

Thirsk and the Vale of Mowbray

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## **THIRSK:**

### **Geographical and Historical information from the year 1890.**

Wapentake and Petty Sessional Division of Birdforth - Electoral Division, Poor Law Union, County Court District, and Rural Deanery of Thirsk - Archdeaconry of Cleveland - Diocese of York.

This parish, comprising an area of 3,100 acres, is situated near the centre of the Vale of Mowbray, one of the most beautiful and fertile of Yorkshire dales. It is watered by the Codbeck, and intersected by two lines of railway, the main line of the North Eastern system, and a branch line connecting Thirsk with the Leeds and Stockton railway. Anciently it included, besides the township of Thirsk, also the chapelries of Carlton-Miniott, Sand Hutton, and Sowerby, but these are now independent parishes for all civil and ecclesiastical purposes. The soil is fertile and generally in a high state of cultivation. The principal owners are Lady Payne Frankland, relict of the late Sir William Payne Gallwey, formerly M.P. for the borough of Thirsk, and Reginald Bell, Esq., J.P., who is also lord of the manor. The rateable value of the parish or township is £18,169, and the population, 3,337. Thirsk is an ancient market town, the head of a Poor Law Union, a County Council Electoral Division, including Sowerby, and is in the 15th circuit of County Court towns for the recovery of debts not exceeding £50. It gives name with Malton to a Parliamentary Division of the county, and is also the head of a deanery in the Archdeaconry of Cleveland and the Archdiocese of York. It is distant nine miles from Northallerton, 23 from York, and 220 from London.

The name has been variously written *Tresche*, *Tresch*, *Treske*, *Treske*, *Thresk*, *Thrusk*, *Thryske*, *Thrysk*, *Thirske*, and Thirsk as at present, and is supposed to have come down to us from the ancient Britons, in whose language *Tre wisk* signified the town upon the river or brook. *Thor*, the thunder god of the Norsemen, and *wisk*, water, have been suggested as the derivation of the name, but this appears to be an incompatible combination - an ancient British name tacked on to a Scandinavian one, much more modern at least as far as its appearance in this country is concerned.

*The Manor.* - If the above etymology be correct, we may claim for Thirsk an antiquity extending back some fifteen or sixteen centuries; but its history until the Norman Conquest is wrapped in conjecture and uncertainty. The Roman road from Eboracum (York) by way of Easingwold to Northallerton, must have passed through, or very near,

Thirsk, but no relics of Roman handiwork have been found to show what use the imperial legions made of this British village. It doubtless then, and probably for many centuries afterwards, consisted of a few wattle and clay cabins, inhabited by the shepherds who pastured their flocks along the vale.

With the advent of the Normans our information assumes a more positive character. From the Domesday Book we learn that there were in *Tresche* (Thirsk) two manors, one in the hands of the King, and the other in those of Hugh, the son of Baldric, whose name attests his Saxon lineage. In the former manor, Orm had eight carucates of land to be taxed, with four ploughs, and in the latter, Tor had 12 carucates of land to be taxed, with six ploughs. There were here 10 villeins with two ploughs and eight acres of meadow. Hugh, who held besides Thirsk, Hovingham, Thirkleby, Gilling, and many other manors in Yorkshire, was the son of a German archer who had taken service under the Conqueror. He was in York when, in 1069, a great portion of the city was burnt by the Danes. Like many of the companions of the Conqueror, he was liberal in his gifts to religious houses, and it was to him as sheriff of Yorkshire, that three monks, Adwine, Alfwine, and Reinfrid, from the abbey of Evesham, applied for assistance when anxious to restore religion in Northumbria. Orm and Tor, whose names are mentioned as possessing eight carucates and 12 carucates respectively, were evidently, from their names, of Saxon lineage, and probably held the lands which their forefathers had held before them.

Soon after the Conquest, the lordship of Thirsk, with a large portion of the surrounding district, was conferred upon Robert de Mowbray, whose father had accompanied the Conqueror to England. Mowbray succeeded Mowbray through a period of nearly four centuries; their name has been impressed upon the whole vale in which Thirsk is situated, and as the Vale of Mowbray it will probably be known for ages yet to come. Space permits us to speak of the most noteworthy, only of those who bore the honoured name of Mowbray.

