

Pendle Archaeological Group

The Former Hamlet of Gambleside, Rossendale

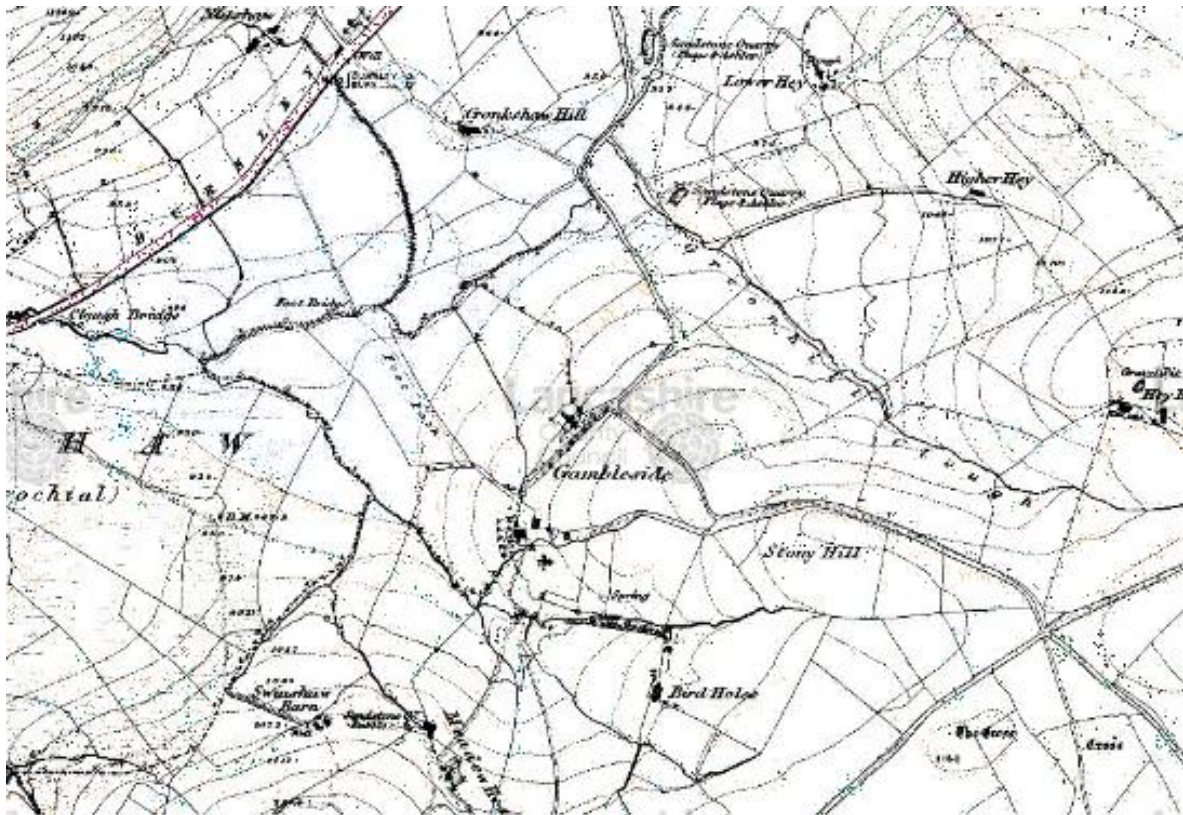
David J A Taylor

The Friends of Pendle Heritage Archaeological Group the forerunners of PAG carried out research into the area around Gambleside for some time in the mid-1990s. This included the vaccary and deserted village. In addition a walking trail was established around the village for United Utilities together with pathways, tree planting and the restoration of the baptistry.

The earliest record of Gambleside is in 1242 when it was stated that there were 11 vaccaries in The Forrest of Rossendale, including one at Gambleside. A vaccary is a cow pasture where some 70 - 80 head of cattle, along with some horses, would have been kept in the 12th - 14th centuries¹. Vaccaries were also situated in the valley of Limey Water at Loveclough, Goodshaw, Crawshawbooth, Constable Lee and Rawtenstall. At this time it is likely that the earliest dwellings would have been rough timber shelters. In 1507 during a survey of the land formerly held as vaccaries, it was recorded that Gambleside was to be let as a farm to Oliver and George Ormerode at £4 a year. During the 16th century the populations in small rural settlements such as this increased rapidly. Although cattle and horses were the major stock, sheep were introduced along with some arable crops such as oats. Income was increased by spinning and weaving wool to make woollen cloth, the surplus of which was sold in Rochdale.

