

Winster Local History Group

Newsletter 28

January 2004

Next Meetings

Monday 23 February. Larissa Worthington, 'A History of Winster Church'.

Monday 29 March. Lewis Jackson, 'Sir Joseph Whitworth, famous Engineer and Philanthropist of Darley Dale'.

Monday 26 April. Notty Hornblower, 'A Hundred Years of Fashion'. A special event, with models displaying original costumes.

Monday 21 June. Guided Walk round Elton. Details later.

Field Study Group (contributed by John Wood)

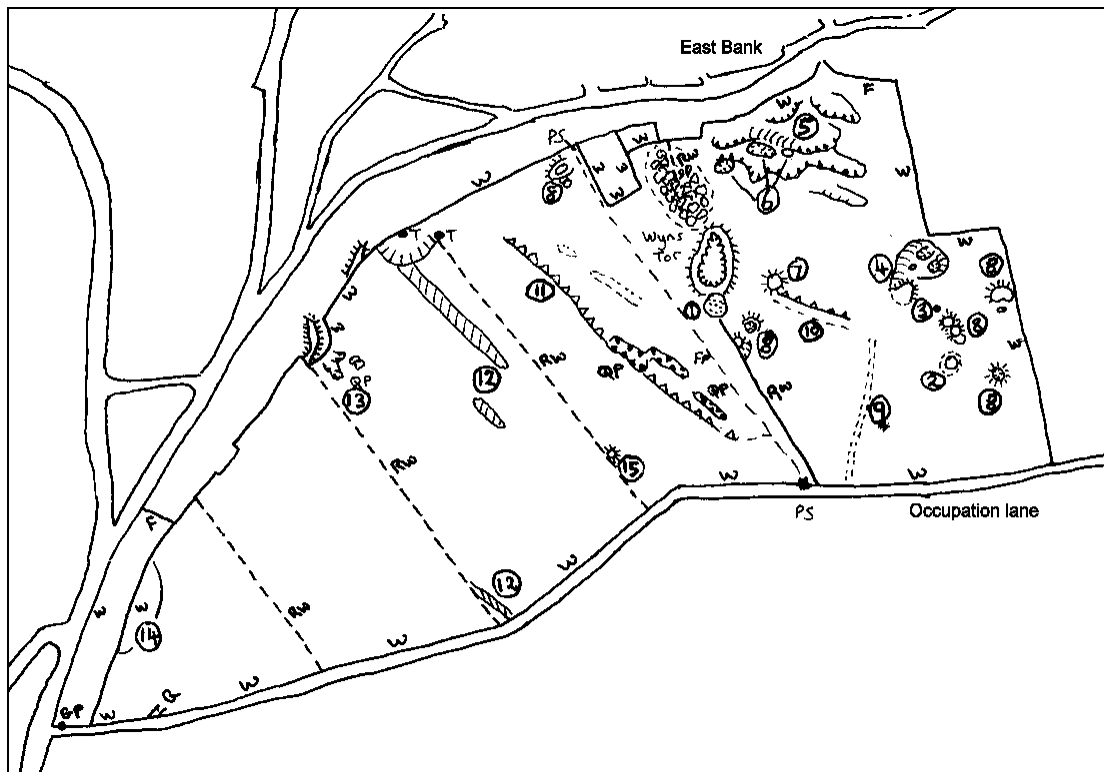
The field walking group managed to get going last April (after several years talking about it) with a day walking over some of Asa Cooper's fields near Wyntor rocks. John Barnatt, an archaeologist at the Peak Park, came along to show us how to do it. It took a while to look carefully and methodically at all the humps and bumps, and try and work out what they were, but with practice most of us were seeing things we had walked past dozens of times before without noticing. There was, of course, much evidence of lead mining, but also hints of much older habitation. You can see some of our written-up records below.

Before even getting into a field, some of us had spent a day at the Peak Park offices in Bakewell, going through old maps, aerial photos, and archaeological records. This was to get as much information about the area as possible, to help us identify and interpret what we would see.

Since then, we have also mapped more of Asa Cooper's land off Pikehall Lane, and Sacheveral Farm, before rampant undergrowth and good weather put a stop to things. While the grass and undergrowth died down again during the autumn, we did the desk research for Whiteholmes and Painter's Way Farms, and hope to look at these over the next few months.

What's it all for? Our eventual aim is to survey the whole parish, and this will be a valuable resource for us and future historians of Winster. In particular, we expect to get a better understanding of the mining history of Winster and of the medieval settlement in the area. We will also record much of the present and past

agricultural use, field boundaries, and buildings. And a day of fresh air and exercise is always worthwhile.



Winster Bank Pasture (Asa Cooper) surveyed 8 Apr 2003 by John Wood, Larissa Worthington, Brian Skyrme, Geoff Lester, Alun Thomas, John Barnatt.

