

Archive

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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, Carn-
forth, Yealand Conyers and Yealand Redmayne.*

PROGRAMME 2005-2006

(Indoor Meetings at the Carnforth Railway Station Meeting Room, 7.30 pm).
 Subscription - £9 for individual members, £17 for family or school members. Visitors are welcome at a fee of £1-50 each meeting.

Indoor Meetings Autumn 2005

October 13th Harriet Martineau – unsung heroine of the 19th C
 Barbara Todd, author.

November 10th One Hundred and Thirty Years of Shipbuilding at Barrow. Graham Sharpe, BAE Systems

December 8th Christmas Buffet (must book) followed by
 "Why Do We Do That?" From the disastrous to the plain funny. Clifford Astin

Indoor Meetings Spring 2006

January 12th Horse Transport and Draft Animals
 Dr. R. Vickers.

February 9th King Arthur and the Lost Kingdom of Rheged.
 Tom Clare

March 9th Dialect and Accent in Britain.
 Dr. K.M. Petty

April 13th AGM (Mystery) Speaker to be arranged.

ORAL HISTORY: JOHN NEWMAN WILSON

John Findlater

'Newey' Wilson, as he was known was born at Keer Bank House, Millhead 29.4.21. Interviewed in 1995.
 Occupation – Funeral director and Joiner.

Newey's grandfather was a funeral director and joiner owning a timber yard and sawmill at Millhead: later Graveson's took over the major portion of the site. Grandfather Wilson retained the rented premises initially, before transferring to a workshop and chapel behind his house in Grange View, in Millhead. Grandfather had taken part in the building of Warton Grange for Edward Barton, boss of the Ironworks, as well as 'bits' in Carnforth. Newey's father became the timber yard foreman for Graveson's.

Newey grew up in Millhead, the rather close-knit community of ironworkers, who had an ongoing rivalry with Warton and were aware they were looked down on by the people of Carnforth as poorer, rather rougher cousins. He admits they were a rather hard-drinking lot, imbibing at the West View Hotel, or Nib, open virtually 24 hours a day. Even after the ironworks closed the people who lived there continued rather separate from Warton and Carnforth. Some funerals were from the Methodist Chapel which had doors onto Mary St. (not sure when chapel closed).

Newey went to Archbishop Hutton's School at Warton; first, the infants' half-way up the hill beyond the Shovel then to the school on the opposite side of the road half-way to the

church. He remembers the schoolmaster Nathan Anderson whose cane he had felt on occasion. He left in 1935 at the age of 14 and was apprenticed for seven years to one of his uncles – Arthur – who was a joiner and undertaker along with his brother George. Their workshop was next door to the house. George left to become a chicken farmer.

Newey's mother was from Burrow. He had a brother, Robert, who became yard foreman at Graveson's; two sisters; Eleanor, who died at the age of 25 and Margaret who went on, married and is still alive..

Newey took to the work fine, perhaps because he had been brought up with it. The first funeral he was fully involved in was that of his aunt (Arthur's wife); previous to that his involvement had consisted of making coffins. In those days cremations were extremely rare, the overwhelming majority were burials in personalised coffins. In preparation for the funeral Newey would cycle from Millhead to get the bier from Warton Church. He would put his bike on top and wheel it back to Millhead, and leave it at the top of the street. In the afternoon at the workshop, the coffin would be roped on, taken to the house and eventually on to the church. Traditionally the coffin was taken to the house after dark, it was sacrilegious to do it in the daytime (the same applied when the body had to be brought from hospital). The bier was pulled by pall-bearers back to the church and churchyard. Later on, of course, motorised hearses were used.

As well as the funeral business they built houses – for example in Sand Lane at the top of the hill perhaps two at a time and they also did house repairs.

He remembers Dr Byrne and his wife from the 30s; Dr Berry and wife; Dr Edward Jackson. His family doctor was Dr Moss who had his surgery on Lancaster Rd., Carnforth.

One of the most memorable characters he remembers was a Miss Green, who lived near their chapel of rest, opposite Stainton Street. She might come asking them to put shelves up. She kept dogs and goats; she used to drive a motor-bike and side-car; she wore mannish clothes and often affected a stiff collar. Miss Green was a lovely, polite lady who, he believed, had been in service in Yealand at some time.

He was very aware of the lodging house nearby where tramps would stay. Norman Clayton was landlord of the West View Hotel (before he went into the motor business). Norman's first wife was one of their early funerals.

Though people talk about the depression in the 30s he was not conscious of it, but certainly after the war the area built up a little.

He joined up in 1942 and was in the army until 1946, serving in England, Ireland and Malta; he never saw any fighting. His wife, whom he married in 1945, was from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland.

After the war he resumed his work and took over the business after his uncle had a heart attack. He worked in with a cousin, who was a bricklayer, when they did building work – a house in Coach Road, another in Sand Lane and a private house on the council estate. His cousin left to be a milkman, and Newey then subcontracted to outsiders to do the brickwork. In passing he remarked on the fact that the houses, which had been built by the Ironworks in Albert St, Mary St, Stainton St., had walls incorporating iron ore and were extremely solid. On the whole he confined his work to the Millhead area. He helped to build some of the houses on Grange View, though others were built by Robinson's of Grange. Dick Bush and Frank Newman dominated the building scene in Warton and Riggs were prominent in Carnforth.

