

WHERE DID THE STONE SLATE ROOFS OF ROSSENDALE COME FROM? ARTHUR BALDWIN: GROUNDWORK ROSSENDALE

Some notes on older quarries supplying this distinctive product before the era of Welsh slate.

1 INTRODUCTION

Stone slate roofs are a rich and characterful feature of early stone buildings and an important aspect of the English landscape. In regional terms, Pennine sandstone roofs are quite hefty and laid at a very low pitch. They may not be so charming as the roofs of the limestone regions of the Midlands and the South, but they have a visual unity and harmony with the landscape and style of local architecture. With great skill and adaptation our ancestors used local materials from their immediate surroundings to create farmhouses and cottages which almost seem naturally rooted in the in the Pennine valleys and hillsides.

2 DEFINITION

The term stone slate includes many varieties of essentially sedimentary rock, especially limestones and sandstones. All must be naturally fissile ie capable of being split into comparatively thin pieces. Unlike true slate, an altered metamorphic rock which splits along lines of cleavage, stone slates always split along lines of lamination parallel to the bedding planes, often facilitated by the presence of mica flakes. Several geological horizons in the local Millstone Grit and Coal Measures display these characteristics and have been used locally, but often only in small or moderate amounts.

3 LOCAL SUPPLIES

A short newspaper report in the Bacup Times, August 1 1891 describes a ramble to Green's Clough near Deerplay alluding to Heald Flag Rock; mention being made that almost all the old houses in Rossendale were roofed with tiles from these quarries.

Was this a throw away line, a vague generalisation, or is it true?

4 THE HEALD QUARRIES

These are undoubtedly old and over grown, and large for such an early date. They stretch across the hillside between Weald Town and Shameyford for about a mile. The 1927 Geological Survey describes the strata as micaceous brown flagstones and tiles constituting the Dynely Knoll Flags, which have been extensively quarried for a mile along the crop north-westwards from Holden Gate.

- 1601: Plan of Horlaw Head and Cliviger Common (year 43 Elizabeth) for a boundary dispute - shows boundary stones in sclatt pittes etc. Possibly worked as early as 1586, with known maps of 1578 and
- 1601, marked as sclatte pittes.
- 1664: Bill of Christopher Nuttall of Newhallhey, gent. Received 22nd July 1678
- 29th February, 1664, George, Duke of Albermarle, leased all Delfes, Mynes & Quarries of Slate, fflags & Wallstones at Heald in Cliviger & Rossendale then open or to be discovered for 18 years from ----? Christopher Nuttall peacefully enjoyed them until 1676 when Richard Smith of Cliviger, yeoman, reported that as Christopher Nuttall lived so far off they were not managed to the best advantage and offered to manage them for him. They agreed that Richard Smith should have the sale orderinge & disposall of the said Mynes and should pay for every George of Slate sold 12d and for every yard of flags 12d and should have the rest of the profits but pay the rent due to the Duke of Albermarle. Richard Smith was to render a fair and just account of tile profits from time to time.
- Richard Smith entered and occupied for 2 years and sold at least 300 George of slate and 1000 yards of flags. When called upon to render account and pay Christopher Nuttall what was due Richard Smith shuffled of yo'r Orator from time to tyme with trivial & delatory excuses but at last came and paid £3 saying it was in full satisfaction and discharge of all moneys he had received but refused to render a particular account saying Christopher Nuttall cannot prove the original contract and that if he can he does not know how much stone has been got out, etc. Christopher Nuttall prays that Richard Smith may be compelled to release the promises and to render account of the profits, etc.
- Other Heald references
- 1804 - 1810: Thomas Barclay's map marked for Heald as slate and flags.
- 1828 - 9: Lord Jas & Co, Held Bacup: Stone Merchants.
- 1846?: Lord James supplying 6 x 8 pierpoints, slate, flags landings, comishes, fire pieces, hearth stones, wail stones and slop stones.

- 1848; OS Map; shows a series of quarries labelled (from north to south, but now no longer mentioning slate) sandstone quarry (flags), sandstone quarry (flags and ashlar), sandstone quarry (flags), sandstone quarry (flags), sandstone quarries (flags and ashlar).
- 1848 OS Map; Slate Pit Hill near Sharneyford.
- 1851: Lord James and Co (slate) Heald Delph.
- 1880s: 50 years ago and for several years later Heald Slate Quarries were in full swing, the slate being sent to all parts of the country, as Welsh slate as then very little known. It was said to be run by the Lords and the Blezards.
- 1867; Field trip to Bacup and Todmorden; Six or seven ft. of finely laminated grit, principally used for roof tiling, This tile rock has for a long period been worked, on an extensive scale, along the hillside from Sharneyford to Heald; it is now, however, nearly exhausted, and is only quarried at one place at Sharneyford.
- 1868; Lord James & Co Heald Top.
- 1869; Lord James & Co & slate, Clough Head Sharneyford.
- 1890: Bolton states In past times those beds have been much worked, the rock readily splitting into thin flags of 1-2 inches in thickness, which were used for roofing purposes during a lengthened period antecedent to that of the introduction of Welsh slate.
- 1891; Ramble to Green's Clough.

