

## **A History of Allithwaite.**

This short history pulls together pieces of research and information on the village of Allithwaite but will hopefully lead to more in depth research in the future.

Allithwaite lies to the north of Morecambe Bay, south of the historic village of Cartmel and en route from Grange-over-Sands to Flookburgh. No river flows through the village but springs percolate through the limestone on which the village is built with a beck running out from the rock at the lowest point of the village and these water sources will have encouraged early settlements. The village is built on the lower slope of a hill called Templand.

Earlier histories talk about the outlying areas such as Templand and Birkby, Applebury and Outerthwaite, Rosthwaite and Wraysholme but very little about the village itself and the growth of the village can be documented after the building of the church and school in 1865 and more dramatically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Early history**

Artefacts (stone blades) from Kirkhead cave on the southern outskirts of the village date to approximately 11000 to 10000 BC. The cave is one of the most northerly recorded Palaeolithic sites in the country (Lindale Low being the other site). Most recently, at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Bronze Age remains from between 1500-1000 BC have been found in the centre of the village. From this period into the Iron Age, archaeologists state there is a lack of settlement evidence in the area.

Kirkhead may have played an important part in local history as it has been suggested by more than one historian that this was the place where the first chapel in the Cartmel area was built. Towards the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the King of Northumbria granted to St Cuthbert, the Bishop of Lindisfarne, Cartmel and all the Britons in it and this early chapel was erected on Kirkhead. On the other hand a chapel on Kirkhead may have been in the possession of the Abbot of Furness who had Abbot Hall in the 12th century. Moving on approximately 1000 years, Allithwaite is said to derive its name from *Eilifr*, a Norse settler in about 1000 AD and *thwaite* is said to be a clearing in woodland.

It is interesting to note that Allithwaite and lands nearby formed a lordship separate to and independent of the Prior and Canons of Cartmel. By 1150 AD the manor of Allithwaite is thought to be held by Gospatrick, lord of

Workington and from there it passed to Robert de Harrington of Aldingham in 1280 with the main part of the manor being known as Raisholme. The Harringtons had their main home at Gleaston Castle. The Harrington Family and Wraysholme tower are linked to the legend of the death of the Last Wolf of England on Humphrey Head, a promontory close by to Wraysholme. Wraysholme tower is thought to be dated from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a typical pele or fortified tower built in response to the threat of attack from the Scots raids and Border Reivers. Although it has also been suggested that it could have been built as a response to the scare caused by the landing of Lambert Simnel and his invasion force at Piel in 1487. (A pretender to the throne of Henry VII, Simnel stated he was one of the young princes supposedly killed in the Tower of London).

Local people are believed to have been involved in military affairs further afield, at Agincourt (1415) Lord William Harrington and his other family members were each accompanied by 10 men-at-arms (which may have included local men) and at the Battle of Flodden Field in Northumberland, 1513, against the Scots army, a Tudor ballad states *From Silverdale and Kent Sand side Where soil is sold with cockle shells For Cartmel eke and Conneyside (Conishead) And fellows fierce from Furneys fells.*

Thomas Stanley led these men from Lancashire and his father had been given land in Lancashire from Henry VII which included Wraysholme tower. In the English Civil War (1642-1651) it is believed that Roundhead forces camped in two fields below Boarbank on their way to Furness to attack their enemies.

## **Modern History**

Farming and fishing were the main industries in the village of Allithwaite for centuries and the population was small with no place of worship, Cartmel Priory and a chapel at Flookburgh would have been the closest religious centres.

The enclosures of the land in this area under Act of Parliament in 1896 would have changed the appearance of the local landscape and more research to show those changes has still to be done for this history.

1851 The Ordnance Survey map of 1851 shows that most of the buildings are down the bottom of the village from the old brewery (the Corn Mill in 1851) up to the bottom of Vicarage Lane. Apart from the odd farm, before the building of the Church and School there were no buildings further north of the parish

cottage. There are a few buildings around Templand and at Becksides near to the Corn Mill and along the Flookburgh road at Barn Hay, where Allithwaite Lodge and coach house are situated. Also can be seen on the map a number of farms and orchards within the village and springs and drawing wells. Dotted along the Wartbarrow Fell are a number of limekilns.

