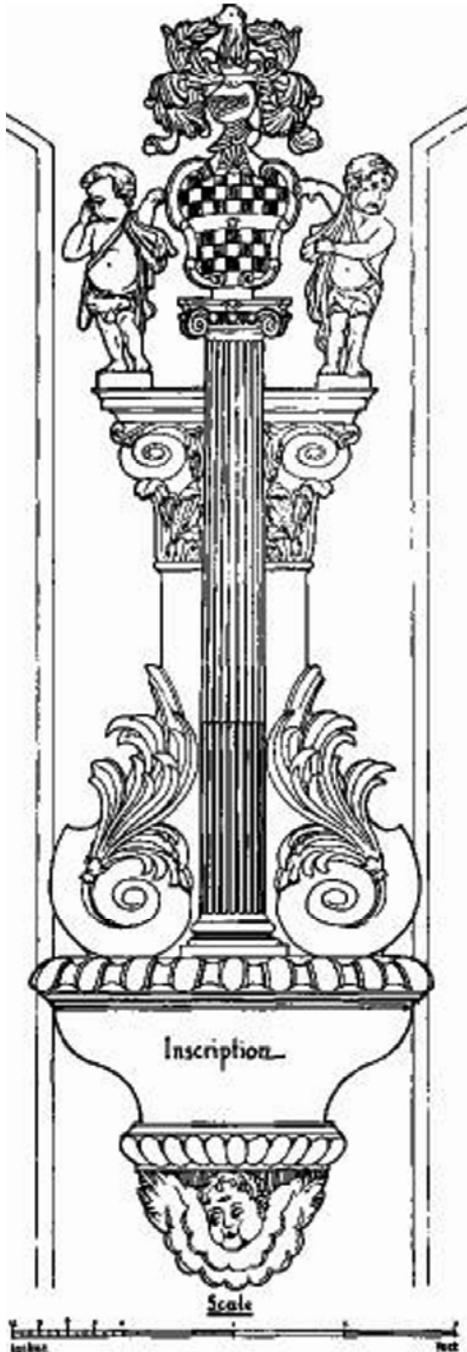


The Journal

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite Buttermere Embleton Loweswater Mockerkin Pardshaw Wythop

www.derwentfells.com



Thomas F. Ford, A.R.I.B.A.

The cenotaph for John Winder of Lorton Hall, at All Hallows, Barking

The Journal

I was very pleased to receive a variety of articles for this issue. The article by Sandra Shaw completes the work on the Paddle School Roll of Honour, and links to further information on our website, about the larger number of people who served and returned, though no doubt very changed from when they set out. Our website also has all back issues of the *Journal*, and so we reference past articles knowing that the material is readily available. This online material generates a number of enquiries from other countries.

This issue has extra pages to accommodate a longer article on the history of Lorton Hall. This was to be published in parts, but circumstances have made that impracticable.

The Journal does not normally include news, but the opportunity should be taken to report that our President, Professor Angus Winchester, having fully retired from Lancaster University, is taking up a new part-time position. The Victoria County History is very fortunate to have a new National Editor, whose knowledge, experience, enthusiasm, and commitment to the project will make his time as editor exceptionally valuable and productive. We wish Angus well in his new role.

Derek Denman

L&DFLHS 2016-17

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Cycle Sports in Cockermouth 1868-1902

by Roz Southey

The first recognisably modern bicycles were produced in France in the 1860s and quickly became fashionable, encouraged by concerns over the degeneration of the French people – some doctors believed that exercise would improve the health of working people (although at various times bicycles were accused of causing every ailment known to man, from hernias to heart attacks). But it wasn't long before healthy exercise was transformed into sport – the first known bicycle race took place in Paris in 1868, and was won by an Englishman, James Moore.

From France, the holding of cycle races spread with astonishing speed. The earliest known in Cumberland was reported in the *Cumberland Pacquet* of 21 May 1869, not much more than six months after the event in Paris. The race took place at the annual Keswick Grand Picnic and Sports, which had for some time included athletics, boat racing and wrestling; there were apparently a large number of competitors for the cycle race although not all survived the parcours along Lake Road to Portinscale and back – a distance of 2¾ miles on bad roads, performed by the winner in around seventeen minutes.

The winner took the lead at a rattling pace, was never headed, and came in victorious by a great distance. Much merriment was created as the defeated competitors returned through the streets, many of them not riding their 'iron horses' but, puffing and flushed, on foot propelling them along to the point from which they had started. The greatest good humour, however, prevailed, as was evidenced by one of the disappointed, struggling at the tail of his 'steed', replying to the badinage with which he was assailed, 'Well, never mind, there's three more behind.'

The new machine continued to be viewed with a mixture of amusement and suspicion for another twenty years, although cycle schools were opened in a number of places, including Carlisle. In Cockermouth



Cockermouth Cycling Club

a bicycle was exhibited at the Agricultural Show in August 1869 but no one could be persuaded to try to ride it;¹ by 1880, however, the Cockermouth Great Meet (put on to celebrate the installation of electric light in the town) had a number of cycle races, including the popular 'slow race' in which prizes were awarded for the slowest cyclist to complete the course without falling off or putting a foot down. This race was won by a Keswick boy, Abraham Wren Rumney, who later became well known as a local writer.²

The golden age of cycle racing, however, was in the 1890s, assisted by a rapidly developing industry producing cycles that were cheap enough for most people to afford, and by the invention of the Safety Cycle. The machine ridden in the late 1880s, the Ordinary (better known in England as the Penny Farthing because of the hugely differing size of its wheels), had pedals attached directly to the front wheel, whereas the Safety had wheels of roughly similar size with pedals attached to the back wheel via a chain and gears, meaning it was capable of higher speeds and was a great deal easier to ride.³

¹ *Cumberland Pacquet* 31 August 1869.

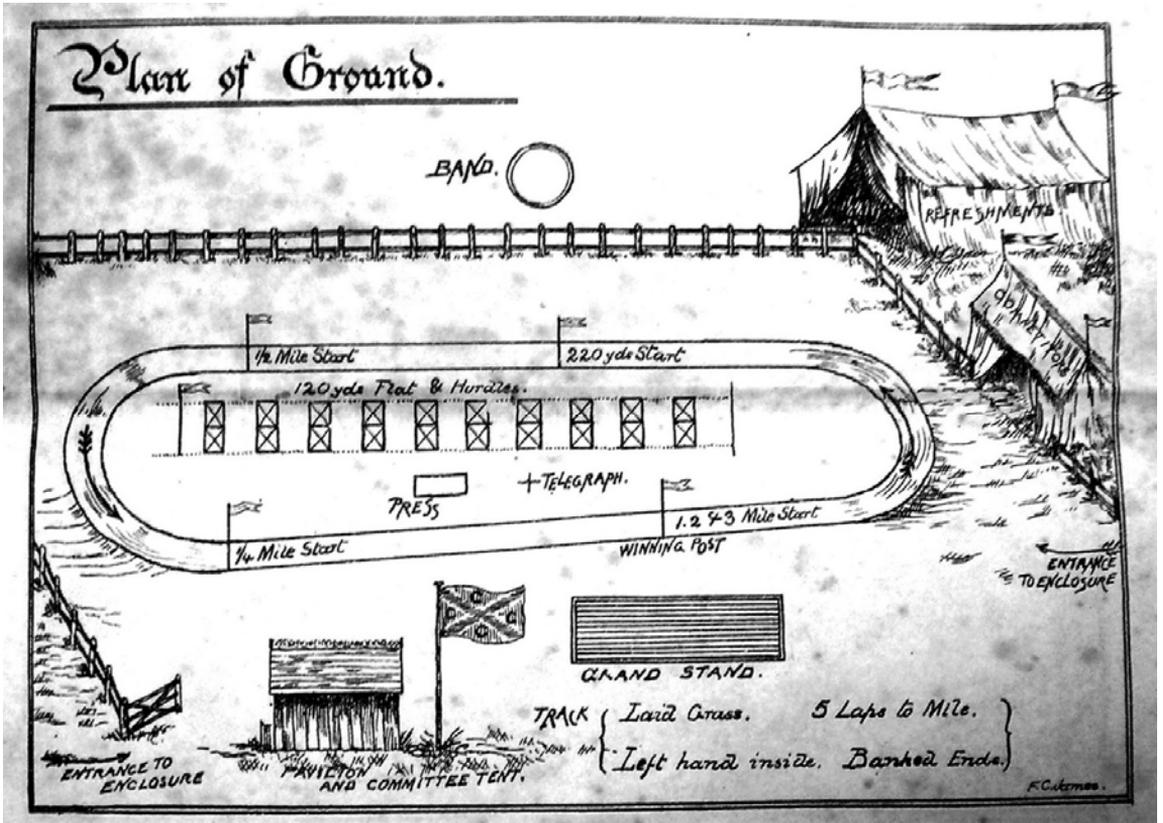
² *50 years a Cyclist* by A W Rumney (Keswick: printed for the author, c 1928).

³ Every time the pedals were turned once on an Ordinary, the front wheel turned once. This limited the speed at which a cyclist could go to the highest speed

at which he could pedal. The only way a rider could go faster once he reached his maximum pedalling speed was to use a larger front wheel which would go further for every pedal stroke – this led over a number of years to the huge increase in size of the Ordinary's 'penny'. (The small rear wheel was merely to balance the machine.) The drive chain and gears on a Safety, however, meant that the wheels turned a number of times for every pedal stroke, which thus enabled the rider to go faster and further.

Throughout the Lake Counties, bicycle races were initially attached to other events, such as agricultural shows. But in the 1890s a number of dedicated annual sports days were set up, particularly on Easter or August Bank Holiday Mondays; events of this type took place in Carlisle, Whitehaven and Workington, as well as other smaller places. In Cockermouth, an annual sports festival was set up in 1893 and surviving programmes show that the festivals continued until at least 1902.

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The sports at Sandair Cricket Ground

The Sports were held on Whit Monday, a traditional date for fairs and recreational events, taking advantage of potential competitors and spectators being off work. The venue, as in many other towns, was the local cricket ground, at Sandair, on the Papcastle side of the river at the Goat; a cycle track – known at this period as a cycle 'path' – was painted on the ground in a shape reminiscent of a Roman cursus. Five laps of this track of especially laid grass equalled one mile; the ends were slightly banked to make cornering easier. Flags marked the various start lines, and the races were run anti-clockwise.

A bandstand was provided for the band of the County Industrial School who filled in the gaps between races, there was a judges' tent (the cricket pavilion), a refreshment tent (a marquee), a competitors' tent, a press stand, and a grandstand for ladies and gentlemen – it is not clear whether this was a permanent structure used by the cricket club or one built especially for the Sports. Programmes were sold at 2d each. Unfortunately, there is almost no

information about the size or composition of the crowd at the Sports; similar though slightly larger event at Carlisle at the same period attracted between four and seven thousand spectators. Judging by the advertisements in the programmes, local businesses expected these spectators to be reasonably well-off suggesting a middle-class or professional majority.

The events included not only bicycle races but also footraces and, occasionally, jumping events. Cockermouth's Third Annual Sports, on 3 June 1895, for instance, had 13 different events: four bicycle races – one, two and three miles in length plus a one-mile novices' race; six foot races at distances ranging from 120 yards to one mile and including a 120-yards race for farm servants only; a hurdle race; and high and broad [long] jump competitions. Many of these races were first run in heats, before a final late in the day; some of the longer bicycle races, however, had no heats. The organisation of these heats and finals required a military-style precision if the day was not to drag on well into the evening, and the success of Sports was often judged

on whether or not the events followed each other in quick succession.

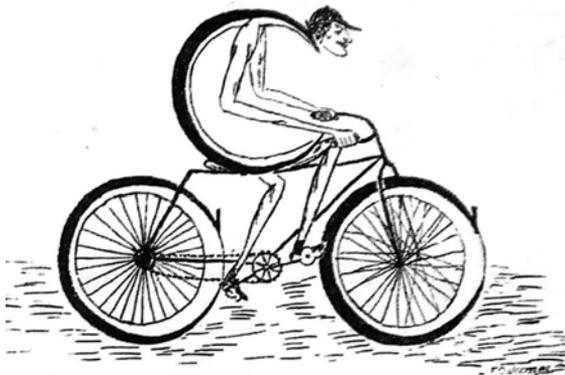
From time to time a championship race was also held; in 1897 Cockermouth hosted the Championship of Cumberland and Westmorland in a one-mile bicycle race; the prizes for this competition – two rather than the usual three – being commemorative gold medals. Inevitably the field was small but of a high quality, the winner being, satisfyingly, a Cockermouth man, Albert Waite, who 'made the pace a cracker from the start, and, never being headed, won by a short length' in 2 mins, 34 and 4/5 seconds. Waite's younger brother won the half-mile race on the same day.⁴ Waite's aggressive racing was welcomed by the magazine *Cycling* which had been exasperated by the cat-and-mouse tactics in other events around the country which produced tactically astute but dull races.

