

## Introduction

Kilnsey in the heart of Upper Wharfedale is the kind of place you might drive straight through without ever stopping. It's perhaps best known for being the most important of Fountains Abbey's monastic granges in Craven, but there are no monastic ruins, and very little evidence of the Abbey's former presence that a modern visitor would be able to see.



Instead you have a small quiet hamlet of a few cottages and houses nestled into the valley, a road through that seems to go nowhere, and a village green now fenced around and used as pasture for sheep.



Our interest in this little place arose from the archaeological projects we have been engaged with over the years in the area, especially on the Town Piece, a common field in the middle of the village. In 2007 and 2008, UWHG with IAG carried out a geophysics survey and excavations of a lime kiln and corn drying kiln.

One of the intriguing results of the excavation of the lime kiln was that its last firing was dated to between 1620 and 1670 which we knew coincided with the building of Kilnsey Old Hall by the Wade family. Was the kiln used to provide mortar for this and other buildings in the village?

Originally the documentary research team was set up to complement the vernacular buildings survey of the years following the two excavations, but very soon we realised how difficult it is to pinpoint direct references in the old documents to particular named buildings. We were wading through boxes and boxes of leases and similar documents trying to find Jackson's Laithe or Reynard's Barn – it was like looking for a needle in a haystack, and many of these documents were proving difficult to read and time consuming to transcribe. The documents we were looking at provided such a rich tapestry of local history that we couldn't ignore it, so our focus shifted and we decided to transcribe these documents in full and see what they revealed about the history of Kilnsey as a whole community. Any information which emerged relating to specific buildings would be a bonus for the Buildings Survey Team.

For this tiny hamlet in the Dales we have unearthed a huge number of documents at various archives – but for the moment we are concentrating on the collections at The Borthwick Archives in York University, the North Yorkshire County Record Office, and Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society's archives at The Brotherton Library in Leeds University. The majority of the documents date from the late 16th to the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

We decided to let the contents of the documents lead us as we started we weren't sure in which direction we were going to go, except we were to keep our eyes open for references to field-names and buildings. The issues which initially emerged from them are:

- The rise of the Gentry in the 17th Century
- Women and Property in Early Modern England
- The Old Poor Law – Settlement, Removal and Bastardy in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century

We still have a very long way to go yet with many more documents still to be transcribed and more research to do, but some interesting information is already emerging.

## **The Rise of the Gentry**

The majority of the documents we were finding in the archives were leases, and other property documents of the early modern period. The Dissolution of the monastic estates in the 1530s sparked a nationwide scramble for land and helped to bolster the rise of the landed gentry. In the light of the fall of Fountains Abbey and the prominence of 17<sup>th</sup> Century buildings in Kilnsey, we thought a detailed case study of how Kilnsey created its new identity in the early modern period would prove useful and interesting.

The post-Reformation period was one of economic expansion and population growth. It was also a period of economic opportunity and a fluid property market. Agriculture was undergoing enormous changes:

- clearances
- enclosures
- consolidation and expansion of holdings

The nature of tenancy agreements was changing, direct manorial control was declining, and commercialisation of farming was intensifying to provide for expanding urban markets. And in the middle of it all were the new owners of landed property – the gentry, the “Middling sort”. They were merchants, lawyers, the medical profession, tenant farmers and yeomen, civil servants, clerks and accountants, skilled craftsmen, yeomen. They had surplus income to spend and invest. But one’s social worth was dependent upon property ownership. This is what made you a gentleman, gave you credibility in legal matters, access to advantageous alliances and marriages, credit networks, access to influential social circles and a say in political affairs, local, regional and national.

These are some of the questions we are asking as we develop our research project: What effect did such people have on small remote rural communities like Kilnsey? What did they want from their new property portfolios? Did they want the status associated with a country estate? Were they looking for a profitable return on capital investment? Did they get that return from rental income or from agricultural production for urban, regional or even national markets?

