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## **A VICARAGE FOR THE VICAR: THE HOUSING PROBLEMS OF THE ANGLICAN CLERGY IN CARNFORTH IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

### **Part I**

#### **The Reverend Ian Pearson.**

We tend to assume these days that the parish clergy of the Church of England have suitable housing provided for them as a part of their job. However, it was not always so. Carnforth is a case in point.

In 1867, after a campaign lasting nearly twenty years, The Reverend Thomas Dean, the vicar of Warton, finally received the promise of £79 per annum from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in London towards paying a curate to look after the growing town of Carnforth. It was assumed that Mr. Dean would supplement this sum from his own money in order to create a viable clergy stipend. Perhaps not surprisingly he was unwilling to do this, and so the Commissioners increased their offer to £120 in 1869. Armed with this, he was at last able to appoint a curate for Carnforth.

#### **The Reverend John Atkinson Fidler, the First Resident Anglican Priest**

John Atkinson Fidler's early life is, at present, rather shadowy. Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses* tells us that he was admitted to Trinity College Cambridge on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1850, aged 23; that he was the son of John Fidler of Lancaster; and that he had received his early education at Lancaster Grammar School. From the census entries (1871-1891) we know that he was indeed born at Lancaster. It looks as though he came from a Nonconformist Lancaster family: certainly his sister Agnes was

baptized in an Independent Chapel in Lancaster in 1841. What his career was in his early life, and why he sought ordination in the Church of England is not yet known, but he received his theological education at Queen's College Birmingham in 1867. He was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Chester in 1867, and his first post was Curate of St. Thomas', Eccleston (St. Helens) from 1867 to 1869. Carnforth was to be his second curacy.

Mr Fidler began his ministry at Carnforth by holding services in the National School, at the junction of Hawes Hill with Lancaster Road. This building had been licensed for worship in 1851 and the Vicar of Warton had been holding services there on alternate Sunday evenings. Now worship could happen every Sunday. The appointment of a Curate with responsibility for the Carnforth area gave added impetus to the proposal to build a church, and soon after this the Carnforth Proposed Church Building Committee was formed to raise money. A site was bought in 1871, building began and the new church was completed in 1873.

Meanwhile where was he to live? As a Curate, Mr. Fidler had very little legal status in the Church hierarchy, and he was expected to find his own accommodation. As early as June 1867 an anonymous local clergyman (styling himself “A Lonsdale Incumbent”) had written to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, informing them that *“the village of Carnforth is fast becoming a town. It has now under 2,000 inhabitants, but promises to grow shortly to 5 or 6,000.”* He pointed out that there was no church, but it was contemplated to build one. He enclosed an advertisement for the sale of land in Carnforth – Carnforth Lodge and Bridge End Meadow (the adjoining field) He very helpfully pointed out to them that the former would make an excellent vicarage, and the latter a site for a new church. *“I*

*believe,” he continued in words which turned out to be very prophetic, “there is now an opportunity for procuring the site, which, if lost, will be regretted in years to come<sup>1</sup>. ”*

Unfortunately, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners did not take this proposal as seriously as it could and should have been taken. Furthermore, they did not realise that the letter was anonymous, and interpreted the signature as “A. Lanerdale, Incumbent” (to be fair to the officials in London the handwriting is appalling and this mistake is understandable). So they wrote a letter to The Reverend A. Lanerdale of Carnforth refusing to buy the property in question, but also causing considerable confusion in the Post Office at Carnforth.

This letter eventually reached Mr. Dean, the Vicar of Warton, who replied, *“The Postman brought it to me as Vicar of the Parish, there being no such person as The Revd. A Lanerdale residing in this Parish. I know nothing whatever of the Nature or Cause of the Application.....”* Such confusion did not help.

So Mr. Fidler had no house provided for him. Where did he live? The 1871 census finds him living in Carnforth “village” (i.e. what is now North Road), a bachelor lodger in the household of Joseph Miller, a local farmer. This may well be the same Joseph Miller who sold the site for the present Christ Church to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (who were acting on behalf of the diocese of Manchester) in 1871. It was not unknown for bachelor

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<sup>1</sup> Carnforth Lodge was a large late 17th/early 18th century farmhouse with an extensive garden, situated just above where Tesco now stands, at the junction of Haws Hill with Lancaster Road. Bridge End Meadow was alongside it, at the top end of Hawes Hill extending down to where the Police Station now stands.

curates to lodge with members of the congregation well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so there is nothing unusual in his accommodation.

In 1875, however, Carnforth became a parish in its own right, separate from Warton, and Mr. Fidler's stipend was increased to £300 per annum. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that on the 1881 census he could now afford to occupy his own house. This was Carnforth Lodge, the same Carnforth Lodge mentioned in the anonymous letter of 1867. He had been able to afford to rent that property and was living there with Agnes Fidler, his spinster sister, both of them looked after by one general domestic. Soon after the census was taken, he married in Hampshire, and brought his new wife back to Carnforth.

Rented accommodation was not satisfactory for him or his family. Several times he asked the Commissioners for a grant towards the building of a parsonage, or towards the purchase of a suitable house. At least twice (in 1885 and 1886) he travelled to London to put his case in person before the Commissioners.

A letter Mr Fidler wrote in 1885 outlines the dilemma in which he and his family found themselves, "I occupy the only house available for the clergyman's residence [Carnforth Lodge] and my tenure there is exceedingly uncertain, and in the event of my having to quit it, I do not know where to look for one suitable for my family, the houses here (if you except those occupied by the farmers and tradespeople) being constructed for artisans."

He pointed out that the two parishes of Yealand and Silverdale were both also offshoots from Warton, and they both had parsonage houses. The town of Carnforth was still growing; the population was now over 2,400. Land was increasing in value, and being built on. It would be more difficult as time went on

to find a suitable site near the church. The regret referred to in the anonymous letter of 1867 was indeed prophetic: by 1891 John Fidler was still at Carnforth Lodge, but now with his wife Annie and two servants - a cook and a housemaid.

