

THE HISTORY OF  
the Parish of  
**PONSONBY**  
Cumbria



Ponsonby Church

by  
**WILLIAM FLETCHER**

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## Foreword

I have been enthralled researching the history of this very small 2,000 acre Parish set in Cumbria, and hope that not only the Parishioners will read it but also the Tourists that crowd into the National Park at the weekends and on holiday. Almost all motorists visiting the Western lakes of Wasdale and Ennerdale rush along in their cars on the Trunk road A595 and do not stop although there is good parking at Ponsonby Road ends near the Bus Shelter. The travelling holidaymaker can turn left at Ponsonby Road ends if coming from Whitehaven, or right if coming from the South. There is an excellent viewing point from the higher land; and stop at the Small Church on the hill and take in the view through an arc of 200 degrees, and see the Calder Hall Nuclear Power Station and the former Mansion of Ponsonby Hall, now a Community Home for Boys.

W. F.



## PONSONBY PARISH COUNCIL

Before 1965 Mr. W. Dawson held infrequent Parish Meetings over a period of 5 years and then in 1965 there were Parish Meetings held regularly in the Stanley Arms Hotel. The Chairman was Mr. W. Fletcher, and the Clerk Mrs. J. Norman. These early meetings were attended by Mrs. Millard, Mr. Ostle, and Mr. and Mrs. Norman, Mr. Steele, Mr. J. Mills, Mr. T. Dawson.

After some exploratory talks between the Clerk of the Peace for the County Mr. Swift, and Mr. Fletcher it was unanimously decided to try to change the status of the Parish Meeting to a Parish Council.

Not until July 1966, after an Order in Council (Copy of Order attached) of the Cumberland County Council was it ordered that the Parish of Ponsonby should have Parish Council status with 7 Councillors.

The First Meeting of Councillors was held on the 31st May 1967 at No. 5, Pelham Drive, Calderbridge. Present were Mrs. G. Stanley, Mrs. Millard, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Gainford, Mr. T. Dawson and Mrs. J. Norman (clerk). Mr. Fletcher was appointed Chairman.

Mrs. J. Hodgson was appointed Clerk on 18th Jan. 1959 in place of Mrs. Norman, Mrs. Hodgson left the district, and Miss Elizabeth Stewart was appointed as Clerk, she resigned in March 1973, and the new Clerk was Mr. W. Fletcher with Mrs. G. Stanley as Chairman, and Mr. T. Dawson as Deputy Chairman. In 1983 Mrs. G. Stanley and Mr. H. N. Craven resigned from the Council.

Over the years there have been Formal and lively debates in Council with regard to the Roads, its Traffic, the by-passing of Calderbridge, trying to build houses at Rowlands Croft, and in the Village of Calderbridge; attending several enquiries about land and Property inside and outside the National Park. Half the Parish is within the National Park, trying to improve the bus services to Egremont and Whitehaven particularly in the evening.

St. Bridget's Parish runs along the northern boundary of the Parish of Ponsonby and the joint parishes have carried out many projects on a 50-50 basis over the years, particularly with the Village Hall in Calderbridge. The land on the North eastern Boundary rises up to almost 1000ft, and is mostly rough pasture. The Parishes of Gosforth and Seascale adjoin the Ponsonby Parish to the South. The Parish of Ponsonby also claims 100 yards of foreshore south of Sellafield Station.

**COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND**  
**ENNERDALE**  
**PONSONBY**  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1933**

To the Ennerdale Rural District Council.  
To the Parish Meeting of the Parish of Ponsonby.  
And to all others whom it may concern.

**WHEREAS** by sub-section (1) of section 43 of the Local Government Act, 1933, it is provided that for every Rural Parish there shall be a Parish Meeting and, subject to the provisions of that Act, for every Rural Parish or group of parishes having a Parish Council immediately before the commencing of that Act there shall continue to be a Parish Council.

**AND WHEREAS** by sub-section (2) of section 43 of the Local Government Act, 1933, it is provided (inter alia) that if a Rural Parish has not a separate Parish Council the County Council shall by order establish a Parish Council for that Parish if in the case of a parish having a population of 200 or upwards but under 300 the Parish Meeting of the Parish so resolve.

**AND WHEREAS** the Parish of Ponsonby is situated in the Rural District of Ennerdale in the Administrative County of Cumberland and had according to the census of 1961 a population of 213 and has not a separate Parish Council.

**AND WHEREAS** at a Parish Meeting for the said Parish of Ponsonby held on the 18th day of April 1966 a resolution was duly passed requesting the County Council to establish a Parish Council for that Parish.

**NOW THEREFORE WE** the County Council of the Administrative County of Cumberland in pursuance of section 43 of the Local Government Act, 1933, **DO HEREBY ORDER AS FOLLOWS:-**

1. This Order may be cited as "The Ponsonby (Constitution of Parish Council) Order, 1966."
2. There shall be a Parish Council for the said Parish of Ponsonby and the number of Parish Councillors for the said Parish shall be seven.
3. An election of seven Parish Councillors for the said Parish of Ponsonby shall be held on the day in May 1967 to be selected by the said County Council of Cumberland in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1933 as amended by the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1949 and the Parish Council Election Rules, 1952.
4. The Parish Councillors first to be elected under this order shall hold office for a period of three years from the date of the election referred to in clause three above.

**GIVEN** under the Common Seal of the Cumberland County Council this 20th day of July 1966 pursuant to a resolution passed at a meeting of the Council duly considered and held at Carlisle on the 20th day of June 1966.

L. Conaway      Member of the Council.  
T. J. R. Whitfield      Deputy Clerk of the Council.



## PONSONBY — the Parish

The small Parish of Ponsonby which looks wedge shaped on the map is 4.5 miles long and 7.5 miles wide and is bisected in the middle by the A595 trunk road. To the north the road goes to Whitehaven, and to the south to Millom. Ponsonby has no village green, few houses, and yet contains within its boundaries, the Calder Hall Nuclear Power Station, and of course the block of buildings known as Pelham House Controlled Community Home for boys.

The Parishes finances are unbelievably high because of this large industrial complex, now known as British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., the RV is £384,860 (at 1 June 1983).

This rural parish has no village as such, and shares the village Hall at Calderbridge with the adjoining Parish of St. Bridget's.

There are no car Parks, although two lay byes and a bus shelter seem adequate at present (1981).

Expenditure charged to the Parish on various projects are —

Road to the Parish Church of Ponsonby

Resurfacing an occupation Rd.,

Grants made to the Village Hall Calderbridge and part of the new Vicarage alterations and flats 1983.

Footway lighting Ponsonby Road Ends.

Building a Bus Shelter.

The Village School closed on 16 July 1970 and the Children from the Parish were transferred to Beckermest School in the Parish of St. Bridget's Beckermest 3 miles away.

### **Taken at Random from the Minute Book, Ponsonby Parish Council**

### **ANNUAL REPORT by the Chairman of the Ponsonby Parish Council by Chairman Mrs. G. Stanley.**

Year 1978-79.

The proposed footway from Ponsonby Road Ends into the Village of Calderbridge has been the subject of a lot of correspondence both with the Regional Highways Authority at Newcastle and the Cumberland County Council Highways, and after completing a survey by walking the road, economics spelt its doom and it will have to wait until more money is available for such projects.

The Notice Board, has now been completed in the Bus Shelter, and includes a map of the Parish, also a copy of the latest electoral register for the parish. It does require repainting inside and this will be done in the spring, as will also the flower beds. Vandalism has been again prevalent and someone stole some of the rose trees.

The British Nuclear Fuels impact on the environment still continues to be a problem it is still spreading its wings, and we are hoping that a Meeting with Copeland District Council on the 21st instant in this hall will elucidate some new information on new buildings to be put up. A washery for sand and gravel for instance which at this stage is only rumoured.

Elizabeth II celebration seat installed at the road ends at Ponsonby has proved useful for those waiting for a bus. Again the grass on that side of the road should be kept in check, and not allowed to get out of hand.

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., Liaison Committee — new phase. I am pleased to have to inform you that we are now well and truly seated on the Committee by our Mr. Craven, and he is here tonight and can explain the purpose of his presence on that Committee.

Gosforth is now added to the 5 Parishes for whom Mr. Craven and Mrs. Higham are representatives.

Rowlands Croft, again lifted its tired head during the year, we thought we were able to buy or at least have an option to purchase this or part of this field for building purposes, and my Committee had to weigh up the enormous cost of purchase against the cost of going to appeal to the Ministry of the Environment to secure the approval to build. The likelihood of which is still remote. However the matter is merely shelved and will be considered by the new incoming Council after May 1979.

A Housing Assn., in this district. This was discussed at some length with a local Solicitor and an enlightened authority on housing associations, at which St. Bridget's Council reps. were present. If and when land becomes available the difficulties which always arise with the launching of a housing assn., should not present a great deal of trouble.

The Vicarage, Calderbridge. After a Meeting with Copeland Borough Council and other representatives from St. Bridget's Parish, no decision was made to buy the property by the Borough Council, and has since been sold.

Village Hall. As you can see the Hall has been extensively altered, and our parish promised to contribute £7500 towards the cost, £5000 has already been paid. Mr. Stewart will no doubt be giving his report on its present position.

Roads in and around Ponsonby. The long winter with hard frosts has continued to play havoc with the surfaces, and again we are told by the CCC Highways Authority that only when money is available can repairs proceed. Water also seems to be the problem, which runs down and across the road in one place.

Emergency Scheme, British Nuclear Fuels. The radiation incidents which have occurred this year left the Company no excuse but to issue a rather complicated Emergency Plan in case of a major disaster.

The Stanley Arms Hotel. It is now 12 months since we were asked to support the relicensing of this hostelry for a firm of



Brewers. Since when very little has been attempted to make the building attractive and it is now sadly falling into decay. Every effort will be made to eradicate this rather delightful corner of the village, which lies on the very border of the Parish.

Road to the Works from Seascale. We did support, with reservations the construction of this road, which it is hoped will considerably reduce the traffic flow at certain hours of the day from Seascale. However, on the other hand there is now a noticeable increase in the larger vehicles used by contractors during the large building programme at the works, and this is bound to increase as the programme accelerates. We intend to keep a watchful eye on the roads, and will always press for widening at the places where we consider danger is apparent.

## PONSONBY CHURCH

Ponsonby Church, the dedication of which appears to be unknown, is situated in the Church Field known as the Park, and stands at 70 ft above sea level and is in the centre of the Parish and a short distance from Pelham House. It is an ancient structure, but has undergone several substantial repairs and alterations, which give it a modern appearance. It consists of nave, chancel and western Tower and Spire. The latter of which was erected in 1840 by the Stanley family. The East window contains ancient stained glass emblazoned with the arms of the Stanley, Brigg and Hutton families. On the North wall of the nave is a monumental Brass with an inscription commemorating Frances Patrickson Daughter of Sir Thomas Wyet, knight, Privy Counsellor to King Henry the viii. There are also mural monuments to the memory of members of the Stanley family, and one to Thomas Curwen, one of the Curwens of Workington Hall.

