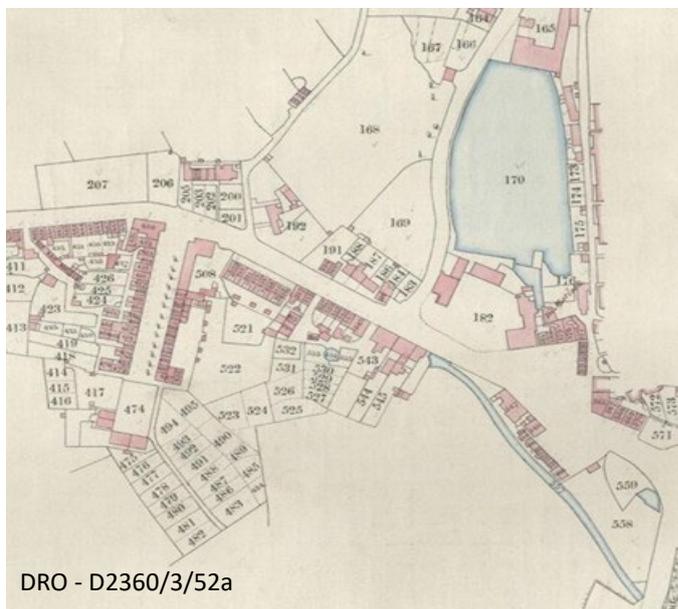


## CROMFORD 1841

**Stephen Hill pulls together information from the 1841 Census and Tithe Award records to build a better picture of who lived where and the social demographic of Cromford at that time.**



In December 2021, the DVMWHS Partnership arranged a talk, led by Dr Stephen Walker, that presented findings from National Lottery Heritage Funded 'Legacy Maker' research, exploring the census record to understand more about the mill workers at Darley Abbey.

This started thoughts about what could be learnt about Cromford and the mill workers using a similar approach.

In terms of records, there are 'useful' census records at 10-year intervals from 1841, and handily in the case of Cromford a tithe map and award for 1840/1 – allowing cross-referencing to provide a more detailed picture.

This section presents some preliminary analysis of the data for 1841 – recognising there are limitations with regard to the data available; particularly the census, with no standard approach for record taking / naming of occupations ...etc. It was typical for only the occupation of the head of the household to be recorded\*.

This portion from the Tithe Map shows Cromford Market Place, Mill Pond, North Street and the two watercourses flowing towards the mill. The 3 census districts studied meet at this point, these are from North Street up Cromford Hill to the bridge carrying the Cromford and High Peak Railway; from North Street through the Market Place and down Mill Lane to the canal wharf, taking in the bottom of Intake Lane and Rock House; the Scarthin Nick side of the mill pond from the start of Via Gellia through to Willersley and the houses by Cromford Bridge. The first two are part of Wirksworth parish, the latter part of Matlock parish.

After a few hours work to gather [thankfully] already available transcribed census data from the internet, transfer to a spreadsheet and do any necessary clean-up the analysis could begin.

So, what interesting information can be readily gleaned?

Looking purely at the census return:

- Total population was very close to 2,000 people, with a 48:52 male to female split
- The age of the population ranged from new born to 85 years
- 40% of the population were under 18 years
- Many households have six or more members; the largest have 10-15 people under a single roof!
- Only 120 people are directly identified as working at cotton mills\* [spinner or carder] – the majority of which live in the Scarthin Nick district
- Around another 100 people could be indirectly associated with working at cotton mills [joiner / labourer...]
- Many of the occupants of North Street are artisans and merchants – Butcher, Tailor, Hatter, Shoe Maker...

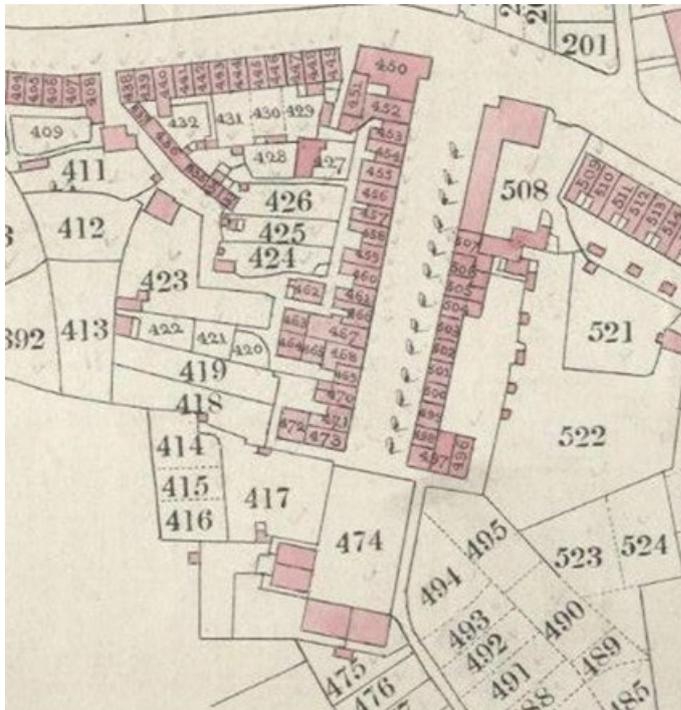
- Some of the artisan professions are more unexpected – confectioner, silversmith, comb maker...
- There are 28 shoemakers in the village!
- The occupation of a Scarthin Nick resident is described as ‘Petrificationer’
- Willersley Castle is occupied by Richard Arkwright Jnr, Frances Arkwright - his daughter [a lifelong invalid who never married], three elderly ‘companions’ and nine servants
- Rock House is occupied by Peter Arkwright, his wife, six children and 13 servants

