

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW MILLS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL BOARD IN 1876

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The reservation of extensive tracts of the country for hunting and the conservation of game was one of the more important effects of the Norman conquest in 1066. The medieval and early-modern history of the region under study with its gritstone hills and westward-flowing rivers (the 'dark peak'), was moulded by it being part of the royal forest of Peak, whose affinities extended eastwards into the 'white peak' (Fig. 1). It originally formed part of an inheritance dating back to William II.¹ In 1372, by an exchange of lands with Richard II, except for the manor of Glossop which had been granted away,² it came into the possession of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. When his son was crowned Henry IV in 1399 it became part of the huge crown estate known as the duchy of Lancaster. To protect his inheritance, Henry decided early on that the administration and accounts of the duchy should be kept separate from the crown. As a result, there is a rich heritage of primary documents available for this region in the Public Record Office, particularly rentals, ministers' accounts, decrees of the duchy court, special commissions giving details of the disposition of land, landholdings and estate managements, and maps.

Since the region was part of a royal forest, there are useful comparisons and contrasts to be made with other crown forests in the north-west, eg Bowland, Pendle and Rossendale, particularly with respect to land tenure. Although physically separate, they are similar in geography, geology and climate, resulting in landscapes of marginal farming in the valleys with the higher moorlands providing wastes and commons. Before the industrial period in the 'dark peak', a distinctive dispersed settlement pattern of farms emerged, the only ancient nucleated settlements being the small market towns of Glossop and Chapel-en-le-Frith, and the village of Hayfield.

Local Government before 1834

Administratively, from medieval times, the district was part of a wide area called Bowden Middlecale, over 16,000 acres, a division consisting of ten 'dark peak' hamlets for tax purposes.³ Its name distinguished it from Bowden Chapel an adjacent division of three hamlets.⁴ The names are no longer in use. In 1713 these were divided into three groups based on an equitable division of the poor rate, with an overseer for each — Great Hamlet, Phoside and Kinder: Chinley, Bugsworth and Brownside: Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle.⁵ This three-fold division of hamlets came to form the template for the organisation of the poor law unions (1837), the parishes of New Mills and Hayfield (1844), the census registration districts, and the local government areas in which the four hamlets of the last group became linked eventually to form the district of New Mills (1876).

All ten hamlets together with the hamlet of Mellor were in the ancient parish of Glossop (Fig. 2), which like many other parishes in Derbyshire is extensive and

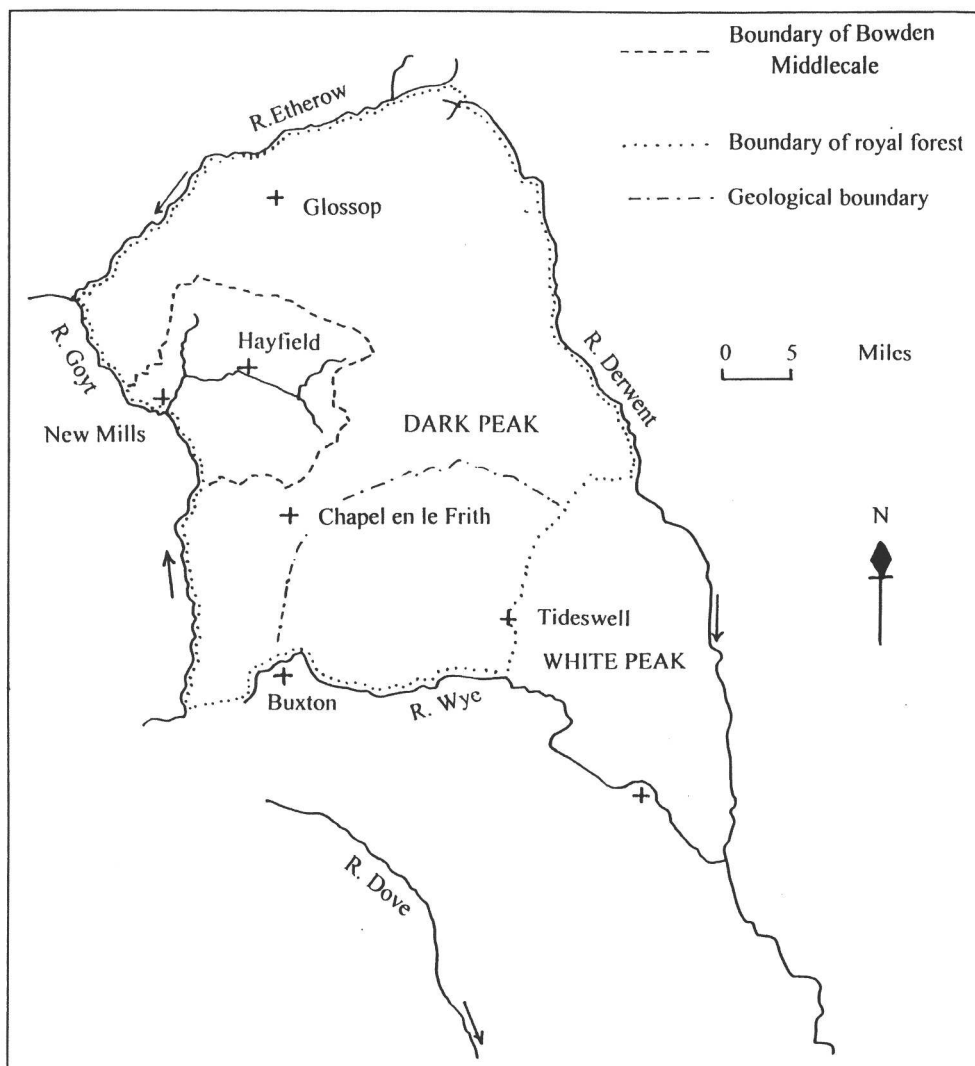


Fig. 1: Boundaries of the Royal Forest of Peak.

widespread. In 1157, the abbey of Basingwerk in Flintshire received extensive grants from Henry II, which included the manor and church of Glossop. 'Ten pounds value of land in Longdendale, that is Glossop, with the church that is there and with all things and land belonging to it, just as William Peveril held it in the time of King Henry my grandfather'.⁶ Since these possessions were within the royal forest the abbot as lord of the manor was obliged to respect the forest laws, but in 1290 the abbot persuaded Edward I to relieve Glossopdale from most of these except that of venison.⁷ As rector of the parish the abbot received the great tithes and the vicar received the small tithes, half of which went to the earl as rector.

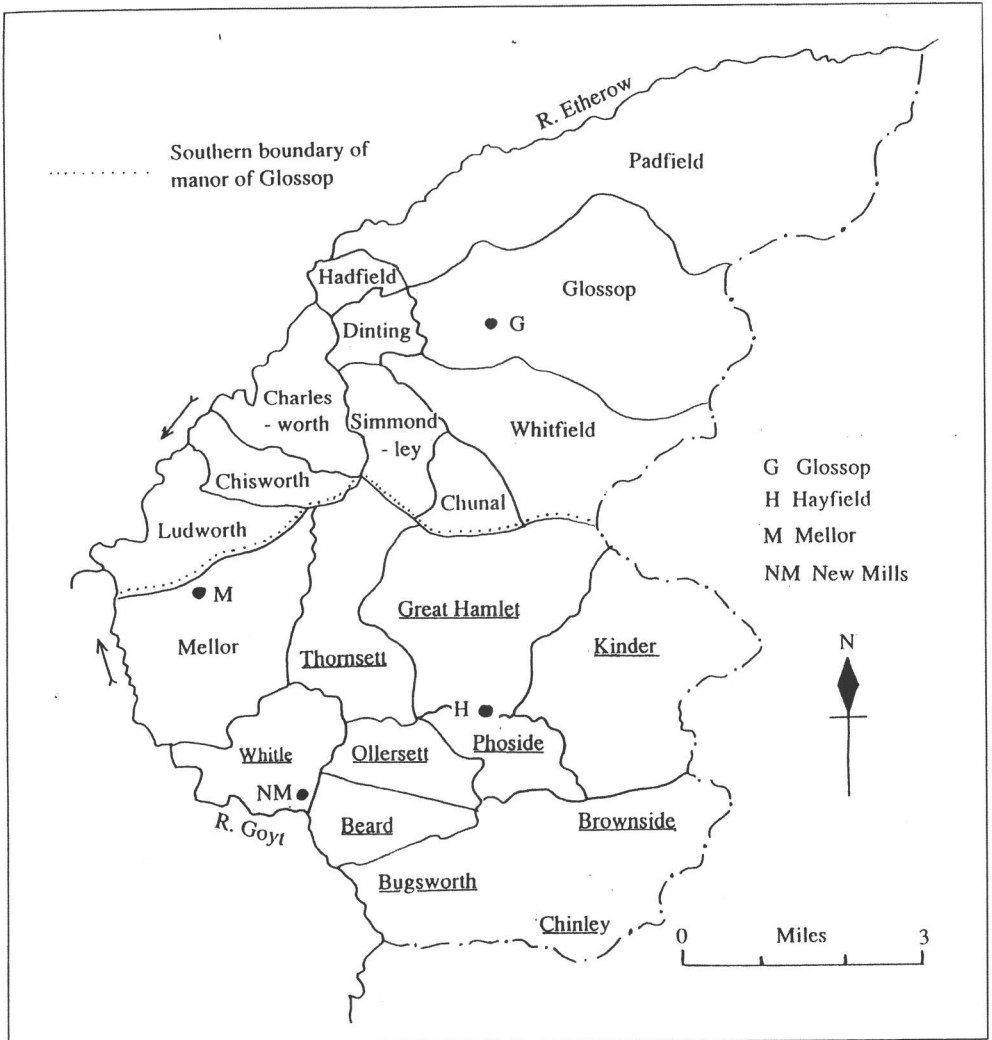


Fig. 2: The ancient parish of Glossop and its hamlets of Glossop. The hamlets of Bowden Middlecale are underlined.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the abbot leased all his rights in the manor to the Talbot earls of Shrewsbury, who appointed the vicar. It was thus natural that, on the dissolution of the monasteries in 1537, Henry VIII granted the possessions to the earl of Shrewsbury.⁸ The extent of the manor was greatly increased when, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the earl of Shrewsbury purchased from Elizabeth an extensive part of Longdendale, which was formally disafforested.⁹ In 1606, these possessions passed by marriage to the Howard earls of Arundel, who later became the dukes of Norfolk.¹⁰

