

**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF**



SAMLESBURY & CUERDALE

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Overview

12th – 14th Centuries

15th Century

16th Century

17th Century

18th Century

19th Century

20th Century

21st Century

Previous page: Alum Scar Bridge after re-construction: Courtesy Lancashire County Council.

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OVERVIEW

Samlesbury is a large parish consisting of an estimated 4,386 statute acres, whilst Cuerdale (which originally consisted of only nine farms), has been estimated at 388 acres.

The Parish of *Samlesbury and Cuerdale* is bordered for several miles the by the Ribble. It includes most of the green belt between Preston and Blackburn, and is criss-crossed by the River Darwen, the M6, two ex-trunk roads, and numerous lanes. Both areas are of historical interest.



Samlesbury has two Grade I Listed Buildings – the Parish Church of St. Leonard-the-Less, close to the river,

Samlesbury Parish Church founded c1186.

and the Higher Hall of Samlesbury, which lies approximately two miles to the east:



Samlesbury Higher Hall c1325

Cuerdale is noted for the discovery (1840), of a large Viking Age Hoard which was uncovered near the river. The area also made headlines in 2002, when a long-forgotten pottery centre was revealed on the Cuerdale plateau, together with evidence of two Iron Age, or Romano-British roundhouses.

There are also a number of Grade II listed buildings in both places.

People of historical interest include:-

- Jane Southworth and Jennet and Ellen Bierley who were falsely accused of practicing witchcraft, and became known as the '**famous witches of Salmesbury**¹' in 1612.

- **St. John Southworth** (1592-1654).

Was the last Secular priest to be executed under the sentence of high treason, and the only one under Cromwell.

- **Joseph Harrison** (1804-1880).

A very successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, who restored and extended Salmesbury Higher Hall.

- **William Billington** (1825-1884).

He was born into poverty in Salmesbury, William went on to become a cotton operative, poet, teacher, writer and social commentator. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing at that time and the effects were felt in rural areas as well as in the industrial towns.

Points of historical interest include:-

Probable Archaeological Sites

The **Battle of Ribbleson Moor** on 17th August 1648, which appears to have spilled over into Salmesbury.

Cottage Factories and **Spinning Mills**.

English Electric's **military aircraft factory** in WWII.

¹ There have been at least 61 different spellings of *Salmesbury* in historical records, but *Salmesbury/Salmesburie* in the account of these trials, appears to be one of the only times when this particular spelling was used.

12th – 14th CENTURIES

c1185: The first lord of Samlesbury: (c.31 Hy. II)

The first recorded lord of the manor is **Cospatric de Samlesbury**. He held the land from his Norman overlord Robert de Lacy, who held the Honour of Clitheroe from the king. Cospatric is believed to have lived within the Ribble's Horseshoe Bend in the vicinity of the present Lower Hall, and certainly there are 'unmistakable evidences of numerous long-forgotten settlements and dwellings now razed to the ground².'



Many large, dressed stones were brought to the surface whilst the land at the bottom of the Bend was being quarried for sand and gravel in the early 20th century. When foundations were eventually revealed, they indicated the remains of a structure some 38ft. square – perhaps a small peel tower.

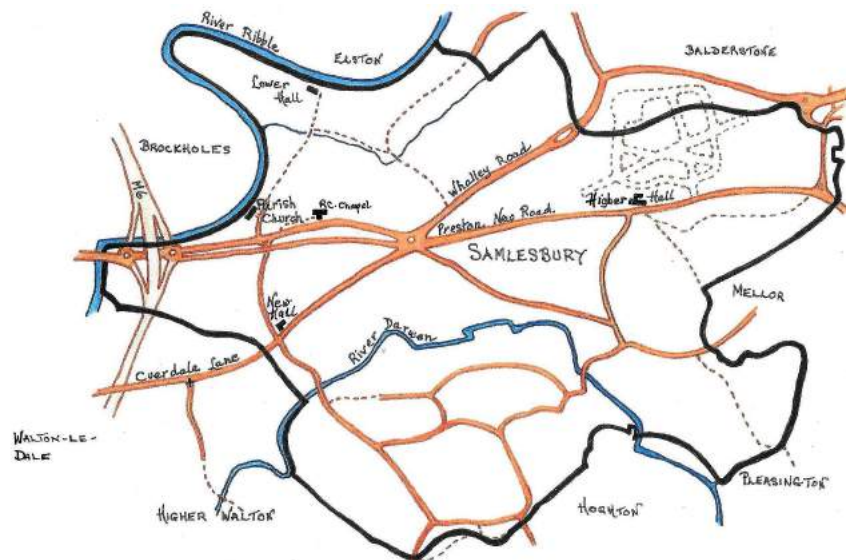
Earth works a short distance away may indicate the site of a 'much mutilated' motte and bailey castle³.

The site of a possible motte and bailey castle.

In time the manor of Samlesbury passed to Cospatric's three great-granddaughters, Margaret, Cecily, and Elizabeth de Samlesbury. Margaret died childless before 1267, but nearly thirty years passed before her husband's family returned her share of the estate to the remaining de Samlesbury sisters, **Cecily d'Ewyas** and **Elizabeth de Holand** (c1296):

From then onwards there were two estates supporting two manor houses.

Elizabeth's moiety was centred on *Samlesbury Lower Hall*, whilst Cecily's base lay at the eastern end of the parish – at *Samlesbury Higher Hall*. Her descendants continued there for over 350 years.



² *History of Samlesbury*: Robert Eaton, local historian and a founder trustee of Samlesbury Hall.

³ *Promontory Forts on the Ribble*: unpublished typescript, 1991: Dr. T.C. Walsh.

