

NORTONTHORPE CC

# DOWN YOUR WAY

## MILLS & TREADMILLS

### Scissett: The Village

In 1980 the residents of Scissett celebrated what they regarded as the village's 150th birthday. It can therefore be assumed that they date the village's birth to 1830, five years after Joseph Norton bought Highbridge Corn Mill and began building the village we know today. It is certainly true that until then, compared to its near neighbour, Skelmanthorpe, Scissett was largely undeveloped and unpopulated.

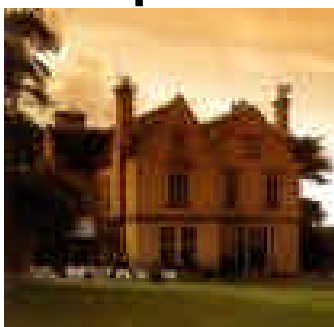


The name Scissett, however, suggests that the village has been in existence since at least the tenth century and Great Scissett Wood (which has today all but disappeared; many of the trees having

**been cut down to provide timber for tools or to create pasture for nearby villages) is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.**

The Domesday Book was a tax motivated survey commissioned by William the Conqueror – a list of who owned what and how much and Great Scissett Wood would have been listed because of the value of its timber (in 1718 the woods were valued at £436; a large sum of money in the eighteenth century).

**Other than the odd person nipping down to the woods for a bit of timber, it is likely that the village remained uninhabited. Until the eighteenth century people would have built their homes on higher ground in places like High Hoyland, Emley and Skelmanthorpe rather than in the valley bottoms which were marshy and prone to flooding.**



The outskirts of the village, however, were populated by the 1600s. Several farms, such as Wheatley Hill Farm, had been built higher up the slopes and one Peter Hawkeswell is believed to have lived in the farmhouse in 1651.

**By the middle of the eighteenth century when ‘mad’ King George III was on the throne, the beginnings**

**of the village's association with the textile industry were taking shape. Scissett was home to fulling and scribbling mills. These mills would have been powered by water-wheels and sited close to the River Dearne.**

It was around this time (1770) that Benjamin Norton (father of the founders of Scissett – George and Joseph Norton) was born. Benjamin lived at High Hoyland but worked at Cuttlehurst in Scissett where he was a weaver and clothier (clothiers outsourced raw materials to weavers, collected the finished product and then sold it).

**Joseph and George were thus brought up with the textile industry and it is no surprise that they followed in their father's footsteps.**

Joseph was able to purchase Highbridge Corn Mill in 1825 along with land to continue his father's business of supplying yarn to weavers, collecting the cloth and selling it at markets and cloth halls such as Tammy Hall, Wakefield.

**Indeed, local entrepreneurs in the cloth trade travelled to Wakefield so frequently they demanded better access. This was eventually provided via the construction of the Denby Dale to Wakefield turnpike road (the current A636).**



As well as campaigning for better transport, Joseph Norton decided to reorganise his business. Realising that toing and froing between outweavers' houses delivering and collecting was wasted time (it was also inconvenient; some of the weavers lived in hilltop villages which were difficult to reach in bad weather), he began building houses in Scissett (known as the Fleet), close to his mills, for his workers.

**As the workers began moving into the village, Joseph and George moved out of their mill houses to the two identical and rather palatial homes they had had built: Bagden Hall (George) and Nortonthorpe Hall (Joseph). Here they were away from the dirt and grime of the mills but were close enough to keep an eye on t'shop.**

Scissett continued expanding until about 1870. By this time the village boasted three public houses (the Crown, the Queen's Head and the British Queen – two of which are still in business today), a wide variety of shops, numerous tradesmen and even a market (this apparently was quite a lively affair attracting people from neighbouring villages), as well as offering employment in its textile mills for over a thousand people.

**As well as textiles, Scissett was also home to the mining industry during the nineteenth century, an industry which had expanded rapidly as a result of the requirement of steam for powering factories and transport. By 1865 eleven mines had been**

**established in the Dearne Valley, including in Scissett where Baths were also built in 1929 for Clayton West and Emley Miners Welfare (the baths are still in existence today and are home to a state-of-the-art fitness centre).**

Perhaps the building of the miners' baths laid the foundation for Scissett as a centre for fitness; today Scissett is home to not one but two very well patronised gyms. The village also offers opportunities for those not so keen on running and rowing - cricket and football teams both thrive whilst those who like a quieter sport can enjoy a round of golf in George Norton's garden.



