



# HISTORY OF KIRKBY GROUP

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## BECKSIDE

VOLUME TWO

### BECKSIDE COTTAGES

It is difficult to ascertain when they were built but the row of houses from 'Peerie House' to 'Cobblers Cottage' seem to have been owned as a block until the 1970's. In 1841 the widow, Mary Fallows, recorded as a Schoolmistress and Landowner, owned the row of "6 formerly 5 messuages or dwelling houses with a small building adjoining used as a stable, with a garden behind the same and the out offices thereto belonging together with moss land off Angerton Moss".

Forty years later, in 1881, William Casson Holmes owned the cottages and on his death these were passed to his daughter Elizabeth Holmes. On her death she bequeathed them to her sister, Annie Briggs.

In 1942, Annie bequeathed the cottages to her daughter Minnie Briggs. In December 1970 Annie's nephew, the Rev. John Arthur Briggs, inherited the cottages.

'Peerie House' used to be No. 2 Becksides Cottages so it is thought that 'Fern Bank' was Nos. 3 and 4 and 'Cobblers Cottage' Nos. 5 and 6. The out offices are still standing and are now used as a store. The low building behind this may have been a wash house or stable.



From the mid 19th century, small businesses were run from the cottages and included dressmaking, shoemaking, tailoring and breadmaking. A third of the occupants, however, appear to have worked at the slate quarry or in the iron ore mines. There was also a monthly nurse, a coardwainer, a toffee shop keeper and one farm labourer.

Mary Fallows lived in the row with her brother, a quarry labourer, and William Casson Holmes also lived there with his wife and six children.

By 1901 one of the residents is recorded as being a 'platelayer on the railway'. Iron ore mining and slate quarrying continued as before and shipbuilding at Barrow became a more recent industry that brought workers into the area.

In 1908, Elizabeth Holmes, eldest daughter of the tailor William C. Holmes, had inherited the Cottages and in 1913 lived in one of them and Sarah J. Curwen was a baker nearby.

Present residents have provided information for more recent times which suggest that around 1928 part of 'Becksides Cottage' was a toffee shop run by a lady known as 'Bezzie' who apparently kept boxes of toffee stacked in her living room.

Between the Wars 'Cobblers Cottage', or part of it, was a baker's and confectioner's run by the Misses A. and S. Curwen whose brother, Joe, drove a van delivering the goods after he lost his arm in an accident at the 'Mill'. Mrs. Curwen had apparently moved to a new bake house at what is now 'Moorland Stores'. Around 1936 the family of W. E. Armistead lived here and by 1950 the builder David Wilson had joined the two cottages together and the whole unit was renamed 'The White House' and became the only double fronted property on the row. It was in the 1980's that it became 'Cobblers Cottage'.

'Fern Bank' again was two cottages with a family named Denny living in one but by 1980 the cottages were joined together and evidence of it once having been a bake house was found.

'Peerie House' continues as a single cottage and previous owners named it in the 1980's with the word 'Peerie' being Scottish for small or tiny. It is thought a shoemaker or dressmaker lived and worked here.

M. A. Hogg

## **'KIRKBARRA' AND 'WILLOW COTTAGE'**



According to the 1847 tithe map the land now occupied by 'Kirkbarra' and 'Willow Cottage' was a coal yard and owned by Mr. W. Postlethwaite. As there is no record of the cottages on the 1851 census it would seem they were built between then and 1861. Presumably William built the houses as he is living in 'Willow Cottage' in 1871. In 1881 William's son, Robert, a corn miller and farmer, lived there. Isaac Myers, who was married to William's daughter, Eleanor, occupied 'Kirkbarra'. Initially, William Myers, their son, worked on local farms, but once established as a tailor, lived with them. He also worked at the quarry. Sarah, his daughter worked as a dressmaker. One of their daughters, Esther, married Edward Turner and they moved into 'Willow Cottage'. Eleanor was still living in 'Kirkbarra' in 1901.

Jackie Fallows

## **'PRIORY COTTAGE'**

'Priory Cottage' was originally part of 'The Punch Bowl' and dances used to be held in the upstairs room. 'The Punch Bowl' lost its licence and was split in to three dwellings. 'Priory Cottage' was rented out and Tea Rooms were opened there for a while. It was sold in 1940 by a Mr. Walker to Mr. W. A. McAtee who was a joiner and builder. He lived there with his wife and two daughters for ten years.

