

-:HILDERSTONE:-

Hilderstone is a small village about two miles to the south-east of Fulford as the crow flies. It stands in hilly wooded countryside on Hilderstone Brook which runs into Scotch Brook in Moddershall Valley. At the time of Domesday in 1086 it was recorded as '*Hidulvestune*' meaning '*The farmstead of a man called Hildewulf*' (whose name means '*warrior wolf*'), and agriculture has always been the main activity in the area with the land being mainly pasture. There is a story of a local man who travelled to London on foot to deliver a stallion to Islington where it was to be shown before King Edward VII. When he arrived at Islington he was told that he had to take the horse to Paddington. As he didn't know the way he paid someone five shillings to show him the way. It is recorded that his eventual reward for delivering the stallion from Hilderstone to Paddington was "*a bob for himself*"!

There is some evidence that the Romans were at Hilderstone. On the west side of the village there is a dilapidated burial mound and a Roman coin was found in the vicarage garden which had been built on what is said to have been the old village green, though some think the land was just a field called Green Field which was part of Home Farm. Also in the 1930's or 1940's John Hobson, the school master had a sword which was once thought to be Roman but now thought to be a copy. This sword was found on land near Hilderstone by a group of his schoolboys. There are also reports of an old Roman stable having been found at Peakshill Farm and just outside Hilderstone towards Little Stoke there is a hill called 'Slowgreaves' which is said to have originally been '*Soldier's Graves*'.

Hilderstone Hall Estate has existed since at least 1674 and between then and 1904 it passed through the Gerrard, Fleetwood, Meynell, Fitzherbert, Beresford, Vernon and Bourne families. The present Hall, now a residential home but originally a Georgian Mansion built by Ralph Bourne, a pottery manufacturer, in about 1750. The Bourne family lived there until 1950. It was them who gave Hilderstone both its church and its school. An 800-year old cedar tree stands in the Hall grounds which is said to have been brought back from the Crusades. Just south of Hilderstone Hall there is a rectangular moated site which is thought to have been the site of the old Manor House, and indeed an old chimney was still standing there in 1986. Nowadays the site is known as 'Chimney Pool'. It was here during the 19th and 20th centuries that the ghost of a lady in white has often been seen. A second ghost, also a lady in white with jet-black hair, is reported to have been seen in the area of the Chapel.

During the 17th century fairs were held in Hilderstone at which cock fighting and bull and bear baiting took place. It is thought this happened in the field at the top of the village called 'Bearsteakes'. From this end of Hilderstone it is possible to see the Wrekin in Shropshire, and on a clear day it is even possible to see the Welsh hills.

The 1747 Poll Book for Staffordshire recorded the following inhabitants:-

John Andrews
Thomas Bailey
Thomas Goodwin
Thomas Mills
Thomas Tabernor
Thomas Walker
Thomas Watson

In 1791 Methodism came to Hilderstone when a house was registered for the use of dissenters. In 1821 Thomas Sargant in his Will left his house to the Methodist Connection for six years. Then in 1822 a Wesleyan Chapel was built, but was then rebuilt in 1890. A tablet was fixed in the wall of the new Chapel which read "*J.Wesley/Methodist Chapel/1822*". Among those serving the Methodist Chapel since 1930 were:-

T.W.Thompson	1930
T.Herbet Kidd	1933
Harold Burrow	1934
Clifford Brown	1935
Edward Hadfield	1939
O.Walter Smith	1945
Arthur Reeves	1948
Thomas Soulsby	1954
William Maslam	1956
Ronald Wharton	1959
Gerald Cole	1962
J.Leonard Waddy	1968
Gerald Clapp	1972
B.A.Dent	1972

Margaret Knee	1979
Derek J.Cooper	1982
Tom Dey MacMeekin	1987

Christ Church, near Hilderstone Hall, was paid for by Ralph Bourne and building started in 1827. It is a stone structure built in a mixed Norman-Gothic style with a low square clock tower. It contained about 340 sittings, 60 of which were free, and it was dedicated on 31st July 1833 from when the register dates, at which time Hilderstone became a separate ecclesiastical parish. The church has a unique enamelled glass window.

