INGLEBOROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

THE KINGSDALE HEAD PROJECT 2005-2007

A HISTORY OF KINGSDALE IN THE PARISH OF THORNTON IN LONSDALE.

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Preface

The following account is designed to form part of the Kingsdale Head Archive compiled in 2007 by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group (hereafter referred to as the IAG). It is quite intensively referenced in the hope that it will provide a useful resource for those engaged in local research. It is not intended as a finished product, indeed much of the research is still ongoing, and we hope to incorporate this material into a wider environmental survey of Kingsdale, with contributions from other groups and individuals working in this area.

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A History of Kingsdale in the Parish of Thornton in Lonsdale

Descending into the valley of Kingsdale, across the glacial moraine that seals the entrance from the south, the length of the dale lies before you, flanked by the great limestone terraces of Gragareth to the west and to the east the greener slopes of Wackenburgh Hill and Whernside. There is a sense of remoteness in the valley, of being cut off from the outside world, but scramble up the side of Gragareth, cross the flat mosses of its summit and the wide panorama of Morecambe Bay unfolds, with its sea lanes to Ireland and the western isles of Scotland and, far below, the M6 motorway replacing the great Roman arterial road linking the south of England with the Scottish borders. There has been a moor land community here for hundreds of years stretching back into prehistory, yet for the last four centuries only the solitary farmstead at Braida Garth remained until the building of Kingsdale Head farm following the 1819 enclosure.

Kingsdale lies within the parish of Thornton in Lonsdale, an extensive parish of tiny hamlets, scattered farms and the villages of Thornton, Westhouse, Masongill, Ireby and until 1866, Burton in Lonsdale. Historically, despite providing the site of the early medieval castle and the Manorial Court Leet, Burton had only a chapel of ease, subject to the mother church of St Oswald’s in Thornton.

Thornton village, centred on its church, lies to the south of Kingsdale. At 131 metres above sea level, the improved farmland provides good grazing and, apart from a caravan site and some modern bungalows, the scene has changed little since Harry Speight, standing at Church Stile corner in 1891, reflected on the rural isolation that seemed to embrace him: “We look in vain for anything but the sturdy old church and, perhaps equally ancient, “pub” close by. The widely-scattered farms seem to belong to no-where in particular, and the old Hall and Vicarage are just as lonesome and some distance off.”

To ensure the relevance of these researches to the excavation at Kingsdale Head, I have restricted this historical account of the valley of Kingsdale to a region of roughly six miles around the site. For a more detailed history of the area around St Oswald’s Church reference should be made to the earlier IAG publication “The Broadwood Project: Thornton in Lonsdale.”

A modern country lane runs north from the church into Kingsdale, climbing steadily until it mounts the moraine and descends into the valley. It then runs along the foot of the limestone escarpments on the west at approximately 250m. until it reaches the site at the head of the valley at 303m. above sea level. Beyond the site, the lane becomes precipitous, twisting and narrow, climbing steeply along the flanks of Gragareth up to 468 metres before dropping down into Deepdale in the parish of Dent. Older tracks may possibly have followed a somewhat lower route to the north of the site, along Long Gill up to Peat Gate and its spring before rejoining the lane at about 424m.

Despite these limestone uplands offering such attractive resources to the hunter-gatherers, with the vast food potential of Morecambe Bay less than twenty miles away, few indications of human activity in Kingsdale during the Mesolithic period have been identified. The flat valley floor has a considerable depth of fine silt below the turf and it seems likely that a glacial lake was trapped here at least for a time, creating a potentially rich landscape but only a small number of microliths have been found on the terrace levels surrounding Rowten Pot (SD.698 780) and although the occasional Mesolithic microlith has been found elsewhere, the archaeological context has been lost. The scatters of later Mesolithic microliths, so common in the Malham/Settle area, are not found here. It is therefore exciting to record the discovery of the pit at Kingsdale Head yielding the radiocarbon date of 6,660 BC (95% accuracy).
The geophysical survey conducted over the site had revealed the anomaly that instigated the excavation of the trench. There was clear evidence of a high temperature having been generated and we were able to recover a piece of charcoal from between the linings of the pit, which dated it to the mid-Mesolithic. It was identified as hawthorn (*Crataegus*), reputed to be useful as kindling. There was very little evidence of burning to the pit lining, suggesting that the fire was not burning within the pit. The small stones with which it had been filled were burnt and broken but the most intense burnt area was around the rim, suggesting that the fire or possibly hot ashes had been placed on top of the stones. The pit was probably being used for cooking joints of meat, wrapped in leaves or grass and placed amongst the stones, which were either heated from above or brought from a separate hearth. Hot ash may have been used and the pit sealed. There are other possibilities. Water may have been poured over the hot stones to generate steam either for cooking or for processing hides. Smoking, drying or preserving of food or hides are other possible uses or the stones may simply have provided residual heat over night after the fire had gone out.  

No Mesolithic artefacts were recovered but flint flakes of good quality were found and a sequence of anomalies to the south-east of the pit, which could well prove to be post-holes, await further investigation. Details of the discovery are available in the archive compiled by the IAG and on our website. ([www.ingleborougharchaeologygroup.org.uk](http://www.ingleborougharchaeologygroup.org.uk))

The number of known cave sites in the valley is in excess of 120 but most have only been excavated by potholers in their search for new cave systems, with the notable exception of North End Pot (SD 683 765) and Yordas Cave (SD 705 791). Few caves of the classic rock shelter type are found in Kingsdale, most are dry shafts on the terrace levels, which are usually blocked by an accumulation of debris making them a potential sealed time capsule. Others are active potholes, containing water flows, which are probably of limited archaeological value, although the adjacent areas often have a scatter of flint artefacts. Further details of the cave sites of archaeological significance in the Kingsdale area will be incorporated into the community project archive which is still ongoing.

The appearance of flint chippings in the valley is of particular significance as indicating human activity, the nearest natural source for the flint lying across the Vale of York. There are however seams of chert on Gragareth and Ingleborough and this provided an inferior substitute. The “limestone corridor” from the Lune Valley to Settle, and on to Grassington, was used as a trade route for Langdale stone and graphite in exchange for flint.

With the evolution of the stone axe and the adoption of a more sedentary lifestyle, small-scale clearance of the mixed-oak woodland began in either the Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic period. In her palaeobotanical researches on the Ingleborough Massif in 1987, Susan Swales identified a “distinctive and long-term” clearance phase in the Early Neolithic Period with evidence of crops being grown on the limestone soils. Three of the sites she studied bear comparison with Kingsdale Head; Braithwaite Wife Hole, (SD 744 764), Sunset Hole (SD 745 759) and The Allotment Shooting Box Site (SD 764 737), all of which lie at a slightly higher altitude on the fell side. Small numbers of cereal pollen grains were found at Braithwaite Wife Hole at an altitude of 354 metres and the presence of plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and mugwort (*Artemisia*) together indicate that during the Middle to Late Neolithic Period, the grasslands were being maintained through grazing of livestock and limited arable farming. She tentatively suggests “that parts, if not most, of the limestone plateau around the edges of the massif were being intensively farmed, both for crop growing and stock rearing”. These were small, mainly self-sufficient, agricultural communities living generally in isolated groups occasionally meeting together in larger gatherings. At all the sites recorded in Swales’ thesis, the long-term Neolithic disturbance was followed by a short period of forest regeneration. Although there was still evidence of farming activity, broad-leaved woodland of ash and hazel
appeared to have taken over. The farmers may have moved to better land if their activities had exposed the limestone pavement or by increasing water logging encouraged peat formation; or there may have been a decline in population. 6. Clearance began again at Braithwaite Wife Hole in the Early to Middle Bronze Age; the preponderance of plantain, bracken and nettles suggesting mainly pastoral farming with the occasional cereal grains indicating some arable. The estimated date quoted by Smailes at 3680 BP (before present) is very close to the radiocarbon date of 3200 BP (1270 BC and 1155 BC) 7 given by charcoal samples taken from the pavement and hearth feature at the Kingsdale Head site excavated by the IAG.(SD 713 800).

The Sunset Hole site at an altitude of 393m., overlooking Southerscales, has also yielded evidence of larger scale clearance in the late Neolithic period and mainly pastoral activity, giving way to the brief regeneration of birch and hazel woodland. Large scale forest clearance resumed in the late Bronze Age with plantain, docks and nettles suggesting pastoral activity with heather or ling heath on the upper slopes. Evidence from the lower slopes of Simon Fell suggests that there were clearances from the late Bronze Age but that peat began to grow again at about the time of the Norman Conquest. 6

That the site at Kingsdale Head was occupied during the middle Bronze Age period was confirmed by the carbon dating of the pavement underlying the burnt mound, supported by the discovery of a flanged chert arrow head, a lovely thumb scraper and good quality worked flints. The trench excavated at the southern end of the site revealed a large area of black ash mixed in with pieces of broken, burnt sandstone. Beneath this layer, nearest the beck, there was a natural buff coloured fluvial sediment with a shallow circular depression which appeared to be the base of a hearth. Further excavation revealed two orthostats at the western end of the hearth, away from the beck, set on edge, end to end, leading down on to a rectangular working area or pavement of horizontal, dressed flagstones. The purpose of the burnt mound however remains ambiguous. Excavation confirmed the absence of iron, pottery or bone. The quantity of ash suggested wood burning on an industrial scale, possibly to produce lye water (potassium hydroxide), a caustic liquid with many uses, including fulling and hide processing but this is clearly a multi-period site with enough evidence to suggest that about 3220 years ago, the community was sufficiently permanent to supplement their pastoral farming with ancillary activities. Beneath the longhouse type building excavated in trench 1, were other indications of possible prehistoric activity but this must remain speculative until further evidence is obtained.

