

THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF
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The Mourholme Magazine of Local History



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

SAVAGE ASSAULT AT CARNFORTH

Clive Holden

This was the headline of an article in the Lancaster Guardian of 18th May 1867, which wasted no time in telling its readers that the incident might have 'a fatal termination'. It told how one railwayman with an iron lever had 'thus murderously armed' attacked another, whose 'life is in danger'.

The 13th May 1867 was not a lucky day for either James Burns or William Armstrong. At about 7.30 p.m. Armstrong, a twenty year old LNWR breaksman, arrived at Carnforth with a luggage train from Tebay which was due to return the same night with some empty coke wagons, and some carriages which were in No. 9 siding. There was shunting to be done, and it was this that was the cause of the subsequent trouble.

Richard Cock was the yardsman in charge of the goods yard, and he directed James Burns a pointsman, to turn Armstrong's train into No. 9 siding, but when Armstrong saw what was happening he became enraged, and demanded that Burns should have them shunted into No. 10 siding. Burns considered himself responsible to Cock rather than to Armstrong, and ignored the demands of the latter, who became even more angry, and a heated argument ensued. It might have come to no more than words had not Burns remarked that Armstrong would look better without his moustache, at which point Armstrong lost control of himself and the two came to blows, and then wrestled one another to the ground. Armstrong briefly held the advantage but Burns soon gained the upper hand and thumped Armstrong's head several times against the ground. Armstrong begged to be

allowed to get up so Burns, assuming that his opponent had yielded, rose and moved a few yards away with one hand in his pocket. Armstrong, however, was far from finished, for he walked over to an iron points lever, unfastened it, swung it over his shoulder, walked back towards the unsuspecting Burns and whacked him across the forehead with it. Fortunately for Burns he was wearing a cloth cap with a leather peak which absorbed much of the force, but the bar made a hole in the leather peak and Burns collapsed to the ground bleeding and unconscious.

Only after Burns had lost his senses did Armstrong partly come to his, but he was in a quandary as to what to do next. If he were to seek medical assistance the circumstances of the 'accident' would come to light, and he would be instantly dismissed from the service. Burns seemed to be in a bad way, lying bleeding and unconscious until Cock and fireman William Lindsay (whose evidence was later to help Armstrong) carried him to the pointsman's cabin, where he was left until the train was ready to make its return journey, when he was taken in the van with Armstrong, and put off at Holme near to his lodging.

When Burns arrived home his landlady was not unnaturally appalled at his condition and sent for a doctor, but it was two days before the doctor could attend, and not long after that the police learned of the incident and matters took a more serious turn.

Armstrong was arrested on Friday 17th May. At his first court appearance he was opposed by Police Superintendent Jervis, who stated that the matter had first been reported to the railway officials, who had discharged Armstrong, and only later by chance

had information reached the police. He (Jervis) had sent one of his sergeants to see Burns, who was being attended by Dr. Royle who considered it unsafe to remove Burns's bandages. Jervis was doubtful whether Burns would recover, and urged the magistrates not to allow bail as the offence had been committed with a certain amount of deliberation and was likely to terminate fatally.

At the next court appearance Dr. Royle when questioned, stated that on his examination of Burns two days after the incident, removal of the bandages showed only slight injury considering the weapon used. Although Burns was very weak through loss of blood, he (Royle) had never considered it to be a serious accident. Nevertheless Jervis, again in attendance, was determined that Armstrong should face the full rigour of the law, and in spite of the efforts of Armstrong's solicitor to have the case dealt with summarily by the magistrates, Jervis's influence prevailed and the case went to the sessions, with Armstrong being allowed bail.

Some weeks later before a jury Burns, by now recovered after being confined to bed for five days and off work for three weeks, declared that he did not wish to prosecute, but things had gone too far and the trial went ahead on a charge of unlawful wounding. Mr. Knowles, representing Armstrong made great play of the fact that Armstrong had been handcuffed and marched through Skerton 'like a felon' although he had offered not the slightest resistance, but it was the evidence of William Lindsay, the fireman, which probably swayed the jury. He maintained that in addition to making a derogatory remark about Armstrong's moustache, Burns had tweaked Armstrong's nose, removing the skin, and this had led to the fight. Burns had then 'brayed'

Armstrong's head against the rail, and when Armstrong was rising having submitted Burns had kicked him. He also stated that Burns had walked unaided to the engine to have his wound attended to and then to the pointsman's cabin, and that when he had been taken to the metal bridge north of Burton and Holme station, he had alighted and walked unaided to his lodging.

The Chairman charged the jury that there could be no doubt about the verdict, and the jury duly declared Armstrong guilty, but with a recommendation to leniency in view of the provocation he had suffered. The Chairman must have felt some sympathy, as he decided that in the circumstances a fortnight's imprisonment would be sufficient punishment, which doubtless did not appease Superintendent Jervis, and would seem even in these enlightened days to have let Armstrong off remarkably lightly.