The Mill Manager’s House is occupied by John Siddon and family; his occupation is simply described as ‘clerk’ [whilst the census records the occupiers of the Mill Manager’s House as Siddon, we of course know this should be Seddon. [Researchers using census records and the like are constantly faced with mis-spelling of names and inconsistent recording between district numerators – you have been warned]

Combining the census with the recently transcribed Tithe Award enhances the picture of the village [Wirksworth parish]:

- Richard Arkwright Jnr owns 98% of the land, most of the 2% belonging to the canal or railway companies
- As you may expect, the properties around the Market Place are merchant shops, and the smithy
- The ‘lock-up’ is described as a joiner’s shop
- The North Street gardens stretch out behind the school [#475-535]

## NORTH STREET 1841



I must thank Rosemary Annable for the loan of two archive items containing earlier research of this type by a WEA Local History Group, and a very comprehensive study of Cromford genealogy by Donald Henderson, which have supported this study.

Following the lead of the WEA Group, this article focuses on the inhabitants of North Street, to develop a sense of life in Arkwright’s housing at a time when the mills were in operation.

This section from the Tithe Map\* shows North Street in some detail – I have focused my research on properties numbered 450 to 508, namely The Bell Tavern to The Cock public house. This includes the school and associated housing, and a few of the properties accessed from the footpath that runs to

the rear of the southern row of housing.

It is interesting to note the map depicts a row of trees lining the street. From some descriptions it is also clear the small [typically square] buildings at the boundary of properties are the outside privy.

\*Two of the census districts studied meet at this point; North Street up Cromford Hill to the bridge carrying the Cromford and High Peak Railway and North Street down Cromford Hill through the Market Place then down Mill Lane to the canal wharf, taking in the bottom of Intake Lane and Rock House.

From the census return:

- The population of North Street was over 200 people
- Households typically have four to six members; though a number have nine people under a single roof!
- Only seven people are directly identified as working at cotton mills [miller or spinner] though there are many more identified as 'labourer' who may have been employed at the mills
- The 'cotton spinners' are mainly men aged over 55 years [head of household], apart from what I assume are two spinster sisters, Martha and Elizabeth Cording, living together at #500
- The 'labourers' are all men, roughly equally split between a group in their 20s and a group aged 40-50 – many appear to be father and son. The youngest is 14; the oldest 70
- Many occupants are artisans and merchants – Butcher, Baker, Tailor, Hatter, Shoe Maker...
- There are a group of artisans, silversmith, comb maker, rope maker ... all living at a single property, and I suspect they may be lodging at The Cock [see later].

Combining with the Tithe Award enhances the picture -

- A baker, Job Smedley and his family live next door to The Bell Tavern at #452 [house & kitchen], which backs on to the bakehouse #427. Living with him are two young apprentice bakers, John Stone and Richard Green
- The dwelling to the rear of the tavern and the baker's, #451, is occupied by John Roper, a hatter, and family
- #455 is occupied by 9 members of the Hodgkinson family; head of the house John Hodgkinson is a butcher and two of his sons are apprentice blacksmiths. Their garden is #426
- Next door live mother and daughter, Penelope and Lydia Potter, #456 – their garden #425 contains a pigcote
- #462 is not a dwelling house, the tithe describes it as a kitchen occupied by Thomas Barton
- #463 is occupied by 9 members of the Holmes family; head of the house Thomas Holmes is described by the tithe as a 'miller at cotton mill'. Their garden #422 contains a pigcote
- #464 to #473 are occupied by [mill] labourers and cotton spinners
- #474 is described as school and two houses; one house is occupied by the schoolmaster, William Shaw and family, the other by two school mistresses, Anne Haslam and Jane Jacks. Interestingly, none of the school staff were born in Derbyshire.

