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**Another Soldier's Photograph Found**

We are pleased to say that a photograph of John Towers Mounsey has been found, and added to our online booklet, *They lie in Foreign Fields*  
<http://derwentfells.com/pdfs/foreignfields.pdf>

On behalf of the committee, I apologise for the postponement of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lecture by the Society's President, Professor Angus Winchester. This has now been rescheduled for 10 October, by which time I'm confident that Angus will be more mobile.



**Cockermouth Castle by Thomas Hearne, 1778**

His Lecture will follow the Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture which has been arranged to take place on Friday 27 September, at the Kirkgate Centre. This year the event is being organised by the Cockermouth Civic Trust, with our Society and the Cockermouth Heritage Group supporting. While the exact title has yet to be announced, Professor Richard Oram is expected to speak about the historical context of the Norman period in the region, and the development of the troubled relationship with the Scots, which gave rise to the building and development of Cockermouth Castle from the mid twelfth Century. This subject will fit well with that which Angus page 3

**Our future programme 2019**

09 May 2019	<i>Viking longhouses in Cumbria</i>	Steve Dickinson
22 May 2019	Summer Outing: Visit to Yanwath Hall and Penrith Museum	Contact Tim Stanley-Clamp
13 Jun 2019	AGM plus talk and exhibits <i>A social history of Loweswater through key moments in time.</i>	Dr Derek Denman
11 Jul 2019	<i>Cumbria's explosive coast</i>	Bill Myers
12 Sep 2019	<i>The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Border Regiment at the Battle of Arnhem, 1944</i>	Stuart Eastwood
27 Sep 2019 8pm	Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture. <i>Creating Cockermouth Castle: the historical context</i> [working title] Cockermouth Civic Trust	Professor Richard Oram Tickets TBA
10 Oct 2019	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture. <i>Lordship and Manor: the Norman imprint on the Society's area of interest</i>	Professor Angus Winchester
Sep/Oct 2019	Autumn Outing – to be arranged	
14 Nov 2019	<i>Roman Roads through the lakes</i>	Dr Paul Hindle

Talks are at the Yew Tree Hall at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise. Visitors £3. Please do not park to the left of the entrance (looking from outside) as the road is narrow.

**Officers and Committee 2018/19**

President, Professor Angus Winchester	Financial examiner, Peter Hubbard
Charles Lambrick 01900 85710 <i>Chairman</i>	Lena Stanley-Clamp 01900 336542 <i>Membership</i> <a href="mailto:ldfhsmembership@gmail.com">ldfhsmembership@gmail.com</a>
Dr Derek Denman 01900 829097 <i>Secretary</i> <a href="mailto:derekdenman@btinternet.com">derekdenman@btinternet.com</a>	Tim Stanley-Clamp 01900 336542 <i>Outings</i>
Christopher Thomas 01900 822171 <i>Treasurer</i>	Mike Bacon Richard Easton Fiona Lambrick Sandra Shaw Hugh Thomson <i>Committee members</i>

**Diary date**

**18 May.** *From Farm to Table via Railway and Road – feeding the towns of the North West in the 19th & 20th centuries.* Regional Heritage Centre, Lancaster Uni.

The next *Wanderer* will be published on 1 August 2019. Please send items to Derek Denman, by early July.  
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<http://www.derwentfells.com>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety>

page 1 ... Winchester will consider in the formation and control, from the same period, of local manors, parishes and townships in the Society's area of interest.

More immediately, our next talk on 9 May concerns Viking Longhouses in Cumbria. Steve Dickinson will discuss these farmstead buildings, which came to Cumbria originally with the Norse-Irish settlement of the early 10<sup>th</sup> Century.

On 13 June, after our short AGM, we will have a talk from Dr Derek Denman about the very local subject of Loweswater but seen through the experience of its people over three periods of change: feudal medieval Loweswater, self-determination in post-reformation Loweswater, and taking control in the nineteenth Century. June 2019 is the four hundredth anniversary of the yeoman farmers purchasing their property rights, and this year is the two hundredth anniversary of John Marshall's manor map. Loweswater maps and sources will be on display.

**Last Call for  
Yanwath Hall and Penrith  
Museum, 22 May**  
by Tim Stanley-Clamp



Yanwath Hall

We are almost fully subscribed for the visit to Yanwath but there are a few places available – contact Tim Stanley-Clamp to reserve one if you are interested.

Not normally open to the public, Yanwath Hall has many points of interest to recommend it to the keen local historian. It dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and is extremely well preserved. Among its points of interest is a strong connection with William Wordsworth – Thomas Wilkinson, his friend and co-agitator against the enclosures of common land, was born there. It is now owned by the Altham family who have opened their doors to us for what should be a fascinating tour. After lunch in the village pub we go to Penrith where the secretary of the local archaeological society, Professor Michael Mullett, will guide us on a tour of the town's main points of historical interest, finishing in the newly refurbished museum.

