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WARTON CRAG: RE-APPRAISING AN 'IRON AGE' HILL FORT: PART I

Kevin Grice, with contributions by Louise Martin

A General Description of the Monument on Warton Crag

Situated about 1.5km north of Carnforth, Lancashire the village of Warton is dominated by Warton Crag, on top of which there is a monument once described as '…situated in a perfect position on a prominent limestone hill...'[1] This article explores different theories of the date and purpose of this monument, placing it in the context of other sites in the immediate area.

The monument is generally categorised as an Iron Age Hill Fort and often connected to the Brigantes (who were the dominant native tribe in the area in the first century AD) and in particular their queen Cartimandua whose capital may have been at Stanwick in North Yorkshire. The site is naturally defended on three sides by rock terraces or scarps with steep slopes overlooking the sea to the west, low lying marshy ground to the south and the Ingleborough area to the east.

The fairly level summit changes however to a long downward slope to the north and north-east. Colonisation of the site by thick vegetation conceals banks of rough/unworked stone with rubble cores (described generally as ramparts) forming three segmented semi-curvilinear features about 40-60 metres apart and piled up to 3-7 metres wide and up to 1.3 metres high. These appear to enclose or defend the north-east and more gently sloping side of the Crag. The inner (southern) and outer (northern) ramparts are the most substantial, with the former

[1] Farrer and Brownbill writing in 1908.

A full list of references for this article will appear on the website.

being the best preserved. The area enclosed by the inner rampart is sub-rectangular measuring about 3.2ha, and that within the outer rampart about 6ha or 15 acres.

The Documentary Sources

Warton Crag itself is first identified on maps prepared as early as 1576 made for Lord Derby and sent to William Cecil, different copies of which are now in the Royal Manuscripts in the British Library and the National Archives at Kew. They refer however only to the beacon at the summit, and not the fortification, being clearly prepared with defence against Spanish invasion in mind. Similarly John Lucas[2] refers only to the beacon as well as to nearby Fairy Hole Cave (see below). The Crag was the subject of an Enclosure Award in 1740 after which the 'Occupation Road' was built about 200 metres north of the monument on an east-west alignment and numerous field boundaries were constructed, one of which cuts across part of one of the three banks (the west end of the outer wall) but again without reference to it.

18th Century Sources

William Hutchinson, a solicitor practising in Barnard Castle in County Durham, was also a keen antiquary. He published accounts of the history of Durham and Cumberland as well as topographic works on Northern England generally. In 1785 he was shown the encampment on Warton Crag by John Jenkinson, the enterprising schoolmaster of Yealand Friends' School and also an antiquary[3]. Hutchinson wrote of seeing two urns of coarse, poorly baked pottery which were in the possession of a

[2] Lucas, J. *A History of Warton Parish*, edited by Denwood A, 2017. pp72-74

[3] See articles on John Jenkinson in other MLHS magazines: 2016 no1 issue 69 p22, and 2018 no 2 issue 74 p9.

Mr. Jenkinson. They had been found separately in circular, conical cairns which were

> levelled down within his new inclosures (sic) on the skirts of Warton Crag. The cairns were composed of pebble stones foreign to those to be had from the rocky surface of the adjoining hill and were probably gathered from a stream. Each urn had been found in a small cist formed of flat stones, covered by a large blue flag. The mouth of each urn, which contained ashes and burnt bones, was covered with a small flat stone. One urn was recovered complete but the other was damaged by the workmen. The adjacent grounds at the feet of Warton Crag contain innumerable tumuli of small dimensions and an oblong feature composed of earth. Many have been opened by Mr. Jenkinson but nothing was found in them. (Hutchinson 1789, 212).

The same Jenkinson is named in connection with plots 8, 9, 16 and 17 in the Yealand Conyers Enclosure Award of 1778 so clearly he owned the relevant land at the time.

Sadly, nothing of these remains has been seen for many years but they have been interpreted as Bronze Age cairns, possibly a barrow cemetery. Hutchinson illustrated his report with a semi-bird's-eye perspective sketch of the ramparts which were to be found on top of Warton Crag and he included the surviving urn (see Figure 1). He associated the encampment with native British resistance to the Roman conquest therefore dating it to what is now categorised as the Late Iron Age.

Figure 1:
William Hutchinson's sketch of the monument on Warton Crag

19th Century Sources

In 1823 T. Dunham Whittaker describes, *two circumvallations*[4] *of loose stones* at Wharton (sic). Similarly the first Ordnance Survey map of 1848 shows part only of the ramparts now known to exist, being described as two 'Old Ramparts' and that the surrounding area was mostly open rough pasture, although the area of the monument may always have been more wooded. This description is repeated in the OS map of 1891 but the 1913 map finally corrects these earlier errors, shows all three ramparts and describes the monument for the first time as a 'Hill Fort'. From then on all OS maps show it much as it can be found on their maps today; the current OL7 Explorer map (2015) simply refers to the monument as 'Fort'.

20th Century Sources

In 1908, the Victoria County History describes the fort in general terms as above and notes that the inner wall appears to contain a

[4] *defensive ramparts*

five foot diameter chamber within its thickness. Possible hut sites are recorded as evident**.** In the late 1930s Robert Pedley visited the site. He sets out his detailed observations, which probably represent the clearest description of the monument prior to recent twenty-first century investigations using modern techniques. He noted the need to defend the site to the north with 'artificial defence' and concluded that the measures adopted were 'certainly sufficient'. He noted that, as at Ingleborough, dry stone walling was used without ditches but with a different building technique, including a double facing to the inner wall. In addition he stated that the entrances were simple, with the three ramparts used in 'an interesting way to complicate this vulnerable spot' and thought that the defences implied 'a large garrison'. Pedley had no doubt that it was a Brigantian site. James Forde-Johnston, writing in 1962 and 1976, describes the fort in similar terms as above, noting also the history of the discovery of huts, barrows and pottery. He also considered it to be Iron Age.

The site was first scheduled on 30 November 1925, with the most recent amendment being on 3 March 1994 under reference number 1007633. The listing describes the site as a small multi-vallate[5] hillfort of Iron Age date. The entry goes on to note that within the enclosure were: the boulder foundations of three sub-rectangular huts constructed against a long low rock escarpment; that immediately outside the inner rampart a further two hut foundations were located against the same escarpment; and that to the south, below the main summit of the Crag, faint traces of a bank and ditch had recently been observed along the edges of a limestone shelf. The alleged oval tumuli (burial mounds) observed by antiquarian sources to the north of the outer rampart

[5] *i.e. surrounded by two or more ramparts forming multiple lines of defence.*

were not evident as earthworks but it was thought might survive as buried remains, perhaps including any deep burial pits. The summit cairn was noted as of modern construction, as was the iron and wooden beacon inserted as part of the 1988 Armada 400 celebrations.