The question might be asked: Why did the Ecclesiastical Commissioners consistently refuse to help with a grant towards the stipend of an assistant priest or towards the purchase of a parsonage house? The letters of refusal refer rather bluntly to a policy of “not entertaining any local claims”. A very forceful petition submitted in 1863 by one James Erving and signed by 15 other local landowners received a more polite refusal. The Commissioners, Erving was told, refused at present to do anything to help. The petition would have been considered for a district where *“large masses of the population are collected together for the purpose of working mines..... but I fear that the case of Carnforth can scarcely be considered as coming within this category”*. It was only the opening of the ironworks in the summer of 1866 and the subsequent building of workers' houses which produced a more favourable response – but only for a grant towards a stipend.

So there the situation rested, and that was the situation a new priest found when he arrived on 3 May 1897. John Atkinson Fidler had remained at Carnforth for a ministry lasting nearly 30 years. He resigned in February 1897, and died soon afterwards on 3 April 1897. He was buried in the churchyard at Warton.

**Sources:**

1. The Records of the Church Commissioners in London:  
Here are the correspondence files of their predecessors, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The files for Warton from the 1850s onwards were consulted for earlier information about Carnforth before the creation of the new parish. The separate Carnforth files exist from the 1870s.
2. Population Surveys: the various censuses 1871 – 1911

*The Rev Ian Pearson was born and brought up in Carnforth. He worked as a qualified archivist before his ordination as an Anglican Priest. Now retired to Frome in Somerset, he assists locally as a priest and works one day a week in the Bath City Archives. He wrote a pamphlet on the history of Christ Church, Carnforth, for its centenary in 1973.*

*In the Autumn 2017 Magazine, Ian will continue his account by describing the problems besetting the next Vicar of Carnforth.*



**'A BONNY BIT': ELIZABETH GASKELL, BURTON  
AND THE ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT.**

**Pauline Kiggins**

‘Was it a pretty place?’ asked Mary.

‘Pretty, lass! I never seed such a bonny bit anywhere. You see there are hills there as seem to go up into th’skies, not near maybe, but that makes them all the bonnier. [.....]Well, and near our cottage were rocks. Eh, lasses! Ye don’t know what rocks are in Manchester! Grey pieces o’stone, as large as a house all covered over wi’ mosses of different colours, some yellow, some brown: and the ground beneath them knee-deep in purple heather, smelling sae sweet and fragrant, and the low music of the humming-bee forever sounding among it. Mother used to send Sally and me out to gather ling and heather for besoms, and it was such pleasant work. We used to come home of an evening loaded so as you could not see us, for all that it was so light to carry. And then mother would make us sit down under the old hawthorn tree (where we used to make our house among the great roots as stood above th’ground,) to pick and tie up the heather. It all seems like yesterday, and yet it’s a long time ago. Poor sister Sally has been in her grave this forty year and more. But I often wonder if the hawthorn is standing yet, and if the lasses still go to gather heather, as we did many and many a year past and gone. I sicken at heart to see the old spot once again .....

This is a passage from Chapter 4 of Mrs. Gaskell’s first novel *Mary Barton* (published in 1847 but set in the previous decade), and the reminiscences were those of one of the characters, whom Gaskell named Alice Wilson. In the novel the writer had Alice

recount her story of leaving her home in rural Burton to work as a domestic servant in Manchester. At the point in the story where the now elderly Alice, a long-time resident in the rapidly growing Manchester, is heard recalling her girlhood, she would probably have been speaking of a period of time in, or nearing, the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In her novels Mrs. Gaskell added realism to the work by describing actual places that she herself knew. The reason I have written this article is to suggest that Alice Wilson's 'bonny bit' is the village (previously known as 'the township') of Burton-in-Kendal, and the surrounding area in the county of Cumbria, the part of the country formerly known as Westmorland.

The land around Burton consists of upland areas of rough pasture and woodland, on limestone. Before the Enclosure Acts that area was held by the commoners of Holme, Burton and Hutton Roof parishes for grazing livestock, harvesting animals, quarrying, stone-cutting, firewood, and - as Gaskell has Alice describing - the cutting and gathering of heather to use as sweeping- brushes, known as 'besoms'. We are not told whether these brooms were made for home use or for sale, but it is very probable that the brooms could have been sold as a means of adding to the family's income.

With the Burton, Dalton and Holme Enclosure Act of 1818, much of the land was taken into private ownership and miles of stone walls were built. Hutton Roof Crag and Burton Fell remained as commons (having limited arable potential). In the chronology of Gaskell's narrative, the enclosure of the fells (hillsides) would probably have occurred after Alice had left her childhood home (and indeed would seem not to have impacted upon her own favourite places). Nevertheless, the reader who hears of her longing to 'see the old place again' would be aware

that that place would have been subject to many changes during the intervening years, and that that ‘displacement’ of the inhabitants, which she and her brother had experienced, typified the movements of population of those times. The ‘displacement’ which took place in the more arable lands of mid-England was, for many, what instigated population movement, whilst industrialization attracted movement of the rural poor to the growing cities for economic reasons. Mrs. Gaskell showed her awareness of these issues, and shared them with her readers, not by sermonizing, but by exemplifying in character and situation.

In another passage in *Mary Barton*, Mrs. Gaskell writes,

There was more mouths at home than could be fed. Tom [...] had come to Manchester, and sent word what terrible lots of work was to be had, for both lads and lasses. So father sent George first [...], and then work was scarce out toward Burton, where we lived, and father said I maun try to get a place. And George wrote as how wages were far higher in Manchester than Milnthorpe or Lancaster, and [...], I was young and thoughtless, and thought it was a fine thing to go so far from home.

