

A Short History of *Garstang*

Garstang is an attractive, popular market town situated on the banks of the River Wyre and close to the Forest of Bowland, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from where the river springs.

Garstang was recorded in the Domesday Book as Cherestanc and received a Royal Charter to hold an annual fair in 1288 and a market from 1314. The weekly street market continues to this day every Thursday. In 2001 Garstang became the world's first Fairtrade Town.

The town has a population of 5,000 and is a true mixture of the old and the new with historic buildings and medieval weinds (passage ways) alongside contemporary shops and services.

Until 1926, when the first by-pass was built, the main A6 road from north to south went through the town and over the River Wyre at the Stone Bridge. It formed the Drove Road for the Highland Cattle being walked from Scotland to markets in London and the Midlands. Robert the Bruce, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Oliver Cromwell all brought their armies through the town, and when travel was mainly by horse drawn coach, up to twenty-four a day stopped here to change horses.

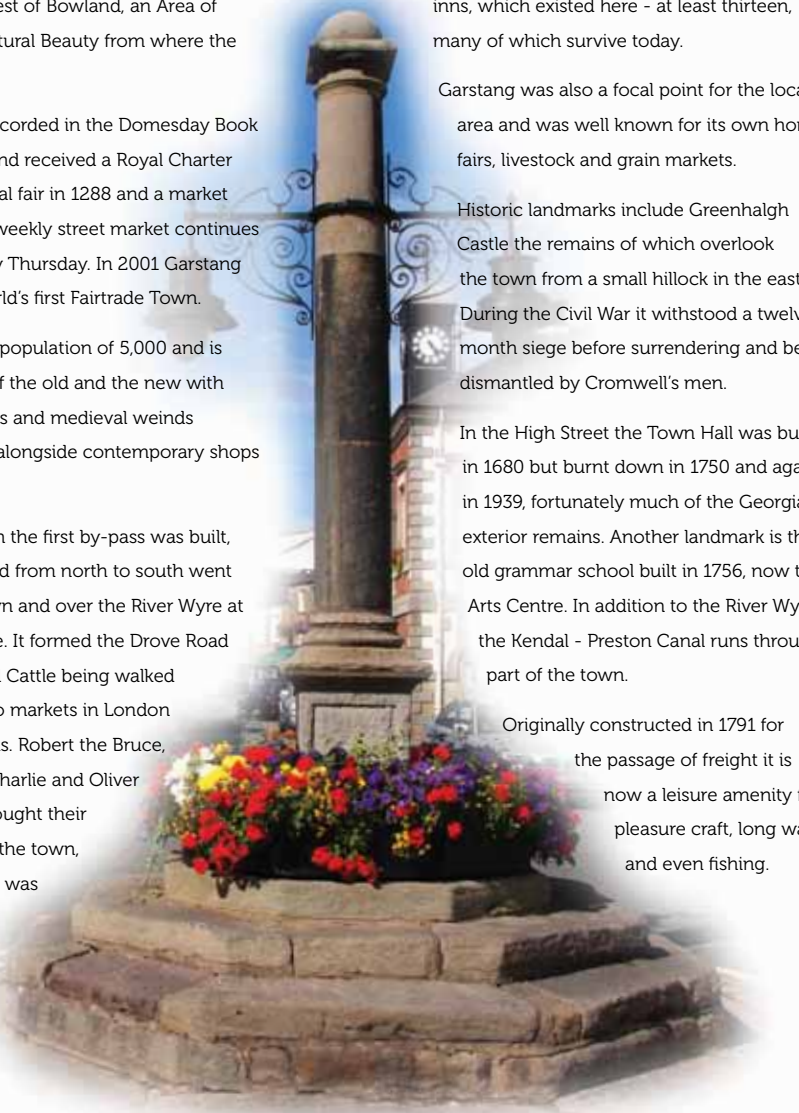
All these animals and people needing rest, food and drink accounts for the large number of inns, which existed here - at least thirteen, many of which survive today.

Garstang was also a focal point for the local area and was well known for its own horse fairs, livestock and grain markets.

Historic landmarks include Greenhalgh Castle the remains of which overlook the town from a small hillock in the east. During the Civil War it withstood a twelve month siege before surrendering and being dismantled by Cromwell's men.

In the High Street the Town Hall was built in 1680 but burnt down in 1750 and again in 1939, fortunately much of the Georgian exterior remains. Another landmark is the old grammar school built in 1756, now the Arts Centre. In addition to the River Wyre, the Kendal - Preston Canal runs through part of the town.

