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Entwistle Family History
Association*

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Editorial

I'm delighted to be able to miss out my usual plea for members to send articles or ideas for articles for forthcoming issues of Twissle Times. We do however still want to encourage others to follow the lead of Jim Fleming of New South Wales, Australia.

Jim has sent three articles about his Entwistles from Edgworth (between Darwen and Bolton, Lancashire, England), their lives (and deaths!) and their links to Australia. The first of these articles is included in this current Twissle Times. The rest will follow over the next two issues. See if you recognise any links to your own family. I'm certainly going to do more research on this as my father's ancestors lived in that area. We've also included a quite rare example of the 1801 census, with a list of Edgworth properties and their residents and an extract from a very early OS map of that area. I apologise for its lack of clarity.

Finally, I must add how pleased we are that two younger members have volunteered to be trustees and to take over the roles of Treasurer and Secretary/Membership Secretary. Brian, Tricia and I are relieved and look forward to developments.

Eileen Cowen, Editor

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A TALE OF TWO ENTWISTLES

Poverty, Perseverance and the Price of Progress

In a series of three articles, Jim Fleming chronicles how an Entwistle family of Edgworth was torn apart in the early 19th century by the adverse social impacts of the industrial revolution. Among those caught in this upheaval were two cousins, Harry and Henry Entwistle, whose responses to privation diverged dramatically, yet whose lives ended in equally tragic fashion.

This tale of Harry and Henry Entwistle is a poignant example of the human cost of industrial progress. In our next issue, the second in this series of three articles will show how these events affected Harry's wife Martha, their son William and his wife Ann (nee Yates). Later, the third article will examine the impact on the family of Harry's sister Betty. ¹

Harry Entwistle was born at Edgworth in 1766 to Alice Haslam and William Entwistle, the eldest son of William Entwistle and Sarah Knowles. At age seven, Harry likely attended the wedding of his uncle Edmund to Susanna Rawstorn. Their only child, Henry, born a year later, became Harry's first cousin and, in time, his moral counterpoint.

As a teenager, Harry engaged in petty crime but appeared to reform after marrying Martha Jackson at twenty. Over the next two decades, they had ten children, though three died in infancy. Meanwhile, Henry married Ann Entwistle, and together they raised six children, also losing one in infancy.

Throughout their lives, the sweeping tide of industrialisation transformed Britain's economy and eventually raised living standards. But this came with problems that had devastating consequences for many individuals and families.

In Lancashire, where handloom weaving had long sustained rural families, mechanised urban factories began churning out cloth at lower prices, undermining their traditional livelihoods. By the turn of the 19th century, the industrial revolution's longstanding squeeze on the economics of rural life had gathered steam.

Both Entwistle families strove with skill and perseverance to make a living in competition with factory-made textiles, but it was a losing battle. As prices fell and mouths multiplied, poverty deepened. By 1802, Harry's family were suffering with malnourishment and his infant son Edmund died.



¹ EFHA member 416 Jim Fleming has been researching and writing family history for over forty years. He published *All Our Tracks and Ways* in 2024, about his pioneering ancestors, the Reed family of Staffordshire and Australia. After obtaining an Economics degree from the University of Sydney in 1978, Jim enjoyed a 33-year career with Australian Customs, culminating in several years as a Director. In retirement he lives on Sydney's lower north shore, enjoys travelling and sings baritone in two choirs. Jim is a committee member and historian for the international Clan Fleming Scottish Society and a member of the Society of Australian Genealogists, the Bathurst Family History Group, the Entwistle Family History Association and the Turton Local History Society. Website: www.jimfleming.id.au

In desperation, Harry returned to crime. By the time that his daughter Martha was born in 1804 he was facing prosecution for felony in Preston, but the outcome of this remains unknown.

Over the next five years, Harry recruited several family members into his criminal activities. Both he and his younger brother John were charged with passing forged banknotes in 1809, but artful Harry managed to dodge prosecution. John was convicted and transported to Australia aboard the *Indian*. At this point Harry could have chosen to heed the lesson of John's fate and abandon crime, but the alternative was the wage slavery that his cousin Henry continued to endure.

Charged with breaking and entering in 1810, Harry managed to again slip free from the law's clutches. Three years later, however, he was caught along with his son William, brother Joseph, and nephew James. All were convicted of larceny and sentenced to transportation.

William was soon shipped to Australia aboard the *Indefatigable* but, while the others waited aboard prison hulks for their passage, Joseph died in the hospital of the hulk *Captivity*.



Around the same time, Harry's brother John, after just four years as a convict in Australia, tragically drowned in Hobart's Derwent River.

Henry Entwistle, by contrast, was steadfastly committed to honest labour, despite the relentless struggle to make ends meet. In the winter of 1816, his family's adversity was compounded by calamity.

A week before Christmas, there was no money and little food in the house. He worked at his loom all day Friday and continued throughout the freezing night, the whole time without eating.

The next day, he trudged the seven cold miles to Blackburn to sell his piece goods. With payment in hand, he began the return journey, but his emaciated body and empty stomach could not muster the energy required to match his determination, so he was forced to rest after just a couple of miles. When his wife Ann later arrived with help, she found him collapsed and lifeless by the roadside. He was just 42.



<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000081/18161227/011/0006>

MELANCHOLY BUT TRUE STATEMENTS,
Illustrative of the Times; and addressed to the Affluent.

Henry Entwistle, Weaver, of Edgeworth, whose family had been some days starving, worked all night of Friday night last, to get his piece out; this he did without having any thing to eat, and on Saturday he took it home to Blackburn; when returning in the evening, with a neighbouring woman, who had also been taking her work to Blackburn, they had got within 5 miles of home, when the man grew so faint that he could not proceed any further, but sat him down on the hedge side, and begged of his companion to make the best of her way home, and to inform his wife and family of his condition; she did so, and when his wife and friends arrived at the spot, he was **QUITE DEAD**; he has left a large family.

Even in Dickensian Britain, the circumstances of Henry's death sent shockwaves throughout the country, with newspapers nationwide reporting the tragedy. Yet the churchwardens of Haslingden showed little compassion. They secured an order to deport his widow, along with their five children, to her native village of Edgworth.

The sad tidings of his cousin's death may have reached Harry, now in the third year of his prison hulk incarceration during a fruitless wait for a ship to Australia. Amid public outcry over such lengthy confinement in very unhealthy conditions, he and his son and nephew were among many prisoners released on parole in 1817.

Henry's tragic end may have steeled his cousin's determination to avoid dying in poverty. Undeterred, he returned to a life of crime, only to be arrested again in 1818. This time, a long record of offenses sealed his fate. On 17 April 1819, Harry Entwistle was hanged at Lancaster Castle and buried in an unmarked grave. He was 53 years old.



Seven years later the widow of his cousin Henry, Ann Entwistle, was convicted for her involvement in the machine-breaking riots that erupted in Helmsore and Chatterton; acts of desperation and defiance born of the social dislocation wrought by industrialisation.



For this, she was transported to Australia aboard the *Harmony*. She would marry John Butcher in 1830 and Richard Broking (or Burkin) in 1838 before her death at Parramatta in 1868.

Further reading

William Turner. 'Riot! The Story of the East Lancashire Loom-Breakers in 1826'. Lancashire County Books, Preston, 1992

[Jim Fleming, member 416]



1805-1845 OS MAP OF EDGWORTH