

# Staveley & District History Society

## Journal Spring 2009

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*Cover picture – Main Street, Staveley, around 1900 showing the Georgian house number 45*

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The next issue of the Journal (the summer issue) will be published about the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Any contributions (letters, articles, etc.) should be with the Editor no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> June.

## Chairman's Report

What a splendid year this has been for our History Society. We started off with three walks during the summer which gave three very different perspectives of our district. First of all John Berry took us round the Mill Yard and with a significant input by David Brockbank and we learned a great deal about the history of this important feature of Staveley's ongoing history. In June, with the help of Nick Pighills, we learned about the 'house that never was' and visited its garden adjacent to Brockstones in Kentmere and then in July we had a guided tour of Ings and Grassgarth with Tony Priestley. These walks were properly recorded in previous *Journals* but we mustn't forget what a wealth of history lies just on our doorstep and our thanks are due to those who led these excursions and opened our eyes.



Our winter season has been similarly stimulating. Andy Lowe led us on a photographic journey through Lakeland architecture over the centuries. Then in November, due to the illness of our programmed speaker Ken Broadhurst, John Berry stepped in a very short notice with his account of the arrival of the turnpike in Staveley. For those who missed it the story is re-told later in this *Journal*. We have since heard about the 'Baroness of Belsfield' from Ian Jones, Dick Smith told us about railways which were planned for the Lake District but never built; we have looked at housing in South Lakeland in the hundred years after 1850 with Jean Turnbull and most recently the fascinating story of the Shorts flying boat factory at Windermere during the second world war. What a variety of topics. What a first class programme of good speakers. We are indeed fortunate in having such an enthusiastic committee to pool their information ideas and draw up such an interesting programme. We could not have wished for a better mix of topics with visiting speakers as well as those from our own membership. We are very grateful to them and ever mindful of the time and effort that has to be put into making a successful presentation.

However, good as our meetings are, they are only a part of the work of this very successful history society. And where would we be without our hard-working committee? After the last Annual Meeting we were pleased to welcome Don Morris not only as librarian for the society but also onto the committee and he quickly became meetings secretary and speaker finder. It is not an easy task and we are indebted to him for his efforts. Next year's winter programme is already arranged. During the year we were sorry to lose Peter Noble from the committee but we were please to co-opt Margaret Beck. I am proud to be chairman of this society but it is the enthusiasm of the members of your committee which sustains the interest and keeps the society moving forward. John Berry is a tower of strength who has continued to sift and sort our archives and the wealth of resources which belong to the society. In addition he has continued to develop the *Journal* into one of the best around and has also found time to produce the article on the turnpike and is in the process of writing

an occasional paper on the history of the Eagle and Child. This should be complete by the time you read this report.

My thanks are due to Mike Houston and Pat Ball who bring a wealth of experience and interest in local history - Mike with his particular interest in oral history and Pat who also brings the advantages of his connections with CWAAS. We are also indebted to David Hooson who keeps the finances in good order and to Arthur Lloyd for his independent examination of the accounts. We haven't seen so much of Zoe Atkinson this year as she is taking time to look after her new baby. We congratulate her on Annie's safe arrival and send warmest thanks for all that she was doing in sorting and cataloguing the vast collection of photographs which are in our possession. They are now on disk and more easily accessible.

We are still looking for new committee members to take an interest in smaller study groups of aspects of our local history. We will again be encouraging members to come along to our committee meetings to see what goes on and perhaps contribute to some of the discussions. We are fortunate that David and Marjorie Hooson host our meetings in their house and again we are very grateful for their hospitality.

This year we have had two unusual projects. With the parish councils we are actively engaged in arranging for the placing of a 'three townships' plaque near the footbridge which crosses from Windermere Road to Beck Nook and we are also sponsoring the re-siting of the Tyson Memorial stone which remained in the Wesleyan Chapel opposite Scroggs Close after it had fallen into disuse. Arrangements are now in hand for the memorial to be installed in St James's Parish Church.

My own connection with the Cumbria Local History Federation provides us with first hand information of what is going on in history societies all over the county. It was good that so many of our members attended their annual convention at the University of Cumbria at Newton Rigg last September. One of the topics under discussion was the new interest in the Victoria County History project which although started at the beginning of the last century, never included Westmorland. This situation is due to change and it could be that local history societies like ours could be involved in the development and completion of this significant piece of work.

