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**The
Mourholme
Magazine
of Local History**

MOURHOLME LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE
OF LOCAL HISTORY

VOL III, No 1 Price 30p Autumn 1984

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ANOTHER AMERICAN CONNECTION

R. L. Bassenden

The Mourholme Magazine of Local History is issued quarterly by the Mourholme Local History Society for the study of the history of the ancient Parish of Warton and its seven constituent townships: Borwick, Carnforth, Priest Hutton, Silverdale, Warton with Lindeth, Yealand Conyers, and Yealand Redmayne.

The Society is named after the Manor of Mourholme, the home of the medieval Lords of Warton. Their seat, Mourholme Castle, stood on the site now covered by Dock Acres Quarry.

* * *

Yearly subscription, £2.50, includes evening lectures and field trips (guest admission 40p), and The Mourholme Magazine of Local History (non-member price 30p).

Application for membership should be made to Mrs J. Chatterley, 173A Main St, Warton, Lancs LA5,0QF.

* * *

Contributions of articles, notes, queries, letters, etc, are invited and should be sent to Mrs N. Thomas, The Gables, Silverdale, Lancs LA5 0TX, Tel 701230.

* * *

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When we consider the American connection in the ancient Parish of Warton, it is inevitable that the name Washington crosses one's mind. It is possible, however, that the Parish and in particular, Yealand, has other ties with the New World.

The Thorntons were for many years influential yeomen farmers in the Lune Valley, and with the rise of non-conformism, Thomas Thornton and his wife Elizabeth appear to be the first of their namesakes to join the ranks of the Quakers.

Thomas was baptised on 8 October 1648 and died on 4 June 1709, and in the records of the Lancaster Friends' Monthly Meeting is an obituary dated 14.8 mo. 1709 which reads (in an abbreviated form) as follows:

Thomas Thornton of Deep Clough was convinced of the Truth about the year 1687, and appeared in a public Testimony to it in the year 1691, and travelled in the Service of Truth, Visiting of Friends in several adjacent Counties....he was removed hence by Death on the 4th of the 3 month 1709 at his owne house.

His wife Elizabeth survived him, dying in 1732. They had a large family of at least six sons and two daughters. They are all described as of Deep Clough, a remote farm on the fells behind Caton. The date-stone over the farmhouse door reads

T
T E
16 79

and records these two, who were also buried, so the records of the Lancaster Friends Monthly Meeting inform us, at Deep Clough itself. At present there is no sign of the actual burial ground at Deep Clough, but there exists one of those annoying rumours, which one can never ascertain for certain, that in living

memory there used to be the remains of grave headstones in what is now the chicken run of the farmhouse.

When Elizabeth Thornton died in 1732, Deep Clough was left to her sole remaining son, Jonathan, who had been born on 14 March 1691. Prior to this, his brother William had died in 1715, leaving all his personal estate, including the farm of Hole House, in Caton, to Jonathan, William being unmarried. This would have been a great boon to Jonathan, for he married in 1722, one Margaret Birkett, the daughter of James and Elizabeth Birkett, whose letter to the Friends in Lancaster to give their consent to the marriage was addressed from 'Wood' in Cartmel. Margaret Birkett also wrote informing the Friends that she was willing to the proposed match, and Jonathan Thornton's mother wrote from Yealand agreeing to the marriage.

Well, the marriage took place, and the births of four boys and four girls are recorded in the Quaker Register of Births at Lancaster. The first three of these were in 1723, 1724 and 1726, after which the house at Hole House apparently became a little too small, for the following datestone, found at Hole House records the extension of the living accommodation:

T
T M
17 27

This stone was recently removed from a barn doorway, on a building adjacent to the present farmhouse, and now has been re-located over a new upstairs bedroom window at the rear of the house. Our suggestion that the 1727 datestone indicates an extension to the living accommodation is substantiated by the presence of old exterior walls, some 2'6" to 3" thick, now acting as interior walls, and also by the existence of the site of a gable window in the house wall that now looks into the barn.

We lose trace of Jonathan and his family after the birth of his eighth child in November 1739, till the

following record is made in the Minutes of the Lancaster Quaker Monthly Meeting, dated 1751, concerning the Certificate of Removal of one James Birket. This reads: 'A certificate on behalf of our Friend James Birket, who hath for several years resided in Antigua, but properly a Member of this Meeting, and as we apprehend about to settle in Tortola or Philadelphia, was read, approved and signed by this Meeting.'

