

No 52 – August 2013

The Journal

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite

Buttermere

Embleton

Loweswater

Mockerkin

Pardshaw

Wythrop

www.derwentfells.com



Mary Hutchison, nee Dodgson, 1768/9-1852, of Shatton, Embleton
courtesy of Mr John Gaunt

The Journal

Once again members have provided plenty of articles which I hope readers will find interesting and enjoyable.

Derek Denman

L&DFLHS 2013-14

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The Buttermere copper mines – a correction

In *Journal* No.51 I expressed the opinion that it was most unlikely that the copper mines were worked by Knott and Taylor from 1822-5 as stated by John Adams in *Mines of the Lake District fells*. That partnership was not formed until 1825.

Our *Journal* No.22 quotes a letter from one of John Marshall’s younger sons, written at Scale Hill on 3 October 1825. He writes ‘On Sunday we went to Buttermere & Gatesgarth, & looked at a new copper & lead mine opening by a new company in Birkness How ...’. It is clear that Knott and Taylor did undertake some prospecting, trials or mining in 1825.

Derek Denman

Stanger Spa – ‘nearly resembling the Cheltenham water’

by John Hudson

Stanger Spa is situated close to the right bank of the River Cocker approximately halfway between Cockermouth and Lorton (GR NY141272). Water issues from a well surrounded by a now roofless building. The water of Stanger Spa has long been famed for its supposed medicinal benefits. For example, Parson and Whites’s Directory of 1829 states: “Stanger is another hamlet in the township and chapelry of Embleton, situated 2 miles S by E of Cockermouth near the old road to Keswick. Here is a strong aperient salt spring, which is efficacious in all acute diseases of the skin, and is much resorted to in the summer season by invalids from the surrounding country. It is called Stanger Spa, and is situated on the farm belonging to Mr John Rooke”. It would therefore appear that by 1829 the reputation of the water was already well established.

An analysis of the water was quoted a few years earlier by Daniel and Samuel Lysons in their *Magna Britannia*, published in 1816. They state: “At Stanger, two miles north of Lorton, is a saline spring nearly resembling the Cheltenham water. It turns white with the spirit of hartshorn, and lets fall a great sediment, with oil of tartar: a gallon of it will yield 1170 grains of sediment, whereof 1080 are sea-salt” The analysis as quoted is not very informative, apart from confirming that the water contains a fairly high concentration of dissolved substances, principally common salt. However, it doubtless assisted in publicising Stanger water, as it seemed to provide a scientific basis for the belief its curative properties.

In a footnote Lysons and Lysons say that their information about Stanger was supplied by the Rev. John Sibson. Sibson was perpetual curate of Lorton 1800-1820.¹ He lived at Rogerscale, and was probably a native of the area, as he was uncle to another John Sibson who was a yeoman farmer at The Brow, Whinfell, and also uncle to Isaac Sibson of

¹ R. George, A Cumberland Valley, Bovate Publications (LDFLHS), 2003, p. 101.

Littlethwaite. John Bolton in his lecture of 1891 states that curate Sibson was "in all probability a St Bees man and doubtless possessed of means".² It is not surprising that he would take an educated interest in a spa in the vicinity, although Stanger was not in his parish. However, although Sibson supplied the information, he certainly wasn't the author of the analysis. The experimental results were published in 1740, some 76 years before the appearance of *Magna Britannia*, by a Dr Thomas Short.

In the early 18th century some still held the ancient belief that waters which were reputed to cure ailments possessed magical or mystical properties. Some of these waters issued from ancient Holy Wells. Although many such wells bore the names of Christian Saints (the name Stanger is thought to be a corruption of St. Anna), they may have been famous for their curative properties long before the Christian era.³ However, in the 18th century spirit of Enlightenment, the opinion grew that the medicinal benefits of such waters should be explicable in terms of the dissolved substances which they contained, and that the identity of these substances could be revealed by chemical analysis.

Chemical tests which could be used to analyse waters had been published by Robert Boyle (of Boyle's Law fame) in the 17th century. But one of the first systematic attempts to analyse a range of mineral waters and discuss their medicinal properties was made by Short, and in consequence he occupies a minor place in the history of both medicine and chemistry.⁴ Thomas Short was born in Scotland around 1690, and after graduating in medicine he practised in Sheffield, where he remained until his death in 1772.⁵ His first study of mineral waters appeared in 1734, and concerned



Stanger Spa from inside – photograph
John Macfarlane

the waters of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.⁶ He followed this with a second volume in 1740, which described waters (95 in total) from all the remaining counties in the Midlands and the North of England.⁷ Short's experiments on Stanger water were performed on 20th June 1738, and appeared in the 1740 volume. The quantitative analytical results Short gives are identical to those quoted in Lysons and Lysons, thus demonstrating that he is the ultimate source of their information, but he gives far more detail.

Short's book is divided into three main sections, treating what he calls the *Natural History*, *Experimental History*, and *Medicinal History* of the waters. Each water is therefore discussed in each section from a different viewpoint. In the *Natural History* section Stanger is described thus; "At Stanger, three miles W: of Keswick and two miles S: of Cockermouth and ¼ of a Mile from the Village, rises up in the low

² J. Bolton, *Lorton in 1811*, Lecture of 1891; www.derwentfells.com/pdfs/JohnBolton.pdf

³ Information on some local Holy Wells is contained in G. Edwards, E. Palmer and T. Sowton, *Holy Wells of Cumbria*, 2nd ed., Cumbria Holy Wells Trust, 2012

⁴ N.G. Coley, *Medical History*, 1982, **26**, 123-44

⁵ Oxford DNB, N. Moore, rev. P. Wallis, *Thomas Short* (c. 1690-1772).

⁶ T. Short, *History of the Mineral Waters of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire...*, London, 1734

⁷ T. Short, *History of Principle Mineral Waters of Cumberland, etc.*, Sheffield, 1740.

dry Sandy Ground, the Spaw, which has a shelter built over it, it throws forth plenty of brinish vitriolic clear Water, of an iron taste and Smel, which Instantly curdles both Soap and Milk. When drunk to 4 or 5 Pints it purges with Violence upwards and downwards, and is found a sovereign remedy in *Surflets*, old and new, Disorders or old pains of the *Stomach*, *Green sickness*, *Scurvy*, *Sores*, *out breakings of the Skin*, *Pains of the Breast &c.*". It is interesting to note that a shelter was already in existence in 1738, so the spa was being patronised before Short's visit.

The *Experimental History* section contains details of chemical procedures and experimental results. Here the waters are divided into classes, and Stanger water is in the "Class Second of Purging Chalybeats". Short records that he obtained a white sediment with a solution of silver nitrate, a dark green colour with syrup of violets, a white colour with spirit of hartshorn (ammonia solution), a "great sediment" with oyl of tartar (potassium carbonate), a red(?) sediment with sugar of lead (lead acetate), and a mazarine (= dark blue) sediment with extract of galls. To modern eyes these results suggest a solution containing significant quantities of chloride along with metals (including iron) with insoluble hydroxides and/or carbonates. When Short evaporated a gallon of the water he obtained the quantitative results later quoted by Lysons and Lysons, but he also added that the 1170 grains of sediment contained 28 grains of "earth" along with the 1080 grains of sea salt. Short suggests how the galls test could be used to make a quantitative assessment of the iron content of a water, but with disarming candour he explains that he can only quote a few results because "having lost or mislaid the papers of Notes, these are all that remain". The observations for Stanger were apparently among the majority that disappeared.

Stanger water was subjected to chemical analysis by modern methods in 2011.⁸ Two samples were taken on different dates, and not surprisingly the composition of the water varied somewhat between them, but they were found to

contain a significant amount of sodium with an excess of chloride. If all the sodium is expressed as sodium chloride (common salt), the figures equate to a concentration of between 887 and 971 grains per gallon. Smaller quantities of other soluble salts were also found to be present, and Short would have included these in his sea salt in addition to sodium chloride. His analytical result of 1080 grains of sea salt per gallon was good by the standards of the day.

The *Medicinal History* section divides human ailments into 44 categories, each of which is further subdivided into a number of groups according to detailed symptoms or circumstances. For each group a few waters are recommended. Among the conditions for which Stanger water is claimed to provide relief are a "vissidity of the blood", which is indicated by a pale countenance, dull heavy pain, slow circulation, and sluggishness of both body and mind. It is supposed to provide relief in stomach upsets caused by gorging too much meat, or by ulcers or abscesses of the stomach. It is also recommended for cachexy, which is defined as a bad state of body or a depraved habit of mind, and it is advised for those suffering from intermittent fevers. In all these cases, Cheltenham water also forms one of the recommendations. Finally the purging and laxative chalybeates are classified according to their purging strength, with F being the weakest and AA being the strongest (apparently the A* grade had yet to be invented). Stanger is awarded the top grade, along with Scarborough, Weatherslack, and Cheltenham. The advice linking medical conditions with specific waters which are claimed to afford relief would appear to be based mainly on case histories, but there is some similarity in the chemical analyses of waters with identical supposed medicinal properties.

