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The Journal

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite Buttermere Embleton Loweswater Mockerkin Pardshaw Wythop

www.derwentfells.com

Editorial

Welcome to the *Journal* of the Lorton and Derwentfells Local History Society, previously the *Newsletter*. The Society has decided to maintain the frequency of its communications as three monthly and you will have received in November the first edition of our shorter, newsy publication now called the *Wanderer*. The Committee has decided that we should rename the *Newsletter* the *Journal* to recognise that it contains articles rather than news. The change is really only one of name, and so we have decided to keep the numbering scheme of the *Newsletter*, partly to because we are rather proud to have reached the thirty-ninth issue. A history society should have some history.

I have to apologise for a problem with the printing of the previous issue. Not only was the publication severely trimmed but also the print quality was probably set to draft. The printer, Firpress, has acknowledged this with a generous credit against this issue and I expect that the text in this issue will be easier to read.

Having said that, I hope that you enjoy this and future issues of the *Journal*. It is, however only as good as its content and the content depends on people writing articles. All are welcome. The editor and others are very happy to help with articles that you may wish to contribute, and anyone who would like to take on the editorship, as distinct from the production, would be welcomed.

This issue has acquired a theme of 'poets on our patch'. Records of Edward Lear's visit are few and Michael Baron speculates. On Wordsworth and Coleridge there is a vast amount of material and important published information has emerged on the Lorton yew tree, requiring the story to be brought up to date.
Derek Denman

Cover illustrations:- Loweswater by Edward Lear

Drawing of 1837 by permission of The Wordsworth Trust
Sketch of 28th September 1836 by permission of The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum

The Excursion of Edward Lear to Crummock, Buttermere and Loweswater on 27th &28th September 1836

By Michael Baron

Edward Lear (1812-1888) : The Man - The Traveller

The cover pictures to this issue are a sketch and finished drawing of Loweswater by Edward Lear. The Higgins Gallery sketch was purchased by the Gallery in 1960, and in autumn 2006 the Trust acquired three drawings of the Lake District adding to its collection of twelve such Lear drawings . Lear may be better known to some, especially children, for his Book of Nonsense (1846) , the Nonsense Songs, Laughable Lyrics (and more), so often reprinted with his inspired ,witty, illustrations ,for example to 'The Owl and The Pussycat', and 'The Dong with a Luminous Nose". He had a superb gift for amusing children. 'I am the man as is making some three or four thousand people laugh in England all at the same time'. So It was beautifully exact when the poet W. H. Auden wrote in the last line of his *Edward Lear*, "And children swarmed to him like settlers. He became a land."

Lear in 1831 – National Portrait Gallery

But he was also an ornithological draughtsman, a topographical artist, self-taught, a natural historian, a musician (he set twenty of Tennysons' poems to music), and one of the great nineteenth century landscape painters. Arguably, his ten weeks stay in the Lake District in the summer of 1836 was part of the step change that transformed the 24 year old draughtsman/artist into the landscape painter, hardy traveller and eventually a major Victorian figure who had given drawing

lessons to the Queen at Osborne. "He was very pleased with my drawing and very encouraging about it". At his death he left over 7,000 watercolours and at least 300 oil paintings (7).

In his travels in later years to Italy, mainland Greece, Crete, Palestine, Egypt, India and Ceylon, Lear usually kept and published, with illustrations, fairly detailed journals. While no journal exists for those 10 weeks, there is correspondence in a dedicated archive. One published letter, written after his return, is to his friend and publisher John Gould on the 31st October "... it is impossible to tell you *how and how enormously* I have enjoyed the whole Autumn. The counties of Cumberland & Westmorland are superb indeed, & tho' the weather has been miserable, yet I have contrived to walk pretty well over the whole ground, and to sketch a good deal beside..."(1). Lear travelled alone, but whose guide was in his hand? He must have read Wordsworth's Guide in the last and fifth edition of 1835 and perhaps Leigh's Guide to the Lakes and Mountains of 1832. Who suggested he should visit Loweswater, and suggested, as is the fact, its water and hills are best seen from Waterend? Cinema goers will have noticed the director of 'Miss Potter' prefers the view from Miresyke!

But where did Lear stay during those weeks and how did he travel, other than on foot? From the dated sketches we know he was on the Kendal-Bowness road at Windermere on 10th July, Loweswater on 28th September, Grasmere on 5th October, Helvellyn on 15th October and other places in between, returning to Knowsley, the country seat of the Earl of Derby where he had spent five years on and off drawing the occupants of the then celebrated menagerie of Lord Stanley, the Earl's heir. He was back in London at the end of the year with his older sister, Ann, in their Southampton Row set of rooms- his "being this small dark room with five inches of dusty fire... my outdoor prospect of a paved yard, 2 cats, & a poplar tree"(1).

Self portrait, 1831

And compared it unfavourably with the "comforts and luxuries in Lancashire and elsewhere for the last 6 months(1).

With the known dates his itinerary could be reconstructed and guesses made of inns for the overnight stays. In 1836 both Scale Hill, Wordsworth's 'roomy Inn, with very good accomodation'(2), and the Fish Inn in Buttermere were offering meals and beds. Publican Edward Nelson at the Church Stile, Loweswater, might have been the host. And if he had been a guest of Thomas Richardson of the Stevensons Arms at Lodore (9), he could have hired from there a carter to transport him over Honister to Crummock. In *Excursion to Loweswater* (3), the facsimile account, published in 1987 of the Manchester Friends Institute's visit to the Lakes in 1865, there is a sketch of the party (who had stayed at a Hotel at Lodore) in pouring rain walking up Honister, with three carts being led by their drivers, the road being 'steep and difficult'. The group reach Mr Jackson of Waterend after a five hour journey. Lear, too, had introductions to friends of friends wherever he went. He may have been awkward (see his self-caricatures scattered through the text of the Penguin Classic's *Complete Nonsense.*) but nonetheless his contemporaries found him sociable and entertaining. His second excursion to the Lakes started from Levens Hall, Levens, where he was a guest of Colonel Howard. To Fanny and George Coombe, he wrote , on 6th September from Kirby Lonsdale, of Westmoreland as "this most lovely of all counties... how I enjoyed myself (at Levens) ... ghosts as common as mice..."(1). It is likely that after Levens Hall he stayed with the Rev. J. J. Hornby, at Waterhead.(4). His son, Robert, a nephew of the Earl of Derby, was a good friend whom he had met in 1835(1). However, in one archive, there is a bill dated 31st August from Lear in Southampton Row, to Lord Stanley at Knowsley for the cost of drawings This does contradict the opening of the letter to John Gould, "I left Knowsley on the 12th August for a sketching

tour". As he is at Levenson 18th August, in the absence of evidence, it seems that he made a quick return to London, then came back to the North West by stage coach and started his tour at Kirby Lonsdale, and thence to Waterhead on Windermere.

Diaries, Dates, Drawings

Unfortunately for the not inconsiderable 'Lear industry', Lear destroyed his diaries or journals of the early years in 1840(4). These would have covered the period between 1832 and 1837 on-and-off at Knowsley (Cheshire), where he drew the occupants of the famous private menagerie of Lord Stanley, the Derby heir, his travels in Ireland, and in Cumberland and Westmoreland, and more to the point, himself. It is almost the last year for Lear to earn his living from ornithological studies. In his studio he works prodigiously hard. Thus no knowledge of his health, the secret epilepsy, the asthma and bronchitis, short sightedness, and a tendency to depression. So without a diary, history will give way, gracefully, to absolute fiction in part III- a fiction created from actual dates, real places, and two published letters.

One authority on Lear, Michael Broughton, summarises the drawings thus- 'an unique record of the Lake District is achieved by the use of pencil, chalk, stump and with some heightening in Chinese White on grey blue paper'. The most recent, and best biographer, Vivien Noakes, comments, "many of the Lakeland drawings, done in bold, swirling graphite and soft chalk, demonstrate a new, powerful and exuberant artistic freedom"(1). With those materials, with the sketch book, size 13 3/8 x 9 7/8 inches(4) in his knapsack, Lear on 28 September 1836, draws Loweswater.

