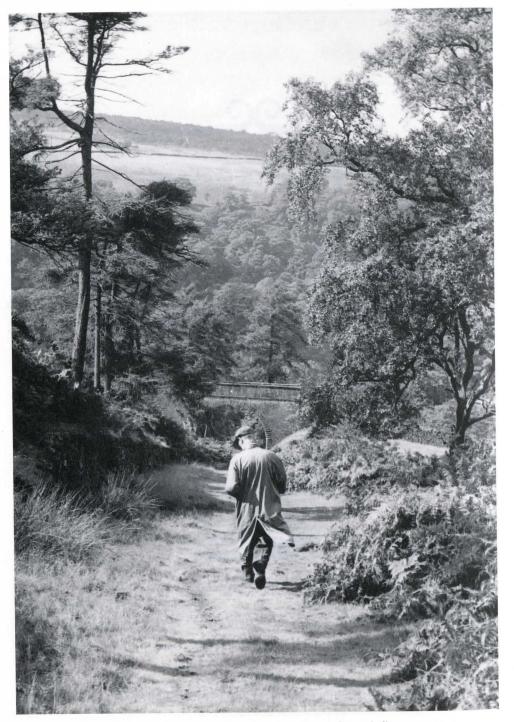


©Gerald Hancock



Once a busy railway, this has now become the main roadway down the once famous incline.

The Goyt Valley

There are several places within the Derbyshire Peak District which retain a special aura, and the Goyt Valley is just such a place.

It has a uniqueness all of its own, for who would imagine now, that in spite of the obvious beauty of the two reservoirs, Fernilee and Errwood, that little more than sixty years ago, a thriving community lived and worked in the valley.

There was a paint mill, a gunpowder factory, a Victorian mansion, farms, and even a railway - all these and more existed here before the reservoirs were built.

Though no-longer inhabited, the Goyt Valley is visited by thousands every year, such is the magnetism of the place.

It has both the ruggedness of hills and moorland above, but having the quiet serenity of the valley below, a haven for both walker and tourist alike.

There are several ways of reaching the Goyt Valley, but if travelling by car the most popular route is from the Long Hill road. The lane branches off the main road and quite quickly one is descending ever downwards towards the valley.

This road, or more correctly Goyts Lane, is steeped in history itself, for having travelled three-quarters of a mile, with car parks to the left and right, there is a steep, almost straight descent with the full view of Fernilee Reservoir below.

This steep hill, turning off Goyts Lane, which leads to the valley bottom, is known as Bunsall Cob, and was in fact part of the High Peak Railway, where on this particular steep section, trains were hauled up by static steam engines. The lake here is evident from where the great engine drew upon for its water supply. From here too, one can see the railway embankment, which leads away towards Burbage and Ladmanlow (above Buxton), through tunnels now blocked up for safety reasons.

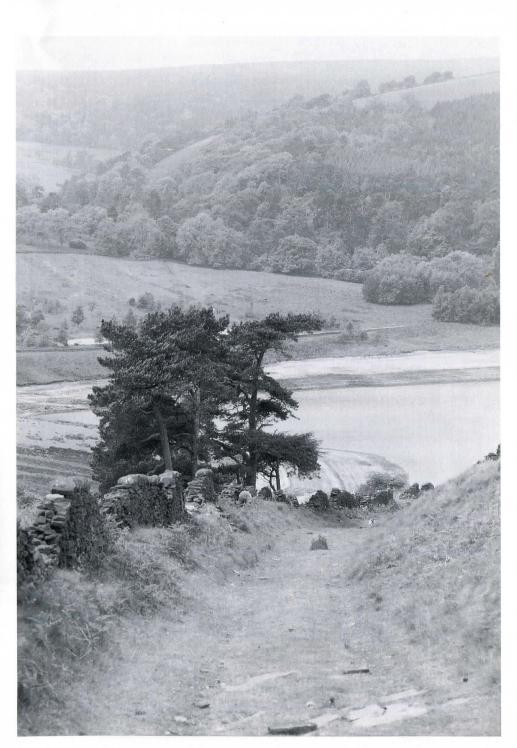
The Bunsall Incline, opened in 1831, was at first worked as two separate inclines, the upper one being 660 yards long, with a gradient of 1:7¹/₂, while the lower one was 455 yards in length, although steeper at 1:7. It wasn't until 8th June, 1857, that it became one single incline, being then 1,115 yards long, and actually descending some 457 feet into the Goyt Valley. From the bottom of the incline, where close by stood Bunsall Farm, the line ran on the level, before reaching the Shallcross Incline, and Whaley Bridge.

