

The Hest Bank Inn



Introduction

There has probably been an Inn at Hest Bank from as early as eleven hundred. Many travellers crossed the sands to take a short cut to Lancaster. The monks of Furness Abbey used this route to inspect their property at Beaumont Grange. The safest route usually meant that the traveller arrived at Hest Bank and also departed from there. We know that Hest Bank was settled at that time with at least four farms so why not also an Inn to house travellers overnight and to feed them?

The Hotel is the oldest building still standing in the village; some parts possibly date from the mid-sixteenth century and these are likely now to be below ground level. The next oldest part of the Inn was probably erected towards the end of the eighteenth century when the entrance was by the west door. The visitor would go down three steps into a large room with a low ceiling and this still shows its original beams. The entire building is of cobble stones (rubble) and oak beams, similar to most other old buildings in Slyne-with-Hest. The pitch of the roof suggests that it would have been thatched in its earlier years. Recently the external rendering has been removed to reveal the lovely old cobbled stones. The rear of the hotel is still on the level of the old road and the old studded door is still in existence.

Fact and Fiction

Travis Jackson, a local historian and graphic artist, gave us an exciting view of the Hest Bank Inn in early times. Although I have not been able to verify all the happenings he relates, there is undoubtedly truth in some of them but sadly he did not give us any references.

The Hest Bank Inn

The original name was "The Sandes Inn" and was first licensed to brew mead, ale, sack, honey beer, sell cooked game and hold a cockfighting main once per week in the year 1554. It remained a free house until 1944.

The rear portion is built of cobble stones and oak beams-it was thatched and is still on the level of the old road. The travelling Abbots and Monks from Furness Abbey and Cartmel Priory slept and dined here royally.

During the Civil War it is said that it was occupied by Cromwell's officers and later was used by the King's men in arms. It was raided by deserters from the Ironsides, they completely wrecked the Inn and wounded the Inn keeper. The Inn became the haunt of highwaymen and foot pads. One foot pad wearing a green coat, robbed a freight wagon, every man, including the innkeeper of this inn, who wore a green coat was arrested and imprisoned in Lancaster Castle. During the 1745 rebellion the Cumberland deserters from Bonnie Prince Charlie's retreating army plundered the Inn and made off across the sands. The redcoats followed and after killing all the poultry, cooked it and had a slap up meal. In 1760 the regular coaching trade began. 1790 brought the gangs of Irishmen who were digging the canal. Riots daily. In 1792 the Innkeeper shot and wounded the Highwayman Edmund Grosse, he was tried and hung at Lancaster, his body was filled with tar and stretched on a gibbet on the Hanging Green in this parish where it remained for two years.

1799 the "Coaching Trade" was booming and the front part of the Hotel together with the Lantern Room was built.

The Inn became a posting and service halt and by 1805 the stables held 16 horses, 6 ostlers, 4 drivers and a rescue team. Foot warmers were provided and there was an ironing and starching service, including lace cuffs, for the travellers. The "Ulverston Queens", "The Broughton Flowers", "The Solway Traders", "The Lancasters", "The Lakeland Gems", and the "Urswick Lassies", were all running the oversands route, daily. The fare for crossing the sands was 7s-outside and 10s-inside. Over 130 people were rescued from the sands and cared for at the Inn until 1854 when the opening of the Furness Railway killed the Coaching Trade. It died fighting, the last coach 1856.

During the exciting years of the 19th century, many Notable people stayed here, including Prince Fredrick of Prussia, Mrs Siddons, Lord Hope, The beauty of Buttermere, Lord Hamilton, The Duke of Devonshire, and many other noblemen. In 1830 the Inn was the centre of the once famous Hest Bank Sports with prizes of £200. Frances Bond the champion wrestler took part. Pace Egging, Maypole dancing, Duck Shooting, Venison dinners, Steak Eating and Sunday Cockfights were normal pastimes. During the Railway days the Hotel was left in a quiet backwater until the Coastal road was opened in 1933. In the early years of this century the old house was covered with creepers and roses, it was illuminated by oil lamps. The beer came straight from the barrel. Those who linger here for a drink are in the company of many happy ghosts.

