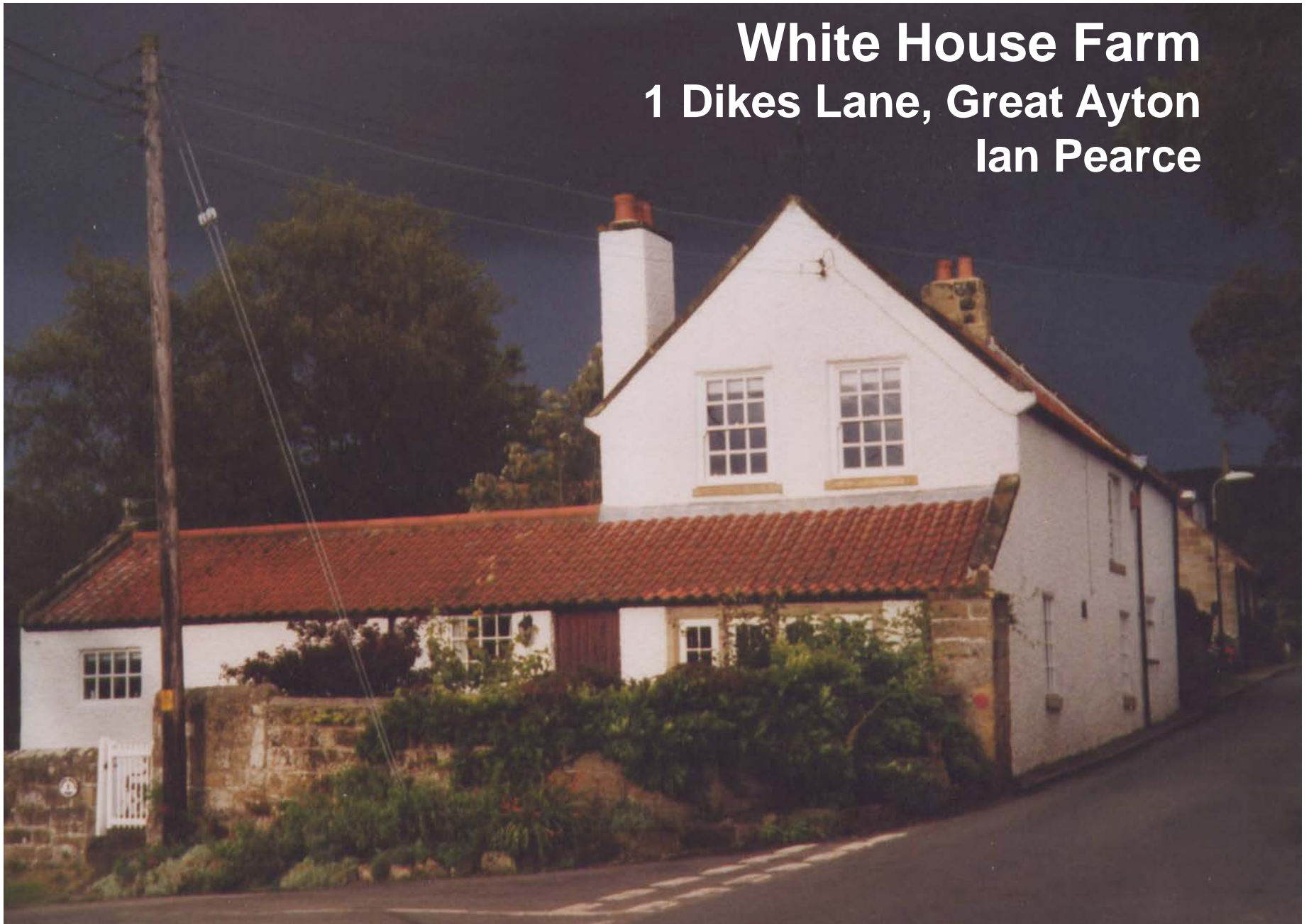


# White House Farm

1 Dikes Lane, Great Ayton  
Ian Pearce





What is now White House Farm, 1 Dikes Lane, probably started as a stable and cart shed for the White House on the opposite side of Dikes Lane. This part of the property is in stone, and is to the left of the vertical line above.

The main house, to the right of the vertical line above, is built in brick and was added on to the west of the original stable. It has a date of 1782 over the door lintel. For many years it remained as part of what is now the White House, and was rented out to tenants.

The Cockshaw Alum Works on Ayton Banks was built in 1765. During the 1770s it was managed by John Ridley from Robin Hood's Bay.

John Ridley was the first person to sell White House (then called Ayton Cottage). So it seems likely that John Ridley built Ayton Cottage and lived there whilst running the alum works. It was probably much smaller than now, but with a stable and barn opposite, the beginnings of White House Farm.



