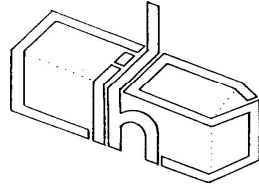


Cumbria Industrial History Society

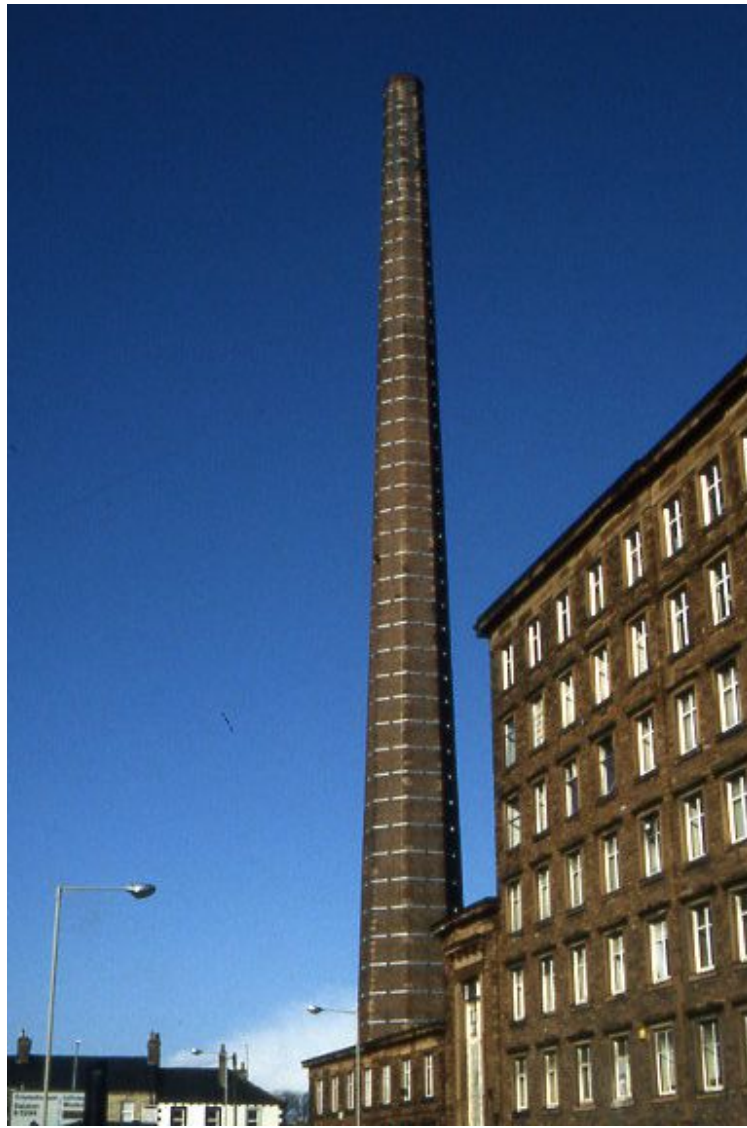


## BULLETIN

[www. Cumbria-industries.org.uk](http://www.Cumbria-industries.org.uk)

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AUGUST 2010



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## **EDITORIAL**

I have a couple of apologies to make first, for mistakes in the last Bulletin. First to William Varley for missing his name off his excellent article on Woodland Industries in Mallorca. Secondly to Philip Ashforth for getting his name incorrect for the trip to Harrington.

Next year marks a special year for the Society it will be the 25<sup>th</sup> Spring Conference. Alas we have had to leave the Ambleside Campus due to changes within the University of Cumbria. However, to mark this special occasion we are going to the Reghed Centre at Penrith. The subject is technology in Country Houses and to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary we have got two eminent national speakers Professor Marylin Palmer and Dr. Ian West. Professor Palmer is the past president of the AIA. Further details are in the Bulletin.

Before that we have the October conference at Maryport and this looks to be a great programme covering a wide range of industries. Booking forms are enclosed.

Please note the alterations to two of this years meetings as shown in the events part of the Bulletin.

The project to digitalise Mike's slide collection is progressing. The committee has nearly raised sufficient funds from smaller groups etc. to avoid attempting a HLF grant and all the trials and tribulations that involved and Helen Caldwell should be thanked for all the hard work she has put in on behalf of the Society.

The meetings this year have all been well attended and it is nice to see so many members enjoying themselves. Good attendances are always a good reward for the committee who put a lot of effort into arranging the meetings and also the people who run them. If you have any ideas for meetings or speakers the Committee is always looking for ideas.

The front picture is Dixon's chimney and Shaddongate Mill Carlisle.

## **CIHS ACTIVITIES IN 2010**

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> August woodland Industries and Steam Bus Trip**

### **CANCELLED**

Due to a problem with the steam bus this excursion has been cancelled. Geoff should have contacted all the people who had booked places by phone. It is hoped to run this trip again next year.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010 Autumn Conference.**

This is to held at the Waves Centre in Maryport and will cover Maryport and West Cumbria subjects. SEE ENCLOSED BOOKING FORM.

**November 16<sup>th</sup> Evening meeting 7.30 PM NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE**

### **GREENODD VILLAGE HALL**

**Lost Worlds. An introduction to the MDS slide collection.**

This will be a slide show by Geoff of some of the slides from the Mike Davies-Shiels collection that show sites and processes in Cumbria that have long disappeared.

## **MEETINGS IN 2011**

**April Conference Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2011 Country House Technology**

As mentioned in the editorial this will be the Society's 25<sup>th</sup> spring conference. With the demise of the Charolette Mason Campus at Ambleside we have moved the conference to the Rheged Centre near Penrith.

We are Pleased to announce that we have attracted two speakers on the subject from Leicester University Professor Marilyn Palmer who is a past president of the AIA and Dr. Ian West. They will give the morning talks on Country House technology.

The focus of the afternoon will be on examples of the use of technology in country houses in Cumbria. Central heating, water supply, gas lighting, hydro and steam generated electricity, hydraulic power for pumps and lifts, sewerage systems and refrigeration are some of the potential subjects.

So we are looking for speakers to give a short presentation (20-30 minutes) either on one of these technologies or on the application of some of them to one particular country house. Is this something you yourself have investigated? Or have you been to a talk that someone else has given?

