THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF LOCAL HISTORY

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REVISITING THE EDITORIAL OF THE FIRST MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF LOCAL HISTORY

Awena Carter

When the The Mourholme Magazine of Local History first appeared, in Autumn 1982, the editorial, (reproduced on the following page), was written by Nancy Thomas, who contributed a great deal to the society before she moved to Scotland in 1987. This editorial is well worth reproducing here. Certainly the aims of the magazine, which Nancy explores in the third paragraph, have been more than fulfilled in the past, and exciting and interesting work continues to be done and published in the present by members of what Nancy described as, 'an active and productive local history society.' Nancy's editorial ended with the words '[d]uring this first year, we would be very grateful for any criticisms or suggestions that would help us,' and it remains true that constructive criticisms or suggestions are welcome from members.

To begin with, an edition of the magazine was published quarterly. This rate of publication must have been hard to keep up and the magazine lapsed in 1985, to be resumed in 1990 after which, until the recent past, either two or three editions were published every year. It would be good to return to this frequency of publication. For this reason we welcome news, both of work in progress, and work ready to be written up, so that we can continue, again in Nancy's words, to bring members' enthusiasms together in more 'interesting, stimulating, readable, and good' magazines.

'With this issue [**Vol. I. No 1. Autumn 1982, issue 1.**] the Mourholme Local History Society introduces its new publication, The Mourholme Magazine of Local History.

Four times a year we will try to fill its pages with interesting material relating to the history of the old ecclesiastical parish of Warton.

We hope, of course, that we will be successful and that our members will eagerly look forward to reading each issue, cover to cover, glad they are members of an active and productive local history society. But our intention goes even further. We want to provide our local history enthusiasts with a medium for communicating their ideas and sharing their knowledge with us and with each other. Their contributions will be the keystone of the magazine's success. We also hope our magazine may provide the nudge that pushes 'interest' over into 'enthusiasm' and transforms the passive local historian into the active one.

In short, we hope our members will not only read our magazine but also write it. We will be pleased to receive all contributions. Articles may be any reasonable length and on any aspect of the history of our areas. Subsequent issues of the magazine will include a 'Notes and Queries' section for comments or questions. Our goal is a magazine that is interesting, stimulating, readable, and good.'

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MORPHY'S MILL (Part One)
Sheila Jones

Early this year I began to hear from various older Carnforth ladies of "Morphy's Mill" which had played a role in each of their lives. It had been at the end of Oxford St. in Carnforth and had been a big employer. My curiosity was piqued wondering what could possibly have driven a mill in Carnforth.It was a fellow history group member who enlightened me saying that it had in fact been a factory, and he put me in touch with one of the sewers from there. "They used to call it Morph's Mill," she said, "but it warn't. It were a blouse and dress manufacture, that's what it went under." Nevertheless those who worked there were known as mill dollies and there was more than one father who wasn't going to have his daughter be one of them.

I couldn't imagine a place of major female employment in Carnforth where now there is so little. It interested me. The very thought of things being made is now, in this era of service industry, quite thrilling. There must have been satisfaction for the workers to be engaged in production. I was curious to know about the business itself and the lives of the women who worked there. The first lady I spoke to, the one whom my history colleague had put me in touch with, lent me her photographs of two of the sewing rooms from the early 1950s. They were run by the local papers and I had a tremendous response from women who recognized themselves or a relative from the previous generation. I gathered odd titbits, and also had several in-depth interviews. These were with two machinists or

sewers, a presser, a cutter, a company secretary, and with the last owner of Morphy's, David, who closed it down in 1985.

The people I listened to worked over a span from the early 1940s to the time the factory closed. The company secretary worked for an uninterrupted twenty-two years from 1963, but others worked just until they got married or had children. There were as many stories as there were interviewees.

Ethel said, "I left when I had me son and I left for 8 year and then they come knocking on me door because I lived down Oxford St. which was just across the road and he said to me "I've been to your sister and she tells me your youngest is at school so would you like to come back?" and I said "I don't really know, it depends on me husband" because me husband, he didn't like married women working (1963) so I, we decided..." and she went back to work.

