

Hatlex House and Hatlex Farm (now Whitewalls)



Hatlex House and Manor Farm are the best known houses in Slyne-with-Hest. Both are structurally beautiful, but it is the people who built and lived in them who have assured their fame. William Stout, in old age, wrote his autobiography and it is from this amazing book that we can trace the beginnings of Hatlex House. William was the elder brother of Leonard Stout who built Hatlex House on land their father bought in 1677. Here is a brief excerpt from William's autobiography:

And soon after my father bought a small estate of about eight acres, and some old houses, in Hatlex, of Francis Ashton of Hest, which he designed for his son Leonard, who very early appeared inclined and active about husbandry and cattel and following the plough.

In 1679, Mr Stout died and left the Estate at Hatlex to his son Leonard with other land to the value of £200. It was Leonard and his descendants who built and added to this property so that by 1815 there were over one hundred acres of land and a farmhouse on the same site as Hatlex House. The estate also included Hatlex Cottage and many barns and outbuildings.

The Stout Family

Leonard Stout 1667-1745

Leonard built a very good dwelling house and barn and other conveniences at Hatlex in 1691. His mother increased that estate by the purchase of ten acres of land between that owned by his brother Josias at Sandside, and that owned by Leonard at Hatlex. This land cost their mother £200 and was purchased from Samuel Hulton of Poulton-le-Sands (Morecambe). By 1695 William, his mother and his sister were concerned for their brother Leonard, who spent his time in bad company; he was also buying and selling cattle, which the family thought was a very

dangerous employ. They decided he should marry and encouraged him to court Ellen Benison of Poulton, a girl he had kept company with previously.

Leonard finally married Ellen Benison in 1697 and with the £400 she brought to the marriage the whole estate was improved and more land was purchased near Hatlex. Because Ellen was very young Leonard's mother sent them a maid servant of long experience to "put them into methods of housekeeping according to their ability".

William was a bachelor and an Ironmonger who lived in Lancaster and it seems that some of the Stout children grew up in Lancaster rather than Hatlex. In 1700, William tells us that he always kept two of his brother Leonard's children with him; he took them at two years of age and kept them until they were six, and able to go to Bolton School.

**and my sister (Elin) was as careful to nurse and correct them, as if they had been her own children.
[Stout, autobiography]**

Leonard and his wife Ellen had four sons and five daughters, all reached adulthood except the first child William born in 1697. They appear to have been one of the most healthy families in the village, all but one of their children growing up which was almost a miracle in those days. They were the only children of that generation. Josias the eldest brother who lived at Boulton Holmes married but had no children, whilst William remained a bachelor and Elin, their sister, a spinster.

In reading William's Autobiography we learn quite a lot about the character of Leonard and his wife Ellen, they were a very easy-going couple who enjoyed their lives and allowed their children to do like-wise. This did not appeal to Uncle William who was a Quaker, he thought his brother and sister-in-law sloppy in the way they brought up their children and many disagreements ensued. The children usually got exactly what they wanted and were always forgiven by uncle William who often helped out with money.

Leonard and Ellen had two servants that we can identify from the death notices in Bolton-le-Sands Church register: George Dixon who died in 1728 at Hacklacks and Mary Robinson also of Hacklacks who was buried in the Church at Bolton-le-Sands. Mary was possibly the maid his mother sent to them. Hacklacks is just one of the many old versions of the name Hatlex which appear in the old documents.

The house as built was not as we see it today, it was probably much smaller and the major building work was done later by Leonard's eldest son in the 1700s. However there are some lathe and plaster walls still remaining from the original building. Because the house is Grade II listed there is an architect's report which is reproduced here. Notice in particular that the House has two date-stones one for 1751 and the other for 1829. We will discuss the origins of these date-stones later.

