

Hook's cottage



A contribution to the history of Hooks Cottage, Oaks Nook, Ainsworth covering the period 1773 to 1849.

On the 1st July 1773 a lease was drawn up between Robert Andrews of Rivington and Nathan Books of Ainsworth, for a plot, piece or parcel of land lying in Ainsworth for a term of 999 years. The land was subject to a yearly rent of six shillings. In the indenture of lease, the said Nathan Brooks "covenants to erect and build one or more good and substantial dwelling houses and other outbuilding on the said plot of land, of the clear yearly rent of £2-0-0 at the least".

The description of the land is as follows:

"The said parcel of land lying in Ainsworth, beginning part of a close or field of land there commonly called and known by the name of the Croft, then in the possession of John Openshaw of Brownhill and containing in length from east to west on the front or most southerly side thereof sixteen yards, and on the back or most northerly side thereof sixteen yards, and in the breadth or depth from the front to the back on the most easterly and westerly ends thereof nine yards or thereabouts. Containing on the whole one hundred and fourth square yards or ground. Bounded and adjoining on the most southerly side thereof by a common in Ainsworth called Cocky Moor. On the back or most northerly side by a close or field called the Croft, on the westerly end thereof by a stone delph (now part of the Old Stables garden) in the close or field called the Croft, and on the easterly end thereof by the said common called Cocky Moor".

On the 22nd & 23rd December 1775 after the cottage was built, a document was drawn up releasing Nathan Brooks from the lease agreement. Robert Andrews then sold the freehold to Nathan Brooks for the sum of £9-0-0. The lease release document states : "On the said plot of land, Nathan Brooks had lately erected or built a good and substantial cottage or dwelling house which was then in the possession of the said Nathan Brooks."

The stone lintel over the front door to Hooks Cottage bears the initials B over N.A. and is dated 1773. The B stands for Brooks, the N stands for Nathan and the A stands for Ann, Nathan's wife.



Nathan was baptised in the Presbyterian Chapel in 1741 and was 32 years old when he started to build the cottage. He died intestate, on or about the 21st April 1790, aged 49 years. His wife Ann was also baptised in the Presbyterian Chapel, in 1735. She died 11th January 1802 aged 67 years. Nathan Brooks and his wife Ann are buried in grave number 162 in the old Unitarian/Presbyterian Chapel burial ground, just across from the cottage in Ainsworth. The grave lies under the large oak tree, to the left of the Chapel entrance and is covered by one of the large flat tombstones.

On his death, the above named Nathan Brooks left a son named Nathan⁽²⁾, his only son and heir. This son then inherited the cottage. Nathan Brooks⁽²⁾ was a farmer and his wife's name was Sarah, (nee Heaton). It seems they had eleven children; they were John, Ann (died Aug 24th 1813 aged 16)' Nathan⁽³⁾ (died Sept 30th 1815 aged 21 months), Joeseph (died July 30th 1815 aged 7), Mary, Betty, William, Sarah, Heaton, Noah and Nathan⁽⁴⁾. Mary later became Mary Alfred, Sarah became Sarah Aldred and Betty became Betty Scholes (died 11th Mar 1834 aged 29).

The cottage stayed in the family until the death of Nathan⁽²⁾'s wife Sarah in 1849. In his will, dated 16th July 1838, just two days before his death, Nathan⁽²⁾ had bequeathed that "on the death of his wife Sarah, the cottage was to be sold and the proceeds divided into eight equal shares. One share for each

of his surviving children and on share to the children of his late daughter, Betty Scholes. In the event that any of his children had not survived his wife, then their share would go to their children".

Nathan Brooks⁽²⁾, Died 18th July 1838 and his wife Sarah died 22nd April 1849. They are buried along with four of their children just a few metres from the cottage, in the old Unitarian/Presbyterian burial ground.

This information has been extracted from old deeds, wills and chapel records, by Mr S. Horrocks