

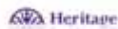
Kirkby Stephen Charter Fair Committee
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Kirkby Stephen Town Council



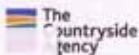
Local Heritage initiative



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KIRKBY STEPHEN
~ 1605 ~

THE JACOBEOAN
Charter Fair
&
PROCLAMATION



Historical research by
Margaret Gowling



Kirkby Stephen was granted its first market charter in 1353. In 1605 James I issued a new charter for the town in which he confirmed the two traditional fairs, one in the spring at St Mark's tide, and the other in the autumn, at St Luke's tide, together with a weekly market. The only change was that the market day was moved from Friday to Monday.



As trading was confined to officially chartered markets and fairs, it was important for rural communities to gain this right. The 3rd Earl of Cumberland, as lord of the Kirkby Stephen manor, was granted the market rights, which enabled him to charge tolls and to supervise the quality of goods on sale as

well as the weights and measures. The Luke Fair, the most important event of the year, was held for three days around October 18th. (The calendar change of 1752 moved the fair to its present date). The Fair was opened by a procession through the streets led by the lord's bailiff, the market committee and officials. Then followed the reading of the proclamation by the bailiff at the market cross. This has now disappeared and the charter stone which succeeded it, is marked by a brass plaque set into the pavement of Market Street.

The tolls charged 'from time immemorial' were:

1d a head for cattle,

4d for a score of sheep,

and 6d for a horse.

1d for every meal ark (a large wooden chest in which oatmeal is exposed for sale).

1d for every stall whereon the owner exposes anything for sale.

Each horse sold had to have a descriptive certificate:

Should the same daye by Robert Cottam of the parish of Kirkestelen butcher one horse cauller buy three white feet and a little whit in the forehead to Samuel Stephenson of Waresopp in the Countie of Westmorland butcher prior four markes. Nij March 1637 (W/SMB)

The official measure for horse height is now to be found along Hills Bottom.

Prices varied with the season but

Cow	£1.10s. to £2
Ewe	3s-4s each (a top 5s)
Wool	6s a stone
Malt	6s a bushel,
Wheat	9s a bushel and

Bigge (barley) 6s, Oats 3s.

A Cambrian bushel was 3 times a Winchester bushel.

Wages, day rates:

Mason	12d
Waller	10d
Laborer	6d



The market square stretched from the church gates down towards Sower Pow. The houses along the street were set well back, so there was a wide space for the animal pens which were filled with sheep and cattle. Geese, hens, ducks, swine, and horses were to be found for sale in the back lanes if the



main street was too full. Butchers, tallow chandlers and bone grinders would be active while surplus farm produce like butter, cheese and eggs were also sold. Stalls selling cloth, stockings, knitted hats,



hides and sheep skins were to be found in every corner, along with leatherware: shoes, belts, saddles and harness. Smiths provided kitchen gear, cauldrons, girdles and pans as well as horse shoes. Pedlars, on foot and on horseback, came from Penrith, Brampton and Carlisle and probably from further away. They sold the little luxuries which could not be easily hand-made at home: ribbons, combs, buckles, buttons, laces, gloves and muffs. They also sold cloth like muslin and calico as well as Kendal cloth, Scotch cloth and part-made clothes like leather bodices, jerkins, and silk collars.

The inns and alehouses would do a roaring trade. The Black Bull was on its present site, the others were not named in the records but were probably The Mire, The King's Arms, The Fountain and The Sun. All were around the Market Place.

The market court appears to have been held in Appleby in the 17th century. Although its early records are missing, those for the period after 1660 exist. From these it is clear that Kirkby had a tanning industry which was in competition with that of Appleby.

On October 19th 1660 (Luke Fair) Richard Williamson of Kirkby Stephen, yeoman, "took divers pieces of leather to the value of £5" belonging to four traders from Appleby.

In 1665/6 Lancelot Robinson and three other Appleby men together with Richard Williamson of Kirkby

Stephen, yeomen, on 10th December by force broke into the dwelling of Adam Urwin of Kirkby and took ten 'fairy hides' value £3. Witnesses: John Powley and Vincent Powson.