Please contact Roger Baker if you can help.

## **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2011 Nenthead**

A tour around the Nenthead site with Peter Jackson ex Chairman of the North Penine Heritage Trust who has worked on and researched the site for the last 40 years.

Further details of all next years programme will appear in the December Bulletin.

### **USEFUL WEBSITES**

Listed buildings can now be searched for online by parish at

<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/Login.aspx>

GRACE'S GUIDE : THE BEST OF BRITISH ENGINEERING 1750-1960s

[www.gracesguide.co.uk](http://www.gracesguide.co.uk)

Grace's Guide describes itself as "the most comprehensive source of information on the engineering industry in Britain from the start of the Industrial Revolution to the 1960s", and I'm not in a position to argue!

When I looked it had 39,000+ pages of information and 36,000+ images on early companies, their products and the people who designed them, and it's still growing.

It's all organised into categories from Agricultural Machinery to Textile Mills, but you can just search for anything you are interested in. Sometimes you may just find a photo, sometimes the whole contents of a book, sometimes nothing – but it's well worth a look.

Roger Baker

### **SITE NEWS**

A couple of interesting sites have been highlighted in the recent past in the county and these have been circulated around those members whose e-mail addresses the secretary has. For those you did not receive an e-mail or would like a permanent copy of the sites they are below.

#### **RUSLAND VALLEY MILL.**

This is a small mill building at High Longmire. It is recorded on the HER as a fulling mill although there is a possibility that it was a Thrash mill. The large doors would suggest a use as a corn mill at some time in its history.







The initial query was about this stone

Initial thoughts were it was either a piece of architectural stone or possibly a stack stone (upside down). A number of these were used to support old fashioned corn stacks before they were threshed to prevent access to the stacks by rats and mice. The overhang made it hard for rats etc. to climb up from the ground. The majority would have had a large flat stone placed on top to look like a mushroom.

Unfortunately the site is now being restored and the stone has disappeared.



The mill interior before restoration/alteration.



The remains of the waterwheel.

## GREENODD LIMEKILN

Recent work near the pub in Greenodd has revealed a limekiln which appears to have been hidden behind a lean to building. Presumably since the limekiln went out of use the houses have been built close to the top of it and also close to the side of it.



If you have any comments on these sites please contact the editor. Or if you would like to be included in the e-mail loop for notification of other sites please contact Helen Caldwell.

**Descriptions of manufacturing businesses, premises, processes, and products in the Carlisle Journal, Further Addenda 1801- 4 and Addenda 1805- 7**

(Continued from the *Bulletin of the Cumbria Industrial History Society*, Nos. 54-56 and 76)

Compiled by G. W. Oxley.

When this project started the criteria for inclusion were relatively narrow. In particular the material relating to premises, processes and plant received undue prominence at the expense of entries relating to finance, business structure, and the products of manufacture. As the project has progressed the criteria for inclusion widened to overcome these shortcomings. The material below was originally excluded but would have been included under the wider criteria adopted later.

**618. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A ship called *Alliance* was launched at the yard of T Kirk  
CJ 141, 4 July 1801

**619. A proposed iron foundry at Carlisle or Dalston**

An iron foundry is much wanted in this place for the accommodation of the trade on general. Those who wish to encourage such an undertaking may see plans estimates, etc at the shop of the publishers of this paper who have engaged some good workmen in the

above business. They can also accommodate the company if required with a water mill and conveniences on Dalston Green if that situation should be preferred  
*CJ* 144, 25 July 1801

**620. Shipbuilding at Harrington**

On 2 August a ship called *Atlantic* was launched at the yard of Askew & Co for Mr Race  
*CJ* 146, 8 August 1801

**621. A water corn mill and kiln at Bowness**

Occupied by Richard Hodgson and advertised to be let by Joseph Liddell  
*CJ* 147, 15 August 1801

**622. Shipbuilding at?**

A vessel called *Neptune* of 563 tons was launched at the yard of Fisher & Barnes for Messrs Hartley  
*CJ* 152, 19 September 1801

**623. Shipbuilding at?**

A vessel of 200 tons called *Eliza* was launched at the yard of James Shepherd for William Coulthard  
*CJ* 152, 19 September 1801

**624. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A vessel of 256 tons called *Dryad* was launched at the yard of Messrs. Brocklebank  
*CJ* 161, 21 November 1801

**625. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A vessel of 229 tons called *Lightfoot* was launched at the yard of Messrs. Nicholson for Captain Wilson  
*CJ* 161, 21 November 1801

**626. Flax and corn mills at Rowantrees near Bewcastle**

A farm with a flax mill two corn mills, a cottage and ten acres of land to be let  
*CJ* 172, 6 February 1802

**627. Textile manufacture at Mount Pleasant in Whitehaven**

A number of buildings for warehouses, warping rooms, weaving shops and .... houses. Already there are several good weaving shops and many more may easily be fitted up. Any person eligible to begin the manufacturing business may have an excellent dwelling house on the spot containing two good parlours, four good rooms, a large garret, and a convenient kitchen and a garden.  
Advertised to be let *CJ* 177, 13 March 1802

**628. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A vessel called *Experiment* was launched at the yard of Messrs. T & J Brocklebank  
*CJ* 179, 27 March 1802

**629. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A vessel called *Britannia* was launched at the yard of Mr Bowes for Captain Wilson Nixon  
*CJ* 187, 22 May 1802

**630. Shipbuilding at Workington**

A vessel called *Wilton* was launched at the yard of Messrs. Wood & Co. for William Fell  
*CJ* 194, 10 July 1802

**631. Bleaching and corn milling at Wigton**

A valuable bleach green with a good water mill now occupied by Joseph and John Coulthard and a windmill well found for grinding all kinds of grain on an extensive scale advertised to be let  
*CJ* 197, 31 July 1802

