

Victoria County History of Cumbria Project. Draft parish/township histories

[Note: This is a provisional draft and should not be cited without first consulting the VCH Cumbria project team: for contact details, see <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/>]

Parish/township: GAMBLESBY

Author: Sarah Rose

Date of Draft: 15.10.14

GAMBLESBY¹

SOCIAL HISTORY

Throughout its history, Gamblesby lacked a resident lord or a significant gentry presence. Instead, local society was dominated by yeoman farmers, several of whom became quite prosperous: in 1860, Thomas Benson of Unthank was described as a ‘gentleman’,² although the 1861 census lists him as a farmer who employed a dozen people.³ Of the fifty-six households recorded in 1861, eighteen (32%) contained farm and domestic servants. However, by the century’s end, Gamblesby’s population began to decline, with a notable loss of farm and domestic employees. Out of forty-eight households in 1891, only nine contained servants, while just six were headed by agricultural labourers.⁴

The twentieth century saw an increase in the number of dwellings in Gamblesby. Two sets of semi-detached council houses were built on the Unthank road by Penrith Rural District Council in 1949.⁵ An agricultural worker’s bungalow was also constructed in 1963,⁶ but most new houses since then

¹ The author would like to thank Lydia Gray and the staff at Carlisle Archive Centre for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

² CAS (Carlisle), QRE 1/111.

³ 1861 Census.

⁴ Numbering 14 individuals: Census 1891.

⁵ CAS (Carlisle), SRDP 3/PLANS/982.

⁶ CAS (Carlisle), SRDP 3/PLANS/3883.

have resulted from the conversion of agricultural and other buildings, including several barns and stables, the mill, the Red Lion Inn, and both the church and Congregational chapel. The later twentieth century saw the arrival of more professionals, including those working in education, management, or IT services.⁷

Education

There was a school in Gamblesby 1751 when John Wesley preached in the school house;⁸ it probably stood at the centre of the village at the north end of the village green.⁹ The schoolmaster at the time, Richard Matthews, became a Methodist preacher.¹⁰ In 1818 the school was attended by thirty children.¹¹ In 1846 the school was said to be unendowed and the children, then numbering eighteen boys and nine girls, paid ‘quarter pence’ for their schooling.¹² At one time it received an ‘ancient’ endowment of 5s p.a., but by 1878 it was reported that this had been lost.¹³ A Board School, built on a new site to the north of the village at a cost of £470,¹⁴ was opened in January 1877.¹⁵ It was endowed by William Harrison of London, one of Gamblesby’s absentee landowners, with £600 invested in the French *Rentes*.¹⁶ In 1878, this yielded an annual income of £30 p.a.¹⁷ The school consisted of two rooms, one larger than the other, and could accommodate forty children

⁷ See Baptism Register: PR 29/97.

⁸ *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol ii (London, 1827), 183; G.H. Bancroft Judge, ‘The Beginnings of Methodism in the Penrith District’, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 19.7 (1934), 154.

⁹ OS, 1:10,560, first edition (surveyed 1860; published 1867).

¹⁰ ‘Beginnings of Methodism’, 154.

¹¹ PP (HC) 1819 [224], *Digest of parochial returns made to select committee appointed to inquire into the education of the poor*, 115.

¹² Jane Platt (ed.), *The Diocese of Carlisle, 1814-1855* (Surtees Society Vol. 219, 2015), p. 200.

¹³ CAS (C), PR 28/55.

¹⁴ Bulmer, *Cumb. Dir.* (1901), 368.

¹⁵ CAS (C), CE 8/2024.

¹⁶ Bulmer, *Cumb. Dir.* (1901), 368.

