

Introduction

A short history of The Mill, Woodeaves, Fenny Bentley, Ashbourne DE6 1LF

by
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Section 1

1. Background history: Woodeaves Mill

Woodeaves Mill

Topography

The mill lies on the Bentley/Bradbourne brook which feeds into the River Dove below Dovedale at Hanging Bridge just south of Ashbourne.

The area is characterised by rolling uplands with steep sided valleys with enclosed pastoral agriculture with woodland.

The name White Peak derives its name from the limestone geology which provides the distinctive grey and white stone for building and walling materials.

The wider area comprises of a limestone plateau with a number of deeply cut dales and gorges with rock outcrops, screes and cave systems.

The altitude range is from 115m in the Dove Valley north of Ashbourne to a high of over 365m on the limestone plateau to the east of Dovedale. Woodeaves Mill is at an elevation of 150m AOD.

The landscape is mixed geology it is predominantly inter-bedded limestones and shales from the Widerpool Formation and the Bolland Shales Formation. The shales are more dominant to the south of Brassington whilst the limestone is more dominant to the west of Tissington. In places there is a covering of glacial till.

Woodeaves Mill lies 2 miles to the north east of Ashbourne and half a mile to the east of Fenny Bentley, however it sits in the Parish of Tissington and Dovedale.

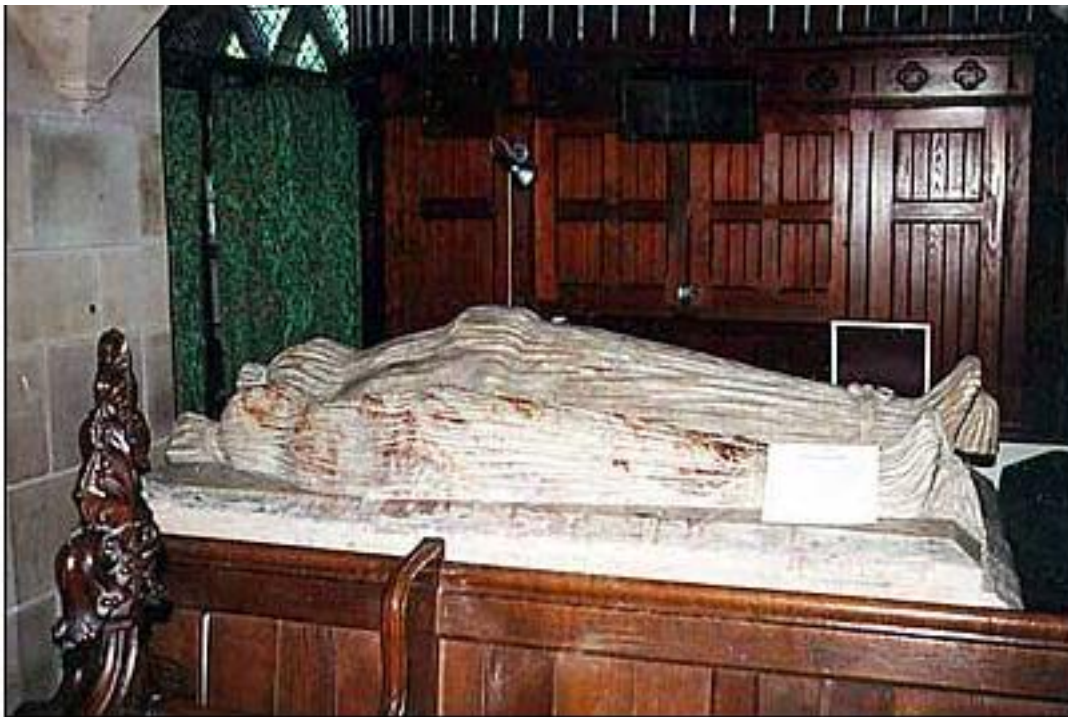
Fenny Bentley

Named as '*Benedlege*' in the Domesday Book meaning Kings Land and '*Fennibenetlegh*' in 1271 the name derives from the Old English '*beonet-leah*'. '*Beonet*' meaning bent grass and '*leah*' a clearing thus 'the clearing overgrown with bent grass'. The prefix 'Fenny' is used to distinguish Fenny Bentley from other Bentleys as this is a name found throughout much of England with Hungry Bentley a long lost village being not so far away just south of Ashbourne.

