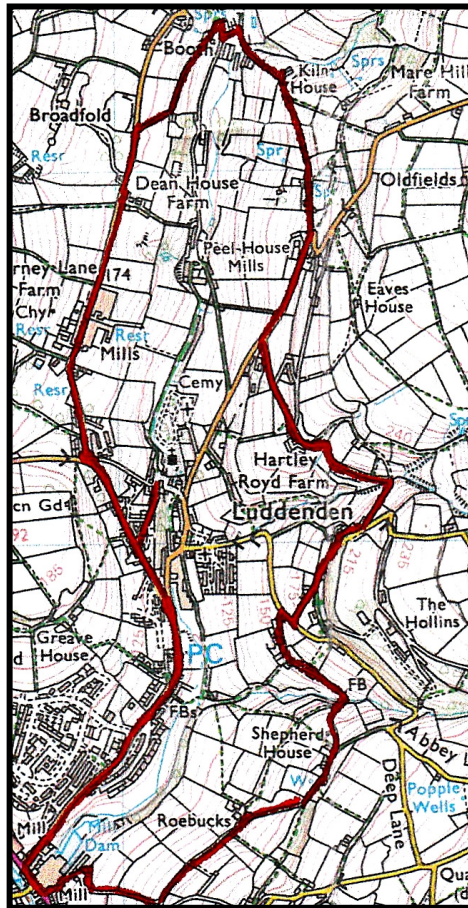


HOUSES OF THE LUDDENDEN VALLEY



LUDDENDEN WALKS NUMBER 3

BACKGROUND

The Luddenden Valley is a wonderful place to examine a wide range of architectural styles going back to the 16th century. By the 17th century, the textile industry had become established in the valley. Yeomen farmers (people just below the rank of gentry) were running a dual economy, where they were farming and also manufacturing wool textiles from their sheep. High quality cloth was being produced, which was being sold by merchants throughout this country and frequently abroad. Consequently, large fortunes were being made, which often went into building houses to match their new-found status. The Luddenden valley is said to have more fine 17th century houses than any other comparable area in the whole country.

Nearly all of the houses were built of stone, although in some cases an earlier wooden building was encased in stone in the 17th century. In contrast to the houses of these yeomen farmers, workers' housing mainly consisted of a single room. The last one of these in the Luddenden valley was lived in until the beginning of the 20th century, and then demolished.

The textile industry gradually increased in importance, so by the last quarter of the 18th century, at the height of the handloom era, clothiers' houses usually included an upper floor over the house for a workshop. Similarly, terrace houses for weavers working at home had rows of windows on the upper floor to give light for the looms there. An example of these can be seen at Church Hill in the centre of Luddenden.

The approximate age of many houses can be established from the material used on the roof. Blue Welsh slates only started to be used from about 1850 onwards, and before that time stone slates were used. Cottages for workers were usually built close to the mills.

To reduce building costs and to increase the number of houses which could be built on a piece of land, the houses were back-to-back in streets. Sometimes, cellar dwellings which had a separate entrance down some steps in front of the main house would also be included. These often consisted of a single room, with maybe a scullery. On very steep land such as that in the Calder and Luddenden valleys generally, to construct back-to-back houses, a gallery had to be included to allow access to one side. A further peculiarity of these areas were the 'top and bottom' houses, where separate houses with their backs to earth would be built at a lower level underneath a row of houses.

Examples of these will be seen up New Road. In general, workers' houses built in the second half of the 19th century were of a much better quality than those built in the 1840s and before. Most of the latter were demolished in the 1960s. During the middle of the 19th century, the 'model dwellings movement' arose, which led to much more government intervention in building houses of a decent standard.

In Luddenden, New Road was cut in the 1820s, and a ribbon of development took place along this, particularly in the second half of the century, and the better quality of these houses, at Thorn View for example, is quite apparent.

THE WALK

Distance 4 miles **Time** 2.5 to 3 hours
Strenuousness There are two significant uphill sections
Facilities Lord Nelson Inn. Open weekdays from 4pm, weekends from 12 noon. Toilets, Information Board in car park
Starting Point. Car Park along Luddenden Lane (O.S. Grid reference 04168 25731)
The route is shown in red on the map on the front of the leaflet.

DIRECTIONS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOUSES

Turn right out of the car park

After 50 metres, bear left at the junction and go up the hill. 100 metres up the road, you come to Carr Field Drive on the left. The estate was built on the site of an ex-mill owner's house called Carr Field which was demolished in the 1970s.

Luddenden is a Conservation Area, and as such, any new developments must fit in with the surroundings. Hence, new houses built in the village must be constructed of stone.

A further 100 metres up the road, turn right at The Old School House down High Street into the village.

Directly across the road from the old chapel lies Folly Cottage, where you can see a good example of a cellar dwelling, with its own gate down some steps at the front of the house. Now incorporated into the house above, at one time, six people were living in the single room with a small scullery at the back. Continuing down High Street to the junction with Old Lane, you can see a terrace of houses above the road and garden. This is Church Hill,

and these listed buildings are an example of a row of early weavers' cottages with a long row of windows upstairs.

Just round the corner lies the Lord Nelson Inn, originally built in 1634 (spot the error) as a house for Gregory Patchett (GFP) but which had been converted into an inn by 1740. Luddenden Old Library was founded here about 1776, and its most famous customer was Branwell Bronte, brother of the famous authors.

