

The Old Hall



Introduction

The Hest Bank Old Hall stands directly across from the Hest Bank Hotel. It is now converted into flats. The earliest references to the site are in some documents from the time of Henry 8th and involve a small insurrection! However by the 1800s the property was a working farm, a boarding house and a beer-house. There was a large barn attached to the back of the Old Hall and either it, or its predecessor, is thought to have been the Hest Bank Tithe Barn. The barn was demolished in 1960 and the first Wimpey house now stands on this site. The property belonged to Robert Jackson and there was a farm-yard, cow-houses and a stable. Robert, who came from Bolton-le-Sands, had married Ann Aldren of Hest Bank in 1814. Ann was a considerable heiress when her father Richard Aldren died; he left her not only the Old Hall but also Hest Bank Lodge and probably The Prospect or Marine Lodge as it was then known. She also inherited a large amount of land and her assets were so considerable that she took advice from the Manor Court in 1814 before a marriage contract was made between herself and Robert Jackson.

Early Information on the Hall and the Attached Tithe Barn

The area consisting of the Hest Bank Hotel, the Old Hall, Mowbrick and Hest Bank Farm is very old and some early documentation gives us a glimpse into its history. Thomas Pape included some interesting information in an article published in the Morecambe Visitor:

The Hest Bank Tithe Barn behind the Old Hall was acquired by the owners of the Hest Bank Lodge Estate sometime between 1859-1927. The land was sold to the Wimpey development who razed the building to the ground in 1960. Mr Morrow was the owner of the Old Hall and two cottages built onto it, 1 and 2, Hest Bank Lane. The back wall of the Tithe Barn was the joint back wall of the Old Hall and cottages and had to be left intact.

In 1539, the Archdeacon of Richmond leased the Rectorial tithes to Lord Mounteagle of Hornby. In a revenue of Hornby 1587 is the following:

Slyne Tithe Barn-----42s-6d.

Hest Tithe Barn-----16s-5d.

Insurrection around the site of the Old Hall in 1525

In 1525 the tiny population living in the hamlet of Hest were led by Richard Southworth and Thomas Ashton in an uprising. This is shown from a Duchy Court document from the time of Henry VIII, possibly about 1525. Since the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries were not in Henry's mind until after 1529, it seems likely that this was entirely a local dispute. We know from another early document that the Southworths held land in Slyne and Hest, as did Thomas Assheton. Lord Mouteagle let land and the tithe corn of Hest to Robert Parker and it is possible that this had previously been let to Richard Southworth and to Thomas Assheton. Richard Southworth was a Roman Catholic priest possibly running a local Chantry at Hest and we know that the Assheton family were also staunch Roman Catholics.

Richard Southworth and Thomas Assheton (of Heste).

Robert Parker versus Johan Southworth, Widow, and others re Trespass and Interruption of Occupation of Tithe Corn of Heste in Bolton in Lonsdale Benefice and Parsonage.

To the Right Hon. Sir Richard Wyngfeld, Knight.

Robert Parker complains that where Edward Stanley, Knight, late Lord Mouteagle, whose seal John Pardon had a lease of Mr. Dalby, Archdeacon of Richmond of the parsonage of the benefice of Bolton in Lonsdale, in the county of Lancaster, for certain years, whereof five or six are yet to come, as by certain indentures thereof made more at large appears, which Lord Mouteagle in his lifetime demised and let to farm, and also by his last will gave plaintiff the tithe corn of Heste parcel of the said benefice, to hold during the said term he paying yearly the farm due and accustomed, which plaintiff has accordingly done. Yet this notwithstanding, one Joan Southworth, of Overkellett, in the county of Lancaster, widow, Thomas Assheton, of Heste, and Richard Southworth, priest, and "Ermeyt", of their cruel minds, by the maintenance of their friends vex and interrupt plaintiff in the occupation of the said tithe corn, so that he cannot enjoy the same, to his great impoverishment. [Duchy Court 1525]

Sadly because there is no other documentation we cannot be sure what was happening and can only guess. The definite things this document does tell us are:

1. That there was a Roman Catholic Priest in Hest as early as 1525.
2. There was possibly a small Chantry at Hest.
3. Richard Southworth was so popular that Thomas Assheton and other people in Hest gave him their full support even though they were under threat of prosecution they were willing to trespass in order to stop Robert Parker reaping his corn.
4. The document establishes that the Asshetons, who figure prominently in the 1600s, were indeed a very old family of the area.

