

## Chapter Two: Local Difficulties

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries destitution was an ever-present threat; violently oscillating trade cycles meant that even wealthy manufacturers could end their days in a workhouse. There was no real security during the early industrial period. In response to this situation, Friendly Societies were set up to provide some form of insurance in the event of sickness or unexpected death. One of these was the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society, which had already been established by 1/1/1799. In exchange for 2/- paid in by each member per quarter, each would receive 7/- weekly if unable to work in the case of illness or injury. An entry book recorded the rules of this Society and according to Wood p.56; they indicated that drunkenness was something of a problem.

### “KILDWICK PARISH FRIENDLY SOCIETY

January 1st 1799

#### Rules

1. Every member to pay 2/- quarterly into the box, besides the allowance for a pint of ale.
2. Any members sick or lame or otherwise indisposed so as to render him unfit to work shall receive 7/- weekly.
3. When a member shall depart this life there shall be paid the sum of 5gns (Guineas) out of the box to defray expenses of the funeral
4. After payment for 12 months to any member, his pay will then be only 5/- per week
5. Any member refusing to conform to the rules shall forfeit 6d to the box
6. Any member joining the procession in a state of intoxication or behaving disorderly or absent from Divine Service shall forfeit 1/- to the box
7. The Master and Stewards to lead the procession, the rest of the members to follow two abreast, each furnished with a sprig of green oak.”

## Chapter Six: The Forgotten Mill

Near the beginning of recorded Smith history there once stood a mill with a very chequered history. Originally built by the Shackleton family in 1795, it was sited adjacent to a fast flowing stream, hemmed in by steep valley sides. It was constructed out of pale sandstone cut from a nearby quarry further upstream. The beautiful pale colour would later turn to a black sooty hue due to industrial pollution and the passage of years. However, when first built it had blended in well in with the protective canopy of surrounding woodland. The mill buildings had once formed a three-sided courtyard at the apex of, which stood a long weaving shed housing the looms. The installation of power looms in 1838 would have turned this building into a noisy chapel of nineteenth century industry – serving the god ‘mammon.’ This god would be merciless in demanding a never-ending sacrifice of human labour. As in any chapel the people would be organised into neatly regimented rows, with the deafening clatter of machines forming the only hymn in that place. By the mid-1830s the usurping ‘prince wool’ would have displaced ‘old king cotton’ as the main item of production. Crowning this weaving shed was a roof consisting of four long parallel, upturned ‘v’ shaped ridges. The eastward slope of each ridge held a shimmering array of co-joined panelled skylights through which whatever sun there was would shine. Inside the shed whitewashed walls would lend a sepulchre effect amongst the machinery, which itself was firmly anchored to the granite-like stone floor. The workaday noise would have been all the more deafening within this enclosed space. In the early days a man-made waterfall would have set a water wheel in endless motion. Only in later decades would an attempt be made to use steam power to replace the waterpower freely given by the natural surroundings. Sticking like two square carbuncles out from the right side of the weaving shed were two brick cabins where the workers would have found relief for their natural wants.

Aloof on the top floor and separated from the workplace were the offices where endless paper work was once completed on slab-like wooden tables with ornately carved legs. These legs possessed a swollen appearance as if they were afflicted with some form of dropsy. Receipts, orders, invoices, and bills would have been impaled upon metal spikes (separating each type of documentation.) Large account books will have had pride of place at a head table presided over by the Mill Owner or whoever was deputising for him. Most clerks would have been expected to work a minimum of twelve hours per day. At night they would have to crouch over poorly written documents by candlelight. Oil lamps would only have been introduced at a later stage in the Mill’s history. Just how many clerks it took to order all of the paperwork could only be guessed at.

Stretching away from the weaving shed were two outstretched arms of outbuildings. These would have contained bales of wool and spare pieces of equipment. From the outbuilding to the right a metal hoist jutted out into the air at a forty-five degree angle. The attached rope and hook would have dropped bales onto a wagon, which would then be pulled by horses or mules up the precipitous valley side. To the right of this warehouse stood a fortress-like caretaker’s house and from its vicinity the baying of guard dogs would have echoed out into the night, deterring all but the boldest of intruders. However, it would have fallen to the left row of buildings to effectively block out any remaining sunlight shimmering through the

surrounding trees and so most of the inner courtyard would have been condemned to dwell in perpetual shadow.

Standing to the right of the courtyard was the finishing warehouse where the dying took place. It was here that the mysteries of textile processing reached their gaudy consummation. Woollen cloth goods were then made ready for dispatch to an army of downtrodden seamstresses who would sew them into the attire that the public required.

Escape from the mill came only through a rutted and well-worn path that writhed up the valley side like a grey snake slithering out of its hole. Unlike the densely wooded valley bottom, the valley side was clad only in a thin mantle of struggling green grass. Here and there a forlorn tree gave its bleak protest to the hostile elements. In spring and autumn pack animals would have had to struggle through slippery mud and in winter through ice and snow. Once at the top they would deposit their loads into a huge towering square warehouse at Laycock. Another creaking system of hoists and pulleys would have pulled each bale up to the top floor through an oblong entrance lying to the right of the building. Once safely stored, the cloth would later be distributed to markets in Keighley, Bradford, Halifax or possibly more distant Lancashire.

In these workplaces were crowded a menagerie of destinies. There would have been the mute despair of orphans having been transported from the South of England to work as near-slaves on the new machines. They would have mingled with the adult workers some of who would long to spend a penny or two at the nearest drinking shop. Ruling over them with a rough authority would be the overseers, but even the most sharp-tongued of these men would have had to respect a skilled engineer whose presence was necessary to keep the machines running. The factory floor would have had its own pecking order, as would the office where junior clerks would have shown deference to more senior clerks, who in turn would have at least made pretence of showing absolute deference to the owner of the Mill. From 1837 until 1853, the owner of that mill was a John Smith of Laycock, (not the John Smith of Sutton, who was Edmund's father).

Family tradition threw extra light upon the social status of the early Smiths. One branch of the family was reputed to have owned a textile mill near Keighley, possibly known at one point as 'Smith and Redman Mill' and located near to a stream. Research conducted in July 2000 did appear to confirm the family legend of a mill. As an incidental detail, it was worth noting that Hodgson p.184 recorded a Joseph Redman operating in the capacity of "worsted inspector for Keighley." Whilst holding this responsible position, he was much feared by those engaged in 'sharp practices.' His office suggested that he had held a previous position of responsibility in the woollen trade. At the very least here was a Redman having strong links with the textile trade. In addition, the monumental inscriptions for Kildwick Parish Church confirmed the presence of a Smith Redman of Farnhill who had died on January 5th 1916 aged 74. (These inscriptions also showed that the Redmans were associated with Crosshills where many Smiths were present.) This combination of names powerfully suggested that in 1843 the two families had been already united in marriage. This fact lent further credibility to the story of a mill in the

Smith family, once known as ‘Smith and Redman Mill.’ During the nineteenth century, marital alliances often cemented business associations between families. During that era, money and love often went together.

The discovery of the old Smith Mill ranks as one of the most important ‘finds’ made in this Family History. It confirmed the above-mentioned oral tradition that there had once been ‘a Textile Mill’ in the family. This particular tradition held a few clues namely that: -

1. The mill was sited near Keighley
2. It was a textile mill that possibly specialised in worsted goods
3. It was located beside a stream
4. An uncle of Edmund had lost an arm in the mill machinery
5. There was possibly some connection with Colne in Lancashire.
6. It might have been known as ‘Smith and Redman Mill.’

As I began looking up Trade Directories in early July 2000 the main challenge was to find a Mill that fitted most closely to the above clues. With ‘Smith’ being a common name, I was all too aware that it would be fatally easy to find the wrong Mill. Trade Directories for the period 1830–1855 brought to light the following information: -

In 1830 there was a William Smith of Bank Place, ‘wool and stuff manufacturer’ and Robert Smith, Exley Head who was engaged in the same trade.

In 1837 through until 1853 there was a Robert Smith, Exley Head and John Smith of Laycock, ‘worsted spinner and manufacturer.’ (From 1841, he was registered as John Smith, Woodmill, ‘worsted spinner and manufacturer.’)

By 1855, Woodmill had passed into the ownership of Henry Waddington.

Old Ordinance Survey maps confirmed that Bank Place was near the centre of Keighley and not sited near any valley. The same applied to Robert Smith’s business in Exley Head, which was subsequently found to be on a small promontory of land as far from any stream as it was possible to be in Keighley. Woodmill seemed to be the better alternative, being separated from Sutton by a ridge at a distance of only about two and a half miles. It would have been possible for any relative to get to work – especially if they lived at Ellers, which was on the Keighley Road that passed through Laycock. However, they would have faced a very steep climb up from Ellers before the ridge gently undulated to Laycock. (Whether Edmund himself enjoyed a connection with the site could not be substantiated.) Hodgson provided another telling clue by confirming that new power looms had been installed at Woodmill in 1838. The labour

force would have been unused to the new equipment, the installation of which would have made any accidents all the more likely. Edmund's Uncle may have lost his arm around that period or shortly after it, leaving an especially vivid memory in the mind of a child (aged 6 to 9) and a striking talking point in his family.

Since its construction for cotton production in 1795 by the "gentleman farmer" John Shackleton, Woodmill had passed through various owners until its purchase by John Smith in 1837 – the year of Queen Victoria's accession.

The previous owners had been: -

1. Richard Robinson (at the Mill spinning worsted yarn and manufacturing stuff pieces from around 1810 until 1826) and John Rishworth (at the Mill also spinning worsted yarn from 1814-1832.) Both men will have shared the premises from 1814 until 1826.
2. Thomas Waterhouse (at the Mill spinning worsted yarn from 1832-1835) and his son-in-law John Midgley who was the chief mechanic and general manager.

A possible stain on the Mill's history was the employment of orphans who were sent up from the South of England in 1802. These hapless children were a very cheap source of labour from parishes that would have been glad to get rid of them in order to reduce costs. As a business, Woodmill followed a very typical local pattern of moving from cotton to woollen manufacture during the early part of the nineteenth century.

Sometimes Hodgson gave a glimpse into the working practices of these mill owners. On p.144 he recorded how Benjamin Rishworth (the son of John Rishworth) "was in the habit when only ten years old, of carrying the cash for wages from Fell Lane, through Holme House Wood to the Woodmill, sometimes at ten o'clock at night." These wages were for the large number of weavers employed by John Rishworth. Anyone seeing the difficult terrain surrounding the mill would soon realise that it was not one to send a child over - least of all at the dead of night with a bag full of wages!

The detailed description of John Smith himself on pp. 99-100 caused Hodgson to be a particularly informative source. The following is a direct quote. "He was very kind and social in his disposition, and withal, one of the greatest wits it has ever been our privilege to meet with. We have frequently heard merchants and other businessmen in Bradford try their hand with him in a good humoured way, when they always meet with a smart reply, and many times we have heard Jacob Berhens try to floor him but he invariably came off second best. He was a member of the Methodist Society at Laycock, and was very useful in promoting the interests of religion and education in his own immediate neighbourhood, and, although he left the bulk of his property at his decease, (which took place in 1861) to his only surviving child Mr John William Smith, now of Colne. Yet he did not forget the necessities of his own native village, but by a will left a large sum of money to Laycock Day School, which has been laid out in building a dwelling house for the schoolmaster."

The opening sentence of this quotation was especially amazing because it could

have been a word for word description of my own father. Written here were my father's attributes of sociability, sharp business sense, self-sufficient industry, and passion for education – not to say his keen interest in religious matters. Strongly present were five major personality traits still in evidence in the Smith family to this day. Also of interest was the link with Colne through his son, John William Smith (whose name was identical to that of Edmund's third son who did not survive infancy.) Overall, there did seem to be a distant family connection between John Smith of Laycock and my Great Grandfather – the son of John Smith of Sutton. Exactly what this link consisted of was impossible to find. It appears that the Smiths of Laycock were wealthier than the Smiths of Sutton. If this was the case then John Smith of Laycock may well have employed some of his poorer relations to be mill operatives. Such a practice was not unknown in Victorian times.

From Hodgson pp. 97-99 it was also discovered that John Smith of Laycock: -

1. Was "The son of a Jonas Smith, a small farmer residing at Brogden near Laycock."
2. Began work as a handloom weaver in his teens
3. At the age of 21 "he commenced business as a dealer in drapery goods, travelling as far as Lancaster, Poulton, Grange, Silverdale and Milthorp."
4. After saving £50-£60 "he commenced the business of a piece maker in a very humble way; ... and employed about three weavers beside himself."
5. "In 1828 he began to employ hand combers, buying his wool in Bradford market."
6. "About the year 1837 he took the Woodmill, near Laycock, where he spun his own yarns. He had his warehouse in Laycock where he stored his goods, sorted his wool and delivered out work to combers and weavers "About 1838 he introduced power looms into his mill, at the same time continuing to employ hand loom weavers."
7. "About the year 1840 he commenced making Orleans cloth, but the class of goods he made were 6qr (quarter). Merinos [wool], which he generally sold to Jacob Berhens."
8. "Never employed more than 200 work people at one time."
9. Retired "in very comfortable circumstances" in 1853.

According to Hodgson p. 99, John Smith's retirement took place in somewhat turbulent circumstances. These showed that the mill was failing to gain 'economies of scale,' (meaning a reduction in running costs caused by an increase in size). Larger competitors such as Bairstows in Sutton were outperforming it. By 1853, John Smith "was very much perplexed in consequence of the competition of several manufacturers who were making the same class of goods and selling them to the same merchants, but who could take a less price for their goods, because they had introduced into their mills the two loom system, that is one weaver minding two looms instead of one. Mr Smith attempted to introduce this new system at his business at

Woodmill, which was resisted on the part of the work people, in consequence of which, and in consideration of his failing years and failing health he determined to give up his business.” Perhaps by then John Smith was in his sixties.

One characteristic of the man was his capacity for hard work. Another was his ability to set up business in an area where there was a growing demand. In the 1820s, John Smith “sent his pieces to Bradford with a neighbouring manufacturer who kept a horse and a cart. As he was an early riser he would be in his loom, even on a market day, by four o’clock in the morning, and weave till eight. He would then eat a frugal breakfast and afterwards walk to Bradford, sell his goods, buy his warps and wefts and occasionally a small bale of sizing. He would then eat parkin or a little bread or butter, to which he would add a glass of beer and walk home again, both journeys being a distance of 24 miles. After partaking of some refreshment, he would go to his loom and weave three or four hours.” My own calculation was that these activities would have required a sixteen to eighteen hour working day! A review of a road map confirmed that the distance to the centre of Bradford was in the order of 12 miles – hence the distance quoted by Hodgson was a total distance travelled. Other days may have been quieter but not by much. Clearly, John Smith of Laycock was a man who was motivated to work well beyond the point of covering his own basic needs. Behind the somewhat idealistic account of Hodgson p. 98 was the picture of a man doggedly determined to succeed in his business. He displayed the typical Smith characteristic of unrelenting determination.

A monumental inscription on a grave outside Laycock Methodist Chapel suggested that before his death in 1861, John Smith might have married twice – the second time to a considerably younger woman. The inscription was for a Sarah Smith, widow of John Smith. She had died on the 23rd November 1881 at the age of 60 – twenty years after her husband.

Two visits were made to the old Smiths Mill, (Woodmill) the first on Friday, July 21st, and the second on Saturday, July 29th 2000 (this time accompanied by my wife.) The present owner of the premises had a keen interest in local history and was most helpful in providing further information ~ which included old photographs of the mill dating back to the late 1960s before any modern alterations had been made. Without those photographs a reconstruction of the original design of the mill would have been impossible. Perhaps the most striking feature was the remoteness of the location. Lying at the bottom of a very steep-sided valley, beside a small and frequently dammed stream, the only way down to it was along a stony rutted path, which twisted back on itself. Still in evidence were the remains of the site of a very old water wheel. Again, thanks to the kind permission of the owner photographs were taken of the general site and surroundings – but it was agreed that these should not be distributed on a public basis.

Compared to other mills in the area, this mill would have been of a modest size. This meant that it would not have been able to enjoy the reduction in costs, which were to benefit its larger competitors. This probably explained why it changed hands so frequently in the nineteenth century. Like many mills in the Keighley area it had moved through the stages of agricultural, cotton and worsted production before finally being left in a redundant condition.

Further insight was obtained about the ordeal about the ordeal of any worker loosing a limb in a machine accident whilst working at the mill. Following this horrific accident a tourniquet will have been tightened around what had remained of his arm to stop the bleeding. He would then have faced a dreadful journey in a rickety wagon up the valley side. It was to be hoped that he was either unconscious or numbed by the shock to take much notice. Having eventually reached the main highway it would then have been downhill to the nearby Royal Victoria Hospital. All of the travelling will have taken anything from an hour to two hours depending upon the weather conditions at the time. Surgeons in bloodstained frock coats would have either sawn off what was left off the arm or sewn up the stump – all without the aid of an anaesthetic. By then any numbness may have begun to wear off. If Edmund's uncle did survive such an ordeal then he must have been an extraordinarily strong man. Unfortunately, written records of the now closed Royal Victoria only dated back to 1894. Nevertheless, there remained the possibility that his ordeal may have been preserved in privately written records kept by the surgeon himself. However, enquiries made at Keighley Library indicated that these records too had long since been lost.

Before closing this examination into the Woodmill it is worth recalling that its discovery and subsequent research involved both a process of elimination and identification. In the former process, mills which did not have the characteristics identified by family tradition were eliminated from enquiries, whilst in the latter a reasonably certain identification could be made because the mill concerned did possess four of the six characteristics pinpointed by family tradition. (The remaining two characteristics were neither proved nor disproved.) Nevertheless, one could still only talk about a strong balance of probability rather than absolute certainty. All of the combined evidence of Trade Directories, Hodgson and family tradition has shown that a particular mill near Keighley was owned by a John Smith and that strong circumstantial evidence pointed to him having some business or distant blood connection with Edmund's own family. The close proximity of this mill to Sutton and the very typical 'Smithian' characteristics of its early Victorian owner, John Smith, reinforced the likelihood of there being some sort of connection. However, to go further by asserting that there definitely was a connection would risk making an over-dogmatic assertion. The only thing to be dogmatic about was that the mill itself was a product of the industrial world into which my Great Grandfather had been born. It also showed that this world differed in so many ways from the more rural background, which was to shape the character of Edmund Smith's first two wives - Helen Hastings and Rosamond Stamford (my Great Grandmother).



## Chapter Five: Mayhem in Skipton

After discovering the facts mentioned in the previous chapter, the next logical step was to check the identity of the John and Ann Smith who had moved to Skipton. Only then would it be possible to ascertain whether they had characteristics matching those of my Great, Great Grandparents. As Skipton was a large market town with an old Norman Castle at its centre, it was decided to begin with the district nearest the mill bridge, as this was the locality most likely to possess a Corn Mill. Consequently, much of the afternoon of Friday 22nd June 2001 was spent running through reels of microfiche looking at the 1841 and 1851 Census Return for Skipton in Leeds Central Library. Only after examining five districts did the decisive piece of evidence slide into view. The time and trouble had been worthwhile – the characteristics did match - indeed they matched perfectly. After over nine months pursuing the wrong John and Anne Smith, I had at last found the right ones. My own true family roots had been uncovered. The extent to which this had been accomplished was revealed in the following Census information for Skipton-in-Craven: -

1841 Census Return for Greenside, (a yard adjoining the south side of New Market Street, below number 38)

1851 Census Return, (for the twenty third house along the north side of New Market Street)

John Smith aged 36 “Miller”

Samuel Smith aged 24 “Corn Miller” ~ born in Keighley

Ann Smith aged 38

Ann Smith (wife) aged 27 ” ~ born in Skipton

Samuel Smith aged 14

William Smith (son) aged 3 ~ born in Skipton

Susanna Smith aged 12

Daniel Smith (brother) aged 16 “Pupil-Teacher” ~ born in Bingley

Edmund Smith aged 9

Hannah Smith (sister) aged 9 “at home” ~ born in Skipton

Daniel Smith aged 7

John Smith (brother) aged 7 “Scholar” ~ born in Skipton

Ann Smith aged 2

Martha Emmott (sister-in-law) aged 22 ~ born in Skipton

Mary Emmott (niece) aged 9 months

Notes provided by Skipton Reference Library were the source of the bracketed information in the title row - they were not on the original Census Returns. Reference to an 1852 map of Skipton suggested that, when living in one of the five dwellings at Greenside (near the shallow Eller Beck), the Smiths might have inhabited a corner house just behind some outdoor privies. The next house up from there was no 36/38 New Market Street, where a family of Cotton Spinners called the Vines had lived, (possibly along with another family). The smell from the privies in the summer must have been dreadful. The 1851 Census appeared to show a marked decline in living conditions in Greenside because fourteen families were now crowded into one block, whereas a decade previously it had held only five. The occupations followed by members of these households also appeared to be of a lower socio-economic status. A newspaper cutting in Skipton Museum showed that slum conditions had continued until its demolition in 1958 - the wry comment being made that “a more unsuitable name for those squalid houses could hardly have been devised.”

Various Trade Directories showed the only significant Corn Mill being sited at Mill Bridge, near the High Street – about ten minutes brisk walk from Greenside. Known as High Corn Mill, it had been used for corn milling purposes since at least 1310 when tenants of the castle paid had for its use. The actual mill building still stands, (John Smith will have known it) and will be described later in this chapter. During the 1840s a Thomas and then a John King (both listed as Corn Merchants) had first owned it. Whether they were father and son or brothers was not clear.

First hand observation of both photographic and site evidence (during a second visit made to

Skipton on a sultry Wednesday, June 27th 2001) confirmed that the move from the crowded conditions at Greenside to the more substantial property at 23 New Market Street represented ‘a step up in the world.’ It was evident that the Smiths had prospered. This dwelling had originally been an armoury in the seventeenth century but the first private owners had already moved in by the 1690s. In 1811 a landlord called John Preston had purchased the property. During the 1850s he or his legal representatives were still renting it out to respectable tradesmen. Notes provided by Skipton Reference Library showed that Samuel Smith lived at No. 23 until 1858. The tenants after him were a Peter and William Smith, (a handyman). Whether they were related to Samuel is unknown.

The 1851 census implied that Edmund’s family was at that time devastated by the loss of both parents John and Ann Smith. When Edmund was still in his teens they appear to have died at a fairly young age, leaving Samuel to shoulder the burden of ‘family head.’ Throughout this period of mourning, and with burial costs to pay there must have been immense financial pressure and Edmund would have had no alternative but to have taken up a trade as soon as he was able. This would account for his absence from Samuel Smith’s crowded household, recorded in the 1851 Census. About three doors down, on the other side of the road, was a Benjamin Smith whom the 1841 Census had recorded as being a “Worsted Manufacturer’s Agent,” living in Crosshills. The 1851 Census revealed the following details about himself and his family.

Benjamin Smith aged 46 “Wool Dealer” ~ born in Sutton

Anne Smith aged 46 (wife) ~ born in Kettlewell

Catherine Smith aged 12 (daughter) ~ born in Glasburn

Sarah Anne Smith aged 11 (daughter) ~ born in Glasburn

Emma Robinson aged 25 (sister-in-law) “Commercial Traveller’s wife” ~ born in Cambridge, Ely

Elizabeth Smith aged 39 (unmarried sister) ~ born in Sutton

Records from the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society suggested that his move to Skipton had occurred in 1844. It seemed apparent that Benjamin was a family relation of Edmund, that he was in the wool trade and that he employed at least one Commercial Traveller – the same occupation Edmund was to follow. When taken in combination with his near next-door location such facts lend substance to the view that Benjamin Smith was Edmund’s first employer and perhaps gave him his first major opportunity in life. Edmund’s involvement in the textile trade perhaps began in about 1845 and was to remain in the family until my father’s own retirement in 1976. (Not a bad ‘innings’ – given the extreme volatility of the textile industry.) Possibly Benjamin Smith’s move to Skipton had been prompted by a desire to help Edmund’s family at a time of crisis. At first this was thought to be the death of Ann whilst giving birth to John in 1843, however John’s birth certificate implied that she had survived this particular ordeal.

Despite its market town appearance Skipton could not avoid the disrupting process of industrialisation. Like other settlements associated with my forbears, Appendix Five showed a dramatic increase in population, over the period of 1801 until 1851. With the aid of information provided by both Skipton Museum and the Museum of Science and Technology at Manchester a simple chronological outline will show the main developments of Skipton's partial industrialisation:

1785: High Mill becomes the first major Cotton Mill in Skipton

1822: The Baines Trade Directory lists five Cotton Manufacturers including:

- William Beesley, Spencer Street
- Isaac Dewhirst, New Market Street
- William Sidgwick, Mill Place
- John Tillotson, Belmont
- Storey Walkinson, New Market Street

1829: Power looms are introduced to Skipton by the firm of Dewhirst

1831: Dewhirst's first mill is rebuilt following a fire. It changes from worsted to cotton manufacturing

1835: Baines ' History of Cotton Manufacture ' records the presence of six mills in Skipton, employing a total of 605 people.

1840: Sidgwicks begin to operate Low Mill in order to weave 'and weft' more cloth

1842: A serious economic downturn provokes mill owners in Manchester to cut the wages of their operatives. This provokes strike action and disturbances, which spread to other areas of Lancashire and then onwards to Skipton. In that year the Chartist Movement is at the peak of its activity, campaigning for the implementation of the following Six Points of "The Peoples Charter:

1. A VOTE for every man twenty-one years of age, of sound mind, and not undergoing punishment for crime.
2. THE BALLOT- To protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
3. NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION for Members of Parliament – thus enabling the constituencies to return the man of their choice, be he rich or poor.
4. PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other

person, to serve a constituency when taken from his business to attend the interests of the country.

5. EQUAL CONSTITUENCIES, securing the same amount of representation for the same number of electors, instead of allowing small constituencies to swamp the votes of large ones.

6. ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS, thus presenting the most effectual check to bribery and intimidation, since though a constituency might be bought once in seven years (even with the ballot), no purse could buy a constituency (under a system of universal suffrage) in each ensuing twelvemonth; and since members, when elected for a year only, would not be able to defy and betray their constituencies as they do now.”

The Chartist Movement originated from a sense of disillusion with the perceived inadequacies of the 1832 Parliamentary Reform Act whose failure to enfranchise the working classes was deeply resented – as was the much hated Poor Law Act of 1834. Its formal foundation can be dated to January 1837 when the People’s Charter was drawn up – although in reality this charter only drew upon radical political ideas, which had been present since the 1790s. During ‘bad’ years like 1839, 1842 and 1848 the Chartist Movement would tend to draw mass support from those whose grievances were of a more decidedly economic nature – thus disturbances were often labelled Chartist even their cause was more overtly economic than political in nature. (Israel Roberts on pp.13-14 of his highly moving autobiography attributed the Plug Riots, which also affected Leeds, to Chartist agitation.) Over the course of the next several decades the first five demands of the Chartist Movement were eventually met, whilst Chartist leaders themselves quietly abandoned the sixth demand for reasons of practicality. In the short term however, the movement was a failure, being beset by scandal and leadership infighting. With improved trading conditions in the 1850s, support for the Chartist cause ebbed and by 1855 the movement had effectively ceased to exist.

Nevertheless, the agitation sometimes associated with the Chartist Movement did produce its casualties. During my last major archive visit to Colne on Thursday July 26th 2001 I came across the following highly moving inscription inside the municipal cemetery.

“HERE

Lieth all that is mortal, of

Martha, wife of John Halsted,

Of Colne, who departed this

Life the 18th day of December,

1829 Age 60 years.

Also of JOSEPH their Son, who was

Barbarously murdered in the 44th year

Of his age while engaged in his duty as

A special constable, during the Riot,

Which took place in the Town, on the

Evening of the 10th August 1840, leaving

Four orphan children to lament

Their loss

Also the above JOHN

HALSTED who died April 5th 1848.”

Like most tomb inscriptions, the words were in block lettering. However, those I have d had been placed in Italics as if the designer of this inscription wanted to make a point for future generations to ponder upon. After recording this inscription I was left wondering about the fates of the four orphans who were left behind.

On Friday, 11th July 2003 I received the death following death certificate from the Burnley Registrar Office; it threw light on the violent way in which Joseph Halstead died.

Registration District Colne

1840 Death in the sub-district of Colne in the Lancaster

1

2

3

3

4

5

6

7

8

When and where died

Name and Surname

Sex

Age

Occupation

Cause of death

Signature, description, and residence of Informant

When registered

Signature of Registrar

1840

August Tenth Colne

Joseph Halstead

Male

Forty Three

Years

Cotton Spinner and Cotton Manufacturer

A blow from an iron rail wilful murder

R. Hargreaves Coroner Blackburn

Fourteenth August 1840

John Conyers

With incidents like these it's easy how the Chartists discredited what in many ways was a just cause. The above information helped to confirm the presence of a highly violent element within early Victorian society. About two years after the murder of Joseph Halsted my Great, Great Grandparents would be caught up in this violence.

What neither Census Returns, nor the statistical information tabulated in Appendix Five could convey was a feeling what daily life was like in Skipton. What were the sights and sound's to be seen and heard there? (From a review of occupations it could be readily deduced that the wealthier and more respectable families lived in those houses facing the main street, whilst the poorer families would be crowded into the tumbledown backyards of places such as Greenside. Therefore, to move from a yard cottage to a main street house was a sign of rising prosperity.) Fortuitously, making up for this lack was a print of about 1840 made by the local born artist Richard Waller (1811-82), and entitled "A view of Skipton-in-Craven." (Earlier prints of 1830 showed sheep being driven up the High Street in the general direction of Holy Trinity Church.) Copies of the print were found in Rowley (1969) and Hatfield (1991) – the latter source giving a very helpful commentary of the specific names and occupations of the people in the print. This, along with a picture of High Corn Mill in Walter (1991) p.44 provided a basis for the following historical reconstruction: -



As my Great, Great Grandfather John Smith hurried his way up the heavily rutted High Street to his place of work at the Corn Mill he passed by a mixed assortment of buildings. Some were a grand three stories high, whilst others, of a meaner cottage-like appearance, could muster only two. At the very end of the street was a tollbooth with a 'birdcage' belfry to the left of which and breaking into the horizon was the imposing medieval tower of Holy Trinity Church.

In the foreground John Smith observed a party of half a dozen men working round a covered wagon in the heavily rutted road. They were busy loading up wooden crates. A plump man in a country smock received a tankard of ale from a small boy in a peaked cap. The men had long sideboards and were stripped down to their shirtsleeves. None of them appeared to be suffering from any form of hunger. Standing patiently beside the cart and looking away from one another were two horses – one dark and one white. Further behind the wagon were two carts at right angles to one another. Around these were five other labourers - this time wearing smocks and country caps. It was clear that the commerce of Skipton was heavily dependent upon a rural clientele.

Going on and further to his left John walked by a dark coloured horse tethered to a pavement post. High up and poised steadily on a ladder repairing brickwork to his shop was Sammy Lister, with a man below him on the ground his back turned to John, holding the ladder steady. Further down from another two men in cloth caps and waistcoats was the stout red-faced Cobbler and ex Chartist Jack Hudson. A workman near him was kneeling down evidently trying to pick something up. Still on the left side of the street was a taller building belonging to the stonemason Joshua Crossley. On the adjoining Sheepscar Street side of the building was the beer house, known locally as Hell's Kitchen. Further down the left side of the street John could glimpse steam rising from the flagstone pavement and he guessed that the Cooper, Tubber Scott was at work. His habit of actually working out on the street had caused such public complaints, which had eventually led to court action in 1831. Nevertheless, with true Yorkshire stubbornness Tubber had carried on regardless and as a consequence was not a well-liked man. He gave no thought to the needs of others. Still further up was the saddler's shop run by Frank Wade. Dividing the High Street into two was the tollbooth, with stairs leading up to the courthouse where inquests were held. Sharing the ground floor of the tollbooth were the premises of John Cork the barber and George Hird the umbrella mender. Cells were located in the basement of the building, conveniently near to the Fountain Inn. Hardly surprisingly, the cells were the next port of call for some of its clientele. Near the top of the left side of the street were the premises of another saddler, (named Richard Proctor) and the well-known ironmongers Manby's, which first began to trade in 1817.

