

Brinscall and Withnell Heritage Trail. Extended Information



1. The Regal Cinema

Newcomers to Brinscall are surprised to hear that the village once had its own cinema; others have happy childhood memories of their trips to the Regal.

The Regal cinema at the bottom of School Lane (now the car park next to the bungalows) was converted by Jimmy Beaver in the early 1920s from a shop and 3 houses (see photo). Jimmy had been screening silent movies in a nearby barn since 1917. He then bought the shop and houses, gutted the buildings, except the roof and outside walls, and built a picture house with balcony; painting the outside walls white.

The films changed three times a week and on Saturday there were two performances in the evening (booking essential) and a childrens' matinee costing 3d (three old pennies, 1p today). From 1933, the cinema sometimes doubled up as a dance hall when Jimmy took out the downstairs seats, with dances on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Jack Murray recalls in his memoirs that, during the intervals, George Guest who lived at the clogger's shop on the corner of School Lane and Lodge Bank, played the piano. In the early days, 'the cinema was run by a gas engine and lads could get in free by turning the fly wheel to get it started'...days before health and safety!

In 2001, a wonderful written account of childhood visits to the Regal was written by Jim Lancaster: Link to <http://www.boydharris.co.uk/brins2.htm> - some great reenactment stories of Robin Hood and Tarzan up in the woods!

Also well worth a listen is a 10-minute audio link 'Memories of The Regal' with Dick Baxendale, William Hodgkinson, Dora Beaver (Jimmy's daughter), Gerald Moss and Bob Mason: Link to <https://soundcloud.com/boyd.../brinscall-memories-of-regal> ;

As TV became more popular, numbers going to the cinema dwindled and the Regal screened its last film in 1957. The building was eventually demolished in 1970.

No trace of the Regal remains and sadly, as Jim Lancaster says, "no inscription informs that here a generation of adults once found a haven from the anxieties of living in a world at war; that here the dream world of children took shape upon a silver screen."



Photo 1. The shops and houses on the right at the bottom of School Lane, Brinscall were converted into the Regal Cinema



Photo 2. The Regal Cinema, Brinscall

<p>Easter Saturday at 6-0 and 8-30 p.m. Ernest Borgnine and Betsy Blair in MARTY</p> <p>Easter Mon., April 22nd. For 2 Days James Stewart and Cathy O'Donnell THE MAN FROM LARAMIE Ⓞ Technicolor</p> <p>Wednesday, April 24th. For 2 Days DUEL ON THE MISSISSIPPI Ⓞ Also The Crooked Web</p> <p>Friday, April 26th. For 2 Days Janet Leigh and Jack Lemmon in MY SISTER ELLEN Ⓞ Technicolor</p> <p>Monday, April 29th. For 2 Days Anthony Steel and Donald Sinden in THE BLACK TENT Ⓞ Technicolor Also The Hide Out</p>	<p>Hang Up for Reference</p> <p>REGAL CINEMA</p> <p>Tel. 255 BRINSCALL Tel. 255</p> <p>PROGRAMME for APRIL, 1957</p> <p>(Subject to alteration without notice)</p> <p>IMPORTANT — KEEP THIS CARD</p> <p>Monday to Friday Once Nightly at 7-20 p.m. Saturday 6-0 and 8-30 p.m. Children in arms NOT admitted</p>	<p>Friday, March 29th. For 2 Days Rock Hudson and Cornell Borchers in NEVER SAY GOODBYE Ⓞ Technicolor</p> <p>Monday, April 1st. For 2 Days Audie Murphy in the exciting true story of his life TO HELL AND BACK Ⓞ Tech.</p> <p>Wednesday, April 3rd. For 2 Days Richard Widmark and Donna Reed in BACKLASH Ⓞ Technicolor Also Behind The Headlines</p> <p>Friday, April 5th. For 2 Days Virginia McKenna and Peter Finch in A TOWN LIKE ALICE Ⓞ</p> <p>Monday, April 8th. For 2 Days Mark Stevens and Martha Hyer in CRY VENGEANCE Ⓞ Also Las Vegas Shakedown Ⓞ</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 10th. For 2 Days Johnny Sheffield in KILLER LEOPARD Ⓞ Also Magnificent Roughnecks</p> <p>Friday, April 12th. For 2 Days Joel McCrea in WICHITA Ⓞ Technicolor Also Bowery Boys in Bowery To Bagdad Ⓞ</p> <p>Monday, April 15th. For 2 Days Patric Knowles and Dawn Addams in KHYBER PATROL Ⓞ Colour Also The Killer is Loose Ⓞ</p> <p>Wednesday, April 17th. For 2 Days Cornel Wilde and Jean Marvie in STORM FEAR Ⓞ Also The Marshal's Daughter Ⓞ</p> <p>Good Friday at 7-20 p.m. HEIDI AND PETER Ⓞ Technicolor</p>
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Photo 3. Programme for the Regal Cinema, Brinscall, April 1957

2. The entrance to Brinscall Playground and Lodge area

The Goit footpath was opened in 2010 to enable the community to enjoy the woodland along the East side of the Lodge following the route of the Goit culvert. It was built as a partnership between the village-run Goit River Environment Action Team (GREAT) and United Utilities, who own the land.

The stone carvings, made out of local millstone grit, at the entrance to Brinscall Lodge and the playground were completed by sculptor, Thompson Dagnall. During a series of workshops with local schools, children from St. John's and St Joseph's provided hand drawings which were used for inspiration. Peter Isherwood, a local master waller, completed the dry stone wall surrounding the carvings.

Although some of the carvings behind the stone seat are now hard to distinguish, the stone entrance and wall to the Lodge have become a distinctive feature of Brinscall.



Photo 1. A church parade passing by the Methodist chapel, now the entrance to Brinscall Park.



Photo 2. The entrance to Brinscall Playground and the Lodge area

3. Brinscall Swimming Pool (Withnell Urban District Swimming Baths)

The swimming pool in Brinscall was opened by Herbert T. Parke on June 22nd, 1911. The Parke family was instrumental in the founding of chapels and schools across the area and had also paid for the Public Library in Chorley in 1899, and the Cottage Hospital at the top of School Lane in 1902.

The local newspaper reported “After the speeches at the opening of the baths were over, Herbert T. Parke emerged from one of the changing boxes, and to huge cheers he declared the pool open before diving fully clothed into what he had called the ‘Swimming Pond’ and swam the first length. Brinscall Prize Band played 'For he’s a jolly good fellow'”.

Many locals have since learned to swim in the pool and, after a recent refurbishment, youngsters will certainly be learning to swim here for many years to come.



Photo 1. Herbert T. Parke

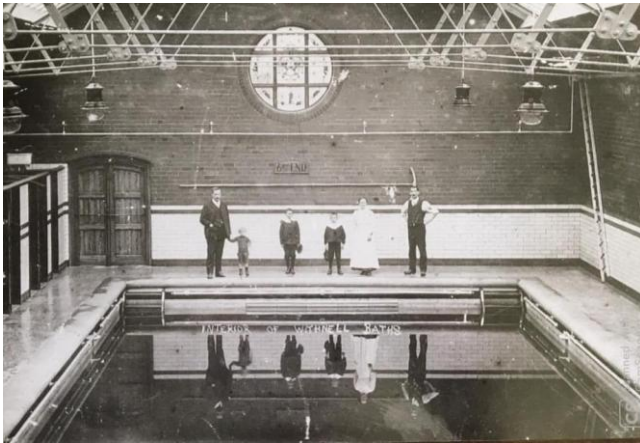


Photo 2. Taken in 1911 at the opening of Brinscall Baths. Herbert T. Parke is on the left of the photo along with the Butterworth family who lived in Chapel Street. Fred Butterworth was the first manager of the baths and can be seen in the photo with Edith, his wife, and their sons.

4. Viewpoint for Wheelton Plantation (Brinscall Woods)

Wheelton Plantation, also known as the Pine Woods or Heather Lea Woods and now more commonly known as Brinscall Woods, are beautiful at any time of year. However, just over 100 years ago, the landscape used to be very different, with numerous farmhouses and mansions dotted across the barren hillside. In 1900, twelve farms and two mansions, along with their fields and stone walls occupied the steep slopes behind Brinscall, where the woods now stand.

During the 19th century, following numerous outbreaks of typhoid across the country, the Government instructed water companies to do more to maintain the purity of their water supplies and prevent its contamination.

As a result, between 1898 and 1902, the moors were taken over by a compulsory land purchase by Liverpool Corporation Waterworks Department (later North West Water and then United Utilities). The Goit was covered through the areas of most population (see **27**). Although not a land clearance, by not renewing the farm tenancies, it was intended to remove as far as possible from the moors, animal and human life therefore prevention of contamination by sewage.

Trees were planted both to prevent occupation of the farms and to improve drainage by restricting surface water run-off and sheep dropping contamination from the moors down to the Goit. This would become Wheelton Plantation or Brinscall Woods. More trees were planted in the 1920s as it was thought that the quickly growing conifers could be sold as pit props for the British coal mines,

although, with the reduction of the mining industry, this ambition never materialised and the trees were allowed to grow.

