

# Staveley & District History Society

## Journal Winter 2011/12

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### CONTENTS

- 2 From the Editor  
*John Hiley reviews Journal 23 and makes a request for new contributors*
- 2 Residents of High House, Hugill  
*Don Morris's adaptation of Occasional Paper No 5 by Harding and Scott*
- 5 Road diversions at Ings 1913-1914  
*An investigation of an old 'bypass' by John Hiley*
- 6 Ings Garage in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War  
*Barbara Coupland and Cynthia Kelsall's account of the wartime munitions factory*
- 10 Tales from the Tapes – A conversation about life in Ings  
*The first instalment of the transcript of a 2001 meeting: memories of Ings School.*

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

*Cover photo: Meadowcroft, the Petrol Station and Ings Church - 1930.*

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The next issue of the *Journal* (the Spring issue) will be published about the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012. All contributions (letters, articles, etc.) are welcome and should be with the Editor no later than early March.

## From the Editor

You will quickly discover that this issue of the Journal only contains articles on the history of Ings. This was certainly a matter of personal interest but also a matter of expediency since little other material had been submitted for publication. I look forward to ‘retaliation’ by members from Staveley and Kentmere! It would give me the greatest of pleasure to receive articles at any time so don’t wait till the deadline for copy is approaching. Your work will be accommodated at the first opportunity. You should also not be modest – your articles **are** good enough for the Journal!



The article on High House which Don Morris has adapted from Occasional Paper no.5 (by Morison Harding and Joe Scott), is particularly topical; some of the converted outbuildings are currently on the market for £1.5 million. The full text of the original paper is available as a download from the Society’s new website – for which many thanks are due to our Secretary, John Berry. This Journal issue also has articles on the Ings Village ‘bypass’ of 1913-1914 and of the 2<sup>nd</sup> WW Ings munitions factory, the latter thanks to the joint memoir of Barbara Coupland and Cynthia Kelsall, the daughter of one of the factory directors. I have also started a new instalment of Tales from the Tapes, a transcription of ‘A conversation about life in Ings’ from January 2001, which gives a fascinating insight into the life of Ings folk extending back before WW2. I hope you will find here something of interest.

*John Hiley*

## Residents of High House, Hugill

High House Farm includes some of the oldest farmland in the area; the Hugill Iron Age Settlement is in one of its fields. There is no evidence of occupation between the Iron Age and the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, from which the earliest parts of the High House buildings are thought to date. This fits with other evidence of local population expansion linked to the need for more sheep grazing. Perhaps its situation, less than half a mile from what was then the main Kendal to Ambleside road and about halfway between these places, was significant for access to markets.

### **The Braithwaites: c.1640 - 1693**

In 1641 a Mr. Charles Braithwaite of High House was fined by the Manor Court, for abuse of his rights in the common fields and for slander. The Braithwaite family had made their money in wool and cloth but had established their claim to gentility, a fact demonstrated by the use of the title “Mr”. The head of the Burneside Braithwaites in the early 17th century was Sir Thomas. His son Richard was one of the Lords of the Manor of Staveley and Hugill. Gawen Braithwaite of Ambleside Hall, who owned

land, mills and a brewery, died in 1653 leaving to his son Robert *‘all those lands and tenements which I formerly bought for him at Hugill and Baysbrowne (Langdale).’*

Robert Braithwaite figures in the manorial records thereafter until his death about 1680 when his daughter Dorothy inherited High House and the Langdale lands. She was Robert’s sole heir and about 1682 married one Miles Atkinson *‘yeoman’*. They had four children, the last being baptised on the same day that she was buried in 1693. We know that Thomas Machel the antiquarian rode up to the door on his tour of Westmorland in 1692. *‘This High House’*, he reports, *‘belonged to the Braithwaites, an heiress whereof bestowed herself upon a country fellow.’* Clearly Machel thought that Dorothy had married beneath her station and let the family down.



High House in the 1940s,  
William Whitwell (Snr) and Rebecca Addison

### **The Jenkinsons: 1698 – c.1850**

Miles Atkinson died in 1698, leaving his lands for trustees to sell in the interests of his children, and High House was bought by William Jenkinson of Abbot Hall, Kendal. Jenkinson and his descendants lived at High House until the 1840s. They classified themselves as “yeomen” not “gentlemen”, and living in a simpler style, may have converted some of the living accommodation into farm use.