Agriculture in Britain from about 3500BC was mostly mixed farming. The climate and soil context meant the system had to keep to nutrient cycles, conserving the nitrogen. It was therefore normal practice to retain fields near the settlement that were manured by domestic beasts that in turn grazed on the surrounding peripheral scrub, woodland or heath. As I.G.Simmons demonstrates the contrast between today's bare moorland and the improved pasture below would have been much less if the uplands were themselves wooded and the land below 300m. was still studded with trees. He suggests there would have been a mosaic of woodlands with openings cut into them. Wheat was being grown in these small clearings in upland woods from about 3,000BC and deer attracted to the grass would have provided easy pickings. 8 Even as late as 1294 documentary evidence refers to “a great wood which is called Kingsdale”. 9

Further down the beck, to the south of the site, was an imposing burial cairn situated on the edge of the river terrace, known as the Apron Full of Stones (SD 708 787) now sadly decayed. It was a complex structure of 25 metres in diameter and must have represented an important family commitment to the land. A Bronze Age cremation lay within a scatter of broken flint flakes and in the centre beneath a cobbled “floor”, there were two large graves, 2.4 metres in length designed to hold an extended human body. These were dug into the terrace, indicating a Neolithic provenance but there was no evidence for either stone cists or wooden coffins, nor
was there any evidence of inhumation or cremation in the graves though it is unlikely that the tumulus was erected without a primary burial.  

No Bronze Age pottery was found in the Apron Full of Stones but settlement sites with the remains of stone based structures are to be found throughout the Ingleborough area. Of the 84 sites identified, 20 are thought to show Bronze Age potential, but only very limited excavation has been carried out. A number of cairn fields give evidence of the clearance of stone to improve pasture, for example a cluster of about twenty grass covered cairns on Scales Moor, (SD 722 767 and SD 716 765) with associated stone features possibly representing domestic dwellings. Two sites at the head of Cote Gill, above Newby (SD 742 718 and SD 747 717) are in an area of cup-marked stones in associated field systems that are generally accepted as a Bronze Age feature. A flanged, Bronze Age axe head has been recovered in Kingsdale and fragments of a knife with remnants of a bone handle have been found near Church Stile Corner (SD 686 737).

Although the stony bed of Kingsdale Beck is often exposed as the stream flows beneath the limestone, heavy rain can produce a powerful and turbulent rush of water. One such recent spate cut into the bank at Sandymire, to the south of Braida Garth, removing the top soil and exposing an assemblage of waterlogged wood. Tests carried out by the York Archaeological Trust in their conservation laboratories showed that the samples had been taken from alder, hazel and willow and that the willow samples bore the dished marks with parallel ridges that indicate beaver chewed wood. Cuts across the other samples indicate human activity. The samples were stratified with those exhibiting cut marks from metal, probably bronze, lying above the beaver chewed deposits. A specimen from the upper layer was radiocarbon dated to between approximately 1640 to 1450 BC but the beaver chewed samples from the lower levels were dated to between 5750 and 5640 BC, placing them within the Mesolithic period.

The European beaver, *Castor fiber*, was native to Britain but by the thirteenth century it had been hunted to extinction. As the marks indicate both human and beaver activity further research is required before the true significance of this discovery can be made clear.

Early settlement is suggested by numerous free-standing field monuments in the surrounding area, but there have been few modern excavations and there is a dearth of dated settlement evidence. In Clapdale, above Clapham, (SD 757 715) there is evidence of an enclosure containing disturbed human remains and sherds of rough pottery with flint and chert flakes and a hammer stone but of the 84 archaeological sites identified by the IAG only six can be classified as possibly Neolithic. Thaw Head Cave in Chapel le Dale (SD 708 757) has yielded human remains and sherds of late Neolithic pottery, including groove ware. A perforated piece of antler, probably used as a hammer head, was found in North End Pot on the flanks of Gragareth in Kingsdale, close to the Turbary Road (SD 683 765) and a human skull radiocarbon dated to 310-130 BC was also recovered from this shaft like pothole and bone fragments of wild cattle, Aurochs, both young and calving females.

Human skeletal material found in the caves is currently being re-examined. The issue of whether it represents human burial practice or simply food dragged into the caves by wild animals is being warmly contested, not helped by the lack of cultural evidence. Beyond the valley both Thaw Head and Ravenscar caves overlook the remains of settlement sites containing stone circles and stone based enclosures with associated field systems, but these may not be contemporary, although they could well overlie earlier archaeology. The suggested possible time span for occupation is from the Iron Age to Romano-British. Ravenscar (SD 729 756) has yielded sherds of plain Neolithic bowls and beakerware, flint scrapers, a barbed arrowhead and a bone whistle.

The valley of Kingsdale was probably totally managed by the Iron Age and its land allocated to a stratified social system. By this period even the uplands were earmarked with dykes and
banks impressed across the landscape. The climatic deterioration experienced in the first millennium BC, however, caused many settlements to be abandoned. Some of the potential earthworks situated above the 350 metre contour are located in such exposed positions that they would hardly be viable and the deterioration may well have marked the end of this period of settlement at Kingsdale Head.

Though the Ingleborough hillfort rampart must be considered Iron Age (SD 741 745), there is no dateable evidence for the hillfort, other than one sherd of southern Romano-British colour-coated Beakerware, and a fragment of Castor Ware. Current research by Yvonne Luke indicates an even earlier, possibly ritual use of the site. There are approximately 20 circular and horse shoe shaped stone-based features on the summit probably dwellings or serving some ritual purpose, dating from prehistory and on through the Romano-British period, but there are few Iron Age artefacts in this area, saving the Ancissa-type brooch from Attermire Cave and possibly the Ingleton Mirror handle.

There has been extensive aerial photographic coverage in this part of the Yorkshire Dales, which emphasises the potential for future research, but unfortunately the photographs show few details of the sites in Kingsdale. The site at Broadwood, close to the church in Thornton, provided the Ingleton-type site identified by Home and Macleod in their report for the National Mapping Programme, although until our investigation was complete there was no direct evidence of Iron Age activity. This paucity of evidence is difficult to accept. During the second half of the late Iron Age, this region was part of the tribal lands of the Brigantes. There must have been a flourishing local community in or around Thornton and Kingsdale involved in more than simple pastoralism. Local lead, zinc and copper ores were being collected and traded and it would have required an organised, settled population to construct and support the Ingleborough hillfort. In the absence of dateable artefacts, we are forced to rely on aerial photography and geophysical and other surveys of the many earthworks identified within the area, from small stone based circles, either isolated or grouped together, to much larger irregular enclosures with internal divisions.

The radiocarbon dating of samples of charcoal extracted from the enclosure ditch at Broadwood, suggested that we might have identified an Iron Age settlement predating the Romans. Derived from yew, the samples gave us a series of calibrated dates ranging from 13 BC-AD1. Other samples taken from inside the structure excavated in trench 3 confirmed that we were dealing with a settlement that appeared to be flourishing during the first century. Charcoal fragments, possibly hazel, gave us a calibrated date of AD 94/5 and the ten fragments of charcoal (possibly yew) taken from the clay feature within the structure were radiocarbon dated to AD 45-134. The hammer scale in trench 1, identified in association with a large cow bone, indicated metal working and pottery sherds indicated continuing activity throughout the Roman occupation. The cow bone from the side of the ditch was radiocarbon dated to around AD 237.

When in AD 69 factional fighting amongst the Brigantes forced Vespasian to bring the north under control, troop movements probably bypassed this area. The forces under Agricola landed in the Lune Estuary, in the neighbourhood of Lancaster, moved north along the Lune Valley, possibly meeting with re-enforcements at Burrow in Lonsdale, and on along the Eden valley to Carlisle, where they would have met with Petillius Cerialis completing the circuit from Lincoln and York in the east. The defeat of the Brigantes under Venutius, seems to have destroyed their tribal cohesion and although sporadic Brigantian revolts necessitated further military action, the Roman conquest and occupation of this region seems complete although conditions in the north-west remained unsettled into the second half of the second century.

Patrick Ottoway has demonstrated that despite the difficulty in distinguishing between Iron Age and Roman evidence on site, the conquest appears on the whole to have had little impact on
the character and pattern of settlement. This seems to have been true of the Broadwood (Thornton) enclosure but it is usually accepted that rectangular structures became more common after the Roman Conquest and Broadwood falls into this category. The Yorkshire Dales Mapping Project identified Broadwood (NY.1216.38.1.) as the key “Ingleton Type Enclosure Site”, described by Peter Horne and David Macleod as “a very regular rectangle approximately 65 metres by 50 metres internally, with internal subdivisions”. They recognised from aerial photographs a “very deliberate, organised form” which was similar to another twelve sites in the area but none of these sites had at that time produced reliable dating evidence. Six of these sites show a great similarity in the organisation of their internal divisions, they are all described as “bank-defined” and all but one as having curved corners. Although both Broadwood and neighbouring Yarlsber lie on south, south-west facing slopes, there appears to be no consistent pattern across all the sites with regards to their location and elevation, although the six most similar-looking sites lie close to the routes of possible medieval or Roman roads.

Apart from our finds at Broadwood, few Romano-British artefacts have been recovered in this area, and nothing has been retrieved from the caves. A Roman cloak-fastener has been found in Kingsdale and mention has already been made of the Roman pottery found on Ingleborough. A Roman pot was found near the Roman road at the head of Chapel le Dale (Hildyard Collection). However on the western limit of our area, at Ellerbeck, straddling the Lancashire-Yorkshire county boundary, R.A.C. Lowndes identified six settlement complexes and on the evidence of pottery recovered from one of these sites suggested they were Romano-British in date. This was forty years ago and since then, over the summer of 1997, an analytical field survey carried out by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England concluded that these settlements overlie a coaxial field system on an extensive multi-period site with evidence of human settlement dating back to the Bronze Age. The few sherds of Romano-British pottery represent only one phase of the occupation. No conclusions have yet been drawn as to the possible relationship of this site to the large ‘D’ shaped bank and ditch enclosure on the opposite side of Leck Beck, described by Haselgrove as an “enigmatic curvilinear site” and tentatively attributed to the Iron Age, map ref. SD 650 780, but these sites lie close to Kingsdale if one has the energy to scramble up the side of Gragareth and approach them from the east. During the Thornton excavation, we were shown a hipposandal, in a rather poor state of preservation, which had been found just to the south east of Ingleton and a Roman coin of the fourth century, bearing the head of an Emperor of the House of Constantine, has been found in Easegill above Yarlsber.

In his review of the Archaeology of Roman Yorkshire, Patrick Ottaway demonstrates that: "As far as civilian settlements are concerned, sites occupied in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries are clearly of great interest for understanding the process of interaction between Roman and native..." but he concludes, in the upland zones “the Roman conquest barely registers in the artifactual record until the 3rd-4th centuries.”

