

# Staveley & District History Society

## Journal Spring 2022

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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: A full house in Ings Church for Andy Lowe's talk in March*

The next issue of the *Journal* (No 55, the Summer 2022 issue) will be published about the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022. All contributions (letters, articles, etc.) are welcome at any time but should be with the Editor by mid-July.

## The Chairman's review of the past year.

After the best part of two years when our activities have been dogged by Covid, we haven't had to cancel a single meeting this year. It was particularly heartening to see forty-seven attendees for the talk by Andy Lowe in our March 2022 meeting in St. Anne's Church, Ings which seems to be working out well as our new home. Attendances have been good throughout this season and we have recruited a number of new members. There has also been an increase in the number of visitors at our talks. In addition, many members and visitors have stayed on to enjoy tea and biscuits, making our evenings more sociable - and helping the Society's funds!



David Telford Reed, our Events Secretary, has been responsible once again for a series of interesting Summer Walks and Winter Talks. The day chosen for our May walk was so wet that we had to make a last minute decision to postpone. Two weeks later we were able to hold our walk round Troutbeck Village with Andy Lowe in much better weather. We covered the lower half of the Village on that occasion. The upper half is scheduled for June 2023. June 2021 saw us visit Crag House Farm sheep-wash with Peter Noble and Edward Park on a lovely summer's day. The post-walk refreshments at the farm were very welcome. Walking the Roman Road around Misset Farm, Ings with David Ratledge in July was a particular pleasure, his expertise revealing clear evidence of the ancient route.

The six talks have been eclectic and educational and have included: 'The Arnside boatbuilders Crossfields' with Alasdair Simpson; 'Thirlmere and the drowning of the valley' with Ian Tyler; 'A Lakeland Boyhood' with SDHS member David Clark, 'Cumbria's connections to the slave trade' with Rob David; Andy Lowe's review of his career in the conservation of the Lake District National Park's architectural heritage, 'A life in ruins', and finally a talk on Lake District Rifle Ranges by Kevin Grice. David Clark's talk was particularly well received by an audience many of whom knew Bowness in the same era and attended the same school, Windermere Grammar School. Andy Lowe's pictures of the Belle Isle round house renovation after fire were especially memorable.

Work on Oral History continues and we're grateful to Phillip Booth for transcribing the spoken into the written word again. We now have the life story of our vice-president, Mike Houston, 'in the bag'. Roger Collinge, our Treasurer, has initiated an investigation of Over-Staveley Hall – see the article on the subject in this Journal. Thanks are due also to him for managing our finances again and also to the rest of the committee for another year of endeavour during which Margaret Beck has replaced Peter Lansberry as Secretary. The final word should be for our long serving President Clare Brockbank who isn't in the best of health. She is currently in a care home near Grange. We miss her energy and constructive input to the society.

*John Hiley*

## Was there a Hall in Over-Staveley?

SDHS has long been aware of the possibility that a Hall once existed in Over-Staveley. Occasional Papers No 3 and No 26, which are summarised below, first highlighted this to the Society. There are many references in local names: Hall Lane, Hall Wood and Hall Beck. Whilst no ‘above-ground’ evidence remains there is an intriguing flat rectangular plateau in a field at the possible site, bounded on two sides by a wall also having a right-angle.

Led by Roger Collinge, SDHS have begun to further the investigation into the possibility that such a hall existed. John Hiley, Roger Collinge, Margaret Beck and Peter Noble have all been involved. This is a report of progress to date, together with a summary of existing relevant literature.

### 1. SDHS Occasional Paper Number 3: STAVELEY HALL/MILL. Report by The Field Walking Group 1992. Documentary Evidence:

a. Thomas Machell, writing in the 1690s, “Staveley Hall in Over Staveley, a quarter of a mile North of the chapel, has been called the manor house<sup>1</sup> of Upper Staveley, which is now fallen, nothing being standing but the wall which belongs to Mr. Will Birket, being on his tenement and in that part which belongs to the Crown.”

b. 1612 Manorial Court Roll. Admission of William Birkett to two tenements, former tenant Peter Birket his father, rent 12/5 and to half a fulling mill rent 5/3.

c. 1635. Court Roll of King’s part of the manor (Marquess Fee) George Birket admitted on death of his father William to a messuage<sup>2</sup> and tenement called Staveley Hall rent 40 shillings. Fine £6.

d. 1635-1763 Manorial records of all three sections of the Manor. Frequent references to the Birkets of Brunt Knott, who held land of all three lords. e.g. ‘Mr William Birket of Brant Knott £2 rent for lands and 8/4 for fulling mill 1679.’ “Widow Birket [Elizabeth - William died 1698] of Brunt Knott 15/4 for lands and 3/4 for a fulling mill.” (These are held of different lords, and are presumably different lands and mills, but they establish clearly that the Birkets of Brunt Knott whose lands included the former Staveley Hall, owned fulling mills.)

