



Casterton's Queen's Platinum Jubilee History Trail

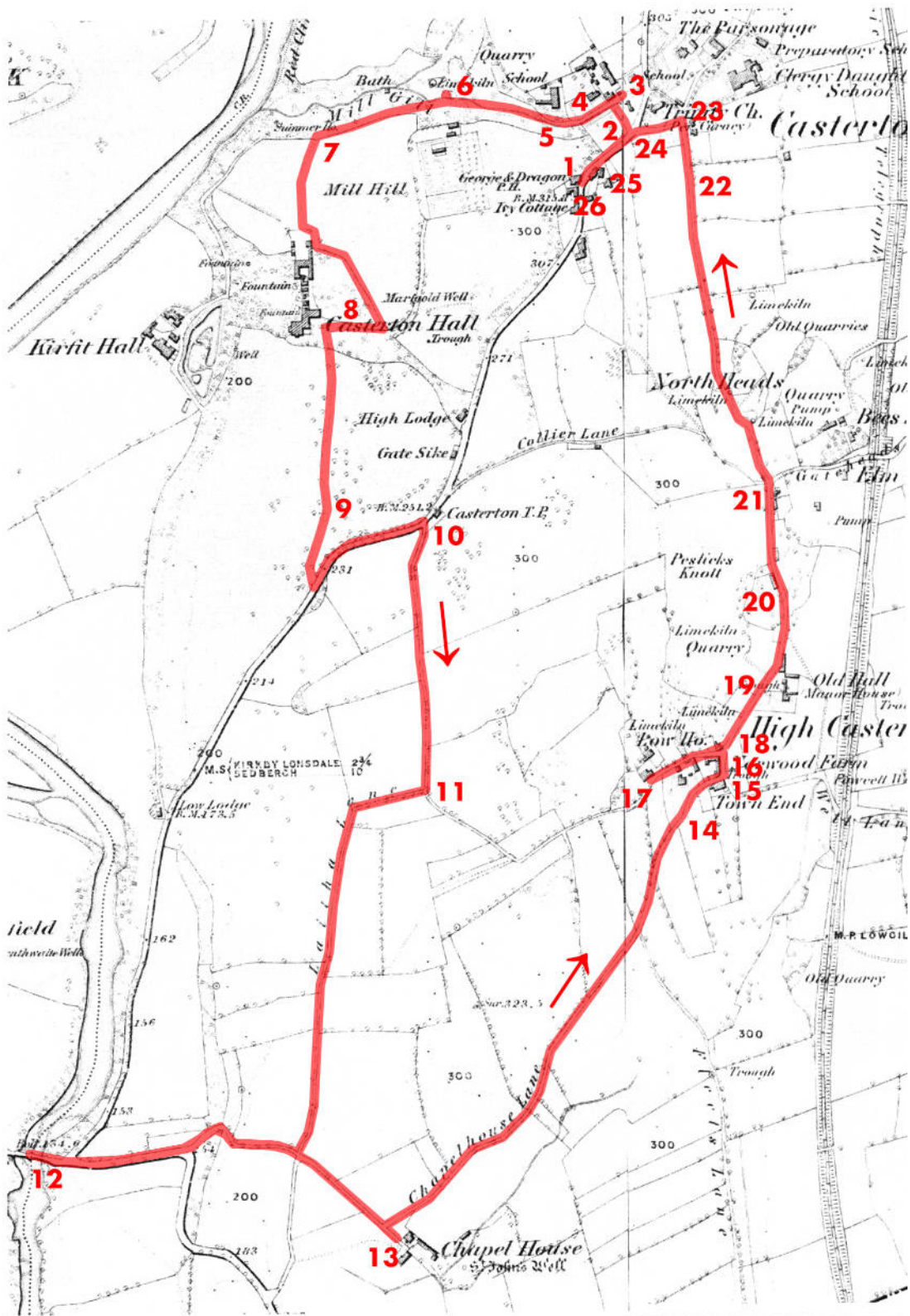
*Suggested
donation £2*

This trail was prepared for walking as part of the 2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June 2022. The approximately 6 km circular route starts and ends at the Pheasant Inn. Depending on how quickly you walk and read, it should take about 90-120 minutes.

During the walk, please be respectful of people's private property. The trail will only be on public roads, footpaths, lanes and bridlepaths. In parts stinging nettles may encroach on the path so long trousers are recommended. One section of the walk is across a field, in wet weather walking shoes would be advisable. Very small parts of the walk are along the busy A683. Please take appropriate care and attention!