At the first Sports in 1893 a novelty rider was also featured, Professor Salmon, who performed two twenty-minute sessions of 'bicycle feats' – the exact feats are not specified but probably included such things as riding backwards, riding side-saddle, riding while standing upright on saddle and handlebars, and even possibly skipping. This feature was not repeated at later Sports, however, and Cockermouth never indulged in the sort of novelty races seen elsewhere, when riders dressed up themselves and their machines in ribbons and flowers and fancy dress.

The different start lines on the track were used for handicapping purposes. The event was run under the rules of the Amateur Athletic Association and of the National Union of Cyclists, and it was usual to get in one of the officials of these bodies to handicap the racers; some races, however, were scratch events with all racers starting from the same line, therefore attracting only the best riders. All riders except first year novices had to be registered with the NUC and their licence numbers were printed in the programmes; riders competing without a licence could be banned.

Entry fees, which had to be paid well in advance, were not cheap – in 1894, for instance, these were 1s.6d for the one- and two-mile bicycle races, and 2/- for the

three-mile race. (Entry fees for the footraces were much the same.) But the price was well worth paying if you won, given that first prize could be worth as much as ten guineas and even third prizes were usually worth around one guinea. The races were, of course, only open to amateurs so the prizes took the form of such items as a silver-plated fruit and flower stand, a silver-plated cheese dish, biscuit barrels, fern pots, ink-stands, cruet sets, gentlemen's dressing cases, tea urns and tea pots, and much more. The fact that the value of each item was printed beside it in the programme, however, gives the game away; every Sports had its little man hidden away in a corner offering cash to buy prizes from successful riders.



Cockermouth Cycling Club logo (from a poster)

Comparison with other Sports around the area shows that the Cockermouth Sports were amongst the best as regards prizes and it is therefore hardly surprising that there were a considerable number of entries for the various events (though it is not always possible to be certain whether all riders entered did indeed take part). All the racers were male, although newspapers occasionally remarked on the exploits of women cyclists on the road. The seven programmes that survive show a regular rise in the number of entries; the first sports, unsurprisingly, had the fewest competitors and the highest number of entries was for 1899, although figures in 1901 and 1902 remained very high. Over this period the number of cycle races was increased from four in 1893 to seven in 1902, which in itself suggests increasing popularity. The longer distances tended to attract fewer entries,

⁴ *Cycling* 12 and 19 June 1897.

PRICE TWO PENCE.

COCKERMOUTH CRICKET CLUB

JUNE 3 1895

CHAMPIONSHIP MEETING.

AMATEUR ATHLETIC SPORTS.

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING. 3 June 1895

CRICKET CLUB 1895.

C. Blackburn } Hon. Secs.
J. W. Drummond }

W. Watson Esq } Treas.
C. D. Bank }

Members of the Northern Counties Athletic Association. Under AAA laws & N.C.U. Rules.

SPORTS TO COMMENCE JUNE 3RD 1. P.M. THE OVAL, SANDAIR.

F. C. JAMES.

The programme for the third sports, 1895

and over the years increasingly short distances were included, starting with a half-mile race in 1899 and including, in 1902, a quarter-mile race. Most riders entered all the races, or at least a considerable proportion of them, and some men were still competing in the

novices' race long after they could legitimately have called themselves beginners. The lowest number of entries for a race was for the three-mile handicap in 1893 (15 riders), the highest number for the one-mile handicap in 1899 (54). The almost constantly increasing number of competitors suggests that Cockermouth did not suffer from the dip in interest in cycling that

occurred in the middle of the decade.⁵ At the first Sports in 1893 all these riders were local, coming from a limited number of towns – Maryport, Carlisle, Cockermouth, Workington and Whitehaven; the only competitors coming from any distance were from Barrow. Not surprisingly, in all the Sports, most riders came relatively short distances to compete but by the third Sports in 1895, riders were also coming from other local towns slightly further afield – from Aspatria and Ambleside, for instance – and one came from Langholm in Scotland. The fourth sports attracted one competitor each from Burnley and Dumfries; the fifth had three competitors from Scotland, one from Coventry and one from Haslington in Cheshire. The reach of the competition continued to extend with competitors from the Isle of Man and Newcastle included in the seventh sports in 1899 – the first competitor from London and one each from Salford and Oldham turned up in 1901. In 1902, there were no fewer than eight competitors from various places in Scotland including Edinburgh, and one from Manchester. The competitors from outside the region were never very many and tended not to return but, given that entries had to be submitted in advance, they were plainly not casual visitors to the area but cyclists who had heard of the Sports in advance and taken a deliberate decision to enter.

Surprisingly, the number of riders from Cockermouth rarely rose above two or three – it is puzzling that they did not ride more often in their ‘home’ Sports particularly as examination of newspaper reports indicates that Cockermouth boasted a large number of riders who were regular racers in other sports events around the county; it was not unusual for riders to travel extensively at holiday periods, appearing at a number of different Sports on successive days. Bodies such as the Cockermouth Cycling Club had their own club colours but individual riders tended to wear their own strip: Cockermouth riders rode in black and gold, maroon and yellow, white and blue, chocolate and purple, and a number

of other strips. A photograph of the club dated to 1900 shows 16 riders although at least 18 members can be identified from newspaper reports; the photograph, however, was almost certainly taken around a decade earlier than suggested as all the riders are proudly displaying Ordinaries, which had ceased to be ridden widely (or in some cases, at all) after around 1891. A total of around 500 riders from Cumberland and Westmorland (over the period between 1868 and 1901) can be identified at various events around the county and occasionally further afield. But the prevalence at Cockermouth of riders from Maryport, Carlisle, and Barrow in particular, shows where the cycling ‘heartlands’ were in the Lake Counties – Maryport Wheelers, at least three clubs in Carlisle (divided on political lines) and the Barrow Cycling Club were well known not only within the region but outside it too, their activities frequently being reported in such national magazines as *Cycling*. The fact that these riders travelled in such numbers on a regular basis to the Cockermouth Sports suggests that the Sports were highly regarded.

Paddle School’s Roll of Honour Revisited – the 36 who returned

by Sandra Shaw

First, to recap, I wrote an article for *Journal 57* in which I described the memorial tablet displayed at Paddle School and listed the eight men who gave their lives in the Great War and the 36 who served and returned. I went on to give such details as I had been able to discover about the eight, and indicated that the 36 would form the basis of a future article. *Journal 58* included further and corrected information about two of the eight which had eluded me. I am grateful to Walter Head and his sources for that information. I can confirm with pleasure that the revised information about William Routledge is correct, as I was contacted by a distant cousin of his who had found my original article on the Society website www.derwentfells.com. He added just a little more. The embarkation detail that Walter Head had found in 1913, was in fact a return by William Routledge to Australia after a visit home; his original emigration having been in

⁵ The foot races attracted roughly the same number of entries, although hurdles races and jumping events always attracted limited numbers and were put on much less frequently.

1901. He was to pay a final visit to the UK in 1917 before his untimely death in 1918.

I turn now to the 36 who fought and returned. They are listed in my initial article and I have scoured the sources to which I have access. Although it might have been a great step forward in 1921 to include those of 'ordinary' ranks in public memorials, and to include more than surnames, the addition of initial letters has not proved sufficient for me to identify with confidence all the men listed. I intend to include here the full name and brief information in those cases where I am reasonably confident that I have information from different sources that relate to the same man. Further details are included on the website as a pdf at

www.derwenfells.com/features/paddleROH

If anyone who is reading this, or the online material, is able to supply additional or corrected information, I would be very grateful to receive it. So the memorial can come to reflect more accurately the service given by these men.

The 36 are George Clague of Eaglesfield, born c1879 at Mosser who served with the Royal Engineers in Russia; J Clague; William Clague born c1894 who served in the Border Regiment, was wounded in the Dardanelles and awarded the Military Cross; John Clark born c1888 at Branthwaite; R Corlett; J Davidson; George Dockeray born c1896 at Brigham who served with the Royal Horse and Field Artillery in France, Salonika, Egypt and Palestine and was demobilised to Eaglesfield; Harold Ferguson born c1897 and living at Eaglesfield in 1911; I Glasson; J Glasson; Hans Hamilton born c1896 at Eaglesfield; J D Hamilton; Benjamin Harrison of Birk Bank, Whinfell born c1898 who served with the Border Regiment; Joseph Harrison possibly serving with the Canadians [as did Henry Bell Moffat and Frederick William Storr.]; JM Harrison who possibly served with the Border Regiment and was a POW, T Harrison possibly wounded while serving with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers [as did Edward Mossop and William Huddart]; Watson Harrison of Birk Bank, Whinfell, born c1900; Harold Huddart of Eaglesfield born c1891; William Huddart of Eaglesfield, born c1894 who served with

the Royal Welsh Fusiliers [as did Edward Mossop and T Harrison], the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and the East Lancashire Regiment and was wounded in France; E H Jackson; Albert Kitchen born c1902 who served with the Royal Navy; C Mossop; F Mossop; N Mossop; [possible brothers of Edward Mossop who was killed.] Eric Park of Eaglesfield, born c1900; Thomas Park of Underwood, Mosser, born c1898; Henry Satterthwaite of Eaglesfield, born c1889; George Scott of Brandlingill born c1871 who served with the Border Regiment, having previously seen action in South Africa with the 9th Lancers as a younger man; Herbert W Sewell of Brandlingill, born c1873 who served as a captain with the Border Regiment and was later commissioned to serve with the Royal Scots in France; William Woodville Robinson Sewell brother of the previous man, also of Brandlingill, born c1868 who served as a clerk with the Hampshire Regiment and then the Bedfordshire Regiment, including time in Bombay; Henry Storey of Smithy Green, Mosser, born c1893 who served with the Border Regiment and was wounded in action in France, who was reported Absent Without Leave but found to have been admitted to hospital in Carlisle, who survived the war, to die of T B of the spine in 1923; W Tyson; Joseph Walker born c1884 at Greysouthen, who served with the Border Regiment, who was captured while on active service in France and detained as a POW before release and repatriation; Henry Waugh of Eaglesfield, born c1894; Fletcher White of Eaglesfield, born c.1894, who served with the Border Regiment and was gassed while serving with the British Expeditionary Force. He was treated and discharged to continue to serve, but later hospitalised with rheumatism and heart problems and invalided out in March 1916; Frederick Wilson of Eaglesfield born c.1896 who served with the Royal Sussex Regiment.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from such incomplete data. One thing that does stand out though is the very varied service careers that these men experienced; serving with a range of regiments, in different theatres of war, experiencing gassing, wounding, capture and for these at least, eventual return. They experienced very different war experiences.

Corn Crops of the 1950s

by Walter Head

During the war years farmers were told how much land to plough and which crops to grow, but these rules had been relaxed by the 1950s. Corn was the preferred cereal crop in this area, but the correct name for this type of cereal was common oats. I have referred to it as corn as this is what this crop was called in the local farming community and I will call it corn throughout the remainder of the text. The corn was an upright crop growing to a height of approximately one metre (39 inches). The corn seeds germinated quickly and grew fast, smothering out emerging weed species and this eliminated the need for herbicides to control the weeds. It usually took between 120 and 150 days to reach maturity, but of course this depended upon the weather conditions.

Corn was the preferred crop in this area rather than wheat or barley. The corn stalks, known as straw, could be used as bedding for the cattle, or as cattle food, whereas wheat and barley straw was much more brittle and did not provide very comfortable bedding material. The seed heads of the corn were known as ears.

Preparing the ground

Once the field for cereal crops had been selected, then during the winter manure was spread on the ground. In spring the ground was ploughed. The coming of the little grey Fergie tractor meant that three furrows could be turned at a time with the tractor driver lifting or lowering the plough hydraulically from the driving seat. This meant that ploughing was much faster. Following ploughing the ground was broken up further using discs and harrows. The disc implement consisted of a series of thin round metal discs, similar to dinner plates, arranged in a row approximately nine or ten feet wide, which were pulled across the field to break up the soil. The harrows which were a square shape were made up of metal bars to form an approximate four feet square. This had protruding spikes about four inches long which were arranged in a diamond pattern of approximately four inches across. These squares usually in a set of three were pulled across the ground

to break up the soil into even smaller pieces to give a fine tilth.

Any large stones turned up by the ploughing were collected and removed to the edge of the field. If any stone that had worked its way to the surface was too large to be lifted, then a deep hole was dug alongside the stone, the hole was deeper than the stone and the stone was toppled or levered into the adjacent hole and effectively buried. The ground was now ready to be planted.