**The arrangements for the day are as follows:**

**11.00 am** Meet at Yanwath Hall, CA10 2LE. The house is set in a working environment with livestock, and sturdy shoes are recommended as the short walk from a parked car to the front door will need a measure of concentration.

Please contact Tim (details below) if you would prefer to share the journey over there, and he will try to arrange car sharing.

**12.15 – 1.30** Lunch at the village pub which is about a mile away. Main meals and lighter lunches will be available.

**2.00 pm** Meet at St Andrew's Church, Penrith, for the guided walk (mostly level, I am told) which will finish at the Museum at around 2.45

For more information, or to reserve a place, call Tim Stanley-Clamp on 01900 336542

## Society News

### Subscriptions in 2020

As will be seen from the Society's accounts for the period ending 31 December 2018, which appear in the AGM Notice accompanying this edition of *The Wanderer*, the Society's financial reserves have declined somewhat over the last few years. They need to be stabilised not only as a matter of financial prudence, but also to allow scope for the Society to undertake future 'special projects'. The publication of the First World War commemorative booklet last November was an example of a project that required financing from reserves. Sufficient financial reserves will also potentially enable the Society to provide other benefits to Members when opportunities arise.

It is in this context, as will be seen from my Annual Report set out with the AGM Notice that the Committee proposes a modest increase in subscriptions with effect from January 2020 – £10 per annum for full membership and £8 for an additional member at the same address.

In common with other users of the Yew Tree Hall, the Society was invited recently to contribute towards increasing the number of available chairs. The Committee considered that, bearing in mind the Society's current financial circumstances, we should support the request by offering the opportunity to contribute directly to members. This was done by email, and the Yew Tree Hall Committee attributes £240 of the amount raised to date to contributions from Society Members. This is appreciated.

*Charles Lambrick*  
Chairman

### Last Few Copies of the Society's Books

There are three books which the Society has published or distributed in the past, which we have now discontinued from being printed. We have a last few copies of two of these books, which are available for sale to members.

*A Cumberland Valley; a history of the parochial chapel of Lorton*, was written by the late Ron George, our founding Chairman, and sets out a comprehensive history of the valley in a thematic way, focussing on Lorton. It does not include Embleton or Loweswater, but it is the best history of Lorton that exists or is likely to. Cover price £12.95.

*Life in Old Loweswater*, is a collection of many of the short essays written by Roz Southey for the parish magazine, mostly in the 1980s. It was edited as a collection and illustrated by Derek Denman and provides an accessible and readable introduction to aspects of the social history of Loweswater. Cover price £8.95.

The above two books are available from our Treasurer, Christopher Thomas, while stocks last. They are available at the desk at any of our meetings or e-mail [candcthomas@btinternet.com](mailto:candcthomas@btinternet.com) or telephone 01900 822171

There is a third book, *Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew-tree*, edited by Michael Baron and Derek Denman, and published as a commemorative in 2004 with a single printing by Titus Wilson. We intend to publish this book as free-to-read on our website, and are also hoping to make the other two books available in this way, subject to agreement with those involved.

*Derek Denman*

## **Romans and Vikings invade our Facebook Page**

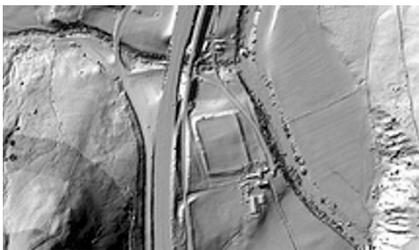
by Lena Stanley-Clamp

The history of Romans and Vikings in Cumbria proved very popular with the Society's Facebook followers. The announcement of our lecture on 9 May *Viking Longhouses in Cumbria* by the archaeologist Steve Dickinson attracted over 2,500 viewers.



**Photograph of a reconstructed house of a Viking Chieftain from The Lofotr Viking Museum, Norway.**

The recent discoveries (with the help of LIDAR technology) of Roman roads near Penrith which were built by Rome's legions to help them conquer northern England attracted even more interest. Our members can look forward to a talk on 'Roman roads through the Lakes' by Dr Paul Hindle on 14 November. See our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety/](http://www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety/)



**Lidar image of Boroughbridge Fort, Penrith.**

## **Field Names Projects**

Individual members are currently engaged in two projects involving the study and use of field names in our area. These projects support interest in the history of land use in a chosen location and will continue at the speed and direction wished by those doing the research. In time we hope there will be a result to be seen in the Wanderer, but there is no hurry.

If other members would be interested in their own projects, involving the study and use of agricultural field names in a particular area, either individually or as a group, then please get in touch with me for information on how to get started.

*Derek Denman*

## **Request for Information**

I have received an enquiry from Stephanie Lawton, who works as a volunteer Exhibition Officer at the Solway Aviation Museum, Carlisle. Stephanie has seen the Buttermere, Cumbria, Loweswater: Historic Landscape Survey report, where this Society worked with the National Trust. This mentions anti-seaplane cables strung across lakes, other defensive structures being built around lakes, and the use of Buttermere for testing amphibious vehicles.

