



Saddleworth White Rose Society

In the County of York

Newsletter No 23 SUMMER 2004

YORKSHIRE DAY Saddleworth Sunday 1st August 2004

As you will know, "Yorkshire Day" has been observed around the County since 1975 and, here in Saddleworth, we have been holding our own celebrations for the past few years based in and around the museum in Uppermill. We have now outgrown this venue and it will now take place in the King George V Playing Field ...or the "back meadow" as it is fondly known by many of us.

In order to promote our being in Yorkshire to the people of Saddleworth, especially those who have moved into the area from outside, we are organising a "Yorkshire Day" event which will take place on Sunday 1st August 2004. This will be an event for all the local community, with free admission, which will take place on the King George V Playing Field in Uppermill from 11.00am until 3.00pm.

The event will include local brass bands playing as well as other groups based in Saddleworth. Various local organisations will have marquees containing displays of the history and heritage of Saddleworth and there will be other forms of entertainment catering for all ages.

The celebrations will begin at 11.00am with the ceremony of placing the garland of white roses, by Cllr Pam Preston (Chairman - Saddleworth Parish Council), on the statue of Ammon Wrigley adjacent to the museum car park in Uppermill. Cllr John Hudson will then read out the "Yorkshire Declaration of Integrity". A brass band will be playing on the grassland area near the statue and then, at approximately 11.30 am, the "Grand Parade" will begin and we will proceed up the High Street to the King George V Playing Field where the rest of the celebrations will take place.

The shops and businesses along the High Street in Uppermill have been invited to decorate their windows in a suitably Yorkshire-theme and, with Yorkshire flags flying from flag poles along the High Street, we aim to have a strong impact for our special "County Day".

What we need, in order that our celebrations are really impressive, is to have as many people as possible present on the day and to take part in the parade up the High Street. The police will be stopping the traffic for us and, with Yorkshire flags flying and brass bands playing, this will make a strong and clear statement to spectators watching and the local press that the people of Saddleworth are proud to be Yorkshire folk.

Please will you make every effort to come along to our celebrations of "Yorkshire Day". If the Yorkshire folk of Saddleworth, and especially the members of the "Saddleworth White Rose Society", can't be bothered to take part in their very own celebrations then this would be a great pity and weaken the message that we want to spread amongst those who have moved into Saddleworth from outside... and to those across the county border in Oldham.

On the eve of "Yorkshire Day", there will be a "Champion Brass" concert at the Civic Hall in Uppermill on Saturday 31st July called the "WHITE ROSE CONCERT". This has been organised by Phil Beckwith and will feature "Yorkshire Brass" which is a specially formed brass band composed of first-class players from brass bands across Yorkshire. This will be an event "not-to-be-missed" and we are grateful to Phil for organising this event, which will really add to our celebrations on the Sunday.

For further information, and if you would be interested in offering to help on the day itself please contact:- Christopher Dronsfield (Tel 01457 874510)

A Meeting to Change the Title of the OMB Council magazine

On 26th Apr a meeting was held at Dobcross to choose an alternative, more acceptable and less offensive title for OMBC's magazine. The meeting was chaired by Cllr Jim McMahon of Failsworth and was attended by representatives of Chadderton Historical Society, Royton Historical Society, The Denshaw Observer and Saddleworth White Rose Society. Invited representatives from Crompton did not attend.

The remit was to choose a title which was all inclusive of the borough and acceptable to all. A lengthy and lively discussion followed with many alternatives offered. This is a far more difficult task than one may imagine. One suggestion, jokingly, I think, put forward and bearing in mind the textile association with the whole area, both Lancashire and Yorkshire was "The Spinner" but it was considered OMB council may feel a little testy about this, bearing in mind it's implications and the idea was hastily dropped. While we had several options put forward by SWRS members the final choice was one put forward by the Royton representative Doug Ashmore "The Pennine Way" with the strap line "Seven Townships Progressing Together" we all agreed that this has a good sound about it and implies a progressive "Way" of going about things.

So much common ground was found to exist between the various groups, with interest in preserving the identity of their own towns that it was unanimously agreed that we should hold regular meetings to discuss the many problems we have in common.

