

Staveley & District History Society

Journal Winter 2005/6

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The next issue of the Journal (the AGM issue) will be published on the 11th April 2006. Any contributions (letters, articles, etc.) should be with the Editor no later than the meeting on 14th March.

Editorial

Those readers who were around when the Society was first started will no doubt recall that it was intended that it should be an 'active' group, not one where members simply sat back and listened to lectures from visiting speakers. Over the past 12 months, for fairly obvious reasons, we have been reviewing what has been achieved by the Society, and where now we should be concentrating our efforts.



One of our first priorities has been to investigate the great pile of files and notes bequeathed to us by Joe Scott. This is no mean task, and will no doubt take us at least until the end of 2006 to finally catalogue what we have. Joe himself had realised this was necessary some time before his unfortunate demise and had started to make lists of what was in the various filing boxes; we are simply continuing where he left off.

In previous issues of the Journal we have referred to the work of the Oral History Group, and we have now decided that despite the backlog of tapes not yet transcribed, we must continue with recordings of local personalities before their individual knowledge of local history is lost forever. If you would like to get involved, or if you can suggest some local person who you feel ought to be recorded, then please contact Mike Houston.

My own contribution, apart from the Journal and the web site, has been to get as much as possible of our records transferred into computer files, so that they can be stored on compact disks or DVDs. At present, all the 'old' slides (pre-1992) and all photo prints from the collection are transferred, as are about one half of the 'new' slides – post 1992. It is worth remembering that history starts yesterday, and we constantly have to include new photographs in our collection as views change due to building works etc. We are hoping to re-convene the 'photographic group' in the near future to keep our records up to date, and to start a new 'buildings' group to record details of the interesting vernacular buildings in our area. Contact any member of the committee if you are interested in either of these.

John Berry

Staveley & District History Society 15th anniversary

Next year, 2006, will be the 15th anniversary of the founding of SDHS. We are hoping to mount an exhibition in the village during August and this note is an early call for members to let us know of any interesting memorabilia they may hold and would be willing to loan for the exhibition. Please contact Pat Ball in the first instance.

Sickle Mills at Scroggs and Seed Howe

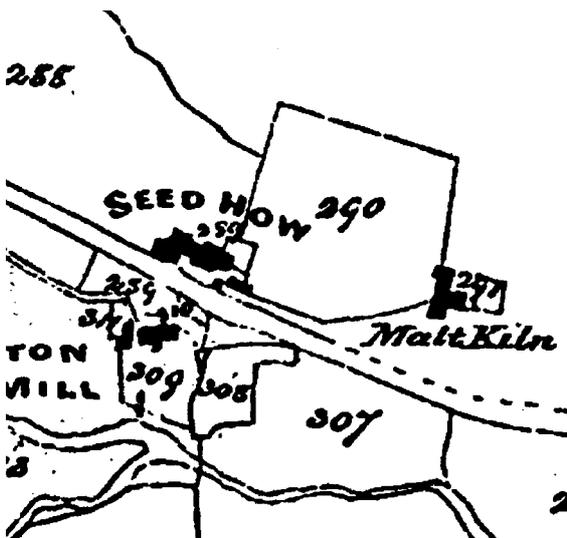
Scroggs

In 1689, George Jopson, who had a fulling mill at Scroggs sold to John Jackson the right to build a sickle mill on to it, using the same dam. In 1747 Jackson leased his part of the mill complex to Edward Jackson, Blacksmith, probably a relation, who carried on the trade¹, and in 1800 Ann Jackson, widow, (Edward's widow?) sold the sickle mill at Scroggs, now in disrepair, to Robert Braithwaite of Barley Bridge, for £10². At this time the other part of Scroggs mill belonged to the Church, to whom George Jopson had in 1696 left it in his will to help to pay for Staveley School. It made sense in 1800 to invest in the rising trade of bobbin turning, and Braithwaite planned to do this, but the curate refused to pay his half the cost, so Braithwaite "rebuilt the mill and converted the whole of it to a bobbin mill."³

