



Saddleworth White Rose Society

in the County of York

Newsletter 56

Many local people are unaware that abbreviating the name 'Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council', to 'Oldham Council', is misleading and inaccurate. Oldham is just one of seven towns which make up the Borough, and is quite small in area. Crompton & Shaw, Lees, Failsworth, Chadderton, Royton or Saddleworth, whilst being part of the Borough, are not part of the Town of Oldham. Unfortunately the Steering Committee of Councillors in 1974 short-sightedly, chose to prefix the title Metropolitan Borough Council with the name of one of the townships within its administration area, giving the false impression that the other six townships had become districts of Oldham, which still causes much confusion. The Councillors of Trafford, Tameside, Kirklees and Calderdale chose neutral names, which caused neither confusion nor offence.

The present Metropolitan Borough Council, is the joint administrative unit, made up of Councillors elected by the voters of each township, to collect the rates, and jointly administer the area. The boundaries of the seven towns of the borough have now been in place for 39 years. However, local government administrative areas do change with surprising frequency. So who knows what the future holds?

When someone asks. Where are you from? The correct answer is, 'Saddleworth'. Saddleworth is geographically larger than the other six towns of the Borough put together, i.e. **53%**. It is far more rural than the rest of the Borough and is the only township of this borough which is in Yorkshire. Contrary to popular belief, created by the media and the joint Borough Council, the historic county boundaries were not changed or moved in any way whatsoever. The boundary at Stanedge is the administrative boundary between OMB and Kirklees, it is not the 'true' county boundary. The county boundary is where it has always been, at County End (Lees/Springhead).

The Police, Fire service and waste disposal service still carry the title 'Greater Manchester' even though the Greater Manchester County Council was abolished in 1986, having existed only twelve years from its formation in 1974. There is however a 'Greater Manchester Combined Authority', which came into existence on 1st April 2011. This appears to be an attempt to re-impose GMCC by the back door.

The title **Lord Lieutenant** is given to the British monarch's personal representatives in the United

Kingdom, usually in a county or similar circumscription, with varying tasks throughout history. It is an ancient and

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historical office, which dates back to Henry VIII in the 1540's,

There is currently however, a 'Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester'. But why is this? Surely the Lord Lieutenant should represent the ancient and historical counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire, as appropriate. All the changes to local government over the last half century, which have generally been unwelcome in Saddleworth, have appropriately all taken place on the **1st of April!**

Yorkshire CCC Coaching for Saddleworth School

For reasons expressed in the previous article, the infrastructure in all the townships of the borough are generally misleadingly prefixed Oldham, not least of these being Saddleworth, which is of course in Yorkshire as witnessed by the pupils of Saddleworth School who wear the county's white rose emblem on their uniform, but like the rest is administered by the joint borough council which meets in Oldham. It is true many Saddleworth children are born in Lancashire, at Royal Oldham hospital, as it is the nearest hospital, but it should not be forgotten that most of these children will be educated, reared, educated and in many cases employed in Saddleworth as adults.



Mr Michael Pulford SWRS member from Ilkley, and member of Yorkshire CCC came up with the idea along with the YCCC of giving coaching to Saddleworth School pupils by YCCC coach. Mark Gilliver who was until recently record run maker in the Bradford League. This will hopefully remind pupils that Yorkshire is the home county cricket side for Saddleworth and the team for

which hopefully many of our youngsters will play in the future, as they have in the past.

The photograph above shows Michael Hall, vice chairman SWRS, on the left, pupils from the school, and Mark Gilliver on the right. It is hoped this will become an annual event.

Saddleworth Branch Yorkshire Country Women's Association

The November meeting YCWA was also their AGM and the annual visit of the Cooperative Singers, now known as the Friday Singers, due regrettably to sponsorship withdrawal, but by now familiar faces and as always excellent singing.



It was followed by a potato pie and excellent deserts and thanks to everyone.

Meetings are held at the Methodist Church Hall, Uppermill at 7.30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month, except August and December. Bring your friends along everyone is welcome.

The committee had served for 10 years so has now stood down and been replaced by a new committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO RAIL SERVICES FROM GREENFIELD

'Network Rail (who own the track, stations and signalling and provide train paths to train operating companies which locally are Northern and TransPennine Express) have decided that as part of the Northern Hub upgrade in rail capacity in the Manchester area and electrification that the track capacity on the North TransPennine Route through Greenfield will expand to allow the number of Leeds to Manchester expresses to increase from 4 to 6 per hour. Four trains per hour will go via Victoria: two onwards to Liverpool and two via a new loop to Piccadilly and Manchester Airport; two trains per hour will go direct to the dead end platforms at Piccadilly.

Our local stopping trains to Victoria then get in the way of the faster expresses.

The consequences for Saddleworth's rail passengers are:

1 Our local all-stations trains between Huddersfield and Manchester Victoria via Ashton under Lyne will be replaced with 'skip stop' trains between Leeds, Huddersfield and via Guide Bridge to Manchester Piccadilly each stopping at just two of the four stations between Huddersfield and Stalybridge (Slaithwaite, Marsden, Greenfield and Mossley).

