Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Wanderer

No.60, May 2026

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Carlisle Castle by Thomas Allom

Society News

Forthcoming Talks

'Border Fortress: The Turbulent History of Carlisle Castle', 14 May

Instantly recognisable as one of Cumberland's most iconic buildings, Carlisle Castle's bulky sandstone keep still lowers over the city it was built to defend some nine centuries ago. No comfortable stately home but rather a fortress in the truest sense of the word, the castle's long and storied past is full of tales of violence, scheming and derring-do. Featuring a rich cast of characters including kings, queens, soldiers and criminals, and spanning Anglo-Scottish border clashes through to treason, civil war and rebellion, this illustrated talk shines a spotlight on the turbulent heritage of one of the most *p.2*

Our future programme 2026

14 May 2026	'Border Fortress: The Turbulent History of Carlisle Castle'.	Dr Maksymilian Loth-Hill
02 Jun 2026	Literary walk around Ambleside with Dr Penelope Bradshaw, 1:30 pm	Contact Andrew Chamberlain, *ldflhschair@gmail.com*
11 Jun 2026	Our AGM plus 'Artists and Prints: Cumbria Illustrated in Early 19th Century Prints'.	Dr Michael Winstanley
10 Sep 2026	'In search of Arctic Wonders: Cumbria and the Arctic in the 18th and 19th Centuries'.	Dr Rob David
19 Nov 2026	'A History of Slate Quarrying in The Lake District'.	Mark Hatton

Talks are held at 7.30 pm in the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton, and are included in membership. Visitors welcome, £4 cash payable at the door, including refreshments. Talks are also streamed live to members using Zoom but are not recorded. Other activities may be added.

Officers and Committee 2025/6

President: Professor Angus Winchester Financial Examiner: Dr Ian Shaw

Andrew Chamberlain *Chairman*	07815 422092 *ldflhschair@gmail.com*	Charles Lambrick *Vice-chair,*	*charleslambrick@btinternet.com*
Lena Stanley-Clamp *Secretary, talks*	01900 336542 *ldflhs.secretary@gmail.com*	Dr Derek Denman *Wanderer, archives*	01900 829097 *derekdenman@btinternet.com*
Mary Baker *Treasurer, Membership*	*ldflhs.subs@gmail.com*	Fiona Lambrick Gloria Edwards Tim Stanley-Clamp Jan Evans	Sheena Denwood Sharon Arrowsmith

Diary date, 16 May, Lancaster University Regional Heritage Centre 'Libraries and Learning in the North West' 9:30am to 4:00pm. At Lancaster University Library Exhibition Space, Lancaster, United Kingdom, LA1 4YH. Cost £28, without lunch.

The **next issue** of the *Wanderer* will be published on 1 August 2026. Please send any items to the Editor, Derek Denman, by 1 July.

The *Wanderer* is published by the Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, 19 Low Road Close, Cockermouth CA13 0GU.
http://derwentfells.com *https://facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety*
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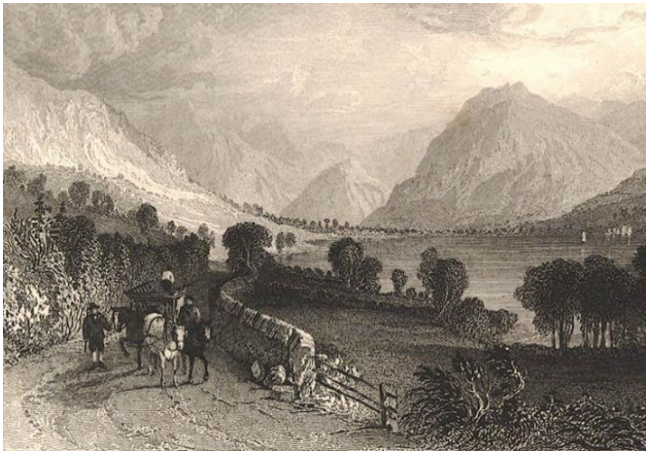
besieged places in Britain, highlighting the vital role it played in both local and national history and bringing its dramatic past to life.

Dr Maksymilian Loth-Hill is a cultural historian of modern East-Central Europe and an Honorary Fellow of Durham University.

'Artists and Prints: Cumbria Illustrated in Early 19th Century Prints', 11 June

This talk looks at the profusion of engraved prints which appeared from the late 18th century until the mid-19th century and which played a major role in formulating the public's visual conception of the Lake Counties. Who were the artists and publishers behind them? How were they produced? Why were so many produced at that period? How much did they cost? What can they tell us about life in the region at the time?