Whether the choice of title to emerge from this meeting is eventually to be used for the council magazine depends on the OMB council itself. We sincerely hope they will accept this alternative, as the current title "The Oldhamer" represents the people of less than one fifth part of the administrative area.

The URBED Report

What a let down. The £300,000 long awaited "pie in the sky" report by URBED. They have served their masters well, or should we say paymasters. They massively fail to recognise the fundamental problem in this Metropolitan Borough, they fail to see a difference between Oldham the town and OMB the administrative area and they barely recognise the existence of the other six partners, Saddleworth, Chadderton, Failsworth, Crompton, Royton and Lees, which make up this joint borough with a joint administration and they see no necessity to change the misleading prefix "Oldham" which in itself implies "one town", which it is not. What, one might ask do the other six squares in the OMB logo stand for?

There are constant references to Oldham, throughout the report, giving little impression of the existence of any township other than Oldham and assumes that all those living in this administrative area are Oldhamers no matter to which township or district they belong. It is quite apparent that the discussions with local organisations and interest groups within the MB served no useful purpose, were not taken into account and therefore completely wasted the valuable time of those who attended these meetings. The introduction reads like a fairy tale and the wishful thinking could be applied equally to any area of the country, reminding one almost, of a car sales brochure. In the final analysis it has to be said that this is a report about Oldham town and not about OMB

Destroying our heritage and Identity

On a recent trip to Halton East, a small village near Skipton, where my grandfather was born, I noticed a finger post similar to the ones we used to have in Saddleworth. In 1974 when the administration of Saddleworth was moved from the West Riding to Oldham Metropolitan Borough, Saddleworth remained in the Historic West Riding just as Halton East did when it's administration was moved to North Yorkshire Administrative County. These administrative counties which were created solely for the purpose of local government administration, did not alter the Real County boundaries, only the administration was changed.

So what then was the purpose of removing, at the rate payers expense, these perfectly good finger posts, in the 1970's, to replace them with the much less attractive, and less informative signposts that we have now. These original posts were part of the heritage of Saddleworth and our Real County. Not only did they give mileage information but also the grid reference and displayed the fact that Saddleworth is in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Maybe the latter is why they were removed, there can be no logical reason, otherwise why would they be still giving out this very useful information in Halton East and other parts of our county.

Was it Really so Long Ago

My husband is a Yorkshireman being born in Richmond. As a result we have always had a fondness for the County and spent many happy days exploring it - mainly on foot when we were members of the Youth Hostelling Association.

We met through scouting and together we took young lads camping and trekking etc., We endeavoured to encourage the lads to play the game; to win and to lose: to help each other using their own particular skills: to use their own initiative and most of all to accept discipline. We couldn't do it now in this particular political climate. What would be said about the games we played? For instance, Running the Gauntlet entailed two lines of lads standing opposite each other with rolled up newspapers whacking the daylight out of the team running through their ranks! Then we had British Bulldogs where we had two teams facing one another across a room or a field. The aim was to charge, at a given shout, and decimate the opposite team by wrestling them to the ground! we did have the occasional black eye, twisted ankle etc., but it never occurred to anyone to sue. We entered District events and were proud when we won but not dispirited if we lost so long as we knew we had done our best. We played Wide games (now it is called Orienteering!) and this meant using ones initiative and skills to get from start to finish. All these activities developed team spirit. When attending meetings the lads wore full uniform and had to be on time. No sloping in when they felt like it! They all brought PE kit to change into if necessary. Officers were never addressed by their first name. We took the lads camping and youth hostelling and spent happy hours around camp fires. The parents trusted us implicitly and we felt privileged to have charge of their sons but today no-one seems to trust anyone and it must be a nightmare to be in charge of a group of youngsters.

Was it really so long ago that life was so free and easy? Yes, it was.

Joan Jones.

The Telephone Directory

Some members have experienced difficulty obtaining their copy of the Huddersfield & District Telephone Directory, which now contains Saddleworth telephone numbers in the OL3 and OL4 postal areas, when ringing Freephone 0800 833 400. It would appear that the assistants answering queries had not been properly briefed, we are assured that this problem has now been rectified. .If anyone experiences any problems please contact the SWRS secretary on 01457 878768

Statement by HRH Prince of Wales, September 3rd 2001

"The fact that Saddleworth is still part of the Historic West Riding of Yorkshire is extremely important"