

STAVELEY BANKS AND THE RAILWAY COTTAGES

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The history of the land

It is difficult to imagine, here in the 21st Century, what Staveley Banks looked like at the end of the 18th. Firstly, the road we know today as ‘The Banks’ didn’t exist, and this name applied to an area of common land running from the banks of the Gowan near to the current Station Road bridge and continuing up to Common Head, accessed by nothing more than a cart track. The main route towards Crook was not as today’s Station Road/Crook Road but a lane, now obliterated, running from the vicinity of Stockbridge Farm¹. The earliest record we have of the owners of land adjacent to the common is in 1755, when James Bank held two freehold closes called ‘Whits’ with a rent value of 10/3². By 1773 these had passed to a William Thompson of Beathwaite Green, Heversham. His land was mainly to the west of the current Crook Road, and included one of the few cottages in Nether Staveley, known as ‘Back o’ the Banks’. (see Fig. 1). In Thompson’s will, dated 14th December 1782³, this land was left to Thomas Furness and his wife Margaret (his tenants or relatives).

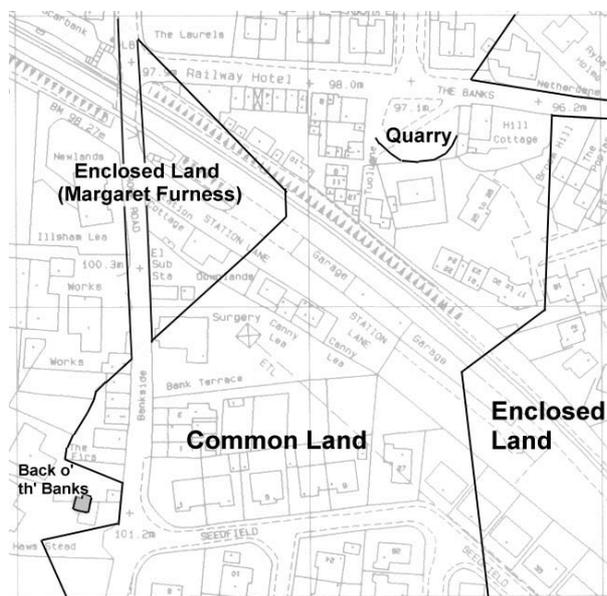


Fig 1 – Map of common land around 1800

We then find Margaret listed in the 1816 Enclosure Act for Nether Staveley, Thomas presumably having died prior to 1816. In the Enclosure Act, Margaret’s land holding was increased by the allocation of a number of plots of

common land, the most significant being No. 104, which was the corner plot fronting the current ‘Banks’ where the Railway Hotel and its cottages now stand. (see Fig 2). The Act also authorised the construction of Public Roads to be known as Nether Staveley Road (today’s ‘The Banks’ from Station Road to Hill Cottage) and Banks Road (today’s Station Road/Crook Road).

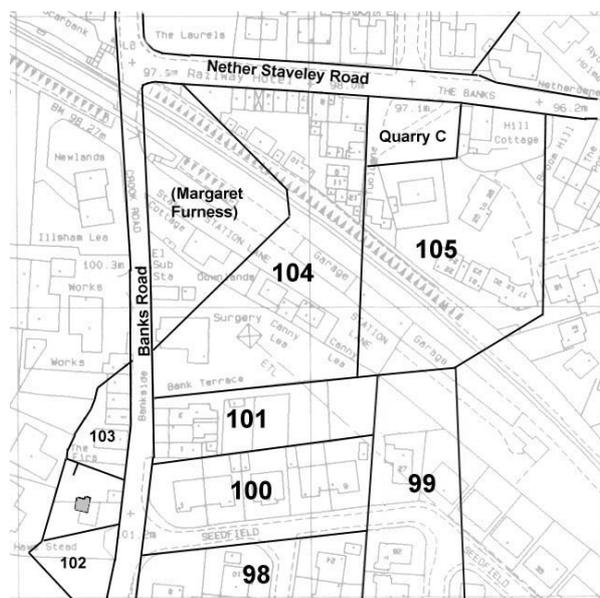


Fig 2 – Map of Enclosure Act 1816

Plot	Owner	Acres	Roods	Perches
98	Richard Jackson	0	3	8
99	John Noble’s heirs	0	3	5
100	Thomas Taylor	0	2	7
101	Mary Brewer	0	1	20
102	Margaret Furness	0	1	13
103	Margaret Furness	0	0	20
104	Margaret Furness	1	0	20
105	Robert Braithwaite	1	0	20
C	Quarry on Staveley Banks	0	0	36

