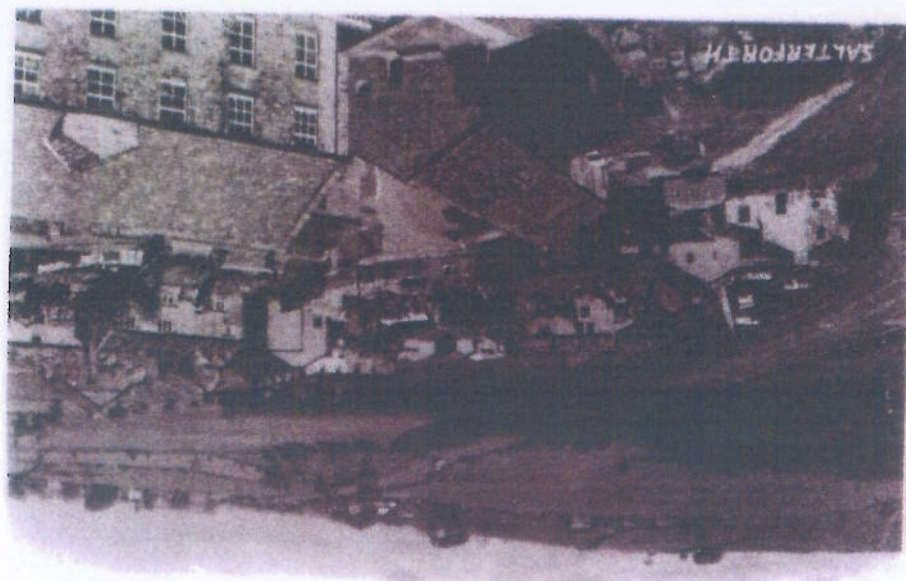


BROADSTONE CHAPEL, BURIAL GROUND OF EASE AND THE CORPSE ROADS TO ST MARY-LE-GHYLL

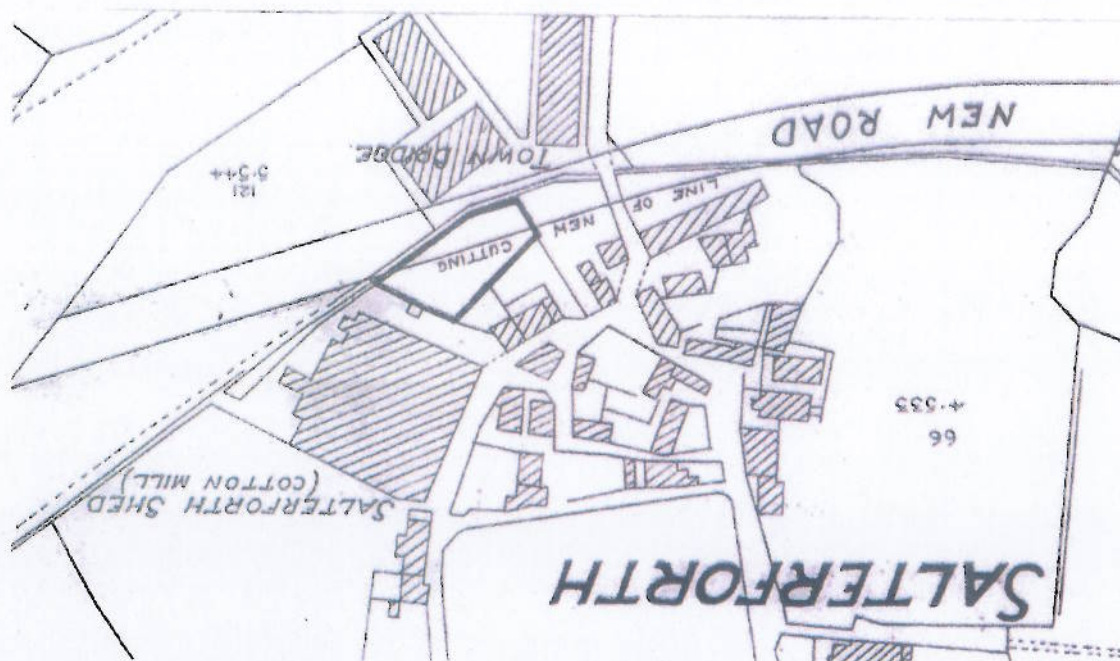
As already mentioned in my short story on the history of Broadstone Farm, Salterforth, which was published in the millennium edition of the *Barby Chronicles*, I mention that this farm was once an Inn called the 'Plough Inn' but had much earlier been called the 'Holy Lamb Inn' and that in late medieval times it was known to house a chapel with its own burial ground of ease and was more than likely established in 1348, when half the population of this area died from the black death. It seems very unlikely that they would have carted the dead 1 1/2 miles to be buried at Ghyll when they could dispose of them more effectively by burying them on the edge of the village in consecrated ground, I think it was the wish of the church and its rector that a chapel should also be provided in this village during such troubled times.



