

## SEVENTH STALL. -

Prebendary of Newbiggin value £10.13s.4.

1. Reginald de Brandon occurs in 1291; died in 1305.

Poncis Montis Martini occurs in 1312 and 1318.

William Wille occurs in 1547.

The following were Prebendaries of Lanchester, but of what stalls I cannot say -

Frederic de Bardis, died in 1342.

William de Skelton, appointed in 1342.

Hugh Pelegrini, appointed in 13.., there in 1342 and 1349.

Mannsell Marmion, appointed in 13.., died in 1347.

John de Burton, appointed in 1347.

Raymond Pelegrini, appointed in 13.., there in 1348.

John de Guyton, appointed in 1354.

Michael de Northbrig, resigned in 1354.

John de Nessebyt, appointed in 1363.

## RUSHBEARING

The ancient ceremony of Rushbearing goes back at least to the 14th Century, and is recorded in a great many Parish records.

A Churchwarden's account from Tavistock parish in Devon for 1385/6 records, " To rushes gathered against the feast of John the Baptist 4d". In the 15th Century the custom was celebrated at St Margaret's Westminster, and at St Martin in the Fields in the 16th Century, and continued to be popular through the years until well into the 19th Century.

The floors of early churches were almost of beaten earth and occasionally of stone flagging. Seats or pews were non-existent, and the congregation were obliged to stand or kneel during the service. Rushes and sometimes hay or straw were a welcoming covering but after a time became infested with insects, slowly rotted and eventually stank abominably.

Rushes were the most durable, and as time went on an annual event of renewing the floor covering became known as the "Rushbearing".

This ceremony was for the most part undertaken from Easter onwards to September when fresh rushes were abundant. Initially, it was held on feast days and for the most part connected to the Patron Saint of that particular church.

By the late Middle Ages the custom had developed into a more elaborate ceremonial procession with girls taking part dressed in white carrying bundles of flowers and bundles of rushes tied up and embellished with ribbons and coloured paper.

They entered the church, laid down their garlands crowns and posies which were sometimes hung on the walls.

This became so dominant a feature that neither post Reformation Puritan disapproval nor even the advent of boarded floors and kneelers could diminish it's popularity.

As time went on the Rushbearing Ceremony became more diversified, and many Parishes added other activities to what had become the greatest parish event of the year. Decorated collections of rushes, a rush cart, and a white linen sheet carried horizontally containing various silver articles such as watches, spoons, bracelets, rings etc, maypole dances, flags, morris men, and musicians were all in use, but not necessarily in any one celebration. A meal would also be provided after the church service, and would be followed by games and dancing.

The rush cart favoured by some areas of Yorkshire and Lancashire quite often was a towering load of green rushes, piled up in a pyramid on the shape of a Bishops mitre, secured by flower woven rush ropes topped with oaken boughs covered with patriotic slogans.

In south east Lancashire there would be as many as ten carts in one procession, hauled by either men or decorated horses, proceeded by a brass band and morris dancers.

At Saddleworth the ceremony was revived in 1975 after a lapse of many years, the sledges which used to carry the rushes to church were replaced by elaborate carts with musicians and morris men joining in. At Sowerby Bridge the rushbearing takes place in the first week-end in September and women dancers are allowed to take part, and a woman rides atop of the pushcart.

#### Legends and Superstitions regarding Rushes

An Irish legend says that rushes go brown and die from the top downwards because Saint Patrick cursed them.

Nevertheless, they have luck-bringing and protective powers. It is still a custom in some parts of Ireland to gather them on Saint Brides Eve (January 31st) without the aid of any iron cutting instrument, and to make them into small crosses known as Saint Bride's crosses. These are blessed in church, and are then set over the doors of houses and cow byers, in the thatch of roofs, and over beds to bring good fortune and protection from evil to men and beasts alike.

It is lucky to find a green tipped rush and there is an old rhyme which says:

" With a four leaf clover and a double leaved ash,  
And a green topped 'seave',  
You may go before the Queen's daughter  
Without taking her leave "

A Devonshire charm to cure thrush consisted in taking three rushes from a running stream, drawing each one separately through the child's mouth, then throwing them back into the water so that the ailment can be carried away by the water.

In Somerset an ulcerated mouth was treated by passing a peeled rush very gently three or four times between the lips.

For healing warts in Cheshire, tie three knots in a long straight rush, make it into a ring, and draw it nine times downwards over the wart. A form of words had to be repeated at the same time. The wart would then vanish within three months.

In 1615, it is recorded that rushes were strewn before the bride and bridegroom on their way to church.

" All haile to Hymen and his marriage day,  
Strew rushes and quickly come away,  
Strew rushes maides, and ever as you strew,  
Think one day maides, like will be done for you."

The Rushbearing ceremony was very popular in many parts of the country, and many of these ceremonies still take place in the Lake District.

#### Ambleside

The Rushbearing Festival at Ambleside usually takes place on a Saturday during the first two weeks of July.

Moss, reeds and rushes are gathered several days before the ceremony and the bearings are made up early on the morning of which the event will take place. The permanent frames are covered first with moss, and rushes and flowers are then added.

