



# Saddleworth White Rose Society

In the County of York

## Newsletter No 16 Autumn 2002

### Saddleworth Celebrates Yorkshire Day

Crowds gathered in Uppermill on Sunday 28th July for the annual Yorkshire Day celebrations. (Actual Yorkshire Day 1st August) Celebrations were held at Saddleworth Museum with a large group of Saddleworth residents, visitors and friends all joining in the festivities:

The chairman of Saddleworth Parish Council councillor Pat Lord, accompanied by councillor Brian Lord, opened the proceedings by placing a wreath of white roses on the statue of Saddleworth's famous son, Ammon Wrigley. Uppermill Band entertained the crowds with some appropriate music. Included in the programme was the local favourite 'The Holmfirth Anthem'. At 11,27am there was a short break when Mr. Frank Bradbury of Diggle, whose ancestors have lived in Saddleworth's hills and valley's for hundreds of years, read the Yorkshire Declaration of integrity and entertained the crowds with local tales and dialect verse. Colin Holt, Chairman of the Yorkshire Ridings Society gave a short address, reassuring any doubters that, a though largely ignored by local government and much of the media, the historic County of Yorkshire and it's three Ridings, as well as other British Counties, are still in existence and that Saddleworth is still very much in Yorkshire. to reinforce this message from the other side of County End - Dave Russell was present representing The Friends of Real Lancashire. The timing of the reading of the Declaration was chosen to represent the number of years since the establishment of the Scandinavian Kingdom of York (AD875), the unit was originally divided into three Ridings and later became the County of Yorkshire. George Ardley a retired Saddleworth hill farmer next gave his rendition of the local song penned by Ammon Wrigley, followed by a performance by the folk group "Dodgy Orange" with Cath Morton, Ken Duffy, Dave Fieldhouse and Garth.

Families took advantage of the Face Painting facility provided by Suzanne Bradshaw of Diggle, The Museum gallery cafe was open to the public with Yorkshire lea kindly supplying the beverage. At 3,30 pm the focus of events moved onto the Navigation Inn, Dobcross when many of the crowd joined the annual Yorkshire Pudding Walk via the scenic route of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal to Wool Road, A traditional Yorkshire meal was enjoyed by all. To round off the events a draw was held, Mr Pete Bramwell of Uppermill won the case of Tetley's beer kindly donated to the Yorkshire Day Celebrations by Carlsberg Tetley. In the knowledge that the administrative boundary changes of 1974 did not affect the traditional county boundaries, this event once again enabled local people to express their pleasure and pride in belonging to this wonderful part of Yorkshire.

### Saddleworth Ward Boundary Changes

The Saddleworth population is expanding, This may not come as a Surprise considering the increasing popularity of living in Saddleworth and the amount of new housing that has sprung up in recent years in response to this. An important consequence of this population growth is that Saddleworth, with six seats out of a total of sixty, is now under-represented on the Met Borough Council The Boundary Committee, an independent statutory authority is now conducting a review of the electoral arrangements in Oldham Metropolitan Borough and it is expected that changes in the electoral arrangements in Saddleworth will follow as a consequence. This poses both an opportunity and a threat for those of us who want to maintain Saddleworth's distinct identity within its historic borders.

Both major parties locally have come forward with proposals. Not surprisingly each of these proposals tends to favour the best interests of that particular party in terms of voter demographics Unfortunately none of these helps to preserve the distinct identity of Saddleworth The proposal from the Liberal Democrats that was unanimously agreed, upon by Saddleworth Parish Council, transfers two of the Lower Springhead wards into Lees thus effectively lowering Saddleworth's electoral numbers and maintaining its representation at six councillors That from Labour proposes grouping part of Saddleworth with Waterhead and Sholver. Although there is no immediate plan to change the boundaries of Saddleworth Parish, a future adjustment seems very possible in the light of these changes which would align the parish boundary with the new ward arrangements. Saddleworth will shrink, loosing a great chunk of Springhead and/or Strinesdale.

