

A JOURNEY FROM WEST TO EAST VISITING EIGHTEEN FUSTIAN WORKPLACES FROM STATHAM TO AGDEN.



Need clearer map or possibly even separate print on A3 laminated sheet.

COTTAGES, ATTICS AND WORKSHOPS

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COTTAGES, ATTICS AND WORKSHOPS

There is little remaining evidence today of the scale of the fustian trade in Lymm during the Victorian era. Church Road and Arley Grove are the only remaining three storey terraces.

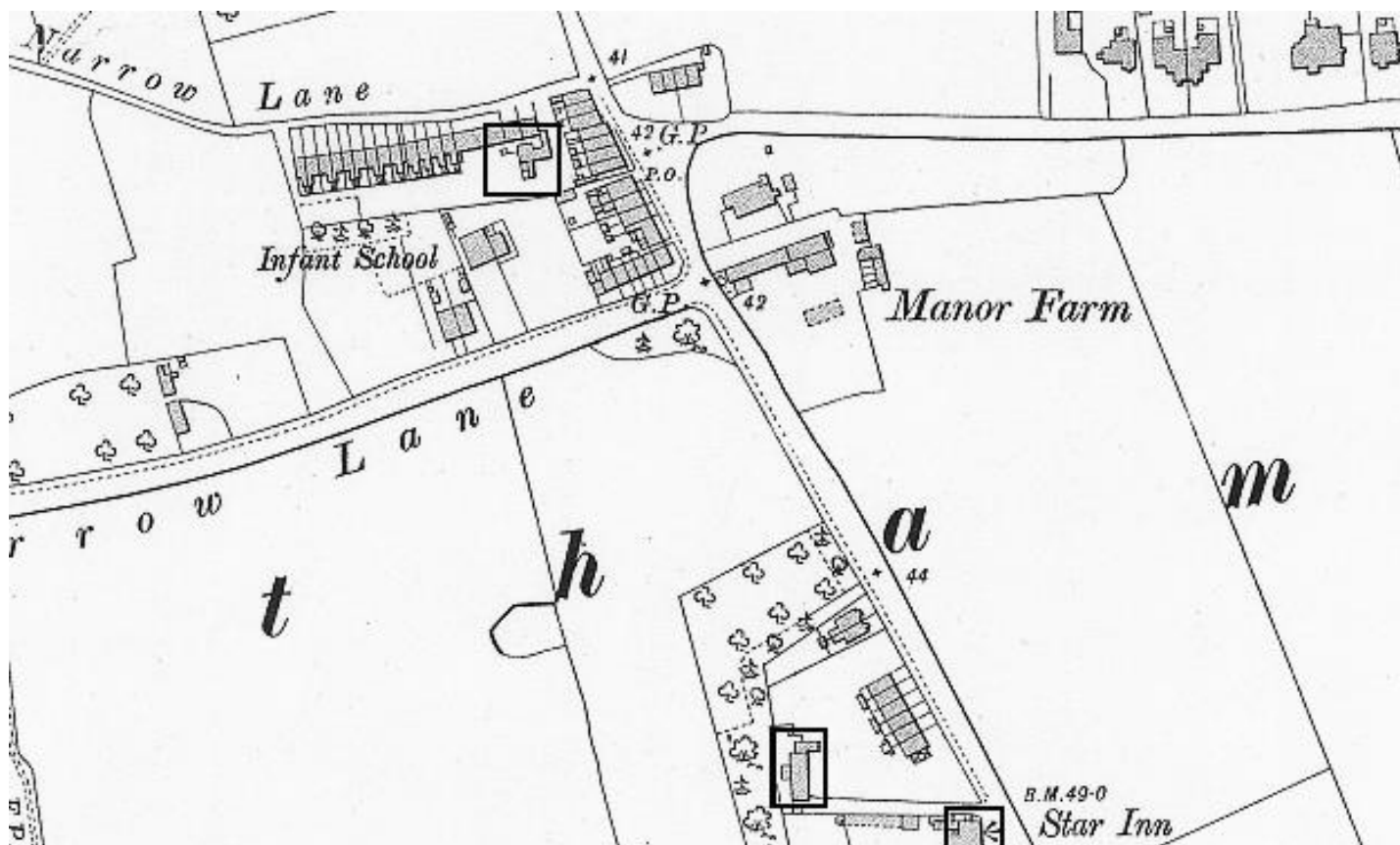
In the early days, up to the 1840s, work would often have been done in homes on shorter five or six foot frames. As early as 1841 there were 120+ cutters in Lymm. As the trade grew so did the number of purpose built workshops.

Some of these were open plan attics in three storey terraces. Others were two storey “factories” like the one still standing at West Hyde.

These workplaces were dirty and dusty, On a sunny day they were well lit but on dark nights they relied on the cutters’ candles for light. The cutters even had to pay for the coal on the fire.

At the trade’s peak in the second half of the nineteenth century there were at least thirty workshops employing 600+ people The largest held 50+ people.

On our west to east tour you will see images and stories of around eighteen of the original workshops.



1. NARROW LANE— STATHAM

Appleton's fustian workshop is marked at the top of this map. It was surrounded then by cottages where many of the cutters lived. The layout has changed significantly with Manor Farm having been demolished to turn Whitbarrow Road into a straight thoroughfare.

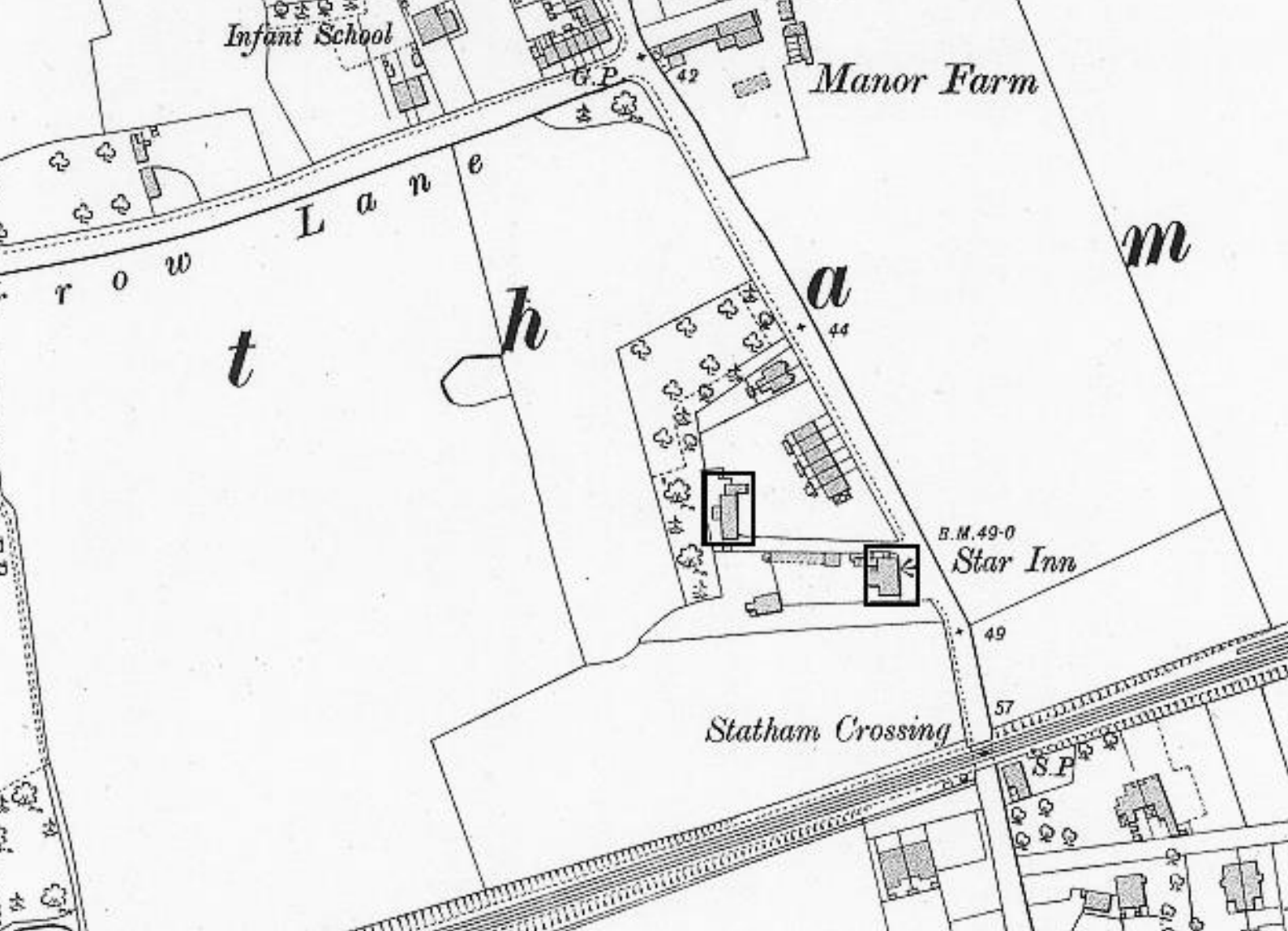
Other members of the Appleton family also had the small grocer's shop on Star Lane (marked P.O. on the map) where many of the cutters would have spent their hard earned wages.