Robert, the first baron, was perhaps the most powerful nobleman in the kingdom, and could at any time command the services of a whole army of followers ready-to die in his service. He was appointed governor of the northern counties with the title of Earl of Northumberland. In 1093, Malcolm III. of Scotland, at the head of a numerous army, invaded England, ravaging, burning, and destroying every town and village that lay in his route. Arriving before the walls of Alnwick he laid siege to the castle. The fortress was defended by Mowbray and a small body of valiant knights. The garrison reduced to the last extremity was on the point of surrendering, when a private soldier undertook its deliverance. He rode forth, armed, carrying the keys of the castle dangling from his lance, and

presented himself in suppliant posture before the king, as if to deliver up the keys; Malcolm advanced to receive them, and the trooper speared him through the heart. The monarch fell dead, and in the confusion which ensued, the soldier sprung upon his horse and retreated. Prince Edward, Malcolm's son, advancing rashly to avenge his father's death, fell mortally wounded by the enemy.

Some time after this, Robert de Mowbray entered into a conspiracy with several of the barons to depose the King (William Rufus), whose cruelty and rapacity had alienated the affections of many of his subjects. William took the field before the plans of the conspirators were fully matured, and marched with his army into the north. The rebel chieftains were taken by surprise, and several of them were made prisoners. Mowbray escaped to his castle at Bamburgh, in which he might have defied the whole power of the royal army. William, aware of the amazing strength of the castle and the impossibility of its reduction, erected another fortress in its immediate vicinity, which he appropriately named *Malvoisin*, or Bad Neighbour, and leaving a garrison therein, marched his army to the south. So long as the Earl remained within his castle he was safe, but he was at last decoyed from his asylum. A secret message reached him purporting to come from the garrison of Newcastle, promising to deliver that fortress into his hands. Accompanied by 30 horsemen he quitted Bamburgh at the dead of night, but his movements had been watched by the garrison of Malvoisin, and they immediately gave pursuit. When he reached Newcastle the gates were closed against him, and he fled for refuge to the Castle of Tynemouth. Here for five days he stubbornly defended himself against a superior force, but on the sixth day he received a wound in the leg, and, having sought sanctuary in the church, was dragged thence, and delivered up a prisoner to the king. Matilda, his Countess, continued the defence of Bamburgh, refusing all terms of capitulation. The captive was then, by royal order, led before the walls, and intimation conveyed to the countess that unless she surrendered, his eyes would be put out. The gates were thrown open; Morell the governor turning traitor was received into favour, and Robert de Mowbray spent 30 years a prisoner in the castle at Windsor. He received his liberty from Henry I., but then aged and sightless, he sought admission into the monastery of St. Albans, which he had greatly enriched, there to pass in prayer and contemplation the remainder of his days. "And so the noble Norman, once the martial representative of his sovereign, and the lord of territorial wealth, assumed the monastic habit, and devoted to religion the serene evening of a life whose noon had been passed amid the shadows of feudal strife." He died in 1106, and his vast estates (280 manors) were bestowed by Henry I. upon Nigel de Albini, Earl of Arundel, and cousin on the mother's side to Robert de Mowbray. Nigel was a doughty warrior and had earned the King's gratitude by his prowess at the battle of Tenchebray, the last effort of Robert Curthose to obtain the crown to which he was entitled by priority of birth. In this

conflict Nigel is said to have killed Duke Robert' s horse and taken the rider a captive to the King. Nigel by royal command assumed the name of Mowbray, and was present at the battle of the standard, A.D. 1138. He was the owner of 120 knights' fees, a domain larger than that of a score of German princelings. He dealt out his wealth and hospitality with no niggard' s hand, and 35 religions houses which he either founded or enriched attest his munificence to the church. Thirsk castle was his frequent if not chief residence, and it was here where Gundreda d' Aubigny, his mother, sheltered the 12 fugitive Cistercian monks, who had been driven from their home on the Calder by an incursion of the Scots. Subsequently Roger de Mowbray gave them land in Byland where they erected an abbey, the ruins of which bear evidence of the extent and magnificence of the structure. Roger caught the enthusiasm enkindled by the preaching of St. Bernard, and joined in the second crusade, in which he is said to have vanquished a Saracen warrior in single combat. After his return to England, he joined in Prince Henry' s unfilial attempt in 1184, to snatch the crown from his father Henry II. His castles of Malzeard and Oxholme were besieged and captured by Geoffrey, Bishop of Lincoln, the King' s natural son, and Mowbray seeing the hopelessness of the rebellion hastened to the king at Northampton, surrendered his castle of Thirsk and received a full and generous pardon of his offences. Shortly afterwards the King issued an order for the destruction of all the castles that remained in private hands (held of the King *in capite*), and that of Thirsk shared the common lot. In the latter part of his life he retired to the quiet seclusion of Byland Abbey, and assuming the monastic habit spent the rest of his days in prayer and peace.

