

THE LUSARDI FAMILY

Memories of Otley Chevin 1939 – 1943

On the 1st September 1939 the first evacuation of Leeds School children took place, that is, those children whose parents had agreed to have them evacuated. They were dispersed to various towns and cities, including Otley. Luckily for us, our parents had decided we would not be evacuated with all the other children and instead they made private arrangements, as indeed they were allowed to.

Around 1937 two uncles, Gilbert and Jack, together with our father Franky (Frank), had built a wooden bungalow at the top of Otley Chevin. It was in a field which belonged to the Blackburn family and was situated directly at the top of the Chevin. It was to this bungalow that we were evacuated, together with some adults to care for us. There were also other bungalows plus one or two caravans in the field.

While living in the bungalow, Mary aged 5yrs 9mths and Mario aged 5yrs 11mths attended St. Joseph's School in Crow Lane. They would have had to walk down the Chevin each day and back up again at the end of each day, and they really were quite young. During the time we spent on the Chevin, Anita would have been between the ages of 3 and 6 years and Patricia, the youngest sister, between the ages of 1 and 3 years. While both had started school in Leeds by 1940/1, they did not go to school in Otley. Anita remembers being told that she went back into Leeds each school day by bus with her Aunt after dropping Mario and Mary off at St. Joseph's.

The bungalow (see photo) was made of wood, in the Scandinavian style. It was painted green. It consisted of two bedrooms, a large living room and a kitchen with a wood burning stove. This was used for both heating and cooking. The bungalow had a veranda right across the front. As the land must have been differing heights, it also had a small sloping garden leading from the veranda down towards the field. There were steps near the right side leading to the veranda and from there into the living room. (photo) The garden used to be full of nasturtiums. As Grandfather Modesto (aged 60) was Italian we would eat the leaves, together with young nettles, in a salad. On the left hand side of the bungalow we also had an outside toilet. We believe it was an earth closet as it used to smell terrible. Our Grandfather used to empty it. There was no water or electricity, so we used to collect water from the farm pump which was situated in the farmyard, not too far away. There were always geese in the yard and they would attack anyone who entered. As children we were quite frightened of them. For light we used paraffin lamps. Grandfather would go out and pick mushrooms early in the morning. He would also pick wild bilberries and we would go with him. They grew all over the Chevin and still do. Whenever we see bilberries, wherever we are, they always remind us of him.

The Blackburn family ran the farm. They also kept cows, pigs and chickens. There were certainly two big cartons, one mainly white called Blossom and one other, we think, called Dobbi. We were allowed to ride on Blossom and all of us at the same time! The horses were free to wander about the Chevin top. We believe they reminded Grandfather of Italy. The Blackburns had two sons, Cyril and Jackie. There may also have been a daughter. We used to buy milk and eggs from them. The chickens were free to roam and they would lay their eggs under the bungalow for us to find. On certain days the Blackburns also used to serve tea and cakes from a table in their kitchen wall. We have an idea they went to live in Jersey.

We have since heard that in earlier days the farm was also known as Jenny's Cottage and we have a postcard showing this and dated 1908. At the very top of the Chevin are the rocks. They are probably extremely old. We used to play on and among them. We were complete daredevils with no fear. One was known as the 'Devil's Frying Pan' and one was called the 'Crocodile's Mouth'. We used to dare each other to go inside. We think it has since collapsed. We could access the stones over a stile situated at the back of our bungalow. You could stand on the Devil's Frying pan and our bungalow was only a few steps behind.

We remember Mum getting cross with the people of Otley. They would open their doors at night to see which planes were over and in doing so let the light shine out. We could see this quite clearly from the top. This was very irresponsible as the Germans were thought to be looking for the Avro Armstrong factory near Yeasdale in order to bomb it. Luckily they never did find it.

We all loved going down to Otley, running down through the woods and the endless light of stars. We believe someone even went down for fish and chips. We remember very well going to Christmas Sundays, to Our Lady and All Saints, then walking back up the 'Lemonade' steep and buying a drink from a very nice friendly lady, in a white painted house.

We think the other adults at the family could only visit Otley from Leeds when there was some petrol to spare, so we must have been fairly isolated. Maybe the Royalty agreed to take phone calls as we had a telephone in Leeds. We don't know.

We loved it up on the Chevin and many years later wondered why we did not keep the bungalow.

Mario Lusardi
Cecilia Lusardi
Anita Mason (nee Lusardi)
Patricia W. Galt (nee Lusardi)
2011



Plan of the chalets in the field behind Beacon House



OLD JENNY'S COTTAGE

1963 Map: Crown Copyright. Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey

John Blackburn's daughter, Mary, took over the tenancy in 1947 with her husband, Lawrence Jackson, and they remained there until 1958, when the Blackburn family link with Jenny's Cottage finally came to an end after nearly 50 years. It appears from the article below that the new generation of car users allowed people to come from further afield with their own provisions and this may have led to less custom at Jenny's Cottage.

FAMILY LINK WITH "JENNY'S COTTAGE" IS TO END

Mr and Mrs Lawrence O Jackson are leaving Surprise View on the top of Otley Chevin shortly and the move will end a family association of almost fifty years with what is known locally as Jenny's Cottage.

