

The Copper Kettle

By Hannah Woodward 1988

(This paper won a first prize in the local history competition for pupils of Staveley Primary School organised by the Society, 1997-8.)

The Copper Kettle

The copper kettle belonged to Hannah Hutchinson. Hannah Hutchinson lived in Hollin Hall near Staveley by-pass. The copper kettle was only used on Hannah Hutchinson's wedding day. The copper kettle was passed down in the family and now it stands on an oak stool in the corner of our living room. It is about 100 years since the copper kettle was used.

Hollin Hall

Hollin How or Hall, on the side of the road from Staveley to Crook, has a history which goes back to the 14th or 15th century, and it has been built in three parts — first the peel tower, then the kitchen and hall and lastly the west wing. According to an old writer the house was built about 1450 by Robert Philipson who married Miss Dockray of Dockray Hall, Kendal, and it is said that from him was descended the notorious Robert Philipson better known as "Robert the Devil", whose supposed helmet hangs in Kendal Parish Church.

In 1639 Captain Myles Philipson was in charge of the forces of Westmorland under Lord Clifford, and six years afterwards Captain Bernard Philipson was with the King's army in Holland, where he remained for 23 years. Then the house belonged to the Braithwaite family who sold it for £2030 to John Moore. In the 19th century the le Flemings owned Hollin Hall and leased it out to farmers. The Hutchinsons were the farming family from 1829 to 1881.

Uncle Dick's Letter

I didn't take much notice of the copper kettle when I was little, but one day I got a letter of my Great Uncle Dick (my Grandad's brother). He used to live in Bowness when he was little and loved to tell stories of the olden days. I got the letter on 27th July 1995 when I was six years old.



This is me with the copper kettle on the oak stool in our living room

Uncle Dick told me the story of how the copper kettle was passed down in our family. It used to be in his Mum's house when he was little. It then went to his sister's house who lived in Scotland and then it was brought back to the Lake District where it had belonged to Hannah Hutchinson originally.

The Story

Now Hannah, I know a little story that you might like so - "Once upon a time - a long time ago, about 600 years ago in fact, there were a lot of bad rough men, chieftains and robbers, who lived over the Border in Scotland, and they were called "reivers." The reivers used to make raids south into what was then Cumberland and Westmorland, now Cumbria. They stole horses and cattle and robbed farms and villages and were very dangerous. Some people protected themselves

by building fortress towers, which were called "Pele Towers." There are a few different ways of spelling "pele" but that's as good as any. Anyway one man built his tower between Staveley and Crook, and it is still there. It has walls that are about five feet thick - that's almost as thick as your Mummy is high! It has rooms inside and a dove-cote at the top where they kept pigeons, so if they didn't have enough meat (maybe after the reivers had taken their cows) they could catch some pigeons and have pigeon for dinner! However there wasn't very much room for long inside the tower, so when times were better and the reivers left them alone they began to add extra rooms on the ground beside the tower and bit by bit it all grew into quite a large house.

About 500 years ago, maybe when the first Queen Elizabeth ruled England, they built big round chimneys. They too are still there, and they began to call the house "Hollin Howe" or Hollin Hall." About 150 years ago a family named Hutchinson lived in Hollin Hall. They were quite a big family and one of them was a young girl.

Just about 100 years ago she married a farmer, and she had a lovely, shiny new copper kettle, which they filled with water and put on to the fire in the kitchen at Hollin Hall on her wedding day - maybe to make tea for the wedding party? But that was the only time the copper kettle was ever used! And that is the same kettle that you have now in your house in Staveley. The young girl had the same name as you do - she was Hannah Hutchinson.

I know because she was your Granddad's Granny - and mine too!

I hope you have enjoyed this little story. It's better than a fairy tale because every word is true.

The people who have had the kettle are highlighted on our family tree. *[see summary on the right]* Uncle Dick didn't write any dates on but I would like to find out some dates, but the only person I can ask is my Nanna, because Uncle Dick and Granddad have died.

If Uncle Dick hadn't sent me the letter I wouldn't have known about the history of the copper kettle and my ancestor Hannah Hutchinson. When I grow up I will show this story to my children and they will know all about the copper kettle.

Bibliography

1. Historical Farmhouses in and around Westmorland
2. The Westmorland Gazette November 14th 1936
3. Information given to Sarah Thurnham (the present owner of Hollin Hall) by Joe Scott.

From a family tree

(Hannah gave the family tree in full. People who have had the kettle are printed here in bold.)

Nathan Hutchinson born 1776

Isaac Hutchinson born 1824

John Hutchinson born 1856

Hannah Hutchinson born 1856

Helena Kendal

Margaret Woodward

Brian Woodward born 1955

Hannah Woodward born 1988