

## Kildwick and Farnhill and the Chartist Movement

### Part 2 – 1848 ... *a turning point in history when history refused to turn* (A J P Taylor)

**Author's Note:** This is second part of a two-part article. Well done on getting this far.

In Part 1 we looked at the rise of the Chartist Movement; the petitions of 1839 and 1842; the increasing fame of the charismatic Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor; and the birth and early years of his Kildwick-born namesake, Feargus O'Connor Holmes.

This part looks at the Chartist Movement in 1848, and considers how Farnhill played a part in the events of April 10<sup>th</sup> 1848 – a day on which this country, perhaps, came close to violent revolution – and provide evidence for the continuation of Chartist activity in Farnhill after the events of 1848.

### Europe – early 1848

By the start of 1848 the strangely-named Kildwick boy, Feargus O'Connor Holmes, would have been 6 years old and it's possible that he returned to school after the Xmas break to a history lesson on how the 1815 Congress of Vienna had been a great success, and how its resolutions had maintained stability across Europe for over 30 years. The dread spectre of the French Revolution was well and truly in the past. As his teacher might have said: "F, there will be no more revolutions!"

A couple of weeks later he might have heard of the revolution in Sicily and then how, in February, a small student protest in Paris got so out of hand that King Louis Phillippe decided to abdicate the throne and spend the rest of his days in Worthing. Revolution then spread quickly, and by the end of year almost all the capitals of Europe had been witness to revolutionary uprisings<sup>1</sup>.

### England 1848 – The resurgence of Chartism

After the revolution in France, the authorities in England were very concerned about the possibility of revolution spreading here.

Trouble started, in London, on March 6<sup>th</sup>. A meeting to protest against income tax had been organised to take place in the as-yet unfinished Trafalgar Square. When the police objected to the location, the organiser agreed to cancel it<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, a crowd of 10 000 people gathered and were addressed by a Chartist activist. The meeting was peaceful but as it dispersed a small fracas broke out which the police attempted to calm with their truncheons. A two-day riot then ensued, which spread throughout central London<sup>3</sup>. Peace was restored by the police following the enrolment of a large number of special constables<sup>4</sup>. In the future the middle-classes would be recruited by those in authority to put down any attempt at revolution.

Further looting and riots erupted in the following days in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Manchester.

In Kildwick, John Robert Tennant, who lived in Kildwick Hall, was clear that these troubles stemmed from the events on the continent and Chartist agitation. In his diary entry for March 9<sup>th</sup> 1848 he wrote<sup>23</sup>:

*Had Accounts in the Papers of the riots in Glasgow, Edinbro', Manchester, and also considerable rioters collected in London, all arising from excitement caused by events in France and the Chartists at home. At Glasgow the destruction of property has been great and some lives lost.*

The second half of March saw further trouble on the continent with revolutions breaking out in Hungary and in Berlin, and war declared between Germany and Denmark.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> John Robert Tennant observed:

*Fearful acct. Of the dreadful state of things in different parts of Europe. The Chartists here ready for mischief.*

He was not wrong.

The Chartist leadership decided that the time was right for another petition (the third) and meetings in support of the Charter began to take place around the country.

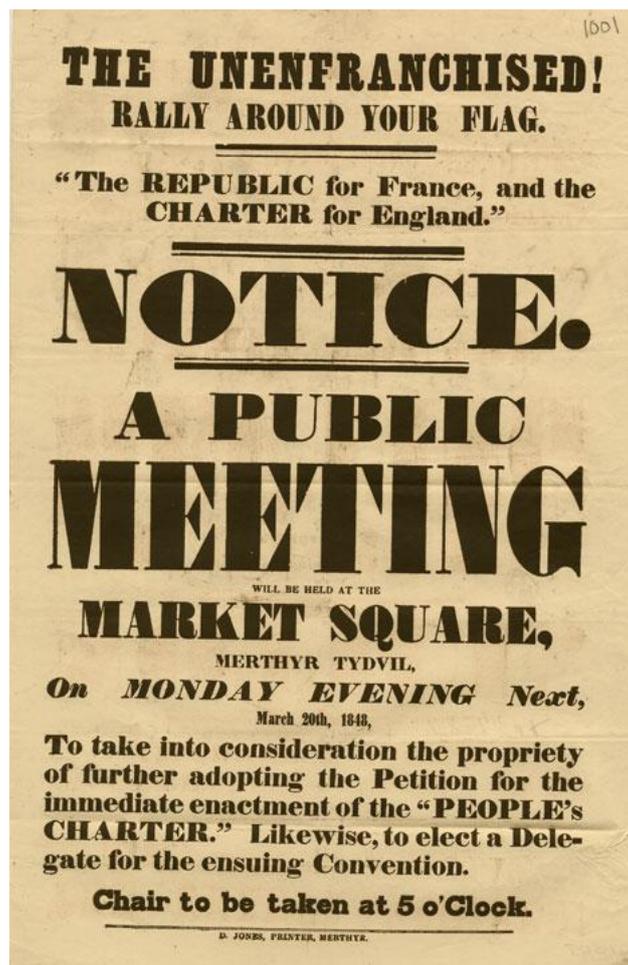


Fig 1. Poster advertising a Chartist meeting in Merthyr Tydfil, March 1848. Note the association: "A Republic for France, and the Charter for England".

On Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup>, a Chartist Convention assembled in London – including representatives from Bradford, Leeds and Halifax<sup>5</sup>. It decided to hold a mass meeting on Kennington Common, on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Feargus O'Connor's plan was that after the meeting those gathered would march on parliament and force the government to accept the petition and accede to the terms of the Charter.

The Government responded by issuing a proclamation that such a procession would be illegal. Despite this, plans for the mass meeting and march went ahead, "notwithstanding the foolish proclamation of the Government".

## Farnhill Moor – April 9<sup>th</sup> 1848

Early in April 1848 the following report appeared in the Leeds Times<sup>6</sup>:

*The Chartist Movement. —The Chartists in Keighley and the neighbourhood are very active just now. The walls are placarded to-day with bills calling a camp meeting for tomorrow (Sunday) on Farnhill Moor, near Kildwick, as a central place between Keighley, Colne, and Skipton. The [meeting] is expected to be a very large one.*

Clearly, this was a well-organised and planned meeting. Farnhill Moor is indeed a convenient location for people travelling from the major Chartist centres of Keighley and Colne. The railway station at Kildwick had opened the previous year<sup>7</sup> and provided an easy method of transport for people attending from Keighley (the line to Colne would not open until 1849 – presumably a bracing walk was in order for those Lancastrians planning to attend).

In addition to its location, Farnhill Moor offers a number of features useful to the organisers: it is well away from any town; its open aspect allows for a crowd to easily disperse should the need arise; and the uneven ground would make it difficult for a mounted force to attack the crowd. There would be no repeat of the Skipton riot and Anna Fields fight of six years earlier.

Whether or not trouble was anticipated locally is not known but on April 4<sup>th</sup>, less than a week before the meeting, John Robert Tennant insured Kildwick Hall for the sum of £3000, payable to his landlord Mathew Wilson of Eshton Hall.

The meeting took place on April 9<sup>th</sup> and it is reasonable to assume that young Feargus O'Connor Holmes, or at least some of his family, were present. The Bradford Observer later reported<sup>8</sup>:

*On Sunday last, a chartist camp meeting was held on Farnhill Moor, near Kildwick. Mr A Lighton from Haworth, presided. A number of working men from Keighley and other places addressed the meeting, which was supposed to number about eight thousand. A resolution pledging the meeting to act under the direction of the "National Convention," was unanimously agreed to.*

**Note:** Mr A Lighton is probably Archibald Leighton, well known in Haworth and certainly known to the vicar, Patrick Bronte.

A somewhat shorter report of the meeting also appeared in the Leeds Mercury<sup>8a</sup>:

*A Chartist camp meeting was held at Keighley, on Sunday last, on Farnhill Moor, near Kildwick. The meeting, which was supposed to amount to about 8,000, was addressed by a number of working men from Keighley. A resolution, pledging the meeting to act under direction of the convention, was agreed to.*

John Robert Tennant also reported the event in his diary:

*A Chartist meeting held on the Moor behind the House (Kildwick Hall). They came up the causeway in a continuous stream, [unreadable] on their way to the place of meeting, at which the Tricolor flag was waving. There are said to have been No. 5000 people assembled. The usual Chartist sedition nonsense promulgated but everything passed off very quietly.*

The Tricolor (Tricolour) flag Tennant referred to was probably the green, white and red republican flag flown at many of the Chartist gatherings often with the words “Humanity, Liberty, Equality” written on it.



Fig 2. The British republican flag often flown at Chartist meetings.

The figure of 8000 people attending a meeting on Farnhill Moor, or even the 5000 reported by Tennant sounds rather high, and the use of the word “supposed” in both the newspaper reports suggests that it was not independently verified. Nevertheless, even if the true number of people attending was just one-tenth of those reported, this meeting must have been one of the largest gatherings ever seen in the two villages.

## Kennington Common – April 10<sup>th</sup> 1848

The meeting on Farnhill Moor and others elsewhere in the country in support of the Charter, the great Petition and the National Convention were designed to reach their climax with a “monster meeting” to be held on Kennington Common, South London, on April 10<sup>th</sup><sup>9</sup>.