The first building on the right hand side of the High Street belonged to a shoemaker, a cousin of Edwin Calvert, now buried immediately outside Christ Church. Standing in front of the doorway and ringing a bell was the parish beadle Andrew Parker. His blue robes and old-fashioned tri-corn hat added to the dignity of this upright silver haired figure. It was easy to imagine him ringing the bell very loudly in order to attract attention to an important notice. He looked the sort of man who would have been very proud of his office. A little further down,

wearing a white apron and cap and standing outside the doorway was Jinny Wharton, wife of the landlord of the Wheatsheaf Inn. The next two shops belonged to John Briggs the clockmaker and Mary Buck a linen draper. Waiting outside the drapers was the open carriage and horse of Miss Currer of Eston Hall. Her servant stood alongside the brown horse, waiting for his mistress to finish her shopping. He probably longed for a tippie at the Hole in the Wall Inn, near the drapers. A two-storey building of a particular hue belonged to William Young, the draper and silk merchant. His immediate neighbour was the hatter's shop belonging to Hannah Thompson and next door but one was the imposing financial building of the Craven Bank, facing the Market Cross. Continuing in an unbroken line were other shops including John Hurtley the chandlers and the wine and spirits shop of Birtwhistle and Mitchell.

Just before reaching Holy Trinity, John Smith turned left and walked down toward the Springs Canal. This waterway would often be crowded with barges and other forms of canal transport. He would have seen the three storey tall High Corn Mill standing to the left of the canal, separated from it only by a narrow dirt path. A wooden, hut like structure jutted out from the top of the wall, above the canal side path. This allowed for the lifting of goods directly to and from the waiting barges. Running near this grey and impressive building was a fast flowing stream, which powered the large slowly spinning waterwheel, itself reaching as high as the second storey. Finally, John entered the building at the entrance by the canal side in order to begin yet another hard days work.

My own second visit made to Skipton on Wednesday June 27th 2001, showed that the mill building was still in active use for commercial purposes. It looked very impressive, and although in a decayed condition, the waterwheel was still in place. Who knows, John may, at times have been on hand to repair it whenever the need arose? However, the present water wheel is the second and smaller of the two known to have been run by this mill. Exactly when the first went out of use and was replaced by the smaller one is not known. My wife and I took photographs were taken of this site during a third visit to Skipton made on Saturday, July 14th 2001.

When the Smiths were first settling down at Skipton during the early 1840s, many textile weavers such as the two John Smiths of Sutton were, at this time, being faced with starvation. Wood p.36 showed that during 1820 a handloom weaver could earn 6/- for a 30-yard piece of cloth, representing a week's work. In 1840 the figure was down to the starvation rate of 2/-. Nor could the manufacturers afford to pay any more as they were only making 1d for every piece of cloth sold. Even if a weaver had worked a flat out 90-hour week he would at the most have earned only 3/- half of which will have gone on the rent for a cheap back-to-back house, with very little left over for basic necessities. Larger families were often faced with the choice of starvation or the dreaded workhouse at Keighley.

According to Israel Roberts p.20, wheat bread and bacon in this period were rarely indulged in luxuries whilst the diet of the poor consisted of oat meal in porridge, cake with potatoes and corn bread, which was often hard as stone! Gin and water were often forced to drink out of black

earthenware pots because glasses were too expensive to buy. Moreover, the quality of food was often very poor. Roberts p.22 mentioned his mother recalling the time when flour was of so poor quality that when baked it would run thin and drain down the outside facing. This was in spite of the fact that it cost sixpence per pound weight. The adulteration of flour with dust and other, sometimes dangerous, additives was a very common practice – it was one that The High Corn Mill at Skipton may well have followed.

In view of these near starvation conditions it was hardly surprising that serious disturbances broke out. In Leeds the Riot Act was readout and the Mounted Hussars under the command of Prince George the Duke of Cambridge dispersed a hostile crowd. (Earlier on this crowd had been extorting up to several pounds from mill owners by threatening to let off the water from the steam boilers.) According to Roberts, p.14 one agitator in Yeadon, near Leeds boasted, “We shall have levelling some day and when we have I shall have Esholt Hall.” Individual acts of sabotage also occurred. One instance of this occurred in Sutton where one manufacturer called John Preston would later receive compensation of £72-17-0 for the expenses of power loom breaking. By August 1842, Britain was teetering on the brink of all out class war.

In angry reaction to their distress, weavers (some of who had been wondering up and down the region looking for work) produced the following rhyme: -

“What do we want? Our daily bread,

Fair reward for labour done,

All our wants are merged into one.

When the fierce fiend hunger grips us,

Evil fancies clog our brains

Vengeance settles on our hearts

And frenzy gallops through our veins’!

Possibly this or a similar rhyme was chanted by a 3,000 strong mob as they left Colne in Lancashire for Skipton in order to bring the Dewhirst and Sidgwick Textile Factories to a standstill. It must have been a frightening or perhaps exhilarating spectacle for a ten-year-old boy, seeing them in Skipton on a sweltering hot summers day armed with wooden clubs and threatening insurrection. In Edmund’s own heart the sight of these desperate men would have reinforced his conviction that poverty was a curse to be escaped from by whatever means possible. He would have seen for himself how hunger could make animals of even the mildest people. August 16th 1842 was perhaps a day he would remember for the rest of his life. Meanwhile, Edmunds father John would most likely be helping to guard the High Corn Mill against any risk of looting. Edmund himself would spend at least part of the day at home with his mother Ann who would be in great fear for the safety of her husband. She would also be terrified of receiving unwanted attentions from any intruders. Chartist mobs were known to break into

people's houses and steal things.

When combined with modern sociological analysis of crowd behaviour, local historians such as Rowley (1983) make it possible to reconstruct the precise events surrounding this riotous episode in the lives of my ancestors. The first thing to state was that this crowd was not just a spontaneous mob, but rather a well planned protest march – one designed to intimidate and bring to public attention the grievances of those suffering severe hardship after the trade depression of 1842. It was also used as an occasion to extort money and demand much needed food and provisions. A white band tied around the upper arm would distinguish the main leaders from their followers. Their chief spokesman was a William Smith who seemed able to display that 'gift of the gab' common to so many Smiths. Awaiting him in Skipton were the magistrates Matthew Wilson Senior, Matthew Wilson Junior (later Sir Matthew), Cooper Preston, James Braithwaite Garforth, Hastings Ingham and Thomas Birbeck. Forewarned of trouble they had 'sworn in' a large number of special constables in order to assist old Thomas Laycock, the Parish Constable for Skipton.

Like all mobs there was a precipitating factor, and in this case it had been a visit paid to Colne by the distressed textile operatives of Burnley. They in turn may well have been stirred by the example of the operatives in Manchester who had decided to go on strike in protest at a cut in their wages. Once in Colne, they had persuaded their equally distressed compatriots to march on to Skipton with a view to bringing the mills to a standstill. They would achieve this by pulling out the water plugs of the wagon-boilers - needed to power the factory machinery. (Hence these disturbances later became known as the 'Plug Drawing' or 'Plug Riots.')

Once this objective had been accomplished then the hope was to win over the Skipton workers, take nearby Addingham and raise the whole region in revolt. Skipton was a highly strategic location – one able to provide a very useful route from Lancashire into Yorkshire. As the local magistrates knew only too well, its loss to the rioters would cause very severe problems for the governing authorities. They were therefore determined to try and contain the disturbances at Skipton. Much would depend upon the feelings of the local population. If they strongly sympathised with the protest marchers then the town would be lost. However, one factor operating in the magistrates' favour was that Skipton was a very conservative market town with many respectable trades – people. This would deeply resent any disruption created by an outside incursion – especially by a threatening mob that had come over from Lancashire of all places!

Once in Colne, the next stage of convergence would begin with people assembling to march forward to Skipton. Contemporary accounts describe it as a terrifying sight, with men marching four abreast, each holding a club in order to intimidate and bring security against attack. Behind the men came the women and children. As the march continued along the Broughton Road, sympathisers (or those looking for trouble) would join it. On their way to Skipton acts of intimidation took place. At Barnoldswick and Easby they took the shuttles from the handloom weavers, who were almost as poor as they were, and so immobilised their looms. This act could hardly have won them much sympathy. At Aireville Grange they demanded milk from a mother with a five-year old boy. One party visited Gargrave and stopped the mills there before rejoining the main party. Such acts probably alienated would-be supporters who saw their own livelihoods being endangered. Meanwhile, there was much fear inside Skipton, Such a reaction was understandable, given the fact that as a market town with just under 5,000

inhabitants it was now being faced by an invasion from a hungry and potentially violent 3000 strong mob. Businesses ceased trading, shops were shut, doors securely fastened and the windows of the wealthier people were shuttered up. Such acts hardly testified to a strong sense of local sympathy for the protestors. Trouble was expected. Yet it was at Skipton that this threat would have to be contained. The scene was then set for the next phase of crowd behaviour – confrontation!

In order to ascertain the mob's intentions the two magistrates Ingham and Birbeck parlayed with William Smith who openly declared that their intention was to stop the mills and 'turn out' the operatives. (The fact that they had to be 'turned out' demonstrated a lack of local support – even from those who would have been expected to have sympathised with the protestors' aims.) Ingham stressed that the people of Skipton were much alarmed and he asked the Lancastrians not to resort to violence or enter any shops or houses. Smith's response was to assure the magistrates that no intention existed to injure life or property. It seemed as if both parties wanted to reduce the risk of violence. Whilst the mob marched into the town Ingham rode furiously to Colne in order to call out the military garrison based there. (Why had it not been rallied earlier to halt the trouble there?) In his absence, 300-400 rioters visited first Dewhirst's Mill, and then Sidgwick's newly opened Low Mill, before moving on to Sidgwick's High Mill. At each place they stopped production by drawing water from the machines. In response the magistrates appointed respectable persons including William Paget (Clerk to the Solicitor Thomas Brown) to be present at certain sites, in order to act as witnesses. At High Mill the mob was at first driven back but then returned to 'pull out the plug' and turn out the workers. Following this success the crowd demanded money and warned that further mischief would take place if the mill re-opened without the 'plug-drawers' consent. Smith ordered the mill to be kept idle until delegates at Manchester had determined the rate of wages. Christopher Sidgwick (who had actually retired in 1833) promised to pay a sovereign as a token of submission, and then asked who was their leader and William Smith stepped forward. In what appeared to be an attempt to defuse a tense situation Smith ordered the crowd to disperse and within the next fifteen minutes this is what they did. Christopher Sidgwick then paid his sovereign to William in order to bribe the crowd to move away. Both parties appeared anxious to maintain some control of the situation.

With the leaders away on the outskirts of Skipton attempting to immobilise the outlying mills, discipline among the rest of the protestors in the centre of Skipton began to break down. Crowds took to wandering around the town, breaking into shops and houses, stealing property, seizing food and demanding money. In some cases householders had food already provided in advance – knowing full well that this would be one of the most common demands. Whether John and Anne Smith were ever subjected to the mobs' attentions remains a matter of speculation. However, nothing in family tradition indicated that they were - perhaps Greenside was too poor a locality to be worth their while. There were richer pickings to be had on the High Street. Such scenes of disorder meant that most of the pre-conditions for a major riot had fallen into place. The final pre-condition galloped in with the 11th Hussars, accompanied by the 61st Regiment of Foot. It had taken them three hours marching in sweltering heat to arrive from Colne. A Captain Jones was their commander.

Backed by military authority the magistrates now felt they could begin to take

firmer measures. (They must also by this stage have been fairly sure of local support.) Matthew Wilson read (possibly twice) a copy of the 1716 Riot Act from the Town Hall steps but was ignored. Hastings Ingham, (who appeared to display great presence of mind throughout the day) rode around the town reading the very same Riot Act but he too was ignored. He will have shouted out the following words: -“Our Sovereign Lady the Queen chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations and to their lawful business, upon pains contained in an Act made in the first year of King George for preventing tumultuous and riotous assemblies. God Save the Queen,” (Quoted in Rowley p.68)

A ruse was then resorted to; the well-respected, elderly timber merchant John Settle offered the rioters one of his fields with the added provision of beer and refreshments. In the exposed location of Anna Fields the crowd could be more easily be dispersed and a nasty street battle in Skipton would be avoided. Somewhat naively the crowd complied, only to find themselves followed by the magistrates who kept on reading the Riot Act. One of magistrates, Cooper Preston of Flasby Hall seems to have panicked and repeatedly called upon the troops to fire onto the protestors. He met with a firm rebuke from Captain Jones who reminded his somewhat fearful men that he was their commander and that they must obey him alone. After regaining control this military man then ordered his troops to fix bayonets and charge the still restless mob that had assembled in Anna Fields. In response one of the mob leaders William Spencer shouted at the mob to remain firm and stand still. However, this was not to be and as the mob fled up the nearby lane, he along with John Spencer and James Dakin, led the rioters in stone throwing. During the melee, one of the magistrates James Braithwaite Garfoth JP was cut off from the troops. Apparently in an attempt to signal his presence he waved his stick in the air. This was interpreted as an aggressive gesture and in response one of the rioters struck him full in the face with a club, smashing his spectacles, blinding one eye and knocking out several teeth. After some more stone throwing the mob dispersed. They left behind one dead soldier.

Six leaders were arrested and conveyed to the Devonshire Hotel where, after a preliminary examination by the magistrates, they spent an uncomfortable night under guard. (This was the Hotel on the south side of New Market Street, about five minutes walk away from John and Anne Smith’s home.) Next day they were conveyed by coach to York Summer Assize Court, under the supervision of Hastings Ingham and Captain Jones. At their trial it was already apparent that the judge had already made up his mind what the verdict should be. Sentenced on September 5th 1842, the names of the six arrested leaders were: -

William Smith, aged 46 – received 12 months imprisonment with hard labour.

William Spencer, aged 47 – received 6 months imprisonment with hard labour.

John Spencer, aged 50 – received 6 months imprisonment with hard labour.

John Harland, aged 38 – was discharged for lack of evidence.

Edward Hey, aged 32 – was discharged for lack of evidence.

James Dakin, aged 27 – received 6 months imprisonment with hard labour.

William Spencer's plea for leniency on the grounds that he had a wife and eight children to provide for went unheeded as did the argument of William Smith's Defence Council that he had led a starving mob in a very creditable manner. The mayhem in Skipton had ended with the clanging of prison cell doors.

Beyond causing some temporary disruption, the protestors had failed to achieve what had possibly been over-ambitious goals. This failure could be attributed mainly to poor discipline, and to the presence of mind displayed by some of their opponents such as Hastings Ingham. However, perhaps the chief cause was the unwillingness of most of Skipton's population to join them. Far from conveying the impression of being a victimised people with a just cause, the behaviour of the demonstrators simply confirmed the prejudice that they were outside troublemakers – whose behaviour was a threat to decent law-abiding citizens. The fact that they had come into Yorkshire from Lancashire only discredited their cause still further. (A rivalry had existed between the two counties from time immemorial.) In the end, what was at the time known as 'the turn out riots' failed because no attempt had been made to win over the people of Skipton. All the magistrates did was to exploit this omission. Even so it had been a very nasty business and was to live on in the local memory.

Precisely how my ancestors reacted to the 'Plug Riots' remains lost in history. Undeniably, it would have been a major source of discussion and it seems likely that as a boy of ten Edmund would retain deep impressions of these highly dramatic events for the rest of his life. The fact that he and other members of his family took the 'High Road' to mid-Victorian respectability suggested a marked lack of sympathy with both the actions and underlying attitudes of the rioters. Also the fact that John and Ann Smith moved away from Cullingworth Chapel at precisely the time its Sabbath School had been taken over by Chartists denoted a lack of commitment to radical political causes. John Smith did not stay behind and lead the workers of Cullingworth in action against their employers. In general, the Smiths of this period appeared to have been more concerned with the making of money than with 'putting the world to rights.' They saw that the road to social as well as individual betterment lay through hard work and good business sense rather than through political agitation. Perhaps in the long term, events have proven them right.

Providing firm evidence of my Great, Great Grandparents presence at Skipton during this disturbed period were the following details concerning the births of children Hannah and John:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

When and where born

Name, if any

Sex

Name and surname of father

Name, surname and maiden name of mother

Occupation of father

Signature, description and residence of Informant



When registered

Signature

of

Registrar

October Third 1841 Skipton

Hannah

Female

John Smith

Ann Smith, formerly Wilson

Miller

John Smith, Father, Skipton

October Twentieth 1841

E. Tindal

July Twenty Seventh 1843 Skipton

John

Male

John Smith

Ann Smith, formerly Wilson

Miller

John Smith, Father, Skipton

August Twenty Third

1843

E. Tindal

Some time between June 1836 and October 1841, my Great, Great Grandfather had learnt to sign his name. This showed a determination to overcome his earlier problem of illiteracy. Unfortunately, copies of his signature were not available from the local register office at Harrogate. This same office was also unable to find details of the marriage of Samuel Smith, even though a number of Parish Registers were looked at including those of Kildwick.

A far more persistent threat to the health of Skipton's population was the one posed by filthy living conditions. These were worsened by a five-fold increase in the number of inhabitants from 2,305 in 1801 to 11,986 in 1901 and by the unwillingness of the Castle Estate to sell off land for building purposes until the 1850s. (This resulted in very serious overcrowding.) A Public Health Act Report of March 26th 1857, cited in Warren (1999) pp.3-5, revealed that after taking into account the 137 infant deaths in this period, the average life expectancy for the good economic years of 1852-1856 was a meagre 35.7 years. Unfiltered drinking water was conveyed in wooden pipes from two reservoirs on the border of Rombalds Moor, and the 22 water closets in the town leaked excrement through their walls and out onto the road or into the local beck. Many families shared the same privies or were thankful to have Holy Trinity churchyard to relieve their natural wants! About 20% of the houses were 'back to back' and consequently suffered from extremely poor ventilation. One family of ten, with children aged in the 5-21 year range, lived in only one room unfit for human habitation. Another of nine lived in similar circumstances (in this case the children were in the 1-18 age range). The only surprising feature was that there had been so little typhus. One recent sign of progress had been the introduction of gas lighting supplied by a private company. In response to this 1857 report a Local Board of Health was established in 1858 in Skipton. Sadly, its arrival came too late for John and Ann Smith who had already died. Attempts to find their names in any Skipton Graveyard Register or in the Sutton Chapel Burial Book proved unavailing. However, following much detective work their death certificates were eventually traced and received on Friday, 21st September 1841.

These documents revealed that tragedy had marred Edmund's life at an early stage. At the age of twelve he had been left an orphan.

Registration District Skipton

1843 Death in the sub-district of Skipton in the County of York

1

2

3

3

4

5

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7

8

When and where died

Name and Surname

Sex

Age

Occupation

Cause of death

Signature, description, and residence of Informant

When registered

Signature of Registrar

November 14th 1843

John Smith

Skipton

Male

38

Years

Corn Miller

Accidentally Killed

Thomas Brown of Skipton Coroner for Yorkshire

November 18th 1843

E. Tindal

Registrar

Significantly, family tradition mentioned ‘a terrible accident’ through which ‘a relative’ of Edmund was reputed to have lost an arm through falling into some of its machinery. It also added that the family moved to Leeds ‘sometime after the accident.’ This oral tradition had apparently originated from Edmund before being relayed to my Grandfather who in turn had relayed it to two of his children who then passed it on to a certain cousin of mine. It appears likely that it contained is a garbled version of John Smith’s death. As a trained Millwright he would have dealt with machinery and accidents in mills were an all too frequent occurrence.

An e-mail received on Saturday, 29th June 2002 from the newly established Mill Archive, threw some light upon the possible cause of John Smith’s death.

“It is all too easy to become too familiar with the machinery and to forget the incredible momentum the gears and shafts possess. If you get caught there is no chance of the mill stopping quickly (assuming there is someone to help). This was in the days long before safety screens were installed. In the professional journal ‘The Miller,’ even in the 1890’s, the deaths of a number of people each year were reported.”

Clearly, my Great, Great Grandfather’s death had been a terrible one. It would have left his family in a profound state of shock. In addition, it will have made striking impression upon Edmund who, at the time of his father’s death, was at a very formative age. He would still have been only eleven years old.

Unfortunately, around the time of John Smith’s death Skipton had no newspaper, and any contacts made with various archive offices only confirmed that the Coroner’s report would have long since been destroyed. (This will have been due to the fact that the report belonged to the Coroner rather than to any governing authority.) All that could in 1847.) Consequently, the exact cause or location of my Great, Great Grandfather’s death remains unknown. However, John’s death did seem to precipitate the rapid decline of his wife Ann Smith as validated by evidence provided in her Death Certificate.

Registration District Skipton

1844 Death in the sub-district of Skipton in the County of York

2

3

3

4

5

6

7

8

When and where died

Name and Surname

Sex

Age

Occupation

Cause of death

Signature, description, and residence of Informant

When registered

Signature of Registrar

October 7th 1844

Ann Smith

Skipton

Female

41

Years

Widow of John Smith Miller

Consumption

Wm. Smith present at the Death, Skipton

October 9th 1844

E. Tindal

Registrar

The William Smith who had acted as informant may well have been Ann's father-in-law. If this were so, then his presence showed that members of John Smith's family had been rallying around his orphaned children – possibly in an attempt to save them from the workhouse. John's eldest son Samuel will have shouldered a particularly heavy burden through becoming the new head of the family whilst still in his teenage years. The fact that he and his brothers came to hold respectable positions in Victorian society showed that the Smiths were not destroyed by this double bereavement. They avoided sinking into either destitution or alcohol abuse. The fact that Samuel and his brothers survived what appears to have been the worst crisis recorded in this family history showed that their lives (and those of the relatives who came to them) were based upon sound moral values – standing them in good stead throughout these most

difficult years. One final interesting possibility is that it was actually this John Smith, Edmund's own father who was the relation who had lost an arm in a machine accident – and had died as a consequence. The timing was right and family tradition could have become garbled in the transmission. However, this point could not be proven. What the tradition did state was that the accident had been a terrible one and that sometime after it the family moved to Leeds.

The precise burial place of my Great, Great Grandparents has remained unknown. A previous review of the Burial book for Sutton Baptist Chapel has eliminated that location; whilst information provided by the Northallerton Archive Centre confirmed that they were not interred at Holy Trinity, Skipton or at Kildwick, Saint Andrews. This only left the nearby Congregational Church, which had been opened in 1839. (The large Raikes Road Cemetery was not opened until 1846.) The fact that this Chapel had links with the British School attended by Daniel increased the likelihood that it was here that John and Ann Smith had been buried. Moreover, it would only have taken several minutes to carry their coffins from their home at Greenside just off Market Street. Unfortunately, their names were not in the Monument Lists held by Skipton Library. This would suggest that they were either too poor to have afforded a headstone – or as was very possible, the headstone itself had worn away when the remaining inscriptions had been listed a century and a half later. In the end, repeated attempts to locate their burial site proved abortive. Complicating this research was the fact that the burial book for this chapel proved impossible to trace. However, following the above process of elimination the Congregational Cemetery seems to have been their most likely resting place.

Throughout this traumatic period Edmund would have lived in a household mourning the loss of the main breadwinner and housekeeper. From the early age of eleven, he will have been familiar with the presence of death. This perhaps explained why he would later acquire such a dour nature and the reputation for being 'a martinet.' The atmosphere at that time would have been thick with gloom and worry about the future. Following his parents' demise Edmund's most immediate priority will have been to look for work and help rescue the family from penury. Any education he may have enjoyed would have been cut short and this could well have created a feeling that he had missed out on life. In the longer term and largely because of this tragedy, my Great Grandfather may have been given the motivation and dogged determination to begin his long climb up to social respectability. He would have known all too well that he lived in a world, which showed only little compassion to widows and orphans. He may also have actively looked for a job, which did not place him near any machinery.

One fascinating detail in the 1851 Census Return was Daniel Smith's connection with education as a "Pupil-Teacher." One hundred and fifty years further on, this link with the teaching profession is still very much alive in the Smith family. (Since October 1990, I have taught a wide range of subjects to mainly adult students on a private basis. These subjects have included Economics, History, Politics, Psychology, Sociology, Theology, and Business Studies. It appears that my role in the family saga has been to combine the business side - as represented by Edmund - with the education side - as represented by Daniel. All the while unaware, I have spent much of my life building upon the heritage first laid down by these two men.)

According to Warren (1999) p. 15-17 the Pupil-Teacher system was established by Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, the Secretary of the Committee of the Council of Education,



formed in 1839. It was this august body, which was to begin the School Inspection System in 1846. Part of the system's mode of operation allowed for the payment of government grants dependent upon the meeting of certain criteria set forth by the School Inspectors. The Pupil-Teacher system represented a major reform, in the sense that cheap and untrained monitors were replaced by fully apprenticed Pupil-Teachers, (minimum age 13). (One Monitor, Frederick Manby, left the British School at Skipton in 1849 because he lacked the capacity to accomplish his tasks.) Pupil-Teachers were eligible to sit for qualifying examinations called Queen's Scholarships held at a Training College – and all paid out of government expense. Two key concepts underpinned this measure; firstly that this apprenticeship system could, using the Pupil-Teacher model, be successfully introduced into the area of education - and secondly, that this represented the best method of teaching classes of up to 60 pupils. At the same time the Master taught varying age ranges and different subjects at set times of the day, the Pupil-Teacher would instruct smaller groups in the very same hall. Superficially, this was a very bad way to teach, as the Master's voice would have been in the background, but it was the method used at the time. The three main occupations of oral instruction, reading aloud and silent occupation largely dominated the lessons; rote learning still prevailed although there was beginning to be some attempt to break with the idea that the Master was merely a 'Drill Sergeant' of young children. Scripture study and learning a Church Catechism by heart ranked in importance alongside the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic; indeed, it could be argued that Religion could be included as a fourth 'R' because the Victorians valued it so highly. By today's standards the education children received throughout this period was terribly narrow, but nevertheless it did help instil moral values and lead to an improvement of memorising skills. In a period of scarce educational resources boys were given greater priority over girls, who were sometimes placed in the charge of lowly, untrained female assistants. Unless they were inebrates, the Schoolmasters themselves were often to be feared, with the swish of a cane a frequently heard sound in many a Victorian School. However, some Schoolmasters could also become well respected and almost revered by their class pupils. A faded old Victorian photograph of the British School at Skipton Museum showed the Master Samuel Farey to have been a plump grey haired man, with 'large mutton chop' styled side whiskers (fashionable in the 1840s) and a ferocious, scowling expression. He was a figure to be respected rather than liked. The nonconformist links of Daniel and my Great Grandfather Edmund suggested they would have attended this British School rather than the Anglican based Parish School. Constructed in 1844, the British School had adjoined the Zion Independent Congregational Chapel, which itself was a large imposing building of Neo-Gothic design sited on Market Street. Built in 1839 it had a bell tower shaped rather like a birdcage, which protruded upward from the centre of its long slanted roof. Perched on top stood a cockerel weather vane. In contrast to this towering building, direct observation made with my wife on Saturday July 15th 2001, showed that the British School was a much lower and long barn-like building which seemed to cast a perpetual shadow over the small school yard and its two outside privies. (The school building has now been converted for private business use.) The 1852 map for Skipton confirmed that the schools location was on the South side of Otley Street, adjacent to what is now Saint Andrew's Church (built in 1914) and just behind the graveyard on the north side of New Market Street. (In 1851 it would have been adjacent to the Congregational Church built in 1839.) Daniel and his elder brother Edmund could easily have walked to this school within several minutes. Perhaps both lads knew what it was like to have been caned by 'old mutton chops.' His photograph had revealed a rather formidable figure – one likely to inspire terror in small boys.

Part 2 of the 1848 Slater's Trade Directory showed Samuel Farey to have been Master of the British School, with Ann Robinson as Mistress - both residing in New Market Street. A thesis by J. Foster (1974) held by the Brotherton Library of Leeds University, revealed some interesting details about this man. According to Chapter Six, Section, (a) Samuel Farey had been in charge from its foundation in 1844 (the School had been established under the patronage of the wealthy mill owner John Dewhirst who had opened the New School Room at a personal cost of £350) until 1866. He was the first teacher in Skipton to have obtained a Government Certificate, which he had gained at an examination held in Manchester during the spring of 1849. An Annual Report of 1850 had praised him for his industry, devotion to work, intelligence and spirit in creating a useful, improving school. He seemed to have been a positive role model for anyone wishing to enter the teaching profession. His annual salary had been £60.00 – which compared very favourably to that of the School Mistress Miss Robinson who was paid a meagre £15.00, despite being praised by the Management Committee for her diligence. By 1855, the success of the school had attracted extra government grants and each annual wage had risen to £143.00 and £36.00 respectively. In the following year Miss Robinson was to resign giving ill health as a reason. Although nominally Inter-Denominational, the school had been closely connected to the Congregational Chapel next door. In April 1854 Samuel Farey persuaded his Pupil-Teachers to attend this Chapel supposedly for congregational singing. When a new Infant Mistress, Elizabeth Smith was appointed in 1857 – one condition of her acceptance was that she would attend the Congregational Chapel. Church members largely supported the School's Management Committee while the Pastor of the Congregational Chapel acted as Secretary - his deacons filling other positions. The Dewhirst family, who were also influential Congregationalists, traditionally provided the position of Chairman and Treasurer. In effect, the School Committee was a 'closed shop' run by the same narrow circle of people. Over the period of 1844-1859 more than half the Pupil Teachers appointed were Congregationalists. An extremely vague tradition in my family mentions that some of the early Smiths had been "Baptists or Congregationalists." The evidence gathered to date in this 'History' would suggest they had been both. They had followed different denominational allegiances over different periods of time.

Pupil-Teachers were usually 'hand picked' from those considered to have intelligence and a good, preferably religious moral character. (In his conclusion to chapter six Foster showed that their social background was mainly lower middle class or respectable working class – with a high proportion of small businessmen such as Coal Merchants, Drapers, Innkeepers, Joiners and Grocers. The lower working classes were largely bypassed.) Another consideration was whether the Pupil-Teacher had the ability to encourage others to learn and to pass the government tests, which provided 'objective criteria' as to whether the school was succeeding. The fact that Daniel evidently fitted this model provided a very good testimony to his character and was also indicative of him having received sound parenting. In those days a boy's family background was normally taken into account when he was considered for such a position. The son of the town drunkard or irreligious sceptic would never have been chosen.

Upon entering the schoolroom Daniel would have found a rather cavernous, church-like interior, with long benches seating up to six pupils apiece, and walls festooned with pictures, maps and scripture texts - adding a note of colour to the otherwise dull and austere surroundings. The Master himself will have sat down on a large throne of a chair behind a heavy wooden desk,

elevated on a slightly raised platform. Equipment will have been sparse, consisting mainly of slate tablets and chalks. Only when a pupil's work had been substantially corrected would it be placed into a copybook. As examples given in Chapter Three show, the reading material was often of a highly moralistic tone, pointing out the many dire consequences, which would invariably result from naughty behaviour. What was regarded, as higher forms of culture would be mediated through the rote learning of poetry and comprehension tests - all based upon edifying pieces of literature. Mathematical problems were geared to preparing children (boys especially) for the world of trade. Needlework was a skill taught only to the girls.