The Lune provided a natural north-south strategic route for the Romans and the three forts of Lancaster, Burrow in Lonsdale and Low Borrow Bridge testify to its importance. The fort at Burrow was only about eight miles across country from Kingsdale and with its military and civilian settlement would have provided a natural market for a native farmstead. Ellerbeck, SD 643 782, Broadwood, SD 693 734, Yarlsber, SD 710 726 and Fell End, Ingleton, SD 705 731 demonstrate very similar features and may well represent Romano-British rural sites related to and within the economic ambit of Burrow. David Shotter has estimated the size of the fort to about five acres accommodating 500 cavalry or 1000 infantry, larger than the norm. Most structural evidence is dated to the third or early fourth century but there is evidence of earlier timber structures. The native rural settlements are sited on the flanks of the northern fells, though Broadwood (Thornton) is less elevated than the others, with extensive views over the Lune Valley and Morecambe Bay. Ellerbeck is a multi-period site with the remains of burial
cairns and several settlement complexes with accompanying field systems, and a possible time span stretching from the Neolithic to the Medieval Period. 22 Yarlsber, on sloping ground to the east of Ingleton, is a large irregular ditch and bank, ‘D’ shaped enclosure, of unknown date. It is possibly a ritual or gathering place. Fell End is a large embanked settlement site with domestic and stock housing structures and an associated field system. Sadly the site has been cut through by the railway from the quarry in Chapel le Dale. The Broadwood earthworks in Thornton indicate a large rectangular embanked enclosure with internal dividing banks and a sub-circular domestic or industrial structure. Our investigations provided firm evidence of its Romano-British past and fragments of medieval pottery and the adjacent seventeenth century lime kiln indicate continuing use of the site. It does not however command the same extensive views as the other sites.

Running east from the Lune Valley towards Thornton is the natural Pennine crossing through Craven with the Bowland Hills to the south and the fells cut through by the Great Craven Faults to the north. This ancient route long pre-dates the Romans and served to link the strategic route through the Lune valley to the Roman fort at Elslack (22 miles away). Another major road running through Chapel le Dale linked the area with the fort at Bainbridge, almost 20 miles away, whilst to the south lies the disputed line of the Ribchester to Carlisle road, map ref. SD 635 721.

Not until the middle of the third century are there clear indications of developing peace and prosperity in the north-west with the establishment of some degree of local self-government amongst the Brigantes 19 but the existence of so many Romano-British settlement sites in this area suggests a flourishing local community and the Roman conquest must have stimulated this economy. Metal working skills had a new market, cereal production had to increase and although taxes and tribute had to be paid, the market economy introduced samian ware and mortaria to the local farmsteads. Chris Loveluck attributes this paucity of archaeological evidence in part to the practice in the west of inhumation in stone cists without grave-goods in sharp contrast to practices in east Yorkshire. 24 The fact that timber tended to replace stone in building construction probably obscures our understanding and makes interpretation of potential sites more difficult.

The transition from the Roman to the post-Roman period in the early years of the 5th century is difficult to interpret but it is clearly the case that the region gradually assumed a new identity. Chris Loveluck has demonstrated that whereas in eastern Yorkshire, Anglo-Saxon societies developed during the fifth and sixth centuries, in western areas of the Yorkshire uplands post Romano-British kingdoms emerged. 24 This region formed part of the sub-Romano-British Kingdom of Rheged, within which it made up a distinct and separate territorial unit, probably centred on the hill-fort of Ingleborough. Much of the evidence for this is derived from study of place-names, which have been for too long an under-estimated and under-used resource.

Place-name evidence is currently being re-evaluated as our understanding of etymology develops. The ancient British kingdom of Rheged lay to the west of the Pennines, embracing most of Cumbria and reaching south possibly as far as Cheshire and the Peak District but by 540 AD, it had been reduced in size losing its Pennine territories to Pabo. Around 560 AD Pabo’s kingdom was divided between his two sons with the northern section passing into the hands of Dunawt (variously spelled Dunaut, Donad, Donatus). Basing his argument in part on the researches of Dr John Morris, David Boulton 25 has identified “regio Dunotinga” as “the region of Dunawt’s people” centred on the region of Dentdale, which became the last stronghold of the old British kingdom until long after the death of Dunawt in 597 AD. He accepts that this region may have included the surrounding territories of Sedbergh and Garsdale and may have extended south to embrace the Thornton/Ingleborough area but he suggests that Dent was perhaps the heartland of this kingdom. 25 The late Mary Higham offered an alternative based on early eighth century documentary evidence of a sub-tribe of the Brigantes, the Dunutinga,
which she attributed to the British word corresponding to O.Ir. “dind”, (height, fortified hill,) and “ingas”, (group of people) which does not fit the normal Anglo-Saxon pattern and which appears to have centred on Ingleborough. Whichever interpretation appears most likely, it is clear that the British remained in occupation of this area and their land tenure and customs survived well into the eleventh century. The British place and topographical names such as Pen-y-Ghent, Cant Beck, Crina, Douugill, Crummacck, Dowglass, Pant, suggest that a native population not only pre-dated the Roman Conquest but survived in the area long after they were gone.

Most names within the valley and its enclosing hills are descriptive of such features as streams, ridges, scars, caves and pasture. Rooted in the land, they indicate continuity of use over a long history. Mary Higham has pushed research back earlier than the Angles to the influence of the native population, who remained within the territory with only a thin veneer of English control. The British elements “dubra” (water) and “dubo” (black) are likely sources for the river name Doe, given to Kingsdale Beck in its lower reaches, and for the medieval “Douugil” identified with the modern Low Douk Cave, with a possible reference to the seam of black limestone, from which the modern “Black Marble Pot” is derived. By the 7th century however the area was being settled and farmed by the Angles. They were looking for fairly open land, easily brought into cultivation and above the level of the swampy ground that filled the valley bottom. Thornton in Lonsdale is recorded as Tornetun in the Domesday record of 1086, possibly derived from the English “tun”, farmstead, amongst the thorns, a reference probably to the practice of using thorn trees or gorse as protection along the enclosure boundary. Neighbouring Ingleton, Inglestune, also appears to be derived from the Old English. A. H. Smith suggests a compound “Ing-hyll or Ingel, plus.tun” denoting a farmstead near the hill called “Ing-hyll”. Kingsdale itself gives us Rowting Caves Bank and Rowten Pot from the O.E. hrutan “to roar” and Douk Cave (Douker Hole on the Tythe Award) derived from the British dubra “water” or possibly from the late Middle English dowker, ”diver”. Most striking is the Turbary (Green) Road and Turbary Pasture derived from the M.E. turbarye “a place for getting turf for fuel”.

It is not known for certain how far the Danelagh (Danelaw) extended into the north-west although William Farrer states categorically that the regions of Kentdale were under its jurisdiction. From the beginning of the tenth century, Norsemen from Ireland supported by fleets from Norway colonised this area and Hedevind’s researches into the dialect of neighbouring Dentdale indicate that it is saturated with Norse words and that the evidence of the place name material strongly supports the theory of chiefly Norwegian colonization in this area. Their settlements can be traced by place-names from Lancashire into the West Riding, clustering throughout the Craven district. Potential evidence of their typical “long-houses”, often with smaller, related buildings and associated field systems have been identified locally and details are available in the database of sites compiled by members of the IAG over several years. This research is ongoing but as yet opportunities for excavation have been very limited. These Norse type sites are usually on more marginal land, probably outside the more productive areas, already settled.

That the Norse settlers and their descendants were assimilated into the local community is evidenced by the local place names. Although Ireby most clearly indicates a settlement of Irish-Norse, their identification by name suggests a minority group within the locality, but the Scandinavian influence, particularly in field and topographical names, is striking. Gill and beck are both of Scandinavian origin, the first denoting a deep, narrow valley with a stream, Braidamaya from the Old Norse, a river and Braida Garth, (Bradoe garthe 1578) from brad, “river”, (or possibly “broad”, from the O.E.) and gardr, “enclosure”, and Deep Moss from mos meaning “bog”. Deepdale immediately to the north of Kingsdale was quite densely settled by the 17th century and more field names are preserved there than in Kingsdale. Docklesyke combines the OE docce (dock)+OE hyll+ON sik (stream or ditch) Hingabank, ON hengjand
(steep) and Slack Farm, ON slakki (hollow). Helks, ON helkr (rough field) appears both in Deepdale and Thornton. 31

The homesteads of these early settlers are usually contained within a field system of small enclosures which often run for some distance on the same level. Gauber High Pasture, at Ribblehead, map ref. SD 784 768, which has been excavated, is thought to be a late Anglo-Saxon or Norse homestead.32 There is one longhouse type structure with associated small outbuildings and a field system situated on the limestone pavement facing the sun. A long, rectangular house platform was also identified at Ellerbeck with a series of three fields running down the hillside, comparable to Viking-age sites elsewhere and accepted by Jecock in the R.C.H.M. report as possibly eighth or ninth century. 22

Scandinavian influencies survived in Yorkshire up to the Norman Conquest, leaving the county divided into its Ridings and with a great administrative centre in York, but in the western area of the Dales artefactual evidence is very disappointing. Metcalf’s analysis of patterns of coin use (1998) shows the Dales are a virtually coinless area in the later 10th and 11th centuries re-affirming the apparent geographical isolation of North Craven.33 The nature of the settlement sites in the Thornton area suggest single family units of farming folk.

Medieval Kingsdale

The only direct reference to Tornetun (Thornton in Lonsdale) in the Domesday Book in 1086 records an estate of six carucates (plough-lands) which seems to have been equally divided between Thornton and Burrow,34 and was held directly of the king by a local landowner Orm, who still bore the popular Scandinavian personal name. Orm also held one and a half carucates of land as a berewick in Wrayton, to the south of Thurland Castle.35 Ireby, the small township within Thornton parish, on the borders of Lancashire was held by Earl Tosti as part of his Whittington estate.

