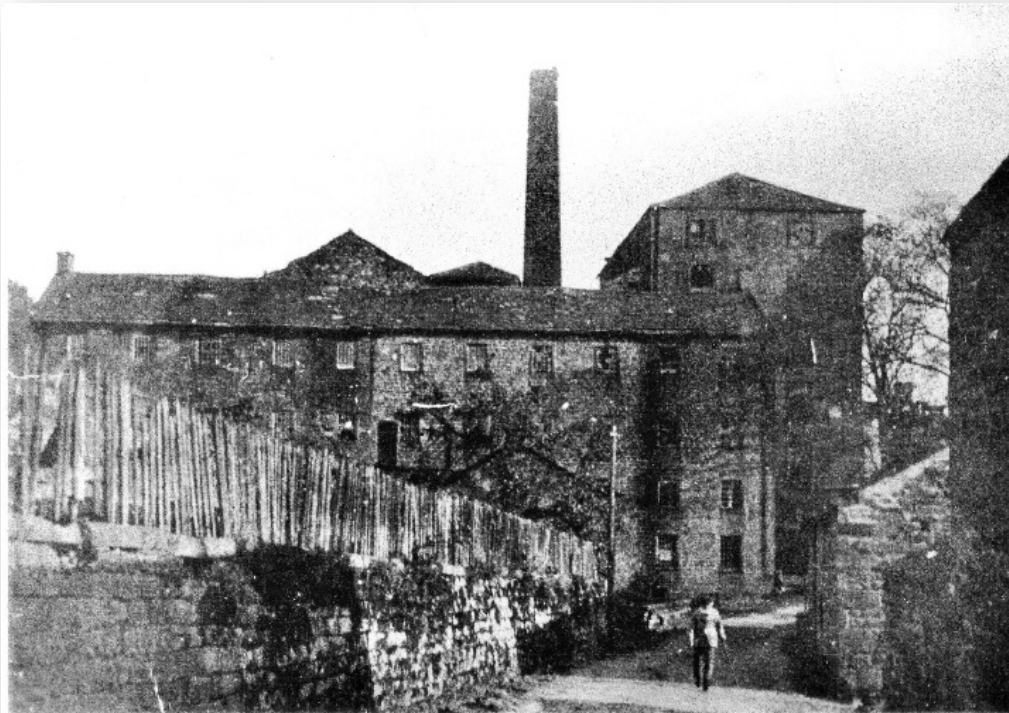


### **When Cotton Mills Came to Embsay and Eastby.**

In 1785 the first cotton-spinning mill was built at Skipton. At that time the combined population of Embsay and Eastby was no more than 300 people. They were mainly engaged in agriculture, as farmers, labourers and farm servants.

Some supplemented their income with home weaving and small-scale quarrying. There were no mills, and no churches or chapels. Each Sunday the inhabitants of Embsay and Eastby would walk, and the better-off ride, to attend church at Holy Trinity in Skipton. They also took their infants to Skipton for baptism, as well as to marry, and bury their dead.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century many of the Embsay and Eastby family names had survived for generations: Mason, Chippendale, Demaine, Walsh, Inman, Jackman, etc. But all that was about to change.



### *Eastby Mill*

Shortly before 1790 a cotton mill was built in Eastby. It would have been the biggest building most villages had ever seen. At four storeys it was taller than the parish church. In 1792 two cotton mills were built in Embsay, and three more were built over the next ten years.



*Whitfield Syke Mill, c. 1900 -*

The population of Emsay and Eastby doubled in 20 years, and tripled over the next 20. Most of those employed in the mills were immigrants and their families who were brought in because of their experience in cotton spinning. For the first 20 years or so, the existing village families mainly continued with their traditional occupations. The increase in population also brought new religious groups. First the Wesleyan Methodists, then the Swedenborgians, and by 1821 the Primitive Methodists, all of whom built their own chapels.

*David Turner, Emsay-with-Eastby Historical Research Group. (2019)*