1322: Earl of Lancaster's Rebellion against the King: (14 Ed. II)

The Earl of Lancaster (the Holland's overlord of the Lower Hall estate), ordered Elizabeth de Holland's son **Robert** to raise 500 Lancashire levies to support his rebellion against Edward II. The Earl lost the battle at Boroughbridge (16th Mar), and despite Robert's immediate surrender to the king, his vast estates – including the Samlesbury Lower Hall moiety – were re-possessed by the Crown.

Cecily d'Ewyas' eldest son **Nicholas**, promptly agreed a three year tenancy for his cousin's share of Samlesbury, but during the continuing civil unrest, the Lower Hall was raided twice. The first assault was led by a deputy sheriff acting under pretence of a Royal Warrant; and he removed armaments, farm implements, domestic items and grain to the value of £9 6s 0d..

A second attack occurred in mid-summer when *Robert the Bruce* (presumably encouraged by the civil unrest), led a raid into England, pillaging his way as far south as Samlesbury. Here, he attacked and removed the contents of Lower Hall's armoury (including 100 lances), appropriated 18 oxen, domestic utensils and bedding, before heading for the chapel where vestments, chalice, missal and psalter were stolen. At least one man is known to have been killed, and the total value of stolen items in the Scots' raid came to £30 11s. 10d..

c1325: Advent of the Southworths: (c17 Ed. II)

Cecily's grand-daughter, an heiress called **Alicia d'Ewyas** married **Gilbert de Southworth**, and they lived at the Higher Hall. It is he who is credited with building the great hall, (a possible extension to an earlier north wing).

The Cuerdale Potteries: 13th and 14th centuries

Approximately 24 clay pits are listed on old maps of Samlesbury and Cuerdale, and when the Natural Gas Pipeline was laid between Cuerdale and Helmshore in the Spring of AD 2002, rustic-ware sherds surfaced on either side of Potter Lane, (close to the Phase I Area).



Investigations disclosed the remains of three medieval production sites of a long-forgotten pottery centre along about ½ mile of the excavated pipeline route on the Cuerdale plateau.

Numbers 1, 2 and 3 indicate the known pottery sites.

During the 13th to 15th centuries, the gritty-ware that was commonly used in Lancashire was gradually being superseded by a finer, sandy-ware and the majority of sherds recovered were made of these two fabrics. Fragments of jars, jugs, pipkins, bowls, lids, cisterns and a possible dripping tray⁴ were found; (a number of which had been decorated with incised lines, a roller stamp, roulette wheel, or stabbing). Apart from one, all the vessels appear to have been wheel turned and the glazing varies between orange, yellow and green. Five other fabrics of various colours were noted, but these were perhaps domestic vessels which had not been produced in Cuerdale. Other finds included waster sherds, kiln furniture, clay pipes, charcoal and peat.

⁴ Pipkins were a five-handled cooking vessel; cisterns had a bung hole and were used to store liquids such as ale and a dripping tray was used to catch the juices from roasting meat.

Whilst some of the potters would live on site, others (like the hand-loom weavers), may have also farmed in a small way and this would supplement their living. Besides selling their product locally, and perhaps at places like Preston Pot Fair⁵, the potters must also have traded further a-field, because examples of their craft have been found in Wigan and Lancaster. Goods would be transported by road or river.

On **Site 1** there were indications that there may have been two Iron Age, or Romano-British roundhouses, (approx. 26 ft. and 31 ft. 6 in. (8m and 10m) diameter respectively), so the area could have been inhabited for a very long time.



A fragment of a rotary quern, a blacksmith's hot set⁶ (both of that era), and two Mesolithic flints were also discovered.

A possible clamp kiln base, (partly cobbled and measuring approximately 39 ft. x.26 ft., (12m x 8m), lies about 30 ft. to the south.

Site 1 in the process of excavation.

It was surrounded by a gully containing discarded sherds of predominantly gritty-ware – which would indicate a nearby kiln being used from about the 13th until the 14th/15th century, as only two of the 8,360 fragments found in this area were post-medieval.

In addition to a probable knife blade, a total of 1,081 sherds were collected on **Site 2**, so there was probably another kiln there. 73% of the sherds were predominantly sandy-ware and, as 13% of them were post-medieval, it would indicate that production of the finer ware was becoming more common. Indications are that this was a 14th century site.

Site 3 gave the appearance of another clamp kiln base similar to Site 1. There was a surrounding gully, which measured approximately 26ft. x 13ft. (7.5m x 4m), but there was no cobbled surface. 817 sherds of predominantly gritty-ware were found, so Site 3 was probably in use during the 13th and 14th centuries.



Altogether, 10,265 sherds were collected, weighing almost 150 kg. – the largest amount of medieval fragments ever discovered in this part of the country.

Fragments of pottery on display in Leyland Museum.

Few kilns have been excavated in the North-West, so this site is of considerable importance.

⁵ Pots found in New Hall Lane are believed to have come from Cuerdale.

⁶ Used to cut hot metal.

15th CENTURY

1415: Royal Protection Squad: (3 Hy.V)

When Henry V sailed for Normandy to avenge French attacks on the Lancastrian throne, **Sir John Southworth** of the Higher Hall was in his army. He had bound himself to supply two men-at-arms (perhaps himself and one of his sons), with six archers each, drawn from amongst the tenants. In this particular campaign he also covenanted to lead a further fifty archers, 'around the King's person,' and was paid £113/15/0 to do so. During the autumn however, John was one of the 2000 Englishmen who died of dysentery at the siege of Harfleur, just three weeks before the Battle of Agincourt (25th Oct.).

