

Staveley & District History Society

Journal Winter 2020-21

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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: Inside Ings Church 1743 bell-tower, renovated in 2020. Full report in next Journal.

The next issue of the *Journal* (No 51, the Spring 2021 issue) will be published about the 12th April 2021. All contributions (letters, articles, etc.) are welcome at any time but should be with the Editor by early March.

From the Chair - review of the past year.

Covid-19 was a looming menace as 2020 began. We held meetings in Ings Parish Hall in January and February, respectively from Diana Matthews on '*Jack Kitchen, the Windermere Inventor*' and Suzanne Tiplady on '*The bobbins at Force*'. Little did anyone realise then what a sad influence Covid-19 would have on all our lives since. Not least for the Society, and personally for many, was the death, with Covid, of Alan Lord, one of our staunchest supporters and a prolific contributor. It seems no time at all since we were celebrating Alan's 90th birthday in March 2019 and we have a delightful appreciation by John Parker, his Ordnance Survey colleague and friend, in Spring 2019 Journal 45. I can add nothing to that other than to say that we all miss him.



Then came Lock-down, and the cancellation of the Society's Talks and Walks programme until July when we visited Kentmere Church. And that was our last event, talks in October and November also having to be shelved. Despite all of this, the three Journals have all been published on schedule. Thanks to all the contributors who made this possible, in particular to Robert Courtier, who not only addressed us at Kentmere Church in July but also more than half-filled two consecutive Journals with excellent articles on '*Early Settlement in Kentmere*' in the Summer 2020 Journal and on '*The grant of land in Ulthwaite*' in this one. Both are fine works of historical scholarship and are to be commended.

Work on the clock at St Margaret's Tower is reported in this Journal too. Its nice to read of this effort to preserve a special feature of the district's history, and it is particularly praiseworthy that it should happen in a year so Covid-disrupted. A significant renovation of Ings Church bell-tower has also occurred, the story of which will be published in a future Journal. The rarely heard peal of three bells dating from 1743 will be ready in time to ring out a trying 2020 and ring in a hopefully brighter 2021.

We are very grateful for your support in the past year. Looking forward to 2021, whilst the programme looks lean, it is our intention to try and provide a full programme of six talks and three walks, subject to Government guidance on the holding of meetings like ours. Thus, deliberately, only the first two talks have been booked. One or both of those talks would be postponed if necessary to the dates currently open in March and April, or even later in the year. Other talks would be added as required. And, there is every likelihood our Summer Walks can occur on the published dates, especially if they're in outdoor locations. We expect the Journals, articles for which the Editor would be very grateful, to be published as normal. All of which means that, despite the past and possibly future loss of events, I hope you will support the Society in 2021 by renewing your membership or joining as a new member. There is much to cherish in our district's history and your continuing membership helps to do that. In conclusion, I'm very grateful to the committee, not only for their work to keep the Society going in this troubled year but also for their optimism for 2021.

John Hiley

The grant of land at Ulthwaite¹ – part of a cunning plan?

Not many who live away from Staveley and Kentmere will have heard of Ulthwaite, let alone *Ulventhwaite*. Some may have noted the name ‘Ullthwaite Bridge’ on the O.S 1:25,000 scale maps, perhaps wondering if the Old Norse roots of the name of a bridge might have commemorated some historic ‘*Waterloo*’ event concerning wolves in a clearing, as there is nothing else to identify the place. Alas, there are no records to support such a contention², yet it does have a history and a significant one too, starting more than 750 years ago.

So how did Ulthwaite come to be and where exactly is it?

The first surviving record appears to be an undated charter (hereinafter called the Grant), in which lands at *Ulventhwaite* were granted to one Richard de Gilpin and his heirs, to hold in fee and inheritance by Peter de Brus III.

Considerable lands ‘held of the king’ had descended to Peter de Brus III, via several stages of partition over time since the Conquest, until finally bequeathed on the death of his uncle, Baron of Kendal, William de Lancaster III, in 1246. The date of the Grant is unknown but must have been before Peter de Brus died in 1272. Having no children himself, Peter’s large estates, the seat of which was in Yorkshire at Skelton and Guisborough, were split between his four younger sisters. A part of the apportionment of holdings was the award of the manor of Kentmere to the youngest sister Laderine, but the major parts of the inheritance in the North West, which contained Staveley and Hugill, went to one of his sisters Margaret (de Ros). The other two sisters shared the rest: Lucy (de Thwenge) got most of Kendal, and Agnes those in the North East.

