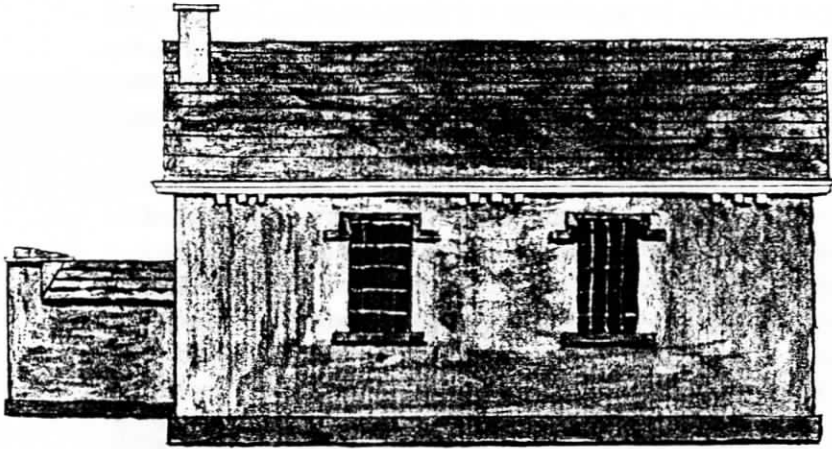


# A SCHOOL DISCOVERED



Proposed building -

Bleasdale School 1833

*Side View*

## INTRACTABLE AND WILD

As you look at the fells which form Bleasdale your first thoughts will be of its wild beauty with little habitation and a timelessness which makes one think that nothing has ever happened here. How wrong can you be? For centuries the North of England was subjected to ever recurring raids from over the border sometimes coming as far south as the Forest of Bleasdale and the Parish of Chipping. In 1340 John Lindeley, the Abbot of Whalley, described the people of Bleasdale as 'few, intractable and wild.' The dangers and insecurity of the times led some people to seek refuge in the inaccessible fells and moorlands of Bleasdale where there was perhaps less danger from raiders. The Parkinsons were one such family who fled from Northumberland and made their home in Bleasdale's remoteness.

## PARKINSONS HERE TO STAY

The Parkinsons were to play a major part in the life of the area in the coming centuries. They had obtained a settlement as keepers of the forest which was reserved for hunting. By the fifteenth century the family was well established in the area.

It hardly seems to be a promising place for education to be an issue! - wild, inaccessible, remote - an unsettled place where disputes concerning land were frequent. A Parliamentary Survey during the Commonwealth period stated:-

"That the people thereabout are an ignorant and careless people, knowing nothing of the worship of God, but live in ignorance and superstition."

## PIONEERS IN EDUCATION

This sorry state of affairs led George Piggott of Preston in 1683 to will £30 to Richard and Christopher Parkinson to provide a preaching minister at Admarsh in Bleasdale. Christopher was a generous benefactor to Admarsh and a local pioneer of education in the area. In his will, made in 1702, amongst other bequests he left £10 yearly for a school master to teach at Admarsh chapel or as near thereunto as possible. To him then is due the origin of Bleasdale School. Throughout the 18th century the ministers were responsible for the education of Bleasdale children. A qualification for such an appointment was that the teacher should be a "literate person". One such person was the Reverend Joseph Stuart, who from 1778 educated the children of Bleasdale for 47 years. This takes us into the eighteenth century when the really fascinating part of the story commences, and it is at this point that I became involved in some unexpected research into the history of Bleasdale School.