



*Appleby in Westmorland • Root and Branch • May it Flourish Forever*

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**Newsletter January 2008**

**No 75**

**Public Meeting 29 November 2007: “The Milestone Society”**

For this meeting we welcomed our speaker, Mr Colin Smith, who is the Cumbria representative of the Milestone Society. He began with an insight into how his interest in industrial archaeology led to an interest in milestones and boundary stones. Then came a very brief history of roads and milestones from Roman roads to pack roads to turnpike roads. ‘Modern’ milestones were introduced in the 1760s as part of the Turnpike Acts, erection of which was voluntary at first but became mandatory with later Acts. Turnpike Trusts were responsible for the roads until 1888, when councils took over responsibility. We learned about the various charges and tolls imposed on road-users and of some of the penalties e.g. transportation to the colonies for a year for those avoiding paying the tolls and loss of all goods for anyone moving a milestone. But there were several circumstances when payment was not required e.g. military personnel did not have to pay, nor did anyone using the road to get to church or moving herds of cows going to be milked. Use of the roads increased over time, more goods were transported and the tourist industry in this area began and grew and the roads suffered damage from the increased traffic. The basis for calculating tolls was changed, which resulted in charges being raised, to the displeasure of many, including farmers who were charged for moving goods/animals both to and from their farms.

Having “set the scene”, Colin then came to the work of the Milestone Society in general and in Cumbria in particular. There are still a considerable number of milestones, technically belonging to the Highways department but no-one is looking after them. He gave an example of a milestone being taken out during work on the new Temple Sowerby by-pass, which had just disappeared before Colin could rescue it. He told several anecdotes of his experiences trying to locate milestones. Once found, details to be recorded include what the milestone is made of, the dimensions, its exact location, its condition and any text, etc found on the stone. He had good news – Cumbria has a rich legacy of milestones and boundary stones. Over 250 milestones and over 100 boundary stones have already been noted and there are more to be found. We were then treated to a series of beautiful slides of examples of several different styles of Cumbrian milestones, including the Roman milestone at Temple Sowerby and the milestone to be found on Bongate, the material of this latter helping to date it: the stone indicating that it is probably an original 1760 Turnpike Act milestone with a later metal addition, probably attached as a result of a later Turnpike Act. Other Westmorland examples are to be found on the Brough/Penrith turnpike road, on the Sedburgh/Kirkby Stephen turnpike and on the A66 between Appleby and Kirkby Thore. More slides, of Cumberland examples, were also shown. The milestones were in all kinds of condition from fresh-painted and obviously well taken care of to badly damaged and neglected.

But he had bad news, too – despite government instructions that roadside features should be looked after approx 18 milestones a year are being lost and 90% of the existing milestones are being neglected. Milestones are under threat in many ways: they can be considered as ‘collectable’ and thus are removed, they can suffer impact damage and they can suffer from poor restoration efforts.

What should be done by anyone concerned about the fate of milestones/boundary stones/waymarkers, etc? Colin gave several suggestions, such as undertaking regular surveys, ensuring the milestones and markers can be seen and appreciated, briefing verge- and hedge-cutting contractors of the location of milestones so that damage might be avoided, ensuring as many as possible are listed, adopting a planned maintenance programme and, of course, joining The Milestone Society.

A lively question and answer session followed.

Colin is a knowledgeable and enthusiastic speaker and the slides illustrating his talk added a great deal to a very interesting and entertaining evening.

More information can be obtained from the website: [www.milestone-society.co.uk](http://www.milestone-society.co.uk)

### **Christmas Special**

Once again, huge thanks to Graham, Anne and Brian for the wonderful collection of slides we were treated to on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December. A good audience of members and friends gathered at the Methodist meeting room and we were thoroughly entertained. As ever, much conversation accompanied the slides as audience members recognised people and places. Graham actively encourages people to pass on details as we are always keen to learn more about the town and its residents. The 'fading-in' effect of the projection really makes the show special – thank you for that, Brian.

