

There are many published books on Cleveland which include mention of Great Ayton. This article is intended to be a guide to these sources, some of which are difficult to find. In most cases there is a summary of the references to the village.

Within each group books are listed by date of original publication. Many of the books are available in the reference sections of local libraries; Northallerton and Middlesbrough can be recommended. Some of the older texts are available on the internet.

### **The History of Cleveland in the North Riding of the County of York**

Rev. John Graves

F. Jollie and Sons, Carlisle, 1808

Republished by Patrick & Shotton, Stockton-on-Tees, 1972

The first comprehensive history of Cleveland and the part dealing with the Parish of Ayton is transcribed elsewhere on this website.

There is the early history, a description of All Saints' Church with a list of all eighteenth century curates, and the founding of the Postgate School. More than half the text on Great Ayton is devoted to William Wilson, who had died in 1795, an indication of the high esteem in which he was held in by the village. Incidentally, Cook has many pages but under the Parish of Marton. Graves has a table of marriages, baptisms and burials from 1680 to 1799, valuable in that it was taken from the Parish Registers before they were extensively damaged in the floods of 1840.

Graves gives a list of industry at the start of the nineteenth century: three tan-yards, one comb and horn manufactory, a tallow chandlry, a common brewery, one oil-mill, one water-corn-mill and a brick and tile kiln. The raw materials for the tan-yards, horn and tallow works all came from cattle, suggesting a significant trade in carcasses.

There are also descriptions of Little Ayton, Nunthorpe, Tunstall, and Roseberry Topping. Graves tells us that whinstone was extensively used for Cleveland's turnpikes, and there was a place called "iron-mine" at Cliff Rigg.

There were only two subscribers from Ayton (Fotherley Pannell, M.D. and the late William Wilson) compared with eleven each from Stokesley and Guisborough, an insight into the level of cultural life in the three habitations at that time?

### **A History of Whitby and Streonshalh Abbey with a statistical survey of the vicinity to the distance of twenty-five miles**

Rev. George Young

Published by private subscription in 1817

Reprint by Caedmon of Whitby, 1976

In two volumes, mainly dealing with Whitby but having some notes on Great Ayton and Roseberry Topping. Young first mentions the village with the Domesday Book reference to Uchil having lands at Ayton, there being one mill there. The burning of the Stokesley Catholic Mass-house and the inaction of the magistrate, Mr. Skottowe of Ayton, and a dispute over tithes with Stokesley both evidence the discord that existed between the village and town. There is also mention of a dispute between the nuns at Baysdale and the abbot at Whitby over tithes at Nunthorpe.

The church at Great Ayton was clearly very important. "The church at Ayton in Cleveland was granted to our (Whitby) abbey by Robert de Mainill, in the time of the abbot William de Percy. This church, which was called St. Mary's, was one of the most important belonging to the abbey, having no less than three chapels subject to it; viz. the chapel of Newton under Rosebury, that of Little Ayton and that of Nunthorpe." "Ayton church had some special benefactions assigned to it; among which was the singular grant from Richard de Theocottys of Great Brotton, who

bound himself and his heirs, to find a lamp always burning before the high altar, during the time that mass was celebrating.”

The patron of the parish church is Wm. Marwood, Esq., and the curate Wm. Deason serving a population of 934. The Friends’ Meeting House can accommodate 200 souls, the William Hinmers Chapel can accommodate 150 as can the Methodist Chapel . There is a subscription school in Ayton, intended to be made a national school.

The author describes his researches with Mr J Bird, some 25 years earlier, into the rows of oval or circular pits found on many of the northern sides of Cleveland hills. The most remarkable were on Rosebury Topping, some along the top of the lower escarpment, some on the steeper slopes of the conical hill. A past landslip or “shooting” had caused several of the former series to shift to the bottom of the escarpment. Young devotes seventeen pages to pits elsewhere in the region, and concludes that they must have been ancient British dwellings.

Great Ayton is the family seat of the Wilson family and of T. Wayne, Esq. at Anngrove.

George Young devotes much space to manufactures. Ayton Banks alum works is included in a listing of 23 such works “Ayton in Cleveland was established in 1765, and was discontinued about 1771”. There is an extensive description of the alum process, and the history of its manufacture. Reference is made to the various attempts at price-fixing between owners, and to the business reaching a peak by 1769. Prices fell due to over-supply, and some works, including Ayton, stopped production.

Mr. H. Richardson and Mr.P Heselton have oil-mills in Great Ayton, the latter formerly a cotton mill. The village is said to have three tan-yards and one brewery.

There is a chapter of biographies and family histories of eminent men, including a page on William Wilson and thirteen pages on James Cook. The closing sentences on Captain Cook refer to the debate about a suitable monument to his memory. At that time, the favoured location was Rosebury Topping. Major Rudd, the proprietor, had agreed but the money had not been raised.

In an appendix, Young reproduces the entry in the Domesday Book for “Atun” and Little Ayton.

The lengthy list of subscribers gives some, but not all, addresses. Subscribers stated as being from Ayton (being cautious about confusion with Ayton near Scarborough) include Joseph Donaldson, Thomas Grahame, Mr. Swalwell and Miss Wilson. Others with known Ayton connections include Rev. W. Hinmers at Guisbro’, John Ridley at Plantation (who previously ran the Cockshaw alum works).

### **A Picture of Whitby**

Rev. George Young

Horne and Richardson, Whitby, 1840

Reprinted by Caedmon of Whitby, 1993

This was intended as an abridged version of Rev. Young’s 1817 two-volume history. Having said that, there is little similarity in what is written about Great Ayton and Roseberry. Ayton is rather ignominiously placed under “Stokesley” although virtually all the text in this section is about Great Ayton. In the intervening years from 1817 the monument on Easby Moor “a handsome obelisk, above 60 feet high” had been erected, and the book features a sketch of it.

On Rosebury, Young quotes carved initials from 1595 and 1625 and says that the curious hermitage at the summit was now fallen down. The pits are the foundations of antique huts, a chain of military posts. The basaltic dyke “is one of the most remarkable in England” and rises to the surface at Langargh and Cliffrigg.

### **The Cleveland Repertory and Stokesley Advertiser 1843-1845**

William Braithwaite

W. Braithwaite, Stokesley, 1843-1845

William Braithwaite ran a bookshop, and printing business in Stokesley High Street. His ambitious monthly publication, The Cleveland Repertory, only ran for three years. Most of the Great Ayton articles are included here.

- Vol. 1, No.1  
1 January 1843
- Article on the proposed British School at Great Ayton. The Society of Friends, Nicholas Richardson, 40 years ago, and Joshua Bowron of a more modern date, are said to have given benevolence and employment to many in the village. The article stressed that, although being set up through Quaker money, the school, will admit the children of parents of every denomination. There is reinforced by a breakdown of the Trustees (of the 9 trustees only 4 are Friends) and the Committee of Management (of the 17 members only 6 are Friends).
- Thomas Loy, surgeon, had died on Sunday evening 18 December 1842, aged 66. He was “a practitioner of the old school, and possessed along with many eccentricities, a keen and searching talent, and was considered for a great many years eminently successful in the exercise of his profession.” “It will be long ere we look upon his like again.”
- On Wednesday evening, 14 December, a Temperance Meeting was held in the North of England Agricultural School, with George Dixon in the chair. The audience was numerous and very attentive.
- Marriage at Ayton on 21 December between Mr. Cavallier, cabinet maker of Whitby, to Miss Elizabeth Humphrey of Ayton.
- Vol.1, No.2  
1 February 1843
- Moses Roper “this gigantic lecturer on American Slavery” visited Ayton on 13 January to give a talk.
- Vol.1, No.3  
1 March 1843
- John Dale of Stokesley had obstructed a highway in Great Ayton by leaving a wagon. Fined five shillings and costs.
- 12 February, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. G. Yorke, at Great Ayton.
- Vol.1, No.4  
1 April 1843
- John Sexton of Great Ayton committed to the House of Correction, Northallerton, for having stolen a quantity of iron from Mrs. Harrison’s shop at Easby.
- Vol.1, No.5  
1 May 1843
- On 16 March, death of Ellen, wife of Captain Appleton of Great Ayton, aged 65 years.
- Vol.1, No.6  
1 June 1843
- 19 May, John Evans a mariner from Stockton, was convicted of vagrancy in Great Ayton and was committed to the House of Correction, Northallerton, for twenty days hard labour.
- 2 May, birth of a daughter to George Pearson at Great Ayton.  
20 May, death of Mary King, aged 69, at Great Ayton.
- Vol.1, No.7  
1 July 1843
- Story of an Ayton tradesman who wrongly included a cheese in his accounts for a farmer. His writing was poor, and he had omitted an apostrophe in “g’stone” (grindstone) that he read it as “cheese”.
- 1 June, first anniversary of the Ayton Total Abstinence Society meeting at the North of England Agricultural School. Upwards of 400 individuals partook of the tea at 6d each, any surplus “to be devoted to the emancipation of drunkards from the bondage of their depraved habits”
- 18 June, birth of a daughter to Francis Audas, miller, at Great Ayton.  
21 June, death of Isabella Richardson at Great Ayton, aged 96.

