

# Hetton-le-Hole Herald

The Newsletter for Hetton Local History Group

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## Summary

Part 2 of the Halls of Hetton looks at Eppleton Hall and Hetton Hall. The latter was demolished in the 1920s, the site now being the location of the Hetton Centre. The earliest map to hand (1776) shows a very small Hall on the site and initially it may have been built to replace the importance of Hetton House (the old Council Offices) which is also shown on the map and likely to have been built before the Hall was constructed.

## The Halls of Hetton 2

### Eppleton Hall

Very little is known of the history of this particular building. It appears that it was in existence during the 17th century and may have been part of an earlier medieval manorial estate. The building itself could well have been known by an

earlier name, but this is not known. .

During Elizabethan times, 1567 to be precise, Thomas Shadforth of Morton near Lumley had a son Anthony and he had no heirs, consequently his brother John had a son George who inherited the Eppleton estate. George married to Isabel ? who died in 1617 and the estate passed to his son Thomas Shadforth. He married Elizabeth Blakeston of Newton Hall and they had three sons and three daughters. Thomas died shortly after 1664 and the Eppleton estate passed to his eldest son George.

Following the marriage between George and Thomasine (Hilton) of Hilton Castle near Sunderland in 1664, they had two children, John who died in 1693 and George who was baptized in September 1668 and went to live in Eppleton Field House. Prior to his marriage to Thomasine George had

been married in 1653 to Margaret James daughter of Francis James a gentleman of Hetton. Unfortunately Margaret died in 1662 and two years later George married again. This first marriage with Margaret yielded three children, The oldest child was Margaret born in 1652 and who later married William Paxton a mercer ( a dealer in textile fabrics), living in Durham. Margaret was still alive in 1704. The next child born in 1657 was a son and heir Thomas and the third child Elizabeth, baptized in 1662 and who later married in 1693 Christopher Raine of Bishop Auckland.

Thus the Eppleton estate with the exception of Field House passed on the death of George Shadforth in 1669 to his son Thomas born into the family in 1657.

Thomas held on to the estate for more than thirty years during which time he accumulated a large amount of debt. In order to settle the debt he was forced to sell Eppleton estate and hall in 1692 to a partnership of Francis Mascall and John Doubleday. Mascall and Doubleday purchased both Eppleton and Alnwick Abbey in Northumberland jointly at the same time, then afterwards deter-

mined their shares by lot. As a result, Eppleton fell to Mascall and Alnwick Abbey to Doubleday, whose later descendants sold it to the Duke of Northumberland.

The land at Eppleton was sold for a sum of £5000 and such were Thomas Shadforth's debts that they swallowed up £4000, leaving only £1000 for his wife and children. Shadforth retired to Bishop Auckland, possibly to live with his sister and husband and before his death received Parish relief from the Township.

Looking at the earliest photograph of Great Eppleton Hall it is



Eppleton Hall—the earliest picture of Eppleton Hall. The original structure is located at Little Eppleton. This would have been the noteworthy house for the Eppleton Estate.

possible to see a simple Georgian building with some ornate building

work around the front door. It appears likely that Mascall rebuilt an earlier building during the last decade of the 18th century or within a few years of the start of the 19th century.

The central section of Eppleton Old Hall situated some distance to the south of Great Eppleton Hall at Little Eppleton looks remarkably similar both in size and proportion to the older hall at Great Eppleton. Additional wings have been added to each side of the central block. New sash windows and sills have also been added throughout the building and the older small pane Georgian windows replaced. Additionally some of the windows were re-aligned and the Georgian symmetry of an older building has been broken



This aspect shows the original Georgian Hall incorporated in the Victorian additions together with changes to the fascia

down in parts through the building of a more modern fascia on the ground floor. This Victorian facelift has also added a new door and door case.

The ground floor wall has received further embellishment as well as the door case and area above the side windows.



A modern picture of Eppleton Hall at Little Eppleton showing the additional wings either side of the original structure.