21st Century Sources

The monument was flagged in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB Statutory Management Plan in 2009 as in need of positive conservation management and was visited by a Field Investigator (Marcus Jecock) in late 2009 to determine the feasibility of archaeological survey. During this survey elements of both the inner and outer ramparts were located although no definite trace of the alleged middle rampart was found. No other internal features were seen although Jecock noted that the ground conditions made survey extremely difficult. The site has thus appeared in all the Heritage at Risk Registers for the North West from 2012 onwards, being described as unsatisfactory with major localised problems. It formed part of Dan Elsworth's 2014 analysis of hillforts around Morecambe Bay where it was noted as relatively large in area and having multiple banks.

Finds from on or near the Monument on Warton Crag and from Adjacent Sites

In the mid- nineteenth century the remains of an iron sword with bronze hilt/pommel and fragmentary copper alloy scabbard/sheath were found near Warton Crag (see Figure 2) It is now in the British Museum. It does appear to be very likely that its owner was at least connected in some way with the hilltop enclosure itself; its discovery in the vicinity is otherwise a remarkable coincidence.

Figure 2:
The remains of the sword found near Warton Crag

The date of the sword is uncertain, though it is probably of the Brigantian type dateable to c. AD 45-125. It is certainly very similar in part to a sword-pommel found at Brough in 1875 which is now in Tullie House Museum in Carlisle (Cowen 1937) which is dated from the Brigantian era of the first century AD and it is of note that a decorated bronze fragment was also found in 1907 at Stone Walls, a 'Romano-British' settlement site near to Skelmore Heads near Urswick[6]. The Warton sword is therefore probably of first century AD origin but even if older, might have been retained over years and lost at that time

[6] *More of this in Part II of this article in the October 2019 magazine*

The findings from two adjacent sites also require consideration. Dog Holes Cave is just over half a mile west of the summit of Warton Crag. It was excavated extensively by J. Wilfrid Jackson FGS, the Assistant Keeper of Manchester Museum, in 1907 – 1912. The work showed early occupation from the Pleistocene era (as evidenced by the remains of carnivorous animals later to become extinct such as Irish Elk, Siberian Vole and Arctic Lemming) onwards into the Neolithic and beyond. A Group 4 polished axe, flint flakes and an antler pick (all Neolithic), were found, as well as later Neolithic and Beaker pottery from the Bronze Age of c.2,000BC onwards. In addition there was first century AD Samian ware and fragments of coarse black ware, hand-made and without ornamentation. Other finds included iron and bronze objects, the most notable being 'a blue and red enamelled bronze pendant or fibula' and 'a pair of beautifully patinated bronze scale pans and beam, the pans being decorated on the interior with the dot and circle design', all dateable to the first - third centuries AD. There were the usual animal remains, a weaving comb made from red deer antler and a small iron sickle. The remains of about a score of human beings were unearthed together with an extant faunal assemblage (now lost), again dated by Jackson to the Neolithic, although recent examination of the human remains (now at Lancaster Museum) suggests they are more modern.

All the Roman-era finds were interpreted by Jackson as domestic in nature although he considered the earlier finds to be sepulchral with the dead being buried at different times during the Bronze Age. However, these later items have also been interpreted more recently by others as sepulchral or votive in character. Similar finds were made by Jackson in Fairy Hole Cave and, without the pottery or human remains, at Badger Hole

Cave. Both these caves are on the flanks of Warton Crag about half a mile or so from the summit.

The Traditional View as to the Date and Function of the Monument

The structures on Warton Crag are thus most commonly referred to as of the Iron Age, particularly of the first century AD and associated with the Brigantes and their queen Cartimandua. The presence of the high status Brigantian sword and scabbard may support this traditional dating theory for Warton Crag Hill Fort as may the presence of the pottery and other items from that era in the nearby caves. Pedley had no doubt that the site was of Roman period, concluding: 'The evidence is too slight to indicate very reliably the range of occupation in the Roman period; only the Samian ware has been definitely dated and this proves an occupation at the beginning of that period, but does not necessarily imply any earlier discontinuance.' He further notes the absence of money, personal ornaments and luxuries as confirming the paucity of the culture (when contrasted for example with that around Settle) and explains the presence of the bronze balances as representing part of the loot gained by some raid on a neighbouring Roman site. The Brigantian connection still remains one referred to in many local walking and other guides to the area (for example Arnside AONB 2010, 10). Otherwise the site is merely described as Iron Age (Lancashire Wildlife Trust 2003).

Connections between Iron Age sites and earlier Bronze Age Sites

This description of the Warton Crag monument as 'Iron Age' is unsurprising because most British hill forts were primarily constructed during the Iron Age, with only a few dating to the Late Bronze Age. However the ethnologist James Forde-

Johnston, writing in 1976, noted how a number of Iron Age hill forts had been built close to earlier Bronze Age barrows. He thought it possible that this had occurred for defensive protection from the 'sacred associations of the burial place'. This would apply to Warton Crag also if the antiquarian evidence about burial sites set out above is accepted. Further he also noted that about one-third of the Iron Age hill forts in England and Wales were multi-vallate as at Warton Crag. He thought they were constructed as defensive positions.

Later, writing in in 2009, Barry Cunliffe also expresses the belief that Iron Age Hill forts were defensive settlements. The Warton Crag monument, in view of its location, look-out, size and multi-vallate fortification appears to fit this description. And in addition it has the 'sacred associations of the [Bronze Age] burial place.

Part II of this fascinating account of the monument on Warton Crag will appear in the next Mourholme magazine, when Kevin Grice will place the fort on Warton Crag in the context of other forts along the north side of Morecambe Bay. He will then interpret a 2016 LIDAR survey and more recent field investigations and will end with an exploration of different dating hypotheses.

CARNFORTH CINEMAS
Clive Holden

Recent advertisements for film shows at the Civic Hall in Carnforth made me think about the 'good old days' of the 'Roxy' cinema, which was Carnforth's chief centre for indoor entertainment for many years. Not that the 'Roxy' was the first cinema in Carnforth; that honour belonged to the 'Victoria Picture Palace' . I do not know when the Victoria Picture Palace showed its first film, but I have in my possession (kindly given to me many years ago by Bert Simister) an advertisement on a hardboard backing for the films on show in the week ending November 1st 1913.

On Monday October 27th and the two following nights the films were '*Her Just Reward', 'A Soul's Awakening'* and *'Whiffle's Fascinating Eye'.* '*Her Just Reward*' was the 'big picture' as we used to call them, and a summary of the plot was attached, whereas the two supporting films were described merely as 'An Indian Drama' and 'Comic' respectively. From Thursday to Saturday the films were *'A Fair Saint'* (a Coloured Drama in which a miracle intervenes to ensure mercy), *'King Lear'* (Drama) and '*Two Tiny Pickles'* (Comic). Doors opened at 7.30 p.m. and the show commenced at 7.45 p.m. Admission costs were 3d and 6d , and a reserved seat cost 1/-. Every Saturday there was a matinee at 2.30pm for children (admission 1d); adults paid the normal admission fee. Saturday evenings were special as there were two performances commencing at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m., so we know that each programme must have lasted about two hours.