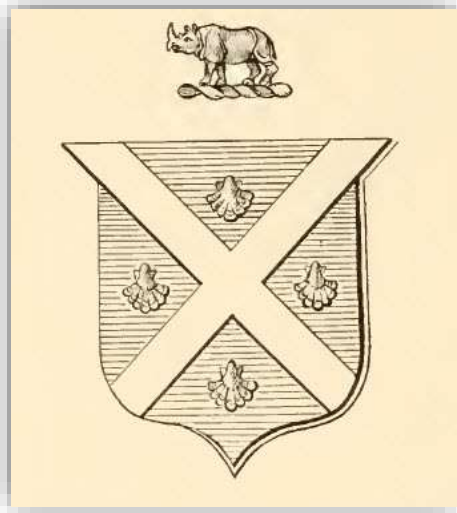
The more documents we transcribe and analyse the better our understanding will be of these issues.



The Old Hall is the centrepiece of Kilnsey. It was probably built on or around the site of former monastic grange buildings and was the work of Christopher Wade in the 1640s who re-built this house from the ruins. This family were the archetypal landed gentry of the late Tudor and early Stuart

period. The Wades came to Kilnsey from Addingham in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century, having made their fortune in iron works. They then built up landed estates across Craven. Three generations actually lived in Kilnsey: Christopher Wade Snr, and his sons Christopher and Arthur, and grandson Cuthbert,

Together they built up the family's estates, including property in and around Kilnsey. Typically, the Wades expanded their estates bit by bit, in a series of small, *ad hoc* purchases over many years. Consequently, there are numerous documents recording their purchases of leaseholds until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, between 1584 and 1744.



This coat of arms represents this family's aspirations to rise up the social ladder – it was an announcement to the world that they had arrived, and was granted by the Visitation of the Herald (1666) even though it was noted that there was no actual proof of their right to these emblems. No doubt the fact that a cousin was Lieutenant of the Tower of London had helped their case.

The Rhinoceros symbolised resilience and toughness.

A number of documents that we are transcribing help us to track the steady accumulation of land by this family, as well as several other ambitious gentlemen also hoping to increase their social worth through landed property.

#### Rise of the Gentry: Case study:

*This document is from the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society's collection at the Brotherton Library (University of Leeds) – the reference number is MD247-item 13. It is dated 1584 and concerns leasehold property in Kilnsey.*



The document recorded a transaction between two local gentry families – the Slyngers and the Wades. The leasehold property referred to in this document was two un-named messuages owned by John Kidd, but since he had died his widow Joanne now owned the leasehold. She was living on part of the property while other parts of the property were occupied by three tenants, including Christopher Wade.

In the event of Joanne's death the property was to revert to her brothers, Henry & Augustine Slynger.

Now, in 1584, this document recorded that Henry Slynger and his son Jeffrey took out a loan of £100 from Christopher and his brother, Arthur Wade. Both were described at this stage as being residents of Plumtreebanks, near Addingham.

As surety for the loan, the leasehold documents of Joanne's property were to be kept safe by the Wade brothers' father, Christopher Wade senior, of Plumtreebanks. Indeed, Joanne no longer owned the property anyway; because she had re-married – to Christopher Wade jnr. Under the laws of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, on marriage women automatically lost most of their rights to ownership of landed property, the rights being transferred to their husband. Therefore, "by right of his wife" Christopher Wade was now the leaseholder of the two messuages. Thus, Joanne's brothers had lost their inheritance rights to him.

But, it was agreed by this document of 1584, that once the Slyngers had repaid the loan of £100 they would then have the option to buy back the rights to inherit the property from their sister provided they also paid an additional £10. On the completion of this payment the leasehold documents would be returned to them.

The document is in reality a means of avoiding usury. This practice whereby cash loans were paid back with interest, had been legalised in 1571 provided interest was no more than 10%. But cash loans, made purely for monetary gain was still generally considered socially and theologically unacceptable. This was a paper exercise, in effect disguising what was in reality a charge of 10% interest on a cash loan. Instead of charging interest, the parties involved were pretending there was a totally separate payment for securing inheritance rights, and the return of legal documents from safekeeping. No land had actually changed hands at all.

