

The end of the war marked the approximate transition from the first to the second generation of garage operators. George and Ethel Scott had one daughter, Joyce who was fifteen in 1939 and worked as a reporter in the early war years before 'called up' to work in the 'Home Grown Timber Department'. After the war her mother's illness caused Joyce to return home and gradually to be come involved in the business, driving taxis, keeping books etc.

The history of Cumbrian village trades very often demonstrates that where sons are not available, daughters tend to marry men who are able to carry on the family business. Tom Walling, from Newby Bridge, met Joyce on a visit to Lorton in 1945, and once demobbed in 1946 came to work as a driver/mechanic in forestry and then in a Keswick garage. They were married in 1947, moved into Midtown with the Scotts, and gradually took over the running of the garage. Ethel Scott died in 1950.

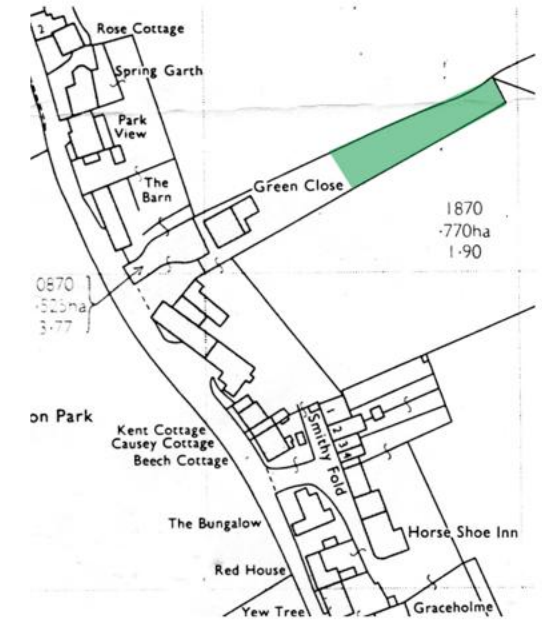


Joyce Scott in the mid 1940's



Tom, Joyce, Philip and Peter Walling outside Green Close around 1957

In 1954/5, with Midtown still owned by George Scott, a strip of land was made available for the Walling family, now with two children. A distinctive modern bungalow, Green Close, joined the old vernacular buildings of High Lorton. The second generation were now firmly established within the village and the business. The area coloured green was used initially for Mr Birkett's beehives. The honey was sold at the garage.



Green Close built in a small strip cut out of the Midtown land.

During the war years the Scotts' bus services had been first subject to competition from the Cumberland Motor Services, and then were put out of business by the large and aggressively competitive company.

But later, in the 1950s, the closure of village schools, except Lorton, provided a long standing opportunity to contract for the transporting of children to and from school. This became an important part of the Walling's business, together with the taxi service for visitors and the introduction of vehicle servicing.



Seen in the late 1950s, Joyce Walling right, children Peter and Philip, with mechanic/attendant Raymond Hardisty behind them.

While the business continued to provide a living through the 1960s, it was no longer able to grow and justify investment. The old slate roof was replaced with corrugated asbestos. The pumps and tanks were those installed in the 1930s and, increasingly, Shell set more onerous terms of business.

The business closed in 1975, when it became clear that it would not make the transition to the third generation. The sons were attracted by farming. Competition for the petrol business came from large filling stations on major roads, whose volumes could support lower prices. Small independent garages were no longer profitable for petrol companies. The motor repair and servicing business could not support an employed mechanic. The property now had more value in different usage.

Midtown farmhouse is now a listed building. The barn/garage has been rebuilt and reconfigured as holiday cottages.

The Society is grateful to the Walling/Scott family for help and advice with this project and for permission to show the family photographs included. In 2000, as part of the Spirit of Cumbria project, oral history recordings were made and can be accessed on-line through the Ambleside Oral History Group's website.

The Society is also grateful for the assistance of the Cumbria Archive Service at Carlisle, where vehicle registrations, Cockermouth RDC building plans and the land tax valuation maps can be found.

The Society hopes to complete this study with oral and written evidence of the view of the garage and its services as seen by others in the village.

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