

Name of House



Occupants

Place of birth etc

David Turner

Long Eaton, Derbyshire

Beryl Turner

Scarborough, Yorkshire

Details of house -

When built, whether listed, history, any alterations or improvements you or previous occupants have made, with dates if known. Additional photographs or sketches of interesting features such as date stones, windows, interior features etc could be added.

David Turner, born Long Eaton, Derbyshire 1936
Beryl Turner (née Rushforth) born Scarborough 1939

We bought the house, which has the former smithy attached, in 1980 when we were working in Zambia and looking for somewhere peaceful to come and live permanently.

Previously, for over a hundred years, the house had been passed down among the members of one family.

The Green

The early history is not known but it may date from the 1730s – Armistead Farm opposite, which has a similar although larger ground floor plan has a date stone of 1734, while the adjoining house, Foss View, has a date stone of 1735.

The early deeds tell the stories of the owners rather than the occupiers. The earliest are dated 6 February 1840 and show that for some years the house had been owned by William Carr of Swainstead (an isolated farm about 2 miles southwest of Giggleswick). It is described as "... that Messuage Cottage dwelling house or tenement being in Litton with a Smithy or Smith's Shop on the North side and adjoining thereto and a garden on the South side of the said house and now in the respective occupations of Richard Wiseman and William Ayrton as tenants thereof". This document also shows that the property was held on a 1000 year lease, with a Lord's Rent of five pence a year. In his will dated 1817, William Carr left his estate to be divided between his two daughters Mary and Jane; his wife Isabel only received an annuity of £12. When he died in 1839, Mary, by this time married to John Dawson and living at Swainstead, inherited this house and smithy, and another house at Litton ("formerly a ruin but since rebuilt") and also land at Litton called Barn Croft or Bancroft and Bridge End Close. Later documents record that both Isabel and Mary died little over a year later, within a few days of each other.

In 1850 John Dawson sold the cottage and smithy to William Foster (Gentleman, but later described as Solicitor) of Langcliffe for £80. The tenants at that time were William Foster (presumably not the purchaser) and Thomas Armstrong.

William Foster (the owner) also had considerable property at Horton in Ribblesdale and elsewhere but he mortgaged it heavily and when he died in 1859 he had large debts, totalling £11,442. The Green was one of the properties sold by order of the Chancery Court to repay these debts, and was bought for £70 by John Lodge of Stonelands in November 1860 and sold by him a few days later to Sarah Ann Wilkinson (Widow) of Litton.

Sarah Wilkinson had a 3-year old daughter Mary and a 1-year old son Richard. A few years ^{later} she married William Garnett of Litton. In the 1881 census he is listed as a farmer and carpenter, and Terry Battersby remembers that in about 1950 the smithy still had a barely legible joiner's sign. Sarah was to die a few years later and William re-married, to another widow, Mary Ann Lodge, who already had a daughter, Hannah

A Richard Wiseman is also recorded as a tenant at Barn Garth - 1864. Another Richard Wiseman, born 1861 was lunkeeper or farmer, living at the Queen's Arms - 1891

Lodge. William Garnett died on 16 August 1908 and his widow Mary died on 25 July 1919. The property was inherited by their oldest son who had emigrated to New Zealand (John Preston Garnett, Agriculturalist of Alton Patea) and in 1922 he sold the house for £150 to Mrs Hannah Webster (his half-sister, formerly Hannah Lodge), who seems to have lived here for over 20 years. She died without leaving a will on 21 March 1949. Around this time Clara Smith, Hannah's daughter, was living here with her daughters Irene and Joyce. Dennis Lund has told the story of how his brother, John was sitting outside Foss View when Clara rushed out of her kitchen door with her clothes ablaze. John quickly grabbed a rug and wrapped her in it, saving her life. The house seems to have been inherited by Mrs Ethel Willis of Gargrave (Hannah Webster's daughter) who sold it in July 1949 for £150 to her sister, Mary Elizabeth Webster who was then living in Southport. On retirement Mary and her sister Rebecca came to live here about 1963.

The Webster sisters moved into a house that had lain empty and neglected for about 14 years, visited occasionally (according to Chris Battersby) by small boys entering through the pantry window. Many improvements were then made. A water supply was brought into the house; Harry Battersby obtained permission from the council to lay a water pipe from Armistead Farm under the road. Previously water had been collected from a tub in the yard at the back of the house. A back bedroom was converted into a bathroom although the two-seater privy at the end of the garden was still standing nearly 20 years later. Electricity was installed and large storage heaters put into the living room and main bedroom. In the living room the flagstone floor was covered with a bitumen layer and the large open fireplace sealed off (destroying the moulded stone mantelpiece) and a solid fuel stove installed. The eighteenth century internal doors were either replaced or covered with hardboard. A wooden porch was added at the back.

When Mary Webster died in 1979, the house had been in the possession of the same extended family since 1860. The Garnett and Webster families had also owned other properties in Litton, including Foss View and Armistead Farm.