During the early medieval period Kingsdale was part of the Royal Forest of Ingleborough. The word “forest” is derived from foris meaning “without” ie. outside the ordinary jurisdiction of common law. The King’s right of forest was a legal not a topographical term and might even extend over the lands of a subject.36 One of the greatest of these, Robert de Montbray, was created Earl of Northumberland in 1080 with vast estates across the north of England. This at a time when the King was exercising his prerogative of creating and extending areas of royal forest at will and rewarding his favourites with specific privileges or “chases” within them. Kingsdale was part of such a chase, referred to originally as the Chase of Ingleborough then the Free Chase of Burton in Lonsdale. Precisely when the King issued the Royal Warrant is not known but the privileges conferred were generous. It was not unusual to grant to a favoured subject the right to hunt over a given area but the pleas of the forest normally remained with the sovereign; that is the right to hold forest courts and to administer the forest laws. The laws were onerous and were designed to prevent the land being “improved”; it could not be converted into arable and the creation of pools or dykes was forbidden.36 The right of occupiers to graze cattle or feed swine was either denied or subject to vexatious regulation. The object of the law was the preservation of red, fallow and roe deer, the wild boar and the timber and undergrowth or “vert” that sheltered them. Sometimes favoured tenants were given the right to take smaller game but the humbler dwellers in the valley had to have their dogs “lawed” or mutilated, by cutting off the claws of the fore paw. The chief forester in the area usually held land by serjeanty on the condition of serving as master forester. This brought with it certain privileges such as claiming any merlins or hobbies found in the dale, all wind-fallen wood, all swarms of bees and the right shoulder of any deer taken there.36 It is possible that the Chief Forrester of Kingsdale was one of the ten sergeants, part of the company quartered in Mowbray’s castle in Burton in Lonsdale in 1129. The Honour of Burton was co-terminous with the Wapentake of Ewcross, which was recorded for the first time in 1219.37
In 1204 a Concord was agreed in York between William de Mowbray and Adam de Staveley, who had challenged the incorporation of certain lands within the Mowbray’s “forest in Lonsdale” i.e. the Free Chase. Adam relinquished his claim to the “whole forest of Mewith”, which lay in the southern part of the Chase, and in return William agreed that Adam and his heirs “with his hounds shall take the hare and fox in the aforesaid forest”. As these were only the “lesser beasts of the warren” this indicates Adam’s considerably lower social status but he was a man of considerable local importance, the “Mesne” lord of Staveley, Sedbergh and Dent, whose death was recorded in 1225.

The right of puture was particularly irksome. This was a claim made by foresters that they, their servants, horses and dogs, had the right of sustenance by those residing in the chase. Chiminage, a toll upon wagons and carriages passing through, was also bitterly resented. The severity of the laws, including death for the taking of deer and mutilation for a catalogue of lesser crimes, was sometimes mitigated in practice but remained oppressive in principle. Magna Carta sought to address this issue and the clauses relating to forest law were considered sufficiently important as to require their own charter, the Charter of the Forest (1217), which sought to mitigate their severity. No man was to be executed for taking deer, fines and imprisonment were to replace mutilation and freemen owning land in the forest were permitted to create mills, pools, springs, marl pits, dykes and arable land providing it was not enclosed. Chiminage was not to be exacted save in certain prescribed cases. Swine could be driven through and lie one night in the forest.

The excavations at Kingsdale Head have yielded clear evidence of settlement within the valley during the thirteenth century, the period now under consideration. The site is a complex and multi-period one and the fact that some of the pottery sherds recovered from trench 1 may date back to the twelfth century suggests that there may well be earlier structures underlying the surface that are yet to be revealed.

The settlement at Kingsdale Head was first identified by Percival Turnbull and Deborah Walsh in November 2000 in their report for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. They describe a rectangular enclosure defined by a grass-covered foundation and a stone partition wall half-way along its length, which they suggested could be the site of a former farmstead. The main structure from its outer northeast corner to the unexcavated tumble in the southeast corner is 14 metres long and it is externally 5.4 metres wide, though the ruinous state of the walls makes it difficult to be accurate. There is no evidence of anything being “attached” to the south wall as the report suggests, but the area immediately to the south of the main structure is very uneven for a distance of about 9.6 metres, at which point there are clear remains of a second structure, about 8 metres in length externally and about 5 metres wide. There is evidence of further disturbance and the geophysical survey carried out by members of the IAG identified a line of settlement running from northwest to southeast between a palaeochannel and the beck for a total of about 40 metres. The walls of the long-house type building, when excavated, were about 610mm in height at the maximum point and the northern wall is about 850mms. thick. Radiocarbon dating gave a calibrated date of AD1250 to AD 1275, which is consistent with the pottery finds excavated both from within and outside the building. The fragments of a small stone vessel suggest an earlier date but this will have to be further investigated.

The structure had stone-built lower courses almost certainly supporting timber walls. It was built at an angle across a cobbled area that possibly pre-dated it. It appears to have contained two rooms with domestic quarters to the north and probably a workroom, dairy or animal house to the south with access to the building through the western wall of the southern section. There was no evidence of bonding in the dry-stone walls, which had an inner and outer skin with rubble infill. No postholes or pad stones were identified, though large orthostats were used in the foundation course, and possible post-settings were identified at the junction of the northern
and southern sections. It was not possible to determine whether an earlier wooden building stood on the same site without destroying the walls. The fact that settlement continued over an extensive period is indicated by the abutment to the internal wall constructed in the south-east corner to remedy its outward lean. The floor appeared to be originally made up of a compact, dark reddish clay soil with dressed sandstone flags covering the northern half of the domestic quarters and cobbles running under the north and west walls into the interior, lying exposed in the southern section of the room. A cobbled surface also ran almost the entire width of the work room or animal house but the floor was only exposed in part. A central hearth was excavated in the domestic quarters but no date was obtained. More details of the building are available in the Kingsdale Head Archive and The Kingsdale Survey 2005-2007 compiled by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group.

About one thousand pottery sherds were recovered but they were widely scattered. There were a fair number of rim fragments and a few bases. Many fragments were both small and abraded but there were a number of medium to large sherds. Stephen Moorhouse kindly prepared a report on the medieval pottery to form part of the official archive prepared by the Ingleborough Archaeology Group and the following information is drawn from this very informative survey. Unfortunately very little medieval pottery has been recovered in the Yorkshire Dales and as there are no well stratified deposits, dating is very difficult. Despite this, Stephen was able to identify most of the material as Northern Gritty Ware belonging to the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. He has found no examples of fifteenth century ware but there are a small number of sherds in a thinner, finer potted fabric with different shapes that appear to be twelfth century. The fabric of these twelfth century vessels, he suggests, is akin to York Ware but is not sufficiently similar to be considered as such. The evidence suggests that many of the vessels represented appear to be wheel-thrown but some of the bases were probably hand-made, as were probably some of the vessels in the Northern Gritty Ware. Reconstructions based on the sherds suggest that most of the vessels were cooking pots (now referred to as jar-forms) but there were also jugs and bowls, some with crude greenish glazing. Sherds from three Humber Ware vessels were also identified suggesting that at least some of the pottery had come a considerable distance. No pottery making sites have been located in the Dales but they may well have existed. The evidence of sooting, wear marks and residues suggest quite a wide range of functions and some sherds have a darker, crazed outer surface indicating the practice of heating (not necessarily cooking!) in water, with an earthen pot suspended in the water in a cauldron set over a fire. The number of small fragmented sherd s prompted Stephen to suggest that the pottery was not used within the excavated building but was brought from elsewhere on the site, after it had been broken, to use as hardcore or for drainage purposes but there were no identifiable drains within the excavated building and the sherds were scattered over a very wide area. One small fragment of pottery appears to come from a piece of roof furniture, either a ventilator or louvre, which is not uncommon in Yorkshire. Further excavation in the summer of 2007 revealed good sized fragments of a salmon-pink fabric of considerably better quality.

It is possible that the building may have been part of a sheephouse complex, the purpose of which was to reduce the liquid milk to a solid form to facilitate easier transportation but the characteristics of the building with its internal dividing wall, rectangular rather than narrow form, central fire, paving only at the far end and the geophysical evidence, suggesting much greater activity in the northern part than in the southern and lower section of the building, where the beasts would normally be housed, seem to indicate a traditional medieval longhouse. Nor is there any evidence of monastic holdings within the valley as is typical elsewhere in the Dales and to which many of the commercial sheephouses belonged. There is no documentary evidence of a manorial enterprise but without further excavation we cannot be dogmatic. Over the passage of time, this site must have seen many, various activities.

Evidence that the community in Kingsdale suffered from the exploitation of the forestry laws appears in the Quo Warranto rolls of 1293-4 when Roger de Moubray was summoned by
Edward 1 to show “by what warrant he claims to have a free chase in.....Mewith and Ingleborough, and gallows and infangthief in Burton in Lonsdale...” Roger’s answer to this challenge was that: “as to the free chases of Mewith and Ingleborough...he and all his ancestors before the time of King Richard (1189-99) and always after peacefully have used there a free chase without any break in time, and concerning this he puts himself upon the country.” 9

Responding for the King however, Roger de Heigham , claimed: “…that Roger’s ancestors thirty years ago occupied and drew to themselves a new free chase in a great wood which is called Kingsdale outside his ground and fee, which wood is partly John de Thornton’s and partly other free tenants.” Moreover twelve jurors, chosen with the consent of Roger, stated upon oath that: “…..around the fifth year of King John (1203-4) one William de Mowbray acquired the chase from Adam (de Staveley) and afterward by his own act enlarged that chase and newly occupied a chase through the whole of the vills of Thornton, Horton, Austwick and Burton, and similarly in some valleys, that is, Kingsdale, Blea Moor, Whernside, and Cam Side.” According to the jurors, William , “ because he was a great man in the country, he made those living there...find the allowance for his [4, later 6] foresters. Those foresters at that time newly prevented those wishing to cross through the middle of the chase on the king’s highway, so that they could not cross at the time of fawning.”