Sowing the seed

Corn seed was sown using a corn drill, which consisted of a long wooden box suspended between two iron wheels. The corn seed was loaded into the box from hessian sacks. The wooden box had a series of holes in the bottom, below which flexible tubes extended down to ground level. These tubes approximately 3 inches apart had solid metal ends which made a furrow in the soil as the machine moved forward, enabling the corn seed to go into the ground. The soil then fell back into place and covered the seed. In the bottom of the wooden hopper a metal bar ran full length. This bar was connected to the wheels and rotated as the corn drill moved forward. Attached to this bar, small cogs were located above each of the holes and as they turned these allowed a measured amount of seed to be released down the flexible tubes and into the soil.

If the field was to be returned to grass after harvest, then grass seed was sown onto the ground using a hand operated seed fiddle drill. This consisted of a bag containing grass seed above a circular piece of apparatus, containing a disc which spun round by means of a cord attached to a bow similar to a violin. The farmer walked over the field playing the bow like a fiddle and this scattered the seed over the ground. The rate of coverage depended how fast the bow was operated: fast playing resulted in the seed being scattered over a wider area as did the pace of the farmer. Nature was then left to do its work. When the corn had grown to about two inches high then the field was rolled using a heavy roller. This flattened the ground and helped to prevent damage to machinery blades during subsequent harvesting.

Harvesting

Harvesting of the corn was carried out during autumn when most of the green



A binder or reaper at work; stooks seen behind. Photograph by permission of Mrs Christopherson

colour had turned brown and the seeds were hard. The farmer would check to see if the corn was ready to harvest by taking a number of ears of corn and squeezing them in the hand. If the ears were soft and extruded a white fluid then they were not ready to harvest, but if the ears were firm and withstood the crushing effect then the crop was ready to harvest when the weather was suitable.

Cyrus Hall McCormack is credited with inventing the mechanical reaper around 1860 and an automatic twine or string knotter was perfected about the same time. The McCormack reaper was improved in 1872 and this cut the crop, bound the corn into sheaves and automatically tied the bundle with string. It was the McCormack reaper, known locally as a Binder, which was then in use.

The first step in harvesting was to hand cut a swathe around the edge of the field using a scythe. This strip was the width of the tractor and allowed the tractor to make the first circuit of the field without flattening any corn. The corn was cut using a Binder. The main body was directly behind the tractor but the cutter blade protruded out to one side of the machine. The cutter bar had forward pointing fingers which had slots in them through which a knife blade reciprocated back and forward to cut the corn stalks

near to the ground. This was driven by a crank from the binder. A platform containing the cutter bar projected to the side of the machine and on the outer edge of the platform was a divider board which separated the cut grain from that to be left standing. A rotating wooden reel frame was above the platform to hold the corn stalks against the reciprocating knife and throw the cut corn back onto the

platform. The platform was in effect a conveyor belt which travelled at 90 degrees to the cutter bar and carried the cut corn up to the top of the binder. There the corn stalks were gathered together to form a sheaf and automatically tied in the centre with string (binder twine) before being discharged onto the ground. If the string burst, then the sheaf was manually tied with a band of straw.

Several sheaves, normally eight, were gathered together and then leant against each other to form an 'A' shape, with the cut ends to the ground. This group of sheaves was known as a stook. The 'A' shape allowed the air to circulate through the stook to dry the corn, and this shape also allowed rain to run off onto the ground. Most farmers liked the stooks to be washed by rain as this removed any dust and small pieces of grass, etc.

Dependent on the weather, the corn stooks were left in the field for one or two weeks. Later on, during a dry day, the stooks were broken down to allow final drying before being loaded onto a trailer by hand using pitchforks. As the sheaves were cone shaped, with the cut stalk ends fatter than the corn heads, it was a work of art to stack the sheaves on the trailer. So that a square load ten to fifteen feet high could be taken from the field. The resulting stubble left behind on the ground after the corn was cut helped to reduce soil erosion. An early combine harvester was invented in 1885 but these only came into use locally in the late 1960s.

Storage

At the farm the corn was stored either in a Dutch barn, which had a curved roof and one sheeted side which allowed air to circulate and ensure complete drying, or in rectangular or round corn stacks. The round stacks were more common. The corn stacks or ricks were built on a stone base, covered with a layer of dry branches to keep the corn up off the damp ground. This allowed air to circulate under the stack. To start building, a stick was placed in the centre of the base and a four feet length of string attached which was used to draw a line for the circumference of the stack. This gave a diameter of eight feet.

Two sheaves of corn were placed upright against the stick and construction started in the centre. The first sheaf was laid with the corn ears to the centre and the stalk ends pointing outwards. Further sheaves were laid in a circle in a clockwise direction. A second row was laid in an anti-clockwise direction, with the sheaves in this row overlapping the first row up to the middle of sheaf already in place. Other rows were added in the same fashion until the required diameter was reached.

Subsequent layers were built up in the same fashion but with the outer sheaf protruding beyond the previous layer by approximately three inches. In this way the stack continued to grow to a height of eleven or twelve layers. The fact that the outer sheaves protruded beyond the previous layer resulted in the traditional stack shape and helped prevent the ingress of water into the stack. After the 11th or 12th layer the next 12 or 13 layers stepped in to give the dome shape required to turn water.

During the building of the stack, a sack full of compacted hay was placed in the centre and this was pulled upwards as the stack grew in height. This was removed at the top and had formed a chimney or funnel in the centre of the stack, which allowed air to travel up the centre of the stack to assist drying. After the last sheaf was in place the stack was thatched using sieves,

dyke cuttings or wheat straw. To prevent wind damage, a square of hessian or a string net was placed over the top, and weighted down with stones attached by string to the corners to keep it in place. Wooden props were positioned around the stack for stability. Corn stacks built in this way would stand weathertight for months.

Threshing

The threshing separated the grain from the straw. It was usually done twice a year, in October and January. It was a time of great excitement for young lads when the thresher arrived in the village, and we enjoyed watching the thresher being manoeuvred into position alongside the corn stack or barn, often in tight situations. One or two farms had their own small fixed thresher, but most relied on contractors, such as Braithwaites or Coates, who would visit the village and thresh for all local farms.

Threshing was labour intensive and each farm would send someone to help as the thresher moved from farm to farm. Once the thresher was in position the large tractor was positioned so that a drive belt from the tractor pulley could be fed to the thresher. This belt had a twist in it to move the pulley on the thresher in the correct direction. This twist also helped to stop the belt moving off the pulley. The belt was perhaps twenty

A thresher in operation, showing the sacks of grain. Photograph by permission of Mrs Christopherson





The corn stacks. Photograph by permission of the Benn family of Dean

feet long and unguarded. So you had to remember to duck when you were near the moving belt. When threshing started, the sheaves of corn were passed to two men positioned on the top of the thresher. They cut the string around the sheaf and fed the corn stalks into the top of the thresher, at a rate which did not overload the machine. As the stalks worked their way through the machine the ears were removed from the stalks. The bare stalks emerged from the rear of the machine, and were gathered together and automatically tied with twine in two places to produce a 'bottle' of straw. This was loaded onto a trailer to be used later for bedding for cattle, or it could be fed to the cattle.

The ears of corn passed over various mesh screens which separated out small pieces of straw and the outer husks of the corn. This waste was known as chaff and dropped out of the bottom of the thresher. The chaff was later bagged and used for bedding, or deposited in a field to rot down. Later, with the advent of the baler, instead of bottles of straw being produced the chaff and straw were baled together and used as bedding. The clean ears of corn were dispensed at the front of the machine down several chutes which had hessian sacks attached to them. When a sack was full then a slide in the chute was used to stop the flow of corn while the

sack was tied at the top and loaded onto a trailer. A new sack was put in place and the slide in the chute removed to let the corn flow again. The sacks of corn were put into storage in a dry building.

The corn stacks were a favourite place for rats, because they provided dry warm living quarters with a ready supply of good quality food. Threshing day would not be complete without the terriers whose job was to catch any rats fleeing from the rapidly reducing corn stack. At some farms where farm buildings were near the threshing area, a fine mesh wire fence was erected around the whole threshing area to prevent escaping rats reaching the buildings and continuing to breed.

Processing the grain

Some corn was kept to be used as seed for future harvests, and some was fed to the free-range hens. Most was crushed to be used as cattle food. At Dean the corn was taken to Scutter Woodburn, at Branthwaite Mill, who crushed the corn using special crushers driven by belts from a large water wheel. The crushed corn was then returned to the farm.

Quotation

In his dictionary, Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) defined oats as "eaten by people in Scotland and fit only for horses in England". The Scottish reply was "that's why England has such fine horses and Scotland such fine men."

Thanks to Joe Benn of Dean for his help and guidance.

A history of Lorton Hall, the estate, and its owners.

by Derek Denman¹

An article on Lorton Hall is long overdue. In *A Cumberland Valley*, the late Ron George published a short account of the hall, and a more extensive history of the Winder family. A rather more comprehensive account of the hall, building on Ron's, is presented here.² References are provided to other relevant articles in the *Journal*.

One significant requirement is to separate fact from myth, and from the more recent imaginative fictions which have fooled all of us to some extent, for some of the time. We can sympathise with the 1960s architectural historian, Nikolaus Pevsner, who might reasonably expect to be able to trust the owner's belief in the tower's medieval origins.³ In the new 'Pevsner' the late Matthew Hyde agrees that the tower is Victorian, as demonstrated in Figures 1,2,&3.⁴ This removes the main evidence for a medieval high-status building, which had influenced some academic writing and has supported fanciful tales of early high status occupants, royal visitors, and even the earliest chapel. The facts are nearly as interesting, but much harder to find.

This account will comprise four parts in chronological order. The first will cover the history of the estate within the pre-Tudor medieval village, including its owners and what building might have existed. The second will cover the hall as the residence of the Winder family, including the growth of their estate, up to their departure in 1699. The third will consider the decline of the eighteenth century, during which the Winders' mansion and estate passed and divided through several hands. The fourth will consider the nineteenth century development of the mansion, with its resurgent estate, firstly through the Lucock-Bragg family, and then as a seat of the Dixons of Rheda. A firm stop will be applied in 1947, when the Dixon's Lorton estate was sold in lots. Though the subsequent history

and ownership of the mansion house, outbuildings and curtilage is fascinating, that is for someone else to write.

The medieval estate to 1485, before the Tudors

In All Hallows church, Barking-By-The-Tower, there is an impressive cenotaph for John Winder, died 1699, with the inscription: 'Near this Place lieth interred the Body of John Winder of Grays Inn Esq^r. Barrister at Law Eldest Son & Heir of John Winder Gent of Lorton in y^e County of Cumberland where y^e Family flourished, in a Lineal Succession, above 300 Years'.⁵ See our front cover. This cenotaph was erected shortly after 1717, through the will of Jonathan Winder, brother of the younger John. There is no doubt that all these named gentlemen were born in Lorton, and they should know the family history. The claim is that the family resided in Lorton before 1400, giving at least 85 years of medieval residence in Lorton.

There are three questions to answer. Did the Winder family own the estate before 1400? Did the Winder family live in Lorton, and was there a substantial medieval hall there? The first is the simplest, as evidenced by the inquisition taken in 1398 after the death of Maud, the Lucy heiress who brought the Honour of Cocker mouth to Henry, Earl of Northumberland, by marriage.⁶ A third part of Lorton inferior (Low Lorton) was held by Margaret de Wyndare (Margaret of Winder, a place name) for 3s 4d rent. This freehold estate can be traced forward, using its fixed free rental, with the Winders until other documents of the seventeenth century identify it as the site of the present Lorton Hall. In 1385 this estate was held by William de Park, and so we can place the acquisition by the Winder family between 1385 and 1398.⁷ This fits exactly with the claims on the cenotaph for ownership, but not necessarily residence.

Did the Winder family flourish in Lorton from the late 14th century, or did they just have tenants there? There are records of the family resident in Lorton from about 1530, but none known before. Could there have been a substantial building on the medieval

¹ We purchased the old hall range in 1993, then called Winder House, and left in 2002. Comments on the building structure are based on personal knowledge.

² Ron George, *A Cumberland Valley*, 2004, pp. 150-5, 189-190.

³ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Cumberland and Westmorland*, 1967, pp.158-9 & pl.45.

⁴ Matthew Hyde, *Buildings of England: Cumbria*, 2010, p.502.

⁵ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol15/pt2/pp75-92> no.27 for text. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol15/pt2/plate-108> for image.