The low-grade and marginal farming carved out of the lands of the royal forest from about the thirteenth century — gritstone moorlands and lower shelves of sandstone

and shale areas with intervening valleys — contributed to the establishment of a large parish. The distances and terrain involved would certainly have made communications difficult and by the early fifteenth century chapels had been built at Hayfield and Mellor.¹¹ The registers at Hayfield and Mellor date from 1622 and 1624 respectively, but it is unsure whether these dates coincide with the separate status gained by the chapelries.¹² These churches had perpetual curacies and their own vestries. The exact relationships between the ecclesiastical boundaries and hamlet boundaries is not certain. The chapelry boundaries may or may not have coincided with hamlet boundaries.¹³

All the hamlets, but not Chinley, are listed in the Glossop Easter books of 1643–1713 as being part of the parish.¹⁴ The position of Chinley, is anomalous — it may have been extra-parochial, certainly Chinley Congregational Chapel, whose congregation founded by William Bagshawe, the “Apostle of the Peak”, was built on such ground. Until that church was founded, Chinley had no local place of worship.¹⁵ The church at Chapel en le Frith and the chapel at Hayfield were used for performing baptisms and burials. Even William Bagshaw went to services at Chapel. Weddings, presumably after the Hardwicke Act of 1753 had to take place at the Glossop parish church.

The local parish and chapelry registers are complemented by a nearly complete set of bishops’ transcripts held in the Diocesan Record Office at Lichfield.¹⁶ There is the usual wide range of a substantial number of documents held in the Derbyshire Record Office, the most important being non-conformist registers, the quarter sessions records, a full set of land tax assessments, railway plans, records of the turnpike trusts, tithing maps, and enclosure maps. There are also individual documents such as deeds, agreements, poor rate returns and copies of duchy of Lancaster documents some of which are not in the public record office. High Peak documents have also found their way into other archive centres in Sheffield, Chester and Manchester as part of estate and family collections.¹⁷

In using church registers and bishops’ transcripts to chart baptisms and burials and to estimate the annual balances, by far the greatest handicap is the lack of any closed area within which to operate. There was no simple one-village and parish structure, which normally helps to simplify such studies. Not only did the region of study consist of two chapelries within the ancient parish of Glossop, but persons were not necessarily baptised or buried in the chapelry in which they lived because of the distances involved and the inconvenience of travel, or for other reasons. In addition, those living near the boundaries of Bowden Middlecale were within the catchment areas of other churches such as Disley and Chapel en le Frith. Particularly after 1753 it must have been difficult to get to the mother church in Glossop for marriages. Except for one marriage administered by the Vicar of Glossop in 1759, there are no marriages recorded in the Hayfield registers after 1751.

As in many new industrial towns, Methodists had built up congregations and had the largest number of places of worship.¹⁸ There were also a Friends Meeting House and after 1845 a Roman Catholic church. There is still much to uncover about the establishment of the Anglican Church in New Mills.¹⁹ New Mills people went to Anglican churches at Hayfield, Mellor or Disley but it was not until 1831 that they had a church, Saint George’s, of their own. There are hints of the influence of the local gentry and industrialists in the church’s establishment which suggest various links with

Hayfield and its more ancient church. The foundation stone of Saint George's was laid in 1829, on land donated by Lord George Cavendish. The church was consecrated in 1831, having cost £3,500, £1,000 being raised through local subscription, and the remainder granted by the Parliamentary Commissioners. It is a 'Commissioners Church', that is one partly paid for by the Church Building Commission appointed in 1818 to provide areas with fast-growing populations with new churches.

It is a big church in a typically superficial Gothic style. Its organ case is by the famous organ maker, Samuel Renn. It was erected in splendid isolation in the middle of fields alongside the new turnpike road to Hayfield, with scarcely any buildings in its vicinity. It was not until later in the century that a local population began to grow up around it. The new church would also hopefully encourage a return to the Anglican fold, although the parish of Beard St George, as it was first known, was not established until 1844. It consisted of the four hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle, a recognition of the subgroup of hamlets which was formed in 1713 and which was to be repeated on the formation of the first local board district thirty two years later.

The new poor law and the establishment of the Hayfield Union.

In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act replaced the Elizabethan structure.²⁰ Over 15,000 parishes were grouped into 643 unions each with its own workhouse and each managed by an unpaid elected board of guardians who were to employ workhouse masters and matrons, schoolmasters, relieving officers, medical officers of health and others.²¹ Justices of Peace were permitted to be guardians, *ex officio*. The poor law commissioners gave their ideal union as a 'circle taking a market town as a centre, and comprehending those surrounding parishes whose inhabitants are accustomed to resort to the same market.'²² Most rural unions therefore included an urban element, and in the case of the local region this was New Mills. However, delimiting the 'ideal union' often meant that existing administrative units were frequently ignored in favour of the new and artificial grouping. Thus, from 1837, the New Mills district was covered by the Hayfield Union which cut across the ancient ecclesiastical, hamlet and county boundaries (Table 1). Three of the hamlets of Bowden Middlecale, Chinley Bugsworth and Brownside, (which were part of the Hayfield chapelry) were assigned to Chapel en le Frith Union. Three of the remaining townships making up the Union — Hayfield, Disley and Mellor — each consisted of one hamlet, but the township of Beard was made up of four — Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle. In addition, Hayfield, Beard and part of Thornsett were in the Hayfield chapelry, while the rest of Thornsett and the whole of Whitle were part of the chapelry of Mellor, which also consisted of three other hamlets outside the Union. On top of this, Disley was in the county of Cheshire. Such boundary anomalies were to cause many difficulties as authorities tried to come to terms with the new law, particularly with respect to the application of poor relief previously the responsibility of the parish.²³ In 1841, the Hayfield Union workhouse was opened at Low Leighton (between New Mills and Hayfield).²⁴

Difficulties of an administrative nature soon occurred due to anomalies arising out of the overlap of the functions of parish, hamlet and union. The unions were established to administer the poor law, while the townships with officers such as surveyors of the highways and constables, who often levied their own rates

administered other piecemeal aspects of local government. One example comes to light in a letter to the poor law commissioners from the clerk of the Hayfield Union.

Beard, Ollersett, Whitle and Thornsett are four hamlets within the Union, each having distinct and separate surveyors of the highways, each collecting his own highway rate and having no connection with the other three hamlets, and so far as the highways are concerned each hamlet is independent of the others, but in all matters relating to the poor and the poor laws they are united as one township under one set of overseers who think that under these circumstances they should be considered as officers of one township yet the magistrates clerks frequently charge the fees for four townships.²⁵

The letter goes on to complain that a person designated as the constable of the four hamlets (forming a township) submitted three identical claims of nine shillings expenses to the overseers for attending the magistrates at the annual licensing day at Buxton when of course he had only made one journey. It seems that four bills would have been submitted except that Beard did not have a 'licensed victualling house'.

The creation of the Hayfield Union in 1837 has resulted in the survival of primary documentation and the detail provides an insight into the working of the local government machinery and its consequences for the local population before there was any local board.²⁶ The working of the 1834 Act, with its chaos of local administrative boundaries, was further complicated with the addition of census registration districts in 1841. The anomalies of intersecting and overlapping boundaries were to get worse as the century progressed particularly with regard to the decennial censuses. Under the Births and Deaths Registration Act in 1836²⁷ the poor law Unions with a few exceptions became the new registration districts for the 1841 and later censuses. Thus, there were chapelry, parish, hamlet and registration districts all with different boundaries and all of which had to be separately counted. When the New Mills Urban Sanitary Authority was formed in 1876 it consisted of the hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle plus Newtown which was part of Disley in Cheshire, while the rest of the authority was in Derbyshire. All these separate divisions had to be accounted for in the census.

The formation of a local board

In 1603 the Elizabethan Poor Law Act had consolidated two centuries development of laws and customs dealing with the problem of the poor. The parish was made the civil unit for poor law purposes, and the cost of maintaining the poor was raised by a local tax, the poor rate, for which overseers (officers of townships) were appointed. Administration was carried out by the vestry which laid the church rate and appointed officers — the sexton, clerk, constable, headborough and churchwardens- confirmed at the Quarter Sessions.

There was, however, no general rate for civil matters and the poor rate, although primarily intended for the relief of the poor, was also used for 'county and other charges not strictly applicable to the relief and maintenance of the poor'.²⁸ These were law expenses, charges for rebuilding or repairing county gaols or bridges, payments to wives and families of militia men and any bounties paid for substitutes, relief given to persons travelling with passes and the expense of conveying them, fines paid for road indictments and law charges arising, highway rate, church rate, and constables rate.

These deductions could be considerable. For instance, in 1804 in the township of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle, the militia payments amounted to £357 11 1 (Napoleonic wars) and the church and constables rate £42 11 0 which was deducted from the poor rate collected, £677 13s 4d, leaving a net amount of only £203 4s 3d.

