

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The largest droplet is in the bottom right corner, and there are smaller ones in the top left, top center, and bottom center.

Ossett

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

A look back at some of Ossett's past history with an emphasis on some of the people we think were good, a few ne'er do wells and our view of what might be seen by some as ugly.

Presented by Stephen Wilson and Alan Howe

Some of Ossett's Good

- **Eli Townend (1846-1910)**
- **The Reverend Edward Kilvington (1766-1835)**
- **Phillip Mickman (1931-1996)**
- **Sergeant Henry Gardner, 1029631, 103 Squadron, Royal Air Force (1917-1943)**

Eli Townend - A Remarkable Ossett Man



- It is easy in estimating the worth of a popular citizen to use the language of fulsome flattery. But Eli Townend was an exceptional man with an exceptional career and exceptional qualities of mind and brain.
- He was born in Ossett in early 1846 in the humblest of circumstances. He never went to school in his life because his father, a hand loom weaver, couldn't afford the fees. He was never able to read due to a sight impediment suffered from birth.
- As a lad he worked wherever he could. He turned the handle of the Ossett Observer printing press for the first edition in 1864. 26 years later he laid the foundation stone for the Borough Printing Works.
- He worked at Healey Old Mill & Victoria Mills and sold hot peas. He joined the ranks of the rag trade and with his straight dealing and respect for his employees he became successful.
- A one time teetotaller and non-smoker he liked to travel and to collect.
- Public life. Liberal in politics. Ossett Local Board, Dewsbury Board of Guardians, W.R.C.C. Independent & modest. A son of the soil. Declined chairmanship of the Board & mayoralty.
- His large-heartedness. He never forgot his roots and was generous to those in need. A rough diamond but with a tender gentleness and understanding. At Christmas, he gave blankets and coals to those less fortunate than he. He had no declared religious denomination.

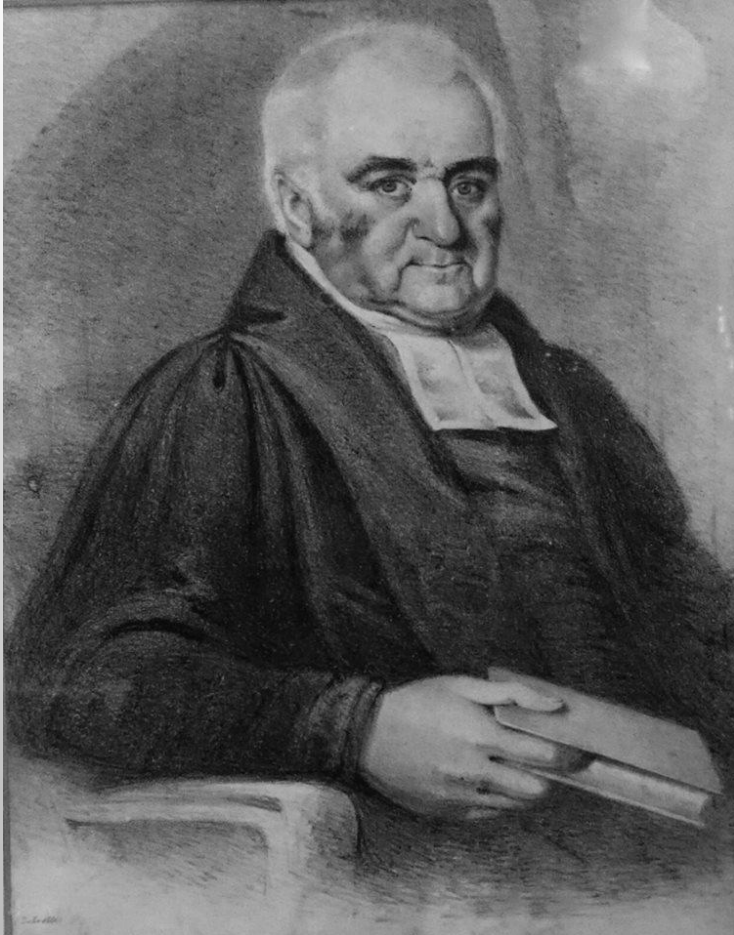
Eli Townend - Continued



Calder Villa, Healey Road, the one time home of Eli Townend

- Eli had married twice and left a widow one son and three married daughters from his first marriage.
- Eli Townend died on Saturday, 16th July 1910, aged 65, after several years of failing health. He left £34,687 12s 6d (£4.1m in current value) and is buried at St John's Methodist Church, South Parade.

