

Staveley & District History Society

Journal Summer 2018

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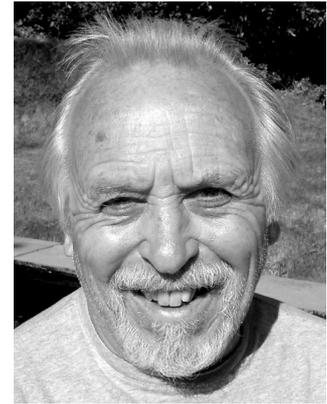
The views expressed in articles in this Journal are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Society.

Cover photo: West Coast Railways vintage train service at Staveley on 26th June.

The next issue of the *Journal* (No 44, the Winter 2018 issue) will be published about the 12th December 2018. All contributions (letters, articles, etc.) are welcome at any time but should be with the Editor by early November.

From the Events Secretary

It is with some trepidation that I take up the mantle of Events Secretary, the previous incumbent having carried out the role for so long and with such success. I am delighted that the change of meeting day has made it possible for me to join this august body.



My interest in local history goes back a long time. Whilst a pupil at Windermere Grammar School my Geography teacher, Mike Davies-Shiel, was a profound influence in drawing my attention to the evolution of the local physical and human landscape of Cumbria. In my late teens I could be found burrowing through the Coniston copper mines and the Langdale slate mines, a heady mixture of adventure and discovery. At university I studied Geography with Geology where my tutor, R.K. Gresswell, introduced me to the intricacies of the Ings drumlin field. During a 40-year career as a schoolmaster, mostly in the North-East, I was able to further indulge my love of industrial archaeology in the lead mining areas of Durham and in mapping the old wagon-ways. It was a great joy to return to my native “heaf” in 2010. My Cumbrian roots go deep and there is still much for me to learn about this wonderful county.

I am confident the change of times and venue will be a positive advantage. I trust that the programme will be of interest of all.

David Telford-Reed

Vintage rolling stock on the Lakes Line

The tenure of Northern Rail, operators of the trains between Oxenholme and Windermere since April 2016, has been marked by delays and cancellations. After the new national timetables were introduced on 20th May 2018, Northern suspended rail services on 4th June in favour of rail replacement buses. However, West Coast Railways of Carnforth, which usually runs heritage and charter services, stepped in during Northern's absence to provide a shuttle service between Oxenholme and Windermere for 2 weeks from 17th June. The six daily return services, hauled by vintage diesel engines at either end of a rake of three vintage coaches, attracted substantially more passengers than the regular Northern services. The reason for this may be that no fares were charged to passengers. The £5,500 per day reported cost (total approx £80,000 over two weeks of operation) is said to have been paid for by the Department for Transport. Northern reintroduced trains on 2nd July running their own 'shuttle service'.



John Hiley

Life at Borwick Fold, 1942-69

This is an extract from '*Family and Farm in Lakeland 1910-1969 - the memoirs of Lucy Holmes*' edited for SDHS by Joe Scott in 1997

Moving in: We took the tenancy of Borwick Fold Farm in the spring of 1942 and moved on the 16 February. It wasn't a very good start. The ground was covered with snow for thirteen weeks and there was still snow in rock crevices when we were hay-timing in June.

