

Postgraduate Diploma in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies

University Of Strathclyde

Mike Kipling

House Étude

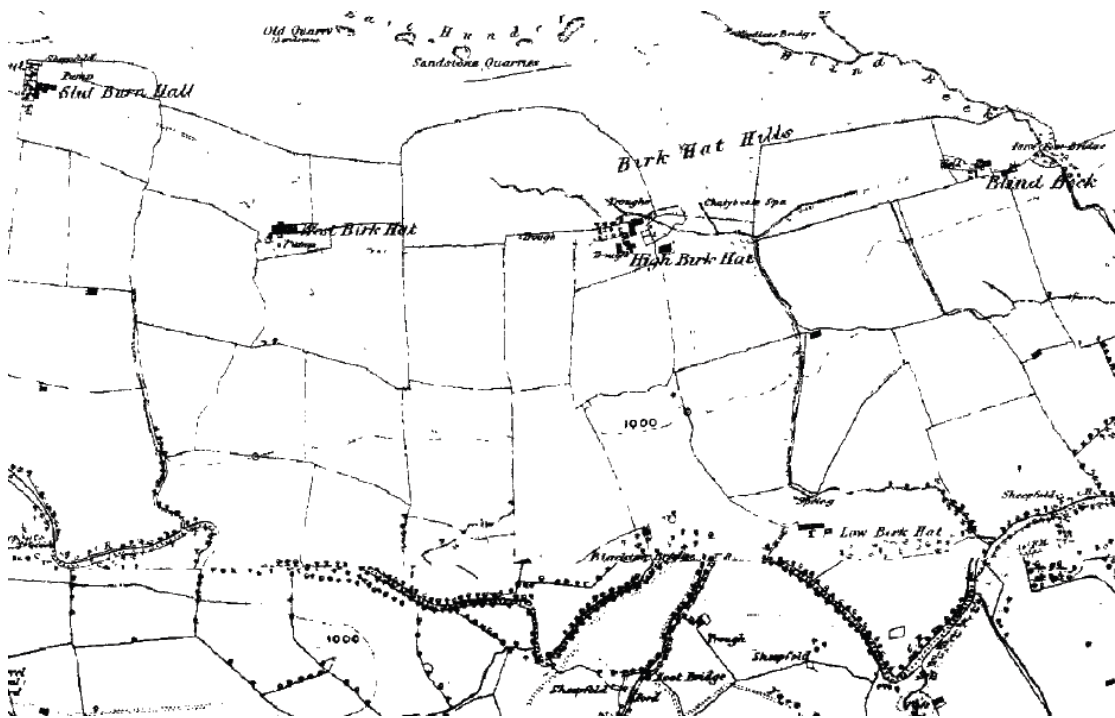
The Farms at Birk Hat, Baldersdale

February 2012

1. Introduction

There are three farms at Birk Hat(t) in Baldersdale, which is in Romaldkirk parish in the North Riding of Yorkshire (since 1974, County Durham). One of them, Low Birk Hat, came to national prominence in 1973 when its owner, Hannah HAUXWELL, was featured in a Yorkshire Television documentary *Too Long a Winter*. It showed Hannah running her Pennine farm without assistance, living extremely frugally from a tiny income but yet being serenely content with her lot.

Birk Hat is located about 5 miles up Baldersdale at about 1000ft above sea level. The farms of the dale mainly keep cattle in the lower fields and sheep in the higher pastures and moorland. The other two farms are High Birk Hat and West Birk Hat.



Birk Hat (Ordnance Survey : Yorkshire 1:10,560 Date: 1856-1857)

The farms have a long history. The earliest mention of which I am aware is in the manor rolls of Cotherstone when, in 1526, “John TYNKLER receives one tenement called Byrkhatte 24/- p.a. (fine 5 marks)”.¹

An explanation of the name appeared in the Newcastle Journal on 29 November 1856:

“Birk Hat” is simply *Birkett* or *Birch Gate*. These abbreviations of common terms being usual in the district.

