

SHELLEY CC

DOWN YOUR WAY

CORSETS, COFFINS & CHAPELS

The Village

When walking the boundaries of Shelley today it is hard to imagine that this large, thriving village was once an unpopulated area of meadows and forests. But over a thousand years ago, when the first settlers chose to set up their homes here, that is how the area would have looked.



It is difficult to give a precise date as to when the first settlers arrived, but the name Shelley offers some clues as to approximate date and identity: as mentioned earlier the area would have been well wooded and the first task of any settlers was to fell the trees and clear the land for growing crops. The suffix 'ley' was the Anglo-Saxon word for 'clearing', indicating that the early inhabitants were Anglo-Saxons who began arriving in Britain from around 450 AD.

Fifty years later they had settled to the east of Huddersfield in areas such as Shepley, Emley and Shelley, forming small farming communities. Those who made Shelley their home did so because of its hilltop position; people at this time preferred to settle higher up the slopes where the land was well drained and suitable for grazing cattle.



As Shelley appears in the country's earliest public record, the Domesday Book of 1086 - the Domesday Book was not a census so it is not known what the village's population was at this time - it is likely that Shelley had been continuously settled from Anglo-Saxon times.

The village may, however, have suffered a similar fate to that of many others in Yorkshire in the eleventh century; much of the north of England had rebelled against William's rule (he invaded England in 1066, defeating King Harold II and his army at the Battle of Hastings and declaring himself king). William sent his troops to quell the rebellious northerners, laying waste to much of the area in the process.

If Shelley was laid 'waste' it had certainly begun to recover by the fourteenth century as there are records of one Nicholas de Schellay owning land at Roydhouse, a lady named Ozan de Shelley living in the village at Ozzings, of Healey Farm being built (c.1335), and of some kind of settlement at Woodhouse by the time the young Henry III was on the throne (1216-1272 – Henry was only nine when he became king. The country ran well until he was 21, when he sacked the nobles, who had actually been doing the job of running the country, and took control himself).

The majority of villagers at this time would have worked on the land. However, as early as the fourteenth

century some of Shelley's inhabitants were supplementing their small income by spinning and weaving in their cottages.



Prior to the arrival of the factories and mills in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, spinning and weaving were home-based with the whole family playing a part: the women and children prepared the wool and the men did the weaving. One can still find evidence of handloom cottage weaving in the village today – some cottages still have their long rows of mullioned windows (the windows which were often south-facing, were needed to let in as much light as possible to enable the family to work long hours).

Like much of Yorkshire, however, Shelley remained predominantly agricultural until the nineteenth century when the Industrial Revolution brought machines and mills to the West Riding.

The villagers of Shelley would have been no different, the village becoming an important centre for rug-making (being home to the Tumble Twist rug) and corset making. Indeed, Shelley was home

to Albert Fitton, the maker of the famous ‘Shelley Dreadnought’, a seamless handwoven corset which came with the following advice: ‘Please don’t wear one pair above THREE years’.



So what of Shelley today? Shelley Community Association describes it as ‘a small Yorkshire village on the edge of the Pennines about 800 feet above sea level with magnificent views over the surrounding countryside’ and it is difficult to argue with this description other than perhaps to say it is no longer a ‘small village’ given the amount of house-building which has taken place over the past few years (one writer has referred to the Shelley Park Estate as a village within a village).

Shelley is no longer an important centre for corset-making (perhaps demand for these garments isn’t what is used to be) but rug-making still continues as does farming, albeit it by fewer people and on a much smaller scale. And now that Shelley has its own

church, people no longer have to walk down Box Ings Lane (the old coffin route) to carry their nearest and dearest for burial to Kirkburton Parish Church.

The Shelley of today is very different from the village our antecedents would have known; like many other rural places Shelley is now a base for commuters but that is not to say that it does not have all the characteristics of a rural village and more: a cricket club, a church, a chapel, a post office, a Sports and Social Club, and a Sequence Dance Club to name a few. It is no wonder that the village was awarded ‘Village of the Year’ in 2004 and that it scooped four other awards as well.