The fact that Lysons and Lysons were apparently unaware that the figures they quoted originated from Short is curious. However, Short's book was privately published, and its distribution appears to have been restricted mainly to the 300 or so contemporary subscribers, for Short adds a note at the end of the subscribers' list to the effect that the print run was small and there are only a "few remaining copies unsubscribed for". When *Magna Britannia* appeared after an interval

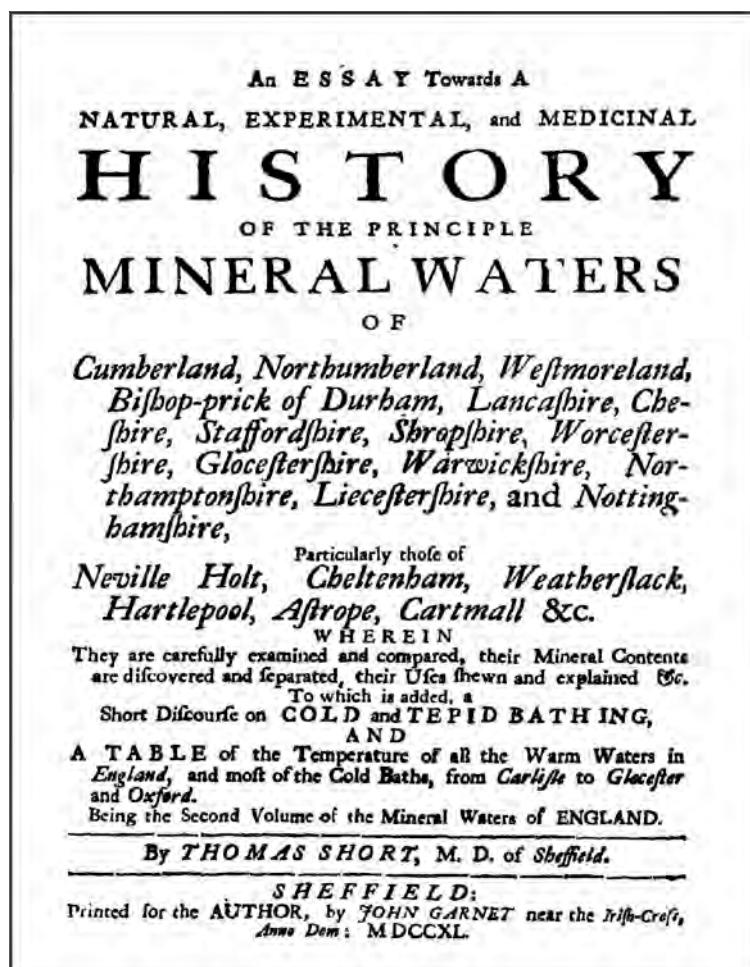
⁸ N. Cooper, *Saline Springs in Cumbria*, MSc Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011.

of 76 years it would have become a rare book, and today even Cambridge University Library doesn't possess it. It is probable that the Rev. Sibson had access to a copy, and Lysons and Lysons had to rely on Sibson's precis of Short's findings. But the vital piece of information included by Lysons and Lysons was the reported similarity to Cheltenham water. This must have enhanced considerably the reputation of Stanger in the early nineteenth century.

John Rooke, the 1829 owner of Low Stanger Farm and Spa, died in 1831 heavily in debt. The property was put up for auction in January 1832, when the advertisement in the *Cumberland Pacquet* stated: "...there is also on the estate a valuable medicinal spring known as Stanger Well....justly famed for the cure of inveterate scorbutic diseases and which might (by proper arrangement for the reception of invalids, for which there is ample space), under a spirited proprietor, become a source of great emolument". The property did not sell at auction, and was subsequently purchased by Isaac Thompson of Workington.⁹ Evidently Thompson was not sufficiently spirited (or foolish) to provide a hotel, gardens, walks, etc., which were a necessary feature of a smart spa resort, and Stanger remained undeveloped. Its isolation was always going to be a problem, and the construction of the railways soon after Thompson's purchase did not help at all. The already well-established Gilsland Spa was within easy reach of a station when the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway opened in 1838, and Shap Wells likewise profited when trains started running on the Lancaster and Carlisle line in 1848. Both

resorts prospered greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth, attracting custom from far and wide¹⁰

By contrast, most of Stanger's patrons were inhabitants of Cockermouth who walked there on a Sunday afternoon, purchasing the water at 6d (2½p) per bottle, although it is claimed that bottles were sent all over the world.¹¹ But like its more famous counterparts, Stanger's popularity declined in the second half of



the twentieth century. Perhaps in the past patrons adopted the attitude that if a medicine didn't hurt it wasn't working, but today most people don't want, as Short put

¹⁰ R.H. Gambles, CWAAS *Transactions*, 1993, 93, 183-185.

¹¹ B. Bradbury, *History of Cockermouth, Cockermouth and District Civic Trust*, 2nd ed., updated 2006, p.3. No reference is given for these assertions, and they may be based on oral tradition.

it, to be purged violently upwards and downwards. That this was the effect of Stanger water is confirmed by LDFLHS member Walter Head, who recounts how his late mother took the water in the early 1930s, with extremely unpleasant consequences. Although there is no road access, it is still possible to walk to Stanger Spa. Two approaches are described in a pamphlet produced in 1998 by the Cockermouth and District Civic Trust after they had performed restoration work on the building.¹² One walk commences at the nearby crossroads on the B5292, and the other starts from Cockermouth and follows the route taken by Victorian strollers on Sunday afternoons.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful to Sheila Stayte, Peter and Michelle Kerr, Eileen Palmer, Tim Sowton, Derek Denman and Walter Head for information supplied.

A History of Keswick in 100 Objects.

by Dorothy Hind



The Forestry Commission's jubilee monument in Thorntwaite forest

¹² M. Jane, *The Stanger Walk*, Cockermouth and District Civic Trust, 1998.

In 2010, the BBC stimulated a flurry of interest by putting on a series of Radio 4 programmes in partnership with the British Museum called "The History of the World in 100 Objects" and Penguin published a book to go with the series. The idea caught on and a number of schools and museums became involved. Some members of the Keswick History Group and of the Board of the Keswick Museum and Art Gallery thought it would be good to try this out in relation to the history of Keswick and its surrounding areas. There were differing motivations amongst the proposers – some envisaged that the Objects would be artefacts in the museum, others hoped that the many Keswick residents who had items handed down through their families might feel inspired to join in – but there were also the sceptics who said we would be lucky to reach 50, never mind 100 Objects. In the hope that the idea might encourage non-historians to participate, we approached the editor of The Keswick Reminder to ask if it would be possible to publish something about the project and the Objects and she readily offered to allocate space, so long as the written material on each Object was not too wordy. Thus we had a rule that articles should be no longer than 350 words and although this meant strict editing, it turned out to be a useful discipline.

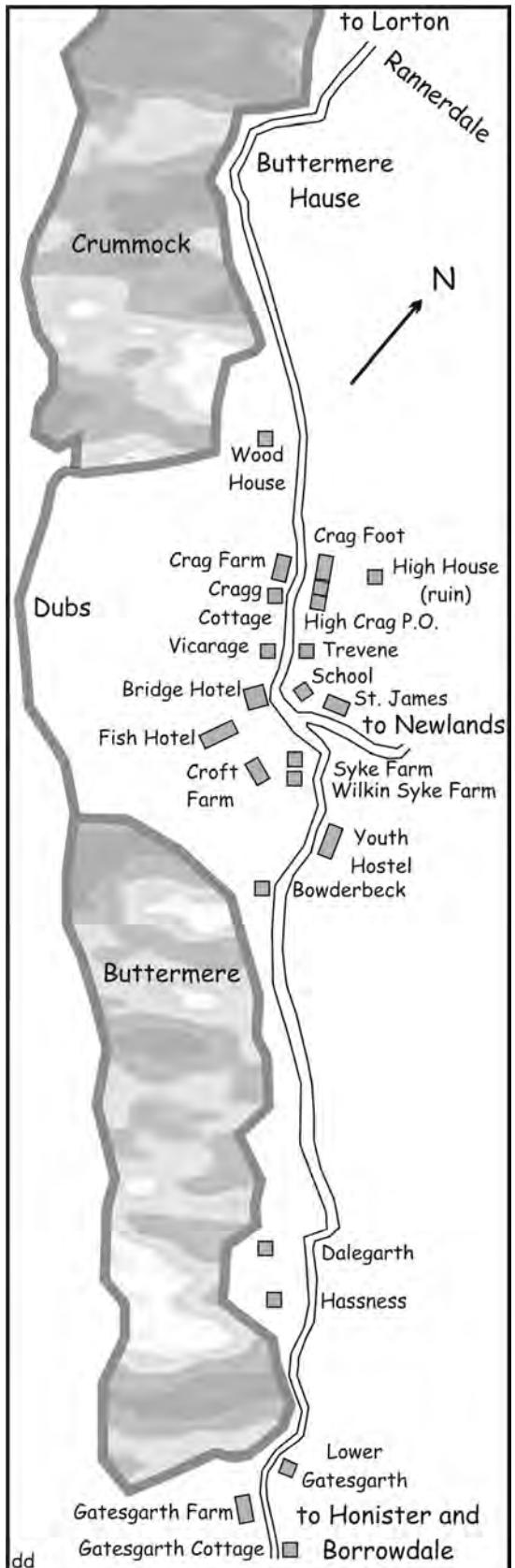
The project set off in the spring of 2011. "Objects" were defined as things that were man or woman made, although they could be related to a specific person – thus we had "Peter Crosthwaite's Map", with a photograph of the map and an article about Peter Crosthwaite's achievements in Keswick. Many were items on display in the museum, but there were also buildings such as the Alhambra Cinema and the Pavilion, or monuments such as the Castlerigg Stone Circle, the memorial pillar in Whinlatter Forest and the Great Gable memorial. There was written material – "The Story of the Three Bears" – portraits and old photographs, personal treasures such as a family marriage certificate, and articles about bygone Keswick industries. Once we started thinking of objects, there could have been hundreds; it only needed committed people to find time to prepare the articles and produce the photographs. Fortunately, there were about half a dozen such people

who came up trumps every time the project was flagging, and so we got to the one hundredth Object earlier this year. So was it worth the effort? We certainly created a rich and varied collection of Objects, although they could not be said to represent specific aspects or periods of Keswick's history. I think those who researched and presented material thoroughly enjoyed the experience and a number of Keswick Reminder readers have said how much they enjoyed the series. The articles about the museum's artefacts stimulated the interest of both local people and visitors and drew attention to the planning for the museum's enhancement programme. Only a few local non-historians participated which was disappointing because those who did had first-hand knowledge of their Objects. And where do we go from here? We are considering the possibility of publication but regardless of this, the information gathered is certainly relevant to Keswick's historical records and will be kept in the museum's archive.