Notable bearings are the 'Harp of David', the Crown, a globe of the World, and the Churchwardens staves, two Celtic crosses, triangular wreathes on poles, and baskets entwined with rushes and flowers. The children carry their own posies, the boys holding crosses made from bundles of reeds.

The procession starts off from the junior school playground led by a brass band, and proceeds along the main street of the town, which is closed to traffic for the occasion. A halt is called in the market place and a hymn is sung, after which on a call from the incumbent of the parish church, all the bearings are raised high into the air.

The procession then carries on via a circular route to the church for a short service during which the Rushbearing hymn is sung. After the service, the bearings and flowers are then left in the church over the Sunday, and each child is given a piece of gingerbread. They then proceed back to the junior school where tea is served and sports are held on the playing field.

On the west wall of the church at Ambleside is a rushbearing mural painted in 1944 by the artist Gordon Ransom. It shows a compilation scene of rushbearing, – the procession, and the service, and was dedicated by the Bishop of Carlisle in July 1944.

The mural is 26 feet long by 12 feet high. There are sixty two almost life size figures including portraits of the vicar and vergers. On the left is the procession setting out, left centre, the singing of the hymn in the market place. Right centre, the lifting up of the bearings after the hymn, and on the right, placing the bearings in the church.

The mural was painted with powdered colours mixed in an oil emulsion directly onto the prepared plaster on the wall, and was gifted to the church by the artist who was stationed at Ambleside during the 1939-45 war.

### Great Musgrave

The festival at St Theobalds at Great Musgrave is now held annually on the first Saturday in July, but over a century ago it took place on the first day of May. The ceremony can be dated back to the 14th century, and was then a formal laying of the rushes which covered the original earthen floor of the church. With the appearance of stone flagging, the laying of rushes gradually died out, and the ceremony became more akin to May day celebrations with chosen maidens carrying crowns of flowers.

In times gone by, on the first of May each year at 10 o' clock, a band of maidens proceeded through the fields from nearby Brough to accompany the rushbearers, dancing as they went along. They were led up the north aisle of the church and hung up their garlands and bearings on the side, there to remain until the next year.

The Gospel was read by the vicar, some prayers were offered and psalms were sung, after which the clerk and vicar retired. A space was cleared near the altar, a fiddle was produced and dancing continued until three or four o' clock in the afternoon.

The ceremony in it's present form has been observed for at least the last fifty years. The rushbearing procession now assembles outside the village hall in the main street of the quiet little village of Great Musgrave near to the town of Brough. The girls have crowns of flowers which they wear on their heads, and the boys carry small crosses made up bundles of reeds cut from the fells.

The procession usually starts at 2.30pm headed by a band, and proceeds on an extended route to the church of St Theobalds, where a rushbearing hymn is sung during the service.

An account of the proceedings in 1905 recalls that the girls of the villages in the area are 'decked with garlands and march to the church in procession where the garlands are attached to the walls'. Hundreds of people were present at the ceremony, and afterwards attended the village sports. The day's proceedings then came to an end with an old fashioned country dance.

### Urswick

At the Parish church of St Mary and St Michael at Urswick near Ulverston the Rushbearing ceremony and procession usually takes place on the 27th of September, or the Sunday nearest Michaelmass. The children assemble in the school yard at 2pm and start off to walk the environment of the village before returning to the Parish church for a thanksgiving.

A brass band leads off, followed in turn by mothers and toddlers, the vicar and church officials carrying a banner portraying St Michael and a dragon, and a large cross decorated with sedges and reeds, they are followed by the church warden with his staff.

Behind comes the 'Queen' and her trainbearers dressed in white, she carrying a posie and crowned with flowers. They are followed by some girls carrying hoops decorated with flowers, and others holding posies. Some of the girls carry between them a white sheet supporting trinkets, watches, sugar tongs, spoons and other items. Some of the boys carry swords in place of reeds.

On arrival at the church, the children spread the rushes down the aisle, offer up their flowers, and the 'Queen' is presented with a Bible. A service then takes place, during which a special rushbearing hymn is sung.

### Grasmere

The rushbearing festival at Grasmere takes place on August 5th, or the Saturday nearest to St Oswald's Day, which is the feast of dedication of the Parish church. In 1885, the festival was revived after having lapsed since 1841 when the church floor was raised and flagged, and the practical necessity was thus renewed.

The rushes used were locally known as 'seives' that grows on the moorland and fells, and in past times were cut and brought to the village in carts.

Some of the details of the festival have changed over the years, but an interesting description was recorded in 1789 by James Clark, who wrote in his survey of the lakes of Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire;

"About the end of September a number of young women and girls go together to the top of the hills to gather rushes. There they carry them to the Church headed by the smartest girl in the company. She who leads the procession is styled the 'Queen' and carries in her hand a large garland, and the rest have nosegays.

The 'Queen' then goes and places her garland on the pulpit where it will remain until the next Sunday. The rest then strew their rushes upon the floor, and at the church door they are met by a fiddler who plays before them to the public house, where the evening is spent in all kinds of rustic merriment".

