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Contents	Page
JOHN LUCAS, WHERE ART THOU? Andy Denwood	1
SHOPPING IN SILVERDALE IN TIMES PAST (AND PRESENT) Geoff Wood	6
THE ROLE OF THE MORECAMBE BAY PARTNERSHIP IN LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECTS Simon Williams	15
ARCHAEOLOGY ON SUMMERHOUSE HILL Andy Denwod	19
JOHN JENKINSON OF YEALAND Simon Williams	22
REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS Richard Carter, Clive Holden, Sheila Jones	27
NOTES AND QUERIES Simon Williams and Clive Holden	32
2016 – 17 PROGRAMME	35



## **JOHN LUCAS, WHERE ART THOU?** **Andy Denwood**

Early last year I embarked on a local history pilgrimage.

I caught the 7.08 train from Carnforth to Leeds, planning to visit the grave of Warton's earliest known local historian, the schoolmaster John Lucas. His history of Warton Parish was written between 1710 and 1750, and I'd been re-reading it with a view to publishing a new edition and perhaps writing a brief, biographical introduction. Along the way, I'd become steeped in his arcane and laborious writing style which is – mercifully – often relieved by fascinating insights into eighteenth century village life: like the lively annual village football match and the elaborate rushbearing ceremony at St Oswalds.

The Leeds train rattled through Borwick and Arkholme, stopping at Wennington and Bentham, before climbing up on to the Pennines at Clapham. The young John Lucas, I reflected, must have followed a similar route – though on horseback rather than by train -- when he first moved from Warton to Leeds. As we pulled out of Long Preston I mused on the graceful homage I might pay the historian whom all Mourholme members must regard as their patron saint. By Skipton I'd decided to buy two roses – one red and one white – to lay on his grave in recognition of a life begun in a north Lancashire village but lived and concluded in the boisterous metropolis of Leeds. It was a touching scene I rehearsed in my mind's eye: two local historians communing down the centuries. This poetic fancy would shortly suffer a rude awakening.

If there is a florist shop between Leeds Central station and my eventual destination, the Church of St John the Evangelist, I failed to find it. As it turned out, it was probably just as well. Brushing past the commuters on Boar Lane, I scaled Briggate, crossed the Headrow with its smart shops and eateries, and entered the churchyard through a splendid lych gate. And there it was in all its seventeenth century glory: the oldest church in Leeds; the place where John Lucas had worshipped for the last 25 years of his life.

The charity school where he taught is now the site of a rather good café in the corner of the church yard (I can recommend the flapjack). This was the centre of John Lucas's world: his workplace, the parish where he served as church warden, where he rubbed shoulders with the great and the good of Leeds and the plot where he was laid to rest, aged 66, in 1750 alongside his wife Elizabeth, who had died at 41, having borne him seven children. It's a fine place to be buried. Very few churches were built in the troubled reign of Charles 1. With its plaster ceilings decorated like a wedding cake and its richly carved, dark, glossy oak pews, St John's is a rare gem and well worth a visit. But I was not here to celebrate church architecture. I had a mission: locate and venerate. I began to look for the grave of Warton's John Lucas.

There is a quintessential English pleasure to be had in randomly deciphering the lives of long-dead yeomen from lichen-covered gravestones to a soundtrack of buzzing bees. But this was Leeds in March and mine was a more dour and deliberate process. Less comfortable too. The memorials in St John's graveyard are not uprights, but horizontal ledgerstones, laid edge to edge in a stony patchwork. Much bending and squinting followed. No matter. I was confident of finding him. He was here, I knew,

because I had it on the authority of a later local historian, Mr J Rawlinson Ford of Yealand: the patient scholar who co-edited and published the 1931 abridgement of Lucas's massive tome.

“He was buried in the Churchyard of St John's Church in Leeds, where...there is a tombstone to his memory”, writes Rawlinson Ford, unequivocally, in an appendix to the book. He helpfully adds details of the Latin inscription I should look out for: *Vita labore perfunctus huc accessit* – A life of labour over, he came here. Simple.

And sure enough, at the tower end of the church I found John Lucas. But hold on a minute, the dates were all wrong. This wasn't *our* John Lucas. It was some other worthy with the same name. OK, so our man must be down the other side. Except he wasn't. I examined every legible stone. Not a trace of our Lucas and his clan. What was going on? I chewed over the mystery along with a slice of excellent flapjack in the cafe next to the church. Was I in the right churchyard? Yes, definitely. What was I missing?

Naturally, I raised the issue with the helpful volunteers at St John's, which is no longer a working church so much as a lovely historic building in the care of the Church Conservation Trust. I wasn't entirely surprised that they hadn't heard of John Lucas. Although he'd lived on their patch, he is of much greater importance to Warton than to Leeds. The only possible clue they could offer was that there had been some “improvements” and “landscaping” around the church a few years back. Perhaps some monuments had been moved?

Back at home I fired off some emails: to the headquarters of the Church Conservation Trust; to the City Council, and to the

Leeds Local history group, the Thoresby Society. But no-one could explain why a grave that had been there in the early 1930's was apparently there no longer. The 'landscaping' and 'improvements' I'd heard about had been carried out in the adjacent memorial gardens, not the churchyard, I was told. The Council couldn't help. And the Church Conservation Trust HQ wrote back saying they did not hold records for churches in their care.

I returned to my source. Re-reading Rawlinson Ford's appendix to Lucas's history, I noticed that he hadn't actually visited the graveyard himself. Instead, he had relied upon the work of another 1930's historian, Mr G D Lumb of Leeds, who had transcribed the details from John Lucas's memorial. Mr Lumb, in fact, had transcribed the details from all the gravestones in St John's churchyard and published them, in the proceedings of the Thoresby Society.

