

## THORNTON-IN-CRAVEN

### BYGONE DAYS IN AN ANCIENT PARISH

#### [II]

Below, Mr. A.H. Clegg, of Kelbrook, continues his series of articles dealing with bygone days in the ancient parish of Thornton-in-Craven. The two previous articles, which appeared in the CRAVEN HERALD on April 26th and May 3rd, examined the poor law system in its relation to the parish about a century ago.

#### ENCLOSURES - TITHES - DRAINAGE - ROADS

We usually think of an Act of Parliament as dealing with some problem affecting the whole country, and not as something parochial.

But in 1819, Parliament passed an act specially for our old parish of Thornton-in-Craven, which consisted in those days of Thornton, Earby, Kelbrook and Harden. This act received the Royal Assent of King George III. on 14th June 1819. The title was : "An Act for inclosing and exonerating from tythes, lands in the Manor and Parish of Thornton-in-Craven, in the County of York."

The reasons for the Act being passed are stated as follows :-

"Whereas there are within the Manor and Parish of Thornton-in-Craven, certain commons and moors, commonly called or known by several names of Thornton Moor, Kelbrook Moor and Bleary Haugh, and Howshaw otherwise Howshaugh, and several small parcels of waste or uninclosed land, containing in the whole one thousand acres or thereabouts."

"And whereas the said Commons, Moors and Wastelands are, in their present state, of very little profit or benefit to the several persons interested therein ; and it would be of great advantage to such persons if the said Commons etc., were divided and inclosed, and such Allotments awarded unto and amongst the several and respective proprietors and persons interested therein, in proportion and according to their respective Rights, Property and Interest of and in the same ; and if the said Commons etc., and also the ancient inclosed Lands and Grounds, and other Tenements and Hereditament within the said parish of Thornton, were discharged from Tythes, and from all Moduses Compositions and other payments in lieu thereof : But the several purposes aforesaid cannot be effected without the Aid and Authority of Parliament."

At the time the Act was passed, Sir John Lister Kaye, Bart., was Lord of the Manor of Thornton, and as such was the owner of the soil of the commons and moors, and of the coal mines, veins and seams of coal and all other veins of minerals within and under them. The Rev. Robert Gee, clerk, was rector of Thornton, and in right of the said Rectory was fiefed of certain glebe lands and the right of common belonging to them, and was also entitled to all the great and small tythes arising within the parish or of certain moduses or compositions in lieu thereof.

Sir John Lister Kaye, Bart., Richard Bradley Wainman, Esq., George Worrall, Esq., the Rev. William Atkinson Wasney, Clerk, and Joshua Windle, George Smith and several other persons were proprietors of lands and buildings in the parish and in respect thereof claimed to be entitled to right of common upon the unenclosed commons and moors.

But although the Act applied to Thornton-in-Craven only, yet other Acts of a similar nature

were passed for many other parishes at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, and it did in reality form part of a national movement known as the Enclosure Movement.

### **CAUSE OF THE ENCLOSURE MOVEMENT**

During the Middle Ages and largely up to the middle of the 18th century methods of agriculture were based on the "open field" system.

Under this system the manor contained three arable fields, each "field" being divided into acres or half acre strips separated from each other only by "baulks" of unploughed earth. The strips held by any one person were not together, but scattered in different parts of the field or fields. Much agricultural work, such as ploughing, sowing and reaping, was carried out on a communal basis. Each year one of the "fields" was left fallow. Commons, moors and woodlands generally surrounded the open fields.

The system was necessarily wasteful, and under it progress in the new methods of farming was almost impossible.

The enclosure movement of the 18th Century was brought about largely through the desire to replace this old unsatisfactory system, which was holding up agricultural progress, by compact farms and enclosed fields, so that better crops and improved stock could be produced.

Between 1797 and 1820, 1727 Inclosure Acts were passed, of which the Thornton Inclosure Act was one.

The duty of carrying out the Act was entrusted to a commissioner, namely, William Pilkington, of Hensall, gentleman, who had a land surveyor, Henry Teal, of Leeds, to assist him. The work apparently took over five years to carry out and in 1825 the Commissioner made his award, known as the Thornton Award, which is a most interesting document.

### **THE THORNTON AWARD**

It was laid down in the Act that if old surveys of the parish existed the reliability of which the Commissioner was satisfied, he could lawfully use them in making his award without causing a further survey to be made. However a new survey was made.

The powers of the Commissioner were great and he had many responsible duties to carry out. Subject to an appeal to the Courts his decisions were final, but it was laid down that his award was not to be impeded or suspended by any action at law.

Any encroachments made upon the commons and moors within twenty years previous to the passing of the Act were to be deemed to be part of the commons and were to be divided and inclosed along with the rest.