Now, Jonathan Thornton's father-in-law was one James Birkett, who was married to Elizabeth (nee Hinde) of Crossgill - not far from Deep Clough - and according to an Indenture dated 12 April 1735, James Birkett and Elizabeth, his wife, were defendants in the case with one James Birkett the younger, possibly his son.

Is this James Birkett the younger the person referred to above as residing in Antigua? If so, then he would be about the same age as Jonathan Thornton's son William, whose application for a Certificate for Removal was made to the Friends' Lancaster Monthly Meeting on the 2nd day of the 1st month 1735. This application was noted as follows:

William Thornton, son of Jonathan Thornton, having signified his intention to remove and settle in the Island of Tortola, requests our Certificate. It appearing to be with the consent of his parents etc: a certificate signifying his Membership & Unity with us was read & approved in this Meeting & Signed by several Friends.

This type of Certificate was usual when a member of one Meeting passed to the area of another Meeting in a different part of the country, and was part of the close-knit fellowship which did so much to hold the Quaker community together; and the fact that his cousin, James Birkett, was already established in this far flung outpost of empire would undoubtedly have influenced the decision of young William Thornton, then about 24 years old, to set out to seek his fortune in the West Indies.

It is interesting to surmise exactly why young James Birkett should set out to the New World. Was it purely on account of religious convictions? We think it may not have been wholly so, when we read an account in the autobiography of William Stout, the Quaker tradesman of Lancaster. In this he mentions James Birkett of Wood in Cartmel as having married Elizabeth, the daughter of Margaret Hind, of Littledale. William Stout and Elijah Salthouse, also a Quaker of Lancaster (who died about 1730), were appointed, under Mrs Hind's will, executors in trust for her daughter. These two Quakers, finding James Birkett in good circumstances, and apparently 'very capable to manage this concern', considered themselves justified (with Mrs Birkett's consent) in assigning the trust to Birkett himself, but some years later, they had occasion to regret having done so, for Birkett 'undertook merchandising and other projects he did not understand, and engaged in partnership with men of declining circumstances and expensive company, so as to waste his estate and what he had in trust for his wife, and became bankrupt'.

Another piece of apparently confirmatory information is the existence of an Indenture dated 12 April 1735, recording the sale of the Croskill Estate in Caton by Thomas Birket, Mercer, of Whitby, James Birkett, Yeoman of Wood-in-Cartmel and Miles Birkett, Merchant, of Lancaster for £366.13.4d to one William Lawkland, acting on behalf of Henry Croft. Does this indicate that James Birkett was trying to raise capital in 1735, due to financial embarrassment?

Anyhow, William Thornton set out and became one amongst the active early members of the Quakers forming the Tortola Meeting, marrying another Quaker, Dorcas Zeagers of Tortola, on 1 August 1757. They had two sons, William born 27 May 1761, and a second son, Edward, of whom little is known, except that he died in November 1781. For some reason, the father was 'disowned' by the Quakers in 1760, and this may account for the fact that the births of the two sons are not recorded in the Quaker Registers for Tortola.

In passing, one notes that a further two sons of Jonathan Thornton, in addition to William, also emigrated to the West Indies: Thomas the elder went to St Michael, Barbados, whilst Jonathan junior went to Bridgetown, Barbados. Life was short, and William died when he was only 31, Thomas when he was 32, and Jonathan did not reach the age of 48.

When he was only about five years old, William junior was sent with his brother Edward to England for his education - this was probably due to the fact that his father had died in 1761, about the time of his birth, and his mother had married again in 1766 to Mr John Baillie.

In England, William junior and his brother were sent to live with their grandmother and their two aunts, Miss Jane and Miss Mary Thornton at Green Aire, in Lancaster. Where he went to school cannot be ascertained, but Robert Sutcliff, in his book, Travels in Some Parts of North America, in years 1804, 1805 & 1806, published in 1812, mentions meeting 'Dr Thornton, one of the Magistrates of Washington City, and who was some years a school-fellow with me at Yealand, near Lancaster'. At this time there was a Quaker School at Yealand, but it has not been possible to locate the names of scholars during the period when William Thornton and Robert Sutcliff could have been there.

