

The Reverend T. N. Postlethwaite Vicar of Urswick d November 1926

BENEATH
REPOSE
the Earthly Remains of
**THOMAS NORTON
POSTLETHWAITE**

VICAR OF URSWICK 23 YEARS
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
NOV. 9TH 1926 AGED 70 YEARS

JESUS SAID I AM THE RESURREC-
TION AND THE LIFE. HE THAT BE-
LIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE
DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE.



This is an extremely attractive gravestone, where the mason has used a puzzling variety of lettering, impossible to replicate on the page.

Barrow News 13 November 1926 told its readers the following:

The Vicar of Urswick

DEATH OF THE REV T. N. POSTLETHWAITE
24 YEARS MINISTRY

After a brief illness, the Rev Thomas Norton Postlethwaite, B.A., vicar of Urswick, passed away on Tuesday morning at the vicarage. The rev. gentleman, who had been confined to the house for three weeks, contracted a severe cold in journeying in severe weather to Colton to preach at the harvest thanks-giving festival, and had since been medically attended. During his illness the services at Urswick Church had

been conducted by Mr. Swainson, the schoolmaster, with the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Palmer, Curate of St. George's, Barrow. The deceased, who was 70 years of age, was unmarried.

The late Mr. Postlethwaite, who was a native of Herefordshire, (*sic – see Ancestry information*) was educated at Cambridge, and took his B.A. degree in 1878. After serving as a private schoolmaster in the South of England, he was ordained by the Bishop of Carlisle in 1894, when he was appointed to the curacy of St. John's, Barrow. From 1897 to 1902 he was curate-in-charge of St. John's, Ulverston, during the ministry of the Rev. J. U. N. Bardsley. In 1902 he was appointed by the resident owners of xxx parish to the Vicarage of Urswick, in succession to the late Rev. R. B. Billinge; and during a faithful ministry of 24 years, he was instrumental in effecting many improvements in the interior of the ancient church. With the willing help of the young men of the parish, he carried out the levelling work and fencing in connection with the enlargement of the churchyard; and he was keenly interested in the annual rushbearing festival, which he revived after a lapse of 80 years. He was a member of the North Lonsdale Elementary education Committee, and a governor of Urswick Grammar School.

The rev. gentleman was a prominent member of the Westmorland and Cumberland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, contributing many valuable papers to its transactions, and also to the records of the North Lonsdale Field Club. He was a man of considerable literary attainments, with much originality of thought and a fund of quaint humour, xxx almost passionately fond of historical research, he was also a frequent contributor to the NEWS series of newspapers of articles of special local interest, which were always widely read. He was the author, too, of several local works in Furness and Cumberland dialect.

AN APPRECIATION

One of the old inhabitants of Furness – part, indeed, of its very soil- has passed away in the person of the Rev. T. N. Postlethwaite, Vicar of Urswick. He came of an old Furness stock, his collateral forbears being the old firm of Petty and Postlethwaite, bankers, who, 100 years ago, before the impetus of the mines, represented practically the commercial and business side of Furness. Mr. Postlethwaite seemed chiefly to be happy when investigating some old local legend or custom, or some old beauty spot or monument of the district.

The Classics had been his delight and his life and they were of course the necessary foundation for his study of the numerous abbreviations of medieval Church Latin and in the deciphering of the black letter and other ancient documents which were continuously brought to him for translation.

His knowledge and work were always willingly given to any seeker after truth or to anyone taking real interest in the history of these North country parts. His services were of course honorary; to have suggested making them otherwise would have given him great offence.

He was for many years past a co-adjudicator of Mr. W. G. Collingwood, the Editor of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society's papers and was a constant and fascinating contributor to the Society's "Transactions". The different literary Societies of the neighbourhood were constantly favoured by his lectures on local archaeological subjects.

He helped many students of ancient local lore and was indefatigable in his examination of Church registers and other long forgotten documents when endeavouring to clear up points connected with the past.

Mr. Postlethwaite had, in a literal sense, the pleasing faculty of making the past live and of breathing life into stone.

His parish church of Urswick, the Mother Church of the Furness district, was to him of enduring solicitude. Many of its features had been allowed to lie dormant. He brought them to life and in the restoration of its beauty he was largely assisted by the late Miss Petty, daughter of a partner in the firm above-mentioned.