'So, where was the Victoria Picture Palace?' you may ask. The advertisement tells us that the cinema was in New

Street, and the proprietor was W. Hoyle. We know that Alfred Hoyle was the manager of the Station Hotel from 1900 until at least 1913 (possibly much longer), so it seems likely that the Victoria Picture Palace was on the first floor in the ball room, and that the entrance was from the New Street side of the building and then up a staircase. On the reverse side of the hardboard is attached the printing order from William J. Weeks ('Late Morecambe Visitor'), dated October 24th 1913 for 30 posters for the picture show; total cost 5s 6d. W. J. Weeks (newsagent, printer and tobacconist) was based at 38 Market Street[1]. It had previously belonged to the Morecambe Visitor Co. Ltd. Little more is known about the Victoria Picture Palace, and nobody is left alive to remember it. Did it survive throughout the war until the early 1920s ? If it did, it had a new rival just across the way.

The 'Lancaster Guardian' for 31st December 2004 included an article about the Pearson architects of Lancaster, and showed a drawing of The Picture House, Carnforth, designed in 1921 by Charles B. Pearson (1875 – 1944). The drawing shows the words 'The Picture House' on the façade of the building, but whether it ever carried that name is open to conjecture. What we do know from the 'Lancaster Guardian' is that the aforementioned W. J. Weeks, managed 'The Kinema', as it was known, for a number of years, and retired at the end of 1928 to be succeeded by Mr. H. W. Pearson of Oldham. In the 'Lancaster, Morecambe and Suburban Directory for 1934' it was listed as : 'The Kinema Theatre (Carnforth) Ltd.'. By then it was managed by James J. Brennan, and it became part of his cinema

[1] The shop closed in 1974 and is now a constituent part of Carnforth Bookshop.

circuit. What we do know from photographic evidence is that it became 'The Kinema' or, as in the 'Lancaster, Morecambe and Suburban Directory for 1934': 'The Kinema Theatre (Carnforth) Ltd.'.

Brennan had cinemas in several towns in the area, including Kendal. The Westmorland Gazette for 27th February 1937 advertised films at 'The Kinema' on Sandes Avenue, Kendal but in the edition for March 6th the advertisement was for the 'Roxy' (late Kinema), along with two other cinemas in Kendal, the recently acquired Palladium (also on Sandes Avenue) and St. George's. Simultaneously reduced admission prices were advertised: at the 'Roxy' these were to be 6d and 9d in the Stalls and 1/- in the Circle. (but 1/3d on Saturdays and at holidays); and 3d, 4d and 5d for children (applicable from 8th March). It would seem reasonable to suppose that the Carnforth 'Kinema' changed its name to the 'Roxy' at the same time, and it may be that the pricing policy was similar.

At the Kendal 'Roxy' the programme was changed only once in the week: Monday to Wednesday and Thursday to Saturday, though there was an instance of Monday and Tuesday, followed by Wednesday to Saturday. At Carnforth Kinema, at least until 1929, the same programming system prevailed, but by the 1940s films were shown for two nights only before the programme was changed, though there were exceptions when films of such length and quality as *'Gone With The Wind'* might be shown for three or four evenings. According to one source of information the Carnforth 'Roxy' had seats for 780 people (hard to believe!) later reduced to 465 (a more credible figure); the proscenium was twenty one feet wide. At least one 'Roxy' is known to have survived: that at Ulverston.

My first visits to the Carnforth 'Roxy' would be early in the Second World War and would probably have been to the Saturday 'matinee' performances (in the afternoon, not the morning), which featured such luminaries as Old Mother Riley, Laurel and Hardy, Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy, to mention a few. Some years later I made a list of the films I remembered seeing (but lacking specific dates), such as *'Mrs. Miniver', 'The Black Swan',* the Sherlock Holmes films with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, and those featuring my favourite actress at the time, the sultry Maria Montez, who starred in glorious technicolour 'Arabian Nights' type films, described by film critics as 'hokum'. At some time in 1951 I decided to take a more methodical approach, and listed all the films I saw, along with the main actors and the dates when seen, and this continued until the closure of the Roxy at the end of April 1961. According to my diary the last film to be shown there was *'The Magnificent Seven'*, (friends of mine, Mick Webster and David Howorth both agree on that). David Howorth, now resident in Canada, adds that the poster advertising that film remained in situ for a long time afterwards The snag is that 30th April 1961 was a Sunday, and films were not shown at the Roxy on Sundays, unless an exception was made for that special occasion.

The usual routine at Carnforth's 'Roxy' was for advertisements to be shown while the audience was settling down, accompanied by songs on (presumably) gramophone records. Two well-remembered records were *'Red sails in the sunset'* and *'Long ago and far away'*. The adverts were followed by the 'little' picture (if there was one), then the Universal News (not the 'Pathé' as in many cinemas), and then the 'big' picture. The 'first house' started at 6 p.m. and the 'second house' at 8 p.m., though there must have been exceptions such as when *'The Big*

Country', a film lasting 163 minutes, was shown. If the film was a very popular one and all 'first house' seats were taken, you would have to queue into Hunter Street next to the advertising hoardings which were there at the time, and wait patiently until the 'first house' came out, not that everyone had to come out; those who had arrived late for the 'first house' or merely wanted to see the film through again were at liberty to do so. There were occasions when the waiting crowd had a little entertainment, such as when Tommy Fisher, a railway guard and a Cumbrian, celebrated his team's victory at Wembley by placing his bait box in the middle of the road and demonstrating how so-and-so had kicked the winning goal; result: one bait box and his bait all over the road! I suppose that seats at the 'Roxy' could be reserved, though I never bothered to do so.

On rare occasions, especially during the war years, there might be problems in the projection room and the film would suddenly drone to a halt. If a repair was not made speedily there would be a cry from one of the more impatient youths in the audience of "Put a penny in the gas!". The films shown at the Roxy were classified as 'U', 'A' and (much later) 'X' (horror). Children had to be accompanied by an adult in order to gain entrance for an 'A' film, so it was not unusual to wait outside until an obliging gent (usually) agreed to take one in to sit next to him, but once the 'first house' was finished you could move to a seat of your own choice. Sometimes my sister would accompany my brother and me, and would force us to cower behind the seats in front if she thought that we might be scared by the next sequence, allowing us to sit comfortably again once the sequence was over. Only once do I remember a 'serial' which went on for several episodes being shown at the Roxy; that would be in the early 1950s and was, if my memory is correct, about a jungle maiden who survived what seemed to be certain

death in every episode. My not so infallible memory tells me that prices of entrance to the Roxy rose from about 9d to 1s 3d downstairs and from about a shilling to two shillings upstairs; no doubt I will be corrected. Throughout the last twenty years at least of the Roxy's existence the manager was Mr. Moss, a small dapper gentleman. The ticket office was usually manned (or should it be 'womanned') by two ladies from whom Mars Bars, Crunchies etc. could be purchased. Of the staff, which must have seen several changes, I remember Danny Townson from Millhead in the projection room, Hilda Stevenson and Jenny Higgins in the ticket office, and Annie Wren (neé Goodman) and ?Ingleby as usherettes. How many can our readers remember?