Fig 3 - Plot Allocations in the 1816 Enclosure Act⁴

The 1836 corn rent map shows plot 104 and the original small plot on the east of Banks Road with a name of ‘Little Field’, but minus the corner plot adjacent to the Quarry (now the ‘Green’ on the Banks) on which was a house belonging to James Nicholson.

In 1844, the Kendal & Windermere Railway Company produced plans for its new line, and listed out all the affected lands together with their

owners and occupiers. Little Field had become Plot No. 85; not quite the same as plot 104 as it had gained the former plot 101 allocated to Mary Brewer. Plot No. 84 was stated to be ‘houses and garden’ belonging to Thomas Levens, but occupied by James Nicholson and John Owen. This was the current ‘Greenside’ cottage but differed from today’s property in that it was divided into two dwellings. (see Fig 4).

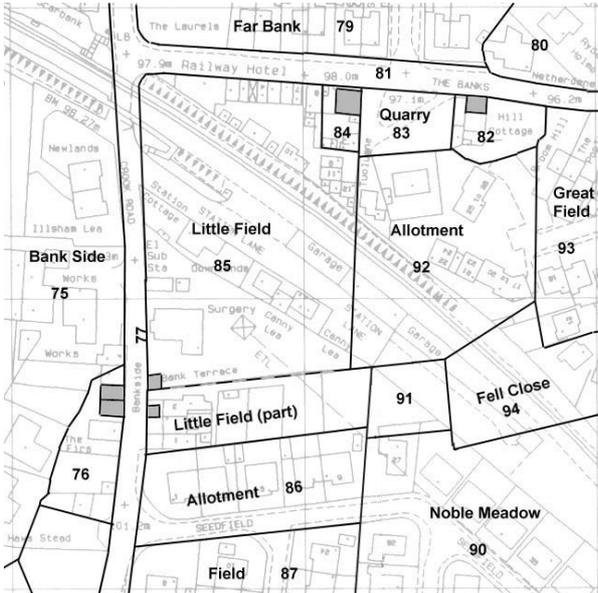


Fig 4 – Corn Rent 1836 and Kendal & Windermere Railway deposited plans

1816 Plot	Owner	1844 Ref	Owner
98	Richard Jackson	87	Rowland Suart
99	John Noble’s heirs	91(part)	Henry Colebank
100	Thomas Taylor	86	Trees. of late Thos Taylor
101	Mary Brewer	85(part)	Thomas Furness
102	Margaret Furness	-	-
103	Margaret Furness	-	-
104	Margaret Furness	85 & 84	Thos. Furness & Thos. Levens
105	Robert Braithwaite	92 & 82	Wm Wilson & J. Philipson
C	Quarry on Staveley Banks	83	Surveyors of the Highways

Fig 5 – Comparison of Plot No.s between 1816 Act and K&W 1844 Reference Plan⁵

Interestingly, by the time that the land was actually purchased by the Railway, ownership of the two cottages had passed to one John Hewetson Wilson, of Abbey Hotel fame, and subsequently to nephew R.W. Buckley. On the other side of the ‘quarry’ stood another cottage (today’s ‘Hill Cottage’), which had presumably also been constructed between 1816 and 1836. Both the 1836 map and the 1844 plan show that ‘Back

o’the Banks’ had disappeared, and the Furness’ were shown owning cottages – probably the existing Nos. 3/4 Banks Cottages on Crook Road.

The Kendal & Windermere Railway Company completed its acquisition of the Furness’ land on 13th March 1847⁶ for the princely sum of £800 (just one month before the railway opened!).



Fig 6 - Plan of area sold by John Furness



Fig 7 - The original conveyance from John Furness to the Kendal & Windermere Railway.