The railway was constructed to carry industrial materials, such as limestone and iron ore, from peakland quarries to the then industrial parts around Whaley Bridge and beyond. Although run mainly as a goods line, passengers were carried for a time, but due to a reported fatal accident in 1877 this practice was not repeated.

In fact, this particular section of the High Peak Railway, between Ladmanlow and Shallcross was closed on 25th June, 1892. The reason for closure was the construction of the Hurdlow to Buxton line, and a new route to Whaley Bridge was opened via Buxton, as an extension of the Stockport, Disley and Whaley Bridge Railway.



From the top of Bunsall Cob, Fernilee Reservoir offers a commanding spectacle, towards the southern end of the valley.



Goyts Lane - one of the main routes in and out of the valley for the horse and carriage, now ends at the waters edge.



There is still evidence, although small, of this access bridge on the Bunsall incline.

THIS ROAD WAS BUILT IN 1967 ON THE BUNSALL INCLINE OF THE CRCMFORD AND HIGH PEAK RAILWAY CONSTRUCTED 1831 ABANDONED 1892 MAXIMUM GRADIENT 1 IN 7 PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THE STEPHENSON LOCOMOTIVE SOCIETY 1972 This new route was inevitably better from an operational point of view, because of the delays with the inclines. There is a plaque erected to commemorate the railway at the foot of the incline.

The road, constructed when Errwood Reservoir was built, leads across the actual dam wall to further car parks to the left and right. The car park to the right is adjacent to a narrow steep winding road, which local people knew as the 'street'. This road leads up and over to Kettleshume and is another route into the Goyt Valley.

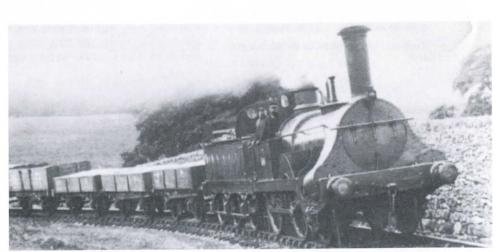
The second car park, after turning left over Errwood dam wall, about a quarter of a mile, is an excellent focal point for walks around the reservoir, and for visitors who especially like to explore the ruins of Errwood Hall. Picnic tables are provided above the car park, giving a splendid view of Errwood Reservoir.

Many of the local walks have been marked with arrows by the National Park, to whom we must all be indebted for preserving and maintaining such a wonderful valley.

Another entry into the Goyt Valley is via the Cat and Fiddle Road, from where the river Goyt rises, near Whetstone Ridge. Motorists must nowadays leave their vehicles in the car park provided. This is the Cheshire, Derbyshire boundary, and is known as Derbyshire Bridge.

From its source, high on the windswept moors, the Goyt, which many people believe is the true source of the river Mersey, begins its journey into the Goyt Valley. First trickling and tumbling its crystal clear waters over centuries old gritstone smoothed rock, then further on providing wonderful cascades, as it falls on its way into the valley. Joined and swollen by the steep rocky 'cloughs' of Berry, Stake, and later Shooters 'clough', finally emptying itself into Errwood Reservoir.

Further on, after passing the steep shale banks of the river, one enters the Goyt Valley proper, twisting and now deepening from the road level, inviting the traveller onwards into this most delightful valley.



'Crewe goods' 2-4-0. This was the type of engine used on the railway, before its closure in 1892 ("LGRP Collection")



The middle engineman's cottage – The stationary engine, which was sited on the left of the picture, was abandoned in 1857, in favour of one single incline ("LGRP Collection]").



Looking more like a Lake District scene, Fernilee Reservoir offers a splendid setting.



The ruined Gunpowder Works, shown here in 1931, now lie deep under the waters of Fernilee Reservoir. It is said that there had been a gunpowder works in the valley since the 16th century.