Loweswater by Thomas Allom

Dr Michael Winstanley was Senior Lecturer in History at Lancaster until he retired in 2010. He is an honorary member of LDFHS and his article about Thomas Allom's local prints of the 1830s appeared in LDFHS Journal in 2015.

Literary Walking Tour of Ambleside on 2 June

Dr Penny Bradshaw of the University of Cumbria, author of A Literary Walking Tour of Ambleside, will lead a tour of Ambleside for members of our society.

The walk will start in Ambleside at 1.30 pm and will last approximately **three hours** with a brief pit stop at the Rydal Falls café. It will take in homes of famous writers in the area such as William Wordsworth, Thomas de Quincey and Harriet Martineau. The walk will include many literary anecdotes relating to Ambleside's literary history along with readings from both famous residents and visitors such as Charlotte Bronte, Matthew Arnold, and Wordsworth himself.

Booking

The cost is £5 per person (refreshments not included). Reservation will be on a first come basis. **Please email Andrew Chamberlain at *ldflhschair@gmail.com*** to book and after you receive a confirmation from us, please pay to our NatWest bank account giving your surname and initials as reference. Lorton & Derwent Fells LHS, Sort code 01-02-17 account 27260291.

You could also pay in cash at the Talk on 14 May. Numbers will be limited to fifteen but a second tour will be organised later this year if there is sufficient demand.

Lake Road, Ambleside

Message from the chair

Dear members,

Welcome to the May edition of The Wanderer and I hope you are enjoying the fact that Spring has sprung and the grass has riz?

It is a pleasure to introduce this latest issue which showcases the remarkable breadth of history to be found in this corner of Cumbria — and the equally remarkable enthusiasm of those who study it.

Our recent talk, Cumbria's First Farmers, given by Dr Gill Hey, drew an excellent audience and set a high standard for the season. With clarity and evident passion, Dr Hey brought to life the earliest agricultural communities of the region, reminding us that even the most familiar landscapes have roots stretching back thousands of years. It was particularly gratifying to see such a strong turnout, and to witness the lively discussion.

The articles in this issue continue that sense of variety and discovery. We begin with the story of Robert Studholme, an agricultural labourer from Dean, whose life offers a grounded and often sobering insight into the realities of rural existence in earlier times. From there, we move to the work of Dr John Walker, whose efforts in combating smallpox in Cockermouth serve as a reminder of both the fragility of past communities and the dedication of those who sought to protect them.

A rather different perspective is provided by the beautifully observed portrait of Sarah Hervey of Bridekirk, painted in the early nineteenth century by the local artist Joseph Sutton. The painting's luminous quality is striking, but it also invites us to consider the social world it represents—one individual, carefully captured, yet suggestive of a wider community and its values.

Over the past week, we have once again had the pleasure of working at Cockermouth Castle, where our efforts to digitise the Leconfield archive have continued to make steady and rewarding progress. It was particularly good to be joined by Sharon Arrowsmith and members of the South West Cumbria Historical and Archaeological Society, who are undertaking complementary work on records relating to the barony of Egremont. Their collaboration added both expertise and enthusiasm to the week, and it was encouraging to see how closely our shared aims align.

We were also pleased to begin extending our digitisation work to support the preparation of the Cockermouth volume of the Victoria County History, to be written by Professor Angus Winchester. This marks an important step in ensuring that these valuable records are more widely accessible for future research.

On a personal note, as I have now moved away from the area, I will be standing down as Chair at the forthcoming AGM. I do so with real regret, having greatly valued my time with the Society, but with the confidence that I leave it in good shape for the future.

I look forward to seeing you at our next event on 14th May, 'Border Fortress: the Turbulent History of Carlisle Castle', by Dr Maksymilian Loth-Hill.

Andrew

Meeting Reports

Talk: 'Cumbria's first farmers', 5 March 2026

This talk was delivered by Dr Gill Hey, president of CWAAS and the former CEO of Oxford Archaeology. This was clearly a subject that attracted a lot of interest and several questions afterwards, some of which I have incorporated in this report. There were 70 attending in-person with an additional sixteen on-line. To my knowledge there were several audience members with a substantial knowledge of archaeology, and I hope they will forgive me that this report is aimed at the general membership.