⁶ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/inquis-post-mortem/vol17/pp460-474> no.1247

⁷ CAC(W) DLec. 314/16

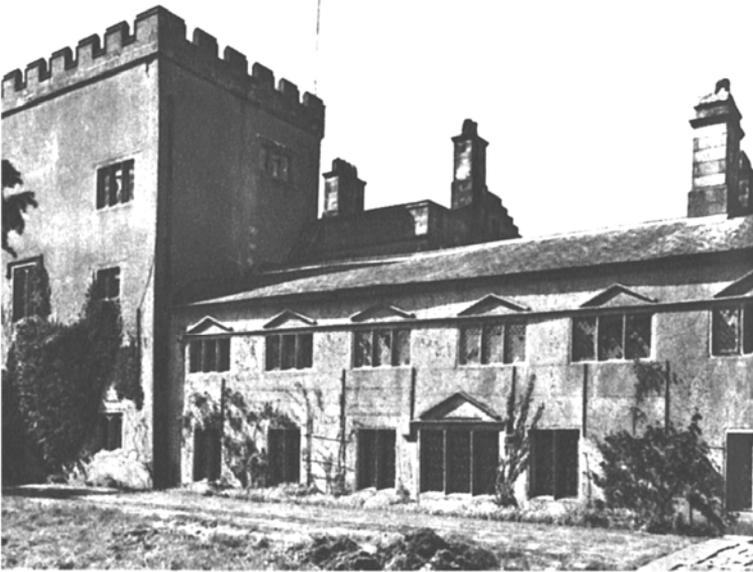


Figure 1. 1960s.
Hall-range east facade, of 1663, with door replaced by window, 1890. With tower converted wadding windows, 1890. North, C17th stables, wing out of shot.
Note the high external earth level raised about 400mm in 1890.
Photograph, Nikolaus Pevsner, from the walled garden with fountain.



Figure 2. 1880s.
Hall-range east facade of 1663. Before conversion by AJS Dixon, probably seated on wall. Viewed from Church Field showing gated entrance to courtyard, folly tower probably by George Lucock Bragg c. 1840, south wing intact. North, stables, wing out of shot.
Photograph probably for AJS Dixon.

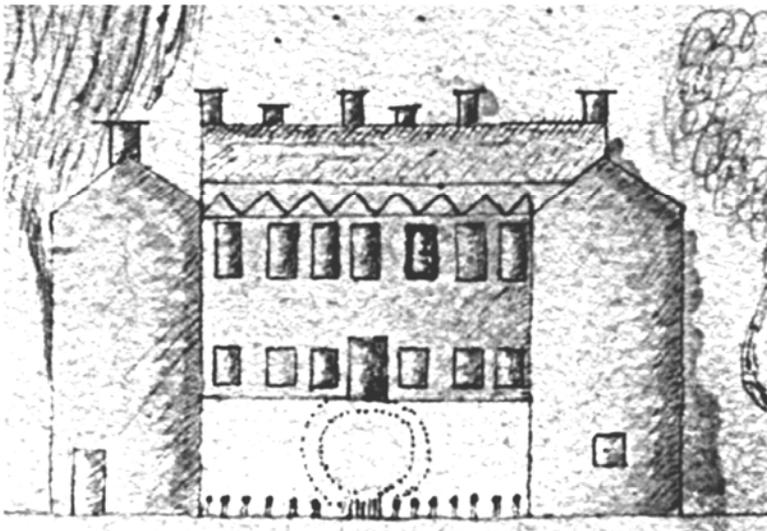


Figure 3. 1803.
Sketch of hall-range east facade of 1663, showing all seven bays and main entrance from courtyard. Carriage entrance from road. Showing south wing, probably C17th, and north stables wing, probably 1663. But showing no tower. Chimneys indicate a further range to the west.
Sketch made in estate plan for Joshua Lucock.

estate, perhaps even before the Winders' ownership? To answer it is useful to go back to the origins of the estate, which will also provide an understanding of the landholding involved.

Lorton is an old settlement, existing well before this area of Cumberland was joined to Norman England from 1092. Possibly, Low Lorton was an Anglian settlement. Since there was no Domesday for Cumberland, there is no historical record before 1092, after which property ownership was rewritten. From about 1100 the lords of Allerdale held all the land between the Derwent and the Cocker, as the forest manor of Derwentfells – which meant that the lord had free chase of protected game throughout, not that it was uninhabited and wooded. From that time a sequence of grants of manors, that is lands, inhabitants, and rights, was made out of Derwentfells to various followers. It is from those grants that Lorton first becomes visible to us. Cockermouth itself was created in around 1200, with its essential elements in the manor of Derwentfells. Cockermouth also had burgage tenants in what is now Main Street, in the manor of Five Towns, which was the land west along the south of the Derwent to Clifton. These elements, Cockermouth, Derwentfells and the Five Towns formed part of the Honour of Cockermouth, administered from Cockermouth Castle. The early history can be found in Angus Winchester's *Landscape and society in Medieval Cumbria*, which is acknowledged as a main source for this section, and also for Figure 4, which shows the medieval land elements relevant to this article.⁸

Angus Winchester writes that '*Low Lorton* appears to be the freehold estate described as the *vill of Loreton* in 1230, when it was held by Thomas Mariscal (Cal. Docs. Re Scotland, I no. 1106). By 1305 it had been divided into three parts ...'.⁹ One of those three parts became the Winders' estate, some 90 years later. When the *vill of Loreton* was first granted as a freehold estate, before 1230, it would have comprised several rustic farmsteads together with their inhabitants. The owner of this sub-infeudated estate would be a minor or mesne lord, and the inhabitants would be his

manorial tenants. It would be the mesne lord who, if resident, might have required a high-status dwelling, which would need to displace one or more of his tenanted farmsteads.

The grant of Low Lorton out of Derwentfells may well have been made before 1230. The other grant, to the Priory Church of Carlisle of High Lorton, or the land of Loreton with the mill (High Mill), was made by 1158. The fact that in 1649 the boulder of the High Lorton manor contained freehold and customary land, mostly the Flatts, belonging to Low Lorton tenements, and none vice-versa, confirms that before 1158 that land was part of tenements in Low Lorton.¹⁰ Similarly, when Brackenthwaite was sub-infeudated to an intermediate lord around 1160, its northern limit was defined by the existing cultivated lands of Lorton. These were holdings at Birketts, which were part of the grant of Low Lorton, later in the Winders' third. That existing cultivated land at Birketts formed a buffer between those two mid-twelfth century grants of High Lorton and Brackenthwaite. However, in neither of those grants is an existing Low Lorton freeholder mentioned, which suggests that the grant of Low Lorton was made after 1160. The freehold manor of Embleton was granted in 1195, and so another grant of Low Lorton in the late twelfth century seems reasonable. The chapel, well placed to serve both Lortons, but in Low Lorton, was probably on its present site in 1198, when a chaplain was recorded. There is no evidence to suggest a different, earlier, site for chapel or village. We know that those two row-villages of High and Low Lorton existed by the mid-twelfth century.

Figure 4 shows the extent of Low Lorton granted as freehold before 1230, including parts identified from later records. The core was the open arable land up to the present Church Lane, which was the boundary with High Lorton. It also included the arable and meadow land up the Cocker as far as Whitbeck, old course, and down the Cocker towards Armaside. Scales, as huts on the common used by the Low Lorton farmers, will have existed when Low Lorton was granted, but not as enclosures because it was not part of the freehold grant. Freehold fellside settlements existed in the fourteenth century at Armaside, Gilbanke (Gillbrae) and High

⁸ Angus Winchester, *Landscape and society in medieval Cumbria*, 1987, pp.143-9.

⁹ *Landscape and Society*, p.146

¹⁰ CAC(C) EM5.1, ff.44-62, Carlisle Dean and Chapter archives.

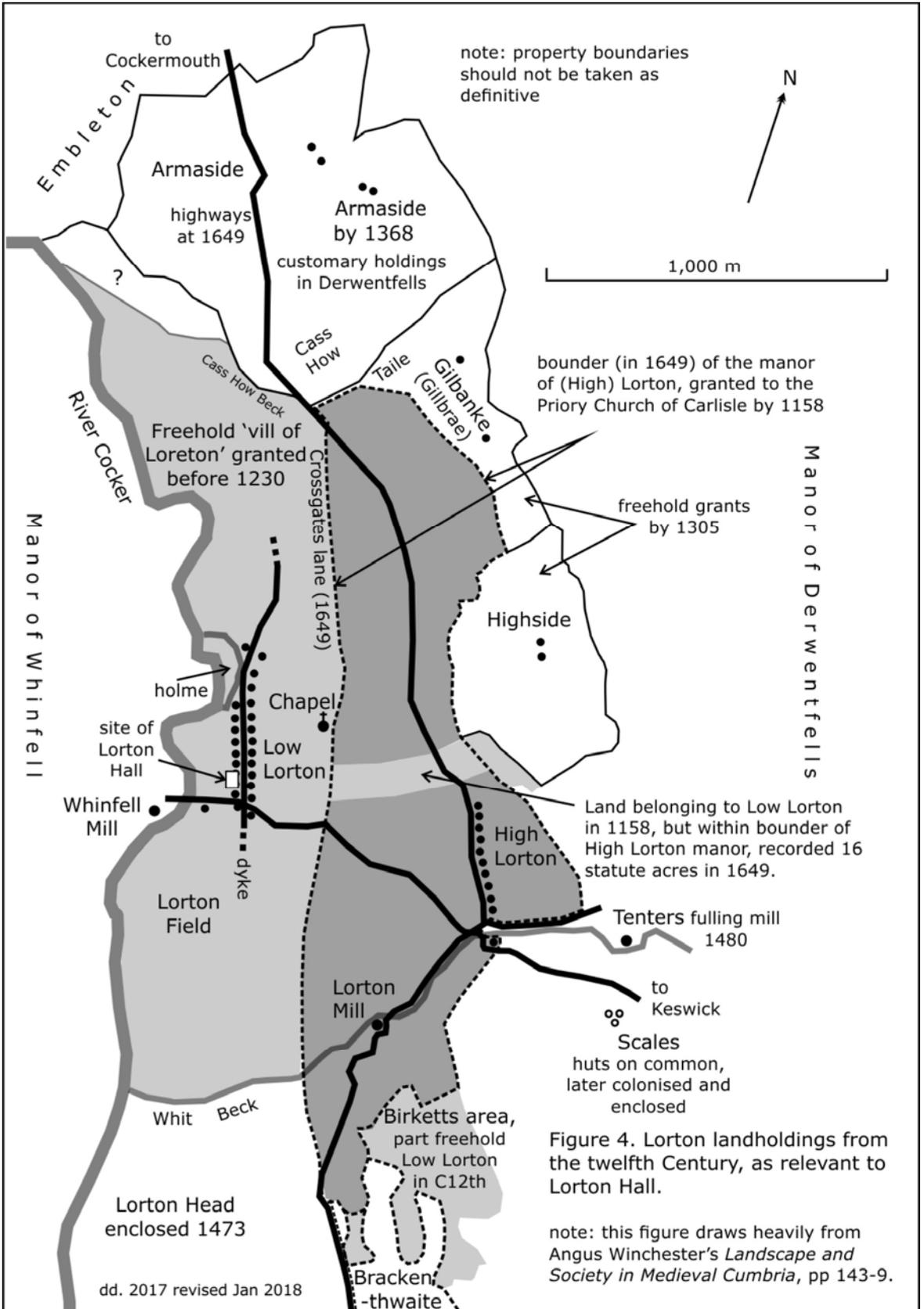


Figure 4. Lorton landholdings from the twelfth Century, as relevant to Lorton Hall.

note: this figure draws heavily from Angus Winchester's *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria*, pp 143-9.

Side (now farmed from Terrace Farm). By 1398, one third part of the Low Lorton freehold estate was held by the Winders, either partly in hand as their demesne, or wholly by manorial tenants on the Winders' mesne estate. The tenants held by rent, fines and services. The Winders' third did not include the rights to that tongue of arable land in the High Lorton manor boundary, which was mostly associated with what became Holme Farm. The Winder estate did include a substantial holding at Birketts.

It is possible that a freeholder before the Winders was resident in an early high status house, but there is no supporting evidence. More likely, the first hall was built after 1385 by the Winders, on land previously occupied by farmsteads held by their manorial tenants. Little more can be said before the sixteenth century.

