

Chapter 8 – A Society in Transition (1520 – 1640)

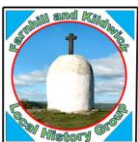
1. The poor

Chapter 6 showed how the most prosperous of the manorial tenants took advantage of the way inflation cut into the incomes of the aristocracy to either purchase the freehold of the land on which they lived or at least to extort long leases on very favourable terms. Yet many did not have the resources to buy their own land and a landless underclass came into existence, even more exposed to the inflationary pressures which marked the period.

A real-wage index has been constructed comparing wages and prices for each year covering the whole of England from 1500 to 1912.¹ It should be used with care because the information on wages comes largely from one class – building workers - and there may well have been variations over England as a whole. In spite of these caveats the picture the index discloses conforms to other more subjective material which has survived. The authors identify the peak of prosperity as the harvest year of 1508-9 for which they give an index figure of 1087. There is then a decline until in the last decade of the century the index averaged around 500, only half what it was at the beginning. One year even dropped as low as 292.

The rise in population may well have contributed to the inflationary effect. There is, however, a difference between the figures drawn from taxation and those deduced from the chantry certificate and the parish registers. The discrepancy was explained at the beginning of Chapter 5 as being due to the way taxation records underestimate the number of families because some were too poor to be assessed. An analysis of the 1522 loan supports this conclusion. A calculation done by W. G. Hoskins, of the yield of each county per 1,000 acres, shows a gradation from £13.2 for Kent in the south to £1.4 for Derbyshire in the north Midlands. The figures for Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire are omitted because the information used is largely based on the valuation of goods rather than landed wealth.² However similar calculations based on the 1524-5 Lay Subsidy for the West Riding gives a figure of £1.4 similar to that of Derbyshire.

Kildwick lies within the wapentake of Staincliffe. In 1522 nearly 58 % of the wapentake's population was assessed at £1 or under, eight out of ten were under £2 and only six over £40. In the parish of Kildwick of the 192 households assessed 86 were under £1, roughly 44%; 165 out 192 were under £2 i.e. around eight out of ten and it had one of the six valued at over £40, Henry Currer of Bradley. The parish of Kildwick covers roughly 22,000 acres and the yield was £367-7s-8d giving a figure of £1.6 per 1,000 acres.³ Again it should be borne in mind that this is based on wealth in goods and not land so it is not strictly comparable with the national county analysis.

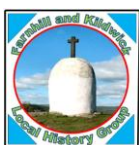


The figures show that Kildwick lay in one of the poorest parts of the kingdom but that it was a little more prosperous than most of the parishes in the wapentake, though that did not mean that it was without a large pool of poor people. The discrepancy between the loan figures and the chantry return described in Chapter 5 show that a significant minority of households were left out. What we can say therefore with some confidence is that the problems of the Kildwick poor did not begin with the stresses of the later part of the century but existed before it.

John Rycroft certainly thought so. As sergeant of the larder to Henry VIII he would have been aware that the sharpest fall in living standards took place in the years between 1518 and his death in 1532.⁴ This deterioration may explain why in his will he left £80 for buying 120 cattle which should then be let at 8d a year to farm 'to the said John Rycroft's kinsmen and other of the poorest of the parish.' 30s of the 80s profits were to be bestowed yearly in bread, drink and cheese to be given to the poor on the anniversary of his death, 10s to the churchwardens, 20s for the beautification of the church and the remaining 20s being ploughed back into maintaining the herd. The money proved to be enough to purchase 160 cattle. The bequest implies a large pool of unacknowledged poverty of between 200 and 400 at a period before Elizabeth's reign began, i.e. between 12.5 and 25% of the population.⁵

The shift from indigent cottagers to landless labourers had a considerable effect on the Rycroft Charity. Already in 1543 some of the profits were being used to pay subsidy demands and soon other threats to its viability emerged. Poor people could only maintain cattle if there was common land on which to pasture them. By 1620 this land was fast disappearing so the decision was taken to commute the charitable donation to a rent charge.⁶ Whatever the reasoning behind it the result was to make the Rycroft Charity a victim of the inflation. The value of the charge steadily declined until by the early twentieth century, 'the Winter Silver' as it became known, was hardly enough to provide the poor of the parish with a cup of tea and a bun on the anniversary of the donor's death.