Whitewalls Restaurant, Hatlex House Farmhouse, Hatlex Lane and Barn

House now restaurant. 1751. Rendered rubble with sandstone dressings and modern tile roof. 2 storeys. Left-hand of facade has end stacks and rusticated quoins at left-hand end. To the left of the door are two sashed windows with glazing bars, the heads and sills continued as bands. 3 similar windows on first floor. Door has moulded and shouldered architrave of C18th type, a moulded cornice, and a false keystone with date 1751 and carved grotesque face. Eaves treated as cyma cornice. Right-hand half of facade has French window in plain stone surround to left of door and a sashed window with glazing bars and plain stone surround to the right. On the 1st. floor are 2 stone surrounds with sills continued as a band. Moulding of door jambs continues around shaped lintel with moulded cornice and incised inscription "IH 1829".

The gate piers at the entrance to the car park are a pair of C18th sandstone gate piers with chamfered rustication and moulded cornices. Left-hand pier has finial missing. Right-hand pier has acorn finial.
[Architects Office Lancaster]

Leonard Stout II 1703-1789

The eldest son of the Leonard and Ellen, whom we can call Leonard II, was brought up at Hatlex with the obvious intention of making him into a farmer like his father. He was born in 1703 and died in 1789 at the amazing age of 86. He married Rebecca Robinson in 1733 with the consent of both his parents and Rebecca's mother who was the second wife of John Caton of Hatlex. From this information it seems likely that Rebecca was also brought up at Hatlex in the house of her mother and stepfather. Leonard II and Rebecca had three children, Thomas, William and Milch but only William survived, the other two boys dying in infancy. Thomas appears to have been born two years before his parents married and he died, aged one, a year before Leonard and Rebecca married. This situation was not unusual in the early seventeen hundreds, many couples married when their first child was several months old. Leonard was a farmer and also a very successful Maltster. Edward Redhead of Hatlex was apprenticed to Leonard Stout but in 1732 set up on his own as a Maltster in Slyne at what we now refer to as The Malt House, Edward died in 1733. Here is an excerpt from Emmeline Garnet's book on the Dated Buildings of South Lonsdale in which she quotes the Richmond Deanery wills records.

Edward who died in 1733, having apparently just set up in Slyne for himself, owning "ninety windles of malt in two granarys in ye kiln...Barley wet and in work sixty six windles.... Dry barley 45 windles", for most of which he was in debt to Leonard Stout.

In the mid-seventeen hundreds many of the up and coming yeoman became Freeman, Leonard was no exception and became a Freeman of the City of Lancaster in 1744. Hatlex House must have been improved and extended in 1751, for there is a Keystone over the door-frame of Hatlex House dated 1751. It includes a carved face beneath it, the face is of an animal or a griffin and was probably placed there by Leonard Stout II.

The brothers and sisters of Leonard II led quite remarkable lives for those times. Margaret, a younger sister of Leonard, married Gualter Borranskill who became a factor for a shipping firm. Both of them travelled to Barbados on a sailing ship and their uncle William fitted them out with pots and pans etc. for the journey. John Stout followed in his uncles footsteps into trade and became a woollen draper, he was the Mayor of Lancaster in 1763.

Elizabeth the eldest child had married Thomas Hall in 1719. Thomas died in 1733 and Elizabeth came back to Hatlex with her two children but died in Slyne aged 40. She was then living with her parents in a house on the Main Road into which they had moved in order to allow Leonard II and Rebecca to occupy Hatlex. It is possible that Elizabeth's descendent James Hall was able to acquire the estate in the following century (1829). Elizabeth must have been very attached to Hatlex because it is her ghost that is now said to haunt the house!

Uncle William Stout fell from his horse in 1744, from this time he suffered from poor health and went to live with his nephew Leonard II at Hatlex. He must have written his autobiography there, dying in 1752 at the fine old age of 87. He spent eight years at Hatlex and would certainly have left a great deal of money to his family, the final computation in his autobiography showed him to be worth £5,000.