We bought thirty-seven lambing ewes from the previous tenant, but some had been buried under snow-drifts for a fortnight and weren't in very good shape so some cast their lambs. Mrs Gosden a friend and neighbour went up to Borwick Fold with George (*Lucy's husband*) in the morning, lit fires and put the beds and cot up for me. She saw to the furniture as it arrived. I was last to leave Golden Rock (*their previous house in Crook*) with our two little children about 8 pm. It was a long hard day. We had no water in the house at Golden Rock, and Borwick Fold was little better - no water in the house, a half rotor pump outside in the wash house. It was a nuisance as there always had to be a can of water ready to prime it. The well was deep and the water went back down and the pump couldn't lift it without priming. George was leaving for work on his motor bike at 6.30 am each morning, so I was left two miles from the village with a four month old baby and a two year old child. The farm when we went there had only one stock-proof field, a small paddock next to the house. The rest had numerous wall gaps and gates on one hanging. The few sheep, when the snow went, wandered anywhere they liked, into the house if the door was left open. They hung about the yard and buildings waiting to be fed as the ground was under thick snow at the beginning. Then after the snow went they still stayed around trying to pilfer calf nuts or hen corn. Two ewes in particular were very tame and followed me everywhere. They were a pest, pushing into everything, always on the scrounge. Margaret, aged two, called them Long Leggies and its mate. We bought one cow in milk and six heifer calves and from that we gradually built up stock. I had to milk and feed the calves and hens and take Margaret with me as I daren't leave her anywhere. I had to keep her where I could see her. She was very good at getting into mischief. The outgoing tenant left the wash-house full of loose oats so I couldn't get in to wash until the snows went and he could move his oats. I had my dolly tubs and the big wooden roller mangle outside the back door where I had to stand in snow and ice to do my washing. The water was to pump and carry across from the wash-house to the kitchen boiler. There was a twenty gallon boiler in the wash-house but I couldn't get to it for oats. The pump was just inside the door - boards had been put across to hold the oats back. When George came home at night and had a meal and the girls were safe in bed we had to go out into the barn and cross-cut-saw logs for me to keep a fire going next day. It was very hard work trying to get the house put straight along with all the rest. The house had not been used very much except for evacuees, as the land had been let to the next farm. The kitchen range had been painted with tar, I suppose

to stop it going rusty, and when I lit the fire and the grate got hot all the tar ran down and stuck on the floor. It took me ages to get it all cleaned off the grate and floor. Before we went there the kitchen had just been used as a store. It took weeks to get the floor scrubbed clean. But even with all the din and neglect I was happy, the house had a friendly feeling and I enjoyed putting it to rights and seeing it come alive.

The road through the yard was said to be the old pack horse road from Levens through Brigsteer, Underbarrow, Crook and up through Troutbeck. I imagine the house next door had once been a pub. It had a narrow pantry with shelves edged with scalloped oak to stop bottles slipping. The top half of one oak door was hinged and the bottom half had a shelf for a serving hatch, the pantry being the bar from which drink was served.

There was a War on: I was there on my own because George couldn't leave his job. He was called up to join the Tank Corps but his boss, Alex Tomlinson, was in command of The Fourth Border Regiment and I suppose he was in a position to pull a few strings. So George was deferred and joined the Home Guard as a despatch rider. He also did two nights a week on look-out. The planes going to bomb Barrow went droning over Borwick Fold and standing in the garden we watched the flash from bombs and the 'Ack Ack' fire.

Farming at Borwick Fold: The first years at Borwick Fold were very hard. The first September George had an accident coming home from work. He sustained a double fracture to the base of his skull, so he was in hospital some time. Fortunately for me his father and mother stayed with me. Granny looked after the baby Dorothy, Grandad worked outside with me and we took Margaret with us. We had fourteen acres of corn; it was compulsory to plough and grow crops during the war. Grandad cut the corn with a scythe and I bound the sheaves. I was stooking them at midnight in the moonlight! In the end the Home Guard was commissioned by the leader to come with horses,



Borwick Fold by Margaret Holmes
from a photograph c1960

machines and carts and cut and lead the crop. They also did the same thing about getting in the six acres of potatoes. It was hard work feeding them all as so much was rationed, but it was a marvellous help. Without it I think Grandad and myself would have been bogged down long before we had finished.

Royal, our first horse: We started from scratch and spent all our money on the few animals we could afford and essential tools, forks, rakes and a mowing machine, a coup-cart with hay-shelvings, plough, harrow etc. and a horse. The first horse we bought had been dray-horse in Kendal, and then sold off and sadly neglected. George saw him in a field and could tell by the awkward way he walked his feet needed attention so he took a chance and bought him for £7.00. It took a whole day to walk with the poor animal from Kendal to Crook. After two days rest George took him to the blacksmith at Ings and got his feet cut hard back and shed with light shoes. He was a different horse on the way back, head up doing little prances, so glad he could handle his feet again. He didn't do any work for a while to let him straighten up as he had gone right back on his fetlock joint. The first thing he did was chain harrow with Grandad. I don't know which was the prouder. Royal with neck arched prancing along, or Grandad marching along behind with the long-cords in his hands. We used to say. "There goes the lad and the stag." Grandad was in his late seventies, and Royal was by no means young. It was a pleasure to watch them, so pleased with each other.

