



Saddleshworth White Rose Society

In the County of York

Newsletter 33

Govt. White Paper

It appears the Local Government White Paper, in its present form, which claims to bring democracy closer to the people, completely disregards our desire to get Saddleshworth away from indifferent urban administration. Despite SWRS member Cllr Ken Hulme's "Save Our Saddleshworth Campaign" with its motorcade and massive support of over 3000 signatures which was handed to Local Government Minister Angela Smith who promised it would receive serious consideration, it refuses to even consider altering Metropolitan Borough boundaries, at least for the foreseeable future. However we have made our wishes known in several ways, one of which was submitting a solution involving creating a South Pennines Rural Borough.

The Govt. White Paper makes the following points:

- a) Any proposed new unitary authority must consist of either the whole of a current local govt. area or a combination of such whole areas.
- b) Only a council or a group of councils in a two-tier or unitary area can make a proposal for a new unitary authority and metropolitan borough councils are excluded from this process. Furthermore, proposed new unitary authorities cannot include any part of a metropolitan borough.
- c) Any proposal submitted by a council must include the area of that council/group of councils as long as that area is not currently part of a metropolitan borough.

But this is a White Paper, a consultative document. In the new year SOS Saddleshworth intend to challenge much in the White Paper and try to get it amended with greater flexibility on issues like establishing new authorities Redcar councillor, Chris Abbott is the new Chairman of The Yorkshire Ridings Society following the sad and untimely death of Mr Colin Holt. Cllr Abbott said "It is a real honour to follow Colin Holt as Chairman of the Yorkshire Ridings Society. It was a sad blow when we lost Colin in April but the Society carries on with the same enthusiasm that has kept it going for over 30 years" "I feel proud that members have placed their trust in me as the person to continue the good work that Colin started". Roger Sewell, of Goole, who last year completed a charity walk around the boundary of real Yorkshire, is the new Vice Chairman. The YRS campaigns for recognition of the continuing existence of the Ridings of Yorkshire, never abolished, in spite of numerous local govt. changes that created "admin counties" and "unitary authorities". Also it campaigns for Yorkshire to be used as part of postal addresses in all parts of our historic County.



Chris Abbott, New Chairman of The Yorkshire Ridings Society

SWRS feel Chris will serve the Society well and prove a worthy successor to Colin. We wish him well and will give him our full support.

Saddleworth White Rose Society Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held at it's usual venue this year, the Swan, Dobcross and was well attended. The existing committee was re-elected with the addition of Mr A Wood from Diggle. Following the formal part of the meeting Cllr Mike Buckley gave an interesting talk about the pros and cons of being within the Peak Park boundaries and pointed out the protection that incorporation into the Peak Park would afford our hillsides and hamlets, from undesirable development. He was followed by Cllr Alan Roughley who discussed the planning implications and Cllr Derek Heffernen gave Saddleworth Parish Councils views and then led a discussion about SPC's intended takeover of some of Saddleworth's services from the OMB administrative council control. These include street cleaning, refuse collection and green spaces. Unfortunately, no mention was made of the vital issue of planning control.

The talks were followed by a delicious potato pie supper.

Peak District National Park

The committee wish to thank all those of you who completed the Pink forms asking if you wish to see more of Saddleworth in the Peak Park and also those who marked the Saddleworth maps, delivered later, to indicate where you would like to see the Peak Park boundary extended to. We had a good response to both. The vast majority would like to see the whole of Saddleworth included and while we feel it would be impractical to include all of the built up areas we appreciate the fact that people want much of Saddleworth included. This information has now been passed on to Saddleworth MP Mr Phil Woolas.

Hot-Pot Lunch with FORL

The flags of both counties flew together on the flagpole of the Rams Head Hotel by the Halifax Road above Denshaw village on Saturday 18 Nov when SWRS and Friends of Real Lancashire got together on the true county boundary to enjoy the annual Lancashire Hot-Pot Lunch.

The occasion was graced by the presence of The Mayor of Rochdale MB Cllr Mrs Jean Hornby and her Consort Mr Barrie Hornby, the Chairman of Shaw & Crompton Parish Council Cllr Diane Williamson and her Lady Miss Kim Williamson and Cllrs Brian & Pat Lord representing SPC. also Chairmen of FORL Mr Chris Dawson, YRS Cllr Chris Abbot and SWRS Mr Geoff Bayley.

Cllr Mike Buckley, Saddleworth Historical Society, gave a very interesting talk about the real county boundary, evidence of which is virtually at the door of the Rams Head in the form of a ditch dug by the twelfth century monks of Friarmere, to resolve a sheep grazing dispute with Lancashire grazieres. The gathering then enjoyed the mellow notes of Mr Herbert Howarth's solo cornet. He played nine pieces which included Solitaire, Love Changes Everything, Over the Rainbow and The Lost Chord.