[Travis Jackson]

Early Times at the Inn

There is very little documentation on the Inn from the 16th and 17th centuries at the Public Record Offices. Unfortunately when masses of documents were removed from Lancaster Castle to London in the late 1800s many records were lost or destroyed accidentally. The earliest relevant reference I have for Hest Bank is from 1643 during the first part of the Civil War. It is recorded that troops passed through the village, but did not stay. Here is a reference from the volume "Lancashire at War" by J. J. Bagley and A. S. Lewis:

September 1643.

....then, towards the end of September, Rigby heard that Colonel Huddleston of Millom was organising a Royalist force in Furness, and was intending marching to the relief of Thurland, Huddleston had the support of Roger Kirby, one of the MPs. for Lancashire, and also the help of Rigby's cousin and namesake, Alexander Rigby of Layton. It appeared to be a fair sized force-about 1600 strong. Colonel Rigby decided to surprise it. He withdrew 500 foot and three troops of horse from his besieging army, and very quickly marched them across the sands from Hest Bank to the Cartmel peninsula.[Lancashire at War, J J Bagley and A S Lewis]

Owners and Tenants of the Hest Bank Inn (Sandes Inn)

I have been lucky to identify some of the early Inn Keepers and owners of the Hest Bank Inn. A man called William Sandes was first mentioned in 1537 as a member of the jury of a court held for Slyne, Hest, Beaumont and Bolton-le-Sands.

Court Held at Beaumont 1537.

Court held there on 13th Jan. 29, Henry 8th. 1537-38, before Sir John Lamplough, Thomas Carus and William Sandes.

[Manor court document, Beaumont 1537]

In 1613 there was a mention of a William Sandes, a gentleman of this area, who was required, with others, to investigate on behalf of Skerton, Slyne and Hest the occupation of the Commons of Quermore Forest. It may be a coincidence that there were prominent people called Sandes in the district and an Inn of the same name. But was he or were his descendants the builders and the owners of the Hest Bank Inn in its earliest days? Of course the name of "Sandes Inn" could simply refer to the geographical location. Here is the second reference:

By 1570 Queen Elizabeth confirmed the bounds of Quermore most of the forest had disappeared but the common pasture remained. In 1613, Sir Marmaduke Tunstall, Nicholas Thornburgh and Richard Newton and William Sandes were instructed to enquire into a complaint on behalf of the Mayor, Bailiffs and inhabitants of Skerton, Slyne and Hest against Robert Packet, Thomas Chapman and others to the number of twelve who unlawfully occupied the Common. George Bennett, Christofer Benyson and Edward Gerson were some of those who gave evidence that John Greene some 15 years past was appointed Keeper of the Common for the King's tenants of Skerton Slyne and Hest and at the same time John Smith was Keeper for the town of Lancaster, and they impounded beasts of the Quermore inhabitants.

[Royal Lancashire Forests, Cunliffe]

In 1663, just after the restoration of Charles II., a Hearth Tax was introduced. It was assumed that the more fires you had the richer you were. Randall Bateman was the Keeper of the Hest Bank Inn at that time and he paid tax on two hearths. However he was not the richest man in the village that honour went to John Arthur Esq. who paid tax on four hearths! From the Ale Recognisance Lists we know that Bateman was the Inn keeper until at least 1678. His wife was probably Agnes who died in 1683, it is also likely that Grace, who married in 1657, was his sister. After this time there are records of members of the Bateman family in the village but were then living in Slyne:

1663: Randall Bateman, paid Hearth Tax on two hearths in Slyne-cum-Hest.

1678: Randall Bateman, Keeper of The Hest Bank Inn. [Ale House Recognizance Lists].

1683: Mrs Agnes Bateman, Widdow dyed att Hest and Buryed at Kendall.

1657: James Houseman of Sline married Grace Bateman of Hestbancke. [Bolton - le - Sands Church register]

The next Landlord I came across was Anthony Caton of Hest Bank who became a Freeman of the City of Lancaster in 1691. There are in fact two marriages recorded for Anthony, one at Lancaster in 1710 and one at Bolton-le-Sands in 1711! The two marriages were witnessed by different people. Anthony died in 1726 having been the Landlord for 35 years.