The remains of the old houses, walls, and outbuildings can still be seen throughout the woods and other sites and books contain more detailed information. For example, see <http://www.white-coppice.co.uk/ruins%20woods.htm> for more details of each individual site.

Brinscall Woods have now become an unintentional nature reserve which are always beautiful and interesting to explore at any time of year - the flowering of the bluebells in late April to May is particularly special.

For further detailed information of all the abandoned farms, see the website above, or the book, 'The Lost Farms of Brinscall Moors' by David Clayton.

See also the Mr H's Hotpot You Tube clips:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjXCskmNIPQ> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xH6eUKzXo3E>



Photo 1 and 2. Brinscall Woods - beautiful throughout the year!

5. Print works, Dye and Bleaching industrial complex

Withnell Cotton Mill at the bottom of Bury Lane will be described later (see **25**). However, in order to tell the whole 'fibre to fabric' story we need to also mention the bleach, dye and print works.

Beyond the present Lodge in Brinscall was a Bleach Works and beyond the private fishing lodges at the end of Lodge Bank, was a large Calico Print Works, employing up to 300 people in 1890. The chimneys of this factory were visible from Lodge Bank and a siding ran down from the railway, delivering supplies and collecting finished goods.

Christopher Wood built the factories and his sons, William, Richard, Joseph and Robert, carried on the businesses after his death in 1867. William (Christopher) Wood built the present Brinscall Hall in 1876 (on the site of an existing hall) and his brother, Joseph, lived in Brinscall Lodge, next to the Print Works (now extended but still existing today as a private house).

...but what exactly is calico printing?

Calico is a plain-woven textile made from unbleached and often not fully processed cotton. It could be produced relatively cheaply and, as such, was used for clothing and soft furnishings (curtains, seat covers). In fact most of the clothes we associate with the working classes of Victorian Britain, Europe and the United States were made of dyed plain or printed calico.

Originally, calico was expensively block-printed by hand, but Scotsman, Thomas Bell, patented a printing technique in 1783, pressing the cloth to be printed against dye on an engraved cylinder by means of a roller, so that the pattern was continuously printed.

Livesey, Hargreaves and Co. put the first machine in the world that used this technique into operation in Walton-le-Dale, near Preston in 1785. In the 1800s, printing works quickly opened near the expanding cotton mills (just like in our villages) and now hundreds of pieces of cloth could be printed in a day which made production cheaper and meant coloured printed patterns on calico could be worn for the first time by most people.

However, as the cotton industry declined in the 1920s, so too did the printing industry and Brinscall Print Works closed in 1928. The buildings were used for storage in the Second World War but were finally demolished in the 1950s (although the last chimney remained until the 1960s).

When walking by the Goit, you can still see the original walls that surrounded the factories and piles of bricks from the Works still lying in the undergrowth.

A dye book from the Brinscall Print Works from the 1920s, with recipes and samples of dyed and printed cotton, is held in the archives of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.



Photo 1. Croft Bottoms (Lodge Bank) – the factory complex can be seen in the background.

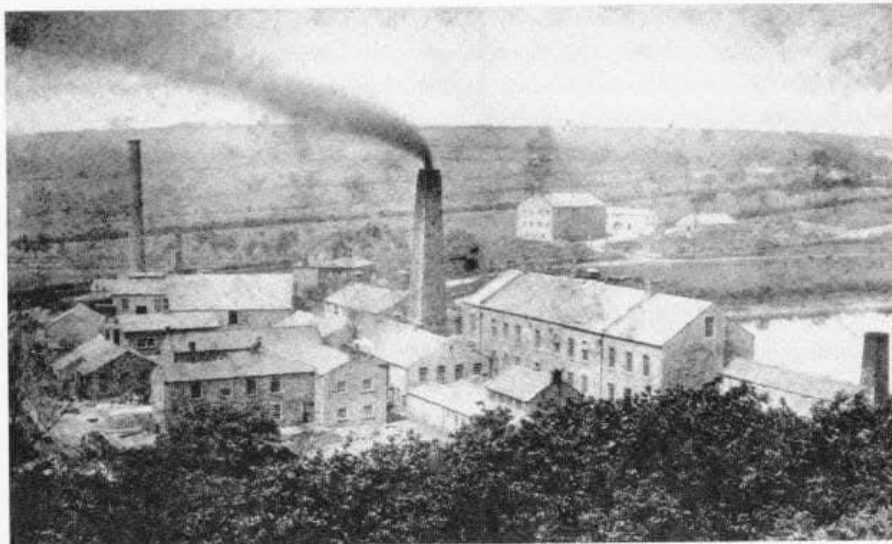


Photo 2.
Brinscall
printworks

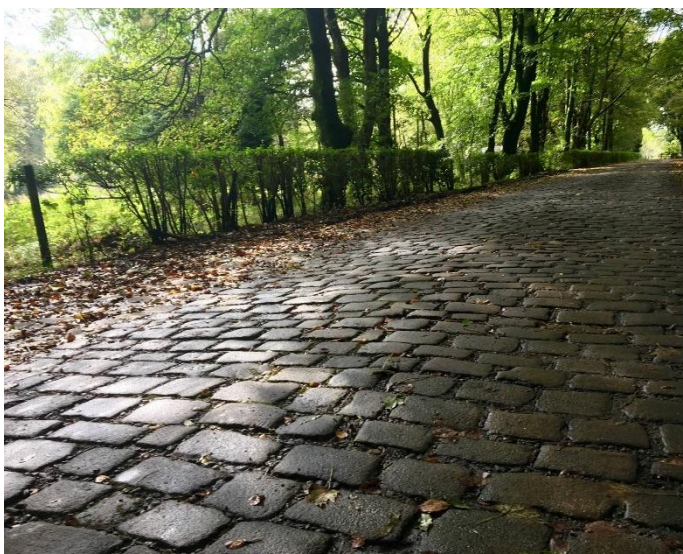


Photo 3. Now a country path but once the road to the printworks complex – a road built to sustain the weight of heavy vehicles!

6. Brinscall Hall

Brinscall Hall is situated at the end of Dick Lane, off School Lane, Brinscall. A large and imposing building, Brinscall Hall falls just within the parish boundary of Wheelton, unlike the rest of the villages which fall within the parish of Withnell.

The present hall was built in 1876 by (William) Christopher Wood, one of the brothers who owned the Calico Print Works by the Goit. His brother, James, lived at Brinscall Lodge (next to the Print Works) and his brother, Edward, lived at Blackhurst Hall, the ruins of which can still be seen in the woods.

Before the current Hall was built it is believed that two other buildings existed on the same site; the first being a 13th Century mediaeval manor house, although we are unable to verify an exact date.

In mediaeval times, much of the land in our area either belonged to the (de) Hoghton family or the Church (Whalley Abbey). In the Whalley Abbey accounts of 1521, it is recorded that £2 per year rent was payable from Brendscolles (the old name for Brinscall) to the Abbey and it is likely that rent from the manor house and surrounding land was part of this payment. The earlier house was believed to stand further forward than the present Hall, above an underground chamber, with a passage leading to Monk's Hill (off Harbour Lane), although existence of the hidden passage is probably a myth as the chamber and passage have never been found.

After the dissolution of Whalley Abbey by Henry VIII in 1537, all the lands of the Abbey were confiscated by the Crown and, in June 1539, Wheelton Manor was sold on behalf of the Crown. Henry VIII granted Sir Richard Hoghton a lease of the manor of Wheelton, and all lands in Wheelton, Stanworth and Withnell belonging to the late monastery of Whalley. A year later the grant was made in fee, Sir Richard paying £180 15s. 4d. and the rent of 18s. 7d. In 1553, Sir Richard gave the manor of Wheelton to his son Thomas for life.

According to the Hearth Tax records of 1666, the largest house in Wheelton, with 8 hearths, belonged to Henry Hoghton and it is likely that this was the same Brinscall Hall (or manor house) above. A date stone in the grounds of the present hall bears the initials HH/MS and the date 1669 which may relate to Henry Hoghton.

A second house certainly existed at the beginning of the 19th Century when George Haigh, a Calico Printer, owned the Hall, his son, Daniel, being born there in 1819. Daniel became the chief English authority on Runic inscriptions, and was the author of numerous antiquarian books and essays, still in print today.

Although, the Wood family built the current Hall in 1876, they did not seem to stay there for long and the next owner was Mr Ormerod, a breeder of horses and hounds. He had the existing stables enlarged with kennels for hunting hounds. There is a clock in the tower, which stands above the stables which is thought to be older than the Hall itself. Chimes used to ring out from the clock tower, but the stables and clock have long fallen into disuse.

In 1919, Mr Alister Reid, the next owner, constructed a swimming pool, fed by water from the moors. The outline of this pool still exists.

