

# **Notes for the Walk**

## **Historic Ossie**

**Spring Vale Rambling Class Darwen**



**Prepared by Michael Counter**  
**4<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

## **Belthorn**

Belthorn is one of the highest villages in Lancashire, rising from 275m above sea level in the north-west of the village to 300m in the south-east. The village acquired its name from the 1701 house named The Bell in the Thorne where a bell placed in a thorn bush would be rung to summon a fresh horse to replace a tired one bringing a load up the hill. Most of the cottages are 'typical of weavers' cottages built in the 19th century. The house on the corner of Belthorn Road and Tower View was once a windmill and, dependent on the weather on the day of your walk, you will understand why it was sited just there. From this location you can see Blackpool Tower sticking up on the horizon and just to the left you can see 'The Big One' on the Pleasure Beach. Further to the left is Darwen Tower and to the left again you will see the TV and radio transmission mast at Winter Hill above Horwich.

## **Oswaldtwistle Moor**

Oswaldtwistle Moor (adjacent to Haslingden Moor) is the extensive area of moorland to the south of Oswaldtwistle, with Haslingden Grane bordering the moor's southern edges, Belthorn to the west and Haslingden to the east. This area forms part of the West Pennine Moors. In May 2007, plans were made to build a wind farm consisting of twelve wind turbines on the moors. In October 2012, the project was officially completed, and was called the Hyndburn Wind Farm.

The panorama from here offers views to Pendle Hill, the Yorkshire Dales, Bowland Fell, South Lakeland Fells, the Fylde coast, Blackpool Tower, West Pennine Moors and Darwen Tower.

## **Jackhouse Farm**

This building is a grade II listed building believed to be the oldest in Oswaldtwistle and dates from around 1530. The former farmhouse was extended at the east end in the 19th century. It is built in sandstone with stone-slate roofs. The house has a T-shaped plan with a two-bay cross-wing at the west end. The windows are mullioned. Jackhouse stands on the corner of what was once an important road link with the main routes through to Accrington, up to Kings Highway, and through to Blackburn, all passing close by via Pothouse Lane and Cobbs Lane. Jackhouse Reserve gets its name from

Jackhouse Farm. The reservoir was built in the 1860s to supply drinking water, but was phased out in the 1980s and re-developed as part of a nature reserve.

### **Town Bent**

Coal mining was second only to textiles as the major employer in the area. Oswaldtwistle's three major mines, Aspen, Lower Darwen and Town Bent, which closed in 1925, the mines together employed some 1,000 men. Town Bent was the last working Colliery in Oswaldtwistle. "Gobbin" comes from the material found at Town Bent and is the waste material from the colliery. When the Irish navvies were laying the main road through Oswaldtwistle they ran out of road material just at the lamp which stood where the library is. The Irishmen found this waste at Town Bent and they called it "Gobbin". And now anyone who comes from above the lamp comes from "Gobbin Land" and is affectionately known as a "Gobbiner". Oswaldtwistle is split into four; Top End (Gobbin Land), Bottom End (Below Lamp), West End and Stanhill. Each section of people are proud of their own area but they are even more proud that they all come from Oswaldtwistle itself.

### **Oswaldtwistle**

The name is derived from "Oswald" and "Twistle". The word "twistle" is an old English word meaning "brooks meet". Legend has it that Saint Oswald, King of Northumbria passed through, giving the area its full title of Oswald's Twistle, which in time came to be Oswaldtwistle.

The people of Oswaldtwistle were involved in the power loom riots of 1826. The mechanisation of the textile industry (with the introduction of looms powered by steam engines from the 1820s onwards) resulted in redundancies, low wages, and starvation. On 26 April, a large number of cotton workers attacked the factory in White Ash (Brookside Mill) in Oswaldtwistle, about a mile from Hargreaves' workshop, destroying looms and other equipment. The riots went on for three days, extending to all cotton towns in central Lancashire.

### **Foxhill Bank**

The Foxhill Bank Print Works in Oswaldtwistle was originally set up by Richard Brewer in 1780 again on the probable site of an earlier fulling mill. The Foxhill area is between the Tinker Brook and White Ash Brook. In addition to the Foxhill Bank print works, chemicals and dye works were established throughout the 19th century. The earliest of these was Tom Knitter bleach works, which was in existence by 1822. This was soon followed by Bridge End Works in 1830.