Throughout his apprenticeship Daniel will have given "model lessons" and to have had his teaching critically observed by either Samuel Farey or a Government Inspector. In return he will have received before or after school personal tuition. He would have benefited from the school's Management Committee's decision of 1848 to lend money for the books the Pupil-Teachers had to use. As Pupil-Teachers usually commenced their work around the age of 13 or 14 this would have been the most likely year that Daniel had begun his own apprenticeship. As the days were taken up with teaching activities any studying on his part will have had to be done by candlelight, which wouldn't have done much for his eyes. If certified, my Great Grand Uncle may have expected to receive £10.00 in his first year and £20.00 in his second. The government could augment this modest salary by £20-£30.00 per year depending upon his class of 'Teaching Certificate' and the length of his College Course. By the 1860s a trend had begun toward teaching in individual classes rather than in large open halls and this led to a desire for improved accommodation with partitioned-off areas. All too often Pupil-Teachers acted as unofficial Caretakers and Servants. In 1854 four Pupil-Teachers at the British School in Skipton had complained in a written letter to the government that they had been forced to undertake such menial tasks as lighting fires and sweeping floors. Their names were M. Ackernley, Barnes, Calvert and T. Holmes. A somewhat embarrassed Management Committee admonished these boys before relieving them of the weekly task of cleaning the stove! In the last year of their Apprenticeship they were relieved of all menial tasks in order to have the time to prepare for the Queen's Scholarship, which would give them entrance to College and a formal teaching qualification. In 1856 classrooms were made available at 6 a.m. and until 9 p.m. for private study. Despite such concessions a degree of ambiguity still surrounded the status of the Pupil-Teacher because in practice many of them were neither quite a pupil nor quite a teacher! The retention rate was poor in that following the completion of their training many dropped out of education altogether and became Clerks instead. They had used their position as a stepping-stone to something better. In Skipton the easy availability of alternative work ensured that the retention rate was poorer than in other localities. Out of the 38 Pupil Teachers identified by Foster and covering the period from 1846-1870, a total of 14 failed to finish their apprenticeship - a failure rate of nearly 40%.

Sometimes there were personnel misdemeanours too. In 1857, Ackernley and Holmes caused a minor scandal by appearing in a theatrical exhibition held in the large room of the Devonshire Hotel on Market Street. An exasperated Management Committee warned them not to repeat this type of conduct and urged their parents to prevent any risk of it ever happening again. In 1860, the Pupil Teacher Thomas Peacock was dismissed from the British School for repeated acts of theft.

Due to the factors mentioned above, the government concluded they were getting only a poor return for their initial expenditure. In 1861 direct payments to teachers ceased and a new 'Payment by Results' scheme was introduced. Grants were paid to schools on condition they obtained certain results in the areas of attendance and attainment. Nevertheless, despite its problems the Pupil-Teacher Scheme had been a courageous attempt to respond to the pitiful lack of public education in the early Victorian era. Through it Daniel had provided the first concrete evidence of what would later become a family passion for education. His brother Edmund would also demonstrate the value he placed upon education. Perhaps both boys had been ashamed of their parents' inability to 'master their letters.' Both alike seemed to share a passion to 'get on in the world.'

Daniel Smith was one of three Pupil-Teachers from the British School who was to make teaching his vocation. The other two were John Grayston (who became Second Master of the British School at Halifax) and William Porrit (who became Head of the Smyth Academy at Wakefield). Although the College, which Daniel at one time must have attended, could not itself be discovered it was found that by 1860 my Great Grand Uncle had become the Master of the British School at 13-15 Kay Street, in the borough of Stalybridge, near Manchester, having succeeded Frederick Hutchins, the previous Master. (Tameside Local Studies & Archives Unit at Stalybridge having kindly provided these details.) His school had taught 400 boys and girls. In 1874 he was living at 18 New Spring Bank Street in the Township of Duckinfield, which was also part of the borough. (An old photograph showed those terraced houses situated on a steeply sloping street. They possessed a small front yard and belonged to people who were slightly above the norm in terms of social class.) By 1878, Daniel had been replaced by a Henry Tinker who lived in Stamford Street. (My Great Grand Uncle appears to have moved away from the area rather than having died. No Death Certificate covering the relevant period has been found.) The name Daniel Smith did not appear in the Index for the 1881 Census. His place of abode for the 1861 and 1871 Census Returns could also not be traced. A visit to Stalybridge made on Tuesday, October 16th 2001 confirmed that the whole area around the old British School had been demolished in about 1966 to make way for a trim new housing estate. In many cases even the old street names had gone, so that pinpointing the school's former location was not an easy task.

A final visit made to a rain-sodden Stalybridge on Monday, July 1st 2002 only uncovered a few extra items of information about Daniel Smith. From Trade Directories provided by the Local History Section of Stalybridge Library it was found that in 1864 his address was given as Eastwood View, which a map revealed as being located on Chapel Walk. In 1874 his address was Hough (pronounced 'Huff') Hill. Reference to another map revealed that New Spring Bank Street lay at the bottom of this hill. However, a careful search of the relevant areas in the 1871 Census showed that he had not yet moved to this address. Daniel Smith remained untraceable. Thankfully, greater progress was made with the 1861 Census where Daniel and one of his Pupil Teachers were traced despite the awful handwriting of the Census Enumerator!

1861 Census Return for Chapel Walk, just outside the boundary of Stalybridge

1861 Census Return, for 35 Leach Street, Duckinfield, Stalybridge

Daniel Smith aged 26 “British School Teacher” ~ born in Cullingworth, Yorkshire

Elizabeth Wood aged 51 “widow” ~ born in [Cumbria]

Elizabeth Smith (wife) aged 24 ~ born in Scotland

Joshua Wood (son) aged 21 “Cotton Spinner” ~ born in Doncaster, Yorkshire

John Smith (brother or brother in law) aged 18 “Gentleman’s Domestic” ~ born in Mansfield, Yorkshire

Ralph Wood (son) aged 19 “Pupil Teacher at the British School” ~ born in Doncaster, Yorkshire

It appears that Daniel had recently married near the beginning of his teaching career at Staleybridge. His brother (or brother-in-law) John was keen to emphasise that he was a “Gentleman’s Domestic” rather than a mere servant. Was this an early manifestation of the old Smith vice of snobbery? One can only wonder! By the time of the 1871 Census Daniel had moved from this address.

What could be established was that Daniel appears to have made a success of running a school - many of whose pupils came from working families employed in the surrounding 19 cotton mills. (According to Haynes p.8 various mills employed a total of 10,400 people in 1861. The total population of the Borough at that time was 24,921.) The Craven Weekly Pioneer, dated Saturday, March 25th 1865 had the following news insert: -

“A SUCCESSFUL TEACHER – Mr D. Smith, formerly a pupil teacher in the Skipton British School, now master of the Stalybridge British School, received this year from E. H. Brodie, Esq. Her Majesty’s Inspector of Schools the following entry in his certificate: - “This is a very well managed School, excellently taught, and in good order.” It was found that 97 and one-third per cent had passed in reading, writing and arithmetic. The number presented for examination was 275, all of whom passed in writing and dictation; 269 in reading, and 258 in arithmetic.” (Information kindly provided by Skipton Library on Thursday, October 18th 2001.) his excellent results reflected the hard work shown both by himself and his fellow teachers.

Daniel must have had enormous dedication to produce results like that, in what in many ways was a socially blighted mill town. In 1863 Stalybridge had suffered badly from disturbances

caused by mill workers being thrown out of work because of the 'Cotton Famine,' which had arisen from the disruption in trade caused by the American Civil War. (According to Haynes pp.8-9, only three mills were working full time and eight had stopped. The result was that over 50% of operatives were unemployed and 40% were working on 'short time.' By 1871, the number of mill workers was 7,785 out of a total Borough population of just over 21,000 – the reduced figures being due mainly to emigration.) Like many local teachers Daniel may have been obliged to teach literacy skills to resentful, unemployed workers forced to attend classes in order to gain entitlement to relief. In 1870, he would have been legally bound to implement the changes brought about by the Education Act of that year, which made school attendance compulsory. Contemporary photographs showed that the local School Board was one of those awful bodies dominated by pompous looking ex-army officers, opinionated mill owners and feline looking clerics. Somehow, one feels that Daniel Smith had not enjoyed an easy time in Stalybridge. Yet one could not help respecting his singular dedication as a teacher.

I had actually began discovering the details concerning my Great Grand Uncle's teaching career in Stalybridge, just as I was beginning some teaching in the Manchester area! (My first teaching engagement there was on Monday, September 3rd 2001.) I first discovered the teaching connection whilst looking through a copy of Foster's Thesis at the Family History Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society on Tuesday afternoon, September 25th 2001. Unbeknown to myself, I had to some extent already been retracing Daniel's own footsteps. It was inspiring to find that I was renewing an old family connection by doing something I felt thoroughly at home with. Equally, it was exhilarating to be in the vicinity where Daniel Smith had once taught with such dedication.

undefined

## Chapter Four: Cullingworth Conundrums

So where did the Smiths go after they left Sutton from in late 1832 to early 1834 period? The answer was not at all easy to find. At first Colne seemed the most likely prospect because family tradition had pointed to a strong association with this locality, and indeed the records of Sutton Chapel showed a William Smith having spent some time in Colne. However, just as this Family History was nearing its completion, what seemed to have been a clearly proven connection with Colne was deftly overturned by fresh evidence from such sources as the Baptismal Registers for Kildwick and the 1841 Census. Having provided useful background information my extensive research into Colne had led to some plausible but nonetheless very misleading conclusions (please see the first Case Study appended to the Statistical Supplement). Having what I had originally thought to be viable conclusions disproved in such a way caused me to be more wary of wholeheartedly trusting in any historical sources. I needed more in the way of corroborative evidence before I could even be remotely certain of anything.

The first clue to the Smiths' real location was provided by an entry in Kildwick Parish Church's Baptismal Register, discovered at Northallerton Archive Centre during a stormy Friday, June 15th 2001. One particular astonishing discovery was Edmund's birth having been registered at a Dissenting Chapel in Sutton on April 22nd 1832 and then later also christened in an Anglican Church, (this time along with his younger brother Daniel). This was the very discovery, which was to lead to a drastic reinterpretation of this Family History just before it was due to be completed! My eyes nearly 'popped out of my head' when the following details appeared on the micro-fiche – not least because I was trying to trace the details of quite another John and Anne Smith, of whom for at least nine months I had been fully convinced were my true Great, Great Grandparents! (For precise details as to how this mistake arose please refer to the second Case Study appended to the Statistical Supplement.)

When

Baptised?

Child's

Christian Name

Parents' Name

Abode

Quality, Trade, or Profession  
Christian

Surname

Christened, 3rd August 1835

Born, 21st January 1832

No. 1133

Edmund

Son of

John Anne

Smith

Cullingworth

Miller

Christened, 3rd August 1835

Born, 27th June 1834

No. 1134

Daniel

Son of

John Anne

Smith



## Cullingworth

### Miller

As had been the case with their elder children during the late 1820s, the officiating minister was again the Reverend John Perring who would now have been approaching his seventieth year at the time of this christening ceremony. A number of unusual features were wrapped up with this document. Firstly, although it included Sutton, Kildwick Parish did not cover Cullingworth, which belonged to the neighbouring Parish of Bingley. Normally vicars were very firm about infants being christened in their own Parish; this was because they did not want to risk any appearance of rivalry with a neighbouring clergyman. The only conceivable reason why John Perring would have allowed the christening of Edmund and Daniel to have taken place in his Parish was because John and Ann Smith had already possessed very strong family links in Kildwick Parish. This implied that their move from Sutton had taken place in the last two or three years. At this point my Great, Great Grandparents do not appear to have put down deep roots in their new abode at Cullingworth, (They did not stay long at Cullingworth either – having left it by the time of the 1841 Census.) Secondly, in an age marked by strong Anglican and Dissenting hostility, my Great, Great Grandparents displayed mixed denominational loyalties. Through registering Edmund's birth at Sutton Chapel, Anne had provided decisive evidence of Baptist sympathies among my direct ancestors. However, christening him later in an Anglican Church appeared to indicate that these sympathies were not yet firmly fixed. A final surprise was the discovery that Edmund had a younger brother named Daniel.

Supplementing the above source of information was the following Birth Certificate, received by post on Saturday, July 14th 2001. It referred to the birth of Edmund's younger sister Ann in the "district of Bingley in the County of York, Registration district Bradford."

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

When and where born

Name, if any

Sex

Name and surname of Father

Name, surname and maiden name of mother

Occupation of

Father

Signature, description and residence of informant

When registered

Signature of registrar

Twenty Fourth of December 1838 at Cullingworth

Ann

Girl

John

Smith

Ann Smith,

Formerly

Wilson

Corn

Miller

The marking X

Ann Smith mother Cullingworth

Seventeenth January

1839

Edward Sutcliffe

This document showed that even by her mid-thirties my Great, Great Grandmother had still not learnt to write. Very probably, the pressures of motherhood had prevented her from ever having enough time to learn this increasingly important skill. Unlike her older siblings Ann was never christened into the Anglican Church. Edmund and Daniel were the last children to undergo this rite.

According to p.45 of the first part of Pigot and Co.'s 1834 National Commercial Directory, Cullingworth was described as "a hamlet in the parish of Bingley in the upper division of Skyrack Wapentake, West Riding; about 3 miles W. (West) from Bingley, the like distance S. E. (South East) from Keighley, 7 from Bradford, and 8 from Halifax. The inhabitants of the hamlet,

for the most part, are employed in the manufacturing establishments, the principal of which is that belonging to Messrs. George Townend and Brothers, worsted spinners and yarn manufacturers. There are two places of worship, one for Methodists, one for Baptists, and a license has been granted to convert the Odd Fellows Hall to the service of the established Church. A Sunday school is in the village. Population returned with the parish of Bingley.” During a telephone conversation with the Bradford Archive made on Tuesday, 19th June 2001, I learnt that the Parish Church of Saint John was not opened until 1849 and that its burial records dated only from 1853. In the 1830s the Baptist and Wesleyan Chapels alone were available to meet the spiritual needs of the community. A reference to a map of 1850 revealed that Mannwell Beck ran through Cullingworth. Presumably, any Corn Mill would be located beside this stream, as its waterpower would have been used to drive the machinery.

Direct observation made during a visit made on Thursday July 19th 2001, confirmed that Cullingworth was a tri-angular shaped village lying on a fairly steep valley side. A few mill cottages dotted the valley bottom near to a crossing point called Cow House Bridge. Underneath it flowed the shallow Eller Carr Beck. A Wesleyan Chapel had been constructed in 1824, but was now used for private residential purposes. It was within a couple of minutes walking distance from the Baptist Chapel. Cullingworth was sited below some very bleak Mooreland. A large rubbish tip on these moors left a pungent stench in the air. Many birds hovered above it looking for easy pickings.

A visit to the Bradford Archive Centre made on Thursday, 21st June 2001 revealed more details about Cullingworth. According to Cudworth (1876) p. 251, “A corn mill and a worsted mill were built in Cullingworth by Mr. John Briggs about forty years ago; the former being worked some years by Benjamin, son of Edward Craven, the latter by John Anderton before his removal to Bent’s Mill. These premises have been enlarged by Messrs. Townend and adapted to their business. A weaving mill was also built by Mr. Wilkinson of Harden at Cowhouse Bridge for Mr. William Harrop, and was worked by him for some years. This is known as Woodfield Mill, and is also the property of Messrs Townend.” One useful point of information were the details concerning a new Corn Mill being built in about 1835, the approximate time of John Smith’s arrival at Cullingworth. The convergence of these two facts did suggest that my Great, Great Grandfather had arrived in Cullingworth to take up a position in this new mill. One mystery was the failure of his employers to hire a local man - but perhaps John Smith was good at his job and had been recommended for the position by someone in Sutton. Part 1 of the 1841 Pigot Trade Directory showed that the only Corn Miller in Cullingworth was Benjamin Craven, so it seemed that he was the employer my Great, Great Grandfather had worked for. The only other accessible Corn Millers were Abraham Hardy and James Pearson, both of whom were based in nearby Thornton. However, Benjamin Craven still remained the most likely candidate.

A review of some early maps of Cullingworth held by the Family and Local History Section of Leeds City Library, suggested that the Corn Mill could have been stood on Eller Carr Beck somewhat to the left of Cowhouse Bridge not too far distant from Woodfield Mill. This is now a long newly cleaned sandstone building standing on the right hand side of this crossing point. It has been converted into private accommodation. A stone inscription on the rear of this building reads, “Woodfield Mill, Converted 1999.” Some old mill cottages still stand beside the road adjoining this building. It was probably inside one of these cottages that John Smith lived with

his family. As will be seen presently both he and Ann had a very significant association with the Cowhouse Site.

Cudworth p. 253 also provided some useful details concerning the Baptist Chapel, whose records were thankfully found in Bradford Archive Centre. “About 1835 the Rev. M. Saunders of Haworth, being invited by Baptist families in and near Cullingworth, held services in the village, and engaged in the Oddfellows’ Hall for public worship. This effort resulted in the formation of a Baptist Church and a Sunday school, and the erection of a Chapel in 1837. The latter is an unpretending but convenient building, and was erected from a design by Mr. Nichols of Hewenden. The founders of the Baptist Church were Messrs. W. S. and R. S. Nicholas, Thomas Green, John Robinson, Robert Hartley, Jonas Sugden, Sarah Taylor, Isaac Constantine, Abraham Moulding and Ellen Gregson. The Rev. J. Harvey was the first pastor, and was highly respected by all in the village.” However, this last point was not strictly accurate.

A more detailed account of the Chapel’s origins was provided in the Minutes Book, covering the period from 15th June 1836 until 30th June 1847, (with a two-year gap from the middle of 1840 until late 1842 and another gap from June 1842 until 1847). Despite its somewhat ponderous use of religious language, this Minute Book was an invaluable source in showing the religious fervour common in the early nineteenth century. The following extract begins with an account (date unknown) of the missionary activity, which had preceded the foundation of the Chapel. This was based around the Odd Fellows Hall, known also as The Lodge. (The Odd Fellows were a Friendly Society founded at Manchester in 1810. Many of its rituals have affinities to those of the Freemasons, although pp. 26-27 of the Spring 2001 issue of their Odd Fellow magazine portrayed a slightly touchy sensitivity on this point). This account proved that the establishment of a new chapel at Cullingworth began with some high, (perhaps unrealistically high) hopes:

“The establishment of a Church of Christ is a blessing of the highest order the means of Christian fellowship which is one of the greatest privileges. A reason for devout thanksgiving – when it is considered that a church formed on the model contained in the New Testament, is an image of that blessed abode, where the followers of the Lamb shall behold his glory and sing his praises and stand in immediate connection with our welfare in an eternal world. It must evidently appear interesting and instructive to trace its rise and progress. Trusting that [as] the Church of God we have had the happiness to see formed at Cullingworth, shall continue till the time of general assembly of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. We briefly record the manner of its commencement for the use of those who may arise after us to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold His beauty and to enquire in his temple.

As early as the year 1820, or even before that period, thoughts of establishing the preaching of the Gospel at Cullingworth had occupied the minds of leading members of the Baptist Denomination in the adjacent towns; and though they did not accomplish their pious design, yet it seems to have had the good effect of stirring up the Wesleyan brethren to increased exertions. Since that time the subject was occasionally referred to, and though no decisive steps were taken, there were a few persons living in the neighbourhood who continued attached to the Baptist cause and waited till the opportunity should arrive of seeing their desire realised.

The prosperity and increasing population of the village awakened fresh attention and during the

summer of 1835, the Revd M. Saunders of Haworth consulted with the Revd D. Taylor of Bingley on the measures which ought to be taken, being encouraged by a liberal promise of support from Mr John Briggs of Cullingworth. (After the word Briggs another hand inserted the telling words, ' but never paid. ') The want of a suitable room has hitherto prevented a commencement from being made. Towards the close of the year this difficulty was removed. A commodious room was erected by the Society of Odd Fellows, who signified their intention to let it for the use of a religious body. M. Saunders immediately treated with them, and agreed on a moderate rent for the occupation of the room on the Sabbath, and one evening in the week.

On Tuesday the 16th February 1836 the Room called 'The Lodge' was opened for Divine worship and sermons were preached on the occasion by the Rev P. Scott of Shipley, and the Revd Blair of Wilsden; and on the following Sabbath by the Revd J. Ackworth [M.A] & D. Taylor of Bingley. The attendance was highly encouraging and a good spirit evidently prevailed.

On the 24th of February 1836 a meeting was convened when sixteen friends (including the Revd M. Saunders) were appointed as a Provisional Committee - with a Treasurer and Secretary for one year and a plan of supplies for three months was presented by M. Saunders. It was agreed that a quarterly collection should be made, beside which a private subscription was opened for the purpose of defraying the incidental expenses connected with carrying on the work of God.

At a meeting held on the 18th of March, it was resolved to establish a Sunday school. A considerable number of persons engaged themselves in this good work as teachers. Superintendents were appointed toward the close of the month with about 50 Scholars, the numbers have subsequently increased to upwards of 100.

On the approach of the annual vacation at Horton Academy, it was thought advisable to invite one of the students to supply at Cullingworth during that time and it was hoped the opportunity he would have of visiting the people at their homes would greatly tend to promote the cause of religion and to encourage those who were anxious for the blessings of salvation. Mr Harvey having won the affections of the friends was chosen to this duty was brought to labour among them in the first week of May. At this period the congregation averaged about 200 persons, many of whom were, previously to the opening of the Lodge living in the neglect of the ordinances of religion without God and without hope in the world. A great effectual door was opened for the preaching of the Gospel at Cullingworth – the good hand of the Lord was evidently with his servant – the attendance increased, the faithful were stirred up to greater diligence, backsliders were reclaimed and sinners converted. A spirit of supplication was prayed out, prayer meetings were established from house to house, as also the Sabbath morning & evening and experience meetings were held with much benefit. This sacred flame of holy piety kindled by the grace of God at Haworth was felt at the beginning of the year, large additions were made to the Church and under the fostering care and zeal of the Revd. M. Saunders and others the influence extended to neighbouring villages – may it never expire, but spread more and more until it is lost in the full blaze of an eternal day.

The opportunity was embraced of forming a Christian Church, the materials were prepared by the Lord, living stones fit to be built together in Christ, and thus the way was opened to the full privileges of the gospel dispensation. Wednesday, 15th June [1836] was appointed for the

solemn service of erecting this spiritual temple to God. The Revds B. Godwin, M. Saunders [O] Foster, [W. Jordan] and other Ministers attended to conduct the interesting proceedings of that day. Seven persons (out of the twelve baptised) made a public profession of their faith in Christ by baptism in the stream at Cowhouse Bridge. In the afternoon, B. Godwin discoursed in a very instructive manner on the nature and character of a Christian Church; after which, addressing himself to the candidates for communion. He desired them to give to each other the right hand of fellowship; on their having done so he acknowledged and pronounced them a Church of Christ, and in an affectionate manner shook hands with them all. Twenty-five persons were thus united in the Lord. 14 [Brothers] and 8 sisters - 3 of whom were received by dispersion from Hall Green, Haworth, 2 from West Lane, Haworth, 12 by baptism, (it appears that five of those baptised, including John Smith, had already professed their faith before this ceremony) and 5 who had previously been in connexion with other Churches, from whose Communion they had withdrawn from various causes.

The members then chose three persons from among themselves, by ballot, to serve the office of Deacon, John Robinson, Wm, S. Nichols, and Richard S. Nichols; whom [the Revd] Saunders, in a fervent prayer, commended to the care, guidance and counsel of the Great God and Head of the Church.

Mr Jordan next offered some admonition on the words of Scripture "Be vigilant." The Lord's supper was then celebrated. The hearts of the brethren were greatly encouraged by this means of grace and by the presence of about 100 followers of the Redeemer from neighbouring Churches, who sat down with them, in obedience to the gracious commandment of the Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me."

The people being again assembled in the evening; Mr Foster gave the charge to the Deacons, setting before them, affectionately and faithfully, the duties God has called them to perform and Mr Godwin concluded by an exhortation, founded on the words: "Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou that hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Thus far were the servants of God directed by his good providence. "This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes;" and his merciful hand is still with them so that they prosper; their numbers increase and their union is cemented.

Mr Harvey having gained the esteem and the love of both the church and congregation has been unanimously invited to accept the Pastoral charge and arrangements are making for building a Chapel. May the Lord be pleased to make the handful of servants to flourish and may 'the little one become a thousand!' O Lord! Grant that this hill of thy Zion, which thou dost establish, may even be as the Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, which thou didst approve. May it be rich towards thee in humility, in love, in faith! And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish through the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands establish thou it!"

This fascinating description showed that Cullingworth Chapel was formed amidst an atmosphere of Protestant revivalism where anything seemed possible. One problem with such a vibrant and expectant atmosphere was the fostering of unrealistic expectations, which if left unfulfilled could

lead to a trail of acrimony and disillusion. Such was to be the case at Cullingworth Chapel.

Of more direct relevance to this Family History was the possibility that a John Smith was one of those baptised on June 15th 1836 at Cowhouse Bridge. (Baptisms appear to have been carried out in three relays, with different ministers baptising at various times of the day, each group ranging in size from two to five people. If later evidence should confirm that he was indeed my forbear then a detailed account of this formal initiation into Christianity, has been preserved for future generations of Smiths.

John Smith appeared to have shown an interest in church business before his baptism – and had obviously given serious thought over this public commitment to his faith. He had attended the Opening Meeting held at the Odd Fellows Hall ('The Lodge') on 24th February 1836, the account of which made for informative reading. For ease of reference I have placed the names of the committee members in list format whilst inserting any other known extra details about them in brackets.

“The Minutes Book of Management for conducting Divine Service in the New Lodge, Cullingworth, which was opened for the purpose on Tuesday, February 16th in connection with the Baptist Denomination.

Lodge, Cullingworth, February 24th 1836

A meeting of a few friends of the cause having been convened, prayer was offered for Divine direction and and Revd Saunders of Haworth being called to the chair instructed the business of the meeting by stating the object to obtain for which they had been assembled.

The following friends were appointed to a Provisional Committee for the ensuing year with power to add to their number:

John Brigg (builder of the then new local Corn and Textile Mills, on some documents his surname was sometimes spelt Briggs. He appears to have been an influential figure in the community.)

Wm Ellison

A. Moulding

Thomas Sutcliffe

John Smith, (a Corn Miller, assuming him to be my Great, Great Grandfather)

Jonas Sudgen (formally received from West Lane, Haworth on 15/6/1836)

John Robinson (formally added to the Church on 15/6/1836)

John Greenwood



Thomas Craven

Edward Craven

Ben Craven (Manager at the Corn Mill built by John Brigg, and son of Edward Craven)

John Craven (formally received from Hall Green, Haworth on 15/6/1836, he later moved to Bradford)

Wm Nichols

R. Nichols

Saint Bland and

Revd M. Saunders (from Hall Green, Haworth – had hitherto been conducting cottage meetings having been invited to the locality by some of the Baptist families living within it).

Resolved

Resolved 1st that Wm. John Brigg be Treasurer for the coming year

Resolved 2nd that W. Tho. Sutcliffe be Secretary for the following year

Resolved 3rd that five persons constitute a quorum for the transaction of business

Resolved 4th that the committee meet once a month & oftener if need be

Resolved 5th that the plan for supplies submitted by M. Saunders be accepted

Resolved 6th that [voluntary] collection shall be made towards repaying all expenses

Resolved 7th that some of the [forms] be let [off] at 6d and a quarter for each sitting

Adjourned”

John Smith had also attended at least two other meetings - one on 18th March 1836 called by the Committee of Management and a special meeting on 7th April 1837. He was at the Open Meeting held on 28th April 1836 when the Church had resolved unanimously to allow only those baptised by full immersion to participate in Communion. He did not however appear to have attended a Committee of Management meeting on 5th March 1836.

The writing for the meeting held on 18th March was very poor and the help of an archivist was required in order to interpret some of the words, (at Bradford Archive Centre on Monday, July 8th 2002). With her invaluable assistance most of the details could be recorded.

“Lodge March 18th 1836

Present Rev. M. Saunders, J. Brigg, J. Sutcliffe R. S. Nichols, J. Sudgen, B. Craven,

J. Smith J. Craven W. Ellison, J. Robinson

The minutes of the former meeting were read  
and confirmed.

Two delegates being present leave was asked to establish a Sunday

School and assurance given that any additional cleaning be defrayed

And the paintings screened to preserve them from injury. (Underlining in the original.)

Also

That permission be granted to affix

Back to six forms for the accommodation

Of aged and weak persons.

Also (the following resolution was indecipherable.)

To adopt as an experiment for one quarter the principle of support recommended in minute 8.

(This financial support was to be gained through the issue of quarterly collections.)

A list of teachers for the Sunday school

Was opened and other necessary preparations proposed.”

Provided here was the first firm evidence of a member of my family having supported a new educational project. Ironically, this discovery was made whilst I was engaged in a not too dissimilar enterprise in the Manchester area! Sunday schools were regarded with great importance because they represented the only means whereby children could learn to read and write. It was fascinating to discover how far back the Smith interest in education went. In 1836 John Smith had not yet learnt to sign his own name, yet already present was a noticeable desire to better himself. Such a desire appears to have been kindled by his affiliation with the Baptist church.

At the second ‘open’ meeting (also at the Lodge) John was known to have attended the Church, “resolved unanimously that, as it is the opinion of the New Testament, which is the Christian rule of faith and practice that we have no authority from Christ and his Apostles to admit unbaptised persons to the Lord’s Supper that we acknowledge no baptism as valid save that of immersion of believers on a profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ of their repentance towards God, that the admission of unbaptised persons into the church would break down the barriers that separates it from the world and would sanction the neglect of any or all the ordinances of the Christian religion and would inevitably lead to dissatisfaction, contention and disorganisation that may better keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and hand down to posterity an example worthy of this imitation. We agree to admit no unbaptised person to the Lord’s Supper - or into Communion as a Church.”

Clearly, these were the words of a group keen to establish its corporate identity in the face of competition from the nearby Wesleyan Church. They were also the words of a group struggling for internal cohesion. However, later events would show that it had been totally naive of them to expect such rules to have saved them from, ‘dissatisfaction, contention and disorganisation.’ Later events would show these aplenty! The example Cullingworth Chapel gave to posterity was one most Churches would do well to avoid.

From these and other meeting transcripts emerged a clear impression of a Christian group determined to build its work upon sound practical foundations, even though it could be argued that to have sixteen on a Management Committee was rather too large a number. Throughout the proceedings the moving force appears to have been Revd M. Saunders who was perhaps instrumental in devising the following Bible-Based ‘Covenant of Faith.’ Here again was the definite impression of a Chapel trying to do things ‘by the book’ – in this case ‘the good Book!’ All underlining and X shaped marks were present in the original document, but had been inserted at a later date. (Someone had struck out some words, which I have subsequently replaced within bold pointed brackets, ( { } ). The same person also appears to have been responsible for the underlining.

“The Solemn Covenant of Church Communion”

We, a small handful of the unworthy dust of Zion, usually assembling for the worship of God at the Baptist Chapel Cullingworth, and conformity to the example of Jesus Christ and his faithful followers, recorded in the New Testament, immersed in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, having first given our own selves to the Lord are now met together with one accord to give up ourselves one to another, by mutual consent and Solemn Covenant according to the will of God, with deep humiliation for our own past sins, and earnest prayer to God for pardoning mercy, and assisting, persevering and preserving Grace, we say with our hearts we are the Lord's and subscribe unto him with our hands, in manner following ----- namely,

1st We this day approach Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the One, only true and living God, for our New Covenant God, and all sufficient position, and give up ourselves to Him alone for his peculiar people in a perpetual Covenant never to be forgotten.

2ndly We receive and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, as our alone Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King; in whom alone we trust for Wisdom and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.

3rdly We devote and consecrate ourselves as living temples to the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier, Guide and Comforter, whose gracious operations and heavenly conduct we desire daily more and more to enjoy, experience and follow.

4thly we take the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only ground and rule of our Faith and Practice desiring through the help of his Grace, therein promised to be in all things conformable to the Holy Will of God, therein revealed.

5thly According to the tenor of which divine Oracles, and depending for the performance only on the Divine help and assistance therein promised – as deeply sensible that we are not sufficient of ourselves, but that all our sufficiency, both to will and to do that which is good, is of God, whose grace alone is sufficient to enable us to do the following things through God strengthening us – in a single dependence on whom, and as in duty bound, we now covenant with God, each for ourselves and jointly together

1st To worship God in spirit and in truth, to observe his commandments and keep his ordinances, as he hath delivered them to us.