This photograph of a group of fustian cutters shows the workers at the workshop on Narrow Lane, Statham where Oldfield Road now stands. In 1862 all but two of fustian master Samuel Appleton's employees were under 18 and two had been bound apprentices at the age of 9. Perhaps the women in this photograph from around 1902 include some of them. The Appletons were still listed as fustian masters in the Trade Directory in 1901. The man in this photograph was Thomas Blane, from Runcorn who lodged with the family and married one of the daughters.



The white wall is part of the original Statham school—still standing on Warrington Road.



2 STAR LANE, STATHAM

The Star Inn was the site of one of at least three cutting shops in Statham . It was well placed with the canal only 300 yards away.

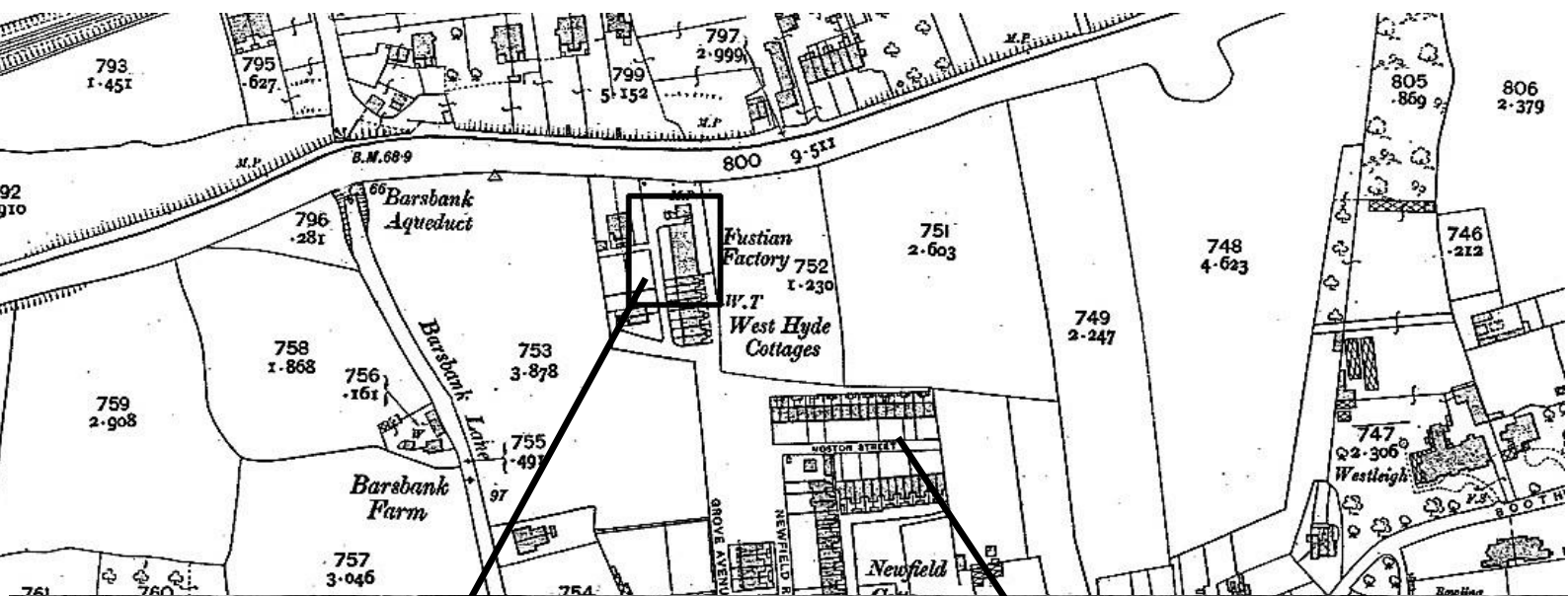
There was another workshop just behind the Star that was run by Richard Leather. It employed 28 people in 1871 including four of his own children. We have no photograph of that building but would welcome one.



It was not uncommon to manage a fustian workshop as a side line to another trade.

Mr Guest who ran the workshop above the Star inn Statham also became the landlord having started out as a lodger.

When this photograph was taken, a little later, Frederick Lockyer was the landlord.



3 WEST HYDE

This workshop is similar to one on Fletcher's Lane in that it was wholly given over to the trade rather than also including living space. It is perfectly located at canalside.

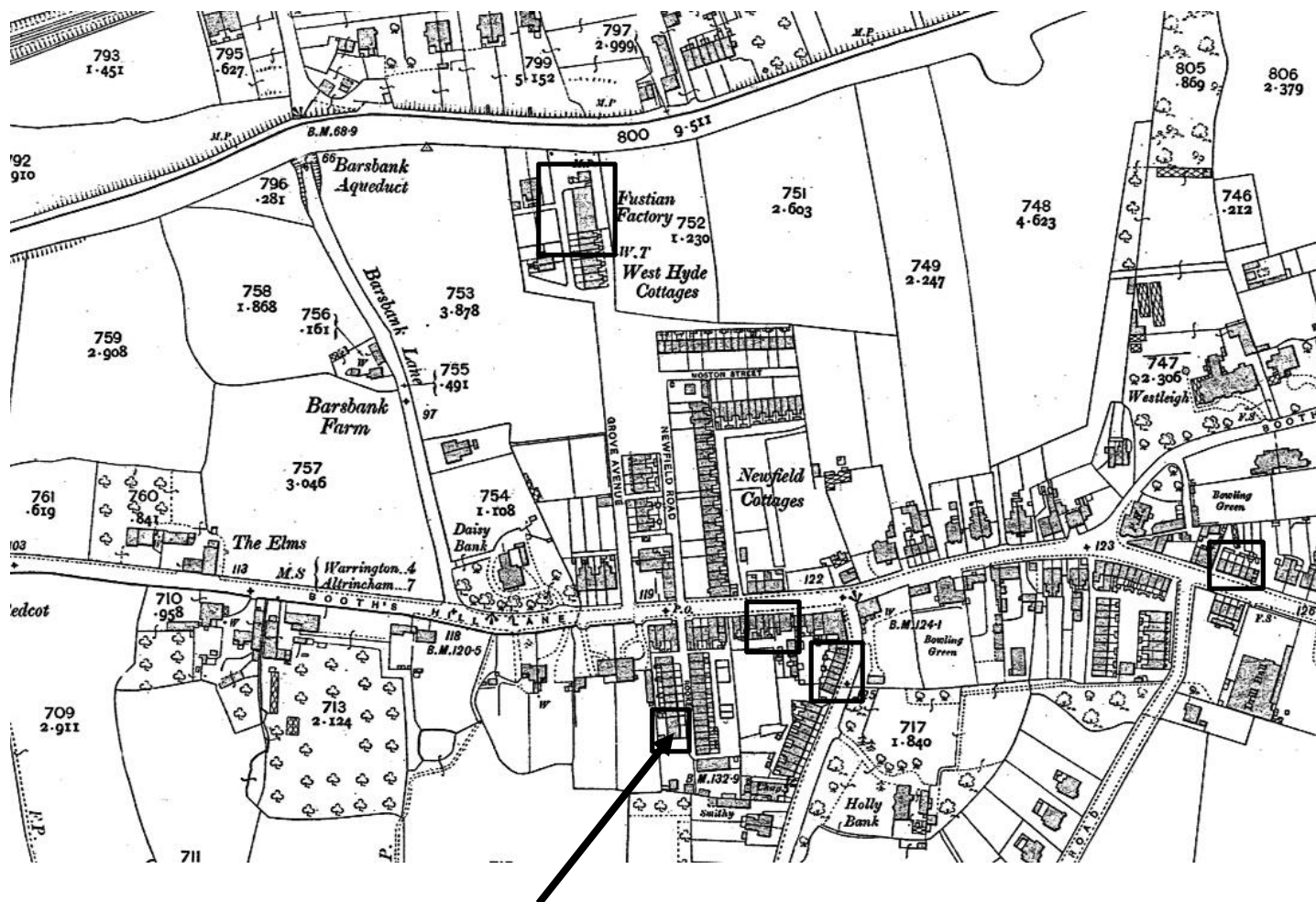
The terrace of Moston St, built in the 1860s was once home to many fustian cutters.

Demolished 1980s.



In the early twentieth century Sarah Jane Smith b1888 was apprenticed with three of her sisters. They attended school part time. Her father was foreman cutter. He supervised the work of sixty making it possibly the largest workshop in the village. He was also responsible for knife sharpening and for checking and packing work to go to Manchester for dying. The proprietor was Mr Frederic Orlando Moston who was a prominent member of the New Road Wesleyan Methodists.