Improving the Farm: We did a lot to alter the farm in the twenty-eight years we were there. We reclaimed acres from bracken, made roads and widened gateways to accommodate new and wider machines. We went from working hay with forks and hand-rakes, and carting hay loose, to machines working the hay and baling it, with tractors and trailers to lead it. We also built two silage barns and made silage as well as hay. We grew from one cow and six calves to 89 head of cattle and from thirty seven sheep to about 200. We sold milk to start with. It had to be in Crook by 7.30 am to catch the milk lorry taking it to Libby's.

We cut a lot of bracken for bedding at Borwick Fold. Years ago, it has been said, hill farmers cut green bracken and made small round stacks dotted around on the hill for winter feed for sheep. I have never seen it done, just heard about it from an old farm worker. I hated sweeping bracken, or hay for that matter, with a horse drawn sweep. It was a rotten job. We had to sledge bracken from the rough land to where we could load the carts. In some places it was easier to sweep it to the carts. I always felt sorry for the horse pulling the sweep.

Bad winters and dry summers: During bad winters we had to be up extra early. We were 600 feet above sea level at the house and so above the snow line. We could have fourteen inches of snow and nothing down at Crook. The highest point was the Big Rock, 818 ft. In 1947, we had to take the milk out on our home-made snow plough, which was normally used to take hay to the sheep and plough tracks for them. That year it took the milk for eleven days and brought water back. Three horses were used to pull it and they lost flesh by the time they dragged that weight up and down. For the first year or two we had no water on tap. We had to carry it when the well gave out which it did sometimes, always in hay-time, so when I went out of the field to get tea I had to go down the pasture to a trough with fresh running water! When we

started selling milk we had to have water for cooling and swilling the shippon, so we had a tank put in and piped water on tap. Again in 1962-3 we had a long hard frost, but by now we had stopped selling milk and had a suckler herd. It froze everything up, pipes, taps, water bowls, the lot, so Margaret and me had all the stock to water down the field at the beck. I stayed at the beck to see they all got a drink and Margaret sent about six down the lane. When they had finished I sent them up the field to the back of the buildings, and gave a whistle for Margaret to send another lot down. The beck sometimes froze before the next lot arrived so someone had to stay to keep it open. We had to take water from there for the house in kits on the back of the tractor. It was a long thankless seven weeks. Fish were frozen in the ice in the little reservoir. The sheep were to feed twice a day, and we seemed to get nothing else done.



Cooking for eight and milking twice a day: All cooking was done on the open fire apart from that done in the oven. I baked twice a week, eighteen loaves at a time - three shelves in the oven with six loaves on each. They were changed half way through baking, middle to top, bottom to middle and top to bottom. I had a family of eight to cook and wash for. When the children were young I milked morning and night, fed calves, pigs, dogs and hens etc. One year I only went out of the yard twice! I often worked all night to catch up with ironing and mending, things I had no time to do during the day. It never seemed to bother me or tire me,

There was a privy at the bottom of the garden. The children and grown-ups had a tin bath in the front of the fire. There was no heat in the house except the kitchen fire. I've got up to find the dish-cloth frozen to the dresser and snow blown under the door, and all the windows frozen over. I got up first all my married life and lit the fire. George was always a bad one to get up, so I gave over trying to get him up when I got up. I just managed to get him out to lift the milk kits onto the lorry and take the milk. Anyway I always liked milking and George didn't.

I went into the fodder-gang one morning about 6.00 a.m. to feed the cows and got the shock of my life. There was a man asleep in the hay complete with hat and boots! I think I gave him a fright too. Anyway he helped me feed the cows and was a very

interesting person. I gave him some breakfast and a few sandwiches and away he went.

