

## A History of Lamb's Close farm and the Pit Laddie Inn, Bowburn



*Possibly one of the last photographs taken of the Pit Laddie, in 1966. Lamb's Close farmhouse is out of picture, to the right, with access from the lane to Old Quarrington [aka "Heugh Hall"]. The smithy, and the road to Tursdale, are out of picture to the left.*

Like all farms in the Bowburn area, Lamb's Close farm was originally owned by the church – in this case the Bishop of Durham and subsequently the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. (A few nearby farms were owned by the Master and Brethren of Christ's Hospital in Sherburn, known locally as "Sherburn House", not the Bishop.)

Like quite a few others, it was sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the 19th century, to a land owner living elsewhere (though in this case, as in most, still living in County Durham), not to would-be owner occupiers.

Like most of our local farms, it was farmed by tenant farmers till late in the 20th century.

And also like most of the farms in the area, it maintained its boundaries, and the fields within those, with a remarkable consistency for the best part of 200 years, at least, before developments and amalgamations occurred in the 20th century.

Finally, Lamb's Close farm was one of those which contained, either as a separate building or as part of the farmhouse, a pub. While today the most and best local memories of this estate are of the Pit Laddie Inn, that was an intrinsic part of the farm for at least half of its known history.

What follows are:

1. an account of the fields and acreage included in Lamb's Close farm,
2. a list of the known leaseholders (when it belonged to the Church) and then private owners after it was sold in 1860,
3. a list of those who farmed Lamb's Close farm,
4. a list of keepers of the Pit Laddie Inn,
5. some comments about the buildings on the estate, including the Pit Laddie Inn, and
6. a brief history of the Pit Laddie smithy – though that was not part of the Lamb's Close estate.

## (1) Lamb's Close acreage

- A Plan and Valuation of Lamb's Close farm (LCF), dated 10 January 1793, gave its acreage as 36 acres, valued at £25/1s/1d p.a.<sup>1</sup> (That is about £1,651 at 2012 prices.<sup>2</sup>)
- In indentures dated between 1793 and 1843, the farm was described as containing "36 acres or thereabouts". They listed the fields by name.<sup>3</sup>
- On the Tithe Plan, 1839, the seven fields combined made a total of 36.75 acres [36 acres, 3 roods, 0 perches]. The plan showed a building at the location of the Pit Laddie Inn, though it didn't name it. It was at the edge of one of the fields, i.e. within the farm's land.<sup>4</sup>



*The fields of Lamb's Close farm are shown here on a recent satellite view of the area (thanks to Google maps). The field names are as given in in the 1798 lease, though I have had to guess to which fields they referred. The acreages are as given in the 1839 Tithe Apportionment map.*

- When LCF was sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to Anthony James Crofton, in 1860, the farm was described as being of "36 acres or thereabouts" and presumably contained exactly the same land, including the inn, as previously. (For more about Mr Crofton, and other owners, see §2, below.)
- When Bell Bros. bought the farm on 8 July 1921, the indenture described it as being of 36 acres. However the minutes of the Bell Bros.' Directors meeting on 12 April 1921

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<sup>1</sup> Source: University of Durham Library

<sup>2</sup> Today's equivalent values are calculated with the help of <[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency)> plus inflation figures since 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Source: University of Durham Library (also in the Durham Records Office)

<sup>4</sup> Source: Durham Records Office D/Va/11, from which much of the following account is drawn.

said that they had purchased 37.5 acres. The reason for this discrepancy is unknown.<sup>5</sup>

- A plan associated with the sale of LCF by Henry & Minnie Ingledew to Alfred Ernest & Amy Fairs, on 17 Feb 1920, shows what was presumably the same field layout as that of 1839 (except for two new small enclosures near the farmhouse) but the farm did NOT include the Pit Laddie Inn.



*Field boundaries superimposed on a plan showing land conveyed in 1920, when the Pit Laddie Inn (at the very bottom of the plan) was not sold to the new owners.*

- In 1936, William Forster and William Underwood bought 4 acres (in two parcels, of 1.2 and 2.8 acres), on which to build the Grange Park estate.
- After 1945, when the tenant farmer of LCF, Tommy Hodgson, died, it was farmed initially by his brother-in-law, John George Hare, and later JGH's son, Alfred Hare. The Hares, of Bowburn farm, farmed fields additional to those that were left of the original Lamb's Close farm and it is likely that Mr Hodgson had also done so, before that. These were the field (about 2 acres) below what is now Bowburn Infant & Nursery School, next to Bowburn Beck, which had formerly been part of Crowtrees farm, and land (about 4 acres) immediately east of Bowburn Beck, which today is east of the motorway and split by the road to Old Quarrington. This had formerly been part of Quarrington farm.
- In the late 1960s, Lamb's Close farm buildings were demolished and much of its farm land was lost, to make way for the penultimate section of the A1 motorway, between Bowburn and Carrville. (This opened in July 1969 and the final section, from Carrville to Chester-le-Street, opened two months later.) The Pit Laddie Inn and the blacksmith's shop had already made way for the Junction 61 roundabout. Lamb's Close farm buildings were where the southbound exit slip road is today.
- These additional plots were part of the remains of LCF, about 22 acres in total, when they were sold by the British Coal Corporation to Harry Melville Johnston, of South Grange Farm, in 1995.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Source: Abstract of title of a house in Grange Park Crescent, from which much of the following is drawn.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Title register from Land Registry

