

KIRKBY RAVENSWORTH:

Geographical and Historical information from the year 1890.

Wapentake and Petty Sessional Division of Gilling West - Electoral Division of Gilling - Poor Law Union and County Court District of Richmond - Rural Deanery of Richmond West - Archdeaconry of Richmond - Diocese of Ripon.

This parish, called also Kirkby Hill, lies north-west of Richmond. It includes the townships of Kirkby Hill, Dalton, Gayles, New Forest, part of Newsham, Ravensworth, and Whashton, containing, according to the rate books, 14,724 acres. This area is exclusive of open moorlands, of which there are upwards of 10,000 acres. The population in 1881 was 1,045. In the western part of the parish extensive moorlands prevail, and the scenery is of a dreary, monotonous character; but in the rest, the surface is pleasingly varied with hill and dale. The soil is generally fertile. Freestone is abundant, and copper ore has been found among the hills.

Skirting the parish on the north east is the old Roman road, called Watling Street, which afforded a means of communication between the stations of *Cataractonium* (Catterick) and *Lavatrae* (Bowes), and passed thence into Westmoreland.

KIRKBY HILL township, the boundaries of which have been recently re-arranged, contains 235 acres, and is valued, for rateable purposes, at £331. The landowners are Christopher Cradock, Esq., J.P., Hartforth Hall (lord of the manor), and Eleanor, Duchess Dowager of Northumberland. The village is seated on an eminence about five miles N.W. of Richmond. The Church (St. Peter and St. Felix) "mounted upon a rock" is an interesting structure, built in 1397, on the site of a former one which, there is reason to believe, dated from Saxon times. It is in the Early English style, and consists of nave, with one aisle, chancel, and a lofty square embattled tower, in which are two bells. In 1862, the old leaden roof was removed and a lighter one of slate substituted; the church was also re-seated at the same time, the total cost being about £800. Further repairs and alterations were made in 1884. Several of the windows are stained glass memorials. In the south wall of the nave is the monument of the Rev. Dr. Dakyn, rector of the parish in the reign of Queen Mary. Another slab is to the memory of one Gerandus de Hombie, and on another is an epitaph of Lucy Robinson, who died in 1667. In the chancel is a tablet to the memory of Thomas Wycliffe, Esq., of Richmond,

"the last male descendant of the family which, in the 14th century, produced the Reformer Wickliffe." He died in 1821.

The living is a vicarage in the gift of the Bishop of Ripon, worth £420 a year. Present incumbent the Rev. Ernest Ayscough Stockdale, B.A.; curate, Rev. John Milner Walton, B.A.

Free Grammar School and Hospital. - These two valuable institutions were founded and endowed by the Rev. John Dakyn, D.D., in 1555, "for the instruction of boys and youths, and the sustentation and relief of the poor and indigent." The letters patent ordained that the wardens, schoolmaster, and almspeople should be a body corporate by the name of "The Wardens, Master of the scholars and the poor of the Almshouse or Hospital of St. John the Baptist, of Kirkby-Ravensworth;" and that they should have a common seal, and be capable of holding and receiving any lands, tenements, &c., given for the use of the institution. The endowment, which now produces upwards of £1,500 per annum, consists of about 405 acres of land in East Cowton, with the impropriate rectory and the advowson of the vicarage of that parish; the com tithes of Thirkieby; a yearly rent-charge of £3 6s. 8d. from the com tithes of Newton; nearly five acres of land at Kirkby Ravensworth; four dwellings at Sleegill; about 89 acres of land in St. Martin's, near Richmond, given by William Walker, in 1557, for augmenting the number of almspeople; a dwelling-house, with about an acre of land, at Newsham; and 110 acres of land awarded, in 1808, at the inclosure of Hudswellmiddlemoor. A portion of the income is also allotted to the schools at Dalton, Ravensworth, East Cowton, and Helwith, and also to the poor of Kirkby Ravensworth and East Cowton.

