



HISTORY OF KIRKBY GROUP

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BECKSIDE

VOLUME ONE

ST. CUTHBERT'S PARSONAGE

“On the appointment 1879 of the Reverend Charles H. Lowry M. A. Former Fellow of Queen’s College, Oxford - & Master of the Cathedral Grammar School, Carlisle - it was agreed that the Small House occupied by the Rev Charles Graham should be pulled down and a new residence be built on the Glebe. For this purpose a Committee was formed of the Church wardens Mr. G. Ashburner , W. Eddy, Townson Ashburner, Lewis and the Vicar. By degrees nearly £1600 was raised - £800 from Parishioners & friends - & £800 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners - nothing however was done for some time - Till at last Messrs. Paley and Austin furnished a plan which was approved of - and the building began in the Autumn of 1882 – was completed & entered in July 1883”

Extract from the Kirkby Select Vestry Book



A reported passage from the speech given by the Bishop of Carlisle after the reopening of St. Cuthbert’s Church following restoration in 1884.

“Ten or twelve years ago there was a parsonage such as very few parsons would live in. At that time there was a dear old simple hearted gentleman who lived in it, who had no wife nor family and who quite won my heart and respect. I do not think the present incumbent, with his family could have got into the house, and I can not help congratulating, not the clergyman alone, but the whole parish upon the admirable house that has been built. It is a very important matter that there should be a good house of that kind as a parsonage. It is most difficult to persuade a man of education, a gentleman by birth and feelings, to live in the ill endowed parishes, and there is nothing so much would induce them to do so as a good substantial house. I congratulate you upon the new parsonage and the newly restored church.”

Dorothy Procter, Audrey Benson, Winifred Harris and Jill Baines



'LOW MILL'

'Low Mill', Beckside was originally part of the Earl of Burlington's estate. There is a record of it being let along with Garner's Hill and Garner's Hill Parrock (paddock), in 1770, to John Townsend and John Stables who paid £17 per annum rent to the Earl of Burlington but there was no record of what the mill was used for.

In 1776 it was let to John Kellet who also paid £17 rent for the mill, Garner's Hill and paddock. At this point Kellet is referred to as a miller. The land and paddock were now let to a Robert Postlethwaite. John Kellet is still renting the mill in 1783 when he married Ann Woodend on 12th July of that year.

Another change of tenancy is recorded in 1840 with James Deason now the 'miller'. In 1841 the mill is referred to as a stone saw mill. In 1849 Deason is still the tenant and is said to be a joiner and millwright. However in 1882 Deason is recorded as being an agricultural implement maker at the stone mill. At this time he was also the parish clerk and there was a mention of a Matthew Deason who was perhaps his son and whose occupation was a mill-wright. In 1911 Alfred Fenton Deason was the tenant and he was a joiner and implement maker. The Deason family continued to rent the property and used it as a joiner's and undertaker's workshop. People in the village talk about coffins being lined up outside the building waiting to be used.

In the early fifties Mr. Albert Richards of Beckside and father of the present owner purchased the mill at an auction held in the Commercial Inn. He used the ground floor for garaging three cars - his own plus two others. The first floor housed battery hens initially and later free range hens with the second floor eventually becoming a hen house also. The present owners, Felicity and Les Richards purchased the mill from Les's father twenty seven years ago and converted it into the dwelling house that we see today. The plans were drawn up by Malcolm Craig of Kirkby-in-Furness. The outer structure of the building did not change very much in the conversion. Altogether there were three windows and one door fitted in the gable ends.

There is no longer a wheel at the mill but there is evidence of one having been there in previous years and there are signs of the old channels through which the water was transported to the wheel from a dam above Mill Bridge.

What the mill was used for before 1841 has not yet been revealed but as well as all the other uses mentioned there is also talk of it being a fulling mill at sometime. If anyone has any further information to share then the History Group will be very pleased to hear it.

Many thanks to Les Richards for imparting information and answering questions regarding the mill and showing my husband and myself around

Anne Woods

Smithy to let at Beckside, Kirkby Ireleth

Blacksmith's shop, shoeing house and coal house attached
With excellent bellows, anvil, vice, etc.

