

TOWNEND 1540 - 1901

Origin of name: what Town? A Township was a Medieval unit for administration of agriculture, in this case that of Bradfield civil parish. Townend at Deepcar lies on its Northern extremity.

Pre Henry VIII's Dissolution of Monasteries, Townend is believed to have been used for Copyhold courts of the Bradfield holdings of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. If so, there would have been an iron cross on the original building, like those on Platts Farm, Bradfield, denoting exemption from tithes. A Copyhold Court could, for example, prove wills and grant letters of administration without application to York.

In 1540, George More is recorded as having paid 3s.8d. rent for 2 properties with 8 acres of land at Townesend in Bradfield to Newlands Abbey. After the Dissolution, all such lands reverted to the Crown.

The Manors of Sheffield, Bradfield and Bolsterstone then became the property of the Earls of Shrewsbury, and remained so during Elizabeth I's reign.

A date 1611 and RM on the original Courthouse is thought to refer to a Morton – a name which occurs often in the history of the property, as in the inscription 1745 M over I and A on the later building. This usually commemorates a marriage, but I can find no corresponding entry in either Bradfield or Ecclesfield Registers.

Among names listed as having served as Constables for their own community in the 17th. and 18th. centuries: for Townend, Christopher Wilson and Thomas Morton in 1648.

In 1652, after the Civil War, rents were due to Parliament, and in a Rental of that year, 13s.4d. was paid to the steward for keeping two Courts and 8s.8d. to the two Juries. (The other was the Manor Court, held at Waldershelf Manor House in Bolsterstone Village.)

The date 1678, with the initials EF over a door at Townend, Deepcar, which Kenworthy recorded in his book on *Midhope Potteries*, probably refers to a Finney/ Fenney – another name associated with the property throughout that period.

In 1782 the Enclosure of the Commons of Bolsterstone awarded 6 acres on Townend Common and Townend Green to William Finney, 10 acres to John Morton, but over 70 acres to Lord Melbourne as owner of Bolsterstone Manor.

The 1797 Valuation of Waldershelf shows Townend owned partly by Joseph Grayson, occupied by Jonathan Staniforth.

In 1802 Lord Melbourne, later Prime Minister to Queen Victoria, offered the Manor of Bolsterstone for sale and the Catalogue lists the various properties under tenants' names, each with its acreage and value. Joseph Kenworthy in his 1915 *History of Stocksbridge - Descent of the Manor of Bolsterstone* identified at Townend: *Benjamin Grayson: house, barn, stable, beasthouse and land 17acres 0 roods 18 perches, 15s.4d. per acre, rent £13.0.0*

John Morton: several parcels of land 10a.1r.19p. at 15s.1d., rent £7 17s.

The Manor was bought by John Rimington, solicitor of Hillsborough, who was married to Mary Wilson of Broomhead Hall. He in turn sold several properties, among which were 58 acres at Townend to Abraham Grayson of Nook Farm. Listed are *Rough land at Round Hill, Almon Well Hill, Royd Field, Canah Croft, Middle Croft, Calf Croft and garden, a house that George Grayson lives in, the house that Abraham Grayson lives in, with gardens and appertainences. Also the barn, stabling and mistling, swine cotes, coalhouse, fold yard and other conveniences which Abraham Grayson occupies. Also the two folderings that John Hawk occupied with the road through John Bradley Fold, and John Bradley fold, to the Lane. Also the Chapelcroft.*

Abraham and Benjamin Grayson subsequently took thousands of tons of firestone and ganister out of Townend Common.

In the sale catalogue of the old cotton mill in Hunshelf Bottom in 1807, it was Benjamin Grayson of Townend House who would "permit the property to be viewed."

Benjamin's daughter Matilda inherited Townend House. She married Rev. William Irving, curate of Bolsterstone. So in the 1841 Census we find him as head of household, with John Morton in one farm and George Hawke in another.

The 1851 Census shows Matilda widowed, entered as Farmer of 20 acres, Joseph Morton a quarryman and Jonathan Brown a gardener and coachman.

In 1857 Samuel and Maria Fox moved from their first home near the Works to Townend House, which he rented from Benjamin Atkinson Irving, eldest son and heir of Matilda.

The 1861 Census shows Maria Fox in charge of the household, with Joseph Siddons farming 60 acres and Daniel Mate 18 acres.

In 1871, Maria had left to live in Oxfordshire with their son, William Henry Fox, leaving Samuel relishing his own independence. The farm acreage varied slightly from one estimation to another – Daniel Mate's was now 19 acres, while James Grayson had 53 acres.

1881 saw Samuel Fox still head of household, with a coachman housed separately. John Helliwell was farming 17 acres and Benjamin Webster 62 acres. Apart from Townend House itself, the rest were entered as Townend Cottages, seven in all.

In 1891, after Samuel Fox's death, Henry Sharp was installed at Townend House, General Manager of the Steel Company, while there appear to be three farms – Upper Townend, held by Mary Bramall and her sons, Townend Farm itself by Albert Wainwright and Lower Townend, farmed by Joseph Hammerton.

Ten years later Henry Sharp, head of household, was described as an Electrical Engineer. A coachman and groom were again lodged next door, with two gardeners in adjoining cottages. Walter Lawton, farmer, occupied another, and widow Eliza Woodcock and her three sons also were farmers. All these were entered under Townend. Albert Wainwright was now at Parsonage Farm.

The water supply for Townend until the mid-20th. century came from the Dragon's Well on the Common. Stuart Lee, then Secretary of Stocksbridge & District Golf Club, remembers the reaction when an attempt was made in 1975 to block the spring.