

Where Dick Turpin took his horse up to bed

DICK TURPIN'S gallop from York to London on Black Bess is legendary — but how many have heard of his daring ride at Ingelton? Daring because, as tradition has it, the 18th Century highwayman took his horse upstairs to the bedroom at one house.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, some villagers are sceptical about the tale. "I don't believe it myself," said one. "I don't exactly know why he is supposed to have done it — but they used to take their horses to bed in those days."

More certain is the belief that one of the Wesley brothers stayed in Ingelton on his way to preach at Evenwood. Arthur Horner, a 64-year-old farmer now living at the Gainford Road turn-off, believes Charles or John stayed where he was born — at Oaklea House, on the Darlington side of the Anglican Church.

Hard work

The present owners, 37-year-old Peter Richardson and his wife, Margaret, have only just heard of their famous guest's visit — after living there for six years. The house has been modernised, but many of the walls are still over three feet thick.

Behind the living room fireplace wall is an ingletook, where people sat when the fireplace was bigger —

Mr Arthur Turner at work in the fields.



Continuing our series, HUGH LITTLE visits Ingelton in search of news, past and present, from another of the little known villages of the area.

tapping the wall reveals the cavity. At the doorway to the next room you can see the living room wall is over five-feet thick.

The Wesleyan presence seems to have had some influence — both Mr and Mrs Richardson go to the Methodist Church. It has had results, too, with Arthur Horner, who believes in the virtue of hard work.

As well as farming on his 32-acres of land, Arthur has had other jobs — as agricultural joiner, wheelwright, stonemason and undertaker.

He learnt many of the skills from his father, another all-rounder, who built the village Methodist Church.



Mrs Margaret Richardson outside her home, where Dick Turpin is said to have stayed.

Arthur was baptised on the opening day.

They started them young in those days. "While I was at school I was building carts with my dad and I got on to a milking stool when I was eight or nine," he said. "I never read a word of my trade — I learned it all from my dad."

His father was making coffins when Arthur was born and Arthur kept the tradition going until 18 years ago. He found it hardly worth having the business — his father often made three coffins a week but for a long time Arthur averaged the same number every year.

Milk cows

Occasionally, this meant doing a full day's work in the fields and going home to dig a grave — but he did not mind. His father had taught him to "slash" hedges rather than play cricket to use up surplus energy. "Pre-empt you are hitting boundaries," he would say.

For a time in the 1930s Arthur laboured for a mason, building the bungalow in which he and his wife, Peggy, now live. "I used to milk the cows, start building, then get the hay in, have tea and go back to the building.

"When the war broke out I had to register at Gainford. They said: 'What's your occupation?' so I gave them the list. They said: 'You can

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only have one occupation' — so I walked out — but they let a friend of mine have two jobs."

During the war Arthur made gates and built and repaired trailers — as well as growing food for the war effort. Today he looks after cattle, piling up the hay from a trailer into his haystacks by hand — with little assistance.

He works a long day, but never on a Sunday. "There has been no work done on this farm on a Sunday for 30 years and it has not spoilt the crops. Every farmer should have his rest on a Sunday."

"It has been lovely having so many jobs — you can't get bored. People who like hard work these days are few and far between. I shall be 65 on September 27 but I am certainly not going to retire."

Key cottage

Until Gainford Road was widened ten years ago, there was a toll-cottage on the corner near Arthur's — and an old butchers shop next door. Both were about 200 years old.

The cottage was the key one for miles around as the main entrance to Durham from Yorkshire and horse-and-carts used to come from Bedale for the Evenwood coal. The butchers had a low

entrance, unfortunately so, for the large family of six-footers who lived there.

Villagers think Ingelton grew up in the Middle Ages. Over the years the population has not changed much — in 1801 it was 236 and by 1851 it was 305, but people say it has not changed much since.

Men used to work in the collieries at Evenwood, but these days most are on the land.

Electricity only reached the village in 1935 and running water just after the Great War — before that there was a pump on the green and many wells. People were slow in taking to the pipes and used their own wells — but nearly all have now been filled in or covered over.

HUGH LITTLE.