2. The Buildings

Today, High Birk Hatt (HBH) is listed grade II and is described as being a farmhouse with barn attached to left and byre to right. It bears the inscription “17 IID 41” on door lintel and has had mid nineteenth century alterations². Low Birk Hat (LBH) is probably of early 19th century construction³, although with a barn which is Grade II listed and was probably built in the 18th century, though it has since been enlarged.



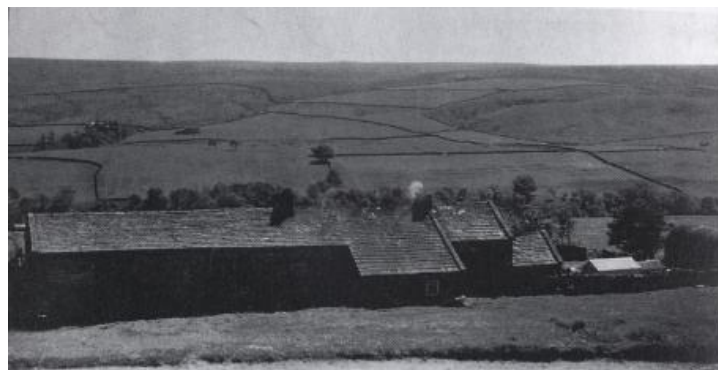
High Birk Hatt



Low Birk Hat

Although I am not aware of any archaeological evidence, non-property records show that there must have been earlier buildings on both these sites.

West Birk Hat (WBH) farmhouse is no more, having been drowned during the construction of the Balderhead reservoir in the early 1960s.



West Birk Hat⁴

The other reservoir seen on today’s map, Blackton, was built in 1889 to provide water for Stockton and Middlesborough Water Board.



Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Baldersdale

Recent aerial views of the site can be seen below:



High Birk Hatt

Low Birk Hat

Blind Beck



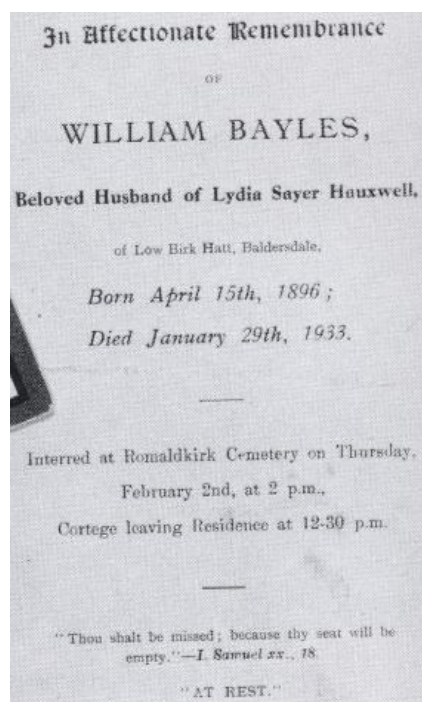
3. Hannah Hauxwell's recollections

Hannah Hauxwell born in 1926, the only child of William Bayles Hauxwell and Lydia Sayers TALLENTIRE. She was born at Sleetburn, the next farm up the dale from Birk Hat, which her father farmed at the time. The family moved into LBH when she was aged 3. With them at the time were her grandmother, Elizabeth Bayles and her great uncle William Bayles.

Her father died intestate in 1933. In 1935, Lydia Hauxwell registered a deed of vesting assent, recognising that LBH and properties in the nearby hamlet of Hury now belong to her⁵.



Hannah Hauxwell at Low Birk Hat⁶



Funeral Card of William Bayles Hauxwell⁷

Hannah recollects that LBH was bought from “*the KIPLING family*” by her father, William, at auction twelve years before he died. She tells how her father was bid against by his aunt, Jane Bell, making the hammer price more than he could really afford, and how the mortgage interest, together with ill health and the lack of other younger family members, led to the farm’s gradual financial decline.