But there are two drawings. The first, dated, is a fine study of the lake , Melbreak, distant fells, foliage, trees, fields on either side, water, and atmospheric cloud. The road runs close to the shore, and is hardly visible thereafter. There are many more trees today but it is visibly Loweswater. The second drawing is very different. With the top-hatted man and the bonneted child in the foreground, this seems to be mid morning, the sun casting defined shadows of the two boulders, large and small on the roadside, the figures and the trees. It is the sunny side of the lake. Is this early morning? Lear was an early riser. In his Cretan Journal of 1864 (6) the entry for 22nd April begins, 'Rose at five, having slept tolerably, barring a dog barking about level with my ear… took the medicine -Magnesia-... spent three hours dividing paper and clothes for travel" and used to walking long distances. And the entry for 23rd April refers to a start 'at six' and a return 'by 3.30'.

So it would be nothing strange for this bespectacled 24 year old man to reach Loweswater near to Waterend by, say, 9.00 a.m. and in the morning make two sketches from different 'stations', and walk on in the afternoon to Ennerdale, taking the route over Fangs Brow, Lamplugh and Kirkland as the Wordsworth's Duddon Valley excursion in late September 1804. And so to sit on the lake shore and so a preliminary draft of the long view down to Pillar. The Ennerdale drawing is dated 29th September. Perhaps he took a room at the Anglers Inn and talked, as he would do on all his travels, with 'the locals' in the evening over a glass of wine or a tankard of beer. Then the final draft after breakfast; and a swift return - the same way, or carried by a willing carter ? - On the 30th he is in Buttermere for a panorama. Four days later he is on the way to Grasmere, and depicts Thirlmere. Grasmere from Red Bank gets the Lear treatment on the 5th October , and Rydal Water on October 7th (4). He does not call on Wordsworth.

These dates - from the drawings of the ten-week tour tell of the seated hours of young Lear who loved walking, mountains and Romantic scenery. And these hold for us his experience of quiet contentment. "It is safe to assume the numbered sequences is well in excess of 107 drawings" (4). That is equal to one and a half drawings a day! The likely routes, to achieve this number of drawings, over road and track suggest for late September a number of inns where board and bed were available. If it was an inn convenient for Buttermere, Crummock and Loweswater, why not the Fish Inn at Buttermere? This seems the best candidate for the night of 27th September. Both Honister -'from near Buttermere' - and "Crummock' at Hause

Point bear that date. But it could have been Scale Hill - after all, one guide book recommended it. And as Lear drew two sketches around Derwentwater on the 20th and 22nd, one from near Grange, and a view of Keswick on the 24th, that points to one of Keswick's many hotels, like The George or The Queens Head, or, the inn at Lodore on Derwentwater. This fits with Lear coming from Wasdale where he was sketching on the 16th and 17th. One can reasonably assume that if he had stopped overnight, it was at the successor farmer to Thomas Tyson of Wasdale Head, where Wordsworth and Coleridge stayed in1799, and Coleridge alone in 1802.

But now look again at the second Loweswater drawing. Imagine being by the roadside anywhere between, say Waterend Farm and Loweswater Hall. In 1836, given no change before the census of 1841, the occupiers of The Grange (then as now in separate occupations). At the 'house' were a widowed farmer, William Dixon, a "farm labourer" Elizabeth Atkinson, aged 55, and two unmarried Dixon daughters aged 30 and 25. And at the 'farm' was John Simon whose son Isaac would have been four or five years old. On the fellside at Miresyke was John Wilkinson and a daughter, Dinah, of the same age-(8).

One cannot with any certainty fix the spot where Lear sat and sketched what is seen in the second drawing. Is it really true to that day? Has a sketch, now lost, been used in a London studio - one of the many and other sketches in his portfolio of work- to tell a morning tale of Loweswater - the darker, emphatic foreground, Melbreak receding, and, look, a well-dressed man and child surely enjoying the morning just like the artist? What of the boulder on the left hand side? No sign of it today; and is that a beach of some sort in the middle distance? Was the road so close to the water? Were the two figures, the human component, in this Romantic view there on 28th September 1836, or introduced later for a false reality? Is the 1837 drawing, known to have been given to Robert Hornby, worked up from a sketch? For the Crummock sketch (not reproduced here) has one figure in the middle distance.

Lear in 1840

Did Lear ask William Dixon and a visiting child to 'pose' and complete the comfortable scene, with the mountain far enough in the distance not to threaten by its bulk here where wildness defers to the pastoral? Or was it John Wilkinson of Miresyke out with little Dinah, and Lear was fortunate to put them 'in the frame'? In 1865, Mary Hodgson, one of those Friends from Manchester sketches Loweswater from Waterend, and shows a high hedge on the left of the picture. Did it conceal the big boulder? Landscapes change over time. Enclosures create new fields; roads are diverted; and rocks are removed. That might be why we cannot mark the ground where Lear squinted through his spectacles, and applied pencil, wash and white chalk that morning, and sketched-. Two sketches, or one and an imaginative studio drawing? The latter with new features for the finished work, the artist exercising his undoubted licence. By way of example, a popular Heaton Cooper painting of Loweswater from the Holme Wood side of the lake has banished the lakeside road to Waterend. What you get is not always what you saw. Even with Edward Lear.

Lear -The Fiction

Lear slept well at The Fish. He'd got up early as usual from a decent feather bed, mercifully free of bugs and fairly clean. When it was light enough walked down to the lake, looked to his left towards Honister Pass over which he'd come from Borrowdale and a more salubrious inn close to the Lodore Falls. Before breakfasting, and downing several cups of tea - the landlord had connections with a tea merchant in Keswick- and eating a good bowl of porridge, he'd opened Wordsworth's Guide, now more than a little dog-eared and stained, and read again the passage about Loweswater and the view over Crummock to Great Gable, and 'the magnificent assemblage of mountains" (5). He was in the midst of the assemblage, and would see more anon.

He had been recommended to the Fish by Robert Hornby who told him a few days ago at his parents' house at Waterhead some tale of the early 1800's of a pretty girl , the then innkeeper's daughter and of her marriage in Lorton church to an impostor who was hanged at Carlisle. He'd asked a talkative fellow in the taproom whether this was true. 'Oh aye... Mary, that were her name, she married again like; Harrison, I think, children an'all, lives over in Caldbeck- she be an old lady now..." That's what he wrote down in the diary though to write in the dialect of this Buttermere man was impossible. And the girl who served his breakfast was not pretty at all, and her wide red face was disfigured by several warts reminding Lear of the strange birds sketched at Knowsley. So after he had written of the encounters on the walk to Buttermere,- Honister Pass as particularly grand and frightening in the rain, the hunchbacked beggar he gave a penny to at Gatesgarth- he scribbled a caricature of a fat woman in a flowered apron- with the head of a parrot- and added :-

There once was a Buttermere parrot
whose neck was as red as a carrot

then scored it out as thoroughly unworthy.

He *was* enjoying the weeks in Cumberland, It was a second visit- the first was seven days in mid -July when he discovered for himself the beauties of the place which the popular guide book of the poet Wordsworth (not that he had written anything of any merit for ages) had made a destination of choice for every sensitive artist, writer and tourist. He'd seen some of John Constable's landscape paintings in London. And if he was going to be a painter of more than animals, it had been clear that here he should be. He had decided to make the visit the previous summer when walking and sketching n the Wicklow Mountains near Dublin with Arthur Stanley. Two days ago he was in the Borrowdale valley, had sampled the pleasures of Keswick, crowded with tourists. He had a nagging conscience that perhaps he ought to call upon the Sage of Rydal Mount, but he would have been just another unknown and unwelcome visitor. That was Robert Hornby's opinion. And Mr. Wordsworth was unlikely to have in his library John Gould's *A Century of Birds From the Himalyan Mountains* to which he had contributed many drawings, nor his own *Illustrations of the Family of Psitticidae and Parrots.*

But the day now was fine and clear, even a little warm. He would take the road to Cockermouth alongside Crummock, skirting the high fell, and as advised by the landlord of the Fish, along a footpath through a wood that emerged on the river Cocker. That would bring him to the scattered village of Loweswater, its lake he'd heard of as pretty and gentle surrounded by a scattering of farms. He read again -' this small Lake is only approached to advantage from the other end; therefore any Traveller going by this road to Wastdale, must look back upon it (5)." He turned to the Notes and as his room had but one small window he was obliged to peer closely at the text. He read aloud to get the rhythm of the prose "Nor will the most hasty Visitant fail to notice with pleasure, that community of attractive and substantial houses which are dispersed over the fertile inclosures at the foot of those rugged Mountain (5)." Somewhat pompous, he thought. At 7a.m., he checked the watch in his waistcoat, put sketch book**,** guide-book**,** assorted chalks, pencils, pen and his favourite portable brass inkwell into his knapsack, with a change of clothing in case it rained, tied up his boots, now fairly worn and scuffed. From the warty, fat bird-looking servant he begged half a loaf of bread and a chunk of cheese. And set off. That his

destination was a six or seven mile walk distant was nothing of consequence.

