

Staveley & District History Society

Journal Spring 2008

CONTENTS

- 2 **Chairman's Report**
Iain Johnston gives his report on the year
- 4 **Christmas Quiz Answers**
If there were clues that you couldn't solve-here are the solutions
- 5 **Ghosts on The Banks?**
Have you experienced any strange happenings in this vicinity?
- 6 **The Beehive Inn Nether Staveley**
A tale of murder and intrigue at this forgotten venue
- 11 **More Rushforth stories**
A sudden death which resulted in a long ministry to the Primitive Methodists
- 12 **An invitation to a Kentmere gathering**
A request to Aireys and Blands (and other ex-pat Kentmere families)
- 12 **Financial Accounts 2007**
David Hooson gives a summary report on the Society's finances

Cover picture – Staveley Flower Show in the Drill Hall, August 1910.

The next issue of the Journal (the summer issue) will be published about the 12th August 2008. Any contributions (letters, articles, etc.) should be with the Editor no later than the 30th June.

Chairman's Report

It has been a tremendous privilege to be your chairman for the last year and it has given me the opportunity to work even more closely with a dedicated team for the benefit of our Society. I am particularly grateful for the continuing support of a very enthusiastic committee and the groups within the committee who, along with co-opted, interested members, are working on specific projects. I said at the last AGM that SDHS has gone from strength to strength and must have far exceeded what Joe Scott had envisaged. In Christopher Gregory's article in the *Journal* (issue 11) he quoted Joe Scott and his mantra that "History begins today". I think it is important that we keep hold of this principle and his ideals as we continue to move forward.



Our society, now with over 140 members, is one of the most successful in the region and the well-attended monthly meetings during the winter months, buck the national trend which appears to show that meetings with visiting speakers and talks are no longer popular. I am sure that much of our success is the result of our successive secretaries finding high quality speakers on a range of interesting local topics. I believe that regularly using our own members as speakers is also a contributory factor in the sustained interest. For some of our speakers, the talk may well be a one-off and we must never forget the amount of work they put into preparation before their talk and we must be very grateful for that. But our successful meetings are only part of the story.

I am sure that every member will join me in thanking John Berry for his tireless efforts on our behalf as Secretary. We must acknowledge that the *Journal* has been developed by him into a first class record of our work which usefully draws attention to some interesting articles from our collection which might otherwise never see the light of day. Sadly, but understandably, John would like to relinquish the role of Meetings Secretary to concentrate on the business of developing the Journal and to continue sorting out and archiving the wealth of resources which belong to the society in the form of papers, etc., many of which were passed to us following Joe Scott's untimely death.

We are delighted that John is willing to continue with this work and the next few months will see even more productions following the excellent work on the Census documents and more recently the Corn Rent Maps and Schedules pertaining to our district. John has been sorting and archiving many of our resources and they will shortly be stored electronically in 'pdf' format. This makes them more readily available to a much wider audience at a nominal cost.

We are, however, looking for someone to take over the rest of John's role, that of organising meetings. We welcome any offers and the person who takes up the role

would be assured of a tremendous amount of support from John and the rest of the committee.

It is sad to report that two other long-standing members of the committee will not be standing for re-election.

Christopher Gregory has been an ardent supporter of the society from the very beginning. In particular he brought a special interest in all matters pertaining to the Kentmere Valley. He has written occasional papers for the society on, among other things, the industrial history of the valley and he has organised several walks in Kentmere to illustrate a range of topics of interest. In fact one of the walks arranged for this coming summer is his idea – to look at the site of a garden, close to Brockstones, near the house that never was. We sincerely thank him for the valuable contributions that he has made during his membership.

Peter Colley has shared with the society his wealth of professional experience and interest in the history of buildings and was leader of the group which was collecting information for our records. Sadly, other commitments mean that he has decided to relinquish that role and stand down from the committee. These two members have been stalwarts of the society and we must record a tremendous debt of gratitude to both of them.

