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The Mourholme Magazine of Local History

*Mourholme Local History Society (Charity Reg. No. 512765)
covers the Old Parish of Warton with Lindeth containing the
Townships of Warton, Silverdale, Lindeth, Borwick,
Priest Hutton, Carnforth and the Yealands*

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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 £5.00 (£9.00 family or school membership), includes evening lectures, field trips, copies of 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 editor, Mrs R. Greaves, Manor House Farm, Yealand Conyers, Carnforth, LA5 9BJ. Tel. 01524-732991.

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YEALAND TRADESMEN'S VANS

Cressida Miles

Weeks at Green Garth during my frequent holidays there in the fifties and early sixties were enlivened by the visits to Yealand of the mobile shops.

Mondays and Thursdays, as far as I remember, were Mr Brown's days. Mr Brown was the baker's van man, and I believe he came from Hartley's grocery store in Carnforth. He was a wonderful person, all brown and twinkly. He wore a brown cotton coat, and drove a small snub-nosed grey van. The van was set up with wide wooden drawers in the back, which slid out to reveal all kinds of loaves of bread, and buns, cakes and Shrewsbury biscuits, and also a small selection of sweets: mint imperials, jelly babies, licorice allsorts and fruit pastilles. A warm smell of baking wafted out into the road from the open van doors, and around Easter there would be the wonderful spicy scent of the large and particularly delicious Hot Cross Buns, which I have never since been able to match. Mr Brown was full of interesting conversation and stories. One particular story of his, which has always stuck in my mind, concerned a harvest worker who was extolling the virtues of a proper breakfast on which to go to work. The punch line of this story was: "Bacon and eggs, look out for your legs!" Mr Brown told this story with gusto, and appropriate scything action. He often came in to have a cup of tea when the sales were completed. He was a friend to us and, I imagine, to every household he visited.

Mr Postlethwaite's van came on alternate Mondays. Mr Postlethwaite dealt in hardware which, in those days, seemed to cover anything and everything from paraffin and bleach to teapots, and from cakes of green Fairy soap to bath plugs and clothes pegs. His van was like an Aladdin's cave and had a strange distinctive smell of polish, new cloths and

soap powder. Everyone came out of the house to watch Mr Postlethwaite slide up the slatted side and display the crowded shelves. We bought stocks of soap and cleaners, dusters and the "pink" paraffin which came out of a large container at the back of the van. All the purchases were conveyed into the kitchen and placed on the large kitchen table from which I would "keep shop" and "sell" them again to the patient adults, before they were allowed to put them away. Mr Postlethwaite too, and his helper, often stayed for a cup of tea. I wonder how many cups of tea those mobile shopkeepers drank during their travels around the villages!

Less permanent visitors were a series of fishmongers' vans, which would come and sell a small selection of "wet" fish on the doorsteps. There was often not a great deal of choice available: plaice or cod, with the occasional piece of halibut seemed to be about the limit. The smell of these vans was predictably strong and attractive to cats who lingered longingly under any fishy drips falling from the weighing scales at the back.

I remember a vegetable van being around the village too, but no-one at Green Garth ever bought from it, there being so much produce from the garden already. Other kinds of provisions could be ordered by phone and were delivered by van; the butcher brought an order once a week. He came in by the back gate, and through the garden, where he would leave bones for the delighted dogs to bury. In the later sixties the Health Food Store in Silverdale would also deliver an order if required, and I expect other shops did as well. I am sure that other people must have memories, different from mine, of these vans. They were certainly a feature of village life in my childhood, and I thought them very special. The only delivery we had in London was the milk, originally by horse and cart and later by milk van, so a shop in a van, as far as I was concerned, had a particular magic appeal.

It was delightful to receive these memories of a holiday visitor from town to the home of her grandmother in Yealand Conyers some quarter of a century ago. The writer mentions that she thinks other people may have other memories to record. Yes indeed. Have other readers memories of earlier times? Or indeed have children and younger people things to say about the villages today? Not only visiting vans - and they still do visit - but anything that seems of special interest. In another quarter of a century such memories will be valued history.