Janet had a contrasting story from 1951, saying she went back to work immediately after having her baby "because in those days you used to have to do". This was a bit of a scramble and she had to work mornings, and her mother afternoons, to cope with the day care. Her granddad would transfer the child from one to the other, picking her up from Janet, and then delivering her to her again, at Machiter's Hill, the name given to about twelve feet of road at the corner of Lower North Rd and Kellet Rd. in Carnforth, which was a convenient central point.

The firm had been started in Preston by William Murphy, an Irish immigrant, as a Blouse Manufactory. He moved to Kendal with the whole family, including a Preston born wife, and is listed as having a warehouse on the smart and quite new Sandes Ave. in Kendal in 1914. Then two years later Duckett Mills, across the road on Sandes was bought by D.Morphy and Co., and is clearly listed as a blouse manufacturer again. The business stayed there until 1928 when it moved to Oxford St., Carnforth. The grandson, David, believes that K Shoes was hard to compete with as an employer and hence the move.

There were two sons, Eddie and William Arnold. Eddie went straight into the business, and William Arnold joined more reluctantly later. David, the last owner, was William Arnold's son, joining in about 1950, after his National Service. They were hands-on employers, arriving at 7.30 a.m. to ensure everything was in working order and to light the boiler in the ironing department. (Of course, methods of ironing changed over the years, but this is how Mr. David remembered it.) This full involvement in the work earned for the owners much respect. One of their jobs was cutting. There was a table the length of the factory and the designers would have calculated how long a "lay" should be. There was a laying machine with rollers; they put a clamp at the correct length, got their big bale of cloth and set it up for as many as, for example, 200 velvets at one go. Then the designers gave them the patterns of brown paper, these were marked onto the lay, and they were cut by hand-guided electrical machines. Ethel still felt the drama of these machines. "I don't know if you've seen it on television," she said, "but them big

blades that go round...” “Fingers were lost,” she added ominously. Only the bosses touched these machines.

Next, girls called counters made up this roughly cut cloth into bundles of six and the ladies in the cutting room would do a more exact job, Mr Arnold sometimes coming to help. It was put on escalators, still in these bundles, and sent up to the top floor to be stitched. Interestingly, some bundles were sent to outworkers to be stitched in their own homes, but this seems to have been a later development. The two stitching rooms which housed the majority of the employees were cramped and noisy. When I first saw the photographs I said to Ethel, “Gosh they packed you in, didn’t they!” She answered that when she’d seen a television programme with Chinese workers in rows, she’d thought, “That’s just how we were.” One lady recalled the belts that drove the machines under the long tables and that “it was a dangerous set-up”. There was a specific job of providing the girls with their bundles of six dresses to sew, and of collecting them from them when they were done. At one point it was the role of Cecil Parkinson’s mother, Betty. The machinists had to sew the entire garment, including plackets at the side of dresses with press-studs in the early days, and then zips later. They hemmed in the early days before the business got a hemming machine and then that became the finishers’ job. Each girl had a number which she would write on a tag attached to the garment.

The garment next went to an examiner or passer for checking. Lizzie was a passer and she said that she had to suffer some abuse from workers if she sent a garment back to them. But she didn’t care, she said. If they were polite

she would help them out and correct the fault herself, but if they shouted at her, she left them to it! The final stage of the making was with the finishers off. As noted above, they did hems, and also buttonholes and buttons, for this task threading a needle with several strands so the job would be done quickly. Lastly they were ironed. Initially this was done on big wooden benches and there may not have been steam. “And then,” Dorothy remembers , “they got modernized whereby they all stood behind each other in a row and the irons were connected to the ceiling, and they were steam.” Mr David said one innovation was a sort of dressmaker’s form on which the worst of the creases would be steamed out. It only remained for Peggy, or someone like her, to do the folding and packing. The firm owned its own delivery vehicle which was kept very busy every day.

Most of the employees were on piece work. The machinists were, and so were the ironers .Winnie, who says “ironing was fun” seems to have regarded the race to get more done and to increase her wage as part of that fun. She said, “If you got right down there it were good money”. Each dress was “minuted” by the designer; that is, the designer determined how long it should take to get made, and from that a work value was attached to it, actually written on the same tag on which the sewers wrote their number. These tags were kept and handed into the office for the wage to be made up. If someone’s wage were uncharacteristically down, it was assumed that an error in the minuting had been made, and it would be bumped up. If a worker were slow, then she was given a minimum hourly wage so she didn’t lose out too much, but if she were fast enough to have earned extra then she’d

also get a 10% bonus. If there had been a fault with a machine then an appropriate wage would be estimated so the employee did not miss out. The time books "all come down once a week" to the office. The calculations to be done each week before the cash wage packets were made up seem to me to be complicated but Rose, the company secretary, was very nonchalant about it.

