

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE WORKING OF RADDLE AT MICKLEBRING, ROTHERHAM

by

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Since the publication of this article, a number of interesting facts have come to light mainly through the further researches of Mr F. Fowler of Doncaster.

In the previous article no evidence of working had been found between Roman times and the early 19th century. However the following references would indicate that working also occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries too. The earlier reference is found in the Parish Registers of Stainton, a hamlet near to both Braithwell and the Ruddle Mill. The register contains the entry; '1621 March 10th James Meridolla, buried, a poore Radleman.' The other early reference is found in the book "Ducatus Leodiensis or the Topography of the Ancient and Populous town and Parish of Leedes and parts adjacent in the West Riding of the County of York", by Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S. "To which is added, at the Request of several learned persons, a catalogue of his Museum with the curiosities, natural and artificial and the Antiquities". (London. Printed for W. Price Atkins and sold by Edward Nutt at the Middle-Temple Gate in Fleet Street, 1715). The section of his Museum catalogue headed "Of Mineral Principles, Salt, Sulphur and Earths" contains the following, "Terra Fabrilis Rubrica, Rubrick, or Ruddle, very good from Edlington, near Doncaster, the seat of my honoured friend Robert Molesworth Esq." The old village of Edlington is only a few miles from Micklebring, the village from which most of the raddle was obtained.

The earlier article describes how the Ruddle Mill (newly-erected in 1812) was then in the possession of Gleadall & Co. In 1814 Samuel Gleadall purchased the mill from Thomas Mapplebeck and in 1815 conveyed it to Joseph Roberts. In 1818 Roberts conveyed it to Thomas Nicholson although Gleadall appears to have retained ownership. By this time the mill was known as the Union Colour Mill and, since the Union Colour Company was a company it had a number of shareholders. Reference is given to several of these shareholders in the paper.

The following advertisement has now come to light and indicates that by 1837 William Thompson was in occupation at the mill and John Gleadall the owner. The sale particulars also give interesting information regarding the raddle deposits and also mention a brown ochre with commercial possibilities.

"Doncaster Gazette" 22nd December 1837 - Advertisementpage 1 (abbreviated).

Desirable Freehold Investment. To be sold by Auction by Mr Tilburn. At --- the Plough --- in Micklebring, Thursday 24th January. The very valuable Freehold Estate situate at Micklebring, Braithwell and Stainton --- approx. 60 acres arable, meadow and pasture land --- with farm house etc. and also an undivided Fourth Share in a Ruddle Mill and 26 acres of land thereto adjoining ----

## Lot 9.

All that one fourth part or share of and in the Ruddle Mill (with water power) near Braithwell and in the parish of Stainton, with the Machinery thereto belonging, and also of and in 26 acres (approx.) of arable, meadow and pasture land, adjoining the said Mill, and therewith occupied by Mr William Thompson -----

The two Crofts, Garden, Yard, and site of the Farming Homestead (i.e. Lot 1, situate at Micklebring) and also the Top Leys (near Micklebring. 10 acres, included in Lot 1) contain a thick vein of RED OCHRE (commonly called Ruddle or Raddle) which lies at the distance of a few yards (yards?) below the surface, and is of a very superior quality. This vein has for many years past furnished the principal supply of that mineral, the same having been manufactured for the Market at the Mill above mentioned.

The Town End Close (Lot 4, near Micklebring, 1a. 2r. Op.) contains a vein of BROWN OCHRE (a brownish red colour) but this article owing to the abundance of the Red Ochre has never yet been worked.

Mr Daniel Chapman will show the property; particulars from Mr John Gleadall of Micklebring, the owner of the Estate, or of Nicholson & Son, Solicitors, Wath."

A sample of the red ruddle was presented to United Steel Co. Sheffield for comment and the following analysis obtained:

General analysis,  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  82.7%;  $\text{CaO} + \text{MgO}$  as carbonates 12.7%;  
alumina 1.7%, remainder  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ .

Metallurgical analysis, Fe 57.6%; Mn 0.75%;  $\text{SiO}_2$  2.76%;  $\text{MgO}$  1.64%;  
 $\text{CaO}$  3.53%; S 0.038%, Phosphorous 0.252%

The Company added that while it was a high grade ore, it could not be considered as a haematite suitable for blast furnaces because of the high percentage of phosphorous. Finally, a biographical note; the artist who did the illustration given with the article, George Walker,

had a brother who was Assistant Recorder of Doncaster and lived at nearby Wilsic Hall. It is therefore probable that George must have visited the mines before 1814, the date given to the print, while staying with his brother. This brother later became Mayor of Doncaster.

Following further expansion at Messrs Butlers, Holme Hall Quarries, Stainton, the raddle exposures previously mentioned have now been covered with spoil, although some red marl beds can still be seen in the limestone face, this company has also recently purchased the old Ruddle Mill and the surrounding fields. The writer would, once again, like to thank Mr F. Fowler for continuing this research.

Manuscript received:  
16th January 1960.

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