- Vol.1, No.8  
1 August 1843
- 22 July, Christiana Swalwell of Great Ayton fined 2/6 and costs for rescuing two asses and a pony which had been seized for impounding.
- Considerable excitement over the elopement of William Loy of Great Ayton and Hannah Jackson, second daughter of the late George Jackson of Tanton. They were seen in a chaise drawn by four grey horses, at a very early hour, on their way to Edinburgh. On their return, they were married at the parish church at Ayton.
- 3 July, birth of a daughter to the wife of Robert Mankin, labourer, at Great Ayton.
- Vol.1, No.9  
1 September 1843
- 12 August, Robert Foxton of Great Ayton, butcher, was convicted of having, on 26 June, committed a trespass upon woodland in the township of Great Ayton, occupied by Joseph Jackson, in search of game, and ordered to pay a fine of £1 and the costs.
- Vol.1, No.10  
1 October 1843
- Serious Theft. On 19 August James Biggins of Ayton sold some cows at the Stokesley cattle fair and spent the afternoon drinking. By the evening he was in the streets with a crowd around him, and someone stole his canvas purse containing £40 or £50.
- Vol.1, No.11  
1 November 1843
- Advertisement placed by Betsy Martin to let her tan-yards at Great Ayton.  
One has 92 pits, the other has 36 pits.
- 12 October, marriage at Stokesley of Thomas Westley, an eccentric and humorous deaf and dumb man, to Elizabeth Sherwood of Ayton. (In the following February issue there appeared a notice saying that this man, known as Dummy, had begun to talk. He managed a living by going round public houses with a nut basket. He said he was educated at the Deaf and Dumb Assylum.)
- 17 October, death of Elizabeth Snowdon of Great Ayton.
- Vol.1, No.12  
1 December 1843
- 17 November, death of Wm. Peacock of Ormesby, aged 77, confidential clerk for 50 years to Messrs. Heseltons of Ayton and Cleveland Port.
- Vol.II, No.13  
1 January 1844
- Mr. Loy had resigned from the office of Stokesley Union medical officer after a "misunderstanding with the Board" and elections that were deemed void by the Poor Law Commissioners. After the dispute was settled, he was asked to accept the office once again, the Guardians admitting that no blame lay with him, which he did.
- Vol.II, No.14  
1 February 1844
- Wanton mischief. Some idle and disorderly persons, late on Saturday or early on the morning of Sunday, 25 January, put down the Bye-wash Cloughs, at the Oil and Flour Mills, at Ayton, and raised the Cloughs at the same mills, threw gates, wood and other articles into the race, causing the water to overflow and do considerable damage.
- 13 January birth of son to the wife of Mr G Breckon, farmer of Great Ayton.
- Vol.II, No.15  
1 March 1844
- 10 February, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. Thomas Harrison.  
14 February, death of Mary, wife of Mr. Jaspar Charlton of Great Ayton.
- Vol.II, No.16  
1 April 1844
- 18 March, birth of a daughter to the wife of Wm. Augustus Loy of Great Ayton.  
(see elopement of William Loy and Hannah Jackson in July 1843)
- Vol.II, No.17  
1 May 1844
- 6 April, birth of a daughter to wife of Mr. Joseph Watson.  
11 April, birth of a son to wife of Mr. Richard. Wilson of Great Ayton.
- Vol.II, No.18  
1 June 1844
- 16 May, marriage at Friends' Meeting House, Stoke Newington, of Mr. Isaac Brown of Great Ayton and Miss Priscilla Brown of Stamford Hill.  
26 May, death of Mrs. Elizabeth Dunning of the Society of Friends at Great Ayton.  
On Monday 13 May and the following evening, Mr. Spencer T. Hall delivered two lectures on Mesmerism. At the close, he said he may move to Great Ayton. If he did the newspaper

thought "the inhabitants of this land of hill and dale will regard it as an important era in the history of Cleveland."

Vol.II, No.19  
1 July 1844

Ayton Tea Party. This annual treat for the inhabitants of Cleveland took place on 13 June in the North of England Agricultural School Room. Nearly 800 sat down to tea and after partaking of "the cup that cheers but not inebriates" adjourned to the green, where there were addressed by several speakers on the importance of total abstinence.

6 June, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Wm. Calvert of Great Ayton.  
1 July, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. John Bradley of Great Ayton.  
22 June, death of Mr. Thomas Rigg of Great Ayton, aged 74.

Vol.II, No.20  
1 August 1844

10 July, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. John Welford, farmer of Little Ayton.  
24 July, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. John Turnbull of Great Ayton.

Vol.II, No.21  
1 September 1844

Lengthy report of cricket match, on 19 August, between Stokesley Juvenile and Great Ayton. Stokesley 117, Ayton 77. After the game, both parties repaired to the Black Swan Inn and partook of a splendid dinner provided by the host and hostess. Stokesley won the return match, scoring 113 runs to Ayton's 108.

On 1 and 2 August there were lectures in the British School Room at Ayton by Dr. F.R. Lees, author of several books on temperance. There was another lecture on the same subject, by Mr. Thomas Whittaker of London on 19 August, with Mr. George Dixon in the chair.

8 August, death of Maria, daughter of Mr. Joseph Kirby at Great Ayton, aged 5.  
14 August, death of Mr. James Maston at Great Ayton, aged 56.  
24 August, death of Alice Pearson at Great Ayton, aged 79.

Vol.II, No.22  
1 October 1844

19 September, annual meeting of the Ayton Branch Bible Society in the British School Room.

17 September, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. J Ridge, hawker, at Great Ayton.

Vol.II, No.23  
1 November 1844

Full report on the Show and Annual Meeting of the Cleveland Agricultural Society, with a dinner at the Black Swan Hotel. Ayton winner included Mr. T. Stainsby in the large breed boar and William Hutchinson for hedge cutting.

8 October, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Richard Wass at Great Ayton.  
18 October, death of Jane, daughter of Mr. T Nelson, aged 1 year.

Vol.II, No.24  
1 December 1844

7 November, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Thomas Parlour, farmer, at Great Ayton.  
31 October, marriage of R.R. Burgess Esq. of the National Provincial Bank of England, Stokesley, to Sarah, eldest daughter of the late Lieutenant James Allan, R.N. of Forres, North Britain, by the Rev. J. Ibbetson at Great Ayton.

Vol.III, No. 1  
1 January 1845

7 December, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. John Sayer, farmer, at Great Ayton.  
7 December, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. George Dixon, schoolmaster, at Great Ayton.  
8 December, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. George Yorke, farmer, at Great Ayton.

Vol.III, No.2  
1 February 1845

20 January, marriage of John Grant Esq. of Wood Street, London, to Jessie Catharine, second daughter of the late Lieutenant James Allan, R.N. of Forres, North Britain, by the Rev. J. Ibbetson at Great Ayton.

Vol.III, No.3

30 January, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. William Jackson, weaver, at Great

- 1 March 1845 Ayton.  
4 February, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Ralph Benton at Great Ayton.  
23 February, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. George Pearson at Great Ayton.
- Marriage of Mr. John Richardson of Langbaugh to Miss Hannah Proctor of Selby, at the Friends' Meeting House, Selby.
- Vol.III, No.4  
1 April 1845 17 March, dreadful accident at Nunthorpe to George Fenwick, hind to John Richardson Esq., of Langbaugh. He fall from a ladder onto a pitchfork, the times went into his chin and penetrated his brain. He died fifteen minutes later.
- 9 March, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Robert Reed at Great Ayton.  
4 March, death of J. William Hewison at Great Ayton, aged 1 month.  
17 March, death of John Place, labourer, at Great Ayton, aged 66.
- Vol.III, No.5  
1 May 1845 5 April, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. Henry Ward, at Great Ayton.  
7 April, birth of a son to the wife of Mr George Bulmer, at Great Ayton.  
13 April, birth of a son to the wife Mr. John Wright, at Great Ayton.
- Vol.III, No.6  
1 June 1845 Report on the Stokesley Trinity Fair, usually held on Roseberry Topping although the report does not mention the location.
- Vol.III, No.7  
1 July 1845 31 May, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. William Coulson at Great Ayton.  
13 June, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. Robert Nankin at Great Ayton.  
26 June, death of Mr. William Sanderson, shoemaker, at Great Ayton, aged 41.
- Vol.III, No.8  
1 August 1845 16 July, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Matthew Thurlow, at Great Ayton.
- Vol.III, No.9  
1 September 1845 Anniversary of the Ayton Total Abstinence Society held in the British School on 21 August. The rooms were "tastefully decorated" and the provisions "excellent", but "we were much disappointed with the speakers, with the exception of Mr. William Martin, of whom we expected but little and were agreeably surprised with an eloquent address". The other speakers "were more suitable for the coal and lead mines, than an assembly of even Aytonians".
- 13 August, death of Ann Bradley at Great Ayton, aged 1.
- Vol.III, No.10  
1 October 1845 Whitby and Yarm Railway via Stokesley. George Hudson had proposed a line from Whitby through the dales of Danby and Kildale, taking a direction south of Ayton, crossing the Stokesley and Ayton Road, passing close to Stokelsey and on to Yarm. The engineers, Messrs. Dickens and Birkenhaugh, and the surveyor Mr. Buckstone, will survey the road in a few days. "Stokesley, which hitherto, from its isolated situation, has been a place of little or no commercial interest, will, by being thus connected with the heart of England, possess means at least, of becoming one of considerable importance."
- 11 September, birth of a daughter to the wife of Mr. Joseph Marley, labourer, at Great Ayton.  
15 September, death of Susan Watson, aged 23, daughter of Mr. Joseph Watson, innkeeper, at Great Ayton.  
19 September, death of Jane Dinsley, aged 18, at Great Ayton.
- Vol.III, No.11  
1 November 1845 Further report on the Whitby to South Stockton railway, via Lealholm, Commondale, Kildale, Stokesley. Mr. Buckstone and his assistants are now surveying the line, and it is intended to be laid before Parliament next session.  
Review of *A Handbook to the Herbarium* by George Dixon of Ayton. Published by Simpkin and Marshall in London and W. Braithwaite in Stokelsey. A neat handbook for teaching botany,