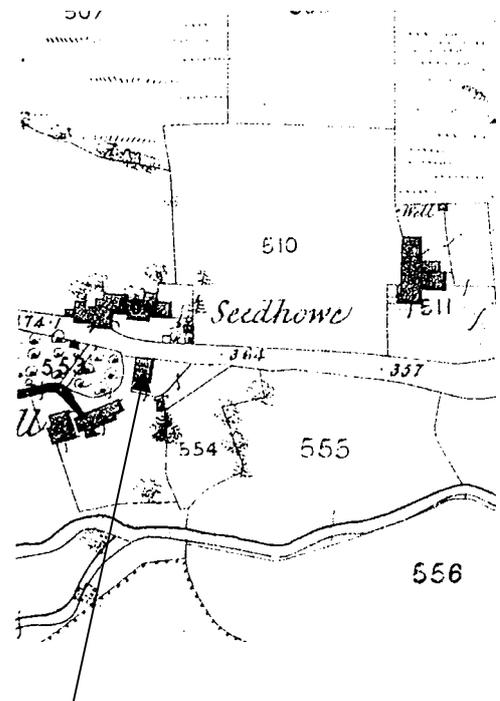
Seed Howe

Meanwhile some Jacksons appear at Seed Howe. In 1811 Richard Jackson, yeoman paid £37.6.8 to Lord Lonsdale for the freehold of "a Cottage, garden and a field at Newgate".⁴ Was he a descendant of the Scroggs Jacksons who was bringing the family sickle-making skills to Seed Howe? Seed Howe was beside Reston corn mill, with its water supply, in which a sickle mill here could share. At any rate we find him in 1829⁵ as a "Sickle maker of Seed How", and in the Corn Rent Survey of 1836 he is owner/occupier of 9 acres there.

Corn Rent Map 1836



1858 OS Map



Probable former sickle mill building

The sickle mill must have been on land south of the Windermere Rd, to be able to use the water power from the Reston Mill leat.

In 1847 Richard Jackson sold up. Perhaps he was perhaps getting old, perhaps the sickle-making business was declining. It was in 1847 that the railway reached Staveley, so that sickles and other tools could be brought quickly and cheaply from Sheffield or Birmingham and would undersell small-scale local production. For whatever reason the following advert appeared in the Gazette on July 3, 1847:

The Sale by Auction of all Mr. Richard Jackson's property at Seed How, Hugil in Staveley:

Household Furniture and Sickle Maker's Stock-in-Trade.

- a) Farming stock, Husbandry Implements, Dairy Utensils, Two valuable high-bred Dairy Cows, One Fat Cow, One Good Work Mare and Foal, One Superior 2-year old Colt by Voltaire, One Store Pig, two Breeding Sows, 4 acres Grass, qty. of Manure, Carts, Wheels, Ploughs Single & Double Harrows, Stitch Harrow, Winnowing Machine, Borrows, Rakes, Scythes, Hooks, Forks, Flails, Spades etc., Anvils, Bellows, Benches, Hammers, Vices, Swages, Tongs, Tools, Steel and Iron Bars, Rods, etc.*
- b) A substantial Dwelling House, and Dairy, Cowhouses, Stables, Piggeries, Outbuildings, and a small detached Cottage with over 13 acres of highly cultivated rich Meadow Arable and Pasture land, well fenced and watered and choice Orchard and Productive Garden.*
- c) Also a Sickle Mill and Smithy with Water-power Forge, Two Water Wheels, Forge Hammers etc, all good going, gears in excellent repair. Never failing Water supply.*

It looks as if that was the end of sickle-making at Seed Howe, because in 1851 the census shows two households there:- Hayton Mounsey, aged 46, miller, maltster and farmer, with his wife, son and daughter and aged mother-in-law, and Mary Jackson, Widow, aged 81, pauper and her son Robert Jackson, 47, accountant.

The buildings at Seed Howe look much the same on the 1836 and on 1858 maps, but by 1898 their plan is much the same as it is today, a row of three dwellings above the road.

Joe Scott

(This article was written by the late Joe Scott in 2002, and as far as we know, has never been published before – Ed)

References

1. CRO Kendal, ref WDX/214;
2. CRO Kendal, ref WPR/68;
3. Charity Commission Report 1821, CRO Kendal;
4. Gatefoot Deeds;
5. Parson & White Directory, 1829

Electricity at Windermere

Electricity is taken for granted in the 21st century, but in the latter part of the 19th it was still something of a rarity. Kentmere residents will no doubt point out that in their locality it was still a rarity until 1963. Windermere was one of the pioneering electricity companies, and at one time (1933) considered extending its supplies to Staveley. Staveley had a connection with the Windermere company in that one of its employees, Billy Bethom (father of the late Bill) acted as adviser to Edwin Brockbank on all things electrical when the wood mill was generating its own supplies.

