

The Bowdon Sheaf

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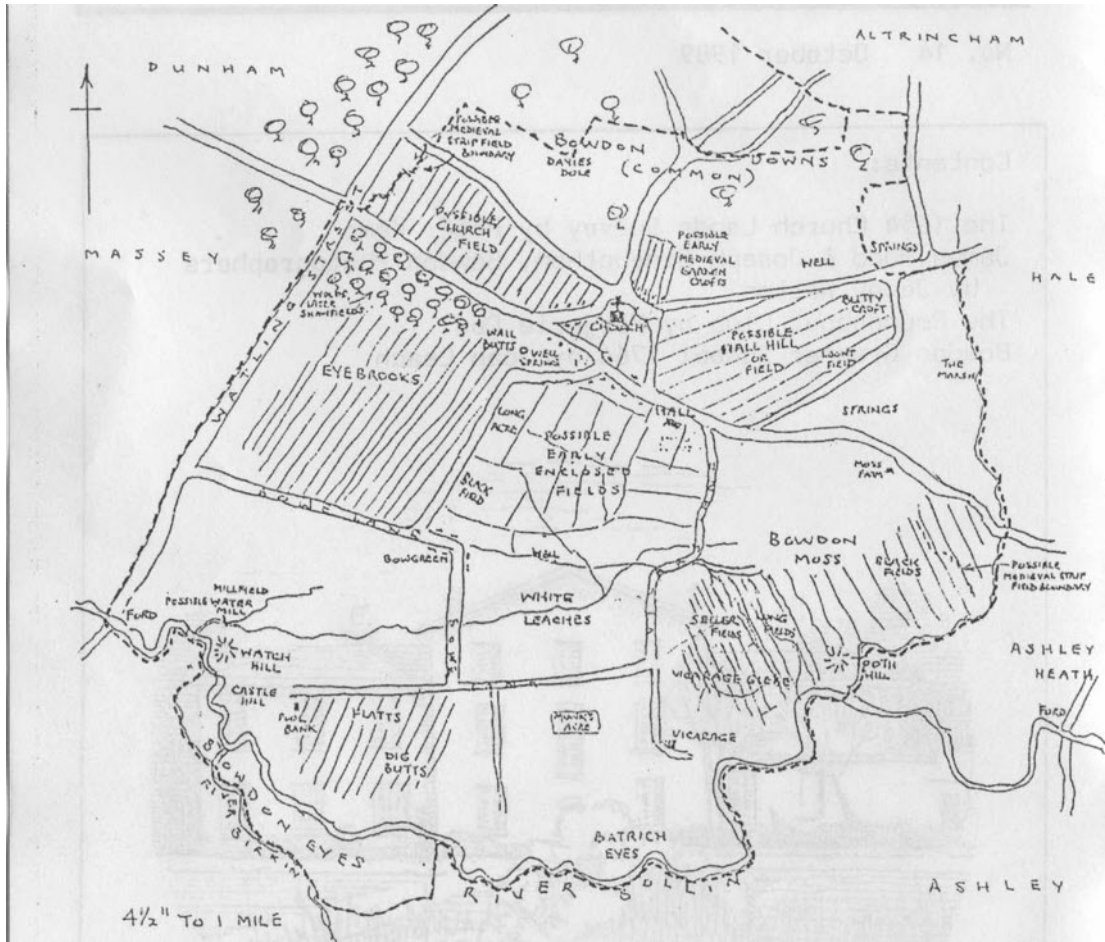
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Contents:

The 1654 Church Lands Survey by Peter Kemp
James Mudd & Joseph Sidebotham, Bowdon Photographers by Jenny Wetton
The Roundabout Club by Marjorie Cox
Bowdon Grammar School 1764 by Joan Leach



BOWDON



R O S T H E R N E
 S K E T C H M A P O F M E D I A E V A L F E A T U R E S
 F R O M 1 6 5 4 S U R V E Y & 1 8 3 4 T I T H E M A P