Benjamin Newton noted in his diary of 1818 how shocked he had been to see in Grasmere church "the communion table, the rail at the altar, the seats, and the windows, in fact every part of the church crammed with all sorts of tawdry and ridiculous things stuck to sticks, hoops and crosses, and made to stand upright". The Rector had explained to him that this was the ancient ceremony of strewing the rushes—after which, at the expense of the parish, the participants were regaled with cakes and ale and gingerbread, and had a dance in the evening in the barn belonging to the inn.

William Wordsworth, his wife, and sister Dora, are said to have walked in the procession, Wordsworth being the chief supporter of this rustic ceremony.

In 1891, a hand-spun linen sheet was for the first time carried by four girls from the village school filled with rushes, and in 1893, six girls from the school wearing green and white dresses made in Grasmere carried the rush sheet, which has been a feature of the procession ever since.

An account written in 1983 gives the following details. The reeds are gathered by a local farmer and brought to the church on a Thursday evening. All day Friday a group of ladies from the parish work in the Tithe Barn next to the Rectory preparing the traditional bearings brought from their 11½ months storage.

Final touches to the bearings such as the addition of fresh cut flowers is done the following morning. The children, with their own bearings and garlands, assemble in the Rectory garden and are each given a tea ticket and a 5p piece. The tickets would be exchanged later in the day for a piece of gingerbread stamped with the mark of St Oswald.

As the time for the procession draws near, the six rush maidens who will carry the sheet appear in their green and white dresses. To be picked as a rush maiden is considered a great honour, but no girl may carry the sheet for more than two years. The rush sheet is prepared the day before with rushes and reeds and flowers sewn into the sheet. The boys appear wearing surplices over their cassocks, and the band which plays for the procession is the band of the Lakes School. The processional gold cross, decorated with yellow flowers, leads the assembly followed by two frame bearings held on poles twined with fresh rushes.

Next comes the 'Hand of St Oswald', a reminder in flowers of St Aidans tribute to the famed generosity Of King Oswald of Northumbria, "May this hand never perish". There follows a bearing in the form of three interlinked circles within a triangle symbolising the Holy Trinity, followed in turn by another permanent decorated frame commemorating St Oswald.

Next comes a miniature maypole carried by a teenage schoolgirl with six or eight infants holding the coloured ribbons, they are followed by a permanent frame entwined with the form of a serpent bound with rushes.

Other traditional bearings include linen banners, a harp, lyre, Prince of Wales Feathers, Celtic cross, crowns and cushions, hoops and circles.

The Churchwardens staves are bound with rushes, and a prominent feature in the procession is St Oswalds Banner, with the choir and other clergy all carrying bundles of rushes.

To the tune of the Rushbearing March, first played by the fiddlers of the 19th century, the procession perambulates the environments of the town, and are joined by many of the parishioners and their families also carrying their home made bearings. While the perambulation of the village takes place, the aisles of the church are strewn with rushes ready for the service. The traditional bearings are placed by the altar rails, and others laid on shelves between the arches.

Finally the procession arrives at the church where a service is held, and during the service a Rushbearing hymn is sung, which was written in 1885 by Owen Lloyd, Curate in charge of Langdale.

As has been mentioned, part of the ceremony involves the giving of gingerbread to the children who take part in the festival. The first mention in the Churchwardens Accounts of gingerbread is in 1819, when an entry records the payment of 3s.9d (19p) to George Walker for 'Rushbearing Gingerbread', and from that time expenditure for the Rushbearing Gingerbread is a constant item in their accounts.



For many years the gingerbread was made by the Walker family, who had a little shop which stood near Beech Cottage. Later it was made by the caretaker of Dove Cottage and then by others in the village. The stamps of St Oswald with which each piece is marked has been handed on from one maker to another.

The Rushbearing Gingerbread is not to be confused with the traditional gingerbread made to a recipe of Sarah Nelson, and sold nowadays in the Gingerbread Shop which was the original village school.

A painting by Frank Bramley, R.A. who lived in the parish of Grasmere, and whose memorial tablet is in the church, was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1905 and purchased for the village in 1913. The painting shows the Rush Maidens carrying their sheet in the procession on it's way over the bridge from the church to the school field, and all the figures represented are portraits of Grasmere people.

The painting is in the care of the National Trust and hangs in Grasmere village hall in a cupboard for security reasons.

#### Warcop

The Annual Rushbearing Ceremony near Brough in Cumbria, is held on St Peter's day in the month of June. A procession of girls and boys, led by a brass or silver band, leaves after assembling at the school premises and proceeds on a perambulation of the village, finally arriving at the parish church of St Columba for a service to commemorate the ancient ceremony of the annual strewing of fresh rushes on the floor of the church.

The Girls wear crowns of flowers and the boys hold crosses made from bundles of rushes gathered from near-by fields or ponds. Afterwards the crown and flowers, and the crosses are hung above the church door until the following year. During the service a Rushbearing hymn, composed by Canon Crum, is sung.

THE RUSH BEARERS' HYMN.

Our fathers to the House of God,  
As yet a building rude,  
Bore offerings from the flowery sod  
And fragrant rushes strew'd.

