

TIMES AND GAZETTE, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1963

THE DAY A PRIEST WAS MURDERED

THE LORD NELSON
INN -- FULL OF HISTORY
AND CHARACTER

Luddenden still retains its
old-world charm

*Looking
round the
districts -- 10*

NESTLING deep at the foot of Midgley and Warley hills, the village of Luddenden retains an old world charm with narrow twisting and winding streets, tiny folds, a beautiful church and a village pub.

There has been a cluster of houses comprising the village for several hundred years and in the early 15th century it was of sufficient importance to be granted a faculty to build a church.

Through the centre of the village runs the boisterous River Ludd which still bears unmistakeable traces of early harnessing of the water. The river forms the boundary line for local government purposes between Sowerby Bridge Council and Halifax Corporation.

Entering the village from Luddenden Foot one passes the modern works of Messrs C. Lindley and Co. Ltd., engineers, before coming to the 14th century corn mill. In the centre of the village is a garden where once stood the Elizabethan building of the Working Men's Club, which has only been demolished in recent times. The club has now other premises in the high street of the village.

From the Square one passes over the River Ludd in the ancient township of Midgley, up the narrow twisting road to the Lord Nelson Inn, dated 1634. Across the road is the war memorial, and the church.

Leaving the Lord Nelson Inn, one immediately begins the ascent of Church Lane and Old Lane. The latter leads straight and steep from the Church school to the top of Luddenden Lane. It is one of the steepest lanes in the district, being equalled only by the Buttress, at Hebden Bridge.

Old Lane is part of the Long Causeway, an ancient highway leading from Burnley, via Kescote, to Hebden Bridge, Heights Road, in Wadsworth and Midgley to Halifax.

Old Corn Mill

Part of the old corn mill is still being used by a firm of wool merchants and also by Messrs Lindley's. It is much larger than the original structure which was erected about 1379. It was built to take the place of an earlier corn mill in Warley which ground corn for the tenants of the Lord of the Manor. When that mill could not meet the needs, the new mill was erected on its present site. Material from the old building was used, and the stream and water wheel provided the motive power.

In 1330, Richard Paget was the miller. Later owners or lessees were John Haldesworth, Richard Chalesworth, William Ramsden, Hugh and Gilbert Lacy. The latter name changed to Lacy, and the owner of the mill in 1600 was John Lacy of Brearley Hall, the Lord of the Manor of Midgley. Several of the leading families in the district have had an interest in the property—Murgatroyd, Oldfield, Lacy and Farrar. It passed in the possession of the Murgatroyd family by the marriage of Henry Murgatroyd to Jane Lacy, in 1632, and remained a Murgatroyd possession for over 200 years. It later came into the hands of Hartley and

John Murgatroyd, of Greave, Midgley, who sold it to Robert and William Henry Thompson in 1856. It was then in the hands of the Thompson family until it was sold in 1951.

Stream produced 30 h.p.

In 1856 the property then included the corn mill, maltkiln, warehouses, stabling for 18 horses, wagon and cart sheds, gig house, joiner's shop, yards, outbuildings, reservoir, water wheel (the brook produced about 30 h.p.), and goits; and included in the sale were rights in connection with Haigh Cote and Leadbeater reservoirs on Saltonstall Moor, which were erected for the benefit of the mills in Luddenden valley.

Mr Robert Thompson extended the mill, built the chimney and continued the corn business up to his death in 1875. His sons carried it on until the early part of this century.

The Thompsons were leading Methodists in the locality, and Mr Richard Thompson was one of the founders of the United Methodist Church in the village. Mrs Thompson resided at Carrfield, Luddenden, and took an active part in the corn business after husband's death. She died in April 1905, at the age of 86. She gave the land on which St. James's Methodist Church is built, and subscribed generously to the building fund.

Mrs Thompson was a niece of Dr. John Mitchell, of Keighley and, was acquainted with the Brontes. She was a passenger in the first train that ran from Hebden Bridge to Sowerby Bridge and remembered Branwell Bronte, who was on the station staff at Luddenden Foot.

Lengthy History

The church in Luddenden, St. Mary's, has a lengthy history, but the present building dates only from 1814. Permission was given in 1460 to build a chapel at Luddenden, and this was erected about 1461. The scheme was assisted by generous gifts from the Lord of the manor and others. In 1464 King Edward IV. conferred on the church certain rights which had been proposed by his father and on June 29th, 1494, the church was licensed for the celebration of "mass and other divine offices."