## (2) Leaseholders and owners of Lambs Close and the Pit Laddie Inn

- On 18 May 1793, **John Oyston** leased LCF from the Bishop of Durham, for three lives.
- On 25 March 1807, John Oyston agreed to sell the Lease to **Edward Maugham** (1756-1837), for £800 (about £31,952 at 2012 prices), and sold it to him by lease & release on 20 November 1807 and 21 November 1807. Edward Maugham was shown as the owner [i.e. leaseholder] of ground to the west of Wm. Story & Wm. Lee's estate on a plan of that estate dated 4 February 1835.
- On 10 March 1834, the will of Edward Maugham<sup>7</sup> left to his son **Edward Maugham [jnr]**, together with other legacies at Shadforth, [the lease of] "a Farm of Land called Lams [*sic*] Close and a Pubick [*sic*] House or Inn situated upon the said Farm and all other Houses situated upon the said Farm of Land situated at Crowtrees in the township of Quarrington and parish of Kelloe". Edward Maugham jnr had previously lived at and worked the farm. (His abode was given as Lamb's Close in 1828, 1831 and 1837, at the baptism of three of his children at St. Helen's church, Kelloe. (See §3 below.)
- In 1837, Edward Maughan [snr], of Crime Rigg House, Shadforth, died aged 82. He was buried at St. Lawrence church, Pitlington, on 2 Apr 1837. His will was administered on 3 October 1838 and 2 December 1840. In 1939, the Tithe Apportionment had already said that the seven fields / closes of LCF were owned by Edward Maxwell Maugham – i.e. EM jnr. However Edward was described as Labourer in the parish register entry of the baptism of his son Moseley at Kelloe in 1937. And he clearly went to live at Gilesgate soon afterwards. He was there with his family (including those children baptised at Kelloe) in 1841 and 1851, employed as an agricultural labourer. He died in either 1852 or 1854. (See §3 below.)
- On 2 March 1843, a new lease of LCF was agreed, for three lives [two of them new], from Bishop of Durham to Mrs. **Mary Matthewson**, widow, of Chartershaugh. She died on 12 October 1860, leaving effects valued at under £300<sup>8</sup> (about £15,228 at 2012 prices).
- On 9 November 1860 **Anthony James Crofton** bought the freehold of the 36 acres that comprised Lamb's Close Farm from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. (He was the third party to the Indenture; Mary Matthewson [the previous lessee] (or, presumably, her executors) was the second party; the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were the first.) AJC was a farmer at Littleburn. In the 1851 census, he had been described as "Farmer of 500 acres, employing 18 Labourers"; in 1861 he was a "Farmer of 360 acres [employing 3 Men and 3? boys]", and in 1871 a "Landowner & Farmer".
- AJC died in 1876: "Crofton, Anthony James. 11 November [1876]. The Will of Anthony James Crofton, late of Littleburn, in the Parish of Brancepeth, in the County of Durham, Farmer, who died 29 August 1876 at Littleburn, was proved at Durham, by Mary Elizabeth Crofton, of Littleburn, Widow, the Relict, and **John Wood**, of Ripon, in the County of York, Gentleman, the Nephew, the Executors. Effects under £3,000."<sup>9</sup> (That is about £22,753 at 2012 prices.)
- John Wood, the son of AJC's sister Ann, was the son of John Wood [snr], a farmer first of Kimblesworth and then of Stanwick St. John, Richmond, Yorkshire. By 1861, JW jnr was running his parents' 439-acre farm at Stanwick St. John (though his widowed mother was listed in that year's census as head of household) and was still there in 1871, when he was described as "Farmer, 430 acres, employing 6 men, 2 women &

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<sup>7</sup> Source: Durham Records Office D/Va/11

<sup>8</sup> Source of this and other information about effects left: National Probate Calendar, via ancestry.com

<sup>9</sup> National Probate Calendar [Index of Wills and Administrations], via Ancestry. [Punctuation added.]

- 1 boy [and] Landowner". By 1881 (after, presumably, he had inherited from his uncle, Mr Crofton), he had moved to Ripon, where he was described as "Land (Housing) Agent". In 1891 & 1901, aged 70 & 80, he was living at 2, Harewood Hill, Darlington, with two servants, described as Retired Farmer and Land Agent. He died in 1904, leaving effects valued at £20,026 2s 1d. (about £1.35m at 2012 prices). (His will was proved by Charles John Bagley, managing director of the Cargo Fleet Iron Co. Ltd.<sup>10</sup>)
- It is presumed that John Wood inherited Lamb's Close Farm in 1876 and subsequently sold it – though when and to whom (and for how much) is not known. In 1899, when John Oxley, of Tanfield, bought Park Hill farm, a plan of the land he acquired showed that of the adjoining property across the Durham road, between Crow Trees and the Old Quarrington road, as belonging to **John Forster**. (This may or may not have been up to date, however, as at least one of the other adjoining "owners" had died before 1899.) This was in all likelihood John Forster, of Biggin Terrace, Esh, who was described in the 1861 census as Landed Proprietor and subsequently as Retired Farmer. He died, unmarried, on 8 January 1905 and left effects valued at £652 2s. (about £39,710 at 2012 prices) to his nephew, **Edwin Nicholson**, farmer, of Butsfield.
  - By 1911, LCF was owned by **Sir Joseph Baxter Ellis & James John Gillespie**<sup>11</sup>, who sold it, for £1,190 (about £79,859 at 2012 prices), to Elizabeth Hannah Alderson, wife of John Alderson, on 7 July 1911<sup>12</sup>.
  - **Elizabeth Hannah Alderson** was listed as widow in that year's census, when she was living at 55, Richmond Park Road, Bournemouth. (She had a Ladies Maid with her, named Jane Wood, aged 45, born Thirsk, but it is supposed that this was not a relative of John Wood.) EHA was then aged 68, born Hallgarth, Durham. Her father was Stephen Oliver, Miller and Farmer of Shincliffe Mill and, though she married John Alderson in 1868, she was living with her parents and then her unmarried brother, at Shincliffe Mill, in both 1871 and 1881. In both cases she was recorded as "married", though her husband was not present. I have not yet found her in the 1891 or 1901 censuses, nor identified John Alderson at all.
  - On 23 Nov 1911: Mrs Alderson sold LCF to **Henry & Minnie Ingledew**. Henry Ingledew was described as Labourer or Agricultural Labourer in the censuses of 1881 (when he was aged 13) and 1891, and as Limestone Quarryman in 1901 and 1911. His father, who died in the 1890s, was also a labourer all his life. HI married Minnie [or Minna] Simpson in 1891. She was the daughter of Charles Simpson, who at that time was the farmer at Coxhoe Colliery Farm. In 1901 he was Limestone Quarry Manager at Coxhoe. In 1911 he was living at Cooperative Terrace, Coxhoe, described as Retired Farmer. He died in 1915, leaving effects worth £777 16s. (about £39,390 at 2012 prices). So it is conceivable that he helped finance the Ingledews' purchase.
  - At the time of the 1911 census, Gladys Mary Ingledew, aged 15, was a farm servant at Lamb's Close farm, living in Joseph Smith's household. (See §3, below, for more about the Smith family.) She was Henry & Minnie's niece, being the daughter of his brother Joseph and her sister Annie, who had also married. H&MI clearly had farming "in the blood" and knew the farm before they bought it.

