

# Lorton & Derwent Fells

## Local History Society



From Hodgkinson & Donald's map, surveyed in 1770/71



## LORTON AND DERWENT FELLS L.H.S.

### NEWSLETTER No.1 : JANUARY 1994.

Since this is our first venture into print for your newly founded Society your Committee thought members would appreciate a re-statement of the aims of the Society, as agreed by the founder members in October last. They are :-

- a. Primarily to study in depth all aspects of the history of the area comprising the ancient Manor of Derwent Fells and the adjacent areas, up to and including the present time.
- b. To hold meetings at regular intervals for talks by members and invited guest speakers.
- c. To provide an opportunity for individual members to meet, discuss and exchange notes regarding their individual interests and researches.
- d. To encourage and organize occasional field work as and when appropriate.
- e. To produce periodic newsletters.
- f. To work towards publishing members' original work of historic interest, either by the individual or by the Society.
- g. To work towards the provision of a local archive of such relevant historical data as may be discovered in National, Regional and personal archives : and to create an archive of current events for study by those who come after, and to provide an archive for consultation by the general public.
- h. Finally, to try and ensure that in undertaking any or all of the above, individual members derive fun and enjoyment from those activities.

We want to emphasize the point made in item "h". Your Society can only be as good as the membership care to make it.

Firstly, it needs to provide pleasure to all concerned - pleasure to come and attend the meetings; pleasure to hear what others have been doing, the problems they met in their research, and hopefully, how they overcame them or propose to do so ; pleasure to share your own work with others ; pleasure to meet and discuss the history which surrounds and interests all of us in one way or another. Do not say you are not doing research yourself - *we hope to find ways of making you want to do some - of kindling an interest* - there is so much to learn of the making of our surroundings, the very nature of which has brought so many of us here, and which has been so instrumental in making those who were fortunate enough to be born here what they are.

Secondly, to achieve this, as many members as possible can help in even a very small way by developing their own latent interests . Do you have a house of unknown origin and background? Seek to discover it. Do you have local family connections with gaps in the family tree? Seek to fill them. Do you have any old photographs of the area which are labelled, or not labelled? Seek to put them into context. Do you have an interest in farming or the environment? Seek to discover how particular areas have changed through the centuries, brought them to their present state, and the likely direction of further change.

Thirdly, we need volunteers to record the present as it happens so that future generations can bless us for our foresight in providing them with the details of their past, as we now struggle with so much difficulty, (and pleasure), to find our own now. There is little chance they will curse us for denying them the work we undertake now - we can never hope to foresee and forestall all future questions : but we can lay a useful ground for them. The Church magazine and local newspapers are but two sources of news in the community.

What community? Well, we only half defined our area of interest - Lorton and Buttermere valley, Derwent Fells. There is, of course, no specified geographical limit - "local" is open to nearly as many interpretations as there are folks defining it. Two generalizations come to mind. One is to take the ancient "parishes" of Lorton and Loweswater. Translating this onto the map draws a rough line from Beck Wythop on Bassenthwaite Lake over the Lord's Seat, Hopegill



Head to Gatesgarth to Loweswater, Mockerkin, over Whinfell to Rogerscale to Wythop, Peilewyke and so back to Beck Wythop. The second delineation, would be "not to tread on the toes of any adjacent Local History Society".

If members would advise their interests we could keep a record of them and so endeavour to cater for them. Your committee has tried to organize the early bi-monthly meetings to cover a broad field in order to help those who are still a little uncertain in their minds as to exactly what purpose and function a LHS satisfies. Our hope is that after a few meetings many members will feel they have had their appetites whetted sufficiently to pursue some line of enquiry, to seek answers to questions which have come to mind. We dignify such activity with the title "research" which sounds delightfully academic, and is intended to impress the innocent, but really, it is nothing more than trying to find the answer to a difficult question.

We must not anticipate too much what our speakers will tell us, but in as far as the past is concerned it may help to give here a partial list of what records are easily available in the area.

#### **For Family Research :-**

The Parish Registers : All except the current registers are now kept in the Carlisle R.O.

Mr. George has full extracts up to 1900 for Lorton

The Tombstones in the Churchyards

The Census Returns for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891. These are available in Workington and Carlisle Public Libraries. (Later ones are not available to the public under the 100 year rule.)