Electricity was first proposed in Windermere in 1892 as the bobbin industry went into decline. Mr. Frederick Fowkes, managing director of R.H. Fell & Son Ltd. in the Troutbeck Bridge mills, set about the establishment of a generating company using the waters of Trout Beck as its source of power. The new Company purchased the Mills and Freehold at Troutbeck Bridge known as Fells' Bobbin Mills and acquired the water power derived from the Trout Beck under a lease from Colonel Watson. A report on the viability of the proposal was prepared by a J.S. Raworth of the Brush Corporation, London and proposed, *inter alia*:

The price per unit in London is 8d but in less densely populated places it is more as for instance in Hastings & St. Leonards it is 10d.

I am of the opinion that one shilling per unit would be a fair price for Windermere but for purposes of this report I have assumed it to be 10d.

The Needful Machinery fixed plant, land & Buildings will absorb a Capital amount of £5250.

Obviously it was felt that there was plenty of money available in Windermere at the time, though by 1896 the Fell company decided to reduce the price to 6d after price comparisons had been made elsewhere with the main competitor, gas.

The first cables were laid from Troutbeck Bridge to Windermere Railway Station and Bowness Bay in early 1893 and by June of that year a 100 volt, 100 cycle supply of electricity was being given to five consumers; Windermere Hotel, Belsfield Hotel, Crown Hotel, Old England Hotel and Bay Villa. The new company itself was formally incorporated on 27th June 1894 and it was proposed to additionally acquire water powers at Newby Bridge and Backbarrow on the River Leven, the outfall of Lake Windermere and to generate and transmit electric energy at 10,000 volts to Ulverston, Grange and Kendal, as well as to Windermere and Ambleside. This scheme was never developed.

The distribution system steadily extended reaching Ambleside in 1901 and Grasmere in 1913. It will be noted that two cables were laid across Windermere Lake, one a

service cable to Belle Isle, the other a supply to Sawrey. Finally in 1936, a supply cable was laid from Staveley to Troutbeck Bridge by the Company in order to take a supply from the Central Electricity Board (CEB). The Troutbeck Bridge generators, which by then had been converted to diesel operation, were taken out of service and the generating station closed down. The photograph below shows some of the staff in the later phases of the operation.



Left to right: Sid Park, Chargehand Jointer; Sandy Robinson, Switchboard; Bill Bickley, Attendant; Charlie Bailey, Storeman; Tommy Sandham, Jointers mate; Billy Bethom, Chargehand Electrician.

Back in 1897, the new installation attracted the attention of the magazine *Lightning*; in the usual flowery language of the period it described Windermere in its 7th October issue:

The district is peculiar from an electrician's point of view. In Bowness there is a cluster of first-class hotels doing an almost exclusively summer trade; around them lie the usual country shops, of which the presidents are mostly philosophers: there is the bun shop kept by the sweetest old maid in the world, whose pies are just 'as nice as mother makes them'; and the country curiosity shop, where you can buy spinning wheels, grandfather's clocks, and mahogany cradles. North and south for miles the hill-sides are covered with beautiful mansions, whose owners live in paradise improved by the omission of the serpent and the addition of electric light.

Windermere and Bowness light their roads and lanes by glow lamps and moonbeams all the year round. Of the two I prefer the moonbeams, their variations are so beautiful, whereas the electric lamps shine on with a perverted persistency which annoys us by its mechanical regularity, for while we loiter in the lane the turbine drives the dynamo, and the electrician snores with the key under his pillow, none daring to make him afraid.

This is an ideal method of dealing with the light load: no coal and no wages – nothing but the music of the mill and the merry chuckle of the meters as all night long they sit and

*Sing a song o' sixpence
But never tell a lie,
Forty little units
Baked in a pie:
When the night is over
The meters cease to spin,
Forty little units
Make a lot of tin.*

Enough to make the dear old children of Israel turn in their graves when they think of what they missed in Jordan. They might have lighted the road from Jerusalem to Jericho for nothing, and paid a dividend out of the Hittites and Gergashites.

The article continues on in a similar vein, but one paragraph we must repeat to show by how much attitudes have changed since then:

It is almost too difficult to discuss dynamics at Windermere, the home of love and lassitude; but even these amenities involve labour, for we could not dream the happy hours away unless some industrious person wound the clock up. It is fortunate, therefore, that Nature has allowed herself to be coaxed into the position of a maid of all work to the dwellers in this modern Garden of Eden, where there are no snakes and woman is seen at her best - usually rowing a lazy man round the lake in a boat: that is because a woman can both talk and row at the same time; if the man were to row, the boat would stop.

