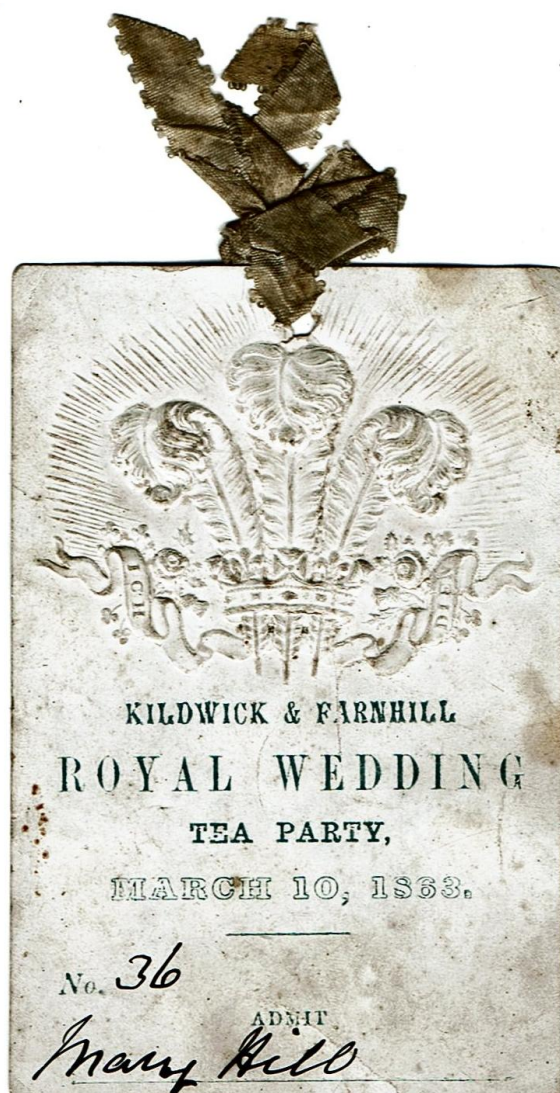


1863 – Wedding celebrations

Recently the History Group was given this image of a rather nice-looking tea-party invitation.



The tea-party was to celebrate the wedding of the Prince of Wales (later to become king Edward VII) and Princess Alexandra of Denmark.

Celebrations took place, in rather mixed weather, up and down the country. The Keighley News, which started being published the year previously, gave descriptions of events in Leeds, Bradford and in Keighley but did not cover things happening in Farnhill and Kildwick. For that information the History Group examined the diary of John Robert Tennant, who was living in Kildwick Hall at the time.

Tennant's handwriting leaves a lot to be desired, but this is what we were able to read from a page covering March 9th to 11th. It seems that the tea-party, which was held in the village school, didn't go off without a bit of a local dispute about the invitations.

- **9th March 1863.** ... other of children in Kildwick and Farnhill are not included in the tea party only those who attend the school – supposed when I contributed £5 towards the festivities, that all were to be selected from – such being the state of the case – Jane and Smith Laycock the leaders of the opposition – 5/- and the half of the favours, having for them [?] a medallion of the Prince and Princess.
The day looked unpropitious in the morning and was wet and wild towards evening.
- **10th March 1863.** Very unpropitious day for the great preparation made throughout the country, to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales and the Princess Alexandra of Denmark on this day. In Kildwick we had a tea drinking, in the school for the matrons etc at 1.30 and also the school children at 6.00 – bun and tea – band of music. Ringing of church bells etc etc. Every one decked to enjoy themselves and enter into the spirit of the thing. And not down cast by the unfavourable state of the weather.
- **11th March 1863.** £5.00. My subscription towards the festivities of yesterday in honour of the marriage of the Prince of Wales and his betrothed the Princess Alexandra of Denmark. Pd. K J W. Crowther £7.6.0 - £2.6.0 contributions received by me.
At Windsor, the day was fine – in London a thick haze in the morning but cleared up towards the evening and the illuminations were very fine.

Note: At this time, the school would have been in the building now used as the Parish Rooms, next to the west gates of the church.

Who was Mary Hill ?

The invitation is clearly intended for someone called Mary Hill. Unfortunately the 1861 census records no less than four people with that name living in Farnhill and Kildwick. The fact that the invitation does not include an address for Mary, and because we know there was one party for adults and another for children, we can't say definitively which one the invitation was intended for.

But here are the possibles (in no particular order):

- Mary Anne Hill; born in Farnhill, in 1843. Living at Crag Top, Farnhill, in 1863. Employed as a power-loom weaver.
- Mary Hill, nee Harris; born 1793, in Devon. Living in Farnhill in 1863. She died in 1867.
- Mary Hill, nee Brown; born in Farnhill, in 1816. Living in Low Farnhill in 1863.
- Mary Jane Hill; born in Farnhill, in 1859. Daughter of Holmes and Mary Hill (above). Living in Low Farnhill in 1863.

Acknowledgements

The picture of the invitation was given to the History Group by Mike Crew.

The diaries of John Robert Tennant are held in the Special Collections at the Brotherton Library in Leeds.

Transcription of the diary entries was carried out by Karen Sayers, a member of our group.