

Life and employment in Farnhill in 1911

The raw data of the 1911 census provides significant information about life in Farnhill three years before the outbreak of World War Two and five years after the disastrous destruction by fire of the two textile mills in the village.

Farnhill was a very lively place with a lot going on. The workday rush to places of work, presumably mostly on foot, of over 350 people and about a hundred scholars going down to Kildwick school. Main Street textile mill had been rebuilt by now, taking many workers, but the majority of textile workers would have been employed at mills in Cononley, Bradley, Crosshills, Sutton and Glusburn, perhaps a few even in Skipton and Keighley.

The bustle would then die back a little but the village was not so quiet as it is these days, with so many people at home during the day, visiting the local shops, family, neighbours, etc. The majority of women working outside the home were unmarried and marriage meant a shift from paid employment to household duties – a situation that didn't change significantly between 1901 and 1911

Year	Total females over 14 years old	Number of them employed	Married and employed
1901	254	125	25
1911	282	142	32

The greatest employer of females was the textile trade, mainly spinning and weaving.

The road traffic would have been much lighter, almost exclusively horse drawn, bicycles and perhaps hand carts. There were five people employed as carters in the village, hauling coal, builder's materials and canal goods.



The canal company had stables in Farnhill. Traffic from the four farms might have been more seasonal, with a busy period around hay making time. There would have been visiting and through traffic as well. The shops would have needed stocking and the various trades being carried on, for example the mills and joiners generating more traffic.

There were many shops:

- W Green's butcher's shop at 33 Main Street, with its associated Red Lane slaughterhouse;
- boot & shoe shop, 17 Main Street, Mr John Mosley;



- grocers shop, 13 Main Street run by Mr James Mosley;
- a hairdressers shop, on the Harbour;
- the Co-op Stores, Main Street opposite the Mill;
- a fish & chip shop on Newby Road;
- another cobbler's shop near 15 Newby Road;
- a lock up shop, Main Street near 24 & 32;
- The Ship Hotel next to the canal culvert;
- Farnhill Wood refreshment rooms run by Mr Kearns.

There were other people running retail businesses, but whether they worked in Farnhill is not recorded:

- Ephraim and Clara Sharpe lived on Mary Street and baked oatcakes, a staple of the Yorkshire diet for hundreds of years. They hawked their goods round local villages in a basket as did Ike Hargreaves in Cowling;
- Joseph Hartley also on Mary Street was a baker;
- Martha Turner on Mary Street kept a small shop;
- William Mosley at 7 Main Street was a fruiterer;
- Abraham Hannam and his wife Sarah at 5 Main Road were confectioners.

Various tradesmen had premises in the village:

- Mr Rhodes' Skipton Road ran a cartwright's shop;
- a joiner's shop, Main Street, opposite 5 & 7? probably run by a Mr Kitson, Albert perhaps;
- another joiners shop, near Hellifield House, perhaps run by Charlie Hill, joiner, who lived nearby;
- a plumbers shop near Ivy Terrace, no one was recorded as a plumber on the 1911 census.

In addition there were:

- Canal Company stables, Main Street, nr Ivy Terrace;
- a wool warehouse, Main St, (now Farnhill and Kildwick Institute)
- Aireside Mill, cotton & worsted, in what is now Cononley;
- the cotton mill, Main Street;
- a private school, in Starkey Lane;
- police station, 31 Main Street where Mr Backhouse, police constable lived;
- Oddfellows Hall, meeting room, 57 Main Street;
- Boy Scouts Rooms, Main Street, Opp 5 & 7?;
- Brass Band Assembly Rooms, Harbour.

There were farms at:

- High Farnhill, Moorgate Farm, Mr Whiteoak;
- Boxtrees, Smith Redman;
- Farnhill Hall, run by farm servants;
- John Holmes at Crag Top;
- Mrs Elizabeth Barrett at Spout House was a poultry farmer;
- Robert Green aged 76, living at 3 Staincliffe Street was a poultry farmer. However, his farm could not have been at 3 Staincliffe Street which was a two roomed under-house.