It would be interesting to know what became of the two protagonists. We know that Armstrong lost his job and went to prison, but no more than that. Burns must be assumed to have remained in railway employment after his three weeks off work, and probably looked at points levers with deep mistrust for ever after.

WARTON CHURCH RESTORATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

Arthur Penn

A great deal of what can be seen today of Warton Church goes back to the Middle Ages, but there must have been many restorations along the way. A very important one was carried out in the closing years of the 19th century, when we read that 'it was gradually falling into decay'. Earlier in the century there had been a scare about the safety of the south arcade, and under the guidance of Edward Paley, the well-known Lancaster architect, it had been rebuilt. But problems were many. Around 1800 the lead had been stripped from the roof to pay for repairs 'leaving the church in little better appearance than a barn, with rain falling on the heads of worshippers'. It had been customary for burials to be made in the floor of the church and, although this had ceased, there was a sanitary problem and the need for a concrete floor. It is not clear what the pews were like, except that they were large square ones with straight backs and included the large square pew formerly owned by Sir George Middleton of Leighton Hall.

A Manchester architect, Mr. W. Ball reported on the fabric in the late 1880s and painted a rather grim picture. The tower, he said, had been altered by the building up of several windows and of the arch into the church, and was in poor condition. He noted that changes had been made to the walls, and that on the north side of the nave 'concealed in the present roof are five clerestory windows of simple design and square-headed but much mutilated'. The roof was in a bad state with all timbers more or less decayed, and the south wall was crooked and as much as nine inches out of perpendicular in places. The north aisle windows

were decaying and needed replacement, the drainage was unsatisfactory and so on.

Under the leadership of the Rev. T.H. Pain an appeal was launched for £2000 and in a short time three quarters of this sum was raised. But it was realised that more was needed, including the replacement of the pews, the replacement of the pulpit dated 1712, and the removal of the unsightly gallery at the west end which contained the organ. In those days the Washington connection was already thought significant and the church was 'much visited in summer time by tourists and visitors' on this account. A year or two before 'a large piece of stucco fell from the outside wall, near where the west doorway must have been in past times and there was laid bare the arms of the Washingtons'. A great bazaar was held to raise money and the first day brought in £114.

It seems that the church must have been closed, pending repairs and in late 1889 a faculty was applied for to the Chancellor of the Manchester diocese. It was proposed to remove the table of the commandments, to remove the existing pulpit and replace it with a carved one, to take up the floor and relay it, to extend the chancel westward to its original boundary, to repew the church and to carry out other alterations.

A little bundle of press cuttings has been preserved recording in some detail what was done and a serious problem which nearly frustrated the whole project. One assumes that there must have been a lot of customary possession of pews, which was usual at that time and in many churches faculties issued by the diocesan consistory courts allotted pews to individuals and

sometimes to properties. It seems that this had not happened in the case of Warton. In the late nineteenth century there was a growing feeling that pews ought to be open to all instead of being treated as a principal source of revenue. It would seem that it was proposed that when the new seats were provided they should be open.

Chancellor Christie received the application for a faculty from the vicar and churchwardens, but he also received objections from two local landowners, Colonel Marton, of Capernwray Hall and Mr. R.T. Gillow of Leighton Hall. Mr. Gillow had succeeded to the estate in 1846 and would be about 83 at this time. Both objectors claimed to have 'prescriptive rights' in the church, which would be interfered with by the removal of their pews. The chancellor adjourned the court in January 1890 to see if an amicable arrangement could be made.

At the next meeting the objectors were represented by their solicitors, but W.T. Sharp, the solicitor for the vicar and wardens was ill. The chancellor proposed that a faculty could be granted providing that Colonel Marton and Mr. Gillow were allowed the same rights as they had before and that they should have certain pews allotted to them in lieu of those to be removed. This placed Mr. Pain in a difficult position. The two objectors were not the only people who would lose prescriptive rights to pews, and these others would not agree to just two pew holders being treated specially. He thought to agree to this solution would mean a loss of financial contributions to the restoration work. He and the wardens contested that the objectors had any special rights and thought that as the Gillow family had not used the pew, as they were Roman Catholics, for 67 years any prescriptive rights

would have been lost. Mr. Gillow's only exercise of ownership was that he had for forty years let the pew to Messrs. Sharp, presumably the family of the vicar's solicitor. This was held by the chancellor to be illegal both by ecclesiastical and common law. However the Chancellor quoted a case in which Lord Chief Justice Denham held that 'in the case of a Roman Catholic owner they were not to look for the same amount of user that they would in an ordinary case'.

There was a flurry of activity to try to get the objectors to withdraw, as the whole operation was being held up. Mr. John Bolden called on Mr. Gillow and Mr. Edward Barton on Colonel Marton. The latter agreed not to oppose a faculty as he did not want to obstruct the church's restoration, provided that his tenants were allocated accommodation. Mr. Bolden was less successful. Mr. Gillow did not show any evidence of title but simply made a bona fide claim. There was an exchange of letters in which Mr. Gillow claimed that the pew was an ancient appurtenance of his house and his only motive was a sense of duty in defending the rights of property of which he was tenant for life. According to Chancellor Christie the bona fide claim was enough to oust the jurisdiction of his court and bar the granting of a faculty. The question of rights could only be established in the Queen's Bench. Neither side was prepared for this and the suggestion was then made that counsel's opinion should be sought but Mr. Gillow would not agree to this.

