

THE MOURHOLME MAGAZINE OF  
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## **RESEARCHING THE CARNFORTH BRANCH OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

**Sheila Jones**

2021 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal British Legion; a long time for any organization. I became very fond of the Legion when, for many years, I taught primary school in Canada. They used to run a speech competition for all the pupils in the Toronto area, which was a very worthwhile endeavour.

They also used to send representatives to each school on Remembrance Day. I taught in 5 schools over 20 years and the occasion was never less than deeply moving. The students, of an enormous range of nations and ethnicities, evinced deep respect as three old men would march into assembly with their colours, and conduct a short service ending with taps and the lowering of the colours. Students and teachers alike were humbled by their dignity.

So, when it was mooted that Mourholme Magazine should have an article commemorating the anniversary, I was happy to research the Carnforth branch of the Royal British Legion, with its building on the rise across the A6 from Booths. I looked up the website, but there was no answer to the message I left on the answer machine, nor did I get a response from the national organization, which has Carnforth listed. Hoping for some oral history instead, I next turned to our City Councillor who is Carnforth born and bred. He was also surprised to hit a block when he looked for men who might have helped, lamenting that we were trying too late, that those who could have helped were gone. Not all memories were lost; our committee member, Clive Holden, remembers that a WW1

gun used to be in place, facing across the road, but that it probably went for scrap during the Second World War. He also remembers before that war being sent by his mother to buy a bottle of Christmas rum from the old wooden shack that then served as the HQ.

With a smidgeon of hope, then, I contacted Brian Bleasedale, who at least had done his National Service. He came up with the name of a Mr Wildman, a Carnforth resident and a member, and such a chain of connections was started! Unfortunately, there was no address for Mr Wildman, only a particular square of flats in Carnforth. I had used to know a Ged from that spot, but could not remember his surname, so I telephoned Barbara, who is in the lunch club I run (in happier times). She could not remember Ged's surname either but knew the little area I was talking about and has a relative who lives there. She would phone her. In an hour or so a call came back that her cousin had gone so far as to pop out and check Mr Wildman's house number.

Joyfully I put on my coat and picked up a notepad, all set. When I rang his bell, Mr Wildman answered the door briskly, but disappointingly. He said he had only joined the Legion when the Railwaymen's Club folded in 2019 and knew nothing of the history at all. However, he added that the grannie of the lady who currently runs the Legion was his next-door neighbour! What luck! This door was also answered quickly, with a non-Covid secure, 'Come in!' She cheerfully sat on the stairs leading down from her flat while I explained my mission, and gave me directions to continue walking to her granddaughter's house. Clearly glad of a chat, she went on to tell me tales of her childhood in Carnforth and of her time

working at Morphy's Mill. As she came to her gate to see me off, I felt as though I were reaching the heart of my quest.

Sadly, not so; granddaughter explained that although the Legion was members only and basically non-profit, it was essentially run as a pub, also hiring out the hall for functions, but having no activities suggestive of its founding character. This description would only be amended slightly when I learned that the committee lays a wreath at the cenotaph on Armistice Day. Unsure if she herself would be able to find anyone who would agree to talk to me, she suggested that I go to see Mrs Hobbs, who lives in the house next to the club.

I was too tired at this point to go and see Mrs Hobbs, but at the same time buoyed by the reflection that even if my research was proving unsuccessful, what lovely community connections I had seen. For how much longer will an incomer, like myself, be able to feed into such a network, spanning generations and depending on a variety of means of acquaintance?

Up until this time I had used the term 'Legion' unchallenged, but when I went to see Mrs Hobbs the next day, she quickly corrected me and said that the 'Ex-Servicemen's Club', as it is, had disaffiliated from the Royal British Legion some decades ago when the organization was asking for subs that the branch could not afford. They had felt at that time they should actually be receiving support. 'Ex-Servicemen's Club' is still written on the building, but it does not seem as though even this fits the current club, given the granddaughter/steward's description.

The process of change began when Mrs Hobbs and her husband, Gerald, moved in next door to the club on the A6 in September, 1970. It was the same hut Clive described, only undoubtedly more dilapidated by then. Gerald and some friends decided to get involved and put it on its feet again. Five couples went to their banks and bravely borrowed money, putting up their houses as collateral, to buy beer and other comestibles. It was a men's club, but these wives quickly made clear that if their houses were being risked, they themselves wanted to be full members. A ladies' committee was formed separately and everything quickly snowballed. The club needed a steward for the evenings and Mrs Hobbs agreed to do it unpaid for three months, leaving her boys at home next door. (Next door to the club, and also to her sister who lived on the other side). Gerald, who worked at Tilcon, the quarry where Pine Lake is now, was allowed to borrow heavy equipment to dig out land on which to build an extension to the hut, considerably bigger than the original and with greatly improved facilities. He brought navvies from the quarry to help on the weekends. I asked how they paid them but Mrs Hobbs said they did it for bacon butties and beer. Albert Fothergill, whose yard was obliquely opposite the club on the A6 where Border Aggregates is now, donated cement. Barry Gladstone, another original member, worked at the Wimpy quarry on Warton Crag and he was given donations in kind to help the refurbishment.