Very important in our society are our Treasurer, David Hooson and his wife Marjorie who is our librarian. Committee meetings are usually held at their house and our warmest thanks are offered to them for both their hard work and their kind hospitality. Sadly too, Marjorie is standing down as Librarian at the AGM and we must thank her for all the work she has done on our behalf over the years.

An initiative which is proving to be very productive is that of welcoming visitors to our committee meetings. We will continue to publish the dates and we invite any member to come along and see what we get up to.

Our vast store of photographs are being sorted and catalogued by Zoë Atkinson and we have recently been offered a large collection of slides from the late Peter Smith. There are some very valuable snaps of our area and they will, when sorted, make a significant addition to our archives. They are currently being sifted by Peter and Anne Noble.

My own connection with Cumbria Local History Federation provides a county wide overview of what is going on in history societies throughout Cumbria. We are fortunate to benefit from Pat Ball's important connection with Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society and from our links with Cumbria Family History Society through Kath Hayhurst.

So, what next? A significant part of our activity in the coming year will be to maintain the impetus in collecting new information. We intend to tackle a task which has been around for some time. Over several years Mike Houston has collected

dozens of audio tapes which record conversations with people in our community relating their memories of times gone by. These are priceless resources and local history societies all over the country are realising their value. Our aim this year is to transfer the tapes to a more accessible disk format and to complete the transcriptions so that interested people can read and listen at the same time. We also need to continue our work in recording information about buildings in the district and establishing how they have been developed and altered as time has passed.

For one reason or another we missed the School History Prize last year but arrangements are in hand for this coming year and we look forward to the fascinating and interesting contributions made by the older pupils in our school. We always learn something from them and we sincerely hope that it is two-way traffic. All that and another interesting programme of walks and talks ... we have a great deal to look forward to.

Iain Johnston

Answers to History Quiz (Issue 11)

1. Meadows. From Old English. It occurs elsewhere as Broad Ings, Ingmire, et al.
2. Thomas Williamson of The Heights, Hugill (d.1797) who began each day by climbing to the top.
3. Quarters. Green Quarter is still in use. The others were Cragg, Hallow Bank and Wrea Quarters.
4. The Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, 1851, to which special excursions were run.
5. The floor of old St Margaret's was below ground level, and the churchyard often waterlogged, causing problems with burials.
6. Gunpowder, which could be carried safely on the new canal, and was in demand for mining throughout the Empire.
7. Robert Bateman, born at Ings 1677, became a wealthy merchant at Leghorn in Italy, the port for Carrara marble. As well as the church, he built Reston Hall, intended for his retirement, but died in Italy in 1743.
8. Bobbins, corn, cotton, woollen, fulling (yarn or cloth), snuff, gunpowder, lead smelting, saw-milling, paper-making
9. He wound and looked after the clock in old St Margaret's church tower.
10. It was built to control the flow of water to the mills, maintaining it during droughts and preventing damage to waterwheels by sudden floods.

11. A row of cottages called Alec Row. They had neither water supply nor drains, and were condemned in 1953 and demolished.
12. Webb's Wonderful lettuce.
13. It was designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris.
14. Gatescarth Pass, Long Sleddale, Watchgate, and to the east of Oxenholme.
15. Joseph Martindale, headmaster of Staveley school from 1859 - 1902.
16. Troutbeck Bridge 1893. (Note: Kentmere did not receive a supply until 1963!)
17. It was built from the base of the gas-holder after North Sea gas made the gas-works obsolete.
18. Men with different skills in the slate quarries. Rhymes with divers.
19. Hugill.
20. It was built as a hotel at the time of the coming of the railway, but it had not occurred to J H Wilson the entrepreneur that visitors to the Lake District would prefer to stay on the train until they were nearer to the lakes and mountains. It became a private residence, and in 1900 a 'home' for workhouse orphan boys, many of whom were employed in bobbin turning.

Ghosts on The Banks?