Having first offered the residual land to the north not required by the Railway to the adjacent owner, Mr. William Wilson and been rejected, the Company put this land to auction the following January. On the 26th of February 1848, a bid by Joseph Crosthwaite, Joiner and Carpenter of Bowness, in the sum of £27, was accepted.

Crosthwaite’s buildings

The survey of the present cottage and Hotel buildings has shown clearly that there were three distinct phases of construction covering the

boundary from true 'vernacular' to the more formal late Victorian. From 1848 onwards, Crosthwaite built the Railway Tavern and the first two cottages (today's 1-3). The 1851 census shows the original Tavern and two of the cottages

occupied. By 1858 the whole front block (1-8) was complete. The artist's impression below (fig 8) shows what the plot may have looked like in 1851.

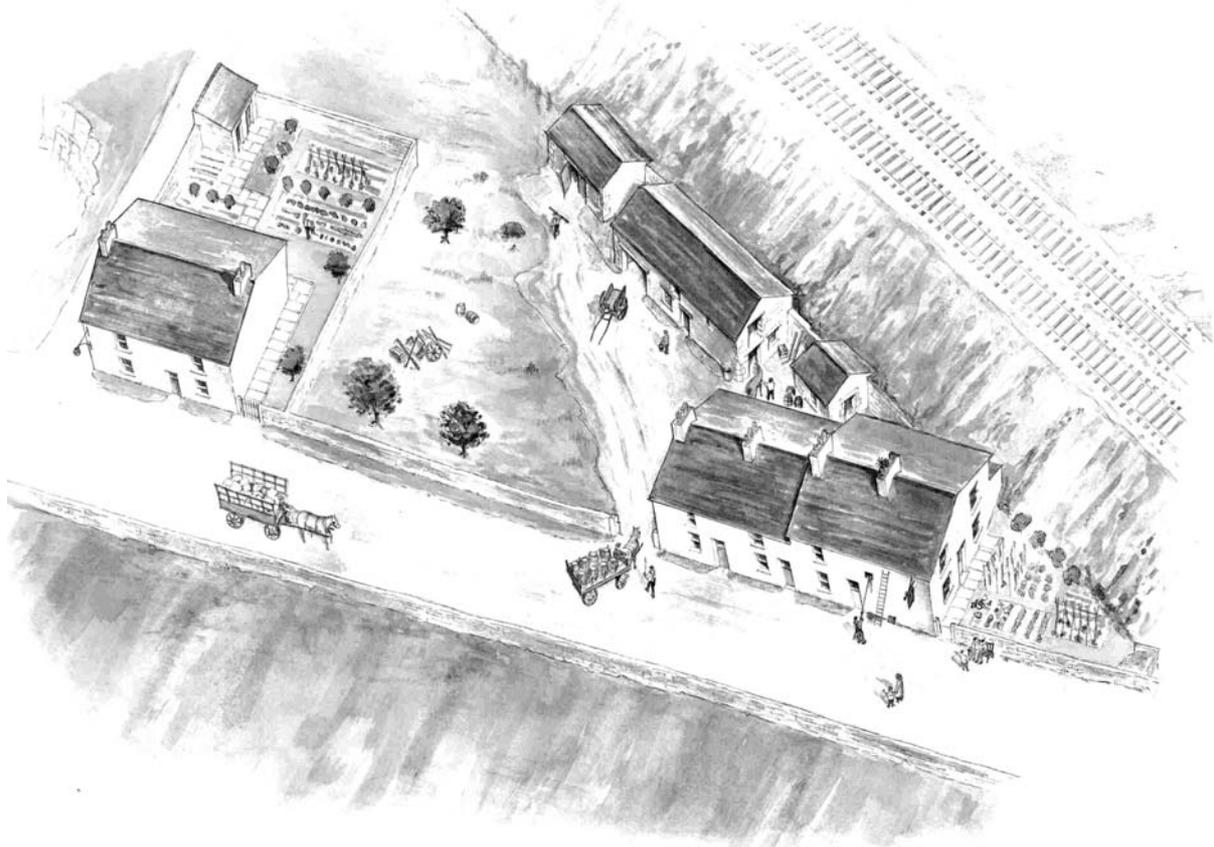


Fig 8 - Artist's impression of the Railway Hotel and the first two cottages in 1851

