

The Story of Arrad Foot

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Introduction

The area has been mainly used for farming but in the past, there have some interesting building developments, a unique sports event and some small homeworking businesses.

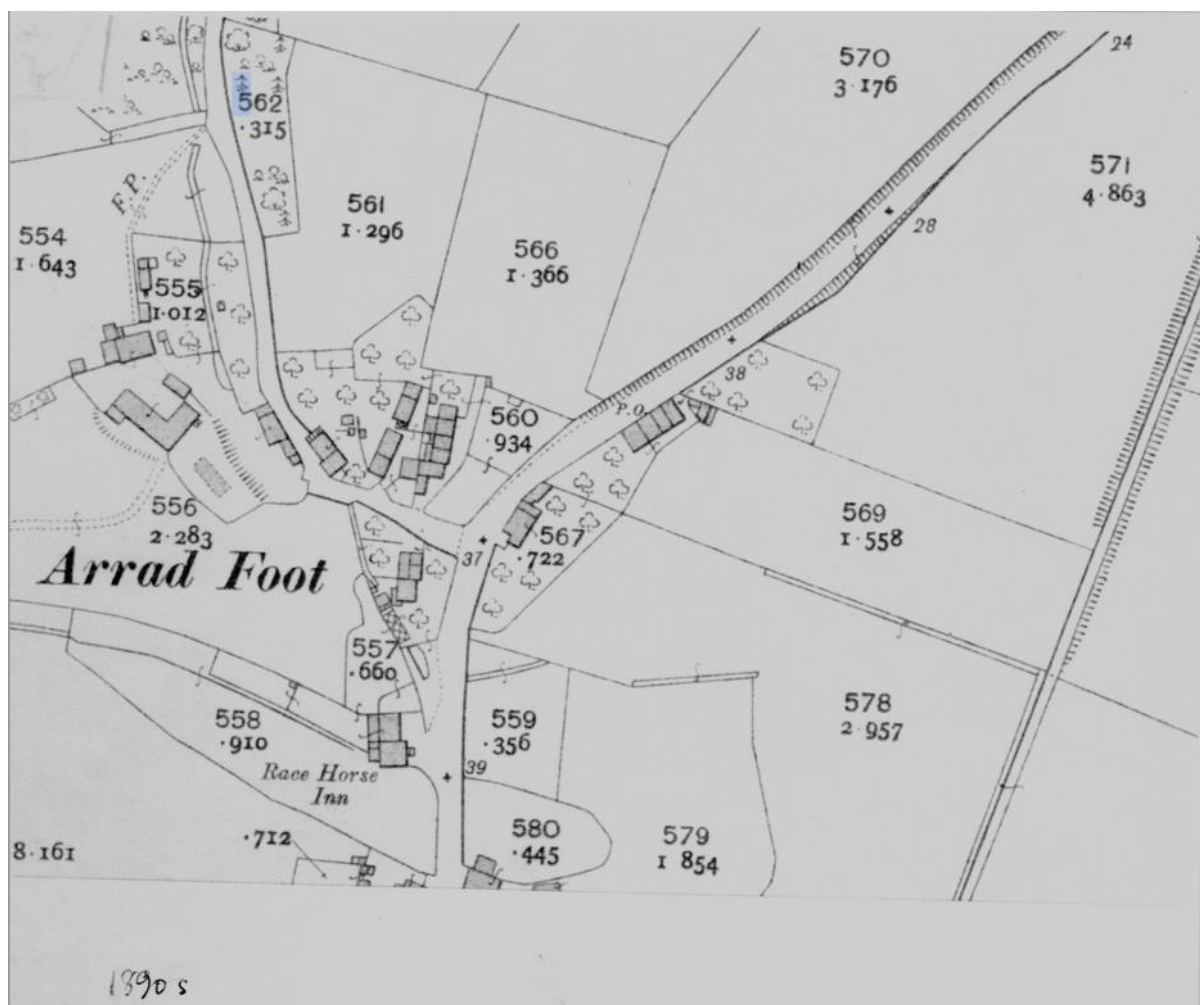


Arrad Foot near A590



View from Arrad Hill out to A590

If you turn into Arrad Foot from the A590 you might see a sleepy hamlet and think that nothing happens here. However, in the past things were very different. This road was the original turnpike road from Furness Abbey and Kirkby Ireleth via Penny Bridge to Kendal and the markets of Yorkshire, Scotland and further south to London. As the road and railway networks were built in the 19th century this route between markets became obsolete.