In the Inquisitions Post Mortem (IPM) of Peter III, there is no mention of Ulthwaite, so it is thus reasoned that it was then already considered a sub-infeudation³ as a parcel of land within the already existing lands of Hugill that were bequeathed to Margaret de Ros and her husband Robert. Later records in the 15th century support this view. An earlier date for the Grant has been conjectured by some as early as 1260, but a later date of around 1267, in the very troubled reign of Henry III, seems more likely to this author. Henry’s return from France would have provided some stability for Peter’s royalist leanings after the second Baron’s War, but Peter’s need to pay off very large debts inherited from William de Lancaster might well have persuaded him to make such a move far away from his seat of power, to encourage settlement and revenue.

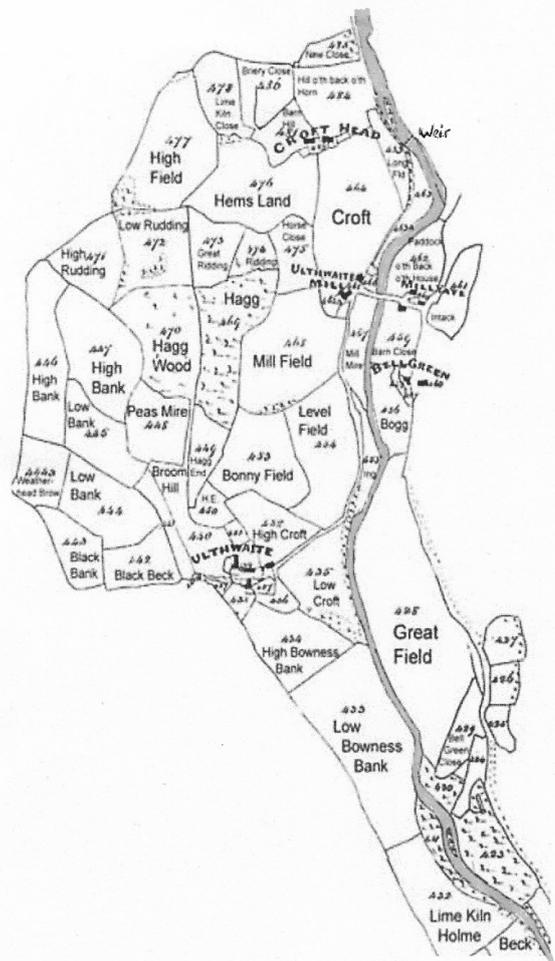
¹ Ulthwaite is spelled with one ‘l’ in this text because it is the spelling used in all historical usage up to the 1836 Corn Rent map, and the census records to 1861 (after which the name disappears). The spelling with two ‘l’s appears unique to the Ordnance Survey since 1858. It is not known why this choice was made.

² The origins of *Ulventwaite* are believed to stem either directly from the Old Norse ‘*Ulf*’ meaning a wolf and ‘*Pteit*’/thwaite a clearing (i.e. a wolf’s clearing) or more probably, in this author’s view, ‘Ulf’s clearing’, Ulf being used as a common Viking personal name, derived from the same stem of wolf.

³ ‘Sub-infeudation’ was an early form of sub-letting, releasing the landlord from day to day management without relinquishing ultimate control, allowing the tenant landlord to develop tenancies to the advantage of both. It would have greatly suited landlords with busy schedules elsewhere, such as Peter de Brus III.

In the Grant, Peter's '*manor and lordship of Ulventhwaite*' is gifted to Richard de Gilpin and his heirs '*for his homage and service*' with a fee of 2s-6d and 12 barbed arrows. Little seems to have been recorded about this Richard although an action of *novel disseisin* (recovery of loss of lands) by a Richard de Gilpin against Margaret de Ros in 1278 concerning a tenement in Helsington, and his earlier witnessing of the IPM of Robert de Ros (Margaret's husband) in 1274 suggests he had connections to the area of Helsington: other snippets of records suggest an abode somewhere around *Grenerige* and *Tranthwaite*, beneath Scout Scar, overlooking the river Gilpin and the wide expanse of the Lyth Valley. The name of Gilpin has contentious origins clouded in legend, but it would seem as most likely that the appellation '*de Gilpin*' refers to the name of the nearby river, as this '*de*' form of name is not applied to persons but places. Where the name of the river originated is quite another question. A large number of persons, worldwide, have sought to trace the origins of the name but the very volume and disparity of alternative suggestions demonstrates no conclusive evidence. The gift of the award is suggestive of Richard being an 'upwardly mobile' character who had done something worthy of reward by Peter de Brus III: popular myths of killing boars do not seem to match this generation of Gilpins, but imaginations can conjure up much for earlier times in the absence of impartial evidence.

