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The Mourholme Magazine of Local History

2003-2004, No.2

Mourholme Local History Society (Charity Reg. No. 512765) covers the Old Parish of Warton containing the Townships of Warton-with-Lindeth, Silverdale, Borwick, Priest Hutton, Carnforth, Yealand Conyers and Yealand Redmayne.

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ORAL HISTORY : MARION RUSSELL

John Findlater

Interview on 5.9.95 at her home, 2 Morningside, Carnforth.

Marion's father, Thomas Jackson Wilkinson, a railway locomotive engine driver, was born at 'Dolly Tub Row', Crag Bank, later living in Hope Terrace (finally moving to Grosvenor Place, Carnforth). He bred canaries for a hobby as well as gardening. Her mother came originally from the Leeds/Shipley area where her father, Mr. Barnham was a railway porter who became a signalman with the Midland Railway in this area. Marion, herself, was born at 13 Hill St., Carnforth, on the 10th of June 1915. "Old Dr. Jackson had brought her in his little black bag."

Marion mixed mostly with railway families but has always felt that the people in the area have been very friendly. She never felt, as some did, that there was any tendency to form cliques – ironworkers, railway folk, shop workers and farm workers. Her mother was Church of England but she did not like the church being 'high'. She was probably Conservative and was on all sorts of committees, distress committees etc. and collected for bells and a clock for the church tower. Marion's father was a Wesleyan and a Liberal. Marion attended Sunday school at the Wesleyan chapel. She went to the Church of England school from the age of four (which was not at all unusual) until 11 years old. She remembers her teachers: Miss Timperley (governess of the youngest), Miss Lupton, Miss Jackson; upstairs, Miss Pelter, and headmaster Mr Copp. She wore a uniform at one stage which later amounted only to a cap with CCE on it, which distinguished her school from the

other school, which had the letters C.C.S. In their rivalry, children from her school were called 'clever elephants' and they called the opposition 'cowsheds'. There was another school in Bolton-le-Sands and a Roman Catholic school. Catholics in Carnforth, lacking their denominational school usually attended the Church of England school until aged seven, then walked to Bolton-le-Sands to attend the RC school.

Friends from school days are mostly gone now. Florence Jackson is still in Carnforth. Marion enjoyed playing games of all kinds – 'poor Mary sits weeping', 'oranges and lemons', etc. Children were not supposed to roam but she played with others in the streets and often in the area between Hill St., King St. and Alexandra Rd., known as 'Butchers' Bottom' which was rather wild and bushy; they played red indians there. They were all carefree, not worried about safety and were happy times.

Carnforth was not an affluent town but everyone seemed to have enough. Her family were rather better off than some with a father in steady work, with only one child. Carnforth, in her opinion, is not beautiful but improves on acquaintance. She remembers the peace celebrations in 1919, in a field up North Rd. at the end of World War I and also, a fancy-dress event in the Co-op Hall in 1920. Carnforth people raised money for a war memorial in various ways: Mrs Ethel Ashton, for example, made and sold mushy peas to raise money till everyone was stuffed with them.

At aged 11 Marion went to Lancaster Girls' Grammar School. The North Rd school managed to provide some scholarships but the C. of E. school did not and Marion's father paid fees for her: she thinks the cost was about £5 a term, and she

had a free railway pass. It was a single sex school, everyone neat and quiet. The only other person she remembers going to Lancaster schools was Ralph Bibby who became a meteorologist, she thinks. Miss Phillimore was the headmistress. Marion was 'O.K.' at history and geography but was not as well grounded in arithmetic and english as the council school children. She missed one term when she had pneumonia; which was treated by kaolin poultices, and then bread poultices. She stayed at school until 18 years old, passing school certificate but did not do higher school certificate.

After leaving school Marion taught at Bolton-le-Sands boys' as a 'schoolteacher under inspection' until approved then taught for seven years until the school closed and Mrs Garth gave up. Marion played hockey – always in green stockings- for Carnforth and liked cricket too. She then taught six and seven year-olds at Carnforth council school for five years on poor pay (£2-3-0 a week) but comparable with the pay of many railwaymen and she enjoyed life.

She went dancing at the Co-op Hall - 'flannel dancing'* – meeting her future husband, Jim Russell, there when aged 16. They had bicycles; hers, a Rudge-Whitworth costing £6; she became engaged at 21 and married aged 24. She remembers good times at Carnforth and does not remember it being a depressed place at all. Many of the residents would go on trains to Southport and mystery trips at the weekend. Cleanliness was next to godliness; housewives were always cleaning windows and 'donkey-stoning the step'. Husband Jim was foreman in the goods department, which was not a reserved occupation when the war came. He was called up, while still on honeymoon, as it happened. He served in the army in Europe. She lived for letters from him;

she collected money for the war effort, was in the WVS and worked on the railway station, often the 3 a.m. Saturday morning shift, providing tea and sandwiches; she also served as an air-raid warden in the ARP and manned the phone at the bank manager's house on Lancaster Rd. often.