The Estate of the Stout Family

Leonard II had inherited a large estate at Hatlex, the land now amounted to over 100 acres. In addition to Hatlex House there was a farmhouse on the same site, known as Hatlex Farm, and there were also barns and other farm buildings. By 1769 he had built Hatlex Cottage which also had a large barn next to it. (Today the cottage is called Hatlex House and the barn is converted into a cottage.) Hatlex Cottage may have been built for a farm agent or bailiff, or for William and

Ann Stout. Directly across from the Memorial Hall land on Hanging Green Lane there were many other farm buildings belonging to the Hatlex Estate.

In 1738 Josias Stout died at the age of 75 leaving everything to Leonard I and his children, his personal estate was considerable including the Boulton Holmes estate.

The sisters of Leonard II had already inherited money from their spinster aunt Ellen and when uncle William died leaving £5000, the family must have become very wealthy indeed. The Hatlex branch of the family were one of the richest families in the village. The Boulton Holmes Estate passed to John Stout, the third son of Leonard I and Ellen.

William Stout 1734-1788

William Stout, the only surviving son of Leonard II and Rebecca, married Ann Jackson in 1762. William followed the same profession as his father and became a Maltster. The coaching trade was at its height and providing beer was a lucrative trade. The Hest Bank Inn and the Cross Keys in Slyne were very busy enterprises. William and Ann had four children: Thomas, who described himself as a gentleman, became a Freeman of Lancaster just before his death in 1784 aged 21. Leonard also became a Freeman in 1785, but must have died shortly after this date. Josias died in 1790 aged 29. This left the only daughter Rebecca who, on the death of her brother, inherited the whole of the Hatlex Estate in 1790. To avoid confusion with her grandmother we can refer to her as "Rebecca 2".

Rebecca Stout 1770-1844

Rebecca 2 was a very rich young lady indeed and in 1793 she married the Rev. Thomas Butler, Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge, who became the incumbent at Poulton-le-Sands. Thomas Butler had bought the Hest Bank Hotel in 1775, so he had some financial interest in Hest Bank. This may explain how he came to meet Rebecca who was living at Hatlex. The couple took up residence at Hatlex and were recorded there in 1817. However, they were not blessed with children. The Hest Bank Inn was disposed of in 1819 and Hatlex House with the estate were sold in 1829. At some time the couple moved away but Rebecca returned to the village when Thomas died and she was living at Marine Lodge in 1841. She passed away in 1844.

The purchaser of the estate was James Hall and it is quite possible that he was a descendent of Elizabeth Hall who was one of Leonard II's married sisters. William Stout, the autobiographer thought a great deal of his great niece and great nephew, he paid for their education and looked after them when their mother died. It is nice to think that his kindness was repaid in some way by a descendent who was able to acquire the estate for the family. Emmeline Garnett also makes this interesting connection:

Whitewalls Hatlex.

1829 The initials I H. On the lintel of an addition.

James Hall of Sunnyside, Salford Dyer bought this estate from Rev. Thomas Butler, husband of Rebecca Stout. A James Hall aged 35, of Lindale in Cartmel, buried in Bolton-le Sands in 1843, presumably son of elder James. Cartmel connection makes it possible that they were a branch of the Stout family. Elizabeth, eldest daughter of first Leonard of Hatlex, married in 1719 Thomas Hall of Cartmel and had at least one son, William born 1722. Still in the house in 1850, owned by Mrs. Alice Hall, was a piece of furniture with LS 1693 carved on it.

[The Dated Buildings of South Lonsdale]

The Hall Family and other inhabitants of Hatlex

James Hall was first mentioned on a householders list of 1836 when people having property worth more than £10 per year in rental were able to vote. The initials on the lintel I H are those of James Hall.

1836. Hatlex Estate, owned by James Hall of Salford, owner of Freehold Farm and houses and land [Voters List, unpublished document]

By 1845 a Mrs Alice Hall occupied Hatlex House and it is not possible to tell whether she was the widow of James Hall or some close relative. When Mrs Hall was at Hatlex there was reputed to be an ancient piece of carved oak furniture in the house with the initials L S and bearing the date 1693. If genuine this piece of furniture possibly belonged to the first Leonard Stout. The extent of her land at that time was 55 acres-2 roods-8 perches and its rateable value was £180-11s-5d. In 1860 Mrs. Hall was assessed for Poor Relief at sixpence in the pound and as the owner of the house and land had to pay £4-10s-3d. In the local directories Mrs Hall is described as a gentlewoman and we learn more about her from the census of 1871.

