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The
Mourholme
Magazine
of Local History

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THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE
OF LOCAL HISTORY

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

Yearly subscription £4.00, includes evening lectures and field trips, the Mourholme Magazine and access to the Society's archival material.

Application for membership should be made to Mrs. J. Chatterley, 173a Main Street, Warton, Carnforth, Lancashire.

Contributions to the magazine - articles, letters, notes are invited. Please send them to the secretary, Mrs J. Clarke, 55 Silverdale Road, Yealand Redmayne, Carnforth, LA5 9TB. Tel. 781363.

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SALT, SPICES, SUGAR AND PEPPER.

The following two articles have grown out of the work of a group of Mourholme Society members who are at present researching the seventeenth century history of our area. Neil Stobbs, a member of this group, has gathered together information about the culinary practices of a well-to-do Lancashire family of the period. The second article is an attempt, by the group, to see how far his findings can be applied to the ordinary people of this area.

Part I; the Gawthorpe Accounts.

Neil Stobbs

Gawthorpe Hall, near Burnley, was the home of the Shuttleworths, a Lancashire family which, from small beginnings in the thirteenth century, had by the sixteenth century amassed a considerable fortune by strategic marriages and the practice of the law. A set of accounts⁽¹⁾ kept by their steward, running from 1582 to 1621, still survives for two Shuttleworth estates in Lancashire, Gawthorpe itself and Smithills. In a previous article⁽²⁾ the accounts were used to illustrate the cultivation and use of liquorice. In this article the same accounts have been used to learn something of the flavouring and preservation of food at the time.

The most important kitchen requirement in this study is salt. It appears in the accounts no less than 31 times, in quantities variously described as *kerves*, *krennekes* [crannocks], *mettes* [bushells], *lodes* and *quarters*. The nineteenth century editor of the accounts translates *kerves* as baskets. The quantity of salt contained in the basket is not recorded, but the cost of three baskets was about 39 pence, that is about 13 pence a basket. A crannock of salt cost about 16/-, suggesting it was about fourteen times the size of a basket. A *mette* was variously priced at anything from 18d to 3/4d. So

it appears that a crannock was anything from 5 to 10 bushels large. This fits in with the definition in the Oxford English Dictionary; "For corn, the crannock of 2 or 4 bushels is mentioned; for salt it appears to have been much larger" There must be uncertainty in such estimates, however, because of the wide variation in price and uncertainty about the local meaning of the measures used.

The Gawthorpe accounts indicate that the salt was bought at Northwich, which is not surprising, since the salt-springs in Cheshire (to which the place-name element "wich" refers) were a long-standing and increasingly important source of salt. The accounts also show that salt was subject to a "towlle" [a toll], apparently paid as the salt left the town. Both these points are taken up in the second half of this article

Among actual spices, the most frequently recorded was pepper (or *peper* as it was spelt in many entries). It appears 15 times in the period. The first entry was found in 1582, when two pounds of pepper were purchased for five shillings. It was sent to Lyme [Lymm in Cheshire] "when the stagges were sent to London." This would indicate that it was used to preserve the meat on its journey. It probably did help to keep it sweet. There has been a tendency to hold that pepper was used in the past more to disguise taint than as a true preservative, but it seems that pepper does have some proven antibacterial properties⁽³⁾.

In London, where the Shuttleworths mostly bought their spices, 2½ lbs of pepper cost 7s/1d, that is 2s/10d a pound. In Lancashire they paid 2s/6d a pound. An ounce of pepper costing 3d was put into a "wodkoce pie which was sent to Londone" in September 1584. This gives a price of 4 shillings a pound, but then, as was also the case with salt, price per unit tended to go up as the quantity purchased decreased. The last entry for which it is

possible to calculate a price was in 1617 when "4lbs of case pepper" cost the strange sum of 9s/13d, or in more ordinary terms 10s/1d. The price per pound is therefore 2s/6½, not significantly different from the price of 2s/6d in 1582, but the comparison may not be valid. The Oxford English Dictionary suggests that "case pepper" meant cayenne pepper.

A frequently occurring purchase during the whole run of the accounts was vinegar, which appeared in many spellings such as *vineyare*, *venykerke*, *vinyker* and *venycer* before settling down as vinegar after 1610. It appears eleven times in the accounts, in quantities from 1 pint to "seven gallons and a querte". Prices vary, but ordinary vinegar is usually quoted at 4d a quart, and for larger quantities at 3½ pence a quart, but on one occasion wine vinegar was bought; "foure gallone and a halfe...at 5d a quarte

It is interesting to note that the three most frequently occurring entries in this study are for materials which were used for the preservation of foodstuffs. The lack of modern refrigeration required the cook to preserve as much of the produce grown in the season as possible, especially in rather isolated communities during winters, when travel would be difficult if not impossible. Methods used would include salting, and pickling.

Of the other spices purchased cloves and mace, often purchased at the same time, occur frequently. They appear in the accounts as early as 1584, as "masse and cloffe". By 1608 the entries are separated. Cloves are purchased at 1s/9d the quarter pound and "large mace" at 2/6d. This gives a cost per pound of 7/- and 10/- respectively. In the accounts for 1617 there is a list of "the usuall p[ro]porc[i]on of spices yearely bought in London at Michaelmas terme"; three-quarters of a pound of mace, and half a pound of cloves.

Another frequently recurring spice was nutmeg which occurred ten times in the accounts between 1610 and 1621. Mace and nutmeg are separate parts of the same fruit, mace being the scarlet aril, or seed-coat, which surrounds the ovoid nutmeg seed. It seems strange that mace should be mentioned as early as 1583, and nutmeg not till 1610. It may be nutmegs were included in some of the general entries about the purchase of spices. The price of nutmegs was quite variable, 4 ounces costing on different occasions 1s/6d, 2 shillings and 1s/8d.