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Durham Mining Museum

<sup>11</sup> There was a fieldseedman & grocer called Joseph Baxter Ellis, born about 1843 in Burnley, Yorks, living in Newcastle at the time of the 1871 census... But SIR Joseph?? And there was a James John Gillespie, born about 1873 in Morpeth, son of Thomas Gillespie, chartered accountant, visiting George Sanderson in Warkwith, Wansbeck, in the 1891 census... It is not known whether these were LCF owners.

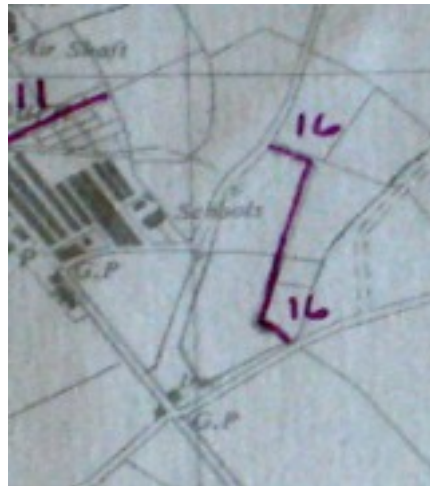
<sup>12</sup> Source: Abstracts of Title for a house in Grange Park Crescent



*A photograph of the Pit Laddie Inn in 1918 shows the name over the door of "Smith Woods, Proprietor"*

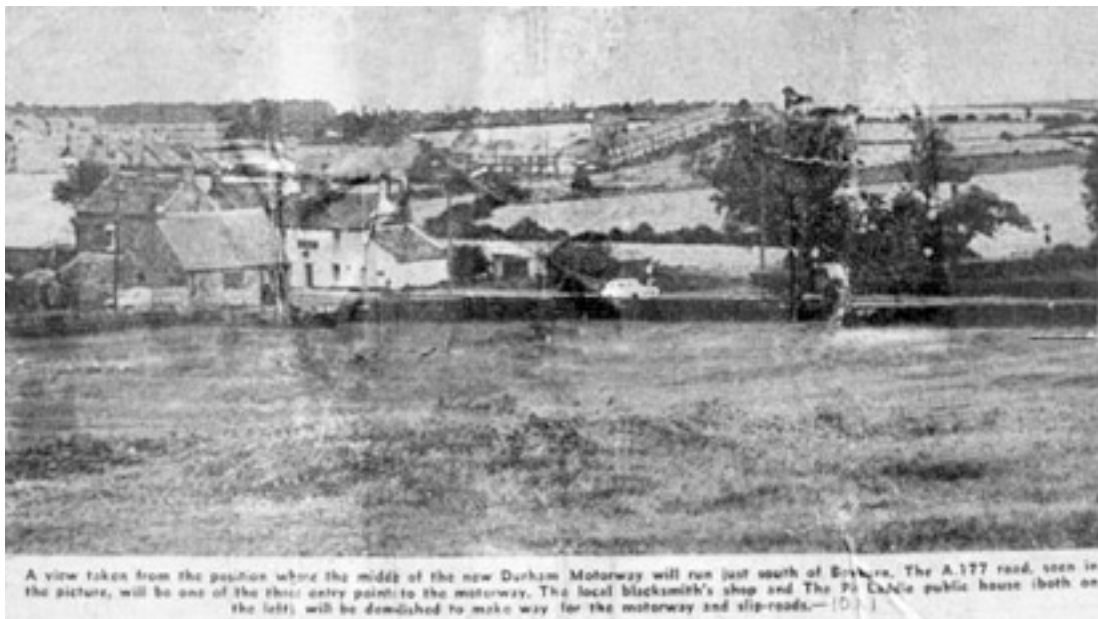
- On 17 February 1920: Henry & Minnie Ingledew sold LCF to **Alfred Ernest Fairs & Amy Fairs**, for £1,600 (about £39,912 at 2012 prices). Alfred Fairs' father, Arthur Fairs, was an innkeeper at Consett, in 1881, before moving to Aycliffe where he was described as Inn Keeper & Farmer (own account) in the 1901 census. Amy Fairs' was also from a family of farmers and innkeepers: her parents were David and Hannah Applegarth, of the Hare & Hounds, College Hill, Garmondsway Moor. It is tempting to think, therefore, that they bought LCF estate complete with the Pit Laddie Inn. However the publican at the time that the Ingledews owned and worked the farm, Smith Woods, was clearly its proprietor before he left in about 1920. (See §4, below.) Moreover the plan associated with the 1920 conveyance clearly shows that the Pit Laddie was NOT included in the sale: the Fairs only bought the farm. (See plan on page 3.) And they only kept the estate till the following year, before selling it.
- On 8 July 1921: Alfred Ernest & Amy Fairs sold LCF to **Bell Bros. Ltd.**, for £1,700 (about £42,406 at 2012 prices).
- In 1923, **Dorman Long** took over Bell Bros., acquiring their assets, including LCF, and these in turn transferred to the **National Coal Board** after nationalisation in 1947. Throughout their ownership, from 1921 till 1995, the NCB or its predecessors rented LCF to tenant farmers, with the exception of two part sales, in 1936 and in about 1966.
- 16 October 1936: Dorman Long & Co. Ltd. sold a 2.8 acres plot of land to **William Forster**, of Newcastle Arms, Newbottle Street, Houghton-le-Spring, builder, & **William Rutherford**, of 1, Mitford Street, Sunderland, builder. They also sold them a 1.2 acres plot, possibly on the same date. They built Grange Park Crescent, Lansdowne Crescent and Neville Terrace on the site. (Broadmeadows followed some forty years later.)
- In about 1966, a corridor through LCF was acquired by the Ministry of Transport for construction of the A1 motorway, removing over half of the original 36 acres. The work included the demolition of the Lambs Close farm buildings (whose site is now under the southbound exit slip road) and the Pit Laddie Inn and other buildings at Quarrington Lane Ends (now under the roundabout). Footpath 16, a right of way that went from opposite Grange Park Crescent, through the Lamb's Close farm yard to near the cemetery, was closed – though a new road connected Crowtrees Lane with

Old Quarrington. The stretch of motorway from Bowburn to Carrville opened on 1 Jul 1969.