The reverend founder had been one of Henry's commissioners for enquiring into the income of the religious houses in Richmondshire, and, if we may believe Fox's "Book of Martyrs," he was concerned in at least one of the Marian persecutions. On a screen near his monument in the church are the original statutes which he gave to his foundation. The master, who was to be a priest of unblemished character, was bound by his oath not to read to his scholars any reprobate books set forth at any time contrary to the determination of the universal or Catholic Church, whereby they might be infected with corrupt doctrine, or be induced to an insolent manner of living. He was bound to say mass at least twice every week, and to pray for the repose of the souls of the founder, Philip and Mary, and others.

The school is styled "Free Grammar School;" but as the words "Free" and "Grammar" as here used are generally misunderstood, it may be well to state that, when public schools were first established to give boys higher education, the subject mainly taught was the first and fundamental art - that of language - Grammatica. Hence such a school was called Schola Grammaticalis, or *Grammar School*, and when founded by Royal Charter, it was declared to be Libera Schola Grammaticalis, a *Free Grammar School*, *i.e.*, free from all superiority but that of the Crown.

This school is practically FREE to all boys of the parish and neighbourhood who can read well, and are eight years of age. The course of instruction comprises all that is necessary for a thoroughly sound and useful education, including both modern languages and the classics. Boys from this school are eligible for the Akroyd Scholarships; and the trustees contemplate reviving a lapsed scheme connecting the school with Oxford and Cambridge, by the establishment of a scholarship or exhibition. There are at present upwards of 80 boys on the school roll.

The *Hospitals* a very common-place building, containing 16 rooms, four of which were added in 1803, at which time also the number of almspeople was reduced from 27 to 24 -12 of each sex. The statutes ordain that the inmates must be natives of the parish of Kirkby Ravensworth, or have been 10 years resident therein at the time of admission, and that they be of the age of 70 or upwards, but, should they be afflicted with any "continual disease," they may be admitted under that age. In consequence of the age and infirmity of the beneficiaries, nurses are employed to take care of them; at present there are three, but six is the regulation number. The almspeople are supplied with clothing, medical attendance, &c., and receive £1 5s. each per month, but this sum varies yearly, according to the income of the charity. The nurses are paid £110s. per month.

The poor parishioners have two acres of land left by John Heslop, in 1606, to which $\frac{1}{2}$ acres were allotted at the enclosure of Whashton Common.

DALTON, or DALTON TRAVERS, is a township containing 2,648 acres, of which 177 are covered with plantations. A portion of the township is elevated moorland, but the rest is fertile and well wooded. The land belongs to various owners, the principal of whom are the heirs of Col. George Sowerby, Putteridge Park, Luton (lords of the manor); Eleanor Duchess Dowager of Northumberland, Stanwick Park; the trustees of the late W. Lister, Esq., and

of Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., and the Trinity College. Gross estimated rental, £2,756; rateable value, £2,487.

The *village* of Dalton (the *ton ox town* in the dale) is situated 2 ½ miles W. of Kirkby, and seven miles N.W. of Richmond. A small *chapel-of-ease* was erected here in 1839, in which service is held in the morning on the second Sunday of each month, and in the evening on all the other Sundays. The school is a mixed one, attended by about 50 children. It is endowed with £3 a year left by T. Buckton, in 1756, and it also receives its share of the Kirkby School and Hospital Charity, allotted to it by the Charity Commissioners. It is under government inspection, and is taught by Mr. Robert Welbourn Amott. A *Wesleyan Methodist Chapel* was erected here in 1855, - a very small and very plain building. It is in the Barnard Castle circuit.

Near the village is a field, which is, or rather was, held by a very curious tenure, viz., that of finding a grindstone for ever for the people of the place. To the south of the village, in Garden Plantation, are the remains of a camp, called *Castle Steads*; and further south still is an upright block of stone, called *Stone Man*, where was formerly a large cairn. The stones were carted away to make fences, but a skeleton of a man being found under them, the bones were replaced, and some of the stones built over them into the present irregular structure.* Nearly a mile S.E. of the Stone Man another tumulus was opened, and was found to contain a cist-vaen, or stone chest, and within this was a *kale pot*; which, it is said, contained money.