Mrs Jackson followed her father Mr John Blackburn in 1907 and he took over from his father Mr Senior Blackburn in 1904 after Mr Senior Blackburn had been there for 25 years.

The family have provided tea and refreshments over the years and the main visitors is the wind-swept crown of the Chevin with its magnificent panoramic view of the Wharfe valley.

Picnic Rendezvous

Times have changed since the hey-day of Mr Senior Blackburn's period when local folk used to make a holiday of a visit to the little refreshment house and it was not uncommon to see hundreds picnicking on the surrounding rocks and hillside. Now most are more visitors from further afield than local people but they come in cars and their needs are fewer.

Mr and Mrs Jackson with their two sons, have decided to

move to a house in Courthouse Street, Otley, and Mr Blackburn will carry on his business of agricultural steam sterilising.

Beacon Site

The cottage is officially known as Beacon House Farm and it stands within a short distance of the site of the Beacon fire which in older times signalled impending danger to the people of Wharfedale and Airedale. It is now the site for celebration bonfires.

An odd feature is that although the cottage is one of the notable landmarks of Otley Chevin it is not within the Otley boundary. This now goes no further than the wall at the foot of the last steep slope to the crown of the hill where the cottage stands. Until 25 years ago, when boundaries were reviewed, Otley's boundary ran along the top of the hill but the cottage was on the Gilsley side.

THE FUTURE OF CHEVIN CARAVAN SITE

Council application heard at six-hour inquiry

A proposed Order by Aireborough Council to discontinue the use of land off York Gate, near Surprise View, Otley, as a holiday caravan site, was the subject of a six-hour inquiry held in the town hall on Wednesday.

The inquiry was held at the town hall on Wednesday, at 7.30 pm. Mr. W. H. Lister, representative of the Society for the Preservation of Rural England, the Ramblers' Association, and the Yorkshire Water Board, supported the Council's application. The Council's application was supported by a large number of objectors, including the owners of the site.

Mr. John Berry, Area Engineer, Aireborough Council, said that the Council had received a letter from the Yorkshire Water Board, dated 19th June, asking for the site to be cleared of caravans and other structures.

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From 1958 until 1972 the land was farmed by Reg Marston. He continued to allow use of the field behind Jenny's Cottage for caravans and holiday chalets. In August 1963 an order was made by Aireborough Council to discontinue the Beacon House caravan site. The land had to be cleared by December 31st 1963.

Agitation

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Sanitation

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Why the loss?

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THIEF BUSY ON CHEVIN TOP

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1966

Wharfedale and Airedale Observer

1960

SURPRISE VIEW BREAK-IN

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Mr Fred Atkinson and his wife ran the Surprise View Cafe from 1959, possibly until about 1970. They lived down in Otley, but would open up the cafe at weekends to provide refreshments for visitors to the Chevin top. Sadly, they were the last people to provide such a service after a history of about 150 years.

OLD JENNY'S COTTAGE OTLEY

In 1972 the Sam Chippendale Foundation bought the cottage and the surrounding land on the Chevin Top, together with the White House property lower down the Chevin, to safeguard it all for the people of Otley. Sam Chippendale was a former estate agent from Otley who became a successful property developer. He established the Arndale Shopping Centres in the 1960's with his partner Arnold Hagenbach and was keen that the people of Otley should benefit from his good fortune.



By 1976 local people were becoming very concerned and saddened at the dilapidated and dangerous state the cottage had been allowed to get into. The building had been badly vandalised and stones and slates removed. Reluctantly, Otley Town Council decided that it should be completely demolished.

JENNY'S COTTAGE

VANDALS ARE PULLING DOWN A CHEVIN TOP LANDMARK

One of Otley's best known and most prominent landmarks—Jenny's Cottage on the crest of the Chevin overlooking the town—is fast disappearing through sheer vandalism.

Known in former years by generations of Otley folk and by visitors from neighbouring areas as a neat cottage where one could find a warming cup of tea and sandwich after climbing the steep slope to the summit, it is now an empty, roofless shell with gaping holes in the few walls that are still standing.

Mr. P. E. Rawling, former head forester at Dainfield, said that since the cottage became unoccupied it has been a prime target for vandalism. "The cottage has been a local landmark for over a hundred years, and it is a shame to see it being pulled to pieces," he said. "Some people have even taken away the slates with vans to take away the wall slates."

The empty cottage was included in some 24 acres of Chevin top land which was purchased about four years ago by the Chippendale Foundation.

Mr. Rawling said it was intended that the land should form part of a countryside park, eventually being part of a walk from Pool Bank, through Dainfield, over the Chevin, Burley Woodhead and Ilkley, to join the Pennine Way.

Concern at condition of Jenny's Cottage

The condition of Jenny's Cottage at the top of The Chevin, and the fact that its gradual demolition, partly by vandals, is depriving the town of an old landmark, is causing concern to members of Otley Town Council.

The General Purposes Committee, reported that a letter was being sent by the Council to the owner of the property, Mr. Sam Chippindale, asking him to take steps to have the building made safe.

The committee chairman, Coun. Dr. G. Kirkland, said it was a great pity that the cottage should be lost as a landmark. "But now it is three-quarters down we should press for it to be made safe, to prevent it falling on some unsuspecting walker on the Chevin," he said.