Near Goytsclough Quarry one comes to the old packhorse bridge, once used by salt smugglers, wishing to avoid the salt tax. This bridge was rebuilt here, having been removed from the hamlet of Goyts Bridge, before the valley was flooded for the Errwood Reservoir.

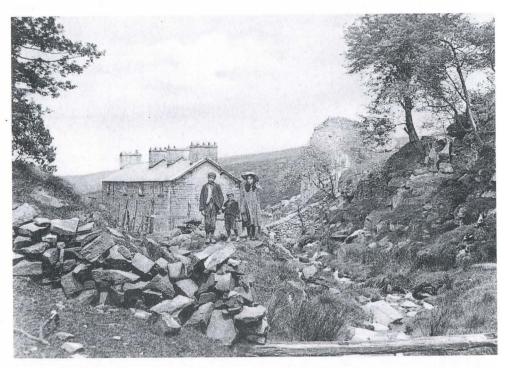
Over the road in the Goytsclough Quarry was the start of Pickfords Removal Company. Unbelievably first worked, it is said, by Thomas Pickford in about 1670. The stone slabs, some of which were used to pave the streets of London, were carried in panniers by packhorse in teams of up to fifty, returning with goods for local towns and villages. Pickfords are still in business today and using the packhorse as a 'motif'.



It was a different form of transport in days long ago. The Cat and Fiddle public house seen here, is the second highest in England at 1,690 feet. It is near here that the River Goyt begins its journey.

The Goytsclough Paint Mill was close to the stream from Deep Clough, near the quarry. Little or nothing remains of the paint factory, or a number of cottages, which in the 1890's employed more than 20 people. The end product was a powder, made from crushed barytes, which was transported on the High Peak Railway, to be used in paint manufacture.

The Chilworth Gunpowder Factory had been around for a very long time, in fact from the 16th century, when gunpowder was supplied for use against the Spanish Armada. The ruins now lie under the waters of Fernilee Reservoir. Before the First World War, when up to 120 men were employed there, in 1909, it is recorded that three men lost their lives after a huge explosion. Their names Joseph Hill (aged 32), George Raven (aged 26) and Percy Southern (aged 18). Hill was killed instantly, Raven and Southern died of their injuries a few days later in Buxton Hospital. In the inspectors report it is said a possible metallic object had caused the fatal blast.



Old Paint Mill Cottages near Deep Clough.

After Goytsclough Quarry, one approaches the wooded area, for some people the loveliest part of the Goyt, having the best of both worlds, with its quiet, undisturbed walks, with now far below, ravine like views of the river. The woods here are very attractive, being of somewhat deciduous nature but further along many Scots Pines and Lodgepole were planted. It is noticable too of the great spread of rhodedendrons, especially around Errwood Hall, and for the discerning eye, the foreign trees like the Italian Cupressus and Monkey Puzzle trees, introduced by the Grimshaw family.

It is well worthwhile exploring these now overgrown gardens, early June being especially spectacular to see all the yellow azaelias and rhodedendrons, in fact a sea of splendid colour.

The two reservoirs, Fernilee and Errwood, perhaps now complement each other, and provide a pleasant spectacle to the Goyt Valley.



Travelling was more sedate in early days. This was the Goyt Valley from the Derbyshire Bridge end.



Heading towards Derbyshire Bridge, with the lovely River Goyt below.



Derbyshire Bridge. This was the Derbyshire-Cheshire boundary until 1928.

Fernilee Reservoir was completed in 1937, taking five years to build at a cost of over half a million pounds.

Stockport Corporation was the authority under which the waterworks scheme was first conceived, as long ago as 1900. In fact, plans were on the drawing board to build Errwood Reservoir when the idea for the Goyt Valley Scheme was thought of in 1930. But the Second World War invervened and was followed by severe restrictions on capital expenditure. Large and expensive projects such as reservoirs, had to wait. Ironically, decades later, the ultimate cost of Errwood virtually trebled at over one and half million pounds.

The two dams are about the same in terms of capacity and acreage, Fernilee being slightly the larger – Errwood 927 million gallons, area 78 acres, and 117 feet deep. Fernilee 83 acres, 1,000 million gallons, and 126 feet deep.