When her husband returned from war in 1946 they bought a convex mirror and two candlesticks to remember the war, with money collected and distributed by the Carnforth townsfolk. Daughter Marilyn was born in 1946 and they made a home in Haws Hill. Jim went back on the railway while she stopped at home on Marilyn's birth. She thinks mother's place is at home. She did do a little relief work and a great deal of handwork like knitting and sewing etc., because she reckons they only had about £2 a week to live on. She was very active in the 'young wives' at the C. of E. church. Her second daughter, Julia, was born in the Queen Victoria Hospital Morecambe, in 1952, brought in the writer's 'little black bag'.

Carnforth, in Marion's opinion, did not alter much at the end of the war; the place was pretty static. She did not notice any improvement after nationalisation of the railways. She went to Harris College (Preston) for a year to get a diploma to teach handicapped children at school, because she thought it would be interesting, not because she had known such children before. She taught at the Loyne school in Lancaster for 16 years.

She remembers old Dr Jackson, of course, and admits she was rather frightened of him because she didn't like his moustache! This memory made her laugh as she remembered that when the writer proposed to give Julia her immunisation injection, she informed us that she didn't like me because I had a moustache

(long since gone). She remembers Edwin Dockray whose horses pulled the ambulance and brought wood for the bonfire night; 'Butcher' Williams and many Carnforth worthies. She had no problem raising her own children and they now live away which she regrets.

Though her all-absorbing work had little to do with railways, because Jim was a railwayman she was aware of the animosity between ASLEF and NUR in the fifties when ASLEF went on strike. Then Beeching slashed away at the railway structure. This may have had something to do with some alteration in the atmosphere in Carnforth. However she is inclined to think that with the closure of the Carnforth cinema, the growth in motor car ownership and the coming of television the community became more fragmented: the 'extended family' is split by distance and not as close.

- the boys or young men were in grey flannel trousers.

Note.
This interview took place 8 years ago!
Marion Russell has written three history booklets about Carnforth.:
How Carnforth Grew
How Carnforth Steamed into the 20th Century.
A Childhood in Carnforth. 1915 -1925

SIR ROWLAND HILL

Jean Chatterley

Stamps Issued in 1995

It was a delightful surprise to see the article in the last issue of the Mourholme Magazine about the development of local postal services. It has prompted me to contribute this short account of the life and work of Sir Rowland Hill.

Rowland Hill was born in Kidderminster on 3rd December 1795, the third son of T.W. Hill, a schoolmaster with his own school at Hilltop in Birmingham. He was named after an English preacher, Rowland Hill (1744-1833), who had helped to found both the British and Foreign Bible Society and the London Missionary Society, and who was a strong advocate of vaccination. All three Sons were to make a name for themselves - the eldest, Matthew Davenport Hill (1792-1872) was to become a noted reformer of the treatment of criminals, a field in which he was assisted by the middle brother, Frederick, an eminent lawyer.

Rowland first excelled as a teacher: he taught mathematics at his father's school from the age of 12(!). He later persuaded his father to move the school to a building he himself had designed on a larger site at Hazlewood. His main objective was to put into practice his own scheme for the education of boys, a method proposed in his pamphlet in 1822, "Plans for the Government and Education of Boys in Large Numbers". His main idea was to "leave as much as possible all power in the hands of the boys themselves". His elder brother thought the experiment a great success: "the headmaster had never once exercised his right to veto on their proceedings", he wrote, in another pamphlet, "Public Education" - also in 1822, which seems a little soon to pronounce on the matter! The new ideas are thought to have influenced Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby who approved of the emphasis on the moral influence in school discipline. (Would Tom Brown and Harry Flashman have agreed?)

Rowland married in 1827, and moved to another school in Tottenham where he taught until ill-health forced him to retire from teaching in 1833. Then followed the most productive years of his life. He became interested in a number of engineering inventions and had great plans for exploiting them. One was a rotary printing press, but objections from the government delayed its introduction - for 35 years! In 1835 he became the secretary of the Gibbon Wakefield scheme for colonising South Australia, and wrote pamphlets extolling this for the Irish during the potato famine.

In the same year he turned his attentions to the postal

system. At the time, sending a letter was largely a prerogative of the rich. If the recipient could not afford to pay for the letter it was taken away again. There were no house numbers, and the postman had to knock at each door to hand over the letter and collect the money. A 4d charge carried letters a maximum of 15 miles. Poor people could not afford to pay this, and, of course, many could neither read nor write, although this was not a common disadvantage in our part of Lancashire. The once common mail coaches were in decline as the railways developed. As early as 1830 the railway was being used to carry letters from Liverpool to Manchester.

Rowland Hill saw this situation as a burden on the poor. As early as 1826 he had worked on the idea of a travelling post office, but never published his scheme. He collected a mass of statistics to demonstrate that the chief expense of letter carriage was in the distribution and receiving of the letters, and that as the cost varied little with distance a uniform rate would be the fairest system. We now take this for granted, but his contemporaries were amazed. He showed that during the previous 20 years the postal revenues had fallen, whereas in France where the rates were lower the revenues had increased. He predicted that a decrease in postal rates would lead to an increase in the number of letters and thus in overall revenue. This, he argued, would be helped by prepayment, simplified accountancy and lower distribution costs. He submitted his plans to Lord Melbourne's government in January 1837. There was no response, so he produced yet another pamphlet, "Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practice":

"Perhaps the difficulties might be obviated by using a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp, and covered at

the back with a glutinous wash which by applying a little moisture might be attached to the back of the letter".... an early definition of a postage stamp!