At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Fenny Bentley was listed as being part of the King's lands, and an outlier of Ashbourne. The Parish consisted of about 30 houses and 140 inhabitants. There was also a church dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen whose patron - the Dean of Lincoln. In Deanery of Ashbourne.

By 1297 it was listed as belonging to Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, the brother of King Edward I, but by the reign of Henry VI, a younger branch of the Beresford family who lived further up the valley of the Dove, towards Hartington, settled there, and became Lords of the Manor for many generations.

The centre of the village is off the main road and contains a nice church, much restored in the 19th century, whose main interest is the tomb of Thomas Beresford (d 1473), whose 21 children provided King Henry V an entire troop of horsemen at the battle of Agincourt. The tomb was built 100 years after Beresford's death and has unusual shrouded effigies of him and his wife, with the shrouded figures of their 21 children on the side of the tomb.



Across the road from the church is former seat of Thomas Beresford - the fortified manor house which dates from Jacobean or Elizabethan times. Known as Cherry Orchard Farm, the house has a fortified square tower which is unique in the Peak. It is still a working farm.



In 1821, the village is recorded as containing 49 houses, 51 families, and 242 inhabitants. Of the 51 families, 42 were employed in agriculture, and eight in trade or handicraft connected with the land.

St Edmund's church in Fenny Bentley has a sundial on its tower wall; the tower having three bells dated 1614, 1617 and 1850. Within the church is the unusual Beresford tomb in Beresford chapel with its colourful painted aluminium ceiling also there are many wall plaques to Beresford family members. There is a font which may predate the current building and an impressive organ.

Tissington

The history of Tissington can be traced back as far as 1086, when it is mentioned as Tizinctun in the Domesday Book, among the possessions of Henry de Ferrers. Evidence of even earlier occupation of the area is amply afforded by the results of excavations in the neighbourhood, which have disclosed Bronze Age human remains, Anglo Saxon burials, and earlier Celtic remains.



Evidence of man's early occupation of the Tissington area has been amply afforded by several excavations that have been made in the neighbourhood at various times in the past, notably in 1848, when a barrow at Crakelow was opened to disclose human bones and a fine Bronze Age earthenware urn, now in the Weston Park Museum at Sheffield. Some years later, in 1863, another barrow was opened at Boar's Low (designated Rose Low on present-day Ordnance Sheets), which was found to contain two separate interments. The first to be discovered was an Anglo-Saxon burial, but further excavation showed that this had been made on top of much earlier Celtic remains. The Saxon burial contained a fine sword, some 34 inches long, together with the central boss of a shield, the remainder of which had disintegrated.

In the Domesday Survey carried out after the Norman Conquest and published in 1086, Tissington is listed among the possessions of Henry de Ferrers.

From the great Ferrers family, the estate passed to the Savage family in the time of Henry I, William le Savage the last male heir, dying in 1259. Two co-heiresses of Savage brought the manor in moieties to the families of Meynell and Edensor.

In the Meynell family, the estate passed down the generations to Joan Meynell, who carried it to her second husband, Sir Thomas Clynton, whose only daughter and heiress, Anne, married Robert Franceys of Foremark. Again there was an only daughter Cicely, who inherited the estate and who married Nicholas FitzHerbert of Somersall. Thus it was that half of the manor of Tissington came into the FitzHerbert family through a chain of heiresses of Savage, Meynell, Clynton and Franceys.

In the meantime, the other moiety of the estate passed by marriage from the Edensor family to the Harthills, and from thence to the Cokaynes, from whence, in the reign of Elizabeth I, Francis

FitzHerbert, who was the great grandson of Nicholas, purchased it and so the Manor of Tissington became re-united.

Since that time, the history of the village has been inextricably woven with that of the FitzHerbert family, who still occupy the Hall and govern an estate extending from Bradbourne Mill in the east, to the river Dove in the West.