Hatlex House.

Alice Hall, head and Owner, Landowner, aged 84, born in Manchester.

Ann Hall, relative, aged 67, born in Bury.

Elizabeth Harris, visitor, aged 56, born in Salford.

Sarah Harris, visitor, aged 60, born in Liverpool.

Ann Bathgate, sick nurse, aged 35, born in Kendal.

Jane Bowe, general servant, aged 51, born at Bothel.

Margaret Rigby, servant, aged 16, born at Bolton-le-Sands. [Census return 1871]

Mrs Hall was obviously being attended by the nurse and must have died fairly soon after this census was taken. One of the visitors, Mrs Sarah Harris, appears to have inherited or acquired the house and was living there in 1879. She is described as "gentry" in a directory of 1879 and may well have been a daughter of Alice:

1879. Local gentry, Mrs. Sarah Harris, Hatlex Hest.

There was the following birth announcement in the Lancaster Guardian of 1879:

On the 21st Inst. at Hatlex House Hest Bank, Mrs Walter Anderson [Rio de Janeiro] of a daughter. [Lancaster Guardian, September 27th. 1879]

It is possible that Mrs Anderson was Mrs Harris' daughter and she had returned home from Rio to have her baby.

In 1881 the census shows that the house was uninhabited but by the end of that year the Brothers Harrill were in residence. They were thread manufacturers in Cumberland and stayed at Hatlex House for ten years. Unfortunately it has not been possible to find out anything more about them.

Joseph Harris, who was possibly a son of Sarah Harris, was in residence with his family in 1891:

Hatlex House, Joseph Harris, his wife Jane and four children, farmer, born in Bridekirk, Cumbria. [Census return 1891]

Sale of the Hatlex Estate 1894

The first documented sale of the Hatlex Estate was in 1894 and this makes me suspect that the estate had previously changed hands only within the family. The Freehold consisted of four dwelling houses, Hatlex House and Farm House, Hatlex Cottage, and also Thortindale; extensive

farm buildings and 103 acres- 2 roods -16 perches. The main building Hatlex House was in the occupation of the vendor and owner who was Jonathan James Harris but it could be viewed by appointment with the caretaker, a Mr. De Pont of Hatlex Cottage. Some of the fields included in the sale are very interesting. Jackson's Field was advertised as a good building site and is the field upon which Hatlex Drive now stands. Field number 396 or Low Line Butts (which was along the Coastal Road towards Bolton-le-Sands) was subject to public footpath and contained a valuable Chalybeate Spring. Bracken Field, number 441, had right of cart road through field number 443 to the Turnpike road. These fields are not shown on the 1845 Tithing Map of Hest Bank because prior to 1980 most of the Hatlex Estate was in the Parish of Bolton-le-Sands. The property was sold to Joseph William Pickard. Written on the catalogue is: "£6,000 offered--Reserve £7,000".

Sale of the Hatlex Estate October 1922.

In 1901 the owner of the estate was S. Pickard and the accommodation of Hatlex House was described in a sale notice:

Ground Floor. Two sitting rooms (17ft. 6in. by 16ft, and 17ft. 6in by 10ft 6in.)
Dining Room (18ft 6in by 10ft 6in.), **Two Kitchens, Back Kitchen and Scullery, Larder, Wash-house.**
First Floor. Four Principal Bedrooms, Three Smaller Bedrooms.
Attic Floor. Bedroom and Three Lumber Rooms.
Basement. Two Cellars.
The Property stands in its own grounds, extending over an area of 3a 2r. 21per.
and in addition to Pleasure and Vegetable Gardens, there is an Orchard and two Paddocks.