View from the top of the mill chimney, showing Broadstone Farm, circa-1967

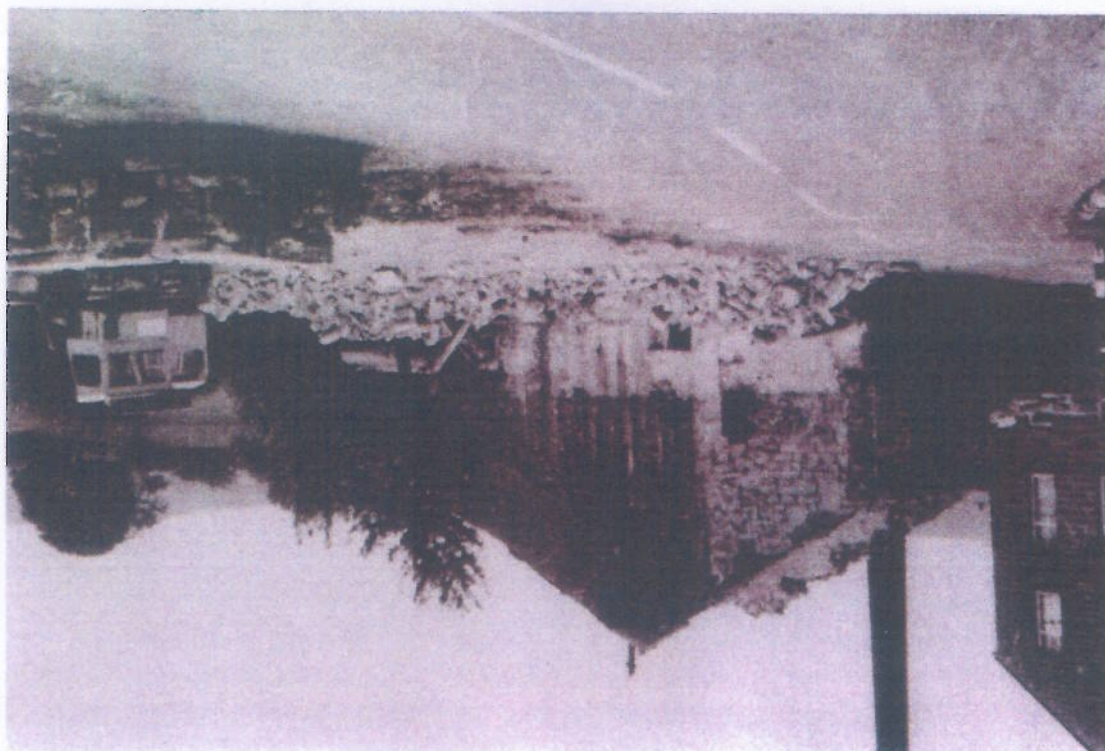
Ghyll was being overburdened by the numbers requiring burial from its parochial parish and that the setting up of another chapel and burial ground would help the situation, was the farm already a possession of the church, part of the Greene Hyll Grange and a way-side Inn? In the farm yard there used to stand a stone trough with the head of a lamb carved on it, water flowed from its mouth and a hand pump drew water to the trough. What happened to this trough and where is it now? The name of 'Holy Lamb Inn' changed to the 'Plough Inn' around the end of the 18th century and by around 1820/30, the Inn ceased to exist and the farm was called after the broadstone which sat against the gable on which were stored rain water butts.

