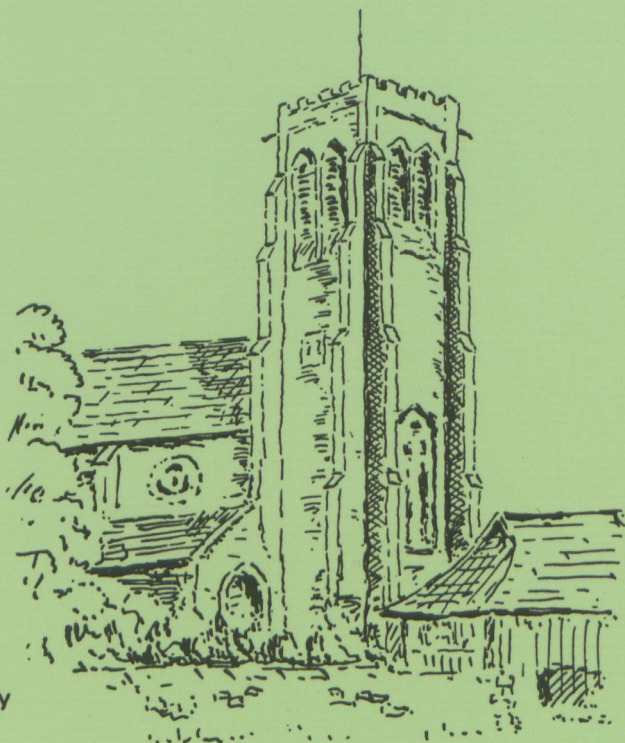


In and Around **Silverdale**



Written and illustrated by
DAVID PETER

Corrections to Page 44 & Page 77

page 44 para 5 should state:-

In 1969, Mr Harries sold the freehold of 2416 acres of saltmarsh, located between Jenny Brown's Point and the River Keer at Warton to Mr J. Wilkinson of High Foulshaw Farm, Levens. In 1974, the RSPB bought the freehold of approx. 3300 acres, located between Arnside and Jenny Brown's Point and between Warton and Hest Bank. The RSPB's purchase included turfing and shooting rights over their 3300 acres and Mr Wilkinson's 2416 acres. In 1975, Mr Wilkinson purchased a further 275 acres of saltmarsh at Warton with the benefit of shooting, turfing and grazing rights. Mr Wilkinson's land is not part of the RSPB's Morecambe Bay Reserve.

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David Peter's 'In and Around Silverdale' has been reprinted in its original form. No attempt has been made to amend or update the 1984 manuscript.

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In and Around Silverdale

The Story of a North Lancashire Village

**Written and illustrated by
David Peter**

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Foreword

It is now some twelve years since I came to live in Silverdale. The attractions of the local scene soon encouraged me to look at the village with a more discerning eye. I began to seek explanations for anything the reasons for whose existence were not immediately apparent.

Gradually isolated items of information came to be related to others, which initially had appeared to be equally puzzling. They merged to produce separate pieces of a jigsaw which slowly fell into place, so that gradually a fuller picture began to emerge. The process has now reached a stage sufficient to enable me to describe the Silverdale scene in some detail, without, however, in any way claiming that it is approaching completion.

Much remains to be discovered, but it is felt that by setting down the salient facts about our village, and the reasons for, and the story of its existence which have so far been established, others may be encouraged to continue the investigation, possibly by pursuing one or more of the interesting avenues of enquiry which these preliminary researches have suggested.

Silverdale

Isolation of area — early settlement

It was not until just over one hundred years ago (the middle of the nineteenth century) that Silverdale really started to develop. Before that time it had been a small, isolated and remote part of the ancient ecclesiastical parish of Warton, which incidentally also included the two Yealands, Borwick, Priest Hutton, and Carnforth.

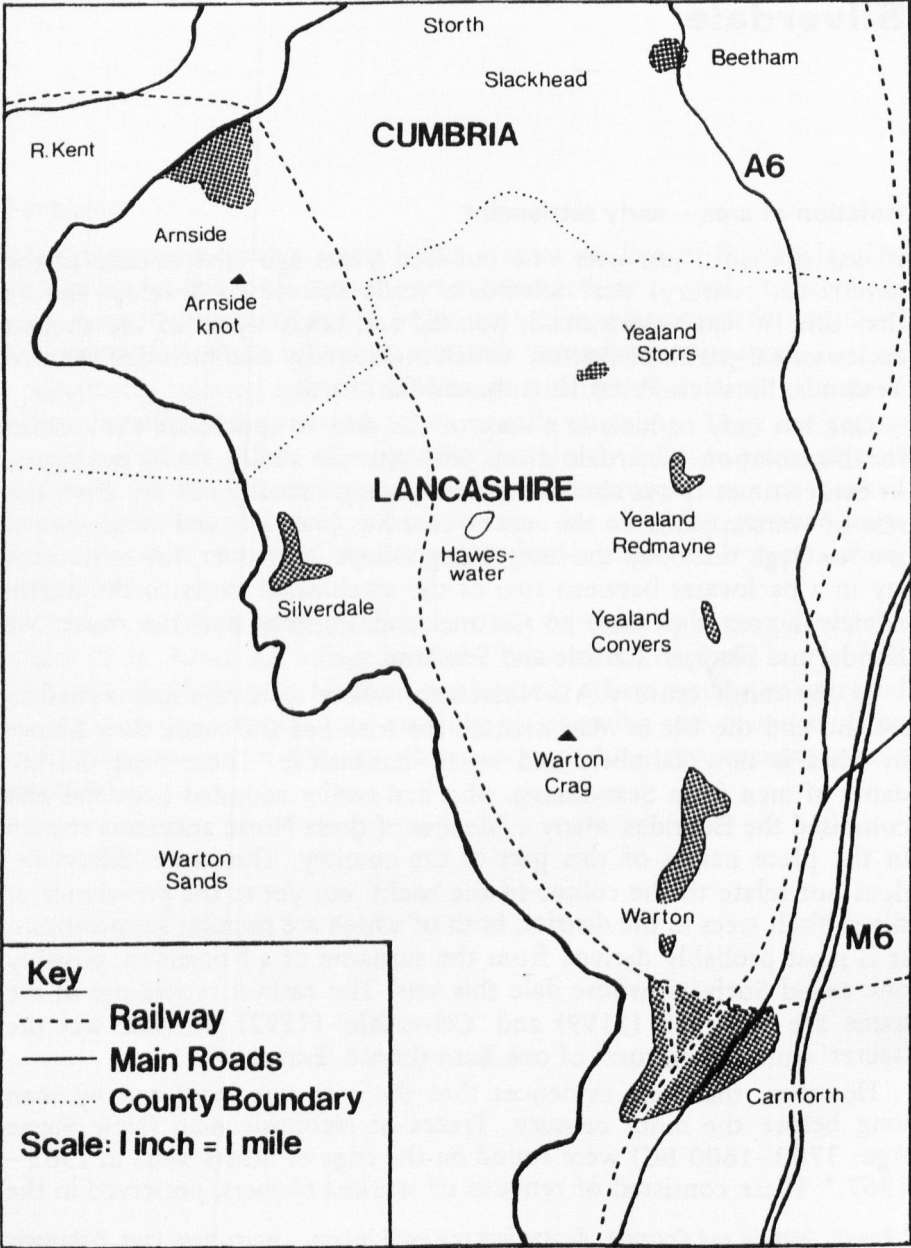
One has only to look at a map of the area to appreciate the reasons for this isolation. Silverdale shares with Arnside a hilly, rocky peninsula. In earlier times it was almost an island, being virtually cut off from the rest of Warton parish to the east by marshes (mosses), and incursions of the sea (high tides), up the intervening valleys. Moreover, the settlement lay in a backwater between two of the established roads to the north, namely across the sands to Cartmel and Furness, and the route, via Kendal and Shap, to Carlisle and Scotland.

In the ninth century AD Norsemen, whose ancestors had settled in Ireland and the Isle of Man, crossed the Irish Sea and made their homes in what is now Cumbria and north Lancashire. These were descendants of men from Scandinavia who had earlier rounded Scotland and colonised the Hebrides. Many evidences of these Norse ancestors remain in the place names of this part of the country. The name 'Silverdale' does not relate to the colour of the rocks, nor yet to the prevalence of silver birch trees in the district, both of which are popular suppositions. It is most probably derived from the surname of a Norseman, possibly one called Soelvers, whose dale this was. The earliest recordings of the name are 'Selredal' (1199) and 'Cilverdale' (1292). Arnside was the 'saeter' (summer pasture) of one Earn (hence 'Earnseat').

However, there are evidences that the area was inhabited by man long before the ninth century. Traces of Neolithic man (New Stone Age: 3700—1600 BC) were found on the edge of Storrs Moss in 1965—1967.* These consisted of remains of worked timbers, preserved in the

* Powell, Oldfield and Corcoran, *Excavations in Zone VII Peat Storrs Moss*. Proc. Prehistoric Society, 1971, pp 112—137.

SILVERDALE and its immediate neighbours



peat, and also many flints and cherts. A Bronze Age (1600–500 BC) sword was dug up in 1978 on Know Hill, Silverdale. It is now in Lancaster Museum. A Bronze Age ring burial cairn was discovered at Borwick in 1982, and excavated by staff from Lancaster University. The Iron Age (500 BC–50 AD) fort on the summit of Warton Crag has been well authenticated, and artifacts relating to these primitive ancestors have been found in the Dog Holes and other caves on the Crag. Roman coins have been unearthed in Silverdale, near the Green.

The early permanent settlements in the area consisted of farms, with accompanying cottages for labourers. They were mainly sited around the periphery of the peninsula, in close proximity to the somewhat rare pockets of workable soil, and also near to the sea, as farming appears to have been combined with fishing to ensure a livelihood.

It is probable that from an early date the sheep was an important item in the local farming economy, later to be linked with the woollen trade of Kendal. There was actually a local breed of white-faced horned sheep associated with this area, called variously the Silverdale, Warton Crag, or Farleton Fell breed. It has been extinct since about 1915.

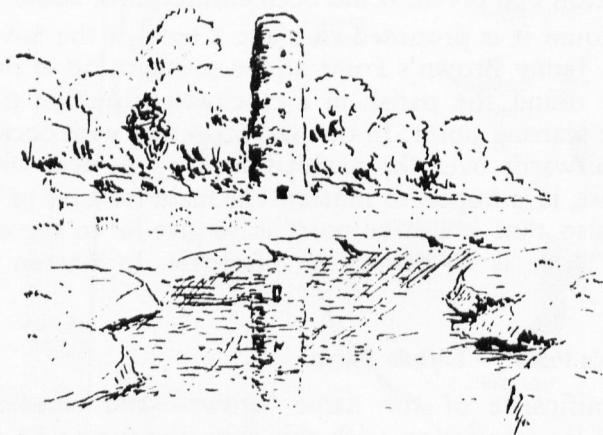
In this account it is proposed to make a tour of the Silverdale area, starting from Jenny Brown's Point at the southern tip of the peninsula and working round the parish in a clockwise direction till returning finally to the starting point. In this way, together with occasional visits 'inland' or outwards over the parish boundary to deal with items of special interest, it is hoped to indicate the main features of the district. It is hoped also that it will be possible to give lie to the oft repeated expression: 'There is no history in Silverdale. In Warton – yes! but Silverdale. . . .'

Jenny Brown's Point – Dykes Farm

The real significance of the name 'Brown' (and especially that of 'Jenny'), and its association with this area, appears to be shrouded in mystery, although it is known that a man with the surname Brown held land and farmed at this point in the sixteenth century. Jenny may have been his wife, or maybe a daughter, but this is pure speculation. Certainly Dykes Farm, at this spot, is one of the earliest stone-built farms in the area and probably dates from the end of the seventeenth century (page 32). By way of interest, 'dike' is the local name applied to the channels by which land water escapes across the Morecambe Bay sands when the tide is out, into the Lune Deep.

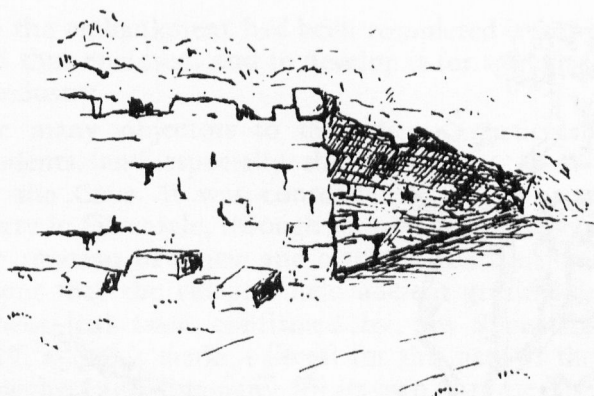
Copper smelting — Brown's cottages

Probably the picture which most clearly identifies Silverdale in people's minds is the one which shows the chimney at Jenny Brown's Point (not to be confused with the one at Crag Foot, page 72). This chimney is often wrongly referred to as having been part of a lime kiln, even by reputable writers, but actually it is all that now remains of an old copper smelting mill, and as such it merits careful preservation as a unique local specimen of industrial archaeology. The works were established in the early 1790's at the start of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, when copper was in great demand for mixing with other metals, especially tin, in the proportions of 90% to 10%, to produce bronze for the making of cannon. Copper was mined near Jenny Brown's Point at Heald Brow (referred to as 'Charlie's ground' after the name of the foreman) and also at Crag Foot, and remains of old mine workings (both bell pits, shafts, and drift mines — adits or levels), together with their spoil heaps, can still be clearly identified.



Old copper smelting works chimney at Jenny Brown's Point

The equipment, including the machinery, required to establish the smelt mill was brought here by sea from north Wales and no doubt the products were removed by the same route. The quay used for these purposes still exists, although somewhat battered, and again, like the chimney, urgently in need of repair work to preserve it.



The old quay at Jenny Brown's Point

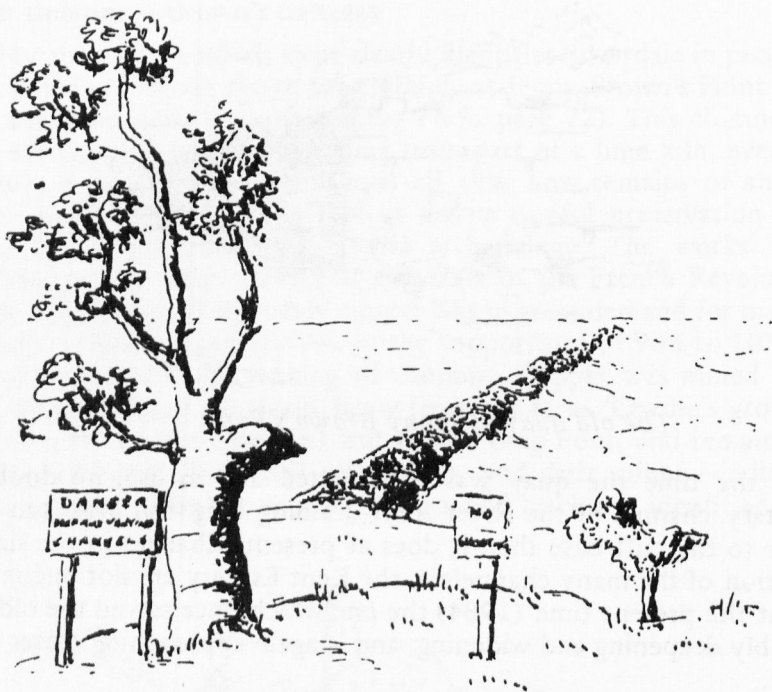
At the time the quay was constructed and in use, no doubt the tributary channel of the River Kent draining Leighton Moss ran much closer to the cliff base than it does at present. Changes in the size and direction of the many channels in the Kent Estuary are not uncommon, and at the present time (1984) the one which once served the old quay is visibly deepening and widening, and is again approaching closer to the shore.

The single building which housed three or four cottages, referred to as 'Brown's Cottages', at Jenny Brown's Point may have existed long before the copper smelter was established and indeed may have been one of the buildings associated with Dykes Farm. In all probability it was adapted to house the workers at the smelting mill. Recently it has been converted, as Dykes Farm has been, to satisfy modern needs and to provide 'desirable residences'.

Hest Bank, Warton and Silverdale Land Reclamation Company

When the tide is low it is once again possible to identify from the shore the embankment which more than a hundred years ago was constructed, extending seawards for half a mile or so, from Jenny Brown's Point.

Over the years since that time either the embankment sank – quicksands are quite common on this stretch of coast – or the tides covered it with sand, so that it completely disappeared from view. However, the severe storm in November 1977, which incidentally destroyed the West Pier at Morecambe, cleared away the covering of sand and exposed the embankment once more.



The old embankment at Jenny Brown's point

It was constructed of limestone found in the immediate vicinity. The old quarry from which the stone was obtained is now disused and remains much as it was left when operations ceased. It serves merely as a fold in which sheep are temporarily housed twice a month, at new and full moon, when they are deprived of their grazing on the salt marsh by the high tides.

The construction of this embankment was undertaken by the Hest Bank, Warton and Silverdale Land Reclamation Company. It all started in December 1873, with an advertisement in the local newspapers giving details of a proposal to build an embankment from Arnside Point in the north, to link southwards with the slag heaps on Warton Sands, built up with waste material tipped there from the Carnforth Iron Works, and the shore at Hest Bank.

A leading proponent of this scheme was Mr Herbert John Walduck, who lived at the house in Lindeth now called West Lindeth. Incidentally, he also held a major interest in the Paint Mines at Crag Foot,

Warton. Once the embankment had been completed it was proposed to drain the land thus enclosed, and to develop it for agriculture, housing, and possibly industry.

There were many objectors to the scheme, particularly amongst Silverdale residents, and especially the Reverend C W W Shephard, who lived at the Cove. It was contended that the proposal would devalue property in Silverdale, through the village in effect being moved inland by the creation of a new and artificial coastline. In addition it was pointed out that the villagers held ancient grazing rights on the foreshore. These had been confirmed by the Silverdale Enclosure Award of 1817, and this made it illegal for this part of the saltings to be acquired by the Land Company for its own purposes. It was further argued that the livelihood of Silverdale families, who depended on fishing, would be adversely affected.

A Bill to promote the scheme was presented to Parliament in 1874, and in July of that year it was passed by the House of Commons. However, it was defeated in the House of Lords, but approval was later given for a limited scheme, i.e. the enclosure of the sands from Jenny Brown's Point southwards to Hest Bank, a proposal not prohibited by the Warton Enclosure Award. The developers decided to proceed with the reduced project and the 'Toe' was built out from Jenny Brown's Point, representing the first phase of the work.

As this wall of rock gradually extended seawards, it was felt necessary in 1875 to replace man and horse-power by mechanical propulsion. To this end an engine was acquired. It was delivered to Silverdale railway station and taken thence by road the two miles to the Point, running on lines laid on sleepers placed on the road surface. The precise route taken is not apparent, but the iron railway line embedded in the stone boundary wall of the house 'Green Close' at Silverdale Green may provide a clue. The whole project to enclose the Warton Sands finally ran into financial difficulties and the scheme was abandoned in 1885, some ten years after it was first started.

Channel changes

The River Kent and its tributaries are notorious for the way in which their channels change course. This has been particularly noticeable during recent years (1979-84) and especially if one walks along the foreshore northwards from Jenny Brown's Point to the gap in the cliffs known as Cow's Mouth.

Until recently there was a level expanse of grass (sea turf), several hundred yards wide, between the low coastline cliffs and the high-water-mark of ordinary tides. This salt marsh was covered by the sea on only a few days each month, when the tides were higher than normal. In a relatively short space of time the sea and/or river has eroded and washed away much of the salt marsh, leaving an expanse of muddy sand, and in places pebbly beaches. The main Kent Channel has been gradually moving over from the Grange side of the estuary towards the Silverdale shore.