The Winder family and the property in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Entering the sixteenth century, the Winder family was the freehold owner of one third of the Low Lorton lands – much more extensive than just a third of the village centre. The Winders also held one of two freehold tenements at Gilbanke, for a rent of 1lb of pepper. They had a manorial tenant, Peter Skinner, there in 1609.¹¹ In 1547 and 1570 Peter Winder, of Lorton, owned the Low Lorton freehold and the Gilbanke freehold. He was succeeded by John Winder by 1578.¹²

Also by 1578, the Winders also held some further property in Lorton as tenants at will, that is as direct manorial tenants of the Percies/the Crown within the manor of Derwentfells. John Winder, who owned the freehold property above, held an intake on Whit Beck called Hornell Groves, Richard Winder held one of four tenements at Armaside, and John Winder of Dearham held the Greystones slate quarry.¹³

It is clear from the St Cuthbert's parish registers, started in 1538, that Winder families lived in Lorton and Whinfell. Records are very patchy for the period 1538 – 1700, but of the records we have of baptisms, marriages, burials and wills, Winder families were involved in just under four per cent of records in both centuries. Winders were

small but significant in numbers, though disproportionately important in ownership – and the only gentry family. After the Winders sold the Lorton estate, in 1699, the whole extended family removed from Lorton, in that the Winder percentage of baptisms marriages and burials at St Cuthbert's dropped to 0.2% through the eighteenth century. This included just one baptism, and that was only a Winder because it was illegitimate. The family did not die out: it dispersed having outgrown rustic Lorton in wealth and status, leaving a gentry vacuum in Lorton to be filled. A branch remained in Cockermouth.

The first Winder who can be placed with certainty in Lorton, and owning the freehold property, is Richard Winder, who died in 1544 and whose body was to be buried in St Cuthbert's, that is in the chapel itself, which was a privilege of the principal families.¹⁴ There is no Winder vault as pretended by a sign to the east of the St Cuthbert's. The burials would be in the floor of the chapel. Apart from Richard's will, there is other evidence of his living in Lorton. He appeared at the head of the muster roll for Lorton in 1535 as a bowman with a horse.¹⁵ A John Winder is listed as a lesser billman, without a horse. Rycherd Wynder appeared in the lists of gentlemen in Cumberland for border service at some time between 1512 and 1537.¹⁶ It is reasonable to assume that by 1530 Richard Winder was resident in a house on the site of the current hall, and therefore acquired at least one tenement of his third of Low Lorton, as demesne for his own use.

The process of acquisition is probably illustrated by a claim that before 1532, Richard Winder and an associate used improper means to gain two tenements.¹⁷ William, the son and heir of Alyn Bell, petitioned Sir Thomas More as Lord Chancellor, 1529-32, claiming that two tenements in Lorton, owned by his late father and to which he was heir, had descended to 'John Gyle husbandman and Richard Wynder, having no more right of title to them'. He required that their deeds be detained to establish their rights, and clearly had no deeds of his own. No other parties were mentioned, and so it appears that these two

¹⁴ FA Winder, *The Winders of Lorton TCWAAS 1892*, pp.439-57

¹⁵ Angus Winchester, *The muster rolls for Lorton township 1535, L&DFLHS Newsletter no.6*, pp.4-5.

¹⁶ G Duckett, *Extracts relating to border service, TCWAAS 1877*, p.213.

¹⁷ TNA C1/611/17 94419

¹¹ F A Winder, *The Winders of Lorton, TCWAAS 1897*, pp.229-38; St Cuthbert's registers.

¹² CAC(W) DLec.314/38, TNA E164/37, f.32; Great Percy Survey, 1578.

¹³ Great survey of Percy lands, 1578.

tenements would be within the Winder freehold at Low Lorton, and had been acquired by Richard Winder and John Gyle on the death of Alyn Bell. This would create or increase Richard Winder's demesne. Alan Gylle was a bowman with a horse in the muster roll of 1535.¹⁸ In 1545 John Gill married Jenatt Winder, and he was buried in 1559. No other Gills appear in the Lorton parish registers before the eighteenth century. Bell's Tenement was included in the freehold property in hand, sold in 1699.

We do not have a plan of the Winder's third of Low Lorton to tell us of how many medieval farmsteads it comprised. There is, however, a statement that in 1578 it contained six messuages, which were usually farmhouses.¹⁹ The Winder's freehold mesne estate in Lorton included Gilbanke, which made a total of seven messuages. The first known listing of the holdings comes from the inquisition post mortem of John Winder of Lorton, died 1609, held in Keswick in 1610.²⁰ 'John Wynder of Lorton, gent, ... was seized in his demesne as of fee, of & in, a messuage and tenement with its appurtenancies in Lorton, in a tenement with appurtenancies in the tenure of Henry Pearson [another, Peter Skynner, another Peter Wilkinson, another John Myrehouse] & also in a tenement in tenure of William Peale - ... the messuage and tenements in Lorton ... were held ... from the ... Earl of Northumberland for a rent of 3s/4d yearly'. He also held half of Santon, Cumberland, and the great tithes of Pardshaw.

In 1569 this John Winder had married Mabel, daughter of Robert Grindal and niece of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury 1575-1583. John Winder held a substantial estate and position, requiring a high-status dwelling. The inquisition above is in the language of a manorial holding and would include only the property in Lorton held freehold by John Winder, that is one third Low Lorton and Gilbanke, which was, from the registers, the tenement held by Peter Skynner. John Winder would have held the demesne message and tenement personally and lived there. The date is some twenty years before the oldest dated stone remaining in the hall, of 1630, and provides confirmation of an earlier phase existing in

the fifteenth century. His tenants listed would be his manorial tenants, holding tenements by rent fines and services. This mini-manor was continued by the Winders through the seventeenth century, with the tenements again defined in 1690 and 1699.²¹ The services, no longer military, were a day's reaping on the Winders' land.

It is difficult to establish from these records which Winder tenements were based on a farmstead in Low Lorton, and which were just landholdings, or elsewhere, but from the six messuages in 1578 and the records above, and later, the likelihood is that by 1609 the Winders occupied two or three old farmsteads as demesne.

Evidence from the building and estate plans

Figure 5 is based on an estate plan of 1803, but attempts to show the limits of the major part of the Winder's third of Low Lorton's farmsteads. The one third would be by value. The secure limit to the north is determined by the Kirkgate End holdings, which, by 1437, had escheated to the manor of Derwentfells from a different freeholder, and were well defined as customary holdings.²² To the south of that, and as far as Lorton Cross, farmsteads would have been progressively removed in favour of the hall and its grounds. These farmsteads may have straddled the road, as with those further north, or there may have been one on each side. There was a considerable settlement at Lorton Cross, with eighteenth century deeds indicating a house and smith's shop to the north east, Wilkinson's house to the northwest and also a building to the south west. Lorton Cross, and the road to the bridge, probably marked the southern limit of the Winder freehold, because the substantial farm tenement of the Pearson's at Bridge End was, in 1578, within the third of the village held by Robert Sandes of Rottington, and was enfranchised to Peter Pearson in 1596.²³ However, the mill across the Cocker in Whinfell, sometimes called Lorton Low Mill, was half owned by the Winders, and a kiln and garden had been developed on the Lorton side of the Cocker, opposite Bridge End farm.

¹⁸ Winchester, Muster rolls.

¹⁹ Winchester, *Landscape and society*, p.146.

²⁰ F A Winder, *The Winders of Lorton, TCWAAS 1897*, pp.229-38.

²¹ CAC(W), DLec.328, Lorton Hall Estate – Identification. This vast late C19th transcription of deeds and other documents is the major source for much of the following detail up to the Dixon purchase.

²² Percy survey, 1578.

²³ Identification, Pearson.

Figure 5. Low Lorton in 1803, showing the development of Lorton Hall to that date.

The shaded areas form part of Joshua Lucock's Lorton Hall estate in 1803, including the Lorton Hall estate of Jonathan Wilkinson in 1740, Whinfell or Low Lorton Mill, the east Kirkgate End estate (Pack Horse) brought by the Peile Barnes, and Wilkinson's tenement bought just before the plan was drawn.

The 'customary' lands could not have formed part of the Winders' third of the medieval village, nor could Bridge End farmstead.

Based on Joshua Lucock's estate plan of 1803, with additions from enclosure survey of 1827.

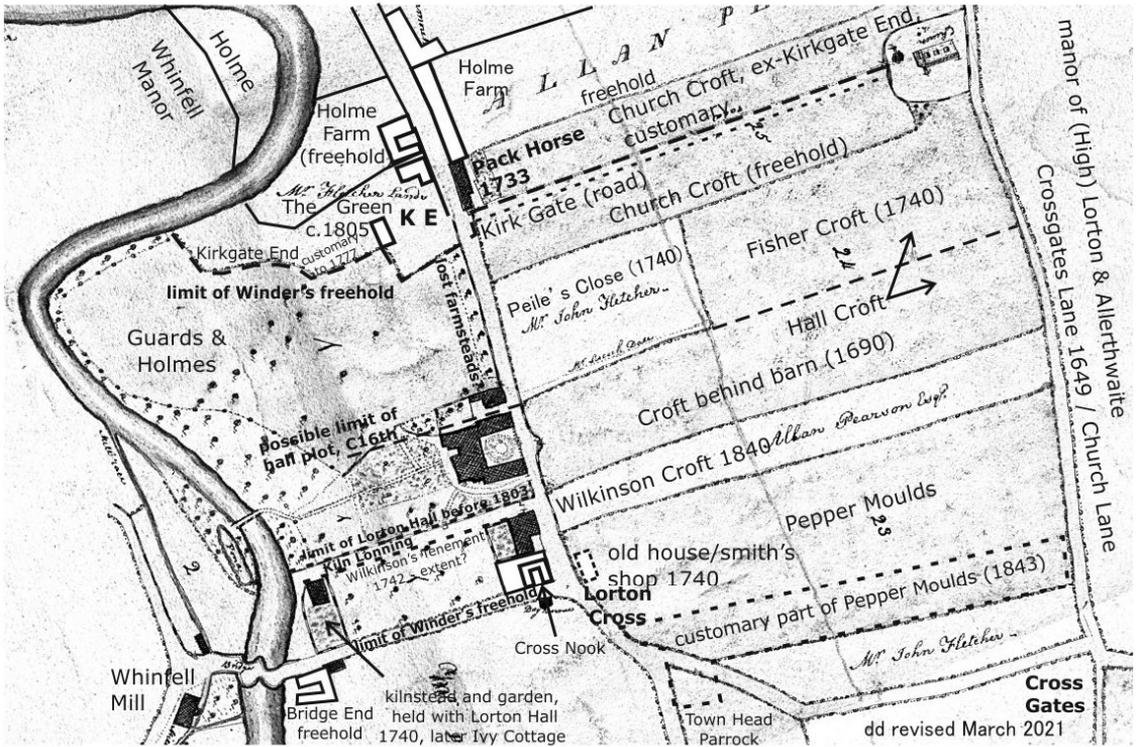
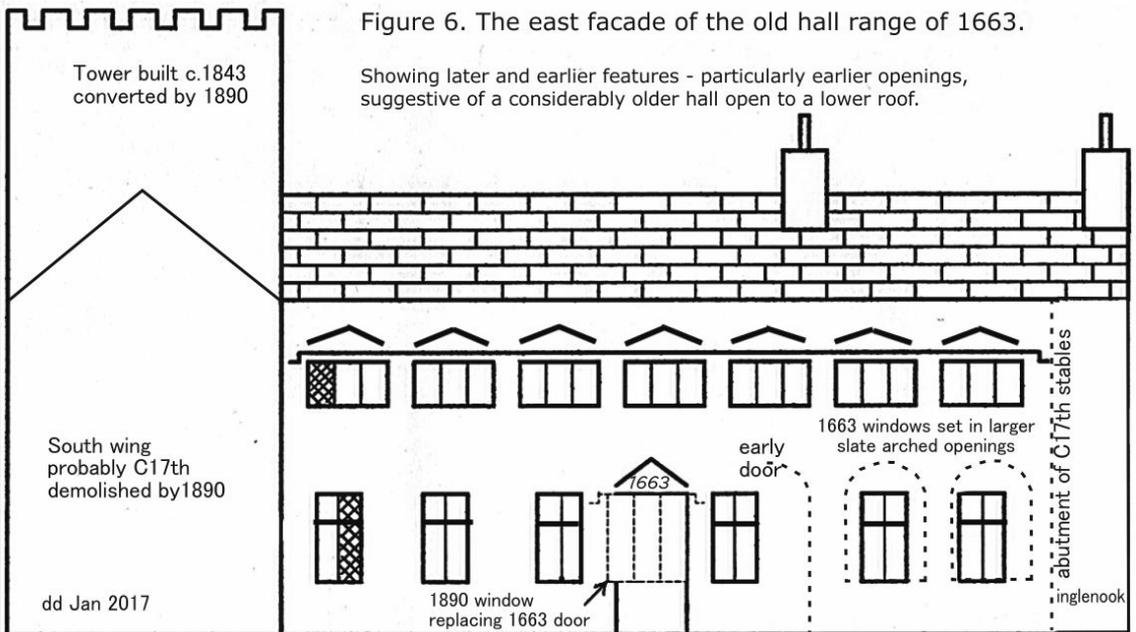


Figure 6. The east facade of the old hall range of 1663.