In addition to dividing and inclosing the commons and moors and making arrangements for exonerating all lands, tenements, etc., in the parish from tythes, the Commissioner was empowered to stop up old roads (except turnpike roads), to have new roads made, to make or cause to be made new drains, ditches and waterways, and to allot to the Surveyors of the Highways quarries for the purpose of getting stone, sand, gravel, etc., for the making and repairing of the public and private roads, drains, etc.

The size of the parish was 5,436 acres and the portion to be enclosed under the Act was about 1,000 acres.

It is interesting to note that several roads in the parish and the drainage system in Kelbrook Bottoms are the result of the Inclosure Act and Award.

### **NEW ROADS**

The Award first deals with public highroads, bridle-paths and private carriage roads.

The commissioner caused a survey, plan and evaluation of all the commons, moors and waste lands to be made and also of all the messuages, cottages, orchards, gardens, homesteads and ancient inclosed lands and grounds within the parish to be made by the surveyor appointed under the Act, and declared the whole of the said commons and moors to contain in statute measure 969 acres, 1 rood and 7 perches. He then set out and appointed the following public and private carriage roads :-

#### PUBLIC CARRIAGE ROADS

1. The Wentworth Head Road of width of 30 feet which commenced at the Colne to Skipton Turnpike Road on Thornton Moor near Wentcliffe Head leading in a north-westerly direction across the moor to the township of Elslack.
2. The Moor Gate Road, commencing at Moor Gate leading over Kelbrook Moor to the north end of Cob Lane.
3. The Dodgson House Road commencing at the ancient gate near Dodgson House and leading in a south-easterly direction across Thornton Moor to the Colne to Keighley turnpike road in the township of Lothersdale.

#### PRIVATE CARRIAGE ROADS.\*

1. Standridge Clough Road commencing at Dodgson House Road on Bleary Moor and leading in a north-easterly direction to an ancient lane in Standridge Clough.
2. Bleary Side Road commencing at the Colne to Keighley turnpike road on Bleary Moor leading in a north-westerly and then northerly direction to an ancient lane near a place called East Baw Head.
3. Hauber Lane Road, commencing at the east end of Hauber Lane and leading in a southerly easterly then easterly direction to the south-west corner of an allotment set out to the Rector of Thornton for glebe,, thence across the allotment in an easterly direction to the north end of Wentcliffe House Road.
4. Thick Bank Road, commencing at Moor Gate Road near Thick Bank, and proceeding in an easterly direction to an ancient inclosure.
5. Hard Clough Road, branching out of Moor Gate Road on Kelbrook Moor. leading in a south-easterly direction to Hard Clough Road, and thence in a south-easterly direction.
6. Copsy House Road, starting from the Bleary Side Road on Bleary Moor, and leading thence in a westerly direction to an estate called Copsy House.
7. Higher Vargues Road commencing at Standridge Clough Road and leading in an easterly direction to an estate called Higher Vargues.
8. Knowl Road, starting at the Moor Gate Road near a place called Knowl and leading in a

south-easterly and then easterly direction to two allotments.

9. Dick Field Road is now called Waterloo Road and it seems probable that the route of the old road which precedes it was slightly diverted.

10. Kitchen Road branching out of the Colne to Keighley Turnpike Road near Howshay Bar and leading over an encroachment lying on the west side of the said turnpike road to a farm called Kitchen.

11. Burnt Hill Road, branching out of the Colne to Keighley Turnpike Road and going in a westerly direction over an encroachment to certain farms and lands called Burnt Hill and Brown Hill.

12. Rake Bank Road starting at an ancient lane called Rake Bank and leading in a southerly direction to an ancient inclosure.

After directing the above carriage roads should be made, the commissioner directed that at all times hereafter the Public Carriage Roads should be kept in repair by such persons and in such manner as other public carriage roads were by law supported and kept in repair and that all the Private Carriage Roads and any bridges or tunnels across such roads should be maintained and repaired by the Surveyor of Highways within the parish of Thornton, and that the costs should be paid by the several proprietors of the commons etc., divided and enclosed under the Act according to the value of their respective holdings, and specified in the Rate Schedule drawn up by the commissioner and included in the Award, under the title of "A rate for the repair of the Private Carriage Roads."

The schedule designates 73 allotments the owners of which had to contribute towards the rate for the repair of the roads. The total acreage of these allotments was about 960 acres, and the total amount of the vote was £6 8s. 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. It was not a flat rate per acre the value, position and probably the extent to which the new roads would benefit the different plots being taken into consideration when fixing the rate.

The Trustees of the Sunday School, Kelbrook, which school was in the present Waterloo Road, near the site where Fort's Buildings now stand, paid one farthing towards the rate for five perches of land.

The rate on an allotment of 114 acres on Thornton Moor was 19/5.

\*These roads varied in width being either 21, 24 or 30 ft wide.

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