Up to about 1460 residents in Luddenden would have to travel to Halifax, in order to attend service.

In June, 1496, licence was granted to the inhabitants of Midgley, Sowerby and Warley, in the Parish of Halifax, to cause Mass and other divine offices to be celebrated within the chapel of Luddenden, and also in times of necessity, to

have the sacraments of the eucharist and extreme unction, so it be without prejudice to the Parish Church of Halifax.

The first chapel was never consecrated nor had rights of sepulture. Archbishop Cranmer proposed to give a licence for its consecration to Archbishop Lee, but the latter died before it was performed. In spite of this, divine service, Catholic and Protestant, continued to be performed in the chapel until the year 1624. Then a petition was sent by the local inhabitants asking for parochial rights at Luddenden, and this was granted by the King at a Court held at Greenwich on May 21st, 1624.

Consecration of the church and churchyard took place in August, 1624, by Greenwood and Walsh, the witnesses attesting to the act being James Murgatroyd, William Midgley, Thomas Lacy, Jasper Lacy, Gregory Patchett and Gilbert Deane. It is presumed that by then the original building had been superseded by a second church, though there is no written record of it.

There is an unusual feature about the consecration. Owing to an omission in the writing out of the mandate, the ceremony was performed by two priests without the aid of a bishop, and the Luddenden Church is thought to be the only one associated with the Established Church which was consecrated in this way.

The first burial entry in the Luddenden Church register is October 18th, 1653. Burials, however, must have taken place immediately after the consecration of the yard, for one of the gravestones bears the date 1625, and relates to a Murgatroyd. For a number of years the records were kept at York. The first baptism recorded in the register is July 23rd, 1654, and the first marriage, May 1st, 1661.

Early in the 19th century, the church had become so dilapidated that it was decided to pull it down and build another. So the present church was erected to plans of Mr. Thomas Taylor, a Leeds architect, the cost being about £2,985. The church occupies the same site as the old building though it has a much wider structure. In 1865 the chancel was extended and beautified, and in 1899 a three-manual organ was placed in the chancel and an organ chamber built.

A Polluted Church

Tradition has it that a priest named Gilbert Brooksbank was murdered in the church about the year 1537. The story is supported by the fact that in November, 1537, there was a gift of money to be devoted "to the reconciling of the chapel of Luddingden," which had been polluted by the shedding of blood. In the days of King Charles I, James Murgatroyd (the builder of Haigh House) and his three sons were heavily fined for misdemeanours committed in the church and its precincts.

A relic of the Church, a 1662 font which has stood in the yard since the early 1800's, has been res-

13 DEC 1963

tored and taken into the church. In 1949 work was commenced on the renovation and reconstruction of the church and fabric.

House Changed its Name

The only public house still in use in the village today is the Lord Nelson Inn, which is full of history and character. The building was re-erected in 1634, and was used as a private residence by Gregory Patchett. It remained as such until about 1740. The inn was originally named the "White Swan" and it most probably changed its title to celebrate the victory of Trafalgar on October 21st, 1805. The Lord Nelson was admirably suited to serve as the "Kirk Stile," and it was the custom of the visiting parsons to take their treats or meals at the inn.

At one time, the inn was the meeting place for all parish affairs. An interesting feature of the building was that it was used as a library formed as early as 1776. It was a subscription library, one of the first in the North of England. Books were housed in an upper room of the inn where some of the most distinguished scholars of the district met. In 1830, the subscription was 4d. a month, but later it was increased to 6d. The library flourished when books were difficult to obtain and purchased the Dickens, Thackeray and Bronte books as they came out. When Branwell Bronte was first station-master at Luddenden Foot (1870) he used to come up to the inn and the library gatherings. It was decided to sell the collection in 1917, but it was not until the early 1930's that the library was disbanded. Many of the books went to Midgley and Luddenden schools.

"Mayor" of Luddenden

In the 1860's the customers of the Lord Nelson decided that with Luddenden's growing importance the village should have a "Mayor," and a brass chain was duly purchased. This is still preserved at the inn today. Not to be outdone by all the regality of Halifax Corporation, a mock corporation was formed in Luddenden and mayors were duly elected, and the Lord Nelson Inn was the council chamber. This farce was kept up for years but was eventually forgotten when the circle of friends at the inn diminished.