The Census of 1841 shows the following types of employment in the village: 1 Landowner, 1 Stonemason, 1 Carrier, 1 Publican, 1 Blacksmith, 2 Wallers, 3 Carpenters, 9 Fishermen, 10 Farmers, 21 Agricultural Labourers, 5 Female servants. There were approximately 53 males and 49 females with 52 under 18 males and 39 under 18 females. (These figures relate to the 40 dwellings in Allithwaite only and do not consider the outlying areas.)

By 1890 the village was becoming more established. No doubt this was due to Mary Winfield Lambert, a benefactor who lived at Boarbank Hall. In her will of 1857 she bequeathed money to build the church, school and schoolhouse and for the erection of a vicarage. (For more information about Mary Winfield Lambert and how she inherited her fortune and the history of Boarbank Hall please see the Kents Bank Village History research of Pat Rowland)

Before the church and school were built an Institute was built at the Back of the Orchard in 1853. It was set up as a chapel school " ...for the education of children and adults of children only of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes in the Parish of Cartmel aforesaid and for religious purposes.." The education of the children of Allithwaite was moved to the newly built school in 1865 and a new Village Hall was built in 1908 by Mr and Mrs Bliss of Boarbank Hall. This was situated across the road from the parish cottage and Sunday Evening Mission Services were held there with the addition of a bowling green shortly afterwards.

Despite the addition of new venues for education and social activities, the Institute has continually been used by the village in many different guises. In 1932 an extension was built for social activities and from 1947-1970 the building was used for mid-day school meals

1890. The 1890 Ordnance Survey map shows the Church, School and related buildings but there are still few other buildings north of the parish cottage due to the fact there was no access to water. The school had a large water tank sunk in the playground. The population had not grown substantially from 1851 according to the 1891 Census. What is interesting are the changes in employment.

Fishermen and farmers remained fairly static with 11 and 7 respectively but agricultural labourers had dropped from 21 to 8. Gardeners, platelayers, joiners, plasterers and grocers had been added to the lists and there were more female jobs described, such as fisherwoman, dressmaker, charwoman, laundress and 2 nurses. In 50 years although the population numbers had not changed dramatically the type of employment had and these change encapsulates in miniature the national social changes – the coming of the railway and the acknowledgment of the nursing profession being just 2 examples.

The new century brought growth to the village with more dwellings extending further north up Church road in the first decades of the century. The school register for Allithwaite creeps up with approximately 70 children on the school register in 1907 and 90 in 1917. In 1905 in addition to the National School there was Allithwaite Technical Instruction Committee and Allithwaite Institute and Reading Room. There was no shortage of religious meetings - Allithwaite CE Temperance Society and Band of Hope (65 members meeting twice a month), Allithwaite Children's Scripture Union (50 members meeting monthly) and Allithwaite Branch of the Church Missionary and Gleaner's Union Meeting (meeting quarterly in the schoolroom). By 1917 there were even more clubs and classes. Services were held occasionally in the new village hall, an Allithwaite women's class was held at Boarbank Hall on Mondays, Allithwaite Christian Endeavour (met every week with 16 members), Allithwaite Church Worker's class met every week in the Institute and Allithwaite Ambulance Class met every week also in the Institute, but only whilst the war was on. The Allithwaite Volunteer Fire Brigade was noted both in 1905 and 1917 with between 7 and 9 volunteers, meeting at the Fire Station at Allithwaite Farm.

A colourful picture of Allithwaite in 1904 is published in the Westmorland Gazette. *October 16 1904*

*The public road between Allithwaite and Flookburgh is still much frequented by drunken and disorderly men and other objectionable animals. The magistrates at Cartmel on Tuesday did nothing else but inquire into cases of this kind. Allithwaite is especially to be pitied, for its Saturday nights seem to be made hideous by inebriate men and its Sundays by stray pigs. The police and the magistrates are struggling bravely to abate both nuisances. Calm and sweet peace will presently visit the village.*

The remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought about further growth to the village. The government encouraged new buildings in the 1930s and Allithwaite builders took advantage of this boom. Continuously through the 1950s and onwards new building developments appeared within the village and on the outskirts.

The population was approximately 2000 at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, growing by about 700% in the last 100 years. The social changes, economic,

religious and educational have been much more dramatic in the last century than in the previous 10 centuries and it is hoped that we are able to document these in more detail in the future.

*Barbara Copeland V1 Nov 2009.*

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