

ART. XX.—*The founding of Maryport.* By EDWARD HUGHES, M.A.

*Read at Penrith, September 6th, 1963.*

BEFORE the present century, few towns in this country can claim to have been founded on a pre-conceived plan of controlled development, though the iron towns of Barrow-in-Furness and Middlesbrough and the coal port of Troon contain elements of what may be called grid-iron block settlement.<sup>1</sup> The case of Maryport, founded a century earlier, is therefore of considerable interest. Thomas Pennant, writing in 1772, called it a "new creation", and Nicolson & Burn state (1777)<sup>2</sup>:

"In 1747 the number of families in this parish [Cross Canonby] was certified as 64, four of which were Quakers. But an harbour having been since made at Elnefoot and a town there built named Maryport, this number of families is greatly increased insomuch that it is computed there are about 340 families in that town only. They pay for their houses and twenty yards backward a front rent yearly, some of 6d. and some of 9d. a yard. There are at present belonging to the said port between 70 and 80 sail of shipping from 30 to 250 tons burden. The principal branch of their trade is coal shipped for Ireland but several of their vessels also sail yearly up the Baltic for timber, flax, iron and other merchandise. They have not much of the American trade, only a few ships yearly sail to North America. They have a furnace for casting iron ware which carries on a considerable trade. They also have a glass house, but at present not much use is made of it."

From material in the Senhouse Papers, now deposited in the County Record Office at Carlisle, it is possible to confirm and amplify this statement in several important particulars.

The credit for first suggesting a new town in that region

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, J. D., *Furness and the Industrial Revolution*, 175-176, 228; Lock, M., *The Middlesbrough Survey and Plan*; VCH North Riding II 269.

<sup>2</sup> Pennant, *Tour in Scotland* (1772); Pennant corresponded with Humphrey Senhouse III later.

belongs to a leading Whitehaven wine and tobacco merchant, Walter Lutwidge. In a letter to Sir James Lowther with whom he shared a lease of Seaton colliery, dated August 1740, he proposed "to put forward a Town at the Bating house which I can soon do by erecting a bottle house and glass house which carries at once great numbers of people".<sup>3</sup> Before proceeding with the project, however, he consulted the powerful baronet. There is no evidence that this bold scheme was proceeded with. Before the decade was out Humphrey Senhouse of Netherhall and other local coal owners and freeholders promoted a bill to improve the harbour at Ellenfoot and so laid the foundation for the new town of Maryport.<sup>4</sup> Their petition, presented on 2 February 1748-9, pointed out that the harbour is "situate very conveniently for the coal trade carried on in that neighbourhood". Within six weeks the resulting bill had passed both houses and it received the royal assent on 22 March.<sup>5</sup> Only two witnesses, Mr John Christian of Unerigg and Mr William Comber Kirkby,<sup>6</sup> had been called and examined by the parliamentary committee and they had readily approved a proposal that a new pier be built and that the channel be widened which is "now so narrow that ships and vessels cannot pass each other".

That Maryport (so named after the wife of Humphrey Senhouse)<sup>7</sup> was founded on the coal trade rather than on glass bottles is confirmed by the following letters from the Collector of Customs at Whitehaven and by the fact

<sup>3</sup> Lutwidge, *Letter Books* in the author's possession.

<sup>4</sup> *Commons Journals* xxv 709.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 766, 785, 807. Sir John Pennington, M.P. for Cumberland, chaired the committee, 22 *George II. cap. 6. An act for repairing, enlarging and preserving the harbour of Ellenfoot.* After 25 March 1749, ships' masters were required to pay 2<sup>d</sup> on every 192 gallons of coal shipped from the port, and sixpence a ton on incoming cargoes. Every ship taking shelter to pay fourpence. The Trustees were empowered to appoint collectors. The act was to be in force for twenty-one years.

<sup>6</sup> Both cousins of Humphrey Senhouse.

<sup>7</sup> The daughter of Sir George Fleming, bishop of Carlisle 1734-47. In his *Description of Cumberland* (1671), Sir Daniel Fleming wrote: "Netherhall heretofore called Elneborough (being placed near the mouth of ye River Elne) is the mansion of John Senhouse, Esq., whose ancestor was a younger brother of Senhouse of Seascale." See *Fleming—Senhouse Papers* 50.

that the petition of 1749 had stated that the improvement of the harbour would not only be a great advantage to the country but would also "tend to the increase of H.M. Customs and to the improvement of Trade and Navigation".

