

# **Staveley & District History Society**

## **Journal Summer 2011**

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The views expressed in articles in this Journal are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Society.

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*Cover photo: Cropper's Ruston Hornsby 4wDM locomotive between St Oswald's Churchyard and the old school.*

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The next issue of the *Journal* (the Winter issue) will be published about the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Any contributions (letters, articles, etc.) should be with the Editor no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> October.

## From the President

What an eventful year we have had at the Staveley and District History Society! To celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, John Berry and the committee put on an extraordinary Anniversary Exhibition in the Roundhouse, the theme being 200 years of change. It was a triumph for those who organised and set it up and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended.



David Hooson retired as our Treasurer, a role he has fulfilled to the last penny as well as holding our bookstore and providing the committee with a meeting place AND tea and biscuits. Thank you David and Marjorie, a wonderful record. We welcome Roger Collinge as our new Treasurer who is bringing equal expertise to the job. Many thanks for taking on the role so ably fulfilled by David. John Hiley has taken over editorship of the Journal from John Berry who has fulfilled every role known to man in the History society and we are so glad John has agreed to lessen his burden.

Apart from our successful Exhibition we have had very good Summer Walks, I particularly wanted to go on the Sunderland Point one but was prevented. It was a wonderful day for it.

Looking ahead, our winter programme is one to look forward to. We expect capacity audiences as usual.

*Clare Brockbank*

## Was this the ‘severe affliction’?

Twenty years ago I was doing research into the Taylor families in the Staveley area. My great-grandfather was Robert Taylor, the Staveley blacksmith. I answered a letter in the Westmorland Gazette, from Doug and Elizabeth Taylor in Melbourne, Australia, requesting information about Taylors in Staveley. Doug’s ancestors, John and Isabella Taylor, married in 1819 and lived at Barley Bridge and Elphowe in the early nineteenth century. John was a farmer and mole catcher. They had several children. Two of their sons emigrated to Australia about 1856.

John Taylor died at the age of 51 in 1842, and because he seemed to be a prominent figure in the Staveley area, I searched the local press for an obituary. The Westmorland Gazette of 1842 reports: ‘*Taylor, Elphowe – On the 10<sup>th</sup> Sept (18<sup>th</sup>?) John Taylor, Age 51. Much reported. He laboured under a severe affliction for nine years, which he bore with Christian composure.*’ What was this ‘severe affliction’?

I sent this information to Doug and Elizabeth in Australia, who then wrote that a recent owner of Elphowe had found a wooden leg when they were removing an old ceiling in the farmhouse. What had happened to it subsequently was something of a mystery, but eventually I tracked down the missing limb to the Armitt Library, over the public library in Kelsick Road, Ambleside. Husband John and I were able to view the leg and take photographs, which were duly sent to Melbourne.



We were very impressed by what was a very old leg. We thought it was probably pre-Victorian since the Victorians were very sophisticated and favoured polished wood with brass, knobs and twiddles. This leg was heavy duty leather with wood and iron. It was probably made by a local cobbler with the blacksmith's help. The foot itself was articulated, a very clever piece of work. We were not sure when it could have been made but it was possibly early nineteenth century.

If John Taylor used the leg, it may have been made for him. Or was it a second hand relic of the Napoleonic wars? John Taylor's death certificate stated that John Taylor died on the 18<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1842 at Elph How, age 51 '*from the effects of a fractured leg.*' Maybe this was the result of an old amputation – or was he hobbling about on a wooden leg and broke the good one?

The leg is now on display in a glass case in the Armitt Museum on Rydal Road, Ambleside. A notice on the case says that the leg belonged to John Ireland of Elphowe though I do not think the finders of the leg knew who it had belonged

to. In 1856, Elphowe passed to Thomas Armstrong, John and Isabella Taylor's son-in-law. The Armstrong's daughter, Isabella married George Washington Ireland, whose family owned woollen mills in Staveley and Kendal for many years. They were very wealthy and lived at Elphowe in the latter years of the century. The leg may have belonged to John Ireland who built Low Mills, Kendal in 1805.

Maybe somebody knows the true story of the Elphowe leg?