As for the layout, see Figure 1. In the downstairs part of the Roxy there was a central aisle only, with equal numbers of seats to each side, and exits as indicated. There would be one extra row at the left hand side as the exit passage was to the right. There were probably about sixteen rows of seats to the left and fifteen to the right with about ten seats per row (someone will doubtless correct me). As was normal at cinemas the last performance ended with the National Anthem, and there were always some who rushed to make their way out before it started. Once it started you were expected to stand still until it had finished.

Upstairs, which I visited not very often, the rows of seats were shorter on the left hand side due to the limitations imposed by the staircase at that side, though the aisle would still be in line with that in the downstairs section, and there were fewer rows of seats as the upstairs section, which was on a steeper rake, extended no further forward than the front of the projection

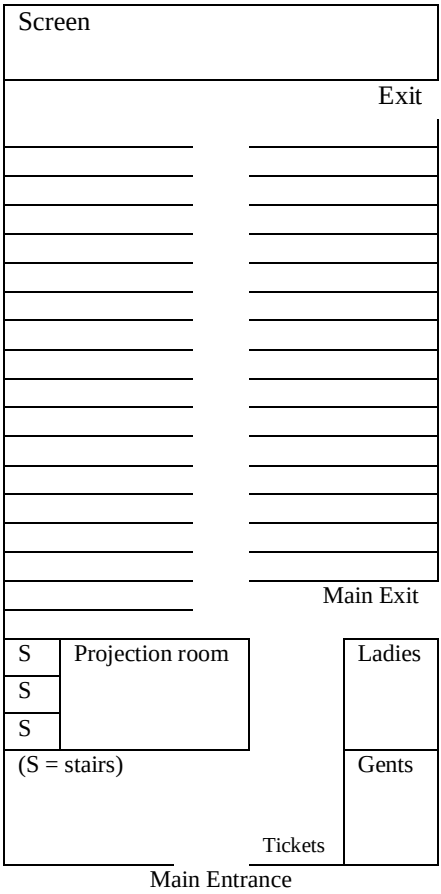

Figure1:
A plan of the downstairs of the Roxy Cinema (not to scale) drawn from memory.

room. There was an exit door at the front right hand side of the upstairs section leading to an external metal staircase; does anyone remember it being used? Normal egress was by the internal staircase. The seats upstairs may have been slightly more 'posh' than those downstairs, though I found them all

quite comfortable, and only once do I remember some refurbishment of the seats downstairs.

It has been suggested that the Roxy, as a relatively small provincial cinema, may have been a 'bug hut'. Nothing of the kind! After the Saturday afternoon 'matinees' it may have needed a spray of D.D.T. or whatever, but the worst I ever got from it was after an evening film show when I discovered that a previous occupant of my seat had kindly left some recently chewed bubble-gum on it, which adhered itself to the seat of my trousers. I was not amused. It may also have been supposed by some that the 'Roxy' would receive more than its share of ancient and inferior films. True, some old films were shown, but they were usually of reasonable quality, and while not first in the queue for the latest films as cinemas like the Odeons would be, the 'Roxy' was not too far behind. In 1959, for instance, most of the films until September had been released in 1958, but 1959 films then began to appear.

In common with most other cinemas, as more people began to buy television sets, so the audiences at the Roxy gradually dwindled, although the best films could still draw them in. By 1961 the writing was on the wall, And for many of us it was with much regret, that the end of 'The Magnificent Seven' was also the end of the 'Roxy'.

Any additional relevant information will be welcomed, whether it be the naming of staff, correction of errors in this article, or simply your memories of the 'Roxy'.

A SILVERDALE WAR HERO REMEMBERED: FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JOHN MAURICE WINNINGTON BRIGGS DSO DFC DFM

Sheila Spencer

Heroism and tragedy - not what I expected to uncover when I happened to look through the church visitor book in St. Johns Church, Silverdale, and noticed an entry referring to the war memorial to Maurice Briggs (situated on the wall of the North nave) made by a Raymond Haffner, who had written how he had known Maurice Briggs as a boy in Cliviger in Holme, and explained that he had been best man to his brother George. He invited contact should anyone want to find out more about him.

Figure 1
Raymond Haffner, George Haffner and Maurice Briggs at Cliviger in Holme

My interest was captured! I had seen the memorial and often wondered who Maurice Briggs was and how he came to be killed in Canada two days after VE day. This was the spur that I needed and I discovered that not only Maurice, but also his older brother Gilbert had both died tragically in air accidents, one before the start of the war and one at the very end.

Maurice Briggs was born in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, on 6th May 1920, and his brother, Henry Gilbert Stewart Briggs in 1916. Whilst their father was headmaster at Todmorden Grammar School, the two brothers attended school in Burnley. In the 1920's the family moved to Cliviger in Holme, and then in 1936 to Silverdale, taking up residence at 'Glenroyd' on Cove Road, now the home of the Bodenham family, but at that time owned by Richard George Lambert.

Maurice and Gilbert owned a dark green Bentley car at the time, which some of the older Silverdale residents may well remember.

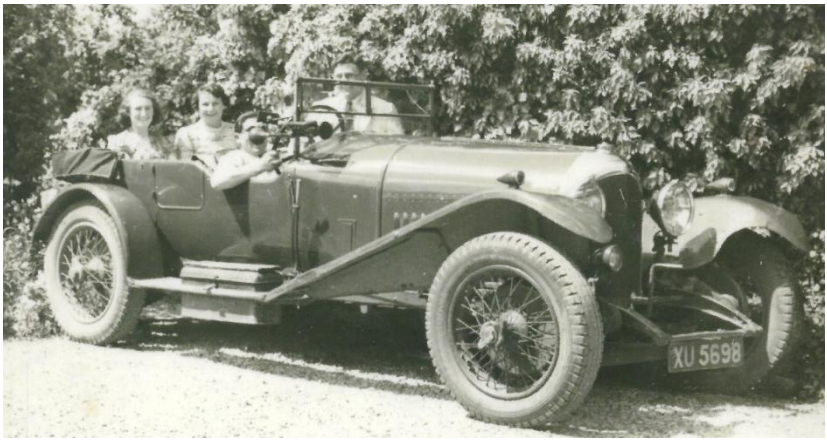

Figure 2
The Bentley car with Maurice Briggs at the wheel.

The brothers joined the RAF before the start of the war. Tragically on 9th January 1939, at the age of 22, Gilbert Briggs who was training to be a navigator and based at Prestwick, was killed along with his three fellow crew members whilst engaged in a Cross Country Navigation Exercise, when their Avro Anson

plane crashed into the Coserine mountain at Rhinns of Kells, 9 miles West of Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire. The weather at the time was very poor with freezing temperatures. He was given a military funeral and is buried in Silverdale churchyard.

Maurice, who had joined the RAF in 1937 at the age of 17, was at the start of hostilities in 1939, posted to 77 Squadron as an air gunner/observer based at Driffield. He completed his first tour with distinction and in September 1940 was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal to recognise his valour, courage and devotion to duty whilst flying in active operations against the enemy. In November 1941 he received his commission and in October 1942 he was promoted to Flying Officer. In April 1942 he began initial pilot training at Torquay, which he completed in Calgary, Canada and was awarded his pilot wings on 2nd April 1943.