FACE-LIFT FOR CHEVIN LAND WILL BE JOB CREATION WORK

A project that would see the history-rich top of Otley under the government-sponsored Job Creation scheme to give a face-lift to the path and surrounding area of the Chevin, has been officially approved.

Jenny's Cottage

Details of the proposals were outlined by Norman Arthur Gemmel, who has been associated for a number of years with the environmental aspect of the Chevin and the countryside generally.

The work would involve the final demolition of Jenny's Cottage which, he said, was at the moment in a shocking state and quite beyond repair. The only solution was to pull it down completely and clear the site. Some of the stones from the cottage, he said, had already gone towards another Job Creation scheme for new classrooms at Hilton Grange school at Bramhope.

"The whole area of the Chevin top is tatty," said Mr. Gemmel, and he suggested items that would form part of the project—provision of seats for visitors making good footpaths, and creating an easier path from the town to the top of the hill, winding round by White House. A good deal of work needed to be done in the woodlands alongside the main path to the summit, which were in a bad state and needed clearing up, in conjunction with the forestry staff.



By the end of 1976, Jenny's Cottage was no more. The stone was used to build the Aireborough Flower Fund Homes at Guiseley and some also went to Hilton Grange School at Bramhope.

Fri. 3rd December, 1976

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WHARFEDALE

OLD JENNY'S

A letter from Mrs. Florence Bellerby, of Chirpendale Rise, Otley makes an interesting suggestion for a memento to mark the passing of Old Jenny's Cottage from the bank of the Chevin. She writes:

"What a nice farewell and tribute in your 'Diary' last week to Jenny's Cottage.

"It would be pleasant to have a cairn of some of the old stones, with an inscription, so that people would pause, and perhaps once more re-live their childhood days spent scrambling on the rocks nearby—the Frying Pan, Throat, Crocodile, Mouth etc.—and view the fields below, out past like a Wellington boot and the sea of heart and diamonds with our lovely Wharfe like a silver ribbon below.

"Please leave a little heather where she was buried and Ladies Fingers etc. grew in profusion."

"Each night if a moon is shining, I gaze up at the lovely Chevin and wonder how many we will miss the old cottage. Poor 'Old Jenny'! You are leaving a sad world but we were all grateful for having known you."

'OLD JENNY'S'

So Old Jenny's Cottage, high on the Chevin, is finally, and regrettably, being demolished. The community is the poorer for its loss.

It is said that, for some reason, the old cottage had been allowed to get into such a state of dilapidation that it had become unsafe. Wreckage by hooligans was followed by removal of much of the stone that, over many years, had stood four square to the Chevin blasts.

It is a pity no way could have been found to preserve the old cottage. It has memories for so many people, not only as a landmark seen from Otley Town Centre, but as a pleasant resting place for a cup of coffee and a biscuit or even a pea-and-pie supper or a ham and eggs high tea, after a stiff climb up the hill. Those who knew it in its more hospitable days will remember nostalgically the glorious views across the valley from its windows.

Now, it has almost gone. There will be many who feel regret that more effort was not made to save it, and that the planners—so keen to retain, sometimes for almost incomprehensible reasons, the scanty offer of far less interesting "listed buildings" in the townships of the valley—could not have found a way to list, and retain, this old cottage on the hill, that has been part of the Otley scene for so many years.

CHEVIN LAND TO BE SOLD BY CHIPPINDALE FOUNDATION

The announcement by the Chippendale Foundation that it is prepared to sell its Chevin holdings in Otley, near Leeds, has aroused considerable local interest and speculation.

The Foundation is a charitable trust which has donated a number of local projects including a major contribution to the Chippendale Memorial Park at Prince Harry's Grammar School.

The Foundation was set up in 1964 by Mr. Sam Chippendale, who was born in Otley and died in 1964. The Foundation is a charitable trust which has donated a number of local projects including a major contribution to the Chippendale Memorial Park at Prince Harry's Grammar School.

Otley Council opposes Chevin housing plans

Otley Town Council has expressed its opposition to the plans of the Chippendale Foundation to build a new detached house on the top of the Chevin. The Council has also expressed its opposition to the plans of the Chippendale Foundation to build a new detached house on the top of the Chevin.

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The site was still owned by the Sam Chippendale Foundation and at the beginning of 1977 they submitted a planning application to erect a new detached house on the top of the Chevin. This was refused on the grounds that "it would be an unwarranted intrusion into an area of natural beauty". The Foundation subsequently decided to sell the whole of their holdings on the Chevin.

PLANS FOR HOUSES AT JENNY'S COTTAGE AND WHITE HOUSE SITES

A planning application to erect a new detached house on the site of Jenny's Cottage at the top of Otley Chevin has been received by the Planning Department of Leeds City Council for their consideration.

The same applicant is also seeking permission to erect three detached houses at the White House Farm, Johnny Lane, on the slopes of the Chevin overlooking Otley.

Both are sites which Otley Town Council has earmarked for possible projects in connection with the commemoration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

Jenny's Cottage, also known locally as Beacon House, was a landmark on the summit of the Chevin for generations, before falling into decay and having to be demolished.

