

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MUSEUM OF NORTH CRAVEN LIFE, SETTLE

Hunting for Black Burton

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Scan your maps of North West England where Yorkshire meets Cumbria and Lancashire. You won't find any trace of Black Burton even though for 250 years it was an important centre of pottery making, producing essential wares for homes, shops and inns. By 1850 there were 11 working potteries here. Burton clay turned black once processed for use. Workers spattered with black clay, smoky charcoal fired kilns and coal powered steam engines explain why Burton earned its grim name although some believe the reputation of the town alehouses which outnumbered the potteries was also a factor. The last pottery closed in 1944 and Black Burton is now transformed into the tranquil village of Burton-in-Lonsdale with just 650 residents and one remaining pub. You can still find traces of the industrial past on the banks of the Greta but if you visit Settle, 14 miles away down the A65, the Folly Museum has a special exhibition this year telling the story of the rise and fall of Black Burton. Learn just how tough an industry this was to work in whether you were mining the clay, shivering in a 3 feet deep settling pan of clay and water, sizzling near the kilns heated to 1250 degrees centigrade or a skilled potter throwing the hefty 112 lb lumps of clay required for each 6 gallon jar. Poisonous glazes and flint dust were additional hazards. Burton's last pottery was run by Richard Bateson and you can discover his story at The Folly (or join Bentham potter Lee Cartledge who will be giving an illustrated talk on Bateson in the Folly on June 12th at 7.30. Tickets are £7.00.) At The Folly you can also view the largest public collection of Burton pots in Yorkshire which include earthenware, stoneware and decorative slipware pieces such as hen-and-chickens money boxes, puzzle jugs and an example of the novelty bird whistles once sold in the seafront shops of Morecambe.

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Associated photos: <https://picasaweb.google.com/>

For more information, please contact:

Mrs Anne Read, Hon. Curator
Tel: (015242) 51388

E-mail: folly@ncbpt.org.uk

Web: <http://www.ncbpt.org.uk/folly>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/follysettle>