

Information from <https://www.oneguyfrombarlick.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=59&t=14391>

"Located below Dodgsons, at the top of Dark Lane, in Thornton Parish. It was once owned by Thornton Church and purchased in 1919 by Amos Nelson of the Gledstone Estate. Tom Jaques rented it from Amos Nelson and my grandfather Amos Holden managed the farm for him in the 1920's and 30's. Other tenants have included the Lowcocks; John Wilkinson or John o' Neds who had the spectacular opening of his hen hoil on the moor; a Mrs Bailey who had regular prayer meetings; Fred Waddington who mended boots and clogs; Arthur and Frank Waddington who were members of the brass band. In 1949 the farm was sold by Amos Nelson to Tom Lumb who had the paper mill at Skipton. The last tenant was Group Captain Hartley from Liverpool. The house still stands but is derelict and David Wood of Oakslack owns the land."

The early history of the farm is covered in Dennis Cairns " Marlfield Papers" which I have attached as a pdf.

marlfield papers (1).pdf

Stephanie Carter one of our history society members, wrote these articles about life at Fiddling Clough for the Earby Chronicles in 2004/5.

LIFE AT FIDDLING CLOUGH IN THE 1920'S AND 30'S By Stephanie Carter .

In 1921 Amos Holden and his family moved from Lothersdale to manage Fiddling Clough for Tom Jacques of Thornton Hall. In fact the farm was owned by Sir Amos Nelson, rented by Mr Jacques and managed by Amos Holden. Tom Jacques was a good and generous man, a bachelor, who walked to the Clough each Sunday, in light coloured boots and a collar and tie. He would look round the stock, pay Amos his wage and spend a little time with Rachel in the house, often taking Bluebird toffees for the children. Cattle and sheep were walked to and from Thomton Hall and Fiddling Clough up Wysick. Originally from the Hubberholme area, when Tom Jacques left Thomton, he returned to manage the pub at Cray. Amos and Rachel already had 5 children Ralph (b 1911), Marian (b 1912), Edith my mother (b 1915), Kenneth (b 1917) and Harriet (b 1920); with Maurice(b 1922), Mary(b 1925) and Doreen (b 1928) being born at Fiddling Clough. It was a small farm of just over 30 acres and the neighbours were Rushtons at Windlefield, Proctors at Marlfield,, Parkers at High Gate a n d Chapmans at Oak Slack - beyond Chapmans was the Mount. Fiddling Clough, Oak Slack, Marlfield, Lower and Higher Vargus, Dodgsons and Windlefield were all standing in the 18 h century. There was no electricity and no mains water. There was a big low living room, kitchen, cellar and three bedrooms. The meadow attached to Windlefield at the top of Dark Lane on the way to Fiddling Clough was arable land at one time and is still called the cornfield. In the 1920s and 30s Dark Lane was passable for horses and carts. It is now overgrown and impassable. At the bottom of Dark Lane is the Brigstones and waterfalls, a once very popular beauty spot. Sometimes the children walked down the lane for shelter, but mostly down the fields. Clogs were hidden in the wall at the bottom for the return j joumey . As they grew up and went dancing at the Parish Rooms, the girls would go in long dresses tucked up with elastic, carrying their shoes under their arms. At the Brigstones they changed out of their clogs, put them in the wall, changed into shoes and let out the elastic from their dresses. At the top of Dark Lane going down to the Clough was the football field, where a team from Earby used to play. The children played football and cricket here, the boys making their own bats. Fiddling Clough is set in a deep ghyll near the edge of the moor and there were two ways in and out - from Earby up Dark Lane and from Lothersdale left at Dodgsons Lane. Once a year a motor rally would make its way down Dodgsons Lane, across the moor and down Dark Lane. The coal man used to deliver coal by the ton down Dodgsons Lane; it came in big lumps and had to be broken with a hammer. At one time on a Monday a greengrocer, Mr Lowcock, visited the farm with a horse and cart. At the Clough there were two out barns, or

