

I was born in Arndcliffe in 1935 and moved to the Post Office where my father was born & his father. My Mother, who was Angie Pullan, was born at Grimstead Farm Litter, and went to school in Litter and enjoyed the dances in the wooden hut. She has spent 88 years in Litterdale. I went to school in Arndcliffe when my father and his father also went, then my sons and now my grandchildren.



Eileen Groves lived in Litton Hall until January 1999, and recalls the following about her life and her time there:

I was born in Arncliffe in 1935 and moved to the Post Office where my father was born and his father. My mother, who was Annis Pullan, was born at Armistead Farm, Litton, and went to school in Litton and enjoyed the dances in the wooden hut. She has spent 88 years in Littondale. I went to school in Arncliffe where my father and grandfather also went, then my sons and now my grandchildren. I married Dennis Lund in 1954 and moved to East Garth in 1955. Stewart my son was born in St Lukes Hospital Bradford and Stephen was born at East Garth in 1957. I enjoyed being on the farm, driving the old Fordson tractor and helping with all things on the farm, taking the milk across to the milk stand in kits and I was always in the hay-field. I often had to crank the tractor and sometimes it came back and hit me, feeling like nearly breaking my arm. We then moved to West Farm, Litton. After that I moved for a short time to a flat in Arncliffe and got a job nursing at Raikeswood Hospital. I really enjoyed that with the old people. I went to Litton Hall in 1974 then married Colin Groves in 1976 and we started up the guest house in early 1977. We spent a long time doing the house up. I did evening meal and bed and breakfast. We had people from all over the world and many are still in touch. Colin took early retirement from his work at ICI in Huddersfield to help me with the guest house. He died very suddenly in March 1984 and after that I had to give up doing the evening meal as I found it too hard.

The visitors loved the house. We had very happy times with them. We had wonderful Christmas parties and always lots of people coming in and out. I enjoyed having all my grandchildren at Litton Hall. All the girls in the village used to come and help me serve the dinners. We had a few mishaps, many times up to 15 of us for a meal. The time when we over booked and had 13 instead of eight sleeping everywhere as we couldn't disappoint them. Sandra Lund came to help me, thank goodness; we were shattered when they left. And the time when Janet Taylor's son came across with a very bad finger. I gave him some Dettol in a jug to clean it with as we were busy with the evening meal. Then all the visitors were sitting at the table. The soup was rather thick so I just put in some milk, as I thought, but it was

the Dettol. Luckily I tasted it and it burnt my mouth so the girls went into the dining room and told them I had burnt it so they all sat there while I made some more.

I've always loved gardening whichever house I've lived in. Colin and I made the Litton Hall garden together. He built it up at the back with rubble and parts of an old car. We had two ponds and rockeries and a waterfall. The visitors were always taking photos of it so there must be pictures all over the world. Colin had a vegetable garden in the croft across the road.

I carried on the guest house until Sept 1998 and left Litton Hall on the 15th January 1999 to live in Grassington, where I am really enjoying my retirement after 63 years in Littondale. All my life in Littondale particularly Litton and especially Litton Hall were wonderful years. There will always be very happy memories and the dale will always be my roots. I hope to be buried in Arncliffe churchyard.

Name of House

Photograph of house
preferably with occupants
standing in front

Occupants

Place of birth etc

EILEEN SHIRLEY GROVES
HIGH GREEN COTTAGE ARNcliffe

MOVED TO LITTON IN 1955
LIVED AT EAST GARTH THEN WEST FAM
• THEN LITTON HALL FOR 25 years

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.

MY HUSBAND SPENT 5 years doing
alterations to Litton Hall
It is a listed house built sometime in
the 1700s

(Further details on next page)

LITTON HALL



Litton Hall is owned by the Smith family who are:-

Andrew Charles Smith

born in Leicester in 1947

Indu Smith

born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in 1949

Rosalind Rashmi Smith

born in London in 1987

Helena Kusum Jaikrishna Smith

born in London in 1988

Anthony Charles Jaikrishna Smith

born in London in 1988

(+ two Border Terriers, Barty + Dowe
born in Hertfordshire in 1999)

Litton Hall

We have bought Litton Hall because we have decided to move from London to the Yorkshire Dales. At the moment we spend the school holidays in Litton and the school terms in London. Rosalind, Helena and Antony attend schools in London. As soon as their education allows us to do so, we shall move to Litton permanently, the sooner the better. When we do so, Andrew will still have to travel to London for part of the time to work as a High Court Judge, but we hope that he will be able to work in the North East, particularly Leeds, for a good part of the year, and be based at Litton with the rest of the family.