Mr. George has transcriptions of those for Lorton and a few others

#### **For Houses, Farms, Farm Land, and family.**

Various Estate Surveys, e.g. 1649 Parliamentary Survey of High Lorton - Mr George has a copy  
For others consult Carlisle R.O.

The Enclosure Awards - Consult Carlisle R.O - Mr. George has that for Lorton

The 1841 Tithe Returns - Consult Carlisle R.O. - Mr. George has that for Lorton

Miscellaneous Records - e.g. Quarter Sessions, Census Returns, - Consult Carlisle R.O

#### **Less Easily Available Records that are within a day's journey.**

##### **For Family Research**

Probate Inventories and Wills - probably at Preston Record Office, up to 1856  
subsequently a few at Carlisle R.O. until 1858.

**For Family and Buildings etc** - Deeds of individual properties ( where they exist) by permission of the current owner.

#### **Other Organisations.**

**Cumbria Local History Federation,**

**Mrs. Jean Turnbull, Secretary,**

**61, Bellingham Road,**

**Kendal, LA9 5JY Tel 0539 722439 ( We have joined this organization)**

**British Association for Local History,**

**Shopwyke Hall,**

**Chichester,**

**West Sussex, PO20 6BQ Tel; 0243 787639**

**Cumbria Family History Society**

**Mrs. Margaret Russell, (Secretary)**

**32, Granada Road,**

**Denton, Manchester, M34 2LJ**

Please remember our next meeting on 20th January 1994 in the Yew Tree Hall, 7.30 p.m. to welcome our President, Dr. Angus Winchester on "The Rise and Fall of the Lakeland Yeoman".

**"HAPPY CHRISTMAS"**



## MAPS GALORE.

As long as I can remember, I have enjoyed using and reading ( yes reading ! ) maps. Until fairly recently my maps have been new ones of many different areas, at many different scales and they have been a mixture of Ordnance Survey maps, coloured relief maps, street plans and all sorts of others such as geological maps.

A few years ago I began to ask myself different questions. Previously I had asked questions like "where is such and such a place ? " and "where does this road lead to ? " ; now I began to ask "Why is this road here and not there ? " , and "how old is this road, who planned it and why ? " It was then that I started to notice old maps in antique and junk shops and began to collect these, some of which go back to about the beginning of this century. And very interesting they were. For example, how the roads northwards out of Keswick - or rather Crosthwaite - have changed from going either up the east side of Bassenthwaite Lake or straight over the River Derwent through Portinscale , to the system of roads we have now.

Then, out of the blue, I saw a book in a shop which reprinted all the road maps surveyed by John Ogilby and published in his "Britannia" of 1675. His survey took from 1669 to 1674, it introduced the statute mile of 1760 yards and it established the scale of one inch to one mile which is still sometimes used today in our semi-metric Britain. His maps show the road going from the bottom of the page to the top with a little of the countryside shown on each side, like the old AA route maps. I bought this book and have been hooked on old maps ever since.

Over the last couple of years I have been looking out for old maps of Cumberland and Westmorland ( amongst other areas of course ) and have found many interesting examples. For instance, I have found that the oldest 1" to 1 mile map of Cumberland was surveyed in 1770 and 1771 by Thomas Donald and engraved by J. Hodkinson in 1774. It was re-engraved in 1802 and I have a photocopy of this second edition. Another map at this same scale was surveyed in 1822 and 1823 by C & J Greenwood and I was lucky enough to trace an original set of their maps of Cumberland and Westmorland, this one dated 1844, so it has some railways added. This beautiful set comes on six maps, on dissected paper on linen and packed in its original leathercloth slip case. To put these into perspective, the first Ordnance Survey map of our area was published about 1860 and entitled "Cockermouth". Subsequently, the Ordnance Survey maps were produced in a 25" to 1 mile scale in 1863, revised in 1899. The Carlisle Record Office holds copies of these maps for most if not all of our area in both series, and these not only show a considerable wealth of detail, but comparing the two shows changes in individual buildings between these dates.

Many of you may have seen some of the famous county maps by Christopher Saxton , first published in 1579, and by John Speed ( 1611 or 1612). They are fascinating maps with odd place name spellings and so on but there is one peculiarity in both sets of maps - not a single road is shown on them. Some bridges are shown, but they don't lead anywhere. Work that one out !