Mr. Postlethwaite was one of those remarkable men who had little use for money; he no sooner got it than he gave it away to those who stood in want of it. In fact, he found his literary temperament did not conduce to the development of the commercial side of his character. He had no ambition to die rich and took no interest in pecuniary matters, but has left many friends who are the poorer for his departure and will long remember him hereafter with regret.

From *Ancestry* a variety of information can be found:

Thomas Norton Postlethwaite of Hitchin (Hertfordshire) was baptised in Holy Trinity Church, Derby on 26th May 1857. His father Thomas was a farmer, and his mother was named Mary Jane Postlethwaite. His birth had been registered in Hitchin in the final quarter of 1856.

In the **1861 Census** the Postlethwaites are living at Offley Holes Farm, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. In the household were Thomas Postlethwaite (35) Head, Farmer of 530 acres, born London; Mary Jane Postlethwaite (37) Wife, born Derby; Mary Emily Postlethwaite (6) Daughter, born Hitchin, Herts; Thomas Norton Postlethwaite (4), Son, born Hitchin, Herts; Kate Postlethwaite (2), Daughter, born Hitchin, Herts; William Postlethwaite (1), Son, born Hitchin, Herts; William Henry Whiston (18), Brother (*of Mary Jane*) Solicitor's Articled Clerk, born Derby; Robert Norton Whiston (16) Brother, Scholar, born Derby; Sarah Whiston (14) Sister, Scholar, born Derby; plus four servants: a groom, a Housemaid; a nurse and an under-nurse.

There is an excellent site showing the history of this farm at <http://prestonherts.co.uk/offleyholesfarm.htm>

By the time of the **1871 Census** the family had moved north, and had changed occupation. Thomas Postlethwaite (45) Head, is now a Slate Merchant, born London, Middlesex; Mary Jane Postlethwaite (47) Wife (Merchant's), born Derby; Emily Mary (sic) (16) Daughter, Scholar, born Hitchin, Herts; Thomas Norton Postlethwaite (14) Son, Scholar, born Hitchin; Kate Postlethwaite (12), Daughter, Scholar, born Hitchin; Harry Postlethwaite (8) Son, born Hitchin; Frank Postlethwaite (7) Scholar, born Hitchin; Elinor (sic) Postlethwaite (5) Daughter, born Millom, Cumberland, make up the family, together with a governess, three servants and a visitor.

In the **1881 Census** Thomas N. Postlethwaite is living at a private school (*Near Hill College?*) in Crowthorne, Berkshire. He is 24 yrs old, and listed as Assistant Schoolmaster B.A. Cantab, born Hitchin, Herts.

In the **UK Clergy List 1897** appears the following entry:

Postlethwaite, Thos. Norton, B.A. Trin. Coll. Cam. deacon 1895 (Carl); cur. of St. John, Barrow, Lancs. from 1894: 48, *James Watt-terr. Barrow, Lancs.*

In the **1901 Census** Thomas N. Postlethwaite (43) Clerk in Holy Orders, born Hitchin, is living in a single-person household at Canal Foot, Ulverston.

The 1911 Census has been completed by John Price, the enumerator (i.e. who called on houses to deliver and collect the forms) and again Thomas Norman (sic) Postlethwaite is living alone, this time in the Vicarage, Urswick. It is unusual for someone of his position not to have at least a housekeeper.

The **National Probate Register (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1927** has:

POSTLETHWAITE the reverend Thomas Norton of Urswick Vicarage near Ulverston **Lancashire** clerk died 9 November 1926 Probate **London** 5 February to Charles James Chapman solicitor. Effects £692 5s 5d.

The vicar did cross swords occasionally:

VICAR AND THE RAM

At the North Lonsdale Police court on Thursday, the Rev. Thomas Norton Postlethwaite, vicar of Urswick, was charged by the R.S.P.C.A. with causing suffering to a ram by omitting too provide care and attention between May 16 and May 31.

Defendant contended that it was more kind to keep the animal alive and get it convalescent than to kill it.

The magistrates find the defendant 40s., allowed the advocate's fee, and ordered the ram to be slaughtered.

Cambria Daily Leader June 9th, 1916 <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4101651>