Stephanie asks if we have any information or images about machine-gun emplacements, and cable strung across our three lakes during WWII or anything to do with Buttermere being a training and defence area during WWII?

If you can help Stephanie with factual information, then please get in touch with her at [stephlawton2018@gmail.com](mailto:stephlawton2018@gmail.com) or contact me if you prefer. I have no information in our archive.

*Derek Denman*

## **Articles**

### **John Jennings the Younger – Inventor**

by Walter Head

John Jennings, known in later life as John Jennings the younger, was the son of John Jennings and his wife Anne nee Wilkinson. He was born at Lorton and baptised in St Cuthbert's Church, Lorton, on 22 January 1913. He eventually took over the running of the Flax Mill at Tenters, Lorton.

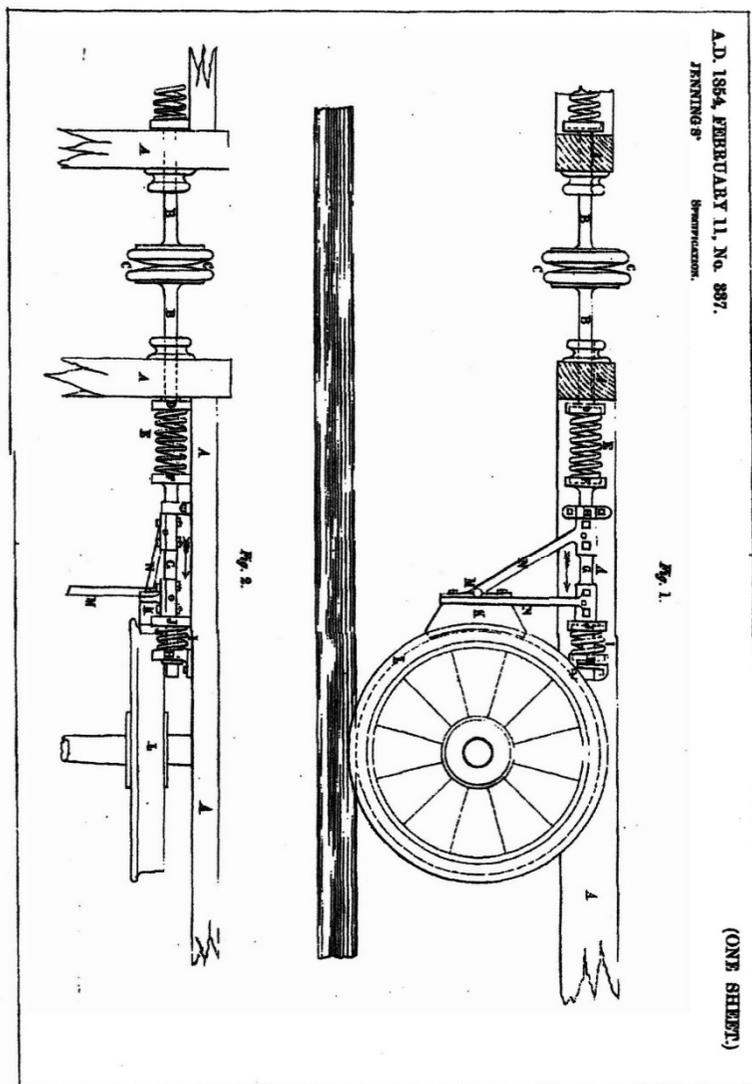
What is less well known is that John the younger was also an inventor and in 1854 applied for a patent regarding 'Brakes for railway and other carriages'. This patent was granted on 11 February 1854 and issued patent number 337 under the heading 'Improvements in brakes for railway and other carriages', and related to an improved construction of self acting brakes. It consisted of attaching a spring to a brake in connection with the buffers of the train, so that when the steam was shut off, the momentum of the carriages behind the engine act upon the buffers and springs, and the brakes are thereby caused to press upon the wheels gradually stopping the train without inconvenience to the passengers and with a considerable saving of time in stopping the train at the stations. One of these brakes is applied to every wheel or as many as may be required to stop the train in case of sudden danger. The following describes in detail how the invention works in respect to railway carriages.

Fig. 1 represents a longitudinal section of part of two carriage framings shewing my improvements in elevation. Fig. 2 is a corresponding part plan of the same, shewing only one side of the carriage framing. A,A, is the carriage framing, through which are passed the rods B,B, of the buffers C,C,

A recessed disc or cup D is fitted on to the inner ends of each of the buffer rods, and receives one extremity of the helical springs E, E, which fits into it. The opposite ends of these springs bear against and fit into a similar recessed disc or cup F, on the end of the brake rod G. This rod slides in the fixed brackets H,H', (secured to the carriage framing) and is kept pressed towards the helical spring E, by the short counteracting spring I, which bears against a recessed or cupped collar J, fitted onto the brake rod and against the bracket H', which is bolted to the framing. The counteracting spring, I, is for the purpose of removing the brake block, K, from the periphery of the carriage wheel, L, after the undue pressure against the buffers which has brought the brake into action has been removed. In place of helical springs, ordinary plate or other springs may be used. The brake blocks may be composed of wood, and may be connected by a transverse bar, M, which serves to unite or tie them together. They are connected to the brake rod G, by the brackets, N, which are bolted to the brake rod at O.