The Peels operated the site in the 1790s and the Simpsons from 1813, employing both water and steam power. Pigot's directory of 1828 lists Foxhill Bank as a 'Calico Printers of Simpson, Haigh and Company'. Foxhill remained calico printers and in 1831 it was leased for seven years to Thomas Coates. In 1834 the Calico Printer listed in the local directory was 'Coates, Thomas & Co'. The Simpsons returned in 1837 until the 1850s. The industrial process at the Foxhill Bank resulted in a court case in 1840 when the following was cited,

*'The streams were quickly polluted by effluent from the mills, and at Church the making of size from dead animal carcasses, the dung pits of the print works, the boiling of blood at the dye works and the sharp eye stinging smells of the alkali plant.'*

Fortunes and tenants ebbed and flowed and from 1891 Frederick Steiner became involved. The firm remained successful until the 1920s, but went into voluntary liquidation in the 1950s. Foxhill Bank was still in use as a bleach works until 1958 but was cleared in the late 1970s.

Clearly, Robert Peel early in his commercial career, combined in his mills new technology for cotton carding & spinning developed by James Hargreaves, and the chemical technologies associated with dyestuffs, mordents and calico bleaching & printing. These latter were the technologies absorbed by Jonathan Haworth from his Dutch mates in London which transformed the Lancashire textile industry.

### **The Holland Bank Chemical Works**

The Holland Bank Chemical Works originally manufactured chemicals for the textile industry and is known locally as Blythe's. William Blythe (born 181) was from Kirkaldy, Scotland and studied chemistry at Glasgow & Manchester University. In 1835 he worked at The Church Bank Works for Messrs Haworth & Barnes, before establishing the Holland Bank Works in 1845, as Blythe & Benson. He was the most important of the manufacturing chemists.

There was also a chemical works on the opposite side of the canal known as John Haworth's Chemical Works at Church which was up for sale in 1856. The OS map from 1893 identifies the factory as between the railway, canal and Blackburn to Accrington Road. Over 1,200 tons of plant & equipment from this Church plant made a good price as scrap when sold in 1859 after a Chancery decree ... and in 1862 the Haworth Chemical Works was finally up for sale again ... the notice identified the lease holders were formerly Messrs Haworth & Barnes

### **Leeds and Liverpool Canal**

The Leeds and Liverpool Canal forms a key trans-pennine route that connects two of the major cities of the north, Leeds and Liverpool, with a variety of industrial towns and villages along its route. The Canal is the longest canal in Britain at 127 miles in length and winds its way down from the Pennine Hills to the east to the flat agricultural land that characterises west Lancashire. The half way point of the canal is marked twice in Hyndburn, at Church and Clayton-Le-Moors<sup>1</sup>. It passes through 91 locks and has a summit level of 487 feet. The first sod was cut in 1770, but not completed until 1816. The canal was constructed in various stages as funds and support for its completion were found. It was regarded as one of the greatest civil engineering accomplishments of its time.

### **“Fairy Caves” Coke Ovens**

The coke ovens are on the site of former Aspen Colliery and are listed as a Scheduled Monument. They are located by the side of the Leeds Liverpool canal. Coal was dug from the Lower Mountain seam and processed into coke before shipping off by canal. The colliery closed around 1930 and it is possible that the coke ovens continued producing coke after coal mining on the site was no longer profitable on site. The coal would have been brought to the site by barge and unloaded prior to processing.

### **Knuzden WW2 POW Camp**

Lancashire had its fair share of POW and Internment Camps, some in the most unlikely places. The Internment Camps were a dark part of the war, whose story is rarely told. Thousands of Italian and German POWs and Internees passed through Lancashire during the war and afterwards during repatriation. Stanhill Camp, between Stanhill and Knuzden, started as an anti-aircraft gun battery before expanding to become a purpose built POW camp made of wooden huts. The site of the camp was excavated during of the construction of the M65 motorway.

### **Stanhill**

Stanhill is a pre industrial settlement, but the earliest buildings still visible date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Stanhill Hall was built in 1748, but was extensively altered in Victorian times as its turrets and Gothic like windows show. The owners of White Ash Mill once lived here. The Post Office has long been associated with the birth of the industrial age. The plaque on the wall tells the

story, but some say the riots took place at Ramsclough. The Spinning Jenny on the plaque is not that invented by James Hargreaves, but a later model. The gardens next to the post office were dedicated as a memorial to the achievements of James Hargreaves and Robert Peel- both natives of Stanhill village.