We have a great deal to look forward to. Watch this space!

*Iain Johnston*

## **Oral History progress**

Thanks to sterling efforts by member Phillip Booth, our backlog of tape transcriptions is getting steadily smaller. Starting with the next issue of the *Journal*, a series of articles entitled *Tales from the Tapes* will tell some of the interesting stories about Staveley's history revealed by the interviewees.

*Mike Houston*

## Main Street's missing cottages

Have you ever wondered why the cottages and shops on the east side of Main Street have a gap in their numbering between 35 and 47? What happened to those in-between numbers? Houses, flats, a shop, a café, an abattoir, a cowshed, a bakery, a



The date plate from number 41

hairdresser's, a builder's yard, a firelighter factory, a butcher's shop, a temporary home for Staveley Players – all of these were once in this vicinity on Main Street but have disappeared.

Those of our members who have lived all their lives in Staveley will know part of the answer; the cottages disappeared in the 1960s as part of the County Council's road improvement scheme, as the Alec Row cottages had done a decade earlier.

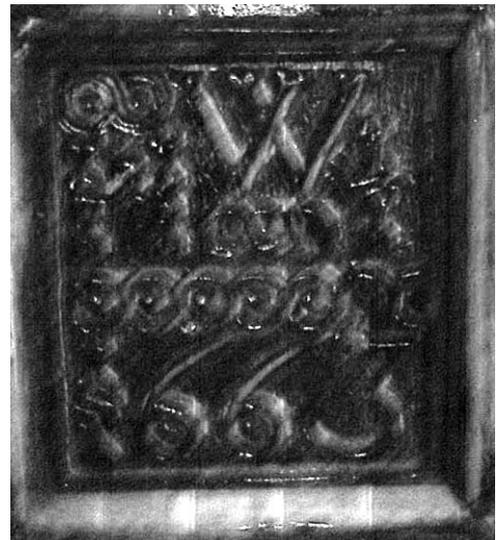
Photographs of Main Street taken early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century show the end view of the cottages. The *Journal's* cover photo is one of two in our archive taken about 1900.

The large Georgian house facing south along Main Street is (or was) number 45. On the right in the foreground is the doorway of the Duke William Hotel beyond which (foreshortened in the photograph) are the cottages between there and the building where the Spar shop now stands and the once narrow entrance into Back Lane.

So what is the history of these properties and when did they disappear? It seems that they were built by John Wilson in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A date stone previously set into the wall of one of no. 41 bears the date 1769 and the initials W.W.H. The stone was taken to Common Head

when the buildings in Main Street were demolished. In addition a spice cupboard was also removed and taken to Common Head. The date on the spice cupboard is a puzzle and it may have been that it had been in the Wilson's previous property before they built their house in Main Street.



The centre inscription on the spice box recovered from No. 41

For the first 100 years of their life evidence is pretty sparse but according to the Corn Rent Map (1836) the imposing building at the end of the row at the junction of Main Street and Back Lane (no. 45) which features in the later photographs was a house and shop belonging to John Wilson and was occupied in part by himself and partly by

Geoffrey Nevinson. Later this property was transferred to John Hayton and stables were added (no. 43) with access from Back Lane. Next door (no 41) was a house facing Main Street where John Wilson lived. It had a long garden at the rear. Subsequently this property was also transferred to John Hayton who created two cottages which were let to Richard Haresnape and Mary Greenbank.

The cottage at no. 39 was at that time owned and occupied by Nathaniel Garnett, after his death it was let to Henry Mercer. Part of that property which faced onto Back Lane was another cottage that also belonged to Nathaniel Garnett and was let to John Grisedale. Next door on Main Street was a house and shop with a garden to the rear owned and occupied by Thomas Atkinson. Later it became the property of Marian Thexton and was occupied by Michael Walker. An additional cottage was occupied by John Moor. Cottages 31 and 33 were owned by John Wilson and occupied by J Swidenbank and others but later by Benjamin Turton and subsequently by nephew Charles Turton, the bobbin-makers.