The Hall was then occupied by the Nursing Order of St Augustine and was used as a convalescent home for a short period, followed by new owners, the Higson family, in the 1970s. Too big for their needs, they had the Coach House rebuilt and moved into there. The Hall was subsequently owned by the Faulkener and Cairncross families.

Brinscall Hall is currently owned (2025) by the North West branch of the School of Economic Science, an educational charity, and runs courses and workshops in practical philosophy, arts and crafts, yoga, Tai Chi, organic and natural beekeeping and Sanskrit – see www.brinscallhall.co.uk for further information.

...so an interesting and imposing building, built on a site with a very mysterious past!



7. The War Memorial



There are 81 names from the 1914-18 conflict, with many family names represented more than once. This shows the increased population at the time and the heroic sacrifice of the young men of this area.

Two of the men on the memorial were awarded gallantry medals: James Miller VC and Allan Parke MC. More on James Miller when you reach his memorial in Withnell (see **20**).

Allan Parke was the son of Herbert T. Parke (who we met earlier at the swimming baths) and who resided in Withnell Fold Hall.



Allan Parke (1893-1918) joined the army in August, 1914, age 21, as a Second Lieutenant with the 9th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. He landed with the Battalion at Suvla (Gallipoli) on the 6th August, 1915, and was severely wounded on the 21st August, when the Battalion attacked the Anafarta Ridge.

He rejoined the Battalion in Egypt in the following April, and as the commander of Y Company disembarked in France on July 1st, 1916. He was invalided from the trenches at Arras in August, 1916; rejoining in October he resumed the command of Y Company.

Captain Parke remained with the Battalion until the 4th October, 1917, when he was twice wounded at Portcappelle, and was awarded the Military Cross. He returned to France in June, 1918. In an attack at Trescault, near Cambrai, on September 27th, 1918, he was instantly killed.

There are 14 names on the Brinscall War Memorial from the 1939-45 conflict. The countries in which they served (see list below), indicates the many different areas of the world in which fighting was taking place.

Birchall, Nathan. Died 16th June 1941, age 25. Buried in Damascus British War Cemetery (Syria).

Corrigan, James Joseph. Died 3rd Nov 1944, age 27. Buried Bergen op Zoom war cemetery (Netherlands).

Drain, James M. Killed in action in Italy 28.10.43, age 23 years.

Edwards, Sydney. Killed in action, Tunisia on 2nd May 1943 age 31.

Entwistle, John. Died 6th October 1943, age 30. Buried in Bari War Cemetery in Italy.

Greenhalgh, Albert. Died 7th June, 1942, age 23. Buried in Libya (Knightsbridge War Cemetery).

Higson, Donald. Died in October 1942, age 27. Killed on a reconnaissance flight for the Telemark mission and is buried in Oslo West Cemetery.

Lord, Herbert. Lost at sea on 3rd February 1943, aged 28.

McDermott, Thomas. Gunner, Royal Artillery, possibly died in 1942 1045495, Gaza (Palestine).

McIntyre, Alexander. Born 1916. Lost at sea 1939 in the sinking of HMS Courageous, aircraft carrier, lost with 500 other men , KX 89656.

Morey, John W. Died of wounds 13th August 1944, age 29, interred in Brouay Cemetery, France.

Porter, Joseph W. Died 9th August 1943, age 22. Born c 1921, buried in Chungkai War Cemetery in Thailand. We think Joseph died after being held as a Japanese POW as there is a report in LEP (19.10.45) that mentions a Joseph Porter who had been captured after the fall of Singapore.

Rishton, Harry F. Died April 15, 1945, age 19 years old and buried in Becklingen War Cemetery (lower Saxony, North Germany).

Winstanley, George. Died 26.06.1944, Normandy, age 30 and interred in Ryes War Cemetery, Bazenville (Normandy, France).

May they all rest in peace!

8. Pubs in Brinscall

In 1900, it wasn't too difficult to find a pint of beer in Brinscall as there were four pubs within a very short distance. As well as the existing Cricketers Arms and The Oak Tree Inn, we also had the Printers' Arms and The Bull's Head.

The Oak Tree Inn (now The Little Tiger restaurant) was the oldest pub in Brinscall and the only named pub on early maps of the 1800's. Inquests into local sudden, violent or unnatural deaths were often held in the upstairs room. As it was an inn (and sometimes called a hotel in old newspaper reports), it suggests that people could stop for the night on their travels through the region, probably with stabling for horses on the premises.

The Cricketer's Arms has also existed on School Lane since at least 1841. The first listed tenant was Judith Wadsworth, a single woman from Brindle who was landlady of the pub for over 40 years. A family affair; Judith's brother was landlord of The Cross Keys in Brindle and her sister ran the Brown Cow Inn (now the Roundabout Cottage) on the Blackburn Road.

The Printer's Arms has been closed as a public house since 1926 but reopened, and remains open, as St Joseph's Social Club today. The original pub occupied the top part of the current St. Joseph's and you can still see the original doorway (now bricked up). You can see the old pub outline more clearly if you look from the back. Its name represents the large part that the printing industry played in this area (see 5. Brinscall Print Works).

Just across the road was The Bull's Head, now a private house (see picture), which closed in the early 1980s. It first appeared as a pub on census records in 1871 and the listed landlords were John Butterfield (1881-93) and later, his widow Jane (1893-1919). John probably grew up in the same house and turned it into a pub, as he and his father were tailors in an earlier census. Apparently, he brewed his own ale and played the organ in a local church.

There are numerous reports of local drunken and disorderly behaviour in press cuttings, some ending in fights; most ending in court fines. One more light-humoured incident in 1925 ended in court and involved a policeman catching three men drinking after hours (after 10pm!) in the Oak Tree (see transcript below).

Most of our local pub information above came from a great site chorleyinnsandtaverns.blogspot.co.uk which researches the history of all Chorley pubs past and present.



Photo. The Bull's Head, School Lane, Brinscall



Photo. The Printers Arms (now St Joseph's Social Club), School Lane, Brinscall

9. School Lane



School Lane in Brinscall has been so called since at least 1805, but no one knows why. Any schools that are recorded since this time - Brinscall Methodist School, the Salt Pie House (opposite Hillside – see **13.**), St John's, were all built after the road was already named. As schooling was not compulsory until the mid-1800s, and only richer people would send their children to school, it is unclear why the road would therefore be so named in such a sparsely populated village.

Many buildings in our area were built as a result of the industrial revolution in the mid- to late 1800s, and the rise of the mills and related industries (bleach and dye works, print works, brick works etc.). Brick houses were built to accommodate the workers, with associated shops, churches, houses, libraries, reading rooms and village halls, with new roads and updated utilities. The

Victorians made structures that lasted and, unless actively demolished, most buildings from this era still survive.

However, School Lane retains many stone built cottages from the pre-industrial era with a variety of houses from at least the late 1700s right through to modern times. The earliest map (1849) shows the pre-industrial village, with eight short and scattered groups of stone cottages, probably housing a small community of handloom weavers. A typical example of these groups is seen on early maps as Brinscall Row (No 12-24) and the houses originally had an open aspect, looking out towards the Lodge. At this time Railway Road had not yet been built (as there was no railway) and the road out of the village crossed the Goit (River Cut) and on to Butterworth Brow.

Further up School Lane, the Oak Tree pub (Little Tiger Restaurant) is an original coaching inn, built in the style of moorland longhouse (many of which still survive along Harbour Lane going out of Brinscall). The end of this building contains an infilled archway that once enclosed a coach or stable entrance as the Inn would have provided stabling and accommodation for horse-drawn carriages and their occupants. The Cricketers is also a former coaching inn and, like the Oak, would have had stables in the fields behind the inn.

Significant changes can be seen when comparing the 1849 map with the 1894 map below. Many more houses now appear, along with the railway line and bridge over School Lane. Railway Road has been built and becomes the major road out of Brinscall, linking Brinscall with Withnell. The Goit is still uncovered (but only for a few more years).

Comparison with more recent maps and photos shows the continuing evolution of Brinscall village into the surrounding fields, although School Lane still remains the focus of village activities.

...so when you next walk up the hill, check out the interesting variety of architecture, reflecting over 200 years of village life. 😊



10. Brinscall Wesleyan (Methodist) School

Brinscall Methodist School was first built in 1876 on School Lane. It was badly damaged by fire in November 1929 but was rebuilt, continuing in use until 1968 when St John's School was opened. Following its closure, it was used for several years by a printing firm and a computer software company and is now the home of the Nature Trail Nursery.



Photo. The pupils of Brinscall Methodist School, circa 1910

11. Withnell Co-operative Society

With the many industries developing in our area in the mid-1800s, and the influx of hundreds of new workers, other businesses also grew and flourished in the villages. The Co-operative Movement and their associated shops were an integral part of the community and Withnell had one of the most well-run co-operatives in the country, operating successfully for over 100 years.

The Co-operative Movement, begun in 1844 involved workers and customers coming together and managing and operating a co-operative which meant they could combine their buying power and control quality at a time when quality was not regulated or guaranteed in other shops.