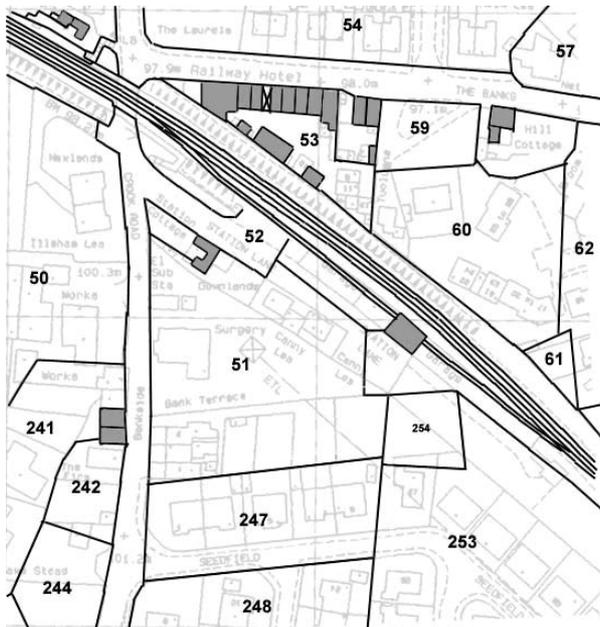


Fig 9 – Showing the major changes resulting from the construction of the railway and the building of the first phases of the cottages (1859)

The 1859 Ordnance Survey map (see Fig 9) shows the completed original block. However, despite the appearance of uniformity, the later cottages (4-8) have a number of design differences. The survey of the buildings indicates a change from the pure vernacular to a more disciplined form. The original tavern, and the two cottages later known as 2 and 3 are all built on a slight skew, being neither completely parallel to the road nor having transverse walls set at right angles to the front walls. The degree of skew of the transverse walls is about 8% or 8cm in 1 metre. The remainder of the block, starting with No.4, is built parallel to the road and with reasonably square transverse walls from the party wall between No.4 and No. 5 onwards. The error in the transverse walls from Phase 1 is taken out in cottage 4 where the front elevation is some 60cm shorter than the rear. It has been suggested that Crosthwaite, starting out as a mere joiner and carpenter from Bowness in 1848, and ending up as a master builder living in Orrest Head in the 1890s, was learning his new trade 'on the job', or learning which stone masons could be relied upon to produce good work. At the rear of the cottage