In November 1837 a committee was appointed to consider the merits of the system. In July 1838 this committee recommended, but only by the casting vote of the chairman, a 2d per half-ounce letter. This was opposed by the government and a 4d post was introduced in the July 1839 Budget, but this lasted for only a few weeks and was replaced by a penny post rate from January 1840.

One of Rowland Hill's staunchest friends and supporters during this long delay was Charles Dickens. It is thought that the "Office of Circumlocution" in "Little Dorrit", (1868), was partly inspired by the situation. English life was undergoing a huge transformation as the country developed into an advanced industrial and commercial society, but the changes in public administration were agonisingly slow.

Rowland was appointed to the Treasury to introduce the reforms, but was dismissed in 1842 after the Liberals resigned office. In recognition of his services he was presented with £13,360 by public subscription. In 1846, when the Liberals returned to government, Rowland was returned to office and was later appointed Chief Secretary to the Postmaster General. Between 1838 and 1864 the number of letters rose from 76 to 642 million per year.

In 1860 he was knighted. In the same year he suffered a "paralytic seizure" - what today we would call a stroke - but he

was able to return to work until 1864. On his retirement he received a grant of £20,000, in addition to his pension of £2,000. In June 1879 he was given the freedom of the City of London, but "this most truthful and upright of men" was by then too infirm to attend the Guildhall ceremony.

Sir Rowland Hill died two months later on August 27th 1879. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and a bust was made for the side chapel. Statues of him are to be found in Kidderminster - inscribed "To his creative mind and patient energy the World is indebted for the PENNY POST introduced in 1840" - and in London and Birmingham. Nearer home, on the plinth which carries Queen Victoria's statue in Dalton Square in Lancaster, towards the right-hand end of the side facing away from the town hall, you can see him amongst other great Victorians. Next time you cross the gardens there, look for him - I do, every time, for he was my great, great, great uncle, and my father's middle name was Hill in his memory.

AGRICULTURE IN WARTON PARISH: A COMPARISON OF CROPS AND LIVESTOCK IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Michael Wright

Agriculture has always played a major role in Warton's economy and historically provided most Wartonians with their living, but we have very little reliable information to enable us to trace the changes in farming over the centuries. In England the government began the systematic collection of agricultural statistics in 1866. For detailed information prior to that date one has to go back to the seventeenth century when inventories were made of the moveable possessions of many of the male inhabitants of the parish when they died.. Between 1700 or so and 1866 there is a large gap, with only sporadic information from agricultural commentators and press reports of farm sales and other matters. But it was in this blank period that there occurred extensive changes in British agriculture - the introduction of new root crops, the improvements in crop rotations, and a revolution in farm stock. Comparison of our information for Warton in the 1600s and the late 1800s shows that while extensive changes did take place locally, much remained the same. The Warton we are considering here is Warton Old Parish - Warton-with-Lindeth, Yealand Conyers, Yealand Redmayne, Borwick, Priest Hutton, Carnforth and Silverdale.

Sources of information

The inventories of the possessions of about 40 per cent of the male inhabitants of Warton parish who died during the seventeenth century have survived and are available at the Lancashire Record Office. These include details of farm stock, crops in store, and sometimes crops on the ground ready to be harvested. Lists of farm implements and equipment give further clues on contemporary husbandry. The inventories tend to record the value of animals rather than head-counts, since the assessors were intent on valuing the estate, but numbers can often be estimated by substituting the likely value per head of stock. For sheep it is possible to establish more accurate estimates of numbers of animals because tithe records of wool and lambs have survived. These include the records of annual payments of the tithe of fleeces paid by all sheep-owners in the parish. We have it from Lucas (History of Warton Parish, p.27) that the tithe was as its name implies one tenth of the total number of fleeces, and we can therefore work out the total number of sheep owned by each person listed.

As for the crop and stock statistics collected from 1866 onward (and continuing at the present day) these are precise acreages of crops grown in each township and totals of cattle, sheep, pigs and, later, horses. It must be said that in the early years of these records there are some unlikely figures that must be rejected. The area recorded as growing cereal crops in 1867 in Dalton exceeds the total acreage of that township, and can be rejected forthwith. There are other rather extraordinary figures given for Dalton, but that township, no longer part of Warton at the end of the nineteenth century, has been omitted from this study. In later years the data appear to be much more

reliable. And they are very detailed. Individual crops are listed, and several categories of animal, including milk cows and calves, sheep and lambs, different types of grassland (temporary, permanent grazing and so on). The later years have over 30 headings for different crops and animals, and even include acreages of woodland.