There was a Co-op shop at the end of Grange View, Jennie Johnson ran the Post-office and shop half way along and there was a private shop, later on, at the end of William Street. Hartley's still had a home at Millhead but the bakehouse had closed and was derelict and run down.

Across Warton Road was a very large house, Hazelmount owned by someone called Willis and then by Mr Bateson.

Unlike his father who was a pigeon fancier and pigeon racer Newey didn't have any real hobbies. There were quite a few 'pigeon people' in the Millhead/Carnforth area; his father and 'Butcher Williams' of Carnforth were leading lights. Newey explained the intricacies of the special clocks that were used for pigeon racing and the verification procedures. Pigeons

were taken to France and Spain to be released in races back to this area. One of the things he remembered of those days was that his father made him exercise the pigeons; this meant getting up at 5 or 6 in the morning and making the pigeons fly around, not allowing them to alight by throwing balls towards them. If the pigeons did manage to land and his father noticed he was in a lot of trouble. Newey claimed that he just worked and never took holidays for many years, though later on he used to go over to Northern Ireland where his wife came from. Recently he has turned his hand to trying to rebuild old farm carts. Part of his apprenticeship training had been as a wheelwright, and he had repaired many in his time, though the iron hoops for them were made by a blacksmith. The blacksmith's shop and forge in the old days had been in Carnforth where the Legion Club on Scotland Rd in Carnforth is now. One of the blacksmiths had the fine name Cannon Dixon. Later there was a blacksmith where Ireton's are.

He went to the Roxy cinema at the corner of Market Street and Hunter Street, in Carnforth, fairly regularly. Dick Moss was the manager. The organist, in the days of silent films, was also organist at the church in Warton. He also had some involvement with Warton Church, singing in the choir for a time. He remembered the various vicars; Ogilvy, Coombs, Rothwell and Oddy. He often walked onto Warton crag and would often go on to Silverdale.

He had friends in Carnforth. He was not especially interested in the railway and commented on the dilapidation which took place at Carnforth station in the sixties, when the railway system was cut back. He had been involved in work

helping to renovate part of the station area to make 'Steamtown', which for quite a time was a Carnforth attraction. He remembers people of the town like Joe Pomfret the barber, Dearden the butcher, Joe Briggs and Douglas Fletcher the pharmacists and, more vaguely, Arthur Martin manager of the bank.

Newey had a son who took over the business when he retired, one daughter who became a physiotherapist and another, an adopted daughter living in a flat in Lancaster now.

Newey died in February 2004.

WARTON-with-LINDETH TOWNSHIP

Jean Chatterley

Though the 1841 census records are much less informative* than subsequent decennial censuses much can be learned. Examining the 1841 census occupations, obviously the bulk of the workforce was directly engaged in agriculture as farmers or agricultural labourers. In trying to discover the number of genuine farmers it is hard to know whether the description "yeoman" simply means a rather better off farmer owning his farm or someone who has others who do the work. Also in trying to decide on the numbers of those engaged in more humble farming tasks, it is a hard to know whether "farm servant" and "agricultural labourer" are equivalent.

But, one may ask what the workers themselves thought the difference was –since the enumerator used both terms. Was there a difference in pay? status? dwelling? perks? terms of service? Very often in the case of a farming household the sons and daughters are labelled "farmer's son" and "farmer's daughter"; no doubt many of these performed their duties in no way differently from the labourer or farm servant. In the case of the farmer's wife, she probably performed many duties and worked as hard as anyone and ought to be put down as a farm worker. In 1841 the working population of the township was 36% of the total; in 1851 it was 42%; in 1861 it was 36%. Figure 1 illustrates the occupational groups found in the 1841 census divided into 8 categories:

Occupational Groups 1841

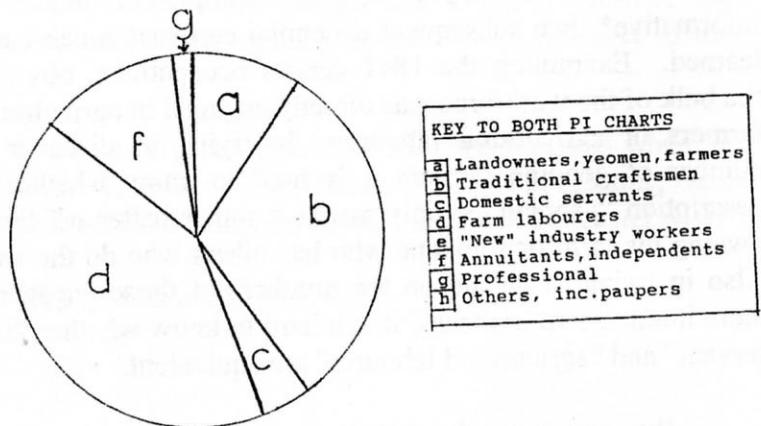


Fig. 1

At the time of the 1841 census, 663 people are recorded as living in Warton-with-Lindeth (a majority of those not born in Warton came from villages within walking distance of Warton). The figure included two men and one woman registered as living in 'barges, boats or other small vessels remaining stationary on canals or other inland navigable waters'. To what extent can the figure be considered accurate? Certainly incentives to evade the census were strong, through fear of taxation or conscription. The returns certainly show errors, probably due to ignorance or uncertainty of the householders as well as deliberate falsification. Even as late as 1881 the registrar reported that 'there is reason to believe that a

