

DAY'S BUS RIDE IS TO LUDDENDEN AND MIDGLEY

An inn that changed its name to celebrate a famous victory

and a
CHURCH
WITH
FOUR
FONTS

"MY turn to pay," said George, as the Midgley bus left the bus station and trundled up King Cross Street.

"Where are we going?"

"Footit," laughed Fred. George looked blank. "He means Luddenden Foot," giggled Martha, in explanation.

"Book to New Road; it'll be eightpence each," advised Fred, settling back to enjoy the ride.

"We'll go as far as Luddenden."

As they approached Luddenden Foot station he started to tell them how Branwell Brontë was the first stationmaster, in 1840. He was interrupted by a sudden swerve as the bus left the main road and started to climb the hill. Soon they were passing Kershaw house on their left.

"I wish we could see it better," said Amy, straining to peer over the high surrounding wall which rarely hid the Elizabethan-style house with its 11 gables. She was distracted by Fred, who was pointing up the opposite hillside.

"That whitewashed house up there," he was telling George. "Thomas Lister, the famous clock-maker, was born there."

"Uncle Eli has one of his long-case clocks," said Martha. "And it's as reliable as the wireless pips."

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"New Road," shouted the conductor.

"We'll get out and walk here," said Fred. "This was one of the quaintest little villages in the district until recently, but they've been pulling a lot of houses down."

"I thought it looked different," pondered Martha. "Last time we came it was little narrow, winding streets. I'll show you some snaps when we get home."

"Modernisation," scoffed Fred, as they turned their backs on the signs of demolition and crossed a bridge over the stream.

"Ah, I remember this bit," said Martha, as a sharp turn brought

by
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them in sight of the church gates and the War Memorial, carved in the style of a Saxon cross.

Amy had wandered across to read the date over the doorway of the Lord Nelson Inn. "1634," she read.

"It used to be called the White Swan," said Fred. "But changed to celebrate the victory."

It was also one of the oldest in the district. They were standing at the end of the street here in Luddenden.

asked



Kershaw House, with 11 gables.

moved to Boggard House at Luddenden Foot, but the house became haunted till it was brought back here. Number three is inside the church and the fourth is in the churchyard, used as a bird-bath.

"What time is it?" asked Martha. "You know I can't hurry, and you said you'd take us up Midgley."

"We've 10 minutes," said Fred. "The bus passes New Road just after the hour and the half hour. We've time to walk back."

"It's a long pull out of the bottom," Martha was telling Amy as they got into the bus. I didn't feel like walking it, but Fred wanted to show you another hill top village."

"But this is different from Barksland or Southowram."

interrupted Fred. Nearly all the houses you can see had hand-loomed in them at one time. There also used to be a number of small smithies."

"Would they be where the pack horses were shod?" queried Martha.

"No, they concentrated on making burling irons," said Fred. "What on earth are burling irons?" asked Amy.

Fred explained how they are small tweezers used in the woollen industry for plucking out specks of cotton and burrs from the finished material.

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"There's a grand breeze," said George, as he threw back his

shoulders and followed Fred. They had turned left as they got on the bus.

"We're on top of the world up here," said Fred. "And I'll show you a view which you'll have to go a long way to beat."

He led them to what is known as 'The Heights,' a promenade starting at Scout Head and stretching for about two miles along the edge of the hill.

If Martha had got her hiking shorts on we might have walked to the other end and where it looks down on the entrance to Hardcastle Craggs," laughed Fred.

"I'm quite content to sit on this wall and look down into this valley," Martha said. "There's enough to see, anyway."

This is where Midgley folk congregated in 1840 to watch the first train go down the valley between Lancashire and Yorkshire. Fred pointed to where the railway, the turnpike road, the Calder and the Rochdale Canal wound their way within 100 yards of each other.

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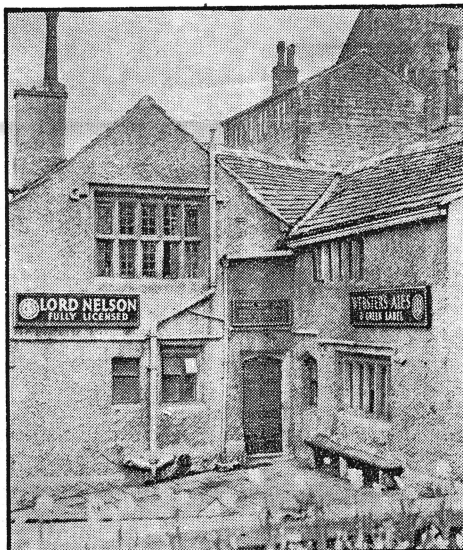
"Ancient and modern at a glance," he continued. "You see that mill down there. They were milling corn there in 1300; it is the site of the Midgley Manor corn mill, and over there is the New Calder Valley High School. I wonder what John Wesley would have thought if he'd seen that. He preached more than once down there, in the open air."

"It would be a bit draughty," smiled Amy, as she started to move. "I'm beginning to feel that breeze George was talking about."

"We'll soon be in lower regions," said Fred. "Come on, we'll go down here."

He led the way down the road they had been overlooking. "We'll go down t'Scout," he said, "there's a good bus service back to Halifax on the Burnley Road."

Next week: Sowerby and Hubberton.



The Lord Nelson Inn . . . where in 1867 Luddenden folk elected their own Mayor.