[*Collector of Customs at Whitehaven to Customs Commissioners.*]

8 July, 1719.

"The Coal Trade at said Creek is carried on mostly by small vessels that belong to Dublin & the north of Ireland who transport them into most parts of that Kingdom & Isle of Man. The Inhabitants near Ellenfoot not concerning themselves in Shipping, only in digging & Leading the Coal in Sacks on horseback to the Harbour."

[*The same to the same.*]

20 July, 1750.

"Ellenfoot is a Creek belonging to this port, and lies about 12 miles Northward of it, very Conveniently Situated for the Exportation of Coals, wch abound in that neighbourhood; to Ireland, Isle of Man & Scotland, but there being no depth of Water it was only frequented by Small vessels or about 15 or 20 Tons, & Seldom above one or Two in the Harbour at a time; under the Inspection of Wm. Yair, Waiter & Searcher, who has had the Care of that Creek many years alone. But an act of Parliament having been obtained in the 22<sup>d</sup> year of his present Majesty for Erecting a new Pier, deepning, amending, and Enlarging the Harbour, and Sev<sup>l</sup> Works having been since made, and more water obtained, there is now a Considerable Trade in Coals, & other things Carried on from thence to the Countrys above mentioned, and frequently this Summer not less than 13 or 14 Sail of Ships in that Harbour at one time — & Vessels now being almost daily arriving there from Ireland, Isle of Man, & other places — we are humbly of opinion there is now a real Necessity of Two or Three Add<sup>l</sup> officers at that place to assist the said Yair in rummaging Effectively all vessels on their arrival, watching the Night Tides & by turns, taking an account of Coals Exported and other necessary Services for the benefit of the Revenue."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Letters Books, Customs' House, Whitehaven.* I owe these references to the kindness of Dr Oliver Wood. Under the act the Customs' officers were not to discharge any ship until the harbour dues had been paid. For the coal trade from Maryport, see Isaac Fletcher, CW iii (o.s.) 301 ff. and my forthcoming volume, *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii.

We know that the initiative in promoting the bill to improve the harbour together with the legal expenses connected with it had come from Humphrey Senhouse, lord of the manor of Ellenborough. Work began without delay: "Gave the men to drink this day beginning to improve and work upon Ellenfoot Harbour 2s/-", runs an entry in his Account Book for 20 May 1749.<sup>9</sup>

The stones were got from his own nearby quarry and he was soon to profit from greatly increased anchorage and shipping dues. At first he had not envisaged founding a new town. Indeed it is clear from the correspondence with his eldest son who had gone up to Cambridge in January 1749, that even the new name of the place and the legal implications of founding a colony only emerged later.

[*Humphrey Senhouse junior to his father.*]

Christ's College.

Feb 15, 1750-1.

... Your success at Elenfoot gives me great pleasure; but Brother George's postscript is somewhat too mysterious for my penetration to unravel: he talks of the Mary of Maryport without informing me of the bearings of that place, or telling me in what degree of latitude it is situated; neither does he acquaint me with the reasons he has to expect that ship in particular.

[*The same to the same.*]

Cambridge.

October 14, 1752.

... The progress you make at Elenfoot gives me the highest satisfaction. I shall be glad to contribute my part towards insuring the new planters in their purchases:—the voice of Honour, of Justice and of Self-Interest require it of me. Yet for my satisfaction I shou'd be obliged to you for a thorough insight into the Nature of the affair before execution.

[*The same to the same.*]

October 28, 1752.

Dear Papa,

So far am I from having the least doubt of the Honour of your views, or from making the least Objection to your

<sup>9</sup> My thanks are due to Mr Roger Pocklington Senhouse for permission to quote from the Senhouse MSS. (Cumberland County Record Office, Carlisle).

Proceedings at Ellenfoot, that the Scheme you have engaged in is of all others that cou'd have been devised or thought of, the most after my own Heart. When I reflect on the many Inconveniences that must arise from the Execution of it and the multitudes of Trouble that must necessarily attend the first planning and settling of a Colony, I cannot sufficiently applaud your parental tenderness. I cannot too ardently wish that you may early reap and long enjoy the fruits of your Labours. That I may have an Opportunity of contributing my very small endeavour towards the Success of the undertaking in joining in what ever may be necessary to empower you to consolidate the Work . . .