This process is also continuing northwards to the Cove and beyond, to Arnside Point. With each tide the sea undermines the edge of the saltings, large chunks of earth collapse, and are washed away. The tidal flow rushes up the channels down which land water, escaping via springs at the foot of the cliffs, finds its way to the sea. The whole of this erosive process is aided by the fact that the prevailing winds blow from a south-westerly direction, and thus directly up the channels.

These changes of course are not peculiar to Silverdale, nor to the River Kent. Any river is a living thing, and is continuously changing its channel. In its upper reaches, where the gradients are steep, a river follows a more or less direct and unswerving line. As it nears the sea, however, the slope is more gradual and the speed of the water is reduced. With this slackening of pace the sediment carried in suspension by the water is deposited — the heaviest particles first. The main river channel and those of its tributaries and distributaries meander across this 'deposition' belt.

The current in the channels tends to undercut the bank on one side till the overhang thus produced eventually collapses and the process is renewed. On the opposite bank the sediment tends to accumulate, and the curve of the river (meander) gradually intensifies. In time this loop becomes so acute that the river cuts through what has now become a very narrow neck and the channel is once again straightened, leaving the meander as a temporary, cut off lake. Thus over the years a river tends to meander from side to side across its flood plain.

This is what can clearly be seen happening at the present time on the River Kent, adjacent to the Silverdale shore. Local lore maintains that the main Kent Channel swings from the Grange to the Silverdale side of the estuary once in a person's lifetime (70—75 years). Certainly post-cards dated 1905 show sailing boats, and even a pleasure steamer from Morecambe, moored close to the Silverdale cliffs. If there is any truth

in this local theory, then the set of circumstances which produced this feature at the turn of the century is due to be repeated in the 1980's, and the recent evidence of channel movements suggests that it is in fact taking place.

This whole meandering process is further complicated in the Kent Estuary by the fact that twice a day the many fresh-water channels are filled and submerged by tidal water. It may also be affected by the very slow uplift of the land surface which is occurring hereabouts at the present time, as is evidenced by the raised beaches which can clearly be identified on the Silverdale foreshore.

Cow's Mouth — cattle droving

The origin of the name 'Cow's Mouth' is somewhat obscure. It represents a significant break in the line of low cliffs which form the western side of the Silverdale peninsula. As such it would no doubt be utilised by drovers bringing cattle across the Kent Estuary.



Cow's Mouth

The main route for cattle droving, which flourished from 1650 to 1850, was from Northern Ireland by boat to ports in south-west Scotland. Here the Irish cattle linked up with the Scottish herds of black cattle, to be driven southwards to pastures, and ultimately to markets, in England.

Irish cattle were also landed on the Cumberland coast, even as far south as Roa Island, near present-day Barrow. They were destined for markets in Lancashire, such as Lancaster, Garstang, Preston and Wigan, after crossing the Leven and Kent sands. They provided food for the rapidly developing industrial communities in south-east Lancashire.

No doubt many of the herds made the shorter crossing of the Kent Estuary to Silverdale. Could it be that the land fall there bore some resemblance to a cow's open mouth? Could it be that the pasture near-by, called Cow Close, was the place where the cattle were accommodated overnight, to continue their journey the next day?

A number of other factors lend support to this theory. Near to Cow's Mouth is one of the oldest houses in the area — known as Waithman's House. It belonged to a well-known Quaker businessman and banker of that name, who was concerned with flax growing and linen manufacture in the Yealand and Holme district. It is more than probable that his financial resources as a banker were placed at the disposal of the drovers from this base at Silverdale.

The cattle were moved inland from Silverdale. It is interesting to note that the Silverdale Enclosure Award of 1817 officially established what had no doubt existed for some considerable time, watering places for animals. There were three of these. Two were at points where roads crossed Myers Dyke, draining from Hawes Water, the third was at Hawes Water itself. These supplemented the well at Wood Well, in Lindeth, then part of Warton parish.

The next logical stopping place for the cattle would be Warton, and the existence there of an ancient hostelry called the Black Bull is further evidence that Warton probably lay on an old droving road. Inn names such as 'Highland Laddie', 'Drovers' Inn' etc, together with 'Black Bull' and 'Brown Cow' are often a clear indication that such inns were sited on a route favoured by the drovers. Incidentally, there is another Black Bull Hotel, and also a Brown Cow, on this same line, but in the reverse direction, at Dalton-in-Furness.

Nor was the traffic restricted to cattle. Sheep, pigs and even geese were also driven in this way *en masse* to market.

Cross sands route

The cross sands traffic, from Kents Bank on the west side of the Kent Estuary to Hest Bank on the east, is well authenticated, and for hundreds of years this road was followed by travellers on foot, on horseback, or in carts, carriages or coaches, between Lancashire and the north-west of England. They preferred the risks attached to this eight miles crossing of the sands to the thirty mile, and often hazardous, alternative route via Kendal. The Cross Bay 'road' was widely used until the opening of the Ulverston—Lancaster Railway, which bridged the Kent at Arnside, in 1857.

Throughout this period the shorter crossing from Kents Bank to Silverdale was used by local traffic and by fishermen, but it also served as an escape route if the longer cross sands journey became impossible to use due to adverse tidal or weather conditions. On such occasions land falls would be made either at Cow's Mouth or at the Shore (Silverdale) and refreshment and shelter would be available at the Britannia Hotel, now called the Silverdale Hotel. The Britannia Hotel was built in 1826 to replace an earlier hostelry, the Blue Anchor, which was established in 1744 and was sited nearby, but on the opposite side of Shore Road.

The cave at Cow's Mouth is of interest. It is one of many small caves on this stretch of coastline. It follows the line of a mineral vein clearly visible on the cliff face, and was no doubt thoroughly investigated, and probably enlarged, by early mineral prospectors.

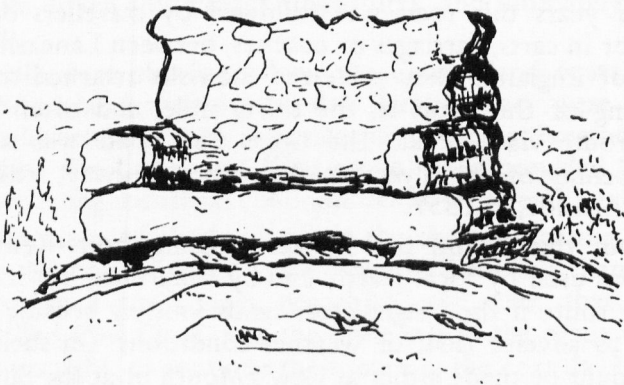
Rocks — for building

A hundred yards or so back from Cow's Mouth there is a stile in the fence which leads to the cliff top. A stretch of uneven ground here marks the site of one of the early attempts to discover and work mineral ores in this neighbourhood. It is now completely overgrown.

On the cliff top is a very large stone seat which commands marvellous views of the Kent Estuary and the whole of Morecambe Bay. In 1982 the National Trust acquired this vantage point and the area immediately around, known as Jack Scout,* to preserve it for all time for enjoyment by the general public.

It will be noted that around this spot there are many outcrops of whitish-coloured rock. This is carboniferous limestone, a formation

* *Ac* (O.E.), *Eik* (O.N.), oak tree; *Scout* (Norse), cliff or precipice.



Stone seat — Jack Scout

which is the basis of the hills not only in the Silverdale district, but also in a much wider area covering parts of Cumbria to the west and north, and of Lancashire to the east. It was laid down in warm tropical seas some three hundred million years ago, the accumulation of skeletons of marine creatures, and other organic agencies, and has since been uplifted, considerably folded and fractured, and later eroded.

The whole of this area was covered by snow and ice during the one million years that the Ice Age lasted. When the ice finally retreated some ten thousand years ago, the land surface was left much denuded, but covered with stones and boulders of varying sizes and composition. Most of these were erratic rocks carried by the ice, many over long distances. The majority were of limestone, but some consisted of green and blue slate (Silurian period) derived from the hills of the southern Lake District and the Howgill Fells, and a smaller number of pink granite from Shap Fell.

One of the first tasks facing the early farmers in this district was that of clearing the land surface of stones, so as to produce an area capable of growing crops. The stones were used for building shelters for the farmers and for their animals. In addition they were used to construct the dry stone walls separating the fields, and an examination of any section of stone walling in this area will reveal examples of the several kinds of rocks referred to above.

Unfortunately, large sections of these stone walls have been removed to produce larger fields; others have been allowed to collapse without being repaired. In addition much cannibalisation of the stone has taken place for the building of garden rockeries. Regrettably, stone walling appears to be a dying art.

Not all the stones were cleared from the fields, however. Many of the very large boulders, too big to move, were left undisturbed. One of the largest of these, called the Buck Stone, is to be found in a field near to Challan Hall. Some of them appear to form interesting patterns. It may be purely coincidental, but such a group of rocks located in a field with the intriguing name of Hagg and Peasland*, near Bottoms Farm, gives the impression of having been deliberately sited there. They look like one of the 'henges' built by primitive people.

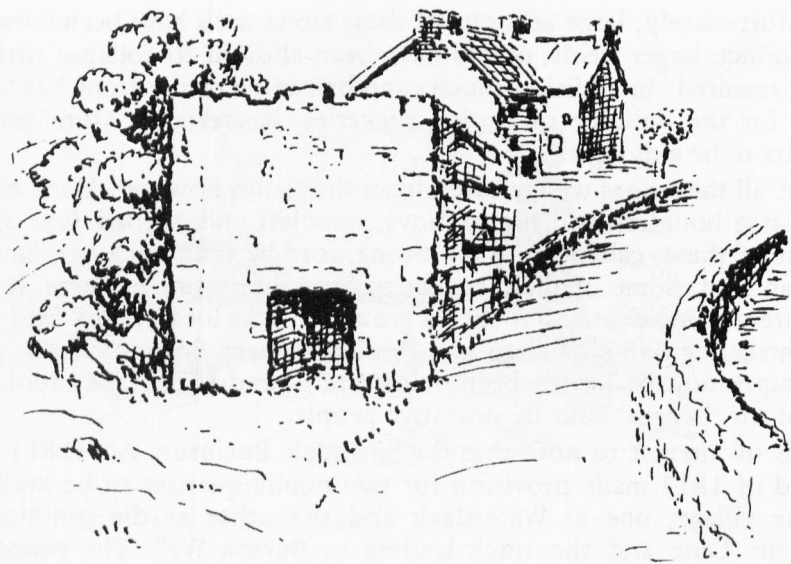
It is of interest to note that the Silverdale Enclosure Act (1811) and Award of 1817 made provision for two public quarries to be available in the village, one at Waterslack and the other at the junction of Bottoms Lane and the track leading to Burton Well. The people of Silverdale were permitted to extract stone from these two sites for their own purposes.

Rocks — for burning (lime kilns)

To return to the cliff top at Jack Scout, here can be found the remnants of an old lime kiln. It has been allowed to fall into a state of considerable decay, which is a great pity and serves to illustrate how little attention is being paid to the preservation of the many lime kilns which exist in this area. There are at least three in Silverdale, and up to a dozen if Warton and the Yealands are included. They form part of our industrial heritage, and, as such, at least some should be repaired and maintained.

Lime kilns could be the subject of a very rewarding study in themselves, but only a brief survey is attempted here. They were constructed of limestone blocks and were built mainly during the period 1750–1850. Essentially a kiln consisted of a bowl enclosed in a framework of stone. The bowl was filled from the top with alternate layers of limestone and a combustible material (coal, coke, charcoal or wood), which was ignited when the bowl was full, and the whole was allowed to burn slowly for several days.

* *Hagg* (O.E.), enclosure; *Pease* (O.E.), swine.



Lime kiln — Bottom's Lane

Basically the process consisted of burning the limestone (Ca CO_3) and by so doing driving off the carbon dioxide (CO_2), leaving quicklime (CaO). After cooling, this was removed from the bowl through a plug at the bottom, approached from below by a short tunnel.

The stone for firing in the kilns was readily available locally throughout the area, and a small quarry, closely associated with a kiln, can usually be identified.

The lime was used for spreading on the fields to counteract acidity in the soil, for liming the walls of the farmhouses and their outbuildings, and for making mortar.

During the nineteenth century more sophisticated kilns were developed, and the remains of one of this type can still be seen in the woods near Cold Well House, just over the Silverdale parish boundary. Unfortunately this provides another example of a relic requiring urgent attention if it is not to disintegrate completely.

Gibraltar Farm

Rejoining the road from Jenny Brown's Point, after a few hundred



Gibraltar Farm

yards one arrives at Gibraltar Farm. This is another of the old farms of Silverdale. The interest lies mainly in its name, of whose origin there is no official and generally accepted explanation. One rather fanciful and somewhat contrived theory is that it derives from two words: 'Gyppi', a personal name, and 'Ryding' (O.E.), meaning 'a clearing'.

My own view is that the farm was built, or more likely rebuilt, in stone, replacing an earlier structure, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was in 1704 that Sir George Rooke captured Gibraltar. This exploit no doubt so fired the imagination of people that they were tempted to crown their own achievements by adopting the name of this famous British victory. Silverdale is not unique in having a Gibraltar Farm.

In the case of this Gibraltar, however, the fact that it occupied a site on top of a rocky eminence, overlooking the sea, might also have been a factor determining the choice of name.

Lindeth Tower — Mrs Gaskell

Closely adjoining the farm is Lindeth Tower. This was erected in 1842 by a certain Henry Paul Fleetwood, who owned the house near-by. He was distantly related to Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood of Rossall Hall, who in the 1830's was closely involved in the building of the new town of Fleetwood across the Bay, at the mouth of the River Wyre.

In the middle of the nineteenth century it was very common for people 'of means' living in Silverdale to erect a summer-house (sometimes also referred to as a 'belvedere' or a 'gazebo') at some advantageous spot on their estates. Afternoon tea in the summer-house was no doubt a popular form of relaxation, and entertainment for guests, at that period.

Lindeth Tower was such a structure. It was certainly one of the largest, and remains as one of only a few which have been well maintained. It has achieved some fame because around the year 1850 and for several years thereafter Mrs Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, the famous Victorian novelist, stayed here with her daughters during the summer months to escape from the polluted atmosphere of industrial Manchester where they lived, to enjoy the pure sea and country air of Silverdale, and the Lakeland breezes from the north.



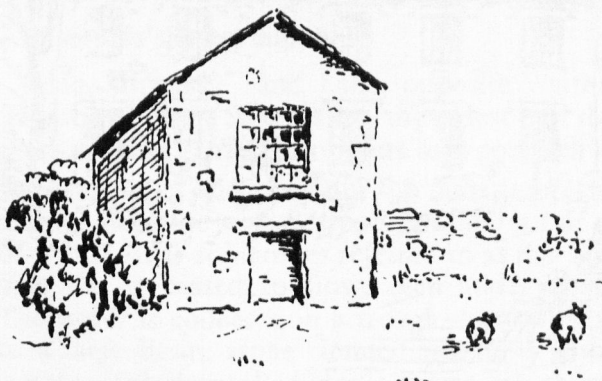
Lindeth Tower

It is certain that many of her books were conceived, and some may possibly have been written, in Lindeth Tower. It is of interest to note that the title of one of her books, *Cranford*, which is supposedly based on the town of Knutsford in Cheshire, happens to have been the early name of Carnforth, a mere four miles away from Silverdale. Silverdale itself is Abermouth in her novel *Ruth*.

Mrs Gaskell's own name is perpetuated locally in the name of the Village Hall, The Gaskell Memorial Hall, opened in 1931 (page 38).

It is suggested that summer-houses might prove a rewarding subject for study by local historians. Several other examples of them come readily to mind. One, well preserved, is to be found in the field behind the house Cray Green on Silverdale Green. Another example is located near the shores of Hawes Water, in the grounds of Challan Hall. A summer-house, alas no longer there, is marked on a chart dated 1850 displayed in the library of Lancaster University, at the spot where the old embankment starts (page 9), and which is actually Jenny Brown's Point.

By way of interest, Mrs Gaskell's two unmarried daughters, Margaret Emily (Meta) and Julia, built a house in Silverdale around the year 1890. They called it 'The Shieling'. This is an interesting name, as it is the Scottish equivalent of the Norse word 'saetr' meaning 'a summer pasture', which has been retained in various forms in many place names in northern England. It has been suggested that for the two sisters it perpetuated their mother's notion of a retreat in the country. The house was later occupied by a Mr Gordon Bottomley, a writer and poet, who lived there from 1914 to 1948.

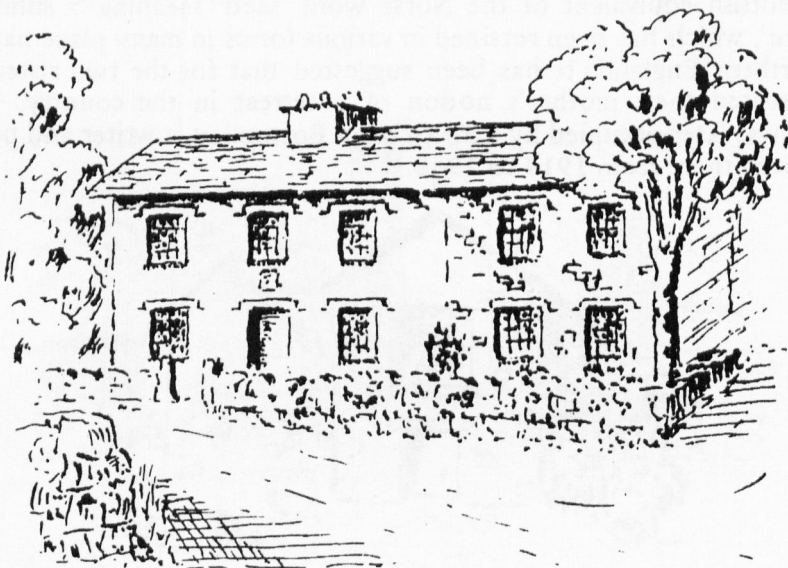


Summer-house — Cray Green

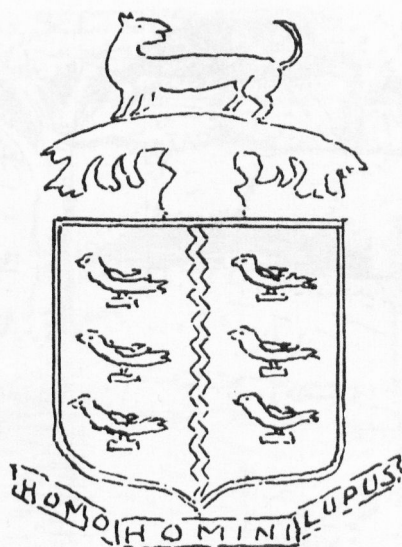
'Wolf House'

Close to Gibraltar Farm is the house referred to locally as the 'Wolf House'. Its official name, however, is Lindeth Lodge. One explanation of the origin of the popular name is that it derives from the fact that the house looks across the Kent Estuary to Humphrey Head, where it is reputed that the last wolf in Britain was killed by a local squire in the reign of Edward I (1272–1307). Actually at least half a dozen other places make the same claim, the last as recently as 1906.

The real reason for the name derives from the coat of arms carved in stone over the front doorway. The design consists of a shield which shows six martlets, mythical heraldic birds which resemble swallows. Above it is the figure of a wolf and below is the motto: *Homo homini lupus*, which loosely translated means 'Man is a wolf to his fellow man'. The whole is the coat of arms of the Fleetwood family, and was obviously built in when the property was owned by Henry Paul Fleetwood, who has been mentioned previously in connection with Lindeth Tower. He was a partner in a Preston banking firm, and he died at Brighton in 1855.