**632. Muslin weaving in Carlisle**

Whereas an unlawful and dangerous combination has been entered into by several journeyman muslin weavers in and about the City of Carlisle and whereas Richard Bailey, late of Bochengate, Carlisle, muslin weaver in abetting and encouraging the said combination has threatened the persons and properties of several individuals with destruction and been guilty of other violent and unlawful acts notice is hereby given that whosoever will give such information that the said Richard Bailey may be apprehended and prosecuted to conviction shall receive a reward of 5gns. By application to the Committee of Muslin Manufacturers at The Grapes Inn in the City of Carlisle and the name of the person informing shall be kept secret. Carlisle August 14 1802  
*CJ* 200, 21 August 1802

**633. Cotton spinning in Carlisle**

Last week an extensive building for cotton spinning belonging to Dr Heysham was covered in  
*CJ* 202, 4 September 1802

**634. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A vessel called *Augusta* in honour of Lady Lowther, was launched at the yard of William Wilson last Saturday  
*CJ* 219, 31 December 1802

**635. Oakshaw and Haythwaite Collieries Bewcastle**

Advertised to be let by the owner Sir James Graham  
*CJ* 220, 1 January 1803

**636. Coal mining at Workington**

On Monday night at 8PM the woodwork belonging to the water engine at Union Pit was discovered to be on fire. In a very few minutes the flames had gained considerable strength owing to the quantity of oil, tar, tallow, etc. made use of in the machine but

happily by the well directed exertions of several people from Chapel Town who immediately ran to the spot the fire was got under control without doing any material injury

*CJ* 222, 22 January 1803

**637. Shipbuilding at Whitehaven**

A vessel called *Commerce* was launched at the yard of Fisher & Bowes last Monday morning

*CJ* 225, 12 February 1803

**638. Muslin weaving in Carlisle**

As Muslin weaving has become such a fashionable pursuit in this city and produces such an abundance of employment nothing can be better calculated to engage the attention of females than this light and easy branch. Numbers have already been engaged in this way for some time and they find it altogether suitable to their capacity and agreeable to their inclination to have produced good work and raised themselves from 10/6d. To £1.1.0 per week. But there arises another consideration. As weaving shops are chiefly filled with men, or at least superintended by instructors of the male sex the other sex are in consequence necessarily subject to an intercourse of person and conversation incompatible with their modesty. This presents another idea viz that as some have already adopted the plan of having female teachers as well as female apprentices it would be highly decorous to pursue it as in that way many shops might be well filled with work people and every inconvenience and impropriety to as the present general practice of associating together males and females would be obviated while the female part of the community would enjoy the comfortable recompense of a useful and profitable employment

*CJ* 227, 2 March 1803

**639. Brewing at Maryport**

A common brewery and malting convenience, granaries, storage houses, mash vats, coolers, working vats, cellars, etc. known as The New Brewery, with a great number of half barrels, and quarter casks advertised for sale. Apply to Mr John Twentyman, the present agent.

*CJ* 231, 26 March 1803

**640. Manufacturing supplies in Carlisle**

T. Stubbs at the head of Bochengate holds stocks of shuttles, fans, web glasses, brushes, etc. and can obtain to order other implements used in manufacture which have hitherto been procured with some difficulty

*CJ* 232, 2 April 1803

**641. Coal mining at Warnell Fell**

On Wednesday night a new colliery was opened on the estate of Robert Warwick, Sheriff of Cumberland. It bids fair to be of service to the county at large and also of singular benefit to the owner

*CJ* 255, 10 September 1803

**642. Manufacturing at Low Cummersdale and Denton Holme**

Nisi prius case of Sowerby against McCormick (nominated as defendant for Messrs Forsters, of Carlisle, bankers and manufacturers) for trespass on the grounds of Sowerby in coming and going to Low Cummersdale. The plaintiff contended that there was no ancient road or footpath through Denton Holme, Miss Graham's field, and other fields near the river Caldew belonging to the plaintiff and that the ancient road lay through Shaddongate and Murrell Hill. The difference between the two is 44 yards. Witnesses gave evidence to this effect among them Thomas Losh who stated that there was a print field at the head of Denton Holme, that there was no sluice in 1744, that the mill race and sluice were made in 1747, that there was no plank over the mill race there then, that there was no common footpath there then, that the new sluice was made by Mr. Millburn in 1780 after his trial with the Corporation.

*CJ* 260, 15 October 1803

**643. Manufacture in Carlisle**

A shop in the Market Place lately occupied by James Beeby, manufacturer, advertised to be let

*CJ* 324, 15 January 1805

**644. Muslin weaving in Carlisle**

Assignment for the benefit of creditors by Josiah Hodgson, claims to be lodged with Messrs Donald & Co.

*CJ* 324, 15 January 1805

**645. Cotton manufacture in Carlisle**

Thomas Atkinson Esq. who is a partner in the firm of Heysham & Co. was set upon by two ruffians while riding from Carlisle to Stenton

*CJ* 326, 19 January 1805

**646. Papermaking at Simonscales near Cockermouth**

A papermill with a good water power advertised for sale

*CJ* 328, 2 February 1805

**647. Muslin manufacture in Bochengate, Carlisle**

A fire at the premises of Mr Thompson caused by pieces of muslin which were drying being wafted by the wind onto the stove. Mr Irving, the foreman, stopped the progress of the flames

*CJ* 332, 2 March 1805

**648. Brewing and manufacturing at Wigton**

The newly erected brewery of Messrs Hudson and Skelton was damaged by fire and threatened the manufacture of Joseph Hodge

*CJ* 335, 23 March 1805



**649. Iron working at Seaton**

The partnership of James Spedding, William Hicks, Joseph Tiffin Senhouse, George Bigland, Richard Dearman and John Skyrin trading as Spedding, Hichks, Senhouse & Co. was established for a term of 21 years on 29 May 1784. It expired on 29 May last and will not be continued. Carlisle Spedding esq., Baldwin Wake esq. and Sarah his wife, Ann Spedding, spinster, Elizabeth Spedding, spinster, George Bigland esq., Robert Dickinson and Robert Russel have sole power and will collect and pay al debts of the late partnership. They will continue the ironworks in all its branches as Spedding, Dickinson & Co and have appointed Robert Dickinson as manager  
*CJ 345, 1 June 1805*