The Church of Ponsonby was given by John FitzPonson to the Priory of Conishead in Furness. It is not known to whom it was granted at the Dissolution, but in the year 1689, a Presentation from the Crown was procured to this Church as a Vicarage, but it was afterwards revoked. The Living was certified to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty at £9.12.0., viz., £6 paid by the impropriator £3 given by William Cleator., MD for monthly sermons, and 2/- surplice fees. In 1717 it was certified that William Cleator gave £100 by his will to the minister for preaching 12 sermons a year till the impropriation should be restored to the Church when it was to be transferred to the use of a school in the Parish, but part of this money was lost together with another sum given by the Stanleys. In 1789 the Income appears to have amounted to £22, besides the surplice fees viz., £6 by the impropriator. It was prior to 1750 the church was augmented with £1,000 from Queen Anne's Bounty given in sums of £200 each, in the years 1744, 1780, 1790, 1791 and 1792, besides two benefactions of £200 each given in 1790 and 1792 making a total of £1,400, with which the Nun House Estate, in the Parish of Dent Yorkshire, and Green Moor side Estate in St. Bridget's Beckermes were purchased £200 being given for the former in 1774 and, £1,200 for the latter in 1793. The value of the living at that time was £113. Nearly 200 acres of the Parish was tithe free and the remainder of the land was commuted in 1846 for a yearly rent charge of £19.0.1. The Benefice is a perpetual curacy in the impropriation of N. Stanley, Esq.

The Parish registers date from 1723. To return to the fabric of the Church. The Chancel Arch dates back to about 1220, and there is a Brass memorial to a Lady of the Abbey, (Calder Abbey) which reads:-

'Here lyeth the bodye of Frances Patryckson daughter of Sir Thomas Whet, Knight, one of the most honourable pryve



Councell to King henery the VIII, some time wyfe of Thomas Lighte of Calder and at the day of her death wyfe of William Patryckson, gentleman God gave this wyfe a mYnde to pray in grones and pangs of deth & to heaven elevating hands and eyes smylyngly to yeld breth and thus at age of Ivi to grave she took her waye. God grant that she and we may mete in joye at the last daye. She dyed the xvi of Julii in the yere of our Lord 1578."

**The Cross in the Churchyard.** The remains of the base of a cross will be noticed outside. This is considered by archaeologists to have been a socketed shaft of red sandstone circa 1200 which is contemporary with the group of crosses in this area.

**The Stanley Vault** is below the Church.

What appears to be a protective ditch round the Churchyard was built to prevent animals grazing in the Churchyard. There is no evidence to show that it was constructed other than for this purpose.

Reference has been made above to a school for the Parish, but where it was sited, it must be left to future historians to unravel.

#### Incumbents

1176 (approx).	Robertus Presbyter
1286	William 'priest'
1723	George Cannel T.C.D. 'curate'
1759	Stephen Reay 'assistant curate'
1776	Henry Nicholson 'curate and minister'
1790	Matthew Hall 'Minister'
1799	John Sanderson 'curate' (until 1808)
1800	John Gaitsgill B.A., 'Curate'
1813	John Smith '?'
1823	James L. Senhouse 'perpetual curate'
1829	John Fleming 'perpetual curate'
1842	Clement F6x, Assistant Curate
1858	Alfred Middleton M.A. R.N. 'Vicar'
1861	James Losh 'perpetual curate'
1871	Thomas R. Holme MA. R.N. 'Vicar'
1875	Arthur Palmer M.A. 'Archdeacon of Toronto,' Vicar
1877	Charles Blomfield M.A. 'Vicar'
1898	E. E. Jackson 'Vicar'
1902	W. Dunn 'Vicar'
1913	W. Davies 'Vicar'
1921	H. M. Fairlie 'Vicar of Calderbridge' and Sequestrator of Ponsonby
1942	R. Lemmon 'Sequestrator' and Chaplain to Pelham House School
1949	T. H. Stocks 'Sequestrator' and Chaplain to Pelham House School
1953	E. O. Bennett 'Sequestrator' and Chaplain to Pelham House School

1957

J. C. Johnson, first Vicar of the united  
benefices of St. Bridget's with Ponsonby

1978

G. A. Crossley

Mr. H. N. Craven, Housemaster lived in the school for a while, and purchased the stables in the grounds of the Old Vicarage, Ponsonby. A rather unusual clause in the conveyance to him stated that 'he should not disturb the Parishioners at Worship, and should not operate a distillery on the property.' The buildings were subsequently named by Mr. Craven as 'The Coach House.'

#### Population of the Parish of Ponsonby

1801	78
1811	147
1821	150
1831	180
1841	187
1851	190

#### Area of the Parish is 2,265 Acres

**The Name Ponsonby** The Manor was held in the 12th Century by Punzon or Ponson who probably died in 1177. He had a son John whose son was Richard, father of Alexander, father of William. From them this place was named PONSONBY - Punzon's Homestead. Nicholas Stanleigh of Greysouthern married Constance daughter and heiress of Thomas De Austhwaite. Nicholas Stanley acquired the Manor of Austhwaite (now denominated Dalegarth) as appears by a Deed dated AD 1345. In 1388 Nicholas Stanley obtained by purchase the manor and demesne of Ponsonby. The male line of descent remains unbroken in 1983, and a Nicholas Stanley still lives at Dalegarth Hall in Eskdale.

The year 1780 saw a new building rising on the South bank of the River Calder, near Calderbridge, built on the site of what had previously been a farmstead, and probably known as Raven Crag. The new sandstone building was to be the seat of the Family of Stanleys, who were then residing at Ponsonby Old Hall, in the Parish of Ponsonby a mile distant from the new Hall.

George Edward Stanley, Lord of the Manor and High Sheriff of the County of Cumberland in 1774, owned most of the farms and land, in both the parishes of Ponsonby and Austhwaite in Eskdale. George Edward Stanley therefore, decided to build his mansion on his own land to be built in the Georgian Style, as were many country seats in the reign of George the Third. He introduced every modern convenience that was available to the builder, landscape artist and environmentalist of the 18th century, to make it one of the noblest buildings in the County. He planted one hundred thousand trees of oak, beech, lime hollies, etc., in the vale of Calder; some still survive today. The idea of northern bleakness and stunted vegetation is dispelled when you reach the vale of Calder.

The Stanley family owned the Hall for almost 160 years until in 1941 it was sold to a Government Department (the Home Office) for use as an Approved Intermediate school, for Boys aged between 14 and 16 years of age. Boys were admitted from all over the country, including the Isle of Man and Scotland. The idea of converting the Mansion into a school came from the Bishop of Barrow, **Herbert Sidney Pelham**, after whom the name of the School originates. He was an Oxford man, and after following his father at Harrow he gained his BA degree at University College in 1903 and his MA in 1906. He was made Deacon in 1905 and priest by the Bishop of Southwark in 1906. He served a curacy in Bermondsey being head of the Oxford Medical Mission from 1905 to 1907. From there he moved to Birmingham and was Head Missioner to the Birmingham Children's Union. During the Great War he was engaged in YMCA work in France and as an RAF Chaplain in Barking. He was a bachelor, and was well known as a man who had grappled courageously with the many problems of Church and Social Service. In 1926 (25th March) he was consecrated in York Minster on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Arch-Bishop of York, as Suffragan Bishop of Barrow in Furness.

He was an acknowledged authority on Juvenile employment, and ministers of the Crown sought his advice. Among his writings was a book entitled 'The Training of a Working Boy.' With such an interest in youth it comes as no surprise that he was to be the guiding light in the founding of Pelham House Approved School.

The School was given a Certificate of Approval by the Home Office on 22nd April 1941, which granted power to the first group of School Managers to admit and train boys in this new Approved School, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations laid down in the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933. The following Managers were appointed in 1941 –

Bishop of Barrow (Chairman)  
 E. Randall, Esq., Tanner  
 Mrs. B. Braithwaite (wife of Medical Dr.)  
 Dr. G. H. Muriel M.D.  
 Mrs. Boulter  
 Mrs. M. S. Johnston  
 H. Williamson, Esq., (Boys Club Organiser)  
 Mrs. M. H. Fox of Keswick  
 C. G. B. Ellison, Esq.  
 Rev. R. Lemmon (Chaplain of the School)  
 John D. Wilkinson, Esq., Waggon Builder

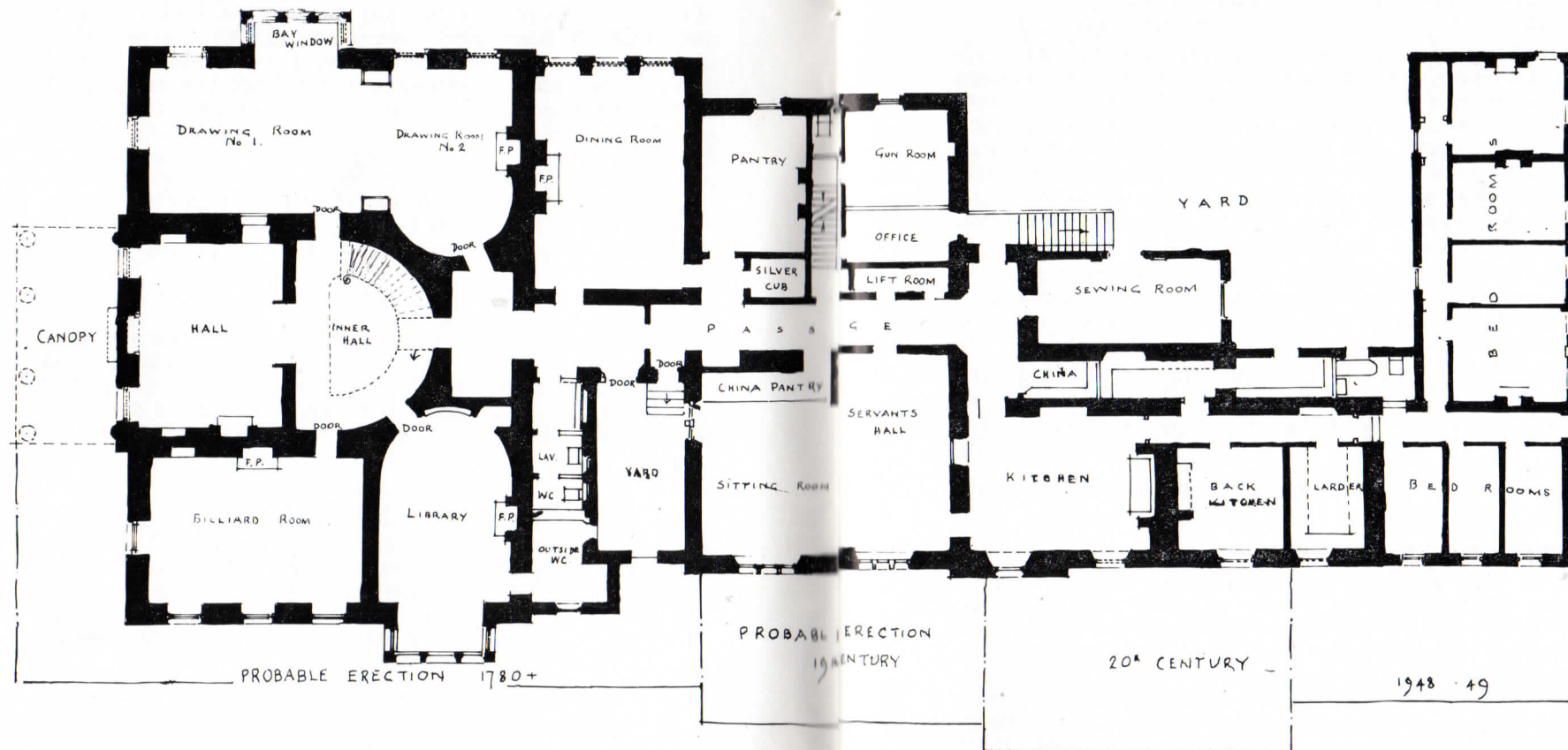
later other Managers were appointed –

Rev. C. E. Nurse, later Bishop of Penrith and Treasurer to the Managers  
 J. B. Wrigley, Esq., Gosforth  
 Mrs. M. Ablett, Braystones  
 W. C. Sumner, Esq., Solicitor  
 Mrs. M. Lilly was appointed Secretary to the Managers.