1691: Caton, Anthony of Hestbank, Inn Keeper [Rolls of Freemen of Lancaster]
1710: Anthony Caton, of Hestbank, Innkeeper. Married at Lancaster with John Statter.
1711: Anthony Caton of Hestbank, yeoman, married, with Fran Bryer.
1726: Anthony Caton of Hest died.

The marriage registers show Richard Proctor as the Hest Bank Innkeeper in 1744

1744. Richard Proctor of Hest Bank, Innkeeper, marries at Bolton By The Sands.

The next recorded owner and Landlord was Christopher Bleazdale, he does not appear in any of the Bolton-le-Sands Registers but the name appears on the Manor Court Documents. Christopher was also a farmer for some years in Hest Bank and later at Hatlex. In 1770 Mr. Bradshaw became the landlord and stayed for at least five years, the Inn was then sold to The Reverend Thomas Butler who married Rebecca Stout in 1793. Rebecca was the great granddaughter of Leonard Stout the builder of Hatlex House in 1698, she inherited the estate in 1790 when her brother Josias, died. (From R. Sharpe France and J. D. Marshall. Revised version of Stout's Autobiography)

The manor court documents detail the sale of the Inn in 1775 to Rev. Thomas Butler:

1775: Christopher Bleazdale of Hatlocks in Sline [Husbandman] surrenders one house at rent of 1s-4d to Thomas Butler of Bolton, Landside, Yeoman. for £350.

The Inn in the 1800s

Bankruptcy

In the early years of the nineteenth century William Cottam was the Innkeeper and in 1805 he was declared bankrupt. Perhaps the Inn was not trading successfully at that time. Reading through the sale notices, which include his personal effects, suggests that each landlord had to provide his own 'stock in trade'; for example glasses, small tables, brewing vessels and barrels. Apparently the Hest Bank Inn brewed its own ale. The fact that William Cottam had a Bathing Machine at this early date is interesting because sea bathing did not become universally popular until around 1840.

Bankruptcy of Inn keeper

Whereas William Cottam, of Hestbank, Innkeeper, hath this day assigned over all his estate and effects whatsoever onto Thomas Cottam, of Heaton, yeoman; Matthew Redhead, of Slyne, Maltster, and Edmund Boardley of Slyne, yeoman, In trust for the equal benefit of his creditors: such creditors are therefore requested to deliver in accounts of their demands against the said William Cottam, to one of the assignees, or at the office of Mr. Webster, attorney, Lancaster. And all persons who stand indebted to the said William Cottam, are requested to pay what they owe, to one of the said assignees, or at the said office without delay.

To be Sold By Auction.

At the house of the said William Cottam, on Monday 25 Feb. instant, the sale to begin at twelve o'clock at noon, and to be continued on the succeeding days, till all be sold.

All The Household Furniture and Stock in Trade.

Consisting of eight feather beds, bedsteads and hangings, in excellent condition, bed quilts and other bed and table linen; a good clock and mahogany case, looking glasses; dining, card, and snap tables, mahogany writing desk, chairs, china, glasses and earthen ware; chests, cupboards, brewing vessels and barrels; with a variety of other house-hold and kitchen utensils.

Also, two cows, one pig, cart, wheels and husbandry gear, a quantity of hay, and a *Bathing Machine*.

[Lancaster Gazette Feb. 23rd. 1805]

Thomas Greene Becomes Lord of the Manor.

Over the years the Inn was used for meetings of the Manor Court of Slyne-with-Hest, just as the Parish Council uses the Memorial Hall today. Most inquests and hearings were held at the Inn and

the urgency of holding an inquest locally was because the body needed to be buried within three days. In 1812 a Manor Court meeting was held at the Inn when William Simpson was the Tenant Landlord.

The members of the Manor Court were called to a meeting on the fifth day of October 1815 at the Hest Bank Inn, this was the meeting where Thomas Greene became Lord of the Manor of Slyne with Hest, up to this time the King had been Lord of the Manor.

Manor of Slyne with Hest with its Members in the County of Lancaster.

Notice is hereby given that the Court Leet or View of Frankpledge with the Court Baron of our Sovereign Lord the King for the said Manor of Slyne and Hest will be holden before John Fenton Cawthorne Esq. Steward of the said Manor or his Deputy at the house of John Townson at Hest within the said Manor on Friday the 27th. day of October instant at eleven o'clock in the forenoon when and where all persons owing suit and service at the said Court are required to attend Dated this fifth Day of October 1815.