'Overnight,' says Mrs Hobbs, 'we made it into a family club; only the under 15s had to be out by 9 o'clock.' She, Pauline Woodhouse, and other members of the women's committee ran raffles for fundraising. The hall was let for functions. Brian Bleasdale's fishing club used to hire it and have food and entertainment, along with prize giving. The committee would

treat sales reps well, as they did everybody, perhaps by giving them a hamburger and a drink; and would hope their companies might make a donation. This might be something like a couple of barrels of beer. Mrs Hobbs wrote to company heads, such as the chairman of Carling's, to ask for donations towards children's Christmas parties, pantomimes, trips to The Grand for children, pensioners' trips, and goodie bags to give away on these occasions. These were all free to participants to thank the members for their support. They used to use Silver Fern coaches and were never charged the market price. Adult activities included darts and football teams, and of course there was dancing. Sunday night became line-dancing night and they had weekend artists providing entertainment. People would dress up for the evening.

Some of their functions were designed as Fundraisers for local charities. Mrs Hobbs remembers a donation of £800 to the then Spastics Society for a TV and sundries. A big fundraising event for a heart charity had Jim Bowen from 'Bullseye' as a guest, and he donated 'bullies' (a sought-after ornament of a bull) for prizes.

Mrs Hobbs was deservedly made a life member, but she claims another honorary member, a ghost. There had been a regular attendee known as Old Cissie, the grandmother of the committee member, Barry Gladstone. She always had her own seat near the fire door. One evening as she sat there, Barry became alarmed at her appearance. She said she did not feel too grand so he went to get her a glass of water, but when he returned, she was dead. No one else ever sat in Old Cissie's chair after that. Sometime later, when Mrs Hobbs was cleaning after everyone had gone home, she felt a noise and a draught, and saw the heavy fire door had inexplicably and impossibly

swung open. ‘It was the ghost of Old Cissie. She had come back to her seat!’ Mrs Hobbs was so alarmed that she phoned her son to come over, but what his reaction was she forbore to tell.

Now, as I write, the ex-servicemen’s club is in lockdown, but it still has everything in place to open up again for regular members and functions, and is ready to serve its purpose in the community. When Mrs Hobbs left in 2016 ‘it was £4,000 in the black and neat and tidy and all the jobs done,’ a tribute, as she said, to all the staff and volunteers over many years.

But what a shame to be unable to trace any history of the Carnforth Branch of the British Legion. If anyone does know anything, it would be wonderful to hear from you and get it on record.

*In this fascinating article which started off researching the Carnforth British Legion and developed into a skilful piece of oral history, Sheila refers to people and places she has written about in the past.*

*For her articles on Brian Bleasdale see magazines 2020 No.1, issue 77, and 2020 No.2, issue 78.*

*For her articles on Morphy’s Mill see magazines 2013, No.1, issue 63, and 2013, No.2 issue 64.*

*All these articles can be accessed from The Mourholme Local History Society’s website at [www.mourholme.co.uk](http://www.mourholme.co.uk)*

## **TITHE MAPS: AN INTRODUCTION**

**Simon Williams**

The Mourholme Society of Local History, with the help of Lancashire Archives, recently published, on our website, high resolution digital images of the 1846 Tithe Maps of the old parish of Warton. Accompanying these maps are detailed schedules describing the land of each of the seven townships that make up the old Parish of Warton. See:

<http://www.mourholme.co.uk/?Maps>

Tithe Maps, produced for many (but not all) areas of England and Wales between 1841 and 1851, were a necessary means to the rationalisation of the ancient system of giving one tenth of the production of any parcel of land to the church. By the time of the Tithe Commutation Act 1836 tithes were often paid to landlords, and sometimes in cash rather than kind. These Tithe Maps and Schedules stipulated the tithes to be paid henceforth from each field and property. For a fuller description of this history: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tithe\\_map](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tithe_map)

The Tithe Maps are large scale maps. Each field or piece of land featured on a tithe map carries a number. By cross-referencing this number with the corresponding number under the Field Number column in the Tithe Schedule, we can learn:

- Landowner name
- The occupier
- Field name and/or description of the property
- The state of cultivation of the field
- The size (acres, roods and perches)
- Tithe owner - i.e. to whom the tithe is paid



As a result, title maps and schedules are an invaluable resource to local historians and genealogists, providing a snapshot of the detailed map of the land, the names of owners and occupiers, and a short description of the use of that land.

Once the maps were available on our website, we asked Mourholme members to take a look, and note any features that struck them as interesting. Of course, each map reader will spot different things. In this magazine we will look at Pam Davies' and Simon Williams' observations on the Warton with Lindeth map, and Geoff Wood's observations on the Silverdale map.

## **WARTON WITH LINDETH TITHE MAP** **Pam Davies and Simon Williams**

The historic township of Warton with Lindeth included not only the area around Warton but part of modern Silverdale. Figure 1 shows that the northern, seaward, boundary of the Township was the wall of the Lots just north of Shore Road. You can also see the Britannia Hotel, now the Silverdale Hotel. In 1932 Lindeth was decoupled from Warton and added to Silverdale, with which it has a much more natural modern fit.