The constraints on farming in Warton

Despite the gap of over 160 years between the two sets of records there are many similarities in the farming in the two periods. This is not so surprising when one considers that the local climate, topography and soil-types exert a strong control on what can be grown and what can be grazed. The predominance of limestone in the parish results in large tracts of dry, thin-soiled or even downright rocky tracts of land. These, nevertheless provide good quality grazing for stock. A limiting factor is the lack of surface water (or even a piped water-supply until well into the twentieth century). In the past this meant that cattle had to be kept in the few areas close to running water (as near the River Keer) or had to be taken regularly to watering-places - Bank Well in Silverdale for example, or Senset Well in Warton. This served to limit the numbers of cattle in the parish. Sheep, on the other hand, are descended from stock adapted to arid lands, and can cope without surface-water supplies. There has, consequently, been a tendency to increase the numbers of sheep in the parish, to the extent of overstocking at times.

In contrast with the abundant grazing land, there is a shortage of good arable land in the parish. It is only where glacial deposits have been left behind by the melting ice-sheets

of the last glaciation, or where meltwater streams and rivers have spread finer deposits, that some sort of arable land has resulted. And much of this is extremely stony, even bouldery, or very thin. Consequently we see at the present day, when transport costs are very low and produce can readily be brought in from distant, more productive places, that the local arable land has practically all been given over to livestock grazing. In the past arable land was needed because most families farmed, and all needed to supply themselves and their stock before allocating any surplus to the market.

The proportion of arable land to grazing land

Measures of the relative importance of crops and stock can be found for both the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. For the seventeenth century the proportion can be measured by totting up the values of the two categories in the inventories. This has been done for all the parish inventories available for the years 1580 to 1680. When all these are added together the total value of crops works out at about 40 per cent of the total value of crops plus stock. The fact that stock was more valuable than crops should not surprise us when we consider the relatively small amount of arable land available in the parish. Further work on the inventories from the period 1690 to 1700 gives a proportion of 35 per cent arable to 65 per cent stock, which suggests that livestock rearing was beginning to become even more important. This would be likely if the trade in cattle for beef was increasing. It was simply a matter of the area playing to its advantages - the large acreages of grazing land with a climate that favoured growth of grass for much of the year.

In the nineteenth century the first firm information can be found in the township tithe awards, which date from around the middle of the 1840s when the acreage of land under the plough may not have been very different from the acreage in 1700. In fact the peak arable acreage was probably reached at the start of the nineteenth century when Yealand, Warton and Silverdale had all enclosed their commonland, and some of the former commonland grazing was turned over to crops in response to a real or imagined threat of food shortages, with the consequent price rises. Pressures had eased somewhat by the 1840s but by then the arable land in Warton parish was 2679 acres, or one-third of the total acreage farmed (that is, one-third of arable-plus-grazing land). (See Fig.1). It is difficult to compare this with the figures already given for the seventeenth century - the older figures are based on monetary values, and the 1846 figures on acreages. But both sets of figures show that stockraising was considerably more important than crops.

From 1866 the data become easier to use despite the unreliability of some of the figures from the earliest years. Perhaps there were teething problems when government first expected the farmers to provide such detailed information. More reliable figures, for 1880 and 1895, were collected from the manuscript sources at the National Archive, Kew. In addition the Victoria County History gives generalised information for 1905. In 1880 the area of arable land in the parish was 1836 acres (25 per cent of the total farmed), a considerable reduction from the 2679 acres (33 per cent) of 1846. By 1895 this had further declined to 1611 acres (or 21 per cent of a slightly larger area farmed at that date), but by 1905 the area of arable had bounced back again, to 1881 acres

(25 per cent). We can therefore trace a marked shrinkage in the area of arable land up to the last decade of the nineteenth century, followed by an increase at the start of the twentieth. The increase was most marked in Carnforth, Warton and the Yealands.

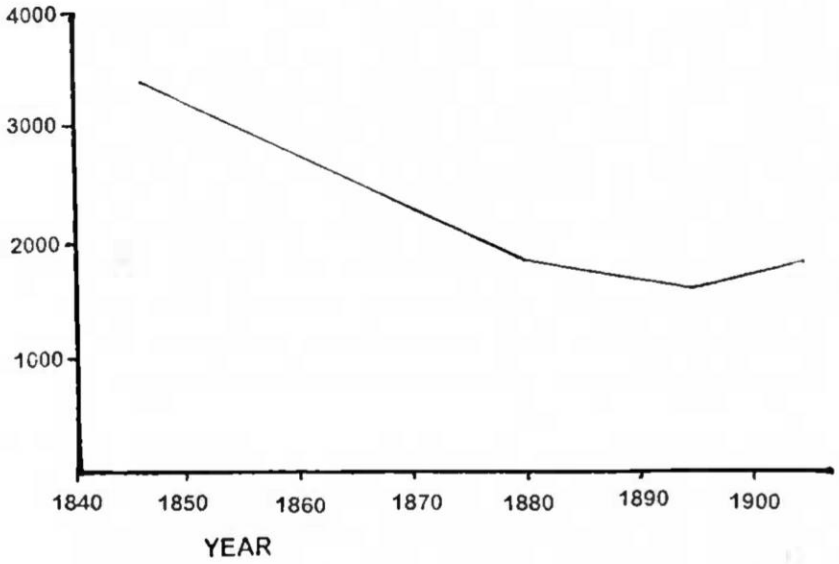

Fig.1 The acreage of arable land in Warton Parish

Livestock

Since a good proportion of the crops grown in the seventeenth and in the nineteenth centuries was needed to supplement the grazing provided for livestock, it makes sense