John Dowbiggin Deputy Steward.

Inquest held at the Inn

In the early part of the nineteenth century the Inn was the location of several inquests. The following is a typical example and one can only imagine the dreadful proceedings:

Body Found. July 9th. 1846

An inquest was held on Wednesday at the Hest Bank Hotel before James Gardener Esq., the coroner, on the body of a young man, who is supposed to be a stranger; but from the body being much decomposed the features could not be identified. The unfortunate man must have been lost for some length of time, as both arms were broken and the body otherwise mutilated no doubt from it being drifted and beaten about amongst the rocks in the channel. He was dressed as a sailor but without shoes or stockings. Verdict: Found Drowned.

Improvements to the Inn

John Townson had become the tenant Landlord of the Hest Bank Inn in 1812. In 1815 John Townson returned his sincere thanks for the general support he had experienced from the members of the Manor Court and he announced that he had established a new Bathing Machine!

At some time between 1806 and 1821, the Inn was improved considerably. The Inn was partly rebuilt, the Lantern Room was added and the stables were extended. Thomas Wilkinson was the Landlord in the 1820s and he was also the Assistant Guide Over The Sands.

When the coaches crossed the sands they were drawn by four horses and, as it was arranged that the horses might be changed at Hest Bank, large stables with about 16 stalls were built at the back of the Inn. They were most likely erected when Thomas Wilkinson was appointed by The Duchy of Lancaster as the assistant guide responsible for seeing travellers safely over the River Keer. After making an assignment of his personal estate and effects for the benefit of his creditors in September 1823, Thomas retired from the Inn in 1830. Later we find records of him living at The Old Hall where he finally died in 1832.

In 1828 Edward Baines (an historian) crossed the sands from Hest Bank to Grange, his guide for the first half of the journey was Thomas Wilkinson. He described the journey in his book "A Companion to the Lakes" written in 1830:

I arrived at Hestbank, on the shores of Morecambe-Bay, three and a half miles from Lancaster, about five in the afternoon. Here a little caravan was collected, waiting the proper time to cross the trackless sands left bare by the receding tide. I soon saw two persons set out in a gig and, following them, I found one of them was the guide appointed to conduct travellers, and the other a servant, who was driving his masters gig to the Cartmel Shore, and was to return with the horse the same evening. He had of course no time to lose and had begun his journey at the earliest possible hour.

We found the sands firm and level, except the slight wrinkles produced by the ripple of the waves, but they were still wet, having only just been left by the sea. The Guide appeared to drive with caution and in no place went further than a mile from land. We had a good deal of conversation, and I found him intelligent and communicative. His name is Thomas Wilkinson, he is a tall athletic man, past the middle age, and bears marks of the rough weather he has been exposed to in discharging the duties of his post during the winter months. In stormy and more especially in foggy weather, these duties must be arduous and anxious.

It is his business to station himself at the place where the river Keer runs over the Sands to the sea, which is about 3 miles from Hestbank, and to show travellers where they may pass with safety.-----

When we came to the river, he got out of the gig, and waded over to ascertain the firmness of the bottom, the water being about knee-deep. Having escorted us a little further, till we saw the Guide for the Kent at a distance and having pointed out the line we should keep he left us to return to his proper post. We gave him a few pence: for though he is appointed by the Government his salary is only £10 a year, and he is of course chiefly dependant on what he receives from travellers.-----

The Ulverston Coach, several gigs, and some persons on horseback, had followed us at a little distance, keeping to the track left by the wheels of the vehicle which conveyed the Guide. When Wilkinson left us we rode on two or three miles before we came to the Channel of the Kent and met James Carter, our Kent Guide.

Edward Baines did not appear to know that Thomas Wilkinson was also the Landlord of the Hest Bank Inn at this time, he and his wife were really quite well-off, as were James Carter and his family. It seems that the Guide to the Keer, Thomas Wilkinson usually performed his duties on foot, whilst the Guide to the Kent, James Carter was on horseback. The Guide to the Kent had become known as "Carter", the duty of Guide had been performed by the family of that name for generations.

