

STOCKPORT :

STOCKPORT is a populous Market Town and Borough (Corporate and Parliamentary) in Cheshire and Lancashire. The town is built on very uneven ground. 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 almost 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 rail Stockport is 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles S.-E. from Manchester, 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ from Macclesfield, 46 from Chester, 79 N. by W. from Birmingham, and 191 $\frac{1}{2}$ N.-W. by N. from London. Stockport parish, which is situated in the hundred and Archdeaconry of Macclesfield, in the rural deanery of its name, and in the diocese of Chester, stretches across the southern extremity of the great horn of country between 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 Stoppport, 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 Stopworth. Mr. Watson's "History of the House of Warren," discusses the origin of the 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 Pictavensis being placed as a check opposite 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 deduced 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 considered by some to be the space known as the Castle Yard, in close proximity to the Market Place, which is situate in the centre of the Borough. The ancient history of the town, however, is necessarily associated with much conjecture and speculation.

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. Prior 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. Court 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 enacted that the Municipal and Parliamentary boundaries were to be co-extensive. These boundaries then comprehended the township of Stockport, the hamlets of