

Early recollections of Crayke by Mr (John William) Hogg of Crayke from circa 1894.
(as recorded by Maj Harry Spencer)

Mr Hogg was born in 1885 and died in 1965 aged 80. His recollections are recorded in his hand-written notes in a small red covered note book now belonging to the Misses Knowles of Crayke. His account would date from about the year 1893 or thereabouts, and also contains his grandfather's memories of Crayke in yet earlier days.

"I remember a court house, boot house and coach house (at the Castle). On the South side of these was a green house in which grew peaches. The coach house became unsafe as the front wall on the South side began to move. There was a stable with loose box and two (stantary?), also a privy and ash pit. Also a water pump which is now taken away, and the well filled in, stood between the two buildings mentioned about opposite the dining room window.

There were some bones found in the wall and were said to have belonged to a girl who had been walled up where the wash house now is. I saw them before they were sent off, I think to London.

There was a turret with winding stairs near where the entrance to the kitchen now is. I remember what now are the kitchens and other places being an old building used as a cowhouse, and one man could always keep 19 cows and a bull, but if he got 20, one always died. The room now used as a dining room used to be the kitchen and had a flagged floor and a wide fireplace. The St. Cuthberts table top¹ was formerly in the room then used by the housekeeper, and no doubt two of the corners were cut off to allow it to fit in the window arch looking towards the East. It was removed when the Castle was done up, and was fixed up on brick walls, then a wood frame and boards were put on top for the hot water cylinder to stand on. It was later removed and placed in the Church in the new aisle on the East Wall.

I think a better thing would have been to have it set up as an altar and used on special days.²

The old staircase and hand rails were taken from an old house in York and were bought by Mr. Cliffe and my father fixed them up. The new wing was built to celebrate Waites³ coming of age. The Castle was lit up for the occasion and a ball given. The engine to make the electric light was a steam one. I remember seeing a beautiful chandelier made of cut glass with do....(?) and button shaped pieces, and all tied together with copper wire. It eventually all came to pieces as the copper (suspension) give way. It was like those seen at Buckingham Palace.

The new stairs near the East Entrance were put up at the time of the alterations somewhere around 1896 onwards. A windmill was put up after water was found in the Home Farm field, and used to pump water up to the two big cisterns, one in the top attic and when it was full a wheel was turned on the second floor and directed the supply into a cistern just above the

¹ The old altar stone now re-established as an altar.

² This has been done now.

³ Of Husthwaite

WC near the new staircase. When it was full, the overflow ran out and was conveyed to a well near where the garage now stands. If the wind failed to blow, the gardener or someone had to do the pumping with a foot pump just through the East door.

I remember seeing bloodstains on the bedroom floor which came from the wound in Mrs Metcalf's arm inflicted by herself with her husband's razor. She got run down in health. Mr. Metcalf would not believe she was dead and would have big fires kept on to keep her warm. When he realised she was dead he insisted on the room and everything being left just as she had left it. Her (garters or gaiters?) at the foot of the bed and her knitting just where she left it and a face was drawn on her pillow. Mr. Metcalf used to say he descended from a high up family. He was a small gentleman rather after the style of a Frenchman and had a pointed beard. He gave my father and I a banana each and had to show us how to eat it as we had never seen one before.

On the brow of the hill near the dungeons looking towards Yearsley there used to be a greenhouse, also tomato house, and were heated with hot pipes. I have helped to paint them

Mr Patrick Frederick Hunter had some dog kennels built and kept fox terriers and used to catch rats for a hobby. He used to drive a sledge drawn by two ponies yoked in tandem when snow was about

Mr Hunter also had some wood stables and loose boxes put up where the brick built garage now is, and when Mr. Fisher came to the Castle he did not like it, so we removed it to the Castle field at the bottom of the steep hill on Oulston Road, and it was later taken to Mill Green Farm....

The carved stone head above the entrance to the porch is supposed to represent a blind (?) king. I fear it was rather damaged by some of the young men there who made it a target for their rook rifles.

Mr Edward Fisher who had mills at Thirsk and Huddersfield way was very fond of Crayke and would have liked to buy the Castle but Mr Stephen Cliff would not sell it to him....

I have seen the front of the Durham Ox lined with two or more rows of game of various kind laid out before being packed up and sent off.

It was Mr. Fishers car that my father had his first and only ride in a motor car when he was taken to vote at Easingwold. He could not realise hardly that he had been for the driver of the car, a Darrach (?) did the journey in 4 minutes each way and the road had a lot more corners in it then than now.

I am told that Mr. Fisher wept when he left the Castle....

At one time in my grandfather's time it (the cottage at the bottom of our street) was a Roman Catholic Chapel, and his uncle, Charles Hogg, married the priest's housekeeper. Charles Hogg came to Crayke in 1801 in answer to an advertisement for a joiner....