The action of this brake is as follows. When the steam is shut off on the engine, the momentum of the carriages in the after portion of the train will act upon the buffers and compress them, thereby bringing the brake into action by pushing back the brake rods in the direction shewn by the arrows in Fig.1 and Fig. 2; and as the whole or the greater portion of the buffers will be fitted with brakes similar to that shewn in my drawing it follows that the train will be brought to an easy and gradual stoppage without any sudden shock or other inconvenience to the passengers. By reversing the engine, the brakes will, of course, be brought into action much quicker.

The same principle is employed in the application of this brake to common road conveyances, the 'backing' or



backward pressure exerted by the horse producing the same effect as the momentum of the railway carriages.

I have full details of this modified design if anyone would like to see them.

### Some additional notes on the Jennings family, of Lorton.

In his article about John Jennings the younger, Walter does not cover the Jennings family's main claim to fame,

as brewers. Most members will know, but not all, and little is written.

John Jennings the elder, 1783-1876, was the first brewer of the Lorton Ale at High Lorton, starting the brewery in 1828. His father was William Jennings, 1751-1848, who was a maltster. 'Old Bill' Jennings built Corner House as his premises in 1809, and his malt kilns were opposite, on Whitbeck.

John Jennings the elder was a maltster, aged 28, when he married Anne Wilkinson, aged 34, in January 1811. Mary Anne was born two months later, followed by John, Elizabeth and Grace. The family home was Beech Cottage (a later name), which Anne had inherited, with property at Scales. The brewery business was at High Lorton on Whitbeck, expanding to Cockermouth in 1874, though Lorton continued into the 1880s.

John Jennings the younger was involved with the brewery, but by 1851 had taken proprietorship of the Flax Thread Mill, which had been developed by others on the site of the old Tenters fulling mill on Whitbeck. This textile business was the true representative of the industrial revolution in Lorton, and it is likely that John Jennings the younger needed some expertise in mechanical engineering, plus, being in Tenters Lane, some good brakes.

John Bolton described Old Bill Jennings in his lecture of 1891. See: <http://derwentfells.com/sources.html>  
Derek Denman

### The Loweswater Pele: a Question.

by Roger Asquith

In the February 2019 edition of the *Wanderer* Derek Denman's interesting article suggested that the medieval manor house of Thomas and then Anthony de Lucy, potentially existed for just one or two decades either side of 1300. This prompted the thought that it may well have been a timber hall

and therefore have left little or no trace on the ground.

I recalled a discussion with Mark Graham of Grampus Heritage (he gave a talk to the Society on Roman Papcastle) relating to a Durham University project he carried out some 15 years ago. His geophysical (magnetometry) survey of the area in question found no signs of a manor house, a result which would be in keeping with a timber hall, but unlikely if it had been built in stone. Mark assumed the earthworks in the vicinity were pre-Roman.

It seems quite plausible that a medieval manor house would have made use of an earlier fortified site and that the scale of the earthworks is consistent with it being an ancient defensive site. A quick search of the C&WAAS transactions would suggest this question has not been addressed – unless that is anyone knows better?

### A Reply from Derek Denman

Firstly, I must correct my statement in February that Borrowdale was granted to Fountains Abbey. It was Furness. Also, a fuller study of the manor of Balnes, has caused me to revise the the Kirkstile article, in *Journal 60* online.

The description of Balnes as a seat comes only from John Denton's C17th history, and may be based just on the manor name in Inquisitions Post Mortem, and the documents 'given at Balnes' listed in the Lucy Cartulary.

It is quite possible that the structure was not a habitable manor house, like the moated manor at Embleton, but perhaps a timber hall or fort created in the context of the first Scottish war of independence. Some Balnes records pre-date the invasion of Scotland by Edward I, in 1296, but his earlier reduction of Scotland to a vassal state under John Balliol will have increased tension on the border with Annandale, and with the Bruis family.

## Bridge End Farm in Low Lorton, and the three-way division of the ancient Vill.

by Derek Denman  
revised March 2021

This article has been stimulated by the chance discovery in the manorial records of one William Gill of Bridgend, in the jury of the Lorton manor court in 1517.<sup>1</sup> This small piece of information helps with the previously unknown answers to the questions, how old is the bridge, how old is the farmstead at Bridge End, and how was the village divided among three freeholders in the fourteenth century?

