

THE LABOURER IN HIS PLACE

Some Observations on the Rebuilding of Appleby

Prior to the Dissolution the church and much of the land in Appleby were in the hands of Thornholme Priory. There was no large secular house; the Andersons of Broughton owned considerable estates here until the Civil War, when Stephen Anderson of Manby Hall in Broughton sold property to aid the Royalist cause – ‘all Appleby was then his, and he sold it to aid the King’.¹ The Gwyns or Winns, ‘a family late sprung up, tho’ now they are dignify’d with Knighthood’, purchased it to add to their property of Thornton Curtis, around Nostell, ‘and many more places in Yorkshire’.²

In 1603 there were 150 communicants in the whole parish and 259 communicants and Dissenters in 1673,³ an apparent increase which may reflect social and economic change, or the way in which the counts were made, or just error. There were some 102 families in 1705, and 79 in 1790; the total population when the first national census was held in 1801 was 394. Fluctuations throughout the 19th century took this from 538 in 1821, to a slight trough of 481 in 1851, rising to 607 in 1871, and declining again to 544 by 1881. The pattern is in keeping with what can reasonably be expected in the area, although the figures may conceal discrepancies arising from the very different settlement patterns in the southern and northern parts of the parish; the

former has thin, dispersed settlement, the latter the single nucleated township of Appleby itself. This had a population of 407 in 1861, 452 in 1871 and 348 in 1881. Because of distance and the indirect roads the population of the nucleated township was not influenced by the growth of ferrous industries at Scunthorpe.

Appleby’s history from the mid 17th century is very much that of the economic activities of the Winns. Abraham de la Pryme’s account of the family’s appearance in Lincolnshire is calculatedly unflattering. Writing in the 1690s he thought the line too new, blamed their ‘gripping methods’, and their having taken advantage (so he understood) of impoverished Royalists to secure their property ‘in Cromwell’s days’.⁴ Enclosure may have been instigated by the Andersons, whose similar activities in Broughton and Manton provoked complaint in 1607;⁵ final enclosure of the arable ground serving the main settlement took place at the hands of the Winns between 1690 and 1710.⁶ Glebe land became ‘so mixed and blended with Sir Rowland Winn’s estate that it [was] completely impossible to be ascertained’, and in the 18th century the commons were known to have been ‘for the most part ... long enclosed by the general consent of the Vicar and Parishioners without an Act of Parliament or any

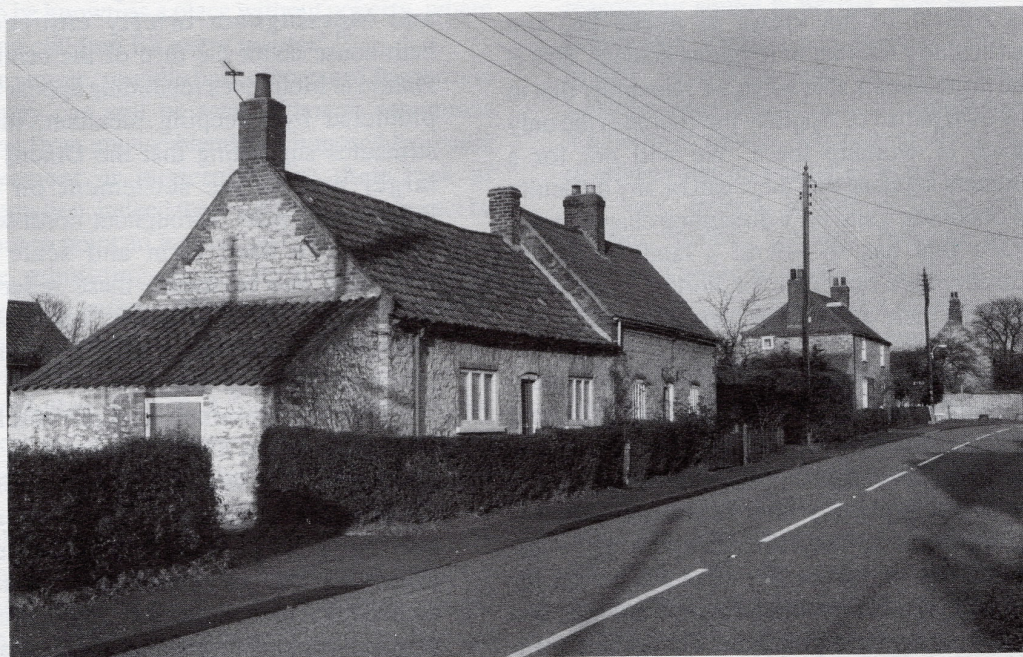


Fig. 1 Late 18th–early 19th century cottages and farmhouses on the west side of Ermine Street, Appleby (K. Miller)