Apart from resting in the wood, marvelling as early light filtered through the trees, stippling the quiet surface of Crummock, he did not stop but tramped on steadily, the comforting heaviness of the knapsack across his back. The road was dusty and rough. Stepping aside to avoid carts, men walking to work, rainwater puddles, sheep being moved between fields until, remembering the words in the Guide, not least the deprecatory reference to 'the tame end', Edward Lear reached the lakeside at Loweswater-, and looked up and around - to the rugged mountain called Melbreak, the clouds, trees, pastures, waving ferns, and little beaches ...

Acknowledgments and sources without which this account would not have been written:

The Wordsworth Trust ,Grasmere, and the Librarian, Dr Jeff Cowton

The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum

(1) Vivien Noakes, Edward Lear -*The Life Of A Wanderer* - London 2006

(2) *Excursion To Loweswater* (1865) - London 1987

(3) Victoria and Albert Museum -*The Discovery of The Lake District*-1984

(4) An unpublished paper by Mr Michael Broughton on Lear In The Lake District- 2006

(5) William Wordsworth '*Guide To The Lakes*' - 1835

(6) *Edward Lear -The Cretan Journal of 1864* - Athens 1984

(7) Royal Academy- *Edward Lear 1812-1888* - 1985

(8) The 1841 Census and the LDFLHS 1841 map of Loweswater-2003

(9) Parson and White -Directory of Cumberland and Westmoreland -1829

Edward Lear- Journals of a Landscape Painter in Albania -London 1851

The Edward Lear website of Marco Graziosi - www.nonsenselit.org

Edward Lear -*The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse*- London 2001

Mr. Charles Lewsen

Mr Steve Matthews

Responses to previous articles

1. John Allason of Godferhead

In his article on the mathematic book of John Allason of Godfrid, 1676, (Newsletter 38) Prof. Dodson asked for more information. By chance areference has been found in an article by Dr Rosemary Southey, who will speak to us in July, in an article for the Loweswater parish papers Oct/Nov 1990:-

> The 20th day of the 12th month (February) came John Allason of Grafed and took away from Anne Dixon of Waterend a pair of leather gloves worth 7d for 6d demanded for repair of the bell-house.

This comes from Quaker records, no reference available, and shows that John Allason was acting as a collector of the church rate for St Bartholomew's and that he distrained the goods of the Quaker, Anne Dixon, who had refused to pay. This was a matter of principle for Quakers who, illegally after the restoration, would not accept or pay for the established church. It is unlikely that Allason had difficulty in seizing the gloves, or that the Anne Dixon then went gloveless, but the proper process had to be observed and recorded.

2. World War II Air Crashes

By Walter Head

Following my article regarding the crash of a Wellington bomber in June 1944 (Newsletter No.38 June 2006), I have received two sets of correspondence.

The first was from Keith Sadler, a member from Wolverhampton, who actually flew in the Wellington bomber. He stated that most of the planes used for training had previously been deployed on active service and that his whole OUT course at Litchfield only covered 39 daytime hours and 35 night time hours – a total of 74 hours flying. The Wellington was very strong, making it capable of withstanding bumpy landings. It was very cold – no heating, very noisy and there was a lot of vibration.

The second was from Ronda Stickel of Alberta, Canada, regarding one of the crew of the crashed Wellington, Emil Unterseher (see photo). Emil was a cousin of her father-in-law.

Emil's father, Charles Unterseher, was a German Russian from Bessarabia in South Russia who emigrated to Canada in 1903. His mother, brother and sisters joined him in 1911. Frederick Martin Stickel, a first cousin to Emil, also enlisted in the RCAF as a flying Officer (Nav) with 404 Squadron. He was killed on 2nd October 1944, aged 23, and was buried in Banff Cemetery, Banffshire.

3. Where was Deepa Bridge?

The location of Deepa Bridge was sought by Geoff Wilson in Newsletter 38. Soon after, in a routine will check for John Allason (see below) a will was found which by coincidence located Deepa Bridge and confirmed that is was the old name for the bridge over the Cocker at Scale Hill, before the prominence of Scale Hill as a coaching inn increased the usage of that name. John Fisher, alias Allason (ie illegitimate) was a weaver of Cornhow in Brackenthwaite township whose will was dated 6th March 1655 (TNA/Prob/11/246):-

> Item towards the repayringe of the causey or High way commonly called Deepa Bridge causey twenty shillings.

Causey means causeway rather than bridge. The bridge itself was maintained by the county of Cumberland; they did little else in those days. The township of Brackenthwaite was responsible for the road on the east side and so a reasonable interpretation would be that he left 20s to repair the approach to the bridge on the Brackenthwaite side.

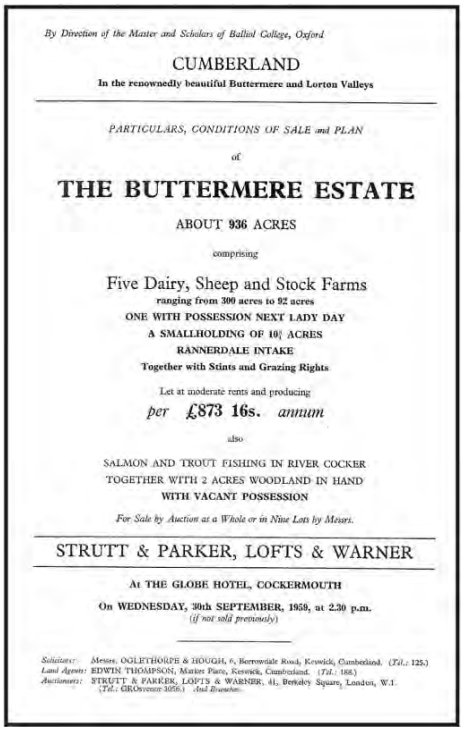
The Buttermere Estate

by Ted Petty

Strutt & Parker, Lofts & Warner of Berkley Square, London auctioneers were directed by the owners, the Master and Scholars of Balliol College Oxford, to dispose by way of sale, the lands known as the Buttermere Estate, in the "renownedly beautiful Buttermere and Lorton valleys", as printed in the sale brochure. The auction was to be at the Globe Hotel on Wednesday, 30th September, 1959 at 2.30pm.

The Buttermere Estate consisted of five tenanted farms, of about 926 acres (375 hectares), a ten acre (eight hectares) smallholding, 2 (hectares) acres of woodland and fishing rights in the river Cocker. The farms ranged in size from 300 to 92 acres and yielded £873 16s per annum in rental income, less than £1 per acre, which was described as moderate by the auctioneers though it seems paltry by returns now. On page two of the sale brochure under Agricultural Holdings, the five farms are described as primarily Dairy and Sheep holdings comprising a Homestead and "in land" in the valley with considerable areas of sheep grazing land on the adjoining Intakes and Fells. Included in the letting is a Landlords Flock of Heaf-going sheep to be taken over at valution, a system still in use today. The term dairy however would hardly be a fitting description of these same farms today. The heaf-going sheep would almost certainly be of the Herdwick or Swaledale breeds as is still the case today, however greater use is made of other breeds for cross-bred lamb production. The penultimate sentence of the holdings description is, "In certain cases summer visitors are accommodated in the Farmhouses". An unusual way to describe "bed & breakfast" guests or perhaps the London gentlemen thought we Cumbrians accommodated visitors in the cow byres after the milk herd was turned out to grass?

