

HISTORY OF KIRKBY GROUP

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KIRKBY IN FURNESS CO OPERATIVE

It was in 1957 that I left School and started work at Kirkby Co-op. At that time the store was flourishing. The Drapery Department and Shoe Department had just combined into one. There were two assistants, a Manageress and a part-time cobbler who made clogs for the quarry men.



The Hardware and Grocery Department had four assistants, one warehouse man and one deliveryman. A Manager, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a committee of eight completed the team.

I worked in the Drapery Department. It was my job as junior each morning to sweep the floor, dust the shelves, clean the windows, polish the counters, stitch torn boxes and in winter light the coal fire. The coal was kept down in the cellar, it was very dark and you had to remember if there were high tides, because the cellar would flood when the tides were high. Paraffin was also sold in the Drapery Department and this was pumped across the road from the oil house. We received many orders for five-gallon drums to be filled. Only two gallons could be pumped at a time so it was important to remember how many had been pumped, many times the drums overflowed - what a mess!

The Grocery Department was combined with the Hardware Department. Weekly orders were sent out to many customers. All the sugar, rice, flour, dried fruit etc. had to be weighed out, so any spare minute was spent weighing packing and putting up orders.

Most customers had their regular shopping days. Not all came just to shop, but for the walk and to meet people for a chat. We had six hundred members on the ledger. Each day the dividend checks were sorted out into the appropriate numbers, then every quarter end, each member's checks were added up and one shilling in every pound spent was credited. Some members saved up their dividend for Christmas.

On Tuesdays and Thursday the Manchester wagon would come with deliveries from the Co-operative Wholesaler. Travellers came every six weeks bringing samples of goods from which we could order. Some orders came by rail and the porter would bring them along from the Railway Station

Stocktaking was done twice a year. Every single item had to be counted. We had a code for the cost price which was 'Westmorland' this being because it had ten different letters. If an item were three shillings and sixpence then this would be marked S/O. Some members paid for their goods quarterly, so that was a busy time taking stock and sending bills.



Every year in June they held a Sports Day for the Village. This was a wonderful event looked forward to by all the children. Every child got a tea bag, a bottle of pop, and races were organised. In the early days a Music Man came, later a Brass Band was invited.

Another big event was the annual 'Sale'. Crowds came and they would be queuing half-way to the Railway Station. This was usually held in February.

Beryl Allonby

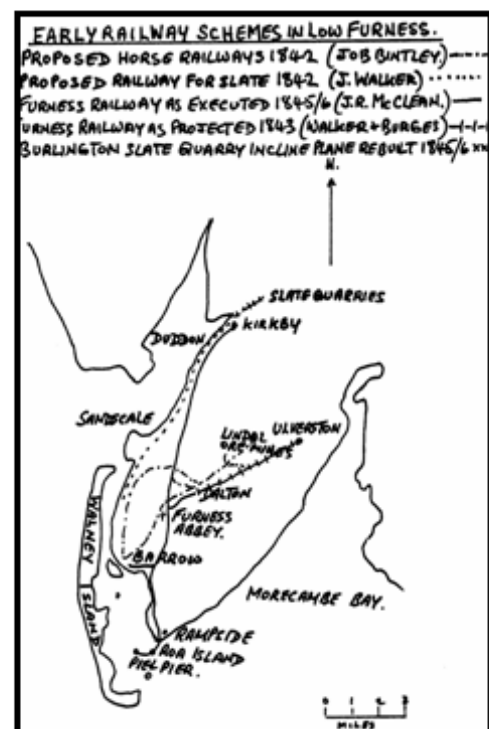
RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT AT KIRKBY-IN-FURNESS.

Before the Furness Railway track was constructed transport in the area was quite inadequate. The lack of roads meant the transporting and marketing of its mineral products was very much delayed and very costly even though the iron ore and slates were of a very high quality.

The Duke of Buccleuch and the Earl of Burlington both of whom had an important interest in the minerals industry put forward a scheme to construct a railway track in the district. A civil engineer was employed to make a survey of the area with special reference to the cost and route of the line. In order to do it as cheaply as possible it was originally considered that horses should pull the trucks with an easy adaptation to steam locomotive at a later date. The cost was estimated at £90,000 plus £10,000 for contingencies and incidental expenses. The map of the early railway schemes in Low Furness shows the direct route proposed from Kirkby-in-Furness.

One hundred thousand pounds would therefore be required to carry through the proposed scheme. £75,000 of this was to be raised in £50 shares. Applications for the shares were to be made to Messers Wilmer and Mr. William Currey, Messers Oldie and Lumley and Messers MacRae all in London. Applications in Furness were made to W. Butler, Dalton-in-Furness, Mr. J Buckley, Milnthorp and Mr. J. Cranke, Ulverston. There was very little support locally for the railway and hence the £75,000 share options were taken up almost entirely by the Duke of Buccleuch and The Earl of Burlington and their relatives and friends.