I have searched the North Riding Deed registry for the period and have found no deeds indexed under either Kipling or Hauxwell which refer directly to the acquisition of LBH by William Hauxwell. However, property deeds were only voluntarily registered at that time.

There are other deeds in the registry which are relevant to LBH. One refers to the sale to the Stockton and Middlesbrough Water Board by William Kipling ‘the younger’ of Romaldkirk, Jane Kipling widow, and William Kipling of Stoke Newington, surgeon, grandson, of land immediately to the south of LBH (approximately the area subsequently filled by Blackton reservoir)⁸.

Lydia Hauxwell died in 1958 and her will leaves all her property to Hannah⁹. Hannah’s Uncle Thomas was an executor and continued to run LBH until his death in 1961, leaving Hannah in sole occupancy of the property.

Hannah tells how her family had lived at LBH since it was built, and that is borne out by the evidence. The 1841 census (see below) shows John Bayles, Hannah's great-great-grandfather, already in residence and it could well be that the Kiplings had the present farmhouse built in the earlier decades of the 19th century.

Appendices 1 and 2 contain key descendant charts for the two families, Kipling and Bayles, most closely associated with LBH in the 19th and 20th centuries.

4. The Earlier History of Birk Hat

The first reference to Birk Hat in the Romalldkirk parish registers¹⁰ I could find is in 1636, the birth of Isabelle DOWTHWAITE of 'Birckhat'. Before this date, the registers rarely gave information on people's homes. In 1649 and 1650, we find the death of Margaret JACKSON and a servant to Charles JACKSON and in 1652 the deaths of Ann, wife of John ATKINSON, and Bryan TINKLER (possibly a relation of the TYNKLER of Byrkehatt in 1526). In Feb 1665/66 was born William son of William KIPLING of 'Birkhat'. Whilst families succeeded each other in their tenancies, multiple occupancy was also common in typical Yorkshire dales 'longhouses'.

In March 1686/87, George Dent of '*Birkhalt of Baldersdaile, Yorkshire, yeoman*' and John Hutchinson of Eggleston, yeoman gave a "*bond in £200 for performance of terms of the bargain and sale of a moiety of a messuage at Underthwaite*".¹¹

The first specific mentions of Low and High Birk Hat come later. For example, in 1723, the birth of Mary, daughter of Thomas HINDMER of LBH is registered¹⁰ and in 1732, the birth of Mary, daughter of William and Rebecca DENT of HBH. Adjectival usage is sporadic. However, also in 1731, Mary the daughter of William and Elizabeth KIPLING was born at Low Birk Hatt and the Kiplings and Dents have a number of other children around this time, making it clear who occupied which at that time. Similarly, at the time of the HINDMERs at LBH, John LANGSTAFF inhabited the higher farm.

Later, we find mention of William and Betty BAYLES of 'BirkHatt' in the late 1790s (see Appendix 1) and a note that John Dent of 'Birkhat' died of "a Cancer in his upper lip" in 1804. In 1812, James DENT of West Birk Hatt, (yeoman) and Thomas HIGHMAN the younger of Low Birk Hatt sold "*West Birk Hatt in Baldersdale and 47a. of land in manors of Cotherstone and Hunderthwaite*" to the Earl of STRATHMORE¹².

It is unusually recorded by an affidavit attached to the register¹⁰ (dated 1866) stating that William KIPLING of Hunderthwaite and Mary NICHOLSON his wife and Elizabeth their daughter (born at Dowgill Head and baptised at Brough, Westmorland) came to live at Birk Hatt. Their other children, born between 1810 and 1819 were all baptised at Romalldkirk and noted as being of Birk Hat.

On display in St Romald's church are brass pew markers, including that of William Kipling of Birk Hat (no22, right). New box pews were auctioned in 1829 and William Kipling paid £6 10s for his¹³. The pews changed hands with the houses, not with the individuals and we can see that by the time of the 1841 census that William Kipling ('yeoman') was living in Hunderthwaite village. In the 1851 census, he is described as a "Landowner Farmer".