On my next visit to Leeds, friendly librarians at the magnificent Central Library steered me towards Mr Lumb's work. His meticulous cataloguing clearly located the memorial to our John Lucas as lying not far from the main door to the church. But I still wasn't able to find it. A further trip to the West Yorkshire Archive, which holds a Victorian map of the graves and a key to their owners, failed to shed more light on the mystery. There was – tantalisingly – a reference to a John Lucas (not my previous false-start) who was buried near the door. But he was listed as "John Lucas, merchant". Was the schoolmaster a victim of clerical error? In any case, whatever the paperwork told me, I'd been unable to find our man's memorial on the ground.

So this, for the moment, is the unsatisfactory state of affairs: John Lucas's family memorial was there for all to see in the 1930's, but I can't find it eight decades later. I still think I've missed something. It will not end here. This is one of those irksome anomalies that nags at the brain. Sooner or later I'll be back on the 7.08 from Carnforth to Leeds. I need answers ... and possibly another piece of flapjack. But no roses. Not until I have somewhere to lay them.

## SHOPPING IN SILVERDALE IN TIMES PAST (AND PRESENT)

**Geoff Wood**

Until the 1950s, if you lived in Silverdale you didn't need to go anywhere else to do your shopping. The village had numerous shops and businesses selling the whole range of essentials and even some of life's luxuries. Furthermore, shops in Arnside and Carnforth sent staff in a variety of vehicles to offer Silverdale residents even more choice and convenience.

These businesses were thriving in the early years, but as tastes changed and personal transport became more common, most of the shops mentioned in this article were closed down. As trading ceased the buildings were generally converted to residences. This article has been written following conversations with villagers who remember what things used to be like. The village centre was as it is now, but it also stretched up Stankelt Road and along Emesgate Lane, as the sketch map at the end of this article shows.

*You can use the **sketch map (page 14)** as a guide to a short walk, starting at the junction of Spring Bank and Stankelt Rd and heading downhill towards the village centre. **Reference numbers** relate to the sketch map. **House numbers**, where appropriate, are given in the text.*

**1. The Dainty House (or Shop)** (No 17) The first cottage on the right after Spring Bank was a drapery, which sold children's and ladies wear and household linen. The owners were two ladies, who lived a few doors back up the road at The Limes. They



later moved premises to continue trading in the shop currently occupied by the Newsagent/Post Office.

*Continuing down the road, on the right is*

**2. Richmond's Newsagents** (No 5) This was next door to The Nook. Tommy Richmond ran the shop, and his brother Lawrence was responsible for sorting the newspapers, which was done at the railway station where the papers were dropped from a passing train. Lawrence also repaired shoes in a little building, which was behind the shop and accessed through an archway, which has now been built up.

The newsagent sold a very wide variety of items including flowers and produce (some from the garden at Richmond Hill), sweets, and chocolates.

On wall shelves behind the counter were:

Cigarettes, tobacco and matches;

Cards and stationery;

Shoes, slippers and wellingtons;

Children's toys, jigsaws, Dinky Toys, annuals;

Seasonal goods for Christmas;

Buckets and spades for the visitors.

**3. Allendale Café and Bakery** (No 18) This was in the double-fronted house across the road. It was owned by the Dolden family and Mr Dolden was very well-known pushing his handcart loaded with bread and cakes around the area. After this business closed the premises became a British Legion Social Club.

**4. Miss Burrow's Haberdashery** (No 14) This was in the first of three older houses after the "new" flats. After many years in her business, Miss Burrow retired and was followed by two ladies who lived on The Row. They provided a much wider range of stock, but they were eventually replaced by a Mrs

Burrow, a relative of the original, who created a Ladies Outfitters.

**5. Farrer's Grocers** (No 12A) occupied the next house. They were followed by Mr Turner and Mr Nuttall. On certain days there was a fish stall outside.

**6. Later, Mr Mainwaring** took over the bottom part of the shop (No 12) and made wooden toys, dolls houses and other general woodwork. He lived across the road at Yew Tree House.

After this **Philip Ashworth** opened an Electrical Shop in the premises, selling radios etc. All three former shops have now reverted to residences.

*Keeping on down Stankelt Rd, bear left into Shore Road, until reaching the Silverdale Hotel.*

**7. Shore Road (Bungalow) Café** The bungalow opposite the Silverdale Hotel was a café which also sold cooked meats and bread. Attached to it was a small kiosk from which Mr Moorby sold ice-creams at weekends.

*Continue down Shore Road to the corner.*

**8. Beach Café** The big white house used to be much smaller and housed a café selling ice cream and other essentials for visitors. At the time it was owned by the Bolton family.

*Retracing the route to the junction of Stankelt Rd and Emesgate Lane we pass the oldest, "Old Post Office". On our left is*

**9. Stankelt House** This was the second location of Silverdale Post Office and also housed a Gift Shop. Later on the Post Office moved to premises next door, and Stankelt House became a café under a succession of three different names – The Rendezvous Café, The Saga Café and The Sandpiper. The building has been converted into flats.

**10. Post Office (3<sup>rd</sup> location)** (No 7A) The Post Office was located here until the 2015 relocation along Emesgate Lane. At the time of writing the building has just re-opened as **Vintage and Country**, a shop selling furniture and soft furnishings.

*Next to the Post Office (3<sup>rd</sup> location) is a block of three properties, before Gaskell Close.*

**11. Haskell's Greengrocery** was the first business at this location. It later passed to Frank and Nora Bolton, who ran a sweet and ice cream shop, selling flat toffee and pop. After this it was converted to an Off-Licence.