Traders would have used the ancient trading route Limersgate, connecting the Ribble Valley with Rochdale, which skirts the hamlet. Evidence of the importance of this route is borne out by the depth of the hollow ways, these old roads representing continuous wear by travellers over the centuries. This is a deeply cut track or hollow way caused by centuries of traffic passing from the Ribble Valley over to Rochdale. Much lime was carried on the track which gives its name to the small river in the valley as well as the route when it was used by carriers taking lime on pack horses from the Clitheroe area on the `Limersgate` route, carrying coal on the return journey. Apart from its use in

agriculture, lime was an important constituent of mortar and was in great demand during the growth of the towns in the 19th century.



The first edition map showing the hamlet in its setting

With the growth of the cotton industry and steam power in the first half of the 18th century, the demand for coal grew and the pits in the area developed. Prior to that demand for coal was low. The growth of the pits stimulated the development of the settlement. Coal is present in large quantities in the area and local outcropping would have occurred for many centuries. The earliest pit in the area is that recorded at Gambleside in 1612.

In the mid-19th century the centre of the hamlet adjoined the nine acre Gambleside Copy or the Farm Field and consisted of Gambleside Farm, the Mansion House, a farmhouse and barn, and a Baptist Chapel². Surrounding the hamlet were two farms with a further eight farms in close proximity. The Ormerod family continued to live at Gambleside for many years, occupying the Mansion House until around 1874. Some of the villagers now used to undertake hand loom weaving and a farmer, John Howarth, used to take surplus cloth to Manchester by horse and cart, returning with weft and warps.

On Christmas Day in 1839 a Baptist Chapel was opened in the village in an old house let by a John Howarth. Howarth also lent a ladder, boards and sacks for seating in the room. The Pastor was a James Maden who lived at Meadowhead Farm³. A Sunday School opened the following year. After a few years the house proved too small and the brewhouse of the Mansion House was used. This again proved too small for the growing congregation of miners and farmers, and in 1849 a new chapel was built in the hamlet. The chapel closed in 1866 when the fellowship moved to the new premises in Clowbridge.

Connected with the chapel was the open air baptistery which is sited by the stream below the village. Outside baptisteries of this type are rare and this has recently been restored by North West Water. Sometime after the closure of the chapel the baptistery was extended to almost double its size so as to provide water storage for the steam engine at the Pumping Pit mine.

The reservoir was completed in 1866 on the site of the village cornfield and spelt the death knell for the community. With some of its best land taken away and three roads into the hamlet cut, together with the attraction of employment in the mills of the neighbouring towns, the community slowly died. The hamlet was occupied up until the 1890`s, however some of the neighbouring farms lasted somewhat longer into the 1920`s and 30`s.

On the grounds of safety, all the derelict buildings in the reservoirs catchment area were demolished in the 1940`s - 50`s and the stone used to build boundary walls and form the water channels into the reservoir. It is over a century since the land was intensively farmed and during that time most of it has reverted back to moorland.

The Hamlet of Gambleside

The first known stone buildings were built in the 16th century. Prior to that it is likely that the buildings on the site would have been constructed of timber. The centre of the hamlet consisted of the following buildings:

The Mansion House with the typical ranges of arched mullion windows to the south elevation, had a date stone of 1668 built in. However, it is probable that there was an earlier building on the site. The building was occupied in its early days by the Ormerods, a family of landowners. In 1843 it was unoccupied and taken over by the Baptists for a short period for use as a chapel. The house was extended to the west in the early part of the 19th century and was later occupied as three dwellings.

Gambleside Farm was a large unusual building with five gables projecting to the east elevation. The house was extended in the first half of the 19th century when it was divided into several separate dwellings.

Howarth`s Cottage called Top O`th Fold was built into the hillside and situated close to the well; the water supply for the hamlet. The barn belonging to the cottage lay to the east outside the boundary wall of the settlement. John Howarth lived there until around 1880 being probably the last resident of the hamlet. He was a farmer and used to take surplus cloth woven in the area to Manchester by horse and cart and come back with weft and warp for the villages.

The chapel was situated at the west of the site. However, the first service was held on Christmas Day in 1839 in an unoccupied house let by J Howarth who lived in a farm close to the Waggoners pub. He supplied sacks and boarding for seats. A Sunday School was opened in 1839 and in 1843 the church moved to the brew house of the Mansion House. A permanent building was constructed in 1848 and had a small gallery at one end, facing the raised platform, on which stood the pulpit and small organ. The building had a very short life closing in 1866 with the opening of the reservoir and the building of a new chapel in Clowbridge. The stone from the chapel at Gambleside was re-used in the new building. James Maden was the first pastor of the chapel. He was a rough kind of man who had a small farm and also did a little hand loom weaving. He had no salary except that now and then a friend would give him sixpence or a shilling. When he had been there for several years one of his flock made him a pair of shoes which he was greatly in need of. The congregation was made up of farmers and colliers.