Arrad Foot Map c1890

Interesting Building Developments

Arrad Foot House / The Commercial Hotel and later the Armadale Hotel

The first house you would have seen, back in the 1800's would be Arrad Foot House, so named after the hill behind, which was a Norse word for hill falling down to the sea. According to the Estate Agents particulars, around 2000, the original part of the house was built in 1760 with a substantial addition in 1860. The Huddlestons became the owners around that time.

George Huddleston was born in Dalton to an Iron Manufacturing family but was trained as a surgeon at Guy's Hospital in London. On returning to Ulverston he married three times and the census shows several addresses in the town, some of which may also have been his place of work. He married Mary Proctor from Dalton in 1817 and had two sons, Thomas and James. George became a Justice of the Peace. He also inherited property from his mother's family in the area of Dalton and Roose. This may have enabled him to move to Arrad Foot. Thomas, also a doctor, married Jane Dodgeson from Kirkby Ireleth and they had four children, all born in Arrad Foot. George seemed to have retired to Arrad Foot and Thomas came to live with him.

Thomas's son, Richard married Elizabeth Ashburner and became a farmer at Natland and later he was a farmer in Leece. His brother, Thomas went to school in Sedbergh, and on to medical school in London at Guy's Hospital. He died in 1947 at Charing Cross Hospital in London. There followed two daughters, Annie and Mary and finally another son George who also trained in medicine in London.

By the time of the 1911 census, there were only two Huddlestons left in Arrad Foot, in the care of one servant.

The house was converted into a hotel first being called The Commercial Hotel and later the Armadale Hotel. Leslie Stoker, was one of the owners, who in the next few years completed the changes. The hotel was a very successful business and several additional areas were built e.g. new kitchens, restaurants and letting bedrooms. It became a welcome fixture in the village, catering for tourists and locals alike.



Armadale Hotel



Armadale Hotel Mid 20th Century

The Armadale finally ceased trading in 2014 when it was sold to Accurite Ltd. for building land.

The Racehorse Inn.

The second house you would have seen was The Horse and Jockey Public House, later renamed the Racehorse. It was first licensed in the late 18th century but in 1869, the licensee was Agnes Postlethwaite and by 1870 it was Anthony Hodgeson. In the census of 1911, it was back in the Postlethwaite family when Mr Postlethwaite was listed as an innkeeper and farmer. In those days it was very common for innkeepers to have other jobs as there was not enough trade, especially in country areas to provide for a family. The inn was sold in the 1920's by Arnold Park for £1,200 to the Brocklebank family, along with 30 acres and by 1939, John Brocklebank was listed as an innkeeper and farmer.



*The Racehorse Inn and houses
beyond - early 20th Century*



The road through - early 20th Century

One of the main advantages of the Inn at Arrad Foot was the stretch of shore on the other side of the turnpike road which was ideal for holding sports and races for the people in the surrounding countryside. The first races were noted in 1834 and became for the next 50 years one of the most

popular country sports held around Ulverston. The sports included foot races, horse races, dog trailing and of course Cumberland Wrestling. In later years there was even quoiting, pole high leaping and trotting. Often there were several horse races with competition between different landowners. In its heyday it was one of the most popular and well supported traditional sports with spectators and contestants coming long distances including from Kendal, Keswick, Grasmere and even Whitehaven.

This was a great day for the Racehorse Inn, held at Whitsuntide every year. The Inn would sell food and drink to all the contestants and spectators throughout the day and in the evening, there would be dancing with local people providing the music. Mr. Postlethwaite from the Inn would provide all the catering.

The races at Arrad Foot stopped when the railway was built because they put up an embankment and needed to drain the land on the west side of the railway. The land was then used as pasture. The Racehorse Inn closed in 1996 and became a private house under the same name. In around the year 2000 the barn at the side of the house was converted into a house, called Stablecroft.



Racehorse Inn (date unknown)



Arrad Foot view 2006

Swill Makers Cottages.

As you move further into the village there are several houses ranging from 18th century cottages, through 19th century houses to 20th century buildings. The earliest cottages are those above the shoreline, Rock Cottage, Sea View and Neuhoff Cottage, along with Glenside. These were all built as homes for the swill makers who carried on their business in the barn at the back of what is now just called The Cottage. They gathered the reeds and willow along the shoreline and sat together in the barn to construct the swills and baskets to sell to farms, iron foundries, bobbin mills and other businesses in the area. Swills and baskets were an integral part of many businesses at the time, whether households, farms or anywhere you needed to collect goods or produce. They were also needed when transporting goods.