In 1980 The Green was sold to us at auction, Harry Battersby being the executor. We have made a number of changes. The back lean-to porch has been replaced by an extension to the kitchen. Central heating has been installed, first with solid fuel and later with oil. The larder floor, originally 3-4 feet down, has been brought up to house floor level and a door made through to the old smithy. The

original slate pantry shelves have been re-installed. In the living room the old fireplace has been restored and beams throughout the house have been uncovered.

Some features suggest earlier changes to the house. Beams in the 2-foot thick partition wall between the two front bedrooms appear to have formed a lintel to a doorway connecting the two rooms. The loft, which is now difficult of access, has plastered and whitewashed walls, suggesting possible use as bedrooms. The two back rooms upstairs (one now the bathroom) probably had no outside windows originally, the only light coming from small windows onto the stairs. The exterior of the house was painted white, and later pink, at a very early date, before the building of the smithy. We counted twenty four layers of whitewash, some almost black, on the kitchen walls.

The present occupants are David Turner, born 1936 at Long Eaton, Derbyshire and Beryl Turner (née Rushforth), born 1939 at Scarborough, Yorkshire. We have two grown-up sons: Alan, born 1966 at Romiley, Cheshire, (now working as an electrical engineer in Gloucester,) and Keith, born 1969 in Hurst Green, Surrey, (now working with a charity for disabled people in Nottingham.)

When we bought the house in 1980 we were looking for a base to come to when on leave and for a home to live in when we left Zambia. At the time we thought this would be in a couple of years, but as things turned out it was not until 1985 that we came to live here more permanently. We were very lucky to find this house was for sale, just at the time we were looking. Beryl had known Littondale since she was a schoolgirl, and we had all spent holidays in the Dales for a number of years. The boys were then at boarding school in Pocklington, so we found Litton both a practical base when in England, and a place to dream of returning to when abroad.

When they were in Litton on holiday from school and university, Alan and Keith enjoyed helping on the farms – in the milking shed and on the long summer evenings in the hay meadows. Although Keith did work locally for a year (at Malham Tarn Field Centre) we have had to accept that they are unlikely to find permanent work nearby and envy those parents whose families can stay around them in the dale. Alan went to University in Durham to study engineering and is now an electrical engineer working at the Du Pont textile factory in Gloucester. In 1997 he married Linda, a mathematician and engineer who works at the same factory. Keith went to

Liverpool University to ^{took a degree} study geography ^{o pale} and now works for a charity for disabled people in Nottingham.

Before coming here we had lived much of our adult life in Africa. David first went to Africa as a research student at London University, mapping the geology on the Jos Plateau, in a range of granite mountains rising above high grassy plains. After our marriage in 1962, we returned to Nigeria where David worked for the geological Survey. Unlike most of the geologists' wives, Beryl always came into the field, giving up her job as a land surveyor, and we spent much of the dry season camping, often in quite remote places. It was at one such camp in 1966 that we heard on our radio of a military coup and the overthrow of the first government of independent Nigeria.

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After a few years in England, we returned to Nigeria in the early 1970s with our two young sons, this time to teach at the university outside the ancient northern city of Zaria. Our children both started school there, finding themselves in classes of mainly Nigerian boys and girls. These were good years for Nigeria – the civil war was over, and oil revenues were bringing much development and plenty of employment for our new graduates. David was able to continue his geological research and Beryl began her research in the Geography Department, on geomorphology and land use in the irrigated valleys around Zaria. From Nigeria we moved to Zambia where David was appointed professor of Geology at the university. Zambia was much behind Nigeria educationally and his main work there was building up the university's geology department, recently established to serve the country's important copper mining industry. Beryl also taught at the university, in geography and land resources, and joined a research group studying the geography and ecology of the Kafue river basin.

When we came to live permanently in Litton we continued with our interests in African geology and geography, mixed with working on repairs and improvements to the house. We went away again for a year and a half to Ethiopia, from late 1990 to early 1992, where we were both employed by the United Nations. This was a time of civil war and we witnessed the fall of the capital, Addis Ababa to the rebel forces. We then had four years back in peaceful Litton before being persuaded to go back for one last year to Africa, this time to Botswana, where David was a visiting professor at the university.

white also

We are still involved in publication work connected with Africa, and in editing for geographical and geological journals, as well as in local activities, such as the

Upper Wharfedale Field Society. David has been chairman of Litton Parish Meeting since 1994. We are deeply concerned about the growing misuse of green lanes and bridlepaths by recreational drivers and last year we presented detailed evidence to the public enquiry into the ancient path from Arncliffe Cote to Malham Moor, to oppose its use by motorised vehicles.

We came to Litton for its peace and quietness and beautiful scenery. We were mountaineers, keen on walking and exploring the varied landscape and have become fascinated by the botany, wildlife and history of the Dales. We like the darkness of the skies at night; we can go straight out of our house and see millions of stars – there are not many places left in England where this can be done. In 1998 we were able to walk a few hundred yards up the Halton Gill road and get spectacular views of the Hale-Bopp comet. We also value the wonderful spring water, uncontaminated by chemical treatment. There have been many changes in the last twenty years: more people live here and visit for holidays, traffic on the road has increased greatly in both quantity and speed, people now lock their back doors when they go out, and feel they have to fit security lights. ^{spoiling the stars} But Litton is still a very special place and we feel fortunate to have our home here.