

UPPERTHONG CC

DOWN YOUR WAY II

LUDDITES & POLES

UPPERTHONG: THE VILLAGE

Upperthong was the original of a trio of Thongs in the area (Thongsbridge and Netherthong the other two). Upperthong was settled much earlier than Netherthong and Thongsbridge and indeed was known as 'Thong' until recent years; some residents in Upperthong still refer to the village as 'Thong'.



The name also gives us an indication as to who the first settlers were and the approximate date of their arrival. 'Thong' or 'Thoac' is the Norse word for tongue or a thin strip of land. The Norsemen began arriving in the area in the tenth century (c.930-940 AD).

They would have chosen to settle in places like Upperthong, preferring hilltop locations for security (they could spot potential enemies as they approached the village) and because the land was well drained and suitable for grazing (the valley bottoms such as Holmfirth at this time were thickly wooded and marshy).

Upperthong's elevated position (925ft above sea level) did not prevent Norman soldiers visiting in 1069, when they destroyed crops and livestock as well as killing people as part of their mission to quell rebellious northerners. The Domesday Book provides evidence of the devastation William the Conqueror's troops caused: 'one plough may till this land, it is waste'.

By the thirteenth century, however, the village had fully recovered from this setback and records show that one William de Thwong was living in the area (at this time Upperthong was known as Thwong) and in 1297 Agnes of Denby paid 6d for a licence to take three acres of land in Upperthong. Perhaps her descendants are still there today.

It was from this time (thirteenth century) that Upperthong's inhabitants would have begun producing cloth. In 1294 a market was established at nearby Almondbury and this would have encouraged the growth of textile production in the surrounding villages. Upperthong was an ideal base for cloth production, having all the ingredients – plenty of sheep grazing in fields nearby, an abundance of soft water for washing the wool, and ample labour to turn spin and weave the wool.



As a result the domestic textile industry gradually developed in the village as an adjunct to subsistence farming. Usually every family member would play a part in the process: the children cleaning and carding the raw wool, the women spinning it and finally the men weaving the wool on his loom which was generally kept on the top storey of the house close to rows of windows to let in as much light as possible. Indeed you can still find evidence of this today; the weavers' cottages with their long rows of mullioned windows and the farmsteads (called laithe-houses) which provided family accommodation, a barn for the cattle and a room for weaving.

This picture remained unaltered for centuries; the residents of Upperthong would have continued farming, spinning and weaving wool. However, the invention of machines in the eighteenth century changed this picture forever. In 1776 the first spinning jenny was introduced into the Holme Valley.

Just fifty years later the landscape had changed dramatically. Mills had sprung up in the previously sparsely populated valley bottoms and many people abandoned hilltop living to move into the purpose-built

terraced workers' cottages. The workplace was no longer the home and families were separated, although many were often employed in the same mill or factory.



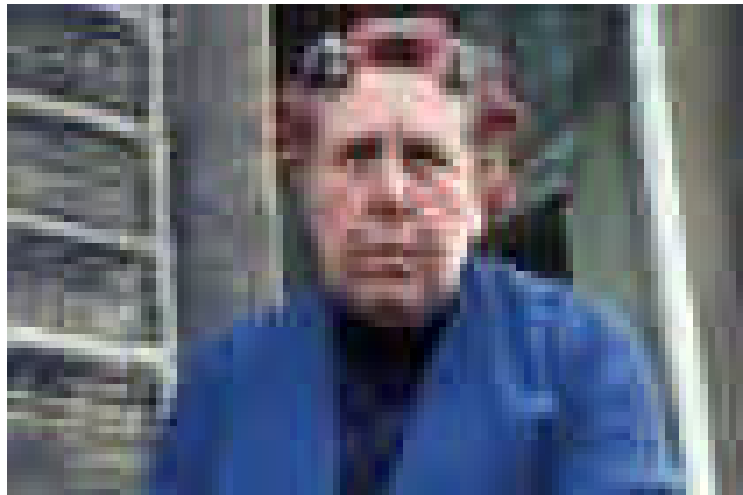
The changes in working conditions together with the de-skilling of the labour force (cropping for example was a highly skilled job but with the introduction of shearing frames in the early nineteenth century, croppers were no longer in demand) and even redundancy led to opposition from some workers, who became known as Luddites. Whilst records suggest that Upperthong did not experience much Luddite activity, one resident, a clothier named John Hinchliffe, incurred their wrath in 1812 (see the fact sheet for more details).

Despite the arrival of mills and machinery the residents of Upperthong continued manufacturing cloth until well into the latter half of the 19th Century. From then on those who wanted to work in the textile industry would have walked down the hill to one of Holmfirth or Thongsbridge's many mills. Even the Polish refugees who lived in huts at the back of Ash Grove in Upperthong during the Second World War continued the village's affair with the textile industry, working in Washpit and Bottom Mills.

