

Percy Inman's Photographs

These photographs all started life on glass plates which were stored in Kettlewell village shop. When John Bracewell took over the store, they were passed to him and then to his son, John Roberts. John made electronic copies of the photographs and this has helped to preserve them. The plates are now in the care of the County Records Office in Northallerton.

This exhibition is the first time so many of the photographs from the collection commissioned by Percy Inman have been displayed together. They offer an important insight into life in and around the Upper Wharfedale area in the early part of the twentieth century. Encompassing as it did two world wars and immense social and technological change, this period was a fascinating era to capture on film. However, the photographs seem to depict an unchanging rural world, rather than one of great upheaval. That is of course until one looks closely.

Percy Inman lived between the years 1876 and 1944. He was postmaster in Kettlewell for 40 years and the photographs he commissioned allowed him to publish and sell his own postcards in his village store. However, the full story of this collection has not been fully unearthed. You will see that researchers have been able to date some of the prints using car registration plates, dress and census details. This has suggested that Percy Inman must have been commissioning the photographs over quite a long period. The photographs of Conistone Post Office, for example, cover the period when it was at Town End and also when it was in Maypole Cottage. There is a nineteenth century view of sheep shearers and much later views including cars. Views of Kettlewell can be seen both with and without the Masonic Hall.

Such a wide span of time captured on film is worthy of celebration and conservation as an entity. UWALS is proud to be able to supplement this unique collection with modern photographs of the area, including 'echo' shots. In addition, the photographs and the social history they capture have been celebrated in music, words and art. We will be making much of the exhibition material, and more, available on our website: uwals.co.uk