considerable number of servant girls who are not yet fifteen years old present themselves as having reached that age'. The enumerators were often not as literate as the registrars had assumed, and found it difficult to understand the rules drawn up for them.

Bearing such possible errors in mind and acknowledging that other errors can arise from difficulties deciphering the census document let us examine the 1841 census for Warton. Perhaps it should also be recognized that errors are magnified because small numbers are involved. Figure 2 is an age-sex-structure pyramid which illustrates the distribution of age groups within the village population.

Warton with Lindeth '41

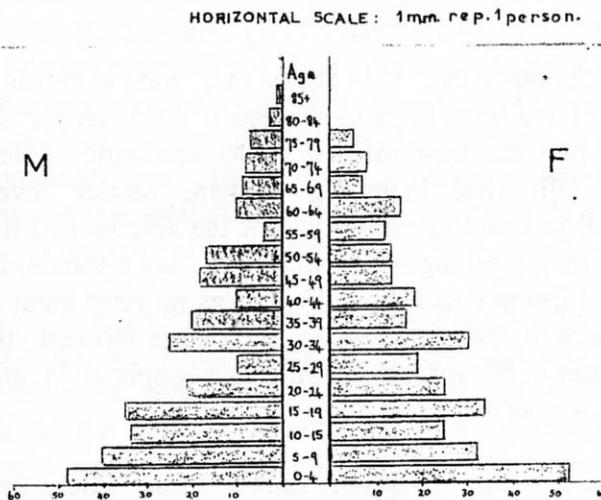


Fig. 2

The most noticeable feature is the imbalance between young and old. Of the 663 residents, 231 were under 15 (35%), and only 48 over 65 years (7%). This reflects the high fertility and birth rates. Large families were the norm, with most couples having five, six, seven or eight children. The age range was considerable, too. Sarah Rawcliffe, the 35 year old wife of an agricultural labourer, had seven children - William 16, Rose turned 12, George 10, Robert 7, John 5, Sarah 2, and Elizabeth 3 months. Such family patterns were not confined to the working classes or labourers. Thomas and Mary Hoggart, Innkeeper and wife, had six children between 20 and 1 year old. William Swindlehurst, a farmer, had six children ranging from 15 to 1 year old. There is a pattern of large, widely spaced families in labouring, tradesmen and landowner groups. Married women spent most of their lives bearing and raising children.

On the other hand, the death rate was also high. Families would have been even larger had it not been for the high mortality rate amongst infants. Many epidemic 'killer' diseases were still rife, including cholera, scarlet fever, diphtheria, small pox and tuberculosis. For the able bodied life was hard, with long working hours and, by to-day's standards, poor dietary and living conditions. There was no retirement at 65. Among others in 1841 Warton we find Adam Beckett still working as a slater at 80, Joseph Blamire as a cooper at 75, and Alice Dent as a washerwoman at 70.

The age-structure diagram raises some interesting questions. For instance, why is there such "a bite" in the 'male' 55-59 age group, and not the 'female'? Had the men of this

age-group been depleted by epidemic or war? There are similar "bites" in the 40-44 and 25-29 age groups, among males and girls 10-15.. Had the 'absent' men sought employment elsewhere; perhaps the girls had gone out to service outside the area. The relevant parish death registers unfortunately record no "causes" of death except in unusual or dramatic cases. And, of course, only burials in Warton parish churchyard are recorded. The causes of death which are given reveal something of the hazards of the time, however. Deaths by drowning were common, both in crossing the Sands and, later, in the canal. One two year old was drowned in a sheepwash pool, and a 12 year old girl drowned in a well. Other recorded causes of death included those of mother and baby in childbirth, accidents while blasting rock from the route of the canal, and a smallpox epidemic in 1797 which killed several under fours - (a contributory cause of the 1841 40-44 year old "gash"?)- and burning and scalding. [It is interesting to note how many deaths by burning especially of little girls standing too close to the fire while their mother's back was turned, are recorded in the diary of William Fisher of Barrow in Furness]. Other diseases mentioned are fever, "the gravel", colic, apoplexy, consumption, scarlet fever and a case of a 22 year old "who died of white swelling of the knee".

A short note at the end of the census informs us that two males had emigrated from the parish "to the colonies" in the previous six months - a small number, but it shows how the pull of the new world was felt even in this comparatively remote corner of Lancashire. And if these two men represented a steady flow, there could have been 40 emigrations over the decade - a considerable percentage of the total population.