# PONSONBY HALL

AD. 1780 - TO 20<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY



Plan of Ponsonby Hall, Calderbridge

### "From the School Log Book"

The following is quoted from the School Log Book –

"August 1st 1941 Pelham House School opened to-day, with 10 boys and the following staff.

Headmaster	William George Hewitson
Matron	Barbara Hewitson
Principal Teacher	Noel Albert Cory
Assistant Master	Alfred Adams
Maintenance Instructor	Isaac Lowery
Gardening Instructor	James Russell
Clerk	Muriel Dorothy Jones

The building operations are still in an unfinished state. The Staff and Boys are using the rooms to the front of the Building. We have only one bathroom, for everybody, and no hot water supply, while water for cooking purposes has to be carried a distance of 30 yards. We are managing with this temporary water supply until the new connection is made to the main. Lack of storing space is proving a problem, for example, the Library is serving as the Office, General Store and Food Store.'

Although our order for clothes was placed as long ago as May, we have so far been unable to obtain any supplies. In spite of numerous letters and explanations our Contractors have not succeeded in Securing a Certificate from the Board of Trade. This matter is now in the hands of the Home Office.

Matron is kept very busy as the appointed domestic staff have not secured their release from their other employment. We hope to be at full strength in a fortnight's time. As arranged with Mr. Shipley, H.M. Home Office Inspectorate schoolroom work has not to be attempted until the school is put into order. The 10 boys admitted today are to assist the staff cleaning, sorting equipment, and preparing the way for the reception of more boys."

### Sale of Ponsonby Hall

A Trust Deed made the 3rd of September 1942 between the Managers appointed and the Trustees of whom there were four. The Deed recited that a Conveyance dated the 22nd Day of April 1941, between Honora Frances Stanley and Percy Douglas Campbell Johnston DSO., of the first Part, the Trustees of the second Part and the School Managers of the Third part whereby certain Freehold property consisting of the Mansion House, Stables, Farm buildings and cottages formerly known as PONSONBY HALL at Calderbridge. In the schedule to the Deed it stated that all that piece or parcel of land containing in superficial area 23 acres or thereabouts, the greater part of which is situate in the Parish of Ponsonby, and the remainder in the parish of St. Bridget's Beckermef – this included the North and South Lodges. The Stanley family retained the field adjoining the South Lodge, and was later exchanged by deed for a larger field next to the school.'

### Occupants of Ponsonby Hall 1841

May Stanley	41	Independent
Jane Stanley	15	"
Mary Stanley	14	"
Helen Stanley	13	"
Constance Stanley	5	"
Douglas Stanley	2	"
Frances Forbes	28	Servant
Sarah Greenup	26	"
Catherine Thompson	25	"
Ann Bingham	20	"
Sarah Younghusband	20	"
Grace Tyson	15	"
Margaret Farrer	15	"
Thomas Greenup	25	Male servant
William Greenup	20	"
Jas Walls	20	Gardener
John Robinson	20	Mason
Stephen Hartley	20	Gamekeeper
John Mossop	20	Farmer
Ann Mossop	20	Servant
William Mossop	15	"
Thomas Mossop	15	"
Clement Mossop	13	"
Ann Hellon	45	"
Joseph Hellon	50	Agricultural Labourer

\* The head of the House is not shown

Sir John Summerson, eminent architect in three Cantor Lectures to the Royal Society of Arts in March 1959, said that the study of the 18th century Country House is at present somewhat lop-sided. There is no known published history of the English Country House which attempts to give an accurate connected account of its changes throughout the 18th century. Nobody has attempted to estimate the number of houses built, the amount of money spent on them or their distribution throughout the kingdom. It is only fairly recently that architectural history has come to be considered a legitimate study, and where the 18th century is concerned it is dominated by the idea of a succession of architectural personalities, the story of types of buildings. The study of the Country House is still largely conditioned by what one may call guide book interest.

**Ponsonby Hall is such a House.** Little is known about the Architect and it is only by an examination of the structure can we find out the extent of the original building.

By the end of the 18th century the great Palladian Mansions were already seen as stranded hulks from the past, and then an upsurge of Country House building began, so much so that in the time of Nash (of Nash Terrace fame) 55 architects of repute were engaged in building country houses in England between 1780 and 1800.



Sir Robert Taylor in his Treatise on 'The Picturesque and Architectural Views of Cottages, Farm Houses and Country Villas' states –

Villas may be considered under three different descriptions

1. Occasional and temporary retreats of the nobility, near London, town residence.
2. Country Houses of wealthy persons and persons in official stations, which cannot be far removed from the metropolis.
3. The Habitations of Country gentlemen of moderate fortune with elegance compactness and convenience are the characteristics of such buildings in contradistinction to the magnificence and extensive range of the country seats of the Nobility and opulent gentry.

PONSONBY HALL (Later Pelham House School) would appear to come within the scope of No. 3.

'13th September 1947. The form of service of the memorial Library is attached. As well as the Managers, and Staff and Boys we were delighted to welcome five old boys from as far away as Sheffield, Stockport and Barrow, and Middlesborough. The ceremony was simple and most appropriate. The Bishop of Penrith was wearing the robes of Bishop Pelham. We were thrilled to hear an account broadcast on the BBC 6 o'clock News. The Bishop of Penrith said 'we dedicate this Library to be, together with this Portrait, a Memorial of Herbert Sidney Pelham, Lord Bishop of Barrow in Furness, the Founder of this school, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

Note. The Portrait of Bishop Pelham was painted by the late J. D. Kenworthy of St. Bees.

Mr. W. Rudd, appointed Assistant Master on Feb. 1st 1943. Subsequently he was appointed to the post of Deputy Headmaster.

16th November 1946. Mr. Wm. Fletcher appointed as Bursar and later had a special responsibility for training boys on the hills, camping, etc.

Mr. H. Stout appointed School Architect.

**Medical care.** Dr. E. Braithwaite was appointed Medical Officer for the school in 1941 and, Dr. J. Strain subsequently took over his duties.

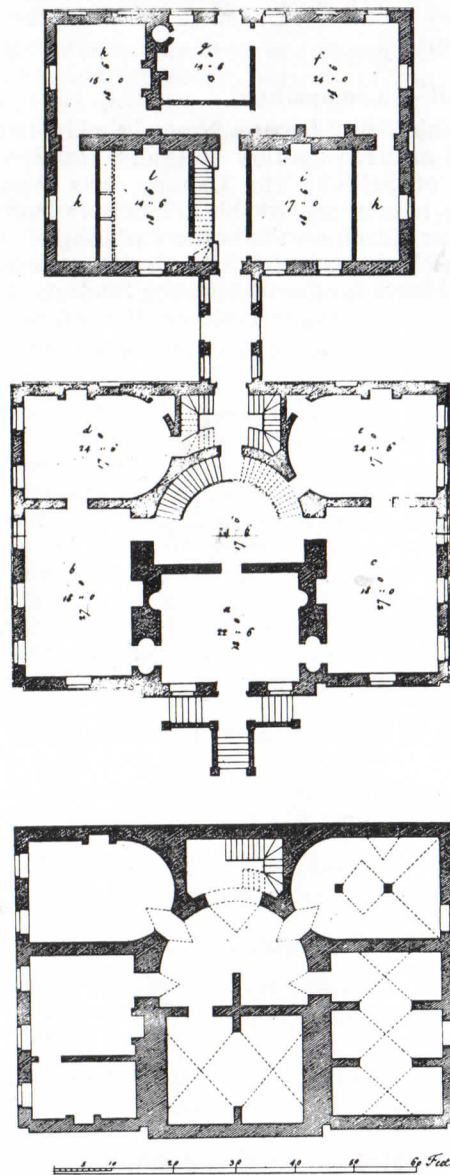
**Pelham House Boys Club.** Was one of the first Approved Schools affiliated Oct. 1949 to the National Ass. of Boys Clubs. Mr. Craven was the Leader.

The plan of the building was probably taken from one of James Paine's designs (an eminent Architect of the period) and the following letter from the commission of Ancient Monuments purports Paine's design may have been incorporated. Also the attached Plan and elevations of a Mansion in Yorkshire is interesting as a comparison with Pelham. During digging oper-

ations outside the building in 1960, a silver coin of Geo. iii was recovered may point to the date 1775 when the builder began the foundations.'

#### **Ponsonby Hall — a comparison**

Certain architectural features have a similarity to "the Burn" built in 1796 an 18th Century Georgian mansion house owned by the Earl of Selkirk. The Canopy, Bay Windows, Shallow angled Roofs bear a remarkable likeness to Ponsonby Hall. It is situated near Edzell on the borders of Angus and Kincardineshire. After 1929 it was offered to the Dominion Students Hall Trust as a residence for Commonwealth Students.



*Plan of the Base & Principal Floors.*  
*James Paine Archt.*

**Plan of St. Ives, Bingley, Yorkshire**

8 Salisbury Street,  
Skipton,  
Yorkshire.

5th May 1976

Dear Mr. Fletcher,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th March about Pelham House, and apologies for my delay in replying. I can answer your enquiries as follows:-

1. The home I referred to in Yorkshire was **St. Ives** near Bingley (now known as Harden Grange) built by Benjamin Ferrand in 1759 and largely remodded in 1859, the architect was James Paine (1717-1789).

