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## **LIVING CONDITIONS 1830 - 1914**

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The Social History of Skelmanthorpe and District



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SKELMANTHORPE AND DISTRICT U3A  
Local History Group

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## **General Improvement**

The basic feature of English life in the first half of the nineteenth century was that of change. Change from a small, mainly agricultural society to a large, industrial population which lived and worked in towns rather than villages. Population had first begun to grow noticeably in the eighteenth century, although at the first official census, taken in 1801, England and Wales could still only muster 8,900,000 inhabitants, scarcely more than one third those of France. Within the next decade, however, nearly another million and a half were added, and by 1851 it had doubled to reach eighteen million. Problems were complicated by the fact that the increase in total numbers was accompanied by a marked shift in the balance between town and country. Urbanisation was the most important and most easily recognised social consequence of the Industrial Revolution. In 1801 only one fifth of the population were town dwellers, four fifths rural; by 1851 the proportions were fifty-fifty whilst by 1901 they were reversed - one fifth in the country and four fifths in towns. For example, from 1800 to 1850 Manchester grew from 85,000 to a bustling city of 400,000; Leeds from 53,000 to 172,000 and Bradford from 13,000 to 104,000. This meant that by the middle of the century life for the working people in towns became "short, nasty and poor".

From the 1850s on-wards, however, living conditions in England were improved by economic and social changes, especially in industrial areas. Trade began to improve, wages rose and food prices fell. Hygiene was improved by the provisions of mains water and drainage and the cumulative effect of roadways, gas lighting, Factory and Education Acts, efficient law and order provisions, co-operative and temperance movements, chapels, mechanics institutes, clubs and societies were all improving influences in wiping out the old rough way of life.

These influences can be divided into those imposed by officialdom and those which sprang from within the ranks of the working class, such as self help groups. and those with a religious, or moral origin such as Methodism and the temperance movement.

## Local Demographics

Skelmanthorpe (Settlement) located in the Parishes of Emley and High Hoyland

Scelmertorp, Scemeltorp 1086 Domesday Book

Skelmerthorp 1290

Skelmarthorp(e), Scelmarthorp(e) 1296

Skelmanthorp(e) 1316 onwards

Clipped on 4-March-2016, 3:34 PM from "The Historical Gazetteer of England's Place-names"

*"...and being at Skelmanthorpe, in the several Townships of Cumberworth with Cumberworth Half, and in the parishes of High-Hoyland and Emley, in County of York, (sale of farm and land in Leeds Intelligencer - Monday 4 September 1809).*

This Introduces us to the complexity of studying Skelmanthorpe history. Part was in the parish of Emley and most in the parish of High Hoyland whilst it was split, very haphazardly, between the townships of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half.

Thus:

*"SKELMANTHORPE, a hamlet, in the townships of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half, parishes of High Hoyland and Emley, poor union of Huddersfield, wapentakes of Staincross and Agbrigg, West Riding of York, 7 miles (S. E. by E.) from Huddersfield; containing 1420 inhabitants. It comprises about 1430 acres of profitable land; the substratum contains freestone of excellent quality, and some coal. The inhabitants are partly employed in the manufacture of worsted and silk goods, for which there are several mills, and in the weaving of fancy waist coatings. A fair for cattle and pigs is held at Michaelmas. There is a place of worship for Wesleyans. On the inclosure of Cumberworth common, seven acres were allotted to this hamlet, now producing £10. 10. per annum, of which £6 are paid to a schoolmaster, and the remainder distributed among the poor.*

(Transcribed from **A Topographical Dictionary of England**, by Samuel Lewis, 7th edition, published in 1848. – in "Huddersfield Exposed: Exploring the History of the Huddersfield Area".)

Cumberworth was a township in the parishes of Silkstone and High Hoyland (both in the Honour of Pontefract), which included the villages of Lower and Upper Cumberworth, as well as parts of Skelmanthorpe. The separate township of Cumberworth Half was situated in the parishes of Kirkburton and Emley (both in the Manor of Wakefield).

The fact that Cumberworth was geographically interlocked with Cumberworth Half caused administrative problems, as indicated by this 1875 newspaper article: (**Barnsley Chronicle 08/May/1875**)

*"We may state that for many years great confusion and difficulty have been experienced not only by the inhabitants but also by the collectors of rates, inspectors of weights and measures, and others having public duties to perform. Several cases might be named where great inconvenience had arisen, and of late the houses have had to be numbered with black letters on white [back]ground and vice versa in order to distinguish in which township they were situated."*

**Skelmanthorpe Local Board: 18 February 1871** "Ordered that all the houses in the District of Skelmanthorpe be numbered - those in the township of Cumberworth white ground with black figures those in Cumberworth Half black ground and white figures."

Following legislation, the complex township boundaries of the two townships were simplified and Cumberworth Half became the township of Skelmanthorpe on 23 February 1876.

### Skelmanthorpe - Formation of a New Township

*"The overseers of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half (Messrs. Henry Senior, Joseph Wood, Humphrey Field and William Field) have received the following letter from the secretary to the Local Government Board: - Gentlemen - I am directed by the Local Government Board to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st inst., and in reply to forward you a copy of the draft order which they propose to issue for re-adjusting the boundaries of the townships of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half, and for changing the name of the latter township to Skelmanthorpe.*

*The order above referred to, states that it shall have effect for all purposes connected with the relief of the poor, the repair of the highways, the collection of taxes, impositions and assessment, all petty sessional and constabulary business. The township of Cumberworth and Skelmanthorpe shall form part of the Huddersfield (Poor) Union until the Local Government Board shall otherwise direct."*

(Huddersfield Chronicle, 12th February, 1876)

### Population

**Eligible to Vote in 1832 Election** Cumberworth half, 30 all of whom are freeholders. 1839 Mr Joseph Ives, poor law guardian, was unanimously elected to the office of Constable for the township of Cumberworth Half for the ensuing year. (*Leeds Mercury - Saturday 13 April 1839*)

**Polling Districts of West Riding of Yorkshire: HOLMFIRTH POLLING DISTRICT--** 12 Townships - 747 Voters: Cumberworth Half. 48; Shelley, 67; Shepley, 37, (*Leeds Intelligencer, 1841*)

### Population 1831-1871

Township	1831	1841	1851	1861
Huddersfield	19,035	25,018	30,876	34,874
Cumberworth	1,374	1,867	2,384	2,414
Cumberworth Half	1,180	1,480	1,688	1,974
Kirkburton	2,650	3,473	3,559	3,664
Shelley	1,319	1,769	1,870	1,901
Shepley	893	1,081	1,198	1,432

### Census Figures 1871

Township	Families	Males	Females	Total
Huddersfield	8,459	18,385	20,273	38,658
Cumberworth	504	1,212	1,273	2,485

Cumberworth Half	433	948	981	1,929
Kirkburton	739	1,669	1,778	3,442
Shelley	396	883	868	1,751
Shepley	310	719	788	1,507

**(Huddersfield Chronicle, 6 May 1871)**

***Transcript of the entry of "professions and trades for SKELMANTHORP in Baines's Directory and Gazetteer Directory of 1822.***

- a blacksmith
- Gawthorp Joseph, vict. 3 Horse Shoes
- a shoemaker
- a joiner
- Hirst John, vict. Star
- Lawton David, schoolmaster
- Lodge John, bone setter
- M'Gowan John, surgeon

Fancy Manufacturers:

- Armitage Wm.
- Burdett John
- Field Jph. & Sons
- Firth William
- Hartley John
- Lockwood Jonth.
- Lodge Thomas
- Moorhouse John
- Senior Jph. (cloth manufacturer)

Grocers: Greenwood David, Hinchliffe Joseph, (and chandler), Moody Thomas

**(Transcript of the entry of "professions and trades in Baines's Directory and Gazetteer Directory of 1822., Yorkshire (West Riding))**

***Transcript of the entry of 'professions and trades' in Pigot's Directory of 1834.***

*Blacksmiths,*

Bower Francis, Skelmanthorpe

*Boot & Shoe Makers,*

Hampshaw John, Skelmanthorpe

Helliwell John, Skelmanthorpe

Morley Thomas, Skelmanthorpe

Nicholson John, Skelmanthorpe

*Butchers,*

Grayson William, Skelmanthorpe

Micklethwaite John, Skelmanthorpe

*Joiners & Cabinet Makers,*

Hampshaw Thomas, Skelmanthorpe

*Machine Makers,*

Wilkinson James, Skelmanthorpe

*Manufacturers of Fancy Goods,*

Armitage Isaac, Samuel & Joshua, Skelmanthorpe

Field Joseph, William & Thomas, Skelmanthorpe

Jepson John, Skelmanthorpe

Wood John, Springfield, Skelmanthorpe

*Shopkeepers & Dealers in Groceries & Sundries,*  
 Archer John, Skelmanthorpe  
 Carter William, Scissett, Skelmanthorpe  
 Field William, Skelmanthorpe  
 Goldthorp Joseph, Skelmanthorpe  
 Hampshire John, Skelmanthorpe  
 Hinchcliff Joseph, Skelmanthorpe  
 Lawton Mary, Skelmanthorpe  
 Wainwright William, Skelmanthorpe  
*Surgeons,*  
 Dowse Thomas, Skelmanthorpe  
*Tailors,*  
 Scatcherd Samuel, Skelmanthorpe  
*Taverns & Public Houses,*  
 Globe, Joseph Gawthorp, Skelmanthorpe  
 Grove, John Archer, Skelmanthorpe  
 Royal Oak, Joseph Hey, Skelmanthorpe  
 Three Horse Shoes, Joseph Goldthorp, Skelmanthorpe  
*Wheelwrights,*  
 Bolton John, Skelmanthorpe  
*Woollen Manufacturers,*  
 Senior Benjamin, Skelmanthorpe  
 Senior Joseph, Skelmanthorpe  
*Miscellaneous,*  
 Hinchcliff Joseph, tallow chandler, Skelmanthorpe

*Carriers,*

To Barnsley, James Heptonstall, from Denby, every Wednesday & Saturday  
 To Huddersfield, Charles Kay, from Kirkburton, Jonathan Fitton, from High Burton, and David Green, from Denby Dale, every Tuesday

**Skelmanthorpe in 1851**

“The 1851 census indexing project has made it easier for us to find our Huddersfield ancestors in that year. Closer analysis of the Indices enables us to create a picture of the community within which our forebears lived. My Dyson ancestors occupied Skelmanthorpe for 5 generations between 1765 and 1900 and I still have distant relations living there now; hence my interest in the village.

The census for Skelmanthorpe is in the two booklets for Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half which covers six enumeration districts. Skelmanthorpe is contained within two of these and at the time had a population of 1371. The village was growing quickly during this period due to the strength of the fancy weaving trade, the village's main industry. Nearly 77% of the population were born in Skelmanthorpe itself or within a mile of it. 18% had moved only 10 miles or less, and the remainder, 50 persons or so, included some Irish immigrants.

Of the 907 people with occupations, 582 were in the fancy or woollen trade. The bobbin winders among this group included children who were taught the skill from about the age of 9. The next largest group of workers were those involved in farming, made up of forty three farmers and labourers. Farmed land amounted to about 445 acres, the largest farm being 101 acres. Despite the relatively close proximity of coal pits there were only 9 miners living in the village, a reflection perhaps of time when most people really did live where they worked. Many of the remaining occupations were those of local service such as carpenters, blacksmiths, shoe makers, chandlers, dress making and tailoring.

The presence of grocers, shop keepers and their assistants shows the growth of retailing in the village. There were, however, three hawkers noted which show that the traditional way of selling still prevalent. Also of interest are the washer woman and mangler who between them probably ran the community equivalent of today's launderette.

Fifteen people were listed as servants. Some of these worked for the manufacturers, the men and women who owned the mills upon which the village relied so much. Inhabitants weren't short of places to get a drink — apart from the three inn keepers and one pub keeper, there were also the two beer house shopkeepers.

The two schoolmasters and two school mistresses show that at least some of the children were educated well before schooling became compulsory in the 1870s. The average age of the population was 23; probably about normal for the mid 19th century. The oldest person, however, was 89 year old Deborah Firth who just happens to be one of my ancestors and there were three other octogenarians.

Here I have only scratched the surface of the information which can be gleaned from the Census material. This can be used, together with other sources of local history, to breathe some life into a community that existed nearly 150 years ago." ***Ian Dyson, Huddersfield and District Family History Journal, Vol.8 No.4***

### ***White's Directory 1870***

**SKELMANTHORPE and SCISSETT**, two hamlets, now forming a large village 2 miles from Shepley Railway station, and 8 miles S.E. by E. of Huddersfield, have about 5000 inhabitants, and are in the townships of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half, already noticed, and in the parishes of High Hoyland and Emley. It is lighted with gas, and has a Local Board of Health, formed in 1867. Scissett Church (St. Augustine) was built by subscription in 1837-8, at a cost of about £2000. It is a neat Gothic structure with an apsidal chancel, and a tower 24 yards high. Joseph Kaye, Esq., gave the land, and T. W. Beaumont, Esq., erected the parsonage house, and endowed the living with £1300. The benefice is a vicarage, valued at £140 per annum, in the patronage of W. B. Beaumont, Esq., and incumbency of the Rev. Henry Newland,. The ecclesiastical parish of Scissett contains a population of over 3300. The Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists have chapels here. At the enclosure of Curnberworth common, in 1800, seven acres of land were allotted to the hamlet of Skelmanthorpe, to pay yearly to the schoolmaster, and the surplus rent to the poor. It is now let for £10. 10s. a year. The schoolmaster teaches six free scholars to read and write. The poor of Skelmanthorpe have also 10s. a year from land called Long Thorpe, near Emley.

There is a Post Office at Mr Thomas Shaw's, Scissett, and also at Mr. John Hinchliffe's, Skelmanthorpe. Letters via Huddersfield. The nearest Money ORDER OFFICE is at Clayton, and RAILWAY STATION at Denby Dale.

### ***INNS AND TAVERNS. (\*Scissett)***

Commercial, Joseph Eastwood

•Crown, John Schofield

Globe, William Gaukrogor

Grove, John William Berry

Horse Shoes, Samuel Peel.

\*Queen's Head, John Shaw

Windmill, John Berry.

### ***Kelly's Directory 1881***

SCISSETT (or NORTONTHORPE) is a village in the township of Skelmanthorpe and ecclesiastical parish, formed in 1840 out of the parishes of Emley and High Hoyland, 9 miles south-east from Huddersfield, 7 miles north-west from Barnsley, 2 north-east from the Denby Dale station, one mile west from Clayton West station, and is a polling place for the Southern division of the Riding. In Huddersfield union, Barnsley county court district, rural deanery of Silkstone, archdeaconry of Craven and diocese of Ripon. The church of St. Augustine, erected in 1839, is a building of stone, in the Early English style, consisting of chancel, nave and tower containing 1 bell; the interior has undergone a thorough renovation, the cost of which was defrayed by subscription. The registers date from the year 1839. The living is a vicarage, yearly value £140 with residence, in the living of

B.Beaumont esq.MP. and held by the Rev. John Patton Bond M .A. of Edinburgh University, who is non-resident: the Rev. Rodney R. White B.A. of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge, is the curate in charge. There is a Working Men's Club, supplied with newspapers and periodicals, and a police station for the districts of Scissett, Skelmanthorpe, Denby Dale and Clayton West. W. T. W. Spencer-Stanhope esq. J.P. is lord of the manor, the landowners are numerous. The soil is clay; subsoil, mineral. The chief crops are wheat, barley, oats &c. The rateable value is £5,382; and the population in 1871 was 3,159.

SKELMANTHORPE is a large village comprising Skelmanthorpe and Scissett, 9 miles north-west from Barnsley, 8 south-east from Huddersfield and 6 north-northwest from Penistone, forming part of the parish of Scissett, and is a station on the Clayton West branch of the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway. The Wesleyan Reformers and Primitive Methodists have each a chapel in the village. There is a poor allotment producing £10 l2s. yearly. The fancy woollen trade is carried on to a considerable extent. The soil is clay; sub-soil, sandstone. The chief crops are wheat and oats. A portion of Cumberworth Half is annexed to this village. Rateable value, £5,630

### **THE VILLAGES**

Denby Dale with Kitchenroyd is a contained linear settlement on the river Dearne in a deeply incised valley. The village did not exist before 1800, but with the building of the turnpike in 1842 and the railway in 1850 the village developed with the textile industry. Kitchenroyd was built in 1854 for a local workforce either side of the turnpike. Denby Dale is now an attractive village with a good range of facilities and one remaining textile mill. There has been considerable housing development in the village mainly on old industrial land.

The Cumberworths and Upper Denby are within a settled wooded farmland setting; a rolling landscape of fields and woods, with distant panoramic views. The settlements are all ancient villages mentioned in the Domesday Book. The villages have an established centre, with some modern housing development, but with very restricted facilities, and just one shop.

Birdsedge and High Flatts have an upland farmland characteristic on a high plateau giving extensive views with an open and exposed feeling of remoteness. A landscape divided by sandstone walls, sparsely populated, mainly down to permanent pasture and treeless. Birdsedge developed along the Halifax to Sheffield turnpike in the late 18th century and grew with the erection of the Birdsedge Mill on the river Dearne. The village has seen some housing development, but remains a small village with very few facilities. High Flatts is a small 18th century group of houses along the turnpike with a well established Quaker centre. There has been little modern development and there are no facilities.

Emley Moor is also of upland farmland character on a high plateau, an exposed area enjoying extensive views in all directions, with a lack of trees, sparsely settled except for a concentration of buildings around the cross roads and towards Emley. Emley Moor developed during the Industrial Revolution around the small scale mining industry and is now a small spread out village with very few facilities.

Emley is in a settled wooded farmland area with a long history from the 6th century involving both agriculture and mining. The village has a well established centre with a grade 2 listed church. The village has seen extensive housing development and is now a substantial village but with limited facilities.

Clayton West and Scissett are in a settled broad valley environment, spreading up the hill side and along the Dearne with a mixture of residential and light industrial development. The two villages merge into one another along the A636 but are distinct from Denby Dale. Scissett has no real centre and a limited range of facilities, but does include an indoor swimming pool. Clayton West has some sense of a centre and a limited range of facilities.



Skelmanthorpe is in a settled valley, on a shelf of land above a narrow river valley and is strongly allied to the textile industry with some substantial mill buildings. The village has grown with large spreading housing developments. These developments have made it the largest village within the parish, with a good range of facilities grouped at its centre.  
***(Denby Dale Parish Council Website, 2018)***

## A Very Brief History of C19 Local Government Institutions

At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there was nothing resembling what we would now recognise as an elected, multi-purpose local authority. Instead local affairs were in the hands of three long-established institutions.

Firstly, the Justices of the Peace were the over-riding form of government at county level. They had far wider powers than their present-day counterparts, dealing not just with criminal cases but with a wide range of regulatory functions, exercised through their quarterly meetings (the Quarter Sessions). Although appointed by the Crown at county level from the propertied gentry, in practice they operated in smaller local groupings and through more frequent petty sessions. Until 1868 Huddersfield was within the Upper Agbrigg petty sessional division, while our area would have been in Lower Agbrigg. These were sub-divisions – 'wapentakes' (Anglo-Saxon) – of the West Riding.

Secondly there was the parochial system. Nationwide, the parish had been the traditional unit of grass-roots local government, both ecclesiastical and secular, for the best part of a thousand years. But northern parishes tended to be large and for administrative purposes were divided into townships. These were sub-divisions of the wapentakes – 36 in Upper Agbrigg for example – and their vestry or ratepayers' meetings elected various officials, including highway surveyors and overseers of the poor. Our area came under the parishes of High Hoyland, Emley and Cumberworth. Shelley was under Kirkburton and parts of Upper Cumberworth in Silkstone!

The Tudors had made the parish the centre of local government between 1495 and 1601 and this survived until 19th Century. The churchwardens whose numbers varied from 2 to 12 according to the size of the parish, were acting as the legal custodians of parish property. To these officials Mary Tudor in 1555 added the surveyor of the highways, an elected unpaid job to maintain roads. The Justices of the Peace made the parish elect a constable to keep "watch and ward", arrest vagrants and help to maintain the peace. In 1597 two overseers of the poor were to be elected to administer the poor laws of 1597 and 1601. Emley, Cumberworth and High Hoyland each provided a constable and overseers for those parts of Skelmanthorpe that were in their "parishes".

This body of officials provided the parochial administration and annually they presented their accounts to the vestry for approval and at the same time elect new officers for the coming year. The vestry was either an open, democratic one, where all householders had a voice and a vote; or a closed, autocratic vestry of twenty-four who filled any vacancies by nominations from survivors. This system functioned in a fairly stable manner for a rural economy, but in the expanding industrial areas from 1790 onwards the system tended to break down. **(Addy, J. ed. *A History of the Denby Dale Urban District* (*Minutes of Denby Vestry 1841-1869 on Denby Dale archive website*)).**

Intertwined with the parishes, the country was also divided into manors, traditional units of land ownership going back to early medieval times. The manors of Huddersfield and Almondbury were famously owned by the Ramsden family. Other important manorial estates included the Dartmouth and Radcliffe estates in the Colne Valley; the Beaumont estates to the east of Huddersfield; the Saville and Thornhill estates in the north; and there were other smaller estates elsewhere. Many were sub-manors of the large Manor of Wakefield or Honour of Pontefract, which covered the area between them. In medieval times manor courts dispensed justice on many minor matters and some, including the Ramsden estate at Almondbury, were still active in the first half of the C19, appointing constables and other minor local officials and sometimes coming into conflict with the township authorities.

These traditional institutions were increasingly unable to cope with the strains of urbanisation in the first half of the C19, and new bodies began to emerge on an ad hoc basis to take on particular

roles. A common model was a body of Commissioners established by Act of Parliament for a particular purpose. For example, Huddersfield had Commissioners of Lighting, Watching & Cleansing from 1820. All of this followed the model, established in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, of the turnpike trusts, which developed the major roads of the district from the 1750s to the 1820s.

Importantly, under the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, the administration of poor relief was taken out of township hands and brought under Boards of Guardians of Poor Law Unions, comprising elected members and JPs. The Huddersfield Union corresponded to the Agbrigg wapentake; further east were the Dewsbury and Wakefield Boards and south the Barnsley and Penistone Unions.

### **Municipal reform**

In today's West Yorkshire, only Leeds had a corporation before 1835. In that year the Municipal Corporations Act reformed the ancient boroughs, putting them on an elected, and enabled other towns to opt for borough status if their ratepayers agreed. This road was eventually taken by Dewsbury (1862), Huddersfield (1868), and Batley (1869).

Before that, however, under the Public Health Acts of 1848 and 1858, townships could opt – or in some cases were required – to establish a Local Board, largely for sanitary purposes. Over 50 of these were established across today's 'Kirklees', from the early 1850s; Skelmanthorpe (and Scissett), Clayton West, Denby Dale and Cumberworth all had their own local boards until many became Urban District Councils in 1894.

### **Non-municipal bodies**

The tendency from the mid-C19 to mid-C20 was to bring ever more local functions under the aegis of elected local authorities. But even in the C19 there remained important exceptions. Separate elected School Boards operated from 1871-1904 under the 1870 Education Act, and the poor law Boards of Guardians continued from the 1830s until 1929.

Before the formation in 1974 of Kirklees Council (and the current Denby Dale Parish Council), our area had been administered by the Denby Dale Urban District Council, which also covered the whole area; before then from 1898, by the four separate Urban District Councils of Clayton West, Denby and Cumberworth, Emley and Skelmanthorpe; and earlier still by Denby Dale, Cumberworth, Clayton West, Emley and Skelmanthorpe Local Boards.

### **Skelmanthorpe**

The traditional system of local government had been the practice in Skelmanthorpe. Emley provided a Constable and overseers for that portion of the village in that parish and High Hoyland did likewise.

In March 1863 things changed when the inhabitants (or at least the local rate payers and property owners) of Skelmanthorpe met to elect their own local Board to take over administration following the Local Government Act of 1858. The portions from the two parishes were known as the "Upper" and "Lower" divisions until the boundaries were properly surveyed and fixed (which did not happen until 1877). Nine members were elected. Joseph Norton was Chairman, (three members of the Field family as members), Godfrey Lodge appointed Clerk on a salary of £20 per annum and rates 9d in the pound. The old elected surveyor handed over his tools, and the Board Room for meetings was in the Commercial Inn. The Board's powers gradually grew, but to begin with they had responsibility for the oversight of sewers, water supplies, toilets, street cleaning, slaughterhouses, pavements, and burial grounds within their district. First Meeting 23 March 1863. Board: Joseph Norton, Chair, John Jebson, Joseph Field, Humphrey Field, Richard Field, Joseph Eastwood, Isaac Armitage, W Carter, Godfrey Lodge Clerk, John Field Treasurer

The full minutes of meetings of the local board can be found in the Kirklees Archives and show the development of sanitation, street lighting, the Gasworks, the building of the cemetery and concern with water supply until the building of the reservoir on Ponker Lane to hold a constant supply from

Dewsbury Water Board. The Board appointed a Medical Officer of Health and a nuisance Inspector and an account of their work can be found below.