Despite the closure of the generating plant, the original cable system carried on for many years later, frequency changers being used to convert from the CEB 50 cycle supply to the original 100 cycle supply to which the consumers transformers were attached.

John Berry

Much of the information in this article is taken from the papers of the British Electricity Authority Conference in Windermere, September 1950 which have been given to the Society by a member.

Mid 19th Century Staveley (Part 4)

This final extract from the late J.C. Robinson papers tells more of the equipping of St. James' Church and setting up the Shrovetide Party. Parts 1,2 and 3 appeared in earlier Journals.

Lighting: Having finished the [church] building, thought was now given to the other necessities. Lighting of some sort would be needed for services in winter. The principal property owners and inhabitants of Staveley had not only taken into consideration the possibility of forming a company to supply Staveley with gas but had taken the initial steps towards that end. But this was not yet accomplished. Now came to the church an offer from Bowness Parish Church, which enabled Staveley St James to be fitted with two chandeliers. Gas had come to Bowness Church and what is described as "the beautiful corona which lighted it" was presented to the new church at Staveley. Two chandeliers were made from one and thus the chancel and the nave could be illuminated - presumably by candles - Each consisted of a metal ring suspended from a crown. The rim was ornamented with crosses and fleur-de-lis and bore appropriate texts of scripture, and to it were fastened the arms which supported the lamps.

Stained glass: Then what was described as a most beautiful work of art was put in., A stained glass window in memory of the Reverend J.G. Ellerau was given by Mrs. Ellerau. The artists were Messrs Warrington & Sons of London who, says the *Gazette* "have treated the subjects chosen - Christ blessing little children, and his command to Peter "Feed my sheep" in their usual skilful and happy manner.... the beauty of the figures, the ornamental designs and the richness and purity of the coloured glass all contribute to make it a most beautiful work of art." (*I wouldn't agree; it has always appeared to me to be a very good example of the worst type of Victoriana but perhaps typical of the mid-nineteenth century Church decoration. J.C.R.*)

The Organ: In December 1865 we hear that the organ had become unfit to play on and Captain Hunt of Scroggs, Staveley, began to collect money for a new instrument and his call had been very freely answered. Messrs Wilkinson of Kendal contracted to build the new instrument, taking the old one in partial payment. It was so constructed as to allow additions at future times to be easily made. The present cost was stated to be ninety pounds. The opening service was held on September 26th 1866 when, notwithstanding the state of the weather, a large congregation assembled. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Canon Hornby, Vicar of Bury. Mr. Smallwood of Kendal, (To learners of the piano sixty years ago Smallwood's Piano Tutor was very familiar in the district; everybody used it!) had consented to open the organ and "gave the congregation a very favourable opinion of its strength and sweetness in the voluntaries he played at different parts of the service, as well as of its usefulness as an accompaniment to the voices of the choir." "The psalms of the day were, as well as the ordinary canticles, chanted well and heartily by the choir. At the conclusion of the service the hymn of joy and praise was sung in a very creditable manner, the choir

being without extra help.” A collection of £21 was made. The *Gazette* then gives the specification of the organ and concludes; “The instrument is generally admired for the sweetness and purity of its tone.”

First Confirmation in St James’s Church: On April 18th 1868 the first confirmation was held in the new church. Candidates came from Staveley, Burneside, Ings and Kentmere and their number one hundred and fifteen. “The Bishop of Carlisle delivered two earnest addresses and expressed himself highly gratified with the heartiness into which the service was entered into by the congregation, and especially with the spirit in which the candidates sang the hymns.”