Thank you, too, to all those who contributed refreshments and who helped 'behind the scenes'. It was a magnificent spread and comments were all very positive.

Vivienne Gate

### **From the Chairman**

#### **Sparkly Appleby**

To start with a cheerful subject, we would like to congratulate the CTCA (Chamber of Trade and Community Association) on getting the lights up for the festive season (and we know it was not done without some "alarums and excursions") and for organising the Appleby Sparkle day, which cheered up a fairly gloomy December day on the 1<sup>st</sup>. I especially loved the dressed-up red squirrels throughout the town – they were great! Thank you very much for all your efforts.

#### **Not-quite-so-sparkly Appleby**

Four of your committee attended the Town Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December, because we thought that, as the Budget for 2008/9 and associated precept were to be discussed and voted on, it was a very important meeting. The overwhelming feeling I brought away with me was of immense sadness on my part and a lack of verve and real interest on the part of the Council. The surroundings (the Moot Hall) are wonderfully and uniquely historic but they are not conducive to briskness of discussion being, in my opinion, depressing to work in; acoustically poor, with Councillors mainly talking very quietly and competition from outside noise resulting in us not hearing them well from the public seats; and visually awkward. Even more depressing to me was the LACK of discussion. Here we have arguably the most important session of the year and after Cllr Budding's exposition of his budget plans in his role as RFO (Responsible Finance Officer), which contained some radical propositions, we expected detailed and pertinent questions by the bucketful, especially since the Council had had many papers about the proposals to study in detail since the last meeting.

What we got was a sort of numbed silence. The budget proposals and precept were passed with minimal comment. Since the proposals are based on forming a Trust to manage the Town's properties which, it is confidently expected, will allow grants to be applied for (and won), the

Council have, by their approval, consented to that Trust with only the sketchiest outline of what is involved, and that only in Cllr Budding's head, it seems. So, at present, the Trust idea has to go ahead – it has been voted on and approved. So has the large precept. There was no “what if?” discussion to decide on a “fall-back” position in case the grants were not forthcoming to the degree assumed, no querying of the Trust's composition or exact powers or role, no rigorous examination of proposed Council expenditure. We have studied the documents and have come up with several points which we think are relevant which we will put to the Council in due course, NOT to be awkward, but because we think that they need to be answered and/or clarified. Did none of the fourteen Councillors find these points worrisome or unclear?

In an unexpected reaction, I was really depressed after the meeting and I asked myself, not for the first time, “What are we paying for?”

### **Appleby Accolade**

This time we want to award our Accolade to the Stick and Wheel Club. Quietly and without fuss, this Group meets every fortnight to bring together people who are less than mobile, either to play games or to enjoy a talk or other entertainment, but always to have tea, sandwiches and cakes. There is a lovely warm atmosphere with the Group – I gave a talk to them and I feel it was my privilege to do so, and I really enjoyed it. Long may the Stick and Wheel Club continue and prosper.

**I would like to wish all members of the Society all the best for the New Year – I hope we do not have to live through “interesting times”.**

R Ian Campbell

### **Looking to the Future**

Partly inspired by the successful partnership between Kirkby Stephen and its surrounding parishes, a group has been set up consisting of Appleby and some of its surrounding parishes to look at ways in which local people might be able to influence future development. The proven way of tackling this is by embarking on a Parish Plan which has been done successfully in a number of communities in Cumbria – Culgaith, Lazonby and Shap. By canvassing local opinion as widely as possible, the Plan will identify areas of success which can be built on and other areas where change is needed. By working together parishes can exert more influence and attract more funding than they could singly. Appleby Town Council, as the body entitled to lead this, has applied for funding to pump-prime the initial work which will be managed by a steering committee consisting of representatives of all parishes concerned.