The Reverend Edward Kilvington (1766 - 1835)



- In 1799, Kilvington was appointed the perpetual curate at Ossett, serving under the Reverend Mathew Powley, M.A., Vicar of Dewsbury. Ossett at this time was part of the Dewsbury diocese and Ossett had a chapel of ease located in the Market Place, which was rebuilt in 1806.
- A considerable part of the expense of the rebuilding was borne by Edward Kilvington, who had large private funds and who, it is reputed, spent more money on the parish than he ever drew from it. Kilvington was a very heavy man and was only 39 years of age at the time of the rebuilding of the Ossett Chapel.
- He ultimately became so heavy and so big that he could not mount the pulpit steps. This led to the installation of a three-decker pulpit, which was in reality, a primitive lift. Before the service, he got into his chair at the bottom of the pulpit steps and then the sexton, by hauling a rope, slowly wound him up to the top level.

The Reverend Edward Kilvington



The original Trinity Church in the town centre shown above in 1866, just before demolition. The church was funded largely by Edward Kilvington. The picture on the right shows where the church was located in the Market Place against a modern backdrop. Kilvington left Ossett to take on the role of the Vicar of Ripon, where he built and endowed Trinity Church there in 1826 using Kilvington family money at a cost of £13,000 (equivalent to £16 Million today).

The Reverend Edward Kilvington died in Ripon in 1835.

Philip William George Mickman 1931-1996



- Philip William George Mickman was born on the 13th of April 1931 in Hull, the son of William Henry Mickman. Margaret Mickman, the grandmother of Philip was the founder of Mickman's Hosiery. The company started in Scarborough, but they moved to Ossett in 1930. The Mickman family lived at Greenland Villa, Dale Street nearly opposite Ings Mill where the Mickman hosiery factory was located.
- 1949 saw Philip Mickman making history. He was eighteen when he became the (then) youngest swimmer to swim the English Channel.
- On his return to Ossett, Philip received a huge civic welcome. A crowd of almost 20,000 were in attendance in the decorated Town Hall Square as Philip was presented with gifts and a commemorative scroll by Mayor Samuel E. Bickle. Amongst the hundreds of congratulatory messages was one sent on behalf of King George VI from Balmoral Castle. This was the biggest day of celebration for a schoolboy in British history.
- Philip Mickman left Ossett and returned to live in Scarborough where he died aged 64 years in January 1996.

Philip Mickman – continued



Greenland Villa, Dale Street, Ossett, once the home of the Mickman family.

The house is shown with a Virtual Blue Plaque to honour the achievement of Philip Mickman in 1949.



Flight Sergeant Henry Gardner

- Henry Gardener was born in Wakefield in 1917 and after marrying Reba Mildred Love in 1939, he and his new wife lived at 39, Rycroft Street, Ossett, the home of Reba's parents. Sergeant Gardner was the bomb-aimer on a 103 Squadron Lancaster bomber based at RAF Elsham Wolds in North Lincolnshire.
- On Tuesday, 6th July 1943, Gardner's Lancaster Mk.1 W4363 left Elsham Airfield on a mission to lay mines in the Gironde river in France. The aircraft left Elsham at 22:28 but never returned.
- Either en route or returning, the Lancaster was involved in an air battle with a German fighter and was shot down off the French coast in the North Sea at an unknown crash site. All seven crew lost their lives and their bodies were never recovered. Gardner's 103 Squadron carried out the most bombing raids and suffered the most losses in 1 Group during WW2. RAF Elsham was cursed with the highest attrition rate of all RAF bomber airfields.
- His obituary in the Ossett Observer noted: *"Twenty-five years of age, Sergeant Gardner, formerly lived at Stanley, Wakefield, but following his marriage, lived with his wife's parents. Mr and Mrs J.C. Love, at 39, Rycroft Street, Ossett. Before joining the Forces, he was on the staff of the science section of the West Riding Supplies Department, Wakefield. He was well-known in Rugby Union football circles, having played for Wakefield and College Grove."*
- Why then Henry Gardner from the many who died during WW2 from our town?



Flight Sergeant Henry Gardner

Henry Gardner was one of over 1,000 airmen who died between 1941 and 1945 on missions from RAF Elsham Wold in Lincolnshire and now the old airfield is reputed to be haunted with frequent ghostly sightings.



Ossett has had a few bad people!

- **James Mark Briggs – Went to prison for trying to abuse his own daughter**
- **Louie Calvert – Ossett's Double Murderess**
- **Sydney Beauchamp – Bigamist, Pretend War Hero and Thief**

James Mark Briggs

- James Mark Briggs, a successful Ossett woollen manufacturer, was the son of Henry Briggs and his wife Ruth (nee Wilson). He was born in Ossett in 1836 and married Elizabeth Shires at South Ossett Parish Church in April 1858. Their eldest daughter Kate was born soon after on the 28th June 1858.
- In June 1877 Briggs was imprisoned in Wakefield Gaol for attempting to abuse his 18 year-old daughter Kate when he was “addicted to drunken habits”. His wife Elizabeth had left Briggs the day before the incident because he was perpetually drunk. Briggs pleaded guilty claiming to be suffering from “*delirium tremens*” or the DTs. The rapid onset of confusion usually caused by withdrawal from alcohol.
- Kate Briggs left home and went to work as a House Maid for Richard Wheatley at Royds House in Mirfield. She never went back home and eventually moved to live in Australia where she married her cousin, Ossett born Walter Briggs in Sydney, New South Wales in 1887. Their only surviving son Dick George Briggs (1899-1917) died in France during WW1 aged 18 years after joining the Australian Army by falsely claiming he was 25 years of age.
- However, Briggs’ wife Elizabeth did return home and they lived together until his death in 1906.