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<sup>1</sup> The word manor generally meant an area of land rather than a building which it appears to mean here.

<sup>2</sup> The Oxford English dictionary defines “messuage” as “the portion of land intended to be or actually occupied as a site for a dwelling house and its appurtenances”.

These two records seem good evidence that there was in fact a hall.

**Table 1. Summary of documentary research - Feb 22**

Source	Findings / results
SDHS Walking Group report of 1992: Occasional paper no 3	Various comments on the likelihood of a building on the site. This paper refers to a quotation by Thomas Machell in the 1690's in which he refers to "Staveley Hall in Over Staveley a quarter of a mile north of the chapel, has been called the manor house of upper Staveley"
SDHS Occasional Paper no 26 by Alan Lord. 2006	This is the paper which basically lays out the case for a building on the site
National Archives	A list of records created by Staveley and Hugill Manor. Some are at Carlisle archives, some are listed as being at Kendal but are in fact held by the Bagot family at Levens and some are at Kew. 4 References to documents held at Kew
Lancashire Archives Preston	2 References in connection with the Sandys family of Esthwaite Both refer to Over Staveley
Kendal archives	2 References: WRDY /2/6/7/2 and WDX 2003/1
Nicholson and Burn	Available in Kendal Library local studies collection
A vision of Britain through time	A map of Staveley and area from the Ordnance first series of 1864 No particular help but it does not seem to show Scroggs Bridge which is odd.
ditto	Sheet 033 in Map of Westmorland (Southampton 1861-1863) This names Scroggs bridge
Maps of Staveley Area	Jefferys 1770 Otley 1818 Ford 1839
British History On Line: Staveley	There are entries under Staveley pp317-341. References to a manor at Staveley in 1413 and 1414. It is not clear whether the references to a manor are to a building or to an area - but see the quotation from Thomas Machell
BHOL: Over Staveley	1 page numbered 94 References to a manor at Over Staveley in 1545 and 1547
Archaeology data service	This is a list of listed and other buildings. There are references to Barley bridge, the site of a corn mill once there, Scroggs Mill and the tower of St Margaret's. No references to a hall.
Dictionary of Lake district place names: Diana Whaley	New Hall: Comments that "the feudal affixes Gamel and godemund then from the 16 <sup>th</sup> century were replaced by upper and nether" Self-explanatory name but the dictionary comments that Robert Bindlose had Aswaythall in Nether Staveley in 1595. His grandson Richard Braithwaite built a new hall a little to the north.
Corn Law map of 1832/6	Local fields named. The field in which our site sits, is called Hall Head. The field below Scroggs drive is called Hall field
The History and antiquities of Westmorland and Cumberland: Joseph Nicholson 1775; Held at the library of New York	Some comments: In the second year of Edward the 2 <sup>nd</sup> William de Thweng was granted a weekly fair in Staveley. In the 20 <sup>th</sup> year of Elizabeth, William Gilpin held the manor of Over Staveley - or at least part. There is also a comment that one Alan Chamber inherited lands at Hawes and Hall Head Hall. This seems a long way away from Over Staveley.
A Lakeland Valley through time	Book published by SDHS in 1995 and edited by Joe Scott. He also refers to a Manor court and quotes extracts. He also refers to a first local tax return in 1332. Reference on page 8 to "Staveley Hall (off Hall Lane) but Scott does not give any evidence for this. He planned to put a typescript of the book with Kendal Record Office with footnotes showing sources.

e. 1836 Kendal Corn Rent map' Brunt Knott farm lands, owner Abraham Banks, tenant James Robinson, include the area we examined.... gives field names as "Hall Field", "Hall Head".

