

Restocking the shelves: post-war experiences of the independent shopkeeper (with primary reference to Southwold, Suffolk)

Understanding the Urban Landscape (case study of Skipton)

Supplying the army: the contribution of Essex to provisioning the forces of Edward III, c.1337

Southcomb sermons



## DID YOU KNOW?

by Peter Lewis

Upper Eden History Society began a collaborative exercise to gather together as many as possible of the 'established facts', anecdotes, hearsay, local legends, beliefs, book contents and snippets about Kirkby Stephen's history, and to document them in as simple a way as possible. The idea was borrowed from some BBC history magazines that, among their long articles, showed little 'bubbles' of information, perhaps a sentence or two long, giving simple snapshots of related historical 'facts'.

There is a plethora of information about Kirkby Stephen in many books, from the 19th century to the present day, but sometimes it is easier to read a list of simple facts. Books such as *A History of Kirkby Stephen* by Douglas Birkbeck, *Kirkby Stephen* by Peter McWilliam, *Secrets & Legends of Old Westmorland* by Dawn Robertson & Peter Koronka, *Things New and Old at and around Kirkby Stephen* by Rev Canon James Simpson, *Kirkby Stephen* by Anne and Alec Swailes ...

Here are a few 'Did You Know's':

The local children used to tie the gates in the cloisters when there was a wedding at the church. The best man would then throw coins for the children to scramble for and, if he was well prepared, would have come with a knife to cut the string. This was a local variation of a common practice – usually the church doors were tied.

The dramatic gorge at Stenkrith is traditionally known as Coup-Kernan Hole, otherwise known as the Devil's Grinding Hole or the Devil's Hole.

Just up river from Low Mill Bridge the weir serving the saw-mill was destroyed in the flood of 1962–1963.

Faraday Road was named after Richard Faraday (1757–1815), uncle to the great scientist Michael Faraday. Richard was a mill owner and local dignitary.

There have been at least five Post Offices in

the town: in the King's Arms 1851; in the 1871 Census there is a Post Office Yard, but no specific location given; certainly by 1901 in Victoria Square, opposite the Temperance Hall in the building currently occupied by 'In the Frame'; at what was the Emporium, now the Evangelical Church; and now in the current building, sharing premises with the florist.

During WWII, when England was bracing itself for invasion in the summer of 1940, two deterrent 'tank traps' were laid at the pinch/nip-points on North Road and High Street – rows of deep cylindrical holes from kerb to kerb. Each was fitted with a circular concrete lid, with a recessed metal handle, level with the road surface. The intention was to pack them with high explosives in the event of invasion, to damage and delay the enemy. Both the Stainmore railway line and the Eden Valley branch line closed to passenger traffic on 20th January 1962.

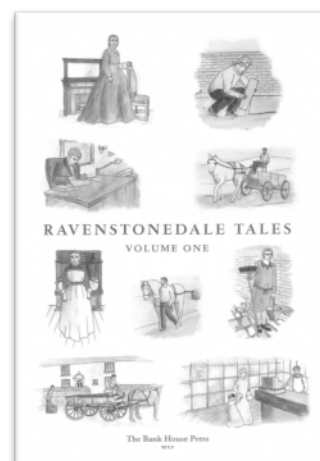
In the fields adjoining Pendragon Castle, at the witching hour of midnight, beautiful white ladies – known rather unromantically as 'boggles' – have been seen walking the castle ruins and nearby fields.

Hwith House, Ravenstonedale, was built by John Hewetson, and completed in 1875. Its name is thought to be a compound of his sons' names: Henry, William, I for John, Thomas, and Humphrey. After John's second wife died in 1920 the building became unused, and was put up for sale. There were no buyers and it was demolished in 1927, with much of the stone used to build other houses – in Hartley and Rowgate, Kirkby Stephen for example.

If readers have additional information please let it be known to: [1lewis.peter@googlemail.com](mailto:1lewis.peter@googlemail.com)



The image on the right is from the cover of a recent book by Val Fermer, from archives held by Ravenstonedale Parish History Group. It gives details of three Westmorland families, including the Hewetsons.



**THE GRAVESTONE OF  
SCIPIUS AFRICANUS  
from Current Archaeology  
Issue 366 September 2020**

Richard Osgood, Senior Archaeologist at the MoD, has reported recent damage done to a headstone in Bristol – that of a black enslaved teenager who died in 1720, a servant of the Earl of Suffolk.

The tombstone is unusually colourful and elaborate, decorated with black cherubs and pink and blue flowers, (pencil sketch by Richard Osgood).



