

Battle of Holbeck Moor, 1936

On 27th September 1936, following a week of tension during which the BUF was forbidden by the city's Watch Committee to march through the Jewish quarter, Oswald Mosley paraded over 1000 uniformed Blackshirts in Calverley Street, and marched them to Holbeck. Press reports suggest very few of them were Leeds natives.

Opposition to the event had been organised and publicised some days previously, with the Communist Party taking the lead; relations between the parties being what they were, the Labour Party refused to take part in the protests. The newspapers reported a crowd of 30000 on the moor with a very significant hostile element. As Mosley spoke, the Red Flag was sung repeatedly in efforts to drown him out, and a large number of stones were thrown at the fascists. Many of these found their targets, with Mosley himself being struck. The city magistrates moralised endlessly in the week that followed, but punishments for most of those apprehended were light.

An eye-witness recalled the weather being good that day, and also a Blackshirt parade down Meanwood Road, and so they came at least close to the Leylands. He also observed that if he'd known he was going to be questioned on the matter 60 years later, he would have paid closer attention to the details of the event at the time ...

This riot occurred just days before the better publicised rout of the fascists in East London.