

L UDDENDEN is one of Calderdale's prettiest, quaintest and quietest villages.

Strange to realise then that it once hummed with industry, that it had 27 shops (today there are none) and that there were five pubs to slake the thirsty workers (today only the oldest, the Lord Nelson, survives).

Luddenden is now largely a dormitory village for commuters or an attractive retirement community for older people. But well within living memory it was a fully-fledged working community and this major transformation in its character will be one of themes of a special millennium event that will take place in the village next week.

"Luddenden Saga" is a multi-media show, with slides, narration, music, drama and dancing, which will be presented at St Mary's Church on Friday, November 17. Narration duties will be shared by TV actor Peter Alexander, who is an active member of the local community.

The performance, billed as "a brief history of the village of Luddenden in sound and vision", was compiled by local resident Vikki Egerton who is, as she admits, an "incumden".

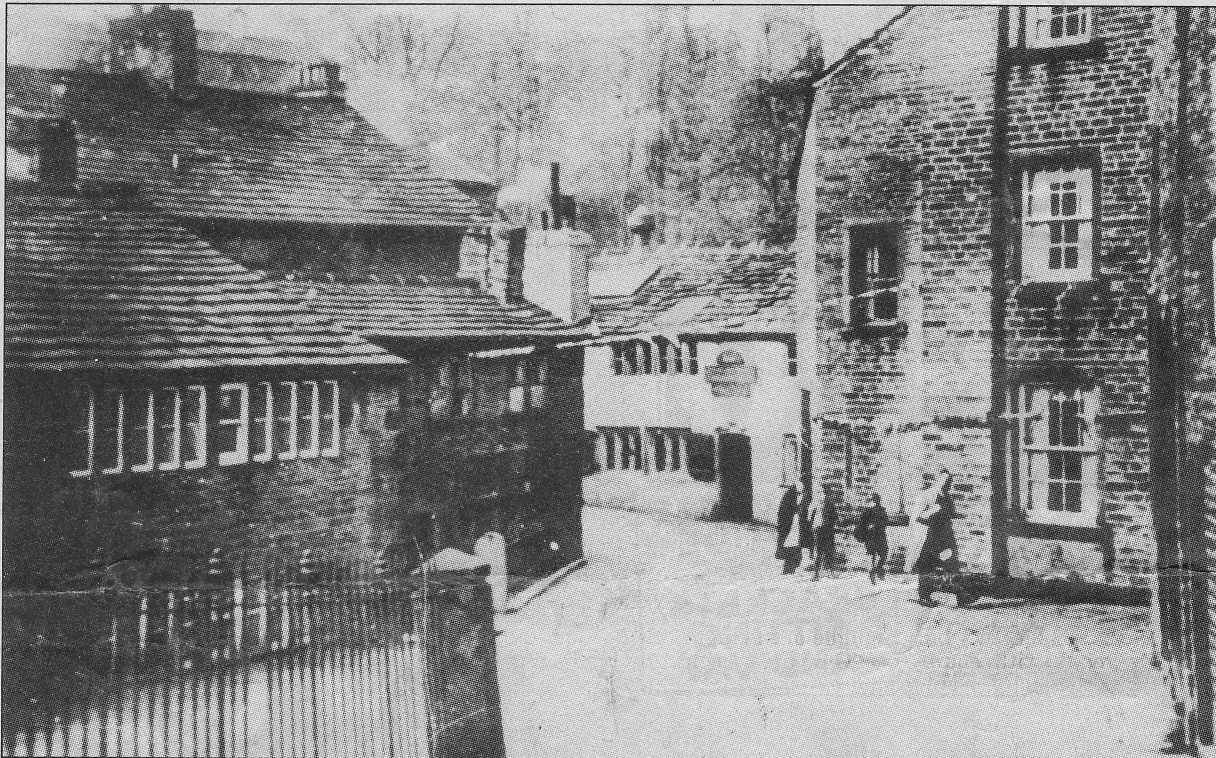
Originally from Manchester she came to live in Luddenden when widowed 10 years ago, to be nearer her married daughter.

A member of St Mary's, she has been closely involved with annual concerts at the church. For millennium year she decided that something a bit different was called for, and "Luddenden Saga" was the result, after months of research into the village's history.

An oddity of Luddenden's past is that for many years half of it was in Warley and half in Midgley. The village jail even had separate cells for felons from the respective communities.

But Luddenden was no backwater. The important pack horse trail from Lancashire passed through the village and its very name hints at a long industrial past. Luddenden means "loud water", possibly a reference to a thundering water wheel probably erected in the Middle Ages.

More recently there was plenty of factory employment in the area for Luddenden people and the number of shops and pubs reflected this. Now everything has changed. The last shop closed quite recently.



This week's pictures are from the archive gathered by Mrs Egerton for "Luddenden Saga". The top one includes Beauvoir Works, a former textile mill which became the premises of the firm C.Lindley and Co.

This company originated in London in 1865, moving to Luddenden in 1899. The building pictured was demolished in 1975, although Lindley's, which made nuts and bolts and industrial fasteners, continued in business in adjacent premises until the mid-1980s. Its closure spelt the end of Luddenden village as a centre of light industry.

The second picture shows the heart of the village and the white painted building is the Wolf Inn, demolished in the early 1960s. The building dated from 1653 and in the late 1950s it was used as a small clothing factory by the Hebden Bridge firm Astin Brothers, which then applied to demolish it.

The Wolf stood just inside the Halifax Borough boundary and the council gave the go-ahead for demolition, although it asked Astin Brothers to wait until a photographic record could be made of the doomed pub. Astin's then offered the building as a gift to the council, but this was presumably declined.

Another of the vanished pubs of Luddenden was the Murgatroyd Arms, the only one licenced to sell spirits - it also offered a funeral service.

□ "Luddenden Saga", which includes music down the ages from members of St Mary's Choir and a performance of the local pace egg play, begins at 7.30pm on November 17.

Tickets are £4 (£3 concessions) or £2 (£1.50) without refreshments. For details phone (01422) 882510.

There will be a display of old photographs of the area, and a traditional pie and pie and cider supper will be served after the performance.

It is also planned to publish a booklet giving a more in-depth history of Luddenden.

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