That sets the picture in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

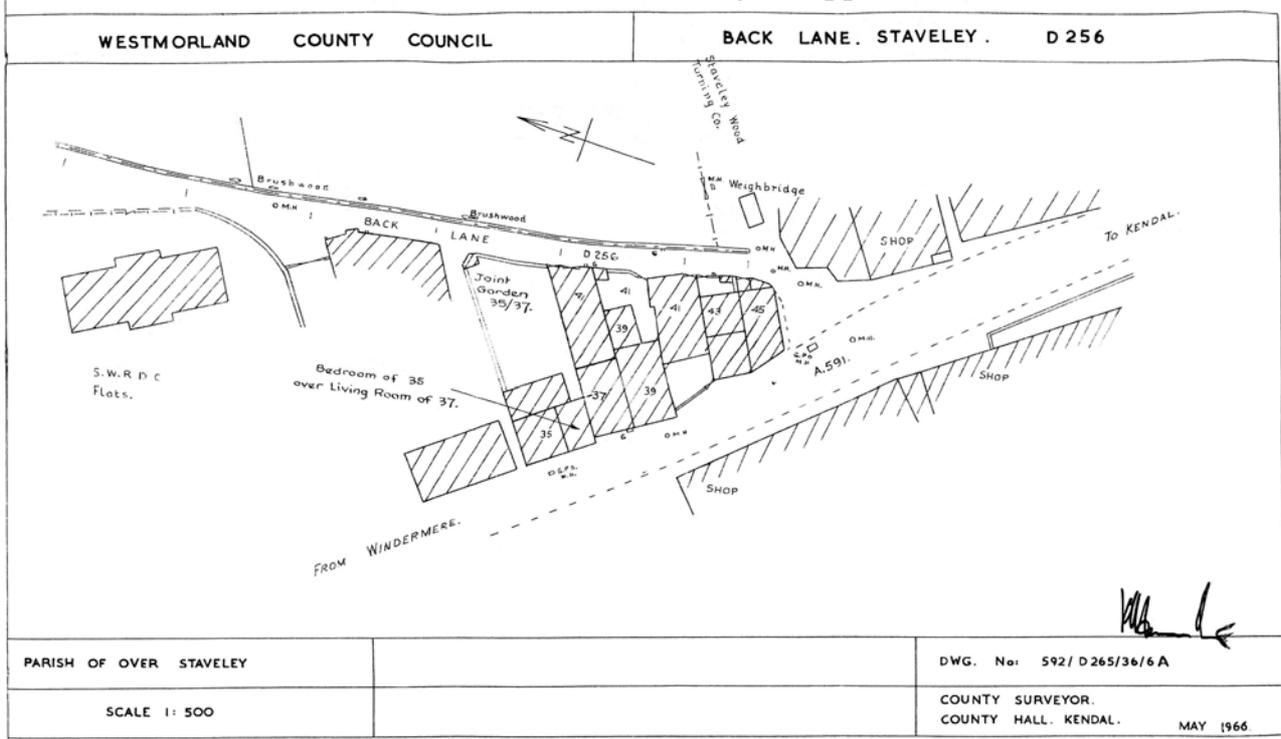


Main Street around 1920. The shop front on number 45 can be clearly seen

We know that in 1851, number 39 was managed by the trustees of the late Nathan Garnett, Rev. James Godmond Elleray, (whose memory was recorded in a window of St Margaret's Tower), and Benjamin Turton. Since Garnett's death the income from the property went to his wife Hannah who died in May 1854. James Dickinson then purchased the property for £130 including the barn and outbuildings which opened onto Back Lane – a much narrower thoroughfare than that which bears the name

nowadays. The property included the hayloft and cow-house which eventually was replaced by the garden of the property now known as 'Renew'.

Let us therefore concentrate on the houses which have apparently disappeared. By the time the County Council's plan (below) was produced little had changed. There was still a row of properties on the eastern side of Main Street numbered from 25 to 45 then continuing southwards across Back Lane and the numbers continued from 47 onwards. There are also three or four cottages in Back Lane itself behind no. 29 – 33. By 1910 No. 37 was owned by a Mr Gibson but occupied by a W Usher. One change that became obvious soon after was that no 37 gradually became part of No. 35. To begin with the first floor was taken over leaving a flat on the ground floor and later it all became one house. In effect No. 37 had already disappeared.