2. Paine's designs for St. Ives were published in his Plans, elevations and sections of Noblemens and Gentlemens houses Vol. 1. (1767) and the situation at Pelham House, is that the building is almost an exact copy in plan as well as elevation of these designs, evidently executed by a local Mason without any architect in the modern sense being involved. The only variations from Paine's design are that the external detail is rather coarser and more conventional than on the original - and exactly of the type one would expect from a local builder of the time. The canopy (Portico), is of course a later addition, and the house has been altered and extended at the back.

On one occasion (T. Thornton, 'Sporting tour through the North parts of England' - Ed. London 1896 p. 308) it was in fact asserted that Paine was actually the architect of Ponsonby Hall. But this is very unlikely as the literal truth, and just repeats the fact of it being a copy of one of his designs. The house does not accord with the pattern of his career - he was in retirement by the time it was built and he did nothing else in the North west at all, nor with his working methods he never repeated himself so closely on any other occasion.

Yours sincerely

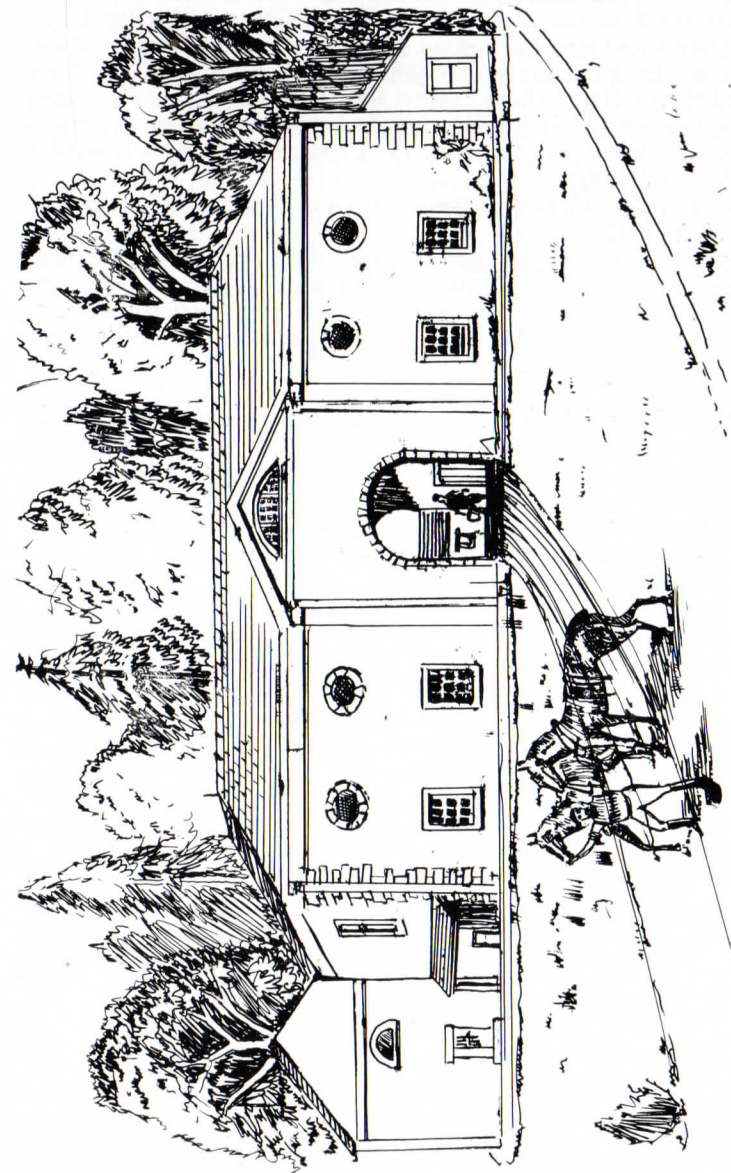
Peter Leach

Commission for Ancient Monuments

Three important problems confounded the owners of such a large building, Water supply, Lighting, Sewage and Heating. Until central heating was installed, coal and log fires sufficed to warm the rooms, this was totally inadequate in winter, and when the Georgian and Victorian Ladies and their escorts stepped from their carriages at the front door on a cold winter evening for a party or ball.



In 1913-14 Mr. W. H. Turner the then tenant had a reservoir built at the highest point in the Church Field. Water was pumped from the River Calder to this high point and a gravity feed through water pipes to a 500 gallon water tank in the water Tower in the Mansion. He was a J.P. **Mr. W. H. Turner D.L.** who rented the mansion, carried out many alterations and did in fact overcome many of these problems. He had a tunnel driven through the sandstone from a point near the River bridge to allow a head of water to drive a water turbine, this was supplemented by a leat from the River at a lower point. The Turbines drove generators to supply light and power to the Hall. The sewage problem was overcome by building a large septic tank 60 feet below the level of the front lawn, this was totally inadequate for a school in 1941 for 80 boys, and staff, and the septic tank was replaced by a modern sewer joining the Main Sewerage system – this was carried out by the Border Engineering Contractors Ltd.



Drawing of Stables, Ponsonby Hall

### Other Buildings on the Ponsonby Estate

Just beyond the large Oaktree on the main drive to the school stood a group of buildings known as the Stableblock. There was stabling for 8 horses, a coachman's house, Kennels for the Dogs, store rooms and carriage rooms, Hay lofts. The house was occupied by a Mr. Fred Long (a character in the village) who later farmed Scar Green farm. Most of the Village people found employment in the Hall, either as Cooks, maids, gardeners, game-keeper, etc. (Compare this with the Census enumerations of 1841 and 1851 and 1881).

The Stable Block of Red Sandstone was demolished by Mr. W. Pharoah in 1948.

There was also a gardeners 'Bothy' near the Walled Garden, and the gardener was responsible for all the greenhouses, and Peaches, Oranges, citrus fruit, figs etc., were grown besides decorative plants for the Hall. Another feature of this Walled garden was an arch built through the wall to reveal a large fish pond.

A Path along the River Bank and here was planted with hybrid Rhodedendrons, a wooden bridge spanned the river at its narrowest part below which there was a deep pool where good sport was possible in the fishing season. The path continued and led to a pheasantry. All along the river banks spring bulbs flourished, Wild Daffodils, Hyacinths, snowdrops etc.

### AD 1780 — SETTING THE SCENE

About this period this country was passing through one of the most turbulent periods of her history.

Differences between this country and the American Colonies on a paltry question of victualling the troops arose. Instead of trying means of conciliation, chose to carry things with a high hand. The Americans resisted the Tariffs which this country placed on imported goods, and threw goods into the sea. War followed as a matter of course, but the land forces of the British under rash and incompetent commanders suffered bloody defeats. At home the war was unpopular and in 1776, the British troops were disgracefully ejected from Boston. Independence for the Americans was acknowledged by France and Spain, so that we were embroiled in War not only with them, but also the Dutch.

In 1780 London was the scene of terrible riots and was for many days at the mercy of a savage mob, and plundered and devastated Romish Churches, and set fire to the prisons of Newgate, The Fleet and King's Bench, 200 were killed. The years 1780-81-82 were rendered remarkable by the seige of the Rock of Gibraltar. The Spaniards bringing all their forces to defend the Rock. Our heroic garrison under General Eliot forced Spain to surrender.

By 1789 a revolution burst out in France, which was destined to put a new aspect upon the political affairs of Europe. It deluged France with Blood and Crime and transferred the reins of government from the Monarch to the Mob. The war with Europe generally arose through the remarkable man Napoleon, who overturned nearly every throne in Europe.

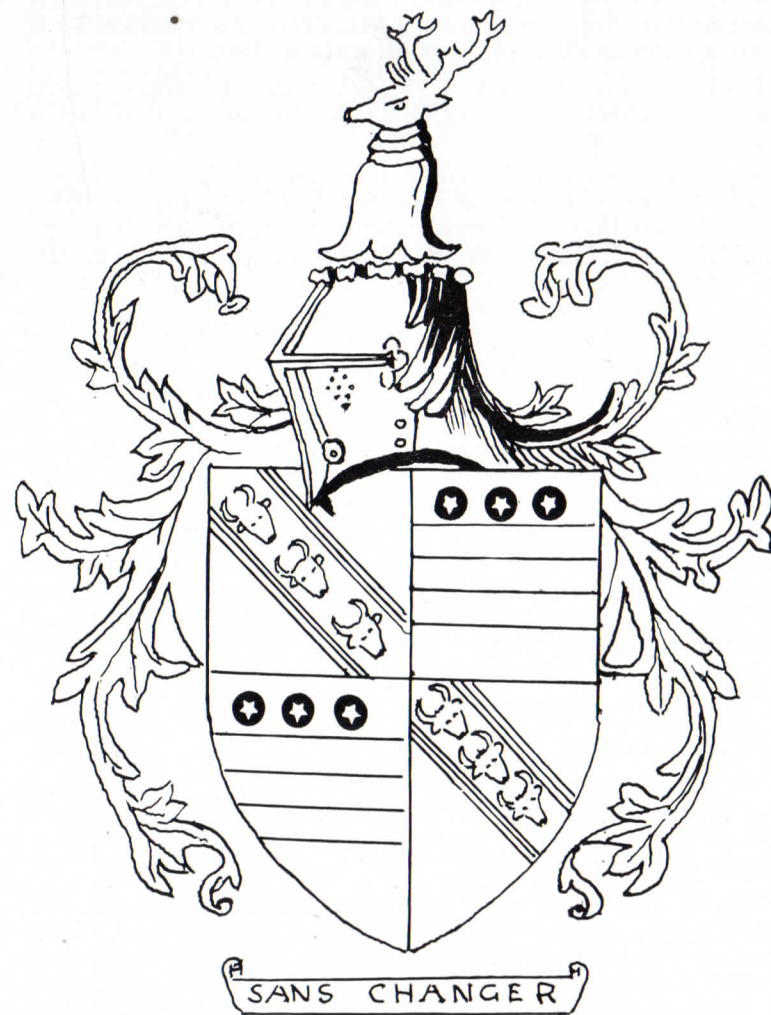
It was, however a period of great expansion in trade, steam power was developed and this contributed to ease the burdensome toil of the working classes in the factories. The Arts produced great Artists like Turner, poets like Wordsworth, Southey, Byron and others. There was a great surge forward in education.

Foremost in the list of Inventions by which mankind has profited stands the STEAM ENGINE. All made prodigious strides since George the Third ascended the Throne. It followed therefore that new Buildings began to spring up everywhere in the country, one of which, of course was Ponsonby Hall.





Photo of part of Drawing Room, Ponsonby Hall



Crest of the Stanleys



## INTERIOR OF THE MANSION 1780

The ground floor—entrance through the heavy sandstone canopy supported by fluted Doric Columns, 13½ft high, probably quarried from a quarry distant 1½ Miles from the Mansion. Each Column is in one piece, i.e. not built up in sections.

Front entrance hall was laid with black and white marble slabs and on each side of the Hall were fireplaces and niches in the Wall for ornaments.