to consider first the numbers of livestock. The most accurate figures for stock numbers in the seventeenth century are derived from the tithes of wool and lambs. The number of fleeces collected for the payment of tithe in 1623 implies that there were about 6100 sheep in the parish in that year Most families in the parish kept some sheep. They were an easy way of using any grazing rights you may have. And in the seventeenth century most families could not afford to pass by any opportunity to grow stock for consumption or sale. Winter feed was the main problem, even though the arable areas were opened to grazing once the crops had been gathered. Overstocking of the commons was the norm, and the animals were small and often diseased. The tithe records also give the number of lambs paid in tithe, but the numbers are suspiciously low, and appear unreliable. Possibly the parishioners were expert at avoiding paying the tithe on lambs, as was certainly the case in the eighteenth century.

Cattle were a very important part of the local economy in the seventeenth century. They were not only a source of dairy produce but raised as oxen were the principal draught animals, and when slaughtered produced not just meat but also tallow, leather and horn. Estimation of the number of cattle in Warton parish in the seventeenth century is more difficult. The "Easter Books" as the tithe records are known, record the tithe paid on produce and stock, including cattle. However, the recorded payments for cattle do not readily convert to numbers of animals. The records do, however, tell us how many people paid the tithe, and therefore how many people owned cattle. This does of course make the rather large assumption that nobody was cheating. From the Easter Book for 1623 we find

that 146 people (out of a total of 330 taxable individuals) paid a tithe on cattle.

If we accept that 146 individuals or heads of households owned cattle, the next part of the calculation is to suggest how many cattle each of them owned. Probably the best we can do is to assume that the distribution among these individuals was very similar to the distribution worked out from all the available seventeenth century inventories for the whole parish. This distribution is given in "How it Was" (p54). It shows that just over half of those owning cattle had 1 to 5 animals, 39 individuals had 6 to 10 cattle, and so on, up to three who each had 26 to 30 cattle. Applying this distribution to our 146 tithe-payers, we arrive at the total number of cattle in the parish in 1623 - about 1050.(Fig.2).

For the late nineteenth century we have firm numbers of livestock. In 1880 there were 3285 sheep in the parish and 2424 lambs. Some were the older Silverdale and Warton Crag breeds, but others were the larger Leicesters. The commonland had by now been enclosed, so grazing was controlled. As for cattle, there were 786 cows in milk or with calf in 1880, and 1392 other cattle. The townships with the highest proportions of milk cattle were Priest Hutton, Silverdale and Carnforth.

Comparison of the numbers of livestock

Allowing for the fact that cattle need about four times as much grazing land as sheep, the 1050 cattle that we have decided lived in the parish in 1623 would have needed as much grazing land as 4200 sheep. If the 6100 sheep are added this gives a total grazing requirement equivalent to over 10,000.

This approximate figure takes no account of lambs, horses and pigs. In 1880 the 2000 cattle would need as much grazing as 8000 sheep. When the 3200 sheep are added this gives a total grazing requirement equivalent to just over 11,000 sheep - not much higher than the figure for the 1600s.

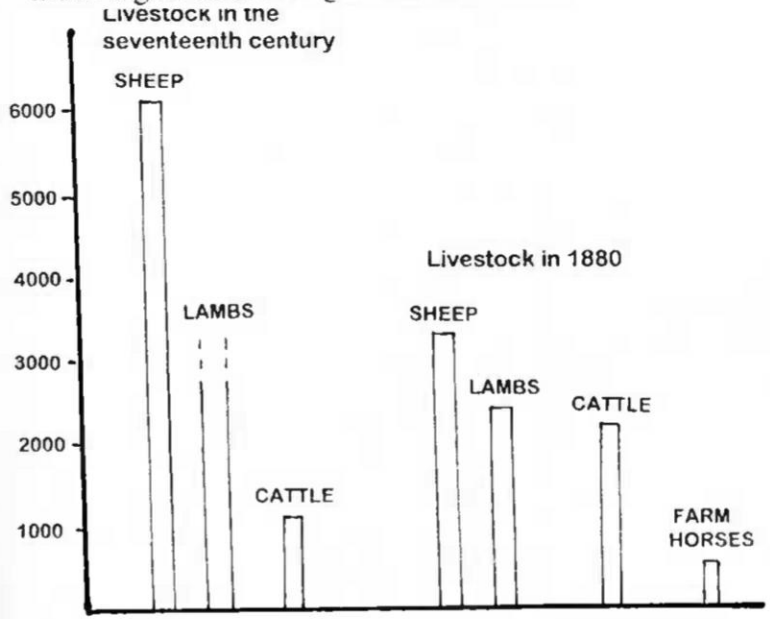

Fig.2 Numbers of livestock in Warton Parish in the seventeenth century and in 1880.

Are we to believe that in the nineteenth century the parish farmers were able to support only roughly the same number and quality of livestock as their sixteenth century counterparts, and on a greater area of grazing land? The answer to this is surely 'no', and the key must be in the quality of the animals. We know, for example, that the typical weight for a sheep fleece in the seventeenth century was only three

pounds, which suggests that the sheep were quite small. (See How it Was, p.51). In the nineteenth century the cattle produced more milk, more meat, and the sheep bigger fleeces, better lambs.