In this brief note I have concentrated on roads but of course all these maps - including the Ogilby strip maps - contain a wealth of other information. I find that new pieces of information and enlightenment appear each time I look at any of them. What a wonderful hobby !

Finally, a practical example, not of roads, but of boundaries. Before maps were in use, villagers were kept aware of their boundaries, and by implication those of their neighbouring townships, by an annual "beating of the bounds". These were confirmed in writing by a description of the bounds known as a "perambulation". This example is a 1705 perambulation of the Lorton Commons bounds with those of Embleton, Wythop and Thornthwaite, and in this case the perambulators rode on horse back .

*Michael Grieve*



1. Upon the perambulation of ye Common of ye Lord of the said
- Manor belonging to Lorton and ye limits & bound
3. between ye Inhabitants of Lorton aforesaid & ye Inhabitants
- of Embleton and alsoe of Lorton & Wythopp, Lorton &
- 5 Thornthwaite the 23 day of September 1705 by adjoiment we do finde upon ye oathes of Edward
- Winder of ye age of seventy nine years Peter Watson of
- 7 ye age of fifty years Jonathan Pearson of ye
- age of fortysix years & James Lawrence of ye age of
- 9 sixty years that ye said Common extends by those limits divisory
- and grounds herein after mencoined That is to say beginning
- 11 att Stubb Close nook & from thence to Bolton Gill Head
- and from thence to Gray Beck & soe to Jenkin Walk & soe along
- 13 upwards to ye Fell Side to a place called Stone Rays
- & thence to Birk Snabb & soe to [ erased ]
- 15 [ erased ] Milkin Beck Foot & from thence to Bleddert keld
- & soe upwards to Meare beck head & from thence to
- 17 Witty howe & soe to ye topp of Brown fell & from thence
- as ye [ heaven ? ] Weltor Deales in ye Lords Seate Pike & soe to
- 19 Seate Howe & from thence to Coom beck head & soe to Broken
- Gill head & soe downe broken Gill to Whinlatter
- 21 high way.

Memorandum  
Mr. Joseph Relfe &  
Mr. William Eward  
was at the riding of the above  
Bound (and 9 other names added)

Note by RCG - the above may be identical in reality with the parish boundary of today BUT I  
can not make it agree on any map as the names are either changed or are too insignificant  
to be marked thereon.

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memorandum  
Mr. Joseph Relfe &  
Mr. William Eward





### COACHING IN AND AROUND THE LORTON VALLEY

The original turnpike road between Keswick and Cockermouth was via Lorton and the Whinlatter Pass, this formed part of the 1761 turnpike road from Kendal to Cockermouth which went via Ambleside and Dunmail Raise to Keswick, and then on to Cockermouth. Prior to that, the Romans had a road over Whinlatter, starting from their fort at Papcastle.

According to William Hutchinson, in his History and Topography of Cumberland, 1797, early travellers over the Whinlatter Pass found: "looking down from such tremendous precipices, from the windows of a carriage, the aspect and situation are alarming"! Admittedly those passengers seated on top of a stage or mail coach would indeed have found it rather alarming - the height of the mail coach from ground to roof was 7 feet 2 inches! The rocking motion of the coach on rough roads would undoubtedly have brought on vertigo in some folk!

Stage coaches operating in the Lake District had marvellous names: 'Defiance', 'The Flying Machine', 'The True Briton', and 'The Royal Pilot'. Their average speed was between five and six miles an hour, and the Mail coaches travelled at up to ten miles an hour, with a change of horses every ten to twelve miles. People could set their clocks by the Mail coaches, whose timing was incredibly accurate.

In 1822 a Mr Banks, who was a tanner by trade, started the first daily coach service from Keswick. It ran to Cockermouth over the Whinlatter Pass, before the new road to Cockermouth, by the west side of Bassenthwaite Lake, was built.