f. 1323 Inquisition Post Mortem "Marmaduke de Thweng held at his death in the hamlet of Staveley 8 tenants at will who render 33s. yearly; a park, the herbage of which yields 10s. yearly; a fulling mill which renders 6s.8d yearly..."The paper concludes: "Let us assume that we are right in placing Staveley Hall on our site. Marmaduke Thweng, or his steward, probably built the Hall as a centre for the administration of the manor and as a lodge from which Thweng and his friends could hunt the deer in Staveley Park. In the early fourteenth century the local textiles were beginning to be important, helped on by the spread of fulling mills. People in our area were moving down from the higher ground - the Over Staveley common fields lie another half mile up Hall Lane from our site. There was as yet no village of Staveley - the chapel was only begun in 1338 - and though there was probably a ford where Barley Bridge is now, it was not necessarily the natural site for a mill in those days. Our site, on the other hand, was perfect, with a considerable natural water-fall and a bend in the river. The Hall Beck has a large catchment area including Skeggles Water, and offered an ample flow for the simple mill of the time. And the steward or bailiff could keep an eye on this valuable asset from the Hall nearby. So it is reasonably probable that our site is what is left of the 1323 mill after nearly 700 years of change and decay...."

## **2. Occasional Papers of Staveley and District History Society. Number 21. STAVELEY HALL / MILL. Site Survey by A. A. Lord, March 2006**

**The Hall:** The southerly boundary wall of the wood has two right-angled bends in its length that would not normally occur in a field wall.....A well-constructed foundation, level with the ground surface and one metre wide, extends for four metres and continues as a definite bank to complete a level rectangular shape 17m by 6m. It is almost certain that a substantial building occupied this site. Adjoining it to the west and slightly lower is another level terraced area of similar size.

**Principal Access:** The portion of Hall Lane to the north of the wood did not exist at the time of the 1836 Kendal Corn Rent Map.....The contouring indicates a hollow way curving down through the wood, towards the Hall, of similar width to the old road and running counter to the underlying rock strata. It is more than likely that this was the access route from the Hall to the north. Access to the south is more problematic. The field to the west of the Hall by the confluence of Hall Beck and







River Kent is named Stang Bridge Field on the 1836 Kendal Corn Rent map. “Stang” is variously described as a post or a pole, which suggests at best a rudimentary footbridge across either Hall Beck or the River Kent. It is more likely that the Kent crossing was by a ford north of the present weir.

### 3. Current work

a. We have met two professionals on the site: Eleanor Kingston of the National Park Archaeological Services and Stephen Dean of the Environment Agency. Both think there is something worth exploring. Dean even wondered if it had been a longhouse earlier.

b. In January 2022, we met Jeremy Robinson and Jackie Fay of the National Park Archaeological Service volunteers. They recommended doing documentary research first. A schedule of the documentary research plan was presented to the meeting. This is summarised in Table 1. This is very much a work in progress but some snippets are intriguing:

- Reference to “Staveley godemund” as early as 1283. So the place was worth taking note of over 800 years ago.
- Flooding is not new. There is reference in 1588 by the inhabitants of Staveley to “the frequent overflow of the waters”. And that year the people of Troutbeck complained that their access to market (presumably in Kendal) “be very dangerous and without great peril not to be passed neyther upon foot nor upon horseback by reason of watters flowinge into the lanes”.

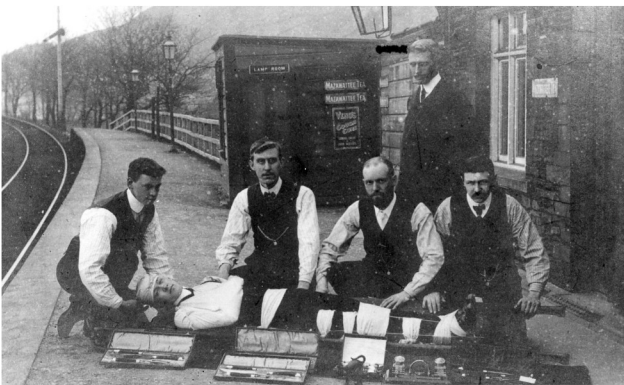
c. A detailed survey of the site is planned for April 2022. Subsequently, a geophysical survey might be carried out. Ground resistivity measurements can be done using metal probes which are inserted into the ground. Marked changes in resistivity can reveal the existence of foundation walls without the need to dig, thereby providing evidence and reason for further exploration of the site.

Thanks are due to Martin Black who owns the field in which the site of interest exists. He has been both accommodating and enthusiastic in supporting our efforts.