GAYLES township contains 2,297 acres, exclusive of moorland, and is rated at £1,783. The Duchess Dowager of Northumberland is the most extensive owner, and also lady of the manor, but the Rev. John Shaw and Miss E. Hind have estates here, besides whom there are several small freeholders. The village is situated on the Barnard Castle and Richmond road, and is distant about eight miles from the former place, and five from the latter. *Gayles Hall* was long the seat of a branch of the Wycliffe family, but is now occupied by a farmer.

NEW FOREST township, comprising 3,000 acres, including moorland, was formerly part of the great forest or chase which extended westward into Arkengarthdale, and belonged to the earldom of Richmond.

The scenes are desert now and bare,
Where flourished once this Forest fair,
Where doe and roe and red deer good

Oft bounded on thro' gay green wood.'

qc * Longstaffe's "Richmondshire."

The principal landowners are George T. Gilpin-Brown, Esq., J.P. (and lord of the manor), Sedbury Park; Mr. Leonard S. Mason, Gainford; and Mrs. Carter, Darlington. The township includes the hamlets of *Helwith*, *Holgate*, and *Kersey Green*. At the first-named place is a mission room, formerly a school, in which service is held once a month by the curate of Kirkby Ravensworth.

NEWSHAM township is situated partly in this parish and partly in that of Bamingham. Its area, according to the rate books, is 3,219½ acres, and its rateable value £3,000. A portion of the township is moory, but in the other parts the soil is fertile. The landowners are Sir Frederick A. Milbank, Bart., Thorp Perrow, Bedale (and lord of the manor); Godolphin Milbank, Esq., The Chesters, Stutton, Ipswich; Joseph Errington, Esq., Barnard Castle; exors. of John Hutchinson; William Todd, Esq., Newham Grange, Stockton; Mrs. E. Robinson, Hutton Hall; Mr. William Johnson, Earby Hail, Newsham; the heirs of the late Col. Sowerby; and the Society of Friends.

The *village* consists of one long, broad street of well-built houses, about eight miles N.N.W. of Richmond. Near the end of the street is an old stone cross, which was repaired by subscription in 1828; at the same time, the old wooden stocks, which stood close by, were replaced by iron ones; and this obsolete instrument of correction is still in good preservation.

The Wesleyans have a small chapel in the village, built in 1881, at a cost of £259. It is in the Barnard Castle circuit. Church service is held occasionally in a room here by the rector of Bamingham.

RAVENSWORTH township, the boundaries of which have been recently re-arranged, contains 1,704 acres, and is valued for rateable purposes at £1,968. A portion is high moorland, but the soil of the rest is generally fertile. The principal proprietors are Christopher Cradock, Esq., J.P., D.L., Hartforth Hall, who is also lord of the manor; Samuel Rowlandson, Esq., Newton Morrell; Beecroft's Trustees; Mrs. Maynard-Proud, East Layton Hall; Eleanor, Duchess Dowager of Northumberland; Miss E. M. Easton, West Layton Manor; and Messrs. Powell.

Ravensworth, before the Conquest, belonged to one Torphin, but when Domesday Survey was taken, it was in the possession of Bodin, who gave

this and his other manors to his brother Bardulph, and retired into the seclusion of a monastery to end his days. Bardulph's descendants, under the name of Fitzhugh, flourished here until about the reign of Edward IV., when the line ended in two heiresses, one of whom married Lord Parr, and had the manor and castle of Ravensworth as part of her share. William Parr, Marquis of Northampton, dying without lawful issue in 1571, his estates escheated to the Crown. In 1629, Charles I. granted the manor of Ravensworth, the castle, park lands tenements, Applegarth woods, &c., belonging to it, and other estates, to the citizens of London, for which they were to pay a Crown rent of £88 10s 4d. a year. The rents from this property then amounted to £93 2s.