Returning up the northern-side of the street -

- The gardens associated with properties on this side of North Street stretch out behind the school [#475-494]
- The corner house [now no.11] was originally two properties. #497 described as a house and kitchen, where presumably the kitchen was the two-storey part to the rear. #496 is also a two-storey dwelling, which amazingly housed seven members of the Bunting family and two lodgers!
- Next door #498, now the Landmark Trust rental property, was at this time occupied eight members of the Tissington family. Head of the house George Tissington is a hatter; his eldest son George [15] is a cotton spinner
- The majority of the houses in this row appear to be occupied by mill workers, the exceptions being #498, #502, #505, #506 where the occupiers are described as hatters, shoe makers and lead miners
- The Cock public house #508, occupied by John Mart and family, is clearly a very large property, probably a coaching inn with yard and stables. #521 a garden and #522 a croft are also assigned to The Cock

Comment:

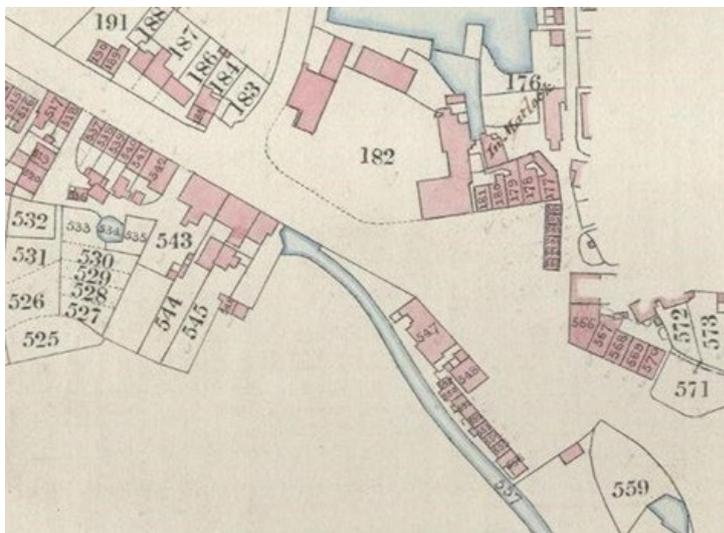


The tithe map suggests the single-storey 'toll house' on the corner of North Street – attached to The Cock – must have been constructed after 1841.

Tithe Award descriptions of premises indicate there were 3 'kitchens' in and around North Street [#452, 462, 497] – could these have been community facilities, providing meals for mill workers?

What are now the allotment gardens, beside the path between Bear Pit and North Street, at this time was a field associated with The Cock – probably for resting horses.

## CROMFORD MARKET PLACE 1841



Continuing the Cromford 1841 tour, here are details of the properties and occupiers around the Market Place.

This section from the Tithe Map\* shows the Market Place in some detail – including the Bear Pit, plus portions of the Cromford Sough, Mill Pond and Bonsall Brook.

It is interesting to note the Cromford and Matlock parish boundary in the top right portion of the map; Scarthin cottages, The Boat Inn and what was the Market Place Restaurant lying within Matlock.

Working clockwise from the

Greyhound Inn- which has George Higgott or Higgett as the publican. In residence are three members of the Wheatcroft family, three travellers and six servants. The buildings around the extensive inn yard [#182] are described as 'stables and other outbuildings'.

Adjacent to the Greyhound are a row of five properties [#177-181] that are described as houses in the tithe, but were likely commercial premises given the occupation of the occupiers.

- James Fearn, a **barber** occupies #181, along with his wife and three sons.
- Henry Buxton, a **grocer** occupies #180, along with his wife, three sons and a niece(?). Two of the sons are described as shoe manufacturers, so potentially they were selling their wares from the premises.
- Edward Boden and his wife Elizabeth occupy #179, which is described as a house with backyard and oven – so maybe he is a **baker**.
- Richard Clay, a **druggist** occupies #178, along with his wife and two infant sons
- From the Tithe Award, #177 is occupied by William Britland, but there is no corresponding census record.

\*Lies within the census district from North Street down Cromford Hill through the Market Place then down Mill Lane to the canal wharf, taking in the bottom of Intake Lane and Rock House.

This brings us to 'The Shambles' [#560-565] – the row of single-storey commercial premises on the right-hand side of the Market Place.

- Edward Boden [of #179] occupies #560 & 563 which are described as a stable and a warehouse.
- Henry Buxton [of #180] occupies #561 which is described as a store [for his groceries]
- George Winson occupies #562, a **shoe-maker's shop**
- Anthony Boden, a local farmer, occupies #564 which is described as a **butcher's shop**
- William Rolley occupies #565, described as a **shoe-maker's shop**, but the Rolley family appear to be hatters

Continuing this number sequence, we move to the row of buildings that face on to the beginning of Cromford Hill, which include what is 'Huntley Green' [#566-570]. Again, the properties are described as houses in the tithe, but were more likely commercial premises given the occupation of the occupiers.