Bowdon in the 17th Century
THE 1654 CHURCH LANDS SURVEY
by PETER KEMP

Bowdon township in the 17th century was a tiny village around and below the old church of St. Mary's on the hill, the focal point of a very large pariah of some twelve townships, all agricultural apart from the small market town of Altrincham, arid with only about 150-170 inhabitants. The population can be estimated from the Hearth Tax Returns for the years 1664 and 1674 which show respectively 33 and 34 houses with hearths, of which 24 were tiny cottages having only one hearth. The area covered by Bowdon township at the time would not be much less than the 776 acres of the 1838 Tithe Award survey, but better agricultural practices and more land taken in to Farming had already doubled the number of houses by the time of the 1801 Census to 66 with 340 inhabitants comprised of 72 Families, of whom 46 were in agriculture, 18 in trade and 8 otherwise occupied. Very little of 17th century Bowdon remains today - a Few of the rapidly dwindling Fields that remain are still recognisable, Moss Cottage (Formerly two cottages) built in 1666 on South Downs Road opposite Moss Farm is still there, as are the 17th century parts of Moss Farm itself and of Motley Bank possibly, and the church has the fine monument of the Brereton family of Ashley in 17th century costume to remind us of those days and a way of life long past.

Five years into the Commonwealth period, in 1654, there was a survey of the church lands listing names and acreages of fields in the glebelands amounting to under half the area of Bowdon township at 288 acres, and also containing names of some cottage tenants and neighbouring land owners or occupiers. These church lands were in part 'vicarial' for the vicar's own farming use, and in the other part 'rectorial', held by a lessee from the Bishop of Chester. Already having destroyed most of the old religious symbols and furnishings in churches, Parliament had, in 1646, abolished Archbishops and Bishops, put all their possessions in trust, and arranged for surveys to be made to assess them for sale. The practical difficulties encountered in putting this into effect caused Parliament to make ordinances for "the more speedy sale...." of the church assets. Another factor seems to have been the £300,000 which had been borrowed on account for the expense of transporting troops to Ireland. In 1649, a further Act provided for the maintenance of preachers, education, "and other pious use" from the rents, etc. of the forfeited church properties and assets, and commissioners were appointed "for the discovering of the value of the several livings in the respective counties".

The Lancashire surveys date from 1650 and the original Mss. are at the Public Record Office, but those for Cheshire no longer exist. All that remains for Cheshire is this 1654 Survey of Lands, Etc. of the Bishop of Chester which is in the form of a contemporary copy in the Lambeth Mss.. The entry relating to Bowdon is "An Additionall Survey of the Rectory or Parsonage and Viccarage of Boden...." which implies that there had been an original survey at an earlier date, now presumed lost. The document records that Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey had had 'a lease for three lives which are longe since defunct' and that the surveyors 'have returned the premisses in the Possession of the Comonwealth.'

Unfortunately the document is written in such a fashion, for example, "One smale Close called the little Batrich Eye , abutting North east upon the Viccarage ground and North west upon Gouldings, by estimation 1 acre value 18 shillings", that it is impossible to be sure of its location without any estate map or knowledge of, in this instance, Mr Goulding's holdings. However, by comparison of the field names with the 1838 Tithe Award and those listed by Dodgson in his Place Names of Cheshire, Part II, it is found that 27 17th century field names survived into the 19th century of which a few south of Bow Lane and along by the Bollin can still be identified today.