Alarmed by the apparent lack of consideration that has gone into these submissions by locally elected representatives, and the possible impact on the future identity of Saddleworth, the White Rose Society has formulated its own proposal and submitted this directly to the Boundary Committee. Essentially our proposal creates a new ward, Saddleworth West and Lees, which combines parts of Lees and Saddleworth in equal proportions. It also proposes to move Dobcross and Diggle in with Delph, Denshaw and Highmoor to form a new Saddleworth North Ward. This leaves the existing electoral arrangements for Uppermill, Greenfield and Grasscroft unaffected but renamed Saddleworth South. The detailed arrangement is illustrated in the map opposite.

It is felt that realignment of the ward boundaries in this way is better than the present status quo in terms of the geography of the district, the communities of interest within it and the communication routes through it. The proposed ward boundaries align closely with major natural features. The boundary between Saddleworth North and South is at the Uppermill Viaduct, a point where the Delph and Diggle valleys join together into the lower valley of the River Tame. The boundary of Saddleworth East and Saddleworth West & Lees is at the top of the hill at Lydgate, the watershed between the River Medlock and the River Tame. The Lees boundary with Waterhead and the polling districts covering Holts estate, Abbeyhills and Alt (which under the proposal are to be transferred to another Oldham ward), are Lees Brook and Thornleigh Brook, both already major boundaries along other parts of their course. These rivers have defined the Yorkshire/Lancashire boundary for at least the last 900 years.

The proposal achieves a very accurate fit against the target voter projections for 2006, much better than that of the two political parties. It is felt that the official projections are in some cases underestimates and do not allow for the full extent of new build likely to take place in the district in the next five years. The proposal gives a 10-14% cushion against expansion beyond the forecast figures in Saddleworth North and South wards where further expansion is anticipated. In Saddleworth West & Lees (areas already densely developed) a margin of 6% is allowed.

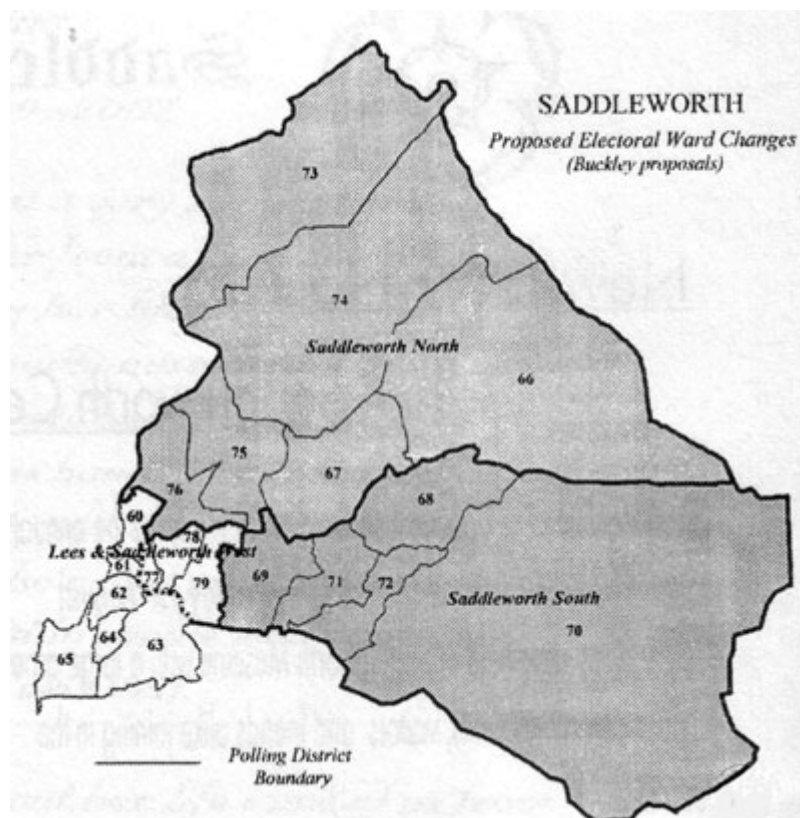
The historic core of Lees comprising Crossbank Lees and Nether Lees remains together in one ward and is now grouped with the demographically, architecturally and historically similar area of Saddleworth West. These two areas are already closely linked by a major communication route. The two components numerically are of similar size - neither Saddleworth West nor Lees could be regarded as "taking over" the other or being moved into the other. Saddleworth gains another three councillors on Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council to represent its interests (a 50% increase).