The general location of Ulthwaite appears on some of the earliest printed maps such as Jefferys (1770), Smith (1802) and Carey (1805), but not on all such maps, thus implying its small size. What the full extent of the Grant was, or was intended to be, is thus difficult to answer, especially as it vaguely refers to being within the lordships of 'Hugill, Staveley and Upper Staveley'. There were, of course, no maps at the time the Grant was made, and a good example of the difficulties of establishing true locations without maps can be seen in the record in 1256 of the perambulation of the western border of Hugill with Applethwaite by the then new lords of the manors Peter de Brus III and Walter de Lindsay. Descriptions such as '*..the breadth of two perches towards the south, and so far as the houses built on the arable land formerly belonging to...*' make the problems of having no maps rather obvious. It is not surprising therefore that it is not until the 1836 Corn Rent Map that any sense of the real extent of Ulthwaite can be deduced. The extract from the SDHS's copy⁴ to the right above shows a location.



⁴The Staveley & District History Society's copies of the Corn Rent maps can be viewed on their website.

It has no topographical features defining its boundaries and apart from straddling the river, as expected from the Grant, it is separated by almost a kilometer of common land from the rest of Hugill and with no habitations immediately north in Kentmere; it does, though have the form of a clearly enclosed land area by this time.

What is explicitly stated in the grant is that the manor of Ulthwaite lay ‘*on both sides of the river Kent*’. Moreover it made it clear that the whole of the river could be used for a fish pond ‘*in the current of the Kent*’. Together with the references to the other two manors in the Grant, the implication of the above is that the manor of Ulthwaite was bigger than just this 1836 part of Hugill.

A clue comes from the IPM of William de Ros (son of Robert and Margaret) in 1310, where it is said that *William de Gylpin held of the said William (de Ros) a messuage and one carucate in Ulvethwaite for 2s 7s cornage and 12 arrows and 1 lb of cummin*. Ignoring the penny difference in rent this ‘fee’ is so similar to that set out in the Grant, it is taken as meeting Peter de Brus’ intent. By this time c.1307, Margaret de Ros had passed from her dower the lands of Hugill containing Ulthwaite, to her son William. Likewise Staveley Godmund (Upper Staveley) was passed to her nephew Marmaduke de Thweng. This split between tenants in chief, though, was made **after** the Grant, at which time no distinctions as appear in 1836 would have applied: the area of ‘*one carucate*’ is thus a guide to the true extent of the land implied by the Grant because the several similar later records of the fee being paid show only payment to the tenant in chief of Hugill.

The area of the fields shown in 1836 that are taken to be Ulthwaite equate to less than a *carucate*: this term⁵ not only implies area but also the number of customary tenancies likely to be taken up. On the Corn Rent map only 5 dwellings and the corn mill can be reasonably deduced unequivocally in Hugill and the area of the enclosures is only about 83% of a *carucate*. The strong implication is thus that the intended extent of Ulthwaite was indeed larger than represented within Hugill alone as in 1836.

Support for this hypothesis of other buildings being within Ulthwaite comes later from the IPM of William Gilpin in 1578, who, besides living in Kentmere Hall and owning land elsewhere, was deemed to be ‘*seised at his death of the manor or lordship of Ulthwate, a corn mill, 6 messuages or tenements now in the several tenures of ... (list of names) ... in Ulthwate.*’ Whilst less than the expected 8 tenancies, a further extent of land beyond the 1836 limits of Hugill is consistent with these records.

⁵A medieval *caruacte* is taken as 8 bovates, a bovate being the area of land that could be ploughed in a season by an ox-gang. A bovate was itself considered to be 15 Customary Acres and sufficient to provide for a Customary Tenant and family. A *carucate* of land thus implied both an area of land, of around 120 acres, but also an indication of the number of likely habitations it could support – i.e. 8. The size of a Customary Acre was argued as varying due to different ploughing conditions. Records for Kentmere show a Customary Acre to be taken as 1.4 modern statute acres in the valley thus making a *carucate* about 160 to 170 modern acres. It is assumed that the same ratio would have applied to Ulthwaite.