One of the reasons for my particular enjoyment of the passage in which Alice Wilson refers to Burton is that I feel able to recognize the area from her descriptions, and therefore I have wondered whether the author was writing from personal knowledge. The Gaskell family used to holiday in Silverdale, which is about five miles south-west of Burton. In *Mrs. Gaskell Haunts, Homes and Stories* Mrs. Ellis H. Chadwick writes that, ‘When staying in Silverdale Mrs. Gaskell used to hire a pony and carriage and take drives round the area to Arnside, Beetham, Levens Hall and the many pretty places nearby.’ The family’s

first stay in Silverdale was probably in the summer of 1843, but perhaps Mrs. Gaskell may have known Burton from earlier travels. I think that this is highly likely, because the main route north used to pass straight through the township (now of course it is by-passed by the A6 and more recently the M6 motorway). She may have travelled through Burton to Grange-over-Sands when she went there to take her first daughter Marianne (born 1834), for some sea-bathing. Indeed in much earlier travels, perhaps from Knutsford to Edinburgh, she may well have spent time at 'The King's Arms', an important coaching inn in the centre of Burton, on the route to the north and similar in its layout to many other establishments, (such as, for example, 'The George' at Stamford, Lincolnshire). The King's Arms was an essential staging post of pre-railway era travel, for the use of coach passengers and operators on their way to the Furness Peninsula, to Kendal and the Lake Country and, beyond that, to Scotland. There were a number of other establishments, now defunct.

Regrettably I should say that it is difficult, in the absence of direct evidence, to be absolutely certain that the writer saw the township of Burton for herself, and I should admit that her knowledge of it may have all been as the result of 'hearsay'. It has a long history as a market town, and the 12<sup>th</sup> century church dedicated to St. James stands surrounded by many ancient graves and gravestones. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Mrs. Gaskell's specific reference to the use of the native heather to make into 'besoms' might be an indication of a particular local knowledge. Whatever the case, it is indicative of her close interest in practicalities and traditions, and I find it very appealing.

Dr. Mike Winstanley's lecture at November 23rd's meeting<sup>1</sup> of the Mourholme Society – on 'Enclosures and Commons' - was for me very informative. Of course Burton is not a part of the Old Parish of Warton, and so was mentioned only in passing, but, as most times with these talks, I found it to be thought-provoking and interesting.

I will end this article by quoting a verse entitled 'December', from John Clare's 'The Shepherd's Calendar', (written in 1827). The Gaskells, William and Elizabeth, were very fond of the work of these 'Poets of Humble Life', of whom Clare was one.

Each house is swept the day before,  
And windows stuck with evergreen,  
The snow is besom'd from the door,  
And comfort crowns the cottage scene.

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of the lecture see 'Reports of Evening Meetings' on page 25 of this magazine.

## **JENNY BROWN REVISITED**

### **Simon Williams**

Who was the Jenny Brown of Jenny Brown's Point in Silverdale? In the absence of a written history, a few myths and half-truths seem to have grown up. In an unpublished guide to Silverdale written by Silverdale's famous Willie Riley<sup>1</sup>, the author described a popular story that Jenny Brown was a young woman looking out to sea from the shore, hoping for the safe return of her lover. He was never seen again, and nor was she; their fate unknown. Alternatively, Jenny Brown was a nanny who saved her young charges from the sea and quicksand by rowing a boat out to rescue them. Or Jenny Brown was a lodging house keeper in Brown's Houses, looking after Irish miners employed in copper mining and smelting. Or Jenny Brown was a steam locomotive used in the construction of the nearby sea wall.<sup>2</sup>

The most convincing account, however, appeared in the pages of this magazine in 1985, in an article written by M.R. Walling<sup>3</sup>, who researched the subject partly for reasons of family history. I have drawn extensively from this account after having revisited

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<sup>1</sup> The author Willie Riley prepared a pamphlet on Silverdale in 1958 – it is not known whether this was ever published. Notes and drafts of this work were provided from the archives of the leading Willie Riley expert, David Copeland.

<sup>2</sup> This is in fact nearly correct – although the engine was named after Jenny Brown's Point. It was purchased by Herbert Walduck's land reclamation enterprise in 1879. The full story is told in the Mourholme Magazine issues 66 and 67. These can be viewed at our website:

[http://www.mourholme.co.uk/?Publications:Magazine\\_Archive\\_4](http://www.mourholme.co.uk/?Publications:Magazine_Archive_4)

<sup>3</sup> Mourholme Magazine Winter 1985, Issue 10, pp 8-9. The article can be viewed at our website:

[http://www.mourholme.co.uk/?Publications:Magazine\\_Archive\\_1](http://www.mourholme.co.uk/?Publications:Magazine_Archive_1)

source materials in Lancashire County Archives. I have also traced a little more of the family story through following leads in the registers of St. Oswald's, Warton. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the period covered by this article, the spelling of Walling, and indeed all other names, was rather fluid in parish and other registers: Jenny has been spelled as both Jennye and the more formal Jennet; Jane has been spelled as Jann. And the surname Brown has also been spelled as both Browne and Browen, and Dykes House as Dikhouse and Dikehouse.

John Wawen [Walling] was baptised at St. Oswald's on the 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1605<sup>4</sup>. His father's address was given as "Dikhouse", Lindeth, the name of the house and farm at what is now Jenny Brown's Point. John inherited the farm from his father, married Jane Jackson in 1627, and started a family. The couple produced three children – Jennet (1628), Jane (1630) and John (1632).