Whilst he was in England, his father-in-law Mr John Baillie died, for in 1722 William's mother married for the third time, this time to the Hon. Thomas Thomason, with whom young William stayed for a time at No. 15 Norfolk Street, Strand, London, according to the notes of an address read before the Columbia Historical Society in May 1914. It is not known when this was.

Charles F. Jenkins in his book Tortola reports that William became a druggist's clerk at Ulverston, and Roy Thornton, in his letter dated 7 July 1983, says that he has found that this druggist must have been the son of Dr Stephen Fell and his wife Margaret (nee Skirrow & daughter of Thomas Skirrow of Wray, the

village where the elder Jonathan was buried). Dr Stephen Fell & his wife were both Quakers, married 4 December 1718.

There does exist, although it is not easily available, being part of a collection of 17 volumes of Thornton Papers held in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., a diary kept by William Thornton for the period 1777 to 1782, whilst he was at Ulverston and Edinburgh. Unfortunately the latter part of it is in shorthand, but as an American author hopes shortly to publish a book on William Thornton, it is hoped that more light will be thrown on these formative years of William's life.

Edinburgh University, however, confirms that William Thornton was a medical student there from 1781 to 1783, after which, according to the Columbia Historical Society paper referred to above, he was a pupil in St Bartholomew's Hospital for six months, from 1 October 1783. He was then awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1784 by the University of Aberdeen before continuing his studies in Paris.

By June 1786 he was back in Tortola, and later in that year he came to the States. In 1787 he was in New York, then living in Wilmington, Delaware, and about this time he became more than a little disturbed by the condition of the negroes, and in a letter written from New York to a fellow doctor, Dr J. C. Lettsom, he pointed out that he was entitled to between 70 and 80 slaves, and half the landed estate held by his family on Tortola, and was considering implementing a strong desire to transport the free blacks of the North, as well as the slaves on his Tortola plantation, to their native homes in Africa. Dr Lettsom, however, dissuaded him from this project, and advised him to return to Tortola, 'get a sufficiency and come to England, I hardly think that island is worthy of thee'. This would be in 1789, when Thornton was 28.

Dr Lettsom's advice was undoubtedly based on his own personal experience, for he too had been born in the Windward Islands, on the Island of Little Jost Van

Dykes, just off the shore of Tortola. He was some 17 years older than Thornton, but like him had been sent to Lancaster, England, at the age of about five years old, for his education. He had been put in the care of a sea captain, one William Lindo, who had delivered him to the safe keeping of two brothers, Abraham & Hutton Rawlinson, who carried out an extensive trade with these islands. At their house he met Samuel Fothergill, the brother of the famous London surgeon, Dr John Fothergill.

Littsom was educated at the Quaker school at Penketh, but when he was 14 his father died and soon afterwards his mother married again. It would appear that at this stage he came under the guardianship of Samuel Fothergill at Warrington, and it was from here that he set out by packhorse on the fifty mile journey to Settle, where at the age of 16 he was apprenticed to one Abraham Sutcliff, an apothecary, with whom he spent five happy years, followed by a year in a hospital in London.

It is interesting to note that this Abraham Sutcliff was the father of the Robert Sutcliff, whose book on his travels in North America we have referred to above, and from which book we have discovered that he and William Thornton were at school at Yealand at the same time, providing yet another example of the close-knit interchange of assistance in Quaker circles.

Then on 8 October 1767, Lettsom, aged 22, set sail on a two month journey to Tortola to claim his inheritance. On arrival he found the estate much depleted, but as one of his first acts, in accordance with his Quaker tradition, he set free the slaves belonging to the estate. He remained in Tortola for 6 months, practicing medicine; he was most popular, and made a considerable amount of money. He then returned to England in July 1768 to complete his medical education at Edinburgh. He never returned to Tortola, dying on 1 November 1815. He was buried in Bunhill Fields Friends' Burying Ground, in London.

