



THE THREE GREYHOUNDS INN

Its History and Architecture

This building was almost certainly a farmstead before it became an inn. A date-stone at the rear of the building (now concealed by later additions) is said to be inscribed '1707'. This is likely to indicate a date of major rebuilding, rather than first construction. Many of the sites (or 'house-tofts') of farmsteads in the village of Great Asby may date from the early 12th century. Structures on them have, of course, undergone many re-buildings. The last major rebuilding, in stone, took place in this region from, roughly, the mid-17th to the mid-18th century. If you walk around the village, you will see other house date-stones from this period.

The three greyhounds (fig.3) on the wall outside are not of ancient origin. They were placed there by a previous owner in the later 20th century. The outer front door (fig.2) may have stronger claims to early origins. Village 'folk-memory' holds that when a much earlier St Peter's church was demolished, before the present church was built in the 1860s, the door of the old church was installed as the front door of the inn. One house in the village has internal oak panelling, probably constructed from 17th century box-pews taken from the old church, so the door may have been similarly 'recycled'.



Fig.1 The Three Greyhounds façade c.1920



Fig. 2 The outer front door

Only three inns in England seem to share the name, 'Three Greyhounds'. Two appear to have an association with hunting hares with greyhounds but the name of this inn has a very different association.

'Three Greyhounds' are depicted on the coat of arms of the Machell family. They were once lords of the manor of Crackenthorpe, a few miles north of Appleby-in-Westmorland. One member of this family, Richard Machell, was Rector of St. Peter's church, Great Asby from 1739 to 1786. He continued to be Rector here even after he became lord of the manor of Crackenthorpe in 1767, and moved to Crackenthorpe Hall. Exactly how the inn came to be so closely connected with the Machells and their coat of arms (fig.4) is not known.

Intriguingly, a local journalist, Frank Haley, reported (in the Penrith Observer in July, 1953) a conversation with the then landlord, JC Alderson - "*At one time, Mr. Alderson told me, it was known as the Machell Arms*".

Keith Cooper, September 2024



Fig. 3 The three greyhounds on the front wall



Fig 4 The arms of Machell of Crackenthorpe