Miles Land Farm was situated to the south and comprised a farmhouse with barn and shippon. Its last occupant was a Tom Darwent who used to deliver milk in the area.

New Biggins Farm to the north is situated below the track leading into the settlement off Limersgate and comprised a farmhouse, barn and shippon. Some pieces of dressed stone can be seen on the site of the former buildings.

The community was made up of many small farms surrounding the hamlet many of which were very isolated. A lady who lived at Lower Hey Farm used to write a post card to herself every week so that she could talk to the post man who delivered it. The farm was abandoned around 1915.

During the hard times during the General Strike in 1926, local people used to bring tin baths to collect outcropping and discarded coal from the sides of the clough, upstream from the baptistery.

The walling to the sides of the main water channel feeding the reservoir was constructed in the 1950`s. The original winding course of the stream can be seen downstream on the left bank. In recent years these channels and watercourses have not been maintained and are falling into disrepair.

Open Air Baptistery

Religion played an important part in the lives of the occupants of the settlement last century. An open air baptistery was built when the first Baptist chapel opened in 1839. This continued in use when the Church moved to Clowbridge. The baptistery was used by the Baptists in Rossendale, especially from Gambleside and later Clowbridge Baptist churches. The church buildings of the latter are now an Old Peoples Home on Burnley Road. Baptism is a public act of confession of faith by total immersion, which marks the believer`s decision that `Jesus Christ is Lord` and symbolises their identification with Christ in dying, to their old way of life and rising to new life. Through faith expressed in baptism the believer becomes a member of the church. Often wrongly called `adult baptism`, this `believers baptism` expresses a conscious response of faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The baptistery 4.000m (13` 2") long, 2.200 m (7` 3") wide and 1.070 m (3` 6") deep, was constructed of dry stone walling, behind which there was a lining of puddled clay so as to retain the water. The tank was filled from the stream running down from the south, with the inlet being in the centre of the south side. The outlet is in the north-west corner with an overflow almost directly over it.

The baptistery was probably last used in the 1870`s. Following its disuse it was extended to almost double its original size to act as a water storage tank for the steam engine at the Pumping Pit. The iron supply pipe can be seen in the centre of the west wall. The walling to the extension on the south side is built off the bed rock, into which the lower section of the baptistery was cut. The steps are modern.

The Rev. James Maden was the former Pastor of Gambleside chapel and in the mid-19th century he lived at Meadowhead Farm above the hamlet. A reminiscence of 1890 describing a baptism sets the scene:

`It was an event of the season to us boys when the Baptismal Sabbath came round, spring or summer, we sat round on the sloping sides to view the `dipping`, as it was termed, of the candidates for church membership. Singing of birds - lowing of cattle - bleating of sheep - God`s sun shining down - it was glorious! On these occasions we did not keep (Sunday) school`.

Gambleside Pit

At the end of the last century there were seven active pits on both sides of the valley, between Loveclough and the crest of the hill above Clowbridge Reservoir. The earliest pit was at Gambleside which Court Rolls show was being worked in 1612. The mine shaft, now below the steel plates within the modern enclosure was called Pumping Pit. The pit shaft and buildings were originally at the level of the top of the bank surrounding the modern Pump House, which has been dug into the hill; the access road being from the south. A further, later shaft was sunk on the hillside to the south. The coal was drawn up the hillside from Pumping Pit by a continuous chain drive of tubs and passed through a tunnel to Swinshaw Pit on the other side of the hill and then down to the coal staithe at the bottom of Goodshaw Lane in Crawshawbooth. North West Water now extract water from the main workings through the modern pumphouse. With the closure of its major customer, Sunnyside Print Works opposite the Parish Church in Crawshawbooth, the mine ceased production. In the days before nationalisation, each mine had its own customers.

The Pumping Pit shaft was 50m (165` 0") deep and 3.200m (10` 6") in diameter with the coal seam being at 44m (144`.0") deep. Men were lowered into the shaft in a tub, to which the chains of the winding gear were attached. There were no guides to the sides of the shaft and the men had to stabilise the tub by using sticks if it started to swing. At the pit head there would have been a boiler house, engine house and winding house together with an office, workshop and cabin where men would change before going underground and eat their `bait` (meal). The chimney to the boiler house was built on the far bank.

The areas where the coal was being worked were called districts. Several of the districts were opened during the time of the First World War and bore names associated with it. Examples of this can be seen in Bagdad, Verdun and Chocolate Hill; the latter being a bayonet charge in the Dardenelles. Other local mines used similar names to describe districts.