¹⁷ CAS (C), PR 28/55.

and twelve infants.¹⁸ A canteen kitchen was added in 1947¹⁹ and a hot water system installed over Christmas 1958.²⁰ The old school building was afterwards used as a smithy.²¹

Nineteenth-century schoolmasters served for long periods. William Richmond was schoolmaster for over thirty years, between 1829 and 1861.²² Robert Walker (b.1859) was appointed headmaster by 1884,²³ and was still there in 1911.²⁴ Both men resided in Gamblesby, although no dwelling was provided.²⁵ Robert Walker's daughter, Marion, taught the infants as a probationer for a brief period in 1903,²⁶ although the first formal appointment of an infants-only teacher was not made until the mid-1920s.²⁷ In 1930, it was reported that there had been five head teachers in three years and several changes of assistant, but the situation had since settled down.²⁸ Mrs M.J. Addison was headmistress from 1949 to 1962,²⁹ followed by Mrs C.W.M. Hedworth.³⁰ Several children came on the school bus, which sometimes had problems getting through the snow - as did the cook and head teacher on occasion.³¹ Secondary school age children from Gamblesby and other east fellside villages went to Lazonby School until 1961. Afterwards, they went to Penrith: the girls to Tynefield County Secondary; the boys to Ullswater High School.³² In the 1960s, children from Gamblesby competed at the annual East Fellside Schools sports day held at Culgaith.

¹⁸ CAS (C), CE 8/2024.

¹⁹ CAS (C), SRDP/3/PLANS/725.

²⁰ CAS (C), SSR 1/64 (Gamblesby School Minute Book 1959-1970).

²¹ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

²² Parson and White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 450; Census 1841, 1851, 1861.

²³ CAS (C), CE 8/2024.

²⁴ Census 1891, 1901, 1911.

²⁵ CAS (C), CE 8/2024.

²⁶ CAS (C), CE 8/2024. The relationship was confirmed by descendant, Pamela Cooper.

²⁷ CAS (C), CE 15/Box 1/2024.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ CAS (C), SSR 1/64.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

There were twenty-one children on the roll in 1959; this rose to a peak of twenty-nine by the summer of 1961.³³ However, the 1967/68 school year started with just fifteen children on the roll, and by June 1970 it was found that only five children would be attending in September. Parents granted permission for their children to be transferred to Langwathby³⁴ and Gamblesby School closed in July 1970.³⁵ The head teacher, Mrs Hedworth, spent some of the remaining school funds on £1 book tokens as gifts to the departing children.³⁶ The board of managers, composed of individuals drawn from the local community, was still in place until May 1971.³⁷

Community Activities

There has been considerable change to the number and variety of communal spaces in Gamblesby, particularly during the twentieth century. Plans to convert the Old Smithy into a social hall were abandoned in 1951,³⁸ and the building instead became a private dwelling. This was also the fate of the Red Lion Inn, which became 'Red Lion House' in 1998.³⁹ By the 1960s the school was used to host various communal activities, including meetings of the Women's Institute and youth club.⁴⁰ Following the school's closure in 1970 the building was used as a village hall. However, after being declared structurally unsound, it closed in 2001.⁴¹ The Gamblesby Village Hall Committee subsequently formed with the aim of building a new village hall on the same site as the former

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ CAS (C), CE 8/2024.

³⁸ CAS (C), SRDP 3/PLANS/298.

³⁹ *Cumb. & West. Herald*, 28 Nov. 1998. <http://www.cwherald.com/a/archive/eden-council-planning-decisions.248316.html> (accessed 25 October 2013).

⁴⁰ CAS (C), SSR 1/64 (Gamblesby School Minute Book 1959-1970).

⁴¹ ACT (Action with Communities in Cumbria), 'Case Study: Gamblesby Village Hall Renewable Energy Project', December 2010.

school, which would run on renewable energy.⁴² The first phase of the project, completed in 2003, focused on insulating the walls and roof using locally-sourced sheep wool, and the installation of a ground source heat pump. Much of the work was done by local residents, and over eighty per cent of funds came from grant sources. The second phase saw the replacement of the old extension (housing the kitchen and toilet block), and the addition of a six kilowatt wind turbine. The village hall re-opened in 2007.⁴³ It has continued to be used by meetings of the Gamblesby and District WI. Since 2002, the annual Gamblesby and Unthank Garden Gadabout has raised money for the village hall fund.⁴⁴ Gamblesby and Unthank have played host to an annual snowdrop walk from 2008 for the same purpose.⁴⁵

Gamblesby possesses a cricket green, the uneven ground of which was not levelled until the 1960s.⁴⁶ Gamblesby Cricket Club, a founder member of the Eden Valley Cricket League, raised funds for a new pavilion in 2007.⁴⁷

Charities and Poor Relief

The poor of Gamblesby could get support from two charities based in Addingham parish: Lawson's Charity and Hutchinson's Charity, both of which were established in the eighteenth century. [[SEE GLASSONBY and HUNSONBY ARTICLES](#)].