Teesdale's map from 1827. If the buildings are drawn reasonably accurately, Ayton Cottage had yet to be extended, but White House Farm had already been built onto the stable opposite.

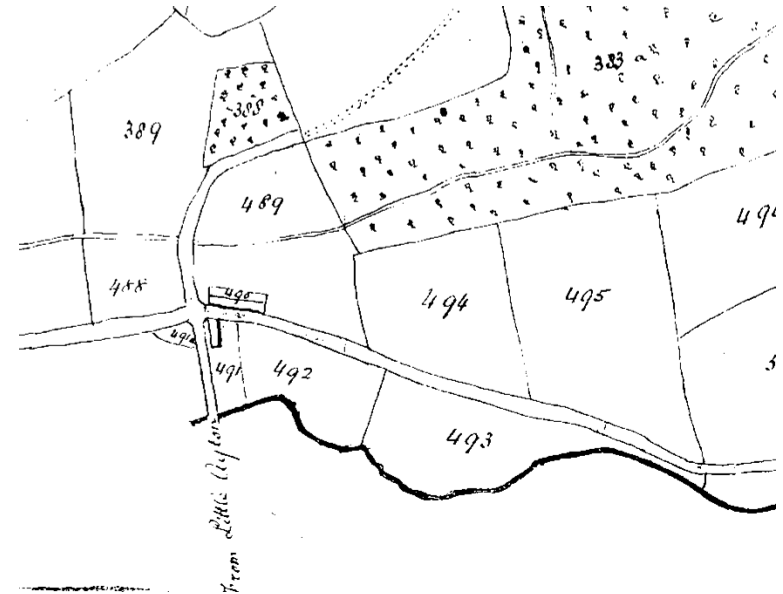
John Ridley moved from Ayton after the alum works closed around 1774, and went to live at Plantation, Robin Hood's Bay. He seems to have continued to own Ayton Cottage for some years and, if the lintel date is accurate, in 1782 he built a house onto the stable opposite Ayton Cottage to create White House Farm. In 1815 he sold both properties to Thomas Bulmer of Guisborough.

Henry Cross's map (right) drawn for Ord's 'History of Cleveland' of 1843, shows both "Ayton Cottage" and "White House" suggesting that it was about this time that the property was renamed, presumably by Thomas Bulmer.



Between 1841 and 1851 Rebecca Smith, a widow and a Quaker, purchased Ayton Cottage. She lived there with her daughters Hannah and Sarah Selfe Smith, and a servant Mary Redman.

The Great Ayton Tithe Apportionment Map of 1847 (extract on right) showed both houses owned by Rebecca Smith.



Rebecca died around 1853 and left White House and White House Farm to her daughters. They sold the properties to John Pease in 1865, with the result that both houses became part of the Cleveland Lodge Estate. The estate then rented out both White House and White House Farm to tenants.





The 1856 Ordnance Survey map (extract left) shows Ayton Cottage, White House Farm with a carriage house or barn to the east, across an enclosed yard. This building was later converted into a dwelling, and is now called “The Barn” 3, Dikes Lane.