Source Lymm & District History Society booklet



4 CLAY TERRACE

(AKA ROOKERY)

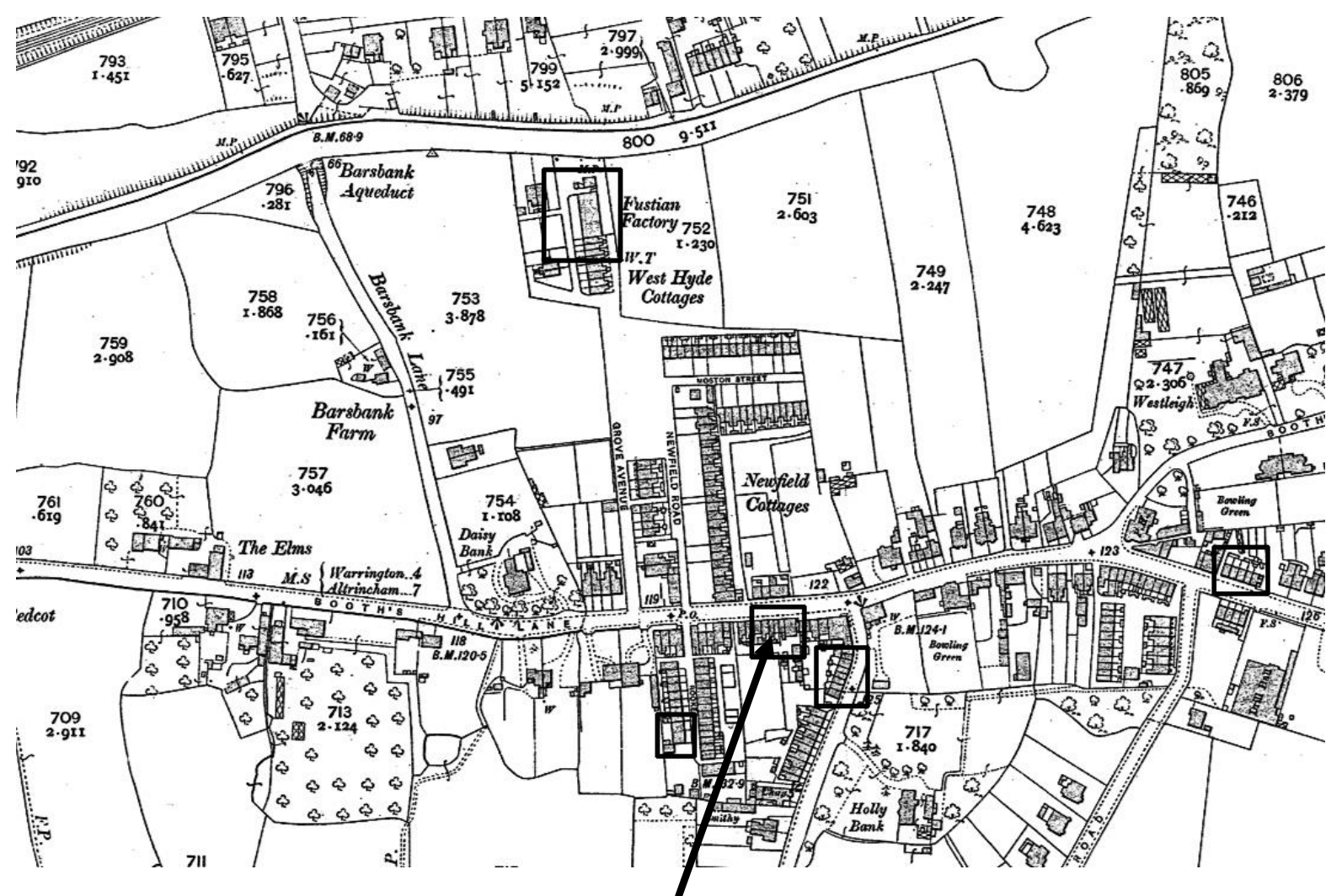
was off Booths Hill Road opposite Newfield Road. It was built in the 1860s along with Newfield Road and Moston Street to house the fast growing population. The 1871 census shows 37 households with 76 people employed as fustian cutters. The road was also known as "Rookery". (It is marked as that on the map above.) This slang term referred to densely populated slum areas in cities in the 19th century.



Mrs Leigh recalls there was a single storey cutting shop on this close, "Clay Terrace" off Booths Hill Road. It had originally been owned by her grandfather but when she worked there it belonged to her uncle, Mr Daniels.



At one time there was also an abbatoir on this close of houses which was demolished in the early 1960s.

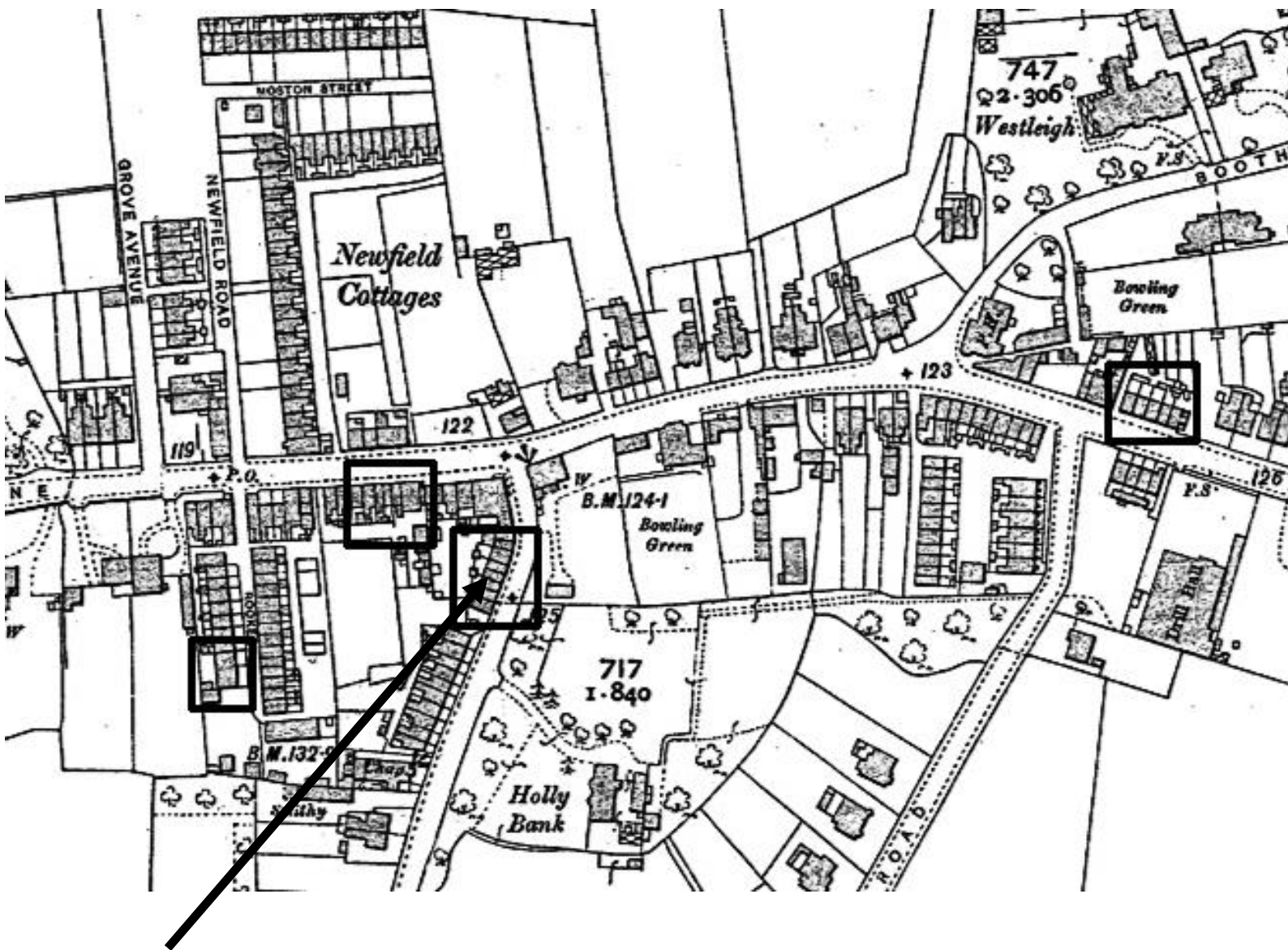


5 BOOTHS HILL LANE (NOW "ROAD")

This area along what is now Booths Hill Road saw a rapid development in the 1860s as a direct result of the fustian cutting trade. Newfield Road, Moston St and Clay Terrace were all built at this time. "Top Lane" as it is known by locals had over thirty shops at one time. Retirement apartments now stand on the site of these workshops.



The way in which the upper floor windows do not correspond to the cottages below is the clearest indication that there were fustian workshops in these premises on Booths Hill Rd. It also possible to see the outside steps. The cottages below the workshops were not always cutters' homes. The 1861 census lists some of the occupants of this block as farmers. Ten years later the same people had become cutters!



6 CHERRY LANE

Next time you park outside the Co-op on Cherry Lane pause for a moment and try to imagine the three storey workshops and cottages that would have dominated the road. It's where many people spent most of their lives eking out a living cutting fustian cloth twelve hours a day or more.