This text is taken from *A Short History of Tissington and its Parish Church*, by D. H. Buckley, 1966

Woodeaves Mill



The earliest mention of Woodeaves Mill is from the Conveyance of Woodeaves Farm 20th November 1652. William Fitzherbert of Tissington sold Woodeaves to Christopher Ball who was presumably the tenant.

On 24th June 1784 Samuel Haslam the owner of the land at Woodeaves granted a lease to John Cooper of Derby gent., John Matchitt of Derby grocer, and Philip Waterfield of Derby a cotton-manufacturer. Under the terms of the lease Cooper, Matchitt and Waterfield were granted permission to build a Cotton Mill on the 7 acre site.

They had to build the Mill from stone dug from the site and were also granted permission to cut a canal and construct foot road and bridge across the Bentley Brook. The lease was to run for 42 years at a rent of £20 per year. In order to raise the money for the construction Cooper, Matchitt and Waterfield sold 20% of the new company to Archibald Douglas of Plymouth in 1785 According to Derbyshire Heritage the Canal was constructed around 1802. The canal ran from Woodeaves bank to the mill at Fenny Bentley and was around 1.25 miles long. Apart from a section of about half a mile where the local farmer filled in the canal, much of it remains intact including the old sluice gates.

However, as we have seen in the summer of 2011 there was obviously a shortage of water to drive the



machinery in the mill.

So on 20th August 1810 a new Bolton and Watt steam engine was installed in the building that still remains today. The engine was a 20 horse power crank engine with a 23.75 inch diameter cylinder. This provided the additional power required to run the spindles when the water level was too low during the summer months.

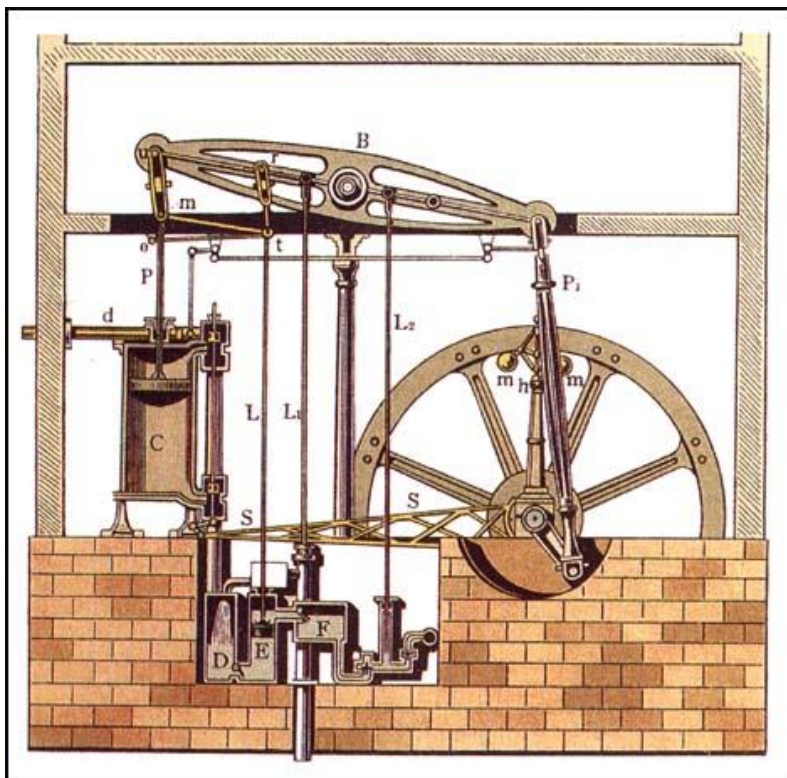


Diagram of Bolton and Watt Engine of 1800

At the Ashbourne Petty Sessions on 13th October 1899 The Woodeaves Company, cotton spinners, were summoned for employing James Burton at night on 24th and 25th August contrary to the Factory and Workshops Acts. They were also charged with employing William Charter at night on 1st September. Burton, aged 14 and Collier aged 16 were employed from 5-30 pm to 6-00 am.

he company did not dispute the facts but said these boys did not have to work as hard at night as if they had been employed in the day time. They would rather be on night work and no coercion had been used. They had not been engaged in the mill during the day while they were doing night service. Mr Yates said there had been no complaints during the 20 years he had been manager.