After Rushes Farm the way in which industry and housing grew together can be clearly seen. The curious concrete structure caps the shaft of Stanhill Pit- once part of the Aspin Colliery.

**James Hargreaves** (c. 1720 – 22 April 1778)<sup>1</sup> was a weaver, carpenter and inventor in Lancashire, England. James Hargreaves was born in Stanill and later moved into Blackburn. He was one of three inventors responsible for mechanising spinning. Hargreaves is credited with inventing the spinning jenny in 1764, in 1768 he was forced to leave Blackburn after a mob of irate spinners attacked his shop. In 1770 he obtained a patent for his spinning jenny and moved to Nottingham to avoid conflict from the mob. Richard Arkwright patented the water frame in 1769, and Samuel Crompton combined the two creating the spinning mule in 1779. The idea for the spinning jenny is said to have come from the inventor seeing a one-thread wheel overturned upon the floor, when both the wheel and the spindle continued to revolve. He realised that if a number of spindles were placed upright and side by side, several threads might be spun at once. The spinning jenny was confined to producing cotton weft, it was unable to produce yarn of sufficient quality for the warp. High-quality warp was later supplied by Arkwright's spinning frame.

### **Brookside**

The mill lodges once belonged to Brookside Printworks which was founded by the Peels in the 1760's. In 1764 at Brookside there was an important happening involving Jonathan Haworth, with his brother in law, Robert Peel, and with some capital assistance from John Yates's son William Yates (1740-1813). This trio established the famous firm Haworth, Peel & Yates; Jonathan was the senior partner in 2 shares, the others had 1 share each. This was hardly surprising as it was Jonathan's grasp of the technology which drove the innovations. This firm went from strength to strength and with the help of the Hargreaves spinning jenny they produced and improving quality of cloth and significantly they printed their own cloth. The firm flourished, and with "Parsley Peel" (named after his most famous print design) supplying the business acumen, they became the father of the printing trade in Manchester. The first pieces were hawked about the countryside from a cart, but when the partners became established at Brookside, Oswaldtwistle, they sold their cloth from a warehouse in Manchester. The mill was abandoned after the riots of 1779

interrupted production. After the initial attacks the mill was refitted, but a second attack convinced Robert Peel that he could not continue his businesses in the Oswaldtwistle district. Around 1779 he abandoned Brookside and forced to move to Burton-upon-Trent. Robert died in 1795 and sometime before his death he retired and returned to Lancashire and the original business was dissolved

### **Duckworth Hall**

Duckworth Hall, which shows no evidence of its ancient state, has a recorded history of over 800 years. An early possession of the Knights Hospitallers as it is named in 1292. The Duckworth family is thought to originate from here as it is the earliest known seat of the family. Roger Duckworth released his right to the Duckworth Hall Estates in 1327. The following year the Holdens (Adam Holden) acquired lands at Duckworth and it became attached to the Holden Hall Estate in Haslingden. The Radcliffe's were also interested in Duckworth, but sold their share to the Holdens in 1546.

There were also a lot of mine shafts which travelled along the full length of Sough Lane from Knuzden Brook to the Grane Road. On the Grane Road itself there were four different colliery workings all at the road side at a distance of about half a mile. Belthorn Colliery which was worked by W. H. Shaw. The Shaws had several drift mines that worked under the Belthorn and Pickup Bank area.

### **Rann**

There is evidence of hand loom weaving in the cottages on Belthorn Road. At least three types of cottage can be observed in this area, a side loomshop lit by two square windows, rear rooms with triple or separated openings and a smaller through lit weaving shop lit by single windows at front and back.

Number 29 has infilled windows in the gable end, while 33, with the offset window seems to be a conversion of a loomshop attached to one of the adjoining houses. 15, which is double fronted, has an offset window, and Number 17 retains a weaving shop lit by two separated windows. It is possible that the other cottages at this site had small rear loomshops. On the opposite side of the road (116-112) is Rann Farmhouse. At least one dwelling has a well-lit cellar.