Those field names were:-

Coe Acre, Coe Field, Downs Field, Eye Brooks, Flatts, Hall Bottom, Horse Field, Hanging Bank or Field, Long Acre, Long Field, Lowe, The Marsh, Mill Field, Monks Acre, New Bridge, Pease Croft, Rough Hoy, Shays or Shawfield, Wallbutts, Well Croft and the White Leaches. For example, north of Castle Hill towards Bow Lane, Mill Field (No. 221, 1838) 4.5 acres corresponds with Mill Field (1654) 5 acres, and Horse Field on Bow Lane (No. 220, 1030) 3.5 acres corresponds with Horse Field (1654) 3.5 acres, from the location description in the 1654 document . Many of the fields are described as 'closes' meaning enclosed or hedged fields so by 1654 a good part of the 'lands' of Bowdon already had been enclosed by the principal landowners.

It would seem that the area bounded north and west by Bowgreen Road containing the Gaddum Road neighbourhood held some of these early fields. Down Bowgreen Road from the corner opposite 'The Springs' nearly as far as Bow Lane were the Long Acre (1654) corresponding with Higher Long Acre and Lower Long Acre, each 2 acres, (Nos. 189 and 190, 1838), and to the south, Blackfield (1654) 2 acres, corresponding with Blackfield (No. 193 , 1838) grown to 4.5 acres. East of that corner of Bowgreen Road and adjoining Long Acre, were Lesser or Little Cowfield (1654) 2 acres corresponding with Lower Coe Field (No. 188 , 1838) 3 acres; Cowfield (1654) 2.5 acres corresponding with Coe Field (No. 187, 1838) 2 acres; and, Greater Cowfield (1654) 2.5 acres corresponding with Higher Coe Field (No. 184, 1838) 2 acres. South of those three fields were two 1654 fields called the Little Lowe and the Great Lowe, which by 1838 seem to have grown in area by another 2 acres, and were divided by then into three fields, Lowes (No. 191) 4 acres, Further Lowe (No. 186) 2.75 acres, and Nearer Lowe (No. 185) 2.25 acres. Little Meadow (No. 192, 1838) may have been called Utley or Uttleach Croft in 1654, being a croft just outside the 'leach' or wetlands, east of the present West Bank Farm on Bow Lane.

The name Blackfield also occurs in the Moss Farm lands, Grange Road being Blackfield Lane in former times, and it is a descriptive name for the dark, peaty soil of the mosslands. It is interesting to see that parts of the old mediaeval open field system were still in operation from the descriptions of Churchfield (some 16 lands and 2 headlands) 'on the Downs', Eye Brooks (some 25 lands and 1 headland), and Hall Hill or Field (some 15 lands) 'on the Downs' . These three Fields could have been those usually Found in the mediaeval arrangement where two were under cultivation at one time with the third being kept fallow. The 1838 field names give clues to the location of open fields from the survival of mediaeval field terms in their names, for example, Butts, Loonts, Flatts and Eyes. It is clear that the Eyebrook open field was the area bounded by Park Road, Chester Road, Bow Lane and Bowgreen Road, and containing the modern Eyebrook Road. The description 'on the Downs' for Churchfield and for Hall Hill or Field leads one to suppose that these two open Fields were east and west of the church, Churchfield being between Park Road and Green Walk , and Hall Field being between Stamford Road and Langham Road where the names Loontfield and Butty Croft appear.' The 1838 Bowdon boundary at the north-west end of the possible Churchfield is stepped and away from the main road suggesting a shared strip field boundary with Dunham Massey. Another mediaeval field site could be east of Pool Bank Farm where the names Flatts and Dig Butts occur. The sketch map on page 2 shows these and other possible features.

JAMES MUDD & JOSEPH SIDEBOTHAM Bowdon Photographers
by JENNY WETTON

James Mudd was one of Manchester's most important Victorian photographers who lived in Bowdon for nearly 50 years.

James was born in Halifax in 1821, the son of Alice and Robert Mudd. They ran a shop selling bacon and cheese, and Alice was also a milliner. However, Robert died when James was ten and, several years later, the family moved to Manchester. In 1845, James married Ann Peacock, a joiner's daughter. In about 1847, James and his brother, Robert, opened a textile design business at 44, George Street in Manchester. James had been a budding artist when the family were in Halifax. Designing prints for Manchester's largest textile industry would have been a lucrative outlet for this talent.