. . . You may certainly depend on my concurrence in whatever Designs your known Prudence may suggest and I look upon it as no mean mark of your opinion of your son that you entered upon the affair without his previous knowledge of his being any necessary Instrument therein. You once told me that Mr. Howe had some thoughts of erecting a furnace upon Your River. It was with Regret that I saw Catgill prefer'd to Ellenfoot.<sup>10</sup> I am glad that another is likely to take place. That the success of the Harbour may answer the most sanguine hope of the Projector and that the place may be deserving of the name of Mary Port is the earnest wish of your most dutiful son.

By that time some twenty-six "colonists" had purchased fairly uniform rectangular blocks paying a frontage rent of sixpence a yard, as the county historians later stated. Indeed, there has survived in the Senhouse Papers a complete list of the purchasers, some 101 in all, from January 1749 to March 1769 (Appendix A). They were clearly mostly local men whose identity will involve much more research than I can command at present.<sup>11</sup> When Humphrey Senhouse II died in August 1770 the Maryport ground rents amounted to £87. 11s. per annum, anchoridge dues to £21, besides a rent of £52. 10s. od. from the Furnace Company and several lesser sums for a rope-walk, shops and yard, etc.

<sup>10</sup> The furnace erected at Maryport by Messrs Gale, Gibson, Hartley, the two Postlethwaites and Lewthwaite "began to blow on Friday the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1754", Senhouse MSS.

<sup>11</sup> Most of them bought pews in the new "subscription" church, St Mary's, in 1761-63.

## APPENDIX A.

(Footnotes included at end of the Appendix).

Names of Purchasers at Mary Port with date of their several Deeds, number of yards in Front and Backwards, as also their yearly rents payable at Candlemass & Lammass.

No.	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of Deed.</i>	<i>Front.</i> [ <i>in yards</i> ].	<i>Back.</i>	<i>Rent.</i>	THE FOUNDING OF MARYPORT
		<i>1749</i>				
1	John Sharp <sup>12</sup>	Jan. 31	15	20	7s/6d	
2	Wm. Brougham <sup>13</sup>	„ „	11	20	5/ 6	
3	Wm. Currey <sup>14</sup>	Mar. 20	14	20	7/ -	
		<i>1750</i>				
4	Anth. Broadfoot	July 31	16	25	10/ -	
5	Jno. Gibson	„ „	13½	25	13/11¼	
	the same	„ „	11	20		
		<i>1751</i>				
6	Jonat <sup>n</sup> . Wedgewood	June 5	13	20	6/ 6	
7	Jno. Rittson <sup>15</sup>	Nov. 2	14½	20	7/ 4	
8	Jno. Wilson. H. Lowson.	„ „	9	20	4/ 6	
9	Hen. Shilton & Gibson	„ „	18	20	9/ -	
10	Phil. Bell	„ „	9	20	4/ 6	
		<i>1752</i>				
11	Jno. Steele	Jan. 22	10	20	5/ -	
12	Jno. Hayton	May 28	11	20	5/ 6	311

No.	Name	Date of Deed.	Front. [in yards].	Back.	Rent.
13	Charles Sewell	June 16	7	25	4 / 4½
14	Wm. Pattinson	July 2	10	20	5 / -
15	Wm. Postlethwaite <sup>16</sup>	July 15	28	26	} I / 3 / 8
	the same	" "	11	22	
16	Henry Gaitskill	July 20	11	25	5 / 6
17	Hen. Jones	Aug. 10	12	22	6 / 7
18	Jos. Hudlestone <sup>17</sup>	" 11	10	20	5 / -
19	Jos. Borrinskale <sup>18</sup>	" 11	11	20	5 / 6
20	Isaac Tiffin	" "	40	20	I / - / -
21	Jno. Bell <sup>19</sup>	Sept. 22	20	22	11 / -
22	Geo. Raw	" "	20	20	10 / -
23	Thos. Wilson	" "	11	22	6 / 1
24	Ed. Tubman	Oct. 3	20	20	10 / -
25	Rich. Tubman <sup>20</sup>	Oct. 7	15	20	7 / 6
26	Wilf'd. Clementson	" "	16	25	10 / -
27	Jno. Christian <sup>21</sup>	Nov. 16	20	20	10 / -
28	Thos. Skelton	Nov. 25	20	20	10 / -
29	Wm. Dixon <sup>22</sup>	Nov. 29	11	20	8 / 3
30	Jonath <sup>n</sup> Thompson <sup>23</sup>	Dec. 2	17	20	12 / 9
31	Thos. White	" "	15	25	14 / -
32	Thos. Pape <sup>24</sup>	" "	15	20	} with triangle
	the same	(Feb. 9. 1754)	21½	15	
33	Geo. Monkhouse	Dec. 26	60	30	} I / 5 / 6
	the same	" "	60	30	
					£6