Was poverty worse after the Reformation than before it? An analysis of Sutton names in the register for the year 1635 gives a total of between 40 and 50 family groups or a population of between 180 and 250. When Alvery Copley sold out to the tenants in 1620 he had 20 messuages. There were three more which had belonged to Bolton Priory and a 24th belonging to the corn mill.⁷ This suggests a dramatic rise to between 40% and 50% of families being landless, though it must be borne in mind that some of the groups may well have been living together as extended families and that it was a period of rapid expansion onto the moor which would have created extra properties. Nevertheless if Sutton is anything to go by there can be little doubt that the situation had worsened since the time of John Rycroft.



2. The Facts of Life

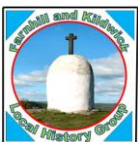
Another feature of the period was the precarious nature of life. Famine, disease and a worsening climate affected everybody but the poor most of all. If you lived in the 16th century you could reckon that in any decade, there would be one bad harvest and two deficient ones. Over the country as a whole there were bad harvests in 1520, 1527 and 1535. The period from 1545 to 1565 saw an unusually high number, with 1556 being the worst in the century.⁸ There was also an upsurge in epidemic disease. The 1556 bad year was followed by the worst influenza epidemic on record, which killed around a quarter of the entire population. Small pox was endemic and plague visitations, which had largely disappeared during the 15th century, returned with increasing severity.

When parish register information becomes available from 1575, it shows that the years of high mortality in Kildwick conform to those in other parts of the country. By plotting them against years of high grain prices it is possible to isolate those which are caused by famine from those by disease. Unfortunately it is harder to identify the particular disease involved because the parish clerk rarely recorded the cause of death unless it was from plague.

The first really bad year recorded was the harvest year for 1586-7. It is listed as a bad harvest which suggests that the basic cause was famine but a comparison with Keighley and Skipton shows that the mortality was much more severe in Kildwick where there were no less than 120 burials which was almost three times the normal rate and there were 98 in the following harvest year.

The reason for this discrepancy was an outbreak of plague at Sutton. The first victim was the local constable, John Shackleton in January 1587, and it then spread to the rest of his family, killing his wife, mother and all his three children in March. Richard Garforth, his wife Alice and his father William are registered as dying of the plague in May. John Harper, his wife Agnes and all their five children, John, Margaret, Grace, Isabel and Thomas fell victim in June. These were only the worst with other family groups in the township being hit too. Hugh Smith had his son George baptised at Colne to avoid contamination. The only non-Sutton plague burial was a widow, Matilda Whitwham of Bradley, and the register specifically records that she caught the disease while visiting relatives at Sutton.⁹

Over the country as a whole the decade 1591-1600 was the worst of the century. The war with Spain was seriously disrupting foreign trade and there was a succession of sub-standard harvests. 1594 and 1595 were both deficient and they were followed by famine conditions in 1596 during which the real wage index dropped to 292. 1597 was not much better. Kildwick also experienced difficult conditions though they were neither so bad as in the south nor so long lasting, possibly because the principal grain in Upper Airedale was oats not wheat. Burial figures began to rise in 1595 and the harvest year of 1596-7 was a bad one with 96 burials twice the usual. The greatest mortality took place in the months January – April 1597. Cowling and Silsden between them accounted for half of the burials instead of the more usual 40% which suggests that conditions on the moors were particularly difficult.

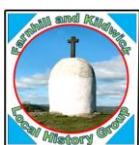


If 1596-7 was the worst famine year of the period plague struck its hardest blows in 1603-4 all over the country. The first recorded plague death in Kildwick was the wife of Anthony Sugden of Silsden at the end of March 1604. Soon Anthony himself and all his children had followed her to the grave. There were other casualties too, among them Anthony Haldsworth, his wife and a widow Haldsworth, probably his mother. The township continued to sustain heavy losses throughout the summer, particularly Francis Tetherington whose son William died in April to be followed by Francis himself in May, his widow, Jennet, daughter Isabel and two other adult members of the family, Nicholas and Margaret in June. Kildwick too had its casualties. Edward Wilson lost his daughter, Mary and a new born child in April, his wife Jennet, a son Robert aged 12 and an unnamed child in May.