Future appropriate development of the town is obviously of real importance to the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society, which is why I find myself working with members of the Town Council again! Further meetings are planned for the New Year, followed by action which I hope many of you will wish to support. Meanwhile, watch this space!

Maggie Clowes

### **History Slot**

#### **Some more information about the Public Hall .....**

In our November 2006 Newsletter we recorded what we knew about the Public Hall. By January 2007, we knew a bit more and included a facsimile of a notice calling a public meeting to consider the need for a covered market. That meeting, on 3 February 1879, was called by the Mayor, James Simpson. By coincidence James Simpson was also Mayor in 1862 and it was he who called a public meeting on 17 September that year to determine the best means of establishing a market at Appleby. On Saturday 19 November 1864 the Butter Market was moved (presumably from The Cloisters) to the Moot Hall where ‘it will continue to be held until the newly rented premises have been fitted out’. The ‘new’ Butter Market was opened, as previously recorded, 1867. As the Rev'd James Simpson was Mayor in 1861, 1862, 1878 and 1879 it would seem that Appleby owes him a

debt of gratitude. Without him there might not have been a market, covered or otherwise, and we might not have our Public Hall. Does anyone have information about Rev'd James Simpson?

#### **..... and the Moot Hall**

In April 1923 the Temple Sowerby Trust gave the Town Council £40 to pay for repairs to the Moot Hall which included a new outer door and fittings. In April 1926 the Town Council agreed to improvements to the Moot Hall at an estimated cost of £260 and in November that year, the *Penrith Observer* reported that a renovated Town Hall had re-opened after several months (during which time the Council met in the Supper Room, by the way). The Moot Hall had been 'transformed'. The photographs of past Mayors had been neatly arranged; seating was re-arranged; new lino laid and the radiators changed. Instead of Councillors sitting round a central table with the Mayor at its head, each Councillor now had a separate desk. Desks were arranged in elliptical formation. The Mayor was provided with a 'new' top table. New chairs had been ordered but not yet delivered.

#### **Council Salaries**

In October 1927 the Council appointed Mr Howland as assistant Finance Officer at no salary. In September 2007, the Council appointed an assistant Finance Officer at £1,500, soon to be £6,000 per annum.

In October 1930 Mr T Gibson's application for an increase in his salary as Council clockwinder was refused. He had wanted £8 8s per annum instead of £5 5s. The Council agreed to an annual bonus of £3 3s instead. In September 2007 the Town Council resolved to comply with the national minimum wage legislation which was jolly decent of them. I'll let Her Majesty know that her loyal subjects in Appleby have agreed to comply with the law. A quantum leap since 1927 when the Council resolved not to comply with the Municipal Corporations Act!

Graham Coles

#### **Chariots of Fire (part 4)**

Part 3 (November 2007) ended with a question – just where was the fire engine kept during its early years? It also ended in 1879, the year in which the volunteer fire brigade was formed. Time, perhaps, to move on.

Fortunately, the brigade was seldom rushed off its feet and turn-outs were few and far between. But, when required, it usually performed well and was often the object of fulsome praise by contemporary newsmen, few, if any, of whom would have seen a steam operated engine at work.

In May 1881, the *Penrith Observer* reported an "alarming fire at Appleby". Within a few minutes of the alarm bell being rung the 'Tufton', a steam-powered fire engine was fully equipped by the volunteer fire brigade and proceeded to the scene of the action under the command of Captain Noble and ably charioteered by John Rigg of the Kings Head Hotel, who drove his own horses. The scene of the conflagration (Low Abbey Farm) was fully seven miles from Appleby but the brigade reached it in under an hour, notwithstanding a mountainous and rugged road. 50 acres of gorse was consumed and considerable damage must have been caused to the game. Following such a glowing tribute, the finale was something of an anticlimax. "Happily the fire brigade was not required but too much praise cannot be accorded them for the promptitude with which they responded to the call of duty".

