

A WALK IN SOUTH OSSETT.

On Wednesday 18th May 2011 myself, Alan Howe and Steve Wilson met at Alan's, with the intention of having a walk around the South Ossett area to view the old houses and buildings in the area which remain. We left the car in the car park at the rear of the Christ Church, and started our walk by looking at the old church. To the front, in a corner, is a memorial to the first vicar of this church, Denis Creighton Neary, erected by his children. These children were also eventually commemorated on this monument. D. C. Neary was the first vicar of the parish of South Ossett, and the church was built in 1851.



Looking at the stone we learn that Revd. Denis Creighton Neary died Mar 15th 1884, his wife Jane Anna died Aug 25th 1881, and his children Mary Jane July 1st 1916 (buried at Southport), Sarah Emma July 21st 1858, and William Edward, who died in America in 1898.

We then walked further down the path to look at the old tombstones which are by the path. Originally this church yard was filled with graves and monuments, but this was cleared in the 20th century and the grounds tidied. These stones are a few which remain. Some were also used as steps up to the church porch, but these have recently been replaced by a rather basic and simple set of concrete steps - it can only be hoped that at some point in the future these will be replaced by something more sympathetic towards a mid-nineteenth century church.

We moved on along Horbury Road, passing the Crown pub, which is now a children's day care centre. Many pubs have closed down in Ossett in the past few years for economy reasons, and the Crown is one of these.

We made our way into Green park, and Steve pointed out that the place where the boating lake was constructed in the park in the early 1960's used to be a waterlogged spot, which would make it an ideal place to situate a pond. Green Park was opened on the 23rd of April 1962. The town had been wanting a good public park for a number of years, and an amount of money had been set aside by the town council for such a purpose. When the Green House estate became available after the death of Herbert Harrop, the council seized the opportunity to purchase, demolished the house and created the park. The site of the house was made into a public garden, most being already in place, and the kitchen garden behind the house

was lawned, with the old Pickard fountain being put in place as a centrepiece. (This had been stored for a number of years at Pildacre). Stone from the demolished house was used to construct a park-keeper's bungalow, which is still there.

We then made our way up the Green to the old newsagent's shop at the top of the hill. There is a plot of land behind this which is up for sale, which had houses on it in the past. These were cleared as part of Ossett's slum clearance programme. The house at the rear of the shop was set at a slight angle to the shop building, and part of this can still be made out. It appears to have been much older than the shop. (In the 1980's myself and a friend dug part of an old stone bottle from what would have been the gardens of these houses at the rear of the shop. The bottle would have dated c1840's). There were a few hooks in the wall, where washing lines were probably strung between these buildings and the short terrace of houses which existed at the other side of the track.



Houses at the top of The Green, now demolished. The only building left standing is V&D News, which is marked in green. (1890 Ordnance Survey).

This track, which leads up past the shop and connects with the top of Lime Street, appears to be of great age. There are the remains of an old stone wall which bounded this track, and this wall is now buried by the earth & rubble which was bulldozed to make up the top of Lime Street. Looking at old maps it can be seen that an ancient track crossed the fields and passed by the bottom of Intake Lane, making its way along Lime Street and (probably) eventually down to Healey and over the ancient ford there. We can only wonder at how old this track must have been, the circumstances which led to its being, and the people who travelled along

it. It would also be interesting to know the date of the boundary wall which still partly remains, now hidden behind undergrowth and unseen to the modern world.

We made our way up to Lime Street, and then walked down to where it meets Station Road. The road has some good houses along its length, which have a good view across the playing fields. The road seems to change alignment slightly, after which the houses are quite later in appearance. One of these earlier houses was pictured in the Ossett Observer in 1941 when German bombs fell on our town, and windows were blown out.

We then crossed the playing fields. The land here is divided into two by a row of trees. These seem to follow a line from Station Road to Green House. At either end there are stone gateposts, remnants from the days when the land was used as farmland.