This farm was demolished by Silentnight in 1973, who had a year earlier acquired Salterforth Mill to be used as a showroom and offices, they wanted extra room for a car park, so they wiped away one of the village's most important sites and buildings. The farm should have been a listed building as it had mild 17th century mullioned windows, the attached barn had cruck frames within it and was at one time thatched, part of its fabric was probably of 16th century date but in the 1970's its heritage was not a consideration when dealing with the prospect of creating jobs.



When Gerry Gibson cleared the buildings and prepared the site for a car park they were careful not to dig too deeply for the fear of unearthing skeletons, because during the early 1930's when Barnoldswick Urban District Council were building the 'New Road' through the centre of our village it became necessary to move the course of Salterforth Beck away from the front of Harry Street to allow for the width of the road, so they employed local men to dig a new dyke 10m further east on land that backed onto Broadstone Farm and the forgotten burial ground.

Demolition of Broadstone Farm by Silentnight, May 1972



The workmen while digging this new dyke were shocked to discover many human skeletons and skulls, they told the bosses what they were finding and that the men were unhappy at digging through a graveyard, they were told to hush up the matter or they would lose pay or be sacked, so they put the word around that they had only found the bones of horses and carried on digging the dyke, they lined the banking with stones to protect the earth where other skeletons lay. They did not forget what they had found and during the following years after the construction of the 'New Road' the truth came out. During the 200 years after the ravages of the black death, the burial ground may not have been used much, either because it was so small or was it the fear of disturbing the mass graves, the chapel would have been used by the locals and the rector on the odd occasion but mostly they used Ghyll.

In April 1345, William Abbot of Kirkstall, allowed the inhabitants of the parish of St Mary-le-Ghyll to take control of the church from the cistercian monks and its tithes were looked after by the lords of the manor. Kirkstall Abbey slowly let go of their grip on Barnoldswick and Salterforth, selling some of its lands to Roche Abbey, but they did keep hold of the best grange farms at Greene Hyl-Salterforth, Cowpasture (which inc' Monkroyd) and the grange at Barnoldswick-Cotes. During the dissolution of Kirkstall Abbey in 1538 some of their possessions were taken by the Crown under the control of the Duchy of Lancaster, who later in 1548 sold the granges at Greene Hyl and Cowpasture to John Tempest, knight of Bracewell Hall, the grange at Barnoldswick-Cotes was granted by two charters in 1544 and 1546 to Sir Arthur Darcy of Westby Hall, Gisburn, who not long after sold his Gisburn and Cotes estates.

Villagers of Salterforth have been taking their dead to be buried at Ghyll, since it was built in 1157 and may have been doing so during the Anglo-Saxon period as the wooden church of 'ancient foundation' existed on the same site for nearly 400 years previous, but that's another complex piece of history which I cover elsewhere. The road they took was known as the 'Corpse Lane' which ran along Cross Lane and Musghyll Gate, from there along what is now just a field path to the side of Rain Hall Farm and on past Dump Hyl Gate to Ghyll Church. The arched bridge over the Rain Hall Rock Quarry was built under the supervision of Mr Sugden of Colne, in 1861, partly to allow farm access to land but also to allow Salterforth people their right of passage to Ghyll Church.