A walk through Buttermere in the 1950s

by Walter Head

Approaching Buttermere from the direction of Lorton on the B5289 the first property on the outskirts of the village on the right was WOOD HOUSE, owned by the Burns family since the early thirties and run as a guest house. Bearing off to the left by the front gate of Wood House and up a steep incline was the old road to Buttermere and near the start of this was a small quarry. This road was replaced by the current road in the early 1900s. The next property at the entrance of the village was a whitewashed farmhouse on the right known as CRAGG FARM, which was farmed by the Burns family. On the opposite side of the road was the entrance to a small gravelled yard giving access to four cottages. The two end ones nearest to the road had been converted into one cottage known as CRAG FOOT owned and occupied by the Rev & Mrs Orme. Rev Orme was a retired former vicar of Buttermere. The middle cottage called CRAG FOOT COTTAGE was occupied by a handyman/cleaner. The far end cottage called HIGH CRAGG was the post office



and small shop run by Mary Clark. Her husband Syd was the lengthman responsible for the upkeep of the road between Hause Point and the tops of Honister and Newlands Passes. On the opposite side of the road was CRAGG COTTAGE occupied since the war by a retired couple. Adjoining this cottage was a stable with a loft above owned and used by Cragg farm. Just along the road on the left was TREVENE, a slate built house occupied by the schoolmistress and catering for visitors. Directly opposite was THE VICARAGE where lived the widow of Rev J T Peddar, the last resident vicar of Buttermere. Down the hill and just across the bridge over Sail Beck on the right was THE BRIDGE HOTEL run by Mr & Mrs Rodney Twitchin (previously known as the Victoria and where the author of the secret valley Nicholas Size was licensee for a number of years.) Turning right off the through road down the side of the Bridge Hotel on the left of a square was CROFT FARM farmed by Robbie Jackson and his wife, who also provided bed & breakfast accommodation. At the end of the square was THE FISH HOTEL run by Mr & Mrs Greenhow. The Fish Hotel was famous for its association with Mary Robinson, the Maid of Buttermere.

Back on the through road going up the hill on the left was THE OLD SCHOOL which closed in 1950. It was owned by the church and used for village meetings. Halfway up the hill on the right was the entrance to SYKE FARM, farmed by the Gibson family, who were followed by Mr & Mrs Kyle. Just past this was WILKIN SYKE FARM, farmed by the Faulder family. Both properties provided bed & breakfast. A footpath past Wilkin Syke Farm led to the lake and a tunnel, hewn out of the solid rock, which ran alongside the lake. Back on the road at the top of the hill was St JAMES CHURCH dated 1840. Ignoring the road on the left to Newlands Pass and travelling towards Gatesgarth the next property on the left was THE YOUTH HOSTEL previously known as The Buttermere Hotel. Across the road was BOWDERBECK COTTAGE owned by one of the colleges and used for holidays. After approximately half a mile on the right was a guest house known as DALEGARTH and also some cottages used by the Fell & Rock Climbing Club. In the same grounds

was HASSNESS, a guest house run by The Ramblers Association. The next property about a quarter of a mile further on and reached by a short driveway was LOWER GATESGARTH the holiday home of the provost of Eton, Sir Claude and Lady Elliott, who employed a resident housekeeper. The next property on the right was GATESGARTH FARM farmed by the Richardson family, who also catered for visitors. The last property on the right was GATESGARTH COTTAGE, the home of Annie Nelson well known for her teas and who was the daughter of the respected Herdwick sheep breeder Ned Nelson, who had previously farmed at Gatesgarth Farm. Further along this road, at the top of Honister Pass was located THE HONISTER SLATE QUARRY.

My thanks to Betty Coulthard for her assistance with this article

The Life and Times of Buttermere Mill

by Roger Asquith

The name 'Mill Beck' on an OS map is the only obvious indication that there was once a mill in Buttermere village. Information in local histories is sparse even though a mill ground the corn of the inhabitants here for upwards of 540 years. Angus Winchester notes that 'mention of a mill before 1215 ... suggests that a farming community had settled ... before the end of the twelfth century' (1). 'Watermills of Cumbria' (2) maintains that Buttermere mill was the last of the Norse/Shetland type working in the county, ceasing to operate between 1754 and 1770. The general literature on Britain's watermills however, indicates that if Buttermere Mill was indeed of the horizontal type (i.e. a 'Norse' or 'Shetland' mill) then it would have been a unique example for the post-medieval period in England.

The history of Buttermere Mill is thus linked to this issue. Was it a horizontal mill and therefore almost certainly not a manorial mill, in which case what were the circumstances or events that made Buttermere different from neighbouring manors/townships? Given this background and the early period in which it operated, the present objectives are to establish what is known of the mill,

including location, and how it fitted in to the local context.

The Horizontal Water Mill

Whether the mill was 'horizontal' or 'vertical' is not merely a technical detail. The former type 'is essentially the simple tool of a primitive agricultural community and is a natural development of the quern, turned by water instead of by hand' (3). In considering the historical and geographical distribution of mill types Richard Holt concluded that 'the horizontal mill flourished everywhere that peasants were able legally to operate their own mills being the least expensive design, the vertical mill on the other hand with its far greater costs of construction and maintenance was everywhere associated with large-scale milling. Whether milling was carried on as a major capitalist enterprise competing for custom, or as a feudal one maximising its profits through legal compulsion, the vertical mill with its greater overall efficiency and much greater potential power was likely to be preferred' (4).

In 1936 the authoritative C&WAAS published in its *Transactions* notes by Nicholas Size (author of 'The Secret Valley' and proprietor at that time of the Bridge Hotel, Buttermere) under the title 'Click Mill at Buttermere' (5). This would appear to be the common source behind references to the Buttermere Norse or Shetland mill (also known as a 'click mill' or horizontal mill). The key paragraphs are as follows:-

In Buttermere village at the point where the ordnance survey map shows a change in name of the Sail Beck to the Mill Beck, there is a curiously carved rock showing a large crescent or segment of a circle, the diameter of which must have been about 7 feet. It is balanced on the other side of the beck by a broken carving showing a small segment of a similar circle.

The two together are said to mark the site of a 'click mill' built across the little gorge through which the beck runs. Each circle contained a shaft with a set of paddles which revolved with the flow of the stream running between them. The shaft went up to the milling chamber above and each went through the nether millstone and operated



Figure 1. Borrowdale Mill – an example of a simple, manorial mill serving a Lakeland valley community. (Converted for residential purposes in 1936, it retains its original character, complete with overshot waterwheel. The elevated leat is visible on the left of the picture; a kiln was incorporated on the far side of the building when the storm-damaged mill was repaired in 1797).

the upper one which would rotate perpetually by direct action, whether in use or not. The carvings are about 18 inches deep the two sets of paddles would occasionally click together hence the name by which such mills were known in Scotland and Ireland.

The location where the ordnance survey map shows a change of name is commonly at the bridge, though 'Mill Beck' and 'Sail Beck' are applied to different stretches of the beck on succeeding editions. N. Size's mill description is completely at odds with the features of the typical horizontal water mill: 'It is made almost entirely of wooda wooden trough inclined at 20 - 40 degrees to the horizontal carries water diverted from a stream to a point near the outer radius of the wheel. Pouring out of the end of the trough, the water strikes the blades and so turns the wheel and the upper shaft' (3). The clearance between the millstones is adjustable and the mill can be set at rest by closing an upstream sluice. The paddle wheel and millstones would typically be about 3 feet in diameter. The term 'click mill' does not actually define a generic mill type, the name relates to the sound made by some mills as the grain feed shoe was periodically knocked to release corn. Absolutely nothing to do with the clashing of a pair of paddle wheels! A stone sitting on and rotating with the upper

millstone was often the trip or 'clapper' for this simple auto-feeder. Thus some horizontal mills such as Orkney's 'Dounby Click Mill' would click (pretty obviously!); others with a different feed arrangement, which just 'jiggled' the feed shoe, would not.

The major literature on the history of water mills seems largely to have ignored or discounted 'Click Mill at Buttermere'. According to Richard Holt (4) 'there is good reason to believe that the horizontal mill was at one time as ubiquitous in England as it was across the Irish Sea. But when and why did it disappear from the English countryside for disappear it certainly did and by the 13th century according to manorial documentation'. John Shaw (Water Power in Scotland 1550 to 1870, ref.6) noted the absence of horizontal mills in England in this specific period 'with the exception of one *unsubstantiated* site in Cumbria', referencing Size's article. It was the absence of a manorial monopoly that allowed the horizontal mill to flourish in the N and NW of Scotland until relatively recent times (4).

Archaeological evidence for a horizontal mill in England or Ireland (7,8) normally comprises parts of the wooden paddle wheels and/or penstock, with, notably, no large circular features cut into the bedrock. Two points arise. Firstly, was N. Size trying to underpin some pre-existing tradition of a local horizontal mill, so despite the case based on his physical evidence not being valid perhaps the notion should not yet be dismissed, and, secondly, what might be the rational explanation for the circular features he described? Those features, it seems, are no longer to be seen, perhaps removed by erosion, water course management or stone 'quarrying'.

Sourcing of Millstones

Having discounted any link between N. Size's (estimated) 7ft diameter, 18 ins deep 'carvings' and the location of a horizontal mill, it is interesting to note that, from the description given, these features are fully consistent with the extraction of millstones of appropriate diameter for a typical, vertical-wheeled corn mill. Improbable though this might

seem in the light of the total reliance on bought-in millstones in the 19C, the simple needs and cost constraints of upland rural mills in earlier times made local sourcing both viable and inevitable.