After some time this shaft was abandoned as the workings were very wet, and it was allowed to become a sump for the rest of the mine. North West Water now pump water from the workings into the reservoir at the south west corner by means of a modern pumphouse.

A further small mine was sited at Bird Holes, south east of the hamlet and is thought to have provided coal for its inhabitants. It was later incorporated into the Gambleside Colliery.

Working conditions were very hard for the miners. The collier worked at the coal face, often in very cramped, wet and uncomfortable conditions, at a seam which was regularly less than 750mm (2` 4") high. Some districts were very wet with water on the floor and also coming in through the roof. Young boys called drawers took the full tubs of coal from the collier to the underground haulage system and replaced them. In the early days children as young as 6 years old were put to work. The colliers worked on a piece work basis a `stint`; when 20 tubs, each holding around 3¹/₂ cwt of coal were filled they could go home, providing the workings had been fully propped. The speed of working depended on the type of coal, for in some areas it was much harder than others. Accidents were frequent, both underground, mainly due to the workings collapsing, and on the surface, often involving unprotected plant and machinery. About 30 men and boys worked at the pit and which produced around 50 tons of coal a day.

Bob Peel speaking in 1996 remembers his father working in the pit as a child when they lived in Crawshawbooth. His father walked to the pit and on a very cold winters night he would come home and when he took his wet trousers off they stood up being frozen solid due to the cold. Life was hard. A tale is told of Mr Auty, who lived in the house at the pit head once complained to the management that the roof to his house leaked and that water was dripping on to his bed. He asked that something be done about it and received the unsympathetic response `move thi` bed`.

The Gambleside Colliery supplied good steam coal, the coal being sent down to Crawshawbooth. The main customer was Sunnyside Printworks situated opposite the Parish Church, which closed in 1936. In those days each mine had its own customers; When its main customer closed down so did the mine, putting 20 - 30 men and boys out of work.

The Gambleside Trail

The Lancashire Heritage Trust on behalf of the Archaeological group approached North West Water in 1994 with proposals to construct and interpret a trail centred on Gambleside, near Clowbridge. The hamlet of Gambleside is of some antiquity, and is mentioned in the Domesday Book; the surrounding area was later the scene for much coal mining activity. Approval was given for the project in April, 1995.

Targeted excavation on the site of the hamlet was carried out by the Archaeological Group, and from this a plan of the buildings prepared; a survey of the adjacent field boundaries was also undertaken. The former well in the hamlet was rebuilt by the group.

The project involved the formation of several lengths of stone footpath, and the cleaning out and restoration of the former baptistery. Much of this work was carried out by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, led by Tom Partridge. This work involved the rebuilding of substantial portions of the walling the well-known local stone waller, Eric Greenwood from Hurstwood, who also involved and instructed the Conservation Volunteers. Marker posts were positioned to identify the trail, and five descriptive panels were set up. In addition some 12 trees were planted within protective surrounds.

A leaflet was prepared by the Trust outlining the trail and describing various features which would be seen at various points on the route. This together with the interpretive panels was carried out by John Westwell of the Trust. The project was conceived and managed by the author together with the Archaeological Group, and was completed in March, 1996.