Lanthwaite Green farm in Brackenthwaite was Lot 1, a farm of 105 acres the tenant Mr R. Jackson had entered on the 5th of October 1938 and had given notice of his intention to retire and surrender his tenancy next Lady Day, so the farm would have the benefit of vacant possession at 25th March 1960. The brochure



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On WEDNESDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER, 1959, at 2.30 p.m.

(if not sold previously)

Solicitors: Messrs. OGLETHORPE & HOUGH, 6, Borrowdale Road, Keswick, Cumberland. (*Tel.*: 125.)
Land Agents: EDWIN THOMPSON, Market Place, Keswick, Cumberland. (*Tel.*: 188.)
Auctioneers: STRUTT & PARKER, LOFTS & WARNER, 41, Berkeley Square, London, W.1. (*Tel.*: GROsvenor 3056.) *And Branches.*

suggested that one of the farm buildings would convert to a T.T. cow byre and the farmhouse was suitable for accommodating Summer visitors. Electricity was provided by the tenants own plant. Buttermere had yet to be connected to the National Grid. There were 150 heaf-going Herdwick sheep.

Lot 2 was High Hollins farm, 92 acres in extent and tenanted by Mr R.A. Storr (Jnr) since March 3rd 1957. The farm boasted a modern Cow Byre for sixteen with cooling and washing up room adjoining, the herd size was tiny compared with modem herd numbers, but remember that many farmers were still milking by hand, machines were in use, but the milking parlours of today were almost science-fiction.

Oak Bank in the Parish of Loweswater extending to 300 acres formed Lot 3 and was tenanted by Mr F.E. Hastie, who entered on the 12th of November 1940. The farm is described as a "sound T.T. and Attested dairy, sheep and stock farm". A modern cow byre for 12 with concrete divisions, water bowls and pressure line" so Mr Hastie had a milking machine? And the meadow and arable land on the side of the River Cocker was at about 300ft above sea level, and in all "about half the farm is under 400ft and the good sized fields lie well". No mention of a heaf-going flock.

Lot 4 was the smallholding of 10 acres, the tenant, Mr K Vickers had no written tenancy agreement and paid a yearly rent of £53 11 s, the farm buildings were a large barn, a stirk byre with loft over and an old pigsty.

Croft House Farm formed Lot 7 described in very similar terms as lot 3, the tenant was shown as one Mr R Jackson who entered the tenancy on the 24th of March 1942, he had also installed his own electricity generator and the cow byre was for 10 milkers. The farm extended to 260 acres and had a heaf-going flock of 348 sheep.

Mr R Folder was the tenant of Lot 8 and his tenancy was also dated 24th March 1942. There was a cow byre for 6 which he had converted to T.T. standards himself and as a result the auctioneers were able to describe the farm as a "good T.T. and attested dairy, sheep and stock farm", which extended to 105 acres. Despite being much smaller than Croft House farm next door, the heaf-going flock was 621 sheep in total, whereas a heaf-going flock on Lanthwaite Green was only 150 on exactly the same extent of 105 acres.

It may seem strange to see farms with milking herds of 12 to 16 cows described as "sound" or "good" dairy farms, but in the days of hand milking, 12 animals morning and night, alongside other farm work was enough, and the in-bye land on farms such as the Buttermere Estate was limited and was also necessary for the other farm enterprises, lambing, haymaking and growing roots for winter fodder. Great changes were to come; silage would replace hay, farms would amalgamate, larger dairy herds outside the dales, bulk milk tanks and all the associated economies of size would see the end of dairying on these farms and milk cows replaced by suckler cows of continental origins. The sheep remain.

The sale prices are not marked on the catalogue, nor the names of the purchasers, and the map in the inside of the catalogue has been removed, these details could be found from newspaper reports and archives, such information is of course still within living memory. Thanks are due to Allan and Vanessa Hudson for passing the catalogue on to the Society archive.

Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Derwent Fells Townships: 1799-1804.

by Derek Denman

On 11th November 1799 the tourists Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth were at the inn at Ouse Bridge, no longer standing today, looking up the length Bassenthwaite and preparing to walk to Buttermere. They would stay at the Fish Inn, observing beauty in its varied forms. But worthy of note on this walk, on this occasion for Coleridge, was a famous yew-tree of an uncertain age. A few years later on 1st August 1802 Coleridge was at home at Greta Hall, Keswick, preparing to walk via Newlands to Buttermere where he would drink tea and read *Revelations* at that same inn, but this time alone, because Wordsworth had secret business in France. Later still, at the beginning of October 1804, on a tour from Town End, their Grasmere home, Wordsworth and sister Dorothy traversed the Whinlatter Pass in the one-horse jaunting car to visit the yew-tree giant of Lorton, as discussed in *Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew tree.*[1] Coleridge had departed to live in Malta.

Coleridge's epic solo tour of 1802 has been well covered by Hankinson[2] and Hudson[3], leaving only the local detail to be described here. This article will concentrate on the local part of the 1799 joint tour, which has been less well traced. The Wordsworths' visit in 1804 was recorded in our bicentenary book, which this article updates. Also of interest are the circumstances of the tours, and their timings within the lives and the changing relationship of the two poets. And then there is the Lorton yew-tree, recorded by Coleridge in the 1799 joint visit but revisited by Wordsworth in 1804 when he deliberately took a tree-ward diversion when travelling to his beloved Duddon Valley. Knowledge of the 1799 visit requires a review of the 1804 return visit by Wordsworth.

Coleridge and Wordsworth 1799

The joint tour of 1799 came at a time of change. Coleridge and Wordsworth, now in their late twenties, had published Lyrical Ballads anonymously in 1798[4], in which poetry had been placed in the mouths and words of ordinary country people. A key influence was the Lakeland of Wordsworth's schooldays; Romantic subjects were provided in the character, lives and relationships of the local rural people, whom he saw as educated in and by a natural environment. A number of these and future poems included the simple poverty of self-contained and self-disciplined traditional rural communities. Often the poems included

Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1799

an element of pathos in which the suffering of misfortunes became redemptive experiences. These people were his replacements for the citizens of France, whose revolution in 1789 he had ideologically and enthusiastically supported, but who had shown themselves more savage than noble in the terrors that followed. The mountain-peasantry of Cumberland, like those of Switzerland, formed the perfect republic, but within the existing social order.

Wordsworth had not reached this rationalisation on his own. Coleridge had supplied the philosophical knowledge, the intellectual support and the grand vision necessary for Wordsworth to redefine his own

[1] Baron, M G & Denman, D (Eds) *Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew tree.* L&DFLHS, Lorton 2004

[2] Hankinson, Alan. *Coleridge walks the fells. Fontana: a Lakeland journey retraced,* London 1993

[3] Hudson, Roger. *Coleridge among the lakes & mountains* The Folio Society, London 1991

[4] Wordsworth, W & Coleridge S T. *Lyrical Ballads* Penguin London 1999

self and his purpose. Coleridge saw in Wordsworth the ultimate genius of the poet-philosopher, in whom the highest levels of poetic imagination were, in his perception, divinely and transcendentally inspired, and therefore Wordsworth was the person most capable of expressing their joint philosophy.. Wordsworth, however, felt that the deity worked more through his responses to nature, which Coleridge had not experienced so strongly. Together they conceived a great poetical work to be called *The Recluse,* which would contain a philosophical system 'containing views on Man, Nature and Society'[5]. This was to be written by Wordsworth as a poet 'in retirement' in the Lakes. Before the tour of 1799, *The Prelude*,[6] the first part of *The Recluse*, had been written in its two-book form and was to be dedicated to Coleridge, but was not to be published in Wordsworth's lifetime. It contained the essence of the personal history of Wordsworth and the process by which he considered his mind had grown to fit him for the main task of *The Recluse*. After the tour of 1799, William and Dorothy Wordsworth would move to Grasmere; soon after Coleridge would follow them, living in Keswick.