Matters deteriorated still further after William’s death, when his son’s officials refused to allow anyone through at the time of fawning and at other times took chiminage from those crossing “at their will”. The current Roger de Mowbray, they maintained, “continues in this way, and the foresters take fine for allowance, sometimes from four or five or six men for one and the same day, that is, from some 2d, from others 3d or 4d at will”. However they did concede that they did not distress anyone for hay nor did Roger take animals “which are called waif” in the chase. Roger’s denial of these charges is ambiguous, “never do any of his foresters by his order or knowledge take one day’s allowance from more than one [tenant]……...”etc. He also reiterated his claim that “he and his ancestors have always peacefully used the liberty from time immemorial without any break in time.” 9 Despite these avowals, the jury found against Roger and fined him heavily. However a year later (1295), he was created Lord Mowbray, Baron by Writ, making him premier Baron of England. In 1297 he accompanied Edward 1st to Flanders and there died, his body being returned to Fountains Abbey for burial, leaving his son, John Mowbray, a minor. (Calendar of Chancery Writs) 37

The peasant farmers at Kingsdale Head may well have suffered in the devastation of the Chase during John’s minority. On coming of age, he petitioned Edward II to confirm his Rights of Chase by charter, to hold by the same bounds as his ancestors. His claim that the Burton Chase had been “destroyed”, meaning unfairly exploited, is only too familiar in this period. In 1307 the inquisition was taken and confirmed that his ancestors had held these privileges “time out of mind” but the King’s death, later that same year, prevented John from taking his suit further to obtain royal confirmation of the agreed rights and bounds. That the Chase represented a valuable asset is demonstrated in 1354 when a deed was enrolled testifying that John de Mowbray granted to the church a number of manors, including Burton in Lonsdale, with their appurtenances excepting woods, groves, parks, free chases, warrens etc..... 41

Gradually certain alleviations crept into the administration of forest law. Tenants were allowed the right of cutting wood for fuel and the repair of their property and sometimes the use of pasture for cattle or swine. From an early period some of the land had been utilised as vaccaries (cattle farms) and in the early fifteenth century these vaccaries were leased on short terms to freemen who often sub-let. There is no archaeological evidence to suggest a vaccary in Kingsdale. To the west of the village the wall separating the improved pasturage from the rough fell seems to follow the ditch and bank that may have marked the boundary of the medieval Chase and are still clearly visible in part.
So far I have concentrated on Kingsdale as part of a Free Chase but the farming community was also subject to manorial impositions, the details of which are far from clear. Thornton in Lonsdale lay within the Wapentake of Ewcross, a Scandinavian term, denoting the clash of arms which signified consent in a public meeting, and which was totally unrelated to either the manorial or the parochial structure. In these areas the coincidence of manors and villages was extremely rare. Moreover in areas where land was held by important lords in large estates, especially in the north, there was usually a less tangible link between village life and manorial organization. Villagers tended to enjoy greater freedom than their counterparts in the Saxon south and free peasants enjoyed a higher status. 42

The most important manor in the Burton Chase was that of Burton itself. Burton was the Chief Lordship and Thornton lay within the jurisdiction of its Court Leet. Within the parish of Thornton there were at least four subsidiary manors or lordships: Thornton, Coggil, Ireby and Masongill. Although it was possible for the Commissioners in the Thornton Inclosure Act of 1814, to state categorically that Kingsdale lay within the Manor of Thornton and that William, Earl of Lonsdale as Lord of the same Manor was “entitled to the Royalties therein and to the Soil of the said Moor, Commons and Waste Grounds”, the situation was more confused in this early period. Manors tended to become divided and lands could be sold between them. Land in Kingsdale was probably divided between the sub-lordships of Coggil, Thornton and even Twistleton, in the neighbouring Parish of Ingleton.

The Domesday Survey of 1086 had recorded the ownership of vills, not individual settlement sites, and the survey had followed the devastating “harrowing of the North” when large areas had been decimated but there is little evidence of “waste” in this area. Kingsdale is not mentioned in the survey and Thornton appears to have retained its orientation towards the south and west, to the richer lands of the Lune Valley, rather than the wilder fells to the north.

The manor of Thornton centred on the old hall in Thornton village, the ruins of what is probably a sixteenth century building suggesting an imposing and comfortable if rural dwelling. It was part of the barony of Kentdale, first mentioned in the Pipe Rolls in 1190, which from then until the reign of Elizabeth, repeatedly passed back into royal hands only to be conferred again as a reward for service or a token of royal favour. In 1344 the manor comprised 16 messuages, a mill, eight bovates, 60 acres of land, 80 acres of meadow and 12d. of yearly rent. It was granted to the Countess of Pembroke for three years, and she had to undertake to maintain houses, mills and other buildings at her own expense without committing waste or destruction or extortions, damages or injuries voluntarily or unjust against any tenant. 29

In 1350 Edward III granted to John de Coupeland the manor of Coghull in Thornton co.York and in 1399 Edward’s grand-daughter Philippa was granted the manor of Cogehull and the manor of Thorneton. 29 Coggil thus appears to be a separate manor within the Parish of Thornton and earthworks in the area of Cowgill indicate a settlement of some importance but the relation between the two manors is unclear and our investigations are ongoing.

The freeholders of land in Kingsdale owed suite and service to the Court Leet of the Manor of Burton in Lonsdale in the Honour of Mowbray and according to the 1682 Survey they had also to pay a yearly rent of 20 shillings payable at Martinmass. 43 By 1652 the court house had become “very much decayed” 44 but as late as the eighteenth century those failing to attend the sessions were named and fined.

The only ancient enclosure in Kingsdale for which there is documentary evidence lay around the farmstead of Braida Garth. The earliest reference to the tenant farmer resident there is the burial of Richard Tathame de Bradoe garthe on July 8th 1578. His wife, Jenett, was buried April 17th 1592. 45 There are no references to a farm at Kingsdale Head.
There is, however, evidence of continuing settlement from the post-Conquest to the early medieval period in the valleys of both Kingsdale and Chapel le Dale, where we have identified nine sites of potential significance. They are largely settlement sites with a field system or possible evidence of animal husbandry but in Chapel le Dale, the deserted medieval village of Southerscales (742 768) is well documented as a deserted medieval village. It is situated under a high limestone escarpment and shows evidence of several domestic structures and enclosures. 11

As mentioned on page 14, the peasant farmers residing in Kingsdale would have owed suit and service to the Court Leet of Burton in Lonsdale. As late as 1724 Articles of Agreement were drawn up between the Customary Tenants of Burton and the Lord of the Manor, presumably customs typical for this area. The tenants had the right to hold their customary tenements as estates of inheritance descendible from “Ancestor to heir”. They had the right to convey their estates and interests by deed poll or indenture without the previous licence or consent of the Lord of the Manor and no livery of seizing was necessary as long as the deed or indenture was presented at the next Court Leet. Fines due on the death of the tenant had to be reasonable arbitrary fines and agreed as such by the tenant and the Lord of the Manor. 45 The Articles are informative and detailed but it is very difficult to determine how far back these practices go. Details of manorial rights in the neighbouring Manor of Ingleton in the reign of Elizabeth 1 are recorded in Balderston’s “Ingleton: Bygone and Present” pages 271 to 290.

Kingsdale lies within the extensive parish of Thornton with its ancient church, rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1933 but retaining sufficient evidence of medieval activity to indicate a settlement of major importance. Thornton appears to have been developing as a polyfocal village probably as a result of medieval land tenure. The main settlement lay on the inter-section of two lanes, one running east-west parallel to the limestone fault that encloses the settlement to the north, the other (now Thornton Lane) passing through the gap north into Kingsdale. Here a cluster of plots, one marked as the pinfold, lie around the old Thornton Manor House. Separated from this cluster by extensive Glebe Lands, probably rented out to the local farmers as arable, is the Church of St. Oswald, facing a seventeenth century hostelry, which probably occupies a much earlier site. Bearing the name of The Marton Arms since about 1870, it used to be known as Church Stile. There is no visible evidence of a medieval settlement immediately around the church but the old house of Halsteads, for so long the residence of the Foxcroft family, lies just to the south-east and although the present building dates only from the sixteenth century, its name and history suggest a much greater antiquity. Between church and inn runs the medieval road from Chapel le Dale towards the Lune and its Roman arteries.

Thornton is an ancient and very extensive parish embracing three other townships, none of which support their own place of worship, in addition to the outlying farms and small clusters of dwellings such as Galegreen. The Church belongs to the Deanery of Lonsdale, in the Archdeaconry of Richmond. It has retained its Norman tower but the three beautiful “Norman” arches at the west end are only replicas. From their style it seems possible to date them from the thirteenth century, when the patronage of the Mowbray family would have provided the necessary resources. It is impossible to believe that there were not more dwellings clustered around the church. There is clear evidence of settlement immediately to the north and other earthworks dotted about the Parish indicate domestic structures now lost. We are therefore heavily dependent on the evidence gleaned from official records and the family names they contain. Unfortunately none of these make any direct reference to Kingsdale.

The Yorkshire Lay Subsidy of 1297 lists 20 inhabitants of Thornton liable to tax. 46 Of the 18 family names, 11 are patronymics; for example Willelmus filius Hugonis and Willelmus filius Ade de Thuiselton. This is unusual for Yorkshire where surnames were usually taken from place-names or trade-names. 47 The rolls confirm the impression that surnames were as yet transient.
and ephemeral but also suggest a settled population content to define their identity in tax returns by family relationship. In Thornton none of the personal names referred to are British. They appear to have been superseded by the popular more fashionable Norman names. The only incomers appear to be very local; Hugo de Bentham, William de Leck, William de Ireby and possibly from Westmorland John de Patton. Robert Capellanus was probably a curate to a non-resident rector and Thomas Pistor may still have been the local miller; a water mill is listed on the manor demesne in 1344 and again in 1607. Whether any of these individuals were living in the homesteads in Kingsdale is not recorded.

The peasant farmer at Kingsdale Head would have had little protection from the Scots, when in 1314, after the Battle of Bannockburn, they laid waste Craven and Lunesdale. Edward II was forced to issue writs relating to the defence of the Wapentake of Ewcross, including Thornton and Twistleton, during the years 1319-1320. Two years later John de Mowbray was named “enemy and rebel to the King” and Burton Manor was gifted to the Earl of Richmond but Richmond was captured by the Scots at Byland and by 1327, after the death of the King, John de Mowbray was back in favour. The West Riding Poll Tax of 1379 lists 50 residents in the Thornton return, most of whom were assessed at the basic 4 pence. Of the surnames listed we find only two, Lound and Leck, surviving from the lay subsidy. Lund(e) appears again in 1576 in the Parish Registers firmly established as a local family name. Leck survives as an Ireby family in the same parish. Although in the north of England surnames became hereditary much later than in the south, almost two-thirds of those listed in 1379 re-appear in the Parish Registers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries re-enforcing the impression of a stable population. The derivation of some of the names in the list appear to have environmental and occupational significance. Fowscroft indicates the O.E.Foss denoting “ditch”, possibly referring to an earthwork rather than drainage. Birch, Hazel and Oak, the indigenous trees give us Birche, Hesledeyn and Aykeheued. Yoy (the 16th century Guy) from the O.Fr.gui “guide”, Milnerson from O.N. mylnari, miller, Dayuyll, keeper of livestock, Hyrd, herdsman, Carter etc.