These are early days in the history of the Wades in Kilnsey but already they were well-established, forging marriage alliances and credit networks with others of the same social status. And of course, building up their property portfolio.

A second document follows up on this relationship between the Wade family and the Slyngers.

*Again this is from the YAHS Collection at the Brotherton, reference number MD 247 item 22.*



It is a sequel to the 1584 document – and is dated 1597, that is 13 years later. Joanne had by now died, and the loan was still not re-paid. Consequently, by this new agreement, the Wade brothers gifted £100 to Henry's son Jeffrey.

In reality, this was another paper exercise to avoid any taint of usury. In effect, the Wades had waived the loan repayments. They were effectively cancelling out the original loan. In addition, the separate £10 cash payment for the safekeeping of the leasehold document was explicitly cancelled.

In return, Henry Slynger relinquished his claim to his late sister's property. The leasehold stayed in Wade's hands, which meant the landed property now belonged to Christopher Wade, as Joanne's second husband and her widower.

This document illustrates the role of women as conduits for property transfers. Joanne appears to have had little or no say in the proceedings, but she was an essential component in the transaction. It also shows how members of the gentry within a local area forged credit alliances and relationships. In an age where banks were not yet accessible to rural gentlemen, such alliances were a vital means for the middle classes to invest money and seek financial security and support.

These are practices we are coming across frequently as we continue working on documents relating to Kilnsey in the early modern period. Clear themes are emerging relating to the changes in property ownership:

1. The frequent exchanges of small pieces of land.
2. The use of land as collateral to avoid the stigma of usury.
3. Absentee landlords sub-tenanting to resident occupiers.
4. The influence of a few locally significant families – The Wades, Tennants, Garforth, Slynger, Kidd, Rayner - all very active in the local property market and interacting with each other.
5. They support the concept of there being a Great Rebuilding in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, which was not only about the construction of new buildings or extensive re-building but was linked with the development of private landed estates.

We may well find it necessary to extend our documentary searches to neighbouring townships and parishes to see how far the property portfolios of these families developed and interacted.

### **Women and Property in the Early Modern Period**

One of the most intriguing issues which has cropped up again and again during our transcription work has been the role of women in property deals and settlements. We were surprised to find how often women were involved, even if only in what often seem to be passive roles. This can, for example, clearly be seen in the Wade-Slynger transactions of 1584 and 1597 (see: *Rise of the Gentry; Case Study, above*).

We are of course dealing with middle class women of the gentry class here. But whatever their social status, married women were generally considered to be "*femme covert*" – that is, without a separate legal identity, and under the direct responsibility of a husband. Thus, they were not permitted to make legal contracts in their own name, all their debts were the responsibility of the husband, and they could not own freehold land.

On widowhood, common law entitled a woman to inherit 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of her husband's estate – known as the Dower. However, it was possible, through a specifically drawn-up contractual agreement, often between her family and her husband-to-be, to set aside additional property for the use of a wife, usually to provide for her in the event of widowhood.

### **Women and Property : Case Study 1: Anne Settle**

*Two documents from the YAHS collection at the Brotherton Library (University of Leeds), reference number DD107 – items 7 & 8, dating from the 1730s.*

So we come to the extraordinary story of Anne – her maiden name cannot be found in any existing records. She had married Thomas Settle, and when he died, he bequeathed Northcote to her. This is a farmstead lying just to the north of Kilnsey (Today it lies along the road between Kilnsey and Kettlewell, overlooked by Kilnsey Crag).

But when he died, Anne's husband, Thomas Settle, had been in debt to Charles Abbotson, owing the huge sum of £60 in cash, plus £120 on a mortgage.