The second front Hall leading from which is the magnificent stone staircase with wrought iron rails, leading to the first floor. The Staircase was semi-circular with mahogany bannister and lit with brass oil lamps. The black and white marble floor continued from the 1st front Hall. Passing through a curved mahogany door on the left we enter the first and second drawing rooms, divided by Pilasters topped with Corinthian Capitals. All the rooms on the ground floor show the Adam Bros. influence was obvious in the heavy friezes and decorative symbols over the doors.

Natural light was admitted to the large Hall, and staircase by a large Venetian lantern window in coloured glass, below which is a frieze in plaster of a Minoan design.

On the right and leading from the stairway hall was another curved mahogany door on rising brass hinges leading to the Library, which had shelving for a large number of volumes and niches and fireplace. Bay windows were built into the structure in the entertainment rooms.

Below the stairs on the ground floor and in the centre of the hallway another door led to the main passage to the service quarters. On the left was a large dining room with very high Georgian Windows, and here was the magnificent fireplace of white Italian and Sienna marble surmounted by a 10ft mirror. The decoration in high relief depicting white marble angels and a flower and fruit design. Again the Adams influence was apparent in the Dining room.

The following rooms led from the main passage. Small staff sitting room, Large kitchen with, China room (where all the crockery was kept), small kitchen with scullery, with two larders, another passage led off to a pantry and silver cupboard, leading to a store room, Office, Gun room, Power lift room and ending with a flight of steps into a yard.

**Cellar** contained washing and drying room, Ironing room, 2 WC's, Boiler room lift, log room, game room, wine cellar (with Sandstone groined ceiling) fish larder and finally the Battery room connected with the lighting of the hall.

**First Floor** leading from the landing (at the north end of the building) were 5 bedrooms and 3 dressing rooms. A door from

the landing led up a flight of stairs to the Tower, where there was another bedroom and dressing room, also used as a children's play room.

The Master bedroom was on the left or eastern side of the building approached from a passage next to which was the main bathroom, and dressing room, and at the end of the passage a further 7 bedrooms, bathroom, 3 WC's and finally to a flight of stairs to the yard below at the rear of the building. Above the 7 bedrooms was a large lead lined water tank capable of holding 500 gallons.

There were two Fireplaces in the Drawing room of White Italian Marble, one of which had an unusual design incorporating a fox and heron design (it was removed to Ponsonby Old Hall in 1982 for Mr. and Mrs. Peter Stanley).



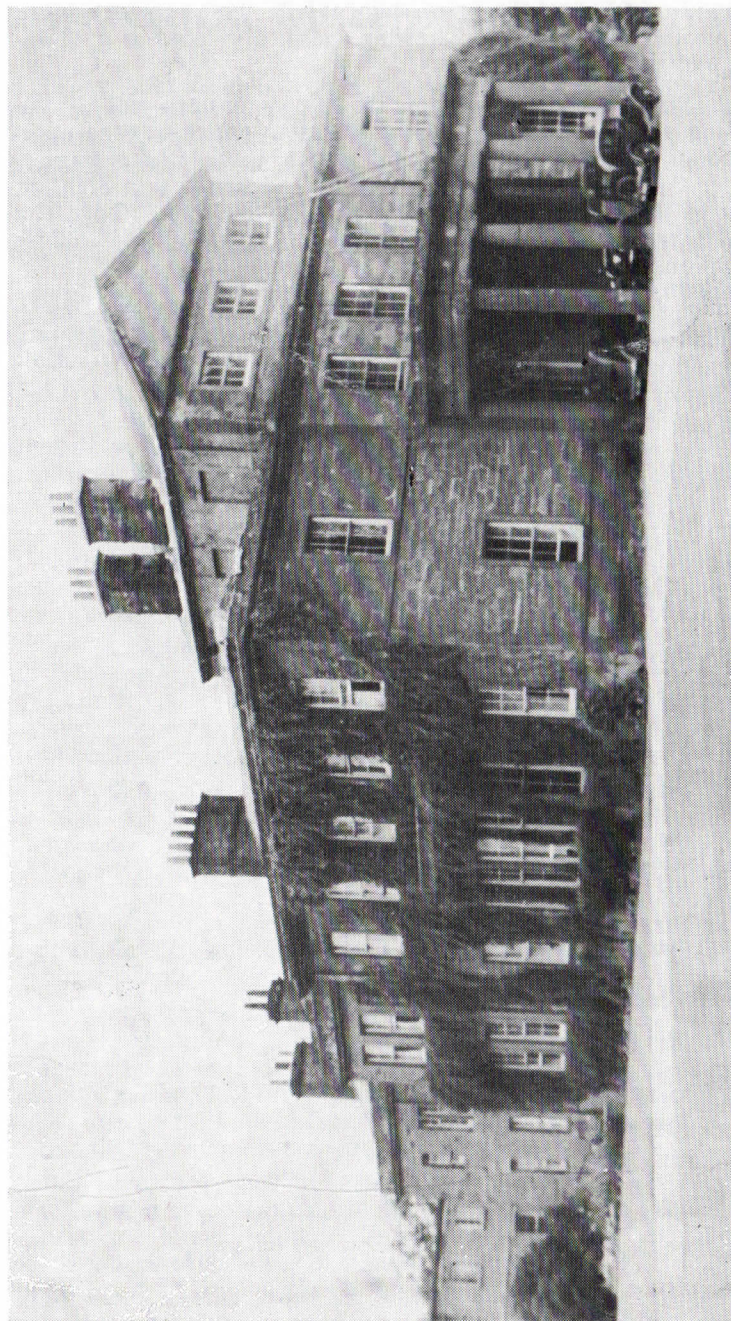


Photo of Pelham House 1946 — as a school post 1941

## EXTERIOR OF THE MANSION 1780

Looking across the main front lawn towards the hall, which is built of Local Red Sandstone, one would notice the squat appearance of the building, and the remarkable number of chimney stacks, the many windows and massive appearance of the sandstone canopy, with its four pillars, the heavy curved overhanging wall plate with block decoration, which was brought in by Adam. By 1775 the idea of the basement services had gone and the stone dado or plinth shown on the lower part of the building is mere decoration. The Service Wing followed.

Although the dates of the extensions are not known, they are plainly visible. They were probably carried out by Mr. Turner. The apartments contained many valuable paintings, including 6 on copper by Holbein, Henry the VIII, his Queen Anne Bolyn, Chaucer, Ben Johnson, Latimer and Cranmer, John Stanley the royalist, Sir George Fleming, Bart, Bishop of Carlisle, George Edward Stanley and his Lady by Romney. Edward Stanley by Lonsdale, and Mrs. Stanley by Mrs. Carpenter, Henry Lord Viscount Lonsdale, Mrs. Dacre, and Mr. Stanley (some of the paintings are still in the possession of Mr. Nicholas Stanley at Dalegarth Hall, Eskdale).

**The ancient Bed.** In the Hall was preserved a very curious bedstead believed to date from 1345, which had been brought from Dalegarth Hall, the pillars are massive, the cornice is decorated with shields bearing the arms of the Stanleys quartered with Austhwaite.

Hutchinson's History of Cumberland and Westmorland in 1792 states —

about 12 years ago Geo. Ed. Stanley, the present owner removed from his present position, where he has built a pleasant and commodious house on rising ground on the banks of the River Calder. The House which is 72ft in front and 115ft in depth is remarkable for its splendid elegance and convenience of the apartments and commands extensive views a prospect of both sea and land. The Welsh mountains can be seen from the lawns.

**The Rev. J. R. Williams** in his 'Guide to Whitehaven' states — on the right is the noble park and woods of Ponsonby Hall, the seat of William Stanley, who represents an elder branch of the same stem as the more fortunate house and offshoot — the House of Derby.

Other references made to the Hall appear in:—

**The County Histories**

**Nicholson and Burn 1797**

**Parson and White's gazeteer 1829**



## PELHAM HOUSE SCHOOL 1941

The first Headmaster was Mr. W. G. Hewitson, and the Matron Mrs. B. Hewitson. After half a lifetime of dedicated service to the school, during which He saw a Georgian Mansion grow into an up to date school for reforming boys and building their characters, he died in 1968.

Mr. N. B. Curbishley was appointed to the post of Headmaster with his wife Mrs. S. Curbishley as Matron; they tried to create the family atmosphere in the school which was originally the aim of the Founder, Bishop Pelham.

Pelham House School is a Listed Building so that any attempt to alter the fabric would be an infringement of Scheduled Monuments under the 1968 Act.

Before entering the Village of Calderbridge going south on the A595 there is at the foot of the hill, a bold sign which reads 'Windscales Works' and next to it a lesser sign which shows the crest of the school.



Crest of Pelham House School

Standing high on the escarpment on the left bank of the River Calder is a cluster of Buildings seen through the trees, in fact they are the first belt of trees of any consequence since leaving Whitehaven 10 miles away, and the Calder River basin is enhanced by this green belt, largely due to the skilful and imaginative planting of trees by the Stanleys 200 years ago. Follow the road leading to the school, cross the sandstone bridge over the River Calder. The original bridge collapsed following a violent storm and was replaced by the owners in 1879. There is a tablet on the south side of the bridge. If your visit coincides with a sunny day in May or June, you will marvel at the smooth lawns, the magnificent collection of Rhodedendrons and Azealeas of varied species – a riot of colour set against the backcloth of tall trees of Chestnut, Ash, Oak, Limes, variegated hollies, and of particular interest the large Cedar Tree, whose branches sweep down over the lawn. During the 200 years since the first trees were planted it has been necessary to have many of them cut down, the work carried out by boys and staff, even clearing the ground behind the school proved to be a formidable task for Masters and boys and it took two years with spade, pick and crow bars to convert the area to a garden to grow produce for the school.

### The History of Pelham House School 1941-1968.

Immediately the Certificate of Approval was granted to the Managers of the school by the Home Office arrangements were made to purchase the Building and the parkland consisting of 20 acres. A Mortgage probably arranged by the Chairman the Bishop Pelham was arranged. There was so much to be carried out within the new buildings, so that further grants from H.M. Treasury helped with the adaptations, installation of various apparatus, boilers, electrical wiring, cooking appliances, beds for the dormitories, Chairs, Tables, books for the schoolroom, plumbing had to be carried out throughout the building on contract. The treasury grants were paid quarterly, following the submission of the progressive Estimated requirements over a period and through the local H.O. Inspectorate at Leeds. Regular inspections were made by the Home Office's Inspectors.

A Major Building programme at the Rear of the school took place in 1948-49, this included the erection of maids bedrooms, a common room, sewing room, ablutions, kitchen alterations. A new Classroom block was built for the Teachers, and craftrooms. A new iron fire escape and access steps to conform to the fire regulations were added.

The Teaching Staff, and Instructors were selected and commenced their duties as soon as the buildings were ready.

There were 4 teachers for ordinary school subjects, and a remedial class for the backward boys, a painting Instructor, Brick-laying Instructor, Gardening Instructor, and Woodwork Instructor.