*Gill Bower*

## Kentmere on the night of Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1911.

With the benefit of the recently released 1911 census and Enumerator's Summary books we can learn much about Kentmere in the spring of 1911. For instance, it had a population of 145 made up of 78 males and 67 females. Population statistics are available from as early as 1801 when Kentmere had 166 people, increasing to 212 in both 1811 and 1821 which is the all-time recorded high. By 1831 the population had decreased to 191 and in 2001, a mere 95. From 1841 we not only have the total population figures but also a breakdown of the number of males and females which in every case showed that there were always more males than females living in the valley.



Ena and Humphrey Lloyd, Mr Law  
Longhouses 1911

It was interesting to learn where the heads of families and their wives were born. One might assume that they were local but in 1911 only 33% of the heads of families were born in Kentmere while almost half had been born there in 1861. The wives of the heads of families were usually not local women as only 17% of the wives in 1911 were born in Kentmere compared to 31% in 1861.

Looking at the occupations of the heads of the family in 1911, most are associated with farming or the slate industry. Other occupations were clergyman, school teacher, artist and art craftsman (married to an author and living at Hallowbank Cottage), sub postmistress, gamekeeper, roadman and caretaker of the reservoir. Fifty years earlier, in 1861 all the occupations were agricultural with the exception of one that appears to be 'slate river' as well as a grocer's shop keeper, the schoolmaster, the gamekeeper, and William Hutchinson, living at Low Bridge Inn, who was the inn keeper – and that's another story!

For a hundred years (1841-1931) the residences in Kentmere number in the 30s. In 1841 there were 39 residences and in 1931 there were 35 with the low of 31 in both 1861 and again in 1901. The 1911 census lists 32 occupied residences, the largest with 12 rooms was Highbridge House followed by Brockstone and The Vicarage with 10 rooms each. The smallest residence was one called South View with two

rooms. The average residence in Kentmere in 1911 had six rooms, only one room less than Kentmere Hall.

The addresses listed in the 1911 census are: Kentmere Hall, Nook Cottage, Nook House, Croft head (The Nook), Croft Head, Greenhead, Grove, The Head, The Vicarage, Browtop, Raw Cottage, Rook Howe, Scale Cottage, Hartrigg, Reservoir Cottage, Dalehead (two residences occupied by quarrymen), Overend, Little Overend (uninhabited), Pouthowe, Fold Howe (uninhabited), Hallowbank, Hallowbank Cottage, Brockstone, Mount Pleasant, Maggs Howe, Highbridge House, Bridgestone, Highfold, Lowfold, Longhouses (uninhabited), Far Longhouses (uninhabited), Sawmill Cottage, South View (Temperance Hotel was scratched out), South View, Lowbridge and Kent Cottage (uninhabited).

Thus we have a glimpse into the township of Kentmere in the spring of 1911.

*Donna Fraser*

## A Mystery Photograph

*Donna Fraser writes:* This photo has been dated by a professional historian as being taken about 1860 based on such things as the style and fabric of the clothes worn, hair style, bonnet, pose, etc. The family who inherited the photo had deep roots in Kentmere on both sides of their family. I'm wondering if any member has seen this photo or have a similar copy in their collection. The photographers, Mowll & Morrison, are listed in Gore's Liverpool Directories from 1884 -1900 and quite possibly were operating before that time but not listed in directories. Could they have been roving photographers who had a stall at events, perhaps? I'd be pleased to hear from anyone who has any suggestions to help identify the couple. My contact details: Postal address: 1074 Eaglecrest Drive, Qualicum Beach, B.C., Canada V9K1E7. Email: [fraser-donna@shaw.ca](mailto:fraser-donna@shaw.ca)



## May Walk: Old Windermere

An intrepid group gathered outside St Mary's Church, Windermere, in doubtful weather on the second Tuesday in May for the first of our summer walks. Dorothy Wearden and Pat Campbell who had given a talk about Windermere at the last of our winter talks had prepared an interesting route tracing much of the development of the hamlets of Birthwaite and Applethwaite into a new village called Windermere after the coming of the railway in 1847. We visited numerous properties built at the time and some which had been there before the development took place including a small row of cottages which were in Birthwaite before the railway came. We were treated to an interesting and amusing commentary on the style and grandeur of the buildings as well as the history of many of them and the people who had lived in them with Pat and Dorothy picking out fascinating features of the architecture and numerous changes which had taken place.