Nevertheless, Anne married Charles Abbotson, and he thus, through *femme covert* (by right of his wife), became the legal owner of the Northcote property.

Anne was widowed again in 1733, and thus assumed ownership of the estate again. But her position as the widow was vulnerable, and she found herself without a male protector in legal matters.

There was, apparently, no copy of her second husband's will to be found, so she took it upon herself to compile an inventory of the estate. She was subsequently accused by her stepson, John Abbotson, of deliberately omitting £200 worth of cash from the list, which he claimed his father had bequeathed to his sisters. He also accused her of hiding the bond for the £60 debt that her first husband had made with his father, Charles Abbotson.

Unfortunately for Anne, a copy of her second husband's will was eventually found (the circumstances are not described) and it was discovered that Charles had named not her as the executor of the estate, as she had claimed, but her stepson, John. There followed an acrimonious exchange between John and his stepmother. He claimed she was still hiding the money his father had bequeathed to his two unmarried sisters, and he demanded access to the house. He even tried to force his way in through the door, so that he could search for the missing cash, but Anne had refused to let him into the house.

So in 1734 he took her to court.



This document (YAHS DD107/7) is a rough draft of notes made by various lawyers and judges discussing Anne's case.

In the early modern period, the courts were often sympathetic to widows, recognising that through no fault of their own, they were not under *coverture* and therefore in the eyes of the law had no male protector or representative. But the law was confused and inconsistent with regards to widows' rights.

This document records that the Court of Equity ruled that the debt owed by her first husband (£60 cash and £120 on a mortgaged property) would have been automatically passed on re-marriage to her second husband. Therefore it had been his responsibility to pay it off. But in this particular case, since the second husband was the same person as the creditor to whom that debt was owed, the debt was considered nullified by the marriage, especially since her second husband had been reaping profits from the mortgaged property during the lifetime of her first. The judges ruled that Anne's stepson could not claim that he was owed the money.

The judges also ruled that John was not entitled to force his way into his stepmother's home. She was entitled to live in the house as it was her dower, and he had no right to force his way in.

However, his sisters were entitled to receive £150 each from the estate as this was money bequeathed by their father. Ann still refused to hand that money over, so it seems Anne was not on good terms with her stepchildren and was determined to hang on to everything her husband had owned, by fair means or foul. Perhaps she saw the whole Northcote estate – including all monies - as hers by right, no matter what the lawyers said. We have no record of whether the money had originally been her property before either of her marriages – she may have regarded the cash as her personal property.

It may be that the farm was her dower right by her first husband. By common law, if her husband or father had made no specific arrangements otherwise, she was only entitled to a dower – that is one-third of the estate. Unfortunately, we do not what other property, if any, her first husband owned, so we cannot assess the extent of her dower property. Hopefully, we will find that out as we continue our research. But it would seem that Northcote was her dower from one of her husbands, as she was still in possession of it when she married yet again.

So, like a never-ending soap opera, the story continues:

Anne married a third time. Her third husband, John Waddilove, then became the legal owner of Northcote by right of his wife. But this marriage was not happy, and he spent much time away on his Irish estates. By 1742 he had been living in Ireland for at least 2 or 3 years, apart from his wife. He returned only to settle his business affairs and make a settlement for Anne.

It is impossible to know from reading the documentation just how much of a say Anne had in the whole business. As a married woman, despite their separation, Anne had no separate legal identity. On their marriage, her husband had become the owner of the Northcote property. Nevertheless, this was still her home.





On his return in 1742, John Waddilove sold the estate to Anne's stepson, John Abbotsen, with whom, presumably, relations were still quite tense. This implies that she was in no position to argue.

Anne was granted two parlours in the house, plus an annual income of £10 to be taken from the property rents and profits. There was an additional guarantee that her stepson John would make "adequate" provision of food, drink and clothes for the rest of her life.