Retainers each had a contract and were paid in advance, so returning home after Sir John's death was not an option – they had to join another knight. Gilbert, Ralph, and Thomas Southworth (the heir), are known to have fought at Agincourt under the Duke of Bedford, so perhaps all of the Samlesbury men were attached to him.

Agincourt was a spectacular English victory – a David and Goliath scenario – but English longbow men carried 50 arrows apiece and had to be able to shoot a minimum of 10 arrows per minute. The French charged at the English from about 200 yards distant and by the time battle was enjoined, the English had loosed up to half a million arrows, each travelling up to 200 ft. per second.

1420: Domestic Chapels: (7 Hy. V)

The above **Thomas** married **Joan**, who came from a family of ecclesiastics. She was the widow of Sir Thomas Sherbourne, sister of a future Bishop of Lichfield, and half-sister to a future Archbishop of York.



It was doubtless her ecclesiastical connections which led to the Bishop of Lichfield granting them a licence for a domestic chapel at their manor houses of 'Sothelworth and Samlesbury.'

The present Samlesbury Hall Chapel. Note the window to the right of the cross, which was said to have come from Our Lady's Chapel at Whalley Abbey.

1489: The Lower Hall Changes Hands: (2 Hy.VII)

The Lower Hall manor was confiscated by the Crown for a second time, when the 6th Baron Holland (Viscount Lovel) took part in the Lambert Simnel uprising. His immense estates, (including the Lower Hall moiety of Samlesbury), were confiscated and granted to **Thomas Stanley 1st Earl of Derby**.

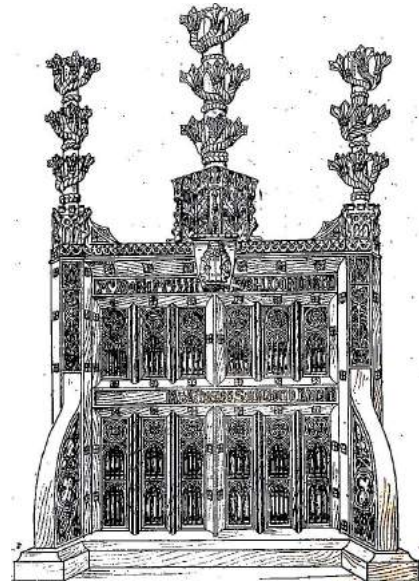
16th CENTURY

1532: Improvements at the Higher Hall: (23 Hy. VIII)

The third **Sir Thomas** Southworth 1497-1546 (a great, great grandson of Thomas and Joan), commissioned a magnificent 'moveable' screen for the great hall (1532). It measured approximately seven feet square, and six foot finials brought the total height to about thirteen feet.



Some of the exquisite woodwork commissioned by Sir Thomas. The panelling is now in Conishead Priory, Ulverston. (See p.15).



In 1545 Thomas(3) also built, or restored the south-west wing, commissioning craftsmen to paint and gild the ceiling, and line the long gallery with ornate wall panelling.

Sir Thomas(3) is buried in the Parish Church and it is assumed his funerary armour hangs directly over his grave.

Sir Thomas' funerary armour

1556: The manor court: (1 Phillip & 2 Mary)

Sir John was at his manor court in 1556 when a number of by-laws on law and order were framed, eg., no-one had to:

lodge or harbour vagabonds or suspected persons [or]
receive or maintain women of light conversation either of body or fame...

They also agreed that:

no woman shall go Abroad into their neighbours' houses with their distaves neither by day or night, nor spin by the wayside. For every time the spinner so doing shall forfeit and pay xii pence.



1558: Church Restoration: (1st. Eliz.I.)

Samlesbury's chapel was already old when Whalley Abbey was dissolved (1537), and churches that had operated under the umbrella of the abbeys were stripped of their furnishings. Samlesbury was no exception, and 1553 saw Edward VI's Commissioners also removing 'two little bells,' the altar⁷, rood screen, and church ornaments. So the building must have been little more than external walls.

As a result, **Edward** third Earl of Derby, who was then lord of the Lower Hall moiety of Samlesbury, sent out a circular letter appealing for funds for its restoration.

Many think that the third **Sir John Southworth** (lord of the Higher Hall moiety), did not assist the Earl. But bearing in mind that Sir John's father had been one of the Royal Commissioners for the Dissolution of Whalley Abbey, and several window dressings and a chapel screen had already found their way to the Higher Hall, that was probably not the case. This restoration occurred only twenty years after the Dissolution, so other items reputed to have come from Whalley – the medieval bell, baptistry window dressings, and ancient painted glass, may easily have been appropriated for the chapel about the same time. It has also been surmised that the large, high quality dressed stones were further ecclesiastical reclamation (which doubtless Sir John considered he was entitled to, in view of the amount of tithes that his forebears had paid to the abbey)!



17th CENTURY

1612: Trials of the Samlesbury Witches: (9 Jas.I)

The 17th century was a particularly complicated time. On the Continent witchcraft was believed to be the ultimate heresy, and witches could expect no mercy. The evil European ideas spread to Britain and it was this erotic, continental style of witchcraft of which Samlesbury's women, **Jennet** and **Ellen Bierley** and **Jane Southworth** were accused. The unfortunates were imprisoned at Lancaster Castle in April, awaiting trial at the Summer Assizes in August.

Jane had recently been widowed, and her eldest son John was the new heir to the manor, but she had stood up to her husband's uncle, **Rev. Christopher Southworth**, when he had tried to persuade her to stop attending the Anglican Church and return to Mass instead. Being unsuccessful, he had then started to spread a rumour that she was a witch, so she also 'challenged' him about that. Christopher would hate the idea of the future of his family estate being in the hands of Anglicans, because his allegiance was to the pope, the king of Spain and

⁷ Altars, which were of stone and stood in the centre of the chancel, were replaced by wooden Communion Tables and sited under the east window.

