

Staveley & District History Society

Journal Winter 2019/20

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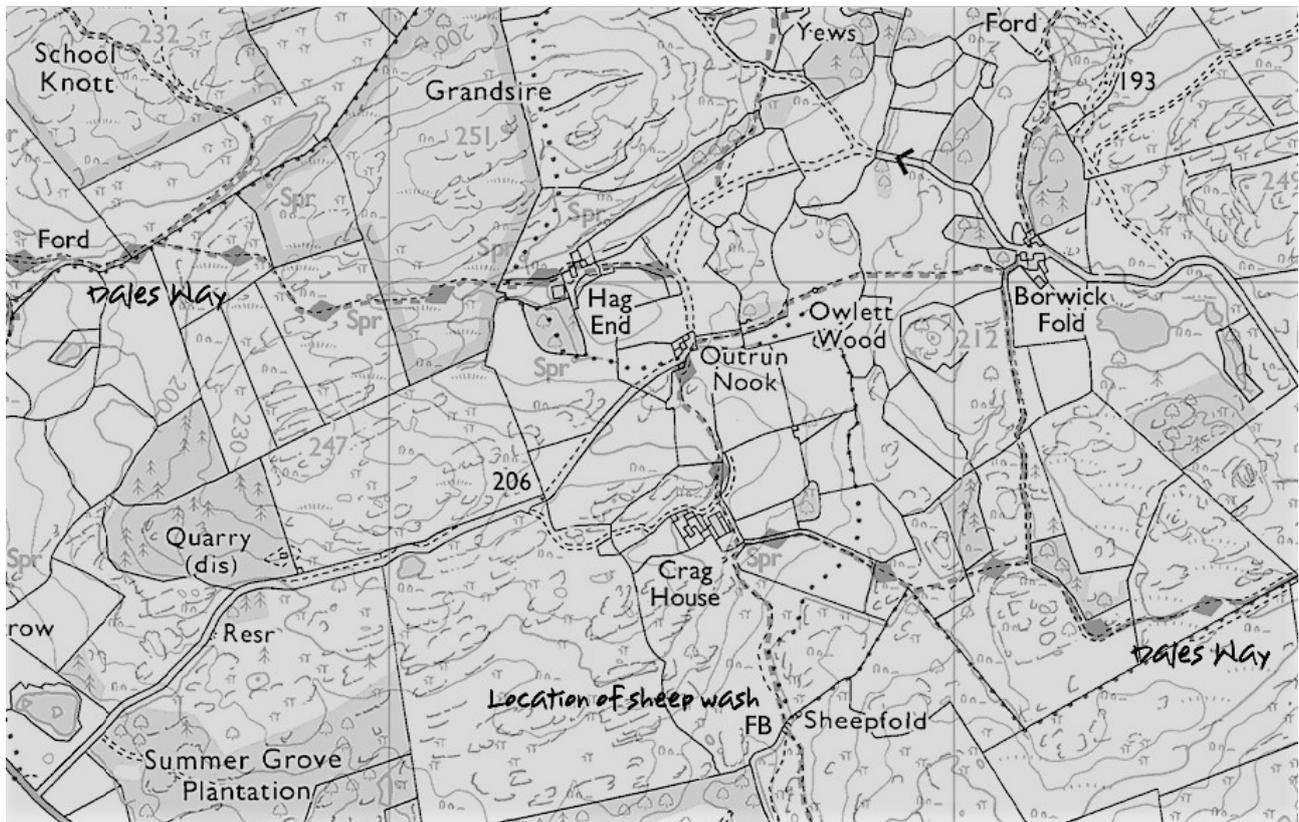
The views expressed in articles in this Journal are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Society.

Cover photo: New artwork by Wendy Randall at Staveley Station. Commissioned by the Lakes Line User Group the three panels depict village life and history.

The next issue of the *Journal* (No 48, the Spring 2020 issue) will be published in mid-April 2020. Contributions (letters, articles, etc.) are welcome at any time but should be with the Editor by early March.

Visit to Crag House Farm sheepwash - 23rd May 2019

Location: South of Crag House Farm. Accessed via gated road from Ings, LA8 9PY, via Borwick Fold toward Cleabarrow on Crook Road.



A sheepwash located in the course of a stream would be used, probably prior to clipping. A washed fleece commanded a better price.