Of the 663 Warton residents, 101 were born outside Lancashire. At first sight this seems surprising but we must remember however, that Warton lies close to the borders of Westmorland, Cumberland and Yorkshire, and that many nearby settlements are outside the county. The 1851 census, which recorded actual place of birth, confirms the fact that most of the non-Lancastrians were in fact local men.

Most of the village population were living in large family or household groups. In addition to the large number of children, servants were an important part of the household, as were grandparents and other relatives. In 1841 only 32 people lived alone. Many servants were the sons and daughters of other Warton or nearby families. Children were trained in service and as agricultural labourers, and as apprentices to local craftsmen. Many would be in service further afield, or may have left to work in the mills of Lancaster or further south, suggesting families were larger than immediately apparent from the census data. Many Warton craftsmen and tradesmen had live-in apprentices, and some farmers employed entire families as servants. Though farming was predominant in the parish, there was a rich variety of other activities which added life and variety to the area.

Warton-with-Lindeth remained the largest township though its population shrank from 1841 through 1851 to 1861. The 1851 and 1861 censuses record more details about each resident, thus making them of considerably more value** in the continued examination of this township. Quite apart from the population figures of the township which show decline in both of the next two censuses (1851 and 1861) there were

changes within that population with some people leaving and others settling from elsewhere.

Warton with Lindeth '51

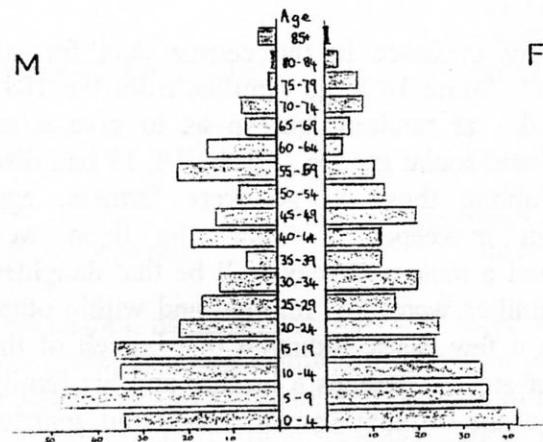


Fig. 3

By 1851 the population had fallen by 10% to 598. The age-structure diagram (Fig.3) shows that all age groups had declined, so that the overall pyramidal shape is similar but narrower than that of 1841. (see Fig. 2). Perhaps the most marked difference, however, is seen at the pyramidal base. In 1841 there were 172 children 0-10 years old, but by 1851 there were 159 - a noteworthy drop in such a small community. By 1861 this figure had fallen further, to 139.

How is this to be accounted for? There may have been a high infant mortality rate, perhaps due to an epidemic. Rural

depopulation may have played a part, involving, as is usually the case when employment opportunities are a root cause, families with young children. Those in their twenties and thirties are usually the most mobile section of any population. The data for 1851 shows a decrease in this age group also.

Is there evidence in the census data for such rural depopulation? Some 18 large families from the 1841 census were selected - at random, but so as to give a variety of occupational and social groups. Of the 18, 11 had disappeared by 1851. Among those to go were farmers, agricultural labourers, an innkeeper, a tailor, the linen weavers, a shoemaker and a mason. It may well be that daughters of the "missing" families were now married and within other village families. In a few cases, although one branch of the family went, another stayed: perhaps a brother and his family can be traced, or just one of many sons can be found, married with a young family of his own. A picture emerges, however, of whole families leaving the village. The following table shows three families, again taken at random, and illustrates the movement of young people away from Warton.

Name	1841 Details	1851 details
James Swindlehurst	40 Agricultural Labourer	51 same occupation
Margaret "	40 His wife	51 " "
Mary "	15	Not found
Elizabeth "	20 Dressmaker	"
James "	13	"
Abraham "	7	"
Henry "	5	"
William, Francis, Agnes	2 (-)(-)	12, 8, 6
William Jennings	50 Parish Clerk, lodger	64 same

William Bolton	35 Stonemason	47 same
Margaret "	30 His wife	42 same
Thomas "	14	24 stonemason, married 2 daughters
James "	12	- not found
Ann "	9	- not found
William "	6	- not found
John "	?	13 agricultural labourer
Elizabeth, Henry, Charles	(-),(-),(-)	8,3 (scholars) & (infant)
William Hodgson	35	Agricultural labourer
Agnes "	35	47 same His wife
James "	6	- not found
Thomas "	3	12 farm servant, Dockacres
Margaret "	4 months	- not found

One cannot, of course, be sure why these young people left; it was probably a combination of different push and pull factors in each case - perhaps the pull of work in the mills and the push of failing village crafts such as handloom weaving. In England as a whole the period was one of agricultural decline in labour, partly due to mechanisation and the non-renewal of farm and land leases for tenants; and partly due to the lower prices obtainable for produce in the face of cheaper imports from the colonies, particularly for grain.