The Withnell Industrial Co-operative Society was created in 1861. After occupying a variety of buildings in Brinscall, it eventually established its Central Store at 3 Railway Road in 1867 (now private houses). New co-operative premises, selling a variety of everyday goods, were then opened in: No. 1 Branch Bolton Road, Abbey Village in 1874, No. 2 Branch Bury Lane, Withnell Mill, with a butchery department in 1888 (see **24**), and No. 3 Branch School Lane, Brinscall, in 1899 (now the Village Store).

By its Golden Jubilee year in 1911, the Society owned all the above premises outright, along with a further 18 cottages. A commemorative plate was produced to celebrate this Jubilee (see photo). In 1951, due to demand, an additional Drapery Department was opened on the corner of Railway Road and New Street. The Society celebrated its centenary year in 1961 but was later integrated into the larger Chorley Cooperative Society, taking direct control away from local members. Changes in working practices, diversification of the Society and the growth of supermarkets, with more ability to travel further afield (cars), eventually resulted in the closure of the Co-op shops in our area, although the Village Store in Brinscall retains its original purpose.

The influence of the Co-op Society on everyone's lives in our area is mainly forgotten - not only did it aim to provide quality of goods and distribution of wealth, but it also enriched life in other ways, as remembered by one child living in Brinscall:

“A more pleasant feature of those days was the Christmas treat provided by the Co-op for member's children. This took the form of a free film show to a packed and enthusiastic audience. The programme always contained a western, and the ever-popular cartoons. At the end of the performance, white-haired committee-man Mr. Michael Kennedy first of all called for, "three cheers for t'cowboy", and then, "three cheers for t'Co-op". His request was lustily carried out. Then we trooped off home, clutching the lucky-bags of sweets and chocolate which were an extra and important part of the proceedings” (source: ‘Memories of the Regal Cinema’ by Jim Lancaster: <http://www.boydharris.co.uk/brins2.htm>).

Sources:

The Four Villages Past and Present edited by Pauline Knight



Photo 1. Centre of a plate produced to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Withnell Industrial Co-operative Society in 1911.



Photo 2. No. 3 Branch School Lane, Brinscall - now the Village Store.

12. Hillside Methodist Church

Before the building of Hillside Methodist Church on School Lane, there were Wesleyan chapels in Withnell and Brinscall and a Primitive Methodist chapel in Brinscall. The different titles for different Methodist traditions remained in use until the Methodist Union of 1932, when the Wesleyan Church united with the Primitive Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church to form the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

The Primitive Methodist Chapel or 'Bottom Chapel' is shown on maps in 1845, but closed in 1936. It was situated at the current entrance to the park and can be seen on old photos (see **2**). It was also used as a store and Air Raid Precaution meeting room in World War II but was demolished in the early 1950s.

A Wesleyan chapel was situated in Withnell, half way up Bury Lane from 1886, closing in 1960. A private house (Chapel House) now exists on the site.

The Wesleyan chapel in Brinscall still stands at the corner of Dick Lane and School Lane (rebuilt in 1900). The land had been set aside and used for religious purposes from 1805 with the original Wesleyan Chapel being built by the Parke family in 1857 and used as such for 50 years. The site is now home to a private business.

Hillside Methodist Church was built in 1899 as the need arose for larger premises to accommodate an expanding Methodist congregation and eventually bringing the different Methodist traditions together. The cost of the building was £3540.3s.7d (£420,000 today). This sum was raised by members of the local community, along with large donations from prominent families within the area, notably the Parke family.



Photo. Hillside Methodist Church, Brinscall

Acknowledgement: Alexander P Kapp.

<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/508374> geograph.org.uk

13. The Salt Pie House, Brinscall

Until 1948, there was a small 2-story building on School Lane, Brinscall, called the Salt Pie House, opposite Hillside Methodist Church. It appears on the 1848 Ordnance Survey map so was probably built pre-1800s, at the same time as some of the older cottages in Brinscall.

The Salt Pie House can clearly be seen on old photos (see below), but there is now little or no evidence that it ever existed.

The only records we can find for its use are when it was opened as the first Catholic school in our area in 1874. Before this time, children travelled for school and Church to St Chads at South Hill, although at this time there was no law obliging children to attend school. In 1874, Father Tobin, the local parish priest, acquired the Salt Pie House, and turned it into a school.

The school's maintenance and upkeep were reliant on goodwill donations and subscriptions of just under £29, from which the school mistress was paid £1 per month. However, the school closed less than a year after its opening, following vandalism and 'sanitary issues'. Fr Tobin continued his pursuit of education for the children, being instrumental in the buying of land and building of St Joseph's in Withnell, less than 10 years later (opened in 1884).

...and why the building was called the Salt Pie House? A salt pie was one name for wooden salt boxes that used to be hung on the wall of a house. Buildings that had lean-to extensions often got referred to as 'Salt Pie' because they looked like these boxes. Salty pies could contain anything and were called salty because they are not sweet like fruit pies and apparently more like a quiche, so maybe the little house once sold salty pies or maybe just a description of the shape of the building.



Photo. The Salt Pie House on School Lane, Brinscall, next to the old car on the right.

14. St John's CE/Methodist School

By 1967-8, due to all the new housing developments, five existing church schools in the area; Brinscall Methodist (now the nursery on School Lane), St Pauls C of E in Withnell, White Coppice Primary School, Higher Wheelton School, and St Paul's Wheelton, could not accommodate all the children.

One larger central new school, St Johns, was built to serve the whole district and was the first combined Church of England/Methodist Primary School in the country.

The school was formally opened on 26th March, 1969, when HRH Princess Margaret came to Brinscall (see photo). She was shown around the school by Mr Dennis Cairns, the headteacher, meeting with children and teachers.



Photo. Princess Margaret at the opening of St Johns Church of England / Methodist School in March 1969

15. Withnell Coronation Hospital

Withnell Coronation Hospital, incorporating Coronation Cottages and Coronation House, on Buckholes Lane, was opened in 1902 to celebrate the accession of King Edward VII. The land and most of the building was funded by the Parke Family and the hospital was built at a cost of £3,500 (£300,000 today).

In his will in 1907, William Bashall Parke (cousin of Thomas Blinkhorn (TB) Parke who built Withnell Fold Village and paper mill) bequeathed £5,000 (£420,000 today) to Withnell Urban Council for the maintenance of the hospital and £2,000 (£170,000 today) for the maintenance of a district nurse for Withnell.

Although the hospital was often described as a 'Cottage Hospital', newspaper reports and official documents more often refer to an Isolation ('Infectious Disease') or Fever hospital. The buildings are now private houses, but over the years they have also briefly been used as a school and an employment exchange.

The original concept of a cottage hospital was a 'small rural building having several beds'. The advantages of such a hospital in villages like ours was to provide care, a place to recuperate, facilities to deal more immediately with emergencies and familiarity of the local doctor with their patients.

In 1903, when the hospital was built, there were no antibiotics or widespread immunisation schemes. Outbreaks of infectious diseases were common, and schools were often closed for weeks due to outbreaks of scarlet fever or

measles. Diseases like typhoid fever, diphtheria and tuberculosis took the lives of many.

Often, the only means of controlling the spread of infection was to isolate patients in private sanatoria or hospitals and Withnell Hospital was used, at least in part, for this purpose. The practice of isolation was continued, especially for tuberculosis (TB), until the use of antibiotics became widespread in the 1950s and 60s.



Photo. Withnell Coronation Hospital

16. Pike Lowe and Village Names

Pike Lowe in Brinscall contains some of the oldest buildings in the village and derives its name from two common Old English and Middle English topographical terms that describe its physical characteristics: 1. Pike: This term refers to a sharp, pointed hill or a summit, and 2. Lowe: Derived from the Old English word *hlāw*, it means a hill, mound, or tumulus.

The name literally translates to "Pointed Hill Hill," a common tautology in English place-names where descriptive terms from different eras or languages are combined. Historically, the area has been associated with Pike Lowe Farm and the Pike Lowe Reservoirs (also known as Boardman's Heights), which were built in the late 1890s to supply water to the surrounding villages.

This seems a good time to also describe the derivation of the names of Brinscall and Withnell.

The first reference to Withnell is in a document of 1160 AD when it is referred to as 'Withinhull' (Old English, *Wiðign* + *hyll*; the hill where willows grow), in 1250 AD it was called 'Wenehull', in 1332 AD 'Withinhulle' (Subsidy Rolls of Lancashire) and by 1557 'Withnell'; the current spelling.

Brinscall in 1200 AD was called 'Brende Scoles', (Middle English brende and Old Norse Skali giving 'Burnt Huts') in 1246 AD it was called 'Brende schales' and by 1670 AD it was called 'Brinscolls'.

The placename evidence, and exciting recent genetic evidence, suggests that the area was once occupied by a mix of Norse and English speaking populations. There are other popular stories for the origins of Withnell and Brinscall which are worth telling but sadly, are unlikely to be true:

Withnell. A young lady from a respectable family fell in love with a man from Abbey Village. Her visits were a well kept secret. When questioned by her parents, she pointed to her dog, Nell, and replied, "I have been with Nell"! In true Romeo and Juliet fashion, she was not allowed to see him again, the young man was killed and the young lady, heartbroken with grief, took her own life.