*Footpath 16 also disappeared when the motorway was built.*

- At some stage during the 20th century, approximately 22 acres of land were added to LCF, being fields to the east (formerly part of Quarrington farm) and to the west (ex-Crowtrees farm). (See §1, above.) These may have been farmed by Tommy Hodgson, who farmed LCF from about 1926 till 1945, and were certainly farmed by his brother-in-law, John George Hare. (See §4, below.) In any case, they were already and remained in the ownership of either Dorman Long & Co. or its successor, the National Coal Board.
- All that remained of LCF, including the additional 22 acres or so referred to above, were bought from the British Coal Corporation by **Harry Melville Johnston**, of South Grange Farm, on 28 September 1995.



*A 1962 newspaper photograph<sup>13</sup> showed the area to be cleared to make way for the A1 motorway. The forge is on the left; the Pit Laddie is on the other side of the A177; Lamb's Close farm is behind that, and in the distance are Grange Park Crescent, Lansdowne Crescent and Neville Terrace.*

<sup>13</sup> Durham County Advertiser, 31 August 1962, p.1

### (3) Lambs Close Farmers

- In 1807, when John Oyston sold the lease of Lamb's Close farm (LCF) to Edward Maugham, who then farmed Gore Hall farm at Thornley and later Crime Rigg farm at Shadforth, Lamb's Close was "in the occupation of **John Best**", as Tenant. John Best may have continued farming LCF for the time being. There was a John Best who was born at Bowburn and baptised at Kelloe in 1763. (His parents were Robert and Mary Best.) This may be the same person. [However this was not the John Best who later, in 1838, was living at Four Mile Bridge when his daughter Jane was baptised at Kelloe and who was described in the Parish Register as Pitman. In 1841 he and his family were living at West Hetton Houses. Described as Coal Miner in the census of that year, he was aged only 26 (i.e. born about 1815) and he was not born in County Durham. So he was not the farmer at Lamb's Close in 1807.]
- In 1828 and in 1831, **Edward Maugham** (son of Edward Maugham, the leaseholder, and his wife, Ann née Maxwell) was the Farmer at Lamb's Close when his 2nd and 3rd sons were baptised at Kelloe. By 1837, however, at the baptism of his 6th son, though his abode was again given as Lamb's Close, he was described as Labourer. In the following year, 1838, his father's will bequeathed the lease to him. Yet by 1841 he was living at Sherburn Road, St. Giles, Durham, described as Ag. Lab.. He and his family were still there in 1851 and he died before 1861.
- In 1839, the Tithe Apportionment said that [the lease of] the fields that made up LCF were owned by Edward Maxwell Maugham and occupied by **John Bell**. The 1841 census gave John Bell's address as Lamb's Close but described him as [owner of] Landsale Colliery, not as Farmer. (Three other households were listed at Lamb's Close, all those of coal miners.) However he was the farmer at Crowtrees farm by 1851 and described as retired farmer in the 1861 census. He bought that farm from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1858 and died, having recently agreed to sell it, in 1861. [For more about John Bell, see the history of Crowtrees farm and the Wheatsheaf Inn.]
- In 1843, when Mary Matthewson entered into a new lease of LCF from the Bishop of Durham, it was "formerly in the Tenure or Occupation of **George Lonsdale & Assigns**". I have not yet identified GL or his descendants. Perhaps he farmed LCF before John Best, or perhaps between John Best and Edward Maugham junior.
- in 1849, **Pybous Christopher** of Lamb's Close was described as Husbandman when his 1st son was baptised at Kelloe. However by 1851 he had moved to Blackgate, Coxhoe, and was described in that year's census as a Pitman. He was described as Coal Miner in 1861, by when he was living at Chilton Colliery, and again in 1871 & 1881, when he lived at Hoggersgate. He had presumably only briefly farmed LCF as a tenant of Mrs. Matthewson.
- In 1858, Kelly's Directory listed **Francis Foster**, farmer, at Lamb's Close. He has not yet been identified in censuses or other records.
- In 1860, **Anthony James Crofton**, who had a farm at Littleburn, bought LCF from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He died in 1876 and did not live at Lamb's Close himself. However in 1861, **Joseph Bell**, born about 1800 in Cumberland and presumed to be no relation of John Bell, was the only householder listed at Lamb's Close in the census. He was described as Labourer and may perhaps have been working for AJC on that farm. There was perhaps no tenant farmer immediately after AJC acquired it.
- In 1868, **John Lofthouse**, of ["abode"] Lamb's Close, was one of the 23 men entitled to vote in the Parliamentary elections in Quarrington township. He was also eligible to vote at Broom, Durham, where his abode was given as Broom and where he in fact



cast his vote. (Thomas Reed, of Pit Laddie, Crawtrees [sic], was another Quarrington elector. See §4, below.) It is at present not known what qualified JL to vote here, but perhaps he rented the farm from Anthony James Crofton. If that is the case, perhaps Joseph Bell worked for him, not for AJC.