Holts Estate and Abbey Hills areas at present sit uncomfortably with their neighbours to the East. The special problems facing these areas it is felt will better be addressed by combining them with an Oldham ward facing similar problems.

The changes will not effect representation arrangements on the Saddleworth Parish Council. Existing Saddleworth Parish Council electoral wards will not cross the proposed Metropolitan Ward Boundaries. Saddleworth West will comprise Springhead Lower, Saddleworth North, Delph, Dobcross and Springhead Higher; and Saddleworth South, Uppermill and Greenfield.

Finally the three new wards will form a logical basis for the Saddleworth & Lees Area Committee freeing and focusing the Committee to concentrate more on issues effecting what is essentially the rural half of the Borough.

We await a response from the Boundary Committee. A decision is expected next year and the new electoral arrangements are due to take effect in 2004.



<b>Polling District</b>	<b>District No.</b>	<b>Electors December 2001</b>	<b>Electors December 2006</b>
Lees	60	2179	2144
Lees	61	346	487
Lees	62	1200	1238
Lees	63	659	692
Lees	64	1123	1103
Lees	65	2011	2111
Dobcross	66	1598	1619
Dobcross	67	1383	1380
Uppermill	68	2417	2437
Greenfield	69	1441	1427
Greenfield	70	1111	1116
Greenfield	71	948	977
Greenfield	72	1594	1668
Denshaw	73	596	674
Delph	74	2085	2270
Springhead Higher	75	245	248
Springhead Higher	76	1754	1824
Springhead Lower	77	1074	1088
Springhead Lower	78	1628	1626
Springhead Lower	79	1626	1635

**Marjorie Fielding**  
**17-01-1933 to 04-09-2002**

On September 4th 2002, Uppermill lost a very special person. Marjorie was a helper and an organiser from a very early age, fund raising was second nature to her. During her life she must have raised thousands of pounds. She will be sadly missed, and many times over in the years to come organisations will say "I wish Marjorie was here". Marjorie also loved her brass bands, she traveled all over the country to listen to them and to raise funds as well, for any band that was in crisis. She also was a person who spoke her mind and if you didn't like it 'tough' but to people who knew her it was taken with a pinch of salt and that was that. Marjorie made lots of friends throughout her life some of us from childhood days. I count myself as one of those privileged people. Rest peacefully Marjorie amongst prattie flowers.

Joan Whelan

**Harold Rudolph Burns**  
**07-04-1927 to 11-08-2002**

Harold in his youth was a very keen sportsman, good at cricket, good at football or so he would tell you. Also finding time to work for British Rail for more than 40 years. (Since he retired it seems to have gone down hill). On retiring he still kept his interest in sport with the local football and cricket sides. You'd find him early morning bellowing his orders out on the cricket field to his willing workers. He loved to watch cricket no more so than when his grandchildren were playing, although he'd be reluctant to tell them they had played well, but deep down he was ever so proud of them. Then he'd see his daughter Susan across the other side of the pitch and roar a cheery 'Hello'. Everybody around would cover their ears. Away from his sport he was always a welcome visitor in the pubs of Uppermill and soon had a game of cards or dominos going. When fed up with that, you would get Harold's version of 'Pratty Flowers' (He could never get the words in the right order). Around Christmas time he would don his father Christmas outfit to give the kids their presents (they all knew it was uncle Harold). Sadly this larger than life Yorkshire Rose has passed away, one of the very rare characters of Saddleworth, gone but will not be forgotten, not by his many friends. Least of all by his daughter Susan and grandchildren Stephen, James, Adam and Rebecca.

Michael Hill