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

⁴² For details of the project see: http://www.cse.org.uk/pdf/cafe_case_study_gamblesby.pdf

⁴³ Local info.

⁴⁴ *Cumb. & West. Herald*, 2 Jul. 2010.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 Feb. 2008.

⁴⁶ John Hurst, *Come Back to Eden: Lakeland's Northern Neighbour* (Cheshire, 2000), 79.

⁴⁷ *Cumb. and West. Herald*, 1 Jun. 2007.

By the seventeenth century, the inhabitants of Gamblesby were regularly baptised, married and buried at the parish church of Addingham, St Michael's church in Glassonby.⁴⁸ Gamblesby's tithe rent charge, owed to the vicar of Addingham, amounted to £49 in 1878.⁴⁹

A chapel of ease, dedicated to St John the Evangelist, was built in Gamblesby in 1868. The site for the chapel was granted by the lord of the manor, the Duke of Devonshire, at the request of the vicar of Addingham, Rev. Edward Brown.⁵⁰ As this site lay over the in-filled tarn on the village green, the south end of the chapel suffered gradual subsidence in later years.⁵¹ The building was largely paid for by private subscription,⁵² the total cost of which amounted to £1080⁵³ (far greater than the '£240 or £300' estimated by the bishop)⁵⁴. The chapel was dedicated in December 1868.⁵⁵ Built of red hammer-dressed sandstone, quarried at Lazonby,⁵⁶ St John's is a Gothic Revival church, designed by the Carlisle architect, C. J. Ferguson. It has a five-bay nave and three stained glass windows, with a wooden bell turret (containing a single bell) and spire.⁵⁷ Electric lighting was installed in 1935,⁵⁸ and electric heating in 1952.⁵⁹

The first two baptisms at St John's took place on the day of the chapel's dedication, and the Baptism Register ran until 1999.⁶⁰ The Chapel was not licensed for marriages until 1884,⁶¹ but only forty-

⁴⁸ The Addingham Parish Register begins in 1601.

⁴⁹ CAS (C), PR 29/55.

⁵⁰ CAS (C), PR 29/93 (requested in 1866).

⁵¹ CAS (C), PR 29/104. This pond is named as 'The Tarn' on the first edition OS map.

⁵² CAS (C), PR 29/93.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ CAS (C), PR 29/97, 104.

⁵⁶ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

⁵⁷ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 361.

⁵⁸ CAS (C), PR 29/64

⁵⁹ CAS (C), PR 29/27-28, 88.

⁶⁰ CAS (C), PR 29/97.

⁶¹ CAS (C), PR 29/63.

eight marriages ever took place there. By 2001, there had been only one wedding in twenty years and two baptisms in the last five.⁶² As St John's lacked a churchyard, burials took place at the parish church in Glassonby, although funeral services were sometimes held at Gamblesby.

The incorporation of Addingham Parish into a United Benefice in 1975⁶³ appears to have had little immediate effect on services, with Holy Communion and Evensong continuing to take place on alternate weeks.⁶⁴ Some financial support to help pay St John's parish quota came from the two trusts established on the closure of Hunsonby and Maughanby schools.⁶⁵ But by the decade's end, the chapel was in financial trouble, largely due to its dwindling congregation, which averaged between four and six.⁶⁶ One service in 1982 was cancelled after no one came.⁶⁷ By 1983, services were more erratic, with the introduction of a family service and more group services at other churches in the parish.⁶⁸ During the 1990s, there was approximately one service a month at St John's.⁶⁹ In 1999, approaches were made to Gamblesby's Methodists by the Rev. Richard Moatt about the shared use of the building,⁷⁰ and a public meeting was held to discuss its fate.⁷¹ But, in need of expensive repairs and with an annual income of just £250, St John's closed in 2002.⁷² The final service (Holy Communion), held on 30 June 1999, was attended by 110 communicants.⁷³ The chapel was sold in 2010 for conversion into a dwelling⁷⁴ and the building was subsequently used as a

⁶² CAS (C), PR 29/99; PR 29/104.