In 1361, Justices of the Peace were created and, as well as dispensing royal justice, came to deal with a vast range of civil administration matters starting with the licensing of ale-houses. It is too cumbersome to list all their duties here²⁹ but some of the more important non-judicial matters which have a bearing on local government included setting the county rate, overseeing the poor rate, administering the land tax,³⁰ confirming appointments of township and parish officers (eg overseers, constables), and the supervision of highways and bridges. Until the formation of elected county councils in 1889, the justices in their civil capacity through the Court of Quarter Sessions, meeting four times a year, formed the county administration.

The present town of New Mills takes its name from a manorial corn mill called 'Berde' mill, dating from 1391, which was located near the present Salem Mill at the bottom of High Street. Soon after 1391 the mill became known as New Mill ('New-mylne'). By the late sixteenth century, the name New Mill was being used as a place name for the small hamlet which had grown up around the corn mill; in the late eighteenth century it was to form the nucleus of the growing town.³¹ Farming was chiefly concerned with cattle and sheep, and corn (mainly oats and barley) There was a scatter of stone quarries and coal pits, and rivers provided water power sites for the corn mill, two or three fulling mills and a paper mill. A surprising amount of coal was mined on the upper moorlands in the first half of the eighteenth century many years before the industrial period.

By the early nineteenth century, New Mills with two rivers running through it, had grown into an important centre for cotton spinning, bleaching, dyeing and calico printing. By 1819 there were eight spinning mills, two calico printworks and two bleach-works. A population of 1,878 in 1801 had almost doubled by 1831. From the 1840s–50s steam power was introduced into the mills and about the same time a second phase of mill building commenced on the banks of the Peak Forest Canal at Newtown in the hamlet of Disley, Cheshire. The establishment of these industries, the creation of the new town and the building of new houses and streets, the construction of turnpike roads, railways, a canal, a new church (dating from 1831), schools and chapels, a public hall (later the town hall), the rise of the calico printing and engraving industries, and the growth of a new industrial suburb, Newtown, with five steam powered cotton mills on the banks of the Peak Forest Canal — all this took place without an urban authority. There was no mechanism for borrowing money for capital projects to deal with the new social conditions and vital public services such as public health, housing, highways, sanitary arrangements, gas and water. In New Mills, as in hundreds of other towns, the provision of these essential services either did not exist at all or was of an *ad hoc* and inadequate nature. Local affairs continued to be directed under various jurisdictions — the old poor law, the new poor law union (from 1837), the parish and chapelries, the hamlets, the justices of the peace, the manor of Glossop (for tithes), two private acts of parliament for water supply and gas, and *ad hoc* bodies such as the turnpike trusts. Letters to the local paper dramatically highlighted the conditions.

I do not think it possible for a town to have more roads into it, considering that two of the principal inlets run through a rocky, dirty and darksome place called the "Torr"... although we are a population of near 7000 souls, we have no sewers or drains... neither sanitary means nor sanitary laws... we have a constant succession of fevers, small pox, and other infectious disorders... the water supply... was a total failure last summer... for the spring which nearly supplied us all last summer has been partly destroyed through operations in a coal pit. Then with respect to gas, which often burns red, then white, is in the hands of a company who are excessive in their charges... although charging 5s per 1000 feet. Truly we are in a pitiable condition... not to have one public man out of all the wealthy manufacturers, property owners and others by whom we are surrounded, who would agitate for a Local Improvement Act...³²

Thus, there were over seventy years of urban growth without a municipal body to oversee and regulate it. The history of local government in New Mills can be placed in the context of the general inadequacy, nationally, of the piecemeal organisation dealing with the new early mid-nineteenth century urban areas in the country.

In 1848, a Public Health Act³³ introduced for the first time a compulsory measure for a proper administrative structure to deal with the problems. A General Board of Health was set up to administer the Act which gave wide sanitary and public health powers to any local body which adopted it and established a local board of health, covering not only sanitation and sewerage but also water supply, highways, burial grounds and the regulation of offensive trades, powers which previously could have been obtained only by a Local Act. The Act could be adopted by a petition of the ratepayers of the area in question. By 1856 there were only 230 such local boards.³⁴ New Mills was not among them. The town was still quite small, its poor-rate payers were spread over a wide area, much of it rural, and it was built up only in a central concentrated area as the tithe map of 1841 shows (Fig. 3). The mills were small, mostly still water powered. The population in 1841 was 3595 and the industrial suburb of later years, Newtown (or Warksmoor as it was then called) still consisted only of fields. The town did not yet have a society mature and experienced enough to promote the establishment of a local board as it was to have in 25 years time.

The General Board of Health was abolished by the Local Government Act of 1858.³⁵ Local Boards were created replacing existing local Boards of Health, and their areas were called 'Local Government Districts'. The Local Government Act Department was formed to administer these local boards. By 1873, 302 local boards had been formed in addition to the 419 formed under the 1848 Act.³⁶ One of the most significant aspects of the Act was that it included a Section [XVI] which was concerned with the settling of boundaries of local authority areas.

- (1) Any place not having a known or defined boundary may petition one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State to settle its boundaries for the purposes of this Act
- (2) The petition shall state the proposed boundaries of the place, shall be signed by one tenth of the ratepayers resident within such boundaries.

It was this section which fifteen years later was later turned to by the people of New Mills to set the boundaries of the urban area.

Over the next few years there followed a series of Public Health and Local Government Acts, Highways Acts and others which proceeded to attempt the reform

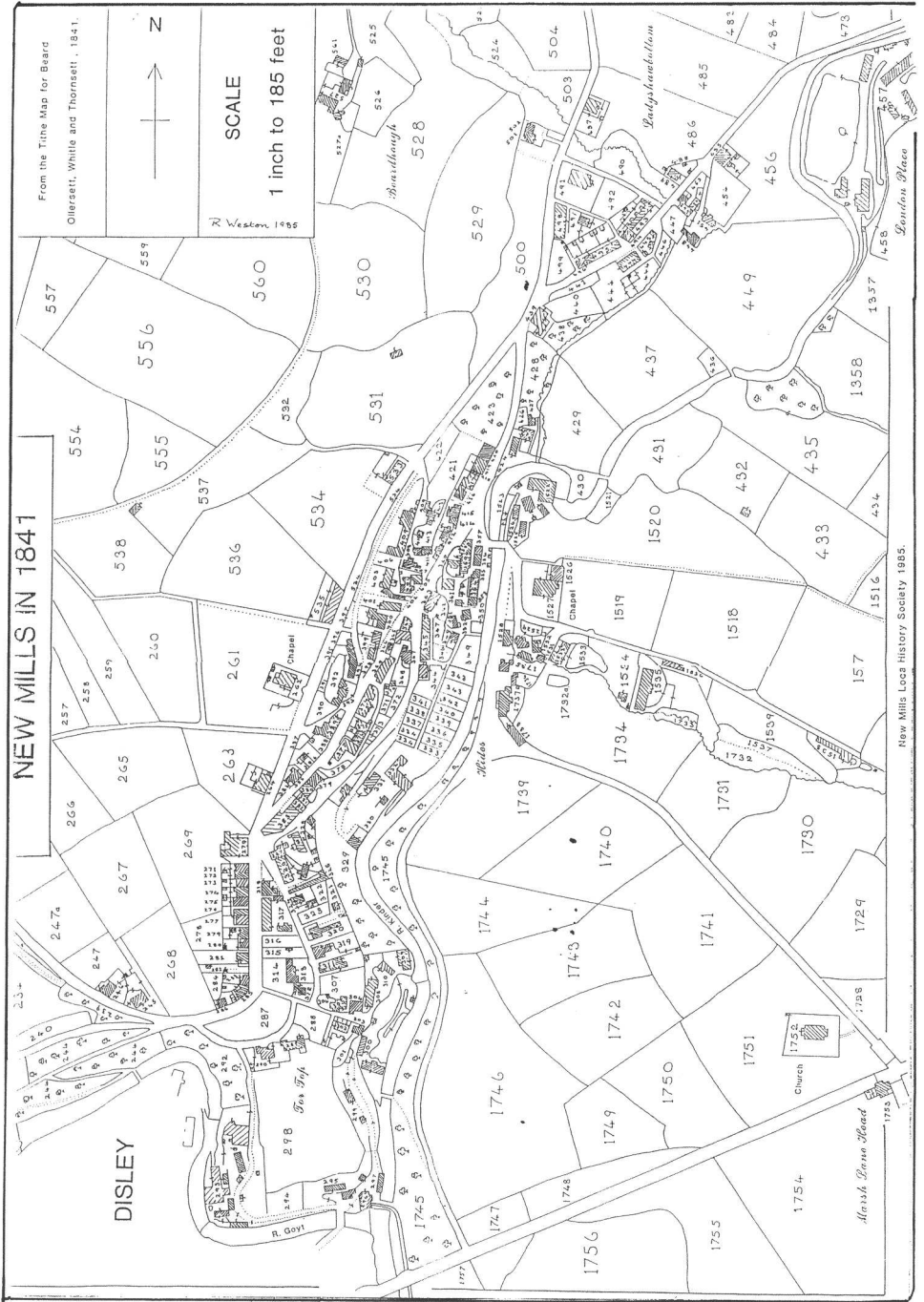


Fig. 3: Central New Mills in 1841 (Tithe Map). Redrawn by Ron Weston.

of local government by bits, attention particularly being focussed upon the need for effective units of sanitary administration in the rest of the country. Eventually, the national inadequacies in local government were highlighted by a royal commission which described the chaos of areas and authorities and recommended the creation of the Local Government Board which in 1871 replaced the Poor Law Commission and made responsible for poor relief and public health. Following this, the great Public Health Act of 1872 divided the whole of England into two classes of sanitary districts — urban sanitary districts and rural sanitary districts.³⁷ Urban sanitary districts were to consist of municipal boroughs, districts under improvement commissioners established under local Acts, and districts under local boards formed under previous public health (1848 and 1858) or local government acts. Rural sanitary districts comprised the rest of the country and were coincident with the existing poor law unions.³⁸ For the first time there was now a comprehensive system of local government in sanitary and health matters covering the whole country. This decisive act in distinguishing between rural and urban areas was the exact opposite to the principles of 1834 which sought to unite town and country.³⁹ It set the template for the organisation of future local government.