The mill owners had kept 12 adult workers on all night regularly but at the time the new railway was ... making it ... difficult to find enough men to carry on night work. They would therefore have had to close the mill at nights or employ these boys and they had chosen the latter course. The Bench did not think the boys had suffered very much as they had not been worked day and night too. They imposed a fine of £1 in each case

The next record of the Mill comes from the Wirksworth Hundred of 1846 which refers to Woodeaves Mill manufacturing cotton for the lace and curtain manufactures in Nottingham. At this time 100 people were employed at the mill.

According to The London Gazette of 17th July 1877 Charles Tysoe who was then owned the mill had been declared bankrupt on 24th November 1875.

The Mill was then bought in 1886 by Cornelius Tattersall a Manchester Cotton Merchant for his son John to give him Manufacturing experience. By 1895 according to the Western Parliamentary Division The Woodeaves Company operated the best modern machinery containing 8,500 spindles and continued to employ 100 hands. The Tattersall's lived in Thorpe and he was later to become a Liberal MP for Hyde in 1923.

In 1908 production ceased and within a few years the greater part of the buildings were demolished. Left standing was the warehouse and engine house which continued in use for various purposes, including that of a cheese factory. Stilton cheese were made for a period between 1910 and 1930 by William Nuttall, brother of John Nuttall of Hartington.

The Mill was the purchase by the Murray-Smiths local farmers who used the old engine house as a grain store for their Chicken Farm. The priory was the sold in the early '80's to John and Angela Hughes who continued to farm the Land.

Simon and Isobel James purchase the Priory and The Mill on 12th January 2010.

Appendices

2. Appendices

2a Abstract from Conveyance of Woodeaves Farm 20th November 1652

Abstract: Indenture between William Fitzherbert of Tissington, Fitzherbert and Anthony Fitzherbert gent., younger brother of the said William Fitzherbert and Christopher Ball of Woodeaves and Nicholas Ball (*to the effect that the Fitzherberts sold Woodeaves to Christopher Ball who was presumably the tenant*).

2b.Details of Lease granted to Cooper, Matchet and Waterfield 1784

Lease by Samuel Haslam with consent of Rev. John Griffith to John Cooper of Derby gent., John Matchitt of Derby grocer, and Philip Waterfield of Derby cotton-manufacturer, of two closes at Woodeaves called Bushy Lees and Ouler Carr (7 acres), part of Woodeaves Farm, with power to cut a canal through the same and also through closes called the two Calf Meadows and Brook Close, for conveying water through the same, power to make carriage and foot roads through closes called Bushy Lees, Ouler Carr, the Thorns, the Banks, Cantrell Close, and Grovenor Wood, and to make a foot road over Calf Meadow and the Brook Close into Ouler Carr, and also power to dig and search for stone in the lands of Woodeaves Farm for erecting a cotton mill; lease to run for 42 years at a rent of £20 to be paid to Griffith so long as any money remains owing to him from Haslam upon mortgage, and to be paid to Haslam thereafter; with a covenant by Cooper, Matchitt, and Waterfield to erect a cotton mill on the closes within 12 months, with all proper machinery. Dated 24 June 1784

2c. The London Gazette 1877

THE LONDQN GAZETTE, JULY 17, 1877

In the County Court of Lancashire, holden at Manchester,
by transfer from the County Court of Staffordshire, holden
at Burton-on-Trent.

i A Dividend is intended to be declared in the matter of
Charles Tysoe, of Woodeaves Mill, "near Ashbourne/in'tbe
county of Derby, Cotton Spinner and Doubler, adjudicated

bankrupt on the 24th day of November, 1875. Creditors who have not proved their debts by the 25th day of July, 1877, will be excluded.-Dated this 12th day of July, 1877.

Jno. Adamson, Trustee

2d. Tattersall, John Lincoln M.P.

[Tattersall, John Lincoln M.P.](#)

Born 16 April 1865. Died in Beaumaris 6 June 1942.

Owner of Woodeaves Mill.