Jennet married Robert Browne and produced four daughters – Mary (1662), Jennet (1665), Elizabeth (1667) and Anna (1669). John Walling signed his last will in August 1671<sup>5</sup>, and died very shortly afterwards. Probate was granted the following month. Attached to the will is a list of the debts owed by John Walling, which were to be settled from his estate – some £32 in total. Two of those debts were to his daughters - £5 was owed to Jann Wallings and 2 shillings to Jennet Browen. In the will itself, Jennet Browen becomes Jennye Browne.

So there were two Jenny Browns – mother and daughter. The elder Jenny Brown's husband had died the previous year (1670).

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<sup>4</sup> Baptism, marriage and burial records are from the transcribed registers of St. Oswald's held at Lancashire Archives, Preston.

<sup>5</sup> Probate records held at Lancashire Archives, Preston.

There is no proof that she had spent her married life at her birthplace, or if she returned to live there with her children after becoming widowed, but it is highly plausible. When she died in 1683 she was buried at St Oswald's.



Cottages at Jenny Brown's Point as they appear today  
Photo, Simon Williams

Just what did one of these Jennys do to earn eternal fame? Maps of sufficiently large scale to name such a local place are relatively few and far between. Greenwood's map of 1818 names the place as Silverdale Point; Hennet's map of 1828 names it Lindeth Point (and also features Dykes Houses). An 1829 estate plan of Lindeth uses the name Jenny Brown Point, as do the various Ordnance Survey maps, starting in 1848. The OS maps also name the large building at the end of Lindeth Road as "Brown's Houses". Earliest of all, announcements concerning the public highways described in the Warton-with-Lindeth



Enclosure Act published in the Lancaster Gazette<sup>6</sup> in 1812 describe the place as “Brown’s Point”.

Perhaps Jenny Brown became the owner of the so-called Brown’s Houses and rented out the cottages that made up this building. Or perhaps she did become the nanny that rescued her charges from the sea. She certainly did give her name to a steam locomotive some 200 years after her birth. But the real reason for Jenny’s name being immortalised remains a charming mystery.

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<sup>6</sup> Article in Lancaster Gazette 8<sup>th</sup> August 1812.

**BARBARA BIRRELL:  
A LIFE LIVED IN CARNFORTH**  
**Sheila Jones**

Barbara has lived all her 85 years in Carnforth. In her early years the family moved often. She had been born, in 1932, in Ramsey Street in her great-aunt's house, but moved to opposite North Road School when she was two, living in one of the tall houses in a sort of hierarchy, with her great-grandmother on the ground floor, her grandmother on the next, and her family on the top. There was one more move within old Carnforth, to Stanley Street, and then finally, in the late 1930s, to council houses, 52 of them, arranged in a horseshoe leading from King's Drive off the Kellett Road. It was a close-knit estate, all the families knowing one another well. It so suited Barbara and her husband, who was also raised there, that, when they married, in 1952, they moved just round the corner. A private developer had bought land near the council estate, but had only erected two homes when war broke out and materials became unavailable. After the war more council houses went up beyond this spot, but one plot was left and Bill and Barbara bought it and had their own home built.

This seems to me very bold and enterprising for a young couple with not a lot behind them. Neither of their parents' families had money to spare, and Bill was an electrician, with a steady, but not a high income. His trade helped them in their plans, however, because they made a deal with the builder that Bill would wire the house. They also supplied the fireplaces and the kitchen sink; the kitchen sink being their first ever purchase together. The house, as a structure, was just what they wanted with a dining room, on Barbara's insistence, but they never expected to furnish it properly at first. Her parents bought them

curtains as a wedding present, but there were lots of hand-me-downs....all except for the dining-room suite. Barbara, Bill's mother, who lived across the road, and another neighbour were inveterate card-players. They always played for money, pennies and ha'pennies; and Barbara always won. All that small change went in a box, during all the years before Bill was called up and also during his service so that, after his and Barbara's marriage, they were able to go to the furniture shop which spanned two sides of Lower Church Street in Lancaster and buy a brand new suite with cash. The mortgage was a problem because they wanted it for 30 years, but it was reduced to 25 and then 20, because there was uncertainty over the Korean War and Bill was in the Reserve. They were stretched to meet payments at first, but later very grateful for an early completion of purchase.

Unlike most ladies I have spoken to, Barbara was not a Co-op user and relied mainly on Jenkinson's which had ever expanding premises, ending where Boot's is now. It also operated an old bus, well fitted out with groceries. Jenkinson was known as Midnight because it could be that late before he came round the estate, for you to select your shopping on the spot. There were enough trade vehicles for you to do all your shopping that way.

The first day I met Barbara she described herself as a grammar school girl, and that characterization of herself has, I think, always been important. She had gone to Carnforth Council School and had consistently done well ("not first, that was Derek Roberts"), and feels herself to have been well-taught. The school put her in for the entrance exam, and the names of the successful candidates were read out in the hall. She was so very excited, that the headmaster, Mr Gibson, called out, "Look at Barbara! She's clapping herself!" Those that passed were sent home to tell their parents, and she found her mother black-

leading the big fireplace. “I don’t know how she got hold of me (to hug). I’ve no idea. It was nice.” It was hard for her parents to keep her at the school because they had to purchase everything. She was saved by a great-uncle, who lived with them, leaving her, when he died, a bank book with £20 to go towards her schooling. Around home, she was labelled a snob by some locals, which was hard for a time. While at Morecambe Grammar she had the surprise experienced by most who passed, that she was amongst her intellectual equals and no longer the brightest. Falling behind after a bout of peritonitis, she was advised by Mr. Palmer, the head, to stay in the fourth form for another year, but by now she was 15 and preferred to leave. Her parents did not object. Later, describing Bill’s unhappiness at Bolton-le-Sands Free Grammar, she reported him as saying, “you couldn’t turn round to your parents in them days and say you couldn’t do it, you want to leave”; but Barbara seems to have been able to do just that. Some insight into how differently, and more intimately, the world operated then is shown by how she got her first job. Her father worked in a garage in Lancaster where they needed an office junior, so it was offered to her. Her parents had to sign a form for the governors of the grammar school asking permission to remove her, but Mr. Palmer, who knew her dad and knew the people who ran the garage, smoothed the way. She left school on a Friday and began work on the next day.

