

The Leyland family and Conistone:

An extract taken from a paper by Peter Leach entitled *Three Houses, a Barn and an Outbuilding: Some Conistone History* which can be read in full below.

There are three buildings in Conistone associated with the Leyland family, yeoman farmers during the 18th and 19th centuries.

1. Leyland House and Close Garth, now two attached houses, along with the garden and two outbuildings to the south along with the croft now partly occupied by Lynchet Cottage, plus the strip of land running south from the south-east corner of the croft.
2. The house now called Leylands at the north of the village, plus the croft behind it adjoining the south side of the churchyard. This is a former barn.
3. The building which used to stand on the south east corner of the present village green, with the croft behind it now occupied by Ebony House.

In all, the land around Conistone settlement which the Leylands owned totalled approx. 206 acres. Documentary evidence of around 1717 suggests that Leyland House was probably built by Thomas Leyland for himself. He was the tenant of the land it was built on and in 1711 secured two loans from a neighbour totalling £14, possibly related to the building of the house (see page 3 of Peter Leach's paper below).

The predecessor of Close Garth was probably the house listed in the Hearth Tax Returns of 1672 as being occupied by Roger Frankland, who died in 1691. His younger brother, Richard, left his property in Conistone to Thomas Stephenson who (or his heirs) presumably sold it to the Leylands. In 1841 Thomas Leyland, his wife, five children and one female farm servant lived in Leyland House. Next door in the house preceding Close Garth lived Leyland's mother, and his unmarried sister, Thomasina. By 1851, Thomasina was in the new house, Close Garth, running a dame school. Her boarding 'scholars' resided with her, by 1861 they numbered ten and came from Gisburn, Arncliffe, Burnsall, Linton and Kirby Malham, they spilled over into Leyland House.

The Leylands' connection with Conistone was weakening by the final third of the 19th century. When Thomasina died in 1867 the dame school came to an end. By 1871 Close Garth was occupied by a married farm servant and his family. Mary Leyland still lived in Leyland House and after her death in 1874 the house was occupied by John's oldest daughter and her husband, William Robinson. Her son, John Leyland had married the daughter of the landlord of **The Racehorses Inn** in Kettlewell. Here he combined innkeeping with farming. By 1891 John had returned to Conistone and farming; he had passed on **The Racehorses** in Kettlewell to his son, Thomas. John died in 1898 and all the Leyland property in Conistone was sold by his son. The Leyland House/ Close Garth complex was bought by William Atkinson Procter of the Manor House at Rylstone.

Mary's other son, Henry, had an up and down career as a farmer, labourer and cattle dealer ending up as farmer again, first in Kettlewell and then in Arncliffe.

Leyland House and Close Garth

Leyland House is a two-cell range with a central lobby entry and the house body (main room) to the right and parlour to the left. There is a service outshut behind the house body. The house is late 17th/early 18th century and has been heightened and re-windowed at the front around in the second quarter of the 19th century. The original front doorway remains. In the house body is a big fireplace at the centre of the house. The design is local and centred on Littondale and Upper Wharfedale. It has joggle joints, the keystone not being under pressure, and fake joggle joints marked on the cantilevers. There is a brick lined bread oven. A winding star case rises from beside this fireplace; the present one is probably no earlier than mid-19th century but there is a solid masonry core which is presumably original. In the outshut there is a blocked three light mullioned window between ground and first floor level. Below this the later window and doorway are partly made up of re-used lintels, doors and jambs of 17th century character. There is no trace of the 19th century heightening here.

The rear wing of Leyland House has all the characteristics of a former agricultural outbuilding datable to the 17th century.

Close Garth main building is a small double fronted block. Maps show it was built by 1848. The straight joint between the upper parts of the two houses, visible at the back, indicate it was built after the heightening of Leyland House.

Close Garth rear is a single cell separated from the back of the main building by a gap less than a metre wide; this is the remaining part of a house which extended further west over the area now occupied by the main block. The two mullioned windows and the deep pitch of the roof suggest 17th century and probably early 17th century: the oldest building in the complex. There is a partly projecting chimney breast and stack at the east gable end which serves a now hidden 17th century fireplace of a size fitting for a parlour in the surviving room; this suggests that the lost part of the house contained the housebody.

It would seem that the remodelling of Leyland House and the building of Close Garth took place about 1836 and 1841 respectively.

Leylands

Originally a barn, the building certainly existed in full, with all the additions made to it, in 1848 and may have done so by 1819. A narrower two-storey block was attached in the 20th century.

A decorated intel above a blocked pedestrian doorway reads **IT 1697**. This refers to John Tennant, a Conistone yeoman (1668-1719). The Leylands acquired the property from the Tennant family in 1725 (see paper below for details, pg 5). The doorway would not have belonged to the barn which was the original building and it is very likely that it came from a Tennant family property which once stood at the corner of the green.

Building at the Corner of the Green

This building disappears from the maps by 1891. The assumption that it was once a house as opposed to a barn is based on pottery found on the site and the description of 'outbuildings' as opposed to 'barn'. It was obtained by the Leylands from the Tennants in 1800.

In the 19th century the croft to the east, now occupied by Ebony House, was known as Ripley Croft. This referred to Thomas Ripley who died in 1787. He was former miner from Grassington who became a yeoman of Conistone. Between 1757 and 1800 John Leyland acquired the west side of the property. In 1800 Robert Wrathall, son-in-law of one of James Tennant's sisters, the other half of the croft.