The map on the next page shows the route for those of you who already know the village. The route has also been uploaded onto the Ordnance Survey App. *Within the text are instructions in red for each stage of the journey*, and historical bullet points to flag up the buildings and other features of interest.

These facts have been extracted from a far more substantial document about the history of Casterton, still in the process of being researched and written by Simon Drakeford with help from other local historians, in particular Jean Hamlett. Those with a deeper interest will have the opportunity to read more in the coming months. New material will be periodically posted onto the Parish Council website history section.



1) Start at The Pheasant Inn.

- The public house was originally called the Red Lyon from at least 1774. It later became *the George & Dragon*. In 1914 it became *The Casterton Hotel* and was renamed *The Pheasant Inn* in 1976.
- In the 1830s, it was not uncommon for coroner's inquests to be held in the pub. For example, an inquest in 1839 was held at the pub regarding the death of Casterton resident Agnes Gibson whose body had been found in the Lune near Tunstall. The coroner concluded that she had drowned herself while in a fit of temporary insanity.



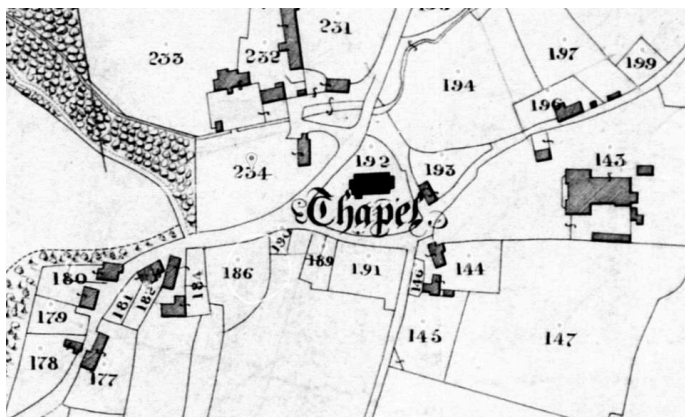
Ivy Cottage and the George & Dragon in the early 1900s.

2) *The Pheasant Inn to the village bench – 100m. Carefully cross the road and walk left towards the church. Just before the war memorial, on the other side of the road, you will see a bench. Cross the road again and take a seat.*

- From the bench you get a very fine view of the church and war memorial.

3) *The village bench to Ghyll Cottage, the village school and Beckside – 50m. Just beyond the bench is a small gap in the wall and a public footpath sign. Squeeze through the gap and follow the footpath down the slope until you reach the gravel road alongside the beck. You have just walked past Ghyll Cottage; to your right is the old village school and to your left the house currently named Beckside.*

- In the mid-19th-century Ghyll Cottage was the focus of a substantial shoe-making business run by the Hardacre family, and later it became the village post office.
- The old National School, i.e. the village primary school, originated in 1841 and continued until 1972, since when, the local children have been schooled in Kirkby Lonsdale.
- Beckside had a very long history as housing for farm workers employed by the owners of Old Hall next door, and for some years was itself known as Old Hall Farm. The building later became accommodation for staff at Casterton School and is now a private residence.



An extract from the 1848 tithe map

4) ***Beckside to Old Hall – 50m. Carry on past Beckside, following the beck, and you will soon arrive at Old Hall, on your right.***

- This was originally known as Beckside Hall. It was certainly in existence by 1674, and reputedly was visited by Queen Katherine of Braganza, wife of King Charles II.
- After Casterton Hall was built, the Carus Wilsons moved out, and their land agents moved in.
- It currently serves as the home of successive Headmasters of Casterton Sedbergh Prep School.



The National School in 1840, with the vicarage in the background.

5) ***Old Hall to Brontë House – 80m. Leaving Old Hall, carry on following the beck through the wood until you see a very large building above on your right.***

- This was the Servants' School, built in the 1830s by the Revd. William Carus Wilson and later known as Lowood

School. It was established to instruct girls of a lower social class in basic household skills, with a carefully restricted amount of general education.

- In 1921 it was merged into the nearby Clergy Daughters' School, which had also been started by Carus Wilson, and became the Brontë boarding house of the combined Casterton School.
- It has recently been converted into flats, which will soon be occupied.



Lowood School, later Brontë House, probably after the First World War

6) *Brontë House to Stone Bridge to view limekiln – 100m.*
Continue along the track with the beck on your left, after a short while it flows under the path and will now be on your right. You will eventually come to a large wooden gate on your right, and behind it, a stone bridge crossing the beck. Step through the gap and stop on the bridge looking downstream.

