

BROAD OAK CC

LINTHWAITE: MILLS AND BOOZE!

Unlike its neighbours, Golcar and Slaithwaite, there is no argument over the pronunciation and spelling of Linthwaite (although to some locals the village is known as 'Linfit').

There is, however, debate over when the area was first settled; was it in 1185 when Linthwaite, 'Lindthait' as it was then known, was first mentioned in a document or had settlement begun earlier, just after the Norman Conquest of 1066 when Norsemen came to the West Riding from over the border in Lancashire?



Whatever the case it is certain that by the time Linthwaite became part of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1361, the village was populated, albeit it sparsely.

The early inhabitants of Linthwaite would probably have settled higher up the slopes, closer to what is

today known as the ‘top road’, near to the parish church and Broad Oak Cricket Club (prior to the Industrial Revolution it was usual to build homes higher up the slopes rather than in the valley bottoms). Families who set up their homes on Colne Valley’s steep hillsides soon found that they needed more than land to keep them fed and clothed – the soil in the area being difficult to cultivate. The land was, however, suitable for the grazing of sheep and those living in the area began supplementing their income by turning wool into cloth which was then sold at Huddersfield or Almondbury markets.

The cloth made was in great demand and this led to small mills being built up on the hillsides and the industry for which the area would later become famous began developing.



By the turn of the seventeenth century, although increasing, the population of Linthwaite remained overwhelmingly rural, living and working on the farms and cottage industries on the hillsides. It was not until improvements in transport and the use of steam power that mills and houses were built on the ‘bottom road’ alongside the canal, railway and the first of these improvements - the turnpike road.

The turnpike road (turnpikes were effectively toll roads; the turnpike being the gated entrance to a town or village where tolls were collected. A typical toll was

a farthing a head for cattle and sixpence for a carriage and horse) across the Pennines was constructed half a century before the coming of the canal in the mid-eighteenth century and did much to encourage the growth of the village.

The road, which ran along Blackmoorfoot and Chain Road, became surplus to requirements in 1821 when what is today the main road through the valley – the A62 Manchester Road – was constructed. These transport improvements along with the mechanisation of the textile industry (the age old ‘domestic system’ for producing woollen textiles was replaced by mills and machinery) transformed Linthwaite from a small village into a thriving mill town.

During the nineteenth century mills sprang up all over the valley bottom, along with terraced housing for the mill workers and working men’s clubs for leisure time. Indeed, one former Linthwaite resident recalls how important the working men’s clubs were and how they played a significant role in arousing working-class consciousness; apparently members of the Hoyle Ing Club in Linthwaite paid one penny a week contribution to the rising Labour Movement.



Ramsden Mill, Black Rock Mill and Spring Grove Mill (occupied by George Mallinson & Son – at its peak Mallinsons employed 1,000 workers) - were all large mills built during the nineteenth century. Titanic Mill, built in 1912, was named, of course, after the glamorous but sadly not unsinkable superliner whose maiden and final voyage took place in April of that year.

Unlike the ship, the mill was never fully occupied and lay derelict for many years. The mill is now being converted into apartments on a fresh wave of post industrial optimism. In its own way, Titanic Mill's construction marked the end of an epoch much as did the vessel – before it Victorian industrial self-certainty reached its climax, and beyond it lay doubt, war, depression and industrial decline.

The Linthwaite of the twenty-first century is a very different place from the Linthwaite inhabited by the textile workers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The village, like so many others in the West Riding of Yorkshire, has seen the decline of the textile industry. Linthwaite is no longer a village busy with wool.



It is, however, busy with something else - brewing. The village is home to two breweries: John Eastwood

Brewery and Linfit Brewery at the Sair Inn (a pub which began brewing in the nineteenth century and after a gap year or two began brewing again in 1982).

The people of Linthwaite today then, rather than being wakened at 6.15 am by the sound of the mill hooters calling them to work, are more likely to be soothed or even sent to sleep by drinking too much of ‘Maud’s Electric Ale’ or ‘Janet Street Porter’ – described as ‘a smooth, dry porter with a bitter roasted malt character’.

LINTHWAITE: KEY DATES

1185 Linthwaite is first mentioned in written records.

1361 The village becomes part of the Duchy of Lancaster.

c.1600 Linthwaite Hall is built.

1828 Linthwaite Parish Church is completed.

1838 The population of Linthwaite reaches 2,852.



1868 5th March – Slaithwaite and Linthwaite Liberal Association hold a meeting/dinner at Coach and Horses pub.

1876 Blackmoorfoot Reservoir, one of the largest of Huddersfield’s many reservoirs, is completed.

1912 Titanic Mill is built.

1956 Colne Valley High School opens.

1979 Fire at Ramsden Mill causes damage to weaving & knitting sheds. Hoyle Ing WMC celebrates centenary.

1982 The Sair Inn recommences brewing.

1984 Ramsden Mill closes.

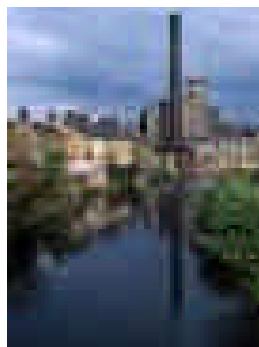
1997 The Sair Inn is voted National Pub of the Year.

2003 Work begins on converting Titanic Mills into apartments.

Linthwaite Band holds a concert at St Paul's Hall to celebrate the past 150 years of music.

LINTHWAITE: TOP TRIVIA

- In the nineteenth century Linthwaite was home to six inns and taverns, eleven beer houses, four blacksmiths, two cloth finishers, two dyers, four joiners, three shoe-makers, seventeen shopkeepers, three tailors and two wheelwrights (people who make or repair wooden wheels).



- **Linthwaite Parish Church, Christchurch C of E, was built in 1828. It was one of many 'Waterloo'**

churches built in the country at this time. The money for building these ‘Waterloo’ churches was made available after the passing of the Million Pound Act. The government said that the churches were to be built to give thanks to god for the recent victory over Napoleon at Waterloo. However, parliament also wanted to extend the influence of the Church of England, particularly in the burgeoning industrial areas where non-conformism was increasing. Unfortunately for the Church of England and the government, it would have little effect in the Colne Valley where many people had been strongly non-conformist from as far back as the seventeenth century.

- **During the Second World War many of the mills in the Colne Valley produced khaki to clothe the British Army. As many of the mill workers were away fighting for their country, bus loads of workers, mainly women, were brought from Barnsley and other South Yorkshire towns to keep the mills going.**



- **Blackmoorfoot Reservoir which stands high above Linthwaite and is apparently a haven for**

birdwatchers, is one of the largest of the reservoirs in Huddersfield. Completed in 1876, it cost £260,549 to build.