which has been practised by Mr. Dixon . “We commend him for his praiseworthy undertaking of presenting the public with a new and easy method of teaching botany.”

1 October, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. Robinson Heckle, labourer, at Great Ayton.

24 October, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. Thomas Westoby, alias Dummy, at Great Ayton (see November 1843 and February 1844 for previous reports on Thomas Westoby).

10 October, death of Ann Ward at Great Ayton, aged 56.

Vol.III, No.12

16 November, birth of a son to the wife of Mr. Robert Wood, labourer, at Great Ayton.

2 November, death of Jane Porter at Great Ayton, aged 79.

## **The History and Antiquities of Cleveland, comprising the Wapentake of East and West Langbaugh, North Riding, County York**

John Walker Ord, F.G.S.L.

Simpkin and Marshall, London, 1846

John Walker Ord’s mighty work, better on his reporting of the Cleveland he saw around him than his, sometimes, unusual view of its history. The section on Great Ayton is transcribed elsewhere in this website.

Ord is informative on the then current agriculture, but gets carried away when considering Roseberry Topping. He subscribes to a most unlikely derivation of the name, and imagines the Bronze Age hoard to be weapons of war used by the inhabitants of his imagined British town on Roseberry. There is an intriguing reference, accompanied by an illustration, to a remarkably fine coin or medal of King Henry VIII., found at Rosebury Topping a short time since.”

Ord goes through the history of the village and has a full description of the church (wrongly, he has it as St. Mary’s) and its three chapels. There is a good history of the stone bridge. There is a good history of the stone bridge. Progress had been made in education over the forty years since Graves’s history; Ord includes three schools (Postgate, British and North of England Agricultural). There were twelve subscribers to this book from Ayton: Mr.Francis Audus; Ayton Village Library; Mr. R. Benton; Mr. John Eldon; Rev. W. Hinners; Philip Heselton, Esq.; Rev. Joseph Ibbetson; Mr. John Jackson; W.A. Loy, Esq., M.D; T. Richardson, Esq., Ayton House; J. Richardson, Esq., Langbaugh; Mr. George Smith, Little Ayton. However, there were still far fewer subscriptions compared with Stokesley (37)and Guisborough (39), proportionately slightly more than the ratios forty years earlier with Rev. Graves (2:11).

## **Record Series Volume XII for the year 1891**

### **Yorkshire Inquisitions of the Reigns of Henry III and Edward I, Volume I**

Edited by William Brown

Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association

Available on-line at

<http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924084250582#page/n265/mode/2up>

On pages 237-9 this reproduces the Baldwin Wake, with a description of the Manor of Aton in Clivelonde. Mention is made of the plot at Ergum, the wood at Wystendale, the grove at Elmerge, and the two mills at Westmulne and Estmulne.

## **A Month in Yorkshire**

Walter White

Chapman and Hall, London, 1858

M.T.D. Rigg reprint in 1991

## **The Local Records of Stockton and the Neighbourhood, or a Register of Notable Events, chronologically arranged ...**

Thomas Richmond  
William Robinson, Stockton, 1868  
Reprinted by Patrick & Shotton, Stockton-on-Tees, 1972

A remarkable collection of about 3,000 entries, obviously mainly about Stockton but with a few Ayton entries.

- 1183 The church at Ayton was given to Whitby abbey by Rt. de Meynill. At the dissolution it was reduced to a perpetual curacy.
- 24 August 1642 Amongst the 2000 ministers who were deprived of their livings by the Act of Uniformity, which came into operation this day, were ... Geo. Evanke of Great Ayton.
- 1663 Among those appearing before Sir James Pennyman, charged with plotting an uprising, was Christopher Milton of Little Ayton, who was to be a trooper.
- 1704 A free schoolroom built at Great Ayton for the education of eight poor boys by Mich. Postgate, yeoman. The building, being in a ruinous state, was in 1785-6 taken down, and a poor house erected, by subscription, on its site, appropriating one commodious room for the school. [In this school Capt. James Cook received the rudiments of his education.]
- 27 December 1745 Comprehensive account from the Gentleman's Magazine of 1746 describing the damage to Mr. Pearson's Stokesley Mass-house by a number of boys, their march to Ayton and dismissal by Mr. Skottowe, at Ayton they recruited 30 or 40 boys more boys and returned to Stokesley, where they to set fire to the Mass-house.
- 5 June 1794 Died at Ayton, aged 80, Capt. Wm. Wilson. As commodore and commander-in-chief of the marine force of the east India Company, he performed various distinguished services, for which he was presented by the directors with a gold medal, commemorative of the same.
- 1842 The North of England Agricultural Society (sic) established at Great Ayton this year by the Society of Friends. There is a brief explanation of the purposes of the school and the education given.
- 10 December 1843 A school built at Ayton for 50 boys and 50 girls. It is in connexion with the British and Foreign Society. The cost (£500) was speedily raised. Thos. Richardson, Esq., gave a site for the building and endowed the school with 4 shares in the Stockton and Darlington Railway.
- 25 September 1859 An alarming fire broke out at Ayton, in the farm-yard premises belonging to the Agricultural School. With the aid of the fire engine from Stokesley, and the exertions of the villages in supplying water to the engine, the fury of the flames was soon arrested, but not finally overcome until daybreak the following morning. The premises and haystack were insured.
- 8 April 1861 At the time of the census the populations of all towns and villages from 1801 to 1861 are given. For Great Ayton:  
1801 = 865, 1841 = 1,216, 1851 = 1,304, 1861 = 1,688
- 18 July 1863 An alarming fire took place at Great Ayton, caused by the striking of a Lucifer match by a little boy. The stacks and shed, the property of Miss Martin, were almost wholly destroyed.

### **The Watering Places of Cleveland; being descriptions of these and other attractive localities in that interesting district of Yorkshire**

Samuel Gordon  
J.H. Webster, Redcar, 1869  
M.T.D. Rigg reprint in 1992

An entire chapter is devoted to Roseberry Topping, during the summer months "a favourite resort of pleasure parties from every town and village for many miles around". The text includes the long-vanished hermitage at the summit, the Roseberry well and the legend of Prince Oswy, and the curious Roseberry pits. The description of the pits is important, for this is well before any mining subsidence, and refers to the pits along the escarpment edge and slightly higher up. The author agrees with George Young that they were ancient British dwellings.

### **The Bards and Authors of Cleveland and South Durham and the vicinage**

George Markham Tweddell  
Tweddell and Sons, Stokesley, 1872



Written in Tweddell's inimitable style, this includes some characters connected with Great Ayton. The list of subscribers includes several inhabitants of Great Ayton: L. F. Crumney, surgeon, George Dixon, Professor of Agriculture, United States (this is the ex-superintendent of the Friends' School), William Martin, John Pease, John Wright.

William Martin (1825-1863). Born in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle (associated with the Richardsons' tanneries) he was adopted by a maiden aunt, Miss Martin, of the Society of Friends, at Great Ayton (this would be Betsy Martin, who ran the Cleveland Tannery in the village). William wrote poetry, inspired by Robert Burns. The bird songs at the foot of Cockshaw or Rosebury opened his heart to the spirit of poetry. He lived in Manchester for some time, where he managed the cash department at his aunt's leather warehouse, which had long been carried out at 89 Oldham Street, Manchester. He returned to Great Ayton in 1860, when he took over the Ayton Tanneries. It was in his final three years, at Great Ayton, that he prophetically wrote "The Poet's Grave". Like Tweddell, he was a freemason, and wrote some verses "To Masonry" for which Tweddell apologises because "they may fall short of that sublimity which masonic poetry ought to possess".

