



Saddleworth White Rose Society

In the County of York

Newsletter No 20 Autumn 2003

Yorkshire Day

This years Yorkshire Day, opened by Cllr John Hudson, Chairman of the Council and celebrated at Saddleworth Museum on 27 July, was spearheaded by Friezland Band under the baton of their very able conductor Lana Clough. The band entertained us with favourites Ilkley Moor, Jerusalem, Rule Britannia, Pomp and Circumstance and True and Trusty amongst others. In inimitable style, Gilbert Symes of Delph read the Yorkshire Declaration at 11.28 a.m. to commemorate 1128 years of recorded Yorkshire history.

The Morris Dancers, now a regular feature of Saddleworth Yorkshire Day, performed with their usual gusto and brilliant display of colour. Harking back to Saddleworth in past ages, they always attract attention and a crowd soon gathers whenever they start dancing. What a credit to our district and a pleasure to watch!



Cllr & Mrs Hudson and the Friezland Band

Also, with an excellent display of dancing and a credit to their tutors, were the relatively new group, the children of the Bedknobs and Broomsticks Dancers from Holmfirth. These children worked really hard and it was a delight to have them take part and to have participants from another part of our county involved.

Performing outside the Museum, where they drew quite a crowd of appreciative onlookers, Dave Fieldhouse and The Dodgy Orange Folk Group entertained us to their usual high standard.

Last, but by no means least, were the future Saddleworth brass bandsmen of Boarshurst Junior Band. We are always thrilled to welcome young Saddleworth musicians. These bandsmen and women of the future are the ones who will perpetuate this wonderful tradition in our beautiful Saddleworth Valleys.

Following the celebration at the Museum we walked along the towpath for the Yorkshire Pudding Walk to the Hanging Gate Hotel at Diggle where thirty to forty of us sat down to a roast beef and Yorkshire pudding feast provided by Gerry Matley and staff. The honoured guests included Cllr and Mrs Hudson, Mr & Mrs Holt, Yorkshire Ridings Society Chairman and Mr & Mrs Russell of Friends of Real Lancashire. Thanks to all for making this a great day.

One thing which would really make this day memorable would be a more conscious and direct involvement by our many members. We hope we shall see more of you present next time.

White Rose Society AGM and South Pennines Association Talk

This years AGM will be held at the Swan Inn, Dobcross on 6th November 2003 at 7.0 pm. All members are welcome as are nominations for the committee. Please try and attend this meeting - it is the one chance in the year when members can express their views directly to the committee and each other and hear more of the issues the committee are campaigning on. If you care about Saddleworth and its traditions, or if you don't like the present set up as part of OMBC, help us campaign for better recognition for Saddleworth. We are making steady progress in our aims but we need your active support.

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Alan Roughley, Chairman of the newly formed South Pennines Association, who will talk about the association's aim of creating a new South Pennine Local Authority which will include Saddleworth.

Birth.

Congratulations to Samantha Whale and Charles Roughley on the birth of their son Jake Charles born 10th September 2003, brother to Charlotte.

Saddleworth Makes it on Yorkshire TV

Chris and Grace Dronsfield, two of our members, went to York to celebrate "Yorkshire Day" with our friends from the Yorkshire Ridings Society. Chris had been asked by Colin Holt, YRS Chairman, if he would read the "Yorkshire Declaration of Integrity" at Micklegate Bar being the Great Gate from the West Riding into the City of York. Grace happened to mention this to one of her relatives, who just happens to work for Yorkshire TV, and the result was that YTV asked if they could send a film crew to the event and interview Chris.

This resulted in Saddleworth receiving a high profile in the five-minute TV clip that went out during the "Calendar News" programme that evening.

The local York newspaper "Evening Press" were also present and they featured a huge photograph of Chris, at Micklegate Bar, in their late edition that evening and in the caption referred to Chris as being a member of the "Saddleworth White Rose Society". Thanks Chris for the publicity.



Chris Dronsfield on camera

The Boundary Committee.

Proposals for the re-warding of Saddleworth and Lees have now been approved by the Government's Electoral Commission and will come into full force in June next year. The draft recommendations for Saddleworth and Lees, based on the Saddleworth White Rose Society proposals reported earlier, have, after consultation, undergone minor changes only. Three new wards will be created called Saddleworth North, Saddleworth South and Saddleworth West & Lees. The identity and integrity of the district is thus preserved .

