

Canal Warehouse



The Canal Trade

The Canal Warehouse is one of the most picturesque buildings in Hest Bank, it has been photographed by many people and has even been the subject of a painting. It was built by the Hest Bank Canal Company and completed in 1819 and bears the date stone of 1820. The company intended it should be the basis of a thriving business, goods were to be brought by sea to Hest Bank and then transferred to barges for onward movement to destinations via the canal. In September 1820 Mr. Robert Greene Bradley of Slyne laid the foundation stone of a pier at Hest Bank to facilitate the transfer of goods out of ships from Liverpool and Glasgow up to the warehouse and onto the barges. A large trade was expected but did not materialise, one of the reasons for the failure was the shallowness of the bay and naturally this did not attract shipping.

The passenger side of the trade did reasonably well until the railway was built in 1846. From May 1st 1820 fast horse-drawn packet boats plied daily between Preston and Kendal, one each way, taking about fourteen hours for the full journey. Each passenger in the fore cabin paid 6s and the fare in the after cabin was 4s. The Hest Bank Shipping Company sold the canal warehouse at some time between 1820-27 to Robert Jackson Esq. of Hest Bank.

Here is a news item from the 1824 Lancaster Gazette concerning the Hest Bank pier.

A Breakwater has been lately constructed at Hest Bank, alongside of which, vessels from Glasgow and Liverpool load and unload their cargoes, and, by means of a canal, a considerable trade is carried on with Kendal and other inland towns. At Hest the road commences across the sands to Ulverston, and the Great North Road to Kendal, Carlisle, and Glasgow, passes through the village of Slyne. Salt works were formerly carried on here, but for some time have been neglected.

At first it appeared that the scheme was going to be successful, and that the sea-canal route would also attract people as well as goods. Again we find this in the Gazette in 1822:

On the 9th of March 1822, The Duke of Lancaster was launched at the yard of Mattershead and Heyes of Liverpool, intended for the Lancaster, Hest Bank and Ulverston run and on the 21st March 1822 the Duke of Lancaster arrived at Bare from Liverpool and disembarked 120 passengers before proceeding to Hest Bank by the next tide, departing for Liverpool the next day. This was the first steamer to sail up the Bay.

By 1847 arrivals in the bay had become a curiosity. The people who witnessed the arrival of the steamship The 'Windermere' were excited by an event that was rather rare. Note that the oversands coaches were still running, the Furness branch of the railway was not then built.

Some little excitement was occasioned on Saturday morning by the passage of a steamer up the bay as far as Hest Bank, where she anchored. It proved to be 'The Windermere', which had come from Liverpool to ship off a lot of hoops and small wood which had been brought to the shore-side from some of the inland districts. It was curious, whilst the tide was out, to see the oversands coach and other vehicles, travelling close under the steamer's bows, in their journeys to and fro.[Lancaster Gazette, February 1847]

The Warehouse as a Farm

In 1831 the Canal Warehouse and yard were up for sale, and the owner Robert Jackson was then living in Liverpool. By 1845 the Warehouse had become a working farm, the tenant farmer used the 90 acres of land owned by the Jackson family. The Warehouse itself was the farm-house and it became known as Prospect Farm. The owner was Edmund Jackson and the tenant farmer was Timothy Longton. In 1846 Thomas Gardner was working for Timothy Longton and he broke his working agreement, hence finding himself in Court. It was normal in those times to make a contract for a certain length of time and the contract was binding:

Breach of Agreement 1846

On Monday Thomas Gardner, labourer, was charged before W B Bolden, Esq., by Mr. Timothy Longton, Hest Bank farmer, with leaving his service after having been duly hired. Upon agreeing with his master, the defendant was discharged. [Lancaster Gazette July 25.]

On the Ordnance survey map of 1848 the Canal Warehouse is named "Prospect House". The house we know today as The Prospect was at that time called Marine Lodge. All this has caused much confusion, not least to the author. In two sources I have read, we are told that The Prospect (i.e. Marine Lodge) was owned by the Canal Company and was sold in 1831. This cannot be true because in 1831 when Marine Lodge was up for sale it *already* belonged to Robert Jackson. The canal warehouse, also owned by Robert Jackson, was lot 11 in the same sale. It is probable that Prospect House (Canal Warehouse) had been confused with Marine Lodge (now The Prospect.)