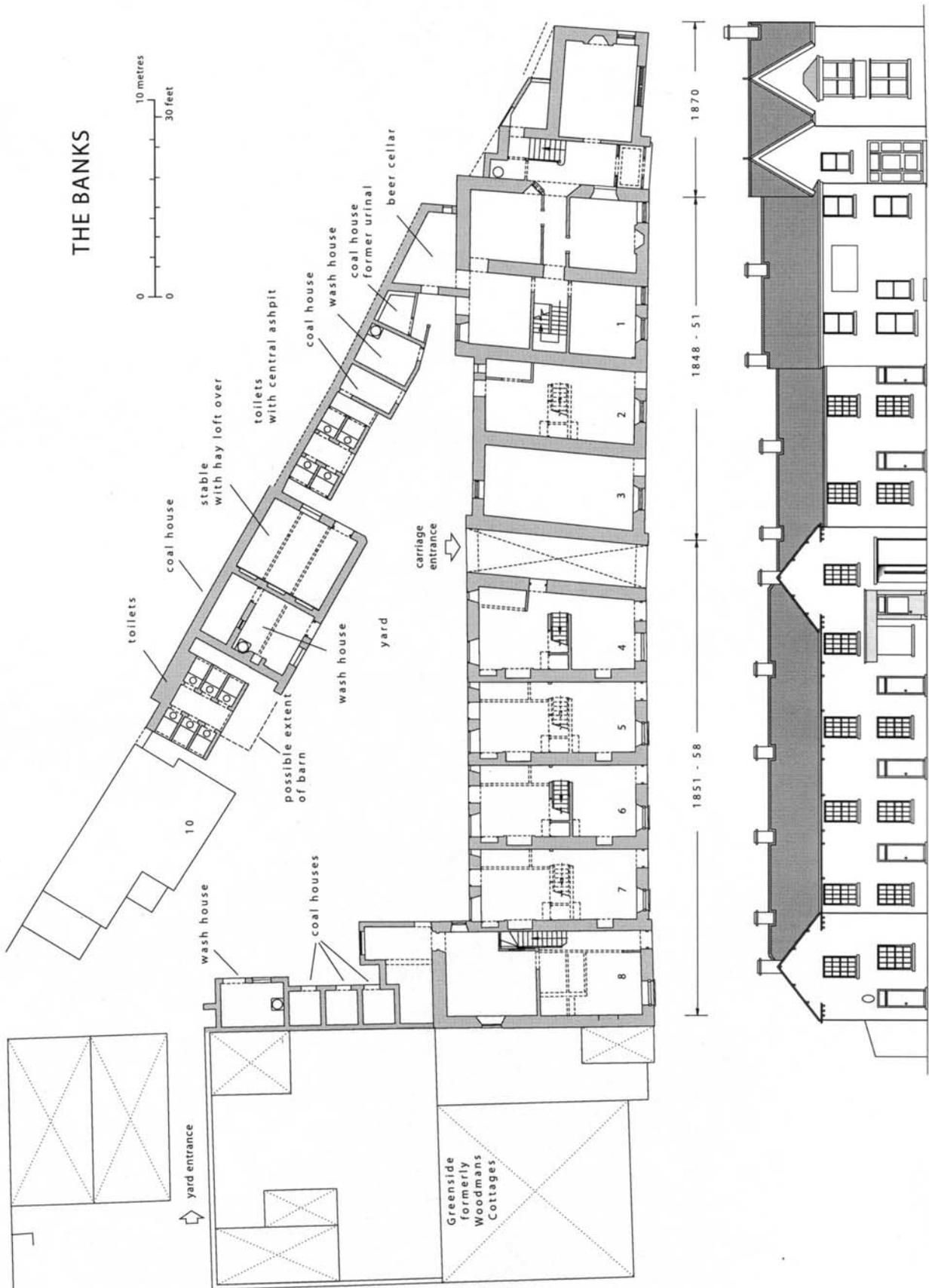


Fig 10 - Plan of the Railway Hotel, cottages and outbuildings, together with an front elevation c.1870 reconstructed from research evidence

buildings were a number of outbuildings, the most significant of which was a large stable block. The end nearest to the tavern still survives in a recognisable form with much of the original woodwork still intact. The three bays for the horses, the feed slots for the hay, and a vertical ladder giving access to the loft are all still present.



Fig 11 - Interior view of the stables

The design of the cottages (see plan and section opposite – fig 13) follows a fairly traditional pattern with two downstairs rooms separated by a stairway parallel to the road. The rear room was divided into kitchen and pantry, with a tall thin window to the latter. In the kitchen was a traditional cast iron kitchen range. Upstairs, after a small half landing, were two bedrooms. There were no internal bathrooms or toilets, but earth closets in the outhouses provided toilet facilities.

