

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

Angerton (also known as Angerton Moss) was an extra-parochial place on the west of the Furness peninsula, in North Lonsdale hundred, Lancashire. It became a civil parish following the Extra-Parochial Places Act 1857 and in 1976 merged with Seathwaite with Dunnerdale, and Broughton West parishes, to form Duddon parish.¹ Surrounded by the parish of Kirkby Ireleth, it lay between the Duddon estuary and Kirkby Pool (formerly Steers Pool), north of Kirkby-in-Furness. To the north it was bounded by Otter Pool and by a ditch through the mosses called Raby Cut, which may be an extension of a dyke mentioned in a grant of c.1290 as extending west across the mosses, reaching the coast north of Whelpshead Crag.² In 1545 this part of the boundary appears to have been known as the Black Ditch.³ Prior to its grant to Furness Abbey, Angerton belonged to the manor of Broughton-in-Furness, within the barony of Ulverston.⁴

The acreage of the civil parish was subject to frequent revision as a result of different definitions, as well as the effects of natural changes to the Duddon channel, and reclamation of the marshes.

¹ Extra-Parochial Places Act 1857 (20 Vict. c. 19); <http://www.duddonparishcouncil.org.uk/> (accessed 12 Dec. 2014).

² TNA, DL42/3, CLXXXVI, Grant & confirmation by Richard Fitz Simon; *Coucher Book of Furness Abbey, Part II*, (Chetham Society 1887), p. 325.

³ TNA, DL4/48/R5.

⁴ TNA, DL42/3, CLXXXVI.

The Ordnance Survey gave its acreage as 2,195 acres (888 ha) in 1846-7 and 2,426 acres (982 ha) in 1911, at least half of which was below the high water mark of spring tides.⁵ The figure recorded in census returns appears to have excluded the foreshore and was given as 1,250 acres (506 ha) in 1861, 918 acres (372 ha) in 1901 and 959 acres (388 ha) in the 1921 and later censuses. Earlier estimates include 772 acres (312 ha) of arable, meadow and pasture in 1840, of which around one third was mossland, although this figure excluded the salt marsh and sands;⁶ 708 statute acres (287 ha) of moss, meadow, pasture, turbary and marsh in 1610, of which over a quarter was moss;⁷ and a quarter of a league by a quarter of a league in 1299, probably equating to around 580 statute acres (c. 235 ha), again excluding the salt marsh and sands.⁸

Angerton Moss was clearly named after the habitation site Angerton, recorded in Angerton Farm in the township of Broughton, which occupies an elevated position overlooking the Duddon estuary (SD 213843). The name may be interpreted as ‘settlement by the grazing grounds’, from the first element which is probably OE *anger* ‘pasture’ (though ON *angr* ‘bay; arm of the sea’ has also been suggested).⁹ All place-names within the extra-parochial area are either non-habitative, or recent. Whelpshead Crag (recorded 1235) preserves the lost name ‘Welpesat’, which suggests a sheiling or seasonal pastoral location (ME *sat, set*; ON *saetr*) on the edge of the moss.¹⁰ Waitham Hill, on a slight elevation within the moss, may derive from ON *veidi-bolmr*, an island from which hunting was carried out.¹¹

Landscape

⁵ OS 1:10,560 map., Lancs. sheet 10 (1850 edn); sheet 10NE (1919 edn).

⁶ TNA, IR29/18/14,

⁷ Lancs. Archives (hereafter LA), DDK 1400/1.

⁸ TNA, C143/29/8. Assuming a league of three miles, and a mile of 2240 square yards (based on a seven yard perch).

⁹ G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North West* (Copenhagen, 1985), 419; E Ekwall, *The Place-Names of Lancashire*, (Manchester University Press, 1922) 220-1.

¹⁰ Fellows Jensen, 72-3; Ekwall, 16, 222.

¹¹ Ekwall, 198, 222.

Waitham Hill and Whelshead Crag are small low islands of Silurian sandstones, rising a little above a landscape which is otherwise almost completely flat, and which entirely comprises raised marine or estuarine deposits dating from a post-glacial period when sea levels were a little higher than at present, and upon which peat began to develop around 7,000 years ago.¹² To the seaward side of the area are more recent salt marshes. Although the whole area was historically normally referred to as Angerton Moss, suggesting a landscape of raised bog with sphagnum moss overlying peat, extensive deposits of peat today survive only on White Moss, north of Waitham Hill, which is largely outside the boundaries of the extra-parochial area. It is likely however that, in the late eighteenth century, a thin layer of peat covered much of the area, extending as far as Moss Houses, although this has since been stripped away.¹³ The soils today are predominantly loamy or sandy with a peaty texture and of moderate fertility, with high groundwater controlled by extensive drainage ditches: in 2014 only the White Moss area, which remains uncultivated and is part of the Duddon Mosses National Nature Reserve, having been designated a Special Area of Conservation in 2004,¹⁴ is characterised by raised bog peat soils, naturally wet and of low fertility.¹⁵ Historically, much of the area was cut for peat, but was also used for seasonal grazing. From the late eighteenth century, a proportion of the land was used for arable, but in the twenty-first century, outside the NNR, most of the land comprises improved pasture, with some rough grazing, and a small area of coppice.