'Wolf House'



Fleetwood family coat of arms

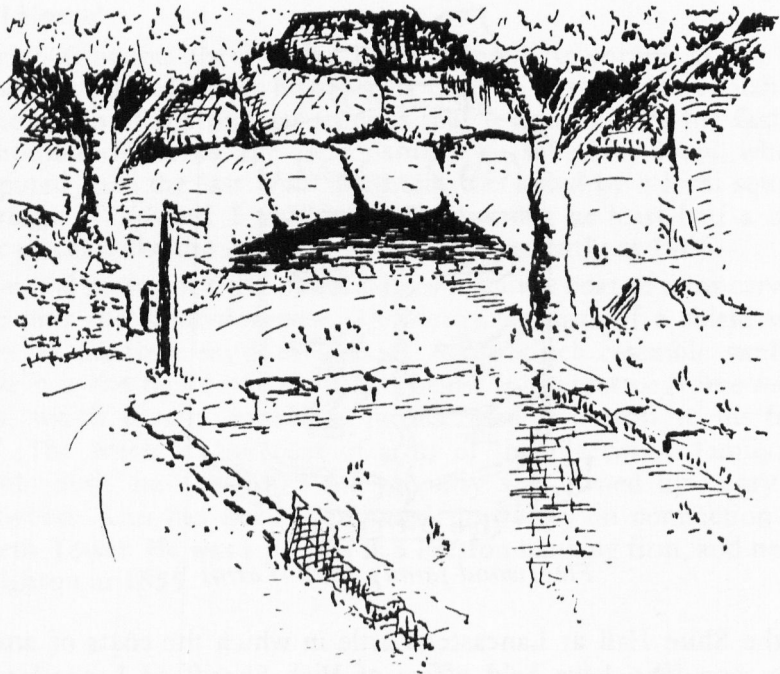
In the Shire Hall at Lancaster Castle in which the coats of arms of all the men who have held office of High Sheriff of Lancashire are displayed, this same shield, here associated with Edmund Fleetwood of Rossall, appears for the year 1606.

The present owner of 'Wolf House', who has converted the property into a highly successful Arts and Crafts Centre, calculates that the house was built about 1790.

Wood Well — Silverdale's water supply

On Lindeth Road, formerly Sand Lane, opposite Waithman's House (one of the oldest houses in Silverdale — the oldest part dates from the early seventeenth century) a signpost points to Wood Well.

This is the best known and certainly the most impressive of all the wells in Silverdale. Here the water drips from the roof of a small recess at the base of a cliff. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Dripping Well', and very rarely has it ceased to flow, even under extreme drought conditions. The water is collected in a trough, from which it overflows and runs into a large basin, stone rimmed and lined with cement. At one time the water was channelled into a gutter, which made it easier for it to be collected with buckets.



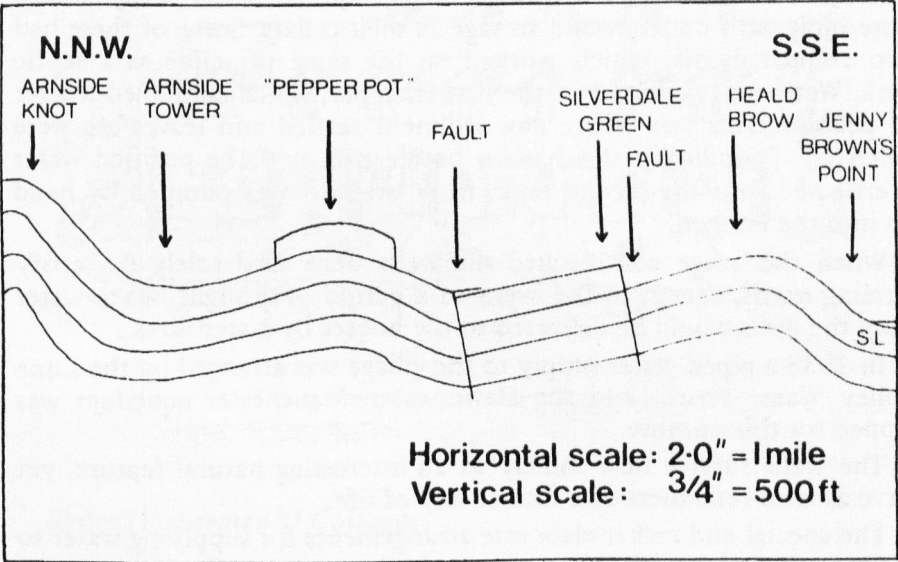
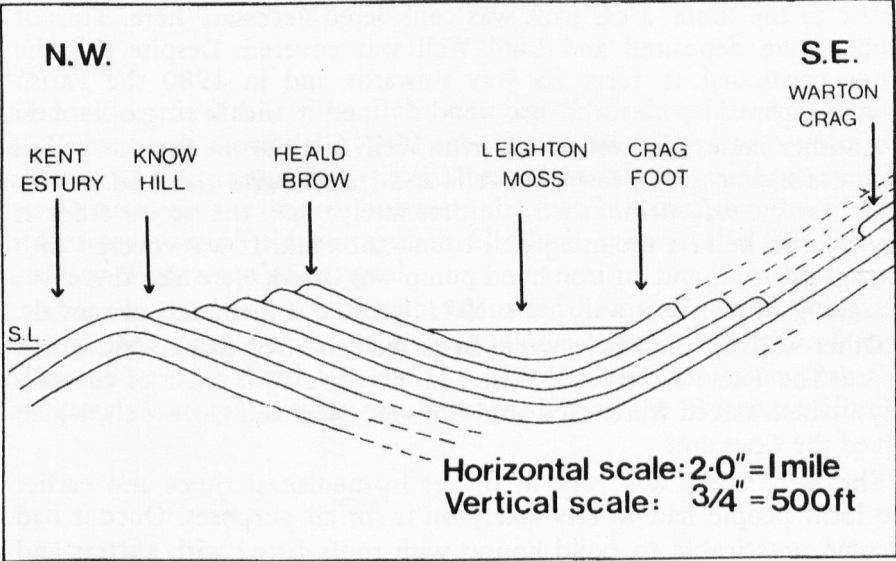
Wood Well

A west—east geological section across the peninsula offers a possible explanation of the origin of this water. It also illustrates the erosive power of the ice sheets which advanced and retreated across this area in the Ice Age, and whose plucking action produced the stepped landscape appearance, with a succession of cliffs of varying heights, which is such a characteristic feature of the Silverdale scene.

It seems probable that rain falling on the porous limestone of near-by Warton Crag and other neighbouring hills percolates underground and collects in a rock basin (syncline) deep under Leighton Moss. Cracks in the strata (faults), of which there are many in this area, provide outlets to the surface and pressure forces up the water on the principle of an artesian well.

The water emerging at Wood Well finds its way northwards, following the natural slope along the base of the cliff. It joins up with the water overflowing from Stankelt Well, and from there it seeps under-

DIAGRAMMATIC SECTIONS ACROSS THE SILVERDALE "PENINSULA"



ground to the shore, where it emerges probably at the Bard Well. This latter was also known as 'Battling Stone Well', presumably because clothes were washed there. In the 1930's, with the increase of motor traffic to the shore, a car park was considered necessary here. Tons of rubble were deposited and Bard Well was covered. Despite this the water continued to force its way upwards and in 1980 the Parish Council opened up the well again and defined it with a ring of stones.

Another important well was Burton Well. In 1934 the Parish Council took a decision to improve the wells and started with this one. A pin-fold near-by was demolished, unfortunately, and the stone from it was used to build a retaining wall round the tank. It was covered with corrugated iron, and an iron hand pump was fitted. Here also there was a Battling Stone. This well has suffered greatly at the hands of vandals.

Other wells in the village were: Bank Well and Dog Slack Well, which served The Row; Waterslack Well and Kellett's Well (east of the railway), which served Waterslack; and Elmslack Well and Cove Well, which served the Cove area.

The well water was very hard, yet in mediaeval times and earlier the local people had to rely solely on it for all purposes. Once it had become practicable to build houses with roofs fitted with gutters and down pipes, it was possible to collect soft rainwater and to store this in tanks and cisterns to be drawn on as required. Later many houses were built with underground storage in their cellars. Some of these had two compartments, which worked on the same principle as a septic tank. Water was collected in the first chamber, which contained a layer of pebbles. This was where any sediment settled and leaves etc were collected. Periodically this had to be cleaned out. The purified water overflowed into the second tank, from where it was pumped by hand up into the kitchen.

When this stage was reached the wells were used solely to satisfy farming needs, except in the event of a period of drought, when water from the wells would be delivered to the houses by water-carts.

In 1938 a piped water supply to the village was arranged by the Lune Valley Water Board, and the Haweswater—Manchester aqueduct was tapped for this purpose.

The wells survive now merely as an interesting natural feature, yet serve as vivid reminders of a former way of life.

The special and rather elaborate arrangements for supplying water to the house called Woodlands are dealt with later (page 63).

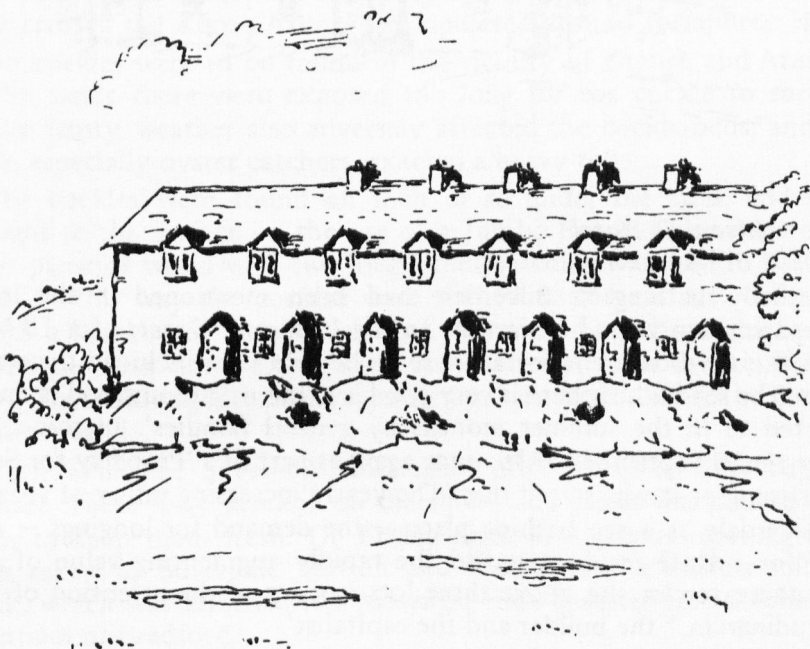
The Shore

Half a mile or so further along Lindeth Road, take a sharp left turn and after a few hundred yards the road ends abruptly at the Shore.

Bath House

Overlooking the Bay at this point is a row of houses referred to locally as 'Fishermen's Cottages'. Although fishing was for many years an important local occupation, the fishermen were never concentrated in these houses on the shore, but were dispersed throughout the village. In fact the row of old cottages in Elmslack Lane is also referred to locally as 'Fishermen's Cottages'.

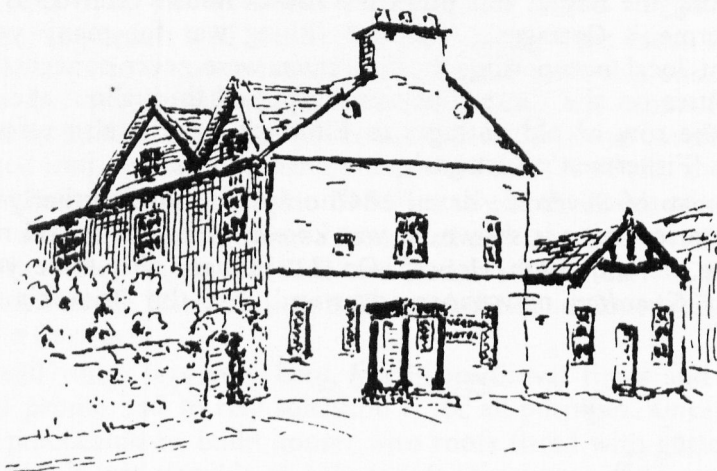
On a map of Silverdale dated 1846 only the most northerly one of these shore cottages is shown. It was known then, and is still referred to locally, as the 'Bath House'. On 31 January this same year the *Lancaster Guardian* newspaper advertised that the Britannia Hotel*



Shore (Fishermen's) Cottages

* Now Silverdale Hotel.

'supplied bathing machines for the use of guests and by providing baths indoors made it possible for visitors to bathe in salt water, without venturing on to the Beach'. It would appear that at that time the Bath House was part and parcel of the Britannia Hotel, although physically the two were several hundred yards apart.



Silverdale Hotel

Actually bathing at Silverdale had been mentioned in the local newspapers ten years before this. In the *Lancaster Gazette* for 18 May 1835 the advertisement for a house to be sold here included the statement 'The sea bathing here is very good and the neighbourhood is much resorted to in the summer months by genteel families'. In this same paper on 10 September 1836, once again as part of a 'Property for Sale' advertisement it was stated that 'The yearly increasing influx of visitors to Silverdale as a sea bathing place — the demand for lodgings — and sites for private residences, and the rapidly augmenting value of the land there render the above three lots worthy of the attention of the valetudinarian,* the builder and the capitalist'.

The other cottages were added in 1868 and the Bath House, as such, was closed.

* Invalid.

Fishing

The art of fishing as practised from Silverdale and also from other places on the north side of Morecambe Bay was in a sense unique. It was land based, and was carried out without bait and without boats. It did, however, involve quite considerable skill on the part of the fishermen, in studying the tides and weather conditions in order to determine when to collect the shellfish and also when to set the nets and to collect the fish from them. These could be quite hazardous occupations, especially when it was misty on the sands, as there were many deep channels (dykes) to be negotiated.

Cockles

The cockle was the main shellfish collected. There were also mussels, but these were to be found mainly on the 'skeers' off Morecambe, rather too far distant for the Silverdale fishermen.

The cockle beds were in the main a mile or so from the shore and the men worked the sands well beyond Jenny Brown's Point. Occasionally they crossed the Kent Channel and operated around Humphrey Head.

No cockles were to be found in the vicinity of Grange and Arnside, as the sands there were exposed too long for the cockle to survive. Severe frosty weather also adversely affected the cockle beds, and sea birds, especially oyster catchers, exacted a heavy toll.

The cockles were found an inch or so under the sand, and were brought to the surface by the use of a Jumbo Board. This consisted of a flat piece of wood with two long handles, which was used to beat the sand. In this way the cockles were sucked to the surface, collected, put in a basket and transferred from there into large bags which were loaded on to a horse-drawn cart. Alternatively, a hand rake, shaped like a bent roasting fork and called a cran, was used to draw the cockles from the sand.

Each week the Silverdale fishermen collected up to sixty bags of cockles. These were stacked on the shore, and water was poured over them to keep them fresh. On Friday night or Saturday morning they were taken to Silverdale Station and loaded into a shallow railway truck, which was attached to a passenger train destined for Manchester, Liverpool or Bradford.

Shrimps

As with the cockle, fishing for shrimps depended on the use of a horse,

the bigger the better, and a cart. Behind the cart was towed a large net, like a trawl, and the fishermen operated in depths of water up to the cart's wheel axles. On the way back the men picked over the catch, removed the debris, and threw out the undersized shrimps. The remaining shrimps were boiled when the men reached home. The main problem was getting labour to do the picking, that is extracting the body of the shrimp from its protective shell.

The only place around the Bay where fishing for shrimps and cockles is still carried out is from Flookburgh. Here the horse and cart have been replaced by the tractor and trailer, but apart from this the basic skills needed to deal with the elements are still practised.

Staked nets (balk or stream nets)

These consisted of long nets staked at each end, which were so arranged that fish were trapped therein as the tide ebbed. At low tide the fishermen collected any fish thus caught. These were mainly flat fish, and in particular flounders (flukes).

Salmon

The run of salmon to spawning grounds up the rivers which flow into Morecambe Bay starts in early spring (February–March) at Sunderland Point at the mouth of the River Lune. They reach the Kent from May onwards. The salmon fishing season lasted from 1 April to 31 August. Unfortunately, only one season in four or five appears to have been a good salmon year.

Before the advent of the railway in 1857 the fish caught from Silverdale were either sold in the village or taken by horse and cart and sold in neighbouring Warton and the Yealands. The greater market presented by the advent of the railway meant that seven or eight local families, including the Websters, Dickensons and Sands, were able to derive a living from the sea.

During World War II (1939–45) the east-coast fishing ports were closed. The fluke was graded as a flat fish, like plaice, and it fetched high prices. Consequently the Silverdale fisherman prospered.

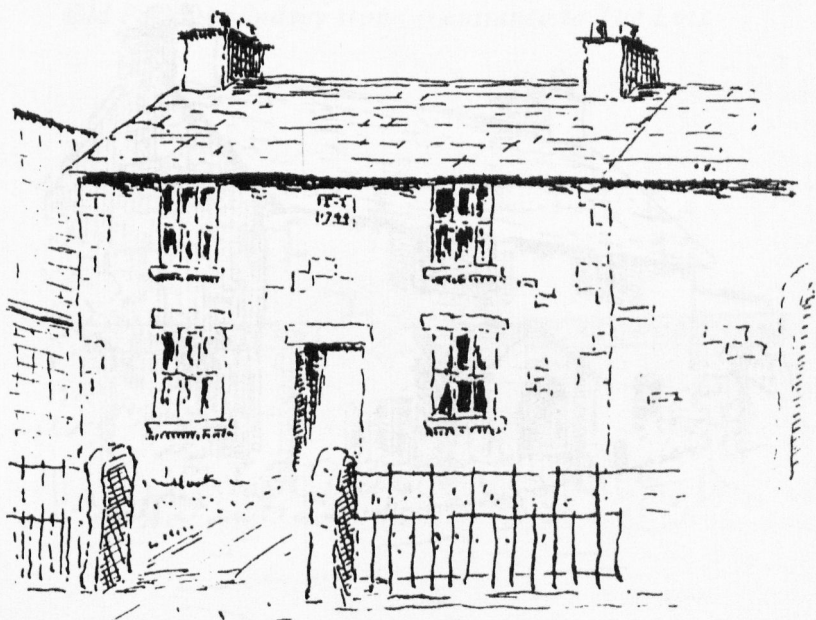
Various causes have contributed to the decline, in the village, of this small local industry. These include the development of large-scale fishing, improved communications and the contamination of the shell-fish beds.

The last man to fish from Silverdale was Mr Eddie Sands, who retired in 1952 after working the sands for twenty-five years.

Old houses

Probably the oldest house in Silverdale, and one which is still occupied, is Waithman's House (page 23). According to its present owner much of the building dates from 1739, but parts of an older building dating from the seventeenth century can be identified. The following is inscribed in stone over the front door: 'William Waithman and Dorothy his wife. 1739'.

Almost opposite the Silverdale Hotel is another of the very few early houses in the village to be dated. Carved in stone over the front door is the year 1744, accompanied by the letters 'II' (or possibly 'JJ'). This was in fact the first inn in the village, called the Blue Anchor. Another house, in Elmslack Lane, carries the inscription 'IB 1780'. A house which adjoins Gibraltar Farm and which was the home of the Hadwen family (Isaac and Anne) was apparently built in 1816.