There is a biography of Joseph Reed, with his play "The Register Office" and its references by Margary Moorput to Roseberry Topping.

William Mudd, the Ayton School gardener who became a pioneer of British lichenology, merits two pages. Tweddell reproduces the adverse review, which is pure academic snobbery, from the *Athenaeum* of Mudd's "A Manual of British Lichens" published in 1861. Tweddell confessed to knowing nothing about the subject, and quotes Ruskin's praise of lichens in Mudd's defence.

In the lengthy entry for John Walker Ord, Tweddell mentions Ord's version of the Prince Oswy tale "where he has worked out Mrs. Merryweather's version of the legend of Rosebury Topping most effectively in old ballad style."

John Ryley Robinson's poem "Rosebury Topping" is reproduced in full.

### **Cartularium Abbatiae de Whiteby, The Cartulary of Whitby**

Edited by Rev. J. C. Atkinson

Surtees Society, Volume 1 in 1879 and Volume 2 in 1881

These two volumes contain transcriptions, in the original Medieval Latin, taken from a bound volume of 144 vellum leaves with some later additions on paper. It contains deeds of the abbey's possessions, some of which were in Great Ayton. The Surtees Society asked Canon Atkinson, the Society's secretary at the time, to edit the Cartulary.

#### **XLVI (M.109) CONFIRMATIO ECCLESiarUM DE SEMARA, DE HATONA, DE KIRKEBY ET ENGLEBY**

Archbishop Roger confirms to Whitby the churches of Aton in Cleveland with its chapels (Newton and Little Ayton) also Seamer, Kirkby in Cleveland, and Ingleby.

#### **LXXIII (M.16) WILLELMUS DE STUTEWILLA DE ECCLESIA DE ATONA**

William de Estuteville confirms to Whitby the church of Ayton in Cleveland. Atkinson has a footnote, quoting from Graves, explaining that the manor of Ayton was granted at a very early period to Robert de Estoteville, one of the valiant Northern barons who, with Stephen, fought against the Scots at the Battle of the Standard. Atkinson dates the deed to the latter part of the twelfth century.

#### **CVI (M. 107) DE PRATO IN ATONA, QUANTUM PERTINET AD UNAM BOVATAM**

Richard, son of Agnoti, grants to Whitby a field of one bovate of pasture in Ayton.

#### **CCXXVI (M.16) STEPHANUS DE ECCLESIAE DE ATONA**

Stephen de Bulmer confirms to Whitby Robert de Mainill's gift of Aton church and grants besides 24 acres of newly-broken land. Canon Atkinson estimated the date of this deed to be between 1154 and 1170.

CCCXLI INCIPIUNT CARTÆ DE ATON IN CLIVELANDE

Stephen de Meinill, son of Robert de Meinill, grants to Whitby the property of William de Cokelun of Ayton.

CCXLII CONFIRMATIO ECCLESIAE DE ATON PER HENRICUM, REGEM ANGLIÆ

Confirmation by Henry, King of England, that the churches at Ayton and Middlesbrough have been given to Whitby.

CCCXLIII ALIA CONFIRMATIO PRÆDICTARUM ECCLESiarUM PER HENRICUM REGEM

Further confirmation that the churches at Ayton and Middlesbrough, also the churches at Kirkby and Ingleby, have been given to Whitby.

CCCXLV ALIA QUIETA CLAMATIO DE GRENDALÉ ALIAS HANDALÉ

John fitz Robert fitz Matilda of Aton terminates his rights to four bovates of land and transfers them to John de Thorp of Aton and his wife Alice.

CCCXLVI QUIETA CALAMATIO PETRI DE ATON

Petrus of Aton gives to John of Evesham, abbot of Whitby, a convent and its appurtenances which he holds in Aton.

CCCXLVII ALIA CARTA DE ATON IN CLIVELANDE

Richard, son of Angoti, states that his brother William has released him from deeds and given them to Whitby.

CCCXLVIII ALIA CARTA DE ATON IN CLIVELAND

John, son of Hugh, has given deeds to Whitby.

CCCXLIX ALIA CARTA DE ATON

William Malebise states that no detriment shall arise to Great Ayton church through the chapel at Little Ayton. In his footnotes, Atkinson refers to the chapel at Newton rather than at Little Ayton, although the text clearly states "Parva Atona".

CCCL ALIA CARTA, DE LAMPADE INVENIENDA APUD ATON

Richard de Tocotes of Great Broughton will provide a lamp to burn before the altar in the church at Great Ayton, with power to Whitby to seize his property if he fails.

CCCLI EXPLICIUNT LIBRI DE ATON IN CLIVELAND. DUÆ CARTÆ DE HOTON IN CLIVELAND

CCCLII ALIA CARTA DE EADEM MATERIA DE HOTONA

Abbot Roger and the Convent of Whitby lease to Richard, son of Hugo of Ayton, a toft and croft, the donation of his father.

CCCCXVI

From William de Stuteville of Ayton in Cleveland in 1265. Confirming, for his own salvation and that of his parents, he has given land and buildings in Great Ayton to the Abbey. He states that he will pursue no suits at any court in Ayton or at the Ayton mill. Monks have the right to pasture eight oxen and four horses (plough teams), to keep beasts at Ayton over the winter and to water them in the stream that runs through the village. Monks can also harvest corn and hay.

DCXXII ESCAET. DE A<sup>o</sup> NONO RICARDI SECUNDI

Details of many properties belonging to Whitby, including land and buildings in Great Ayton.

**Old Cleveland being a Collection of papers. Local Writers and Local Worthies**

W H Burnett

Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1886

Under "Modern Writers" this has sections on Thomas Pierson, associated with his poem "Roseberry Topping" and Joseph Reed, associated with his play "The Register Office" and Margery Moorpout's words on Roseberry.

We learn that Thomas Pearson was “somewhat troubled, as are most thoughtful writers are, with a villainous bad liver” and that Reed “so devoted himself to his studies and to his business affairs, taking little exercise, that he brought on a disorder which terminated his life”. Burnett prints John Walker Ord’s poem about Prince Oswy in full.

The nine pages on Captain Cook are ascribed to Graves, and cover familiar ground albeit in rather rambling prose; for example he was “well adapted to the course of life which Providence destined him to lead, for he was inured to labour and toil, and capable of bearing almost any hardships.”. A shorter entry on William Wilson is also attributed to Graves. Wilson “retired to the village of Ayton, where, practising those virtues which come within the reach of general imitation, he gave dignity to the walk of private life by the pursuits of genius, the exertions of philanthropy, and the example of integrity.”

### **Forty Years in a Moorland Parish**

Rev. J. C. Atkinson

Macmillan and Co., London, 1892

This classic book of the area around Danby does mention Roseberry Topping, with Atkinson showing his special contempt for Ord and his theory that the pits on Roseberry, and elsewhere, were evidence of extensive British villages. Atkinson wrote “The simple explanation of course is, that with the pits following the course of the strata containing minerals capable of being applied to economic uses ...” and concludes with “Alas for the ruined glory of the ‘vast British settlement’!”

### **Beautiful Cleveland and just beyond its borders**

“Q. T.” possibly Harold Hood

Hood & Co., Limited, Middlesbrough, 1897

Illustrated book with a description of a week-end tramp over the Cleveland Hills, taking in Roseberry (but not climbing it) and Great Ayton. In the village the author came across “a long waggonette standing outside the inn at the beginning of the village, and a party of noisy, profane, muscular, Middlesbrough excursionists were scrambling into it.” Even at this date “many business men make this the place of their residence, where they can quickly get away from then smells and smoke of their not dear, but dirty, Middlesbrough.” Sadly, among the many photographs there are none of Great Ayton, and just one of the Topping taken from the pond at Aireyholme.

### **Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs of the North Riding of Yorkshire**

Richard Blakeborough

W Rapp & Sons Limited, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, 1898

There was a second edition, with additional material by Jack Fairfax Blakeborough, in 1911.

This book is a rambling miscellany of tales, superstition, folklore and dialect collected over the years by Richard Blakeborough, perhaps best-known as the father of Jack Fairfax Blakeborough. People from Great Ayton are given as the source of some of the stories. An old lady told of her grandmother’s encounter with Au’d Nanny, the Ayton witch who lived in a cottage at the lower end of Low Green between 1750 and 1780. Old Willie Bradley, a quarryman from Great Ayton, related how Wrightson, the wise man of Stokesley, was able to locate his lost tools. And anyone who dares stand by Gribdale Gate on New Year’s Eve will see a man pass through it and then vanish.

Perhaps the most interesting references are to places in the village. Blakeborough mentions of the building of the Grange, when “artists and other workmen from town and elsewhere were requisitioned to beautify the place”, occasioning much banter between them and the native Yattoners. There is also a tale about Old Bessy’s shop, and the rudeness of the family of gentleman who briefly rented the “one big house in the place”.

