

Farnhill tithe commutation

Part 1 – who owned and who rented land in the village

Introduction

Tithes were originally a tax which required one tenth of all agricultural produce to be paid annually to support the local church and clergy. Some of the produce, the “great tithe” went to the church authorities, to help maintain the fabric of the church; the rest, the “small tithe” went to the vicar himself.

In Farnhill, up until the Reformation, the great tithe was payable to Bolton Priory who owned the parish of Kildwick. In practice, this was probably paid to the monks at Kildwick Grange.

At the Reformation the control of Kildwick parish, which included not just the village but many of the surrounding townships, passed to Christ Church college in Oxford. They “appropriated” (that was the term used at the time) the right to appoint the vicar of Kildwick Church and the rights to the great tithe.

By the early 19th century tithe payments in the form of produce seemed a very out-of-date practice, and the 1836 Tithe Commutation Act provided for these “tithes in kind” to be converted to more convenient monetary payments, called a “rent charge”. The Tithe Survey was established to find out which areas were subject to tithes, who owned them, how much was payable in rent charges, and to whom.

The tithe survey map for Farnhill, dated 1845, and the associated tithe commutation document of 1846 provide useful information on:

- Who owned which parts of the village
- Who were the tenants
- The nature of the land-holdings or properties
- How much was payable as rent charges

Who owned land and property in the village ?

In 1846 the village of Farnhill covered an area of just over 560 acres. Of this, an area of 371 acres was liable for payment of rent charges; 159 acres was classed as common land; and 30 acres were recorded as roads and waste land.

The commutation documents records a total of 24 landowners, although only 10 of these owned more than 1 acre.

The major landowners were as follows.

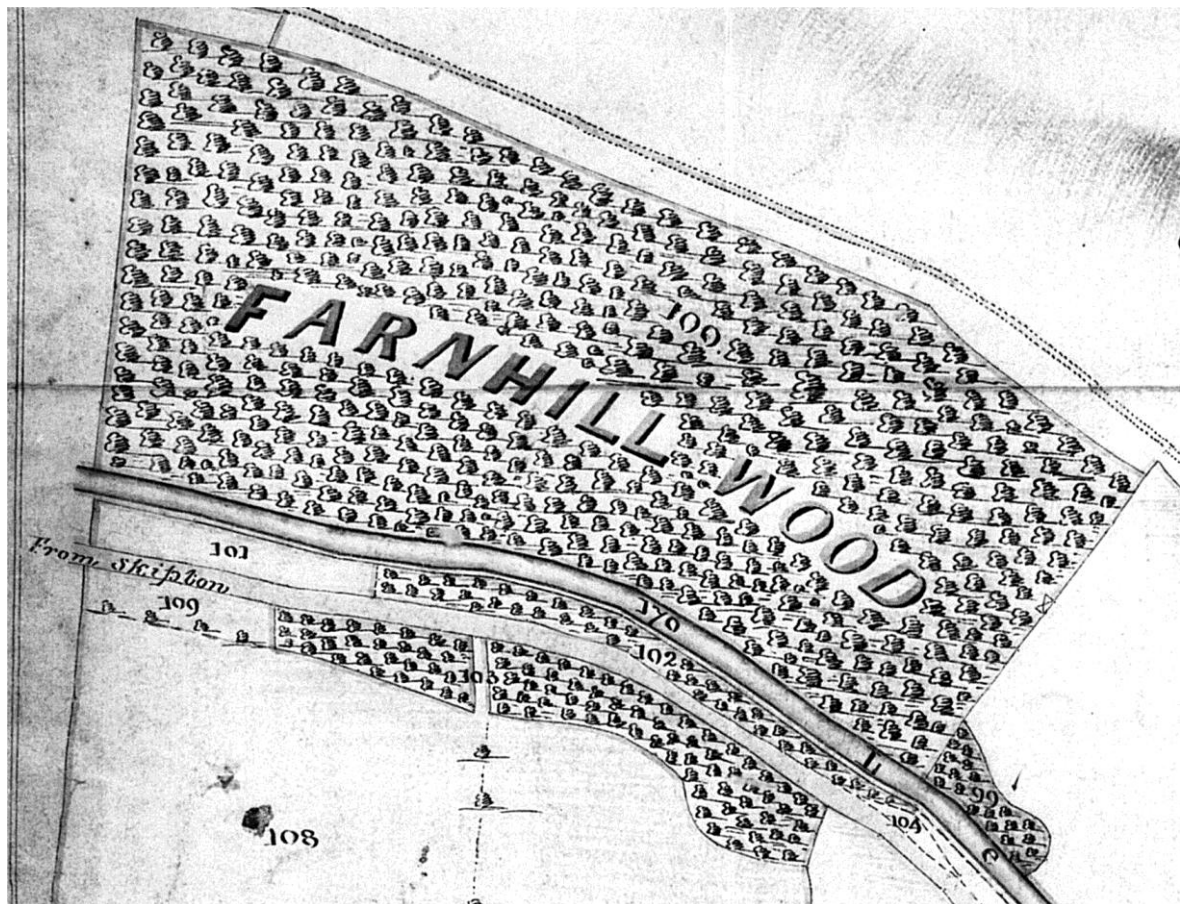
Sir George Lane-Fox (~300 acres)