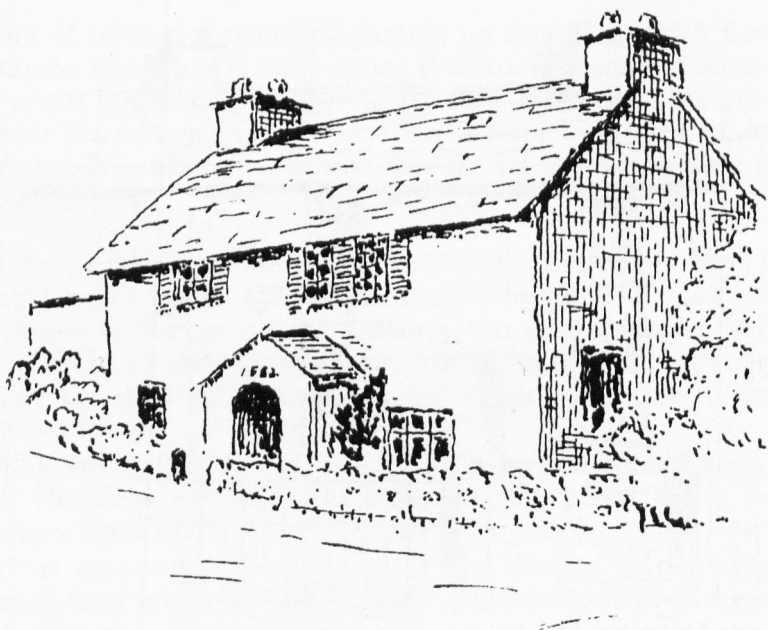
1744 house – former 'Blue Anchor'

These appear to be the only houses in the village which bear a genuine date of origin which is pre-1850. In a way it is surprising that they are so few in number. There are far more in the neighbouring villages of Warton and Yealand, bearing authentic 'birth stones' from the 1630's onwards.

It was towards the middle of the seventeenth century that houses started to be built of stone in this part of the country. In Silverdale they were undoubtedly farmsteads, and certain of these early habitations, including Bank House Farm, Bradshaw Gate Farm, Dykes Farm, Bottoms Farm, Red Bridge Farm and Slackwood Farm still stand and are well preserved. Unfortunately none are dated.

It is possible that in the more closely-knit community of neighbouring Warton a certain element of competition induced the dating of the houses, whereas in Silverdale, where the houses (farms) were isolated and widely scattered, there was not the same urge to keep up with the neighbours.

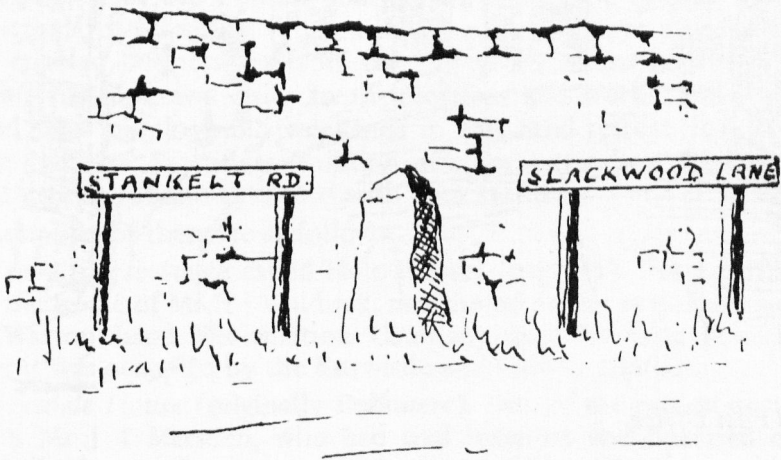
What would appear to be the oldest house in the village is on Silverdale Green. It carries the date 1552 over the front door. On the



1552(?) house – Silverdale Green



Old Parish boundary stone — entrance to The Lots



Another old Parish boundary stone

authority of a previous owner of the property, the explanation of this is that when it was sold in 1952, the new owner enquired its age, and was told 'About 400 years'. A simple subtraction sum suggested 1552 as the year of its origin, and the purchaser, in his enthusiasm, had a stone carved to commemorate this fact. There may of course have been a homestead on the site in the year 1552, but it was not the present building, and it was certainly not built of stone.

Parish Boundary

Until 1932 Lindeth was part of Warton (Warton with Lindeth). In that year, however, certain local government boundaries were changed* and Lindeth† was added to Silverdale, with which it had a more natural affinity.



Old Post Office

* Proposed in *Local Government Act 1929 – Review of County Districts*.

† Earliest form of name was 'Lyndeheved': *Linde* (O.E.), lime tree; *Heafod* (O.E.), hill summit.

The old boundary between Silverdale and Lindeth started at the shore and ran inland behind the Silverdale Hotel to the gate leading on to the Post Office Lots. At this point is to be found one of the three boundary stones which still exist marking the limits of the old Silverdale parish. From here the boundary went up the Post Office Hill and along the right (south) side of Stankelt Road, i.e. along the top of the cliff and the line of the Stankelt fault, and so via Silverdale Green to Richmond Hill. Here there is the second of the three boundary stones. At this point the old Lindeth-Silverdale boundary crossed from the south to the north side of the road, producing a change in the road name. In Silverdale it was called Stankelt Road, but in Lindeth it was Slackwood Lane. Both names have been retained.

By way of interest, the third boundary stone is on the road to Beetham, about half a mile beyond Challan Hall.

The larger houses of Silverdale

At the census of 1851 the population of Silverdale was only 240, and it had remained almost constant between that figure and 253 at the three previous censuses. In 1861, however, it had increased to 294, and the following three census returns showed a steady increase from 343 to 489, and, by 1891, to 589.

This increase can be directly related to the completion of the Ulverston and Lancaster Railway in 1857, with a station at Silverdale. It became part of the Furness Railway in 1863. The railway made the attractions of Silverdale very much more accessible to a wider area. It also enabled businessmen from the Lancashire industrial towns to live in the village, travel daily to their offices and works, and return to spend their evenings and weekends in this rural retreat. It resulted in these business executives building new, or extending old, houses to meet their needs and to accord with their status.

Examples of these are as follows:

West Lindeth (once called Hole House) (page 41). For a period this was the home of Mr H J Walduck, mentioned earlier in connection with the Warton Land Reclamation Company and the Crag Foot Mines. Later it was occupied by the Entwistle and Calvert families.

Bleasdale House (originally Delamere). One of the earliest occupants was a Mr J T Marsden, who had coal interests and operated on the Stock Exchange. For a time it was occupied by a Mr Sharp, who built extensions across the road. It was used as a Red Cross Hospital during

the first World War, and in 1916, after standing empty for a while, it was converted to a Convalescent Home by Bradford Dyers' Association, as a war memorial to their employees.

Mountain View (originally Oak Lea). This house was also occupied by the Sharp family. At one time it was the residence of a Mr Calvert, a retired lawyer, who had interests in textile mills. For a while it was a hotel. Later, part of it was adapted for use as a Masonic Temple, the remainder being divided into flats, and part of the grounds were sold to provide a site for a bungalow.

St John of God (formerly Hazelwood). The Sharps were also involved in extensions to this house. In 1920 it came into the possession of a Mr Isaac Smith, a Bradford wool merchant. Later it was owned by Mr Harold Carrington, a member of a firm of cotton manufacturers. He died in 1947. Subsequently it was bequeathed by his widow to the Roman Catholic church.

It will be noted that the Sharp family had an interest in several of the large older houses in Silverdale. In 1936 on their return from Kenya Mr Edward Sharp and his wife came to live at Grey Walls. They lived there till 1979 (forty-three years). The house had been built in 1926 by Mrs P L Sharp, to the design of Thomas Mawson, a Lancaster architect. By way of interest, in 1918 his firm had prepared the original civic development plan for Calgary (Alberta), and for other major Canadian cities.

This by no means exhausts the list of Silverdale's large old houses. In fact the two best known, namely Cove House and Woodlands, have been omitted at this stage to be dealt with specially and in more detail later. Sufficient to say that a study of these large houses built in the second half of the last century, of the families who lived there, and of the circumstances which have produced such variations in their use, could be a very rewarding one for local historians. It will be appreciated that the information given above is far from being a complete picture. If it inspires any reader to fill in any of the gaps the author will be very appreciative.

In the light of modern conditions most of these houses have proved to be too big to be maintained by single families, and many have been acquired and converted for commercial use. For example, of those cited above: West Lindeth is now an Old People's Home; Bleasdale House is a residential school for physically handicapped children maintained by the Lancashire County Council; Mountain View was converted into an

Old People's Home in 1983 as an annexe to West Lindeth, and has been renamed Cumbria View; from 1953 to 1967 St John of God was maintained as a hospital by the Brothers of the Order of St John, and after that date by the Sisters of our Lady of the Apostles. It is to be replaced by a new hospice to be built in Lancaster. The future of the site and buildings is at present unknown. Cove House and Woodlands, which will be dealt with in detail later, are now an Old People's Home and a hotel, respectively.

These kinds of changes were similarly affecting other large houses in neighbouring villages. At Capernwray the Hall has been taken over by a Christian organisation and is used as a study and conference centre. At Hyning (Warton) the Hall is now St Bernard's Priory, a home for an Order of Bernadine Cistercian nuns. Near-by Borwick Hall is a centre for youth activities. Here again the Lancashire County Council is largely involved. At Yealand the Manor accommodates the Provincial Insurance Company.

Actually the only large house in Silverdale which is still a family home is Woodwell House. Some two hundred years ago there was a gamekeeper's cottage on this site. This has been added to and adapted by a succession of owners, including a Mr Robert Milne (of Kendal Milnes) who travelled daily by train to Manchester from Silverdale.

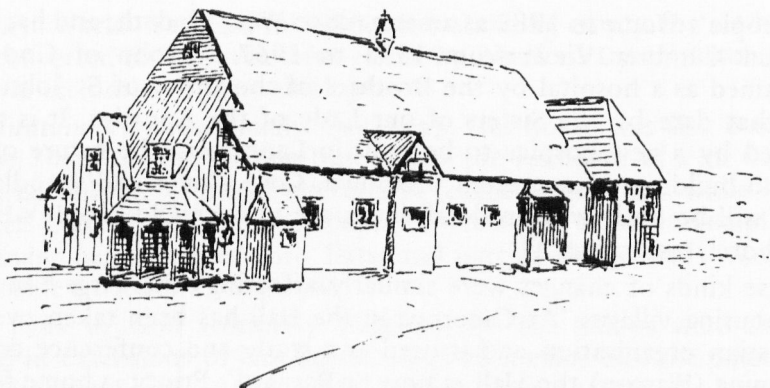
Village centre

Reference above to two of the larger old houses of Silverdale, Bleasdale House and Mountain View, has brought us up the hill, past the old Post Office, replaced by the present Post Office about the turn of the century, to the village centre.

This 'centre' of the village has been established in relatively modern times, by the erection in close proximity to one another of ten or so shops and other business premises (e.g. Post Office and Bank). Throughout its earlier history Silverdale consisted merely of an aggregation of scattered farmsteads, which were often quite widely separated. Each comprised a unit consisting of a farm and its outbuildings, together with cottages for workers. Such were Waterslack, The Row, Silverdale Green, the Cove, Lindeth, and Gibraltar.

Gaskell Memorial Hall

In the village centre is the Gaskell Memorial Hall, which has an interesting history.



Gaskell Hall

A proposal to form a dramatic society in the village was first made in 1921. It was enthusiastically received, and such a society was established in that year. It was called 'The Silverdale Village Players' and for several years its members produced plays either in the School Room or in the Parish Hall (old Hall). Many problems arose, however, relating to lighting, use of furniture, etc, and, not least, a fire in the Parish Hall in 1928 which halted a production. As a result of these frustrations it was suggested that an attempt should be made to raise funds to build a hall which would have adequate facilities for play production. The idea was pursued vigorously by a committee, which included Mr W E Riley and Mr F J Dickens, two well-known local residents.

The first £115 subscribed included the promise of £100 from Sir Norman Wray of Harrogate, a friend of Mr Riley, on condition that the title of the Hall should include some reference to Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell in order to commemorate the association which this Victorian novelist had with the area.

A site near the village centre was made available by Mr Herbert Bright of Cove House, at a nominal cost of £25 (based on one shilling per square yard), on condition 'that a building worthy of the village should be erected and that the plans should be submitted to him for his approval'.

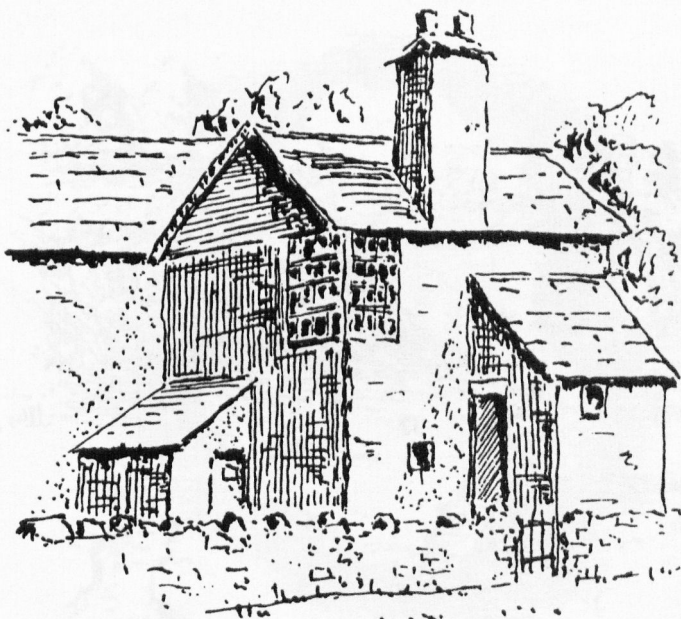
The Hall was designed by a Mr Howard, a Bradford architect who had spent holidays in Silverdale. It was completed and opened in 1931 (5 February) at a cost of £3964, inclusive of architect's fees and furniture. Appropriately, at the opening the Village Players performed

scenes from *Cranford*, arranged by Mr W Riley. Mr Dickens (of Woodlands) finally paid off the debts of the Hall, in 1935–36, by two generous gifts, the first of £500 and the other of £1000.

For the past fifty years the Gaskell Hall has been, and continues today to be, the focus of most of the village activities, and each organisation which makes use of the Hall is represented on its Management Committee.

Bank House Farm

A cart road to the left at the Gaskell Hall leads to Bank House Farm. This is frequently referred to in the village as 'Mason's Farm', after the name of the present tenant. It is one of the oldest farms in the area and the buildings, grouped round three sides of a courtyard in which there is a large and very old yew tree, are very attractive. This is especially so in the spring of the year, when the field through which the farm is approached is full of daffodils. One of the upstairs rooms at the rear of the farm contains what is termed the 'Lantern Window'. This has two aspects, north-west and south-west, and commands a wide view both up



Bank House Farm (lantern window)

and down the Kent Estuary. Allegedly a lantern was lit and displayed there in inclement weather to guide travellers crossing the sands.

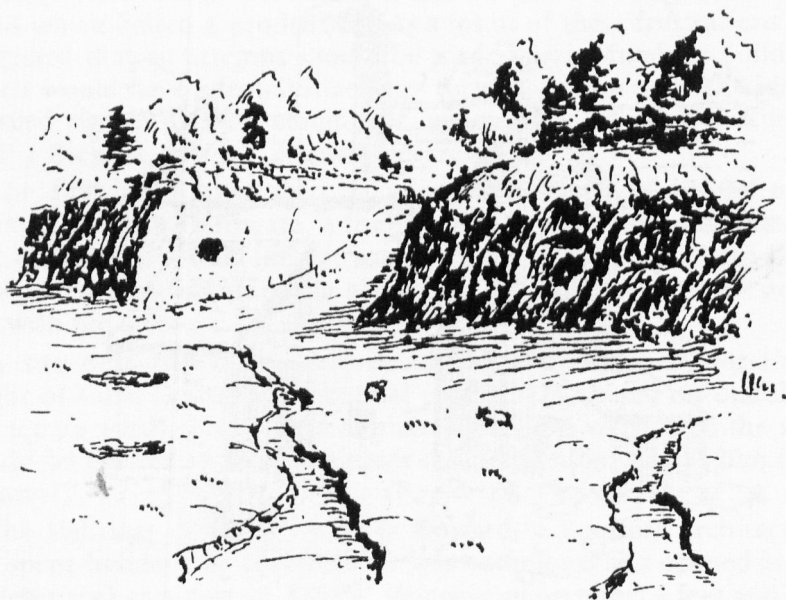
In 1983, Mr Tom Bright, who owned the farm, presented it and fifty-seven acres of land to the National Trust.

The Cove

It is but a short distance across the fields, as the crow flies, from Bank House Farm to the Cove. It is slightly further if the approved routes by road and/or field path are followed. The Cove represents a natural break in the line of cliffs, and it enables a road to reach the seashore at this point.

The cliff footpath from the Cove and the first of the fields 'over The Lots' are part of the Bank House estate, now administered by the National Trust.

The salt marsh here is studded with innumerable small depressions which are usually water-filled and can be accounted for as follows. Numerous springs emerge from the base of the cliffs along the west side of the Silverdale peninsula. The water percolates through the

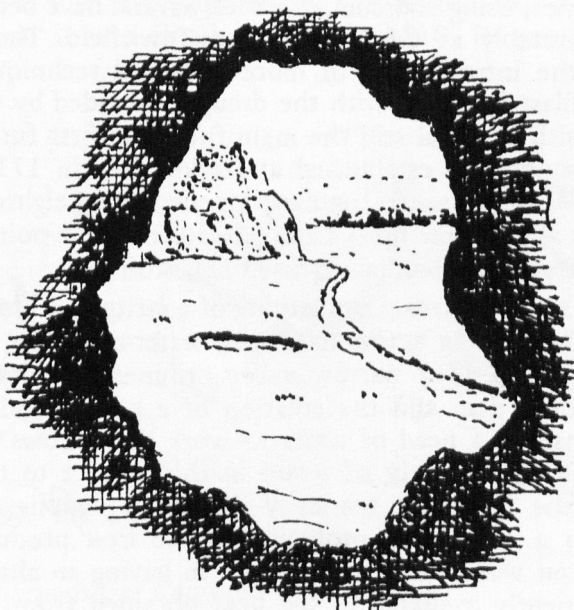


The Cove

shore sand to the underlying rock surface, and thence finds its way to the sea. These underground seepage channels of spring water gradually get deeper as they get further away from the shore, but in the early stages the overlying soft sand tends to collapse in places, producing a succession of depressions, which fill with the fresh water. This is reinforced by sea water after high tides have covered the saltings. When the tides are low and/or there has been a spell of dry weather, the depressions dry out.

From a viewpoint on the cliff path overlooking the Cove, the pattern of these water-filled depressions can be the more readily discerned, and the connections, one with the others, can be the more easily appreciated. They constitute a significant and unique feature of the salt marsh at Silverdale. They can be compared to collapse or sink holes which occur in limestone areas, local examples of which can be found at Deepdale in Cringlebarrow and even in Silverdale itself, at the site of Hole House (west Lindeth).

There are many other features on this stretch of coastline of interest to the geologist. First, there are a number of small caves, the largest being at the Cove itself. This has probably been enlarged by man.



The cave at the Cove

No doubt, over the years it has served a variety of purposes, e.g. as a bathing 'tent', a refuge during inclement weather, and a storage place for perishable materials awaiting land or sea transport at this point. Secondly, a pronounced edge to the shore shelf is discernible, about fifty yards out from the cliffs, representing a raised beach, and marks representing even higher tide levels can be traced along the cliff face. Thirdly, on the exposed face of the cliff traces or veins of a variety of mineral specimens can be identified. The largest of these, at the Cove and known as Red Rake, was obviously at some stage investigated in depth in the search for iron-ore (haematite). How successful this was it is impossible now to say, the workings have collapsed, but the mine entrance is still a significant feature of the Cove.

Leighton Furnace

Reference to Red Rake gives a lead to the part played by the Cove in the establishment and development of the small but successful iron industry at Leighton during the eighteenth century.