5. Birk Hat in the Census Era

The table below shows the occupying family head at published censuses from 1841 to 1901:

	Low Birk Hatt	High Birk Hatt	West Birk Hatt
1841	John BAYLES	Joseph TOWNSON	George DENT
1851	William BAYLES sen	William WALKER sen, John DENT sen	George DENT
1861	William BAYLES sen	William WALKER sen, John DENT sen	George DENT
1871	William BAYLES sen	William WALKER sen	George DENT
1881	William BAYLES sen	William WALKER jnr	John DENT jnr
1891	William BAYLES sen	Thomas DONALD	Edmund FAWCETT
1901	William BAYLES sen	John ADDISON	Edmund FAWCETT
1911	William BAYLES jnr	John ADDISON	Edmund FAWCETT

From this and Appendix 1, it can be seen that LBH was occupied continuously by three generations of the BAYLES family and that the other two farms also had decades-long periods of single family occupancy, including the Dents at WBH. Appendix 1 notes two intermarriages between the Bayles and Dent families. There are also two marriages between Bayles and Tallentires. This practice was not uncommon amongst isolated farming communities.



Siblings Jane and William Bayles at Low Birk Hat (early 20th century)¹⁴

Newspapers of the period reveal something of the Dent family of WBH, with George Dent being known for his devotion.....

For a season the Wesleyans seemed, as it were, to be shut out of Baldersdale, until the late George Dent, of Birkhat, opened his house for them, where they assembled until the erection of the Wesleyan Chapel in 1861.

Teesdale Mercury (letter dated 21 Mar 1884)

.....and John Dent for his devotion to strong liquor!

DRUNKENNESS AT BARNARD CASTLE.—
John Dent, farmer, of Birk Hat, Balderdale, was charged with being drunk and disorderly on two occasions in Barnard Castle. Defendant has been several times recently before the Magistrates, and the full penalty, £2 in each case, was imposed.

Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough - Thursday 9 July 1885

Probate records also reveal the passing of occupancy:

BAYLES William of Birk Hat Farm Hunderthwaite Romal-kirk Yorkshire died 3 May 1907 Administration **London** 9 April to Isaac Bayles farmer.
Effects £1138 15s. 2d.

HAUXWELL William Bayles of Low Birk Hat Baldersdale Cotherstone **Yorkshire** died 29 January 1933 Administration **London** 24 March to Lydia Sayer Hauxwell widow.
Effects £1492 5s. 4d.

WALKER William.
Effects under £800.

23 April. The Will of William Walker late of High Birk Hat in the Township of Hunderthwaite in the North Riding of the County of **York** Yeoman who died 20 December 1872 at High Birk Hat was proved at **York** by Elizabeth Walker of High Birk Hat Widow the Relict John Dent of Balder Head in the said Township Yeoman and George Tarn of Wooden Croft in the said Township Farmer the Executors.

DENT George.
Effects under £600.

7 January. Administration (with the Will) of the effects of George Dent late of West Birk Hat in the Parish of Romalldkirk in the County of **York** Farmer who died 7 July 1873 at West Birk Hat was granted at **York** to John Dent of East Carnigill Romalldkirk Farmer the Son one of the Residuary Legatees.

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The Bulmer's 1890 directory¹⁵ tells us that Edmund Fawcett of WBH was a gamekeeper as well as a farmer, confirms the 1891 occupants of HBH and LBH and mentions that William Kipling and the estate of the late John N Kipling were amongst the principle landowners of Hunderthwaite.

The 1910-3 Valuation Office survey tells us who actually owned each farm at that time¹⁶. We find:

	Size	Owner	Occupier
Low Birk Hat	67 acres	J KIPLING, Gt. Neck, Long Island	William & Isaac BAYLES
High Birk Hatt	125 acres	Geo. BARKER (Trustee), Darlington	John ADDISON
West Birk Hat	356 acres (and 1200 acres of grouse moor)	Earl of STRATHMORE	Edmund FAWCETT

This Earl of Strathmore was Lord of the Manor of Cotherstone with Hunderthwaite and father of the late Queen Mother^{17 18}.