The Lord of the Manor of Farnhill. His land included most of the farm land of the village as well as sizeable amounts of woodland. He also owned a number of smaller plots, particularly on the Arbour; various cottages; as well as the usual outbuildings, barns, etc.

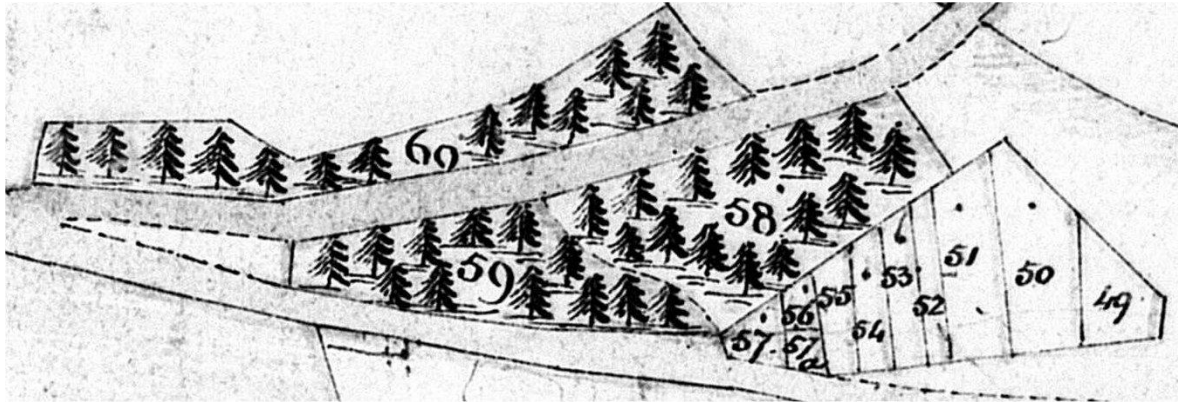
The tithe commutation document records over 120 holdings with him as owner – out of a total of 201 for the entire village.

He did not live in Farnhill (he lived in Bingley) and most of his properties were tenanted – he had 30 tenants.

The only land that he retained for himself (i.e. where he was recorded as being the “occupier”) were areas of woodland (almost 30 acres in total) including Farnhill Wood (plot #100), woodland near Farnhill Wood that extended below the canal (plot #102) and on the other side of the Skipton to Keighley Road (plot #103), and woodland either side of Grange Road where it meets Farnhill Main Street (plots #58, #59 and #60).



Part of the 1845 Farnhill tithe map – showing George Lane-Fox’s holdings #100, #102 and #103