In a Paper by His Honour Sir Sanderson Temple M.B.E., Q.C. we are reminded of the dangers of the sands::

Lord Ellenborough, Chief Justice, it is pertinent to recall in order not to overlook the dangers inherent in the crossing, being about to journey trans-sands from Cartmel to Hest Bank, with some apprehension, inquired of the inn-keeper. "Do you lose many crossing the Bay?" "No" came the riposte "we always find them at low water".

Thomas Pape tells us about the construction of the Lantern Room:

During the early years of the nineteenth century the Hest Bank Inn was partly rebuilt, most likely when Thomas Wilkinson, the assistant guide over the sands was the tenant: and the owner was the Rev. Thomas Butler who in 1821 was stated to be paying a customary rent of 1s-4d. yearly to the Lord of the Manor. Before being appointed incumbent of Poulton-le-Sands Church in 1825 the Rev. Thomas Butler was the curate at Whittington and had married Rebecca, heiress of Leonard Stout in 1793. On taking his seat in 1817 as a Justice of the Peace in the County of Lancaster his residence was given as Hatlex. Leonard Stout's old home. Plans for the existing church in Morecambe were well under way when he died in May 1839.

Lantern Room. To guide travellers coming over the sands after dark a huge lantern was installed in the large upper room of the inn containing many windows on three sides. This was the main feature of the new eastern part built in the Rev. Thomas Butler's time.

Thomas Moore

In 1806 the Rev. Thomas Butler had raised £500 on the Hest Bank Inn from John Dowbiggin, by 1821 he also owed £900 for professional services; the Inn was surrendered to John Dowbiggin who sold it to Thomas Moore of Flookburgh, a fishmonger. The following document is dated 10th. May 1821:

1821. Surrender by Thomas Butler, John Dowbiggin and William Sharp of The Hest Bank Inn to the use of Thomas Moor of Flookburgh, (Fishmonger), 10th May, who pays £1000 and 1s-4d rent.

The Inn appears to have flourished during the time of Thomas Moore there were many visitors to the Inn during this time, two famous landscape painters who came more than a century ago to paint the coaches and people on the sands at Hest Bank were J. M. W. Turner and David Cox in 1838. The following letter, written at Hest Bank Hotel by David Cox in 1838, well illustrates the difficulties of travelling from south Lancashire into the Lake District:

Letter to Robert Hindmarsh Grundy.

Hest Bank Hotel,

3¼ miles from Lancaster,

August 17th., 1838.

My dear Sir,

It is my intention to go from this place, over the sands to Flookborough, and from thence to Cartmel which is two miles beyond where I shall anxiously wait your company, and as I understood you it was your intention to leave Manchester by the coach on Thursday morning, I will give you some advice about the coach etc. If you leave Manchester by the coach called the Water Witch [? that was the name of the packet boat on the canal, T.P.] it will convey you to Preston where I believe you take the boat, and it will land you at Hest Bank Hotel, [mind and be particular in telling the boatman to put you out at Hest Bank Bridge] you will arrive at half past 5 afternoon-- the next morning you will take a place in the conveyance over sand and coach to Flookburgh. I shall put up at the Inn kept by Richard Todd; if I am not there I shall be at the inn at Cartmel kept by --Singleton. I have had three most delightful days and hope you will be as fortunate. After you arrive and have been with me two days I intend to go to Furness Abbey, there we will make our further arrangements ,etc. Believe me, yours sincerely,

David Cox.

PS. If there should not be room for you in the coach over sands, Thomas Moor of Hest Bank Hotel will hire you a cart, and take you over to Flookborough. I hope you will not disappoint me in your company. Remember me to your brother and partner. If you should prefer the round-about road, you must then leave Manchester early in the morning and reach Lancaster about two or half past, and leave by the Ulverstone coach at three. This coach will put you down at a place called Lindale, about 9 miles beyond Milnthrop where you will sleep and walk 5 miles next morning to Cartmel. I am very particular in giving directions, pray excuse me. D.C."

