



Ravenstonedale Parish History Group

Inside this Issue:

Chairman's Notes

Monthly Talks

Thursday Afternoons

Gifts to the Archive

**Exhibition of Photographs
& Heritage Open Days**

RPHG Committee

**Visit to the Cumbria Archive
Centre, Carlisle**

Dates for your Diary

**Membership
Subscriptions**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday 21st May 2014**



Chairman's Notes

Welcome to the second Newsletter from RPHG. My apologies for it being very belated, there is no excuse except finding the time. The pattern for group activities established last year continues. These include the winter season of monthly talks and weekly meetings on Thursday afternoons collating the growing archive of local history material and peppered with visits from those researching their family history. We continue to have good support for our talks' programme which is very gratifying. Thanks to the efforts of Chris Elphick and the management committee of the High Chapel Community & Heritage Centre (a bit of a mouthfull!) we now have, in what was once the Vestry, a very smart kitchen cum meeting room which makes the provision of coffee and tea etc. for meetings so much easier.

Monthly Talks

The range of speakers and topics has always been varied. Researches into the archaeology of Mallerstang and Nine Standards demonstrated very vividly what busy places these now wild, empty and lonely fells once were with the constant to and fro of traders, miners and farmers and in even earlier times their importance as sacred burial sites. The later medieval

period was equally active with the story of Lammerside Castle revealing the power struggles and enmities of local families...these valleys were dangerous places then! In the 16th century the inhabitants of Ravenstonedale parish came up against another powerful family, which ended in a petition to Queen Elizabeth I protesting at the callous and unfair treatment received from Lord Thomas Wharton in the building of his deer park on Ashfell. Our attention was brought to an unexpected aspect of history, the treatment of lunatics, which was for many years dire, the treatments offered to the poor sufferers often worse than the illness itself. We were made aware if we were not already of the huge importance in the 18th and 19th centuries of the woollen industry in the economy of this parish, everybody knitted stockings avidly, men and women, young and old there were even knitting schools for children. The more recent past brought to light a story worthy of today's 'Soaps' of the decline and fall of the once hugely prosperous land-owning Thompson and Graham families through an unwise marriage and foolish investment.

Reminiscences of the local characters and activities in the parish in the 1930s -1950s brought a more reassuring touch. My thanks go to all the committee members who sought out such an interesting variety of topics and speakers.

Thursday afternoons

Sally Cannon, and Christopher Read continue to catalogue the ever increasing archive of leaflets, books, photo-

graphs, newspaper cuttings, etc which somehow appear on the shelves and multiply! All the contents of the catalogues are now on the computer but there is constant catching up to do which keeps Sally especially busy! Mavis Dixon sent us files downloaded from old newspapers with snippets of news about the inhabitants of the parish and their activities and records of births, deaths and marriages dating from the early 1800s to the mid 1900s. They provide a fascinating glimpse into the way of life at that time. Chris is cataloguing these items and also making an inventory of the books and other artefacts which are now on the archive shelves. Val Fermer is able to offer expert advice to those visitors who come to research into their family history with her instinct for finding exactly the right documents to help them. I cannot thank them enough for their patience, perseverance and hard work. We are hoping to have another volunteer joining us in the not too distant future