- Through the greenery, it is just possible to see the lime kiln, a Grade II listed building. If you stand on the bridge

facing downstream, the entrance to the lime kiln can be glimpsed through the trees, under a mound. Look at about 2 o'clock, some 50 metres away.

- Casterton had a least nine lime kilns. Another survives above Langthwaite crossroads on Wandales Lane.

7) *Stone Bridge to corner of the grounds of Casterton Hall – 360m. Return through the wooden gate, turn right and take the right track headed towards Casterton Hall.*

- The beck drops steeply away to your right, within Mill Gill, shortly to join the River Lune. There was a reference to a mill at Casterton as far back as 1271 but its precise location is unknown.
- To your left you will see Mill Hill and the impressive 15' high walls of what was originally the walled garden of Casterton Hall. It once contained Garden Cottage, which has more recently been replaced by the private Paries House.

After viewing the hill and walls, continue along the footpath until you reach one corner of the grounds of Casterton Hall. You will see a large wooden field gate and a clearly marked footpath. Take the pedestrian gate and continue along the path.

8) *Around the edge of Casterton Hall – 320m.*

The footpath takes you around the field edge of two sides of the sprawling Casterton Hall estate. Walk along the edge of the field, ahead you will see the word Footpath painted in white. Follow sign and take the narrow footpath to the left between the hedge and the fence. You will come to a driveway, follow the

signs along the driveway until you reach the T-junction. To the left is a private road, so take the right path. Just before you feel as if you are about to walk into Casterton Hall, there is a footpath sign on the left which takes you into the field. Pass through the gate and walk along the edge of the field stopping at the still-standing hollowed dead tree. From here you will have a fine view of the hall behind you.

- Casterton Hall, listed grade II*, was built by William Carus-Wilson about 1811. The hall, described in 1829 as “a stately mansion”, remained in the Wilson family until 1885, though latterly rented out, firstly to Mrs Katherine Bickersteth and later to her unmarried daughters, Emma and Lucy.
- It was then bought by the Earl of Bective, of the Irish peerage but also High Sheriff of Westmorland and linked through his daughter’s marriage to the Cavendish-Bentincks of Underley Hall on the opposite side of the river.
- The original single house and outbuildings now make up six residences.

9) *Casterton Hall to viewing point for Toll Bar Cottage – 200m. From the dead tree, walk along the edge of the field for about 200 metres until you reach the second large tree in the field on your right. Looking to the left you will see Toll Bar Cottage, and to your right an excellent view of Kirkby Lonsdale. Note that down the hill towards the river, but out of sight, is Kirfitt Hall, the fourth of Casterton’s large houses.*

- Toll Bar Cottage was built by the Sedbergh Turnpike

Road Trust, probably in the 1820s. There are similar toll cottages at the other side of Hornby and on the old Sedbergh to Kendal road. Toll roads ('Turnpikes') were abolished in 1874.

- In 1850, Edward Elleray, the son of the toll keeper, was tragically killed in a road accident. He had been playing with a cricket ball outside the cottage and was so focussed on the ball, he did not notice a horse and gig on the road. He fell in front of the alarmed horse which reared up, fatally injuring the young boy.
- The photo below, taken between the wars, shows the cottage and its setting before the road was widened.



Toll Bar Cottage between the wars.

10) *Viewing point for Toll Bar Cottage to the entrance of Casterton Golf Club – 420m. Continue to walk along the edge of the field. In the corner to the left, adjacent to the road, you will see a black metal gate. Walk through the gate and turn left onto the busy A683, walking very carefully in single file towards*

Toll Bar Cottage. As you come round the bend in the road, you will get a fine view of the cottage. Just before you reach it, you will see the entrance to the golf club. Turn right, and to your right you will see a public footpath. Unless you want to stop for refreshments at the golf club, proceed along the footpath.

11) *Entrance to Casterton Golf Club to bench on Laitha Lane footpath – 420m.* *As you walk along the path, the golf course is on both sides. Keep your eye on the path and you may find a stray golf ball. After 420 metres, you will see a bench on the left hand side.*

- You have been walking along the curiously named Laitha Lane. The name is most likely Viking in origin (*hlatha*). The word *Laithe* within place names is quite common across Yorkshire and Cumbria. It means barn, or more generally farm building, so Laitha Lane = Barn Lane, perhaps Cragg House Barn, which we will see later, was the barn after which the lane was named.

