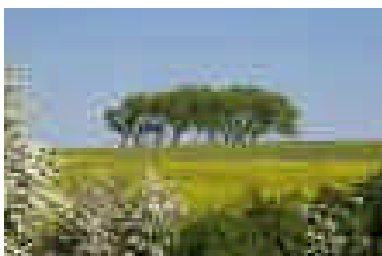


## LEPTON CC

# LEPTON VILLAGE: MINES, FIREWORKS & UNPOPULAR POPLARS

When people first began to settle in the ‘farmstead on a hillslope’ – Lepton – cannot be known with certainty but what is clear is that these early settlers would have chosen to settle on the hills where soil would have been fairly well drained and suitable for grazing, rather than in the damp valleys.

**Lepton offered just that. Though it is difficult to pinpoint when the first Leptoners arrived, the name ‘Lepton’ offers some clues as to approximate date and their identity: the ‘ton’ element of Lepton indicates that the early inhabitants were Anglo-Saxons who began arriving in Britain from around 450 AD.**

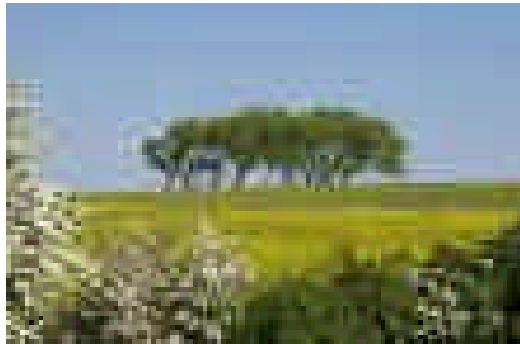


It is not known what the population of Lepton was at this time but by the time William the Conqueror’s Domesday surveyors paid a visit to Lepton in the late eleventh century

the village was described as 'waste'. Perhaps Lepton was one of the many Yorkshire villages to suffer at the hands of William's troops after his invasion in 1066.

**Certainly William believed the North to be troublesome and sent his troops to quell the rebellious northerners, laying waste to much of the area in the process.**

After the village's possible unpleasant encounter with the Norman soldiers, it slowly began to recover and according to records by the time the young Richard II was on the throne (he was only aged 10 when he was crowned in 1367) there were 75 people living in Lepton.



**The majority of Leptoners at this time would have worked on the land but it is also possible that some were employed in mining and documents suggest that coal pits were in existence in the area as early as the fourteenth century (a coroner's report dated 1357 records that one John Long, a Lepton resident, met an unfortunate death when he fell into a coal pit).**

By Tudor times this industry was firmly established in the area and villagers could be fined as much as 2 shillings and 6 for selling coal outside the manor.

**As well as farming and mining many of Lepton's residents would have supplemented their income by spinning and weaving in their cottages.**

Prior to the coming of the Industrial Revolution spinning and weaving of cloth were home based and the whole family would have been involved: carding being done by the children, the spinning of the wool by the women and the weaving by the men.

**This process continued in Lepton until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries and one can still find evidence of the domestic textile industry in the village today – there are still rows of weavers' cottages with their long often south-facing mullioned windows (to let in as much light as possible).**



Finished cloth would be taken to Almondbury market or, later, Huddersfield Cloth Hall to be sold. It was only in the nineteenth century, with the arrival of factory-based production and mills, that the weaving cottages of Lepton became redundant and large numbers of spinners and weavers were brought under one roof.

**During Victorian times, many Leptoners would have continued to work in the textile industry and many nineteenth century documents record that the majority of villagers were 'employed in the manufacture of woollen cloths and fancy goods'. One member of the village, Allen Jessop, was not interested in the textile industry and turned his hobby into a successful**

**business and employed many of the villagers as a result.**

In 1847 Jessop began making squibs as a hobby, but this led to him creating a successful firework business, Lion Fireworks. Bob Shaw and two of his nephews subsequently set up a rival concern to Jessop's business, Globe Fireworks. These businesses both traded for well over a hundred years.