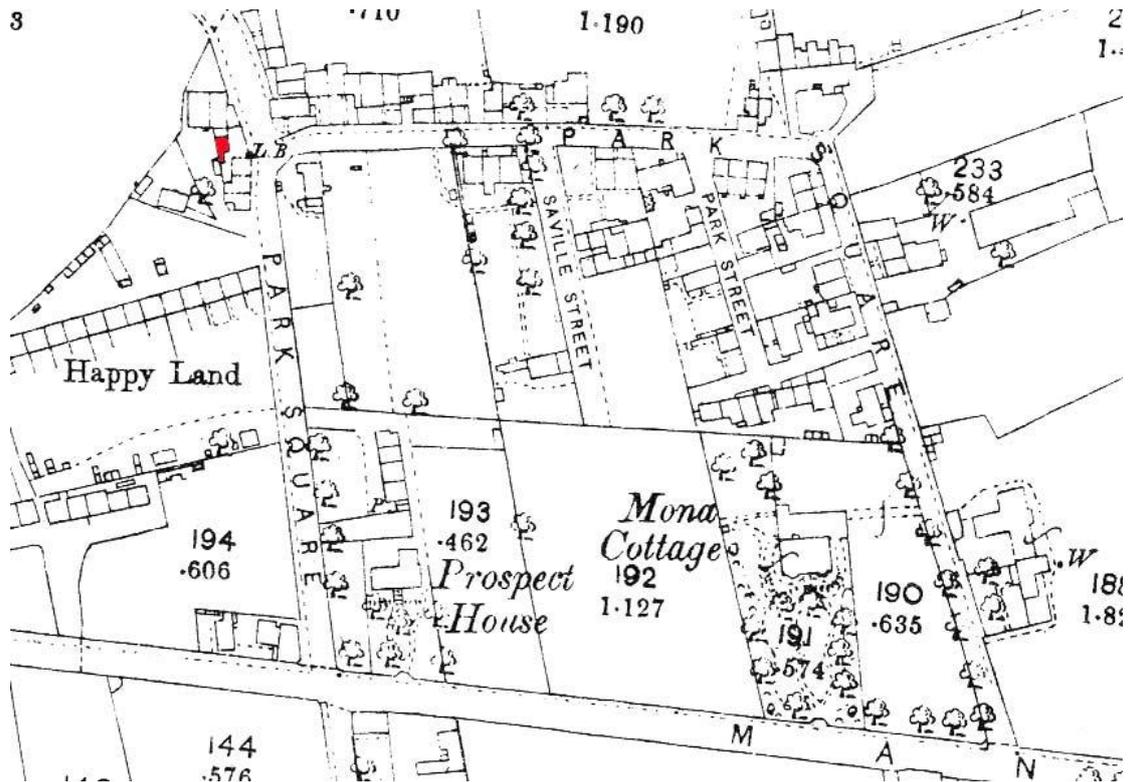
We then crossed the playing fields. The land here is divided into two by a row of trees. These seem to follow a line from Station Road to Green House. At either end there are stone gateposts, remnants from the days when the land was used as farmland. In the 1980's the land was levelled by earth-moving machines, fortunately the trees survived this landscaping. (Just near the gate from where you enter the fields from Lime street I remember there being concrete bunkers, which we were told were air raid shelters. They would have been surviving remnants of the second world war. They disappeared in the 1980's, possibly in connection with the landscaping of the area).

We then passed through a ginnel and entered back onto Manor Road. Across the road near the present day vicarage is an old stone-built house, and at one end can be seen evidence of other buildings, long since demolished, being attached. A look at the 1890's Ordnance Survey map of Ossett supports this.

We then walked down Manor Road and turned left onto Station Road. At this junction is an old stone house called Sowood Cottage. It appears of great age, and was home to a branch of the Mitchell family for nearly 150 years, until 1964. It has recently undergone renovation.

We then moved on to the top corner of Park Square. Here was a corner shop, now converted to residential use. We walked around the back of this and noticed the remains of an old stone building. These buildings are shown on the Enclosure map of 1809 and are hidden from the view of the road.





The remains of the old building are marked in red (1890 Ordnance Survey).

Crossing the road we made our way down Park Square. On the older maps there are many buildings shown to the north of this road, however nothing earlier than late 19th century seems to exist there now. The buildings are shown on the 1809 Enclosure map, and it is quite possible that some were of a very great age. It would have been quite a community down here in the 18th century, one of the smaller settlements which made up the township of Ossett. This area was called Middle Common. Eventually, with the opening in 1889 of Station Road, it became more accessible and eventually merged with the rest of the town.

We made our way down Park Square, passing by the end of Saville Street. At the far end of this street are brick-built warehouses which became home in the 1950's to S. D. Matthews of Bradford, who later acquired and moved into the premises at Healey Old Mill, where the company still trades today under the name of Matthews Foods Ltd.

We then walked round the lower edge of Park Square and back out onto Manor Road. Here at this junction were the buildings and gardens of Mona Cottage. This appears to have been a substantial house, however it no longer exists, a small housing development now sited there. Further up towards the crossroads on the same side was Prospect House. Later a petrol station was sited here, however that site has once again reverted to housing.

We then walked down Sowood Lane and back up Horbury Road, returning to the car and then to the Brewer's Pride for refreshments.