First Beginnings James Mudd's interest in photography probably began soon after. It seems likely that he learned about photographic techniques and processes from Joseph Sidebotham and, through him, John Benjamin Dancer. Sidebotham was a fellow textile designer and keen amateur photographer. He was also to become a life-long friend and photographic collaborator. Dancer was an important Manchester scientific instrument maker who also made cameras and was interested in new photographic processes. Sidebotham and Dancer were both members of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. This society met regularly to discuss matters of scientific and literary interest. Mudd's earliest known photographs were landscapes taken using the waxed paper process in 1854. The following year, he and Sidebotham experimented on this process and they made some improvements to it.

In 1855, the Manchester Photographic Society was formed. The members were professionals, amateurs and dealers who met fortnightly to display their photographs and demonstrate new processes and equipment. Most were also members of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Mudd, Sidebotham and Dancer were all founding members of the society, Mudd being elected on to the council in the society's second year and Sidebotham being its first Secretary.

Beyer-Peacock & Company

In 1856, Mudd began a commission to document locomotives and other machinery produced at the Beyer-Peacock works at Gorton in Manchester. He may have been introduced to Charles Beyer by Joseph Sidebotham who would have known him from meetings of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Mudd's photographs would have acted as an official record of the company's accomplishments and would probably have been distributed to prospective customers. Eventually, the negatives of these photographs were sent for storage at the Gorton works and, in 1965, came to what is now the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry when Beyer-Peacock closed down.

Pictorial Work James Mudd also took 'pictorial' photographs and entered many of them in important exhibitions. The first of these was a Manchester Photographic Society exhibition in 1856. He also exhibited two landscape photographs at the Exhibition of Art Treasures of the United Kingdom held at Old Trafford in Manchester in 1857. He went on to receive many prizes for exhibition photographs, culminating in the 1067 International Exhibition in Paris where he received a silver medal. After this, he retired from exhibition photography to concentrate on oil painting and drawing.

Studio and Other Commissions

In about 1856, James and Robert Mudd opened a photographic studio at 94 Cross Street. They also sold photographic apparatus from here. The textile designing business was retained as this was probably a lucrative source of income for them.

The two Mudd businesses must have been very successful as James moved from Salford to a large house at Rose Hill in Bowdon in about 1858. However, Robert does not seem to have shared James' enthusiasm for photography - he returned to the textile design trade about a year later. In 1860, James Mudd acquired a new studio in the fashionable area of St. Ann's Square. At the same time he also hired an assistant, George Wardley, who would have helped with studio portraiture. Wardley was a very active photographer and a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society. In 1866, Wardley left Mudd's employment to open his own studio in Salford. Other photographic commissions undertaken by James Mudd include work on the locomotives made by Sharp, Stewart and Company of the Atlas Works in Manchester. This commission lasted until 1885, when the company moved to Glasgow. Mudd also took many photographs in and around Manchester for the Friths publishing firm which issued them as postcards. He undertook other important work of the machine tools made by Nasmyth, Wilson and Company of Manchester. James Nasmyth, a co-founder of the firm, was an amateur photographer, a member of the Literary and Philosophical Society, and a founding member of the Manchester Photographic Society.

In 1873, Mudd's son, James Willis Mudd, joined the firm. However, he does not seem to have been very active in the business and may have just worked in the studio. James Mudd hired a new assistant, George Grundy, in about 1880. Grundy remained in Mudd's employment until the studio officially passed to him in about 1903.

Towards the end of his life, James Mudd concentrated on painting and drawing. In the early 1870's, Mudd was inspired to illustrate Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner". For this, he did twenty-two chalk drawings of fantastic landscapes and seascapes in the Antarctic. These were published in a booklet by the Coleridge Society in Manchester. In the 1880's he entered paintings into at least five exhibitions including the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition held at the Walker Art Gallery.