# CHARTIST DEMONSTRATION!!

**“PEACE and ORDER” is our MOTTO!**

**TO THE WORKING MEN OF LONDON.**

Fellow Men,—The Press having misrepresented and vilified us and our intentions, the Demonstration Committee therefore consider it to be their duty to state that the grievances of us (the Working Classes) are deep and our demands just. We and our families are pining in misery, want, and starvation! We demand a fair day's wages for a fair day's work! We are the slaves of capital—we demand protection to our labour. We are political serfs—we demand to be free. We therefore invite all well disposed to join in our peaceful procession on

**MONDAY NEXT, April 10,**

As it is for the good of all that we seek to remove the evils under which we groan.

*The following are the places of Meeting of THE CHARTISTS, THE TRADES, THE IRISH CONFEDERATE & REPEAL BODIES:*

**East Division on Stepney Green at 8 o'clock; City and Finsbury Division on Clerkenwell Green at 9 o'clock; West Division in Russell Square at 9 o'clock; and the South Division in Peckham Fields at 9 o'clock, and proceed from thence to Kennington Common.**

*Signed on behalf of the Committee, JOHN ARNOTT, Sec.*

Henry Mitchell, Printer, 5, Edward Street, Hoxton Road.

Fig 3. Poster advertising the Chartist meeting on Kennington Common, April 10<sup>th</sup> 1848

On hearing that the Chartists intended to continue with their procession, despite the ban, the government proceeded to put in place strong precautionary measures.

Plans for the “defence” of London were made and the 79-year old Duke of Wellington was brought out of retirement to take charge of the military. In addition, a large number of Special Constables were sworn in (estimates of numbers vary wildly from 20 000 to over 150 000).

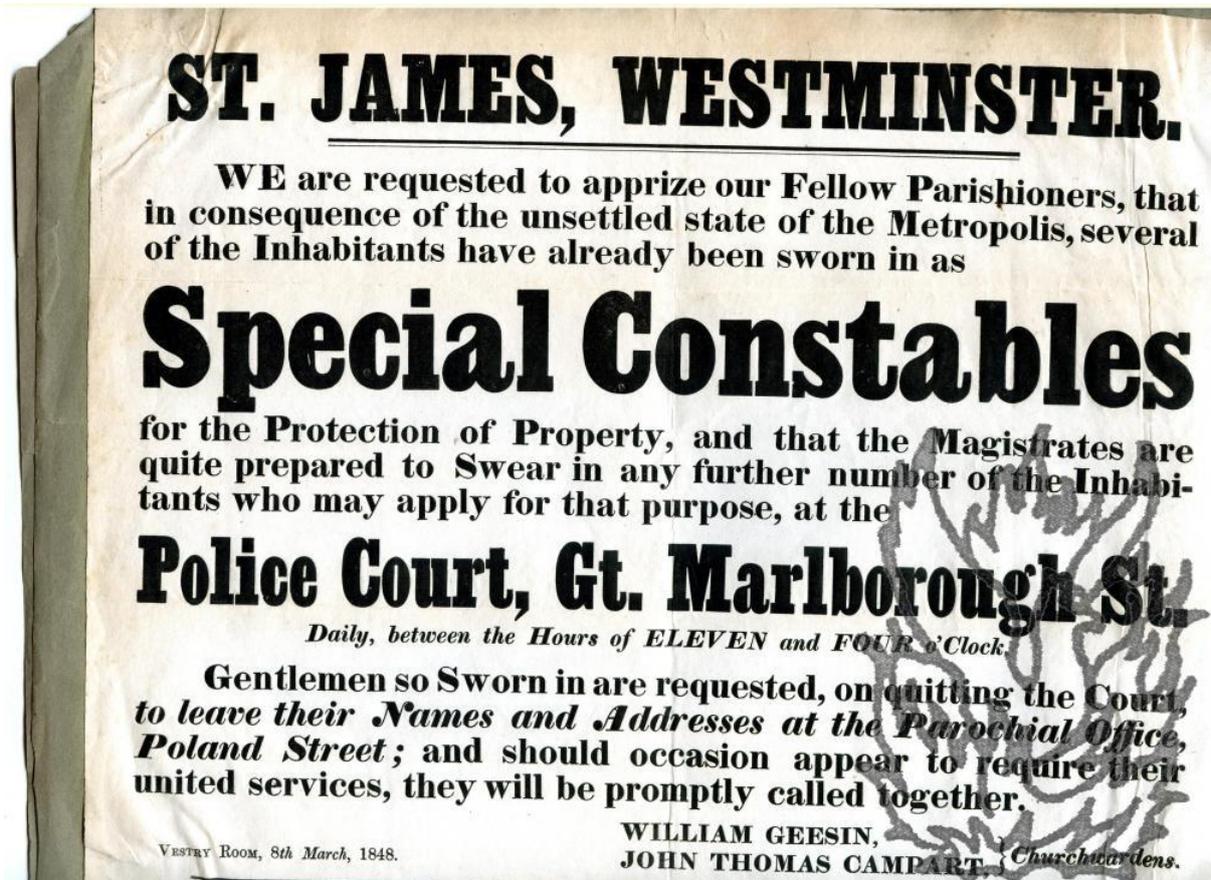


Fig 4. Poster calling for Special Constables to enrol

The Specials were drawn from a wide cross-section of the public, although principally the middle-classes, and included William Gladstone, Sir Robert Peel, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (the future Emperor Napoleon III of France).