### **Clayton West (J. Addy, "A History of Denby Dale Urban Council")**

The records of the Clayton West Local Board do not commence until 1877. The first concern seems to have been with lighting the streets. The development of Park Mill colliery is seen in a resolution of June 1881 when Edward Stringer was allowed to lay iron plates alongside the causeway in Long Lane for his coal carts to run to the station and the firm would undertake to maintain the track. This track was later abandoned in favour of a tramroad passing by a tunnel under Long Lane.

It is in the field of public health and water supplies that the Board seem to be most concerned. There were from time to time outbreaks of scarlet fever, typhoid and before the Board commenced, one of cholera. The death rate was low at 18 per 1000 with an average of 7 infant deaths per year. In all the average was about 30 deaths per year in 1878 which was the same in 1933. In June 1877, Dr. Duncan was appointed the first Medical Officer for the Board at a salary of £11 per year.

### **Denby Dale and Cumberworth**

Until the 1820s Denby Dale was known as Denby Dike and was comparatively isolated until the coming of two Turnpike roads in 1825 - the Barnsley and Shepley Head Turnpike Road and the Wakefield to Denby Dale Road which passes through the village. Turnpike tolls were collected at the Catchbar and at Upper Cumberworth. The railway came through the village a quarter of a century later and with the greatly improved communication industry in the valley began to develop.

Until 1875 the administration of Denby was in the hands of the Vestry which was concerned with roads and the poor (Minutes on archives website). The vestry opposed the introduction of the Turnpike roads with financial help from the Barnsley Canal Company, but the roads went through. After this a great deal of the expense of the vestry was to maintain these roads. After 1875 both Denby Dale and Cumberworth had their own town boards and the work of both is fairly similar being concerned with maintaining the roads and introducing sanitation. Street lighting for the area was introduced by the two boards using gas from the Denby Dale Gas Company with whom both boards seemed to have continual trouble over the supply and quality of gas. Oil lamps were provided for outlying areas. (Minutes of both town boards are on the archive website). After having their own Town Boards until the 1890s, Denby Dale with Cumberworth comprised Denby Dale and Cumberworth Urban District Council until 1938. (Minutes on web archive).

### **Emley**

"... the medieval town that never grew..." (*Dr. A. Rastrick, quoted in (Addy, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974)*). Market Charter from Henry III in 1253 gave rights to weekly markets and an annual fair for five days in May. By 1760 Emley open fields were enclosed and in 1818 Emley Moor was enclosed. To assist the Justices of the Peace in maintaining law and order in the locality, each village had an elected constable - a most unpopular office, and one which was usually avoided if possible. Some of the accounts of the constable have survived for 1619 and these show that Emley was divided into quarters. Whitecross, Woodhouse, Town and Skelmanthorpe, with a constable for each. No crime seems to have been committed, but the constables were concerned with the fouling of highways. There were also regulations about the cutting of more peat than was required for household use and to forbid private sale of peat or turves to any who were not inhabitants of Emley. Of the old manorial offices that of Pindar seems to have survived at Emley for some time, perhaps because of the number of animals wandering the streets. Records show the last Pindar being sworn in in 1873. (*Addy, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974*). Emley town board and council minutes on the archive website).

## Poverty

**The Old Poor Law.** The 1601 Act made each parish responsible for its own poor and also determined that in each parish the churchwardens and two or more substantial landholders should act as Overseers of the Poor and collect the poor rate. Suppression of begging by provision of work for the able bodied and the use of County Houses of Correction for vagrants.

It became the basis of Poor Law administration for the next two centuries and divided the poor receiving relief into three categories:

1. The able bodied who were to have work provided for them.
2. The rogues, vagabonds, and beggars, who were to be punished for their unwillingness to work.
3. The old, the sick and the disabled who were to be relieved in alms houses or by parish relief.

### **Local Poor Houses up to 1834 (when the New Poor Law was introduced)**

A parliamentary report of 1777 recorded 18 local workhouses in operation around Huddersfield with our nearest at Honley and Lepton. (Place, 2004).

The Golcar township workhouse was at Pike Law, to the south of Scapegoat Hill. A Poor Law inspector's report of 1866 gives us a glimpse inside these early workhouses. It was a small establishment sited on a bleak hillside location. In October 1866, Poor Law Board Inspector R.B. Cane noted that the premises were designated for able-bodied inmates, of whom 22 could be accommodated. He found the workhouse 'wholly inadequate in every respect'. It consisted of two old cottages, one for men and one for women, but with no yards. The men slept two to a same bed, with up to 14 in one small room containing seven beds. At the time of his visit, seven women and five children occupied four beds in one small room which also served as the lying-in ward. The kitchen and washhouse were a small lean-to shed and the inmates' 'puddings' were boiled in the same copper as the foul linen was boiled and washed. (*West Yorkshire Archive. Guardians' minute books (1837-1930)*).

### **The impact of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act**

The poor law was radically changed following the great reform act of 1834. The main difference was that the relief of the poor was moved from a parish responsibility into a locality one. Groups of parishes were consolidated into Poor Law Unions so removing the local community responsibility. Out-relief was discouraged and the workhouses, which had been in existence for the previous two centuries, became the primary source of relief. Throughout the remainder of the 19th century the laws were tightened and modified until the administration was transferred to the Ministry of Health in 1918. It was not until 1930 that the poor laws were finally abolished.

Huddersfield Poor Law Union formally came into being on 10th February 1837. Its operation was overseen by an elected Board of Guardians, 41 in number, representing its 34 constituent parishes and townships listed (figures in brackets indicate numbers of Guardians if more than one): Almondbury (2), Austonley, Cumberworth Half, Cumberworth Lower, Cartworth, South Crosland, Dalton, Farnley Tyas, Foolstone, Golcar, Hepworth, Holme, Honley (2), Huddersfield (5), Kirkburton, Kirkheaton, Lepton, Lingards, Linthwaite, Lockwood, Longwood, Meltham, Marsden in Almondbury, Marsden in Huddersfield, Netherthong, Quarmby with Lindley, Scammonden, Shelley, Shepley, Slaithwaite, Thurstonland, Upperthong, Upper Whitley, Wooldale (2). Later additions: Scholes (from 1894), Skelmanthorpe (from 1876). (*Pattern, David, Huddersfield Exposed*)

The 1834 Act is often criticised by historians with reference to its philosophy of putting all able-bodied paupers in the workhouse. No able-bodied pauper was to receive outdoor relief under the terms of the act. However the act was focused on the rural south and not the urban industrial north where there were too many people subject to the vagaries of trade. Therefore, in the north, many poor law guardians continued with the practice of outdoor relief where possible.

In the industrial North the old poor law had been useful to both employers and to workers. So, for example, hand loom weavers could be given work by the mill owners when orders were good and when the orders dried up they could get outdoor poor relief to tide them over until the work picked up and they were still on hand to do the work. Workhouses were seen as harming both sides of this relationship and opposition to the new poor law was very strong in the West Riding along with the campaign against the Corn Laws which were seen as a root cause of poverty in working families.

There was a strong anti-poor law movement in Huddersfield led by Richard Oastler – a land steward at Fixby and leader of the Ten Hour Movement. The Huddersfield Union successfully held off electing Guardians and holding quorate meetings until directly ordered to do so from London late in 1837.

### **Workhouse inmates born in Skelmanthorpe & surrounding area in 1881 Census**

#### **Wakefield Union Workhouse (opened 1851)**

Henry Bedford, unmarried, 50, coal miner, born Emley  
Benjamin Haigh, unmarried, 67, cloth weaver, b. Emley  
Joseph Haigh, unmarried 76, farm labourer, b. Emley  
David Healey, unmarried, 81, cloth weaver, b. Emley  
Emma Senior, unmarried, 43, no occupation, imbecile, b. Emley  
Abigail Wade, unmarried, 21, domestic servant general, b. Emley \*

#### **Huddersfield Dean House Workhouse (opened 1862)**

George Brook, widowed, 84, clothier (no occupation), born Skelmanthorpe  
Wilson Jepson, unmarried, 36, wool weaver, lunatic, b. Skelmanthorpe  
Sarah Lodge, widow, 78, b. Skelmanthorpe \*  
Thomas Shaw, widowed, 74, wool weaver (no occupation), b. Denby Dale  
Mary Wood, unmarried, 47, wool winder, b. Cumberworth

#### **Huddersfield Crosland Moor Workhouse (opened 1872)**

Clementina Cockshot, 62, imbecile, born Cumberworth  
George Fisher, unmarried, 49, collier coal miner, b. Cumberworth  
Matthew Fretwell, unmarried, 27, cloth finisher (wool), b. Skelmanthorpe\*  
Amos Hardy, unmarried, 51, farm labourer, b. Shepley  
John Hinchliffe, unmarried, 62, cotton weaver (no occupation), b. Skelmanthorpe  
Henry Kilner, unmarried, 43, driver of engine, b. Denby Dale  
Michael Ranfield, unmarried, 69, woollen weaver (no occupation), b. Emley

#### **Examples:**

##### **Abigail Wade**

In 1871 Abigail, age 9, was living with her grandparents, Benjamin & Priscilla Wade at White Cross, Emley. At the time of their marriage in 1853, both Ben & Priscilla could not sign their names. Ben was a farm labourer. Abigail had been baptised on 20 April 1862 & the records show that her mother was Hannah Wade, spinster. Hannah died less than a year later, age 20. Priscilla died in 1875 & in 1881 when Abigail was in the workhouse, Ben was 80 & still living in Emley on his own. He died & was buried there in September 1883, age 83. No further records have been found as to what happened to Abigail after 1881.

##### **Sarah Lodge**

Sarah was living with her husband Will in 1851 at Dale Bottom, Skelmanthorpe. They were both 48. Living with them were their daughter & son in law, Ann & Joseph Morley. All of them were hand loom weavers. Will died, age 75, at Skelmanthorpe & was buried at Scissett on 6 January 1878. In 1881 when Sarah had moved into the workhouse, Ann & Joseph Morley were living at Elm Street, Skelmanthorpe. Joseph was a jobbing labourer & Ann was a mixed goods weaver. Sarah died in the workhouse, age 80, and was buried on 8 February 1884 at Netherthong.

## **Matthew Fretwell**

Matthew's age is inaccurate in the 1881 census. He was born about 1834 to Matthew & Mary Fretwell. In 1851 he was 15 & living with his parents & siblings at Upper Fold, Honley. The older children including young Matthew had been born in Skelmanthorpe but his younger 2 sisters were born at Honley. His father was an engine tender & Matthew was a cloth dresser. All the older male children were gainfully employed while his mother & older sister were occupied in domestic duties. All official documents including his parents' marriage certificate show that they all could sign their name legibly. Matthew seems to have come from a stable background so why did he end up in the workhouse?

The Huddersfield Chronicle of Saturday 11 February 1854 provides a partial explanation. It reported that the previous Wednesday at the works of James Shaw Esq, Matthew Fretwell senior who had been employed for a long time at the works had met with a terrible accident. He had been engaged in oiling the shafting connected with the extensive machinery in the old part of the mill. His comforter (scarf) got entangled in the machinery & he was whirled around by the shafting. The engine was stopped & he was extricated alive. His legs were broken & his body crushed. A surgeon was called but said there was no hope for him and Matthew died shortly after. The coroner's jury had been to see the mill but found nothing of which to complain.

By the time of his father's death two of his older brothers had married & one had died. Matthew was the only son at home but he seems to have spent some time with his friends back in Skelmanthorpe. The Huddersfield Chronicle reported on 8 January 1859 that Matthew & others were charged with assaulting PC Robert Wilson at Skelmanthorpe in the early hours of 27 December. The PC had been called to a commotion & had pounced on Matthew who broke the policeman's lamp & knocked off his helmet before struggling free. The group of miscreants then started stoning PC Wilson. Matthew was fined 1s. for the assault & 2/6d for damage to the lamp; with expenses this totalled £1.1s. In default of payment he would be committed for a month.

In March 1861 his mother Mary died, age 65. His younger sisters went to live with their elder sister who had married & had her own family while Matthew had to find his own place. The 1861 census lists him as living on his own in Honley working as a general labourer. By 1871 he was at Dean House Workhouse, in 1881 at Crosland Moor & by 1891 he was back at Dean House. In each census he is described as a cloth finisher but it is not clear how much time he spent in this occupation. He continued to spend part of his time in & around Skelmanthorpe. The Barnsley Chronicle of 17 February 1877 reported that he was charged with others of being drunk on licensed premises, the Dog & Gun. The police had found all of the customers as well as the landlord, William Eastwood worse for liquor. As Matthew was an "old offender" he was fined 20 shillings with costs. The Huddersfield Chronicle of 11 June 1887 reported that Matthew & John Turton, labourers, were summoned for being on licensed premises, the Crown Inn, Cumberworth, during prohibited hours: they were in the tap room at 4.30pm on a Sunday. It was said that it was a regular custom for Skelmanthorpe people to be supplied with beer there on a Sunday. The pair were given the benefit of the doubt & discharged.

Matthew wasn't free of problems even in the workhouse. The Huddersfield Examiner of 21 September 1895 reported that Joshua Thewlis, a pauper at Dean House, had assaulted another pauper, Matthew Fretwell. Thewlis had been evicted from Crosland Moor because of his threatening behaviour but he had continued his ways at Dean House. He was said to have approached Matthew while he was cleaning the floor & thumped him on the head. Thewlis was sent to gaol for 28 days. The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle of 1 August 1899 had the announcement that Matthew Fretwell had died at Dean House workhouse on 28 July 1899. He was buried on 31 July at Honley.

## **Poor Rates for Cumberworth Half**

On Tuesday last, the overseer of the poor of Cumberworth Half obtained from the Huddersfield magistrates a new rate of 10d in the pound.

***(Leeds Intelligencer, 30 Nov 1850)***

### **Petition to Join Penistone Union**

The usual fortnightly meeting of the Huddersfield Board of Guardians was held yesterday with Mr. Tolson in the chair. After the usual business of relief had been dealt with, the Chairman brought to the attention of the meeting a petition which had been handed to the Poor Law Union from the township of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half asking to be permitted to join the Penistone Union. He thought that if these townships were to be allowed to go then other townships would have the same grounds for complaint and they might go "dividing and dividing until someone had to pay the piper at last."

Extracts from the petition: "According to the 1851 Census the populations of the two townships is as follows: namely Cumberworth 2381 and Cumberworth Half 1683. That your petitioners desire to bring to your notice the rapid increases of the common or general charges of the Huddersfield Union.... (Moving to Penistone Union would considerably reduce the charges to the townships).

	Penistone Union	Huddersfield Union
Yearly amount of salaries:	£213	£1651
Yearly amount of relief:	£286	£2052
General charges in the £	4s 8d	7s 1/4d

(Penistone Union are happy to have them and are building a new workhouse capable to taking their poor.)

Your petitioners therefore must humbly and earnestly pray that you will please to exercise the powers given you by the law (sections quoted) and cause the said townships of Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half to be added to and form part of the Penistone Union."

Signed: Joseph Field, overseer, Cumberworth  
John Jebson, overseer, Cumberworth  
George Hall, overseer, Cumberworth Half  
Joseph Whitaker, overseer, Cumberworth Half  
Joseph Fisher, churchwarden, Emley  
Joseph Kaye, churchwarden, Scissett  
C. J. Cawthra, churchwarden, High Hoyland  
(and 308 other signatures).

The Board moved to delay a consideration and decision until the next Board meeting and it was never agreed. (**Huddersfield Chronicle, 19th Nov. 1859**)

The Guardians of the Huddersfield Union brought the overseers of 12 townships before the magistrates to show cause why warrants of distress should not be issued against their goods and chattels for the great areas of rates each of the townships stands indebted to the union. All pleaded poverty of their districts causing them to be unable to collect the rates. All were given one month to make amends. However, the overseer of Cumberworth Half said that even given that time he would be unable to comply and he would be unable to collect any rates before the harvest. The magistrates signed a distress warrant against him for the whole amount of the arrears that township owed to the union. (Thursday 31 August 1843 **Leeds Times** and **Bradford Observer**) Also in national newspapers (**Evening Mail, London**) in 1843 so must have been quite unusual.

### **Meeting of Huddersfield Poor Law Guardians, March 1855**

SKELMANTHORPE HAND-LOOM WEAVERS. "The Chairman read a letter from W. Walker, Esq., J.P., of Bradford, relative to the depressed state of the ' hand-loom weavers of Skelmanthorpe, occasioned by lack of work, and great sickness, and requesting that the relieving officer for that district should be directed to visit the locality. Mr. Oates, the guardian for the district in question, stated that he knew nothing of the pressing circumstances of this locality. Whatever relief was required there was directly attended to. Subsequently, on the relieving officer, (Washington) being asked, he replied that he knew of no special cases of distress in this neighbourhood, but he would visit the district, and make enquiry. Here the matter dropped." (**Huddersfield Chronicle** 31st March 1855)



It was not until the Local Government Act 1929 that Poor Law Unions were abolished and administration of poor relief was transferred to Local Government. Workhouses were officially closed in 1930, although some continued as "Public Assistance Institutions", under local County Council control and it was not until the National Assistance Act of 1948 that the last vestiges of the Poor Law disappeared, and with them, the workhouses.

## Diet

In the early part of the nineteenth century working class diet mainly consisted of oatmeal in one form or another, although weavers enjoyed a better diet with broth or stew being the usual mid day meal. In times of hardship families subsisted on porridge three times a day, sometimes supplemented with potatoes, a little bacon, skimmed milk and green stuff such as nettles and "fat hen" (a weed growing where potatoes, sugar beet and other root crops are grown).

Drinks, which in the early period had been the traditional northern ones of beer, water, milk and herbal drinks, gave way after mid-century to beer and tea.

Eventually, as conditions improved, the traditional oak cake was replaced by wheat bread and the "hung beef", which was once relied on to last through the winter, was replaced by fresh meat which became more affordable.

### Cast iron ovens

After the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) iron foundries ceased making cannons and began to produce cast iron ranges with fire side ovens, which were cheap enough for most working classes to buy and by the 1850's most working class households had one. After the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, which were designed to keep corn prices high, a "golden age" of home baking began. Compressed yeast, cheaper sugar, jam and dried fruit were now available, as was a reliable baking powder.

Whereas, cooking had previous been done on an open fire, bake stone or griddle, the introduction of the cast iron oven enabled cooks to increase their repertoire beyond recognition. Pies, tarts, bread, puddings cakes and biscuits could now be produced at home, as well as better cooked vegetables and meat. The introduction of the cast iron oven brought about significant improvements to the living conditions of the working classes. (**Jennifer Stead, *Changing the Pattern, Everyday Life 1800-1900 in "Huddersfield a Most Handsome Town", E.A. Hilary Haigh (ed.) Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992***)

### Improvements in Diet

Public health measures, e.g. the supply of clean water and safe disposal of sewage which were instigated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, together with improvements in nutrition led to a reduction in mortality, and particularly infant mortality. Increasingly it was realised that poverty and poor living conditions in the new industrial towns was slowing down this improvement.

Before 1900, the nutritional intake of the labouring class had been virtually ignored, but this situation began to change quite dramatically in the new century. Firstly, the publication of Booth and Rowntree's studies of the poverty in London and York (William Booth, Life and labour of the people of London, First Series (1902) and Seebohm B. Rowntree, Poverty: A study of town life (1902)), showed how many families had to survive on very poor wages. Secondly, the humiliation of defeat at the hands of farmers in the Boer War was compounded by the concern that too many of the enlisted soldiers were physically unfit and thirdly, the declining birth rate, and a rising infant mortality rate were all in spite of the great steps made in sanitary improvements.

The Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, PP.1904, CD2175 (XXXII) led directly to allowing Local Education Authorities to provide school meals and thus acknowledging that many children had an insufficient diet. The main fact to emerge from the implementation of this legislation was that many of the children entering school were suffering from illnesses connected to a poor diet, for example poor teeth, deformities such as rickets and skin disorders. With the recent findings of the Physical Deterioration Committee fresh in their mind and the

increasingly worrying high infant death rates, local authorities developed schemes for the protection of infant life. School milk began to be provided and a School Medical Service set up.

## **Shops**

By the middle of the nineteenth century there were three main types of retail outlets supplying town dwellers:

- (a) The weekly or daily market,
- (b) Hawkers, peddlers and street sellers who sold their wares, e.g. hot pies, fried fish and cooked potatoes around the town,
- (c) Shops at fixed premises, although the working class tended to avoid these because of their higher prices.

At this time it was mainly pork which was consumed by the majority in the form of sausages, bacon and brawn because pigs could be kept near the home and fed on scraps. After the First World War diet became more varied and the corner shop became important.

In Skelmanthorpe a Saturday market was started on Market Green in 1844 and ran for many years. Market Green was the area at the top of King Street where it met Station Road.

## **Adulteration of food**

The adulteration of food had persisted throughout the nineteenth century but it is commonly assumed that as urbanisation increased there were extended opportunities for this to take place. Dr Arthur Hassall's enquiry and report between 1851 and 1854, which were published in the *Lancet*, highlighted the increasing amount of adulteration which was now taking place. The Select Committee which further investigated Hassall's findings discovered that adulteration was widespread and penetrated every branch of commerce. Within five years the first piece of permissive legislation to tackle adulteration was on the statute book. The Adulteration of Food, Drink and Drugs Act, 1872 made it illegal to adulterate food or drugs or to add any injurious ingredient. The weaknesses of this act were finally remedied by the 1875 Act which confronted many of the previous problems and ensured the appointment of a public analyst.

## **Truck**

The practice of employers paying part of the wage in "truck" was another evil which survived well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Some estimates put "truck" as accounting for a quarter of all wages. A good deal of truck was in the form of food or of tickets exchangeable for food at the "tommy-shop" especially in coal mining and railway building where employers could argue they were providing a service as other shops weren't available. The complaints of Barnsley miners in 1842 that they were forced to take "provisions of the worst quality and at prices full above the market" are echoed in contemporary local accounts including for those working for the Nortons in Scissett, who reduced wages and paid in "truck" when business was bad.

By far the most comprehensive work on food history is John Burnett's, "Plenty and Want", which traces the social history of food from 1815 until 1985. As well as dealing with diets he examines the problems of feeding families in the growing urban areas during the late nineteenth century, highlighting such problems as ignorance, inadequate money, adulteration and lack of facilities.

***Plenty and Want: a Social History of Diet in England from 1815***, John Burnett, Methuen, 1985

Demographic changes in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century had very important food consequences. The vast bulk of the population no longer grew their own food - they lived in towns not in the countryside and this meant that they were dependent on others for their food rather than growing their own. The population had also vastly increased - how was this increase to be fed? Rapid urbanisation created difficult problems for food supply and transport. The railways arrived just in time in the early 1840s to prevent famine, and quickly brought about a revolution in the supply of food to the towns. There can be little doubt that the new means of transport - fast, cheap and unaffected by the weather - played an immensely important role in lowering costs and extending food consumption from the 1840s onwards.

Throughout these changes Britain was mostly able to meet its own food needs through improvements in farming methods and the enclosure of waste and common land.

In fact, imports of most foreign foods were discouraged throughout the period by tariff policies designed to partly protect the domestic farmer and partly to raise revenue since customs and excise duties were the main means of raising government revenue before the introduction of income tax in 1842. The most notorious of these duties was, of course, the Corn Law of 1815 and the various amendments through which it passed before its final repeal in 1846. These were seen to be a major cause of the hunger and poverty of the period because it kept the domestic price of bread very high.

### **The Agricultural Labourer.**

The standard of life from 1800 to about 1840 fell to its lowest point for this group. They were reliant on trade and the weather as well. In bad years they would be the first to suffer. With the loss of strip farming and the ability to use the commons and waste with the growth of enclosures, they became day labourers and were badly affected by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

The best eye witness account of the suffering caused comes from Corbett's "Rural Rides" compiled between 1822 and 1830. Corbett estimated the needs of a family of five in bread, meat and beer alone at £62 a year. The labourer's wage (in a wealthy parish) was 9s a week and the maximum parish "allowance" would give them another 7s 6d so at best they could only earn about half of the minimum necessary for basic foods. He found them making do with potatoes as a staple diet - his definition of extreme poverty.

The country diet in the "hungry forties" consisted of rough bread, potatoes, root vegetables and weak tea. Fresh meat was rarely seen and then came from the family pig or from risky act of poaching. (*"The Hungry Forties; Life under the Bread Tax, Descriptions from Contemporary Witnesses"*, T. Fisher Unwin, 1904).

### **The Town Worker.**

The range of earnings among workers was large. In the years up to 1850 there were more who lost out by industrialisation than gained by it, e.g. the cotton hand loom worker who was gradually reduced to a starvation wage as the power loom took over.