There was another sale of the Warehouse in 1859 along with the rest of the Jackson property in Hest Bank. In an excerpt from the unpublished document below we can see some of the conditions of rental for the farmer Timothy Longton. This is a memorandum of an agreement dated 16th June 1857 between Ann Jackson and Timothy Longton for the lease for three years of Prospect Farm, Hest Bank, the rent to be £85. The Prospect had a quantity of land attached to it including Fiddle Case, Prospect Field, Thompsons Meadow and Mowbreck Meadow. The land and the Warehouse were then known collectively as Prospect Farm:

Memorandum of an agreement

- 1. He agreed to drain the Closes called Hatlex Meadow, Lower Marsh Field and Thompsons Meadow and to finish the drains on this land.**
- 2. That all the crop should be eaten within the outbuildings of the premises, (presumably fodder for animals), and that the dung and manure thence arising as well as the ashes from the dwelling house were to be set out and spread upon the lands.**

The agreement between Timothy and Ann was terminated a year early when Ann died and the whole estate was again put up for sale.

A Grade II Listed Building

The Canal Warehouse is a grade II listed building. Its architectural features are noted from the listings held in the Architects Office Lancaster:

1820. Houses, probably former canal warehouse. Roughly squared watershot sandstone, slate roof. 2 storeys. North-west facade to canal has 3 ground-floor windows with plain reveals and segmental heads. Centre window previously a doorway, now partly blocked. 3 windows above on first floor, with 4th stair window to the left of right-hand window. All have plain stone lintels and plain reveals except centre window, which has a wooden lintel. Chimneys on gables and between bays 1 and 2. Eaves bracketed at gables. Left-hand gable has wide segmental-arched dressed opening on 1st floor, now blocked. On the ground floor are a door and window with plain reveals. On the 1st floor is a window with plain reveals. The southern gable has a similar opening on the 1st floor with "1820" inscribed on the keystone of the arch and a smaller bay window inserted. The south-east wall has 2 doorways with projecting hoods, the southern one having a plain stone surround, and 2 sashed windows with glazing bars and plain reveals.

Some notable Inhabitants

In 1824 the Warehouse was either owned by Braithwaite & Co. or they were agents for the Hest Bank Canal Company. The local man in charge was Richard Foxcroft.

The 1841 Census gives us detailed information on the inhabitants. Richard Taylor was a farmer with his wife Jane and their six children including two sets of twins. Twins seem to be a recurring theme in the story of Slyne with Hest, there are lots of examples in the old registers and we all know many in more recent times!

Richard Taylor, aged 55, farmer.

Jane Taylor, wife, aged 50.

Children, William, aged 20. Richard, aged 15. Stephen, aged 15. (Twins.) John, aged 10 and Jane, aged 10 (Twins). Margaret, aged 8.

Also living in part of the house was William Bentham, aged 25, butcher.

Mary Bentham, wife, aged 20.

William Bentham, son, aged 5 months. [1841 census returns]

The Tithe Map listing of 1845 shows the change of tenant from Richard Taylor to Timothy Longton. **The census of 1861 gives his wife's name as Ellen and details of their two children and two servants:**

No. 62. Canal Side, known as "Prospect House", from 1848.

Timothy Longton, aged 46, farmer of 90 acres, and employing two men.

Ellen, wife, aged 47.

Thomas, son, aged 13.

Ann, daughter, aged 10, scholar.

Laurence Laurence, male servant agricultural, aged 19.

Mary Gorst, female servant, aged 19. [1861 census return]

Unfortunately there is no information in the 1871 census but in 1881 we see that Robert Long is the tenant with his wife Mary Jane, young son Thomas and one lodger.

No. 42. Prospect House, Robert Long, head of household, aged 27, labourer.

Mary Jane Long, wife, aged 21.

Thomas Long, son, aged 10 mos.

William Pisse (Peace), lodger, aged 20, labourer.

Mrs Vickers

Mrs Vickers who lived on the corner of Hatlex Lane and the Coastal Road was known to many people in this village, she was a wonderful gardener and bought a new greenhouse at the age of 90. She assured me she would get good use from it, and so she did, growing wonderful chrysanthemums for a further nine years. She was born Rachael Frances Palmer at the Warehouse in 1890 and her name appears in the census return of 1891 along with her older brother Arthur and her parents Louis and Edith:

Louis Arthur Palmer, aged 35, Wine Merchants Clerk.
Edith, wife, aged 29.
Arthur Morrison, aged 3.
Rachael Frances, aged 1.
Rachael Morrison, widow, aged 54, mother-in-law.
Louisa Willan, aged 74, servant.
Bridget Bloomfield, widow, aged 75, baker.[1891 census return]

In the directory of 1913 there was an Louis Arthur Palmer living at "Brooklands" Hest Bank. Mrs Vickers lived to be 99 years of age, just missing her 100th birthday by three months.

The row of houses including the Canal Warehouse properties became known as "Bay View Terrace" in the 1920s and The Warehouse eventually became two properties as it is today. During the 1930s a Mrs. Rogerson lived in one part and Mr. Morrow, a taxi driver, in the other.