Thomas Moore died in March 1839, he must have been sick in the February of that year for it was then that he set his affairs in order. He assigned executors, made his will and after his death his wife was required to pay a heriot to the Lord of the Manor, Thomas Greene, because the Hest Bank Inn was a Copyhold estate in the Manor of Slyne-with-Hest. The Inn was subject to a mortgage lent by William Field, a merchant of Cartmell, and during the interim until the Inn was sold William Field took charge. He installed William Tatham as Landlord.. The following Assignment was published in the Lancaster Gazette on February 2nd 1839

Whereas Thomas Moore of Hest Bank in the County of Lancaster, Innkeeper, hath by certain indentures of Lease and Release assigned over all his real and personal estate and effects unto The Rev. William Rigg of Flookburgh and William Bush of Lancaster, Spirit Merchant in trust for the benefit of all his creditors. Witness J.M. Harrison, sol. Flookburgh.

Thomas Moore of The Hest Bank Inn has died since the last Court, his wife is now in possession of the Inn and the Lord is entitled to a heriot.
[Manor Court document]

The Hest Bank Inn was again for sale in May 1839. Mrs Moore was still living at the Inn, which had been much improved, there were hot and cold water and shower baths available. There was also accommodation for invalids because the sea bathing was recommended at that time for infirmities. The buyer of the Inn in 1839 was William Field but he only kept it for two years.

Valuable Hotel for Sale. To be sold by Auction, By Mr. Matthew Knowles.

At the house of Mrs. Moore, the Hest Bank Hotel on Tuesday, the 18th June 1839. The Sale to commence at six o'clock in the evening.

All that long established and well Accustomed Hotel, situate at Hest Bank, in the County of Lancaster, together with the Barn, Stables, Brewhouse, Buildings and Garden, thereunto belonging and adjoining, also a close of land, contiguous thereto, containing by estimation one acre, or thereabouts, be the same more or less, all which said premises are now in the occupation of Mrs. Moore.

The Property is Customary Copyhold of inheritance of the Manor of Slyne-with-Hest; and subject to an annual rent of 1s-4d. and to Heriot service.

Hest Bank is distant from Lancaster about 3 miles, on the direct road to Ulverston by the Sands; and has been for many years a most fashionable resort in the bathing season. The Hotel being fitted up with hot, cold and shower baths, and every accommodation for the Invalid, has consequently received a large share of Public Patronage.

Mrs. Moore will shew the Premises, and further information may be had on application to :
Rev. W Rigg, Flookburgh, or Mr. Bush of Lancaster, both Assignees of the late Thomas Moore.
Sol. Flookburgh, Maychell Harrison.

N B. The occupier of the Hotel has always been privileged (on application to the Government) to hold the situation of Guide over Keer, at a Salary of £10 per annum.[Lancaster Gazette May 18th 1839]

Horse Racing in 1840

Hest Bank was a lively little watering hole in the 1840s and much envied locally for its Bowling Green (nothing changes) and for its horse racing! The horse races attracted large crowds and one might wonder where they could take place; an advertisement from the Lancaster Gazette reveals all. But have you ever heard of *cart horse racing* before?

Hest Bank Hotel Races.

The Public are respectively informed that the above Races will take place on Tuesday the 9th day of June 1840, on Morecambe Bay Sands, when the following prizes will be run for:-

One excellent Cart Saddle to be galloped for by Cart Horses.

One excellent Hunting Whip to be galloped for.

One excellent Snaffle Bridle to be trotted for.

Also a Belt to be Wrestled for.

Every horse that intends running on that day must be at Hest Bank Hotel at Ten o'clock in the morning, to make their Entrance, viz.-Two Shillings for the first prize. One Shilling for the second prize and Sixpence for the third prize. Each horse to be entered. Three to start for each Prize or no race.

The Sport to commence at One o'clock in the afternoon on account of the tide. No Tents, Booths, or Stalls to be erected on the sands without the consent of the Guide over the River Keer.

A Public Assembly in the Evening.

William Tatham, Steward of the Course.

Hest Bank

[Lancaster Gazette May 30th 1840]

The Steward of the course William Tatham was also landlord of The Hest Bank Hotel. He was then aged 26, married with one child.