In 1886 Tattersall's father, Cornelius, a Manchester cotton man bought Woodeaves Mill for John to give him manufacturing experience.

Tattersall married Lizzie Harland in 1893 and they lived in Thorpe.

He took an interest in Bentley long after leaving the area and in 1939, in spite of coming from a family of non - conformists, funded alterations to the Church including moving the pulpit and paving the sanctuary in Hopton Wood stone. The Wooden lectern, a replica of the medieval one at York Minster was provided by him. He provided outings and parties for the village children and left a sum of money to enable this to continue after he had left.

He was an advocate of temperance and latterly President of the Manchester Band of Hope Union.

He was elected Liberal M.P. for Staleybridge and Hyde in 1923 but lost his seat 11 months later.

2e. *Maps consulted*

2L Wirksworth Hundred

Wirksworth Hundred: Tissington Parish 1846

At Woodeaves, near the Bently Brook, is a cotton mill, worked by a steam engine of 16 horses power, and employing 100 persons.

Western Parliamentary Division: Tissington 1895

Woodeaves is a hamlet on the Ashbourne and Matlock road, three miles N from the former place. Here is a cotton mill, which gives employment to about 100 hands. It is fitted up with the best modern machinery, and contains 8,500 spindles. The special feature of the manufacture is cotton doubling for the lace and curtain thread manufactures of Nottingham and elsewhere.

Ashbourne News 13 October 1899

Ashbourne Petty Sessions (held the previous Saturday). The Woodeaves Company, cotton spinners, were summoned for employing James Burton at night on 24th and 25th August contrary to the Factory and Workshops Acts. They were also charged with employing William Charter at night on 1st September. Burton, aged 14 and Collier aged 16 were employed from 5-30 pm to 6-00 am.

The company did not dispute the facts but said these boys did not have to work as hard at night as if they had been employed in the day time. They would rather be on night work and no coercion had been used. They had not been engaged in the mill during the day while they were doing night service. Mr Yates said there had been no complaints during the 20 years he had been manager.

The mill owners had kept 12 adult workers on all night regularly but at the time the new railway was ... making it ... difficult to find enough men to carry on night work. They would therefore have had to close the mill at nights or employ these boys and they had chosen the latter course.

The Bench did not think the boys had suffered very much as they had not been worked day and night too. They imposed a fine of £1 in each case.

The Industrial Archaeology of the Peak District p.113-114

Another cotton mill established at the end of the eighteenth century was Woodeaves Mill, in Tissington parish. It was built by hosier, John Cooper, in 1784, and was powered in its early days by water from the Bradbourne Brook, brought along a three quarter of a mile long mill leat, termed a 'canal', for it was also used for conveying

limestone to the mill in small boats. Later, power was provided by a 16 hp steam engine. Cotton manufacture, which involved cotton doubling for the lace and curtain trades of Nottingham and else where, continued through the nineteenth century. A hundred people were employed, some of whom lived in cottages in the mill yard and others at nearby Fenny Bentley. In 1908 production ceased and within a few years the greater part of the buildings were demolished. Left standing were the warehouse and engine house which continued in use for various purposes, including that of a cheese factory. The small portion now remaining is incorporated in a poultry farm while the former manager's house is a private residence, its surroundings transformed though still showing slight evidence of the former buildings.

Bygone Industries of the Peak: Cheese Making by Julie Bunting - Peak Advertiser, 29th July 1996 p.3

Weekly cheese markets were held at Derby, Ashbourne, Bakewell, Chesterfield, Uttoxeter, and Leek, with annual cheese fairs held in and around the Peak, as at Bakewell, Tideswell and Winster. Together with oatcake, Derbyshire cheese formed the staple diet of Peakland lead miners. This was also true of coal miners in neighbouring counties and great quantities of Derbyshire cheese used to be taken to Nottingham Goose Fair every year.