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Lord Newcastle wrote in his journal<sup>10</sup>:

*All the troops that are any where near to London have been ordered up in case of accident, altho' after all there will not be above 10,000 men. But the great reliance will be on the Police & constabulary force which will be made to act in the first instance & if required aided by the military force. This is quite the right mode, & meets with the most strenuous support from all classes & has brought out the best & noblest feelings from all well thinking men. All have stepped forward & have been sworn Special Constables. Nobles, gentlemen, the middle-classes, professional men of all kinds, shopkeepers, working men, everybody. A most admirable spirit prevails & by God's will we shall be secure.*



Magistrate. "Now Sir, what do you want?"  
Nervous Gent. "I beg your pardon, Sir; but I wish to be sworn in as a Ch-Ch-Chartist. I mean as a Sp-Sp-Special C-Constable."

Fig 5. Punch cartoon – Enrolment of a Special Constable. The caption reads:  
Magistrate: "Now Sir, What do you want !"  
Nervous Gent: "I beg your pardon, Sir; but I wish to be sworn in as a Ch-Ch-Chartist.  
I mean as a Sp-Sp-Special C-Constable."

As the date of the meeting approached, a number of the Chartist leaders began to question whether it was a good idea to continue, but they were overruled by Feargus O'Connor.

By the morning of April 10<sup>th</sup> the government's plans were well in place. Detachments of the military were stationed throughout London, some with cannon, principally positioned out of sight on the south side of bridges across the Thames<sup>11,12</sup>. The Queen and her family had been evacuated to the Isle of Wight.

Shortly before 9am, members of the Chartist Convention met in Fitzroy Square, north of central London, to finalise their plans<sup>11</sup>. The meeting was informed that the Commissioner of Police had written to confirm that the police would allow the meeting to go ahead and subsequently allow the petition to be taken to parliament, but that "*no procession would be allowed to take place, or be permitted to proceed through the streets of the metropolis*".

There was then a heated discussion, with many members wanting the procession to continue. Feargus O'Connor then gave a rambling and almost incoherent speech in which he claimed that the petition contained 5.7 million names. This speech was full of blood and thunder, but he ended by reversing his previous position and urged the convention to obey the police and call off the procession.

And so, with the issue of whether or not a procession to parliament would take place, members of the Chartist Convention mounted a cart to travel to Kennington Common. A second cart carried the petition.

The journey to South London was uneventful, as was that of the various groups of Chartists who had gathered at pre-arranged points in the city and who then marched south over the river. By the time the leaders of the Convention arrived a substantial number of people had gathered. (Again, the estimates vary wildly: O'Connor claimed that over 300 000 were assembled there; the government said it was only 15 000 and *The Times* reporter estimated that it was probably about 20 000. *The Sunday Observer*, a newspaper fairly sympathetic to parliamentary reform, suggested that the true figure was around 50 000<sup>14</sup>.)



Fig 6. The only known photograph of the 1848 Kennington Common meeting

As soon as they arrived, the leaders were approached by a single policeman, on foot, who then took O'Connor and several of the others to the edge of the Common to meet with Richard Mayne, Commissioner of Police. Precisely what happened at this meeting is not known, but it seems likely that Mayne told them that the police and military had taken control of all the bridges over the Thames and that if any attempt was made to lead a procession over the river towards parliament, overwhelming force would certainly be used to prevent it. No lesser person than Queen Victoria wrote in her journal<sup>15</sup>:

*F. O'Connor was dreadfully frightened & thanked Mr. Mayne for telling him the Procession would be stopped, & shook him by the hand !*

Fig 7. Extract from Queen Victoria's journal, April 10<sup>th</sup> 1848

O'Connor and the others then returned to the platform and addressed the crowd, telling them that the petition would be delivered to parliament by a small deputation but that the rest of them should disperse. With that, the petition was loaded into three hansom cabs and driven, with a small number of delegates, to the Houses of Parliament.

The feeling of the crowd was mixed, with even some of the Chartist leaders still in favour of forming a procession: and there were some minor scuffles with police manning the bridges. But the weather intervened and, in pelting rain, the meeting was declared over at 1:15pm. By two o'clock, the Common was deserted.

