

DENBY CC

DOWN YOUR WAY

DANES, WITCHES & ROUNDHEADS

DENBY: THE VILLAGE

When people first began to settle in the 'farmstead of the Danes' (Denby or Denebi, as it was recorded in the Domesday Book) cannot be known with any certainty, although some historians believe that Denby (the umbrella term for Upper and Lower Denby) was founded some time after 862 AD when the Danes conquered York.

What is clear, however, is that the early settlers were of Danish origin and that they chose Denby because of its hilltop situation, being 500 ft above sea level. The land was well drained making it suitable for grazing whilst at the same time giving settlers the advantage of seeing potential enemies as they approached.



William the Conqueror

This lofty location, however, did not prevent the village being visited by Norman Soldiers in the eleventh century. After William the Conqueror invaded the country in 1066, taking the throne from Harold II, the north proved troublesome and was seen as a problem by William. He therefore dispatched troops to quell the rebellious northerners, laying waste to many settlements in the process.

Denby, however, was not laid 'waste' and although the value of the area had certainly been damaged (plummeting from 10s to 6s according to the Domesday Book) the village was fortunate in comparison to others. Perhaps it was Denby's famous cow pasture that saved the village; as many historians have been quick to point out Denby's unique selling point in Yorkshire at this time, 'Ibi est vaccaria' (there is a cattle house), is recorded in the Domesday Book.

The Norman soldiers were not the only military visitors to Denby. Six hundred years later, during the English Civil War, one of the most turbulent periods in English history (1642 to 1660), a regiment of Roundhead soldiers (Oliver Cromwell's men) were stationed at Gunthwaite.



Domesday Book

The Civil War was extremely divisive, dividing families, neighbours and in Denby's case the entire village: William Savile, the then Lord of the Manor, was a loyal supporter of King Charles I whilst Godfrey Bosville, Lord of Gunthwaite, supported Cromwell's cause (hence his hospitality at Gunthwaite).

It is said that some of these soldiers contracted typhoid during their stay in Denby and that those who died as a result were buried near an old oak tree, the remains of which can still be seen near Gunthwaite Hall Farm. It is not known whether the sulphurous spa waters of Gunthwaite were either a cause or an attempted remedy for the outbreak.

After the Civil War ended, the residents of Denby were able to settle back down to 'ordinary life'. At this time (seventeenth/eighteenth centuries) the majority of villagers would have been employed in agriculture. However, some Denbiers had been producing cloth to supplement their agricultural income from as early as the fifteenth century and this continued through to the 1700s.

By this time many cottages and farms in the village had at least one handloom on the premises and one villager, James Beaumont, even had a 'wool chamber' and 'weaving chamber' containing three pairs of looms and two pairs of combs.

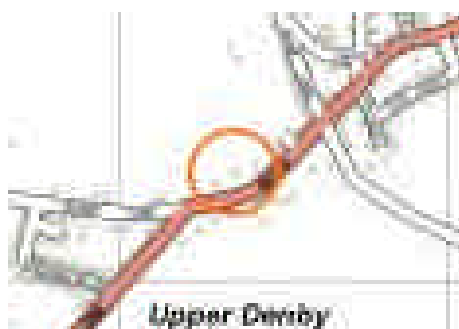


A weaving loom

Like many hilltop villages in the West Riding, Denby was seriously affected by the Industrial Revolution. In particular the arrival of the mills in the rapidly expanding valley bottom at Denby Dale (formerly Denby Dike) meant a change in lifestyle for many in Denby. The weaving looms became redundant and many residents now had to leave their homes and walk down Bank Lane to the mills at Denby Dale. One resident recalls seeing the men and women of Denby undertaking this journey to work during his childhood (in the 1920s).

Today, villagers no longer walk to work down Bank Lane and nor are they busy spinning and weaving. It is hoped that the female residents are safe from allegations of witchcraft (in 1674 two local women, Anne Shillitoe and Susan Hinchcliffe, were accused of witchcraft by a Clayton West resident, one Mary Moor. Both were charged and taken to Barnsley Court where they were committed for trial at York.

It is not known what happened thereafter. More recently a nineteenth century resident, one Betty Roberts, was also accused of being a witch). Denby Feast, Denby Band, Denby Club, the New Inn and the Star are all a thing of the past but Denby First School, Denby Ladies, Denby Church, Denby Cricket Club, ‘Spa Sunday’, the George and the Dunkirk still play major roles in community life.



One local historian laments the fact that ‘the old Denbiers have dwindled in number and that these are being replaced by newcomers, attracted by the site and situation of the village’, but if Denby didn’t have such an idyllic location which attracts these newcomers, perhaps Denby’s original newcomers would never have settled here in the first place over 1000 years ago.