**Lepton today is a different place to the Lepton of 150 years ago. The mills no longer employ the majority of Leptoners; foreign competition in this industry has resulted in widespread closures not just in Lepton but also throughout the West Riding.**

A similar fate has befallen Lepton's coal mining industry; there having been a much publicised closure of 'uneconomic' pits in the 1970s and 1980s (in Yorkshire there are now less than 5,000 miners left).

**Leptoners today then are no longer awakened at 6.15 am by the sound of the mill hooters calling them to work; nor are they at risk of being kept awake by the testing of fireworks.**

But if the talk about Lepton's poplar trees is true (the trees are Lombardy Poplars nicknamed 'the unpopular poplar' by horticulturalists because of their potential to damage buildings and landscape) they might suffer sleepless nights after a haunting experience when next out walking down Thurgory Lane!

# HAUNTED TREES?

## 5 FACTS ABOUT LEPTON VILLAGE

1. Care should be taken when walking past the 25 poplar trees on Thurgory Lane, Lepton. Some people believe that these trees are haunted and that as a result many dogs have refused to go near them. It is said that these trees, which are Lombardy Poplars, were brought back to Lepton by Crusaders (the Crusades or 'religious wars' began in the eleventh century and continued until the thirteenth century).



However, it is more likely that the trees were brought from northern Italy along with others that were planted in Britain during the mid eighteenth century. Lombardy Poplars are in fact, quite unpopular trees – they are apparently extremely susceptible to disease and have shallow and aggressive roots which can cause damage. Perhaps that is why dogs are keen to avoid them!

**2. The manorial corn mill was sited at Rods Beck, Lepton. The mill was owned by the Lord of the Manor, in this case the Beaumont family. All his tenants were required to take their grain to be ground at this mill and had to pay for the facility. This was the only mill in the area until the eighteenth century.**

3. Lepton Parish Church, St John the Evangelist, was built in 1868 on land donated by Henry Beaumont of Whitley Hall. Prior to the building of St John's, services were held in a cottage at Town Bottom and the villagers had to travel to Kirkheaton for weddings, christenings and funerals. The first baptism was carried out on 29 November 1868, the day after the church was consecrated.

**4. Lepton is one of 13,418 places mentioned in the Domesday Book, a detailed survey commissioned by William the Conqueror to ascertain the wealth and possessions of his subjects.**



**The actual entry was: “In Leptone Gerneber held 3 carucates of land to be taxed and 2 ploughs might be used there. Now Ilbert has it but it is waste. In King Edward’s reign its value was 20 shillings.” The entry tells us that at the time Edward the Confessor was on the throne (1042-1066) a man called Gerneber held the land. After the Norman invasion this land was given to Ilbert de Laci, one of William’s loyal fans.**

**We are also told that there were 3 carucates of land in the manor and that during Edward’s reign the value of the village was 20 shillings. Unfortunately for Ilbert, by 1086 it was ‘waste’.**

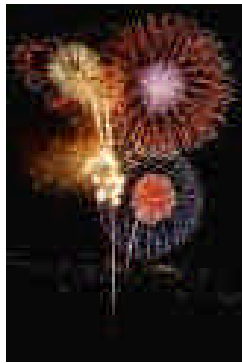
# CROFTS & CORONERS

## KEY DATES IN LEPTON'S HISTORY BEFORE THE BIRTH OF THE CRICKET CLUB

**1086** Lepton, or 'Leptone' as it was written then, is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

**1329** Addlecroft, one of Lepton's oldest settlements, is referred to in a document as 'Arkel Croft'.

**1357** A Lepton resident is killed on falling into a coal pit. The coroner's report records the death as being 'accidental'.



**1379** Lepton's population is estimated at 75.

**1815** Linfit Mill is built.

**1831** Census returns show the population of Lepton is 3,320.

**1834** Pigot & Co's National Commercial Directory describes Lepton as 'a populous township in the same parish as Dalton'.

**1847** Allen Jessop, of what later became Lion Fireworks, begins making fireworks.

# 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.

# LOCAL RIVALS!



Almondbury CC



Flockton CC



**Kirkburton CC**



**Kirkheaton CC**



## Lascelles Hall CC