During the research for the following articles, a number of people have reported to us unusual 'sightings' in the vicinity of The Banks, not necessarily near to Greenside cottage. The persons described were clearly not part of the incidents described in our articles, but with more than one person reporting sightings we would be interested if any of our members are aware of any unusual incidents in our past history which might have led to ghostly appearances. Please contact the Editor in the first place.

Advance Acknowledgements

The Editor would like firstly to acknowledge the contributions made by two of our 'distant' members in researching and supporting the articles on The Beehive and the Rushforth family. We are indebted to Wayne Shepherd of Toronto, Canada, who is a direct descendant of James Nicholson, and to Martin Crossley-Evans of Bristol, whose patience in researching Methodist records has once again given us material for the *Journal*.

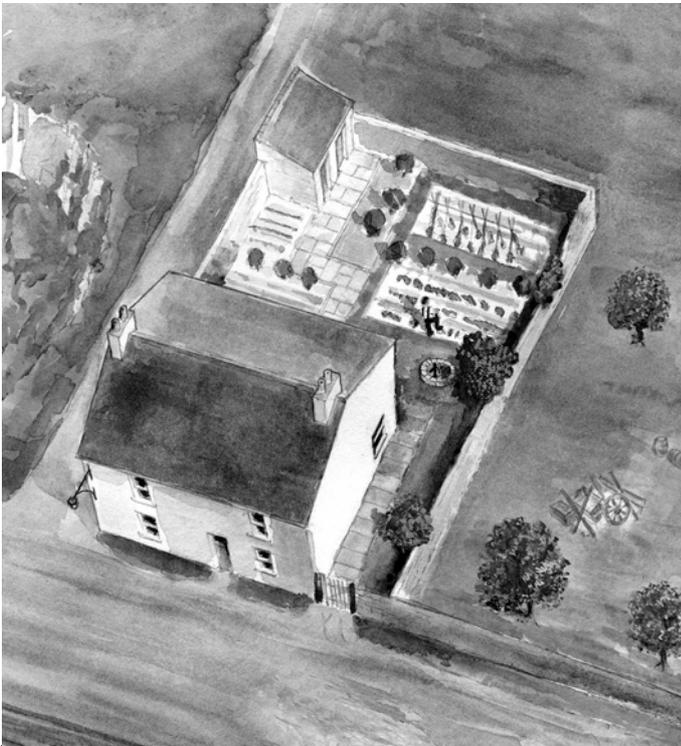
In support of these two, help has also been given by Heather Glen of Cambridge University who had more information on the Rushforth family, and last but not least, by Diane Meek and Tim Brock, past and present residents of 'Greenside', and by Tony Berry, now retired from English Heritage, for information leading to the production of the plans and description of the building on pages 9 and 10.

The Beehive Inn, Nether Staveley

In Journal 11, we told the tale of the aborted land sales from Thomas Furness following the surprise return of his elder brother. The first of these sales was to James Nicholson and it is the tale of his tragic loss that we tell in this issue.

As far as we are able to ascertain, James Nicholson was born in 1772, the son of Thomas Nicholson of Longsleddale and Grace Airey of Over Staveley. James married Ann Inman in April 1808 and their daughter Grace was born in Burneside in July 1810. Grace subsequently married Thomas Rushforth at Staveley in July 1830. Thomas was a bobbin turner whose family lived in cottages near Barley Bridge.

James Nicholson is listed in the census of 1841 as an ‘Agricultural Labourer’ and in 1851 as a ‘Parochial Pensioner (Ag. Lab.)’, so the capital that enabled him to purchase land from Thomas Furness and to build a pair of cottages (*Woodman’s Cottages, as they came to be known*) almost certainly came from elsewhere. In the conveyance James is described as being a farmer, living at Ashes – which presumably means he was simply employed as a farmer, as Ashes was a large farm belonging to John Clarke – so the funds most likely did not come from here. Whatever the source, on the 24th November 1830, the purchase of the plot of land on the Banks (*then known as Nether Staveley Road*), was completed.