**12. Hairdressers** Mrs Provart had a hairdressing business in the central property. Later it was a solicitor's office.

**13. Chemist** This occupied the third property (No 13) on the end of Gaskell Close. The chemist was Jack Fay and in those days all bottles and containers had to be sterilised on the premises.

*On the opposite side of the road is now Stoneleigh Court which previously was ~*

**14. Shaw's Garage** Based around the present Stoneleigh Court Shaws had coaches, taxis, wedding and funeral cars and some cars for hire. They had the only petrol pumps in the area and a range of lock-up garages that were rented to residents and visitors for car storage. They provided day trips for villagers and now operate nationwide as Traveller's Choice in Carnforth.

*Continuing along Emesgate Lane the semi-detached house was~*

**15. Robinson's Newsagent** (No 10) This had replaced the Richmond's shop (see 2 above). Before this it had been occupied by a hairdresser.

**16. Mrs Grave's Stall** Mrs Graves was a very effective saleswoman who sold fruit and vegetables from her own garden, preserves, honey and plants at a moveable stall at the entrance to the farm near the bus stop. After greeting her – “Good Morning, Mrs Graves” apparently you could expect to walk off having bought a bag of fruit or something very tasty. If you went to buy a single item you inevitably left with two or more.

*Across the road and next to The Royal Hotel the large block of shops called Holborn House comprises ~*

**17. Newsagent/Post Office (4<sup>th</sup> Location)** This was where The Dainty House/Shop (see 1 above) relocated. After the Dainty House it became a shop selling gifts, sweets and ice cream. The next occupant tried to create the finest Fish and Chip Shop in the area but sadly did not succeed. The premises are now the combined news agency and post office.

**18. Dr Findlater's Silverdale Surgery** Whilst writing this the surgery is closed and awaiting a new role.

**19. Winterbottom's** Next door saw the creation of wonderful tasty pies, bread, cakes. Mr Winterbottom was known by the local children as “Chilly”. Later on Lawton's opened a fruit and vegetable shop, now Gill's Hairdresser.

**20. Burrow's Butchers** This was run by brothers Fred and Walter the butcher's shop is still thriving, with later generations involved.

*Across the road is ~*

**21. The Co-op** Refurbished twice in the last few years the Co-op is a lifeline for villagers making it possible to get all food and general necessities, without leaving the village.

**22. The Indian Restaurant** Previously an Italian Restaurant and before that a pvc window showroom, it is currently an Indian Restaurant and takeaway.

*Next to the Indian restaurant are two tall stone buildings. The first was ~*

**23. Grocers** This was owned at different times by Miss Cook, Roscoes or Kenningtons. It is currently the Chemist.

**24. National Westminster Bank** Now a branch surgery this building was for many years a branch of this bank.

*Continuing down Emesgate Lane the building at the junction with Spring Bank has had various roles including ~*

**25. Miss Hirst's Sweet Shop** and later owned by **Riddicks**.

**26. Smithy** and later an Antique shop.

**27. Cobbler's Shop** owned by **Fawcett Allinson**.

At one point there was an upstairs restaurant, which was very exclusive and had to be pre-booked.

**Travelling Salesmen:** The following provided various valuable services for the villagers:

**Mr Hartley** lived at Waterslack and was a fisherman.

**Eddie Sands** lived at Red Bridge until 1953 then moving to Stankelt Road. He fished and also did gardening work.

**Carnforth Co-op Butcher** came over weekly, bringing meat from the Carnforth Co-op.

**Mr Postlethwaite** came every Monday night to Silverdale with a horse drawn cart loaded with goods. He eventually bought a lorry, with which he did the same, only rather more quickly. He carried paraffin oil, which was essential for the many small domestic heaters in use around the village.

**Crosfield's of Arnside** Every Monday (washday) Mrs Taylor came by bicycle from Arnside to collect villagers' grocery orders. These orders were then delivered by Crosfield's van on the following Thursday. (Will TESCO and the others ever think of doing this?) Crosfield's shop was on the front at Arnside in premises now occupied by a restaurant. As Crosfield's were also boatbuilders, the shop counters and shelves were beautifully made.

**Bert Nicholls** lived on Townsfield and delivered fruit and vegetables around the village in his van.

**There were also the following businesses and services:**

**Coal Merchants:** There was a choice of coal supplier –

**Sid Meadows** who lived at Spring Bank House, where his wife also provided Bed and Breakfast, and **Stan Burrow** who lived at Myers Farm (now RSPB).

**Level Crossing Keeper** was George Hodkinson, who, with his French wife Louisa, lived in a cottage alongside the level crossing. The gates were normally closed against traffic and any driver wishing to take a vehicle across had to ring a bell and the

Crossing Keeper would open the gates when it was safe to do so. Pedestrians used a small wicket gate. This arrangement ended around 1959. To supplement their income his wife had a small shop selling cigarettes, tobacco and sweets. He also sold and repaired bikes and had a petrol pump.

**Red Bridge Shop** There was a small shop next to the road, selling crisps, sweets and pop, with customers mostly being the wagon drivers from the two nearby quarries.