One of the conditions of sale of 1922 was that the vendors sell as Trustees under the Will of the said Joseph Pickard, presumably S Pickard was his son. One of the most interesting conditions of sale was for lot number 6, this land stood next to Uplands which is now Ashworth Drive. The condition stated that the buyer of lot 6 "could not erect a dwelling house of less value than £500 or a pair of semi-detached houses for less than £800" on this particular plot, and further "no house could be erected within 150 yards of the plot of land containing Uplands". An indenture to this effect had been made between Joseph William Pickard and Peter Wild the owner of Uplands in 1898.

Hatlex Ghosts.

Mr. and Mrs Fisher, the present owners of Whitewalls Restaurant, will tell you that there is definitely a "presence" in the house, particularly in one of the bedrooms, of a woman named Elizabeth. Who can doubt that this is the shadow of Elizabeth Hall (nee Stout) one of William Stout's beloved nieces. Elizabeth was a sickly child suffering from asthma (its not a new disease!) who had two children and died aged 40 in 1740. It may have been her descendent who reclaimed the estate in 1829. Is she happy with the way things have turned out?

Hatlex Farm

The Farm house is easily confused with Hatlex House itself. However it was a separate dwelling adjoining and behind the main building. The first references to the farm appear in 1817 when the tenant was Mrs Jane Worthington. The best description of the property was given in the notice of 1894 when the whole estate was for sale:

Auction Sale.

All that valuable Freehold Residence called Hatlex House together with the Farmhouse and gardens adjoining, and the pleasure gardens, vegetable gardens and land adjoining.....

All the estates in Hest Bank were regularly split into two. Houses such as Hatlex and The Prospect were occupied by the rich who described themselves as gentlemen or gentlewomen but often they were only tenants and appeared to move quite frequently. In the case of Hatlex House the owners were usually in residence. The land attached to the estates was generally farmed by tenant farmers and the farm house was one of the cottages on site.

The Worthington Family

Mrs. Jane Worthington was the tenant at Hatlex Farm as early as 1817 when her husband Ambrose died aged 52. We can see from the census of 1841 that the Worthingtons had five children, four sons and one daughter, all were unmarried at that time. In total ten people including servants were crammed into the property. As we shall see the brothers had "exciting" lives and must have been well known characters in the community:

Jane Worthington, farmer, aged 66.
William Worthington, aged 45, son.
Edward Worthington, aged 39, son.
Alice Worthington, aged 35, daughter.
Thomas Worthington, aged 33, son.
Hugh Worthington, aged 21, son.
William Pedder, aged 17, agricultural labourer.
Ellen Robinson, aged 19, female servant.
Christianna Ainslie, aged 75, of independent means.
Ann Winston, aged 20, female servant. [Census return 1841]

By 1845 the lives of the Worthingtons had changed significantly and rather dramatically. Their mother Jane had died sometime between 1841 and 1845, and William was the new tenant and head of the household. At the age of 49 he decided to marry but by the 10th of May 1845, one week after his marriage, he was dead from arsenic poisoning!

The Death of William Worthington

An article was written in the Lancaster Guardian about the inquest after his death. It is well worth reproducing here:

Suicide at Hest Bank

The inquest of the body of William Worthington which had been postponed on Friday to allow the Medical Gentlemen time to analyse the contents of the stomach, was resumed on Sunday afternoon before James Gardner Esq. Coroner, at the Hest Bank Hotel. Mr Leack, surgeon, deposed that the powder which he found in the stomach, on the application of a test, proved to be arsenic. The powder also found in the gill pot near the bed was found to contain the same deadly ingredient. A brother of the deceased stated that the arsenic was kept in the house for the purpose of dressing the feet of diseased cattle. He had frequently heard his brother exclaim that "he would not live a week" and on the evening previous to his death, he had said "I don't think I shall live till morning".

The Jury after a short deliberation, returned the verdict, that the deceased had poisoned himself, being at the same time of unsound mind. He was only married on the Monday previous, and the agonised feelings of his widow may be better imagined than described.