Roger' s successor was Nigel, his eldest son, who died about 1191, and was succeeded by William de Mowbray, his son and heir. William, unlike his father who appears to have lived a quiet uneventful life, took a prominent part in all the affairs that perplexed and agitated the country. He was one of the barons that took up arms against King John for the confirmation of the Great Charter of England' s liberties, and he was one of the twenty-five conservators appointed by the barons to see that its provisions were duly observed and carried out by the king. He was also one of the disaffected barons who joined the standard of Prince Lewis, of France, and was taken prisoner at Lincoln. His lands were confiscated, but he subsequently received the royal pardon and was restored to his estates. He founded a chapel at Thirsk, dedicated to St. James, and a chantry therein to the honour of God and St. Nicholas. He died in 1222, and was buried in the priory of Newburgh. Nigel, his eldest son and successor, died without issue leaving the honours and estates to Roger, his brother, who died in 1266, and was succeeded by Roger, his eldest son, who was summoned to several parliaments by Edward I. He died in 1297, at Ghent, and was brought home and buried in Fountains Abbey.

John de Mowbray, his eldest son, succeeded to the honours and estates of his father. He fought in the Scottish wars of Edward I., and in the following reign was governor of the castles of Stirling, Malton, and Scarborough. He was subsequently one of the prime movers in the rebellion against Hugh Spencer, the favourite on whom the weak-minded Edward II. had conferred almost unbounded wealth and power. The forces of the rebellious barons were defeated at Boroughbridge, A.D. 1331, and amongst the prisoners was John de Mowbray. He, with others, was executed at York, and his lands seized by the Crown.

John de Mowbray, his eldest son, was received into favour by Edward III., and had livery of all the lands which had belonged to his father. He was in the Scotch and French wars, and died of the plague, at York, about 1360, seized of the manor of Thirsk. Another John de Mowbray, either the son or grandson of the above, was created earl of Nottingham at the accession of Richard II., but died soon after without issue. He was succeeded in the family honours and estates by Thomas, his brother, who was created Earl Marshal of England on account of his descent from The Duke of Norfolk (John de Brotherton, second son of Edward I), who had held that title. He was afterwards elevated to the dukedom of Norfolk, but having spoken disparagingly of the king and several nobles, to Henry Bolingbroke, he was banished the kingdom, and died at Venice, leaving two sons, Thomas and John, and two daughters, Isabel, married to Sir James Berkley, and Margaret, married to Sir Robert Howard.

Thomas succeeded to the eighty-eight manors and castles left by his father, but in 1405 he rose in rebellion with Archbishop Scrope and the Duke of Northumberland against Henry IV., and was beheaded at York, leaving no issue. His forfeited honours and estates were restored by Henry V. to his brother John. To him succeeded his son and grandson, each named John, The latter was created Earl of Warren and Surrey, and left by his wife, Elizabeth Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, a daughter and heiress, who married, Richard, Duke of York, second son of Edward IV. She died without issue, and all the possessions of this great family reverted to Isabel and Margaret, the two daughters of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. On the partition, the lordships of Thirsk and Malzeard fell to the share of Isabel, and were inherited by her son

William, Lord Berkeley, afterwards created Earl of Northampton by Henry VII. He was thrice married, but having no issue and being displeased with the plebeian marriage of his brother, he gave or sold divers lands and manors to Sir William Stanley; and to Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby, he gave or sold the manors of Thirsk, Donnington, Thwaites, Hovingham, Kirkby Malzeard, and Burton-on-Lonsdale, in the county of York, and several other lands and manors in others counties, "to hold to ye said earle and the heirs of his body."

The lordship of Thirsk continued in the possession of the Stanley family until 1723, when it was sold to Ralph Bell, Esq., of Sowerby, for the sum of £6,300, in which family it still remains. The Bells are descended from an old Border family, which long owned lands in and around Newcastle, and another branch is still resident at Woosington, near that town.

*Thirsk Hall*, the manorial residence, is a commodious brick building, situated near the church and covered with a dense mantle of ivy, which gives to it a picturesque and venerable appearance. In the grounds is an ancient curiously carved font, which was dug up at Hood Grange.