The site is on land in the ownership of the Sam Chippendale Foundation, and which is currently the subject of a 'woodfill' under the government sponsored Job Creation Scheme, part of the project being to complete the demolition of the cottage.

Plans to use stone from the cottage to build an obelisk or range of steps on the Chevin as part of Otley's contribution towards commemorating the Queen's Silver Jubilee are being considered in detail by the Town Council. It has also been suggested to mark the Jubilee year that the old White House could be converted into a field study centre.

Both the applications are

being considered as having been received by the planning authorities are submitted to the Sam Chippendale Foundation, which bears the name of Otley-born businessman Mr. Sam Chippendale. They are in outline form only.

Sent via the Otley-based firm of Messrs. Dacre, Son and Hartley, auctioneers and valuers, the first application reads: "Outline application to erect detached dwelling to site of demolished house (site area 0.25 ha - 0.56 acres) on site of Beacon House, Yorkgate, Otley, Airedale, Yorkshire (on 204 SW). Part of this application lies within Otley."

The second application reads: "Outline application to erect three detached houses to vacant site (site area 2.1 ha - 5.2 acres) White House Farm, Johnny Lane, Otley, Chert. Gury (on 204 SW)."

Plan to replace Jenny's Cottage is refused

An application to build a detached house on the site of Jenny's Cottage, on the brow of the Chevin overlooking Otley, has been refused by Leeds west division planning authority, because the site is in the Green Belt.

The application was submitted by the Chippendale Foundation. Jenny's Cottage, once a landmark on the Chevin skyline, is now derelict and partly demolished, and is due for complete demolition shortly as part of the "tidy up" operation on the Chevin in the Job Creation programme.

The application to build another house on the site has been opposed by Otley Town Council on the ground that it would be an unwarranted intrusion into an area of natural beauty. The Leeds planning authority also had letters of objection from Aireborough Civic Society, the Ramblers' Association and the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

In 1977, Leeds City Council purchased the site where Jenny's Cottage once stood from the Sam Chippendale Foundation.

Leeds Council to buy Chevin land

Leeds City Council has agreed to buy an area of 11.5 hectares of land on Otley Chevin from the Sam Chippendale Foundation.

A report to the Council was made by the Committee of the Council which stated that the Foundation had offered the land to the Council for a price of £10,000. The Countryside Commission had indicated that a grant equivalent to 50 per cent of the purchase price would be given, together with continued support to future development costs.

It was agreed that the land should be purchased with vacant possession, subject to finance being available and each party being responsible for their own costs.



BUILT OF STONE FROM
JENNY'S COTTAGE
TO COMMEMORATE THE
SILVER JUBILEE
OF
H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II.
1977
BY THE PEOPLE OF OTLEY

The site was tidied up and a decision made to build a Rangefinder where Jenny's Cottage once stood.

There had been a map board somewhere near here from 1928, possibly until the Second World War, when it was removed to avoid being used as a landmark.

Shown here is a drawing of what it could look like by the former Head Forester, Reg Rawling.