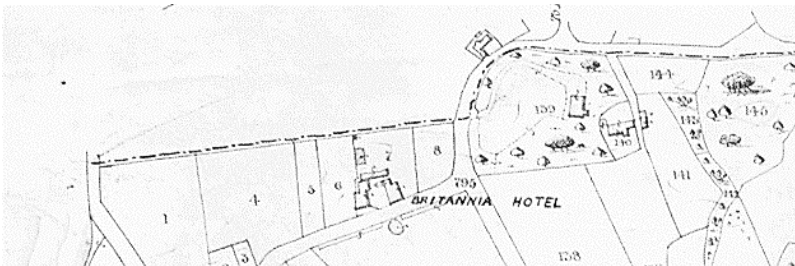


Figure 1

The northern boundary of the historic Township of Warton with Lindeth.



Figure 2  
Browns Houses, Dykes Farm and the Chimney at Jenny Browns Point

Before following the boundary further, it is worth looking at Jenny Brown's Point. In Figure 2 you can see several buildings including what is labelled as a Mine Shaft, but in fact is our celebrated chimney. The copper smelter had been out of commission for nearly 50 years, and so the surveyors might be forgiven for misinterpreting the ruins. Still, it is surprising that local memories did not correct this nomenclature.

The Warton with Lindeth boundary follows Stankelt Road, but with a strange indentation so that The Chase, south of the road, belongs to Silverdale, not Warton. Then, heading towards Warton, there is a Toll Bar, at the dogleg where Sand Lane meets the Warton Crag lower road (near the top of Figure 3, overleaf). The Toll Road was built by Edward Dawson and initiated in 1837, making for an easier route between Carnforth/Warton and Silverdale and avoiding the need to climb Warton Crag. The buildings of Coat Stone House are virtually on the shore line, making them look vulnerable to floods. The Warton marshes still flood at Spring tides, but Carnforth's iron works later created slag heaps at the low tide

edge of the marshes, usually holding the sea at bay and incidentally providing a site for the present Stock Car racecourse.

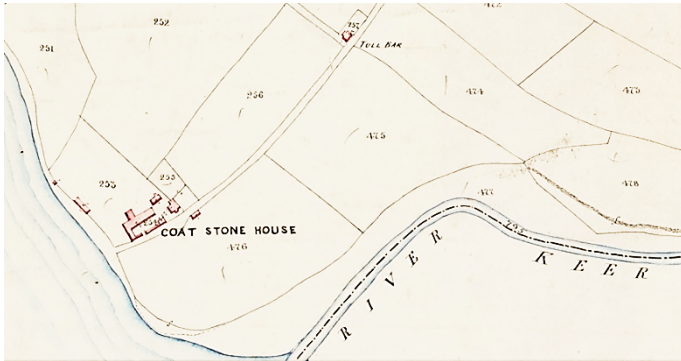


Figure 3: Coat Stone House, now Cote Stones Farm, and the Toll Bar

On towards Warton village the tithe map shows a small cluster of buildings at the Sand Lane/Mill Lane/Main Street junction. Looking down Mill Lane towards Carnforth, there's only a couple of buildings just before the river, which forms the township boundary, but none of the rest of Millhead has yet been built. The schedule tells us that field 488 down there are *buildings and yard* owned by Edmund Clowes and occupied by John Lamb, and the adjacent portions of land have the same ownership and occupancy and are variously pasture, arable and meadow, rejoicing in names including Jacks Ings<sup>1</sup> and Neck Cloth (long and thin, that one).

Other interesting features on the Tithe map include Hying, identified in the schedule as *Mansion House, pleasure grounds etc*, owned and occupied by John Bolden. It has a circular

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<sup>1</sup> In issue 78 Sheila Jones drew on Winchester's *'Lake District Field-Names* where 'Ing' is identified as meadow land in a low, moist position. Jack generally denotes small, so Jack Ings means small meadow.

entrance drive which Google maps satellite view shows is still a feature of the monastery. The Lancaster and Carlisle Railway slices through the east of the Township, although the railway to Silverdale hasn't yet been built. In the north east there is a section of the Lancaster Canal, northwards from Tewitfield, the Township boundary being just one field to the east. The name Tewit Field appears in three places. I wondered why until I found that tewit is another word for a lapwing or peewit: there must have been a lot of them around.

