

ART. VIII – *The first Market House at Bowness-on-Windermere, 1692*

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IN 1936 the anonymous historian of Windermere Grammar School,<sup>1</sup> using a minute book of 1763-1811, the present whereabouts of which is unknown,<sup>2</sup> wrote that a subscription list, begun on 16 November 1764, was to pay for a “*new* Market House” with shops below, in Bowness. The rents were to fund a salary of 20s. for a person to teach younger pupils, with any surplus going to the headmaster.<sup>3</sup> As the population and woollen industry had both increased, the market was to be revived, since elderly inhabitants stated that “Bowness had been a market town in times past”. Donations raised £48 16s. 6d., but to cover building costs £10 more was borrowed from the school stock and if the market house failed, the school was to have all benefits from it. In 1771 an order was made that, once a debt had been settled, the shops should be let for the school’s benefit.<sup>4</sup> By 1788 the debt was cleared, so the income went to the master.<sup>5</sup> However, any impression that this was the first market house in Bowness is misleading, since sources not open to the public in 1936 are now available and prove the erection of a market house in 1692.

When Revd Thomas Machell rode through the Barony of Kendal in 1692-3 recording antiquities, he noted at Bowness: “A market was kept on Sundays [selling] meat, cockles, sheepskins [and] swills on the South side of the Church under the Yew tree about fifty years ago. But [it had] no charter. Now there is a meeting every Friday”.<sup>6</sup> He described the parish church as being “in the midst of Bowness, a small country village, with a school-house<sup>7</sup> [and] with nine or ten other houses about it . . . There was a market house – or rather a meeting house built there last winter, 1692,<sup>8</sup> by Sir Christopher Philipson, the parson of Windermere, and . . . friends and acquaintances, with some of the town. It stands just opposite the church on the South side of the churchyard”.<sup>9</sup> Machell spent that night at the rectory, preached for William Wilson (rector 1660-1705) next day, then stayed overnight at Sir Christopher Philipson’s house on Windermere Island, so that he could record more coats-of-arms in the church. Finishing at midnight in a storm, both men slept at the rectory.

Some of Machell’s observations help in interpreting a document in the manuscripts of the Browne family of Townend, Troutbeck.<sup>10</sup> Dated 2 January 1701/2, it is endorsed “A True and just account touching the erecting and building of the Markett house in Bownes[s] is as followeth”:

First our receiptes	£	s	d
of the Inhabitan[t]s in Aplethw[ai]te & other persons	6	4	6
of the Inhabitan[t]s in Undermilnbeck & other persons	7	13	4
	both is	13	17 10
Our disbursem[en]ts			
Imprimis to Reiginald Sharp for building the house in [16]92	18	00	00
Itm to Jo <sup>n</sup> Suert for a bush[el] of Malt at the house raising	00	05	00
Itm to Rowland Park for his right to the house stead	00	15	00
	In all	19	00 00

Disbursed more then rec'd	05 02 02
Interest of the same for 9 years	<u>02 14 00</u>
both is	07 16 02
More for suing & recording the 10s. Chr: Dixon promised	00 01 04
Itm more for writeing & stampt paper	00 05 06
Itm more for our pains & expences	00 15 00
In all then dispersed more than rec'd	08 18 00

The document is unsigned, in unknown handwriting and seems to be a final draft, as if a copy would be made for consideration by other people. It confirms Machell's date for building the market house, and the donations suggest that it was a joint project of just Undermillbeck and Applethwaite townships, perhaps because folk in the other townships of Windermere parish (Troutbeck and Ambleside Below Stock) preferred the Ambleside market established in 1650.<sup>11</sup> Machell's observation that the 1692 market house was just south of the church suggests that it would have been in the same place as the 1764 building and measured about 12 x 6½ yards.<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 1) If the 1692 building was built to the standard of local barns it could easily last more than a century unless an incident, like a fire or great storm destroyed it. As such an event might live in local folk-memory, it seems more likely that the 1764 work was not so much a new building as a major refurbishment, or perhaps a rebuild using the old materials on the same site. In 1692 Rowland Park's 15s. "for his right to the house stead" surely gained possession of that prime site in the heart of the established market. The Barony of Kendal admittances do not contain the transaction,<sup>13</sup> but Park was fined 1s. several times for lighting bonfires which would cause nuisance if they were in the market place. Rowland Park, of Bowness, died at Heaning in Applethwaite (SD 431 991) and was buried on 22 November 1704. After his wife Barbary was buried on 7 December 1693, he married Elizabeth Taylor on 13 April 1697.<sup>14</sup>