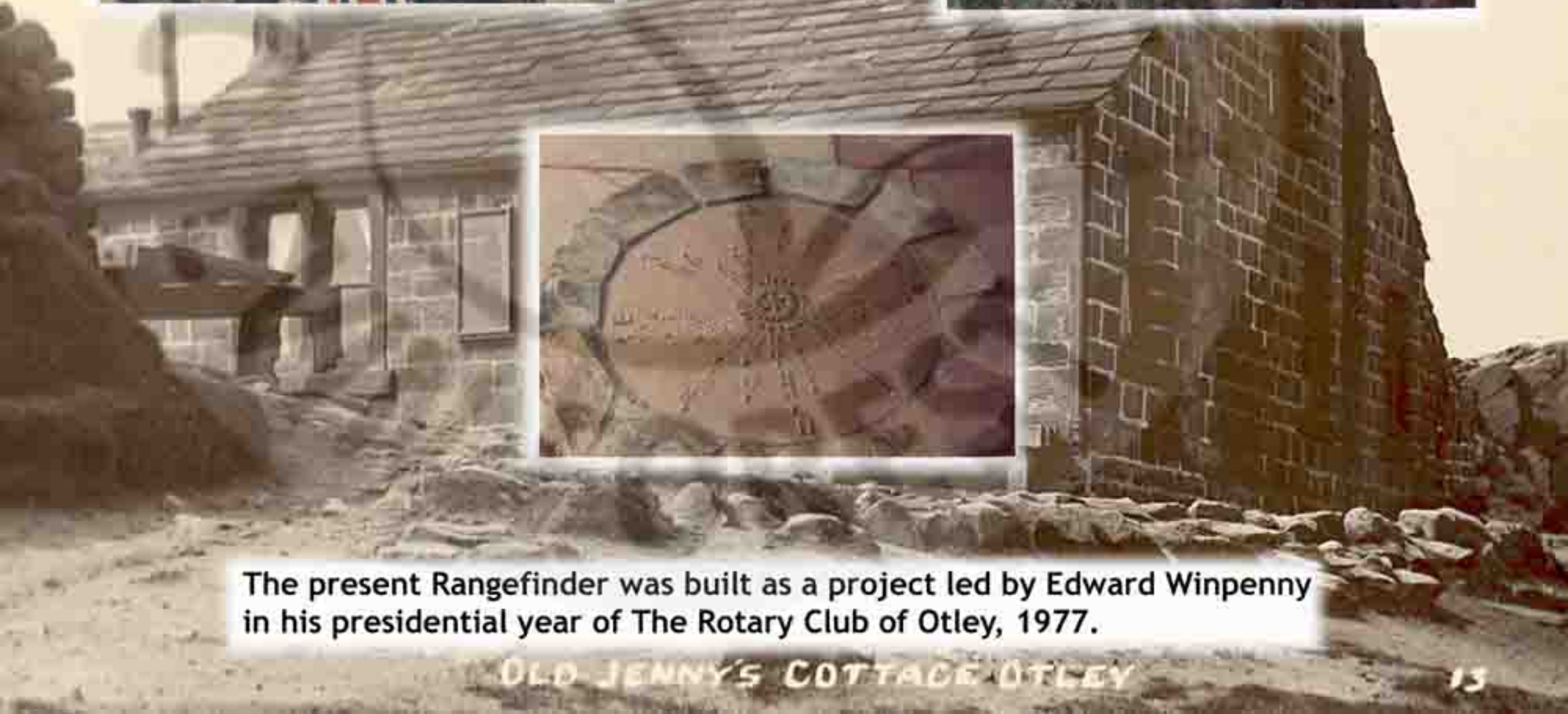
MAP ONCE STOOD ON CHEVIN TOP



Will you please allow me to correct a small mistake which crept into the interesting article you published last week on the 'Contour Map' that formerly stood on Otley Chevin, near Beacon House, usually referred to as Jenny's Cottage. Also as I have since found out that some of the facts I supplied to you for that article are not strictly correct, it gives me the opportunity to rectify them.

It was the Howarth, and not the Hawthorn Hamblers who were responsible for its being placed there, and Mr. Jonas Bradley, of Magnary, a well-known lecturer of that day, who was an authority on the Bronte family and president of the Howarth Hamblers, presided at the unveiling ceremony in 1928. This was performed by Mr. Abel Kay, one of a former Yeasdon man, who was the chief donor to the scheme. Donations were also received from others, including some from two old Yeasdonians—Mr. Thomas John Cook of New Zealand, and Mr. Walter Myers, of Ambleton. The accompanying photograph of the unveiling ceremony will, I am sure, prove most interesting to many people. The map was enclosed

in a glass case and there was a collecting box attached, the proceeds of which were sent to Leeds Infirmary by Mr. Senior Blackburn, the then tenant of Beacon House Farm. During the twelve years or so of its existence, hundreds of pounds were raised for the infirmary. The photograph shows in front Mr. Bradley and Mr. and Mrs. Abel Kay, and also in the centre of the group with a Trilby hat on the late Mr. Sydney Roberts and his wife Anice. Mr. Roberts will be well remembered by other Yeasdon folk as a talented violinist, who played in many orchestras, and was for many years resident violinist at the old Yeasdon Temperance Hall. He was also known in Otley as a member of the staff of the Food Office during the last war, and this photograph has been sent to me by his son, Mr. Gerald Roberts, of Little London, Rowdon, whose parents I have just mentioned. I think the photograph was sent to you by Mr. Abel Kay. Other members of the group will, no doubt, be recognised by some of your readers. YANCOLO WATKINS, 1, Meadow Place, Otley.



The present Rangefinder was built as a project led by Edward Winpenny in his presidential year of The Rotary Club of Otley, 1977.

OLD JENNY'S COTTAGE OTLEY



1897 Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria



1935 Silver Jubilee of King George V



1935 Silver Jubilee of King George V



Beacons lit for celebration during the last century



CONSTRUCTION OF BEACON



1937 Coronation of George VI



ALL THAT REMAINED.



1953 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II



1981 Marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer

OLD JENNY'S COTTAGE UTLEY

MEMORIES OF A LAST RESIDENT

"My name is Keith Jackson. I am 68 and I was one of the last residents of Jenny's Cottage. My parents were Lawrence and Mary Jackson, my grandparents were John and Edith Blackburn and my great grandparents were Senior and Hannah Blackburn. I moved up there in 1947 during the big snow and we stayed there until round about 1958 or 59 when we moved down to Otley."

"It was a hard life. We had no electricity, no sanitation, no running water. We had all the water to fetch up in milk churns from a well down in the bottom of the yard round the back of the barn. It was pumped up by a hand pump. In the winter, if it was severe, it froze up and sometimes father had to go with the horse and sledge to neighbouring farms to get cans of water for the animals and for use in the house.

The toilets were down the bottom of the yard as well. If it was snowing or raining we got wet and cold running down there. Electricity was never heard of. It was all done by paraffin tilley lamps. Cooking was done on one of the old fashioned Yorkist ranges. We also had a big two burner industrial paraffin stove. We used to put a big copper urn on top on a weekend for Mum to boil water to make teas for the people who came to the cafe."