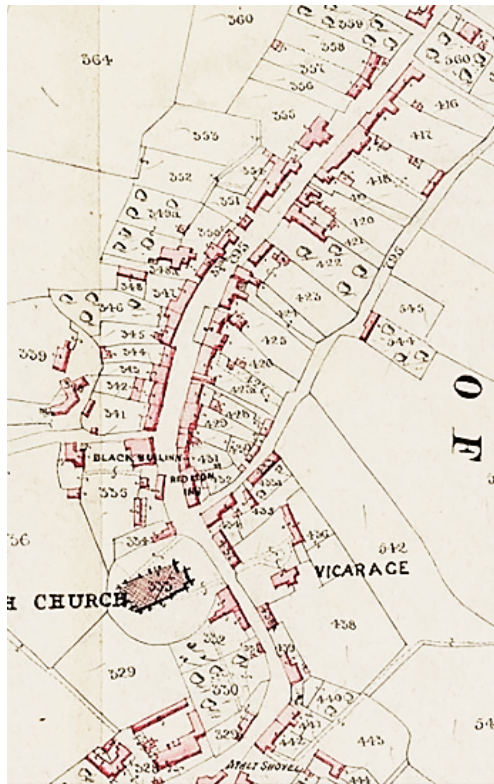


Figure 4: Warton's main street as it was in 1846

Warton's Main Street is solidly built up on both sides from before the church up to Coach Road and a bit beyond. Figure 4 clearly shows the Church and Vicarage, the Methodist Chapel, the Malt Shovel, the Black Bull (still a pub, but now called the George Washington). There is also the Red Lion, which no longer exists. The garden plots running down to Back Lane are clearly shown. The current Old School Brewery seems to be identified as *barn* at 340, owned and occupied by Robert Airey.

Plenty of fascinating stuff still to go at!

## **OBSERVATIONS ON THE SILVERDALE TITHE MAP** **Geoff Woods**

Here are some of the varied and fascinating observations that a study of a tithe map, with its schedules and plot numbers, can yield.

### **LAND OWNERS**

Looking first at the ownership schedule I was surprised to see that a few people owned great swathes of Silverdale. Some of these were:

#### **Reverend William Carus Wilson**

He is listed as owner of Cove House and all the land from the site of Gaskell Hall to the shore and including The Lots. He also appears as occupier of substantial areas of land owned by the Incumbent of Casterton Chapel. He owned the field on which St John's church was subsequently built.

#### **Thomas Inman**

He was the owner of Hill House, which is now the Woodlands Hotel. It is listed as a mansion with pleasure ground

plantations; these have now become Eaves Wood. He also owned a very large area from Eaves Wood up to The Green.

**Margaret Burrow**

She owned lots of land along The Row, near Dog Slack Well and about 24 acres in strips of land on Silverdale Moss. Her surname is, of course, well known in the present-day village.

**Henry Paul Fleetwood**

He was the creator of Fleetwood, and owned the Wolf House and several plots of land.

**VILLAGE ORIGIN**

I was also interested to see that what we now think of as the sprawling village of Silverdale, clearly appears on the tithe map as a group of hamlets - small settlements with no church or place of worship. These are:

The Green

Waterslack

The Row

Bradshawgate

Lindeth

Redbridge

**LAND USE**

It is interesting to see the uses the land was put to. For example, off Moss Lane, about 45 narrow strips of land (fields 288a to 334) are all listed as pasture or arable with many different owners/occupiers. These might have been used for peat cutting but their length from Moss Lane would make transport very difficult. Looking on Google Earth the boundaries of many of these fields are still visible as drainage ditches, so it is possible ditches were used to mark boundaries.

## **ROADS**

Most of the roads have not changed. One exception is Spring Bank which was then just a short lane next to what was the Blacksmiths Shop.

A map of our present roads show two realignments from the tithe map:

One is the road from the Methodist Church to the Bowling Green, where a major re-alignment was needed as development took place. This explains the strange junction at Castle Bank/Woodlands Drive.

The other realignment was caused by the building of the railway and created the new junction at Storrs Lane, by the Golf Club.

## **THE SCROGGS**

This is an example of the way a name from one plot can migrate to another. On the list of plot numbers, Plots 143 and 144 are cottages and gardens owned by the Overseers of the Silverdale Poor and these are next to 142, which is a public quarry and an area now called The Scroggs. However, on the map, Scroggs Lots is the name shown on plot 150 on the opposite side of the lane to Burton Well, and at a distance from what is now known as the Scroggs.

**‘SADDLER’ MURRAY**  
**Clive Holden**

This article could have been entitled ‘Get stuffed!’, but the more sensitive of our readers might, with some justification, interpret that as an assault upon their dignity, therefore, the more prosaic title ‘Saddler’ Murray is preferred.

There may be a dwindling few of us who remember gazing into a large display window in Scotland Road, Carnforth, to admire the stuffed animals and birds exhibited within. The premises were those of A. J. ‘Saddler’ Murray, the well-known local taxidermist, son of Mr. H. Murray, who founded the business in 1872. Whether the display was static or whether it changed from time to time is not remembered, but it was always a source of wonder and admiration.

The following are extracts from a letter written in June 1983 by Mrs. J.C. Sutcliffe, the then curator at Kendal Museum, to a Mr. Grange, who had requested information about Mr. Murray.

Several old established Carnforth families have been contacted and Mr. A.J. Murray is well remembered; although many people can talk about his family connections, nothing too specific emerges about his life and work ...A niece’s widower says that A.J. Murray retired in 1958 and went to live at ‘Sunny Brae’, Beetham Road, Milnthorpe, where he died in 1961. His widow died some years later...A.J. Murray’s work premises appear to have been adjacent to his home at 6, Scotland Road, Carnforth. He carried out his business here and had a first-class helper, Mr. Tommy Salkeld, who continued the business some



years after Murray's retirement, working from 2, Station Buildings, Carnforth, now a house furnisher's shop owned by Mr.G.T. McNulty. Salkeld died a few years ago, but his widow lives at 25, Church Bank, Over Kellet.