The Furness Railway Bill met very little opposition passing through Parliament and Royal assent was received in May 1844. The contract for constructing the line was awarded to J. and W. Treadwell, at an estimated cost of £47,789, to be completed by 30th September 1845.



The Earl of Burlington was particularly concerned for the transport of slate from the quarries at Kirkby-in-Furness and this section was the first to be opened on 11th August 1846 and facilitated the transport of stone from the foot of the incline railway (which ran down from the quarry) to Piel Pier at Barrow. There was no celebration at the opening of the line which is thought to be due to the fact that at this point in time there wasn't any facility for passenger transport for safety reasons but eventually people were allowed to travel on this mode of transport.

The track was later developed north of Kirkby and a station was built where it is today. These first buildings were constructed in 1848 of wood. In the early nineteen hundreds Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council complained about the dilapidated state of the station buildings and as a result new stone ones were put up in 1904. The contract was awarded to G. Frearson, builder of Broughton-in-Furness at a cost of £446.2s.11p. i.e. £446.15. Unfortunately most of these buildings have now been demolished and the station no longer has the prestigious look of the days of high train travel.



The signal box, unusually, was attached to a small waiting room on the north bound platform which was opened 3rd July 1893. The remains of the box can still be seen on the north side of the waiting room, the only building left of the original stone built station.

As a result of a fatal accident to a passenger crossing the line, a footbridge was erected in August 1956 and officially opened on 21st October. This same bridge was originally situated on Lindal-in-Furness station and was removed when the station closed.

Kirkby-in-Furness station is said to have had the longest railway seat and claims to have been mentioned in the Guinness Book of Records for this. The position of the seat can still be seen today along the wall of the down platform

Anne Woods

THE NEWS SATURDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 1939

MANY HURT IN FURNESS RAIL CRASH **EXCURSION TRAINS** **INVOLVED** **EARLY MORNING MISHAP AT KIRKBY**

One of the most serious railway accidents during recent years occurred early yesterday when two excursion trains were in collision at Kirkby Station and 30 passengers were injured, at least three seriously.

A return excursion from Bootle to Southport, run in connection with the flower show at the seaside resort, had stopped at Kirkby and was just drawing away from the platform when a second excursion returning from Southport to Aspatria and not booked to stop until Millom, crashed into the rear.

COCKFISH HALL

The oldest transaction so far discovered relating to Cockfish Hall is an agreement dated February 1625 between John Parker and Thomas Postlethwaite. At that time the land belonging to Cockfish covered a large part of Sandside on both sides of the present road. The land became divided up into several ownerships by the descendants of John Parker and, in 1744, another John Parker, Agnes Parker and John Addison conveyed land to Hugh Dickinson. More than twenty years later, a Thomas Dickinson conveyed this land to Samuel Knight. In 1783, Roger Parker conveyed a portion of his estate in part to John Pearson (with a lease of manorial rights from John Cavendish) and in part to Thomas Knight - both of whom, in 1789, sold their land to the Rev. Thomas Pearson, bringing together several pieces of land originally part of Cockfish estate. Rev. Pearson renamed his land 'Prospect'.

As to the farmhouse known as Cockfish Hall, it has been the home of the Coulton family since Isaac Coulton settled there sometime in the 1820s. The connection with the Parker family was not broken as Isaac's wife, Ann (born in 1797) was the daughter of the above-mentioned Roger. In 1829 Isaac was described his occupation as 'Wheelwright'. Living at Cockfish Hall at the time of the 1851 Census were: Isaac, the head of the family, aged 52, then described as 'Master Carpenter', his wife Ann, 53 years, daughters Jane, 22 and Nancy, 19 and two sons, George, 15, apprentice carpenter and Joseph, 13, scholar. In 1861 Isaac Coulton, then a widower, was living there with his two sons and two daughters. All three men gave 'Joiner' as their employment. In 1871, George, Joseph, Jane and Nancy still shared the same home - all unmarried.

Isaac, George and Joseph Coulton all served as members of the Kirkby Ireleth Select Vestry - Isaac was appointed Overseer of the Poor for Low Quarter in 1861, George appointed Parochial Constable in 1869 and Joseph was a member from 1874 onwards, serving as Surveyor of the Highways in 1877, Overseer of the Poor in 1890 and Waywarden in 1892. He was also a Sidesman at St. Cuthbert's Church from 1833. He died in 1923. A plaque commemorating George and Joseph can be found in the church.

At some time in the recent past, Cockfish Hall became 'Ashgrove', but has now reverted back to its historic title. The original house has now been divided into two. **June Whitehead**



The pictures show the house before renovation in the 1980s and today.

SOULBY'S Ulverston Advertiser July 1856
To be let with immediate possession All that excellent Beerhouse, situate at Sandside,
Kirkby Ireleth, in the occupation of William Braithwaite, Jun. ...
Apply to James Holmes, Barrow, the owner.