Showing later and earlier features - particularly earlier openings, suggestive of a considerably older hall open to a lower roof.



From the above it can be seen how, by the 1530s, a resident and growing Winder family in Lorton might have acquired two or three tenements in Low Lorton as demesne for a substantial residence, farm buildings, and landholding. In 1687-8 Thomas Denton noted that 'Mr John Winder hath an estate worth 80 *li* per annum, and an house well built and scituate upon Cokar'.²⁴ That house, dated 1663 and illustrated in Figure 6, will contain at least the east hall range, the northern stables wing shown in the plan of 1803, and probably the southern wing, which survived to about 1890. The principal access, up to the mid nineteenth century, was directly from the road into the courtyard, which meant that the required frontage to the road was minimised. The main hall building seems to have been accommodated on just one former farmstead, as shown in figure 5. The hall and its pleasure grounds in 1740 could be contained in the space of three old farmsteads.

There were at least two phases of the hall before 1663. Firstly there is a reused lintel in a bedroom which is inscribed PW 1630 AW, and must come from earlier building work by Peter Winder, though that may have represented minor changes. Secondly, as illustrated in Figure 6, two of the ground-floor stone-mullioned windows with transoms of the 1663 two-story façade, those nearest to the stables, were set in much larger and higher stone-arched openings. This suggests an earlier single-floor phase, which was open to the roof, and considerably older in style than 1630. This lends lending support to the claims that the Winders resided there through the fifteenth century. Furthermore, the window closest to the stables was offset in the older opening to as far as possible to the South, consistent with taking the abutment of the stables as far south as possible, overlapping the huge inglenook. There may have been a need to keep within a single old tenement, as suggested by property boundaries in Figure 5. To the south, the constraint for building until 1803 would be Kiln Lonning, which ran from Lorton street at the present entrance to Lorton Hall Tower, and straight down to the Cocker. This was used by both Lorton Hall

and the adjacent Wilkinson's Tenement, in separate ownerships from 1740.²⁵

*The estate in the 1690s*²⁶

In the 1690s there were two transfers of ownership which detail the Lorton holdings. In 1696, John Winder and Mary, who had built the 1663 hall, retired to Cocker mouth and gave their property to John Winder the younger. In 1699 John Winder the younger and Lettice sold the whole of the Lorton and Whinfall estate to Captain Timothy Dalston. The two indentures combine to give a good description of the estate at its height, at the end of the Winders' ownership.

They held in hand 'One Capital Messuage or Mansion House, dovehouse, gardens, orchard' plus 33 closes held freehold and seven held customary; at Birketts, Lorton, six freehold closes, three more held customary and a house [Birkett's Cottage]; Bell's Tenement; High Lorton Mill held customary and a freehold moiety (half interest) in Low Lorton (Whinfall) Mill. They held also seven tenements in Lorton which were let to their manorial tenants, for a total of just £1-14-4¼. These included messuages at Gillbrow, Wilkinson's tenement, and the other in Low Lorton held by John Fletcher. All this above was sold to Dalston for £2350. In addition to this, John Winder held five farmsteads in Blindcrake, one in Pardshaw, the corn tithes of Pardshaw and a House in Cocker mouth, which were not sold to Dalston.

The Winder family will not be discussed in detail here but this can be found elsewhere.²⁷ The children of John and Mary, born at Lorton, were very prosperous. Of local interest is that Governor Stephenson, of Keswick, owed his position and wealth from the East India Company to marrying Rebecca Winder of Lorton. Her brother, Jonathan, was joint chair of the East India Company's joint council from 1705-7.

The eighteenth Century

The purchaser of the estate in the parish of Lorton in 1699 was Captain Timothy Dalston, 1665 – 1721.²⁸ He was a Dalston of

²⁵ Identification, deed Wilkinson & Walker 1742.

²⁶ Identification, Winder-Winder 1690, Winder-Dalston 1699.

²⁷ *L&DFLHS Newsletter* no.14; *A Cumberland Valley, TCWAAS 1892, 1895, 1897.*

²⁸ C Roy Huddleston, *The Dalstons of Acorn Bank, TCWAAS 1958*, pp.140-77, Appendix XV, pp.174-5.

²⁴ Angus Winchester, *Thomas Denton, a perambulation of Cumberland 1687-8*, 2003, pp.120-1.

Acornbank, near Temple Sowerby. Sir Daniel Fleming was his godfather. A victim of primogeniture, Christopher Dalston saw his brother John succeed to the family estates at a time when second sons could expect only a small annuity. Christopher received a commission in Col. William Northcote's regiment of Foot in 1693. His future depended on marrying money, and in 1694 he married Dorothy Lowther, daughter of Henry Lowther of Cockermouth, and co-heir to the extensive estate of Sir Gerard Lowther. By mortgaging her estate at Woolsty Castle, Abbey Holme, Dorothy provided £1000 of the purchase money for the Lorton estate, the rest being mainly borrowed by Dalston from local gentry. Their son Christopher was baptised at Greystoke in 1700, and daughter Margaret in 1701 at Lorton. Margaret died in 1702, and that burial provides the first known use of the name Lorton Hall. That was the contribution of Christopher Dalston.

Unfortunately, Dalston lived above his means, incurring further debts charged against the property which he never repaid.²⁹ He was apparently also an adulterer, because Bishop Nicholson notes Dalston's wife visiting him in 1711, attempting to gain justice against her husband and his 'paramour'.³⁰ During his lifetime, Dalston's local debts were bought up and further extended by the attorney Richard Baynes, d.1744, of Cockermouth.³¹ He was agent to Lord Egremont, but also lent money and dealt in property on his own account. After 1721, Dalston's heir, Christopher, and his widow, Dorothy, carried those debts forward. By 1726 the total debt charged against the estate was £2210. Richard Baynes created a consortium with Thomas Walker of Cockermouth, tobacconist, and John Westray of Riggs in Embleton, woodmonger, to pay the debts and gain ownership, by using their own money, and by borrowing from local gentry at interest. They foreclosed on the mortgage in 1726, and Christopher and his mother had a year to vacate Lorton Hall.

Baynes, Walker, and Westray became the joint owners of the Lorton Hall estate in 1726, and set about a long process of selling it in parts for profit. It was through this

process that the Winders' manorial tenancies were sold as freeholds, and the manor ceased to exist. Only four of the indentures of sale survive in the identification of Lorton Hall, and these total £2514 by 1742.

In 1740, Lorton Hall and its reduced estate was sold to Jonathan Wilkinson, 1704-79, who was then a single man, born at Waterend in Loweswater into a Quaker family, and into the Pardshaw Meetings.³² His life seems to have become more eventful as 'an indulgent husband' after 1750, when he married Elizabeth Scott, 1712-71, a native of Cumberland who had been brought up in Ireland and had travelled in the American colonies. She became a Quaker minister in 1760, but through the 1750s they used Lorton Hall for Quaker preaching. Wilkinson sold the hall in 1759 and they moved to Cockermouth. It is clear that their relationship with the Pardshaw elders, and with Isaac Fletcher in particular, had become unfriendly, even antagonistic. In 1770, after being wronged by her, Fletcher referred to Elizabeth Wilkinson as 'that blaspheming preacher and prophetess'. Little else is known about their activities in Lorton, where there were few Quakers.

In 1740 Jonathan Wilkinson paid £1200 for the capital messuage known as Lorton Hall, together with dove house, orchards, gardens, stables, etc, the Guards and Holmes adjacent. A reconstituted and compact package of freehold lands was included; Fisher Croft with a rig of land leading to it over Peile's Close, Croft behind the Barn, Kirk Croft, Pepper Moulds, Townhead Parrock, Long Boon Dykes Square Boon Dyke, Middle Boon Dyke, Little Boon Dyke, 4 closes Stub Lorton Heads, and the freehold Birketts Closes. Plus the customary Fell Close (Hornell Groves on Whit Beck). There was a smith's shop and old house adjoining Pepper Moulds. The moiety, or half interest, in the Low Mill was included. During his time in Lorton Jonathan Wilkinson acquired the other moiety, and seems to have put the mill in order. The estate was clearly well maintained because in 1759 Wilkinson sold it for £2080.

Apart from the Hall and its land, the sales by Baynes and associates included a freshly created New House Farm (the building being older) which was sold to Joseph Peile in 1741. In 1742 they sold Brough's tenement and Wilkinson's Tenement, both in Low

²⁹ Identification, Dalston

³⁰ Huddleston, Dalstons, p.174.

³¹ Identification; C Roy Huddleston, Cumberland families and heraldry, 1978, p.18.

³² Angus Winchester, The diary of Isaac Fletcher, 1994, p.448 and extensively.

Lorton, with packages of land, mostly freehold, which were conveniently located. Brough's tenement was sold to John Pearson of Low Lorton, gent, for £360. The land was all to the north of Lorton, suggesting that this John Pearson was of Low Lorton tenement, or now Croft House.

Wilkinson's Tenement was sold to Edmund Walker of Ruthwaite, yeoman, for £475. The lands were south of the farmstead, which was part of the old Winder freehold to the south of Lorton Hall, as shown in Figure 5.

The boundary between Jonathan Wilkinson's Lorton Hall and Edmund Walker's Wilkinson's Tenement was Kiln Lonning, which ran to the kiln stead and garden at the Cocker. After the kiln stead was replaced, presumably by one co-located with the rebuilt mill, the old kiln stead and garden became Ivy Cottage. Wilkinson and Walker signed an agreement to share this lonning in 1742. All the land between this lonning and the boundary of Kirkgate End farm came to Jonathan Wilkinson with Lorton Hall in 1740.

Lorton Hall was sold at auction on 12th January 1759, to Christopher Richardson of Johnby, Greystoke, for £1820. Richardson has not been researched. He was to pay the money in two instalments, half in September 1759 and the balance in March 1760. By March 1760 there was £950 outstanding, and in 1766, with the payment still not made, the estate was again sold for £2060, this time to Thomas Peile-Barnes, 1742-1782, of Low Lorton. He held the inn at Low Lorton, which had been rebuilt in 1734 as the Packhorse by Thomas's father, Thomas Barnes, and his wife Mary, nee Peile. The Packhorse had previously been the farmstead of one of two tenements at Kirkgate End. Those two customary tenements had marked the northern boundary of the Winders' freehold property, being outside of it, and on both sides of the road. When Thomas Peile-Barnes purchased Lorton Hall in 1766, aged 24, the Packhorse, and the closes in Low Lorton belonging to it, became part of the Peile-Barnes estate at Lorton Hall. These Kirkgate End tenements and their incorporation into the Lorton Hall estate have been considered in *Journal 49* and will not be discussed in detail here.³³ When Captain Thomas Peile-Barnes died in 1782,

his eldest son, Thomas, 1773-1790, was only nine and his mother, Eleanor Barnes, took charge. After Thomas's death at age seventeen, the second son, John Peile-Barnes, succeeded aged fourteen. In 1797, when John became 21, he mortgaged Lorton Hall to John Nicholson, of Hill in Brigham, for £720. When his mother died at Lorton Hall in 1800, John Peile-Barnes sold the whole estate to Joshua Lucock of Cocker mouth.

In summary, at the beginning of the eighteenth century the whole of the Winders' Lorton estate, with manorial tenants, was passed intact, but through that century, mostly through unsuccessful owners/occupants, the estate was divided and reduced to a core of house, land and mill, in Low Lorton and Whinfell. As far as we know, Lorton Hall itself was very little changed from the Mansion House in the form which John Winder had created in 1663.

The nineteenth Century

In 1800 Lorton Hall was purchased from John Peile-Barnes by Joshua Lucock, 1772-1809, of Cocker mouth. This Joshua Lucock was the grandson and eventual heir of Joshua Lucock of Cocker mouth, 1710-1782, who was sheriff of Cumberland in 1745 and is probably best known for building Wordsworth House. His son, Raisbeck Lucock of the Low Field estate in Setmurthy, died in 1786. The grandson came into his inheritance when aged 21, in 1793, and in 1794 he married his cousin, Rebecca Lucock Wilkinson, 1774-1839. Three children were born to the Lucocks of Castlegate, but only one, Raisbeck, 1795-1850, survived to make the move to Lorton. In Lorton Hall five more children were born, John, Sarah, Joshua and in 1806 the twins Elizabeth and George. The sad story of the family was covered in *Journal 52*. The father, Joshua, died in 1809, leaving Rebecca with a young family and with the estate in the hands of trustees. Four of the six children suffered sudden collapses into lunacy as young adults, leaving just the twins as mentally competent. By 1865 all the family members had died except for the lunatics, John and Sarah, who lived on in the hall in the care of attendants until 1875.