In 1274 the IPM of Robert de Ros recorded that '*the tenants of Kentmere no longer do suit at the fulling mill of Kirkby*' (i.e. Kendal). This is interpreted as meaning that access to another fulling mill had been arranged by John Bella Aqua (Laderines's husband and the first Lord of the Manor of Kentmere in 1272). As there do not seem to have been other mills as early as this in Kentmere itself, this is at least consistent with Low Mill Rigg dating from this time, although use of one at more distant Reston (*Rispeton*) cannot entirely be ruled out.

The arrangement of Low Mill Rigg is one which someone with authority of control of both sides of the river would be expected to adopt, but not so if the banks were owned by different parties. As the weir for the corn mill also crossed onto the bank of this land its position very strongly suggests not merely equal ownership of both sides with the right of all the water in the river, but the position of the leat to the corn mill is consistent with a fulling mill already being there, or built contemporaneously, in order to not starve the corn mill's supply in drought. All the above appears justification for believing Low Mill Rigg was indeed a part of the lands taken by the Grant: any contention that such a small piece of otherwise isolated land should have fallen within a different lordship would seem to have no foundation.

Whilst water in the river was plentiful, potable water seems to have been a problem in the location of this mill and there is no real sign of any reliable source in modern times. This suggests that local habitation and farming the immediately adjacent land might have given a somewhat precarious living. Fulling, as an activity localized to sheep farming, was an early casualty of industrialization as the wool industry developed. Michael Davies-Shiel reports no clear records after 1750 for the mill which is consistent with its expected early demise, but it also coincides with the period of lead mining on Mill Rigg Knotts, rising immediately above. A speculative reason for it failing to be a successful farm could be attributed to the shafts and adits of lead mining activities above the site, dating from c.1755, affecting the groundwater: the one small water 'issue' at the mill location is now almost dry. The buildings shown on the 1836 map indicate only a residential abode away from the site of the leat. By the census records of 1881 it had become unoccupied. Today it is a comprehensively ruined outline with only the ramp to a barn clearly identifiable as a previous structure. No outline of ruins of the original mill remain today, however, unless the mound close by contains some of its rubble. An early demise by the mid-18th century is also consistent with field names in 1836 no longer being related to those associated with fulling.

The corn mill had greater longevity, and although not large, was still in operation in the 19th century and, if one can believe Trade Directories, perhaps even into the early 20th century: limited ruins of the mill and a barn on the opposite side of the lane are all that exist today, plus some 'souvenir' mill stones moved elsewhere. Unlike the fulling mill, the corn mill appears to have little useful land associated with it, but it is the one building to which the 'moniker' Ulthwaite appears to have most often been applied.

Conclusions

The Grant appears an unusually bold move to make as it invested control of the land on both sides of the river to one party when there were already divided interests between Hugill and Over Staveley (then also known as Staveley Godmund) following grants in the beginning of the 13th century in the southern part by William de Lancaster III. An explanation could be that the land-take on the east bank of Ulthwaite occupied by Low Millrigg, Mill Gate and Bell Green had already been made clear by the time the division of control was clarified c.1307 by the partition by Peter's heiress Margaret de Ros who assigned most of Hugill to her son William de Ros and Staveley to her nephew Marmaduke de Thweng. The isolated development of Ulthwaite would necessarily have required a bridge of some sort although a ford would have sufficed for some time; the existence of a crossing some distance from any other was most likely though to have been seen as mutually beneficial by the new lords of Hugill and Staveley. The bridge standing today, known as Ullthwaite Bridge on the O.S. maps, although clearly very old, almost certainly postdates this period. No division of the fee to the two over-lords is evident in the records – Hugill received all.