- In 1871 and 1881, **James Lindsay**, Farmer of 34 acres (39 in 1881), was recorded in those years' censuses as living with his family at Lamb's Close farm. He was born about 1824 at Donlady, Ireland. He was presumably the tenant of AJC, and then the owners that followed – as, indeed, subsequent Lamb's Close farmers are presumed to have been, till 1911.
- In 1890, Kelly's Directory listed **James Smith**, farmer, at Lamb's Close. He was the farmer there in 1891 and 1901, in those years' censuses, which said he was born about 1828 at Guestwick, Norfolk.
- In 1910, Kelly's Directory listed **Joseph Smith**, farmer, at Lamb's Close. He was James Smith's son and was the householder there in the 1911 census, though his father was still in the household. James Smith's gravestone said he was of Lamb's Close, Bowburn, when he died on 7 Aug 1911, aged 83 years. He and his son were both, presumably, tenants of the owners who followed Anthony James Crofton.
- Elizabeth Hannah Alderson bought LCF on 7 July 1911 and then sold it, on 23 Nov 1911, to **Henry & Minnie Ingledew**. In 1914, Kelly's Directory listed Henry Ingledew, farmer, at Lamb's Close and his address in that year's Electoral Register was given as Lamb's Close farm, while Smith Woods, the publican, was registered at Pit Laddie Inn.
- In the 1918 Register the address of Henry and Minna [sic] Ingledew was given as "Lamb's Close, Pit Ladder" [sic]. However Smith Woods and his wife Edith were registered at Pit Laddie, with her son by her first marriage, Herbert Alderson Legg. So presumably the Ingledews were at the farm, not the pub. Thomas Fawell, their son-in-law, was also registered at "Lamb's Close farm", as an absent voter. [There is probably no significance in the different address; electors were listed alphabetically, so his name did not appear beneath those of his in-laws.] He had married the Ingledew's daughter Edith May in 1917 and was probably the Mr. Fawell who farmed Cornforth Moor House Farm prior to 1926, when Jim Dixon took it over.
- Henry & Minnie Ingledew sold the farm to Alfred Ernest & Amy Fairs on 17 Feb 1920 and they in turn sold it to Bell Bros. Ltd. on 8 July 1921. However **Alfred Fairs** was still listed in the 1921 and 1925 Kelly's Directories as farmer, Lamb's Close. Assuming the latter directory, at least, was not out of date (though that is not impossible), Mr. Fairs must have continued farming as tenant of the colliery owners.
- In about 1926, **Thomas Hodgson** came from Whalesfield, near Button Hole, where his father farmed, to take up the tenancy. He had married Ethel Hare in 1923 and they came to Bowburn at about the same time as her father, John Hare, took over the tenancy of Bowburn farm. TH was listed as farmer, at Lamb's Close, in the 1929, 1934 and 1938 Kelly's Directories and he and his wife, Ethel, were registered to vote at Lamb's Close Farm in 1930 and 1939. He was killed on 6th January 1945, when he was knocked down by a motor lorry as he pushed his bike, with a gallon can of milk for delivery on the handlebars, up the bank between the Pit Laddie and Park Hill.
- From 1945 onwards, LCF was farmed by Ethel Hodgson's brother, **John George Hare**, as part of Bowburn Farm, whose tenancy he had taken over when his father died in 1939.
- JGH died in 1966 and his son, Alfred, continued to rent and farm those parts of the two farms that were left until he moved away in 1977. By then most of Bowburn Farm had disappeared under Bowburn council estate (and the colliery before that) and then Bowburn North Industrial Estate, and most of Lamb's Close farm had disappeared

under the Grange Park Crescent estate and then the motorway. However three plots of land had been added: the field below what is now Bowburn Infant & Nursery School, next to Bowburn Beck, which had formerly been part of Crowtrees farm, and two plots of land (originally only one) immediately east of Bowburn Beck, east of the motorway and north & south of the road to Old Quarrington, which had formerly been part of Quarrington farm.



*Fields added to Lamb's Close farm in the 20th century, outlined in orange*

- The remaining fields of LCF, including the three plots referred to above, were bought from the British Coal Corporation by **Harry Melville Johnston**, of South Grange Farm, on 28 September 1995. Both before and after that, they have been let to various users, for grazing.

#### (4) Pit Laddie Innkeepers

- 19th Century conveyances of Lamb's Close or its lease refer to seven parcels (or "closes") of land amounting to about 30 to 39 acres, which in the will of Ed Maugham (12 December 1840), at least, included "Lam[b]s Close" farm and a "pub[li]c house or inn". Edward Maugham is shown as the owner [i.e. leaseholder] of ground to the west of Wm. Story & Wm. Lee's estate (including Quarrington Farm) on a plan of that estate dated 4 February 1835.
- The will of Edward Maugham decreed that: "... I give and bequeath to my Son **Edward Maugham** a Farm of Land called Lams [sic] Close and a Pubick [sic] House or Inn situated upon the said Farm and all other Houses situated upon the said Farm of Land situated at Crowtrees in the township of Quarrington and parish of Kelloe and County of Durham..."
- No publican was recorded at the Pit Laddie in the 1841 census. However **Thomas Herron** [also spelt elsewhere Heron, Herring and Haring] was blacksmith at Quarrington Lane end – i.e. at the crossroads where the inn was situated – and his wife was later, if not already, the innkeeper. TH may perhaps have been the publican, as well as running a smithy, without being so described in the 1841 census.
- In the 1851 census, **Eleanor (aka Ellen) Heron [aka Herron]** (1804-1876), TH's widow, was recorded as the Inn Keeper at Pit Laddie, Quarrington, where she was living with her six unmarried children. She was also listed at the Pit Laddie in Kelly's Directory 1858. In 1861, her address was just given as Crowtrees, but she was described as Publican – presumably at the Pit Laddie. Her son William, living with her, was described as Blacksmith – as were two other sons living at Crowtrees, John and George.
- Mrs Herron's husband and five of their six sons were blacksmiths. She had grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren living in Bowburn and Tursdale in 1911. Some descendants still live locally.
- In 1869, **Thomas Reed**, of Pit Laddie, Crawtrees [sic], was one of the 23 men entitled to vote in the Parliamentary elections in Quarrington township; he was one of the ten who were only eligible to vote at Quarrington, that being their abode. (John Lofthouse, of ["abode"] Lamb's Close, was another elector. He was also eligible to vote at Broom, Durham, where his abode was given as "Broom" and where he in fact cast his vote.) The implication seems to be that TR was briefly the innkeeper at the Pit Laddie. However I have found no trace of him in the censuses or other records.
- In the 1871 census, **Richard Cunningham** (1843-1899) was described as Pit Labourer & Publican. He was born at Dumlough, County Down, Ireland, in about 1843, and was living at the Pit Laddie with his wife, Eliza, and three young children (the eldest of 14). RC probably left the Pit Laddie in about 1879, initially living elsewhere in Bowburn. He and his family then moved to Spennymoor, where he was employed as a coal hewer, in about 1880.
- Richard Cunningham's father-in-law, James Lindsay (1824-1903), farmed Lamb's Close Farm. His brother-in-law William Lindsay (1855-1926) was still living at Cornforth Moor in 1911 and some of his descendants still live in Bowburn.
- In 1871, the census also recorded that Ellen Heron [i.e. Herron], widow, aged 66, born Shincliffe [sic], was still living at Pit Laddie, Quarrington, on her own. No occupational description was given. She had presumably given way as publican to Richard Cunningham. (There were six households at Pit Laddie, not including the inn; three of them were one-person households.)
- In the 1881, 1891 and 1901 censuses, **James Dawson** (1830-1902) was listed as the Publican or Inn Keeper at the Pit Laddie Inn. He was born at Colster, Aberdeen,

about 1839. His wife, Mary (née Bell?), was born about 1836 at West Auckland. He died in 1902; she died in 1905. JD was listed at the "Pit Laddie P. H." in Kelly's Directory in 1879 & 1890.