This article is concerned with Lorton Hall and its estate through the 75 year period of Lucock ownership, but again much of this can be found in *Journal 52*.³⁴ On arrival in 1800

³³ Derek Denman, The end of Kirkgate End, *Journal 49*

³⁴ Derek Denman, Joshua Lucock Bragg of Lorton Hall, mad, bad, or sad? *Journal 52*

Joshua Lucock was keen to establish his position as village squire and to develop the extent of his estate. The Lorton Hall estate he purchased was that re-created by Baynes sale to Wilkinson in 1740, plus the ex Peile-Barnes Pack Horse estate, which had been one of the two Kirkgate End farm tenements. Additionally, Joshua Lucock added the property which he had inherited in Cockermonth, Setmurthy, Westward, Bassenthwaite, Egremont, and a moiety of the manor of Brigham to create in 1800 his estate based on Lorton Hall. Joshua Lucock then set about increasing his estate, firstly up to 1805 by using his own money or borrowing from others. In 1805 he became the residual legatee of his mother's brother, Joseph Bragg of Liverpool, which provided him with sufficient funds to continue purchasing extensively until his death in 1809. In accepting this inheritance in 1805, Joshua Lucock became Joshua Lucock Bragg and his family followed, becoming Braggs.

There are few records of his Lorton purchases, but it has been possible to put together a rental of his estate totalling £1700 per annum in 1810, and to identify some of his purchases, from transcriptions of his trustees' accounts supplied later for a case in Chancery. This is detailed in *Journal 52*. His first purchases in Lorton appear to be a freehold farm at Highside, the northern half, and the farm at Low Swinside, which at that time was in Buttermere township rather than Lorton. Of more significance to Low Lorton was his purchase circa 1803 of an estate based on Wilkinson's Tenement, and then of the greater part of the other Kirkgate End farm from the trustees of the Fletcher family in 1806. This farmstead was opposite the Packhorse Inn, and occupied the space between the northern end of Lorton Hall's grounds, currently the entrance to Winder Hall, and what is now Holme Cottage. Under Lucock Bragg this farm continued as the Kirkstile or Churchstile farm, rented to tenants. However, one part of this farmstead was not sold to Bragg and remained in the Fletcher/Woodhouse family as a house, now demolished, called The Green – currently represented by Lorton Hall Lodge. The details are given in *Journal 49*, and of course this purchase is not reflected in the plan of the Lorton Hall Estate drawn for Joshua Lucock in 1803.³⁵ In 1804 Joshua Lucock

purchased a customary estate at Lanthwaite Green in Brackenthwaite.

In 1805 Joshua Lucock inherited his uncle's fortune, and rather than repay what he had borrowed, he purchased more property. Joshua Lucock Bragg purchased the extensive old Fisher freehold estate in Brackenthwaite, including the Scale Hill Hotel. In 1807 he purchased Potter Gill in Loweswater, and followed this by purchasing at auction in 1807 the manor of Loweswater, the Holme, Lake and Rigg Bank – completed in 1808. When he died in 1809, the sum of £4,868 was found in Lorton Hall, probably raised by recent mortgages of some his property and perhaps intended for further purchases. He had borrowed £13,500, which proved a problem for his trustees.

Wilkinson's tenement and Cross Nook.
[Revised March 2021]

When Joshua Lucock purchased Lorton Hall in 1800, the property ended at the south at Kiln Lonning. It did not include Wilkinson's tenement. This was based on the old manorial Wilkinson's tenement, which can be assumed to be just the next farmstead south of Kiln Lonning, as suggested by Wilkinson's Croft across the road from the farmstead. A croft, recorded in 1840, suggests a very old name.

In 1803 Joshua Lucock had his plan drawn of the Lorton Hall estate. It showed that Lucock had purchased Wilkinson's Tenement. See Figure 7a. However, that freehold Wilkinson's tenement was probably more extensive than the medieval manorial holding, being either created by Baynes and associates in 1742, or by acquisitions by its subsequent owners. When Lucock purchased it contained all the land that would become the south lawn of Lorton, see Figure 5. It excluded just the dwellings at Lorton Cross Hall, see Figure 7a. The old hall range faced east and west, but the mid-nineteenth century developments would exploit that southern prospect, with its fine view of the Buttermere Fells offered by Wilkinson's extended tenement, see Figure 5.

In 1742, Richard Baynes and his associates had sold Wilkinson's tenement, in some form, as freehold to Edward Walker, yeoman of Ruthwaite in Ireby. In 1780 Edward Walker sold the same to William Tiffin of Caldbeck. William Tiffin was connected with Lorton, because in 1775 his sister, Mary Tiffin, had married John Wilkinson of Lorton.

³⁵ A copy is held only in the archive of the Society, copied from the original held by a former owner.

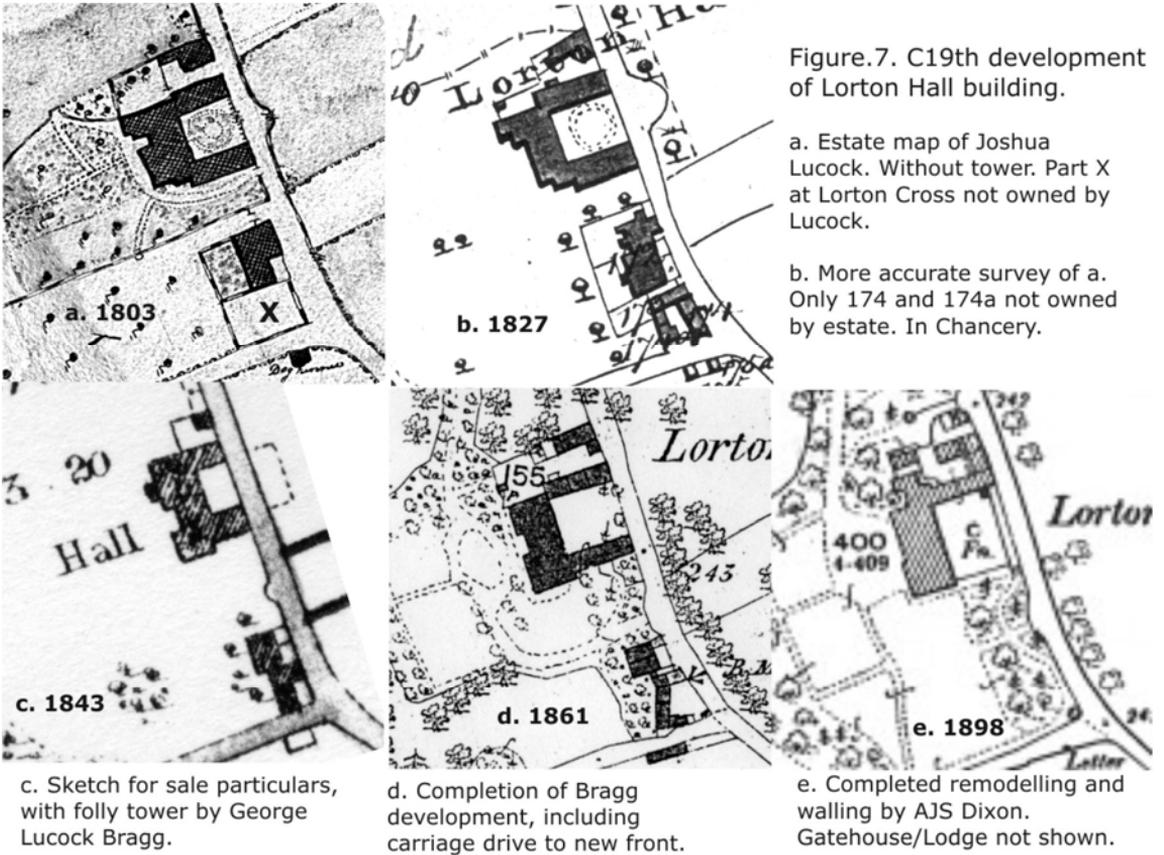
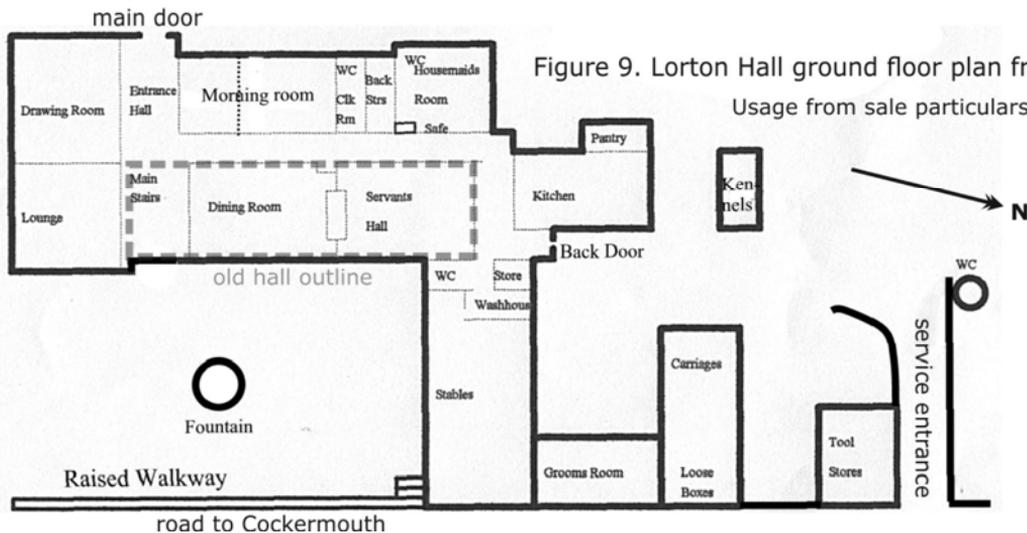


Figure 8. The West front facade in its final form, approached by the carriage drive from the left. All visible building is nineteenth century. Photograph taken from Guards close, mid C20th.



John Wilkinson owned the farm at Scales which over a century previously had been developed from the huts on the common at Scales. John Wilkinson enfranchised his holdings there in Derwentfells manor in 1760. He also owned the house which is now Beech Cottage, and Causey Cottage, originally its attached barn. At some time after he purchased Wilkinson's tenement in 1780, William Tiffin came to Lorton. Both he and his sister, Mary Wilkinson, died in Lorton 1802.

The daughter of John and Mary Wilkinson, Ann, born 1776, was heir to John Wilkinson when he died in 1786. She married John Jennings, the first Lorton brewer, in 1811, having their family at Midtown Cottages, now Beech Cottage.

Purchase of Cross Nook [Revised March 2021]

By 1827, when a survey and plan was made for the enclosure of Lorton commons, Cross Nook was owned by Christopher Fisher, see Figure 7b. The claim of Lucock Bragg's trustees included a request for a commons allotment in respect of a house and large garden late purchased from Christopher Fisher. This Christopher Fisher, 1751-1835, was the son of John Fisher of Cross, and it seems likely that he had been the owner of Wilkinson's tenement after William Tiffin's death in 1802, and had sold to Joshua Lucock by 1803. Christopher and Sarah Fisher died in 1835 and 1836. By 1840, when the tithes were commuted, the whole of Lorton Cross was owned by the Lucock Braggs. These buildings survived the Lucock Bragg era, perhaps with alterations, and are shown on the first series Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1861. See Figure 7.d.

George Lucock Bragg and the development of the estate, hall and grounds.

Joshua Lucock Bragg died in 1809, leaving the estate in the hands of trustees, who had to manage the family finances, fund the bequests in the will and contest a number of complex Chancery cases, brought by those with a claim or supposed claim on the property. They started disposals of the wider estate.

After the death of Sarah Lucock Bragg in 1839, if not before, her son George Lucock Bragg took charge of Lorton Hall, as the squire of Lorton, and ran the estate, though the property was under the control of

the Court of Chancery. A qualified and competent manager, George worked with the Court of Chancery to provide a way of exiting the long-standing case with a smaller but viable family estate.³⁶ In 1843 the whole of the remaining estate created by Joshua Lucock Bragg, together with new commons allotments from the enclosures, was sold at auction in fourteen lots by order of the Master of Chancery, to settle the case of Bragg v Wilkinson.³⁷ While the details of the purchasers are unclear, George Lucock Bragg became owner of the Hall, its pleasure grounds, the home estate, the Pack Horse Inn; and Church 'Style', Highside, and Low Swinside farms. He consolidated a core of property in Lorton, while allowing others to buy the Lucock's legacy estate elsewhere, including Low Lorton Mill. At around the same time he purchased the Holme Farm, adjacent to his Church Stile Farm, and rearranged the land north and south into two compact letting farms. He now owned the Hall with its grounds and home estate, plus four good letting farms in Lorton, Highside, Low Swinside, Church Stile and Holme farms. George Lucock Bragg now owned a viable local estate and was responsible for his four elder lunatic siblings, Raisbeck, John, Sarah and Joshua, all living in Lorton Hall. George remained a bachelor, while his twin sister, Elizabeth, had married an elderly widower, Robert Bridge, and had removed to Dorset, where they built Lorton House. It is probably that the twins decided that there should not be a further generation of Lucock Braggs, with the risk of inherited insanity.