Retrace your steps back to New Road and walk uphill to see several good examples of houses.

On your right, at the rough road called Thom View, you will see a row of underneath houses. There is a gallery above them to get around to the back-to-back houses at the rear of those on New Road itself, where there is also another cellar house. You can see that these houses when built were of a very good quality.

Across the road from Thorn View, Hill Crest is a relatively modern house. This was built in 1934 by public subscription as a house for the resident Luddenden nurse, who was employed by the Luddenden and District Nursing Association before the National Health Service was formed.

Further up, Wesley Villa was erected in 1873 as a house for the resident Methodist Minister in Luddenden, and was named after John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church.

Continuing, there is an excellent example of a mill owner's house, Thorn Bank. It has not quite suffered the same fate as Carr Field, but has been divided into apartments with four other houses in the grounds.

Where the road bears to the left, bear right along Duke Street towards Booth.

The white painted house you come to on your left just before Oats Royd mill is Mill House. It was first mentioned in 1660, but was named after a small mill behind the house, which was demolished in 1880s.

John Murgatroyd bought the Oats Royd estate in 1840, and sited his new mills there. The house Oats Royd is now split into two. The oldest part at the rear carries a date 1645, but is on the site of a much earlier one mentioned in 1452. The front wing you can see from the road was built in the 1870s when mediaeval houses were no longer fashionable.

Continue along the road to a large mill complex.

You pass the mills and the car park for the apartments, where once stood two rows of houses now demolished for mill workers. The mill closed down in 1982 and a fire in 1989 burned down a block at the bottom side and part of the mill at the top side. The site was later redeveloped with apartments at both sides of the road.

Continue along the road past the farm, which also dates back to about 1650.

You come to the lodge and drive for the largest of the Murgatroyd residences, Broadfold. This was built about 1860 and by the 1920s, it was said that the ambition of a successor John Murgatroyd was to look from his house and own everything that he could see. He also enjoyed watching cricket, so he provided the field in front of the house for Booth cricket club so he could watch the game from his terrace.

About 100 metres past the entry to Broadfold, turn right down Cow Lane. At the bottom, by the house Wintersedge, turn right again and then almost immediately left.

Go up the track past the small terrace Kiln House Lodge to Kiln House Farm. Turn right through a gate and across the fields to the small hamlet Benns. Continue up the track to the metalled road Stocks Lane, and then go down towards Luddenden Village for about 50 metres.

Here you will see on your right over the wall one of the biggest gems of the Luddenden valley - Peel House. This was built in 1598 and is the oldest house still standing in the valley. It contains a hall and at the western end a cross wing.

A short way down Stocks Lane, turn left along Buttress Lane.

Along here you will see Hartley Royd, also built during the first half of the 17th century. The lower part of the house is of inferior stonework and windows, suggesting it was used as a workshop for handloom weaving.

Continue along the road to Birch Lane, then turn right down the road.

You will pass two more houses - Yellow Birch and White Birch. The former is a modern house, built on the site of an old house which fell down whilst being renovated. White Birch, further along on the right dates back to 1654, although the part near the road is of a later date.

At the junction, turn right then almost immediately left down Ive House Lane. (If you wish to shorten the walk, go straight down into Luddenden, turn left at the bottom and back to the car park).

About 100 metres down Ive House Lane, you will come across South Ive Farm, which is a mixture of 17th and 19th century but which also contains timber frames in the walls of late mediaeval date.

Continue past the houses in Ive House Lane to the end, and up through the fields to Shepherd House.

This is said to date back before 1624, although there was probably a house on the site before that. It was the birthplace of two Thomas Listers, father and son, both eminent clockmakers. The present house was built by the elder Lister in 1746, and his initials and date are by the window. Thomas Lister junior was the finest clockmaker of his day, and was appointed to look after the clocks at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. There are two plaques on the wall to celebrate their achievements.

Continue on to the next farm on the right down the hill.

This is Roebucks, which has recently been renovated. This dates back to 1633, and consists of a hall and cross wing, but a previous house here was mentioned in 1491. Again, the windows and detail of the lower part suggest that it was used as a workshop.

The owner in 1593 was Michael Foxcroft, who had borrowed some of the money to pay for the estate from his brother-in-law Samuel Wade. Wade claimed the money was not paid back on time, and claimed the house as his. There were a number of lawsuits and fights, and Samuel Wade was stabbed and killed by Foxcroft's son, who somehow evaded any punishment. The matter finally ended up at the High Court in Westminster, where one of Foxcroft's supporters, Thomas Oldfield stabbed Henry Farrer (Wade's supporter) to death in Westminster Hall. He was found guilty of murder, and hung in London a week later. Six years later, Foxcroft was found drowned in the river Calder!

Continue along the track past Roebucks until you come to Danny Lane. Turn right and go down into Luddendenfoot. Turn right at the main road and then right again up Luddenden Lane.

Up the road, you will come to Kershaw House on the left. The original name, Kirkshaw House, means the house in, or by, the church wood, and was possibly the site of the first church in Luddenden. It is grade 1 listed and was built in 1635.

Continue along Luddenden Lane for about 300 metres, where you will return to the car park from which you started.