2ndly To subject to that divine order and discipline which Jesus Christ our only King and Lawgiver hath appointed in his Church; X and not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together for the public worship of God in its appointed seasons; but to continue steadfastly in our relation to one another, and to fill up our own places duly in the House of God, and cheerfully maintain his worship therein, to the best of our capacity, until death or evident calls in divine Providence shall separate us one from another. X

3rdly To love one another with pure hearts fervently, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace for the honour of our God and our mutual good unto edification

4thly We will also make it our care, through the aforesaid help, to walk before the Lord in our own houses, with upright hearts, and to keep up the worship of God therein by daily prayers and praise to God, and by diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures, that the Word of God may dwell richly in us.

5thly And {as we have given our children to the Lord, by a solemn dedication} we will endeavour through divine help, to teach {them} our children the way of the Lord, and command them to keep it, setting before them an holy example, worthy of imitation, and continuing in prayer to God for their conversion and salvation.

6thly We will also endeavour by the grace of God to keep ourselves pure from the sins and vices of the times and places wherein we live, and so be holy in all manner of conversation, that none may have occasion given by our own unholy lives to speak evil of God's holy ways.

7thly And all this under an abiding sense that we must shortly give up our account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead, unto which Solemn Covenant we set our hands in the presence of the all seeing Heart."

One fascinating feature was the way in which someone had underlined all those areas where the Church had been visibly failing by the time of Pastor Joseph Green's arrival in 1842. This made it most likely that he himself was the man to have made those underlines and to have deleted the document at the places denoted by the pointed brackets. He seemed to have been a rigorous and thorough man, assessing his congregation's behaviour against the standards, which they should have been following.

The following financial information was found in the "Accounts of the Baptist Church at Cullingworth" for the year 1836, compiled by John Briggs and Thomas Sutcliffe. For ease of clarity, it has been expressed in table form:

The Treasurer and Secretary John Brigg

Committee of Management for the Lodge - Secretary, Thomas Sutcliffe

Date

Collection

Amount

Date

Expenditure

Amount

1836

Total Collected;

£

s

d

1836

£

s

d

Feb 16

At the Opening Services

16

7

Feb 16

By acct 2/ By printing 8/

10

1st Quarterly Collection

2

17

1h

Mar 18

By cash for Bible

1

1

1st Quarterly subscription

May 10

By Rent

2

10

9

W. Ellison

10

21



By covers for front desks in Lodge

10

J. Briggs

1

5

27

By sundry fittings to Jn Smith as paid

7

10

A. Moulding

2

6

”

By supplies for Horton College to April 24

3

12

B. Craven

10

”

By 4 [forms[& back nails to old ones

2

4

Thos. Sutcliffe

2

”

By table & music stand

1

0

6

Jonas Sugden

2

June 24

By Mr Harvey for Easter Supply

5

John Robinson

2

Nov 9

By Rent for Lodge Room

5

9

Jn. Greenwood

10

Dec 4

By Jn Smith's a/c

10

h

Jn. Craven

5

By candles

3

h

Jn. Smith

2

Balance

9

8

9

A. [Heeland] (Donation)

2

6

July 31

2nd Quarterly Collection

3

13

6

Nov. 15

3rd Quarterly Collection

3

17

9

Cash for Bible from the Odd Fellows

1

1



Subscription of Sutcliffe & Hudson for table and music stand

1

1

32

6

10h

32

6

10h

1837

Feb 16

Total balance on hand

9

8

9h

The Account Book showed John Smith pledging the very small sum of 2s for the quarter covering February 16th until May 22nd 1836, (compared to the 10s pledge of his possible employer B. Craven.) Significantly, in 7 of the 11 recorded cases the amount pledged lay in the 2s to 2/6d range. These small figures suggested that most of the active participants in this new Chapel were people of only limited financial means. Hardly surprisingly, mention was made in the records of it being a poor church. Certainly, it was unlikely to have been able to afford to pay for both a new Pastor and the costs of a new £900 building at the same time. (Not to mention the costs of running a new Sunday school.) Even if the congregation could give £25.00 per year to covering the costs of the new building, it would still take 45 years for it to have been repaid!

These figures showed that the fellowship would either very quickly run into a major cash flow crisis or be forced to resort to dubious methods of fund raising. It seemed Cullingworth Chapel had tried to expand too quickly in too short a time. They would later come to regret their over-ambitious plans.

It was interesting to note the 7s 10d being paid into John Smith's account on May 27th 1837 for 'sundry fittings.' By December 4th of that year another 10s and half-a-pence was paid in. Apparently John Smith played an active part in furnishing the new Chapel even though he was not on the 'Building committee.' (Neither he nor Ann served on the Sunday school committee either. Sadly, the Sunday school minutes book did not contain the names of those children who attended its classes during this period) The implication of these figures was that he had supplemented his income as a Corn Miller by doing odd jobs – this was a practice very typical of the time. In general, the picture emerged that John Smith was a very useful Chapel member who could be relied upon to repair or make new fixtures. He also served on the occasional committee as long as he was not required to discharge those tasks, which involved strong numeric or literacy skills. In addition, he was willing to make a financial contribution despite having limited means. On the whole he was very much a 'loyal stalwart,' willing to put in a helping hand, although not eloquent enough to have been considered for preaching or for some higher form of office.

A quick review of the available records did show John Smith as having served on the provisional Chapel Management Committee. This body lasted from Tuesday, February 16th until December 1836 when the new six-member 'Building Committee' superseded it. He did not serve on this committee but attended open meetings conducted under its auspices. The members of this Building Committee appeared to be fairly influential figures in the community. Their names were Edward Craven (whose son Benjamin acted as Manager at the then new Corn Mill), W.S. Nichols (Textiles Manufacturer), William Craven (Builder and Constructor), William Ellison, John Briggs (Shopkeeper and Grocer) and John Greenwood. With their previous track record of success it did not appear that much could go wrong. Consequently, after full consultation with the members it was decided at a meeting held on 6th June 1836, to erect a new Chapel.

The surviving records of Cullingworth Baptist Chapel also threw up an Ann as well as a John Smith. Her name cropped up in the following minutes for the year 1836:

"Minutes of Church Meeting held July 22nd the baptising having been postponed for a week.

The following persons came before the Church, John Berry, Wm. Wilkinson, Wm. Lund, Elizabeth Shoesmith, Priscilla Waddington, Hannah Townsley, Ann Smith, Jane Taylor, Martha Craven, Ann Sutcliffe, Mary Huntley and Joseph Sutcliffe

Resolved 6th to accept them in full communion in their having been baptised

Resolved 7th The committee having made this request – it was to purchase 1500 yards of land more or less belonging to W. Waddington sited opposite to the gate of Messrs Townend and contiguous to the road

Resolved 8th To invite W. J. Harvey to become Pastor of the Church at Cullingworth on the termination of his studies at Horton – adjourned.”

Ominously, there was no record of anyone asking whether this pioneer work could afford to purchase both new land and hire a new Minister. Nor did anyone question whether it was wise to plunge an obviously inexperienced Minister into a situation where a great deal of mature judgement would be required. With hindsight, it was possible to see that, for all its concern with outward forms, the decision-making skills of this provisional Management Committee left a lot to be desired. They were rushing in to build a new work far too quickly. The members of this Chapel had much zeal but too little wisdom to give it a sense of balance.

In the membership lists John and Ann Smith occupied thirteenth and thirtieth positions respectively. Details were also included about Simon Mead because of the interesting location of his death, which showed that even a remote Yorkshire villager could have contacts with a very different part of the world. (For further details, please see the statistical analysis of these membership lists in Section Two of the Statistical Supplement.)

Name

When Recorded

How Recorded

By whom Baptised

Dismissed

Separated

13. John Smith X

June 15th 1836

By Baptism at Cowhouse Bridge

Reverend M. Saunders - from Hall Green Baptist Church in Haworth

Removed to Skipton

December 21st 1842

16. Simon Mead X

June 15th 1836

By Baptism at Cowhouse Bridge

Reverend M. Saunders

30 Ann Smith X

July 24th 1836

By Baptism,

Cowhouse Bridge

Reverend James Ackworth, M.A. -- President of Horton Baptist College, Bradford

Removed to Skipton

December 21st 1842

NB: Simon Mead died on July 17th 1837 at Chicago, Illinois, “on his way to settle with his brother.”

The ‘separation date’ could be recorded some considerable time after an actual removal to another location. All three names had X shaped marks beside them in the original lists (as distinct from a neater, later copy which I had reproduced at Bradford Archive Centre for statistical tabulation purposes) suggesting that all three new members were illiterate. Ann Smith was one of twelve people baptised on July 24th 1836, only four of whom were men.

The names of John and Ann Smith also appeared as signatories in connection with a rather grovelling letter sent to Joseph Harvey begging him to be Pastor. Dated July 24th 1836, it showed them both as established Chapel Members all of whom were formalising an important request.

“Copy of invitation to Joseph Hartley by the Baptist Church at Cullingworth requesting him to accept the Pastoral charge over them.

The Church of Jesus Christ meeting in The Lodge, Cullingworth, to their esteemed and beloved brother Joseph Hartley.

We fervently thank our Heavenly Father, the great shepherd of the Flock, who in his gracious Providence, directed you to labour amongst us during the recent vacation, and who honoured you in the manifestation of his grace to the awakening of careless sinners and the great edification of them who feared God. The Holy Spirit hath hereby stirred up in us such a love to your person and such an esteem for those gifts of sympathy and communication with which he hath especially blessed you, that our hearts our enlarged toward you.

Amidst the greatness of the Lord’s work, we see our insufficiency and weakness. We see the wisdom of the head of the Church in appointing the Pastoral Office, and we humbly but earnestly pray that our wants may be supplied, and the Church built up a glorious temple to the praise of God, by His appointed means – that we may be blessed in the labours of one whom the spirit of the Lord God hath anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

We are highly favoured in the ministry of those who so acceptably distribute amongst us the bread of life on the Lord’s day, yet we feel the want of one who may discharge the equally important duties of the Pastoral Office during the week, by spiritual intercourse and the maintenance of prayer meetings, preaching and social religious instruction; that enquiring souls may be brought in, the wicked awakened, the borders Zion be enlarged, and her inhabitants directed and stimulated by such superintendence to diligent labour in the Lord’s vineyard.

To you beloved Brother, we look on him whom Providence has designed to fulfil these duties among us, our affections unite in you as those of one heart and our prayers and

endeavours shall be constantly directed to promote your comfort and prosperity, should you be stationed over us.

We do therefore most affectionately and unanimously invite you to take oversight of us on the expiation of your term of studies.

May the wise and gracious Spirit guide your decision.

To him, in whom we are and whom we serve, we humbly commend you. Brother pray for us

July 24th 1836 (Signed by)

Wm, S. Nichols, and Richard S. Nichols & John Robinson – Deacons

T Shoesmith, W. Wilkinson, Joseph Sutcliffe, Abrm Moulding

Jonas Sudgen, Isaac Constantine, W Ellison, Jn Smith, Wm Lund,

Simon Mead, Robt Hartley, Cornelius Taylor, Geo: Hethrington,

Thos Ellison, John Berry,

Sarah Taylor, Ellen Gregson,

Ruth Sutcliffe, Rebecca Waddington, Nancy Sandham,

Marianne Craven, Emma Craven, Martha Craven,

Ann Smith, Hannah Townsley, Priscilla Waddington,

Elizabeth Shoesmith, Anne Sutcliffe, James Taylor, Mary Utley,

Grace Tilotson ----- Members.”

Including the three Deacons there were eighteen male and fourteen female members.

Through this correspondence a great deal of emotional pressure and flattery was being exerted on the Chapel’s prospective Minister. Hardly surprisingly, he was rather wary in his response, laying down strict conditions before he would accept the post. One of these was a demand for four weeks leave. From the onset it was obvious that desperation for strong leadership made Cullingworth Chapel far keener to have Joseph Harvey than Joseph Harvey was to have them. Evidence from his correspondence revealed that he already entertained strong doubts about the Chapel’s financial viability. This apparently young and rather insecure man perhaps wondered how the Church could feed him! He may also have felt that its members were rather unrealistic in their expectations of what he could do. A sense of unease was already



present in his very first reply.

“To the Church of Jesus Christ meeting in the Lodge Cullingworth

Beloved Bretheren,

Having received from you, an invitation to become your Pastor, and sensible that this involves important consequences; I cannot presume to answer your request, until I have had time for serious consideration and prayer that this may be afforded, I beg your indulgence for 2 months, when you shall, (God willing) hear from me again.

Wishing your continued and increased prosperity and requesting an interest in your prayers.

I remain dear Brethren, your brother in Christ J. Harvey

Horton Academy, July 30th 1836”

At this point the Chapel perhaps should have taken the hint and either looked for another Pastor or better still done without one until their financial situation had improved.

Near the end of September 1836 it was obvious that Pastor Harvey was playing ‘hard to get.’ He appeared to be going out of his way to lay down stringent conditions, possibly in the hope that the congregation of Cullingworth would withdraw their offer without him having to suffer the embarrassment of refusing it! Yet even at this stage no one in the Chapel appeared to take the hint. This lack of discernment was evident in the minutes for September 25th 1836.

“Lords’ day Sept 25th the members of the Church were requested to stay after the service to consider propositions made by Mr Harvey previous to his accepting the invitation of the Church

Copy of J. Harvey’s proposals to the Church of Christ at Cullingworth: -

1st that he should only preach two sermons on the Lords day to the same people

2nd that he should have one month every year at his disposal, and that the Church should find supplies (meaning supply preachers) during that time

3rd that he wished to be exempt from begging for the Chapel

4th that he desires to know what they can do towards his support

If these proposals meet with the appropriation of the Church, he will accept of their invitation for 6 months with the prospect of settling if the providence seem favourable, September 24th 1836.”

The Church’s reply. Cullingworth Sept 25th 1836

Dear Sir,

Your three first propositions have met the appropriation of the Church and touching the fourth the following resolution has been come to – that the Church will do all in its power to make you comfortable and will give you a more decisive answer when the Chapel is built

To the Revd J. Harvey (Signed by)

John Robinson, Deacon”

- Who could by the way, write in a very clear manner.

Such an evasive reply on the matter of his support would hardly reassure an already doubtful Pastor Harvey that Cullingworth Chapel was in any position to ever successfully provide for him. Any doubts he would have had about accepting their offer could only have been reinforced. Moreover, he could easily draw the conclusion that this congregation wanted a pastor on the cheap Very possibly it did!

Another early indication of trouble was this letter received from Isaac Constantine thanking his fellow members for readmitting him to the Church after a period of estrangement. It was written in beautiful script writing.

“Sykes Dec. 3rd 1836

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The note of Brother E. Wadsworth informing me that by the unanimous consent of your church my unworthy name had been restored to the church book by some misadventure only reached me on Monday night. I beg now to express my sorrow that I ever requested it to be withdrawn and think I did wrong, pray for me that I may be forgiven. I take this opportunity for thanking you for this mark of your Christian confidence and hope. Let my life be long or short I shall not be unmindful of my obligations to my fellow members. Had I known in time I believe that notwithstanding my severe indisposition I should have been with you at the Lord’s on Sunday last. May the Lord accept the will for the deed and now my dear Christian friends I beg an especial interest in your prayers and I will not forget you in mine.

On a review of my former connection with you although never quite destitute of the eventual qualification to the true Christian, yet I find a sad and mournful deficiency existed in

my own case. Brotherly love is not only necessary to the prosperity of the church but also to individual progress in the divine life. Love covers a multitude of sins and enables us to bear each other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. It is that prominent mark, which separated the world from the church and is the brightest evidence of our having experienced that divine change so essential to salvation.

The love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts has also a counteracting influence over all our principles, disputations and actions and in dealing with our erring Brothers or Sisters with what tender and anxious solicitude should we endeavour to reform and restore such as one to his or her proper state of mind and were we on all occasions to pursue such a train of actions in dependence on divine influence and grace then I think much good would be the result. May the head of the Church preside over us and direct my brothers and sisters of the Cullingworth Baptists in the prayer of your unworthy Brother in Christian Love, Isaac Constantine."

After reading this letter one was left wondering 'What happened here?' It appeared that the most interesting things were those left unsaid. Obviously, there had been some disputation in which Isaac Constantine had perceived a lack of charity. No details were given over what had caused the rift and none were found in other records such as the minute book. This would suggest that the matter had not been all that serious; the fact that a restoration to membership was possible further reinforced that conclusion. In terms of personality, Isaac Constantine came across as a somewhat weak character desperate to belong to a group in order to gain some degree of self-worth. He appears to have suffered from depression, yet the suspicion emerged that his letter was a little too fulsome to be genuine. The writer was not above a little self-serving grovelling! Also present was a tendency to skirt round issues. In terms of style the letter was certainly something that could easily have come from a Charles Dickens novel. This would suggest that Isaac Constantine was a well-educated man. His address 'Sykes' appears to have been that of an outlying farm – a conclusion reinforced by the fact that it wasn't found during a search of the 1841 Census Return for Cullingworth and its immediate vicinity. This search had taken place on Monday, 8th July 2002, the day I first transcribed the above letter at the Bradford Archive Centre.

Another mystery was the identity of E. Wadsworth – a name, which did not surface on any of the membership roles of the chapel. However, the Sunday School Teachers Minutes Book revealed that he was a Sunday School Teacher who had been asked by the relevant Committee to help set it up on 10th July 1837. Neither his name nor that of Isaac Constantine featured in any Trade Directory for the Cullingworth locality. This would suggest that in terms of wealth they did not number among the top one fifth of the population.

Overall, the letter written by Isaac Constantine was interesting because it had been written by a man who would have both seen and conversed (if only on a formal basis) with my Great, Great Grandfather, John Smith. Another interesting feature was the way it covered the affairs of a group to which my ancestor had belonged. It also provided evidence that tensions had been present from the very beginning. These were to grow ever more acute as time passed. On 11th April 1837 the minute book revealed that, "Discreditable reports being in circulation

respecting Bro. Hartley of having for sometime being also not in attendance of the worship of God, Brother Robinson and Wilkinson were deputed to converse with him.” He was eventually excluded on the 3rd August 1838. Isaac Constantine had another ‘run in’ with the church sometime later.

Particular details, (kindly provided by Julie Skellern of New Zealand in late December 2003) made it possible to construct the following simple ‘Fact File’ concerning Isaac Constantine (one of Julie’s ancestors.) They formed a useful context to the letter just quoted. His service with the British army in the Spanish Peninsular suggested that he might have been a braver man than his letter would suggest.

“Name: Isaac CONSTANTINE 3rd

Birth: ca 1787 Haworth

Baptism: 31 Jul 1787 St Micheal & All Angels, Haworth

Residence: 1851 Sun Street, KEIGHLEY,

Residence: 1841 Hope Street, KEIGHLEY

Residence: 1830 Rycroft (Hamlet near Harden) Bingley Parish,

Residence: 1817 Rycroft (Hamlet near Harden) Bingley Parish,

Death: 1857 Keighley

Occupation: Wool comber (1817), Peninsular Wars - British Army, Weaver (1830), Teacher of Leading & Lodging House Occ. (1851)

Father: Benjamin CONSTANTINE (ca1765-)

Mother: Margaret WILSON

#### Spouses

1) Alice HOLMES

Death: before 1830

Marriage: 11 Mar 1811 Haworth

Children: -

Benjamin (1811-1846)

Nanny (ca1815-1882)

Thomas (ca1817-?)

John (ca1821-?)

Holmes (ca1826-?)

2) Hannah PRESTON

Birth: ca 1801 @389

Residence: 1830 Rycroft

Death: Mar 1851 Sun Street, KEIGHLEY,

Burial: 30 Mar 1851 Keighley,

Father: PRESTON

Marriage: 27 Dec 1830 Bingley

Notes for Isaac CONSTANTINE 3rd

Thomas is baptised to Isaac & Alice in Bingley, but Benjamin is baptised just to Isaac in Haworth! Other baptisms for his children (and there may be more) have not been found.

Joseph the bath proprietor refers to his Uncle Isaac being at Cullingworth..... in 1830s to 1846 and the tiny village of Rycroft (some 28 households) is just up the road from there - both fall in the Parish of Bingley.

Last Modified: 27 Dec 2003

Created: 4 Jan 2004

Source

Julie M. Skellern  
NEW ZEALAND 1750  
email: jools@maxnet.co.nz”

Matters rested whilst the Chapel building was being constructed in 1837 – the year Queen Victoria came to the throne. The Revd J. Harvey came only to preach and help out in the baptisms. (He baptised one man and three women at Cowhouse Bridge on July 30th 1837. During January 7th 1838 he baptised another one man and three women in the new chapel.) Only at “a Church Meeting held in the vestry February 2nd 1838” was the question of his pastorate renewed. It seems that during this interlude J. Harvey had been unsuccessful in his plans to find another Church to take his services. Looming into view was a dangerous situation in which a desperate congregation was looking for the services of a Pastor who himself was, because of financial pressures, increasingly desperate to find any position – no matter how unsuitable. In terms of ministerial material Cullingworth was in danger of taking on board a ‘reject’ by other Assemblies. Overall, a very unhappy situation was in the making. Undertones of this can be found in the following extract from the minutes of the meeting, which commenced at “Friday evening 8 o’clock February 2nd 1838.”

Brother Harvey having signified his determination (after many difficulties and much prayer, and contrary to all his former plans) to accept the cordial invitation of the Church (agreed unanimously by the congregation) to its Pastoral Superintendence he requested to know what support could be provided for him, and also stated his conscientious objections to the usual mode of Ordination and Recognition. It was therefore resolved that under present burdens of the Church and its limited resources, that sum cannot be guaranteed which the Church would desire to give and to which Bro. Harvey’s services entitle him and that sixty five pounds per annum with the use of the house be proposed, allowing one month’s absence in the year as before stipulated, the church during that time to provide supplies. Bro. Harvey also having reserved to himself the option to avail himself of such assistance as he may be able to procure for one of three services of the Lord’s day and conceding to the Church the remainder of the stipulations

agreed according to the minutes Sept 25th 1836.”

The ominous words here were, “agreed unanimously by the congregation.” This provided decisive evidence that not one person was willing to publicly challenge the wisdom of appointing, at a time of severe financial difficulty, a Minister who seemed to raise one obstacle after another concerning the taking up of his position. No one asked the obvious question as to whether he was only considering the appointment because he had no better Church to go to? Nor did anyone query whether it was appropriate to appoint a Pastor when the Church obviously could not afford one. The impression conveyed in these documents was of a Chapel whose decision-making processes were seriously flawed. There was an over eagerness to gain the respectability of having a properly accredited minister just like any other church. Although the motions of consulting the members was gone through, there was the possibility that Church meetings were commandeered by a few domineering personalities bent on having their own way. Later events showed that such personalities existed. Sadly, nothing emerged to confirm that John and Ann Smith ever opposed such a dangerous status quo. They were perhaps too young in the faith to have done so.

On Sunday, 23rd February 1838 Pastor Harvey was received into the ministry at Cullingworth Chapel amidst what appears to have been a rather grand ordination tea. At a meeting conducted under his auspices it was “resolved that the first subject for consideration be the Sufficiency of the Word of God as contained in the Old and New Testaments, for direction in faith and practice.

Resolved that Mr Giles of Leeds be requested to present the sermon on the Anniversary of the Chapel.

Resolved that W.S Nichols be allowed the use of the school room except on the Lord’s Day for the purposes of tuition on such matters as may be arranged at the next meeting.”

William Nichols was dismissed to Bradford Church on July 1st 1840, although later evidence will show that he was still in the Cullingworth locality during the middle of that month.

To the embarrassment of all concerned the Revd. J. Harvey turned out to be a one-month wonder. All the efforts taken to cajole him into accepting the ministry at Cullingworth Chapel had been in sheer waste of time. Undeniable proof of this point was found in records dated March 23rd 1838.

“At a special meeting of the Church conveyed by notice to the members personally, March 23rd Friday at 8 in the vestry. After the devotional exercises the following communication from Bro. Harvey was submitted to the Deacons.

Copy

To the Baptised Church of Jesus Christ meeting in Cullingworth Yorkshire: -

My beloved brethren! Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you.

Since my first knowledge of you, I have every reason to bless God on your behalf, because of the great things he has done for you. I feel thankful to the Father of all mercies for any token of his favour bestowed upon us and for peace and comfort attendant on acquaintance. Notwithstanding all that has been enjoyed and done, I am under the necessity of resigning my pastoral charge over you. And of separating myself altogether from the communion of the particular Baptists. I dare no longer continue in association with a body of professing Christians, which prostitute the worship of Jehovah; by allowing the ungodly to unite therein and make the world its ally, in maintaining the cause of God by seeking contributions from it.

(Was this a reference to seeking contributions from the Odd Fellows whose rituals J. Harvey may well have disliked for religious reasons? The accounts quoted previously did show at least one sum of £1 1s having been raised from that quarter to purchase a Bible. Another 'worldly' donor may well have been the business of Sutcliffe & Hudson who likewise had provided £1 1s.)

My views have not been hastily formed, for they are the result of much prayer, meditation, and searching the scriptures. The sacrifice I now make is on my own part a very great one. I have much feeling and many interests to relinquish. Yet if the sacrifice were tenfold greater, such is the force of truth on my conscience that I must make it. What am I, that I should withstand God? This I dare not do on any consideration; for I am fully persuaded in my own mind, that I am now doing my duty by handing in my resignation, and at once coming out from a communion, which I believe to be in practice erroneous. Such is the plain direction given in the word of God, which is not to separate a society, but to come out from those who maintain a fellowship with the world, which the scriptures forbid. Viz 2 Cor:6:14-18 & Rev 18.4.

In leaving your communion and neighbourhood, I can assure you that I shall retain the warmest affection for you all, and a grateful remembrance of the repeated kindness' you have showed me on various occasions. I take this opportunity of returning my sincere thanks for your forbearance with me amidst the numerous imperfections, which have blended with the performance of my pastoral duties. Believe me you shall not be forgotten at the throne of grace. My prayers to God for you shall be that the Lord may lead you with all truth and preserve you until that day, when we shall meet at the bar of our judge. & that we maybe found of him in peace. Until that period, cleave close to Christ with full purpose of heart. Be much in [prayer] with your Father and friend. Be diligent Bible students and the God of peace shall bless you, with the knowledge of his will, and with hearts to do and submit to the same.

(All underlining was present in the original document.)

Let me remind you that we part in peace, that I have no personal nor private animosities; that I do not blame you for not seeing as I see, and that I only ask in [grace] to be remembered by you when you are enjoying meetings with God, unto whom I now commit you,

and shall ever remain, your brother in Christ.

Signed J. Harvey

The Church, after discussion, in consequence resolved that the faithful & zealous devotion of our beloved pastor to the welfare of sinners and the interests of this church – the unconscious affection of the church and congregation of him – and the blessing of God manifest on his labours – cause his present communication to be received with the deepest regret.”

Somehow it was very easy to imagine the stunned expressions on the faces of all the listeners as that letter was read. Among the dismayed gathering were two people who could have been my direct forbears. However, J. Harvey’s severance from the Chapel was not as decisive as his letter made out. He was still performing baptisms until July 8th 1838 - possibly while he was working his period of notice. Nor did he leave the neighbourhood for he was still ministering in the Bingley locality toward the end of 1839. Only then did this somewhat curiously weak man vanish from the scene.

Although an abundance of other evidence confirmed that his criticisms of the congregation were valid, one would have been more impressed by his letter if he had displayed real humility by openly admitting that he had been wrong to have ever taken up the offer of a Pastorate at Cullingworth Chapel. Joseph Harvey’s mistake had been to accept a position for which he had had no real calling. Beneath the pious wording of his correspondence there lay the distinct impression that he was heartily glad to be rid of this assembly. In reality, he had never really wanted to be so closely involved with it in the first place. Overall, it was a case of a minister being unable to identify with his congregation or to fit in with their requirements. Having said that, some of the congregation’s requirements do appear to have been unreasonable. It was evident that their ideal minister would someone who would be good at writing begging letters. Yet in fairness to Cullingworth Chapel, Pastor Harvey did receive a gift of eight pounds for the services he had rendered. Such an act possibly spoke of a guilty conscience for messing him around!

Thus Cudworth’s statement about Pastor J. Harvey was not confirmed by historical sources emanating from within Cullingworth Chapel itself. (See Bibliography for precise details of these sources.) I myself found the copy of J. Harvey’s letter to have been rather peevish in tone. His letter formed the basis of his excuse to leave. In addition, he should have had the common sense to ascertain what the fundraising methods were before accepting the post. As so often in church life a failure to ask the right questions at the right time had led to an unnecessary dispute.

An entry in the Minute Book for 1st June 1838 noted that the Chapel was without a Pastor, (the term was used interchangeably with minister) but had received seventeen new members by baptism and one by letter of recommendation, thus bringing the total membership to 69. The outstanding debt on the new building was £650.00. (A huge amount for those days!)



At a district meeting held on December 4th 1838, the Bradford District Committee recommended that Bingley and Cullingworth Chapel pool funds so that they could share the same minister. Two days later at “a Special Church Meeting after the afternoon service and in the schoolroom ... it was proposed that J. Harvey be requested to become the Pastor of the two Churches – the members of Bingley being agreeable.” (The records showed that deputies from Bingley were present at this meeting in Cullingworth.)

However, at the Church meeting of January 11th in the following year, “it was reported to the Church that the resolution of the last meeting has been communicated to J. Harvey personally and that the following was his reply:

‘After most serious deliberation and prayer I am constrained to reply in the negative to the invitation I have received from the Churches at Cullingworth and Bingley.’”

Here were the words of a man who had definitely made up his mind. No ambiguity was shown this time around. He was ever so politely telling the two assemblies to ‘get lost.’ He must have felt a profound sense of mistrust toward their leaders to adopt this stance.

In May 1839, the Chapel was still looking for a new Minister (they did not receive one until July 1842.) By this time the Assembly still listed 69 members. In the previous year four members had been added by baptism, and four had been lost, (3 by exclusion and 1 by moving to another Chapel). These figures were interesting because they revealed that J. Harvey’s resignation had not generated a significant loss of membership. Such data confirmed that any support he had enjoyed within the Church had been of a very limited nature. He had not been a charismatic leader – (someone who could draw on large numbers of people for support.)

Sadly, as the months passed by Cullingworth Chapel fell into complete disarray, as is shown by the following extracts from the Minute Book, which probably recorded only snippets of what was going on: -

1/11/1839: “that bro. [Ellison] be appointed to visit Sister Sandham over the complaint of Sister S. Taylor.”

29/11/1839: “that the resignation of bro. Sandham of his post of Deacon be accepted and that he be continued as member of this Church.”

10/1/1840: “Resolved that Isaac Constantine be excluded for continued neglect of the worship of God among us.

The withdrawal of Elizabeth Holmes and Ann Sutcliffe was received.

Second that members absent from the Lord’s Supper for three months without sufficient reason be thereby excluded.”

8/5/1840: “It is painful to report to you the state of Church during past year. We are yet without a pastor – and have suffered so much from the want of that vigilance, reproof, encouragement and

co-operation, which a judicious and active leader would have afforded to us.” (This was part of a ‘begging letter’ sent by the Deacons to the Baptist Association concerning the Chapel debts.)

One person who in the end was reconciled with the Chapel was Isaac Constantine. He was restored on 28th November 1856 then died in March of the following year. The cause of death was attributed to old age. Somehow, one feels that Isaac Constantine was as much sinned against as sinning. It must be recalled that he was a man whose letter manifested a profound distaste for any form of conflict and by 1840 there were conflicts aplenty in the very assembly he had once been so keen to be part of. Given all of the acrimony that was present Isaac Constantine may have been right to keep away from it! In addition, it must also be remarked that it took him almost seventeen years to pluck up the enough courage to return. This does not speak of a man with fond memories. Perhaps in the end, he was ‘hedging his bets’ for the afterlife! Apart from my Great, Great Grandparents, Isaac Constantine was the only layperson connected to the Chapel in that the time that I felt I knew as an individual. The discovery of his letter had represented a major finding.

By 14th July 1840 membership was down to 60, with 14 being non-resident, the latter category apparently included John and Ann Smith. Part of the reason was a highly unpleasant state of affairs, which may have been instrumental in persuading John and Ann Smith to sever all contact with this assembly. At the very least it would have left a very charged atmosphere and it was symptomatic of an assembly turning inward. It involved a ‘Brother Benjamin Sandham’ who was first baptised on September 4th 1836 before being elected to the office of Deacon on 16th February 1838. He appears to have got into trouble over a pecuniary matter.