Among the past incumbents of Christ Church were:-

Ralph Bourne	1829
Thomas Barge Jenkinson	1860
Robert Smythe Hopkins	1863
Joseph Thomas Meek	1885
Thomas Barnes	1894
W.B.Masefield	1926
Eric Hart	1934
George Bruce	1940
J.R.Watson	?
Edward Hubert Fernie	1950
Norman Gledhill	1961
Harry Myers	1980
Philip D.Brookes B.A.	1987
Malcolm Griffin B.A.	1996
Peter Dakin	2001

(The Rev.Hopkins was born in Quebec, Canada)

Christ Church was redecorated and extensively repaired in 1926/7 and since 1980 St.Nicholas Church in Fulford and Christ Church in Hilderstone have been under one vicar, living in Tudor Hollow, Fulford. Just south of the church there was a windmill which certainly existed in 1798 and which was still in existence in 1855.

The village school which stands at the junction of Sandon Road and Fulford Road in Hilderstone was built by Ralph Bourne. It opened in 1819 and taught both sexes. Among the past masters and mistresses of the National School at Hildestone were:-

Nathan Smith	1834
Thomas Wibberley	1851
Miss ?	1851
Henry Panks	1872
Martha Panks (wife)	1872
Henry Thomas Baugust	1887 to 1892
Annie Baugust (wife)	1892
George H.Hope	1899 to 1928
Emma Hope (wife)	1899 to 1928
John Hobson	1928 to 1946
Mrs. Hobson (wife)	1928 to 1952
Mrs. A. Harrison	1946 to 1951
Miss. B. Blant	1952 to 1980

(Nathan Smith was a victualler and schoolmaster and lived at 'The Roebuck')

In 1827 a licence was granted to allow 'Divine Services' to be held in the school. By 1928 there were enough pupils for the school to be divided into four 'houses', red, yellow, green and blue. The captains of each 'house' that year were:-

BOYS	GIRLS
A.Bower	B.Bower
L.Bosson	L.Gerrard
J.Pattyson	S.Myatt
J.Poole	N.Samways

Unfortunately, by the Easter of 1981 attendance at the school had dwindled until there was only one pupil and so it closed and became a private residence in 1982.

In 1849 the apportionment of the rent-charge in lieu of tithes in the township of Hilderstone was published as part of the apportionment of the rent-charge of Fulford. Among the occupants and owners of properties in Hilderstone at this time were:-

MAP REF.	PROPERTY DESCRIPTION	OCCUPIERS NAME	OWNERS NAME
88	School	Thomas Willerby	John Bourne from the Hall
89	Toll House	John Stevenson	Trestees of Sandon Turnpike
161	Public House (<i>Horse Shoe</i>)	John Walters	John Walters
163	Storehouse and Shop	William Mountford	William Mountford
168	House and Shop	Thomas Hazelhurst	William Lycett
199	Beerhouse (<i>The New Inn</i>)	Edward Plant	William Cotton
340	Hill Croft	John Gilbert	John Gilbert
341	Chapel Garden	Trustees of the Methodist Chapel	
344	Chapel Garden	John Gilbert	John Gilbert
345	House and small garden	William Fairbanks	Trustees of Galvanist Chapel
351	Public House (<i>The Roebuck</i>)	Edwin Massey	Nathan Smith
355	House, shop & outbuildings	Charles Hill	Thomas Timmis
357	2 Houses and Joiner's Shop	Charles Hazelhurst and Thomas Parker	John Parker

At one time Hilderstone had four pubs, the 'New Inn' beerhouse, 'The Horse Shoe' (previously known as the Black Horse), the 'Bird in Hand', and 'The Roe Buck'. Of these only the 'Bird in Hand' and the 'Roebuck' still exist, the 'New Inn' apparently having closed its doors in about 1850 and 'The Horseshoe' in about 1915. Among the past landlords and landladies of the pubs were:-

The Black Horse (the centre cottage between Dingle Lane and Leek Road):-

(No landlords/landladies names have yet been found)

The Horse Shoe:-

Among the past landlords of The Horse Shoe were:-

M. Walters	1818
John Walters	1834 to 1843
Thomas Knight	1851 to 1863
William Cope	1872 to 1892
Mary Cope (daughter)	1912



The property with the orange door was once the 'Horse Shoe' public house.