### **A Picturesque History of Yorkshire**

J. S. Fletcher

J. M. Dent & Co., London, 1899. Second edition, 1901

A three-volume set covering all three Ridings, illustrated with paintings and sketches. Great Ayton has a few pages in Volume III, mainly about James Cook and Roseberry Topping. Two suggestions are given for the double row of pits around the Topping: "mining operations of long-dead ages" or an early British settlement. The author writes "Phillips speaks of them as 'the bases of British huts' which seems to put the matter beyond doubt. This authority is probably Professor John Phillips (1800-1874), one of the most knowledgeable of 19<sup>th</sup> century geologists. There is an account of the celebrated three-hour fox hunt of 1849, which passed the old alum works and "Cockshot plantations".

### **Rambles in Cleveland and peeps into the Dales on foot, cycle and rail**

Michael Heavisides

Originally published by Heavisides of Stockton, First edition 1901, Second edition 1903

Reprinted by M.T.D. Rigg Publications, Guiseley, 1988

Michael and his father, John, ran a printing business in Stockton. Michael was a keen photographer and his huge collection of glass plate negatives has recently been digitised by Stockton's Museum Services. Michael spent many week-ends touring Cleveland, taking photographs and compiling local history notes. On his later excursions, he was accompanied by his son, referred to as "the young scion". Michael usually travelled on his bicycle, sometimes after an initial train journey from Stockton to one of the rural stations. The book describes visits to various Cleveland destinations; the reference to "the Dales" the title is to the northern dales of the North York Moors, such as Bilsdale and Farndale.

Several visits to Great Ayton are mentioned on pages 91 to 107. The account starts with six pages of village history, containing some fascinating anecdotes and unusual facts, including a list of 16 famous men who were born or who lived in the village. Michael recalls that his first acquaintance with Great Ayton was around 1850, when he enjoyed a three-week summer holiday here, and over the following fifty years was a frequent visitor. He then describes two travels to Ayton. The first is a cycle ride from Stockton, on his new 1902 Coventry Eagle machine and, apparently, with the young scion for the first time. The second is a train journey from Thornaby to Great Ayton, with a ramble to the Monument and then to the Topping.

There are the inevitable paragraphs on James Cook, the Postgate School, the Friends' School, the Monument and Roseberry Topping, but they are enlivened with unique anecdotes and experiences. They met George Dixon, then past his 90th birthday, and attended a cricket match at "the El Dorado of Great Ayton – California".

### **The Castles of Cleveland**

T Matson

Hood, Middlesbrough, 1923

Makes passing reference to Great Ayton: "Stokesley also had a castle, the residence of the Lords Baliol and Eure, but its site is unknown, which may also be said with regard to the castle of the Wakes and Nevilles at Ayton."

### **The Hand of Glory and further Grandfather's tales and legends of Highwaymen and others**

Collected by the late R. Blakeborough, edited by J. Fairfax Blakeborough

Grant Richards Limited, London, 1924

A collection of ghost stories, two with their location in the parish: *The Mystery of Anngrove Hall* and the poem *T'Hunt o' Yatton Brig*. The story of Anngrove Hall is summarised below. The poem is described in the books on Great Ayton.

An occupant of Anngrove Hall had a serious grievance against the under-coachman, Henry Edwards, who may have been conducting an affair with one of the occupant's daughters. Edwards was given notice. Edwards was then sent to Stokesley to pass on a box of valuable plate and jewellery to a gentleman on the London coach. Edwards did not

return . The squire of Anngrove, suspecting the worst, travelled hastily to Thirsk and made enquiries, and then went on to London. Edwards was never found.

Edwards had a sister, Polly, working at The Grange nearby as a servant. Late one evening, she saw her brother's ghost with a broken skull. Two weeks later, a miller saw the same ghost. Then the squire returned from London, but his horses refused to cross the bridge on the drive leading up to Anngrove Hall. When the squire entered the house a large picture fell to the floor. The feeling grew that Edwards had been murdered.

Polly obtained one of the shoes from a horse that had refused to cross the bridge and took it to a witch in Broughton. The witch put a spell on the horse shoe, so it would lead to the murderer. Back at The Grange Polly hung the shoe up on a nail. That evening, the squire of Anngrove Hall visited The Grange for a card-party. As he passed by the horse shoe, he staggered and went pale, and a voice was heard "Who murdered Edwards?"

After this, nobody would work at Anngrove, the squire left and the Hall was closed up. After a year, the Hall was again occupied and the ghost made new appearances. Edwards's body was found in a shallow grave under a hay stack in the stack-yard, with a broken skull.

### **Striding through Yorkshire**

A J Brown

Country Life, London, 1938, revised edition 1943

Alfred John Brown (1894-1969) biography started by Tom Scott Burns will be completed by John White with planned publication in 2012. When his walking days were over, he ran the Whitfield Hotel at Goathland. He died in 1969.

This classic book covers all three Ridings, Part VIII is on the Cleveland hills. In some ways, A J Brown was a forerunner of Alfred Wainwright (1907-1991), a serious walker publishing books of walking routes, but without the drawings so characteristic of Wainwright. Brown's Cleveland walk was from the Chequers Inn above Osmotherley to stay the first night at the Buck Inn in Chop Gate, then to Bransdale, Ingleby Greenhow (dining at the Dudley Arms), over Easby Moor and the Cook Monument, Roseberry Topping and on to Guisborough for the night at the Buck Hotel. Brown eschewed camping, enjoying a good meal and a good bed; in his own words "make the night's lodging the last economy"

### **Yorkshire Tour**

Ella Pontefract and Marie Hartley

J.M.Dent and Sons Ltd, London, 1939

Dalesman reprint, 2002

Another volume spanning the whole county. Great Ayton merits just over a page. When the authors visited the village they saw what they claimed to be the only tulip tree in the north, flowering in the Ayton School gardens. The Schoolroom Museum is "rather melancholy", and there are bits about Roseberry Topping and Richard Blakeborough's "T'hunt o' Yatton Brig".

### **The King's England: Yorkshire North Riding**

Edited by Arthur Mee

Hodder & Stoughton, London , 1941

Presented as a new Domesday Book, covering 10,000 towns and villages. The Yorkshire volume, appearing in 1941, opens with a poignant note that it would stand as a record of Yorkshire before the blitzkrieg. Great Ayton has just over two pages, with half of the text concerning James Cook. The exchange of the Cook Cottage for the stone obelisk is considered "a sorry bargain". There is brief description of All Saints' Church and mention that the new church of Christ Church has a New Testament of 1601

## **The Spirit of Yorkshire**

J and R Fairfax Blakeborough  
B T Batsford, London, 1954

This publication spans across all three Ridings and, true to form for the Blakeboroughs, has a final chapter on dialect and folk-lore. In this, Jack writes that he believes his father's "T'hunt o' Yatton Brig" was a dialect classic.

Obviously with such a wide geographical spread, there are but few references to Great Ayton. Noteworthy is Sir Alfred Pease's 1937 letter to Jack Fairfax Blakeborough in which he remembers picking up arrow heads from the Roseberry pits and coming across burnt stones. The authors blame mining operations for subsidence of Roseberry Topping and for the disappearance of Prince Oswy's Well.

## **The Buildings of England: Yorkshire, The North Riding**

Nikolaus Pevsner  
Penguin Books, London, 1966

Under "Great Ayton" there are entries for Christ Church ("a restless composition and an uninteresting interior"), All Saints' (with special reference to the three-decker pulpit, the Anglo-Saxon stone fragments, plate and headstones), and to Ayton Hall. There is a brief description of the village which, oddly for a book published in 1966, states that the village ends in the High Green. Finally, there is description of the cairn group on Great Ayton Moor.

## **Canon J. L. Kyle, M.A. vicar of Carlton-in-Cleveland & Faceby, 1894-1943**

J Fairfax-Blakeborough  
Published by the author, Westerdale, 1968

On pages 22-23 there is a description of how Carlton Church obtained its first organ from Great Ayton in 1899. The Rev Withington has said that he had a new organ and wished to dispose of the old instrument. Canon Kyle spoke up, and the next morning sent a waggon to collect it before Withington might change his mind.

## **The Story of Cleveland**

Minnie C Horton  
Cleveland County Libraries, Middlesbrough, 1979

There are two references to Great Ayton. The first is in connection with James Cook, where the author incorrectly states that Captain Cook lived in the cottage that was taken to Australia in 1934. The second reference is in a section on Roseberry Topping, which includes a peculiar explanation of the origin of the name.

## **Cleveland History from the Air**

M. M. Brown and L. Still  
Cleveland County Libraries, Middlesbrough, 1980

This book contains a series of 31 black and white aerial photographs, mainly of archaeological sites. Figure 5 on page 14 shows the Great Ayton Moor Iron Age enclosure and hut circle in heavy snow.