No.	Name.	Date of Deed.	Front. [in yards].	Back.	Rent.
1753					
34	Geo. Irton Esq. <sup>25</sup>	Jan. 18	20	20	10/ -
35	Sam'l Irton	" "	40	20	£1
36	Robt. Twentyman <sup>26</sup>	" 21	40	20	£1
37	Jno. Topping	" 31	60	20	£2
38	Benj. Carlisle	Feb. 2	24	20	18/ -
39	Wm. Wallace	" "	38	20	} Wm. Wallace 1/8/6 } } Thos. Downs 18/- }
			T.D. 24	20	
40	Thos. Osborn	" "	10	20	5/ -
41	Simon Hunt	" "	10	20	5/ -
*42	James Towers <sup>27</sup>	" "	10*	20*	[See note at foot] 7/ 6
43	Jno. Sharp	" "	11	31	12/ 9
44	Joseph Stamper	" "	50	22	} 1/18 /9
	the same	" "	15	20	
45	Wm. Osborn	" "	11	20	-Quayside 8/3 }
			10	22	-N. Lane 5/6 }
	More additional rent to that part next the Quay now				
	Mr. Jas. Postlethwaite's				
47	Jonat <sup>n</sup> . Harrison	Feb. 2	40	22	3/ -
48	Wm. Roper	Mar. 27	32	20	£1/ 2/ -
49	Mat. Wrightman	" "	13	20	£1/ 4/ -
50	Josiah Goddart	" 31	17	31	9/ 9
50	Mr. Law, late Goddarts	(Mar. 1758)	1	31	19/ 8
51	Jacob Tiffin† (See below)	Apr. 27	20	20	1/ 2
					15/ -

\* Originally all Mr Wallace's.

† Crossed through but no other name substituted.

No.	Name.	Date of Deed.	Front. [in yards].	Back.	Rent.
52	Wm. Dodgson <sup>28</sup>	" "	20	20	15/ -
53	Jos. Fisher	July 17	7	22	3/10
54	Jno. Steele	June 2	12. 2 foot	22	5/10
55	Jno. Nicolson	Aug. 11	30	20	} £1/17/ 6
	the same	" "	20	20	
56	Jno. Scot	July 3	12	22	6/ 7
57	Jas. Wheelwright	Aug. 11	30	20	1/ 2/ 6
58	Thos. Skelton	Sept. 7	20	22	11/ -
<i>1754</i>					
59	Carlisle Spedding & Co. <sup>29</sup>	Feb. 21	45	45	3/15/11
60	John Christian Esq. <sup>30</sup>	" "	71	—	4/10/ -
61	Robert Wise	May 2	30	30	2/ 5/ -
62	Amos Beeby	" 14	30	30	1/13/ 9
63	Wm. Brougham	(1756) May 27	5 76½	20 31	} 1/ 1/ 3
64	John Salkeld	" "	20	20	
65	Dan'l Hodgson	" 28	31 & 6	—	9/ -
[May 31/1756 (rents) amounted to the sum of					£57/ 0/11¼ ]
<i>1757</i>					
66	Samuel Wilson	Oct. 30	22	24	£1/ 0/ 8
67	Thos. Wetherald	July 8	(no. figures)		14/ -
68	Wm. Penny	" "	" "	" "	15/ -
69	Thos. Ravell	Oct. 7	29	24	£1/ 6/ -½



No.	Name.	Date of Deed.	Front. [in yards].	Back.	Rent.
<i>1761</i>					
80	Philip Nelson <sup>34</sup>	May 15	25	25	15/ 7½
<i>1764</i>					
81	Thos. Harris	July 6	12	40	18/ -
82	Wm. Lonsdale	" "	11	24	9/10½
83	Jno. Barnes <sup>35</sup>	Sept. 7	10	20	7/ 6
<i>1765</i>					
84	Wm. Wood <sup>36</sup>	Jan. 19	53	40	£3/19/ 6
85	Jno. Hudson	" 19	40	40	£3
86	Mr. Jos. Gilbanks <sup>37</sup>	" "	16	20	12/ -
87	Robt. Bell, Mar'r	May 17	16	20	12/ -
88	Jno. McNeil	" "	10	20	7/ 6
89	Jas. Wheelwright	Dec. 6	17	20	12/ 9
<i>1766</i>					
90	Wm. Harrison	Mar. 28	20	20	15/ -
91	Geo. Brown	Apr. 19	18	20	13/ 6
92	Lawrence Husk	May 3	20. 2 feet	23	17/ 9
93	Mr. Blennerhasset	Oct. 24	20	20	£1
94	Richd. Scrugham	Dec. 19	10	23	8/ 7½
95	Jonath'n. Fawcett	" "	10	23	8/ 7½
96	Joshua Finlinson	" "	10	23	8/ 7½
<i>1768</i>					
	Dan'l Osborn	June 14	9	20	6/ 9

|| No. crossed through.