Political problems continued to thwart the newly-formed brigade. In June 1881 a meeting of the East Ward Union was reminded that it had received a request for additional equipment. Nothing had been done. The clerk recalled that Mr Pearson had agreed to call a meeting to raise funds by public subscription. It was resolved to refer the matter to a future meeting which agreed to organise a collection.

Another example of praiseworthy work was the 'great' fire at Kirkby Thore Hall in 1882 – recalled in a previous Newsletter.. On that occasion, the Appleby men arrived before the Penrith brigade and was able to fight the fire by taking water from a beck 200 yards away. The Penrith men, with insufficient hose, were reduced to virtual bystanders. *The Herald* reporter described the Appleby men as “fine a body of active and daring young fellows” and their engine as “simple but efficient”. However, just one year later, in October 1883, the press was not quite as supportive. When called to a barn fire at Brampton, the brigade arrived without its engineer and no one knew how to get the pump started. The assembled crowd did its best with buckets. By the time the engineer, Mr Story, arrived the barn had been destroyed. *The Penrith Advertiser* reporter commented, “Whilst the firemen did their best, it was regretted that none of them could work the engine.”

In 1883 the public subscription for new equipment raised £48 14s 6d of which all but £14 14s was spent. At a presentation dinner held in the Tufton Arms and attended by some 45 people, the Mayor John Bell Jnr recalled the great fire at Kirkby Thore and praised the way in which the Penrith and Appleby men had worked together (not quite how *The Herald* saw it). The brigade was presented with 19 helmets, including a captain's and lieutenant's, both with silver mountings. A further 600 feet of flax hose with brass couplings was also provided.

In 1887 Cllr McConnal of Appleby Borough Corporation asked the Mayor whether the Corporation received any income from the brigade's services. (It was a volunteer fire brigade but it was worth a try.) The Mayor thought not but added that the brigade occasionally got something for services outside the Borough. Cllr McConnal then asked if the engine was ever used but we shall never know the Mayor's reply as it was drowned out by shouts of “the less the better” amid much laughter.

In August 1889 *The Penrith Observer* reported an “alarming” fire at the premises of Messrs Whitehead, Printer and Stationer, Bridge Street. The alarm was raised by ringing both the Moot Hall fire bell and one of the church bells. In a very short time the brigade, under the command of J S Rigg (now Captain), was on the scene together with a large gathering of townspeople. Despite an abundant water supply being obtained from the street hydrants the premises suffered considerable damage. The printing press on the upper floor fell through into the shop below. The staircase and a considerable quantity of stock were damaged. The upper floor and roof were completely destroyed. Captain Rigg was complimented by the two insurance companies with an interest in the premises. By October that same year Messrs Whitehead and Sons was back in business. The premises had been repaired and new equipment installed.

In March 1890 there was a serious fire at the premises of John Shaw, joiner and cabinet maker. He occupied premises “formerly known as the White Hart” on Boroughgate (*Penrith Observer*). The word “formerly” intrigued us as the White Hart was and still is a public house. However, at the time of the fire, the property, once owned by Lord Lowther (see Chris Wilson's *Something Close to My Heart*, Appleby Record Society, 1995) was owned by another Mr Wilson, a solicitor. John Shaw was his tenant. The licence lapsed during Mr Shaw's tenancy but the premises later re-opened as a temperance hotel, run by Mr Shaw. Back to the fire. Behind the White Hart, then described as a dwelling house, and connected to it, was a range of buildings extending for some eighty feet. The lower part was used as stabling, the upper level as a showroom and workshop. In the early hours of 6 March, Mrs Hutchinson, wife of the landlord of the nearby Butchers' Arms (probably so named due to its proximity to the recently removed Shambles) saw the fire. Her husband ran first to the Moot Hall and then into St Lawrence's Church to raise the alarm. The brigade, under the command of Captain J S Rigg, was on the scene in “an incredibly short time”. Mr Johnson, Corporation turncock and surveyor, prepared the hydrants, hoses were attached and, within fifteen minutes, water was on. Only the dwelling house survived. Nothing remained of the outbuildings save bare walls.