“At the Church Meeting on July 14th 1840, present 30 members W. S. Nichols presiding, Bro. Green detailed the proceedings of the Deacons in reference to the reports against Bro. Sandham that stating that dissatisfaction had been expressed with his conduct therein

Resolved (two Resns,) that the Church approves the conduct of the Deacons in Bro. Sandham’s case

Also resolved that the Deacons be requested not to call in other members to advise them, or act in conjunction with them in matters belonging to their office was withdrawn on the Deacons expressing their determination not to do so except in cases of extreme emergency.

Resolved that the evidence against Bro. Sandham received by the Deacons & others at their meeting for that purpose be read to the Church.

That evidence having been read and all other charges brought forward which any member thought proper against Bro. Sandham was allowed to question the witnesses present respecting their evidence, and to offer explanation and defence of his conduct.

On the proposal that the Church do express its opinion by ballot whether Bro. Sandham’s conduct on the evidence and defence produced had been consistent as a member of the Church.

Resolved (By a majority of 16 to 12) that the conduct of Bro. Sandham had been consistent.

Adjourned”

Nevertheless Bro. Sandham had won only a hollow victory. The membership list showed that he withdrew from the Church on that very same day.

After this entry the Minutes Book fell silent for almost two years. The failure to keep up with it was another sign of disruption at Cullingworth Chapel. When entries were again resumed they began with this highly uncomplimentary description of its condition by Joseph Green, five days after he took up the Pastorate on July 4th 1842. Not from him the diplomatic equivocations of his predecessor. Joseph Green was of an altogether more decisive nature. Unlike the more hesitant J. Harvey he was certainly not a man to mince words with anyone. Indeed Pastor Green appears to have been something of an autocrat, one who did not suffer fools – least of all religious fools - gladly. Such traits were going to be needed, for by the time of his arrival the assembly was in total disarray. The extent of this disarray was highlighted by Pastor Green’s first entry in the Minute Book.

“The following was penned by Joseph Green their Pastor.

From the time of the last minutes being entered the church entered upon a sad course of contention, confusion and decline. It is needless and impossible to enter into detail respecting its downward progress. Suffice it to say the pulpit was supplied by students from Horton and lay brethren in the neighbouring Churches, the congregation continued to decline until the writer of this account first visited the place, the congregation had dwindled down to 60 persons. I came here first on the 2nd Sabbath in January 1842 and supplied the pulpit for 1 month during which time the congregation doubled its members. Feeling concerned for the state of things I gave up my pastoral charge at Soham, Cambridgeshire, and in July following came to reside here for 1 year in order to try the station to see if it was possible to raise it from its awful state. An examination of its state had convinced me that I had undertaken a task of no ordinary difficulty.

The Sabbath school was under the direction and control of Socialists, Deists and Chartists, who had introduced several volumes of novels of a very questionable character amongst the books. No words can describe the awful condition of the Church. All discipline was at an end, the prayer and experience meetings existed only in name, while very few came to the Lord’s Table. And how could it be otherwise with a raw inexperienced people utterly ignorant of the nature and design of Church order and divided in their views of divine truth. I think I have never met such a motley mixture of Armineans, Calvinists, and Hypers in my life. (Very briefly, Armineans emphasised the role human freewill played in choosing the moment one could come to faith in Christ, Calvinists highlighted the role of Divine election in the creation of this faith, whilst Hypers were extreme Calvinists who bordered on fatalism in their attitude to Divine election. All three factions still exist within different branches of Protestant Christianity.)

Finding such to be the state of things I requested the members to meet me in the vestry and after stating to them my view of their condition and informing them that I would have nothing to do with their past quarrels and dissension’s. I proposed that I should dissolve their Church state and

begin afresh. To this every one heartily consented. (They probably did not have much choice!) The following resolution was then proposed and agreed to.

Resolved that as there has been so much amongst us which has been unChristian and ungracious we agree to bury all our differences and begin afresh and in token thereof to sign the church covenant [and] after the Deacon had engaged in prayer the whole number present 20 signed the covenant. It was resolved: -

1. That if any member shall again introduce our former difficulties he has to be instantly expelled from the Church
2. That none of the former members shall be allowed to sit down with us at the Lord's table until they have signed the covenant and consented to bury former differences
3. That the Pastor and Deacon be requested to visit and affectionately invite our brethren who are absent to unite with us on the foregoing conditions
4. That those members who are living in other places at a distance be urged to obtain their dismissals to the churches where they reside.
5. That those who shall not have complied with our invitation to unite again with us or obtain their dismissal from us by Christmas shall then be separated from the Church. These things been attended to Wm. Wilkinson who sometime withdrew from the Church was restored. These resolutions were agreed to July 9th 1842 and that the meeting was adjourned to July 16th.

July 16th several friends signed the covenant making the number in communion now 34. Leaving 29 who have not yet done it.

Agreed to hold the Prayer meetings in the vestry on Monday evenings and an experience meeting on Wednesday evenings. Except once a month when there shall be a Church meeting, which is appointed to be held on the 2nd Wednesday, Also the Lords supper, which is to be administered on the 1st Sabbath of the month.

Resolved that the seat rents be made on the 2nd and 3rd Sabbaths in January, April, July and October.

Agreed that for the future the gravedigger shall have 3d for digging a grave and the minister 1s 6d for his fee. Application for graves to be made to the Pastor and Deacon.

Agreed to have a public collection every quarter for incidental expenses to be made in Sept, December, March and June.

August 17th Martha Parker, [Olivia] Hanson and Thomas Heay appeared before the Church, related their experience and accepted baptism and church fellowship. They were baptised August 20th.

October 19th Hannah Binns, Mary Ann Craven and Thomas Dinnean (who had been a Papist) were received as proper persons for membership. Baptised October 30th.

November 16th Mary Wright and James Briggs were accepted for membership. Baptised Nov 27th. Messengers having previously been sent out to Hannah Ackroyd they reported their message to the Church when the Church solemnly separated her from its communion for her conduct. Messengers were also appointed to visit John and Mary Berry to admonish up their place in the Church.”

The removal of John and Ann Smith from the fellowship was handled in Pastor Green’s usual highly direct manner. “Dec 21st Berrys case postponed.

Separated for not filling up their places, John and Dinah Robinson, John and Ann Smith, John and Mary Holmes, Ellen Gregson, Thos. Constantine, Joseph Tatham and Elizabeth Greenwood.

Dismissed Joseph Sutcliffe to Bradford, 2nd Church.”

In spite of some practical contributions to the life of Cullingworth Chapel neither John nor Ann Smith were prepared to remain there. Perhaps by the middle of 1840 it had already dawned on John that the Assembly was in such a bad way that the best course of action was to take himself and his family out of it. (Anyone involved in similar Church situation today could well sympathise with his decision.) Paradoxically, evidence cited later on in this history would show that his Baptist roots had not been entirely abandoned. My Great Grandfather Edmund was to return to those roots in a very surprising manner. Some light of faith had after all been kept burning. The lack of any further christenings also confirmed that John and Ann Smith did not renew any deep connection with the Anglican Church.

Nevertheless, this couple could have suffered a worse fate. John Robinson, who had been the Deacon so anxious to obtain the services of J. Harvey, was actively excluded. By that time he may have been a thoroughly discredited figure. His neat writing was however greatly missed the records becoming somewhat untidy after his exit.

Ironically, Pastor Green didn’t last long either. Within eleven months of taking up the call to be a minister on July 4th 1842 he had left. An entry laconically stated “Dismissed our Pastor Green, his wife and his servant to Golcar 12th June 1843.” (Golcar was a Township near Huddersfield. In 1841 it covered an area of 1560 Acres and had 3598 inhabitants.) There was one last entry in the minutes about a minor administrative matter on June 14th 1843 and then they fall silent until 1847. The chapel still did not seem able to put its affairs into any kind of order. Its members were always looking for a strong leader to sort their problems out.

Following a painstaking search through relevant documents I can only conclude that my possible Great, Great Grandparents had been wise to leave Cullingworth Chapel when they did. Bearing

testimony to a marked sense of alienation was the fact that despite being given over five months grace they never replied to the request to obtain a dismissal to the Church at the place they resided. By this lack of action John and Ann Smith showed that they wanted to place the many troubles associated with that fellowship firmly behind them. Another irony was that they probably came out of this story at least a little better than the assembly, which had dismissed them. Approximately 160 years after it was first made, their decision to leave Cullingworth Chapel has, through this history, been vindicated.

Despite his short stay Joseph Greens drastic measures did possibly contribute to this Assembly's survival. By 1870 Cullingworth Chapel was in a position to successfully enlarge its premises and to install an elaborate entrance, complete with sandstone pillars, at the doorway. It still had enough resources to renovate its premises again in 1909. However, during a visit to Cullingworth made on Thursday, July 19th 2001 a contact I met there divulged that the Chapel had closed about "twenty-two years previously, when only about five Baptists were left." A review of the membership book showed that the last names had been entered in 1980. All but three of the twenty-two names were women. Following its closure this grey sandstone building had become a private residence, which up to the present time has had up to two different owners. A thorough survey of it revealed that there had been minor structural flaws in its original construction, with slightly wrongly angled walls causing problems to the roof and brickwork. The overall impression was of a building being thrown up in a hurry. John Briggs, who was responsible for the construction did not seem to have had his heart in the job, presumably because there was no major financial gain to be made out of it. During my visit it was undergoing major renovation. A circular round stone near the roof had the inscription "Baptist Chapel 1837." There were still tombstones in the grounds.

An interesting notice in the Minutes Book gave one reason over why this assembly had run into problems. "After contending with many difficulties over the erection of our new chapel occasioned by the depression of trade we had the pleasure of opening it for divine Worship on October 11th [1837]. We have built our walls in troublesome times" (name indecipherable). This showed that its prosperity had depended heavily upon the economic condition of a community already operating on the margins of existence. Possibly it was this trade depression, which had prevented John Briggs from honouring a generous financial pledge. Pastor John Whittaker had been forced to resign because he was unable to support a family of three children on a wage of 15s a week, which the chapel members were barely able to afford. In his long and badly written resignation letter 3rd February 1847 he made it very clear that it was only the lack of money, which had provoked his resignation. He had no personal animosities and he had in fact left the Chapel in a more unified state than he had found it. Also mentioned was his background as a mill worker and his resentment at not obtaining support from the Itinerant Society because he had lacked a College based Theological Education. Maybe because of his working class background he appears to have genuinely liked the members of the Chapel.

It therefore can be seen that underlying any personality clashes and misjudgements by the leadership, there was a very real, long-term structural problem. This consisted of an inadequate and precarious financial basis of support. During good times a Minister could just about be

afforded, but in the all too frequent bad times this was not the case. Moreover, its membership of about seventy (of on the whole not very wealthy people) would have been the maximum it was most likely to have gained within the village. (Membership rarely rose above that figure.) Consequently, the Congregation was always on the borderline of being able to support a minister. These points were brought out by the Deacons who, at the end of the Minutes Book wrote, "A Short History of The Baptist Church at Cullingworth 1837–1911:"

"The Commercial condition of this village does not encourage the belief in its increase in population and trade expansion in the immediate future. Seeing that it has remained comparatively unproductive since 1837 to the time of the writing of this article worsted spinning being the only trace of industry. In consequence, large families are regularly leaving the district for large towns in order to find more lucrative and varied employment and for growing up sons and daughters. Obviously, the Churches find this to be a constant reducing tendency and regular disappointment. This accounts to a great extent for our inability to support a pastor continuously unaided. Six Pastors since 1837, namely Rev. J. Harvey 1837, J. Green 1842, Whittaker 1847, Spencer 1863, Berry 1876, Smith 1879 and Davis 1892. These pastorates were mainly for short-term service. In the interval, the pulpit has been creditably supplied by students from Rawdon College and by Preachers." (In 1911 the Chapel had 70 members, 120 attendees at the Sunday service and 140 Sunday School Scholars. Characteristically, it was in debt to the tune of £350 – incurred because of building operations.)

Although a persistent problem of limited resources was present, it was worsened by the misjudgements caused by 'conventional chapel thinking,' whereby a congregation required a chapel building be hurriedly created even when it was obviously best not to do so. It was done out of a sense of wanting to be respectable. This had been the case at Cullingworth, which was a community desperately vulnerable to any down turn in trade, (which happened frequently in this period.) Also, it was this thinking which caused the church to always be hankering for a Pastor even when it couldn't afford one. One wonders whether anybody ever raised the common sense point that the persistent lack of resources to pay for a Pastor was a sign that the good Lord didn't want them to have one! For Cullingworth a rule by elders would have been a far more feasible (and biblical) option. Sadly, this alternative was never considered. One suspects that if it had ever been suggested then it would have been given very short shift. In the area of Church Government Cullingworth Chapel's rule of faith owed more to Baptist Tradition than to the New Testament. As a result a ridiculous amount of time was wasted on Minister chasing. For all his many good qualities Pastor Saunders appears to have been the originator of this problem, for it was he who first moulded this Assembly along conventional Baptist lines. Care should have been taken to follow the Apostle Paul's example in Titus 1:5 where priority was given to placing Churches under a proper Eldership. Cullingworth Chapel would have been far better doing this before any thought was given to buildings or Pastors.

Upon further reflection, it appears that mixed spiritual influences were the fundamental problem blighting this assembly. Evidence for this point was provided by Joseph Greens account. One particularly unsettling influence might have the Odd Fellows Friendly Society, which appears to have been connected with Cullingworth Chapel from its very beginning. It is hard to see how its

rituals could be reconciled with the beliefs and practices of a bible-centred form of Protestantism. Testifying to the size and importance of this order was the following tomb inscription found in the graveyard of Saint Mark's Church, Woodhouse Leeds. (This largely derelict Church was formally closed on Sunday; July 15th 2001. I attended its final service, which was held under the auspices of Headingley Deanery - the decaying interior reeked of damp rot and beautiful windows had been smashed by vandals.) The inscription was discovered whilst going for a walk with my wife during Boxing Day 2001. It was finally transcribed on Monday, May 13th 2002 and showed that, like Cullingworth Baptist Chapel mixed spiritual influences had been present almost from the moment of this Church's foundation in 1826.

"In memory of

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

who died Dec. 13th 1862

age 58 years.

This monument was erected

By the members of the Leeds district,

Of the Independent Order of

Odd Fellows, M. U.

In recognition of his zeal & integrity

Displayed by him in carrying out

The objects of the order

He was initiated in the year 1831, and

Immediately took an active part in the

Management of this lodge.

In 1836 he was elected

Grand Master of the district



And in 1840 corresponding Secretary,  
Which office he held up to the  
time of his death

He attended 21 A.M.CS and in 1858 was  
Elected grand master of the order,  
Numbering at that time  
Upwards of 400,000 members.

He fulfilled the duties of his various  
Offices, with honour to himself and  
To the advantage of those by whom  
He was appointed.”

On the plinth were added the words: -  
“REQUIRAT IN PARR”

(Latin for ‘Rest in Peace.’)

The second inscription showed that this man was not immune to the domestic tragedies, which could blight even the most respectable of Victorian Households. It also gave details of his wife and daughter.

“In memory of

Anthony Adamson Alexander

Son of the said

William Alexander

Who died 1st May 1835

Age 6 years.

Also Ann Alexander

Daughter of the above who died,

January 6th 1865,

Age 29 years

Also of Elizabeth

Wife of the aforesaid

William Alexander

Born April 6th 1803

Died October 25th 1887”

In an alcove at the top of his inscription was a sculptured portrait of William Alexander. It showed a man with a domed forehead, long bushy sideboards forming into a beard (but no moustache) and a slightly bulbous nose. He was wearing a necktie. The expression on his face appeared to be as smug as the inscription beneath it.

A surprising amount of information has been discovered concerning the man who initiated John and Ann Smith into the Baptist faith. His name was the Reverend Moses Saunders, Minister at Hall Green Strict Baptist Church from the time the building was first constructed in 1825 until his replacement by Thomas Hanson in 1847, (having come from nearby Golcar Chapel.) Details concerning the history of Hall Green were provided by a Marjorie H. Day – herself a long-time member of the Chapel until shortly before her death (at the age of 84 on 9th August 1996). She’d made the final corrections to her booklet only a week before her death. Despite a paucity of original records the following extracts from her lucidly written history confirm that she’d managed to obtain a significant amount of information concerning the man who’d been an

'Apostle' to the Smiths. I have placed Day's quotations in the order in, which she gave them. In her first section, entitled "Beginnings," she states that: -

"Our own story really starts in 1824, but many years prior to this – in 1781 – half a dozen non-conformists – dissenters as they were known at first – started holding services in Leach's barn, just by the entrance to the Goit at the bottom of Brow Road in Haworth. Evidently, there was a growing worshipping community there for 40 years, and as numbers increased and they were outgrowing the barn; they decided to build a Chapel. Acquiring some land of Edward Ferrand of St Ives, Bingley, Lord of the Manor of Haworth, in 1824 they built our present Chapel on the village green opposite the Old Hall. Descendants of one John Moore, who helped physically in the Chapel building, are in membership to this day, to the sixth generation. The Chapel cost £1,700 to build and the schoolroom upwards of £200. One of the signatories of our trust deed was the Rev. Patrick Bronte of Haworth Church" (Day p.1. This indicates exceptionally good relations between the Anglican and Non-Conformists in the area – as Patrick Bronte was in effect giving his blessing to the competition; this act displayed a certain broad-minded attitude on his part. Eighteen men acted as the first trustees.)

"It is unfortunate that many of the Chapel records and minutes of church meetings have been lost. We have no details of the opening in 1825 of the Chapel, but we have an anniversary hymn sheet of 1826, the date 23rd April. The preacher was the Rev. Godwin, classical tutor of the Baptist Academy, Bradford. On the hymn sheet was printed an appeal from the Sunday School Committee to the inhabitants of Haworth and its vicinity. They gave a brief statement of school activities and needs, and were confident of the "support of the friends of Christ in helping to rescue many of the rising generation from the paths of vice and wretchedness, and of training them up for virtue, happiness and immortal life."

15 years after its opening it was found necessary to enlarge the Chapel, and additions were made of the organ gallery and vestries. In 1841 an organ was installed, built by Nicholson of Rochdale." (Day pp.1-2)

"The Sunday School was also very well attended, there being 281 scholars and 107 teachers on the register at one period. People attended the school and Chapel from far and near, and for most folk the only means of getting to the services was on foot. One family walked every Sunday from Hewenden, which is halfway to Bradford. Others walked from Oakworth, Ingrow, Stanbury, Queensbury and from distant farms on the moors surrounding Haworth. No wonder there are entries in the school book like: "John Pickles, no clothes to come in; Widdop brothers, no boots."

Each year, when they elected the various officials to run the school, a number of men and women were appointed to visit all the absentee scholars and teachers, and report back. In March 1844, ten people did this job, dividing Haworth and Oxenhope into five areas, each area covered by two visitors. On March 20th they brought their reports to a committee meeting. James Winterbottom and Abel Wadsworth had visited 17 people and found a number sick, some had left, some "lie too long in the mornings," one or two "will come again when the weather is better." One boy must have given some trouble in the school – "he left for the Methodists – good rid." Of another crafty boy, "his Father does not know but he comes." James Feather and John

Ratcliffe visited 12 people and brought back similar reports. "Mrs Tidwell's lass, no hat, but will come again." "Widow Kay's lass, sick." "John Redman very wild and has jobs to do for his grandfather, but will do better." "Thomas Wilkinson's lass too cold to come, but will come again."

In the beginning, they drew up a set of rules for the running of the school. These are written out in beautiful penmanship in the minute book, date 1825. The Old English long 's' is used:

'That the business of this institution be managed by a treasurer, superintendents, secretary and committee to consist of nine persons, with power to add to their number, three of whom will be competent to act.'

The committee numbered 20 and even more later on, and sub-committees were formed from time to time to look after special projects. For almost 100 years there were four superintendents, and the secretary had an assistant. Morning school opened at 8.30 in the summer months, 9 o'clock in the winter months. Afternoon school was at 1 o'clock. After both sessions there was a Chapel, and everybody had to go. "The committee and teachers are to meet the last Monday evening in every month to transact the business of the institution."

Teachers had to be proposed, and thereafter to appear and be received at a committee meeting. Rules of behaviour both for teachers and scholars were strict. Punctuality, order and decorum must be observed.

"The superintendents and teachers are requested to embrace every opportunity to communicate religious instruction to the children under their care." This may sound to us a strange injunction in a Sunday School until we remember that in those days there was no compulsory education, so it was essential first to teach the children to read." (Day pp.2-3)

"In 1825 the treasurer was instructed to order certain quantities of spelling books of various grades, pasteboard and alphabet sheets. Testaments at one shilling from the Bible Society at Haworth, and several dozen of Watts' Divine Songs for Children; the children were allowed to have Bibles, Testaments and Hymn Books by paying for them at 1d per week.

Scholars were given 'tasks' to be learnt during the week, and repeated the following Sunday morning, those most proficient to repeat the tasks publicly to the Superintendent were rewarded according to merit." (Day p.3. These rewards consisted of medals based on proficiency or regular attendance. Book prizes were also rewarded at Christmas.)

In her Second Section, entitled "Early Days In Sunday School." Day stated: -

"By the early summer of 1826 it would seem that the Hall Green School was proving popular, if the quantities of books ordered are anything to go by. Bibles, Testaments, spelling books and record books were frequently sent for. During the summer eight more teachers were engaged, and still another order for books of all kinds was made, including 100 copies of Watts' First Catechism. Robert Hartley was appointed to examine the boys and Martha Greenwood the girls in their catechisms.

Rules of behaviour continued very strict, indeed had to be with 180 children, later increasing to 280, being taught at the same time in the open schoolroom. The scholars were to walk in an orderly manner up into the Chapel after Sunday school led by their teachers, and “each scholar is to put his hat under the form on which he sits.” Twelve teachers sat in their turn with the scholars in Chapel, to ensure good behaviour. In March 1834, it was resolved to appoint four persons as over-lookers in the school, and that rods be provided for them! The rods were to help maintain order among the children. Later on, the ‘stick carriers’ were also deputed to sit, in their turns with the children in Chapel. For persistent unruliness, and excessively bad behaviour, the punishment was exclusion from Sunday school until an apology had been received by the Superintendent.

In the earliest days, Hall Green School was a member of the Sunday School Union in Leeds, and our delegate was the Rev. Moses Saunders, our Pastor. Questionnaires were sent out by the Union. In 1826, after giving details about the number of children and officials, we replied, in answer to the questions: “Do all the children regularly attend preaching in the Chapel? If not why not?” “They all attend regularly.” “Have you a select class?” “There is no select class at present.” (Day p.4. A select Class was for adults. Men and Women met in different classes. They were first formed at Hall Green in October 1853 and lasted until the Interwar period.)

“In 1826 the Union wanted to know: “Have any beneficial effects been observed in the children, parents or neighbourhood, from the labours of the teachers?” Answer: “We think good has been done.”(It is interesting to note that this answer could contain the actual words of the man who brought my Great, Great Grandparents into the Christian Faith.)

“Reward books and stationary were bought of the Union.” (Parcels from the Union were conveyed to the Bradford warehouse of the Secretary William Greenwood Junior of Oxenhope who then brought them to the Chapel. The Greenwoods were worsted manufacturers who owned two mills in the local area. A John Greenwood was treasurer, but in 1834 he died “much lamented” and James Greenwood was appointed his successor.)

“For the most part, however, Hall Greeners have been humble, hard-working folk, the majority working in mills, but with a sprinkling of shop-keepers, a farrier or two and a few teachers,” (Day pp.4-5)

“In January 1828 the School Committee met to discuss the formation of a Union of the various schools in the neighbourhood and decided to request the Reverend Patrick Bronte to call a meeting for that purpose, each school in the area to send two delegates.

We have no record of the meeting Parson Bronte was asked to call, but we know that a Sunday School Union was formed at Keighley in 1853, and we joined it, indeed we helped in the expenses of its formation.

By the year 1834, as more and more people had learned to read, there was a continuing thirst for knowledge and for reading material, and a library was established. From time to time, monies were allocated out of school funds to buy more books and a system of rewarding the children of the library was started, By 1840 it appears that the users of the library had read everything and

Mr Saunders was asked to examine and compare the Cullingworth Baptist library books with those of Hall Green, and to take a valuation of each, "If found to be somewhat alike, a complete exchange is to be made."

In September 1848 it was necessary to appoint five librarians, as the library was now open on Wednesday evenings. At this time, too, there was a resolution that a night school should be started for teachers and scholars at their own expense." (Day p. 5)

In her third Section, entitled "Red Letter Days" Day recounted: -

"For the 1827 occasion (anniversary), we read from the minutes: "That Rev. M. Saunders and John Earnshaw are to give the necessary instructions to the children in singing." Their performance must have been a success, because it was resolved "that John Earnshaw receive the thanks of the Committee for his assistance in teaching the children singing and that he receive fifteen shillings as a small remuneration for his services." Also "that Archibald Leighton receive 3s, George Bland 2s and Robert Hartley 5s for erecting the platform with thanks for their services."

John Earnshaw continued to be a singing teacher for many years, assisted later by Thomas Murgatroyd. They were each paid a "consideration for their trouble." Archibald Leighton continued to erect and dismantle the platform, with or without helpers and then given a little monetary appreciation. It seems odd to us in these days that people who did jobs for the Chapel and school should be paid, but wages were very low, and most of the people who come into this story lived very frugally at best. There was, of course, no 'sick pay' or unemployment benefit for 80 years after this time, and when these misfortunes came people suffered desperate privation. So it was thought good evidently, to give out a little encouragement money to willing helpers.

In the 1840s the anniversary was moved from April into May. Ministers were invited from the nearer towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire, and even from Liverpool.

From the earliest times tea was provided for the anniversary singers, a practice, which has gone on until recent times." (Day p. 6)

"Work was very hard, hours long. No such things as tea breaks; they came in with the Second World War. Mill owners were in some cases Fatherly figures, who nevertheless inspired awe, and of course – like Fathers – were strict in Victorian England. They employed mill managers, who with their seemingly great power were often domineering. The overlookers and lesser bosses with some authority over ill-paid weavers and spinners were often overbearing, sometimes cruel. Operatives were afraid of losing their jobs and for most part did not answer back.

Employees of that day had no protection against harsh treatment. Employers could indulge their whims., and there was no redress. As yet, there were no funds to draw on to keep the 'wolf from the door,' except what a man had himself put by against the evil day.

So life was a struggle, but it was not all grim. There were occasions of joy, laughter and fun.

Ordinary people got their pleasure from simple things. Most families were connected with a place of worship, around which their social as well as religious life revolved. Whitsuntide was one of the highlights of the Sunday school year, and all places of worship had processions, teas and games. Indeed, in some of the Lancashire towns and cities today, beautifully dressed processions are still a spectacular feature of Whitsuntide.

The Whitsun treat was established in the very beginning.

The children were “each to have a cake and beer given them,” but not before they had listened to a few addresses and done a very long walk “in the best order possible.” Doubtless, the ‘band of music’ marching along at the front of the procession helped to keep them going in good order. In 1843, for some reason, it was decided to “dispense with the band, nevertheless thanking the Tansy End Band for their kind offer.” But in 1851 the band was again engaged.

As well as the children’s treat, there was also a public tea laid on, and for this you bought a ticket costing 4d to Hall Greeners, 6d to those not connected with the Chapel. About 150 adults sat down for tea,” – which mainly consisted of home made bread, current buns, cakes and tarts. (Day p. 8-9)

“For the 1835 treat, it was decided “that the Rev. M. Saunders engage to prepare lemon ale for drink for the children.” But before many years had gone by the selection in drinks was out, and it was tea all round, adults and children.

There must have been some disorderly ‘gate-crashing’ at the 1846 celebrations, with our own scholars missing their school buns altogether, so in future the children must wait for their names to be called before being given their ‘cake’ and the door would be policed to prevent children not entitled from entering.

After all this festivity there came the annual meeting, when a fresh committee and officers were elected each year.” (Day p.9)

In her fourth Section, entitled “Early Pastors” Day revealed that: -

“We have a somewhat blurred picture of the early Pastors of Hall Green. The Reverend Moses Saunders was the first. (We called our Pastors ‘Reverend’ in those days. He was Minister from 1825 until 1847, when he moved away from Haworth. It seems he kept himself very busy in the work of the Sunday School as well as the Chapel. Mr Saunders had a keen interest in missionary endeavour, and in his day there was a regular missionary prayer meeting. Mrs Martha Saunders too was busy in schoolwork, teaching and “examining the girls in their catechisms.” It is apparent that Mr Saunders did a good deal of visiting, and was usually in one of the teams deputed to seek out absentee scholars and teachers. The committee got very concerned from time to time about absenteeism. In this day we would say that there was plenty of excuse, indeed good reason for it, in view of the hard life people had and their need for a bit of extra rest at the weekends.” (Day p.9-10)

Day’s chief value as an information source was the way in which she complemented the details gained from other sources connected to Sutton and Cullingworth Chapels. She conveyed

something of the lives led by early nineteenth century Baptists. It was possible to learn a little of what Moses Saunders was like as a real human being as distinct from a name on a list. Although naturally biased in its favour, Day gave the convincing impression that, during the Reverend Saunders ministry, Hall Green was a thriving and robust assembly. However, it was perhaps the success of this 'work' at Haworth, which persuaded Moses Saunders that a similar success could be repeated at Cullingworth. If this was the case then he had fallen into the common missionary trap of assuming that one approach, which had worked successfully in one place, would also work successfully in another. Regrettably, this would not be the case - as later events would show.

One source of information, which failed to provide any data, was the 1841 Census. An extensive search undertaken on Wednesday, June 12th 2002 showed nothing. Yet p.329 of the 1837 and p.441 of the 1847 White's Trade Directory contained the following entry "Saunders, Rev. Moses (Baptist)." He was recorded as living in Stanbury and Haworth, which were precisely the areas I had looked at two or three times already. The only likely explanation for this absence from the Census Return was to presume he'd been away on itinerant work. The 1847 Directory did reveal a Baptist Minister called John Winterbottem (aged 45 in 1841, the Census had him down as married with two boys and two girls), but he was a Pastor of a Chapel at a different end of Haworth. There was obviously no direct connection with Moses Saunders. For Bronte lovers, the 1841 Census did reveal: -

Patrick Bronte aged 61, 'Clergyman' born in Ireland

(Listed as "Bronte Patrick A. B. Incumbent" in the above cited Directories)

Elizabeth Beaumont aged 60, 'Independent' born in Cornwall

Emily Jane Bronte aged 20, born in Yorkshire

Ann Bronte aged 19, 'Governess,' born in Yorkshire

Martha Brown aged 15, 'Female Servant,' born in Yorkshire

The 1847 White's Directory revealed that the proprietor of the Black Bull Inn was Abraham Wilkinson. It was here that Patrick Bronte's son Branwell had spent his last two to three years drinking himself to death (from a mixture of consumption and alcoholism in September 1848). In contrast to his sisters and Father his had been a wasted life. He had shown no resilience in the face of failure.

From the 1822 GENUKI Bradford Website it was found that Haworth lay "in the parish of Bradford, Morley-division of Agsbrigg and Morley, Liberty of Pontefract. 4 miles S. of Keighly, 7 from Bradford, 8 from Halifax, 9 and a half from Colne (Lanc.) No market fairs, July 22, Pedlary ware and October 14 for horned cattle, pedlary ware & population 4,668. Here is a Chapel of Ease dedicated to St Michael. Patron, the Vicar of Bradford." The population appears to have been much too high for Haworth Village and may either be a misprint or, as seems more likely, be one, which includes outlying areas. What this extract did not show was that in February 1820 Patrick Bronte had arrived in Haworth to take charge of Saint Michael's with his



ailing wife and six young children. His wife subsequently died in September 1821 – possibly of cancer, and was only 38 years old. This marked the beginning of many domestic sorrows, which would mould the literary genius of the three daughters who survived into adulthood.