Bradley did not have many burials but it seems to have been the source of the outbreak at Cononley. Both Thomas Peel's two servants, Jennet Baxter and Isabel West who came from there died of it and they gave it to his son William but he himself survived and the township as a whole was not as hard hit. It also seems to have been the source of the much more serious outbreak at Steeton, because the Margaret Smith of Steeton who died of the disease in April was described as the daughter of George Smith of Bradley. Numerically Steeton lost more individuals to the plague than any other township. Glusburn too was hit hard. John Marshall lost his wife and all five of his children. Robert Scott died together with his three children. Sutton with only two deaths and Cowling one got off lightly and Farnhill had none at all. Ironically one of Sutton's two deaths was the child George Smith, who had been taken by his father to Colne for baptism in 1587.

The parish rapidly recovered from the plague and the remainder of the decade brought better times. 1611-20 was not as good, but nowhere near as bad as the end of the previous century. The 1620s began with a serious epidemic. The cause of Rev. Foote's death is not given but he could have been a victim of the typhus epidemic which killed the Keighley parish clerk in 1620 and led to over 100 burials there in 1621. Shortly after Foote's death Kildwick experienced its worst mortality crisis since the records began in the 1570s. The 92 burials of the 1622-3 harvest year may represent a spread of the infection from Keighley but an analysis of the 144 burials of the 1623-4 harvest year, the worst of the entire seventeenth century, suggests a different cause.

The burials are evenly spread across the parish. The peak burial figures are bunched in the autumn and the number of marriages is the lowest in the whole series, which points to famine conditions. Couples would put off marriage because they could hope that the next one would be better (which it was) but not for disease because no one knew when it would strike. This is the main reason why infant and child burials declined as a proportion from a third in 1622-3 to a quarter which was roughly similar to earlier years. Perhaps the most striking feature was the greater vulnerability of men. Whereas the figures for 1622-3 showed a rough balance between the sexes 1623-4 has a distinct majority of male burials in all categories except the widowed, showing that even in bad conditions women fared better than men. This evidence suggests that despite Hoskins' figures (based largely on grain prices at Exeter) suggesting an average harvest, that this part of the country experienced dearth conditions.



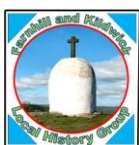
In his book called *The World We Have Lost* Peter Laslett's contention that the North West and Lancashire in particular suffered dire conditions during this harvest year seems to me to be proved beyond all doubt and that the Kildwick figures suggest that parts of the West Riding were affected as well.¹⁰

Laslett claims that the 1623-4 crisis was last one to be caused by harvest failure alone. This does not mean that the lean years were over but that there was a change in the way the economy worked. Yorkshire weavers sold their cloth not just in England but in the Baltic countries as well. England imported wheat in return which often compensated for shortages here. Consequently crises could occur if the trade was interrupted. The Thirty Years War caused difficulties reaching their worst in 1630 when Gustavus Adolphus, the King of Sweden, invaded north Germany, which may account for the peak in that year. The decade was a particularly unpleasant one with the harvest years of 1635-6 and 1637-8 being particularly bad ones. The way the burials were distributed suggests that disease played a major part. Kildwick seems to have suffered more severely than either Keighley or Skipton which suggests that bad winter weather may have been a contributory factor too. Altogether Kildwick was not a happy place to live in on the brink of the Civil Wars.

3. Social Engineering in Later Elizabethan England

The change in society, which intensified towards the end of the 16th century, combined with the threats posed by disease, bad harvests and worsening weather need to be borne in mind, when looking at Tudor Visitation returns. So far they have been used as evidence for the political and religious changes taking place but a complete examination shows that these issues formed only a small part of the charges brought by the churchwardens against individuals in the parish. Instead they are dominated by concerns about sexual morals and with good cause. It was very important that whenever a child was born that there were parents, who were in a position to look after it and provide for it because, in a society where manorial authority had collapsed, the monasteries had disappeared and charitable guilds ceased to exist, the churchgoing community would become liable for its upkeep.