James Mudd's close friend and collaborator, Joseph Sidebotham, died in 1885. They had worked together on developing photographic processes and had supported each other throughout their photographic careers. James Mudd died in Bowdon eleven years later at the age of eighty-five. He was a very versatile photographer who took many important photographs, portraits and prize-winning photographs of artistic subjects. His technical expertise was much greater than many other photographers of his time. Joseph Sidebotham was an important amateur photographer who contributed to the early development of photography in Manchester. He lived in the Bowdon area for nearly thirty years.

Joseph was born in 1821 at Apethorne House in Hyde, Cheshire, the son of Joseph and Ann Sidebotham. His father was the manager of Gibraltar Mill in Hyde. The young Joseph was educated first at Denton Chapel and later at the Manchester Grammar School. After leaving school at the age of 16, he became apprenticed to Nelson and Knowles, calico printers. Later, he went to evening classes in Natural History at the Manchester Mechanics Institute. Here, he would have met J B Dancer who taught the use of the microscope at the Institute.

Sidebotham was to retain an interest in botany and entomology for the rest of his life. In 1846, he became a junior partner in the calico printing firm of Mellarid, Appleby and Sidebotham of Manchester. Five years later, he became

Sidebotham was to retain an interest in botany and entomology for the rest of his life. In 1846, he became a junior partner in the calico printing firm of Mellarid, Appleby and Sidebotham of Manchester. Five years later, he became the senior partner of the Strines Calico Printing Company. It seems likely that Sidebotham would have learnt his knowledge of photographic techniques from Dancer. As a calico printer, Sidebotham would have had a good knowledge of chemistry and was able to experiment with new photographic processes. When he produced his first photograph is not known but he was certainly producing highly competent pictures by 1852. Some of these photographs appeared in the Strines Journal, a hand-written journal produced by members of the staff at the Strines Printworks. It was also at this time that Sidebotham was elected to membership of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Sidebotham probably met James Mudd in about 1850 and seems to have taught him about photographic techniques and processes.

In the early 1850's Dancer also taught Sidebotham to make microphotographs. These were ordinary negatives reduced through a microscope onto a microscope slide. The resulting tiny transparencies could be viewed through a microscope and became very popular. A few of Sidebotham's microphotographs are now in the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry's collections.

In 1866, the Sidebotham family moved to 'The Beeches' in Bowdon. They had moved to Ashton-on-Mersey ten years earlier. Joseph retired from the Strines Printworks in 1877 and was given a photographic album illustrating all the staff at their various trades. He died eight years later.

Editorial Note James Mudd lived at 1, Richmond Hill, Bowdon & Joseph Sidebotham lived on the Downs and moved to 'Erlesdene', Green Walk, Bowdon in 1879.

THE ROUNDABOUT CLUB **by MARJORIE COX**

In the early 1860s a literary club, The Roundabout Club, was formed in Bowdon. The founders were Alexander Ireland, Horatio Micholls and J M D Meiklejohn. Ireland was a Scot by origin, business manager of the advanced liberal newspaper, the Manchester Examiner and Times and a leading literary and intellectual figure in Manchester; he lived first in Stamford Road and later at Inglewood, St. Margaret's Road, where his son, the composer John Ireland, was born. Horatio Micholls was a Manchester merchant and leading Reform Jew, of Summerfield, East Downs Road and Meiklejohn was headmaster of the notable Rose Hill School for Boys in Bowdon and later Professor of Education at St. Andrew's University.

The club was named the Roundabout because its monthly meetings and dinners were held in turn at the houses of its members, who numbered twelve. Among the original members, drawn from a variety of fields, were John Mills, banker, economist, musician and music critic; John D Morell, one of the early School Inspectors (HMIs) and a leading educationist, who, in 1851, showed Matthew Arnold, newly appointed an HMI, round Manchester schools; John Watson, a well-known naturalist, and James Mudd, photographer.