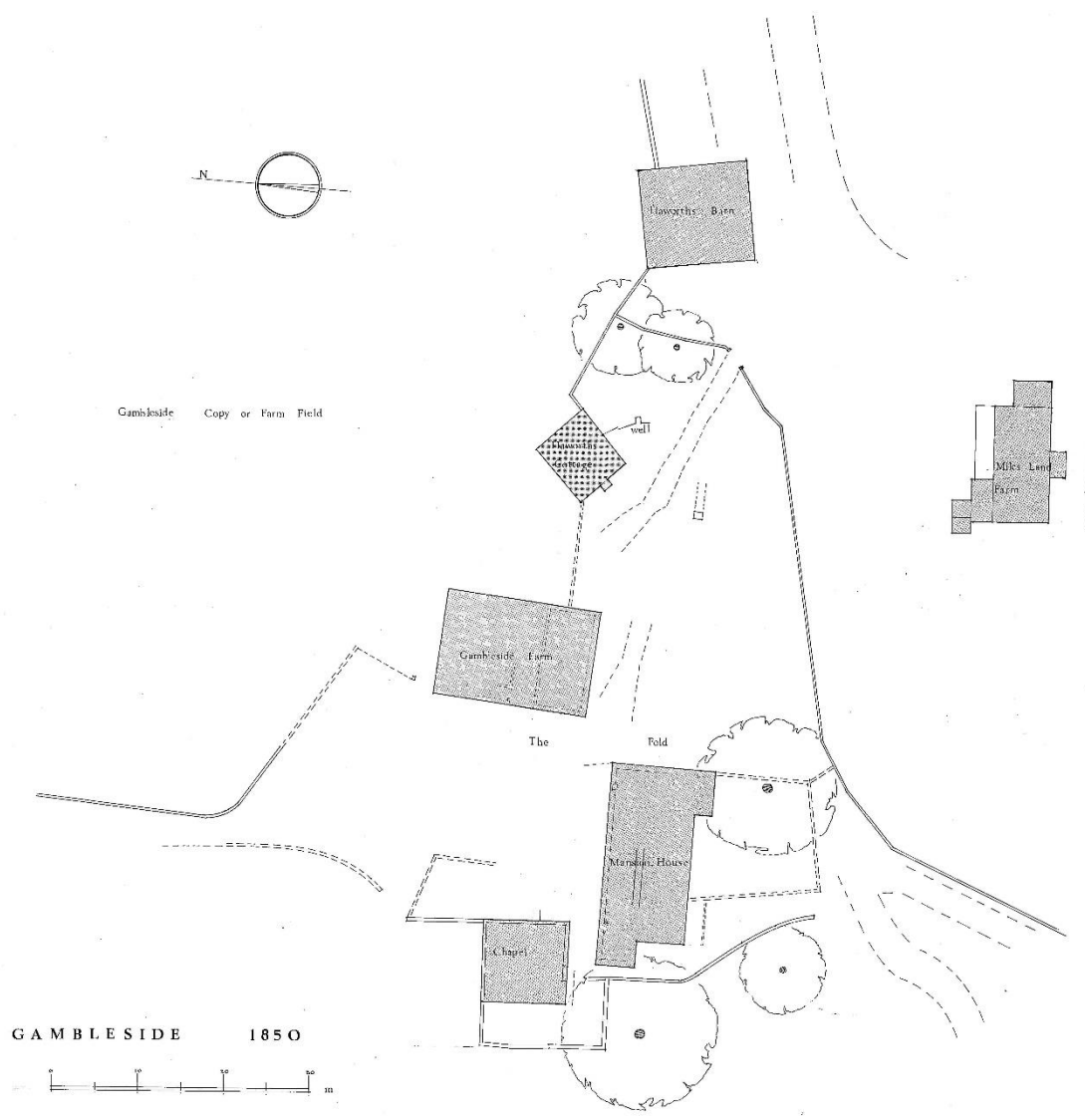
Unfortunately the trail was not adequately publicised and soon fell into disrepair.

Notes

1. A report describing field walking to explore the site of the vaccary can be seen on the Friends of Pendle Heritage web site, www.foph.co.uk search under Pendle Archaeology Group then Reports and Publications.
2. Ken Spencer a local historian (pers. comm.) states that he thinks Pearson is wrong in the attribution of the names to the buildings called the Manor House and Mansion House. He says that there would definitely not be a Manor House and a Mansion House in the village. The principal residence was always referred to as the Mansion

House or the Great House. He thinks the Mansion House was the building nearest to the chapel and the other would surely be Gambleside farm in effect the Home Farm. However, for the purpose of this text I have retained the names as put forward by Spencer.

3. The Rev. Maden is also reported to have also lived at Bird Hole Farm, so called as the birds flew in and out of two holes in the gable wall of the barn.