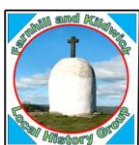
The first visitation we have after Alexander Horrocks became vicar covers the years 1571-2. In it there are 11 cases of fornication i.e. of couples who have sexual relations outside marriage. About 3 of these we have little information. In the remaining 8 comparison with the parish register shows that 7 of them already had an illegitimate child and that in 1 or possibly 2 cases the couple later married. The next visitation in 1575 shows a fall to 4 cases. Only 1 has a child out of wedlock and in another the couple married later on. In 1577-8 there are 4 possibly 5 cases plus 1 of adultery. In one case there is an illegitimate child and there is 1 in the adultery case as well. Again one of the couples was persuaded to marry. In 1586 there are 4 cases once more. In 2 of them the parish registers provide no information and in the remaining two there is a child.¹¹



These figures suggest strongly that Horrocks has managed to gain control of the situation but after his death there is a sharp change. The 1590-1 visitation shows a rise to 8 cases in which 6 of them already have an illegitimate child. However 3 of them later regularised the position by marrying. This, however, is dwarfed by the 1594-5 Visitation where there are no less than 25 couples prosecuted. There is no information on 4 of them. In 17 cases there are children but this time 9 of the couples eventually married. This rash of cases corresponds to the difficulty that Kildwick experienced in finding a successor to Hugh Newbury who resigned in 1593. There is even a reference to a Lawrence Ambler, clerk, not mentioned in any list of vicars or curates, who may have been filling in a gap. He is recorded as marrying Mary Tetherington and having a child Nathaniel baptised 20 January 1593/4, less than nine months after his marriage. The position had stabilised by 1596 when there were 8 cases in which 4 of the couples subsequently married and two case of adultery. Hicks the vicar was an absentee but William Harrison, who was later to be curate to Chatfield and vicar of Otley was already operating in the parish. In 1600 the last Elizabethan Visitation there was 10 cases. There is no information on 3 of them and the information on 2 more is ambiguous. 2 of the couples later married.¹²

The problem was nationwide. And it was not just an internal one. The changes in economic and social organisation which had taken place in society had created an extensive underclass of landless people many of whom wandered about the countryside looking for work. Tudor parliaments were particularly concerned about what was termed 'vagrancy'. First in 1597 and then in 1601 acts were passed entitling vestries to raise a poor rate for the support of those destitute within their parishes. It also allowed the parish overseer to return migrants to their original parishes after whipping them to deter them from migrating again. The Kildwick register contains a list for the year beginning March 1600 of those punished in this way and then removed. There are no less than 46 entries, showing the scale of the problem. Most come from other parts of Yorkshire but there are also entries returning migrants to parishes in Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. There is only one from the south Christopher Tyrell from Sittingbourne in Kent.¹³ This pattern was to be a recurring one. Bad times led to an influx from the north, sometimes from as far afield as Scotland.

It is difficult to estimate how effective the Poor Law was in discouraging people from moving in search of work, because Kildwick poor law records for the period have not survived. As to the internal effect on Kildwick the parish registers suggest that except when there was no effective vicar or curate the parish had the problem of illegitimacy under control by 1600, with an average of only two a year. However we must be careful as a comparison of the registers with the visitations suggests that when the couple subsequently married the children were not considered as illegitimate and many of the children I identified from the Parish Registers died before they could be baptised.¹⁴

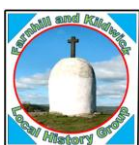


4. The Attack on Pre-Nuptial Pregnancy

After 1600 there is a gap in the Visitation records until 1632, probably because the parish was effectively served by curates who were paid by the vicar out of the joint incomes of the parishes he held. Archbishop Neile was allegedly keen to enforce the railing off of altars, the wearing of a surplice by the priest, regular perambulations, the proper maintenance of the vicarage and other Arminian issues and the poor law had been in full swing for 30 years. You would therefore expect that these would be the issues which the churchwardens would be reporting. Yet an examination of the two visitations of 1632 and 1640 shows that sexual morals still dominate the entries. And this is so even though the registers are still recording only an average of two illegitimate baptisms a year. An examination of them shows clearly that interest has switched to trying to stamp out what population historians call pre-nuptial pregnancy.