May we, their children ne'er forget  
The pious lesson given,  
But honour still, together met,  
The Lord of Earth and Heaven. ;

Sing we the good Creator's praise,  
Who gives us sun and showers,  
To cheer our hearts with fruitful days,  
And deck the world with flowers.

These, of the great Redeemer's grace,  
Bright emblems here are seen;  
He makes to smile the desert place  
With flowers and rushes green.

All glory to the Father be,  
All glory to the Son,  
All glory, Holy Ghost to Thee,  
While endless ages run. - Amen...

John Thornborrow.

## MOSS-TROOPER

*In this day and age, mention the word moss-trooper and not many people will have a clue what you are talking about. But during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the moss-trooper would put the fear of God amongst the population who lived in the Border counties of England and Scotland.*

*A moss-trooper, for those who do not know, was an out and out villain of the period, who made a living out of cattle stealing, robbery and plunder, and was the natural descendant of the Border reiver.*

*To understand the background of the moss-trooper, we have to look into the motives of the reivers. Their origins are well and truly rooted in the political tension that had existed between the Kingdoms of Scotland and England right up to the early seventeenth century. We must also remember the hostility that had existed between the two countries for many centuries, and it was not uncommon even during the time of the reivers, for violence and mayhem to erupt in the Border lands, which had been torn apart over the years by vicious raids, reprisals, or even blood feuds, whenever one side, or the other decided to settle old scores. Their forays were one of the main reasons why so many peel towers, bastles, and fortified houses, which are characteristic of the Northern counties were built. The reiver was also a fighting man who handled his weapons with superb skill. He was also a guerrilla soldier to whom the arts of theft, tracking and ambush were second nature. The reiver also gave the word blackmail to the English language, in fact it could be said they were the Mafia of their day.*

*In the history of Britain, the reiver is a unique and mysterious figure. He was not part of a separate minority group, but came from every social class. Some reivers lived in outlaw bands, some were even Peers of the Realm. But many of them were ordinary members of the community who had fallen on hard times and turned to stealing. It was either that or the family starved.*

*The main reasons why many turned to reiving was the result of an old antiquated English custom. When a man died, it was customary to divide an inheritance equally between his sons so, over the years, the endless sub-division of land led to farms becoming so small as to be completely uneconomic, providing neither a fair living for those who farmed them, nor with a reasonable amount of food to feed their families.*

*As a result, a father's shortage of land led him to reiving as a way of making a living, which usually resulted, all too often, in an early and sometimes violent death, while his sons divided up his land once more, and the dreaded cycle of hunger, violence and death began all over again.*

*When armies were not on the march, frequent raids were encouraged by both sides of the Border in order to wear down the enemy. For centuries, life either side of the Border could be extremely dangerous, and it was not unknown, that in the morning a man could be rich in cattle and sheep, and by the evening be without anything, including a roof over his head.*

*One must realise that the raids were not only a one-way traffic, or even a two-way one. Scot pillaged Scot and Englishman raided and robbed Englishman just as readily as they raided both sides of the frontier.*

*Feuds were just as deadly between families on the same side of the Border, as they were when the frontier lay between them, and as several clans bore the same name there was at times general confusion, bordering on chaos, due to the criss-cross of loyalties. As a result, two and a half centuries of violence, if not intermittent warfare between England and Scotland were enough to leave the Borders looking like a charred wilderness.*

*Distance was no handicap to the raiders from both sides, who frequently marauded farms dozens of miles from their homeland, and it was not unknown for the Scottish raiders to extend their forays as far south as Weardale. The main trade of the Border raiders were cattle, but it was not unknown for them to also steal sheep, horses, and even household possessions.*

*Even Alnwick Castle, home of the Earl's of Northumberland, proved no obstacle to the raiders. In 1596, they surprised the watch, broke into the stables, and made off with several horses from the garrison.*

*To try and prevent the lawless acts of the raiders, the Borders were patrolled by troops of the Border Wardens who were in control of the Border Marches, which formed a frontier buffer state, with it's own system of law and justice almost separate from the two Kingdoms.*

*The Wardens controlled the East, Middle, and West Marches, as these areas were known, which together virtually sealed off the Borders. The Wardens were the law on the frontier, even having their own courts to deal with the raiders caught in their own March.*

*But the raids still continued, and the raiders, if caught, could expect an immediate death by being hung from the nearest tree or gibbet, as it was a case of hang them first and ask questions afterwards.*

*Northumberland, and Cumberland, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contained many reiver families, whose trade included murder, brutality, plunder, and extortion.*

*There must be thousands of men and women bearing such names as, Scott, Graham, Armstrong, Elliot, Nixon, Charlton, Bell, Robson, Milburn, in whose veins runs the blood of the reivers, yet have never heard of them.*

*The folk-lore that has grown up over the years have made many people to see the reiver in a romantic light. But in reality, history has proved that the Border way of life was a basic struggle for survival in a cruel lawless environment.*

*After the union of the two crowns in 1603, the day's of the reiver were numbered, although it took many years, and many deaths, before the Border country finally became a safer place to live.*

*Soon after his accession to the English crown, James I abolished the post of the Border Warden, and with it the separate Border Marches. In their place he set up a commission to administer the law. The King then ordered all strongholds to be demolished, and the inhabitants to put away their armour and weapons.*