With this staff available and the boys in training, a New Technical building was erected, a Rose Garden was built on the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne. The school was painted throughout inside and out, and the general maintenance of the school carried out by the training Depts.

Objects made by the boys and Craft departments, included –  
 St. James Church, London. – A crib for the Christmas nativity complete with full size cow and donkey.  
 St. Martins in the Fields Church, London – a Cross of Oak and Perspex for the east window, by the woodworkers.  
 St. Pauls Church, London – a small cross.  
 Liverpool Cathedral – Symbolic nativity joining together the ethnic children in the city, by the Art club.  
 Father Borrelli's Boys Club in Naples – an assortment of odds and ends normally carried in boys pockets were prefabricated into the shape of an anchor.  
 St. James Piccadilly, Trafalgar Square, London, a Donkey and Cow for the Christmas nativity with symbolic star.

#### **Community work –**

Painting and decorating Ponsonby Church.  
 Abbeyfield Old Folks home, Seascale – Painting.  
 Isthmus Cottage, painting and decorating, and woodwork for the Cumbria Assn. of Boys Clubs at Keswick.  
 Painting and Decorating Dept. and Woodworkers.  
 A Major project was the building of Beckstones Centre near Broughton in Furness. Work on the chapel, making the windows, painting etc. The school had a close relationship with the Village Church and village life – sawing logs for the older inhabitants. Open days in the school grounds for the village, sales of school work to the general public, for church and other funds.  
 Making an oak alter for a Church at Dean – Woodwork Dept.  
 Making a seat in teak for the Parish of Ponsonby – Woodwork Dept.  
 Building Canoes in Fibre glass for the Outward Bound school. Woodwork Dept.  
 Building a rowing boat for the duck pond in the school grounds. Woodwork Dept.  
 Building a Nativity Crib for the West Cumberland Hospital. Woodwork Dept.

#### **Other work carried out by staff and boys:–**

Building a Cricket Pavilion in brick and timber.  
 Levelling the ground for a double Tennis Court.  
 Carried out by the Bricklaying Dept.  
 Planting Cherry trees in two lines called Cherry Tree Avenue. Gardening Dept.  
 Building an aviary for hundreds of Budgies and other small birds by Mr. Harris-Ward – Teacher.  
 Introducing mallard duck to the pond after clearing away all the reeds which had grown over it in a century, a herculean task.



Making the Running Track



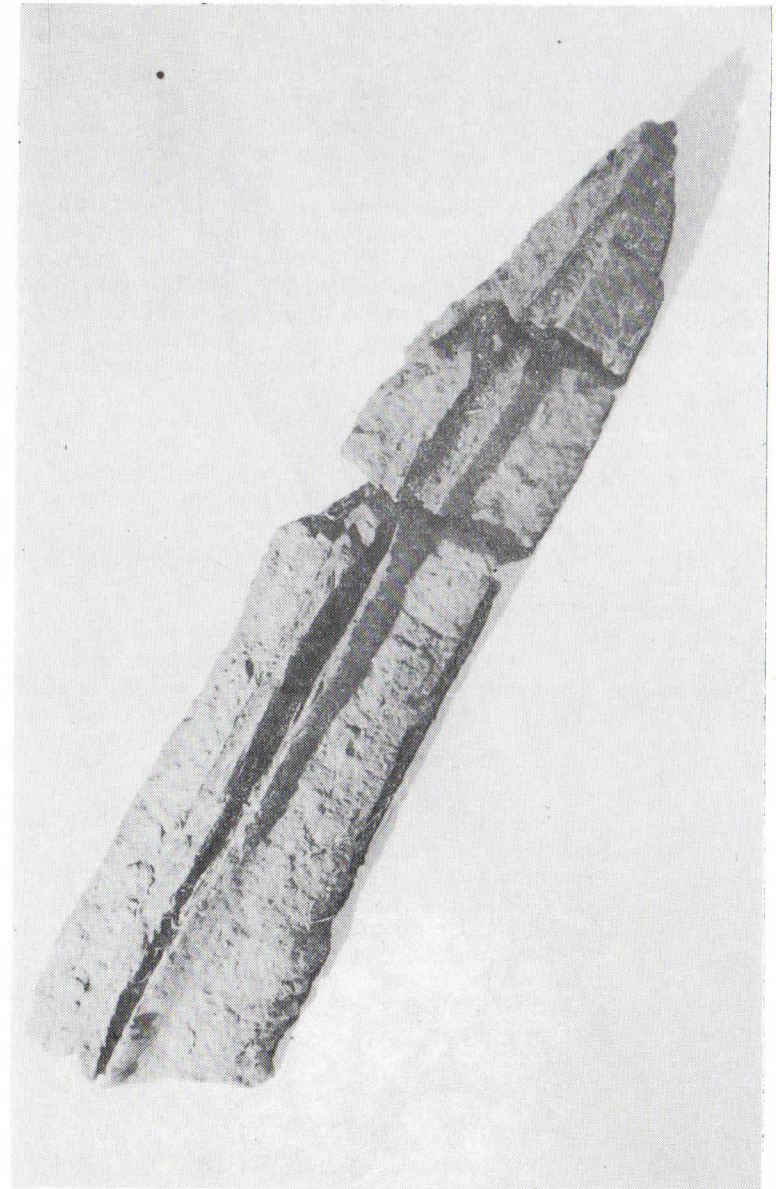
Building an Oil Tank House by Bricklayer and his boys and Mr. Hogg's woodworkers.

Long term building of the running track—This was probably one of the major projects and meant excavating hundreds of tons of soil by using rails and bogies (loaned from a local Mine) and levelling the site for a running track.

All Staff and boys.

Rugby and football extensions. Laying out the field and levelling.

New Greenhouse 100 feet in length in the walled garden carried out by the Woodwork Dept. and Gardening Instructor and boys. Boys were encouraged to engage in sport, like swimming canoeing and Mountain Climbing, and assisted a member of staff who was an archaeologist.



**Photo of Ponsonby Sword**



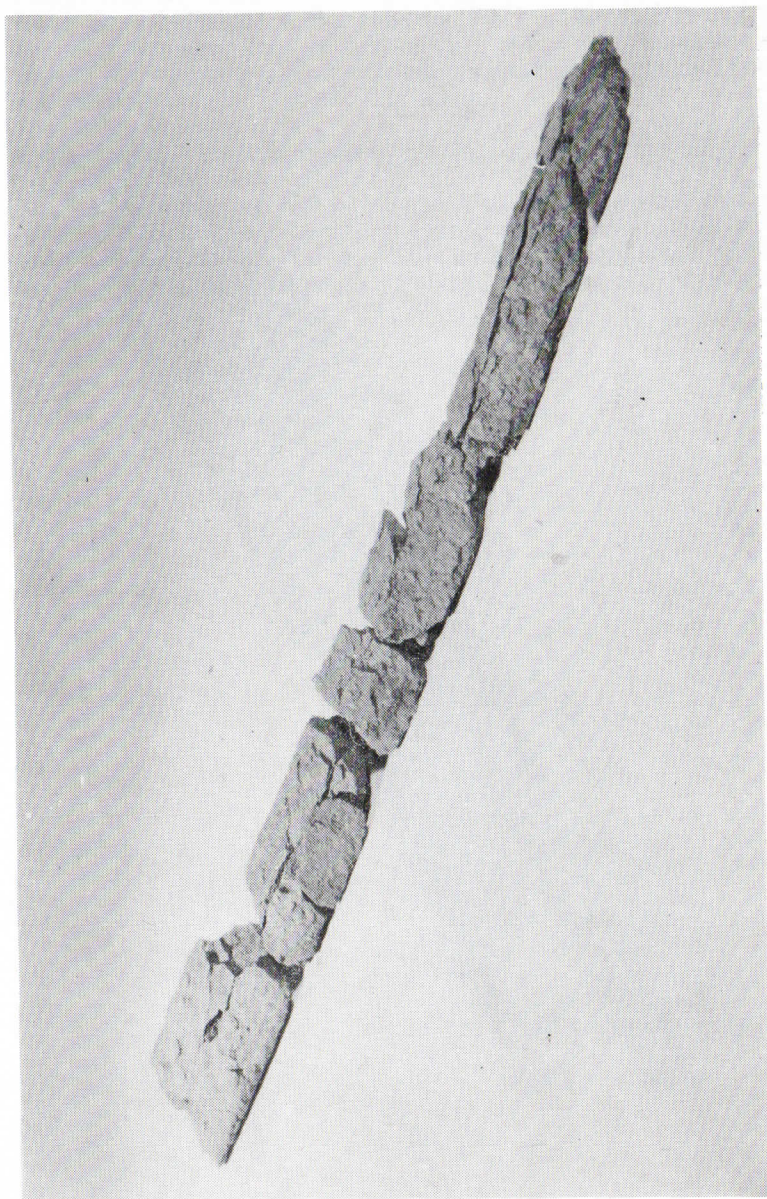


Photo of Ponsonby Sword

## “THE PONSONBY SWORDS”

### The First Excavation

Early in the summer of 1965, Mr. Peter Stanley's Staff dug into a stone heap on In Fell, the writer was called and the mound proved to be a bronze/Age Cairn. Careful digging exposed the fragmented remains of two La Tené swords. They were both identified by Dr. R. F. Tylecote of the Department of Metallurgy, University of Newcastle on Tyne. Dr. Tylecote in his report states. **Sword No. 1.** “About 12 inches of typical La Tené sword of oval or lozenge cross section, probably of maximum width of 1.6 inches. **Sword No. 2.** about 7 inches of ogival-section spearhead of similar date. The apparent grooving in the Ponsonby Specimens due to the rusting process which often opens up sharp edges.”

Both weapons were completely converted to rust. However a section of a piece of solid rust showed a layered structure which was related to the original metal. Both these weapons were made by a straight forward piling process and were not in any way ‘Pattern welded’ as were some of the Roman and Anglosaxon Weapons. They were sent to Cambridge University Museum.

On **In Fell** are the vestiges of a settlement. The ramparts and ditch are in a fair state of preservation, and can be distinctly traced all round. It is almost oval in plan and near the North West ditch is a ‘Tank’ filled with water from a natural spring and the remains nearby of what must have been a house. This so called ‘Tank’ never dries up. In 1883 the upper part of a large quern (hand Mill) was found quite close to the settlement and the writer picked up a whet stone in one of the Ditches. It had almost certainly been used as a refuge into which cattle could be driven and watered. The La Tené period is within the European Iron Age or 500–300 B.C. Further proof of occupation was found by Mr. Benson of Oxford when he excavated an area 100 yards from the settlement and found another house which had traces of its having been on fire.





