

OLD MIDDLE HOUSE.

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MALHAM MOOR.

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A.R.



## MIDDLE HOUSE FARM

### 1. Historical interest

#### a) Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic) 7000 BC - 5000BC ?

Around Great Close Mire are found abundant microliths, flint implements of Mesolithic hunters and fishers

#### b) Iron Age 300BC - 400 AD

Iron Age tumulus on top of Great Close Hill (multiple burial). Many hutments on this farm and a large settlement just W of the farmhouse - described and figured in "Archaeology of Malham Moor", p.12-13.

#### c) Anglian 7th or 8th century.

Priests House - described and figured in Archaeology of Malham Moor.

#### d) Mediaeval farm (Norse) 12th century

described and figured, p.20-21.

#### e) Monastic (Fountains Abbey property, 12th - 16th century)

The little enclosures and their walls, between the old farm and the new Middle House, are the oldest in the district and date to this period (see photograph in "Monastic remains on Malham Moor, p.2 and text on page 4.)

#### f) the Old Middle House rebuilt late 16th century on the site of the older Norse farm. Description in "Malham and Malham Moor" book, p.101

#### g) Malham Moor Cattle Fair, held on Great Close Pasture annually 1750 - c.1830. Drovers' roads can be traced leading to it from far away. 5000 head of cattle pastured on Great Close from Scotland for this fair (Description p.100 of Malham and Malham Moor book).

### 2. Botanical interests

#### a) Great Close Mire. wet ground constantly fed by lime-saturated water, with numerous springs and runnels of water. The great interest of this Mire is that it is an unstable open habitat, where species which cannot stand the competition of a closed habitat, such as grassland, can survive. It has probably been an open habitat since glacial times, so that species which have become extinct elsewhere have managed to survive here. It contains a great many rare plants as a result, notably *Bartsia alpina*, *Carex capillaris*, *Equisetum variegatum*, *Rhinanthus spadicus*. The Mire is similar in importance to Teesdale for wild plants.

#### b) Cliffs and Screes are numerous on the farm and contain most of the rich limestone flora, where sheep grazing is reduced. Great Close scar is the only locality in the area for the fern *Ceterach*, and the small annual *Hutchinsia*. Many species unknown to people from the south and outside limestone areas are found here.

### 3. Geographical interests

Middle House farm contains some of the finest limestone features in the country ; limestone pavements, dry valleys, and large enclosed hollows, the latter being unique and similar to those in the European Karst country (described in "some Karstic features in the Malham Tarn District )

Nothing is known about the erosion of this dry limestone country and many geographers have said to me : "if only you could enclose small areas against all grazing and disturbance, we could start long term experiments of 50 - 100 years to find out ."