In 1951 extensive alterations and modernisation of the inn took place.

At the top end of High Street, near to New Road, stands the strikingly designed St. James's Methodist Church. It was built in 1903 at a cost of £2,100, and replaced an older chapel in Chapel Street. Like many other buildings in the Calder Valley it has two ground floors. The lower floor, opened on one side, is used as a school and, the upper floor is occupied by the chapel.

Growth of Methodism

Methodism was established in the Luddenden district towards the end of the 18th century by a young man named John Sutcliffe, who lived at Ewood. He established a class meeting in the village. In its early days Luddenden is thought to have belonged to the Colne circuit, and later was for a short time in the Halifax circuit. In December, 1788, there were 55 members, comprising five classes. In 1798 the district fell on somewhat evil days, but in 1803 the then famous "Little Jonathan" (Jonathan Saville, of Southowram) led a revival, so that the membership increased "eight-fold."

William Boardall, of Midgley, in 1804 was appointed class leader, remaining for many years, until through some dissatisfaction he and a number of others left. They were instrumental in the erection of Midgley Methodist New Connexion.

At Luddenden Dean higher up the valley a chapel was first erected in 1828. In the early 1800's under the influence of George Hartley, a well known local preacher, Luddenden Wesleyans had a revival, and in 1811 premises were built in Chapel Street. The debt on the chapel was £1,050 when opened, and for ten years about £40 was annually required to pay interest on the borrowed money. In 1863 a new school was built replacing the old chapel, at a cost of £952, and a minister's house was built in 1875.

In the centre of the village is a garden which is the site of former working men's club which was demolished in recent years. The club has now premises in a building in the High Street. Not a great deal is known about the old building that once housed the working

men's club. It was erected in 1653 as the Wolf Inn, and local churchwardens used to transact their business in the inn and in a garden at the rear. The late Mr. John Longbottom chose the inn as the scene for a story in which a Highlander of Prince Charlie's army escaped from a back window aided by a Scots maid at the inn.

The inn commanded a central place in the village and it must have been a busy hostelry in its heyday. In July 1854, it was sold by auction and in 1877 was re-sold to the Luddenden Co-operative Society, who surrendered it in 1920 to the trustees of the working men's club. It was occupied as a working men's club from 1880.

From Pub to Church House

The former Murgatroyd Arms in the centre of the village was closed as a public house in 1939. It has now been given a new lease of life being taken over as the church house. It is used by the various organisations connected with the church.

Known as the Murgatroyd Arms for over 200 years, the former inn has a design of arms, possibly that of James Murgatroyd, which is described in heraldic language. "Argent, three crosses, flosse, sable." Situated just inside the Warley township of the borough of Halifax, the inn probably knew some prosperous times in the Luddenden valley, particularly when the stone quarries at Mount Tabor were busy, and the teamers brought their loads down Stock Lane to be delivered at Luddenden Foot, and when all the mills in the valley were all working and employing a large number of workers. The premises were formerly the headquarters of the local Foresters, and have been the scene of many popular dinners and social functions.

Another inn in the village which closed in 1938 was the Travellers' Rest in Duke Street. It has not been ascertained when the inn was first opened, but it had been a public house well into the last century. When Gatsroyd Band was one of the leading bands in the district, Messrs. J. Murgatroyd and Son Ltd., built a bandroom adjoining the inn. Mr Percy Simpson was the last landlord.

Yeomen Clothiers

A short distance from the village up Stocks Lane, is the historical building of Old Riding. The earliest known reference to Old Riding is in a deed dated September 15th, 1561. For centuries it was the homestead of yeoman clothiers who carried on the combined work of farming, grazing, sheep rearing and cloth making.

A deed of 1561 refers to land in Warley, out of which from 1527 a yearly annuity of 20s. has been paid towards the salary of Rood Priest at Halifax Parish Church. With other chantries, the rood service was suppressed and its revenues confiscated in Elizabeth's time.

Sir Thomas Gargrave, a knight, military leader and court favourite, became proprietor, by grant from the Crown, of the 20/- annuity. He sold out for a lump sum to James Haldworth. In this deed, Haldworth was selling the estate to Gilbert

13 DEC 1963

13 DEC 1963

Brooksbank, of Bank House, Warley. The first signature to the deed was William Deyne of Oldrydyng.