The revolution was cancelled due to bad weather, and the "tragic fiasco"<sup>16</sup> of April 10<sup>th</sup> 1848 was over.

THE GREAT CHARTIST DEMONSTRATION.



No. IX.—THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

Leader. "HOORAY! VEEVE LER LIBERTY!!! HARM YOURSELVES!!! TO THE PALS!!! DOWN WITH HEAVERTHINK!!!!"

Leader. "OH, SIR—PLEASE SIR—IT AIN'T ME, SIR—I'M FOR 'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN' AND 'RULE BRITANNIER' BOO—HOO—OH DEAR! OH DEAR!!"  
[Bursts into tears.

Fig 8. Punch cartoon summarising the April 10<sup>th</sup> 1848 meeting – “The beginning and the end”  
**LH caption:** Leader “Hooray; veeve ler liberty !! Harm yourselves !!! To the Pals !! Down with heaverythink !!!!”  
**RH caption:** Leader “Oh, Sir-Please Sir-It ain’t me sir-I’m for ‘God Save the Queen’ and ‘Rule Brittannier’ Boo-Hoo-Oh Dear Oh-Dear !!” (Bursts into tears

John Robert Tennant's diary entry for April 10<sup>th</sup> (probably written on the 11<sup>th</sup>) shows how news of the events in London were quickly spread around the country – although, sadly, he fails to mention where the nearest telegraph office to Kildwick was located.

*Heard this morning (?) from the communication conveyed by electric telegraph that the Chartist Meeting in London has passed off quietly. Their intention Being to present their Petition for the Charter on that day and March as a body to the House, which considering the excited state of the public mind, consequent on the late proceedings on the continent, caused much anxiety.*

## The Petition Discredited – April 13<sup>th</sup> 1848

The authorities clearly won a propaganda victory on Kennington Common on April 10<sup>th</sup>. A few days later it was presented with another.

When Feargus O'Connor presented the petition to parliament he repeated his earlier claim that it contained 5.7 million signatures; he also said that it weighed 5 tons. Thirteen clerks retained by the Select Committee on Public Petitions then spent 17 hours work counting and analysing it and, on April 13<sup>th</sup>, the committee was able to present its devastating conclusions<sup>17</sup>. The petition:

- Weighed just over a quarter of a ton.
- Contained only 1,975,496 names – and even some of these were clearly bogus, including: Queen Victoria, the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, “Pug Nose”, “No Cheese”, etc.
- On numerous consecutive sheets all the signatures were in the same handwriting.

Feargus O'Connor blustered that “*thirteen clerks could not have counted 1,900,000 signatures in seventeen hours ... and if the House doubted his assertions, he would, ere long, present one with two or three times the amount.*” But the ground was cut from under this protest by Mr. Cripps, the MP from Cirencester:

*He would say for himself, that he could never believe the hon. Member [O'Connor] again; and he trusted that those deluded persons who had assembled on Kennington Common would also withdraw their confidence from him .. Now the hon. Gentleman said he could present a petition signed by three times as many persons. Why, the whole number of males in England above 15 years of age did not exceed 7,000,000 persons.*

With this rejection of the petition, Feargus O'Connor's credibility was totally ruined; he was never able to regain popularity with the general public, although he remained a leading figure in the movement, and shortly after this his mental health began to fail.

Again we find John Robert Tennant echoing the establishment view:

*The Chartist proceedings have most signally failed and their weaknesses and absurdity daily exposed. J. O'Brien made a most furious speech to the House and is quite mad at this failure of their schemes. The leaders have not shown the common prudence (?) and foresight that might have been expected from them.*

**Note:** It is possible that Tennant is confused here: perhaps mistaking James Bronterre O'Brien with Feargus O'Connor. O'Brien was a leading Chartist but, disillusioned with O'Connor, he resigned from the Chartist Convention before the Kennington Common gathering<sup>24</sup>. O'Brien may very well have been furious at O'Connor for the failure of the Chartist enterprise but, as he was not a member of parliament, he would not have been giving his speech to "the House".

## The aftermath

The events of April 1848 were a debacle from which the Chartist Movement never recovered. The meeting on Kennington Common had shown that the authorities could rely on the middle-classes to counter Physical Force; while the rejection of the third petition to be presented to parliament had shown the inadequacy of Moral Force.

The government were in the ascendancy and the Chartist Movement was in disarray, with O'Connor going so far as to suggest that plans to form a Chartist National Assembly would be illegal and then later becoming a member<sup>5</sup>.