In addition to their manorial duties, the peasant farmers were subject to the church tithe. In 1650 a survey for the Rectory of Thornton defined the system then prevailing for tithes of wool and lamb in Thornton parish. “The owner takes two for ten out of the whole, then from the eight the tithe man takes one and the owner the remainder. For five a half is due, for six and so on, to ten a whole one. If the owner has odds as from 10 to 15, he only leaves 8 for the tithe man to take one out of. If a man’s number does not exceed 4 in all, a penny piece is due.”

Parish rates also had to be paid. From the sixteenth century these rates provided support for the poor, the lame, for “soldiers’ money” and for church repairs. A record dating from 1664 explains the system: “The ancient order of the Parish of Thornton hath been from time to time and at all Times Dureing the Memorie of Man, that every Householder, having an House wherein anye dwellethe and the Smoake arises, to pay such sumes as shall be Assessed by the xxiiij sworne men, and the Churchwardens of the Parish. Provided alwaies that every householder of the Parish pay equalyelye.” In 1662 the Church Registers record the customary payment of six pence for the burial of “every corpse that is carried or borne on a Woman’s head” and three shillings and four pence for “every corpse that is carried on a bier”.

Disputes between Thornton and Burton over the parish rates were resolved in 1726 when an accommodation was reached, including the decision that for fox heads, each party should pay as if in different parishes.

The way to the Turbary road along the side of Gragareth lay through the West Gate above Masongill, although the fell sides could be reached more directly through Kingsdale. This deviation to a high route above the valley could reflect the excessive chimingage charges being
levied by the agents of Roger de Mowbray on those crossing through the free chase of Ingleborough, which were the subject of dispute in 1293. The Turbary Pasture above Yordas Wood, close to the site at Kingsdale Head, was set aside in the Enclosure Award of 1819 to compensate for the loss of this ancient right but the cutting of peat was not necessarily restricted to this area or to this acreage.

The Lay Subsidy of 1547 shows 10 families in Thornton Parish assessed at £5 or more in goods, but the list differs strikingly from that in Wolsey’s 1522 Year Book with only the Redmans appearing in both records. That manors were being sold off in the sixteenth century has been demonstrated in recent research into enclosure practices. There was in this area a general pattern of landlord withdrawal. This may be attributable to the unrest and dislocation caused by the Pilgrimage of Grace, 1536-37, to the turmoil in land tenure caused by the Dissolution of the Monasteries, or to the repeated incursions of the Scottish reevers. Enclosures were basically the replacement of communal rights by private ownership, consolidating blocks of land within clearly demarcated boundaries. They were often private agreements approved by local manorial courts. Tenants sometimes took the initiative as in Ingleton where, when private agreements drove grazing further from the village, tenants tried to safeguard their rights of common by small-scale encroachments of their own. Bitterness appears to have come to a head in Thornton in 1598 when a riotous assembly, armed with sticks, swords, and daggers, had to be dispersed from the “capital messuage” (home farm) of William Redmayne gent., in the parish of Thornton, called Rynkilmyle.” Whatever the reason landowners were pulling out and in Thornton the pattern of landownership appears to change. The Redmans remain the wealthiest secular holders, with property valued at 40 marks, paying a tax of 53s 4d but three Foxcroft households appear, Edmund assessed at £7, paying 4s 8d, and James and William assessed at the basic £5 paying 3s 4d each.

Kingsdale in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

Wheat had been abandoned by the 17th century, giving place to oats, and the creation of stinted pastures on the lower fields allowed individuals more control of grazing rights. More use was being made of the upland common and of the ancient Turbary. The limekiln on Raines Pasture adjacent to the Broadwood site indicates that the land was probably being improved by liming. A sample taken from the kiln gave an archaeomagnetic date of 1650-1695 for the last firing and the recovery of the stoneware tankard from within the rake-out bearing an excise mark (WR) of William III (1688-1702) provided confirmation that the kiln had been abandoned by the early 18th century.

There is an “ancient” enclosure in Kingsdale recorded in a printed Inclosure Notice of 1814 in the south east corner of Thornton Low Fell called “The Greens”, part of which lay within the manor of Thornton and part in the manor of Twistleton, but the only farm recorded in Kingsdale at this time was Braida Garth. Also identified as an “ancient enclosure” it appears to have belonged to the Richmond Fee, part of the Kendal barony, which can be traced back to the twelfth century. The tenant farmer Richard Tathame de Bradoe garthe was buried in 1578. His wife Jenett survived him by fourteen years but there is no evidence that she continued to reside on the farm. The burial of the next tenant, Richard Baynbrigge, is recorded in 1623 and by 1642 the Brownes were in residence. They were followed by the Masons and they, in turn, by the Langstreths. According to the Parish Registers, a Christopher Langstreh married Katharine Walker in July 1683 and in 1687, Ralph and Stephen, twin sons of Christopher Langstreh of Bradagarth were baptised. Another son, Thomas, married Ann Townsend also “of Broadagarth”, in June 1695, and his daughter, Denny or Dennese, was baptised the following October. The marriage of George Langstreh to Isobel Tennant is recorded in 1698 and in June 1699, their daughter, Elizabeth was baptised. Eight years later the farm had passed into the hands of the Cragg family and then in fairly rapid succession it was occupied by the farming families of Nicholson, Taylor, Sutton, Jonson and before the close of the 18th century, the Metcalfes.
With the Reformation the Church had passed into the patronage of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester and from 1576 the Parish Registers provide a fascinating insight into village life. Even before the end of the century, there are far more family names derived from surrounding villages; Firbancke, Leavons, Sands, Baynebrigge, Rathemeller and so on. Together with the Hearth Tax Returns of 1672, they provide strong evidence of a stable community despite the turmoil caused by the Civil War.

The principal families in Thornton in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the Tathams, the Redmans, the Foxcrofts and the Fenwicks.

There is very little evidence of industry in the documentary records, certainly nothing from the medieval period onwards to account for the quantity of hammer scale we found on the Broadwood site in Thornton, which suggests that the industrial activity there must belong to a much earlier period, but in 1443 there is reference to a lease of the lead mines in Thornton and there is a reference to John Topham’s smithy in the hearth tax, which is rated at one hearth, separately to his own dwelling, rated at two. He must have been fairly comfortably off.

In 1691 the Church Registers show the baptism of Mary, the daughter of Nicholas Hatfield, “a workman to dig for lead on Thornton Fell”, who came out of Standish Parish in Lancashire from a lead mine near Blackrod.

That the political drama of the Civil War had such an impact on this quiet rural parish was due in the main to the family resident in the Manor House of Thornton, the Redmans. They appear in the records in 1359, when Sir Matthew Redman gave 20 marks for the neighbouring manor of Twistleton and in 1416 Thomas Redman, of Thornton, witnessed the deed of assignment by William Tunstall, of his castle of Thurland and other lands in Yorkshire and Westmorland. Not only were they Lord of the Manor of Thornton but according to the Parish Registers between 1578 and 1847, 164 Redmaynes were baptised, 76 were married and 143 were buried here.

Their early activities in the Fifteenth Century left something to be desired. In 1437 William Redman, armiger of Overlands in Thornton, gentleman, seized John Gardener at Pulton in Lonsdale and was “attached” (arrested) for it.

The Hall stood to the north of Raines Pasture. It has long vanished though traces of a substantial manor house can still be seen. The family appear to have been content to embellish their fortunes through good marriages and the effective conduct of their estate. In 1580 Marmaduke Readmanne of Thornton, Justice of the Peace and a Roman Catholic, was engaged in a dispute over tenant right with Rowland Hardye of Manserghe. Other relatives too were of the old faith. Marmaduke died in June 1607 and his burial entry in the Register reads “Marmaduke Readmayne, ar. was Buried upon the nighte by unknown p’sons”. Nocturnal funerals were quite fashionable but hardly in this manner.

His son, William, died the same year and at the Inquisition taken at York Castle, the estate was reckoned at eight cottages, six messuages, worth “per annum (clear) £3 11s.”, 120 acres of arable land, meadow and pasture in Thornton and a water mill in Thornton. There were other holdings in Wrayton and Burton.

Although the family were able to recover some of their possessions much of their wealth was lost by the close of the century through squabbles and bickering over the inheritance as the estates passed between brothers. The Manor House was lost but Ralph Redmayne married into the old family of Tatham and was able to take up residence at Halsteads, the second most important residence in Thornton. What possessions he had on his death in 1702 were left principally to the local poor and for the endowing of a grammar school, which was built at Nether Westhouse Green in Thornton Parish; in 1726 there was only one poor woman in Thornton Parish receiving relief. His silver he left to St Oswald’s Church to be converted into altar plate. William Tatham of Halsteads was his sole executor. There are a number of very
interesting family memorials in the Church and a seventeenth or eighteenth century window containing the Redman arms in stained glass, with the Thornton crest.

Another leading family in the area was that of the Foxcrofts. In 1724 George Foxcroft of Thornton, lord of the manor of Burton in Lonsdale, married Ellen Tatham, daughter and heiress of William Tatham, and with their union Halsteads passed into the keeping of the Foxcroft family for the next two hundred years. The family’s increasing consequence and wealth was due not only to their land holdings but also to collieries in Mewith and Burton, to indigo works at Burdwan, India, and to mercantile interests in Lancaster and Liverpool. For more details see the IAG publication on the Broadwood Excavation.

Socially the most important of these leading families, were the Fenwicks, owners of the Braida Garth estate in Kingsdale. Braida Garth appears to have belonged to the once powerful but now split and divided Barony of Kendal, to the portion known as Kentmere, with its manors of Thornton and Coggill. By 1745 it had fallen into the hands of the Wilson family of Kendal, one of whom (Thomas) was heir to John Fenwick of Burrow Hall near Kirkby Lonsdale. The Fenwicks had moved into the area in the late seventeenth century. Descendants of an old Northumberland reever family, they owed their fortune to the Attorney General, Robert Fenwick, and to John’s marriage to the heiress, Ann Bennison. Thomas succeeded to the estate when John was killed in a hunting accident in 1757. He adopted the name of Fenwick, cheated Ann of her personal estate, and combined his portion of the Barony, the Richmond Fee, with his newly acquired landholding. In 1770 in his Survey of Thornton Fell, Mr George Grey recorded the Fenwick holding as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Roofs</th>
<th>Perches</th>
<th>Per acre valuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Fell</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>at 1d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Fell</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>at 5d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsdale</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>at 7/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brada Garth</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total acres</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enclosure had continued to gather pace throughout the eighteenth century, taking the form of intakes from the common pastures or wastes or infilling the larger stinted enclosures. That this was beginning to cause trouble is evident from a letter written in January 1770 by John Wilson of Lambrig to Edward Tatham, Attorney at Law, at Hipping Hall in the neighbouring parish of Leck. In reply to his demand that “Returns must be made of every Trifling Incroachment in each Manor as particularly as possible.” Tatham lists eight holders of land in Thornton, who have encroached, usually by about half a rood (an eighth of an acre), on the common or waste, the worst offender being Thomas Fenwick esq., who had enclosed about half an acre adjoining Braida Garth. The controversy must have been more serious than this suggests to have caused Wilson such exasperation. He concludes his letter; “We have been concerned in this Damn’d affair ever since I saw you; almost Day and Night.”