THE CASTLE. - Of the once proud home of the early Barons de Mowbray not a vestige is to be seen, a small artificial mound and a portion of the moat alone remain to tell where it stood. It is said to have been built between the years 974 and 979, but as no mention occurs of it in Domesday Book, its erection was probably subsequent to the date of that record. What kind of a structure it was can now never be known, as not a single stone remains from which an inference might be drawn, nor are there any records forthcoming to tell the tale of its grandeur and magnificence. Old Leland, writing some three and a half centuries ago, says in his quaint style, "At Tresk was a Great Castle of the Lords Mowbrays. And there is now a Park with praty wood about it." And Camden in 1582, says "Thresk, commonly called Thrusk, had formerly a very strong castle," but it was then so utterly demolished that he "could see nothing of it besides the rampire." This castle was the chief residence of Roger de Mowbray, and it was here that he unfurled the standard of rebellion, in conjunction with the King of Scotland, against Henry II. The rebels met with disaster and defeat; Mowbray surrendered his castles at Thirsk and Kirkby Malzeard, which were shortly after demolished by the royal command, as before stated.

Thirsk figures but little in the pages of history after the demolition of its castle. In 1489, the northern counties were in a state of perturbation and excitement. The frequent pecuniary exactions of the king had irritated the people, and when another subsidy of £75,000 was demanded to carry on the war in Bretagne, the smouldering embers of insurrection burst into flame, and Thrusk sent forth its contingent to swell the ranks of the insurgents. At their head was Sir John Egremont, with whom was associated John a' Chambre, a native of Thirsk, who though of mean extraction, possessed considerable talent and oratorical ability. The insurgents refused to pay their share of the subsidy; and when the Earl of Northumberland, the king's lieutenant, in harsh and intemperate language announced to the populace assembled round his house at Topcliffe the royal demands, they dragged him forth and murdered him. The massacre is said by some writers to have taken place at Coxlodge, but if we may believe tradition, it was perpetrated under the elm tree on St. James'

Green, Thirsk. The insurrection was soon suppressed by the superior forces of the king; and John a' Chambre and several of his followers were executed with cruel solemnity at York. Chambre, as the ringleader, was hanged on a gibbet of extraordinary height, and his companions on a lower stage around him.

What share Thirsk took in the attempt made by the people of Yorkshire to reinstate the monks in the monasteries, which was quaintly called the Pilgrimage of Grace, has not been recorded, but in the reign of Elizabeth it contributed its quota of men, money, and arms to repel the Spanish invasion. With the rebellion of 1745 ended its "drum and fife" history, when a body of Dutch mercenaries rested for some time in the town on their way to reinforce General Wade's army, then in Northumberland.

*The Town.* - Under the general name of Thirsk are included the towns of Old and New Thirsk, situated on opposite sides of the Codbeck, and which had probably at one time, some relation to the two manors before mentioned. It is an ancient borough by prescription, and was in possession of its burghal privileges as early as A.D. 1145, as we learn from Roger de Mowbray's charter of foundation of the Priory of Newburgh. Its government was vested in a "borough bailiff," elected annually by the burghers, and sworn in before the steward of the lord of the manor, at the court leet. With the bailiff were associated the following officers: two constables, two leather searchers and sealers, two field graves, and one, sometimes two, pinders or pound keepers; four market searchers, four ale tasters, four afferators, and twelve jurymen. Its management is now vested in the Rural Sanitary Authority, formed by the Board of Guardians, of which Quintin Rhodes, Esq., is chairman, and C. McC. Swarbrick, Esq., solicitor, clerk.

The borough was first summoned to send burgesses to Parliament in 1294, but from that year until 1553 the privilege was for some reason or other never exercised. From the latter year until 1832 it regularly returned two members, the privilege of electing them being vested in fifty-two burghage houses situated in Old Thirsk, of which forty-nine belonged to the Franklands of Thirkleby, who had therefore the power of returning both representatives. The Reform Bill of 1832 took away one member, but introduced the £10 householder, and extended the borough boundaries so as to include New Thirsk and the townships and villages of Sowerby, Carlton Miniott, Sand Hutton, South Kilvington, and Bagby. By the Redistribution Bill of 1885 it was expunged from the list of Parliamentary Boroughs, its last representative being Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Lewis P. Dawnay. The elections formerly took place under the spreading branches of a gigantic elm tree, which stood in St. James' Green, and beneath which also it is said the Earl of Northumberland was murdered by an infuriated mob in the reign of Henry VII. The tree, hollow and half dead with age,

was burnt for a bonfire by some mischievous boys who were celebrating the anniversary of Gunpowder Plot in the year 1818.