The following is an interesting extract from a letter written from Cork, and dated 23 August 1777:

Two Lancaster men sailed from hence a few days ago for the West Indies, but last week they met an American privateer, which they engaged, and Captain Calland, of the 'Sally' was killed, and the mate struck to the privateer; but Captain Preston, of the 'Rawlinson', fought the privateer five hours, and beat her off and re-took the 'Sally', which he is afraid was taken again last Saturday morning, by another privateer. The 'Rawlinson', being much shattered, is put back here, in order to refit.

Could the 'Rawlinson' have been connected with the family to whom the young Lettson was sent? It is an interesting speculation, but perhaps no more than that.

Prior to this, Thornton had become an American citizen on 7 January 1788; and then on 13 October 1790 William Thornton married Anna Maria, the daughter of Mrs Brodeau, a successful Philadelphia school mistress. William was then 29 years old, his wife was only 15. After the wedding the couple departed for Tortola, where they remained for two years, during which time William carried on his profession as a physician, and also wrote a book entitled Cadmus, or a Treatise on the Elements of Written Language. The book was published in Philadelphia in 1793 and earned him the award of a gold medal from the American Philosophical Society.

Then in March 1792, while William was still in Tortola, Thomas Jefferson, the Secretary of State, advertised, asking for plans for the President's house and for the Capitol. Thornton asked permission to submit plans, but by the time he had completed his plan for the Capitol, the competition was closed. Luckily for him, none of the 14 drawings submitted was satisfactory, and Thornton took his plan to President Washinton, who was so pleased with it that he gave Thornton a letter to the Commissioners urging them to

MLHS QUESTIONNAIRE

The MLHS Committee is currently distributing a questionnaire designed to help us give you the kind of society you would most like to have. It is also designed to allow members to indicate how they would like to be, or would be willing to be, involved in the various activities and operations of the society.

These questionnaires were handed out at the November meeting and will be available again at the December meeting. They are also available from any Committee member or from your area representative.

We hope very much that each of you will do three things: 1) make sure you get a questionnaire, 2) make sure you fill it out, and 3) make doubly sure you get it back to us. Please bring it to the December meeting. Thank you.

* * *

THE MAGAZINE NEEDS YOU

The magazine needs articles and you can write them!

If you've reached an age when people are interested in what you remember, you can write for the magazine.

If you have any special knowledge of our area, you can write for the magazine.

Please share your interest in local history with us through the magazine.

* * *

SILVERDALE AUTHOR

Congratulations to David Peter on the publication of his In and Around Silverdale, The History of a North Lancashire Village, for sale at newsagents and at The Carnforth Bookshop at fl.95.

* * *

MLHS DECEMBER MEETING

13 December 1984
7:30 Hyning

Ice Houses

Rob David

Before Refrigerators there were Ice Houses. Mr David and his pupils at Queen Katherine's School, Kendal, undertook a project in experimental archaeology several years ago to see what it meant to have an ice house. They filled one with ice, 17 tons worth, and watched for over a year. What they learned will be part of what Mr David will tell us this evening.

Since the initial experiment, Mr David has continued his study of ice houses, including those in North Lancashire. His talk will include findings as yet unpublished and, of particular interest, tape recordings of people who in the early part of this century actually filled ice houses.

* * *

MLHS JANUARY MEETING

10 January 1985
7:30 Hyning

Bolton-le-Sands

Kenneth Entwistle

Not only is Mr Entwistle a member of the MLHS and the former headmaster of the Bolton-le-Sands school, but he has to his credit the ultimate of all local history accomplishments, the publication of a history of his locality, From Bodeltone to Bolton-le-Sands, The Story of a Village (1982).

His illustrated talk will cover many aspects of the history of Bolton-le-Sands.

* * *

MLHS'S NEW DUPLICATING MACHINE

When we lost Margaret Clarke to North Yorkshire this year, we also lost the duplicating capability she provided for us. Though we can't replace Margaret, unfortunately for us, we have acquired a new (used) electric Gestetner duplicating machine.

As members will know, we held a coffee morning in Warton to try to replenish our depleted deposit account. Unluckily, we chose October's coldest, windiest, rainiest Saturday morning for the occasion, and although we made about £70, we did not make up the full cost of the Gestetner.

Undiscouraged, we are planning another fund raising event for the spring.