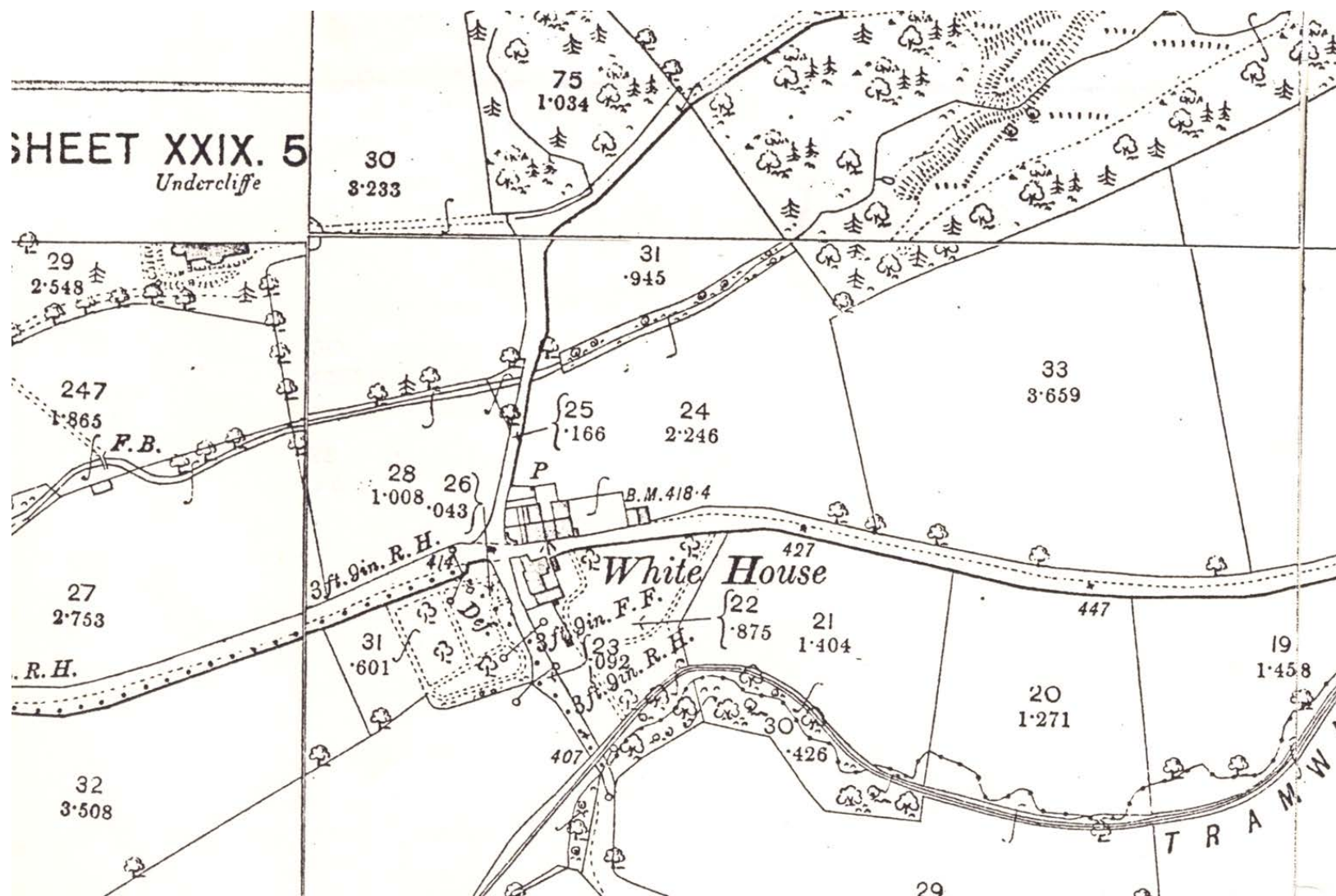
View from Undercliffe Hall, with White House on the right, and White House Farm on the left, taken from Undercliffe Hall, probably about 1880.





Detail from previous photograph. The single storey outbuilding in the foreground is shorter than today, and the pig-sties bewteen the house and Aireyholme Lane have been demolished.

The 1894 Ordnance Survey map (25" to the mile) showed a great amount of detail.





The 1910 National Valuation showed Amos Newton living at White House Farm. It is possible that he was related to George Dixon's wife, Martha Newton, at the White House opposite. Her brother Samuel Newton lived at White House for a time.

In 1918 Fred and Ann Mary Buckton moved into White House Farm. Fred drove the steam locomotive for the Gribdale whinstone mine. The Cleveland Lodge Estate was sold to Sir John Pease Fry in 1921, but the Bucktons remained as tenants.



Men at the Gribdale Mine in 1892, including Fred Buckton.

Tragedy befell the Buckton family on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1944. George William Buckton, aged 21 and the only son of Fred and Ann, was killed in a quarry accident. A newspaper report of the accident is shown below. The photograph shows a young George playing with his toy train in Dikes Lane.

Robert Howe, of Bridge Street, Great Ayton, foreman at the quarry, said they were working at the top of the quarry removing earth with a mechanical digger, and loading it into a dumper. Buckton drove the dumper away to tip the earth into a gulley, an operation which usually took two or three minutes. As, on this occasion, Buckton had not returned after an absence of five minutes, witnesses went to look for him, and found him lying near the bottom of the gulley, which was about 20ft. deep. It appeared that the nearside wheels of the dumper had got over the edge before he began to tip and the dumper had somersaulted before arriving the correct way up at the bottom of the gulley.

Dr Waldie said death had resulted from multiple injuries to the left lung.





Detail from the previous photograph, taken in the late 1920s. The original building, a stable with a hay loft above, was built in stone. The access steps to the hay-loft above are still there; in later house modifications they were partially removed.

The brick-built house, built onto the stable, had a higher roof line, seen here. At a later date, when the stable and hay-loft were converted to become part of the house, the roof was raised to the same level as the main roof.



This photograph, from about 1920, shows Edith Buckton and her mother outside White House Farm. Edith is standing on the stone mounting block.