Brinscall. Bryn was a young man from Tockholes who was deeply in love. The girl he was going to marry set out across the moorland to visit him but became lost in a violent snowstorm and never arrived. Bryn believed she was still alive and every night he would go out onto the moors and call her name. Villagers would swear that they could hear him calling on dark winter's nights - 'Bryn's Call'.



17. Pike Lowe Reservoirs

After numerous Public Health Acts, Withnell Urban District Council began the construction of an integrated water supply network to supply the villages in the late 1890s. The Goit was already available as a good supply of water, but to provide sufficient pressure head to allow water to flow by gravity through the pipe network the water had to be pumped to the highest point possible.

Pike Lowe at the top of Brinscall was chosen as the location for two reservoirs that would hold the pumped water and allow it to be cleaned and treated before flowing out to houses and industry.

A pumping station was needed to lift the water and this was built on Railway Road across from the Goit in the late 1890s (next to the present-day Health Centre).

A branch pipe from the Goit ran under Railway Road and the water was pumped through an underground pipe up Bury Lane and across the fields to Pike Lowe (higher) Reservoir. A filtration system cleaned the water and it was then held in a sealed underground second reservoir before flowing out into supply by gravity. Distribution pipes radiated out to Withnell, Withnell Fold, Wheelton and Abbey Village.

The higher reservoir at Pike Lowe was originally for untreated water but it was enclosed by a roof in the new scheme and could be used for treated drinking water. The Pumping Station on Railway Road then became redundant.

A new Lancashire Conjunctive Use pipeline was laid and commissioned in 1980. This relieved the connections from the Thirlmere Aqueduct and Pike Lowe was one of many connections transferred to it, still being used today.

...water supplies today are often taken for granted, but their construction is an essential and interesting part of our local history.

Many thanks to the late Boyd Harris for the information and photos.



Photo 1. Pike Lowe upper reservoir, Brinscall.

18. Brinscall Trig Point

Triangulation pillars or 'trig pillars' or 'trig points' are often seen on peaks around the UK.

Between 1936 and 1962, retriangulation helped to rewrite the British Ordnance Survey map. Triangulation is a mathematical process that makes accurate map-making possible. It works by determining the location of a point by measuring angles to it from known points at either end of a fixed baseline and, in this case, 6,500 trig pillars, made of stone, or more commonly, concrete.

Most trig points follow the standard Hotine design, credited to Brigadier Martin Hotine (1898-1968), who was the head of the Trigonometrical and Levelling Division of the Ordnance Survey and, like an iceberg, there is more of a trig pillar below the surface than above it. The highest trig pillar sits on the top of Ben Nevis.

Modern technologies now mean that the traditional trig pillar is obsolete and hundreds have been removed or damaged. They are no longer used to shape our maps, although they often act as a beacon for walkers and cyclists.

Trigpoints can be found nearby at the top of Hough Hill near Brindle, Winter Hill, Rivington Pike and next to Darwen Tower on Darwen Moor but we also have one in Brinscall, at Boardman Heights Reservoir. This trig point is not actually reachable as it is about 5 metres behind the fence that surrounds the covered reservoir. It is recorded by the OS as standing at 222.5 metres.

Although you can't go right up to the Brinscall trig point, if you walk along the footpath over the top between Sandringham Drive and Bury Lane, look left just after you pass the houses half way across, and you can see it on the hill. The photos below are taken from inside the fencing, by a 'trigger' who was allowed inside the perimeter by United Utilities staff.



Photo. Brinscall Trig Point

19. Viewpoint for Brinscall Quarry

For thousands of years, extracting rock, sand and minerals from the Earth's surface has been key to the building industry. From the mid-16th Century, there was an increased demand for stone, brick and slate and, due to the good quality of the sandstone (millstone) grit in this part of Lancashire, small quarries started to spring up across the region.

In the first Royal Ordnance Survey map in 1845, there are three small quarries identified up on the moor, in the vicinity of the current quarry, and another two above Pike Lowe at the top of Brinscall. Other quarries were dotted across the moors and in Abbey Village.

Up until 1938, Brinscall Quarry was relatively small, and the stone was used for windowsills, lintels, paving flags, kerbstones and sett stone blocks for cobbled roads. Most of the work was done by hand; very hard physical labour. The men worked in teams with no safety equipment and only hand tools; hammers, picks, crow bars and sledge hammers which forced the stone from the rock beds. Large pieces of rock from 1 to 7 tonnes would then be lifted by a steam crane to the work areas where they could be split again into manageable sizes and the 'banker' masons could finally shape the sandstone blocks to the required sizes.

The men wore iron shod clog boots on their feet. Their jackets, waistcoats and trousers were made of heavy moleskin or corduroy to keep out the wind. A simple knotted neckerchief was often useful as a bandage for slight injuries or wiping their sweating brow (see photos of workers at Brinscall Quarry).

The stone was transported from Brinscall Quarry, under Twistmoor Lane, down the hillside and over Railway Road by means of a high bridge, known as the 'Gantry Bridge'. The track continued around the back of Railway Road and along to the nearby railway sidings. The contents were then loaded onto railway wagons for delivery to other towns.

With war becoming imminent, in 1938 the original quarry was extended and new equipment bought. Power tools were now used for drilling into the rock and blasting and an electrical generator and two large crushing plants were installed. Stone was now crushed into small pieces from 6 inches down to sand and was used to build the sites of the Royal Ordnance factories in Chorley and Blackburn, also the runways for the US Airforce and Royal Air Force camps at Warton and Burtonwood. Blasting took place 3 times per day and up to 50 wagons a day were carrying crushed stone out of the quarry.

As younger men left the villages to join the war effort, Italian prisoners of war were brought by coach each day from the Stanhill POW Camp at Oswaldtwistle. They had their own Italian cook and an interpreter who would come into Brinscall and Withnell each morning to get stale food that the shops couldn't sell and villagers also gave him home-grown vegetables. Later in the war, German

prisoners of war, supervised by British guards, were also brought from a POW camp in Bamber Bridge.

After the war, stone continued to be supplied to help the building and rebuilding of new housing developments and the Preston by-pass; the first section of the M6. In the 1960s the quarry started production and delivery of ready mix concrete but then closed down in the 1970s until 1994, when it was reopened to provide materials for the building of the M65.

Brinscall Quarry now covers 40 acres and, since 2008, is owned by Armstrongs Aggregates Ltd., producing aggregate and block stone. It was the only quarry in England chosen to supply some of the high quality faced sandstone that is currently used to construct the façades of the new bell towers on the Sagrada Familia Cathedral in Barcelona.

...one of the few industries that has stood the test of time...the story of Brinscall Quarry and its impact on the villages is likely to continue...



Photo 1. A group of workers from Brinscall Quarry c1910

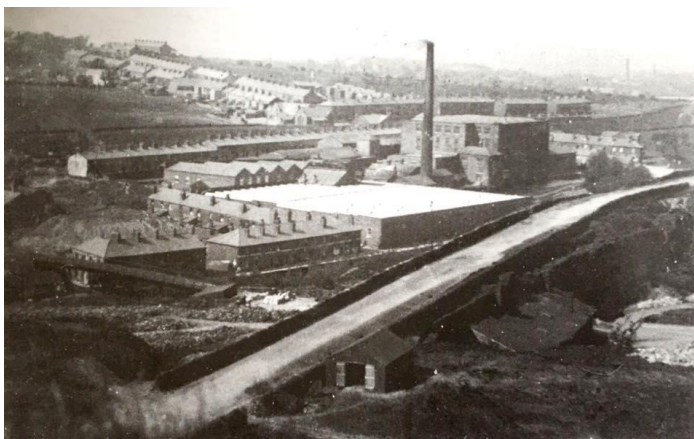


Photo 2. View of Withnell from Brinscall Quarry. Twistmoor Lane is in the foreground. Stone could be taken underneath the road and over the Gantry Bridge, running over Railway Road.

20. Memorial to Private James Miller V.C. (1890-1916)



Private James Miller's name appears on the Brinscall War Memorial, with more details on his separate memorial, just next to the road, at St Paul's church on Bury Lane, Withnell. He is buried in Dartmoor Cemetery, Becordel-Becourt, Somme, France.

As a posthumous recipient of the Victoria Cross, his brave story can also be heard in this 4-minute BBC audio link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02l8fzg>

Jimmy Miller's story is eloquently told in the following poem:

"The Message" by Ellis Williams (written in 1916)

Now put away your books, my lads; come sit you by my side.
And I'll tell you the glorious story how Miller, of Withnell, died.

I've told you oft of the Spartan boy; how Spartans nobly bore
Themselves to guard the narrow pass, in the grand old days of yore.