The separation itself may have been to her advantage in that she no longer had to have any dealings with her third husband. After all, he agreed never to have any contact with her or interfere with her concerns ever again. In addition, her stepson generously agreed to pay her funeral expenses when she died. In return, all the remaining profits and rents of the estate after Anne received her share, were to be her stepson's.

By law, Anne could not re-marry unless her husband John Waddilove died, and the settlement made in 1742 was less than generous - £10 was equivalent to an unskilled labourer's annual wages. She had been deprived of the greater proportion of the income from the Northcote estate which she had previously enjoyed. That now went into her stepson, John Abbotsen's pockets.

Furthermore she was being forced to live on the same farmstead, perhaps even in the same house – although this isn't made clear in the document - as her stepson who had control of the estate. The stepson she disliked so much was her landlord and in control of her income. As a married woman, despite her separation from her husband, she was still in a very dependent position in a relationship she probably found very uncomfortable, although we suspect she was no shrinking violet.

### **Women and Property : Case Study 2: Isabella Tennant**

Single women who had inherited property were at a distinct advantage in that they owned that property in their own right, rather than losing legal authority over it to a husband. Although not entitled to own freehold land, they could possess leasehold.

Probate records are often a very useful resource for finding women's ownership of property.

*Borthwick Institute, University of Leeds - "The will of Isabella Tennant of Kilnsey" (1715)*



Here we have a female protagonist acting in her own right, rather than a woman being represented by a man. She was a spinster when she died in 1715, although we cannot be sure of her age, as she has not been found in local parish register records.

As is clear from the terms of her will, she had a brother, Christopher Tennant, and lived in Kilnsey.



Isabella was illiterate, signing her will with a very unsteady mark. Nevertheless her will denotes a woman with a degree of independence, and interestingly, she appointed another woman as her executrix: her niece, Anne Broadbelt.



Anne, with her elegant signature, was co-signatory with two male witnesses, when the will was proved at York. This wasn't an unusual practice - to have a woman as an executor for another woman's will.

Isabella made several small bequests of money to her brother, sister and brother-in-law. Then there were generous annuities made to her young cousin George, and to her married sister Alice. In addition, her two nephews would each receive £10 on reaching the age of 21. In total Isabella bequeathed over £40 in cash, plus annuities totalling £20. She appears to have had no landed property - although it is possible she had already disposed of any such property before making her will, and we have no surviving record of it.

The inventory of her goods was compiled by four men, and listed mostly bedroom furniture, bed linen, cash and clothes. A purse and her clothes alone were valued at a staggering £80.

They listed:

The Purse and Apparell	80	0	0	
Three Coverletts		0	12	0
Two bolsters & one blankett	0	2	6	
One brass pott		0	5	0
Ten sheets		0	5	0
Pewter		0	3	0
Two boxes		0	2	0
One chest and one trunke	0	5	0	
Total		81	14	6

The contents of the inventory appear to have been confined to a single bedroom. There are no goods associated with another kind of room such as a parlour, kitchen or scullery. This suggests she died not at her own home in Kilnsey, but perhaps in a relative's house in Litton, having been allocated her own room during her illness.

Since we do not know her age, it is impossible to know whether this was an accumulation of goods over many years, or the bottom drawer of a young woman waiting to be married.

These two documents, the will and inventory of goods, raises several questions:

- Despite her illiteracy she was a woman of substance – how did she come by such wealth?
- And how did she manage her money when she was illiterate?
- Did her brother play a part in helping her manage her estate?
- If so, why did she choose her niece be her executor when she died?

It raises all sorts of questions about the actual status, in the real world, of single women despite the legal theory of their perpetual dependency on male representatives.

### **The Vulnerability of Women in Early Modern Society**

Women of lesser status, were, of course, usually much less visible in the documentation of the early modern period, unless they turn up in poor law records.

The Old Poor Law had been in operation since Tudor times and had undergone many amendments and changes since. But until it was replaced by the new system established under the 1834 New Poor Law, the relief of the poor was the responsibility of the parish. Parish officials could apply to the magistrates for court orders to enforce the provisions of the Poor Law, but essentially it was for the parish officials to sort out the problem of collecting, allocating and distributing the relief.