Tommy Salkeld had an assistant, Colin Preston, who is retired and living in the South of England. Both Murray and Salkeld were helped by a lady (sic) assistant, Mrs. Simpson, whose husband was also involved. Mr. and Mrs. Simpson are in their seventies and living at 2, Pond Street, Carnforth...Mrs. Simpson recalls that A.J. Murray was consulted by a wild-life expert from London, on behalf of the B.B.C. for T.V. broadcasts in the 1950s. Apparently, he appeared in a programme, creating the mask of a fox...A Carnforth solicitor (and local historian) J.L. Bibby, may be able to assist...and there is a possibility that he has ...some old photographs...

Examples of Mr. Murray's work are to be found locally at: The Blue Bell, Heversham; The Eagle's Head, Over Kellet; Borwick Hall; Capernwray Hall; Leighton Hall; Levens Hall; and Sizergh Castle. He also did work for Earl Peel at Hying Hall, Warton (now St. Bernard's Priory).

Mr. Murray is known to have done much valuable work for the Lancaster R.G.S. natural history collection as mentioned in the following editions of *The Lancastrian*, the school magazine:

**Dec. 1950:** Mr. Murray of Carnforth has carried out a great deal of work in the 'Museum' which is now more than ever worth a visit.

**July 1955:** Mr. Murray continues the work of recasing the birds, adding new specimens where appropriate.

**January 1958** The recasing of the birds is now complete and thanks must be given to Mr. Murray for displaying the birds to their best advantage.

Whether the locations mentioned by Mrs. Sutcliffe in the last paragraph of her letter, still have examples of Mr. Murray's work is not known. The collection of birds at Lancaster R.G.S. was acknowledged to be one of the finest in the country, but part of it was dispersed in 1964 (some of it to Kendal?).

I do not recall Mr. Murray himself, but Tommy Salkeld sticks in the memory as a man of no more than medium height, lean and wiry, with a slightly weather-beaten complexion and wavy hair. His premises at Station Buildings would have been suitable for displaying examples of his work, but whether he did so is not remembered.

A few questions remain to be answered:

1. The business is said to have been founded in 1872. It seems most unlikely that, at that date, it would be at Carnforth, so where was it?

2. Why 'Saddler'? Did he make saddles before he took to taxidermy, or was that his father's trade?

3. The J.L. Bibby referred to was probably John Lewis Bibby, born 23.11.1929, of the firm Ratcliffe and Bibby. Did he produce any old photographs as suggested?

4. What do we know, if anything, about the other people mentioned in Mrs. Sutcliffe's letter? Any further information will be welcomed.

Mr. Murray's home at 6, Scotland Road is now the Red Luck chop suey shop. His display room was long ago demolished, and is now vacant ground used as a car park. If you are a motor car enthusiast it could interest you, but it has not the fascination of yesteryear. Sic transit gloria!

*(Further recollections of Murray or Salkeld will be welcomed.)*

## **LEIGHTON BECK IRON FURNACE**

**By Simon Williams**

At some point during Lockdown #2, as we now call it, my wife Wendy and I took our permitted walk across Gait Barrow and found ourselves passing the remains of the Leighton Beck iron furnace. This is situated at the junction of the Gait Barrow and Beetham Roads – at the attractive little bridge carrying the Lancashire – Westmorland wooden sign.

For nearly a century (1713-1806) this was a thriving business, but all that remain are the charcoal store and a shed – now converted to dwellings. But there is more, the footpath there takes you past the slag heap, and the remains of a pond and leat system which provided water power to drive the furnace bellows.



Figure 1: One of the dwellings converted from the furnace buildings

It's a charming spot and, rather like the copper smelter chimney at Jenny Brown's Point, it's hard to imagine the sounds and smells of a busy industrial process in action. But the visit encouraged me to revisit as many sources as I could find (listed below) to see what had been discovered about its history. And I had access to maps from various periods, including our website's digitised copy of the tithe maps. Frustratingly, visits to search the primary sources in the Cumbria archives at Barrow and the Lancashire archives at Preston have not been possible during the pandemic. But enough historians have examined the history for me to draw up this account.

