



Saddleworth White Rose Society

In the County of York

Newsletter No 17 Winter 2002

Members Night

Members Night at the Catholic Centre, Uppermill on 01 Nov was addressed by Mr Michael Bradford, Chairman of the Association of British Counties. He gave an extremely interesting talk entitled "Whatever Happened to the Ridings" accompanied by an equally interesting slide show featuring shots of the seven areas of Yorkshire whose administration has been transferred elsewhere, including some wonderful shots of Saddleworth.

There was wine and cheese plus tea coffee and biscuits available for members and their guests in the comfortable and pleasant surroundings of the Catholic Centre.

We had a stall selling our very popular greetings cards depicting Saddleworth scenes taken from paintings by members of the Saddleworth Art Group also greetings cards with Fridge Magnets illustrating the white rose "Saddleworth" and unframed prints of the white rose taken from a painting kindly donated to SWRS by Mrs Eileen Eckersly a local artist.

A second stall sold sweatshirts, T shirts and polo shirts all with the Saddleworth Yorkshire logo. These are proving to be in great demand with members often sending them to friends living in other parts of the country or Abroad.

We are extremely grateful to the council of the Sacred Heart Church for the use of their facilities at the Catholic Centre.

Chairman's Address 2002

I am pleased to report that the last twelve months has been another successful year for the Saddleworth White Rose Society. During the year we have achieved a number of milestones in furthering our aims and the membership numbers of the Society have grown steadily. The Society is now widely recognised in Saddleworth and we believe there is growing awareness of our key message that Saddleworth is still very much part of the County of Yorkshire, irrespective of local government propaganda and confused media messages. More people than ever before are including Saddleworth and Yorkshire in their address, and despite dire warnings from Royal Mail against omitting the Oldham postal town guess what - letters are arriving on time without any hitches. Even the local press on occasions have managed to remember that the county boundary is at County End and not on the top of Stanedge.

We were pleasantly surprised and delighted in the Autumn of 2001 when HRH the Prince of Wales reminded everyone during his visit to Tunnel End at Marsden that the Stanedge Tunnel links two parts of Yorkshire and that this is very important to Saddleworth people.

True to character the newspapers got their story all wrong when they reported last year's Lancashire Day event in November with FORL. The main purpose of this event from SWRS's point of view is to make residents and the local administrative authorities aware that the traditional county boundary still legally exists.

In March we held a very successful Members Evening at Saddleworth Museum with a slide show, talk, music and wine and cheese. Thanks go to Mary Clay for organising the excellent food and drink and to Martin Stimpson for the musical entertainment which was much appreciated by all.

The 2nd of April saw us transporting a pair of enormous cloggs for Terry Waites (Size 14s) from Tunnel End Diggle to the Navigation Inn along that stretch of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Christine Barrows boat, the Saddleworth Rose, was suitably decorated and, as well as the cloggs, conveyed civic dignitaries including the Mayor and Mayoress of Oldham M. B. down the Diggle flight. Among the crew were the Mayor of Mossley councillor Roy Etchells and the Chairman of Saddleworth Parish Council councillor John Angove, both of whom proved to be excellent lock gate operators. The cloggs were later presented to Terry Waite at the Emaeus Centre in Mossley.

Progress with our special rose called Saddleworth continues steadily if a little slowly. After some difficulties in propagating the rose, in April Mr Dave Brasher head of Horticulture at Woodbank Park, Stockport agreed to take on the multiplication of the rose and we are now hoping to achieve more positive results from future crops. This year's crop from Mr Rawlins the Huddersfield rose breeder will be available at the beginning of November and all plants have now been ordered

We were pleased to be able to assist in the formation in May of this year of a Saddleworth Branch of the Yorkshire Country Women's Association and this branch now appears to be flourishing. Congratulations go to all those who worked hard to get this new Saddleworth organisation off the ground.

In the Spring we sent a letter to councillor Christine Wheeler, the then Mayor of the Metropolitan Borough, requesting a change of title to the administrative authorities magazine "The Oldhamer" as we felt this title is unimaginative and inappropriate considering that the Town of Oldham makes up only 18% of the area of the Metropolitan Borough. We can see no reason why all residents of the borough should be described as Oldhamers which is a growing trend by the council and the Oldham press. Our objections are in no way intended to be disrespectful of our neighbours in Lancashire. However we do not feel that the identity of Saddleworth people needs to be subsumed into that of Oldham just because we are administered by a common local authority. Saddleworth's identity, culture and history is different from that of the other Townships which make up the Borough and is part of our heritage. We were informed that this letter had been passed on to the leader of the council, councillor Richard Knowles. So far we have had no response from him. A further letter has been sent and we plan to continue campaigning on this issue.