## **Essays in North Riding History 1780-1850**

R.P. Hastings  
North Yorkshire County Council, Northallerton, 1981

The first essay, on agriculture, although covering Cleveland does not specifically name Great Ayton. The village fares better in the next essay, on industry, with the Cockshaw alum works opening after 1765. Closure came in the 1770s

after an attempt to establish a monopoly, although Sir George Colebrooke is not mentioned. The flax and linen industry text includes the spinning and weaving in the village. A comment on the 1801 census points out that, unlike other Cleveland villages, Ayton had other manufactures as well as flax and linen: tan-yards, brick and tile kiln, a brewery, mills, etc. Philip Hesleton's "manufactory" at Greatr Ayton is seen as an exception to what was normally a cottage-based industry. There was an exodus from the village in the period 1831-41 due to the decline of the linen industry and by 1851 linen weaving had virtually disappeared from the village.

Other essays are on shipping, farming work and wages, conditions of the labouring classes, social and political movements, emigration, treatment of lunatics, do not mention Great Ayton. In the essay on self-help, the Ayton select vestry paid the friendly society subscriptions for paupers. In the essay on philanthropy, there were subscriptions at Great Ayton for the provision of cheap coal in the winter of 1837-38. In the essay on vagrancy, the Ayton select vestry closed the lodging house which accommodated vagrants in 1827, under pressure from Irish vagrants and seasonal workers. The essay on education of then poor mentions children from Nunthorpe and Newton going to school in Ayton. An 1818 survey showed 400-500 were reported to be without the means of education, a surprisingly high number given that the population of the village was about 1,000. By mid-century, Great Ayton had some provision for adult evening education.

### **Poverty and the Poor Law in the North Riding of Yorkshire c1780-1837**

R. P. Hastings

Borthwick Papers no 61

University of York, York, 1982

In the eighteenth century, Great Ayton's unemployed were found berths on vessels of a local ship-owner or dispatched to the alum works. The Select Vestry provided tools and advanced money to alum workers until their first monthly pay.

In 1833, Great Ayton acquired a special broadloom to get a contract for several out-of-work weavers. Great Ayton supplied cobblers with leather and a glover with skins. Great Ayton employed women as well as men on road repairs. In Great Ayton the monthly payments to paupers ("cesses") were reduced for keeping pauper children at home, contrary to vestry order.

The inmates of the poorhouse at Great Ayton were largely self-supporting and the house was used for temporary accommodation. The select vestry inspected the poorhouse before every session. In 1823 they found beds, bedding and paupers were in a filthy state. An attempt to convert the Great Ayton poorhouse into a genuine workhouse in 1827 came to nought (Select Vestry Minutes, 10 May 1827).

### **Stokesley Selection**

Collected and edited by Alec Wright and John Mawer

Studio Print, Great Ayton, 1982

A fascinating miscellany of article on Stokesley, with some references to Great Ayton, but almost impossible to use due to the lack of an index.

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Page 25 | Serious flooding in 1886. Great Ayton postmaster, John Longstaff, drowned. Body found weeks later near Bense Bridge.  |
| Page 43 | Legal conveyance between John Cissesson of Stokesley and Robert Hoton of Ayton.   |
| Page 47 | Rising of the North 1569. Earl of Westmorland the Rebel leader had land at Great Ayton and recruited 22 followers there – his land was confiscated.                                     |
| Page 50 | Railway pass and receipt for William Jones of Undercliff, Great Ayton, in connection with his support for Messrs Pease and Lambton in the South Durham Parliamentary Elections of 1880. |

- Page 61 Extracts from the Diary of a Stokesley Lady 1936-37. 24 April 1937 This afternoon C. and I went to the first outing of the Cleveland Naturalists, by train to Kildale, walking through the woods under Captain Cook's Monument in brilliant sunshine with splendid views, to Mr. and Mrs. H.'s new house at Cherry Hill, where 40 of them had tea by kind invitation. (this refers to the Hoods at Cherry Hill, built in the grounds of White House).
- Page 77 Press cutting of the journey of Cleopatra's Needle from Alexandria. This article appeared just after Waynman Dixon's death. Mainly consists of extracts from John Dixon's obituary the Institution of Civil Engineers' proceedings.
- Page 95 Article on Aaron Peacock, Stokesley gunsmith, based on his accounts for 1816-1821. Most coffee mills needing repairs came from Ayton and Hutton Rudby. Also "Mr. Martin of Great Ayton, who was a noted tanner, bought a new Bark Mill from Aaron in 1818 for grinding oak bark. At that time, Faceby Lodge Estate had just been bought by Mr. Liefie of Sowerby, Thirsk, and he had commenced to fell all the old oaks on his estate, taking two years. Women were engaged on the work, from Stokesley, at 1/8d per day to debark or strip the trunks. The bark was filled into 4 stone sacks and sold to Mr. Martin for 4 pence per stone.  
The cost of the bark mill was £40, and with bolts and fitting charges the total was £49..18..0. According to the editor's records, most of Mr. Martin's leather was transported to Leeds each Monday by two horses and wagon.
- Page 170 Extracts from the Quarter Sessions.  
1606 The inhabitants of Great Ayton for great decay of Nunhouse Lane (Pannierman Lane).  
1633 The inhabitants of Great Ayton for not repairing the highway between Easby and Stokesley.
- Page 180 Extracts from the Conviction and Order Book of the Stokesley Court in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.  
James Heads, labourer of Great Ayton, "did use a certain engine for the purpose of killing and taking game, to wit, a snare" and was fined £20. If he could not pay the fine, or sell his household goods to raise this sum, he would be sent to the Northallerton House of Correction for six months.
- Page 183 Stokesley Sessions, 30 March 1839. Complaint by John Scarth of Great Ayton, gamekeeper, about a fire being lit at Great Broughton  
22 July 1843. Christiana Swalwell, wife of Thomas Swalwell of Great Ayton, fined 2/6 and costs for rescuing two asses and a pony which had been seized for impounding.
- Page 212 Inventory from the will of Thomas Wetherill of Great Ayton, 27 October 1713. Total value £66..10..00.
- Page 232 Reproduction of advertisement for the sale in Great Ayton and Easby of a mansion house and other houses with gardens, an oil mill and several farms. There is no date on the notice.
- Page 237 Stone gate pillars from Angrove Hall moved to the Stokesley Manor House in 1853 by Colonel Hildyard.
- Page 310 Sketches of hinges from All Saints' pews and the three-decker pulpit.
- Page 344 Reproduction of a letter from Isaac Brown, a Great Ayton Quaker with a successful Cake, Corn and Meal business, acknowledging payment of a bill and promising to supply cake.
- Page 358 Serious fire at the Buck Hotel, Great Ayton. The landlord was very dilatory in paying the £6..3..0 for the Stokelsey Fire Service. Eventually the Yorkshire Insurance company paid up.
- Page 361 Reproduction of a five pound note from the Stokesley and Cleveland Bank with Roseberry Topping in the background.
- Page 397 Note on the bus service from Stokesley to Ayton.



## **More Essays in North Riding History**

R.P. Hastings

North Yorkshire County Council, Northallerton, 1984

A collection of six essays arising from the author's work at the Leeds University Adult Education Centre in Harrow Road, Middlesbrough. Three make mention of Great Ayton, the remaining essays, on early Middlesbrough, education in Hutton Rudby, and Cleveland ironstone miners, do not have any references to the village.

Crisis mortality in thirteen Cleveland parishes 1570-1850.

Includes Great Ayton. The data from this essay has been summarised in the Public Health section of this website.

The Unreformed Workhouse in the North Riding of Yorkshire c1730-1834.

In 1785 the Great Ayton Overseers resolved to build their own poorhouse. An old schoolhouse was demolished (the Postgate School) and a workhouse, with a room set aside for the school, was erected using the old materials. Finance was provided by a local rate and a subscription from eleven men of landed property. Surrounding hamlets, including Little Ayton, paid an annual subscription to the Great Ayton to take their paupers. The Great Ayton inmates were largely self-supporting and the workhouse was used as a place of temporary accommodation (the essay includes details of the arrangements for running the workhouse).

The New Poor Law in the North Riding of Yorkshire: the first decade 1837-1847.

Establishment of the Stokesley Union on 27 February 1837. John Richardson, who had also been a member of the select vestry for many years, became the first vice-chairman of the Stokesley Union. There is a great deal of detail about the operation of workhouses, but no further mention of Great Ayton.

## **Ancient Cleveland from the Air**

Richard Crosthwaite

Tees Towing Co. Ltd, Middlesbrough, 1986

Aerial photographs taken by Richard Crosthwaite of Langbaugh Hall, from his microlite aircraft. Great Ayton Moor is shown on page 33, Langbaugh Hall on page 140 and Roseberry Topping on page 154.

## **In Days of Posh Tubs and Pigs**

Edited by Elizabeth Turner

Country Endeavour Local History Project, Guisborough, 1987

A look at life in the early twentieth century through interviews with local residents, some from Great Ayton, from recorded interviews. The original recordings are preserved in the Teesside Archives in Middlesbrough. Many of the recollections are specifically quoted from Aytonians.

**Fred Bottomley**, who had lived in the same house in Great Ayton since his birth in 1910:

Everyone stood in the street on listening to the bells ringing in the New Year.