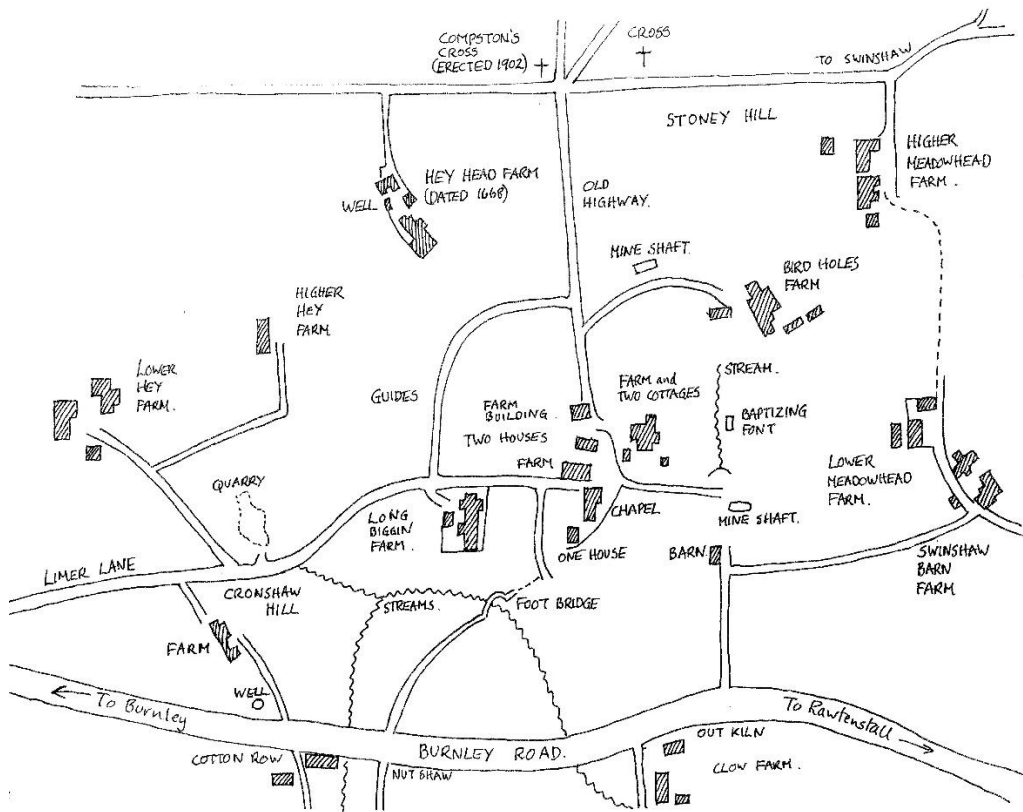


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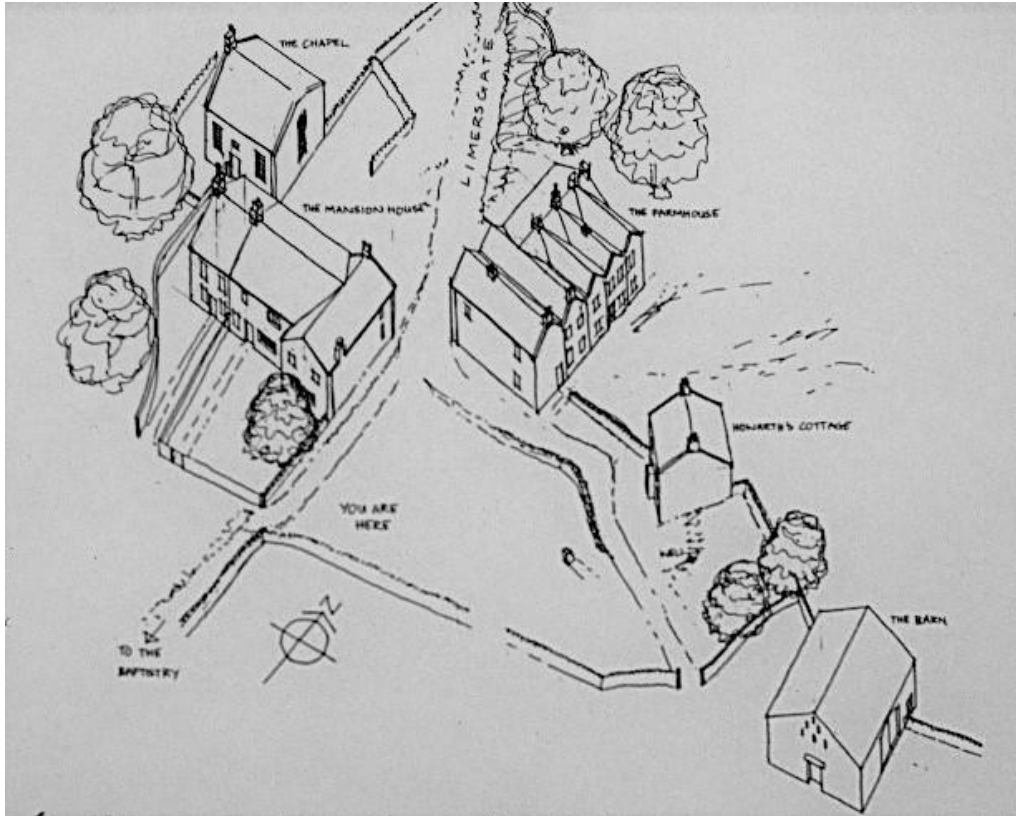
Survey of the hamlet of Gambleside