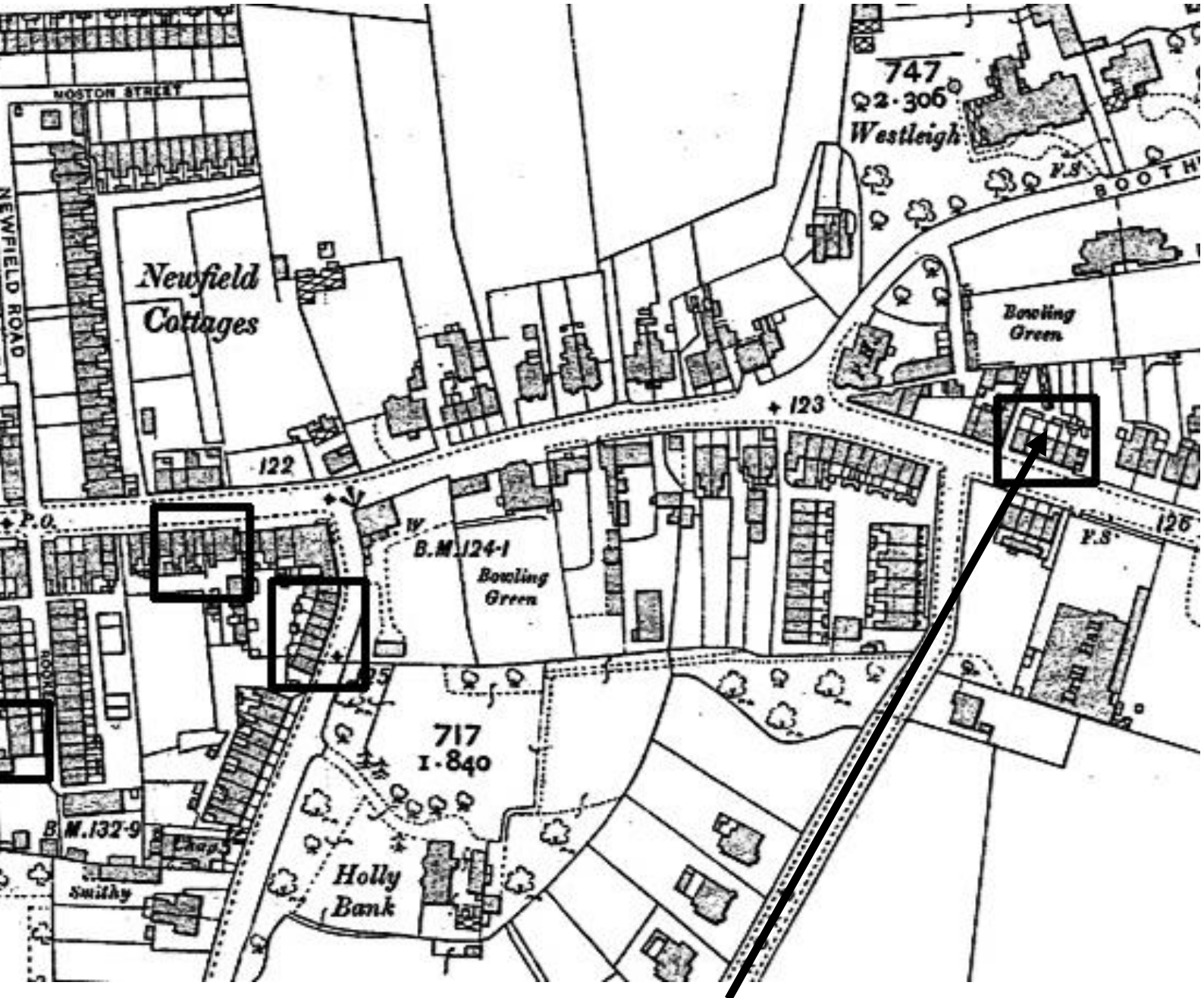


These premises on Cherry Lane are the traditional three storey design with the open plan workshops across the top. Notice how the top windows do not tie in to the cottages below them.



Access to three storey workshops was typically via an outside staircase but also sometimes via a trap door in the ceiling of the cottages.

These, now demolished, belonged to Mr Cowper who also had premises on Fletchers Lane.



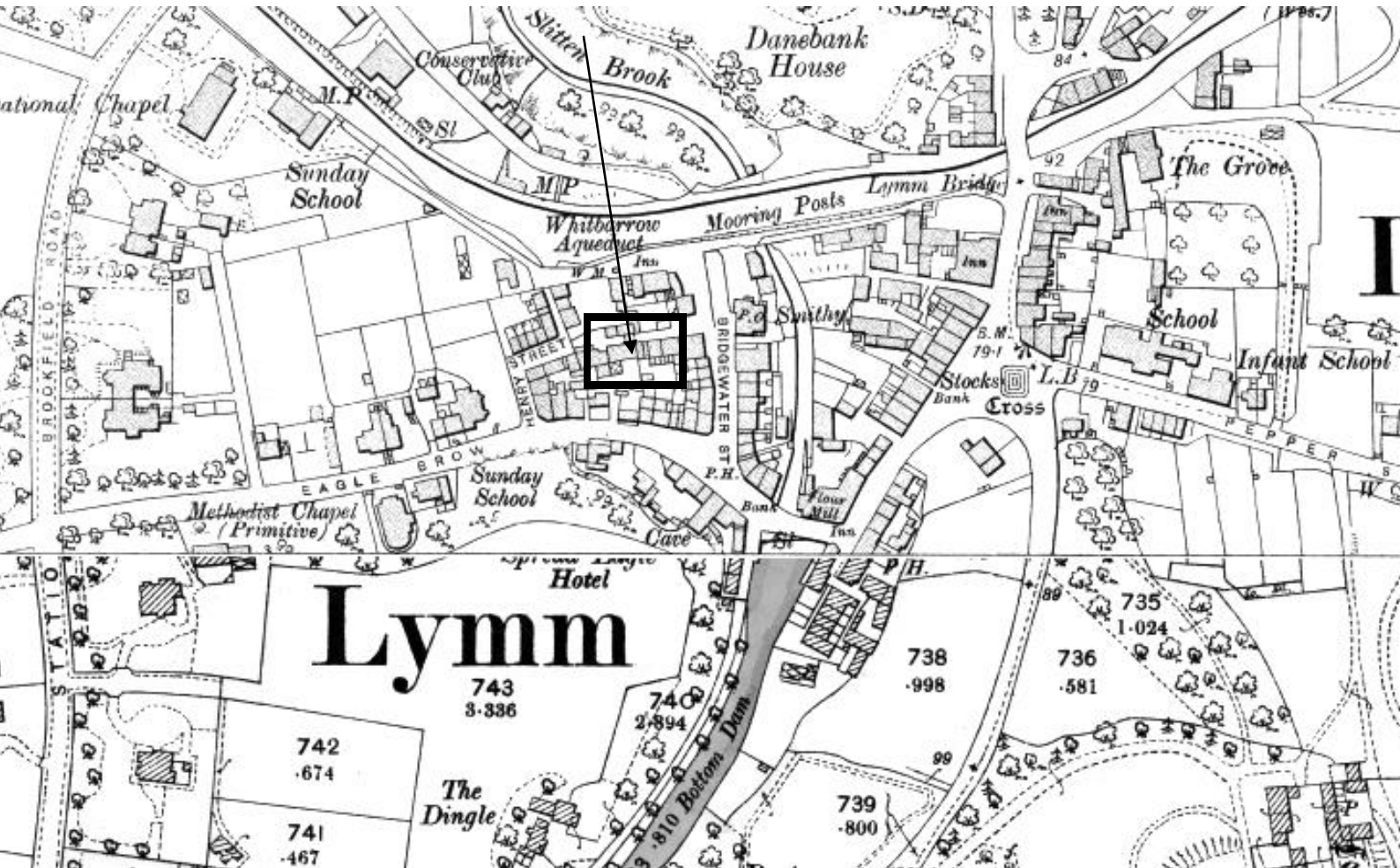
7 CHURCH RD

This Grade 2 listed terrace of cottages is now a well known local landmark. At one time Lymm had thirty workshops. Exactly who financed their building is a mystery still to be solved but we do know that at one time this block was owned by locally based cotton baron George Dewhurst. But then he did own well over half of the village!



This block on Church Road is the best remaining example of a fustian terrace with the outside staircase giving access to the large open workshop across the top of all five cottages.