I had been struck by the fact that Barbara lived for so much of her life without a change of neighbourhood, but I was just as much struck by the number and variety of jobs she held. She did not stay long at the garage, despite her love of cars, because they were not willing to come through with the rise she requested, but moved on to making garden pots east of Quernmore. There were only two busses a day to the crossroads in Quernmore, and then

a further 1 ½ miles to walk, but the firm paid your bus fare. Her female workmates were fun, but a man was summarily dismissed for harassing her. When the business closed she moved quickly on to Lansil, as an office worker again. She disliked the segregation there where the workers had to use a canteen and eat at wooden benches, whereas the white collar workers, such as her, had tablecloths and were waited on with food they had selected from a menu the previous day. Still, it was better than the “Dickensian” conditions she described at her next job in Thomson’s pawnbrokers, quite a sizeable establishment at the corner of New St. and Lancaster Rd. in Carnforth. Here she was in the jewellery department and, with another girl, would pick over the pawned jewellery, cleaning it and pricing it. “At quarter past ten a bell would ring and from the offices and shops we all marched into a room, empty, completely empty with a door, and you stood round the wall and had a cup of tea or coffee. After 10 minutes a little bell would ring and you’d march back.”

By now she was pregnant and stayed home until after her second son was born, when she began part-time at Pye Motors, with her mother and mother-in-law child-minding. She did not like the work, and gave up altogether until Sergeant Purnell came to her door and said his wife was giving up cleaning the police station, then opposite the church, and would she like the job? This suited her and she took pride in her work, polishing the brass door knocker until it shone (she cringes to see it now), and she stayed even when they moved to the new police station and there were more hours. One day the sergeant said, “Come on; I’m going to lock you in cell. We’re having someone in and we’re just not sure about him”. So she stayed safely in the little, high-windowed room until they had dispatched the criminal. Her next job spun off from this one and she did the two concurrently. She

was a lollipop lady for the Catholic School, and from that she became a dinner lady. Mr Fitzgerald, the head, was the brother of the President of Ireland, and one day received a parcel from him. The police came with it and took it to the station to check it out before he could have it. This was Barbara's last job, and she retired from there at 60.

She had worked all her life because she enjoyed it, but also because they needed the money. They lived frugally, certainly at first, but were content in their life style. When Bill came home from the army on leave (he had been called up in 1946, the same year in which they met) they "always went somewhere", for a meal in Morecambe or to Blackpool. Holidays were caravanning with her parents, or they had runabout tickets on the railway.

Bill was not one for socializing or drinking, but he loved gardening. They had a decently sized garden, and it gave on to the vacant Hartley Quarry land at the back. Barbara knew Mr Baker, the owner, having been to the grammar school with his daughter, and asked if they could have a piece of the land for fruit trees and hens. He agreed and sent up big equipment to fill in a hole and even it out. Barbara asked how much the rent would be and he bellowed, "Have I asked you for rent? No? That's how much it is." They kept it until he died, but his sons, perhaps wary of squatters' rights, gave them two days to vacate it. The land is still empty. I initially thought that Bill and Barbara's lives continued in this modest way, but learned later that they began travelling overseas on holidays in 1975, and before then had travelled within Britain. (The mortgage would have been paid off in 1971). Even their honeymoon, in 1952, had been in Edinburgh where they stayed on Princes St., disturbed by the grubbing up of the tramlines that are being re-laid now.

Talk of the honeymoon led to questions of how she met Bill. Although he lived across the road he was shy and they did not know one another. However, Barbara used to frequent the Congregational Church social club where she remembered that the girls did crafts such as using coloured threads and narrow ribbons to weave patterns in and out of open-weave dishcloth fabric. The resulting textile was then used to make colourful cushion covers. Bill's friend, who was a member, persuaded him to come to a Valentine's party, where they were all to share their sandwiches with another. The partner was chosen by a game in which the boys shot darts at a board on which the girls' names were pinned. Bill got "Barbara", they shared their supper, and that was that. She was nearly 15 and he was 17. Their marriage lasted 63 years until Bill's death and now their sons and grandchildren are regular visitors in the house bought so many years ago.

## **BOOK REVIEW**

**Awena Carter**

### **OLD SILVERDALE:**

**The loveliest spot on Morecambe Bay,**

**by Rod Ireland<sup>1</sup>**

It is a great delight to review this book, a treasure trove of postcard images, old photographs and carefully researched information about the history and development of Silverdale. There are six pictures of old Silverdale on the cover alone, each picture meticulously referenced, so that just holding the book in my hands made me long to open it. And, once it was opened, I could not wait to turn the pages. Like other readers, I imagine, I flicked through the postcard images and photographs at first, before settling down to read the text. For residents of Silverdale there is particular pleasure in studying the photographs and recognising faces and families. A wider pleasure is gained from looking at the postcard images to see what the village was like in past times, so that, both for residents, and also for non-residents, of this 'loveliest spot on Morecambe Bay', there is plenty to interest and enjoy.

One of the great strengths of the book is the way it is embedded in a variety of domains. First, there is Rod Ireland's love for Silverdale since his boyhood and his longing, now realised, to live in the village. Then there is his understanding, as a geologist, of the setting of the village. Added to this is the love of local history which underpins his writing about the development of Silverdale, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century enclosures to

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<sup>1</sup> Rod J Ireland (2016) Lancaster: Palatine Books. £9:99. The book may be ordered direct from the publishers on 01524 840111 or at [www.carniepublishing.com](http://www.carniepublishing.com)



20<sup>th</sup> century village life. Through his love of photography which, I suspect, led to his interest in pictures of Silverdale, he was able to photograph and to scan images in order to assemble a large and comprehensive local archive. He was lent material by his friends in Silverdale and from them he was able to garner a great deal of information about the village of which he is so much a part.

