

Mr P.S. Harrison of Scarborough Road, Lytham St Annes, has kindly provided the following extract from a letter from his father, Thomas Stuart Harrison, to R.G. Shepherd who wrote articles about the countryside on the Evening Gazette newspaper.

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“Dear Mr. Shepherd.

Your article in Saturdays Evening Paper about the Country Squire took me back to my youth at Aldcliffe (I was born in 1896), when that kind of life was common to those who were lucky enough to be born in the country, and especially when one looks back and compares the pleasures and comforts we got when necessary, from the Squire, Vicar, Schoolmaster, Squires Agent and Police Officer, with the trouble that surrounds us at present.

At the moment I am confined to my bed with heart trouble and I thought as I pondered over your words, I would try and list a number of Squires and their estates in the district around Lancaster, where we lived at Aldcliffe, just south of the town. I am [also] naming the Agents because I think they were part of the picture.

I thought I would start at the North and work down.

- 1 KIRKBY LONSDALE, Underley Hall. Lord Bentinck. Agent J. Punchard.
- 2 ARKHOLME, Whittington Hall, Col. Dawson Green. Agent T.Jemson.
- 3 CARNFORTH. Capenwray Hall, Major Marton, Agent E.Winnerah.
- 4 WARTON Nr CARNFORTH, In the early 1900s the biggest land owner was E.B.Dawson, of Aldcliffe Hall, Lancaster, and included a large portion of Warton Cragg. My father was the agent for Mr. Dawson and lived at Aldcliffe and looked after the Warton Estate from home [‘Inglewood’].

The Aldcliffe estate extended from the borough boundary of Lancaster to the village of Stoddy, where it joined the property of Lord Ashton.

I cannot pass from the Warton Hall Estate without mentioning the Winnerah family. Edmund mentioned above as Agent for Major Marton was in partnership with his brother James at Warton Hall Farm, where they ran the renowned Shire Stud and Pedigree Shorthorn Herd.

This famous Shire Stud was famed far and wide, and every spring the Winnerah family staged a Parade Day, when their Shire Stallions were all on view for examination by Breeders and Representatives from Shire Horse Societies throughout the Kingdom. The village was always spruced up spick and span for this day. It was a splendid sight to see these magnificent horses, turned out with manes and tails platted with raffia, ribbons and rosettes. I do not think there will be many men today that could carry out this almost forgotten equine art of decoration.

- 5 HORNBY. Hornby Castle, Col., Foster, Agent G.S.Beckett.
- 6 QUERNMORE. Quernmore Park, W.Garnett, Agent J.Cranston.
- 7 ASHTON-WITH-STODDY. Ashton Hall, Lord Ashton, Agent C.Thompson.
- 8 COCKERHAM. Crookey Hall. Col. Bird.

- 9 WINMARLEIGH. Winmarleigh Hall, Lord Winmarleigh, Agent Peats of Preston ?
- 10 LYTHAM. Lytham Hall, Clifton Family, Agent T. Winnerah.
- 11 ABBYSTEAD. Abbystead House, Earl Sefton, Bailiff J. Whittaker, who used to drive into Lancaster with a pair of dark chestnut cobs with very light coloured manes.
- 12 South of Pilling we always looked upon as the property of the Derby family.

As you can imagine the Agents were of Yeomen families and were close knit in their profession, and used to have get togethers to compare notes etc.

The quaint sayings that you often quote in your articles, take me back to pleasant memories of some years after the first war, when I lived with my Uncle J. Harrison, Sand Villa Farm, Cockerham sands. I used to bring cheese to Stakepool and load it in a box wagon at the Station Yard. Joe Hall was the Station Master and I think Jack Dobson was the yard porter. I always put plenty of straw on our lorry for the cheese, and then put some in the Box Wagon for them to travel in comfort to Preston, but there was always a decent size bottle of straw for me to throw off at Jack Dobson's house in Lancaster Road.

Then there was Bill Dawson at the Smithy, and Ireton at the Ellitson's Arms, plus many others including the Rev. Pearson and his Rose Garden, Irving Jackson at the Golden Ball, Alan Curwen at the Garage near the Egg Depot, and an engine driver T. Armer worked for I. Ball of Winmarleigh, later of Forton, who during the first war was cutting hay and bailing it at Lytham. He used to cycle from near Cocker Bridge, at the Cockerham end of the marsh, to Lytham and return the same night. I saw him in spring at his home near Cocker Bridge, still the same cheerful chap; he is over 80 and smiling.

Did you ever hear the following doggerel?

Pilling for Prates.  
 Preesall for Pluck.  
 Knott-End for Bonnie Lassies.  
 Fleetwood for Muck.

*Thomas. Stuart. Harrison. 1-8-72*

GOD BLESS THE SQUIRE AND HIS RELATIONS AND KEEP US IN OUR PROPER STATIONS.

Extract from a letter from my father to R.G. Shepherd who wrote articles about the countryside on the Evening Gazette.

*P.S.H. 20/2/1998.*"

*Note: I have taken the liberty of inserting a few small additions [within square brackets] for clarification. NW.*

*My thanks go to Mr Philip. S. Harrison of Scarborough Rd, Lytham St Annes for generously contributing his father's memories of 'A Life at Aldcliffe' (File G), and two wonderful old photographic postcards of his forbears and his old family home 'Inglewood' (File F).*