Spices were not only bought for cookery. They had medicinal uses. The Gawthorpe accounts list herbs and spices bought for the lying-in of one of the ladies of the household. The use of cloves in the pomanders which were carried to ward off infection, is well documented. Oil of cloves, as now, was used for toothache. Nutmeg was used to promote digestion, being, as a modern herbalist says "carminative; aromatic; stimulant. Used in small doses to reduce flatulence"⁽⁴⁾. Perhaps one should mention here that it is also poisonous and can lead to disorientation, double vision and convulsions. It has been known for centuries that moderate doses of nutmeg cause a feeling of unreality and visual illusions. Did we have sixteenth century drug takers? Probably not; the trip given by nutmeg apparently tends to be extremely unpleasant.⁽⁵⁾

Other spices which appear in the accounts include saffron, fenugreek, ginger, aniseed ["*annelsied*"], cinnamon, coriander, poppy seed, liquorice, pomegranate seed, saunders, turnsole and dragon's blood. The last three are colouring rather than flavouring agents. Saunders (sandalwood) and dragon's blood (a coloured resin) for red colour, and turnsole (a mediterranean plant) for purple.

One of the other important materials mentioned is sugar. It appears very early in the

accounts, in 1583, though the amount purchased then is not noted. The earliest indication of price is 1/10d a pound. Later, in July 1621, an entry reads "p'd to Francis Austin, grocer, for ij loves of Fine sugar...at 13d per lb" Sugar was purchased in various forms, sugar loaf, white sugar, powdered sugar, brown candy, kitchen sugar, "*suger in peeces*". It came from various sources such as Preston and Colne.

The prices of all these articles do not seem, at first sight, impossibly high, but the wages of servants quoted in the accounts show how large a proportion of the wage would have been spent to obtain the various materials under review. A female servant apparently received 1/- a month "*hur halffe yeares waghes vis*", and though one female domestic was paid the very high wage of £9/6s a year, this seems to have been exceptional. Male servants received as much as 40/- a year, e.g. "*His first qereters wegges x^s*". The editor of the Gawthorpe Accounts gives a table of wages for the period. General labourers earned approximately 3d a day. Skilled craftsmen were paid up to 7d or 8d a day. It is clear that the price of cloves and mace would be beyond the reach of most wage earners of the periods.

NOTES

- 1) *Chetham Society*, Vol. XXXV, 1856.
- 2) Neil Stobbs, "The Use of Liquorice", *Mourholme Magazine of Local History*, 1994.1, p.9.
- 3) E.J. Shellard, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, in *Culpepper's Colour Herbal* ed. David Potterton.
- 4) M.E. Stuart, *The Encyclopaedia of Herbs and Herbalism*, 1979.
- 5) G.S. Venables, "Nutmeg poisoning", *British Medical Journal*, Jan.1976, p.96.

SALT, SPICES, SUGAR AND PEPPER. Part II
The townships of Warton Parish.

The Shuttleworths were a wealthy family. The comparison, given in Part I, between the cost of spices and the wages paid to their servants, shows the need for caution in extrapolating from Shuttleworth kitchen practices to those of more ordinary people. Would our predecessors in north Lancashire have used anything like the same range of ingredients for flavouring and preserving? In trying to find what was happening in the north-west two main local sources were used. One was the autobiography of William Stout⁽¹⁾. Stout was born in Bolton-le-Sands in 1665 and spent his working life in Lancaster, where he died in 1752. He was in the grocery trade for much of his life, and also involved in the import of foreign goods to Lancaster. He was thus in a position to speak authoritatively on the supply of the goods under consideration.

The other main source of information used by the group were the collection of wills held in the Lancashire Record Office. In the seventeenth century wills were still required, by law, to be accompanied by an inventory of the testator's possessions before probate could be granted. These inventories, drawn up by respectable neighbours, were often very detailed, including even quite minor household equipment.

The inventories⁽²⁾ were searched for references to the preserving and flavouring agents referred to in Part I. A start was made by looking for references to salt. Direct references occurred only in 21 inventories of the 242 searched. Only once, in these direct references, was a quantity given. In January 1612 Alice Jackson, a widow of Silverdale, died possessing "*halfe a strike of salte and a pecke of hempseed*" valued at 1s/8d. But what was the size of a strike round here?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary it could be equal to anything from half a bushel to four bushels. It was not even possible to work out quantities from the values given, since mostly salt, as in Alice Jackson's inventory, was lumped together with other items, and then all were valued together. In only seven inventories was it priced alone. The range was from 4d to 6 shillings. Using the estimate from the Gawthorpe accounts of 18 pence a bushel for salt this gives holdings of from under a quarter of a bushel to four bushels. George Townson of Borwick died in 1638 owning salt and a barrell, worth together £2. If, as seems probable from values in other wills, most of the £2 was the cost of salt, then this would suggest a holding of something like 32 bushells. Townson, however, was exceptionally rich, with holdings in both Borwick and Halton, and property valued at £228 pounds.

Compared with what a modern household would store the amounts of salt held seem large. The explanation would seem to lie in the other common reference to the use of salt in the inventories. There are 15 references to "salting tubs" and a further 23 references to "beef tubs" or "flesh tubs". It is no longer believed that most of a farmer's stock had to be killed off and salted in the back end, because of the difficulty of over-wintering animals. Dr J.D. Marshall, for instance, found no evidence for this practice in Cumbria. "*It will be noticed that there is no sign of any mass Martinmass slaughter...a community of cattle-dealers would think twice before indulging in textbook massacres, and an overwintered young beast gained in market value*"⁽³⁾. Nevertheless animals had to be killed and, in the absence of refrigeration, almost the only way of preserving the meat for any length of time was by soaking it in brine in just such tubs. There were other methods of preserving meat, the inventories mention "hung beef" and "powdered beef". Some of the bacon so frequently mentioned may have been smoked, nevertheless for large scale preserving salt

was needed. William Stout thought the lifting of the salt excise in 1731 would be a great relief to country farmers and labourers since *"a farmer of twenty pounds a year useth as much salt as many gentlemen of some hundred pounds a year use"*⁽⁴⁾.

The inventories also give evidence of the more small scale uses of salt. Six inventories mention *"salt butter"*, which probably meant butter packed in salt to preserve it. Five mention *"a salt"*. This was a common word at the time for a salt-cellar, an interpretation which is supported by the fact that when *"a salt"* is mentioned in an inventory, it is along with the pewter and dishes. James Burton of Silverdale even had *"3 saltes"*. Possibly a man who liked things fine about him. He was not outstandingly well to-do, yet as well as the three salts he had *"11 peices of pewter"* and an expensive table cloth, valued at two pounds, to put them on.