Workers might alternate between periods of prosperity and poverty in a matter of weeks as many trades were "boom or bust". The cost of food also varied a great deal and housing was overcrowded and ill-equipped for cooking.

Many wives worked at the factory or domestic trades and had little time for proper cooking, so bread (from local bakers), potatoes and bacon became the mainstay of the urban diet. The poor had a greater dependence on cheap carbohydrate foods and a much smaller intake of protein. They had no money for milk, cheese and butter. Those poor children who survived to the age of five grew up to be rickety, deformed and undernourished.

### **The Middle Classes.**

Early Victorian England saw the rapid growth in the size and spending power of the middle classes. In terms of houses, dress, the employment of domestic servants and, not least in terms of food. Dietary habits were changing both in the times of meals and the choice of food. The giving of dinner parties came down from the upper class to the middle classes and the ritual of afternoon tea began.

## Housing

### Living Conditions at Home

Weavers cottages were simply furnished as there was little room left when all the processes of weaving, spinning, winding and warping were carried out at home. Life centred around the loom and people often slept under the loom or on a crude bed placed on the loom itself. Most weavers' cottages had only two rooms, with two looms, a spinning wheel, winding wheel, turn up bed, straw mattress, plate rack, table, 2 or 3 chairs, a cradle, a bread reel for drying oatcake, a bake stone, an iron pot and a stone sink. Walls would be either white washed or coloured ochre or blue.

Water supplies were unreliable, with wells being polluted and often drying up in the summer months, and it was not until the 1880's when cottages were supplied with tap water, so ending the centuries old communal activity of meeting, queueing and gossiping at the well and fetching water for neighbours. There was primitive sanitation, there being no proper drainage with waste being collected in stinking slimy open sewers. Communal privies in yards or folds were described as 'vile', with waste being dropped into ash pits and little or no privacy, and it was not until the later years of the nineteenth century that better earth closets and water closets were introduced.

By the 1880's most weavers cottages had gaslight, running water and drainage and many had carpets, rugs or clip mats, padded chairs and a sideboard. (A good example of a weavers' cottage furnished as they were in 1900, with a hand loom upstairs can be seen at Skelmanthorpe Textile Heritage Centre, 6 Queens Street, Skelmanthorpe).

### Housework

Even up to the 1850's half the woollen industry was still carried on in the cottages by out-workers, and up to the end of the century hand loom weavers still operated at Skelmanthorpe to provide short runs for the fancy trade and plush cloth which could not be made on machine. Women worked full time in cloth making but they also managed to rear infants, cook, brew, clean, churn milk, wash and make clothes. Housework was done when the weaving stopped. At 4pm on Saturdays when the "fuzzins" i.e. hairs off wool were swept up and the floor scoured. Sunday was the only quiet day.

After the flag floors were scrubbed with urine and hot water to remove the grease, they were rubbed with a scouring stone which could be ochre (ruddle or 'pottery mould') or white or blue ('idle-back'). The hearth stone was usually scrubbed with white idle-back and sometimes two colours were used to make a pattern. For example, a continuous circular pattern was thought to ward off evil spirits.

Washed clothes were smoothed in a big box mangle at the local mangle house. Mangles were expensive so villagers would club together to buy one, and the mangle house was a regular gossip shop.

### Housing Conditions

SEARCHING CRITICISMS LOCAL DISTRICTS. "The Public Health Department of the West Riding County Council has been looking into the housing conditions in certain localities. Dr. Kaye, the Medical Officer, reports at Skelmanthorpe about eleven houses are reported to be unfit for habitation, and several are overcrowded. Rooms formerly used for hand-loom weaving sheds are now utilised as sleeping rooms. Private enterprise here, too, having failed, the Council should be asked to start building themselves. Many private streets and yards are in very unsatisfactory condition. At Clayton "there is plenty to done; Denby and Cumberworth active steps are needed." The same also applies to Shepley. At Shelley houses are said scarce; twelve were overcrowded the last census. In the Kirkburton district housing needs to be expedited. There is here great demand for

houses, and private enterprise is quite inadequate." (Wednesday, 14 October 1914, **Huddersfield Daily Examiner**)

The Co-operative was one of many friendly societies that flourished in Skelmanthorpe. The Golden Fleece, the Weavers' Glory Lodge (the local branch of the Oddfellows Society), the Independent order of Rechabites and the Good Templers were all Friendly Societies who supplied funds for building houses. The weavers' cottages on Strike Lane were built with money loaned by the Golden Fleece Friendly Society.

In 1875 it was compulsory to appoint a Medical Officer of Health to report on sanitation and water supplies and the Artisans' Dwelling Act of the same year gave local boards powers to buy unfit houses and demolish them and to build suitable homes for artisans. (**Addy, J. "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974**)

In 1878, Archers Building on Sam Taylor's Laith, Skelmanthorpe and wash house pulled down. Two new shops with houses behind were built. (**Letter from Samuel Field to Albert Field, Field Archive, Kirklees Archives**)

1879, three houses in Gibb Lane belonging to Mrs Mitchel condemned as unfit for habitation and ordered to be pulled down. (**Skelmanthorpe Town Board Minutes, Kirklees Archives**)

Continual pressure from Medical Officers about overcrowding and poor housing eventually forced the local boards and then Urban District Councils to begin building "council houses". Houses on Windmill Crescent in Skelmanthorpe began to be built in the 1930s and on Smithy Lane after 1945.

#### **Skelmanthorpe Medical Officer's Report for 1937:**

"Housing Conditions.

1. Total number of houses in the District—1075
2. Number of working class houses included in the above—996
3. General observations as to housing conditions, overcrowding, and shortage of houses;—The general standard is fair but the standard is being improved by the carrying out of Clearance schemes. The shortage of houses is being overcome by the Council's building schemes. During the year the erection of 60 houses was commenced by the Council on an existing site at Windmill Crescent and on a new site in the Scissett area. Eleven of these houses have been completed and the remainder are approaching completion. Of these houses 38 are for rehousing families displaced by Clearance Orders and 22 for rehousing overcrowded families."

Windmill Crescent, 1937. *"The occupation of the new housing estate is now complete and it is noted that the health and comfort of those removed to the area are greatly improved. The conditions are greatly appreciated in the large majority of cases and those who were inclined to grumble at the outset have now come to realize the benefits of fresh air and sunlight as opposed to the conditions under which they formerly lived."*

#### **New Building 1949**

During the year 19 houses were completed by the Council on the Smithy Lane Estate, Skelmanthorpe, and 22 "Spooner" type prefabricated houses were erected at The Royds, Clayton West.

In addition 3 houses (2 at Emley and 1 at Skelmanthorpe) and 3 flats at Birdsedge were completed by private enterprise.

#### **Emley**

Two reports on housing by Dr William Bell, the Medical Officer for Emley, one in 1909 and the other in 1911 read like an extract from Edwin Chadwick on housing in 1842. Writing about Walter Booth's house on Emley Moor he said, "this is a low decker with one living room and one sleeping room. The number of persons living in it are ten. Six sleep in the living room and four in the bedroom. There is no sink trap nor gate and the sewage runs into a tank which has to be emptied daily." The second describes two houses in Outlane, "there is no spouting except over the door

which runs into a bucket. The rest of the rainwater runs down the walls. The roof is defective and leaks. The ground at one end is level with the upstairs on the village side is level with the door top and the path to the house is made of poor flags. The staircase is dangerous and windows will not open upstairs. The best thing is to demolish the whole building."

An Emley housing scheme finally got off the ground in 1925 when the Council borrowed £4000 to erect eight houses at Warburton to be completed by the summer of that year. It was agreed to find out the rents charged by Stringer and Son for their houses in Springfield Terrace, Emley Moor. This was 5 shillings a week so the Council decided that their new houses should be charged at 5s 6d per week. Two years later, a further scheme was planned for building 8-16 houses on Church Hill farm land.

### **The Fleet, Scissett**

Benjamin Norton was an original small time clothier whose sons were brought up in the tradition. In 1825, one of them, Joseph, purchased the Highbridge Corn Mill and most of the land on which the village of Scissett was later to stand. The row of house which Joseph Norton had built adjacent to the turnpike at the bottom of Busker Lane was not planned in isolation but as the first principal street of further development; a second street should have crossed this at right angles the "middle" house being so designed that a cart road and two pedestrian passageways could pass through it, though this was never to be, and apart from the tunnelled entry to these houses and the arched masonry on the outside walls, nothing else was done towards achieving this end.

This first street of houses known as the Fleet, though much criticised a century later, were in their day purpose built, designed with people's comfort in mind. Built two stories high, the upper room was built to house the hand loom. In the Fleet, the large sash windows gave maximum light to all the floors and the steps to the first floor opened straight off from the outside door to save any passage through the house of the business of weaving. The flights of steps to the weaving chamber were of the open type and in the early days a large trap door closed off the whole top storey when weaving was being done. Each house had its own well in the cellar, the overflow from the first filling the second and so on. The feed for the wells was a natural spring of good water. Later, however, tenants discovered that it passed through the churchyard and they objected to drinking it so Joseph piped in his own supply and later connected to the town water. Each tenant had a right of way to the river for washing cloth, etc and each house had its own pigsty in a long line between the houses and the river.

Any further planning of the village by Joseph Norton was not to be for trade fluctuated and capital was not always available, so the Scissett property to the east of the Fleet was sold to a group of enterprising men who formed themselves into the Clayton West Building Society who were to be responsible for further developments in that direction. Under them, Saville Street and Water Street followed reasonably quickly, still keeping to the same geometrical street plan but no longer were the houses planned with weaving in mind as this occupation had moved into the mills. The space enclosed by the streets as set out in the 1840s was used as allotments and as a market square. From that time on the village expanded rapidly with building almost always done between the turnpike and the river. By 1870 the village had reached its maximum size.

## Health

The connection between dirt and disease had been appreciated for hundreds of years, but what was not known was just what that connection was. That had to wait until 1867, when Louis Pasteur developed his germ theory of disease. In the first half of the 19th century, overcrowding and lack of sanitation and clean water meant that disease was rampant and life expectancy of the working classes was low (average age of 19 in Leeds in 1842) <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/p-health/pubheal.htm>. People living in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions and without easy access to a supply of clean water housed body lice, which spread typhus fever, from which many died. There were typhus epidemics in 1837 and 1839; an outbreak in 1847 killed 10,000 people in north-west England alone. Influenza, scarlet fever, tuberculosis (often called the white plague) and measles were endemic and were often killers. Typhoid and diarrhoea were common. Cholera hit Britain in four massive epidemics: 1831–2, 1848–9, 1853–4 and 1866. The first epidemic killed 31,000 and the second 62,000.

### Major legislation affecting Public Health

- 1848 and 1858 Public Health Acts – introduced Local Boards responsible for sanitation.
- 1858 Medical Act. Approval of medical qualifications and creation of Medical Register
- 1875 Public Health Act. Gave powers to local Sanitary Authorities to provide hospitals for the sick.
- 1902 Midwives Act. Implemented Certified Midwives and registration to practice.
- 1907 Education Act set up School Health Services.
- 1911 National Insurance Act. National health insurance scheme introduced to "provide for insurance against loss of health and for prevention and cure of sickness". Compulsory weekly contributions from workers. Medical attention from GPs on local panels.
- 1918 Maternity and Child Welfare Act. Local authorities empowered to provide maternity homes and set basis for maternity and child welfare including health visitors.
- 1919 Nurses Act. Set structure for training and regulation of nurses.
- 1929 Local Government Act. Transferred responsibilities of Poor Law Guardians to counties and county borough and enabled them to provide general hospitals.
- 1946 National Health Service Act established NHS.

### Health and hygiene in the 19th century

Smallpox was endemic. From 1853 vaccination was compulsory. (Due to public opposition the law was repealed in 1909).

CUMBERWORTH .....	Mr. Thomas Downe, Skelmesthorpe	Shelley .....	1st Tuesday in each month.....	Halfpast 2 p.m.	Half-past 3 p.m.	At Jonathan Wood's, Armistige-row.
		Thurstonland .....	Ditto .....	One p.m. ....	Two p.m. ....	At Enock Walker's, Thurstonland.
		Shelley .....	Saturday .....	Ten a.m. ....	Eleven a.m. ....	At Mr. Josiah Townshead's School-room.
		Cumberworth and	Ditto .....	Twelve-noon ...	One p.m. ....	At the School-room, Cumberworth.
		Cumberworth-Half .....	Ditto .....	One p.m. ....	Two p.m. ....	At his Surgery, Skelmesthorpe

The required Vaccination arrangements for this Union being thus completed, as above set forth, and there being herewith no excuse for non-compliance with the provisions of the recent Statute, the Guardians trust the Public will readily avail themselves of such arrangements, and thereby prevent any compulsory means being adopted.

By order,  
C. S. FLOYD,  
Clerk to the Board of Guardians.

Albion-street, Huddersfield, October, 1853.

### The Public Health Act 1848

Local Boards of Health HAD to be set up in places where the death rate was above 23 per 1,000

#### Weaknesses

- responsibility was STILL optional and the Board met resistance to its orders.
- no measures were taken to ensure professionalism
- 1854: the Central Board was reduced to three members, with only ADVISORY powers



- the Central Board had few powers once a local Board was set up, and had no money
- the problem of public health was not made a ministerial responsibility

(<http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/p-health/phact.htm>)

## **Skelmanthorpe**

### **1854 Scarlet Fever in Skelmanthorpe**

"For many weeks past this village has been inflicted by the presence of scarlet fever, which has raged with almost unknown virulence and scattered death in a frightful manner in its onward progress. Already 20 out of such a small population have fallen victims to its malignant presence and we are sorry to say that there appears to be no sign of improvement. (*Huddersfield Chronicle*, 22nd July 1854)

In 1875 it became compulsory to appoint a Medical Officer of Health to report on sanitation and water supplies and the Artisans' Dwelling Act of the same year gave local boards powers to buy unfit houses and demolish them and to build suitable homes for artisans. (*Addy, J. "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974*) However, Skelmanthorpe Local Board appears to have been negligent or unwilling to copy out in full the reports of the medical officer of health before 1885. so the only reliable information are the odd entries in the minutes concerning nuisances.

In 1876 Skelmanthorpe joined with Shepley and Cumberworth to employ a Medical Officer of Health. He made reports, but the Board did not rush to implement his recommendations nor publish the reports. We know nothing about his first report of 1878 and we can only see that privies were to be removed and improved from the instructions given to the surveyor. (*Addy, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974*)

The birth rate was rising but so was infant mortality. In 1880, Thirteen children in Skelmanthorpe died under the age of one year and fifteen under the age of five years. One child drowned by falling into a liquid manure tank. The winter of 1885 was severe and 66 people died of whom 35 were children under the age of one year. (*Skelmanthorpe Local Board Minutes in Kirklees Archives*)

***Skelmanthorpe Medical Officer's Report for 1888.*** Sanitary condition of Skelmanthorpe greatly improved during the year. Condition of privies and ashpits overall improved.

- Death rate 20.1.
- Birth rate 31.1.
- 27 deaths in children under 5.

Most overall deaths caused by respiratory illnesses. No outbreaks of infectious diseases.

- 44 new cases of 'pauper' sickness (seems to be cholera).

### ***For 1889***

- Death rate = 18.9.
- Birth rate 34.9.
- 20 deaths in infants under 1 year of age - cause mostly "weakness" and premature births.
- Outbreak of typhoid at Park Gate. 7 people affected. Removed to Crossland Moor hospital where 2 died.

Apart from this, the district free of infectious diseases. 56 cases of "pauper sickness".

### ***For 1890***

Death rate 17.2.

Birth rate 27.2.

- 14 children died under 1 year of age.
- No infectious diseases.
- 36 cases of "pauper sickness".

### ***For 1891***

- Schools to be closed for 2 weeks owing to the outbreak of measles and whooping cough. 1892 was a bad year for infectious diseases. Influenza was rampant as were measles and whooping cough.
- 49 children died of whom 12 were less than 1 year old and 20 were less than 2 years old
- Also typhoid in the district.
- All the drains to be flushed and disinfected.
- Town Board now giving planning permissions for new houses, etc. Had to be connected to drains.
- Board rented a field to be used as a recreation ground.

### **For 1892**

- letting recreation ground for Feast week for £6.
- Medical Officer's report received: Nuisances have abated.
- Sink pipes still not disconnected from drains.
- Privies and ash pits satisfactory, but ash not collected regularly and ash pits not covered.
- Very detailed report as to houses and places with problems of rubbish and nuisances.
- Older houses very bad with poor ventilation and 2 had been condemned.
- HEALTH very bad in early part of the year: flu, whooping cough, measles were present causing several deaths. Deaths numbered 90.
- Death rate of 26.5 per 1000. (Last year 54 with rate of 17.2). 49 of the deaths were children under 5 with 22 for children under 1.  
The cause of this high infant mortality was measles and whooping cough. 20 deaths people over 60 years of age.
- 1 woman died of typhoid.

Population increased from 3120 to 3392 with 87 births registered.

- Birth rate is 25.6 last year it was 27.2.
- Clerk instructed to get tenders for emptying of ashpits and privies.

### **For 1892**

Letter from Kirkbuton Local Board asking if they would cooperate with others to set up an isolation hospital in Kirkburton covering Kirkburton, Shelley, Flockton, Emley and Shelley. Said that they were not willing to combine with boards mentioned, but on 3 Aug 1892 a committee set up to look at costs of being involved with isolation hospital. Agreed to combine with Shelley and Cumberworth to set up an isolation hospital at premises in Shelley Woodhouse.

### **For 1893**

- Ordered closing of lodging house for 3 months because of prevalence of smallpox.
- Isolation hospital plans adjourned until further pressure from medical officers, county council, etc.

### **For 1893**

- Deaths 50, rate 14.7.
- 83 births, birth rate 24.4.
- Deaths 11 children under 5.

### **(Skelmanthorpe Local Board Minutes in Kirklees Archives)**

#### **Emley**

The appointment of a public officer of health was undertaken in February 1874, when Dr John Douse, surgeon of Skelmanthorpe, was appointed at £7.10s per year by the Local Board. At the same time Thomas Silverwood was appointed as nuisance inspector although it would appear that he had been undertaking these duties before records began. The sanitary conditions in Emley were alarming with cottages with no back door conveniences so that contents fouled the highway. A serious outbreak of scarlet fever in May 1880 led to several orders to remove and repair privies. The death rate was the highest for three years due to 43 cases of scarlet fever in the first three months when seven died. Numbered in the deaths were 12 children under 5 and 6 over 60. The real health hazard was at Warburton where there were no drains and the scarlet fever epidemic

had been concentrated. The Local Government Board in London wanted to know what Emley Board intended to do about the Warburton drains. The Board decided to take legal advice since the residents of Warburton said that they would object to paying for any drains out of the rates.

1881 saw an outbreak of typhoid fever in Emley and the police constable called the Board's attention to the large number of typhoid cases at a concentration of houses where "the epidemic was fearful caused by bad sanitation and any death would be the responsibility of the Board". The privies and ashpits of the affected houses were ordered to be cleaned out and all villagers were ordered to clean out all their privies and the Surveyor was to do this task for all who refused to empty their own. By January 1882 plans were completed for the draining of Warburton and extending a drain to the main sewer and the sewage from the houses on Upper Lane which had formerly ran onto the road was now piped into the drain. By 1883 conditions in Warburton were much improved but a new drain in Church Street was needed where many houses had no privies. The Church Street drain remained in every medical officer's report until 1892 when the Board resolved to adopt a complete new drainage system. By this time the new drainage at Warburton was proving ineffective and the gates were choked. Finally in October 1894 the new sewage scheme was accepted linking to five acres of land granted by the Saville Estate as a sewage farm.

### ***Report of Medical Officer of Health on Emley year ending Dec. 31st 1904***

Emley population in 1904 was 1445

Birth rate was 35.9, higher than average.

Death rate was 15.0 which is less than average. 10 deaths due to respiratory affections.

Infant mortality rate was 77. Health of children better this year largely due to the absence of epidemic affections such as whooping cough and mumps which caused widespread sickness in 1903. One case of smallpox occurred during the year but since the subject had been vaccinated in infancy the attack was mild and the attendants immediately re-vaccinated and no wider outbreak occurred.

Note high infant mortality from 1894 to 1898 and in 1901.

### **TYPHOID EPIDEMIC AT DENBY DALE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The following details of have been kindly supplied by Dr. T. N. V. Potts, County Medical Officer, which show what serious consequences may result from drinking polluted water.

The first case was notified on the 17th September, 1932, and subsequently notifications were received during the following months of October and November.

The number of persons notified as suffering from Typhoid Fever were :

- Skelmanthorpe            3
- Denby Dale                64
- Clayton West            3
- Penistone                 1
- Other Areas               4
- *Total*                     75

As a result of the above outbreak, 12 people died.

A case of typhoid fever was notified on September 17 1932 and through a leaking land-drain that fed Square Wood reservoir the water became contaminated and a severe epidemic of typhoid broke out. In a community of 1400 people almost every house was affected either directly or indirectly. Within the space of a few weeks seventy-two people had contracted the disease, many of them extremely seriously. The patients were taken to the isolation hospitals at Kirkburton, Mill Hill, Penistone and Meltham. The daily press published regular bulletins giving the names in each of the hospitals and their condition.

By the end of the 19th Century Huddersfield had access to a wide range of health care services impressive when set against what had been available at the beginning of the century when it had no hospital, and only a handful of surgeons and chemists' shops to service the medical needs of the inhabitants. During the century all of this changed. The number of doctors increased rapidly, to over thirty by the end of the century. The Huddersfield Infirmary was outstanding; its presence a memorial to Victorian philanthropy and it made a major contribution to the medical relief of the town's inhabitants. Supplementing the work of the Infirmary were a variety of smaller charities providing nursing and convalescent care; assistance to the blind, deaf and dumb, support to lying in mothers and home visiting.

### **Poor Law Medical Services**

The very poor had no other resort when taken ill but to turn to the Poor Law. Under this regime they fared badly but better under the Old Poor Law when relief was organised on the basis of local townships, regulated by the overseers of the poor than they did after the New Poor Law of 1834. Medical relief was given on a very small scale yet there is evidence to suggest that it was administered in individual cases with some flexibility and generosity. The parish would, in addition to out-relief, pay the medical bills of paupers, or contract doctors would be employed. Nursing was also organised usually undertaken by poor parish women. Overseers employed local healers and made arrangements with friendly societies for relief, and a few also paid subscriptions to local dispensaries and Huddersfield Infirmary.

After the passing of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, which reorganized small townships into large Unions, governed by the Boards of Guardians, the old methods of providing medical relief disappeared. The employment of local healers, the payment of friendly society subscriptions, and instances of individual generosity to the sick were cut at a stroke. The Huddersfield Union created in 1837 and covering thirty-two townships and a population of 100,000 meant that any personal contact such had existed between pauper and overseer under the old Poor Law was inconceivable. Medical relief became regimented and inflexible.

Most sick paupers continued to be treated in their own home - perhaps luckily for them as conditions in the Union workhouse were appalling. (**1857 Commission report**) Medical treatment under the new regime was provided by Poor Law medical officers, often well-qualified and well-meaning, but badly paid and over-worked. Relations between the Guardians and their medical employees were acrimonious and this led to a rapid turnover of medical officers and a large number of vacancies. The pressures on the medical officers meant that treatment was sometimes inadequate and occasionally negligent.

Cost-cutting was the most outstanding feature of the New Poor Law - efforts were directed at keeping the burden of the ratepayer to a minimum. The Guardians refused, despite directives from the Poor Law Board in London, to provide better workhouse accommodation and to improve medical officers' salaries and conditions and to "treat the very poor, the weak, the old and unfortunate with more harmony." As late as 1863 the medical expenses for the Huddersfield township amounted to only 1d per head of the population or 1.6% of the total Poor Law expenditure.

***Health Care in Nineteenth Century Huddersfield, Marland, Hilary, (in Huddersfield a Most Handsome Town", Hilary Haigh, 1992)***

## Lighting

By the mid 19th Century a source for lighting to the mills, streets and houses was needed. There was an unwritten law among weavers that no weaving by artificial light should take place before Barnsley Fair (October 11th) and after Candlemas Day (February 2nd)

### Skelmanthorpe

The Skelmanthorpe Gas Company was incorporated in January 1859 and a Gas works was built in 1865 to manufacture gas from coal and supply streets, shops, houses, mills and other buildings with gaslight in the town and neighbourhood of Skelmanthorpe, and also to sell coke and bye-products. The capital of the company was £1500 in £1 shares. The subscribers were all Skelmanthorpe residents. The friendly societies also invested money in the company, especially the Golden Fleece and the Weavers' Glory. The gas works was established in Marsden Street where they remained until they were closed after nationalisation in 1950. In 1872 the annual production of gas was given as 1,292,400 cubic feet at a cost of £376.19.0d. The expansion of street lighting and the demand for artificial light in mills led to the supply of a reliable product easily and cheaply available so that by the latter decades of the 19th Century, Skelmanthorpe was known as the best illuminated village in the area. (**Ady, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974**)

The Local Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1865 ordered that a new survey of the rateable value of Skelmanthorpe be carried out including Cumberworth and Cumberworth Half. They ordered that the district rate of 5d in the pound be adopted for the purpose of lighting the district and other improvements and ordered 12 new lamps and 12 lampposts to be placed in Skelmanthorpe. Ordered a notice for a lamp lighter to light and douse these lights to be advertised. By October 1867 there were two lamplighters, one for Skelmanthorpe upper, and one for Skelmanthorpe lower; each on 5 shillings per week - George Hampshire and John Braithwaite were appointed. From October to March, **when no full moon**, Skelmanthorpe lamps to be lit from dusk until 10 pm and 12 pm on Saturdays.