[The Guardian, 1845]

In 1996 we may say that to marry at the age of 49 for the first time could cause difficulties, however it was not unusual for a man to marry so late in the first half of the 19th. century. I have come across many men in Slyne-with-Hest marrying for the first time in their 50s.

What is most peculiar is that he died only one week after his marriage. Death by arsenic is very painful and requires massive doses over a long period. The whole event is very curious indeed and perhaps the brothers and the local community knew more, but it was not made public. The following notice was printed in the Guardian one week later:

Re William Worthington, Deceased.

Notice is hereby Given.

That Hugh Worthington the person who holds adverse possession against the widow and Administratrix of the deceased of the farm, at Hatlex, in Bolton-le-Sands, and the Stocks and Effects therein, is not authorised to receive any debts owing to the deceased, or to sell any part of the farming stock, or other effects the property of the said Administratrix.

And that any person paying him money owing to the late William Worthington, or purchasing any part of the stock and co. from him, or any other person not authorised by the said Administratrix, will, after this notice, do so at their own risk.

Thomas Thompson, Attorney at Law for Ellen Worthington (widow) Administratrix of the said William Worthington, deceased.

Market St. Lancaster, 13th, May 1845.

The youngest brother Hugh Worthington, then aged 25, had taken over Hatlex Farm and it seems that Ellen Worthington the widow has been made to leave the house. The warning from Mrs. Worthington's solicitor indicates that Hugh was also trying to sell off farm-stock and equipment. The above notice was meant to act as a restraint on his activities. Although the whole case deserves more investigation I have not found any more material but I still hope more will come to light. I did come across Hugh in 1846, by then living in Lancaster, and another death is involved:

Death Notice.

In Upper Bulk Street Lancaster. Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Hugh Worthington of Hatlex, aged 23.

The third brother Thomas Worthington married the eldest daughter of George Crosskell of the Hest Bank Inn in 1846 when he was aged 38 . They continued to farm at Hatlex and raised a family there:

Marriage notice: 1846. September 21st, On Tuesday last at Bolton-le-Sands by the Rev. R Gibson, Mr. Thomas Worthington of Hatlex Farm, to Margaret, daughter of Mr. Crosskell of The Hest Bank Inn.

Edward Worthington, the second eldest brother, must have continued to live with them and I came across him again in 1848 in a court case at the Quarter Sessions.

James Robins, aged 18, was charged with having stolen a watch, the property of Edward Worthington of Hatlex Farm. On the 19th. October 1848, Edward Worthington went to Marginson's cattle sale at Bolton-le-Sands, he had a little to drink and fell asleep, the watch had gone when he awoke. His name was engraved on the inner case of the watch, Robins had been seen loitering in the vicinity and was arrested and found guilty of theft, he was sentenced to six months imprisonment at the House of Correction in Preston.

From a directory of 1851 we find that Thomas Worthington was still farming at the Hatlex Farm and from the census of 1871 he was well settled with a son and a daughter:

Hatlex farm.

Thomas Worthington, Head man, aged 63, farmer of 88 acres.

Margaret Worthington, wife, aged 60.

Jane, daughter, aged 20.

George Worthington, son, aged 18.

Richard Gardner, farm servant.

Joshua Shuttleworth, aged 23, farm servant. [Census return 1871]

Thomas remained at Hatlex farm at least until 1879 when he was 71 years old and appeared to be on the point of retirement. He probably died soon after.

Later Inhabitants of Hatlex Farm

The Brothers Harris were farming at Hatlex Farm in 1879 and their sister Sarah was living in the main house and could well have been the owner of the estate. Their stay was very brief and things had changed again by 1881. At that time the main house was uninhabited but a Peter Ponsonby was at the farm with his wife Mary and a baby:

Hatlex Farm:

Peter Ponsonby, head of household, aged 27, farm bailiff of 108 acres, employs one man.

Mary, wife, aged 26.

William, son, aged 1.

Elizabeth ? aged 19, general servant.

William Hutchinson, aged 23, farm servant. [Census return 1881]

In 1891 the farmhouse was referred to as a cottage and living there was John Askew who, I am sure, was a professional Farm Bailiff, later employed by other landowners in the village.

