

AMERDALE GARTH.

My late husband, Thomas, who died 23. 7. 93, + I (Gladys) came to live here in September, 1974. He was born at Brook House, Staunforth, (near Settle) on 29. 10. 09, moving with his family to Town Head Farm, Malham, in 1915. He attended Kirkby Malham School, + later, Emmsford's Grammar School, Skipton, as a boarder. Articled to the late Asough Rodwell, Engineer + Surveyor to the then Skipton Rural District Council, in course of time he became Engineer + Surveyor to that same authority, resigning in June, 1973.

I was born in Skipton on 6. 2. 27, my maiden name being Pearson. From Primary school, I won a County minor Scholarship, + was a pupil at Skipton Girls' High School from Sept. 1931 to March, 1937. I spent my working life at Skipton Post Office.

My husband + I were married on 23. 6. 48 at Kirkby Malham Church. We lived in Skipton until we bought this house + the adjoining meadow in Sept. 1974. Our three children, John, Geoffrey + Anne, were born in Skipton in May, 1949, October, 1950, + November, 1953, respectively. At the time of our removal to Linton, both sons had graduated + were teaching, + our daughter was still at University. None of them has ever lived in this house on a permanent basis.

The former name of the house was Hill Top Farm. We renamed it because (a) it was no longer a farm, + (b) Hill Top did not seem appropriate for a house approached downhill from the main road. However, from the Outgang, a very old bridle track, (which predates the present main road by hundreds of years, + which borders Hill Top meadows on two sides,) the ground rises

steeply towards the N.W. corner, with the house situated on ground, level with its highest point. So perhaps "Hill Top" is more appropriate than we first thought.

There is no date on the house, but the lintel over the front door is similar to many in the Dales which are dated late 17th to mid-18th century. The former dairy has one original mullioned window remaining intact, & another one in the same North-facing wall has been modernised, but retains part of the original stonework.

The house faces approximately South, & has three rooms downstairs, plus the old dairy built onto the North side. The floors are concreted except the room at the Eastern end, which, although measuring $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 12 feet, is floored by only 6 flags. These are of slate, probably quarried at Helwith Bridge, North of Settle. It is fairly certain that the house was extended Eastwards, prior to the Tithe Map (1845), which shows the present outlines. A vertical joint in the front face indicates the likely site of the original doorway before the extension was built. The inner wall which divides the middle room from the most Easterly one is not tied in to the outer wall. Alterations revealed a former salt cupboard to the right of the fireplace, & also an alcove or recess with a large stone lintel nearly 5 feet long; this could have been used for storing peas. We dug up in the croft, (now our garden), a reekau-crook, which would have been suspended from a hook in the chimney (still in situ). The reekau-crook has a number of holes from which pans or kettles were hung, nearer or further from the fire, according to the heat required.

We made a number of alterations to the house, replacing a lean-to coalhouse on the western face with a small extension, (a cloak-room & store), which my husband & elder son built. My husband constructed the stone archway, the way in from the lane to the front of the house. Three new windows were installed, the back kitchen window, one in the East wall of the sitting room, & one in the North wall of the largest bedroom.

Some interesting pieces of stonework, such as parts of mullions, which we found in Potts Beck, had very likely come from the original house & been discarded when more modern windows were constructed. These my husband incorporated in the South wall between the croft & the meadow. He also paved the area at the back of the house, & built the wall & doorway which runs from the Eastern corner of the dairy to the back boundary wall. In this doorway is a paving stone which has a circle chiselled in it. We thought this may have been the base of an old cheese press.

The building in front of the house, now our garage & fuel store, was previously used partly as a stable. The house further down the lane used to be a barn belonging to this house, & was sold just before we came on the scene.

The previous owner of Hill Top was Norman Pullan (born at Arncliffe Farm). He had bought it in 1952 from the Lees of Stonehills (further down the dale). For some years prior to 1952, the house was occupied by employees of the Lee family. The late Harry Battersby also lived here for a short time. He told us that what is now our kitchen was formerly a barn, & during his time here they only used it as a store place, & for chopping kindling. There was a baksone in it

where formerly oaststacks would be taken. This space now houses a Rayburn Stove.