- Two of JD's children were living in Bowburn in 1911. His son, Thomas, born about 1859 at Penicuik, Midlothian, was employed as Colliery Heap Keeper and living at Peat Edge Cottages. His granddaughter still lives in Bowburn. JD's daughter, Elizabeth Ann Scott (née Dawson), was born about 1867 at Shincliffe. Her husband, John Thomas Scott, became the Innkeeper at the Pit Laddie after her father died.
- **John Thomas Scott** (1866-1930) was shown as the Innkeeper at the Pit Laddie Inn in the 1911 census. Born about 1866 at Coxhoe, he was at the time of the 1891 and 1901 censuses the innkeeper at the Coxhoe Bridge Inn, where he lived with his first wife, Bertha (née Catley, 1868-1894). (In 1901, he was listed as "employer", but NOT "own account"; in the other censuses, no such distinction was made.)
- In 1897, JTS re-married, to Elizabeth Ann Dawson (1867-1950), daughter of James Dawson (see above), and presumably took over as innkeeper at the Pit Laddie when JD died. **Elizabeth Ann Scott** was listed [as the publican] at the Pit Laddie P.H. in Kelly's Directory 1910 but her husband was described as publican in the 1911 census. They presumably left before 1914. JTS' son by his first marriage, John Albert Scott, was killed in action in 1917.
- When JTS died, on 2 Jan 1930, he and his wife were living at Blackgate, Coxhoe. He left effects worth £56 in his will. While certainly not impossible, it seems unlikely that he had bought and subsequently sold the Pit Laddie. That may have been done, however, by his successor, Smith Woods.
- **Smith Woods** (1865-1930) was the publican during the First World War. In 1901, he had been living at the Brancepeth Castle Hotel, Meadowfield, described as Licensed Victualler (own account). At the time of the 1911 census, he was at Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, described as Retired Licensed Victualler (though he was aged only 46). His first wife, Jessie, died later that year (perhaps her illness was the reason for his retirement?) and he presumably moved to Bowburn soon afterwards. He may even have been planning to move before she died. That possibility is suggested because he clearly at some stage bought the Pit Laddie Inn. While a detailed reference to that purchase has not yet been found, an unexplained conveyance is referred to in the title register of lands, including parts of Lambs Close farm, bought by Harry Johnston in 1995. (See §3, above.) The date of that conveyance was 14 February 1911. At that time Smith Woods was presumably still living in Newcastle, having "retired" and probably sold his pub at Meadowfield. However he may have been about to move to Bowburn. He may indeed have bought it with a sitting tenant, John Thomas Scott. (See also §1, above, on the matter of who first sold, and who bought, the farm separately from the inn.)
- Smith Woods was listed at the Pit Laddie P.H. in Kelly's Directory in 1914 and was registered to vote there that year. He was also listed there by Kelly's in 1918. By then he had re-married, to Edith Legg, in about May 1917. She was the widow of William Legg, Innkeeper (own account) at the Dunn Cow, Bishop Middleham, who had died in 1913.
- In the 1918 Electoral register, Henry and Minna Ingledew's address was given as Lamb's Close, Pit Ladder [sic]. However Smith Woods and his wife Edith were registered at Pit Laddie, with her son by her first marriage, Herbert Alderson Legg. So presumably the Ingledews were at the farm. (Thomas Fawell, their son-in-law, later of Cornforth Moor House Farm, was also registered at "Lamb's Close farm", as an absent voter.)
- SW died in 1930, aged 65, when his address was Lilac Cottage, Sherburn. He left effects valued at £2,644 6s. 5d. (about £103,935 at 2012 prices). He had presumably sold

and left the Pit Laddie in about 1920. The photograph on page 6, above, of a small group in front of the pub, taken in about 1918, shows that the sign over the door included the words “Proprietor Smith Woods”. The word “Free” also features, presumably meaning that it was a free house. Smith Woods had clearly, therefore, bought the pub, either from his predecessor, John Thomas Scott, or from the owner of Lambs Close farm – more probably the latter.

- **John William ("Darkie") Edwards** (1882-1970) kept the Pit Laddie Inn from about 1920 till about 1940. His father, John Ira [or Inman] Fidal Edwards (1859-1921) was innkeeper at the Clarence Villa Hotel [later the Kicking Cuddy], when JWE was born, but retired before 1911. JWE worked at East Hetton, Tursdale and Bowburn Collieries, according to his obituary in the Durham Advertiser, and this included some or all of the time that he was the Pit Laddie landlord. He was living with his parents at Coxhoe in 1901, when he was a putter, presumably at Kelloe, and he will have been working at Bowburn when he was living with his wife and two children at 31, Wylam Street, in 1911, described in the census as coal hewer. He served in the RASC in WWI and played football for his regiment, according to his obituary.



*A photograph of a group in front of the Pit Laddie in the 1920s shows that J. W. Edwards was at that time its proprietor.*

- When his father’s will was proved, on 6 June 1921, JWE was described as innkeeper. So he had clearly already taken over the Pit Laddie. (His father left £699 17s 11d (about £17,459 at 2012 prices), some or all of which may have helped him buy the pub – see below.)
- JWE was listed as the Secretary of Bowburn Institute Football Club, with his address given as the Pit Laddie Inn, in Kelly’s Directory 1921 & 1926. He was also chairman of Crowtrees Club for a number of years. He was registered to vote at Pit Laddie Inn, with his wife, Mary Ann, and daughter, Dorothy Annie, in 1930. He was listed at the Pit Laddie P. H. in Kelly’s Directory 1934 & 1938.
- A photograph of JWE and several customers, taken in front of the Pit Laddie in the early 1920s, shows a sign over the door saying “Proprietor J. W. Edwards”. Clearly he had bought the freehold of the property and was not manager for another owner, at that

time. Though I have not yet found a conveyance<sup>14</sup>, my guess is that he bought it from Smith Woods (given the latter's assets when he died), either when he first took over the pub or after first working as his tenant or manager. He perhaps bought it after his father died in 1921. Two photographs taken in the mid-1920s and in 1933, however, merely show JWE's name over the door, with no reference to his being the proprietor. The first has the words "Supplied by the North Eastern Breweries Ltd", painted on the south side of the building, and the second has a large sign advertising "Vaux' Stout & Sparkling Ales in Bottle", on the front. C. Vaux & Sons Ltd amalgamated with North East Breweries in 1927, forming Vaux and Associated Breweries Ltd. This suggests that JWE sold the pub to North East Breweries between 1921 and 1927, and then remained as their tenant or manager, and Vaux's. He may have sold it in 1926, during the national coal mining lock-out.