Scipio Africanus was not his birth name but that of a Roman general famous for defeating Hannibal in 202 BC, and probably given him by the Earl's household. Read more at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scipio\\_Africanus\\_\(slave\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scipio_Africanus_(slave))

Why might this be of interest to us in Upper Eden?

A little over 150 years later, in 1871, a black teenager was buried in Kirkby Stephen Cemetery. Not such an elaborate headstone but, thanks to research by Peter Lewis, a little more is known about Egbo.

In Memory of  
EGBO>  
of Old Calabar  
who died May 20th  
1871

Erected by Dr. Henderson

Old Calabar was an old European name for what is now southern Nigeria, and the name Egbo was probably taken the name of his tribe, the Igbo. Most slave ships to this region were British, sailing from Bristol and Liverpool, but the British Abolition of Slavery Act took effect in 1834, 20 years before Egbo was born. So was he a slave? The full story of Egbo, as far as it can be told, is in the UEHS book *Kirkby Stephen Past: People, Places and Plague* available at The Book Shop and Hall's Newsagents in Kirkby Stephen.

Returning to Scipio Africanus: Richard Osgood set up a *JustGiving* page and was delighted to raise

enough money to restore the tombstone and protect it in future. As he says 'while the Internet can be used to share acts of hatred, it can also be used to facilitate all that is good about being human.' [The Editor wishes to thank Richard Osgood and Current Archaeology for permission to reproduce the sketch and summary from the original article.]



**A RAILWAY BRIDGE AND A BUS  
two more items from the  
newspaper collections of the late  
Marion Baynes**

Did you know that until 1999 Kirkby Stephen West railway station had no footbridge? After many years of 'chipping away' and 'banging the drum' that Kirkby Stephen needed a bridge, it finally arrived. It was a redundant Midland Railway bridge, originally from Guiseley but then in storage in a Huddersfield depot. Information from *The Cumberland & Westmorland Herald* 4 December 1999.

16 — THE HERALD, SATURDAY, 1st AUGUST, 1998



FIRST PASSENGERS: Day trippers set off for Hawes with drivers Anthony and Will Hamer. The coaches in the background are the 1934 Leyland used in the television series and a 1949 Leyland owned by W. Alexander and Son, Falkirk.

**ALL ABOARD FOR A CLASSIC  
TOUR — AT A SEDATE 38mph**

AN Upper Eden family's interest in classic motor coaches has led to the formation of a new business offering scenic trips around the area. Cumbria Classic Coaches is the brainchild of Will Hamer, his wife Claire, son Anthony and daughter Alison Morris, from Bowber Head, Ravenstonedale. They all have a long-standing interest in restoring and running classic motor coaches from the pre-motorway days and are now offering leisurely tours, with a 38mph maximum, throughout the Eden Valley and surrounding areas, using two Leyland vehicles, both of which appeared in the Dr. Findlay's Casebook television series. The Hamers hope the trips will be of interest to both the local traveller and visitors who are looking for a unique way of getting around without using the car. Part of their venture has been supported by a grant from Business Link and it is hoped to form ties with the proposed railway museum at Kirkby Stephen East station, the Settle-Carlisle rail line, organised walking groups and local businesses. The two Leyland coaches, dating from 1934 and 1949, left Kirkby Stephen's Market Square on Tuesday with their first group of passengers, bound for Hawes.

The oldest of the vehicles, bearing the fictitious Tannochbrae on its destination blind, is reckoned to have covered well over 1.5 million miles in its lifetime. Built in 1934, with one of the first six cylinder diesel engines, the coach spent its first 10 years doing the Glasgow to Inverness return run six days a week. With a top speed of 40mph, a clutch pedal on the left, accelerator in the middle and brake on the right, driving it becomes a specialist business. Both of the vehicles owned by the Hamers are fully maintained and tested to conform with all public service vehicle requirements. Also undergoing complete restoration is a 1949 Cornner Commando which will be an attractive 29-seater coach with a little scrub bonnet. The family would welcome ideas and suggestions for trips and the vehicles will be available for hire for outings and special events, such as weddings. Future trips to places of interest include Long Meg and Appleby Castle and this week's visit to Hawes coincided with the arrival of a steam engine for the reopening of the Wensleydale line. The Hamers are hopeful that visitors to the Upper Eden Valley and local residents will enjoy seeing this beautiful area from these 'old ladies' of the road as they wind their way along the quiet country lanes.

In the previous year, 1998, *The Herald* published the above article, about the first Cumbria Classic Coach trip to Hawes. What a wonderful service this company has provided over the years.

Thank you all, particularly for maintaining some vital services through the early months of Covid-19.