His Woodstore shed and stable and cartshed had a thatched roof... (one day) he was taken to York on horseback with some corn, and while there saw two men and a woman hanged. The scaffold was put up near the Castle was in St George's Field, and the prisoners were brought through a door or window onto the scaffold. He was scared of the crowd. He later saw two men hung. One was a hardened (?) criminal and before his legs were strapped together on the drop he said his father always said he was so last that he would die with his boots on, but that he would make him a liar, and he kicked his boots off among the crowd. The other, quite young, began to weep and the other told him to keep his heart up, it would soon be over.

My grandfather married a butcher's housekeeper who had his shop next to The Cottage where Dean Inge was born⁴. Miss Dobson lives there now, and the window is facing the street at the top of Jack Lane.

My grandfather always said the railway line through Alne to the big cities would not have been laid so soon had it not been for a severe gale which blew many plantations quite flat, and the owners were glad to get rid of the trees for sleepers... The roads were blocked with fallen trees....

There used to be some small cottages on the left hand side on turning the corner to go to Easingwold, called the Barracks. They were quite low and coloured yellow and as children we were told they were haunted and so we used to hurry past them at dusk.

I remember the water mill being in good order and ground flour and later just pig meal.

I remember seeing the thatch being blown off (Mr. Hutchinson's house) while we were in school. It damaged the roof of Oak Cottage, now done away with.⁵ A Mr Lacles (Lascelles) lived there. The (thatched) roof at the back came quite low and some young chaps for a lark climbed up and dropped a goose down the kitchen chimney and scared the old people who lived there. I helped to board up the bottom of the chimney for Mrs. Matthews (of the Hall) who at the time owned it, but had a trap door left so that people could see the modern fireplace. The old chimney was a wonderful piece of work with stout pieces of oak for the main spars, stout riven (?) lathes and plasterwork with cowdung clay and straw. On going upstairs into a cupboard like place there was a door into the chimney, no doubt used to put bacon into the chimney to smoke.

Over the doorway was carved THOS. JOHNSON 1614, I think the date was (Note: an account in a book says it said "MAY 14, 1613 – THOS. JOHNSON") and when the timber cottage was pulled down the wood was put in the new stone built house for Miss Matthews.

I remember Mr. Cooper, a well sinker, being gassed in the stone well on the Green. He went down to try to get his son out, It appears that a pocket of gas had formed over the water and unfortunately they had not tested the well for gas. My father was going through the square at the time and Mr. Cooper called hto him "Will you come Mr. Hogg, something is

⁴ January 1860

⁵ The timbered cottage c 1638 which was on the site of the present oak cottage until its demolition in 1937.

wrong with my lad." It was unfortunate that they did not test before going down. They were at our house for tea on the Sunday, and Mother ask if they ever had an accident, and he said no, only once a ladder broke and in falling he broke his leg. My sister played the organ, and my word what a grand bass voice he had and how we enjoyed the happiness little knowing that the next day his voice would be stilled.

He was eventually got out with ropes and grappling iron and the son somehow did not get so much gas and was got out. He was a big fine chap. I can just see them walking him about and working his arms. He gave up well sinking and joined the Police Force....

At the time there were two houses next to the one where Miss Ena Johnson now lives (Danetree), and when they were taken down, the stone now in the front wall of the Wesleyan Chapel was re-carved, and a space was cut in it, and a glass jar with some papers and I think some coins were put in before it was walled up. It has AIHS (?) on it. There was a big crowd and as each person gave a donation of money, there were loud cheers. I rather think that Mr. F.J. Todd of Easingwold had a good bit to do with the planning of it. He had an office in Uppleby.

The idea of making the village well deeper and so hold more water did not go according to plan, so the shale and stuff taken out had to be put back, as water leaked out.....

Mr. J. Spirit, who had a wooden peg-leg, did trapping to and from the Easingwold and other stations, or wherever people wished to go, also did Harry Smith and also Sam Johnson.

In former years before wireless time signals the middle bell in the church tower used to be rung a few minutes before 8am as a kind of warning, and directly the clock began to strike it stopped ringing, except on the first Sunday each month when Holy Communion was celebrated at that time, so the Sexton had to just go and do his duty so that people could set their clock right.

My grandad used to say that there had always been people named Johnson at Mill Green Farm for as long as people could remember, and one lot used to drive a horse and trap into Scarboro one day, have a rest, and come back selling fish on the way.

(A bus used to go to York every Sunday). It held about 8 inside and 4 outside, and butter and egg baskets were on the roof, and two horses pulled it. I cannot remember how long it took, but some had to get out at some of the Inns for something to revive them, as the bus got stuffy and some could not stand the rumble the wheels made....

Mr. Stephen Cliff provided a real good do for Queen Victoria's Jubilee (1897). A large tent was put up in a field and what a grand spread of food, and local people each had tables which were a picture. At night a bonfire was lit on the hill.... Mr. Cliff also gave mugs to the schoolchildren, blue for the girls and red for the boys. We had medals too, and a grand display of fireworks. There was food for all and to spare, and people on the road too were given a good helping in paper bags."