Catalogue of archaeological features

1. Dew pond: Circular pond, now dry, with stone lining still visible.
2. Possible barrow: A symmetrical mound, 7m x 5m and about 1.2m high. There is a slight dished hollow, no more than 0.2m deep, on the west side. A ditch about 2m wide and 0.3m deep surrounds the mound.
3. Lead Mine shaft: A concrete cap covers a small shaft. There is a small hillock on the downslope.
4. Lead Mine shaft: A concrete cap over a probable engine shaft. Large hillock with robber scoops, particularly on downslope half. Flat-topped working platform on upslope side with slight hollow for possible gin circle. Second hollow and hillock to east.
5. Quarry: A series of conjoined scoops/pits, maximum depth c. 2m.
6. Possible mining within quarry: 4 pits and upcast heaps on downslope side.
7. Possible barrow or mining: Symmetrical mound with hollow at centre. Mound c. 0.5m high, c. 7m x 9m across. Hollow c. 2m across, 0.3m deep. Hint of ditch at topslope side, c. 3m across and 0.1 – 0.2m deep.
8. Small-scale mining: Small hollows and hillocks.
9. Sinuous gully c.1m across, 0.2m deep. Unlikely trackway – more probably natural.

10. Possible lynchet running diagonally on slope, c. 3m wide.
11. Lynchet: Pre-enclosure boundary, up to 0.5m high.
12. Mining: Small hollows and hillocks following 3 small veins.
13. Quarry pit c. 2m deep, part of quarrying below.
14. Orthostats: Drystone wall with intermittent orthostats at base.
15. Small mound

From the Parish Magazine 100 years ago

August 1903: By kind invitation of Mr G. Jobson Marples, J.P. members of the Girls' Friendly Society visited Thornbridge Hall. A service was held in Longstone Church, at which the vicar of Longstone spoke on 'Women of the New Testament - their Motives and their Work'. Tea was provided and the house thrown open for inspection by the girls.

The Choir had their Annual Excursion to Blackpool, starting from Darley Station at 6.15 a.m. 'This year the whole of the money required was collected beforehand.'

At the United Hospital Service the Wardens arranged seats as usual for the clubs of the village in the main aisle of the church. 'It is one of the best of days when the Friendly Societies of the Village can lead in a procession to the Parish Church'. [The History Group Archive contains a number of photographs of such parades along Main Street.] A full and verbatim report of the Vicar's sermon was printed in the High Peak News.

September 1903: 'It is suggested that the Parish should seriously consider the advisability of again adopting the Watching and Lighting Act in order that the village shall be lit during the winter nights. It is rightfully held to be a ridiculous anomaly that as we possess lamps, and that such were collected for entirely by means of private enterprise, these lamps should be deteriorating in value and efficiency by being unused year by year.'

October 1903: 'In the September Magazine I [the Vicar] fear I may have been somewhat misunderstood with regard to my criticism of the Parish Council and their policy in the matter of the Watching and Lighting Act: one may be forgiven for forgetting some of the regulations which govern Parish Councils. Their powers are so very limited that to limit them still more would seem well nigh impossible and yet they cannot spend their balance in hand to light our lamps!!! It is a pity, because I feel sure they, as well as we, would rather spend our little nest egg thus than fritter it away upon an election.

However, let the Parish Council bring forward the matter of Street Lighting at a convened General Meeting and let us have the business settled, and if the Parish don't want lamps - if they prefer darkness rather than light, then let me suggest that

the Parish Council hand over the lamps again, now rusting away and becoming rapidly valueless, to the old Lighting Committee - Perhaps they may sell them and buy a long hose and put up two or three hydrants for use in case of fire.'

November 1903: 'It is with greatest pleasure that we congratulate Mr H. C. Heathcote [the subject of the talk to the History Group last November] on his election to the Magisterial Bench.'

December 1903: The whole of the Vicar's letter this month was given over to urging parishioners to attend church on Sundays and to remind them that 'it is not sufficient that we attend the Evening service, even though we be regularly there'.

A Cat with Wings (contributed by Alun Thomas)

Extraordinary Capture at Winster: A Tomcat with Wings.

The most interesting item in natural history, so far as the Matlock district is concerned, transpired this morning (Friday). Our reporter learns that Mr Roper of Winster, while on Brown Edge near that village, shot what he thought to be a fox, which had been seen in the locality some time previously, on Mr Foxlow's land. Thinking he had missed his aim, Mr Roper gave up the quest, but returning later he found he had killed the animal. It proved to be an extraordinarily large tomcat, tortoiseshell in colour with fur two and a half inches long, with the remarkable addition of fully-grown pheasant wings projecting from each side of its fourth rib.

Unfortunately, the climate having been so excessively hot, the animal was allowed to putrefy, and after being generally exhibited all round the district the carcass has now been interred. It was seen by Mr Joseph Hardy and ample witnesses, so that there is no doubt the museums have missed a most curious animal. Never has its like been seen before, and eye-witnesses state that when running the animal used its wings outstretched to help it over the surface of the ground, which it covered at a tremendous pace.

(High Peak News 26 June 1897)

In fact, there have been quite a number of reports of winged cats over the years and if you go to <http://www.messybeast.com/winged-cats> you can read more about them.

Do you have an item for this Newsletter?

If so, please phone Geoff Lester (650090).