But in making use of the poor law unions as administrative areas, the 1872 Act still left certain small towns like New Mills unrepresented by their own urban authority. New Mills did not qualify as an urban sanitary authority and the district covered by the Hayfield Poor Law Union (New Mills, Hayfield, Mellor and Disley) became, in 1872–3, the Hayfield Rural Sanitary Authority. The guardians of the union constituted the rural sanitary authority, a body within a body. The clerk and treasurer of the union were appointed at a small additional salary to carry out the duties of those positions for the rural sanitary authority. All expenses were met by the union although there was a small parliamentary grant for some purposes which the Local Government Board were able to make use of. For the most part the poor rate still remained the chief source of income for any expenditure. There was still no procedure by which certain essential services outside health and sanitation, for the town — roads, bridges, streets, lighting, housing — could be provided and paid for under a rural sanitary authority.

However, under the powers of the 1872 Act, the new rural sanitary authority was able to extend the jurisdiction of the union and consequent expenses beyond its remit into fields of public health. In May 1873 the clerk wrote to say that it was proposed to appoint a Medical Officer for Health for a group of local authorities — the rural sanitary authorities for Hayfield, Chapel en le Frith and Glossop, and the urban sanitary authorities for Glossop and Fairfield [Buxton] at the salary of £300.⁴⁰

The authority very soon came to be engaged in considering the water supply and drainage of the district. Soon after his appointment, the new medical officer of health made a survey of the district, and his report described exactly the neglected state of affairs resulting from the unregulated growth of a rural area into an urban area.

... I have paid repeated visits to New Mills which place I am sorry to say is in such a sanitary condition as to require an extra amount of attention both from myself and the inspector. . . in very few places is there much attempt at drainage, that kind of drainage which should carry dirty water and other impure liquids away from dwelling houses, stables, shippens, etc, even in country districts where. . . all kinds of impurities are often merely conveyed outside the back or

front door, whichever is the most convenient, and there left to soak into the earth and into the foundations of the houses. . . we must have recourse to a system of sewerage, which I should strongly recommend you to have carried out in both the above named places [New Mills and Hayfield]. . . The water supply in some places might be very much improved, as for instance in New Mills, where there is abundance of water, but which from its not being carefully collected and delivered, that is in such a manner as to prevent contamination, it is often unfit for domestic purposes. . .

The privy accommodation is generally very insufficient and unfortunately I find it rather difficult to convince some people what is requisite and for the best in the matter. I believe the act says that in urban districts every house must be provided with a privy or water closet. . . there are many towns, besides New Mills, the populations of which are large enough for them to be looked upon and treated with regard to the sanitary matters as urban, though they may not happen to bear that appellation from not being a Borough or under a Local Board.

Pigstyes, which unfortunately are very numerous, are a great hindrance to sanitary improvements, and I strongly advise that they should be completely removed. . . slaughter houses also ought not to exist where houses are crowded together and particularly under the same roof as a dwelling house. . . I must draw attention to the ash pits throughout the district, which are not very satisfactory. They should be emptied at stated periods. . .⁴¹

As a result of this report the clerk of the sanitary authority was asked by the Local Government Board to make a report on what might be done. His reply⁴² was that he found that the water supply was inadequate, particularly in summer, and in general through being reduced by the numerous coal pits recently opened up which took water away from the springs. He considered that a large reservoir would have to be built and glazed earthenware pipes put into the ground. He was asked by the Local Government Board to approach the owners of the Ollersett waterworks a private enterprise established in 1831. His letter in October 1874 to the trustees of the late G W Newton asking if they would extend the mains and enlarge their reserves began the long drawn-out negotiations to purchase these works which was not finally completed until 1907 by the then urban district council.⁴³

Meanwhile, there were persons in New Mills who wished to see the establishment of a separate urban authority. A letter from John Pollitt, a solicitor, who eventually was to become the first clerk of the local board, said

Here we have a manufacturing village the centre of a township consisting of four hamlets in which it is proposed to adopt the Local Government Act to extend through the whole of the four hamlets. Close adjoining but part of another township and also another parish and county is Wirksmoor [known later as Newtown] which for a variety of local reasons it is desirable to include within the boundary the said Wirksmoor being a recent offshoot from New Mills. There will be no difficulty as to the four hamlets but what are the best steps to take so as to include the district of Wirksmoor which has no clearly defined boundary. I may add that the ratepayers of Wirksmoor are anxious to join the four hamlets for the purpose of the Local Government Act.⁴⁴

In March 1872, 109 owners and ratepayers comprising portions of the hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle and part of the township of Disley called Wirksmoor or Newtown petitioned the Local Government Act Department to settle

the boundaries of the district.⁴⁵ As a result, an inquiry was held on 6 July 1872 into the boundaries. In a long account of this inquiry,⁴⁶ witnesses in favour of the petition described the bad state of sanitation, with sewage running into the two rivers, the bad condition of the bridge at the bottom of New Mills which was not safe to cross, and the want of a good thoroughfare across the river gorge known as the Torrs. However, Wirksmoor [Newtown] was included within the proposed boundaries and much of the inquiry centred around this. There were many objections from the residents of Newtown, arising from the fact that they would have to pay rates for improvements in New Mills — that Newtown was under a special Highway Board (the Stockport and Hyde Highway Board) and that the road had been paved at a cost of £800; that the houses were in better condition than those of New Mills; that there were many empty houses in New Mills; that New Mills had had an outbreak of small pox; that the bridge at the bottom of New Mills needed repairing and that it was a highway bridge and not a county bridge and its repair would be a charge on the rates; that Birch Vale was not included, that Disley one day might adopt the Local Government Act and wish to include Newtown; and — this was the crux of the matter — that the people of New Mills wanted to build a high level bridge over the Torrs onto the Newtown side of the river Goyt and therefore Newtown had to be within the boundaries, although it was in Cheshire not Derbyshire.

That there was strong feeling about this is evident from a separate report of a meeting of ratepayers the previous Friday evening concerned with opposition to the inclusion of Newtown, ‘which they wished to keep allied to Disley’. The meeting was described as ‘very disorderly, and broke up in confusion, the parties standing on forms and shouting at each other’.

As a result of the inquiry, the inspector, Mr Robert Morgan, in his report recommended that a local government district for New Mills be formed and that its boundaries should include Newtown.⁴⁷ He observed

There are in the proposed district of New Mills about 4500 inhabitants of whom 950 are ratepayers. The property therein represents a rateable value of £6500. There are 12 cotton mills and print works in the district, employing over 1200 persons, the majority of the mill owners are amongst the promoters for the adoption of the Act, on the ground that owing to the very bad sanitary condition of many parts of the proposed district, typhoid fever, small pox, and other epidemics are prevalent and local jurisdiction is much required.

Although the river Goyt separates the townships of New Mills and Disley; the parishes of Glossop and Stockport and the counties of Derby and Chester yet Wirksmoor forms part of New Mills and owes its origin to it. Wirksmoor has very little connection with the remainder of the township of Disley which is with the exception of three villages for the most purely agricultural.

There are footbridges crossing the river Goyt at many points along which traffic between the two places passes and many of the inhabitants working at New Mills live at Wirksmoor and vice versa. But additional bridge accommodation is much required.⁴⁸

An order was issued by the Local Government Board establishing the district of New Mills for local government.⁴⁹ The Newtown objectors had lost their case. However, the

district so defined included only part of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle plus part of Newtown (Fig. 4)⁵⁰ The boundary approved by the Local Government Board was a strange one, apparently following the edges of the town and bearing no relation whatsoever to any administrative boundaries except partly in the south. The explanation provided by the Local Government Board was that ‘in order to lessen the burden upon the agricultural part of the district, certain portions had been cut off. . .’

Although the order defined the district⁵¹ it did not create a local board. Two scholarly letters from Edward Godward⁵² set out succinctly the reasons for having an elected local board to run the affairs of New Mills. A subsequent report⁵³ described ‘uproarious proceedings’ at a public meeting convened by John Hibbert in the New Mills public hall.⁵⁴ Edward Godward again spoke in favour of having a local board, but there were many objections from those who feared the increase in rates that this would inevitably bring. As a consequence, a resolution was passed rejecting the adoption of the Local Government Act of 1858 and the meeting ended in uproar amid demands for a poll.

In March 1873, a public meeting was held by the opponents to the establishment of a local board. The bill calling the meeting set forth the objections to the Torrs bridge scheme for which it was calculated £4,000 would have to be borrowed. There were objections to the cost of the bridge; to the cost of repairs of New Mills bridge; to the expenditure which would be incurred in meeting the requirements for the proper supply of gas and water; to the costs of the extra salaries for Board officials; and the smallness of the proposed district which would result in the rateable value being too little and hence the rate burden on the population too great.⁵⁵ A poll was held and the adoption of the Local Government Act of 1858 was rejected by a majority of 49 out of about 750 papers issued.