In consequence every parish had its own approach. Much was dependent upon the attitudes of the individuals who currently held the parish posts of churchwardens and overseers, the financial state of the parish coffers, and the numbers applying for relief within the parish from year to year, or even season to season. Consequently, neighbouring parishes could adopt very different attitudes, and very different levels of leniency and generosity in allocating maintenance, and would not necessarily be consistent from year to year in their policies and decisions.

Under the terms of the Old Poor Law, in order to claim poor relief, the pauper had to apply to his or her parish of settlement, that is, the parish to which they were deemed by law to “belong” – by virtue of being born there, renting or owning property, or through a significant terms of residence and employment. Poor relief was paid from money raised through the poor rate which was imposed on all property owners and wealthier tenants in the parish.

Of all the categories of paupers, it was the unmarried mother and her child which caused most concern, and generated heated debate, since each case involved many factors to consider.

Moral judgements over sexual morality were often cited as matters of great social concern, especially as the distinction between the “deserving” and “underserving” poor became a dominant feature of social and political commentary. The unmarried mother was often regarded as the epitome of the consequences of lax behaviour. Her presence also raised fears for the existing social order, which was threatened by families without a male head of household. But as far as most parish officials were concerned, the dominant concern was purely financial. The expense of a child’s upbringing was a long-term commitment of at least seven years – in many cases a lot longer. Hence the practice of sending parish children out to apprenticeships as soon as possible, sometimes as early as the age of seven.

The financial burden was often exacerbated by arguments over settlement and removal, which might be clouded by the conflicting interests of up to three different parishes if the mother, the father and the child each had different parishes of settlement. The costs involved in settling such disputes could be substantial but were considered a worthwhile investment if the long-term commitment to paying poor relief to mother and child could be avoided.

The overriding concern was usually to ensure the father was made financially responsible, taking the burden away from the parish ratepayers.

The case of Mary Lawson throws light upon several aspects of social history in the early modern period. It illustrates early 18<sup>th</sup> Century perceptions of parish identity and belonging, which led to our use today of the word “parochial” to denote insular attitudes. The nature of parochial administration, with its overriding concern for the interests of ratepayers, and the extent of control exerted by those local ratepayers over their more vulnerable neighbours is also illustrated by the calculated treatment of Mary Lawson as a financial problem to be sent away. The vulnerability of single and widowed women within a paternalistic society is highlighted by such cases as these. The attitudes towards the role of men as fathers is clearly shown as discounting any responsibility for caregiving or nurturing outside the realm of a married household.

### **Vulnerability of Women ; Case Study – Mary Lawson**

Parish papers relating to poor relief for the parish of Kilnsey-with-Conistone do not appear to have survived, but our attention was drawn to a particular case which generated at least three separate documents which have somehow found their way into the Proctor Family Papers at the North Yorkshire County Record Office archives.

*North Yorkshire County Record Office, Proctor Collection ZM 8, 9 & 10.*

The three documents date from 1728, and relate to the case of a widow, Mary Lawson, pregnant with an illegitimate child. The more we looked at this case, the more complex and intriguing it became.

Edward Heseltine, a yeoman farmer of Kilnsey was the father – there does not seem to have been any doubt or dispute over that - was apparently willing to acknowledge the child as his and to provide maintenance.

The first of the three documents (*NYCRO ZM 9*) relating to this case is undated but was probably drawn up in July or August 1728. It was a private agreement, as there appears to have been no court action involved. And it appears this was well before the child was actually born.