The question posed in the paper's title, must be answered with caution. What limited evidence that exists does strongly suggest, however, that the specific nature of the original Grant was not simply a flight of fancy. Records show Peter de Brus III to have been an efficient administrator who survived the turbulent times of Henry III's reign, which lasted pretty well Peter's entire adult life. He avoided such crucial events as capture and ransom for his royalist leanings, resisted knightly duties such as providing safe conduct to the king and the king's call to muster against Wales. He even resisted the call to the 9th Crusade in 1271 by the Lord Edward (the future Edward I), though he died anyway the year after, before Edward had returned. Most remarkably, perhaps, was that he managed to pay off his half of the large debts 'bequeathed' to him by his uncle William of Lancaster III. Peter de Brus has been described by others as a 'loyal northerner', and his career suggests acumen for business opportunity. In particular, his Grant of Ulthwaite appears to show an appreciation that the best place to site water powered mills is where the river is best regulated (by the mere). The location of this Grant was taken not at Staveley but in a position to service the population upstream of the mere in the 'Vale of Kentmere'. The balance of probabilities suggests that awarding Ulthwaite as a semi-autonomous region was indeed part of a plan to unleash the full potential of the up-and-coming wool trade which the *de Ayrays* of Kentmere had established with their hill farming. It also appears significant that the Grant was made free of the normal tax on a corn mill (*multure*) - interpreted as Richard de Gilpin not having to pay his tenant-in-chief. This would have been a boon to Richard but also to his tenants. It also appears significant that a William de Gilpin is listed as a tenant of Kentmere in 1301 – perhaps a son of Richard, with no other likely contenders appearing in the many records of Gilpins at this time.

Bearing in mind that the mills of Ulthwaite were closer to the populations centres of Kentmere than Staveley, or Hugill, the Grant appears to have contained foresight by positioning this development more as an adjunct to Kentmere⁸ than the more southern areas of habitation. The resulting relative prosperities of Kentmere over the other parishes in the 14th century is evidenced by the Lay Tax assessment of 1332. Eventually, however, by the 19th century, Staveley boomed with water mills for new industries and Ulthwaite was forgotten. Harnessing the water power immediately downstream of a natural retention pond had been a bit of engineering foresight to envy, nearly 600 years before the dysfunctional schemes to drain the mere and tame the river with the Kentmere Reservoir. In those intervening times descendants of Richard de Gilpin's family married into the *Ayray* family and Kentmere's prosperity blossomed with the wool industry until it also was affected not by a wolf in Ulthwaite but by the 'wolf' of industrialization.

Robert Courtier

The chimes they are a-changing (For whom the bell tolls)

Saint Margaret's Tower in Staveley has housed a clock from the mid-seventeenth century, and the remains (stone-faced and single-finger) of that clock are still on display within the Tower today. In the seventeenth century most clocks only had one finger showing the hour; however Saint Margaret's also remains in possession of some of the old workings mounted on the original frame, which are thought to be very rare and worthy of preservation.

The present-day clock replaced the old one in celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. In order to accommodate it, the height of the Tower was raised and a slated pitched roof was constructed. It has stood vigil over the ensuing years, marking village events as



⁸ It would not be until 2014, this close relationship became more 'official' with Croft Head, and its converted barn, Ulthwaite Fold, being transferred to the civil parish of Kentmere.

well as those of national significance: world wars; coronations; jubilees and state funerals, as well as other landmarks throughout the course of the twentieth century. In 2005, it was serviced, with the cost being funded by the estate of Bill Bethom (a clock-winder of very long standing). Alas, it was discovered more recently that the clock was losing time, and that action would have to be taken before the mechanical situation became terminal.



Original 1744 clock – windings (single finger bottom left) and stone face

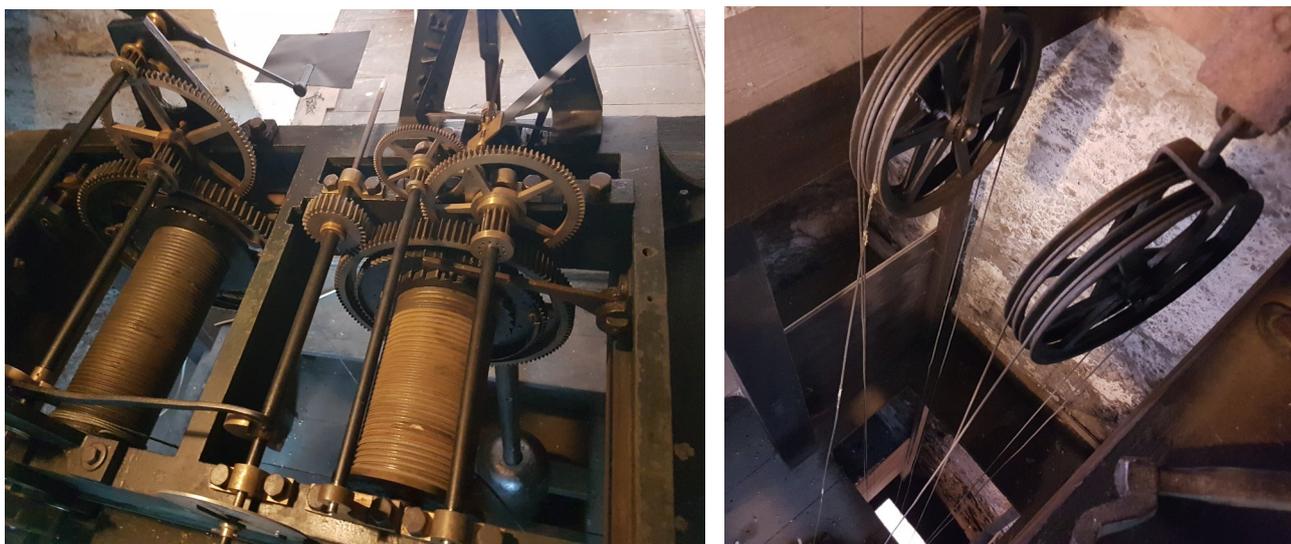
The Keepers (or the Last Of The Summer Wine – a group of amateur caretakers who regularly tend the Tower and its graveyard) managed to locate a horologist from Ulverston, who kindly offered his survey and expertise free of charge. Because the