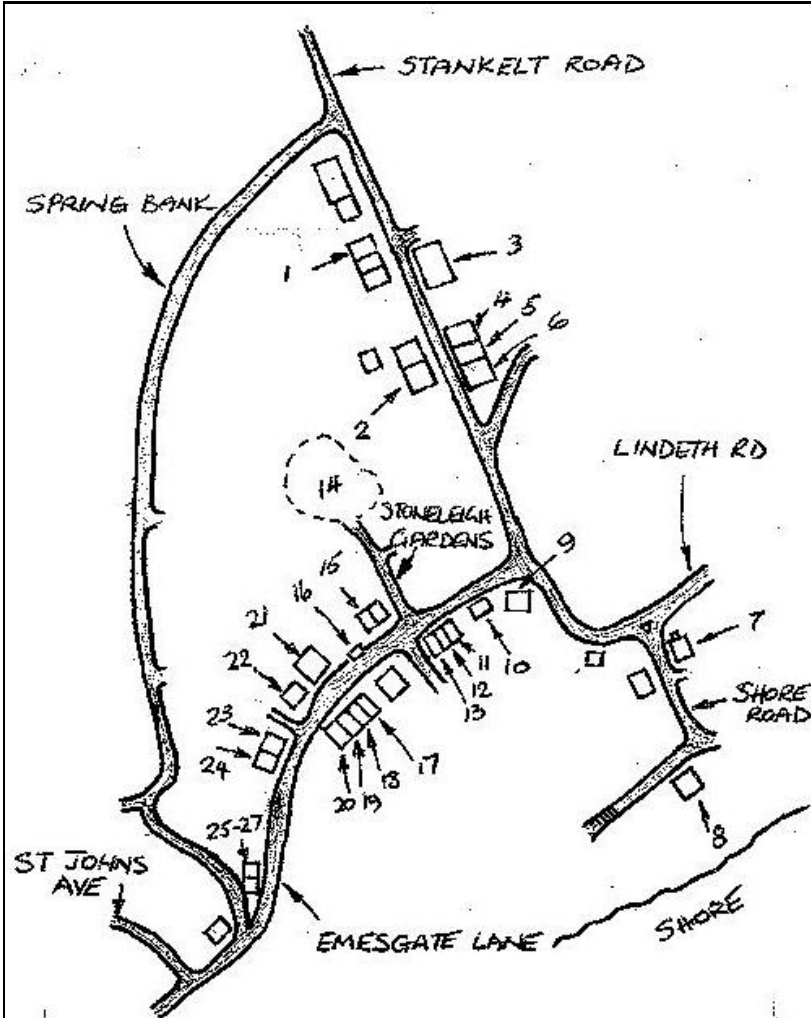
### **Conclusion**

I have been surprised that a small village like Silverdale should have so many retail opportunities. Clearly, with such a wealth of shops there was very little need to make the journey to large towns, except in exceptional circumstances. It's even more surprising when you consider that the village was much smaller than it is now – all the following developments came later:

Maryland Close; The Chase; Hazelwood; St Johns Avenue etc.; LevensWay; Spring Bank bungalows; Stoneleigh Court; Shore Green.; Shore Close; Whinney Fold; Cleveland Avenue; Elmslack Court; Cove Drive; Birch Drive; Bradshawgate; Wallings Lane bungalows; and a few infill developments.

I hope that this article inspires you to stroll along the lanes and roads of Silverdale and think about the many changes in the way of life of villagers. Compare this to our ways today and think about those of our predecessors 60 years or more ago. All the information is given in good faith and I apologise in advance if I have misinterpreted any of the information I have collected.

My particular thanks go to John and Margaret Lambert, for starting me off on this project and also to Betty Hodgkinson for her help.





A sketch map of Silverdale showing the location of the shops,  
past and present.

*In the following two linked articles, Simon Williams and Andy Denwood write about local archaeology projects.*

## **THE ROLE OF THE MORECAMBE BAY PARTNERSHIP IN LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECTS**

**Simon Williams**

What, exactly, is the chimney at Jenny Brown's Point? And just where is the iron age hill fort on Warton Crag? Two of the most important historic features in our area are poorly understood, and we hope to be able to change that.

In 2014 the Morecambe Bay Partnership (MBP)<sup>1</sup> secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which together with match funding from other sources has enabled an ambitious 5 year programme of activities. Its 'Headlands to Headspace' programme includes a wide range of cultural and natural heritage projects around the Bay, including a programme of community archaeological projects. Two of these are within our area – the chimney at Jenny Brown's Point, and the Warton Crag hill fort.

Through 2015 volunteers were recruited and given training in the archive research and surveying techniques, and the work got underway, guided and led by MBP's archaeologist Louise Martin. So what have we found and where next?

First, the chimney. It has been variously described as a lime kiln (which it certainly isn't), a shipping beacon, a mine (the 1846

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the Morecambe Bay Partnership, visit their web site at <http://www.morecambabay.org.uk/>

Title Map for Warton with Lindeth marks the site “Mining Shaft”), a lead ore processing works, and a copper smelting operation. This last contender remains the favourite – but is as yet unproven. Many hours of volunteer time has been spent in Lancashire and Cumbria County Records Offices pouring over maps and any late eighteenth century documents that might relate to the chimney and its purpose. But to date we have been frustrated by a lack of direct evidence – although two stories have emerged that might hold the answer.

A set of letters in the Lancashire Records describes an extraordinary dispute between the Yealand Lord of the Manor and the occupants of Leighton Hall. Following the enclosure of Yealand’s wastes and commons in 1777, including certain portions of Warton Crag, Robert Gibson, as Lord of the Manor, assumed that he had retained the rights to mine minerals on newly enclosed common lands even if these had been awarded to other landowners. He mined copper at Crag Foot, but was successfully challenged in the Court of the King’s Bench in 1784 and 1788 by George Townley, the landowner at Leighton Hall. Had Gibson built a copper smelter at nearby Jenny Brown’s Point to smelt his raw material and transport raw materials and the finished product by sea from that location?

A second possible lead came out of a search of the National Archives – which uncovered legal documents from 1784 to allow for the mining of minerals on a few parcels of land owned by the Crown. One of these parcels, labelled The King’s field on a map of 1812, lies off Hollins Lane, and is just 500 yards from the chimney. Of the three men granted this lease, one was John Jenkinson, the schoolmaster at the Quaker school in Yealand (described elsewhere in this magazine). Could this be

connected? Did these men organise an integrated mining and smelting operation?