12) *Bench on footpath to Devil's Bridge – 1000m.* *Take the right hand path which will take you down past the 'football golf' and eventually through Woodclose Caravan Park to reach Chapel House Lane. At the main entrance to the caravan park, take the downhill shady path – Bucka Brow – to the right. At the bottom of the hill, continue on the road to your right. Carefully cross the A683 and arrive at Devil's Bridge. The parish boundary is half way across the river.*

- The first evidence of a bridge at Kirkby Lonsdale (and

therefore also Casterton) was in 1365 when a grant was given to Richard de Wisebeche, vicar of the church at Kirkeby in Lonesdale, to charge tolls to fund the maintenance of the **existing** bridge across the Lune. However, it is likely that this was a wooden construction built some 700m upstream where the conditions were more favourable.

- Most likely, Devil's Bridge was built in the 14th century, and the current structure largely dates from this period.
- The bridge was eventually closed to all vehicular traffic in 1932 after the nearby Stanley Bridge had been constructed.
- The name Devil's Bridge derives from the local story that the Devil appeared to an old woman, and promised to build a bridge in exchange for the first soul to cross over it. It is said that when the bridge was finished, the woman threw bread over the bridge and her dog chased over it, she thereby outwitting the Devil.



The sundial, or possibly a plague stone, on the Casterton side of the bridge

13) *Walk towards Chapel House – 600m. Retracing your*

steps, perhaps with a bacon butty in hand, walk towards the A683, again carefully cross the road and continue back up the steep Bucka Brow. At the entrance to Woodclose Caravan Park, continue straight ahead until the road takes a sharp turn to the left. Directly ahead of you you can see...

- Chapel House Farm, the site of the first chapel built in Casterton. It was dedicated to St Columba. It was called Colynklachapele in 1375 and Colmekilnechappell in 1411. The site was chosen because of the existence of a holy well which may have dated back to pagan times. The chapel closed in 1531 and had disappeared altogether by the late 17th century.

14) *From Chapel House Farm walk to Norwood House – 750m. Continue along the lane by climbing up the hill. You will pass the house ‘Uplands’ on your right and see a little way ahead a collection of buildings which is our next stop. Carry on downhill and pause for a moment in front of the large gates on the left hand side.*

- Norwood House, which was originally called Norwood Cottage, is a fine example of a house for ‘a gentleman of independent means’.
- From 1843 until at least 1911, the Clarke family lived there. Thomas Clarke published a detailed account of the monthly rainfall here in the year 1879.
- In addition to Norwood House, also in the area are Norwood Farm Cottages, Norwood Cottage and Norwood Fields.



Norwood Cottage as was, in the mid-19th century

15) *Norwood House to Town End Cottage at the T-junction – 80m. Carry on along the road on past the cattle grid of what used to be Norwood Farm towards the curved end wall of the old barn and arrive at the T-junction where Chapel House Lane meets Well Lane.*

- On the right is Town End Farm Cottage. The house was the property of the Bayley family for around 240 years, comprising a croft and a collection of fields. It came into the Bayley family when Joseph Bayley married Jane Hynde, the daughter of a prosperous landowner, in 1647.
- When the Bayleys moved out, sometime before 1851, they let the property to tenant farmers.

16) *Town End Cottage to the gate of Hospital Garden – 30m. Turn away from Town End and walk northward for a few yards, stopping by the black metal gate in the right hand wall*

before the junction with Laitha Lane.

- The garden you are looking over, and the garden to the left of it, were together known as the Hospital Garden. A charity known as the Poor Lands was set up in 1682 and administered for the use of the poor of the township.
- These are presumably the same lands as noted in an 1851 history of Westmorland which mentions, ‘1646 Poor’s Land, Casterton Township, Rent Value £.11 s.9 d.3.’ In addition to the Hospital Garden, the lands comprised two and a half acres on Casterton Fell and eight acres comprising two fields called High Carr and Low Carr, collectively known as Poor Carrs.