Perhaps it is the manner in which Shelley's residents get the year off to a good start by walking the village's boundaries (the Shelley Welly Walk) at 10.00 am on New Year's Day that gives the residents the energy to organise and take part in all the activities Shelley has to offer.

MINERS & METHODISTS

Shelley: 4 Key Facts

1. Religion: By the middle of the eighteenth century Methodism was becoming popular, particularly in the industrial areas. There was a shortage of Anglican clergymen outside the capital and this, along with the complacency of the Church of England and the lack of churches in many areas (Shelley did not have a church until c.1866 and until then the villagers had to walk to Kirkburton to worship), opened the door to non-conformity.



John Wesley

A Methodist Chapel was built in Shelley as early as 1785 (the very first Wesleyan chapel being built in Bristol in 1739) and John Wesley (the man behind the movement) preached from its pulpit in 1788 on

his journeys through the North of England. Wesley had ridden to Shelley from Huddersfield where he had preached at 5.00am! (Incidentally, Wesley travelled over 250,000 miles and preached more than 40,000 times during his life).

The Methodist Church in Shelley still plays a large part in village life. On 10 July this year Shelley's residents are opening up their gardens for viewing once more (this will be the fourth time the Garden Festival has taken place) in order to raise money to fix the organ in the Methodist Church.

Wesley apparently said of the people he preached to in Huddersfield: 'I rode over the mountains to Huddersfield. A wilder people I never saw in England, they seemed ready to devour us.' Perhaps he found the villagers of Shelley more to his taste!



2. Employment: In 1881 the majority of Shelley's inhabitants were employed locally in the textile

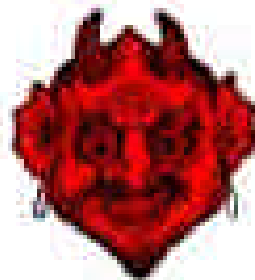
industry (196), mining industry (37) and on the farms (47). In addition there were blacksmiths, railway platelayers, cloggers, servants, wheelwrights, tailors and seamstresses. Today the picture couldn't be more different. Out of a population of just over 3,000, the number of people employed in the mining industry is 6, with only 21 employed in agriculture.

Most villagers today are employed in the public sector, manufacturing and the retail trade and work in nearby towns and cities.

3. Shelley Pinfold: From medieval times until the nineteenth century most agricultural villages had a pinfold.

A pinfold was a secure enclosure where straying animals were collected and kept until the owner reclaimed them, on payment of a fine to the Pinder, the man responsible for administering the pinfold.

Shelley's pinfold was situated close to Shelley Hall and was last used in 1860.



4. Lawyer sells soul to the Devil! Over two hundred years ago a lawyer, who was described by locals as 'ruthless and grasping', lived in a cottage at Roydhouse, Shelley.

Apparently the lawyer sold himself to the devil who arrived at his house in a horse-drawn carriage to collect him. The lawyer was carried off by the devil and his fire-breathing horses.

This story was believed for so long that no person felt able to enter the lawyer's private room in the house until over a hundred years later. It is not known how much the lawyer charged the devil!

MINERS & METHODISTS

Key Dates in the History of Shelley before the Birth of the Cricket Club

1086 Shelley, or Scelneleie as it was written then, is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

1335 Healey farm is built.

1785 Shelley Methodist Chapel is built.

1788 May: John Wesley preaches to crowds at Shelley Methodist Chapel.



1828 28 July: A coach taking Methodist ministers to a conference overturns at Shelley Bank Bottom. Two of the ministers die and eight others are wounded.

1831 The population of the village is 1,319.

1860 Shelley pinfold is last used.

1862 Shelley's handbell ringers win first of two handbell- ringing contests at Belle Vue Zoological Gardens in Manchester.

1866 Emmanuel Church built. Foundation stone is laid by the Earl of Dartmouth.

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



Cumberworth



Kirkburton



Lepton



Shepley



Skelmanthorpe