

## William Mackever Adamthwaite - page 2



*Landscape between Branthwaite and Hallbank looking towards the Howgills 2009*

In the first half of the 19th century it must have been even more difficult. Most definitely he wasn't alone. In 1868 C Webster wrote that the old class of statesmen was nearly extinct---small owners were gradually disappearing. This was mentioned in a book *Westmorland Agriculture* by Frank W. Garnett. Obviously Sedbergh was not in Westmorland but it was very close, with similar land and therefore, it is reasonable to assume, experiencing the same trends.

In 1851 William and his family lived in Millthrop, just outside Sedbergh.



*Millthrop today seen from Frostrow Fell (Sedbergh is in the background)*



*Cottages at Millthrop*

It is not possible to locate the exact house but he had 8 children, two of them working as labourers. He himself was still labouring and was also receiving parish relief. The Sedbergh Overseers of the Poor's Poor Fund Account Book shows that he occasionally received small amounts of money between 1847 and 1852. Interestingly there is also a record here of him being paid £2 3s for meal in 1845 so at this stage it looks as though he was still able to act as a supplier of goods. His three oldest children worked as servants on local farms, William and Sarah at Blandses near Millthrop and Thomas at High Oaks, a little further away.



*Blandses Farm near Millthrop*



*High Oaks*

By 1861 William and most of his family had moved down the Lune valley to the Burton in Lonsdale area following a trend repeated all over the country as people move off the land and into work in the mills and in transport William himself was a farm labourer living at Chapel Street in Burton (William is most likely to have lived in the cottage on the far right of the image below).



*Cottages on Chapel Lane*

Five children living with him were cotton spinners and one worked on the railway. They probably moved before the mid 1850s as John was working in Caton (further down the Lune Valley) as a farm labourer in 1856 when he married at the age of 20. Also it looks as though times became particularly hard for them all in Millthrop in November 1852 when he received three lots of money from the poor fund within a month so perhaps this precipitated the move. Of the ones that had left home only Jane remained in the Sedbergh area (and she moved to Preston

later). She was a farmer's wife at High Gill to the North-west of the town. The others were not far away. William was an agricultural labourer at Burrow with Burrow and lived in a small cottage there. (It was named Ivy cottage—I have not been able to deduce which one this is but it is very near the Highwayman pub/restaurant on the opposite side of the road).

Thomas was a coachman for Melling Hall and lived in the Garden Cottage and Sarah was a housemaid at Austwick Hall.



*Garden Cottage*



*Austwick Hall*

John lived furthest away at Settle railway station where he worked on the railway. (again it is not possible to pinpoint exactly where he lived but it was somewhere at what is now Giggleswick station—this used to be Settle station).

In 1871 and 1881 William remained in Burton in the North side of Low Street , a widower, as Sarah died in 1869.

He continued to work as an agricultural and then a general labourer until he died in 1888 of senile decay and paralysis. Several of his remaining close family were still nearby and in fact his son in law James Fetcher was with him when he died.



*Low Street (north side)*

On the face of it this looks like a simple story of a slide down the social scale from relative prosperity to what appears to be a fairly meagre existence. It is easy to assume that William brought it upon himself, but looking more closely it seems that there are several mitigating factors. In particular, his parents died when he was young - so when he inherited his land he was too inexperienced to be able to make a living from it in relatively difficult times - especially with so many children to support. None the less, although he eventually ended up doing unskilled work for other people for the rest of his life, he did live to a good age and was living close to several of his children for all of that time.

#### **Text and photographs by Paula Healey**

William Mackever Adamthwaite was Paula's 4 x great grandfather

#### **Note**

*It has been very difficult to find definite information about the Reverend William Adamthwaite and if anyone can help with this I would be really grateful to hear from them. Paula*