An artist's impression of the Beehive Inn/Woodman's Cottages

We know little of the actual building of Woodman’s Cottages (*today known as ‘Greenside’*); but the *Westmorland Gazette* of 1833 recounts in detail the tragedy that unfolded there. Thomas and Grace Rushforth had moved in with Grace’s parents James and Ann after marrying and stayed until late 1832 when they moved up the road to a cottage of their own. (*Whether this was one of the Bankside cottages or the Egyptian Well cottages we do not know, as both are situated about 100 yards from the Nicholson plot on the Banks.*) The *Gazette* tells us that James and Ann ran a ‘Jerry Shop’ – i.e. they sold locally brewed ale from their home.

On Sunday, March 24th, 1833, there was some conflict between Thomas Rushforth and his wife, serious enough for Grace, that evening, to seek ‘refuge and protection’ in the house of her father and mother. The following evening, at around 5 p.m., Thomas Rushforth came to the house and demanded to be served ale. James was not

present at the time, and Grace was upstairs with fourteen-year-old Betsy Henderson, who helped out at the ‘Shop’ – known locally as The Beehive Inn. Downstairs were Ann Nicholson and Dorothy Dobson, a long-time lodger with the Nicholsons.



Woodmans around the turn of the century. The bracket formerly carried a gas lamp.

From witness accounts it appears that an argument started between Ann and Thomas which eventually escalated to the exchanging of blows. Ann was forced to defend herself with a small table. Exactly what happened next is not entirely clear for both Dorothy and Grace had fled the house to fetch Thomas Furness (*this time in his role as the Village Constable*) and Betsy had shut herself in a bedroom for safety. It seemed that Ann either fell and hit her head on the stone floor or was struck a blow by Thomas wielding a coal-hammer. However it happened, by the time Furness arrived on the scene, fifty-two-year-old Ann Nicholson was lying dead on the floor and Thomas Rushforth had disappeared down the road towards the Eagle & Child.

Rushforth was subsequently arrested and charged with murdering his mother-in law. He appeared at the Kendal assizes and pleaded not guilty. The *Gazette* describes in great detail the medical evidence given by the Staveley surgeon, Miles Read, and a Kendal surgeon, Mr. W. Longmire. Mr. Read had attended Ann Nicholson immediately following the incident – he had even made an effort to bleed her in a futile attempt at resuscitation – and was subsequently present at the autopsy.

The defending counsel, Mr. Dundas, took great pains to extract from the surgeons an admission of the possibility that Ann had died purely as a result of the fall, and not directly as a result of a blow to the head from a blunt instrument. This, together with a direction from the judge that a verdict of manslaughter was permissible, was sufficient to convince the jury that Thomas was not guilty of murder (*which, in those days, meant instant execution*), but rather of the lesser crime of manslaughter. Even so, and despite pleas from Mr. Dundas for clemency, the Judge sentenced Thomas to ‘transportation for life’, the standard at the time for such crimes. Thomas was transported to Australia in 1834. In a strange coincidence, the ship on which he left England, never to return, was named ‘the Hive’!

Unlike our previous Staveley Convict, George Thexton (*Journal 2*) who continued with a string of petty offences out in Australia, Thomas Rushforth appears to have been ‘of good conduct’ and was finally given a conditional pardon by the state of New South Wales in 1847. However the condition attached to his pardon was that he should not return to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and as a result

NEW SOUTH WALES.

CONDITIONAL PARDON.

Nov 7 82

SEAL

By His Excellency Sir Charles Augustus Fitz Roy, Knight Companion of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order, Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over Her Majesty's Territory of New South Wales, and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same, &c., &c., &c.