Originally constructed in 1791 for the passage of freight it is now a leisure amenity for pleasure craft, long walks and even fishing.



Market Cross

15. The Wheatsheaf. A public house of some sort could possibly be traced back to this area as early as 1717 when a property here used to be referred to as The Wheat Cake. Prior to about 1820 it used to be known as The Dog Inn. This was originally a two story whitewashed 18th Century farmhouse dating from around 1740, and it had undoubtedly replaced an older building on the same site.

If you wish to return to the start of your walk at this point, skip number 16, and cross over Moss Lane to turn right at back on to Church Street. Now you can return to the Th'Owd Tithe Barn for welcome refreshment!

The trail has now visited fifteen of the sixteen public houses that used to, or still do grace Garstang's town centre or close by. The sixteenth is possibly one that should be saved until last, and may require you to just know about it rather than to visit! If, however, you wish to walk to see the area you must turn right after The Wheatsheaf, and walk up Moss Lane to reach the junction with the A6. (Allow 15 mins extra) Here you will find the area once known as:



New Cathouse c1905



Old Cathouse c1890



Wheat Sheaf Inn c1910

16. The Cathouse. A small clutch of thatched, whitewashed dwellings could once be found at the top of Moss Lane and fronting what we now call Parkside Lane. - in the area now occupied by C&C supplies. The largest of these premises was an ancient ale house known as The Cathouse. Its title seems to have given the small hamlet its name. 'Cathouse' is rather obscure, but it is thought that during the 16th and 17th Centuries that the name 'Cat' was used as a nickname for a whore... and a Cathouse was where their 'services' could be procured! The old pub was demolished about 1898 and replaced by a new Cathouse Inn. This was demolished as recently as 1989. Even now, the old name still survives, though the hamlet has long since disappeared.

You can return to the Th'Owd Tithe Barn by retracing your steps back down Moss Lane as far as the playing fields. Here you can cut through directly to your starting point.

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks to:
Paul Smith for historical advice, help with the collation of the data, and for allowing the use of photographs and drawings from his own personal collection.

• Mike Coleran for his help with the adaptation of the map.

• Wyre Coast and Countryside Service for their assistance in checking the walk.

• The Garstang Heritage "Pub Trail" © is taken from the publication: "Garstang...An Award Winning Lancashire Market Town" © Lynn Harter.

For further information on the Garstang Heritage Trail - a fascinating guide to Garstang's past via some of the many surviving historic buildings and landmarks - please contact:
Visit Garstang Centre, Unit 1, Cherestanc Square, Garstang, PR3 1EF
Tel: 01995 602125 or visit the website www.thisisgarstang.co.uk
www.visitwyre.co.uk

For further information about the history of Garstang and surrounding area visit: www.garstangheritagesociety.org

NB: Old photographs reproduced by kind permission of Paul Smith. As far as we know, there are no pictures of The Holy Lamb or the George & Dragon. If you do know of any surviving photos/etchings of these two pubs, we would love to see them. Please contact lynnharter@icloud.com

Contemporary Colour photographs © Lynn Harter
This leaflet also reproduced with kind permission of Lynn Harter

THIS IS GARSTANG

This leaflet was updated in association with This Is Garstang, part of the Garstang Town Council working group. For an extensive, no nonsense guide to Garstang and the surrounding areas then visit www.thisisgarstang.co.uk

Thanks to the sponsors of this reprint:



Garstang

HERITAGE PUB TRAIL



printed by Colin Cross Printers, Garstang.

A TOWN FOR ALL SEASONS

Garstang Heritage Pub Trail

One thing that may strike the modern visitor to Garstang is the number of Public Houses there are in or near the town centre. There are seven currently. However, in the early 1800s Garstang could boast to having fifteen public houses. This fact alone is testimony to Garstang's commercial importance, and to the extent of passing trade there must have been at this time. Although there were undoubtedly inns in Garstang prior to the 17th Century, there appear to be no surviving records. The Garstang Heritage "Pub" Trail will often include parts of the Garstang Heritage Trail (GHT) (see end of this leaflet) but will mainly concentrate on sixteen pubs past and present; those which no longer exist, and those which have stood the test of time and can still offer a warm welcome to all.