In the north, however, Chartist agitation continued throughout 1848. The Farnhill Moor meeting was just one of a number held in support of the third petition<sup>18</sup>:

- On April 10<sup>th</sup> (the day of the Kennington Common gathering), magistrates in Bradford wrote to the Home Secretary "... *the Chartists hold meetings daily or oftener ... the most inflammatory speeches are made ... Machines for Combing Wool will be the first objects of attack.*"
- Later that week meetings took place on open moorland near Wilsden, during which Chartists practiced forming into military columns and were drilled by ex-soldiers. Similar meetings were being held in Halifax.

Meetings and minor outbreaks of violence occurred throughout the rest of the month and, on May 17<sup>th</sup> Bradford magistrates again wrote to the Home Secretary with news of a mass meeting which had sent a deputation to the Court House with a number of placards including one which read:

*... shall the present system of government continue ? Shall we go from year to year, petitioning, remonstrating, begging ? or is it your determination to bring the vile system, which is slaying us by the thousands, through slow starvation, to a speedy conclusion ?*

*We have lately presented a numerously-signed petition to the House of Commons, and received another, and we trust, final, proof of the utter uselessness of further petitioning a body of men whose sole business seems to consist of devising means to crush and plunder us.*

*We have therefore come to the resolution of doing our own work, and relying on our own energy and determination to work out our deliverance, and shall endeavour to bring the present struggle to a close, as speedily as possible.*

Further meetings were held throughout the rest of the month and Chartists began to make parts of the town, particularly around Adelaide Street on the Manchester road, no-go areas for the authorities. On Monday May 29<sup>th</sup> fifty policemen armed with cutlasses and 500 special constables twice tried to “invade” the area and were twice repulsed by a crowd equipped with stones and clubs. Eventually 200 dragoons and infantry troops were required to settle the matter.

At around the same time there was also trouble in Bingley where, following a Chartist militia drilling in the town, two men were subsequently arrested but later “rescued” by a crowd of over 200 who had gathered at the railway station to prevent them being taken to York. For a while the situation got completely out of hand, when the magistrate (actually the same gentleman who ordered out the Dragoons against a Methodist camp meeting in Keighley, described in Part 1) ordered 200 special constables to patrol the streets and the mob responded by threatening to set fire to the entire town. The magistrate was then called back to defend his own home in Harden where the moor had been set on fire in several places, presumably as a warning.

Troops from Bradford were sent to Bingley on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 16 men were arrested. Their legal expenses were paid for by Chartists from Keighley.

After this, the situation rumbled on for quite a while, but the defeat of the national organisation and the increasing readiness of local authorities to use military force finally quashed the movement’s hopes.

On June 13<sup>th</sup> 1848, John Robert Tennant made a final reference to the Chartists:

*The Chartist meeting in London to be held yesterday proved a failure, although much fear and anxiety was felt by many as to the result.*

## Chartism in Farnhill after 1848

The effect of the failure of the great Petition and the National Convention on the Chartists of Farnhill and Kildwick can only be imagined. However, there is evidence that Chartist activity continued in Farnhill after the events of 1848.

The following year, Rev. J.T.C. Fawcett, the vicar of Kildwick, compiled a summary of all the registrations of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials occurring in the parish in the year to June 30<sup>th</sup> 1849. The single sheet (shown on the next page), printed as it says “for circulation in the parish”, also contains a list of “Dissenting Meeting Houses” and, at the very bottom of the page, the following note:

*There are also three Sunday Schools unconnected with any place of Worship, two in Sutton one of which is called the Chartist or Democratic Sunday School; and a third of the same description in Farnhill, held in a building called the Odd Fellows’ Hall.*

So, there was a Chartist Sunday School in existence in Farnhill until at least June 1849.

**Note:** The Oddfellows Hall still exists, as a private house. The hall formed the upper floor of part of Kitson’s Row, in High Farnhill.

Chartist Sunday Schools were not uncommon; we mentioned one in Hunslett, run in conjunction with the local Temperance Society (see Part 1) and others were formed in Bradford, in Keighley<sup>20</sup>, and there was obviously one in Sutton.

Chartist Sunday Schools teaching combined the singing of hymns and the telling of Bible stories<sup>21</sup> with the recitation of Chartist poems such as “The Factory Slave’s Last Day”, “The Charm of Freedom”, and “The Democratic Working Man”<sup>22</sup>.

Quite how long after 1849 the Farnhill Chartist Sunday School continued, and whether Feargus O’Connor Holmes attended, is not known.

# PARISH OF KILDWICK.--1849.

A STATEMENT of the Number of Marriages, Births, Baptisms, Deaths, and Burials, of Parishioners for the Year ending 30th. June, 1849, ascertained from the following Sources. The Number of Births and Deaths communicated by Mr. Jonathan Hindle, and by him obtained from the District Registrars of Keighley and Kildwick. The Number of Marriages, Baptisms, and Burials, taken from the Register Books of the Parish Church, the Church of St. James, Silsden, and Trinity Church, Cowling.