WHEREAS, by an Act of the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, passed in the Sixth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law affecting Transported Convicts, with respect to Pardons and Tickets of Leave," it was amongst other things enacted, that, after the taking effect of the said recited Act, in any place to which Felons and Offenders had been or might be transported by Law, the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor should, from time to time, by an Instrument in Writing, under his Hand, recommend such Felons or other Offenders as he should think fit to be recommended, to Her Majesty, for an Absolute or Conditional Pardon; and in case Her Majesty should, through one of Her Principal Secretaries of State, signify Her approval of any such recommendation, it should be lawful for the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor to grant an Absolute or Conditional Pardon, pursuant to such Instructions as should be sent to him by the Secretary of State, by an Instrument in writing, under the Seal of his Government, which should be deemed from the Day of the Date thereof, to have within such Place or Places, as should be specified in such Pardon, but not elsewhere, the same effect in the Law, to all intents and purposes, as if a General, Absolute, or Conditional Pardon, had passed on that Day, under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom: And whereas the said recited Act has taken effect in the said Colony of New South Wales; And Whereas *Thomas*

Rushforth, whose Description is hereunto annexed, having been indicted and convicted at *Wentworth* on the *eight* day of *August* One thousand eight hundred and *thirty three*, of the Crime of *Murder*

, was, in pursuance of the said Conviction, sentenced to Transportation, and was accordingly Transported to the said Colony, for *the period of his natural life*: And Whereas, in consideration of the good conduct of the said *Thomas Rushforth* since his arrival in the said Colony *His Excellency Sir George Gipps, Knight*, Governor of New South Wales, recommended the said *Thomas Rushforth*

, to Her Majesty for a pardon, to take effect in all parts of the World, except *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*

And Whereas Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to signify Her approval of such recommendation, through Her Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies: NOW KNOW YE, that I, SIR CHARLES AUGUSTUS FITZ ROY, in pursuance of the Power and Authority so in me vested by the said recited Act, and of Her Majesty's gracious approval so signified, and of the instructions of the said Secretary of State in this behalf, do hereby grant unto the said *Thomas Rushforth*

, a Pardon for the Offence, in respect of which such Sentence of Transportation was passed as aforesaid, which shall take effect in all parts of the World, except *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*; PROVIDED ALWAYS, and it is hereby expressly declared to be a Condition of this Pardon, that if the said *Thomas Rushforth*

, shall, at any time during the continuance of the term of his said Sentence, go to, or be in, any part of *the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland*, then this Pardon shall thenceforth be and become wholly void, as by Her Majesty's Commands expressly limited and directed: And all Her Majesty's Officers and Ministers of Justice, and all other, Her Majesty's Subjects, are hereby required to take notice accordingly.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have caused these Letters to be made Patent, and to be Sealed with the Seal of the said Territory.

GIVEN under my Hand at Government House, Sydney, this *thirtieth* day of *July* in the *eleventh* Year of the Reign of Her Majesty, and in the Year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and forty *seven*

(Signed) CHAS. A. FITZ ROY.

ENTERED upon Record at Pages *63* and *64* Register No. *23* - this *eighteenth* day of *September* One thousand eight hundred and forty *seven*

for the Colonial Secretary and Registrar.

The official pardon granted to Thomas Rushforth in 1847

Thomas spent the rest of his life in Australia. He remarried, to a woman called Jane Matthew, in 1853, and Jane bore him three more children. He worked as a Postal Assistant and finally died in Australia in 1893 at the ripe old age of 82.