**Scissett has witnessed many changes during the last fifty years; the mills are now home to a variety of different business, the majority of residents no longer work in the village but commute to work in nearby towns and cities and, of course, the market has gone along with many of the shops (although Scissett does still have a number of shops – a general shop, a newsagents, a post office and a bakery). However, one item from the past has remained in the village – Violet, a Pollit & Wigzell**

**steam engine can still be found in Nortonthorpe Mill.**

Violet, who was installed in the mill in 1886, began life as the 'Empress'. Her name was changed to Violet in 1906 after Queen Victoria's death and on the birth of George Norton's daughter, Violet.

**She worked in the mill until 1962 when perhaps old age (she was 76) and modernisation of the mill forced her retirement. After ten peaceful years, however, she was forced out of retirement to provide power during the power cuts of the early 1970s.**



Today, with a slightly more stable electricity mains supply, she only does performance steams on certain days of the year. There must be many present day residents of the Upper Dearne Valley who, resetting their clocks and timers after the umpteenth power cut of the year, would love to have Violet in their garage.

# DEMANDS & EXHIBITIONS

## SCISSETT: 2 KEY FACTS

### 1. PLUG PLOT RIOTS

The Great Reform Act of 1832 turned out to be a damp squib for the majority of British people, particularly the working classes (the pre-reform electorate had been 435,000; the 1832 Act only increased the electorate by 217,000 to 652,000 and this meant that five out of six adult males were still disenfranchised).

The disappointment of the Reform Act together with a number of other developments, including economic depression, led to people organising themselves to air their grievances. Many became Chartists. The Chartists expressed their demands in a six point Charter which called for universal (male) suffrage, annual parliaments, vote by secret ballot, abolition of property qualifications for MPs, payment for MPs and equal electoral districts.



A plug plot riot, August 1842

**None of these demands were realised during the lifetime of the movement despite the fact that the Chartists presented these demands in the form of three petitions to Parliament (1839, 1842 and 1848).**

**The failure of the second petition in 1842 (it was rejected by 287 votes to 47) sparked off widespread unrest in the country, particularly in industrial districts.**

**A series of strikes began in the Midland coalfields and spread to the textile industry in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Some of these striking workers wanted to halt production in factories and mills and did so by removing the boiler plugs from engines. Hence, they became known as Plug Plot Rioters.**

**In August 1842 a group of strikers marched on Nortonthorpe Mills in Scissett with the intention of removing the boiler plugs. The mill owner, Joseph Norton, had been informed of their group's intentions prior to their arrival and cavalry were waiting for them. On arrival the Riot Act was read to the group and they were informed of what would happen to them if they continued with their plans (transportation). This was enough to deter the individuals and the crowd eventually dispersed.**



## **The Great Exhibition**

### **2. TRIP TO LONDON**

The Norton Brothers were one of a number of businesses from the area that exhibited their goods at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The Exhibition, effectively a large trade show, took place in the Crystal Palace and attracted over 6 million visitors.

# ANGLES & AUGUSTINE

## Key Dates in the History of Scissett before the Birth of the Cricket Club

**c.900 AD** The area is invaded and settled by Angles.

**1086** Great Scissett Wood is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

**1760** Fulling and scribbing mills, powered by the River Dearne, are operating in Scissett and nearby Denby Dale.

**1770** Benjamin Norton (father of Joseph and George) is born.

**1825** Joseph Norton buys Highbridge Corn Mill.



**c.1830s** The Norton Brothers build Bagden Hall and Nortonthorpe Hall.

**1839** Church of St. Augustine is built and consecrated.

**1842** August: Plug Plot rioters march on Nortonthorpe Mills.

**1851** The Nortons exhibit their products at the Great Exhibition in London.

**1865** George Norton dies and is buried at High Hoyland.

**1874** Joseph Norton dies. He is also buried at High Hoyland Church.

# 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!

## OTHER NEARBY CRICKET VILLAGES



**Clayton West**



**Denby Dale**



**Emley**



**Flockton**



**Skelmanthorpe**