17) *From the black metal gate of Hospital Garden to Cragg House – 120m. Walk from the gate a few yards further northwards, then take the first left down Laitha Lane. The white Cragg House is about 100m. down the road, set back on the right after Laithan Barn.*

- The buildings that are now Cragg House and Cragg House Barn appear on an 1828 map and on the 1843 tithe map, but the properties are un-named there. Intriguingly, in 1843, the house was owned by a lady called Ann Cragg who was born in Casterton about 1795. In 1841 she was living in Kirkby Lonsdale on Main Street, and of independent means, i.e. living off the income from her land and properties.
- During the Second World War, German prisoners of war were imprisoned at Milnthorpe. One such PoW was 18-year-old Hans Hannig who had been captured by the

Americans in March 1945. While at Milnthorpe, he worked for Edward Askew at Cragg House Farm, finally returning to Germany in 1949. Fifty years later, Edward's daughter Ann managed to track down Hans and there was a reunion at the farm. During his time at the farm, Hans saved the life of Ann's three year old brother John, who still lives in the village, but has no memory of the drama. John was sat on a horse-drawn carriage when the horse suddenly bolted towards the farmyard through a narrow passage. Spotting that the carriage was about to topple over, Hans jumped onboard, clambered over and managed to stop the horses, averting disaster.



Hans Hannig and his wife, with Ann Hesketh (née Askew) and her husband Leslie during the reunion around 2001

18) *Cragg House to Hospital Garden – 100m. Retrace your steps back up Laitha Lane, stopping at the wooden gate overlooking Hospital Garden.*

- You have just walked past Caton House on your left.

Local knowledge believes that this residence was once a plague or a leper hospital, suggesting a link with Hospital Garden. Caton House is identifiable on the 1828 map, and in 1843 was owned by William Dodgson, while Betty Coates and Mary Dodgson were living there.

- If you look beyond the Hospital Garden and over the field, you will see the embankment of the old railway running parallel to the old Roman road, Wandales Lane, which is beyond the next field. Some locals and some maps still refer to this road as Wanderers Lane. This railway was opened in 1861, after a great deal of planning and wrangling with other railway companies, a line running from Clapham to Ingleton, and on to join the west coast mainline at Tebay.
- Although the original plan was that the line would form part of a London – Leeds – Scotland route, within fifteen years it had been bypassed by the Settle to Carlisle mainline, and it reverted to being a quiet rural branch.



Kirkby Lonsdale station in 1955

- The passenger service was withdrawn in 1954, but freight continued until 1964. The rail tracks and sleepers were dismantled in 1967.

19) *Hospital Garden to Old Manor – 150m. Turning to your left, walk on past the yellow defibrillator box on its stand and stop outside Old Manor which you can see on the right.*

- Today this is two houses, named Old Manor and Old Manor Farm. It is possible that the original manor house dates back to before the Norman conquest. Before the Normans arrived, the manor of Casterton was part of the lands of Earl Tosti.
- In the Domesday Book this land was assessed as being about 550 acres. The next mention in the records of Casterton is not until 1202 when records show that the Manor House was passed from Eleanor, widow of Robert de Kabergh, passing it onto her stepson Hugh de Kabergh. By 1247, William de Lindsay held the lands. Despite Casterton then being worth only 60 shillings in rent, it was important enough for Edward I (1239–1307) and his army to rest there on 2 October 1292, on their way up to Berwick on the Scottish border.

20) *Old Manor to Newlands – 150m. From Old Manor, carry on up the road, passing the old farm buildings now converted into residences (Cedar House etc). you will pass the new Pearset Park on your left before arriving at Newlands, also on your left.*

- Newlands was built in 1880, but probably on the site of an earlier farmhouse. The Bownass family first moved

into Casterton after 1861 but before 1866. They remained connected with the house until at least 1949, probably later. The family business transported people and goods in horse-drawn carriages and later in taxis.

- The modern golf course which lies beyond the house, was farmland at that time.

21) *Newlands to the crossroads at Colliers' Lane – 150m.*
Continue walking along the road until you reach the crossroads.

- The road which crosses that on which you are walking is named Colliers' Lane. It refers to an industry from long ago and was the road that the colliers used to bring their coal down from a shallow seam on Brownthwaite Fell. The excavated coal was of very low quality and was primarily used for burning lime.
- A Casterton mine was noted as having been worked in the reign of Charles I, and the workings were noted again in 1692. In 1732 the colliery, in the possession of Rowland Tatham, was rented to James Stainbank together with Casterton Fell Farm. The rent of £5 for the colliery against £65 for the farm suggests a very minor operation.
- Traces of numerous small surface pits, with their spoil heaps, can still be found on the fell. In 1830 they were owned by the Earl of Lonsdale, but by the mid-century the workings would appear to have died out altogether.

22) *Colliers Lane to Casterton School – 450m.*
Continue straight across the crossroads up and then down North Heads Lane until you get to the first car park of Casterton School on

your right, shortly before reaching the church.