But the matter could not end there. Pressure for the creation of a local board and the proper running of the district’s affairs continued from various quarters. The poor law guardians, who now separately formed the Hayfield rural sanitary authority, were concerned with the questions of water supply and sewerage. In April 1875 an inquest was held on a man killed while trying to cross the Torrs gorge. The coroner was reported as saying that ‘New Mills was the worst town in Britain. . . it has some of the most wretched and miserable roads. . . a local authority ought at once to be formed; and one of its first businesses should be the construction of proper roads from one part of the town to the other’.⁵⁶

A letter to the Local Government Board drew attention to the fatalities in the Torrs and the coroner’s comments, adding ‘the roads are bad, the sanitary state of the town neglected, the water supply very deficient, gas dear and bad, no local board exists’⁵⁷

The opportunity to form a local board was on its way. The great Public Health Act of 1875 added to and consolidated all existing legislation relating to public health, particularly the Public Health Act of 1872, which had created the urban and rural sanitary authorities. Under section 272

The owners and ratepayers of any place situated in any rural district or districts and having a known and defined boundary may, by a resolution passed in a manner provided by Schedule III to this Act, declare that it is expedient that such a place should be constituted a local government district; and the Local Government Board may. . . declare such a place to be a local government district.

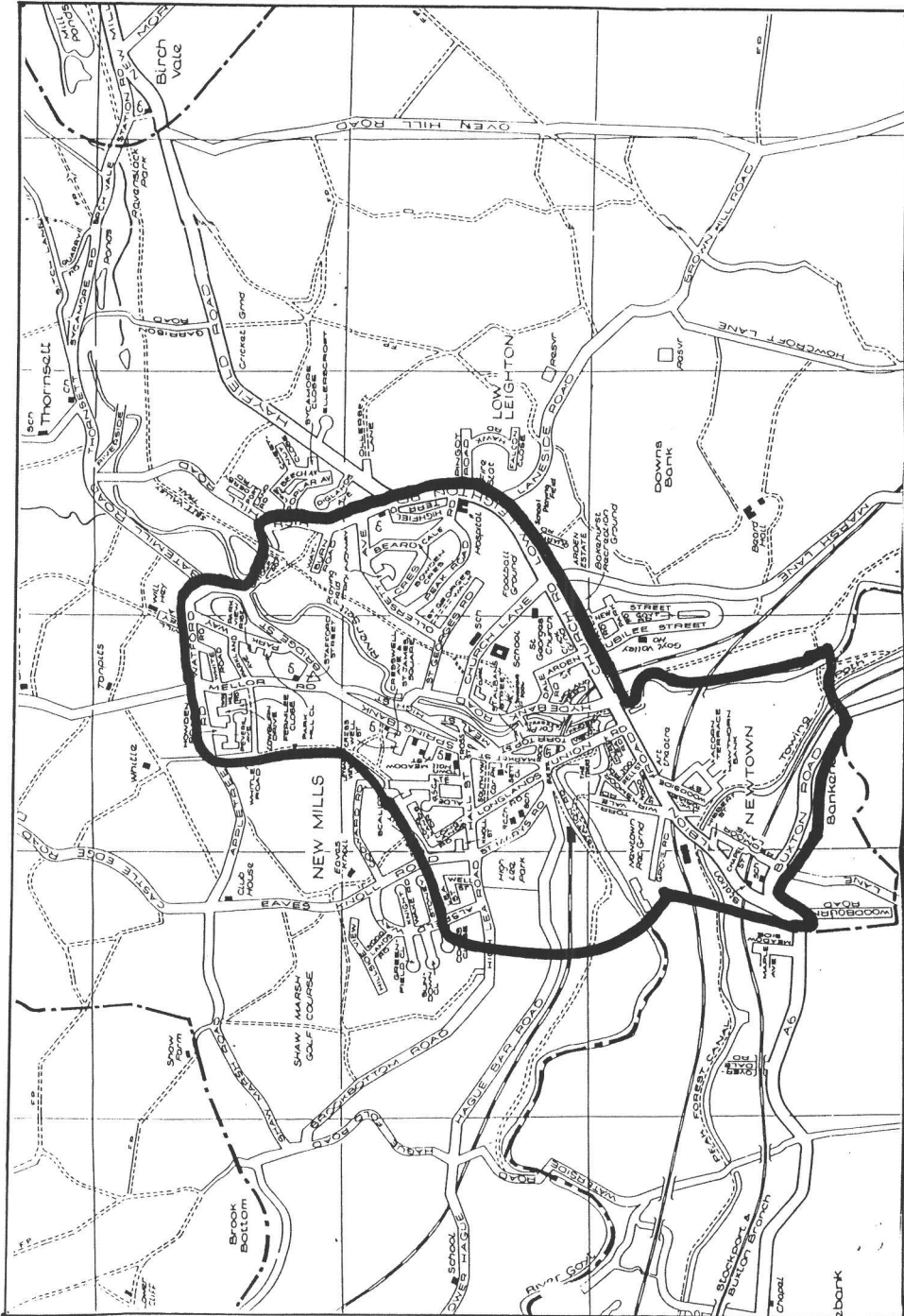


Fig. 4: The local government district of New Mills proposed in 1872.

This is what happened. A petition to the Local Government Board asked it 'to declare the above named parish of Beard [ie the four hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whittle] and part of the township of Disley [known as Newtown] to be a district for the adoption of the Local Government Act.⁵⁸ As a result, the Local Government Board held a public inquiry in New Mills on 5 June 1875 (Fig. 5). Mr Johnson, a Stockport solicitor, represented the petitioners 'and commented upon the need of a better water supply, the lighting of the streets, sanitary matters...and the dangerous state of the two roads leading from New Mills to Newtown'⁵⁹ Others who spoke in favour included John Bennett, James Hibbert, Thomas Saxton, Edward Godward, James Bagshaw, John Fielding, John Hawthorne and John Pollitt. The vociferous opposition to the adoption of a local board and to the inclusion of Newtown with the district so much in evidence previously was now missing. The boundary of the local district was finally fixed.⁶⁰ At a public meeting in September 1875⁶¹ a motion to adopt the Public Health Act of 1875 was passed by a large majority.⁶²

In the Local Government Board's annual report for 1875-6 New Mills is one of four places listed⁶³ as a place constituted as a Local Government District under the Public Health Act 1875 'in pursuance of a resolution of the Owners and Ratepayers.' It encompassed the hamlets of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whittle, recognising, like the parish reorganisation thirty years earlier, the sub-group of hamlets dating back to 1713. To them was added the district of Newtown (part of the parish of Disley), in Cheshire (Fig. 6).

The way was now clear for the establishment of the local board. Elections followed and the New Mills Urban Sanitary Authority first met on 21 January 1876.⁶⁴ The rest of the district within the Hayfield Union became the Hayfield Rural Sanitary Authority. Before long, the elected members of New Mills took advantage of their new powers to borrow money for public works, thus starting the great process of the municipalisation of public services which was to last nearly a hundred years. In October 1876 three loans were taken out for a total of £2,000 for sewerage, street improvement and lighting, paving, and flagging,⁶⁵ and in 1884 public loans of £4,400 were taken for the construction of the Union Road bridge across the Torrs gorge.⁶⁶ Despite the importance of this bridge to the road network of the town, it continued to raise controversy at the time; the resolution to build it was passed only on the casting vote of the chairman.⁶⁷

The new local board, however, was still only one element of order in local government for there remained the poor law union, the parish and chapelries, and various other administrations including the county system governed by the Quarter Sessions and the justices of the peace, school boards, highway boards, burial boards, and *ad hoc* bodies such as Turnpike Trusts. Boundaries of these disparate bodies were not coterminous. The complexities, were particularly apparent when it came to the taking of the census, as was made clear in the report to the 1881 census:

This complex system of division of the country... adds enormously to the labour of compiling a Census, and to the length of time occupied in the process. The difficulty consists not merely in the vast multitude of different areas that have to be taken into account, but still more in the bewildering complexity of their boundaries, which intersect each other in so intricate a manner as often to baffle even local knowledge; and the unravelling of which has in numerous cases



THE SANITARY ACTS.

NEW MILLS.

WHEREAS a Petition has been presented to the Local Government Board by Owners and Ratepayers of the Township of Beard, in the County of Derby, and of the Township of Disley, in the County of Chester, praying for the settlement of Boundaries of a District for the purposes of the Local Government Act, 1858, to consist of parts of those Townships; and the Local Government Board have directed Inquiry into the subject matter of such Petition:—

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that Robert Morgan, Esq., C.E., the Inspector appointed to hold the said Inquiry, will attend for that purpose at the Public Hall, New Mills, on Saturday, the Fifth day of June, 1875, at Eleven o'Clock in the Forenoon, and will then and there be prepared to receive the evidence of any persons interested in the matter of the said Inquiry.

JOHN LAMBERT,

Fig. 5: Notice of Inquiry by the Local Government Board to be held on 5 June 1875.