Rod Ireland's scientifically analytical eye led him to divide his material into sections, dealing with a wide range of aspects of village life, and to select the most telling images to illustrate these aspects. Most sections have a succinct introduction which contextualises the material, and all the postcard images and photographs are generously captioned. These captions often identify people and families, charting their contribution to development and change in Silverdale. It is this dynamic between the text and the image that makes 'Old Silverdale' so much more than a mere collection of interesting pictures. In reading a book like this, meaning is made 'somewhere in between what the words tell us and what the pictures show'<sup>2</sup>. For me, it is this that makes the book such a satisfying read, and it is the reason I have returned to it again and again.

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<sup>2</sup> Lewis, D. (2001) *Reading Contemporary Picture Books: Picturing Text*, New York: Routledge Falmer

## REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS

Clive Holden

### **26<sup>th</sup> October 2016: Pride of Preston: The Dick, Kerr Ladies 1917 – 1965.**

Throughout her talk, **Gail Newsham** put the history of The Dick, Kerr Ladies Football Team, into its changing social context. It all started in October 1917 at the Dick, Kerr munitions factory on Strand Road, Preston, when, with their men fighting at the front, the ‘munitionettes’, under the management of Alfred Frankland, formed a ladies’ football team. Charity matches were played at Deepdale to raise thousands of pounds in aid of wounded soldiers.

With the war over, and with men returning to claim their jobs, many had to find work elsewhere, such as at Whittingham Hospital. However, the team carried on to such good effect that, in 1920, a game against St. Helens attracted a crowd of 53,000 at Goodison Park, Everton, and, in 1921, an evening game was played with the aid of a couple of searchlights. The team also represented their country against foreign opposition.

In December 1921 the Football Association made the perverse decision, on flimsy evidence, to ban ladies football on F.A. grounds, but it did not put the kibosh on the Dick, Kerr Ladies who had their own ground and carried on their all-conquering way, including victories against overseas opposition as far away as the USA, and a team representing ‘The Rest of England’. In 1926 the team’s name changed officially to ‘Preston Ladies’, but they were still popularly known as ‘Dick, Kerr’s Ladies’.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 football ceased ‘for the duration’, but, despite Alfred Frankland’s death in 1957, the club carried on afterwards until 1965, and could point to a fine record

of 758 victories and 48 draws out of 833 games played. Even more importantly they had raised an enormous amount of money for charity.

In 1992 there was a reunion for surviving members, followed in 1994 by the publication of a book by Gail Newsham, and in 2003 a celebration dinner was held. Gail Newsham, whose knowledge of the club is encyclopaedic concluded her presentation by paying tribute to some of the finest players produced by Dick, Kerr Ladies.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016: The Age of Enclosure 1750 – 1870.**

Or should it be ‘inclosure’ as **Dr. Mike Winstanley** suggested in his detailed history of how some sort of order was brought about in the allotment of land? The aim was to bring parcels of land into more compact form rather than to have them spread around here and there; to do this the ‘elimination of rights’ was introduced. There were four ways of achieving this: 1) by individual action; 2) by mutual consent; 3) by Act of Parliament; or 4) from 1845, by decision of the Enclosure Commissioners. Not all communities were affected at the same time: Yealand, for instance, was one of the earliest in the 1770s, whereas Carnforth’s turn did not arrive until 1859. ‘Rights of Common’ were reserved for land owners. As the decisions of the Enclosure Commissioners were advertised in a Liverpool newspaper, not easily accessible in the more northerly areas, they were also fastened to the doors of churches.

Dr. Winstanley was liberal in his use of maps and aerial photographs to compare what the inclosures used to look like with what they are today. In many cases, such as at Yealand Storrs, the resemblance is but slight. One lady in the audience

pointed out that there still exists in Yealand a pinfold (i.e. an enclosure for cattle).

This is a short summary of what was a most interesting and detailed meeting.

## **20<sup>th</sup> December 2016: How Water Affected the Evolution of Silverdale.**

**Geoff Wood**, a retired civil engineer with a career in water management in Cheshire and the North West, was well qualified to talk about water's effect on the development of Silverdale. With an annual rainfall of nearly 50 inches, the hamlets forming Silverdale would not normally suffer from drought, but for drinking water reliance had to be placed on storage tanks fed by rain from roof tops, and on wells. Several of these are still existent, though not now put to their original purpose.

The arrival of the railway in 1857 brought several wealthy families to live in Silverdale. These new residents provided themselves with adequate water storage tanks, but were reluctant to see the rest of the village brought up to the same standard. Not until 1934, following a severe drought, was Silverdale plumbed into the main piped-water system.

Disposal of sewage was a problem not solved satisfactorily, in the wider area, until the advent of piped water supplies from the Lake District. This enabled the provision of sewage treatment plants; in Silverdale some attempt had been made to bring order out of chaos by the setting up of the Silverdale Select Vestry in 1838. Such local bodies eventually led to modern authorities such as the North West Water Authority and United Utilities, although mains sewage disposal has yet to come to Silverdale.

We were shown photographs of several of Silverdale's wells and of relics of a past, which some of us will remember (or would rather forget), such as dry closets, water pumps and tin baths. We were also shown a diagram illustrating how a septic tank works. This potentially delicate subject was handled with great humour by Geoff and much enjoyed by his audience.