When a girl first began she was trained for six weeks under a mentor, who got extra pay for doing that, and during that time the trainee was paid a fixed wage. Ethel's sister started on 12/6 a week just after the war began, and 18 months later Ethel herself started on £1 2s 6d. Perhaps the availability of work for women due to the war caused this large increase. Others on fixed wages were cutters, designers and sample makers. There are differing views as to whether or not the wage was fair. Rose had moved down here from Glasgow and took quite a salary cut, but thought it was reasonable and in line with what she could have got elsewhere in the area. One lady said that they were not allowed to unionise, but Mr. David, when I related this to him, said he had never heard talk of wanting unionization. The employee herself had been aware of other working practices. Several made it clear that they knew about regulation breaks and wage rates.

The dresses were made for a wide range of companies and brands. A lot were for mail order firms such as Robert Shaw. Then there were some for Laura Ashley which were probably Laura Ashley designs. Then there were Empire Stores in Bradford, Grattons in Leeds, Debenhams, BHS, and C&A. One of my interviewees judged the garments to be made for the low end of the market, with a lot being

made especially for sales. They were sold under the name of the firm that was marketing them, not under Morphy's. By and large, Morphy's generated their own designs, and it was from the design that they sold to the retailer. The designers were supplied with magazines for ideas, and sent off, for instance to Manchester so they could keep abreast of fashion trends.

Essentially the operation of the factory did not change for the decades from the fifties to the eighties. There were developments and experiments of course, and we'll look at some of these in the next article, along with working conditions.

FARMING AT BOTTOMS FARM, SILVERDALE, PRE THE WORLD WARS: THE ROLE OF THE FARMERS WIFE.

Margaret Lambert

Richard George and Lydia Ann, my husband's grandparents, came to Bottoms Farm in 1900 with seven children. I do not hesitate to say that Lydia Ann was the driving force here – small in stature, but strong in body and mind. This piece is dedicated to her.

The farmhouse, especially the kitchen, was the power house of the farm. Everyone gathered there, decisions were made and folk were fed. The Farmer's wife was pivotal to the day-to-day running of the house. Feeding everyone was her main occupation. After his animals and the land, food was high on the Farmer's list, and word would travel amongst farm lads as to where the best meals were to be had. The cooking was done on a big black-leaded range, containing a large oven on the right-hand-side and a hot water boiler on the left, both heated by the fire. This never went completely out.

Along with the domestic chores, additional outside jobs were done by the Farmer's wife. She would be in charge of:

- the dairy
- the garden
- poultry
- the domestic pig
- calf-rearing
- butter making.

Occasionally, Lydia Ann would catch the train to Ulverston Market, with her few eggs, small pats of butter and bunches of flowers, in season, to supplement her household income.

Bearing in mind that, during this period, there was no mains water in Silverdale, rain/surface water was collected either in large wooden barrels or, as at Bottoms Farm, in big stone storage tanks, sited on the outside walls nearest the kitchen or dairy. Rain water was channelled into these tanks from the roof. At Bottoms Farm there was a hand pump at the side of the kitchen sink, this made life much easier. The sink was made of stone and sometimes glazed. Outside, in the yard and in the fields, water had to be brought manually to the stock. There were wells on the farm and also large stone storage tanks on the ends of the farm buildings.

Wash days started on Sunday night with the soaking of the dirtiest clothes in dolly tubs. They were then rung out in the morning, and rinsed before they were put into clean hot water. The Farmer's wife was up early to light the Copper fire, where all the white washing was done. She had an array of wash tubs and rubbing boards at her disposal and also a mangle. This was a really useful machine, it had a pair of wooden rollers, turned by a wheel, with a handle on the side. After rinsing, the wet clothes were put through the mangle, to squeeze out as much of the water as possible before they were put out to dry. It was hard work with large families and with farm lads living in. Bottoms Farm has a large drying rack in the kitchen which was used on wet days. Ironing was done on the kitchen table with flat or box irons.

