

AGRICULTURE

The following two articles are best read online at www.NorthCravenHeritage.org.uk under Publications.

Austwick agriculture by Stan Lawrence. NCHTJ 2003

Haver and Stirks: Farming in Austwick from 1550 to 1750 by Michael Pearson. NCHTJ 2016

Limeburning took place at the quarry on Oxenber in the early 1850s. See *Limestone industries in the Yorkshire Dales*, by David Johnson, Tempus 2002 and Amberley 2010.



Michael Wilson; A Forgotten Quarryman

Dr. W. R. Mitchell

Michael Wilson (1816-1891) first came to my notice in 1980 through Winifred Tomlinson, a reader of *The Dalesman* magazine then living at Brunton, a detached house in Storrs Park, Windermere. Michael's daughter, Amelia, married John Tomlinson of Windermere. Winifred wrote to me informatively about her family connection with lime works at Ingleton and in North Ribblesdale, about pioneering excursions he organised by rail and about his adoption of the Hoffman type of kiln which had been designed in the 1850s for continuous burning operations.

Much of what follows was based on Winifred Tomlinson's research. Inquiries by W. R. Mitchell in 1979 and 1980 from those engaged in lime production into the working of the Hoffman kilns at Ingleton and Langcliffe were widely circulated in typescript form as *The Industrial Archaeology of North Ribblesdale No.2*. The first published account under the title *Tales of (a Yorkshire) Hoffman*, appeared in *The Dalesman*, Vol. 42 No 8 (November, 1980).

Michael Wilson was a native of Austwick. Michael's grandfather lived at Brunton House, a historic building with a solitary position beside the pre-turnpike road between Buckhaw Brow and Rawlinshaw Brow. When the Little North Western Railway was being built, about 1830, Brunton was a public house, the lodging place of railway navvies.

Michael's father, Robert (1790-1874), a stonemason or builder, also lived at Brunton before moving into Austwick. The family home was demolished and the site used for Austwick Church, which was completed in 1841. Michael was apprenticed to shoemaking at Austwick and subsequently took over the business. In 1856, having saved £400, he was married at Clapham Church to Agnes Grime, who had been born at Lawkland on September 20, 1824. She was the daughter of Luke Grime (1791-1856), who was educated at Giggleswick Grammar School, and Jinny Grime, nee Geldard (1792-1864). Her parents owned Israel Farm, Eldroth, near Clapham, and another farm nearby.

Giggleswick Scar c1900



Michael Wilson

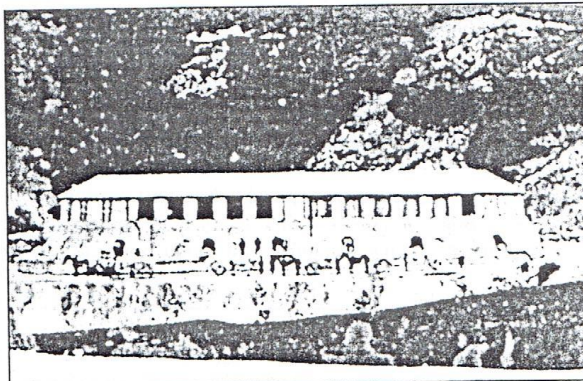
The first child, Frederick (1857-1910) was born at Settle and married Elizabeth Pinch of Lancaster. The second child, John, born at Hornby on February 17, 1859, first married a Miss Alderton and, following her death, his cousin, Nancy Hird. By this time, the family had moved to Tems House, Giggleswick, where the rest of the family were born. They were Amelia, Charles, Walter, Robert and William. Amelia (1861-1943) gave her father considerable help in his business. About 1860, Michael Wilson purchased Brunton House from his aunt and, on his father's death, he let it to a Mr Southworth until 1885, when Michael and his wife went to live there. He had given up the coal and timber business.

With the opening of the Little North Western Railway, Wilson and Clark organised excursion trains for local people. Winifred Tomlinson had heard from senior members of her family that the first excursion, from Austwick to Clapham, thence to Morecambe, was so organised that the young and the very old travelled free of charge.