Settlement

¹² British Geological Survey, 1:50,000 Series, Sheet 48,(Ulverston, Solid and Drift).

¹³ William Yates, *Map of Lancashire* (1786) shows symbol for 'Heaths and Commons' covering the central two-thirds or more of Angerton.

¹⁴

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712082125/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/nnr/1006954.aspx> (accessed 12 Dec. 2014).

¹⁵ Soilscales Viewer, National Soil Resources Institute, Cranfield University <http://www.landis.org.uk/services/soilscales.cfm> (accessed 12 Dec. 2014).

It is unlikely that there was any permanent settlement before the sixteenth century. Seasonal occupancy is suggested by the place-names Whelpshead and Herd House, the former probably recording a sheiling ground and the latter perhaps recording a seasonal habitation or shelter for a common cow-herd or shepherd. In 1545 it was reported that tenants with turbary rights were sometimes obliged to stay overnight or longer during the peat-cutting season at times of high tides when their access from the south was cut off.¹⁶ The earliest permanent settlement would appear to have been at Moss Houses, where four small cottages had been established by 1587, associated with a large number of small enclosures along the east bank of the Steers Pool.¹⁷ From then until the end of the eighteenth century it appears there was no further settlement. In 1786 there were three buildings at Moss Houses, but nothing else within the extra-parochial area.¹⁸ However by 1818 there were more buildings in the vicinity of Moss Houses (which had been divided into Moss Houses to the north and Marsh Field to the south by 1846), together with a building on Waitham Hill, while the property named as Herd House was in existence by 1828.¹⁹ Herd House was abandoned later in the nineteenth century, possibly as a result of access problems following the construction of the Furness railway, to be replaced by Moss Farm (recorded as Moss Barns in 1846;²⁰ and renamed Moss Farm by 1888-9, and again as Angerton Hall prior to 1950-1).²¹ At no time have there been any buildings within Angerton other than farm houses and associated structures.

Communications

By the late sixteenth century there were a number of over-sands routes crossing the marsh before heading across the Duddon estuary to Millom, and at the time of writing there are still public rights of way across Duddon Sands. In 2014 there were no through roads through

¹⁶ TNA, DL3/48/R5, 37 Hen 8 Commission to perambulate Angerton Moss.

¹⁷ TNA, MPC1/34, map of Angerton Moss 1587.

¹⁸ Yates, *Map of Lancs.*

¹⁹ C. Greenwood *Map of Lancashire* (1818); G. Hennet *Map of Lancashire* (1828).

²⁰ OS 1:10,560 Lancs. Sheet 11 (surveyed 1846-7); OS 1:63,360, sheet 88 (Seventh Series, 1950-1).

²¹ OS 1:2,500 Lancs. Sheet 10.15 (surveyed 1888-9).

Angerton, only narrow lanes linking the settlements, with access from the north limited by a manned level crossing. In 1818 the route from Kirkby to Broughton would have involved fording the Steers Pool and crossing the marsh before reaching Angerton.²² In 1848 the Furness Railway Company extended its line from Kirkby-in-Furness to Broughton-in-Furness, crossing the area in a straight line from south-east to north-west, between the stations of Kirkby-in-Furness to the south and Foxfield to the north, each situated near to, but outside, the boundaries of Angerton.²³

Population

The population of the extra-parochial area was not recorded separately until 1841, at which date there were 36 people living in Angerton. Map evidence suggests that prior to the end of the eighteenth century there were never more than three families living in the place. However, that does not mean Angerton was unfrequented: seasonal usage, both by stock exercising grazing rights and by those with turbary rights (see below, Economic History), brought herdsmen and peat-diggers to the moss, particularly in the summer months. Since the mid-nineteenth century the population has been in decline, falling to 21 by 1951 and to just 14 in 2001. Until the early-twentieth century, the residents were all tenant farmers and their families and servants, with no resident landlords.

²² Greenwood *Map of Lancs.*

²³ Furness Railway Trust <http://www.furnessrailwaytrust.org.uk/frco.htm> (accessed 12 Dec. 2014)