



# Saddleshworth White Rose Society

Newsletter 44



Gilbert Symes again did an excellent job and demonstrated his unique sense of humour.



Mr Brian Gregson SBL Chairman heads the Saddleshworth Branch Royal British Legion.



The Chairman of Saddleshworth Council Cllr Mrs Alma McInnes laid the garland of white roses on the Aamon Wrigley statue.



Mrs Anne Robinson of Thurston Clough, Delph provided ponies for rides, from her riding school



Cllr Mrs McInnes, Chair Saddleshworth Council, Cllr Bill Cullen, and Ms Doreen Ainscough of Friends of Real Lancashire head the parade.



The King George V playing field was packed with displays, with a huge variety of interests.

*(more Yorkshire Day photographs on back page)*

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## **SADDLEWORTH AND PETERLOO**

**By Paul Fryer**

The origins of Peterloo can be traced to the development of Radical ideas in the late eighteenth century, stemming from the French Revolution. However it was the severe economic depression following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 that sparked nationwide protest.

An illustration of the scale of the distress can be seen by the fact that in 1817 over 3,000 of the 13,000 population of Saddleworth were on parish relief.

In March 1817 20,000 people gathered at St Peter's Field Manchester. The Riot Act was read, and eventually the crowd dispersed, with no casualties. In June 1817 there were violent riots in Huddersfield.

Workers began to be drilled in military style across the country, much to the alarm of the Government who feared a revolution.. 500 such men met on Saddleworth Moor, with 300 seen on Oldham Edge. Spies were sent into these areas to report on what was going on.

The main aim of the Reformers was equality in Parliamentary representation, in particular universal suffrage. In 1807 for example, in Saddleworth only 300 people out of a population of 11,000, could vote. They also opposed 'rotten boroughs', where landowners controlled who would be the MP, and the Corn Laws, which increased food prices for the poor.

On August 16 1819 a rally was held in St Peter's Field to call for Reform. The Saddleworth contingent set off at 8 am, with other from Lees and Mossley joining along the way. They met other contingents from Oldham and beyond at Oldham Green (near the present Borough Civic Centre).

At 10 am John Knight of Saddleworth gave the signal for the march down to Manchester to begin. By the time the procession reached the Field it had swelled to around 10,000, with contingents from Failsworth and Chadderton adding to the numbers. They had marched in a disciplined manner, and were in their best

clothes, many enjoying an outing on a beautiful summer's day.

By noon the crowd measured over 60,000, with contingents from the Manchester area, and from as far away as Blackburn. They were crammed into an area some 14,000 yards square.

At 1.20 pm the famous Henry 'Orator' Hunt mounted the hustings to great cheers. The Magistrates decided to arrest him and the others on the platform. The Riot Act was read. Special Constables tried to get through to the platform, but failed. The Magistrates panicked and instructed the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry (MYC) to carry out the arrests. The MYC numbered over a thousand, but it was a volunteer force not trained for such tasks. The leaders were arrested, but the MYC lost all discipline and began to charge the crowd, slashing with their sabres indiscriminately at men, women and children, even the Special Constables!

Within half an hour St Peter's Field was cleared, with up to 18 dead, and almost 600 wounded, with at least 100 of those being women. The injuries were mainly caused by trampling, either by the horses or the crowd running to escape.

Of the Saddleworth contingent –

Edward Dawson – sabred in the head – dead.

William Dawson – sabred – died September 1.

Joseph Buckley of Woodbrook – sabred in the shoulder.

James Lees of Stoneswood – 2 severe sabre wounds to the head.

James Thewlis of Strinesdale – severely trodden on the legs.

Daniel Whitehead of Woodbrook – trampled and much bruised.

Joseph Wrigley of Quick – trampled by horses.

The trial of Henry Hunt and the others, including John Knight took place at York Assizes in March 1820. 'The Black Flag of Saddleworth', which had been carried to St Peter's Field, was used in evidence. It's colour and slogans 'Equality or Death' were used to show the supposed threatening nature of the meeting.

