

A Headingley Alphabet

Historical Notes

Ilbert de Lacy played an active part in the Norman Conquest: he fought at the Battle of Hastings, and helped carry out the brutal Harrying of the North afterwards. King William rewarded him with the Barony of Pontefract, where he built a castle [pictured], and with vast tracts of land in Yorkshire, including Headingley.

The **Domesday Book** records Headingley as among the lands of Ilbert de Lacy, in the Skyrack Wapentake in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The entry [pictured, third line up] lists two villagers and one plough team, with an annual value to the lord of four shillings in 1086, formerly two pounds (forty shillings) in 1066. The catastrophic fall in value was due to the Harrying of the North (carried out in part by Ilbert de Lacy himself).

Henry de Lacy, fourth Baron Pontefract (grandson of Ilbert), fell seriously ill, and vowed that if he recovered, he would build an abbey. Recover he did, and in 1152 Henry laid the foundations of **Kirkstall Abbey** [pictured] 'with his own hand'. He endowed the Abbey with lands, later including all of Headingley and its environs. The monks built New Grange to manage the land, and Monk Bridge over Meanwood Beck. The Abbey lost the land with the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539.

Thomas Brudenell (a Catholic, with a relative in the Gunpowder Plot, a Royalist in the Civil War) was made **Earl of Cardigan** in 1661 by Charles II. His grandson Francis inherited the Headingley estates in 1671 (by marriage to Frances Savile, heiress of Robert Savile, who acquired the estates at the Dissolution). Francis' son George, Third Earl, commissioned a map of the estates in 1711. His great-nephew Robert, the Sixth Earl began the disposal of the estates, which enabled the development of Headingley suburb, with the enclosure of Headingley Moor. The Brudenells' tenure of Headingley expired in a blaze of ignominy: Robert's son, James Brudenell, Seventh Earl [pictured], led the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade, and ran up such huge debts that, following his death (in 1868 after a fall from his horse), his lands were steadily sold, culminating in the auction of the remaining Cardigan estate in Headingley in 1888. The family's names are remembered in several Brudenell and Cardigan streets.

The **Victorians** made the suburb of Headingley. The year after the new queen came to the throne, residents opened the first regular bus service in Leeds, thereby establishing Headingley as its *first* suburb. A railway soon followed, and both served the new Zoological & Botanical Gardens – also set up by residents.

The suburb flourished – as Lord Cardigan's lands were sold, villas were built, some hundred listed buildings still, making this the *finest* suburb in town. Meanwhile, terraces also rose, first in stone, then in brick, along new streets; a road and a terrace [pictured] were named after the queen.

Towards the end of Victoria's reign, in the last Cardigan sale, local residents bought fields at the end of North Lane, where they built a stadium – which has become *famous* around the world.

See further, [‘A Headline History of Headingley’](#), and for more detail, Chapter One of Eveleigh Bradford, *Headingley: This Pleasant Rural Village*, Northern Heritage, 2008.