Around 6,000 years ago, the way of life for people living in what is now Cumbria changed dramatically. Hunting, gathering and living in the natural environment were replaced by farming in a landscape altered by clearing woodland and constructing burial and ceremonial monuments. These are changes that occurred throughout Britain but recent work in the Northwest is providing particularly good evidence for understanding this transition. Was it as abrupt as first seems? Did it involve an immigrant population and, if so, what happened to the native Cumbrians?

As the last ice-age came to an end about 12,000 years ago, people began to move into Britain from continental Europe over a land bridge, known as Doggerland, which then became submerged around 7,000 BCE as sea levels rose with the melting of the ice.. This era is known as the Mesolithic (or middle stone-age) and its people lived by hunting and gathering using stone tools and living in temporary camps as they moved throughout the landscape following herds and migrating salmon. They cleared small areas of land for seasonal settlement and to facilitate hunting but made minimal impact on the landscape. Much of what they did leave has been lost to repeated ploughing. However, a few signs, mainly worked flint including flint-knapping sites, have been found in the northwest – in Fylde, near Maryport, near Warcop on the bank of the river Eden. These were successful people, whose way of life endured in Britain for 6,000 years. Their tools were made of stone, largely small flints known as microliths, often with several attached to a wooden shaft to form a weapon. Using such tiny flints, Mesolithic people were capable of bringing down large game including elk. The skeleton of one elk (nicknamed Horace) found in Lancashire preserved evidence of just such a hunt. These small flints have been found all over northern Britain, suggesting interconnected populations. Mesolithic people were also capable of producing sophisticated woodwork and appear to have built round shelters.

The European land bridge, Doggerland, before the sea level rose circa 7000 BCE

Images of the essentials of neolithic agriculture: grains, domesticated food animals, stone axes, and pottery.

Then, around 5 to 6,000 years BCE, life began to change leaving signs in the archaeology with finds along the Cumbrian coast containing a mix of the old (Mesolithic) and new (Neolithic) materials.

This new era is known as the Neolithic (new stone-age). Did this indicate new people with new ways of doing things, or did new ideas move into the area. If new people had arrived, how did they relate to those who were already here?

The Neolithic is characterised by the growing of crops, domestication of cattle (which were not native to Britain), and the making of pottery. The people used different kinds of stone tools, generally larger and made of different materials, built new housing including timber halls and started burying their dead visibly in the landscape.

Dating evidence suggests that the new ways of doing things began in Kent, moving northwards and westwards, or possibly coming across the Irish Sea, or south from Scotland. The picture is still unclear. Twenty years ago, it was thought that the spread was due to local people adopting new farming ideas, but the DNA of the people associated with the farming way of life is now known to be different, suggesting it was new people arriving with their new ways of living. Their DNA very quickly overtook that of Mesolithic people,

but at present the mechanism for this is not known. Disease or conquest are both possible, and although massacre pits have been found in Germany, there is no evidence for these here.

Recent research suggests this change happened very quickly. An excavation in Fylde, conducted in advance of a new road scheme, turned up a very early type of pottery and cereal (emmer and spelt wheat and barley) dated to 3900 to 3750 BCE. It uncovered Mesolithic and Neolithic finds in separate layers dated to within decades of each other. A site at Stainton West, however, suggests a hiatus between the end of Mesolithic use and that by Neolithic people.

Neolithic finds include pottery and bigger lithics (objects made from stone) using different stones transported from a wide geographical area. The Stainton West excavation also gave dating evidence which suggested that production of the familiar Langdale axes began earlier in the Neolithic period than had previously been observed. These axes are very widespread, suggesting extensive trade overland and by sea. The densest finds are in the east of Britain, round the Yorkshire Wolds, where they were probably traded for flints.

Dr Hey illustrated something of the way of life of these new farmers, although little is known of the people themselves as bone does not survive well in acid soils. There is limited evidence of the kind of houses they lived in but excavated remains uncovered in a wet location prior to the construction of a road suggested rectangular buildings. However, we can see the kind of bowls they used and their wide range of stone types. Where waterlogged sites preserve organic material, we can see how stone axes were hafted, and the remains of wooden tridents suggest how fishing might have been conducted. The dead were buried in mounds, often called barrows or long cairns, or in caves.