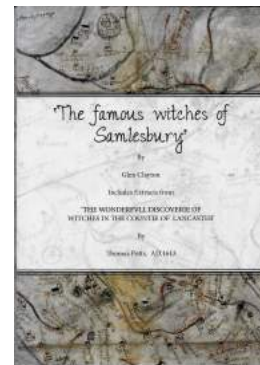
Cardinal Allen, who were all trying to bring England under the control of Spain and the pope. It would be Jane and her influence that he would want out of the way, but it would be less obvious if others were also accused. Christopher's main witness was 14-years-old **Grace Sowerbutts** – a grand-daughter of Jennet and a niece of Ellen.

When Sir Edward Bromley (Justice of Assize), had heard all the evidence against the women, he 'demanded of them what answer they could make.' Weeping, they fell on their knees and begged Sir Edward 'to examine Grace Sowerbutts, who set her on, or by whose means this accusation came against them.'

Grace was flummoxed. It transpired that she had been sent to a certain Master Thompson (aka Father Christopher Southworth), 'to learn her prayers;' but it became clear that she had been taught far more than prayers. Grace had been coached to recount improbable stories – false evidence that, if it was believed, would condemn the three women to death. A number of other witnesses had also been persuaded to back up her stories with their own 'evidence.' They all committed perjury, and in his account Thomas Potts (Clerk of Assize), explains that 'Master Thompson,' who was Jane Southworth's uncle-in-law, was taking revenge on the women for attending the local Parish Church, instead of going to Mass.

So the 'famous witches of Salmesbury' were acquitted and Grace was sent away from home for a while, to be given spiritual instruction by the Rector of Standish, an eminent puritan Divine.

A booklet relating these events is available at Salmesbury Hall.



1654: Execution of Rev. John Southworth: (5th Cromwell)

The parentage of this particular John Southworth is unknown, but traditionally he is believed to have been born at the Lower Hall of Salmesbury, and to have been a grandson of the third Sir John Southworth, who was manorial lord from 1546-1595.

Young John trained for ministry in the Church of Rome at Douay, Flanders, and was then sent back to England to persuade the 'heretics' to return to the Roman Catholic fold. But most of his working life appears to have been spent in London and Westminster, alleviating the suffering of the poor (particularly during the 1636 outbreak of plague).

John was imprisoned on several occasions and was arrested for the final time when Cromwell issued two ordinances for the apprehension of priests, Jesuits and nuns.

In court, John denied that he was a traitor, but admitted that he was a priest of the Roman Church. He had trained on the Continent under the aegis of the Pope (a hostile authority), and then worked in this country against the law. He knew he was breaking the law by remaining in England, but his point was that he was not a political activist and he was not trying to undermine the political system.

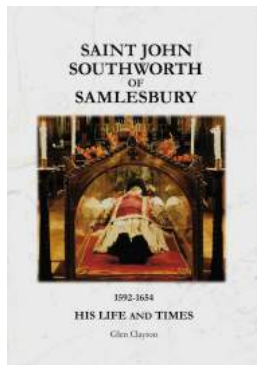
Unfortunately, the penal laws were still in place, and the law could not be set aside. After execution his quartered remains were stitched together, embalmed and taken to Douay.

John's coffin was eventually re-discovered and returned to Westminster in 1927. He was canonised in 1970, and is still considered to be 'a model for every priest today.'

Saint John Southworth is now co-patron of Samlesbury's Roman Catholic Chapel, and his Feast Day is celebrated on 27th June.



St John Southworth



A booklet about these events is available from Samlesbury Hall, Glen Clayton, or ruthuson@googlemail.com

1646: Financial problems at the Higher Hall: (23 Chas. I)

Stand-offs with the Civil War sequestrators (who claimed he owed them £358 18s. 9d. plus expenses), a 26-year legal battle with his two nieces over the ownership of the Mellor estate, and the cost of bringing up his own large family, brought the sixth **John Southworth** to the edge of bankruptcy. His ownership of the Mellor estate was eventually confirmed, but he had to pay his nieces £318 0s 0d., (1666).

The case financially devastated him and the debt was not finally cleared until many years after his death.

1679: Samlesbury Higher Hall changes hands: (18/19 Chas. II)

John's son **Edward** inherited in 1678, and he could see no hope of recovery. He sold out to **Thomas Braddyll**, who already held the mortgage, and the indenture is dated 10th March 1679.

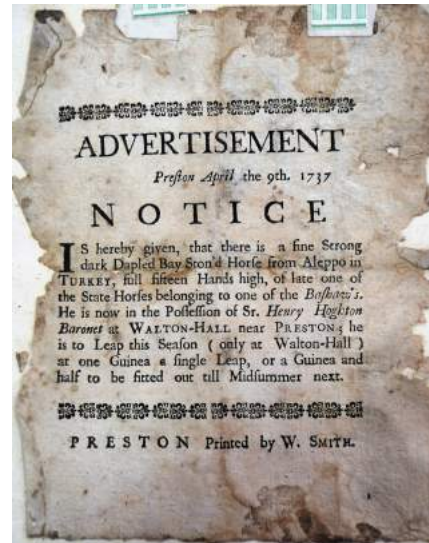
The Hall took a social nosedive and was set up as a fustian factory.

18th CENTURY

1737: (9 Geo. II)

One of the Parish Clerk's duties was to circulate useful information to parishioners.

This announcement about a stallion at stud, would have been made by the clerk from the lowest tier of the three decker pulpit in the parish church.



A notice about a stallion at stud, which was found under the pulpit.

Occupations

Agriculture, textiles and their related industries were the main occupations in 18th century Samlesbury, but records indicate a self-sufficient community that included tanning, saddlery, brick burning, and furniture making.