* * *

PROGRAMME CARDS

Programme cards became available later than usual this year, and as a result their distribution to members has been somewhat uneven. We think that all 'paid up' members have now received their cards, but if anyone hasn't, or has any question about his subscription, please contact Mrs Jean Chatterley, 173A Main St., Warton.

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DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER?

The Westview Hotel in Millhead used to be called 'The Nib', and in fact is still known by that name locally.

Can anyone explain the origin and/or the meaning of the name?

* * *

THE MANOR OF WARTON FOR SALE

Earlier this year it was learned that Mr. W. N. Bolden, Lord of the Manor, was planning to offer the Manor of Warton for sale.

The MLHS, of course, was immediately interested in the role it might play in this historic event.

There are two aspects of the sale that are of local interest. The obvious first is the legal ownership of the Manor and the title. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Manor of Warton was held by the Crown. In 1811 it was sold to Thomas Inman who soon afterwards sold it to John Bolden, in whose family it has remained ever since.

The second involves the documents that belong to the Manor and its lord. These include the very important Manor Court Book, now on loan to the University of Lancaster, which gives an unparalleled record of the people of Warton from the 17th through the 19th centuries.

Although the MLHS Committee has decided the society can play no financial part in the purchase of the Lordship, we are definitely interested in the documents. Since it is unlikely that the documents can be sold separately, we have written to Mr Bolden about the possibility of having the documents photocopied and have received a favourable and cooperative response.

As far as we know, the sale has not yet taken place. We will keep members informed of developments.

* * *

accept it. Thornton's plan for the Capitol was accepted, and he was awarded the prize of \$500 and a plot for a house in the new City of Washington. Prior to this, Thornton, although not trained in architecture, had produced the winning plan for the new building for the Philadelphia Library, founded by Benjamin Franklin some years previously.

This was the start of a close friendship between Thornton and Washington, and numerous letters between them have been preserved in the Congressional Library at Washington, D.C. In 1794 Thornton was made one of the three Commissioners for the building of the city, and in 1802 he was made the first Commissioner of Patents, a post which he held until his death in 1828.

In later years Thornton bought a large farm outside Washington, D.C., for which Washington himself sent him three shagbark hickory trees. He maintained a racecourse and appears to have deserted many of his Quaker principles: when the English burned down the Capitol and White House in 1812, William Thornton was an officer of militia endeavouring to stop them.

As an American citizen and a friend of George Washington, Thornton obviously identified with the friends and surroundings of his mature years. The Quaker convictions of his youth had been modified; indeed he withdrew from the Society of Friends and felt able, as we see, to take up arms and horse racing! On his death he was buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington.

Adjacent to the Rotunda in the present Capitol in Washington, there is a commemorative plaque to 'William Thornton - First Architect of the Capitol, 1793-1794'. It does not mention his schooldays in Yealand!

SOURCES

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 Clark, A.C., Dr and Mrs Thornton
 Marshall, J.D., ed, The Autobiography of William Stout
Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Lancaster Friends
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AESTHETICS IN THE QUICKSANDS OF MORECAMBE BAY
 an extract from Lascelles Abercrombie

Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938) was another of those literary figures who were drawn to our part of Morecambe Bay. A poet and critic, he published An Essay toward a Theory of Art in 1922, from which this anecdote is taken.

Mrs E. V. Foulds, who brought this piece to my attention, recalls that his visits were made to Silverdale and Grange-over-Sands. The irrepressible little boy was one of the author's three sons.

(NYT)

...I was staying a while ago with my family on the shores of Morecambe Bay. The news came one morning that a horse was in the quicksands: so we all set off to assist in digging it out. I may say - not to make the story too thrilling - that there was no danger to us. It was a temporary quicksand, due to rain. Only the head, back and tail of the horse were above ground, but it would not sink further: the sand had set firm around - till we began to dig, and then it at once became a sort of porridge. It was a long business and horribly exciting. We could feel at our backs the menace of the tide; it was only a gleam as yet on the skyline - but everyone knows how the Morecambe tide comes in. Exciting, certainly; but the excitement was one of intense and practical anxiety. We were all the time calculating the possibility that the poor beast might be still embedded when the water was up to its nostrils; and we were trying not to notice the anguish of terror in its eyes and the quivering palsy to which exhaustion had reduced its pitiable struggles. But there was one member of the party who hopt about in pure candid untroubled enjoyment of the whole affair: this inexhaustibly interesting world had