The major occupations

The censuses of 1851, 1901 and 1911 record the occupations of Farnhill villagers during a period of high local industrial activity and when some important local events happened. In 1905 and 1906 there were two mill fires which destroyed the premises which were an important source of employment. Analysis of the recorded occupations at this time gives a background to what the working village may have been like and how people's working lives were affected by the fires.

Textiles

From the census figures it is clear that the majority of people in the village were employed in the textile industry.

Census year	Total employees	Textile workers	Percent textile workers
1851	332	274	84%
1901	304	201	66%
1901	371	249	67%

There is no drop in textile employment five years after the destructive fires. It should be borne in mind that all surrounding villages had textile mills, within what would have been considered at the time, easy walking distance.

Of the Farnhill volunteers, 41 were employed in textiles in 1911.

Textile employments can be categorised by the type of textiles being manufactured, and by the type of employment, whether direct or ancillary to textile manufacture. Local mills manufactured worsted, cotton or cotton and silk cloth. Employment was divided as follows between them:

Census year	Worsted	Cotton	Mixed cotton/worsted
1901	113	64	6
1911	58	91	32

Perhaps some of the workers in worsted manufacturing in the mills destroyed by fire were displaced into cotton and cotton and silk manufacture. Aireside Mill in what is now Cononley is described in the 1911 census as cotton and worsted, perhaps the mill was occupied by different manufacturers on different floors.

Within the textile trade there were many processes and the various occupations listed in the censuses include:

- wool washer
- wool sorter
- wool combing (127 in 1851, 1 in 1901, and 5 in 1911)
- labourer
- bobbin setter (This and bobbin pegger were jobs done by 14 year olds or half-timers)
- bobbin pegger
- reeler
- drawer
- twister
- doffer
- yarn packer
- rover
- spinner
- yarn finisher
- warp dresser
- heald tier
- overlooker weft department
- warper and beamer
- pattern warper
- weaver (193 people employed, all types of cloth, 1911)
- weaving overlooker
- singer (who singed the cloth after raising the nap)
- piece looker
- piece folder
- piece mender
- burler and mender

Some of the ancillary work included:

- Paper tube maker cotton mill
- machine minder
- stationary engine man
- stationary engineer assistant
- machine oiler
- engine fitter
- mill mechanic
- mill engineer
- warehouseman
- warehouse boy

- iron moulder textile machinery
- iron borer, textile machinery
- manufacturer (i.e. the overall manager of a mill)
- bobbin mill labourer
- wood sawyer at bobbin mill
- bobbin turner
- bit sharpener bobbin works
- clerk cotton mill

Non-textile trades

Census year	Stone masons & their labourers	Joiners & labourers	Iron-related trades	Farming
1901	13	6	7	10
1911	9	10	8	12

An interesting assortment of other trades not employing many people included: Architect's clerk, Basket maker, Cartwright, Clock & watch repairer, Dressmaker, Gardener, House painter and decorator, Organ builder, Plasterer, Plumber's apprentice, Stocking knitter, Wheelwright, Wood sawyer for Cooper.

Services

This is a catch-all category employing 26 people in 1901, and 23 in 1911.

The employments include: School teacher, Minister, Baritone singer, Landlady of The Ship Hotel, employees of the canal, railway and gas companies, Road maintenance, Public Health, Domestic servant, Coachman, Commercial traveller, Clerk and Hairdresser.

Independent means

In 1901, 6 people were living on their own means, 5 in 1911.

Marriage age

The youngest married lady in Farnhill was 21, as was the youngest married man; they were married to each other! The majority married when 21 or over, there are however some instances where people had married at a lower age when parental consent was required.

Mobility

Perhaps because of the healthy employment rate in Farnhill there was much immigration from outside the village. In 1911, 75% of married women were not born in Farnhill or Kildwick. For married men, 66% were from outside the villages. There were 56 couples where neither partner was native to either of the villages this accounts for 64% of the non-native married men.

Notes

In the 1901 census there were only 5 people resident in Aireside Cottages, then included in Farnhill Parish. The 1911 census includes 75 residents of Aireside Cononley. They accounted for all but 20 of the 90 increase in the number of residents between the 1901 and 1911 censuses.