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HONISTER PASS; 1907.

"A.R."

In the last issue of the magazine (1997.2) we printed three extracts from a typescript diary, kept by an unknown "A.R.", of his holiday in this area in 1907. In the last extract A.R. and his party were left recovering from a very wet trip in an open carriage from Ambleside, through Grasmere, to Keswick on August 20th. Their landlady in Keswick saw to it that they had a bright fire, a good dinner and a change of clothes before they retired to bed at ten o'clock. The next day began equally rainy.

Wednesday, August 21st, 1907

A very wet morning caused us to hesitate whether we should turn out or not. The charabancs were all driving round in that alluring fashion to which we were so accustomed, booking seats for "anywhere", but for Honister Pass in particular. For some little time we considered matters and decided to have none of them. After a further while we put on our so-called waterproofs and went out for a stroll

in the town to see how matters stood... Although it did not really cease to fall, the rain seemed to be more kindly disposed. We decided to risk it.

But the coaches had all (or as many as could get a complement of passengers) set off at ten o'clock; now it was half-past. So we tried one or two hotels for a suitable brougham for the day, but the terms were prohibitive. However, we found our old friend at the Queen's had some horses apparently doing nothing, and we made suitable terms with him. By eleven o'clock we were seated inside a closed landau and prepared to face the elements to Honister and Buttermere.

...When we got to Seatoller we found that a new road had been completed up the Pass, for the use of the slate company's carts. It was much easier than the old road, the ascent being rendered much less difficult by winding away in gentle slopes. On payment of a Sixpenny Fee public conveyances are allowed the use of this road. We tried it, but although we found it more convenient, it was certainly much less interesting than the old one... We arrived at the top of the Pass all right, the pedestrians being much less fatigued than on the former ascent.

Nearing Buttermere we met an old man, apparently of the unemployed class, and, considering the arduous walk in front of him, we encouraged him in a manner he quite appreciated.

Leaving Buttermere on our return journey we slowly climbed the long road leading through the Newland Valley. Although we would now and then have a ride, for the greater part of the way there was nothing for it but walking; even I was obliged here and there to join the pedestrians. It was amusing to see the manner of the horses when called on to rest a little, they did the "easing back" into

the little ruts just as if they had the thing off by heart.

All the same, one cannot help feeling "done" when one takes into account the long distances the tourist has to foot it, notwithstanding it is given out in the railway and other Notices that the Coaches will convey passengers to so and so. This is not as it should be. A short walk no-one would probably object to, but when it means "miles" of exertion, it is no joke. The Companies ought to employ such a number of horses as would be able to carry or pull the passengers up these hills, except in extra-steep places, or to adjust the load to the horses employed. The remedy is with the tourists themselves.

By the time we arrived at Keswick the Pencil Works were closed, so we did not visit them this time. After dinner we spent an hour or two looking round the shops in Keswick, buying postcards at Pettitts. In Pettitts we came across two "pure Northumbrians" who entered into conversation with us. To Mr Butcher the northern burr was highly amusing; but the couple, who were having a short holiday, evidently enjoyed themselves.

Having had a long day we were ready for a good night's rest.

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HELEN ESCOLME'S DIARY,
YEALAND CONYERS, 1914

Robin Greaves

Dr Elizabeth Roberts' recent talk to the Mourholme Society on *Courtship in the Twentieth Century* covered courtship in the urban areas of Barrow, Preston and Lancaster in the first half of the twentieth century. Courtship in this period in a rural area has already been reflected in the pages of

this magazine in the extracts printed from time to time over the past few years. It seems appropriate to add a final contribution from that source.