provided one more first-rate spectacle for his especial benefit. 'Will the horse be drowned?' he kept eagerly asking. There was nothing callous in that: what the horse felt about it had simply never occurred to him: the only judgment to which the spectacle had been referred was the simple and immediate judgment: Was it a thrilling affair or not? Why, of course it was: the whole thing was most admirably arranged. And then came the final touch. The men were busily digging round; we were all hauling on a rope doubled endways round the horse's body; the owner was hauling on the horse's tail. But the tail and his hands were slippery with salt water, and just as we made a grand concerted effort, - the tail slipped through his hands and over he went, heels over head. Instantly there shrilled out a piercing keen peal of ecstatic delight; I have never heard laughter of a more unqualified rapture: and I have never, I think, been more shocked by the intrusion of the pure aesthetic view of things into the world of moral or practical values. Severe remonstrance followed: the unseasonable nature of the laughter was made clear. But the excuse was irresistible: 'I thought he'd pulled the tail right out!' That would, indeed, have raised the affair to an exquisite perfection. It was not true; but the instantaneous impression of it was accepted without question and enjoyed to the utmost - simply as a thing given.

Now this was pure aesthetic experience: that is to say, it was experience that did not look outside itself for its value. That small boy had still the faculty (alas, he will lose it too soon) of taking everything as it comes along and finding it immediately good or bad: of instantly deciding its value simply as experience, without requiring any other interest.

* * *

WESTMORLAND DIALECT STORIES

from Mrs Ann Wheeler

Ann Coward was born about 1735 in Cartmel. As a young woman, she left North Lancashire for London where she married Captain Wheeler, a seaman in the Guinea trade. At his death she returned to the north and lived with her brother, W.M. Coward, at Arnside Tower until her death in 1804. During her years at Arnside, she wrote several books, including The Westmorland Dialect in Four Dialogues in which she tried to convey the local dialect phonetically.

It is not only the dialect spoken in our area at the end of the eighteenth century that her Dialogues recreate. Their subject matter is drawn from the life of the time and the place, and though fictitious, they do seem to tell us something about the way our predecessors here two hundred years ago may have lived.

The selection included here is entitled 'A Prefatory Discourse.' It is hoped it will introduce readers to Mrs Wheeler's phonetic technique, in preparation for future extracts from the main Dialogues.

Mr A. Green of Arnside brought the Dialogues to my attention and with his help I have prepared the 'translation' which accompanies the passage. I apologise both to those who don't need such an aid and may consider it patronizing and to those who do and may find it insufficient.

[NYT]

A Prefatory Discourse

I kna mony of my readers will think, nay en say, I hed lile et dea tae rite sic maapment about nae body knas wha; I mud hev fund mitch better employment in a cuntry hause, tae mind milkiness, sarra th coafs, leak heftert pigs en hens, spin tow for bord claiths en sheets; it wod hev been mitch mair farently then ritin books, a wark ets fit for nin but parson et dea; but en ea mud rite I sud hev meaad receipts for sweet pyes en rice puddins, en takin mauls aut eth claiths, that mud hev done gud, but as tae this, nea yan knas what it means, it's a capper.

It wur net ith time of Oliver Crumel ner King Stune, but sum udder king, two men com a girt way off, ameast be Lunon, an they wanted toth gang owar Sand, but when they com an leaked what a fearful way it wur owar, en nae hedges ner tornpike tae be seen, they wur flayed en steud gloarin about net knain what toth dea, when belive a man com ridin up tew em en eshed whaar they wur bawn; they sed owar Sand, but it wur sic a parlish way they didn't like tae gang, for feard ea been drownt; this mon sed cum gang wie me, I'll tak ye'th seaf owar I'll uphod ye'th; wie that they set off, an thor men hed bean at a college caod Cambridg, en they thout tae hev sum gam wie their guide, soa as they raidd alang, yan on em sed he wod give a supper an a crawn baul of punch if they cud cap him ea ony six words; they tryd mony a time, but cud net deat. At last they gat seaf owar Sand, en ridin up Shilla, two wimen wur feighten, hed pood yan udder's caps off en neckcloths; they steud and leakd et em a lile bit, when th guide cood out "En udder blae el deat." Upon hearing this, our travellers sed yee hev won the wager, for that wur a language unknown to onny univarsity.