At what point these alterations took place has yet to be established by further research. However, it is likely that, following the Hall's transfer to the Hetton Coal Company when it became the home for the manager of the Lyons Colliery, the additions to the building were carried out and the whole building was enlarged. In order to carry out the building changes, a great sum of money would have been required, and the commercial activi-

ties of the profitable coal company would have been well able to carry them out. As well as the main building being enlarged a number of out-houses were constructed at the rear, around a central courtyard. A kitchen garden was added to the north of the main building and decorative lawns and gardens were constructed in the front of the building and facing west. An unusual feature of the kitchen garden is that the North wall had hot water pipes constructed within part of its length and a sloping glass house added to the wall so that semi tropical plants and fruit trees could be grown. The water boiler was apparently produced by burning coal slack which came freely from the colliery and where it was assumed to have no purpose other than to provide a material suitable for a rail track bed.

Today the hall is no longer a single home, since it has been broken down into apartments and these are individually privately owned. Most of the land around it is no longer owned by the residents of the hall, but belongs to the adjacent farm. The Eppleton estate has over the years been sold off in parcels and

much has been given over to the quarrying of sand and limestone.

## Hetton Hall

The land on which Hetton Hall was built has a complicated background since throughout the Medieval period it was broken down and sold in various parcels to a number of notable families. Initially it appears to have been owned by a family who had its origins back in the Norman period. When William the Conqueror was hassled by the north country folk he declared that the land should be laid waste and this was carried out. He then distributed the land to his most loyal followers and one of these was a member of the de Layton family.

In 1390 William de Layton's daughter married Piers Tylliol and the descendents of this union can be traced into the Colville, Moresby and Musgrave families. The part of the estate belonging to the Musgrave family was sold in 1611 to the family of Bishop William James of Durham. Other parts of the land through the Moresby interest were sold by trustees to a variety of

Most of the land which changed hands was woodland with the occasional patch of fertile farm land and the odd individual cottage. In 1664 the grandson of Bishop James, Bryan James, sold a Moiety (half) of his interest to George French of London, a haberdasher for £1402-10s-0d. He in turn conveyed the land in 1686 to John Spearman a gentleman of the area who was Under-Sheriff of Durham. In 1694 he settled the lands, on the marriage of his eldest son, also called John, with Ann Bromley. It is presumed that some form of house was built on this land which was sold on the death of John Spearman in 1725 to the Dowager Countess of Strathmore. She gave it to her youngest son, the Hon. Thomas Lyon.

*( This was of course the connection with the later Lyons colliery and the Strathmore family of which the late Queen Mother was a part.)*