Another indication of population changes is that between 1841 and 1851 the number of households (i.e. families plus servants, apprentices and lodgers) dropped from 148 to 125. The outflow of population from Warton was to some extent counterbalanced by an inflow of new families, many with surnames new to the village. Most of these were from the immediate neighbourhood, however. If conditions were such

as to make many families leave Warton, what, we may ask, induced others to move in? This is a complex picture: many 1841 young families leaving, resulting in marked falls in certain age groups, but new families arriving despite the increasing economic straits.

It is interesting to compare the relative sizes of comparable occupational groups in 1841 (Fig.1) and 1851 (Fig. 4 below)

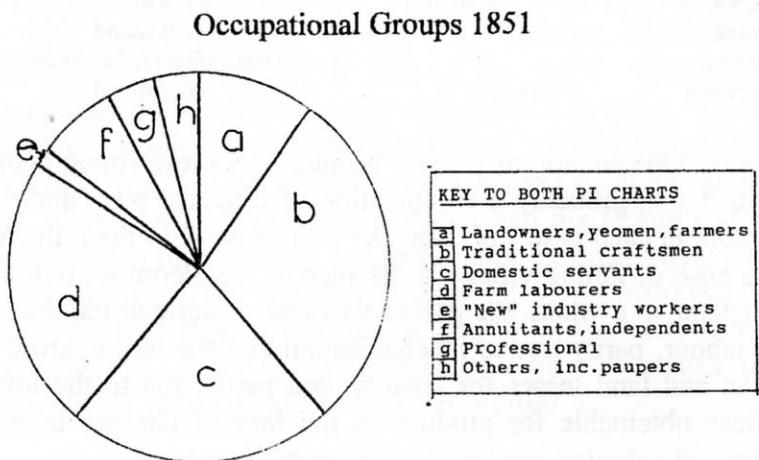


Fig. 4

The most striking differences are the appearance of 'Professionals' in 1851 (4% of the total); the great increase in 'domestics' (from 4% to 27%); the almost halving of 'Farm Labourers' (from 41% to 23%). One notes the appearance of 'New Industrial Workers' (mostly railwaymen) and the decline in 'Annuitants' (from 12% to 7%).

The 1861 census reveals little change. The age-structure pyramid is not too dissimilar, although the base is even narrower and the overall shape is even more markedly that of a declining population. The total population had fallen to 579, a further 3% fall on 1851's total. (see Fig.5)

Warton with Lindeth '61

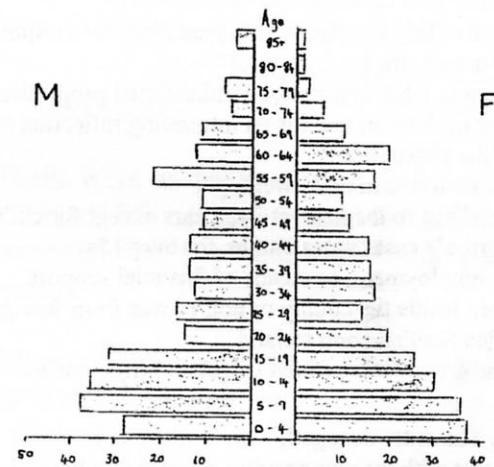


Fig. 5

As always, the census data conjures up interesting pictures of village life. Richard Hodgson, the Tewitfield farmer, has done well and now owns 134 acres (cf 88 ten years before). William Jennings is still the parish clerk, now 74, and still lodging with the agricultural labourer, James Swindlehurst. A William Swindlehurst, a 64 year old farm labourer, lived in one of the Main Street cottages with his daughter Jane, described as his housekeeper, two sons and a second daughter who were all scholars, plus two lodgers - one of whom was

James Fell from Aughton, a police constable and the other was Mary Lawrence Birtle, born in Liverpool, and described as a lodger even though only seven months old! One interesting resident was Charles Warburton Bennett, an 18 year old medical student from Honduras, lodging with a widowed grocer and her daughter. One wonders what brought him to Warton, too.

Notes

* In 1841. For every dwelling six pieces of information were required:-

1. the name of the house or street
2. whether the house was inhabited or not. (Uninhabited properties were listed, and the number of these in itself is an interesting reflection of the growth or decline of the population)
3. the names of everyone living in that dwelling
4. the person's sex, and age to the nearest five years except for children under 15 - and in Warton's case, occasionally for over 15s
5. the person's trade, employment, or means of financial support
6. whether he was born inside the county or not, or was from foreign parts, which in 1841 included Scotland and Ireland

In the 1841 census the groups represented by (e) and (h) were not differentiated.

**In 1851 and 1861. The extra data gathered:

- (i) the name of the street with the name and/or a house number
- (ii) the relation to the head of the family
- (iii) whether married, single or widowed
- (iv) actual age
- (v) rank, profession or occupation, including how many employed if an employer; and
- (vi) the place of birth
- (vii) whether blind, deaf, or dumb. No-one in Warton is recorded as being so handicapped

Enumerators collected and checked the census forms

ON THE SUBJECT OF TEETH

Diane Dey

On the front page of the 'Kendal Free Press', August 1906 was the following advertisement:

"ARTIFICIAL TEETH"

References (if required) to over 3000 wearers.

What better proof need anyone ask for?

Upper and Lower, complete from £2.00.