laithes, where young cattle and pigs were kept at opposite ends of the land. There were rats there, and sometimes tramps would sleep there. On the moor where the grass was poor, Amos built a pig hut and the pigs were taken to the top laithe in winter. 100 pigs were kept on the moor at one time, often having litters of up to 16. They were fed up and taken to market down Dark Lane. The Tempests at Kelbrook had a wagon and they moved them to market from the Brigstones. Sometimes on a Monday Amos would take the horse and float to Skipton with a load of pigs with a net over them. Cattle were kept in the low barn. Looking at the front of the house from across the ghyll, it seems to be split into three sections. At the Earby end of the building was a stable for two horses with bawkes up above with hay for the horses. Under the horse stable there was a cellar, where the salted pig killed for Christmas was kept. Outside were some steps up to the middle section of the building where the Holdens lived. There was an empty house at the top, where an Irishman slept in summer. The Holdens had the same man, Michael for many years, to be followed by one of his relatives. They were staunch Catholics and walked down into Earby every Sunday. After mass at 12 o'clock they went for a pint or two before returning to work in the afternoon. Downstairs in the top house was storage for various things including coal, proven bins and corn for animal feed. Large 12 stone bags of flour were delivered by the proven merchant. At the Earby end there was a place for the pigs, a cart house for the float and two carts and kennels for the dogs. There was an outside bucket toilet with a wooden seat and newspaper hung on a string behind the door. It was such a long way to go when it was dark, and the children went in twos, with either a paraffin lamp or a jar with a candle in. There was one seat and Amos had to empty it. Kenneth kept hens and ducks in little stone huts, two on each side of the beck, and bought two huts for the three cornered field. He used to take the eggs to sell down Earby and had his regular customers, including Eddie Broughton's shop opposite the Conservative Club. He also bred pigeons and built a hut in the upstairs window of the place next door. In front of the house was a garden with lupins, rhubarb and currant bushes. Amos was a jack of all trades and a real horse man. He kept pigs, horses, young and laying off cattle and sheep; the sheep being dipped in the stream more towards the moor, and the last job was to throw the dog in. On one occasion a group of scouts from Liverpool came to camp down the ghyll. They got their water out of the beck - it wasn't very clean, after being used for sheep dip. There were lots of trees down the steep sided ghyll, with magpies and crow's nests and the children played for hours climbing them, and raced up and down on one wheeled bikes and go-karts, sledges in winter. Cows were hand milked and the milk used by the family; the shippon was towards Marlfield. Haytime was hard with all hands on deck. Amos was very crafty when turning the swathes - he was in front, then the children and the Irishman at the back - they had to keep up; there was no messing about. My mother Edith helped outside - she was at the end of the row before Marian reached the middle. A barrel of beer and a barrel of ginger beer were kept in the cellar at haytime, and large jugs of tea and a picnic basket were taken to the hay field. Winters were often harsh and brought a lot of snow, when sheep had to be rescued from the drifts. When the snow drifted up the walls, the sheep got under the walls and the children had to look for them; when they saw a small hole, the sheep would be below and Amos would come to dig it out. The snow was up to the top of the door on many an occasion and the children walked on top of the frozen snow, wall high, to school. On occasions they couldn't get down to school and Grundy the school bobby was sent up from Alder Hill to give Amos a rollicking. It was here at Fiddling Clough that the family of eight children grew up and all harboured fond memories of their childhood all their lives. To be continued in the next edition

#### LIFE AT FIDDLING CLOUGH IN THE 1920'S AND 30'S (PART 2) by Stephanie Carter

Rachel Holden had a hard life at Fiddling Clough but she enjoyed her family of 8 surviving children who had a great time living at the farm on the edge of the moor. She was a placid and remarkable person. Downstairs, in the middle section of the farm building where the family lived, was a big kitchen and pantry with stone slabs. The living room had low ceilings and there were two tables. Many hours were spent cutting up old coats, dresses and cloths to make rugs for the flags. Rachel had a hook to make wonderful patterns. Knitting and embroidery were favourite evening pastimes. Up the wooden stairs Amos and Rachel slept in the first room; there was a gap at the top of a partition separating it from the next room. You had to go through this room to get to the middle room, in which were three beds and a fireplace. Top coats were put on the beds for eiderdowns