*Roger Collinge and John Hiley*

## The 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Kendal and Windermere Railway

LakesLine 175 (a collaboration between Lakes Line Rail User Group and Community Rail Cumbria) put on a 2-day exhibition in Staveley Roundhouse to mark the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in March 2022 of the opening of the line through to Windermere in 1847. The historical photographs are from the Cumbrian Railways Association archive and are reproduced with kind permission of LLRUG. If you can identify any of the people depicted please write to [staveleyhistorysociety@gmail.com](mailto:staveleyhistorysociety@gmail.com) Table 2 shows a brief history of the line.



The level crossing at Staveley originally had full gates which were pulled across the road by the crossing keeper. In 1967 it changed to an automatic crossing with lifting half-barriers. Photos by Paul Wills (below left with the last crossing keeper) who was involved in the conversion work.





**Table 2: Lakes Line – a brief history**

Aug 1844 Proposals for a railway between Kendal and Windermere, and Provisional list of Directors published.

30 Jun 1845 The K&WR Act (V8 & 9 c32) published: An Act for making a railway from the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway to Birthwaite in the parish of Windermere, to be called "The Kendal and Windermere Railway".

16 Jul 1845 Cornelius Nicholson, the man behind the establishment of the K&WR, ceremonially cut the first sod.

22 Sep 1846 Opening of the line from Kendal - Oxenholme, at the same time as the southern portion of the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway to Oxenholme. Passengers changed from the train at Kendal to travel north by coach north, along what is now the A6.

20 Apr 1847 The railway opened through to Windermere amid much ceremony and feasting.

May 1858 K&W Railway leased by the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway.

Aug 1859 Lancaster and Carlisle Railway (including the K&W) became part of the London and North Western Railway (LNWR).

1881 Oxenholme Station rebuilt.

1884 Kendal Station enlarged by provision of up platform.

1905 The "Club Train" began running to Manchester with special accommodation for the leading Manchester businessmen, whose homes were on Windermere.

1923 The LNWR became part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS).

1948 The LMS formed the major component of British Rail's London Midland region as part of nationalisation of all of Britain's railways.

1962 Oxenholme engine shed closed.

1964 Staveley signal box, Staveley and Burneside goods yards closed.

1966 The Manchester "Club Train" ceased running.

1971 Burneside and Staveley stations became unstaffed.

29 April 1973 Kendal and Burneside station signal boxes closed.

13 May 1973 The Branch reduced from double to single track; Oxenholme and Windermere signal boxes closed.

February 1984 Lakes Line Action Group formed.

1986 The new station at Windermere opened.

1991 The new shelter at Kendal station opened.

May 1994 Through trains to Manchester Airport introduced in the summer timetable.

April 1997 On privatization British Rail's 'Regional Railways North West' became the North Western Trains franchise. Later this was taken over by First Group to become First North Western.

Mar 2002 The Branch was closed for 16 days for complete relaying with continuous welded rail.

February 2005 Services taken over by First TransPennine Express (TPE).

August 2006 Windermere station refurbished.

December 2006 Services taken over by TPE Class 185 'Pennine' trains.

April 2016 The franchise passed to Arriva, trading as Northern Railway.

June 2018 Northern replaced all Lakes Line trains with buses after its new timetable collapsed. After two weeks locally based West Coast Railways ran a skeleton service, which was welcomed by locals and visitors alike.

March 2020 The franchise was taken over early by the Government after poor performance by Northern.

July 2020 The first day of the new class 195 diesel trains working the Lakes Line.

*Table courtesy of LLRUG*

**Tales from the Tapes: Mike Houston interviewed by John Hiley.**  
Recorded in the home of Mike Houston in Bowston 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 **Part 2**

JH. And did you go out helping your Dad work?

MH. Yes, but of course, remember I was only about 5 years old. I used to love that. You see the big enemy was the fox, and I used to go out with Dad at night. He used to shoot the foxes. Obviously there was a local hunt and my father was always being accused of having shot foxes, which he did do, and he would argue that wouldn't shoot foxes, but people knew he did.

JH. He would probably be more effective at keeping the numbers down than the hunt.

MH. Oh heck yes. It was a great thing. People would come and say: Billy, there's a fox, and they would tell him where they'd seen it, you know, and he'd sit out at night and wait for it.

JH. And did he have a dog as well?

MH. Yes. He had two labradors, one called Caesar and one called Colin. They were big black labradors and a favourite trick of mine was that I could ride these when I was little, about five year old. My father would encourage me. He was a real tease always. When this syndicate which consisted of, I think, Northumberland Fusiliers, they were all officers and lieutenants and what-not, came my Father would say: "Michael, show them how you ride your horse." And I would get on Caesar - he was the best one. I'd get on his back and he would go round the house twice. Sometimes, someone would make a noise or bang and of course the dog went under the table and crack, I got knocked off my horse!

