

## ANOTHER WALKABOUT AT OSSETT COMMON

*Myself, Steve Wilson and Richard Glover met at Alan's house for 10.00am on the 23rd July 2010, where we exchanged a few research notes etc. We then set off towards Hags Lane, to measure the width of the road which is still marked by the two parallel stone walls, the first task of the day. I decided last time that these would probably have been much higher, but today's walk revealed coping stones along a length, which indicated their original height. However, I do believe that the level of road has been raised by leaf mould etc. since its use was discontinued. We measured the width, inside the stone walls, as 17ft 6", which Richard said could make it eligible for Roman origin. We decided it was of interest to check old methods of measuring, to see if this was an old abandoned standard (i.e. a chain, furlong or whatever). This could help us decide upon the age in which the walls were built at least.*

*We moved on towards "Bucktrap", and moved up the old Roundwood Road, former Raynor Road. Then onwards to Goring Park House, where Steve took photos for his website. We then moved up Junction Lane, passing the St Aiden's Mission church. I have done a bit of research on this, but I never realised it was so large. We next moved along South Parade, heading towards Manor Road. There are several very old buildings along this stretch, a couple of which are hidden. There was an old house with a 17th century date stone, demolished in the 1970s, which stood somewhere in the yard now occupied by F. Mitchell's. It appears that there was quite a community here, certainly by the 18th century. A row of three cottages which stand back and at a slight angle from the road look to have had one end demolished at some point in the past, the end wall being of brick when the remainder is of old stone. An extension from the rear looked to me to be older than the rest of the building, possibly indicating that the site is older than the present houses.*



*We went to the burial ground at Manor Road. The old iron gates are still hanging, and in use. We examined the war memorial, which includes the name of my great uncle Herbert Ashby, killed in 1918. Steve also identified his great-uncle Thomas Willie Green, killed in 1917, was there too. We had a look around the graves and noted that burials still take place here.*

We then moved off down Spa Lane, towards our second task of the day; to look for the site of the "round house" on the 1795 manor map. Spa Lane is a straight track, which turns at a right angle towards Spa Street. It was probably laid down at the time of enclosure. Alan says it was referred to as Emmerson Road, leading eventually towards Emmerson's mill at the spa. The fields at either side are pasture, and were having the hay mown today. Towards the lower end of the track we entered a field to the north-west, originally being two fields, now with a hedgerow removed. We had to search for a place to pass through the hedge to enter the next field, where the round house was shown on the 1890 map.

### **A word about the round house**

This is shown on the 1795 manor map, and marked as "round house". On the 1850s it appears to be to the northern edge of the field we intended inspecting, however on the 1890 map it is on the eastern edge of this field. I believe the 1890 map would be a more accurate placing for the round house. What was this feature? Again we do not know for sure, but it seems likely to have been a pumping house for removing water from colliery workings. The name "whin gin" is in the area, suggesting an engine powered by wind? It is also possible it was a horse powered engine. Once we were in the field we had a look for signs of any old stonework in the hedges, but could find no trace. When it was demolished it is very lightly the stone was reused by the farmer who demolished it. However we did notice the land "dipped" on the spot where we expected to find traces. This could indicate the shaft, filled in, which was maybe sinking as the infill settled. We are pretty sure that this was indeed the spot, but we did not examine the other 1850's placing, on the northern field boundary. We came to the conclusion that I need to spend some time in there with my metal detector, to look for any signs of any concentrations of metalwork, or even artefacts dating to the 18th century, which might give an indication of the exact location of the building. 1850s OS shows Cardigan Lane in existence, which is possibly a track put in at the time of enclosure, to approach the field containing the round house. This is purely conjecture of course. The field is owned by Peter Brooke of Sowood farm. Alan knows this gentleman, and had already approached him and gained clearance for our search, and the subsequent use of a metal detector in there. I decided that as the hay had just been cut and was still lying, waiting for baling, I would give it a week or so before going for a look.

We passed back into the first field, and had to replace the filling in the gap we had removed. We then saw a deer run across the field, and disappear into the hedge. When we entered Spa Lane again we were approached by a lady who lives in the houses built by Fred Burrow at the bottom of Spa Lane. She said the deer was living in the dried beck at the back of the houses, it had two young but one had died. I was very surprised that deer were living wild in this area. It can be assumed there is a male in the area too.

We went the rest of the way along Spa Lane to John Myers' house, where we called in to let him know we had been searching down there. (He rents the first field, which we had to cross). He was telling us of a tunnel underneath the old Spa Mill, which he unearthed years ago with a digger. It was about 16ft wide, and maybe 8ft high, with a vaulted ceiling. (His estimated measurements). We assumed that this could be for transferring water under the mill.

We walked back along Spa Street, and captured a photo of Whinfield Terrace. Does the name "Whinfield" have any significance with the engine house in the area? I also took better photos of the old single storey miner's cottage, as the sun was now shining and this was a better day than the last walk here a week ago. Further along on Teall Street I also took a good photograph of the probable 18th century cottage by the roadside there.



*We then adjourned to the Silver King for a pint and a bite to eat. (They were not serving food today, so we had a drink then moved on to the Brewer's Pride). Before entering the Silver King we had a look at the probable site of an old cottage dated 1756. I found reference to this in the Ossett Observer from 1956, and it was stated that its address was 55 Manor Road. The datestone has I&R W as well as the year. Alan had worked out that this almost definitely must refer to Isaac Wilby (1718 - 1806), who married Rachel Stephenson (1725 - 1788) in January 1742. Isaac left Scott's Yard to his eldest son David in 1806.*