⁶³ With Langwathby, Eden Hall and Culgaith: CAS (Carlisle), PR 105/48.

⁶⁴ CAS (C), PR 29/99, 104.

⁶⁵ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ CAS (C), PR 29/99.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; PR 29/104.

⁷⁰ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*; DRC 22/1.

⁷³ CAS (C), PR 29/99.

⁷⁴ <http://eforms.eden.gov.uk/fastweb/detail.asp?AltRef=10/0725> [accessed 25 October 2013].

holiday let. The renovation featured on Channel 4 Television's 'Restoration Man' programme in 2012.⁷⁵

Nonconformity

Methodism was strong in Gamblesby from an early date. John Wesley made several visits there from 1749, facilitated by Gamblesby's position on the old Alston-Penrith road.⁷⁶ Local tradition states that Wesley planned the village's first Methodist chapel,⁷⁷ which was not constructed until 1784, at a cost of £100.⁷⁸ Prior to this, Gamblesby Methodists had worshipped at a house in Melmerby.⁷⁹ In 1864, a larger chapel with a school room was built on the same site. The new building incorporated the date stone of the first chapel (inscribed 1784).⁸⁰ The stone laying ceremony took place on 27 April 1864,⁸¹ while the dedication ceremony followed on 14 April 1865.⁸² The cost of the building work amounted to just over £685.⁸³ The chapel is still in use and celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2014.

Three women numbered among Wesley's first adherents in the village: namely, Sarah Sawyer, Fanny Falder, and Mary Watson, the latter of whom donated the site of the first chapel.⁸⁴ By 1791 membership of the Gamblesby class included twenty-four women and thirteen men.⁸⁵ In 1802 there were fifty-one members.⁸⁶ In 1841 it was noted that seven or eight Methodist families lived in

⁷⁵ Televised January 2012.

⁷⁶ G.H. Bancroft Judge, 'The Beginnings of Methodism in the Penrith District', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 19.7 (1934), 153-157.

⁷⁷ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

⁷⁸ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 3 May 1864.

⁸² *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 18 Apr. 1865.

⁸³ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

⁸⁴ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 1 July 1884; 'Beginnings of Methodism', 156.

⁸⁵ Durham Record Office, M/BC/2.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Gamblesby, all of whom were 'regular at church and sacrament'.⁸⁷ One of the first chapel trustees, Joseph Salkeld, together with his brother, Benjamin, had been preachers before the chapel was built. Joseph, who later moved to Kirkby Lonsdale, set up a pulpit in his home, which was later used in the chapel.⁸⁸ Other trustees of the first chapel were local yeomen farmers, John Faulder, Thomas Benson of Unthank, Anthony Benson, and James Atkinson.⁸⁹ By 1864, trustees of the new chapel still included representatives of the Salkeld and Benson families.⁹⁰ By 1893 only three trustees remained and numerous appointments had to be made in order to raise this to number to twenty four, as required by the chapel's model deed.⁹¹ A similar situation occurred in 1949, by which time fourteen trustees (all of whom had been appointed in or before 1923) had died.⁹² The new trustees appointed in 1949 were all farmers from Gamblesby or neighbouring townships.