In April 1890 the annual general meeting of the brigade was held in the White House. Captain Rigg reported on the only two fires in the previous twelve months i.e. Whitehead's and Shaw's. The brigade was currently one man short of its establishment of 20. Seven drills, including the two fires, had been held with average attendance of 11.4 men. Seventeen had turned out to the fire at Whitehead's. Insurance companies had donated £2 to brigade funds which stood at £16. The brigade held 400 yards of hose, suggesting that hose had a short shelf life as it must have had almost 1,000 yards following the gift of 600 yards in 1883. J S Rigg was re-elected Captain and treasurer; F Moordaff became a lieutenant in place of William Noble, who had resigned; John Alderson was appointed secretary; John Story remained as engineer; James Yare sub engineer; W Lothian, John Ewbank, John Dodgson and John Shaw were elected to replace those who had retired. Following the A.G.M. the brigade wrote to the Borough Corporation asking for the entrance to the engine shed to be widened. The Clerk agreed to contact the owner. (Photographic evidence suggests that the doorway to the ex-railway pumping house was altered at about this time.)

An application to the Corporation for financial support met with mixed success. The brigade applied for a donation of £31. 5s to purchase more standpipes, some drying equipment for hoses and uniforms and the cost of insurance premiums to provide cover when men were injured on duty. The Corporation turned down the request to fund drying equipment on the grounds that, whilst drying hoses might aid preservation, there was no pressing need. As the firemen sometimes worked outside the Borough, the Corporation agreed only to part fund the insurance premium at a cost of £1 7s 6d and only then if the men agreed to fund the difference. The total donation came to £24 15s. Captain Rigg thanked the Corporation for its kind consideration. This may have been the first time that the brigade had approached the Corporation for assistance. As a quid pro quo the Corporation requested an annual report from the brigade. This was agreed.

1890 was clearly an eventful year for John Shaw. In March his workshop had been gutted by fire, in April he was elected to the volunteer fire brigade and in November he was injured whilst on duty. The brigade had been called to a fire at Mr Grisedale's farm at Spittals. The alarm had been raised by telegraph. (Possibly via the line between Kirkby Thore and Appleby post offices. The Post Office had taken over the telegraph service in about 1870. It is equally possible that the railway telegraph between Kirkby Thore and Appleby was used.) The alarm was first raised at 7.15 a.m. but the brigade did not arrive on scene until 9 15 a.m. The only water was a pond some 300 yards distant and down hill from the barn, making pumping difficult. John Shaw was found to be missing at some time and he was later found trapped in the building due to a loft collapse. He was treated on the scene by Drs Williamson and Watson and remained at the farm for some days before returning to Appleby. The farm's owner, Mr Metcalfe-Gibson, made a donation of £50 to the brigade, no small sum in 1890. There was also a fire at Skirwith Hall that month. It was serious and proved to be a turning point in the legal status of the firemen – more anon.

In December of that same year the Corporation agreed to place a standpipe and 150 yards of hose under the Moot Hall steps.

To be continued .....

Maggie Clowes and Graham Coles

### **Committee Meeting**

**Matters Arising from Minutes for 9 October 2007:** King George's Playing Field – Ian to write to EDC to remind Mr P Emerson, EDC, of his promises with regard to Memorial Trees; discussion took place about the multi activity play area and the field's charitable status. Explorer Films – it was decided not to proceed with the Dybeck's project proposals.

### **Reports:**

Treasurer/Membership – funds standing in excess of £5,700. Still several non-renewals. Recruitment drive to be considered.

Oral History – nothing to report.

Planning/Townscape – several planning applications discussed, along with EDC's Designated Public Place Order and the proposed ramp on the Sands. Further efforts to be made to progress the outstanding issues following the townscape works.