### Names

Farmsteads in Cumberland villages were often identified by their location, particularly in row villages such as High and Low Lorton. Those identifications often became persistent names. So that in High Lorton we have retained Midtown, and Boonbeck, meaning above the beck, though we have lost Beckside, which was used for Graceholm in the sixteenth century. Separating the two villages we retain Crossgates, as the gated crossroads between High and Low Lorton, though the ancient dividing Crossgates Lane is now Church Lane. In Low Lorton we retain Holme cottage, for a major farm which once included a large 'island' in the Cocker, holme meaning island. But we have lost Kirkgate End, at the road to the Church, and also Cross Nook, the dwellings in the north-west corner at



Low Lorton Bridge from Bridge End,  
c.1900

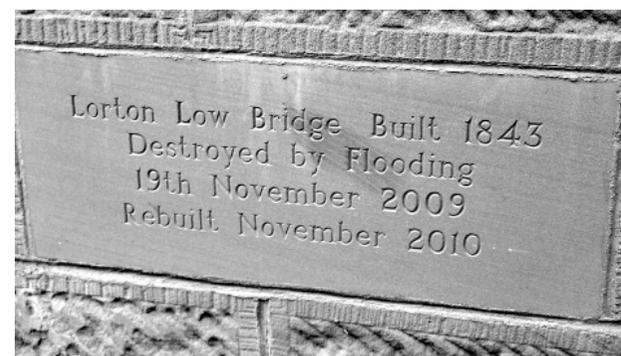
### Records of the bridge

The bridge was rebuilt in 2010 as an attractive single-span structure. The inscription states that bridge which it

Lorton Cross (see p.11). This was the crossroads between the Low Road through town and the road which went eastwards to High Lorton and the common in one direction, and westwards to the River Cocker in the other. That road to the Cocker has lost its attractive nineteenth Century name of Burtrees Road.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the hall wall replaced the trees and Cross Nook.

Reaching Bridge End, on the left and just before the bridge over the Cocker, the meaning might easily be taken as the end of the bridge. However, the more usual meaning would be to identify the farmstead which was at the end of the town nearest to the bridge. Does that mean that the medieval row village extended to the bridge?

<sup>2</sup> Named in John Bolton, *Lecture on Lorton & Loweswater*, 1891, and in the surveyor's report



Inscription 2010, Melbreak  
Communities website

Bridge End Farm, seen from the bridge,  
c.1900



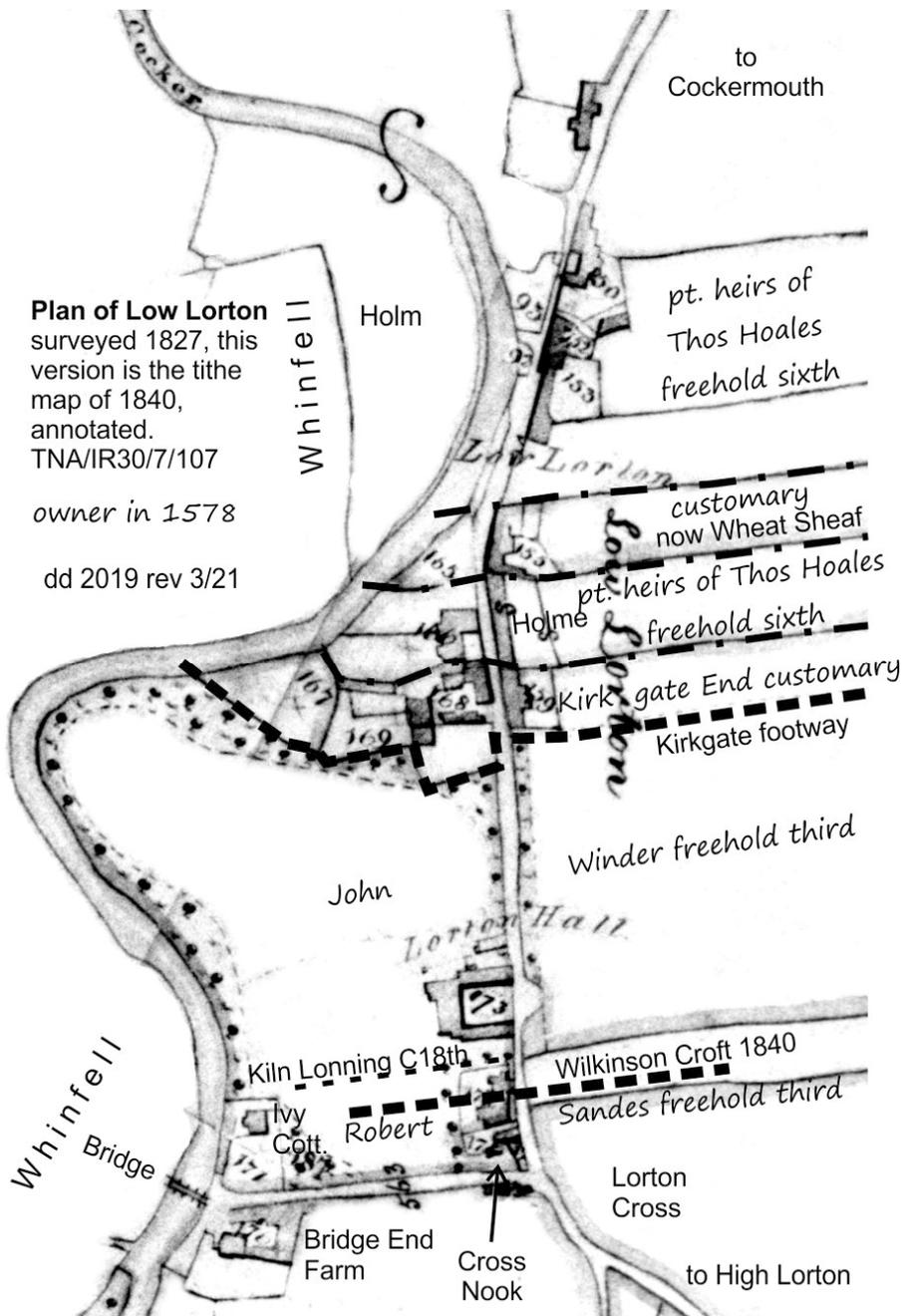
<sup>3</sup> H S Cowper, 'Ancient and county bridges in Cumberland and Westmorland ...', TCWAAS 1899