Puzzling over an unusual spinning wheel

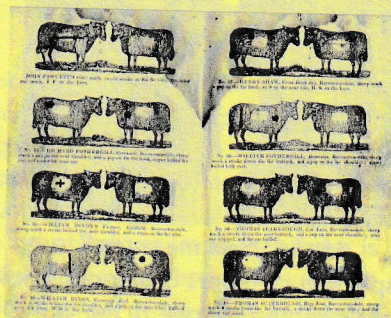


Val assisting a house research

Gifts to the Archive

Amongst the items we have received are two watercolours from Bernard Thornborrow, of the High Chapel and St Oswald's Church circa 1950s by Tebay painter, J.T. Thornborrow, a couple of Toby Twirl Annuals illustrated by Edward Jeffrey who lived in the parish for many years from Mr & Mrs Johnson, the recent publication and 'The Upper Dales Family History Group' given by the editor, Glenys Marriot. We have also received a selection of local history books, an invaluable archive resource from Annette Wallace nee Fothergill and more unusually; from the late John Jackson the Ravenstonedale Shield for football with a silver centrepiece c.1937 obviously intended for permanent use but seems only to have lasted for one year. The family of the late Frances Nicholson has amongst other items donated her scrapbooks recording the activities of the Young Farmers (a great interest of Frances) from the 1970s-1980s which complement perfectly the Young Farmers' Minutes Books, which we already have in the archive. The collection of artefacts from the High Chapel such as the beautifully illuminated list of High Chapel

Ministers by Edward Jeffrey and the two 1962 oak collection boxes have been augmented by the splendidly framed pulpit frontal from Dr & Mrs Cannon, a most generous gift. We were also very generously given access by Christine Lord, descended from the Hill and Peacock families in Newbiggin-on-Lune, to her wonderfully varied family history archive. Any of you who may have seen old photos of the High Chapel will have noticed the fine arch and lamp above the entrance gate arch. The lamp mysteriously disappeared somewhere along the line in the 1950s-60s but the arch remained. The family of the late Joan Turvey who lived in the cottage just above the High Chapel gates has very kindly given the High Chapel in her memory a not dissimilar lamp belonging to Joan so perhaps one day the arch and lamp will be reinstalled although security will have to be taken into consideration. **We are immensely grateful** to all these donors. These gifts are a wonderful asset and witness to the history of this parish. On behalf of the parish, **THANK YOU.**



Sample pages of Sheep Mark book from Mrs C Lord

Talk and Display of Costumes 1910-1970

To coincide with the National Heritage Open Days the RPHG and the High Chapel Community & Heritage Centre Committee held a joint fundraising event. Those who came to see the display of on costumes on the Friday evening were greeted with a glass of wine and canapés and ushered into an evening, which was not only informative but entertaining and fun. Lynne Hopwood in her own inimitable way presented us with a varied array of clothes including a top coat and hat of the early 1900s, a beaded 1920s cocktail dress, fur coat and pudding basin hat, demob suit of the 1940s, a 1950s Teddy Boy outfit and a coat and dress from the 1960s.



Models from the catwalk

Unsuspecting members of the audience gamely assented to take to the catwalk. Memories came flooding back and it was generally agreed that some fashions have withstood the passage of time while others have definitely not!

Exhibition of Photographs September 14th & 15th

The exhibition of photographs the village houses, made by the WI in the 1980s, was followed by this year's exhibition of outlying farms in the parish & the names

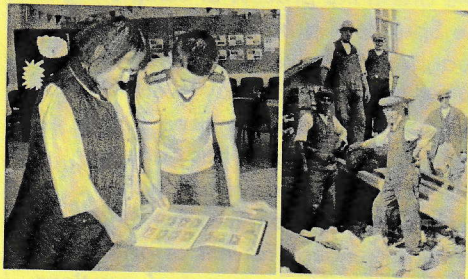


Reviewing the farms & their 1953 occupants of their occupants in 1952-53. Both afternoons were well attended by people curious to know who was living on their farm in 1953.

As well as the photographs of the outlying farms, the exhibition included items from the wide range of information stored in the history archives including photographs of Church fetes and other public events from the 1950s-1970s. Although a lot of the people in the photos are now gone there are still a few parishioners around who will remember most of their names. Chris Read made an excellent folder of photographs and accompanying numbered tracings (a Herculean task) aided by Sally of each photo for names to be filled in; they caused

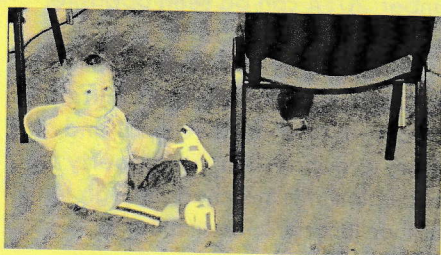


a lot of interest and considerable scouring of the memory but eventually, in a sort of team effort, quite a lot of the blanks were filled in!