An estimate for a new wheat mill at Ullock (Dean's manorial mill) in 1768 allowed £26 for a pair of 'French stones' (9), a sum equivalent to 26 years rent for Buttermere mill. The grinding of barley and oats, the main or possibly the only requirement of Lakeland farming folk prior to this time, was less demanding than the grinding of the harder wheat, and did not require high quality stones from France or Derbyshire. The replacement of stones was, even so, a major issue for any corn mill, individual obligations being defined in mill leases and by 'the custom of the manor'. Often the stones were provided by the Lord – paid for or quarried from his land, the tenants being required to 'lead the millstones' to the mill. While this later meant the tenants paid a defined cash sum to pay for haulage, originally it involved all turning up to manhandle or cart the stones, depending on the terrain. The use of a 'wand' (i.e. a suitable pole) through the central hole to enable the stone to be rolled over rough ground and tracks from the quarry to the mill is described in 'The Scottish Country Miller' (10). In the case of Ullock Mill records survive identifying the manorial tenants of the Dean townships (Dean, Deanscales, Ullock, Ullock Mains, Pardshaw) who 'led the millstones to the mill' in 1692 and 1723 (9). Not surprisingly, given the cost of imported, good quality millstones and the issue of transport over rough roads, the preference, or often the only option, would be to source stones locally. Having discussed burrs and gritstones Mike Davies-Shiel (2) concluded that 'many other stones were used in local mills and the variety suggests either poverty or ingenuity or both'. The use of Eskdale Granite, and the similar Ennerdale Granite, is mentioned in association with several Cumbrian mills. Ennerdale Granite outcrops at Buttermere (11) with large slabs in the bed of Mill Beck (or is it Sail Beck?) above the bridge, presumably close to the site of N. Size's 'curiously carved rock'.

'Millstone making in Scotland' (12) explains the process of cutting a stone and hence the evidence left behind in the landscape. Having marked the circle, a gap would be cut around it, having a width of about 9ins and a depth matching the required millstone thickness. The central hole would be cut before separating the millstone from the bed rock. Thus a 7ft diameter feature would indicate the extraction of a 5 ½ ft millstone. The average size of stones for horizontal mills is 3ft (12)

while a diameter of 5 to 5½ ft is typical for a vertical-wheel mill (e.g. Eskdale, Borrowdale – 2). New millstones were up to 18 ins. thick, being replaced when worn down to 3 ins. (10).

Given the inaccessibility of Buttermere to wheeled transport (pre 1800), the suitability of the available local stone and the dimensions/form of the features described by Nicholas Size, the conclusion must be that this is evidence of extraction of millstones for a nearby vertical wheeled mill.

Buttermere Mill, it seems, was a typical corn mill of its period and region; it remains to consider the historical picture from manorial and other records.

The Percy Survey

A survey and valuation of the estates and privileges of Henry Percy, 8th Earl of Northumberland ('The Percy Great Survey'), dated 1578, tells us that 'All the tenants of Buttermire hold one water corn mill and renteth by the year – 8s Od' (13). The individual holdings and rents of the nineteen tenants-at-will are itemised (includes Buttermere village, Gatesgarth and surrounding tenements). John Norman rented 'a little close called Milndam' of ½ customary acre (0.8 statutory acre). The number of tenants would appear to be stable - 19 are also listed for hearth tax purposes in the 1670s - and would suggest that the mill then served more people than the 1801 census



Figure 2. Mill Beck, Buttermere, above the bridge. (Note the straight line of the mill leat leading from a dam).

population figure of 74. A 1774 traveller in the Scottish islands noted that where there was a suitable stream every farm had its own (horizontal) mill, otherwise two or three might share (3). Clearly Buttermere mill operated on a different scale.

All the tenants of Buttermere appear in the survey as 'tenants-at-will', retaining their holdings 'at the will of the lord according to the custom of the manor'. The customs could include providing a number of days labour at ploughing or harvest time, border service, obligation to use the lord's mill, lead millstones, etc. From the 12C the lord's ability to compel tenants to use his mill was not legally in question (4). Coincidentally the earliest historical evidence of this situation (according to ref.4) relates to a grant from Cecily de Rumilly of her mill at Silsden, Yorkshire in 1130. With the mill went the service or suit to it of the villagers who had no choice in the matter and were forbidden either to use their own mills (including hand mills) or to go to any other mill. Cecily de Rumilly and her descendants held the honour of Cockermouth from the twelfth century. Buttermere mill, should it indeed date from circa 1200, would have been built by Alice de Rumilly, daughter of the above, its purpose from new being to

maximise the estate's income from the tenants.

Tied customers, such as the tenants of Buttermere, paid a fee (known as 'multure') whereby a proportion, possibly up to 1/13th by volume, of their grain was retained by the miller. Customers with the freedom to choose where they ground their corn would pay a more competitive, economic rate - perhaps 1/24th. Both these rates were fixed according to local circumstances. The way lords managed their mills changed with time and circumstances. They could be held directly, with an employed miller, who would collect the multure. A more convenient arrangement for the lord was for the mill to be leased to a miller who then retained the multure as part of his income and to make his living had to ensure the customers attended his mill. As with other mills in the area, in 1578 Buttermere Mill was held by the tenants collectively (13). Failure to use the lord's mill as required could result in a fine; a system however developed whereby a cash sum could be paid individually or collectively to be released from the obligation to use the mill. If all the customers of a mill could be induced to pay for release, the lord could then leave it to decay without loss of income. Although originally there had to have been a working mill, in time the payment could be demanded in respect of the mill the lord could build, and require service to, should he so choose (4).

Other Manorial Records

A lease agreement between Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland and Christopher Dickson of Buttermere, dated September 1612 (14), specified a term of 21 years and a rent of 20 shillings per annum. The Earl 'doth demyse grante and to farm lett unto the said Christopher Dickson all that his water corn mill situate lyinge and being within the towne of Buttermire aforesaid commonly Buttermire milne sometime in th'occupacon of the tenants of Buttermire at by for or under the yearly rent of 6s 8d together with all suites sokes multures tolles wares (weirs?) dams ponds watercourses passages easements profits and comodities whatsoever to the said mill belonging or in

any wise appertaining'. The mill prior to 1612 therefore, was still held by the tenants as in 1578, but at a reduced rent (8s 0d in 1578). This reduction may well indicate some temporary relief necessitated by the poor harvests and high mortality rates, due to the occurrence of plague in Cumberland, between these dates.

'Suit of mill' is the obligation of the customary tenant to use the mill; the 'soke' is the defined area in which the mill holds its monopoly. Multures and tolls are terms for the milling fee charged, high for the customary tenant, lower for those with the liberty to go elsewhere. Christopher Dickson agreed, bound in the sum of £5, to 'repaire mantayne uphold susteyne and amend' as needed, and specifically at the end of the tenure, 'all and everie houses buildings bridges mill dams weeres and watercourses' appertaining to the premises. The lease holder could, by agreement with the lord's representatives, take such 'timber wood and stone' necessary for repairing the mill and other demised premises. The outline of the mill embodied in the above, is pretty much a generalised catch-all description of a water corn mill, apart that is from the inclusion of 'bridges', which are not normally part of a water mill. The use of the plural may just be following the style and manner of the document, but the requirement to keep the bridge in repair would indicate bridge and mill are in close proximity.

The next available evidence on the mill would indicate that Christopher Dickson did not actually take up the lease in 1612. A letter from Sir Wilfred Lawson and Thomas Fotherley to the Earl of Northumberland shows that the mill is still, in August 1618, held by the tenants of Buttermere at a rent of 8s 0d (15) 'We have sent your lordship hereinclosed a composition with one Thomas Dickson for a milne at Buttermire which the tenants have held by Tenant Right at viij shillings rent, he is willing to give twentie shillings yearlie, which we think better for your lordship though the profit be but little, than to let the mill go still in Tenant Right'. The main concern of the letter is a court case regarding the tenants of the Earl's manor of Bolton (nr. Aspatria), who were refusing to pay fines for their tenements.



Figure 3. Watercolour by Thomas Girtin circa 1797, 'Scene in the Lake District near Buttermere'. Tate Britain. The nearer building may well be Buttermere Mill, converted to a cottage by the date of the painting.

At this time, the first quarter of the 17 C, 'border tenant-right' was a contentious issue in the northern border counties of England (16). Customary tenants held their tenements by payment of small fixed rents with the condition of providing service against the Scots when required. James I declared that with the union of 1603 Border Service was no longer necessary and tenants had no title to their lands as the service by which they held had ceased to exist. The lords of manors were expected to 'take to themselves the absolute estate of the several tenants within their respective manors and refuse to admit the heirs to their ancestors' estates'. The tenants, however, held meetings, pledged mutual support and took legal action through the courts. James I died early in 1625 and on June 19th of that year the Court of the Star Chamber established and confirmed the

tenants in their ancient customary tenure of tenant-right.

It may be surmised that the tenants of Buttermere resisted the leasing of the mill in 1612, seeking to maintain its tenant-right status. However after the court ruling of 1625, it seems, mills unlike tenements were let by lease rather than held by tenant-right.

Why would Sir Wilfred Lawson of Isel Hall have been involved in issues regarding the Earl of Northumberland's estates? The 9th Earl, known as 'the Wizard Earl', was one of the wealthiest peers of the court of Elizabeth I, but in the reign of James I he was suspected of involvement in the Gunpowder Plot, fined £30,000 and spent 17 years as a prisoner in the Tower of London. Wilfred Lawson, it is said, 'owed his estates and his standing in the county to a fortunate marriage' (17), that is to the widow of Thomas Leigh of Isel. His 'standing' was considerable; positions held included MP and High Sheriff for Cumberland, Convenor to the Royal Commission established to govern the borders and Grand Steward of the Earl of Northumberland's lands in Cumberland. Thomas Fotherley, later Sir Thomas, the other signatory to the above letter, was,

like Wilfred Lawson, from the minor gentry, rising to achieve power and influence (17). He succeeded Thomas Percy (of the gunpowder plot) as receiver-general for the Earl's northern estates, later becoming an MP. Rarely can the affairs of a humble corn mill have received such a level of attention!

Most of the 17 C and the first half of the 18 C can be accounted for regarding the lessees of the mill. Thomas Dickson was succeeded by John Hudson in 1641 (18), followed by John Scott in 1666 (19). James Scott leased for 21 years from 1689 (20) perhaps taking us to 1710, or even later. When Charles Bowman, yeoman of Gatesgarth, took the mill for 21 years in 1754 (21), it had previously been in the tenure of John Norman. The rent having been 20 shillings since the days of Thomas Dickson, Charles Bowman's rent was 15s Od 'in consideration of the charges and expenses ... in repairing the water corn mill with the buildings and appurtenances'. The description of the mill in the lease, at this point indicates that no significant development or updating had taken place. Likewise the terms of business regarding the obligation of tenants to use the mill were unchanged.