and on the floor at the sides of the beds to get out on to. Fires were lit only when someone was poorly, and the children sometimes slept three in a bed, short side on if there were visitors. Originally the middle room was for the girls, but when the boys went into farm service, Marian and Edith moved into the end room, from where a door led into the house next door; this had a bar across and the children used to dream of someone coming through. The children all had jobs to do inside as well as out. The lads got in the coal and chopped the wood. The girls washed up in stone sinks, which were difficult to keep clean. There was a big churn to make butter, and all took their turn to twine the machine handle. This churn had a glass on top, and if it was clear the butter was being made - sometimes it took up to two hours. Lamps had to be filled and the glasses cleaned. Monday was washing day. Rachel would put on the set pan in the corner of the kitchen, make a fire underneath to bring the water to boiling point and fill the pan with buckets of water. There were two dolly tubs - in one would be soap cut up in little pieces and the other had dolly blue in it. Tablecloths, whites and towels were boiled in the set pan. There was a pole to fish them out and they were always as white as snow. Then the clothes had to be twined through the mangle - sheets had to be folded straight first. Rachel was washing from the time the children went to school to them returning home - all day long. Clothes were passed down and Rachel did plenty of patching, mending and darning. Tuesday was ironing day. There was a rack and at the front were all the pillow cases and tablecloths; the knickers and vests were at the back; it was on a pulley to let it down. Wednesday was cleaning upstairs. Rachel used to write a note out for Amos when he went shopping and often he turned up late and didn't bring half the ingredients - he used to cross half of it off. Amos carried up potatoes, paraffin and heavy goods on the float. On Mondays he went to Skipton and sometimes Keighley to see his relatives. He would bring haslet from the market and sausages from Prestons of Colne or John Willie Smith in Earby. There was always a roast on Sundays, warm up on Monday, potato ash the next day - a joint of meat lasted a long time. A pig was always killed for Christmas: Jim Parker from Highgate, with the help of three or four men to hold it down would kill it on a three legged bench. Nothing was wasted; it was cut up and put on slabs in the cellar and Amos was an expert at rolling bacon and hams. Saltpetre used to be rubbed into the bones, and as there were no fridges, four hams were hung up in the house. The meat went green on the outside, but it was beautiful inside. The blood drained from the pig was used to make black puddings. Thursday was baking day. Bread was baked for the whole week; it was kneaded and put in front of the fire to rise. One and a half pounds was then weighed out and put in a loaf tin and left to rise again. 8 loaves were put in the oven at once. Rachel baked 20 pounds at once, twice a week in haytime. She also made currant teacakes. Then she made pastry for onion and potato pasties - this was for tea every baking day. She made sad cakes cut into eights, custards, rock buns, and parkins which the children had at night. When she had finished there were two tables and the window bottom full of things she had made. The oven was by the fire with big chunks of wood underneath. The children collected dead wood down the ghyll and the fire was started with coal, then wood. There was no temperature gauge and it was marvellous what Rachel could do. Friday was cleaning downstairs. It was also bath night, when the set pan was put on and the bath filled; two girls got in at once; the water was tipped out and filled again for the lads. The bath was hung up in the old house next door and brought into the main room in front of the fire. 8 o'clock was bed time. Sometimes in summer the children would go to their aunt's house in Keighley - it was quite an experience; there were trams to take them to all parts of the town, the market to explore and Aunt Harriet would make the girls new dresses. Also in summer lots of friends from Earby and relatives from Lothersdale and Colne used to walk up to the Clough, often taking sweets for the children, and they had a great time. On Sundays everyone got dressed up, as this was the principal day for visitors. Sometimes on a Wednesday Rachel would go to Jew's Alley below the old market hall in Colne, where goods were cheaper. Whit Monday was walking day and the family went to Skipton in their Sunday best. The bus went from the Red Lion to Skipton. Amos would go drinking - beer was 2d a pint - and the others watched the procession - it was a day out. On one occasion they went from Fiddling Clough on a day out to Blackpool. Rachel went to a fortune teller there; she told her her husband would live longer than her. When she got back home, she stopped paying insurance on Amos' life! At Christmas the children would hang up their stockings, and would get some nuts, an apple and an orange. The family made their own fun. A Christmas tree was put up and paper chains glued together. Geese were kept on the farm and one was roasted for

Christmas. The goose grease was put on the children's chests on a piece of flannel when they had a cold. The doctor was rarely called, as Rachel nursed the children herself. Doctor Niven had to be taken up in the horse and cart when one of the children was born. All the children left school at 14; the boys going into farm service and the older girls into weaving at Watson's shed. The family left Fiddling Clough in 1936 and lived in Cowgill Street; electric lights, running water and other modern conveniences must have seemed like paradise.