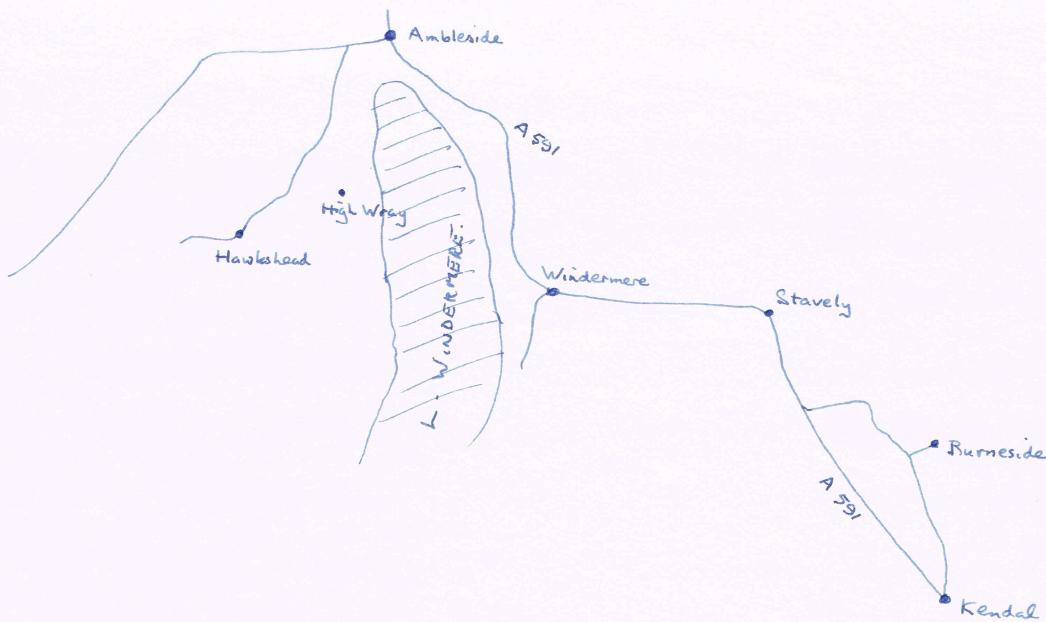


Mrs Elizabeth Gibson, The Beeches, Garsdale, aged 77.

A character; she took it as a matter of course that I should know the various places she mentioned - most of them small villages - and expressed great incredulity if I didn't know where the top of Long Drag in Winters Lane was!

Mrs Gibson was brought up by her grandmother at Browfoot Farm, Burneside, near Kendal. Some time after she left school, she went into service at 'The Common' at Windermere, and then at the age of 21 she moved to High Wray Farm between Hawkshead & Ambleside. At this last period, she attended dances in Hawkshead.



Mrs Gibson learnt step-dancing at the age of 5 from a teacher called something like Slainton. He was the teacher before Robinson (& certainly before Cannon, who came after Robinson). From this teacher she learnt a Sailor Hornpipe, a kind of a hunting dance, and various steps. These included a "shuffle off" (which she tried to demonstrate, but since it didn't fit any music known to us we didn't note it) & "sidesteps".

For the ball at the end of the session, she was ^{(one of) (two)} the Queen. She had to have four different costumes for this ball, an Irish one, a Highland one (with a velvet jacket & kilt), a hunting costume (with a red jacket), & her "ball frock".

At the end of the ball, the two Queens & two Kings came down the hall. The bigger girls performed a "flower dance" with garlands consisting of broad tape with ~~red~~ roses on it. At the end of the dance, the two Queens & two Kings walked up the centre of the hall, and the older girls hooked their garlands to the Queens' dresses, and they processed off, the Queens trailing the garlands as a sort of train. This concluded the ball.

While she was still living at Burneside, ~~she~~ but after she had left school, Mrs Gibson attended classes in ballroom dancing held at Burneside by a Professor Airey. Airey lived in Kendal, & had a dancing academy in Entry Lane there. At that time he was aged c. 40. At his classes in Burneside, Professor Airey taught them Quadrilles, Lancers, Waltzes, Polkas, & the Schottische. He carried a stick about 12" long with a bell on the end of it. If someone did something wrong, he would ring the bell, & they all had to stop.

When Mrs Gibson later went to the dances at Hawkshead (this would be c. 1904) the repertoire there was quite different from that taught by Professor Airey. At Hawkshead the dances included Square-Eight, Six Reel, Cottagers, Polka Mazurka, and La Vassanaia.

Mrs Gibson made one comment on the old-time dancing seen nowadays on Television:
"When they put the old-time dancing on, it makes me mad, because they aren't old-time dancing."