Another very important job for the Farmer's wife was to make sure that all the oil lamps for lighting up the house were in good working order. Every morning lamps were checked, topped up with oil/paraffin, the wicks were trimmed so they burned evenly, and the glass chimneys were gently washed in warm soapy water, rinsed and left to air dry. Good light was essential, especially for the mending and darning of clothes in the darker months.

Baking days at Bottoms Farm were marathons, with eight children and farm men all to feed. Dough for making bread and teacakes was put into large pancheons, covered with damp white cloths and put in a warm place to prove. Pastry was made for pies and pasties, and farm butter and eggs were used to make sponges, gingerbread and light fruit cakes. The cake mixture was put into large square tins. These were all kept in a large food safe in the dairy – with slatted shelves and mesh doors. This is still at Bottoms Farm and used daily. The flour for baking was bought from the miller at the local Corn Mill, and arrived in hessian bags. When empty, the sacks were shaken, opened up down the sides, washed and made into aprons for the Farmer's wife to wear when doing rough/dirty work.

The Orchard was also a rich source of food – apples, pears, plums and damsons all grew here. 'Keepers' (cooking apples) were stored in cool conditions and these would see Lydia Ann through the winter months. Damsons were used in the kitchen to make jam (a staple food), but were also sold at the Farm gate – another source of income for her. Herbs were grown to flavour food, but were also used for medicinal purposes; keeping the family

in good health was a priority – the Doctor had to be paid at that time.

One of the most important days for Lydia Ann would be the killing of the domestic pig. Early in the morning the big Copper was filled because lots of boiling water was needed. After the act was done, the offal was taken away to be made into black-pudding, sausage meat and potted meat. The fat was rendered for lard and the pork scratchings were a treat for the children and farm lads. Hams and flitches (bacon) were put onto stone slabs, covered in salt and saltpetre to cure. These were then hung in white cotton bags from hooks in a cool, dry place. The roasting joints were cut up for home use, but it was the custom to give one or two away to friends, who would then return the favour.

Life was hard on the Farm, but there was a natural rhythm with the seasons, and the great satisfaction of a job well done. I hope Lydia Ann would approve of this narrative.

Margaret Lambert.
August 2012.
Bottoms Farm.

CARNFORTH AND ITS IRON WORKERS: THEIR LABOUR, WAGES, AND HABITS

Clive Holden has contributed this piece of 19th Century local industrial history. It is an edited verbatim account first published in the Liverpool Albion and reprinted in the Lancaster Guardian of the 13th September 1873.

'Carnforth would be nothing without its railway station and smelting works; in truth it was the former which called it into existence. Just like Crewe, no one ever heard of Carnforth until the place was fixed upon by the railway companies as a convenient site for a 'junction'; and now, just as every London train stops at Crewe, so each train bound for the North is brought to a stand at Carnforth; even though it has dashed, at a heightened speed and with a vain-glorious whistle – as who should say, "I'm the great express, and much too grand to halt at so paltry a place" – through staid, handsome Lancaster, six miles nearer to the south.

With the exception of a few agriculturists, the population of this little town, sprung up where a few years back were waving tree-groves, pasture-land and corn fields, is composed entirely of persons connected with the blast-furnaces, and with the London and North Western, the Furness, and the Midland Railway Companies. The aristocracy is made up of the manager of the iron works, the doctor, and the clergyman, for which latter personage a small chapel has been built, since Carnforth in old times never possessed a church. Next comes the middle-class society, comprising the railway clerks and inspectors, the clerks at the smelting establishment, and others. The third

grade of Carnforthians is the most numerous; it embraces almost the whole population, to wit, the iron-workers and the railway porters.

The town has its older houses, built of limestone from Warton Crag, a mountain that guards the entrance to Furness scenery; the newer ones are of ordinary quarry-stone, together with a large number lately put up by the owners of the blast furnaces which are, we believe, of a peculiar cement construction, and were brought to Carnforth in a 'piece form'. The names given to the ranges of dwellings are characteristic enough; we have for instance: Bessemer-terrace, Free-Trade Buildings, and Pig-iron Row. The house accommodation is quite inadequate to the number of inhabitants, so that many of the workmen employed at Carnforth have to seek lodgment in the pretty village of Bolton-le-Sands, two miles to the south, or else at Warton and Yealand Conyers. The country around is luxurious in appearance: two small rivers, the Keer and the Beela, wind down to a flat swamp that forms a continuation of the waste sands in Morecambe Bay.