At the start of this article the issue of the supposed medieval pele tower was discussed, see Figures 1–3. This tower appears without windows in a photograph after 1881, when the hall was bought by the Dixons of Rheda, and therefore was converted by them rather than built. But no tower is included in the drawing of 1803, nor shown in that plan. There were two major developments of Lorton Hall in the nineteenth Century, one by George Lucock Bragg in the 1840s, and the other by Anthony Dixon in the 1890s, who rebuilt most of what George had added, except for the folly tower. In the sale particulars for the hall in 1843, the agents stated that 'The Mansion House has lately been much enlarged and the Coach-house,

³⁶ TNA C101/5337, Accounts of the estate.

³⁷ Sale Particulars, Lorton Hall estate, 1843, copy L&DFLHS archive.

Stables, and other Buildings are in excellent order throughout and in thorough repair'. Figure 7 shows the footprint of the hall in 1803, 1827, 1843, and 1861 and 1898. The 1843 footprint, though not to scale, shows that recent development in the south west corner of the building, which includes the location of the tower. The conclusion must be that the folly tower, without windows, was added to the south of the hall range by George Lucock Bragg as part of that development. He also turned the hall around to provide the main entrance to the west and to open the new views to the south. The plan of 1843 does not show the long carriage drive from the gate on the north, the current entrance to Winder Hall, but the entrance is shown in 1843, and the 1861 map shows the drive and grounds complete. The direct entrance to the old hall from the street was retained.

Soon after George Lucock Bragg had firmly established his estate and family position, the misfortune that followed the Lucock Braggs struck again. In 1844 he wisely wrote his will and in 1847 he was killed when thrown from his carriage in Thackthwaite. At this time his four lunatic siblings were still living in the hall under George's care. Their sister, Elizabeth Bridge, returned to Lorton Hall with her husband to take charge. Robert Bridge died in 1857, and Elizabeth built and gave the Sunday School building in his memory. Elizabeth herself died in 1865, leaving no competent family member to care for the two siblings, John and Sarah Lucock Bragg, who lived on in Lorton Hall with attendants until 1875, probably giving rise to the various ghost stories. Again the trustees had to defend new cases at Chancery, and the Holme and Church Stile farms were put up for sale by auction in 1870. The Lucock Bragg estate was gradually dispersed for cash, as the previous estate had been, and in 1881 the core Lorton Hall property was again for sale.³⁸ The Identification of Lorton Hall, in Dlec.328, seems to date from this period between the death of the last Lucock-Bragg lunatic in 1875 and the sale in 1881. The lack of documentation of much of the Joshua Lucock purchases did not help the process of sale.

One effect of the failure of the Lucock Bragg family was to leave Lorton increasing

in need of social leadership in mid-century, particularly after the death of George in 1847. That gap was filled by the creation of new gentry residences in High Lorton, that is Lorton Park, Oak Hill and Fairfied, which were created and inhabited by the interlinked families of Alexander, Harbord, Wilson and Armitstead. Lorton Park and these families have been discussed in detail in *Journal 45*.³⁹ While Joshua Lucock Bragg was perhaps the last of the eighteenth-century country-gentlemen, these new families, with wealth coming from trade and industry elsewhere, provided a focus and leadership for the Victorian improvement of Lorton and its people through the second half of the century. William Lancaster Alexander, 1821-1910, of Oak Hill was generally acknowledged as the squire of Lorton, and justly so. Until the 1890s, old Lorton Hall was a relic of the past order, already a curious bygone from a rustic age, when John Bolton gave his lecture in 1891.⁴⁰

Into the twentieth Century – the Dixons of Rheda

The purchaser of Lorton Hall at auction at the Globe Hotel on 7th June 1881 was Thomas Dixon, 1802-1882, of Rheda Hall in Frizzington. The Dixons had prospered from marriage and by exploiting minerals assets, to hold a large estate based on Rheda Hall.⁴¹ Thomas Dixon had already purchased farms in Lorton, some from the reducing Lucock Bragg Estate, and Thomas Dixon purchased Lorton Hall as a seat from which to develop and run a local estate. That seat and estate was not for himself but for his second son, Anthony Joseph Steele Dixon, 1862-1909. The first son, Thomas Dixon of Rheda, 1861-1923, would inherit the principal estate. AJS Dixon was only twenty when his father bought Lorton Hall, but was 21 in 1882, when his father died, and he came into his Lorton inheritance. The old photograph, Figure 2, is thought to show Anthony Dixon around that time, in Church Croft and looking over the road to a worker at the old gates leading to the door of the old hall of 1663. Soon after, we are not sure exactly when, Anthony Dixon set about the extensive redevelopment of Lorton Hall into the large late-Victorian

³⁹ Derek Denman, Lorton Park in the nineteenth century, *Journal 45*.

⁴⁰ John Bolton, Lorton and Loweswater 80 years ago, 1891

⁴¹ Huddleston, Families, Dixon, p.93; CAC(W) DDix, Dixon of Rheda.

³⁸ Sale particulars 1870 & 1881, copies in L&DFLHS archive.

country house, retaining the old hall range but converting the folly tower into accommodation. A high-level dated stone of 1890 marks the completion of the structure, and by 1891 Anthony Dixon was living at the Hall as a bachelor with a full staff. In his lecture in 1891, John Bolton said 'today the hall stands renewed'. In 1892 Anthony Dixon married Florence Brockbank, 1867-1920, the daughter of a Whitehaven solicitor. Monica Gladys was born in 1892 followed in 1893 by Ethel Florence. In 1927 Ethel married Humphrey Patricious Senhouse of the Fitz in Cockermonth, a lesser Senhouse family. The heir, Anthony Thomas Steele Dixon, 1900-1962 was born at the turn of the century. The family and a full staff were all at home for the 1901 census. There is a clear parallel with the optimistic arrival of the Lucocks a century before.

The new ordnance survey of 1898 shows the completed project of the rebuilt hall and its grounds. Anthony Dixon demolished the old south wing, but left the structure of the old hall range and the stables intact. He converted George Lucock Bragg's folly tower, placing windows in the east and north façades at least. But Bragg's structures on the west and south west appear to have been substantially or wholly rebuilt. The main entrance, principal rooms, and main staircase in oak were placed in the south west block, taking advantage of views to the Buttermere Fells, made available by cottage demolition and landscaping. The old hall was panelled internally, and its 1663 doorway replaced with a window. The old courtyard became a walled garden with fountain, and with a high walkway along the roadside. The old fire house or kitchen at the north of the hall range, with its huge inglenook, became the servants' hall, while a new kitchen was built to the north west. This kitchen, together with the dog kennels was converted much later to form Fife Lodge, but otherwise on the ground floor the hall that existed in 1890 is that which remains today.

Anthony Dixon also purchased all property not already owned between the road and the river, from where they meet opposite the Wheat Sheaf Inn and where the road joins the river at Low Lorton Bridge. Within that area he demolished Ivy Cottage, the six cottages at Lorton Cross, the Green, replaced by Lorton Hall Lodge as his gatehouse, and the Church Stile farm buildings. The old farmhouse and barn of

Holme Farm was retained as a service cottage held by Joseph Allison and family. The road perimeter, between buildings, was filled by a high boundary wall, excluding the public, and the main entrance to the carriage drive was gated and opened by a wheel at Lorton Hall Lodge.

Apart from the hall, its grounds, the Packhorse, and the land which came with Lorton Hall, a mostly new set of farms in Lorton and Whinfall was held as the rented estate. Only Low Swinside was present from the farms owned by the Lucocks. In 1913 the Dixons also owned Bridge End farm, which acted as the home farm for the farm land attached to the hall, plus New House Farm, Darling Howe Farm, which was a nineteenth century creation farming the enclosed commons, the gentry house at Broomlands, which was built earlier by others, and Birkett Cottage with the woods. In Whinfall, Anthony Dixon had acquired Bridge End Cottage, Bank Farm and Brow Farm. Darling Howe Farm was later sold, which reduced the total acreage at 1947 from around 1000 acres to 615 acres.⁴²

During Anthony Dixon and his family's residence in Lorton Hall from 1891, he undertook the normal sponsorship of village institutions, such as the church. However, the hall and its occupants did not regain the primary social leadership within the village, for example with the school. That remained with William Lancaster Alexander, who died an old man in 1910 and was greatly missed. Anthony Dixon pre-deceased him in 1809, aged 47, while his heir, Anthony Thomas Steele Dixon, was no more than nine. While the widow, Florence Dixon, was still of Lorton Hall, in practice the Dixons were mostly elsewhere. For the 1911 census there is no entry, except for the occupants of the Lodge, who provided a caretaker role. The late Charlie Allison, of Holme Cottage, said that the Dixons were a consumptive family, and lost their vigour and their interest in Lorton. ATS Dixon was infrequently resident, and when visiting would stay at the Pheasant Inn, near Bassenthwaite Lake Station. During the second world war the servants' quarters of the hall were used to house evacuees. In 1947 Lorton Hall and its estate was sold in ten lots. ATS Dixon became an English settler in Thika, Kenya.⁴³

⁴² Sale particulars Lorton Hall estate 1947, L&DFLHS archives.

⁴³ Huddleston, Families, p.93.

Conclusion

The recorded history of the freehold estate has been presented since 1230. There is no evidence of a high-status seat at that time, but that was probably developed by the Winder family between 1385 and 1530. The family claim, to have lived there and flourished through the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. is supported by ownership records and an earlier phase of the hall which could support it. However, their residence can only be proved from the early sixteenth century when they were using their position, as mesne lords of a third of Low Lorton, to grow their demesne by reducing their manorial tenanted land. By the time the family left, in 1699, the hall was a substantial high-status seat controlling a significant manorial estate, and the family members had established commercial and social position outside of the district. The Winders were probably Lorton's most prominent and successful resident family at any time.

The eighteenth century saw a long decline of the hall and its estate. Christopher Dalston had neither the resources, nor the ability, to follow the Winders. Under his family's ownership the estate fell into the hands of Richard Baynes and associates, to be broken up and sold in parts for profit. At the start of the Dalston ownership the name Lorton Hall was created, and at the end the manorial tenancies were extinguished. After several more ownerships, Lorton Hall again became the seat of a growing estate under Joshua Lucock (Bragg), and it was mostly

the continual ill fortune which attached itself to that family which caused the decline of the estate to nothing by 1880. This also excluded the occupants of Lorton Hall from playing the normally expected part in leading the Victorian improvement of Lorton and its people. Instead, the incoming trade-based middle classes of High Lorton provided and maintained that role.

The purchase by the Dixons of Rheda in 1881 marked the last redevelopment of the hall buildings, and of a substantial but different local estate. attached to the hall as a gentry seat. The Dixon family did not thrive in Lorton and they became absentee owners. The estate was again broken up and sold for the last time in 1947. Such a fate for a Cumberland estate was not uncommon in this period, but at least Lorton Hall escaped the sale and dismantling which was the fate of, for example, the Brandlingill mansion.

Though the Hall itself remained as one property for many years, the estate sale in 1947 marked its end as a gentry seat, though also the start of a new phase of occupation first as a whole and now in parts, by many people for many uses. It remains today a lively place with a long and exceptional history.

The Journal

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L&DFLHS – Programme for 2017

Date	Event
12 th January	Cumbria's Traditional Buildings, by June Hall
9 th March	150 years of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, by Professor Angus Winchester
11 th May	Cumbria and the Caribbean: a history, by Dr Diane Rushworth
Weds 17 th May	Outing to Lanercost Priory and Holme Cultram Abbey – further details to follow. Organiser Tim Stanley Clamp.
8 th June	Agm and talk Holme Cultram Abbey: recent archaeological work, by Mark Graham.
13 th July	Cumbrian Minerals, by Ian Tyler.
14 th September	A passionate sisterhood, by Kathleen Jones.
Friday 13 th October	Sixth Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture, TBA
9 th November	From barren waste to national treasure: how we learned to love the Lake District, by Grevel Lindop.
11 th November	Melbreak Communities coffee morning, Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton, 10:30 – 12:00. Offers of assistance welcome, to Sandra Shaw.
Talks are held at the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton at 7.30pm. Visitors £3.00 with refreshments.	