Henry Best, an East Riding farmer, described marital customs where he lived in 1641. If a young man saw a girl who attracted him, probably at church, his first step would be to approach her father with a marriage proposal. If the father looked on it kindly he would be invited to visit and get acquainted with her. The conversations would take place in the presence of a duenna. If the girl objected the connection would be terminated. On the other hand if she approved his approaches at the end of the third meeting he would give her a small present like a pair of gloves. The girl would then visit the young man's parents. If they liked her, the two sets of parents would get together and make the necessary financial arrangements. Once these were settled the couple was allowed to go to bed and it was up to the minister to get them to marry in church. A similar process took place lower down the social scale which was called bundling. The young man would be invited to the girl's house where they were allowed to go to bed but with a plank between them to prevent sexual activity. When the two families were in agreement the plank was removed and again it was up to the minister to get them into church. The chief problem here was that there were fees for both marriages and baptisms which the poorer sort found difficulty in paying. Many delayed marriage until they were convinced that the child would survive. We can see the process at work in the Kildwick visitation returns.¹⁵

There are ten cases in 1632.¹⁶ Only three of them deal with what society would have regarded as sexual misdemeanours. Richard Shackleton was cited for suspicion of incest with his sons. This must be Richard Shackleton of Sutton Moor. He was probably at least 67 in 1632 and his wife had died as early as 1595. Two of his four children were male. John, who was not married, would have been 45 and Richard 42. The latter was married to Ann the daughter of Henry and Jennet Hargraves from the neighbouring Cowling township of Stothill. Both were probably living with him and helping to run the farm.

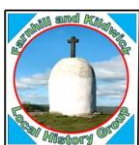


Henry Brigg and Frances Hargraves were accused of committing adultery together. Brigg had married Elizabeth Craven on 4 June 1618 and they had no children. He may have been tempted to commit adultery by the example of his brother Christopher who had an illegitimate child in 1615. The only other information we have about Frances is that she had an illegitimate child called Lawrence by Lawrence Turner in 1631 which had died only a month after its baptism so she may have been a prostitute. The William Barrett who had sex outside marriage with Agnes Wetherhead was probably the William Barrett of Glusburn who eventually married Margaret Cockshott on 21 February 1632/3.

The other seven appear to be cases of pre-nuptial pregnancy even though we do not always have the marriage date. William Hudson and Grace White were accused of fornication. There is no Grace White in the register and it is clearly a clerical error for Grace Wade. On 14 October 1632 i.e. after the Visitation they had an illegitimate son baptised. There is no record of them marrying. Robert Greenwood and Alice Windle were also accused of having sex outside marriage. There is no Alice Windle in the register either but there is a Robert Greenwood of Cononley, who had an illegitimate child by a Jane Windle which was baptised on 25 August 1632 and they eventually married on 13 October 1635. Anthony Coates and Mary his wife were another couple accused of having sex before marriage. He was Anthony Coates of Steeton. There is no record of his marriage but he and his wife Mary had a child baptised on 4 July 1632 which died unnamed. Mary soon followed it to the grave being buried 2 February 1633.

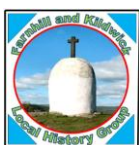
Thomas Harvey and Ann, his wife were similarly accused but they do not appear in the parish register at all. We know more about John Barrett. He lived in Sutton. His wife was Agnes Shackleton. They married on 18 June 1632 and their first son was baptised on 7 October 1632 which shows that it was a pre-nuptial pregnancy. The case of Henry Barker of Silsden Moor was similar. Ann was his second wife. There is no record of his marriage but his son Thomas by her was baptised on 14 October 1632 once again after the Visitation.

The 1640 Visitation shows that the campaign against sex outside marriage was still in full swing.¹⁷ There were no less than 13 citations for sexual misdemeanours. Again only three of them were ones which we would consider aberrant. George Cathorne and his wife Grace were prosecuted for having sex together because the churchwardens thought they were not married at all. The Cathornes of Steeton were a notoriously dysfunctional family. George's father had been cited in the 1586 visitation for drunken behaviour and failure to attend church. George himself had had an illegitimate son in 1626. Steeton was also the township of Edmund Baldwin. Not content with siring an illegitimate son, Edmund, by a Margaret Wilson which was baptised on 18 March 1637/8 he was now carrying on with a Frances Watson als Bracewell, despite being excommunicated. Finally there was Edward Gibson of Eastburn whose wife had died in 1632 and who was suspected of accepting sexual consolation at the hands of Jane Graham of Cononley. All the rest fell into the category of couples who did not bother to marry until the imminent arrival of a child forced them to.