The blast furnaces here are five in number, another being in course of erection; they belong to the Carnforth Haematite Iron Company, who commenced building the works in the latter part of 1864, fixing upon the present situation as being convenient for the procural of haematite ore by means of the Furness Railway, of lime as a flux from the adjacent Warton kilns, and of coal and coke from the colliery districts but five-and-twenty miles away. The combustible gases given off at the 'throats' of the furnaces are conducted from the summits into a large oblong

underground reservoir, whence they are conveyed beneath an extensive set of boilers, where, with a certain admixture of atmospheric air, they serve to raise steam for the working of the gigantic engines attached to the blowing machine. The blast, heated also by waste vapours from the smelting mass, is driven into the *tuyeres* at the unusually high temperature of 1100 degrees; these *tuyeres*, too, upon reaching the furnaces, take a steep downward curve before entering, which is also an improvement, and precludes the danger, when the blast is temporarily suspended for the purpose of 'casting', of the smelted material rushing into the vacuum of the *tuyeres*, bursting the stop-cock, and creating an explosion.

Let us now glance at the workers themselves. First there are a number of men, styled 'fillers'; these shovel the ore and limestone in proper proportions into one iron-plated barrow, and the coke into another, and wheel them onto the 'lift' to be raised to the galleries at the summit of the furnaces. This, of course, proves mere labourer's work, and receives ordinary labourer's pay. Upon arriving at the top of the lift-tower, the barrows are taken in hand by another set of workers, the 'chargers'. These men at proper intervals, of which it is their business to be judges, wheel the material into the openings in each furnace and empty it into the funnel-shaped opening at the top; the 'bell' which covers a hole at the bottom of the hollow is then lowered by the charger within the furnace, the smelting mixture being swallowed in as well. Every time that the bell is lowered in this way a large volume of choking gas rushes out enveloping the workman, who hurries away to escape breathing it. We were told that some three or four men each day were rendered insensible

by the sulphurous fumes, and had to be carried away for restoration from this temporary suffocation. This risk seems to be one disadvantage of the utilisation of the waste gases, an immense cloud rushing forth from the conducting apparatus each time the entrance to the furnace is uncovered. From the time when a charge is put in at the bell to the time when the metal resulting therefrom is tapped may be said to average perhaps sixty hours.

Turning now to the workers employed at the foot of the blast-furnace, in the front where the hearth, the tapping hole, and the casting-bed are situated, we have three persons to each furnace, namely the ‘keeper’, the ‘helper’, and the ‘slagger’. The keeper is the principal man; he judges of the proper moment when the metal shall be run out, forms the rows of sand-moulds on the casting-bed in front, and taps the furnace. In all his labours the helper assists; while it is the duty of the slagger to remove and direct in a right channel the scoriae and slag continually oozing out from an opening behind a stone called the ‘dam’, which lies above the tapping-hole. The slagger is a lad of thirteen or fourteen; from a slagger he will become a helper, and thence in a few years may rise to the position of keeper.

The visitor should walk in front of the furnaces at the time of casting. He will notice the long bed of sand, with the wider channel leading from the furnace and communicating with the series of rows of moulds, each of them the size and shape of what the ‘pigs’ will be; he will notice the keeper working away with a long-handled spade on a lever and throwing aside the slag, disclosing the bright orange liquid beneath, which rises and falls like the

human pulse, and streams away, and makes the atmosphere above it swim and pant. Then all at once from without the opening the flames will be seen to burst forth, hissing and lolling out their great tongues, and licking in the crinkled air; but the keeper eludes them and applies his huge lever steadily. And now the helper brings a sharp-fanged pike, which is driven with heavy blows into the clay-stuffed tap-hole beneath the *dam*; three or four men take turns to hammer the stopping in, and at last the tank of metal within is reached, the pike is withdrawn, then forth gushes the red-hot stream pure-looking as syrup.

All of the workmen connected with the actual manufacture of the metal are paid wages which vary with the quantity and quality of the metal produced. The earnings of a keeper or a charger averages 8s. per day; 5s.9d is certain, while the remainder depends upon circumstances which a good workman can materially govern. There are always instances of industrious men to be pointed at every establishment; accordingly, it was told us how one keeper, scarcely more than a youth, had drawn that day as his fortnightly wage the sum of £7.10s.. The men here, as at all blast-furnaces, work Sundays as well as week days. There is no change - night and day, year after year, the same routine goes on. The shifts of work at Carnforth are 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and 10p.m. to 6 a.m..