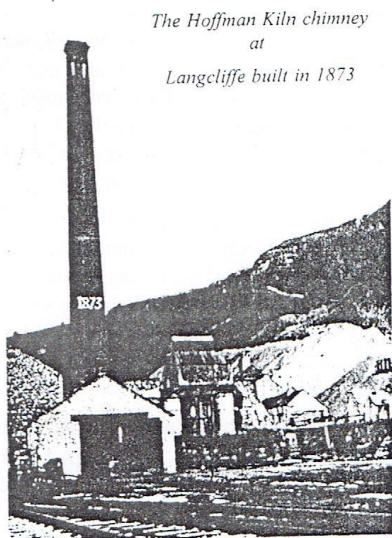
With the proceeds of rail excursions, they acquired a contract for the use of the old lime kiln in Austwick Wood and, realising that the biggest demand for lime was from customers outside the district, they arranged with the Little North Western Railway Company for a siding to be made at Laneside, on the Settle side of Clapham station, from which lime could be transported.

The partners dealt in timber and then they leased the kilns beside Giggleswick Scar. (Traces of kilns and trackways came to light in recent times when Giggleswick School arranged for mature larches to be felled, leaving a scattering of deciduous trees to assure there was a regeneration of native woodland). Wilson and Clark fuelled their kilns with thin, brittle coal from the Yoredale Series on Fountains Fell, the coal being transported to Giggleswick by pack pony.

The burnt lime was taken from Giggleswick to Settle by horse and cart. Twenty such outfits maintained a shuttle service. When the lease at Giggleswick ran out, they transferred their attention to Mealbank, Ingleton. J Carr, dealing with the origin of the Craven Limeworks in a series of personal recollections of Ingleton which were published in the Lancaster Guardian on May 9, 1896, mentioned a third man "a fellow workman" he believed was called Thistlethwaite. They used "an old fashioned kiln" and built another on the same principle. "Their efforts were so far successful that they found it necessary to extend their work and to make lime on a more efficient and economical principle."



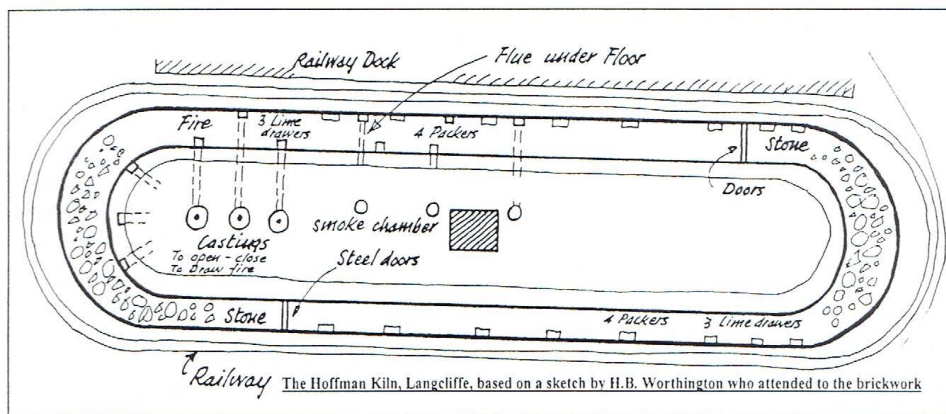
The Hoffman kiln at Mealbank, Ingleton



The Hoffman Kiln chimney
at
Langcliffe built in 1873

This was done by acquiring the right to Mr Hoffman's patent "for lime burning within a limited area." The Hoffman kiln they had constructed had eighteen chambers to which there were thirty feeding holes for coal and coke. The maximum production was sixty tons of lime a day. "The rock, which by analysis is proved to be almost pure lime, makes an article of first rate quality either for building or chemical purposes." A new company had been formed, consisting of Messrs Clark, Wilson, Charlesworth and Shepherd. Amelia used to recall to the family that when she was ten years old she was given the great responsibility of taking £100 by train from Giggleswick to Ingleton to pay the wages of employees at the lime works.