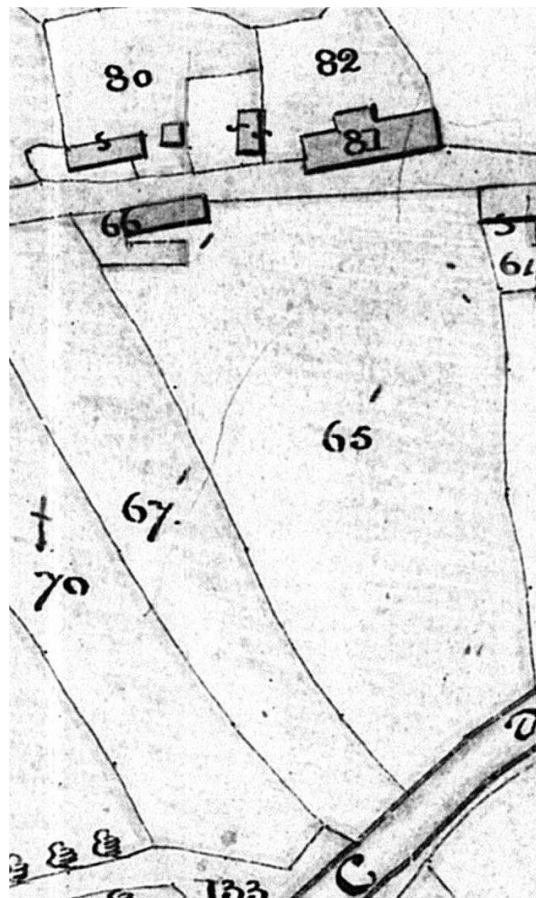


Part of the 1845 Farnhill tithe map – showing George Lane-Fox’s holdings #58, #59 and #60
(also the “Harbour” holdings, #49 to #57a)

Thomas Laycock (~20 acres)

The next biggest landowner , although holding less than 10% of the area owned by George Lane Fox, was Thomas Laycock.

His holding consisted, for the most part, of Hellifield Farm (plots #65, #66. and #67) and three large plots of land on the other side of the Skipton to Keighley road. He also owned a cottage and garden on Main Street (plot #80), opposite Hellifield Farm, which was tenanted.



Part of the 1845 Farnhill tithe map – showing Thomas Laycock’s holdings on Farnhill Main Street
(#65 - #67 and #80)

Frances Mary Richardson Curren (~20 acres)

Frances Mary Richardson Curren was the Lady of the Manor of Kildwick, although she never actually lived at Kildwick Hall, spending all her life living with the Wilson family at Eshton Hall.

She owned 20 holdings in Farnhill. All except two areas of woodland, close to the boundary with Kildwick, were tenanted. Her principal tenant was John Robert Tennant, who may already have been living at Kildwick Hall (and was certainly living there by 1848).

Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company (~9.5 acres)

Unlike roads, it appears that canal towpaths were liable for rent charges.

Who were the major tenants ?

Although Farnhill was owned by just 24 people, there were 48 tenants (including people who were occupying their own land). The various parcels of tenanted land varied from over 176 acres to just 15 square yards.

The three major tenants were, perhaps unsurprisingly, all occupants of land owned by George Lane-Fox.

James Hargreaves (farmed ~176 acres, belonging to George Lane-Fox)

James Hargreaves was George Lane-Fox's "tenant in chief". This meant that in addition to occupying a significant amount of land he acted as agent for his landlord in various local land-related legal matters.

Hargreaves tenanted almost all of the land in High Farnhill, including Farnhill Hall and all of the land surrounding it, on both sides of the canal. 28 separate plots in all.

The 1841 census records James Hargreaves as living at Farnhill Hall; with a household of 10 people, including his family, servants, and agricultural labourers. This family does not appear in any later census returns for the village.

Although James Hargreaves is not listed on the tithe commutation document as owning any land in 1846, it is known that he had owned land in the village – and in Cowling and Cononley – in the recent past. It appears that he was declared bankrupt in 1841 and his property portfolio sold at auction.

The newspaper report on the following page lists the various lots in Farnhill. The new owners of some of these lots can be identified in the tithe assessment.

5/6/1841 **Sales by Auction.**

SALE OF VALUABLE ESTATES IN THE PARISH OF KILDWICK.

By Mr. JOHN GARNETT, at the Ship Inn, Kildwick, in the County of York, on *Wednesday, the Ninth Day of June, 1841*, commencing at One o'Clock in the Afternoon precisely, by Order of Mr. Benj. Bradshaw, the Assignee of the Estate and Effects, real and personal, of Mr. Jas. Hargreaves, of Farnhill Hall, a Bankrupt:—

ALL the Valuable and Desirable FREEHOLD and LONG-LEASEHOLD MESSAGES, BUILDINGS, LANDS, and HEREDITAMENTS of the Bankrupt, situated in the several Townships of COWLING, CONONLEY, and FARNHILL, all in the Parish of Kildwick aforesaid, which will be put up either altogether, or in the following or such other Lots as the Assignee may determine upon at the Time of the Sale, and subject to such Conditions as shall be then and there produced.