While at the same court hearing, Lancelot Robinson claimed that John Powley of Kirkby Stephen was unlawfully dealing in hides on Kirkby Stephen market.

Most other recorded offences were at the fairs, when the constables, appointed annually by the Vestry, would be on duty, hence:

Edward Moore, yeoman of Kirkby Stephen, was accused on the 19th day of September of -

'a great assault and affray', (for he) beat, wounded and maltreated Leonard Lee and his wife Elizabeth at Brough Hill in 1662.

Likewise:

The King's jurors say that:

John Barnett of Kirkby Stephen upon 8th October used violence and a weapon on Elizabeth Wilson, wife of Edward Wilson.

and

On 7th November, Edward Wilson yeoman of Kirkby Stephen, used violence and a weapon on Dorothy Barnett.

Other court cases were related to the threat which new hedges imposed. For example:

The King's jurors say that Henry Petty of Kaber on the 9th day of September, 1662, broke into the enclosure of William Varey, 'entered it and made a common way, damaging grass worth 1d'. This seems to have been

followed by more violent action for on the next day, Henry Petty was accused of using force and a weapon on William 'so that people despaired of his life'.





Kirkby Stephen town in 1605 had perhaps 60 or 70 of the total 300 households found in the parish. The church and grammar school were stone buildings. The church had a new tower built at the west end to replace the old and unsafe central tower. The Manor house in Melbecks may have been built of stone too, but all the other houses were wattle and daub with thatched roofs. There was a corn mill at the end of Mill Lane and a fulling mill with tenter fields (for finishing cloth) at Stenkrith. Later in the century there was a dye house somewhere in the town. There was a common bake house, while malt making and brewing were probably done on a commercial scale by the inn keepers.

The town fields were Sandriggs, Waitby Thorns and Croglin, where in 1604 there were 44 tenants with strips some with only half a rood. Meadow land was in closes in Inggire, Stobars and Trainriggs and the commons were on the fells to the south.

WHO LIVED IN KIRKBY AROUND THE BEGINNING OF THE CENTURY?

The manor house was occupied by the steward of the Clifford manor, William Spencely. The Earl of Cumberland rarely came to Westmorland and, like his 17th century successors, seems to have ignored Kirkby Stephen. The Whartons who lived at Wharton Hall owned the church lands in Kirkby. The Musgraves of Hartley Castle had only two tenements in Kirkby: their Westmorland property was concentrated in the villages of Hartley, Soulby and the Musgraves.

Kirkby was not a gentry town, its character and economy was the result of the efforts of ordinary people. People like those shown on the rent lists:

Robert Gibson who paid 6d a year for a cottage.

Geoffrey Harrison who paid 2d pa for a lime pit.

Christopher Hutchinson paid 16d for a cottage & garden.

Michael Dent paid 18d for a cottage & garden.

Forty four tenants each paid 16d a year for strips of arable land in Croglin.

Henry Hartley leased the manor corn mill for 20s a year, and another twenty three householders paid a mill rent of 12d p.a. each, on condition that they also paid Hartley for his work and repaired the thatch of the mill roof when required.



Some individuals can be seen in more detail from the wills and inventories.

Henry Blencarn, who died in Kirkby Stephen in 1602 was comfortably off. His will shows that he left a tenement, a cottage and a house and a garth, which were to be divided between his sons and his wife. His inventory lists all his movable goods, which legally

included those of his wife too.

2 horses	36s 8d
2 ox, a wott	£4
3 kye	£3
2 sterkes	7s 6d
11 sheep	25s
4 geese, 2 ducks, 11 poultry	3s
Five vessels	34s
Peuter vessels	7s
Wood vessels	6s
Bedding	£2
Wyndcloth, sakes & poles	54s
Chest & arke	7s
Husbandry gear	20s
Chairs, forms & stools	20s
His apparel	20s
Small implements	20s
In corn & wheat	£22
Total	£40 19s



NB, original spelling.