Michael became a Director of the Stainforth Lime Works, the company chairman being Lorenzo Christie, the owner of mills between Settle and Langcliffe. A Hoffman type kiln was in use at Ingleton. Now it was decided to build another, which should be three times the size and, having been modified, an improved efficiency. It was said that when the new Hoffman kiln was completed in 1873, Michael Wilson, with his daughter Amelia sitting on his knee, was raised in a "bucket" to the top of the chimney. Michael and his parents moved to Mountain View, Springfield Terrace, Lancaster, partly so that his Sons might have a good education, daughter Amelia remained at Ingleton, being a boarder at Storrs Hall School.



Michael Wilson developed an interest in the opening up of Canada, and in 1881 he made it possible for his son John to visit Hamilton, Ontario, for six months to study Canadian farming. John moved on to Manitoba. Michael, visiting his son in 1882, sailed up Lake Superior (there was then no railway). The boat had no sleeping accommodation and he was afraid of being robbed during the night, for he was taking socks, hand knitted by his wife and daughter, also hand made shirts and other warm items of clothing.

His son Charles emigrated to the community in Manitoba in 1883. It was intended to call the community Brunton, after the old family home in Yorkshire, but the Canadian Pacific Railway allowed the owners of the land on which they built their station to choose the name. They decided it should be called Rathwell. The two sons of Michael Wilson were given £ 150 by their father to assist them with construction work. A similar sum was available to each of three more members of the family who emigrated later. Michael was tempted to emigrate to the New World, settling in Minnesota, which he considered to be an attractive area. This did not come to pass.

Agnes Wilson died on March 13, 1886, and was buried at Clapham. Michael Wilson died in his sleep on 2 April, 1891, and was buried at Clapham, in a plot where five years before his wife Agnes had been laid to rest.

AUSTWICK TO BE LET

On a yearly Tenancy, and entered upon on the 14th of February next,
as to the Lands, and on the 12th day of May next, as to the Buildings,
all that desirable

FARM

Called

"RATCLIFFE HOUSE"

Situate in the Township of Austwick, in the Parish of Clapham, in the
West Riding of the County of York, consisting of the following
particulars

Description.	Quantities in Statute Measure.		
	A	R	P
Back Skirthaw	3	0	37
Crabby	1	2	15
Ratcliffe Dales	2	3	12
Homestead and Garden	0	0	19
Long Skirthaw	3	0	38
Great Skirthaw	7	2	0
Total	18	2	1

The highest Tender will not necessarily be accepted. Written
Tenders to be sent on or before the 17th day of September next, to

Mr. WILLIAM HARTLEY,

Solicitor, Settle, from whom further particulars may be obtained.
Settle, 28th August, 1878.

WILDMAN AND SON, PRINTERS, NEW STREET, SETTLE.

The corn mill

A probable corn mill stood on Austwick Beck a little beyond the Mill Bridge on the way from Austwick to the hamlet of Wharfe but only a few traces of its foundations remain. The water was diverted from the main stream from a point about 50m above the old Mill Dam

Bridge at Wharfe, whence it flowed to the mill pond. From the pond the water was conveyed along a wooden trough set on stone pillars to an overshot wheel working the mill. Following the break-up of the manorial system with compulsion of tenants to grind corn at the lord's mill, many of the old corn mills which became derelict through lack of custom were eventually adapted for cotton spinning. An advertisement in the 1800s said 'LOT IX. Situate at Wharfe within the township of Austwick – Austwick Mill, with a powerful stream of water from 30 to 40 feet fall. These premises are worthy of the attention of any person desirous of entering on the Spinning and Manufacturing Business.' Not long afterwards the property was burnt down and the stone utilized for building. At a later date, on the opposite side of the road, a mill for the sawing of flagstones began operations, the same source of water being used.