**650. Weaving at Hayton**

William Milburn, a muslin weaver .absconded on the first if June from the employment of Joseph Faulder without just cause. He is 5'6" in height and 17 years old with short dark hair and dark complexion and is supposed to have engaged himself as a servant in agriculture  
*CJ 349, 29 June 1805*

**651. Carding and spinning at Caldbeck**

Isaac Saul has removed from The Grey Goat where he used to take in work to the White Hart in English Street  
*CJ 354, 3 August 1805*

**652. Water cornmill at Monkhill**

Advertised to be let. The owner, Mr Langcake reserves half the flax mill adjoining the water corn mill to himself. The mill is conveniently close to Sandsfield where vessels sail once a fortnight to Whitehaven, Liverpool, etc. Proposals to Mr Langcake  
*CJ 356, 17 August 1805*

**653. Alabaster quarry at Stainrigg**

A quarry has been opened by Daniel Wilson who has alabaster for sale  
*CJ 359, 7 September 1805*

**654. A water corn mill in All Hallows parish**

Harby Brow Mill advertised for sale  
*CJ 359, 7 September 1805*

**655. Corn mills at Carlisle**

Borough Mill now let to John Sewell and George Sewell, Bridge End Mill and kiln now let to William McKnight and Thomas McKnight, and Castle Mill now let to John Jackson and Robert Nanson advertised to let by Carlisle Corporation  
*CJ 359, 7 September 1805*



**656. Hat making in Carlisle**

Wanted two steady finishers, one of whom must be used to stiffening; also a few steady stuff and wool men. Apply to Messrs Owen & Thompson

*CJ* 359, 7 September 1805

**657. Colliery at Hewer Hill, Castle Sowerby**

Advertised for sale

*CJ* 362, 28 September 1805

**658. Theft of Textile products**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of last month villains broke into the carts of Mr Thomas Wright, carrier, at Temon near Brampton and stole a parcel containing blue and white 6-4 checks and 9-8 crossover checks, another containing 1 dozen 4-? handkerchiefs blue and red in the? and white border, and a truss containing three pieces of printed furniture and six webs of Irish linen. A reward of £20 is offered for information.

*CJ* 364, 12 October 1805

**659. Tanning and glue making in Kendal**

A tan yard, a skin yard and a croft on the west side if the River Kent in Kendal with large and convenient drying houses, warehouses, workshops, etc. On the premises are 17 tan pits, 12 lime pits, three baits, 340 gine-frames, 31 glue troughs, and other valuable utensils for carrying on the business of a tanner, skinner and glue maker to a great extent. Advertised for sale by the assignees in bankruptcy of Bryan Vearty. Also the stock in trade including tanned leather, owzed leather, raw hides, hides in the pits, glue, several tons of spetches for making glue and several packs of skin wool of different qualities; also five houses and household goods.

*CJ* 369, 16 November 1807

**660. Dyeing at Ritson's Lane near Irish Gate, Carlisle**

Joseph Thomas and Joseph Graham have dissolved their partnership

*CJ* 370, 23 November 1805

**661. Dyeing, Calendering and Glazing at workhouses near the Borough Mill, Carlisle**

Joseph Thomas returns thanks for past support and seeks further business from manufacturers and the public. He also takes in blue and white printing and cleans clothes and carpets

*CJ* 370, 23 November 1805

**662. Dyeing at Ritson's Lane near Irish Gate, Carlisle**

Joseph Graham returns thanks for past support for his business at this old established dye house. He has employed additional hands and does fancy colours to the patterns with the greatest exactness. He attends the markets at Ecclefechan, Longtown and Brampton as usual.

*CJ* 371, 30 November 1805

**663. Calico Manufacture in Carlisle**

Insolvency of William Armstrong of Stanwix  
*CJ* 378, 18 January 1806

**664. Manufacturing in Carlisle**

Insolvency of Edward Overton and assignment of assets to James Forster of Carlisle, banker, and Thomas Waistell of Bochengate, calico printer  
*CJ* 380, 1 February 1806

**665. Papermaking at Caldbeck**

Dissolution of the partnership of Messrs. Simpson and Scrughan  
*CJ* 385, 8 March 1806

**666. Cotton spinning in ? Ulverston**

Dissolution of the partnership of William Warhurst of Ulverston, Joseph Greene of Ulverston, Joseph Procter of Ulverston, Daniel Mardale of Ulverston, Robert Sandy of Ulverston, John Strickland of ....., and Samuel Whineray of Dunnersdale  
*CJ* 386, 15 March 1806

**667. Cotton factory at Caldew Bridge, ?Carlisle**

The well erected building of John Robinson advertised to be let; the machinery may be had for a valuation.  
*CJ* 389, 5 April 1806

**668. Iron and brass foundry in Carlisle**

Pattern maker advertised for  
*CJ* 394, 10 May 1806

**669. Papermaking at Kirkoswold**

Dissolution of the partnership of William Crampton, Timothy Lowthian, and Francis Jollie of Carlisle, trading as Wm. Crampton & Co. The business will be continued by William Crampton on his own account  
*CJ* 395, 17 May 1806

**670. Mill at Keswick**

Keswick Mill advertised to be let by the Commissioners & Governor of Greenwich Hospital  
*CJ* 399, 14 June 1806

**671. Mill at Keswick**

Millwrights advertised for by James Atkinson of Keswick  
*CJ* 400, 21 June 1806

**672. Manufacturing in Caldewgate**

Dissolution of the partnership of Messrs. Hewson & Rigg (John Hewson, John Rigg, and John Hewson, jr.)

*CJ* 402, 5 July 1806

**673. Iron and brass foundry in Carlisle**

Foundry, counting house, and a large yard, recently occupied by Williams & Co. Apply to Carlisle Iron and Brass foundry advertised to be let

*CJ* 402, 5 July 1806

**674. Bleaching at Warwick Bridge**

A heavy storm at Castle Carrock, Croglin, etc. caused considerable damage to yarn.

*CJ* 406, 2 August 1806

**675. Bleaching in Dalston**

Two pieces of muslin were stolen from the bleach field of John Robinson

*CJ* 413, 20 September 1806

**676. Machine making in Bochengate, Carlisle**

Insolvency of John Blackie

*CJ* 429, 10 January 1807

**677. Check weaving in Penrith**

On New Year's Day according to old established custom of the memorable Jacob Thompson the annual procession from the factory took place accompanied by the drums and fifes of the Cumberland L.L.W. Volunteers. The check weaver's flags were flying upon one of which was this motto "Weave Truth with Trust". After parading the streets for some time they were regaled with bread, cheese, and ale and returned in peaceful harmony.