The salt used in the Warton townships probably came increasingly from Cheshire. There had been important salt-pans on the Cumbrian coast, especially near Holme Cultram, but even there Cheshire salt was ousting it as early as the reign of Elizabeth⁽⁵⁾. Earlier, Cheshire salt had been manufactured by evaporation from the salt springs there. By 1670 the rock salt itself was being mined, and William Stout mentions that by 1688 it was being brought into Lancaster, though he adds that salt was also being imported from France and Spain⁽⁶⁾.

The inventories were also searched for any possible mention of sugar, but none was found. This does not necessarily mean that it was not being used. There were conventions about what was and what was not mentioned in inventories. Kitchen utensils and kitchen cupboards were mentioned, but not what was in them except farm produce likely to be stored on a fairly large scale; beef, bacon, suet, meal, malt and butter. The absence of all mention does suggest, however, that sugar was not being

stored on a large scale. On the other hand it would be surprising if it was not being used at all, at least later in the century. It was no longer the luxury item of the middle ages, suitable only for sweet meats for the rich. Then it had come, via Venice, from India and Arabia. By the fifteenth century Venice's monopoly was broken. Sugar cane was grown first in the Canary Islands, and from the end of the century on, in the Americas, Columbus having taken the first canes there in 1493⁽⁷⁾. It was available in Lancaster. William Stout stocked it in his shop. By 1684 it was coming into the port in such quantities, though via London and Bristol rather than direct from the Indies, that it was worth setting up a sugar refinery in Lancaster.

There are two hints that sugar might have been used in the Warton townships by the end of the century. The first is a possible falling off of bee-keeping in the second half of the century. In the 242 inventories bees, honey, or both, are mentioned 38 times; 32 times before 1650 and only 6 times thereafter, a ratio of 5.3 to 1. It is true that there are, by chance, more surviving inventories for the first half of the century, but in nothing like the same ratio. (192 from 1600-1649 and 90 from 1650-1699, a ratio of 1.7:1.) Was the arrival of relatively cheap sugar lessening the need for bee-keeping? The other hint, admittedly a tiny one, is that, when Sir George Middleton of Leighton hall died in 1672, he had in his kitchen two preserving pans. Perhaps, in this rich household, sugar was being used as a method of preserving food.

No evidence has been found in the inventories of holdings of spices or vinegar. They were both obtainable locally. Ginger was coming in from the West Indies according to Stout and in any case the tradesmen of Lancaster were in touch with London. In 1693 Stout ordered goods from London, including oil and vinegar. Unfortunately they were *"long a-coming, and damage by rats, who eat out the*

corks in liquor and oyl caskes, to the loss [of] some whole caskes of oyle and vinigar⁽⁸⁾.

The prices for spice suggested by the Gawthorpe accounts were high but not astronomical. The more substantial farmers would probably have been able to afford them. The question is rather would they have wished to? Spices are not essential to health like salt, nor even essential to palatable food. Herbs have always been a cheaper alternative. As long ago as the twelfth century a physician, talking about flavouring medicine, put it in a nutshell. "We usually give things for things and words for words. For empty words we give herbs..., but for precious money we give spices"⁽⁹⁾.

In Part I of this article it was mentioned that at Gawthorpe a whole ounce of pepper was put in a pie, surely an excessive amount even for the largest pie? The rich seem in general to have used very large quantities of spices, partly perhaps as a form of conspicuous consumption⁽¹⁰⁾. It is possible that northern farmers' wives preferred not to give "precious money" for spices when they could flavour the family food out of their own gardens for nothing. And simply because herbs cost "nothing" they would not appear in inventories. The only home-grown flavouring that got a mention in the inventories was onions.

In conclusion it has not proved easy to find direct evidence for local practices in preserving and flavouring food. At most it can be said that salting remained the important way of preserving, and that, though exotic spices were available to flavour the unpalatable result, no direct evidence has been found of their use. There are only hints that sugar may have been increasingly used. William Drummond, the classic writer on the history of food, thinks that the fall in the price of sugar also popularised the serving of fruit tarts or puddings after the meat course, and dates the practice from the middle of the seventeenth century⁽¹¹⁾. There is one entry in William

Stout's autobiography which suggests that fruit puddings may have been coming in up here. In 1682, when he was serving his apprenticeship as a grocer, he had to make up parcels of goods for sale on market day for people coming in from the country. The packets included sugar, tobacco nails etc. "and particularly prunes, which we made up in summer time about one hundred weight weekly in pounds and two pounds, and sold them three pounds for four pence comonly..."⁽¹²⁾.

NOTES

- 1) Ed. J.D. Marshall, *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752*, 1967.
- 2) The original wills, with their inventories, are held in the Lancashire Record Office. There are transcripts of almost all of these in the Society's archives, the outcome of much work, over the years, of members past and present.
- 3) J.D. Marshall, "Agrarian Wealth and Social Structure in Pre-Industrial Cumbria", *Economic History Review*, p.512, 2nd series Vol.XXXIII, 1980.
- 4) Ed. J.D. Marshall, *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752*, 1967, p.254.
- 5) C.M.L. Bouch & G.P. Jones, *A Short Economic and Social History of the Lake Counties 1500-1830*, p.117, 1961.
- 6) Ed. J.D. Marshall, *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752*, 1967, p.95.
- 7) Tom Stobart, *The Cook's Encyclopaedia*, 1980, p.402.
- 8) Ed. J.D. Marshall, *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752*, 1967, p.108.
- 9) B.A. Hensch, *Fast and Feast*, 1976, p.103.
- 10) *ibid.*, p.104.
- 11) William Drummond, *The Englishman's Food*, 195 ,
- 12) Ed. J.D. Marshall, *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752*, 1967, p.79.

ROBIN HILL; No.24 Market Street, Carnforth.