The chimney of course would not stand in isolation, and old postcards show that around 1900 there were the remnants of connected buildings – by then in a tumbledown state. The erosion of the saltmarsh around the chimney has exposed foundations of some buildings and features that are as yet unexplained. Through the summer months small teams of volunteers undertook the first ever detailed survey of visible features – mapping and photographing each and every stone of visible walls and foundations so that a base record is obtained of the site.

If the archive research has not given us the answers we want, then further on-site archaeology may help. The detailed survey of the site will be complemented by a geophysical survey. And during 2016 we will bring to the chimney an expert industrial archaeologist to help interpret the visible features, and guide us in our next steps, which are likely to include some limited amounts of excavation.

Nearby lies Walduck's Wall – the stone wall jutting into the sea which represents the failed attempt to reclaim 6,300 acres of land from the sea in the 1870s (see issues 66 and 67 of this magazine for the full history). Tides, storms and coastal erosion have damaged the wall considerably, and at some point in the future we will lose it. Before that happens we will at least complete a survey of the wall so that a record remains. In the near future a specialized drone aircraft will be employed to make an aerial survey of the embankment – in essence a three dimensional record of the feature.

Unlike the site at Jenny Brown's Point, the hill fort at Warton Crag has been surveyed before. Both local historians and the Ordnance Survey drew a system of three concentric ramparts that were visible at a time in the crag's history where there was little vegetation on the crag. But today the job is much harder. With extensive tree cover the ramparts are hard to discern, and previous surveys do not agree with one another. For some years the White Cross Archaeology Group has traced what they can – principally in the winter months when more is discernible on the ground. Our group's work has concentrated so far on amassing the documentary research concerning the site.

But we are now awaiting the analysis of an exciting new survey – a LiDAR<sup>2</sup> survey taken from the air works by bouncing laser pulses from the plane to the ground under survey, building a highly accurate (to 10 cm) three dimensional model of the terrain. Best of all, it sees through the vegetative cover (more about LiDAR in the next article).

This article should be regarded as a progress report. As we discover more about these sites we will share the results with Mourholme members – watch this space.

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<sup>2</sup> for more information about LiDAR visit  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/approaches/research-methods/airborne-remote-sensing/lidar/>.

## **ARCHAEOLOGY ON SUMMERHOUSE HILL**

Andy Denwod

The Mourholme Local History Society began the New Year with a bold new initiative to unlock some of the archaeological secrets of Summerhouse Hill in Yealand Conyers. The Society has joined forces with the Archaeology Department of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), to commission an aerial survey of the hilltop, in order to gather data using the latest LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology. This type of data is gathered by a specially equipped aircraft which fires a rapid series of laser pulses, in the form of light, at the ground. Their reflection creates a three dimensional map which can help to identify man-made banks, pits and ditches.

Back in May the Society invited the University's Dr Vicki Cummings to join members for a walk and talk up the Hill. Dr Cummings – an expert in prehistoric monuments – was impressed with what she saw, and subsequently encouraged MA archaeology student Scott McKenna to survey the site as part of his final year dissertation. He has so far used two different forms of geophysical survey: magnetometry and resistivity.<sup>3</sup> This has involved dividing the hilltop into grids, and carefully walking up and down the site with frames carrying electrodes. Magnetometry maps patterns of magnetism in the soil, especially areas which have been burned. Resistivity involves passing an electrical current into the soil. The current highlights variations in soil moisture – with ditches and pits tending to be damper than buried walls, for example. Whist these surveys can

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<sup>3</sup> For more information about these techniques, visit <http://www.archaeological-surveys.co.uk/index.html>

provide useful information, LiDAR generated three dimensional maps can provide a clearer picture.

A LiDAR survey normally costs many thousands of pounds. But (as mentioned in the previous article) the Morecambe Bay Partnership's 'Headlands to Headspace' project had already booked a survey of Warton Crag's prehistoric fortifications. Simon Williams, The Mourholme Society's chair realised that this presented the Society with an unmissable opportunity. For the relatively modest cost of £650 plus VAT, the Morecambe Bay Partnership's planned LiDAR aerial survey of the Warton Crag hillfort could be extended to survey the summit of Summerhouse Hill. Since the survey of Summer House Hill represents genuinely new research in our area, Simon agreed, in consultation with committee members, that the society's research/ publications grants policy could meet 50% of the costs. UCLan's Archaeology Department will shoulder the remainder of the bill. And they have promised to explain their findings to Mourholme members once Scott has finished working on his dissertation.

There have been arguments for decades about the significance of the Summerhouse Hill site. In the 1930's, local antiquarian Colonel Oliver North suggested it might once have been a massive stone circle – an idea which has been challenged by many experts in the field. On her first visit in May, Dr Cummings was sceptical about the claims for the circle. But she was impressed by the surviving stonework around the base of the eighteenth-century summerhouse. Her initial response was that this might be part of a large Bronze Age burial mound.

Scott McKenna's patient geophysical surveys have produced some data. While the magnetometry survey revealed little of any

interest on the hilltop, the resistivity survey was more successful, showing evidence of a linear feature leading up to the immediate area of the Summerhouse/barrow. The archaeologists are being cautious . But there is a possibility that the feature could turn out to be an ancient trackway. It has two parallel edges and runs the entire length of Scott's 60 metre grid. It may be similar to features which UCLan archaeologists have surveyed in their recent investigations in the Forest of Bowland.

It will be interesting to see whether the LiDAR data is able to tell us any more about this feature and whether it might help locate the “many barrows of earth and stone” which eighteenth century antiquarians reported as covering the hill. Watch out for updates on the Summerhouse project as 2016 progresses.



