Margaret Smethurst © 2014

With thanks to:
Andrew Gwynne MP
Irwell Valley Housing Association
Mr Alfred Brown, for the kind use of his photographs
William Gwynne
Tameside MBC

References:
The North Cheshire Herald
The History of Denton & Haughton, Thomas Middleton
Burley Key & Rev. Charles Burke
The County Families of Lancashire and Cheshire

- TOMMY TODD -

The story of our Village Green

By Margaret Smethurst
And finally... Who was - TOMMY DODD? -

The truth is that we really don’t know...

We have read how our village green was first named Betty’s Park and that a large ornamental lamp was brought to Haughton Green in 1884 to celebrate the amalgamation of the ancient townships of Denton and Haughton.

This led to the name Betty’s Park being dropped in favour of a corruption of the name given to the lamp; over time, Tommy Dodd became Tommy Todd.

The Tommy Dodd lamp used to stand on the market place in Denton so it seemed reasonable to believe it was originally named after a local man. But looking at old records, they don’t reveal anyone of that name in Denton.

There is however one ‘Tommy Dodd’ with a connection to Denton, listed in the ‘County Families of Lancashire and Cheshire’:

“Thomas Dod Esq. of Edge, baptised at Malpas, 7th Sept. 1604, who married Anne, daughter of Edward Holland, esq. of Denton, in Lancashire, who died in 1680. Thomas Dod died 1st January 1683-4 and was succeeded by his son, Randis Dod, esq.

“By this marriage the senior line of the Egertons, represented in later times by the Earls of Wilton, added to the vast possessions of the family, the extensive estates at Denton, near Manchester, and Heaton, in the parish of Prestwich, which had been held by the Holland’s in direct succession for many centuries.”

Of course we have no way of knowing if this marriage has any connection to our Tommy Dodd but it is an interesting fact, nonetheless!

This booklet has been produced to coincide with the unveiling of the new village green sign for Tommy Todd.

We know our village green has existed for at least two centuries, and probably for much longer. Indeed it is the green which gave Haughton Green its name!

However, until now there has never been a sign to mark the green.

Last year our Member of Parliament, Andrew Gwynne, noticed an old sign on a public house that was soon to be demolished at Guide Bridge. Not being one to miss an opportunity, Andrew asked the developer if he could have the structure. This was agreed.

Irwell Valley Housing Association are making huge improvements to the Haughton Green housing estate, and they agreed to provide a new sign board to our design. And today thanks to Andrew and Irwell Valley, we will have a beautiful village green sign specially designed for our village.

I hope you enjoy reading the story of TOMMY TODD – our village green – as much as I have enjoyed piecing it together.

MARGARET SMETHURST
Our Protected Green

It was always assumed that Tommy Todd had protected legal status as a village green. Tameside Council holds a Register of Town and Village Greens for the borough, but until recently, no one had realised that Tommy Todd wasn’t on it!

During 2012 Andrew Gwynne MP, the Member of Parliament for Denton & Reddish, was working alongside local councillors and residents to protect local heritage in Haughton Green, when he became aware that our village green was omitted from the register. Realising the significance of this omission Andrew turned detective, instigating a formal investigation involving national government and the Lancashire and Greater Manchester County Record Offices, to help piece together the missing bits of the jigsaw. And the evidence was uncovered.

Tommy Todd was indeed registered as a village green using the provisions in the Commons Registration Act 1965, on the request of the former Denton Urban District Council to Lancashire County Council in February 1967, and the entry in their Register of Town and Village Greens, being undisputed, became final on 1st October 1970. No-one will know, but it seems likely that the documents may have been lost as a consequence of local government reorganisation. Andrew explains:

“Originally Lancashire had been the Commons Registration Authority, and in 1974 the records will have transferred to the new Greater Manchester Council. When it was disbanded in 1986, the records should have transferred to Tameside, and that could be how the records for Tommy Todd became lost.”