Present day clock – face and bell (Loughborough 1887)

clock was still intact and its form is relatively unique (it has a horizontal turret and complete winding mechanism, without any electrical parts), and because of his love of horology, he offered to repair and renovate it at cost price only.

The clock was commissioned by a Kendal clockmaker and was built by Newey's of York; it was then donated to the village by the Thornton family. A tapestry in a wooden glazed frame was recently discovered in the village, thanking the Thornton family for their generous gift on behalf of the Staveley community. Any information appertaining to the Thornton family and to the tapestry which commemorates their donation in 1887 would be most welcome.



Mid - clock working, partially rebuilt (L) - Winding gear and escapement (R)

After the survey was carried out, a suggestion was made by the horologist of having a silencer fitted to stop the chimes of the clock sounding hourly during the night, to prevent nearby residents from suffering disturbed sleep.

A figure of approximately £2,500 was given to complete the necessary work. An appeal for funds was duly launched by The Keepers, and, thanks to the staggering generosity of the people and businesses of the village and beyond, the necessary funds were very quickly raised. The renovation process is now underway, and it is hoped that in six to eight weeks' time (Covid regulations permitting), the clock will once again be able to stand vigil over village life and to mark national events for the next 133 years or more.

The Keepers currently convene every Wednesday morning (again, Covid regulations permitting), should you wish to contact them at Saint Margaret's Tower.

Dennis Riggs (of the Keepers)

Happy Birthday

The following 'cutting' from the 'About People' section of the Westmorland Gazette Sept 15th 1972, was recently given to James Walling, Warden of St Anne's Church, Ings, by Roger Harris, the great nephew of Mary Parsons. Mary is buried in St Anne's Churchyard.

The oldest resident of Staveley, Miss Mary Parsons, celebrated her 90th birthday on Sunday and was overcome by the number of people who congratulated her and sent cards and presents.

"I've got such wonderful neighbours," Miss Parsons told the Gazette. "I can't single anyone out. They are all so kind."

Miss Parsons moved to a council flat at 1, Main Street in July, but her former neighbours did not forget her and went round the village collecting for a present.

It was in 1889 that Miss Parsons came to Staveley with her parents from London and while a child went to work at Crag End Mill. "I earned four shillings a week," she said. "I was there five and a half years and the wage went up to seven shillings. After that I went into service and for 46 years I worked for three clergymen."

Miss Parsons said that Staveley has changed almost out of recognition since she arrived as a child, but dress has changed even more. "The skirts are so short. I don't like them. They are indecent."



Despite her condemnation of modern fashions, Miss Parsons has certainly won the respect of the younger generation for friends and neighbours pop in every day to see if she is all right and on her birthday she received 25 cards and many presents of food and clothing from her Staveley friends.

At the beginning of morning service on Sunday at St. Anne's Church, Ings, the Rev. W.K.R. Strickland (officiating owing to the illness of the Vicar) extended the congratulations and good wishes of the worshippers to Miss Parsons that day. Mrs Casson on behalf of the Mothers' Union presented Miss Parsons with a birthday parcel of groceries. Miss Parsons is the senior member of Ings Parochial Church Council.