Up to two hundred children rolling paste eggs down the side of Captain Cook's on Easter Monday afternoon.

Putting on play in the parochial hall, getting chosen to be in the school pantomime.

Playing marbles on a marble board.

Tying a button to a thread and hanging it against a window so it went "tap, tap" against the glass. People would think it was a ghost.

Dad made wooden things, old pram wheels and made a bogey.

Playing cricket in the school yard with a tennis ball.

Merrills, a board with dozens of holes and little pegs.

In the General Strike of 1926 everybody went on strike. The only ones working were the Post Office, I believe they still delivered letters. The mines, the school teachers, the clerks, the people in shops, everybody, there was nobody working.

**Arthur Cumbor**, who moved into the village when he was one year old:

Playing football with an inflated pig's bladder.

Going to church with a clean starched collar, clean face and clean shoes.  
First footing, taking an egg or a turnip or whatever.  
Wearing a new suit or new boots for church on Easter Sunday.  
Frumenty and gingerbread on Christmas Eve, and a goose or turkey at Christmas.  
Just an orange and an apple and a few nuts in his Christmas Stocking.  
Baking chestnuts to harden them for playing conkers.  
Children didn't want a lot of toys, there was so much in Mother Nature for them.

**John Frankland**, a farmer, born in 1913 and lived in Ayton all his life.

His family kept a goat or two, pegged on Low Green, for milk, and he sold eggs from their chickens door-to-door.  
Collecting rainwater from the back of the house. In dry weather, when this ran out, they collected water from the beck in a big old tin bath.  
Playing marbles.  
Playing tiggings in the school yard.  
One bloke would lean against a wall with another three or four all bent over. You took a run and jumped onto the lads' backs to see how far you could get along, saying "mude kitty, mude kitty".  
Whipping a top in the main road – nowt but horse and carts then.

**Richard Heaviside**, born in John Street in 1905, worked as a miner and then as a joiner:

His parents had an allotment which kept them in potatoes all year round.  
Saturday routine of washing all the floors, shaking mats, and black leading the fireplace.  
We never got many birthday presents when I was a lad.  
Playing tip cat – hitting a piece of wood, pointed at each end, with a stick to see how far it would go.  
We always had comics – Comic Life and Lot of Fun, my younger brother had Chuckles.  
At Christ Church on Friday night we used to play cards and dominoes, and there was a kid's club.  
We were frightened of the policeman, we always got out of his way or he would clip your ear. We had two policemen, a sergeant and a constable.  
Nobody got mugged. You didn't bother to lock your doors.

**Lillian Sales**, born in the village in 1905, her father was a miner, she worked as a maid and then as a shop assistant;

Washing clothes with a peggy or a poss stick in a tub.  
Every day of the week had a routine in order to get through all the work.  
I was friendly with the police sergeant and his daughter and I used to go to the police station with her.  
I remember the coal strikes, we used to go up to the Monument and get dead trees and saw them into logs.

**Charlie Sigsworth**, one of fifteen children, born in 1907 in the village:

Milky Willy, with his pony and trap, and Fanny Easton with a hand-barrow carrying a large churn.  
Helping his mother, after school on wash days, by turning the mangle handle.  
His mother couldn't get through all the washing on Monday and was sometimes still ironing in the middle of the week.  
Crackers and sparklers on Bonfire Night  
Playing "mouny kiddy" in the school yard. Someone would lean against a wall, the others would tuck their heads down and form a line behind him. Then the others jumped onto the line to see how many you could get on the line of kids' backs.  
We used to go to the tips and find an old frame and wheels and make our own bikes.  
The police were very good, everyone got on well with them.  
In 1926 he was in the navy, and was on duty at Liverpool Docks where they had a smashing time boozing with the strikers they were supposed to be guarding.

## **Round and About the North Yorkshire Moors, a glimpse of the past**

Tom Scott Burns

M.T.D.Rigg Publications, Guiseley, 1987

Tom Scott Burns was born in Middlesbrough and lived in Nunthorpe for many years. He was a keen walker and lover of the surrounding countryside, publishing several books about Cleveland and the North York Moors. He died in 2011.

This book takes the form of short articles based around a number of old photographs. There is only one reference to Great Ayton in this volume, on pages 25-26. The picture is of West Terrace, looking over the river to Ayton Hall. The public water pump is clearly visible outside the Buck Hotel. The accompanying article is very short, but mentions the witch Au'd Nanny from the poem "T' Hunt o' Yatton Brig". On page 56 there is a picture of a field of corn stooks at Newton, with Roseberry Topping in the background.

### **Round and About the North Yorkshire Moors Volume II, a further glimpse of the past**

Tom Scott Burns and Martin Rigg

M.T.D.Rigg Publications, Guiseley, 1988

This book follows the format of the previous volume, with Martin Rigg from Guiseley providing some of the photographs and background text. As if making up for the comparative neglect of Great Ayton in the first volume, this contains no fewer than seven articles on the village and many fine photographs by Frederick L Stainsby of Middlesbrough.

Pages 20-21 have a Stainsby photograph from 1896 of children in the Leven, just below the waterfall, looking towards Waterfall Terrace and the bottom of Skitterbeck. There is hardly any water in the river, a consequence of most of the flow being diverted down the mill race upstream of the dam. The article quotes from the histories of Cleveland by Graves and by Ord.

Pages 73-74 describe operations in Bradley's whinstone quarry, with a Stainsby photograph of the workings.

Page 79 has another Stainsby photograph, this one is of Low Green, looking towards the footbridge at the lower end of the green. Eastbrook house can be seen, as can the "Guinea Pig Inn" and some outbuildings. The short article mentions the three mills.

Pages 87-88 are about the bridge at Little Ayton, with a Stainsby photograph of the iron bridge shortly after it was built.

Page 92-93 are of the huge beacon on Roseberry Topping for the coronation of Edward VII. There is a brief description of Robinson Martin using a steam engine to haul the timber to the summit.

Pages 113-114 have an excellent Stainsby photograph of the Captain Cook Monument during its restoration in 1895. According to the text, the doorway was blocked off during the second restoration, after the lightning strike of 1960, when the monument was split from top to bottom.

Pages 114-115 show a Stainsby photograph of the Cook Cottage on Easby Lane, before part of it was taken down to widen the road. Tom Scott Burns correctly states that James Cook never lived there.

### **History of Cleveland Ancient and Modern**

Rev. J. C. Atkinson

M.T.D. Rigg Publications, Guisley, 1993

Hitherto unpublished writings of Canon Atkinson, which include his chapter on the Parish of Ayton. This has been transcribed elsewhere in the website.

Atkinson records that Doctor Craster of Middlesbrough had excavated several barrows on Ayton Moor "several years since" (perhaps written by Atkinson around 1880) but he had no record of the results. He recalled a conversation with Mr. Craster when he had told him that he recovered a very large quantity of flints from a barrow on the Newton/Guisborough boundary and arrowheads and other stone articles, with one urn, at another site on Ayton Moor.

The Marwood Free Grammar School was built in 1851 to replace the old Postgate School. The new Christ Church had been built, and there is the text of a letter from Rev. Ibbetson to Canon Atkinson listing the main contributors to the cost of building the new church.

## **A Stokesley Diary 1901-1971**

Charles and Marion Hall

The Stokesley Society, 1999

Extracts from the diary kept by Charles and Marion Hall, many recording events in Stokesley and nationally, but with occasional references to Great Ayton. The following are of relevance to Great Ayton.