You've read great Nelson's story, of Trafalgar 'cross the foam.
And also of the dauntless three who kept the bridge at Rome.

I've told you, too, of Gordon's death: the bravest of the brave.
And of the noble Kitchener, now in his ocean grave.

But none fell nobler than this lad, of Lancashire the pride.
So let your children's children tell how Jimmy Miller died.

We had shelled the Hun from his dug-outs, our guns had smashed him in style,
We had hurled the foe from his trenches; driven him back for a mile.

But many a hero had fallen, and many a husband and son
Who'd gone to their rest, left us weakened; could we hold that which we had
won?

So our Captain cried out "Here, Miller! A message to Company D.
I know you, and trust you, brave Miller, so bring back the answer to me.

You never have yet shirked a duty, you never have reasoned why;
For God's sake do not fail me now, but bring me the reply.

I hate to ask you risk your life, but it's the only way;
If you but get the answer back, you'll save some lives to-day."

A brief salute to his officer, he cleared the trench at a bound:
He dashed out into the open, out on the shell-swept ground.

With a hearty cheer from his comrades, and the rest is hard to tell -
But with scarce a score of paces gone, an angry bullet fell.

And struck him through from back to side. He halted for a span
(Ye shot not well, O marksman! To slay so brave a man).

Then, with hand pressed upon his wound, he struggled gamely on.
And got his message through at last, his short life all but gone.

"Now, stay you here, good Miller; you have nobly run your race;
And you ere sorely wounded, lad, let another take your place."

"Don't ask it, sir; why waste a life? You're open to attack.
I've brought this message right through hell - I'll take the answer back."

Then brave men sobbed as he started back across that danger zone.
They could not, dare not "queer his pitch," that's a creed in the old King's Own.

Now he reels along in his agony, now on his knees he crawls.
With his lifeblood ebbing drop by drop; a dozen stumbles and falls.

And the goal is reached as he murmurs, "Relief - sir - all - is - well."
Then he dropped at the Captain's feet, and died. So Miller of Withnell fell.

His name is off the roll call now; so brave where all were brave;
He's laid by gallant soldiers in his lonely, honoured grave.

He saw his duty plain and straight, and he went for it there and then.
And I think our Saviour won't be hard on a man that died for men.

Cheer up, ye hearts of England! Cheer up, ye Britons all!
Bear up, ye wives and mothers, so sick at duty's call.

The soul of our race lies in men like these, who fight to their latest breath.
And, like the sentinel of old, stand faithful unto death.

But this deed stands aloof from all; heroic, grand, alone;
The pride of all of British race: the pride of the old King's Own.

So, when you hear folk talk of heroes, tell this story far and wide:
The story of the message, and how Miller of Withnell died.

21. St Paul's CE Church

St Paul's Church at the top of Bury Lane, was consecrated as a place of worship for the Church of England in 1841. It is a stone building in the Norman style and consists of a nave and a western tower containing a bell. In the 1950s two vestries and an outer door were added. A church field used to exist next to St Paul's, where walking day parades would end with entertainments and refreshments. It now includes the only graveyard in our villages.

When first built, St Paul's recorded 576 seats of which, unusually and due to an initial grant, 436 were free. Until the mid-20th century, it was common practice in Anglican, Catholic, and Presbyterian churches to rent pews in churches to families or individuals as a principal means of raising income. In the villages during Victorian times, it would have mainly been the emerging middle class - business owners and managers - who rented seats as a sign of their rising status within the community.



Photo 1. St Paul's CE Church, Withnell.
Credit. Alexander P Kapp.
<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/508333>
geograph.org.uk

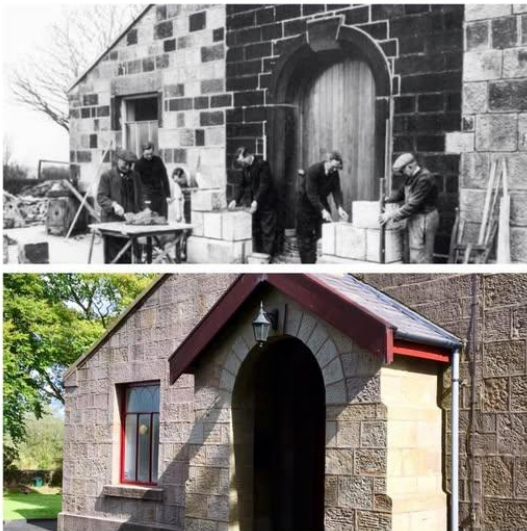


Photo 2. St Paul's Church, Withnell. In the late 1950s, two vestries were added with a new central porch and outer door. Richard Robinson was hired for the stonework and James Melling made the outer doors. Also in the photo are Revd Waterson, the vicar at that time and Sydney Crook the church treasurer. Both men helped in the building of the new vestries.

22. St Joseph's Catholic Church

In 1874, Father Tobin, the catholic parish priest, acquired the Salt Pie House (see **13**) on School Lane, Brinscall, and turned it into a school. However, for various reasons, this was short-lived and the Catholic chapel, dedicated to St Joseph, in Withnell, was founded in 1884 at a cost of £1,800 (£202,000 today). It is situated at the top of Bury Lane and is the highest parish in the Liverpool Archdiocese, standing at 850 feet (259m) above sea level.

Before the building of St Joseph's, parishioners had to walk 3 miles to St Chads in South Hill, Wheelton.

St. Joseph's is an unusual design in that the Church is built above the school; an innovation by the influential Father Tobin.



Photo 1. St Joseph's Catholic Church and School, Withnell

23. St Paul's CE School

Now demolished to make way for the Fellstone Vale housing estate, St Pauls Church of England School was built in 1874 at the bottom of Bury Lane on land costing £150 (£16,500 today). A school and dwelling house was built on the site for £500 (£55,000 today). St Pauls School served the district as a day school, Sunday school, meeting place, sports centre, youth club and church functions until 1968 when it was demolished to make way for the roadway to Fellstone Vale estate.



Photo. St Paul's CE School, Withnell

24. Withnell Cooperative Society No. 2 Branch



No. 2 Co-operative Society Branch Bury Lane, Withnell Mill, with a butchery department - now a café and hair salon. The word 'Withnell' was covered during WW2 when all place names were removed to fool the enemy, should there have been an invasion.

25. Withnell Cotton Mill

Withnell Cotton Mill was built at the bottom of Bury Lane in 1839 by Robert Parke - the Parke family feature many times in the history of our area! In 1873, the factory was sold on to Marriage & Pinnock, a Manchester based company. A typical design, it was a stone building, four-storeys high, with a two-storey east wing. The engine house was situated at the western end of the Mill (see photo below).

As manpower was needed for the factories, the mill-owners built accommodation (including many of our existing houses) and families migrated from all parts of the country seeking work. Often the whole family; men, women and children, all worked in the Mill. The building of new schools, churches, shops, pubs and other amenities (e.g. baths, recreation ground) helped to establish and maintain a thriving community.

In 1884, the ground floor of Withnell Mill housed 340 looms and was used solely for weaving. Carding was carried out on the first floor and spinning on the upper two floors. By 1905, 40,000 spindles and 877 looms were operating in Withnell Mill, so this was no small-cottage industry!

This industrial heyday was relatively short lived and, following a worldwide slump in demand for British cotton, Withnell Mill closed as a large-scale cotton mill in 1930. Most buildings built during this era, other than the factories themselves, are still standing, and many villagers are the descendants of the local mill workers.

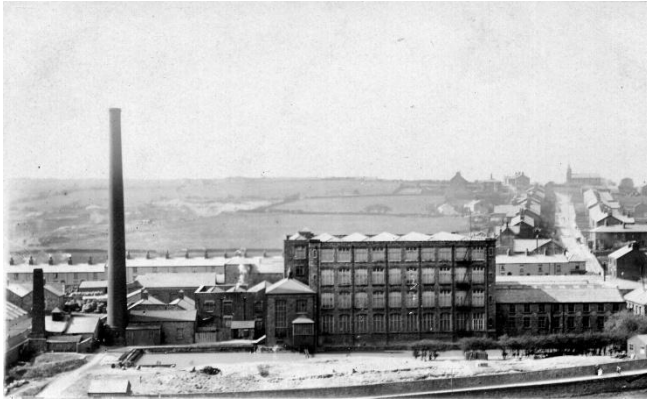


Photo 1. As well as a good view of Withnell Mill, with the weaving sheds on the far left, you can also see the Wesleyan chapel half way up Bury Lane, with Withnell Farm behind.