Small-scale iron-mining took place in the north-west of England in mediaeval times. The iron-ore was reduced to iron at primitive hearths, called bloomeries, using charcoal as a fuel. Several have been identified in this area, notably at Capernwray and Tewitfield. The eighteenth century saw the introduction of more advanced techniques for iron smelting, i.e. blast furnaces, with the draught provided by water-driven bellows but with charcoal still the main fuel. The first furnace of this type in this region was established at Backbarrow in 1711, and two years later (1713) the same company opened the Leighton Furnace. This was built about three miles from Silverdale, at the point where the road to Slack Head and Beetham crossed Leighton Beck.

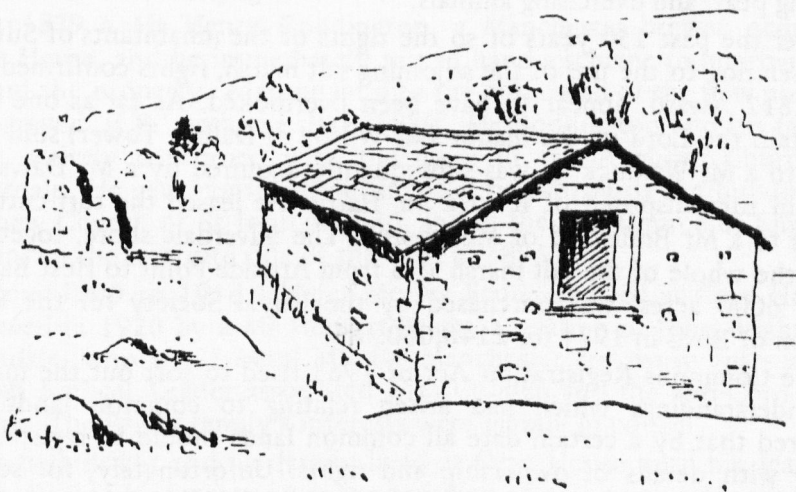
Here was a sizeable stream, something of a rarity in a limestone area, which, after meandering across flat, open water-meadows, emerged to flow down a steep-sided narrow valley, eminently suitable for the construction of a dam and the creation of a small pond for storing water. This ensured a head of water to work the bellows. In addition there was a plentiful supply of wood in this district to convert into charcoal for the fuel. The tendency of timber supplies to become exhausted was a continuing problem for the iron producers at this period. Leighton was fortunate, however, in having an alternative fuel supply conveniently available in the peat obtained from the Arnside and Silverdale mosses. When production was at its height, upwards of

8000 cwts of peat a year were used at Leighton. The price of peat iron was low (ninety shillings a ton), whilst charcoal iron sold at seven pounds a ton. Occasionally quantities of peat iron had to be re-smelted.

The main problem was that the supplies of local iron proved to be relatively insignificant, so the ore had to be imported. It came by sea from the Furness district, being loaded on to ships near Baycliffe and landed at various places on the Kent Estuary, including Know Hill and the Cove at Silverdale. From here it was transported to Leighton by pack horse and wagon via Mine Road (now Park Lane).

It is probable that boats were able to utilise the channel of the River Kent during the periods when it ran close to the Silverdale shore. Otherwise they would simply be beached on a high tide, and the cargoes would be unloaded or loaded on to or from carts on the sands when the tide receded. The boats would then be refloated on a subsequent high tide. Accounts exist of a variety of articles stored at the Cove and awaiting collection, including grindstones (from Hutton Roof), bobbin wood and withys*.

The furnace at Leighton continued to operate for approximately one hundred years, although its fortunes fluctuated widely throughout this period. In 1755 it was acquired by the Halton Iron Company, near Lancaster, and it was finally closed in 1810. Its products consisted



All that remains of Leighton Furnace

* A tough flexible branch, eg of willow, used for binding things together.

mainly of cast-iron wares, and included large kettles, pans, fire-grates and stoves.

Little now remains of the furnace. Of the buildings only the fuel store still stands, but it is used now for agricultural purposes. It is, however, possible to identify the iron-ore house, the site of the dam, the Mill Race (Leet or Goit) and the slag heap, but that is about all the evidence which remains. In its heyday the furnace also boasted a stocktaker's house, bellows house, casting house, bridge house and founder's house.

Common rights of pasture on the shore

The 1817 Silverdale Enclosure Award contained the following statement relating to that part of the salt marsh lying between the Shore and the Cove:

'We do hereby leave the same to the use and behoof of Daniel Wilson Esquire, Lord of the Manor, and to the inhabitants of the said township according to their respective rights and interests therein.'

The existing legislation on common land is often ancient, and almost invariably complicated. Usually a common is owned by a private individual, but is subject to the rights of the commoners, who are local people who have used it for many generations, e.g. for sheep grazing, cutting peat, and exercising animals.

Over the past 150 years or so the rights of the inhabitants of Silverdale relating to the use of the adjoining salt marsh, rights confirmed by the 1817 Award, appear to have been overlooked. As far as one can ascertain the Lord of the Manor (Mr Wilson of Dallam Tower) sold the land to a Mr Walduck. It was subsequently acquired by a Mr Dawson, who in turn disposed of it to a Mr Harris. He leased the turf-cutting rights to a Mr Brailsford of Milnthorpe. The Silverdale shore, together with the whole of the salt marsh area from Arnside Point to Hest Bank, some 6000 acres, was purchased by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in 1974 for £140,000. *

The Commons Registration Act of 1965 tried to sort out the many misunderstandings which had arisen relating to common lands. It required that by a certain date all common lands should be registered, along with details of ownership and rights. Unfortunately, for some reason not apparent the appropriate local authority did not do this, and it may well be that by this omission the rights of local people to the foreshore have been forfeited.

* For correction, see inside
front cover.

Cove House

The cliff top on the north side of the Cove forms part of the garden of Cove House, a building which was probably a farmstead originally. In the early part of the nineteenth century, however, it was acquired for use as a holiday home by the Reverend Carus Wilson, who at various times was Vicar of Tunstall, Whittington and Casterton in Lunesdale. He wrote extensively, particularly tracts and articles for religious periodicals. But his main claim to fame was as an educationist. He established five schools, the best known in 1842, at Cowan Bridge, for the daughters of clergy. In 1833 this was transferred to Casterton where it continues today as a successful Girls' Public School. Amongst its earliest pupils were the Bronte sisters. It has been suggested that they might have visited Cove House, as pupils from Cowan Bridge were brought to Silverdale to enjoy the benefits of sea air to aid their recovery from illness. This is highly problematical so far as the Brontes are concerned. There is certainly no documentary evidence to support it.

Carus Wilson died in 1859 and the ownership of Cove House passed to his son-in-law, the Reverend C W W Shephard. He concerned himself greatly with local affairs in Silverdale, for example successfully leading the local campaign against Mr Walduck in his plan to enclose and drain the marsh (page 11).

In 1879 a Mr Henry Boddington, a Manchester brewer, acquired Cove House, and he immediately put in hand a scheme to improve and extend the property. A stone let into the outer wall of the new portion is engraved 'H.B.' with the date '1879'. Mr Boddington and his family were actively concerned with the work of the Anglican Church in Silverdale. He gave considerable financial help towards the building of the new Church of St John in 1886, and of the new Church of England School on the opposite side of the road in 1896.

From 1900 to 1918 a Major Morley Saunders lived at Cove House, followed in 1920 by a Mr Herbert Bright, a relation of John Bright* of Rochdale, who was Liberal MP for Manchester for many years and a British Radical Leader associated with Cobden and the anti-Corn Law League. The Bright family's interests were mainly in cotton.

Herbert Bright and his family lived at Cove House until his death in 1950. One of his interests was the breeding of polo ponies. Up the road from the Cove, just over the wall on the right-hand side is to be seen an

* He was the grandson of a younger brother.

interesting reminder of this activity, a low corrugated roofed shed. The ponies were grazed in the fields on The Lots, where no water source existed. Two sheds were erected and their corrugated roofs not only collected rainwater to be stored in a tank underneath, but they also shaded it from evaporation. Unfortunately the shed in The Lots has now been demolished. The one remaining derived its water not only from the roof, but also from surface water draining down the side of the road. This was diverted, via a gulley through the wall, to augment the supply.

Near the top of the road a wooden gate gives access to gardens, and on the top bar of this has been carved the names of some of the prize-winning Bright ponies: Cherry Champion, Warwick Royal, Madrigal Champion, etc, and the date 1931.

This same spot commands a view of the garden with its magnificent old walnut tree and is well worth a visit, especially in the spring when the ground is carpeted with aconites, snowdrops and crocuses.

On the death of her husband Mrs Bright moved to live in the adjoining property, Cove Lea, in 1951.

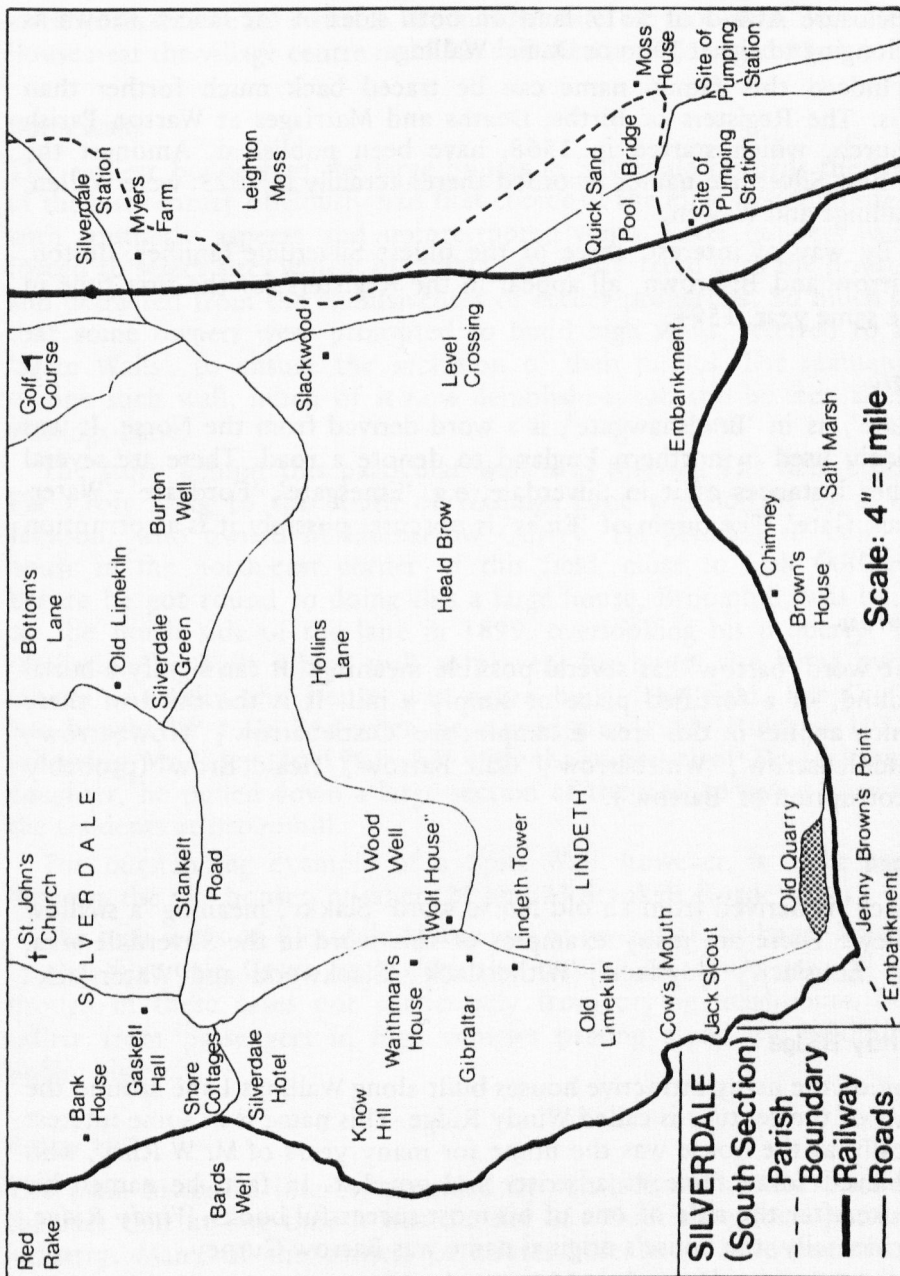
Since 1951 Cove House has been used as a 'Home for Elderly Gentlefolk' and renamed Stone Bower. The home was started by a Mr and Mrs Helliwell who moved here from Burton-in-Kendal, where they had run a similar home with the same name. They are described as a dedicated couple who 'ran their home on faith'. It is now partially assisted by the local authority.

Wallings Lane

Further along Cove Road towards Bradshawgate a footpath is sign-posted to Castlebarrow and Elmslack via Wallings Lane. These names suggest that a brief reference to the importance of a study of personal and place names to a knowledge of local history might be appropriate at this stage.

On an interior wall of the Silverdale Old Chapel, which has recently (1982) been converted for domestic use, there was a tablet commemorating a Dr Walling. It read as follows: 'John Walling M.D. died Preston 29th July 1871. Born in Silverdale and long associated with it in his professional career'.

However, it is likely that the name 'Wallings Lane' derives from older members of the same family, for on the map accompanying the



Enclosure Award of 1817 land on both sides of the lane is shown as belonging to either John or Daniel Walling.

Indeed this family name can be traced back much further than this. The Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages at Warton Parish Church, which started in 1568, have been published. Amongst the earliest Silverdale names recorded there, actually in 1623, were Wallen, Wallinge and Wawen.

By way of interest, three of the oldest Silverdale families, Bolton, Burrow and Bisbrown, all appear in the Registers for the first time in the same year, 1594.

Gate

'Gate', as in 'Bradshawgate', is a word derived from the Norse. It was widely used in northern England to denote a road. There are several other instances of it in Silverdale, e.g. 'Emesgate', 'Fordgate', 'Water-slack Gate'. The origin of 'Emes' is obscure, possibly it is a corruption of 'Eves'.

Barrow

The word 'barrow' has several possible meanings. It can signify a burial mound, or a fortified place or simply a hill. It is the third of these which applies in this area. Examples are 'Castlebarrow', 'Trowbarrow', 'Middlebarrow', 'Whitbarrow', 'Gait Barrow', 'Heald Brow' (probably a corruption of 'Barrow').

Slack

'Slack' is derived from an old Norse word 'Slakki', meaning 'a shallow valley'. There are many examples of this word in the Silverdale area, e.g. 'Elmslack', 'Dogslack', 'Witherslack', 'Slackwood' and 'Waterslack'.

Windy Ridge

One of the many attractive houses built along Wallings Lane around the turn of the century is called Windy Ridge. This name is of some interest locally as the house was the home for many years of Mr W Riley, who achieved some fame as a writer and novelist. In fact, he named his house after the title of one of his most successful books, *Windy Ridge*. Incidentally, the house's original name was Barrow Gurney.

Mr Riley was born in 1866. *Windy Ridge* was published in 1912,

seven years before he came to live in Silverdale. He moved to Yew Tree House near the village centre in 1952, and died in 1961, aged 95.

Spite walls

The earliest builders of the large houses in Silverdale towards the end of the last century obviously had first choice of the most desirable sites, with southerly aspects and uninterrupted views. Later builders were forced to select sites which, in certain cases, interfered with the privacy and detracted from the exclusiveness of earlier properties. So much so that some owners were prompted to build high walls, referred to as 'Spite Walls', to ensure the seclusion of their homes. The remnants of one such wall, much of it now demolished, can still be seen along Wallings Lane.

The story behind this particular wall is as follows. The field called Far Croft lying to the south of Wallings Lane was bought by a Mr Jackson, who owned Middlebarrow Quarry. He planned to build a house in the north-east corner of this field, close to Oak Cottage. Before he got round to doing this a large house, Broomhill, was built on the north side of the lane in 1899, overlooking his property. In retaliation he built a high wall to prevent his house site being overlooked. Actually the house was never built. The field, Far Croft, was bought by a Mr Pye when he moved into Windy Ridge in 1952, following Mr Riley. In 1961–62, with the approval of Mr Jackson's daughter, he pulled down a large section of the wall to give a view to the residents at Broomhill.

The outstanding example of a Spite Wall, however, is to be seen between the two houses, numbers 21 and 23 Stankelt Road.

The high walls of Bleasdale House and of several of the larger houses in the Silverdale Green area were also erected to secure privacy, although in these cases not particularly from prying neighbours, but rather from passengers in high vehicles passing along the adjoining public highway.

Potter Hill

The main historical interest provided by this hillside, however, lies in the fact that at one time it was the site of a flourishing local pottery industry. Many of the owners of houses hereabouts have unearthed large quantities of pottery fragments, waste from the kilns, whilst

creating and cultivating their gardens. Because of the amount of waste and the widespread distribution of these sherds, it is probable that over the years more than one kiln operated here. The area is still known as Potter Hill, but today the only visible sign of such a past industry is the inclusion of that name on an electricity sub-station sited hereabouts, and its use as the name of a house erected here — by a native of Stoke-on-Trent!

It is impossible to give precise dates as to when pottery-making flourished at Silverdale. It has been described as being late mediaeval, and was probably practised over the period from 1400 to early in the seventeenth century. The type of ware produced consisted mainly of jugs, bowls and other household articles.

Initially it was difficult to understand exactly why such a cottage industry should have been started in Silverdale. Bare limestone outcrops, with patches of glacial debris in the hollows, seemed to comprise most of the landscape. It was a study of the local field names which eventually provided a clue as to the probable source of the clay supply. About a mile or so to the east is a small lake, called Hawes Water, and several of the fields alongside it are known as the Clay Holes. This was the obvious source of the clay. Locally derived iron and copper-ores were used to produce the glazes which gave the characteristic brown and green colours to the pottery produced at Silverdale.

Other small-scale potteries have been identified locally, e.g. in the Keer and Lune valleys, so the market for the wares was probably within a radius of ten to twenty miles from the kilns. As far as Silverdale is concerned, this could include customers living across the Kent Estuary, and it is more than probable that the Brothers living in the Priors at Conishead and Cartmel and in the Abbey at Furness used kitchenware supplied by the Silverdale potteries.

Townsfeld

Elmslack Lane leads back into Cove Road and almost immediately one is confronted by the street sign 'Townsfeld'. This is of great interest as it was the name given in north-west England to the common arable land of a village before it was enclosed. The common field was divided into strips amongst the villagers. Much of what was once the 'Town field' has now been built upon, but two large fields still remain under grass. Principally it lay between Cove Road and Emesgate, and probably extended eastwards to Bottoms Lane, and possibly beyond.



Townsfeld

It was no doubt earmarked from early times for the growing of crops, because in this rocky, hilly terrain it contained a sizeable area of workable soil. It lay in a valley, and was probably the bed of a post-glacial lake.

Much of the land in the village, and especially that closely adjoining the farmsteads, had been enclosed by mutual consent long before the Enclosure Award of 1817. This merely completed the process by allocating the common lands and the waste ground. The map accompanying the Award is of interest because it gives the names of the landowners and indicates the fields they farmed.

By far the biggest area belonged to Thomas Inman of Hill House (now Woodlands), whose land extended from the county boundary along the summit of Castlebarrow, southwards across Park Lane, including both sides of Bottoms Lane, to Silverdale Green. Between this belt and the coast to the west the land was shared between a number of farmers, and in particular by Daniel and John Walling, Thomas Jackson, John Bisbrown, Charles Walker, William Maychell and George Hutton.

To the east of the Inman lands, from The Row to the Yealand Parish boundary, the principal landowners were James and Thomas Kellet, John Burrow and Thomas Hoggart.