In the 1799 tour Coleridge, aged 27, saw the lakes for the first time, with Wordsworth, aged 28, as his guide. He experienced the landscape, the people and the inspiration from nature that was so central to *The Prelude* and for the planned future parts of *The Recluse*. Coleridge recorded the tour in his notebook[7]. He joined Wordsworth at Sockburn, Durham, where on 26th October he first met Wordsworth's cousin, Sara Hutchinson, who was shortly to become, with laudanum, one of Coleridge's twin addictions. On 31st October Coleridge, Wordsworth and his seafaring brother John, one of the strong silent type, stayed at Bampton, starting the Lakeland tour on 1st

William Wordsworth in 1798, by Robert Hancock

November. Coleridge's notebooks provide the account of the tour, recording his experiences and responses. The three travelled on foot by Haweswater and Longsleddale to Kentmere, by Bowness, where they 'were much disgusted with the New Erections & objects around Winderemere' and took the ferry to the Hawkshead of Wordsworth's schooldays. Avoiding Coniston, they travelled by Rydal to Grasmere where they lodged a few days. On 5th November the three pedestrians climbed Helvellyn and brother John departed at Grisedale Tarn. Wordsworth wrote to Dorothy from Grasmere on 7th 'there is a small house at Grasmere empty which perhaps we may take'[8] Wordsworth and Coleridge then lodged at the Inn at Ouse Bridge for 8th, 9th & 10th November. On 10th Coleridge wrote to Robert Southey – their wives were sisters – anticipating a move of Sara Coleridge and young Hartley to London, where Coleridge would work for the *Morning Post*.[9]

The 11th November was a clear bright day with some snow on the tops. Coleridge noted:-

> From Ouse bridge, from the Inn Window, the whole length of Bassentwait, a simple majesty of water and mountains…What an

[5] Wordsworth, W. Wordsworth's poetical works, *The Excursion, The Recluse, Book1 Part 1*, p.2 Preface to the 1814 edition.

[6] Wordsworth, W. *The Plelude 1799, 1805, 1850*. Norton London 1979

[7] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 1772-1834. *The notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Text / ed. by Kathleen Coburn: Routledge, London 1957

[8] Wordsworth, William. *The letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth* / ed. de Selincourt. Oxford :Clarendon, 1967-1993. WW to DW 7th Nov 1799

[9] Purton, Valerie. *A Coleridge Chronology*. Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1993 p.43

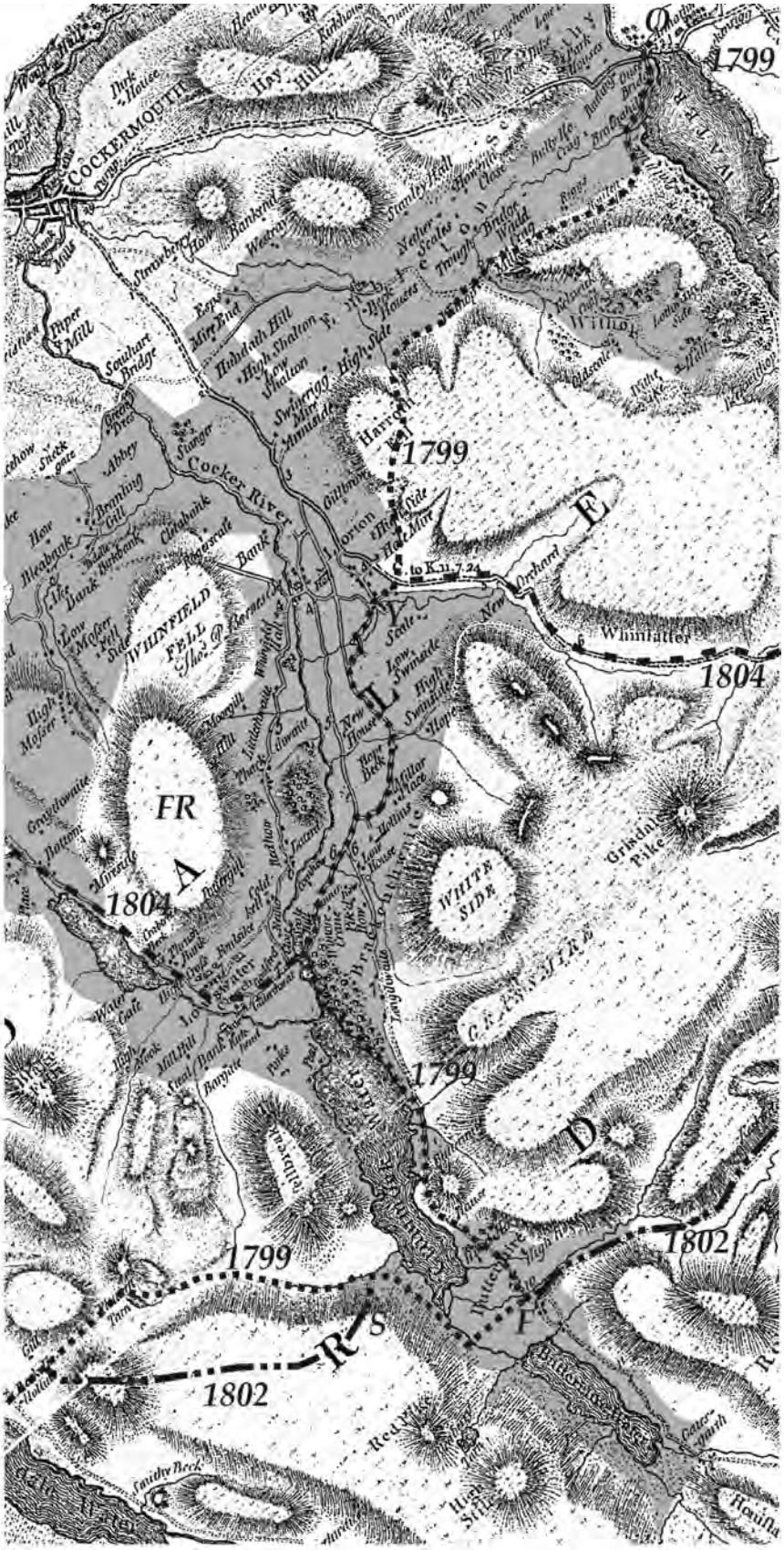
Map 1

Most probable routes of:-

Wordsworth and Coleridge on foot 11th&12th November 1799

Coleridge on foot 1st August 1802

William and Dorothy Wordsworth in the jaunting car early October 1804



KEY

O-Ouse Bridge
Y-yew tree
FR-fantastic ridge?
F- Fish Inn
S- Scale Force

The base map is the Donald map of 1774 at 1inch to 1mile.
The shaded area is the approximate inclosed land at the time of the visits

> effect of the Shadows on the water! – On the left a conical Shadow, on the right a square of splendid Black, all the area & intermediate a mirror reflecting dark & sunny cloud –but in the distance the black Promontory with a circle of melted silver & a path of silver running from it like a flat Cape in the Lake. The Snowy Borrodale in the far distance…

That day they walked to Buttermere via Embleton and Lorton. Some writers say or suggest that they went via Cockermouth, or surely must have done, or at least Wordsworth did?[10] They did not. There is no evidence that they did and the route taken, read with local knowledge, is inconsistent with a Cockermouth visit. There was sufficient time to go via Cockermouth, even in November, but they did not. Mr Denwood of Cockermouth, consulted by the notebook editor in 1957 agrees and had 'never heard that he [Coleridge] was ever at Cockermouth, ...' Why did Wordsworth not take Coleridge to his birthplace, where he had spent the years of nurture until the death of his mother, and which figured in *The Prelude*, recently dedicated to Coleridge? Cockermouth in 1799 was a rapidly growing industrial town; it would not have helped the romantic mood. When Dorothy had last seen the house the gardens were in ruin.[11] Perhaps it was wisely avoided.

The route taken through Wythop and Embleton is not described until the common between Embleton and Lorton was reached. Denwood advised that 'he must have followed an old pre-enclosure road through the hills between Embleton and Lorton'. At this time Wythop, Embleton and Lorton commons were all open, the enclosed lands being as shown on Map 1. Travellers would skirt the township enclosures on the common, taking a shorter route avoiding poor obstructed roads. Thus the foothills to the south of Embleton would be the best choice:-

> On our left hand from Ambleton to Lorton the smooth Hill sinks into an inverted Arch, & over the arch appears a fantastic ridge, brown iron brown, but all over-spotted with snow – only spotted -. … We turned over a small common, the Hills before us intermitted on each side, & the interspace was a plain animated by Hillocks, the front view being terminated and ramparted by the snowy tent-shaped mountains – The unseen river Cocker roaring –Passed thro' Lorton.