In March 1927 Skelmanthorpe UDC ordered that 47 electric street lights were to be installed in the Skelmanthorpe and 37 in Scissett in 1928.

### **Emley**

The surrounding authorities were in a position to light the streets at a fairly early stage in their development due to the fact that gas works had been built by private companies. Emley had no gas works, and so remained a village without street lighting in any form until August 1895 when some lighting was provided by oil lamps. Supply of gas always proved expensive and difficult so electricity began to be thought of for use in 1909 but the war intervened and work was not restarted until 1925. The first street lighting in the village by electricity was on September 16 1926 and the whole scheme completed in 1931. (**Ady, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974**)

# Sanitation

## General Issues

Most housing in the first half of the 19th century lacked drainage, sewerage and a regular water supply. Lavatories (or privies) were usually outside, in the courtyards and alleys, and emptied into cesspits. Human waste collected in these cesspits that were, from time to time, cleaned out by 'night-soil men'. They piled what they had collected in huge dunghills and then sold it on to local farmers at a price per tonne. Some houses had their own privies. These were ash privies where, instead of flushing, the users covered the contents with ash. Some middle-class houses had flushing lavatories, but these flushed either into a cesspit in the cellar or into a closed sewer. These, as with the ash privies, had to be physically emptied.

Water was needed for washing, cooking and drinking; not only was water in short supply but it was expensive. Its supply, too, was controlled by vested interests in the form of private water companies. Water companies sometimes took their water from deep, natural underground reservoirs and springs, but more usually from local rivers. The middle classes had water piped to their houses and, because the supply was frequently irregular and uncertain, stored it in huge cisterns so that they could, quite literally, have water on tap. The poorer areas of towns and cities had to make do with standpipes, and the inhabitants queued with buckets and saucepans to buy what they could afford when the water company turned on the supply. People too poor to buy water took what they could from local wells and streams.

The first duty of any local Board was to ensure the health of the residents (statutory duty under 1858 Public Health Act) and sanitation - or lack of it - was very important. Many houses did not have access to clean water or drains, effluent was often discharged into the street or local streams so they had to do something about it.

## Skelmanthorpe

Skelmanthorpe Local Board: Autumn 1869 began to install drains.

1870 began to inspect and deal with "nuisances" (blocked drains, uncleared privies, etc.)

1872 now have Nuisance Inspector reporting to the Local Board

In 1874 a new well was ordered to be sunk at Dale Street and bye-laws were made concerning the use of water and it became an offence to "pollute the water by washing dogs or other animals or to throw material into the well."

In 1876 Skelmanthorpe joined with Shepley and Cumberworth to employ a Medical Officer of Health. He made reports on sanitation, but the Board did not rush to implement his recommendations.

A government inspector, Dr. Gressewell stated in 1887 that the old sewers in Skelmanthorpe were nothing but long cesspools and that house drains were to be connected to trapped gullies and not direct to the drain. The medical officer told the Board that they must accept the inspector's report but in May 1887 the Board replied to the effect that sewage and drainage were both effective. The area was a hilly one and the fall good. The Board will install trapped gullies but stated that "it is not possible in rural areas to carry out the elaborate arrangements suitable for towns." In 1887 child deaths under 5 rose to 41.

A move was made to provide town water in 1875 when Wakefield were approached for supplies but these discussions proved fruitless so in 1879 the Board decided to approach Dewsbury Water Works for terms to supply water from Cliff Hill. Clayton West were asked if they would join, but they refused. An analysis of the water sources was taken. This showed that the water at Pond End (Pilling Lane), Skelmanthorpe was very hard, but pure, while that at Tinker Well in Elm Street was polluted to a serious degree. Water from Ewart's borehole at Scissett was objectionable to drink and that from the old pump in Scissett market place was soft spa water but safe to drink.

Pond End pump yielded 5040 gallons a day but Ewart's borehole was privately owned and Scissett pump belonged to the building company but since the ratepayers had been using it freely for 21 years it appeared that ownership had passed to the Board.

The responsibility for supplying the town's water was placed on a Waterworks Board and finance was raised by local loans from investors in the Huddersfield and Holmfirth area; several of whom lent as much as £4000 at 4% interest for 30 years. It wasn't until December 1881 that, following an agreement by the Waterworks Board with Dewsbury Water Works, 7000 yards of mains service pipes were to be laid; 60,000 gallons of water were to be supplied daily, at 10d per 1000 gallons, and a reservoir was to be constructed to hold 800,000 gallons.

By July 1883 the mains were laid and there was sufficient water in the reservoir to test the system. Construction of the Skelmanthorpe reservoir, on Ponker Hill, had started in 1882.

On 18th July 1883 orders were issued to those persons who had not installed town water to do so in one month. Even so, people continued to draw water from the pumps and in 1889 there was typhoid in King Street due to persons using the pump there. (**Ady, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974**)

By 6 May 1891 Clayton West Local Board began purchasing water from Skelmanthorpe for £45 a year.

In Skelmanthorpe, on 7 Oct 1891, the pumps in Dale Bottom and Pond End were removed. The Board now had to respond directly to the County Council for its work on sewage disposal and purification of rivers.

Skelmanthorpe on 3 August 1892 adopted Sec 42 of Public Health Act for cleaning of privies and proposed to pay 18 people to clean those in their areas. They now have a joint inspector of nuisances with Shelley and Cumberworth at the insistence of County Council. (**Skelmanthorpe Local Board Minutes in Kirklees Archives**)

On 1 March 1893 Skelmanthorpe agreed to combine with Denby Dale, Clayton West and Cumberworth to employ an engineer to prepare a scheme of drainage for the four townships.

In 1898 Clayton West had been approached to see if they wished to join with Skelmanthorpe in a sewage scheme, but as usual, the former declined so that Skelmanthorpe had to construct its own plant at Langley's. By 1898 agreement had instead been reached with Denby Dale for the latter to install a sewage plant at Putting Hill and the sewage plant at Langley was designed to take effluent from lower Putting Hill and served Scissett, Busker Lane, Parkgate and Skelmanthorpe. Clayton West kept complaining about the smell from this works over the years!

## **Emley**

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1881 saw an outbreak of typhoid fever in Emley and the police constable called the Board's attention to the large number of typhoid cases at a concentration of houses where "the epidemic was fearful caused by bad sanitation and any death would be the responsibility of the Board". Finally in October 1894 a new sewage scheme was accepted linking to five acres of land granted by the Saville Estate as a sewage farm.

The other problem in Emley was that of domestic water supplies. There are many references to wells and their maintenance in the Board minutes. The medical officer reported in 1881 that the

water supply in Warburton was entirely from wells and none of the water was fit for human consumption since the contents of the drains soaked into the ground and percolated to the wells. This was the cause of much of the illness in that area.

The real problem was to obtain a source of supply for the town pump. The first steps were taken in August 1881 at a ratepayers' meeting when it was decided to ask if Emley could join Flockton in taking supplies from Dewsbury water board. Two years later the mains were not laid and Huddersfield Corporation decided to offer water at a cheaper cost with no maintenance needs. The Council notified Dewsbury water board that the scheme with Flockton had fallen through and an agreement had been made with Huddersfield. It was not until the eve of the First World War that Emley was provided with a complete town water system. (**Ady, J. (ed) "History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974**)

### **Urine**

Urine, in the northern textile areas, was once a valuable commodity, not to be disposed of lightly. From earliest days the woollen industry had need of a strong alkaline substance for the finishing process, the only source of which, until the early nineteenth century, was stale urine. This nauseous liquid, known as 'wesh' or 'weeing' was preserved by hand loom weavers for scouring their cloth or collected and stored for sale to the local fulling mills. In the early 1800s the going rate was a penny per bucket and as an adult produced an average of two to three pints a day a family of eight or ten could, by the sale of their combined output, supplement their income by up to a shilling a week. Then, in 1830, Read Holliday perfected a method of distilling ammonia from the residual ammoniacal liquors of the local gas works and this new, cheap and hygienic scouring agent was welcomed by the textile industry. From that time the bottom fell out of the market for weeing although it continued to be used by one or two of our local mills until the 1930s.



## Roads

Maps from the 1830s and 1840s show the general layout of the local village roads to be much as they are now (with exception of later housing developments.). The main connecting roads to Huddersfield, Wakefield and Barnsley were also basically as now.

Each parish was required under the Tudor law of 1555 to appoint a Surveyor of the Highways. The surveyor of the highways had to compel every householder to work six days in the year on the repair of roads free of charge. It was a burden many dodged by sending a horse and cart plus substitute whom the hirer paid. (**Ady, J. ed. *Denby Dale Urban District***). This system was abolished by the Highways Act of 1835.

The repair of roads was an annual problem and in most areas costs were high. The custom was to construct a stone stack in a local quarry, such as in Smithy Lane; burn the stone and then break it into small pieces to use for road repairs. In Emley costs were particularly high due to the length of roads and a relatively small population of rate payers.

In the early nineteenth century Turnpike roads began to be built to link major towns and in the 1830s a Turnpike was built from Wakefield to Denby Dale. Prior to this the old road from Clayton West to Wakefield ran from Guide Post in Clayton West down Back Lane through the mill yard and across the ford or over the pack horse bridge at Park Mill. From this point it went up Kiln Lane to Emley, down Woodhouse Lane across Bentley Springs and up the old road to Bretton, through Crigglestone to Wakefield. The Turnpike was a completely new route and linked Wakefield with Denby Dale, Shepley, Holmfirth and over Greenfield to Manchester. Turnpikes were funded by Tolls and local Toll bars were established at Bretton, Park Mill, Highbridge and Denby Dale Catch Bar

### Roads -Skelmanthorpe

In 1800 an Enclosure Act was passed to divide the commons of Skelmanthorpe. Jonathon Teale was appointed commissioner to allocate the lands and to make provision for roads, especially the ones over the common to Shelley and Cumberworth, in addition to what is now Station Road to Emley (created in 1273 by license from the King to the Fitzwilliams across their estate). He also had to provide quarries for stone for road making and construct drains. One quarry was at the site of Garrett House Row; a second at the junction of Wood Street and Station Road. (**Ady, J. (ed) *"History of Denby Dale Urban District", 1974***)

Although 1840 maps show the road layouts as now, it is thought that Elm street leading onto Pilling lane was until the late 1700s, the main route through the village. At some stage Commercial road became the main road but the date of this has not been established. Commercial road had previously been known as Windmill Lane and called "Back Lane" until the 1830s, which indicates that it was a lesser route than Elm Street. It led into Highbridge Lane which joined the Wakefield to Denby Dale Turnpike when that was built in the 1830s. Busker Lane was very narrow and nearly blocked by houses not taken down until 1928. Clarence Bradbury, on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in August 1971, told the Huddersfield Examiner that when he opened his first premises on Commercial Road it was a rough lane with the only building a pub called the "Old Guys" and Pilling Lane was the main road. When he first started selling petrol at pumps opposite his shop it cost 71/2d (old pennies) per gallon.

In 1863 the Skelmanthorpe Local Board began to improve the roads but the cost of obtaining stone or blast furnace slag was high.

Notes from first Board Meetings: (***Kirklees Archives***)

- In April 1863 the Board allocated 50 tons to resurface Scissett market place; 20 tons to the road near William Carter's house; 15 tons to Highbridge Lane; a further 15 tons to High-

bridge Toll House and 103 yards of stone were burnt to repair Parkgate Road (modern Station Road). A disused quarry, Nelly Park, was offered for sale a year later for a minimum of £130 to help offset the cost of road repairs.

- Sub Committee of John Jebson, Isaac Armitage and Joseph Field to manage a road survey.
- Ordered stone to be bought from Smithy Lane Quarry and taken to roads needing repair.
- Highway rate account opened with £350 8s 10d

“ON TUESDAY NEXT, a NEW OMNIBUS will COMMENCE RUNNING between CLAYTON WEST and HUDDERSFIELD, leaving Clayton-West at a quarter before eight o'clock, a.m., and three o'clock, p.m., by way of Skelmanthorpe and Kirkburton, arriving at the White Swan and Rose and Crown, Kirkgate, Huddersfield, at a quarter past nine o'clock, in time for trains to Leeds, Manchester, Bradford, Halifax, &c., and leaving the White Swan and Rose and Crown, Huddersfield, at ten o'clock, a.m., and a quarter before five o'clock, p.m., after the arrival of Trains from Manchester, Bradford, Halifax. Leeds.” ***Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 02 October 1852***

## Friendly Societies

Friendly Societies evolved to offer insurance against sickness, unemployment and death. Most villages had their own Societies. The assistance to sick members generally took two forms. Firstly a weekly benefit was paid to those too sick to follow their usual employment. Once the illness had been confirmed by a society official or approved witness, members would become entitled to a benefit of something in the region of 10s a week. After several months if members were declared permanently incapacitated, the benefit would be reduced. Secondly, a small number of societies provided medical assistance by a club doctor. Medical assistance was usually confined to visiting and medicines, but in the second half of the century a few societies paid subscriptions to Huddersfield Infirmary thus giving their members access to a wider range of treatments.

The fees for Friendly Society membership were usually 1 shilling a month, and, of course, not everyone could afford this, so limiting membership to the lower middle classes and better paid working classes i.e. tradesmen and shopkeepers. However, the overseers of the Poor Law often paid subscriptions to Friendly Societies on behalf of paupers, so relieving themselves of the burden of having to provide financial or medical assistance. Membership excluded "high risk" categories and was restricted to those aged between 18-40 years of age, who, at the time of enrolment, were in good health. Relief was restricted to the member only, not to dependents, and benefits were denied if the illness had been brought about by the member's own carelessness, misconduct, frequenting public or gaming houses, or taking violent exercise or playing football. Most forms of sickness dealt with by Friendly Societies were of the long term or chronic, such as rheumatism, bowel disorders, chest or heart complaints.

At the time when medical science had little to offer, friendly societies offered valuable relief and the financial assistance provided kept a lot of poor families out of the work house.

However, because of the costs involved in treating the sick and providing financial assistance, coupled with an ageing membership, many Friendly Societies had collapsed by the end of the century. **'Health Care in Nineteenth Century Huddersfield', Marland, Hilary, (in Huddersfield a Most Handsome Town", Hilary Haigh, 1992)**

### Skelmanthorpe Industrial and Co-operative Provident Society

Skelmanthorpe Co-op was founded in February 1834 under the name Skelmanthorpe Co-operative Trading Friendly Society operating out of property at Shaw Croft. The rules of the organisation were established in February 1834 and were revised and agreed at the house of John Lawton in Skelmanthorpe on 28 June 1838 by the Chairman, Benjamin Stead and a committee consisting of William Wadsworth, Abel Wadsworth, George Mathews, Samuel Booth, James Newton, David Peel, George Senior, Joseph Bates and John Firth. Edward Gawthorpe was the secretary. Besides trade in food stuffs and the like, the Co-op was a friendly society, whose members paid subscriptions in order to take advantage in times of hardship such as sickness or death.

*"The object of this society shall be to raise from time to time by subscriptions amongst the members thereof, or by voluntary contributions, or donations, or loans, or trading, and to find employment, educate, and instruct all its members, which subscriptions, etc., shall be applied as follows, first, for relief in sickness, and find employment for all its members, or the purchase or rental of lands whereon to erect suitable dwellings or other buildings, or for the purpose or rental of dwellings or other buildings where in the members shall by united labour support each other, under every vicissitude, including the establishment of schools for children, or any other purpose not unlawful, by these and every other means consistent with honesty and impartial justice to arrange the powers of production, distribution, consumption, and education, in order to produce among the members feelings of pure charity, and social affection for each other, and practically plant the standard of peace and good will on earth towards all men".*

***('Preamble to rules of Skelmanthorpe Co-operative Trading Friendly Society, established February 1834. " H. Lawson, Centenary Souvenir 1834-1934: Skelmanthorpe Industrial and Co-operative Provident Society Ltd., (Manchester, 1934) p 15. )***

The sick Brief of the Skelmanthorpe Society also displayed the type of society these pioneers were trying to establish: *"That as this brief is established for the mutual benefit of all its members in sickness and in case of accident and to lighten the bed of affliction until all the members of the Co-operative Friendly Society become as one family, having but one interest and living in community then the cause for separate funds will Cease"* **(Rule One. Lawson, op. cit. ,p 22.)**

This society was clearly intended to be more than a co-operative store. It embraced all the early aspirations of co-operators, it transcended the mere accumulation of capital, it would emancipate them from the old immoral world and give them hope for the future. These aspirations were shared by many other societies in Yorkshire,.

Of over forty co-operative societies were formed in Yorkshire during the pre-Rochdale period, the three survivors, Meltham Mills, Ripponden and Skelmanthorpe were all societies that, in the main concentrated all their efforts into retailing rather than production, even though it is evident that Ripponden and Skelmanthorpe had envisaged in their rules that their ultimate aim would be community. Meltham Mills was established in 1827, making it the oldest recorded society in Yorkshire. However, it remained in obscurity for nearly 50 years. Indeed the Editor of the Co-operative News recalled that when analysing a number of balance sheets for 1870, he was "no little startled" to find that a co-operative society had, for 43 years, existed at Meltham Mills and which had divided profits amongst all members since its formation.

The objectives that the Rochdale Pioneers set out in their rules were not new. Societies like Skelmanthorpe had published their aims ten years before, which were very similar to the Rochdale objectives.

***("The Origins and Development of the Retail Co-operative Movement in Yorkshire during the Nineteenth Century", John Butler, PhD Thesis, University of York, July 1986)***

On 8 April 1886 the Skelmanthorpe Society became a member of the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS). In October 1895 it was resolved to build a new shop and building began in March 1896. The old shop was rented out to the Liberal Club for £7 per year. On 5 May 1898 a wooden shop was purchased to be used as a cobbler's shop. In 1909 the Liberal Club moved out of the old premises and these were converted into a butcher's shop with hardware and crockery upstairs.

The Society continued to progress steadily and when they celebrated its centenary in 1934 they had 1062 members. By 1967 the Society had 1582 members. President J. Freakley, Vice President, A. Lodge, Secretary and Manager, H. Blackburn, Directors, J. Tyas, G.Hinchliffe, G. Barraclough, E. Smith, F. Turton, W. Dyson, H. Lawton, In 1968 the Society transferred to Barnsley British Co-operative Society, who transferred its engagements to the Co-operative Retail Services in 1971. Source: ***'Skelmanthorpe Industrial and Co-operative Provident Society Limited Centenary Souvenir 1834-1934', by H Lawton (1934).***

*"On Monday last 200 persons sat down at a tea party given in connection with the Skelmanthorpe Industrial Co-operative Society, Limited. It was held in the large room of the Mechanics' Institute, and followed by a public meeting, which was presided over by Mr. T. G. Botterill. During the evening Mr. Sam Wimpenny, of Holmfirth, gave a practical address upon co-operation, and the Scissett Glee Party rendered various selections of music in a creditable manner. The proceedings of the evening passed off most agreeably."* **(Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 01 April 1876)**

The Co-operative used to hold annual "Treats" for the village children which were very well attended and included games and competition such as the "annual spoon-cleaning competition".

Records created by Skelmanthorpe Industrial and Co-operative Provident Society including a report and balance sheet are held at the **National Co-operative Archive, Reference GB 1499 NCRS/2/41** <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb1499-ncrs/ncrs/2/41>

The early records of the society had, by 1934, disappeared, thus the oldest records available for use dated from March 1881. Extracts from the Minutes given in **Chris Heath, "Denby and District III", Wharnccliffe Books, 2006, pages 95ff.**

The Co-operative was one of many friendly societies that flourished in Skelmanthorpe.

#### **Skelmanthorpe Friendly Societies in 19th Century:**

- Independent Order of Rechabites, met in Primitive Methodists Schoolroom and Zion Chapel. (founded in Salford in 1835)
- Weavers' Glory Lodge, Oddfellows, opened 1827, rules registered 1853, The Globe Inn
- Independent Order of Foresters, Rules 1872
- Sons of Temperance, later Good Templars, 1842
- Hill of Glory Lodge, Ancient Order of Golden Fleece, 1869, Commercial Inn
- Royal Order of Buffaloes Buffalo Club but not sure of dates.
- Skelmanthorpe Co-operative Trading Friendly Society, started 1827, registered 1834.
- Loyal Order of Ancient Shepherds, 1827 (active in Skelmanthorpe as Good Shepherds and Good Shepherdesses, not sure of dates.
- Skelmanthorpe Child's Funeral Society, was a contribution society started as part of the Co-operative Society in 1858 to pay for funerals of children in the village, wound up 1955 due to declining membership and lack of funds.
- Skelmanthorpe Friendly Society. The Skelmanthorpe Friendly Society was a friendly society formed in 1813. By 1885, the society had 62 members and £299 in receipts, and was meeting at the Old School Room in Skelmanthorpe. (**Reports of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, 1886**).

The Golden Fleece, the Weavers' Glory Lodge (the local branch of the Oddfellows Society), the Independent order of Rechabites and the Good Templars were not only involved with funding of the Gas Works and the Co-operative Society but also supplied funds for building houses and mortgages for buying them. The weavers' cottages on Strike Lane, for example, were built with money loaned by the Golden Fleece Friendly Society in 1822:

Golden Fleece Friendly Soc

Small cottages built by Land Club.

GRID REF:1-7 Strike Lane Skelmanthorpe

REF: **Workers Housing in W. Yorkshire.**

Clipped on 14-July-2017, 4:17 PM from "**Utopian Yorkshire**"

Whilst the accounts for the Weavers' Glory Lodge showed £1200 lent out in mortgages in 1895. (**Weavers' Glory Lodge, Accounts 1894-95**)

In 1863 there was an admission fee to the Weavers' Glory Lodge based on age rising from 12s at 18 to £4 10s at 36, and then a membership subscription of 3d per week. (**Laws for the Government of the Weavers' Glory Lodge, Skelmanthorpe, 1863**). The Lodge showed activity in 1902 which included £1400 lent to the School Board, £400 lent to the Working Men's Club (Mechanics Institute), £500 lent to the Gas Board and £630 lent to Skelmanthorpe chapels. Over 100 members received sick pay from the Lodge during that year. At the time they had over 450 active, paying members. (**Weavers' Glory Lodge, Audit, 1902**).

Friendly societies were designed to help members to cope with the illness, death or unemployment of a household's breadwinner. Each month members, mostly skilled men, paid into the society, often at a meeting in a pub and in return payments from the pooled funds were made to ill members and to members' widows. The societies also developed myths and rituals (including funeral rites) and provided regalia, badges, certificates, charitable activities, parades, communal singing and feasting. They were often linked to the beginnings of trade union activity and the government regulated them from 1790 as they saw them helping to finance strike activity. The Manchester union

of Oddfellows and the Salford Union of Rechabites for example formed the Manchester and Salford Trades Council which was the forerunner of the Trades Union Congress.

While these activities were sometimes presented as extravagant, subversive or financially unsound, they helped the societies to be seen as trustworthy and beneficial by potential members, members and patrons. The societies were embedded in Victorian and Edwardian society. Estimates vary but something like 80% of male workers were members at one time or another and there were between 6.3 and 9.5 million members in 1910.

Friendly Societies also helped members to travel to other towns and countries. A system of passwords and cards enabled a member to be provided with a night's lodging while seeking work in another location. This support for the unemployed regulated the supply of skilled labour and enabled men to travel. Information was passed around and potential blacklegs could be dispersed in times of industrial dispute. They might also look forward to later life. After marching beneath banners to hear, sometimes defiant graveside orations, a member could imagine his own well-attended funeral (some societies fined members who did not attend the funeral of a brother). He could look beyond it to when his grieving widow would benefit from the support of his respectful brothers.

By 1913 the larger national and international ones had acquired vast funds which enabled them to provide for members through epidemics or periods of unemployment. Although there were dishonest members, divisions, disputes and local difficulties, the system of quasi-autonomous branches enabled men both to rely on local men whom they knew, and if necessary call upon thousands across the globe. Many of these societies, despite the word 'independent' which appeared in the names of several of them, attracted the support of wealthy local patrons. These societies were not only for respectable working men, they crossed class boundaries and, by 1913, many had women members as well.