So it was that whole communities had to give way to the demand for water. Errwood Hall, though not close to the dam, was dismantled for reasons of pollution.



Construction begins for Errwood Reservoir.



The Goyt Valley in 1931. Peace before the waters.



The waters of Errwood Reservoir encroach towards the new bridge. Errwood Hall's driveway can still be seen under the left archway of the bridge.



This very pretty suspension bridge was built over the most narrow part of Fernilee, to provide access to travellers on foot. It was removed for the construction of Errwood Dam wall.



A youthful Duchess of Kent at the opening ceremony of Errwood Reservoir on 14th June, 1968.

Errwood Hall

Errwood Hall is a ruin that is never forgotten. Whilst other ruins are left, and indeed seldom visited, Errwood Hall has many thousands of visitors each year. Standing, as it does, in the beautiful Goyt Valley, it is hard now to imagine that the Hall was once the head of a thriving community.

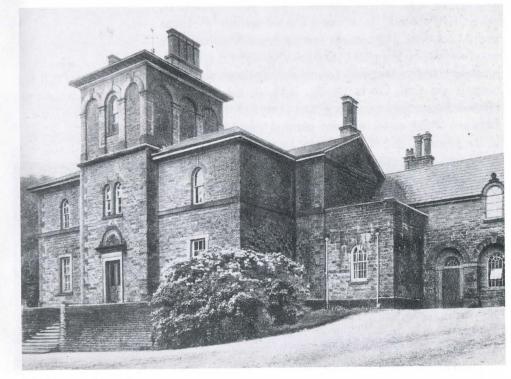
Farms, cottages, a school and to the rear of the Hall, a hamlet called Castedge, and of course Goyts Bridge, now sadly under the waters of Errwood Reservoir. All were just part of country life only sixty years ago. Many of the ruined cottages become visible in times of drought, and it can be interesting trying to identify various locations.

The Hall itself actually stands to the side of Shooters Clough, about 200 feet above Errwood Reservoir, and just above the 1,000 foot contour line on the Ordnance Survey Map.





Pictured in 1934, shortly before demolition. From Stakeside above Shooters Clough.



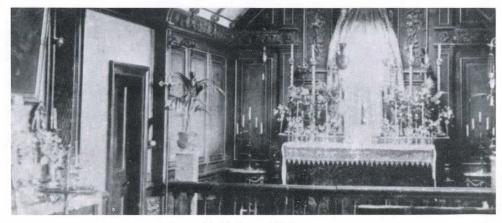
Splendid Errwood in all its majesty.

It was built in 1830 by Samuel Grimshaw, who was a very rich Catholic Lancastrian industrialist. The Grimshaw family had interests in shipping, and owned land and property in Manchester at that time. They also owned their own yacht, the 'Mariquita' and were known for their lavish parties, especially during the shooting season. The house employed some twenty servants.

Samuel Grimshaw must have had an eye for beauty, for he could rarely have found a more pleasant and charming location.

It was a grand house, of some Italian style, turretted, of double wing structure, with a central tower, a chapel and an extension to the northern end. French windows opened onto a terraced garden at the southern end, with wide steps leading up to the main entrance. The house faced east towards Long Hill, on the Buxton to Stockport road.

Over the front door was the crest of the Grimshaws, a dragon and a small coat of arms. In the garden stood an ornamental stone arch surmounted by a bird and a large G; its remains, now long gone, where it stood amongst the lawns and flower beds. High in the central tower window, there was always a crucifix with a lamp shining before it, and there must have been a wonderful view looking down the valley towards the then Goyts Bridge, with all the masses of rhodedendrons and azaelias, which surrounded the house. Between 40,000 to 50,000 were planted from 1840 to 1850 in the grounds, and of all colours, even today one can see

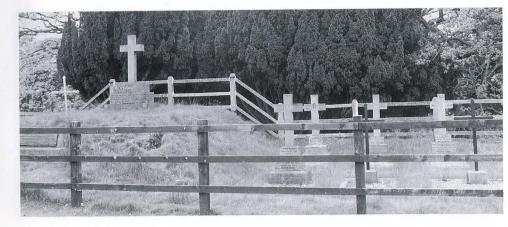


A unique picture of the private Catholic chapel inside Errwood Hall.

bright reds, white and brilliant yellow. Although much overgrown today it is still a wonderful sight, especially in the month of June. The grounds of Errwood Hall were open to the public towards the end of the 19th century on Tuesdays and Saturdays, but this stopped after one of the many statues was damaged, by a careless visitor. Above the house on top of the hill, is the private burial ground of the Grimshaws, where once stood a small building, a mausoleum. This fell into disrepair and was dismantled many years ago. The whole burial ground has been tidied up over the years and is now kept in good repair by the Peak Park.