On the Green it is supposed was situated the *Chapel of St. James'*, which is mentioned in the foundation charter of Newburgh Priory, A.D. 1145, but had disappeared before the Reformation. There was another chapel dedicated to St. Giles, which is described as standing "in Brynkellhow Gate, in the town of Thirsk." This name has disappeared from the local nomenclature, nor is its present representative known with certainty, but "Chapel Hill Close," in Barbeck, may possibly indicate the site of the Chapel of St. Giles. No record of its founder, nor of the date of its erection has been discovered, but it was in existence as early as A.D. 1345, and was swept away at the Reformation.

The Church, dedicated to St. Mary, is a handsome structure in the Perpendicular style, situated on elevated ground at the north end of the town. Thirsk had no church in Saxon times, but this want was supplied soon after the Conquest. It is mentioned in Roger de Mowbray's Charter of foundation of Newburgh Priory, A.D. 1145, wherein the founder gives to the said priory "The church of Tresc, with one carucate of land in that vil, and tofts and crofts in the borough; also the chapel of St. James, with two oxgangs of land in the village, with two tofts in the borough; also one carucate of land in Tresc, which Bartholomew Gigator (beltmaker) held or occupied, with the tofts and crofts thereto belonging." The Norman chancel of the original church was subsequently replaced by the present elegant Gothic one, and a little later, about the year 1400, the nave was rebuilt in the Perpendicular style. The reconstruction of the entire fabric was completed by the rebuilding of the lofty embattled tower, of which we have distinct evidence in the will of Thomas Marshall, of Upsall, who left, in 1532, towards "the building of Thresk steeple one acre of rye, one acre of heather, and one acre of barley." The church was thoroughly restored about 12 years ago, under the direction of Mr. Street, who has carefully preserved all its ancient characteristics and beauty, and ranks among the finest specimens of the Perpendicular style in the north of England. It is 160 feet long, by 58 feet broad, and consists of chancel, nave, with north and south aisle, porch, and tower, rising 80 feet, in three stories, buttressed, and finished like the rest of the church in an elegant embattlement, divided into embrasures, and pierced. On the west side of the tower, above a large three-light window, is a niche, containing a statue of the Virgin and Child.

The interior is light, elegant, and majestic, depending for its beauty not so much on the elaboration of ornament, as on the harmonious proportions of all its parts. Each aisle is lighted by five three-light windows, with cinquefoil heads, and Perpendicular tracery; and in each clerestory are six Perpendicular windows of three lights, but with more depressed arches.



Between each of the windows is a staged buttress, terminating in a pinnacle. The east window of the chancel consists of five lights, filled with stained glass, representing our Blessed Lord and the four Evangelists, from designs of the daughters of Lady Frankland Russell. There are also several beautiful memorial windows. The fragments of the ancient stained glass that formerly adorned the church were collected a few years ago, and placed in the east window of the south aisle, forming a heterogeneous arrangement of heads, arms (heraldic), saintly emblems, &c. The roofs are of oak, and on each boss is a curious, and often grotesque, piece of sculpture. On one in the chancel is represented "the wife beating her husband with a ladle, because she has discovered, by lifting the lid, that he has been stealing the porridge!" The ancient sedilia remains, and also the piscina, but the stone altar is gone, and in its place is a carved oak table, which is said to have been brought from Byland Abbey. Beneath the chancel is the crypt, which is reached by a flight of stone steps. It has also an exterior entrance, and is lighted by a window below the east window. It was for a long time used as a Grammar school, and now serves the purpose of a vestry. A new font has, with questionable taste, replaced the old octagonal one. The bowl of the latter was large enough to admit of immersion, and was covered by a canopy of beautiful perpendicular tabernacle work, standing 21 feet high, which was, with barbarous taste, shortened in 1858, to allow of a better view of the barrel organ. The porch on the south side was rebuilt exteriorly in 1857, but it still retains its ancient wooden door, in its original form. Over the porch is a chamber, called a "parvise," which, about 1513, was the abode of a recluse, named Thomas Parkinson, whom John Foxe has thought worthy of a place in his "Acts and Monuments."