On 27 June 1884, a large party was held to celebrate a centenary of Methodism in Gamblesby.⁹³ Two large marquees were erected to accommodate the 1,500 people who attended, 300 of whom were seated for lunch. It was reported that over 1,000 people attended the meeting that evening.⁹⁴ The chapel received several legacies, including £100 left by George Dufton in 1922, for the benefit of the chapel's Sunday School. The money was duly invested and used to provide prizes for the children who attended.⁹⁵ Electric lighting was installed in 1934, together with redecoration and water being

⁸⁷ *The Diocesan Book of Walter Fletcher, Chancellor of Carlisle Diocese 1814-46*, ed. V.J. Platt (forthcoming 2015), 127.

⁸⁸ From the reminiscences of his great nephew, Benjamin Salkeld: *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 1 July 1884.

⁸⁹ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/2.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ CAS (C), DFCM 4/5/115.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Cumb. & West. Advertiser*, 1 July 1884.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ DFCM 4/5/115. Legacies of 100 were also left by a Sarah Cowen and Anthony Metcalf.

laid on.⁹⁶ A new organ was purchased in 1941, while a lavatory and cloakroom were added in 1949.⁹⁷ Part of the Kirkoswald Methodist Circuit since 1871, services were held at Gamblesby every third Sunday in 2013.⁹⁸

The Congregationalists had their first place of worship in Gamblesby by 1824.⁹⁹ This was replaced in 1864 by a new chapel, which cost £400 to build and could accommodate 200 people.¹⁰⁰ In 1929, the Charity Commissioners appointed the Lancashire Congregational Union as trustees for the chapel building and the cottage and land which belonged to it.¹⁰¹ By 1928, services were only held every third Sunday¹⁰² and the chapel closed in the 1930s. The cottage was sold off in 1938,¹⁰³ followed by the chapel itself in 1939.¹⁰⁴ A year later, the former chapel was converted into a dwelling called Hazelgarth.¹⁰⁵ In 1954, the owners, Mr and Mrs James Purvis, gifted the house to the Kirkoswald Methodist Circuit for use as a manse.¹⁰⁶ The building became a private house again after it was sold in 1962, a new manse having been built at Langwathby.

LOCAL GOVERNEMENT

Manorial Government

Gamblesby was administered as part of the honour of Penrith by at least 1500. Court records for the honour survive from 1701 through to 1947. These reveal that Gamblesby manor court was held

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ CAS (C), PR 29/104.

⁹⁹ *Congregational Magazine*, vol. 7 (1824); Bulmer, *Dir. Cumb.* (1901), 368.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 'Independents Chapel' is marked on the first edition OS Map of 1860/1867, but is in a different place to the later chapel built 1864.

¹⁰¹ CAS (C), DFCCL 13/39; the cottage was then leased out for £5 p.a.

¹⁰² CAS (C), DFCCL 13/32.

¹⁰³ CAS (C), DFCCL 13/39.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ CAS (C), SRDP 3/PLANS/473 & 509.

¹⁰⁶ CAS (C), DFCM 4/6/7/1.

annually in June at the Pack Horse Inn at least until the late 1820s.¹⁰⁷ By the 1850s, the courts were more commonly held in Penrith.¹⁰⁸ As well as dealing with surrenders and admittances, the courts also made a perambulation of the boundaries. In 1805, those present at the perambulation included the steward of the manor, William Atkinson, the bailiff of the honour of Penrith and Forest of Inglewood, Thomas Lewis, as well as representative from key tenant families, like the Bensons, Mortons, Falders and Westgarths.¹⁰⁹

Township Government

No records of Gamblesby's township officers are known to survive from before 1834, from which time the township became part of Penrith Poor Law Union. The role of the constable in keeping the peace was aided by the stocks on the village green, which were still there c.1955.¹¹⁰ In 1934, Gamblesby was absorbed into Glassonby civil parish¹¹¹ and has since been administered by Glassonby Parish Council.

¹⁰⁷ CAS (C), DMBS 4/49-51, 60, 61.

¹⁰⁸ CAS (C), DMBS 4/53. One exception was in 1862 when the court baron was 'held at the house of William Sisson, Inn Keeper at Gamblesby'.

¹⁰⁹ CAS (C), DMBS/60.

¹¹⁰ CAS (C), DX 483/3/6.

¹¹¹ Cumberland Review Order, 1934