Row of old cottages near A590



Old swill barn near A590

Other Houses at the Bottom of the Hill

The other houses in the village included Brookside Cottage which was originally two houses, the larger part on the shore and the smaller part on the rock upstream above the shore. The house at the bottom of the hill on the corner of the bend was called Kengarth and was the farmhouse of the reclaimed shore once the land was drained. Next to that was Holmfield, the site of the shop and possibly the post office.



Brookside Cottage c 1970



Kengarth

The next house up the hill is Oakdene, a 19th century cottage with the large oak tree on the other side of the road. This was the site of the village pump. Those people who didn't have a well on their premises, had to collect water from here. Some houses had their own wells; Arrad House, the Racehorse, which had a well in the kitchen, and Arrad Foot Farm which had a well in the farm. The lack of mains water meant that there were only earth toilets, many of which had to be shared between several houses. In the 19th century, Oakdene was occupied by the Bibby family. Edith Bibby was a professional photographer and hat maker. Eric Bibby was a cobbler and had a bike shop in Ulverston. The house was renovated in the 21st century with an interesting garden up the hill behind the house.



Oakdene



Water pump near A590

Arrad Foot Farm

The property on the corner of the road is Arrad Foot Farm.



Arrad Foot Farm



Arrad Foot Farmhouse

The Park family originated in Torver and over many generations farmed in various areas in the locality. In 1733 John Park took over Bottom Farm in Newland and made money from road improvements and property in Ulverston. In 1748 a new road was made by the Penny Bridge Iron Company along the shore from Barr End to Greenodd and in 1763 a Turnpike Road was made which passed between Greenodd and Arrad Foot and then on to Ulverston. The Park family settled in many parts of the district, including Dalton, Ashplants, Ulverston, Newland, Broughton Beck and Arrad Foot.

Thomas Park was born in 1770 in Dalton and married Jane Barben from Arrad Foot. He took over the farm at Arrad Foot in the years after 1800 and they had seven more children to add to the five they already had.

He farmed during a time when agriculture was going through a revolution. Fertilisation meant better crops, cattle matured faster, and better roads meant they could get their produce to market easier. Many men were required to work the farm, however, diseases spread due to overcrowding in the houses and there some died young.

By 1851 Thomas had lost his wife and eight of his children, almost certainly due to tuberculosis. His son Robert took over the farm in 1850 and married Isabella Jackson from Kirkby Ireleth. They had thirteen children, many of whom died at a young age of tuberculosis. T. H. Park in his book "The Story of a Lakeland Family" Four Hundred Years of the Park Family, records that it was realised that with overcrowding tuberculosis would spread easily. Robert Koch identified the tubercle bacillus in 1882 and it became a notifiable infectious disease. At Arrad Foot the doctor was up to date with the condition and recognised the problem. In 1887, a new farmhouse had to be built. The doctor said that none of the family who were suffering from T.B. would be allowed into the new house and must live in the old one. After that the old house had to be pulled down.

After Robert's death, his eldest son Thomas took over the farm, but he died in 1885 of typhoid, leaving no children. The tenancy of Arrad Foot Farm became vacant and the Penny Bridge Estate gave the tenancy to John Park, Robert's surviving son. He was married to Hannah Mary Harling from Kendal and had two sons at the time. They went on to have six more children at Arrad Foot.

Like his father and grandfather, John was very publicly minded. 1912 it was reported in the Barrow Herald and Furness Advertiser, that as chairman of Low Furness Divisional Committee, he was concerned about the speed of motor traffic and questioned whether farm carts should have red lights on the back. A Mr. Altham said that the new by-law would come into force on Feb. 1st. Mr Park said that was all very well but residents of Arrad Foot were afraid to come down to the main road after dark because of the rushing motor traffic and he would like a speed limit of 10mph from sunset to sunrise. After some discussion, Mr. Altham said what about the danger to motor traffic caused by farmer's carts standing still or driving at 2mph on the wrong side of the road. He suggested that a "Danger" signal be placed at Arrad Foot and at either end of Greenodd village. The meeting terminated after Mr. Park had wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

John's principal cash crops were butter, buttermilk, lambs and calves. Occasionally a young horse would be bred on the farm and sold and then he began to sell milk in Ulverston. He also did a bit of carting, charging 6 shillings a day for a horse and a man. They were almost completely self-sufficient. In spite of having several sons, with all of them working on the farm at some time, many of them ended up with occupations related to farming, both in this country and in Canada. After W.W.1, John retired and he lived in Prospect House Greenodd, until he died in 1937.