Figure 3
Maurice Briggs being awarded his pilot wings in Calgary, Canada.

In April 1943 the 1409 Meteorological Flight (part of the Pathfinder Unit) had been formed and equipped with De Havilland Mosquito aircraft which were unarmed, light and amazingly fast. The primary function of 1409 Met Flight was to

ascertain weather conditions, the consequences of which could mean cancellation of an operation for the whole scheduled bomber force. Prior to this many aircrews had been killed by bad weather, icing of the plane being particularly dangerous. The pilots and navigators of this new unit were all specially selected and described as 'young in years but old in flying experience'. They together with their aircraft stood ready to take off at a moment's notice, flying when other aircraft of Bomber Command were grounded due to the weather conditions. They faced extreme danger, not only from the weather but also having to proceed alone, deep into enemy territory, in unarmed aircraft, often in broad daylight with no cloud cover.

In November 1943 on his return to England, Maurice was promoted to Flight Lieutenant and posted to this unit, completing well over a hundred sorties, most of them with a John Custance Baker, his navigator. In an official report the two men were described as a perfect team, whose flights were often eventful and dangerous, and who delivered factual and accurate reports. On one occasion for example, in January 1944, Maurice had to ditch their plane in the Channel after they had flown through flak over the Ruhr, had a fire in the cockpit - and finally an engine failure.

It was in this period that Maurice earned the DFC and DSO - the Distinguished Flying Cross in October 1944 for great determination and exceptional meteorological ability in bringing back accurate data, and the Distinguished Service Order in March 1945. In the official citation it stated, 'that he had never allowed the heaviest enemy opposition or adverse weather deter him from completing his allotted task and in consequence of his undoubted courage and determination he invariably obtained

excellent results. His reliability and devotion to duty have been of the utmost value to his unit.'

Maurice flew his last sortie of the war in December 1944, and over the next few months, together with John Baker, made several trips to Canada to transport Mosquitos from the De Havilland plant in Ontario to England.

At the beginning of May 1945 on account of their excellent team work the two men were selected to take a Mosquito to Canada as part of the Victory War Bond Drive. The plane known as F for Freddie was famous in its own right, having flown at least 213 combat operations, which was the highest record for any Allied bomber in WWII. They arrived in Calgary on 9th May, three days after Maurice had celebrated his 25th birthday, and the day after VE day.

Hundreds turned out to greet their arrival and were thrilled by a spectacular air display put on by Maurice in a celebration to mark the end of the European war. The crowds flocked to the airport to see the famous plane and meet its crew, many taking the opportunity to buy a bond and chalk their name on the plane. Unbelievably and tragically 24 hours later Maurice Briggs and John Baker would be dead, and the remains of F for Freddie scattered across the aerodrome.

The following day at 4pm, scheduled to fly the plane to other air bases, Maurice taxied the plane down the runway. Before departing he once again put on a display for the benefit of the spectators who had gathered, making two successful low level passes over the airfield. Tragically on a final daring pass the wing of his aircraft clipped a metal pole above the control tower causing it to crash in a field a third of a mile from the terminal

building, where it exploded into flames. The two men, although thrown clear from the wreckage were both killed instantly.

Two days later, Maurice Briggs and John Baker, escorted by an honour guard of 100 airmen, their coffins draped with the union jack and adorned simply with their hats and a single rose, passed through streets lined with hundreds of shocked and saddened mourners, on their way from a church which had been filled to overflowing to the cemetery. After a full military funeral they were buried side by side, in the Field of Honour in Burnsland Cemetery, Calgary.

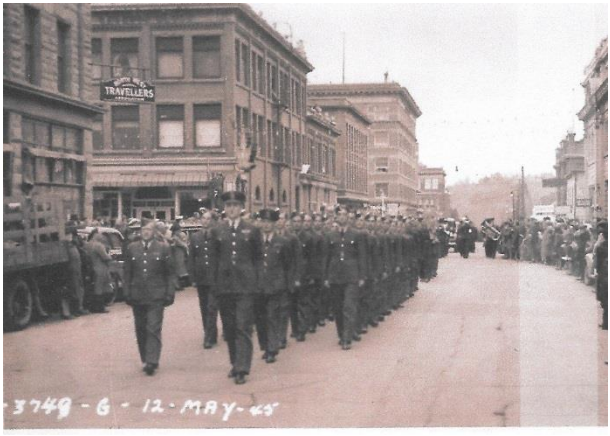

Figure 4
The funeral procession marching through the streets of Calgary

The shock at the tragic circumstances of their deaths was felt by many. One of their old commanders wrote how their deaths had upset him more than any that he had come across in the war. The Lancaster Guardian reported how the death of Maurice ‘had cast a gloom over Silverdale’, and The Globe and Mail newspaper of Toronto -‘that a deep sense of personal loss was felt by thousands. These two young men were all we always thought the

ideal fliers should be, modest and pleasant. They were the pride of a proud command. Maurice Briggs had flown the amazing number of 145 flights and John Baker 115. It was men like Maurice Briggs and John Baker who helped to save the worlds freedom.'

We should also spare a thought for Mrs Margaret Stewart Briggs who, having been widowed shortly after the tragic death of her eldest son, must have believed with the greatest of relief that her remaining son had managed to survive the war. We cannot begin to imagine her grief and devastation upon receiving the tragic news of Maurice's death coming so soon after VE day. Mrs Briggs continued to live alone at Glenroyd. In 1947 the house was converted into two flats, with Mrs Briggs living on the top floor and Richard Lambert and his family living on the ground floor. In 1959 she moved into Maryland care home in the village, and died in Lancaster Royal Infirmary on 1st October 1959.

Figure 5
John Maurice Winnington Briggs DSO, DFC, DFM

OBITUARY:
DR JOHN FINDLATER, 1925-2019

Sheila Jones

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Dr John Findlater, whose funeral was held on March 15th. He had been a full member of the local community since his arrival in Carnforth in 1950 and of the wider community through his involvement with the Medical Council, His involvement with the Mourholme Local History Society goes back certainly to 1993, when we know he collaborated with Jean Chatterley on an article for the magazine.

Surprisingly for such a quintessentially English GP, he was born in North Dakota in 1925. His father had practised in Edinburgh, but decided to take his chances in America. Great efforts did not meet with success and the family returned to Scotland in 1934; so it was from Edinburgh that John himself qualified in 1947.

After National Service, John was called as a locum to Carnforth, and this led to a life-long career there. He was extremely well-liked; how could he not be, with his professionalism, good humour, and caring manner? His time in medicine was very different from practice today, and, being an amateur historian, he wanted this recorded. This led to his articles entitled "24, Robin Hill" (the address of the practice in Carnforth that is now Ashtrees) and "Building a Practice". He also asked me in 2012, to record an oral history of his life, and this appeared in Mourholme's Spring 2014 issue.