Limersgate



Diagrammatic map of Gambleside and its setting c.1850, by William Pearson



Reconstructed view of the hamlet c. 1850, by John Westwell



The Mansion House

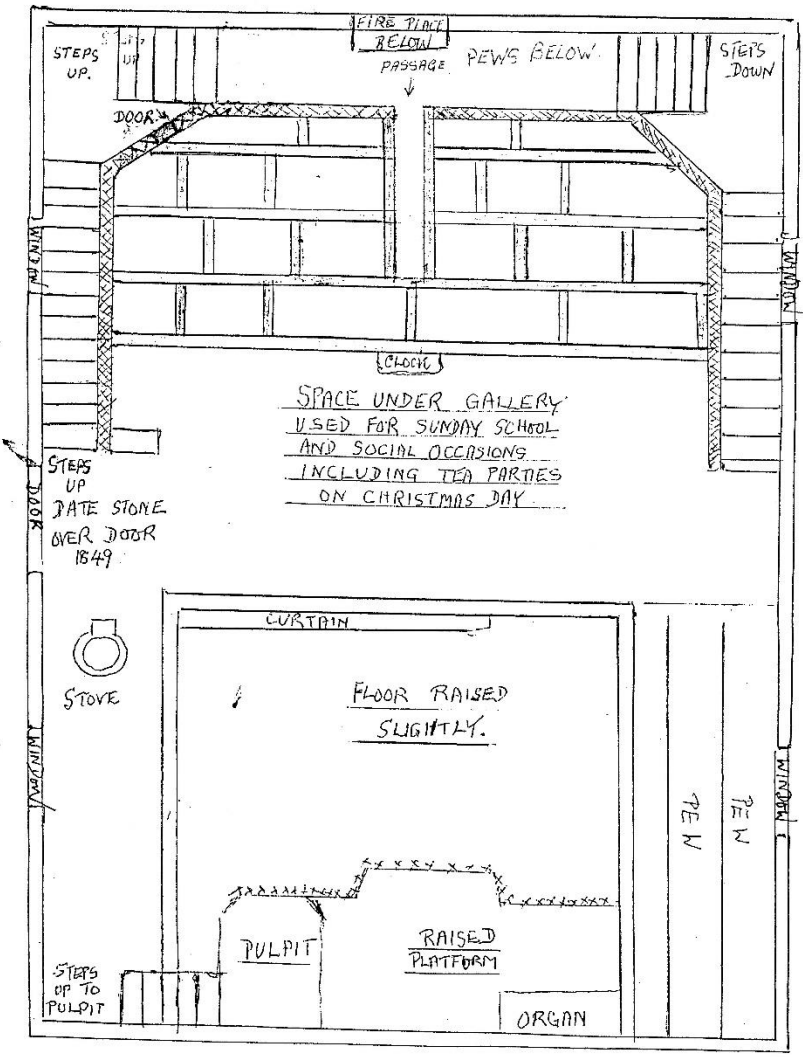


Gambleside Farm



The village well which was restored by the Archaeology Group

BETHEL CHAPEL GAMBLESIDE. DATESTONE. 1849 FACING SOUTH.



GAMBLESIDE BAPTIST CHAPEL INTERIOR.

The Chapel with the main elevation and plan reconstructed by William Pearson



The Baptistry following restoration



The baptistry during restoration – a very messy operation due to iron deposits in the ground water



Pumping Pit coal mine



Former miners at the Gambleside pit



The site of the former hamlet



The site of the former chapel



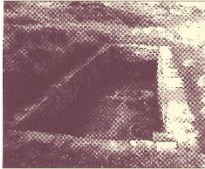
The track leading to the hamlet from the north with the copy or farm field on the right



The Gambleside Trail markers

On Christmas Day in 1839, a Baptist Chapel was opened at Gambleside in an old house let by John Howarth. Howarth also loaned a ladder, boards, and sacks for seating in the room. The pastor was James Maden who lived at nearby Meadowhead Farm. A Sunday School was opened in the following year, but the congregation of some 300 miners and farmers soon proved too large for the premises. After moving briefly to the brew house of the Mansion House, in 1849 a new chapel was built in the hamlet. This Chapel was closed in 1865 when the fellowship moved to new premises in Clowbridge.

Connected with the Chapel was an open air baptistry, located by the stream below the hamlet. Some time after the closure of the Chapel, the baptistry was extended to almost double its original size in order to provide water storage for the steam engine which extracted water from the Pumping Pit and also powered the pit head gear.



The Baptistry, restored 1995.

Outside baptistries of this type rarely survive, and this example has recently been restored by North West Water.

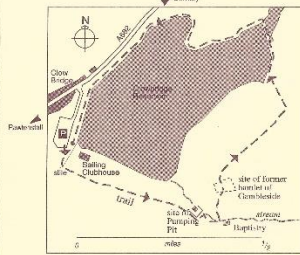
The construction of Clowbridge Reservoir, completed in 1866 on the site of the village corn field, sounded the death knell for Gambleside. Without some of its best land and with three of the roads into the hamlet now under water, the inhabitants began to leave to work in the mills in the neighbouring towns. The Ormerod family continued to live at the Mansion House until about 1874, whilst the last inhabitant of the hamlet left in the 1890s, although some of the neighbouring farms were occupied into the 1930s.