Readers of Helen Escolme's diary will have noticed a clear difference between the ways described by Helen and the rules imposed on young people in urban areas where, from Dr Robert's records, it seems that opportunities for young couples to meet, especially by themselves, were much hampered by very strict control by parents. For the three years described in her diary Helen and Herbert were free to go for walks and cycle rides whenever they chose. Not that Helen's parents were careless of her. There were times when Helen got into trouble for returning home "late", although in fact she was back by ten, but on the occasion of the Natland Railway Supper she and Herbert cycled back and got home at 2.30 a.m. (Herbert lived at Oxenholme and worked on the railway, coming to Yealand by train, often bringing his bike. He had relations in Cinderbarrow.) It seems probable that Helen's parents wished to know what time she meant to return and were only angry if she did not keep her promise.

Helen was the eldest of three children. With her sister Alice and her brother Reuben they lived at Holmere (now Dykes) Farm. Helen was a lively girl; she worked hard on the farm and entered fully into the social life of the village. She was an able musician, she was organist at Borwick church, she sang in the local choir and performed at social occasions.

Helen and Herbert had quite a tempestuous relationship. He seems to have been a jealous man. Helen sometimes describes him as "horrid" and said he made "cutting remarks" and that she is quite "cut up". Sometimes he was "my own dear laddie" or "a darling today". The extracts finish when she and Herbert at last become officially engaged.

As usual Helen wrote in a hurry and punctuation and spelling were consequently sometimes erratic. They have been left unaltered.

January 5th. Aunt Susannah's at thrasher. Jolly day, left after tea get ready party at Dykes. Dressed A's and Mother's hair, put swank gown on. Lovely supper, then whist drive, 36 games and I won 1st again (a chicken) what luck. After drive had dancing till 3.30 then home - tired - but had a lovely time...lovely dances with Harold. I played for some.

January 6th. half asleep, routing up folks for our party today. 7.30 Herbert came, went walk, then -- -- H. left 10.15, had few nasty words tonight. H in horrid mood just because I told him about party at Dykes, & Soph Becket talking of Willie Perkins.

January 7th. I was to sing at Band-of-Hope Warton, but got wretched cold, lucky got word that it's put off. H was to meet me at 8.15...at 9pm he arrived, had had accident at Crooklands, tire burst & he walked...

January 8th. Busy preparing for our party. I down after dinner, done up completely. Mrs Fallowfield came early to help. 7.30 about 25 guests arrived & had supper. H wouldn't come - shy. Lots of folk asked for him, do wish he'd come. We had Whist Drive 36 games. I felt better after midnight...Had dancing after. Refreshments and a thoroughly good time till 3.30 when guest departed & we adjourned to hammock* - tired, & Mother not well.
(* the "hammock" is referred to again, but remains unexplained. Perhaps just a joke word for bed.

January 9th. Not so very bad this morning, had good rest afternoon, did feeding - cold little better - of course because I'm off to Oxo [Oxenholme] tonight, went on train from Burton, mistook time & had to

wait an hour - silly - I arrived safe however - with Sally Clegg. H met me in Subway. We walked to No.24 [Herbert's mothers house] then had cup of tea, lads got changed & we off to Natland Railway supper.

Met all sorts and sizes here, not many took my fancy, enjoyed concert immense, & supper not bad, - 12.30 left, didn't stop for dance. Bessie Raker a queer sort. They all got their heads together to stare, & chaps did lot of grinning, - poor beggars - H and I walked to Oxo. All gone bed No.24 got our bikes & then for home - dirty ride, stayed out till 2.30 am. one last short night for a week - fight to keep up. H slept at house went to bed 3.0 am. had good talk in house, didn't get up on January 10th till 10. am. H up first, feel bad today. Just lost. Alice and Edith went Gibson House for tea & H and I went walk round Snape Lane then to C'barrow for luggage. Other lads gone Preston earlier in day see football match, back for tea, another good talk with H while out. Gave all oppinions of last night. When we got home Mother had fainted so I had tea to make. H going by 5.13 to London. I set him onto green lane & left him. Oh what misery for us both, H wishes he wasn't going Oh so do I, good-bye laddie dear for a week - went back home did all work, then sat down for long long night. Bed 9.30. Why do we part?

