Below is a letter and email I received from the late J. Michael Bedford who called at the park in 2012 to revisit his childhood

A few memories of Castlerigg Hall Farm days.

We first came to Castlerigg in 1938 for summer holidays (see the picture of my father), but in 1940 the people I remember particularly were the Gelbers – refugees from Vienna. They had two sons, Thomas and ?, and Mr Gelber came at weekends, as did my father. I have a letter that Mrs Gelber wrote to my mother after we went to Morecombe, that I may be able to scan for you.

1. I and my sister Susan (she died in 1986 of ovarian cancer) went with your father each day to school in Keswick by pony and trap.
2. I was often sent to fetch in one or more carthorses. The trick was to offer a handful of cowcake, and when the horse lowered its head to my hand, that was the time to slip on the halter. One day, a late pregnant mare got the better of me, grabbed me by the chest and walked a few yards before dumping me in the mud. I thought she was going to stomp me, but she walked away. When my mother gave me a bath, a row of perfect broad teeth marks were imprinted across my chest.
3. One day I ran over a series of corrugated iron sheets covering a series of fenced troughs in the main yard. When one cover collapsed I was deposited into the worst smelling fluid I had ever imagined – a used sheep dip ! A further bath !

4 Other activities in the main yard were 'bullings' whenever a cow came into heat. That was quite a ritual with people gathering around, and my first sense of the significance of the difference between boys and girls.

4. On many days it was my job to bring in the cows for milking, in the morning and/or afternoon. One day I was puzzled by one cow that would not come and kept to itself at the bottom of the field. As I approached, to my total puzzlement it appeared to have two sticks jutting from its rear. I sprinted back to explain to your grandfather. He seemed remarkably cool, and said something like "don't worry Michael – we'll put some sawdust into a wheelbarrow and get back down there". By the time we had done that I think she had actually calved !!

Of course 4 and 5 were vital harbingers for a future professor of reproductive biology !

Dear David – thanks for your message –

The elder Gelber boy is standing next to your grandfather in that group photo, and I think the chap with the rake worked on the farm then. I am not in that group and I think the young boy in front next to my sister is the younger Gelber – at least as judged by the lederhosen. Actually, I doubt that the Gelbers actually sparked your father's interest in Austria as I think that they went to America after the war.

We came on holiday at least once - in 1938, and then we later stayed at Castlerigg I think for about a year+ in 1940. We then spent a short time in Morecombe and also in Silsden in the West Riding where my father's sister had a woolen mill, but I know we were back being bombed in London in 1942, and then Bristol in 1943. I had tried hard to keep my Northern accent + clogs, but I soon outgrew the latter and the accent had faded by the time I was about 14 !

I am very happy indeed that you can replicate the poster, the caption of which is fine – I will give it a pride of place on our wall. I think the caption on the postcard is not quite accurate as we were not 'sent' to the farm, but it certainly does not matter in the least.

With my best regards - Mike