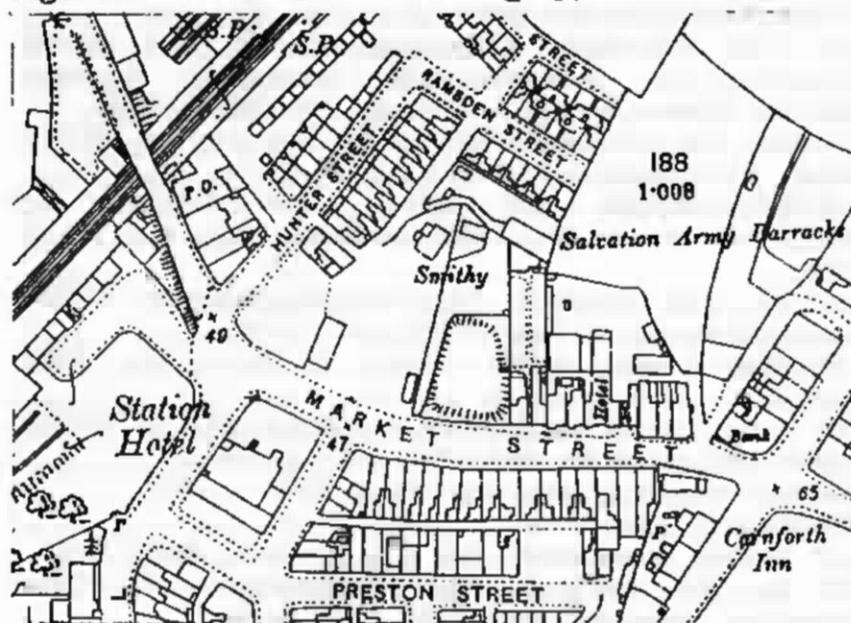
John Findlater

My interest in this property arises not simply as a matter of local history, but because I once owned and lived in it.

This land was bought by Dr E.S. Jackson from the Carnforth Haematite Iron Company on April 22nd, 1902. The house was designed by Joseph Pattinson, architect, of Windermere; the plan is dated May 1902.

Looking at the 1891 O/S, 25"/mile map you see an area marked as an open pit where Robin Hill now stands.[Fig.1] A smithy and the Salvation Army

Figure 1. Site of Robin Hill Surgery, Carnforth, 1891.



Reproduced by courtesy Ordnance Survey, Southampton from 25"/mile 1891 O.S. map.

Barracks lie between the delineated plot and Ramsden Street. Whether it was a sand or gravel quarry which had been worked out is hard to say, probably the latter. The 1846 enclosure map of Carnforth shows there to have been a small area, presumably a little hillock, called Robin Hill. What the derivation of the name is, is hard to say; there have been many Robin Hills in England. One would like to think that it had a high quota of cheeky redbreasts. However the house was clearly named after the hill. There is a copy of a legal document of 1865 concerning a "right of road" 10ft in height and width to the west side of a plot of land, Robbin Hill. Figure 2 (p.16) shows Market Street as it was not long after Dr Jackson built his house at the bottom of the hill on the left going up.

Figure 3.(p.16) shows the ground plan for the house, fronting on to, but slightly set back from Market Street, and abutting the property next to it up Market Street; the land to the west, where the Fire Station is now, was retained by the Iron Company. At some point Dr Jackson must have acquired some of this land because there used to be a walled garden the length of the house and parallel to it. I have cut grass, planted and weeded and, occasionally, sat in it. There was a magnificent cherry tree near the wall along Market Street, which can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 4. (p.17) shows the front elevation, and Figure 5. (p.17) the side, approached down the drive. The house had three storeys with large rooms. There were six bed-rooms on the upper two floors, a large box room, a complex on the second floor with bathroom, separate water closets and a housemaid's closet. There were cellars underneath.

The single storey projection from the back of the main part of the house was the surgery. The surgery entrance was through a door in the main

Figure 2. Market Street, Carnforth c. 1902-1914
 Drawn by D. Dakeyne (from a postcard loaned by Miss M. Smalley)



Figure 3. Ground Plan for Robin Hill 1902

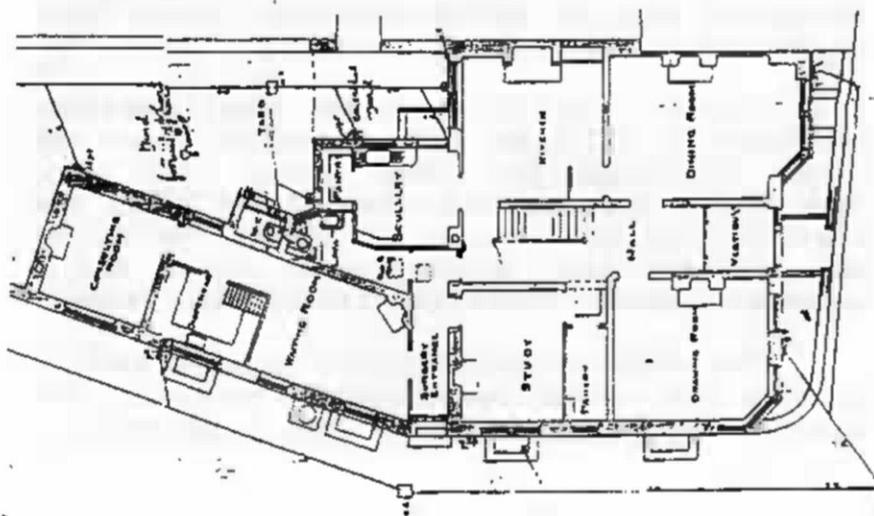
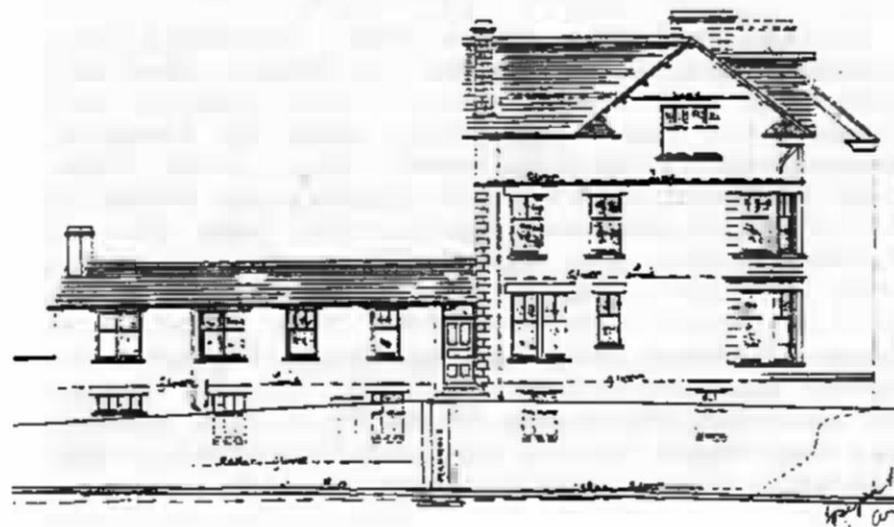


Figure 4. Plan for Robin Hill, 1902. *Front Elevation*



Figure 5. Plan for Robin Hill, 1902 *Side Elevation*



house, immediately to the right of the extension. It was complete with night bell and speaking tube. Entering here the patients would enter the first door on the left of the passage which took them into the waiting room. At the far end of the waiting room a corridor led through to the consulting room, going past a door into a smaller room, the dispensary. The study, entered to the right down the passage from the surgery door entrance, was also used as a consulting room.