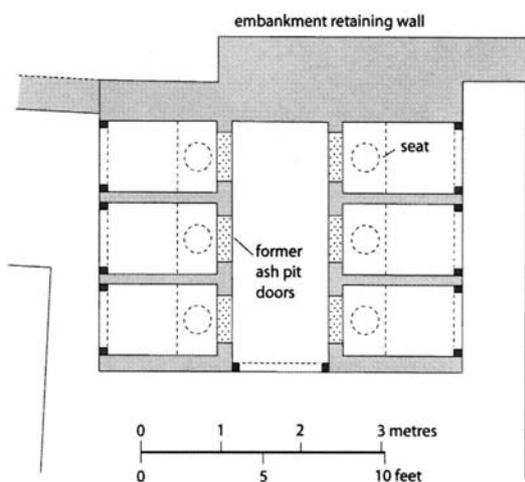
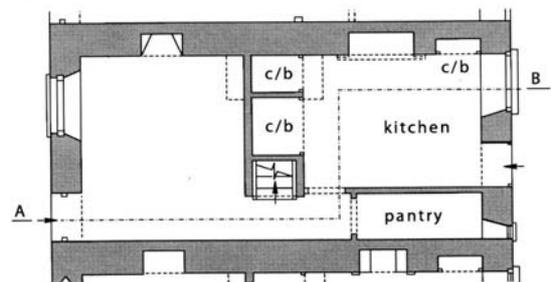
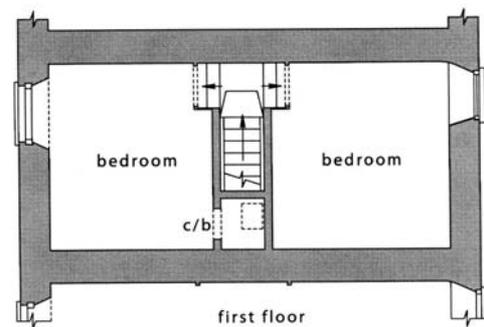


Fig 12 - Plan of the toilet block for cottages 5-10 as reconstructed in about 1870



section A.B.



ground floor

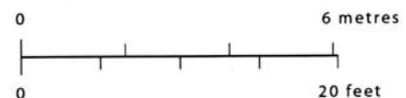


Fig 13 - Plan and section of a typical cottage.

The Railway Tavern was obviously popular, for not long after it was built, it was extended at the station end to form the current hotel building. The extension adjoined the skew end wall of the original tavern and was built at right angles to it, creating yet a further variation on the frontage settings. The original front door and windows on the end elevation were blocked off, although three of the windows survive as alcoves. New windows were let into the front and upstairs rear of the original building to provide light into the rooms. The 1861 census shows the occupier as a stone mason, with no mention of publican duties, so it may well have been in this period when the

extension was started. (As a further point of interest, Nether Staveley Road was now called 'Railway Street' in the census). The precise date of construction is not known, though the architecture suggests that it may have been into the 1870s rather than 1860s. In this same period, cottages 9, 11 and 12 were built to late Victorian standards and a new cottage, No.10 was built by extending a former outbuilding. As with the original cottages, all were tenanted, and the Crosthwaite family remained the owners.

Construction of the additional cottages required a re-think on the outbuildings and two new toilet blocks (still earth closets) were built, one of which

required the stable block to be shortened at the east end. (see Fig 12).

Towards the turn of the century, two changes occurred to the frontage elevation. Cottage No. 8 was let to the local policeman, and became a police house. As a result it was decided to reverse the positions of the door and window, presumably to provide a room separated from the access to the stairs and rear accommodation. No.4 became a confectioners shop, with an enlarged front window and shop front. Into the twentieth century further alterations⁷ were made to the Police house as it was transferred into the ownership of the Cumberland and Westmorland Constabulary.



Fig 14 - View along the Banks circa 1898

Through the twentieth century the cottages themselves have received many internal alterations; most have had the rear bedroom partitioned off to make a bathroom, and as a result required an additional upstairs window – a variety of styles has resulted from this. Many have extended the lounge by turning the stairs to run parallel to the dividing walls and extended the kitchen by demolishing the partition to the pantry.

More significant internal alterations were made to the Tavern (now known as the Hotel) in 1938,⁸

when the internal toilets and bathrooms were improved, and the former landlords lounge became a 'smoke room'. In the 1950s, the bar area was opened out following the granting of a spirit licence. (Up to this point the 'Railway' had served only beer). Then in the 1980s the wall into the 'smoke room' was knocked out providing one large lounge. Finally, in 1997,⁹ a major re-modelling involving incorporation of cottage 2 into the Hotel was carried out. This also resulted in a further change to the frontage elevation when the door and window to No. 2 were reversed. An

interesting feature of the lounge is that the fireplace is on the front wall, and the passage from the fire to the central chimney passes up the front wall to an inspection plate (currently hidden behind the sign board) before turning through a right angle up the internal wall to the chimney.