Apart from these autobiographical pieces, John wrote numerous articles for the magazine and also contributed to the books, "Warton 1800-1850" and "Warton Parish 1850-1900". He

served on the committee for many years and as chairman from 1998-2001.

John left much for us to remember him by, but for those who had the privilege to know him, he will be recalled not for what he did but for what he was, a person rich in the fullness of life.

SEDGWICK GUNPOWDER WORKS TOUR
Andrew Davies

On the 12th of February, Mourholme Local History Society had a most interesting tour, led by Terry Bond, of the Gunpowder works at Sedgwick. The tour was scheduled in February because the works are in deciduous woodland, making it easier to see the remains in winter.

Figure 1
Concentration and intrepidity in equal proportions

The works was established by Walter Charles Strickland in 1857 but by the following year was already struggling because it was underfunded and could not produce enough powder. It was wound up in 1864. Henry Swinglehurst soon took over the site and made substantial investments including a new 20' waterwheel and the tramway. Production of 4,000 pounds a week was now possible by working shifts. The night workers would need lights and these were possibly candles behind glass.

From 1917 the works changed hands several times and were eventually closed by ICI in 1935. Gunpowder or blasting powder had been superseded by other explosives such as dynamite. The site was cleared of explosive material and then scrap.

The overriding priority for a gunpowder works was safety. Everything possible was done to reduce the chance of explosions and to reduce their impact if they should occur. This starts with the choice of the site, in a thinly populated area and continues with the small building at the site entrance where all workers had to leave not just matches, lighters and tobacco but all metal objects, particularly iron. Any studded boots had brass studs rather than the normal iron.

The gunpowder made at Sedgwick had 70% saltpetre or potassium nitrate with sulphur (both of which are imported) and charcoal. It was used as an explosive for mining etc. rather than for firearms, which would usually have had a higher proportion of saltpetre. The type of product from Sedgwick is also termed blasting powder.

As the refining of the ingredients progressed, so the mixture became more likely to explode. First the saltpetre was boiled to purify it. Then the three ingredients were mixed together in the Preparing House (of which nothing remains) in barrels using wooden paddles on brass shafts. This produced green charge, which was stored in the Green Charge House. The green charge was then ground in the Incorporating Mill. This was divided into sections in a fan shape, with thick stone walls at the back and between the sections but thin wooden walls and a wooden roof so that if there was an explosion, it should be confined to one section. A later improvement was to incorporate sand in the roof that would drop down if there was an explosion. The mix was

then pressed between brass plates in the Press House to remove moisture and produce Press Cake. Next came the Corning House where the powder was ground between rollers and sieved through a copper mesh. A graphite coating was added in the Glazing House and then surface dust was removed in the Dusting House.

Some of the powder was used loose for blasting and would have been loaded into cotton bags then into barrels. The remainder went to the Cartridge Press House where 80 cartridges were made at a time with a hollow centre for the fuse to be added later. The cartridges were then wrapped in paper and boxed in the Packing House. Both products were then dried in the Drying House or Stove House at a temperature of 126°F. The flue from the Stove House went some distance up the hillside to isolate any sparks.

The whole site was powered by water. A leat led down from the River Kent which forms the eastern boundary of the site. It powered a 37' diameter or 90 horsepower waterwheel at the Incorporating Mill and an 18' waterwheel at the Sawmill, used by the coopers when making the barrels. Later five turbines were used. There was also a basic tramway on which men pushed trucks around the site.

Despite precautions there were accidents. In 1871 powder residue exploded during maintenance work in the Press House with one fatality. There was an explosion in 1874 in the Corning House when two men were badly injured but survived. In 1875 another explosion in the Corning House spread to the Press House, killing four men including both survivors of the previous year. A dramatic explosion in the Cartridge House in 1883 was heard in Kendal and badly damaged the works but there were

only three deaths. The replacement Cartridge House was sunk between banks to contain any future blast. One death came from a lightning strike in 1885 followed by two more in 1903 during maintenance. In 1906 lightning struck again and did considerable damage, particularly to the Press House,

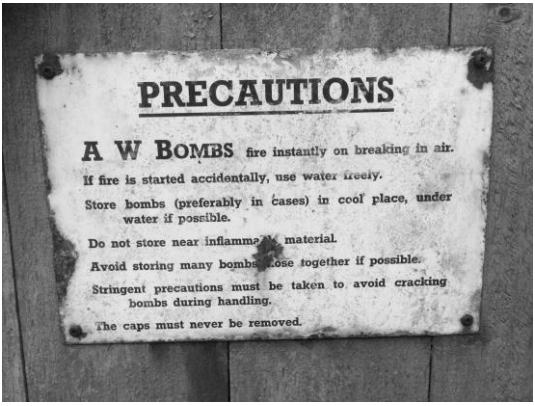

Figure 2
Fixed to an old door.

although this was the only building with a lightning conductor, but there were no deaths or even injuries. However considering the material being dealt with, the number of fatal accidents seems low and declined over time indicating safety improvements. This was in the producer's interest, as quite apart from the fatalities, damage badly interrupted production.

Several of the buildings on the site have Grade II listing. The site is now owned by the National Trust as part of the land around Sizergh Castle and has been used as a caravan park since 1977. The importance of the site was only recognised in 2000. There had been several other Gun Powder Works nearby in Cumbria but little if any remains of these.

REPORTS OF EVENING MEETINGS
Clive Holden, Simon Williams and Sheila Jones

31st October 2018: Early Maps - Antiquity to the Tudors.
To give an adequate summary of this talk by **Dr Bill Shannon** would probably require enough space for three magazines, so what follows is a précis of a summary, inadequate though it will be.

It is hardly surprising that the earliest maps would prove baffling to most of us, as the world, or as much of it as was known, would often be represented on an east-west axis or, in at least one case, on a south-north axis, and even so would bear only a vague resemblance to the earth's true shape. By mediaeval times much more of the Earth's surface had been charted and, as well as being informative in various ways, many maps could be regarded as works of art. Amongst the names mentioned, (most of them new to the uninitiated), were Eratosthenes of Cyrene who estimated the size of the Earth in the 3rd century BC, and Agrippa (64 BC to 12 BC) who constructed a circular chart showing a complete survey of the Roman Empire. Of Rome itself there was an early 2nd century A.D., very large detailed marble map of the city, on a south-north orientation, of which only fragments remain, though more fragments are still being discovered.

The Peutinger Table of the 4th or 5th century shows the road network of the Roman Empire, excluding Britain and the Iberian peninsula, and the Madaba Map is a 6th century Jordanian mosaic depicting the Holy land with the emphasis on Jerusalem. Several centuries later we come to the Mappa Mundi, a complex map, the best known one being at Hereford Cathedral, though there are others, such as the Polychronicon by Ranulf Higden,

which are considered to be degenerate forms. Such maps were not intended to be accurate navigational aids, but in many cases were used as teaching aids, a kind of mediaeval encyclopaedia. Of more navigational use to mariners were Portolan Maps, which helped us to rule the waves. Some portraits, such as one of Queen Elizabeth with the course of the defeated Spanish Armada as part of the background, were good for propaganda purposes. Even very early paintings and statues included globes, proof of the belief that the Earth is round. Other ground-breaking maps included the 16th century Carta Marina of the Scandinavian countries, the most accurate of its time; the 16th century map of Anglo-Saxon Britain (not completed) by Laurence Nowell, who made an accurate survey of the east coast of Ireland; the Gough Map, the first pre-17th century map to show routes and distances, and the first county maps by Christopher Saxton (c.1540 – c.1610).