Litton Hall was a farm house until 1969 and it is often still called Litton Hall Farm. It was last farmed by a Mr. Michael Thorman, who owned not only Litton Hall and the croft behind it, but also East Gatt Farm and Nether Heselden and land at Arcliffe. He moved to Heck Gill Farm at Darley near Harrogate and sold Litton Hall to Colin and Jean Groves. Colin Groves later married Eileen and after he died Eileen Groves ran Litton Hall as a very popular bed and breakfast establishment. We bought Litton Hall from her at the beginning of last year to be our home.

We are told that the main house was built in the seventeenth century by the Armistead family. They appear to have been quite wealthy because they could afford to dig out a cellar for the house. Furthermore, when the original owner who built the Hall died, he was not only able to leave Litton Hall to the eldest of his three sons, but also provided for the two younger sons to build houses in similar styles in the village.

The oldest part of Litton Hall is, however, the west end of the house. This is said to be built in the early sixteenth century, or if not before, and to have been used by for lodgings by the monks from Fountains Abbey when they visited their land around Litton. There is a door arch on which is carved the date 1595, but we have not been able to discover whether this was originally made for Litton Hall or whether it was

unported at a later date. Nor have we been able to find out whether the sculpted dog, which stands on the apex of the roof as if on guard, is part of the original building.





The most recent addition to the house is a sun room which we built at the east end of the house.

My name is Antony, and I have lived in London for all of my life. I am in my final year at the Hall School in Hampstead, and hope to take up my place at Westminster in 2001 as a weekly boarder.

We first visited Liffordale on holiday in 1998, staying at Low Barn in Newark, and are now planning to move up to Yorkshire as soon as possible. Our two dogs, in particular, love the Dales and the freedom of 'their'croft'.

Life in the Dales is very different from in London, where 'blind sheep dog trials' and throwing eggs at each other, would no doubt be branded as 'odd' or 'weird'. We no longer have to have an adult with us when we go out, but can wander around the local countryside without any fear - a novel experience!

The Christmas Carol Service at St. Oswald's was fun, as was the Christmas Day Mass - even if I did agree to walk home as soon as it began to hail! On the night of the Jacob's Ladder, New Millennium Eve, we saw hundreds of stars, visible to even the most experienced London astronomer.

On New Year's Day, we climbed Pen-y-ghent, and tried to have a picnic at the peak, having already failed to light the sparklers! We nearly froze to death. At Easter, we had great fun when the hounds showed us Pace egg rolling, much to the delight of our dogs who were licking up the remains for days afterwards. We also had an Easter Egg Hunt in thecroft with the difficult task of distinguishing between the chocolate eggs and sheep droppings. This year (2000), we spent our first complete summer holiday at Lifford Hall and had a great time. I am looking forward to spending many more years in the Dales - but it must be in Lifford!

My name is Helena and I am Antony's twin (10 minutes older.) We were 12 in August. Rosalind and myself go to City of London School for Girls (C.L.S.G) which is in the Barbican (in London.)

We have got two dogs, Barty and Dowe who enjoy the croft in Yorkshire and are already being known as they are in London as 'double trouble!'

We are planning to move up to live in Litter as soon as we can and I am really looking forward to it. The main difference between Litter and London is that we can go out by ourselves feeling safe.

This summer I also enjoyed going to Fountain's Abbey, when we went to a Brass Band concert. I especially enjoyed it because I play the French Horn as well as the harp.

I also really enjoy the Fêtes and Galas. For three years we have entered the Scarecrow Festival in Kettlewell but never have won it. We are determined to win one day.

I look forward to spending more time in Litter in the future.

My name is Rosalind Smith and I am thirteen years old. I live at Litton Hall, but because I go to school in London I can only be here in the holidays at the moment.