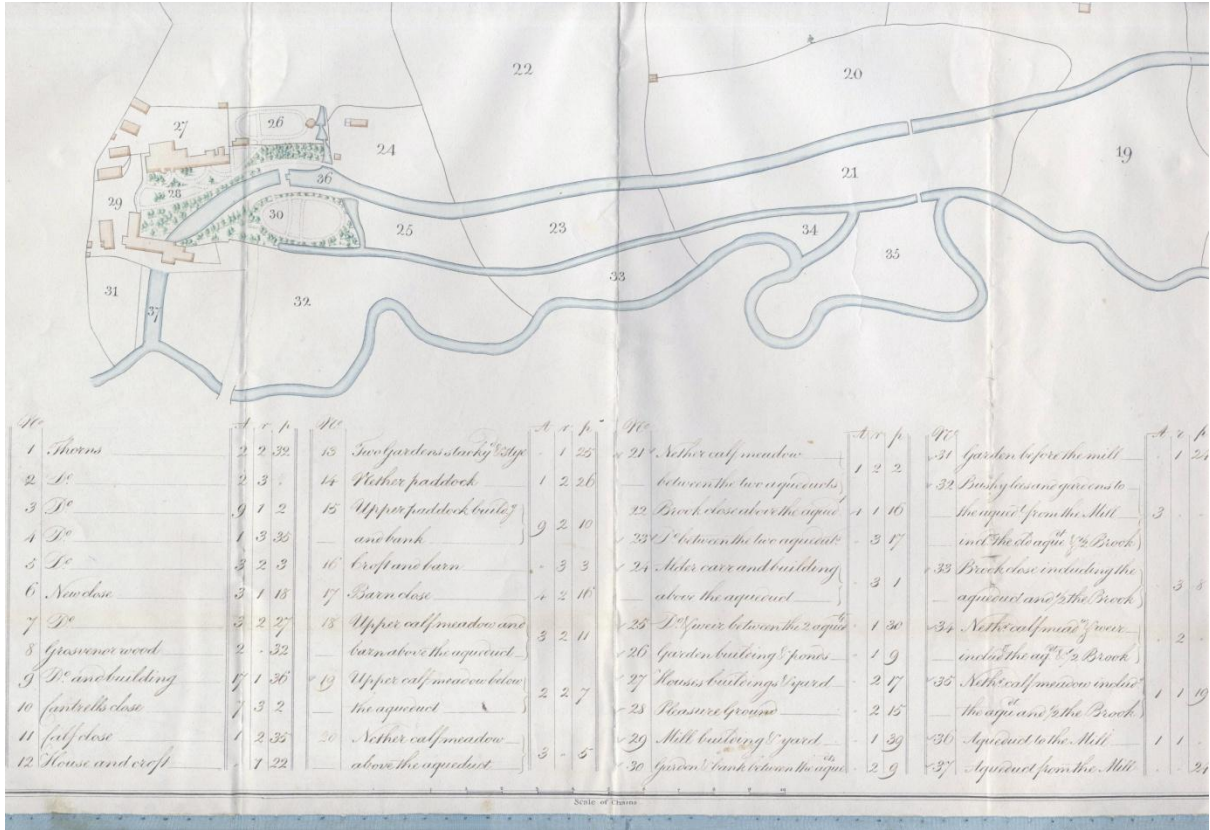
Derbyshire cheese was uncoloured and heavy in texture with a generally mild flavour. John Byng, later Viscount Torrington, having dined in Ashbourne in 1790, wrote: 'the cheese of this country pleases me much; being a medium between the Cheshire and the Stilton'. When it went on sale in London it was often actually passed off as the more expensive Cheshire.

A 1794 report on Derbyshire farming stated that cheese was the 'chief, if not the only article of provision which the natives can spare out of their own country'. The Dove Valley, with its good grazing, was particularly good dairying country ...

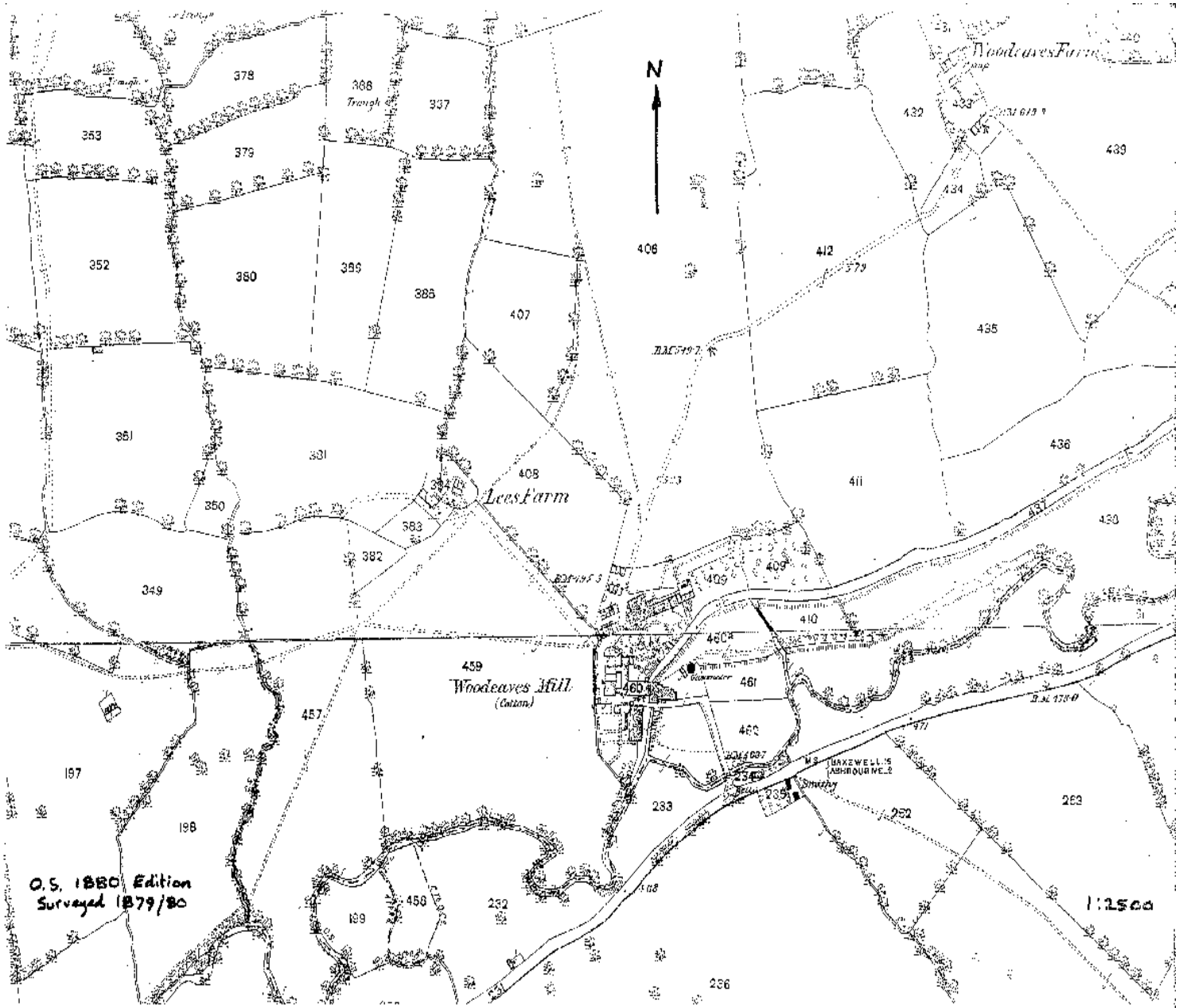
England's first purpose built cheese factory is thought to have been established in 1870 at Longford, near Derby. Within a few years Derby cheese was being produced in factories at Ecton, Reapsmoor, Gratton, Woodeaves, Grangemill, Glutton Bridge and Hartington ...