Start your walk from Th'Owd Tithe Barn car park. One of the newest pubs to be created in Garstang, it sits on the banks of the Lancaster canal, and overlooks the picturesque canal basin. Visitors coming into Garstang down Kepple Lane from the A6 will find it tucked away to the right just after crossing the canal bridge:

1. Th'Owd Tithe Barn. This barn was once used for storing corn and the building dates back to 1701. A Garstang lady, born and bred in the old house, recalls the days when she used to be allowed to skate on the frozen ice in the basin. She also remembers seeing a very young Sir Bobby Charlton visiting friends on a boat moored nearby. The barn was sold in 1973 to Mr John Wilding who performed a sensitive restoration, combining the pub and restaurant with a myriad of farming implements - enough, in fact, to call it an "agricultural museum". You will still see some of these items on show today. Part of the original house is now used as a cosy fireside lounge area.

As you leave the Th'Owd Tithe Barn turn right and walk down to the corner of Church Street and Park Hill Road. The roundabout you see there is approximately where the oldest known pub in Garstang used to be:

2. The Brown Cow. The date 1685 was on the stone lintel above the door of this pub, and it was reputedly built from the plundered stone from Greenhalgh castle. After closing its doors in 1903, it became a grocers and bakers shop. Unfortunately it was destroyed by fire in 1931 and was subsequently demolished.

Immediately to the left of you is a large early 18th century whitewashed and timbered building that until 2008 was known as:

3. The Farmers. Until the mid 1868 it used to be called The Shovel & Broom Inn and was known to adjoin a large Mill in Church Street. It was sold in 1868 by the Keppel Estate, and was renamed the Farmers Arms.

Cross over the road at one of the two safe crossing points, and walk a few yards up Church Street. Stop at the Nationwide Building Society. This building - and the premises to the right of it stand on a double plot that once was:

4. The Horns. This was a small 18th century ale house which was opened in 1798 by James Stuart. The name originated from the enormous pair of horns - at least 12 feet wide - that were fastened above the door. They were reputedly dug out of an Irish peat bog, and the landlord was often asked if he would sell them. Whether he ever did or not we do not know, but The Horns Inn itself lasted until 1904 when it became a lodging house. The building was finally demolished in 1978.

Walk up to the Market Cross (the Tuscan column) and you will reach Market Place. Here you will see the Royal Oak, a whitewashed building which stands at an angle facing the High Street:

5. The Royal Oak Hotel. (GHTblue plaque) This is probably one of the oldest coaching inns in Garstang. It was also once the Post and Excise office. Parts of the building date back to the 17th Century. According to a rent roll of 1842, this inn had 11 bedrooms, 3 servant rooms, and enough stabling for 24 horses. During the first half of the 19th Century the Royal Oak was a regular stopping place for stage coach owners to be able to change their horses and allow their passengers to rest awhile. There was - around 1824 - an average of eight stage coaches per day going north and 4 going south calling at this Inn. Mix this together with market day traffic of livestock and people, and you can imagine Garstang must have been very vibrant, bustling and somewhat noisy place at times!

Until the middle of the 20th Century there was a large field at the back of the pub. The Royal Oak field (now the site of the Postal Sorting Office) was the venue of many fetes and festivals, including a few circus events.

From the Market Place turn right and walk a few yards down Bridge Street and stop at the area now occupied by B&S supplies. Here used to stand:



Eagle & Child c1905



The Horns c1903



Crown Hotel c1905



Church Inn c1885



The Pack Horse c1910



Red Lion c1905



The Farmers Arms c2008



Kings Arms c1908



The Brown Cow c1870



Royal Oak c1926



Golden Ball Inn c1913



Th'Owd Tithe Barn c2007



6. The Golden Ball. This began life as a farm sometime before 1794. It was refaced around 1868 and closed just before the outbreak of WW1 in 1914. It was a stone and thatched building that had 3 parlours and a taproom. Upstairs there was also a "club room". The Golden Ball could also stable up to 5 horses. "The Preston Wholesale Co-operative Society" bought the premises in 1923 and opened up their shop on Market Day Thursday 24th July 1924. The building we see today was built by the co-op in 1968, but the shop itself closed in 1980.