The ironworkers at Carnforth are not at all a dissipated class of persons. It is surprising, too, to see how soon they can sober themselves. A few hours before a man's gang have to take their turn of toil, you will see him incapably drunk; and yet when the time arrives he presents himself

as steadily and staidly as ever at the gate; perhaps it is the consciousness that, according to the agreement which he, in common with all employed at these works, has signed, half-a-crown will be the forfeit of absence which enables him to waken up just at the proper time. Should any workman absent himself, he whose spell of labour has just ended continues at his post during the defaulter's turn besides, and receives an extra eight hours pay. The half-crown fine goes to the doctor's fund. We asked if there was much ill-usage of wives among the men; no such case was recollected, but we were informed that a few weeks before a strapping Carnforth wife had been sent to Lancaster Castle for beating her husband.'

REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS

28th March 2012: Sharpe, Paley and Austin.

James Price, author of two publications about the practice, and part author of another study yet to be published, was well qualified to talk about this distinguished firm of Lancaster architects. It all started in 1836 when the multi-talented Edmund Sharpe opened an office in Lancaster and worked alone for a short period before taking on Edward Paley, first as a pupil, then from 1845 as a partner in the firm of Sharpe and Paley. There then followed a bewildering series of changes in the name of the firm from 1851 when Sharpe decided that his interests lay elsewhere, and for the next seventeen years the practice was only in Paley's name, until he took into partnership Hubert James Austin, who had previously worked for Sir George Gilbert Scott. This situation lasted until 1886 when Harry Paley, only son of Edward, joined the firm, which thus became Paley, Austin and Paley, and remained so until 1895 when Edward Paley died and the firm became Austin and Paley. As if this was not confusing enough, in 1914 Austin's son Geoffrey joined the firm which then briefly became Austin, Paley and Austin, but Hubert Austin died in 1915 and Geoffrey did not return to the practice after the war, so that Harry Paley carried on alone for a time, though by 1925 the firm was again known as Austin and Paley.

To describe the work of the firm in depth would take up many issues of the Mourholme Magazine; suffice to say that each partner had his own strengths, and a practised eye can identify who was responsible for what. Though heavily involved in the Gothic revival, evident in many of

their churches, they were by no means stereotyped, nor were they limited to designing churches. The bulk of their work is in Lancashire and Cumbria, including railway stations for the Furness Railway, but they occasionally worked farther afield, as at Hertford, and near Henley on Thames. The firm's golden period was in the nineteenth century, but it was not until 1944 that the business was officially wound up. Sadly most of the firm's records were destroyed, so that it may never be possible to account for all of the firm's contracts, many of which were for additions or minor alterations to buildings. James Price showed slides of many of the firm's outstanding works, and readers of his books will be amazed at the vast number of buildings known to be products of the firm, and how many are, so to speak, on our doorstep.

April 24th 2012: There is no spring without St. George.
Most of us probably regard England's patron saint as merely the knight in shining armour who slays the dragon and saves the damsel, but Dr. Sam Riches informed us that he was much more than that, and that other tales of the slaying of dragons and such like monsters go back many centuries, with the story of Perseus and Andromeda as a good example, as is the story of the Lambton worm in our own country. St. George can be seen as a symbol of good versus evil, humans versus wild animals, civilisation versus barbarism, or the church versus non-believers.

Nor is it coincidence that we celebrate St. George's Day in April, for he can be regarded as a ploughman, a cultivator of land and the harbinger of spring, as opposed to St. Michael (another dragon slayer), who symbolises autumn

and gives his name to Michaelmas. Just as holy relics used to be (and perhaps still are) sold as bringers of good fortune to the buyers – and profit to the sellers – so would St. George badges be sold to hopeful pilgrims, who might wish for protection for their livestock, or a cure for skin diseases. There were certain taboos to be observed, such as not sitting on wet ground or drinking from a spring before St. George's Day.

We do not have sole claim to St. George, for he is patron saint of many lands and professions. He has been much used to inspire patriotic fervour, such as during the Crusades and as, Shakespeare reminds us in 'King Henry V', at Harfleur, with the cry: "God for Harry! England! and St. George!"