In this impasse a public meeting of the parishioners was held on 23rd April in the grammar schoolroom to report. The Vicar and Mr. Barton described the negotiations and a resolution was passed unanimously instructing the committee to have the

church as it was put into a fit state for occupation so that it may again be used for divine service without further delay.

The reports do not tell us what happened next, but the work must have eventually been put in hand, because a column in the Westmorland Gazette for 6 May 1893 is among the cuttings reporting the re-opening of Warton Church. This tells how the interior work was financed by £1000 of subscriptions and Sales of Work. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners as the tithe owners of the parish undertook to reconstruct and furnish the chancel at their own cost. Mr. Dawson of Aldcliffe Hall promised a new pulpit. This was placed where the Leighton Hall pew had formerly been, but many years later was moved to its present position on the south side. Other offers were made of specific items. Messrs. Hatch and Son were the contractors undertaking to construct seats for 500 persons and to remove the gallery and the organ. The new pews were of plain oak and a carved reredos and communion table were provided. £60 was spent on improving the organ which was done by Mr. Wadsworth. The total work cost some £3000 and was completed by Christmas 1892. The Leighton coats of arms were placed in one of the new pews, but all seats were now free, it seems that no prescriptive rights were recognised.

On a Thursday in May 1893 a very large congregation and half a dozen clergy took part in the opening service at which Dr. Ware the Suffragan Bishop of Barrow-in-Furness, preached.

DR. J.W. JACKSON
Mrs. Muriel Wild

The reference to Dr. J.W. Jackson in Dr. Andrew White's article on the Silverdale Pottery (in the last Mourholme Magazine) sent my memory rolling back to the years 1932-35 when I was a student, reading Classics, at Manchester University. I became interested in "caving" both as a sporting activity and as an archaeological discipline concerned with the identification and dating of the prehistoric human and animal bones and artefacts found in caves.

Going further back I learned about Sir William Boyd-Dawkins who had published his famous book, "Cave Hunting", in 1874. At that time, Boyd-Dawkins was "Curator of the Museum and Lecturer in the Owens College, Manchester". (Owens College became The Victoria University of Manchester shortly after this date). Boyd-Dawkins did a lot of work in the Elwy Valley and Cefn area (which lie between the uplands of the Denbigh Moors and the North Wales coast). Before the advent of the motor car, the North Wales Limestone area was easily accessible by train from Manchester. Dr. J.W. Jackson was an active cave archaeologist by 1910-1912 - vide references in "The Prehistoric and Roman Remains of Flintshire", 1949, by Canon Ellis Davies. As a young man Dr. Jackson had come under the influence of Sir Boyd-Dawkins.

In the 1940s after my husband and I had come to live in North-East Wales, we joined the Dyserth and District Field Club (founded 1911) and found that this club had actively supported

Dr. Jackson in the excavation of the Gwaenysgor Cave at the foot of Gop Hill in 1930.

In 1953 "British Caving, An Introduction to Speleology" was published by members of the Cave Research Group. Dr. Jackson contributed a 76 page chapter on Archaeology and Palaeontology, and in this he describes three caves on Warton Crag - Dog Holes, Badger Hole and Fairy Hole. Excavations were "from 1909 onwards". Dog Holes produced evidence of Romano-British occupation. Deeper in the cave was a Neolithic or Early Bronze Age burial chamber with human remains. Lower still were yet earlier animal bones. Badger Hole produced no human remains, but there were signs of human occupation, including a knife handle and bones of wild and domestic animals. Fairy Hole had been occupied by humans, probably in the early period of Roman domination. An iron needle, some flint flakes, and an example of first-century Samian ware were found.

Dr. Andrew White says "Jackson was what we would call today a Palaeontologist rather than an Archaeologist". Jackson heads his chapter in British Caving 1953 "Archaeology and Palaeontology". Nellie Kirkham, whom we both knew well, in her chapter on "Caverns in Mines" uses the term "Palaeontological", so the term "Palaeontology" is certainly over 50 years old.

Sir William Boyd-Dawkins' book is dedicated to "The Baroness Burdett-Coutts, the founder of scholarship for the encouragement of geological science in the University of Oxford", and he adds that it is "a slight acknowledgement from her first scholar". My copy of Boyd-Dawkins' book was a gift by him to Leonard Tatham and following his signature is the date

27.V.1913. This proves that Boyd-Dawkins was still alive when Dr. Jackson was leading active digs in the first decade of the twentieth century.

WILLIAM ROLLINSON MA PhD FRGS 1937-2000
Win Hayhurst and Kate Hodgson

March was a sad month to realise our friend and enthusiastic lecturer was no longer with us and we are sure those at the Mourholme will miss his visits to our History Society.