We had some Wise Dogs: We had some very wise dogs at Borwick Fold. George bought Nell when we were still at Golden Rock. She was about five months old and he broke her in on the hens being the only live things we had. We had a cockerel, and not satisfied with his own hens he used to fly over to our neighbour's. The first time he went missing, George took Nell to find him. She put her nose down and sorted him out. Often when he was missing all we did was tell Nell to find him. He got so used to her flushing him out of the bracken where he was hiding, if he saw her at all he would high-tail it home.

She was a very jealous dog and wouldn't let anyone near Margaret. If Margaret didn't want to come if she was called she'd crawl to the back of Nell's kennel and sit there, and Nell stood guard and growled at anybody going near. When we went to Borwick Fold she worked the sheep. She was a very quiet worker and sensible. The first spring I did the lambing on my own with Nell's help. If I wanted a sheep and lamb bringing home, I told Nell to fetch them and I could do something else. A ewe will always run at a dog to protect her lamb, so it isn't much good trying to drive them. Nell worked it out for herself. She put her back towards home and ran at the ewe. The ewe would then chase her, the lamb following the mother. That way Nell got them home with the least hassle.

Fly was another clever dog. We didn't put her in at night at all, and she always had the cows in the yard by 6.00 am and only brought the ones we were milking. If we weren't out by the time she got them into the cow-yard she would come to the shippon and bark. One of our neighbours looked straight into our cow pasture and so could see Fly bring the cows. I saw the wife one day when I was going past on my way to Ings, and she said what a daft dog we had, only taking some of the cows. I asked her if she ever saw anyone fetch the rest. Fly only took the ones we milked. She sorted them out and left dry cows and non-milkers - not so daft!

Borwick Fold was a Lovely Place: Borwick Fold was a lovely place to live, two miles from the village, quiet and peaceful, with lots of wildlife and wild flowers. We had every kind of bird, the birds nesting in hedgerows and meadows, woodland birds, green woodpeckers and spotted woodpeckers. Having two reservoirs, water birds were also attracted. The arctic swans came in winter and sometimes they stayed till April. Lots of different ducks, oyster-catchers, snipe, redshank, sandpipers and grebes all nested around the reservoirs. The mute swans came off the lake for short spells. They were interesting to watch. Taking off they flap their wings and appear to run along the surface of the water till they get enough speed to lift off and fly away. When they land they will fly around dropping down low enough to make a landing, and then seem to lean back, stick their feet out and skid along the surface throwing up spray like a little speed boat. It was also nice to hear the wild geese going over, as it

was to hear the larks singing their hearts out in spring. When we first went to Borwick Fold there was a corncrake in the low fields and also a nightjar, but they seemed to disappear after a few years. The swallows and house-martins nested every year. A family of swallows nested on the beams in the shippon, one nest was above one of the cows so when we were milking we used to watch the parent birds feeding the young - hungry little blighters - they never seemed satisfied.

Vipers also were seen quite often in warm weather. They came out and basked in the sun and it worried me when the children were small in case they got stung. We lost several sheep and had a dog and our trap pony stung - he was stung in the chest and had a big swelling in front of his shoulder. He was very lame for a while and we had to bathe the swelling twice a day with hot water and saltpetre.

Our landlord stocked the reservoir near the house with rainbow trout and sometimes he fished in the evening. I enjoyed standing on the lawn and listening to the reel as he cast and the line ran out. If he hooked a fish you could hear the splish-splash as it was reeled in.

I loved to listen to all the night noises. If a curlew got up piping its long eerie call you could be sure a fox or some other night prowler had disturbed it. In the country you can hear all sorts of sounds at night when all else is quiet. The wind sighing through the trees, birds twittering gently, animals grazing, water lapping against stones or the murmur of running water, night creatures snuffling along, foxes yapping - the night is full of sound.