Upperthong today is a small village in the heart of Summer

Wine Country and indeed the village probably makes a bob

or two out of Summer Wine tourists looking for film locations or wanting to visit the grave of Compo (Bill Owen). Bill Owen is buried in Upperthong's churchyard which overlooks the valley where he spent so much time.



Upperthong, with its mixture of old and new houses (many dating back to the mid-eighteenth century), its friendly pub and its fantastic views is now a popular place for professionals to settle. This is lamented a little by one writer who states that there 'has been much new development along the roads leading up to the village' and another stating that it is 'now home to yuppified lanes'. Compo and Nora Batty certainly could not afford to live here!

CRIMES & CHURCHYARDS

UPPERTHONG (THE VILLAGE): 3 KEY FACTS

1. WHO DUNNIT?

The introduction of new technology (both agricultural and industrial) in the early nineteenth century often led to disturbances. The group which opposed these changes became known as Luddites after the mythical Ned Ludd (the word Luddite has since been added to the English language and means resistance to technological progress). The Luddites (a group of textile workers – mainly croppers, who were highly skilled – destroyed machinery in an attempt to protect their livelihoods) were very active in the Holme Valley.



Upperthong, which was home to many textile workers, did not go unaffected. In 1812 an Upperthong resident, John Hinchliffe, was approached by a Netherthong Luddite, John Schofield, who asked him to join them. Hinchliffe

apparently refused but paid a heavy price for doing so. Some time later he was attacked outside his home by a group of masked men who believed Hinchliffe's refusal was a sign that he was an informer (before the formation of the police force the Home Office paid people for information on groups they saw as dangerous and even revolutionary). Dragging Hinchliffe outside they shot him in the eye, leaving him blind. Hinchliffe accused Schofield of the crime and this led to a panic-stricken Schofield fleeing. He was eventually caught and put on trial but was found not guilty. The masked men were never caught.

2. PARTY TIME

Wolfstone Heights, on the outskirts of Upperthong, appears to be the place to be. On several occasions the field has been the venue for celebrations. In 1887 villagers celebrated Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee at Wolfstone Heights and this was repeated just ten years later on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. In 1911 when George V was crowned and in 1977 when the present Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee, 'Upperthongers' again partied at Wolfstone Heights.



3. FLOOD VICTIMS AND LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE

St John's Church, Upperthong is now famous for being the final resting place of Bill Owen, otherwise known as Compo from *Last of the Summer Wine*.

The church also has another connection to the programme. The Hellowell family, who once lived in one of the cottages on Scar Fold (now famous for being the home of Nora Batty and her stockings) are also buried in the churchyard.

The Hellowells' story is a tragic one. The family were all asleep in their home when Bilberry Reservoir burst its banks in the early hours of 5 February 1852.

The water reached their house and carried Mr Hellowell to safety (he was taken to the upper floor of the house where he was dragged to safety by the people in the house above), but his wife and five children all drowned and were laid to rest in St John's churchyard.

WEAVERS AND THE W.I.

UPPERTHONG – KEY DATES BEFORE THE CRICKET CLUB WAS FOUNDED

930-940 AD First settlers arrive in Uppertong.

1086 Uppertong, or Thong as it was then known, is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

1297 Agnes of Denby pays 6d at the manor court of Wakefield for three aces of land at Uppertong.

1733 One Joshua Broadhead of Uppertong is recorded as having a 'dyeing house'.

1771 Uppertong appears on Jeffrey's map of Yorkshire as 'Thong'.



1776 The first Spinning Jenny is introduced in the area.

1810 The population of the village is estimated to be 1,033.

1812 Luddite activity begins in the area.

1837 Upperthong Sunday School is built.

1841 The village's population has more than doubled, now standing at 2,258.

1846 Upperthong church, St John the Evangelist, is built.

1848 The church is consecrated.

1851 An Upperthong company, Brook & Son, exhibit their cloth at the Great Exhibition.

1852 5th February - 'The Great Flood'. This flood has been described as 'probably the greatest single disaster ever to befall the Holme Valley', claiming 81 lives. Some of the victims are buried in Upperthong churchyard.

1872 8th July: Weavers' strike in the area.

1884 Upperthong forms part of Holmfirth Local Board.



1887 The village celebrates Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee with games, dancing and food followed by a bonfire at Wolfstone Heights.

1911 The villagers celebrate the coronation of George V at a bonfire at Wolfstone Heights on the outskirts of Upperthong.

1928 The Holme Valley Beagles are housed at Upperthong.

1961 Upperthong's population stands at 1,200.

1971 Upperthong W.I is founded.

LOCAL RIVALS!

OTHER NEARBY CRICKET VILLAGES



Cartworth Moor



Holmbridge



Scholes



Thongsbridge

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.