## **JOHN JENKINSON OF YEALAND**

**Simon Williams**

One of the delights of historical research is the accidental discovery of curiosities that seem – on first sight – to have nothing to do with your line of inquiry. As one of the team of volunteers working with the Morecambe Bay Partnership to study and record the history of the chimney at Jenny Brown’s Point, I was working in the Lancashire County Archives one day, sifting through a batch of letters sent to George Townley, resident of Leighton Hall since 1763. I was hoping to find some evidence, or even mention, of a copper smelting operation at Jenny Brown’s Point – but found nothing useful. But I did find a curious letter. Written on a single page in an elegant and highly legible hand, it is addressed to George Townley of Leighton Hall, and it reads:

Yealand February 7<sup>th</sup> 1768

My Friend

My Pupils for above a year last past have by your kind favour had the use of your Pew to sit in at Warton Church. And as you have been so generous as to decline taking any consideration adequate to the favour. I therefore herewith send you sixpence as an additional acknowledgement, that it is entirely by your courtesy they enjoy the privilege, which favour I hope will always be gratefully remembered by

Your much obliged friend

John Jenkinson

One can only guess at the careful diplomacy that necessitated this letter. But a little more research soon unearthed some startling facts. It was the Townleys who established a Catholic mission in Yealand, and John Jenkinson was schoolmaster at the Friends' School. So just how did it come about that the schoolmaster of a Quaker school should be thanking the devoutly Catholic resident of Leighton Hall for the use of his pew in the Church of England parish church?

Although there may have been an earlier school, the Yealand Friends' school started in 1709 when Thomas Wither of Over Kellet left £6 for the maintenance of a schoolmaster at Yealand. By the time John Jenkinson had taken up the post (c1745) the salary was £12. An advertisement placed in the Newcastle Chronicle in April 1768 by Jenkinson gives a flavour of the operation:

### **Yealand School, near Lancaster**

The Trustees having erected a large and commodious new School, and the Encouragement the present Master hath met with induced him greatly to enlarge his House, and make it suitable for the Reception of Boarders. These Conveniences, and the remarkable healthy and pleasant Situation of the Place, make him take this Method to acquaint the Public, that those who please to favour him with the Education of their Children, may be assured that he will take proper Care of their Morals, as well as to instruct them in their Learning. The Branches of Learning taught by the Master and proper Assistants are, English, Latin, Greek, Writing, Arithmetic Vulgar and Decimal, Book-keeping, Geography, the Use of the Globes (*navigation through astronomical observations*), Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Navigation,

Surveying, etc. The Terms for Boarding, and Schooling, are from £10 to £12 per Annum, according to the part of learning they study. There are also good Lodgings to be had in the Village, on reasonable Terms, exclusive of the Master's House.

The Encouragement given him by those who have favoured him with their Children, and the Trustees of the School, is most gratefully acknowledged by their most obliged Friend,

John Jenkinson.

Interestingly, at no point does the advertisement state that this is a Quaker school (unless the reader spotted the sign-off "... their most obliged Friend ...") In fact the school was not exclusive; a report by Charity Commissioners in 1898 stated "The benefit of the charity has never been reserved for Friends, nor is there anything in Withers' will to exclude children of other religious denominations."

The conundrum seems solved. The Townleys' pew in Warton church came with possession of Leighton Hall. They had no use for it – they were busy building a Catholic congregation at their new chapel. And since the boarders at the Friends' School were from any denomination, some would doubtless have been keen to attend the local Church of England church.

But there was more to discover about John Jenkinson. He was much more than just a schoolmaster albeit a progressive and accomplished one, given the wording of his advertisement. In the Lancashire County Archives, he and his brother James, and a John Cumming, can be found repeatedly handling the estates of the Friends – letting various parcels of agricultural land, and buying and selling other land. John Jenkinson was appointed

several times as executor to local wills, and as a trustee to administer the annual disbursements of money to family members. He was a man of consequence; an educated man; and a man who could be trusted with important family business.

And he would involve himself in much larger matters too. In 1787 he wrote a letter to Lord George Cavendish, who was in London at that moment – sitting in Parliament. His letter describes a visit from an engineer, Mr Longbotham, in which a grand scheme was unveiled – diverting and canalising the river Kent from Levens along through Arnside, Silverdale, Warton, Hest Bank and Bare – eventually emptying via a lock into the Lune. The newly canalised Kent would be no less than 60 yards wide which would “very probably make it one of the most useful Navigations in the Kingdom.” It would also mean that the Kent was no longer emptying itself into Morecambe Bay – and 40,000 acres of land would be reclaimed from the sea. John Jenkinson’s purpose in writing seems twofold: to brief a local VIP and landowner; and to ask him to tackle the Earl of Derby on the same scheme, as Derby’s own man seemed negative towards the whole idea. This was a lobbying letter. As it happened, Mr Longbotham switched his surveying attentions to an alternative and relatively easier canal project, and in 1792 Royal Assent was granted to the Act that enabled the building of the Lancaster Canal from Kendal to Preston. Morecambe Bay remained safely wet.

This massive undertaking wasn’t the only large industrial project to occupy the mind of this village schoolmaster. And it brings me, perhaps, full circle – back to the chimney at Jenny Brown’s Point. Louise Martin of the Morecambe Bay Partnership obtained a document and plan from the National

Archives held at Kew. This was a lease, agreed in 1784, to mine and smelt minerals on three parcels of Crown land in the area of Warton. One of these parcels of land is on the side of Heald Brow – just 500 yards from the chimney as the crow flies. Could this be the source of copper used at the smelting mill at Jenny Brown’s Point (if indeed it does prove to be a smelter – which is likely but as yet unproven)? And who were the men granted this lease? A surgeon from Burton in Kendal; a gentleman from Lancaster; and a schoolmaster from Yealand: John Jenkinson.