#### Westmorland County Council's plan of the cottages before demolition in 1966

By 1906 no. 39 was owned by Jane Procter who remained there until her death in 1933 when the property transferred to William Procter. William manufactured firelighters and remained there until his retirement in 1942. He then moved to Preston handing over the property to his daughter Mary Agnes Eastham. After her day Edwin Brockbank bought the property and later it was used by the Staveley Players as a rehearsal and practice room upstairs and a studio on the ground floor where Mrs Park gave dancing lessons. Ken Bell's hairdressing salon was in the adjacent building.

No 41 was known as "Hardshift" and in 1906 was occupied by a John Hayton (who was a grocer) and his wife Elizabeth. He had inherited the property from his father, also a John Hayton, who had died intestate in 1879. The property included a slaughterhouse which had belonged to the Lord of the Manor a title which by then was shared between the Earl of Lonsdale and Lieut. Col. J F Bagot MP. It may have been in these buildings facing Back Lane that William Procter's firelighter factory

developed. The firelighters were made from resin mixed with sawdust from the bobbin mills, boiled together and allowed to cool in moulds. These were sold in shops in Staveley and taken farther afield by horse and later with a horse and flat as far as Grange.

In 1920 this property was transferred to Thomas Clayton a builder who sold it on to Thomas Storey in 1934. The story becomes confused but it is clear that this property was “acquired” by the Westminster Bank in 1946 before transfer to Edwin Brockbank in 1948.

Little evidence appears to exist about no. 43 but it is clear that it became in part a builder’s yard and in part a bakery and was annexed to and eventually became a part of no. 45. Latterly, this was the site of Clements Bakery with windows facing southwards along Main Street. When the building was taken over the family moved across the end of Back Lane into the premises now occupied by Colophon. It had previously been Medcalfe’s hairdressers but it became the Kozy Kafé

By compulsory purchase, the County Council became the owner of Nos. 37 to 45 and adjacent buildings in 1964 and they sold the land on which had stood the cow-house, hayloft and former abattoir to Edward Coward in 1966 who then built himself a new dwelling (Renew).

Nos 39, 41, 43 and 45 were demolished to make a better entrance into the mill yard and to realign and widen Back Lane. One of the reasons for the demolition and widening was the major traffic jams that happened from time to time when an articulated vehicle had difficulty in entering or leaving the mill yard.

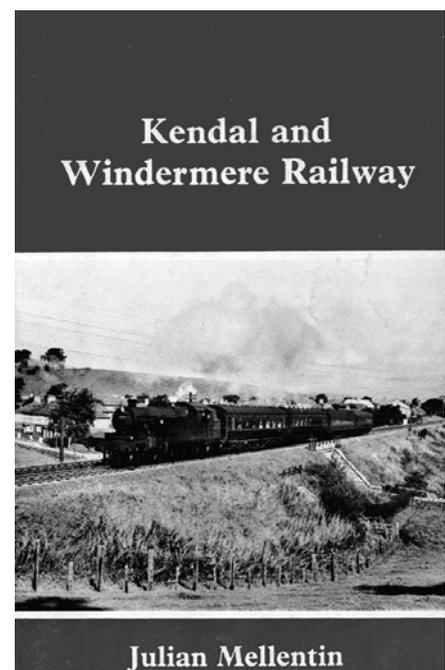
*Compiled by Iain Johnston with significant input from Clare Brockbank and Mary Smith; information on the property deeds kindly supplied by Jack Castling.*

## **From the Library collection**

### ***Kendal and Windermere Railway,*** ***Julian Mellentin, Dalesman Books, 1980***

Dick Smith gave the society an excellent talk on stillborn railways in our area earlier last year. He is the author of a well illustrated book on the Windermere line. This book is not only still in print but also in our library. However, did you know that there was an earlier book on the same subject written about 15 years before by Julian Mellentin?