May Walk 2018 – The Yards of Kendal

Nine members gathered at the Town Hall just as the clock should have chimed. John Bateson, one of our leaders, with Trevor Hughes, explained the clock had recently undergone major repairs but had 'broken down again'. He gave us a short talk on the restoration work of the Town Hall and of the history of the immediate surrounding area. With the low number on the tour John left us and Trevor began our tour of some of the yards of Kendal. We actually covered very little distance during the evening: SLDC offices; Beales; Frydays and Iceland / Boyes. It may have been short in distance but Trevor gave us a fascinating and informative talk showing his knowledge giving us both quality and quantity of information in a most friendly manner.

The yards of Kendal developed in the late 18th and 19th centuries and were once lined with cottages and workshops which are now considered one of the most distinctive historical features of the present day town. Of significant historical interest the yards are visited by many people to see what were once thriving communities in the town. The yards are not, as widely thought, defences against Scots raiders. Some 120 yards exist with research finding over 250 various different names. Before 1862 the yards were known by name until street numbering was introduced. Slum clearance around

1960 reduced the number and character of the yards quite drastically although many yards still exist and form an active part of the history of Kendal.

Records and research show a very different side to the present day yards, a history of trade and development, crowded living conditions for families, working servant girls, poor sanitary conditions, health problems, intermarriage between families with no two yards being the same.

Yards were named for one of five reasons:-

1. The owner e.g. Webster's Yard after the architect Francis Webster.
2. A resident e.g. Noble's Yards after Dr Samuel Noble
3. The work or manufacture e.g. Tanners Yard after leather traders E.W. Thompson
4. An Inn or Hostelry e.g. Old Bank Yard and the Old Green Dragon where Mary Wakefield was born
5. Notable features e.g. Footbridge Yard after the footbridge destroyed in the 1898 floods

Some of the yards we visited on the tour:

Berry's Yard: Arthur Simpson had a furniture workshop here. He was active in the Arts and Crafts movement producing high quality furniture including some for St James church in Staveley. Some readers will remember Frank Stainton (wine) had a shop here along with Sticky Fingers a school uniform supplier both now gone.



Dr Manning's Yard: Dr Manning lived and practised here at the end of the 19th century. He was a highly respected doctor and also a surgeon at the county hospital.

Old Post Office Yard: Named for obvious reasons as the site of a former post office.

Shakespeare Inn Yard: The original Inn dates back to around 1829 as a drinking venue for those attending the Shakespeare theatre. Poor support saw the theatre closed in 1834 and converted into a billiard room and ballroom.

Tanners Yard: Leather was an important trade in Kendal with shoe making and hides used for saddles. The yard was resurfaced by SLDC in 1990 but notable features of the beeboles where beehives were placed still remain.

Tognarelli's Yard: Named somewhat more recently after the well known Italian ice cream maker and seller.

Old Police Yard: Home of a former police station and refurbished by Kendal Civic Society in 2013

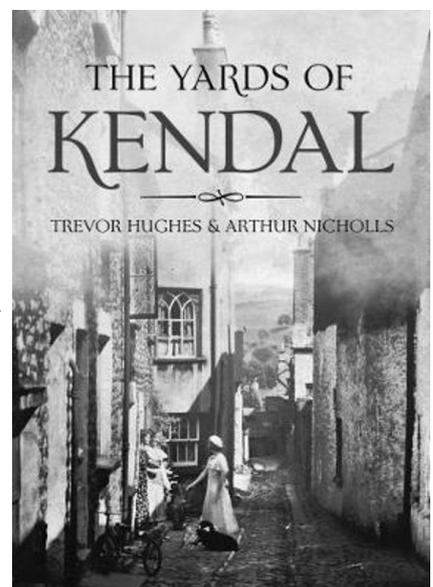
Old Widows Yard: Thomas Sandes a wealthy cloth merchant provided money for almshouses to accommodate 8 poor widows aged over 50 and of good reputation who had worked in the woollen trade in return for them continuing to work in the wool trade doing carding, spinning and weaving with further marriage forbidden. Sandes was mayor of Kendal in 1647.



Sandes Hospital Yard: Also named after Thomas Sandes who founded the Blue Coat school here. The houses were rebuilt by Miles Thompson in 1852 and the school merged with Kendal Grammar School in 1886. There is an interesting date-stone and coat of arms above the entrance on Highgate.