Bare-knuckle Boxing in 1840

William Tatham obviously had the best interests of his patrons at heart, much better than satellite TV he organised live sporting contests. In addition to the horse racing they could enjoy boxing contests as the Gazette reported. At that time boxing contests were bare-knuckle fights, they could be of an extremely vicious nature with contestants suffering serious injuries, some of which were fatal. The sport of modern boxing, as distinguished from pugilism, dates from 1866 when the public became disgusted with the brutality and unfair practices of the professional "bruisers" and the Marquis of Queensbury rules came into effect. Before that time gloves were only used in training. The local police chief, Inspector Walters, took a professional interest in the proceedings! Walters' police training had been in London and his move to Slyne in 1840 as head of the Rural Police was probably a promotion. He was 40 years old and lived at Slyne with his son William, aged 19, who was a Police Constable.

Prize Fight

We have reason to believe that a prize fight for £20 a-side was to have "come off" at or near Hest Bank on Tuesday, but Inspector Walters was on the spot, and we gather his vigilance spoiled sport a little. As it was, the effect was to bring a tolerable of rabble to the spot.

[Lancaster Gazette, Nov. 28th. 1840]

We stated in our last that the vigilance of Inspector Walters had prevented a prize fight which was to have taken place at Hest Bank but subsequent information was received by the police from Preston, that two persons belonging to that town named Mayor and Nightingale intended to fight a pitched battle at Hest Bank on Saturday morning last. The police tried to arrest Nightingale at the Shovel Public House in Lancaster, but the bird had flown. The Rural Police made direct for the canal banks, and captured him. Inspector Walters and Superintendent Wright with men of the County and Borough police then hastened off to the Hest Bank Hotel, and there found the other pugilist in bed. He was taken into custody and with him were taken two pairs of boxing gloves and a pair of dumb bells. All this took place on Friday night last and early morning of Saturday.

The two men were taken before the Magistrates, Nightingale was discharged but was thought to have had the moral intention to commit a breach of the peace. Mayor was kept in the Castle until an inspection of police came from Preston to collect him.

Considerable disappointment must have been the consequence of these untoward events, as a great number of people had collected in and about Hest Bank.

[Lancaster Gazette Nov. 21st 1840]

The Crosskell Family

It is interesting to look who was at the Hest Bank Inn on the day of the census in 1841. There were four people staying at the Hotel and four servants to help with the running of the premises.

William Tatham, aged 27, Innkeeper.

Isabella, aged 31.

Emma, aged 8 mos.

Elizabeth Moore, aged 75, independent means.

Mary Heaton, aged 40, independent means.

Elizabeth Moore, aged 45, independent means.

Ann Harrison, aged 27, female servant.

Margaret Batty, aged 21, female servant. Ann Close, aged 14, female servant.

Sarah Hodgson, aged 15, female servant.

Edward Cox, aged 35, Auctioneer. [Census returns 1841]

Mr Tatham and Isabella suffered the sad loss of an infant daughter Ann in January 1842.

In 1841 George Crosskell paid £650 for the Hest Bank Inn. On the tithe map of 1845 the property includes an orchard and a very large garden. The owners of the Hotel had their own pew in Bolton-le-Sands Church. George must have brought his family to Hest Bank with him because in 1843 he gave his son-in-law Adam Clark part of his land and on this part Adam built "The Thorns". His elder daughter Margaret married Mr Thomas Worthington of Hatlex Farm in 1846. In 1849 George Crosskell sold the Hest Bank Hotel to Oliver Simms of Manchester who paid £950 for it. The Inn throughout most of its existence appears to have been mortgaged; nearly all of the owners borrowed money using the Inn as collateral for various complex business deals.

George Crosskell followed the example set by William Tatham in keeping his clients happy, this time by selling ale on a Sunday. For this offence he was hauled before the County Petty Sessions with Jane Wilkinson who kept the Old Hall across the road:

Caution to Publicans and Beer-House Keepers.

At the County Petty Sessions on Saturday last. George Crosskell, of the Hest Bank Hotel and Jane Wilkinson, beer-house keeper of Hest Bank [Old Hall] were convicted of vending liquor during divine service on the Sunday preceding. Crosskell was discharged with a reprimand, on paying costs and Wilkinson was fined 5/-.

The Railway Age

After the Railway opened in 1846 the coach and canal trade began to die away but a new clientele emerged descending on the village on Bank Holidays. The Railway built up traffic and packed trains arrived at Hest Bank Station. By 1890 Mr Bryden the Station Master stated that between 600 and 800 passengers arrived each day in the season with 1000 on Whit Monday. The Railways gave a boost to all the businesses in Hest Bank including the Hotel.