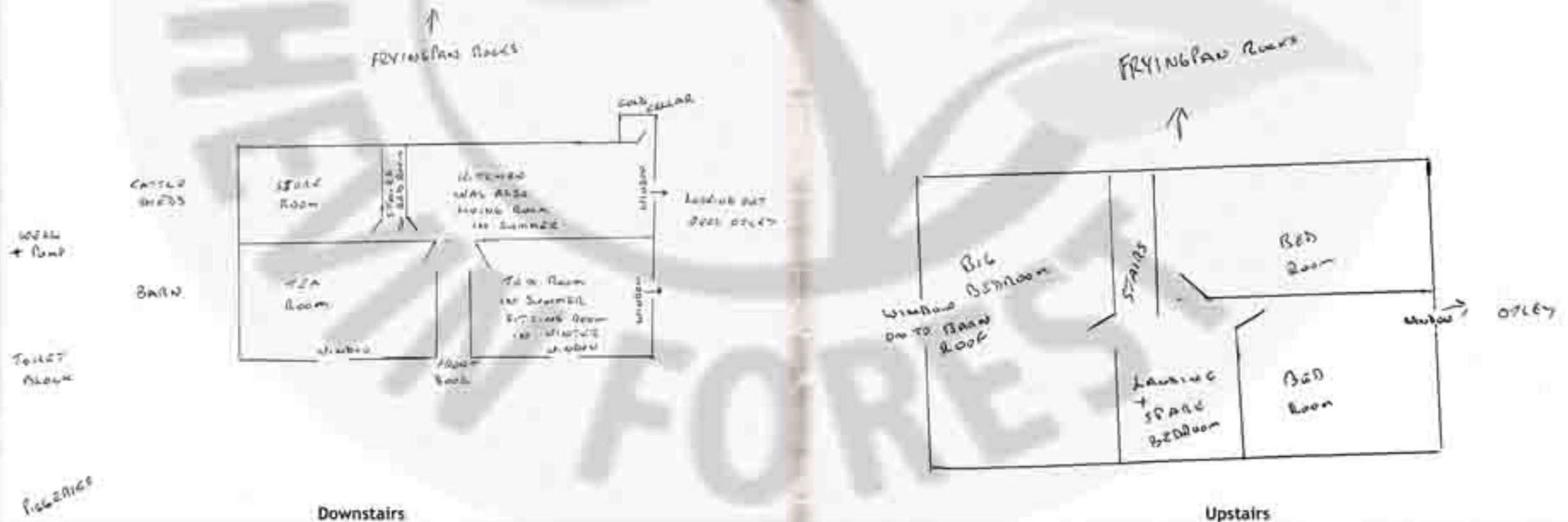


Lawrence and Mary Jackson with their sons Barry, David and Keith

"We had a kitchen where the stone 'dial' stands now. At the back of that kitchen there used to be a store room where the stairs went to go upstairs to the bedrooms. In the corner of the kitchen to the left as you look towards Otley there were some steps that went downstairs to a little cellar where we kept all the milk, vegetables and everything. At the front, the room to the right was our sitting room in the winter, and through the summer it was a tea room. We had two tea rooms. At the back there was another tea room.

Upstairs we had four bedrooms, one where we used to be able to walk out onto the roof of the barn that was built onto the side of the house. Many a time Mum put us to bed and we got dressed and nipped out of the window onto the barn roof, causing problems again!

At the weekend help used to come from relations. They would come and stay with all their children. Sometimes there would be four in a bed, two at the top and two at the bottom, but we enjoyed it."



Drawing of internal layout of Jenny's Cottage in the 1950's by Keith Jackson



"Opposite the door of the house there was a structure that we used to call the 'landmark'. It was like an underground store. It was built properly, tunnelled, all stone, just like a black hole. We would fill it up with wood so all the wood was kept dry - and ready for Bonfire Night. In the winter between there and the roof of the house would fill up with snow. There is a photo of my grandad standing where he had to dig the snow out of the doorway so we could get out."

"The tea room was open all the time. It used to be very popular and very busy. Most people used to walk there from Otley, Guiseley and Yeadon. Visitors from Leeds would catch the tram to Guiseley and walk up.

When you came out of the house on the right hand side there used to be a little wooden hut that we called the 'pop shop'. We had our own way of getting in there. We just moved some boards and sneaked in. We used to sell 'Scotspop' - dandelion and burdock, cherryade, orange and lemonade.

We would spend hours and hours picking bilberries in the summer for Mum to make pies - bilberry pie or bilberry and apple pie were the favourites."



Edith Blackburn, Mary Jackson and Edith Slater

"When it was the Queen's Coronation they had a big bonfire up there. Mum made hundreds of ham and tongue sandwiches in bread cakes and put them in big boxes, but it absolutely poured down. Nobody came. We were eating ham sandwiches for weeks and had to throw a lot away."

"It was very much a working farm. We had to help father on the farm as we got older, haymaking and looking after the animals. Round the back of the house there was a big barn and there was a mistal where we could tie about 15 cows up. At the back of that was what we used to use as a loose box where young calves could run free. As you walk up from the car park, on the left hand side there used to be four piggeries where we kept pigs. We had two horses. We had five fields at the back of the house. We just used to do hay, turnips and things for animal feeds. When we were children we used to have a donkey and cart and I had a little Shetland pony."