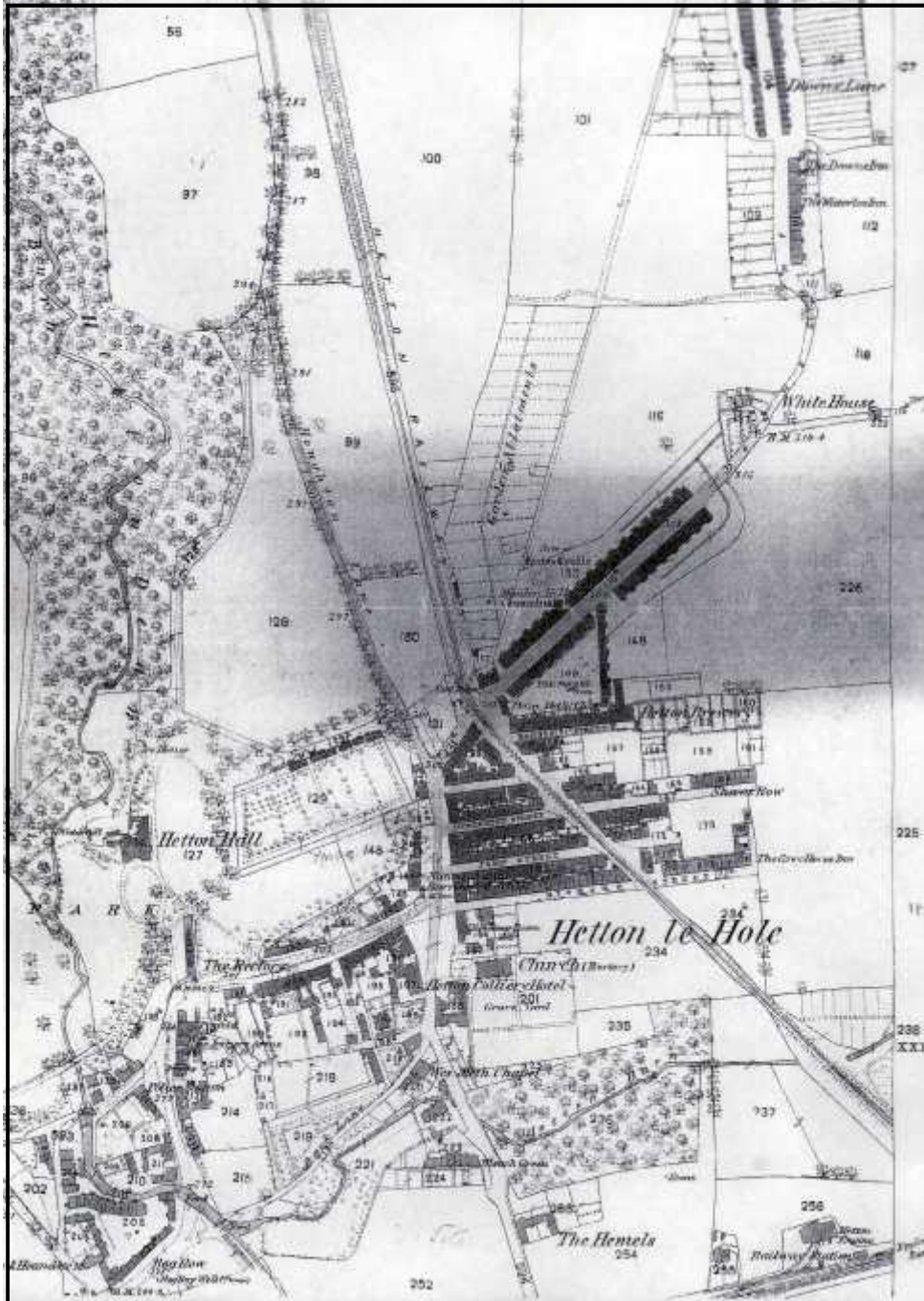
A number of other parcels of land around the village were sold on e.g. in 1727 lands belonging to John Gargrave including Gargrave House, situated to the south-east of Hetton. The Watson estates eventually

passed to the Pemberton family of Barnes in Sunderland, notable coal owners in their own right. The lewens held land in Hetton from 1543 until relatively recent times.

The exact date of construction of the earliest manor house building is not known but an early description states of it, " standing low to the west of the village and surrounded by soft wooded grounds and almost on the edge of a lake formed by Hetton Burn".

This site corresponds with the southerly extremity of modern-day Hetton Park. Probably its exact location today is on the site of the new leisure centre and swimming baths and partly on the Hetton Centre.

The land on which these modern buildings stand has been greatly raised in height above the Hetton Burn which itself has been controlled to prevent flooding. Sometime in Medieval times the original building was built in relative close proximity to the burn and this was improved and enlarged when it became associated with the Lyon family.



The earliest useful map of Hetton in 1856 shows Hetton Hall lying to the west of the then village in semi parkland grounds

For many years after 1812 the house was empty until Nicholas Wood, the eminent colliery engineer and great friend of George Stephenson, lived there with his family. After his death in 1865 the Hall was rarely occupied since Nicholas' son, later to become, Sir Lindsay Wood, who had lived there as a boy, moved to Chester-le-Street to live in the Hermitage at the southern end of the



Hetton Hall from the south and east.

town.

Descriptions of the building stated that it was built in the classical style. (*Classicism was symptomatic of a desire to return to the perceived "purity" of the arts of Rome, and the more vague perception of the arts of Ancient Greece.*)

Classical Architecture can still be found around certain parts of America. Often you can find some

examples in the colonial towns or some very expensive and rich areas of eastern seaboard towns and cities. The architects of that time period tried to have everything symmetrical. From the door, to the fireplace, and even the decorations inside as well as outside of the building. This is certainly the case with Hetton Hall which is symmetrical along a north-south line.