The inscriptions of the private burial ground are as follows:

- Braddock, Elizabeth Anne, died 6th January, 1903, aged 19
- Butler, Hannah, died 4th March, 1887, wife of John Butler
- Butler, John, died 3rd February, 1886, aged 55. Captain of the Yacht Mariquita. For 16 years the friend and faithful servant of the late Samuel Grimshaw.
- Ferns, Ellen, died 12th January, 1889, aged 75
- Gosselin, Helier Robert Hadsley, died 31st March, 1924
- Gosselin, Mary Ambrose Louisa, died 23rd February, 1930



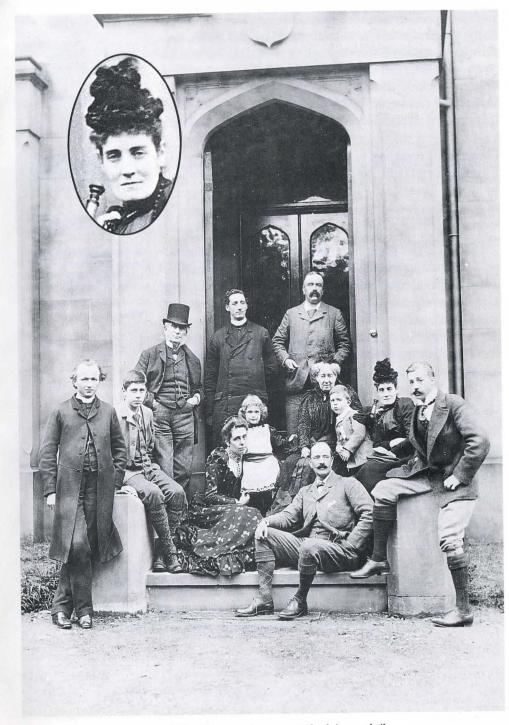
The Grimshaw private cemetery.

- Grimshaw, Arthur, died in infancy
- Grimshaw, Jessie Mary Magdalen, died 6th December, 1893
- Grimshaw, Samuel Dominic, died 20th August, 1883
- Niorthe, Irma, died 19th December, 1882 at Errwood, aged 27, born 7th July 1855 at Bayonne, France
- Preston, Anne Genevieve Marie, died 26th January 1929
- Preston, Captain, the Honourable Edward Francis, died 1st March, 1901.

There are at least three unmarked graves.

From this point is a most remarkable view, taking in three glorious valleys below, through the wooded spendour of Errwood, the little known corner of Castedge, and in the distance the hills towards Buxton. From this pinnacle of the hilltops the eye can take in twenty-five miles of country at a glance.





A panoramic view of Goyts hamlet and Errwood Hall in the distance.

The Grimshaw family, with inset of Miss Dolores to whose memory the shrine was built.

The burial ground should not be confused with the Shrine, situated off the moorland road known as the 'Street'. It can be reached by taking the track up from Castedge behind the burial ground and in fact is now signposted. Much visited today, it was erected in 1889, by the Grimshaw family in memory of the beautiful Miss Dolores, a well educated Spanish lady, companion of Mrs. Grimshaw. Miss Dolores, it is said, never enjoyed good health and died in her forties. The shrine is dedicated to St. Joseph. The mosaic above the little altar depicts St. Joseph holding Jesus as a baby and the words 'Nunca se le Invoca envano a San Jose prueba de gratitud' (No-one asks in vain of St. Joseph a token of gratitude). Flowers are placed upon the altar at regular intervals, though by who no-one knows.