Staveley’s musical Tradition: There was great musical interest at this time, and in June 1868 we read of a Choral Service in St. James’s Church, Staveley, at which the choir of the Parish Church, Lancaster assisted and where the singing of the choir was said to be “hearty, in good time and taste, and the music selected being such as could be appreciated by the congregation”. The preacher was the Rev. T.M. Gilbert, Heversham, and the collection of £8 was made towards the debt upon the spirelet. In 1870 we read of a full choral service being held in the church. “The chanting of the psalms for the evening was very good and the anthem (Psalm 102) by the late Mr. Scarisbrick (organist Kendal Parish Church) was well and heartily sung.” We have the first mention here of Mr. Henry Read - of Ings - as organist who “led the choir in a most efficient manner,” There was mention of him, however, earlier in 1866 when he was presented with a silver watch and appendages, at Ings. The watch had been subscribed for by ninety-eight of the chapelry of Ings “none being solicited out”. The chairman of the presentation gathering congratulated Harry on the good opinion which his neighbours had of him...and hoped the watch would ever remind him “a good name is better than riches”. On the watch was engraved “presented to Henry Read, Organist of Ings Church-December 23rd 1865,” (Harry Read was born in 1847.) His name is the first to be entered in the Staveley register (a new book which was started in July 1847). (*see Occasional Paper No.11 – Ed.*)

The Shrovetide Party: The Shrovetide Party was founded in 1863 when several ladies promised “trays” to help funds for the new church. This became an annual affair and seems to have continued on Shrove Tuesdays ever since. The surplus cakes were disposed of by auction. The good ladies of Staveley are stated “to be so careful to have enough that there is always a surplus” and this was in the early years disposed of by auction, by Mr. Adam Walker, Auctioneer. In 1868, at the end of February, the event was split, the tea being held in the National Schoolroom and the concert “through the kindness of Messrs Suart Brothers of Staveley”, who generously allowed their commodious new mill (New Gate) to be used for the concert in the evening, the task of entertaining so many guests at the tea-tables was much lessened, and the whole proceedings more comfortably got through. As in former years, a number of kind friends gave substantial assistance to the success of the entertainment by subscribing “trays”. At Staveley the subscription is paid not in kind but in money, a few ladies learned in all the mysteries of tea and cakes taking upon them to provide

whatever is necessary to the comfort of the guests. And most skilfully and happily they manage the work, so that it is no wonder that this gathering may already be looked upon as a permanent institution. Fully three hundred persons took tea; unfortunately not all at once, the room is sadly too small for such a thing, but in turns.

At seven o'clock the party re-assembled in Messrs Suart's mill. There was a wonderful treat in store for them in the musical performance of the juvenile brass band of the Kendal workhouse. The good taste and accurate time of the young musicians was much appreciated by the audience, and they received a hearty and deserved encore after the "Hallelujah" Chorus. There were readings from "Pickwick Papers" by Mr. Harrison; the Rev. W. Chaplin also gave a reading. "The last piece of fun at these entertainments is always under the management of Mr. Adam Walker, who put up for auction the surplus cakes" (This time the fun was abridged as, owing to the large number of guests there was but little left to dispose of.)

In 1870 we learn that interest and pleasure excited by these re-unions in no way suffers diminution. There were the same willing assistants to decorate the room, and the same kind ladies to enter with hearty readiness into the more important business of preparing large quantities of cake and bread annually in request. There were the same crowds of cheerful guests who, after having tasted the good things provided, waited with exemplary patience till the room could be re-arranged for the concert and there was the same densely packed room, the same difficulty to obtain seats and the same good-humored bearing with the heat and crushing caused by the gathering together of so many people into so small a room.

The Shrove Tuesday Party was in 1873 "from a heavy fall of snow most unpropitious". This time the schoolroom was tastefully decorated by a number of new mottoes, the work of an old parishioner during the winter evenings, richly bordered; also by several monograms in blue and silver. Though the roads were all but impossible about 100 persons gathered round the tables, at which the ladies presided with their accustomed kindness and liberality. This year Mr. William Johnson wielded the hammer most successfully, in the absence of Mr. Adam Walker, in dispensing of the surplus cakes. In January 1874 we have a record of a concert to help to raise a fund for improvements to the organ. In April 1875 a Staveley Augmentation Fund was brought into being at the instigation of the Venerable Archdeacon Cooper, Vicar of Kendal. Two ladies undertook a house-to-house visitation "for the purpose of adding a little to the above named fund". Altogether the sum of £26-7-6 was placed into the Archdeacon's hands for this purpose. The *Gazette* comments that though this sum in itself, may not seem large yet, coming as it does from a considerable number of by no means wealthy people, the cheerfulness and good feeling evinced in many cases where sums are awaiting the collectors, show the good of united efforts to raise the incomes of country curacies to a higher level proportionate to the great advance in most of the necessaries of life, beside furthering local exertions, the desire of those who have so energetically laboured in the movement.