Very best, complete set, £5.00.

Tel: 0239 50, Stramongate, Kendal.

Teeth were as great a curse as boon to mankind long before increased life expectancy and the addition of sugar in the diet accelerated the potential for dental pain and cosmetic disfigurement.

False teeth can be dated as far back as 700BC, when the Etruscans were designing and carving them from ivory and bone. In ancient China acupuncture was practiced to relieve the pain of decay and extraction. In Lancashire magic was one of the folk remedies. "I have wormes in my tethe, wether they be red or grey, they sall die anyway, as Jesu was borne of the Virgin Marie" was a magical incantation used in the 16th century. The following early 19th century token was to be written on parchment and worn beneath the vest over the left breast if a man, or under the stays if a woman: "As Saint Peter sat at the gates of Jerusalem our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ passed by and said, 'What aileth thee?' Peter saith 'Lord my teeth ache.' Jesus sayeth, 'Arise, follow me and thy teeth shall never ache more.' " It wasn't until 1771 that a

British surgeon, John Hunter, published the 'Natural History of Human Teeth', which book is the foundation of all modern texts on the anatomy of jaws and teeth.

Dentistry was practiced as a sideline by surgeons. Documents relating to the Waylett family of Kent, held in the Library of the Wellcome Institute reveal that on October 8th 1780 William Waylett, 'a gentleman of great skill and judgement in Surgery and Pharmacy ...' and a man-midwife, charged a Mr. S. 1/6d for 'Extractio dentis uxorem' three times the cost of blood-letting. In country districts, it was more often an adjunct to the blacksmith's trade and this tradition persisted even after the 1878 Dentist's Act which brought the occupation firmly under medical control but did not outlaw unregistered practices. 'Healing' was most often achieved by extraction of the offending tooth, hence the value of the blacksmith's tool kit! Does this in part explain the tight-lipped seriousness of Victorian photographs?

In his panoramic work 'The Victorians', A.N.Wilson declares that "If I had to choose my ideal span of life, I should choose to have been born in the 1830s, the son of a parson with the genetic inheritance of strong teeth (improvements in dentistry are surely among the few unambiguous benefits brought to the human race by the 20th century)."

In 1846, the first operation using anaesthetic was performed in America. Nitrous oxide or 'Laughing Gas' was used and teeth were the subject. The option of local anaesthetic, in the form of cocaine, was not available until after 1884 and that would only be for the wealthy. Being

dangerously addictive, safer products like Novocaine were discovered and introduced.

1848 saw the patenting of the dental chair and in 1875, the first electric dental drill came on the market.

Robert Robert's contribution to social history, 'The Classic Slum' a faithful record of life in Salford, Lancs. in the first half of the 20th century, vividly portrays a grim existence through intimate detail both researched and biographical. Not even teeth escaped the attention of his pen.

During the First World War, false teeth became affordable items for the very poor and prudent. The war provided a new source of income for thousands of women by demand for their labour in the new mass-production factories and, if she was the wife of a conscript, she had a Dependant's Allowance (75% of Lord Kitchener's army "had family burdens to carry"). Although prices in 1915 had inflated by 32% above pre-war levels, wages on average had increased by 170% by 1921, so enabling her to enjoy relative financial improvement. A security never before experienced in 'primary poverty' on less than 24/- a week became a reality. For many of these women too, the relief of budgeting a whole wage packet that had not been ravaged and handed to the local publican was a luxury. A little of the wage packet could be diverted to non-essentials.

Some chose, to "the shocked stares" of respectable housewives, to go in pairs to the pictures or take a glass of stout in the 'best room' at the public house. Having one's likeness

taken at the increasingly popular photographers was another channel for the diversion of funds. But, "Artificial dentures! It seemed the ambition of every other woman to get a mouthful of flashing 'pots' before her husband came home from the war".

"When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said –
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
.....get yourself some teeth
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will,I said."

From T.S.Eliot's 'The Wasteland'

The oral tradition still flourishing in the not fully literate population would be peppered with tales of the 'crude' techniques of dentistry in the preceding century. At about £2.00 for a cheap set in an economy where a farthing was common currency – a farthing would buy, among other things, a slim night candle to see you to bed - it was a possible dream. The often, quite literally painful longing, and enthusiasm is easy to appreciate.

REPORT ON 2005 HAPPENINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Jenny Ager

At the Mourholme Local History Society's annual general meeting on 14th April, 2005, the Chairman (Michael Wright) outlined various projects that are underway or are planned. These include the publication of a book on the old parish of Warton in the early 19th century and an exhibition in Warton Parish church in October, to celebrate the society's 25th birthday. Silverdale Golf Club is also planning an exhibition to celebrate its centenary in 2006 and is requesting photographs or other items. Members of the society are also busy preparing a room in the basement of Warton vicarage as a new, more accessible store for the archives. Grateful thanks were extended to Dr John Findlater for storing the archives until now and to Father John Hall for the new accommodation. The officers for the new year are Michael Wright, Chairman, Dianne Dey, Secretary and Dorothy Spencer, Treasurer.