The walk took us past many fine houses including the site of the former St Mary's College and The Terrace. This very impressive group of houses overlooks the station. They are some of the first examples of private homes in the village, reputedly designed by Augustus Pugin and built by Pattinsons who were responsible for many fine buildings, including the Windermere Hotel. The hotel overlooks Windermere Station (now a supermarket) still with its magnificent *porte cochere*. The weather held until the last few minutes and the group heartily endorsed the thanks given to our splendid guides.

*Iain Johnston*

## June Walk: The Tramway from Burneside to Cowan Head

On Tuesday 14th June twenty members gathered outside the Bryce Institute, Burneside, to follow the route of two former tramways. One was short and ran between Burneside Station and the paper mill; the other plied between the station and Cowan Head Mill. The tramways started life as 3' 6" gauge lines in 1814, thirty years after Charles James Cropper had bought the two mills from Cornelius Nicholson. The shorter line was converted to standard gauge in 1903, the



Cowan Head line around 1925, enabling the horse traction on both systems to be replaced by a Motorail "Simplex" petrol locomotive named Rachel. A Ruston Hornsby 4w DM locomotive was added in 1951.

From the Institute, the group walked down past the churchyard and old school where short sections of the old rails could be seen in the tarmac, as could a former pulp crusher on the near side of the river. After retracing steps to the station, members had a clear view of the route of the track towards Bowston. From the station the line went directly to Garnett House road-end through what is now private property and sports grounds. Here, Kath Hayhurst regaled us with vivid memories of a childhood spent at Garnett House when the track still operated. She produced a fascinating family rent book showing regular payments of £1 relating to the tramway.



The track now ran alongside the road through a "cutting" to Whitefoot Tip Wood, a former dumping site for waste slurry, where a short siding formerly led from the track. Here in 1954 the "Simplex" ran off the track and ended up in the slurry. From Whitefoot the track took the same line as the existing pavement

through the hamlet of Bowston to where the group halted at Winstanley Place. Here the old tramway crossed the road to Bowston Mill which closed in 1962. The former pulp shed, now a boatbuilder's, is all that remains, along with a sleeper embedded in the boat yard.

The track now left the road and, from Bowston weir, followed the Kent to Cowan Head along the present-day Dales Way. The final few hundred yards to Cowan Head slope fairly steeply but a gradually rising wall on the left indicates the gentler incline taken by the tramway. David Bowness, who used to work at the mill recalled an incident when a runaway wagon from Cowan Head sped past Bowston before coming to rest. A more embroidered version suggested it narrowly missed a Ribble 'bus on the way - a fitting tale to end an enjoyable evening!

We are indebted to David and Liz Bingham for much of the information used during the walk and included in this account.

*Mike Houston*

## July Walk: Sunderland Point

On 12<sup>th</sup> July around 20 members and guests journeyed to Sunderland Point for the last walk of the season. This tiny community is approached along a mile and a half of causeway, is set among the windswept marshes alongside the Lune Estuary and is regularly cut off by the tide. It has a fascinating history including its trade with the West Indies developed by Robert Lawson in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Our guide was Iris Birks who was born in the village and she gave a spirited and lively commentary on what life was like there when she was young. She took us round the area pointing out interesting features and linking them with the history of trade in rum and tobacco with Jamaica and punctuating her talk with anecdotes of her own experiences and those of her family.

Sunderland Point still maintains some of its former grandeur with the splendid houses, warehouses and buildings along the former quayside. They once stored the rum, tobacco and cotton and are the very stuff of smugglers' stories and intrigue. It is reputed that Sambo, a young, black cabin boy on one of the trading ships may have been the first black person to have been seen in the area and his master did not think it wise that he should venture into Lancaster. He fell ill and died in 1736 whilst the ship was at Sunderland and is buried near the sea overlooking Morecambe Bay.

It was a good walk with lots to see and lots to talk about. The weather was good, the tide was low, the guide was excellent and a very pleasant afternoon was spent by us all.