Edward Heseltine agreed to cover the costs of the child’s maintenance, raising the funds by selling:

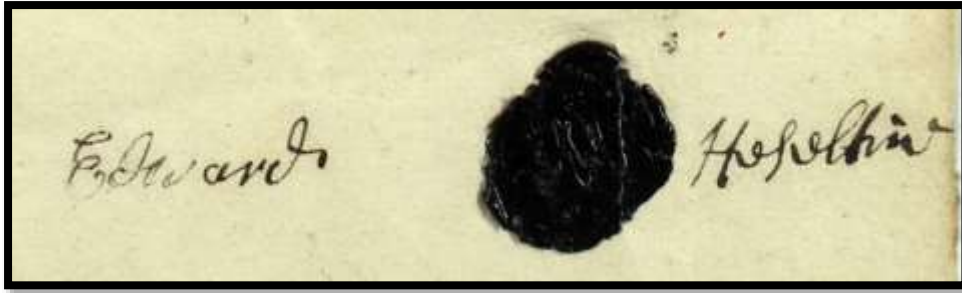
- 2 bedsteads with bedding,
- 2 oak cupboards,
- 1 meal chest,
- 4 brass pans,
- a baking stone,
- 2 chairs

and a range of farming equipment including

- a churn,
- 2 pales,
- 2 carts,
- a pair of wheels,
- and some horse gear.

We assume these goods were to be sold in order to raise funds in lieu of Edward committing himself to weekly cash payments for the next seven years. It was a common practice for putative fathers to offer a one-off lump sum like this provided the parish agreed.

Nevertheless there was a problem with this case. Mary apparently belonged to Sawley-with-Tosside, an extra-parochial district – there was no parish structure and therefore no mechanism for providing poor relief there. This meant that the burden would fall on a neighbouring parish. This explains why Edward Heseltine had made his agreement with Mathias Weatherhead, a butcher of Giggleswick, who was also an overseer there. The document was signed in the presence of two witnesses who were also from Giggleswick.



Edward was to sell the goods described in the agreement, if and when Mary's child became chargeable to Sawley-with-Tosside, which is about seven miles from Giggleswick. Yet Mary is repeatedly described in all the documents as being a widow of Carperby-with-Thoresby near Aysgarth. So why was Sawley-with-Tosside going to be responsible for Mary and her child?

We have some further research to do to find where she was born, where she married and resided with her husband, and where she lived after becoming a widow. Unfortunately, there are no parish registers for either Carperby-with-Thoresby, nor for Sawley-with-Tosside for this period, as neither had its own church or chapel. We have not been able to track her down in the parish registers of neighbouring parishes.

And neither do we have any record as to how she met Edward Heseltine of Kilnsey. She may have worked in Kilnsey or met him elsewhere, perhaps in a market town. It is impossible to know whether their relationship was that of master and servant, a casual affair, or a romance that had gone sour.

A second document dated 23 September 1728 (*NYCRO, ZM 8*) was again made between Edward Heseltine and Mathias Weatherhead with the same witnesses as before. Edward now agreed to sell a house with garden to Mathias to pay for the child's maintenance. Perhaps the valuation of the goods he had first offered had proved too low to cover the expected costs.

The puzzle comes with the clause:

*"Whereas Mary Lawson of Thoresby in the parish of Aysgarth in the aforesaid County is now pregnant with a Bastard Child; at the request of the sd Edward Hassletine by and with the Consent of the said Matthias Wea[therhead] and other the Leaseholders & Inhabitants within the Mannoure of Sawley and Tosside in the County aforesd is received therein in order to bear the said Child"*

In other words, Mary, although she belonged to Thoresby nr Aysgarth, was expected to deliver her child in Sawley-with-Tosside nr Giggleswick and receive poor relief there – at Edward's request. Why this was the arrangement is a question we haven't yet found the answer to.