(No records of the Horse Shoe have been found since 1912 though part of the metal bracket that held the sign can still be seen on the cottage wall in the middle of the village)

The Bird in Hand:-

The Bird in Hand doesn't appear in records for 1818 though it is thought to have existed before then. Sadly The Bird in Hand closed its door in 2004. Among the past landlords of The Bird in Hand were:-

James Shelley	1834
Ellen Shelley	1851
William Shelley	1860 to 1872
Thomas Shelley	1881
Thomas Houldcroft Shelley	1892 to 1940
May Shelley	about 1940 to 1970
Joan Shelley	1970 to 1977
Ray and Sharon ?	

(The Bird in Hand was one of the last pubs in Staffordshire to brew it's own beer and even had a cooper on site)



The 'Bird in Hand' public house, sadly now (2006) closed

(The left-hand B&W photograph is from Staffordshire Past Track – approval is still to be sought)

The New Inn (at the corner of the footpath to Peak's Hill):-

Mrs. Kendrick	1818
Edward Plant	1843

The Roebuck:-

Nathan Smith	1834
John Breeze	1835
Edwin Massey	1843 to 1860
Edward Knight	1851
Henry Bowers	1872
Sarah Bowers	1881 to 1897
Thomas Bond	1888 to 1889
Thomas Turner	1890 to 1892
Sarah H.Salt	1912
Frederick Fellows	1920
Robert Cooke	1921
John Thomas Breeze	1932
Frederick Fellows	1936 to 1940



The 'Roebuck' public house – left-hand B&W photograph is from Staffordshire Past Track – approval still to be sought.

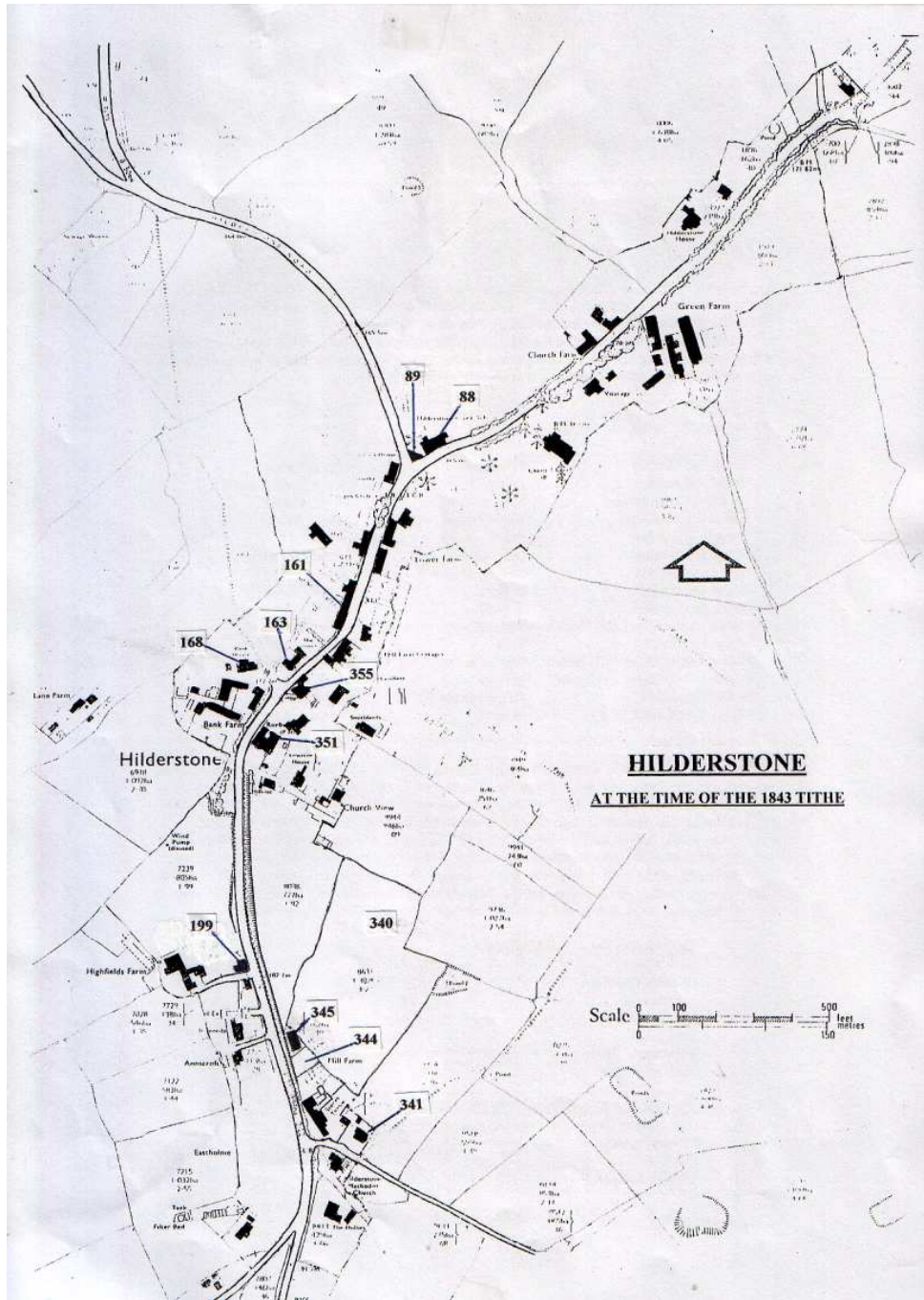
Towards the Hilderstone end of Moss Lane is Rushlade Farm. Among the past owners of Rushlade Farm were:-