There is a peal of eight bells in the tower, the largest of which weighs 22 cwt., and is supposed to have been brought from Fountains Abbey. It bears the name "Jesus," and the date 1410, in Old English capitals. Another is inscribed "Voco, Veni, Precare, 1729." Two others bear dates 1775 and 1805; and to these four others have lately been added since the restoration of the church.

The chantry in the south aisle is supposed to be that of St. Ann, to which, on the suppression of religious houses, was granted the Priory of Carthusians, at Richmond. In the north corner of the east wall is a bracket - an angel, holding a blank shield - on which probably stood a figure of St. Ann. No certain information is to be obtained respecting the north chantry, now occupied by a new and powerful organ.

The living was appropriated to Newburgh Priory, and until the Reformation the clerical duties of the parish were performed by the monks of that house. At the dissolution of monasteries the advowson and the rectory were granted by the king to the Archbishop of York, in exchange

for other lands, and remain with the occupants of that see. In the taxation of Pope Nicholas (A.D. 1292) this living was valued at £36 13s. 4d., a large sum for those days; but 26 years later the parish had suffered so severely from the Scottish incursions that in the Nova Tax, in 1318, its value had fallen to £12. The benefice is a new vicarage, now worth £340, gross. Rev. W. T. Mackintosh, M.A., vicar; patron, Archbishop of York.

Opposite the church is a grove of noble willows, in which is a spring of clear water, called "Our Lady' s Well," from which it may be presumed that the church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.

The *Parsonage House*, on the north-west side of the churchyard, is a neat brick building, erected in 1851, at a cost of £1,365. The former residence, a low antiquated thatched building, now converted into cottages, is at Norby (North town), a row of houses by the side of the Codbeck, at the north end of modern' Thirsk.

Besides this church, and the chapels of St. James and St. Giles before mentioned, there was, in Thirsk, another chapel, founded by William de Mowbray; and also a chantry therein, dedicated to St. Nicholas; and the founder agreed with the monks of Newburgh that, although it was not a parish church, the bells should be rung at the celebration of mass therein, whensoever he or any of his heirs should be present, and on the festival of St. Nicholas, and "ye obitts of his ancestors." Of this edifice nothing more is known; it has disappeared without leaving a vestige behind, and not even a local place-name remains to indicate the site.

The following is the most correct list of the incumbents of Thirsk obtainable. Before the Reformation the duty was done by monks from Newburgh, who probably took it in turns, and no one was regularly appointed. The two first names are from Torre' s MSS., the others from the parish register.

-	John Esyngton, cap.
17 May, 1471	Will. Assynby, cap.
1600	Thomas Todd
1632	T. Gilleys
-	Matthew Hill, M.A.
1704	Joseph Midgeley
1746	William Williamson
1746	Anthony Routh
1762	Daniel Addison
1783	Thomas Barker
1798	Jonathan Holmes
1829	Robert Lascelles, M.A.
1833	Samuel Coates, M.A.
1843	William Lindley
-	C. E. Camidge, M.A.
-	W. T. Macintosh, M.A.

In 1662 Matthew Hill was ejected from his living. After the loss of his curacy he went to London, where he lost all his possessions by fire, upon which he subscribed a letter thus: "Your brother, sine re, sine spe, tantum non sine se." - M .H.

The parish register begins in the year 1557, and contains the following insertion on the first page:- "Sic incipit primus liber. Liber factus vicesimo die Septebris A.D. 1556. Anno regni Philippi et Mariæ tertio et 4." Among the earliest names are those of Pennington, Stockdale, Dent, and Abbot. The following are extracts

"Names of persons excommunicated out of Thirske church, Aug. 1, 1708, Elizabeth Billup, John Palliser, and Ann Wood."

"1746, April 27th, Mary Moore' s absolution was published."

"1770, July 25th, Bishop Drummond confirmed in Thirsk church, nigh 2,000 people."

"Burials, 1769, May 22, Jane Davy, a single woman (a dwarf), left 200 pound to the poor of Thirsk."

"Burials, 1778, Oct. 23, John Ward, by trade a weaver, 99, natural decay."

Among the church accounts is a payment, in 1684, of £3 10s. "for writing and painting the Commandments, Belief, and Our Father, which came off almost as soon as done."

The *Catholic Church*, dedicated to All Saints, is a neat brick building, erected in 1867, with presbytery attached. The chancel is chastely decorated, and lighted by stained glass windows. Behind the church is a small school, built in 1872.