- 1935 Noel Kitching married Miss Nicholls of Seamer.
- April 1941 Little Ayton: Mine of largest calibre dropped by parachute from Teesside, narrowly missing steeple of Great Ayton Church, dropped here in Mr. Dixon's field, breaking odd windows at Ayton, throwing open the doors and lifting beds at Stokesley, during heavy raid on Middlesbrough.
- 22 October 1941 Incendiary bombs fell at Gribdale.
- 27 June 1942 Balloon seen over new gunnery and radio location field at Tree Briggs (Tree Bridge).
- 20 August 1943 (or thereabouts) News that the only son of Col. Kitching of Ayton Firs is missing in Sicily. Was serving with paratroops. (Col. And Mrs Kitching gave a window to Ayton Church after the war in memory of all the fallen in the war from that place – just including their son's name with all the others).
- Autumn 1943 Four farm cottages built at great Ayton by Stokesley RDC for agricultural workers. Cost over £1,00 and over for each, rent 13/6 per week. Well planned houses.
- 24 September 1944 A carriage-width bridge of steel and concrete replaces wooden footbridge at Great Ayton (Mr Sidgewick's farm).
- 21 October 1944 Stokesley Auction Mart closed due to foot and mouth disease at Ayton and Broughton.
- 8 April 1945 Two PoWs return to Great Ayton.
- October 1945 Mrs Besley, widow of former Rector of Stokesley, died. He died 1903/4. She lived at Holm Lea, Great Ayton, for several years afterwards. Her son, the composer, died this year.
- 1 October 1946 A prison camp at Ayton. The men allowed to move freely round the country, distinguishable only by their uniforms.
- August 1955 Old cottage at Ayton, opposite Mrs Besley's house, pulled down for road widening.
- 15 September 1955 Fatal accident to Derek Greenwell, 19, of Ayton when walking home after Stokesley Show.
- 12 March 1957 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Christ Church, Great Ayton.
- 30 June 1957 Floods after thunderstorm causing difficulties in Great Ayton.
- 27 December 1958 Dr Murray, 80, of Great Ayton died. Very greatly esteemed like his much beloved predecessor and partner, Dr Charles Stuart, who died about 30 years ago. The people of Ayton erected a granite cross to the memory of him and his sister, who died a few days after he did.
- 3 April 1959 Rev Reginald Ernest Bradshaw, vicar of Hutton Rubdy from 1954 and Chaplain to Nunthorpe Sanatorium, died in hospital at Newcastle after some weeks' illness. He was vicar of Great Ayton for 15 years ...
- 14 December 1959 Very ancient small cottage, opposite fine old house Eastbrook (Tudor), at Great Ayton, was demolished to allow for road widening. Probably contemporary buildings. (Eastbrook itself demolished in 1969 to give way to a bungalow on the site.)
- 15 September 1960 Capt Cook's Monument quickly repaired. Now thought corrosion of lightning conductor was cause of failure of its protection.
- 29 September 1961 Evening Gazette reports that Mr Bryan Tinkler, teacher at Ayresome Senior Boys' High School, Middlesbrough, and some of the boys have in recent months been uncovering an Iron Age site on the hills above Great Ayton. He is going soon with two colleagues to the Council of the British Archaeological Society in Edinburgh, taking samples of pottery damaged during the digging and metal, not of local ore, also found on the site.
- December 1961 Magistrates sentence three Stokesley youths to four months imprisonment each, regretting they could not give heavier penalty. Youths were breaking into a slot machine at Ayton and when Mr F Bottomley remonstrated they attacked him.
- 20 January 1963 Scores of skiers were on the slopes below Capt Cook's Monument in bright sunshine.

4 February 1963	A huge snow plough, made up of two large steam engines with a plough at each end, was stuck between Great Ayton and Battersby and had to be dug out. The road from Stokesley to Great Ayton by Stanley Houses was closed for three weeks by drifts.
1 April 1963	Winley Hill Farm, 131 arable acres and TT tested dairy herd, beside the Leven between Stokesley and Great Ayton, sold for £26,100 for Mr Ascough to Mr H Petch of Ayton, setting up all his sons. A very respected and experienced farmer.
30 March 1965	Death of Jack Hatfield, 71, of Middlesbrough, born at Great Ayton. "An illustrious son of Middlesbrough and an inspiration to every Teesside swimmer for 50 years. Winner of three Olympic medals for swimming at Stockholm in 1912, he also won 42 English championships. He was possibly the most popular man on Teesside. He spoke and thought well of people. He liked them and they liked him." Evening Gazette
April 1965	At Ayton schoolchildren planted daffodils in great numbers along the banks of the Leven a year or two ago. They flower in April in such beauty. Ayton an entry for the Tidy Village competition.
April 1966	Mr Herbert Dennis, former headmaster of the Friends' School at Great Ayton, died.
29 June 1966	Funeral of Sergeant George Simpson, retired from North Riding Constabulary and formerly of Great Ayton. Church almost full of mourners.
16 June 1967	Baxter Cottage at Great Ayton sold, it is said for £12,000.
4 February 1968	Dr Dodd of Ayton took four hours there and back to attend a patient in Kildale, three or four miles away, and could only travel by tractor.

### **Yeoman's Acres: Public Health in Stokesley Rural District 1899-1939**

Dennis Tyerman

Bilsdale Study Group, 2007

This booklet charts the development of public health in the Stokesley District through the medical reports of Dr. William Yeomans.

Notifiable diseases were reported: in 1912 there were forty cases of scarlet fever in Great Ayton, the outbreak starting in Rye Hill Cottages near the railway line. There had been wagons of scavenger's manure from Middlesbrough left by the cottages for a fortnight, and Dr. Yeomans was in no doubt that they were the source of the outbreak.

In 1909 seven cases of diphtheria were reported in the village. Dr. Yeomans commented that diphtheria was more frequent in Ayton than elsewhere, and he thought this was a consequence of the new drainage scheme which confined sewage into badly ventilated drains. In 1912, four Friends' School pupils were isolated in the school's infirmary with the disease. All pupils were examined and a large number of carriers found. They were isolated until free from infection. Over the following years most of the Great Ayton cases were at the school.

In 1914 it was reported that two tuberculosis shelters were in use at Mr. Wilson Tanfield's field in the village, but by 1923 the remaining shelter had to be fenced off to prevent vandalism.

In 1935 there was an outbreak of infective hepatitis, a viral disease, in the infants at Edward Kitching School. The affected pupils were excluded from school and the premises disinfected.

Clean water supplies were a continuing problem in Great Ayton. In 1900 the well outside the Buck Hotel was deepened to improve the supply. In 1906 analysis showed water from Ayton's wells to be unfit for domestic purposes, but there was no alternative supply. The Tees Valley Water Board had plans in 1913 for a piped supply, but nothing was done until the 1920s. A proposed scheme to bring water from the Gribdale whinstone mine was abandoned. A survey of public wells in 1926 again found the water unfit for use. It was not until 1929 that Dr. Yeomans could report that there was a piped-in supply from the Tees Valley Water Board, although in several cases it was difficult to get landlords to connect houses to the new supply.

Immediately after the First World War, a new shop opened in California specifically for the sale of frozen meat, and in 1929 a slaughterhouse was licenced in Little Ayton.

Great Ayton was most fortunate to have its sewerage and sewerage disposal works completed in 1899, at a cost of £3,814. 1s. 11d., the engineer being H.W. Taylor. Complaints about smells from the ventilated drain covers were reduced by installing flushing chambers and by suspending deodorisers in cages from manhole covers. In 1903, the metal sewer pipe crossing the Leven (just below Low Green) was washed away in floods and replaced. Three cast iron urinals were erected in the village in 1903. With no flushing mechanism, they “were liable to become offensive from neglect”.

Not all houses were connected to the drainage scheme. Because of the number of new houses in the village with pan closets, a new scavenger was appointed in 1909. In 1923, ash-pits and privies were reported to be in a disgraceful state, having been left for six months or longer and then only half-emptied, in spite of the contact specifying cleaning out at least once every five weeks. Where many houses shared one privy, with no single individual responsible for cleaning, they were often in a deplorable state.

By the 1930s, problems were being experienced with large quantities of surface water and the Ayton treatment works was described as “old and inadequate”. In 1936 it was decided to modernise the works at a cost of £4,250, and the work was completed two years later.

In 1910, Dr. Yeomans expressed concern at the number of new houses being built in Great Ayton with unreliable and often contaminated water supplies. Immediately after the First World War cottages in the village were reported as unfit for human habitation. Ayton was the only village in the area with a housing shortage and the Stokesley RDC Housing Committee purchase 12 acres of land on which they hoped to build 30 houses. Roads and sewers were put down in 1920.

An electricity sub-station for Great Ayton was proposed in 1929. The first petrol pump, on Romany Road, appeared in 1932.

The many appendices contain much district-wide data, but have notifiable disease records and water analyses, village by village. There is an excellent list of housing plans passed by Stokesley RDC year by year from 1899-1920, which includes all the new properties in Great Ayton and their owners.

### **The Diaries of Ralph Jackson (1749-1790)**

David Wilkinson

Normanby Local History Group, Middlesbrough, 2010

A collection of some of the more interesting entries in the celebrated diary. Many of the Ayton entries are of Ralph taking tea with his brother-in-law William Wilson or his mother.

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1 August 1762    | Ralph purchases Ayton Hall from Rev. Wilson for his mother, at a price of £4,200. The grounds were about 78 acres including the gardens.   |
| 8 May 1764       | Appointment to see Wm. Richardson, the Quaker tanner, with Mr. Smith at Guisborough tomorrow.  |
| 17 July 1765     | Goes to York races with William Wilson and “Willy Richardson” after breakfast in Ayton.  |
| 26 December 1771 | While he was at Ayton, Captain James Cook and his wife arrived at Ayton Hall and stayed the night there.   |
| 14 December 1773 | Ralph went with the doctor to obtain smallpox inoculation for his nephew, William Wilson, then 22 months old, from Jane, daughter of Mark Carrick of Ayton.  |
| 16 April 1778    | The body of Ralph’s “dear and only child” Ralph Ward was taken in a lead coffin and interred on the north side of the church. There is a detailed instruction of how to locate the exact location; the stone is engraved “R.W.J. 1778” |
| 31 May 1788      | Marriage of Dr. Blackburne to Hannah Wilson, Ralph’s niece, at Ayton Church (“now without a steeple”).   |