Louie Calvert – Ossett’s Double Murderess?



Above: Louie Calvert’s Prison Photograph

- Louie Gomersall was born in 1895 as part of a devout Christian family. Her father, woollen weaver, Smith Gomersall, was a Trustee of the Gawthorpe Zion Congregational Church. In 1901, the Gomersall family were living at Glenholme Terrace in Gawthorpe.
- Louie was first employed as a cloth weaver, but by the time she was 17 she had already served a one year sentence in Borstal for theft. She was an habitual thief and liar for the rest of her short life
- She was less than five feet tall, thin, undernourished, not particularly attractive and coarse in manners. What she lacked in height, Louie made up for in assertiveness by way of a very strong personality. It was said that some people found her intimidating and they were scared of her.
- After leaving her home in Ossett, Louie Gomersal moved to Leeds, where she lived a hand-to-mouth existence as a prostitute, a house keeper for John Frobisher, who died in suspicious circumstances and ultimately wife of the unwitting Arty Calvert, before being tried for the murder of her landlady Lily Waterhouse.

- So how did a girl from Ossett end up hanging from Thomas Pierrepoint’s noose in Strangeways Prison in June 1926?

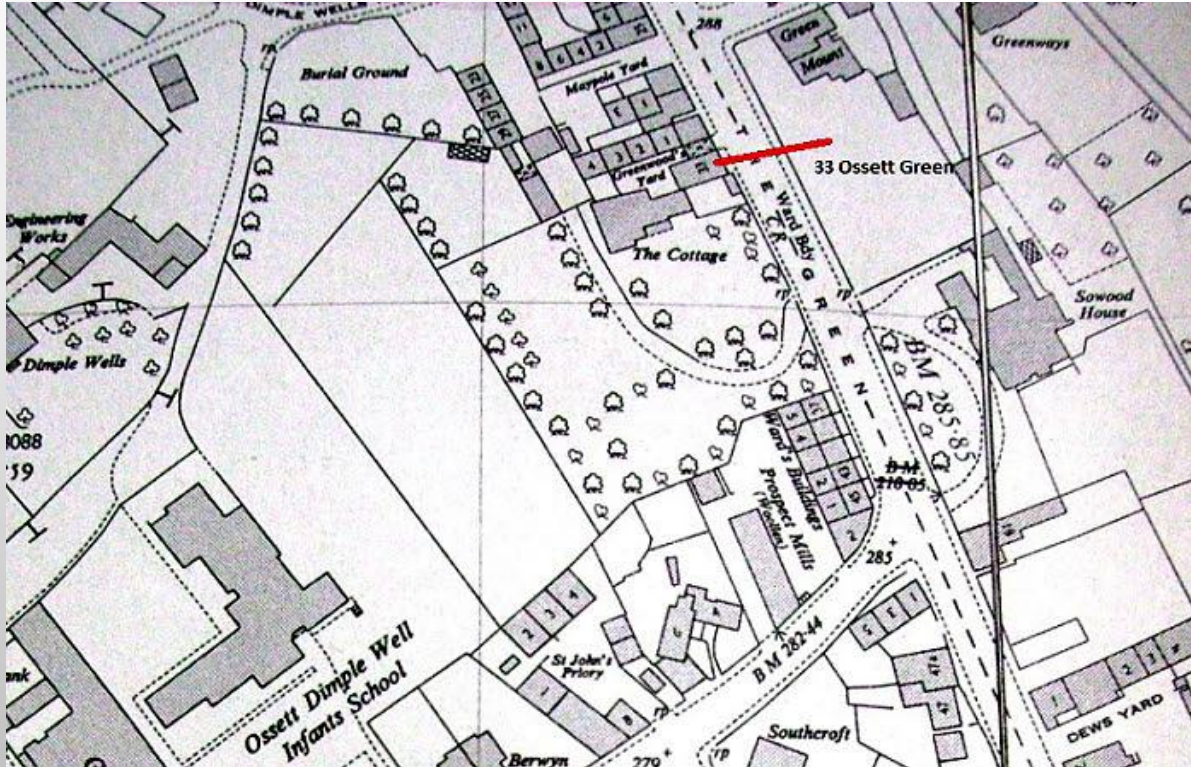
Louie Calvert - continued

- Louie Calvert deceived her husband by saying she was moving back to Ossett to have a baby, which was a lie. In fact, she moved into the home of 40 year-old widow Lily Waterhouse at Amberley Road, Wortley, Leeds. Louie's role was to act as some kind of maid servant or companion for Mrs Waterhouse, though in fact they worked together as prostitutes.
- After only a few days, Louie started stealing what few possessions Lily Waterhouse had and that wasn't very much.
- To complicate matters a regular client of Mrs Waterhouse, Fred Crabtree, a returning Barnsley WW1 soldier recuperating from injury at nearby Beckett Park Hospital became a regular visitor to Amberley Road. He wanted Louie, Lily wanted him and a fight broke out after an argument between the three of them one fateful night in March 1926.
- Crabtree attacked Lily. Louie tried to intervene and attempted to hit Crabtree with a poker, but missed, hitting Lily instead causing a massive head injury. It is likely that Crabtree tied Lily Waterhouse's hands together, then strangled her and left her dead in a pool of blood on her bed.
- Next morning. after hearing about strange noises from the neighbours, a policeman obtained a key and let himself in. There he found Lily Waterhouse bludgeoned and strangled to death. She was fully dressed, except for her boots, which were missing.
- Louie had returned to Arty Calvert's house and the police soon arrived there to find Louie wearing Lily's stolen boots and with a suitcase full of Lily's possessions.
- She was tried at Leeds Assizes and sentenced to death for the murder of Lily Waterhouse, but always maintained her innocence to the end. She did, however, confess to the murder of John Frobisher in 1922 who was found floating in the Leeds – Liverpool canal fully clothed, but minus his boots.