*CJ* 429, 10 January 1807

**678. Textile printing in Carlisle**

Mr. Stamp, one of the partners in The Old Printfield was attacked on a journey to Halifax. The attackers were frightened off by an approaching coach. Mr Stamp had several hundred pounds and a gold watch in his possession

*CJ* 433, 7 February

**679. Lime burning at Lime Kiln Nook**

Dissolution of the partnership of John and James Little

*CJ* 437, 7 March 1807

**680. Hat manufacture**

A meeting of hat manufacturers, Mr George Ferguson in the chair, was held to discuss the tax on hats

*CJ* 439, 21 March 1807

**681. Calico printing at Denton Holme**

The print field of Messrs John Losh & Co was broken into and several pieces of half bleached calico were stolen therefrom on the night of 2 April. A reward of 50 gns. is offered for information leading to a conviction

*CJ* 441, 4 April 1807

**682. Collieries at Greysouthern**

Report of an award made by James Losh, Esq., Barrister at Law in the case of ?Citison & Co. v. Benson

*CJ* 441, 4 April 1807

**683. Manufacturing at Whitehaven**

Dissolution of the partnership of Joseph Hornby, Thomas Hornby, and William Hornby, all of Kirkham, Lancs., and Joseph Bell and Henry Birley, both of Whitehaven, merchants and manufacturers trading as Hornby, Bell and Birley. The business is to be continued by Thomas Birley, John Birley, and Henry Birley under the name of Henry Birley & Co.

*CJ* 445, 2 May 1807

**684. Weaving in Penrith**

The estate of Joseph Vipond, bankrupt, comprising a house and shop in Market Place, a building used as weaving shop with dwelling rooms above in Town Head, and stock in trade of flax hemp and groceries

*CJ* 450, 6 June 1807

**685. Mill at Carlton**

Mill and kiln with a good supply of water advertised to be let at a rent of £15

*CJ* 455, 11 July 1807

**MYSTERY AT SPARK BRIDGE**

Spark Bridge is a small village not far from Ulverston in South Lakeland. It lies on the River Crake as it makes its way from Coniston Lake to the river estuary at Greenodd, and developed into an industrial centre with a corn mill, cotton mill and bobbin mill active at various times.

The large scale Ordnance Survey map published in 1892 shows two black spots labelled “Gasometers” 400 metres south of the village next to the river in the valley bottom. As a result they have been included in the Historic Environment Record of the Lake District National Park as “Spark Bridge gasometers”. There is no sign of them on the First Edition 6” map of 1862.

They have had me puzzled ever since I started looking into the history of gasworks in Cumbria. Why would they have been constructed in such an unsuitable location? Why would there be two of them? Where was the gasworks itself (only gasometers are marked on the map)? Was there one at all?

Why there? Although the record on the online HER links to an aerial view of the location, the photo was taken in the middle of summer and all you can see is the tops of trees masking the site. Roads and footpaths don't take you near enough, so it was only recently that this intrepid explorer ventured through the undergrowth by the river. And what was there? Nothing! Would you build two gasometers there? I can't imagine why, on a site so inaccessible and prone to flooding.

Why two of them? OK, early gas holders were built above ground rather than sunk into it, so the rock in the valley bottom might not have been a deterrent to their construction. But why build two? From what I know of other gasworks one gasholder is plenty until you get to somewhere the size of Ulverston or Appleby. Nearby Greenodd managed with one, what's so special about Spark Bridge that it needs two?

Where was the gasworks that made the gas that was stored in the gasholders? Unfortunately the map doesn't help. Next to the gasometers would be normal, but there's no room, it gets wet, and it's asking a lot of the local carrier to drag his horse and cart down there with a load of coal after he's made his way up to the village from the Greenodd quays or sidings.

By the mills in the village would be more appropriate, but I can't see anything on the map. And if it was there, why put the gasometers 400 metres away when equally unsuitable sites existed much closer to home?

Was there really a gasworks? It would have been justified – other small places like Staveley near Kendal or Scotby near Carlisle had one. Were those round things by the river really gasholders, or – rather than getting his feet wet - did the surveyor believe the local who was having a laugh at his expense? It's hard to believe the Ordnance Survey got it wrong, and impossible to check without the surveyor's notebooks and drawings. The only avenue left open at the moment is to try and find out more about the cotton mill which existed between maps as it were, and may have had a gasworks that was not worth noting once the mill had closed. But still – why put the gasholders down where they did?

So I'm still puzzled, but – undeterred – will get to the bottom of this mystery one day. Of course if anyone reading this has any ideas to help me out I'd be very interested to hear them. Help!!!

Roger Baker

### **Harrington Harbour Visit : 10<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

While the south of England was being given health warnings of extremely hot weather conditions, our tenacious band of members was greeted at Harrington by low mist, a cool breeze off the sea and threatening rain. There was perhaps a contrast, too, in what most of us were expecting to have revealed to us. By comparison with neighbouring Workington, Harrington might seem to be the poor relation in terms of industrial significance. Our guide for the visit, Philip Ashforth, was soon able to show us otherwise.

The settlement of Harrington grew around a creek where the River Wyre entered the Irish Sea and provided the opportunity for a modest anchorage. Here a private harbour called Bella Port was established by Henry Curwen of Workington Hall whose lands included the Manor of Harrington. Several coal measures underlay this part of the Curwen estate and were already being exploited before the artificial harbour existed. Around 1770 the pier and harbour structures were completed and its principal trade was coal from the Curwen pits to Ireland plus agricultural lime brought by the 'Lime Road' from Barfs Quarry near Distington. Shortly after the completion of the improvements to the harbour a wooden wagonway was constructed to convey the coal from the pits on high ground a little over a mile south-east of the village. The wagonway was believed to have been of about 3 ft gauge and coal was carried in horse-drawn chaldron wagons. The final approach to the harbour involved a 500 yard descent at a gradient of 1 in 17 over what later came to be known as the Rose Hill incline. Four pits were then in production, together raising 30 tons of coal daily. The estimated annual cost of operating the wagonway and hurries is recorded as being £426.