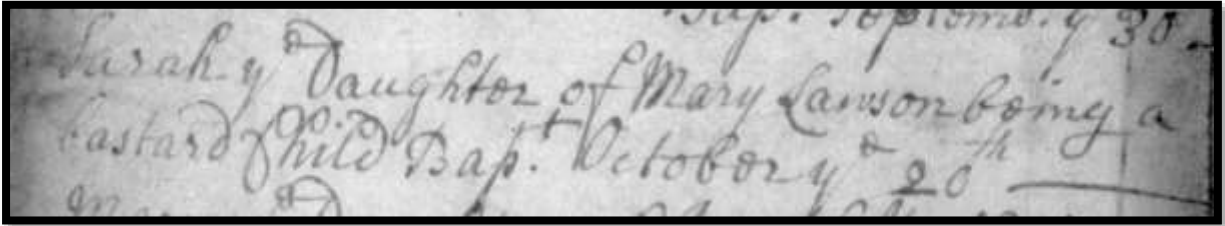
And there is a third document, an order from the JPs of the West Riding of Yorkshire (*NYCRO ZM 10*), dated 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1728.

Apparently, the heavily pregnant Mary, despite the agreement made between Edward and Mathias, had not taken herself to Sawley-with-Tosside, as ordered, but had returned to her home parish of Carperby-cum-Thoresby. But she wasn't welcome there as her home parish did not want the added burden of a bastard child. If born within their parish boundary, that child, along with Mary herself, could become their financial responsibility for several years. Accordingly, Mary was removed from there to Conistone-with-Kilnsey, on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1728.

A heavily pregnant woman, Mary, lonely, nowhere to live, no livelihood, rejected by the community she called home, was unceremoniously shoved onto a wagon, accompanied by an overseer, taking a long, bumpy road to a place sixteen miles away, where she did not want be, and to an uncertain future.

Within two days of arrival in Kilnsey she gave birth to a baby girl. Sarah was baptised ten days later at Conistone on 20<sup>th</sup> October. That gap of ten days is probably highly significant as most babies would be baptised within three days of birth. This parish did not welcome mother and child to stay either.

The township of Conistone-with-Kilnsey complained to the Quarter Sessions justices that Mary and her daughter had no right of settlement there, and therefore should be sent away. The Justices of the Peace ordered Thoresby-with-Carperby to take them back, so Mary could apply for poor relief in her home parish.



Sarah's baptism entry in the parish registers for Kilnsey-with-Conistone is telling. There is no reference to the identity of her father despite his acknowledgement of her as his child. She is simply: *Sarah, the daughter of Mary Lawson, being a bastard child baptised October the 20<sup>th</sup>.*

As yet we have no further information on the fate of Mary, or her little girl, Sarah. They disappear from the records.

And what about the father of the child – Edward Heseltine. Certainly by the standards of the day his settlement for Mary and Sarah was quite generous. But it was a one-off payment intended to avoid regular weekly payments over the next seven years or more. He obviously did not want a long-term commitment to the relationship. With Mary, and her child, now miles away in the non-parochial township of Carperby, we have no record of whether he made a new agreement with overseers there, or with the neighbouring parish of Aysgarth for the child's maintenance. One wonders if he ever saw either of them again.

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### The Kilnsey Documentary Research Project – Ongoing

This project has a long way to go yet. There are many more (hundreds) of archive documents to transcribe, including leases, property conveyances & probate records.



Through an analysis of the documents we will be able to map changing patterns of land ownership and land use in this Dales township.

The significance of social networks in the early modern period – credit, kinship, the parish vestry, and the “good neighbourhood” of the middle classes – is revealed through the mutual exchanges of land and money, marriages and other alliances mentioned in the documents.

We shall also be developing a genealogical database for the township, based on these archive documents, in conjunction with parish registers, census returns, land tax returns, etc., to provide us with a broader demographic history of the township in the post-Reformation period into the Victorian.

We can then begin to set this local study into the national & regional context of social & economic change in Tudor, Stuart and Hanoverian England.

At the same time, we continue searching for references to buildings, field-names and landscape features to inform future archaeological work in the area

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With thanks to :

The May Pickles Award, Olicana Historical Society

Staff at:

the Brotherton Archives, Leeds University Library

North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton

Borthwick Institute Archives, University of York

North Yorkshire Public Libraries, Skipton

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