A Prefatory Discourse

I know many of my readers will think, nay and say, I had little to do to write such nonsense about no body knows what; I might have found much better employment in a country house, to mind the dairy work, feed the calves, look after pigs and hens, spin tow for table cloths and sheets; it would have been much more suitable than writing books, a work that's fit for none but a parson to do; but if I must write I should have made recipes for sweet pies and rice puddings, and taking mauls out of cloths; that might have done good, but as to this, no one knows what it means, it's a capper

It was not in the time of Oliver Cromwell nor King Stune, but some other king, two men came from a great way off, almost by London, and they wanted to go over the Sands, but when they came and looked what a fearful way it was over, and no hedges nor turnpike to be seen, they were afraid and stood gazing about not knowing what to do, when, believe it, a man came riding up to them and asked where they were bound; they said over the Sands, but it was such a dangerous way they didn't like to go, for fear of being drowned; this man said come go with me, I'll take you safe over, I'll take care of you; with that they set off, and these men had been at a college called Cambridge, and they thought to have some sport with their guide, so as they rode along, one of them said he would give a supper and a crown bowl of punch if they could stump him with any six words; they tried many a time, but could not do it. At last they got safe over the Sands, and riding up Shilla, two women were fighting, had pulled one another's caps off and neckcloths; they stood and looked at them a little bit, when the guide called out "En udder blae el deat."* Upon hearing this, our travellers said you have won the wager, for that was a language unknown to any university.

NOTES

The dictionaries consulted for the following definitions are The English Dialect Dictionary, Nodal & Milner's A Glossary of the Lancashire Dialect, and the Oxford English Dictionary.

sarra [from sarrow]: serve, feed

tow: hemp or flax fibres

faerently [from farrand]: fit, becoming

mauls: ?

capper: something which beats one's comprehension.

flayed [from fley]: frightened

gloarin [from glower]: to stare with wide open eyes, to gaze intently

King Stune: ?

*Another blow'll do it

* * *

NOTES AND QUERIESHISTORY IN THE RAIN

One day last year I set off in the early morning on my usual dog walk, along my daily route across the fields beyond the Roods Estate, Warton. A miserable day and raining hard but along the base stones of what had once been a wall one stone shone and glittered. It had no moss on it, unlike the others, was more shaped and seemed a different type of stone, possibly a gritstone instead of the more usual limestone. And what is more it had writing chiselled on its surface.

There appeared to be two names at the top: did the second name start with a 'J'? Was it a 'T', a 'B'? The mind could make a lot of it but in reality it was not at all clear. However, in the middle there was, clear and definite, 'WARTON', and also two 'WW's and at the bottom two definite cross marks. It was about 18" across and 18" long. Was it ancient or modern? Would anyone bother with such a labour these days? During the summer the stone became mellow and the words much less obvious. However, this year Mr Graham Watson, the archaeologist from the Lancaster Museum, came out to inspect the stone. He rubbed the entire top surface of the stone with graphite powder, which had the effect of bringing up all the marks into clearer relief. The 'WARTON', the two 'WW's, and the crossmarks were, he suggested, all signs of a boundary stone. He couldn't work out the two names above but as the chiselling was so inferior to the rest he thought these must have been put on much later and have no relevance to the first markings.

His last recommendation was to look for more boundary stones. So please start looking, preferably in the pouring rain! And please let us know if you find any!

K. Hodgson

...AND IN THE UNDERGROWTH

Stimulated by Mrs Hodgson's discovery, and by Mr Watson's enthusiasm, I went looking again for a stone noted on a walk many months ago. This one is an upright, shaped slab, rather like a large milestone or small grave headstone. It leans against the north wall in the undergrowth bounding a green lane which runs between a point on the minor road between Leighton Beck Bridge and Slack Head and Hazelslack Farm, at approximate grid reference 486783. This is just outside our parish boundary and the Lancashire-Cumbria boundary, and, like Mrs Hodgson's stone, is not on a boundary of any present-day significance.

The lettering is very clear:

A
S J D C
1870
No.3

but apart from the date, conveys little.

Any suggestions?

J. Chatterley

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