***Note:** An article by Joan Clarke: 'From Midden to Septic Tank' which appeared in Mourholme Magazine No.31 (1997) is well worth reading and can be accessed on our website [www.mourholme.co.uk](http://www.mourholme.co.uk)*

### **25<sup>th</sup> January 2017: The 'Long Reformation' in Warton c. 1520 – 1660.**

Would the Reformation have happened if Catherine of Aragon had provided Henry VIII with a son ? Perhaps not, but she failed in this 'duty' and the Pope's refusal to grant Henry a divorce led to Henry's Act of Restraint of Appeals to Rome (1533), the Act of Supremacy (1534). **Dr James Mawdesley** then told us how, with the help of Thomas Cranmer, the dissolution of the monasteries took place. This was not purely for religious reasons, but also to provide Henry with the money required for him to carry out his plans. All this was not easily achieved, but Roman Catholic resistance was cruelly repressed and their forms of worship attacked until the end of the short reign of Edward VI. The resurgence of Catholicism in the reign of 'Bloody' Mary, under whom it was the turn of Protestants to suffer, was but short lived; and, with Protestantism once again in the ascendancy during the reign of Elizabeth, Roman Catholics were again in for a hard time. With the coming of the Stuarts, life became easier for Catholics if an oath of allegiance was taken, but after Charles I's execution, attempts to transfer allegiance to the Pope were unavailing.

Having dealt at length with the Reformation at a national level, Dr Mawdesley commented on how the North West had been affected more slowly than the southern counties. He told us that some Catholics were able to continue their worship by paying an annual fee of £100, and commented on the rise of Puritanism, despite Archbishop Laud's attempts to undermine it. Other dissenters such as Quakers, also met with disapproval. George Fox, who preached at Yealand, was imprisoned, and local born Richard Hubberthorn died in Newgate prison for his beliefs.

In an hour of well documented information packed with details, only a few of which can be included in this report, we could only marvel at Dr Mawdesley's mastery of his subject.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017: Leighton Moss, Stone Age to Phone Age.**

With the advertised speaker unable to attend, **Andy Denwood** stepped nobly into the breach to tell us of the history of the moss, starting with an impressive aerial view of the area, showing the relationship of the moss to the shore line. We were also shown the sort of reed igloo-like hut that would have been constructed in Mesolithic times, when the moss provided plentiful supplies of food. Objects such as arrowheads and weights for fishing nets from the Neolithic period had been found, and in digs at Storrs Moss ancient timbers had been uncovered. Passing by the Bronze Age we came to the Middle Ages when the moss was managed by the old rectory manor court; peat and hemp were produced there. As well as these products, salt from the seaward end of the moss was produced by a process known as sleeching. And in the 13<sup>th</sup> century sheep were able to graze there, a barrier having been erected to prevent incursions from Bolton-le-Sands.

In the eighteen forties Richard Thomas Gillow of Leighton Hall drained the moss to make it suitable for the growing of grain, but in 1918 the pump ceased to function and the moss started to flood again. Rather than install a new pump it was found advantageous to allow it to flood completely. This led , in the 1930s, to duck shooting becoming a popular sport on the moss. Eventually, however, with the growth of reed beds, the moss became a haven for wild life and it was first rented to, and finally bought by, the R.S.P.B. in the 1980s. It has featured in Autumn Watch on television, and, thanks to the dedication of John Wilson and others, has now more than a hundred thousand visitors per year.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### ANCESTOR QUERY

**Maggie Dickinson**

<mailto:maggiebdickinson@blueyonder.co.uk>

I have been researching my family. My Mount family came from Throng or Thrang Farm. John was born 1759 and married Mary Battersby at Warton. Their son Richard born 1759 was a land surveyor who married 1) Rebecca Jackson at Beetham and 2) Alice Hunter, producing many children.

I have inserted the surname Mount into the search box but all I could find was the name Mouteagle in Archive 2.

Might you have any records of this family, or members who are searching for them please?

***Note:***

*If anyone has any knowledge of the Mount family, please reply directly to Margaret, or if you are not on email, to me at the address on page 33, and I will forward it.*



## SILVERDALE CHAPEL: A MYSTERY SKETCH

**Simon Williams**

Recently, Jenny Ager passed to me some papers donated to the Mourholme Archive. Such donations are always welcomed, and often produce little gems. Here is one collection of papers that I briefly showed at a recent members meeting. The subject matter of them is the old Silverdale Church (originally a Chapel of Ease in the Parish of Warton) at a time when it incorporated a school room at one end. The collection of papers comprises what appears to be a copy of a plan, together with a text giving information about the interior of the Church and some pen and ink sketches. The precise date of the sketches is unknown, but the text notes that the chapel was rebuilt ‘around 1830’.

As you can see they are fascinating pictures: the plan shows the arrangement of a box pew, a ‘Christening pew’, a few rowed pews, the pulpit and reading desk, and a gallery, and the sketch of the interior shows some of these features. There seems to be no heating, and few windows in either church or schoolroom, as the sketch of the exterior makes clear.

Do you know anything about these sketches or do you have other observations to make?