Sydney Beauchamp aka Thomas Price

- Ossett has its fair share of heroes who served in the Great War 1914-1918. Sydney Cecil Buchanan Beauchamp of 33, The Green, Ossett was not one of them.
- He claimed that he fought and was wounded at the Battle of Mons on the 23rd August 1914. Instead he had joined KOYLI on 28th August 1914 and was discharged a month later. It was March 1915 before Ossett discovered he was a fraud, a liar, a thief, a deserter and a bigamist.
- His real name was Thomas Price (aka Prince, Beaucamp & Beauchamp) and he had a thing about aliases. By 1904 he had enlisted and become a Lance Corporal in the army. He lost his stripe in 1905, was jailed for shoplifting in June 1905 and discharged from the army.
- In late 1914, he was undone by his lies about fighting at Mons and in early 1915 proceedings were taken against him when he was called to interview by Ossett's Town Clerk. Sidney (aka Thomas) did a runner, but was subsequently apprehended at Hull.
- In March 1915 he was banged to rights and sentenced by Glamorgan Assizes to 3 years penal servitude at Portland Prison in Dorset where he would break stone. With good behaviour he was out on 1st March 1917 and off to London to work as a joiner. He returned to Wakefield and died there in spring 1919, aged 39 years.
- This then was the life of Thomas Price, alias Thomas Prince, Sidney Cecil Beaucamp and Sydney Cecil Buchanan Beauchamp. Three aliases, three enlistments, three marriages, possibly three children and three years penal servitude.

Sydney Cecil Buchanan Beauchamp



Beauchamp's Ossett residence on The Green



Portland Prison where Beauchamp served time

Are some parts of Ossett ugly?

- It is said that the name “Gawthorpe” is derived from the Viking language and means “Gauk’s Hamlet” and that “Gauk” is the Viking term for an ugly person!
- Several generations of Gawthorpe May Queens probably give lie to this claim, but who knows what the people of Gawthorpe looked like back in Viking times? The Vikings ruled in York in 866 AD and ruled parts of England until 954 AD.



Is Flushdyke an ugly part of Ossett?

- For many years Flushdyke was a self-contained village and popular suburb of Ossett with many local people living there. The sketches and recollections of the late Douglas Brammer remind us that Flushdyke was a good place to live with pubs, a working men's club, lots of shops, chapels, a motor garage, fish and chip shop, a railway station, a Co-op store, a Post Office, several thriving small businesses and, at one time anyway, Ossett's Workhouse.



In recent years Flushdyke has changed dramatically and has become mostly a vast industrial estate spread over many acres with only a few houses now left, but thankfully still with a thriving and successful junior and infants school.

The first thing you see as you approach Flushdyke from the M1 is the Halal Meat Slaughterhouse on Shepherd Hill.

Industrial estate or Ossett suburb?



Flushdyke 1928



Railway Bridge being demolished

Flushdyke Today



Pictures courtesy of Helen Bickerdike

Yorkshire Halal Meat Suppliers Ltd.



Pictures courtesy Rachel Driver