We also approached the Royal Mail! requesting a change to the Saddleworth postal addresses so that it shows the true County. This they have so far refused to do, stating that a postal address is not intended to show the true geographical location of a particular place but is purely for operational convenience. Again we plan to continue lobbying on this issue. If the number of people using their correct addresses continues to grow, soon the Royal Mail will be presented with a *fait accompli*.

A submission was also made to the Regional Policy Unit regarding proposed Regional Assemblies. We pointed out that in 1974 80% of the Saddleworth population voted against any kind of union with Oldham and that any new regions should respect Saddleworth's identity as part of Yorkshire.

We also wrote to the Boundary Committee for England proposing what we consider to be a more suitable readjustment of the ward boundaries that have to take place within Saddleworth, than those suggested by the two main local political parties.

Acknowledgement of receipt of these submissions were received from the appropriate government departments. We await the results of their deliberations.

The Saddleworth Boundary Walk held in June was highly successful and well attended and the Mayor of Oldham M. B.C councillor Riaz Ahmed, joined us for part of the walk also two visitors from Australia. A complete circuit of the Medieval Saddleworth boundary had not been completed to our knowledge since the eighteenth century. An interesting discovery en route was a 13th century boundary ditch created by the Monks of Roche Abbey which marks not only the Saddleworth Boundary but also the County Boundary between Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Yorkshire Day was a little less well attended this year probably due to the last minute notification by the Morris Men that they would not be able to take part and also possibly because of the Commonwealth Games taking part in Manchester. Next year we plan a more lavish event and a subcommittee has been formed to work out an ambitious program.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking all the committee for all they have done on behalf of the society during the last year. As always a particular thanks is due to Roy Bardsley for his unstinting dedication to the society and his hard work on our behalf.

I look forward to another year of success and ask you all to continue campaigning. We may be in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham but Saddleworth is still White Rose Country.

The Boundary Walk

Mr L Perrins and his party which included Audrey, Paul and Carol who took part in the Saddleworth Boundary Walk on 29th June raised £120 for the Chairman of Saddleworth Parish Council's Charity Fund Congratulations Lawrence for an excellent effort. We would also like to thank all the other participants who took part in this walk and contributed in their various ways.

The Grand Draw

The Draw was made at The Kings Arms, Grains Bar by the Deputy Mayor of OMB Cllr Mrs Val Sedgewick at the Lancashire Day celebrations on the County boundary. We were again invited to take part in this event by FORL . A report will appear in the Spring Newsletter.

The first prize, a framed print of the rose "Saddleworth" from a painting by Eileen Eckersley was won by Mrs Lowe from Greenfield.

The second prize, an unframed print, was won by Mrs Halliday from Uppermill.

The Raffle of a Saddleworth rose was also drawn by Cllr Sedgewick. This should have taken place in the Autumn following the 2001 Yorkshire Day event but was unable to be held because of the rose crop failure that year. It was won by Mrs Waugh from Springhead.

The Saddleworth Rose

The Society is proud to donate two plants of the white rose Saddleworth in memory of two local personalities. One has been planted on the grave of Mr Harold Burns of Uppermill, who died on 11th of August this year, a very popular character around all the villages of Saddleworth. The other in the grounds of the Spiritualist Church in High Street, Uppermill in memory of Miss Marjorie Fielding, also of Uppermill, who died on 4th of September this year. Marjorie was a great worker for local charities throughout her life.

White Rose Events in 2003

Here are some tentative dates for your diary.

Members Night ? May. date and venue to be announced.

Yorkshire Day 27th July Saddleworth Museum.

AGM 1st Nov The Swan Dobcross.

Lancashire Day 22th November venue to be announced.

Congratulations to Dobcross C of E School

We congratulate Dobcross C of E School on using the true address on the letter head of their official notepaper instead of the misleading addresses recommended by the Royal Mail. We hope the other schools will follow suit along with the many individuals throughout Saddleworth who already do so and help to preserve our identity and heritage -something we should all be proud of.