Twelve debts totalling £10, 12s 6d included his rent, his burying and his church fees.

His house was barely furnished. Not listed would be the bed and a chest which was all that the widow was allowed to keep.






The Proclamation

The proclamation included the following commands:

O yes. O yes. O yes... The Lord and Owner of this Fair doth strictly charge and command in His Majesty's name that all persons keep His Majesty's Peace, and not to presume to ride or go armed during the time of this Fair and also that all persons bargain and sell lawful and sound goods and merchandise, and pay their due and accustomed tolls and stallages, use lawful weights and measures, upon pain to forfeit the value of their traces and merchandise, and also that all who buy sell or exchange any horse, mare or gelding, that the sellers and buyers thereof repair to the clerk of the Tolls and there enter their names, places of abode, together with the price, marks and vouchers at their perils; and lastly if any person have any injury or wrong done by reason of any bargain or contact, during the time of this Fair, let them give information thereof, and the same shall be tried by the Manor Court according to law.

God Save the King (and the Lord of the Manor).



John Dickinson of Kirkby Stephen who died in 1619 was not a farmer. He had neither livestock nor crops. He may have been a craftsman as the bulk of his inventoried wealth is made up of unpaid debts probably for work done over a number of years.

His possessions were worth less than £3.

<i>Bedding</i>	14s 8d
<i>Fire wood & pewter vessels</i>	21s
<i>His apparel</i>	20s
<i>Implements</i>	2s 6d
<i>Owing unto him</i>	£18 10s
<i>Total (with debts owed)</i>	£21 8s 2d
<i>Funeral expenses</i>	26s



Among the better off inhabitants was:

Edward Myntess, the school master at the Grammar School. A Scottish Calvinist who had taught at Ravenstonedale, before his appointment by Thomas Lord Wharton to be the first master of the new Kirkby Stephen school in 1566. He was still there when he died in 1606. He taught both local boys and up to 20 boarders a year.

His house had been the old vicarage and orchard. His will shows he owned tables, chairs, cupboards, forms and stools as well as a good supply of bedding and linen (£10 worth). He had a saddle-horse, a bible, books (£4) and more clothing than most (£3). He also had livestock, 54 sheep, six kine and 5 young cattle. He had two quarters of hung beef which was more food than any other household in Kirkby recorded at the time.

Master William Swinbank in 1606 was even better off. He owned a house in York, as well as one in Kirkby. He left young children, but, as was the custom of the time, his wife was not to be their guardian.

He left a total of inventoried goods of £50. His house contained some new fashioned painted chests, flanders chests and a coffer of ash. He was well supplied with bed-hangings, cushions, feather beds, pewter ware and cooking equipment including a frying pan and a girdle. He had a pouch of coals where most people had peat or wood fires.

He had supplies of corn and hay, two kine, a horse and a swine but no sheep. Perhaps he was a mercer (draper) as he

had 13 pairs of sheets, 10 lbs of line (flax yarn) and equipment for spinning flax such as cards heckles and a line-wheel but he also had ten yards of sacking. He may have had an inn as he had 3 dozen trenchers or he may have been just wealthy.

And the best dressed man in Kirkby?

Thomas Trippett, in 1618, left goods to the value of £35.

He was a single man whose lands were leased out. He owned an expensive horse, enough luxury items to furnish one comfortable room and chests of clothes. He had:

Black horse, £3, 6s 8d & 3 pecks of oats
Feather bed, bedding, chest, trunk & desk. Linen table cloth
2 old cloaks
2 doublets
4 jerkins



6 pairs hose
1 old clout, 3s
hat, 6s 8d
handkerchiefs
3 shirts
2 pairs boots, 2 pairs shoes
9 pairs woollen stockings

He also had:

a sword
2 daggers
2 girdles
bow & arrows,
quiver with silver fringe & buttons
£26 in gold & £13 out on loan