I should finish with two postscripts. John Jenkinson was clearly a man to be reckoned with. Did he and his partners actually mine copper (or anything else) on the Crown lands? We do not yet know. Nor is there any link with the chimney other than proximity – geographical and historical. And lastly, I should recognise the work of others from whom I’ve drawn some of my researches: the 1992 Mourholme Magazine article “Green Garth and the Jenkinsons” by Carol Shaw and notes and papers in the recently donated archives of the late Joan Clarke.

## **REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS**

**Richard Carter, Clive Holden, Sheila Jones**

### **28<sup>th</sup> October 2015 Willie Riley, Author (1866-1961)**

**David Copeland** began his lively talk about Willie Riley with Riley's birth in Bradford and his life there as a business man and Methodist Lay Preacher. He moved to Silverdale in 1919 for the good of his first wife's health. He became a novelist when his wife and his friends urged him to publish a story originally written for a private audience: 'Windyridge', set in the Yorkshire Dales, was published in 1912 and became an immediate best-seller. After the business of which he was Managing Director collapsed in 1914 he relied on writing for his income. Over a period of 47 years he wrote over 30 novels including 'The Silver Dale' (1932). Riley remained an active Methodist Lay Preacher and a popular lecturer throughout his adult life. He was active in the life of Silverdale including the Leeds Children's Holiday Camp and the Silverdale Players, for whom he wrote two plays. The name of the Gaskell Memorial Hall was his suggestion and the Hall was opened with a play based on a scene from his work. More information about his life and work can be found at <http://willieriley.org.uk/>.

### **26<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Researching War Memorials.**

**Mike Coyle** began by telling us how his interest in war memorials had been aroused many years ago by the discovery that his great uncle Bernard, killed at Arras in 1917 while serving in the King's Own, was commemorated on six war

memorials. He then went on to lament that on average in Britain one memorial is desecrated per week, and showed examples of war memorials in various places in the East Lancashire/Manchester area with missing panels or other damage. Apparently when caught, some of the perpetrators get off lightly by claiming ignorance of the significance of their crimes.

We were reminded that war memorials can take many forms including paintings, gardens, libraries, village halls, and even whole villages such as Westfield Memorial village in Lancaster. Many of the smaller memorial tablets and rolls of honour to be found in churches, village halls and business premises are at risk for various reasons. Churches may be deconsecrated or demolished, businesses may close down and village halls may be refurbished, so that their war memorials may be looked upon as of no importance and thrown in a skip, sold on ebay as was one from Wigan Wallgate station, or, as in the case of a winner of the Victoria Cross, sold at a car boot sale for £800. Equally shocking was that a branch of the British Legion wanted to get rid of a memorial because it no longer 'fitted in'. There were several more examples suggesting that for many of us 'We will remember' has become 'We want to forget' to such an extent that over three thousand memorials are thought to have gone.

Not all was gloom and doom. There were stories of unidentified war memorials being rescued and eventually traced to their source, such as one in Blackpool which was identified by a 94 year old lady. Other memorials have been rescued and lovingly restored by those who appreciate the sacrifices made for us.

After showing a picture of rolls of honour in Yealand village hall and church, Mike concluded by mentioning the work of the

War Memorials Trust, which deals with the conservation of war memorials, the War Memorial Archive and War Memorial Online.

### **10<sup>th</sup> December 2015: Social evening.**

A well-attended social evening was enlivened by members who had brought along objects of interest. Among them were models made to illustrate ideas for improving the stability of running of railway locomotives; Princess Mary's Christmas 1914 gift box for the forces; a ladies' sovereign case (pity it wasn't full of sovereigns!); a miner's dial and an unusual sextant; a gentleman's travelling case; a couple of Victorian Bibles; some bead work; an early stethoscope to be carried in a top hat; a Soviet space age enamel badge; a self-pouring tea pot; some rug maker's implements; a distinctly unusual pressure cooker and one or two mystery objects. Apologies to anyone whose contribution has gone unrecorded. After mince pies and liquid refreshment an enjoyable evening concluded with a short quiz relating mostly to the old Warton parish.

### **27<sup>th</sup> January 2016: Digging at Sizergh**

**Jamie Quartermaine** subtitled his lively talk, "Barns, Boundaries, and Mounds" to illustrate the focal points of the archaeological investigations at Sizergh undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North, and to emphasise that all work took place in the estate, not in the castle. He was at pains to point out that it was an inclusive operation with 85-90 schoolchildren, many locals, and even Michael Buerk of "Inside the National Trust" taking part. His photographs testified to the enthusiasm of everyone involved.



The Great Bank Barn was found to be from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, probably built when the Stricklands were reinstated after the Civil War. However, investigation of the timbers, which were re-used, showed them to be tapered cruck blades, and the existence of an older plinth at the base of the stone walls suggested that the current barn was raised on the site of an old cruck barn; perhaps the tithe barn which was mentioned in 1529.

The Stricklands had hoped that the double bank and ditch whose shape relates to the castle and so post-dates it, would have been of great interest. However, it was determined that it dated from 1647-94, and was probably an ineffective attempt to keep deer from the garden.

Most exciting was the burnt mound. Burnt mounds are feature that are yet to be fully explained. They consist of an artificial mound with a hollow, and are near a water source. The stones in the mound are fire-cracked indicating they have been heated and rapidly cooled i.e. put in water in order to heat it. Sizergh's mound is too far from the nearest settlement to suggest domestic purposes and Jamie posits that it could have been for tanning. A wooden trough made it possible to date the mound as 2575-2460 B.C. and thus one of the earliest in the country.