When taken in conjunction with records from Cullingworth Baptist Chapel, these sources provided an illuminating insight into the character and gifts possessed by Moses Saunders. The available information would suggest that this minister was an activist who possessed many positive qualities and a few weaknesses. If a particular project were sound he would zealously propel it along until a great deal had been accomplished. Conversely, if (as appeared to be the case at Cullingworth) a project were not soundly based then he would keep it going long after it should have been stopped. More thoughtful people would have asked, “Is it worthwhile persisting in this work, given the endless financial and personal problems being encountered?” Pastor Saunders may well have replied “But didn’t the Apostles endure many problems with the Congregations they established?” This would have been a fair point, but also on a scriptural basis Pastor Saunders would have been aware that ‘weighing up the fruits’ existed whereby a particular endeavour is given care, attention and time to see if it will work out, then should it prove persistently bad and given a definite period of probation, it should then be ‘cut down’ (Luke 13:6-9). In the case of Cullingworth Chapel the fruits were so bad that by 1842 a completely new beginning had to be made. This would suggest that either a Chapel should never have been founded there in the first place or alternatively it was a work ‘born before its time.’ In either case, there had been a failure of discernment. The overall impression from surviving documents was of a fledgling congregation hurrying to build a Chapel because it was a ‘respectable’ thing to do. Perhaps against his better judgement the Reverend Saunders had allowed himself to be carried away by the popular enthusiasm of the Baptists at Cullingworth. They may well have broken away and joining some other denomination if he hadn’t supported their endeavours to found a ‘proper’ Chapel. Perhaps he’d also felt it better to stay on the scene rather than leave immature believers to become subverted by some other group like the Chartists. Cullingworth was a baby he just could not abandon. Whatever the motive his name became associated with a work, which did not prosper, and furthermore was one, which appears to have exercised a distressing influence upon my Great, Great Grandparents.

Nevertheless, following an interval of seventeen decades it would not be fair to be unduly critical of a man who, after all, had acted as ‘an apostle’ to the Smiths. His motives had been clearly honourable. He obviously had a gift for leadership and a willingness to engage in humble tasks such as preparing lemon ale for children. His commitments at Haworth were such that he could only give a very limited amount of time to the affairs at Cullingworth. The Reverend Saunders was a very busy man – perhaps too busy! Moreover, at Hall Green the fruit of his ministry was (and still is) good. An attendance (by my wife and myself) at two services on Easter Sunday, March 31st 2002 revealed that Hall Green still possessed a very lively congregation, robustly loyal to the Gospel teachings Moses Saunders had been committed to propagating all those years ago. Indeed, he would have recognised everything except the modern style clothing and some unfamiliar words in the spoken English language. He would also perhaps have found the sermons a little too short and observed that those attending looked surprisingly well fed as compared to the people of his own time. What the Reverend Saunders could never have guessed was that one day a descendent of two people he had evangelised would be attending this very Chapel to obtain information about him! Could he have known, he would undoubtedly have

attributed this development to the favour of God.

All these details to do with Cullingworth Chapel showed that both John and Ann Smith were somehow closely related, but in what way were they the John and Ann Smith who were my Great, Great Grandparents? The reason for asking this question was that the 1841 Census for Bascroft, Cullingworth recorded quite a different John and Ann Smith, who had had their children around the same time as Edmund and Daniel. They lived next door to three wool combers also called Smith, who were William (aged 20) James (aged 18) and John (aged 14). The Census details showed a household containing: -

John Smith (aged 45), Wool Comber

Ann Smith (aged 50)

Benjamin Smith (aged 20), Wool Comber

Francis Smith (aged 16), Wool Comber

[Laura] Smith (aged 11), Worsted Mill Worker

George Smith (aged 8), Worsted Mill Worker

These people possessed none of the right occupational or personal characteristics to have been Edmund's parents. So the problem arose over which John and Ann Smith were the records of Cullingworth Baptist Chapel referring to? Present was a serious conundrum, which required further research for its unravelling. My next step was to examine the 1841 Census Return for Skipton.

Volume 1 of Slater's Directory for 1855 revealed that Sutton Baptist Chapel was one of several churches in the wider area of Kildwick. It listed the following places of worship:

1. Saint Andrews, Kildwick - Rev. T. C. Fawcett, vicar
2. Saint James Church, Silsden - Rev. Richard Heelis, curate
3. Baptist Chapel, Sutton
4. Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Cross Hills – Rev. Paschal Hoskins
5. Wesleyan Methodist Chapel – Cononley, Steeton and Silsden
6. Primitive Methodist Church – Steeton
7. Wesleyan Association – Cross Hills.

The Directory also mentioned that, “Sutton is in the Parish of Kildwick, stuff and worsted for the Bradford market are manufactured there. The only place of worship is the Baptist Church.” The records provided by Sutton Chapel were to play an absolutely vital part in uncovering the various activities in which some of my forebears had been engaged. They also showed the type of social networks within which they moved. Through these activities I got to know something about them as people and about those things, which were of importance to them. I was also able to see how some of their values have lasted right through to the present day. These included a keen emphasis on the need to gain a good education, which after six generations is still a powerful force - with my middle son expressing the desire to be a teacher. Without the survival of these records the knowledge gained about my ancestors would have proved far less rich. Having been stored since 1975 in the Reference Section of Keighley Library, it seemed as if these documents had been patiently waiting for me to use them.

In the early Victorian era the Church as an institution specialised in education. This was especially so in the larger centres of population. At Keighley Grammar School a Rev. Thomas Plummer of 25 Cook Lane (in the centre of Keighley) was on record as being the Headmaster from c.1830 until c.1837 – his son Peter, acting as ‘usher’ at this time. By 1843 the school was in the hands of the Rev. Thomas Brayshaw M.A. and a Thomas Holgate. (Unfortunately the oldest surviving documents of this school were financial records dating back only to 1853, which prevented any further detailed research.) By placing a high priority upon education Sutton Chapel was simply following a very typical trend of the time. In this area, the Protestant Dissenting Tradition was very strong – not least because Anglican Parishes were often very large and difficult to supervise. Nearby Halifax was the second largest parish in England. Charlotte Bronte's novel ‘Shirley’ testified to the fact that the relations between the Anglican and Dissenting Communities were often extremely poor. There existed a great deal of rivalry – not least in the area of education.

The fervent Evangelical Anglican Minister William Grimshaw (1708-1763) often conducted missions in the area during his time as curate of Haworth Church from 1742 until 1763. In a letter written during the year 1744 he mentioned that God was pleased to visit Keighley, Silsden, Sutton, Bingley and other localities where different branches of my family lived. On Thursday, October 9th 1755, his short-lived diary recorded a busy round of preaching engagements that covered Otley, Addingham, Silsden, Sutton and Newsholme. In spite of travelling a distance of about thirty miles he stated that it was a blessed day and that he had much of the Lord's presence in him and with him! Precise quotations from those sources will be found in Cook (1997) p. 81 & 168. William Grimshaw was a close friend of well-known eighteenth century preachers such as George Whitfield (1714-1770) and the Wesley brothers who founded Methodism.

Almost inevitably, the activities of Grimshaw would have caused comment Kildwick Saint Andrews – not least because he could easily have been viewed as an intrusive trespasser meddling in the affairs of a parish that was not his own. Among those well placed to comment upon and observe Grimshaws activities were those members of the community who were respectable enough to act as Churchwardens at Kildwick. These were John and William Smith (from early 1747 until early 1748), Robert Smith and John Gill (from early 1748 until early 1752 at the latest) Samuel Smith and William Holmes (from early 1755 until early 1756) and finally Joshua Smith and Peter Parkinson (from early 1757 until early 1758). It was by no means beyond the possibility that Samuel Smith and William Holmes actually heard William Grimshaw preach the Gospel with great fervour at Sutton on Thursday, October 9th 1755. What their reaction would have been could only be guessed at, but at Sutton Grimshaw did not meet the violent hostility he encountered in places like Colne where the local incumbent, the Reverend George White used to instigate mob attacks against him and his lay preachers. (George White's notorious drunken and gambling ways often landed him in the debtor's prison. He was the sort of eighteenth century Anglican Minister who was satirised in the prints of William Hogarth the painter. After a final spell in a debtor's prison he died in 1751. It was said that he begged William Grimshaw to minister to him during his final moments.)

The Smiths more decidedly step out of the mists of history in 1784, when they are found in the local 'Dissenting Register of births for Kildwick Parish.' Introduced by John Walton in 1785, the Minister of Sutton-in-Craven Baptist Chapel, (from 1780 until 1807) and lasting until its replacement in 1837 by the National Birth Register, this invaluable document had been stored at both Bradford and Leeds Central Libraries. It showed that John Walton was a very methodical man, endowed with a sharp intelligence and a gift for administration. Thanks to this source, possible family connections could now be traced back to the late eighteenth century. Whilst studying this source on micro-fiche, an attempt was made to begin with the earliest entries in 1785, before moving forward in time until the birth of Edmund in 1832. In John Walton's very neat script writing we hear of Susan Smith. Her date of birth provided the earliest entry in the Register. It simply stated, "Susan Smith the daughter of Robert Smith and Laura his wife of Lumb Mill in Cowling in the Parish of Kildwick in the county of York was born seventeenth of August in the year of our Lord 1784. Registered the fourteenth of May 1786 by me John Walton – Protestant Dissenting Minister." Susanna (or Susan) was the earliest Smith for whom it was possible to gather a little more information. In addition, she appears to have had a sister called

Mary Smith, born on 14th April 1786 but also registered on the 14th May of that year. (For a record of the other Smith's recorded in Dissenting Register please see Appendix Two.)

Evidence of the social problems facing the community at that time came to light in further records belonging to Sutton Baptist Chapel. One of these goes had the rather long-winded title of, "The book belonging to the Baptized – Church of Jesus Christ at Sutton containing: the Church's confession, together with the names of those that has subscribed thereunto, who are a member of the said Church, No1, 1780." The Confession itself displayed marked Calvinistic influences – with an emphasis upon the classic Calvinistic teachings concerning election and the depraved condition of human nature. Some of it would seem harsh by today's standards. What this confession did show was that the ideological roots of the Church lay in seventeenth century Puritanism rather than the more emotional revivalism of the eighteenth century. The evangelical revivals of that period appear to have largely passed Sutton by although Methodism did gain a noticeable foothold in Crosshills and other nearby localities.

For a long period after its foundation in 1712 the Chapel was a very struggling work meeting in a converted barn. It seemed to depend upon visiting preachers and it didn't even attempt to keep any records until 1768. Meetings occurred on a fortnightly or a monthly basis. There was a distinct impression of a work just about 'hanging on' in the face of severe difficulties. However some members appear to have maintained an association for all of their lives - others remaining a source of considerable trouble to a succession of pastors. It was only possible to establish a coherent narrative of events with the ordination of John Beatson as pastor in 1768. After this event "many were added unto the Church and the chapel was enlarged whilst he was here about two years. Mr Beatson added members but many were afterward proved to be unfit to have a name and place in the Church of God. He preached his farewell sermon, May 27th 1770 – again he preached on June 20th." (The record showed that he went to Hull with his wife Mary.)

"When Mr Beatson left Sutton it pleased the Lord to send the Revd William Roe, who had much work in weeding out some members admitted in Mr Beatson's day, but much disturbance taking place and continuing a long time, he thought it his duty to leave the Church. Many died and were dismissed in his day – only three he baptised remain now in the Church. According to the Church Book the Church consisted of 34 members when Mr Roe came to us; he was pastor for 8 years and supplied sometime before he was ordained. He preached his farewell sermon August 1st 1779 and removed to Farsley. He left the Church with 23 members and was dismissed (meaning 'moved' not sacked) February 23rd 1780.

When Mr Roe left us the Lord notwithstanding our manifold offence was pleased still to be mindful of us and immediately sent unto us the Rev. John Walton who preached the first time as a regular supply August 8th 1779." On becoming Pastor on July 11th 1780 "he wished to have some regular account kept." The evident effectiveness of his ministry paved the way for Sutton Baptist Chapels Victorian heyday. Near the beginning of his pastorate, he must have felt confirmed by the rightness of this move when a Mrs Elizabeth Atkinson was moved to benefit the minister with an annuity of £15.00 per year with another £3.00 per year for the poor. This incident showed that John Walton could attract loyalty from well-meaning people. Nevertheless, he needed to be very strong-minded because the church he took over appeared to have represented every pastor's nightmare. It had suffered from a long history of internal dissension

and a high proportion of deaths. Confirmation of this lay in the following three lists of names, (the exclusions having all occurred in Pastor Roe's day).

Deceased

Dismissed to other Churches

Excluded

1. Matthew Green

Rev. John Beatson - to Hull 20/6/1770

John Greenward Senr. – Shaw House

2. William Sharp

His wife Mary Beatson

Edward Duckworth Senior

3. William Ingham

John Smith

Margaret Crabtree

4. Mary Ingham

William Roe – to Farsley 23/2/1779

Ann Smith

5. Mary Hudson

Simon Topham

6. Eleanor Smith

Rose Topham – restored – excluded

7. Agnes Emmott

Elizabeth Smith

8. Sarah Gill

Richard Gairs

9. Ann Clough – died 9/8/1772

Christopher Mason – added 27/9/1772

10. Mary Smith – died 19/4/1780

John Tomlinson – added 18/7/1773

11.

Lydia Duck – added 8/3/1777

Further details concerning the administrative disarray facing Pastor Walton were provided a statement following the above list; “The greatest part of those who now stand as members have no day of the month or year of our Lord when we were joined members. What circumstances turn up after the coming of Mr Walton must be looked for among our names – excepting Mary Smith’s death. David Laycock is the first baptised and from thence names begin more regular.”

From the numbers excluded it appeared that Pastor Roe had ‘purged’ almost one third of those who had belonged to the Church in 1770. Moreover, at a later date, he then subsequently removed three of those whom he himself had made members. Admittedly, some of these individuals like Rose Topham (who also fell foul of Pastor Walton) may well have been troublemakers but the high proportion of exclusions and the variety of people involved did raise questions about the quality Pastor Roe’s leadership. Either he was a very weak man trying to compensate for this by exerting his authority in a tactless arbitrary manner, or a very proud, arrogant man who loved to have the pre-eminence, (3 John 9). What may have been on display here was the kind of ‘petty popery,’ which can still afflict rigid forms of Protestantism today. However, in fairness it must be stated that a place like Sutton would have been full of rough characters, many of who would be convinced they could do a far better job of running the Church than the Pastor. Others would have had serious social problems. Gossip too would have been rife. As Charlotte Bronte observed in her novel Shirley, “talking scandal” was a pastime shared by both rich and poor members of the community alike. There was very little privacy in small settlements like Sutton. Consequently, with hindsight it was possible to see that faults had probably existed with both Pastor Roe and his congregation. The following, heavily abbreviated extracts from his Chapel Book show that even the wise John Walton was to have his own share of problems.

In the following list a cross (or X) has been inserted against those people who left a cross-shaped mark beside their name. Such a symbol meant that another person had written their name for them because many of those joining the Church were illiterate. (Overall, illiteracy was found to be higher amongst women than men.) Those words in square brackets denote those sections so difficult to read that the original meaning could only be guessed. Any idiosyncratic spelling given to particular names has also been kept. Also, in order to give a flavour of how the original source would have read, details concerning a few names were quoted in their entirety. However, reasons of length prevented this being done in every case.



“ROBERT CLOUGH Junior of Longhouse – added March 9th 1769 – died 1821

JOHN GREENWOOD of Glasburn - added June 1st 1777 – died 3/1821

JOHN WALTON - Received as from the Church at Halifax 20/8/1780, ordained Pastor 24/8/1780

X BLAKEY X SMITH X. Excluded April 19th 1781 for professing himself dissatisfied with some of the members, or something else, which we would not discover. But withdrew from the privileges of the house of God - Church meeting and private meetings and also the Lord's supper. (

) And for saying one thing at one time, and the reverse at another in a contradictory manner.” Note the one sentence in brackets, which had been crossed out by a thick black line.

X MARY X GREENWOOD X. Added 24/8/1769. Excluded for tale bearing and denying the truth - excluded 19/4/1781

X ROSE X TOPHAM X. Restored 24/7/1781 but excluded for acting the part of the tale bearer or mischief maker and for attempting to justify her conduct and character by lies.

X DAVID X LAYCOCK X Baptised 30/5/1780 – member 1/6/1780, excluded 29/5/1783, restored 4/7/1796, excluded 2/3/1797 – for persevering in trade after he knew himself unable to pay his just debts. For borrowing money – when he knew himself unable to repay again.

JOHN PARKINSON – baptised by J. Walton the 20th September and added to the Church 11th October 1781

X JOHN X CRAVEN X of Sutton Brow, excluded 4th December 1783

X ABRAM X HEELAND X – Baptised 6/8/1786, added (to membership) 3/9/1786 – excluded 8/5/1802 for neglecting to fill his place in the Church.

HENRY BANNISTER – Baptised 6/3/1787 – excluded – poor attendance.

THOMAS LAYCOCK of Cononley – Baptised 19/4/1793 – member 21/4/1793 died 10/9/1854 aged 88 years.

MARTHA SNOWDON – Died October 1795, interred at Kildwick (22nd October).

SARAH LUND – baptised by John Walton and admitted as member February 7th 1796, excluded July 8th 1813 for not filling up her place and railing against the Church.

ANN LAYCOCK – Baptised 28/8/1796 – excluded 22/6/1797 – non-attendance.

ALICE CLOUGH+ – Baptised 28/8/1803, member 18/9/1803, excluded 8/7/1813, non-attendance.

JOHN HUDSON – (Born Feb. 7th 1713 old stile. In 1804 he said he had been almost 60 years a member of the Church. Died September 4TH 1804 aged 91)

MARY PEEL Died April 3rd 1805 aged 85, buried 6th.

ELIZABETH WILSON Died July 16th 1807 about 10' o Clock morning, aged 77.”

Having rearranged this list in chronological order from 1769 through to 1807, (just after the time when my Great, Great Grandfather John Smith was born) a number of interesting points emerged. The first striking feature was the great age to which some of the people lived. The only medicinal herbs available at that time would have been herbal remedies. Once people had survived childhood diseases (and childbirth in the case of women) living to an old age appeared to be a possibility. Such a health record implied that Sutton was a community in which basic provision in terms of food, shelter, and clothing was available to all but the poorest inhabitants. Conditions in Sutton would have been better than in rural Ireland or most of France, which at that time was being convulsed by revolutionary upheaval. The second striking point was the absence of drunkenness as a reason for exclusion. In the main, the disciplinary measures taken were for such 'Churchy' sins as gossip and disputing with the Pastor – rather than for carousing at the nearby Inn. It did seem that Sutton Chapel attracted the more respectable elements of the community. Hard core drunkards would stay away of their own accord. One frequent problem was 'durability' – new members were sometimes easy to find but difficult to retain even under the able leadership of John Walton. This was shown by the fact that the most common reason for exclusion was non-attendance. After a week full of toil people could not be bothered to go to meetings. Perhaps candidates for baptism should have received clearer guidance as to what church membership would entail. At least then there would have been a higher retention rate. Nevertheless, Sutton Baptist Chapel took its ministry to the surrounding community very seriously and this was perhaps a factor in fuelling its nineteenth century growth when membership rose into the mid-hundreds. Of further interest was the fact that those very problems, which confronted John Walton, still exist today in the modern twentieth Century Church today. Most Pastors reading this document would quickly recognise a Blakey Smith or a Rose Topham in their own congregation!

Financially, Sutton Baptist Chapel was not immune from the economic pressures caused by the Napoleonic wars. A Church memorandum of 1806 (the year in which Napoleon was coming to the height of his power following his great victory at Austerlitz in December 1805) provided confirmation of this. “Memorandum: Thomas Gasforth esq. of Steeton informs us that he has read a letter from one of the trustees saying that the government has by Act of Parliament laid a tax of ten percent upon the interest of bank stocks which took place in July 1806 and reduces the bill which used to be £11. 10s. 0d, to £10. 7s. 0d, per half year.

The stamp duty takes off       £0 3s 0d

£2 9s 0d} sum of both

The bill must be drawn on the 5th of January and on the 5th of July every year.”

The only other conclusion to be drawn from this document was that the Church had put aside a little money to meet extra expenditure. There was a desire to keep track of its investments.

Following the departure of Pastor John Walton in 1807 the deacons decided that “writings belonging to the Church” should be kept by Robert Clough of Longhouse. (Sited south of Ellers, Longhouse was a long grey stone farm building, which is still in use today). That particular decision was taken on November 14th 1808. The mark of Alice Clough was on the minutes of the meeting. It did appear that in certain instances women played some part in the decision-making processes at Sutton Chapel. Presumably, it was felt that these documents would be more secure in what was possibly a well-guarded farmhouse. A strange set of circumstances less than a decade later would show that this security was not impregnable. Sutton Chapel did not obtain another Pastor until Francis William Dyer was received in June 1812 (the month in which Napoleon began his disastrous invasion of Russia). Students from Horton Baptist College had filled the pulpit during this interregnum.

From the early nineteenth century ‘The Church Book’ listed people who clearly had associations with my own family. Some of them may have been the parents and grandparents of my Great, Great Grandfather John Smith. On a more cautious note, it should be stated that following the end of John Walton’s pastorate in 1807 the quality of the writing in this source became highly variable – sometimes bordering on the illiterate. Despite repeated checks it became impossible to vouch for the complete accuracy of the information provided. Nevertheless, such checking did allow for a reasonably coherent picture of Church life to emerge. What these lists did provide was a good overview – though not necessarily precisely correct in every detail.

“SARAH SMITH+ of Sutton – Baptised by Mr Edwards 14/5/1809 added 9/7/1809. Died 18[70]

ROWLAND SMITH of Sutton - Baptised 5/6/1809, added 9/7/1809. Died after a short illness but in the faith of [Christ] May 11th 1857.

DAVID McCROBEN of Sutton - Baptised by Mr McFarland 5/6/1809 added 9/7/1809 – excluded.

X ANN X OVEREND X (Dickinson) Baptised by Mr Sinkley 25/6/1809, added 9/7/1809, excluded 8/7/1813. Doubts were entertained respecting her moral conduct but she wished to withdraw.

JOSEPH CRAVEN – of Lower Jack Field – Baptised by Mr Greenwood 8th July 1809 and added to the Church July 9th 1809 – died of apoplexy April 19th 1814.

MARTHA CRAVEN+ of Jack Fields – Baptised by Mr Greenwood 8th July 1809 and added to the Church July 9th 1809 – died 1838

MARGRITT OVEREND Baptised by Mr Edwards 10/5/1810, added to the Church 13/5/1810 – dead.

JOHN SMITH – Baptised by Mr Edwards’s 10/6/1810, added 7/2/1811 – dead, lived at Cranbury Hole

JOHN SMITH SENIOR of Sutton – Baptised by Mr Wilcocks 29/1/1811, added 7/2/1811 - dead

SARAH SMITH – Baptised by Mr Wilcocks, added to the Church 28/4/1811 – died 14/2/1818

JOHN OVEREND – Baptised by Mr Wilcocks, added to the Church 29/12/1811 – dead

RICHARD OVEREND – Baptised by Wm. Dyer 3/1/1813 and added to the Church the same day – excluded for non-attendance

ELIZABETH SMITH (now WILKINS) – added 3/7/1814 – moved to Shipley – dead 25/12/1857

MARY SMITH – was baptised on a profession of faith and added to the Church July 3rd 1814 – dead

WILLIAM CLOUGH – was baptised on a profession of faith and added to the Church July 3rd 1814 – excluded.”

How much these people would have known about the ‘outside world’ was open to question. Among the more literate who read the newspapers of the day there would have been a keen interest in the campaigns of the Duke of Wellington in Spain. One or two survivors of the Napoleonic wars may well have returned with horrifying tales of the battles they had fought. Any businessman would have fretted about Napoleon’s attempts to ruin British trade through his Continental- wide blockade. Napoleon's banishment to Elba in 1814 and his final defeat at Waterloo in June 1815 caused widespread celebration with some mill owners treating their workers to free beer and even a hearty feast. Nevertheless, the impression remained that for most people in the above list the campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) might as well have been in another world. They were too busy struggling to survive to worry about events in far off Europe. Even the better off wouldn’t have begun to understand the diplomatic complexities of the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), which would redraw the map of Europe for almost a century.

Evidence concerning John Smith ‘Senior’ emerged with the Baptist Register of Kildwick Parish Church, which showed that he was a weaver of Sutton. His wife’s name was Mary Smith. Together they produced the following children: -

Benjamin baptised on 21/10/1770

Mary baptised on 13/2/1774

Joshua baptised on 26/11/1775

Jane baptised on 1/3/1781

Peter baptised on 23/4/1787

Mary baptised on 21/8/1788

For the first two baptisms John and Mary Smith were living in Glasburn, but by the time of Joshua's Christening they had moved to Sutton. The presence of a second Mary may well indicate that the first Mary had died young. It was common custom in that period to give a new child the name of a deceased one. (This practice can be a source of nightmarish confusion for Family Historians.)

The above details from the Kildwick Parish Church Marriage Register also revealed that John Smith and his father John Smith 'Senior' were weavers, both of whom had lived on a farm called Cranberry Hole and were each married to a lady called Mary. Like many of their contemporaries they would have combined agricultural work with work associated with the rising Textile Industry. The younger John and Mary Smith may possibly have been the parents of my Great, Great Grandfather, also called John Smith.

In 1811, Sutton Baptist Chapel decided to expand its premises to celebrate its Centenary. To some extent such a step might have been taken out of sheer necessity as the converted barn the congregation met in was in a serious state of disrepair. Yet such a move could also be interpreted as a sign of fresh confidence, for the Church Membership was indeed growing. Regrettably, 1811 was one of the worst years to undertake such a project. Charlotte Bronte's well researched novel 'Shirley' (set in precisely that year) showed it to have been a time characterised by terrible economic hardship and severe social disturbances - with even large mill owners finding it difficult 'to make ends meet.' Moreover, as was often the case with building projects, costs escalated and the congregation was forced to appeal to Baptists as far afield as Leeds and Scarborough in order to pay off an outstanding debt of £117.00. (According to the accounts section of 'The Church Book' the total cost of the original project was £180.00 – a vast amount for those days.) The letter appealing for financial assistance possessed that timelessly irritating quality characterising all such correspondence. Dated July 25th 1813 it began by stating "Dear Brethren, our circumstances are of such a nature as to lead us to address you through this medium in order to elicit a little of your kind and brotherly assistance." There then followed a highly verbose and rather defensive account explaining why Sutton Chapel needed to raise such a vast amount of money. A sense of embarrassment was very strongly present. Finally, this letter ended with the signatures of Pastor Dyer, Deacon Thomas Laycock and Deacon Robert Clough. Accompanying the appeal was the following recommendation by the influential Dr William Steadman of Horton Baptist College, Bradford and John Fawcett, Pastor of Hebden Bridge Chapel. It stated, "I am fully satisfied that our brethren at Sutton have acted with prudence, and exerted themselves to the utmost of their ability, and do therefore with pleasure warmly recommend their case to the attention of the friends of Christ and his cause.

W. STEADMAN, Bradford

JOHN FAWCETT, Hebden Bridge.”

(Quoted in Pilling p. 10)

Despite this recommendation the suspicion remains that an absence of coherent financial planning meant few of the costs had been budgeted for. Sutton Chapel had not been the first or the last Church to get itself into financial difficulties through an over ambitious building programme. During the 1830s, one Baptist Chapel in Cullingworth was to find itself in an even worse mess.

Thankfully, for all concerned a subsequent record of donations showed that the appeal did produce the required funds. Pastor Dyer and his deacons were spared the humiliation of a debtor's prison. One donor helping them out was a Benjamin Smith who gave the quite generous sum of 10s 6d – thus showing he was a man with some spare money. He may have been the Benjamin Smith who had acted as a witness at John Smith's first wedding in 1824.

One literary source that threw an interesting sidelight into the kind of life enjoyed by people at Sutton Chapel was the novel *Shirley*, first published in 1849. Written by Charlotte Bronte and set in the period 1811-1812, this valuable source however must be treated with caution - not least because it represented the views of a middle class Anglican 'looking down her nose' on working class Dissenters. Nevertheless, Charlotte Bronte clearly drew on what were still living memories of the late Napoleonic period. She also knew the area where the early Smiths had lived and had an acute ear for local dialect. (On reading this novel one gained a very clear idea of how people like my Great, Great Grandparents will have spoken.) Where Charlotte Bronte was especially helpful was in having a keen ability to expose religious hypocrisy and being able to distinguish it from real Christianity. This was most evident in her waspish treatment of three awful curates. However, in relation to early nineteenth century Baptists (mentioned on p.10 of *Shirley*), the way she vividly described the high level of emotionalism in some of the sermons and the manner in which a preacher could attract weaver-girls 'in their flowers and ribbons' struck a fairly contemporary note. Apparently, a dynamic Baptist preacher of that period could enjoy a certain amount of 'sex appeal.' This was especially the case if they were also of handsome appearance. On reading this novel I was struck by how little certain aspects of both Anglican and Baptist Church life had changed over the last two centuries. The types of religious misfits that Charlotte Bronte lampooned are still around today.

During 1813 pressures other than financial were bearing in on the Chapel. One of these was the insistent and widespread local demand for a burial ground to be established in surrounding grounds of the newly refurbished building. Preoccupied with financial survival the leadership responded to this development with a marked degree of irritation as evidenced by the following brusque announcement.

“Against burying any corpse

in the Baptist Chapel at Sutton

Whereas several persons seem desirous of interring the bodies of deceased relatives in the place in which we assemble for the purpose of divine worship and different individuals have on that account applied to us frequently for our permission so to do. We feel it our duty as members of the Church whose joint property the chapel aforesaid is, to enter on our Church our full determination not to permit any person rich or poor on any account to inter a corpse or corpses in the above-mentioned place of worship.

Several reasons may be assigned for our conduct in this affair but we think every wise person will be satisfied without requiring any.

This has very unanimously been agreed at our Church meeting May 19th 1813 and signed in behalf of the whole by

Robert Clough

Thomas Laycock } Deacons

David McCroben } Member

Wm. Dyer } Pastor.”

The impression created by this document was that of inopportune enquirers being rebuffed in a very abrupt manner. One interesting signature was that of David McCroben who appeared to be a highly influential member. The 1822 Baines Trade Directory revealed that, along with Benjamin Smith, he was one of two Cotton Manufacturers present in Sutton. This fact added to the view that, socially, his voice carried some weight.

Although possibly justified at the time, the decision taken at this meeting was eventually over-ruled by popular demand. By 1830, the dead members were starting to be interred around the chapel and by the late 1870s it was evident that overcrowding was becoming a problem. I for one am grateful that this decision was eventually nullified by events. If Pastor Dyer and his deacons had had their way this Family History would have made only very little headway. The graveyard behind Sutton Chapel turned out to have been an invaluable source of information.

One problem with the employment of lists as an historical source was their tendency to ‘de-personalise’ the people named on those lists. The bare facts were given and the reader was left speculating about other details such as the precise reason for exclusion or an exact mode of death. Yet behind every name was a real human being with an individual story - someone that had once felt, thought and lived. Only rarely was any extra information available to reveal something more. In the case of Joseph Craven supplementary details did survive and the following account, written in Pastor Dyer’s neat handwriting, give a vivid account of his untimely death.

“Departed this life yesterday April 19th 1814 our dear brother Joseph Craven an honourable and

useful member. He died suddenly in a fit of apoplexy as he was returning from Sutton to his farm at Jack Field. He had conversed with great cheerfulness with his Pastor not much above a quarter of an hour before his death. His funeral sermon

was preached by his bereaved Pastor the Sabbath but one after his departure from this vale of tears. The congregation was numerous and affected. A [loving] address from the following words: -

‘Be ye ready for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh.’”

After nearly two centuries one can still feel the emotional intensity contained in those words. Both Pastor Dyer and his shocked congregation would have interpreted this unexpected death as a divine ‘visitation,’ warning people not to neglect the ways of the Lord. Whilst reflecting upon this point it was easy to imagine that Joseph Craven had been a stout, red faced ‘John Bull’ figure with a hearty laugh and a warm-hearted concern for others. Even Pastor Dyer, who was quite ruthless in excluding people, found him to be ‘an honourable and useful member.’ This minister undoubtedly preached a most moving sermon at Joseph Craven’s well-attended funeral. Perhaps some of those who heard it would have been awakened to a genuine Christian faith.