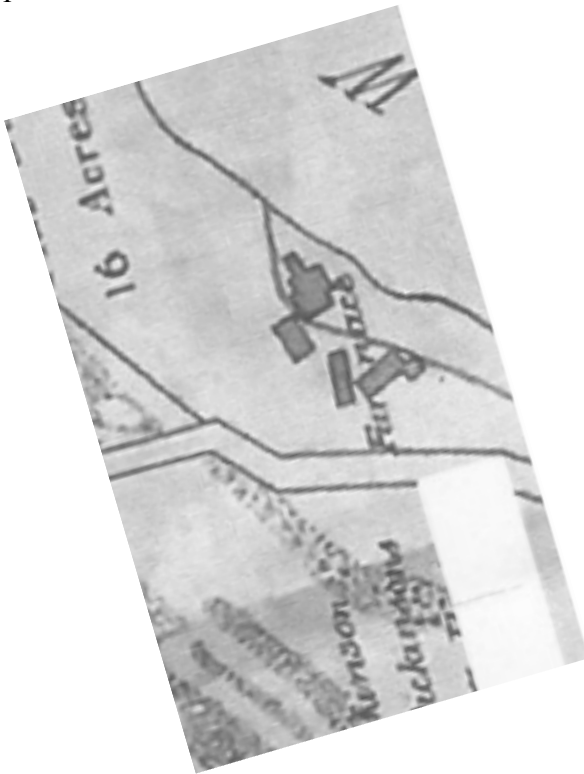


Figure 2  
Detail from  
the 1778  
Yealand  
Inclosure  
Survey

Luckily the first map I looked at (see Figure 2) was drawn up during the working life of the furnace – the 1778 Yealand Inclosure Survey. I have rotated a small extract to orientate to the north: Here we can see four buildings, with a water course diverted from Leighton Beck to run between the buildings and power the bellows.

By the time of the 1845 Tithe Survey, some 40 years after the working life of the furnace had ended, four buildings had become three, as Figure 3 shows.

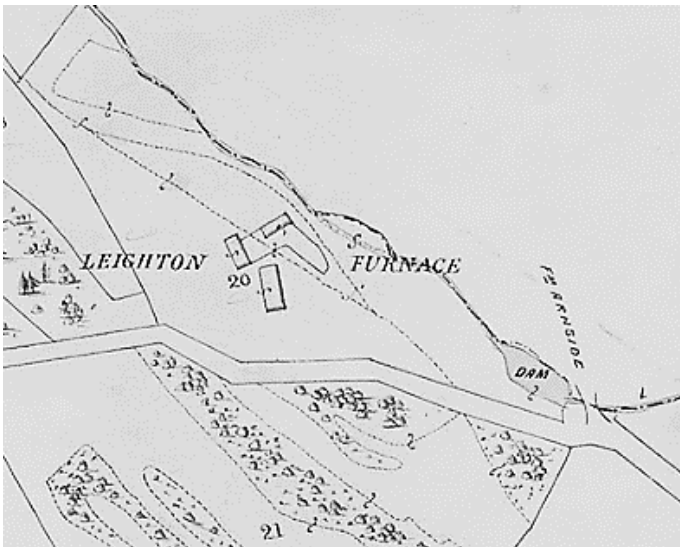


Figure 3  
Detail from the 1846 Yealand Redmayne Tithe Survey

The largest building, the furnace itself, has gone. Interestingly this map shows that a dam had been constructed to enable a pond to be formed, providing a more reliable source of water.

As a modern Ordnance Survey map shows (Figure 4), now three buildings have become two – the charcoal barn and iron ore store are now dwellings:

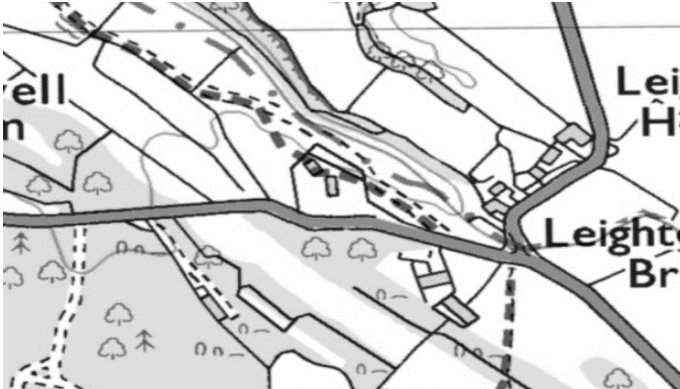


Figure 4  
Detail from a Modern OS Map

## **Background**

The blast furnace first came to the area in 1711, with the building of the Backbarrow furnace. Just two years later the Backbarrow Company built a second furnace at Leighton Beck. In the course of another walk to visit the Swinside stone circle, Wendy and I parked close to the Duddon iron furnace, near Broughton-in-Furness which was erected in 1736 and continued to be in operation until 1867. To imagine how the Leighton furnace would have appeared we can look at the restored Duddon furnace as seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5: The Duddon Furnace, Broughton-in-Furness

Why was Leighton chosen as a site for an iron furnace? The main reason was the ready supply of fuel – both in the form of charcoal from coppiced woodland and peat from the mosses. 1715-16 records show that peat was used with charcoal in a ratio of 2 to 3, and no less than 8000 cartloads of peat were used per annum, derived from the mosses of Silverdale and Arnside, and the Backbarrow Company's own land at Ulpha across the Kent estuary. In addition, the Leighton site offered a water supply and was sufficiently close to landing places at Silverdale and Arnside for the import of iron ore and export of pig iron. There were numerous attempts to mine iron locally, but the amounts derived from exploits at Cringlebarrow (Yealand), Heald Brow (Silverdale) and Crag Foot (Warton) were sparse.