These same families were allocated strips in the Mossdales (turbaries) of the Hawes Water and Silverdale Mosses, for the cutting of peat.

The Tithe Commutation Award Map of 1846 is of considerable interest as it includes the names given to the enclosed fields. Many of these include elements which mean 'enclosure'. These are listed below, together with a figure showing the number of times the name appears in Silverdale (excluding Lindeth).

— Croft	: 29	}	In the main these are small fields and relate to the earlier enclosure of areas of land by mutual consent.
— Parrock	: 17		
— Close	: 8		
— Pickle	: 2		
— Garth	: 2		
— Hagg	: 2		
— Tot	: 1		

The area which comprised Townsfield, the common agricultural land, was divided into fields with the following significant names:

— Field (O.E. 'feld' = 'open common field')	: 36
— Dales (O.E. 'dal' = 'share of common land')	: 4
— Butts (O.E. 'butte' = 'abutting strips of land')	: 3
— Flatts (a division of the common field)	: 2

The heart of old Silverdale — Chapel and School

If the ancient village of Silverdale can ever have been said to have had a centre it must surely have been at the point where Emesgate, Cove Road, Park Lane, Bottoms Lane and Elmslack Lane meet. What is certain is that for centuries this was the focus of the religious and educational life of the village.

Fifteenth century and earlier

In the reign of Richard I (1189–99) Henry de Redman gave a moiety of the village of Silverdale, and fishing rights in Hawes Water, to Cartmel Priory.

Pope Gregory's Bull of 1233 referred to a cell at Silverdale.

Before the Reformation (Henry VIII 1509–47: Dissolution of the

Monasteries 1536) there is evidence of there having been a chapel at Silverdale, possibly an oratory. It is referred to in documents dealing with the possessions of Cartmel Priory. It was no doubt maintained by the Priory for the use of travellers about to undertake, or having just completed, the hazardous journey across the Kent Sands.

There is no firm clue as to the possible site of this chapel. It may or may not have a significance that on the cliffs, at the Cove, in the grounds of Cove House there was until relatively recently a small private chapel referred to as 'The Oratory'. Could this have been the site of the first religious establishment in Silverdale?

Sixteenth century – after the Dissolution

Silverdale was included within the parish of Warton, as also were the Yealands, Borwick, Priest Hutton and Carnforth. There is little direct evidence of a Silverdale chapel in the sixteenth century, but the following pointers seem to suggest that one existed. In 1548, in the Visitation List for Warton Church four names are entered: Rector, Curate, Stipendiary and 'Another'. One of these most probably served at Silverdale.

1554 In this year, also, four were mentioned.

1562 The Vicar and 'Another' were recorded.

1591 In the Visitation List for this year the following are listed:

Vicar. School Master and Usher of Warton

School Master of Silverdale

(The School Masters were in Holy Orders, eg the Warton School Master was Curate of Kellet.)

1594 An endowment was granted by Archbishop (of York) Hutton which included ' . . . £3. 3. 4d. for rendering prayers every Sunday in the afternoon in the chappell of Silverdale' (being an obscure remote place).

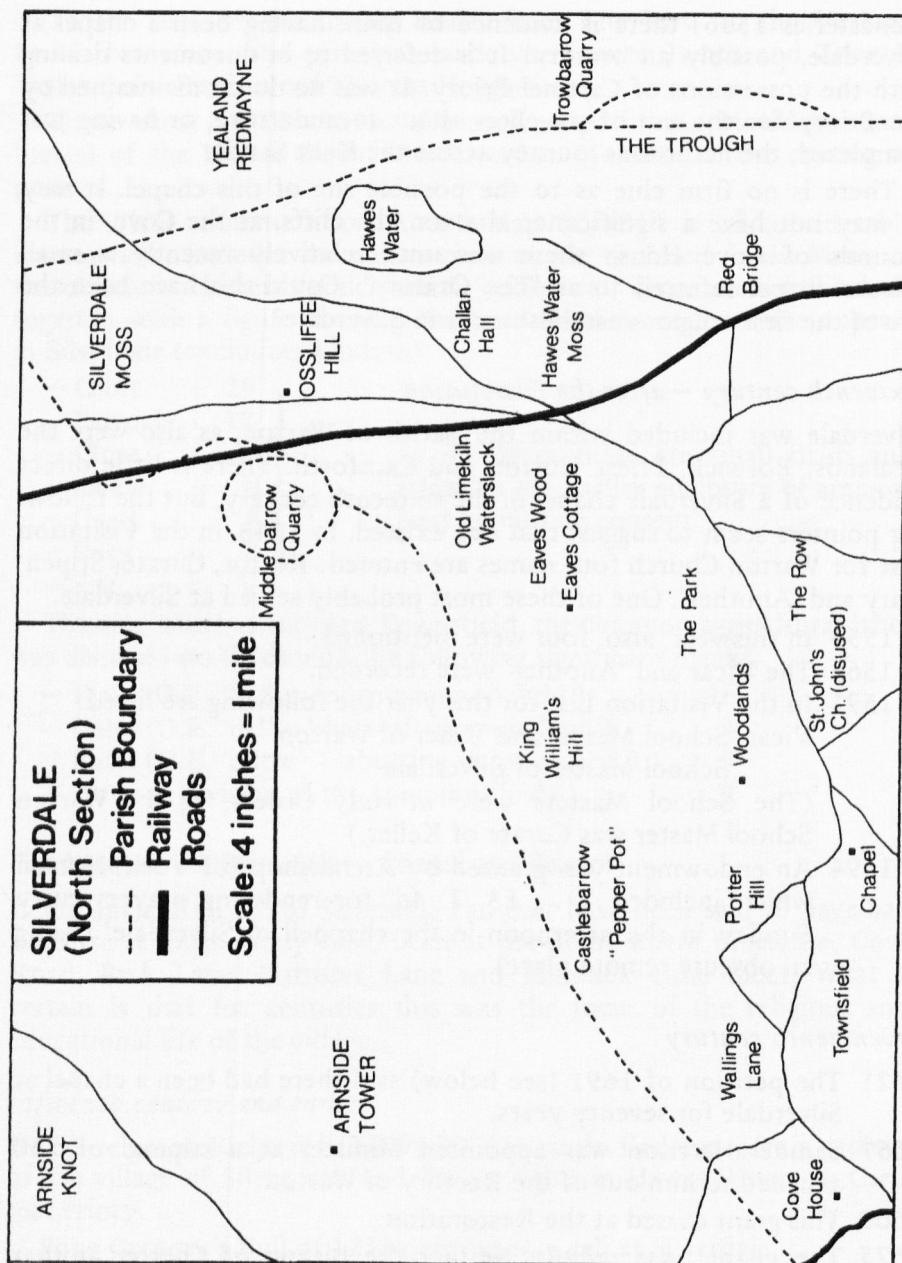
Seventeenth century

1621 The petition of 1691 (see below) said there had been a chapel at Silverdale for seventy years.

1657 Samuel Harrison was appointed Minister at a stipend of £40 assigned to him out of the Rectory of Warton.

1660 This grant ceased at the Restoration.

1675 The chapel was *rebuilt*. Neither the Bishop of Chester at that time, nor any of his successors, ever found time to visit Silverdale



to consecrate this chapel. The fact that it was rebuilt suggests that it probably occupied the site of an earlier building.

1686–1695

These ten years merit a special section all to themselves. During this period quite a drama was enacted in the church life of the villagers of Silverdale. The two principal characters were the Vicar of Warton (Thomas Lawson) and James Atkinson (who in 1683 was licensed to be School Master at Silverdale and in 1691 was licensed to be Curate of the chapel there). The latter was strongly backed by the villagers. Other main parts were played by the Bishop of Chester and by the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral, whilst minor roles were filled by the Bishop of Carlisle and by the Vicars of several of the neighbouring parishes.

The Dean and Chapter of Worcester were involved in their capacity as patrons of the Warton living. They held the right of advowson, i.e. to appoint the Vicar.

The villagers wanted the Dean and Chapter to provide a stipend of £5 a year for their School Master, and to license him to read the services at Silverdale on Sundays. This was agreed to in 1691, but the Vicar of Warton neglected to pay the £5, and so the arguments continued. Finally Mr Lawson agreed to pay the money if the Dean and Chapter would cancel the deductions they made from his stipend in respect of 'tenths, synodal and procuration fees'.

Some of the arguments used by both sides in support of their claim make fascinating reading and a selection is reproduced below. The Silverdale people pointed out, 'We are bound up by the sea on the one hand and mosses on the other soe that at sometimes we cannot with conveniency travel to the mother church at Warton being in a very obscure and remote place and consisting of nere three score familys amongst which are very many aged and decrepit people abounding . . . with many schismatics and Quakers', and later, 'Divers inhabitants are very infirm and also very remote from the Parish Church.'

Then again, 'The road to Warton was so vile that any regular attendance there by Silverdale people was out of the question.' But most convincing, 'The distance between Warton Church and Silverdale I take to be 4 miles, the way is plain and open from the sides of two great hills to all the severity of the weather seaward, in the midst lies a deep mosse where I thought we must have left our horses and were once in despair

of making our way. The inhabitants petitioned that they might have regular services for since they had been instituted people had ceased to play among the hills on Sunday and Quakers had made no new converts. If the chapel were to be closed the Quakers would make progress.'

There are many more letters in the same strain.

The Vicar of Warton's main concern seemed to be the resulting reduction in the size of his congregation. He argued that until their 'usurpation and rebellion' Silverdale people had always gone to Warton Church, and that the chapel in Silverdale, although built in 1675, had not been consecrated. Moreover, Warton Church was not 'farre remote . . . and the way very goode'. He accepted that the Silverdale chapel served a purpose, e.g. for the use of the elderly and infirm, and it also kept out dissenters.

Eighteenth century

There has been regular ministration at Silverdale since 1756, first by a Mr Frances Haygarth (School Master of Over Kellet), followed in 1758 by a Mr Thomas Turner (also School Master of Over Kellet), in 1765 by a Mr Richard Bailey (lately Master of Beetham School),

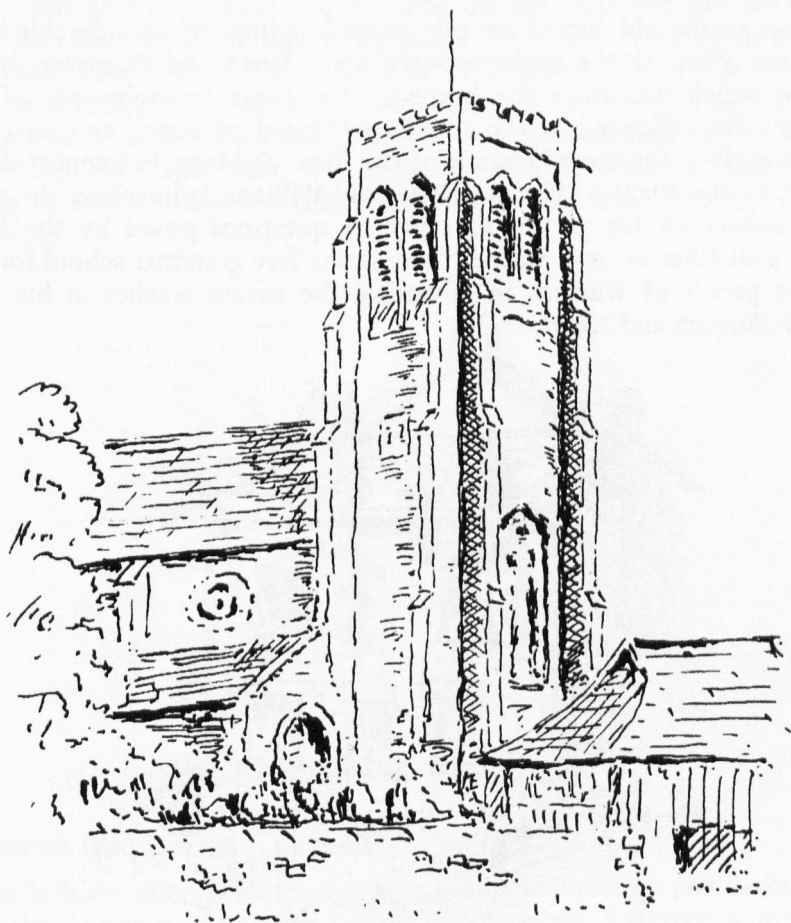


Old Chapel of Ease

in 1766 by a Mr Thomas Hest (afterwards Vicar of Warton 1775–89), and so on.

Nineteenth century

The chapel was rebuilt and consecrated as St John's in 1829. Once again the use of the word 'rebuilt' suggests that it was continued on the same site. This indicates that there has been a chapel on this spot at least since 1621, i.e. for 360 years.



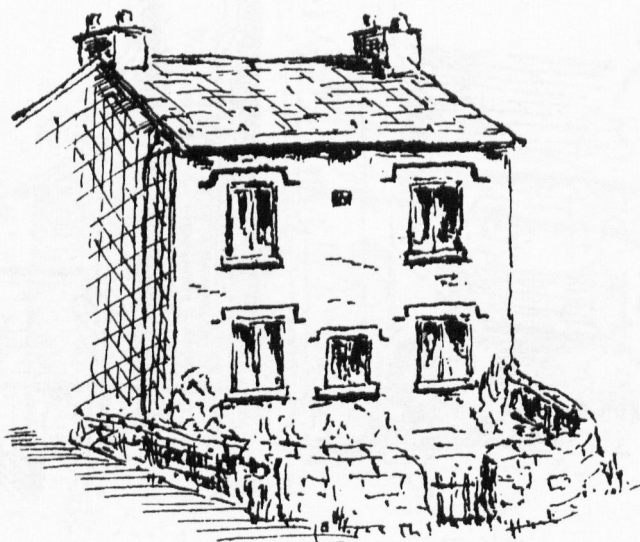
St John's Church

It is a great pity that it was not found possible to preserve the old chapel and to adapt it for some village purpose, for example as a Youth Centre. Instead, in 1982 the gravestones were removed, the building was gutted, and it was converted into three dwelling-houses.

In 1871 Silverdale became a separate parish.

In 1886 the new Church of St John was built, and the old one was thereafter used as a mortuary chapel. A local financial benefactor was found in the person of Mr Boddington of Cove House (page 45). Possibly the building process was hastened by the erection of the new Wesleyan chapel in 1879 (page 61).

Near to the old chapel are two other buildings of considerable local interest. First, in the angle between Cove Road and Emesgate, is the house which was once the home of the curate/schoolmaster of the village. He officiated at the Anglican 'Chapel of Ease', and also had responsibility for the education of the local children. In a report dated 1722 by the Vicar of Warton (Reverend William Aylmer) on the state and history of his parish, in reply to questions posed by the Lord Bishop of Chester, it is stated 'there is one free grammar school for the whole parish of Warton. In Silverdale the curate teaches in his own house, English and Latin.'



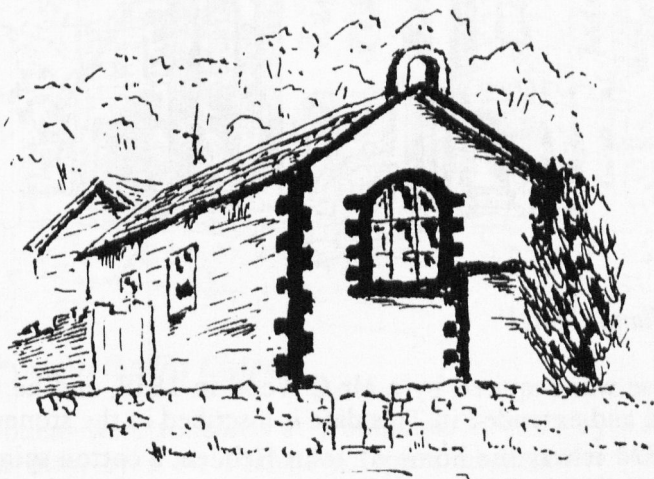
Schoolmaster's (Curate's) House

In a newspaper advertisement (*Lancaster Guardian* 1 January 1859) the following notice appeared:

WANTED

At Lady Day next a Master for the Silverdale National School. He must be a member of the Church of England, and a communicant, and married. His wife would be required to give instruction to the girls in sewing in the afternoon. The salary has realised in school pence and subscriptions about £40 per annum, in addition to a residence. Application to be made to the Reverend A Hadfield, Silverdale, near Lancaster, on or before 15th January 1859.

The pupils were accommodated initially in rooms in the curate's house, but at a later date the building on the opposite side of Cove Road was also used for school purposes. It is now referred to as the 'Old Hall', and after the new Church of England School was built in 1896 it continued to serve a useful purpose for many years as the Parish Room. It occupies the position where, according to the 1846 Tithe Map, the Tithe Barn was sited. By way of interest, closely adjoining it, and fronting the road according to this same map, there was a pinfold.

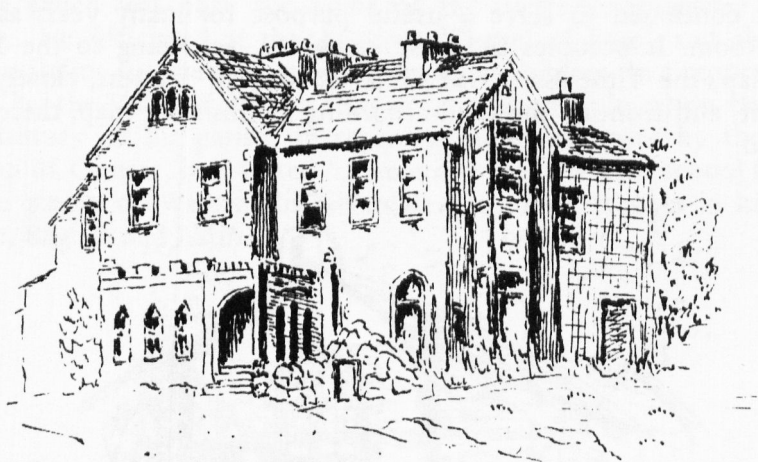


Old Hall (Schoolroom)

Woodlands (Hill House) — Methodism in Silverdale

On the hillside immediately behind the group of buildings just described there stands one of the larger houses of Silverdale. Referred to now as 'Woodlands', it was once known as 'Hill House'.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the house on this site was occupied by the Inman family, who had shipping interests in Liverpool. It is recorded that in 1818 Thomas Inman of Silverdale acquired the title of Lord of the Manor of Warton, but sold it almost immediately to the Bolden family (of Hyning), which family still holds it, although they no longer live in the area. The Inman family's connection with Silverdale is still perpetuated by the fact that the main pathway through Eaves Wood to Waterslack bears the name 'Inman Road'. This family was responsible for planting many of the fine trees to be found in Eaves Wood, and for many of the splendid oak trees which give a park-like appearance to the fields between Emesgate and The Row, and on both sides of Park Lane.



Woodlands Hotel

The house was acquired by a Mr C Wood in 1858, and he considerably altered and extended it. This date is inscribed in the stonework.

From 1873 it was the home of John Hebden, a cotton spinner from Bolton who died in 1889 and was buried in the grounds of the old chapel, as also were his two wives, Hannah, who predeceased him in 1875, and Ann, who continued to live here until her death in 1905.

Just as the Boddington family from Cove House took an interest in the affairs of the Anglican Church in the village, so the Hebdens were a powerful influence in the activities of the Methodist Church. The earliest references to Methodism in this area relate to services held at

Arnside Tower Farm from the 1830's onwards, by courtesy of the Gibson family who lived there. After John Hebden came to live at Woodlands, he made a room in one of his outbuildings available for services. This accommodation later became inadequate, so Mr Hebden offered a field 'Stone Acre', as a site for a new chapel, and the present building was erected there and consecrated in 1879.



