

Musgrave Bridge Railings

The River Eden is notorious for flooding. In 1753 the villagers of Great Musgrave near Brough signed a petition "To the worshipful the Bench of Justices" to widen the old wooden bridge near St.Theobald's Church. It was so narrow that "Horses or Black Cattle can neither go past one another nor turn and several have been forced over the Rails into the River", the riders being "in the utmost danger of their lives". The petition was summarily rejected!

However, the Great Flood on February 2nd, 1822, washed the old bridge away for ever. The present magnificent sandstone bridge was built over Musgrave Wath (or ford) in 1825 for £1,630 as a Westmorland County Bridge. But the nearby Glebe continued to flood; so in 1829/30 a drainage tunnel was dug and some of the new stone wall was replaced by 10 roods (1 rood = 5.5 yards) of iron railings, weighing 47 cwt. 0q. 20 lb., to allow the waters to pass. The total cost of this was £132 16s 9d.

But to no avail. In 1845 St. Theobald's itself was re-built and in 1884 the old Rectory was demolished, despite an impassioned plea from the Rev. Stafford Haines to maintain his home behind the flood defences. Over a century later, only the outline of the Rector's garth (garden and orchard) and some of his trees can be seen close to the Eden, along with a magnificent horse chestnut avenue.

Musgrave Church Field Trust now maintains the land for the general public, with generous support from various agencies. The 1830 iron railings have recently been repaired, cold galvanised and restored (see photo 41), with the help of an *Awards for All* grant and the *Manifold Trust*. Hopefully they will last for another two centuries.

Mike Lea



Photo 41: Musgrave Bridge (1825) and Railings (1829) Photo: Mike Lea

BOOKSHELF

New Pevsner volume for North Lancashire launched

There is a saying to the effect that there is no gain without pain. It is hard to remember now, but there was a time B.P. (not 'Before Present', as in radiocarbon dating, but 'Before Pevsner'!)

when the study of standing buildings was not really 'respectable' in academic terms, and when it was also very difficult because the literature was totally fragmented. Then, along came Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, and, as a result of his 'pain' (as represented by untold miles of journeying and hours of work) we all felt the 'gain' of having a series of readily available and portable books which would save us all much beavering when we wanted to know about the buildings of an area. These books, *The Buildings of England* series, recalled what Stuart Piggott said of the first edition of Camden's *Britannia*, 1586; 'designed for the pocket or the saddle-bag'.

The original volumes, published by Penguin, are gradually being revised and re-issued by Yale U.P., and *Lancashire: North** was launched at a gathering held in the Judges' Lodgings in Lancaster on March 26th, 2009.

The reviser, rightly treated as a co-author, is Clare Hartwell, whose work on the two volumes† which have replaced the original *Lancashire: South*, and on such volumes as *The History and Architecture of Chetham's School and Library*, has commended her to all interested in local architecture.

Well, the 'Pevsner' for North Lancashire, as we all call it, like that for the South, has clearly grown, and a few statistics are of interest: the original volume had 306 Penguin-sized pages, and 96 black and white illustrations; the new has 780 pages, each nearly 40% bigger in area, and 123 illustrations in colour, in addition to 70 line illustrations in the text.

However, we started by considering gain and pain, didn't we? Well, the new volume weighs 889g. as against 280g; and it would go in few pockets; and saddle-bags are now a rarity! But it is true to say that most users of the volumes probably travel by car so the greater size of the new version is less of a disadvantage than it might seem.

The launch itself took the usual form: wine and savouries; an introduction by the publishers; and a short speech by the author.

But no doubt equally important would be the conversations of the audience, who included almost everybody with an interest in the buildings of North Lancashire who could be there. A notable tribute.

B.J.N. Edwards

*Hartwell, C. & Pevsner, N. (2009). *The Buildings of England; Lancashire: North*.

Yale U.P. ISBN 978 0 300 12667 9. £29.99. [NB This volume, unlike its predecessor, does not include coverage of Lancashire-North-of-Sands, which became part of Cumbria in 1974. The Cumbria volume is in progress].

†*Lancashire: Liverpool and the South-West; Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East*, replacing *Lancashire: the Commercial and Industrial South* (1969).

The Ulverstone and Lancaster Railway: the Challenge of Morecambe Bay by Leslie R. Gilpin. Publ. Cumbrian Railways Association, 2008. Price: £13.50 +£1.50 p&p