Township.	Population. 1841.	Marriages.	Births.	Baptisms.	Deaths.	Burials.	Proportion per Cent of Illegitimate Births in each Township, omitting Fractions.
COWLING . . .	2,460	12*	97	17*	56	26*	12 or 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cent.
SILSDEN . . .	2,346	8†	82	93†	46	47†	8 — 10 do.
SUTTON . . .	1,291	5	54	19	33	14	4 — 7 do.
CONONLEY . . .	1,159	8	30	79	18	15	3 — 10 do.
GLUSBURN . . .	1,052	4	35	11	28	17	2 — 6 do.
STEETON . . .	963	4	34	16	26	18	3 — 9 do.
BRADLEY . . .	557	3	11	6	17	9	none.
FARNHILL . . .	459	2	18	10	11	9	none.
KILDWICK . . .	189	2	7	6	5	3	none.
<b>TOTAL . . .</b>	<b>10,476</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>32 — 9 <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> Cent</b>

\* Of these,  
10 were performed  
in Cowling  
Church.

\* Of these,  
15 were performed  
in Cowling  
Church.

\* Of these,  
10 were performed  
in Cowling  
Church.

\* All performed  
in Silsden  
Church.

\* Of these,  
23 were performed  
in Silsden  
Church.

\* Of these,  
29 were performed  
in Silsden  
Church.

The following is nearly an exact Account of the different Places of Worship in the Parish of Kildwick, whether of the Church or of the various Dissenting Congregations, the date of their Erection, and the number of sittings in each where ascertained; also of such Schools as are held in the buildings themselves, or others contiguous to them.

It is to be understood that in this Notice the word 'Sitting' has no precise signification except in the case of Cowling Church, where it means 21 inches.

Any information that will make this Statement more complete or correct will be thankfully received.

Those printed in *Italics* are Rooms appropriated to the purpose.

THE PARISH CHURCH, date of Erection Unknown; a Church was here in the Eleventh Century; 1000 Sittings.  
ST. JAMES' CHURCH, SILSDEN, Consecrated 1712, Re-built 1816, 450 Sittings.

TRINITY CHURCH, COWLING, Consecrated 5th. September, 1845, 500 Sittings.

The National School in Cononley built 1846, is licensed by the Bishop for Divine Service, and accommodates about 40 Adults, besides the Children.

### DISSENTING MEETING HOUSES.

TOWNSHIPS.	DENOMINATION.	WHEN BUILT.	NO. OF SITTINGS	SCHOOLS &c.
COWLING . . .	Baptists, Cowling Hill . . . . .	<del>1757</del>	350	Sunday School and Burying Ground.
	Do. Middleton . . . . .	1822		
	Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .	1813	200	Sunday School.
	Protestant Methodists . . . . .	1832	300	Sunday and Day School.
SUTTON . . .	Baptists . . . . .	enlarged 1825	650	Sunday and Day School, and Burying Ground.
BRADLEY . . .	Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .	1814	270	Sunday and Day School.
	Primitive Methodists . . . . .	1835	150	Sunday School.
GLUSBURN . . .	Protestant Methodists . . . . .	1831	190	Sunday School.
	Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .	1805	550	Sunday School and Burying Ground.
CONONLEY . . .	<i>Baptists . . . . .</i>		100	Sunday School.
	<i>Primitive Methodists . . . . .</i>			
	<i>Protestant Methodists . . . . .</i>			
	Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .	1807	230	Sunday School.
SILSDEN . . .	Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .	1813	250	Sunday School.
	Primitive Methodists . . . . .	1821 re-built 1846	330	Sunday School.
FARNHILL . . .	<i>Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .</i>			
STEETON . . .	<i>Primitive Methodists . . . . .</i>			
	Wesleyan Methodists . . . . .	1826	350	Sunday School and Burying Ground.

There are also three Sunday Schools unconnected with any place of Worship, two in Sutton, one of which is called the Chartist, or Democratic Sunday School; and a third of the same description in Farnhill, held in a building called the Odd Fellows' Hall.

PRINTED FOR CIRCULATION IN THE PARISH.

**JOHN T. C. FAWCETT, M. A.,**

VICAR OF KILDWICK.

TASKER, PRINTER, & STATIONER, SKIPTON.

Fig 9. Rev. J.T.C. Fawcett's 1849 summary of registrations in Kildwick parish

## What happened to Chartism ?

The Chartist Movement quite clearly failed to achieve any of its aims, but the cause of Chartism turned out – eventually – to be an almost total success.

After 1848, many of the people who had called themselves Chartists drifted away from the movement, but a substantial number of them subsequently found their way into other organisations involved in the promotion of social change, such as:

- The Liberal Party (founded in 1859)
- Trades unions (legalised in 1871)
- The Co-operative movement (founded in Rochdale in 1844)
- Working Men's Clubs
- Mechanics Institutes, and later the Workers' Educational Association

For some, Chartism had had an underlying basis in Christianity and for these people the future was in Primitive Methodism and other radical religious movements of the period.