The extent of pre-nuptial pregnancy in the period from 1575 to 1640 can be gauged by reconstituting families from the parish registers. In 616 cases evidence exists which enables us to compare the date of the marriage with the baptism date of the first child. I have included children baptised before the marriage date where the mother and father subsequently married but not where the mothers were different. Of course birth dates and baptism dates can be a good way apart but it was the custom in the early Reformation period to have the child baptised as soon as possible and in any case there were others born prematurely which appear to be pre-nuptial pregnancies but which were not, which would balance out most errors.

Over the entire period roughly 40 % of first born children were conceived before their parents married. Internal examination, however, shows that there were changes over time. In the period 1575-80 there was actually a majority of pre-nuptial pregnancies, though the sample was naturally smaller, covering only six years. In 1600 the registers actually record Edward Malham, lord of the manors of Elslack, Broughton and Glusburn fathering twin girls. He did not bother to marry their mother until later because they both died before they could be baptised. After 1600 there was a steady fall until in the period 1631-40 it was down to just over 30%. Even so individuals were still defiant. John Craven and Ann Bannister for instance had their son John baptised on 21 September 1633 but they did not get married until 11 August 1635. Would the church authorities have been able to wipe the practice out entirely given time? Intriguingly when a research student did a similar study of Gosforth in Cumberland between 1920 and 1950 he came up with the same figure 40% which suggests that it was a common feature of rural communities and would have been nigh impossible to eradicate. Anyway time was what the Church had not got. In two of the cases before the Visitation, those of Thomas Hollindrake and William Peel, the husbands were described as soldiers. The clouds of war were gathering.¹⁸



Baptismal records for Kildwick Parish – 1575 to 1640

Numbers of children baptised between 1575 and 1640; showing the numbers for both before the marriage of their parents, and in each of the first nine months following the marriage.

In the following analysis 8 runs from 7.6 to 8.5, etc.

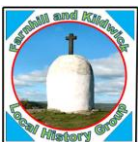
Period	Baptised before marriage	Number of months after marriage									Total
		0	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	
1575-80	9	0	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	23
1581-90	6	1	7	9	3	7	2	2	5	2	44
1591-1600	8	1	4	3	6	9	4	7	2	6	50
1601-10	7	1	4	2	1	5	3	3	4	5	35
1611-20	2	1	4	6	4	9	6	5	2	3	42
1621-30	6	0	0	3	5	3	1	4	2	1	25
1631-40	4	1	3	3	2	3	2	2	7	2	29
Total	42	5	25	28	23	38	19	25	23	19	248

Period	%age M	%age PN
1575-80	37.8	62.2
1581-90	54.4	45.6
1591-1600	56.5	43.5
1601-10	63.3	36.7
1611-20	63.0	37.0
1621-30	63.2	36.8
1631-40	68.5	31.5



5. Education

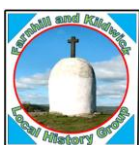
John Rycroft actually made two bequests. The money for this second one was another £80 and it had been entrusted to Nicholas Gibson, a London grocer. Like the first it was to be spent on the purchase of milch cows for the poor. The pleadings showed that Gibson illegally retained £10 of the bequest and only handed over the remaining £70 on the understanding that the money should be devoted to the support of a chantry priest.¹⁹ Consequently when the chantries were dissolved the parish was threatened with the loss of the bequest. There was one possible loophole. If the churchwardens could prove that the money was being used to teach children the chantry commissioners could be persuaded to allow the parish to retain the money. The difficulty was that a similar and much more powerful case could be made to save the Dame Margaret Blaid chantry and the commissioners were unlikely to approve two schools in the same parish.



Reading between the lines it seems that an ingenious plan was hatched between the 2nd Earl of Cumberland and the churchwardens of the parishes of Skipton and Kildwick. Skipton already had a chantry school endowed by Peter Toller in 1493 which had goods and plate but no property to support a schoolmaster. Cumberland was the trustee for the Dame Margaret Blaid charity at Kildwick which had property but no goods and plate. Would it not be a good idea to combine the two to make a really soundly resourced school at Skipton? It could then be left to the Kildwick churchwardens to make a case for a school at Kildwick supported by the money left in Gibson's hands. Some such scheme was certainly afoot. The Kildwick chantry certificates for both 1546 and 1548 list Stephen Ellis as the tenant of the charity's property, and he was the Toller charity schoolmaster.²⁰ The trouble was that neither of the two uses proposed for the second Rycroft bequest mentioned education. At the 1547 hearing before the Court of Augmentations it transpired that the vicar and churchwardens were using some of the income to maintain a priest to teach the children 'which was to the great relief of the inhabitants of the said parish' but when the matter was raised again in 1552 the court refused to accept Kildwick's case and ordered the £70 be confiscated but there was a stay of execution. Edward VI died in February 1553 before the money was due to be handed over.²¹