The rear of the Farmhouse, c.1870.

On the grounds of safety, during the 1940s and 50s, all the derelict buildings within the reservoir's catchment area were demolished and the stone used to build boundary walls and form the water channels into the reservoir. It is over a century since the land was intensively farmed and during that time most of it has reverted to moorland.

This leaflet has been produced for North West Water by Lancashire Heritage Trust



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GAMBLESIDE

A brief guide to the abandoned former Medieval Hamlet near Clowbridge Reservoir in Rossendale



The earliest record of Gambleside occurs in 1242, when it was listed as one of 11 *vaccaries* in Rossendale. A *vaccary* was a cow pasture where some 70 - 80 head of cattle were kept. Other *vaccaries* were situated along the river valley at Loveclough, Goodshaw, Crawshawbooth, Constable Lee and Rawtendale.

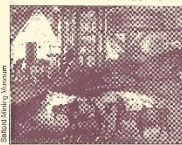
Little is known about this early settlement, but it is likely that the first dwellings would have been rough timber shelters. In 1507, during a survey of lands formerly held as *vaccaries*, it was recorded that *Gambleside* was to be let as a farm to *Oliver and George Ormerode* at £4 per year.

During the 16th century, the population in small rural settlements such as this increased rapidly. Although cattle and horses were the major stock, sheep were introduced, along with some arable crops such as oats. Income was increased by spinning and weaving wool to make woollen cloth, the surplus of which was sold in Rochdale. Traders would have used the ancient trading route which skirts the hamlet, connecting the Ribble Valley with Rochdale. Evidence of the importance of this route is borne out by the depth of the *hollow ways*, the old roads, representing continuous wear by travellers over the centuries. Much lime was carried, which gives its name to the small river in the valley, *Limey Water*, as well as to the route, *Limesgate*.

(Below) Packhorse trains, such as this, regularly passed through Gambleside



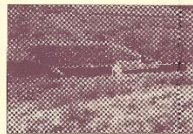
Coal is present in large quantities in the area and local outcropping would have occurred for many centuries. The earliest pit at Gambleside is recorded in 1612.



Coal mining in the late 17th century.

With the growth of the steam-powered cotton industry in the first half of the 19th century, the demand for coal grew and new pits were sunk in the area. In the short distance between Loveclough and the far side of Clowbridge Reservoir, there were once seven active pits. The growth of the pits stimulated the development of the settlement.

The Gambleside colliery had two main shafts - Pumping Pit, located just below the settlement and a later shaft on the hillside to the south. Coal was drawn up the hillside from Pumping Pit by a continuous chain drive of tubs, then passed through a tunnel to Swinshaw Pit on the other side of the hill. From there, it was carried down to the coal staiths at the bottom of



The site of Pumping Pit with the modern pumphouse visible.



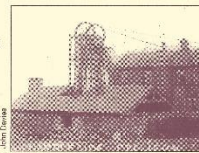
Coal miners at Gambleside Colliery, c.1920.

Goodshaw Lane in Crawshawbooth. Pumping Pit was a very wet mine and was closed in the early years of the century and allowed to become a sump for the colliery.

North West Water currently extracts water from the mine workings through a modern pumphouse which stands on the site of the old Pumping Pit.

Gambleside Colliery ceased production in 1936 with the closure of its major customer, the Sunnyside Print Works, located opposite the Parish Church in Crawshawbooth; in the days before Nationalisation, each mine had its own customers.

In the mid 19th century, the centre of the hamlet adjoined the 9 acre Gambleside Copy or Farm Field, and consisted of the Farmhouse, the Mansion House, a cottage and barn, and a Baptist Chapel. Surrounding the hamlet were two more farms, with a further eight in close proximity. Some of the villagers were involved in handloom weaving and one farmer, John Howarth, took cloth by horse and cart for sale in Manchester, returning with weft and warps for the looms.



Winding gear at the pit head, c.1920.



The Mansion House, dating in part from the 16th century, before its demolition.

Acknowledgements.

Thanks must be given to the many people who gave help, advice and information concerning the hamlet and its surroundings. These include William Pearson, John Davies (Rossendale), Bob Peel, Eric Greenwood and Ken Spencer. The help and cooperation of the Conservation Volunteers together with Tom Partridge is also acknowledged without whom the Trail could not have been completed. Particular thanks must be given to John Westwell of the Pendle Heritage Centre for his time and patience in preparing the Trail leaflet and information boards.

Pendle Archaeological Group

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