The use of peat and charcoal, rather than coke, was unique in England. Although the iron produced in this way was inferior it was cheap, and found a ready market in Chepstow and Bristol where it was used to make anchors, chains and other ship's fittings.

The furnace was sold in 1756 to the Halton Iron Company, and continued to be in service until 1806, at which point it reportedly blew up (this seems to be a hand-me-down story, it would seem, without a primary source of evidence).

Unlike the copper smelting at Jenny Brown's Point, which I concluded was an industrial folly, the Leighton Beck Furnace was a successful venture. But by 1806 perhaps it was too small-scale to be worth rebuilding. It would be 60 years before iron smelting would return to our parish – in the much grander form of the Carnforth Ironworks.

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**Historic England – Pastscape** Website entry

**Public information display** at the Duddon Furnace, Broughton-in-Furnace.

**BOOK REVIEW: LEVENS IN THE SHADOW  
OF THE GREAT WAR**

**Reviewed by Clive Holden**

This book by Levens Local History Group was published last year. Although it deals with events not quite in our neck of the woods, it is well worthy of our attention. It has been compiled by a devoted and diligent quintet of authors, who describe it as a ‘community enterprise’ (not surprising judging by the long list of credits and acknowledgements).

As expected, some chapters are devoted to those who fought and died in the Great War, and also to those who fought and survived. Some, such as William Brennand, who died of wounds one week after his brother -in-law, are dealt with in great detail. Others, whose military records were destroyed by enemy action in the 1939 – 1945 conflict, are necessarily much shorter. Even a couple of men (one of whom died on the first day of the Somme) whose names are not on the village war memorial are not neglected. No Levens men are known to have served in the Navy, but Sir Charles Walker, the Assistant Secretary at the Admiralty, who lived at Brettargh Holt, and Admirals Sir Charles Beresford and Sir Cecil Burney, both with Levens connections, qualify for inclusion.

A lengthy and fascinating chapter is devoted to Lady Theodosia Bagot, an inspirational war worker, whose many activities included setting up the Hospital of Friendship in Belgium in 1915, and ‘Charmy’s’ (a Church Army mixed club/restaurant) in London in 1917. She was a remarkable lady.

Other shorter chapters deal with: the vicars of Levens (one of whom married the widowed Lady Theodosia); the Hying, which served as an annexe to the Stramongate hospital in Kendal; the ladies who served in the Voluntary Aid Detachment; the foundation of the Levens Women's Institute in 1917; Women's Suffrage; Levens School; Betty (the Levens war horse); the home front; demobilisation and immediate post-war effects. Fittingly the book ends with two coloured photographs taken in 2018 of poppies on The Green commemorating the fallen of the Great War.

The book is well illustrated, though some of the photos taken of soldiers from newspapers of the war period are of indifferent quality. The authors are to be congratulated on the depth of their researches in producing a book worthy to be cherished by the people of Levens and all others who chance to read it.

Here are the details:

Stephen Read, Allan Steward, Lesley Ormrod, Gillian Wood and Ian Hodkinson, *Levens in the Shadow of the Great War* 2020, Levens Local History Group

Copies of the book are available from:

[levenshistory@btinternet.com](mailto:levenshistory@btinternet.com) at a guide price of £3.50 to U K addresses or £5.00 for overseas postage. Contact Levens Local History Group for payment and collection details.

A PDF of the book can be downloaded from this site:

[https://www.levenshistory.co.uk/uploads/1/2/6/4/126405959/web\\_page\\_version.pdf](https://www.levenshistory.co.uk/uploads/1/2/6/4/126405959/web_page_version.pdf)

There is no charge for the PDF download but recipients are asked to make a donation to SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity at 4, St. Dunstan's Hill, London; or at <https://www.ssafa.org.uk>

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### A YEALAND COMMEMORATION

Sheila Jones

Last year, crossing the stile from Yealand Manor grounds onto the road above the New Inn, we noticed this plaque we had not spotted before, secured horizontally to the stone on the top of the wall. Looking around, we could see what we assumed to be the twelve trees in the manor grounds, now looking quite mature. It seemed an extraordinary gesture by a local Parish Council and we wondered who had instigated it.



Figure 1  
The Plaque

We are still wondering! The current Chair of Yealand Conyers Parish Council very kindly looked through records which she was currently holding and managed to find a letter, referring to the trees, involving the AONB. That was all she could find: there was nothing in the minutes. I turned to the AONB and was surprised to draw a blank there too: nothing minuted and no references. Following through on possible memories I have also had no success. Is there anyone reading this who knows what prompted this action? I think it is rather grand on the part of a local village council.



Figure 2  
The trees in Yealand Manor Grounds

## **THOMAS BRIGGS BORN SILVERDALE CIRCA 1826** **Chris Hampson**

Like many, no doubt, I've spent some of the lockdown looking into the family history - in this case the ancestors of my step mother from Cheshire. Her great great grandfather, Thomas Briggs and his son John were railway 'navvies' working on the Settle - Carlisle line (constructed in the 1870s); in Nottinghamshire; and even briefly in London. They also worked on the Cheshire Lines railway from Manchester to Chester and at this point John Briggs married a local girl and settled in Cheshire. His father, Thomas Briggs, eventually settled in Arlecdon, near Whitehaven, and died there in 1890.