John Kipling was son of John N Kipling and grandson of William Kipling of Birk Hat (see Appendix 2). He emigrated to the USA in 1893 and died in Brooklyn in 1921. John Kipling's widow and three children were still resident at Great Neck, NY in 1930¹⁹ and it was presumably they who sold LBH to William Hauxwell (John Kipling's death in 1921 coincides with Hannah Hauxwell's recollection of the date her father bought LBH).

I have not been able to identify George BARKER nor of whom or what he was trustee.

In 1939, WBH and adjacent shooting moors were put up for sale, presumably by the Earl of Strathmore.

IN A FAVOURED PART OF THE PENNINES
BETWEEN
BARNARD CASTLE AND BROUGH.

The picturesque villages of Cotherstone, Larlington and Ronaldkirk are close to the property. Barnard Castle is only 5 miles distant. Middleton-in-Teesdale 7 miles. Harrogate and Darlington are 54 and 23 miles respectively. Convenient by car for the West Riding and the Tees and Tyneside towns.

THE FINE GROUSE SHOOTINGS
over the notable
HIGH AND LOW COTHERSTONE MOORS,
together with the Freehold of West Birk Hat Farm and Moor Allotment of 1,270 acres adjoining. Keeper's Cottage, &c., extending in all to about
6,250 ACRES.

For SALE by AUCTION by Messrs.
JOHN D. WOOD and Co., at the Sale Room, 23, Berkeley Square, London, W.1, on Tuesday, 24th July, 1939, at 2.30 p.m. Solicitors: Messrs. Titley, Paver-Crow and Fedden, 6, Princes Square, Harrogate. Auctioneers' Offices:—23, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

The Times (London, England), Tuesday, Jun 13, 1939; pg. 30

6. Birk Hat today

Today, HBH is farmed by A C ICETON & Sons, who keep Swaledale sheep and Limousin cattle²⁰.

LBH was sold in lots by Hannah Hauxwell in 1988 when she moved to Cotherstone village at the foot of Baldersdale²¹. LBH farmhouse is occupied and has been sympathetically restored²².