Dr E.S. Jackson, or old Dr Jackson (to distinguish him from his son also Dr E.S. Jackson who was often known as Dr Edward, or Dr Teddy) had been born in Bolton-le-Sands, the son of Dr William Jackson. "Old" Dr Jackson lived and practised from the Robin Hill house until somewhere just before the second world war. He became one of the prominent men in the area, not only because of his large practice, but because of his interests in agriculture, horticulture and wild life. Stories of his sayings and doings are legion. None of this is relevant to this article.

Old Dr Jackson died in 1939. Dr Edward then acquired the house. When Dr Edward died in September 1951 I succeeded to his practice and bought the house in 1952 when Dr Edward's american-born wife Ruth moved out. I lived there until September 1956 when the surgery was moved to Ash Trees in Lancaster Road, at the same time as Dr Berry's move from Bank Buildings. The two of us were now in partnership, and were joined by Dr P.T. Frazer. My wife and I then moved to a house on Warton Crag. Having bought the house at Robin Hill for £3,500 in 1952 I sold it to Mr Jenkinson, the grocer, for £3,250 in 1958, when it had been empty for one year and four months, some indication of my business acumen.

It is amazing, but the house that we moved into in 1952 was almost exactly as it had been in 1902. The thing most people seem to remember is that the waiting room had cases of stuffed animals and birds round its walls. Quite unnerving! These had been collected by old Dr Jackson over the years. They were disposed of to the taxidermist, Mr Murray, on Scotland Road, though I seem to remember it was a Mr Salkeld who conducted the business.

Mr Jenkinson had previously run a grocery business from premises in upper Market Street, before moving down to Robin Hill. The ground floor was extensively altered to make it into a shop. Upstairs was altered so as to make a maisonette. The grocery business continued after Mr Jenkinson senior died and his son took over. He then sold to Booth's, the grocers, who conducted their business from there after still further alteration.

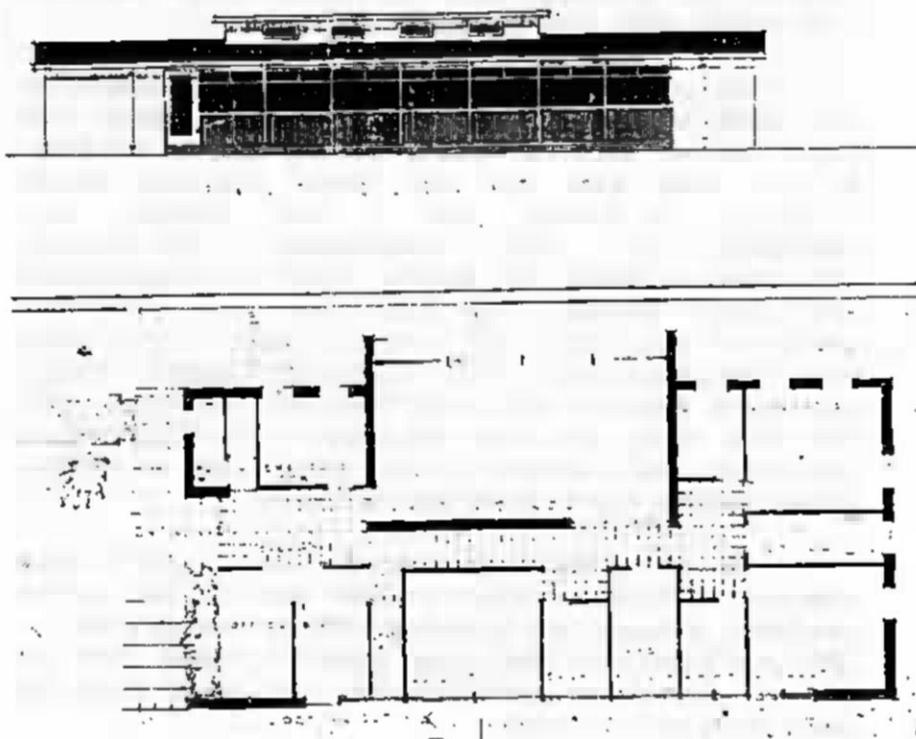
As part of the re-development of Carnforth to the north of Market Street Booth's built their new super-market with car park, moving into it in 1991. At the same time the Ash Trees practice, which Dr Berry, Dr Fraser and I had formed, now belonging to our successors, Drs Lowson, Shakespeare, Bates and Kopcke, built the magnificent new group premises on what had once been the garden of the Robin Hill surgery. Also at the same time the matching Local Authority Health Clinic, sharing a common wall, was built so that they look like one unit, but are separate. The Clinic had previously been located on the other side of Market Street, where the Post Office is now.

It is interesting that Dr Berry and I had planned to build a much smaller and, it has to be admitted, a much less pleasing looking surgery in 1956 on precisely the same ground [Fig.6], but we went to Lancaster Road instead. In those days we were strapped for cash.

Now Mr Fahy runs his pharmacy from the main part of Robin Hill. To the rear, where the previous surgery had been, the extension has been further extended, and is divided into small shops and a café. The old Robin Hill driveway, past the house to the garage, is now a walkway through to the Local Authority Clinic and the supermarket.

I would like to thank Booth's and their solicitors Robert Pinkus for permission to use records now at the County Record office.