**The Mayor of Rochdale MB listens intently to FORL Chairman
Chris Dawson's wise words**



Mr Herbert Howarth with cornet who entertained the guests admirably with his music as solo cornet.

Association of British Counties Meeting at Coventry

On the 11th November Mike Buckley and I attended the Association of British Counties meeting at Coventry.

Never having attended one of these meetings before I did not know what to expect but found it immensely interesting. The delegates, from various parts of the country, represented mainly north of England and south Eastern counties. The aim of the Association is to promote the recognition of the historic counties of Great Britain as opposed to the local government administrative counties such as Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire etc.

The Friends of Real Lancashire informed the meeting that the Highways Agency had been asked and agreed to remove road signs which had appeared on motorways north of the Mersey, the Lancashire side and including Warrington, welcoming people to Cheshire. Back in 1966 Cheshire CC lost administrative control of this part of the Historic County Palatine of Lancaster so the signs now have no purpose whatsoever.

The delegates of the Yorkshire Ridings Society stated that Redcar Council have acquired permission to erect North Riding of Yorkshire signs on the real county boundary. A new South Western group is in the process of being formed in Gloucestershire and although as yet small in number it is hoped to build on this.

The Association of British Counties Aims

The 86 traditional Counties of Great Britain are fundamental. Older than Cathedrals, more historic than stately houses, places like Lancashire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cumberland link us with our distant past. Our literature and history have been played out in them Organisations galore - sports clubs, businesses, societies, regiments, farmers unions etc. are based upon them. They are where we 'come from' where our forbears 'came from' too – part of the idea of home. So what's the problem? In the past 40 years the idea has grown up that many old Counties have changed beyond recognition or gone altogether. There have been four major changes in local government names and boundaries; and each time Ordnance Survey redrew the map to match. Addresses, holiday literature and guide books followed – confusing foreign tourists and most of us too. Tradition seemed at the mercy of local government; and ancient places like Westmorland and Banffshire vanished from the map – just because they were no longer needed for local government purposes. Yet the government has protested all along that it's reforms were only for local government administration and the old Counties have not been abolished.

ABC stands by the historic Counties. Modern local government is important but it's geography is too fragile for general use. No one can cope with places which change every ten or twenty years; and in any case we shouldn't forsake our cultural inheritance. In Northern Ireland they never have The six counties are not used for local government but are still the names and areas in everyday use. ABC's objectives are to see that the names that everyone uses are protected even those not used for local government.

We are gaining ground. Royal Mail now recognises traditional County names. Guide books now talk about Huntingdonshire and ignore 'West Midlands' etc. Encyclopaedia Britannica now describes each historic County in detail and does not confuse them with administrative areas.

Michael Hall SWRS committee

ABC's current aims include the proper marking of traditional County boundaries on major roads, the production of commercial maps showing the Counties and the return of the ceremonial offices of sheriff and lord-lieutenant to the traditional Counties.

What Can You Do ?

Remember that there are two distinct kinds of county; the ancient or geographical (traditional) Counties and local government administrative counties. Sometimes their boundaries coincide, mostly they do not.

Remember that the Counties exist unaltered; never refer to the 'abolition' of Counties such as Westmorland etc. Or refer to them as 'former' Counties.

Never afford administrative areas a geographical or cultural status not given them by Parliament – they are just for local government.

Reject the use of administrative area names (e.g. 'Tyne & Wear', 'Cumbria', 'Greater Manchester', 'West Yorkshire' etc.) unless referring specifically to local government matters.

Use the proper names (e. g. Lancashire, Yorkshire etc.) correctly – mean the ancient or geographical County.

Always use the correct traditional County names in postal addresses. This is now accepted by Royal Mail throughout the UK.

Press for maps showing the ancient or geographical County.

Ensure that children are taught about their true Counties – do not deny them their heritage.

Wishing you a Speedy Recovery

We were delighted to hear that Mrs Suzanne Bradshaw of Diggle, former SWRS committee member is now recovering from her recent serious illness. At the time of writing she is in a rehabilitation unit at Rochdale but was able to spend some time at home with her family during Christmas. Hopefully after a few such home visits she will soon be home permanently. We wish her a speedy and full recovery.



Rural Lane to Urban Back-Alley, One of OMBC's "Improvements"

Above is a photograph of Roebuck Lane, Strinesdale, Saddleworth. It is one of OMBC's highway "improvements" and is reminiscent of a sterile urban back-alley. We have so far been unable to ascertain the cost. The original dry stone walls on this lane, having stood for around three hundred years, required some repair but although carrying much traffic, we feel the walls of this lane could have been repaired to an at least equally safe standard by local qualified dry stone wallers, as is the case in many areas throughout the country, on at least equally busy roads. Many authorities use no concrete stone-clad walls whatsoever. Dry stone walls would be much more ecologically friendly and we have good reason to believe would have been less than a third of the cost. Saddleworth is an area noted for it's dry stone walls and there are plenty of capable wallers about.