*A further blow to the reivers was the abolition of the Border Laws which, though somewhat rough and ready, had been far more acceptable than the ordinary law of the land which, as they found to their horror were now expected to obey.*

*As time went by the business of rounding up the reivers continued. Many were executed, some were imprisoned, and whole families, including members of the Armstrong and Elliot clans, were banished to Ireland, where they were expected to cultivate the bogs and wastelands in places like Roscommon and Connaught. In fact there are many families in Ireland today who are descended from the reivers, who thought it unwise to return to England and possible persecution.*

*However, some did return, changed their names, and tried to return to their lawless ways, but for those who did return the outcome was inevitable. On the orders of the King, many reiver families, if they wanted to avoid the purge, were given the choice, either to be transported to the colonies in Virginia, or the men of the family be conscripted to fight in foreign wars under English army commanders.*

*Many chose the latter, because it meant their families could escape the slavery of the colonies, and they could continue to do what they did best, albeit under the orders of their officers.*

*Few men have captured the spirit of the Border reivers like W.H.Ogilvie in his poem, 'Riding Ballad'.*

*" Last night a wind from Lammermoor came roaring up the glen,  
With a tramp of trooping horses and the laugh of reckless men,  
And struck a mailed hand on the gate and cried in rebel glee,  
Come forth, come forth, my Borderer, and ride the March with me.*

*I said, 'Oh! Wind of Lammermoor, the night's too dark to ride,  
And all the men that fill the glen are ghosts of men that died!  
The floods are down in Bowmont Burn, the moss is fetlock deep,  
Go back, wild Wind of Lammermoor, to Lauderdale and sleep!"*

*Out spoke the Wind of Lammermoor, "We know the road right well,  
The road that runs by Kale and Jed across the Carter Fell.  
There is no man of all the men in this grey troop of mine  
But blind might ride the Borderside from Teviothead to Tyne".*

*Gradually some of those who had indulged in reiving, gave way to marauding bands of moss-troopers, picking up a few sheep and cattle as best they might, with a little bit of horse stealing on the side. Although violence still continued in and around the Border, the moss-trooper should never be regarded in the same light as the reiver.*

*The name 'moss-trooper' was derived from the fact that many of the raiders operated in the mossy, or peat bog areas of the Middle and West areas of the Border, and as time went by, anyone who indulged in any nefarious activity such as cattle stealing were generally known, especially in the 17th century, as a moss-trooper, and although they wore no body armour or steel helmet, still armed themselves with sword and pistol, or any thing else they could lay their hands on. They were not as violent as the reivers, probably due to the fact they did not indulge in acts of revenge by feuding with other families. But violence was a pastime that died hard, and there are references that, even in the eighteenth century, some of them still indulged in pure brutality, although the majority had simply degenerated into simple sneak thieves.*

*But the moss-trooper, who was still thought of as an outlaw, ran the same risk as the reiver, and if caught could expect a quick trial, or in some cases no trial, and an early appointment with the hangman.*

Two of these notorious characters who were lucky to escape the hangman lived in the Derwent valley who, because of their exploits, became part of the folk-lore of the valley.

In the floor of Muggleswick church is a headstone with the following inscription:

' Here lieth Rowland Harrison  
of Muggleswick.  
Who departed this life  
Sepr XXIV Anno Domine 1712 '

Rowland, best known as Rowley Harrison, was a notorious moss-trooper, and as he had been excommunicated for his crimes could not be given a Christian burial, nor could he be buried in the churchyard. But how did his headstone end up in the church? One answer is that Rowley may have ended up in the church when it was extended in 1728, or rebuilt in 1829. Another theory is that some kindly soul showed some respect by bringing his headstone into the church to save it from harm. But as there are no records this is open to conjecture.

Rowley Harrison, was a noted cattle thief, who did most of his stealing by night, and it was common knowledge that he regularly brought small herds of cattle from one of his forays to his home, a small Bastle house near Muggleswick called Shield Farm. At that time meat was the staple diet of the moss-trooper and his family, and it was the duty of the master of the house to keep up a good supply when the larder was nearly empty.

In the folk-lore of the Charltons, a famous family of reivers, it was well known that if the meat barrel was becoming low, a spur served on a dish, was presented at the table instead of the usual portion of beef, as an indication that if the men did wish to eat, they would have to fill up the barrel again.

The wife of Rowley Harrison also came from a reiver clan called Graeme. They were a Cumberland family who did their marauding mainly over the Scottish Border, and earned the same notorious reputation as the other reiver families of the county.

Dame Harrison had the dubious distinction of being nearly as bad as her husband, and though she did no thieving herself, made sure that the larder was never empty. By today's standards I suppose that Rowley did lead an exciting life, but he did run the risk of a cruel and merciless death not only from the families he stole from, but also from the local Sheriff, should he fall into his clutches.