Lawrence Jackson with horse





Mary Jackson with her three sons (the boy on the far right is Robert Slater, the son of Eric Slater)

"In the wintertime when we couldn't get the van out to go shopping we would go down to Chevin End with the horse and sledge and catch Sammy Ledgard's bus to Otley and come back the same way. We would do that on a Friday."

"I remember the caravans and wooden bungalows in the field from a very early age. Some had a little garden in front of them and some people lived in them all the time. Grandma (Edith Blackburn) lived in one, Uncle Cyril lived in one and at the top of the field Eric and Edith Slater lived in one. Someone called Barraclough had one in front of the Royalty that was an old railway carriage."



Mary Jackson



Keith Jackson

"We had a good life up there. They were enjoyable times and I would do it again. It was a big part of my life, a big part of me. What more of a playground could you have in your back yard?"

Excerpts from the 1977 Radio Leeds programme 'Those were the days' about Otley, featuring Jane Slater (daughter of Senior Blackburn)

One landmark on the Chevin overlooking Otley is Jenny's Cottage. It is now a ruin and the roof is gone. The time was that you could get a nice tea there, probably served by Jane Blackburn or Mrs Slater as she is now. (Voice of Peter Hawkins, interviewer)

Mrs Slater, when did you actually move up to the Chevin?

"On the 13th April 1910"

What sort of teas did you serve?

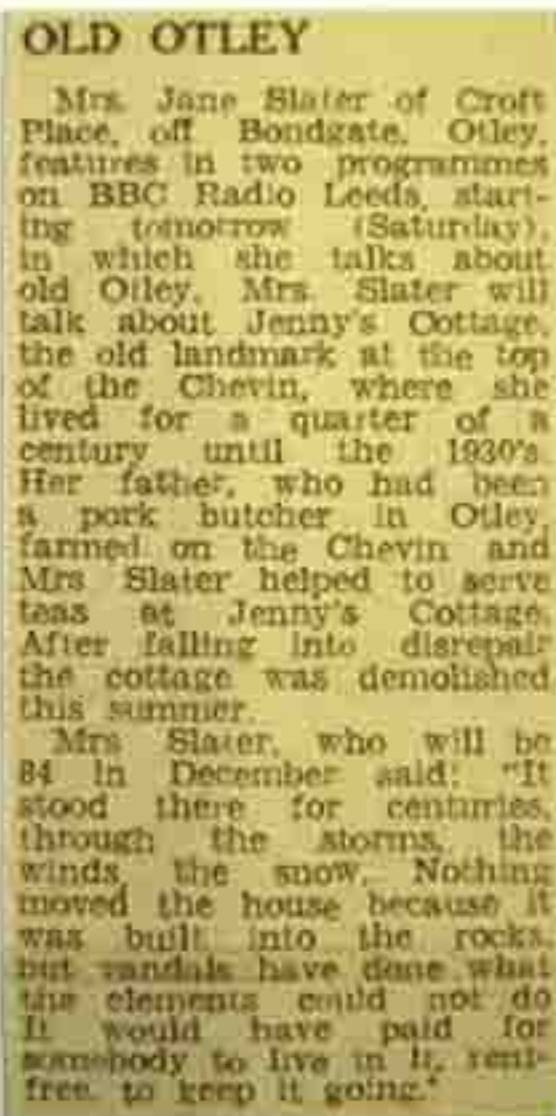
"Oh, ham and eggs was our speciality. It was fried ham, two eggs, white bread, brown bread, sweet cake, home made, with marmalade also home made and a pot of tea for half a crown."

It was quite a hard life, wasn't it?

"It was a hard life, because we had to work hard while the season was on, but it was a very long winter. I have seen it with the snow to the top of the walls."

The house is actually built into the rock isn't it?

"Yes, it is. At the west side the house is built into the rocks, only the roof shows of the house."



You must have had to dig yourselves out.

"It is funny. We never had much snow round the front of the house. With that building opposite it seemed to make a passage across the front of the house, but just past that building it used to be terribly thick and down the yard it used to be thick, but round the house it wasn't."

"I've walked down to Otley when it has been up to my knees nearly. We had to do when we were short of stuff because we couldn't bring the horse and cart out because going down East Chevin it would be all ice. We had to carry everything up even for the cattle and the hens, me and my father and my brother. My father always carried two big handkerchiefs and he had one filled with stuff at the back and one at the front over his shoulder. He once bought some oranges and the handkerchief gave and the oranges went down to the bottom of the wood. He went down and picked them up and brought them up again and whether he hadn't tied them tight enough I don't know, but down they went again."

You live in Croft Place now in the middle of Otley and if you walk out of the door you can see your old house.

"It breaks my heart to see it now. I can step out of my door and see my old home and now it is a shell, just the front left. It breaks my heart. The square at the top, that was the bedroom where my son was born, and it's gone like that. There won't be anybody living in Otley, or anywhere, that remembers Chevin without that house. Why they let it go I do not know, because it's been a landmark for ages and ages."

OLD JENNY'S

Sir,—I have been sorry this week to see the last of Old Jenny's Cottage and the demolition of my old home. It has stood for two centuries as safe as the rocks into which it was built. It has stood gales, winds and terrible snow storms. The elements could not do what the vandals have done.