- Samuel White, a **draper** occupies #566, along with his wife and sister(?)
- Nathan Stafford, a **tailor** occupies #567, along with his wife
- James Rolley, a **hatter** occupies #568, along with his wife, three children and an apprentice, George Walton.
- Mary Ann Street, a **grocer** occupies #569 [with a warehouse for her goods across the road in #552]
- William Parker, a **plumber and glazier** occupies #570 alongside his son, daughter-in-law and their three children. The son John is also a plumber and glazier, and the business has a workshop across the road at #555

The row of small buildings [#549-556] where the Community Centre now stands are another row of premises similar to The Shambles, which include the warehouse and workshop described above.

- James Green, a **grocer** occupies #549 which is described as a cellar – this is adjacent to the house and shop [#548] he occupies with his wife, four daughters and an apprentice baker, Richard Green [probably a nephew]. #548 is now the chocolate shop and Parky's Eatery.
- Samuel White, the draper occupies #550 which is described as a stable
- Robert Carwood occupies #552 which is described as a house - no corresponding census record
- William Ellse occupies #553 which is described as a shop - no corresponding census record
- Obadiah Adams occupies #554 which is described as a **saddler's shop** - no corresponding census record
- Richard Clay, the druggist occupied #556 which is described as a warehouse

Heading up Cromford Hill:

- William Bunting, a **blacksmith** occupies #547 described as house, smithy and cowhouse [now Q Eye gifts and Essentials Beauty], along with his wife, son and daughter
- Next is an open space where the sough approaches the road, which is still partly open and partly occupied by the fish and chip shop
- #546 is a small building at the back of a long yard, which is described as a **woodman's shop** in the occupancy of a carpenter, Jeremiah Cooper with his wife and two children. Amazingly, still a carpenter's shop today!
- Hugh Gray occupies #545 which is described as a house, yard, outbuildings and garden - no corresponding census record
- George Staley occupies #544 which is described as a house, yard, building and garden - no corresponding census record
- Joshua Roper is the proprietor of **The Crown public house** [#543] next to the path to the Bear Pit, where he lives with his wife Martha

- The Bear Pit [#534] is described as the 'shuttle to Cromford Sough' – note the absence of any adjacent pigcote building at this time.
- George Allen, a **draper/merc**er occupies #542 with his wife Ann – this sizeable premises is described as house, shop, yard and building
- Joseph Wastaff, a **tailor** occupies #541 with his wife and two daughters; both daughters are milliners. This sizeable premises is described as house, yard and building
- John Kidd, a **tin manufacturer/tinsmith** occupies #540 with his wife and two young children. The premises is described as house, garden and shop – it appears what is now named 'Tinsmith Cottage' would most probably have been a workshop.
- Daniel Smedley, a labourer occupies #539 with his wife, two children and lodger Joseph Kniveton, a weaver.
- John Kidd, a **hatter** occupies #538 with his wife and two daughters.
- Mary Siddall occupies #537 which is described as a house and garden - no corresponding census record
- The small building to the rear of this row, #536 is described as a cowhouse.

This brings us to the drive/yard in front of the 'lock-up'.

- The tithe award describes #520 as a '**hatter's shop**' occupied by James Rolley [of #568]
- The 'lock-up' #519 is described as a '**joiner's shop**' occupied by Robert Britland [of North Street]
- Timothy Jepson, a **shoemaker** occupies #518 with his wife and four children
- George Boden occupies #517 with his wife Mary – the census describes him as a mechanic, whilst the tithe award indicates his is a swailer [miller/grain dealer]

Crossing Cromford Hill to complete the picture:

- William Jones, a **hatter** occupies #183 with his wife, two children and father James Jones a cotton spinner [aged 70]
- #184/5 are a house and garden occupied by Ann Limb - no corresponding census record
- James Fyer, a **paper maker** occupies #186 with his wife and four(!) daughters – the wife and two eldest daughters are **milliners**
- Moses Kidd Snr & Jnr, lead miners occupy #187/8 respectively
- The Mather family occupy #189, with a share of #191 a garden. Ann Mather, a farmer shares the property with two sons [both apprentice mechanics], a daughter-in-law and grandson
- The Bradley family occupy #190, with a share of #191 a garden. Dorothy Bradley, shares the property with her son John [a **hatter**], his wife and six children

The Market Place and surrounds were clearly a home to craftspeople and traders of many different wares.

[Stephen Hill](#)

Cromford Mills Volunteer

August 2022