Below the cemetery are the remains of the extensive kitchen gardens overlooking the stream, and beyond this and further upstream was the private swimming pool, and in the same area too were the tennis courts. Evidence of Castedge village can still be seen at the foot of the cemetery hill, and it was here that the estate workers lived. For a time the game keeper lived in a cottage here before leaving to live up near the Cat and Fiddle. His cottage was taken over by the Hewitt family, who came to work the coal mine that supplied Errwood Hall, and indeed many of the surrounding farms.



The Catholic shrine to Miss Dolores. Situated high up a windy hillside, some distance from the Hall. Flowers are always left, by whom no-one



This was the area of Errwood Hall's kitchen garden. Remains of cottages are found here too, that once made up the hamlet of Castedge.

The coal mine was situated in Shooters Clough, up and to the left of the Hall, and to the left of Castedge, only about half a mile from the house itself. Mr. Joe Hewitt, who worked the mine with his father, had many a tale to tell. The huge fireplace at Errwood would take five hundred-weight of coal, and every time he delivered the coal he would get a jug of beer, so he went as often as he could, of course.

The mine extended 1,700 to 1,800 yards into the hillside, being only four feet high at the highest point. They would extract up to six tubs of coal each day, any surplus coal was sold to local farmers but little money changed hands, it was usually cheese, meat or eggs paid in kind. Time meant little in those days, a bell was rung at the Hall at 6.00 a.m., 9.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon was for lunch, 4.30 p.m. tea, then 6.00 p.m., 9.00 p.m. and finally at 10.00 p.m. Joe said they often didn't start until 10.00 a.m., 'then do a stint'. It is said the coal was particularly favoured by local blacksmiths as it was a good caking coal. To transport the coal to the Hall horses were used but then later on they had a Model T Ford lorry. In the late twenties a great flood washed the lorry into Shooters Clough, and there it has lain ever since, being gradually dismantled by passers by.

When the young gentry came to visit the Hall they would ask to visit the mine, and would be pushed in a tub deep inside to gather a lump of coal which they would wrap in a handkerchief to show their friends. The miners were paid handsomely so, of course, they looked forward to their visits.

Up to twelve families used to visit the Hall twice a year to pay the rents and they were always treated to a good dinner, such was the generosity of the Grimshaws. Christmas was always a special time, all the children would receive presents, usually something useful such as clothing and each family would leave after the party, with a well stocked hamper. Dancing would go on late into the night, always ending with the estate agent, Mr. Qyarzabel, doing a Spanish dance with the Rt. Honourable Mrs. Prestwood.

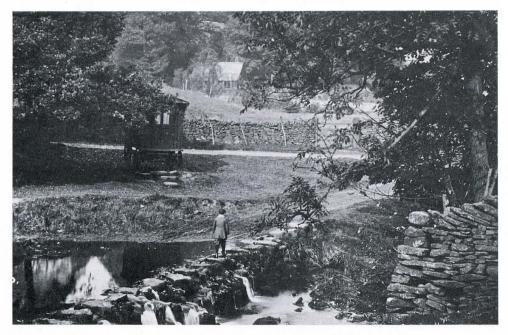
The school at Errwood was first set up at the Hall, then a proper building was constructed near the bottom of the drive, about fifty yards from the entrance on the left of the



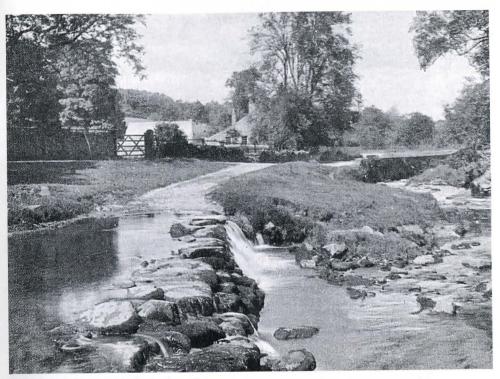
The Gatehouse and Gardeners Cottage. The road went around here to Errwood Hall.

drive. The school was a wooden structure having a corrugated iron roof with a stove in the middle. Boys sitting on one side and girls on the other. About 30 children from the estate and surrounding cottages were educated up to the age of 14. The school was started at the suggestion of Miss Dolores de Bergria, the Spanish lady to whom the Shrine was erected. Miss Dolores taught needlework and other subjects and was helped by the estate agents wife, Mrs. Qyazabel.