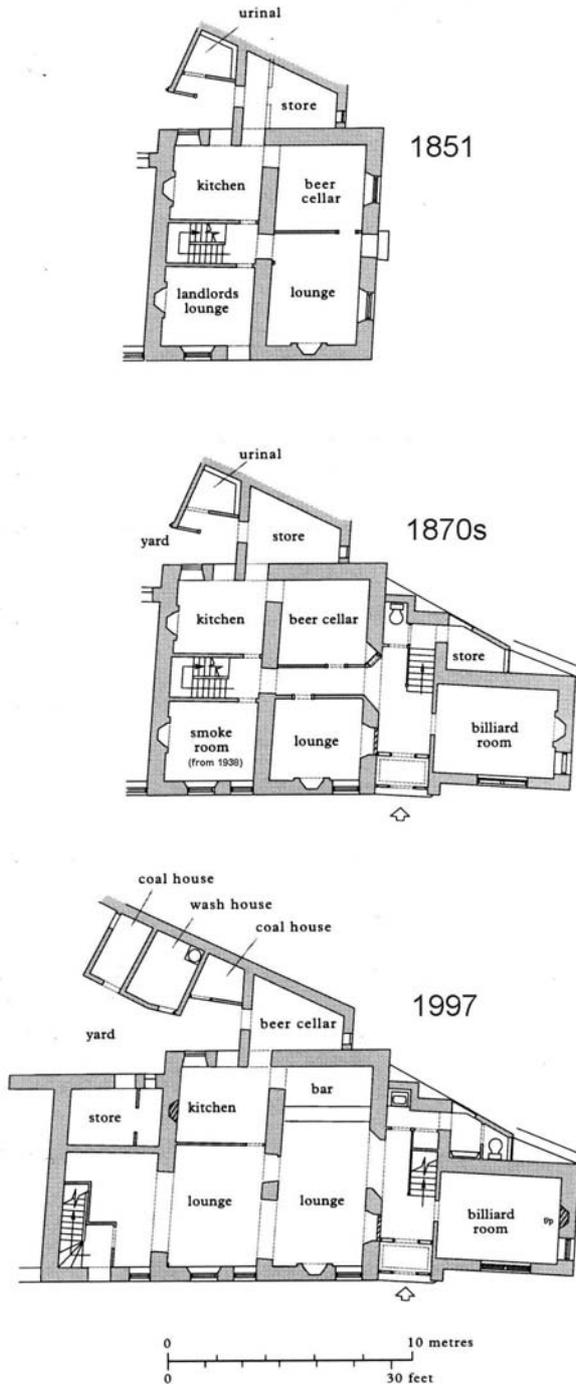


Fig 15 - The phases of extension of the Railway Hotel

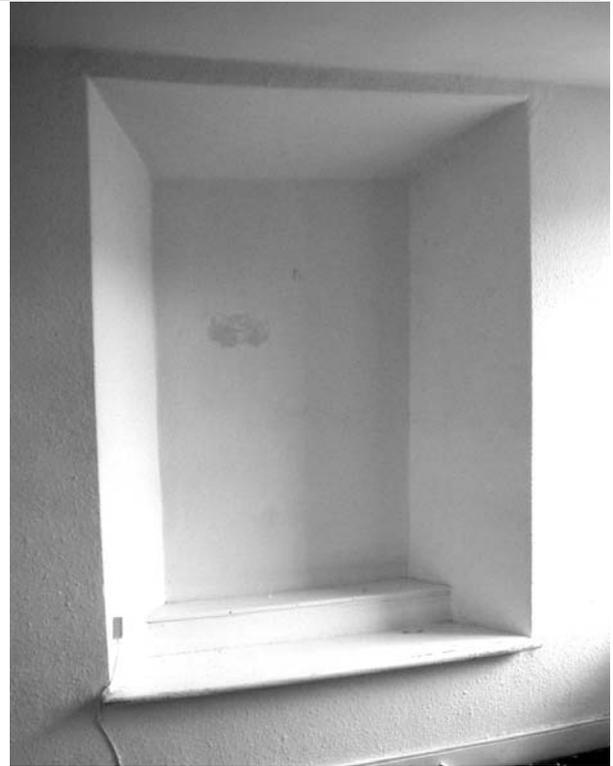


Fig 16 - Blanked off former window in the upstairs of the Railway Hotel

The people

Joseph Crosthwaite himself died in 1896 and this portion of his estate passed to his daughter, Mary. Mary was married to Edwin John Frank and Edwin continued on as the owner after Mary's death in 1910. When Edwin died in 1932, his estate was placed in the hands of trustees to manage, the income going to support his two daughters, Mary and Annie.

