

MS/00

LING GILL

Mrs B. Mason

Ling Gill and neighbouring ravines probably gave cover to wolves and other animals now extinct, long after the time of John of Gaunt who is credited with having slain the last wild wolf in Yorkshire, near Wodlesford in AD 1380. Wolves, we know, lingered in Scotland until the 17th century. The last wolf killed around here was in Ling Gill.

The old Mowbray fee, which included a vast expanse of country extending eastwards as far as Ribbleshead or, in the terms of the contemporary survey 'from Gemesike (Jam Sike now) to Cold Keld super Camb and from Cold Keld super Camb to the top of Penyghent' where it adjoined the territory of the Percys, abounded in wolves and stags. In the time of King John between William de Mowbray and Adam de Staveley particular reference is made to these animals with respect to concessions of Free Chase. In the time of the monasteries the wolves were hunted with a powerful breed of mastiffs, and rewards were given by the monks for ridding their land of these bloodthirsty marauders. Ling Gill anciently was the property of Furness Abbey and the monks may have introduced the crayfish into the stream. They are, however, thought to have been imported from Semerwater.

Ingmanlodge has been a fine old mansion and was once the property of the monks of Furness. A clump of trees near the house is said to mark the site of an ancient burial ground. In the 17th century the house was in the possession of the family of Weatherhead and the initials C.W. 1687 appear over the canopied portal. Two large battle-axes are cut in stone on the sides of the doorway.

GEARSTONES

The name Gearstones is probably derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'goerstan' - to rest - from the circumstance of there having been a hostelry or resting place on this ancient highway in Anglo-Saxon times. The land about here was certainly cultivated at a very early date and the origin of the name may perhaps be discovered in the A-S goerst meaning green grass. The Scottish Drovers (cowboys). Until the coming of the railways the area above Capnut Cave was similar to scenes we see today when watching cowboy films set in the American Wild West. Huge herds of cattle were driven from Scotland along tracks and quiet roads by men on horseback and their dogs. At night they slept in the open or if they were lucky in the inn. Gearstones was an important inn where drovers rested and also where many of their cattle were sold. Each year two huge fairs were held. In 1792 such a fair was described like this: The ground in front of Gearstones was crowded with Scotch cattle and their drovers who at the end of the day having struck a drunken bargain with the English went to sleep wrapped up in their plaids as a protection against the cold or wet; but if cattle strayed they immediately threw ~~it~~ down the plaid so that they might overtake their cattle.

GEARSTONES

M. Charnley

Taken from the book Giggleswick by Brayshaw and Robinson.

Up to the year of 1872 at Gearstones each Wednesday was held a market for corn and oatmeal. These markets which had been held from time immemorial, as many as twenty to thirty wagons laden with oatmeal used to come out of Wensleydale and used to supply farms for miles around.

The Inn was a very old establishment, and had been rebuilt around 1880, the sitting room looking south down the valley.

"One could imagine, imagine the market easily having seen the place, with the local shoemakers, stocking knitters from as far as Dent and the local knitters all gathered. Pedlars selling ribbons, laces and buttons, local weavers selling cloth etc and wooden toys

for the small children".

Words by Lord Torrington's Diary 1792, quoted by Speight:  
 "In crossing the dales from Askrigg to Ingleton I was much fatigued by the tediousness of the road, whereon we met two farming men with whom we conversed about the grouse and their abundance. Crossing a ford, Mr Blakey led me to a Public House called Grierstones (Gearstones), the seat of misery in a desert, and tho' filled with company, yet the Scotch fair held upon the heath added to the horror of the curious scenery. The ground in front crowded with Scotch cattle and the drovers, and the house crammed with buyers and sellers most of whom were in plaids, fillibags etc. The stable did not afford hay, the only custom of this hotel, or rather hovel, is derived from the grouse-shooters or from two Scotch fairs; when at the conclusion of the days squabble the two nations agree in mutual drunkenness. The Scotch are always wrapped up in their plaids as a defence against heat, cold and wet, but they are preventions of speed and activity, so whenever any cattle strayed, they instantly threw down their plaid that they might overtake them."

All the Yorkshire around this black and frightful seems of small account in the comparison of Ingleborough at whose base we now travel.(sic)

Also at these two major fairs would be countless horse drovers.

Also at this period High Birkwith was a thriving Inn, but we can find no records or mention with anything of note. The Proctors would then be in residence. (up to 1735 - BH)

Horton at one time had three schools upon its land - Horton, Selside and one at Ribblehead, a building hired from Chapel-le-Dale which was in use for several years, till their own was built. This school was situated on Thorns land, the building of which still stands, now a barn.

Dances were held in the big barn at Thorns around the turn of the (19-20) century, at which time Gearstones was a public house.

M.C.

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