After Miss Dolores died, Mrs. Qyazabel, who was an Irish lady, ran the school for many years. Later a qualified teacher, Mrs. O'Rourke, taught in the school until it closed in 1930 when Mrs. Mary Gosselin, the last member of the Grimshaw family, died. Mr. Joe Hewitt remembers sometimes being sent for at the school to act as a footman on the carriage to either Buxton or Whaley Bridge. Also when he did odd jobs at the Hall whilst still at school he would clean all the ladies shoes, fill the oil lamps and, on Saturdays, he would help polish the silver. For these chores he would get 3/6 (about 22p), which was a vast sum in those days, especially when breakfast was included and lunch on Saturdays.



Looks likely this boy was on his way to school, seen through the trees.



Idyllic scene looking towards the Gatehouse Cottage.

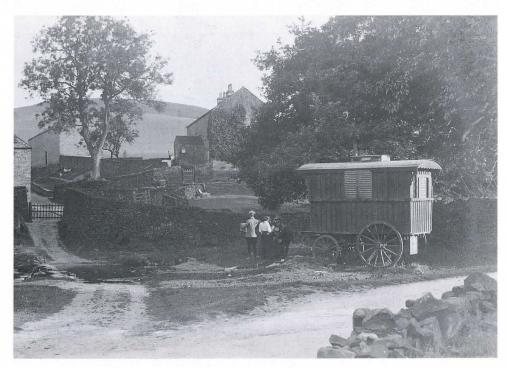


Part of Goyts Bridge Hamlet with the Packhorse Bridge.

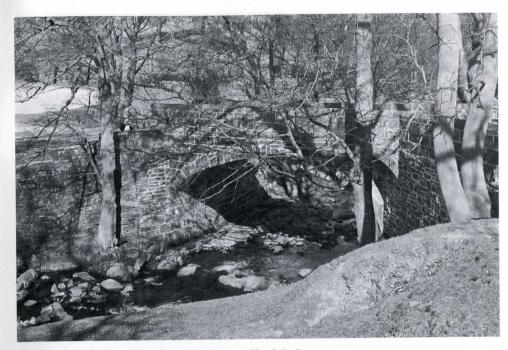
When the snows came, between Shooters Clough and the hill behind Castedge, sledging always took place. All the staff from the Hall would join in, about twenty in all, often just leaving the housekeeper alone with the owners. This would go on into the early hours, often when the staff had to start work at 6.00 a.m. Singing and shouting happily all night long, such a great event it was.

Perhaps, even now, as you walk up the old drive past the ruined Hall, you can stop and hear the carriage and horses. Or maybe the happy cries of the estate children. The magic of Errwood is still there.

Mrs. Gosselin, the last member of the Grimshaw family, died in 1930, and the estate was broken up so the Fernilee Reservoir could be built. For a short time Errwood Hall was used as a Youth Hostel, but in 1934 Stockport Corporation, who had bought all the land, began demolishing the Hall, the best stone from which was used in the water treatment building below Fernilee.



The mobile 'Village Shop' at Goyts Bridge.



The main Goyts Bridge, used by all the horse drawn traffic of the day.



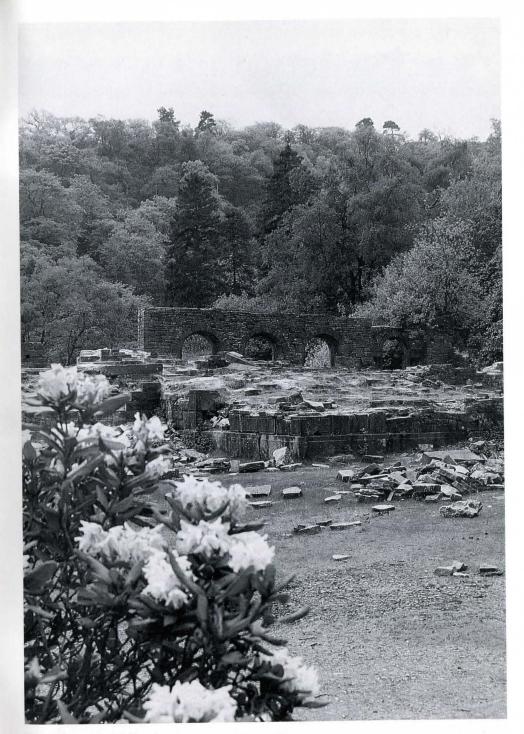
The ruins of Errwood Hall.

