

Savouring a slice of Langsett's history

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Story and pictures:

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HAM AND EGG meals at Billy Greens are as much a part of the history of Langsett as dark peak air crashes, the navy village and the building of the reservoir.

It is no exaggeration to say that Billy's was known worldwide, by Irish navvies, rambblers, and steel executives.

Otherwise known by its proper title of the Waggon and Horses, the hospitality was run by the Green family for close on 200 years. The date of the inn is 1750 and they were its first licensees.

But, with the death of John Green, the second of Billy Green's bachelor sons in January, the family's connections with the pub ceased.

The person who MADE the Langsett inn though was Billy Green's mother, who was the second wife of George Green.

The pub, originally a farmhouse, became known as Ma Green's.

She opened up one of her sitting rooms as a tea-room where she served the ham and egg toast which were to become well-known.

Her husband and son Billy, were known for their stallion shire horse they walked around all the farms in the area — to serve the manes.

She died in 1908, aged 67. Billy Green, her son, died on June 5, 1958, aged 76.

It was his wife, Helen Green BA,



A lady of quality...Helen Green.

who upgraded the homely pub and team-rooms above the tap room with all its bare floors and spittoons.

She served her last meal at the inn on September 1960 before she moved to Manor Farm, Upper Malpas, a sheep farm which the family owned, where she lived with her sons until she died in 1995.

She provided dinners at 9d a day for the outcroppers in the vicinity during the 1926 general strike — and they provided the fuel to cook with.

Her two sons, David and then John continued at the pub until 1961, when they joined their mother at Manor Farm.

During the 1939-45 war the armoured fighting vehicle range on the nearby moors made the inn very busy and a great number of distinguished people were accommodated and catered for, including colonels of

regiments and ginnery officers.

Helen Green was described as "a lady of quality" brought up in fashionable circles as her father was a diplomat.

She became as well known in country circles as she was in the London set.

Although the pub became widely known as Billy Green's after his mother died, it was Helen Green who was the mainstay behind the business.

She first came to Langsett in 1916 with her father's shooting party. The story goes that she set eyes on Billy Green; a farmer's rough and ready son and said, "That's the man I'm going to marry" — and she did.

She was talented and educated, a remarkable lady with fingers in many pies, both the home-made variety and community-wise.

She became a magistrate, county councillor on the old West Riding Council, and was also a governor of Granville College, Sheffield, and Penistone Grammar School.

But she knew how she wanted things done.

Fresh starched linen was laid for every meal, and the business people and shooting parties who stayed at the inn were all served at one big table.

Nearly everyone in the village, particularly the women, worked for her. They didn't get paid much, but got a good meal every day which was worth quite a lot in the days of the general strike.

The original farmhouse was extended when the reservoir was built in the early 1900s and a navvies' hut was built to accommodate them, complete with chapel, hospital and community room.

After the war, when eating out became fashionable among ordinary people Helen Green saw the opportunity of increasing trade and upgraded her business further.

Football teams, such as Sheffield United, Sheffield Wednesday and Lincoln City, all called there to eat on their way over Woodhead to play Manchester matches.

On these occasions, before a match, Mrs Green would serve up steamed fish and toast.



How the tea rooms used to look.



The inn as it looks today.



Billy Green (far left) pictured with Langsett United football club 1923-1924.



Present landlady, Margren Batty pictured in the garden of the pub