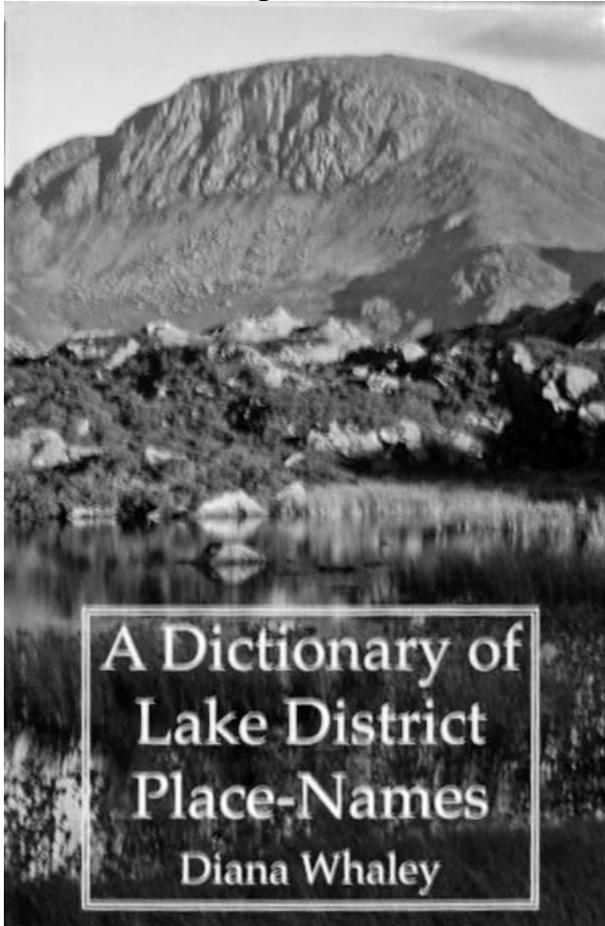
The remarkable thing about the little Dalesman booklet is that Julian was still at Kendal Grammar School when he wrote it. Perhaps some of you knew him? The format of the booklet is to take each of the five stations in turn and, besides giving a potted history, to record



the reminiscences of railway employees who were working, or had worked, at each station. It isn't as authoritative as Dick Smith's book but it is an enjoyable read nonetheless.

***A Dictionary of Lake District Place-Names,*  
Diana Whaley, English Place-Name Society, 2006. ISBN 0904 899 726**

Have you ever wondered where names like Grasmere or Grassgarth came from or what the names really meant? If so, this book, a relatively recent acquisition by the library is just the book for you. It is written by Diana Whaley a lecturer at the School of English Literature, Language & Linguistics at the University of Newcastle. A perusal of the book quickly demonstrates she has a deep love of the Lake District. And perusing is all this book is designed for, though once you delve into this for one item it is hard to put it down.



I cannot do better than quote the introduction to the book from the title page: *This book is a guide to the place-names of the English Lake-District from the earliest times to the twentieth century. It is based on previous scholarship and fresh research and combines detailed and authoritative commentary on the names with insights into the setting, languages and history which gave rise to them. It will prove absorbing reading and an important resource for anyone interested in the past of the region and the origins of its names.* It is hard to argue with that description and the book has a splendid set of photographs and a detailed bibliography. If you don't get your own copy make sure you borrow the library copy.

Finally, as an example, here is part of the Staveley entry:

Staveley is 'the clearing where staves or poles are obtained', from OE *stafa*, plural of *stæf* 'stave, staff' plus OE *leah* 'clearing, woodland' *Stæf* occurs 'usually where staves were obtained or where they were used as marks'; the former seems more likely in these areas, still heavily wooded. The two parts of Staveley were distinguished by the feudal affixes *Gamel* and *Godemund*, then from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century by Over (etymologically from OE *uferra* 'upper' and Nether (OE *neodera* 'lower')

*Don Morris*

## The Turnpike comes to Staveley

To understand the significance of the coming of the Turnpike, we need to look at what was there before. Our local roads existed mainly for foot and horseback traffic; despite the Romans having had wheeled traffic, there was little of it around in the Lake District until the late 18<sup>th</sup> c.

From the passing of a law in 1555, it was the responsibility of each Parish to repair all its own roads. Every able-bodied man was supposed to put in 4 days (later amended to 6 days) labour to help with the maintenance. The better off would pay someone else to do their 6 days for them.