At this point, if you prefer to keep your walk to the town centre, skip number 7. If however, you wish to see the site of Church Inn (about 5 mins walk away), continue down Bridge Street, cross the Wyre Bridge and walk down Bond's Lane where you will pass the Catholic Church of Saints Mary & Michael on your left. Just beyond the church you will find:

7. The Church Inn. This inn was given its name in 1858 in recognition of the building of the new Catholic Church next door. It was originally a pair of houses until around the 1790s when it began to be used as an ale house - mainly it is said - by the Irish Navvies who had been seconded in to work on the Lancaster Canal. It would appear that it suited Garstang to have the navvies and their drinking habits kept out of the town centre. It ceased to be a public house a few years ago, when it was converted into residential dwellings

Retrace your steps back towards the town centre, pass the Royal Oak & market cross on your left, and continue down the High Street. The next public house you will see is:

8. The Eagle & Child Hotel. (GHT blue plaque) This was also one of the town's largest Posting Inns after the Royal Oak. In 1824 it is noted that two coaches to the north and two to the south stopped here every day. By 1842 the inn possessed 3 parlours, a large market room, 8 bedrooms and stabling for 21 horses and 7 beasts. The oldest parts of the existing building are at the rear, and appear to date from the mid 18th century. However it is more than likely an older hostelry would have stood on the same plot. The pub's name stems from an image on Thomas Stanley's Coat of Arms (first Earl of Derby).

Walk a little further down High Street and you will see a small square on the western side of the road in which you will find, slightly recessed from the road:

9. The Kings Arms Hotel. Originally known as The Kings Head. The latter probably being replaced in the late 18th or early 19th century by the former. The building stands in what was once the square of the old Swine Market. The town's original market cross once stood directly in front of the present Inn but was demolished in the late 18th Century in order to widen the road.

At the rear of the Kings Arms there used to be several outbuildings. They were described in the 1842 rent roll as: "...outbuildings of brick and thatch containing a brewhouse and stabling for 7 horses...and a stone and slate building containing pigsties and a shippon for 4 cows".

Retrace your steps through to the High Street and almost immediately opposite the Kings Arms on the other side of the road (16 High Street) you will see the site of what was once another public house. (GHT blue plaque).

10. The Pack Horse. This building was built to replace an older premises with the same name around 1800 - 1810 and the Keppel Family Crest was carved onto a stone plaque on the gable end of the building. It was known to have been called The Wool Pack prior to 1794. During the mid 1800's the Pack Horse had room to stable 29 horses and stallion houses, a shippon for 5 cows and a brewhouse. Stallions and mares were brought here for mating. The land at the rear of the inn had a garden and a bowling green. It was sold by the Keppel Estate in 1877, and the Inn was closed for good in 1905 when the publican had his Licence revoked. Ironically, the building became a Temperance Hotel until 1925, and the building was eventually rebuilt to become The Manchester & County Bank in 1925. Now the building houses two retail shops.

Continue to walk northwards down the High Street, and you only have to go a few yards before you come to Laburnum Cottage. It is on this site that a public house seems to have had three names in its time:

11. The Bowl Alley. Originally a small whitewashed ale house. It was renamed in 1805 and became known as The Holy Lamb. It has also been known as "The Fleece" but this was possibly just a colloquial nickname. In the 1842 rent roll it is described as being a "miserable dilapidated building." The pub closed in 1843, became a dwelling house

and was finally demolished sometime in the 1850s. Demolition of the pub eliminated a tight pinch point in the road, and revealed the old cottages we see today. They were refronted by Mr James Parkinson, after his purchase, around 1895.

A little further down the High Street on the eastern side of the road you will pass:

12. Crown Hotel. The present building has been built slightly further north east of the original site of an inn that once stood here called The Three Tuns. (A tun is a wine cask). This was originally a whitewashed farmhouse with its own stables and outhouses. In 1824, shortly after the publican died, it was renamed The Swan Inn, and was renamed again around 1893 as The Crown Hotel. It remained the same until 1912 when it was rebuilt and "The" was dropped from the title.

Stand now with the Crown Hotel at the back of you and look across the road at the Post Office and the supermarket building. These are modern buildings that stand approximately on a site that once housed two public houses. The first was:

13. The Red Lion. This was a group of three early 17th century cottages that were incorporated into one larger ale house. Whitewashed, as they all were, this building had a thatched roof which was cut eyebrow fashion over the upper windows. It closed in 1857 and the building reverted back to cottages. They remained in use as lodging houses until 1904 when they were rebuilt into two larger cottages. These too were demolished in 1958 to make way for the Post Office building.

14. The George & Dragon. This public house consisted of several separate buildings made into one and in its heyday it was actually larger than the Royal Oak. Around 1818 it was renamed The Blue Anchor and remained as such until 1870 when it was demolished and replaced by cottages again. These in turn disappeared when the site was redeveloped for the Supermarket in 1972.

At this point on the Pub Trail, cross over the High Street and walk through any of the weinds to arrive at Parkhill Road. You will be more or less facing Booths supermarket. Cross over on the pedestrian crossing and turn left. Walk along the pavement for a few yards and you will arrive at the public house now known as: