

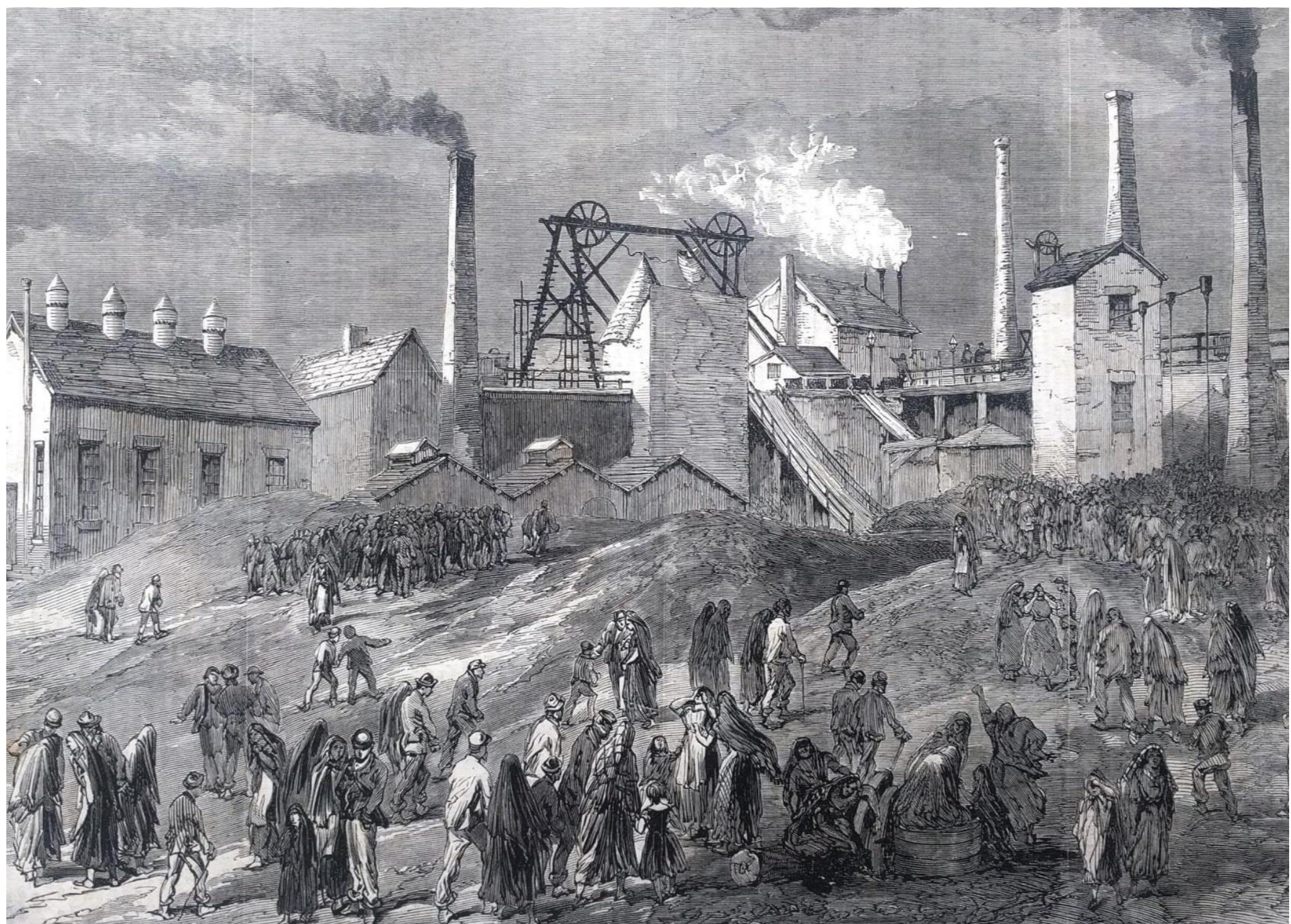
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# WEEN THE OAKS FIRED



**12<sup>th</sup> December 1866 – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

The Oaks Colliery Disaster killed 383 men and boys in two explosions on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December 1866. It was the worst mining disaster in Victorian Britain and remains the worst in English history. On the 150th anniversary of the disaster we remember those who paid the ultimate price of coal.



# Oaks Colliery Disaster

## 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

This commemorative newspaper has been produced as part of the 'When the Oaks Fired' exhibition at Experience Barnsley. The exhibition has been co-curated by the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership and Barnsley Museums.

It is often the tragic events in history that reverberate through the generations with the power to leave a mark. For Barnsley and the communities surrounding the old Oaks Colliery site (now Barnsley Main and Oaks Business Park) the 12<sup>th</sup> December is a dark date that still resonates.

As we mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary the local community and various organisations have come together to ensure this event would not go unnoticed.

The Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, started a research project to uncover the true story of the disaster. For too long the lives of the men and boys killed were largely unknown, there was no comprehensive list of names and the officially reported death toll of 361 was highly questionable.



A team of volunteers from across Barnsley came together to achieve something that had never been done before. Their aim was simple, to name every victim of the Oaks Disaster.

The research was designed by Stephen Miller from the Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership and started with collating all the available names from a range of sources. The death registers in Barnsley Town Hall, lists of the dead and missing from contemporary newspapers, burial records and several memorial sheets were all used to create an initial list of over 500 names.

Volunteers then rigorously researched each name using national and local records to uncover their life stories, family connections and identify any errors due to spelling or misidentification.

The list they produced of 383 people sent shock waves through the historical and local community. It not only revealed a higher death toll than previously thought but also showed a level of detail that had never been achieved before.

You can view the full list here  
[www.discoverdearne.org.uk](http://www.discoverdearne.org.uk)

People and Mining, a charity made up of ex-miners, were supported by the National Union of Mineworkers in their aim to raise a memorial for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The memorial was designed by local artist, Graham Ibbeson, himself a descendant of an Oaks Disaster victim.

The tireless dedication of the fundraising efforts greatly increased the public awareness of the anniversary. Graham Ibbeson's memorial is a welcome addition to the tradition of Oaks Disaster memorials.

Christ Church in Ardsley was the Parish church for the Oaks Colliery and has long been regarded as the centre for commemoration. In 1879 the Oaks Disaster Memorial was raised in the church yard, the first memorial to remember all the victims. Funding for the memorial was raised through public subscription.

For the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary the Oaks Disaster memorial was cleaned thanks to funding from Barnsley Council Ward Alliance.



Local artist, Alan Andrews, from the ART of Mining has created his own unique piece of work to remember the Oaks Disaster. A former miner, Alan uses virtual reality to create immersive digital worlds.



Part of the site of the Oaks Colliery is now occupied by the remaining Barnsley Main buildings. The Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership is working with the Barnsley Council Central Area Team to increase usage of site. One outcome has been the formation of the Barnsley Main Heritage Group.

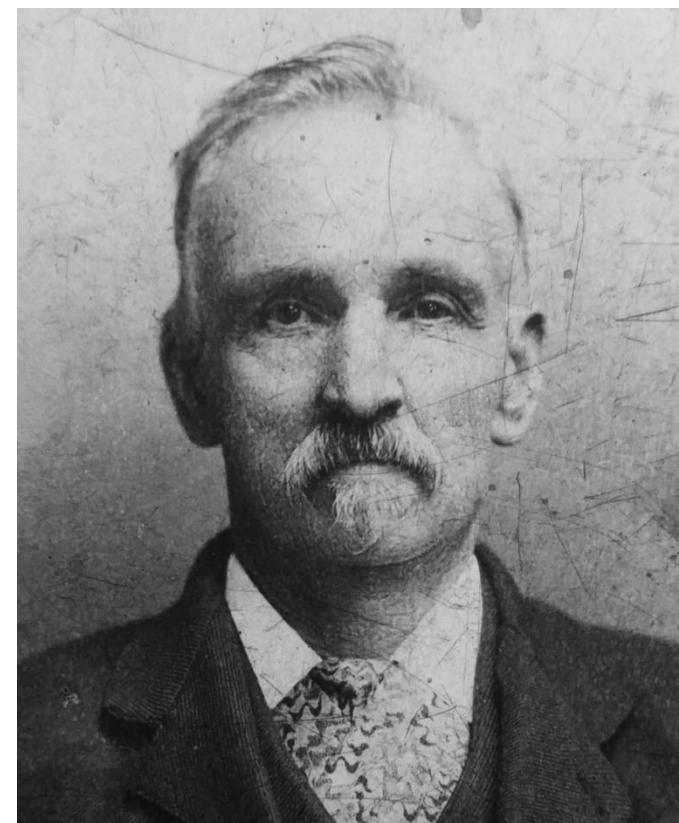
For the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 the group organised the lighting of a beacon from the Barnsley Main spoil tip. The beacon was lit for 150 minutes and visible across Barnsley and the communities most affected by the disaster. 383 named wooden crosses were also placed in the ground around the beacon.



Mary Jones was just 12 at the time of the disaster. She lost her father and two brothers. (Image courtesy of Jacey Bedford)



William Henry Hart was one of just six survivors of the first explosion on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1866. (Image courtesy of Steve Wyatt)



John Riley was the youngest of the volunteer rescuers, aged just 17. (Image Courtesy of John Timms)



Sarah Hyde lost her husband, Thomas, in the disaster and was left with two young children to raise alone. (Image courtesy of Brian Elliott)



Ann Marshall's husband, George, was killed in the disaster. They had eight children. (Image courtesy of Julie Wright and Carol Forsberg)



William Ward lost his father in the disaster and was one of the volunteer rescuers. He became the treasurer of the Oaks Memorial Committee. (Image courtesy of David Ward Royal)



John William Hellewell's father and two uncles were killed in the disaster. The family later emigrated to America. (Image courtesy of Mary Hellewell)



Priscilla Poppleton was born in Monk Bretton in 1839 and lost her father and four brothers in the disaster.

# IN MEMORY OF

## THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-ONE UNFORTUNATE SUFFERERS WHO WERE KILLED BY THE DREADFUL EXPLOSIONS AT THE OAKS COLLIERY, BARNESLEY, December 12th and 13th, 1866.

**ARDSLEY.**  
BRADLEY, JOHN S. .... w 2  
BROOKES, CHARLES .... w 2  
CLARKSON, FRANCIS .... boy  
CLARKSON, TOM .... boy  
GLADWIN, GEORGE .... w 3  
HAMMOND, THOMAS .... w  
HARPER, JOHN .... s  
HOLDSWORTH, DAVID .... w  
KENNY, EDWARD .... w  
ROBINSON, STEPHEN .... s  
SHORE, JOHN .... s  
WILKINSON, GEORGE .... s  
WILLOUGHBY, HENRY .... w 4

**BARNESLEY.**  
ABBOTT, WILLIAM .... w 2  
ALFRED, ROBERT .... w 1  
ALLEN, MATTHEW .... w 1  
ARMITAGE, ALFRED .... w  
ARNOLD, MATTHEW .... w  
ARNOLD, GEORGE .... s  
ARNOLD, JOHN .... s  
BARKER, GEORGE .... boy  
BARKER, THOMAS .... w 1  
BELLAMY, SOLOMON .... s  
BERRY, WILLIAM .... w 2  
BIRKINSHAW, ARTHUR .... w 2  
BONSON, JOHN .... w 4  
BOOTHROYD, WILLIAM .... s  
BOSTWICK, STEPHEN .... s  
BROOKS, JOHN .... boy  
BROWN, BENJAMIN .... w  
BROWNLOW, LOT .... s  
BURDEN, JOSEPH .... boy  
CARTWRIGHT, ABEL .... w 1  
CARTWRIGHT, JOHN .... w  
CHESTERFIELD, HENRY .... w  
CLAPHAM, RICHARD .... w  
COCKLIN, JOHN .... w 2  
COLDWELL, ANDREW .... boy  
CONLEY, JOHN .... s  
COOPER, DAVID .... s  
COOPER, JOSEPH .... s  
COWARD, A. .... s  
COWARD, GEORGE .... w 1  
DAWSON, WILLIAM .... w 2  
DAY, PETER .... w 3  
DENNIS, ABRAHAM .... w 4  
DENNIS, BENJAMIN .... w 4  
DENNIS, JOHN .... w 4  
DUNK, SAMUEL .... w 2  
EDSON, WILLIAM .... s  
EVANS, EDWARD .... w 3  
EVANS, GEORGE .... s  
EVANS, JOHN .... s  
EVERETT, ROBERT .... w 1  
FAULKS, JAMES .... w 3  
FLEETWOOD, JAMES .... boy  
GILLBRIGHT, MARTIN .... s  
GAUNT, JOHN .... boy  
HAGUE, HENRY .... boy  
HARDCASTLE, THOMAS .... w 4  
HARDCASTLE, THOMAS .... w 4  
HAYCROFT, JAMES .... w 4  
RIDES, HENRY .... s  
HINCHLIFFE, CHARLES .... boy  
HINCHLIFFE, HENRY .... boy  
HITCHEN, GEORGE .... w  
HOCKING, ROBERT .... w  
HOLDSWORTH, FREDERICK .... w  
HOLLAND, DAVID .... w  
HOYLAND, ALFRED .... w  
HOYLAND, THOMAS .... s  
HOYLE, GEORGE .... s  
HUTCHINSON, JOSEPH .... w  
ILLINGWORTH, EZRA .... w 6  
JACKSON, HENRY .... w 3  
JACKSON, JOHN .... w 3  
JACKSON, WILLIAM .... boy  
JONES, JOHN .... w  
KAYE, JABEZ .... w  
KEIGHLEY, JOSEPH .... w  
LEATHER, JAMES .... w  
LEE, MARK .... w  
LONG, GEORGE .... w 1  
MARSHALL, GEORGE .... w 4

MATRICK, MATTHEW .... boy  
MATRICK, WILLIAM .... boy  
MORREL, JOHN .... w  
MORRIS, THOMAS .... s  
MULLER, GEORGE .... s  
M'DONALD, PETER .... w 2  
M'DONALD, MICHAEL .... w 1  
M'HUGH, JOHN .... boy  
NEWTON, JOHN .... w 2  
NOBLE, JOHN .... s  
OSBORNE, CHARLES .... boy  
OSBORNE, HENRY .... s  
POPLETON, HENRY .... w 2  
RACE, NATHAN .... w 3  
RAMSDEN, SAMUEL .... w 4  
ROBERTS, ISAAC .... w 1  
ROTHWELL, HENRY .... boy  
SCHOFIELD, THOMAS .... boy  
SENIOR, JOSEPH .... s  
SHAW, THOMAS .... boy  
SHIRT, GEORGE .... s  
SHIRT, WILLIAM .... w 3  
SIMPSON, D. F. .... s  
SLOANE, JOHN .... s  
SMITH, GEORGE .... w 1  
STENTON, SAMUEL .... boy  
TEWETT, JOHN .... s  
THICKETT, THOMAS .... boy  
THOMPSON, WILLIAM .... w  
WALMSLEY, GILES .... w 4  
WALMSLEY, JOHN .... boy  
WALMSLEY, JOSEPH .... boy  
WARD, THOS. .... s  
WILLIS, JOHN .... w  
WILSON, JOSEPH .... boy  
WILSON, THOS. .... w  
WILSON, WM. .... w 1  
WINTER, DUNCAN .... w 1  
WINTER, HENRY .... w 2  
WINTER, JOHN .... w 2  
WINTER, JOSEPH .... s  
WINTER, THOS. .... w 2  
WINTER, WM. .... w 1

**BURTON.**  
ANDERSON, THOMAS .... w 3  
BRADLEY, DANIEL .... s  
CARR, GEORGE .... boy  
CARR, JON. .... w 1  
CLEARY, CHARLES .... s  
COOKE, AMOS .... s  
EDSON, GEORGE .... s  
EDSON, JOHN .... s  
EDSON, JOHN .... w 2  
EDSON, WILLIAM .... s  
GLOVER, JOHN .... boy  
GLOVER, THOMAS .... boy  
HAGUE, WILLIAM .... boy  
HARRISON, CHARLES .... boy  
HARRISON, JOSEPH .... w 5  
HEELEY, ALFRED .... w  
HELLIWELL, JOHN .... w 4  
HELLIWELL, SAMUEL .... s  
HELLIWELL, THOMAS .... boy  
HORBURY, THOMAS .... w 1  
HUTCHINSON, CHARLES .... w 3  
HUTCHINSON, THOMAS .... s  
JONES, SAMUEL .... s  
JONES, THOMAS .... w 6  
JONES, WILLIAM .... w 5  
LANE, JOSEPH .... w 2  
LAW AUSTIN .... boy  
LEE, JOSEPH .... s  
LEE, WALTER .... s  
MATTHEW, CHARLES .... w 5  
PARKER, WILLIAM .... w 5  
PICKLES, THOMAS .... w  
SLATER, ELIJAH .... boy  
SLATER, WILLIAM .... s  
SWIFT, MATTHEW .... w 2  
WILKINSON, WILLIAM .... w 4

**CLIFFE BRIDGE.**  
BAMFORTH, MATTHEW .... w 2  
COOPER, THOS. .... s  
EXLEY, BENJAMIN .... boy  
EXLEY, CHARLES .... s  
EXLEY, JOHN .... s  
FARMER, JOHN .... w 5

FEARN, CHARLES .... s  
FEARN, DAVID .... s  
MUSCROVE, ED. .... w 6  
PRIESTLEY, JOSEPH .... boy  
RHODES, CHARLES .... w 4  
RHODES, FERGUS .... s  
RHODES, GEORGE .... s  
RHODES, WILLIAM .... w 4  
ROOKE, JOHN .... boy  
SIDDONS, SAMUEL .... boy  
WALKER, JOSEPH .... boy

**CUDWORTH.**  
DUCKWORTH, WILLIAM .... w 5  
ROEBUCK, JOSEPH .... boy  
ROEBUCK, MATTHEW .... boy

**DODWORTH.**  
SHAW, WILLIAM .... w 4  
THORLEY, CHARLES .... w 2

**GAWBOR.**  
BRADLEY, EDWARD .... boy  
BRADLEY, JOHN .... w 7

**HOYLE MILL.**  
ADDY, GEO. .... w 2  
BANN, JOSEPH .... boy  
BANN, THOMAS .... boy  
BARKER, ANDREW .... w 7  
BARKER, ANDREW .... s  
BARKER, ANDREW .... boy  
BARKER, GEO. .... boy  
BARKER, JAMES .... w 6  
BARKER, RICHARD .... boy  
BARKER, WILLIAM .... s  
BATES, JOHN .... s  
BATES, MOSES .... s  
BATES, PHILIP .... w 4  
BATES, WILLIAM .... boy  
BATES, WILLIAM .... s  
BATTY, JAMES .... s  
BATTY, JOSEPH .... w 2  
BENNETT, JAMES .... w 1  
BENNETT, JOHN .... boy  
BENNETT, THOS. .... s  
BENNETT, THOS. .... boy  
BURNHALL, GEO. .... w  
BORROWDALE, GEO. .... w  
BROWN, JOSEPH. .... w 5  
BROWN, THOS. .... boy  
BROOKES, HENRY .... w 4  
CADMAN, JOHN .... boy  
CASTLE, JOHN .... w 2  
CLAYTON, HENRY .... s  
CLAYTON, JOHN .... s  
CLEGG, CHAS. .... w 3  
CLEGG, JOHN T. .... boy  
DAMMS, GEO. .... w  
DIXON, THOS. .... s  
DIXON, WM. .... boy  
DONKIN, CHAS. .... boy  
DONKIN, TOM .... w 3  
FLETCHER, CHAS. .... boy  
HAGUE, WM. .... w 1  
HALTON, JOHN .... s  
HAWLEY, WM. .... s  
HINCHLIFFE, CHARLES .... s  
HINCHLIFFE, HENRY .... s  
HINCHLIFFE, JOHN .... s  
HILTON, HENRY .... w 1  
HOBSON, GEO. .... w 3  
HOLLEN, JOSEPH .... boy  
HOUGH, GEO. .... boy  
HOYLE, WALTER .... s  
HUNT, JOSEPH .... s  
HUNT, RICHARD .... w 3  
HURST, ROBERT .... w 2  
HYDE, THOMAS .... w 2  
KEEN, JOHN .... boy  
LAWLESS, GEO. .... w 4  
LAWLESS, JOHN .... w 1  
LEATHER, THOS. .... w 4  
LEE, JOHN .... s  
MARDEN, HENRY .... s  
MATTHEWS, WM. .... w 2  
MORT, JOSEPH .... w 4  
MOSS, JOHN .... s  
NADIN, EBRAIM .... boy

NADIN, GEO. .... boy  
NADIN, THOS. .... w 3  
NUTTALL, JOHN .... w  
OAKLEY, RICHARD .... w 3  
PAYMAN, FREDK. .... boy  
POOLEY, JOHN .... s  
RAMSDEN, CHAS. .... w 3  
RAMSDEN, HENRY .... s  
RYMER, JAMES .... boy  
RHODES, WM. .... w 4  
RICHARDSON, JOHN .... s  
RIDER, JERVIS .... w 6  
RIMMINGTON, ROBT. .... s  
ROBSON, JOHN .... w 7  
ROSS, JOSEPH .... w 1  
RYNE, JOHN .... s  
SELLERS, EBRAIM .... w s  
SIDDONS, EDWD. .... s  
SIDDONS, THOS. .... s  
SMITH, JONAH .... w 3  
SNOWDON, JOHN .... w 1  
SYKES, GEO. .... w 3  
THORNLEY, JAMES .... w 3  
TIMMINS, ISAAC .... w 1  
WALL, DANIEL .... s  
WATSON, JOSEPH .... w  
WATSON, WM. .... boy  
WEBB, CHAR. .... w  
WHARTON, WM. .... w 1  
WHITTAKER, JOHN .... w  
WILKINSON, ABRAHAM .... w  
WILSON, WM. .... w 5  
WOOD, HENRY .... w 4  
WOOD, THOS. .... w 3

**HUNNINGLEY LANE.**  
BARRACLOUGH, ALFRED .... s  
CARTWRIGHT, EDWARD .... w 3  
CLARKSON, RICHARD .... w  
HALL, HENRY .... w  
WALTON, THOS. .... w  
WARD, JOHN .... w

**LITTLEWORTH.**  
BANTON, JOSEPH .... w 2  
CHALLONER, CHAS. .... s  
DODGSON, WM. .... s  
GRAHAM, JOHN .... boy  
MUSGRAVE, GEORGE .... w 5  
PEARL, JOSEPH .... w 1  
POPLETON, ALFRED .... boy  
POPLETON, GEORGE .... boy  
POPLETON, HENRY .... w  
POPLETON, JOSEPH .... w

**OAKS.**  
FLETCHER, FREDERICK .... w 2  
HILL, WILLIAM .... boy  
LAVER, GEORGE .... w

**OLD MILL.**  
SMITH, ALFRED .... s  
SMITH, FREDERICK .... s  
TAYLOR, THOMAS .... w 4  
THOMPSON, JOHN .... widower

**STAINCROSS.**  
MOORE, GEORGE .... w 4

**STAIRFOOT.**  
ELLIS, GEORGE .... s  
JOWITT, BENJAMIN .... s  
MASSEY, RICHARD .... boy  
NEAL, JOHN BROWN .... w  
NEAL, SAML. THORPE .... s  
NORMAN, WILLIAM .... boy  
HARDERSON, CHARLES .... w 1  
SCALES, MATTHEW .... w 2  
THORPE, JOSEPH .... s

**WORSBRO COMMON.**  
JOHN PICKFORD. .... boy

ARMFIELD, JOHN ....  
DUCKETT, WM. ....  
McINTOCK, WM. ....

"So teach us to number our days,  
that we may apply our hearts unto  
wisdom."

### VOLUNTEERS.

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