

John Wilkinson of Castlehead

From William Field's log book with newspaper reports recording some of the events.

1806 Dec 29 Mrs Wilkinson Castle Head died

The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser, for Lancashire, Westmorland, &c. (Lancaster, England), Saturday, January 10, 1807

DIED.

A few days ago, at Castle Head, near Cartmel, aged 82, Mrs. Wilkinson, wife of John Wilkinson, Esq.—In her, the poor of that neighbourhood have lost a valuable benefactress; and for piety and Christian charity, she was equalled by few.

William Field did not record Mr Wilkinson's death possibly because it did not happen locally.

Lancaster Gazette 23 July 1808

On the same day, at his works, at Bradley, in the county of Stafford, John Wilkinson, Esq. the great iron-master, at the advanced age of 80. He was a man endued with a great mind, and combined happily with it much enterprize and energy. He was a great promoter of public improvements, friendly to agriculture and canals, and as an iron-master had few equals; in which, by his inventions, and spirit of enterprize, he was decidedly the first to bring that great branch of our national wealth and prosperity to its present great state of perfection. Though he had lived to see in his time the iron trade rising into a great scale of importance, he still thought it in its infancy, and capable of much improvement.—The loss of such a character, so extensively connected with the labouring classes of this country, cannot but be sincerely felt; but ever friendly to objects of national improvement, he has left directions to his executors, as an important legacy to the community, to carry on his numerous works on their extensive scale. Though frugal in his manners and habits, he was not sparing in expensive experiments for the advancement of his favourite object, the iron trade, in which he had acquired, what he justly merited, a very ample fortune. He has directed his body to be buried in an iron coffin, at his seat at Castlehead, in Lancashire, where he had created a considerable increase to his property by reclaiming a large part of moss land, which has been spoken of by agriculturists as among the first efforts of the kind in this or any other county. It is hoped that a biographical sketch of this great man's life will be shortly given by those persons who were best acquainted with his undertakings and improvements, that they may serve as an ample to others worthy of imitation.

However he does record a visit to Castlehead.

1808 Augt 6 at Castle Head

- A Catalogue of Antiquities etc found at Castle Head
and arranged in Card Cases by T Moore Sept 2 1808
- No 1 Parts of an human Skull Verbeta etc
 - No 2 Jaws of a large kind of Deer.
 - 3 Teeth of the Buffalo and other Animals
 - 4 Tusks of the Boar and Teeth of other Animals
 - 5 Pieces of Limestone in the form and nearly the
size of Hens Eggs supposed to have been used
in Slinging.
 - 6 Keys and other Iron Utensils.
 - 7 A spoon Fork and other utensils in Brass.
 - 8 Beads formed of Blue Rag stone.
 - 9 A Bead of Lead 10 Beads of Clay
 - 11 Ornament of Bone 12 Rings etc of Brass.
 - 13 Rings of Iron 14 Ornaments in Rag Stone.
 - 15 Beads and Ornaments of Glass 16 Various Pieces of Glass
 - 17 Ornaments of Brass.
 - 18 Fibula and ornaments of Brass.
 - 19 Supposed by Mr Wedgewood to be Pottery **Queen** of Bone
 - 20 Imitations of Muscles. **Queen** of fossils.
 - 21 A Ring and other Pieces seemingly of Coal.
 - 22 Pebbles, a mass resembling amber and a Nut.
 - 23 A singularly laminated Stone.
 - 24 An impressions in clay and two flint Pebbles.
 - 25 Varigated Flints
 - 26 Part of a human Skull and a bone in a petrifying State.
 - 27 Iron Ore
 - 28 Ninty Five Sticas of different Northumbrian King
 - 29 Three coins one of Constantine and 2 unknown
 - 30 Coins sposed British
 - 31 A Ring of Silver Ornamented.
 - 32 Seventy Two various roman Coins in Brass
 - 33 A Stone with various hollows cut in its appar
-ently used as moulds for casting Rings of
Silver and other Metal with a jet of Brass.

William does not record the burial of John Wilkinson but records the inscription with an inaccuracy. It was 1808 not 1806 that John Wilkinson died

1808 Aug 14 Inscription on J Wilkinsons Monument at C Head

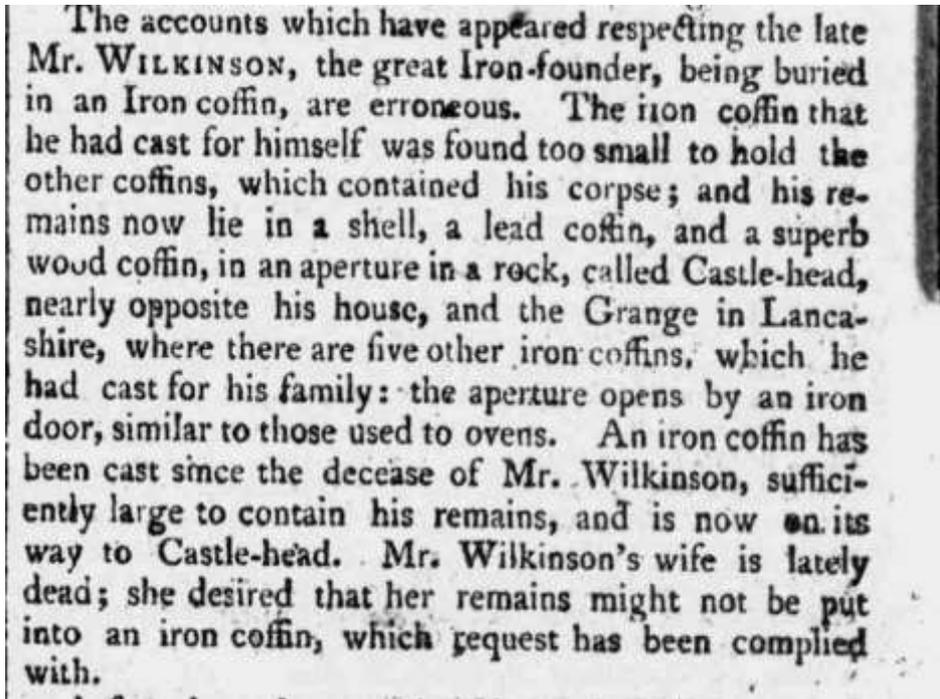
Here Rests

John Wilkinson Iron Master who died 14th of July
1806 Aged 80 years.

His different works in various Parts of the

Kingdom are lasting Testimonies of his unceasing Labours. His life was spent in action for the benefit of Man and he presumed to hope to the Glory of GOD, erected AD 1807.

Morning Chronicle 30 August 1808



The accounts which have appeared respecting the late Mr. WILKINSON, the great Iron-founder, being buried in an Iron coffin, are erroneous. The iron coffin that he had cast for himself was found too small to hold the other coffins, which contained his corpse; and his remains now lie in a shell, a lead coffin, and a superb wood coffin, in an aperture in a rock, called Castle-head, nearly opposite his house, and the Grange in Lancashire, where there are five other iron coffins, which he had cast for his family: the aperture opens by an iron door, similar to those used to ovens. An iron coffin has been cast since the decease of Mr. Wilkinson, sufficiently large to contain his remains, and is now on its way to Castle-head. Mr. Wilkinson's wife is lately dead; she desired that her remains might not be put into an iron coffin, which request has been complied with.

Compiled Pat Rowland for the CPLHS Lindale Village History.
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