Following the analysis of previously quoted documentation, it became apparent that the period of 1813-1814 was very much ‘a season of trial’ for Sutton Chapel. Financially it was in dire straits, with some evidence of poor planning, also an unpopular decision had been made concerning the highly sensitive issue of the interment of bodies and a much-loved member had died unexpectedly. Moreover, one long established member Sarah Lund had been excluded from the Church in acrimonious circumstances and was busily “railing” against it. (She may have felt aggrieved about the decision taken concerning the proposed graveyard.) Her defection suggested that internal relationships within the assembly were not exactly harmonious. In addition, such afflictions must have compounded the daily trial of living in early nineteenth century Britain where death, disease, and poverty were all too common. No wonder Pastor Dyer referred to this world as being ‘a vale of tears.’ The strain he was under must have been considerable. Hardly surprisingly he left Sutton Chapel in 1814 to become Pastor of a Church in another locality. Perhaps the trials he had endured during his brief pastorate had convinced him that the Lord’s blessing was not upon his ministry at Sutton. He seemed glad to leave and take up the Pastorate of another Chapel at Bacup where the Pastor had recently died. The following interregnum of four years at Sutton Chapel suggested that the Baptist Association had known about its difficulties. If, (as seemed likely) this were the case, then Sutton Chapel would not have been a prospective Pastor’s first choice. Even when another Pastor was later to be found he was involved in some unusual business concerning the Chapel Book. Moreover, the poor quality of his handwriting, when compared to that of John Walton or Wm. Dyer reinforced the view that the new Pastor, Joseph Gaunt was a far less cultivated man than his predecessors had been. Perhaps the Church trustees who had appointed him felt that a ‘rough diamond’ was the best person to deal with the unruly folk of Sutton. Should this have been their intention then their decision was later to be borne out by events. During his pastorate, which lasted from 1818 until 1826, he added 40 members to the Chapel. This level of success suggested that Joseph Gaunt did indeed establish a good rapport with the local inhabitants. They would perhaps have recognised someone more like themselves.



The following excerpt was one of the most ambiguous findings made during the course of this research. It was obvious that the Joseph and his wife Ann Gaunt had at one point been involved in a conflict over the Chapel Book. Moreover, the first paragraph had been crossed out and covered in blotches of black ink in what appeared to have been a deliberate attempt at defacing details. The impossibility of fully reconstructing this paragraph meant that their exact connection with the Church in Bramley (mentioned in the paragraph) would remain a mystery. Adding to the confusion was the fact that the writing of both of this couple was of an extremely poor, semiliterate quality.

“ Joseph Gaunt having laboured [among us] in the Lord [moved]... to the Church at Bramley ... He was received as member on members 17/5/1818 [ordained] 3/6/1818. Also Ann Gaunt the wife of Joseph Gaunt [received] from the Church at Bramley by the Church at Sutton at the same time.

We do hereby declare that all connection between us as members and the Church at Sutton is entirely at an end and as proof of which with our own hands we have withdrawn our names from the book as witnessed by our hands

JOSEPH GAUNT

ANN GAUNT

I do most solemnly certify that a book called the Chapel Book which was paid for out of chapel money was frequently brought to our house by David McCroben and that I have a distinct recollection of it being left one night and that Mary McCroben came for it next morning. I delivered it to her and other circumstances were connected which I cannot forget. ANN GAUNT.”

(On the following page was an entry about Richard Smith dated 9/4/1820.)

What were the ‘other circumstances’ connected to ‘the Chapel Book,’ which Ann Gaunt couldn’t forget? The answer proved impossible to find but her voice was that of an essentially timid woman obviously caught up in some unsavoury business she was later to regret. It was easy to imagine her in a woollen shawl giving a breathless account to scowling Church elders. The exact nature of the problem was impossible to fathom but it apparently involved the disappearance of a Chapel Book that by rights was the property of the Church. Why such an event occurred was a mystery but it involved the McCroben’s who seemed eager not to have it in their house. Reading between the lines there seemed to have been some kind of power struggle involving both Joseph Gaunt and David McCroben. Such struggles were a common feature of early nineteenth century Baptist life. Moreover, the list of exclusions in Sutton Chapel’s own records showed that ill discipline was a continual problem. Yet much remained unknown. Even the date of this incident was uncertain. Its position in the book suggested 1818 but the actual events being recorded suggested 1826. The Gaunts may have joined the Church in 1818 and then resigned only to be recalled to a pastorate lasting until 1826. Alternatively, they may well have left a blank page in

the Church Book before recording the 1820 entry. This would have been done to leave room for further additions to their record. Unless new evidence comes to light then the full events surrounding this 'cloak and dagger' business will forever remain unknown. My own instinct was to guess that somehow money was involved. It was unclear whether the Chapel Book was to be identified with the Church Book, which has proved to be such an invaluable source for this study. If they were the same one should be grateful for the documents survival.

The Birth Register showed that Joseph Gaunt made his first entry on December 10th 1818 and his last on 25th December 1826. The final entry before the start of his pastorate occurred on 29th September 1816 – a fact, which left open the possibility that this document book formed part of the Church Book, which had apparently gone missing earlier on in 1818. In his large untidy handwriting, Pastor Gaunt made the following proud entry concerning the birth of his son who was also named Joseph. “Joseph Gaunt the son of Joseph Gaunt and Ann his wife was born on Wednesday Morning (between 6 & 7 o'clock), the 26th of September 1822 in the Township of Sutton & Parish of Kildwick in the County of York. Registered 29th September 1822 Joseph Gaunt, Minister.”

Returning to a more factual note, the Church lists did show that there was another David McCroben who was almost the exact contemporary of my Great, Great Grandfather. He was apparently the son of the David McCroben who had become a member in 1809 and had been embroiled in the strange business involving the Chapel Book. Mary McCroben (who was either his wife or sister) acted as a witness at the wedding of John Smith the weaver on May 24th 1824. Her neatly written signature provided evidence that she was a fairly literate woman – one who could be entrusted with updating a Chapel Book

After the dramatic episode with the Chapel Book the list of names continued its remorseless passage through time: -

“RICHARD SMITH – added 9/4/1820, having been baptised on 3/4/1820 being Easter Monday - dead

MARGARET SMITH - added 9/4/1820 - having been baptised on 3/4/1820 being Easter Monday died 11/4/1878 aged 78 years at Kildwick Grange.

WILLIAM SMITH – Baptised 2/12/1820 and added to the Church 3/12/1820. Excluded May 1834 - association letter to Colne June 13th-14th 18[21] Baptised – twice excluded. Restored to the Church in September 1848 - dead October 1857.

BETTY SMITH added 2/8/1822 having been baptised several weeks before - dead 23/9/1854

JOHN PARKINSON – added 3/2/1823, having been baptised on 1/1/1823 - 2/1848 withdrew, 1/1849 restored – died 17th December 1875 aged 71 years

ELLEN SMITH added 21/8/1825

EMMA PARKINSON – added and baptised 18/7/1829, withdrew, restored 3/9/1863 - died 25/5/1875 aged 66 years

RICHARD & EDWARD WILSON – added 17/11/1833 – dead 1858 and 1843. Also SARAH WILSON

JESSE OVEREND – added 12/10/1834, excluded 7/1841

ELIZABETH SMITH – added 12/10/1834 – 1845 dismissed to Hall Green [Chapel] Haworth [and] received by letter

TITUS WILSON, WILLIAM WILSON (dead 4/6/1876, aged 63), BETSY WILSON – added 9/11/1834

ROBERT SMITH – added 5/4/1835, dead

Being the ordinance day of June 4th 1837 the following persons were baptised and received into the Church – having signed the covenant.

ANN SMITH from Ellers – dead 10/4/1856

ABIGAIL SMITH from Sutton – excluded - May 1841, restored in October 1841 - moved to Hudson in Australia

ANN MILBURN from Sutton – dead 6/1841

MARY OVEREND from Ellers – dead

JOSEPH SMITH from Glasburn – added 7/2/1838, excluded 1853, restored 1856

ROWLAND SMITH – added and baptised 3/6/1838

Added 5/5/1839: -

ANN WILSON from Cononley,

MARY SMITH+ from Cononley

TITUS SMITH from Sutton Mill – added 3/11/1839

Added 3/5/1840: - having been baptised the same day

ALICE WATSON – died 6/1846

HANNAH BERRY – dismissed to Haworth

MARY ROE - died 18[58]

DAVID McROBEN – withdrew, restored 31/1/1867, died 27/10/1871 – aged 70

JOSHUA BECK – excluded 1845

HANNAH RISHWORTH - excluded

JOSHUA SMITH – added 31/5/1840, excluded 11/1845 – dead 1850

ROBERT SMITH – added 31/5/1840, excluded 5/1841 – restored 10/1841”

What these set of names demonstrated was the way in which families like the Overends, Smiths and Wilsons had formed a particularly close association with the Chapel. Hardly surprisingly there was a high proportion of intermarriage between these families. John Smith the weaver had married first a Wilson and then an Overend. One other interesting feature was the way in which William Smith had a connection with Colne. Evidently there existed quite close links between Sutton and the market town of Colne.

From about 1840 onwards the Chapel began to provide detailed figures of its membership. These showed that within six decades Sutton Baptist had come a long way from being the struggling affair of 1780. Numeric growth had risen and this suggested that the Chapel was now performing a highly respected service in the community. It appeared to have benefited from industrialisation and the population increase of the surrounding area. These points were verified by the statistical data recorded in Appendix Three.

The list of new members from 1841 until 1851 confirmed the earlier impression of the Smiths and other closely connected families being strongly represented.

“SUSANNAH SMITH from Sutton Mill – added 11/7/1841, (1852 withdrew,) returned 4/12/1873 as SUSANNAH LAYCOCK

ELLEN SMITH – added 3/8/1845 – Sutton

MAVIS SMITH – added 3/8/1845 – Glasburn, dismissed to Easby 7/1/1857

JOHN SMITH – added 21/12/1845 – excluded 1850 – restored January 1852 – excluded 1857

NANCY SMITH – added 2/1846

WILLIAM SMITH – added 8/1846, dismissed to Easby 7/1/1857

MARY SMITH – added 4/4/1847 – now RISHWORTH

SARAH SMITH – added 7/11/1847

RICHARD GREENWOOD

ELIZABETH GREENWOOD - received by letter from Hall Green, Haworth, added 6/10/1849

Added 3/12/1850: -

JANE WILSON (Now EVANS)

SARAH WILSON (Now HALL)

SARAH ELYN CLOUGH (Now HAUGGAS) – KEIGHLEY PARISH

ELIZABETH WILSON (Now MCNAB) – excluded 1857

MARY SMITH – died 18/7/1874, aged 86

MARGARET WALTON (Now MIDGLEY)

ELIZABETH HILL (Now THORNTON) – died 16/2/1883, aged 46

MARY TETLEY – died 26/3/1872 aged 65

MARGARET SMITH – added 5/5/1850

Added 7/7/1851

SARAH WILSON

MARY ANN OVEREND

MARGARET WILSON – added 7/9/1851 (now WILKINSON) – moved to America 3/10/1873.”

The above list showed that most of the Chapel’s growth in the 1850-1852 period was due largely to an increase in female membership. For some reason Sutton Baptist managed to break into

female social networks. This success resulted in a situation where ladies would ‘gossip the gospel’ and bring their friends or relations to particular meetings. There they would respond to the Christian message and take up Church membership. The relatively low proportion of exclusions suggested that this assembly did manage to successfully meet a variety of female needs. Improved economic conditions may have meant that the womenfolk were less bound by a daily struggle for survival. There was the odd extra penny to spend on Church activities. Not shown in the above selection was the fact that the name ‘Walton’ frequently re-occurred on these lists. A telephone conversation with a contact at Sutton Baptist did confirm that the Walton family had been active members in the Church for the three to four generations covering the late to early eighteenth centuries. At one stage of this research it seemed possible that the twice-excluded John Smith may well have been my Great, Great Grandfather. However, later findings nullified this conclusion.

One important source was “the minutes of the teachers and committee of the Baptists Sunday school, Sutton, with registers of teachers.” Covering the period from 1837 until 1853 this ‘minute book’ provided much useful information. However, the presentation was highly variable - what was often poor writing was marred still further by ink stains, rough calculations and what appeared to be early Victorian doodles drawn by a bored minutes secretary! Even worse, the page edges had at some time in the past become damp and were beginning to crumble away. It was decided that the best way to handle this evidence was to quote some of the more clearly written parts pertaining either to my own family or to families closely connected to the Smiths. Portions in square brackets represent my own guess at what key words meant, whereas portions in curved brackets represent additional information inserted from elsewhere in the book. Nevertheless, the following excerpts are fairly typical of the document as a whole and conveyed something of the flavour of Church life. For reasons of brevity, these excerpts will mainly be extracted from the 1837-1840 period.

“Sutton Chapel, May 28th 1837

The meeting having opened with singing and prayers, Wm. Samuel Bairstow was elected chairman in the absence of Wm. Fawcett the president.

Judith Wilcock was elected a treasurer (for the next session)

The following persons were then appointed as officers for the ensuing year: -

Wm. Fawcett, president by virtue of his office as the Minister of the place

Superintendents

John Parkinson (for the first course)

Samuel Bairstow (for the second course – a man called Charles Asquith replaced him during the annual meeting held on 4/6/1838)

Thomas Wilson (for the third course)

(James Laycock was serving as a superintendent from 4/6/1838 but had gone by 20/5/1839)

Secretaries

Richard Petty (resigned in 1839 and was replaced by John Wilson)

Thomas Berry

Librarians

Richard Wilson

William Wilson (from Sutton, resigned in 1839 and was replaced by Lawrence Moss)

Treasurer

Thomas Berry

Members of the committee

Matthew Sugden

Duncan Campbell (Jesse Overend replaced him during the annual meeting held on 4/6/1838)

William Wilson (from Crosshills)

James Fox (Rowland Smith replaced him during the annual meeting held on 4/6/1838)

It was ordered that no [pieces] should be separated on the anniversary day.

That 60 Circulars be printed for the use of persons who may wish to invite their friends to the Anniversary.

That [Martha] Berry and Mary Ann Clough find places for the children and get them tea on the anniversary.

[Robert] Parkinson, Stephen William, Matthew Sugden and Lawrence Moss were appointed visitors for the next quarter.

(Minutes recorded by) Richard Petty”

A distinction appeared to exist between the Committee Meetings and the actual Teachers Meetings, which were held more frequently. In the latter the minutes appeared to be very terse as can be seen in the following example.

“Teachers Meeting July 2nd 1837

1. Ordered that Benjamin Smith be received as a teacher
2. Ordered that Charlotte [Moreley] be received as a teacher
3. Ordered that Joshua Walton be received as a teacher.”

The size of this mainly male dominated committee showed that the Sunday school was a very large affair taken seriously by all those involved. Women tended to be given an auxiliary role and were very much in a position of subordination. There also appeared to be a great concern on formality and order. It was easy to imagine that some of these meetings were tedious in the extreme – hence the doodles in the book. Present at a committee meeting chaired by John Parkinson on 30/8/1840 were David McCroben, Jonas Tetley, Benjamin Smith, and William Wilson.

The above-cited information was particularly illuminating because it showed that through John Parkinson my Great, Great Grandparents were possibly connected to one person who was actively involved in Sutton Baptist Chapel. This strongly implies that they themselves could have enjoyed some contact with this assembly – albeit a very loose one because they lived elsewhere. This would lend credibility to the family tradition, which stated that “the Smiths were all originally Baptists.”

By the time of the Committee Meeting’s AGM on 8/6/1840 various personnel changes had taken place i.e: -

The Secretary was now Samuel Bairstow

The Clerk was William Wilson

Assistants were Robert Parkinson and Stephen Wilson

The Treasurer was James Laycock

Superintendent for the first course was Walter Midgley

Superintendent for the second course was Rowland Smith



Superintendent for third course was Thomas Wilson

Librarian Charles Asquith - the 1841 Census showed him to be a joiner

At about the same time Henry Smith of Sutton Mill had been admitted as a teacher.

It was perhaps the long working hours of the time that created the problem of a lack of punctuality. At one Committee Meeting held on 27/9/1840 with John Parkinson acting as Chairman, Richard Petty (acting as Secretary) proposed a motion, seconded by Matthew Sugden. This requested "that the superintendents be requested to censure the teachers in their respective courses to be more punctual to the time of opening the school. Present, Males 13, Females 9."

These minutes also showed that by 6/1/1841 Titus Smith (who had become a member on 3/11/1839) was serving on the Sunday school Committee. The 1841 Census showed him to be a Worsted Weaver, living in Sutton Mill. It also confirmed that he had been born in 1780, the year John Walton had become Pastor. He would have been in his late fifties when he became a member. This Titus Smith also ensured that the births of his two daughters Hannah and Charlotte were registered at the Chapel in 1811 and 1814. By drawing together information from a variety of sources it became possible to supply biographical details about particular characters. These sources also confirmed that different branches of the Smith family formed a major and enduring presence at Sutton Chapel. Their spiritual roots were indeed Baptist.

Also provided by these minutes was useful statistical and financial information concerning the running of the Sunday school. The following table (compiled by the teachers themselves) shows the number of Sunday school Scholars, confirming that the Church had undertaken a very major educational work at a time of much socio-economic hardship. The sheer scale of its effort could only be commended. Clearly, Sunday school work at the Chapel enjoyed massive support from within the surrounding locality. The education facilities it provided were obviously highly regarded.

On the books,

May 21st 1837

Admitted during the year

Totals

Dismissed during the year

On the books,

June 2nd 1838

Male

Female

Male

Female

Male

Female

Male

Female

Male

Female  
Scholars

74

79

51

44

125

123

2

9

123

114

Teachers

1st course

12

12

4

4

16

16

3

4

13

12

2nd course

12

12

1

4

13

16

1

3

12

13

3rd course

10

11

3

3

13

14

2

2

11

12

Totals

34

35

8

11

42

46

6

9

36

Beyond legibility, one difficulty with these figures was the absence of any consistent system of presentation. This point was confirmed when an attempt was made to compare these figures with those of subsequent academic years.

Number of Scholars

Number of Teachers

Number of Scholars on the Books, May 6th 1838

237

73

Admitted during the year

27

22

Dismissed

32

9

Number of Scholars on the Books, May 5th 1839

232

84

Number of Scholars

Number of Teachers

Number of Scholars on the Books, 5th August 1839

229

86

Admitted during the year

20

13

Dismissed

20

9

Number of Scholars on the Books, June 8th 1840

229

99



The financial returns also revealed much in the way of interesting information. They showed exactly where the income from this work was coming from and where it was going. Also displayed was a certain degree of generosity when rewarding scholars.

#### Receipts

£

S.

D.

#### Expenditure

£

S.

D.

Balance from last year

6

By expenses last anniversary

3

15

0

Collection 18/6/1837

16

2

1

By Whit Monday

19

10

To books sold to Richard Petty

1

6

By Rent

5

0

0

By balance due to treasurer

1

3h

By attending Night School

17

8h

By propitiation of attending alterations in Chapel

4

8

6

By rewards

14

9

By Books and copies

9

7

Total

16

5

4h

Total Balance by 4/6/1838 Committee Meeting

16

5

4h

N.B. h means halfpence

The minutes showed that “after the business had been transacted Mr Matthew Sugden and Wm. Fawcett addressed the meeting and the whole was concluded with singing and a prayer.”

Receipts

£

S.

D.

Expenditure

£

S.

D.

Collection

21

6

3h

Rent

5

0

0

To W. T. Bairstow for books

9

Coals

2

0

0

Sweeping

10

0

By expenses last anniversary

2

16

6

Books

2

14

6



Sundries

13

10h

Whit Monday Balance

1

12

9

Total

21

15

3h

Total Balance by 20/5/1839 Committee Meeting

21

15

3h

From this data, it became immediately apparent that the Sunday school was largely dependent upon individual giving. There were neither grants nor any other sources of income from outside the area. The high level of giving was indicative of a solid core of commitment; people were determined that this work would succeed in bestowing a basic level of education. Lending further support to this view was the large number of obviously very busy people determined to give what little spare time they had by supporting this work as volunteer teachers. In operation at a Community level were the principles of 'self-help' taught by the well-known Leeds-based author Samuel Smiles. A succession of zealous Pastors also took an interest in establishing activities for young men, with night classes being conducted for 'their mental advancement,' (Pilling et al P.11).

Sometimes material outside of the archives of Sutton Baptist Chapel would give more insight into some of its active participants. Both the 1841 Census and modern sources like Whittaker and Wood (1992) revealed that Richard Petty was a Schoolmaster, living at North Street, Crosshills. His school had been founded in 1775 and was to last until 1857 - by which time it was known as 'the Richard Petty School.' Apparently, the schoolroom consisted of one large room, 30 feet in length and 18 feet wide. It had five writing desks and a 'Master's desk' in front of the fireplace. Its pupils consisted of 17 boys, a few of them boarders. One senses that Richard Petty had struck a good bargain when he had purchased some Sunday school books for only one shilling and six pence. He would undoubtedly have put them to good use.

A review of the monumental inscriptions for Kildwick Church revealed: -

Richard Petty of Crosshills June 21st 1861, 60 years

Margaret his widow January 18th 1884 - 84th year

Martha infant

For Remembrance

Charles eldest, died Sutton 1896

Joshua second son, died Preston 1894

Richard third son died Brisbane 1899

Francis William fourth son, died January 2nd 1918 - 80th year

An interesting feature of this epitaph was the way in which a man who was highly involved in the Baptist Church could at the same time have chosen to be buried in the local Anglican graveyard. Nor was his behaviour unusual, for other families such as the Cloughs and some branches of the Smiths followed the same pattern of high activity in the Baptist Church being followed by burial in the Anglican Cemetery. It seemed as if the Church of England was still used for 'despatching' purposes though not for 'hatching' or 'matching.'

Over the 1840s and early 1850s the whole of the Sunday school prospered. On 8/6/1840 the balance stood at £24. 14s 6h – during a time when a severe economic recession was provoking large-scale Chartist agitation! In the more prosperous 1850s the balance grew even higher at £35.00 for 26/6/1852 and £36 12s 9d for 19/6/1853. After further review of the Sunday school material it became clear that my own family's marked passion for education went back at least five or six generations. In those days education, along with religion, provided hope for people who were bearing the full brunt of industrialisation. It also provided a way for overworked parents to get their children away from overcrowded living conditions – especially on Sunday afternoons when their parents would want some peace and quiet.

Nevertheless, even though Sunday school work met an evident need and grew in terms of financial prosperity this did not automatically mean it was free from problems. On 9/8/1849 "A teachers' meeting was held this day at [this Church]. It was resolved that a monthly teachers prayer meeting be held on the last Sabbath of every month to commence at 5 'o' clock for the purpose of the instructions given and labours exercised in the Sabbath School. Rowland Smith Junior." The information here was especially fascinating because it provided a glimpse into the spiritual life operating behind the Sunday school work. It showed that it existed on a dynamic of prayer. One could easily imagine any prayer meeting led by a Smith would be somewhat verbose and long-winded in nature. Even in those times the Smiths appeared to be a family who liked the sound of their own voice. (Significantly, 1849 was the year after Karl Marx and Frederick Engels had published their Communist Manifesto, whose diatribes against political opponents showed that sectarian feuding was not something confined to the Christian Church alone.) A likely reason behind this recourse to prayer could be found in the details of the teachers meeting held on 11/11/1849. During it both John Smith and Samuel Bairstow proposed a motion "that absent teachers should have their names read out at successive teachers' meetings." As it happened one victim of this exercise of group pressure was to be Mary Smith herself!

By 1/4/1850 Samuel Bairstow (who was a farmer) had become treasurer on the Sunday school Committee whilst Rowland Smith acted as Librarian. Also remaining on the Committee but not

servicing in any office was Jonas Tetley who had been a next-door neighbour to John Smith the weaver at the time of the 1841 Census. The persistence of these names over a decade was indicative of a strong degree of commitment to this work. Perhaps the longest track record was that of John Parkinson who was still chairing committees until the year of his death in 1875 – but by that time it was for the Glasburn Mission, which had been established by Sutton Baptist at about that time. For a certain type of personality committees can be a highly addictive activity. John Parkinson appeared to have been a naturally born chairperson.

Other written records concerning the Sunday school, from February 1845 until March 1846, were also located in the Local History Reference Section of Keighley Library. These included the scholars register for that time period and the Sunday school minutes book. With 287 admissions in the 5 to 15-year age range, it was a thriving work, overseen by a large but variable number of teachers. The two main subjects it offered were maths and reading. Clearly, the Church was making a brave attempt to provide what seemed to be the only large-scale educational service in the area. Despite the classes having been very popular throughout the district, my Great Grandfather's name did not appear in the list of pupils. Neither did his name appear in the 1841 or 1851 Census Returns for Sutton or Crosshills ~ although these were very settled communities with insignificant rates of migration even during periods of economic difficulty, (including the 1839-1841 textile recession which brought considerable hardship to the mill workers of Manchester.) For reasons that will become clear later, Edmund obviously retained a very strong attachment to his place of birth. He must have had some other links beyond being born there.

However, this Register showed that a significant proportion of Smiths in Sutton were Baptists. (Relevant details concerning the Smiths and other connected families registered in the Sunday school are presented in table form in Appendix Four.) Like many of their contemporaries, the Smiths were greatly concerned with religion, education, and social development – they lived in the age of 'self-help.' Despite many positive services offered by the School, a combination of low attendance and high turnover rates would have made it difficult for children to pick up any more than basic literacy and numerical skills. Even the Sunday Schools Minutes Book was at times badly written and blemished by rough workings out of financial transactions, blotchy ink stains and what appeared to be early Victorian 'doodles' made during the more tedious parts of Committee meetings.

Found within the scholars register was an example of the kind of work that teachers of this period inflicted upon their charges. Printed on a crumpled piece of paper were some Arithmetic and English exercises. The latter included two fragments of rather charming story called 'The Animals that Ran Away.' A start will be made with some of the Arithmetic where forty-one questions were asked. As can be seen from the following extracts, the exercises got harder as one went along. Question numbers were placed in brackets

(1) 97351 X 2

(5) 54917 X 4

(9) 45897 X 6

(13) 60839 X 8

(17) 26948 X 10

(21) 89657 X 12

(25) 239765 X 2,3,4.

(28) 3974268 X 7, 8.

(31) 893746 X 16,17,18.

(35) 962503 X 19,21,34

(39) If Tom has 4 apples, Jane 101, Kate 7562, and if Bill takes 9 from each, how many remain?

(40) If every inn in England has 6 horses in its stables and if there are 517 inns, how many horses are there in all? [Work this first as an addition, and then as a multiplication sum.]

(41) In a desk there were 6 drawers, each draw was divided into 8 compartments, and in each compartment were 87 pounds. How many pounds did the desk contain?

Not very nice work for a child to do at any time of the day! However, it was through the English exercises such as the one below that an attempt was made to instil the right moral values into a child.

“Up be watchful! Day is dawning!

Softly steals the gleams of morning,

Thank thy God who guards the night

And who brings the morning light.

[Write from dictation the last four lines of the last verse]”

Only the last two verses of the following twelve verse moralistic poem survived.

“11.

If he had thought how tender hearts  
Love every living thing,  
And would not hurt the lowest beast  
And bird upon the wing;

12

And how the good and kind can feel  
E'en for a bird distressed,  
I think he would have left the eggs,  
In Robin's pretty nest.

[Write from dictation the ninth verse.]

The story 'The Animals that Ran Away' was written for the same edifying purpose. Only the pupils were expected to 'spell and write' words like 'animals, consider, ploughing, quality, appearance, company, resolved.' It would have been worth quoting if only a full copy of it was available. The degree to which children in places like Sutton absorbed its moral message probably varied from case to case. Then as now, their home background would have been the decisive factor. Overall, the impression generated was one of unbridgeable gulf existing between the world of the Upper Middle Class Victorian moralist who designed this literature and rough working class children in Sutton who could only look forward to a life of hard manual work alleviated by drink. Even today, the gulf between educational experts and the pupils who often act as the unfortunate guinea pigs for their theories remains a perennial problem in education. Pity the teachers who are caught between the two parties!

Three years after the passing of the 1870 Foster Education Act what had then become the Baptist Day School reverted back to being a Baptist Sunday school. The new Board School met in the former premises of the Baptist day school. It stayed until 1896 when purpose-built buildings became available, (Wood p.65). By that later period there co-existed within Sutton a fierce rivalry with the Parish Church of Saint Thomas, which had been consecrated on 21/12/1869. In the village a three way split existed between Church people, Chapel people and godless 'roughs.'

This type of division was very common in the Victorian era.

Despite its well-documented problems, it was still possible to gain a marked feeling of respect for the Sunday school work of Sutton Baptist Chapel. Whatever its shortcomings, it at least attempted to offer a positive service in an area of severe socio-economic hardship. Most of those who played their part in that activity really did have the best interests of the children at heart. They accepted the value of combining strong Christian belief with an emphasis upon education and a determination to serve their local community. In their own quiet way, the 'Sutton Chapels' of this world did far more good than the revolutionary ideology of Karl Marx (1818-1883) with its 'Gulags' and mass execution pits. Perhaps the time has now come to appreciate the achievements of such places.

Although rather idealised, the following paraphrased notices concerning two Pastors, in Pilling pp. 13-14, conveyed something of the flavour of life at Sutton-in-Craven Baptist Chapel during the Victorian period. "The Rev. William Elisha Archer became Pastor of the Church on May 12th 1861, and retained the office for nearly a quarter of a century. Mr John Walton, (a descendant of Pastor John Walton) the Church Secretary mentioned earlier, thus described Mr Archer's characteristics: 'He was a great thinker, and the way he prepared and wrote his sermons showed him to be a man of method. He made it a point to be in the pulpit always five minutes before the service began. As a preacher he appealed to the heart and conscience. His language was always choice, and his sermons were all based upon the foundation truths of the gospel. During his long ministry he baptised and received into fellowship 334 members... The Chapel was taken down and rebuilt in an enlarged and improved style. Mr Archer's ministry closed on 23rd September 1883. In his retirement he resided first at Harrogate, and then at Leeds, near which he died at an advanced age.

The Rev. John Aldis, Junior was his successor and commenced his ministry on 23rd January 1884. During his seven years' pastorate the present large and beautiful school premises were erected and certain structural alterations effected in the Chapel at the cost of £5,770...

The good work done by Mr Aldis during his ministry cannot be tabulated, though in manifest results his ministry was richly blessed, for he baptised 117 new members. After further periods of ministry at Batley and Little Leigh near Northwich, he died at the latter place after a very short illness on 27th November 1900, deeply lamented by a sorrowing people. His remains rest in the Sutton Baptist burial ground, near the scenes of his former gracious ministry."

Amidst driving rain on Monday, February 5th 2001 I came across Pastor Aldis' headstone. Its inscription confirmed that he was a man who had experienced both personal tragedy and the heartfelt respect of his congregation.

"In loving memory of

Lizzie Aldis

Who fell asleep

April 30th 1886 aged 19 years.

Also of John Aldis

Father of the above

Born July 30th 1837, died November 27th 1900.

A faithful minister and Pastor at

Sutton Chapel for 7 years 1884-1891

‘So he giveth his beloved sleep.’

Also of Elizabeth

Widow of the aforesaid

Born June 25th 1840, died May 10th 1919.

‘Even to your old age I am He.’

In the course of their ministries both Pastor Archer and Pastor Aldis would have met my Great Grandfather, though sadly in rather tragic circumstances. Following many years of absence from Sutton, Edmund would have spoken with them face-to-face and from them he would have heard the Gospel message. How he responded to it is not yet known.



(Presumably, these processions took place to celebrate the Annual Feast Day - the carrying of a sprig of oak was a custom that perhaps had its origins in ancient fertility customs.)