Chronologically the second industry to emerge at Harrington was shipbuilding. As early as 1776 a ropery existed on the north side of the harbour where shipwrights Askew, Ellwood & Co. were in business from 1784 to 1810. South of the harbour a firm of Piele operated but the principal yard here was that of Williamson & Son who began building in 1838. Facilities seem to have been fairly rudimentary with boats being built on the open foreshore and launched by digging a channel to draw the craft to high water. Later Williamsons took over the patent slip at the south-west corner of the harbour to enable vessels to be hauled out for repairs. Operations at the shipyard after 1857 came to be impeded by the activities of the Harrington Ironworks which was set up a short distance to the south of the harbour. Finally in 1879 James Bain, owner of the ironworks, bought out the Williamson yard beside the harbour and their shipbuilding operation transferred to Workington.

Another early industrial venture was a copperas works at what became known as Copperas Hill on the cliff top south of the harbour. This went into production in 1798 and was owned by a Joseph Dutton of Liverpool. Iron pyrites was the chief raw material and this was mined with coal from the neighbouring pits and delivered by the wagonway. After weathering in the open the pyrites was boiled with rusty iron to produce vitriol (sulphuric acid) and various by-products such as Prussian blue, Epsom salts, nitric acid and muriatic (hydrochloric) acid. Records show that products from the works were exported through the harbour. The works operated until 1834 when the then owner,

Joseph Theodore Dutton, went bankrupt. In 1837 the lease on the site was taken over by a firm of Littledale & Co. but by 1844 they were in trouble. A Peter Ward assumed the lease in 1853 but sold the works by auction in 1855 and filed for bankruptcy. Techniques for commercial production of sulphuric acid had by then moved on.

Transport technology was also developing rapidly. Harrington was reached by its first public railway in 1846 when the Whitehaven Junction Railway extended the pioneer Maryport & Carlisle line south from Maryport through Workington. By 1847 the line was continued to Whitehaven. Originally single-track, by 1861 the line had been doubled and the wooden viaduct at the head of Harrington harbour had been replaced by a permanent iron girder structure which survived until the present decking and supports were installed in 2004. From 1866 the WJR became part of the LNWR.

Rail transport was both enabled by and contributed to the development of iron manufacture. Hematite smelting on an industrial scale in West Cumberland began at Cleator Moor in 1841 followed at Oldside in Workington in 1856. Harrington Ironworks began producing iron in 1857 but the initial venture was short-lived. In 1863 the single furnace was purchased by Scottish interests associated with William Baird & Co. of Gartsherrie and trading as Blair & Paterson, later Blair, Bain & Paterson. The ambition was to operate four furnaces. The company bought property near the harbour to house workers and erected some new housing including two terraces of cottages at Copperas Hill. From 1874 the ironworks became Bain & Co. The enterprise by now managed the harbour, worked the local coal pits, operated several hematite mines in the vicinity, had a brickworks at Micklam, a limestone quarry at Distington, sandpits and a fireclay pit. An extensive private standard-gauge tramway linked the work and harbour and reused the trackbed of the earlier waggonway.

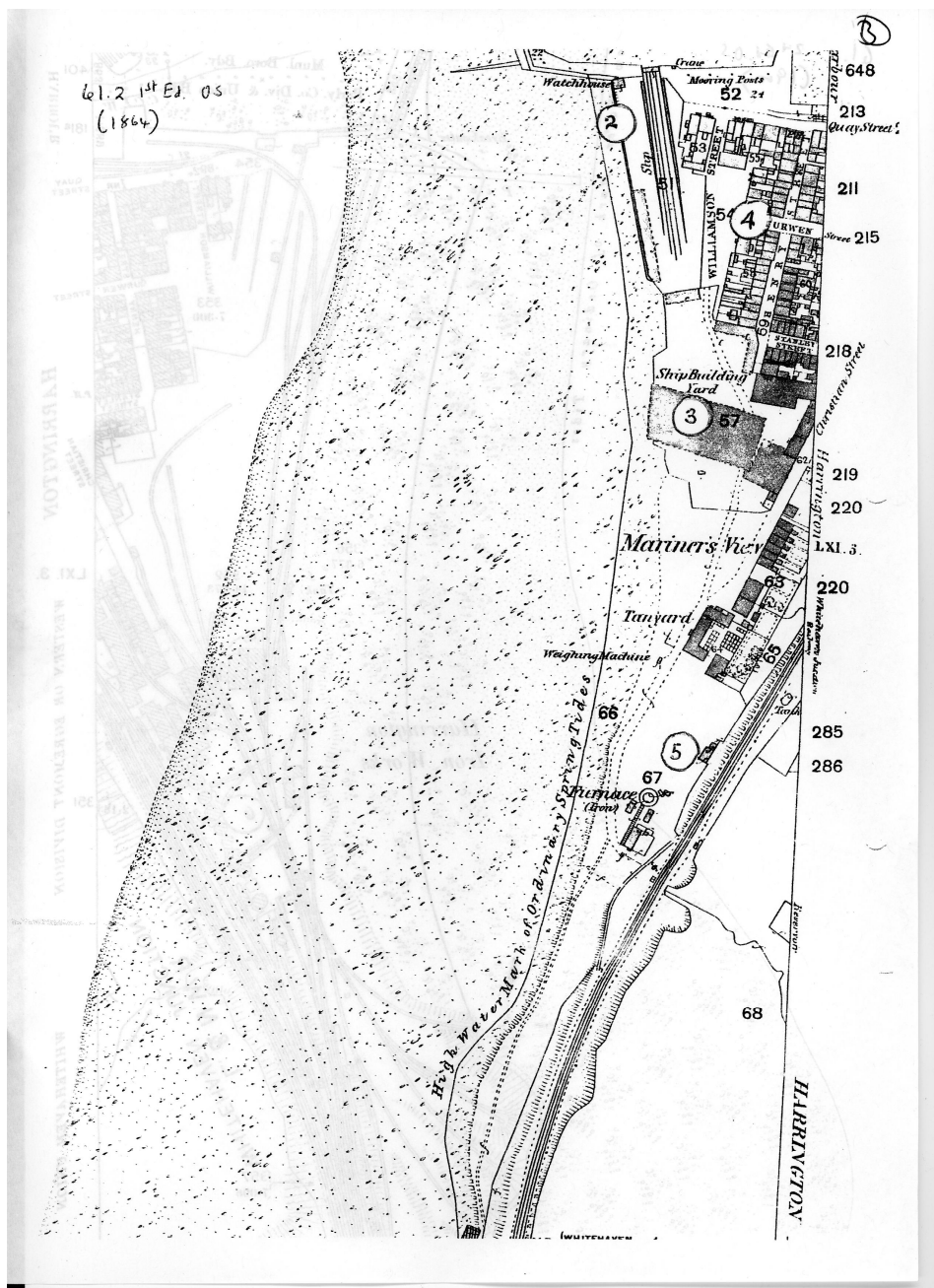
West Cumberland iron interests promoted the Cleator & Workington Junction Railway in 1876. Opened for traffic in 1879 this line running from Cleator to Workington was designed expressly to free the ironmasters from the stranglehold of the existing railway operators. The line passed through High Harrington from where a branch line struck off to meet the ironworks tramway near Copperas Hill. This later became the Lowca Light Railway over which a passenger service operated between 1912 and 1926 and workmen's trains until 1929. The line remained in use in connection with the Moss Bay Works at Workington until 1973.