The jury found the defendants guilty, with Henry Hunt sentenced to 2 years, and the others 1 year imprisonment. John Knight was not sentenced as he was already serving a 1 year prison term for speaking at a meeting in Burnley in 1819 .

No member of the Yeomanry was ever found guilty of any offence. In Radical folklore the meeting became known as Peterloo in a parody of Waterloo which had happened just 4 years earlier.

On Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup> 2009 Oldham Community Radio organised a re-creation of the march from Saddleworth down to St Peter's Field. Nine people met at Lydgate to begin the procession, including one man who had set off from Dobcross before 7 am. Around 35 people met around the Borough Civic Centre from all parts of the Borough. They then marched down to Manchester, and by the time they arrived outside Manchester Central exhibition centre they numbered 60 out of a total of 400. A wreath was laid at Peace Gardens in the city centre.

*It was 190 years on August 16<sup>th</sup> since the Peterloo Massacre took place.*

### **Yorkshire Day 2009**

Yorkshire Day is officially the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. However in Saddleworth we celebrate on the nearest Sunday which this year at least proved to be a good move. The 2<sup>nd</sup> dawned with sunshine and we were blessed once again with fantastic weather. But the field was wet from the previous days rain.

The event started at Saddleworth Museum Gardens at 11.15 where Cllr Alma McInnes (Chair of Saddleworth Council) placed a garland of white roses on the statue of local poet and historian Ammon Wrigley.

Local dialect speaker Gilbert Symes read the Yorkshire Declaration and recited local poetry. Also present were Cllr Chris Abbot from the North Riding Group representing The Yorkshire Ridings Society and Ms Doreen Ainscough representing Friends of Real Lancashire.

From the Museum Gardens Diggle Band lead the parade along High Street to King George V Playing Field where the band continued to provide entertainment at the Country Fair. People and animals had started to arrive at the Playing Field by 10.00 am.

New this year were a Cocoon Shy, Owl boxes, Clowns to entertain the children, which they did in some style keeping the children mesmerised with the giant bubbles they blew and a local dog which joined in and tried in vain to catch a bubble, added much to the entertainment. There was face painting and even a Charity Stall raising money for Leprosy Colonies! There was a Hog Roast provided by David Hirst and cheeses for the ploughman's lunches from Paul the butcher. All the usual stalls were of course also there with plenty of fun for everyone. But not forgetting that the Country Fair is there to celebrate Yorkshire Day and to remind everyone that Saddleworth is still and always will be in Yorkshire.

We wish to thank everyone for their help and support.

Brenda Cockayne.

### **Yorkshire Country Women's Association**

Saddleworth Branch meetings Autumn 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2009. At Uppermill Methodist 7.30pm

29<sup>th</sup> July Classique Clothes Party

Aug No Meeting

30<sup>th</sup> Sep Co-op Singers

Meetings commence 7.30 pm at the Methodist Hall, Uppermill.

### **Saddleworth White Rose Society Annual General Meeting**

The 2009 SWRS Annual General Meeting will be held at the Masonic Lodge, Uppermill on 24 Nov 09 commence 7.30 pm.

**Suppers must be booked in advance. Please contact secretary 01457 878 768.**

**Subs for 2009/10 will be due from 01 Nov .**

A few members have not yet paid 2008/09 subs, please do so at your earliest convenience





The Barber's Shop Quartet. Hair dressing was also available.



Mrs Brenda Cockayne's rescued ex battery cage hens. Now once again fully feathered and enjoying a more natural life on free range.



Llamas were displayed by Saddleworth Llama Trekking from Denshaw



Sheep for the shearing demonstration were provided by Mr David Hirst of Albion Farm Shop.



Mr and Mrs Duncan two of the hundreds of visitors who attended Saddleworth's Yorkshire Day Country Fair.



Mr & Mrs Frank Whitehead from Delph at the SWRS stand whilst Mrs Judith Wood checks the price list..

*Photo's by: G Bayley, E Bardsley, M Hall & S Dronsfield.*