The parish registers tell us that (another) William Jenkinson in 1757, then aged 55, and *‘Mary Wilson his servant’* had illegitimate twin daughters, Mary and Alice. William made amends to Mary Wilson by marrying her in July 1766, just in time for the birth of a son Thomas in September. In 1775 when the twins were 18 one of them had an illegitimate child. Again in 1838 Thomas’s daughter Margaret, aged 32, found herself in the same condition. It seems to have been a family habit. Thomas had a family of ten children and was still at High House in 1841 aged 74, with his wife and his son William aged 50. But, by the time of the 1851 census they had gone.

It was in Thomas’s time that an important change to the farm took place. Seventy-nine extra acres of rough grazing were allocated to High House, due to the enclosure of the common, adding to the 106 acres of the farm. This was a time of prosperity for local farming. The population of the Staveley area doubled between 1801 and 1851, and so did the demand for food, still much of it produced locally in this age before the railway. The extra farm buildings attached to the old barn may have been added

then, as cattle and corn became more important than sheep. By 1841, Thomas was an old man, but none of his sons took over from him. The 1851 census reveals that his daughter Margaret was married to John Hayton, butcher and grocer of Staveley village, and with them lived George Jenkinson ‘*clergyman*’, one of Thomas’s sons. High House was farmed by a tenant, Christopher Armstrong.

### **The Addison's c.1850- c.1900**

By 1861 the farm was probably owned by John Addison, Gentleman of Strickland Place, Kendal. It was farmed by his brother George who was to stay there until the 90s by which time the farm actually belonged to his son Robert. It seems likely that some important changes to the building took place at this time. This included the insertion of two new staircases in the east wing which in effect converted it into two self-contained cottages. One of them was occupied in 1861 by George Addison’s sister Hannah and her husband Edward Hayton, a wine merchant. Edward’s shop was in Highgate, Kendal. It is known that he sold wines in Troutbeck Bridge so again, the position of the house seems of importance to trade. In 1891 one cottage was



The waterworks office in 2011

occupied by an Irish waterworks inspector and his wife and the other by a Gloucestershire tunnel miner working on the Thirlmere pipeline and his wife and daughter. As well as bringing occupants to the cottage parts of the house, the Thirlmere pipeline brought a hut to the edge of the farm. An

overlooker with his wife and four children and fourteen other navvies lived there in 1891. The waterworks also built an office, later used as a farm store and which is still there in what came to be called “Office Field”.

George Addison’s granddaughter Edith saw her first sign of the waterworks men one evening in 1886 or 1887 as she was going home from school. In a report to the Ambleside Oral History Group in 1977 she remarked ‘*One night in front of me there was a man hammering in a peg by the roadside and they were preparing for the Manchester Water Works. There was a tunnel entrance there in our field and we had huts there for the men, We had two of the men that worked in the tunnel, it was going through to Troutbeck. They took me one night up to the tunnel, one of these men. There was tram-ways. Well it got so long they had to put up a thing for the air and the machinery was in a great big building*’.

### **The Whitwells 1920- 1994**

The farm changed hands several times in the early years of the century, and in the 1920s became part of the estate of the Somervells of High Borrans and was farmed

by tenants. William Whitwell was the farmer from 1920, and in 1958 he bought it outright from Sir Arnold Somervell, and he and his sons and grandson farmed at High House until 1994. In the 1920s and 30s the total farm income is said to have been about £1000 a year, about half of it from a milk and dairy products round in Windermere and half from the sale of wool and lambs. As the Lakeland tourist industry developed one of the two cottages was usually let. The other was lived in by a farm worker when one was employed and then from 1953 by William (Jnr) and Dorothy Whitwell. When, on William Snr's death in 1962, they moved into the main house, it too was let to summer visitors. Electricity came to the farm in 1955.

In 1994 the Whitwells sold the farm to Messrs Black of Ambleside, who modernised the house and converted it into two dwellings. At the same time machinery and motor transport made it possible to farm much larger areas than in the past. So the land was sold on to Browfoot farm, Ulthwaite. The growth of tourism and the coming of easy transport, central heating and modern communications gave houses of traditional character such as High House an increasing value. Its location between the central part of the Lake District and Kendal still adds to its value today, even though its original function as a farmhouse has completely gone.