Detail of the 1692 building work is disappointing but Reginald Sharp had £18 for his work. That compares well with costs of building small stone barns, such as Robin Lane bank barn (1731; £13) and Crostenriggs hog-house (1733; £18 10s.) both in Troutbeck and measuring 14 by 7 yards,<sup>15</sup> so that £18 should be the full building cost. Reginald Sharp, of Bowness, was buried on 15 April 1711. Jon Suert's 5s. for malt would be to brew ale for men raising roof timbers onto finished walls. A £5 2s. 2d. deficit, outstanding for nine years, accrued £2 14s. interest; a rate of about 5% compound. Perhaps, as with the 1764 market house and also the Hawkshead market house built in 1790,<sup>16</sup> a committee had hoped to pay off a loan to meet the subscriptions shortfall, using rents from market traders and others. If so, the account shows that was not achieved. If the finances failed by 1701, the account would help clear up the affair. To sue Christopher Dixon for just 10s. is a sign that they tried to gather every penny of promised money, despite the cost which might have been more than the 1s. 4d. stated. Some of the 15s. for "pains & expences" may have been to sue him, but most would be for the site conveyance, for which "writeing & stampt paper" cost 5s. 6d., making the total debt £8 18s. Other Townend papers appear to shed light on why Dixon was a reluctant payer.