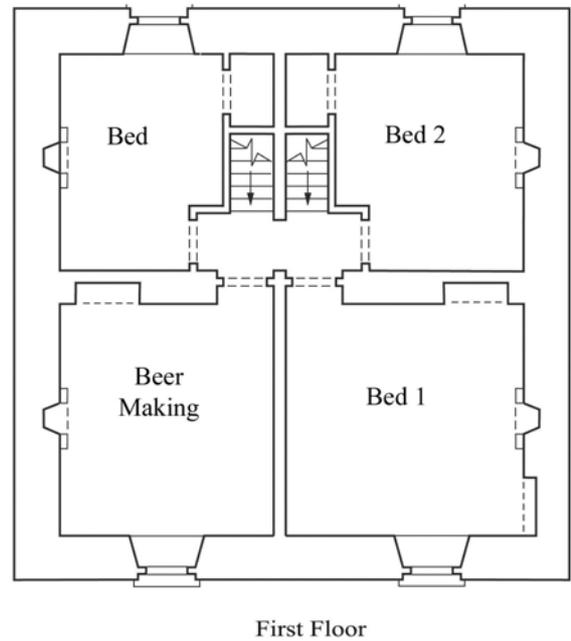
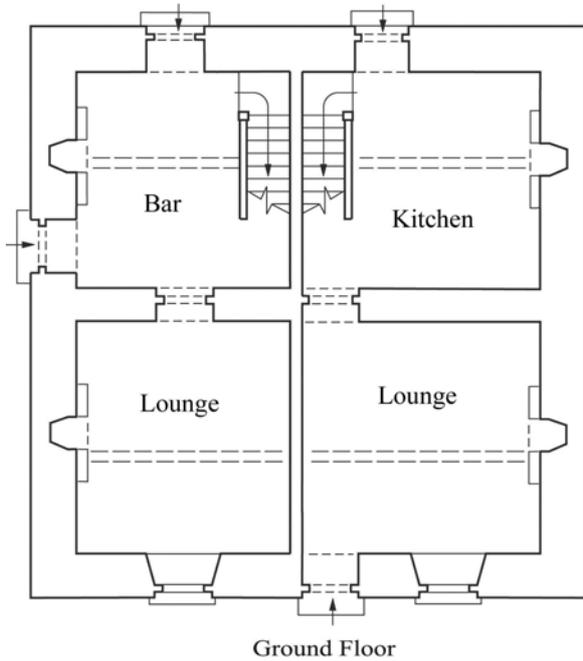
Referring back to Thomas' trial in 1833, there were other witnesses of note who took part, including: Richard Rawes – he of Rawes Mill, then the Mayor of Kendal – who was asked by Rushforth to speak as a character witness; and Mary German – wife of Thomas German who subsequently built the large house on Station Road known as Mount Pleasant (now Stanley Bank) – who was living (or lodging) at Hill Cottage next-door to Woodman's Cottages and was one of the first people on the scene after Ann Nicholson's death. (As an interesting side-note, Miles Read, the surgeon, was lodging at Hill Cottage in 1841.)

No further record exists of The Beehive Inn – in fact, we only know the name because it is mentioned in Ann Nicholson's entry in the Staveley Burial Records. We suspect that Ann was the brewer of the ale she sold, and after her death there was no reason for the business to continue; certainly, by 1848, any demand for alcohol would have been catered for by the new Railway Hotel. However, we are given to understand that ale continued to be sold from the cottage on Fair Days until the 1930s when the fields opposite were acquired for housing.