M. B. Allonby



## **'BECKSIDE HOUSE'**

Records do not show when 'Beckside House' was built but the present owner has kindly given me details of early legal transactions. The first of these is 24th December 1806 when Edward Coward, a cotton spinner and, later, a slate merchant, sold the house to Thomas Fallows. He presumably lived there with his wife Mary until 4th June 1822 when it was bought by William Postlethwaite and his wife Jane. William is recorded on the 1841 census as being a farmer with several adult children living at home. The eldest was a solicitor. There were also three servants living above the stables.

On 8th November 1847, William Postlethwaite was drowned on Duddon Sands. He had left home thirty minutes previously and his horse returned with the saddle under its belly.

However tragic this was it does not appear to have adversely affected the family financially as the 1851 census records his widow as being a slate merchant and farmer of ninety acres. The 1861 census gives her as being a landed proprietor. Her adult children were still at home and the eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was the 'beloved faithful Sunday School Superintendent' for thirty years as the memorial plaque on 'Beckside Rooms' shows today. The family also supported a grandson at school and had three servants.

In February 1871 the eldest son, John, the solicitor, died without leaving a will so the property passed to a relative in Ulverston. However, the census of 1871 shows that the second son, Joseph Postlethwaite, continued as a slate merchant at the house supporting his sisters and a twenty year old law student and two servants.

Joseph Postlethwaite must have died before the 1881 census as this records his sister, Jane, as being the family head and owner of houses, but not, perhaps, 'Beckside House'

She supported two adult nephews and one female servant who was born in Hertfordshire.

There is no mention of a farm. Two years later she too must have died as there is a poster advertising an auction of household furniture, garden tools and one 'capital pony phaeton' to be held on 29th September 1883.

'Beckside House' may have been one of eight Beckside properties that were unoccupied in 1891 or may have been occupied by domestic gardeners, James and Mary Jervis and their seven children. Records show that the children were born as far afield as Ireland and China and the parents came from Warboys, Huntingdonshire.

In August 1893, Thomas Postlethwaite died leaving his estate to his son William who two years later, put the house up for sale by auction. Details show this was to be done at 'The Punch Bowl' on 28th August 1895. Joseph Tyson (Gent) is listed as living there in 1905 and a William Coward in 1914. This seems to indicate that the property was only a dwelling

It does not look as if the property was actually sold by auction in 1895 as William Postlethwaite died in January 1916, leaving the house to his wife and sons who sold it on to Mrs. Alfred Haynes and Miss Mary Haynes for £450 in 1920.

Local residents think that a Mr. Baines and a Mr. Procter lived there and one of them can remember going to the house when a Mr. Lacey, a retired dentist, lived there and did



There is a photograph of Hector Lacey as a Scout in Raven Patrol in 1910. The patrol was led by a Mr. Walker.

Toc H had a group in Kirkby between 1936 and 1939 but since it did not fulfil the criteria for a full branch it is not known for sure if it was held in the house or who ran it.

**M. A. Hogg**

## **'THE PUNCH BOWL'**



'The Punch Bowl' was registered between 1854 and 1904 as an Alehouse and was converted to a Public House in 1905. In 1856 the licensee and owner was W. Stables who actually lived at Urswick. In 1872 the licence was converted to Anne Mason, presumably managing it for W. Stables, who still lived in Urswick. Anne appears to have been somewhat lax in implementing the law as she was fined on several occasions for Sunday trading and for trading outside hours. The fines range from 10/- to £5 with costs of between 10/- and 14/5d. As most fines around this time appeared to be in the 10/- to £1 region the fact that she was fined more would indicate a regular appearance at court. In 1886 the ownership was taken over by W. G. Ashburner, Brewers of Dalton. The licensee became Mary Anne Hodgson, who also appeared to flout the law for she was fined £1 with 12/- costs for permitting drunkenness. In fact the same lady became licensee of 'The Commercial' in 1888 and again has a record of breaking the law.

Between 1888 and 1905 'The Punch Bowl' had several licensees including one G. W. Benson (no connection to us). On converting to a Public House the ownership was taken over by J. W. Brockbank & Sons of the 'The Croft Brewery', Kirksanton. On this conversion the licence holder, with the approval of the owner, had to give an undertaking **"that the yard and the house be open all hours of day and night for the purpose of police supervision"**. 'The Punch Bowl' continued as a Public House until 1911 when the renewal of licence was refused on the 24th May. Compensation of £200 was paid on 21st of December of that year.

In 1771 'Kirkby Hall was sold to the Cavendishes and a quote from the Directory of Westmoreland and Lonsdale (1951) indicated that "Lord John Cavendish occasionally held Court Baron at 'The Punch Bowl' in Beckside".

Members of the History Society recall that 'The Punch Bowl' later became a "wet fish shop" prior to its present conversion to a private dwelling.

**Alan & Betty Benson**