LBH in 2009



Signage at Birk Hat

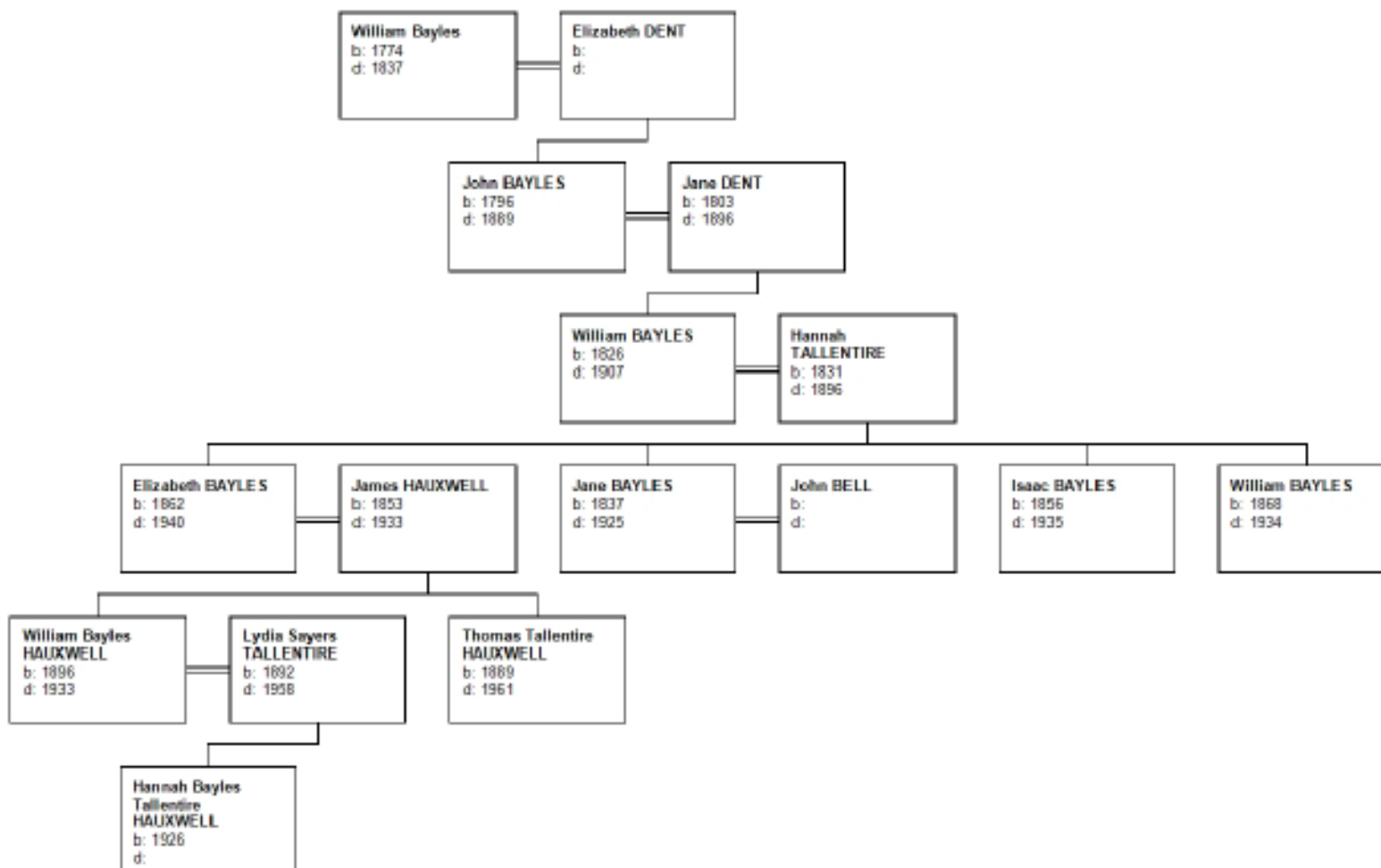
Some of the surrounding fields were discovered never to have been artificially fertilised and harboured a number of rare plants. They were bought by the Durham Wildlife Trust ('Hannah's Meadow'). One of the barns has been restored as an information centre²³.



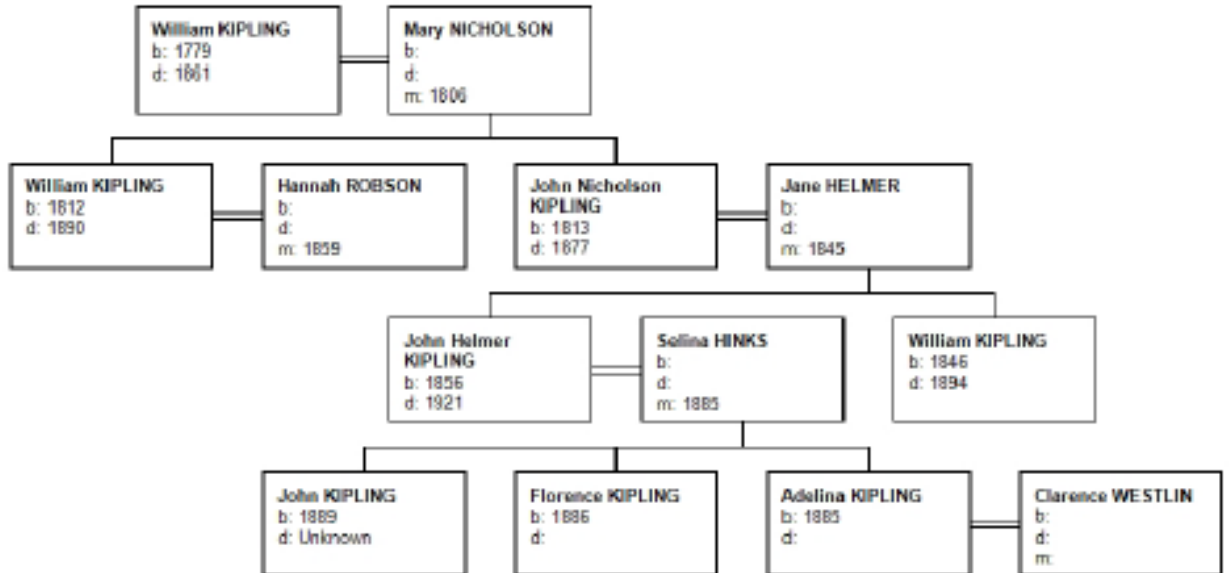
Low Birk Hat Farm 1989 Land Registry Plan²⁴