All the recorded tenants or leaseholders of the mill were from Buttermere land-holding families. There is no 'miller of Buttermere' recorded in Lorton church registers. As a simple mill of this period, serving a small community, Buttermere Mill would not warrant a professional, full-time miller, and in any event such a man would be unlikely to have the resources to provide the assurances required by the lease. In the words of Enid Gauldie, referring to this situation in 'The Scottish Country miller', 'there was in fact no more need for a skilled and apprenticed miller than there was for a stone mason. People built their own houses and could all turn their hand to the operation of the mill. Its machinery was familiar to them and easily understood' (10)

The 18th Century - A Time of Change for the Corn Mill

Whether or not Charles Bowman put the mill to rights is not known. For many generations life in Buttermere would have changed little, however, with regard to the local mill was things changed markedly in

the 18th century. An essential aspect of oat milling was 'drying' in the kiln (more akin to toasting than removal of superficial dampness), a process hitherto regarded as the business of the farmer not the miller (10). Barns would have a small hearth set into the corner. The next improvement was a rounded stone addition to the barn of two storeys, the fire chamber on the ground floor, the drying chamber above. In the Percy Survey (1578) can be found 'John Bowe holds at Braithwaite a tenement house a barn and a kiln' (13). Free-standing corn drying kilns occurred in places, e.g. Brackenthwaite and Borrowdale, set apart from the mill due to the fire hazard. With the introduction of perforated tiles or perforated iron sheets for the drying floor, the hazard was much reduced and from 1700 onwards a mill owner who had to compete for business would add a kiln to his mill. Ullock water corn mill was leased for £7-10s per year in 1742; Ullock mill and adjoining kiln leased for £10 in 1757(9).

With the enfranchisement of customary tenants in Buttermere from 1759, the compulsory use of the mill would decrease, and, given the choice, farmers would take their business to a mill with a kiln. The grain taken by Buttermere's tenants to the mill would have been oats, barley, and malted barley for brewing beer (23, 24, and 25). The single pair of millstones would be set wide to take the husks off the barley or oats, and then set close to grind the flour. A low single storey building would accommodate the necessary machinery as shown by the nearby Borrowdale Mill, Fig. 1. The progressive, commercial mills at this time, mid to late 1700s, would have several pairs of stones, in part to avoid the need for constantly resetting the gap; a pair for shelling barley or oats, a pair for grinding the same and a pair of expensive burr stones (or similar) in a wheat mill, purpose built to produce the fine white flour, then increasingly in demand. Sack hoists and sieves added to operational efficiency and product quality; 3 or 4 floors now being required and the building looked more like the archetypal industrial corn mill. There is no sign from the leases of any 'improvement' to Buttermere mill. The era of 'the skilled and apprenticed miller' had arrived and the simple mill, such as at Buttermere, with its

dependence on tied customary tenants, fell into disuse.

The Site of Buttermere Mill

There is some difficulty reconciling the earliest years of the Bridge Hotel, formerly the Victoria, with Nicholas Size's statement (5), that 'the mill was dismantled about 1735, when the miller's house was purchased for a parsonage, and for three years was occupied by 'Wonderful Walker', who obtained a license for it as an inn'. The last known mill lease is dated 1754 (21). In 1758 the house with barn, stable and 22 acres at Brigg (Bridge) End was tenanted as a farm by John Fletcher (22). John Bolton (26) tells us that Osbern Littledale, priest of Buttermere, in 1811 lived in 'an old fashioned house on the site of which now stands the Victoria Hotel'. The Tithe Survey of 1840 shows the Victoria Inn and cottage, at Bridge End, owned and occupied by Charles Richards. Twenty years later the Queen Victoria Inn appears on the map as a larger, developed building akin to the present Bridge Hotel (OS1). Nicholas Size, always keen to publicise Buttermere and further his business interests, created a history for his hotel including both an early foundation date and an association with the renowned Wonderful Walker with his Wordsworth connections. (A folk lore tradition had developed in the 19 C in respect of 'Wonderful Walker', as a school teacher and church reader in Loweswater and Buttermere respectively; though there is no evidence in local records of any connection - see ref. 27). Reliable historical sources do not support N. Size's version of events relating to the foundation of the inn, with its implications for the mill – neither the date of 1735 nor the 'Wonderful Walker' connection.

Just above the bridge Mill Beck emerges from its 'little gorge', which extends some considerable distance and height up the fell side. The character of the beck changes suddenly from a rocky, tumbling stream above the bridge to a relatively benign brook below it. To

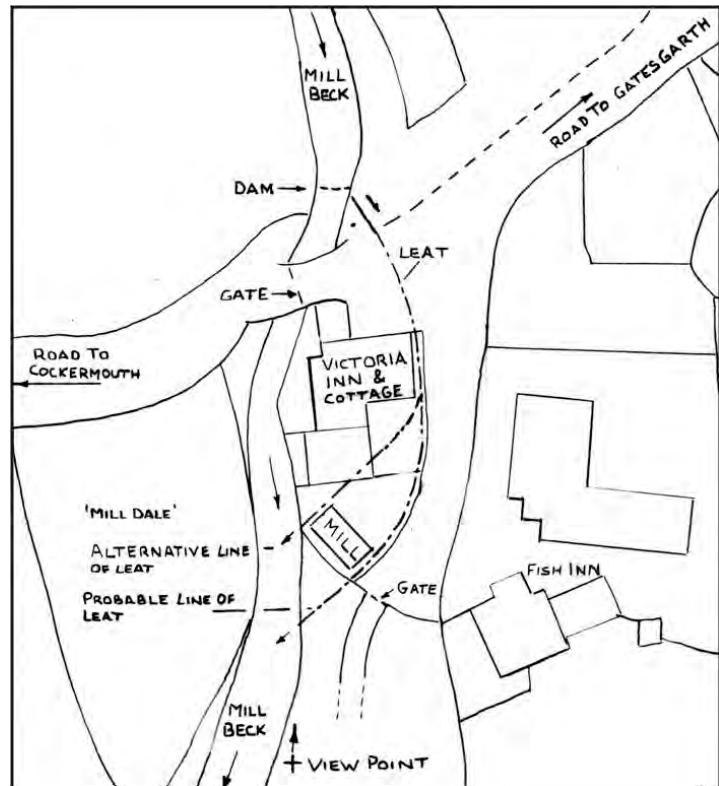


Figure 4. Map of Buttermere Village based on 1845 Tithe Map. Shows the view point for Thomas Girtin's Watercolour in fig. 3, and the position of the mill, later converted to the cottage shown in the painting. The position of the dam and start of the leat indicated by fig. 2 are also marked. The water wheel would be on a gable end, probably the one nearest to the viewpoint. This is the option consistent with the property boundary line.

benefit, from the fall of the beck, the mill would need to have been close to the short transition between the gorge and the bridge. A leat or launder from above the bridge to a mill wheel below the bridge is a possibility, though the road level in the era of the mill would have had to be different from today to allow either passage of the leat under the roadway or to cross over with sufficient headroom to permit road use. The features that are visible today alongside the beck above the bridge are consistent with a dam and leat, (Fig. 2). Depending on the height of the dam, the leat could have been elevated considerably compared with the level in Fig. 2.

A Thomas Girtin watercolour 'Scene in the Lake District, near Buttermere' shows the bridge, Mill Beck and two buildings on the site of the present Bridge Hotel c. 1797, (Fig. 3). The larger building could be John Fletcher's house and barn, later the 1840s Victoria Inn. The nearer building, it is proposed, is the mill itself, having been converted to a cottage. The size, proportions and character of this building, are remarkably similar to those of Borrowdale Mill in Fig. 1. The two, in their day, had much in common, being simple manorial mills of similar era, both on fell side becks serving upland Lakeland farming communities. It is conjectured that Buttermere Mill, as shown in Fig. 3, would, when operational, have had an overshot wheel on a gable end wall. The map in fig. 4 shows that the position of the mill/cottage depicted in fig.3 fits very well with the property boundary of the Victoria Inn (now the Bridge Hotel), as shown on the Tithe map of 1840. The 'probable' line of the leat shown on the map could have defined the boundary. The orientation of the building, at an angle to the beck would have suited the return of water to the beck.

Conclusion

The residents of Buttermere before the 1750s will have made good and regular use of the mill, for oatmeal was preferred freshly milled and corn was best stored unground and left unthreshed until needed. In the words of E. Gauldie (10) 'the central importance of the corn mill is not easily grasped until it is understood that the mill used to be the supplier of almost every mouthful of food!' As customary tenants the inhabitants were constrained and obliged to use Buttermere's manorial mill. In the late medieval/early modern period such mills were invariably of the vertical water-wheel type. N. Size's case for a 'click-mill' at Buttermere has no basis; the evidence is inconsistent with the physical principles and construction of the horizontal mill.

Buttermere Mill was typical of its time and upland, Lake District valley location, apparently going out of use between 1754 and 1758. The available evidence fits with the site of the mill being below the bridge, where the Bridge Hotel now stands, supplied from a dam in the

beck above the bridge. The mill building, some forty years after the mill last operated, is believed to be depicted in Thomas Girtin's 'Scene in the Lake District near Buttermere' (Fig.3).

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Joshua Lucock Bragg, 1772-1809, of Lorton Hall: mad, bad or sad?
by Derek Denman

By the time that this *Journal* is published, the Denmans will have lived in Lorton for twenty years. This includes the nine years, from 1993 to 2002, when we owned and inhabited the old hall range of Lorton Hall, which we re-named Winder Hall. This occasion seems right for an article to commemorate a previous owner who also held it for nine years, but 200 years earlier. Joshua Lucock, a native of Cockermouth, purchased Lorton Hall in 1800 and died there in 1809, by which time his name had been extended to Joshua Lucock Bragg, as required to inherit his uncle's fortune in 1805. Bragg must surely be the most interesting Lorton character in the historical records. Readers may already have encountered Mr Bragg in many articles in our *Journal*. As more records of his actions turn up, the more they confirm his extreme character and behaviour, the subject of this article.