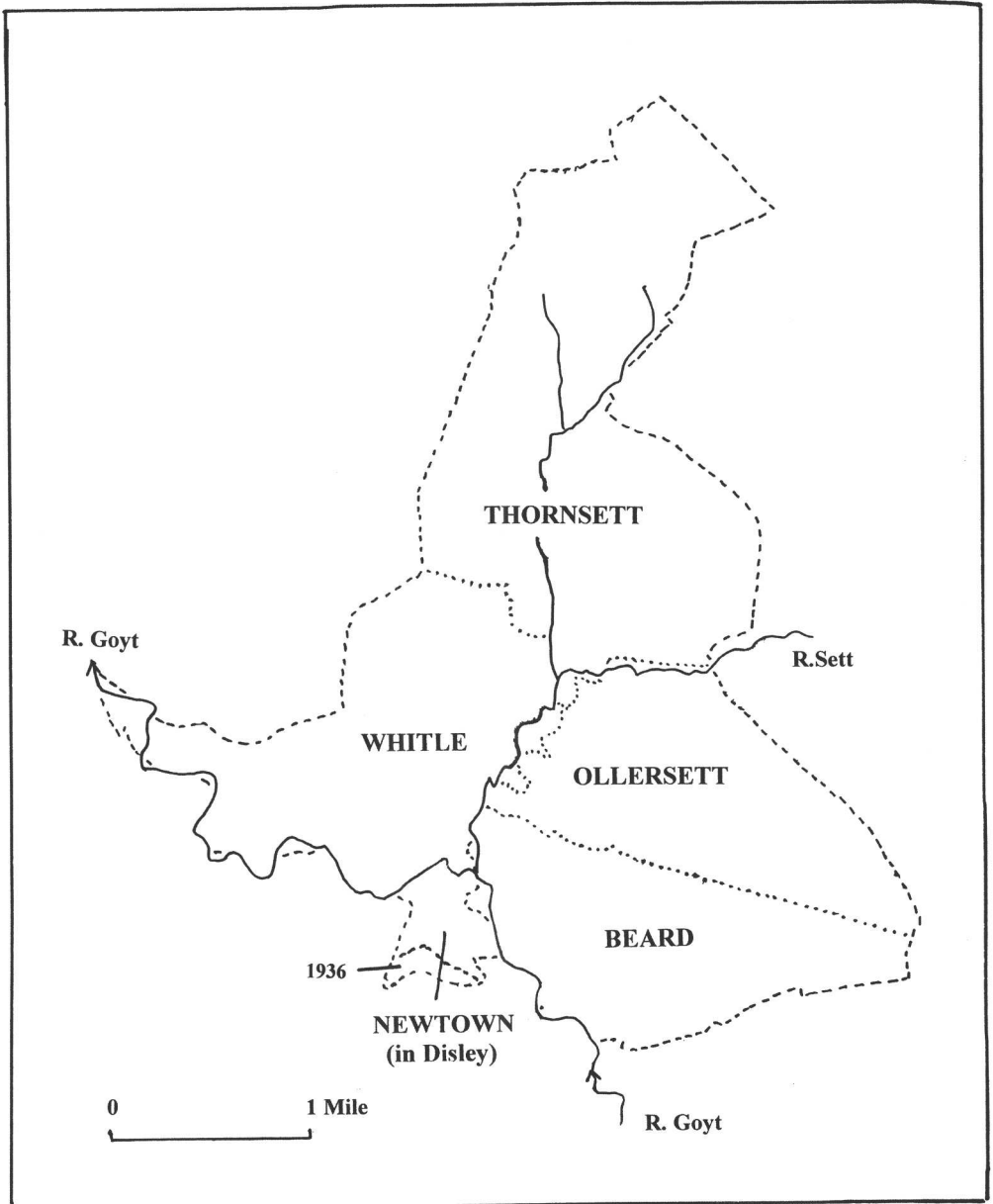


Fig. 6: The local government district of New Mills established in December 1875.

involved long correspondence and patient investigation of contradictory statements. . . One great addition to the labour was caused on this occasion by the institution in the last decade of Sanitary Districts. The Rural Sanitary Districts coinciding as they do generally either with entire Registration areas, or with the parts of such areas that remain after subtraction of any Urban Sanitary District within their limits, have caused but little additional expenditure of time or labour; but the Urban Sanitary Districts, nearly a thousand in number, with areas defined very

frequently without any apparent regard to the other administrative areas, have added very materially to the toil of our work. . . .⁶⁸

The various administrative boundaries of the New Mills district perfectly exemplified this (Table 1). An attempt to tackle these complexities were made by the Local Government Act of 1888,⁶⁹ which transferred the administrative powers of the justices of the peace to elected county councils ('administrative counties') and county boroughs.

The conditions of the 1888 Act were consolidated by the Local Government Act of 1894⁷⁰ which introduced self government into rural parishes and reconstructed the urban and rural sanitary authorities as urban and rural district councils. Hence, from 31 December 1894 was established the New Mills Urban District Council with the same boundaries as the previous urban sanitary authority. Where any urban sanitary district was situate partly within and partly without the borders of an administrative county, the district was deemed to be within that county which contained the largest portion of the population of the district, according to the census of 1881. Thus, from 1888, Newtown was placed in the administrative county of Derbyshire while remaining in the ancient county of Cheshire. There were now three kinds of counties:⁷¹

- (1) the ancient (or geographical) county, ie the counties of our maps.
- (2) the administrative county (created by the Local Government Act 1888)
- (3) and the registration or union which were aggregations of poor law unions (used for census purposes).

Hamlet	BMC	Hayfield Chapelry	Mellor Chapelry	Hayfield Union	New Mills Parish	Hayfield Parish*	Mellor Parish*	Other Parishes
Date		15C	15C	1837	1844	1844	1844	
Great Hamlet	x	x		x		x		
Kinder	x	x		x		x		
Phoside	x	x		x		x		
Bugsworth	x	x						x
Brownside	x	x						x
Chinley	x	x						x
Beard	x	x		x	x			
Ollersett	x	x		x	x			
Whittle	x		x	x	x			
Thornsett**	x	x		x	x			
Mellor		x	x				x	
Newtown				x				x

* Hayfield and Mellor are perpetual curacies

** Thornsett was divided between Hayfield and Mellor chapelries

BMC Bowden Middlecale

Table 1: The hamlets of New Mills and district and the ecclesiastical and poor law union boundaries.

Centuries of practice and piecemeal legislation had now led to a great number of overlapping areas, all of which, including the three kinds of counties, had to be separately identified in the census reports.⁷² Matters were made worse by the fact that in rural areas, changes in boundaries were unknown, unrecognised or misinterpreted by local authorities. The general report to the 1891 census complained that

A curious instance may be cited of the strange ideas held by some local authorities as to their power to alter boundaries of areas when such suits their convenience, without any Act of Parliament or Order of Local Government Board whatsoever'. . .⁷³

From 1888, therefore, the urban sanitary authority of New Mills (known as the urban district of New Mills from 1894) was in the administrative county of Derbyshire but the part called Newtown was in the ancient county of Cheshire. This anomaly was not resolved until 1936 when Newtown (plus a part not previously included in the New Mills Urban District) was transferred to the ancient county of Derbyshire and the river Goyt lost its centuries-old status as an ancient county boundary (Fig. 7).⁷⁴ New Mills Urban District Council continued to administer the affairs of its district until 1974 when under local government reorganisation all urban district councils and rural district councils were abolished and it became part of the Borough of High Peak, retaining a town (parish) council for certain purposes.⁷⁵

Education and the formation of the school board

In the early nineteenth century, the New Mills district, in addition to cotton spinning, was a centre for calico printing and, as a result of the importance of the bleaching, dyeing and printing industries, education acquired a strong technical emphasis. There was a printworks library in the 1850s and in 1852, a 'People's Institute', later known as the Mechanics' Institute, was established to provide evening classes, recreation and a library for young men and women. In 1860, this appears to have transferred to a rented house on Market Street and was known as the 'New Mills News and Reading Room', paid for by subscriptions. New Mills Co-operative Society was founded in the same year, and a number of its original officers and committee members were block printers, possibly from Strines Print Works.⁷⁶ The Mechanics' Institute's evening classes included science lessons in 1866, although these quickly closed due to a 'lack of elementary knowledge'. The Co-operative Society also had a strong educational emphasis, and it had established an educational fund by 1867.

The inadequacy of such arrangements were soon recognised, however, and following a public meeting it was decided to build a public hall 'for educational and community purposes'. £2,500 was raised through public subscription, and the hall was opened in September 1871, with a newsroom, classrooms and large public meeting hall capable of holding 500.⁷⁷ After the local board was formed in 1876 its meetings were held here.⁷⁸ In 1879, the Mechanics Institute transferred to the Public Hall, to become the centre of educational work in New Mills, concentrating on science classes, mainly chemistry for young men in calico printing and dyeing. J A Nichols, brought from a London training college, took over the chemistry class.⁷⁹ Nichols, described later as 'a pioneer' of New Mills education, was appointed head of the old British School held at the Congregational Sunday School, and subsequently became head of the first Board school on Spring Bank.⁸⁰