The textile industry was mostly domestic and kept whole families occupied with carding, spinning and weaving. Many small farmers supplemented their income by hand-loom weaving, particularly in the winter months when less work could be done outside.



In time, several individual manufacturers emerged who employed a few hand-loomers and spinsters on a cottage factory basis: eg. muslin was produced at Cardwell's Farm, and 'blue bratting' on Sowerbutts Green; (the latter being a checked, denim-type material used for a variety of purposes, including 'brats,' ie. aprons).

Weavers' cottages/factory premises are still in existence at Church Bottoms, Goosefoot and Roach Bridge.

A hand-loomer at work.

1771 Cotton spinning at Roach Bridge: (11 Geo. III)

Technology was advancing: the flying shuttle had been patented in 1733, the spinning jenny invented in 1764, and the spinning frame in 1769.

Collinson and Watson erected a water-driven cotton-spinning factory at Roach Bridge on the

site of the present Roach Bridge Mill, and leased machinery from Richard Arkwright (1732-1792). Arkwright's water-powered spinning frame gave Britain the monopoly on factory-produced thread, and this water-driven spinning mill in Roach Bottoms appears to have been one of the earliest in this part of Lancashire. Sadly, records show that their child workers were cruelly exploited.

Roach Bridge Mill in 1936



1787

By 1787 John Sharrock was leasing a cottage factory in Roach Bottoms which was spinning cotton on the north side of the Darwen. This included a row of cottages just down-stream from the bridge (centre-left in photograph), and an acre of land.

The spinning mule had been made generally available c1783 and when steady, reliable steam-power eventually superseded water-power, mills no longer needed to be built by rivers or streams.



Roach Mill AD 2021

Many workers therefore left their traditional rural communities, to work in the large spinning or weaving mills of the rapidly expanding mill towns. As a result, small rural mills like Roach Bridge turned their attention to paper manufacturing. At Roach they concentrated on tissue paper.

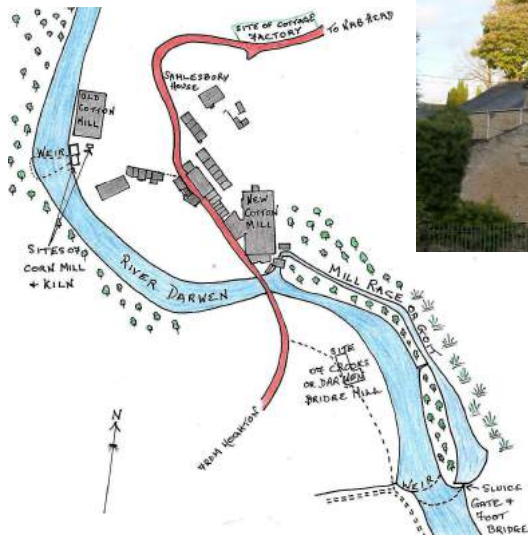
1784 Cotton spinning at Samlesbury Bottoms: (24 Geo. III)

On 1st May John Sharrock leased a cottage factory on Mill Brow, whilst Thomas Smith, Robert Cross and Richard Ellenthorpe took out a joint lease for a water-powered cotton factory in Samlesbury Bottoms on the same date. This was built on waste land downstream from the bridge.

Four years later the mill was being run by *Smith, Slater and Co., Cotton Twisters*⁸, but by about 1793 the concern was leased by William Slater only. William eschewed cottage factories (the halfway stage between the true cottage industry and power driven mills). Instead he established a new mill a short distance upstream from the old one, and built a larger, crescent weir to harness the free motive power for his extra spinning machines.

Another mill also appears on the old maps, variously called *Crooks'*, or *Darwen Bridge Mill*. It

⁸ Twist was cotton yarn which was strong enough to be used as warp in the textile industry. They were cotton warp spinners.



Samlesbury Bottoms: mill sites, goit and weirs.



Samlesbury Mill AD 2021

was on the opposite side of the Darwen between the bridge and the crescent weir.

(By 1850 two of the mills were being run by John Cooper of Penwortham, see p.17.)

19th CENTURY

1818: St. Mary's & St John Southworth's R.C. Church (58 Geo. III)

The Lower Hall chapel was in use for a long time, but eventually the encroaching river endangered the building and it was decided to take advantage of the 1791 Act of Parliament, which allowed RC churches to be erected – subject to conditions.

So a new 'barn church' was opened at Southbank in 1818, and dedicated to St. Mary. It was built on an old stretch of road connecting Potter Lane with the Five Barred Gate that became known as 'Roman Walk.'

When Preston New Road was cut, another access was made from the new main road.

The Grade II listed St. Mary and St. John Southworth's R.C. Chapel.

The chapel is rectangular and decorated in the Byzantine style with a classical High Altar. It is surrounded by a curved Communion Rail with stick balusters and over it hangs a crucifix which was made from a newel post of the old Lower Hall staircase.



The Sanctuary wall has a large framing recess with a wide, depressed arch flanked by Ionic columns, bearing a dentilled cornice and frieze inscribed:- 'Ecce Panis Angelorum,' (from the sequence of the Mass of Corpus Christi).

One of the relics of St. John Southworth is also kept here.

1834: The Braddyll Arms: (4 Wm. IV)

At this time, the Braddylls were still letting the Hall to six hand loomers and their families, but traffic on the new Blackburn-Preston Road (opened in 1826), was increasing and ten years later Col. T.R.G. Braddyll took advantage of the fact that Samlesbury Hall lies midway between the two towns. He converted it into a wayside inn called the *Braddyll Arms* and most conveyances travelling between Preston and Blackburn stopped to change their horses there.