Following a petition from a local resident with 305 signatures in support of the draft for the Saddleworth area, and a proposal that the name 'Lees and Saddleworth West' ward should be changed to 'Saddleworth West and Lees' the Boundary Committee agreed to adopt this change because 'the Saddleworth West community constitutes the majority of the ward'.

Another submission from a local resident observed that the draft recommendations 'will very much help preserve Saddleworth as a geographic, cultural and historic entity' and went on to say that he 'would have preferred a return of our administration to Yorkshire' but accepted that it is not within the terms of reference of the Committee at this time' The Committee reported 'We noted the comments that a number of Saddleworth residents would prefer to be part of a Yorkshire authority, but can only reiterate that changes to external borough boundaries are beyond the remit of this review.

In summary the report stated:

44. In the east of the borough, we adopted the Saddleworth White Rose Society's scheme subject to minor amendments to provide for more clearly defined boundaries, as we considered these better resolve the current under-representation of this part of the borough than any other proposals received . It is worth noting that we are unable to propose changes to the external boundaries of local authorities and could not therefore give consideration to the respondent's views on Saddleworth being part of Yorkshire.

All in all a very pleasing result and a great achievement for the Society!

Oldham Beyond

Oldham MBC in the form of the Oldham Local Strategic Partnership have enlisted the help of Consultants URBED to help shape the future of Oldham, both town and borough.

The consultants have produced a very well researched and written paper on the history of the town, the problems of today, particularly the racial tensions in the town and problems of deprivation, and the options for the future regeneration of Oldham and the building of a strong and successful economy and a community at ease with itself.

Like all official documents from Oldham there is sometimes confusion in terminology between Oldham the town and Oldham the borough. Arguments that apply to one, more often than not, do not usually apply to the other. However, overall, the consultants do understand the distinction and the differences in history, culture and outlook between areas like Saddleworth and the once great cotton town that gives its name to the borough.

Particularly relevant are the report's conclusions:

"New Oldham": The final theme relates to nothing less than the reinvention of the Borough of Oldham, the way people feel about it, the way it is governed and the image that it has of itself and projects to the outside world.

Many places not one - We are aware that the first issue is likely to be controversial. There is concern that the borough has never really gelled since the 1974 reorganisation. There is a desire that everyone in the borough should be more positive about being "Oldhamers". Our view is that, if it has not happened yet, it will never happen. It is therefore important to think of the borough as a range of places rather than one. this includes Oldham itself, the four industrial towns of Shaw, Royton, Chadderton and Failsworth, the smaller industrial towns of Hollinwood and Lees, the Saddleworth towns (sic) of Uppermill, Greenfield and Denshaw. A federal concept for the borough should allow people to feel they belong to these places while being part of Oldham borough. This has implications for the map of Oldham and the way that places are signposted and the identity that they project. It could also be emphasised through a further development of the area committee approach by devolving increasing powers down to these levels."

These comments fully vindicate the Society's campaign to rename the Borough magazine "the Oldhamer"

URBED are seeking the views of local people throughout the borough and comment and suggestions on their findings. To this end they will be visiting Saddleworth on November 6th. At Saddleworth School all day, they are hoping that as many people as possible will visit their white inflatable "thought bubble" and register their views.

A gimmick perhaps, but an important opportunity for Saddleworth people to let the powers-that-be know what they think about being part of Oldham Metropolitan Borough, the way Saddleworth is treated by an urban local authority and the confusion that often seems to exist in the centre between the concepts of Town and the Borough.

In discussion with a senior URBED representative at a recent workshop in Gallery Oldham, representatives of the White Rose Society told the consultant that the reinvention exercise would be enormously assisted by the choice of a new, more inclusive, name for the borough. This point was well taken and he promised to pass this suggestion on to the Oldham senior executives who had commissioned the study. We will continue to press this point.

This exercise is being taken very seriously by the council and it presents a really important opportunity for everyone in Saddleworth to register their views. Do go along to Saddleworth school on November 6th and express your opinions – as forcefully as you can.