Throughout his talk, discussion of the theories put forward and the methods and instruments employed, engaged us in a sense of discovery ourselves. We were urged to watch for developments in the digging proposed on Vicarage Fields in Lancaster if we want to participate practically.

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 : The Scotforth Murder of 1866.**

The story of this murder was told to us by **Dr. Andrew White**, author of a booklet on the subject published four years ago. It concerned Elizabeth Nelson, a maidservant working in Skerton, whose body, partly covered by snow, was found some miles away at a rarely visited spot now on the University campus. She was unsuitably dressed for the time of year (mid January) and it was not clear why she had ventured so far in the dark, though various suggestions were put forward. With forensic science in its infancy and inexpert examination of the crime scene, there was only circumstantial evidence to rely on. There were several suspects, even including Police Sergeant Harrison, stationed at Galgate, who had been called to the scene of the crime. It seems that as an 'offcomer' from Staffordshire, he was not well received by the locals, and accusations against him were without foundation. The two main suspects were young men from nearby farms, Joseph Dunderdale and John Cottam, who were both arrested, but had to be released after a time, Dunderdale much sooner than Cottam. Of the two it would seem that Cottam was the more likely culprit, though they could have colluded in the crime. One of the problems in disproving their alibis was the confusion caused by the differences in railway time and local time, which it would probably have required a Sherlock Holmes to sort out. So, with insufficient proof of guilt, the verdict was 'Wilful Murder by some person or persons unknown'. Matters were subsequently slightly confused by two separate confessions, but the claims of the would-be culprits were speedily disproved.

There is?/was? a memorial stone at the University campus, but anyone wishing to visit the grave of the victim will have to go a few miles to the little churchyard at Aughton. As for the others mentioned in this report : Sergeant Harrison retired soon afterwards on grounds of ill health and eventually moved to

Egremont in Cumbria; Joseph Dunderdale emigrated to Canada and lived until at least 1901, and John Cottam continued working as a horse-breaker and did not die until 1889.

## **NOTES AND QUERIES**

### **RESEARCH GRANTS POLICY**

**Simon Williams**

Over the last few years Mourholme members have published pieces of their own historical research. We have made two financial awards to both assist in the cost of publication and encourage research and publishing endeavours. The following list outlines the criteria for work which could be considered for publication through the Mourholme Local History Society.

1. The research must be original, and may look at primary evidence, secondary sources for the period under examination, or reach new conclusions from collection and examination of secondary sources currently in print.

2. The research must be put into the public domain in some printed form which uses the Mourholme Local History Society logo (it can also go on the web).

3.

The research must address the old parish of Warton and the neighbouring area. The extent of the neighbouring area is open to interpretation.

4. The awards for any year would be for up to £125 and could be split between applicants.

5. The applications would be assessed by the committee or by a publications committee, and determinations would be final.

## **“TERRIBLE ACCIDENT AT THE IRONWORKS”** **Clive holden**

Such was the headline in the Carnforth local news section of the Lancaster Guardian for 24<sup>th</sup> January 1903.

John Davies of 26 Albert Street had been employed as a labourer at Carnforth Ironworks for fifteen years, and it was his job to see that one of the furnaces was charged with minerals. He was working an eight-hour shift starting at 10 p.m., and all had gone well until 2 a.m. when the ‘bell’ through which the mineral was poured became fast, presumably as a result of overloading. He summoned help, but efforts to lever the bell were unavailing, so he went to look for a ‘brake’ to use as a fulcrum. When he failed to return, Arthur Savage, weighman, who was on duty with Davies, went to look for him and found him lying on the bell with his clothes burnt from his body, apparently having been ‘gassed’. At the inquest Albert Barton, Assistant Manager of the Carnforth Ironworks Company, expressed the regret of the company, and said that every precaution was taken to ensure the lives and safety of the employees. He said that death would be instantaneous through the effects of carbonic and gas in the fumes, though Savage had earlier given evidence that he heard groans while searching for Davies. The Coroner gave his opinion that no one should be held responsible, and the jury returned a verdict of accidental death. Davies, a model worker aged 39, left a widow and six children.

Despite the claim that the management took every precaution to ensure the safety of its employees, the following extract from the ‘Liverpool Albion’ (reprinted in the ‘Lancaster Guardian’ in

1873) suggests that not all that much had changed in the course of thirty years:-

“...arriving at the top of the lift-tower, the barrows are taken in hand by...the ‘chargers’. These men...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.....The bell in use at the Carnforth works appears to be of hardly so improved a construction as those employed at the furnaces of the Wigan Coal and Iron Company, since an escape of gas is continually issuing from that at the former establishment, which has to be burned by the expedient of hanging a basket of lighted charcoal just above the bell; if there be a high wind the flaming vapour is being continually extinguished and the unburned gas being blown into the workers’ faces.”

It would be interesting to know if measures were subsequently taken to ensure that such an accident could not occur again.

## **2016 - 17 PROGRAMME**

**Wednesday September 28<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Jeremy Bradley:** Recent archaeological discoveries on the new  
M6 Link Rd.

**Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Gail Newsham:** Pride of Preston; the Dick, Kerr Ladies  
1917-65

**Wednesday November 23<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Dr Mike Winstanley:** Enclosures and Commons

**Tuesday December 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 (Please note change of day)**

**Geoff Wood:** Flush and Forget in Silverdale

**Wednesday January 25<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**James Maudsley:** Religious Reformation in the North West

**Wednesday February 22<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**David Casserly:** Civil Wars in Lancashire

**Wednesday March 22<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**Clive Holden:** The Railways of Carnforth

**Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**AGM** followed by:

**Dr Awena Carter:** Postcard messages from Silverdale,  
1900-1950