JH. And these were working dogs were they?

MH. Oh yes.

JH. What function did they perform?

MH. Well, I don't know if you've ever been amongst these gun shooters? Obviously you had plantations with pheasants and what-not in and that's why you had to keep the foxes down 'cos they got your pheasants! And, when it came to the shooting season you'd have these drives. Your beaters, those men who make a noise would come down through the wood, you'd have your guns at different places and then these pheasants flew out of the wood as your beaters come down and they shot them. There was rivalry amongst the different estates, you see, how many did you shoot this week, this last month or whatever?

JH. So did these dogs root the birds out of the undergrowth?

MH. Yes they did that and also if you shot a pheasant and it was winged, in other words still quite alive but couldn't fly, you'd have to use your dogs to get these, we call them runners. because if you didn't then eventually a fox would get them.

JH. But for foxes, wouldn't you need a terrier of some kind?

MH. Well, yes. You built what you call a false earth. It's like a tunnel and it was like, you know these big clay waterpipes - about that round. You made a tunnel of these and halfway through the tunnel you built quite a big chamber and made it nice and comfy. Foxes could not resist this lovely place to lie up during the day. I know where there are one or two round here - I know there is one quite close to Staveley. You'd put your terrier in this little tunnel and the fox would bolt out of the other end, you would hold back your dogs for a little bit to give it a start.

JH. So, you had a terrier as well.

MH. We had terriers, chiefly border terriers but we also had Lakeland terriers. But since I owned a house I've never owned a dog. It was just totally unfair 'cos where we lived in Windermere and there was too much traffic and dogs just don't get out.

JH. I presume that sometimes schooling and this lovely outdoor life would come into conflict...

MH. Yes (Mike laughing).

JH. So you would go to a local school, did you?

MH. Yes that's right. I remember the first day very well. The week before, my Granny, that's my father's mother - I absolutely loved her - her name, her maiden name was McFarland, in fact her full name was Grace Darling McFarland. Does Grace Darling mean anything to you?

JH. Yes. She had something to do with rescuing shipwrecked sailors....

MH. You're right...

JH. Where was that from..Seahouses or somewhere like that?

MH. Yes in a way, Bamburgh. You see the ships went up and down and right opposite Bamburgh and Seahouses are the Farne Islands and these were really treacherous. You would go where you could go the quickest, and if you were inshore you had to miss the Farne Islands. And of course there were loads of wrecks on the Farne Islands. The Grace Darling episode, I think it was about the turn of the

century, I can't remember when it was exactly, but she went out with her father in the boat from Bamburgh and they...

JH. It was a rowing boat wasn't it?

MH. Yes, that's right and from there they rescued quite a few, I can't remember how many..

JH. But you Grandmother wouldn't be related in any way? She would just be named because of this?

MH. That's right ,yes. I suppose that's the earliest thing I can remember? I used to love her. I didn't call her Grandma I called her Granny and I suppose you just got away with everything. You were the bees knees!

JH. That's what grandparents are for! So, I have forgotten, how was she involved in the early days of your schooling? Did she take you to school or what?

MH. Yes, my mother used to have little jobs. I had an older sister but she would be away at school and Granny would come and she'd stay and would look after me whilst my Mother would be out at work.

JH. Oh right, and she lived nearby did she?

MH. I can only just remember my Grandfather. I think I was four year old when he died. I can remember him dying. They lived in a tied cottage, and she had to get out and so she went round the family. There was one daughter who lived at Ashington, she married a miner, I mean a coal buster, yes, and the rest were all boys you see, but Granny used to move around these families and I used to love it when it was our turn.

JH. Very hard the tied cottage business, wasn't it? It must have been a very big blow for her, losing a husband and a house at the same time?

MH. Oh yes, yes it was. Well that was it, that was what happened. So she lived with us quite a lot. The other family, how many were there, yes, there were six of them. The one daughter, my father's sister, as I say, she married a miner, and they had coal and you could keep warm in the winter so she would spend a lot of the winter in Ashington. And then she would move round the others. She used to stay with us a lot of the time. I think, I don't know, I mean you don't know when you're little. I think she would be alright with the sons, so they would say "alright, you can come and stay", but I mean there's no blood connection with the wives.

*To be continued*