The tenancy of Arrad Foot farm changed hands again. When Wright Greatorex's grandfather moved to Arrad Foot from Westmorland, in 1923, he began the next generation of farmers. Wright's father and grandfather bred cows, bulls and horses as well as carrying on the work of the farm. They took the animals to the agricultural shows in Lowick, Cartmel and Ulverston, winning prizes for them. Wright has a silver cup, a perpetual trophy from the Lonsdale Show for winning three years in a row and five times in all.

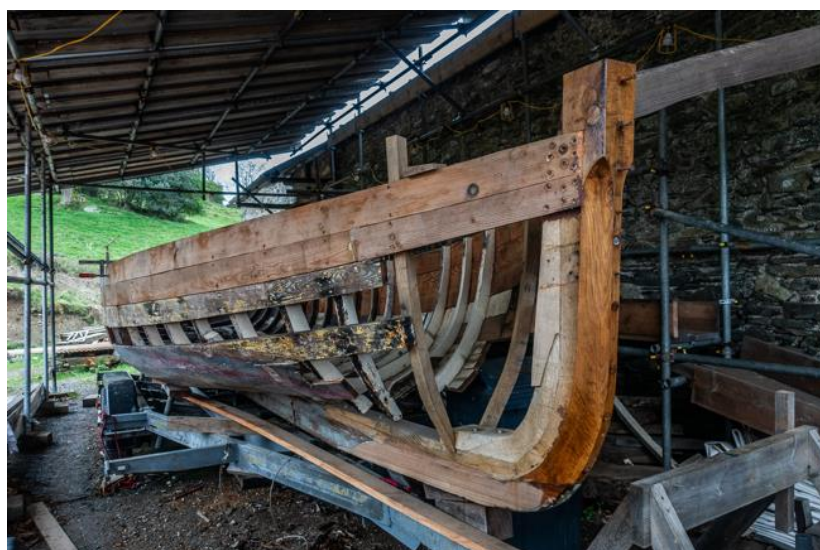
After W.W.11, farming changed again with the advent of tractors and more mechanisation on the farm. The bringing of mains water to the village meant it was possible to build the milking parlour up the hill, now the premises of Arrad Foot Balconies. When Wright and his wife Anne left the farm in 1986, having built a new house, the farm and buildings reverted to Penny Bridge Estates, there were no cows left on the farm. The land belonging to Arrad Foot Farm was incorporated into the other farms and the house and barns were rented out to other tenants. The main barn is now a boat builder's premises where they repair and refurbish boats, while the lower barn is let to several small businesses.



Arrad Foot Farmhouse 2024



Arrad Foot Farm



Boat Yard at Arrad Foot Farm

Other Houses at the Top of the Hill

As you continue uphill you pass a small, wooded; area, where there are the remains of the site of a turbine built in the wood. It harnessed water from the stream to provide electricity for Gawithfield House. It was believed to have been built by Brodie Kay. There was a small reservoir behind The Brow Cottage and a pump which produced the electricity which then was carried over the road by cable and connected to Gawithfield. When electricity was brought to the village the turbine and pump were removed from the wood. The remaining houses on the right-hand side of the road were all built in the 20th century on land belonging to Gawithfield House, having previously been part of the gardens and the paddock where Captain Egerton had trained his horses.

On the opposite side of the road, we see Beckside. At one time, this was the house of the gamekeeper for the Penny Bridge Estate. When the current owners moved into the property in the 1984, it was very neglected. In the space of ten years it was renovated and the old house and barn were joined to create one home. In the renovation, old building techniques were used where possible and the old oak beams that had been originally from shipbuilding activities at Greenodd were reused.



Beckside



Beckside 1984

Gawithfield



Gawithfield House - front view



Gawithfield House - aerial view

On the other side of the road you will see an impressive mansion which is Gawithfield house.

In 1719 there was an indenture by James Gawith of Hollowmire between him and Thomas and Agnes Gawith, his sister. We don't know much more about the property until 1861 when Margaret Potter

(widow) leased the mansion at Gawithfield to Thomas Roper, Iron master of Newland for a rent of £60. In 1871 the census showed Thomas Roper, aged 63 as a retired iron master, Jane Roper his wife aged 33 years and 8 servants. He seemed to lead an active business life but by 1872 he was withdrawing from many of his interests. The next we hear is his death in 1874.