Websters Yard: Named after Francis Webster a well known architect who established his business here with buildings now converted into modern homes.

By now it was 8.15 and Trevor Hughes was considering ending the walk but keen not to do so he added a bonus visit to Collin Croft (again it had been covered on a previous visit). Now a more modern area improved by the Civic Society in the 1980's its name originates from the Collin family in the 15th century still of mixed use. For further information Trevor Hughes and Arthur Nicholls have recently published a book *The Yards of Kendal* £14.99 and on sale in local shops with few still available directly from Trevor with discount.



There is one question Trevor Hughes nor anyone else could answer. What is the reason for the large stone at the bottom of Kent Street near Frydays fish and chip shop. The answer seems to have baffled everyone. Any suggestions please?

John Morris

June Walk 2018 – Visit to Low Ludderburn

A balmy June evening found us at Low Ludderburn, Cartmel Fell, the former home of Arthur Ransome. It is now the home of Helen Caldwell, secretary of the Cumbria Industrial History Society, who gave us a delightfully entertaining account of Ransome's life and of his time at Low Ludderburn. Her talk took place in Ransome's workroom, the upper story of the adjacent barn which he'd converted. We also were shown some of Ransome's documents and artifacts. There was much else of interest but a few things have stuck with me, in particular the system of signals, similar to those in *Winter Holiday*, that Arthur devised to communicate with his neighbour, Colonel Kelsall at Barkworth about half a mile away.



Ransome was born in Leeds. His father was professor of history at Yorkshire College, now the University of Leeds. The family regularly holidayed at Nibthwaite and he was carried up to the top of Coniston Old Man as an infant. He was educated first at the Old College in Windermere, then at Rugby School where he failed to thrive because of poor eyesight, lack of athletic skill, and limited academic achievement. He went on to study chemistry at Yorkshire College giving that up after a year to go to London to become a writer.



The Ransome's moved to Low Ludderburn in 1925. Arthur wrote that it was '*on very high ground but sheltered from the north, overlooking the whole valley of the Winster*'. The view is indeed magnificent. It was a small, primitive cottage in those days, and the damp

climate did not agree with his wife, Evgenia, former secretary of Trotsky, who he'd met in Russia whilst working as a foreign correspondent for the Daily News. In 1935, after the success of *Coot Club*, they sold it and moved to Suffolk, where they could sail on the Broads.

John Hiley

July Walk 2018: A Visit to Askham (a cabinet of delights)

On one of the many wonderful days we had this summer, Andy Lowe agreed to escort members of the Society around the village of Askham. Fifteen members decided to take up this offer. It was a wise choice. Most members will know of the joy of attending an Andy Lowe lecture. Well this was an Andy Lowe talk in glorious three dimensions. We didn't have to make do with his slides, we could see the real thing. Our chairman instructed me to write everything down. Again members



will recall the vast amount of information Andy delivers at his lectures, well with the real thing the amount of information given in a walk of 135 minutes was prodigious.

We started off gently in the (free!) Askham car park examining the map of Askham and its environs and the importance of the conjunction of both limestone and sandstone to the appearance of the vernacular architecture was stressed. The hand of the Lowther family and the river and valley which gave them their name was also explained. The importance of the proximity of Penrith and its railway station was also discussed. Then the walk began and it became impossible to retain all the delights in our minds.



We first walked east past Askham Hall, a grade 1 listed building, and went from Askham Parish down to the River Lowther and the start of Lowther Parish. In his previous life Andy had been the conservation officer for the National Park, and his knowledge of the myriad cottages and barns was staggering; every other building seemed to be listed. One could recognise the passage of time in consecutive cottages just from the windows design and the size of the panes.

We then crossed over the road and examined the properties on the side of the road including St Peter's Church until we arrived at the western limit of the village on the Moor Divock road. What a day, what can I remember? Well, one thing was the sight of several Yorkshire sliding sash windows. If you want to know what they are, either visit this most exquisite village, or ask sprightly Alan Lord. He will have remembered everything.

Don Morris