Wesleyan Methodist Chapel

The Hebdens were followed at Woodlands in 1905 by a Mr H Pratt, and he, in turn, by a Mr Francis Joseph Dickens, who was a cotton and yarn merchant and also a Director and Deputy Chairman of the District Bank. He lived at Woodlands for thirty-three years and the details about Eaves Wood, given in the following paragraphs, are largely concerned with his family.

On his death in 1949 Woodlands became a hotel, and it has continued as such until the present time, apart from the period 1967-74 when it was empty.

Eaves Wood — 'Pepper Pot'

The 130 or so acres of forested hillside lying behind Woodlands and extending from Castlebarrow in the west to Waterslack in the east and northwards to the Cumbrian border are usually referred to by the name of one part of it, 'Eaves Wood'. This name is derived from the old English word 'efes', which means 'the edge of a wood', but it also means (in mediaeval English) 'a wood on a steep hillside'. Either meaning is applicable here. The whole area is now administered by the National Trust, and the story of its development is as follows.

In 1929 Mr F J Dickens of Woodlands handed over to the National Trust, by Deed of Gift, about twenty-three acres of land lying close behind his house and including the highest point, Castlebarrow (over 250 feet).

Mr Dickens died in 1949 and in that year the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury directed that land which he owned, immediately adjoining Castlebarrow on its eastern side, should be transferred direct to the National Trust as part payment (£1250) of death duties on his estate. This embraced:

Eaves Wood (which included King William's Hill)	78 acres
Waterslack Wood	18 acres
	<u>96 acres</u>

A strip of land sufficiently wide to provide a footpath was acquired in 1952. This leads into the wood from near the Park Lane entrance to Woodlands and was given the name 'Coronation Footpath'.

In 1960 the Silverdale Parish Council transferred to the National Trust a small area at Waterslack (0.86 acres) comprising a public quarry, a lime kiln, a well and a public watering-place, established by the Silverdale Enclosure Award of 1817.

In 1975, £700 raised by a public appeal for funds was used by the local committee of the National Trust to purchase a tongue of woodland (3½ acres) extending down to Park Lane. At the same time a car park was established here at the junction with The Row, giving a much improved access to the woods.

In 1977 a further 5.7 acres of woodland fronting on to Ford Lane were acquired at a cost of £1700. This part was named Jubilee Wood, to commemorate the first twenty-five years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

National Trust properties here now total 130 acres.

The whole of this hillside is of considerable interest. It contains areas of ancient, largely undisturbed, woodland, with yew trees on the sloping surface of the bare limestone, and oak and lime in the deeper soils. Certain parts were artificially planted in the last century, and include particularly beeches and hornbeam. Others consist of mixed woods — ash, oak, beech, larch and pine. In places the trees, especially hazel and ash, have been coppiced. This was done on a 15–20 year cycle to provide straight poles and brushwood. Interspersed are extensive areas of limestone pavement with clints and grikes, together with patches of grass and heather.

An interesting Nature Trail has been established through the woods. First introduced in 1966, it was revised ten years later so as to start at the new car park.

There are many points of interest in the woods to which attention is drawn. Immediately behind Woodlands are three very large, stone-built, water storage tanks on the surface. These were used to store water for the house before a mains supply was available. The source of this water was a spring some four hundred yards distant, sited remarkably near the summit of the limestone ridge. The water was first directed through a pipe to a large collecting tank. From here it continued its piped journey underground into a second holding tank before finally reaching the large storage tanks referred to above.

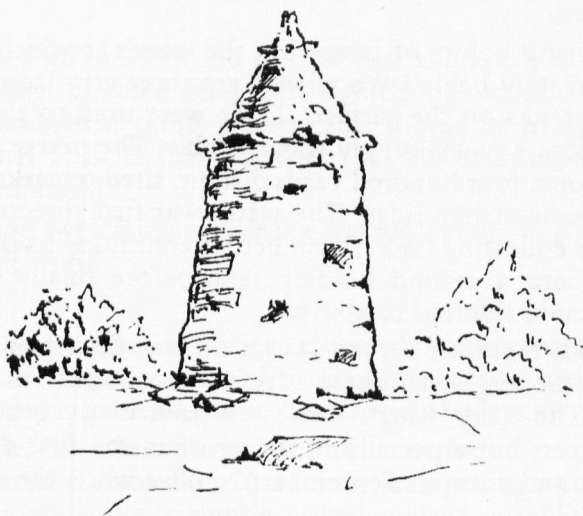
In the woods there are several stands of very fine trees, particularly beeches, and the largest of these is referred to locally as the 'Ring o' Beeches' or 'The Fairy Ring'. These are particularly beautiful at any time of the year, but especially in spring when the first delicate green leaves appear, and again in September/October when the autumn tints take over.

A ruined three-roomed cottage, Emes Cottage, is located near to the major group of beeches. It is flanked by several very large nests of wood-ants. It is probable that at one time this cottage accommodated either the forester or the gamekeeper employed by the estate. It was described as a ruin in a newspaper article (*Lancaster Guardian*) dated 22 June 1872, headed *In and About Silverdale*, so it probably dates from the Inman era. hook up

Any visitor to Eaves Wood must aim to reach the highest point, Castlebarrow, which is over 250 feet above sea level. On the way a place is reached where the pathway is curb-edged with stones, and a short flight of steps leads to the summit of King William's Hill. Here

are several hexagonal base stones, all that now remain of a gazebo, which was probably built in 1830 to commemorate the accession to the throne of King William IV – hence the name of the hill.

After another few hundred yards, Castlebarrow, the highest point, is reached. Here a circular stone tower some twenty feet high has been erected. It forms a well-known local landmark called, somewhat irreverently, the 'Pepper Box' originally and now 'Pepper Pot'. It was built in 1887 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, by a Mr Bowskill, a local man, no doubt with the active support or more probably at the instigation of the Hebden family, who owned Castlebarrow at the time.



The 'Pepper Pot'

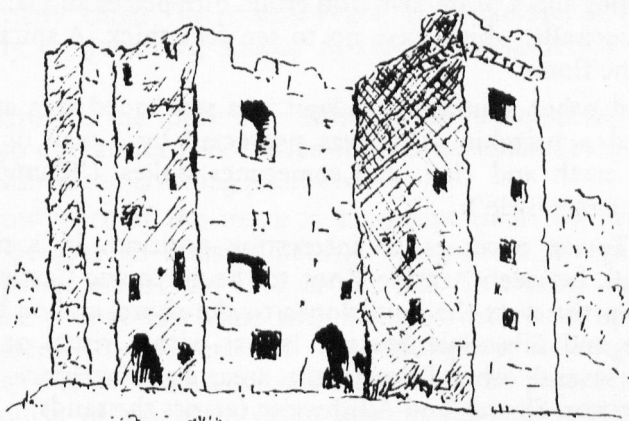
A plaque which was affixed to the tower, detailing its history, was removed by vandals in 1965, and has not been replaced. A proposal to build a companion 'Salt Cellar' during the First World War by soldiers billeted in Bleasdale House, which was a Red Cross Hospital, never materialised. A similar suggestion was made in 1977 at the time of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee celebrations, but it was never actively pursued.

This hilltop commands extensive views of Ingleborough to the east, the Ashton Memorial in Lancaster, and Clougha beyond, Heysham

Power Station, and on clear days Fleetwood and even Blackpool Tower to the south. To the west can be seen Ulverston and Barrow-in-Furness. It also provides what almost amounts to a bird's-eye view of Silverdale itself.

Arnside Tower

Arnside Tower is but a short distance from the 'Pepper Pot' and although it is in Arnside, not Silverdale, Parish, and indeed is over the county boundary and located in Cumbria, yet its history has always been closely linked with that of Silverdale. It is well worth a visit.



Arnside Tower

It is a Pele Tower, or more properly a Tower House. In the Middle Ages, whenever the English king's attention was distracted, the Scots lost no opportunity of invading northern England. Castles and Pele Towers were constructed to provide protection, and in north-west England between the River Lune and the Scottish border over one hundred were built. Peles were smaller, and less well fortified, than castles. They were intended to counter lightly armed raiders rather than to withstand a siege by a properly equipped army.

They were mainly built in the fourteenth century. Following the defeat of Edward II's army at Bannockburn in 1314 the Scots invaded England, first in 1316 and again in 1322. On this latter occasion Robert Bruce and his troops crossed the Leven and Kent sands, and neighbour-

ing Warton received the attentions of one of his raiding parties on its way to burn Lancaster.

Arnside Tower was built by the De Broughton family around 1340. It was damaged by fire in 1602, but was rebuilt and survived intact until 1690. In 1815 it was sold to Daniel Wilson of Dallam. In 1884 one corner fell in a great storm. Much of it is still standing, although it is gradually disintegrating. Unfortunately, little or nothing is being done to halt the process of decay.

Pele Towers tended to conform to a pattern. They were usually three storeys high, but Arnside had four. The ground floor contained the dairy and store rooms. Stone steps led to a first-floor entrance, with a heavy oak door and a protective iron grille. Fire-places and latrines were built into the walls, which were up to ten feet thick. A spiral staircase connected the floors.

Cattle and other animals were kept in a stockaded area around the tower, called a barmkin. This was protected by a wall of stone, or possibly of earth and clay, and sometimes stakes. ('Pilum' = 'stake' — hence the name 'Pele').

Arnside Tower occupies an interesting position. It is sited on a saddle, or col, between Arnside Knot to the north and Castlebarrow to the south. To the west the land slopes to the shore, and on the east to the Arnside and Silverdale Mosses. It was within visual or signalling distance of several other Peles in the area, e.g. Hazelslack, Borwick, Beetham, Levens, Sizergh and Allithwaite (across the sands).

Waterslack

After the brief excursion to Arnside Tower, return to Eaves Wood and walk through it to Waterslack. This hamlet, like The Row near-by, is similar to the many small groupings which formed the typical settlement pattern in early Silverdale. Each was really a collection of cottages associated with a farm or farms, and sited in relation to a source of water and an area of cultivable soil. There is quite a group of these in this area, which includes, in addition to Waterslack and The Row, Challan Hall, Ossliff Hill and Red Bridge. Each developed separately as a distinct unit. In addition to wells, the water source here was provided by the lake, Hawes Water, and the streams flowing into or out of it. Surprisingly, little has happened over the years to produce any marked increase in population in these small units. Basically they remain today much as they have been for hundreds of years.

Quarrying — The Trough

The Middlebarrow and Trowbarrow quarries have provided employment for men from Silverdale since they were first opened over a hundred years ago. In actual fact neither is in Silverdale Parish — both are just over the boundary. Middlebarrow is in Arnside (and Cumbria), whilst Trowbarrow is in Yealand Redmayne. No doubt the decision to establish quarries on these two hillsides was taken largely because, in both cases, the railway line from Barrow to Carnforth ran close by and thus the removal of the stone was greatly facilitated.

The Middlebarrow quarry still operates, but the crushed limestone is now taken away by lorry. Over the years ownership of this quarry has changed many times. In recent years, for example, it has belonged successively to Jacksons, Keirby & Perry, and currently to Kingston Minerals.

Trowbarrow is the more interesting of the two quarries, even though it ceased to operate in 1965, when the Tarmacadam Company closed it and demolished the crushing plant etc.

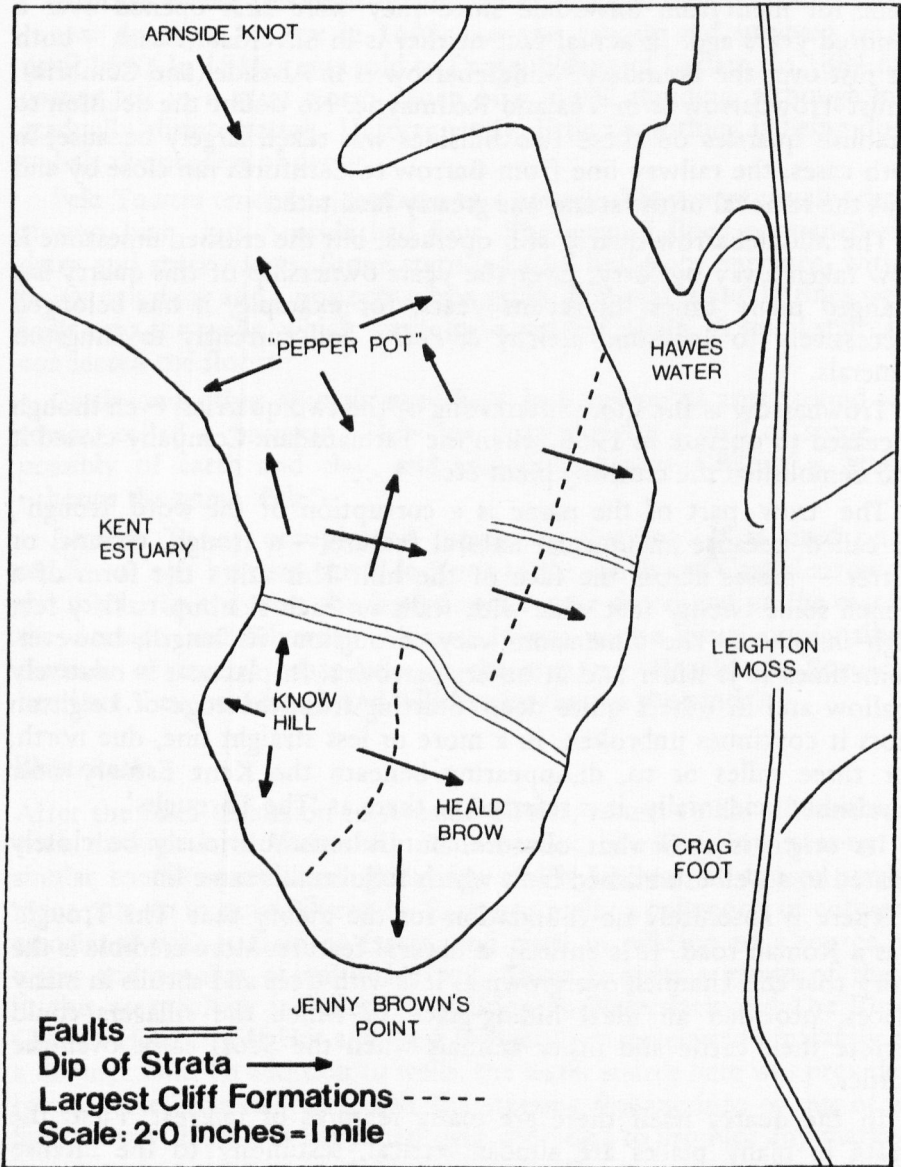
The trow part of the name is a corruption of the word 'trough', so called because an unusual natural feature — a trough, channel or gutter — passes across the face of the hill. This takes the form of a trench some twenty feet wide with walls on each side, up to fifty feet high in places. The dimensions vary throughout its length, however. Sometimes it is wider and at others narrower. In places it is relatively shallow and in others quite deep. Starting from the edge of Leighton Moss it continues unbroken, in a more or less straight line, due north, for three miles or so, disappearing beneath the Kent Estuary near Sandside. Incidentally, it is referred to there as 'The Throughs'.

Its origin is somewhat obscure, but it must obviously be closely related to a well-established fault which follows this same line.

There is absolutely no foundation for the theory that 'The Trough' was a Roman road. It is entirely a natural feature. More credible is the story that this channel, overgrown as it is with trees and shrubs in many places, provided an ideal hiding-place in which the villagers could secrete their cattle and other animals when the Scots came over the border.

In the quarry itself there are many features of interest. First, the strata in many places are almost vertical, testimony to the intense pressure to which the rocks must have been subjected to produce such

**SKETCH MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE BASIC
GEOLOGICAL FEATURES**



acute folding. In geological terms it is a monocline. Another occurrence of special interest to geologists is that the rocks here are very rich in fossils, especially corals.

Trowbarrow, like Middlebarrow, has had a variety of owners: Crossland, Ward, Northern Quarries, Tar Macadam. Initially they concentrated on producing lime, but around 1904 this quarry became one of the first in the country to start producing tar-macadam. The crushed limestone was mixed with tar brought from the Carnforth and Morecambe Gas Works by rail. The tar-macadam was widely distributed and was used for paving streets, footpaths, and tennis courts.

Trowbarrow is now closed, although a great deal of workable stone remains. The limestone from Middlebarrow and the other quarries in this area is used today for a variety of purposes, including the making of:

- Tar Mac — coated stone,
- aggregate for concrete for the building industry,
- hardcore for railway ballast and site bases,

and in its purest form for making industrial grits and powders (for the glass, rubber and steel industries), and for agricultural purposes (lime for land, and animal feeding stuffs).

Hawes Water

Hawes Water is one of the very few areas of water in this limestone region. After the ice sheets retreated most of the valley floors hereabouts, being lined with glacial debris, retained water and produced lakes. These lasted for varying periods. Some drained naturally as the overflow channels gradually deepened. In other cases the process was hastened by man. Few areas of water remain today.

The name 'Hawes Water' is possibly derived from an old Norse personal name 'Hafr'. A more likely explanation of the origin of the name, however, is that it derives from an O.E./O.N. word 'hals' — 'hause', meaning 'a narrow and lower neck of land between two heights'. 'Hause' is commonly found in the Lake District referring to a pass. The lake has been known locally as 'Arnside Dub' (= 'a pool'). Hawes Water is not to be confused with the much larger artificial lake of the same-sounding name created by the damming of a valley in the Lake District in the 1920's to produce a reservoir to provide additional water for Manchester.

Silverdale's Hawes Water is interesting for several reasons. Actually there are two lakes here. In addition to Hawes Water itself there is a smaller lake, Little Hawes Water, a short distance further up the valley. This latter is little more than an area of marsh nowadays, except after periods of heavy rainfall.

Hawes Water and two areas of land immediately to the north and to the south-east of it were the only places in Silverdale allocated to Mr George Wilson of Dallam Tower, who was then Lord of the Manor, by the Enclosure Award of 1817. This same Award designated part of the eastern shore of the lake as a public watering-place approached by the road from Red Bridge (page 14).

An area of flat, low-lying land to the north of the lake, no doubt once part of the lake bed, and called 'Clay Holes', was obviously the source of the clay which was the basis of the small, local pottery industry carried on in Silverdale in the Middle Ages and which produced mainly kitchenware (page 50).

To the south of the lake is an extensive area of flat land — also no doubt once part of the lake floor — which, due to the gradual infilling of the water area, became an area of mossland. Peat was formed here in the Boreal and Atlantic phases of the post-glacial period (7500—3000 BC), when the climate was apparently much milder than it is today. Strips of land here, referred to as 'turbaries', were allocated to the villagers according to their needs, and from these were cut supplies of peat, for use as fuel, until relatively modern times.

The gradual contraction of the lake has been caused partly by sediment brought down by the streams which flow into it, partly by the deepening of the channel where the water leaves the lake, but also by the accumulation of the skeletons of minute, uni-cellular algae, called 'diatoms', which live in the lake. In many places around the shoreline the beach is composed of a white gritty deposit formed in this way. A similar deposit is found in the Kentmere Valley in the Lake District. There the lake has totally disappeared, but the diatomic deposits left behind have been extensively worked and used to provide material for lagging boilers and pipes in industrial heating installations. Could this be a future development in Silverdale?

To end this section on a fanciful note, Hawes Water is said to have been the haunt of a huge water serpent, which used to coil itself round a neighbouring rock waiting to seize some unwary sheep. Eventually it was killed, and a pack of wool was found in one of its hollow teeth.