January 11th. Mother in bed, I cycled to Church. Feel done up today, went get some stout from New Inn after dinner...A[lice] made dinner, then sat down to write thro diary & letters till feeding time - made tea, cleared up; then biked to Church - what a long day - A[lice] & E[dith] at Church, drawled out Service, then biked home, lovely night, best this winter, home by 8.pm

January 12th. Mother in bed still, bad today, Sent

for Dr after tea did churning today, but long long day. Dr. came pronounced Influenza.

January 13th. Dad and Mother both in bed today - did washing - tired night, got letter from H.

January 14th. D[ad] & M[other] in bed still got up after dinner - Mending - busy all day. Baking tomorrow. I got hair dressed at Carnforth & took H's shoes to mend Co-op.

January 15th baking today. Mother got up morning. Dad ill in bed. Baking went off fine, good stuff...

January 16th. John Smith, New Inn died today, also Old Moss, Borwick. Busy all day. Dad in bed Mother up, both getting better in all, long night.

January 17th. Busy all day both invalids up. Dad out in the afternoon. The last long long night without my darling boy. What a week.

January 18th. ...got letter from H...5.30 walked church with Alice and Edith, good choir, short practice for funeral, then out. Herbert met me at church, what a gloriously happy time. He gave me 6 of latest pieces, a silver chain & locket, & gold brooch when we got home, & had a beautiful talk, not had anything since 8 am, been travelling since 10 am. Went out 9.30 & stayed till 10.15, our folks in bed when I went in, so a blacking for morning I expect don't care, been too happy, almost made up for last Sat's parting, & all week too anyhow.

January 20th. 1.30 at Borwick, Mr Moss's funeral, had lovely service in church, good choir. Church full. I cycled home...Thrasher came whilst away. Mother been at John Smith's funeral, been lot there - Granny at home. 7.45 H came, met at Gate, had fire in S[itting] R[oom] so both came in, had lovely night, played & sang, then good talk till 10 pm,

then H went home after having little supper. Been good tonight, H got bad cold...

January 21st. Thrashing all day, very busy...7 p.m. biked to Warton to sing at Band-of-Hope, ...sang "Thin Red Line" & "The Master Stood in his Garden" (sacred). Splendid audience. Accompaniest ill so I'd to play for myself & other soloists too. All went off well, out 8.15. Got invites to social on Friday, (practice at Borwick)...biked home, up Woods with girl from Baileys, talking about girl being found in Canal at Bolton-le-Sands - mysterious.

January 22nd. Busy all day. H came 7.30. Mother staying up with Granny at Old Hall tonight (she taken ill). H & I walked on then stayed in house till 10 pm. I out to see him off. H a darling.

January 24th. busy day. Mother off Old Hall 12 pm. Granny not so well, 4.30 H came had tea (raining) stayed in house till Alice returned from taking milk, then we walked up to Old Hall. H went to Shap I to see Granny. She very ill. Mother staying up tonight... H with me at home again 10 pm. sat together till 10.30. Happiness complete with my laddie. H staying the night.

January 25th, Church morning Laddie got up 9.30, had breakfast & set me to Church then went C'Barrow "Bother them". I played Dead March (In Saul)...went to see Granny before tea - she worse, rambling fearfully...Mother home left Granny very ill, went see H off 10 pm. prompt (for once) been perfect treat tonight, talking about next year and happiness.

January 26th. Granny about same...busy churning and washing. Drowned 6 Bell's pupps...

(for the rest of January and the beginning of February Helen's Granny continued ill. Her mother spent much time at Old Hall. Herbert continued to visit.)

February 5th. Baking. H going to Prochalhill [Parochial?] tea with Mrs N [his mother] I went to Mrs Swannocks from 7.30 till 10.15. Took crocheting & had lovely time. She awfully nice, had supper then biked home to get a scolding (for late hours) from Mother.