IN FARNHILL.

Lot 5. In the Occupation of Wm. Palfreeman, the HOUSE, (known by the Name of the Ship Inn,) Barn, Stable, Garden, and Yard, Warehouse, and several CLOSES of very excellent LAND, containing altogether 8a. 3n. 38r. Statute Measure.

Also, TWO COTTAGES, adjoining the Ship Inn, in the Occupation of John Mosley, and Thomas Whitecock; also, the Barn behind the Canal, in the Occupation of the said William Palfreeman.

Lot 6 TWO COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Grace Wilkinson and Wm. Spencer.

Lot 7. THREE COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Mary Lilly, Jacob Lilly, and Wade Shuttleworth.

Lot 8. ONE COTTAGE, in the Occupation of Anthony Spencer, Senr.

Lot 9. FIVE COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Joshua Hill, James Brown, John Barrett, David Barrett, and Paul Mosley.

Lot 10. TWO COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Wm. Palfreeman, Junr. and Robt. Watson.

Lot 11. TWO COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Michl. Brown and John Overend.

Lot 12 THREE COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Thomas Wilson, John Todd, and Wm. Brown.

Lot 13. EIGHT COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Ann Wilcock, Henry Davy, Wm. Green, Peter Laycock, Wm. Spencer, John Brown, Margaret Wilson, and Wm. Holmes. Also, a Barn, in the Occupation of Wm. Spencer, lately occupied as a Cottage.

Lot 14. SEVEN COTTAGES, in the Occupation of Wm. Todd, Wm. Wilson, John Todd, Joseph Wilcock, Frank Birtwhistle, Wm. Hill and Henry Green.

The Whole of the Lands are in a good State of Cultivation, and are well-watered and fenced, and the Buildings are in excellent Repair, the whole affording a singularly good Opportunity for Investment.

For further Information apply to Mr. BENJ. BRADSHAW, of Skipton, Gentleman, the Assignee of the said Jas. Hargreaves; or at the Office of

Mr. ALCOCK, Solicitor, Skipton.

Lot 5: These are the three buildings on Kirkgate closest to the culvert.

Note – Kirkgate is now part of Kildwick but was until a few years ago part of Farnhill. The building closest to the culvert was the “Ship Inn”.

The commutation document records these properties as being owned by Peter Barritt, with all of them tenanted by William Palfreeman. (Neither John Mosley or Thomas Mosley were mentioned.)

Note – William Palfreeman was the landlord of the “Ship Inn” and the father of the man who was driving the train involved in the Kildwick rail crash in 1875.

Lot 6: There is no mention of a Grace Wilkinson in the tithe document, but “William Spencer and others” were recorded as the occupant of two cottages owned by a Mrs. Robinson.

These were adjacent properties towards the bottom of Starkey Lane.

Lot 7: “Jacob Lilly and another” were recorded as being the tenants of cottages owned by Marshall Green – at the very bottom of Starkey Lane.

Lot 8: unidentified

Lot 9: Of the five cottages, in 1846:

- Joshua Hill was the occupant of a cottage and garden owned by Thomas Laycock (plot #80, see earlier).
- “James Brown and others” were the occupants of a cottage, close to Redman bridge, owned by William Palfreyman.

The other three people cannot be identified neither can the location of these five cottages owned by James Hargreaves.

Lot 10: unidentified

Lot 11: unidentified

Lot 12: The cottage occupied by William Brown in 1846, was owned by William Hill. It was in Starkey Lane.