At a 'Thanksgiving for Bill's life' held at the delightful Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin and St. Michael at Urswick his friends and associates spoke of the various aspects to his busy life and it certainly, I am sure, made all those there remember the happy days of yesteryear.

Win and I met at classes in Warton and these soon included lectures held by the Extra Mural Dept. of Liverpool University. After a year or so a new lecturer came to our area and, of course, it was Bill. We can't remember which course of lectures was first — perhaps the Lake District, Norway, Iceland, Orkney and Shetlands, Isle of Man but which ever it was one was inspired. When hearing about the Lake District you could not but go to the various places he spoke of.

He also took study tours to his speciality Scandanavia. Neither of us was able to go on these tours — perhaps some of you were able to enjoy them. However, we were pleased at a later time to let him know that his lectures had not fallen on stony ground and that we had been encouraged to visit between us Norway, the wonder of Iceland and the historic sites on Orkney and Shetland and all because of his encouragement.

After the lectures our small group from Warton would call at a cafe and partake of tea and toasted tea cakes — which tempted Bill to join us and we all enjoyed good conversation.

Bill felt he was running out of new lectures for us but we were all delighted when he offered a course on the discoveries of the old explorers. Later we suggested winter lectures on Warton and being a good friend by then that is what happened and our numbers grew as the lectures were held in Warton itself. He 'surrendered' after that as it was getting very historical: but if we wanted to delve deeper into Warton history he knew just the man — and so the following year we met Paul Booth. After several more years and a wealth of information on Warton the Mourholme Local History Society was formed.

In February 1999 Bill ran a course of six lectures on 'The Vikings' with a surprise visit from a 'fully equipped' Viking - complete with sword, shield and helmet (without the mythical horns!!) During the lectures various Viking artefacts were on display.

What more can we add except 'Thank you Bill' for your friendship and for the interesting talks with which you have inspired us over the years and also at the Society's meetings.

WHO WAS ROWLAND ATKINSON OF PRIEST HUTTON?

Paul F Barker

This question posed itself as the result of an unexpected discovery in a bundle of old title deeds in the Cumbria Record Office, Kendal (*ref. WDW 1426*). The bundle contains 37 documents, dated between 1598 and 1774, and the great majority relate to property in Farleton, Westmorland. Seven of them, however, are concerned with Priest Hutton in Lancashire, and the latest of these in date is the Will of Rowland Atkinson of Priest Hutton husbandman, made on the 19th February 1725/6. The Will is sealed with Rowland's mark, and witnessed by John Braithwaite [mark], Robert Gibson and Robert Walker.

Contents of the Will

The Will bequeathed to Rowland's younger son John £5, to be paid to him by his older brother Christopher when John reached the age of 21, out of Rowland Atkinson's house barn and garden in Priest Hutton. Christopher was to receive the remainder of the said house with its 'barn beasthouse and garden', and also the parcel of hempland called Under Seller estimated at one rood - the premises all lying within the liberties of Priest Hutton. The Will appointed three executors - the testator's brother Thomas Atkinson of Arkholme, and William Walling and John Gibson both of Priest Hutton; these three men were bequeathed all the testator's personal estate as trustees and guardians for the best advantage of the two said sons until they came of age.

Since the Will makes no mention of Rowland's wife, it could safely be assumed that he was a widower, and another of the documents gives a clue as to his wife's identity. It is in the form of

a Quitclaim, dated 23rd March 1718/19 and made by Thomas Turner of Priest Hutton husbandman to his son-in-law Rowland Atkinson of Priest Hutton For a consideration of £20. Thomas conveyed to Rowland "two oxen two Cowes two steares five heiffers one calfe one coult one maire four dunghills one Cupboard one Beeffe Tub one malte milne one Cheese press four Ruggs three pairs of sheetes five Cowerlets two pairs of Blankets four Brass Panns one Iron pott six pewter dishes six Chaires six quishons two fether Beds three Chaff Beds four pairs of Bedsteads and all my Corne graine of all sorts & all my Flay my hemp flax and Turfe & all my Beeffe butter and Cheese my mealle & malte And all and singular my Goods Chattells Wood vessells househould Goods pott vessells househould Stuffe Utensills of Househould stuffe and also all my Jewells peuter plaite Bills Bonds Ready moneys rights Credittes and all mine Iron geare Iron Toolles husbandery Geare & personal Estate whatsoever of what Kinde or nature soever and in whose custody or keeping soever the same or any parte or parcell Thereof now is and hereafter at any time shall be and Remaine (One suite of my Wearing apparrell only Excepted)". This is followed by the usual legal formulae, and the document concludes by stating that Thomas, immediately before the sealing of this deed, has formally put Rowland Atkinson in possession of all these items by delivering to him "one Black maire one Brass pann one sheafe of oates in the name of seizin..."