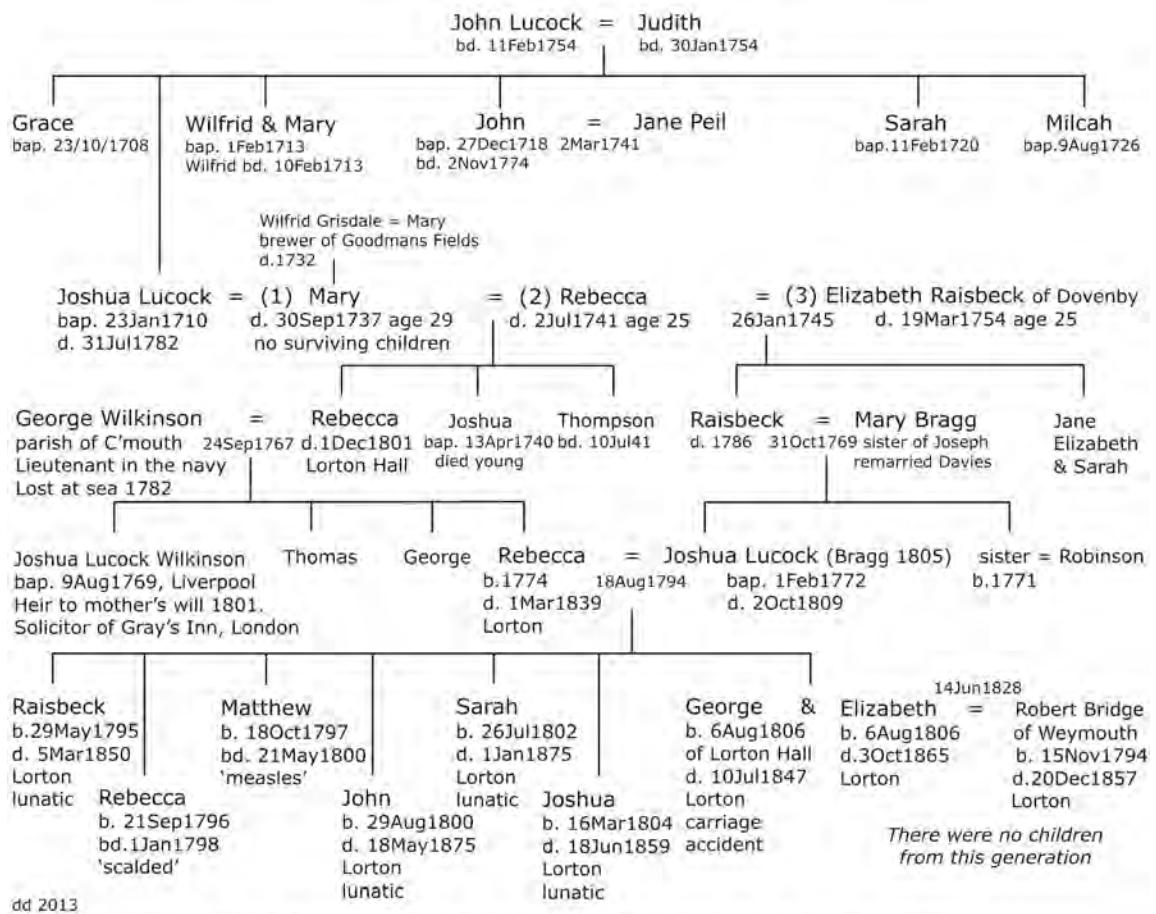
The hall itself is not very old; the fake medieval history of Scottish royal visitors and early chapels was the creation of an over-active mid twentieth century imagination. The old hall was a sixteenth century, or possibly earlier, structure for the Winder family, who owned the freehold estate for 300 years. The house was remodelled, with the stables, for the large family of John Winder in 1663. In the time of the Winders the hall was the seat of a mini-manor based on six ancient tenements, some of which had been replaced by the house and grounds. The Winders' estate was one third of the original grant of the freehold manor of (Low or Nether) Lorton, made before 1230. The Winders left in 1699. The fine house, its status as a gentleman's seat, its history, and the new name of Lorton Hall, attracted a string of minor gentry and adventurers through the eighteenth century. In the last year of that century, 1800, John Peile Barnes sold Lorton Hall to Joshua Lucock.

Joshua Lucock was the grandson of a better known Joshua Lucock of Cockermouth, 1710-1782, the man who built or rebuilt 'Wordsworth House' in

1745. He was a JP, the sheriff of Cumberland in 1745, and acquired considerable property. He first became a brewer and married the daughter of Wilfrid Grisdale, brewer of Goodmans Fields in Whitechapel, now London E1. Through his deceased first wife and their deceased daughter, Lucock acquired Grisdale's small manor of Hewthwaite in Setmurthy, a moiety (half) of the freehold manor of Brigham, plus other property. Lucock married two more young women who both died at the age of 25. He was survived by four years by one son, Raisbeck Lucock. Raisbeck married Mary Bragg, the sister of Joseph Bragg of Liverpool. Their son, Joshua Lucock of Castlegate, was fourteen when his father died in 1786, and came into possession of his inheritance in 1793, when he reached 21.

In 1794 Joshua Lucock married his cousin, Rebecca Lucock Wilkinson, 1774-1839, who was also a grandchild of Joshua Lucock and was sister to Joshua Lucock Wilkinson. He was a friend of William Wordsworth and the author of *The Wanderer* and other works. Rebecca's father, Lieutenant George Wilkinson RN, had died at sea in 1782, and prior to Rebecca's marriage her mother had settled a thousand pounds on Rebecca in her will. Joshua and Rebecca Lucock had three children in Cockermouth, though only the eldest, Raisbeck, survived to move to Lorton Hall in 1800. Five more were born at Lorton Hall by 1806. The family was still young when Joshua Lucock Bragg died on 2 October 1809, aged 37. At that time it seems that the affliction that would later cause four children to be declared lunatics had not yet affected them. Did it affect the father?

The young family which moved into Lorton Hall in 1800 was clearly one of the principal Cockermouth gentry families, with both status and property. In 1803 Joshua Lucock had plans drawn of his manor of Brigham, essentially a few residual customary closes of little value. Another plan showed his Lorton Hall seat and property, presumably much as he had bought it from John Peile Barnes. From this plan we have the only sketch of St Cuthbert's before it was rebuilt with the bell tower, and another of Lorton Hall itself, more or less as the Winders left it.



The Lucock & Lucock Bragg family of Cockermouth and Lorton Hall

A part of the Lorton Hall estate plan that speaks of Joshua Lucock is the kennels, proudly marked at Lorton Cross where now we have the hard standing with bus stop and village notice board. According to John Bolton's grandmother-in-law, 'Mrs Lancaster says that she remembers Mr. Joshua Lucock Bragg hunting in Brackenthwaite. He kept a pack of hounds and hunted regularly. He was not like "John Peel with his coat so grey" but wore a scarlet coat'. Mrs Lancaster was recalling him after 1805, when he had bought the Brackenthwaite estate, including Scale Hill and Lanthwaite Wood, with the fortune of his late uncle, Joseph Bragg. There must have been a considerable number of dogs, because on 7 May 1810 Bragg's trustees settled an account of one guinea for 'a Horse bought for the purpose of being killed for the Dogs'.

Lorton Hall provided extensive stables for the horses, and a coach house.

Bragg employed a young servant/coachman, John Scott for several years. Some idea of Bragg's passion for riding can be gained from the probate accounts of his managing trustee, the gentleman-brewer Matthew Smith of Cockermouth. Smith had been one of Lucock's guardians during his minority, and incurred the task of selling the late Bragg's horses in 1809:-

| | |
|---|----------|
| 7 Dec 1809 Auction sale of some of the testator's horses at Lorton Hall | £250-0-9 |
| 9 Mar 1810 Reginald Armstrong for a chaise horse and another | £45-15-0 |
| 30 May 1810 Reginald Armstrong for a bay gelding | £33-9-6 |
| 2 Feb 1811 For the testator's bay horse | £18-18-0 |
| 26 Feb 1811 For the testator's Phaeton | £7-0-0 |
| 11 April 1811 For a pointer dog | £3-3-0 |
| 11 Dec 1812 Mr Coulthard for Harness | £3-3-0 |
| 21 Jun 1813 For a mare sold at Rosely | £25-4-0 |