The Braddyll Arms: At this time the principal door was the one in this picture.



In addition, Braddyll stripped Thomas Southworth's *long gallery* of all its beautiful, carved wall panelling. Along with the chapel screen, the exquisite woodwork was taken to Conishead Priory, to enhance his new house. The massive, 'moveable' screen in the *great hall* was left at Samlesbury, but was later cut up to build a minstrel's gallery.

When Mrs. Blundell was landlady at the inn, she farmed 130 acres of the manor land and won the Preston Agricultural Society's Prize of six guineas, for the best cultivated farm (1838).

In addition, the Woodfold Foxhounds would sometimes meet here and the Preston Steeplechase was run on adjacent land.

1840: Discovery of a Viking Age Hoard in Cuerdale: (2 Victoria)

This *Dark Age* hoard was discovered on 15th May when workmen were repairing the eroded Ribble banking near Cuerdale Hall. One man's pickaxe came into contact with the remains of a lead-lined wooden chest lying below the surface and as it burst open he remarked, "It's quare 'ow them cockle shells ha' gotten theer," but it was soon realised that 'them cockle shells' were in fact, tarnished silver coins.

At the time it was the largest find ever discovered in Western Europe and caused great excitement. There were about 7,500 British and foreign coins, together with jewellery, ingots and hack silver. The total weight exceeded $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt. (40 kg), and one theory is that it was gathered together to fund a military expedition.



The find lay close to an old Viking trade route that passed through the Aire Gap and along the Ribble Valley, linking York to Dublin and the Lancashire settlements around the Irish Sea.

Sample of silver from the Cuerdale Hoard. (Courtesy Liverpool Museum)

The Vikings however, were driven out of

Dublin in the early 10th century, so they travelled up the English rivers, raiding inland and taking control of large swathes of Northern and Eastern England. It is believed that it was during this time of turmoil that the hoard was buried (AD 903-908).

As might be expected, some of the treasure was squirreled away by those who found it, but Queen Victoria was Duke of Lancaster, and it was declared Treasure Trove. The remainder was then distributed to various museums, or acquired for private collections.



A stone now marks the place where the Hoard was uncovered.

According to ancient lore, if you stand on Walton Bridge and look up the Ribble Valley, you look over the 'wealth of England,' and many believed that the treasure discovered was only a part of what was originally buried.

1846: Bankruptcy: Samlesbury Hall changes hands again: (9 Victoria)

Col. Braddyll went bankrupt in 1846, and the Hall was placed in Chancery. An advertisement that year gave particulars of 'The ancient mansion called Samlesbury Hall' and 'Capital and Important Estates in Farms, Cotton Mills and Water Mills,' which were to be sold in 23 Lots under the order of the Lord High Chancellor of England. There were approximately 960 acres subdivided into farms of fine arable, pasture and meadowland. In addition there were extensive woods well stocked with game and some fine situations suitable for the erection of villas. A water corn mill and a cotton mill were worked by the River Darwen and there was a moiety of two other cotton mills which were 'principally worked by the same river...' The purchase also appears to have included the brick kiln on Nab Lane.

There were however, doubts about the legalities of the auction and it was November 1850 before the Court of Chancery confirmed **John Cooper** to be the new owner of the Hall and estate. By this time two of the mills must have changed hands, because Rimmer described Cooper as 'an opulent spinner' of *The Oaks*, Penwortham, who was running two cotton spinning factories in Samlesbury Bottoms.

The mills were not lacking in drama during their cotton years – there were six known fires, two bankruptcies, two shut-downs, one strike/turnout, an attempted bombing, an acid throwing incident and a shooting, besides the mill owners' cruel exploitation of child employees.

1852 (15 Victoria)

Cooper let the Higher Hall to **Mrs. James Harrison**, who opened a boarding school for young ladies and small boys. She used the Pestalozzian⁹ method of teaching and offered a very extensive curriculum.

From **1860** 'self acting,' or 'self actor minders' began appearing in the church registers. These men were manning fully automatic, multi-thread spinning machines (designed and patented by Richard Roberts). Each operator minded two, and it was presumably Cooper who introduced the new machines.

⁹ J.H. Pestalozzi 1746-1827: a Swiss educational reformer who emphasized learning by observation.

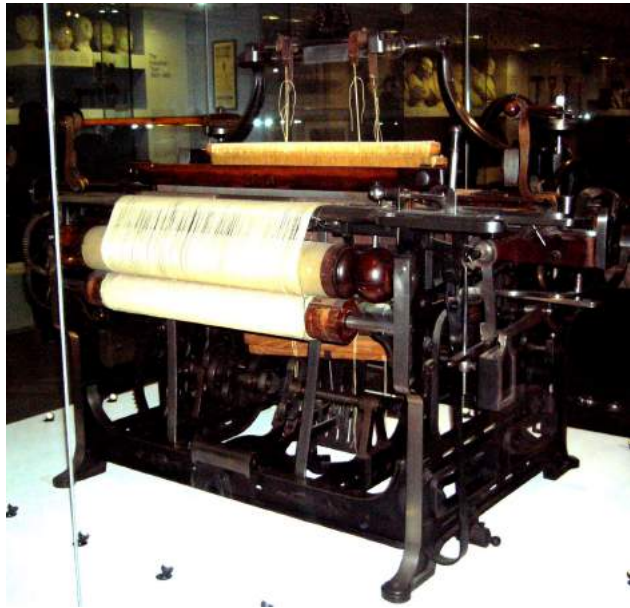
1862 Another change of ownership: (25 Victoria)

Again the Higher Hall estate changed hands. This time it was bought by a leading Blackburn entrepreneur and philanthropist, **Joseph Harrison JP., DL.**, iron founder and mill owner who had an admirable 'can-do' approach to life.