Following the AGM Clive Holden showed photographs of the railway around Carnforth, it was interesting to see the station in its various guises over the years and to spot the things that have changed and those that have stayed the same in the area.

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It was at this point that our society suffered a major setback. Michael Wright, our Chairman, died suddenly on April 24th while on holiday

MICHAEL WRIGHT: AN APPRECIATION

John Findlater

Our chairman, Michael Wright died suddenly at the end of April (24.04.05), while on holiday near Taunton.

I first came to know Michael in the early nineties when we were both attending Lancaster University studying for a Diploma in Local History. Michael also joined the Mourholme Society of which I was already a fairly new member. We became good friends.

Michael was born on 16.07.33 in Northenden, Manchester. He graduated at Manchester University in 1954 as a geologist and then took a 12 months' course in Librarianship. He started work at Sheffield doing 'Safety in Mines' research, followed by work at the Geological Museum Library in Kensington, in London. He then obtained a M.Sc. at Chelsea College before going to work for the Metal Box Company. In 1963 Michael went to Canada to work as a librarian at Saskatoon University. He returned to Britain at the end of 1965 and worked in Bedford; he married in 1968 and then went to Cardiff as a geologist for the Coal Board inspecting tips following the Aberfan disaster. He obtained a Ph.D. from the Open University at this time. In 1990 he took early retirement and moved to Silverdale.

A calm, quiet, gentle, modest but immensely learned man with a dry sense of humour, Michael became actively involved with an astonishing number of local groups.

Sadly, over the last few years, Michael's wife, Betty, has suffered from deteriorating mental powers, becoming absolutely dependant on Michael, a burden he bore without complaint. In fact, it was clear to those of us who witnessed it, the extraordinary, self-sacrificing, loving care Michael gave to Betty merely confirmed what a fine man he was. It is slightly comforting that the last entry in Michael's diary about his holiday was, "a lovely two days".

All of these groups, and the friends he made, will miss him very much and, in particular, the Mourholme Local History Society. Michael was our Chairman at the time he was so abruptly cut down having already made a tremendous contribution to our society.

OBITUARY: MICHAEL WRIGHT

Dr. J.D.Marshall, President Mourholme Local History Society

As we have seen Michael was a dedicated society member and did not consider the most repetitive labour beneath him. He would share knowledge with any fellow student. His insights were penetrating and original, and were the result of much painstaking work on archives. More than this, however, Michael and his colleagues set the highest standards in well-organised and clear writing.

Readers of this obituary may well be aware that Michael Wright was a central contributor to a highly organised Local History of 17th Century Warton - "How It Was: A North Lancashire Parish in the Seventeenth Century.

SUBSEQUENT TO OUR CHAIRMAN'S DEATH

You have only to read Jenny Ager's report on our last AGM (above) to understand what a lively year was in prospect for the society under Michael's leadership. Now it was as if the Society had been decapitated and we ran the risk of running round like headless chickens. Despite this blow, with the goodwill and help of the membership there is every reason to think that the society will continue to thrive.

SUMMER 2005 UPDATE Diane Dey (Secretary)

May 2nd – The Exhibition 2005 sub-committee had their first meeting and have been meeting monthly since then. The Exhibition now has a title, "A Place in History" and, with contributions from outside the Society is shaping up to present a very interesting display. Offers of help to steward will be welcomed with open arms.

May 9th - An Extraordinary Committee Meeting was convened, chaired by John Findlater, to try to get a grip. A number of matters required immediate attention so that the Society could continue with its planned programme. We failed however, to find a Chairperson at this stage: Jean Chatterley agreed to chair the scheduled committee meeting on August 8th.

May 18th – The Archives were finally removed from the Findlater's cellars to the Warton Rectory vaults. The scrubbers and painters having done a splendid renovation, John, Jane and Dorothy completed the mammoth removal of twenty five years

of gleanings, gifts and research. The sub-committee Jane Parsons (Keeper of the Archives), Jenny Ager, Dorothy Spencer, Audrey Fishwick and Robin Greaves are aiming to meet once a week to sort and classify the collection, another exciting challenge. Thank you John for keeping and maintaining the Archives for so many years. It could not have become the rich resource that it is without your kindness and care. To borrow or drop in, please contact Jane on 01524 734223.

The latest Mourholme Society publication, about Warton Parish 1800-1850, has miraculously come together and should be ready for launch at the Exhibition in October. The Book Group have worked feverishly in recent weeks to pull the final threads together for printing. Definitely going to be one for the Xmas present list.

Discussions have continued with The Carnforth Station Trust regarding our several concerns about the Meeting Room. At the time of writing, all that can be said is that the issues, primarily now the Car Parking charge, have been on the table since the AGM in April and whilst they are being addressed, remain unresolved.

In July, Robin Greaves who had agreed to come back on the committee also agreed to take on the Chairmanship and this would be put to the committee on August 8th.

We have noted that the Summer Outings are generally poorly attended. Whether we venture beyond our immediate neighbourhood or just explore our locality, you do not seem

inspired by the idea of gentle summer afternoon or evening forays. What would you prefer, if at all? Is it a case of "been there, done that.." too strenuous, not strenuous enough? We need some feed back from you. In the meantime, don't miss out on the excellent programme of winter meetings. Look forward to seeing you all there.

