

# Victoria County History of Cumbria Project.

## Draft parish/township histories

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Parish/township: ANGERTON (otherwise Angerton Moss)

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## ANGERTON

### ECONOMIC HISTORY

From the earliest records, the economy of Angerton Moss was largely based upon peat. Agriculture was predominantly pastoral, with some arable. Fishing in the Steers Pool (Kirkby Pool) and Duddon estuary has long taken place, while there was shooting over the mosses in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century. There is evidence for some gravel extraction and quarrying for local use, as well as a short-lived lime kiln.

### Peat Cutting

The chief value of Angerton Moss to the abbots of Furness, and to their successors, lay in the leasing of 'moss rooms', both to their own tenants throughout Low Furness and also to tenants of neighbouring lords in Broughton and Kirkby. In 1545, a commission reported that the king's tenants throughout Low Furness had common of turbary within Angerton, but that they only had pasture for their oxen and horses there during the time when they were actually cutting and leading turf.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TNA, DL3/48/R5 37 Hen VIII.

In 1612, when Ireleth school was endowed, the tenants of Kirby Ireleth agreed to deliver to the school one cart load of peat from Angerton Moss for every 13s. 4d. of rent they paid.<sup>2</sup> In 1632 there was a dispute over whether crown tenants throughout Low Furness, from as far away as Barrowhead and Salthouse, had moss rooms as of right. At that date, the moss was leased from Mr Preston by Mr Kirkby of Kirkby, and was managed by four 'sworn men' who had authority over the tenants of Kirkby Ireleth, but not over the king's tenants, who were taking turf as far north as Waitham Hill. In 1683, 90 tenants, probably largely from Kirkby and Low Furness, were paying £3 2s. 7d. a year to the Preston estate.<sup>3</sup> At the same time it is likely that tenants of Broughton were paying turbary rents to the Buccleuch estate. In 1726, 24 tenants were paying 'moss rents' on the Lowther (formerly Preston) holding for grazing there, while 77 were paying turf rents.<sup>4</sup>

In the middle ages, peat had probably been dug from shallow deposits over much of the area, which would have become grazing land as the turf was stripped away exposing the estuarine deposits beneath, eventually leaving only the deep basin peats of Bank End Moss and White Moss. In the latter, outside the extra-parochial area, a 'bog-litter' works operated until the Second World War, with peat destined for stables and similar uses loaded onto boats at Galloper Pool, north of Angerton Farm. Turbary rights had been sold with the farms in 1902, with Moss House farm, for example, then having rights on 74 acres of Bank End Moss, part in Broughton and part in Angerton.<sup>5</sup>

## **Agriculture**

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<sup>2</sup> J. L. Hobbes, 'Notes on Ireleth School and Chapel', *CW*2, 48 (1948), 145-67.

<sup>3</sup> LA, DDCA/4/1.

<sup>4</sup> LA, DDCA/4/2 (rental Angerton Moss 1726)

<sup>5</sup> LA, DDHH 1/57 (Duddon Hall estate sale catalogue 1902)

The first enclosure and improvement for arable and meadow commenced in the early sixteenth century, under the abbots of Furness.<sup>6</sup> Thirty acres of the moss (almost certainly at Moss Houses) had been enclosed by the abbots as arable and meadow, and houses had been built, which after the Dissolution were held of the king by tenantright, with a rent of 33s. 4d.<sup>7</sup> In addition, a further enclosure and improvement of 50 acres took place under the abbots by tenants living in Kirkby, who encroached upon a further 20 acres after the Dissolution. As a result, by the 1580s, some 124 local acres (c.200 statutory acres; c.80 ha) were under cultivation.<sup>8</sup> There would then appear to have been little further enclosure and improvement before the end of the eighteenth century, but by 1805 the enclosed, if not necessarily cultivated, area had doubled.<sup>9</sup> A lime kiln, recorded in 1805 in the vicinity of the later Moss Farm, was probably associated the enclosure and improvement episode around the turn of the nineteenth century. At the same time, new farms were built at Waitham Hill and Herd House, to exploit the newly enclosed areas. Since the early nineteenth century there has been no further expansion of the cultivated area.