J.C. Robinson

Staveley School History Prize 2005

Since its formation the Society has always maintained firm links with Staveley School – all our evening meetings have been held in the school hall. For several years now, we have organised, with the help of the School, an annual history prize and, as this was one of Joe Scott's many original ideas, it was decided to call it the "Joe Scott History Prize". The rules are fairly general but topics chosen must have some historical significance and should be connected with Staveley or, bearing in mind that several pupils come from the surrounding villages, the village where the pupil lives. Joe would have been delighted with this year's entries.

In all there were 28 scripts to be considered and it was evident that much time and effort had been devoted to the task by many of the pupils. The age of the computer has meant that the presentation was often very professional. This did not mean, however, that anyone using traditional longhand was at a disadvantage. Indeed one of the best pieces of work was meticulously presented in longhand. Because the standard was so good, it was decided to make several awards. Each entry was awarded a certificate with an encouraging remark. The main problem was to decide upon the winning script(s). In the event, because so many of the entries were of an equally high standard, it was agreed to award a prize of a book token to twelve of the pupils in addition to their certificates. These were presented in the school before the end of the summer term.

Needless to say, as we read through the entries, we ourselves learned a tremendous amount from the pupils' work. Among the many interesting revelations, we were informed that the bellows from the former smithy in Kentmere can still be seen there as a house feature; the foundations of the former signal box near Staveley's railway station are at the rear of someone's garden; the window sill outside the former butcher's shop in Burneside still bears the grooves where the butcher sharpened his knives; The Eagle and Child was formerly called The White Lion. One could go on and mention the hunting diaries of Walter Gaddum, the fact that Forestry Commission girls worked for almost two years in Craggy Wood during the war and that at time fields in Kentmere were given over to potato production. There was even a fascinating piece on the history of a house which was only one year old - certainly an original idea. Indeed some of the work was so interesting that we are thinking about the possibility of reproducing it in a future edition of the Journal or perhaps considering one of the interesting houses described for a possible future visit on one of our summer walks.

We believe that that the school should be thanked and congratulated on the excellent standard of the work. It is something with which Joe Scott would have been very pleased.

Iain Johnston and Mike Houston

School History Award Winners

We thought you might like to see a list of those Staveley schoolchildren who were given special awards this year and the variety of subjects chosen. The awards went to: Laurie Nuttall, *Old Forge Cottage*; Rebecca Tredwell, *Kendal-Windermere Railway*; George Milligan, *Braban House*; Elizabeth Crawford, *Crook*; Tilly Adcock, *Kendal Castle*; Frances Butcher, *Thirlmere*; Christopher Morphet, *Church View Burneside*; Joe Fallows, *Beck Nook*; Lawrence Lee, *Craggy Wood*; Katy Coleman, *Eagle & Child*; Ben Ridding, *Crosthwaite*; Callum Gallop, *Bobbin Mill Yard*.

More e-mail news

In issue 4 we referred to the 'lady from Kent' who was researching her family history; this story was picked up by one of our members who had met a family from France who were researching the same family. Thanks to the medium of e-mail, Kent and France are now in touch and we hope to hear the full story later.

Another contact, this time from the Journal, involves a family who were evacuated to Staveley during the war, and lived on Danes Row. They are now scattered around the world, and through e-mail we have received some stories of their time in Staveley. We hope to run an article on 'Wartime memories' in our next issue. Apart from the emails just received, we have some material in our Oral History archives which we can use, but if you have some stories you would like to include, then please let us know.

English Heritage Report on Blackbeck Gunpowder Works

EH have donated to the society a survey report of the Blackbeck Gunpowder Works. This may be borrowed from the Society's library.

The Blackbeck works were established from 1860-62 in wooded countryside some 2¼ miles west of Newby Bridge (NGR SD 334856) and about 1½miles north-west of Lowwood Works beside the River Leven (348838). Unlike the other six sites in the Lake District, which were water-powered (some adding auxiliary steam later), Blackbeck was throughout its working life, until 1928, powered by two steam engines, the small beck being inadequate. A note of interest to the Society is that from 1870-1896 the charcoal used in making gunpowder apparently came from the shavings produced in bobbin manufacture by Chadwick's mill at Staveley.

This new report is very similar to the one on Sedgwick, lavishly produced with 154 A4 pages printed on one side only and plastic comb-bound. The many illustrations are strikingly crisp and clear, and the colours, both of plans and of recent photographs, are bright, while the older photos appear to have been enhanced to great advantage.

Christopher Gregory