There is further evidence for an early chapel and the insurrection at Hest Bank from the book "Royal Lancashire Forests":

There was an early chapel at Hest, Richard Southworth, priest and hermit was concerned with Thomas Ashton of Hest in a tithe case.

The Hest Bank Tithes

There is evidence that the tithes of Hest Bank were bound up with the Old Hall. In the documents below we see that Edmund Jackson with others leased out the Tithes of Hest Bank, and we know that Edmund was the Trustee of the Old Hall at that time.

1832 Edmund Jackson, John Dodson and James Park let out Hest Bank to farm.

To be let to farm all the tithes of wool and lamb which shall arise, grow, renew, increase and become due to them.

1832: Let to Thomas Longton, £21-1s-0d.

1833: Leased to John Miller of Kellet, £29-10s-0d
1834: Again to John Miller, £29-0s-0d
1835: To Adam Platt of Overkellet, £31-0s-0d.
1836 ditto.....£41-0s0d.
1837: To William Carter, Thomas Longton, Thomas Powell, £32-s-0d.
1839: Thomas Mayinon? £45-0s-0d.
[Documents in Lancaster Library]

Early Inhabitants of the Old Hall

Here is a list of tenants and owners before 1841, the information comes from the Manor of Slyne-with-Hest Court documents. The early tenure for this property was the same as for the other Jackson properties:

1763. Owner, Elizabeth Livesay; tenant Christofer Bleazedale, farmer.

1768. Owner Elizabeth Wilson, daughter of Elizabeth Livesay; tenant James Shaw.

1802. Elizabeth Wilson left her property in Hest Bank to Richard Aldren.

1814. Richard died leaving his property to his daughter Ann. Owner, Ann Aldren married Robert Jackson of Bolton-le Sands.

1827. Robert Foxcroft, tenant and farmer. Owner Robert Jackson.

1831. In a sale of The Old Hall in 1831, it was described as being in the occupation of Richard Robinson, farmer and other tenants, including Jane Wilkinson. This sale was postponed until Feb. 1832. The building was described as being nearly new.

1831. Thomas Wilkinson.

Sale Notice 1831

In a for-sale notice of 1831 the Old Hall buildings were described as nearly new. Did Robert and Ann Jackson rebuild her inherited property at some time between 1814-30? Here is some information on the sale of the property including sale notices taken from the *Lancaster Gazette* newspaper:

The tenant farmer at the Old Hall was Richard Robinson. It is reasonable to assume that he lived in the garden cottage at this time for the Hall itself was a sort of Inn, taking-in lodgers, and was probably an over-spill for the Hest Bank Inn. This part of the enterprise was run by a Mrs Jane Wilkinson, wife of Thomas Wilkinson the official guide over the sands. Previously the Wilkinsons had kept the Hest Bank Inn. In 1831, when all the property belonging to the Jacksons was for sale, Richard Robinson sold off all his live-stock:

To be sold by Auction for Ready Money, upon the farm and premises of Richard Robinson, at Hest Bank Near Lancaster. On the 28th day of February 1831 at 12-00 noon precisely.

All his cattle and farming stock. Consisting of 6 cows, 4 calves, Sow and 4 pigs, two carts and wheels, ploughs, harrows, husbandry gear and dairy utensils, a quantity of excellent hay. A small mow of oats, a quantity of potatoes.

Household Furniture: Comprising of a good clock and case. Feather beds and bedding, bedsteads and hangings. Dining and other tables. Chest of drawers, chairs and miscellaneous bedroom and kitchen furniture.

[Lancaster Gazette 1831]

In the same year the Old Hall itself came on the market:

Hest Bank Hall, with garden, stable, barn, cowhouses, sheds, farmyard and co. As laid out in lots upon the plan. This lot has a pew attached to it in Bolton-le-Sands Church. The buildings on the estate are all of stone and nearly new, of the most convenient description and in excellent repair, surrounded by pleasure grounds, gardens, greenhouses and ornamental plantations of seventeen years growth and laid out in the most tasteful order. The premises are now in the occupation of the Hon. Mrs. Cawthorne, John Alexander Hunter, Esq., Richard Robinson, Thomas Wilkinson and others.