The Wesleyan chapel is situated on St. James' Green, in ~~Ol~~ Thirsk. It is a large handsome structure, erected in 1816, and capable of accommodating over 1,000 hearers. Methodism was introduced into Thirsk by John Wesley himself, who regularly visited the town on his missionary journeys. The first chapel was an octagonal building, erected between 1764 and 1766, and described by Wesley, who preached in it in the latter year, as "almost equal to that at Yarm, and," he adds, "why not quite, seeing they had the model before their eyes, and had nothing to do but

copy after it." An organ was purchased, by subscription, in 1857, but this was replaced by a new and more powerful instrument in 1888, at a cost of £250. The Congregationalists, Primitive Methodists, and Friends have also chapels in the town. The last-named body were formerly numerous and influential in the district, and had a Meeting House here in the lifetime of George Fox, the founder of the society. This was rebuilt in 1799, and restored and enlarged about eight years ago. The Friends have two burial grounds, one behind their meeting house in Kirkgate, the other in Barbeck, both well filled.

The *National* or *Parochial School*, rebuilt on St. James' Green about 26 years ago, was founded in 1812, and is attended by over 300 children of both sexes. The *Infant School* (Undenominational) was established in 1833, and is supported by subscription; number of children on the rolls, 90. The British and Foreign School, a commodious brick building, was erected in 1841, at a cost of £600, raised by subscription. There are two departments; one for boys, the other for girls and infants. About 230 children attend.

The *Market Place* is a spacious square, surrounded by some well appointed shops, but a cluster of old unsightly buildings detracts much from its beauty. The old Toll Booth, or Town Hall, which stood here was burnt down in 1834, and a range of old ruinous buildings, called *The Shambles*, was removed in 1857, and the shaft of the old market cross some years later. It formerly bore on the cornice of its capital, "four sun dials facing the four cardinal points of the horizon." The market day is Monday. The market is held by prescription, and was in existence as early as A.D. 1145. *Fairs* are held on Shrove Monday, April 4th and 5th, for horses, horned cattle, sheep, &c.; on Easter and Whit Mondays, for pleasure; on August 4th and 5th, and October 28th and 29th, for horned cattle, sheep, &c.; on the Tuesday after December 11th, for horned cattle and sheep, and *Hirings* for servants on November 12th. Leather tanning and saddlery were once extensively carried on, and a few curriers still survive, but the most important industry now is the manufacture of agricultural implements, which are sent to all parts of the country. Blome, in his "Britannia," in 1673, says Thrusk was then noted for its good ale, and "Drunken Barnaby" evidently alludes to this beverage when he speaks of "the cold pottage of Bacchus" in the following lines:-

"Thence to Thryske, rich Thyrsis casket,  
Where fair Phillis fills her basket  
With choice flowers; but these be vain

things,

I esteem no flowers, nor swainlings;  
In Bacchus' yard, field, booth, or cottage,  
I love nought like his cold pottage."

In 1768 an effort was made to improve the trading facilities of the town by deepening the river Codbeck so as to make it navigable from its junction with the Swale to Thirsk. An Act of Parliament was obtained, but after constructing a wharf for the discharging of vessels, making a lock at Sowerby, and straightening and deepening the river, the further prosecution of the scheme was abandoned for want of funds.

All traffic at this time was conducted by strings of pack horses, stage waggons, and mail coaches, the rattle of the latter as they dashed along the street sending a thrill of excitement through each housewife as she rushed to the door to bid the travellers God speed. In 1841, the Great North of England railway was completed between London and Darlington, and the waggons and coaches disappeared from the road. This line passes a mile west of the town, and, in 1848, the line connecting Leeds and Thirsk was opened out.

Three Banking Companies have branch banks in the town, as enumerated in our directory. The Savings Bank, established in 1819, was removed to its present premises in 1849. It is a large, substantial brick building, erected that year, at a cost of upwards of £2,000. Besides the rooms appropriated to the banking department, there is a large assembly room, for lectures, concerts, and public meetings, capable of accommodating about 1,000 persons. On the 20th November, 1887, there was £61,576 6s. 6d. standing to the credit of 1,548 depositors, 38 charitable societies, and 5 friendly societies.