The Sheepwash at Crag House Farm, possibly early C18th, consists of:

- A sheepfold from which there is access to the stream
- At the point of access for the sheep a 0.9m deep pool 4.4m wide by 6.4m long would have been created by temporarily damming the stream
- Below the pool, but before the temporary dam, there is a paved ramp for the sheep to get out of the water

The Sheepfold

- The sheepfold is some 15m long by 4.5m wide
- It has two 'sections' 10m long and 5m long, with a gate between the two sections. The abutment for the gate can be seen on the left of the picture below. Remains of the dividing wall still exist
- A hog-hole through which lambs might be separated





Stream channel above and below the wash about 1.5m, widened to 4.4m in the wash





The opening at the downstream end of the wash would have been temporarily dammed. Sheep would leave the wash by the paved ramp.



Below the sheepwash there is evidence of a ford, on what was probably the main access road to the farm from the Crook direction. The main water flow would have been confined in a cundreth - a conduit or culvert.

WESTMORLAND WOOL SALES

At Kirkby Stephen on Thursday Messrs Whitwell, Hargreaves and Co. of Kendal offered by public auction 500 packs of wool mostly cross-bred and blackfaced. The following prices were obtained:- Washed cross-bred 22½d to 24d, unwashed 19d to 20d, fine washed blackfaced 17½d to 18½d. At Kendal on Friday the same firm offered 1,000 packs and a very good sale took place most of the wool being sold as follows:- Washed half bred hogg and wether 2s.9d to 2s.10d. do Cheviot 2s.7d to 2s.11d, do Wensleydale 2s.1d to 2s.4d, Herdwick 16d to 16½d. These prices are 5 per cent higher than the July sale. [6.9.1919]

Excerpt form Westmorland Gazette 6th September 1919



Prior to clipping, sheep were often given a good wash in a dub or deep pool such as the one here at Barbon, c. 1900. On hot days this job was no doubt appreciated by the men doing the work! Wet fleeces were very difficult to cut and the sheep were left to dry out thoroughly before being taken to the shearer. The ancient yearly cycle of gathering the sheep, lambing, dipping and clipping was a community enterprise. It required large numbers of helpers from among the neighbours and the local community to supplement the work of family and hired hands.

From: Britain in old photographs, Kirkby Lonsdale and District
Nigel and Phillip Dalziel, ISBN 0-7509-1274-X

Peter Noble and John Hiley

Littlewood stone sled

Peter Noble writes: “Some time ago Staveley and District History Society organised a walk at Littlewood to look at the shooting range and the old shooting hut which had collapsed in a storm. Behind the hut were the remains of an original sled for moving stone around the fields and fells. I talked about it with Tom Bland and he suggested that I try and recover the remaining pieces and rebuild it. I eventually got permission to take it and have now completed the project.



All the old timber was beyond repair but some of the metalwork was good enough to sand blast and the work was undertaken by Bowman's of Kendal. It then was given coat of primer and two coats of paint. I had to make new nuts and bolts to the same specifications as the old ones, all the diameters being taken from the original iron work. New ash planking was obtained from Graythwaite saw mills and the sled was put together in the traditional manner. I wasn't sure about the shelvings but was given invaluable advice from William and Nelson Bland who had both used a sled in their younger days.”

The metalwork that Peter found, in particular the runners and cross brace, provided the information needed about the size of the original sled, 5ft long by 3ft wide. He estimates that such a sled would have carried up to about ½ a ton of stone, depending on the horse available. It is likely a Dales or Fell pony would have been used.

The following¹ places the use of such a sled in context: *Typically the wallers worked in gangs of four: two to do the actual walling; one to quarry the stone and one to manage the horse and sled bringing the stone between the two. There's roughly a tonne of stone in every running metre of wall, slightly less in fell walls as they are deliberately less solid than those in the valleys. In good conditions a single waller will put up between four to six metres of wall a day so with two wallers you are looking at around ten tonnes of material per day to build ten metres of wall. The stone was quarried as close as they could find to the intended line of the wall - why cart (sled) it further than needed? They used a sled rather than a cart as it was less likely to run away or turn over on steeper slopes. The quarries will have been small affairs, an outcrop that they felt could be easily worked and would only have a short working face. No dynamite or black powder as a) it would have cost money & b) it shatters the rock. So they extracted the stone using hammers and crowbars.*

1. https://www.ukclimbing.com/forums/hill_talk/history_of_dry_stone_walls_borrowdale_near_kendal-616603

From satanic mills to the roots of heaven

My father, Henry Hiley, born in 1919, would have been 100 years old this year. Brought up in the Lancashire mill town of Littleborough, family illness first brought him to the Lake District, about 90 years ago. The beautiful Lakeland landscape and clean air created such a deep impression that he resolved to live there. It wasn't till just before his 30th birthday, after six years in the Navy in WWII, and with a wife and young family, that he achieved that dream when he came to teach at Windermere Grammar School. He lived in South Lakeland for the rest of his life, in Windermere and Ings, passing away in 2007.