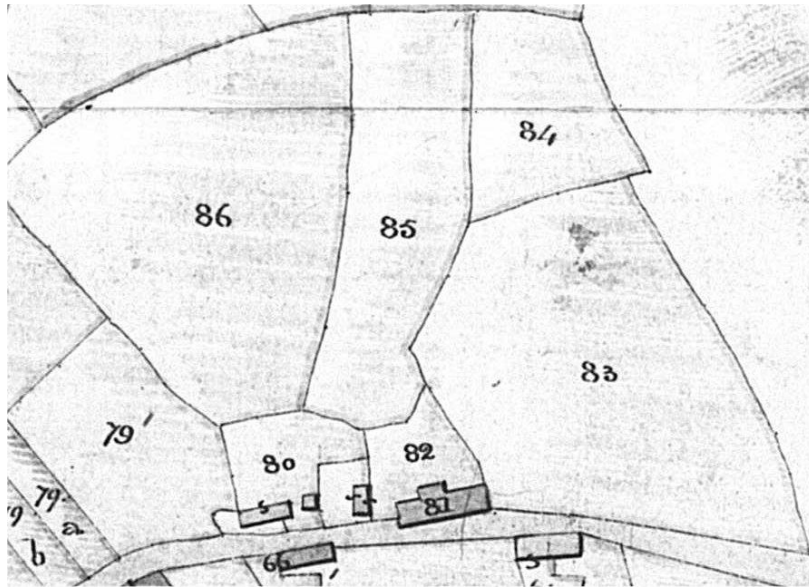
Lot 13: Only one of these properties can be positively identified. “John Brown and others” were the occupants of a cottage owned by Mrs. Newby. “William Spencer and others” were the occupants of two cottages owned by Mrs. Robinson (but see Lot #6).

Lot 14: In 1846 the cottage occupied by Frank Birtwhistle, located on Starkey Lane, was owned by John Crossley. None of the other properties can be positively identified.

Joseph Parkinson (farmed ~63 acres, belonging to George Lane-Fox)

Joseph Parkinson occupied 32 plots of Lane-Fox land, in three main areas of the village.

He appears to have had a house on Main Street in High Farnhill, just west of the junction with Grange Road (plot #81), and to have farmed the land around it (plots #82 to #86).



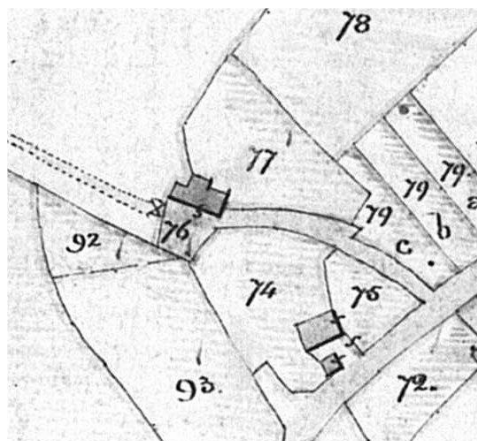
Part of the 1845 Farnhill tithe map – showing Joseph Parkinson’s home on Main Street (#81) and some of the adjacent land that he farmed (#82 to #86)

He also held land close to Farnhill Hall Barn (although the barn itself was tenanted by James Hargreaves). However, his major interests were in land between the main Skipton to Keighley road and the river.

He is recorded in the 1841 census as living in High Farnhill, with his wife Judith. He died in 1855 and was buried at St. Andrew’s, Kildwick.

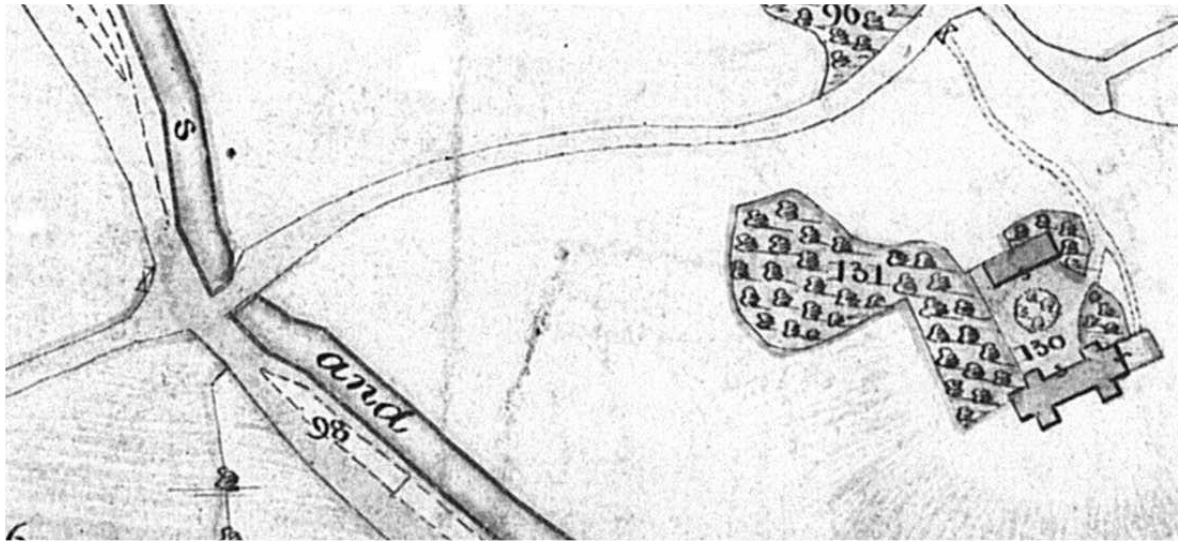
William Whiteoak (farmed ~12 acres, belonging to George Lane-Fox)