Not all maps have been accepted at face value; the authenticity of the Vinland Map, held at Yale University, has been questioned, and Charles Bertram's 18th century 'Description of Britain' deceived the antiquarian William Stukeley and many others for the best part of a hundred years before being declared a forgery. After the question and answer session much interest was shown in those maps which Dr Shannon had placed on display.

28th November 2018: Warton Crag. An Iron Age Fort – is it ?

A large attendance gathered in eager anticipation to hear **Kevin Grice's** opinion on this subject, but left no wiser than when they arrived. Not that it was Kevin's fault. A better topic for the evening might have been 'Let there be Light', but there was none, and we were left in the dark, due to a local power cut. The consolation was that Kevin agreed to return at a future date to shed more light on the subject.

December 19: The Chimney at Jenny Brown's Point

Simon Williams began the first part of this talk (shared between him and Louise Martin) by saying that his interest in the chimney was piqued while he was researching other features and histories at Jenny Brown's Point: the Matchless boating disaster; and Walduck's Wall. Whilst much had been written about the chimney, he was unable to track down primary sources which might corroborate any of the various theories. Hearing that the Morecambe Bay Partnership (MBP) had successfully secured Heritage Lottery Funding to undertake community archaeology projects, Simon made contact and soon met the newly appointed MBP archaeologist, Louise Martin. It was agreed that the chimney would make a good subject for a community archaeology project. A team of volunteers was recruited – including a good number from the Mourholme membership.

MBP organised training courses on several aspects of archaeology, starting with the methods and sources of Documentary Research. Simon described the maps, letters, newspapers, and legal documents that were pored over – both at Lancashire Archives in Preston, and sourced from elsewhere. The most likely new theory, it emerged, combined the stories told in two sources. Firstly, there is a set of papers in the Lancashire Archives concerning the illegal activities of Yealand's Lord of the Manor, Robert Gibson. In the 1780s. He mined minerals, including copper, on land that was not his, wrongly assuming he had the mineral rights to land that had once been Commons. That mining took place at the base of Warton Crag, and on Heald Brow, above Jenny Brown's Point. Two High Court Cases were brought by the Towneley family, of Leighton Hall, and Gibson was forced to desist. It is thought he was probably behind the building of a smelter at Jenny Brown's Point: an intriguing letter written by an antiquarian in 1788

makes a passing reference to meeting Robert Gibson in 1785, "who for some months in the summer makes Yelling (sic) the place of his residence, on account of the copper works he is projecting there".

The second party to the enterprise may have been a trio of gentlemen – John Jenkinson (the schoolmaster at the Quaker school in Yealand), Anthony Atkinson and John Parkinson. A lease dated 1784, obtained from the National Archives, gave these men the rights to mine minerals on Crown lands in Warton in Lindeth, and to erect works for smelting the result.

These findings would be largely consistent with the written works of the local historian, the late Tom Bolton, whose family lived and worked in Silverdale for many generations. Tom recorded that an ancestor of his had been hired to help build a copper smelter at Jenny Brown's Point in the 1780s, that Welshmen were brought in with the necessary machinery, and that the operation was quite short-lived; ending in the early nineteenth century. He wrote that copper had been obtained from Crag Foot, and Heald Brow.

The first Ordnance Survey map for the area shows the works in ruins by 1848. Why had the operation been so short-lived? The Townley court cases had cut off one source of Gibson's minerals. Robert Gibson died in 1790. And this does seem to be a poor site for a large industrial process – the highest tides inundate the site entirely, and there is archaeological evidence of several attempts to hold back the sea from the chimney. Lastly, it is very unlikely that such a small operation could compete economically with the vast copper smelting industry of Swansea, which by then was the world leader.

Louise Martin began the second part of the talk by recounting a wide range of archaeological techniques that had been brought to bear, most of which employed trained volunteers. Physical hand-drawn surveys and measurements of the site were supplemented by photography made by drone flights. The fields behind the chimney were surveyed using magnetometry, earth resistance, and ground-penetrating radar, but with no result. Finally, with expert professional advice and guidance, the volunteers embarked upon a physical dig of three exploratory trenches at the chimney site. These revealed more of the foundations of the associated buildings, and recovered samples of clinker and other burnt residues, the contents of an ash pit, and a few artefacts. Including part of a clay pipe of a design consistent with the late 18th Century.

The final stages of archaeology consisted of restoring the site: replacing turfs and anchoring them; and processing the samples recovered. Louise explained the range of external experts consulted over the finds. Whilst no conclusive proof could be obtained for copper smelting, the physical remains at the site were seen to be consistent with those of a calcining reverberatory furnace – which would have processed crushed ore-bearing rocks to an intermediate state suitable for transporting onwards for sale and further processing.

Louise ended her section of the talk by sharing with us the latest draft of an illustration (just like the end of a Time Team episode on TV) which was a a reconstruction of how the industrial site might have appeared during its short time of operation.

30th January 2019: The Almshouses of North West England. Dr. Jean Turnbull made a welcome return to tell us about the history of almshouses, first established in northern Europe in

monastic times, St. Oswald's in Worcester (c. 990A.D.) being the oldest in the U.K.. They were intended to aid the aged and infirm, and, since they were Christian foundations, would include chantries, though these were later dissolved, many of them to be converted into extra accommodation.

Later conditions for acceptance into an almshouse meant signing a Letter of Appointment, agreeing to abide by the rules laid down by the appropriate trust or charity. Rules might require that the applicant be of old age (over 50!), live locally, be in financial need, be pious and of good character, and be of the correct sex or the right trade or profession.

Some of us would be surprised to learn that more almshouses were built in the 20th century than in previous centuries. Not all old almshouses survived; an example being Dorothy Dowker's 'Old Maids' Hospital' in Kendal, built in 1833 and demolished in 1963. Perhaps the best known surviving local almshouses are the six Tattersall Almshouses, the gift of William Tattersall, brewer, of St. Anthony's House , Milnthorpe, built in 1884, with the usual stipulations that they should be for local people in reduced circumstances. They figure (in disguise) in Constance Holme's novel 'The Trumpet in the Dust'.

Other almshouses in the area to be mentioned were St. Anne's at Appleby, Miss Rowlandson's at Grayrigg. In addition, almshouses in both Lancaster and Kendal, the latter with the help of the Mayor of Kendal's Fund, figure prominently in the provision of almshouses.

It might be supposed that most almshouse occupants would be grateful for their accommodation, but a sobering thought is that the Almshouse Residents' Action Group complains bitterly that

having no security of tenure leaves them as second class citizens, subject to the whims of what they term uncaring trustees.