Figure 6. Plans for projected surgery, 1956



THE LIMESTONE CAVERNS OF NETHER KELLET

This year the Society has obtained a photocopy of a 1908 guide book⁽¹⁾. The guide was published for the "Carnforth Improvement Syndicate", and is plainly an attempt to push Carnforth as a tourist centre. The book is called "*Carnforth: Gateway to the West Country*". Its opening paragraphs state that while Carnforth is known mainly for its railway junction and for its "very up-to-date Iron Works" it was becoming increasingly known for its "wonderful healthfulness, for the beautiful district of which it is the centre and its close proximity to the Lakes and a score of places of interest". It then lists these places. Among many which are still much visited to-day, such as Warton Crag, Levens Hall, and Arnside Knot, it places "Dunnal Mill Caves" in Nether Kellet. Visitors are advised to provide themselves with lantern or torch, and promised they will see "*Weird winding caverns with overhanging boulders and fantastic shapes in stone*". The guide also assures its readers that "*in dry weather the descent into the entrance cave is easily made even by ladies*". After visiting the cave refreshments might be had at a near-by cottage.

It seemed odd that such a dramatic sight was no longer attracting tourists. More especially as research in Lancaster Library showed that the caves had been known, as a sight to visit, long before 1908. In 1796 Father West had described Dunald Mill Hole in his "*Guide to the Lakes*". Moreover he was quoting from an earlier description in the "*Annual Register*" of 1760. Lancaster Public Library was able to produce many more references from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

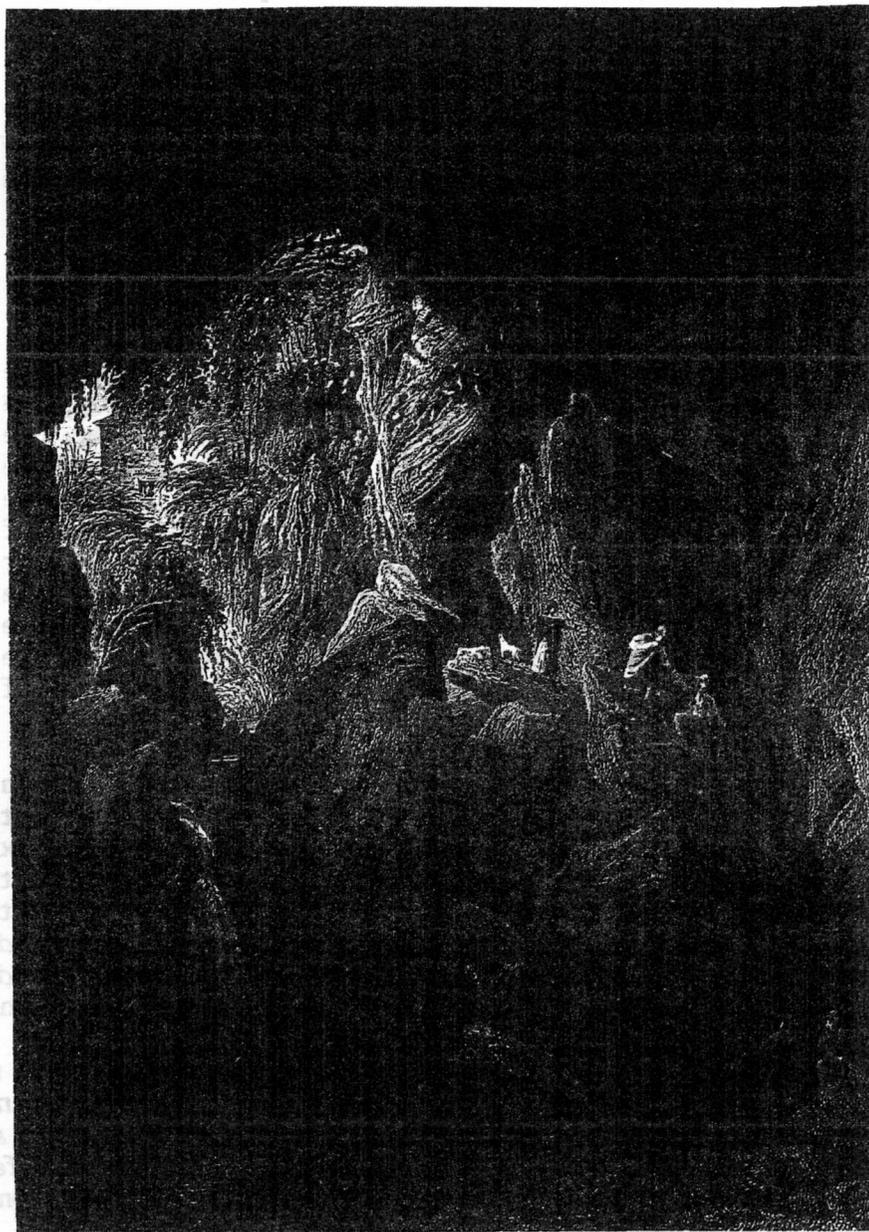
As these were studied an interesting sequence appeared. To the early visitors the cave

was huge and "horrible". The Annual Register in 1760 describes the brook leading to the cave as falling down "several beautiful cascades". The entrance to the cave "has something most pleasingly horrid in it". There were "vaults so capacious we could not see either roof or sides". As the writer and his companions made their way through the cave the brook "entertained us with a sort of harmony well suiting the place - for the different heights of its falls were as so many keys of music, which, all being conveyed to us by the amazing echo, greatly added to the majestic horror which surrounded us". And so the writer goes on, piling phrase on phrase.

In 1846 the caves were featured in a book of engravings⁽²⁾, what we might now call a coffee table book. The text speaks of Dunald Mill Hole as "one of those curiosities of Nature that combine impressions of terror with those of grandeur and sublimity", and of "capacious vaults, whose boundaries are not discernible". The illustration shows the intrepid visitors dwarfed by the dark magnificence of the cavern. (see opposite)

By 1865 a more prosaic note has entered the descriptions. A clergyman, Mr Addison Crofton, and his two brothers visited the cave⁽³⁾. They kitted themselves out professionally, with tin holders in their caps to hold candles, with ten yards of rope, a bull's eye lantern, a compass and a note-book. They put on flannel trousers and flannel shirts with sleeves rolled to the elbows. Like the previous visitors they entered the cave through the corn mill whose wheel was turned by the beck that fell into the cave, (carefully leaving with the miller their coats and braces). The caves still impressed. The three brothers found one of the caves "a perfect paradise of white forms; hundreds of stalactities hung pendant from the roof...from the tips of which a continual shower of drops came down, very beautiful in their glistening succession". But they note, more practically, that the dropping water

Dunold Mill Hole Near Lancaster. C. Pickering
From *The People's Gallery of Engravings*, 1846



threatens to put out their candles and move on hastily. They listen to "*the eternal drop of the stalactites...and their music in the pool below,*" but they also experiment. They struck the stalactites with their hammers and found that some sounded in C and some in G. They are even prepared to be humorous; they noted that in one cave the stalactites, when hit, "*gave a discordant yell of indignation*", which sounded to them like "*cats on the house tops*".