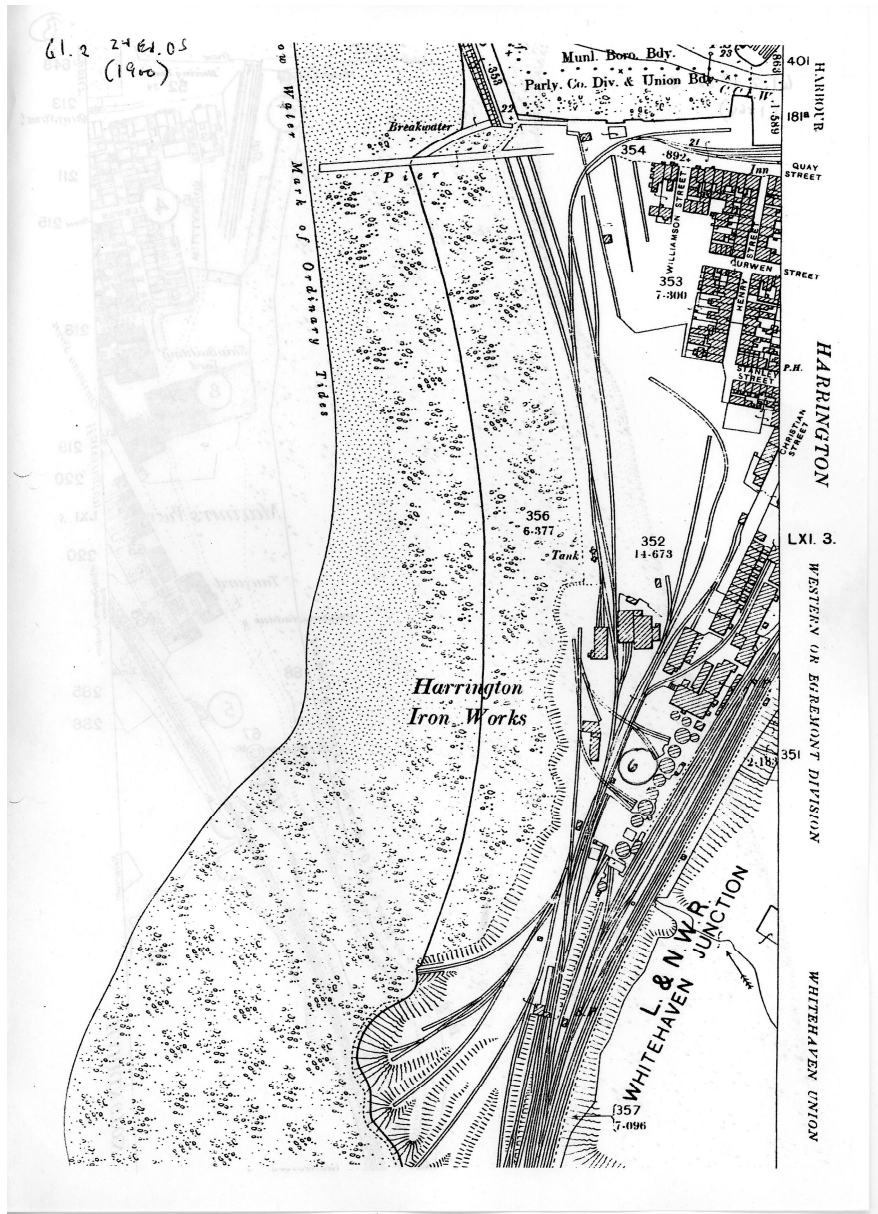
Harrington's final claim to industrial fame was its Magnesite Works. Built under conditions of wartime secrecy the Harrington Shore Works was built in 1940 on the south side of the harbour. Because of the need to replace the supplies of imported magnesite that were cut off by enemy action, the plant was to be used to produce magnesia by reacting calcined dolomite with sea water. The now disused harbour was enclosed to form a sea water reservoir. Calcined dolomite came by rail from Coxhoe in Co Durham and limestone from Flusco near Penrith. The product of the works was a magnesia slurry which was despatched in rail tank wagons to Clifton Junction near Manchester for conversion into metallic magnesium required for use in aircraft production and



munitions. At the end of hostilities the plant was mothballed but had a brief revival during the Korean War. In the 1960s the works and most of the adjoining residential property were cleared leaving the large grassed area that now lies to the south of the harbour.

ALAN POSTLETHWAITE





OS maps showing some of the industries talked about.