By 1960 the income from the tenancies had become insufficient to support the daughters and the Trustees began to sell off the properties, starting with the Hotel which went to Duttons Brewery in May 1960. Although Annie died in September 1960, and Mary in December 1972, the family continued with the sales. The final sale from the family was cottage number 6, which was sold in April 1996.¹⁰

The census records up to 1901 show us that some of the tenants were very loyal, several (or their widows) appearing in three consecutive census records (see fig 17). The Crosthwaites were friends (if not related) to the Suarts, and it comes as no surprise to see that the Suarts were the landlords of the Railway Hotel for a long period. The first policeman in number 8 was Constable Thomas Richardson from Matteredale who moved in about 1897. Widow Margaret Byers, sometime

prior to the 1891 census, started to use number 4 as a confectioners shop.

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
1	Nelson	Storey	Suart	Suart	Robinson	Suart
2	Sanderson	Abby	Abba	Abba	Tatham	Hornby
3	Waide	Huck	Dawson	Dobson	Clark	Clark
4		Fleming	Jopson	Steel	Byers	Holme
5		Davis	Davis	Read	Blamire	Johnson
6		Atkinson	Stewardson	Stewardson	Stewardson	Johnson
7		Bowness	Bowness	Bowness	Dobson	Fleming
8		Dawson	Greenhow	Dobson	Clark	Richardson

Fig 17 – Tenants surnames from census lists

The two-up, two down, cottages were also home to large families, father, mother and as many as nine children, or a combination of children and lodgers. There were a whole variety of occupations listed for the tenants; bobbin turners were the most popular, 5 in 1861, 3 in 1871, 5 again in 1881, but only 1 in 1891 and 1901. Stone Masons were the next most popular occupation, with 3 in both 1861 and 71. In 1891 there were 5 labourers on the pipeline (navvies) lodged in the cottages. The list of other occupations is very wide; there were carpenters, tailors, railway platelayers, paper makers, basket makers, dressmakers, a school mistress, worsted spinners, general labourers at both the bobbin and paper mills, and agricultural labourers listed. In 1901 we find even a ‘hammer shape maker’ – a sign of things to come at the bobbin mill as the demand for bobbins decreased. Also in 1901 there was a ‘labourer for mechanics’ – probably one of the mill maintenance firms.

References:

1. Jeffery’s Map of Westmorland 1770; Cary’s map of Westmoreland 1787.
2. Lowther Manor Court Rolls (Carlisle RO, Dlons/L5/24/21).
3. Lancashire Record Office Wills.
4. Kendal Record Office WQR/1/99 Strickland Kettel & Nether Staveley Enclosure Award 1816
5. Kendal Record Office WQR/DP/35 Kendal & Windermere Railway 1844
6. Network Rail (Spacia) Record Office Manchester; Kendal & Windermere line plot number 41, Deed package number 43.
7. Kendal Record Office WS/RD/SW 399 Page 30 Entry 1225 (South Westmorland RDC Building Control Register)
8. As above, entry 1240.
9. LDNPA Planning Application 7/97/5095
10. Extract of Title for 6, The Banks; copy with Staveley & District History Society and with Kendal Record Office.

Acknowledgements:

The authors wish to thank the following people and organisations:

English Heritage (York) for assistance with the survey and illustrations;
 Alan Lord for assistance with the survey work;
 The Landlords of the Railway Hotel and the owners of cottages 4, 6 and 8 for granting access to the premises;
 Andrew Marsden of Network Rail for permission to examine the original deeds.
 Don Greaves and Dorothy Sanderson of Windermere for information about the Crosthwaite family.

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