2 These changes mean that Greenfield loses its train services to Victoria, Salford Central (close to the fast expanding Manchester Spinningfields area), Salford Crescent and Ashton and to two of the three stations Mossley, Marsden and Slaithwaite.

3 Most rail passengers from Greenfield and Manchester want to go to Victoria (which is much nearer to the city centre shops, cinemas and jobs than Piccadilly). This was confirmed in the results of last year's poorly worded survey by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) which has been ignored by Network Rail and TfGM. We started the petition on Friday morning 11th January at Greenfield Station and obtained over 200 signatures in one morning with just 4 refusals from people who prefer Piccadilly to Victoria as their Manchester destination

4 Many passengers from Greenfield would have to stand to Piccadilly as some of these skip-stop trains would already be full when arriving from Huddersfield and Leeds whereas currently passengers at Greenfield can usually find a seat even in the rush hour

5 Electrification work is scheduled to start in 2016 and be completed in 2018. Transport for Greater Manchester have informed Greenfield Rail Action Group that our local services to Victoria will be replaced by skip stop services to Piccadilly from the start of the electrification work in 2016

6 The Northern and TransPennine Express franchises expire next year and the new franchise(s) (which might be combined) will specify the service patterns for the length of the franchise which will last at least 7 years and could be up to 15 years. Unless the Greenfield service to Victoria is included in the franchise specification when tender bids are requested later this year we will have lost our existing train services to Victoria.'

Greenfield Rail Action Group (GRAG) are also campaigning to increase our trains from hourly to twice hourly and to retain more frequent peak period trains. If Greenfield's train service is increased to twice hourly GRAG want the existing service to Victoria retained but would then be relaxed about the

second hourly service going to Piccadilly which would provide more choice of destinations to passengers.

Thanks to Richard Knowles & Royce Franklin for the above.

COMMENT:

The present stopping train to Huddersfield uses part of the same platform at Huddersfield, as the Huddersfield to Leeds stopping train. It would appear sensible therefore to combine these two services.

Similarly, the present Victoria to Stalybridge service should continue via Greenfield to Huddersfield.

The proposed extra hourly train should go to Piccadilly. (Everyone gains).

Every local service train **MUST** stop at **ALL** stations!!!!!!

Extra passing loops to accommodate additional fast / slow trains can be provided.

Tickets and passes are often not inspected or even issued. The train operators therefore cannot give accurate passenger numbers!

Geoff. Bayley

An hour with Roger Tanner

By Michael Pulford

Roger Tanner is a well known figure in Saddleworth both for his work at Waterside Mills where he managed the family's cotton business for over thirty years and also as a generous and imaginative patron of the arts for which he was awarded the MBE. He is now ninety years old but it goes without saying to all who know him that he remains a highly energetic and busy person and it took some time to manage to arrange a time when he was available to meet up and talk.

Happily, a date and time was agreed and I spent a very enjoyable hour in Mr. Tanner's company at his lovely home above Greenfield over a cup of coffee along with SWRS member Michael Hall, talking to him about a number of matters including his family's contribution to cricket in the district. This lasts to this day as Roger Tanner is president of the Saddleworth League and has been for fifty six years whilst his father's cousin Harold was a president for twenty four years before him so that Tanners have held the office for every year but six since 1927.

Tanners were also founder members of the Saddleworth club as far back as 1867 whilst Roger's father Jack and Jack's cousin Harold captained Greenfield before and after the Great War. The Tanner family of course gave their name to the local knock out cup whilst the First Division trophy is named after Harold Tanner but the Tanners influence spread beyond Saddleworth and back over the hills to the West Riding hinterland and Headingley itself.

The Tanners were well known and important figures in Yorkshire cricket for Phillip Taylor has recounted in his splendid history of the Saddleworth Cricket League, 'Over the Hill by way of Highmoor', how between the wars Harold and Jack arranged annual end of season matches between Saddleworth representative sides and Yorkshire elevens at Greenfield.

The first time was in 1923 as a benefit match for a Greenfield player Herbert Halliwell who had been badly injured whilst batting. Happily Halliwell made a better recovery than expected but the day – which featured both Yorkshire and Lancashire players - was such a success that it was repeated the following year with a Yorkshire eleven as visitors and thereafter became an annual end of season occasion which attracted thousands of Saddleworth people to see the famous Yorkshire cricketers of the time.

The Tanners hosted the occasions and Roger recalled how his mother worried about catering for so many people at their house, grand though it was. She need not have worried for her planning was always successful and Yorkshire players returned year after year offering their thanks to the Tanners for their excellent hospitality. Roger was a shy boy and did not have the confidence to talk to any of the cricketers and only remembers walking in between them in the family home. He did recall that Percy Holmes once walked the ten miles over the top from the Holmfirth area where he lived to make sure he was part of the day. Roger also told me that the family used to holiday at Herne Bay in Kent at a property owned by George Macaulay. The Tanners interest in sport incidentally was not solely confined to cricket for Roger recalled that the family had seats at Huddersfield Town who were a leading club between the wars.