Of the six points of the People's Charter, five would (in time) find their way onto the statute book:

- The franchise was extended gradually, to provide almost universal male suffrage by 1918 – although women had to wait a decade longer
- The property qualification was abolished in 1858
- A reorganisation of the size of constituencies began in 1867
- The secret ballot was introduced in 1872
- Payment of MPs became law in 1911

Feargus O'Connor didn't live to see the success of his enterprise. After 1848 his behaviour became more and more erratic and finally, on June 10<sup>th</sup> 1852, he was declared insane and committed to an asylum. He died in 1855<sup>19</sup>.

Feargus O'Connor Holmes died, in Kildwick, in 1925. He died fully enfranchised: with the right to vote for a local MP, in a secret ballot. By this time the exploits of the man he was named for were largely forgotten.

## Appendix – A second Chartist family in Farnhill

Throughout this article we have based our narrative around Feargus O'Connor Holmes, known as "F" to the school. Recent research, done as part of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers Project, has shown that two of the Farnhill men who volunteered to serve in WW1 were related to men whose forenames were Feargus O'Connor.

**William Birch Holmes** – was the great-nephew of Feargus O'Connor Holmes

**Harry Pollard** – was brought up by Binns Hartley and his wife Sophia Annie (nee Pollard). That Harry was some close relation of Sophia's is almost certain, but quite what their precise kinship was is eluding us at present. What we do know is that Sophia Annie had a brother with the name Feargus O'Connor Pollard.

These two families weren't related. What connected them was a shared set of political beliefs and a desire to honour the leader of the movement they supported.

## Acknowledgements

Farnhill and Kildwick History Group would like to thank:

- Isobel Stirk, whose talk on the Bronte Family, in Farnhill Institute in April 2012, was the trigger for this article.
- Juliet Barker, author of the book "The Brontes" (Little, Brown, 2010), who provided useful source material.
- Dr. Marjie Bloy, author of the website "[The Peel Web](#)" who was very helpful in providing material.
- Keighley and District Digital Archive, who provided Figure 9.

## References

- 1 1848 Year of Revolution, In Our Time, BBC Radio 4; first broadcast January 19<sup>th</sup> 2012. Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019gy9p>
- 2 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1848/mar/07/the-riot-in-traffic-square>
- 3 <http://www.chartists.net/Trafalgar-Square-riots-1848.htm>
- 4 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1848/mar/09/the-disturbances-in-traffic-square>
- 5 <http://www.chartists.net/Convention-and-Assembly-1848.htm>
- 6 Leeds Times, Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> 1848
- 7 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kildwick\\_and\\_Crosshills\\_railway\\_station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kildwick_and_Crosshills_railway_station)
- 8 Bradford Observer, Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup> 1848

8a Leeds Mercury, Saturday April 15<sup>th</sup> 1848

9 <http://richardjohnbr.blogspot.co.uk/2007/11/aspects-of-chartism-10th-april-1848.html>

10 Extracts from the diaries of the fourth Duke of Newcastle, Archives of the University of Nottingham, published by Open University.

11 Illustrated London News, April 15<sup>th</sup> 1848; see <http://www.chartists.net/10-April-1848.htm>

12 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/chartist\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/chartist_01.shtml)

13 <http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/failed-chartist-demonstration-london>

14 <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/CHkennington.htm>

15

<http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/search/displayItemFromId.do?FormatType=fulltextimgsrc&QueryType=articles&ItemID=18480410&volumeType=PSBEA>

16 The Chartist Movement, Mark Howett, Manchester University Press, 1918; see [http://archive.org/stream/chartistmovement029286mbp/chartistmovement029286mbp\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/chartistmovement029286mbp/chartistmovement029286mbp_djvu.txt)

17 <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/chartism/debate48.htm>

18 The Chartist Risings in Bradford, by D.G. Wright, Bradford Libraries and Information Service, 1987

19 <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/people/oconnor.htm>

20 Learning and Living, 1790-1960, by J.F.C. Harrison; publ. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961

21 English in Nineteenth-Century England: An Introduction, by Manfred Görlach; publ. Cambridge University Press, 1999

22 An Anthology of Chartist Poetry: Poetry of the British Working Class, 1830s-1850s, by Peter Scheckner; publ. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press (U.S.), 1989

23 Diaries of John Robert Tennant, D L, J P, Captain 3rd West Yorkshire Militia of Chapel House, Kilnsey and Kildwick Hall (1847-1873); Brotherton Library Leeds, Special Collections; Ref YAS/DD201

24

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/chartists1/introduction/biographies/chartistbiographies.html>