replaced was built in 1843, which refers to the last rebuilding or widening, and not the first ever bridge. A survey and plan in 1827, for the enclosure, re-used for the tithe map, shows a two-arch bridge, as does Joshua Lucock's estate map of 1803. The surveys of county bridges date the actual bridge back to 1753.<sup>3</sup> One of the few duties of the County was to ensure the maintenance of key bridges. In 1753 Lorton had three listed, at Low Lorton, High Lorton (over Whitbeck) and Whinlatter. Whinlatter Bridge was not the magnificent New Bridge, built in the 1760s for the turnpike, but the small Blease Bridge, on the old road to Keswick, via the bridge at High Lorton and through Scales.

### Earlier records of the name

For earlier evidence of a bridge at Low Lorton, we must rely on the evidence for Bridge End Farm, on the basis that it would only be so-called if there was a bridge, and not a ford. The surviving parish registers of St Cuthbert's first record the name in 1600 when John, son of Peter Pierson of Bridge End, was buried.

The discovery of William Gill of Bridgend, in the jury of the Lorton manor court in 1517, confirms that both the



Plan of Low Lorton surveyed 1827, this version is the tithe map of 1840, annotated.  
TNA/IR30/7/107

owner in 1578

dd 2019 rev 3/21

farmstead and the bridge existed in or before 1517.<sup>4</sup> This also helps to locate the Gill family, who were closely associated with the principal Winder family in the 1530s, but who had left by the end of the century.<sup>5</sup> Manorial records generally do not record the name of a farmstead such as Bridge End, which would be part of a freehold estate, probably held by a mesne lord. The farmstead would not be subject to the court rolls, fines, surrenders and admittances that were recorded for the manor of Derwentfells. In this record the words 'of Bridgend' are used to identify William Gill, who would have use of the shared Lorton common, which was supervised by the court.

There are no known records of the name Bridge End in Lorton before 1517, and therefore it is not possible to say when a ford became the first bridge, just that there has been a bridge for at least five hundred years.

#### How old is the farmstead?

The earliest recorded grant of Lorton property is the monastic grant of 'land of Loreton with the mill' to the Priory Church at Carlisle.<sup>6</sup> This was granted by Ranulph de Lindesay, of the family who became seated at Crawford Castle. Ranulph also granted the chapel and land at Loweswater to St Bees Priory. He was part of the court of David I of Scotland, at the time of the anarchy, or civil war, when Stephen ceded Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland to David. David was seated at Carlisle, in the Norman castle, and at some time before 1142 David was at Lamplugh, where Ranulph witnessed a document.<sup>7</sup> Ranulph married the sister of Alan, lord of

<sup>4</sup> D/Lec299T, folio 367 28Oct, 9 HenVIII

<sup>5</sup> See Derek Denman, 'A history of Lorton Hall ...', *L&DFLHS Journal* 59

<sup>6</sup> See Angus Winchester, *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria* 1987, Appendix 2 for medieval Lorton

Allerdale, and acquired lands through that connexion and in other unknown ways. Ranulph died before 1158, when his widow remarried, but it is likely that his grants were made in the 1140s, while Lorton and Loweswater belonged again to Scotland.

The straight boundary of High Lorton, along Crossgates Lane or Church Lane, should date from that original grant and suggests a division between the row-villages of High and Low Lorton in or around the 1140s. Monks were very good at keeping records of property granted to them, but lesser mesne lords were not. The first record of other freehold estates in Lorton is dated 1230, when 'Loweswater' manor was created and when the lord, Alan de Multon, became the superior lord of three Lorton freeholders.<sup>8</sup> In 1230 Thomas Mariscal held the freehold of the 'vill of Loreton', which should be Low Lorton, and it is quite possible that the original freehold grant of Low Lorton was also made by Ranulph de Lindesay in or around the 1140s. The records are silent.