The survival of the societies was based on continual renewal of membership. The younger, healthier members' payments often went to the older members. In addition, those who were expelled or who left having made payments but who were unable to sustain further payments, did not get their money back. This money also swelled the societies' funds. In the 1890s one in eight Oddfellows lapsed within a five-year period. Another estimate indicated that half of all members lapsed. By 1913 members were dying at a significant older age than half a century earlier.

In 1913 the friendly societies had a reputation for respectability and efficiency. Many members enjoyed conviviality, ceremony and the balance of economic, material, ethical and educational considerations. The notion of increasing security through social networks remained popular. None the less, the societies were challenged by other ways of saving, medical advances, wider recreational and political opportunities, longer lives and greater social mobility. Those approved societies which administered national insurance on behalf of the state, after 1911, felt undermined and overwhelmed while those which were not approved faced closure.

By the time that the First World War was over, thousands of friendly society members were dead; many societies had closed and the remaining societies had been transformed. The cause of this change was not simply the war. As the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society and an Honorary member of the Oddfellows, Charles Loch, said, with pardonable exaggeration, "Lloyd George's National Health Insurance Act, 1911 for sickness benefit and Old Age Pensions Act of 1908, were, 'the death warrant of the friendly societies'".

***('The World in 1913: Friendly Societies', Daniel Weinbren, The Historian, Winter 2013)***

### **Oddfellows' Lodges**

The Oddfellows is fraternal society consisting of lodges and which traces its history to the first half of the 18th Century. In the North of England, the 19th Century saw a number of breakaways from the parent Grand United Order, including the Independent Order of Oddfellows (Manchester Unity)

in 1810, the Ancient Noble Order of Oddfellows (Bolton Unity) in 1832, and the National Independent Order of Oddfellows in 1846. The Huddersfield Unity district branch was affiliated to the Grand United Order and was reportedly formed in 1815.

As was the case with other Friendly Societies, each lodge had a name and a number. In some cases, the name was linked to the meeting place where the lodge was initially formed.

Local Lodges. The following is an attempt to compile a list of the lodges in the Huddersfield area, based on local newspaper reports:

Lodge No.	Lodge Name	Locality	Affiliation	Formed	Meeting Place
1691	Beulah	Shepley	Manchester Unity	1839	Stag's Head
128	Cawthorne	Clayton West	Manchester Unity	1824	Jolly Sailor
2416	Children of Israel	Holmfirth	Manchester Unity	1840	Royal Oak
1221	Friendly Refuge	Holmfirth	Manchester Grand United	1858	Shoulder of Mutton
589	Good Intent	Emley	Manchester Unity		Old House
813	Hill of Glory	Shelley	Manchester Unity	1834	Commercial Inn
3446	Lily of the Valley	Scissett	Manchester Unity	1843	Crown Inn
748	Lord Milton	Denby Dale	Manchester Unity	1833	White Hart
736	Mount Ararat	Holmfirth	Manchester Grand United	1845	Rising Sun
4960	Peaceful Home	Holmfirth	Manchester Unity	1861	Crown Hotel
728	Prosperous	Kirkburton	Manchester Grand United		Grapes
243	Robbie Burns	Clayton West	Manchester Unity	1833	Commercial Inn
4905	Spring of Industry	Kirkburton	Manchester Unity	1860	Spring Grove
	Valley of Prosperity	Kirkburton	Bolton Unity		Spring Grove
399	Union	Shepley	Bolton Unity		Black Bull
353	Weavers' Glory	Skelmanthorpe	Manchester Unity	1827	Globe Inn
447	Well of Salvation	Kirkburton	Manchester Unity	1830	Royal and George
172	Mary Campbell	Clayton West		1912	Oddfellows' Hall
47	Grace Darling	Scissett		1912	Parish Rooms

Extant Lodges. The following are the known surviving local lodges:

Victory (No. 395) now meets at Cowlersley, Huddersfield

Stranger's Refuge (No. 675) now meets at the Elephant & Castle Inn, Holmfirth

**Expulsions:** David Stephenson, aged 30, a weaver from Weavers' Glory Lodge, Skelmanthorpe for "divulging the secrets of the order". By 1902 the Weavers' Glory Lodge had 472 active, paid up members with an average age of 40 and an individual worth in contributions of £10. (***Weavers' Glory Lodge Audit, 1902***)

## **Rechabites and others - the Temperance friendly societies**

In the early nineteenth century many friendly societies were strongly associated with individual pubs or drinking dens, which in many towns were often the only venues where a substantial body (of men) could meet. The association of society with venue could be so strong that Foresters, Gardeners, Carters and others are still remembered in some public house names. The proprietors of public houses organised welfare by 'passing the hat'. In time members paid a regular subscription in return for welfare protection. From these clubs developed the affiliated orders - Oddfellows, Buffaloes, Foresters, Shepherds, Druids and others.

However, as ideas about temperance spread through the United Kingdom in the 19th century, some activists saw that there was an advantage in linking temperance with mutual aid. Subscriptions could be lower when the effects of alcohol were removed from the benefit equation.

### **Independent Order of Rechabites, Temperance Friendly Society**

(Society records 1873-1974, including Roll of Honour for 1914-1920 are in Kirklees Archives).

The Independent Order of Rechabites [Salford Unity] is a Friendly Society whose members also take a pledge of abstinence from intoxicating liquors. It was founded in 1835 and tended to be closely associated with churches, particularly Non-Conformist churches. Its branches were known as *tents*. **Hope of Skelmanthorpe Tent** [number 267] was instituted in 1874 and registered in 1886. It was in the Huddersfield and Halifax Rechabite District [number 70] at first, but by the 1960s had come to be in the Bradford District [number 20]. Tent meetings were held at first at Helliwell's shop in Queen Street. Later they were held in Skelmanthorpe Wesleyan Reform Church, and then they moved to the Primitive Methodist Church in Pilling Lane where they remained. On the 1887 tent return their trustees were listed as William Helliwell, John Lodge and Albert Turton. The Tent had a Juvenile Tent with weekly activities held in the Primitive Methodist Sunday School Kitchen. By 1910 Skelmanthorpe had 200 juvenile and adult members.

**"I HEREBY DECLARE that I will abstain from all Intoxicating Liquors, all Medicated, British and Foreign Fermented Wines, except in religious ordinances, or when prescribed and furnished by a legally qualified medical practitioner during sickness which renders me incapable of following any employment. I will not give nor offer them to others; I will not engage in the traffic of them; but in all possible ways will discountenance the use, manufacture and sale of them; and to the utmost of my power I will endeavour to spread the principles of Abstinence from all Intoxicating Liquors."**

***Rechabite pledge on membership application of the 1920s.***

**Charity Tent, Emley** [number 1183] was instituted in 1872 and registered in 1884, and was in the Bradford District [number 20] of the Rechabites. Tent meetings were held at the Primitive Methodist Church in Emley. Both tents also had juvenile sections in which children and teenagers could be enrolled.

***Kirklees Archive contains the following sources:***

***The Hope of Skelmanthorpe declaration book, KC/394***

***Publications of the Order of Rechabites, KC/664/6/5***

By the end of the 19th century many other bodies offered friendly society benefits in a temperance environment. The Independent Order of Good Templars arrived in Scotland from America in 1869. It was a total abstinence movement for the whole family. Other organisations with a branch structure simply propagated the temperance message in an atmosphere of mutual support. The British Women's Temperance Association was formed in England in 1876.



## Examples of local Friendly Society Events

"The members of the **Weavers' Glory Lodge** of the Independent Order of Oddfellows. M.U. held their annual dinner on Monday at Skelmanthorpe. The lodge numbers are strong. To meet the convenience of such a large number dinners were provided by the Three Horse Shoes and the Commercial Inn, besides the "Old Globe Inn," where the Lodge is held. They met at 1 p.m., and then walked in procession through the village, headed by the Skelmanthorpe brass band. Having completed the route they met at the Wesleyan Chapel, when an excellent sermon was preached by Mr. Joshua from Jeremiah, chap. 16th. After this service they proceeded to the respective places appointed for dinner." ***Barnsley Chronicle, 7 April 1877***

**SKELMANTHORPE. The Old Sick Club.** – "The members of the Old Sick Club, in Skelmanthorpe celebrated its anniversary on Monday. The members met at the old schoolroom in Skelmanthorpe, where about 150 of them formed a procession and proceeded to the Wesleyan Chapel, where a sermon was preached to them by Mr. J.L. Hobson, of Thurstonland. After service the company divided, one portion going to the house of Mr. Peel, the Horse Shoes Inn, and the other portion to Mr. Gaukroger's, the Globe Inn, where substantial dinners awaited them. The club is in a good financial position, being possessed of £900, or about £1 per member." (***Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 22 June 1867***)

**SKELMANTHORPE. Lodge Anniversary 1865.** – "On Saturday afternoon the members of the Golden Fleece, Skelmanthorpe, assembled at their lodge room, the Commercial Inn ; 170 formed in procession, and, headed by the Skelmanthorpe brass band, proceeded through the town to Scissett Church, where a sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Shackleton, the curate. The procession returned to the lodge room, and partook of a substantial dinner. The lodge was stated to be progressing satisfactorily, both members and friends increasing each year. The evening was spent in a convivial manner." (***Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 12 August 1865***)

**Foresters' Anniversaries.** – "On Saturday afternoon last, the Ancient Foresters, of Cumberworth, enjoyed their annual day with usual pleasure. The lodge held at the house of Mr. Thomas Kaye, the Foresters' Arms Inn, Lower Cumberworth, met at their lodge-room, where, to the number of between 70 and 80, formed a procession, and headed by the Kirkburton temperance brass band, proceeded to Denby church, where a discourse was delivered to them, by the Rev. Job Johnson, the incumbent. They then returned to the above inn where they thoroughly enjoyed a first rate dinner, and subsequently held a gala in the neighbourhood, which was well attended and created much excitement. The same afternoon the lodge of Foresters held at the Star Inn, Upper Cumberworth, met at their lodge, where 170 formed a procession and walked to Cumberworth church, preceded by the Holmfirth temperance band, where a sermon was preached by the Rev. Adamson, after which they returned to the lodge-room and partook of a substantial dinner, and after another short walk returned to the inn, and enjoyed a very pleasant evening with singing, reciting, etc."

**Oddfellows Anniversary.** – "The members of the Hope of Glory lodge, No. 813 of Independent Oddfellows, celebrated their 43rd anniversary at the house of Mr. Henry Gill, the Commercial Inn, Shelley, on Saturday afternoon, when 172 of the brotherhood partook of a first-rate substantial dinner, served in Mrs. Gill's best style. The after proceedings were presided over by Brother Wm. Barden. The report showed the lodge to be in a highly satisfactory state, each member, over 20, being worth nearly £10, according to the funds of the lodge." (***Huddersfield Chronicle, 17 Aug 1867***)

Friendly' Societies Act, 1896 Advertisement of Dissolution by Instrument.

"NOTICE is hereby given that the **WEAVERS GLORY LODGE FRIENDLY SOCIETY** Register No. 860 York held at Skelmanthorpe Liberal Club, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield in the county of York is dissolved by Instrument, registered at this office the 3rd day of December, 1946, unless within three months from the date of the Gazette in which this advertisement appears proceedings be commenced by a member or other person interested in or having any claim on the funds of the society to set aside such dissolution, and the same be set aside accordingly." Dated the 3rd day of

December 1946. (187) B. K. WHITE, Acting as Chief Registrar. (***THE LONDON GAZETTE, DECEMBER, 1946 6037***).

The website, "Huddersfield Exposed" [https://huddersfield.exposed/wiki/Friendly\\_Societies](https://huddersfield.exposed/wiki/Friendly_Societies) has a list and some details of 19th Century Friendly Societies in Huddersfield area.

## People's Lives

The writers of many local histories and recollections published in the late 19th Century described the tough living conditions people endured up to mid-century, when at last trade began to improve, wages rose and food prices lowered. This saw the effects of mains water, drainage and improved hygiene and also the cumulative effect of railways, gas lighting, the Factory and Education Acts, more efficient law and order provision, co-operative and temperance societies, chapels, mechanics institutes, clubs and societies all of which began to wipe out the 'old, rough way of life' including many traditional customs and pastimes. (**Jennifer Stead, *Changing the Pattern, Everyday Life 1800-1900 in "Huddersfield a Most Handsome Town", E.A. Hilary Haigh (ed.) Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992***)

At the beginning of the nineteenth Century the behaviour of the inhabitants of the moorland hamlets and villages surrounding Huddersfield was recorded as being 'savage and coarse', especially in those isolated areas away from the main routes of communication and civilising influences; never having felt subject to authority.

John Wesley's infamous remarks about the wildness of Huddersfield people are well known, but others commented as well, such as John Pawson in 1765 who described local people as being "heathens, ignorant and wicked to a degree", and a new Bradford doctor in 1825 commenting, "little removed above the brute creation". Even richer clothiers were crude and rough because they retained the vulgar manners of their low origins.

With no structured authority, it was not unknown for vigilante groups to be set up to combat drunkenness and disorder, e.g. Honley in 1805.

Strangers to a village would be likely to have stones and sods thrown at them, and new residents were attacked and harassed until they won acceptance by showing courage. A submissive attitude brought only scorn.

For a youth to court a girl from another village, or even from another part of his own village, was foolhardy and dangerous. He might be assaulted and forced to pay "pitcher money", i.e. he had to drop coins into his assailants' pitcher for their ale, and if he refused he would be met with great violence.

Running battles between villages were commonplace and at the bull-baiting held in Honley, up to the 1820s, local gangs regularly fought with those from Skelmanthorpe and Crosley.

Indeed, Skelmanthorpe had the reputation of being a village in which it was said that "a whole man did not exist at that time, having lost fingers, ears noses ....." (Mary Jagger, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Village+life+Skelmanthorpe.-a0144331535>) owing to their love of personal warfare. The men were notorious for their love of "lug biting" and "shin poisoning". No wake or feast was thought to be complete unless the men had been involved in personal combat.

### Appearance

Up until 1850 men and master shared the same speech and even though the master was better off, his manner of dress was little better than his workman's. Even Sunday best consisted of clogs and ill fitting clothes of "fustian" i.e. thick, hard wearing twilled cloth. Women wore long shawls worn over their heads, instead of bonnets. Men went unshaven during the week. People were, generally, thin and under nourished, often with missing teeth and pock marked faces due to small pox.

Many men and women took snuff or smoked long clay pipes. Men's clogs had thick iron plates on their sides as well as iron "skillets" on the soles, and clean clogs or working trousers were regarded scornfully by fellow workers and quickly roughed up.

By the 1880's cleanliness was more favoured, only colliers wore the thick heavy clogs, and men wore boots on Sundays. Broad cloth was now used for men's clothing and a variety of materials were available to women.

### Ignorance and Superstition

Most people, until after the 1850s, were illiterate and innumerate, having had little or no schooling and having worked in cloth production since childhood. Pregnant women were known to put a cinder on the mantelpiece as each month passed in order to calculate when to expect their babies.

Such ignorance nurtured belief in superstitions, charms, fairies and witches, with people using "charms", to ward off evil spirits or bring "good luck". Pitch darkness out of doors at night, held dangers, both real and imaginary. Accidents or bad luck occurred for no apparent reason, and it was reasonable for the uneducated mind to blame evil forces or unknown powers, and to try to combat them with charms and potions. Many people always carried a charm with them, such as a piece of "wiggin", (ash twig).

### Celebrations

Weddings, christenings and funerals were all occasions for much drinking, mirth and matchmaking, and funerals were frequently more rumbustious than weddings.

Births were celebrated by "wetting the babies head" or "yed-washing" which involved much beer drinking, singing, and telling of ghost stories and men and women pairing off in the dark.

At weddings the bride and groom often had to creep separately to and from the church by different routes to try to avoid the rough and indecent pranks waiting to be played on them.

The local feast, or wake, was often the most important event of the year. Family members and ex-residents returned home, relationships were reinforced, friendships and matches were made.

Vast crowds attended attractions such as a circus, menagerie, strolling players, games, rides, sports, races and eating competitions. Even those living at subsistence level contrived to enjoy the Feast's special fare, which could consist of currant puddings, veal and fruit pies, roast beef, pickled red cabbage and home brewed beer.

Drunkenness and brawling were commonplace and the Beer house Act of 1830 - designed to combat the evils of gin - allowed any household to brew and sell beer. It was calculated that by 1833 one in eight of all heads of households in the Huddersfield Area was a drunkard, with most recreations being centred around the public house. However, with the advancement of education, temperance and railways in the latter half of the nineteenth century the importance of the local Feast declined, and was replaced by excursions by train to the seaside.

### Holidays

In the first half of the nineteenth century most people worked 12 – 14 hours a day, although they only worked until either 2pm or 4pm on Saturdays and were allowed two half days holiday each year, being the afternoons of Good Friday and Christmas Day.

As the century progressed however, they were allowed to have holidays on Feast days, and whole day's holiday at Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide. The Factory Acts of 1832, 1833 and 1844 reduced working hours and improved conditions for children working the factories and the Factories Act of 1847 finally brought about the ten hour working day for mill workers'.

Prior to the 1850's, most people celebrated Christmas on Twelfth Night, 6th January, with wassail and Twelfth cake. In the 1870's "wassailing" i.e. the carrying of a wessel bob or evergreen garland, moved to 31st December.

Wassailing has been associated with Christmas and New Year as far back as the 1400s. It was a way of passing on good wishes among family and friends. Wassail is an ale-based drink seasoned with spices and honey. It was served from huge bowls, often made of silver or pewter. The Wassail bowl would be passed around with the greeting, 'Wassail'.

Wassail gets its name from the Old English term "waes hael", meaning "be well". It was a Saxon custom that, at the start of each year, the lord of the manor would shout 'waes hael'. The assembled crowd would reply 'drinc hael', meaning 'drink and be healthy'.

As time went on, the tradition was carried on by people going from door to door, bearing good wishes and a wassail bowl of hot, spiced ale. In return people in the houses gave them drink, money and Christmas fare (special foods eaten during Christmas time e.g. mince pies) and they believed they would receive good luck for the year to come.

A Wassailing Carol: one of the most popular Wassailing Carols went like this:

*Here we come a-wassailing  
Among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wassailing,  
So fair to be seen:*

*Love and joy come to you,  
And to you, your wassail too,  
And God bless you and send you,  
A happy New Year,  
And God send you,  
A happy New Year.*

Old Mischief Night, 30th April, was in the early nineteenth century, traditionally a festival when mayhem reigned. Farm animals were released, urine tubs overturned, windows and doors white-washed, goods were stolen and property destroyed. The old and the unmarried were a particular target. However, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the establishment of an organised, local police force, and gas-lit streets were factors in the demise of Old Mischief Night.

## **Leisure**

In the early nineteenth century there was no clear division between work and play. In cottage industries workers could "lake" i.e. play, if they felt like it and "wake", i.e. work at night by candlelight, to make up for it.

Bear-baiting and, more often, bull-baiting were commonplace, with mastiffs or bulldogs being kept for the purpose. Betting on cock-fights and dog fights was usual and whippet racing, pigeon flying and Knurr and Spell were common leisure activities.

**Knurr and spell** is an old English game, once popular as a pub game. The game originated in Yorkshire, but then spread throughout the north of England. It can be traced back to the beginning of the 14th century, was especially popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, but virtually unknown by the 21st century.

Knurr (from Middle English: knurre, knot) refers to a hardwood or pottery ball, as could be made from a knot of wood. Spell (from Danish: spil, spindle) is the stick of wood used to strike it. It is played with a levered wooden trap, by means of which the knurr, about the size of a walnut, is

thrown into the air. The knurr is struck by the player with the spell. The object of the game is to hit the knurr the greatest possible distance, either in one or several hits. Each player competes as an individual, without interference, and any number can enter a competition.

On an open space, the ground is marked out with wooden pins driven in every 20 yards (18m). In matches each player supplies their own knurrs and spells and has five rises of the ball to a game. In villages like Skelmanthorpe the problem that the police had with this game was that it was often played on the road and bets were taken as to the distance the knurr was hit – such gambling was illegal. For example, Skelmanthorpe Local Board on 15 Oct 1870 ordered the policeman to dismiss parties from gathering at bottom of Green Lane and 'Top of Town' and other places – early ASBOs!

## **Music**

From the eighteenth century music began to play a large part in the lives of working people, with the emergence of brass bands, orchestras, choirs and hand bell ringers. Local rhymes and songs reinforced local identities and people would often walk long distances to go to evening practices, after a full day at work. Huddersfield Choral Society was founded at the Plough Inn in 1836.

Huddersfield was renowned for singing and by the 1840s there were at least three public houses designed as "singing halls", the forerunners of the music hall. Massive outdoor local sings drew crowds from surrounding towns.

***(Jennifer Stead, Changing the Pattern, Everyday Life 1800-1900 in "Huddersfield a Most Handsome Town", E.A. Hilary Haigh (ed.) Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992)***

In Skelmanthorpe the Brass Band was founded in 1843 and the Choral Society in 1886. Skelmanthorpe Sing started in 1903.

The Wesleyan Chapel on Commercial Road used to hold regular musical performances. For example, in December 1886 there was a performance of Handel's "Messiah" by five members of the Huddersfield Choral Society with a band and chorus of 50 performers conducted by Mr. North of Huddersfield. This was sponsored by the local mill owners and admission cost 6d to 2s 6d depending on the seats.

## **Skelmanthorpe Brass Band**

Founded 1843 with funding from the Oddfellows. By the 1880s they were competing to get graded.

*"The workpeople in the employ of Joseph Norton, Esq., celebrated the event on Saturday, the 8th instant, when about 200 of them sat down to an excellent dinner of roast beef and plum pudding afterwards the piecers and winders—boys and girls, partook of the same cheer, each individual having two quarts of good beer allowed. Mr. Norton presided on the occasion. The women in Mr. Norton's employ had treat on Saturday, the 15th instant, when 150 sat down to an excellent tea, &c. The Skelmanthorpe brass band, dressed in uniform, were in attendance on both occasions, and enlivened the scene by playing some choice pieces." (Leeds Times, 29th August 1846)*

*"SKELMANTHORPE. Scissett Church Sunday School.— On Monday last, the children of this school had their annual feast, on the lawn in front of the parsonage. The children assembled at half-past one o'clock in the school-room, where they were arranged in order, and being preceded by the Skelmanthorpe brass band, they proceeded to the residence of Joseph Norton, Esq., of Nortonthorpe Hall, where they sang hymns. They then went forward to Bagden Hall, the residence of George Norton, Esq., where the children were refreshed with ginger beer and cakes. After singing hymns, they returned to the parsonage, where plenty of currant buns and coffee were distributed by their teachers. The day was remarkably fine, and the children seemed to be highly delighted with the afternoon's amusement." (Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner, 17th July 1852)*

*“Grand Gala. -- A gala was held on Saturday last in a field kindly lent for the occasion by Thomas Dowse, Esq. The object was the augmentation of the funds of the Mechanics' Institution. The celebrated Bramley Brass Band was engaged by the gala committee, and contributed largely to the enjoyment of those present. Upwards of 2,000 showed their interest in the object in view by attending, although the day was far from having a promising appearance. The Skelmanthorpe Brass Band well performed their part by relieving their brethren of Bramley as occasion required. The whole terminated with a very good display of fireworks. Everything was order and regularity, for which, in a certain measure, we were indebted to the indefatigable exertions of Superintendent Shepey, of the Scissett division, to whom the gala committee are much indebted. Between £6 and £7 remains for the Institution.” (Huddersfield Chronicle, August 1854)*

*“CONCERT.—On Saturday evening last, the members of the Skelmanthorpe Brass Band, assisted by the united choirs from the Wesleyan, Primitive, and Reform chapels, gave a concert in the Primitive Methodist Sunday School for the benefit of Mr. T. Schofield. The chair was occupied by Mr. A. Jackson. The band, which consists chiefly of young men who are natives of the village, played several selections with considerable taste and expression, and from the hearty applause accorded after each piece it was evident the people appreciated their efforts. Mr. Job Shaw officiated as conductor of the band. The united choirs rendered several choruses from the "Messiah" and "St. Paul," together with anthems and glees, in a very efficient manner, under the conductorship of Mr. Albert Wadsworth. Miss E. Holmes presided at the harmonium with great efficiency. A collection was made near the close, when the handsome sum of £8 was collected. (Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 31 Oct 1891)*

In 1933 the cottages of Prospect Square were demolished and the Skelmanthorpe Labour Club was constructed in their place. At this time, Skelmanthorpe Band was leasing and rehearsing in brewery owned buildings above stables that belonged to The Three Horseshoes Pub on Commercial Road, Skelmanthorpe. The outbreak of World War II saw the commandeering by the Home Guard of the band's rehearsal facility which, in 1942, the band vacated, making its new headquarters The Commercial Inn. It wasn't until after the war in 1946 that the band returned to its original rehearsal room. Two years later, it registered to compete in the Daily Herald Championships- better known today as the Yorkshire Regional Championships. During the late 1950s, Herbert Mann had the idea to move Skelmanthorpe Band to the now disused Labour Club in Prospect Square. The band had been offered use of the building free of charge so the decision to relocate was made; the band's trustees met with the officials of the Labour Club and terms for a one hundred year free lease with an option to extend a further 90 years were agreed. Skelmanthorpe Band moved to its current location and the future of the Skelmanthorpe Brass Band Community was born.

