



This photo shows Barnston Dale as it was in the days of horse-drawn transport. The children outside the old Fox and Hounds (which was also a farm) are the Jones brothers (left) and the Newby children (right). The old inn was demolished in 1910 and replaced by the present pub.

the road bridge being destroyed, the horse-drawn omnibus service which ran from Neston to Birkenhead via Barnston and Woodchurch was diverted along Storeton Lane, through Storeton Village to Higher Bebington and on to Woodside Ferry.

∞ In the Thingwall and Barnston area, locals called the Great Storm, the Great Flood. Old relations and friends sometimes recalled things they had been told about the Great Flood. My Uncle Chuck Wilbraham who was born in Gayton in 1891 and lived in Pensby, knew some details about the flood. The road on both sides of the brook in Barnston Dale was built up on stone, but the brook itself was bridged with large timbers to take horse drawn vehicles. This wooden centre part was smashed and washed away. A few days later, the brook was re-bridged with strong timbers and the following year, 1876, a completely new sandstone bridge was built, as the date on the keystone tells us. One of my dad's mates, old Will Hignett, who lived on market garden in Thingwall called Blakelow (now the site of Nurse Road) also knew a bit about the storm. When I was a lad I remember him walking up through Barnston Dale towards the Fox and Hounds, sometimes he would stop and scratch at the sandstone wall with the tip of his blackthorn walking stick. His nephew George Hignett told me that Will was cleaning out the chisel mark in the rock which records the height that the floodwater rose to. I was told that the mark was an upside down letter T, 30 inches up from the ground, opposite a lamp post. I recently found the flood mark, not exactly opposite the old lamp post, but about seven yards further uphill, or about 50 yards downhill from the entrance to the Fox and Hounds car park. The mark is not a letter T, but an H, presumably, H for height.



Considering the amount of heavy traffic which passes through Barnston Dale these days, the road bridge, rebuilt 142 years ago for horse-drawn vehicles, has lasted well, a testament to the workmanship of the stonemasons of yesteryear.



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