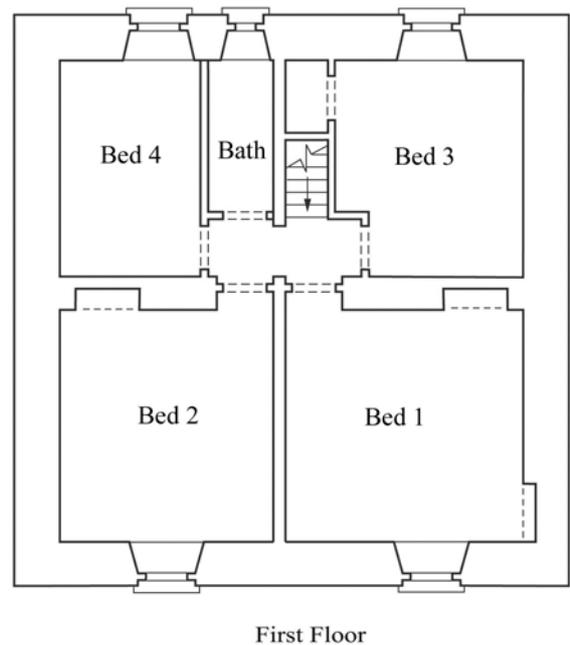
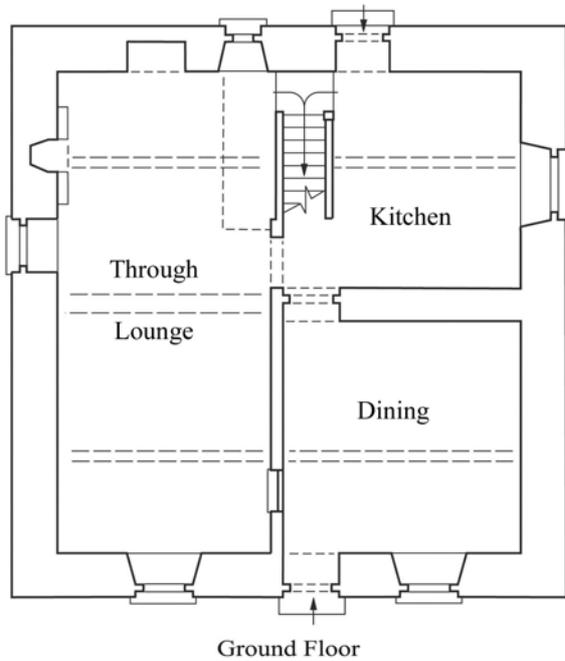
In the 1841 census, James Nicholson is listed as still living in one of Woodman's Cottages, along with Dorothy Dobson (now quite diplomatically referred to as 'Dorothy Nicholson'), James's daughter Grace and granddaughter Eleanor Rushforth. In that same year, Dorothy died, and James put the cottages up for sale. Could it have been that perhaps Dorothy had been paying part of the mortgage? Or had she become the brewer, keeping the 'shop' open until her death? Whatever the situation, in 1842 the cottages were sold to Isaac Levens, but with James and his family continuing to live there as tenants. In 1848, following Thomas' conditional pardon and there being no possibility of his return, Grace remarried, this time to William Shepherd, a tailor from Cartmel. James and his family (with more grandchildren added) were still at Woodman's Cottages in 1851. He died that same year, aged seventy-nine.

From more recent research, we can piece together the layout of the original 'Beehive' Inn. In simple terms, it was the mirror image of the later Railway Hotel, (*Occasional Paper 19*) with the beer making and retailing in one half and the landlord's cottage in the other. The original main door to the 'Inn' faced on to the former quarry, now the 'green' – hence the new name 'Greenside' – this 'front' door on the side no doubt ensured that any drunks did not get run down immediately by a passing horse and cart. In the back garden was a 25-foot deep well, lined with stone, from which water for the beer making was drawn. This probably utilised the same supply as that for Hill Cottage, which later became the supply for the village via Gypsy Well (*Occasional Paper 8*).

The plans on this page indicate what we think may well have been the layout of rooms within the original inn. Unlike the Railway, the fireplaces were conventionally located on the end wall next to the main door. One of these is probably where the argument between Ann Nicholson and her son-in-law took place.



Plans of the cottage(s); above the original layout, and below, the present day one.



Another Rushforth Story

From two hitherto unconnected sources, we learn of the sad death in 1844 of Phoebe Rushforth aged only fifteen. Phoebe was Thomas Rushforth's youngest sister and had recently started work as a dressmaker's assistant to Mary Taylor. The circumstances leading up to Phoebe's unforeseen death were detailed at the coroner's inquest which was held at the Black Bull in Staveley. On the afternoon of January 22nd, 1844, the young girl had taken a child's dress up to Kentmere and returned home to Staveley – the family lived in one of the cottages on Kentmere Road – at about 5 o'clock. She sewed until 8 p.m. and then went into the village for some bread. She returned home after about an hour. On her return, she went into the back yard, lighting her way with a candle. A short time later, her sister Sarah followed her into the back yard and found the unfortunate girl dead in the outside privy. The verdict at the inquest was that she had 'died by the visitation of God'. (Incidentally, the 'respectable' account of Phoebe's unexpected passing – printed as part of her brother's obituary in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* – stated that she had been found dead in bed).