Roger explained that he was not a natural cricketer himself but turned out for Greenfield if they were short of players. He recalled being especially useful to the team when they made the arduous trip up the valley to Friarmere by taking many of the side in his Talbot Darracq. Before motoring became common place the side would have had to take the Delph 'Donkey' train from Greenfield to Delph and walk the arduous way up the hill with their kit. The Friarmere club was of course that of J.L.Byram, another local cotton mill owner who made a reputation in Yorkshire cricket, building twelve cottages at the foot of the ground - which Roger reminded me were reputed to be for his players and a scorer! Byram died in 1932 but Roger recalls his widow.

Roger explained that his first love is music followed by travel. He learned the piano at prep school in Harrogate and then at Uppingham School in Rutland though he did not like the strict regime at Uppingham. However, he thoroughly enjoyed his time at his next educational establishment, the London School of Music, but this experience was curtailed by the war and his mother's natural wish to save him from the Blitz. She 'persuaded' him to come home by failing to send the weekly cheque for his rent!

Roger served in the war and afterwards took over managing the family business so that music became a hobby, Michael Hall recalling Roger playing the harpsichord for a local rendition of the Messiah. It must not have been possible to play the annual Yorkshire matches at Greenfield after the war but Harold maintained the family link with Yorkshire cricket by serving on the county committee as the member for Huddersfield and district from 1946 until his death in 1952.

Roger worked hard to maintain the family business, which eventually specialised in making fabric for tyres, but he recounted how during the seventies competition from Turkey and China eventually and inevitably held sway. He also told me that there was only one working textile mill remaining in Saddleworth.

Yorkshire cricketers have held benefit matches in Saddleworth since the days of Harold and Jack Tanner, for in the seventies such games were held at Delph and Dobcross on behalf of Tony Nicholson, John Hampshire and Chris Old, probably due to the work of John Bacon. But Roger Tanner maintained the family's involvement and Michael Hall stated that the first time he had visited Mr. Tanner's house was for a function following a benefit match for Chris Old in 1979.

We spoke about the friendly rivalry between Yorkshire and Lancashire. Roger described it as "a bit of fun" but felt that if Saddleworth had to join a west of Pennines council then Tameside would have been better than Oldham as Ashton is more of a rising place. He is a man of the world and concluded that whatever council runs Saddleworth then it remained a lovely place to live.

But it is a great shame that thirty four years since the Chris Old benefit match, Saddleworth's links with Yorkshire cricket seem almost severed. There are some remaining Yorkshire members in the district, Michael Hall himself and a Mr. Whitehead – brother of the former Yorkshire cricketer of the forties and fifties J.P. Whitehead – but, following the council re-organisation in 1974, the local clubs and secondary school have long been in the Lancashire cricket system.

I told Mr. Tanner about my interest in Yorkshire cricket history and my sadness at this development without it seems a 'whimper' from the Yorkshire cricket authorities, (though I fully recognise that the Lancashire cricket bodies appreciate Saddleworth and are doing splendid work here.) I explained about a project I have started to try and forge fresh links between Saddleworth and Yorkshire CCC by funding annual cricket coaching at Saddleworth School from

Pro-Coach Yorkshire at Headingley in order to remind young people in the district about their Yorkshire roots.

It began before Christmas with funding from the Saddleworth White Rose Society, the Yorkshire Ridings Society and a Yorkshire cricket supporters message board the Corridor of Uncertainty. A dozen of the best players are also being invited to the Yorkshire Cricket Indoor Centre at Headingley in the spring to receive coaching and tour the ground alongside a school from another Yorkshire border area cut off from Yorkshire administration in 1974, West Craven Technical High School at Barnoldswick. The aim is make young cricketers aware that though they are part of the Lancashire cricket system, they should also be included in what I term the Yorkshire cricket 'family'.

I have in part been motivated to begin this scheme by reading about the Yorkshire matches in Saddleworth between the wars in Phillip Taylor's book which was kindly sent to me by the league secretary Trevor Harrison. Phil has found many quotes by legendary Yorkshire cricketers expressing their thanks and admiration to Harold and Jack Tanner for their organisation and hospitality. Legendary figures such as George Hirst and Wilfred Rhodes said they would come back as often as asked.

George Hirst for instance said, " They were very fortunate to have in the district, gentlemen like Mr. Harold Tanner and Mr. John E. Tanner, who had always endeavoured to make cricket the best game in the world and encourage it in the way they did, and local cricket owed a great deal to these gentlemen " . Wilfred Rhodes commented, 'how glad they always were to come to Greenfield', a thought echoed by Maurice Leyland.

This moved me and I have wanted to play a part in Yorkshire returning to Saddleworth in some way. I told Roger about the project and the idea greatly pleased him. Indeed this great sponsor of the arts immediately wrote out a cheque to help fund further coaching and I was thrilled to be playing a part in the Tanner family continuing their support for and connection with Yorkshire cricket.

SWRS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership Subscriptions are / were due on.....**1st November**

Individual member: £5.00

Family member: £8.00

Please send remittance to the Treasurer:-

Mr M Hall,
6, Bridgefield Close,
Springhead,
Saddleworth,
Yorkshire (W.R.)
OL4 4PD

Remittance form for SWRS Subs.

Name.....

Address.....

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E-mail.....