Photo of Bronze Age Necklace (found on Irton Pike)

The second excavation carried out by the Boys, Calder Girls Public School and St. Bees Public School Boys and the writer in 1968 was on Irton Pike. It revealed spectacular finds a **jet necklace of 100 jet beads**, and a pulley ring fastener, flint arrow heads, and a fragmented bronze age food vessel and the most important of all, a cult object a Man or Woman's head in stone (volcanic material) with inserts of epidote for the eyes, nose and mouth. The cult object was placed centrally in the Grave. It was a symbolic artefact of unusual archaeological importance, being rare in these islands, but found on the Continent. The grave or cairn in which the grave goods were buried could be dated to around 1350 BC (the Middle Bronze age).

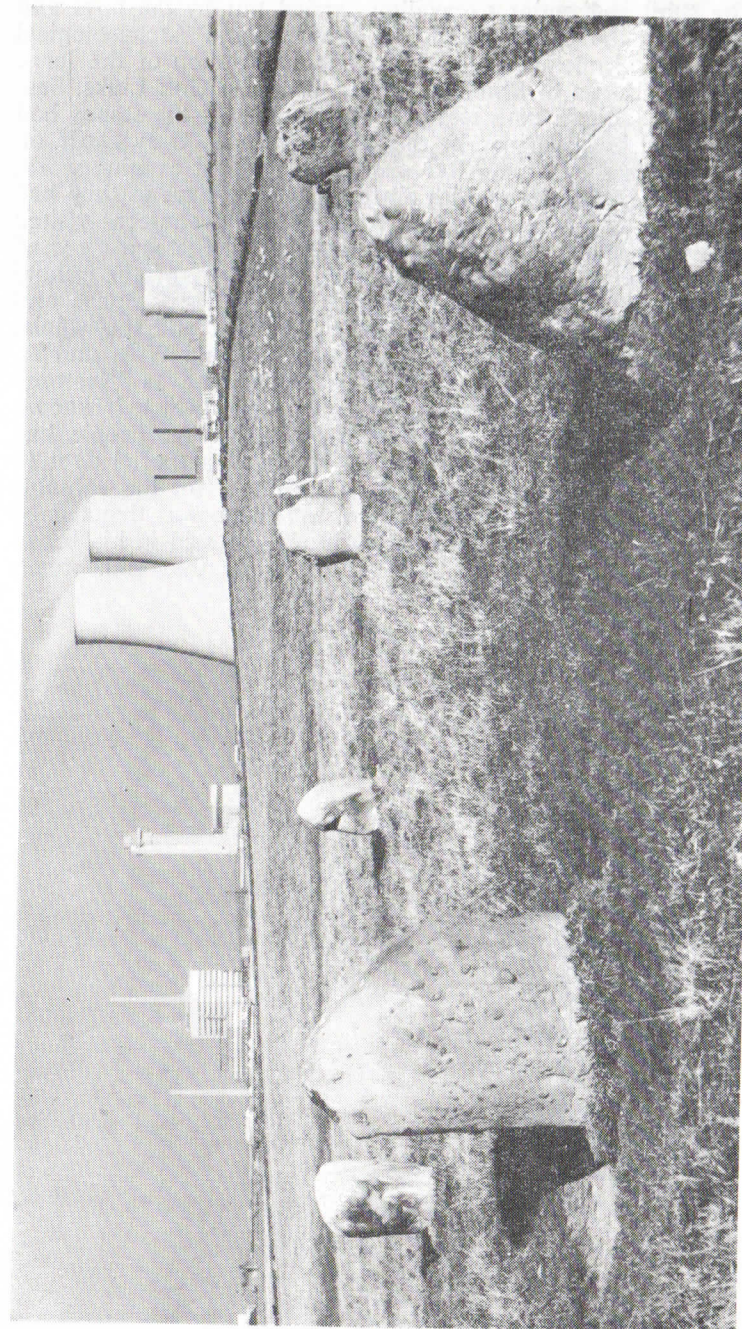
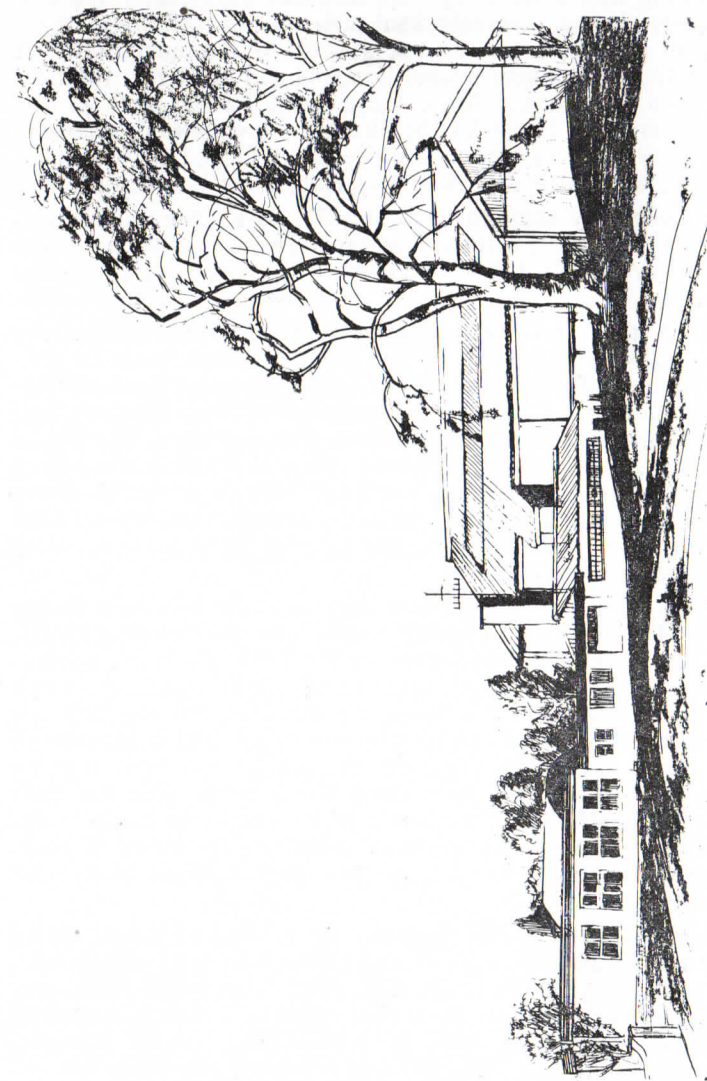


Photo of Stone Circle, Seascale Hall with Calder Nuclear Power Station



The third and major excavation carried out by the boys and others from the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society SW Group was the finding and restoration of the large **Bronze Age circle of Standing Stones**, near the Golf Links, Seascale. It is 100ft in diameter and all but one of the stones had been buried by a farmer in the field known as Grey Croft on the Seascale Hall estate. After weeks of tiring but exciting work, the circle was completed with all the stones in place as they had stood for two or three thousand years. It is a monument visited by many historians and archaeologists. Mr. W. Fletcher directed the Excavations with help from some members of the school Staff, Mr. R. Walker and Mr. Fred Walker, Miss Jones and others. The finds are in Tullie House, Carlisle, and the official report appears in the Transactions of the C. and W.A. and A. Society. It now appears on the Ordnance Map as 'Restored Circle.' It is the only stone circle in Cumbria which is known to have been sepulchral, i.e. where the Bronze Age people had buried their dead. Mr. Fletcher said he owed a special debt to Bill Litt of Dockwray Nook Farm, Lamplugh, for the valuable assistance given by using his tractor. When he was thanked by Mr. Fletcher for giving his services freely, he said in his broad Cumberland accent "I, if it hed'nt been for thee Bill, steans could hev ligged."



Drawing of the school, part of controlled Community Home

## Pelham House as a Controlled Community Home

Following Mr. Curbishley's appointment as Head, there was a complete change, this coincided with the new rules and regulations of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 becoming law. A completely new modern school was planned sited two hundred yards from the old buildings. Large capital items such as the change over to oil firing for the Heating. New up to date School rooms, Play Barn in which 5 a side football and cricket could be played, a Theatre and Assembly Hall, New block of Offices.

Mr. Curbishley introduced a weekly boys Case Meeting to which staff took part, aftercare and social service Officers attending. This eventually led to a system of giving boys an earlier release.

In 1973, the school was renamed Pelham House Community Home, and was taken over by the Social Services, based in Carlisle. The new Management meant a new group of local Managers, and more involvement with the Social Service Workers, and frequent Meetings with the aftercare Officers within the Social Service. Eventually Social Service Officers worked in the school and were allowed to tenant the Staff Houses of which there are 13 on the school estate. All these changes had a beneficial effect on the boys themselves, and allowed them more freedom to visit their homes regularly.

Contact with other boys from other schools became a factor in their training, and regular fixtures to play competitively, rugby, soccer, cricket, recreation on the Hills, Focus on adventure with safety as a key factor in all their sport. Although there were many minor accidents on the hills, not one boy was badly injured, or killed. In fact before Prince Philip introduced the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the school had been running similar tests, which led to a competitive spirit with the four houses in the school. There was a house trophy to compete for annually. Eventually the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme was introduced and many boys took part winning Silver and Bronze awards.

**Takeover by the Social Services.** By a Deed of Appointment made in 1972 the following **Founder Members** were appointed - E. Randall Esq., D. W. Leslie Esq., Mrs. Joan Isabel Halfpenny (Chairman) and Arthur Dodd Esq., and the **Local Authority Managers** consisted of Mrs. B. Iredale, Rev. J. C. Johnson, Trevor Moulding Esq., CC, Mrs. M. Nelson, Dr. Platt, Mr. H. Thomas, Mr. Vigodny and Mr. Nigel Wingate. **The New Trustees** were W. C. Brown Esq., A. Williamson Esq., Thomas S. Lowery Esq., Lilian Anne Lowther Munro, Arthur Dodd Esq., Dalton W. Leslie Esq., Thomas A. Brown Esq., John J. Simpson Esq., Joan I. Halfpenny and John Hope Turner Esq.

## Parish of Ponsonby - Taken from Parson and White's Directory of 1829. Some of the people living at that date:-

Christopher Birket. Licensed Victualler - Stanley Arms Inn.  
John Hartley, gamekeeper.  
William Mossop, New Mill, corn miller.  
John Stamper, New Mill, Blacksmith.  
Edward Stanley, Gentleman, Ponsonby Hall.

### Yeoman Farmers:-

Henry Bateman, Calder.  
William Dixon, Scar Green.  
John Gunson, Calder.  
John Nicholson, Scar Green.

### Other tenant farmers:-

Jonathan Benson, Laverick How.  
Isaac Gunson, Calder Hall.  
William Kendal, Gibb Hill.  
John Mossop, Church House .  
Jane Southward, Town End.  
John Sturgeon, Ponsonby Old Hall.  
Thomas Watson, Calder.  
John Wilson, Calder.



## Other items of common Interest in the Parish

### Minerals

There are no known deposits of Ore within the Parish, but quarries of excellent sandstone.

### Businesses

Blacksmithy

2 Sawmills

One Hostelry – 'The Stanley Arms Hotel.'

### The Stanley Arms Hotel

It was a stage coaching establishment, well known to travellers. It is the first building in the Parish after crossing the river bridge at Calderbridge. It was for many years run by the Hail family. There is still a descendant still living in the parish. Greenips ran the hotel 120 years ago and advertised as opposite page.

