

STOCKPORT is a populous Market Town and Borough (Corporate and Parliamentary) of Cheshire. The ground on which the town is built is very uneven. The central part stands on the top of a hill, which has a steep descent towards the river Mersey, and towards the north, the hill becomes perpendicular for a height equal to that of the houses which encircle the base. By road, Stockport is six miles S.-E. from Manchester, seven from Ashton-under-Lyne, 17 from Buxton, 38 N.-E. by E. from Chester, and 179 from London. By railway Stockport is $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles S.-E. from Manchester, $11\frac{1}{2}$ from Macclesfield, 46 from Chester, 79 N. by W. from Birmingham, and $191\frac{3}{4}$ N.-W. by N. from London. Stockport parish, which is situate in the hundred and Archdeaconry of Macclesfield, rural deanery of its name, and in the diocese of Chester, stretches across the southern extremity of the great horn of country which shoots up between, and abuts upon, Derbyshire and Lancashire, and is also in close proximity to the parishes of Mottram, Longdendale, Prestbury, Northenden, and Cheadle. Its component townships and chapelries are Bramall, Bredbury, Brinnington, Disley-cum-Stanley, Dukinfield, Etchells, Hyde, Marple, Norbury, Offerton, Romiley or Chadkirk, Stockport, Torkington, and Werneth.

Among etymologists and antiquaries, considerable controversy has arisen respecting the derivation of the name of the town, the modern spelling of Stockport being at variance with all the old authorities. In the 12th century it was written Stopport, regarded in some quarters as a corruption of Stokeport; at a subsequent period it was spelled Stopworth; and in a deed made three centuries ago, the name appears written as Stöpworth. Mr. Watson's "History of the House of Warren," discusses the origin of Barony of Stockport, and among various conjectures founded in references to Lee's N.—Baron of Stockport, and in Williamson and Lucas's MSS., that historian mentions "the facts" (to quote Butterworth's history and description) of Stockport having been defended by Roman and Saxon works; "that Stockport had seen after the Conquest a Norman Castle, defended by Geoffrey de Constantin against Henry II., that it is probable that this fortress was an appendage to a barony, intended as a check to Manchester (the baronies of the Earls of Chester and Roger Pieta-venis being placed as a check opposite to each other), and he proves that Robert de Stokeport was living before the extinction of the local Earldom; but honestly confesses that he has not authentic evidence to support any genealogical deductions beyond him." Although Stockport is entirely unnoticed in the Domesday survey, the antiquity of the town is undoubted, and there have not been lacking indications that very modern evidence might be adduced in support of the theory that the early Romans camped in this district, and made it the centre of many diverging roads. The Castle held by Geoffrey de Constantin in 1173 was destroyed towards the latter part of last century. The site of the Castle is, however, still shown to curious visitors who inspect what is locally known as the Castle Yard, in close proximity to the Market Place, which is situate in the centre of the Borough. But in the ancient history of this town, a vast deal of speculation must necessarily be embraced.

Stockport was garrisoned for the Parliament during the Civil Wars, and was considered an important post. In May, 1644, Prince Rupert appeared before it with his army; the garrison, to the number of 5,000 horse and foot, drew out to oppose him, but were repulsed, and the town taken. The garrison seems to have made but little opposition, and the capture of the town to have been attended with little bloodshed; the burial of one soldier only, "slain at the taking of Stockport, the 27th of May," is entered in the parish register. On May 10th, 1645, Lord Fairfax's regiment of horse, commanded by Colonel Spencer, removed from Macclesfield to the neighbourhood of Stockport, where they remained a week, and then marched into Yorkshire. On the 17th of August following, a number of Scots, 6,000 horse and 1,000 heavy Dragoons, made Stockport their headquarters on their way from Congleton. On the 25th of the same month, Major Jackson, commanding eight troops of the Lancashire horse, who had marched in the rear of the Scots, came from Yorkshire to Stockport.

During the Scotch rebellion, the Pretender's army marched through Stockport; shortly after, to prevent the retreat of the rebels, the bridge was blown up.

The Borough was anciently incorporated. Previous to the passing of the Municipal Act of 1835, Stockport elected and appointed its Mayor, constables, and other officers. The office of Mayor was, however, almost nominal, the town being under the jurisdiction of the County Magistrates, who sat daily in the Court House, and held Petty Sessions every alternate week. Courts Leet and Baron held twice a year by the Steward of the Lord of the Manor, with a jurisdiction co-extensive with the township of Stockport, were the only Local Courts, till a Court of Requests for the recovery of debts to the amount of £5 was established in 1806. The Mayor and other gentlemen were commissioners, whose jurisdiction extended over the townships of Stockport and Brinnington and the hamlets of Edgeley and Brinksway.

By the Municipal Act of 1835, the Borough of Stockport was placed under the government of fourteen Aldermen and forty-two Councillors, with the Corporate style of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Stockport. The Borough was included amongst those entitled to have a Commission of the Peace, which was accordingly granted; and it was also stipulated that the Parliamentary boundaries of the Borough were to be taken for Municipal purposes. These boundaries then comprehended the township of Stockport, the hamlets of Brinksway and Edgeley, with Portwood, a part of the town situated in Brinnington township, and also part of the township of Heaton Norris, situated in Lancashire. The Borough was divided into six wards, with the 42 representatives allotted as follow:—Heaton Norris Ward, nine councillors; Middle Ward, nine; St Mary's Ward, six; St. Thomas' Ward, six; Edgeley Ward, six; and Portwood Ward, six; and at the census taken in 1841, the estimated population was 50,495.

In 1826, an Act of Parliament for the police regulation of the town was passed. Another Act for improving and regulating the Borough was adopted in 1837. On July 22nd, 1847, there was also obtained an Improvement Act, entitled, "An Act to purchase and define the manorial and market rights of Stockport, to establish public parks, to purchase and lease waterworks, to build bridges, and to make other communications within the Borough of Stockport." Other Provisional Orders or Improvement Acts were adopted in 1853, 1864, 1866, 1890, 1891 and 1894. On the 23rd of June, 1894, the redistribution of the Borough into fourteen Wards was fixed by C. H. Cresswell, Esq. (Commissioner appointed by the Home Secretary).

By the Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation Act, 1901, the boundaries were extended so as to include Reddish Urban District, parts of Bredbury and Romiley, Cheadle and Gatley, Hazel Grove and Bramall, and Heaton Norris Urban Districts, and part of the parish of Brinnington within the Stockport Rural District. The boundaries fixed by the award of Commissioner Cresswell, and amended by the Act of 1901, are as follow:—

Borough Boundaries, Wards, &c., &c.

1—2 and 3 William IV., ch. 45 (adds Brinksway and Edgeley to ancient Borough and Townships, and allows two Members of Parliament).

2—2 and 3 William IV., ch. 64 (adds part of Brinnington and Heaton Norris to Borough, as settled in 1).

3—5 and 6 William IV., ch. 76—The Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, declares limits of Borough to be same as in (2), grants 7 Wards, and constitutes the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses a corporate body.

1 Edw. 7, ch. 169.—The Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 11) Act, 1901, adds the Reddish Urban District, parts of Bredbury and Romiley, Cheadle and Gatley, Hazel Grove and Bramhall, and Heaton Norris Urban Districts, and part of the parish of Brinnington within the Stockport Rural District.

The following are the Boundaries of the Wards of the Borough as fixed by the award of C. H. Cresswell, Esq. (Commissioner appointed by the Home Secretary), on the 23rd June, 1894, and amended by the Local Government Board's Provisional Order Confirmation (No. 11) Act, 1901.