16th Century Duel

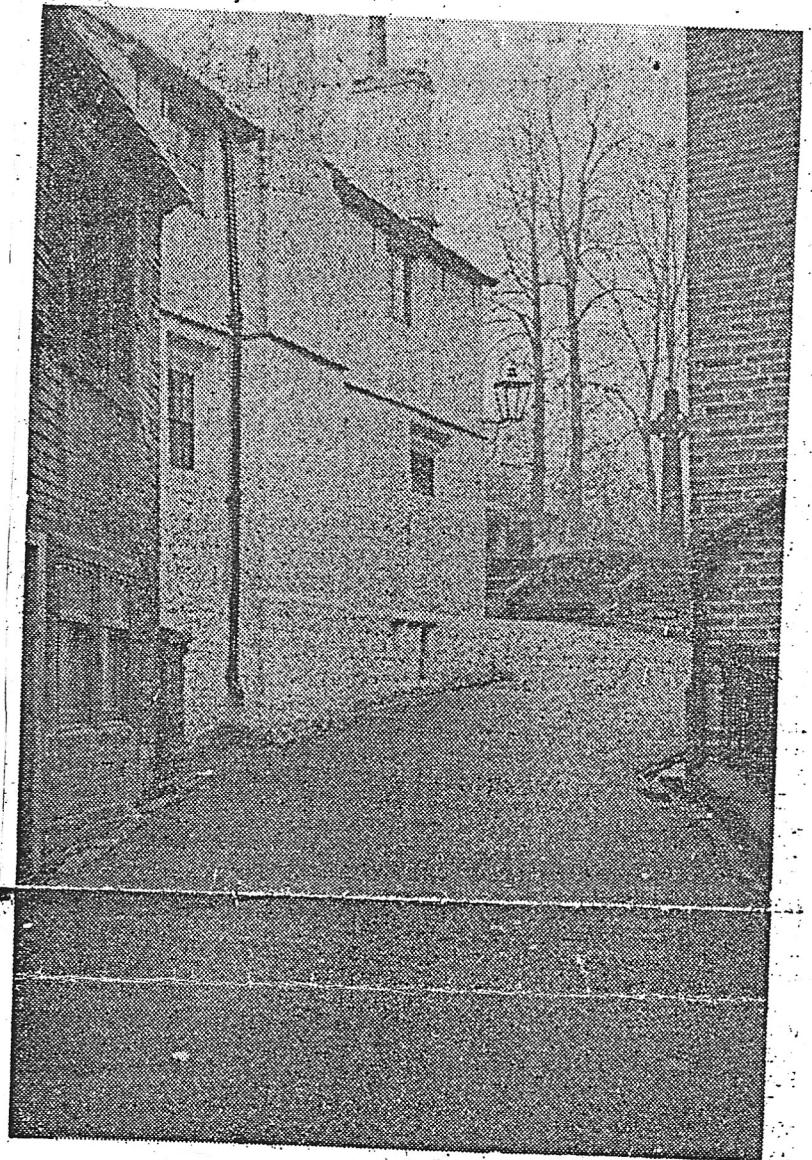
The Deynes had prospered with the expansion of trade during the two previous centuries. It is recorded that one Richard Deyne was said to have killed one Brooksbank in a duel, and in expiation left a yearly rent of 13s 4d. to the Chaplain of Luddenden in 1526. A local court roll of 1578 records that Richard Deyne, son and heir of William Deyne of Old Ridding, surrendered to John Parkyson, a considerable amount of property for a term of 21 years, paying 16s. rent.

Church Schools

The village has two schools, a junior mixed and infants'. Under the control of the church authorities the infants' school occupies a site near the junction of New Road with High Street. There has been a church school in the village for over 130 years and both schools are under the jurisdiction of the church. History of the schools has been long and eventful, legislation and time have wrought many changes, but religious education has flourished and developed.

In the village there is a large number of three-storeyed cottages with long mullioned windows—the houses of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Along the streamside were the water-driven fulling and scribbling mills. At a later date these developed into factories controlling all the textile operations.

The whole of the district abounds with fine seventeenth century homesteads, one of the finest of which is Kershaw House, with its eleven pinnacled gables, two double-storeyed porches and clusters of original stone mullions.



The steep gradient of High Street, Luddenden, winding its narrow path through the houses clustered close on either side.