Crops

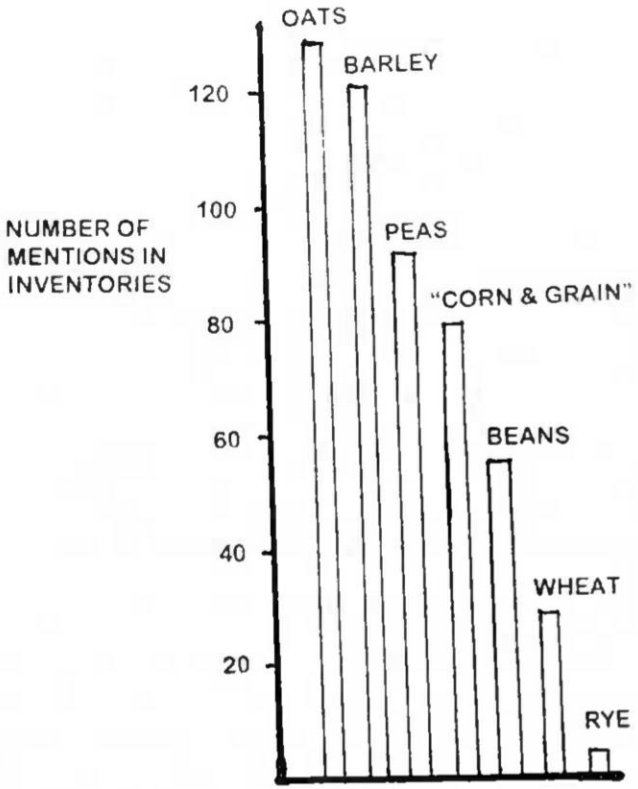

Fig.3 Crops grown in Warton Parish in the seventeenth century.

For the seventeenth century we can get some idea of the relative acreage of crops by counting the number of times the various cereals and other crops are mentioned in the surviving inventories. This gives the following heirarchy:

1. Oats - most mentions.
2. Barley - mentioned about as often as oats.
3. Peas - mentioned two-thirds as often as oats or barley.
4. Beans - mentioned only half as often as peas.
5. Wheat - mentioned one-quarter as often as oats.

Wheat we know was regarded as a new crop, and increasingly sown. Barley was needed as a feedstuff for stock as well as for malting for beer. Peas were eaten by both people and animals, beans probably mainly by the livestock. Another widely grown crop was hemp, and there was also some flax. (Fig.3).

In 1880 the main crops based on acreages were:

1. Oats - still the most important crop.
2. Turnips, swedes and mangold-wurzels. Mainly for animal fodder, and introduced in the eighteenth century. They replaced peas and beans.
3. Barley. Still important, but only about half the acreage devoted to oats.
4. Potatoes. Another new crop introduced on a large scale during the eighteenth century. Originally largely used for animal fodder, but by this date almost certainly all for human consumption.
5. Wheat. Less than one-fifth of the acreage devoted to oats. More wheat was probably grown a decade before, but by 1880 the acreage had declined due to massive cheap imports from North America.

6. Beans and peas - only 22 acres, compared with over 700 for oats.

7. Rape - only 9 acres.

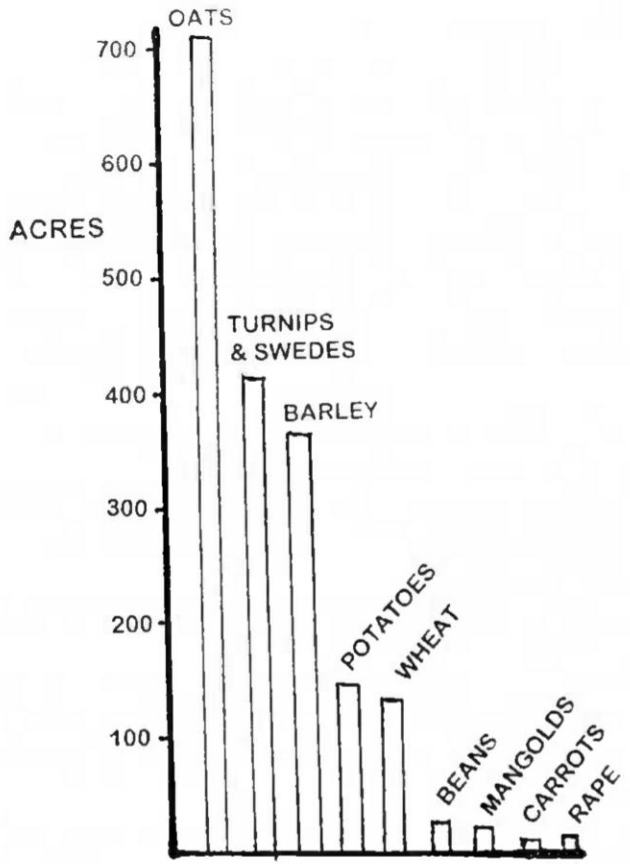

Fig.4 Acreages of crops in Warton Parish in 1880.

