

Another of History's Little Quirks

Led by John Bowen and Linda Beever the HDAS has been carrying out survey work and excavations at Honley Woods. Of particular interest on this site is a large D-shaped enclosure constructed of stone. Three trenches have been cut across this feature revealing just how massive it must originally have been, made up of many hundreds of tons of stone. Locals who have regularly walked past this feature have expressed their surprise at its size, for it has generally gone unnoticed thanks to a covering of vegetation and trees. Over the centuries the wall has gradually collapsed, but it is obvious that its building must have been a huge undertaking requiring a large amount of labour and must have served some purpose as yet unclear. An enclosure for sure, but enclosing who or what? Dating evidence has so far been disappointingly meagre, just a few bits of pottery which is tentatively be identified as Romano-British. Linda's eagerly anticipated chariot burial still eludes us!



Thanks to John's extensive trawling through the documentary archives covering this part of Honley I find myself as much intrigued by what this reveals as to uncovering the mystery of the D-shaped wall itself. In particular the enclosure map of 1788 shows a large area of fields next to Honley Woods belonging, it states, to the "**Trustees of Clitheroe School**". Close by another small section of woods is known as Clitheroe woods, and Clitheroe is also the name of a local farm. This Clitheroe school referred to on the map is in fact the **Clitheroe Royal Grammar School**, founded in 1554 as "*The Free Grammar School of King Philip and Queen Mary for the education, instruction and learning of boys and young men in grammar; to be and to continue for ever.*" How come, I was keen to discover, did a grammar school in Lancashire manage to have several fingers in the Honley pie?

I wrote to the school asking if they were able to shed any light on this and received a gratifyingly long and detailed explanation from the present chairman of the Trustees of Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, Dr. Andrew Clayton. (I find it somehow comforting and reassuring that this direct link with the 16th century still continues. King Philip and Queen Mary must be smirking with self-satisfaction!)

Dr. Clayton explained that the starting point was the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII and the confiscation of church property by the monarchy. Some of this property had been inherited by Edward VI and on his death was passed on to his half-sister, the above Queen Mary, who used the money that it produced to endow the Clitheroe Royal Grammar School. In fact the school was given several parcels of land from several areas of Yorkshire, including the parish of Almondbury. Six governors were appointed in 1554 to administer all this property, consisting of tithes and woodlands etc., for the benefit of the Grammar School. Interestingly, these six school governors also appointed the rectors of Almondbury church for several centuries.

None of this land in Honley now belongs to the school, in spite of the enduring nature of its association with Clitheroe. In 1837 the then governors of the school sold all their Yorkshire properties to raise capital to invest in property in the Clitheroe area, much of which they

still own. Nevertheless, thanks to this intriguing little quirk of history Clitheroe lives on in Honley, although I doubt that many are now aware of the reasons for the connection. Not for the first time, however, the HDAS can provide the answer for the curious.

David Cockman for HDAS November 2016



Clitheroe Royal Grammar School

Founded in 1554