February 7th. Mother at O[ld].H[all]. Granny not so well.

February 13th. been weighed just 9 stone. Mrs Wilkinson died. Mother at O.H. Granny weaker, much...

February 15th... Granny still worse...very windy & stormy, awful biking...Another Death, a young fellow Moss by name. Also Mrs Brigg's cook died (away). Awful sad place...Happy time with laddie till 10 p.m. when he left. H not been well today. I got headache.

February 17th. I cycled Carnforth did shopping...also got 3 teeth out (Widdups) very nice fellow teeth no pain...didn't tell home folk about teeth till later...too wet for H to come tonight.

February 19th. ill and very tired, had room to do morning then a goose to dress. Killed it 11.30 & I commenced to get all feathers except inside of one wing done then had to lie down. Reuben took my temperature. Alice went for Mother, the thermom-eter gave over 101, so I stayed on sofa. Got up when Mother came and fainted. I went to bed - in front room - sent for Doctor on February 20th. temperature over 104. He pronounced influenza. In bed very ill all that day...

February 21st. At 2 a.m. Granny died...I in bed all day, little better. Doctor came morning - nice fellow from Silverdale, Dr Barnes - Dr Falkner away on holiday. H coming at 5.30 been playing

football at Millnthorpe - he had come & seen blinds down, so gone to C'barrow for tea (silly) landed on hear again 7.30. When Mother happened to see him outside she brought him upstairs & he stayed till 9.30 when Dad* wanted to come to bed. *(it seems the "front room" where Helen had been put when she became ill was her parents bedroom, but it is never made clear.)*

February 22nd. ...had quiet day. H came 4 p.m. for tea then stayed with me till 9.15. Dad as usual wanting to come to hammock so H left after having good talk. He had supper and went. Wet night.

February 24th. ...I wrote 3 letters & did reading. Wonderful today. 8 pm who should turn up but Herbert. Quite a surprise, he been down since 7.15 & too shy to knock. Had waited about for Alice. However I suppose he wasn't going to see me so he summoned up courage to knock. Mother went down and he came upstairs till 9.30 when Dad came to bed. H brought 6 rings down to choose from tonight - chosen a beauty - very happy.

February 27th. up morning. Walked to post. Legs aching fearfully. After dinner went C'barrow, sat for hour feel rather shaky. Home tea. 7.30 H came sat with me till 10 pm.

February 28th. I'm 20 today. Got good few letters & cards. Sally sent lovely silk handkerchief, Bertie a neck-band. Aunty - flower broach, mother 2s with which I got large black feather, & last but best of all a ring from Herbert.

Helen and Herbert did not marry for another three years, and two years later Helen died soon after the birth of her daughter. Although the last entry in the diary is followed by 'to be continued' there is no evidence that this happened.

FROM MIDDEN TO SEPTIC TANK

Joan Clarke

*For offens we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever at fall;
An I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but Miss Annie she said it wur drains.
Tennyson, *The Village Wife**

The public health enthusiasts of the nineteenth century, like Miss Annie, were dedicated believers in drains as a safeguard against infection and death. Indeed with the population increasing so rapidly it was certainly time to find some other way of removing human excreta other than piling it on middens. In the towns the answer was, eventually, water-closets and water-borne disposal of the contents through drains and sewers, though even in towns the process was not complete even at the time of the first world war. Round here Lancaster did quite well. In 1920 the Medical Officer of Health for Lancashire was able to report that over 99% of domestic sanitary installations in the Borough were water-closets connected to main sewers. In a smaller town like Carnforth the percentage of water-closets was 69.5. But what about the countryside?