Queen Mary was a Roman Catholic so the decision to confiscate the second Rycroft bequest was cancelled but when she died and was succeeded by her sister Elizabeth the issue reared its head again. The usual practice of the crown when it believed that property which belonged to it was being withheld was to issue a patent to seek out 'concealed lands', usually to a favoured courtier, who would then receive a percentage of the value of any lands he 'discovered.' On 12 April 1560 a grant was made to Thomas Reve and George Evelyn of a long list of properties including St. Mary's chantry(sic) in Kildwick²² but they do not appear to have gained possession of it and little progress was made at Kildwick until after the Rebellion of 1569-70 and particularly after the deprivation of Midgley when the government began to exert more pressure.

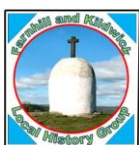
By this time Reve and Evelyn had been replaced by one Robert Collins who, in February 1579, managed to get the 1552 decree of the Court of Augmentations reinstated. Yet even now there was stubborn resistance and Collins had to return to the court once more in 1583 to get his grant confirmed. In the end the Kildwick churchwardens were compelled to pay the £70. Skipton also lost the Toller school at the same time.²³



This was not to be the end of the story. When the efforts to save the second Rycroft charity failed, a trust appears to have been set up for the creation of a parish school because there is a provision in the will of William Garforth of 'St. Gregory in Powles, London, gent.' dated 15 Feb. 1587/8 for the founding of a school. It runs – 'To the maister, governors or feoffees of Queene Elizabethes free schole at Kildwick in Craven, in the Countie of Yorke, ten poundes, to be paid within fower yeares if the schoole shall then be fully erected.'²⁴ As usual it is difficult to pin-point which William Garforth this was but the siting of the school and the date of the will suggest that he was a brother of John Garforth the Younger. It was fully erected because the parish register records under the date 9 May 1595 the burial of John Garforth, 'dominus' of Kildwick 13d and then on 3 May 1599 the burial of Richard Garforth 'dominus' of Kildwick.²⁵ When the Garforth family sold out to the Currers the school building passed into their control as well. It still stands and is now used as the parish rooms of the church of St. Andrew's Kildwick.

This belief in the value of learning to read at least, so that the congregation could fully understand its religion was almost universal. Ministers not only preached sermons but urged heads of families to discuss them with their households afterwards particularly where there were servants who might not have attended church because of their duties. The records of the Stationers Company and the tracts collected by a London bookseller called Thomason reveal a large demand for printed versions of sermons by popular preachers. There was, however, a danger that some might draw conclusions from their bibles that either the church or the state might deem to be subversive. Consequently just as all ministers had to have a license to preach and could be called to account by the ecclesiastical court, so did teachers as well. 'Teacher' could cover both what we understand by the term today and also individuals, not in holy orders, who held classes which expounded the bible in ways not authorised by the Church.

In the Visitation of 1575 the churchwardens presented Martin Heardman for teaching without license at Silsden but when he appeared it transpired that he did have a license.²⁶ It is interesting that there was a school there as early as 1575. Unlicensed teaching was an issue at Kildwick in Newbury's time because at the 1590-1 visitation John Brigg and John Marshall were accused of teaching without a license. Both failed to attend.²⁷ What if anything happened to them is not known. No unlicensed teaching was reported in either the 1594-5 or 1596 visitations but it appeared again in 1600, the churchwardens reporting that – 'James Preston he teacheth schole not known to be licensed.'²⁸

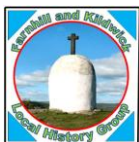


Unlicensed teaching was still taking place in 1632. The Henry Lawson who is cited was presumably the Kildwick schoolmaster but he does not appear in the parish registers. William Taylor who was teaching without license at Bradley was William Taylor of Silsden Moor. He had a wife, Elizabeth. There is no record of his marriage but soon after the visitation he had two children baptised, Grace on 11 August 1633 and John on 6 November 1636. He could have taken the place of William Jewett, buried 8 July 1629, who was described as the Silsden Schoolmaster.²⁹ Jewett had been Schoolmaster there since 1612 at least because he is listed together with Hugh Curren of Steeton, as a trustee of a school there. The school was supported by a rent charge donated by William Laycock worth £3-6s-8d in 1786. The property was a quarter of a cottage and barn, a little house called a shop, one other house called a 'Flight House', one little croft and garden, and one close called Thorneholme.³⁰