Thanks to Andrew’s tenacity we are now assured of the future protected status of ‘Tommy Todd’, our village green.

Tommy Todd

The story of our Village Green

By Margaret Smethurst

Haughton Green in Denton is indeed fortunate to retain much of its historic village.

Pride of place is taken by our much-loved village green, known locally as ‘Tommy Todd’. The Reverend Charles Burke, Rector of St. Mary the Virgin from 1943 –1965, wrote of the green in his column in the local newspaper:

“The Green itself was flanked on either side by cottages each which owned small garden land. The Green is a relic of the enclosed Freeland, the farmers around here not being greedy men as were so many who enclosed and claimed peoples free pasturage.”

Betty’s Park

Few know that the village green was originally called ‘Betty’s Park’ and the reason for the name and, indeed, the identity of ‘Betty’ seemed to be lost in the mists of time. However, a chance discovery may have shed light on these questions...

Recently whilst browsing the census for Haughton Green I came across an old name for the Bay Horse Inn. It had also had the name ‘Betty’s Building’, this sparked an interest and a possibility that the Inn was connected to ‘Betty’s Park’.
THE WEDDING OF

- TOMMY DODD and BETTY HAUGHTON -

At the time of the 1884 amalgamation of the two townships, a large lamp stood on a stone pedestal on the market place in Denton. The lamp was known locally as 'Tommy Dodd'.

For some reason the Dentonians had grown tired of their lamp and the people of Haughton were eager to acquire it.

Therefore as the year drew to a close, Tommy Dodd along with his masonry was hoisted onto a convoy of horse drawn lorries and accompanied by a grand public procession complete with Brass Band the lamp was removed to Betty’s Park, Haughton Green.

On its arrival the fire brigade ran out their hoses and proceeded to re-baptise the lamp. After that, the chairman of the Denton and Haughton Local Board and prominent gentlemen gave speeches in praise of their new acquisition. A local poet cast the history of the lamp into verse and these were recited during the ceremony.

Local wags were quick to dub the celebrations as the wedding of Tommy Dodd and Betty Haughton.

Tommy Dodd stood on the green at the centre of the village for twenty years, but the locals soon tired of him. He was in the way. Haughton youths loved to play football on the green and Tommy stood right in the middle of the field of play. When the cricket season came it was the same, the glass on his face kept getting smashed. He was a nuisance.

Then came the end. In its issue of 11th March 1905, the North Cheshire Herald reports:

“Tommy Dodd’s services do not seem to be in much request.

“The Haughton Greenties do not want him, and the Dentonians have long discarded him, and he is now to be removed to the Town’s Yard, which will eventually be his last resting place.

“R.I.P.”

But our green, right in the centre of the village, has ever since been known as ‘Tommy Todd’ – a corruption over time of the lamp’s old name, Tommy Dodd.

The Bay Horse Inn was built in 1831. The first Innkeeper and owner was John Worth. He and his wife, Mary, had two children; a boy, John, was born in 1840 and a little girl, Betty, was born in 1842.

In 1838, a small Sunday school was started in a cottage at Haughton Green. It was so successful that larger premises were soon needed and in 1842 the Sunday school moved to a room at the Bay Horse Inn.

The Reverend Walter Nichol, Rector of St. Lawrence’s Church in Denton, not only encouraged the Sunday school at the Bay Horse Inn, but also obtained a Bishop’s licence to hold Sunday evening lectures in the same clubroom.

The Sunday school became a branch of Denton Chapel (St. Lawrence’s) and on 19th June 1843 the Reverend Walter Nichol commenced evening services although these could only take place when a neighbouring clergyman could be found. On the first Sunday of every month the members of the Sunday school were conducted by their teacher to morning service at Denton Chapel. This outing was very much looked forward to.

It seems very possible to me that the Sunday school would have had a playground or a park near to the Inn on the area we now know as Tommy Todd for the use of the children and that this was named in honour of the Inn keeper’s little daughter Betty Worth. Betty would have played there as she grew.