*In the 1930s, Darkie Edwards was a tenant of Vaux Breweries.*

- Stephen Bradley (Steve) Marr (1911-1986) was one of Darkie Edwards' sons-in-law, being married to his daughter, Mary Ann (1911-2001). They were living at the Pit Laddie in 1939 but it is not thought that he was ever the licensee. JWE's son, John Inman Edwards (1904-1976), of Wylam Street and then Burn Street, was a deputy at Bowburn Colliery. JIE's son, Bill Edwards (1934-2010), was a noted footballer, once playing for Middlesbrough. JWE and his wife moved to 9, Grange Park Crescent before 1945 and he died at the home of his other daughter, Dorothy Annie Gilmore, at no. 15, Grange Park Crescent, on 13 May 1970.
- There appears to be no record of JWE in the National Probate Calendar (via Ancestry), which suggests that he did not die a rich man.
- **Matty Mains** was landlord of the Pit Laddie in the 1940s, possibly after Darkie Williams and before Walter Milburn. He is said to have been from Spennymoor and to have married Miss Fenwick, of Bowburn. However I have not yet identified this marriage, nor any other records about them.
- **Walter King Milburn** (1899-1997) was also landlord of the Pit Laddie in the 1940s, probably after Matty Mains. He was born at Bishop Auckland on 7 July 1899 and married Norah Catherine Christlow (1902-1984) in 1924. They were living at 38,

<sup>14</sup> While indentures from the late 18th and early 17th century, relating to Lamb's Close farm and the Pit Laddie Inn, are in the Vaux Breweries collection in the Durham Record Office, none are included after 1843. Presumably evidence of later transactions were included in title documents handed to the Ministry of Transport, when they acquired the inn and much of the farm in the 1960s.

School Street, TurSDale, in 1939; at the Pit Laddie in 1945; at 140, Park Avenue in 1951 and at 47, Park Avenue in 1961. She died in 1984 and he in 1997.

- **William R. (Robson?) Willey** was landlord of the Pit Laddie in 1951. He was born in 1915, the son of Matthew Willey (born 1890) and Sarah (née Johnston). His grandfather, Robert Willey, was one of the first miners at Bowburn Colliery and was Secretary of Bowburn Miners' Lodge till he died in 1932. (His father was one of the original coal hewers at Bowburn Colliery, living in 1911 with his parents.) In 1939, WEW married Isabel Turton (born 1915), daughter of Joseph Turton and Margaret J. Turton (née Tones).
- **Charlie Springett** was landlord in the 1950s, presumably following William R. Willey.



*Charlie Springett behind the bar of the Pit Laddie*

- In 1959, **George Jones** came from Belle Vue, Quarrington Hill, to be the last manager of the Pit Laddie Inn. He and his wife, Mary, were registered to vote there in 1961. The Durham County Advertiser, on 31 August 1962, p.1, carried a photograph of him outside the inn, with three customers: Ronnie McTaggart, George Woodruff and Mick Stokoe. This was soon after the route of a 21-mile motorway from the Birtley to Aycliffe had been announced by Ernie Marples, Minister of Transport. According to the Advertiser, it was Mr Jones' view that they should "build a great roundabout and leave the Pit Laddie in the middle of it". While many in Bowburn might have agreed with that view, the Ministry did not. Work on the motorway started at Bowburn in about 1966. (A photograph of the pub, said to have been taken in 1966, shows it still intact – see page 1.) The Bradbury-to-Bowburn stretch of the motorway was opened on 6 Jan 1969 and the stretch north of here opened on 1 Jul 1969.
- George and Mary Jones later lived at 61, Bede Terrace. A nephew still lives in Quarrington Hill.

## 5. Buildings

- The will of Ed Maugham (1834), referred to above, included “Lams Close” farm, a “pub[li]c house or inn” and “other houses” at Crowtrees.

### (a) Lamb’s Close farm buildings



- Frustratingly, there are no known photographs of Lamb’s Close farm buildings, other than at a distance as part of a wider scene. (The picture above was taken in the 1950s.)
- Evidence from Ordnance Survey maps suggests that the original (or, at least, pre-1850s) farmhouse remained intact till at least 1920, though a few outbuildings were added in that time, and it is likely that this farmhouse survived till the whole site was cleared for the motorway.



*Lamb’s Close farm buildings in 1857, 1895 and 1915*

- A search for “Lamb’s Close” on < [www.keystothepast.info](http://www.keystothepast.info) > finds that “a circular structure at this site... shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map... may be a 19th century gin gang”. At that time, however, the field where this was located was not actually part of Lamb’s Close farm – though it became so during the 20th century (see §1, above). And, unless the Lamb’s Close farmer of the time sub-let this field from the tenant of Quarrington farm, of which it was a part, it seems unlikely that he used it for farming purposes.





*The 1857 OS map shows the possible location of a horse gin, to the west of Lamb's Close farm. However it may not have been used for agricultural purposes.*



*The site of that supposed horse gin is still visible on satellite views – shown here thanks to Google Maps. (There appear also to be other similar circles viewable from the air... However this one is exactly at the site of the suppose horse gin.)*

- Much of Quarrington farm (and the adjacent Quarrington Grange and Heugh Hall farms) was extensively mined for coal in the late 18th and 19th centuries. So perhaps there was a horse gin (or whimsey) to wind men and coal to and from some underground workings. It is tempting to think that the gin might have belonged to John Bell, who farmed Lamb's Close farm in the 1850s and bought it in 1858, but who also leased a colliery immediately south of there (on Quarrington farm). However John Bell's Pit worked the Five Quarter Seam (or, rather, "robbed the pillars" of earlier workings in that seam), which outcropped (met the land surface) higher up than this point – roughly where today's Bowburn Colliery is now located. So, if the horse gin did in fact serve colliery workings, it was in deeper the Main Coal seam.