In Lancaster Rural District, at the same date, the water-closets formed only 40 per cent of all installations. However there is no need to read official reports to know that, in rural districts, water-closets were slow to replace older systems. There are plenty of people still alive who will remember the "ash-pits" and the carts that came to empty them. Even these ash-pits were an improvement on the arrangements of former centuries. We know from the Warton Manor Court Book that in 1699 Elizabeth Burrow had a dung hill "...at the uper end of the weend [Crag Road]". It stood before her barn and was "...3 yards in Breadth and 4 in Length". Another 'dunghillstead' is described as "at

the street side". It had been there for twenty-five years. There can be no doubt that these, very public, middens received not only the sweepings of the farmyard, but also the contents of chamber pots, close-stools and privies. Close-stools (what we would now call commodes) could be used in the warmth of the house, but someone had to empty them. A privy or more properly a privy closet was sited, usually at a chilly distance from the house, over its own midden. The midden would only have to be cleared when the owner needed the dung for his land, or it was becoming inconveniently full.

It was not a practical proposition to replace these primitive arrangements with water-closets and sewers throughout a rural district. The population was thin on the ground and no local authority could think of building such miles of sewer for so few people. Besides sewers needed piped water to flush them and that was a scarce commodity. Carnforth, which by 1871 had grown to a small town of 1,061 inhabitants, was caught out when water-closets became the fashion before the opening of its reservoir at Pedder Potts in 1879. A member of the Rural Sanitary Authority visited the town in 1876 and commented bluntly "...there was no water to flush sewers, and there was a stench from outfalls". Other villages were slower to obtain piped water, Silverdale not until 1938.

In 1870 Dr Radcliffe of the Local Government Board made the sensible suggestion that, in small and scattered communities, it would be better to improve privies rather than turn to "novel arrangements". He suggested two improvements. Firstly provision could be made to add earth or sand to the contents of the privy "to render them more solid" and less offensive to clear than the usual putrid, semi-liquid mass they contained. This type of closet was what came to be called an ash-pit. A really successful ash-pit required a supply of well-sifted ash or earth if the contents were to be kept sweet.

The reports of Sanitary Inspectors make clear that these were not always forthcoming. As late as 1912 three houses in Warton were described as having "Privies in a tumbledown state. Ash Pits only holes sunk alongside the privy and roughly walled round. One uncovered and containing water from the roof of closet...this offensive liquid mingling with the privy contents."

The second method suggested was to replace the midden by a closed, impervious container to form a "pail-closet". Pail-closets were increasingly used in Lancaster Rural District. They formed 15.8 per cent of all installations in 1920 but 31.5 per cent by 1938. Whether they were much used in the villages of the Mourholme area is not known. Wry memories of the ash-pits have been recorded, but not of pail-closets. Perhaps someone can enlighten us.

Of course both systems required a well-organised system of emptying and disposing of the contents. Pails in particular were usually designed only to hold a week's "supply". Was a satisfactory frequency of clearing privies achieved in Lancaster Rural District? The answer seems to be no, not reliably until well on into the twentieth century. The problem was confounded by the fact that even in the villages water-closets were being installed and, in the absence of main sewers, these could only drain into cess-pools. These too needed emptying.

In 1902 the District Medical Officer, in despair of ever getting his Authority to move in improving conditions, called on the Local Government Board to help and an enquiry was set up under a certain Dr Mivart from London. Warton, he found, had had sewers since 1875, but the system consisted of two separate sections of pipe; the main one received drainage from water closets and led to a cesspool on 'the Weir', a green in the centre of the village where the school children played and where there was a watering place for cattle. It was no longer a

main supply for people, but some still preferred it as drinking water because they felt it tasted better than piped water. Dr Mivart made an acid comment that it was perhaps fortunate that "at Warton...the Limestone comes to the surface...cesspools receiving liquid drainage are said never to require emptying". One is glad to report that he was equally scathing about the whole of the rest of the Rural District.