Warton Parish Registers

The registers (*Lancashire Parish Register Society 1935*) furnish more information. Margret, daughter of Thomas Turner of [Priest] Hutton, was baptized on 6th May 1688. There is no record of a marriage, but on 12th July 1712 we find the baptism of Christopher son of Rowland Atkinson & Margaret his wife of

[Priest] Hutton, followed on 17th June 1716 by that of John son of Rowland Atkinson of Priest Hutton. And on 23rd March 1718/19 Margret wife of Rowland Atkinson of Priest Hutton was buried. It will be noted that this is the very day on which Thomas Turner conveyed almost all his personal estate to his son-in-law. Perhaps Thomas was wearing his "one Suite of Wearing apparrell" when he too was buried on the 25th March, only two days after his daughter.

There is no record of the burial of Rowland Atkinson himself at Warton, but if his Will of 1725/6 was made not long before his death, his sons would have been well short of their majority. The context of the Priest Hutton deeds, however, tells us a little more of one of them. The remaining thirty documents in the bundle are concerned with property which came into the possession of one John Atkinson of Farleton, husbandman. John's daughter Isabel was baptized at Beetham in 1743, and when John made his first recorded purchase of freehold land in Farleton in 1746 and set up a datestone bearing his initials at the farm called Ellers, his own son John had already been baptized at Beetham over a year earlier.

So, who was Rowland Atkinson of Priest Hutton?

To an extent, the foregoing has given some answers. Rowland was brother of Thomas Atkinson of Arkholme, and son-in-law of Thomas Turner of Priest Hutton. He and his wife Margaret, née Turner, had two sons, of whom the younger, John, seems in his late twenties to have become customary tenant of the Ellers in Farleton, initially farming some 30 or 40 acres held mainly under the manor of Cattleside, but in due course buying the freehold and beginning a process of acquisition which saw John's grandson John, at his untimely death in 1838 at the age of 44, owning several farms in Farleton and district totalling some 300

statutory acres, and enough personal estate to enable his trustees to establish a fund of £5600 to maintain John's wife and six daughters without need to sell any of the real estate bequeathed in trust for his nine year old son John, on which the boy on reaching maturity was able to live the life of a leisured gentleman at Moss Side in Preston Patrick, with his own grandson John establishing himself as a veterinary surgeon with an address in London's Belgravia.

Questions remain about how the original John, younger son of a Priest Hutton husbandman of very modest means who left him a patrimony of a mere five pounds, was able to establish a 'dynasty' of John Atkinsons of Ellers who within a generation came to be regarded as members of the minor gentry of South Westmorland, but those questions are beyond the scope of the present paper. Rowland Atkinson himself, however, remains an enigma. How did he come to Priest Hutton? Where and when did he marry Margaret Turner? When did he die, and where was he buried? Was it his brother Thomas who looked after the young boys?

'How It Was'

As chance would have it, the bundle of Ellers deeds containing the Priest Hutton documents came to light shortly before the appearance of the Mourholme Local History Society's publication 'How It Was'. Alas, no Atkinson of Priest Hutton is mentioned in its pages. It does, however, contain some familiar names. In 1633 Thomas Turner of Priest Hutton bequeathed clothing to his son and son-in-law (p. 82). Was he father, or perhaps grandfather, of Rowland Atkinson's father-in-law? Was the Margaret Turner of Priest Hutton, in trouble in 1689 for practising as an unlicensed midwife (p.106), Rowland's future mother-in-law? His wife 'Margret' was baptised in the previous year.

These are not the only names to find an echo in the deeds. Of the five not yet discussed, two relate to the house which Rowland bequeathed to his older son Christopher, the other three to the one rood of hempland. Not only do they give names of other inhabitants of Priest Hutton during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but also information which can help to identify these premises.