The Mechanics' Institute, built in 1849, by the late Sir W. Payne Gallwey, was amalgamated with the Church Institute about four years ago, and is now styled *Thirsk Institute*. It contains, in addition to a well-stocked library, a large lecture hall, capable of seating nearly a thousand persons. Art classes are held in the winter months.

The *Police Station* is situated at the west end of the town, in the adjoining parish of Sowerby. It was built in 1854, and contained a justice room or court house in the upper story; but this was superseded by the present court house adjoining, erected in 1885. *Petty Sessions* for the wapentake of Birdforth are held here every Monday, and a County Court every two months. His Honour E. A. Turner, Judge,

The *Thirsk Poor Law Union* was formed in 1837. It embraces an area of 85 square miles - accurately, 64,893 acres - and includes the following

parishes or townships, viz., Ainderby Quernhow, Bagby, Balk, Birdforth, Boltby, Carlton Miniott, Catton, Cowsby, Dalton, Elmire-with-Crakehill, Fawdington, Filiskirk, Holme, Howe, Hutton Sessay, Kepwick, Kilburn, Kirby Knowle, Kirby Wiske, Knayton-with-Brawith, Maunby, Newby Wiske, Newsham-with-Breckenbrough, North Kilvington, Pickhill-with-Roxby, Sand Hutton, Sessay, Sinderby, Skipton, South Kilvington, South Otterington, Sowerby, Sutton-under-Whitstonecliffe, Thirkleby, Thirlby, Thirsk, Thornborough, Thornton-le-Moor, Thornton-le-Street, Topcliffe, and Upsall. The number of inhabited houses is 2,737, containing a population of 12,840, an increase of 673 between 1871 and 1881. The total rateable value of the union at the last assessment was £133,306. The Thirsk Board of Guardians were recently informed by the Local Government Board that they had received from the County Council for the North Riding of Yorkshire a representation submitting proposals for the adjustment of the boundaries of the county. By these proposals the following townships, at present in the Ripon Union, will be added to Thirsk Union:- Asenby, Baldersby, Cundall-with-Leckby, Dishforth, Hutton Conyers, Marton-le-Moor, Melmerby, Middleton Quernhow, Norton Conyers, Bainton-with-Newby, and Wath, and the following townships in the Great Ouseburn Union:- Ellenthorpe, Kirby Hill, Langthorpe, Norton-le-Clay, and Thornton Bridge, and such parts of the parishes of Humberton and Milby as are in the West Riding. The *Workhouse* is situated in Sutton Road, and was erected in 1838, at a cost of £2,203. During the past two years many additions and improvements have been made at a further outlay of nearly £2,000; and recently a new casual ward, containing 18 working cells, has been added which, it is expected, will exercise a deterrent effect on vagrancy in the district. The average number of indoor paupers is 73, and out-door paupers, 281. Master, Mr. Malcolm Macpherson, and matron, Mrs. Macpherson. The guardians meet in the board room, at the workhouse, every alternate Monday; chairman, Thomas W. Lloyd, Esq., J.P. and D.L., Cowesby Hall; vice-chairmen, Quintin Rhodes, Esq., Thirsk, and John Kirby, farmer, Knayton. The union is divided into five medical and registration districts, viz., Topcliffe, Pickhill, Thirsk, Sutton, and Knayton.

The town has been lighted with gas since 1834. The works were erected by Mr. James Malam, and were carried on as a private speculation until 1871, when a Limited Liability Co. was formed, with a capital of £12,000, in £10 shares. The annual consumption is about seven million cubic feet, which is charged to householders at 4s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet. The illuminating power of the gas is equal to 17½ candles.

The *Waterworks* are also the property of a Limited Liability Co. The water is drawn from springs on Boltby Moor, and stored in a reservoir capable of containing from 40 to 60 million gallons. The watershed embraces an area of 700 acres.

*Races* have been held annually since 1855, on a course a little west of the town. There are now two meetings in the year, which take place in spring and autumn.

CHARITIES. - The poor of the parish have five rent-charges, amounting to £3 3s. per annum, left by persons of the name Davison, Croe, Wrightson, and Midgley, and two roods of land called Wet Lands, left by William Wrightson. in 1684. Timothy Place, Esq., of London, but formerly of Thirsk, left by his will, in 1810, £1,000 in the three per cent. consolidated annuities, for a weekly distribution of bread among poor parishioners who regularly attend church, and do not receive parish relief. The late W. Sinclair, amongst numerous other charities, gave, in 1869, the sum of £500 to the poor of this parish.