BUILDINGS & BUTCHERS

DENBY (THE VILLAGE): 5 KEY FACTS

1. **Taxation:** In 1379 the young Richard II imposed a poll tax on his subjects to help finance the Hundred Years' War with France. This tax was as unpopular as the one implemented by the Thatcher government in the 1980s. Both taxes caused protests (as can be seen from the pictures below).



Poll Tax riots

In 1381, however, being involved or being the focus of a protest was much more serious; the leader of the protestors, Wat Tyler, was stabbed to death by one of Richard II's men. Tyler was not the only victim; the man who devised the Poll Tax was dragged out of the Tower of London and had his head cut off, a remedy that perhaps many in the 1980s might have sought for those who imposed the Community charge. Incidentally, it is not known whether any Denby residents were involved in the 14th century protests but we do know that tax amounting to 11s 8d was collected from villagers.

2. Religion: Prior to 1627 when a chapel-of-ease was built in Denby, villagers wanting to attend church had to walk the three and half miles to Penistone Church. It

was only after thirteen villagers lost their lives in a tragic incident in 1626 (Scout Dyke was prone to flooding and thirteen people en route to Penistone drowned in the floodwaters) and a subsequent petition by villagers, that Denby was granted permission to build a chapel-of-ease.

Building began in 1627 and thereafter the inhabitants of Denby only had to endure the journey to Penistone Church for weddings, baptisms and funerals. John Ellis of High Flatts built the present day church in 1845 at a cost of £1,170, after the previous chapel was declared to be in a 'filthy and ruinous state'. It has since undergone various alterations and still plays a major part in village life today.

3. Education: The current village school, Denby C.E (A) First School, was built in 1864 when it was called Denby National. This, however, was not the first school in Denby. There used to be a school at Lower Denby, now converted into a private house. This school was funded by Francis Burdett of nearby Denby Hall who contributed heavily to the school's existence (leaving £200 in his will for the purpose of providing for the school and the poor of Denby).



Lower Denby School, now a private dwelling

This school, which was founded in the eighteenth century, underwent various repairs in the mid-nineteenth century enabling it to continue to educate the children of Denby and the surrounding areas until the 1860s when numbers of scholars dwindled (perhaps as a result of competition from the newly opened Denby National School). The present school offers a reminder of its antecedent – the recently established technology suite (built after much fundraising from villagers) is called the Francis Burdett Suite.

4. Shopping: With the last of Denby's shops, Peter Holmes the Butchers, closing in 2004, it is hard to believe that Denby once had a general store, a post office and even a Co-op. The general store opened in 1904 and apparently sold everything from clogs and slippers to figs and ammonia! It closed in 1960. The Co-op followed suit in 1963 and is now a private dwelling.



5. What's in a name? Over the years Upper Denby has been known as Overdeneby, Over Denbe, Over Denby and High Denby whilst Lower Denby has been called Netherdeneby, Neyther Denbye and Low Denby.

SETTLERS & SCHOOLS

DENBY – KEY DATES BEFORE THE CRICKET CLUB WAS FOUNDED

c. 800/ 900 The first settlers build their home in Denby.

1086 Denby or ‘Denebi’ is recorded in the Domesday Book.

1379 The number of people living in Denby is 39.

1626 Thirteen villagers drown in the floodwaters of Scout Dyke while on their way to Penistone Church to worship.

1627 A chapel-of-ease is built in the village.



1672 The Hearth Tax of this year (the tax began in 1662; people had to pay two shillings per hearth twice yearly) shows that one Mr Cotton of Denby had 7 hearths with 2 more under construction. Perhaps today’s equivalent of this would be a tax on en suite bathrooms!

1743 An enquiry by Church of England officials records that 'in the chapelry of Denby there are 130 families, only 9 of which are Quakers. There are no papists or other kind of dissenters.'

1806 According to records there are 63 weavers, 12 clothiers, a dyer, a dresser, a slubber, and a cotton spinner in the village.

1822 The Star public house, Upper Denby opens.

1827 There is much poverty in the village and as a result a workhouse is opened for paupers.

1838 The New Inn public house, Upper Denby opens.

1839 The Bishop of Longley visits Denby and finds the church in a 'filthy and ruinous state'.

1842 The current church is built.

1851 The 1851 census shows that 118 villagers are employed in the textile industry.



1853 Denby becomes a separate parish.

1857 The George (which is now the only pub left in Upper Denby) opens.

1864 Denby C.E (A) First School is built.

1866 The Junction public house (now the Dunkirk) opens.

1881 13 October – a hoard of coins is found at Denby.
Some of the coins date back to Tudor times.

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.