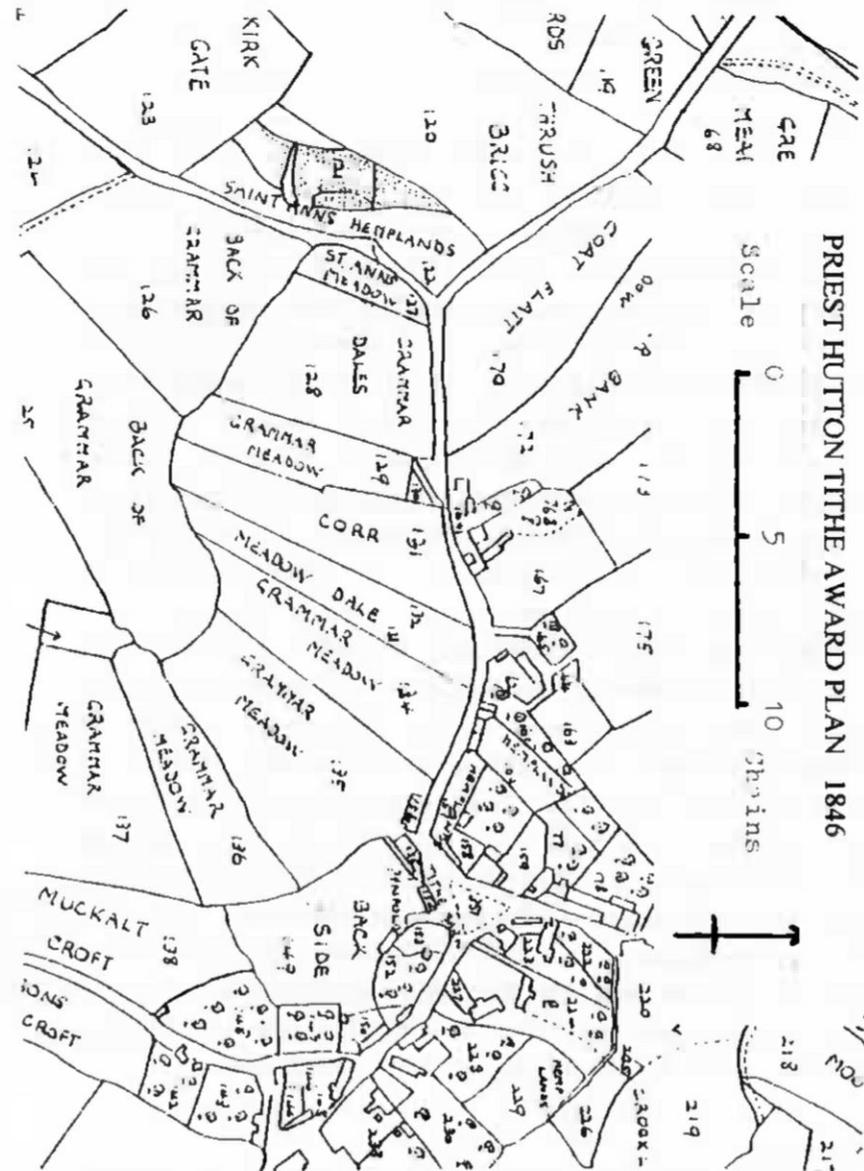
The land

In a Quitclaim dated 3rd March 1611/12, John Gibson of Priest Hutton gentleman, for a consideration of £5, conveyed to Richard Harlinge of Priest Hutton husbandman "one rood of arable called undersellar land, adjoining the east side of a little wood called Sellar in Hutton aforesaid, of the lands belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, part of the rectorie belonging to the parsonage of Warton; yearly rent 3 pence to said Dean and Chapter". On the 10th April 1677 Richard Townson of Priest Hutton yeoman conveyed to his wife Ann, in consideration of his husbandly love and for her preferment after his death, one rood of arable and pasture in the manor of Priest Hutton called Roode under Seller, yearly rent to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester 3 pence, at Easter and Michalmas yearly by equal division. The deed is sealed, with Richard Townson's signature, and witnessed by John Gibson (mark), and Richard Dowker (whose signature bears a strong resemblance to the hand which wrote out the deed).

If this is the Richard Townson of Priest Hutton, but working as a clothier in Leeds, who had occasion in 1653 to appeal for financial assistance to obtain medical treatment in London (*How It Was* pp. 121-123), his circumstances seem to have improved somewhat, and his wife was comfortably enough off to give help

to others. In May 1689 she conveyed the rood of arable to Hannah Walker spinster, daughter of William Walker of Priest Hutton, for a consideration of 20 shillings, of which ten shillings was to be paid by Hannah Walker to Ellin wife of James Postlethwaite of Priest Hutton, and the other ten shillings to Anne Jackson of Warton, spinster. More information is given in this deed about the parcel of land. It is "called Under Sellar Land adjoining to the east side of a little wood called Seller, lately bought by her former husband Richard Harling of John Gibson senior of Priest Hutton", and excepted from the conveyance to Hannah Walker is "one rigge of the same adjoining a little wood called Seller betwixt the stone and the wood, which Ann Townson grants to James Townson of Priest Hutton husbandman". The land was to go to Hannah and James after the death of both Ann and Richard Townson. Hannah to pay yearly rent of 2¹/₂d to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester, and James to pay the remaining yearly rent of 1¹/₂d. The deed is sealed, with Ann Townson's mark, and signed as witnesses by Richard Townson (presumably Ann's second husband), Robert Walker, and Thomas Wood. The description of this land is detailed enough for its identity to be established.

Whitebeck Lane leaves Priest Hutton village in a generally north-westerly direction to meet the A6070 (the former Heron Syke turnpike). Midway between these two points, a green lane (Kirkgate Lane) leaves Whitebeck Lane in a southwesterly direction, leading to the Methodist chapel which stands where the Lancaster/Kendal canal passes beneath Kellet Lane. At the west side of Kirkgate Lane where it meets Whitebeck Lane, a gate gives access to a field (the field's approximate centre is at grid reference SD 526 738) which is still known to its present owner, Mr Edmond Bainbridge of Watson House on Whitebeck Lane, as 'Seller'. The field is some 2 acres in extent, but examination of its