The Death certificate and Burial certificate for Thomas Roper of Gawithfield, recorded that he had committed suicide in Newport, Monmouthshire while of unsound mind and is buried in Egton Church.

The family continued to live there at least until 1883 when Ellen Roper died. Then we think Admiral William Francis Egerton bought the property. He was from the family of the Duke of Bridgewater from Cheshire and his wife Susan was the daughter of the 7th Duke of Devonshire. They had several children, 2 sons and 4 daughters.

William Francis Egerton was born in 1868 in Byfleet as was his brother Frederick in 1870. Frederick Egerton joined the army and served in the Boer War where he was killed. William served in the 17th Lancers and rose to the rank of Captain. In 1894 he married Alice Susan Godolphin Osborne in Carmel, daughter of the 9th Duke of Leeds. When his father died in 1895, they took possession of Gawithfield and William embarked on a programme of enlargement of the house. However, they spent much of their time in London and with various relatives round the country.

When the house was completed, he was so pleased with the results, he gave a dinner at the Ship Inn, Greenodd for all the workers who had been responsible for the work, including the architects and surveyors, as reported in the local paper.

In the 1911 Census, the house was listed as having 22 rooms and was occupied by William Francis Egerton, his wife, two visitors and 7 servants. He was listed as a company director. He was obviously very fond of horses and spent much of his time breeding and training racehorses. He continued to train and run his racehorses for 40 years and enjoyed great success, including Mount Lebanon in 1930 and Night Arrow in 1934. Part of the land at Gawithfield was laid out as a training ring for young horses. He was also interested in the breeding of cows and bulls and entered many shows with his animals.

He was a prominent member of the community. By 1913, he was chairman of the Licensing Committee and a member of the Low Furness Divisional Committee. However, he objected to the turnpike road in Arrad Foot in front of his house being tarmacked as he felt it would damage his horses' feet. Eventually, he allowed the road to be made up.

Top of the Hill

Opposite the house called The Echos is a gate into the field. At this gate, if you stand and face the hillside, it is possible to hear an echo of your call coming back to you.



Echo Gate

Further up the road, you pass Hollin Hall and Smithy Green farms.



Hollin Hall Farm



Smithy Green Farm

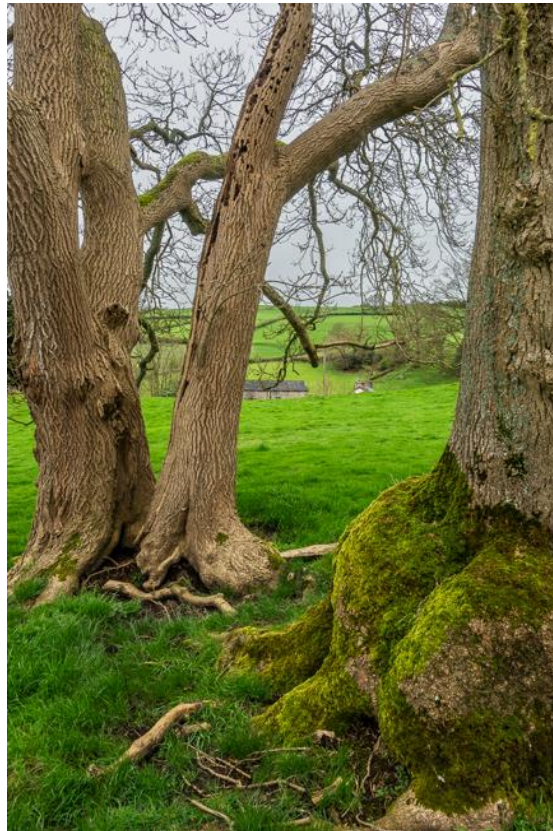
Beyond the wood at the top of the hill is the border to Penny Bridge. Going back to Smithy Green and taking the hill to Toppin Rays the properties become farms and later dated houses.

Trees in Arrad Foot

There are many old trees in the village, from the oak, said to be over 200 years old, the ancient ash trees on Arrad Hill and the slightly younger Ginckos and Tulip tree in the garden of Brookside Cottage. These all give a wonderful feeling of continuity in the countryside and in the village.



Old Oak Tree near A590



Ancient Ash Trees on Arrad Hill



Ginkgo Tree



Tulip Tree

References

Document Title	Author
"The Story of a Lakeland Family" Four Hundred Years of the Park Family	T. H. Park

Research

Source	Section
Westmorland & Furness Council Archives Barrow-in-Furness	Arrad Foot
Newspaper Archives	Local Articles
Local Residents	Personal Documents