*But he was familiar with the hills and dales of the Derwent valley, and knew of many places where he could hide out to evade capture.*

*Harrison, like many outlaws, had a price on his head, but was never under any threat of betrayal, as reprisals could, and would be metered out in full measure to the betrayers by other members of his kin.*

*However, it does seem that he evaded capture, as his name does not appear in any court records, but he did appear in the records of the Ecclesiastical Court when he was excommunicated by the Church for his crimes.*

*Rowland Harrison who, for most of his life lived under the threat of a violent end, died peacefully in his bed on 24th September 1712. He may be dead, but in the folk-lore of Derwentdale his spirit for many years lived on, as there were many reports after his death, that his ghost was seen in the district, riding his horse to the cry of " Ride Rowley, ride Rowley, away out o'er the moors - they'll never get you, ride Rowley ride ".*

*After his death, Dame Harrison became a recluse, but because of the stories that had circulated the district about the ghost of Rowley Harrison no one dared to go near Shield Farm.*

*However a local farmer, George Proud, who had not long lived in the district, decided to satisfy his curiosity and visit the farm. His friends said it was a foolish thing to do, but he wanted to investigate the rumours about the ghost of Harrison. On Christmas Eve 1712, George Proud arrived at the farm carrying a basket full of food, in case he might find someone living there.*

*He entered the house, and finding no one on the ground floor slowly climbed the stairs. On opening the door to a room he came across the figure of Dame Harrison lying on a bed covered in rags. Looking at him she thought at first he was a priest, but Proud simply told her he had come to visit his neighbour.*

*After sharing his food, Dame Harrison began to talk, and told him about the life of Rowley, and of her own family the Graemes. Her father had been a farmer, but because of serious losses had decided to become a reiver, and the family over the years very soon earned a reputation throughout Cumberland for their daring raids across the Scottish Border.*

*But during the persecutions of the Warden General, who happened to be the Earl of Northumberland, the family were virtually wiped out. Those who survived were banished, and transported to foreign shores*



*Dame Harrison informed Proud she was the last of the Graemes, and had to be worthy of the name. Soon after the death of Rowley, realising she had to eat, wore her husband's clothes, and began raiding herself to collect food to keep her alive. Thus the ghost of Rowley Harrison was no other than his own wife.*

*After she had told her story, Proud invited her back to his home, but she refused, and asked him to leave, but made him promise to visit her again. But he did not immediately leave the farm, as he was concerned about the health and well-being of his new found neighbour.*

*After an hour investigating the remaining farm buildings, he was startled to see Dame Harrison coming out of the stables dressed in her husband's clothes, and mounting her horse, called to Proud, " Good-bye, I am going to Rowley and all the Graemes who have gone before me."*

*She rode out of the stable yard and into the night across the snow covered moors. Later, Dame Harrison was seen by a traveller on the banks of the river Derwent. He then saw her dismount off her horse, and with a wild cry, cast herself into the swollen river and quickly disappeared from sight.*

*Dame Harrison, at last had decided to join her beloved Rowley for all eternity, and like him, was to be part of the folk-lore of the Derwent valley.*

*Midway between Castleside and Allansford, on the Durham-Northumberland border, is Wharnley Burn Farm, one of the oldest continually inhabited buildings in the district. The earliest reference to the site can be found in the Boldon Book, a survey which was undertaken in 1186 to record the Diocese of the Bishop of Durham, Hugh de Puiset.*

*Wharnley Burn Farm, was for many generations owned by the Raw family who, when not working the land, fought under the banner of the various Prince Bishop's of Durham. It was also the home of Thomas Raw who, like Rowley Harrison, was a moss-trooper and, like Harrison, lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the early part of the eighteenth century. Although Raw and Harrison were contemporaries, there is no evidence to suggest that they ever raided together. Raw had the reputation of being a bold and fearless man, he was also a notorious cattle thief, and such was his fame that no man dared to challenge him. Like Harrison, he lived in contempt and defiance of the law, as he roamed the wild country of Northumberland, raiding farms and home-steads to steal cattle or whatever he could lay his hands on.*

*He was also a fine horseman, and his knowledge of the hills and dales of his native valley kept him safe on many occasions from being captured by the the troops of the local Sheriff.*

*As an outlaw he was, like Rowley Harrison, excommunicated by the Church for his crimes, and would, in the event of his death, be refused a christian burial in consecrated ground. Being under the ban of Holy Mother Church, Raw's name was called out in all churches between Medomsley, and Hunstanworth, and in the market places of Hexham, Slaley, Stanhope, and Wolsingham.*

*This meant that Thomas Raw was officially declared an outlaw with a price on his head, but he cared not a jot, as he still carried on as he always had done, stealing cattle, robbing and burning to enrich himself and his larder. It was not unknown for Raw to drive his cattle so hard, that they were more dead than alive when they arrived back at Wharnley Burn, leaving many more lying dead on the moors.*

*Having arrived back at the farm, Raw would immediately brand the stolen cattle, and on an old fireplace, still in situ, at Wharnley Burn, can still be seen the marks of his branding iron with the initials T.R.*