William Whiteoak lived in what is now known as Moorgate Farm, at the bottom of Bradley Lane (plot #76) and also rented the adjacent plots (#77 and #92), as well as others around the village.



Part of the 1845 Farnhill tithe map – showing William Whiteoak’s home at the bottom of Bradley Lane (#76) and two small plots of tenanted land (#77 and #92)

He also rented land referred to as a “Coal Staith” (plot #98) – a narrow strip of land between the canal and the Skipton to Keighley road on the Keighley side of the bridge at Connonley Lane End.



Part of the 1845 Farnhill tithe map – showing the Coal Staith at Cononley Lane End (#98).
(Farnhill Hall is also shown (#130))

Rent charge assessments – who paid and how much

The total rent charge assessment for Farnhill was reckoned at £42.

Of the 24 land owners, 10 had their rent charges assessed as being zero and only 4 received a rent charge assessment of more than £1:

George Lane-Fox	£30-17s-11d
Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company	£ 2-12s-2d
Thomas Laycock	£ 2-11s-10d
Frances Mary Richardson Currer	£ 1-19s-5d

10 land owners had their rent charges assessed as zero.

There seems to have been a considerable variation in the rent charge per acre of land owned:

L and Liverpool Canal Company	69.5 d/acre
Thomas Laycock	31.1 d/acre
George Lane-Fox	24.7 d/acre
Frances Mary Richardson Currer	23.65 d/acre

The variations between George Lane-Fox, Thomas Laycock and Frances Mary Richardson Currer can probably be explained by the fact that both Lane-Fox and Currer owned a fair amount of woodland, whereas Thomas Laycock’s holdings were a farm and farm land.

What cannot be explained – particularly bearing in mind that the rent charge was supposed to replace payment of agricultural produce – is why the Canal Company were required to pay more than double the price per acre of the best agricultural land for the tow-path.

Who was the rent charge paid to ?

Page 3 of the commutation indicates how the £42 total assessment is to be divided.

The image shows a handwritten document with a table-like structure. The text is written in cursive. On the right side, there are columns for pounds (£), shillings (s), and pence (d). The first row is 'To the vicar of Kildwick' followed by a horizontal line and the amount '21. 0. 0'. The second row is 'Appropriators or Matthew Wilson their Lessee' followed by a horizontal line and the amount '21. 0. 0'. A third horizontal line is drawn below the second row, and below it, the total amount '42. 0. 0' is written and underlined.

To the vicar of Kildwick _____	£	s	d
	21.	0.	0
- Appropriators or Matthew Wilson their Lessee _____	21.	0.	0
	<hr/>		
	42.	0.	0

There are two points of note:

- The vicar of Kildwick was to receive half of the total. This indicates that at some point between the Reformation and 1846 the two types of tithe had been equalised – there was no longer a great tithe and a small tithe.
- The other half was payable to Matthew Wilson, rather than the original “appropriator” of the Kildwick Parish land, Christ Church Oxford. This may appear odd, but research by David Gulliver has revealed that that Christ Church had leased their portion of the tithe to various people for a number of years and Matthew Wilson had signed a 21 year lease with them in January 1846. This accounts for him being referred to as the appropriator’s lessee.

Matthew Wilson was the cousin of Frances Mary Richardson Currer and the Lord of the Manor of Eshton. The Kildwick estate would pass to the Wilson family when Frances Mary died having not married.

This division of the rent charge makes for interesting issues regarding a couple of the payments due:

- Matthew Wilson owned a plot of land in Farnhill – a cottage and garden on Grange Road – that was assessed at 5d. Half of which was due to himself.
- The three plots of “glebe” land in Farnhill, land owned by the church, was assessed at five shillings and three pence. It’s amusing to contemplate who paid what, and to whom ?