Joseph Harrison

In 1851 Joseph sent one of his power looms to the *Great Exhibition of the Industries of all Nations*, at Crystal Palace. Their success brought about a Royal Appointment and a rapid business expansion.



The Harrison Loom

The loom can still be seen today in the Science Museum in Kensington, London.

Joseph knew the importance of education, and established night classes, a reading room and a brass band for his employees at the *Bank Foundry and Highfield Mill Atheaneum*.

Samlesbury Hall however, appears to have been a special project on which to focus after the death of his wife.

Both Joseph and his eldest son **William, FSA., JP., DL.**, lavished vast amounts of money and time on both a general restoration, and an extension to Thomas Southworth's south wing. It became William's home and his sister Agnes lived with him after she was widowed.

1878: Cotton operative rioters at Samlesbury: (40 Victoria)

In May, thirty to forty men and boys made their way into Samlesbury Higher Hall. William was away from home, but when Agnes was told that they were already in the house, she went to see them. Having learnt of their hunger, she offered them all bread, beef and ale, which they accepted gratefully, and afterwards left 'perfectly quietly, doing no damage to anything, inside or out.'

1879 Tragedy: (41 Victoria)

In January William fell heavily on the ice, sustaining a serious head injury and a fractured patella. He developed pains in his head and his knee gave him a lot of trouble. Then in May a rabid dog bit William's dog, and that too started displaying hydrophobic symptoms. William

knew that it would have to be shot, but it was a good dog and the gamekeeper did not want to destroy it.

When William was found to have shot himself, Agnes was convinced that he had been loading his revolver to shoot the dog. Their brother Henry must also have had similar thoughts, because he considered William to be the 'last person' who would 'do such an act.' At the inquest he said his brother was

an altered man since his accident; he looked strange and complained of his inability to sleep and read, and said he had a pain in his head.' He had also become 'incapable of giving instructions with that clearness and decision which had formerly characterised him, and letter-writing was a task....

Joseph died the following year and their sister Mary (who had continued to live in the family home), moved in with Agnes. But Agnes re-married soon afterwards and both sisters re-located. Henry bought them out and leased the Hall to Frederick Baynes, JP., D.L., a Mayor of Blackburn (1896/7), and High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1900.

1879: (42 Victoria)

As Roach Bridge had done four years earlier, the 'new' Samlesbury Mill converted to paper making, concentrating on a denser product – blue sugar bags and brown paper. It caused neighbours to remark on the very different thumping sound of machinery in the Bottoms, compared to that at Roach.

1899: Stanley Grange: (62 Victoria)

A small estate in the South-West corner of Samlesbury was acquired by **Mr. Thomas Miller Crook** and he came to live at *Stanley Grange*.

His generosity paid for the Parish Church to be re-roofed and a tower built. In addition the baptistry was re-ordered, the porches added, and a peal of eight bells and clock were purchased.



Stanley Grange

Mr. Crook also bred prize Shorthorn bulls, which were housed in a large shippon behind the Grange. They were shod by the Houghton blacksmith and exercised on nearby lanes.

20th CENTURY

Stanley Grange contd.



There was an outdoor theatre behind the garden wall, and the family also held gymkhanas for early motorised vehicles.

Setting off for one of the gymkhana events.

Neighbours were always invited to go and

watch and they were fortunate in that an adjoining field behind the house sloped down to a level area, and formed a natural arena.

Mr. Crook also began a programme of improvements to his properties – extending or renovating several of his farm houses and buildings, including a cottage on Roach Road called *Mawdsley Fold*. When workmen there were replacing the thatch with slates, they found a partly burnt leather bag on a ledge inside the chimney, containing coins dating from the reigns of Edward VI, Phillip & Mary, Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I. The money was claimed by the Crown as Treasure Trove, but a coin from each reign was given to the Miller Crooks as a keep-sake.



After Thomas died (1905), Mrs. Crook continued her husband's philanthropic work and she eventually re-married.



In time the *Grange* was taken over by **The Police Training College** of the Lancashire Constabulary, and young cadets did part of their training there. The *Grange* also became a very useful base for the Royal car when the Queen was travelling around Lancashire.

The Royal Car at Stanley Grange.

It was very quiet in Samlesbury in those days, and the sound of the cadets doing drill and running along the lanes could be clearly heard in the distance. Each Sunday they used to march down to church to attend the morning Service and again, whenever film shows and bonfires etc. were laid on for the cadets, the neighbouring residents were always invited. After the police left, the house was used to provide residential accommodation and work opportunities for adults with learning difficulties.

1914 Samlesbury Hall in decline (5 Geo. V)

Henry Harrison had entailed the Higher Hall manor on Agnes' eldest son, **Montague Charles Somerset Johnstone**, but Montague declined to live at Samlesbury.



It was agreed that his brother, **FitzRoy Lewis Montague Johnstone** would reside there instead, and preparations were put in hand. Sadly, Roy was killed soon afterwards at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914.

The gardener then took on the additional role of caretaker.

Roy Johnstone



Roy's Memorial in the Parish Church

1924/5: (16 Geo. V)

By this time the Hall had become unkempt, and it was bought by property developers, *Caton and Duckworth*. Fearing possible demolition and the site being used for a housing estate, meetings were held in Preston and Blackburn; money was raised to buy the property for the benefit of the public (December 1925), and the *Samlesbury Hall Trust* was formed in 1926.

A lot of remedial work was needed, and the Trust was kept busy. In 1935 Mr. T.B. Lewis (Chairman of Trustees), bought a piece of land across the road for the Trust, in order to prevent undesirable development opposite. The area was laid out as a Japanese stroll garden and was beautifully kept.