The three Summer Outdoor Meetings went ahead and short reports are appended:

Visit to Shap on 21st May 2005 - by Jane Parsons

The weather was fine and warm, and Jean Jackson, Chair of Shap Local History Society, gave us a very interesting tour of the Abbey and its environs. It was therefore rather a pity that only half a dozen or so members (plus a few other visitors to the site who joined us) attended.

Jean Jackson first pointed out an ancient "lum" (pr. "lume"), which consists of a pair of walls leading down to a deep part of the beck (15 feet in this instance), which funnelled the sheep into the water, and forced them to swim for a sufficient distance to wash them thoroughly.

The Abbey, the only one in Westmorland, was home to the Premonstratensians from its foundation in 1189 until its dissolution in 1540. The monks were sheep farmers, and sent their wool by packhorse to Kendal. They also acted as parish clergy for the people of the area. Because the Abbey was so poor, it almost escaped dissolution, and the remaining 12 "White" Canons were treated leniently, being pensioned off.

The land was bought first by the Wharton family, then, in 1729, by the Lowthers. The farm now attached to the ruins is one of the largest sheep farms in the north of England.

After our tour we went to the Heritage Centre for refreshments and the chance to look round the Shap Local History Society permanent exhibition housed in the Market Hall. A market was granted in 1867 and the Hall was built soon after. At that time it was open at ground level. It was closed in when it became a school.

Visit to Carnforth on Thursday 23rd June by Clive Holden

On a beautiful sunny evening some ten or a dozen members and friends gathered in Hawk Street to be issued with maps and a few photocopied photographs prior to setting off for a 'historical walk'.

First we looked at the 'footings' which suggest that the short terrace of houses on Hawk Street was originally intended to be much longer, then we looked at the site of the old British School, demolished some years ago to make way for houses before halting briefly at the space once occupied by 'Saddler' Murray's taxidermy shop in Scotland Road, surely in its time, with its display, one of the more unusual and interesting of Carnforth's shop windows. After commenting on the history of other buildings in Scotland Road, we looked at those with rounded corners, which are a feature of some of Carnforth's more prestigious buildings, one of which started life as the Carnforth premises of John Hartley (grocers). For information about this we were indebted to Malcolm Hartley, whose forbears set up what was one of Carnforth's most important and thriving businesses of the late nineteenth century.

On turning into Market Street we looked at another of Carnforth's superior buildings, that of the Lancaster Banking Company (Natwest to us); how many of us pass by it without glancing up to see the date of construction: 1889? We also looked across at the Carnforth Inn, built in 1620 and rebuilt in 1904. There was no dispute about the latter date, but there were a few words of scepticism about the earlier claim.

Next we looked at Carnforth Book Shop, formerly three different premises which had always (or nearly always in one case) been chemists, woollens and newsagents respectively for about a hundred years, then, passing by the long-established Queen's Hotel (or Queens' Hotel as it must now be with two queens on its signboard), we looked across at the other side of Market Street, noting the variety in styles of the upper floor windows in what appears at first glance to be a terrace of uniform design. We also noted that despite alterations over the years, some of the shops retain at least part of their original exteriors, and that the one under the longest continuous ownership, Sowdens, had regrettably closed at the end of 2004, to be followed not much later by its next door neighbour 'Vivlio'.

Just as we were fortunate to have Malcolm Hartley to tell us about his family's business, so we were fortunate to have John Findlater to tell us about the fairly recently demolished and rebuilt 'Robin Hill' for long the residence, with surgery, of Carnforth doctors, where he had lived and practised for a time in the 1950s; next door, in what had been the garden of Robin Hill was the new medical group practice building and Local Authority Clinic.

Dorothy Spencer thanked Clive for leading the walk, and for the work he had put in preparing.

Visit to Sedburgh, Saturday 30th July. – by Clive Holden

Even though 30th July was not the brightest of days, Joyce Scobie of Sedbergh & District History Society may have been disappointed to find that only four Mourholme members turned up for the walk; if so, she did not betray her disappointment. As it turned out, the threatened rain did not materialise, and after an introductory talk in which we learned of Sedbergh's distant past, and during which a goodly number of veteran Ford cars passed by, we were taken on a walk from the Tourist Office along Main Street, straying off to some of the yards which would go unnoticed by the casual visitor, then through the churchyard and along Back Lane to its junction with Main Street, and so back to our starting point. The tour took two hours to complete, and we were indebted to Joyce for making it so interesting. How many of our members would know, for instance, that an archway at one of the houses was made so that Sedberghians could admire the hills beyond, or that Sedbergh once boasted an octagonal Methodist church? Thanks to Joyce Scobie we learned that there is more to Sedbergh than lovely countryside and a public school and – oh yes – if anyone tells you that Bonnie Prince Charlie passed through Sedbergh, don't believe it, but it is true that George Bernard Shaw bought his socks there. Not many people know that!

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