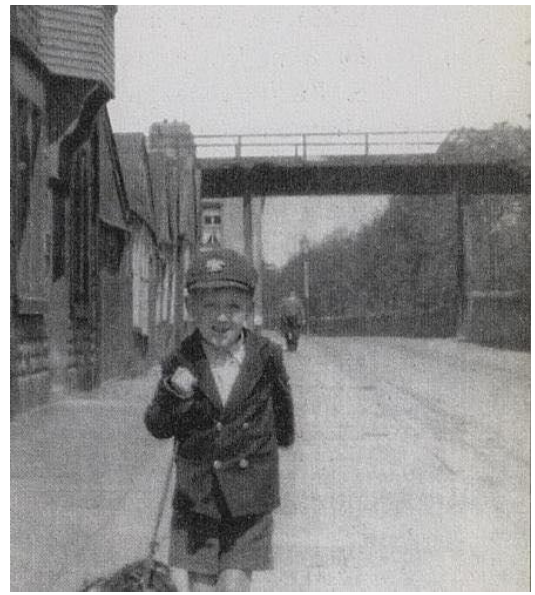


Photo 2. Withnell Mill at Christmas

26. The Gantry Bridge

Stone was transported from Brinscall Quarry (see **18**), under Twistmoor Lane, down the hillside and over Railway Road by means of a high bridge, known as the 'Gantry Bridge'. The track continued around the back of Railway Road and along to the nearby railway sidings. The contents were then loaded onto railway wagons for delivery to other towns.

Almost nothing of the gantry bridge remains, although the eagle-eyed may be able to identify some of the brickwork standings along Railway Road.



27. The Goit (and why it was covered)

Goit or 'goyt' is a Yorkshire word describing an artificial channel or canal for transporting drinking water and our Goit is one of the best examples...linking the Roddlesworth reservoirs beyond Abbey Village with those lower down at Anglezarke and Rivington and all built essentially to provide drinking water for Liverpool.

As the industrial revolution moved into full swing in the mid-1800s, the existing sources of water in the rapidly expanding towns and cities of the North West became inadequate and new ways of transporting large and continuous amounts of water into the big cities was needed.

In the 1840's Liverpool was in a desperate position. Water was turned on in the mains 2 to 3 times in a week and then for only 2 or 3 hours. The mains were small and, when fires broke out, many lives were lost, and property and goods destroyed due to lack of access to water. Outbreaks of violence between people stealing or begging for water became common and alternative supplies of fresh water were needed to prevent the spread of disease.

Between the 1840s and 1860s, following an Act of Parliament, two groups of reservoirs were constructed by Liverpool Corporation to store vast amounts of water that could then be transported into the Liverpool area; Upper or Withnell Group, consisting of Upper and Lower Roddlesworth and Rakebrook Reservoirs (beyond Abbey Village); and the Lower or Rivington Group, consisting of the Anglezarke and Upper and Lower Rivington reservoirs.

These two groups of reservoirs were connected by the construction of a goit or canal which ran along the bottom of our villages. The Goit is $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles (6.4km) long with an average width of 20 feet (6m) at the bottom and varies in depth from the top of the sloping slides, from 6 feet (1.8m) to 25 feet (7.6m). Between Withnell and Brinscall, a concrete culvert/tunnel covers the original waterway...but why was this section covered?

After the building of the Goit, there was considerable growth of population in Brinscall and Withnell due to the expansion of the Cotton Mill, Print Works, Brick Works and associated businesses, and many houses were built close to the side of the channel. There was danger of contamination of the water, coming from both the factories and from sewage from the houses.

To prevent pollution of the water, it was decided to cover the Goit in the most populous area and, in March 1905, a contract was awarded to Mr George Bell, amounting to £8,371 16s. 6d. for a concrete culvert 1,078 yards (980m) in length (£750,000 in today's money). Work commenced on 14th August 1905.

Although not a great distance, due to bad weather; rain and severe frost, it took $2\frac{1}{2}$ years to complete the main body of the project; the average number of men employed was 36 per day. Two photos below show the tunnel under construction in 1906.

A few years later, the original tunnel was extended by 326 yards (296m) to prevent pollution from a newly built sewage works which once existed where the horses now graze on Lodge bank. The whole Goit area is now owned and maintained by United Utilities.



Photo 1. Quarry Road pre-1906 with the original Goit running between Brinscall and Withnell. The brick wall separating the Goit from Railway Rd can be seen at the bottom of the photo.



Photo 2. View towards Withnell in 1906 as the Goit is being covered on the right. The cotton mill is on the left. What appears to be water on the left is just a very wet (flooded) Railway Road - there is someone walking down the middle and people sat on the wall that ran along Railway Road.

28. Road names on Railway Road: Churchill, Harrington, Derby and Salisbury

After the opening of the railway in 1869, Railway Road was built to make access up to the railway and associated buildings easier. Houses for the mill workers were built along the road. Leading off Railway Road, houses were also built on Churchill Road, Harrington Road, Salisbury Road and Derby Street. There seems to be no obvious connection between the four road names, but they are actually named after four influential politicians of the time.

Many electoral changes took place in the latter part of the 19th century and the four politicians commemorated in the street names were instrumental in bringing about some of these changes....

Salisbury Road: The Marquess of SALISBURY (1830-1903)

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, was a British statesman of the Conservative Party, serving as Prime Minister three times for a total of over thirteen years. He first became Prime Minister in June 1885 and was the prime minister that led Britain to war against the Boers in South Africa. He won his final election in 1900 before relinquishing the premiership to his nephew Arthur Balfour. He died a year later, in 1903.

Harrington Road: The Marquis of HARTINGTON (1833-1908)

Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire, Marquis of Harrington, was a British statesman. He has the distinction of having served as leader of three political parties (as Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons (1875–1880), as of the Liberal Unionist Party (1886–1903) and of the Unionists in the House of Lords (1902–1903). He also declined to become Prime Minister on three occasions, not because he was not a serious politician but because the circumstances were never right.

Derby Street: Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of DERBY (1826-1893)

Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby was a British Conservative statesman. He served as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs twice, from 1866 to 1868 and

from 1874 to 1878, and also twice as Colonial Secretary in 1858 and from 1882 to 1885.

Churchill Road: Lord Randolph Henry Spencer-CHURCHILL (1849-1895)

Lord Randolph Henry Spencer-Churchill was a British statesman and father of Winston Churchill, the third son of the 7th Duke of Marlborough. A very colourful character, Randolph Churchill was a Tory radical, who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, broke new ground in modern budgetary presentations, attracting admiration and criticism from across the political spectrum. His disloyalty to Lord Salisbury was the beginning of the end of what should have been a glittering career. He died at the age of 45 leaving two sons, Winston and John, and his American wife, Jenny Jerome (another very colourful character!).

29. Brinscall Blue Brickworks and Shaloes

During the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, there was an increasing need for building materials. Bricks were used to build factories, housing for the workers, schools, shops, theatres, libraries, hospitals etc. As a result, if good beds of clay were available, brick works grew up alongside the new industries and railway lines.

The Withnell Brick and Terra Cotta Company (1912) Ltd. was one of over a hundred brickmakers in Lancashire and made engineering, facing and common bricks from boulder clay and millstone grit shales. They operated two brick works in our area (remembering that Withnell often refers to the whole township which includes Abbey Village). The works existed before 1912 but this is the date of the company's formal registration.

The main works and clay pits were in Abbey Village, on land now occupied by the old landfill site. A siding ran from the main railway line, just after Withnell Station (in Abbey Village), over to the factory.

A second works, the Brinscall Blue Brickworks (owned by the same company), was situated between Brinscall and Bury Lane in Withnell. Again, a siding came off the railway line so that materials and bricks could be loaded and unloaded easily.

The clay for the Brinscall works came from Shale Holes now a picturesque fishing pond. The brickworks had a bridge and track crossing the railway line to bring in clay from the claypit. The embankment to the bridge can still be seen today.

Withnell bricks from the main works were a bright red colour (see photo). The name 'Blue Brick Works' suggests the Brinscall works made blue engineering bricks and darker colours or blue colouration are associated with higher firing temperatures. Blue engineering bricks and pavers are very well regarded as high-quality products.

As with other village industries, the demand for their products fell towards the middle of the 20th century. Concrete became increasingly popular as a building material and smaller brick works either closed or joined together to make larger companies. The surviving works were then concentrated into a few areas, which could now produce all the bricks the country required.



Photo 1. A Withnell brick



Photo 2. Shale Holes (Shaloes) - source of clay

30. The railway line and Brinscall Station

I'm sure most of us have walked along the Nature Trail; the railway cutting between Abbey Village and Brinscall.

The old railway line, from Chorley to Cherry Tree, near Blackburn, was owned and operated jointly by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and the London North Western Railway. It cost £530,000 to build and opened in 1869; two years late and considerably over budget. Originally designed to carry coal, there were sidings servicing Withnell cotton mill, the quarry, the brickworks and Brinscall printworks. A goods yard was situated off Railway Road.

The busiest station on this line was situated almost in the middle of Brinscall, built above an embankment. Going towards Chorley, the line then crossed over School Lane and behind the houses along Lodge Bank.

The four stations on the line, at Feniscowles, Withnell (Abbey Village), Brinscall and Heapey, were built at a total cost of £10,430 and Brinscall Station was the highest point on the line. In the early 1920s, there were 14 passenger trains each way calling at Brinscall every day; 16 on Saturdays! However, following the decline of local industries, an increase in car ownership and the Beeching railway cuts in the 1950s, the line was closed to passengers in 1960, and to goods trains in 1966.