1939-1945: (3 Geo.VI)

English Electric's military aircraft factory at Samlesbury Aerodrome

About 1935, land adjacent to the Higher Hall was acquired by Preston and Blackburn Corporations for a civil airport with a grass airfield, but it was never developed. As war became inevitable, the MoD took it over for the production of military aircraft.

Today, few people are aware of the important contribution that Samlesbury made to the war effort, yet approximately 1,100 personnel supplied the country with nearly 3,000 medium and heavy bombers.



The final total was 770 Handley Page *Hampdens* (a twin-engine medium bomber), and 2,145 Handley Page *Halifaxes*, a four-engine heavy bomber.

Towing the first Hampden (P2062) out of the shed.

The Halifax

Towards the end of the war, the piston-engine war plane was superseded by the de Havilland *Vampire* – a jet-propelled fighter.



An order for 120 was received in 1944 and the first one was test-flown by Geoffrey de Havilland in April 1945. *Vampire* carried four 20mm. guns and was the first plane to exceed well over 500 mph in level flight.



de Havilland Vampire F3s, with Handley Page Halifax C VIIIIs. A defensive pill-box is in the background.

Burnley Aircraft Products

Throughout the war, the Burnley company operated from the South-West corner of the airfield, restoring wrecked *Bristol Beaufighters*. These big, strong, heavy, all-metal aircraft carried a crew of two, and were usually fitted with two canon and six machine guns, but they were capable of many roles.

One day an engineer was approached about a special job. After signing a second official secrets document, police security – which was already tight – was stepped up. For about six months he worked in great secrecy (under guard and close surveillance), on the nose cones of three Beaufighters.



It was many years before the engineer found that he had fitted them with radar.

The Beaufighter

1954: Bluebird K7. (3 Eliz. II)

After the war the Burnley company became **Samlesbury Engineering Ltd.** and their most memorable contract was the construction of Donald Campbell's hydroplane, *Bluebird K7*.

A Samlesbury Engineering advert

Congratulations
TO MR. DONALD CAMPBELL

NEW WORLD
WATER SPEED RECORD
202.32 m.p.h.
ULLSWATER · JULY 1955

from
SAMLESBURY ENGINEERING LTD.
The MAIN CONSTRUCTORS of the turbo-jet hydroplane "BLUEBIRD"
Manufacturers of Major Components for the various "Gossamer"
AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERS and PRECISION MACHINISTS
Suppliers of Structural Assemblies, Jigs, Tools and Fixtures to the leading Aircraft Manufacturers
SAMLESBURY AIRFIELD · NEAR BLACKBURN · LANCASHIRE
Telephone: Blackburn 44660. Telegrams: "Craftline" Blackburn
ALSO AT STANSTED AIRPORT, HANWY · HODDERS GATE AIRPORT, BLACKBURN

Donald went on to set seven world water speed records in *Bluebird*, before his fatal run in 1967.



The Aerodrome in the 1980s

Roads

The 'Preston Bypass' was the first stretch of motorway to be opened in Britain (December 1958), and was widened in 1965 and 1995. The A59 was dualled in 1965.

21st CENTURY

There are now light industries on the mill premises at Samlesbury Bottoms, whilst tissue conversion and light industry continues at Roach Bridge. Samlesbury Hall is still used for the benefit of the public, and has won many awards.

Over the years, English Electric has morphed into Europe's most experienced military aircraft research, development, production, and flight test organisation. The Samlesbury sheds are now occupied by BAE Systems, a direct descendant of English Electric.

1984-2008: RAF 635 Volunteer Gliding School

The Air Cadets were the last to use the runway at Samlesbury Aerodrome. They became the top school in the U.K. and places at Samlesbury were in great demand. A large percentage of the cadets went on to become front line pilots, so made a major contribution to our national security.



The School's Gliders.

Unfortunately, the Gliding School had to relocate when the airfield was designated an **Enterprise Zone**, and the Parish Council had no alternative but to accept yet more development within the parish – a science and business park that is largely related to the aerospace industry. A new road was cut across the site in 2016, and the land has been steadily developed.

At ground level the runways were un-obtrusive and merged into the countryside, but the new buildings are not un-obtrusive and do not merge into the countryside.



The Enterprise Zone from Park Lane

Bluebird K777

On the 60th Anniversary of his fatal accident, Donald Campbell's daughter Gina planted an oak tree on the site of the engineering works. She also arranged for a full scale replica of the hydroplane to be exhibited.

Bluebird K777 at Samlesbury Hall in 2014.



Further items of interest

Stories of Samlesbury is a selection of local anecdotes, folklore, and factual accounts about Samlesbury which may be of interest to both visitors and residents.

It is available from the shop at the Higher Hall of Samlesbury.

2024: In Conclusion: (2 Chas. III)

Parish opposition to a large industrial development in 1970 directly contributed to the setting up of the Government's new **Department of the Environment**, and the parish was promptly designated green belt.

Despite this, massive expansion on the airfield, sewage works and brewery have still been inflicted on the parish.



An example of industrial development in open countryside.

We have already lost at least fifteen footpaths and lanes to development, and now other large-scale developers are threatening to strip away what is left of a green belt that is the buffer between two large industrial towns.

Fortunately, a large part of Samlesbury is still well-farmed agricultural land, but as in other rural areas, the continued uncertainty of agriculture and food supply is affecting the mental health of our farmers.



Happily, a wide variety of flora and fauna still manages to exist, hidden away amongst the fields and woodlands, the rivers and streams.



But both the Parish Council and residents agree that

**planners need to defend the remainder of the
Samlesbury and Cuerdale green belt
far more robustly –
it is vital to us all.**