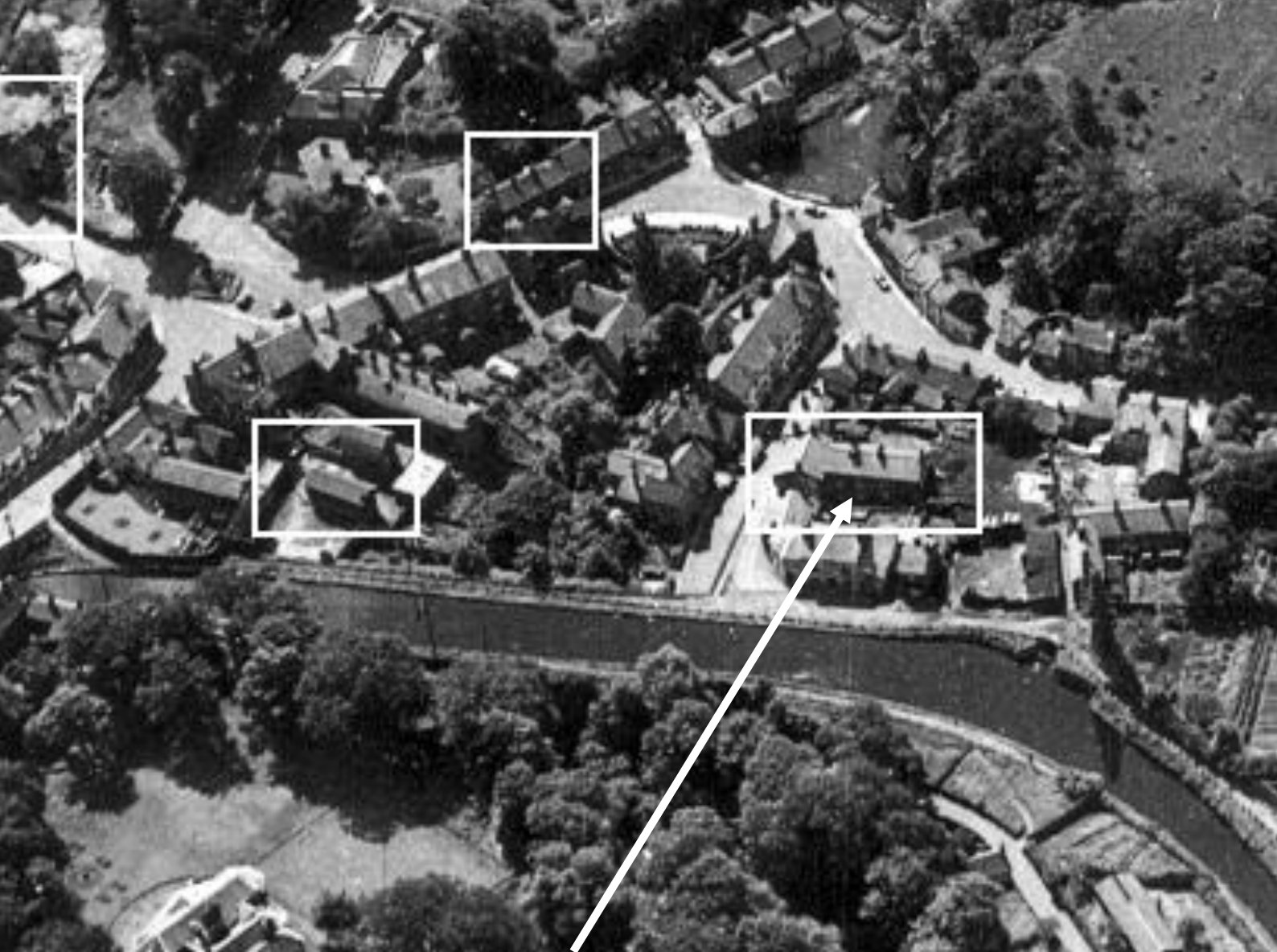
Mr Moston, the master cutter, ran the business in 1871. His cottage—on the right was a little wider than the others. A few years ago when the open area was finally partitioned some of the floorboards were seen to be “cupped” as a result of the endless walking to and fro along the frames.



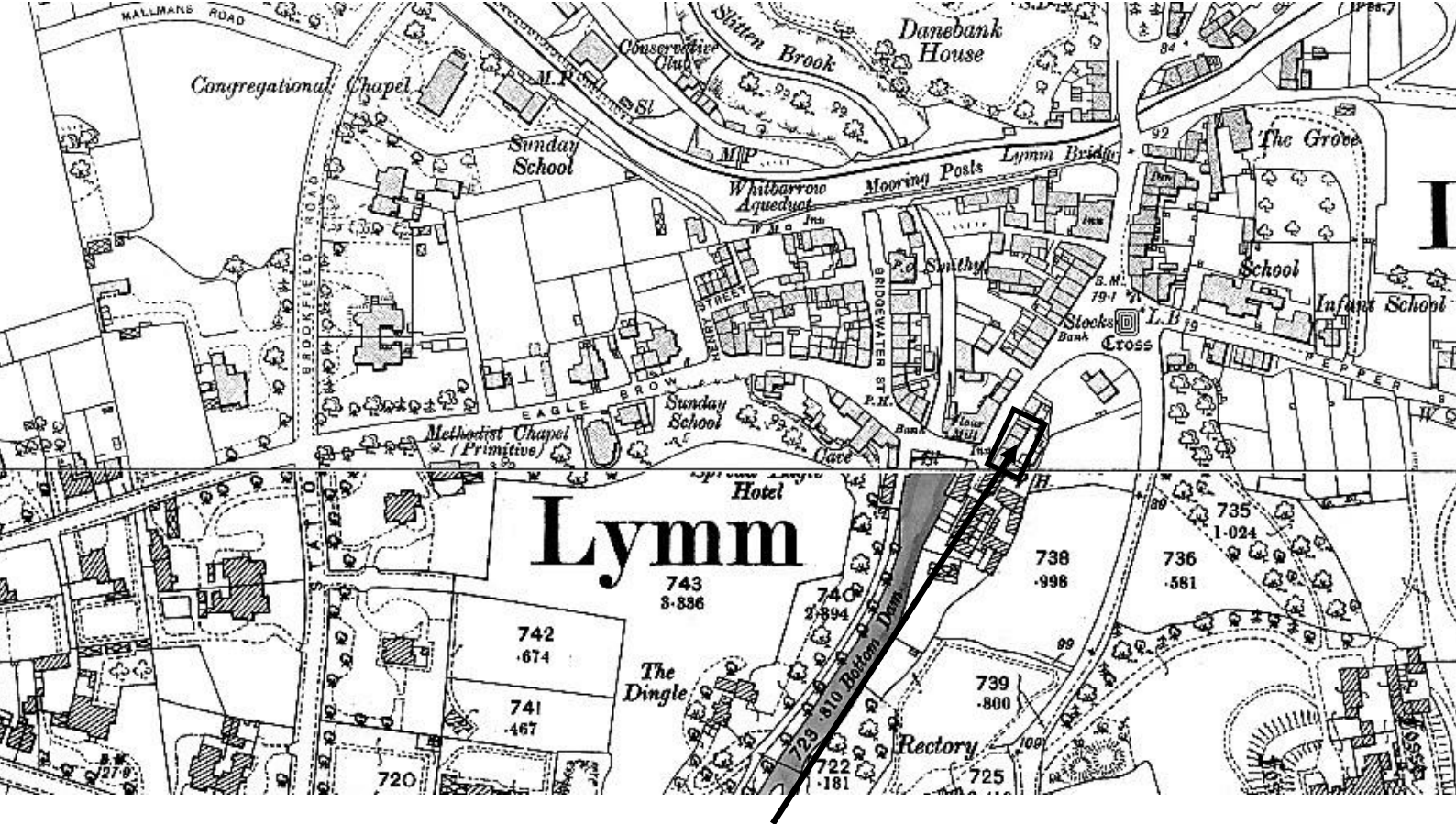
8 LEGH ST

OFF BRIDGEWATER ST.

Bear in mind that these cottages on Legh St are being viewed across the canal from North to South in the photograph on the right.



This grainy aerial shot taken in the early fifties is the only picture we have of the short terrace of cottages on Legh St that housed fustian workshops in what were also cottage homes. They were well located, being so close to the canal. We would love a better photograph of this row, if only because these cottages stood on the site of what is now Lymm Heritage Centre. One of the cottages was also home at one time to a boatman and his family, the Guests.



9 VILLAGE CENTRE

At the turn of the twentieth century the village centre was not quite as dominated by shops as one might have imagined.