Henry was one of a family of five. He had an elder brother Sam and three sisters, Edith, Agnes and Mary. Illness was to strike the children; first Sam and then Agnes contracted TB. Father recalled sharing a bed with his brother Sam when he was coughing blood! Agnes was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1927, and was admitted to the sanatorium at High Carley, near Ulverston. Sam went there too but TB took his life in 1929. Agnes spent 10 years battling the illness, in and out of hospitals and sanatoriums till the late 1930s. TB or 'consumption', was a very common ailment when most urban families lived in cramped and damp conditions.



L to R: Henry, Mary, Agnes, Edith, Sam



High Carley was opened in 1884 as a fever hospital for pauper patients. Its relatively isolated country setting was ideal for containing infectious diseases such as scarlet fever, typhoid and diphtheria. An extension to treat tuberculosis patients was added in 1916 and it became well known as a place where people stayed for many months to overcome the effects of TB. Not all the patients were local. Some were sent there from the

industrial communities of Manchester and Liverpool. It was one of several hospitals to close when Barrow's new Furness General Hospital opened in 1984.

The wards were open to the weather all year round – cold, fresh air being seen as an important part of the treatment for lungs made weak by tuberculosis. The cure was slow but did offer its compensations. Those at High Carley might not have enjoyed waking up with snow on their beds but most did enjoy the chance of activities in the great outdoors, including digging the vegetable garden, feeding the hens, working in the orchard with its hundred fruit trees, or even light building work designed to toughen recovering patients. Activities also included walks, croquet and bowls.¹

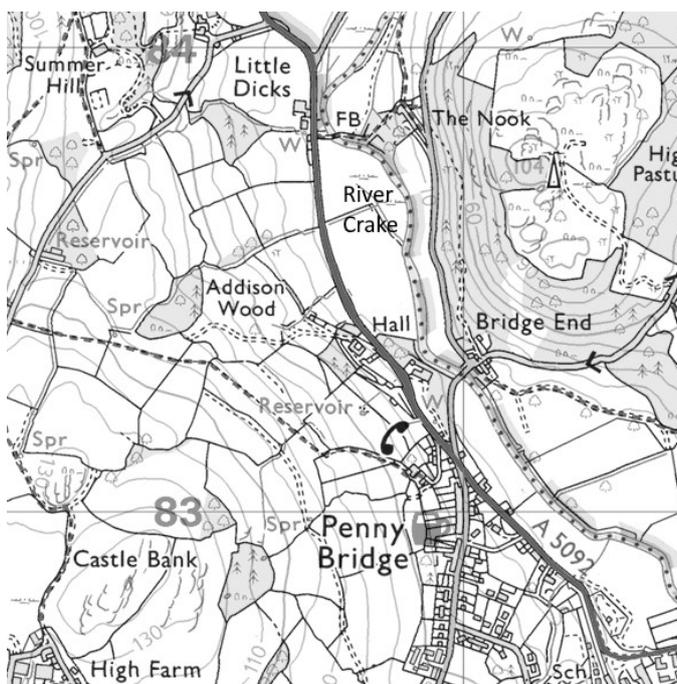


In order that the family could visit Sam and Agnes, Henry's father arranged accommodation at Little Dick's Farm, near Penny Bridge with the Crowe family. Henry was never sure how the arrangement came about, but the family spent almost every Easter, Whitsuntide and Summer school-holiday there, till the late 1930s. The clear waters of the River Crake run close to the farm here. The contrast with the grime from the cotton mills in Littleborough and the pollution in the River Roch must have been stark. Little wonder the visits influenced Henry's future so strongly.



Little Dick's Farm in about 1929. Henry is on the right with a pitchfork of hay.
The little boy is Larry Crowe.

Though located in the beautiful Crake Valley, sadly, Little Dick's itself is no longer the idyllic spot it once was. The farmhouse is barely ten yards from the A5092 and the heavy traffic that thunders to and from West Cumbria. I risked life and limb to take this photograph.



Henry remained in touch with Laurence (Larry) Crowe and recalled taking me as a child to Addyfield Farm, Cartmel Fell, where Larry had relocated. Agnes's story had a happier outcome than that of her brother Sam. Developing TB at such an early age was a very formative occurrence for her. Because of the treatment, she missed a lot of her schooling but it did give her a real motivation to do well for herself. She qualified as a State Registered Nurse and became a nursing sister. She was nursing in Mansfield when she met her future husband who had caught TB in WWII in Iraq.