In 1772 a valuation of Thornton Rectory by Mr Palmer for the Dean and Chapter of Worcester Cathedral estimated Thornton Fell as containing about 6064 acres but that it “being in general so Hilly and full of Rocks, very little of it can be tilled to advantage” Of this the value deducted for the upkeep of roads was 364 acres, leaving 570 acres available for tithe, giving a yearly value of £199.10s.0d. One of the lessees estimated the number of sheep in the Parish at about 5,000. Thomas Jeffrey’s map of 1774/5 records few details of the valley, but Kingsdale Beck is shown winding freely along the valley floor, obviously not yet canalised. The only route through is shown as a lane running north from Thornton to Deepdale over High Pike, frequently crossing
the bends in the river, but passing the site at Kingsdale Head on the same line as the modern road over Cluntering Gill Bridge. No roads appear to link Braida Garth with the outside world.

This was the period when the first tourists began to descend on Kingsdale. William Camden in his “Britannia”, an account of his travels through England in 1582, had described Ingleborough as stretching with its vast back rising towards the west, with another hill as if flung upon its extremity. In 1773 the great antiquary, Thomas Pennant, passed this way on his journey to Alston Moor. He described Ingleborough as a “great mountain” but had not the time to visit the caverns for which it was famous. He noted that by Thornton Church the road was good, in sharp contrast to the Manor Court Book which records the constables’ regular complaint that although the stocks and whipping post by the church were in good repair, the country roads were in the main deplorable.

John Hutton, late Judge Advocate in India, but a local man and for some time, vicar of Burton in Kendal, was one of the first to publish an account of his tour of the district in 1781. He records how they collected candles, lanthorn, tinder-box and a guide from Church Style Corner and walked to Kingsdale along the Doe, past Thornton Force in its lonely ravine to Keld Head. The only habitation in the valley was Braida Garth “a lonely shepherd house…with a little wood and a few enclosures near it”. The soil, he noted, in some parts was deep and rich and capable of improvement but his comment, “….a plan is in agitation for having it inclosed, when I make no doubt but it will support some scores of additional families” was to prove over-optimistic. He notes that black marble was being quarried in Kingsdale and polished in Burton in Lonsdale to fashion pieces of furniture monuments and “chimneys” (probably fire-surrounds).

His object in entering Kingsdale was to visit the already famous show-cave of Yordas. He observed within the cave, names inscribed on the walls about 200 years earlier but these are no longer visible, probably obscured by the thick calcite deposits that cover the walls. We did however discover one piece of graffiti from this period, carefully carved with serifs, “J.T. 1768”. It is very close to the floor of the cave which is usually lightly flooded, indicating how far the floor must have risen with alluvial deposits over the last three hundred years. The roof was so high and the cave so dark that even with candles and torches, John and his companions could not make out the dimensions but they found the “gloom and horror” of the place oppressive and called to mind the sad death of a “poor woman” in this cave on her way to Dent. This may be a reference to the “Poore travelling Woman” whose death at “Bradagarth” was recorded in the Parish Registers on September 15th 1728. The story is continued by John Housman who came this way in 1797-8 and was told of a poor woman, being “big with child”, who being taken in labour was found dead in the cave. Housman records another tragic death occurring at about this time; “an unfortunate tailor having been working at Breadagarth returning home at night fell into the pool at Keldhead and was found drowned the next day.” This was probably John Swinbank from Bentham whose burial record in 1788 bears the explanation, “found dead in Kingsdale”. He also relates the case of “a lunatic escaped from his friends……(who) lived here upwards for a week in the winter season having previously provided himself with cheese and other provisions. Snow being on the ground, he pulled off the heels of his shoes and set them inverted at the toes.” The name of this unfortunate appears to be unrecorded.

Houseman, (head gardener of Henry Howard of Corby Castle, Carlisle), gives one of the best of the early accounts of the dale. Braida Garth, he describes as “a solitory farmhouse surrounded with a few meagre looking fields, while all the surrounding country has the appearance of a wild unfrequented desert; with here and there, two or three sheep peeping from among the rocks.” Candles and a large candelabra-type candle-stick were obtained by their guide from Braida Garth but the excursion into the cave did not pass without incident, “our guide, with his collection of luminaries, tumbled into the brook, and had nearly left us in darkness……However he arose without receiving much injury…” and the party proceeded to enjoy the natural wonder, they had come to see.

21
“The broad sheet of water, the spray arising from the fall, and the beautiful petrifications, all illuminated with the light of the candles, produce effects in this natural edifice which the puny efforts of art may attempt to imitate, but in vain.”

John Byng, in his “Tour to the North” in 1792 explained how the candles were lit from a burning turf, which the guide carried with him, replenishing it with fresh peat as he led the way on foot, too swiftly for the horses to keep pace with him!

The most famous visitor to Yordas, who has left a permanent record of his impressions, was William Wordsworth, who with his brother, John, explored the cave on a walking tour of the area in 1800. In “The Prelude”, book 8, he muses on how the retrospective love of nature leads to the love of man. The memory must have been especially poignant for him, as John, a naval captain, was drowned only five years later.

“The secret of music is a harmonious mixture of the human voice and the divine. It is the art of expressing the mysteries of life and the beauty of creation.”


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The Enclosure of Kingsdale and its Aftermath.

The gentry’s taste for travel into the remoter parts of Britain had been stimulated by the writings of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell and Thomas Pennant, and was also encouraged by the restrictions on travel occasioned by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Others were however becoming more interested in the potential that Kingsdale appeared to offer to the financially enterprising. The old hall at Halsteads was now gentrified as befitted the residence of one of the leading dignitaries in the area. Thomas Hammond Foxcroft, the only survivor of six brothers, was originally destined for the church. He had risen rapidly to the post of Chaplain in Ordinary to the Prince of Wales and was now to become one of the prime movers in the Parliamentary Enclosure of Kingsdale. The Burrow family of Westhouses had also secured a private fortune through industrial enterprise, trade and land and were eager to invest and John Peart, a solicitor in Settle and a founder member of the Craven Bank, was quick to see the financial opportunity it offered. Across at Capernwray Hall in Lancashire, Oliver Marton, an avid collector of manorial holdings, whose family had already acquired a considerable estate in the parish of Thornton, gave the enterprise his backing. Although the lands within the parish had been amalgamated into the “Manor of Thornton” according to the formal public Notice published in September 1814, the Lord of the Manor, William 1st Earl Lonsdale, appears to have had no active role.

Just when more agricultural land was brought into production by the canalising of Kingsdale Beck in the lower reaches of Kingsdale is not recorded. The Enclosure Award of 1819 makes provision for the “public Watercourse called Kingsdale Beck” to be kept open, cleansed and scoured and kept in its “present Course” with “Wears and Banks necessary for the protection of the adjoining land from injury by Water in times of Floods” at the expense of the owners of the allotments through which it passed. The reference to its “present Course” suggests that the process of canalisation had been completed and the map shows the straightened line to which this section of the beck is now reduced but this does not confirm that the work had been completed and there is no evidence of any such undertaking. Local information suggests the beck was not canalised until well into the 19th century.
Although the high fell was valued as much for shooting rights as for sheep, the pasturage on the lower slopes offered valuable grazing but the enclosure was unfortunate in its timing. The second burst of enclosure activity in the north-west, generated by the shortages caused by the Napoleonic Wars, had come to an end and prices had fallen sharply. In 1817 youths who had been commanding £20 to £30 a placement at the hiring fair in Kendal were having to settle for £10 to £13.  

William Pilkington of Snaith, Yorkshire, and Thomas Wakefield of Yealand, Lancashire, both styled “Gentleman” and both from outside the area, were sworn in as Commissioners in 1814 to undertake the division, allocation and enclosure of the “said Tract of Moor, Common and Waste Grounds commonly called Thornton Fell” plus other small parcels of common or waste ground within the parish, amounting in total to 5,450 acres and one rood. Notices of meetings were published in the Lancaster Gazette and, in time-honoured fashion, posted on the main door of the Parish Church. A perambulation of the parish boundaries was completed and the work of enclosure begun. The Award, Schedule and Map are an invaluable aid for research and can be consulted by appointment at the North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton.  

Care was taken to protect access to the pastures with provision made for the upkeep and repair of both public and private “Carriage Roads and Highways” and for the provision of “sufficient and commodious Gates ……..fixed in the Fences of the different Allotments over which the said …Roads are set out” to be kept in repair by the person or persons directed. Provision was made for two public Highways: the Dent Road running the length of the valley, which was to be maintained at a width of thirty feet and the Twistleton Road branching from the Dent Road as it entered the valley and leading south east to Twistleton, also thirty feet wide. Two private roads, eighteen feet in width, were to give access from the Dent Road to the Burrow holdings just north of Braida Garth and to the Turbary Ground past Yordas Cave. A third private carriageway gave access to Braida Garth from the Twisleton Road. The term “Highway” did not imply a surfaced road, just one that had to be maintained. Twistleton Road remained a green lane and the link with Braida Garth a public right of way. The two private roads have not survived.  

The Turbary Ground or Peat Moss was singled out for particular care as this was enshrined in customary rights for common use and essential revenue for the Overseers of the Poor. Stone markers, carved with initials apparently denoting the direction and the division of the rentable area, were probably set up at this time, a number of which remain on the fell side to this day. The Turbary Road leading from Masongill was to be maintained at a width of twenty feet in addition to the access road near Yordas. These ancient common rights were to become the subject of further dispute with the church authorities when the Parish Council was set up in 1895 and adjudication was sought from Whitehall in 1896, which confirmed that the powers of the overseers concerning rights of turbary were now vested in the newly elected Parish Council, to be used to supplement the poor rates.  