*Iain Johnston*

## Tales from the Tapes – Sam Crossley (part 3 of 3)

We would go down to Levens for some trees, and we had a wagon of our own at Woodturning and I volunteered to drive one we borrowed from Bethoms, an old Ford, and I got away set off and I got to going up Ratherheath, I thought, that's a nuisance having to pull up this lever on the - near the steering wheel - to go faster and slower and I got nearly to Kendal afore I realised there was a pedal for your feet. And anyhow we loaded up at Levens, I conked out in Kendal, had to jump out and crank it, two or three times and then we come to House of Correction hill, ah got so far up, ah thowt oh dear I don't know how to change gears. I had to change gear int' middle of t'hill quick enough - I had no idea, so I'd to stop and run back to the bottom again, and then slip it into bottom gear and chug right up House of Correction hill in bottom gear, wasn't half a steam when I got to the top, I got home but I never went again. Now you couldn't do that today would you? The police would be after you.

*Oh yes.*

Oh I'd never been on the road with a van or car or anything.

*Didn't you pass a test or anything like...*

Oh no, no I never passed a test, I was working the throttle off underneath the steering wheel, you know, that you used to set, just for ticking over.



SWTC display in Kendal Market 1951

After the war there was something called Bakelite, come out. That was making a few bob but it didn't seem to, didn't seem to get hold much, didn't bother us until plastic came and then, oh that... started making them out of plastic and that stopped us altogether. All we made then for a year or two was a few wire reels and some small bobbins for t' fishing industry called gossamer reels.

That they used to put fishing silk on for making flies, that's all we made and the automatic machine is still there now, where we left it. There's one in Kendal Museum, aye it still works, still there ready for... just turn the turbine on and it 'ud go. Connect it up to the turbine.

*Where were these made Sam, these machines? Do you know? Were they made locally?*

Yes, some were made at Fells at Troutbeck and some were made at Whites in Scotland, but... we had a good mechanic in't village then called Bert Braithwaite and he modernised them a bit. He made them bore the holes at the same time. Aye he was a good mechanic was Bert. Was handy for us to get bits and tools when we wanted them in the village. Aye he modernised them a bit, aye.

*Ah. You were saying about them coming into the plastic bobbins - was it about that time that they started turning handles and that?*

Aye, stepped up the handles after that. Aye but of course there were only half the workers, less than half the workers there now because the machine, more modernised now see, but there's one man working two tool handle machines, just feeding them automatic.

*And as I look at you Sam, your hands are perfect. You would not think you had ever worked among dangerous machinery.*

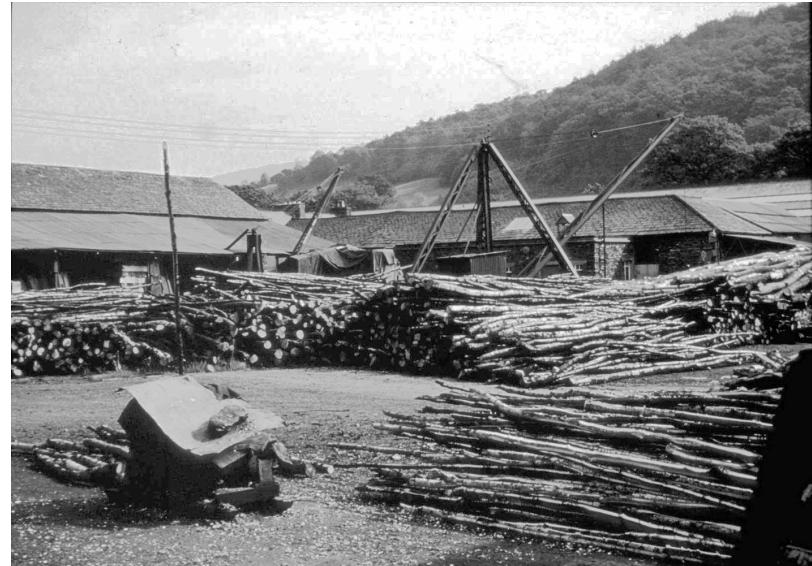
No.

*You've been wise.*

I do wall gapping now, a lot of wall gapping, putting walls up.