#### Identifying the thirds of Low Lorton

By 1305 the Low Lorton estate had been divided into three, which typically happened when there were no male heirs, causing the estate to be equally divided among daughters, each with a free rent of 3s 4d in this case.<sup>9</sup> The descent of that division can be traced through manorial records listing of the freeholders in Lorton. However, the division of village ownership on the ground was neither stated nor known, though it seems reasonable that there

<sup>7</sup> James Wilson, *The Register of the Priory of St Bees*, 1915, No.39

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Bain, *Cal Docs Scotland*, Vol. 1, No.1106

<sup>9</sup> Angus Winchester, *Landscape & Society*, p.146



**The miller's house and pig stys in Whinfell, from the bridge, c.1900.**

would be three parts and two dividing lines.

By 1578, in the great survey of the lands of the rebellious Percies, Earls of Northumberland, two of those thirds of Low Lorton remained whole, one in the hands of the resident John Winder, and the other with Robert Sandes of Rottington.<sup>10</sup> Each was said to have six messuages, or dwellings. The last third had long been further split in two, and one of those sixths had escheated to the lord of Derwentfells as three customary tenements, which would happen if there was no heir. Two of these were the Kirkgate End farmsteads and the third was the tenement which is now the Wheat Sheaf.

In *Journal 591* suggested that the Winder third started at the Kirkgate and extended at least to the old Kiln Lonning, which ran from the present gate of Lorton Hall Tower down to a kiln by the Cocker. It would also include the

<sup>10</sup> Percy great survey, 1578, transcription on shelf, Whitehaven archive centre

first tenement past that lonning, namely Wilkinsons's tenement. It was also established that the substantial but un-named farm tenement of the Pearsons, in 1578, was within the third of the Low Lorton held by Robert Sandes of Rottington. The freehold was sold to Peter Pearson in 1596.<sup>11</sup> That can now be firmly named as Bridge End, from at least 1517.

#### **Division of the Sandes third**

After 1589, when the Sandes and Winder thirds were still intact, the freeholders were no longer included in the list of rentals of the manor, and so we have little visibility of their descent to modern times. Except that there is one isolated note in 1633 of six freeholders in Lorton, which appears to be a list of the names of those who held freeholds derived from the Sandes

<sup>11</sup> D/Lec.328 Lorton Hall Estate - identification, Pearson property

third, probably all purchased in or around 1596:-

Peter Pearson for a tenement parcel of land formerly Robert Sandes per annum 3s 4d ... 11d  
Robert Fisher  
John Peele of Becke  
William Bell  
Peter Wilkinson  
John Wilkinson.<sup>12</sup>

The 11d will be that part for 3s 4d free rent apportioned to the large Bridge End tenement, while the other 2s 5d should have been apportioned among the other five, though there is no further information.

The names of Wilkinson and Bell point to Lorton Cross. Of the twenty-six events recorded in St Cuthbert's registers in the seventeenth Century at Cross in Lorton, eighteen are for Wilkinsons or Bells. It seems most likely that the Sandes third of Low Lorton included all of Lorton Cross and the tenements on either side of the Low Road up to the old Kiln Lonning, beyond which was the Winder third.

Except for Bridge End, all the farmsteads of the Sandes third of Low Lorton have been lost, creating a gap between the main village and Bridge End which removes the continuity of the sixteenth Century. We are missing any information of the content of the thirds of Low Lorton before the sixteenth Century, and so it is impossible to state from historical sources that Bridge End existed. However, we know that equal thirds by value existed from 1305, and it seems that Bridge End would be necessary to make up the third which was held by Robert of Goseford in 1305.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> D/Lec.314/42/f.12

<sup>13</sup> D/Lec.314/16

<sup>14</sup> Susan Laville, 'Pearsons in Cumberland', L&DFLHS Archive, received October 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Angus Winchester, editor, *Thomas Denton, a perambulation of Cumberland,*

#### **The Pearsons of Bridge End**

The Pearsons were an important Lorton and Loweswater family before 1596, but that date marks their new status as yeoman freeholders at Bridge End. The indenture recording the sale of the freehold to Peter Pearson, in 1596, was seen by one of the Society's early members, Susan Laville, who communicated with Ron George about the Pearson family. She noted that Henry Sands sold to Peter Pearson, of Low Lorton, lands, farm, and a mansion house, for £90.<sup>14</sup>

In 1687-8, Thomas Denton noted 'divers freholders here have considerable estates, as Mr John Winder hath an estate worth 80li per annum and an house well built and scituate on Cocker. John Peil hath an estate here better worth than 40 li a year, and so hath John Peirson'.<sup>15</sup>

The fine Georgian farmhouse remaining at Bridge End demonstrates a continued prosperity. However, all things must pass, and by the later nineteenth Century the Pearsons' Bridge End estate carried £2,900 of mortgage debt, which led to it joining Anthony Dixon's Lorton Hall Estate, as their his farm.<sup>16</sup>

#### **In conclusion**

We now know that there has been a bridge over the Cocker at Low Lorton and a farmstead known as Bridge End, or Bridgend, for at least five hundred years. The occupants changed from the Gills to the Pearsons in the sixteenth Century. It seems likely that the farmstead is much older than that.