**Clipped on 14-July-2017, from History | Skelmanthorpe Brass Band Community.**

## **Skelmanthorpe Sing**

Skelmanthorpe 'Sing' originated in 1903. The first Committee Meeting was held in the Working Men's Club on Tuesday, May 24th, 1904. The original Committee consisted of twenty members with Emmanuel Mann as chairman. There were five Radleys on the committee! Joah Lodge was the first secretary. It was resolved arrangements were made to have a Sing on Skelmanthorpe Feast Sunday, July 10th, 1904, in aid of Huddersfield Infirmary. The Committee was to be called Skelmanthorpe and District Musical Society.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Co. were asked to run a special train on Feast Sunday, July 10th, 1904, to leave Huddersfield at 1-15 p.m. and return from Skelmanthorpe at 9 p.m. No expenses were to be allowed, but teas provided to singers and players. Admission to the field was 3d., by ticket, programmes 2d. and collection boxes were taken to all the audience outside the field. The Committee accepted the offer of the field adjoining the Working Men's Club for the Sing.

Mr. James Waites was asked to conduct the Sing. Mr. Mann to conduct rehearsals. Mr. Harry Stead to accompany rehearsals on the piano. If the weather proved unfavourable, the Sing was to be held in the Working Men' Club. Five of Skelmanthorpe Brass Band were asked to assist in the Choruses and Hymns and Choirmasters were asked to invite members of their choirs to assist.

Taking part in the Concert were Misses C. White, F. Moorhouse, A.A. Taylor, A. Micklethwaite, Mrs. Armitage and Messrs. Mann. Fisher, Blackburn. Taylor and Bottomley. Mr. E. H. Jenkin (violin) and a Brass Quartet from the Skelmanthorpe Band. Thousands of people attended wearing their 'Sunday best' and the Sing became an annual tradition taking place on Feast Sunday every year and moving to the grounds of Pilling House once the Council took over the Working Men's Club. The programme every year was "Excerpts from the Messiah".

*Skelmanthorpe Sing began in 1903, when choirs from local churches gathered together to celebrate Skelmanthorpe Feast. In the early years the Sing was held on the land adjacent to the former Working Men's Club - now Skelmanthorpe Council Offices. Later it was held in the grounds of Pilling House, formally owned by Mr Field, the local mill owner. Skelmanthorpe Band formed the core of the orchestra, along with musicians from the surrounding area from as far away as Holmfirth. Lawrence Mann's great uncle was a cellist who took rehearsals in the absence of the conductor. In excess of thirty people used to organise the event and whole families sporting their Sunday best attended. Ladies, resplendent in their attire and sporting the finest hats that money could buy, paraded around at the tea party, which followed the Sing.*

***"History of Skelmanthorpe Sing 1904-1929" taken from the Centenary Programme for the Sing of 2003.***

## **Theatre**

An indoor roller skating rink was built on Commercial Road in 1901 towards the Windmill Inn. This became the Palace Theatre showing a range of variety shows in 1910, and later became the Skelmanthorpe Picture Palace being granted a license to show films in November 1912 with the first show in January 1913. It closed in 1934 when the Savoy Cinema was opened and became derelict.

## **Skelmanthorpe Workers Education**

Skelmanthorpe had both a Mechanics Institute and a Mutual Improvement Society. Nationally, the difference between the two organisations was that the Mechanics Institutes tended to be run by the employers to "improve" their workers, whilst the Mutual Improvement Societies were run by the workers themselves. Some example programmes show the difference locally:

### **Skelmanthorpe Mutual Improvement Society.**

In 1887 the President was David Harris and meetings were held at 7 p.m. on Saturday evenings in the Wesleyan Schoolroom. The programme for Autumn 1886 included talks on: David Harris – Study; Joe Wainwright – leisure hours; B. Tunnicliffe – capital and labour; Percy Jackson – life's warfare; H. Beanland – wool and wool sorting; Chas Oates – the planets. Debate – poverty, wealth or ignorance. (***Skelmanthorpe Mutual Improvement Society, Syllabus and Rules, 1887-88***)

Rules of the Society, to be called the Skelmanthorpe Mutual Improvement Society:

"The objects of the society be to promote the religious, mental, moral and social improvement of its members by means of lectures, debates, readings, essays, etc. The ordinary meetings of the Society to be on Saturday evenings at the Board School to commence at 7 and conclude at 9 pm. That each member shall pay an annual subscription of not less than 1 shilling."

(***Skelmanthorpe Mutual Improvement Society, Syllabus and Rules, 1888-89***)

In 1891 the President was George Tunnicliffe, Vice Presidents C. E. Booth, Charles Oakes and James Hinnchcliffe. The Secretary was Joe Wainwright and the Treasurer George Morley. Meetings were held in the Board School on Saturday evenings during the winter and contributions were 1s per year. (***Skelmanthorpe Almanck, 1892***)

"Use and abuse of religion and worship" was the subject of an essay given last Saturday evening, before the members of this society, by Mr. G. Tunnicliffe, Mr. L Tyas acting as chairman. The essayist said that drink, money, worship, time, knowledge, power, etc., were all good for use, but



were also abused; and particularly might this be said with regard to religion. Men should worship God in spirit and in truth. He was no believer in folks shutting themselves up and making use of a lot of ceremony. Religion should be identified by its fruits; and if it made men better and more Christ-like, doing all possible to benefit their fellow men and all with whom they came in contact, it was of the right sort ; but a sterile religion was an insult to God. A discussion followed the essay, after which the meeting was brought to a close with a vote of thanks to the essayist.

"Co-operation" formed the subject of a talk before the members of this society by Mr. G. H. Lodge, of Skelmanthorpe. The essayist stated the amount that had been done by the co-operative societies during the 1880s in England, but he said that he thought that cooperative societies had a greater work before them of supplying food to their customers. Discussion followed, after which a vote of thanks was given to the essayist.

**(Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 24 March 1894)**

The weekly meeting of the Society was held in the Board School last Saturday evening, when Mr. Balmforth. of Huddersfield, delivered a lecture entitled, The Story of the Great Reform Bill. Luther Tyas presided. The lecturer gave short history of the position of the people prior to 1830, and of the antagonism any measure of reform which was before Parliament had to contend with. He described the monster meetings held in Birmingham and other large cities in support of the Reform Bill by Lord John Russell. He also described how the measure was passed in the Commons, only to be thrown out by the Lords, and how in the end the King consented to the creation of a sufficient number of Liberal peers to make a majority and pass the bill. Discussion followed. and at the conclusion a vote of thanks was accorded to the lecturer for his services.

**Huddersfield Examiner, 9 November 1895**

Skelmanthorpe Almanck published in 1893 lists a Polytechnic Institute with Sam Field as president, Dr Greenhalgh and D. Harris as Vice Presidents. Percy Jackson was Treasurer and Thomas Field was Secretary. Contributions of 6d per month, but no details of their activities have been found except that the Yorkshire Penny Bank had a branch there. **(Field Archive, Kirklees Archives)**

### **Skelmanthorpe Mechanics Institute**

The Clayton West and Skelmanthorpe Mechanics Institute started in 1847. "The second annual soiree of the institution was held in the large warehouse belonging to Joseph Norton on Saturday evening last – Mr Norton in the chair. There was an address by the secretary of Wakefield Mechanics Institute followed by a concert." **(Leeds Times, 30 December 1848)**

On the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> November 1853 a meeting was held in Skelmanthorpe by the village schoolmaster to find out the feeling of the villagers as to the formation of a literary society or preliminary mechanics institute. A committee was formed to consider the practicability of the proposed association. **(Huddersfield Chronicle, 3rd December 1853)**

A Skelmanthorpe Institute met in June 1875 in the Old Royal Oak under the chairmanship of James Biltcliffe to consider how they could obtain their own property to act as a reading room for the men of the village. Agreed to hold village meetings to that end – the first being in the Royal Oak in August 1875.

Later in 1875 they took up the rent of a house at Lane End to use as an Institute – rent £15 for first year and £20 per year thereafter. This house used to be an inn called the British Oak, then a Model Lodging House. (Before it was pulled down it became Clarence Bradbury's display warehouse.) They agreed to canvass the village for subscriptions and members. In August they joined the Yorkshire Mechanics Institute and allocated rooms in the new building as follows: Top room to be the school; rooms on the middle floor to be the class library and committee rooms; bottom floor to be the news room and a books and conversation room. In September it was agreed that the school should start at 8pm and finish at 9.30 pm. Smoking was banned and the only games allowed to be dominoes, draughts and upmajor. Josua Dyson appointed as caretaker. Reading classes to be held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. In September it was agreed to let the

Skelmanthorpe Brass Band use a room on Saturdays but not Sundays. The house to be closed on Sundays. In February 1876 they appointed Fred Lawton as librarian to replace Walter Turton who had left the district. The Committee attempted to entertain its members by Saturday night concerts at which readings, songs and recitations were given. Spelling bees were also arranged. In March they decided to place the school under government supervision and acquire a certified teacher. Mr Timm, the master of the Church School, was asked to take charge. Henry Field and John Field to take juvenile classes one night per week in reading.

In February 1877 classes were agreed as follows:

Monday night – arithmetic – Enoch Hellowell

Wednesday night – reading, writing and arithmetic – Henry Field

Thursday night – reading, writing and arithmetic – John Jenkinson.

In October 1877 it was agreed that Joseph Field senior be asked to take charge of the night school for a fee of £3 per session. Scholars to be admitted at 13 and the charge to be 3 ½d per week. The Bellman was to be sent round the village to announce the news.

February 1878 they had trouble paying the rent and asked for a reduction. This was not granted so they began to look for somewhere new and gave six months notice to quit. They began to look at an offer of land next to the Co-op made by David Marsden and began to enquire with temperance organisations in the village as to whether they could come together to build a public hall for the village.

In January 1881 it was agreed that the Institute should be referred to as the "Working Men's Club". In 1886 they agreed to join with the Good Templars who would help finance the new club. As part of this they agreed to pay £10 per year for ten years if intoxicating liquors were consumed on the premises. The Templars gave £100 towards the club if the Institute found £250.

In 1892 its President was W. Ogden Kaye, Vice President John Bolton, Secretary Henry Lodge, Financial Secretary Fred Lawton, Treasurer Robert Wadsworth, Librarians Arthur Lodge and Harry Senior. It had 90 members at that time and the contribution was 6d a month. (Skelmanthorpe Almanack, 1892)

In 1898 the Weavers' Glory lodge agreed to lend £400 towards the new building. The new club began to be built in October 1898 with Geo Hinchcliffe & Sons the masons, John Wainwright the joiner and Geo Ellis the plumber. The Working Men's Club was opened in 1900. (**Notes from Minutes of Skelmanthorpe Mechanics Institute**)

### **Skelmanthorpe Working Men's Club.**

The Working Men's Club was the building opened as a Reading Room and Assembly Room and offices by the Mechanics Institute in 1900. It was funded by the Good Templars and Weavers' Glory friendly societies on the condition that it would not have a bar nor sell any alcohol.

To help fund the new club, a concert was given in the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom, Skelmanthorpe, on Saturday evening last. There was a moderate attendance. The artistes were Miss Selena Sykes, soprano (Sunderland prize medallist, 1897); Shepley Orpheus Prize Quartet (winners of the Sunderland male voice competition, 1897), consisting of Mr. Haydn H. Holden, also; Mr. Fred Farrington, first tenor;- Mr. Joseph Vickers, second tenor; and Mr. Fred Mosley, basso ; and Mr. Geo. W. Nicholson, humourist, Leeds. An excellent programme had been arranged, and the songs, etc., were rendered in a masterly manner. Mr. Mosley received an encore for " The soldier's song," and Misa Sykes was encored for " Matrimony." Mr. Nicholson created much laughter with his humorous songs, which he gave in good style, and was encored for each. Mr. Norman E. Holden accompanied on the piano with ability. The proceeds go in aid of the new club. (**Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 26 March 1898**)

The London Gazette has official notice of closing of many of the local friendly societies and the Skelmanthorpe Independent Working Men's Club (closed 1970). "Notice is hereby given that the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies has, pursuant to section 77 of the Friendly Societies Act, 1896, by writing under his hand, dated the 13th day of November 1963, cancelled the registry of SKELMANTHORPE WORKING MEN'S CLUB (Register No. 4220 York W), held at Commercial Road, Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield, in the county of York, on the ground that the society has ceased to exist. The society (subject to the right of appeal given by the said Act) ceases to enjoy the privileges of a registered society, but without prejudice to any liability incurred by the society, which may be enforced against it as if such cancelling had not taken place."

S. D. Musson, Chief Registrar. (***THE LONDON GAZETTE, 19TH NOVEMBER 1963 9457***) The building was taken over by the Council and now holds the Parish Council and Community Library.

## Temperance

The Temperance movement is a social movement against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Temperance movements typically criticise alcohol intoxication, promote complete abstinence (teetotalism), or use its political influence to press the government to enact alcohol laws to regulate the availability of alcohol or even its complete prohibition.

Many of us will have heard of "signing the pledge" and groups such as the Band of Hope and the Rechabites. But few people now remember why temperance was so important to millions of people. If temperance was the solution, what was the problem? As a reaction to the destructive effects of cheap gin, the Beer Act of 1830 was meant to encourage beer drinking as a healthier alternative. But the effect was disastrous, especially in the crowded industrial regions. Drink became a national problem, and temperance societies which encouraged moderation sprang up throughout the country and eventually, "taking the pledge" meant teetotalism.

*"Skelmanthorpe Temperance Society.— This village, for so long sunk in lethargy and indifference to all march-of-intellect movements, seems to have roused itself within the last few months back. It is earnestly to be hoped that this may not prove a mere "flash in the pan," but a steady and ever-increasing light, which may effectually dispel the darkness of other days. Some well-wishers to the cause of temperance, and to a certain extent, the consequent comfort and increased happiness of the natives, lately made the endeavour to form a "total abstinence society." The pledge, in the course of a few weeks, has been signed by upwards of forty.... On the evening of Saturday last, May 6th, a meeting was held in the town school, for the purpose of advocating and expounding those principles. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Lawton, of Skelmanthorpe, a friend from Emley, and Mr. Sievwright (town schoolmaster). The attendance was most respectable both numerically and otherwise. The last-mentioned speaker, in a very humorous address, urged the extensive adoption of the principle of total abstinence, and backed his appeal by sundry incontrovertible arguments. A few more signatures were added to the pledge. (***Huddersfield Chronicle***, 3 May 1854).*

The Skelmanthorpe United Temperance Committee ran from 1900 to 1927.

**Local Veto Meeting, Scissett** - a public meeting was held in the Co-operative Hall, Scissett on Saturday under the presidency of Mr Ewart, JP, in support of the Local Veto Bill. It was proposed that the meeting tenders its thanks to the Government for the introduction into Parliament of the Intoxicating Liquor Traffic Local Control Bill. Mr Haigh of Skelmanthorpe and Mr Postlethwaite of the United Kingdom Alliance supported the motion which was carried unanimously. (***Huddersfield Chronicle***, 1 June 1895)

## The Band of Hope

The Band of Hope was first proposed by Rev. Jabez Tunnicliff, who was a Baptist minister in Leeds, following the death in June 1847 of a young man whose life was cut short by alcohol. While

working in Leeds, Tunncliffe had become an advocate for total abstinence from alcohol. In the autumn of 1847, with the help of other temperance workers, the Band of Hope was founded. Its objective was to teach children the importance and principles of sobriety and teetotalism. In 1855, a national organisation was formed. Meetings began to be held in churches throughout the UK.

In 1887 the movement had about 1½ million members out of 8 million young people in Britain of Band of Hope age. By 1891 it had 2 million members and in 1897, Queen Victoria's Jubilee year, the estimated membership was 3,238,323. The movement – linked to temperance and Methodism - became very important in Skelmanthorpe with a large following.

There are photographs available on the Denby Dale Archive website and the books written by Chris Heath showing:

- Band of Hope temperance movement assemble in Board School yard in June 1909
- Band of Hope fete at Pond End by the Board School
- Band of Hope Skelmanthorpe demonstration on Commercial Road, 1907 - photo S. Sheead
- Band of Hope demonstration gather at "The Triangle", 1907 - photo S. Sheead
- Temperance gatherings at Skelmanthorpe possibly organised by the Rechabite Society - photo S. Sheead
- Primitive Methodist Chapel, decorated wagon for the Band of Hope demonstration at Jebson Fold, 19 June 1909. (L. Robinson collection)
- Wesleyan Chapel wagon - Band of Hope fete, on Commercial Road, at the bottom of Smithy Lane, 19 June 1909. (L. Robinson collection)
- Temperance Demonstration held 1910.

### **Skelmanthorpe Liberal Club**

The club was built – with a mortgage from Charles Field – in November 1909. (***Bill from Herbert Jackson, Solicitor regarding work with the Club regarding Trust, Deed and mortgages, 1908-09***). The records show that by the 1920s, H. J. Wilson was the Liberal Party Parliamentary Representative. Percy Jackson was President, C. E. Field was Vice President. Lodges were both Company Secretary and Financial Secretary. The number of members was 130. (***List of Club Officers, no date***) Before 1909 the club had met in premises rented from the Co-operative Society (***Receipt from Skelmanthorpe Co-operative Society for one half year's rent by the Club, July 1908***)

## Crime and Punishment

Our area entered the 19<sup>th</sup> Century under the traditional judicial system of Justices of the Peace, the manor and the parish. The Justices of the Peace were the default mode of government in the counties. They were appointed by the Crown at county level from the propertied gentry, and had far wider powers than their modern-day counterparts, dealing with not just criminal cases but with a wide range of regulatory functions, exercised through their Quarter Sessions and more frequent local Petty Sessions. Although unpaid themselves, the local magistrates were supported by a High Constable and a salaried clerk.

Then there was the parish - the traditional unit of grass roots local government, both ecclesiastical and secular for the best part of a thousand years. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century manorial authority had greatly lessened while the parish vestry was still vital and politically active. It became customary for the parish constable to be nominated (or elected) by the parish vestry - sometimes after a contested contest - and sworn in by the Manor Court. This system of law and order through parish (or township) constables lasted in our area until the 1850s. In London a single police force had been established by Peel's 1829 Metropolitan Police Act and the 1839 Rural Constabulary Act attempted to rationalise county policing along similar lines. But it left it to local JPs the discretion to introduce a county force - an option not adopted in the West Riding until made compulsory in 1856. (***"Pioneers or Partisans? Governing Huddersfield 1820-1848"*, David Griffiths, Huddersfield Local History Society, 2008**)

### Examples of Local Crime Taken from the Newspapers of the Day

"ASSAULTS ON POLICE OFFICER. Yesterday afternoon the magistrates committed three offenders for two months each for assaulting police officers in the Barnsley district. The prisoners were Charles Taylor, dyer, Skelmanthorpe, who assaulted Police constable Cullingworth at that place, Henry Adams, miner, Wombwell, for assaulting Police constable Briggs, Wombwell; and Robert Wood, miner, Broom Hill, for assaulting Police constable Williams. In each case the prisoner kicked the officers in a brutal manner." (***Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer - Tuesday 14 February 1882***)

"Damage to a Lodging-house at Skelmanthorpe. — Thomas Taylor, Seth Senior, Abraham Kilner, Joseph Lodge, and Walter Senior, were summoned by Andrew Duffs, for committing damage to his dwelling-house at Skelmanthorpe, to the amount of 13s. 1d. on the 21st December last. The defendants did not appear, and were mulcted in the damage and expenses, £1 16s. 7d." (***Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 13 March 1852***)

**The "Idle" Corner.** Skelmanthorpe, like most other villages, boasts of an idle corner, where nightly, as well as throughout the whole of Sundays, large numbers of persons congregate to pass away the idle hours, much to the annoyance of foot-passengers, travellers, and the public generally. This corner in Skelmanthorpe is near the Grove Inn, at the junction of the road from Shelley and the "Garrett" where as many as 40 or 50 are standing at one time, and such is the obstruction that travellers enquire "What are the police doing?" This is easier asked than answered. It is time something was done to abate the nuisance." (***Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 21 October 1865***)

"KICKING AND FIGHTING AT SKELMANTHORPE. At the County Police Court, Huddersfield, on Tuesday morning, Joe Schofield and Joel Schofield (uncle of Joe), both of Emley Park, one weaver and the other a farmer, were charged with assaulting Benjamin Ellis, weaver, Skelmanthorpe, whose upper lip was covered with a plaster. Mr. W. Armitage defended Joe.—Complainant said Monday last week he was in front of the Grove Inn, Skelmanthorpe, on the highway, when he saw Joe Schofield knock Philip Locke down. He said it was not right, whereupon Joe knocked him down, and both the defendants kicked him. In reply to Mr. Armitage said it was closing time, and

he, Lodge (his uncle), and the two defendants all came out of the Grove Inn. He did not hear Lodge say that Joe Schofield's wife was unfaithful; heard Joe say that Philip was "Sammy" for some woman, and Philip said he was not "Sammy" for his wife; when Joe knocked him (Lodge) down. He did not kick Joe. Armitage: You never do any kicking in Skelmanthorpe? You are very particular not to fight there, aren't you (Laughter.)—Mr. T. Brooke (the chairman): There are all sorts at Skelmanthorpe. In reply to Mr. Sykes, the magistrates clerk, the complainant said he could not tell how his life was injured, whether a blow or a kick.—Charlotte Tyas said when complainant remonstrated with Joe for knocking down Philip, Joel said, "Give it him," and (said the witness) they gave it him right, they did to.—The Clerk; What did they do?—Witness: Well, they punched into him after they knocked him down. Philip lay on the ground like a dead un, and I picked him up, and Benjamin Ellis bled like pig, and they could see into his mouth through the hole in his top lip. Joseph Haigh said that all Ellis said to the defendants was, "That's not fair to knock an old man down," and then Joe knocked him down, and both the defendants kicked him, Joel saying, "We'll give it him while have him. In reply to Mr. Armitage, he said he had been sent to Wakefield for being drunk, and for throwing stones at the police.—Mr. Armitage said that Joe only acted in self defence, and that Joel did nothing, but had been summoned by the complainant so that he could not put in the box to give evidence.—Pearson Taylor, Skelmanthorpe, Lodge said that Joe Schofield's wife was unfaithful, and Joe knocked him down. Ellis then kicked Joe on the ankle. Joe then acted in his own defence. Joe did nothing except help to separate them. In defence Joel made a similar statement to that given Taylor. He called P C Cullingworth, who gave him a good character, and also said never saw anything wrong with Joe. The Bench considered the assault proved, and thought it very serious, for although great provocation had been given Lodge—why probably only got what deserved—still Ellis had not given provocation, and they should fine the defendants £1 each and 30s. expenses jointly, total £3 10s." (*Barnsley Chronicle, etc. - Saturday 14 August 1875*)

"STRANGE OCCURRENCE AT SKELMANTHORPE. On Thursday last week, Mr. Tom Taylor, district coroner, opened an inquest at the Windmill Inn, touching the death of Arthur Wilkinson, late of Park Gate, Skelmanthorpe, aged twenty eight years, which occurred so far back as July last, under circumstances of a peculiar nature. It appears that Wilkinson married Harriet Ann Hadley, a native of Skelmanthorpe, when she was seventeen years old, and four children were born to them—all now living—the eldest nine years old and the youngest two years. Wilkinson was not strong in health, and his wife was subject to fits. On the 23rd of May, Wilkinson was taken ill after having, it is said, partaken of tinned salmon, and he called on Dr. Milligan, of Skelmanthorpe, who found him suffering from symptoms which might have been caused by irritant poison. After a fortnight had gone Dr. Milligan went for a holiday, and left the patient in the care of Dr. F. P. Bell, of Clayton West. Wilkinson died on the 4th of July, and Dr. Bell certified that his death was due to ulceration of the bowels and stomach. Wilkinson was interred in Skelmanthorpe Cemetery on the 4th July, and after his death the widow carried on the business of selling sweets and small articles, in the house in which she had for some time lived, and it is stated also that she had parish relief. Arthur Morley (23), single, who lived at Emley Park, with his father, and who was employed at Messrs. Jagger's, Emley Moor collieries, was a friend of the Wilkinson, and he had a friend named Seth Blackburn, of Park Gate, married, who was also friend of the deceased man. His alleged that owing to a dispute between Morley and Blackburn, the latter made statement to the Barnsley police, who made certain inquiries. It is rumoured in Skelmanthorpe that the man Wilkinson had been poisoned, and much curiosity has been occasioned through the circumstance that on Saturday, November 30th. Mrs. Wilkinson and the man Morley disappeared from the neighbourhood. In an out-house of the dwelling occupied by Morley's father was found a piece of paper, apparently torn from a penny memorandum book, on it were the following words, written in pencil:—"We have left this world together. We have no friends, for everybody is against us, and the tales that are going are all lies. It is -- (naming two persons) that has set them going. Everybody is against us. We cannot live. I hope you will forgive us for what we have done." There was no signature to the writing, but as the wording on the paper pointed to the widow of the deceased and Morley, the Barnsley police—for Skelmanthorpe is now in the Barnsley police division—commenced a search for them on Sunday evening. On Sunday evening Mrs. Wilkinson returned to her home in Park Gate, and Morley went to his father's house. Where they had been is not exactly known, and whether they had gone away together we cannot say. It seems that in November the Barnsley police obtained an order from the