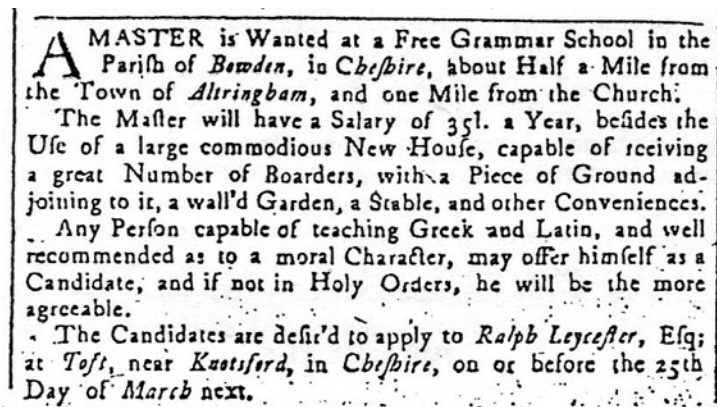
For the record, the other members were Mr J Leese, Mr Swanwick, Mr Fleming, Mr Marsland and Mr Phillips. Alexander Ireland was the leading spirit of the club, inspiring it with 'its remarkable qualities of geniality and its unrestrained liberty of expression of opinions'. As vacancies occurred, new members were elected and there were visitors from among Ireland's exceptionally wide range of literary

friends. Ireland was noted, too, for his interest in America and his kindness to Americans. Emerson, a close friend, stayed with him in Bowdon, and in 1957 Ireland accompanied Nathaniel Hawthorne to the famous Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures on the occasion when Tennyson was there. It is interesting to note that James Mudd took a photograph of Tennyson during that visit to Manchester: a reproduction of it can be found in *The Tennyson Album* by Andrew Wheatcroft. Ireland left Bowdon in the late 1880's and we do not know what happened to the Roundabout Club afterwards, but for over twenty years James Mudd must have belonged to it. A club which had as its centre the exceptionally well-read (he was said to have a library of 15,000 to 20,000 books) and influential Alexander Ireland, friend of Carlyle and acquainted with Wordsworth, Lamb, Leigh Hunt, De Quincey and Mrs Gaskell as well as American writers, must have been a stimulating society.

BOWDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL 1764

by
JOAN LEACH

While undertaking historical research, Joan Leach noticed the following advertisement in the *Manchester Mercury*, for the 27th November, 1764:



A MASTER is Wanted at a Free Grammar School in the Parish of Bowden, in Cheshire, about Half a Mile from the Town of Altringham, and one Mile from the Church. The Master will have a Salary of 35l. a Year, besides the Use of a large commodious New House, capable of receiving a great Number of Boarders, with a Piece of Ground adjoining to it, a wall'd Garden, a Stable, and other Conveniences. Any Person capable of teaching Greek and Latin, and well recommended as to a moral Character, may offer himself as a Candidate; and if not in Holy Orders, he will be the more agreeable. The Candidates are desir'd to apply to Ralph Leycester, Esq; at Toft, near Knutsford, in Cheshire, on or before the 25th Day of March next.

It is interesting to note that Ralph Leycester, of Toft, was involved in this Bowdon project, but records show that the Leycesters and Stamfords were related by marriage at that time. The school concerned was the one built out of the proceeds of the will of Thomas Walton, Gent, of Dunham Woodhouses, at Oldfield Brow in 1759. The school was transferred to a new building in 1867 and named Seamons Moss School. The old building was then converted into a private residence, Oldfield House, and occupied by a Danish merchant, Viggo Rahr, whose great grand daughter Sheila Rahr Trenbath has provided a photograph of it for publication. The road adjoining Oldfield House was later renamed Walton Road, instead of Sandy Lane in honour of Thomas Walton, Gent.

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