	<i>Name.</i>	<i>Date of Deed.</i>	<i>Front. [in yards].</i>	<i>Back.</i>	<i>Rent.</i>
97	Joseph Barwise	Mar. 12	15	32	18 / -
98	Wm. Wood	Sept. 30	64	20	£2 / 8 / -
		1769 <sup>38</sup>			
99	John Potts	Feb. 17	15	21	11 / 9½
100	Wm. Harris	Feb. 24	18½	16	11 / 3
101	Jonath. Williamson	Mar. 24	—	—	£2 / 5 / -

## FOOTNOTES.

<sup>12</sup> In 1769 Sharp was paying a rent of £8. 10s. od. to Senhouse for a farm or tenement

<sup>13</sup> Brougham was paying a rent of £8. 8s. od. for another.

<sup>14</sup> In the 1790's a Wm. Currey was under-steward of the Ellenborough colliery.

<sup>15</sup> A tenant of Senhouse paying a rent of £4. 4s. od. in 1769. His namesake (died 1840) was a sailmaker and later a shipbuilder in Maryport.

<sup>16</sup>? later a partner in the Furnace Company.

<sup>17</sup> Of Birkby, mason, died December 1793, aged 86. He owned two houses in King Street, Maryport.

<sup>18</sup> Master and part-owner of a brig.

<sup>19</sup> John Bell fitted out a ship, the *Centurion*, in 1752 and had a lease to get clay.

<sup>20</sup> The Tubmans were prominent Manx merchants trading to the Mediterranean: some members of the family were settled in the Cumbrian ports. See J. J. Kneen, *The Personal Names of the Isle of Man*, 236.

<sup>21</sup> Not to be confused with his namesake of Unerigg.

<sup>22</sup> The Dixons were freeholders and tenants of the Christians of Unerigg. Dixon junior was a shoemaker.

<sup>23</sup> A tenant of Humphrey Senhouse on a three-year lease, paying £26. 15s. od. per annum.

<sup>24</sup> Ditto, paying £8. 8s. od. rent in 1769.

<sup>25</sup> Of Irton Hall, sheriff of Cumberland in 1753. Samuel was his younger brother and successor.

<sup>26</sup> A tenant of the Christians. In 1754 he was receiving interest from Senhouse on a loan of £500.

<sup>27</sup> The first case where the frontage rent was increased to ninepence a yard.

<sup>28</sup> In 1769 Bragg (a cooper) and Dodgson were paying a rent of £30 to Senhouse.

<sup>29</sup> Whitehaven timber merchants, Carlisle Spedding was Sir James Lowther's agent.

<sup>30</sup> Of Unerigg, Senhouse's cousin. *N.B.* The biggest allotment to date.

<sup>31</sup> James Wheelwright, a tenant of Senhouse, paying a rent of £30 in 1760.

<sup>32</sup> Son of Ewan Christian of Unerigg.

<sup>33</sup> The elder Blennerhasset was the author of a History of England.

<sup>34</sup> The steward at Netherhall: he had loaned his master £100 in 1754.

<sup>35</sup> John Barns was the proprietor of a Ropery in 1790.

<sup>36</sup>? the shipbuilder.

<sup>37</sup> The curate of St Mary's, Maryport.

<sup>38</sup> In 1781 Beilby Porteus, bishop of Chester, a contemporary of Humphrey Senhouse III at Cambridge, wrote: "When I had the pleasure of seeing you at Whitehaven I remember your giving me an account of the very rapid and extraordinary increase of the number of Inhabitants at a little place of yours called Mary Port. Be so good as to give me the Particulars of it. at what period it began to be inhabited, what the present number of inhabitants is, and how long it has been in acquiring its present Magnitude. And if at the same time you could furnish me with any authentic accounts of the Encrease of Whitehaven or the adjacent villages from the beginning of this century to the present year. I should be much obliged to you and the sooner the better." (Senhouse MSS.) Enquiries at Chester have failed to trace the reply to this letter. The late Dr J. W. Crerar of Maryport compiled a series of maps to illustrate the growth of the town.