An old book which Harry Battersby passed on to us when he left Litton is entitled, "Valuation + Measurements of the Townships of Litton + Halton Gill, by Robert Mount + John Jackson". It is not dated, but is likely to have been compiled at the time of the Tithe Map (1845). The writing is immaculate copperplate. None of the houses is named, but this house is easily identified by the adjoining meadow, Hill Top. The then owner was Miss Carr, + the tenant, William Coulton (spelt Colton on the next page). The census of 1861 shows the occupants as John Colton, aged 27, + Betty Colton (widow), aged 54, + the farm comprised 109 acres.

The 1871 census lists Richard Wiseman, aged 61, born at Kettlewell, his wife, Margaret, 57, born at Hardraw (near Hawes), their daughter, Mary, aged 36, born at Newby (near Clapham), + a grandson, Joseph, aged 6, born at Litton. The land farmed had increased to 135 acres. Later census returns of 1881 + 1891 give only names of Litton residents, not indicating which houses they occupied.

Hill Top meadow has sometimes been referred to as "Coatsworths". Older residents of the dale tell me that a family of that name occupied this farm at some time during the first half of this century, but I have been unable to discover any more accurate information about them.

I have seen many changes in Litton since we came here in 1974. Apart from myself, only the Lund family, (Dennis at East Garth, Stewart + family at Armitstead Barns, + Stephen + family at West Farm), + Peggy + Eddy Chapman at Foss View, were living in Litton in 1974. All the other houses have changed hands, some of them four times.

A number of tradespeople used to visit the village weekly. The proprietor of the village shop at Kettlewell called fortnightly on Mondays for an order, + delivered on Wednesdays; also bread, as requested on the alternate Wednesday. The Rymer

brothers (based on Rylstone) came with a greengrocery van on Tuesdays. The Bains Brothers, from Grassington, called each Wednesday with fish, poultry & other sundries. A confectioner from Threshfield came up the dale on Fridays. The Grassington butcher will deliver telephoned orders on Friday, but only he & the Kettlewell fortnightly delivery remains & they now telephone for one's order.

In theory, there is a bus service, but only during school term times. It is not very useful, leaving Litton about 8 a.m. & returning about 5 p.m.

The Travelling Library Service is a boon to me. This comes to the village every three weeks. The staff are most helpful & friendly.

It was a pleasure in our earlier years in Litton to find flowers typical of limestone areas, particularly the Bird's Eye primrose. These grew in profusion on a steep bank near Bull Common, & also on Guilderbank. Lately I have found none at all at the first location, & very few at the second. Star of Bethlehem used to grow near the Foss, & also near the stream close to Roselher Barn. A few Globe flowers were to be found in Priest Flat.

Moths were frequent visitors to the warts at the bird table. There have been fewer in recent years. The Great Spotted Woodpecker appears from time to time, as do Siskins. The spotted Flycatcher is often to be seen in summer darning from the various wires near the house to catch insects. On two occasions they have nested in the climbing rose on the house front. Swallows, Swifts & Martins used to be far more numerous in past years.

Tom & I have been very happy here; the hard work we undertook gave us satisfaction & a great sense of achievement. Together we made the rockery,

using (in part) stones dug out of what is now a vegetable plot. In 1974 the crop was mainly grass, with a Victoria plum tree, & three rather unproductive apple trees, since removed. The present lay-out of the garden is much as we designed it in our early days here. For the most part, we have gathered excellent crops of both vegetables & soft fruit. The Victoria plum, planted by the Pullans some 40 years since, is still a delight in Spring with the delicate, white, scented blossom, & crops well.

Although I would hope to end my days in Linton, the maintenance of the garden may well defeat me. May whoever follows after know the peace & contentment that has been ours in unspoilt Littondale.

Amerdale Garth

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