

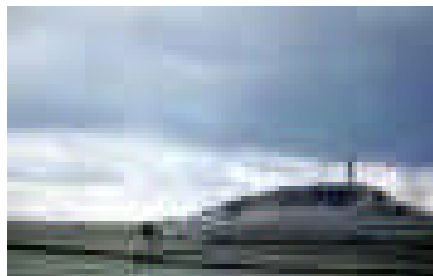
ALMONDBURY CC

DOWN YOUR WAY

BULLS, BARE KNUCKLES & BLUE BOXES

ALMONDBURY (THE PLACE)

The name Almondbury is often associated with nearby Castle Hill and over the years the village has indeed benefited from the proximity of this prominent landmark. But the village of Almondbury, whilst not dating as far back as Castle Hill (which archaeologists believe was occupied by Neolithic man c. 2000 BC), has a distinct and illuminating history of its own and was at one time (prior to the rise of Huddersfield itself) the most important settlement in the area.



There has been a settlement at the site of Almondbury for over one thousand years and the village, which was then known as 'Alemanberie', is mentioned in the Domesday

Book of 1086 (a tax-motivated survey of the country in which landholdings were listed and assessed for tax and value).

By the time of this survey Almondbury and much of the surrounding area had become part of the Honour of Pontefract and thus was owned by the powerful de Lacy family (who were given much of the land in this area as a reward for their loyalty to William the Conqueror).

It was during the de Lacy's long reign in the area that a 'motte and bailey' type castle was built on Castle Hill (c.1140) and that Edward I, who was King from 1272-1307, granted rights for a weekly market to be held in the village (1294). This transformed Almondbury from a small village to a thriving market town where local farmers would bring their crops, and clothiers (middlemen who supplied the weavers with wool and then bought up the finished cloth) could bring wool to sell.

The market continued to be held each Monday and Almondbury became an important centre for trade and commerce particularly during Tudor times (1485-1603) and remained so until the seventeenth century when nearby Huddersfield (after receiving its own market charter courtesy of Charles II in 1671) began to replace Almondbury.



During this period Almondbury had also become one of the most important cloth producing centres in the region and a number of weavers cottages can still be found in the village. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, it was not uncommon for rows of cottages to have a top floor running the whole length of the block which formed one long room so that hand looms could be grouped together. And indeed one can find evidence of such a 'factory' in a row of houses at the top of Fernside Avenue.

When the Industrial Revolution arrived (in the mid to late eighteenth century), it confirmed Huddersfield's status as the major market town in the area. Like many hilltop villages, Almondbury declined when transportation improved and trade and industries moved down into the valleys.

As a result, people began to move from rural settlements in the hills such as Almondbury and Golcar and settle on lower ground in places like Holmfirth and Denby Dale. Despite this trend of urbanisation, Almondbury continued to prosper. It was home to a number of mills (Birks Mill, Hole Bottom Mills and King's Mill to name a few) and also provided sumptuous accommodation for Victorian businessmen and mill owners who chose to desert the smog of Huddersfield in favour of the clean air of the elevated settlement of Almondbury.

The Almondbury we know today, whilst still 'a place of distinction', is very different to the Almondbury that was so described when the market and courts were in existence.

The village, which has been continuously populated for over a thousand years, is now mainly a residential area with great pubs and eateries offering locals and visitors alike great nosh!



Many of the old customs such as rush-bearing (at the beginning of August rushes were carried to the Parish Church and used to cover the floor to keep the feet of the congregation warm), bull-baiting (Almondbury Common was home to the last bull-baiting performance in the village on 2nd August 1824) and dog-fighting have ceased and Almondburians rarely, if ever, participate in the once common bare-knuckle fights at the top of Castle Hill.

As long as these customs remain in the past, it is unlikely that there will be a need to re-commission the old blue police box on Northgate or the old village stocks which can still be found in All Hallows' Churchyard!

CHARTISTS & CHURCHES

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE (BEFORE THE FIRST CRICKET CLUB WAS FOUNDED)

1086 Almondbury appears in the Domesday Book as 'Alemanberie'.

1294 Edward I grants Henri de Lacy the right to hold a weekly market in Almondbury.

1379 The population of Almondbury is estimated at 100.

1588 Beacons are lit on Castle Hill to indicate the defeat of the Spanish Armada.



Edward I

1608 King James' Grammar School is founded.

1634 A map from this year shows that there are just over 30 houses in Almondbury.

1671 Huddersfield is granted its own market charter.

1766 The first Methodist sermon is preached in the village.

1784 9 July: John Wesley visits Almondbury.

1820 1st April: The Huddersfield Riots take place and beacons are lit on Castle Hill.

1823 Titus Bancroft installs the clock in All Hallows Church tower at a cost of £250.

1824 2nd August: The last bull-baiting takes place on Almondbury Common.

1829 A hoard of coins is found on Castle Hill including 200 Roman coins and 16 British gold coins.



1834 Almondbury is described in the National Commercial Directory as a 'populous township and respectable village'.

1842 Chartists hold a meeting on Castle Hill.

1848 Chartists again meet on Castle Hill.

1860 Almondbury churchyard is closed by an Act of Parliament.

GUNS AND HEDGEHOGS!

ALMONDBURY (THE PLACE) – 4 KEY FACTS

1. Anyone wandering down to the Radcliffe Arms or the Rose & Crown for a quick drink would not expect to see an inquest taking place. But until the early twentieth century that was precisely what one might encounter – in full view of the body or bodies. People would even make a special trip just to attend.

On Tuesday 18th February 1856 an inquest was held at Castle Hill Hotel into the death of a farmer who it was held had cut his own throat. Just a month later on Saturday 22nd March 1856 there was one at the Radcliffe Arms when an eleven-year-old boy was found hanging in a hayloft. And on Monday 19th May 1862 there was an inquest at the Rose & Crown after the body of a 49-year-old man was found. It was held that he had hung himself.



2. Situations Vacant! In March 1854 Almondbury required a competent person ‘to undertake the duties of surveyor of the highways’ which included collecting the highway rates. The salary on offer for this post was £35 per annum.

3. During the Second World War there was an anti-aircraft gun site at Almondbury.

4. Almondbury is famous for its annual Rush-bearing festival which took place in early August. Rush-bearing was an old custom that ceased in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century in which locals celebrated the renewal of the rushes.

Rushes were spread on the church floor in medieval times to protect the feet of worshippers from the cold of the flagstones. Unfortunately whilst protecting the feet of parishioners, the rushes brought with them another problem – insects.



To combat this, hedgehogs were released into the church at the same time as the rushes.

ANOTHER CRICKET CLUB IN THE VILLAGE...

ALMONDBURY PARISH CHURCH CC

Played in Section 'B' of the Combination League around
1900.



180 NOT OUT!

KEY DATES IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF CRICKET IN KIRKLEES

1825: Lascelles Hall Cricket Club founded.

1842: Dalton play Sheffield for £30.

1867: *Huddersfield Examiner* publishes scores or reports on 209 matches featuring 107 different teams.



1868: Fartown ground leased by Huddersfield St. Johns C.C.. Savile Ground, Dewsbury, hosts game between All England XI and United All England XI.

1873: Batley legend Louis Hall makes Yorkshire bow.

1883: Lumb Cup and Heavy Woollen Cup born.

1886: Huddersfield Cricket Association is formed.

1887-9: Dewsbury Savile C.C. win hat-trick of Heavy Woollen Cup titles.

1892: 10 Clubs take part in inaugural Huddersfield & District Cricket League competition.