The emptying of cesspools and privies continued a problem. In 1903 the District Medical Officer of Health said in his annual report that where the work was contracted out it might be done four times a year, though he himself thought it ought to be done every two months. Scavenging in Millhead was conspicuously good. The Carnforth Iron Works owned many of the cottages and arranged to have all house refuse and the contents of ash pits removed once a month. "The clearing was carried out between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m." according to a Sanitary Inspector's report. In 1909 the Medical Officer found that contractors in all the bigger villages were coming up to six times a year. In Silverdale the contractors were under contract to empty cess-pools once a month. They had also been supplied by the Council with an "apparatus" to do so. Scavenging, the Medical Officer of Health thought, was less satisfactory in smaller villages where it was left to the occupiers of houses. "I would...call... attention to the indefinite manner of house refuse removal at Lindeth. Not carried out under contract...No particular time specified for removal."

Inhabitants of Lindeth may take comfort from the description in 1905 of Bolton-le-Sands where things were even more unsatisfactory. The Medical Officer described ash-pits and privies there; they were uncovered so that the rain soaked in, making the contents liquid and hard to remove. They were emptied by occupiers with gardens only when it suited their crops. Those without gardens had to make arrangements with their neighbours to clear

the ashpits for a small recompense or for the value of the manure. Often such neighbours found it not worth while to empty them at all. On inspection ashpits and privies were "full to overflowing".

Then there was the question of where the cleansings from the ashpits were to be dumped. In October 1900 the Inspector of Nuisances found that the cesspool on the Weir at Warton had not been emptied since March. Also there had been complaints about the contents simply being left to dry on the Weir. The Inspector thought that "Arrangements will have to be made to have it carted right on to the land". In 1915 the parish council suggested that some two acres of the sands, reserved for the residents of Warton, should be used for tipping. Nothing happened immediately. In April 1916 the Sanitary Inspector was successful in "procuring the use of other dykes for this purpose...in the field at the back of Senset Well lane". Senset Well was, at least, further from the centre of Warton than the Weir. The offer was taken up since the owner of the field was prepared to allow the use of it free of rent.

Slowly refuse collection improved. By 1954 the County Medical Officer of Health reported that in the whole Rural District there was a fortnightly collection of "house refuse, together with the contents of privies and pails". Refuse was disposed of by controlled tipping. For Warton this took place at Cotestones.

Eventually water-carriage of sewage took over even in rural districts and water-closets slowly replaced ashpits and pails. In 1925 there was an enquiry into cases of typhoid alleged to have been caused by shell-fish from Morecambe Bay. The Sanitary Inspector, Mr Littlefair, told the enquiry that out of 168 houses in Warton 113 had water-closets, that is 67 percent, considerably more than the average of 40 per cent for Lancaster Rural District as a whole. Millhead, with a population about

equal to Warton's, had only 40 water-closets or some 24 per cent. Mr Littlefair told the enquiry that all the sewage, throughout the area around Carnforth, was discharged untreated.

By 1954 things were better. The Medical Officer of Health's report for that year said that the Millhead sewer was now connected to the main trunk sewer of Carnforth Urban District and taken for partial treatment at their Hagg Road works. Warton sewage was still discharged untreated, into the River Keer. (When high tide co-incided with storms, the sewage could be swept the wrong way back up towards the Weir as people still remember) However the Medical Officer was able to report that a tidal valve had recently been installed to prevent this back-flooding.

To-day water-closets are almost universal, even in the most rural parts. Efficient septic tanks, requiring little maintenance, have replaced the old cesspools and made it possible to install water-closets even miles from the nearest main sewer.

There is no doubt that a water closet is pleasant and convenient compared with a privy, but did privy middens and their successors, ash-pits and pail closets, have a deleterious effect on health? Successive Medical Officers inveighed against the awfulness of rural sanitation, nevertheless rural districts remained obstinately more healthy than urban districts. Adults and infants alike were more likely to die in the towns. Even deaths from diarrhoeal diseases, which one might suppose would correlate with poor sanitation, were far higher in the towns. It seemed the benefits of sewers did not outweigh the other evils of town dwelling.