I love being in Litton because it is so quiet, and you can always feel safe when going out. I also love the way the seasons change and with it the landscape completely changes too. I love the river Skirfare in the winter when the water is pelting down to Arncliffe and I love the way the beck opposite our house splashes down whenever it has been raining. (We can hear the beck from our house and sometimes I know when it has been raining in the night before I look out of the window.) But we also enjoy being able to walk along the river bed when it is dry in the summer. We are sometimes allowed to take a picnic to the stepping stones for lunch.

My favourite views are from the top of our croft when we can look down and see all the roofs in Litton. I used not to know which house was which but now I can identify them all. The other lovely view is when we go onto the hill behind Janet Beard's house and we look down the dale in the evening.

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Janet Taylor has added some notes on the history from Harry Battersby's notes:

Harry Battersby who lived across the road recorded his youthful memories of it (he was born in 1911) and the tenants, Bob Spencer and his wife, Mildred. They had five children - Jim, Tom, Pollie, Bill and Bob. Bob's brother Bill also lived with them. Bob Spencer, he recalled, 'was truly a dales character'. Their two families were very friendly, 'letting in' Christmas and New Year for each other every year with coal and whisky. Harry had to stay with them when the roof of Barn Garth was removed during the renovations of 1925. 'What an education that was. Every

morning at 6 old Bob was up and lit the fire, then with the cowbrake on the ceiling he would bang for Jim and Tom to get up to milk, shouting first "Come on, it's milking time" then after a while "Come on it's going to rain. Look sharp," finishing up by "Look sharp, it's going to snow." Bill took not the slightest notice. Neither indeed did Jim and Tom. They got up when ready, about 8. Bill said, "Father keeps saying it's going to snow in September and of course he's always right. It does snow, but maybe not until January." Bob cooked the bacon in a tin tray in front of the fire bars and made a big pan of porridge over the fire.'

'Bob and Bill were in partnership at Litton Hall which then was a sizeable farm. It had High, Low and Middle Rice and Pottsmoor, Low Litton brow and cow pastures and meadows, meadows adjoining Stonelands - Datholme and Brearlands, High and Low Limelands, Allotment? Rossaber wood and meadows as well as all Spital Croft meadows and brows and Litton Fell above. In summer they milked in the milking shed in Litton Brow cow pastures. The milk was brought back in 16 gallon kits which fit on wheels and shaft. It was set up in leads in the pantry, skimmed and the cream made into butter. The skimmed milk was taken up to Low Rice in kits on wheels, and fed to calves and stirks. In winter they milked at Home barn and Brearlands. Non-milkers were in out barns - Rossaber, Spital Croft, Brearlands and Limelands. (Brearlands is now a house and Limelands and White Barn gone.) They always had one or two hired men and three Irishmen in Haytime. They slept in the loft above the stable.'

When Norman Lee of Stonelands, wanting more land for his pedigree Shorthorn bull-breeding business, bought Litton Hall Farm (as well as Hill Top Farm), and took over the meadows near Stonelands for himself, Bob Spencer 'fell out with Lee about it and gave up Litton Hall, regretted it, but his notice had to stand'. The family moved to Elle Beck where old Mrs Spencer died in 1930.

Tom Harry Leyland who rented East Garth, took over the remaining land of Litton Hall and moved into the house, helped by his sons Owen and Herbert, the latter known for his habit of disappearing to bed for the winter months. This was referred to locally as 'hibernating', but must have been the illness later identified as seasonal depression. When Owen married Annie Metcalfe of Sawyersgarth, she came to Litton Hall where they had four children. Both generations lived together

until Owen Leyland died suddenly of meningitis, when his brother-in-law, Jim Ingleby, who had married Lizzie Leyland, took on the tenancy. Several farm-men were employed at Litton Hall Farm, including Dennis Lund who worked for Jim Ingleby.

Litton Hall Farm, by this time owned by the Walker family, was bought by Michael Thorman, the son of the last vicar of Arncliffe, the Rev RH Thorman, in the early 1960s. Mrs Thorman had farmed the glebe land attached to the vicarage all the time they were there, 1953-1974, and her son perhaps wanted to carry on the tradition, keeping Jersey cows as his mother had done. In 1969, the house was sold separately to Colin and Jean Groves, and the land bought by neighbouring farms. Michael Thorman moved to a farm in Nidderdale.