16th January 2019. Warton Crag: re-appraising the past.
After the power cut which cancelled his first visit, in November, **Kevin Grice** made a welcome return for this extra meeting. Whilst the very large audience was fascinated by his presentation, an account of it would be superfluous as he has agreed to allow us to print a fuller version of his findings in our magazine. Part I of this exploration of the purpose of the structure on top of Warton Crag appears on page1 of this magazine. Part II will appear in the October magazine.

27th February 2019: The Development of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Palatinate of Lancaster.
Beginning with the unwelcome news that in early mediaeval times our region was a part of Yorkshire, **Mike Derbyshire** went on to tell us that after various forfeitures of land owned by persons considered disloyal to the crown, Henry of Grosmont was created the first Duke of Lancaster in 1351, and, after his death, the title passed to his son in law, John of Gaunt, Earl of Lancaster, who had married Henry's daughter Blanche. When Henry of Grosmont died his palatinate powers died with him, but they were restored to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, by his father, Edward III.

So, what were palatinate powers? They were royal powers, mostly to do with the law and courts. They were exercised by the King's representative, (in this case the Duke of Lancaster), in areas which were difficult to govern, and would include the collection of feudal dues and the holding of courts at Preston and Lancaster, thus enabling the presumably already rich duke to

become very much richer. Lancastrians may be surprised to learn that while John of Gaunt, through his first two marriages, became the richest of men he was also the most hated. Little would he care!

Ever since the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V the title Duke of Lancaster has been held by the reigning monarch, and even though its powers declined during the 17th century, it remains as an important source of revenue for the monarch, with the Chancellor of the Duchy responsible for the administration of the estates and rents, though he has little to do with the running of its day-to-day affairs.

NOTES AND QUERIES

BOYS' TOWN.
Clive Holden

The original Boys' Town was set up in the United States by a Father Flanagan in 1921 to help 'underprivileged and delinquent youths', the aim being to reform them and make them into responsible adults. In 1938 a film was made with Spencer Tracy cast as Father Flanagan and Mickey Rooney as a severely delinquent youth, ending with the inevitable transformation of Mickey Rooney from super-delinquent into angelic 'mayor' of the town. So much for America!

In the very late 1930s or early 1940s a young man by the name of Len Poore set up a Boys' Town in London. Whether it was modelled on the US version and aimed specifically at delinquents I know not, but it was obviously intended to keep boys fully occupied with interesting activities and so out of mischief. Len kept a photographic record of Boys' Town activities in an album, and added to it on his subsequent move to the Isle of Man (almost certainly sent there during his army service). After a spell there he was transferred to the Carnforth area and billeted at Warton Grange, where he set up another branch of Boys' Town, but it was short lived as he was soon to depart from the area, possibly to France.

My brother Tom (four years my senior) and I both joined Boys' Town, though we laid no claim to being delinquents. Our only memory of any activity was playing a game of cricket on a concrete wicket near to the Shovel Inn at Warton. We know, however, that Len Poore probably departed in late July of 1944, as he was the sole guest at my birthday party (in itself unusual

as we didn't normally have guests) and he gave me a book entitled 'Frankie and the Wolf Cubs' which remains in my possession. He may have been a guest because we knew of his impending departure. The other tangible evidence of his existence is an envelope ('war economy label: re-use of envelopes') addressed to A/Sen. Capt. Tom Holden, BOYS' TOWN, 6, King's Drive, CARNFORTH, Lancs., bearing a 2½d stamp and the date 27th July 1944. Unfortunately the rest of the post mark is illegible. The envelope is empty; perhaps it contained a request for Tom to look after the photographic album until it could be retrieved. Whatever it contained, it was our last contact with Len Poore. The fact that the album was not retrieved may suggest that all did not go well for him. Did he survive the war to continue his work with 'Boys' Town'? We will probably never know.

The photographic album was in my possession until 2010 when, feeling that as there were no photos of activities in the Carnforth area, it would be of more interest to people in the Isle of Man, I donated it to the museum at Douglas, where presumably it remains. The lack of photos taken in our area strongly suggests that Len's stay was indeed a short one before the army sent him elsewhere.

So, now to the point of this article. Were you, or do you know, of anyone (delinquent or not) who was a member of 'Boys' Town'? It's a bit of a long shot, I know, as we are all rather long in the tooth, but miracles do happen. The address on the envelope suggests that Boys' Town was run on military lines and that Tom was an Acting Senior Captain (he does not remember). If you are going to the Isle of Man on holiday, why not pop into the museum and do a bit of the research which I should have done before handing the album over.

Mourholme Local History Society's LECTURE PROGRAMME 2019-20: September 2019 – April 2020

25th September 2019 :
Lanty Slee – A Smuggler's Life: Margaret Dickinson
Lancelot 'Lanty' Slee, born 1802, was a legend in his own lifetime, some of which was spent in jail. He operated as a farmer, illegal whisky distiller and smuggler from the beautiful Little Langdale area, where his activities provided for his wife and 10 children.

30th October 2019:
The Northumbrian Kingdom: Dr Fiona Edmunds
The powerful kingdom of Northumbria at its height reached from the Mersey to southwest Scotland, and from the Humber to the Forth. How and why did it expand into our region, and what caused its decline in around 1100? Access to the Irish Sea was certainly important.

27th November 2019
The Pilgrimage of Grace: Dick O'Brien
The Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536-7, was the largest uprising faced by Henry VIII. His changes to English religion and church were a main cause. Cumberland and Westmorland were heavily involved, and the rebellion culminated with a battle outside Carlisle Castle and the summary execution of 74 men.

18th December 2019
The Cumbrian Coast Railway: David Hindle
The construction of the Cumbrian Coast Railway led to a transport revolution, giving ordinary people greater mobility for work, business and pleasure. Excursion trains, steam specials and regular services have enriched the lives of passengers for nearly two centuries. The Cumbrian Coast is one of Britain's great railway journeys.

29th January 2020
The Lancaster Canal: John Acres
The Lancaster Canal celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2019 and this talk will explore the reasons for its development and its contribution to the economy of the region. Today its function as a linear countryside park dominates, but plans to restore the canal to Kendal are more than a pipe dream.

26th February 2020
Sex & Sin in 17th Century Lancashire: Alan Crosby
The 17th century is seen as a time when magistrates and church courts sought to enforce moral behaviour. The reality was rather different. This talk is based on court records, which include plenty of vivid verbatim testimony, and some very colourful language.

25th March 2020
The North-West and Slavery: Dr Nick Radburn
The north-west has deep connections to the transatlantic slave trade. Thousands of men from this region invested in the slave trade, served upon slave ships, or traded for slaves in Africa and the Americas during the eighteenth century.

29th April 2020

A Cumbrian Colony in the South Pacific: David Fellows

Norfolk Island is a small island in the South Pacific with a large history. Discovered by Captain Cook, in time it has been a penal colony, a new home to Cumbria's Fletcher Christian and the Bounty mutineers, a tax haven and a tourist destination. But since 1990 a modern dispute has arisen, a sort of Brexit dilemma!

This talk will be preceded by the Mourholme AGM.