It is a farming community, and the following farms were owned by the Stanley family – Townend, Ponsonby Old Hall, Church house; Scar Green, New Mill and Calder Farm is owned by William Fenwick.

### Fisheries

There is a Calder fisherman's Club who fish the river Calder – salmon.

### Cricket and recreation

There is a local Cricket Club.

There are several footpaths leading out of the Parish to the high hill country to the east, and these encourage walkers to use these footpaths and Bridle tracks.

### Streams

Apart from the fast flowing River Calder, there is 'scar green beck' which is known locally as the 'Mad Beck.'

### Trees

On In Fell there are Larch, and sitka spruce in abundance and beyond Church House Farm to Calder there is a mixed variety of timber, also round the man made Tarn through which flows Mill beck. There is also a timber built fisherman's house

### Mills

New Mill is now derelict, but was a corn grinding mill up to this century.

### Communications

The A595 carries heavy industrial lorries to the Windscales and Calder works. There is also the railway which just touches the Parish at one point this is the main line between Carlisle and Carnforth.

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# GREENIP'S STANLEY ARMS, COMMERCIAL HOTEL, AND POSTING HOUSE, CALDERBRIDGE,

Within a few minutes' walk of the far-famed ruin of  
CALDER ABBEY, and two miles from Sellafield  
Station on the Furness Line.

---

A CHOICE  
SELECTION OF WINES AND SPIRITS.  

---

COMFORTABLE SITTING ROOMS,  
AND  
WELL-AIRED BEDS.

---

# WAGONETTES, CARRIAGES, AND DOG CARTS,

Constantly on Hire,  
WITH COMPETENT AND STEADY DRIVERS.





Onto Scawfell Pikes



Group of Boys in the days of the Ragged Schools in Birmingham  
1900



## The Housemasters

The Housemasters in the school, of whom there were 4, Mr. H. N. Craven, Mr. Platt, Mr. B. Brice and Mr. R. Jones. They were mainly responsible for the recreation of the Boys, all forms of sport being covered, Rugby, Soccer, Visits to Outward Bound School, where use was made of the canoes, some of which were built at Pelham House school. One form of recreation was climbing on the fells, which were 4 miles from the school. During the 26 years of Mr. W. Fletcher's (who was a true lover of the hills) association with the school, all boys had the option to camp and climb with him in all conditions and seasons, at the weekend. There were four houses in the school, Solway, Ennerdale, Calder and Wastwater, each of which were the responsibility of the Housemasters.

With the constant activities of climbing, a working relationship developed with Mrs. D. Banner (whose professional name was Josephina Das Vasconcellos) a sculptor, who lived in Little Langdale with her Painter husband Mr. Delmar Banner, Mrs. Banner proved to be a great inspiration to all who came into contact with her, and she fired the imagination of the boys to help the less fortunate, from the inner cities. On another page is a list of the various things which were made in the school as the result of this association with Mrs. Banner. The intake of boys was in the early days mainly from the cities, like Liverpool, and the Lancashire cotton Towns. When the school opened in War time 1941 it was a question of 'make do with what you have' whatever the nature of the project, and many of the boys had not the opportunity for a full time education, with the stringencies of war time rationing. Many of the boys admitted belonged to the world, of the forgotten, the misfits, urchins of the market place, where control had disappeared in the home, with the father away fighting with the Forces. Many could not read or write, and Mr. W. Rudd, M.Ed. later Deputy Headmaster with great diligence started a class for the backward type of boy, and it is to his intensive teaching, that boys who could not read or write, left the school, literate, and able to find a job. Two rather unusual crafts were carried on by Mr. Rudd, book-binding, and painting and decorating, whilst the Principal teacher Mr. N. A. Cory took leather work, this was no ordinary leather class one would find being taught in an evening class, but it was more like a sadler's shop. Fishing rods were made by the boys in the evenings and with Mr. Lowry's encouragement, some good rods were turned out, and were used to advantage when the whole school of 80 boys went to Camp with members of staff, to Brathay Hall, near Ambleside, at the invitation of Mr. Scott. Using Ex Army tentage and equipment the camp site looked more like a circus with its 70ft marquees, and bales-of straw for the palliases. For 5 years, the camping at Brathay Hall continued and was a great success, climbing, fishing, sailing, swimming were the main sports. This was a great test and admir-

able training for the City boy from the concrete avenues and flats.

I would add, however, that both Grammer school boys and public school boys were later admitted for training.

From 1941 to 1945, during the war years most things were rationed, and particularly food and clothing, which meant that the Gardening Department under Mr. W. H. Rhodes produced quantities of vegetables for the boys, and the sewing and mending department in the school (Miss McLaughlin and Miss M. Richardson) worked heroically to keep the boys garments tidy.

Of all the members of Staff that have passed through the school, Mr. W. Rudd was the longest serving teacher, until he retired in 1982. One can say that he was dedicated to character training of the boys in his care.

## The adult population of Ponsonby in 1983.

Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Appleby	Malcolm A. Mounsey
Judith Atkinson	Sheena Mounsey
Frank Barker	Jessie Norman
Allan Benn	Jos. Norman
Rosemary Benn	Thos. Ostle
Arthur Clark	Margaret Pickett
Dorothy Clark	Roger G. Pickett
Timothy Clark	Margaret E. Reay
John S. Clarke	Freda A. Robinson
Sarah A. Clarke	Frank Robinson
Irene Cook	James Samson
Lesley I. Cook	Julia Samson
Ronald Cook	Edward Sewell
H. N. Craven	Margaret Sewell
N. B. Curbishley	Eleanor M. Sharpe
Sylvia Curbishley	Janet Sharpe
Arthur Edmondson	Vanda Sharpe
Colin Edmondson	Wm. S. Sharpe
Eva Mary Edmondson	Charlotte N. Stanley
Mary Edmondson	David F. Stanley
Robin Edmondson	Gwendoline Stanley
Audrey Fenwick	John Peter Stanley
Barbara Fenwick	Philip Stanley
Wm. F. Fenwick	Edward Stewart
Isaac M. Gainford	Eva Stewart
Colin Gray	Peter Edward Stewart
David G. Hail	Peter Strong
Eileen Hail	Sylvia Strong
Henry Hail	Trevor Taylor
Elizabeth N. Hewitson	David M. Todd
David Hinton	Grace S. Todd
Fred Long	Michael J. Tooze
James B. Long	John R. Trot
Mary I. Long	Susan Trot



Alan Lynch  
Angela P. Lynch  
Robert C. Mayhow  
Pamela A. Mallard  
William Moffat

Hazel Tyson  
Andrew Waddington  
Jos. Williamson  
Mary Grace Williamson

## CALDER HALL—NUCLEAR POWER STATION

I cannot conclude this history of the Parish without making some reference to Calder Hall, Britain's first nuclear Power Station, which is situated at the seaward end of the Parish and on the left bank of the River Calder.

On the sunny morning of October 1956, her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II came to open this historic power station, the first in the world to supply electricity to a national supply network on an industrial scale. H.M. drove along the works road, past the gigantic piles some 450ft high, which were closed down after one took fire in 1957. The road slopes gently down to the River Bridge, which is the only means of access to the Calder Hall Power Station.

It had taken only 3½ years to design and build Calder Hall. By any standards this is fast work. When the work started several major parts of the design had only been roughed out, so that contractors had to build things, without knowing just how they were to be used. They had no tangible example to guide them, and although they had to work to standards of accuracy which had never before been specified for a piece of machinery as bulky as this. It is no exaggeration to say that Calder Hall is among the finest achievements of British heavy engineering. Although I do not wish to go into a lot of detail about the construction of Calder Hall, there are items which you should know about.

Special difficulties were involved with the pressure vessel. First a special Crane had to be built to lift heavy parts of the pressure vessel to a height of 125ft, and then lowered accurately down the centre of the octagonal concrete shield. Each section of which was welded and prefabricated on the ground weighed between 80 and 90 tons. The crane consisted of a 100 ton derrick mounted on a steel tower 90ft high, and became affectionately known as 'the Big Stick.' The lattice work of Steel plates on which the graphite core sits presented similar problems, together with unusually exacting requirements of accuracy. The whole structure had been designed so that it would not bend in the middle more than a quarter of an inch even when supporting its full load of more than 1000 tons. Then there was the building of the graphite core. 58,000 machined blocks of high purity graphite, were fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle. Stress relieving was achieved inside the vessel by building a huge electric fire capable of using 1500 kilowatts of electricity, heating went on for three days and then it was allowed to cool. After constant tests to see whether it could stand up to great pressures that operation would entail. By the evening of May 17th they handed over the plant to the Atomic Energy Authority, and the loading of Uranium fuel began. Engineers kept their eyes glued to the 'period meters' after each addition of fuel was added. As each rod was inserted the needles would jerk violently and fall



back more slowly. After 5 days it was clear that the reactor would soon be working, and finally after the addition of a single rod of uranium at 7.15 p.m. the vital needles rose and did not fall back. It was then 'critical' and the reactor had started work, with only one third of the fuel channels filled.

A dias with a silk Awning was specially erected in which H.M. the Queen, other dignatories and ministers of the Crown were to stand to operate the switch which would start sending electricity into the Grid. This was a great historical moment.

Except for short periods for maintenance, the Reactors at Calder are still working after 27 years.

Since then British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. have taken over Calder with its sister industrial complex at Sellafield, and new developments for the future of Calder type gas cooled reactors are often on Agendas, but one thing is certain, Calder Hall was worth building, and designers have returned to the design again and again. It is safe and robust, and gave power sooner than another type and at a reasonable price.

#### **Parish Councillors in 1983**

Tyson Dawson Esq.  
Philip Stanley Esq. (Chairman)  
Mrs. Audrey Fenwick  
David Stanley Esq.  
Miss Fenwick  
Mrs. C. Pritt  
Edward Stewart Esq.  
Parish Clerk — W. Fletcher Esq.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am conscious of the many gaps in this History of the Parish as I have had to rely on my memory, as some Records of the School, and the family records of the Stanley family have gone. However, I feel privileged and honoured to write this short history, and would like to thank all those people who Volunteered information. I am deeply indebted to David and Philip Stanley, Mrs. P. Millard, and N. Stanley and his staff, and Mr. and Mrs. Peter Stanley for a lot of the family history, and to the late Mr. W. G. Hewitson, for advising me to keep a photographic record of the history of the school, and to Mrs. B. Hewitson for reminding me of some of the many incidents which occurred in this residential school, and lastly to all those members of Staff, who over the years, did so much to add to the school's prestige in the area.

I am also especially indebted to members of the Parish Council of Ponsonby who urged me to write this short history and to Miss Gillian Edwards of the Library Staff Whitehaven and also to Miss M. Mossop and Mrs. S. Strong for checking details from School Records.

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George Todd & Son  
— Whitehaven —