*1687-1688*, Surtees Society, 2003, pp. 120-1

<sup>16</sup> D/Lec.328, Identification – Pearson property

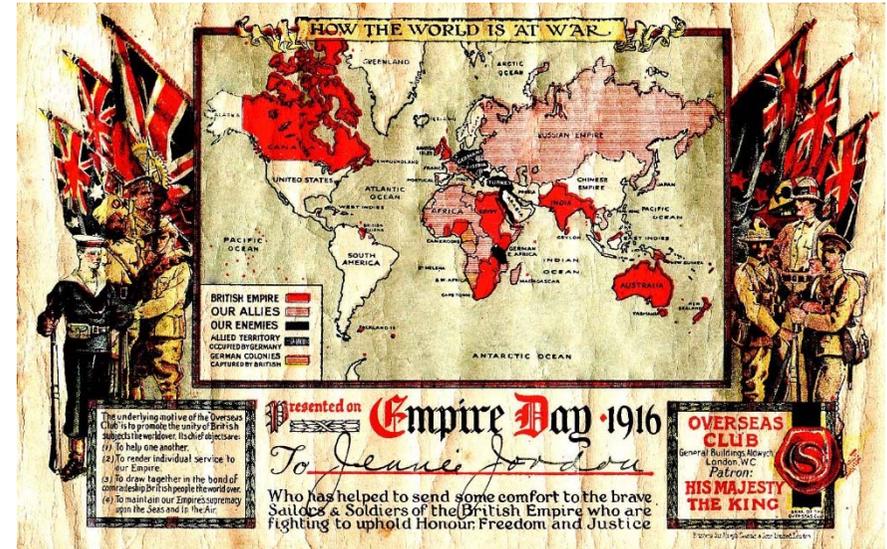
## From the Cocker-mouth Heritage Group

By Gloria Edwards

In September 2018 the Cocker-mouth Heritage Group was awarded a Heritage Lottery grant to commemorate WWI and its effect on the local community. As part of that grant a small group of people were trained in oral history recording techniques, and then went into the four residential homes in Cocker-mouth to speak to residents with interesting memories to share about their lives, as well as stories passed on about WWI ancestors. We took a small exhibition relating to Cocker-mouth's WWI experiences with us, left on display in each home for a week, and then returned with a collection of WWI

objects from our store, talking to residents about the objects. We identified around a dozen people to record, and those recordings are now being transcribed.

A second requirement for the grant was to create an educational resource pack for Key Stage 2 children, giving information about life in the Cocker-mouth area 100 years ago. The pack is divided into 5 stand-alone sections: My Town, My Home, Life for Children, Life for Women, Life for Men as Soldiers. Each pack has a set of A3 laminated images, extracts from a child's diary kept during the war years, a letter from a Cocker-mouth soldier in France, and suggested activities for children in the classroom. Additionally, there is the option for schools to borrow packs of old household equipment as a resource for lessons.



We plan to take packs to nine primary schools, in and around Cocker-mouth.

For the third component of this project, WWI objects are being professionally photographed and will appear on new web pages on our website. Information about the objects will be available, and the eventual hope is to develop a 'virtual museum' online to showcase many of the objects we hold.

The Kirkgate Youth Theatre group, led by Letitia Thornton, created two pieces of theatre stimulated by WWI objects from the Heritage Group collection.

The Young Performers group (age 10-14) devised a performance called 'The Blackberry Pickers', inspired by a diary held in the Heritage Group archive. The diary was begun in 1917 by 10-year-old Joycelyn Mitchell, daughter of Robinson Mitchell, auctioneer in Cocker-mouth. The piece interwove imagined letters from the children to their fathers and brothers at the front, with scenes depicting how the war affected their daily lives at home.

The older group, Kirkgate Young Actors (age 14-18) created and performed 'Dead Man's Penny', dramatising the experience of local young soldiers convalescing at Cocker-mouth Castle (requisitioned as a military hospital during the war) and the VAD nurses who cared for them.

The two pieces were cleverly linked together through characters/family members written to in the first piece, appearing as convalescing patients in the second. The plays previewed at the Allerdale 100 event in Workington on 1 September. They were then performed at the Kirkgate Centre on 7 December 2018, and in local care homes in February half-term this year.

For the final part of the project a professional board designer has created an amazing set of A1 WWI exhibition boards, that incorporate in text and photographs much of our research, old and new, into the town's experience of the war. This will go on display in Christ Church from the 18 - 23 May, and in Cocker-mouth Library from 24 May – 3 June.