The Parish Constable, via Township ‘Surveyors of the Highways’ – usually local yeoman farmers – made all the arrangements and co-ordinated the work. Some were better at it than others, and many Townships could not afford to keep their roads in good repair.



The nearest current equivalent to the sort of roads we are talking about is the bridleway; a good modern example is the road from Staveley to Sadgill, (Longsleddale) beyond the end of the surfaced part at Park House. A modern photo of this is seen opposite.

In 1675 Ogilvy produced his strip maps showing the main routes across the Lake District, leading to more people attempting to journey along the roads. Celia Fiennes circa 1700 describes the roads *capable of taking only narrow horse carts like wheelbarrows*; this was despite the law requiring a minimum width of 8 feet from 1691 onwards.

In the south east of England, where traffic was heaviest, they tried to fine the local parishes and to increase the labour days to 12 – but to no avail. The first Turnpike roads – i.e. roads where the user had to pay a fee or toll to pass – were authorised in the south in 1695 – despite much opposition to the tolls. Turnpike mania – similar to the railway mania 100 years later – covered the years 1751 to 1772 when 389 new Turnpikes were authorised.

The Turnpike from Kendal to Ambleside was part of this boom and was authorised in 1761. The trustees met for the first time on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1762. On 26<sup>th</sup> August they

agreed to the construction of a Toll House at Staveley and advertised for its construction a few days later. On the 16<sup>th</sup> October they agreed to erect gates, and the following April they made their first payment to the builder, Christopher Mitchel. Finally on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 1763, the first tolls were collected at Staveley.

The first full time toll-gatherer, James Hodgson, was appointed in February 1764. In the April of that year, the trustees authorised a 'side gate' to be erected at Barley Bridge. Hodgson was an excellent book-keeper and his accounts for the period 1763 to 1774 are available to view in the Kendal Record Office. The monthly tolls average between £3/10/- and £4/10/-; around £50 per annum. Hodgson's records for some months even show the categories of tolls – mainly for horses.

Hodgson was replaced by a John Cooke who was very lax in his accounting. The minutes of the Trustees meetings refer a number of times to Cooke not passing over his takings. Possibly recognising the shortcomings of directly employed toll-gatherers, instead of direct appointments, the Trustees decided to 'auction' or franchise the toll-house livings. In 1783 the Staveley Toll-house was let to Stephen Thompson and Thomas Robinson for a yearly rent of £49/5/- payable fortnightly.

From 1765 onwards various contracts were let for repairs or reconstruction of the road itself. The new section from Misset gate to 'a mile beyond Ings Chapelry' was one of the first, being part of an alternative route to the Ogilvy one via Broad Gate; this new route passed over Bannerigg and went via Orrest Head. 1770 saw the completion from the north end of Staveley to Reston and the authorisation (at 4s 8d per rood) from Ratherheath to Staveley Toll-house. The works were obviously of a good standard, as traveller Arthur Young in 1771 noted: *Turnpike, now making, what is finished is as good, firm, level a road as any in the world.*

Also in 1771, the contractor was authorised to make up the road from the Eagle & Child *House stone* to the Toll-house at 8/- per rood. A Mr Reginald Remington was required to erect *a sufficient battlement* at Stock Bridge beck at the Trustees expense.

In 1773 an advert was to be placed for letting and making up the road from *Widow Farrer's field through Staveley to an ash tree in Thomas Harrison's field by the waterside below the bridge in Staveley.* The 'side gate' at Barley Bridge was found to be difficult to staff, and there are various entries regarding its viability. However, in 1782 an advert was authorised for a Toll-house at Barley Bridge. There is no subsequent reference so it is assumed that this never went ahead.

The trustees were not afraid to protect their interests wherever necessary. In December 1764 they issued a warrant against Robert Vicars the younger for permitting cattle to pass through his grounds and avoid payment. In 1831 Thomas Taylor (owner of the large Georgian house part of which now forms the Chemist's shop) was requested to remove steps put down at the end of his house into the road. The same year they offered Mr Cookson £2/16/- for land and 4s per rood for building

a new wall. Mr Cookson owned land and a cottage where the old Primitive Methodist Chapel now stands.