Just how many horses Joshua Lucock Bragg had cannot be precisely known,

| Name | Tenant | Rent pa | Acquir'd | Notes |
|---|------------------------------|------------------|-----------|--|
| LORTON | | | | |
| Lorton Hall & grounds | In hand | | 1800 | Freehold |
| Pack Horse public house | George Chambers | £10-0-0 | 1800 | customary |
| Pepper Moulds estate | William Robinson | £35-0-0 | 1800-3 | May include Wilkinson's tenement 1803 |
| House & Church Croft | John Fletcher | £41 | 1800-3 | May include Wilkinson's tenement 1803 |
| Fletcher's Estate | John Bank | £73-10-0 | 1806 | Kirkgate End. Part customary. |
| Lorton Town Head estate | Barthololew Stagg | £100 | 1800 | |
| Highside | Joseph Hodgson | £50-0-0 | ukn | |
| Long Boon Dykes | John Scott | £15-0-0 | 1800 | |
| Cottage Birketts | John Brough | £2-10-0 | 1800 | Now Birkett House |
| Cottage | Stephen Martin | £1-10-0 | 1800 | Now Stable Cottage, Lorton Hall |
| BUTTERMERE | | | | |
| Low Swinside, plus Raynes & Holmes Meadow | Peter Fisher | £73-10-0 | ukn | |
| WHINFELL | | | | |
| Lorton Mill and land | Thomas Thompson | £83-13-0 | 1800 | |
| BRACKENTHWAITE | | | | |
| Hollins estate | Matthew Stabler | £89-0-0 | 1805 | |
| Scale Hill estate & New Inn | Henry Hewitson | £20 | 1805 | |
| Peel Place | Joseph Fearon | £80 | 1805 | |
| Lanthwaite Green estate | William Parkin | £52-10-0 | 1804 &5 | Two purchases, Betty Stainton customary 1804. Mortgaged for £2500, 22 Feb 1809 |
| LOWESWATER | | | | |
| Lord's rent | Steward Henry Muncaster | £30-17-0 | 1808 | Auction 1807, completed May 1808. Amount varied |
| The Holm estate | Thomas & John Wilson | £68 | 1808 | Auction 1807, completed May 1808. Let as grazing, rent at 1813 |
| Loweswater lake | In hand | | 1808 | Auction 1807, completed May 1808 |
| Rigg Bank | Captain Scott | £60-0-0 | 1808 | Auction 1807, completed May 1808 |
| Pottergill | Henry Cass | £31-10-0 | ukn | Purchased JLB customary from Richard Fearon, 1807 |
| COCKERMOUTH | | | | |
| Messuage in Cockermouth | Pearson Younghusband | £7-7-0 | Inherited | |
| Messuage at head of Castle Street | Robert Barnes | £3-3-0 | Inherited | |
| Messuage at Castle Gate | Grace Hinde | £4-10-0 | inherited | |
| Shedfield at Grayson's closes | Joseph Harrison & Mary Peill | £21-0-0 | Inherited | |
| South & East Brewer fields | William Bolton | £40-0-0 | inherited | |
| SETMURTHY | | | | |
| Hewthwaite estate | Thomas Stagg | £100-0-0 | inherited | |
| Lowfield Estate | William & John Reeves | £160 | inherited | |
| BASSENTHWAITE | | | | |
| Braideness estate | Joseph Gally | £105 | inherited | Mortgaged for £1500, 6 Feb 1809 |
| WESTWARD parish | | | | |
| Islekirk estate | Francis McKnight | £260-0-0 | inherited | Mortgaged for £3000, 24-25 Jul 1807 |
| EGREMONT | | | | |
| Estate | Arthur White | £81-5-0 | inherited | Wholly or partly disposed of by 1812 |
| Total rental | | £1699-12s | | Approx £40k market value |

Table 1. Rental in 1810 of the estate of Joshua Lucock Bragg of Lorton Hall, deceased.
 Main source: TNA/PRO/C101/5337

because we do not know the number in the main sale conducted by the Lorton auctioneer, Stephen Martin. There must have been well over ten sold in total, without counting the 'horses and carriages' which Rebecca was to retain the use of during her widowhood, under the terms of the will. Bragg's Phaeton, sold in 1811, would have been a sporty open carriage drawn by a single horse or a pair, with four large wheels and a minimal body, fast and dangerous. The name refers to the ride of Phaeton, son of Helios, who nearly set the earth on fire while attempting to drive his father's 'chariot of the sun'. Today's Bragg might drive a Porsche. The Phaeton might have been more suited to cutting a dash in Cockermouth than for long journeys, but could it have been the very carriage which, in late 1805, conveyed Bragg via Dove Cottage to London, entrusted with the safe delivery of a Wordsworth manuscript? A previous manuscript had been stolen from the post, but then discarded by the thieves.

It seems that Bragg's main love, and that of any country gentleman, was for landed property and the means of obtaining it. Land equalled status; tenanted land, particularly land which had been held for generations, increased that status. The Luocks, associated with brewing, were not an old landed Cockermouth family, but before he became a Bragg, Joshua Luock sought to establish a large landed estate based on a seat at Lorton, taking the position of squire of Lorton. In 1800 there were no serious competitors in Lorton for that role, nor had there been for a century since the Winders left. High Lorton, particularly, was prospering and developing commercially since being connected to Cockermouth and Keswick by the turnpike road. Lorton was clearly crying out for the control and authority of a true gentry presence, and Joshua Luock was the man to provide it. There are few contemporary records of his property purchases, but Table 1 gives a rental of his estate in 1810, from Chancery records, and it works back where possible to the acquisitions. That rental of £1,700 suggests a sale value of around £40,000, at 25 years purchase. Joshua Luock made



Lorton Hall and the dog kennels, 1803

some purchases of farm property before 1805, but bought more when he inherited uncle Joseph Bragg's Liverpool estate, renaming his family as Braggs. It seems that Joshua Luock was content to exchange his family name for wealth, as were many gentry. Next the ex-Lichigary bankrupt estate at Brackenthwaite was purchased for £7,200 in 1805, and in 1807 Bragg bid £14,100 at auction for the Lawsons' Loweswater manor and estate, completing the purchase in May 1808. In March 1808 Bragg had raised the necessary funds by selling Joseph Bragg's development land in Liverpool for £13,000. Joshua Luock Bragg was now Squire of Lorton, a JP for Cumberland, and lord of the manors of Brigham and Loweswater, Thackthwaite & Brackenthwaite – though only for seventeen months.

Bragg liked to buy landed property, but not to part with money. When he died in 1809, a long list of tradesmen presented their respects and their accounts, including bills for nearly £20 for oats for all those horses. A gentleman did not pay tradesmen in ready money for goods and services, but would expect a supply on account. To some extent the length and age of the unpaid account was a measure of credit-worthiness and status. From Matthew Smith's accounts, Bragg did not seem to have paid many tradesmen's and professional men's bills, nor rates nor taxes, for some years. Robert Mounsey, Bragg's solicitor, was owed £453. Bragg's coachman, John Scott, was owed £21 in wages and had probably never been paid by Bragg. This was not for lack of cash, because at Bragg's death Matthew Smith was holding £908 of Bragg's money, and in Lorton Hall they found £4,868. Did Bragg

inherit enough money to buy all those estates and still have nearly £6,000? Not at all. He had paid for all the estates except for Fletcher's estate at Kirkgate End, on which he owed £2,292 plus interest. But he had financed some of his early activity by borrowing, and had funded some of his later purchases by mortgaging those properties he already owned. He created a buy-to-let portfolio partly on borrowed money, which worked well while property values were rising, until 1815. After Bragg's death in 1809 his debts of borrowed money, given in Table 2, were represented by another, rather grander, queue of creditors presenting their respects and their promissory notes. In February 1809, shortly before his fatal illness, Bragg had raised £4,000 in mortgages, which probably formed the bulk of the money found in Lorton Hall, as yet unspent. Was he planning to pay his debts or buy more property? We can only guess. When he died, the balance of £13,500 debts of borrowed money and £5,777 cash was a net deficit of £7,700, which set the trustees on their programme of further mortgaging and of selling some of the property.

Was Bragg a canny purchaser of property? In many cases he will have had professional help, but in one case, the purchase of Loweswater manor and estate, it seems clear that the vendors saw him coming. One can create a mental image, which may be entirely wrong, of Joshua Lucock Bragg racing down Main Street in his Phaeton and swaggering into the Globe Hotel before the auction, held at 6pm on 28th August 1807. Perhaps he arrived in time for a good lunch and an afternoon's hospitality. Maybe he was flushed with his uncle's legacy and intoxicated with the idea of being the powerful lord of the seventy customary tenants of Loweswater. Surely he must have been bid up to the high total sum of £14,100 by some paid bidders – a common practice. When Bragg's trustees decided to sell in 1813, land prices had moved significantly upwards, but their asking price was down at £11,000. The purchaser, John Marshall, had it valued by John Norman, who had been steward to Wilfrid Lawson of Isel when Bragg bought bid for the manor in 1807. Marshall was at a loss to understand why Bragg had paid so much when

| Lender | Year lent | Nature | £ |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Deborah Harrison, executors | Ukn | Balance | 144 |
| Peter Fisher | Ukn | Balance | 55 |
| Joseph Smith, executors | Ukn | Balance | 91 |
| William Note? | Ukn | Balance | 6 |
| Ann Robinson | Ukn | principal | 100 |
| Daniel Harrison | ukn | principal | 89 |
| Joseph Fisher | 1795 | principal | 250 |
| Mary Smith | 1798 | principal | 700 |
| John Simpson | 1804 | principal | 200 |
| John Lancaster | 1806 | principal | 300 |
| Captain Charles Reed | 1806 | principal | 700 |
| George Peill | 1806 | principal | 500 |
| Fletcher's estate (outstanding) | 1806 | principal | 2292 |
| Islekirk estate mortgage | 1808 | principal | 3000 |
| Lanthwaite Green mortgage | 1809 | principal | 2500 |
| Braideness estate mortgage | 1809 | principal | 1500 |
| William Pearson | 1809 | principal | 329 |
| Mary Davies (his mother) | From 1806 | Dowry | c.700 |
| Total | | | c.13500 |

Table 2. Joshua Lucock Braggs debts of money at death, excluding trades and professions

Norman now said that the estate was worth less than £10,000, including £2,000 as a generous valuation of the right to the general fines. Marshall paid £10,500 and did not get fair value. Conversely, the Liverpool property of Joseph Bragg, which Joshua Lucock Bragg had sold for £13,000 in 1808 to pay for Loweswater, was sold again in June 1812 for £22,000. Bragg did not do well.

The method of management of that Loweswater manor and estate says much about Bragg. He set about stripping it of its timber and its mineral assets for maximum income, regardless of the rights of others, and with no concern about the aesthetic consequences in an area now frequented and celebrated by picturesque artists and tourists. On the Loweswater manor, which became his property on 17 May 1808, there was 'a large quantity of Oak and other Timber Wood, growing upon the Customary Estates, all of which belongs to the Lord.' When in 1813 his trustees advertised the Loweswater manor they noted that 'the springs of wood are

valuable & when last cut about 6 years ago sold for upwards of £1500'. Bragg had stripped that timber for cash, refusing to pay tenants for the damage caused in the process. John Norman, still working for the Lawson estate in 1808, replied on 29 November to a letter from Robert Scott, who was possibly Bragg's inherited tenant of Rigg Bank. Scott complained that Bragg had refused to pay damages for cutting down the wood, and had referred Scott and his claim to the Lawson trustees. Norman was 'astonished' that Bragg would not pay and 'wondered how Mr Bragg could imagine the trustees – liable to pay damages for the thing that he is actually receiving the profits of'.