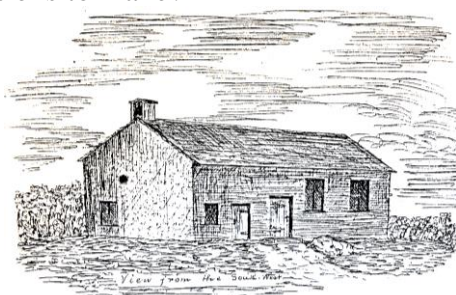


Figure 1: The exterior of the Old Church from the South west

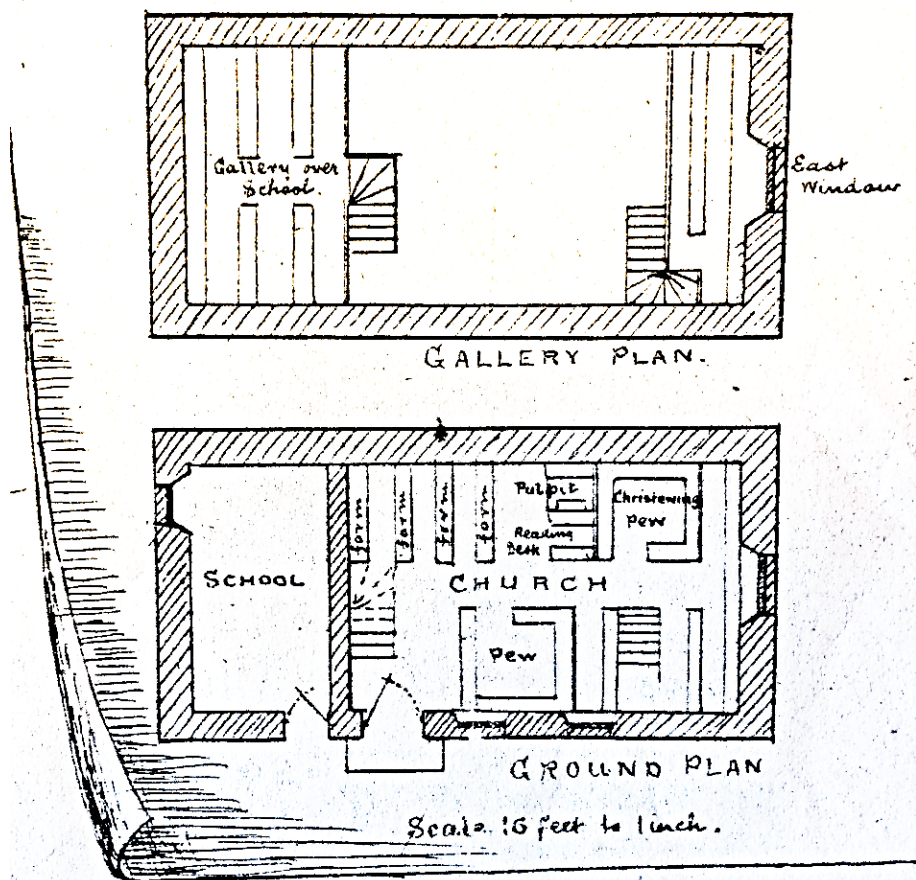


Figure 2: A plan of the Old Church

# Silverdale Church.

First Founded in 1548.A.D.

The Structure here represented  
was re-built about 1830 A.D.

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Text on front of East Gallery: - We must all appear before the judgment  
seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according  
to that he hath done whether it be good or bad. V. 2 Cor. 10 verse.

Texts on each side of Pulpit: - O call ye the Lord our God and worship  
at his footstool for we in Holy. XCIX Psalm. 5 verse.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye  
shall find we have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. V John 34.

Figure 3: Textual information about the Old Church

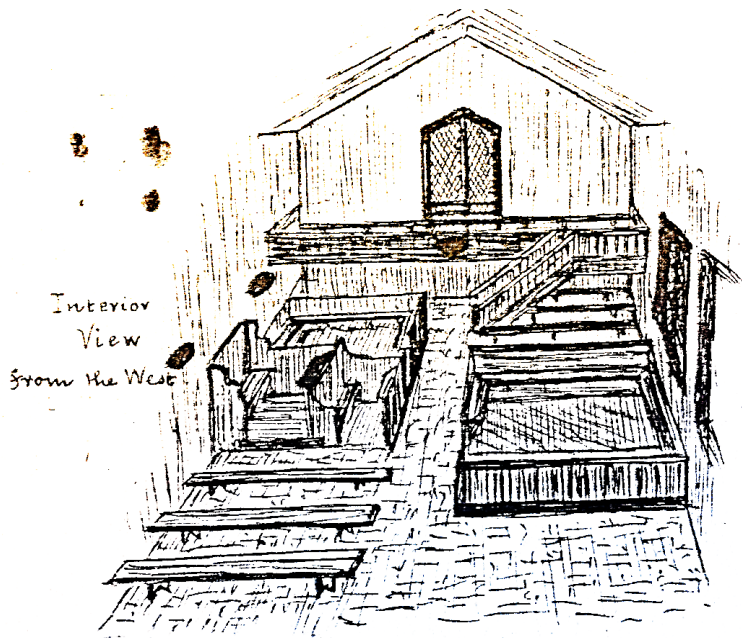


Figure 4: the interior of the Old Church

### *Note*

*Simon and Margaret are not the first people to ask for further information in the 'Notes and Queries' section of this magazine. I would welcome replies to queries like Simon's so that 'Notes and Queries' could be more interactive. Please email or post your replies to Awena Carter at [dr.a.carter@btinternet.com](mailto:dr.a.carter@btinternet.com) 4 Lindeth Road, Silverdale, Carnforth, LA5 0TT.*

*I am very willing to edit contributions, so do not worry if you feel you are not a practised writer.*

*Awena Carter*

## **2017 - 18 PROGRAMME**

Meetings are held in Yealand Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. Our talks generally finish by 9.00 p.m. followed by tea and coffee

**Wednesday September 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Debtors of Lancaster Prison** – Dr Graham Kemp

**Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Mapping Morecambe Bay: The Early Days** – Dr Bill Shannon

**Wednesday November 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Place Names and the Landscape in Mediaeval North-West England** – Dr Alan Crosby

**Thursday December 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Local Surgeons of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries** – Mr Bryan Rhodes

**Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Cumbrian Stone Circles** – Tom Clare

**Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Fishermen on Morecambe Bay** – Michelle Cooper

**Wednesday March 28<sup>th</sup>**

**The Arthurian Legend in Lancashire and Beyond** – Dr Andrew Breeze

**Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup>**

**If God Permits; Myths and Realities behind the Stagecoach Era** – Dr Stephen Caunce

The talk will be preceded by the **Mourholme AGM**.