September 26th 2012: The Silverdale Hoard and other local finds.

For such a topic a good attendance was expected, and so it was, for Yealand Village Hall was packed to capacity for Dot Boughton's presentation. She started by showing that, not surprisingly, though metal detecting has improved chances, finds in the North of England are still much rarer than in the south and in East Anglia. Many of us would be unaware that the old laws pertaining to treasure trove have changed significantly since the introduction of the Treasure Act 1996, and that other laws apply in Scotland. Whatever laws there are, much depends on the integrity of those who make the finds and the care with which their finds are recorded.

We were then shown important Cumbrian finds of recent years, such as the Crosby Garrett helmet, which sadly did not find a home in Cumbria, and the Furness Hoard of April 2011 which consists of Viking coins and ingots etc.. The discovery of the Silverdale Hoard only six months later was an almost incredible bonus, consisting as it does of many items from a slightly later Viking period, including bracelets and coins, some of them of Arabic origin. What is to become of the hoard ? Lancaster Museum is keen to provide it with a home, but much depends on the valuation placed on it, and no doubt competition will be keen.

Several questions were fired at the speaker from a keenly interested audience, such as the reason for the apparent error in naming the hoard, and more questions would have been asked had time permitted.

24th October 2012: Lesser known traditional houses and buildings open to the public in Lancashire.

Kevin Illingworth made a welcome return to give the second part of his illustrated talk on this subject, dealing with public houses, tea rooms and restaurants before going on to more traditional family homes and farms.

Of immediate interest was Yealand's own New Inn, partly of the 17th Century, with blind lintels over the fireplace, probably removed from a door. We were then taken to 'The Cottage' at Blackpool, built with cobbles, before moving on to the Manor House at Clapham and the White Bear at Barrowford, both with large open fireplaces sporting joggle voussoirs. Stang End at Hutton-le-Hole

(way up in Yorkshire) and the Boar's Head at Newchurch had a witch post and a witch beam respectively, while at Astley Hall was to be found a comparatively short 'long gallery'. Other places in Lancashire worthy of mention were Winewall, where is to be found a corn drying kiln, and Cockerham Hall Farm. As well as crossing into Yorkshire, several times we crossed the boundary into Cumbria, to the very old Castle Dairy at Kendal, or to view a large barn with cruck beams at Park House Farm, Heversham, but appropriately enough we finished near to home at Borwick Hall, where the late 16th century staircase was an item of interest.

All of these places were of some antiquity, and each had its own peculiarity. There are various study groups for those who wish to explore further, but arm yourself first with a dictionary of architecture if you want to know what 'joggle voussoirs' are!

November 28th 2012: How dark were the Dark Ages?

There must have been several in the audience who were 'in the dark' as to the significance of the term 'Dark Ages', but we were told by Dr. Rachel Newman that they were those years between the departure of the Romans and the arrival of the Normans. Apparently, relatively little had subsequently been known about the period.

By the time the Romans left Britain in 410 A.D. most of them had become anglicised (de-Romanised might be a better term), so that true Roman influence had been on the wane for many years. Mass production of metalwork and pottery, for example, ceased in the fifth century. Very few

Dark Age sites had been verified prior to 1980, and, other than in the works of the Venerable Bede and a handful of others, there was little written evidence of what went on: it was indeed a period shrouded in darkness.

Relics such as the granary at Birdoswald, the cross at Bewcastle, a wall and gate at Heysham and findings near Brougham Castle are all known to be from the Dark Ages, but it is only with more recent discoveries and improvements in techniques, such as carbon dating, that more light is being shed on the Dark Ages, or Early Medieval period as it is now commonly called.

Dr. Newman said that cultural change was difficult to define, but there was evidence of Scandinavian cultural influence, and as more finds are being unearthed a more detailed picture is gradually being built up. Nevertheless, there is much yet to be learned before we can say that we are fully enlightened about the Dark Ages.

December 13th: The Christmas meeting

The meeting opened with Christmas readings from Richard and Awena Carter. This was followed by a short account by Sheila Jones of her fascinating oral history research into Morphy's Mill at Carnforth (see Sheila's article on page 4 of this magazine). After a break for refreshments, including mince pies, Clive Holden presented a local history quiz, which was much enjoyed, with members cudgelling their brains for the answers to some of the more obscure questions.