Coleridge and Wordsworth approached Lorton from Embleton over the fells. If Wordsworth had been to Cockermouth alone he would not go back to Embleton to cross the fells to Lorton. The notebook editor identifies the smooth hill as Ling Fell and the fantastic ridge as Broom Fell, but this rather elevates grassy Broom Fell. Personal survey suggests that this description is from the common at High Side in Embleton and that the route is also the old coffin road running to High Side in Lorton, used for burials in Lorton from the township of Wythop – a chapel of ease under Lorton until the new church was built in 1865. This old road still exists, with railings in part, from Lorton Highside up to the gap between Harrot Hill and Kirk Fell. The inverted arch and plain with hillocks of the notebook can be better identified between Harrot and Kirkfell. The fantastic ridge would be the first sighting of the distant Loweswater Fells through that arch. From the common at Lorton Highside the travellers could either have continued through the farm to the new turnpike road or, more likely, kept to the common to pass the tenter-riggs, entering the enclosed land through Tenters commons-gate and down Tenters Lane – the old highway to High Lorton.

> Just over the Bridge [to Boonbeck] (there the brook [Whitbeck] flings itself down a small chasm of rock) – a field on the Right Hand a yew prodigious in size & complexity of numberless branches flings itself on one side entirely over the river, the Branches all verging waterwards over the field it spreads 17 Strides - - On its branches names numberless carved – some of the names being grown up appear in alto relievo…

Here Coleridge notes, on 11th November 1799, the precise position of the Lorton yew and identifies our present tree in her pre-storm glory. Wordsworth was present, partly as local

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[10] Reed, Mark. *Wordsworth, the chronology of the early years, 1770-1799* Harvard: Massachusetts, 1967 p.279 and Gill, Stephen Charles. William Wordsworth : a life / Stephen Gill. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989. p. 167

[11] DW to Lady Beaumont, 7th August 1805, recalls the visit. EY p.516

guide, but leaving no surviving record of his presence there other than the later poem. The names grown into high relief were not recorded, but their implied antiquity in the slow-growing yew-limbs associates immediately with the tree full of people seen by George Fox in 1653. In 1794 the tree had already been recorded as exceptional in Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland*,[12] and may have been familiar to Wordsworth before this first reliably recorded visit. But there is no suggestion of a determination to visit the tree, since the route taken would have been a natural one.

From High Lorton to Scale Hill Inn, passed on their right, the route is not described, but would have followed the highway which then passed Lorton High Mill, taking the route of the lane connecting with the Hopebeck road, through Hopebeck and via the road to Scale Hill, then alongside the Cocker and the east bank of Crummock to Buttermere village:-

> To our right is Lowes Water which we see … – the White Houses here beautiful - & look at the river & its two arched Bridges – We have curved around the hill – the Bridge, the Plain & Lowes Water are at my Back – and before me – O God, what a scene. – the foreground a sloping wood, sloping down to the River & meadows, the serpent River beyond the River & the wood meadows terminated by Melbreak walled by the Melbreak …
>
> …The waters near the upper end of Crummock the archipelago of tiniest Islands 7 in number Pleiads – and two near the opposite shore – Buttermere comes upon us, a fragment of it – the view enclosed by a huge Concave Semicircle-. The Hill like a Dolphin so beautiful in the Lines of Snow in Crummoch is named Red Pike -.

Coleridge and Wordsworth spent the night of the 11th November at the Fish Inn. There is no record of that stay, and very little in Coleridge's notes of the local rustic people they met, but this is the only basis for the verse in book VII of the 1805 Prelude, now thirteen books and essentially completed, in which Wordsworth recalls their encounter with Mary Robinson:-

> .....O friend, I speak 302
> With tender recollection of that time
> When first we saw the maiden, then a name
> By us unheard of - in her cottage-inn 305
> Were welcomed, and attended on by her,
> Both stricken with one feeling of delight,
> An admiration of her modest mien
> And carriage, marked by unexampled grace.

The Maid of Buttermere, 'sketched from life'. James Gillray, 1802. (Carlisle Library)

The Maid had been famous since Joseph Budworth sang her praises in his 1792 ramble.[13] Perhaps in 1799 Wordsworth and Coleridge did not know her name, despite the compliments which other gentlemen had written, disguised in Latin or Greek, on the walls in the Inn.

On 12th November they set off for Wasdale Head via Floutern Tarn and Ennerdale, but first seeing Scale Force:-

> Scale force – The first fall a thin broad white ribbon from a stupendous height; uninterrupted tho' not impinged by, the perpendicular Rock down which it falls, or rather parallel with which – there is no pool at the bottom, but a common shallow brook over flattish small pebbles – but the chasm thro' which it flows, is stupendous – so wildly wooded that the mosses & wet weeds & perilous Tree increase the Horror of the rocks which ledge only enough to interrupt not stop your fall - & the tree – O God! to think of a poor wretch hanging with one arm from it.

[12] Hutchinson, William. *The history of the county of Cumberland*, Carlisle, F Jollie 1794. Vol II p.124

[13] Budworth, Joseph *A fortnight's ramble to the Lakes of Westmoreland, Lancashire and Cumberland. By a rambler.* London, Hookman and Carpemter 1792

They spent two nights at Wasdale Head then over the passes to Borrowdale, to Threlkeld and Matterdale, arriving at Eusemere, at the house of the anti-slavery campaigner, Thomas Clarkson, on 17th November. Coleridge left alone to travel for London to begin work for the *Morning Post*, but found himself back at Sockburn. Coleridge rarely completed his intentions, and this time his wanderings had led him back to Sara Hutchinson, with whom he spent a few addictive days, as ever 'chasing chance-started friendships'. Fortunately for the poetical consequences, her name was the same as that of his wife – who understood that he had been in Liverpool all this time.

Coleridge 1802

In August 1802 Wordsworth lived with Dorothy at Town End, or Dove Cottage, in Grasmere while Coleridge, wife Sara and the children Hartley, five and Derwent, one, rented the front of Greta Hall at Keswick. The immediate context of the famous solo walk by Coleridge is the marriage of Wordsworth in October to his cousin, Mary Hutchinson, sister of Sara Hutchinson. The marriage would mark the end of the strong bond established by Wordsworth, Dorothy and Coleridge in Racedown in 1795. The three shared the experience of orphans, displaced from the family on the death a parent. William and Dorothy's mother died in 1778, he being sent soon after to school in Hawkshead, while she spent nine years in Yorkshire. The death of their father in 1783 added the threat of poverty,

Sara Hutchinson in later years

because it was found that his employer, Sir James Lowther, owed the estate £4625, which naturally he refused to pay. The second Lord Lonsdale settled in 1802. When William and Dorothy set up home together in the west-country in 1795, her task was to support the rebuilding of Wordsworth's ego and purpose, after the double blow from France had resulted in a mental crisis. Not only had the revolution he had supported descended into chaos, but also he had no safe option but to return to England leaving Annette Vallon unmarried and pregnant with Caroline. Coleridge[14] was a precocious child attached to his mother, but it was his father who died in 1781. His mother agreed to his placement in Christ's Hospital School, a school for the needy sons of clergy and orphans. From 1795 a close relationship among the three was established, even though Coleridge had felt obliged to marry.

Dorothy's role should not be underestimated, in that she extended her care and concern to Coleridge as well as acting as having a significant role in the creative process. Like Wordsworth, she had an extraordinary sensibility to nature, which made her observations and responses valuable to Wordsworth and Coleridge. Through the period 1796-9 Coleridge, the philosopher and poetry-theorist, and Dorothy were both instrumental in reconstructing Wordsworth's ego and purpose.

One can see *The Prelude* as the poetical expression of that reconstruction of Wordsworth and the rationalisation of his past. While Wordsworth developed a strong ego and protective iron will, in Coleridge the passions where in charge; he could not manage money, he was unreliable and could rarely hold onto an objective long enough to produce an output. But he was also a genius, inspiring, generous, open, likeable and vulnerable. Coleridge's weaknesses were those that Wordsworth had removed from his own character. The benefits of the relationship accrued to Wordsworth overall, through the poetry. When Coleridge no longer provided the necessary inspiration

[14] Holmes, Richard *Coleridge, early visions* London, Flamingo, 1999. For Coleridges early life

and support, his inadequacies would contribute to friendship being marginalised, then broken.