Leighton Moss

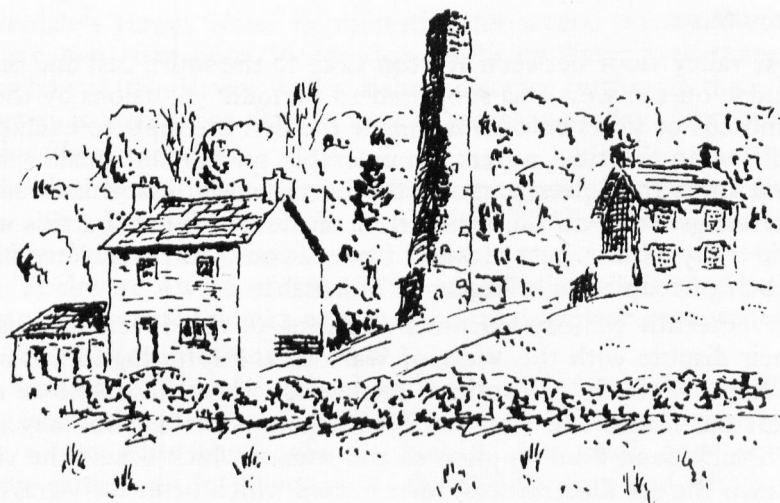
The flat valley floor between Warton Crag to the south-east and Silverdale Ridge on the west was subjected to periodic incursions by the sea for hundreds of years before man made the first attempts to exclude it. In addition to the tidal waters, innumerable springs and small streams emerged from the lower parts of the bordering hills, and lack of any appreciable gradient on the valley floor made it difficult for this water to drain away. This excess of water from various sources resulted in the valley being occupied by a large area of marsh.

A seventeenth century document relating to the Silverdale villagers and their dispute with the Vicar of Warton, and referring to this moss, stated that '... in the midst lies a deep mosse where I thought we must have left our horses and were once in despair of making our way.' The name 'Quick Sand Pool' applied to the stream which drains the valley water into the sea illustrates another hazard which beset early travellers attempting a crossing. In a document dated 1662 workmen were requested to investigate the possibility of replacing a footbridge near Quick Sand Pool with a bridge for 'laden horses and footmen'.

On higher and drier ground around the edges of the Moss a number of farms were eventually sited, e.g. Fleagarth (now demolished), Slack Wood and Myers Farm on the west side, Brow Foot at the head of the valley and Leighton Hall Farm and Moss House Farm on the east.

They all benefited from the construction in the eighteenth century, by the owners of Leighton Hall and descendants in the female line of Sir George Middleton (actually his great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter), of the first embankment, made of earth and stone, across the Moss, from Slack Wood Farm to Moss House Farm. This was designed to keep out the sea. In the middle of it there was a sluice-gate whose doors closed as the tide started to flow, but opened as it ebbed, to allow the land water to escape to the sea. The process was aided by the installation of a wind pump. This embankment was removed in 1959 as it had long since ceased to serve any useful purpose, and now only a short section of it remains clearly visible at the Slack Wood end.

A more ambitious land drainage scheme was started around 1830, when a substantial embankment was constructed across the valley, nearer to the sea, from the foot of Heald Brow to the base of Warton Crag. Here again it was the family occupying Leighton Hall, this time the Gillows, which was responsible for the work. An engine, with a paddle-wheel pump, was installed near Crag Foot to expel the land

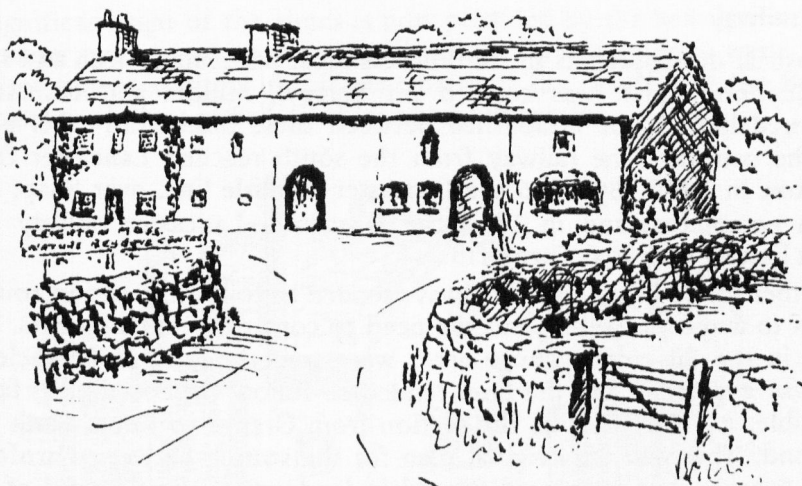


Old chimney of pumping station at Crag Foot

water. It also operated a small saw-mill for the Leighton Hall Estate. The engine house and other buildings have been demolished, and now only the tall chimney remains as a landmark to a former local industrial enterprise. About the turn of the century this pumping station was replaced by one sited near to the sluice-gate on the 1830 embankment. This housed a more powerful Tangye pump with a Lancashire boiler. It was erected by Mr E B Dawson of Aldcliffe, who was associated with the Carnforth Iron Works and was also an owner of land hereabouts. It was intended to answer complaints by other landowners that the dumping of slag from the Iron Works on to the Warton Sands was affecting the drainage of Leighton Moss. Difficulties arose, however, with regard to the supply of fuel for the engine during the First World War, and in 1917 it ceased to operate. It did not take long for nature to reassert itself and the fertile fields reverted to marsh, which was let-off for duck shooting. The shell of this pumping station still stands, near to the point where the railway bridges Quick Sand Pool. It is now used as a farm building.

During the time the valley had been drained the soil proved to be exceptionally fertile. It earned the title of 'Golden Vale' on account of the excellence of the crops it produced, especially cereals.

In 1964 the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was given the right to study bird life on the reed-beds and waterways of Leighton



RSPB headquarters at Myers Farm

Moss, above the original embankment. Ten years later the Society purchased the freehold rights, but the Leighton Hall Estate retained the right to shoot ducks during the September–April period of each year. This created a ridiculous situation, but the Society has now been given the opportunity to buy the shooting rights for the sum of £10,000. Myers Farm has been adapted as the local headquarters of the RSPB and home for the Warden, and the outbuildings as an Interpretive Centre (1980).

By way of interest, 6000 acres of the Bay between Arnside Point and Hest Bank were bought by the RSPB in 1974 for £140,000, and this area now forms a natural extension of the Leighton Moss Reserve (page 44).

A final note on land drainage. In the field between Quick Sand Pool, the railway line and the lower Crag Road, a small but ambitious drainage scheme was undertaken in 1975. New field drain-pipes were laid, leading the surface water into a large open tank from which it could be pumped electrically into Quick Sand Pool, and so to the sea. This has proved successful when the pump has operated in summer, when crops are required from the fields, but in winter, when the fields are fallow, the present-day cost of electricity is so high that the pump is switched off. The water accumulates and the field is flooded after any spell of heavy rainfall.

The railway

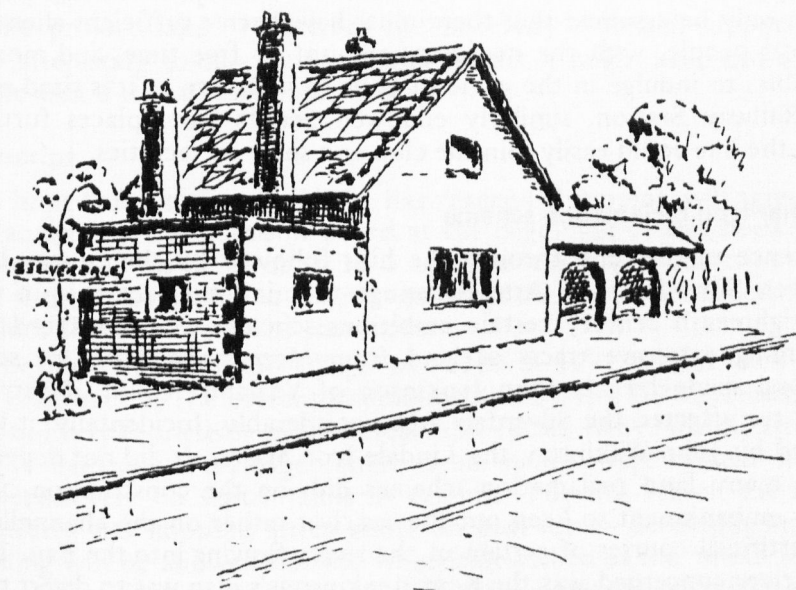
Industrial developments in the Furness area, particularly iron and steel production, which was centred on Barrow, Millom and Ulverston, required links to be established between these places and other parts of the country. The railway from the south reached Lancaster from Preston in 1840. By 1846 the Lancaster—Carlisle line, over Shap, had been completed, and in 1857 the Ulverston—Lancaster railway was built linking with it at Carnforth.

Other things being equal, railways tended to follow the easiest routes, so as to avoid tunnelling and the need to construct embankments. The hills in the Silverdale-Grange areas were something of an obstacle to railway engineers, and the lines tended to follow the coastline as far as possible, as, for example, the section from Grange to Kents Bank and beyond. This was the original plan for the stretch between Carnforth and Arnside, but interested Silverdale landowners were fearful of the possible effects of such a route on their lands and properties, and so an alternative course was sought and found. It so happened that there was a natural gap through the hills from Slack Wood via Red Bridge and Waterslack to the flat land provided by the Silverdale and Arnside Mosses, and so to Arnside and the viaduct across the River Kent. The only commercial drawback about this route, at the time, was that it by-passed the village of Silverdale by some three-quarters of a mile.

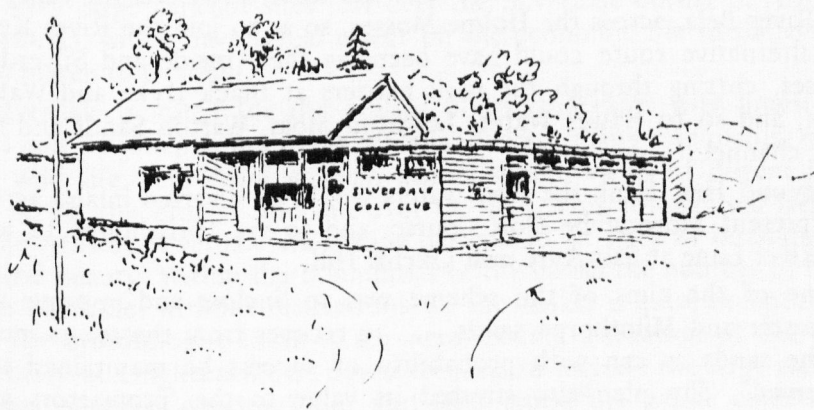
In 1862 the Ulverston—Lancaster line was merged with and formed part of the Furness Railway. At this time more and more amalgamations of the many small railway companies which had been established in the years of the railway mania (1844—50) were taking place. In 1859 the Lancaster & Carlisle and the Lancaster & Preston Junction Railways agreed to be leased to the London and North Western Railway. The amalgamated lines were finally vested to the L. & N.W. in 1879. In the same year the Furness Railway also became part of the London & North Western Railway system. In 1923 there were still some 123 railway companies in existence, but in that year they were grouped into four big companies. The lines in the north-west of England became part of the London Midland and Scottish Railway system. Despite the many line closures during the period after 1963, when Dr Beeching 'axed' unprofitable routes, the line through Silverdale was retained.

Over the years many changes have taken place in the character of the traffic it carries. Gone are the days when coal, coke, iron-ore and limestone made up the bulk of it. Mineral traffic has practically ceased.

A significant sign of the times is now provided by the heavily insulated container trucks passing through Silverdale, carrying atomic waste from nuclear power stations in different parts of the country to the British Nuclear Fuel Plant at Sellafield (formerly Winscale).



Silverdale railway station



Silverdale Golf Club

Before leaving Silverdale Railway Station, note the Golf Club cheek by jowl with it, on the opposite side of the road. This 9-hole course is extremely attractive, but very challenging. It was established in 1906 and must have been one of the first in the area. The question arises as to why it was built here, in the heart of the country, in the first place. It can only be assumed that there must have been a sufficient clientele of local people, with the necessary amount of free time, and money available, to indulge in the game of golf. In addition, as it is sited near the Railway Station, similarly endowed people from places further along the line could easily join the club and share its facilities.

Another land reclamation scheme

Reference to the 'cut' through the hills followed by the railway line between Silverdale and Arnside brings to mind the fact that in the late eighteenth century certain ambitious schemes were advanced for reclaiming extensive tracts of land from Morecambe Bay. One such proposal made by Mr John Jenkinson of Yealand* could, if carried out, have affected the Silverdale area considerably. Incidentally, it was backed by John Wilkinson, the Lindale Iron Master. It did not depend, as so many land reclamation schemes did, on the construction of a major embankment to keep out the sea, but rather on the channelling into artificial courses of certain of the rivers flowing into the Bay. The main river concerned was the Kent. Jenkinson's plan was to divert this river so that in effect it became a tributary of the River Lune. First it was proposed to build a dam across the Kent somewhere between Dallam and Arnside and then to lead the Kent waters via the valley of the River Bela, across the Holme Mosses, so as to join the River Keer. An alternative route could have been via the Arnside and Silverdale Mosses, cutting through the rock barriers at Black Dyke and Water-slack, and so to Hawes Water, Leighton Moss, Warton Sands and the Keer channel.

Beyond Hest Bank the river waters would be diverted inland across the present Morecambe Golf Course, and so via Torrisholme to join the River Lune at Salt Ayre near Oxcliff Hill.

One of the aims of the scheme was to 'inclose and improve the Lancaster and Milnthorpe sands . . . to recover from the sea as much of the sands as can with probability of success be maintained and preserved'. The plan also stressed its value to the 'proprietors and

* *Gentlemen's Magazine Supplement*, 1786, p 1140.

occupiers of land contiguous to all parts of the canal to be formed for this purpose'. Finally it emphasised that 'it was most essential to a seaport (in this case Lancaster) to possess the largest quantity of water which can be obtained . . . the passage from Whitehaven to Lancaster will be more secure and commodious'.

The project failed to attract the necessary financial support, but it is interesting to speculate on what effect it might have had on the whole area if it had been implemented.

Postscript

It is hoped that the reader, if he has reached this point, will agree that the answer to the question posed at the beginning of this book: 'Has Silverdale any history?', must be a definite 'Yes'. As a postscript therefore it might be useful to attempt to assess the results produced on the modern Silverdale by all its past history.

The population of the village was 1160 in 1971. It had been 1213 ten years earlier. The present population totals 1484 (1981 census), but it is unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future. Why? Mainly because of the inadequate drainage. There is no main sewage system and all properties rely on septic tanks or cesspits. For this reason the Local Authority has imposed strict limits on any future developments. No building will be allowed outside what is described as the 'urban fence', ie the limit of the built-up area. Only a certain amount of 'infilling' will be permitted. There is, however, a large seasonal or holiday population, which consists mainly of caravanners, especially if one includes the two very large caravan sites just over the Silverdale border in Arnside (Cumbria), which have a real effect on the economic life of the village from March to October.

Silverdale is noted for the beauty of its landscape, with limestone cliffs and pavements, luxuriant woodlands with many rare plants, trees and wild life, and from its high points superb views of distant hills and across the estuary and out over the Bay. This contributed largely to the Arnside-Silverdale area being designated an Area of outstanding Natural Beauty. Within the boundaries of the parish the number of field paths available, without restrictions, to the walker is quite exceptional. For the ornithologist there is the never-ending attraction of the bird sanctuary at Leighton Moss, now extended to include the large area of saltings between Arnside Point and Hest Bank,* the whole controlled from the RSPB Interpretive Centre at Myers Farm.

* for correction, see inside front cover

Over recent years the number of farms in the district has gradually declined, those remaining having correspondingly increased in size. The rearing of animals, particularly cattle and sheep, is now their main concern. It would be difficult to find a single ploughed field in the whole parish.

We are particularly fortunate in that the village still has a bus service — even though it is rather infrequent — which enables contact to be maintained with neighbouring villages, and further afield with larger centres of population, such as Kendal, Carnforth, Lancaster and Morecambe. It may appear strange to find a large private motor coach company mainly concerned with tourist trade, both in this country and on the continent, located in the village.

Though the local station is now unmanned, we are also lucky in that the railway line passing through Silverdale connects with Carnforth and the main north—south line from Scotland to London, and westwards with Barrow and towns on the Cumbrian coast. Despite renewed threats recently concerning its future, it is hoped that the line's economic significance for Barrow and the west Cumbrian industrial belt will ensure its retention.

In this day and age very few families in the village are without a car. This permits residents to have wider horizons 'shopping-wise', and also allows many of the village's inhabitants to find employment over a much wider area, which includes not only Carnforth, Lancaster and Morecambe, but as far afield as Preston and even beyond. By way of example, the number of Silverdale residents who are employed in the education service either as teachers, lecturers, or administrators in county schools as well as in St Martin's College and the University in Lancaster is quite considerable.

An increase in the number of young married couples living in the village in recent years has ensured a healthy future for the local primary school, which now has over one hundred Infants and Juniors on its roll. Most of the Senior pupils attend Carnforth High School, transferring to schools in Morecambe for VIth Form work.

The shopping facilities in Silverdale are adequate for the immediate needs of most families. There are three grocers, a butcher, a chemist, a ladies' hairdresser, and a newsagent. There are also a bank, a Post Office, a branch library, an antique shop, an art and crafts centre, three hotels, and several cafes. The wider range of goods offered by the larger stores in neighbouring urban centres satisfies most needs as well as

providing an excuse for a day out.

There are two Nursery Gardens in Silverdale. The owner of one of these has an international reputation for his specialised knowledge of, *inter alia*, shrubs, ferns, alpines and aquatic plants.

There is a flourishing social life in the village. There are many local clubs and societies with their activities concentrated on the Gaskell Hall. Examples are the Silverdale Players, the Painting Group, and the Horticultural Society. There are also many active groups associated with the Church and Chapel.

If you play golf, prefer cricket, or like a game of bowls there are local facilities available. But there is no local football team, neither are there public tennis courts, and the only swimming pool is the one attached to a local residential special school, but which is also used by children attending the village school.

With all these advantages it is not surprising that Silverdale should appeal as a very attractive place to which to retire, and most of the new property, mainly bungalows, built since the last war, has been bought by retiring couples. With the march of time residents are unable to care for themselves, and a need for homes for 'Retired Gentle Folk' has arisen. Now there are six such establishments in the village.

This then is our village. A blend of land and sea, hill and dale, fields and woodland, old and young, artisans and professionals, and all on a scale such as can be fully comprehended. Surely the recipe for a happy community.

Acknowledgements

The spark which first prompted me to put pen to paper can be attributed to the Department of External Studies of Liverpool University, which organised a class in Local History in the neighbouring village of Warton over a period of several years, terminating in 1979. The class members later conceived the idea of, and successfully established, the Mourholme Local History Society.

It is difficult to suggest specific published works which have had much direct bearing on this account. Very many books dealing with the history, geography, geology, etc of the country in general, and of Lancashire in particular, have been consulted. Many of these have no doubt contributed in varying degrees to the basic background information, and to this extent indebtedness is acknowledged.

Discussions with local people have yielded much information. These conversations enabled me to stir the memories and tap reminiscences of men and women who have lived most, if not all, of their lives in this area, and whose families, in certain cases, have been here or hereabouts for hundreds of years.

The County Record Office at Preston is the depositary of many invaluable documents, and the material stored there has been the source of much useful information.

Finally, many of the details of local occurrences have resulted from a perusal of local newspapers, particularly the *Lancaster Guardian* (started in 1837 and still published today), and the *Lancaster Gazette* (published from 1803 to 1894). Bound copies and micro-film of both these papers are available in Lancaster Public Library. They provide fascinating accounts of the local scene, and are a 'must' for the local historian. Tribute is paid to the Library staff, and particularly to those in the Reference Section, for their patience and help.