Owner of the estate is Robert Jackson, Esq., 39, Brownlow Street, Liverpool.

[Lancaster Gazette 1831]

The Hon. Mrs Cawthorne, widow of John Fenton Cawthorne one time MP for Lancaster and Steward to the Manor of Slyne-with-Hest, had been living at The Prospect. John Alexander Hunter had been living at Hest Bank Lodge. It appears that they were just in temporary accommodation at the Old Hall whilst the sale went through. Mrs Fenton Cawthorne certainly returned to The Prospect and continued there until she died in 1838.

The Old Hall in 1845

Thomas Wilkinson died in 1833 aged 55, and his wife Jane continued to be the proprietor at the Old Hall until at least 1861. On the Tithe Map inventory of 1845 the Old Hall, including a barn and gardens, was tenanted by Jane Wilkinson and owned by Edmund Jackson Esq. Edmund, aged 26, was the eldest son of Robert Jackson.

Jane Wilkinson of the Old Hall and George Crosskell of the Hest Bank Hotel were in court as a result of selling alcohol on Sundays! A caution was issued:

At the County Petty Sessions on Saturday last. George Crosskell, of the Hest Bank Hotel and Jane Wilkinson, beer-house keeper of Hest Bank (Old Hall) were convicted of vending liquor during divine service on the Sunday preceding. Crosskell was discharged with a reprimand, on paying costs and Wilkinson was fined 5/-.

The Wilkinson Family of Hest Bank

The Wilkinson family of the Hest Bank Hotel and the Old Hall lived in the centre of the village for over forty years. Thomas Wilkinson was the official guide over the sands in the eighteen twenties and the Landlord of the Hest Bank Inn. When he died in 1833 his wife Jane moved into the Old Hall. She had already been running it as a boarding house but it now also became a beer house. .

Mrs Wilkinson's daughter Jane married Captain John Rawlinson in 1820. She had a difficult time as the following marriage notices and death notices show. They give us an insight into life in the early part of the eighteen hundreds, the distances the sailing ships travelled, their cargoes, and the sad deaths from fever suffered by the sailors. Most of Mrs Wilkinson's children died before her and one grandson died on the coast of Africa:

Marriage. John Rawlinson Master Mariner of the ship "Eliza" married Miss Wilkinson of Hest Bank on Nov. 27th. 1820.

Death. 1845, May: On the 28th. of September last, at Bonny, on the coast of Africa, on board the barque "Mary" aged 23 years, Thomas Rawlinson, eldest son of Captain John Rawlinson, 39, Clayton Street, Liverpool, and grandson of Mrs. Jane Wilkinson, of Hest Bank, near Lancaster.

Death. 1863. Liverpool, death. on the 16th. Feb., at 65 Oakes Street in her 60th. Year. Jane, wife of Captain John Rawlinson and eldest daughter of Mrs J. Wilkinson of Slyne, late of Hest Bank near this town.

Shipping news. 1830: Jan. 14th. The Eliza Rawlinson, from Liverpool, with 32 hands arrived safely in Lancaster. Carried Rum, into bond, for Messrs. Coulston and Co. and other goods.

In 1830 Thomas and John Coulston owned The White Lion Inn at Slyne, later that Inn became known as the Greene's Arms Inn. Was the rum on the Eliza Rawlinson destined for Slyne?

The Census taken in 1841 allows more information to be obtained including the ages of the occupants:

**Jane Wilkinson, 65, Innkeeper.
Anne Wilkinson, aged 25.
Eleanor Wilkinson, aged 20.
Margaret Walmosley, aged 80, of independent means.
John Milner, aged 55, of independent means. [Census return 1841]**

At this period a large amount of accommodation was needed for travellers. The Hest Bank Inn may not have had enough capacity so the Old Hall was brought into use as an hotel.

In 1861 the census shows that Old Hall became the post office but was still also a boarding house. Mrs Wilkinson was going strongly for a woman of 85!