The three pig-sties in the foreground have now gone, although their outer walls remain. The dovecote on the gable end wall has vanished, but the weather cock is still there. At this time the main entrance door, now blocked up, was straight onto Dikes Lane. The children walking down Dikes Lane are possibly pupils from the Quaker Ayton School.





The dovecote on the gable end wall concealed three holes which gave pigeons access to the roof-space. A vertically sliding door could then be dropped down to trap them inside. Until recently the woodwork of this trap-door mechanism remained in place (left).

When the first owner-occupiers moved into the house, they had to remove many bucket loads of pigeon droppings.

Maude Powell purchased Bank House Farm, where she lived, and White House Farm, from the Cleveland Lodge Estate in 1929. The Bucktons continued to live at White House Farm as Maud's tenants. With the closure of the Gribdale whinstone mine in 1926, Fred worked as a fan engineman at Ayton (Monument) ironstone mine. When Ayton Mine closed in 1928, Fred cycled to work at Poole Hospital as their boilerman.

Maude Powell repeatedly tried to obtain planning permission for building houses in the field behind White House Farm; but was unsuccessful (eventually she sold the land to the owners of White House Farm). Maud then "did the place up a bit" and sold White House Farm to Ronald William Cavill in 1958. Mr and Mrs Cavill had two daughters, Virginia and Hilary; Ronald Cavill worked at ICI, Wilton.

White House Farm at the time of the Cavill's ownership. The dovecote and the pigsties had been removed.





1964 aerial photograph. Note the well-stocked garden at White House Farm, and the removals van outside White House.

The house painted by the village blacksmith, Grayson, in 1959.





In 1966 White House Farm was bought by Charles and Valerie Smith. Charles Smith worked mainly in Africa.

The Smiths sold White House Farm to Ian and Sue Pearce in 1982. Extensive work was carried out to remedy damp problems and lack of insulation between 1998 and 2000.



During renovation work, aspects of the house's earlier history were revealed. The original floor was probably puddled clay. Then nine inch square clay tiles laid on sand. The Cavills covered them with bitumen in an attempt to cure damp, but this merely channelled the damp up the door frames since their bottom ends were below the bitumen.

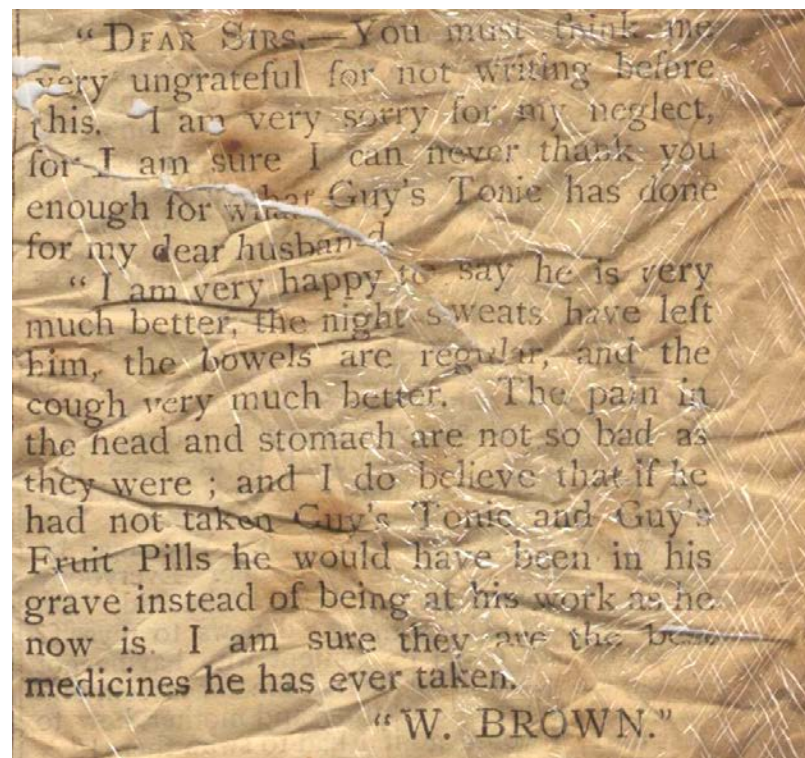
All of this was removed and a damp proof, insulated floor was installed in 2000.





The internal walls were covered in woodchip paper. Underneath this were layers of older wall paper, which were then stripped to reveal pitch pine boards lining the staircase.

Part of a newspaper from 1891 found stuffed in a hole in one of the ceiling beams. This was from "THE CHRISTIAN HERALD AND SIGNS OF OUR TIMES" of 24 December 1891.





Filling cracks with newspaper was a practice that continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century! This was the “repair” of a cut-out in the skirting board.

The history of the house is still under investigation.