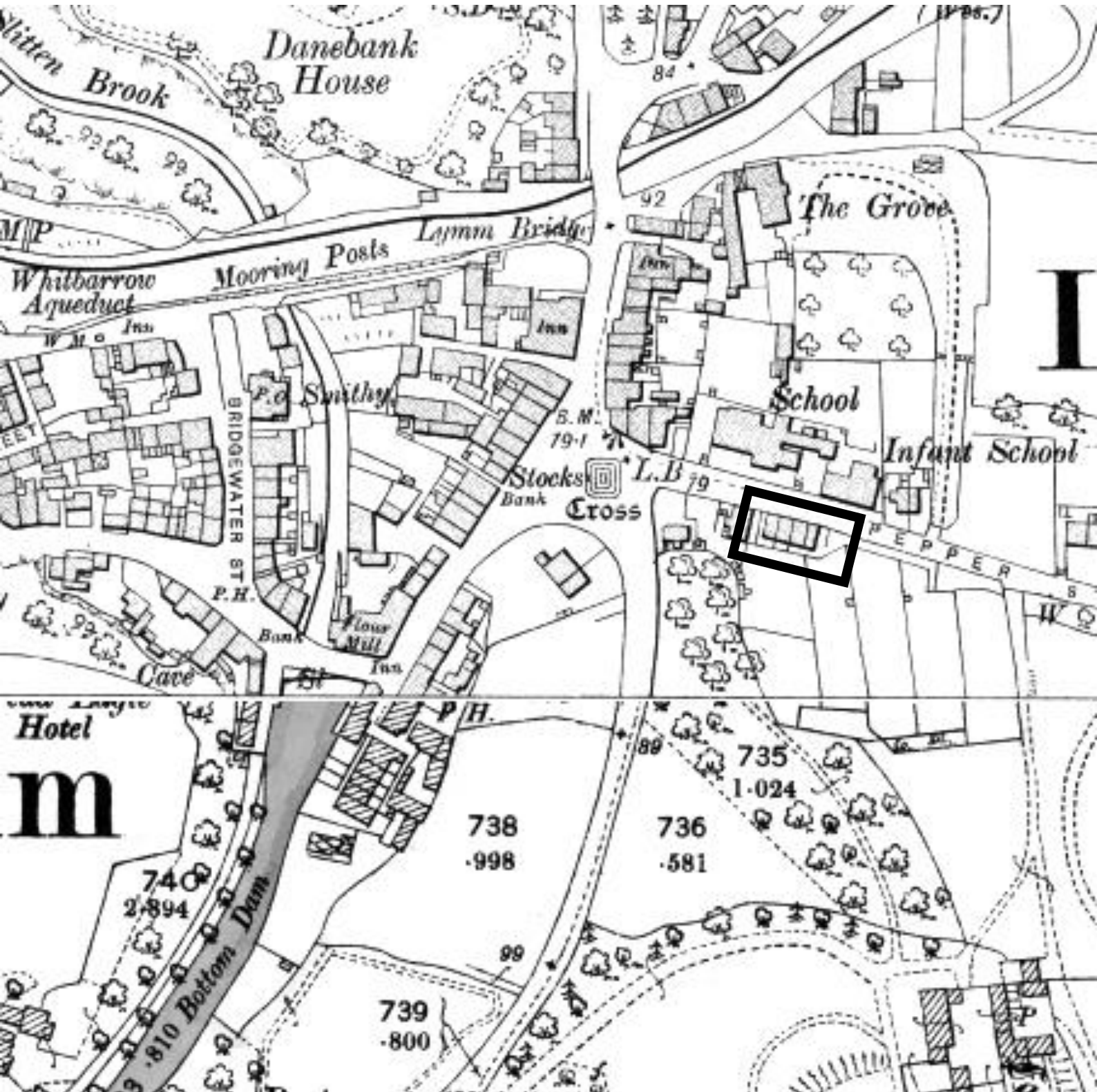


Opposite the cottages was the smithy and just round the corner, was the corn mill, served the lower dam. (pictured above) Many shops were dispersed around the neighbourhood with a local grocer sometimes just serving a handful of streets.



When rolls had been completed and passed by the foreman they were taken by horse and cart to the wharf at Lymm and from there by boat back to Manchester for dying.

The cottages on the right looking up toward the cross have some of the characteristics of fustian workshops but we cannot be certain without more evidence. The matching top storey windows suggest that if they *were* cutting workshops access may well have been from inside.



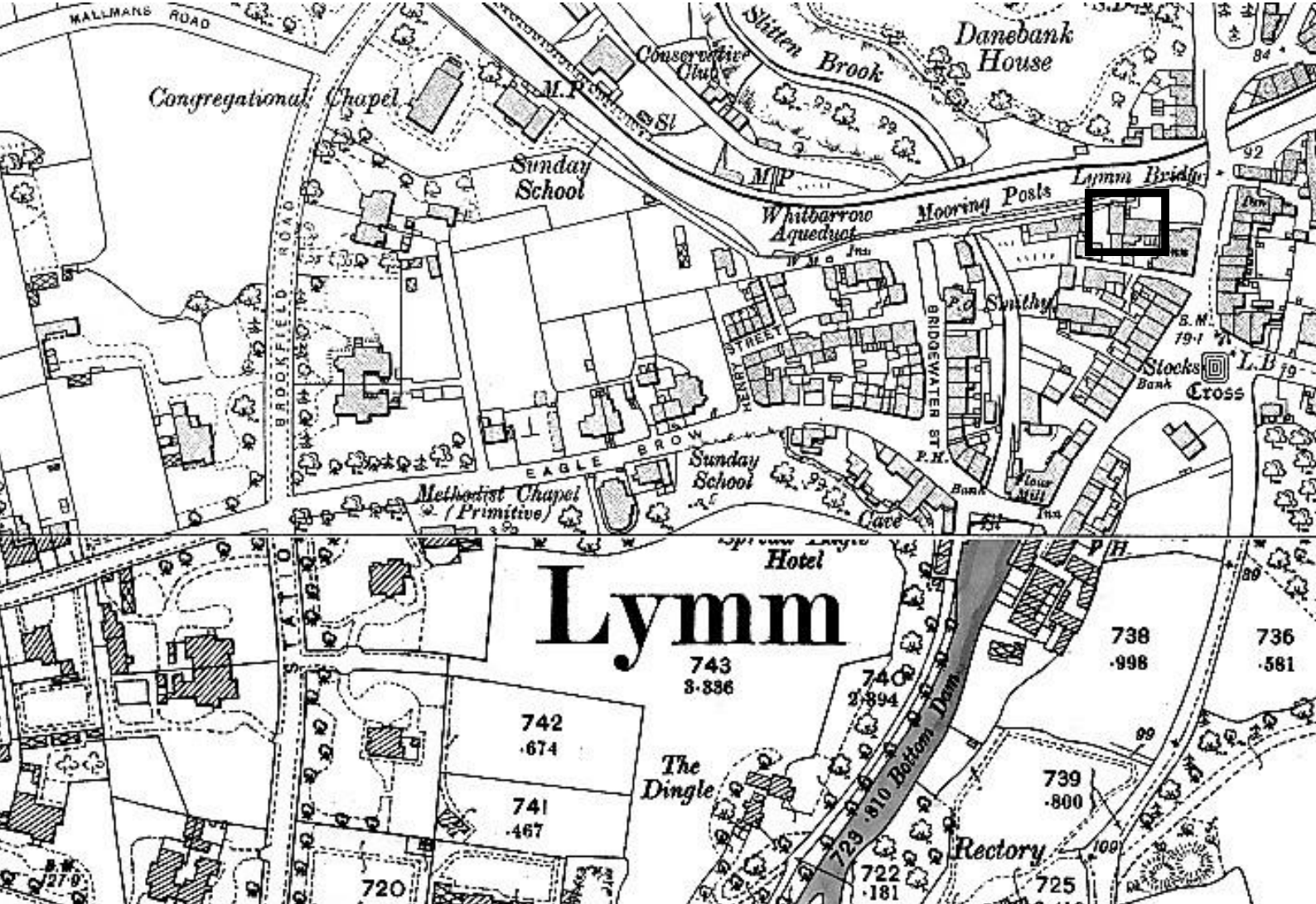
10 PEPPER STREET

The street name suggests a Roman connection. Prior to the building of the turnpike road (The A56 past the dam) this was part of the main route from Altrincham to Warrington.



Photo provided by Lymm & District History Society

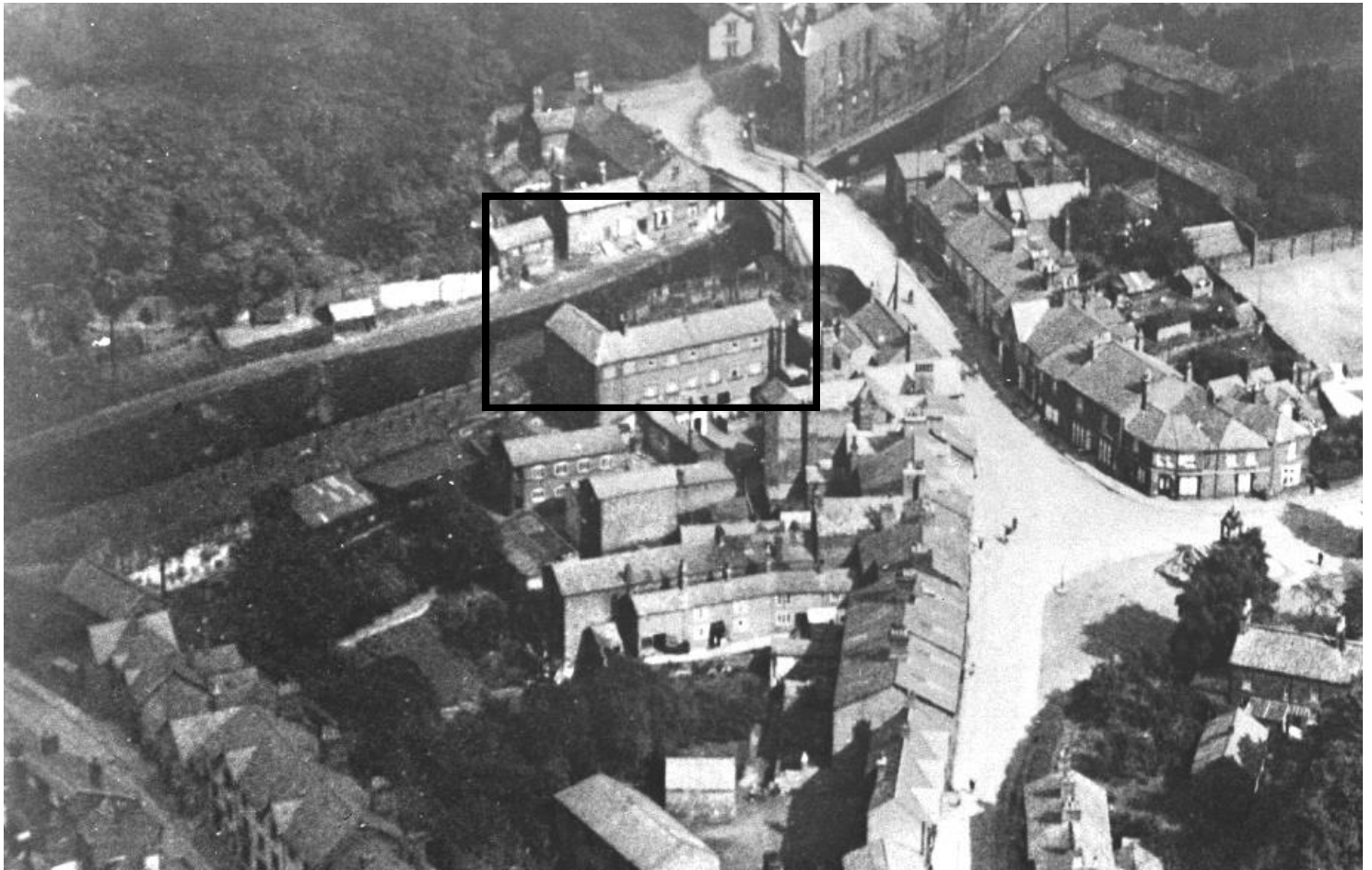
In 1861 Mary Holt, 44, widow, employed 50+ men, women and children in her workshops on Pepper St, almost certainly including the ones above. Her own sons worked at the nearby canal warehouse. Mrs Holt was proud of her enlightened approach and encouraged families to work together as well as giving three meal breaks during a typical 13 hour day. The Holts continued to run their business into the 20th century under son James.