William Tew	1850
Henry Farrall	1860 to 1863
G. Swift	1868
William Lockett	1868 to 1896
Joseph Rushton	1892 to 1904
John Bedson	1908 to 1912
Thomas Bond	1916
James Bradbury	1936
Harold Bastock	1940

William Meath Baker, the son of Rev. Ralph Bourne Baker, was born in Hilderstone on 1st November 1857. He later moved to Hasfield Court in Gloucestershire where he became friendly with a then unknown piano teacher. Sir Edward Elgar. William Meath Baker is said to be the 'WMB' of the Fourth Movement of Elgar's Enigma Variations. His sister Dora married Richard Baxter Townsend, the 'RBT' of the third variation.

At the time of the 1881 census there were 66 habitable buildings recorded in Hilderstone housing 324 residents. One of these buildings was Hilderstone Hall which was occupied by the Bourne family who in 1881 had eight staff living in. John Bourne and his son were both Staffordshire J.P's. There were 57 different surnames recorded in Hilderstone in 1881, those marked * also being recorded in Fulford:-

Arrowricks	Gilbert	Moors
Beeston	Hall	Mountford
Barker	Harper	Musson
Bevans	Hawkins	Panks
Booth	Hazlehurst	Parker
Bosson	Heath	Porter *
Bostock *	Hopkins	Rowley
Bourne	Horwell	Shaw
Bowlers	Hough	Shelley
Bowers	Houldcroft	Snow
Bradbury	Johnson	Till
Brain *	Knight	Tunncliffe
Brandon	Leedham	Turner
Bridgewood	Lillito	Udall
Cheadle	Mayer	Walters
Cope *	Medders	Wood
Cox	Meddings	Woodward
Fairbanks *	Miller	Woolrich
Fox	Milner	



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Being a small village one would expect to find the usual 'country' occupations represented amongst the inhabitants, and indeed the 1881 census did many of the occupations that were recorded at Fulford such as agricultural labourer, general labourer, farm servant, farmer, cowkeeper, gamekeeper, blacksmith, wheelwright, school master, domestic servant and innkeeper. However in addition to these 'country' occupations there were other occupations such as bootmaker, shoemaker, dressmaker, laundress, charwoman, nurse, butcher, provisions dealer, joiner and teacher. There was also one annuitant living in the village. In 1881 the population of Hilderstone was 395. In 1902 it was still almost the same, the actual figure being 393, and by 1932 it had dropped slightly to 377. It then rose slightly until by the 1980's it reached the 400 mark. In 1985 the 'Village Stores' closed. At the beginning of the century it had been run by a George Meddings, and he was followed by the Spencer family. Since then a new small estate of perhaps thirty or forty houses have been built on the Fulford side of the village which will have had an effect on the population, though by how much isn't known.



Hilderstone village stores

Approval to use the photograph is still to be sought from Staffordshire Past Track