And Hannah Hauxwell celebrated her 85th birthday in 2011!²⁵

Appendix 1 – Selected Descendants of William BAYLES



Appendix 2 – Selected Descendants of William KIPLING



Bibliography

Secondary Sources

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² <http://www.keystothepast.info/durhamcc/K2P.nsf/K2PDetail?readform&PRN=D12844> (accessed 29 Jan 2012)

³ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991). *Hannah – The Complete Story*. London. Random Century Group Ltd.

⁴ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991). *Ibid* Page 214

⁵ North Riding Deed Registry Vol 64 Page 292.

⁶ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991). *Ibid* Pages 96-7

⁷ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991) *Ibid* Page 94

⁸ North Riding Deed Registry Vol 662 Page 529.

⁹ North Riding Deed Registry Vol 1373 Page 809

¹⁰ Births, Marriages & Deaths (PR). Romaldkirk Parish. Transcription. NYRO

¹¹ Strathmore Estate and Family Records. Durham County record Office. Ref No. Ref No. D/St/D3/7/6 Catalogue entry (accessed 2 Feb 2012)

¹² *Ibid*. Ref No. D/St/D3/7/27 Catalogue entry (accessed 2 Feb 2012)

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- ¹³ DICKINSON, K. S. (1936) *History of the Church & Parish of Romaldkirk*. Snushall
- ¹⁴ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991) *Ibid* Page 94
- ¹⁵ 1890 Bulmer's Directory of North Yorkshire, Richmond and Cleveland Page 587. Ancestry.com (accessed 5 Feb 2012)
- ¹⁶ National Archives IR58/25493 Hunderthwaite Assessment No. 1-100
- ¹⁷ *A History of the County of York North Riding: Volume 1* (1914), pp. 117-127. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64726> Date accessed: 02 February 2012
- ¹⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2007) Online Edition. Oxford University Press (accessed 2 Feb 2012)
- ¹⁹ Census. USA Year: 1930; Census Place: Great Neck Estates, Nassau, New York; Roll: 1461; Page: 6A; Image: 248.0; Ancestry.co.uk (accessed 4 Feb 2012)
- ²⁰ Hamilton and Hetherington stock sales: http://www.livestock-sales.co.uk/mart/pedigree_beef/limousin/2005/0525calves.html and <http://www.swaledale-sheep.com/10salereports/Midd%20Sw%20Ewes%20270910.pdf> (accessed 2 Feb 2012).
- ²¹ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991). *Ibid* Page162
- ²² A SLIDESHOW DEPICTING IMAGES TAKEN AT HANNAH'S FARM, LOW BIRK HATT, AND HANNAHS MEADOW IN JUNE 2009. Uploaded to YouTube on 241457922's channel on 29 Mar 2011 (accessed 4 Feb 2012)
- ²³ HAUXWELL Hannah with COCKROFT Barry (1991). *Ibid* Page 252
- ²⁴ UK Land Registry. Title Number : DU145052 (downloaded 6 Jan 2012)
- ²⁵ <http://www.itv.com/yorkshire/hannah-hauxwell-at-8557764/> TV news report 6 August 2011 (accessed 4 Feb 2012)