

## KIRKHEATON CC

# DOWN YOUR WAY

Mills, fires & toilet trouble!

## THE VILLAGE

Kirkheaton, which has also been known as Yetton, Heton and Heptone over the years, is today a mixture of dwellings dated from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century. Kirkheaton the place, however, has a history dating back over a thousand years.

**It was some time in the ninth century that people began settling in the area. Kirkheaton continued to be inhabited and was one of 13,418 places mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 (William the Conqueror's survey to assess the extent of land and resources in England).**

However, the Kirkheaton referred to is the original Anglo-Saxon settlement at Upper Heaton, over half a mile away from the Kirkheaton we know today. Heaton means 'high farmstead'; at that time people tended to build higher up the slopes.

**It was only when Kirkheaton became a parish in its own right (it was once part of Dewsbury) around 1200**

**and a church was built in a place convenient for Dalton, Upper Whitley and Lepton, that people settled in Kirkheaton.**

Thus there were two Heatons: Upper Heaton, the original settlement; and Kirkheaton, the settlement near the church. The population of Kirkheaton continued to grow, albeit at a slow pace. In 1574 there was an important addition to the parish's population when Sir Richard Beaumont was born.

**The Beaumont family resided in the area for over four hundred years and during this time contributed to the growth of the parish and the welfare of the parishioners. Richard Beaumont, together with one Reverend Stock built Kirkheaton Grammar School in 1610 to educate Kirkheaton's boys.**

Education has always been important in Kirkheaton - as well as a Grammar School there was a boarding school for boys. By 1845 the Grammar School was replaced by Kirkheaton National School and it was this school, in the first half of the twentieth century, that seemed to have no end of trouble with its toilets! On 7 February 1917 a log-book entry records that 'the intense frost has frozen the WCs, both boys and girls'.

**This was, however, nothing compared with the problem encountered on 9th May 1938 when 'a boy got his head fast in the lavatory door...'. He had apparently been trying to open the door the wrong way – 'outwards rather than inwards'. Only a year later there was more toilet trouble when 'the outer door**

**jammed' and one unfortunate child had to be put through a window to open the toilets!**

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many of Kirkheaton's residents would have worked on the land. The land in and around Kirkheaton, unlike in other localities of Huddersfield (particularly the Colne and Holme Valleys) is suitable for arable farming and dairy cattle. As well as farming, many people worked at home, weaving. This activity was still continuing in Kirkheaton well into the late nineteenth century; the 1871 census records that a mill owner, one Hefford Ainley, employed 46 people 'on the premises' and 'about 50 outweavers' (home workers).

**Hefford Ainley and his partner William Lord bought land and property in Kirkheaton (including a dyehouse and weavers cottages) in 1869. As well as being a local employer, the Ainley family also took an interest in the welfare of their local workers: they set up Sunday Schools in Kirkburton and Dalton and contributed to the rebuilding of the parish church in 1886 after a fire, caused by recently installed underfloor heating, destroyed much of the church. Apparently locals had tried in vain to fight the fire with buckets of water and a borrowed hosepipe!**

Local mills suffered a similar fate. In February 1818 a boy accidentally ignited some cotton with a candle, resulting in a fierce fire at Atkinson's Mill, Colne Bridge. The mill doors had been locked; apparently the overseer had gone home to bed, locking the children inside to get on with their work.

Seventeen children (the youngest aged 9) died, trapped inside the mill. They were buried at St John's Church and there is a memorial to them in the churchyard.

**More recently, a fire broke out in Kirkheaton Mill (then owned by Broadhead & Graves) in 1964. Over fifty firemen were needed to tackle the blaze but they could not prevent the collapse of the roof of the building or the destruction of pattern and design records from the mill's early days.**

Kirkheaton today does not have the fires, or the toilet troubles of the past. Sadly, nor does it continue its textile traditions. In February 2005 the *Huddersfield Examiner* reported that 'More than 125 years of textile industry' would come to an end in Kirkheaton when weaving stopped at Huddersfield Fine Worsteds. However, not everything from the past has faded: Yetton Rant, a fair which has been held for more than 100 years, still takes place every Spring Bank Holiday in the fields next to the Beaumont Arms.

**And this pub, which is still known locally by its old name 'Kirk Stile', continues to offer liquid refreshment to locals. It is, however, no longer used as a court house nor its cellars as a prison. Thomas Blyeth (headmaster of Kirkheaton Grammar School c. 1675 who was known to frequent Kirkheaton's alehouses) might be disappointed to learn this as he would probably have been happy to have a hearing in the Beaumont Arms, followed by a long stint in the company of the beer barrels and the wine racks!**

# **DRUNKS & DEATHS!**

## **KIRKHEATON (THE VILLAGE): 5 KEY FACTS**

**1. Knur and Spell an old Yorkshire game was still being played in Kirkheaton in 1955.**

2. In the late seventeenth century one Thomas Blyeth was appointed headmaster of Kirkheaton Grammar School. When he accepted the post he promised that he would live a 'sober life' ... and not be 'addicted to excessive drinking nor a frequenter of alehouses'.

Unfortunately this was a promise Blyeth could not keep. He was an habitual drunkard and constantly spent time in Kirkheaton's alehouses, sometimes for several days and nights in a row. His drinking led to him being absent from school and on one occasion the school had to be closed for thirteen weeks! Eventually Blyeth was removed from his post.

**3. In 1858 the period's equivalent to an Ofsted inspector paid a visit to Kirkheaton National School. He praised the teaching but was concerned about the holiday that was being taken, commenting: 'My Lords are of the opinion that in no school ought there ...to be less than four weeks vacation a year.'**

4. An Inquest was held at the Blacksmith's Arms, Kirkheaton on 26th May 1873 into the death of a plate layer who was killed on the railway line at Heaton Lodge junction.

**5. Whinney Close Farm off Cockley Hill Lane was once the home of Alfred Moore. Moore was under surveillance from local police – he was suspected of carrying out burglaries in the area. On the evening of 14th July 1951 ten policemen were watching over Moore's House. Two of these, DI Fraser and PC Jagger, stopped a man who was walking back to the farm at about 2.00 am. This man admitted to being Moore but before he could be questioned further produced a gun and shot both policemen.**

**DI Fraser died immediately, having been shot several times, but PC Jagger (who died later) was able to identify Moore and give a statement. Moore was tried at Leeds Court five months later and was found guilty by the jury after only 50 minutes of deliberation. The death penalty (which was the principal form of execution in Britain from Anglo-Saxon times until the death penalty was abolished in 1964) was his punishment and Moore was executed on 6th February 1952 at Armley Jail, Leeds.**

# SETTLERS & SCHOOLS

## KIRKHEATON – KEY DATES BEFORE THE CRICKET CLUB WAS FOUNDED

**900 AD** People begin settling in the area.

**1086** Kirkheaton is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

**1200** Kirkheaton becomes a parish; prior to this it was part of Dewsbury parish.

**1574** Sir Richard Beaumont is born. The Beaumont family were a very important family in the area and were Lords of the Manor for about four hundred years.

**1610** Kirkheaton Grammar School is built by Rev. Stock and Sir Richard Beaumont for the education of Kirkheaton's boys.

**1818** February - seventeen children die in a mill fire at nearby Colne Bridge. They are buried in St John's churchyard.

**1823** Major rebuilding work begins on St John's Church.

**1831** The population of Kirkheaton stands at 2,755.

**1859** The church graveyard is full; a new piece of land nearby is purchased and consecrated.

# **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.