In 1895 the list is very similar, though wheat has fallen from 135 acres to a mere 17. Beans and peas are down to 12 acres and rape to 6. There is 13 acres of rye, and an acre of carrots. (Fig.4).

Agricultural changes in Warton parish

Warton's farming scene in the late nineteenth century resembled that of the seventeenth in many ways. The area was largely dependent on livestock, especially cattle and sheep, because grazing animals could make the best use of the most abundant local resource - a profuse growth of grass. More cattle were kept, and more milk produced in the late nineteenth century - there was a local market for milk, and some was even sent by train to Liverpool. Shorthorn cattle had replaced the longhorns, and oxen were no longer used. There was a corresponding increase in the number of horses, needed for work on the farm as well as for personal transport. Sheep breeds had been improved, and Leicesters were becoming more popular. Grazing and breeding could be much better controlled once the commons had been enclosed, encouraging the development of better stock.

To keep the livestock fed through the winter, and to keep cattle in milk when the grass was not growing, the feedstuffs introduced in the eighteenth century - turnips and swedes - were extensively grown, replacing peas and beans. Potatoes were an important crop in the nineteenth century, and it appears that specialised growing areas such as the Ormskirk area had not yet taken over from locally grown potatoes. On the other hand cabbages and carrots were seldom grown. Such

crops would be easily transported by rail from market-garden growing areas close to the large towns in south Lancashire.

The improved farming of the nineteenth century

How much had farming progressed by the end of the nineteenth century? If we had figures for the actual crop production per acre, or the milk yields, wool production and rate of fattening of beef cattle, we must surely find that production was considerably higher in the nineteenth century than it had been in the seventeenth. This was due to a mixture of good fortune, improved techniques, and the input of new manures and fertilizers.

The good fortune arose from an improvement in the climate. Farmers in the seventeenth century had to cope with the coolest summers of the Little Ice Age. But by the start of the nineteenth century the climate had warmed, and the warming trend continued to the end of the century. Other improvements in production arose from the better management of grazing land after the enclosure of the commons. Stock could be far better controlled, and it was worth introducing improved breeds of cattle and sheep.

Improvements in farming equipment also played a part. Farmers still relied on human muscle and on horses for motive power. Steam power was tried in some parts of the country for ploughing, but there is no record of this in Warton parish. But ploughs and cultivating equipment were greatly improved in the nineteenth century, partly because of the ready availability of iron to replace wooden equipment. A wide variety of machinery was introduced to speed jobs such as feed

preparation - turnip cutters for example. Mechanical drilling of seed made for a much more efficient distribution than hand-sowing. And once a mechanical seed-drill had planted the crop in rows, weeding could be carried out by horse-drawn machine as well. The wearying job of hand-weeding, and the use of weeding-tongs could be greatly reduced. This in turn not only economised on labour, but also helped to hold a workforce that was continually looking south at the opportunities for employment in the textile mills. While much of the introduced machinery could not improve yields, it allowed more work to be done by fewer labourers - a serious consideration when wages rose.

But of more importance than any of the factors mentioned so far, was the application of manure and fertilizer brought in from outside the local farm system. In the seventeenth century farmers had relied on a closed system to run their farms. Their only manure was that from their livestock, and the livestock had to be fed on hay and beans through the winter. The only supplements that could be spread on the land were lime and, where close to the coast, silt and sand with its low organic content, from the bay. Bone-meal, the first of the new manures, first appeared in about 1800, though it is not known whether it was used in Warton. By the 1820s guano (bird-droppings) collected from islands off the South American coast began to be imported, and we know that the first cargo of guano imported direct into Lancaster arrived on board the "Caledonia" in 1845 (Lancaster Gazette 1st March 1845). Guano was rapidly adopted by local farmers, and local agents set up their businesses in our area. By the 1840s mineral nitrates were being imported from Chile, and

potash from Germany. In the 1870s superphosphate of lime was widely used - it was produced by treating animal bones or mineral phosphate with sulphuric acid. And after 1860 sulphate of ammonia became available as a by-product at gasworks.

By 1871 there were over 1200 manufacturers of artificial fertilizers in Britain, and the traditional local "manures" such as liming and estuary silts, were largely abandoned. The introduction of fertilizers from outside the local farming cycle started farming on the road that has been followed into the twenty-first century. Most farmers now routinely use artificial fertilizers.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- The unpublished agricultural statistics collected by the government since 1866 can be consulted at the National Archive, Kew, under the classification MAF 68. The original returns from individual farmers have been destroyed, but summaries of the figures for each township are available.
- Inventories provide most of our information on farming in Warton parish in the seventeenth century.
- Manor Court records for Silverdale and Warton include details on management of the commons, and show that overstocking was a perpetual problem in the seventeenth century.
- Many details on farming in the seventeenth century are conveniently summarised in "How it Was: A North Lancashire parish in the Seventeenth Century", Mourholme Local History Society, 1998.
- Details concerning the introduction of fertilizers from "A Sourcebook: Victorian Farming" edited by C.A.Jewell. Institute of Agricultural History, University of Reading, 1975.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS No.1
THE MAIL TRAIN ACCIDENT, CARNFORTH OCTOBER 1855

Clive Holden

If the Lancaster Guardian is to be believed, on the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway there had been no accident to a passenger train nor any instance of a passenger being injured from the opening of the railway in 1846 until 1855. That record was to come to an end in October, 1855, though without the serious consequences which might easily have ensued.