5d. Four years afterwards, the citizens sold their purchase to Jerome Robinson, of St. Trinians, Richmond, and his brother, John Robinson, of Applegarth, for the sum of £3,110 13s. 4d. On the death of Jerome without issue, John became sole owner, and his descendants, in 1675, sold the same for £8,900 to the Hon. Thos. Wharton, whose granddaughter conveyed the estate in marriage to the Hon. Robert Byerley. In 1764, Elizabeth Byerley, the only surviving offspring of this marriage, bequeathed the manor, &c., to her five female cousins; and in 1787, the castle and park, containing about 273 acres, were sold to William Fletcher, of Boroughbridge. The following year, the manor, with all fights, royalties, &c., was sold to Dr. Hutchinson for £4,475; and his trustees, in 1814, disposed of the lordship of Ravensworth and 212 acres, part of the estate, to Sheldon Cradock, Esq., of Hartforth, whose son, Christopher Cradock, Esq., is the present lord of the manor. The castle and demesne were purchased by Humphrey Fletcher, Esq., and at his death they were sold to Mr. Lax. R. Page, Esq., was the next owner, and now they belong to Samuel Rowlandson, Esq.

The *Castle*, once the residence of the Fitzhughs and the Parrs, of which family was Catherine Parr, sixth and last wife of Henry VIII., now lies in ruins. It does not appear to have been at any time a place of much consequence; and Leland, who saw it in its entirety upwards of 300 years ago, says - 'The castle, excepting two or three towers, and a faire stable, with a conduct (conduit) coming to the haulte side, hath nothing memorable.' It stands in a marshy situation, near the foot of Kirkby Hill, and, consequently, must have relied solely on its moat for protection. There are few remains of the castle now left, two towers and a gateway being the only features possessing any interest. On the smaller of the two towers, in bold black letter, is the following inscription: "*Fpc cf'n's'ih'c via tons & origo alpha & oa*" (Christus dominus, Ihesus via, fons et origo, alpha et omega.) The style of architecture is latish Gothic, and no indications of an earlier structure are to be seen, though, it is

said, a fortress occupied the site in Saxon times. Henry, Lord Fitz Hugh, founded and endowed a chantry in the Castle Chapel, for two priests to sing mass daily for ever for the souls of the founder and his wife, and for the souls of all his ancestors. When it was suppressed at the Reformation, the net yearly income was £6.

At the base of the hill, not far from the ruins, is the village of Ravensworth, described by Leland as "pratty." In the centre is a large green, on which still stands the base of an ancient stone cross. A school was erected here in 1841, and is attended by about 60 children. It is supported by school fees, share of the School and Hospital Charity, £4 from Lax's Charity, and voluntary contributions. Service is held in it by the vicar or curate of the parish on Sunday afternoons. The Wesleyan Methodists have also a chapel in the village, which was rebuilt in 1862. It is in the Richmond circuit. A reading room was established in 1886.

WHASHTON is another township in this parish. Its area is 1,620 acres, and rateable value £1,548. Christopher Cradock, Esq., J.P. (lord of the manor); heirs of the late Colonel Sowerby; and Hale Sweetman, Esq., are the chief owners of the soil. The *village* is situated on an acclivity under the eastern verge of the high moors of Arkengarth Forest, four miles N.W. of Richmond. A temperance hall was erected here in 1861, but the building was subsequently purchased by the Wesleyan Methodists for £80, and converted into a chapel. It is in the Richmond circuit.

The place is variously written in early documents - Quassington, Whassington, Wascington, and gave the name of Washington to its early owners.

[Description(s) from Buhner's *History and Directory of North Yorkshire* (1890)]

Directories

Transcript of the entry for the Post Office, professions and trades in Buhner's Directory of 1890.