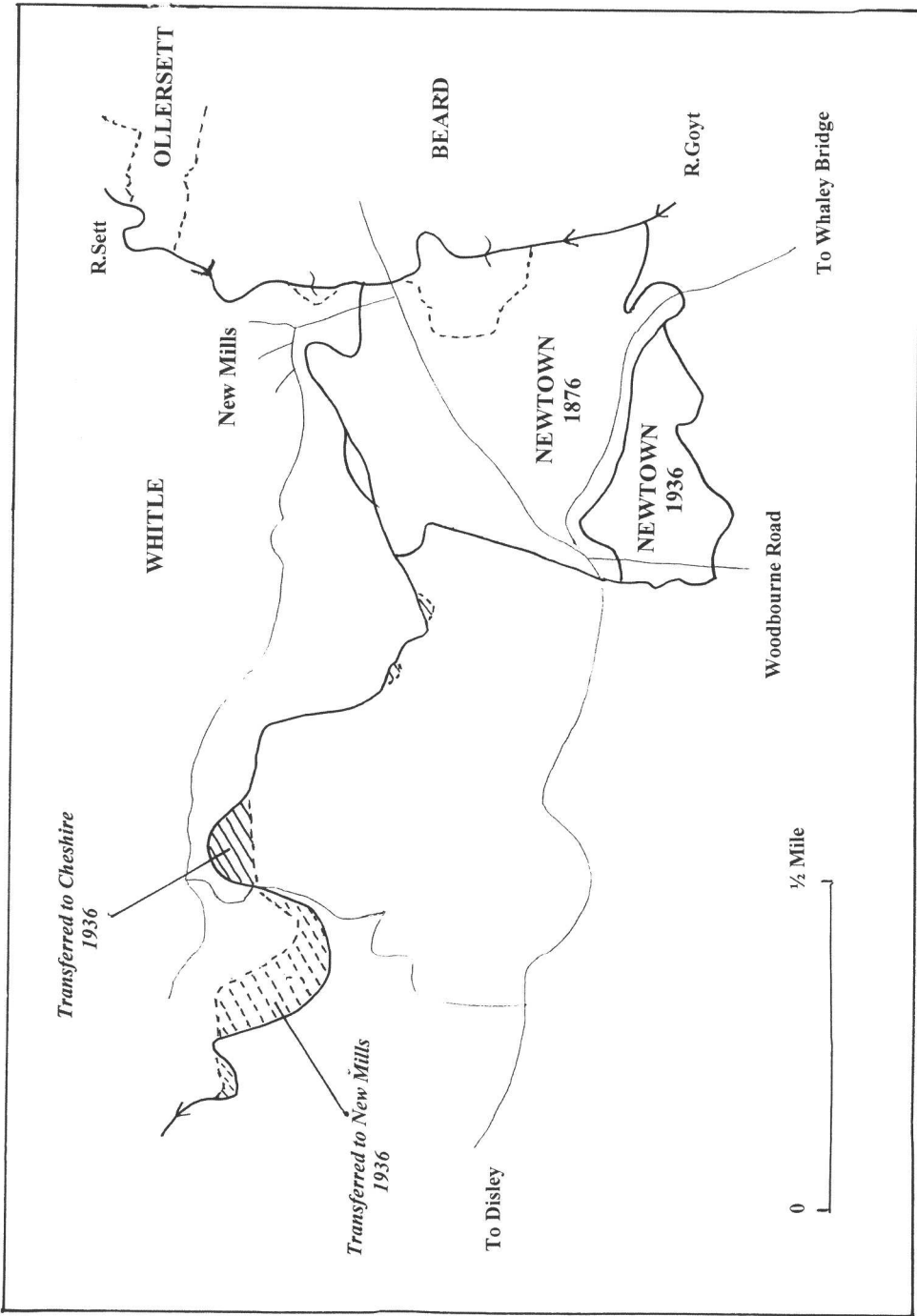


Fig. 7: Boundary changes made in 1936.

NEW MILLS SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

Report of the Science, Art, Technical, and Evening Continuation Classes, for Session 1900-1901.

On the Registers of Science, Art, and Technical Evening Classes, for last session, the numbers were as follows:—

Art Drawing.....	11
Geometry (Practical, Plane, and Solid).....	9
Machine Drawing	21
Building Construction	18
Inorganic Chemistry	10
Inorganic Chemistry, Practical	12
Organic Chemistry	14
Organic Chemistry, Practical	8
Calico Printing, &c.	14
Dressmaking	20
Applied Chemistry	14
Physiography, Practical (for Elementary Teachers)	30
Mathematics	10

Total number of entries, 191; number previous year, 207

The following passes were obtained by Evening Students at the May Examinations, 1901.

ART SUBJECTS:

Geometrical Drawing	Pass	2
Freehand Drawing	Pass	2

SCIENCE SUBJECTS:

Advanced Stage.....	1st Class.....	1
Do. do	2nd Class	8
Elementary Stage.....	1st Class	6
Do. do.	2nd Class	8

CITY AND GUILDS OF LONDON EXAMINATION:

Ordinary Stage	2nd Class	7
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The Class in Ambulance Work was discontinued for lack of Students.

From the Evening Continuation Classes and the Dressmaking Class, 15 Students attended the Examinations of the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes. Passes:

Elementary Arithmetic.....	1st Class.....	3
Do.	2nd Class	5
Do.	Pass.....	3

The amounts received in aid of Science and Technical Instruction during the year have been :

	£	s.	d.
From Science and Art Department	361	12	1
„ Derbyshire County Council.....	241	12	8
„ Students' Fees	60	18	3
Special Grants previously made by Derbyshire County Council in aid of building and equipment of Technical extension.....	620	0	0

Fig. 8: Front page of the Report of the New Mills Science and Technical School 1900-01.

Following the Education Act of 1870, the Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle School Board was elected in 1875.⁸¹ Its first clerk was Edward Godward, an architect, surveyor and mill owner, who became one of the most remarkable men in the history of nineteenth century New Mills.⁸² Three new board schools, designed by Godward, were built in quick succession — New Mills (Spring Bank, 1878), Thornsett (1878) and Hague Bar (1879). A fourth, at Newtown (1877), was in the Whaley Bridge and Disley School Board District. Attendance was compulsory until the age of 13, but was not free in New Mills until 1892.⁸³ These handsome buildings (with later additions) are now infant and junior schools, (except Spring Bank) but when they were established they were all-age schools (5–13).⁸⁴

Most classes were held in the public hall but evening classes in art and science were held in a rented cottage in High Street from 1883. These classes were supported entirely by voluntary contributions. As Nichols himself described, it was only three or four days after he entered upon his duties in New Mills that he found himself at a literary meeting belonging to the Mechanics' Institution. It was not very long afterwards that he was asked to take the secretaryship of that institution, which he carried on until its eventual demise. In the first session the students numbered 24 and their ages varied from 13 to 52. The rent of the cottage, the cost of chemicals and other expenses paid out of income, consisting of students' fees and the grants of the Science and Art Department, the balance being paid to the teachers at the end of the session. In 1887 the cottage laboratory was condemned and an inspector compared it to the 'Black Hole of Calcutta'. The classes were eventually taken over by the School Board.

In September 1889, the New Mills Local Board moved quickly to adopt the Technical Instruction Act (1889)⁸⁵ and delegated its powers to the school board. It led to the establishment of the New Mills School of Science attached to the board school on Spring Bank. It was the first such school in Derbyshire, and comprised a lecture room and chemical laboratory for 40 students. Nichols became its head. Chemistry, with its practical application to the calico printing, dyeing and bleaching trades, was prominent among science subjects. The significance of such educational initiatives was reflected in the fact that of 73 students who attended the evening classes and day school between 1879 and 1894, 21 went on to become print work managers.⁸⁶

In 1894 an extension to the technical school (as it became known) was built with grants made possible by the Technical Instruction Act. In 1899, further extensions to the technical school and a reading room (New Mills first free library) in a public hall extension were opened.⁸⁷ Mrs Mackie presented a library of technical books in memory of her late husband, the first chairman of the School Board and a former chairman of the science committee.⁸⁸ The emphasis on technical education continued, inspired by Edward Godward, John Mackie, James Hibbert⁸⁹ and John Nichols, men who devoted their lives and careers to the service of the town.⁹⁰ In 1902, the Education Act abolished school boards, and the county council became the local education authority. The Act distinguished between 'elementary' and 'secondary' education and the board schools became the council (elementary) schools. A recommendation⁹¹ that New Mills should have a higher grade elementary school instead of a secondary school was successfully fought by Edward Godward, who was then a county councillor and a member of the county education committee.

Following the passing of the 1902 Education Act, John Nichols was appointed headmaster of both the secondary school and council school on Spring Bank. He remained headmaster of both schools until 1908, when he became headmaster of the county secondary school. A separate headmaster was appointed for the council school, although both were still in the Spring Bank building. In 1914 Nichols moved to a new secondary school building on Church Lane which later became the first grammar school.⁹²

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹ N J Frangopulo, *The history of the parish of Glossop*, University of Sheffield MA thesis, 1936. J H Scott, J H Smith, and D Winterbottom, *Glossop Dale, Manor and Borough*, (Glossop, 1973). J Hanmer and D Winterbottom, *The book of Glossop*, (Buckingham, 1992).
- ² See below Note 6.
- ³ The earliest known date for the use of the name Middlecale is 1298–99. C E Luard, *Trailbaston Derbyshire, I*, 1933.
- ⁴ The names were in use by the fifteenth century. *Rotul. Pasch.* (Easter Roll) of 1433, Glossop Library Archives Z1, Derbyshire Record Office (DRO), 705/23/11
- ⁵ Order made upon petition at the general quarter sessions of the Peak, 4th April 1713. DRO, D3705/25/15.
- ⁶ Charter quoted by J Scott, J H Smith, and D Winterbottom, (1973), p. 18.
- ⁷ J Scott, J H Smith, and D Winterbottom, (1973), p. 17.
- ⁸ J Scott, J H Smith and D Winterbottom, (1973), p. 20.
- ⁹ A map prepared at this time (possibly between 1587 and 1590) shows six areas of herbage stretching as far as Tideswell, which are represented by geometrically-shaped blocks of colour varying in size apparently proportional to their area. In between them are ‘great wastes’. The settlements of Glossop, Hayfield and Chapel-en-le-Frith are represented by pictorially drawn buildings. PRO, Maps MPC 53. A copy is held by New Mills Local History Society. Also, H Nicholas, *Local maps of Derbyshire to 1770. An inventory and introduction*, (Matlock, 1980).
- ¹⁰ J Scott, J H Smith and D Winterbottom, (1973), p. 26
- ¹¹ It is recorded that twelve oaks (a gift by Henry IV out of the royal forest) were used in the construction of a chapel at Hayfield in 1405. R Bryant, ‘The early history of Hayfield church. *New Mills Local History Society Newsletter* (16), Spring 1996, p. 4.
- ¹² Hayfield registers DRO, D2426 A/P1 1/5. Bishops’ Transcripts are held in Lichfield Record Office. See also F A Youngs, *Guide to the local administrative units of England; Vol II Northern England*, Roy. Hist. Soc., London, 1991, p. viii.
- ¹³ A search of parish, diocesan and county records has not found any information regarding the boundaries of the chapelries.
- ¹⁴ Chinley, however, is listed in the Glossop Easter Books which were presented with other documents in the Chinley tithe case, (but are now missing), and tithes and other dues had been paid to the rector. D Brumhead, ‘The Chinley tithe case, 1765–66’, *Derbyshire Miscellany*, 16 (5) Spring 2003, pp123–34.
- ¹⁵ Chinley Chapel’s registers date from 1729 although there are a few retrospective entries dating back to 1703.
- ¹⁶ Recently transcribed by Rowena Clarke, and published on internet website *North West Derbyshire sources*.
- ¹⁷ The Eyre, Bagshaw and Norfolk families in the Sheffield City Record Office, the Bagshaw and Jodrell families in the University of Manchester John Rylands Library.