In June, 1889 a party from the Geological Section of the Barrow Naturalists' Field Club visited the caves. It was plainly an entertaining outing. The members walked through the lanes, enjoying the chance to pick botanical specimens, including bee orchids, they took group photographs outside the cave and finished up with "*a substantial tea*" at the Limeburners' Arms in Nether Kellet. Yet the expedition was also the beginning of a season of serious study. In November of that year Mr J.P. Smith gave a full account of the work to the Barrow Field Club⁽⁴⁾. He produced a map of the whole complex, gave accurate measurements of all the caves and passages, and speculated on the course of the underground river and where it might emerge.

He was very careful to distance himself from the hyperboles of his predecessors. Measurement had shown him that none of the caves in the complex were so big as to have indescernible walls. In fact he found none wider than 10 feet. Even he could not help being a little impressed at the "*fine rugged entrance to the cave...in all its boldness and grandeur*", but he immediately draws back from such enthusiasm.

"It would be the correct thing I believe here to break out into rhapsodies of the scene, and quote a few verses from the poets, &etc, but as this is a plain matter of fact paper, I must refer those who are of a poetic turn of mind to some of the previous descriptions which contain a

great deal more poetry and flowery description than reliable fact."

The 1908 guide book showed a slight lapse into the flowery, but since then Dunald Mill Hole seems to have been left to the geologists who have shown all the matter-of-factness desired by Mr Smith. Dunald Mill Hole has become "*a primary phreatic* network of tubes in solutionally widened joints*"⁽⁵⁾.

Armed with this information your chairman and secretary attempted to visit the cave to make a report on it. To-day the way to the cave is muddy and derelict. The corn mill is no more. Even when the Barrow Field Club visited in 1889 the mill had been out of use for some fifteen years, though the wheel and a pair of stones were still *in situ*. Now there is only a ruined wall, and a treacherous jumble of stones to be crossed. It is no path for a "*lady*". Yet the cave is still there and the arched entrance still impressive, certainly evocative of something more than the entrance to "*a network of tubes*". Perhaps the earlier writers had a feel for something in the landscape which had a little escaped Mr Smith and the geologists. Whether the caves inside in any way approached the drama of the 1846 engraving could not be checked. We had not the skill, or courage to enter even the outermost cave. The Barrow Field Club had noted that dry weather was needed to enter the caves. At the time of our visit the beck, swollen by prolonged rains, fell over the rim of the cave into the darkness beyond in a way that did not invite casual exploration.

In 1760, the writer of the article in the Annual Register said that he had read no previous description of the cave, and added "*its obscure situation I take to be the reason*". Obscure to whom? Mr Smith of the Barrow Naturalists' Club had

*Phreatic. Of or pertaining to a well. Underground water which may be reached by a well O.E.D.

for a guide a local game-keeper. When he asked local inhabitants how far into the cave one could penetrate he received answers which he dismissed as guesses, but which showed that a number of locals had been inside the caves. An "obscure situation" is a relative thing. There was once, it is said, a man from the Hebrides who visited London. He had nothing to say against it, except that it was "so far from anywhere".

Dunald Mill Hole is still known to those living close by. The very first passer-by on the road above the mill knew exactly how we should get to it. Moreover his uncle had once investigated the route of the underground river by the use of dyes. The present inhabitants of the cottage by the mill, when questioned, were able to refer us to the valuable collection in Lancaster Public Library. Once it was so much visited that Mr Smith, of the Barrow Field Club noted sadly how many of the stalactites had been chipped away by visitors. When did the caves slip from the tourist route? It is true they now lie on land belonging to Dunald Mill Quarry. Yet it seems that they disappeared from the knowledge of all but speleologists and geologists even before they were taken over by the quarry. It is hoped that some local person who may chance to read this article may be able to throw light on what happened.

NOTES

- 1) By kind permission of Mrs Dora Roberti.
- 2) *The People's Gallery of Engravings*, Vol.3, p.92, 1846
- 3) *Preston Chronicle*, August 19th, 1865
- 4) J.P.Smith, "Paper on Dunald Mill Hole". Barrow Naturalists' Field Club, November 11th, 1989.
- 5) Ed. A.C. Waltham, *The Limestones and Caves of North-West England*, 1974, p. 221.

YEALAND IN 1913: The diary of Helen Escolme of Holmere Farm (now Dykes Farm) in Yealand Conyers.
Further Extracts
Robin Greaves.

On September 16th, 1913, Helen had just returned from a much enjoyed, but exhausting visit to Liverpool. The following extracts cover the quieter period which followed, as far as anything was ever very quiet with someone so full of life as Helen. In particular her relationship with "H" - Herbert Nixon - continues stormy. He works on the railways and is now on night shift. She is constantly "dissatisfied" because he is not able to get away to see her, but when they do meet they swing from delight to furious quarrels. She continues as organist at Borwick Church and is much involved in local musical activities.

October 9th

At Borwick Church decorating 10.30, stayed till 3pm. I did chancel... Home for tea (no dinner), put white frock on for service... Singing went well, played Hallelujah Chorus going out - nervous.

October 12th

Harvest Sunday, long sermon⁽¹⁾...Out meet H 2p.m...home for tea. H & I had another war, a silly one bother him, said heaps of horrid things & wouldn't come to tea. I tried to turn him but no fear, he took off...Cycled to Church - packed - Herbert in Church, (must have come round a little) Alice walked home, I biked...ran against H, he walking by road - I had new secalingne [acetylene] lamp. I condescended to walk home with H, he little better. I got rotten headache...

October 17th

Sally came by 3.50. I met her with trap, talk - talk - talk - all way home. S[ally] still at

Colwyn Bay. Practice at night. All excited - put heap in paper about Festival⁽²⁾, all choir delited, home 9pm alone.