Home Office for the exhumation of the body of Wilkinson, and Thursday last week Inspector Macdonald, of Barnsley, attended at Skelmanthorpe with the order, and the exhumation took place. As stated above, the district coroner opened an inquest, with Mr. W. Haigh as the foreman of the jury. The body was identified by John Wilkinson, brother of the deceased. Dr. Milligan, who attended the man Wilkinson, made the post mortem examination, and sealed up the viscera, which has been forwarded to Somerset House, London, to be analysed by the official analyst. The inquest was then adjourned for a fortnight, as nothing more could be done. The case is in the hands of Inspector Macdonald, Sergeant Mansfield, and Police constable C. Crosland." (**Huddersfield Daily Examiner - Tuesday 10 December 1895**)

"SKELMANTHORPE MAN'S OUTBURST Luther Dyson, miner, Skelmanthorpe, was at Barnsley yesterday fined 10s. and costs for having been drunk and disorderly, and 20s. and costs in each of two cases of police assault, one upon Constable Beanland, and the other upon Constable Walton, on Saturday night last. Beanland stated that he saw defendant being ejected from a public-house, and went to the landlord's assistance. Defendant then behaved like a maniac, and kicked and bit both the officers.—Mr. Hewitt, who defended, described the case as a very pitiable one. Defendant's father had been a local preacher for 50 years, and had brothers who were now local preachers. Defendant had signed the pledge and broke it on Saturday, the occasion of a band contest." (**Sheffield Daily Telegraph - Tuesday 23 July 1907**)

"COUNTY POLICE COURT. YESTERDAY. (Before G. Armitage, J. Beaumont, and S. W. Haigh, Esqs.) Gambling at Skelmanthorpe. — Job Morley, Samuel Morley, Samuel Littlewood, and Edwin North, working men, were charged with having on the 16th November played at unlawful games and pastimes. Police-constable Collingwood stated that at half-past three o'clock on the day named he was on duty in Skelmanthorpe, and he saw 15 or 16 men about 200 yards from the Methodist Chapel, off the highway, playing at pitch and toss. When he got within 10 or 15 yards of them, they espied him and ran away. All of the defendants were present when the gambling took place, and one or two of them actually gambled. Witnesses were called by the defendants to prove that they did not take part in the gambling, and were not near the spot where the gambling took place. The officer, in reply to the Bench, positively stated that the defendants were present at the time; he knew them, and had an opportunity of seeing them, as he was within 15 yards of them before they caught sight of him. The Bench unanimously fined the defendants £3 each, and the expenses, £2, to be divided among them." (**Huddersfield Chronicle - Wednesday 03 December 1873**)

"Assault upon a Married Woman. — Walter Edward Jepson and Walter Senior were charged with having, on the 23rd August, assaulted Mrs. Hopkinson, wife of James Hopkinson, at Skelmanthorpe. Mr. W. Armitage, for the complainant, stated that Mr. Hopkinson was the cashier of Mr. Clarke, the contractor for the Clayton West Blanch Railway, and on Saturday night he and his wife were returning from Skelmanthorpe, about 11 o'clock at night, in company with Police Constable Kershaw. When about 200 or 300 yards from Skelmanthorpe, he met the two defendants, who violently pushed against Mrs. Hopkinson, who was leaning on her husband's arm. Police-constable Kershaw turned his light upon them, and recognised their faces. He knew the name of one but not the name of the other defendant, and when he asked Senior for his name he gave the name of Jepson, the other defendant, and it was only by the aid of somebody who knew the man that he was able to get his name. He (Mr. Armitage) was instructed that it was not safe for a respectable woman to go out at all late in the evening at Skelmanthorpe. If he supported his case, he should ask their worships to render an effectual check to that kind of misconduct. The foregoing statement was supported in every respect by Mr. Hopkinson and Police-constable Kershaw. Jepson's defence was that he was partly drunk, and hardly knew what he was doing; and Senior said he was beerified. The Bench fined the defendants each 10s. and costs, which amounted to £1. He hoped it would be a warning to the Skelmanthorpe people of the defendants' class, and they would find in the end that the law would be too strong for them. — The Chairman; Are you prepared to pay? — Senior: Yes, I think we are." (**Huddersfield Chronicle - Wednesday 03 September 1873**)

"Assault.— Serious Prevarication — Thomas Field, labourer, of Skelmanthorpe, was brought up on a warrant, charged with indecently assaulting Grace Jackson, of Skelmanthorpe, on Friday, the 5th

instant. The complainant stated that she was very sorry, but she had made a mistake; the defendant (Field) was not the man who had committed the assault. The Chairman (producing a document which the complainant had previously put forward): Then, what does this mean? (reading)— "Skelmanthorpe, January 29th. I, Thomas Field, have agreed to settle this affair with Mr. and Mrs. Watson, and to be no further trouble on either side." The complainant stated that paper was written by another person, and not defendant. The Chairman pointed out that it was signed by Thomas Field, and that the defendant's name was Thomas Field; he pressed the complainant to tell the truth. The complainant, after considerable hesitation, acknowledged that the paper had been written and signed by the man in the box. The Chairman then requested that she would state her case, as they could not the affair to be thus settled after having granted a warrant upon her sworn information. The complainant said that on Friday week, at about half past four o'clock in the afternoon, she was going along Cross lane, Skelmanthorpe, when she met a person who kicked her about and threw her down. Mr. Sykes (the magistrates' clerk) : Who was the person ? The complainant : I don't know. I have mistaken the person. (Laughter.) The Chairman said that she had already sworn that the defendant was the person who assaulted her, and again urged that she should speak the truth. The complainant, after further prevarications and much hesitations, said the defendant was the person who assaulted her. The Chairman said that it was very wrong of the complainant to act thus— the Bench might commit her for contempt of court. The complainant then said that the defendant knocked her down, and committed an indecent assault. Superintendent Sykes said that when the defendant's father came to see whether the defendant could be bailed out, he distinctly told him that he must not settle the case, or pay any money to the complainant until he came before the magistrates. The Chairman : Have you received any money? The complainant : No, sir. The Chairman then asked the defendant if he had anything to say? The defendant: All I have to say is that I was not there. Police constable McKay deposed to having apprehended the defendant on a warrant on the 12th inst. Upon charging him with the offence, he said that he did not touch the complainant. But whilst he was taking him to the Denby Dale Station he (defendant) pointed to the place where the assault had been committed. The chairman said that they had had great difficulty in getting the truth with regard to the case. The complainant had told them wrong, and the defendant had also made false statements. The Bench, therefore, felt that it was their duty to inflict severe punishments, and they committed the defendant to the Wakefield House of Correction for two calendar months, with hard labour." (***Huddersfield Chronicle - Wednesday 17 January 1877***)

"WHERE COCK FIGHTING STILL EXISTS. At the Wakefield Courthouse yesterday afternoon two men, named John Wilcock and Dan Townend, miners, the former of Gildersome and the latter Drighlington, were brought charged with cruelty to cocks at Emley. Superintendent Crow said it was generally supposed that cock-fighting had been abolished, but it was by means the case, such occurrences appeared to be pretty frequent in the district named and a fraternity of cock fighters had their headquarters there or near abouts. Skelmanthorpe Feast was now on. and the cock-fighting fraternity, whose headquarters were in the district, had taken advantage of the occasion to arrange a fight. About ten o'clock that morning Sergeant Appleby and another constable proceeded to field at Emley, about a quarter of mile from the roadway, and made a raid on about 200 men evidently intent on watching a cock fight, but all escaped except the two prisoners who stayed behind to pick up the birds. The birds, which were secured, had been dubbed and their spurs had been cut off, evidently with the intention of putting on steel spurs. One of the cocks was in a very dazed condition, and was almost dead —Sergeant Appleby having given evidence, one of the prisoners said that the bird, did not belong them. They had gone to the place to watch a fight, but it did not come off the police having come on the scene too soon —They were each fined £2 with 13s. costs, the alternative of one month's imprisonment." (***Bradford Observer - Tuesday 09 July 1901***)

"SKELMANTHORPE. The Police and the Cockfighters.— On Tuesday morning last the constable at this place received information that a cockfight was taking place within his beat. He immediately obtained the assistance of the Scissett and Emley officers, and repaired to a place on Stocks moor known as "Midgley," close to the Huddersfield and Wakefield road. Here they found that two men, named Elijah Armitage, of Scissett, and Job Townend, of Skelmanthorpe, were fighting a main of cocks. The police officers used their utmost endeavours to get near the mob, consisting of some 200 or 300 persons, but were unable to do so, as the lawless crowd, the moment they saw the of-



fficers stoned them to such an extent that the officers had to get sharply out of the way. The appearance of the constables had the effect of driving the mob from Stocks moor to Woolley Edge, near Moseley's beerhouse, whither they were followed, but the stones fell thicker and faster the officers were forced to decamp, leaving the crowd to proceed with their brutal sport unmolested." (*Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 01 April 1865*)

### **"THE SKELMANTHORPE War - Conflict with the Navvies**

Over the years, navvies had acquired a reputation for disorderly riotous and even criminal behaviour and their appearance in Skelmanthorpe when the railway was being built in the 1870s was not welcomed by the locals. So great was their anxiety that they asked for a supernumerary policeman to provide protection from the anticipated lawlessness. Curiously, things happened rather differently for, from the beginning, it was the locals who caused trouble. For two years they intruded on the works, attacked the huts and shouted insults at and picked fights with the navvies, presumably in the hope of getting rid of them. By October 1874, the village was seething with ill-feelings and fights between truculent locals and the despised navvies were becoming more frequent, especially on Saturday evenings. when the navvies visited local public houses. The navvies proved themselves strong opponents and, in a fair fight, man against man, they invariably won. Frustrated, the Skelmanthorpe men soon resorted to underhand tactics. One of them would confront a group of two or three navvies, insult them and challenge them to fight. Once the blows began, several locals came out of hiding to join in the fight taking great delight in kicking the navvies with their metal tipped clogs.

On Saturday, 7th November 1874, a fierce skirmish broke out in front of the Commercial Inn. This time the numbers were evenly matched and the conflict was long and hard. Eventually, the navvies saw off the locals and triumphantly made their way back to their huts at Shelley Woodhouse leaving their demoralized opponents in disarray. The following afternoon, still smarting from their defeat, a group of locals invaded the huts to fight a return battle but the navvies once again prevailed. Obviously, two defeats rankled and during Monday plans were carefully laid in the village. The local hot-heads had no intention of losing again and, spreading their grievances round the village; they recruited more and more people to their cause. Tomorrow, they were determined to be the victors.

Between Skelmanthorpe Station and Shelley Woodhouse the line of the railway runs through a deep cutting called, in those days, Old George Cutting. On Tuesday morning, 10th November, some two hundred navvies were at work in the cutting unaware that a group of about a hundred locals were making their way towards the line. Picking up stones as they went the attackers quietly dispersed into the fields above the cutting closely followed by twenty or more women who carried extra ammunition in their aprons. Once in position along the edge of the cutting the men opened up a bombardment on the navvies fifty feet below. Although there were more misses than hits the navvies took immediate action to defend themselves. Their position was difficult for advantage in battle usually belongs to those who hold the high ground but, armed with pick shafts, shovels and hedge stakes, they scrambled up the steep side of the cutting to meet the enemy at close quarters. Soon, by sheer weight of numbers, the locals were driven back to the road. Once again the navvies scented victory but exhilaration turned to alarm when a large back-up group of locals came out of concealment to join their beleaguered comrades. Another volley of stones scattered the navvies and drove them back towards the railway. But an appeal for help had been sent to another group of navvies working near Skelmanthorpe Station who armed themselves and set out to defend their own. Outnumbered and in danger of being closed in by the navvies the locals dropped their ammunition and ran.

The locals had chosen that particular day for the attack because they knew the Skelmanthorpe police would be engaged at the Police Court in Huddersfield. However, Sergeant Battye of Scissett heard of the attack and, accompanied by two constables, arrived at Shelley Woodhouse at eleven o'clock, an hour after the start of the riot. He found some fifty navvies preparing to march on Skelmanthorpe and the regrouped locals about to march on Shelley Woodhouse. As the two groups converged, positions were taken and insults were hurled as well as stones. Sergeant Bat-

tye immediately went into the fray to inform the ringleaders that a telegram had been sent to Huddersfield and police reinforcements were on their way. Both sides immediately withdrew and the riot fizzled out.

In response to the telegram, Superintendent Heaton sent a squad of seventeen policemen by the 2.30p.m. train to Kirkburton. From the station there they marched to Shelley Woodhouse where the navvies cheered their coming. By that time, of course, the local gang was nowhere to be seen and the excitement was over.

Afterwards, sporadic fighting seems to have continued, for three weeks later three Skelmanthorpe men, Joseph Hey, Ellis Senior and John Turton, all weavers, were summoned to appear at the Police Court in Huddersfield charged with assaulting three railway workers on 28th November. Stating the case, Superintendent Heaton said that the navvies were quietly enjoying a Saturday night pint in the Commercial Inn when the three defendants entered. Their demeanour towards the navvies was exasperating and annoying and when the landlord tried to intervene they turned off the gas. The police were informed and Constable Cullingworth was sent to warn the defendants to moderate their behaviour. After about half an hour the navvies left, closely followed by the defendants who, once outside, threw stones and tried to provoke a fight. Constable Cullingworth who was still in the vicinity intervened and arrested the three locals. The Chairman of the Magistrates, summing up, said he was determined to put a stop to such lawless behaviour and sent the three men to prison for two months with hard labour. Perhaps these custodial sentences brought the locals to their senses for afterwards there were no more reports of trouble." (*Discovering Old Huddersfield, Vol 2*). (*Manchester Courier, 1874*), (*Huddersfield Chronicle, November, 1874*)

#### Skelmanthorpe Feast

"Last Monday being Skelmanthorpe feast, and all the loose characters in the village in a state of uproar, a man named Wm. Lodge, about seventy years of age, was attacked by a young fellow named Jacob Dyson, aged about eighteen. Poor old Lodge was knocked down, and his cowardly assailant kicked and otherwise ill-used him so that he has since died. Dyson is under arrest, and of course will be committed. The above village has become notorious of late for its outrages, and until a regular paid constable is sent to the locality we need not expect a reformation. On a Sabbath evening fifty or perhaps sixty young fellows are to be found on the public highway gambling, and the local constable afraid to interfere: surely the day is fast approaching when the request of the respectable inhabitants will be acceded to, namely, to grant them a "paid constable" who will not be afraid of doing his duty. We are informed, upon good authority, that in certain public-houses gambling is allowed to be carried on until a late hour of the night." (*Huddersfield Chronicle, 17 July 1874*)

#### The Worsted Inspectorate

The Worsted Committee and Worsted Inspectorate were established in 1777 to police the textile industry. At the time, the losses to the industry, through deliberate appropriation and the 'wasting of time' by employees, were considerable.

The primary objectives of the Inspectorate were to stop the simple theft of workplace materials, whether that took place in the out-worker's cottage, or the mill, and also to stop the customary practices that had established themselves over time in the textile trade – in particular the practice of workers converting waste material for their own use. The Worsted Acts also empowered them to prosecute the 'neglect of work' (workers' not completing contracts) and other infractions and breaches of contract. If conviction was secured, the offender was fined £20 in most cases, or in default (and most did default because this was an enormous sum to find for most workers – far in excess of their annual wage), they were imprisoned for a period of up to one month.

The Worsted Committee lasted for nearly two hundred years as a viable concern, continuing to act in the interests of their employers until well after World War Two. Unusual too was the range of their duties, pursuing the suspect from the point of crime through the prosecution of offenders until the final judgment of guilt or innocence was delivered in court. Since material was often temporarily

stored in a worker's house or shed before being sold, the homes of factory workers were searched as assiduously as the houses and workshops of domestic out-workers had been previously. Inspectors merely had to obtain a warrant signed by two magistrates before searching the house of a suspect, often accompanied by parish constables (later police officers) and/or the suspect's employer.

The most important of the local law enforcement agencies was the Huddersfield and Holmfirth Manufacturers' Association, whose chief inspector was R. H. Kaye, who regularly prosecuted under the Worsted Act. On numerous occasions, Kaye and Heaton (the superintending constable for Upper Agbrigg) took action on behalf of the Manufacturers' Association, bring men and women before the local magistrates.

The majority of prosecutions involved the embezzlement of woollen and worsted material - not always waste. However, there were also prosecutions for the embezzlement of looms, gears and dyestuffs. Some cases were straightforward as the cloth in question was found (the inspector having the power of search) and the 'offender' not able to produce an invoice. Other cases were less straightforward, not least because of the varying attitudes and practices of local employers towards 'waste'. Some paid all their out-weavers a monetary wage and expected all waste to be returned to the mill. Others still permitted perquisites and turned a blind eye to some portion of waste which it was not necessary to return. Others did not expect waste returned, but claimed they had not given permission that it could be sold. Whilst some employers still implemented the practice of a mixed wage, allowing perquisites to workmen in lieu of a full wage!

When a conviction was achieved the Worsted Acts laid down clear penalties - a fine of £20 or a month in goal for a first offence and £30 or three months for a second. The magistrates, however, exercised discretion as to what the punishment should be and sometimes let 'offenders' off with a recovery of the costs of the articles, etc.

***Policing the industrial north of England, 1777-1877: the control of labour at work and in the Streets, Barry Godfrey and David J. Cox (Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies Vol. 20, n°1 | 2016, Varia)***

## **Policing**

The Huddersfield district covered an area of almost 86,000 acres and contained a population of over 100,000. Old and new practices coexisted. Handloom weaving persisted in several townships, for example, Kirkburton, Kirkheaton and Skelmanthorpe while power mills sprang up in others, for example Marsden and Meltham. Social tensions created by economic change posed problems of order but they were compounded by a tradition of political radicalism and popular dissent, which showed itself most notably in the Anti-Poor Law and Chartist movements of the 1830s and 1840s which gave rise to fear of the middle classes that the workers were out to subvert the social order, but also contributed to an ideological framework whereby police conduct was evaluated.

Some of the greatest problems stemmed from the geography of the region. The population was scattered and often in relatively inaccessible areas at a distance from Huddersfield with their own culture and radical traditions. It was against this complex and evolving socio-economic and political background that the superintending constable system and later the West Riding County Constabulary had to operate.

Outside the Huddersfield boundary, the responsibility for policing rested with the magistrates of the West Riding. This led to a distinctive, but neglected, form of policing. Marginalized in most police histories have been the "Tory initiatives" embodied in the Parish Constables Acts of 1842 and 1850, which provided for the appointment of a paid superintending constable responsible for coordinating the activities of parish constables in any petty sessional division. This was used in the West Riding of Yorkshire, particularly in the Huddersfield district, to create a system of policing that satisfied many of the needs and expectations of local magistrates and manufacturers, who voted consistently not to establish a county force under the 1839 Rural Police Act.

Thomas Heaton assumed responsibility for the Upper Agbrigg district in June 1848 and held the post until the end of the parish constable system in 1856. (Upper Agbrigg stretched as far as Kirkburton, Holmfirth and Shelley in our locality but excluded Skelmanthorpe, Denby Dale and Clayton West which were in Lower Agbrigg or Staincross). Heaton believed in a causal link between gambling, drinking and criminality. The magistrates saw the dissemination of information and the regulation of parochial constables as central aspects of his work, but also expected him to play an active role, including co-operating with existing local law enforcement agencies - particularly the Worsted Inspectorate.

Heaton's preoccupation with breaches of the licensing laws, especially at Easter, Christmas and during local feasts; his determination to stop young men taking part in races for money, or playing pitch and toss in the highway made him appear a local pest determined to interfere in working men's leisure pursuits. But Heaton was serious and went to great lengths to enforce licensing and gambling laws. Individual cases do not do full justice to Heaton's commitment. Take, for example, a day's work in the winter of 1852. In the morning while out in his gig, he found the landlords of both the Sovereign Inn and the Star Inn in Fenay Bridge serving drinks illegally between 10 and 11 a.m. Continuing on his way, just before mid-day he came across some young men playing pitch and toss and obstructing the road near Shepley, whom he apprehended and summonsed, before arriving at the Sovereign Inn, Shepley, where he found the landlord selling alcohol out of hours. Not content with that haul, between 3 and 4 p.m. He found time to catch the landlord of the Star Inn, Shelley, and a beer house keeper in Netherton similarly breaking the law. In total he had travelled over 20 miles that day in his pursuit of lawbreakers. All were subsequently prosecuted; and the precise date - the 25<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Day!

Heaton's methods made him unpopular. Using men in plain clothes led to accusations of spying while more mundanely checking public houses as soon as the church bells stopped ringing gave rise to charges of being a zealot. But Heaton was not acting simply on his own beliefs. The local magistrates repeatedly stressed the importance of containing and restricting gambling and illegal drinking and many local organisations and the middle class were concerned with the threat posed by working class leisure activities and particularly by the 'wild, rough youths' of the neighbourhood.

The scale of police activities and their success in marginalising pastimes such as cockfighting and prize fighting in the early and mid-1850s was considerable - not least when the advent of the railway made it easier for people to travel to such 'sports' from miles around.

To overcome problems with electing parish constables, at the suggestion of the magistrates, paid constables were appointed in several townships including Kirkburton, Marsden, and Meltham. Most were introduced peacefully, but elsewhere matters were more problematic. In Kirkburton, a paid constable was introduced as early as 1850, but met with "a very warm but unsuccessful opposition". The 'poorer classes' determined to 'nurse their wrath' and Constable Glover was assaulted in 'the most cowardly and clandestinely manner' on a number of occasions. The extent of his continuing unpopularity soon became evident. In the following months the windows of his house were broken by stones and he was physically assaulted on at least two occasions - one led to a trial for cutting, wounding with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm - for which sentences of seven years' transportation and twelve months hard labour were handed down. It is not known what led to Glover's unpopularity, but his closeness to local manufacturers; his 'moving on' people and his zeal in enforcing licensing laws could not have helped. No paid constable was subsequently appointed in Kirkburton until after the 1856 Act.

The County and Borough Police Act of 1856 meant that from January 1857 the West Riding would have a county-wide police force. Parish constables were not abolished immediately, but the balance of responsibility for policing shifted to the paid officers of the WRCC under its new chief constable, Lieutenant-Colonel Cobb. The WRCC was a large force, numbering 500 officers and men at inception and rising to over 650 by the late 1860s. However, the area it covered - 1,600,000 acres and the population - 800,000 - that it covered meant that the number of police per head of population was low, and particularly so for some of the far-flung small villages. The police were scattered and each one much more isolated from one another than in town forces.

Heaton, the previous superintending constable, became the new Superintendent for Upper Agbrigg in the new force. Attitudes to the new policemen varied from township to township and depended heavily on how the newcomer reacted to and treated the inhabitants. Their attempts to curb out of hours drinking and suppress cockfighting in and around Kirkburton and Holmfirth, for example, provoked a number of violent responses.

Not all routine policing was uncontentious. Concerns with order and decorum from the better off and middle classes gave rise to conflict as traditional activities and events were subject to greater scrutiny. As the police became increasingly involved in curbing drinking, gambling and cock-fighting, and in ensuring order at customary celebrations, such as local feasts, the scope for conflict between police and many working-class men and women increased.

This was particularly acute when the local policeman was disliked and seen as a “comer in” and as ‘an occupying power’. This led to mass disturbances in Honley and in Holmfirth until the offending policeman was removed.

The evidence from the court cases following these disturbances suggests that there were real problems for the new county force in some areas. The pages of the Huddersfield newspapers bear witness to continuing animosity towards police. Furthermore it was a problem which continued into the following decade. In 1873, Heaton conceded that there were places, such as Skelmanthorpe, ‘where police were routinely interfered with in the execution of their duty.’ In Skelmanthorpe at this time the Constable’s house a “lock-up” was in King Street near the old Dog and Gun public house.