Today nothing remains of the station, the bridge over School Lane or the embankment on which the station stood. A small wall that formed the entry gates to the Goods yard, can still be seen off Railway Road.

See the following link for more interesting information and photos about the whole Chorley-Blackburn line:

http://www.white-coppice.co.uk/chorley_blackburn.htm



Photo 1. Brinscall Railway Station



Photo 2. The old railway bridge crossing over School Lane, Brinscall

Other points of interest (optional)

31. Hatch Brook (Brinscall) Waterfall

If you don't know the area very well, Brinscall Woods is full of surprises and Hatch Brook waterfall is one of them!

Hatch Brook is one of the streams that drain Brinscall Moors, along with Dean Black Brook, Calf Hey Brook, Rake Brook and Sour Milk Brook. As you walk up Well Lane, you can usually hear the waterfall on the right long before you can see it. Where the lane bends to the left, you are at a junction with the Heather Lea/Blackhurst 'carriage drive'. Turn right via a gate and you cross Hatch Brook.

If you look over the wall as you turn right you can see the brook surging or trickling, depending on the weather, over the cliff of the former Hatch Quarry on its way to the Goit

For the more adventurous (or foolish), you can reach the bottom of the waterfall by following the brook from below but be very careful as it is steep and slippery with lots of fallen trees and broken branches to climb over!



Photo. Hatch Brook (Brinscall)
Waterfall

32. World War II Bombing Decoy (Starfish) Site on Brinscall Moor

During the Second World War a secret department was formed at Britain's Air Ministry to develop a deception strategy to combat German bombing. This campaign was masterminded by Colonel John Fisher Turner, an engineer and retired Air Ministry officer. Colonel Turner formed a team with the best film studio tradesmen, carpenters, and engineers who constructed a network of dummy airfields and hundreds of decoy sites.

Decoy towns were built in remote areas which could be easily set alight. As soon as the first wave of German bombers attacked a target, emergency teams extinguished the resulting flames and then the decoy fires were lit. Due to the 'black out' across all towns and cities, the real target was then completely invisible. The aim was to fool the second wave of bombers that the decoy site was their target - not too sure how happy you were if you were manning the site or lived in the farms and villages nearby!

One decoy site near to our villages was situated on Brinscall Moor at the top of Well Lane. During the war, the Royal Air Force had a checkpoint at the bottom of Well Lane, which was a wooden hut, which later became a garage (Eddie Moss). At the top of Well Lane an air raid shelter was built to protect the men who built the decoy fires which were designed to lead bomber attacks away from Preston, Blackburn and the Royal Ordnance Factory at Chorley.

The decoy site was built in 1941 as an 'SF' site and in 1942 a 'QL' decoy was incorporated into the site. 'SF' stands for Special Fires, but the name Starfish was more commonly used. Each Starfish site was a sophisticated set up, with

fires differing in appearance, intensity and duration and the site itself had an infrastructure that included access roads, firebreak trenches and a means to control the fires remotely, usually from the air raid shelter.

The additional 'QL' decoy displayed simulated railway marshalling yard lights and factory lighting that would be present in the cities. SF and QL sites were frequently found together.

Tanks containing paraffin or diesel were placed on top of 20ft towers, arranged to resemble rows of buildings or industrial complexes. A valve that operated like a toilet flush was opened to release the fuel on to burning coal, creating an instant blaze and engulfing the area in black smoke. Then the fire was flushed with water to send a column of steam into the night sky. This resulted in a convincing mock-up of a bombing raid that had hit its target.

By the end of the war there were approximately 630 decoy sites in the U.K consisting of 230 decoy airfields and 400 decoy towns including railway marshalling yards, steelworks, foundry and factory complexes. It is believed that the decoy sites drew some 5% of the bombs intended for real airfields and cities, saving an estimated 2,500 lives and prevented 3,000 injuries. We don't know of any bombs being dropped on the Brinscall Moor site.

Little remains of the site today except a few pipes and outlines of buildings. At the top of Well Lane/Edge Gate Lane, turn left and the control bunker is on the right. Look to the right and you can see the earthenware pipes that were designed to prevent spilled diesel from the simulated fires from running down the brooks. Behind the ruins of Solomon's Temple farm are some concrete bases with remains of the poles that held the decoy lights...another little piece of history hidden in plain sight!

Other sources of information:

You can hear a 10-minute BBC Sounds 'Hidden Lancashire' segment about the site on <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0jbjgd0>
<http://www.white-coppice.co.uk/ruins%20central.htm>



Photo 1. Remains of pipes from decoy post up on the moor



Photo 2. Top. Remains of air raid shelter up on Brinscall Moor. Bottom. How the shelter would typically have looked when intact.



33. Cocker's Folly

As you walk across the moors or through Brinscall Woods, you can't fail to notice the ruins of many abandoned farmsteads; houses, barns, outhouses and gateposts. These farms were established as small holdings between c.1550 and 1750; tenant sheep farmers, supplying the wool for Lancashire's rapidly expanding textile industry.

Details on each farm across the moors and in the woods have been covered elsewhere. For further detailed information of all the abandoned farms, see 'The Lost Farms of Brinscall Moors' by David Clayton.

Also see the excellent site:

<http://www.white-coppice.co.uk/ruins.htm> which links to information from the book and gives further details and photos of all the ruins.

However, one interesting abandoned farm, Cocker's Folly, is worthy of note.

Cocker's Folly was just one of over 40 abandoned farms on the moors and occupied a prominent position directly above Brinscall village, on top of the hill next to the 'Three Trees'. It was a single building with its long axis aligned north-east to south-west. The origin of the name Cocker's Folly is unknown although the surname of Cocker appears in local parish records during the period when the farm was probably established.

Cocker's Folly was built in a similar style to the other farms in the area; a traditional stone longhouse with lime-washed walls and mullion and casement style windows. The farms were one room deep (circa 16ft or 5m) and 3-5 sections or bays long. There are still a number of similar buildings, dating from the same era, dotted along Harbour Lane (the road up into Brinscall).

But what happened to all the farms and why did many disappear over such a relatively short period of time?

We have already mentioned the building of the Upper (Roddlesworth) and Lower (Anglezarke/Rivington) reservoirs, joined by the Goit. These reservoirs were built between 1847 and 1857 to deliver water to Liverpool. At this time, there was little disruption to the moorland farms and the Parke Family continued to own much of the moorland.

However, in 1898-1902, there were further compulsory purchase orders to take over the moors by Liverpool Corporation Waterworks Department (later North West Water and then United Utilities). The takeover was an attempt to prevent typhoid outbreaks in Liverpool and ongoing transatlantic shipping, due to contaminated water. The objective was to prevent contamination of the water supply by animal and human sewage. Tenancies on moorland farms were not renewed, the Goit was covered in the area of most population (Withnell and Brinscall) and trees were planted in Wheelton and Withnell Plantations (Brinscall Woods). Although farmers were not driven off their land in a 'land clearance', they were not encouraged to stay!

Farms were also abandoned for other reasons. Families in the 1800s were large with too many people for a small farmstead to sustain. They supplemented their incomes by also working in the expanding village industries (quarry, spinning,

weaving, printing etc.). The 1851 Census reveals that Cocker's Folly was inhabited by Thomas and Alice Snape and their seven children. Six members of this family were employed as power-loom weavers in the cotton mills.

Eventually, many moorland dwellers voluntarily abandoned their tenancies to live in the newly built houses in our villages. The lure of modern amenities; gas lighting, piped indoor water, mains sewage disposal, and easy access to shops, churches, schools and trains, was more preferable to a life of hardship and remoteness up on the moors.

By 1891 Cocker's Folly was inhabited by 82 year old Ann Pilkington, a woman 'living on her own means'. Map and aerial photographic evidence shows that Cocker's Folly was abandoned between the late 1930s and early 1940s and the farmhouse and associated buildings have since been demolished or allowed to collapse.

The outlines of the gate posts and buildings can still be seen and there is a wonderful view. 'The Three Trees' has now become a special place for many people in the area and it is well worth the climb on a sunny day!

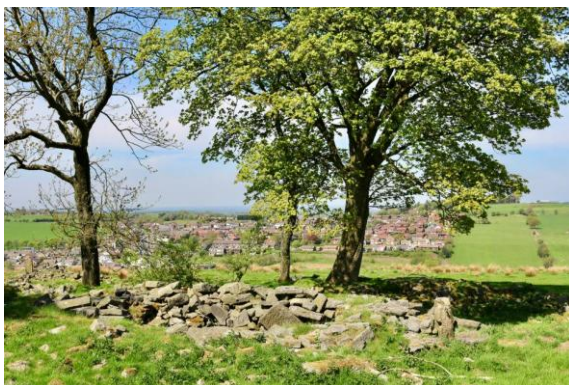


Photo1. Cocker's Folly ruins

Photo 2. Cocker's Folly farm visible at the top of the hill overlooking the villages