- ¹⁸ S Evans, *New Mills Wesleyanism*, New Mills, 1912.
- ¹⁹ A point made by Melanie Tebbutt in an unpublished ms.
- ²⁰ 4 and 5 Will IV c 76.
- ²¹ M Caplan, *In the shadow of the workhouse. The implementation of the new poor law throughout Nottinghamshire, 1836–46*, Nottingham 1948, p. 8.
- ²² A Digby, 'The rural poor' in D Fraser (Ed), *The new poor law in the nineteenth century*, 1976, p. 152.
- ²³ The overlapping of union and county boundaries was not sorted out until the Local Government Act of 1888 when Newtown was placed in the administrative county of Derbyshire and Disley was taken out of the Hayfield Union.
- ²⁴ J Powell, *The Hayfield Union Workhouse*, New Mills. In 1929 it became a hospital for the mentally ill and, later, for elderly people. It has now been converted into apartments, retaining its original exterior.
- ²⁵ 5 September 1845, PRO, MH 12/2/2041.
- ²⁶ The voluminous records are under Series MH in the PRO. MH 12 'Correspondence with Poor Law Unions and other local authorities' (1833–1909) consists of 16,741 volumes.
- ²⁷ 6 and 7 Will IV c 86
- ²⁸ *Return from the township of Beard of the amount of the poors rate in each year, 1801–17*, DRO, Q Agp 78. See also *The amount of poors rate in each year in the several townships in the hundred of the High Peak*, DRO, Q/RG/2/2.
- ²⁹ They are succinctly summarised in J Richardson, *The local historian's encyclopedia*, Historical Publications, New Barnett, 1983, pp 78–83.
- ³⁰ A full set of the land tax assessments 1778–1832 is available for the township of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle, DRO, Q/RE. Unfortunately, other than a few individual records, no such record for the poor rate seems to have survived. Eg in 1768 the poor rate assessed for the township of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle was £24.15s 9¼.d (£400.5s.5d in 1801).
- ³¹ R M Bryant, *The New Mill and some other corn mills of the High Peak*, New Mills 1990.
- ³² Anonymous letter, *Glossop Record*, 6 February 1869.
- ³³ 11 and 12 Vic. c. 63
- ³⁴ Parliamentary Return No 431 (1870)
- ³⁵ 21 and 22 Vic. c. 98
- ³⁶ 'Local Board of Health, *Wikipedia*, pp 1–5.
- ³⁷ 34 35 and 36 Vic. c. 79.
- ³⁸ 35 J Redlich and F W Hirst, *Local government in England, Book I*, Second edition by B Keith-Lucas, *The history of local government in England*, 1970, pp 159–60. V D Lipman, *Local government areas, 1834–1945*, Oxford, 1949, pp 93–97.
- ³⁹ Lipman (1949), p. 97.
- ⁴⁰ Letter to the Local Government Board, 19 May 1873. PRO, MH12 2046.
- ⁴¹ Report to the Local Government Board by the Medical Officer of Health, C Bennett, 11 February 1874, PRO, MH12 2947.
- ⁴² Letter to the Local Government Board, 19 August 1874. PRO, MH12 2047.
- ⁴³ Copy of letter from the clerk to the solicitor of the trustees of G W Newton, 30 October 1874. See also, D Brumhead 'The Ollersett Waterworks 1831–1907', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, 17 (6), Autumn 2006, pp 150–64.
- ⁴⁴ Letter to the Local Government Act Department forwarded to the Local Government Board, 11 December 1871. PRO, MH12 2047.
- ⁴⁵ Under the Local Government Act, 21 and 22 Vic c 98 (1858), Section XVI, which stated that 'any place not having a known or defined boundary may petition one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State to settle its boundary for the purposes of this Act. . .'

- ⁴⁶ *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 13 July 1872.
- ⁴⁷ 9 September 1872. PRO, MH12 2047.
- ⁴⁸ Report by W Morgan, 7 September 1872. PRO, MH12 2048.
- ⁴⁹ 24 October 1872. PRO, MH12 2047.
- ⁵⁰ A description of the boundaries is given in J H Smith and J V Symonds, *A short history of New Mills: including an analysis of the census of 1851*, Manchester, 1975, pp 15–16.
- ⁵¹ Under the Public Health Act of 1858
- ⁵² *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 9 and 16 November 1872. Godward, an architect and surveyor, was the owner of Brunswick Mill in Newtown.
- ⁵³ *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 30 November 1872.
- ⁵⁴ 25 November 1872.
- ⁵⁵ It was calculated that owing to the small area a 10d rate would bring in only £270 16s .8d.
- ⁵⁶ *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 10 April 1875.
- ⁵⁷ Letter dated 27 April 1875 from Mr John Geddes of Rock Cottage, New Mills. PRO, MH12 2048.
- ⁵⁸ Petition from the ratepayers received by the Local Government Board, dated 29 April 1875. PRO, MH12 2048.
- ⁵⁹ *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 12 June 1875.
- ⁶⁰ *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 7 August 1875. The Local Government Board order dated 19 July 1875 was rescinded because of an objection to the use of the name Beard for the township of Beard, Ollersett, Thornsett and Whitle. The revised order was dated 7 August 1875. PRO, MH12 2048.
- ⁶¹ *Glossop-dale Chronicle*, 11 September 1875.
- ⁶² The Public Health Act 1875 was passed in July. It repealed the Local Government Act 1858 under which provisions all the previous proceedings had taken place. The meeting was held on 6 September 1875 and immediately afterwards a special meeting agreed that the local board when elected should consist of twelve members. The Local Government Board's order establishing New Mills as a place constituted as a local government district under the Public Health Act 1875, 'in pursuance of a Resolution of the Owners and Ratepayers', was dated 30 November 1875. PRO, MH12 2048.
- ⁶³ Appendix K No 76
- ⁶⁴ Later, it became known as the New Mills Local Board. The minute books of the present town council date from the establishment of the urban sanitary authority in January 1876.
- ⁶⁵ Minutes of New Mills Town Council. A loan of £2,000 was sanctioned by the Local Government Board dated 23 October 1876, PRO, MH12 2048. The balance of £1,000 was raised on the rates.
- ⁶⁶ Minute books of New Mills Town Council.
- ⁶⁷ Minute books of New Mills Town Council. The construction of the bridge, together with its new road (Union Road), required the demolition of Whitle Hall (Torr Top Hall) and the Queen's Arms public house, which was relocated on an adjacent site.
- ⁶⁸ Census of England and Wales, Vol I, Area, Houses and Population: Counties, 1883, Report, pp iii–iv
- ⁶⁹ 51 and 52 Vic c 41, 1888.
- ⁷⁰ Local Government Act, 56 and 57 Vic c 73, 1894.
- ⁷¹ In only one county, Cumberland, were the boundaries of the three identical. Census of England and Wales, 1891.
- ⁷² In the census report of 1901, the population of the ancient county of Derbyshire was 620,196, that of the administration county 504,577, and that of the registration county 490,886.
- ⁷³ Census of England and Wales, 1891.
- ⁷⁴ Local Government Act, 19 and 20 Geo V, c 17, 1929. Provisional Order 1936.

- ⁷⁵ D D Brumhead, *New Mills 1894–1994*, New Mills, 1994.
- ⁷⁶ John Humphreys, *New Mills Co-operative Society 1860–90*, New Mills 1989.
- ⁷⁷ It is now New Mills Town Hall.
- ⁷⁸ In 1895 the hall was transferred to the New Mills Urban District Council but was not described as the Town Hall until 1898. Brumhead (1994), p. 25.
- ⁷⁹ Nicols was still a probationer.
- ⁸⁰ *High Peak Reporter*, 8 January 1927. This and other newspaper references are kindly provided by Melanie Tebbutt in an unpublished *ms* on education in New Mills.
- ⁸¹ School Boards were *ad hoc* bodies formed by ratepayers and were outside the responsibility of the local boards. They were authorised to levy a rate of not more than 3d in the pound.
- ⁸² Brumhead (1994), p. 28.
- ⁸³ J P B[owden], *A contribution to the history of education in New Mills*, Unpublished *ms*, New Mills 1966. I am grateful to Cath Bolton of New Mills Library for bringing this to my attention.
- ⁸⁴ The Spring Bank building became a secondary school in the early twentieth century. It is now used for Community and Adult Education (Derbyshire County Council).
- ⁸⁵ Minutes.
- ⁸⁶ Brumhead, (1994), p. 25. The highest paid printwork's manager in the United States was said to have been a pupil at Nichols's evening classes.
- ⁸⁷ When the reading room became inadequate a new free library next to the Town Hall was built in 1911 with funds from the Carnegie Foundation. The room is now the council chamber of New Mills Town Council, and the words 'Reading Room' are still to be seen on the entrance door.
- ⁸⁸ Brumhead (1994), p. 27. 'Mackie Memorial Library' is still emblazoned in relief on the building.
- ⁸⁹ Hibbert was the second chairman of the urban sanitary authority. Through his efforts New Mills got its public hall and free library (for which he donated £500).
- ⁹⁰ Brumhead (1994). Godward was a Quaker and refused to pay that portion of the poor rate devoted to educational purposes. As a result, his silver watch was regularly seized and put up for auction. *High Peak Advertiser*, 5 June 1908.
- ⁹¹ M E Sadler, *Report on Secondary and Higher Education in Derbyshire*, Matlock, 1904.
- ⁹² Today, New Mills School, Business and Enterprise College. Nichols retired in 1921 after 43 years service in New Mills.