*Don Morris (adapted from Occasional paper no 5 by Harding and Scott)*

## Road diversions at Ings 1913-1914

The first recommendation to divert the road at Ings, which then ran close to the



1898 map – marked up in 1912  
for the statutory meetings

school, came in 1907. The Minutes of Westmorland County Council record ‘...the turn in the road at Ings Church is dangerous...’

Costs of £2780 were agreed in July 1911 and a 50% grant sought from the Road Board in London. The Diversion had two ‘stages’, the Hill Diversion and Ings Village Diversion, (note the absence of the term ‘bypass’) which were agreed at meetings of South

Westmorland District and Hugill Parish Councils in the autumn of 1912.

A public notice in the Gazette of Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 1913 announced the commencement of construction of the Hill Diversion and on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> two JPs inspected the proposed

line: *'We have viewed the said highway... and that the reasons why it is more commodious are as follows: because the new highway is shorter by seventeen yards; a dangerous and awkward corner is done away with; the gradients of the new highway are easier than those of the existing Main Road...'* Construction seems to have been rapid, so much so that on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1913, the same two JPs reported after their inspection: *'the said public highway... is now completed and put into good condition and repair.'*

A new bridge over the River Gowan seems to have delayed the Ings Village Diversion. A report to the Road Board of 14<sup>th</sup> October 1913 reveals: *'The stability of the bridge...was tested with two (steam?) rollers, of 12 and 10 tons respectively...'* and that *'no movement was witnessed.'* Nonetheless, all construction was finished by March 1914 and surplus land then sold off.



Signs of the old 'stopped up' road bed in 2011, just west of The Hill Farm

A letter from Rev. Reade from Ings Vicarage, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1914, to the County Surveyor says: *'I hereby accept the terms agreed upon by us this morning for the purchase of the plot of land, 2490 sq yds, adjoining Ings Churchyard, for the sum of £50.'* The Vicar was clearly very anxious to seal the deal before the Surveyor had chance to change his mind! It seems likely that Canon Reade bought the land himself and subsequently gifted most of it to St Anne's Church. A small plot, *'unsuitable for burials'*, was sold to Miss Margaret Jump of the immediately adjacent house 'Burnthwaite', which had been the vicarage till 1908. Miss Jump had an enviably short journey to work. She was the headmistress of Ings village school – not ten (now traffic-free) yards from her front door!

A postscript is to be found in the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1914 Westmorland Gazette in a report of a recent County Council Meeting: *'The Ings diversion was finished and the accounts were being prepared. In all probability there would be questions raised by Mr. Carradice, the last contractor. In fact he had sent in a claim for some £170 to be added to his contract price. Mr Pattinson...proposed that a sub-committee should be appointed to go into the question between the County Council and the contractor with a view to complete settlement of accounts and to deal with all other outstanding matters such as the sale of surplus land...the money would go towards the reduction of the capital account.'*

John Hiley

## Ings Garage in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War

During the depression of the 1920s, William Henry Wedlock and his son-in-law, Eric Pride, moved from Barrow-in-Furness to Bexleyheath in Kent and established the firm of W.H. Wedlock, Building Contractors. Indeed, many of the estates in that area were built by the company, and, a few years before the war they also built a garage in Barnehurst; Milestones Service Garage Limited.

September 1939 found the staff engaged in the normal trade of garage business, but, during the following months it turned gradually to wartime products. Many large firms were inundated with orders for munitions and, in an effort to fulfil their contracts, turned to garages to give a helping hand. In this manner the Milestones' staff were employed by the City Electrical Company, London on parts for guns, and later by Industrial Mechanical Ltd, also of London, to manufacture small arms tools. Small arms tools before the war had only been manufactured in small quantities by the Royal Ordnance factories. With the increased fire power of guns and the equipping of fighter planes, tanks etc. with automatics it became obvious that small arms tools must be made in vast quantities to keep pace with what was now required by the fighting services.



The wartime extensions to Ings Garage

Milestones was fortunate in having two directors, Mr Eric Pride and Mr Albert Kelsall, who had both been in munitions at Vickers Shipbuilding Co. during the previous war, and realising the urgency of the situation, collected the necessary equipment to enable the company to make its contribution. With a start being made on production, the

Germans began the 'Battle of Britain' offensive, so, whilst this was in progress the government decided to evacuate important factories. When Industrial Mechanical Ltd was ordered to the North West, Milestones was advised to follow, to maintain close co-operation with them. By now, the shortage in small arms tools was acute and the Ministry of Supply called for an all-out effort to fulfil the demands of the Armed Forces, a demand that would be maintained throughout the war.