Growing up in Windermere, I took hills, lakes, clear streams, and fresh air for granted. After all, that was 'normal'.



Even though we made many family excursions in the 50s and 60s to relatives in Rochdale, Littleborough, Todmorden and Halifax, all towns marked by the legacy of the mills, the realisation that the Lake District was somewhere special only slowly dawned. I was prompted by letters from home when I was a student in Manchester in the late 60s.

At that time, letters posted in Windermere bore the postmark² 'Visit Lakeland, the roots of heaven.' Clearly Henry thought the same all those years earlier!

John Hiley

1. Information on High Carley from North West Evening mail, memories column.

2. Used at Windermere 14 Oct 68 to 15 Mar 72 except when transferred to Ambleside 1 Feb to 15 Mar 69

Tales from the Tapes: recorded at Ings Parish Hall 14th December 2017
James Walling *'Farming in seven decades at Misset'* Part 4.

And then the government brought out a new scheme called the Environmental Stewardship Scheme, and this is the contract that I have with the government and it was the same for the other schemes. The instruction book is three times the thickness of this (*holds up a hymnbook*) and basically it lays out sections of things that you can do and things that you can't do. You sort of plod your way, it's full of graphs, it's full



Looking North to Banner Rigg from the gated road above Ings.
Misset's lands lie on the East side of the fell.

of figures. It's full of maps, loads of maps at the end showing all our fields. There's one map here with a red line round it, something else there and so on and each of these little things that's just one field, will qualify you for a sum of money. You know, whether it's ten bob or a fiver, so the idea is that I would get as much as I could from these various schemes. And

actually now I'm in this scheme and it is quite successful. It provides me with an income and in return the country gets better wildlife diversity but I have a list of individual fields, they're all listed. This was produced by the National Trust. They're all listed.

There are plants there that we had on the farm, notably Dyers Greenweed and the orchid with the black spots on, the Early Purple. That was very prevalent sort of forty or fifty years ago. There is no sign of them at all now they've just disappeared and the hill above the farm, the area where they grew, has had no change in either fertilizer or management or stock numbers or anything...I dunno...for the last hundred years 'cos Willie Taylor, when he was there, he told us about all this and they managed the farm exactly the same as we did. So there is this climate change to think about. Anyway we've gone in for this environment scheme. We now have lots of what I call toadstools. I think there's a fancy name for them, mycellus, or something like that and the Trust are very proud of these little mushroom things. They come out pink, yellow, brown and white and the top ground over towards High Borrans is full of them. That's where the sheep graze.

In addition we have to fill in a book every year. This is the cross compliance soil protection review. We have a holding register which registered all the sheep

movements and all the sheep we have in and out and it's all computerised if you wish to put it on the computer. We have this one which is another soil protection view. We have all these boxes to tick, you see, we can tick all boxes, yes, it's an interesting job ticking boxes.

So, at the moment, we've now come round to having a suckler beef herd, which at present numbers around sixty, fifty-six I think it is. I'm going to have a selling session before long because I'm getting old and sixty is quite a lot to clean out. The sheep we are maintaining at around 130 to 150 and I still clip the sheep myself. I have a mate now who is good with paperwork and she ticks the numbers off and writes down the numbers and sees that I do my job properly. The silage now is in round bales, wrapped in plastic. We have a baler of our own. We did make our own wrapped bales until I went to drive the bus. After that we got contractors to do the job. We need about 500 to 600 bales, that's 300 tons of grass, to keep the cattle going from the end of October to the end of May. And if I think I am going to run short I have the option of buying bales or reducing the number of cattle.

With that environmental scheme there's a limit on the number of animals that I can keep, the limit is 0.8 livestock units per hectare. Yes, exactly, so I have to calculate you see and rearrange the bookwork to suit the government while I keep as many cows as I want. Well, we've got to that stage now where we're settled in with this suckler herd and it's actually very nice to work with cows. It is nice, it really is. I go in there and wander about



SDHS visit to Misset in June 2016. James is in the centre of the group pointing toward the farmhouse

among them and they pull me and they eat me and they shove me and lick me and it's quite nice. And as I say I can cuddle them without getting a slap round the face.

So, I've come to the end, time has got on me. A mate said the other day - I said I'm going to speak for forty-five minutes about seven decades - he says 'Well that will be alright. It's only seven minutes a decade isn't it!' And I will answer your questions if you wish to ask. But remember, I'm rather uneducated, not college trained so I'm a bit dim which suits some of the yuppie townies!

to be continued