Christopher Dixon was buried at Windermere on 26 January 1714/5. A bond of 8

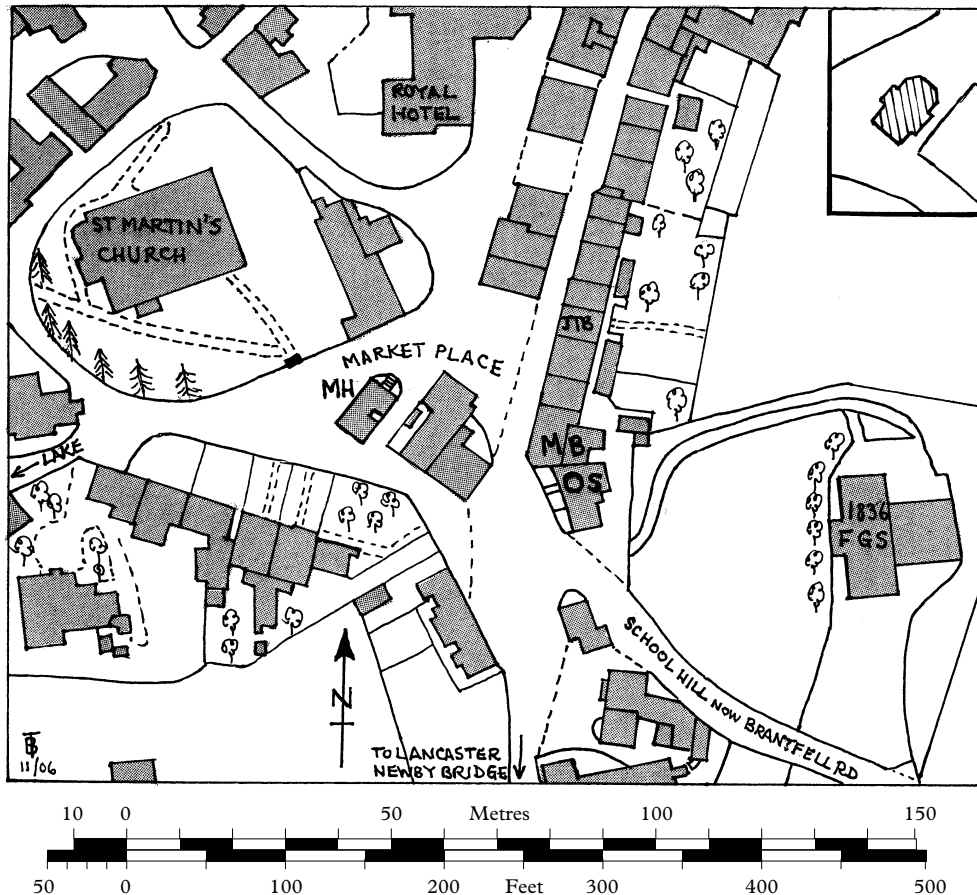


FIG. 1. The centre of Bowness showing the location of some key buildings in 1858, and later occupiers. MH = Market House as in 1858; OS = Old Grammar School built c.1632; FGS = Free Grammar School built 1836; MB = position of the later Midland Bank; JTB = position of the later solicitor's office of J. T. Bownass, secretary to the grammar school governors and the Windermere Gasworks Company. (Sources: O.S. 1: 2,500 plan (1858), Windermere Tithe Map (1838), CRO(K), DRC/8/244 and building control plans, CRO(K), WSUD/B 161, 217 and WSUD/W2, 197). INSET: Market house form in 1912.

February 1692/3 shows that Miles Atkinson, a yeoman of High House, Hugill (NY 438 005) and Christopher Dixon of Common in Appleshwaite (SD 422 996) had agreed<sup>17</sup> with Robert Philipson, Peter Collinson, William Williamson and Thomas Ellery or “others of their fellow feofees [trustees] of the school situate in Bowness”<sup>18</sup> to pay £5 5s. before 2 February next “without any manner of fraud” as if Atkinson had a dubious reputation,<sup>19</sup> and needed a friend and neighbour as guarantor. As interest was not mentioned, the bond was probably not to secure an investment loan but to extract a promised gift, delayed by prevarication. The bond was eventually settled on 2 February 1698/9 when £5 5s. was paid by Benjamin Browne, John Longmire, Leonard Fleming and John Rigg, all trustees of Miles Atkinson's will, made on 1 June 1698. Atkinson was buried on 11 June and three of

the school trustees Collinson, Ellery and Williamson<sup>20</sup> acknowledged receiving the sum from Atkinson's estate. His inventory on 17 June listed £152 1s. 8d. in assets, including over 50% in livestock, but debts were £425 6s. 8d. plus £10 funeral expenses,<sup>21</sup> and confirm why Dixon was as a guarantor. Atkinson's wife, Dorothy, survived him but High House was sold to pay his debts. She was the daughter and heir of Robert Braithwaite, who inherited High House and also Baysbrown (in Langdale) from Gawen Braithwaite of Ambleside Hall, who died in 1653.<sup>22</sup> Benjamin Browne (1664-1748) of Townend kept the documents in his archive, since he was the main trustee settling Atkinson's affairs and, as the market house account is also in his archive, though not in his handwriting, perhaps he was also involved in settling that, including collecting 10s. from Atkinson's dilatory neighbour. An outline of the school's history raises interesting possibilities.

In 1613 a subscription was raised to fund a schoolmaster's salary, but a school room was not built until the early 1630s.<sup>23</sup> On 2 February 1633/4 a document in the school papers noted that in Bowness "a scholhouse hath latelie been erected by the well disposed p[er]sons of the said two hamlets . . .".<sup>24</sup> Before this, teaching was probably in the church, as in many other parishes.<sup>25</sup> Machell described the school as a "stone building of two stories . . . six yards broad and thirteen yards long, with a chimney at the end of it, and slated all over . . . South East from the church about a hundred yards".<sup>26</sup> It had no house for the master but one, a bachelor, had lived in the apartment on the upper floor.<sup>27</sup> The school was taught in the building until a new Free Grammar School was built in 1836, to designs of George Webster and financed by John Bolton of Storrs.<sup>28</sup> The 1838 Tithe Award records the "Old School" (plot 60) as the house of Robert Forrest.<sup>29</sup> In 1912, it was Mrs Barrow's house, called Laurel Cottage.<sup>30</sup> In 1936, it was occupied by Mrs Henderson; and stood next to the Midland Bank<sup>31</sup> (Fig. 1).