Appleby New Fair Joint Committee – brief reports given of the Media Working Party plans for an information leaflet and the membership of the Infrastructure Working Party.

Cemetery Chapel – letter received from the Cemetery Chapel Committee Chairman, expressing disappointment at the withdrawal of Society representation. It was agreed, however, that the Society would no longer be involved.

Chamber of Trade and Community Association – consideration to be given to re-starting the Liaison meetings between the Society, the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade, extending the membership to include police representation.

**Society Archive: IT update and accommodation:** the experiments with data input/database had given rise to lots of queries. Further meeting of sub-committee to be arranged. Cumbria County Council's Head of Culture had written to Ian explaining why he had not been able to progress our requests and offering accommodation for the archive at Kendal Record Office. VG to write, declining this offer. A temporary home has been found for the material.

**Newsletter:** it was agreed to allow 4 pages for "Current Affairs". Deadline for contributions given.

**2008 Exhibition:** offers of photos and artefacts have been received.

**Arrangements for 10 December meeting:** well in hand.

**Correspondence received:** BALH subs renewal request.

**Any Other Business:** Moot Hall – letter requesting information about the outcome of the Moot Hall survey.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday 5 February 2008, 7.30 p.m.

### **From the Secretary**

#### **Help!!**

A Society member writes, wondering if members can help. Bob Burns has recently been contacted by someone living in New Zealand who is the many-times g. grandson of Rev. Harrison Shaw, Vicar of St Michael's from 1789 to his death in 1823, Mayor of Appleby in 1801, a County Magistrate and member of the Turnpike Trust. What is being sought is information about a commemorative stone which was in St Michael's said to have been removed and taken to Crosby on Eden, where Harrison Shaw's father, Henry Shaw, was vicar. A visit to St John's Church at Crosby revealed a commemorative stone for Henry but nothing for Harrison. If anyone knows anything about the Harrison Shaw stone, especially its whereabouts, can you contact Vivienne, please?

## **Forthcoming Events for the Society**

Thursday 10 July 2008, 2.00 p.m. start: visit to Appleby by members of Heskett Local History Group.

Heritage Open Days: to be held this year 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September. Look out for further information in due course.

## **Forthcoming Events notified by other organisations**

Wednesday 23 January 2008, 7.30 p.m.: "How Old is Your House?" – Stainton (Penrith) History Group meeting in Stainton Village Hall. Bob Howard from Nottingham University will give a talk on Dendrochronology (tree-ring dating). Bob Howard has been responsible for almost all the work in Cumbria and will explain the method, with hands-on samples, as well as giving details of the remarkable results he has obtained. Costs: adults £3; students £1.50. Tea and biscuits will be available.

## **New website**

A new discussion board for communities and groups in Cumbria and beyond has been set up:

<http://cumbric.net>

There are a number of general discussion sections and there is a history section.

## **Next Meeting**

**Thursday 31 January 2008  
7.30 p.m. Supper Room, Market Hall**

**"Mardale" – Mr John Falshaw, of Orton, will talk about the drowned village. It will provide an interesting foretaste for the evening visit to Haweswater in April.**

**Website: [www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk](http://www.applebysociety.force9.co.uk)**

If you have enjoyed reading this Newsletter and are not already a member of the *Appleby-in-Westmorland Society*, you could have it delivered free to your home six times a year simply by joining the Society.

A £6 individual/£10 family subscription also entitles you to attend six bi-monthly meetings free. These are usually held in the Supper Room of the Market Hall on the last Thursday of January, March, May, July (our A.G.M. meeting), September and November at 7.30 in the evening.

Application forms are available at the Library.

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The Newsletter is published by the Appleby-in-Westmorland Society and is edited by Vivienne Gate, Secretary, tel: 017683 51597

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To inform members that Councillor Morgan, chairman of Eden District Council, alerted Appleby Town Councillors to yet another review of public toilets which will begin soon.