Ten acres were put aside for public use as quarries for obtaining gravel for the upkeep of the roads and for getting stone for lime and other purposes, and provision was made for their fencing-off. Scarr End Quarry at the entrance to the dale and Yordas Quarry are both marked on the map. Public watering places, essential for washing sheep, were also identified and vested in the Overseers of the Poor, one at Keld Head, another just off Twistleton Road and a third at Kingsdale Head, close to the excavation site. There is no indication in the enclosure schedule, or on the map, of an ancient enclosure here, but the Braida Garth estate, now the property of James Davis Esq. with an allotment of 17 acres, is shown on the map as the only ancient enclosure in the valley. All the fellside to the east of the farm belonged to Christopher Burrow, recently purchased from the Earl of Lonsdale.  

It took five years to complete but on the 10th October 1819 the Enclosure Award was executed in the presence of Thomas Hammond Foxcroft, John Redmayne, Edward Lodge, Richard Balderstone, Robert Chapman, Thomas and John Whittingdale and five others.
John Peart, the Settle banker and solicitor, had purchased a considerable acreage at Kingsdale Head and the present farmhouse was built there within a couple of years of the enclosure. It seems that John had perhaps over-reached himself as he was forced to apply for a mortgage soon after. From about 1850 three generations of the Batty family farmed there, as shepherds and gamekeepers until they moved to Braida Garth in about 1887. 4 The present farmhouse at Braida Garth was built in 1861, partly as a shooting lodge, to the south of the older dwelling, no longer visible save for some few foundation stones. These remain the only dwellings in the valley. W.R.Mitchell records Kingsdale as having 25 miles of drystone walling, all of which has to be maintained in good order by the tenants. The valley still flooded after heavy rainfall and at the age of 90 years, Edward Batty recollected how as a school boy, he walked waist deep in water, on his way back from school, and the Faradays of Kingsdale Head spoke of seeing a wall of water a foot high. 67 For further details on this period, reference should be made to Mr Batty’s contribution to the Kingsdale Head Archive.

The occupational structure of the rural community was reflected in the Craven Muster Roll of 1803. Compiled by the constable of the parish for the Deputy Lieutenant of the county when the threat of invasion seemed imminent, it included all men between the ages of 17 to 55 years. In the parish of Thornton, 13 were classed as yeomen or the sons of yeomen, 15 as farmers, 20 labourers, 12 cotton spinners, 5 cotton weavers and 6 cordwainers. Of the total enrolment of 89 men, 14 were designated infirm. In his analysis of the returns for the whole of Craven, R. Lawton concludes that the principal bases of the economic geography of Craven in 1803 were two-fold: agriculture and the textile industry, which were still to be found alongside each other. 68 Relatively few townships had no textile workers but throughout Craven the emphasis was on wool not cotton as in Thornton. The cotton mill at Westhouse closed down about 1835 but alternative employment was available in the cotton spinning mill which had opened in Ingleton in 1791. 69

In 1824 a Law and Order Protection Society was set up to put a stop to and punish “trespasses, felonies and other misdemeanours: murder, robbery, rape…..within seven miles of the Parish of Thornton including poaching, common nuisance, riot and affray”. 41

A local tragedy was recorded in the Westmorland Gazette on the 31st October 1829 under the headline: “Extraordinary Disappearance of a Boy on the Dent Mountains”, followed on the 5th December by an account of the discovery of his body in the large pasture above Braida Garth. The child, Michael Parrington, aged eight, had been with his two brothers checking on their sheep stock on the common land above Hackergill, Dent, when he had wandered off. A mass search of the fells failed to locate him until a shepherd’s dog led his master to the sadly decayed body above Braida Garth. That the contemporary view of Kingsdale, despite the Enclosure, was still highly coloured by the Romantic Movement is evident in the journalist’s closing statement: “Probably the eagle, vulture, raven or fox had attempted to feed on the carcass as it lay perishing in its loneliness on the wild and desert mountain.” 70

The Tithe Map and Commutation Award of 1842 71 records the apportionment of the rent charged in lieu of tithes for the Parish of Thornton, including the townships of Westhouse, Masongill, Burton in Lonsdale and Ireby. The Commissioners were William Blamire and T.W. Buller. They recorded 168 acres of arable, 858 acres of pasture, 74 acres of woodland and 5258 acres of enclosed common land in the parish. The Tithe Map with its schedule follows closely the field pattern of the Enclosure Map and provides useful evidence of field names, though it gives no indication of their origin. As the division of land in Kingsdale had been so recently achieved, the fields there were described simply as allotments, with a few exceptions around Braida Garth. The Turbary Allotment Pasture of 231 acres is recorded as belonging to the Overseers of the Poor and “occupied” by Abraham Kidd. No mention is made of the marker stones. The farm at Kingsdale Head was in the possession of Jane Robinson with Stephen
Hargreaves as tenant and the excavation site itself lies in allotment 615 (mistakenly marked as 616 on the map) with the sheepfold as 615a. There is no evidence of any settlement, but the point where the road crosses Cluntering Gill is marked Wold Foot, before it ascends the fell side still called “The Wold” before entering Dent Parish. The Anglian term “wold” originally meant “forest/woodland” especially in high upland areas but as the forests were cleared, the name survived as meaning “open moorland” or “waste”.

Braida Garth (spelled Braisdey) had passed to the heirs of Christopher Burrow and was farmed by John Lambert Senior. The woodland identified as Braida Garth Wood on the OS map (SD 705 774) is recorded in the Award as Scroggs (Wood). It is divided into three allotments, two of which are shown as woodland on the map but the third, and by far the largest, lying on the fell side to the east and above the wooded area, is described and shown as pasture land. That the “wood” element in the name is shown in brackets suggests that clearance had been a recent development. The washfold lying between Yordas Cave and Kingsdale Head appears to have belonged to the farm. A paddock adjoining the farm buildings is called Stoney Parrock, a possible reference to the term “parrick, sometimes used for an enclosure when a ewe is adopting a strange lamb.

Lawton uses the 1851 Census to provide comparative material to shed light on the changing economic geography of this area during the first half of the nineteenth century. He shows an economy in the process of change with the growth of textile factory towns. He concludes that in towns and large villages occupations were growing in range and variety but that the small agricultural townships of the uplands were increasingly given over to agriculture and in some cases, as in Thornton, had suffered a decline in population. He points to the effect of the coming of the railways to Craven and to the evidence of rural depopulation. That throughout most of the nineteenth century, the Foxcroft family, the most important estate-holding family, were absentee landlords, was also perhaps a contributory factor to the decline of the community. Between 1850 and 1857 agricultural wages were only 43.7% of those for industry. This improved to 46.6% after 1858 and 49.2% in 1874-5. In his analysis of the West Riding Crop Returns, Phillip Dodd demonstrates that the cultivation of oats, the only significant arable crop, seems to have declined significantly since the Napoleonic Wars when some four times the acreage was sown.

The practice in animal husbandry was to buy in Scotch Cattle at the Gearstones market at Ribblehead, fatten for one or two years and then sell on at the Settle fatstock market. In 1854 60% of the cattle from this area were still fatstock animals. Milch cattle were below the general average. Sheep would seem to be more suited to these limestone grasslands, which produce good quality meat, but, as Dodd points out, densities were not as high as might be expected in the uplands, probably reflecting the fact that the statistics were compiled after the autumn cull, necessitated by the low feeding value of the grass from autumn onwards.

The community stabilised after 1881, due largely to the preponderance of young people, but the Census Return indicates a surprising number of incomers to the parish. The enumerator listed 150 persons in 1851, this declined to 100 in 1881 but recovered to 157 in 1901. The preponderance of birthplaces outside the parish is striking although most came from a radius of about 25 miles.

In 1857 proposals for a railway line running from Ingleton through Thornton, Casterton and Barbon, north along the Lune Valley, as part of a through route to Carlisle, were accepted by Parliament and an L.N.W.R. station was built in Thornton but in 1865 the Midland began to plan an independent line from Settle to Carlisle leaving the Ingleton branch line with no future in the main artery. It was therefore consigned to remaining a local, rural means of communication with slow, infrequent services. The opening of the Waterfalls Walk in 1885 with its steps and paths and viewing points brought thousands of tourists to Ingleton from the northern manufacturing
towns but as these were carried by the Midland line into the centre of the village, usually on cheap day excursions, it did not benefit Thornton, cut off at the far end of the viaduct, and in 1916, Thornton station was temporarily closed as part of the national effort to free up more men for war service. The tourists entering the lower part of Kingsdale at the foot of Swinsto Hole were directed south-east along the bridle path to Twistleton to return to Ingleton via the Beezley Falls effectively cutting off the valley, which remained largely the preserve of the so-called sporting fraternity until their depredations on the grouse stocks brought a premature end to their investment.

There have been a number of significant speological events in Kingsdale since 1929 when the Gritstone Club made their first attempts to explore Swinsto Hole. An accident in Gingling Hole, when it took twenty six hours to get an injured caver to the surface, led to the formation in 1935 of the “Cave Rescue Corps” later renamed the Cave Rescue Organisation (CRO). In 1965 Ken Ashton pioneered the method of estimating the proportions of flooded/air-filled passages by generating artificial flood pulses in dry weather conditions and monitoring known or likely resurgencies in the Master Cave, Marble Steps Pot and Keld Head systems and in 1970 Mike Wooding made the first cave dive of over 300metres, a major psychological barrier, in Keld Head. Nine years later, the first through dive from Kingsdale Master Cave to Keld Head established a new world record (1829 metres) and in 1999 the first British cave dive of over a mile in each direction took place in Keld Head. Sadly these achievements have come at a heavy cost. Over the centuries as we have seen, the valley has been witness to human tragedy and the deaths of seven of the caving and potholing fraternity are poignant reminders of the dangers of the wilderness that is still Kingsdale.

The road through the valley was surfaced with tarmac after the Second World War but has never been heavily used and, although the uneven ground at Kingsdale Head attracted the activities of mountain bikers over the winter months, it wasn’t until Deborah Walsh and Percival Turnbull recorded the site of the washfold and its apparently attendant enclosures for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority that the site was formally recognised. Even then it was only when members of the Ingleborough Archaeological Group began a geophysical survey of the area, that the potential of the site was fully appreciated and the present investigations begun. These will hopefully continue into 2008 and beyond, deepening our understanding of a little known but fascinating corner of the National Park.
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