*The present farm house had, up to about 1860, a thatched roof, and it remained so until the middle of the nineteenth century, when it underwent some alterations, and received a new roof. There are three rooms on the ground floor, the central room being the bedroom of Thomas which contained a large beautiful carved oaken box-bed which stood against an oak partition, in which was hidden a secret door built into the thickness of the wall, this gave access to another room, which in turn had a small door opening into the stable. This was his means of escape, especially when the troopers decided to pay him an unexpected visit in the hope of arresting him. But Raw had another trick up his sleeve. Above the farm on the crest of the hill was an observation point which commanded a beautiful view over the valley. Thomas spent many an hour watching out for visitors to the farm, whether it be friend or foe. Should his enemies appear, he would watch until they had reached a certain spot, then descend the hill to mount his horse and disappear into the valley until all was quiet again.*

*Thomas, knowing he could not be buried in consecrated ground, chose his favourite observation point above Wharnley Burn as his final resting place.*

*He requested his family to bury him under a tree on the crest of the hill, which overlooked his beloved Derwent Valley.*

*Thomas Raw, one of the last of the moss-troopers, ended his days by dying in his bed on 30th January 1714. As instructed, his son Michael interred his remains in the spot he had chosen, there he placed a flat stone over the grave of his father with the inscription.*

*' Here lieth the body of Thomas Raw of  
Wharnley Burn, who departed this life  
January 30th. Anno. 1714.'*

*The spot where Thomas Raw was buried is aptly described in a poem by the Derwent Valley poet, Alexander Barrass.*

*" How rich the wood, how green the grassy mound  
Where sleeps the once indomitable Raw.  
And where asylumed safe, he gazed around  
And toiling through the scenes surrounding saw  
The coming plunder or the searching law,  
What though unconsecrated memory  
May hold a thousand feebler souls in awe,  
He slumbers there beneath his chosen tree  
And who where ever laid may sleep more sound than he."*

*For many years after his death, Nelly Wilkinson, a woman who kept house for the Raw family, used to visit the grave of Thomas once a week and scrub the stone. As a reward for her efforts, George Raw, who was in possession of Wharnley Burn, decreed in his will that she should have a room rent free at the farm for the rest of her life.*

*The farm remained the property of the Raw family until 1864, when it became the property of John Emmerson of Frosterley, who eventually sold it to Mr Annandale Town of Allansford.*

*Emmerson, when in possession of Wharnley Burn, had the gravestone of Thomas removed to his farm at Steeley Burn, Satley. The stone was inserted in the west wall of the old farmhouse, now a cart shed, with the words." Removed from Wharnley Burn 1866 " inscribed upon it.*

*A few years before the removal of the stone to Satley, Mr Frank Bell, tenant of Wharnley Burn farm, and George Siddle of Castleside decided to open the grave of Thomas Raw in order to prove that he was actually buried there. On opening the grave they found the remains to be in a remarkable state of preservation, which was probably due to the dryness of the soil in which the body lay.*

*Thomas Raw, like Rowley Harrison, were among the last of the moss-troopers, and like the reivers have now passed into the history of the Border counties, but because of their infamy many stories have been told, and as a result, they have become part of the fascinating folk-lore of the Derwent Valley.*

*The valley, one of the most picturesque in the North of England, is indeed very rich in history, superstition, legend and song, of which most of which can be found recorded in the splendid book by J.W.Fawcett, 'The Tales of Derwentdale'.*

*Kevin Leary.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

F.J.Wade. *The Upper Derwent Valley. Volume II. pp 19-23 & 130-132.*

J.W.Fawcett. *Tales of Derwentdale. 1902. pp 38-41 & 54-58.*

G. Watson. *The Border reivers. 1974.*

G.M.Fraser. *The Steel Bonnets. 1971.*

# A COPY OF THE ACT

of 13th, George 3rd, 1773,

For dividing and inclosing certain Meors, Commons, or Tracts of Land, within the Parish and Minor of Lanchester, Palatine of Durham," and called