*Main Coal seam abandonment map, superimposed on today's satellite view (thanks to Google maps). The arrow points to site of possible horse gin.*

- Main Seam coal was worked immediately beneath this point from the original [working<sup>15</sup>] Bowburn colliery, in the 1840s and '50s. So perhaps this horse gin was for a pit to that seam. That would be logical, as the site was so far from the main shaft, more than half a mile to the south east. The abandonment map of that seam does not show such a pit, however – though nor does it show any other ancillary shafts.
- Before leaving this topic, it can be noted that the same Google Maps satellite view of the area, today, shows the location of the concrete base that is all that remains of the Lamb's Close farm buildings. It marks the site of one of the outhouses south of the farmhouse.



*Site of concrete base of the last remaining Lamb's Close farm building*

<sup>15</sup> See "Three Bowburn Collieries" for an explanation of which colliery this was.

## (b) Pit Laddie Inn

- Photographs shown earlier in this paper show that the main building of the Pit Laddie Inn was the same in 1966 (page 1) as it was in 1918 (page 6) – though the stone had been rendered and painted white. The building immediately to its north cannot be seen in any known photographs, but the earlier photo does look as if there might have been a gap there. However this building was shown to be present on the third edition Ordnance Survey (OS3) map, the revised survey for which was done in 1915, so this is probably a trick of sight-lines. (Alternatively, the date when that photo was taken may have been earlier in the 1910s. But that is not believed to be the case.)
- That OS3 (1915) map shows that the main building had been completely replaced since 1895, when the previous OS edition was surveyed. The earlier map, meanwhile, presumably shows that the inn standing when the first edition (OS1) was surveyed, in 1857, (and probably for many years before that), had been extended.
- Also of interest on these maps is a row of four cottages, on the main road, north-west of the inn. They had gone before 1915. These were probably “Pity Belly Row”, which was referred to by W.A. Etherington in the Evening Despatch in 1967<sup>16</sup>. It seems more than likely that the cottages once housed miners at John Bell’s Pit.



*Pit Laddie Inn and forge buildings in 1857, 1895 and (below) 1915*



<sup>16</sup> A photocopy of this article, reprinted in an unknown book, was kindly lent to Bowburn LHS by John Richardson, former landlord, with his late wife, Angela, at the Kicking Cuddy.

## (6) Pit Laddie Smithy

- To those people who remember the Pit Laddie Inn (always fondly!), the blacksmith's forge across the road was an intrinsic part of the group of buildings that contained them both. Yet the smithy was never part of the Lamb's Close estate, until at least the 1890s being on Park Hill farm. It is appropriate to make some reference to it, however, both because of the perceived connection and because, for many years, the blacksmith's business was closely linked with running the pub and may even, originally, have been conducted from that side of the Durham-Stockton road.
- The buildings over the road from the Pit Laddie included the forge and the blacksmith's house. There is very little clue given in the first three OS map editions as to whether these were re-built during the late 19th or early 20 centuries, as they occupy much the same ground in all three. However in the 2nd and 3rd editions one of those buildings was labelled "Smithy", while that was not the case in 1857.
- What is clear, however, is the the Herron family (also variously spelt "Heron", "Herring" and at least once "Harring"), who also ran the Pit Laddie Inn, were the local blacksmiths for most of the 19th century.
- In 1841, the census recorded that Thomas Heron [sic], aged about 40, Blacksmith, was living at "Quarrington Lane end" with his wife, Elen [sic] and six children, the eldest of whom, John, was an Apprentice Blacksmith. There was no recorded inn keeper at the Pit Laddie – though the pub is known to have been there.



*The smithy workshop faced on to the lane to Tursdale.*

- Ten years later, in 1851, the address of his widow, Eleanor [sic] Herron [sic], and her five sons – two of whom were described as Blacksmith and another as Apprentice Blacksmith – was given as "Pit Laddie". She herself was described as "Inn Keeper" and was clearly the publican at the Pit Laddie Inn. (See §4, above.)
- In 1861, there were two Heron [sic] households whose address was given as Crow Trees [sic] but who were clearly living at Pit Laddie. The mother, Eleanor [sic] was described as "Publican" and with her was living her unmarried son William, aged 30, Blacksmith. At the same address (but possibly living over the road) was the household of her eldest son, John. Also described as Blacksmith, he was married with four children. Also in his household was his brother George (though he was listed as "servant"), another blacksmith.

- For some reason, no blacksmiths were recorded at Pit Laddie in the 1871 census, although the mother, Ellen [sic] Heron [sic] was living there, the head of a one-person household, with no occupational description. (The Pit Laddie innkeeper was then Richard Cunningham.) Of the six sons, five were blacksmiths. The eldest, John, had died in 1869. Thomas, the second son, was an engine fitter and had married and moved to Elswick in about 1856 and still lived there. The fourth son, Matthew, was a blacksmith at Coundon Grange, probably at the colliery. The fifth son, Robert, was a Master Blacksmith at Blackgate, Coxhoe. I have not found the youngest, George, in that year. He had married in 1863. By 1881 he and his wife were living at Leasingthorne, in 1891 at Brandon and in 1901 at Framwellgate Moor. Nor have I found the third son, William. It was he who was at Pit Laddie working the family smithy by 1881. It is just possible that he never left, but was just missing on census day in 1871. He probably never married. Perhaps he lived with his mother and just happened to be away that day. (In 1881, he had a housekeeper, Rebecca Fothergill.)
- In 1891 and again in 1901, John Thomas Heron, grandson of Thomas & Eleanor / Ellen (son of Robert, who had the smithy at Blackgate), and his family. If it was not clear before, JTH definitely lived in the forge house across the road from the inn. However he later moved to Co-operative Terrace, in Coxhoe, where he was employed by the Co-op Stores in 1911 as General Smith.
- The Pit Laddie smithy was in 1911 occupied by George Alderson, formerly a blacksmith at his father's smithy at Sedgefield. He had moved here in about 1906; he then left before 1918. For by then the second local blacksmith dynasty had arrived: the Greatheads.
- George Greathead came with his family from Danby Wiske, Yorkshire. He and his sons worked at the Pit Laddie smithy till he died in 1957.



*Bob Greathead, blacksmith, with Bob Ward, in the 1960s.  
The Pit Laddie Inn is across the A177 in the background*

- His son George Robert (Bob) was already running the business and continued to do so till he had to leave in 1965, when his smithy faced demolition to make way for the A1 motorway. His plight was much publicised at the time. But he moved, the day before his threatened eviction<sup>17</sup>, initially to a house he had bought in St. John's Crescent and later back to "The Forge", a bungalow on the TurSDale Road. He died in 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Source: Dur. Co. Adv. 4/6/1965, p.1