The Kildwick gentry may have been disappointed that their ambition to have a grammar school like that of Ermysteds in Skipton was never to be realised but the acquisition of a free school was probably all that a country parish which contained no town of any size could reasonably be expected to provide. Yeomen farmers and weavers both came to value the teaching of skills like reading, writing and simple arithmetic being taught to their sons but neither had any time at all for Latin and Greek as can be seen from the fate of the Grammar School at Haworth endowed in 1638.³¹ All the same it is intriguing to speculate. Did Kildwick have a school in the parish in some form or another all the way from 1505 to 1588 or did the churchwardens simply sit on their hands until the case was finally resolved?

Footnotes

1. Wrigley, E.A. & Schofield, R.S.: Population History of England 1541-1871, A Reconstruction, Cambridge 1980 p642
2. Hoskins, W.G. – The Age of Plunder: The England of Henry VIII 1500-1547, London 1976 p24
3. Figures calculated from information in Hoyle op. cit. Analysis from Hoskins p43 op. cit.
4. See Real Wage Index op. cit.
5. Hoyle R. W.– A Sixteenth Century Parochial Charity at Kildwick YAJ vol. 62 pp187-9
6. Hoyle, Parochial Charity p189
7. The author's Family Reconstitution
8. Hoskins p246
9. Subsequent details from my Family Reconstitution
10. Laslett, Peter – The World We Have Lost, Methuen 3rd Paperback Edition pp143-52
11. Borthwick Institute, Craven Visitations 1571-2 f56 and 106-8; 1575 f44-5; 1577-8 f76 and 1586 f74-5; details from my Family Reconstitution



12. Craven Visitations 1590-1 f268-9; 1594-5 f58-9; 1596 f46 and 1600 f154-5 and my Family Reconstitution
13. Parish Registers vol. I pp162-3
14. Parish Registers:
1575-80 – 16 Yearly Average 3.2; 1591-1600 – 22 Yearly Average 2.2; 1611-20 – 23 Yearly Average 2.3; 1581-90 – 14 Yearly Average 1.4; 1601-1610 – 20 Yearly Average 2.0; 1621-30 – 31 Yearly Average 3.1; 1575–1640- 20 Yearly Average 2.0
15. Robinson, C.B (ed.) Rural Economy in Yorkshire in 1641: Being the Farming and Account Books of Henry Best, Surtees Soc. 1857
16. 1632 Visitation Craven Act Book f110-1 and my Family Reconstitution
17. Craven Visitation 1640 f69-70 and material from the author's Family Reconstitution
18. Analysis from my Family Reconstitution; see table
19. Hoyle, R.W. – A Sixteenth Century Parochial Charity at Kildwick, YAJ vol. 62, 1990, pp187-9
20. Gibbon A.M. – The Ancient Free School at Skipton pp12-3, 17-8; Surtees Soc. Certificates of Chantries, Church Guilds, Hospitals etc in the County of York, vol. 92, 1895, pp251 and 407
21. Hoyle op. cit.
22. CPR Eliz 1558-60 pp314-5
23. CPR 1578-80, p131, no. 1132; Gibbon, pp27-30. Rycroft, Christopher – Master John Rycroft (unpublished typescript written in 1990s) pp17-24 I owe this reference to Robin Greenwood. I assume this was final because the later Garforth school seems to be a different one.
24. North Country Wills at Somerset House vol. II 1558-1604, Surtees Society Vol. 121
25. Registers I pp125 and 131
26. Visitation Craven 1575 f45r
27. Visitation, Craven, 1590-1 f268;
28. Visitation, Craven, 1600 ff154-5
29. 1632 Visitation Craven Act Book f110-1 and Parish Register
30. KLSL BK 10/549 p155
31. Baumber, M.L. – History of Haworth Carnegie 2009, p46 for the original endowment and pp54 and 127 for its decline into teaching 'practical subjects'.