In order to ascertain whether any of my likely forbears were connected with this Society I decided to carefully examine and replicate some of its archives during a visit paid to Keighley Library on Thursday, March 1st 2001. As the following extracts will show, these archives provided some intriguing details concerning the Smiths of Sutton and other connected families. An insight was also gained into the type of social life enjoyed by the men when they were away from the ladies! (The word 'do' in the following extract was an old way of saying 'also'.)

“Annual Day, October 5th 1826.

Appointments to Offices for part of the year 1826

and part of the year 1827. As follows viz.: -

James Wilkinson President

Stewards

For Farnhill, John Wellock

Do Cowling James Snowden

Do Thos. Bottomley

Do John Riley at Jackfield, Sutton  
Committee

Glusburn, Thomas Hopkinson }

Connonley, Hugh Watkinson

for Bradley, Edmund Cockshott

Sutton, Wm. Dickenson and Henry Spencer

Steeton, James Lund, Silsden, Henry Pickles Cowling, John Emmott

Kildwick, William Davihorn,

Farnhill, Michael Brown and Anthony Spencer Junior

Committee Room October 5th 1826

We the Committee have unanimously agreed that the Committee

shall in future have two quarts

of ale on the Annual Feast

Wm. Skinner            Joseph Dickinson

Wm. Heaton            Wm. Hind

Wm. Green            Wm. Wilson

John Longbottom    Wm. Stott

Jonathan Green    Wm. Laycock

Richard Brigg.”

On the basis of this resolution it was possible to deduce that those involved in the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society liked their ale. This refreshment will have been drunk from pewter tankards - with the participants in this group eating what was likely to have been the very traditional pub fare of roast beef, potatoes and an assortment of vegetables. Conversation at such an event would have revolved around business, and village gossip. “Talking scandal” would have been a popular pastime. Another subject under discussion may well have been some important national event such as the recent Buttershaw banking crash (1825-26), that was reputed to have ruined half the manufacturers in Keighley and almost bankrupted the famous Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott. (Even though the Scottish banking System was far less badly effected than the English one.) The falling price of cotton could also have been a subject of debate. As the ale flowed some of the conversation at the Annual Dinner must have assumed a more bawdy tone. The room in which they met would have been dark, being illumined only by candles and a flickering coal (or log) fire. One interesting name to surface was that of William Wilson, who just might have been John Smith’s father (or brother)-in-law. However, records did show that William Wilson’s signature did not appear on any Friendly Society Records after October 1826. This meant that he may never had any contact with my Great, Great Grandfather.

The first Smith to be found in the records of Kildwick Parish Friendly Society was Robert Smith of Sutton who was listed as serving on the Committee at the Annual Day held on October 4th 1827. However, the find that was of real interest was the simultaneous presence at the Annual Day held on October 7th 1830 of John Smith from Sutton and John Parkinson from Glasburn, (sometimes spelt Glusburn in old documents). The latter name was important because John Parkinson was a witness at my Great Grandfather Edmund’s birth registration at Sutton Baptist Chapel in April 1832. At that event his name also came up in connection with my Great, Great Grandmother Ann Smith. Throughout this period his name was often associated with the John Smith who appeared to have been my Great, Great Grandfather. Indeed John Parkinson seemed quite an interesting character in his own right for he was a highly active individual who appeared



Thomas Walbank	Glusburn
Roger Couper	Cononley
Roland Harrison	Cowling
Frank Restwick	Farnhill
John Todd	Farnhill
William Hinde	Steeton.”

Unfortunately, a secretary recorded all the relevant names. Consequently, no original signatures (or marks) were made to compare with those belonging in other documents – thus it was not possible to establish for certain whether the John Smith whose name appeared in these documents was my Great, Great Grandfather or instead some other John Smith. (If he were not my forbear it would be necessary to conclude that John Parkinson was closely involved with two John Smith’s from the Sutton locality. Given the extent of his contacts this was not impossible.)

On the Annual Day October 6th 1831, John Smith was re-elected to serve on the Committee. John Parkinson’s signature was one of eleven signatures approving a unanimous, but somewhat obscure motion “that in future the stewards shall have power to stop all deficiencies belonging [to] the sick members of this society the first weekly day the fines go to the benefit of the box.” (Among the signatures was one belonging to Robert Smith who was later to become an influential figure in the Society.) By this juncture my Great Grandfather Edmund Smith was a baby some five and a half months grown in his mother’s womb.

The Kildwick Parish Friendly Society Committee minutes also made it possible to trace developments during the nine and a half months following Edmund’s birth.  
“Copy of a notice to committee men

Sir/ A committee meeting is appointed to be held at the  
Clubhouse Farnhill at the hour of Seven O Clock  
in the evening on Saturday the 19th instant, when  
your attendance will be required at the time  
and place above mentioned

Sutton, May 16th 1832

yours Wm. Walten

Clerk.”

The reason behind this urgent summons was duly recorded. It showed something of the financial concerns involved in a period of high economic and political uncertainty - where there had been much agitation for parliamentary reform. (1832 was the year in which the Great Parliamentary Reform Act was passed.)

“Clubhouse May 19th 1832

The Committee resolve that the £250 due from the Canal Company to be paid off the 31st day of May shall be lodged in the savings bank at Skipton.”

Whilst the Committee bustled about its business, my Great Grandfather would have been suckling from his mother just before being put to bed. Like many wives in the village she may have been glad that her husband was out for the night. Still only five months old, Edmund will have already begun to raise his head – looking at those objects and people nearest to him – oblivious of any larger affairs of the world. His exhausted mother may have sung him lullabies to send him to sleep. It was easy to imagine Edmund being a highly active if somewhat delicate baby. Ann Smith would not have had the faintest idea that her son was to be the lynch pin on which the future destiny of many Smiths would rest. Not for one second could she have dreamt that the baby she held in her arms would be a source of considerable interest to family members at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Nor could she have foreseen that her own name would be brought from obscurity and published world wide on the Internet.

Almost every Club has its problem member and in the case of Kildwick Parish Friendly Society that member was Thomas Greenwood. Hints of trouble could be seen in the following curt notice: -

“Copy of a notice sent to committee men

July 12th concerning Thomas Greenwood

Sir,

The Committee meeting is appointed to be held at the Clubhouse Farnhill at the hour of Eight o’ Clock in the evening on

Saturday next the 14th Inst. when your  
attendance will be required at the time and  
place above mentioned.

Sutton July 12th

Yours

1832

William Walten

Clerk

More will be revealed about Thomas Greenwood later.

After some two years service John Smith was not listed as a being appointed for any office on the Annual Day held on October 4th 1832. A James Ramsden and a William Heaton (both of Sutton) took his place. However one does find a William Smith serving as a steward for Glasburn and Sutton and an Edmund Smith serving as a steward for Cowling, (The 1841 Census showed him to be a farmer by occupation). James Wilkinson acted as President. Yet John Smith would still have been present at this meeting as his one-year term on the Committee was coming to its natural end. This implied that he was voluntarily relinquishing his responsibilities, possibly because he had an impending move in mind. His name was added to the following resolution, which contained some evidence of a financial problem.

“October 4th 1832 club hours

We the undersigned committee

have resolved

unanimously that in future

the 3s 6d pay shall be

2s 6d                                  Thomas Green  
James Laycock                  David Snowden  
William Dickinson John Holmes

John Smith

John Longbottem

Henry Clapham

William Roe

William Smith.”

The other business transacted that day was the direct result of a dispute with the clubhouse landlord. As was often the case in such matters the problem revolved around money.

“Clubhouse Farnhill October 1832

The committee, this evening have unanimously resolved

to have the Club Box moved to another House

in consequence of Mr Palfryman saying to

the committee then sat, that he lost money by

providing Dinners for the members of the club.

The business was immediately carried over, when

put to the vote there was not one dissenting voice.

One of the Committee was immediately sent to

Mr Henry Stirk at the Old White Bear who has agreed

to take in the Club and provide for them at the

same rate now paid to Mr Palfryman, the box

was accordingly removed this evening,

October 4th

1832.”

Of particular interest was the note of surprise at the absence of any dissenting voice. Presumably, previous meetings had been characterised by a considerable amount of dissension. One is left wondering how Mr Palfryman felt about the Club’s defection to a nearby competitor? The committee appears to have given him very short shrift. Perhaps they had been dissatisfied with his services for quite some time. However, he managed to survive the defection of the Friendly Society for the 1841 Census showed him to have remained in business as an Innkeeper: -

William Palfryman aged 60, 'Innkeeper' at Low Farnhill

Jane aged 57

Ann aged 30

Sarah aged 30

Richard aged 31 'Butcher'

Samuel Parkin aged 35 'Agricultural Labourer'

Hugh Watson aged 25 'Lawyer'

One can only speculate over what had brought a young lawyer into the locality and why he chose to stay in the same accommodation as an agricultural labourer? Pigots Trade Directory for 1834 confirmed that the name of Mr Palfryman's Inn was 'The Ship.' The entry recording his business details spelt his name 'Palfreeman.' This was the spelling used in the Parish Monumental Inscriptions for Kildwick Parish Church. I examined these at Skipton Reference Library on Thursday, 5/4/2001. They revealed that William Palfreeman had lived to an exceptionally good age for a man in a trade where the temptation to heavy drinking was severe. His particular inscription stated: -

William Palfreeman of Farnhill                      March 30th 1860, 86 year

Jane his wife    June 4th 1846, 63rd year

Harrison infant

William    November 22nd 1862, 49 year

Jane widow of son William

Thomas son of William Senior                      June 15th 1875, 54th year

Alice wife of Thomas                                      February 4th 1899, 74 years

On a separate headstone was inscribed the name: -

Richard Palfreeman of Bradford late of Farnhill, November 24th 1863, 43 years

A search of the Marriage Registers for Kildwick at Northallerton Archive Centre on Friday, June 15th 2001 showed William Palfryman acting as a witness for quite a large a number of weddings. The frequent presence of his rather cramped signature implied that he was



a rather popular figure who seemed good to have around on a joyful family occasion where the ale would be flowing freely. He always spelt his surname Palfreeman. The signature of his wife confirmed that she too was literate. In 1841, Farnhill was a small township with a total population of 459.

The 1834 Pigot's Trade Directory also revealed the presence of a 'boot and shoemaker' called John Parkinson in Glasburn. He may have been the brother of a Robert Parkinson in Crosshills who, during this period, followed the same trade - although by 1841 he was a grocer.

The Census for 1841 also showed John Parkinson to be now living at Eastburn, a village just down the lane from Sutton Mill. He was living alone except for a 15-year old maid servant called Martha Staw! Ten years later he was married to a 54-year old lady called Susanna, (he himself was then aged 50). The 1851 Census also revealed him to be a worsted manufacturer who had been born in Cononley, (which I briefly visited on my way to Skipton on a very wet Thursday, April 5th 2001). Lodging with them was Peter Scott (aged 57) who was Minister at Sutton Baptist Chapel from 1854 until 1857. The fact that John Parkinson did not appear to have any children perhaps freed him to participate in a wide range of community activities. The 1861 Census revealed that he was no longer living at Eastburn.

Significantly, John Smith vanished from the scene at a time when I expected him to have done so. Later cited evidence was to confirm that he had left Sutton to look for employment opportunities elsewhere; his active involvement in the affairs of the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society indicated that at least until October 1832 his life had been free of any traumatic events such as the loss of a wife. Overall, John Smith appears to have been a sociable sort of man who enjoyed his ale. However, the same couldn't be said for Thomas Greenwood who, as the following extracts show, was to cause yet more problems.

"The following is a copy of a notice sent to the

committee on the 12th Novr 1834."

Sir/ A committee meeting is appointed to be held

at the Clubhouse Crosshills at half past seven.

O Clock in the evening on Saturday next

The 15th Novr when your attendance will be required

At the time & place mentioned.

Sutton Novr 12th

Yours

1834

Wm. Walten

Clerk

The reason for this urgent request was explained in the following notice.

“The above meeting was convened on account of

Thos Greenwood’s irregular conduct when paying

On the club who agree to pay the fine

Of ten shillings & 6d specified in the

17th article, which fine he promised to pay

at the Annual Feast Day next ensuring.”

The conduct of this Thomas Greenwood must have been very irregular as the fine of 10/6 almost amounted to the weekly wage of a skilled worker. Something far more serious than turning up drunk at a meeting had been involved; however, what the precise nature of his irregular conduct was cannot be guessed at. However, it must have been fairly longstanding and seemed to involve the misuse of money. Perhaps there had been some arrears in his contributions? At the time of this confrontation my Great Grandfather Edmund had entered the third year of his life and was living away from Sutton in Cullingworth with his parents John and Anne. By then he had a younger brother called Daniel.

The minutes of Kildwick Parish Friendly Society ended in September 1855. They consisted of the usual list of names and committee resolutions on mundane administrative matters. Certain key individuals had displayed a long lasting commitment right to the end. Robert Smith served as ‘Clerk’ from 1839 until 1846 whilst Benjamin Smith acted as ‘steward’ for Sutton from 7/10/1841 until late 1844. At the Annual Feast Day on October 4th 1849 “the following persons were appointed to the following offices” John Cockshott was President, Roland Smith acted as steward for Sutton, Robert Smith (also of Sutton) served on the committee, and the ubiquitous John Parkinson acted as steward for Steeton. Records connected to Sutton Chapel show Roland Smith to have been a devout Baptist; yet despite his evident religious convictions he still felt free to hold a responsible position in a society that met in a public house and consumed generous quantities of ale! Apparently absent during the late 1840s was any rigid demarcation between Chapel and Public House. Evidence provided by Wood confirmed that the Temperance Movement did not begin to influence Sutton Chapel until the late 1860s. An earlier generation of

Chapel members didn't appear to have seen any conflict between their faith and any attendance at the White Bear Inn. Their attitude was more akin to that of today than the late Victorian era, when to be a member of the Chapel was to be identified with teetotalism. The following extract, written in neat script writing provides confirmation of this point.

“Committee Room October 5th 1854

In consequence of the members not attending  
to put in and nominate officers according to the

rules of the society the officers now acting

were obliged to hold office for this year

when it was unanimously agreed

to have the box and society removed to.

The Old White Bear Inn, Crosshills

When the landlord agreed to furnish

Each member with a dinner in the

Next Annual Feast Day.

The box was removed accordingly.

Robert Smith, Secretary.”

It seemed that following several decades of honourable service to its members, the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society was in decline – having been replaced by other forms of insurance provision. Most of its records do appear to peter out in the late 1850s. Incidentally, the 1841 Census revealed only two Robert Smiths living in Sutton. One an agricultural labourer born in about 1810 (too young to have had an active part in the Society in the 1820s) and the other a worsted manufacturer, who would have been of the same generation as my Great, Great Grandfather John Smith. (This Particular Robert Smith had lived at Low End on the North Side of the Turnpike Road.) The high degree of literacy displayed in his role as secretary strongly implied that the Robert Smith of the Friendly Society could be identified with the worsted manufacturer of the same name.

My Great, Great Grandfather's probable connections with John Parkinson, Benjamin Smith, and Robert Smith have one common feature; all of these associations were with men engaged in worsted manufacturing. The influence of such connections may have persuaded John Smith that work in this growing area of industry would be a good option for his son Edmund to follow. Almost of equal significance is the fact that his best friends were businessmen and the fact that they were his friends (or at least close associates) powerfully suggested that during the 1830s his

own commercial reputation as a Millwright must have been respectable. In those days businessmen did not usually associate with losers or cheats. They would have risked ruin in doing so.

Whilst visiting the locality on Monday, 19th March 2001, I managed to find 'The Old White Bear Inn, Crosshills.' An inscription in a somewhat eroded capstone above the doorway showed that the building had first been constructed in 1735. One interesting feature was a flight of stone steps leading to an upper room, which most likely would have been the dining area where the Friendly Society to held their Annual Dinners. The regular clientele would have partaken their refreshment downstairs. The Inn was only about twenty-five minute's walk from Sutton. For most of the members it was perhaps at a far more convenient location than Mr Palfrymans Inn 'The Ship' at Farnhill. (Incidentally, the 'White Bear' Pub at nearby Eastburn, should not be confused with this particular Public House. In 1834, this second 'White Bear' pub was under the proprietorship of a John Wilkinson.)

A less exciting but still highly informative document was the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society Sick Book dating from 1782 until 1853. It consisted mainly of a list of names and payments. The earliest Smith on record was a Benjamin Smith who was paid 4/- for one week's sickness on July 4th 1782. Next in turn was a John Smith who received 5/- for one week's sickness on February 10th 1783. However, perhaps the most interesting entry was that of John Smith Senior of Sutton whose sick pay evidently amounted to an old age pension. The length of time he received this form of payment suggested that he had suffered an old age characterised by a great deal of infirmity. He first appeared on the records on July 7th 1831, along with a John Smith of Glasburn. His payment at that stage was 6/- per week. By January 1832, weekly payment was 5/-, by August 16th of that year it was down to 3/6, by 9/9/1833 it had been reduced to 2/6 and to a paltry 1/6 in April 1838. It remained at that level until the final payments in late 1838. My own estimation - based on these records - was that his death occurred in late November 1838. His case showed that the Friendly Society could only meet needs for a rather limited time-period. His last income from this source would barely have paid the rent.

Complementing the above source were the official Parish Records of Sutton Township. These contained the same names, which featured in the Friendly Society and in the records of Sutton Baptist Chapel. When used in conjunction all three sources of information offered a very coherent picture of the kind of lifestyle led by the Smiths and the social position they enjoyed in their local community. They also highlighted many of the local difficulties facing a community like Sutton. The following extracts from the official Parish Records highlighted such problems. As with the documents from the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society I have only extracted material pertaining either directly to my own (or closely connected) family lines or offering useful background information about everyday life at Sutton. Nevertheless, this material was still highly representative of the wider documentation.

The endless capacity of small communities like Sutton to almost literally 'make

mountains out of molehills' can be seen in the following extract taken from The Township Accounts Book, (which covers the period from 1834 until early 1839).

“1836

An agreement this 9th day of February 1836

between the inhabitants of Sutton and John

Shackleton of Sutton that he the said John

Shackleton engages to take the moles and

To spread all the mole hills in the said

Township for 7 years at 4 pounds per year.

If any complaint be made that he has

Not done his duty, he shall be discharged

From his employ by the consent or

Majority of two thirds of the occupiers

Present at a meeting convened on

The occasion by giving three months

Notice from the aforesaid meeting.

I John Shackleton engage and

Enter into the above agreement as

Witnessed my hand the day and

Year above written.

X (John Shackleton)

Witness J. D. Heaton.”

It appeared that the services of the illiterate John Shackleton were not satisfactory because a year later another illiterate worker George Hudson had replaced him. He received one third extra for doing the same work as his predecessor.

“1837

An agreement made this 5th day  
Of May 1837 between the inhabitants of Sutton and  
George Hudson of Sutton that he the said

George Hudson engages to

take the moles and to spread

all the mole hills in the said

Township for 7 years at

£6. 0s per year. If any

complaint be made that

he has not done his duty, he

shall be discharged from his

employ by the consent or

majority of two thirds of the

occupiers present at

a meeting convened on the  
occasion by giving one month notice  
from the aforesaid meeting

I George Hudson engage and enter

into the above agreement

as Witnessed my hand the day and

Year above written.

X (George Hudson)

Witness John Jackson.”

The change (which I d) from three to one months notice indicated that the inhabitants of Sutton wanted to speed up the procedure whereby an incompetent mole catcher could be

discharged. The existence of such a post showed that industrialisation had not yet completely severed this community from its rural roots. Parochial politics were very much on display. In some ways, my ancestors lived in a very small world. Appointing a mole catcher would not have been one of the most exciting of activities and somewhat frustratingly it failed provide a long-term solution to the problem. During my visit made to Ellers on Monday, 19th March 2001, I could see that some of the surrounding fields were still full of molehills!

One especially fascinating document was the 'Disbursements to the Poor Book' for Sutton. It covered the period from 1785 until 1809, naming those who were in receipt of poor relief. A review of those listed revealed plenty of Craven's and Wilson's but not one Smith! Even if I had overlooked out a few names the fact remained that in proportion to their numbers the Smiths were highly underrepresented in the 'Poor Book.' This absence provided decisive evidence that the Smiths in a social sense were located above the poorest section of the community. They were neither wealthy landowner's like the Spencer's nor were they 'up and coming' industrialists like the Bairstow's Nevertheless, they were clearly 'a middling sort of people' who knew how to be self-sufficient. Their signatures as witnesses to the fact that the poor relief accounts had been properly examined provided telling evidence of their respectable position within their local community.

An examination will be made of the poor relief distribution for 1805 - the year in which Admiral Nelson won his famous sea battle against the French and Spanish navies at Trafalgar. For ease of clarity, these figures were placed in table form. It can be seen that, whilst being under the authority of the local overseer, a certain John Smith had taken a hand in the administration of this form of welfare. The money will have released into his care, and then he will have distributed it to those most in need.

"Disbursements by Joseph Craven, overseer [& Constable]

for John Smith at [Firtops] or Spencer's Farm

1st May 1804 until 1st May 1805

Payments

£

s

d

h/f

Monthly Pay

7

19

4

Weekly do...

123

13

5

Funeral Expenses

2

14

6



Clothing

2

7

10

1/2

House Rents

16

11

6

Necessities

18

0

7

1/2

Overseer Expenses

30

7

7

1/2

Constable

60

8

2

Mole Catching

4

8

4

To serving the office

8

[9]

[1]

Vestry Coals – 4 Loads 15 and a half

5

2

275

4

2

1/2

Due to Old Offices 1803

73

18

1

1/2

349

2

4

N.B. h/f = 'Half Pennies and Farthings'

Following a brief record of collections made to pay for the poor rates, the balance for this period closed with the following statement.

“June 13th 1805 –

These accts (accounts) have been examined

& allowed errors excepted

by us W. Dixon

Wm. Spencer

John Clough

David McCroben

Robert Clough

John Spencer

Richard Smith

James Lister

Benj. Smith

John Parkinson

Wm. Brigg

Thos. Bottomley.”

A particularly fascinating feature about the names I d was how the Smiths were already enjoying close ties with other families such as the Cloughs, McCrobens and Parkinsons at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This was at a time when my Great, Great Grandfather John Smith would have been only a three month old baby. Subsequent evidence would show that these ties were also present at the time of my Great Grandfather’s birth in January 1832 and continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century. It seems that these same respectable families had all known one another from the late eighteenth century, before industrialisation had really taken hold of Sutton. In the main their chief sources of income will have been from farming, milling and weaving.

By mid 1807 Napoleon was the master of Europe, but in Sutton the routine distribution of parish poor relief continued unaffected – although the higher amount spent on weekly relief suggested the presence of economic hardship. This in part could have been a symptom of the disruption caused by the troubled political and military situation at the time.

“Disbursements by Joseph Craven overseer [& Constable]

for Peter Barritt at

Hill Farms 1st May 1805

Until 1st May 1806

Payments

£

s

d

h/f

Monthly Pay

5

7

Weekly do...

163

16

Necessities

14

19

4

House Rents

15

16

9

### Funerals

3

15

10

### Mole Catching

5

3

### Clothing

6

16

9

Overseer Expenses

6

12

3

Constable Do...

51

1

7

To serving the Office

8

8



Paid to old officer

35

14

11

1/2

317

11

5

1/2

& charging journey to Huddersfield

8

317

19

5

1/2

Following a brief record of collections received in order to pay for the poor rates, the balance for this period closed with this statement: -

“July 2nd 1807 –

The above accts examined

And allowed errors excepted

By us -----

Wm. Spencer

John Clough

David McCroben

John Spencer

James Lister---

Joshua Cropley

John Smith

John Spencer, Farmer

John Walton

Hiram Butterfield.”

N.B. John Walton was possibly the Pastor at Sutton Baptist Church.

Virtually all of the signatures appended to the 1805 and 1807 accounts were neatly written - not

one ‘mark’ was present. This confirmed the high degree of literacy existing among this circle of men. Somewhere in or around the township a reasonable amount of basic teaching had been or was still taking place. Not only could these men write their names but they could also understand accounts as well. This was an attribute that some of my own Business Studies students do not have today – even with the benefit of the modern education system!

From 1810 until 1827, no records of poor relief were available. When they do re-appear as the “Kildwick Payments Book for Sutton Township” John Smith was ‘overseer.’ He held this post until April 1833 when Peter Laycock replaced him. This particular John Smith wrote in beautiful script style, which was to contrast markedly with the far messier style of his successor. His signature, with its decorative curls around the ‘J’ and the ‘S,’ and its bold crossing of the ‘t’ was identical to that of the John Smith whose signature appeared in the 1807 audit. He was clearly too old to have been my Great, Great Grandfather of the same name. (Also my Great, Great Grandfather was illiterate.) Equally apparent was the fact that he was a man of some standing in the local community. The writing gave the impression of a good administrator who knew his own mind on matters. In addition, the length of his involvement in the depressing area of poor relief displayed a high level of commitment to the surrounding community. This present history owes much to that Smith for the meticulous way in which he kept his documents – extracts of which are now given. (For ease of clarity, most of the information will again, be presented in table form.)

“John Smith, Overseer 1827

Payments

£

s

d

h/f

Disbursts in April

100

1

4

Do in May

86

1

5

Do in June

111

4

4

Do in July

96

17

4

1/2

Do in August

107

15

3

1/2

Do in September

89

6

[0]

1/2

Do in October

50

1

4

1/2

Do in November

53

1

1

Do in December

59

18

2

1/2

Do in January

46

5

10

Do in February

50

13

[0]

Do in March

174

7

5

1/2

1055

12

9

Lost in Bastardy

13

8

5

1069

1

2

John Smith, Overseer to Town"

8

8

9

A review of these figures appeared to show no seasonal fluctuations. During high summer a plentiful supply of outdoor work should have been available, yet this period showed a higher level of payments than the cold winter months of January and February when such employment would have been of limited supply. The amount spent on poor relief would have represented a sizeable proportion of the township budget. There was only a little left to spare for improvements to the roads and other local facilities. Much of the local labour appears to have been of a casual kind, which could easily be laid-off at the first hint of an economic downturn. Consequently, the amount spent on poor relief could suddenly escalate as demonstrated in figures for the December 1831 until March 1832 period.

Year



Date

Payments

£

s

d

h/f

1831

December

Weekly Payments

27

3

2

1/2

Casual relief

30

8

8

1/2

Rents

7

8

-

Journeys

8

6

Total £

65

8

5

1832

January

Weekly Payments

15

18

4

Casual relief

17

15

6

Rents

6

11

-

Journeys

-

11

-

Total

40

15

10

1832

February

Weekly Payments

20

-

6

### Casual relief

22

1

3

$\frac{1}{2}$

### Rents

3

10

-

Journeys

-

11

-

Total £

45

19

8

½

1832

March

Weekly Payments

47

9

-

Casual relief

100

4

3

1/2



Rents

30

9

6

Bills

63

10

3

Journeys

-

12

6

Total £

242

5

6

1/2

The almost five fold increase in ‘casual relief’ strongly supported the view that in this period there had been a sudden and major laying off of casual labour. This problem may have arisen because of the economic and political uncertainty involved with the passing of the great Reform Bill in June 1832. This was not to exclude the influence of more localised factors, but these will have taken place within the context an agitated national political environment, which will have discouraged a wider business confidence. My Great Grandfather Edmund Smith’s birth on January 21st 1832 took place amidst some very troubled times; when his own father John Smith will have had plenty of incentive to look for work elsewhere.

Total payments in the financial year covering the period from 1/4/1831 until 31/3/1832 was £902 3s 8 1/2d. Of this amount £6 11s 1/2d went “by balance of bastardy;” the rest into various forms of poor relief. The last month accounted for over 25% of the total. As can be seen from the extract below, respectable witnesses had to sign to the fact that the annual totals had been properly worked out: -

“Seen and allowed by us this

6th day of April 1832

James Laycock

Edmund Smith (Possibly an Uncle of my Great Grandfather of the same name?)

Ferdinand Scarborough

Peter Laycock

Richard Gill

John Teal

Samuel Whitaker

Saml. Gott

West Riding

Yorkshire } Passed and allowed by us two of his

Majesty's justices of this place for the said

Riding, the same being verified upon the oath

Of John Smith this 7th April 1832.

M. Coulthurst

A. Marsden"

Obviously, the overseer John Smith was a man who could be entrusted with a major responsibility in running community affairs and whose oath could be relied upon by visiting magistrates and as well as by the wider community. His position of respectability strongly reinforced, the impression that the Smiths were 'a middling sort of people.' They were not wealthy, but they were not poor either.

Over the next financial year, total payments were £895 19s 61/2d, of which £3 1s was spent on 'Bastering.' Verifying these accounts on May 17th 1833 was: -

James Laycock

John Davy

Edmund Smith

John Parkinson (whose signature differed from that of the John Parkinson in 1805)

Joseph Brown

Ferdinand Scarborough (an unusually splendid sounding name)

Richard Gill

William Smith

- The two examining magistrates being Matthew Wilson and H. H. Bramley.

By 1836, administration had, become much more stringent, with the accounts now being examined every quarter rather than once a year. Peter Laycock appeared to find it difficult to do his job. On July 4th 1836 the witnesses to the figures for the first quarter of the financial year, which began on April 1st were: -

James Laycock

John Smith (whose signature was not that of John Smith the overseer)

The mark of Richard Gill

Henry Overton

John Binns

These were the usual number of witnesses one would expect, even though the total payments were £180 3s 7d (of which £3.15 went on the Overseer's salary and £1 3s 3d in 'bastardy.') However, the following quarter was quite a different story. Virtually everyone wanted to sign as a witness, which powerfully suggested that there had been some form of serious dispute about payments. Respectable members in the community of Sutton did not seem to possess much confidence in Peter Laycock's ability to properly discharge his role as overseer. By this period anyway the 1834 Poor Law Act was putting an end to the old traditional system of parish relief and replacing it with the much-feared threat of the workhouse.

“1836

July			
Paid-----			
26 18 10	Aug.		
Paid-----			28
16 1			
Sept. Paid			
-----			66 7
--	Paid in		
Bastardy-----			3 0
1			
		125 2 --	
Overseer on Hand			
		5 3 3h	
		130 5 3h	

seen and allowed by us

this 3 day Oct 1836

for the last 3 months before

Jonas Laycock Church Warden

John Parkinson (whose signature was identical to that of the John Parkinson in 1833)

James Laycock

Richard Gill X

Henry Overton

Joseph [Becanan]

John Whitaker

Edmund Smith

John Smith (A handloom weaver of Sutton whose untidy signature appeared on his wedding certificate at the time of his marriage to Mary Overend on March 30th 1834.)

John Smith (Another handloom weaver of Sutton whose tidy signature appeared as a witness to the above wedding)

Richard Green X

John Woollen X

Ths. Laycock

James Gott

Peter Watson

Joseph Smith

William Watson

Roger Shackleton (was shown to be a 'Slater' by trade in the 1841 Census)

Wm. Watson Junior

Henry Shuttleworth X

Joshua Wilson

James Hargreaves X

Nicolas Smith X

John Binns X

William Whitaker X

Benjamin Lambert X

John Teal X

Michael Emott X

Robert Hutchinson X

Isaac Berry

James Emmott X

George Scarborough

William Thompson X

James Whitaker X

John Smith

William Shuttleworth

John Wilson

Peter Walton

James Snowden X

West Riding

of

Yorkshire } Passed and allowed by us two

of his Majesty's justices of this

place for the said Riding the same being

duly verified upon the decaration of

Peter Laycock this 4th day of Oct 1804

Matt Wilson

L. Prestow.”

None of the three John Smith's who had signed this document could have been my Great, Great Grandfather. Nor do any of them appear to have been of John Smith Senior who was in failing health and dependent upon the relief provided by the Kildwick Parish Friendly Society. Although reasonably clear - these signatures did not match the very neat hand of John Smith the overseer. In spite of blotches caused by what was a very scratchy fountain pen, it was still clearly apparent that the Smiths enjoyed a high level of literacy for the time. The only mark was for Nicolas Smith who appeared to have been a fairly elderly man. He was gone by the time the 1841 Census took place. One highly unsurprising feature was the signature of John Parkinson who of course had to be in on this business as he was in every other business.