

A Town in the Countryside



The photograph above was taken from the vantage point of the top of the tower of Oldham Parish Church, on the left. I was in Oldham, visiting old friends from my time there, from 1974-1977 as assistant curate of the parish church and then from 1977-1982 as priest in charge of St. Hugh's in Oldham. St. Hugh's church is not visible in the photograph, but it lies in a hollow, beyond the housing and within sight of the monument on the far hill, called Hartshead Pike.

The area in the photograph is called Glodwick, pronounced Glodick, and was the home to many mill workers who occupied the town in days past. Today it is one of the areas almost totally occupied by people from Bangladesh and Pakistan.

From the top of the church tower, Glodwick presents a very attractive streetscape, especially in the rain. You can almost hear the strains of the Hovis advert with Dvorak's slow theme from his New World Symphony!

On the ground, Glodwick looks in need of a major make-over, with streets that look charming from a distance, but which are full of small houses, many of which are too small from modern family life. There is a dilemma because it does look great and is a statement of what working class Oldham has been like for many years, and the locals can be proud of that, but it does need improvement, but done really well, with a lot of care, vision and, don't forget, money, which now seems highly unlikely to happen.

Standing over 700 feet above sea-level, Oldham is often cold, wet and windy. The town is truly set amid beautiful countryside with the Saddleworth moors to the north, especially fine.



This is Dovestones' Reservoir which is really imposing. There is a yacht club along its shoreline, just 10 minute's drive from the town centre. It was very cold and windy when we were visiting.

The town itself has many impressive buildings, both public and private, all speaking of the comparative wealth of the town in the 19th century. Here you see the old Town Hall on the right, now seemingly abandoned for ever. The pub is called the Greaves Arms and has the war memorial in front of it. The parish Church is just to the left off the picture. This is a view of Yorkshire Street and as the road goes downhill, it is possible to catch fine views of the hillsides and the moors beyond the town.



We took with us my oldest son Toby who was himself on a memory-lane trip, with his wife Mell and their daughter Kitty. They were all really impressed with the town and countryside. Oldham is a place well worth visiting. Watch out for the tripe and black pudding, two specialities of the region!

Neil Richardson