Road construction in those days, followed the methods developed by Telford and McAdam. Telford favoured a graded construction similar to that adopted by the Romans. McAdam's method was to use a deep covering of smaller stones, minimum 8 inches deep and using stones of about 1 inch diameter. Both methods used a central camber and had side drainage.

In 1824 a new Act was passed for *effectually repairing and improving so much of the road from Keswick ... to Kirkby in Kendal*. In order to finance these repairs the Trustees managed to let the Staveley & Plumgarths Toll-houses for £494 per annum in 1826, but in 1828, they had to offer a rebate of £100 for the two years past 'for falling off in carriage' and a further £50 for the final year of the contract. In the next contract, on 28 Feb 1832 – Staveley and Plumgarths were let to George Beecham for the more reasonable sum of £354 per annum. Finally, on 6 March 1838, Limestone mileposts were ordered for the route.

The coming of the railway in 1847 was to spell the beginning of the end of the turnpike between Kendal and Birthwaite (Windermere) as a commercial entity. The railway offered faster and cheaper transit. The turnpike dragged on for several years until the end finally came for the Staveley toll-house in 1870, when the Trustees proposed abolishing tolls between Kendal and Birthwaite because of declining revenue.

The remainder of the route dragged on for a few more years; the final leases for the remaining Toll-houses were let in 1874, 10 months at £950. The winding up of the Turnpike trust came on 23 Dec 1875 with the balance on the books, together with ongoing liabilities, passing to the Townships through which the Turnpike passed. In the subsequent settlements, Nether Staveley received £36/10s/5d; Over Staveley £12/9s/7d and Hugill £ 70/3s/6d. The roads finally passed to the new County Councils some 10 years later, and surface sealing began in about 1910 – called 'tar-macadam' though McAdam himself had died in 1836.

It is a popular misconception that all the original turnpikes eventually became today's 'A' and 'B' roads in the 1930s. Some turnpikes were re-aligned as the amount of wheeled traffic increased in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and some were abandoned in favour of an alternative route. However, it was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that any sections of the original turnpike in the Staveley Parishes were abandoned.

Not far from Staveley, the original turnpike road over Shap was one of those modified during the early 1800s. McAdam was the engineer. Much of the original route is still visible and walkable from just above Hucks Bridge along to the summit. Further afield, over the border into Yorkshire, another example of an abandoned turnpike can be seen, in this case the route was not simply moved to a better

alignment with easier gradients, as in the case of Shap, but abandoned entirely due to changed circumstances. The turnpike from Ribbleshead to Bainbridge, originally a Roman Road, was abandoned when the market town of Hawes was developed and became the preferred destination. The old turnpike remains as a bridleway and as part of both the *Dales Way* and the *Pennine Way*.



The abandoned turnpike at Ribbleshead

With Acknowledgements to Paul Hindle's book 'Roads and Trackways of the Lake District' (1984) a copy of which is in our library collection. There is also a later version

(1998) in Kendal Library.

*John Berry*

## Financial Accounts for the year 2008

For the benefit of members unable to attend the Society's Annual General Meeting the following paragraphs highlight the main items of the income and Expenditure Accounts as presented to the meeting on 14 April 2009.

The chief source of income was membership subscriptions which were somewhat more than in 2007 due to an increase in the number of members. Three secondary income sources are: Sales of the "Lakeland Valley Through Time" book; Bank Interest and a figure relating to Donations to the James Tyson Memorial Fund (to meet part of the cost of installing the plaque in St. James' Church). Sales of Occasional Papers and profit from sales of the Staveley Walks Book together with other small amounts helped to produce an income figure in excess of £2,000, an increase of some £400 on the 2007 total.

Expenditure in the 12 month period is considerably less than total income. Speaker fees/expenses show a large increase on the previous year whilst the fee for the use of the school hall is the same as in 2007. Purchase of a digital projector is the main item of expenditure followed by the cost of producing the three issues of the Society's Journal. Other minor amounts are broadly in line with figures in the 2007 accounts.

Credit balances in both Current and Deposit Bank Accounts at 31/12/08 show that the Society's finances are in a healthy state.

Copies of the full accounts are available to members on request to the Treasurer.

Mr Arthur Lloyd has once again checked the recorded entries and found the Society's books to be in order. Our thanks are due to him.

*David Hooson (Hon. Treasurer)*