Maps and Diagrams

Mill Plan of 1800



Ordnance survey map of Woodeaves
1880



Notes and references:

Appendices

BENTLEY, (FENNY) a township, parish, and village, situated in a valley watered by a small brook to which it gives name, and which is here crossed by a stone bridge of two arches, 2¼ miles N. from Ashbourn, and 7 miles S.W. from Wirksworth. It

contains 976A. 2R. 30P. of land, and in 1851, had 62 houses and 290 inhabitants, of whom 144 were males and 146 females; rateable value £1,745 12s. 0d. The principal owners are Sir Henry Fitz-Herbert, Bart., Rev. Jeremiah Barnes, John Goodwin Johnson, Esq., Lord Denman, Wm. Hunt, Esq., Miss Van Tuyl, and Mr. Bailey. The Church, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, a small ancient structure with nave, chancel, north aisle, and low tower with three bells. A handsome oak screen separates the nave and chancel. In 1850, the church underwent some repairs at the coat of Sir Hy. Fitz-Herbert, Bart. On the north side of the chancel is a curious altar tomb for Thos. Beresford, and Agnes his wife. On the upper surface are extended two alabaster effigies completely enveloped in shrouds, and on the sides and end are twenty-one similar ones for their children. The inscriptions are in English and Latin, by which it appears that this gentleman must have lived to a great age, as he is said to have distinguished himself at the battle of Agincourt. The *living* is a rectory, valued in the King's book at £6 12s. 0d., now £124; the Bishop of Lichfield is patron, and the Rev. Garton Howard, incumbent, who has 30 acres of glebe. Here is a National school, at which about 65 children attend. The *Hall*, a neat secluded mansion, embowered with fine trees, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile N. from the village, is the residence of the Rev. Alleyne Fitz-Herbert, M.A., and the property of Sir Henry Fitz-Herbert, Bart. The *Old Hall*, now a farm house, formerly the property of Sir Simon Degge, is now the property of Sir Henry Fitz-Herbert, Bart. The family of the present occupier have resided at it for upwards of two centuries. *Bank Top Farm*, was purchased about four ago, by the Rev. J. Barnes, M.A., by whom, a new house with very convenient out-buildings, has been erected on a new site, better adapted for the benefit of the farm, and commanding an extensive view of very beautiful scenery. The old house has since been converted into a neat cottage, and is used by him as a place of occasional residence. The Methodists have a neat brick chapel, erected in 1832. Here is an Odd Fellows' Lodge. This parish partakes of the Rev. Francis Gisborne's charity, and £5 10s. is annually sent to the incumbent, which is expended in warm clothing and given to the poor. (See *Bradley*.) The poor also receive 10s. annually, left by the Port family, which is paid by Jesse Russell, Esq. The manor of Bentley was part of the crown lands at the time of the Domesday survey; and in the reign of Edward I., was held by Edmund, Earl of Lancaster. In the reign of Henry VI., a younger branch of the ancient family of Beresford settled here, and their descendants for many generations held the manor. In the 13th year of Henry VII., William Basset, Esq., of Meynell Langley, died possessed of lands here. In the time of Henry VIII., two families of Beresford owned estates in this parish, and the Bradburnes had also property here.

Barnes Rev. Jeremiah, M.A., rural dean,
Bank Top Cottage
 Ditchfield Wm., shopkeeper
 Fitz-Herbert Rev. Alleyne, M.A., incum-
 bent of Tissington, *Bentley Hall*
 Harrison Charles, shoemaker
 Harrison Wm, shopkeeper
 Marsh Wm., joiner
 Slater Adam, cowkeeper

Slater Adam, jun., butcher
 Warrington John, butcher
 Willert Thomas, tailor

Inns and Taverns.

Blue Bell, John Redfern
 Coach and Horses, Rd. Thos. Sutton Wright
 Wheat Sheaf James Wright

Farmers.
 Beardmore Thomas,
Raven Cliff
 Burnett James

Chaloner Elizabeth
 Hand Francis, *Firs*
 Heath James
 Lownds Math., *Bank*
Top

Redfern John
 Salt George
 Thornely Wm., *Ashes*
 Waterfall John, *Pas-*
tures Top

Waterfall Thomas,
Cherry Orchard
 Wigley Henry

Whites directory of Derbyshire 1857

Late C18. 2 storey stucco. Gable end slate roof, shallow wood eaves cornice. 3 windows, sash, glazing bars intact. Band between storeys. Central recessed door of 6 fielded panels in moulded architrave, projecting cornice over.

List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: Borough of Newport, DOE 1 February 1972, p.59 SZ59SW 14/102A