The history now of the second reservoir at Errwood is well known, covering the lovely Goyts Bridge and Valley, but when, in time of drought - as in the summer of 1991, all the ruins come into view. The gatehouse cottage, Goyts Bridge Farm, the entrance and old drive to Errwood Hall, all these are plain to see, and more.

Some people argue that the coming of the reservoirs has enhanced the Goyt Valley, but who knows what it would have been like today, had the valley community lived on. Certainly the memory of Errwood Hall will always survive. As Joe Hewitt said, "It was a wonderful life".



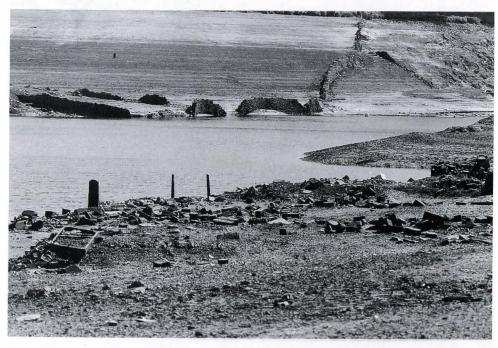
Sad sight of early demolition of the Hall.



Errwoods beauty amidst the ruins.



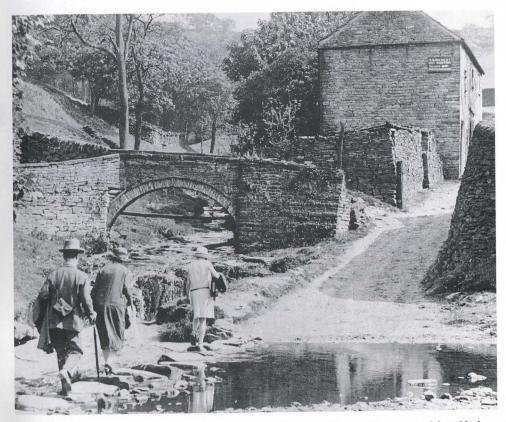
Errwood Hall now laid to rest, children play in the ruins.



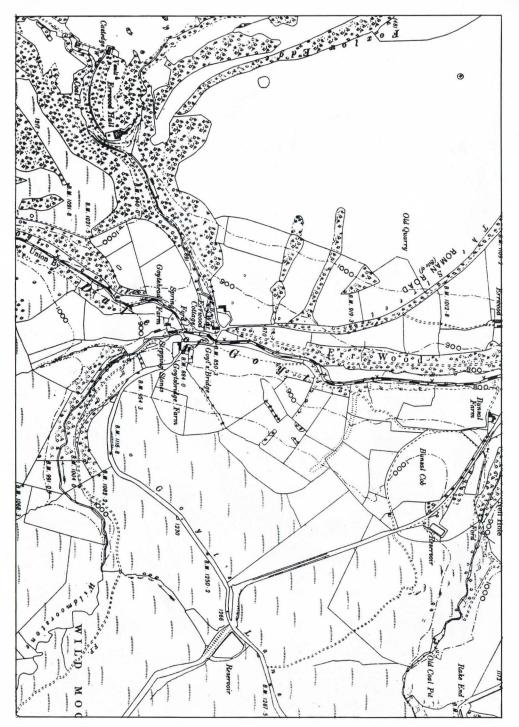
Errwood Reservoir in drought conditions. Remains of cottages which once boasted proud gardens.

Acknowledgements

Miss Catherine Harlow for her invaluable help Diane for the photographs Matlock Study Library Stockport Local Heritage Library Buxton Museum The National Railway Museum – York Peak National Park Mr. J. R. Morton Mr. R. Skidmore Mr. V. Hallam



The much loved Goyts Packhorse Bridge. The sign on Hibberts Farm says "Teas and Parties catered for". Maybe this family were heading for refreshments after a pleasant walk.



An early map of the area, showing all the buildings around Goyts Bridge and Errwood Hall.