*Did you always do that Sam?*

No, no I started, getting it just... after the war. Aye after the war we started doing bits. I do quite a bit now. I do quite a bit up at Orrest Head, and I've put wall gaps up from Longsleddale, Kentmere, I used to do all the top of Kirkstone, right up behind Petts quarry. I used to have to walk right up to the, top, behind Petts quarry and put gaps up there. Aye I used to do all Kirkstone, down the Struggle and right on the top where the pub is. I used to put these, just in spare time, weekends and...



Coppice wood peeled and dried for reels - 1960

*And you get paid for that Sam?*

Yes, aye, I still do a bit.

*Ahah, and you were just self taught then Sam?*

Oh yes, aye, self taught.

*Because it's a skilful job, I mean you like build two walls and make them meet each other as a wall.*

Aye, they meet each other and the main thing is getting throughs in that reaches from back to front if you can, those are what holds the wall up.

*Then your cams on the top.*

And the cams on the top aye,

Yes.

Aye I'd go to Orrest Head and do quite a bit now.

*And who do you work for there? On Orrest Head?*

Listers.

*Harry is a solicitor in Kendal.*

Aye, you've got to keep active really, 'less its no good. No good just sitting around, day in and day out. Oh the bobbin turners and tool handle makers had different rules, different measurements. The tool handle makers had the conventional rule, you know - with sixteenths, eighth of an inch but the bobbin turners was a rule with fortieths on. They were a little more accurate, they were in fortieths.

*And that's your measure Sam?*

That's an old one that I used to use. I have another somewhere. I've two of these, they are in fortieths.

*Do you know? I've never seen that, I've never seen one of those. Those measured a fortieth of an inch?*

Aye they were a little more accurate than the tool handle, they were in thirty seconds, sixteenths, eighths you know, but the bobbin turners were in fortieths.

*But that stays permanently in Sam's pocket.*

Aye I use it now, yes if I'm doing owt. I've another somewhere. Well there won't be many of those about now. These, I don't think anybody in the village will have one.

*Now the actual bobbins that you made Sam, how were they cut out? The first, what happened? Came as a square bit of wood or as a log?*

Well they came in, in the tree cut into about ten or twelve foot lengths. Then they were brought in onto the saw, cut into cakes whichever length your bobbin had to be, maybe an inch mebbe two inch and then they were put on to a - on to a table - and this tubular saw used to come down and cut the bobbins out, used to treadle it with your feet, push it down with your feet. Hold the wood and push the tubular saw down with your feet, then they were put on to the drying kilns, they had to be really dry, then they were brought onto the machines, put onto er, into a slot, moved so far down then clamped and a bit used to come in and put a hole in. Then they were released and went down another trough onto the machine and then they were pushed on to



SWTC Bobbin turners at work - 1930

what we call a mordrup to hold them and then the back bed and the front bed came in and made them into a bobbin, and that's how they kept going mebbe 150 to 200 gross per week.

*And were you paid by the amount that you turned Sam?*

No, no no, you used to be before my time, you were on by piece aye they used to be paid by how many they made, but when I was there we got paid a weekly wage.

*Well that would take out some of the dangerous element 'cos if you were paid by the piece you would be wanting to get as many as you could and not take...*

Oh aye, if anything went wrong with the machine, they warn't making any money. Some weeks they would have probably next to nothing to take home if there were trouble. No, that died out before I started

*And did you take a pride in your bobbins yourself Sam?*

Oh yes, you had to keep your eye on it all the time, watch every bobbin that was turned, aye, because every finish could soon go wrong you know, a bobbin just tip up and not get onto the mordrup properly then you were in trouble. Aye you had to watch it all the time.

*And they were a nice thing to look at when you had finished it?*

Oh yes, aye, they were nice were't bobbins.

## **Exhibition Artefacts**

Many thanks to those who lent artefacts and photographs etc for the exhibition. Some items were donated to the Society's archive and have been placed into store. If anyone has not had returned any item which they wished to be returned would they please contact the General Secretary as soon as possible.

## **Vacancy for General Secretary**

As some of you will know from the AGM, John Berry will not be standing for the post of General Secretary next April. We are therefore looking for a replacement. The post of General Secretary is not all that onerous; it simply comprises dealing with correspondence and doing the agendas and minutes for four committee meetings plus the AGM. Obviously in these days of electronic communication it needs someone familiar with e-mails and a word processing package but no other special skills. Is there a member out there who would be interested?