topography quickly shows the features mentioned in the old deeds. Where it adjoins Whitebeck Lane there is a flat area, at the same level as the lane. As one goes further into the field, the surface of the field "steps up" a few feet to give a bench of level ground a few yards deep, and then sweeps uphill, some of it being particularly steep. The initial level area is clearly the 'rood of arable' (the customary measure in use in north Lancashire and south Westmorland in the 17th and 18th centuries was larger by some 40% than the statute measure brought into use throughout England in the nineteenth century, so a customary rood would have been close to five eighths of a statute acre). The flat bench seems likely to have been the "rigge of land" Anne Townson in 1689 reserved for the use of James Townson. It is very easy to visualise the increasingly steep slope behind the bench as covered by uncleared woodland in the 17th century, and the map attached to the Priest Hutton Tithe Award of 1846 shows this slope as having a number of small enclosures, perhaps representing a preliminary stage in the laborious task of clearing and improving the land for use as pasture. The whole of the slope is given the number 121, and in the Schedule to the Tithe Award is described as "Gardens (Cellars Dale)", being included in the category of Public Roads and Waste Grounds. The long-cleared enclosure below it (number 122 on the map) is named in the Schedule as "Saint Ann's Hempland and Cellars Dale", owned and occupied by Robert Muckalt, who was the farmer at Upp Hall with its 193 acres, owned by Lazarus Threlfall. Muckalt was farming a further 68 acres of his own land. The hempland numbered 122 was just over an acre in extent, and must therefore have incorporated the dale belonging in 1718/19 to John Wrayton (see below).

The house

Just over a year before Ann Townson made the conveyance

deed of the rood of land, she had in December 1687 conveyed to her "well-beloved friend Hanna Walker" for her better preferment (with no mention of a monetary consideration) a "cottage or fire house with adjoining beasthouse and a garden belonging to it at Lee yeate adjoining the west side of the pinfold within the lordship of Priest Hutton", of yearly rent 2d. The seal is accompanied by Ann's mark, and the signatures as witnesses of Richard Townson, Thomas Turner, and Christopher Guy. Guy's distinctive signature is the same as that which appears as witness on a Bond of Dame Anne Middleton dated 26th August 1673 (*Kendal Record Office, ref. WD RG Acc.1858*) acknowledging a fine paid by Josiah Cartmell as customary tenant of premises in Farleton on the death of her husband Sir George, and indemnifying Josiah against any further claim, and it seems likely that Guy may have drawn up both documents (see *How It Was, p. 109*).

In February 1718/19 Hannah Walker conveyed the house and the parcel of hempland for a consideration of £16 to Robert Walker of Priest Hutton yeoman. The deed describes the premises as the "dwelling house in which Agnes Whormby now lives formerly belonging to Ann Townson deceased, with barn beasthouse and peathouse, all adjoining the pinfold in Priest Hutton, with an orchard and garden lying close by the side of the Kings streete on the fore side of the said house; and one rood of arable hempland in a place called underseller adjoining the west side of a parcel of hempland belonging to John Wrayton of Priest Hutton; said house garden and outhousing being within the liberties of Priest Hutton, now in possession of Hannah Walker and her undertenants, and part of the lands sometime ago purchased from Sir Robert Bindloss of Borwick Hall... out of fee farm estate into fee simple and held under annual rent of two

peppercorns payable to Sisily Standish Lady of said premises during her life or time of true abode at Borwick Hall, and then to her heirs; and said hempland held under annual rent ... to the Dean and Chapter of Worcester and is of lands pertaining to the rectory of the parsonage of Warton" On the Tithe Award map of 1846, the house is numbered 156; it was owned at that time by Edward Dawson, its occupier being John Geldert.

From the context of these deeds it is clear that the premises conveyed by Hannah Walker to Robert Walker are those bequeathed in Rowland Atkinson's will to his older son Christopher. There is no indication of how they passed from Robert Walker to Rowland Atkinson, but it is intriguing to find the signature of a Robert Walker as witness to the will.

Another identification, and more speculation

On the south side of the small, triangular village green in Priest Hutton is the former school, now a private residence. It stands on the site of the old pinfold, and immediately to the west of the school is a house called 'Beckside Cottage'. When bought by the present owner Mrs Fisher and her late husband in 1956 it was a farm-cottage with attached barn, and adjoining the west gable of the barn a large tank forming part of a rainwater catchment system. The cottage and barn have been modified internally to improve the living accommodation, a garage added where pigstyes formerly stood, and the water tank demolished, but Beckside Cottage is still recognisably the property described in the old deeds.

It was suggested above that on Rowland Atkinson's death his young sons might have passed into the care of his brother Thomas at Arkholme. The parish registers of Melling (*L P R S 1911*)

record the marriage in January 1703/4 of Thomas Atkinson and Jane Holme, both of Arkholme, and the baptism of their son John in the following December. Exactly the same entry occurs in October 1708, suggesting the death in infancy of their firstborn, but there is no record of a burial. A daughter Margaret was baptized in November 1710, and her sister Agnes in June 1713. A further interesting entry in the Melling registers is that of the marriage in January 1733/4 of Christopher Atkinson of Warton parish and Margaret Harris of Melling. If this was the older son of Rowland Atkinson, he would have been aged about 21 at this time, and entitled to claim his inheritance. But why are the deeds of the premises among documents belonging to the first John Atkinson of the Ellers in Farleton? Perhaps it was John who inherited the property as the result of his brother's death. Yet in the several bundles of old deeds in Kendal Record Office which deal with premises owned by John Atkinson of Ellers and his descendants, there is no further reference to Priest Hutton. Perhaps Christopher, or John, or their father's trustees, had sold the property. In that case, however, one would expect the deeds to have gone to the purchaser.