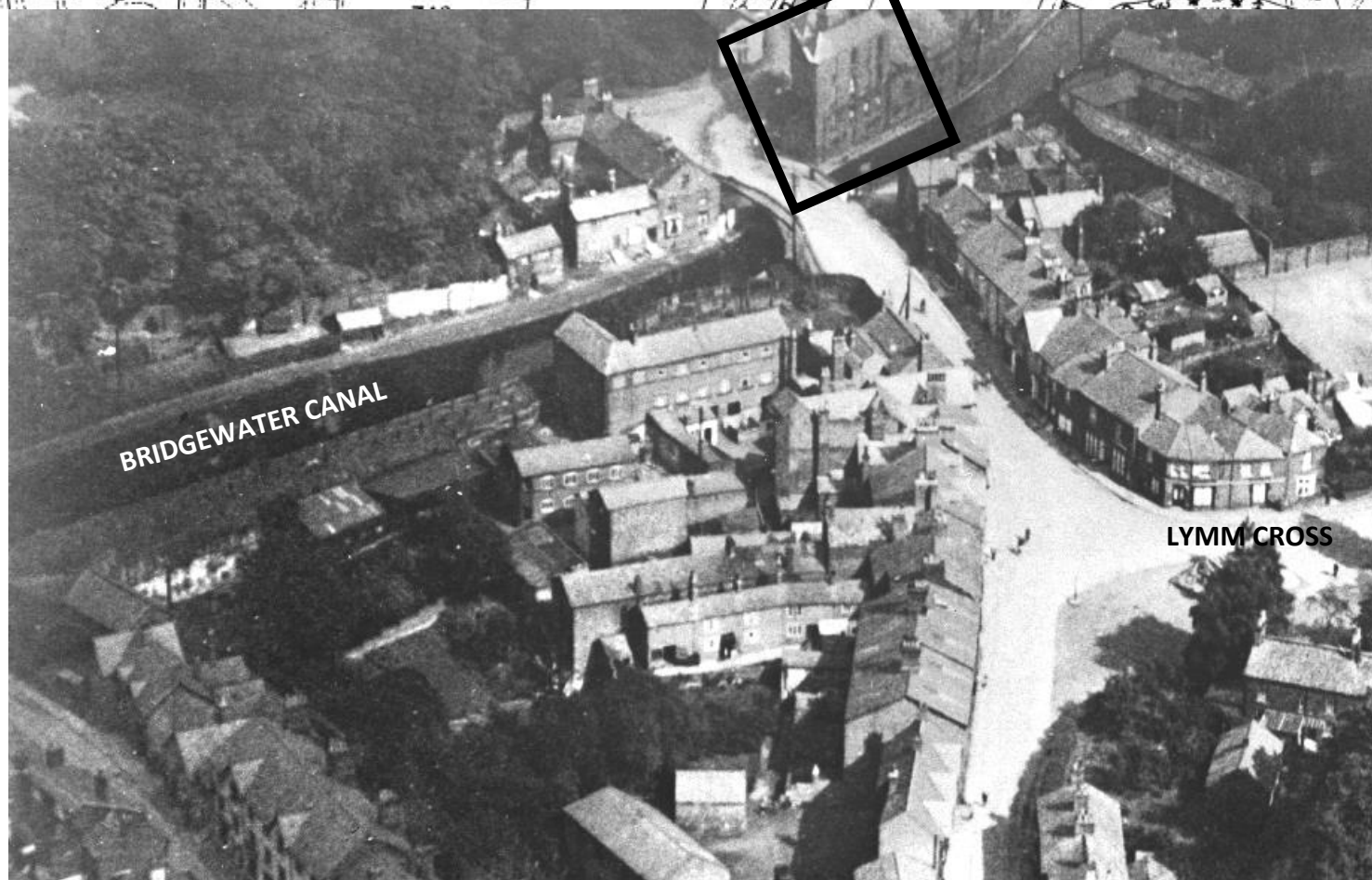
11 THE CROSS

REAR OF THE FLEECE.

Yet another workshop that may well have been purpose built in order to take full advantage of the proximity of the canal. In 1862 Samuel Butterworth testified to the government inspectors that cutters at all workshops, including his mother's could be "crippled for life". He stated "If some bill doesn't pass all will suffer".

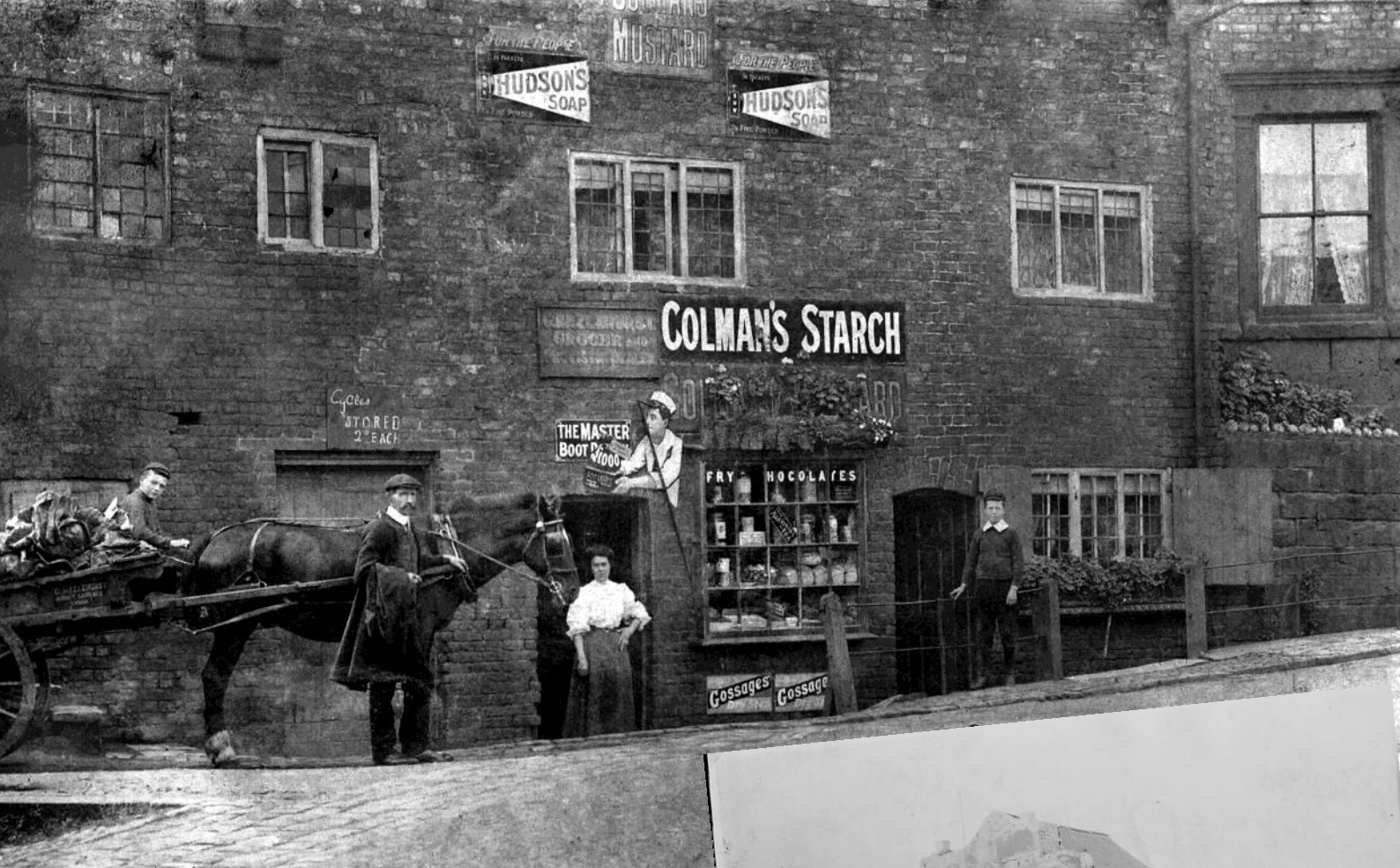


In 1874 when the “Fleece Inn”, as the Golden Fleece was then known, went up for sale the property included a range of outbuildings. Among them were what was described as “extensive premises at the rear of the Inn now used as fustian cutting shops and in the several occupations of Mrs Woodhead and Mrs Butterworth as yearly tenants at the annual rent of £26.” The workshops were in the three-storey L shaped block in the centre of the picture



12 NEW ROAD

Haslehursts occupied what is now an empty site next to the canal.