The 'casualty' was the up night mail for London, consisting of a guard's van (next to the engine), a travelling post-office and six carriages, which had left Carlisle at 7.42 pm on the evening of Sunday 28th October and travelled without incident until, at half past nine, it was approaching Carnforth at its usual speed of about 35 miles per hour. Some three quarters of a mile north of Carnforth, near the Keer bridge, the engine struck an obstruction, whereupon the driver immediately shut off steam and applied the brake on the tender (the locomotive presumably having no brake), but the engine continued for another sixty yards before running down the embankment and becoming embedded to a depth of four feet in a field. The progress of the tender which had broken loose, was brought to a halt by the guard's van which somersaulted over the tender and lay with its wheels uppermost, while the travelling post-office fell onto its side at the bottom of the embankment but did no damage to its complement of clerks other than a good shaking up. Five of the passenger carriages were derailed and 'upset' on

the trackbed with some damage to their interior fittings and to some of the passengers who were considerably shaken, while the other carriage, probably the last, had turned over two or three times before falling into a field on the other side of the railway, but miraculously without serious harm to any of its nine occupants though the carriage itself was in pieces. As soon as the accident happened the passengers extricated themselves as best they could and the post office clerks removed the mail into the field.

There was little delay in securing help, for a man was sent on horseback to report the accident, but before he could deliver his message a pilot engine had arrived to find the cause of the delay, returned whence it came and made a second journey to the scene of the accident with assistance and carriages. Refreshments were obtained from the neighbourhood and before long there were four doctors in attendance, though most of the passengers had escaped unscathed while others had a few bruises but were fit enough to continue their journeys. The driver had stayed on his engine but received only a few bruises which would keep him from work for a day or two, while the fireman was found wandering about in a dazed condition but physically unhurt, and the guard suffered a stiff shoulder after being thrown about in his van but had no bones broken. Only four passengers were considered to be hurt sufficiently seriously to warrant further attention and they were removed not to hospital, but to the King's Arms at Lancaster, one of them being fit enough to leave the following morning.

The cause of the accident was a bale of jupe (sic) which it was presumed had fallen from a down goods train about an hour before the arrival of the night mail. The contents of the bale were sufficiently solid to withstand the force of the engine and became entangled with its wheels, thus causing the derailment. The engine suffered little damage though its tender was not so lucky, and those carriages which had remained on the trackbed were able to make the journey to Crewe without preliminary repairs.

Thus it was that Carnforth was the scene of what could easily have been the first major accident on the Lancaster & Carlisle Railway, but fortunately it was able to avoid that unenviable reputation.

THOMAS TIBBENHAM, GAMEKEEPER

(Information from Mrs. E. Crowther, Bacup)

Thomas Tibbenham born 9th January, 1840 at Campsea, Suffolk. Married Louisa Lovett 1859 at Aldringham, Suffolk.
1871 Census: Thomas, gamekeeper and Louisa at Myton Hall, Myton-on-Swale, Yorks.
1873 Thomas at West St., Hartland, Devon, probably employed at Hartland Abbey, the Stucley family.
1881 Census: Thomas, rabbit catcher at Belle View farm, Kirkby Lonsdale, boarder with Mathew Braithwaite, farmer.
1891 Census: Thomas, 51, gamekeeper, Crag Foot, Warton-with-Lindeth, boarder with Thomas and Ellen Rawlinson. *
1901 Census: Thomas, 61, gamekeeper, Crag Foot, Warton-with-Lindeth, with wife Louisa 58 and grandson Harold Wade. James William Wade, 18, another grandson was a gas works labourer, boarder at 20 Hill St., Carnforth.
Thomas died aged 87, 26 February 1927 at Bacup, having returned to Bacup from his job as a gamekeeper at Silverdale in 1915.

Children
William born 1860 Aldringham died Hartland, Devon, 1873
Alice born 1861 Hazelwood married Joseph Pollard
Patience born 1862 Hazelwood married James Wade
Ellen born 1863 Hazelwood died Bacup, Lancs 1879
Louisa born 1865 Aldringham married John Coleman (Mrs. Crowther's grandparents) died aged 74, 25 January, 1917, Bacup
Grace born 1869 Myton married Bidwell
Julia born 1871 Myton married Pilling

* Presumably gamekeeper for Leighton Hall but they have no record. Anyone with any information please come forward.

Programme 2003-2004

(Meetings in Yealand Village Hall, 7.30 pm)
2003
December 11th - Jacob's Join Christmas meeting.
2004
January 8th – Dr. I. Saunders. Maps & Mapmaking in the North West.
February 12th – Helen Day. North West Food at Home, Work, on the streets and in Cookery Books.
March 11th – Vicky Slowe. Gillow's Furniture.
April 8th - AGM

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Editor's Apology.
To his consternation the last issue of the magazine had some glaring textual errors. Sorry.