

FORMAT FOR HISTORY GROUP MEETINGS

Start time is 7.30 pm.

Theme/subject for meeting [10-20 minutes]
Ongoing projects/research & how we can help each other
Open forum – members' participation

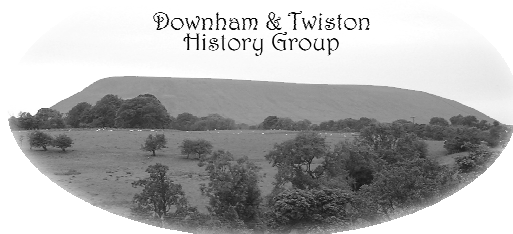
PLANNED PROJECTS FOR 2010/11

Church history & information for centenary in 2011
History of houses in Downham and Twiston
Continuation of Twiston Mill history
History of farms and farming
Wartime evacuees
Developing the newsletter
Local people/characters

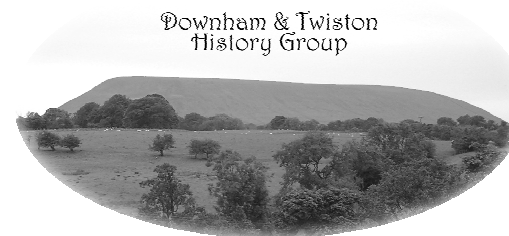
NEXT MEETING

Monday 2nd August, 2010 at 7.30 pm in the downstairs meeting room
at the Village Hall

Short talk – 'Downham Post Office'
Continue family history discussions
Church centenary project
Pull projects together for next few months



Logo design Molly Roskell



THE DOWNHAM & TWISTON HISTORY GROUP NEWSLETTER - No. 1—AUGUST, 2010

When we started the history group meetings in January 2010 the main purpose was to find out what people wanted to do/to know/to research as part of a local history group. Many ideas came up and we have made some headway in starting history projects that are of interest and can be continued as more information emerges on each subject. The different projects and themes may be led by individuals or small groups.

Initial ideas for study: the Mormons; the history of individual homes/houses in the locality; the Reading Room; local people; Assheton history; the Quakers; information about church history for the centenary next year; history of local farms; a 'snapshot' of the village as it is now; wartime evacuees; the history of Twiston Mill. We also discussed the possibility of issuing a newsletter which is now an active project.

At the five meetings to date we have looked at old postcards, photographs and maps, discussed aspects of family history research and had themes for meetings including Downham school and the history of Twiston Mill with a piece by Jenny Palmer included in this newsletter.

We meet approximately every six weeks and continue to plan themes suggested by members. The cost of the meeting is now £1 and anyone is welcome to attend - bring ideas, look for information about local history or family history or just come to listen to the subject of the day. We welcome ideas and articles for our newsletter which will be issued quarterly.

TWISTON MILL: a short history by Jenny Palmer

If you walk past the lodge at Twiston Mill today, all you see is a cluster of farm buildings and a house. It is hard to imagine that any industrial activity ever went on there. But for almost a hundred years, from 1792-1882, Twiston Mill was a hive of activity with up to 49 operatives working in the cotton mill at one time. (1861 Census)

Twiston Mill had been in existence as a water-powered corn mill since the 14th century, owned by the Cistercian monks from Whalley Abbey. After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1534, it became a 'King's Mill', according to Mike Rothwell. (1990) Later it was owned by the Listers of Gisburn and in the 19th century by the Asshetons of Downham. Rothwell tells us the mill was converted to a water-powered cotton twist mill in 1792, probably by Robinson Shuttleworth, a merchant and banker of Preston. At the time it was three stories high, contained 312 water frame spindles and carding and breaking engines. Robinson Shuttleworth was bankrupt by 1796 and the mill was taken over by John Robinson. By 1828 waste cotton spinning and carpet weaving had been introduced to the mill, possibly by John Taylor and Sons. The firm commenced printing carpets around 1839 and during the 1840s was using five block printing tables.

But the mill had a chequered history. The British Library Online Newspapers reveal that in 1851 the partnership between Thomas Taylor and Robert Taylor was dissolved. (London Gazette, 1851)

In October of 1855 the following advertisement appeared in the Blackburn Standard:

The Twiston Cotton Mill and Farm. The Mill consists of a large and commodious Building fitted up for Spinning and Weaving Cotton Waste with Outhouses and all requisite conveniences. New Water-wheel and other Gearing and two lodges for water, of which there is good and constant supply. There are also six cottages attached for labourers employed in the Mill.

In 1855 the mill was leased to Robert Moorby, who also worked Narrowgates Mill at Barley. The partnership of Moorby and Sons lasted until 1874 (Liverpool Mercury, British Library Online Newspapers). William Bailey succeeded Moorby and Sons as manager. At that time the

machinery comprised 1400 spindles and 62 looms, driven by a water-wheel and steam engine (Rothwell, 1990).

One of the pieces of machinery that William Bailey owned was an old fire engine. (Clarke, 1989, quoted in Searle, 2009) It had come there from Clitheroe by a devious route. Stephen Clarke reports in 'Clitheroe in its Coaching and Railway Days,' (1989) that when the new steam fire engine, called Perseverance, was purchased in Clitheroe in 1876, the old manual engine, called Volunteer, was sold by Merryweather and Sons for £650 to Alderman Parkinson.

This, in spite of the fact that Alderman Parkinson had been run over by both wheels while on fire duty some ten years earlier. On further investigation, it seems that the fate of the fire engine and that of Twiston Mill coincided. The old manual engine was rather unwieldy. Apparently it carried a tub, filled from the nearest brook, which needed 24 men to manage the pumps, or 'rude appliances', as they were called. The fire engine did not prove to be of much use, because in 1882 the mill burnt down and the fire engine was, as Clarke puts it, 'roasted alive'.

References:

Primary sources:

British Library Online Newspapers,
The Blackburn Standard, 1855,
1882,
The Liverpool Mercury 1862,
The London Gazette
Censuses: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881,
1891 and 1901.

Secondary Sources:

Clarke S (1989) Clitheroe in its
Coaching and Railway Days,
Landy Publishers
Rothwell M, (1990) Industrial
Heritage: a guide to industrial archaeology
in the Ribble Valley, Bridgestone Press
Searle G (May, 2009) The Valley, in the
Clitheroe Advertiser and Times.



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