Similarly, Bragg decided to exploit the mineral rights of his new manor, reopening Spedding's green slate quarry as the Bragg green slate quarry, and searching for copper ore in Birkness and Warnscale. This part of the manor lay beyond Sour Milk Gill in the township of Buttermere. Here Bragg ignored the mineral rights of the duke of Norfolk, who held the freehold of that estate, and scorned the protestations of the duke's agents. In the plaintiff's legal case for damages, which was brought against Bragg's trustees in 1812, the late Joshua Lucock Bragg was described as 'of famous memory', suggesting that his cavalier behaviour was well known.

We know little of his activities as squire of Lorton, except in the case of St Cuthbert's, where he was the leading signatory on the petition of 1806 for a faculty to rebuild. The records seem to show that the parishioners had difficulty with Bragg's erratic decisions and behaviour:-

... Bragg had promised to build a tower to the new Church "about three yards square and nine feet above the rigging of the said Chapel." However, when the tower had been built up to the height of the roof "he ordered the workman off, saying that 'the tower appeared so small and diminutive that it was only like a chimney,' although the plan was his own." The parishioners then asked leave to build "an open bell-case for two bells, as it was before in the old chapel – which will tend to frustrate the whims of our Village Squire." However we find the parishioners, at the same meeting [June 1809] at which they expressed their satisfaction at the rebuilding "Resolved that a small tower-steeple twenty

yards square, when measured on the outside – and three yards higher than the rigging of the roof, shall be erected at the West end of the said chapel, at the expense of the Parish."

The rebuilding was commenced in 1807 and completed, except for the tower, by June 1809, when Bragg was terminally ill in Lorton Hall, having signed his will on 11 April. The fact that Bragg had not yet contributed to the cost is confirmed by the accounts of his trustees. On 11 December 1809 Matthew Smith paid £21 'towards erection of Lorton Church steeple, the testator having in his lifetime promised to contribute towards the expense'.

Just one more dimension of Bragg's character can be considered from the evidence, and that is in his treatment of women and their rights to money and property. At this date a woman's property became her husband's on marriage. That which she acquired after marriage was protected only by a requirement for a husband to gain her consent before he could dispose of it. A wife was considered as little different from property, and how can property own property? A widow had more rights; in particular to dower as long as she did not marry or 'miscarry'. Common law entitled her to a home and one third of the profits of her late husband's freehold property. For example John Peile Barnes mortgaged the Lorton Hall estate in 1797, but did not sell to Joshua Lucock until his mother, Eleanor Barnes, had died at Lorton Hall in 1800.

Bragg's father, Raisbeck Lucock, had died in 1786, and at some time before Bragg's death in 1809 his mother had remarried, becoming Mary Davies. In December 1810 his trustees paid Mary Davies arrears payments in lieu of dower amounting to £900, to cover the four and a half years of payments which Bragg had borrowed by not paying. The avoidance of the future dower rights of his own wife was also an issue for Bragg. When her mother died at Lorton Hall in 1801, Rebecca Lucock received an inheritance of £1,000, effectively a deferred dowry. But in purchasing the Brackenthwaite freehold estate in 1805, Bragg placed the ownership with his trustee, Richard Wordsworth of Wordsworth and Addison, expressly to avoid that estate being liable to dower. In his will he was more generous to his wife,

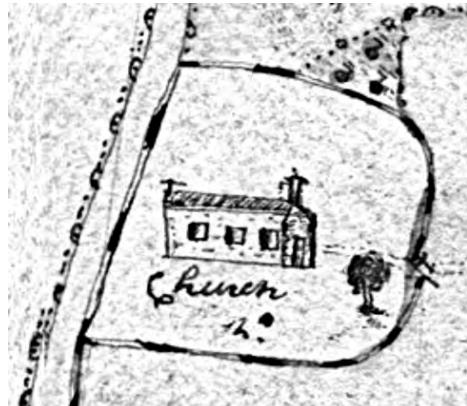
who was neither an executor nor a trustee of his will. She would have the income from his Lorton freehold estates if she gave up rights to dower, and his two daughters would each have £3000 at age twenty-one. But power relationships may have been different during that last illness, when the will was written and signed in April 1809.

The most extreme example of his attitude to women and their money was shown in his treatment of Mary Bragg of Egremont, in a case which she took to the court of Chancery in 1806, as Bragg v Bragg. Joshua Lucock was sole executor of Joseph Bragg's will, as well as residuary legatee. This meant that after the bequests had been honoured and debts paid, what was left was his, and no-one else need have sight of what that was, apart from the payment of legacy duty. Joseph Bragg left an annuity for life for his brother Thomas of Egremont, and the sum of £200 to each of Thomas' daughters, including the unmarried Mary Bragg. In her petition, Mary Bragg complained that:-.

'He the said Joshua Lucock Bragg refuses to pay your Oratrix the said legacy of two hundred pounds or any interest in respect thereof. And at some time he pretends that the personal Estate whereof the said Testator died possessed was small and inconsiderable and not sufficient or however not more than sufficient for the payment of his Just Debts. Whereas your Oratrix charges the contrary thereof to be true. And that the personal Estate and Effects of the said Testator which have been received by the said Joshua Lucock Bragg were very large and considerable and much more than sufficient for the payment of his Just Debts and funeral expenses and all the Legacies given by his will.'

Mary Bragg obtained her £200, but had to go to the most extreme lengths to get it.

The circumstances of Bragg's illness and death in 1809 are hard to establish from the records. It would be valuable to know whether Bragg suffered the same sudden collapse into incapacity which struck four of his children, such that they were unable to manage their affairs and were eventually declared lunatics in 1834. Raisbeck was said to have been incapacitated from 1 August 1816, Joshua from 1 June 1819, John from 1 July 1823 and Sarah from 1 November 1828. The trustees accounts of their education



St Cuthberts in 1803, before the rebuild

confirm that Raisbeck's collapse occurred at Queens College Cambridge in May 1816 and Joshua at Queens College Oxford in 1819. John survived Pembroke Hall College, Cambridge. He and Sarah, who spent a year finishing at a girls' school at Crofton Hall, reached 21 before a collapse. The twins, George and Elizabeth, were unaffected. Though the four children lived long lives at Lorton Hall in the care of attendants, it is possible that this obviously inherited condition affected their father, who might have collapsed in spring 1809 and lasted only some sixth months.

Bragg was clearly his usual self in February 1809, when he was mortgaging his properties to raise cash. Then, on 6th March, he signed a letter to the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral, as lords of the manor, confirming that he had sold the top end of Broom Close to the inhabitants of Lorton for a school building, for the nominal sum of five shillings. On 11th April Bragg signed his will, which is a very strong indication that a serious illness was upon him, and nothing more is known of him until his death on 2nd October. He was buried in Cockermouth. It is clear from his will that from the time of his illness the Cockermouth gentry took control. It was written by the solicitor, John Fisher, and three Cockermouth, or ex-Cockermouth gentlemen became his trustees. They also became the guardians of his children, together with his wife as long as she remained his widow. The will was as rational and fair and careful as Bragg was not, rewarding those who had been of service to him, and those who were to manage the estate, continuing the

provisions of Joseph Bragg's will, and making generous provisions for the family, rather than just the heir. The daughters were each to receive three thousand pounds when they became 21.

The question was whether it was Bragg's will or something he was persuaded to sign when the power relations at Lorton Hall had changed from those which existed when he had his full vigour. The witnesses to the will were John Fisher the Cockermouth solicitor, George Chambers the tenant of the Packhorse Inn, and Bragg's young manservant, James Souter (b.1786-7). Souter lived at Lorton Hall for 'four or five years' before Bragg's death. In 1835 the validity of the will was thoroughly tested by the Court of Chancery, and James Souter was the only living witness who could, and did, testify that Bragg was of sound mind when he signed. This may well be true, but Souter had been well looked after by the trustees. There was no written basis on which Souter could be supported, other than paying what was due to him. On 4 April 1810 the trustees paid £2-9s to 'John Johnstone Schoolmaster for Instruction to James Souter the Testator having in his lifetime paid for his Education'. On 14 May 1810 the trustees paid £30 to Josias Lambert 'in part for procuring for James Souter an order for the Excise in Conformity with the Testator's request.' A second payment was made on 2 April 1811 for £30-18s. In 1835 James Souter was an Officer of Excise in Newcastle, thanks to Bragg's generous trustees.

The title asks, mad, bad or sad? Sad can be dismissed, because it is clear that whatever genetic malady afflicted the Luocks, it did not affect his family until after he had departed. The picture given here, and supported by corroboration from various contemporaries, is that Bragg was a model of the self-centred, self-indulgent, arrogant, grasping, thoughtless, irrational, impetuous

village squire who might grace the pages of a later Victorian novel. However, his misuse and abuse of women does not seem to have gone beyond his need for money and power.

Was he trying to live up to the expected model of a village squire of later Georgian England? We must remember the example set by the real local villain, Sir James Lowther, 'or Jimmy grasp all'. Bragg came no-where close.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Steve Baskerville for information on the purchase of Riggbank.

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L&DFLHS – Programme for 2013 (others to be arranged)

| Date | Event |
|--|---|
| Sat 10 Aug & Sun 25 Aug | Low Lorton Village walk, 2.30, Churchyard, Derek Denman |
| Sun 11 Aug & Sat 24 Aug | High Lorton Village walk, 2.30, Yew Tree Pound, Derek Denman |
| 12 th September | The bobbin mills at Force-Satterthwaite 1826-1923, by Dr Suzanne Tiplady |
| 19 th &20 th October | 20 th Anniversary Exhibition – Lorton and the Derwent Fells through objects. Yew Tree Hall, 10am – 4pm |
| 14 th November | Cumbrian ice-houses and the international trade in ice, by Dr Rob David |
| Talks are held at the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton s at 7.30pm. Visitors £2.50 with refreshments. | |