

## A Short History of Keswick View, formerly Bellevue House and Belle Vue

Before the arrival of the railway, Keswick was a small rural community and most of the town centre was still open countryside. The map below by James Clarke shows Keswick in 1787.



Keswick View stands on land once known as Robley Field, owned until July 1854 by Elizabeth Atkinson (nee Jackson). Elizabeth was the twice-widowed wife of local wool merchant William Dunglison, and the Keswick postmaster James Atkinson.

Robley Field was inherited by Elizabeth's eldest son, Professor Robley Dunglison MD, a world-renowned physician. Robley Dunglison had emigrated to the United States in 1824 as professor in the newly-formed Department of Medicine at the University of Virginia. He was appointed personal physician to US President Thomas Jefferson and was present at Jefferson's deathbed in 1826. Dunglison later treated US presidents Jackson, Madison and Monroe.

As a US citizen and resident of Philadelphia, Dunglison decided to sell his inherited Keswick property. Robley Field was sold at auction on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1854. At the time, 'Lake Road' went straight from the town centre across Crow Park. The road in front of Keswick View was known as 'Little Hills Lane', while the side road towards the lake was known as 'Derwent Street'.



*'Robley Dunglison MD'  
by E.C. Bruce (1848)*

Bellevue House was built between 1861 and 1864 for a jeweller and watchmaker called Anthony Furnace. Furnace had a small adjacent workshop (now 22 Lake Road) and let the main house to tenants.

Following the arrival of the railway in January 1865, Keswick grew rapidly and Bellevue House found itself at the heart of the new town centre. By 1871, Bellevue House was occupied by John and Deborah Youdale and their family. John Youdale was a painter/decorator as was his namesake son. The Youdale family continued to live in the property until John's death in 1898, initially as tenants and later, from 1884, as owners.

Bellevue House was bought in October 1898 by William & Ann White. In the 1901 Census, Ann was running the property as a boarding house, while her husband worked as a rural postman. In 1906, "White's Belle-Vue Boarding House" was advertised in a "Penny Guide Book to Keswick and its Vicinity" (see picture). Before long, Bellevue House became known simply as "Belle Vue".



At this time, Lake Road was still a narrow lane – in this picture the front of the Lake Road chapel can be seen in the foreground with a small, long-gone garden, Fifty years later the view from Belle Vue had changed little, as seen in the picture below.

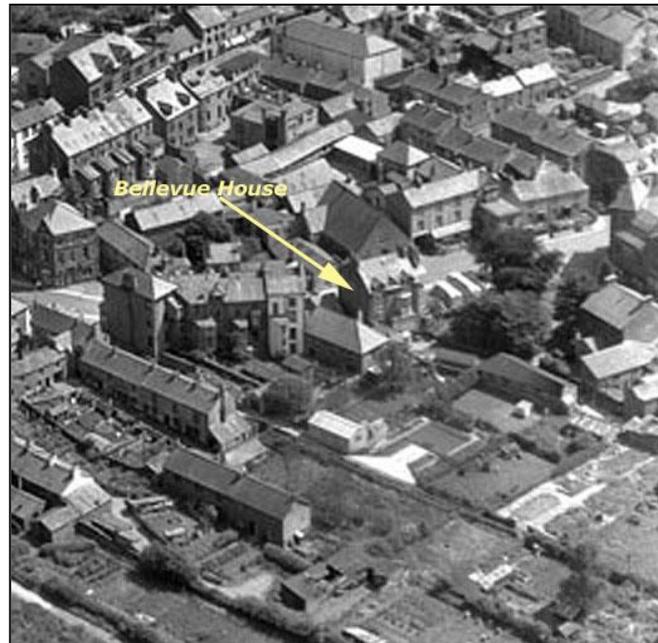
In 1920, the widowed Ann White sold Belle Vue to local station master, Thomas Allinson, who then sold the property in 2 lots: the building to Charles Mayson, from a well-known Keswick family; and much of the rear plot (now owned by Keswick Motors) to the younger John

Youdale, who had a wooden paint workshop on the site. As well as boarding house proprietor, Charles Mayson was also an ironmonger, gas-fitter and plumber! By the mid-1930s, Belle Vue also housed a confectioner's shop, later trading for many years as an ironmonger's.

During the Second World War, Youdale's wooden paint shop to the rear was transformed into the local headquarters of the Air Training Corps (ATC). Part of this land reverted back to Belle Vue in 1947, providing the current rear access to the car park. Belle Vue continued in the Mayson family for a total of 61 years, mainly as a boarding house and ironmonger's shop. It was first operated by Charles Mayson and later by his daughter and son-in-law, Katherine and Robert Stallwood.



Belle Vue used to overlook a rural scene of allotments to the rear. The aerial photo below was taken in the late 1940s, well before Keswick's Central Car Park was created. Looking towards the rear of Belle Vue, you can see the roof of George Fisher's store at the mid-right of the photo and the large rectangular Alhambra cinema at the top centre. The adjacent corner site was the old Lake Hotel's motor coach park, overshadowed by a large tree. This had been the terminus for horse-drawn trips round the lake in 'four-in-hand' coaches.



The Lake Hotel was later converted into a pub (now 'The Wainwright'), retail units and apartments. There were mature trees on the site of Keswick Motors workshop and a now-demolished outbuilding in Belle Vue's garden. The photo also shows a Sunday School hall next door, in what is now a beer garden, and the previously-mentioned ATC hut/paint workshop.



The photo above, taken around the same time, shows Lake Road before Keswick Motors garage was built. It looks towards the gable end of Belle Vue (now Keswick View) with the old Lake Hotel in the right foreground. The Lake Hotel operated its own coach company. Its fleet of coaches are parked opposite, with advertised excursions to Blackpool, Morecambe, Dumfries and Edinburgh. There is a small shop awning outside Belle Vue, with a white van parked outside.



Belle Vue was acquired by Mike Ryder in 1983. He converted the boarding house into three holiday apartments. The photo shows Belle Vue in the late 1990s. The ground floor premises were occupied by Mike Ryder's own insurance business, later trading as 'Border Counties Insurance Services'. Mike Ryder retired in 2003 and the shop premises reopened as the 'Toy Chest', operated by Tim Blundell. Mike's wife, Lexie Ryder, continued to operate Belle Vue holiday apartments until 2007.

In June 2007, Gail & Andrew Newton acquired the whole property. Recognising the need to update the holiday apartments and to reflect modern tastes, they renamed the holiday apartments 'Keswick View'. After

over 140 years, the whole property needed urgent attention and was refurbished to meet 21st century standards. Structural problems were fixed, including a new roof, and shared amenities improved, including the entrance hall, car park and laundry/drying room. Keswick View reopened for guests in May 2008, continuing the tradition of welcoming guests to stay in the heart of Keswick.



The Toy Chest continued to trade until June 2019, when Tim Blundell moved onto pastures new. The shop was transformed from a children's toy shop into the current Norwegian Store selling high-end Norwegian knitwear, operated by Vittorio Spasciani.