It was ‘Betty’s Park’. 
Life in the 19th century was hard for the working people of our village. Farming, mining, cotton mills and hatting were the main occupations. Miners were tough hard men; they had to be to endure their working conditions. The local historian, Burley Key, said of them:

“Life was hard, wages were low and large families were the rule and there were plenty of pubs, so there always seemed to be plenty of drunkenness. Many of the men were colliers, real hard drinkers and hard fighters and many times I have seen men stripped to the waist battling for dear life using fists and clogs as well.”

It was around the green that most people lived and there it was that their recreation took place. In later years the green was used for the more peaceful pursuits of football and cricket.

**- HAUGHTON GREEN VILLAGE -**

Early maps show Haughton Green as little more than a scattered collection of dwellings along Two Trees Lane and Haughton Green Road. There were also cottages at Haughton Dale (Ivy Cottages) and small settlements at Lower Haughton and Glasshouse Fold.

There were three large residences belonging to the Sidebotham family:

- **Rosebank** at Gibraltar Lane was the home of William Sidebotham (William ‘int’ Brow). He built a Cotton Mill on Two Trees Lane.
- **Victoria Place**, now Haughton Dale House, was the home of George Sidebotham, who in partnership with his brother Henry Sidebotham, built the Meadow Cotton Mill on the side of the River Tame at Haughton Dale.
- Henry lived in a rather grand residence at the junction of Haughton Green Road and Meadow Lane.

Haughton Green was very well served for public houses there were once at least nine in and around the village, most of these were on Haughton Green Road near to the village green.

Opposite the green were: the Jolly Hatters; almost next door, the Lamb Inn, and across the road, opposite the Jolly Hatters, was yet another pub, the Cricketers Arms. This pub boasted a skittle alley & quoit pitch. Near to the Cricketers was a row of cottages named ‘back barrel’ because barrels were rolled past them to the pub.

The Bay Horse was almost next the green. The Old Dog, and the New Inn were further along Haughton Green Road. The Clarke’s Arms, the Cock and the Chapel House were nearby on Two Trees Lane.

**- DENTON AND HAUGHTON -**

Haughton claims to be older than the neighbouring township of Denton. For the purpose of local government in the township, the Haughton Local Board of Health was established, and held its first meeting on 20th June 1877. The formal amalgamation of Haughton with Denton took place on Sept 29th 1884 and the new enlarged authority was styled as the Denton and Haughton Local Board.

However, the title ‘Haughton’ was officially dropped 10 years later by default, when a postponed meeting led to the Haughton representatives not being present. Consequently, the Denton representatives, by a majority of 54 to 6, resolved to strike out the name of Haughton from the title of the new council. Thus in 1894, the local authority became known as the Denton Urban District Council.
THE DEPARTURE OF TOMMY DODD TO BETTY’S PARK 1884

N.B.- procession will start from Market Place at 2.00 Saturday Be in time

A. Walker

22 Manchester Road

[Cartoon with text and characters]

When I go in I'm sure to wine Tommy Dodd, Tommy Dodd
Glasses poured cigars as well
Tommy Dodd, Tommy Dodd etc., etc.

Neau Rees
Where are Tommy’s Dads?
Thau wants to go too fast
Make that horse step out –
I shall want some rum and tea after this
We won't serve Tommy shabby
No Eliza he'st always have a light, even if it's only a blue'n
They are coming up in t'other cart ‘Ned’ weeping

Tommy's Dads
Auld Lang Synne
I say Sir James, who's the boss of this lot?
Yes & he's a regular basinful
Why put that Bray's lamp outside my shop
Neau foxy we have got him at last
My pair of Cream (Horses) finest in the show
Neau Sim will Tommy be lighted with 'gas' or paraffin?
I wish I had some Karves on here, they'd pay better than Tommy's arms & legs

By gum WAREUM these horses taken some holding. They are all different to you or mine