October 18th

Washed at 12, H not come very dissapointed. ...Been tremendous lot of accidents lately, first, railway smash at Hawes lot killed⁽³⁾, next Volterno ship on fire in mid-Atlantic,⁽⁴⁾ about 100 lost, terrible, then worse still big mine disaster in Wales, 400 men entombed⁽⁵⁾ then Railway smash at Liverpool in tunnel, 6 killed, then airship burst & 26 killed⁽⁶⁾ - what a world!

October 20th

Sally A & I went to Pictures at Carnforth jolly time, home alone, hurried.

October 21st

Sally & I went to Morecambe on 12.17, lovely day, tea at Tetley's⁽⁷⁾(lovely). Shop gazing, & PCC gazing...⁽⁸⁾

October 25th

H came 6.30, biked. Pictures at Carnforth, H in horrid mood, vexed because I laughed in Pictures, then because I'd been to P[icture]'s last Monday & never told him. Cycled home, he left home, he left me at hill bottom - I cut just a little - as I went in he turned up, & we fought it out, till 11pm. Sally & A been to Warton for chips.

October 26th

Poor choir morning...2.30 went out to meet H, met on low road, went walk, H little better than last night, I pretty full...I walked Church night, good choir. Walked by road home...I alone till H made himself known on Borwick lane, I completely cut up, H horrid, horrid, horrid, walked home in sulks. I done

up, H sorry, I dried up, finished night in --- [blank left in diary] Oh! glorious, H says he'll stay the night, so off we went to C'barrow at 10pm for his bike. H stuffed them both, came back, & had supper. H slept with Sam.

October 27th

Oh! bliss H here for all day...

November 1st

H gone to Preston to-day...S[ally] & A[lice] went first house Pictures. I down on bike met them out. A took my bike, I stayed talking with Sam & George Johnson. Then went second house, sat next S & George, he horrid. I completely disgusted, persisted saying horrid silly things. I came out before finish, went to Station. H coming on whip, it came in about 11pm. George Johnson on Station, silly again, completely insulting, talked about having love for him, Oh! & his wife at home shame, relief when H came. Going home I told H, he very vexed says he'll speak to Johnson, H been worrying little, but had good time at Preston, bought me pile of chockalate "the darling", - happy - H left me out gate 12.15, shocking. Till tomorrow love.

November 4th

Took S in trap meet 10.23. Lovely ride down, goodbye to darling Sally. Sheep-dipping home, sloppy....

November 5th

Bonfire day. Busy all day, went meet H 7.30 after setting off crackers, met H at gate. H being off since 1pm, & oh! glorious, he's gone to his old work again, no more night work & worry. Had lovely walk round Snape Lane, saw fire-works at Borwick & Leighton, home 10pm. H dearer every time he comes.

November 9th

Good choir, new parson, stayed Holy Communion... H came to tea, walked Church - good choir - H lot of horrid things to say coming home, but came in to supper. Out at 10pm after peicing up again.

November 13th

12am off Oxenholme on bike, at C'barrow had horrible collision with Jim Clarkson, ran into one another, hurt my side. His bike terribly damaged, mine not much worse. I very upset, poor kitten I was taking to Helmside went flying, however, I biked so far then walked the rest to Burton Station. A train going at 1.45. Went to signal-box, T.Abotsen there, stayed with him hour, then off. Saw H at Oxo:, cycled to No 24...Mrs N & I drowned a cat, such a time, it got out, H & Percy "ragtime" when they knew, at last it died. Had few games at dominoes...lovely ride home, 9.20 home, H stayed till 10pm, what an enjoyable day.

NOTES

- 1) Helen features in the *Lancaster Guardian* account of the harvest festival "Miss Escolme presided at the organ" (Oct.13th, 1913)
- 2) Morecambe Music Festival. A full column about the programme for the 1914 Festival appeared in the *Morecambe Visitor*, on November 22nd.
- 3) In a railway disaster at Aisgill, in September, two trains entered the same section of line and collided. 9 people were killed. The driver was charged with manslaughter, but the N.U.R. came to his support, blaming the railway company for its poor equipment. The driver Samuel Caudle went free. (*Lancaster Guardian* 4.10.13)
- 4) The Volturmo went on fire in a gale. Lifeboats could not be launched till an "oil tank steamer" pumped oil on the rough seas. 130 lives were lost. (*Lancaster Guardian*, 18.10.13).

- 5) In an accident at the Senghennyd Mine in S.Wales 400 lives were lost, 368 bodies being entombed in the mine. (*Lancaster Guardian*, 13.10.13)
- 6) Particular disaster not identified. There had been airships of the "zeppelin" type since 1900.
- 7) Tetley's. Perhaps the Crescent Café, 21 Crescent Road, kept by J.Tetley (*Bulmer's Directory*)
- 8) Does any reader know what "PCC gazing" is?

NOTES AND QUERIES

Sugar Elly Water

In his article on "The Use of Liquorice" in *The Mourholme Magazine*, 1994.1 Neil Stobbs asked if anyone could remember a rhyme about liquorice - "something to do with a "pin". Dr Margaret Bainbridge, a member of the Society, has supplied the answer. She writes,

"My mother, born in East Lothian in 1896, used to say a rhyme, learnt as a child, when pins had fallen during dressmaking and had to be picked up:

*Sugar elly water, black as the lum,
Gather up peens an' you'll get some.*

"Sugar elly water" being made of liquorice shaken up in a bottle of water....My playmates and I used to make and drink the concoction in Barrow-in-Furness in the late 1920s, but I now have no recollection of our uttering any rhyme to accompany the operation."

Dr Bainbridge also mentions that Iona and Peter Opie quote the rhyme in their *The Lore and Language of School Children*, using the form sugarolly instead of sugar elly. The Opies describe sugarolly water as exclusive to Scottish and North Country children, but note the same drink under the names "spa water" and "popololly" in the West Riding.

NOTES AND QUERIES (continued)

Oral History

Following the meeting on Oral History on October 20th a small group has been formed of members prepared to carry the idea of a local Oral History Group a little further. A preliminary meeting of the group had been fixed. It will be just an informal get-together in a member's house. We have been warned that the very first thing to do, before attempting interviews, is to become skilled with the tape recorder, so the group are going to practice interviewing each other! If you missed the meeting on October 20th, but would still like to join the group, it's not too late. Just get in touch with chairman or secretary.



ENTRANCE TO DONALD MILL CAVE OCTOBER 1994.