Rainhall Bridge, circa-1940, this is in the parish of Salterforth and was part of the corpse road to Ghyll

An ancient local tradition is to take the dead, feet first to the church to be buried this is to stop the spirit returning home and on no account must the corpse lane be blocked or built upon. Have you heard of the term "dead straight" well this comes from the ancient belief that spirits can only follow straight roads or paths, one peculiarity of corpse roads is that they are relatively straight from the church until

you reach the approach of a village where the road will curve back and forth before entering the village this is so that spirits can't return back to a village. Cross Lane twists before entering the village of Salterforth. The other known corpse road is Mucka Layne, now called Mucky Lane. At its junction with Cross Lane and Musghyll Gate, there stand what are called the 'Coffin Stoops' or 'Salterforth Town Stoops' two large stone posts with flat tops spaced so that a coffin can be placed on top of them while those carrying the coffin can take a rest, they have the date 1513 carved on them and are extremely rare.



Mucky Lane- 2002, showing the 'coffin' or 'Salterforth Town Stoops' (the one on right was erected in 1994)

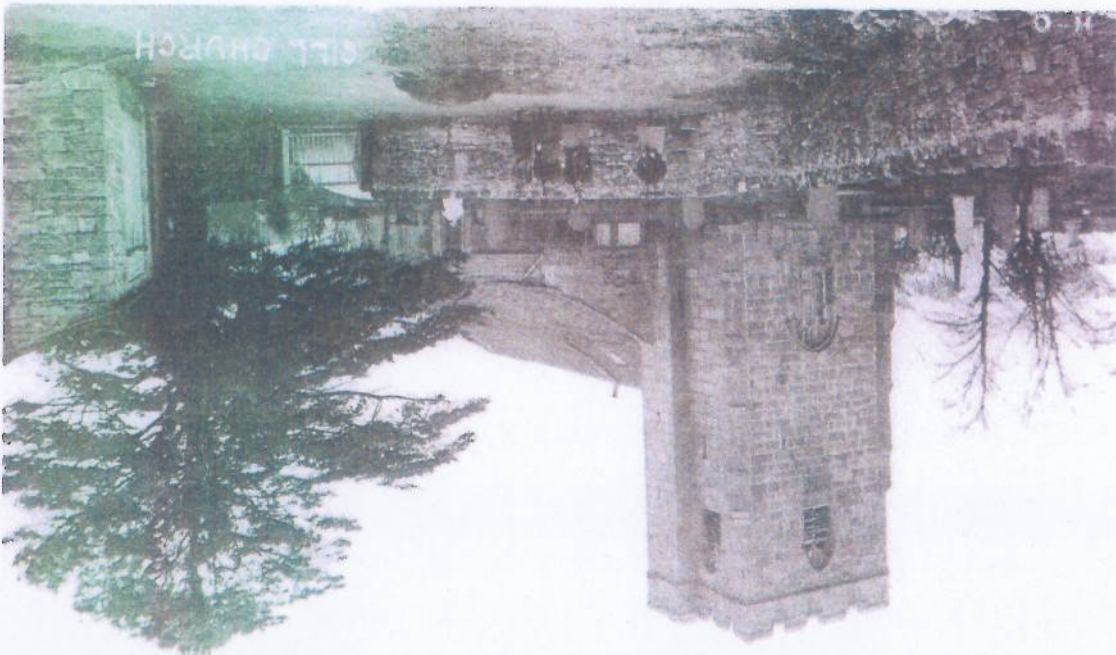


The date of 1513 carved onto one of the 'coffin stoops' on Mucky Lane, photo-1997

Mucky Lane was also used as a packhorse lane between Kelbrook, Salterforth and Barnoldswick-Cotes, during the medieval period and perhaps earlier there used to exist a settlement or hamlet near where the present day 'Klondyke' sits and was known as 'Cotes' the inhabitants of this area would have used the lane to get to Ghyll Church. Before the building of St Marys at Thormton in the early 13th century it is more than likely that the folk from the Kelbrook area would also have walked or ridden the same lane. This lane is without doubt the best preserved packhorse lane in this area and has changed little during the last thousand years, long may it remain in its undisturbed state!



Mucka Layne Stoopses at junction with Earby Road and Spen Head Lane, photo- 1997



Salterforth's parish church- St Mary-le-Ghyll, circa- 1905, the final destination of many Salterforth folk