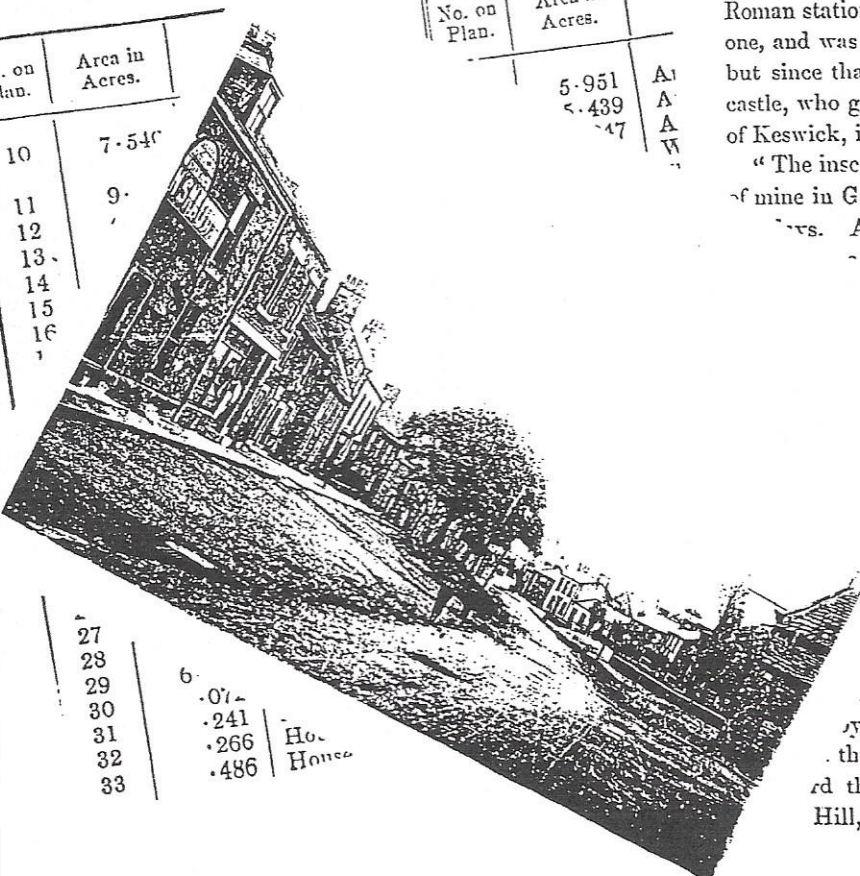
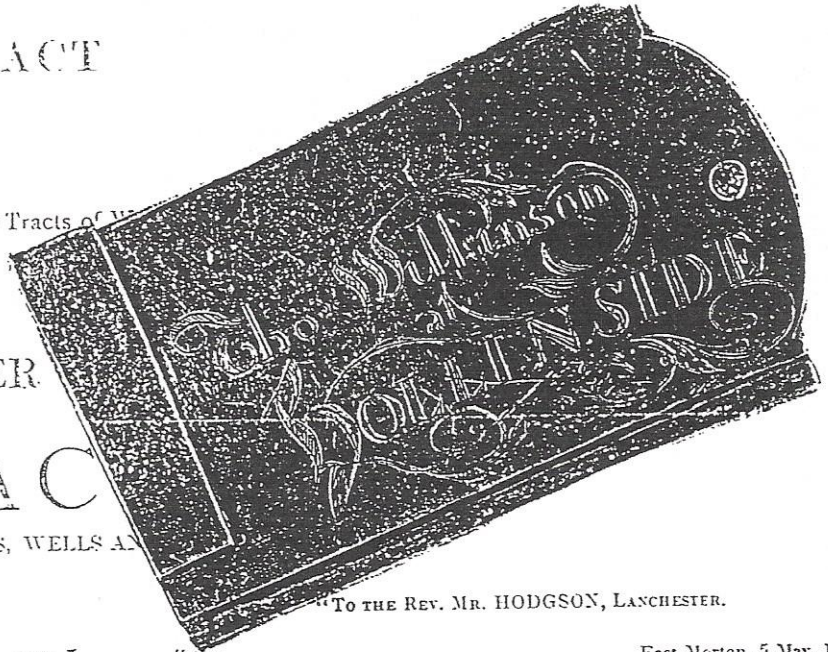
## THE LANCHESTER

# COMMON AC

WITH THE AWARDED ROADS, COMMON QUARRIES, WELLS AND WATERING PLACES,

### PARISH OF LANCHESTER, PART I.

No. on Plan.	Area in Acres.	No. on Plan.	Area in Acres.
10	7.540	5.951	A
11	9.	5.439	A
12		47	A
13			A
14			A
15			A
16			W
27			
28			
29	6.		
30	.072		
31	.241		
32	.266		Ho.
33	.486		Houses

To THE REV. MR. HODGSON, LANCHESTER.

" SIR, East Morton, 5 May, 1806.

" Yours of Saturday morning was handed to me in Durham. I shall willingly give you any small information I have respecting the Roman station at Lanchester. The altar you allude to is a small votive one, and was in good preservation the last time I saw it at Hollin Hall: but since that it was in possession of the late Mr. Callender of Newcastle, who gave it, along with some other antiquities, to P. Crosthwaite of Keswick, in whose museum I suppose it still remains.

" The inscription I have not by me: it being among other old papers of mine in Gateshead; but I will seek them out, and send it you in a few days. About 18 or 20 years ago, a considerable number of Roman inscriptions with a stylus and other things, were found at your station. One of the gentlemen (Mr. Fenwick of Hamsteels) got these; who tells me he gave them to me. They are at present in the collection of Dr. Mitford. I have a copy of their inscriptions preserved, which was printed in the Newcastle Chronicle, at the end of the year 1785. The station has been supplied with water from a well at Hamhope, above Knycheley, a distance of about a mile. Mr. Fenwick, of Dipton, and myself, traced the rivulet, from its head down to the west side of the station, where it runs in a reservoir. It begins about a mile to the S.W. of the station, in a mill, near a house called Dyke Nook; where an dam has been thrown across the rivulet, to collect the waters of the mill-race—thence skirting along the heath, till it crosses the west side of Mr. White's woodlands, where it enters his garden, and passes on a little way south of the house, distinguishing itself by the superior size of the trees, which are much larger than in other parts of the grounds; then it runs through the new-inclosed field, and finally discharges itself into the Hill, takes a sweep to

THE  
**PARISH REGISTRE**  
 OF  
**All Saints' Church, Lanchester**  
 IN THE COUNTY AND DIOCESE OF DURHAM.