The Townson connection

The Warton registers add some biographical details. Richard Harlinge of Priest Hutton was buried on the 9th June 1664, and on the 3rd June three years later Ann Harlinge married Richard Tounson. (The surname of husband and wife is spelled 'Towlson' in the 1687 deed conveying the cottage to Hannah Walker, but Richard's signature as witness is clearly 'Townson'.) There is no record of any child of the marriage, and Ann Townson was buried on 31st May 1689, the same month as the conveyance of the parcel of hempland to Hannah Walker. It will be recalled that one rigge of this land was to go to James Townson of Priest

Hutton, husbandman. Richard Townson's burial was in September 1695.

That detail in the conveyance deed suggests that Richard Townson was the son of Anthony Townson of Priest Hutton, baptized in November 1630. In June 1636 Anthony's son James was also baptized. There is no marriage entry for a James Townson of Priest Hutton, but the name occurs several times. A son Edward was baptized in June 1697, a daughter Alice in June 1701, and wife Eliner buried in May 1710. In 1714 a James Townson of Priest Hutton married Ann Douthwaite of Warton, and it may be the same man who was buried in December 1726. If all these entries feature Anthony Townson's son, James had a remarkable constitution. He may have married round about the time of the death of his brother Richard, perhaps having inherited the latter's estate; James would have been almost 60 at the time. Remarriage in his late seventies was followed by death aged about 90.

Conclusion

Much contained in this paper is highly speculative, but given the fragmentary nature of the evidence so far discovered it could not be otherwise. It may be that fellow members of the Mourholme Society have come across material which would support, or negate, some of this speculation. In either event, the writer would be very glad to learn of it.

Warm thanks are owed to Mrs Fisher and to Mr and Mrs Bambridge for their kind consideration and assistance in the identification of the house and land.

MOURHOLME SOCIETY NEWS

Programme 2000-2001 (Meetings in Yealand Village Hall 7.30pm)

2000

Sept. 14th- The History of Local Postcards

Mike Moon. Mike will be bringing along his large collection of local postcards, including Warton, Yealand, Silverdale and Arnside areas.

Oct. 12th - From Markets to Supermarkets: Lancaster Shopping through the Centuries.

Dr. Michael Winstanley

Nov. 9th - John Ruskin: Artist, Poet and Philosopher.

Walter Johnstone

Dec. 14th - To be arranged

2001

Jan. 11th- North Lancashire and South Westmorland in the Early Middle Ages

Mrs. Mary Atkin

Feb. 8th- Bolton-le-Sands: Our Changing Village. An Audiovisual presentation portraying life in the village at the end of the 20th Century, with flashbacks to by-gone days.

Kenneth Entwistle and Russell Smith

Mar. 8th- Magistrates and Malefactors: Crime in Seventeenth Century Lancashire

Dr. Alan G. Crosby

Apr. 12th.- Annual General Meeting : Speaker to be arranged.

June 14th- Outdoor Meeting: An Historical Walk Through Burton-in-Kendal. Meet at Burton Village Hall 7 pm . The walk will take about 1 ½ hours. Leader: Kath Hayhurst

August 9th - Outdoor meeting: A Walk through Yealand Conyers. Meet near the Friends' Meeting House (Grid Ref. 503744) at 7 pm. The walk will last about 1 ½ hours. Leader: Michael Wright.

Chairman's Comment- In past years summer outdoor meetings were arranged but were not supported so we gave up on them. Recently, it has been hinted that members and potential members would like such events. The committee decided to restart them and we shall discover whether they get support again

Crag Foot Paint Mines.

This site is of some considerable interest to us. Recently, the area has been used as a recreational site where 'paintball' games have been taking place. Lancaster City Council wishes to regularise this use and the presence of temporary buildings. With a view to formulating 'An Environmental Impact Statement' a site meeting was being arranged for August 1st. Members of the Mourholme Society were invited to attend and we were asked if we had any documents about the mines. Some documentation was made available and the Chairman and Secretary hope to attend. We hope to have further information in due course.

Other Events of Interest (Leaflets available CNWRS, Fylde College, Lancaster University, Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4YF)

Local History Seminars CNWRS Fylde College, Lancaster University
Wednesdays 4.00-5.30pm Winter 2000-2001

Annual Conference -Society for Landscape Studies in conjunction with Lancaster University, CNWRS Fylde College, 28 10 2000

Guided Field Trip: Landscapes of the Upper Eden Valley -Society for Landscape Studies in conjunction with Lancaster University, CNWRS Fylde College - 29 10 2000

Railways Day - Lancaster University, CNWRS, Fylde College, Saturday 25 November 2000