Agricultural activity was probably at its peak in the mid-nineteenth century, at which time 469 acres (190 ha) of the total titheable area of 772 acres (312 ha) were farmed land, while 303 acres (123 ha) were mossland, of which 25 acres (10 ha) were enclosed for pasture, the rest being 'common'.<sup>10</sup> The land was described as 'poor in quality', the tithe commissioners concluding in 1839 that 'High Farming would be thrown away upon it'. One third of the farmed land, called 'hard land' to distinguish it from the moss, was considered suitable for crops, the rest being meadow and pasture. At this date the main arable crop seems to have been oats, with barley and some wheat. The existence of field names 'Rye Parrock' and 'Rye Close' might suggest that rye

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<sup>6</sup> TNA, DL3/48/R5 37 Hen VIII.

<sup>7</sup> TNA, DL1/137/R 12 Angerton, 28 Eliz.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> TNA, IR30/18/14: a note on the map states it was 'copied ... from a plan surveyed by Mr Gibson 1805'; Greenwood, *Map of Lancs.*

<sup>10</sup> TNA, IR18/3895.

had also been grown, but was perhaps unusual, while the tithe map and apportionment also note the presence of an ‘Orchard’ and a ‘Cabbage Garth’.<sup>11</sup> Field names such as ‘Bull Meadow’ (twice), ‘Calf Parrock and ‘Cow Close’ suggest cattle breeding and rearing, but the value of the small tithe for lambs and fleeces was more than three times that for calves, heifers and ‘strippers’ (dry cows) combined, suggesting that sheep were the main livestock. In 1902 there were a turnip house, potato house, piggeries and granary at Waitham Hill farm, as well as cow houses and stables.<sup>12</sup> By this date a wood, Fir Coppice, had also been planted.

### **Hunting, shooting and fishing**

The name Waitham (perhaps to be interpreted as ‘hunting island’) may suggest a base for hunting in the early medieval period. In 1902 it was claimed that there was ‘some capital shooting’ at Waitham Hill.<sup>13</sup> Shooting rents were also noted at that date at Moss House, and Moss Farm/Herd House.

Fishing is recorded from the thirteenth century, when three *stalnettis* (stake-nets) in Steers Pool were retained by John of Kirkby, out of a larger fishery there granted to Adam son of Ralph son of Alan.<sup>14</sup> In 1533, fishing in the Duddon was worth 10s. 0d. to the monks of Furness, a perambulation of Angerton Moss in 1545 stipulating that the fishing associated with Angerton extended to the midstream of the Duddon and midstream of Steers Pool (now Kirkby Pool). At that date it was claimed that the inhabitants of Kirkby had wrongfully made a fish garth right across Steers Pool,<sup>15</sup> perhaps the fish trap near the mouth of the Kirkby Pool, visible on aerial

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<sup>11</sup> TNA, IR29/18/14; IR30/18/14.

<sup>12</sup> LA, DDHH 1/57 (Duddon Hall estate sale catalogue, 1902).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> TNA, DL42/3 CLXXXIII; *Coucher Book*, p. 320.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, DL3/48/R5 37 Henry VIII.

photographs.<sup>16</sup> In 1801-2 the Cavendish estate received 5s. rent per half-year from the duke of Buccleuch for the Duddon fishery.<sup>17</sup>

### **Mining and Quarrying**

To the north of Waitham Hill, gravel pits were present in 1846-7, and ‘Old Quarries’ in 1888-9.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that the former were used for road metal within the extra-parochial area, while the quarries appear to have been used for local building stone, although it is not of high quality. The house and farm buildings at Waitham appear to have been built using this stone. In 1841 two of the five households were headed by a ‘Quarryman’ and ‘Slater/Quarryman’ who probably worked in the Kirkby quarries, some 2-3 kms away. This occupation may have been short-lived, as later censuses show only farmers and their families, together with farm and domestic servants.

### **Economic History since 1945**

Peat cutting for domestic fuel purposes continued into the 1950s<sup>19</sup> In 2014, much of the farmed land was under grass, predominantly for sheep, with some cattle. The largest farm, Waitham Hill has not been farmed directly since around 2000, the grazing being leased.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Monument no 1491194.

<sup>17</sup> LA, DDCA/1/115 (Cavendish account 1801-2).

<sup>18</sup> OS 1:10,560 Lancs. Sheet 10 (surveyed 1846-7); OS 1:2,500 Lancs. Sheet 10.4, surveyed 1888-9

<sup>19</sup> Inf. from Joss Curwen (2014).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.