By 1851 Thomas Buxton was the Landlord and the Hotel became known as "Buxtons Hotel". In 1857 coaches still went across the sands to their low-tide timetables but by then the assistant guide's office at Hest Bank had lapsed. The chief guide remained at Cart Lane, (named after the Carter Family) Kent's Bank.

In 1861 Thomas Buxton died and his wife Sarah returned to Lancaster leaving the running of the Hotel to her sister Elizabeth Dickenson. The 1861 Census records the inhabitants:

Elizabeth Dickenson, domestic assistant.
John Dickenson, brother, aged 42, plumber and painter.
Lilla Cotton, aged 15, assistant in house.
Ellen Wilson, visitor, aged 21, Liverpool.
Hannah Greenhow, aged 60, Westmorland, visitor.
Henry Verity, aged 20, watch maker.
Agnes Newton, female servant, aged 20, general.
Margaretta Bodiano, visitor, aged 21, Manchester. [Census return 1861]

Some time after 1861 Jonathan Wilding became the Landlord of the Hotel. Very little is known about him although he was Landlord for about ten years. By 1871 the Census returns show that William Holmes Garlick was the proprietor with his wife Jane and two children:

William H. Garlick, aged 36, Inn Keeper.
Jane, wife, aged 31.
John, son aged 3.
Margaret, daughter, aged 1.
Sarah Hindson, aged 31, domestic servant. [1871 Census return]

William was still there in 1881 with another daughter:

William Holme Garlick, head of household, aged 48, Innkeeper.
Jane, wife, aged 42.
John, son 14, scholar.
Margaret Jane, daughter, aged 10, scholar.
Lousia Anne, daughter, aged 3.
Sarah Hindson, aged 22, servant.(age does not correlate with above) [1881 Census return]

An interesting advertisement appeared in the local Lancaster Trade Directory of 1881 concerning the Hotel. It extolls the virtues of the area and the facilities available to the visitor:

Hest Bank Hotel.
W.H. Garlick, proprietor.
This Hotel is 3 minutes' walk from the shore of Morecambe Bay. and the Morecambe and North South Junction of the London and North Western Railway. The situation is retired and salubrious, and commands magnificent views of the Bay and Lake Mountains.
Excellent Accommodation For Visitors And Tourists.
Private Apartments. Families Boarded by the week or month. Terms on Application.
Choice Wines, Spirits, Etc.; Etc.
To meet a want which has often been expressed, a Pony and Phaeton will be kept on the premises for the convenience of Visitors.

Mr. Garlick must have remained at the Hest Bank for twenty years but by 1891 Thomas Willacy is the Landlord. Thomas was born in Morecambe and occupied the premises with his wife Catherine, mother-in-law and two servants:

Thomas Willacy, aged 37, Pub keeper.
Catherine, wife, aged 33.
Mary Muran, mother-in-law, aged 75.
Elizabeth Harrison, aged 27, servant, single.
Walter Morris, aged 24, servant, single. [Census return 1891]

Modern Times

Ernest Peace was a lifelong resident of Hest Bank who lived at Prospect Cottage in 1913, he had spent his working life as groom, coachman and gardener at the Hotel. He remembered, in conversation with Thomas Pape, the dismantling of the lantern and the old stables in the early years of the century.

Thomas Willacy stayed to see in the twentieth century at Hest Bank Hotel. After this time the landlords are probably remembered by older residents in the village. First there was Alfred Shaw in 1913, then Marion F Sadler in 1933 and Mr Harold Neal before 1952. Many will remember Mr and Mrs Harold Taylor and more recently Nora Cornick.

Nora will tell you of the Hotel ghosts supposed to inhabit the upper rooms of the Hotel. It is reliably reported that two such apparitions can make their presence felt! There is the "evil" one who is male and a "good" one who appears as a maid who will happily dust your bedroom early in the morning.

[Note:
Frankpledge: All Freemen over the age of twelve were members of Frankpledges (tithings). Each was answerable for the conduct of their associates. An 11th century method of assuring law and order.]