Hatlex Farm Cottage,

John Askew, wife Mary and three children, Farm Bailiff, born in Bare, wife born in Over Kellet.

[Census return 1891]

As we have noted with reference to Hatlex House, the whole estate was up for sale in 1894 when the Farmhouse was leased by Mr. Thomas Thompson as tenant. The sale notice says that his term was to expire in regards to the Farm House on the 12th. May 1895, and on the land in February 1895. It is likely that Thomas Thompson was a breeder of pedigree cattle and sheep who lived at The Prospect. John Askew may well have been his bailiff.

Fire at Hatlex Farm.

By the turn of the century Thomas Cook was farming at Hatlex Farm and five years later in 1906 there was a serious fire. A barn was destroyed along with farm implements and a large quantity of hay. The Lancaster Guardian ran this article on September 22nd. 1906.

On Monday morning a serious fire broke out in the farm buildings at Hatlex Farm Hest Bank, in the occupation of Thomas Cook. A man riding past shortly before ten o'clock discovered the fire and immediately gave the alarm. A farm servant was promptly dispatched to Bolton-le-Sands and the police telephone was requisitioned to enlist the services of the Lancaster Borough Fire Brigade and the Carnforth Fire Brigade. This was the first call within a fortnight to the Borough Fire Brigade who were summoned at 10-30am.

Superintendent Wearing turned out with the tender 4 mins. later and the steamer followed getting steam up on route. On arrival it was found that the fire was raging in a barn containing two bays of hay, a splendid crop together with some grain and a large amount of farm implements.

The roof had fallen in and the fire threatened the destruction of everything. The Lancaster Fireman, Supt. Wearing with the tender coupled up to a hydrant on the road not far from the building devoted their attention to preventing the fire spreading to adjoining buildings and did this effectively until the arrival of the steamer which worked from the canal which is within sight of the farm. On the Carnforth Brigade arriving, in charge Captain Simpson, they used their manual engine and pumped water from the canal. In about an hour the combined brigades succeeded in mastering the fire. They cut out the smouldering hay, seeking to save the centre of the bays. This work continued for four hours the rubbish being cleared and the centre mows left standing, proving the fire was due to external causes and not spontaneous combustion.

Loss included a cart, chopper, sheep rack, plough and other implements damaged by the fall of the roof. The Fire Brigade returned home at 5pm.

Crops and implements were insured with Caledonian Insurance Company. But the loss to the owner of the barn, which was not insured, the owner being Mr. J. W Pickard of Oatlands.

This splendidly descriptive article dramatically illustrates the difficulties experienced by the fire brigade in the early 1900s. There were no public telephones available and the route for the fire engines would have been along the A6 to Slyne and then down through the village. The people on route seeing a wonderful sight of the galloping horses drawing the engines. The Lancaster men had the use of a steam driven machine but the Carnforth lads had to operate theirs manually.

John Parker was still farming at Hatlex Farm in 1913 but he must have died before 1922 when the estate was again for sale. Mrs Parker, by then a widow, showed people around the property. The Farm House was not described in any detail but is still there and is the cottage attached to the back of the main house, rented out in the 1930s and 40s as a holiday cottage.

The Sale Notice contains the following description:

**A Dutch barn 20yds. by 7 yds., in four bays, with Dairy Shippon (14 head) and Loose Box. Two further Barns, Shippon (10 head), Trap House, and Stable (2 stalls). Further Stable (2 stalls), Workshop, Five Calf Pens, and Granary. Bull-house, Four Loose Boxes, Two Shippons (16 head), and four Calf Boxes with Loft-over, Two Piggeries.
Tithe (Vicarial) 1s-3d. per annum
Land Tax 4s-4d.**

Today none of these old farm buildings exist. The beautiful stone barn, which was a listed building, was situated on the land that is now the car-park for the restaurant and was burned down in the late 1960s. At this fire I watched as the fire brigade again pumped the water from the canal but this time in an unsuccessful attempt to save it.