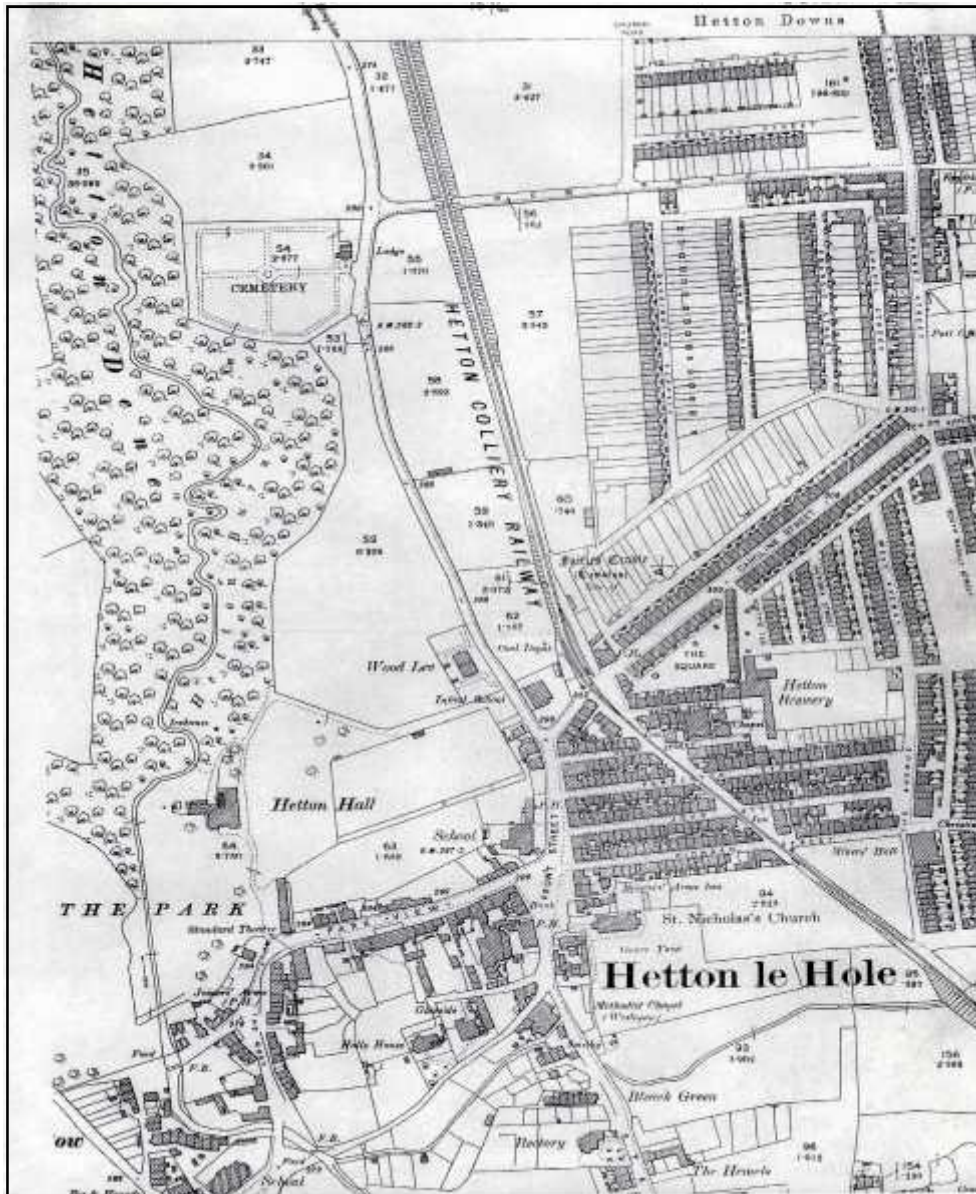
Examination of the OS map of 1856 shows how close the building is to the Hetton Burn and it is easy to see how the low-lying land could be flooded to become a lake. The map shows evidence in the stream of sluices which would have been used to control the flow of water and prevent flooding. Additionally there is also evidence of a waterfall in the stream which may have been used as a decorative water feature.



Enlargement showing paths, the burn, bridges and parkland around Hetton Hall

Towards the end of the 19th century the hall was in a poor state of affairs and there was no improvement forthcoming, so by

1923 when it had become a dilapidated shell it was finally demolished and the parkland reverted to council ownership and a public park was built.



1896 OS Map of Hetton. The outline of the Hall had changed slightly from 1856