Before he set out in August 1802 on his famous eight-day walk alone, Coleridge was aware that the relationship was changing, though the formal break was not made until 1810. He wrote to Southey, his pre-Wordsworth friend, with detailed arrangements for sharing Greta Hall, imploring him to come, and spoke of a 'happy Revolution' in his marriage.[15] Shortly before, Wordsworth had heard that the debt to the family would be paid from the estate of the deceased Lord Lonsdale and that he and Dorothy would be financially secure. Coleridge had been told of the understanding between Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson and in April had encouraged Wordsworth to marry. He then knew that William and Dorothy must travel to France to reach an understanding with Annette Vallon. Coleridge confided in the Wordsworths about everything, 'we had some interesting melancholy talk about his private affairs' wrote Dorothy in her journal[16] for 22nd May; but the Wordsworths had kept secrets from him – and still he did not know about Wordsworth's child, Caroline. On 1st August, as Coleridge set out on his walk, William and Dorothy landed in Calais to spend August there with Annette and Caroline, aged nine. Calais, now accessible through the Peace of Amiens, was full of English gentlemen curious to see France. The Wordsworth party encountered William Southeby, a new friend of Coleridge, who wrote to Coleridge of the meeting.

For Coleridge, now aged 29, his solo walk was perhaps a positive statement of independence. He planned it using Hutchinson's history, drew a map and made an itinerary which he more or less kept to. He made detailed notes on the way, taking a very personal and active perspective in contrast to the responsiveness of 1799, and expanded the account during the walk into a 'Great-sheet letter' transcribed by Sara Hutchinson, with

Sara Coleridge in 1809

whom he was still obsessed, and who was the focus of the resulting poetry.

> On Sunday Augt. 1st - ½ after 12 I had a Shirt, cravat, 2 pair of Stockings, a little paper &half a dozen Pens, a German Book (Voss's Poems) & a little Tea and Sugar, with my Night Cap. packed up in my natty green oil-skin, neatly squared, and put into my net Knapsack and my Knap-sack on my back & the Besom stick in my hand, which for the want of a better, and in spite of Mrs C. & Mary, who both raised their voices against it, especially as I left the Besom scattered on the kitchen floor, off I sallied –

His first night's objective was Ennerdale via Buttermere, and he took the direct pedestrian route by Newlands and Buttermere Hause where 'the cataract … had but little water in it of course, was of no particular Interest'. The time at the Fish, where he drank tea and read *Revelations* was not recorded in his notebook but only in the transcribed letter. Again Mary Robinson was not mentioned, though her marriage to the not-so-Honourable Augustus Hope, alias the bigamous Hatfield, did not take place in Lorton until 2nd October. From October to December Coleridge wrote extensively about the Maid of Buttermere in the *Morning Post*.

From Buttermere the notebook records him taming the landscape:-

> … ascend by Scale force gain a level – mossy soft ground, every man his own path make – skip and jump – where rushes grow, a man

[15] Coleridge, S T. *The collected letters*. Ed Griggs. Oxford, the Clarandon Press 1956. STC to Robert Southey 29th July 1802

[16] Wordsworth, Dorothy. *The Grasmere and Alfoxden journals*. Ed Woof, P Oxford World's Classics 2002

> may go – Red Pike peeks in on you on your left and on the right Melbreak … you again ascend & reach a ruined sheepfold – here I write these lines a wild green view, bleating of sheep & noise of waters…

And so he passed out of the Derwentfells townships over the ridge to 'fiddle-shaped' Ennerdale water to stay the night at Ennerdale [Bridge?] with John Ponsonby.

One of Coleridges objectives for the 3rd August, after spending the night at a 'miserable pot house' in St Bees was to visit:-

> …the School and Church ruins – had read in the history of Cumbd. [Hutchinson 1794] That there was;- 'an excellent Library presented to the School by Sr. James Lowther,' which proved to be some 30 odd Volumes of commentaries on the Scripture utterly worthless – and which with all my passions for ragged old Folios I should certainly make serviceable [words obliterated] for firelighting. Men who write Tours and County histories I have by woeful experience found out to be damned Liars, harsh words, but true!

The highlight of the tour was Coleridge's returning walk on the Sca Fell ridge, the first known record of an ascent of Scafell Pike, in which Coleridge cheated death in descending Broad Stand, having not had the benefit of Wainwright's prohibition. Coleridge's record of the adventure should be read as a whole and will not be extracted here. His route continued to explore Dunnerdale and Coniston, returning via Ambleside to arrive home at Greta Hall with some elation on 9th August, to write another letter of invitation to Southey. Letters had been received from the Wordsworth in France and as mentioned above from William Southeby, reporting his meeting with the Wordsworths in Calais and presumably mentioning the child Caroline. The next day, 10th August, Coleridge wrote to Sara Hutchinson, soon to be Wordsworth's sister-in-law, including the question that showed that he was outside of the family group. Why had Wordsworth not mentioned Caroline in his letters from France?-

> I seem, I know not why, to be beating off all Reference to Dorothy and William, & their Letters – I heard from Sotheby of their meeting … I wish, I wish, they were back! – Dear little Caroline! Will she be a ward of Annette? – Was the subject too sensitive for a letter? I suppose so.

Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson were married, before returning to Westmorland, on 4th October in Yorkshire; this was a quiet family wedding of Wordsworths and Hutchinsons, not involving Coleridge. Coleridge continued to ask Southey to come to Keswick, and tried to mend his marriage. Writing to his wife, pregnant with Sara, on 16th November from Carmarthen in a long letter about the beauty of trees and woods he noted:-

> …a Church Yard two or three miles from Brecon is belted by a circle of the largest & noblest Yews, I ever saw – in a belt, to wit – they are not as large as the Yew in Borrodale, or that in Lorton but so many, so large and noble, I never saw before – and quite glowing with those heavenly coloured silky-pink-scarlet Berries.

But even such smooth talk about yew trees could not save his marriage.

William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 1804

By the time of the visit of William and Dorothy to the famous Lorton yew tree in Autumn 1804, Coleridge had left the country and was working very effectively for the governor of war-time Malta, the disputed island which had broken the Peace of Amiens. His departure, a very deliberate change in his life, officially necessary for his health, recognised the breakdown of his marriage, the unsatisfactory nature of his time in Keswick and the contrast of his declining personal circumstances whereas Wordsworth was now happily married, financially secure and producing some of his best work. 'I now see very little of WW … [he is] living wholly among Devotees', wrote Coleridge in October 1803, once the devotee-in-chief. This comment followed the tour of Scotland, where the William, Dorothy and Coleridge had set off together on the jaunting car, but had parted company after two weeks. On reaching Perth, Coleridge learned that Southey, after the death of his daughter Margaret, had decided to come to Greta Hall with his family and the widow, Mrs Lovell, who was sister to both Mrs Southey and Mrs Coleridge. From his arrival, Southey took over responsibility for the whole household, including Coleridge's family, and supported

them through the proceeds of his writing. Coleridge was now able to leave, for the benefit of his health. This he did, aged 31, with no intention to return, in the Speedwell on April 9th 1804, promising to write and to send Wordsworth notes for *The Recluse*, or what would become *The Excursion* of 1814; notes which never arrived, due to their later destruction.

In late September or early October 1804 William, aged 33, and Dorothy Wordsworth set out in the one-horse jaunting car for a six day tour. This followed the christening of baby Dora, and to some extent was a holiday and reward for Dorothy, who had run the household. While the main objective was the Duddon Valley, the tour started with a visit to the expanded Southey household at Greta Hall and a return trip with them to Buttermere, presumably via Borrowdale and Honister using the jaunting car. The tour proper then started from Keswick, and if the required route was to the Duddon Valley via Ennerdale and an overnight stop at Wasdale, then the general route taken via Lorton and Loweswater can be considered as direct. They travelled via Braithwaite and the Whinlatter Pass, a turnpike since the late 1760s. The direct and scenic route was via Swinside Terrace to Hopebeck and then to Loweswater, avoiding Lorton village. The fact that they 'dropped down soon after into the fertile Vale of Lorton, and went to visit a Yew tree which is the Patriarch of Yew trees, green and flourishing,[17] in very old age – the largest tree I ever saw' demonstrates that they visited High Lorton specifically to see the yew tree. They probably continued on the turnpike and then descended Tenters Lane to take the route which Wordsworth and Coleridge probably took in 1799. Having admired the tree, the route via High Mill and the highway, now a footpath, to Hopebeck Lane, Hopebeck, Scale Hill and the Scale Hill (Deepa) Bridge would take them to Loweswater, then via Fangs Brow to Ennerdale.