- The original school in Cowan Bridge opened its doors in 1824 for the Daughters of the Clergy at the instigation of the Reverend William Carus Wilson. In common with many schools at that time, its students experienced bouts of ill health. In 1825, there was one very bad epidemic. It soon became apparent that the low location of the school was not helpful for its pupils health and it was resolved to find a new location, Casterton was the site chosen.
- Were it not for the fame of the school's former pupils, the poor health record of the school like many others would have been lost to history. However, when the original school became the thinly veiled inspiration for the school in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* it achieved some infamy.
- More than thirty years later, Charlotte's biographer Elizabeth Gaskell was very condemning of the Cowan Bridge School and of its founder Carus Wilson, who took the character Mr Brocklehurst in the book. Vehement protestations and legal threats were made, which resulted in subsequent editions of the biography tempering some of the criticism, but the shadow lingered for many years, even over the school at Casterton which the Brontës did not attend. Ironically, later the association with the Brontës was commemorated as we saw earlier in the walk.
- If you look beyond the car park, you will see the large school assembly hall and classroom building that was completed in 1897 and later had a third storey added.

- As a girls' boarding school, Casterton closed in 2013, but is now the co-educational preparatory department of Sedbergh School.



Casterton School's classroom block in 1924, not long after the extra floor was added

23) *Casterton School to Church Cottages and Holy Trinity Church – 75m. Head towards the Holy Trinity Church.*

- On your right you will pass Holly Bush, also a residence of the previously mentioned Bownass family. This is yet another old farmhouse, albeit one that lost all its ancillary buildings to the modern school carpark adjacent.
- One hundred years ago there would have been around thirty farms in Casterton parish, and even in the 1950s there were perhaps thirteen. Nowadays there are no more than three or four.

As you look across the road junction, you will see Church Cottages to the right of the church. Cross the road and stop at the entrance gate to the churchyard.

- The three terraced houses adjacent to the entrance to the

churchyard and known as Church Cottages contained a village shop and, later, a Post Office which finally closed in 1966. This was not the earlier shop or Post Office run by the Blamire family which is discussed later, nor was it the Ghyll Cottage Post Office on the other side of the church which we saw earlier on in the walk.



The grocer's shop in Church Cottages in the 1920s

- The church building was constructed in 1833, with the needs of the Clergy Daughters' and Servants' Schools largely in mind. The chancel was added in the 1860s. Whilst the building itself is relatively plain, a peep inside will reveal the unusual Pre-Raphaelite-influenced wall paintings by James Clark and Henry Holliday.
- Around the back of the church is another unusual and most sad feature, a collection of seventeen graves of young girls, reflecting the way in which infectious diseases could rip through a tight school community in

the mid-nineteenth century.

24) *Holy Trinity Church to the war memorial – 75m. Walk on through the churchyard and towards the A683, pausing at the War Memorial.*

- After the Great War, the church donated the south west corner of the churchyard for a proposed war memorial. In 1918, the Reverend Canon Burton opened a subscription to fund the cost.
- Two years later, on 23 September 1920, a service of dedication and unveiling was held, officiated at by the Bishop of Barrow and the Reverend Burton. The memorial was cleaned, re-incised and re-pointed in 2017 as it approached its centenary.



The main road in the early 1920s. The new war memorial is in the background, and the Church Room, now the village hall, to the right.

25) War memorial to the village green – 50m.
Carry on along the pavement on your left, past the bus shelter and the village hall, and take a seat on the bench on the village

green.

- The bench was installed in 1977 to commemorate the Queens Silver Jubilee.
- Whilst nowadays the green looks most attractive and would appear to have been in place from antiquity, in fact it had been an untidy scrap of land on which two cottages had stood until the main road was widened in the 1930s.
- The now demolished cottages had included a grocer's shop and Post Office run by the Blamire family from before 1838 until the 1920s or 30s, whilst one part of Fern Cottage, whose white-washed wall forms the back of the green, was a beer house named the Carpenters' Arms from before 1841 until the 1860s.

26) *The village green back to The Pheasant Inn – 50m.*

And so from the site of an old beer house to the current beer house. Carefully cross the road back to the Pheasant Inn, where you may consider that your recent exertions justify refreshment.



The Casterton Hotel, possibly in the 1930s.

If this has piqued your interest in the history of our village, you will want to look out for a much more thorough delve into Casterton's past which Simon Drakeford is preparing and which will be added to the Parish Council website in periodic instalments.
