
Some historical facts about local quarries

- 1847 there were 15 quarries in the Settle area, 10 of which were limestone.
- From the 16th century Limestone was heated to make lime mortar and burned with coal to make slaked lime, quick lime and lime wash.
- Sandstone quarries were used for building stone - window frames and carved door-heads.
- In 1789 Rev John Hutton found the fine Blue Slate from Arcow – 1-3 inches thick 2 to 3 yards broad and 5 or 6 yards long which was used for floors, gate posts and foot bridges.
- In 1870 railways were built to provide outlet for lime working.
- In 1873 Craven Quarry was the first commercial lime burning quarry in Ribblesdale.
- In 1888 Horton Lime Works was developed to exploit the gritstone (greywacke) known locally as granite and limestone.
- Coal for lime burning came from Penyghent.
- Lime workers had no paid holidays until after WWII when they had 3 days per year. By 1975 they had a month paid holiday.
- Men would earn £6 per week and work from 5:30 am to 14:00 in afternoon and on Saturdays they would start at 4:00 am so they could watch football in the afternoon.
- There were many different lime kilns. The Hoffmann Kiln at Langcliffe was closed in 1939.
- 1980 Tarmac bought out ICI and managed quarries at Dry Rigg, Arcow and Horton.
- In 2007 Tarmac joined with Lafarge and had to sell Horton to Hanson because the combined company had too many quarries.
- Rocks and lime products were originally moved by horses and carts, later by lorries.
- In 1920 an aerial ropeway was built to carry rock from Giggleswick Limeworks to Giggleswick station.
- In 2016 rail links were re-established at Arcow to transport rock for road building.
- Rock is now quarried and crushed into aggregate and has many uses.
- Greywacke from Tarmac's Dry Rigg and Arcow Quarries provide high quality roadstone.
- Limestone from Horton Quarry is used roads and buildings.
- Mechanisation has reduced the quarry workforce significantly.



Ingleborough Dales quarrying during WWI

The Land Fertility Scheme

In 1937 the new Land Fertility Scheme provided a subsidy of 50% of the purchase price of lime for farmers willing to take up liming to boost the output in both quality and quantity of food production. The demand for food increased during the war.

Impact of the war on the quarrying

1. During the war there was a shortage of quarry workers.
2. A large number of quarry workers were conscripted into the Royal Airforce.
3. Even after the war when servicemen returned home the shortage remained.
4. German and Italian Prisoners of War were used to work in the quarries. These prisoners continued after the war and were then replaced by Poles.
5. In 1938 it was reported that not a single Craven quarry had been able to complete its outstanding orders for agricultural lime because 90% of Craven's farmers took up the subsidy.
6. In the late 1930s the boom in agricultural lime and steel markets led to a significant growth at Horton Quarry.
7. In 1939 a new hydrating plant and an agricultural ground limestone plant were installed.
8. In 1943-44 machines replaced the manual Breakers and Fillers.
9. One blast in 1941 released 120,000 tonnes from the hillside above Horton. Rails were laid within the quarry to bring the stone out.
10. Lime was sent to steel works and onto the fields to help produce food.
11. In 1942 a further 50,000 tonnes was blasted from the rock face.
12. In November 1940 Ellis Read was killed by falling rock at Horton Quarry.
13. A quarry worker, A Bentham, was reported missing in June 1942 and officially reported killed in action on the 19 September.
14. The Spencer Kilns at Langcliffe Quarry were demolished and pieces sold in 1942. Steel was sold for scrap raising £161, while the firebrick lining fetched £210.
15. In 1939 a new plant at Foredale Quarry was installed to produce ground agricultural limestone, the demand for which was soaring as a result of the introduction of Government subsidies.
16. In the 1940s 14 men worked at the quarry itself mainly at the quarry face.
17. A locomotive had replaced the ponies inside the quarries.
18. Ribbleshead Quarry had been abandoned in 1907 but was resurrected in 1943 with new machinery to produce pulverised agricultural limestone.