Why did they visit the Lorton yew tree in 1804? Wordsworth had visited it before in 1799 with Coleridge and they had inspected and measured it. Perhaps Dorothy had not seen it before. We also know that Hutchinson's History of Cumberland was well known to Coleridge at least in 1802, and it is unlikely that Wordsworth was not familiar with that History. Hutchinson's description 'spreading its branches on every side to a great distance, covering with its shade above three hundred feet in circuit'[18] predicts the descriptive language of the poem, *Yew-trees*, 'of vast circumference and gloom profound'. And buried in a poem, *Edwina,* by the London playwright, Mrs Hannah Cowley, in that same volume, the historical content of Wordsworth's poem is predicted by:-

> For this, that time-worn YEW its branches bends,
> And to the scene a deeper sadness lends;
> Midst LORTON's vale its wond'rous stems arise,
> Unmatch'd, beneath our floating arctic skies
> Planted by HENRY in an anguish'd day
> And on its roots, his head full oft in sorrow lay.[19]

Hannah Cowley never lived in Cumberland but married Thomas Cowley of Cockermouth, son of the prosperous Cockermouth bookseller, the widow Mary Cowley who died in 1783.

It is most likely that the tree was visited in 1804 in the context of the poem published in 1815. Wordsworth himself gives the date of composition as 1803, perhaps on the Scottish tour when Dorothy notes the superiority of the 'Giant of Lorton'[20], though no early manuscript copy of the poem survives. Knowing that the Lorton part of the poem is associated with 1804, it is possible to speculate on the context and symbolism of that part of the poem. In 1803 Wordsworth had joined the Grasmere Volunteers, the local home guard of the Napoleonic wars. The history of conflicts between England and France is obvious in references to *Crecy*, *Poictiers* and *Azincour*, where the English archers were triumphant. My interpretation is that the Lorton yew tree of the poem represents, for Wordsworth, the English

[17] DW to Lady Beaumont 7-10th October 1804

[18] Hutchinson 1794 Vol II p.124

[19] Hutchinson 1794 Vol II p.5

[20] Wordsworth, Dorothy. *Recollections of a tour made in Scotland.* Yale University Press. London 1997

nation, grown organically over the lifetime of the yew, changing and adapting slowly by evolution rather than revolution, unlike the French. Like the yew tree, the English nation is 'produced too slowly ever to decay' in that culture and tradition guarantee social cohesion and internal stability; likewise it is 'of form and aspect too magnificent ever to be destroyed' by external agencies such as the French under Napoleon. Two hundred years later, the tree is battered and reduced but still standing.

Conclusion

This article has recorded the three recorded tours of Coleridge or Wordsworth in the Derwent Fells townships. The local route of the 1799 tour has been given in detail for the first time, with a few corrections suggested to previous accounts. The tours have been placed in the context of the relationship between Wordsworth and Coleridge, both personally and in the execution of *The Recluse*, though this is covered in depth in many academic texts.

The 1799 tour was a happy tour with both poets optimistic about future cooperative work combining Wordsworth's sensibility to nature with Coleridges philosophical abilities. Their tour was the preamble to their residence in the Lakes to produce *The Recluse*. Its first part, *The Prelude,* was in outline in 1799 and a complete work, but not published, in 1805, having had the full benefit of Coleridge's earlier contribution. *The Prelude* is often considered as Wordsworth's greatest work. By contrast *The Excursion*, the main part of *The Recluse* which was published in 1814 but worked on for years before, and which contained the philosophical system that Wordsworth was to express through poetry, received little praise. Instead of becoming 'a work that would live' it became a work unloved either for its poetry or its philosophy. At the time of the 1799 walk Coleridge's best poetry was already completed as a product of the early intense phase of the partnership; indeed *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* made up the first 53 pages in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* and is probably its best known poem. But after that Wordsworth's works were pre-eminent.

The opportunity has been taken in this article to update the history of the Lorton yew tree, incorporating those references which

Coleridge, 21st March 1804, by George Dance (Wordsworth Trust)

have been discovered or brought to attention[21] since the publication of *Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew tree* at the time of the 2004 bicentenary. Now we know that the first published poem about it was by Hannah Cowley in 1794 and that Coleridge was the first of the Romantic poets to record it, in his notebook; though it was Wordsworth who wrote the lasting poem.

Acknowledgment

I wish to thank Michael S Baron, my co-editor of *Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew tree*, for his comments and advice in the production of this article, though the opinions are mine and should not be assumed to be held in common.

Further Reading

Apart from the sources referenced in the text, those interested in the historical background to the two poets are recommended to see Byatt, A S. *Unruly Times, Wordsworth and Coleridge in their time*. Vintage. 1997.

The changing relationship between Coleridge and Wordsworth is the subject of a recent publication: Sisman, A. *The friendship: Wordsworth and Coleridge*. 2006

[21] Dr Angus Winchester has identified a reference to the Lorton yew tree in Lysons *Magna Britannia Vol. IV (Cumberland)* London 1819. p.177. 'In the chapel-yard at Lorton is a Yew-tree, the trunk of which is 27 feet in circumference'.

Timber petitions

by Sandra Shaw

While browsing through one of the Leconfield Estate boxes at Whitehaven, looking for something entirely different, I stumbled on the following which brought a smile to my face. I was getting pretty disheartened turning over endless petitions, struggling to read the handwriting and this cheered me no end. I thought it might do the same for others. Although I feel slightly uneasy making fun of the spelling efforts of someone in the past, we need a little light relief sometimes.

This humble petition was among a few similar relating to Eskdale, written on small scraps of paper and read as follows.

'Grashes commefsingrs I hombli bege that you would grant me som wood for Repering my stebel and for foour gates. I have asked leve on Stivin Nicklson for tou trees and John Wilkison for tou trees. Josap Porter I will oblege my lord in aney favor I can doo.'

Sadly it is undated and the response of the greshes commefsingrs [gracious commissioners] is not recorded.

Another petition asks permission to '…cot doun 8 smolle yock trees of my own ground …'

Another complains '…I have not a whole yeat about the tenment and I have three peesis of timber broke in the housis …'. This man was granted 2 trees.

Typing this to send to the editor has brought another smile. *Word* helpfully auto-corrected some of the spelling and the spell checker has sought to make sense of the rest. It actually gets many words right but also offers some amusing suggestions and is sometimes completely stumped.

References to the above petitions to the lord. CRO/W/D/LEC 256 / 81, 83, 90

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L&DFLHS Events 2007	
Date	**Event**
8th Feb	**Members' evening: Talk by Derek Denman: John Marshall of Hallsteads - from satanic mills to Wordsworth's hills (Visitors welcome, no charge)**
8th Mar	**Talk: by Ralph Lewthwaite: Whitehaven and America**
12th Apr	**Members' evening: talk by Prof Michael Waller: John Wilson Robinson of Whinfell Hall - the life of a climbing pioneer (Visitors welcome, no charge)**
10th May	**Talk: by Dr Mike Winstanley - The new Domesday: the Land Tax survey of 1910**
12th May	**Visit by coach to Rose Castle and Wrea Church**
14th Jun	**The Society's agm : event after to be announced**
12th July	**Talk: by Dr Roz Southey - Eighteenth Century music and musicians in West Cumberland.**
August	**Walk to be announced**
13th Sep	**Talk: by Andrew Lowe- Power from the Fells - water powered industries**
Autumn	**Visit to be announced (local)**
8th Nov	**Talk: by Sue Grant - The story of Newlands Valley**
Unless stated otherwise, talks are held at the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton starting at 7.30pm. Visitors £2 including refreshments.	