When I was a young girl and was down in Otley at night, I could see the house lit up. It felt like a beacon and to me it felt that Otley was safe.

Chevin does not look the same without it. Even the rocks look smaller. People keep stopping me and asking me what I think about it, and I am too full up to answer.

We had some happy times there also some hard work, as we had none of the things that made work easy.

(Mrs.) JANE SLATER
Croft Place,
Otley.

Editor's Note.—Mrs. Slater, 83 this week, is daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Senior Blackburn. The family lived at Old Jenny's on the Chevin top, for 25 years, from 1910-1935.



OLD JENNY'S COTTAGE OTLEY

Electoral Registers from 1888 - Jenny's Cottage
(Kept at West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield)

Date	Names on Electoral Roll	Address
1888 - 1907	Thomas Vail	Chevin Top
1908 - 1909	Charles Kirk	Chevin Top
1910 - 1915	Senior Blackburn	Beacon Top Farm
1916 - 1918	No registers kept during World War 1	
1919	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn	Chevin Top Farm
1920	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn Robert Slater	Chevin Top Farm
1921	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn	Chevin Top Farm
1922	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn John Blackburn	Chevin Top Farm
1923 - 1924	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn John Blackburn Robert Slater	Chevin Top Farm
1925	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn	Chevin Top Farm
1926 - 1928	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn John Blackburn Robert Slater	Chevin Top Farm
1929	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn Robert & Jane Slater (Jane - Senior's daughter) George Needham	Chevin Top Farm
1930	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn Robert & Jane Slater John William Hall Alice Urwin Neville Freeman	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1931	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn Robert & Jane Slater John William Hall Edith Dykes Neville Freeman	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1932	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn Robert & Jane Slater Edith Dykes Neville Freeman	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1933 - 1934	Senior & Mary Hannah Blackburn Robert & Jane Slater Neville Freeman	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1935 - 1936	John & Edith Blackburn Neville Freeman Gilbert Sowerby	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1937	John & Edith Blackburn Fred Newby Neville Freeman Gilbert Sowerby	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm

1938	John & Edith Blackburn Fred Newby James & Clara Marshall Gilbert Sowerby	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1939	John & Edith Blackburn Fred Newby Neville Headridge Gilbert Sowerby	Chevin Top Farm Hut - Chevin Top Farm
1940 - 1945	No registers kept during World War 2	
1946	John & Edith Blackburn Cyril Blackburn Frederick Newby Douglas Slater? Gilbert Sowerby	Chevin Top Farm Chevin Top Heathlands Hut
1947	John & Edith Blackburn Cyril & Jenny Blackburn Frederick Newby Gilbert Sowerby Frederick T. Harrison Mary Barton Marion McCoughlin George S & Florence Pocock	Chevin Top Farm Chevin Top Farm Heathlands Hut Old Blackburn, Chevin Top
1948	Lawrence & Mary Jackson Edith Slater Cyril & Jenny Blackburn Neville Barnadough Eric Slater Gilbert Sowerby Frederick T. Harrison George & Florence Pocock George M. & Gladys Middleton	Surprise View Calf Chevin Top Farm Heathlands Hut Old Blackburn, Chevin Top Chevin
1949 - 1958	Registers missing	
1959 - 1959	Lawrence O. & Mary Jackson	Salmon House Farm
1960+	Salmon House Farm / Surprise View Calf not listed	

Sources

Otley Museum Documentary Archive

- Maps
- Photographs
- Otley Guide Books
- Building Records
- Trade Directories
- Newspaper cuttings

West Yorkshire Archive Service

- Registry of Deeds (Wakefield)
- Otley Enclosure Map and Award - 1793 (Leeds)
- Otley Manorial Records (Leeds - formerly at Atkinson Dacre Solicitors)
- Electoral Registers for Otley (Wakefield)
- Map of Beacon Sites in West Yorkshire (Copied from an 1803 original)
- Ray and Fitzroy Papers (Leeds)

Leeds Libraries

- Newspapers - Leeds Mercury, Leeds Intelligencer, Wharfedale and Airedale Observer - on microfilm at Leeds Local Studies Library
- Wharfedale & Airedale Observer - bound copies from 1953 to present day at Rawdon Library
- Maps
- Parish Registers (on microfiche)

Otley Past, Present and Future 25years on.

Compiled by John Morgan.

Published by Otley PPF Community Project 2002 ISBN 0-95428-0-2

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Rev.G.H.Brown

Originally published in the Wharfedale and Airedale Observer 1919 & 1930

Re-printed by Otley Museum 1982

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Elise Brumfit

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Harold Walker

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- ancestry.co.uk - Census 1841 - 1901, West Yorkshire Parish Registers, Civil Registration indexes - births, marriages and deaths from 1837 and other records
- findmypast.com - similar to above
- 1911census.co.uk - 1911 Census
- familysearch.org - parish records from 1600 onwards, except burials
- leeds.gov.uk/onlineresources - 19th century newspapers
- archives.wyjs.org.uk - West Yorkshire Archives (searchable catalogue)
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OLD JENNY'S COTTAGE OTLEY