To be instructed to evacuate to the North West was one thing, to find accommodation was another. Many firms were engaged upon a similar assignment. After an extensive search, a small garage in Ings was obtained. It was well situated on the main road

between Kendal and Windermere, and with space for expansion if needed. Ings Garage was owned by Clifton Park. In 1930, he had bought part of a field from William Creighton of Ings Hall and then built a small garage and filling station, starting trading in 1931, repairing cars, motor cycles and bicycles, and selling petrol, oil, tyres, spares, etc. Fred Unsworth started work there as an apprentice, on Good Friday 1934, the day after leaving school! He had a 48-hour week, one week's holiday a year and was paid 8/- a week. Petrol then was 1s/3d per gallon. In 1937 a three-bedroom house was built on the south side of the garage. Clifton Park was called up for service on 1 September 1939 by the RAF. He was one of the servicemen evacuated from Dunkirk and then served in North Africa. Fred Unsworth mothballed the business in October 1939 and joined the R.A.F. a month later, serving, until March 1946, mostly with the R.A.F. in Rhodesia as an Aircraft Engine Fitter.

Now came the problem of maintaining production whilst removing plant and erecting this in the new premises.

Exciting tales were told; of hauling plant and equipment in trailers and lorries through the London blitz at night; of arriving at the factory in the early hours of the morning; of willing hands waiting to erect the machines and to get them in production without delay; of special trips to London to obtain materials in short supply; of working through the night in the freezing cold in order that the plant could maintain full production.



The facility settled down and began to increase production, but not enough to satisfy the Ministry of Supply, who were by now placing direct contracts. The Directors were summoned to a meeting in London and required to organise an increase in output of over 600%. This meant an expansion to the premises, the plant and the number of employees. A canteen, a cloakroom for ladies, an office and another workshop were built, all with central heating, which was also added to the existing workshop. Research into quicker methods of production was needed. New staff were engaged and two twelve-hour shifts arranged, one under Mr Pride and the other under Mr Kelsall. Within two months the new targets were being met.

The old workshop became the machine shop where metal bar was cut into short lengths. These were drilled, then shaped with a bit the shape of a bullet, and smoothed with a bullet-shaped sandstone. These were the bullet dies. The dies then went to the smith to be hardened, a tricky process as the temperature had to be just

right to avoid shrinkage. At first, the smithy at Ings was used, then the Staveley smithy was rented and used for the rest of the War. The new workshop was where the dies were reshaped and polished after hardening, again with a bullet-shaped sandstone revolving at high speed in a Black and Decker drill. The manufacture of small arms tools required a great deal of patience, care and accuracy. The shape of a bullet is designed to obtain accuracy in firing so the tool required to make the bullet has a demanding specification. Likewise, highly polished precision tools are needed. The finished product was routinely tested on a projector giving a magnification of twenty-five times.



Much of the labour employed was female. Each Wednesday a lunchtime service was held at Ings church and attended by the day shift. The vicar during the war was the Rev C.W. Howard. It was not all work. A supper dance was held in the Village Hall, Staveley at the end of each year and a concert was given in the Village Hall in order

to raise money for the Red Cross. The girls' costumes were made from blackout material. The red buttons, hats and gauntlets were painted by the men.

The end of the war brought a swift end to the manufactory. It had made 107,720 dies. The Ministry of Supply congratulated them in a telegram just after VE day: *'This was a truly great effort'*. Milestones staff returned to Kent to reopen the garage. Clifton Park returned to Ings and resumed business serving the locals with petrol and maintaining their cars whilst Fred Unsworth restarted in June 1946, becoming a partner in 1949. In 1950, the rest of the field was bought and a new workshop was built. The original garage was made into a Car Salesroom. The partnership lasted till 1960 when it was dissolved. Clifton retired and Fred kept the filling station. The original garage was retained for the filling station use. The car sales and repair side of the business was sold to Mr F Burrows. The rest of the buildings at the front were demolished and a new showroom built. The workshop was kept and more buildings were erected at the rear. In 1972 the filling station was sold to Auk Investments, and the house and original garage were demolished, and new buildings, canopy, restaurant, and flats built.