Browsing the old sheepmarks

Rebuilding a farm porch in 1939



Our youngest visitor...it's good to know they start young!

The Christmas get-together Dec 18th 2013

It was a wild and stormy evening and I thank the stalwarts who braved the elements to come and join the gathering...we were 18 in all and considering the horribleness of the weather that was good going.

Once again Ann Wappett and Marlene Taylor did a marvellous job of decorating the hall, which was decked out with candles accompanied by the distant sound of carols giving the hall a special atmosphere of Christmases long gone by as well as in the present. It is

a pity that all our far-flung History members could not magically join us with their thermos of mulled wine, or similar, in hand to share in the celebrations and partake in another Christmas quiz set by Les Neal. I hope you all had a good Christmas. My thanks to everyone who helped with the party in any way.



The first arrivals



Chatting over mulled wine

Committee

Once again I would like to thank the Committee for their support in the running of the group, now that there is a clearer pattern of events it seems less daunting than at the start, nonetheless it is a great help to know that there is a body of people who will help out in their different ways when necessary. Alex Watts Tobin has resigned as secretary. He has a young family and life gets busier. I would like to thank him for his work over the last couple of years

and his cheerful willingness to help whenever he could. Ann Wappett has agreed, indeed volunteered, to take over as secretary and we are immensely grateful to her. I would particularly like to thank the archivists and cataloguers who come every Thursday afternoon to help cheerfully and patiently however tedious the task!! The collection of local material is particularly dear to my heart as it is an enduring record of the story of Ravenstonedale parish which should remain long after we have departed this life! Finally, as always we thank you our members for your support if any of you have some aspect of interest, please let us know. We are open on Thursdays as you know and welcome visitors.

Visit to the Cumbria Archive Centre, Carlisle

On August 8th 2013 the Centre held an 'open house' for visitors to look round its new premises. The archives are housed in a spacious, brand new modern building, which is attached to the charming early 19th century Lady Guilford's House in its pleasant grounds on Petteril Bank Road. We were able to see 'behind the scenes', including the brightly lit restoration room with all the latest equipment for repairing ancient documents, the room where boxes of special acid free cardboard are made for holding ancient documents and the amazing storage rooms full of floor to ceiling movable shelving and hi-tech gadgetry for maintaining a constant and rather chilly temperature. The 19th century house with its fine reception

rooms is being converted into a conference and education centre. I strongly recommend a visit.

Dates for your Diary

We are in the process of completing the Speakers' programme for next year. Meetings will continue to be held on the third Wednesday evening in the month to start in September 2014. Ann Metcalfe-Gibson has done excellent work in developing the programme for next year and I cannot thank her enough for her efforts. The proposed programme of meetings (held on the 3rd Wednesday in the month) for next year starting in September 2014 can be seen opposite

Former committee members names

and contact details redacted.

Annual General Meeting 2014

Wednesday 21st May in the Community & Heritage Centre at 7.30pm

The proposed programme for next year, which will continue to be held on the 3rd Wednesday in the month starting in September 2014-2015 is

17th September 2014

George Handley

The Dawson family of Ravenstonedale

15th October 2014

Susan Dench

Black settlers in Cumberland

19th November 2014

Richard Arrowsmith

The History of Kirkby Stephen Silver Band

17th December 2014

Members & Friends

Christmas Get-together

21st January 2015

Val Fermer-

TBA

19th February 2015

Andy Lowe (?)

Wrestlers, Crucks & Mullions-traditional architecture

18th March 2015

Sheena Gemmell

The Vikings in Cumbria