The 1633/4 deed provided for the school to be "maintained . . . and at all tymes repaired . . . through the profits of the remainder of the stock for ever", but did not provide for possible needs beyond the capability of investment income. Later fund-raising included Robert Philipson of Calgarth, a school trustee,<sup>32</sup> giving £21 4s. to the funds in 1670. Also, "writs for smaller sums were issued to various persons in 1671, 1684, 1689 and 1692", the last of which, found "by Miss Browne of Troutbeck", was no doubt Miles Atkinson's bond. By 1703 problems arose because the only perpetual trustee still alive was the rector William Wilson and only two of the ten other trustee places were filled.<sup>33</sup> A new board was set up and invested £213 10s. of school stock in land. The school historian saw this as beginning "a new period . . . when the history is more that of the estate at Greenbank in Storrs and of the [1764] Bowness Market House than of the school and school house".<sup>34</sup> There is no sign that he was aware of the 1701/2 building account, despite Miss Browne's help, nor of Machell's observations.

Machell identified Sir Christopher Philipson of Crook, the owner of Windermere Island who died in 1709<sup>35</sup> and the rector, who died in 1705, as major fund-raisers for the 1692 market house, just when Atkinson's gift was needed by the school. As it would be sensible to have a joint committee to handle both projects, the four school trustees named in Atkinson's bond might have been active on both schemes. The 1692 building may therefore have been built not only to improve Bowness market and perhaps reduce begging, so criticised by Machell,<sup>36</sup> but like its successor, to

benefit school funds. If so, the debt accumulated between 1692 and 1701/2, would contribute to the difficulties faced by the school trustees prior to the 1703 reorganisation. Thus, it is likely that the building account was part of a plan to cure financial problems before a new school stock strategy was decided upon. The situation suggests that the 1692 market house probably survived until 1764, but needed so much repair that it gave the impression of being a new building, rather than just greatly repaired. The resulting structure occupied plot 107 on the 1838 Undermilbeck Tithe Award, was owned by the Grammar School Trustees, who had the full benefit of it, and was tenanted by Charles Eccles and others unnamed. In 1829, Eccles was a “shoe and clog maker” but his address was not given.<sup>37</sup> Measuring about 12 by 6½ yards in plan (Fig. 1), the building had a small projection at the north-east end, indicating steps surely to an upper floor meeting room, perhaps even used by school governors, and suggests that the 1764 structure merely mimicked, or retained, the dual function observed by Machell.

The present building on the site is Victorian and was recorded as a “Bazaar” on drawings by Bowness architect Joseph Pattinson dated October 1898, for alterations to the building immediately south-east of it in St. Martin’s Place.<sup>38</sup> In 1912 the building was occupied by “Nicholls & Co”.<sup>39</sup> and is now a pizza outlet.

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Anon, *Windermere Grammar School* (1936), 18-19. (Hereafter WGS History . . .). Copy in CRO(K).
- <sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the archivists at Kendal have been unable to identify a likely source archive.
- <sup>3</sup> *Report for . . . Charities and Education of the Poor . . .* (1815-1835), 531-2. Copy in CRO(K).
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 532.
- <sup>5</sup> WGS History, 19.
- <sup>6</sup> J. M. Ewbank (ed.), *Antiquary on Horseback* (1963), 120, CWAAS, Extra Series, xix. (Hereafter Ewbank . . .).
- <sup>7</sup> The school was built about 1632-3. Perpetual Trustees were the rector of Windermere and three more drawn from the Philipsons of Calgarth and the owners of Orrest Head and Lickbarrow. From 1762 they were the rector and the owners of Rayrigg, Lickbarrow and Burthwaite. (N & B, i, 179) The 1764 funding perhaps relied on that change.
- <sup>8</sup> My italics.
- <sup>9</sup> Ewbank, 112-3.
- <sup>10</sup> CRO(K), WD/TE, bound mss, ii, 328.
- <sup>11</sup> N & B, i, 188-9. A market was held every Wednesday and two fairs on Whitsun Wednesday and 18 October.
- <sup>12</sup> Measurements scaled from Ordnance Survey, 1st edition (1858), 1 : 2,500, Westmorland XXXII, 11.
- <sup>13</sup> CRO(C), D/ Lons / L / 5 / 2 / 11. I am grateful to Linda Collin for searching this source for me.
- <sup>14</sup> CRO(K), WPR/ 61/ 4, 11 and 22.
- <sup>15</sup> B. Tyson, “Some Traditional Buildings in the Troutbeck Valley”, *CW2*, lxxxii, 151-176, esp. 154-8.
- <sup>16</sup> B. Tyson, “Francis Webster and the Market House at Hawkshead, 1790”, Abbot Hall, *Quarto*, xxxi no. 3, 8-11, based on CRO(K), WPR/ 83, file 25.
- <sup>17</sup> CRO(K), WD/ TE, bound mss, iii 152.
- <sup>18</sup> School affairs were managed by four governors (note 7) and ten trustees drawn from local worthies who, when death had reduced their number to five, were to select others to make up their number.
- <sup>19</sup> Machell noted Atkinson as “a country fellow . . . on whom the young gentlewoman . . . Dorothy, the daughter and heir of Robert Braithwaite of High House in Hugill . . . unfortunately bestowed herself”. (Ewbank, 90, 112, 129, 138)
- <sup>20</sup> The fourth named trustee, Robert Philipson, was probably buried at Windermere on 21 May 1697 when he was described as “of Alicehow, Applethwaite”.