23 January 2013: Roadside Heritage

Andrew Lowe of Kendal gave an illustrated talk Roadside Heritage. Through his work as a National Park warden, cycling in his younger days, and his interest in photography he had noticed the many things of interest beside our roads, particularly the older ones, and he then sought out more examples.

When turnpike roads were built, they were required to have milestones or mileposts every mile. These can be of stone, cast iron or a cast iron plate mounted on a stone. Many survive and are to the same design along each road, although when the originals are replaced the design can change. For example a cast iron milestone of 1757 survives 12 miles from Kendal, but 3 miles nearer Kendal is a nineteenth century limestone replacement milestone with the simpler but more cryptic inscription "K 9". A very rare survival at Middleton, Cumbria is a Roman milestone, 53 (Roman) miles from an unknown place but probably Carlisle.

Also from the turnpike era are Tollhouses. A good example is found in Keswick, with a splay bay with good views up and down the road. In the middle of the bay is what appears to be a blocked up door or window. This is where a board would have been which listed the charges.

Boundary stones are often but not always similar in size and shape to milestones. The most important stones mark boundaries between counties, such as that between Lancashire and Westmorland near Windermere. Others

delineate Local Boards, parishes or townships. A different type in Keswick reading "C K & P R Co" marks the boundary of land belonging to the former Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway Company.

Signposts are found at the junctions of country lanes and many of the cast iron examples survive, often with the location on the top. The AA supplemented milestones and signposts with black and yellow enamel signs list the distance to places, both nearby and further afield, and some of these also survive.

Many masons in the eighteenth century were illiterate, so errors, such as transposed letters, can be found on milestones,. Spelling can also be erratic, with even inconsistencies on the same piece of work, although spelling was only becoming standardised at this time. One milestone has the distance to Kendal as 3 miles originally which was then corrected to 7. Errors are, however, not confined to this period. A modern enamel sign marks a route as a "Public Birdleway".

Also from the AA, eight telephone boxes survive, including one at Dunmail Raise. The traditional red telephone box was designed by Giles Gilbert Scott. The first version or K2 was used for 2,000 boxes in London then the similar but smaller and simpler K6 version was used for 60,000 boxes elsewhere. Before the introduction of telephone boxes a small blue enamel sign would indicate shops where the telephone could be used. These signs are all thought to have disappeared in recent years.

Post boxes bear the initials of the monarch reigning when they were installed. They can thus be used to trace the spread of urban development. They are painted red because red paint was cheap. Before enclosure, pinfolds were used to impound stray animals until a fine was paid for their release. A good example survives at Field Broughton. Most communities have a war memorial. Often similar in appearance are memorials celebrating Queen Victoria's golden and diamond jubilees. Most memorials were designed by local people but the war memorial at Muncaster is a slender design by Lutyens.

Other items to look out for are "pill boxes", May Poles, and drinking fountains, the last worthy of a study in themselves. Do not overlook manhole covers. In Sedbergh is a fine one cast by the noted Victorian engineer Thomas Crapper (contrary to what the speaker said, the origin of the slang term 'crap' is much earlier than Thomas Crapper, see OED).

Much of our Roadside Heritage is under threat from neglect, theft or legitimate removal. In this last case, notably, are telephone boxes (the lecturer had campaigned successfully to save some of these). This Heritage is worth recording and preserving. Many types of items are now listed. Local groups should record the Roadside Heritage in their area.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Local Study Days in April

The Centre for North West Regional Studies (CNWRS) is a department at Lancaster University which publishes and sells books about the North West and runs regular study days which usually last from 9.30am to 4pm.

They are holding a study day entitled:
The Manorial Documents Register for Lancashire,
on Saturday 20th April, Biology Lecture Theatre,
Lancaster University.

Contact details:
CNWRS Fylde College,
Lancaster University,
Lancaster, LA1 4YF

Telephone: 01524 593770
Website: http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/cnwrs/
Email: christine.wilkinson@lancaster.ac.uk

The University of Central Lancashire is holding a study day entitled:
Discovering the North-West in the National Archives
Saturday 27 April, University of Central Lancashire,
Preston, 10am to 4pm.

Contact Susan Bailey, Telephone: 01772 893053, email: lfhistory@uclan.ac.uk