By the beginning of the twentieth century these premises had a small shop, possibly catering mainly for the boatmen who passed close by on the towpath. But the 1871 census shows the Haslehursts of New Road to be fustian cutters.



An old aerial photograph of the building shows that unusually it was originally four storeys, making it probably unique in Lymm.

It is very likely that the next building along in New Road was also a fustian workshop.



13 FLETCHERS LANE, RUSH GREEN

The map clearly shows a footpath down to the workshop from the canal bank where cloth could have been dropped off and collected. This map from 1872 shows many other innovations in what was a fast changing village. Lymm Gas works opened in 1862. The railway had opened in 1853.

Letter boxes were another recent innovation.



This “shop” in Fletchers Lane (belonging to Mr Cowper) was a two-storey brick built one. The upper storey was used for short frame work (5ft) and the ground floor for long frame (18ft).

Mary Read (later Seymour) started work in 1894 at the age of 11. Conditions were still very poor. Mary stood on a raised plank to reach her work and earned just 5s a week at first. The air was full of fluff and lime and after dark cutters worked by candlelight. Babies, kept under the frames, went home covered in dust.

Sandy Lane Map

14 SANDY LANE

According to the 1861 census there were around fifty men, women and children living on Sandy Lane who made their living from fustian cutting; this at a time when there were possibly twenty cottages at most either on or next to Sandy Lane itself.



This row of seven cottages—numbers 30 to 44 was originally three storey and were probably all occupied by fustian cutters.

We know for certain that Fustian Master Isaac Thomason lived at No 40 with wife Jane at the end of the 19th century. His grandson, Denis, who is at least fifth generation still lives just a couple of hundred yards away. Denis recalls as a child seeing the outside staircase up to the workshops.





15 OUGHTRINGTON LANE

As well as being next to the canal this terrace of cottages with top floor workshop had the added advantage of being opposite the Dog Inn—complete with bowling green. The closure of the pub seems to have coincided with the decline of the fustian trade.



The three storey cottages shown here were next to what was known locally as "Dog Bridge" - now Lloyds

Bridge. There were more workshops further along Sandy Lane.



The boatman would sound a bugle as he was leaving Burford Lane warehouse so that by the time he arrived at the drop off point there may be a small crowd with wheelbarrows or carts waiting for the consignment. The cottages are still there but have had their top storey removed.



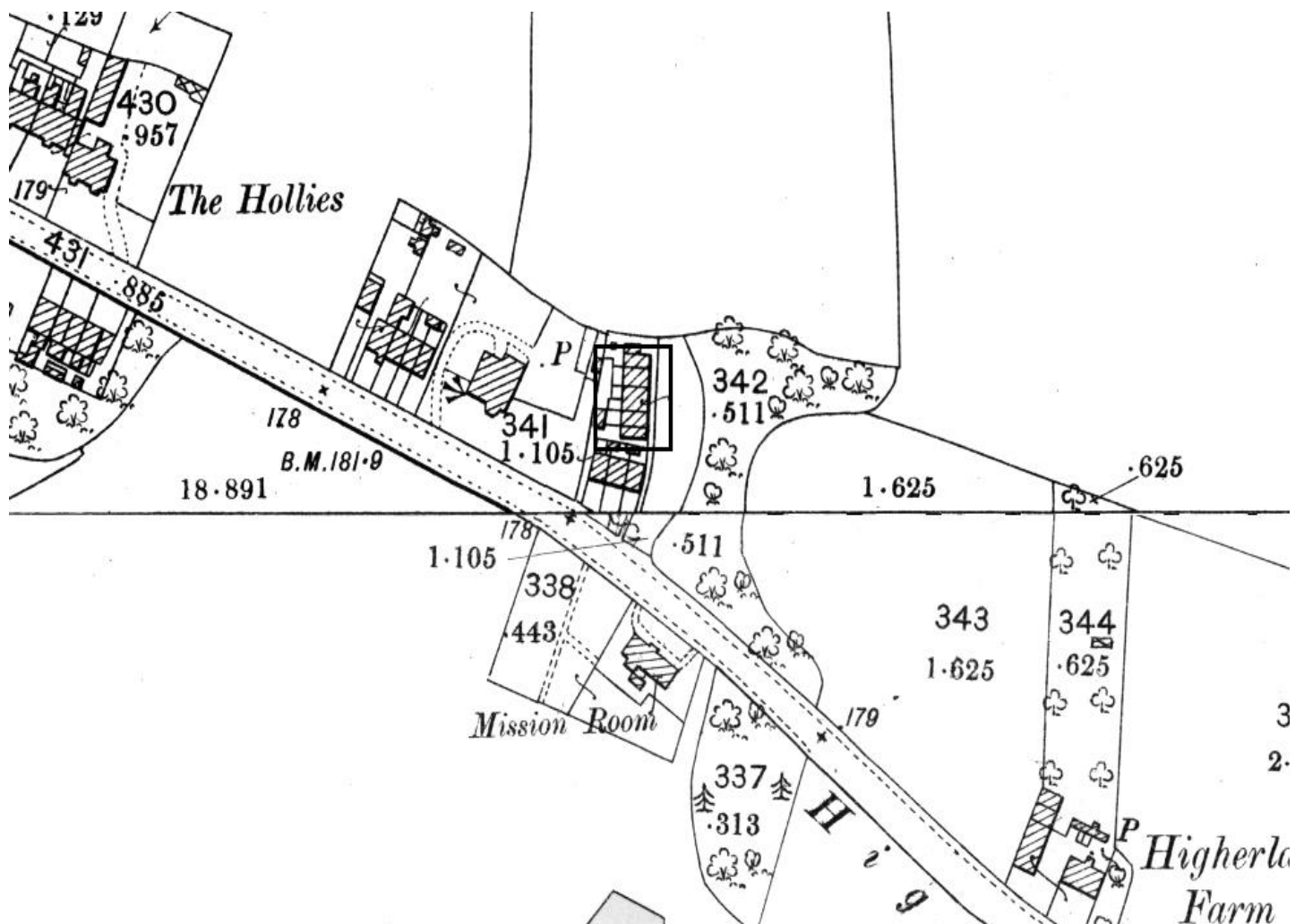
16 WARRINGTON LANE AGDEN

Any bridge along the Bridgewater Canal was a natural point for development. By the end of the 18th century Agden Wharf was being used to ship out farm produce returning with loads of horse manure and human excrement for the fields. With the building of the Boathouse Inn to serve the working boats in the 1840 it was perhaps understandable that cottages quickly followed.



“By 1861 a terrace of three storey cottages had been built next to the Boathouse Inn at Agden Bridge which was occupied by two families and two single men who were working as fustian cutters in the loft. The cloth could be unloaded at the wharf directly in front of the cottages. By 1871 eight people gave fustian cutting as their main occupation including Betsy Warburton.”

Source: Agden in Rostherne & Bowdon—Basil Ellam



17 ARLEY GROVE

The workshops in "Arley Grove" were in a semi-rural location outside Lymm itself just off the turnpike road from Warrington to Stockport on a short cul-de-sac. The Mission Room marked on the map is now a private house.



One of only two remaining three storey cottage terrace workshops in Lymm, this building is now listed. At one time there were up to five fustian masters on Higher Lane.

They included.

1850 Cheetham, Clayton, Riley, Moston, Smith

1874 Dixon, Whitfield



18 HIGHER LANE

This 1873 map shows just how sparsely populated Higher Lane was at that time. This terrace of three cottages on the main road is next to the larger three storey workshop on Arley Grove (also still standing).

One of the cottages was destroyed in a gas explosion



Photo Tim Kitchen

PHOTO NEEDED

The 1861 census shows no fewer than 31 residents of Higher Lane employed as cutters. Out of 20 properties 13 were home to fustian cutters. It is quite likely that these cottages were more in the nature of a home workshop, possibly taking on extra work from the larger premises round the corner on Arley Grove (present day Woodland Avenue). They are much further from the canal than most of the village workshops though there were also working premises at Broomedge which we have yet to locate.

of the said John Hampson, as yearly tenant.

Lot 7.—All those Seven **COTTAGES** or **DWELLING-HOUSES** and **FUSTIAN** CUTTER'S SHOP, with the gardens and appurtenances thereto belonging, situated at Rush Green, within Lymm aforesaid, containing 3,080 superficial square yards of land or thereabouts, and now in the occupations of Ann Thomason and others, as tenants.

This lot has a considerable south-easterly frontage

Some sundry notes about others unidentified including Alan T's father's notes .