Thomas Briggs was born around 1826. His place of birth appears variously in the 1851, 1861 and 1871 census returns as *Silverdale, Lancashire; Warton Lancashire; and Milnthorpe*. Frustratingly 1881 gives only *Lancashire*. Perhaps faced with a hut full of navvies from all over the country the enumerator appears to have decided Counties were near enough. So far, I've failed to find a likely Thomas Briggs in the 1841 census and until the Lancashire Archives re-open I can't check the Silverdale parish registers. From Thomas' wedding register entry (1850 in Filey, Yorkshire) his father is also given as Thomas Briggs, occupation: farmer. My hopes soared when I found your reproductions of the 1846 tithe maps but alas no Briggs as either owner or occupier of land, only Briggs Hill in Priest Hutton.

*I wonder whether anyone's memory is jogged by this article. If so, contact Chris Hampson, [cjh1953@googlemail.com](mailto:cjh1953@googlemail.com)*

## A MYSTERY ITEM

By Simon Williams

A footpath from Gait Barrow runs close to Silverdale Moss and emerges at Coldwell Lane. Just as the path reaches the lane, there is a strange object by the wall. It is a massive cast iron cauldron, featuring four spigots at the rim: north, south, east and west, to which one can imagine lifting chains could be attached. Nearby are two defunct industrial plants, the large and imposing Coldwell limekiln and the Leighton Beck furnace.

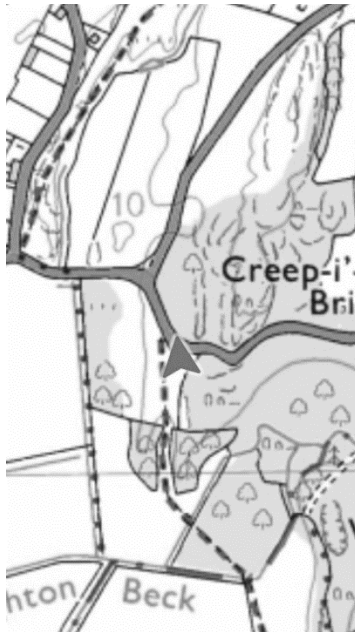


Figure 1  
OS Map location

Does anybody know anything about this mysterious cauldron?



Figure 2  
My wife Wendy beside the cauldron



**MOURHOLME LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY'S  
LECTURE PROGRAMME 2021-2022**

*All meetings are subject to change given any current Covid regulations*

**Meetings are held in Yealand Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.  
Our talks generally finish by 9 p.m. followed by tea and coffee (if permitted)**

**29<sup>th</sup> September 2021: Roads Around the Sands - *Paul Hindle***

This lecture looks at the changing routes around the sands of Morecambe Bay, from Carnforth to the Furness peninsula. The first turnpike of 1763 went via Kendal and Bouth to Ulverston and Kirkby Ireleth, whilst the later route of 1818 went from Levens via Lindale to Greenodd.

**27<sup>th</sup> October 2021:**

**A Lancashire Garland - *Sid Calderbank***

The history of Lancashire and its dialect over the last 500 years presented in the songs, stories and poems of the time, all in the tongue and the talk of the people.

**24<sup>th</sup> November 2021:**

**The North-West and Slavery - *Dr Nick Radburn***

The north-west has deep connections to the transatlantic slave trade. Thousands of men from this region invested in the slave trade, served upon slave ships, or traded for slaves in Africa and the Americas during the eighteenth century.

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2021:**

**Buffalo Bill in the North West - *Dr Brian Jones***

Buffalo Bill is a familiar name from the Wild West as a scout and a bison hunter. His active riding life was short but he went on to become a great showman. An account will be given of his Wild West Show which visited Lancaster in 1904.

**26<sup>th</sup> January 2022:**

**Local Connections with Richard III - *Christopher Tinnmouth***

Three local families were closely connected with Richard III: the Redmaynes of Levens Hall, the Middletons of Middleton Hall and the Harringtons of Hornby Castle. This talk will focus on their role in the Wars of the Roses, the key battles they were involved in, and the noble intrigue which characterised this period.

**23rd February 2021:**

**Feeding People during the Industrial Revolution - *Dr Mike Winstanley***

How did an industrialising Lancashire obtain food to sustain its rapidly expanding population in the early 19th century? An 'agricultural revolution' or imports? What did Lancashire people EAT at the time? As usual, Lancashire does not fit the national picture!

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2022:**

**A Cumbrian Colony in the South Pacific - *David Fellows***

Norfolk Island is a small island in the South Pacific with a large history. Discovered by Captain Cook, in time it has been a penal colony, a new home to Cumbria's Fletcher Christian and the Bounty mutineers, a tax haven and a tourist destination. But since 1990 a modern dispute has arisen, a sort of Brexit dilemma!

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2022: *to be advised***

***This talk will be preceded by the Mourholme Local History Society's AGM***