**Hest Bank Post Office, Jane Wilkinson, aged 85, Boarding House Keeper.
Margaret Wilkinson, daughter, aged 47, Sub-Post Mistress.
Jane Wilkinson, aged 17, relative, female servant.
Mary Ann Whitewell, visitor, aged 41, Yorkshire.
Elizabeth Whitewell, daughter, aged 11, visitor.**

At some time between 1861 and 1866 Mrs Wilkinson retired to Slyne, and she died in 1867 at the fine old age of 91

In 1859 all the property of the late Robert Jackson was again up for sale:

**Lot 6. A dwelling house called the "Old Hall" and premises now used as a Lodging House and occupied by Mrs. Wilkinson, together with a cottage adjoining in the occupation of John Sharples. There is a pew attached to this lot. Its extent is 0a-0r-20p.
Lot 7. A good barn, (Hest Bank Tith Barn) fronting from the road which might be converted into dwelling houses at a moderate expense, and the yard adjoining. Its extent 0a-1r-6p.
Lot 5. A building and garden in the occupation of Mrs Wilkinson, as tenant. Extent 0a-0r-33p.
All these lots having belonged to the late Robert Jackson Esq., now owned by Edmund Jackson.**

The Cottage adjoining the Old Hall was now called Garden Cottage. Lot 5 was a building situated behind Prospect Cottage and there was also a garden.

Later Inhabitants

The Census of 1871 terms the Old Hall as 43 Hest. The most likely inhabitant was William Till, a grocer, living with his wife Ann, five children and his mother in law:

**William Till, head of household, aged 59, grocer.
Ann, wife, aged 36.
Alice, daughter, aged 11.
William, son, aged 9.
Ann, aged 6.
Edward, aged 3.
Sarah, aged 1
Alice Dyes, mother-in-law, aged 79, formerly farmer. [Census return 1871]**

In 1881 the Old Hall was also shown as the Post Office with John Smith the sub-Post Master. His son Bedford eventually became an oat-cake maker in Slyne:

**Old Hall, John Smith, aged 37, Sub-Post Master and bread maker.
Martha, wife, aged 37.
Mary, daughter, aged 8, scholar.
Bedford, son, aged 5.**

Alice Swaine, sister-in-law, aged 58, nurse. [Census return 1881]

In the Census of 1891 its use remained unchanged.

Richard Wadsworth, widower, Post Office and gardener, aged 42.

Sarah, daughter, aged 10.

Elen, daughter, aged 8.

Anne, daughter, aged 6. [Census return 1891]

From more recent village directories we find the following inhabitants

1891. Wadsworth Road, Florist, Old Hall, Hest Bank.

1913. Agnes Machell, confectioner, Old Hall, Hest Bank.

1933. Elizabeth B Taylor, Old Hall, Hest Bank.

1960. Mr. Morrow.

The Garden Cottage, attached to the Old Hall

There is little information available on the Garden Cottage. The earliest reference comes from an advertisement in May 1821. In it Robert Jackson stated that the cottage was within 300 yards of good sea bathing at Hest Bank and that three coaches and canal packet boats passed through the village daily.

In 1841 John Sharples worked as a man servant at Manor Farm, he was then 15 years old. By 1859 when the Old Hall was for sale, John Sharples lived in the cottage adjoining. The 1861 census shows that he was married to Mary and had three children including Henry and Margaret aged one (the Hest Bank twins again!):

Hest Bank Road, John Sharples, aged 35, husbandman.

Mary, aged 34, wife.

John, son aged 4, scholar.

Henry, son, aged 1, Margaret, aged 1.

[Census return 1861]

[Notes:

Tithe: The payment of one-tenth of the earnings or produce of an inhabitant of a parish for the upkeep of the church. They became an important item in the income of the parish priest. The payment of tithes were bitterly resented by the peasants and less well-off people.

Manor Court: In Slyne-with-Hest the King was Lord of the Manor until 1816, a steward was appointed to run the affairs which were exercised as a Court Leet or a Court Baron. Generally looking after the affairs of a village, best modern likeness is a Parish Council. After 1816 Thomas Greene became Lord of the Manor, and later he was also MP for Lancaster.]