### COAL PIT FIRE AT WHITEHAVEN

Whilst recently undertaking research by chance I came across two apparently conflicting accounts relating to a series of fires at coal pits owned by Sir James Lowther in the vicinity of Whitehaven during the spring of 1747. The first report was only one short paragraph. However, following its publication in the Gentleman's Magazine the publishers received a letter of complaint from an indignant member the Whitehaven community, presumably an agent for the Lowther Family. The author of this letter

claimed that published accounts about several of their pits being on fire had been falsely reported and the truth should be told.

The controversy started when the Gentleman's Magazine published a report amounting to a single paragraph about the outcome of a fire at a coal pit located near Whitehaven. The conclusion of the report was that many inhabitants had been in fear for their houses. It was claimed the fire, started by the carelessness of a boy, had burned with great ferocity and spread to several other connected pits. The fire produced a prodigious amount of smoke, which along with timber from the coal workings was forcibly ejected from the pits concerned.

The next report was an account of the Philosophical Transaction number 480 (presumably of the Royal Society) which gave a controversial account of a coal mine fire some thirty years earlier at Newcastle which could have been extinguished for the cost of half a crown (for the younger reader 12½ pence) this amount of money being denied and this resulted in land and mine being wasted.

The Whitehaven series of pit fires turned out to be a significant event but the brevity of the report coupled with philosophical transaction No. 480 suggested a catastrophic event without giving much detail about the mine owner's awareness of the danger of firedamp (essentially carburetted hydrogen or methane gas) or the owner's response to this very dangerous incident.

In the following issue, the magazine published an extract from this letter of complaint from a Whitehaven resident. Essentially the author of the letter did not deny that a fire had ensued involving a number of their coal pits but sought in a logical manner to explain how firedamp could accumulate and the associated dangers with such an event. It was claimed that Whitehaven pits were probably some of the deepest in the world. One coal pit in particular being 600ft deeper than the surface of the sea and, as a consequence of their depth such mines were subject to invasion by firedamp. The author further described the likely outcome if firedamp were allowed to gather and become ignited, saying that it would go off with a "*very great explosion*". Moreover, it was anticipated that such an explosion would cause great damage. It was recognised the danger from firedamp was intensified during the process of sinking a new shaft and precautions had to be taken. A system of pipes had been installed to bring the bad air to the surface where it was burned as waste, although Sir James Lowther had given some thought to its use to fuel a fire engine; an early name for a stationary steam engine. Today it is difficult to imagine the scene but a crude indication of the amount gas involved can be perceived by the fact the flare created by burning this waste gas could be seen in the Isle of Man some ten leagues away (30 miles). It was claimed this process provide a better light for shipping than did the lighthouse.

The letter also contains an account of the incident, the direct cause of which was a defect in the venting pipes resulting in a great explosion on the 6th of April 1747 the ensuing fire being maintained by the continuing presence of firedamp, leading to several smaller explosions over a number of days. There had been little to observe other than a great deal

of smoke accompanied by a sulphurous smell until April 20th when two more explosion occurred, followed by two more on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. During the latter series of explosions debris had been thrown up to the top of the pit a distance of 160 yards.

The response from the mine owner was to construct a stage or platform loaded with earth, stone and clay this was let down on the shaft. It had been anticipated that such action would restrict the flow of air to the fire and also contain any smaller explosions. Further research is required to determine how effective this endeavour had been. It seems the author's main objection was the manner in which the accident had been portrayed in the previous issue and that the whole incident passed off without the loss of life or limb of those involved, which had not been mentioned.

An interesting footnote to the this letter goes on to explain many features associated with mine gas known as damp or firedamp. Prominent among the features explained is the assumed fact that fire damp could not be set off with a red hot iron or by sparks made by the collision of flint on steel. The collision of flint on steel was in fact the principle of the Steel Mill developed and introduced for safe illumination purposes in Whitehaven pits by Carlyle Spedding

circa 1730. History shows that the Steel Mill was not intrinsically safe but it must have been safer than a naked flame from a candle.

In addition to providing a detailed account of a series of explosions in 1747 the letter gives many interesting facts about the state of mining in 18th century Whitehaven. I would recommended both the short report (Vol. 17 May 1747 p. 246) the letter of response (Vol. 17 June 1747 pp. 326 –327) both may be viewed at the Internet Library of Early Journals <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ilej/> and search The Gentleman's Magazine using the term Whitehaven.

Dr. Ian Hill

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

There has recently been a number of English Heritage Research Department reports published covering industrial sites in the county

**GATEBECK LOW GUNPOWDER WORKS AND THE WORKERS SETTLEMENT OF ENDMOOR AND GATEBECK CUMBRIA. AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY.**

English Heritage Research Department report number 2009/63. This will be available from the department.

**HILTON MINES, SCORDALE, CUMBRIA. IDENTIFICATION OF MINERAL SAMPLES**

Report number 2009/20. This one can be viewed on line at <http://research.english-heritage.org.uk/>

## **REPORT ON EVENING MEETING TO WITHERSLACK HALL FARM**

A large number of members turnout on a pleasant summers evening in June to look at the model farm buildings at Witherslack Hall Farm. Very little is known about the date of the building of this interesting farm. The buildings of which are grouped around a central courtyard underneath which was a large tank to hold rain water that drained off the building roof, with the spouts on the outside walls being carried through the building.



One of the ranges of buildings surrounding the central tank (now covered with a riding area)

The main initial reason for visiting the farm was to view a threshing machine situated in one of the buildings. The machine was set into the floor of one of the buildings lofts and consisted of a standard wheeled threshing machine with the wheels removed. Viewing the machine was a precarious occupation due to the rotten nature of the floor of the loft, but the owner had laid scaffolding boards across the beams to allow better access.

The reason for the specific positioning of the machine lead to many debates although at a suitable height for the easy of filling of sacks with grain and chaff below there was no easy access to the building for carts to allow the sheaves to be easily put in at the top of the thresher.



Members viewing the top of the thresher. Note the drive shaft coming through the wall from the horse gin on the opposite side.

After leaving the farm we had a short drive down the road to view a Williamson's turbine and a set of pumps, which were used to supply water to a reservoir on the hill above which then allowed a gravity flow to the main Hall.





Details of the turbine.



Details of the Pump.

This site again caused a large amount of debate especially over the role of the iron pressure vessel laid to the side of the pump.

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