*From the memoir of Barbara Coupland and Cynthia Kelsall*

## Tales from the Tapes – A conversation about life in Ings

*Transcript of a History Society meeting held in Ings Parish Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2001 chaired by Joe Scott (JS). The panel: Dorothy Buckley (DB), John Redmayne (JR), Denis Sowerby (DS) and Dorothy Whitwell (DW). Questions came from the 'floor' (Q) and the chairman, who introduces the panel:*

JS: Dorothy Buckley....came here...in 1945...when her husband was demobbed. But she's been a pillar of Ings society ever since and - Denis tells me - she's his boss about running the Hall and that sort of thing.

JS: John Redmayne....is a farmer born at High Fairbank... moved to Borwick Fold as a lad with his dad to work with his dad. When he married he went off into foreign parts. Tebay I think...came back to Gowan Bank in 1962 and he's still there. He's retired and has got a cottage on the farm. His son is the farmer.

JS: Denis Sowerby...is very much a local, born at Hill Farm, left school at Christmas 1939 ...worked on the farm here, then worked for a time at, not this garage, (DS: No, at Bowness), and he's a pillar of the local society, still active in running the church..

JS: Dorothy Whitwell...was born at Yews, moved to Whasdyke as a girl, then married the farmer's son at High House and was the farmer's wife at High House for 30 years until she retired. She now lives in Staveley.

JS: *So what would you like to tell us about Ings school...that we're in now, what was it like? Was it a nice place to be?*

DW: Yes, it was a lovely school. It was the only school I ever went to, and of course ...stayed till we were 14.

JS: *And this was one classroom?*

DW: This was juniors...and infants were in there, what is the kitchen now, yes.



Ings School 1932 – 3 teachers, 23 pupils

JS: *And how many would there be in the school? Children? 30-odd?*

DW: Average 30-odd, yes.

Q: *When did it close?*

DW: 1972.

JS: *That was a bit of a shock, they say, was it, when it closed?*

DS: Well, the attendance dwindled, it got down below 10 and it was no longer viable.

DS: In 1939, 32 evacuees came.

JS: *Did they? That must have been fun.*

DS: From Newcastle, they'd two teachers with them. Two men teachers and we'd never had a man at our school

JS: *Oh well then how did you get on with the new lot?*

DS: We were very shy of them. They seemed like foreigners, we couldn't understand what they were talking about. They were very broad Geordies.

Q: *Did you have joint lessons?*

DS: No, we more or less kept to ourselves. The Newcastle lot, the evacuees, were here at this end of this room and the eldest of the seniors belonging to Ings were at that end and then some of them were put back into the little room, what is now the kitchen.

Q: *Did they stay for the duration or did they drift back?*

DS: Some drifted back immediately. I remember when they'd been here a week, one set off to walk back. We had a full scale search for him. Eventually they found him somewhere down about Rest-a-while.

Q: *How was the school heated?*

DS: There was an old fashioned iron stove — just there, under where that notice is. And there was old iron pipes right round.

Q: *Water circulation?*

DS: Yes.

Q: *Did you have problems during wartime with fuel? Or did you have to bring fuel with you. I know that children actually brought fuel.*

DW: We still got coke deliveries regularly

JR: I don't ever remember us being short of fuel. No...

*Q: It must have been very noisy with two 'r three classes in the same room*

DB: Our head teacher kept everybody very quiet.

*JS: What about you John?*

JR: I never settled at all like, at school, I didn't like school. I got caned for a few years. .

*JS: What for?*

JR: Running out of the door there....

*Q: Did you have school milk? Those little bottles?*



The former Ings Vicarage (Burnthwaite) 1933

DW: Yes they did. One third of a pint? Originally it was Horlicks.

*Q: Because it was an agricultural area, were you allowed to go and work on the farm at certain times when there was work to do?*

JR: You had to have a blue card and you got so many days...20 half-days. I took a lot of time off myself without the blue card.

*JS: How did you get a blue card?*

JR: It was issued by the ministry somewhere - education?

DS: Miss Bell was very, very strict and if you stayed away to help with hay-time or anything, it was very much under her protest.

JS: The farmer's sons used to stay off at hay-time, when it had to be done, didn't they? I think the Staveley log book and some of the Ings log books complain about bad attendance at harvest time. They're stored there.... in the County Archives.

*To be continued*