In the autumn of the previous year, the inhabitants of another nearby village - Emley, celebrated the departure of an unpopular constable in spectacular fashion. PC Suttle, a teetotaler, had made himself very unpopular during the two years he spent there. His departure sparked off a rousing send-off in a spectacular form of ‘rough music’ to express their disapproval. ‘The local band was engaged, an irregular procession formed and a crowd of persons marched through the village. One man carried a beer barrel on his back, another carried a loaf of bread, held aloft on a hay fork. A third carried a ham on his head, while others for want of better things, tied their handkerchiefs to the end of sticks and held them up in the breeze... beer was plentiful ... and great was the rejoicing.’ PC Suttle could not escape unnoticed. ‘As the policeman essayed to depart (members of the crowd) brayed discordant noises in his ears and stoned, jostled and knocked him down and otherwise insulted him.’

These events highlight the very real limitations of police power and authority and the need for the police to accommodate themselves to their community rather than simply imposing their authority. Superintendent Heaton’s annual reports show that over 50 per cent of summons were accounted for by three offences - drunkenness (17%), assaults (21%) and vagrancy (24%).

Although cockfighting had been made illegal in 1835 it remained a popular blood sport across many parts of the West Riding and was still supported by all classes. The magistrates in Upper Agbrigg made clear their detestation of the ‘degrading spectacle and barbarous sport of cock-fighting’. However, many weavers, especially around Kirkburton and Holmfirth, were noted for being fond of visiting local ‘cockpits’ and the police view was that cockfighting was greatly on the increase and well-attended fights were reported in the newspapers throughout the 1860s. In May 1868, for example, crowds of 200 or more were reported at Farnley Tyas and Kirkheaton.

Cockfights, dogfights and pigeon racing were public and often large-scale events, but perhaps more police time was devoted to the more unspectacular but ubiquitous issue of gambling. Gambling took place in pubs and beer houses and carried on despite all police efforts to stop it. Gambling took many forms in a wide variety of locations. Across the district young men, most commonly on a Sunday, met together to gamble on the roadside, in fields, in quarries and at local feasts - and week after week the local magistrates heard cases of men playing pitch and toss, dominoes and the like. In the eyes of both the police and magistrates, gambling was the route to a

life of crime, but for all their efforts, the 'crusade' against gambling enjoyed little success as it was so widespread and supported. Gambling was immensely popular with many working class men. They did not see it as 'a great social evil' but rather as an opportunity for excitement with the hope of making some money during their free time on the Sabbath having been cooped up in mills and workshops during the week. The police were in an unwinnable position.

***"Beerhouses, Brothels and Bobbies - policing by consent in Huddersfield district in the mid-nineteenth century", David Taylor, University of Huddersfield Press, 2016***

## Sports, Shows and Events

### SKELMANTHORPE FAIR.

“THE FIRST CATTLE FAIR. Some time ago steps were taken to establish two fairs for cattle at this place. One to be held on the 1st Monday in May, and the other the first Monday in October. The first fair was last Monday, and the show of horse, cows, sheep, pigs far exceeded the anticipation of the most sanguine. The dairy cows particularity attracted considerable attention, and the sheep and pigs were very fine. A number of prizes were awarded, and the following were the successful exhibitors: best dairy cow Mr. Jos Field, Skelmanthorpe; 2nd. Mr. Wm. Carter Scissett. Sheep, Joseph Norton 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes. Best litter of pigs, John Dowse, surgeon, Skelmanthorpe. Extra prize for the best lot of cattle submitted by a single person – Jos Norton.

The interest of the fair was considerably enhanced by a prize being awarded for the best trotting horses with the merits to be judged by a race of about one mile. The winner was Mr. Jos Field, Skelmanthorpe. Parties attending the fair expressed themselves satisfied with the arrangements and a large number of sales were effected at good prices.”

**(Leeds Intelligencer, 9 May 1863)**

“A meeting of the Cattle Fairs’ Committee was held at the house of Mr. J. Eastwood, the Commercial Inn, on Monday evening last. Mr. W. Senior presiding to decide the classes and prizes for the Autumn fair. It was decided to follow those offered for the Spring Fair.” **(Huddersfield Chronicle 17 September 1864)**

“The Autumn fair for the sale of horses, cattle, pigs, etc. was held on Monday last, and surpassed the expectation of its promoters. The day was remarkably fine, and a large number of animals of all classes were shown... Prizes were offered for competition in several classes. The show of horses was very good, especially in the agricultural and roadsters. Some first class animals were exhibited, especially those belonging to Josh Norton, esq. and Messrs Hanson and Co. of Bradley Mills. Of beasts the show was also good, and prices ranged rather higher. The show of pigs was also large, and the prices tended upwards.... Ample refreshments were provided for the large number of visitors at the house of Mr. Jonathon Greenwood, the Grove Inn, which is most admirably situated for the accommodation of all comers being at the junction of several roads and near the centre of the fair. In the evening the committee, judges and principal exhibitors, to the number of nearly thirty, sat down to an excellent dinner provided by Mr. Eastwood, the Commercial Inn. After dinner a determination was expressed to leave no effort unused to make Skelmanthorpe fairs both good and profitable”. **(Huddersfield Chronicle 1 October 1864)**

“Cattle Fair – the fifth, half-yearly meeting for the sale of horned cattle, sheep, etc. was held in Skelmanthorpe on Monday. The show of horned cattle was not as good as the Spring fair; still there was a good show of animals with many of them of superior quality. Notwithstanding the fact that the prices were very high, a clearance was effected, every beast being sold off. Several pens of sheep were exhibited and the animals were of a good breed were soon caught up, the prices paid being very remunerative. The show of pigs was but meagre. Of horses there were but two or three exhibited, and these were inferior in quality, and consequently were unnoticed. The announcement of Mr. Greenwood of the Grove Inn, that he would provide a lunch and a quart of ale gratis to all exhibitors of stock, brought about forty dealers and buyers to his table, where they were amply supplied with refreshments free of cost, and we understand that Mr. Greenwood purposes giving prizes for the best trotting horses at the next spring fair. The day being fine, a large number of pleasure-seekers visited the village, and the numerous stall-keepers reaped a rich harvest”. **(Huddersfield Chronicle 30 September 1865)**

“The Fair – the usual half-yearly fair was held on Monday in Skelmanthorpe, when there was a good show of pigs and sheep. Numbers of people regretted that the restriction still remaining on the exhibition of horned cattle through disease, prevented that class of animals being shown. There was a fair demand for pigs, and numbers changed hands at high prices. The demand for

sheep was also brisk, and a fair amount of business was done at remunerating rates. In the afternoon there was a spirited trotting match. A large concourse of spectators assembled to witness the sport but there was little betting. After a canter or two the horses got well off, but it was evident from the first that Mr. Field's, "Digby" would be the winner. This proved correct. Mr. Dowse's "Fanny" being second." (**Huddersfield Chronicle 29 September 1866**)

"THE Eighth HALF-YEARLY FAIR will be held in Skelmanthorpe, on Monday, the 6th of May. A free lunch will be provided by Mr. Jonathan Greenwood, the Grove Inn. for all exhibitors of stock. Pens and every accommodation provided." (**Huddersfield Chronicle, 1867**).

"The Fair – the ninth half-yearly fair for the sale of horses, cattle, sheep, etc. took place in Skelmanthorpe on Monday. There was an average show of horned cattle, sheep and pigs and considerable business was transacted. In the afternoon a trotting match took place when Mr. Joseph Field's old horse, Digby, again proved the winner. The horse of Mr. J. Jagger of Kirkburton was second." (**Huddersfield Chronicle 05 October 1867**)

"Skelmanthorpe Spring Fair. The Spring fair for the sale of horned cattle, pigs, etc. was held on Monday. Only a very few head of cattle were exhibited, and the show of pigs was extremely limited. Little business was done. The trotting match for prizes, which usually concluded the fair, had to be dispensed with on account of the weather." (**Huddersfield Chronicle 8 May 1869**)

### **"SKELMANTHORPE Feast**

Traditionally held on the first Monday and Tuesday after 6<sup>th</sup> July. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Skelmanthorpe Feast was a riotous affair with bull and bear-baiting and organised dog fights on the feast field. A quote from John Taylor, who compiled a biography of Skelmanthorpe-born preacher Isaac Marsden (1807–1882), records that "*Public houses were crowded with drunken revellers, who caroused all day and made night hideous with quarrels and disturbances ... Among these scenes of revelry were mountebanks, showmen, fortune telling Gypsies, vagabonds and thieves from every quarter.*" Taylor, John (1882). **Reminiscences of Isaac Marsden**

"This annual festivity was observed on Monday. As usual, the scholars of the Wesleyan, Primitive, and United Free Church Sunday Schools, to the number of nearly 400, assembled, and joined in a procession. Headed by the Skelmanthorpe brass band, the procession passed through the village, stopping at various places, and singing hymns. Afterwards they returned to their respective school-rooms, and were regaled with tea, currant cake, etc. The feast was attended by a few booths, stalls, flying boxes, boats, and other adjuncts to a village fair, but they met with little encouragement. A gala, held in a field behind the Commercial Inn, was well attended, and the sports were kept up until dark. An unusual occurrence, at a Skelmanthorpe feast, was the fact that but few rows were kicked up, and the services of the police were not called for." (**Huddersfield Chronicle, 17 July 1869**)

Skelmanthorpe Feast was held in various local fields and there are memories of several "Feast Fields". This is because the fairground organisers enquired of prices long before the date and put the fair in the field that they could obtain most cheaply. For example, the Local Board on 2 March 1892 "letting recreation ground for Feast week for £6."

### **"THE FEAST**

The paragraph under that head in last week's paper appears to have given offence in some quarters, and Mr. Fisher, on behalf of himself and all Skelmanthorpe, wishes to contradict the statement contained, that "although no noses or ears were bitten off, still the teeth were freely used." Mr Fisher thinks the phrase in question was written as a "skit" on Skelmanthorpe. Whether that be so or not we leave the inhabitants themselves to judge, as they know whether such occurrences did or did not take place." (From <<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0000167%2f18640723%2f034&stringtohighlight=%22skelmanthorpe%20feast%22>> )



"This annual event was celebrated on Monday and Tuesday, and proved as noisy as ever. In addition to the usual feasting, two galas with athletic sports, races, etc. were provided in a large field near the Globe Inn. (*Huddersfield Chronicle, 15 July 1871*)

#### "THE CLOWN CRICKETERS AT SKELMANTHORPE

On Monday and Tuesday last, the Skelmanthorpe Feast days, the Clown Cricketers from Leeds about 15 in number, played a friendly game of cricket with the Skelmanthorpe Cricket Club. Vast numbers flocked to see the match with something like £50 being taken at the gates during the two days. The acting and appearance of the Clowns caused much merriment. One of them was dressed in female attire, another was habited in Indian garb, and so on, and whilst the game was proceeding, rabbits and pigeons were allowed their liberty from a box like a large cricket bat. Acrobatic performance was frequently indulged in and witty remarks made to the evident delight of the many present. The Crown Cricketers were evidently more interested in making the event a happy one than in their cricket to the benefit of the Skelmanthorpe Club – who won both matches." (*Barnsley Chronicle, 14 July 1877*)

#### **The Scissett, Skelmanthorpe, and Denby Dale Horticultural Society**

This society held its first annual exhibition in the National School Room, Scissett, on Saturday last. The judges were Mr. Wilson, of Cannon Hall, Mr. Reid, of Nortonthorpe Hall, and Mr. Cork, of Denby Grange Hall. At half-past four o'clock, the Rev. A. Donald took the chair; afterwards an appropriate address was delivered to a crowded assembly, by Wm. Barrett, Esq., of Wakefield. He greatly complimented the society for having such a show of vegetables and fruit. The potatoes, he said, were the finest specimens ever exhibited in this district, and he thought they were highly favoured, the judges not having seen the least symptoms of disease. At the conclusion of the address, thanks were voted to the president, and also to Mr. Barrett, for his able address. The school room was tastefully decorated, and the society, if well conducted, will probably become very useful in the neighbourhood. (*Leeds Times - Saturday 19 August 1848*)

"NORTONTHORPE AND DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY. ANNUAL SHOW AND SPORTS. The most successful show and sports in connection with the above society were the seventeenth, which took place on Saturday last. in the old football field at Nortonthorpe, for, contrary to the state of things in many previous years, the weather was beautifully fine, and consequently there was a very large attendance—the number present falling not far short of ten thousand—and the people had every facility for thoroughly enjoying themselves. There were many means provided to this end in addition to the show and the sports. Sergeant-major Handy and a party of gymnastic members of the Huddersfield Athletic Club gave remarkably good performances with dumb bells, cavalry sword, foils, boxing gloves, Indian clubs, sword and bayonet, single sticks, and quarter staves; and their exhibitions on the parallel bars, flying rings, trapeze, and horizontal bar were clever and neat, and were greatly admired. Mr. J. Whiteley also provoked roars of laughter by his comical antics. Then there were shooting galleries. "Aunt Sally." "roll, bowl, or pitch" for cocoanut; ginger bread stalls, and (what ought to be provided at all such gatherings) a tea booth, as well as the ordinary tent where beer, spirits, and wine were dispensed. Food for the mind was supplied by the music of the Skelmanthorpe Brass Band, who played a very varied selection of music." (*Huddersfield Daily Examiner, August 14th, 1893*)

"The sixth annual show of the Skelmanthorpe and District Agricultural, Horticultural, Floral and Athletic Society was held on Saturday when there was a record entry. The following classes were judged: horses, cattle, poultry and rabbits. An athletic sports event was also held." (*Sheffield Telegraph, Monday, August 30th 1909*).

"SCISSETT. Gooseberry Show.— The annual exhibition of the Nortonthorpe Gooseberry Society took place on Saturday last, at the house of Mr. John Lockwood, the British Queen Inn, Scissett, when a good show of this fruit was placed on the tables. A large number of persons visited the show, and expressed their admiration at the amount of the gooseberries placed before them. (*Huddersfield Chronicle, 12th August 1865*)

## Skelmanthorpe Cricket Club

It's known that organised cricket was being played in Skelmanthorpe on a field at the top of Huddersfield Road in 1871. A Skelmanthorpe team are playing home and away matches against Emley in 1876, and had regular fixtures throughout the 1870s and 1880s. In 1880 they were playing at "the rear end of Co-op farm". The current club was founded in 1892 and they became founder members of Huddersfield Combination League in 1893. In 1892 their President was B. Norton Esq. Secretary Mr. Eastwood Rhodes and Treasurer Mr. Kilner. Their club house was the Globe Hotel.

They moved to play at their present premises in Lidgett Lane in 1900. (*Cricket History of Calderdale and Kirklees*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060829122402/http://www.ckcricketheritage.org.uk/southkirklees/skelmanthorpe/clubhome.htm>; accessed 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

**"Athletic Festival at Skelmanthorpe.**— The first annual festival in connection with the Skelmanthorpe Cricket Club, was held on the 13th and 14th inst. There was a fair attendance both days. On Monday, proceedings was commenced with a cricket match, between Skelmanthorpe v. Mapplewell and Staincross,' which ended in a very easy victory for the home team. After the match, the following events were contested: — 150 yards handicap flat race, first prize, musical globe, value £2 25. , won by Noah Mitchell, Kitchen Royd CO Bowling at wickets, prize, a pair of boots, won by R. Dalton. Skelmanthorpe CC. 440 yards hurdle race, prize, 155., won by A Smith, Denby Dale. 100 yards juvenile handicap flat race, prize, value 7s. 6d. This race is still in dispute. 80 yards track race, over hurdles, 1st. prize, pair of carvers, Thomas Miller ; 2nd prize, album, won by Henry Wadsworth. On Tuesday, proceedings were commenced with a cricket match, between Skelmanthorpe v. Newsome, which again ended in a victory for the home team. The following events were contested :— 440 yards flat race, 1st prize, timepiece, value 30s., won by A. Lodge, Skelmanthorpe CC. Throwing at a wicket, 30 yards distant, prize, cricket hat, won by S. Shaw, Skelmanthorpe CC Kicking the football, 1st prize, cigar case, won by W. Fisher, Skelmanthorpe CC ; 2nd prize, meerchaum pipe, won by J. Lodge. Ball gathering, 1st prize, concertina, value 12s. 6 d., won by Ed. Barker, Kitchen Royd. After the games and sports each day, the Skelmanthorpe Brass Band played for dancing. This being the first festival given by the Skelmanthorpe CC, it is considered to have been a great success. (*Huddersfield Chronicle*, 18 July 1874)

"Once again Skelmanthorpe Feast has come and gone and the cricketers like other folks have been enjoying themselves. They have played three matches but have not been able to win any of them with all three being drawn through lack of time." (*Huddersfield Examiner*, July 17 1891)

## Skelmanthorpe Football Club

Undoubtedly football of some kind was played in the village for many years, but the first newspaper account featuring a Skelmanthorpe Football Club was in *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* on 23 January 1886 giving dates when they were open for matches with "good clubs". Their first reported match appeared to be against Primrose Hill shown as a fixture in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* on 1 January 1887.

Skelmanthorpe Football Club were the winners of the Huddersfield & District Cup in 1905-06.

Skelmanthorpe has two bowling clubs. One by the Windmill Inn and the second, the Central Bowling Club, which was behind the Liberal Club.

"A fine new bowling club and green were opened on Saturday at Skelmanthorpe. The Club, which is known as the Skelmanthorpe Central Bowling Club, is in connection with the local Liberal Club, and is owed to the generosity of Mr. C. E. Field and Mr. J. T. Field. The former has purchased and present land and also furnished the club house, and the latter has lent £300 for three years, free of interest, for the purpose of laying the green. In addition, Mr. Frank Child has presented to the trustees the trees for the south side of the green. The opening ceremony was performed by Mrs. C. E. Field." (*Huddersfield Examiner*, July 1911).

## VALLEY NATURALISTS

The study of botany often grew out of an interest in herbal medicine and every community probably had its own herbalists with varying degrees of traditional knowledge, many of them women and very few of them leaving any record. 18<sup>th</sup> Century records of the first naturalist societies exist from Lancashire and there may have been societies in Yorkshire, even though there is no record of them exists.

In 1838 there arrived in England the unfortunately named Dr Coffin, whose remedies, based on those of the American Samuel Thomson, became popular among working class radicals. He toured Yorkshire, including Huddersfield and by the 1840s a Botanical Society existed in the town advocating remedies that often relied on cayenne pepper and lobelia. Coffin's agent, William Fox of Sheffield went on to publish, 'The Model Botanic Guide to Health' which was still being issued in 1916. Richard Brook, one of the founders of Huddersfield Naturalist Society, a printer and book seller, was also a Chartist, a scientific botanist and a medical botanist. From 1847 he published in parts 'Culpepper's Herbal Improved: A New Family Herbal, ...or a history and description of all the British and Foreign Plants, which are useful to man, either as food, medicine, farming purposes, or in the arts and manufactures.'

Holmfirth Botanical Society appears by 1872, but by now the scientific rather than the merely medicinal interest was paramount. One of its prime movers, John Sanderson, an auctioneer, described the merits of their pursuit, '*In botany there was no life to destroy, nor any experiment to make accompanied with danger; on the contrary, all was delight, innocence and safety*'. Three years later Honley Naturalist Society was formed and in 1876 it held its first annual tea party and entertainment at the Coach & Horses. John Sanderson of Holmfirth, remarked on the 'great progress naturalists were making in that locality.' By 1885 it was reported that Naturalist's societies were 'springing up like mushrooms', a new one at Scholes meeting at the WMC, which the Examiner correspondent commented was, 'better than meeting in a public house.'

***The Botanical Tradition, Radicalism and Naturalists' Societies in the Colne, Holme and Dearne Valleys. Allan Brooke (Underground Histories)***

### **Skelmanthorpe Naturalists' Society**

Although Botany was often the original inspiration behind the foundation of naturalists societies, and for some often remained the main activity, other branches of natural history became just as important. By 1890 Skelmanthorpe Naturalist Society meetings heard reports from members not only on Botany, but also entomology, ornithology, geology, micro-zoology and micro-botany. A founder of the society, (as well as secretary of the Mechanics Institution), Fred Lawton, a handloom weaver turned power loom weaver, was also a keen local historian and antiquarian. Some naturalists became recognised authorities in their field, such as the Skelmanthorpe handloom weaver, Ben Morley, whose knowledge of Lepidoptera earned him a curator's job at Tolson Museum. Officers for 1892 included President, Fred Lawton, Vice Presidents Seth Dyson and William Peel, Secretary, Luther Tyas. Meetings were held alternative Tuesdays in the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom with field trips. Subscription 2s per year. It was founded in 1890. (***Skelmanthorpe Almanck, 1892***)

On the calendar of events followed by the society, rambles were the most popular among those members who were not content to be arm-chair naturalists. The enthusiasm is captured by Fred Lawton's account of 'A Ramble with the Skelmanthorpe Naturalists' at Denby Dale in April 1891: '*The members met under the viaducts in weather that was not all that could be desired. Naturalists, owing to the long cold season have been imprisoned...They were over the walls and down at the waterside before anybody could say Jack Robinson.*' Golden saxifrage, liverwort, cicely, bistort, and wood anemone were among the plants found and not only the first chaff of spring, but also its nest. Although it would appal us today, one egg was taken, an act Lawton was moved to justify. '*The officers and leading members of our society are strongly opposed to the wholesale robbery of birds' nests.*' Taking was condoned only when it was for study not '*the mere selfish gratification of having a collection of dried specimens to show to the admiring gaze of friends.*' This was an

extremely contentious issue for naturalists even then. Most collecting of specimens – birds, their eggs, insects etc – was done not on society rambles but by individuals. Morley, for example accumulated a collection of over 20,000 moths and butterflies, mostly locally which he showed in local exhibitions.

*“SKELMANTHORPE. The fortnightly meeting was held last Tuesday evening. in the Primitive Methodist Schoolroom. The president, Mr. George Hey, occupied the chair. Mr. C. Oates exhibited a brilliantly coloured beetle from India, also a specimen of gold quartz. Mr. Hobson Lodge exhibited some preserved specimens of the water boat man. A pleasant half-hour was then spent in impromptu speeches on various natural history subjects. (Huddersfield Daily Examiner, 31 Oct 1891)*

*“The members of this society held their usual meeting last Tuesday evening, in the Primitive Methodist School, Mr. L. Tyas in the chair. A box of insects and beetles, and a few shells, were exhibited by the members. The entomologists reported nine species of insects, including C. suffamata, E. cardamines, and E. castigata. The ornithologists reported short-eared owl and a number of jays had been shot, and sedge-warbler and whinchat as having been seen. Eleven plants were laid on the tables and named. Mr. F. Dyson read a paper on " Moles and mole hills." Discussion followed, and a vote of thanks to Mr. Dyson closed the meeting.” Huddersfield Chronicle, 22 May 1896*

Cawthorne Museum visitors: During 1891, 2,609 people signed the Visitors Book, 285 coming from Huddersfield, fourteen miles away, and 193 from Barnsley, which is four miles away. It has been possible to identify the occupations of a number of the visitors, particularly those who came in groups from churches or chapels, as neighbours or as friends; two typical examples are the group of young women from Clayton West, (a dressmaker, a worsted spinner, a worsted weaver, a cashmere weaver and a manufacturer of boots and shoes) and the group of eighteen young men, members of the **Skelmanthorpe Naturalists Society**, which included six coal miners, a banksman and a colliery trammer, five fancy weavers, a joiner's apprentice and a general labourer.

Concern about conservation grew in the late 19th century reflected in the increase of protective legislation and organisations like the RSPB and the National Trust. In our area as early as 1873 there were calls in the Examiner from Slaithwaite on the need to protect birds against ‘hobbledhoyes with rusty guns’ and gamekeepers ‘who seem to imagine that creation was established solely to maintain a lot of game’ . (Allan Brooke, **Underground Histories**)

### **Skelmanthorpe Annual Canary and Pigeon Show**

Skelmanthorpe & District Bird Fanciers' Association. In 1892 the President was Walter Senior, Vice President Seth Dyson, Secretary William Wadsworth. It had 66 members.

Skelmanthorpe became an important centre for the breeding and showing of prize canaries at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and held an annual show. A breeding pair were worth up to a £1 with exceptional birds worth much more. Skelmanthorpe breeders attended shows across the country and took many prizes including the Crystal Palace national show and exported birds as far as America. Skelmanthorpe held its own show each year until the late 1960s.

*“Canary and Pigeon Show. The Skelmanthorpe and District Bird and Pigeon Fanciers' Association held their fourth annual show last Saturday in the Old Globe Hotel. The number of entries were canaries 94, pigeons 90. The following were prize takers:- Canaries, clear yellow Yorkshire 1 and 3 L. Lawton, 2 C. Taylor; clear buff Yorkshire, 1 W. Wadsworth, 2 L. Lawton, 3 L. Smith; marked yellow Yorkshire, 1 H. Radley, 2 W. Wadsworth, 3 T. Wood; marked buff Yorkshire, 1 W. Wadsworth, 2 T. Wood, 3. L. Lawton; etc... A special prize of a copper kettle was awarded to W. Wadsworth for having gained the most points of anybody in the show....”*  
**(Huddersfield Daily Examiner 1 December 1894)**