Situated at Beckside in the
Parish of Kirkby Ireleth in the County of Lancashire.

A quantity of iron and blacksmith's tools to be taken at valuation.

Advertisement in Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser 7th September, 1848

BECKSIDE MILL



There has been a mill at Becksides since at least the early 16th century, probably the 15th and possibly earlier, but research so far has not confirmed this. It was owned by the Kirkby family until 1771 when it had to be sold along with most of the estate which had been mortgaged, possibly in support of Charles 1 against Cromwell. It was bought by the Cavendish family and remained in their possession until 1956 when it was sold at auction.

Later it was bought by Phil Patterson who converted it into the house it is now. The picture above shows the mill in about 1904 with Matthew Walker and another person .

The mill was a manorial corn mill which means that everyone living under the lordship of the Kirkby family had to have their grain ground there under a pain of a fine. They owed 'soke to the mill. In one of the 17th century Kirkby wills there is reference to 150 'sookeners'. The miller would take 1/16 of the grain as his toll for grinding it and from this he would pay his rent to the Kirkby family. Initially it probably had a smaller wheel than now which drove just one pair of stones and was fed from a low dam across the beck at the waterfall. This dam was later used to feed Low Mill and the leat and higher dams were constructed to feed the corn mill with a larger wheel as it is now. This larger wheel drove up to four pairs of stones, but not at the same time, and also a sack hoist, oat sifter, flour dresser and so on. There was a second manorial mill at Grizebeck.



At some time probably in the 19th century, the building was extended by 1/3 of its present size to the north. This part of the building is wider than the rest and the roof line to the front is angled. It is also likely that the second storey was also added. Many country mills took to 'merchant milling' to survive as the old feudal system of 'soke' had long broken down and there was huge competition from the large steam mills in the ports which ground grain imported from America and Canada in steam driven iron ships.

As a 'merchant mill' grain was bought and ground to supply local bakers and others so more storage space was needed. The village would be buying some flour and bread instead of baking all their own. The mill ceased to grind in about 1956 and following conversion in 1964/5 was bought by the present owners in March 1968. The waterways and wheel were restored to working order in 1989/91. The lower picture shows the mill in 2003.

Charles Rowntree

'MILL COTTAGE'

The cottage was one of the first few built in Becksid, probably during the 16th century. The first occupants found so far are Ann and John Cragg who are mentioned on the 1841 census and Ann Cragg as owner and occupier on the Tithe Map of 1846. Ann was a Kellet either by birth, or by marriage, to John Kellet, the manorial tenant of Becksid Mill.



This is possibly how she came to own the cottage. In 1851 she again appears on the census return for Becksid.

In 1871 the cottage was rented by the Lancashire Police Force from John Mason for £10 per annum. The 1881 census gives Robert Sefton, Police Constable, from Blackburn, as the occupant with a wife, son and daughter.



The 'Police Station' sign and cell window can be seen in the photograph above. The police rented the cottage until 1922 when the police houses near Soutergate were built. A cell was installed on the ground floor and the two inch thick door is still in place with the positions of the bolts, lock and food flap still visible.

The cottage was later owned by Joe Curwen and one of his tenants up to 1956 were Edgar and Dorothy Procter. It was purchased by the family of the present owner shortly after this. Until 1902 water for the cottage was obtained by descending steps from the garden against the downstream side of the bridge but after a death in the village from typhoid a piped water supply was organised by the Standing Joint Committee and the Ulverston Water Supply Company.

Albert Walker, born in 1901, remembers taking food, cooked by the policeman's wife, to a prisoner in about 1909. Norman Rawlinson senior says, **"I remember when the Police Station was in Becksid. My dad used to say that any drunken fellow put in the Police Station at Becksid on Thursday, when it was court day at Ulverston, was fastened behind the horse and cart and taken over the moor to Ulverston. He had to walk behind all the way over the tops."**

Whilst additional information may be available from the 1861, 1891 and 1901 census returns as to who the occupants were further research is required to identify the complete list of Police Constables who lived there. The age of the property may be gleaned from the deeds, if they become available, and the Police archives held in Preston would help with the former. Any further information that readers of this piece can furnish would be most welcome.

Margaret Wayles and Charles Rowntree