The sudden death of Phoebe Rushforth had a profound effect upon her elder brother William, aged nineteen. William had followed other members of the family into the bobbin-turning trade and was generally living a life of wantonness and impiety. On the night that his sister died, he had been out dancing and generally enjoying himself. The *Primitive Methodist Magazine* recounts: *His remorse of conscience and sorrow for sin were deep, and for weeks did he wander about seeking rest and finding none. His father being ungodly, the position of our friend was critical, but conviction had a deep hold upon him, and many a wakeful night was spent in secret weeping. At a prayer meeting in Staveley, he at length found peace by faith in Jesus. Shortly afterwards he was requested to become a local preacher, and he creditably filled that office for twenty seven years.*

The magazine continues: *He was a man of much benevolence of heart, fervour of spirit, and integrity of principle. His house was a home for the preachers, and for all who named the name of Christ. Many of our ministers will remember the kindness shown them under his roof. In the prosecution of his calling, he removed to several places, in two of which, necessity existing to form a cause, he opened his house for preaching, and established Sabbath schools, until rooms were fitted up chiefly by his own efforts. He was an ardent supporter of every good cause: Sabbath schools, bands of hope, and temperance movements gained much of his sympathy and aid.*

John Berry

Last Plaque Removed

We are pleased to report that the last of the memorial plaques in the former Wesleyan Chapel on Kentmere Road has been successfully removed and placed in store. The plaque, a memorial to James Tyson, J.P., of Hopefield was taken down by member Peter Noble on 1st March. It is hoped to re-erect it in St. James in due course.

An Open Invitation to descendants of the Kentmere valley in the 1800s

A member is planning an informal gathering of the descendants of the Airey and Bland families of Kentmere which will be held on Saturday May 31, 2008 in the hall in Kentmere. At this point the plans include a 'meet and greet' followed by lunch and, weather permitting, a guided walk on one or more of the beautiful walks through Kentmere. She is extending this invitation to anyone connected to a family who lived in the Kentmere valley in the 1800s (not just Airey or Bland). The cost will be £10 per person to cover the meal costs and hall rental. Please contact either Donna Fraser via email fraser-donna@shaw.ca or Margaret Lister via telephone in Bowness at 015394 47544.

Financial Accounts 2007

In recent years I have provided an overview of the financial accounts for those members unable to attend the Society's Annual General Meeting. The following notes highlight the main aspects of the Income and Expenditure accounts together with year-end balances as presented to the meeting on 8th April 2008.

The main source of Income was membership subscriptions (approaching £1,000, due to the increase in the number of members and the uplift in subscription rates). Three 'secondary' income sources were the sale of the Society's "Lakeland Valley Through Time" book, bank interest and proceeds from the sale of the re-published "Walks Around Staveley" book, edited by our Secretary, John Berry. Overall income was less than in 2006 when donations and sales of the Society's publications were considerably higher as they benefited from visitors to the week-long exhibition in the Roundhouse.

Total Expenditure was somewhat less than income. Production costs associated with the three issues of the Journal accounted for almost 25% of our expenditure whilst purchase of various relatively inexpensive items of computer, safety and sound equipment absorbed a further 12%; hire of the school meeting room remained the same as previous years. Purchase of Corn Rent Maps/Histories and the September Heritage Weekend costs (subsequently re-imbursed) were new items of expenditure in 2007.

Year-end credit balances in both Current and Deposit Accounts show the Society's finances are in a healthy state. Copies of the full accounts are available to members on request to the Treasurer.

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

David Hooson, Hon Treasurer