5 SLATES FROM STONY RAKE, HASLINGDEN GRANE:

An excellent description is given in The History of Haslingden Grane by Lancashire County Council (198) - 'In the county there are beds of Haslingden Flags, a form of gritstone (sic) which splits into thin flat flags ideal for roofing and paving; for hundreds of years tiny quarries - only surface scratchings by later standards - had been worked on the upper hillslopes. They were known as the 'stone pits' or 'slate pits', and were concentrated along the line of the old main road, Stony Rake, about 1/2 mile west of the village. Here the beds came to the surface and could be exploited with the minimum of excavation, so the shelf of the hillside became pockmarked with shallow pits.'

These were certainly being worked by the middle of the 17th century. In a survey undertaken in 1662 it was asked what Slatemines are within the Hundred of Blakeburnshire... and who sells the Slatestones of Haslingden, Grane Post and the Pikelaws. In answer it was explained that the workings had been leased to Edward Kippax, but were now almost worn out and little to be gotten saveing what remains in the Coppihold lands (lands rented from the lord of the manor) of one Lawrence Heape and Richard Rothwell in the Graine in Haslingden.

The remains of many little pits may be seen south of the modern B6232, forming a confused landscape of overgrown mounds and hollows typical of early, small scale quarrying activity.

6 OTHER EARLY SLATE QUARRIES:

- 1341; Tupling records; from the De Lacy Compti 'bacstones' were sold in 1341 - 42.
- 1439: In the middle of the next century (1439 - 40) rents were being drawn by the Receiver of the Honour both from 'Baxstondelf' and from a couple of quarries of slate stones in the same manor.
- 1537: Duchy Papers: Michaelmas - 3 men fined 8d each for breaking the King's ground at Balladen, and therefrom taking limestones and selling them to strangers.
- 1552; There were mynes or delfes on the King's waste ground at Balladen wherein slate stones were got. They were scarcely worth letting by the year for 20/- because there is slate enough to be had near adjoining on other men's land and because it is in a 'wyld savage contrey farre from any habitacion.
- 1620s; Edward Rawstorne the elder (of Lumb Hall) to his daughter-in-law Jane - sha? He granted her all suche waleston, freeston, and slate, as ly in my Lanndes called Hancocke and alsoe all those walestones wch I have bought from Mr Rawstorne, and another person of slate standinge in Balliden Hey.
- 1753: There were proceedings in Chancery against several men (including James Holt of Pike Hill Slacks) who had worked for sale several great quantities of slates, flags and wallstones. (The stone which was quarried from the ancient enclosures, especially at Horncliffe, or from the small stone pits on Deardern Moor).
- 1784-85:
 1. Counterpart lease dated 1st March 1784 and made by (1) Lord and Lady Beaulieu and Duke of Montagu to (2) John Hargreaves of Newchurch in Rossendale for one

year of all the slate mines and slate pits and quarries of stone, slate and flags within the copyhold lands of the said John Hargreaves within the manor of Tottington (except such stones and flags as maybe wanted by the farmers of the coal mines). Annual rent £1 1s.

2. Counterpart lease dated 1st April 1785 and made by (1) Mr Richardson on behalf of the Earl and Countess of Beaulieu and the Duke of Montagu and (2) James Dewhurst the younger of New Hall in Eden field, quarryman; John Lord and James Lord of Spotland, quarrymen; and James Dewhurst the elder of New Hall, quarryman of all the slate mines, etc., in the copyhold lands, etc. and waste grounds commonly called Foe Edge or Fall Edge (except (as above)). Annual rent £6.

3. Counterpart lease dated 1st March 1784 and made by (1) Earl and Countess of Beaulieu and Duke of Montagu and (2) James Warburton of Haslingden, quarryman; Isaac Nuttall the younger of Lawnd, quarryman; Charles Nuttall of Haslingden, yeoman; Isaac Nuttall the elder of Lawnd, yeoman, and Abraham Warburton of Haslingden, yeoman of all the slate mines, etc. in the copyhold land of Mr John Howorth of Horncliffe in Tottington Upper End and called Horncliffe and in the occupation of the said John Howarth and his tenants. Annual rent £18 18s. (Endorsed 'A new lease granted')

4. Counterpart lease dated 22nd January 1788 and made by (1) Duke of Montagu and Earl of Beaulieu to (2) James Warburton of Haslingden, quarryman, Isaac Nuttall of Lawnd in Higher Booths, quarryman, and John Hoyle of Haslingden, merchant for one year of the same quarries as in no.3. Annual rent 18 gns. (Endorsed 'Given up')

- 1825 Reference to grey slate in the Directory of Fowle Edge and Crest Height quarries.