- <sup>21</sup> CRO(K), WD/ TE, bound mss, xiv, 24 (will) and viii, 43 (inventory).
- <sup>22</sup> N & B, i, 176, 191. For family tree, see Ewbank, 129.
- <sup>23</sup> WGS History, 11-19.
- <sup>24</sup> Undermillbeck and Applethwaite.
- <sup>25</sup> R. S. Ferguson (ed.), *Bishop Nicolson's Visitation . . . in 1703-4* (1877), CWAAS, Extra Series, i, *passim*.
- <sup>26</sup> Ewbank, 117. The school's Market Square location *close to* the church casts doubt on a caption in the 1936 History (facing p. 11): "The building in the *foreground* is the first Windermere Grammar School". It is nowhere near the market place and looks more like a barn.
- <sup>27</sup> *Charities Report* (as note 3), 532. The upper room was later let for 21s. a year towards the master's salary, while the market house provided a further £5 income in the early 19th century.
- <sup>28</sup> Angus Taylor, *The Websters of Kendal* (2004), 149, CWAAS, Record Series xvii.
- <sup>29</sup> CRO(K), WDRC/ 8/ 244, Undermillbeck Tithe Award 1838. Mannex & Co. *Directory of Westmorland . . .* (1851, pp. 333, 338) lists Robert Forrest under grocers *and* linen & woollen drapers and states that he was secretary and librarian in the Circulating Library & Gentlemen's News Room, established about 26 years previously.
- <sup>30</sup> Inland Revenue Valuation map and schedule, 1912 (plot 670) CRO(K), WT/DV/2/2/26.
- <sup>31</sup> WGS History, 11. The old school's position is confirmed by Joseph Pattinson's architectural drawings for the London & Midland Bank, dated December 1896. CRO(K), WSUD/B, plan 161.
- <sup>32</sup> For Robert Philipson's trusteeship, see note 7.
- <sup>33</sup> Peter Collinson would be one of the "other" ten school trustees and was probably he of "Heaning, Applethwaite", buried at Windermere on 23 January 1702/3 ("younger"), rather than on 12 April 1705 (presumably his father).
- <sup>34</sup> WGS History, 14.
- <sup>35</sup> N & B, i, 185; R. S. Boumphrey and C. R. Hudleston, *Armorial for Westmorland & Lonsdale* (1975), 231.
- <sup>36</sup> Ewbank, 118. See B. Tyson, "Windermere paupers . . . and the Undermillbeck workhouse . . .", *CW3*, vi, 113.
- <sup>37</sup> W. Parson & W. White, *Directory . . . of Cumberland & Westmorland*, (1829), 679.
- <sup>38</sup> CRO(K), WSUD/ B, 217.
- <sup>39</sup> CRO(K), Inland Revenue Valuation schedule and map, 1912 (plot 545).