There were two very popular coaching inns in the valley; one was the Rising Sun (now known as Mountain View in High Lorton), on the Whinlatter Pass, where travellers could procure refreshments, and horses were also fed and watered, although it is doubtful whether horses were actually changed there. The other was the Scale Hill Inn which was extremely popular with visitors who were "doing the Buttermere Round". This was a coach trip from Keswick up Borrowdale, over Honister Pass to Buttermere, and back to Keswick either by Newlands or Whinlatter Pass. Those taking the Whinlatter route would stop for refreshments at the Scale Hill Inn. The cost of the trip at the end of the 19th century was 5/-.

Travelling by coach through the Lake District must have been a mixture of extreme discomfort (especially in cold or hot weather) and excitement, mingled with pleasure at the constantly changing and sometimes spectacular scenery.

If anyone has any information about coaching in the Lake District, I should be most interested.

Vivien Grieve



## **COMPETITION.**

Your committee would like to have an appropriate design, symbol, device, or emblem, with or without a motto to head our Society notepaper, newsletter and other printed matter. We invite members to submit ideas for this, and if the committee should decide to accept one of these for adoption, the originator will be rewarded with one years free membership. The work should be capable of being photocopied. Closing date - by the January meeting, please.

## **Membership Card.**

We hope to produce a Membership Card for paid up members very shortly, on which the year's programme will be shown together with names and telephone numbers of the Committee.

## **REPORT OF THE MEETING held at the Yew Tree Hall 17th October, 1993.**

For the benefit of members who were unable to be present at the meeting held on 17th October 1993, at which this Society was established, we give here a résumé of that meeting.

Mr. George, in the Chair, welcomed the 40 or so persons present and thanked them for their interest. He then went through the aims and objects of the proposed Society, and these having been accepted by the audience, continued by reading the intended Constitution. This too was accepted with the comment that we should re-consider fees for students. After discussion of times and dates of meetings the preference was for the Yew Tree Hall on the second Thursday in alternate months, at 7.30 p.m. starting in January and this was agreed. However to prove that this might need to be flexible, the first meeting was fixed for January 20th, the 3rd Thursday that month. A sufficient number indicated their willingness to join at the proposed fee of £6 p.a. and a Committee was elected from the floor. Whereupon, the newly elected Chairman announced that Dr. A J. Winchester, of Lancaster University, and one time inhabitant of Lorton, had agreed to become our Honorary President, and would deliver the inaugural lecture in January. After an interval for refreshments, Mr. George gave a talk entitled "Walking in the Shadows", during which he gave a brief history of our area up to the introduction of church registers. It was a taste of things to come at our meetings and an indication of the history that is there - waiting for the investigative seeker to piece together. The evening finished with the inscription of our founder members. Subsequently, at the first Committee meeting, the Committee agreed that we should have a student subscription of £3 p.a..

## **FUTURE NEWSLETTERS.**

Please help to make your Newsletters interesting. Articles and comments from the membership are an integral part of a lively and active Society. The quality of your literature is as much a function of your interest as in the work of your Committee and editor, though naturally the latter must reserve the right of judgement as to what is published. Work produced on a 3 1/2" floppy disc with MS-DOS Windows or compatible would be a help.

## LORTON AND DERWENT FELLS L.H.S.

Founded 1993

Member of the Cumbria Local History Federation.

Honorary President - Dr. A.J.L. Winchester  
Chairman - R. C. George : Tel 85 236  
Secretary - M. Grieve : Tel 85 259  
Treasurer - Mrs. A. Holbrook : Tel 85 346

### Programme for 1994.

- 20th January - Dr. A. J. Winchester "The Rise and Fall of the Lakeland Yeoman"  
17th March - Mr. D. Bowcock, Assistant Archivist Cumbria Record Office  
"Carlisle Record Office and it's relevance to Local History Societies"  
<sup>19th</sup> 12th May - Member's Evening - bring your family history, photographs, house deeds, maps and any other likely material.
- ? June - Annual General Meeting : details to be announced  
14th July - Mrs. S. Denyer, Historic Buildings Representative of the National Trust, N.W. Region. - "Vernacular Buildings of the Lake District"
- 8th September - To be arranged?  
10th November - ? Member's Evening, to be arranged.

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Membership - £6 p.a., payable at the November meeting.

Children and those in full-time education £3 p.a., payable at the November meeting.

Country Members - £4

Visitors, £1 per session, Accompanied children 50p.

Meetings will normally be held in the Yew Tree Hall, Lorton at 7.30 p.m.