Moving on to larger features in the landscape, Dr Hey discussed stone carving such as that found on the Long Meg standing stone, but also on natural stones in the landscape. There is an image of the Long Meg standing stone on page 6 of the Wanderer dated November 2025 which shows very clearly the concentric circles discussed here. Although cup marking is more widespread, it is the swirls and circles in use in Cumbria that is unusual, having more in common with carving found in Ireland and Orkney. Stone circles are often found on or near travel routes, and although Roman roadbuilders respected their outlines, later infrastructure has not and many remains are shadows of their former selves. Besides roads that cut across, large stones were blown up or otherwise removed if they interfered with ploughing, and if considered suitable, stone was removed for building. The Long Meg stone circle has been dated to 3,000 BCE while the enclosure came in several hundred years earlier at 3,700 BCE and may have been used for communal gatherings for feasting, trade and social exchanges. The Mayburgh Henge and King Arthur's Round Table survive in much reduced form, truncated by modern roads. The entrance of Mayburgh Henge is due east of the centre and points towards the rising sun at the equinox. The only view from its interior is of Blencathra at a point where the sun sets at the equinox suggesting that this astronomical alignment was significant. William Stukeley, the eighteenth-century antiquarian, described 41 large uprights, of which only one survives. Both are in the care of English Heritage and can be visited.

Around 2,400 to 2,500 BCE things changed again with the arrival of Beaker potters, metalworking and new burial practices. Again, the DNA of these people was different, related more to the Steppe people of the grasslands of eastern Europe, central Asia and northern China. That though, is another story.

Sandra Shaw

Images courtesy of Dr Gill Hey

Articles

A Photograph of Robert Studholme, 1827-1907

by Josephine Brown and Derek Denman

This photograph of Robert Studholme, together with much of the Studholme family history, has been contributed by our member Josephine Brown, who is a great, great, granddaughter of Robert Studholme. Josephine links the photograph to a piece in *Cumbrian women remember: Lake District life in the early 1900s*, by June Thistlethwaite, 1995. The memories of Molly Taylor are contained in 'Molly's Story', Molly being a great granddaughter of Robert. This is clearly too long ago for personal memory:

> *When Loweswater was frozen over there was skating and a feast with roast ox the side of the lake. Great grandfather Studholme drove the horse and dray from the local brewery to the feast and that's where he met his second wife, my great grandmother, whose folk tenanted Hopebeck farm belonging to Squire Gaskell.*

Robert Studholme was born in Abbey Holme in 1827. He married Mary Ashburn in 1846 at Plumbland, but she died in 1850. Robert was a widower and an agricultural labourer from Dean in 1855, when he married Mary Chambers Beck at St Cuthbert's Lorton. That places the ox roast at Loweswater between 1850 and 1855. Robert could have brought the ale from the Jennings brewery in Lorton.

Their son John was born in Lamplugh in 1855, but by 1858 they were living in Lorton, when daughter Ann was born. They stayed in Lorton until at least 1864, when son Robert arrived. In 1861 the family were at Holemire, and Robert senior was an agricultural labourer At some time in the 1860s Robert started to work as a drayman, because by 1871 the family had moved to Cockermouth, at 38 Kirkgate, and Robert was described as a drayman.

In 1901 Robert was living in Hensingham with his daughter, Ann Nicholson, and the photograph is probably from that time. His wife Mary died in 1902, and he died in 1907.

Considering Mary Chambers Beck's family, there were two farms at Hopebeck. In 1844 Joseph Beck was a tenant farmer to Mary Steel at the farm to the south, with Jane Beck recorded as his cousin. She was born in 1806 at Bramley in Mosser, was sister to Mary Chambers Beck and a witness at her marriage to Robert Studholme. Joseph Beck was baptised in Loweswater in 1811. He and Jane farmed there until they died. William Gaskell, mentioned by Molly, was born in Nether Wasdale in 1828, and became a tenant farmer at the northern farm at Hopebeck, now Hopebeck House, by 1871 and died there in 1888. He does not appear in the register of landowners for 1873. Whether he subsequently purchased the farm that Joseph Beck tenanted is unknown, but he was no squire.

Robert's eldest son, John, was with his parents at 38 Kirkgate in 1871, although a John Studholme of the same age is also recorded as working as servant with Joseph and Jane Beck at Hopebeck in that year. Perhaps a duplicate entry? In 1879 he married Martha Ellen Birkett of the Rising Sun, Lorton. In 1891 the family were living at the Goat in Cockermouth/Papcastle and John was a brewer/maltster with Jennings. He continued in Jennings employment for the rest of his working life and died in Cockermouth in 1919.

Dr John Walker, 1759-1830, smallpox doctor

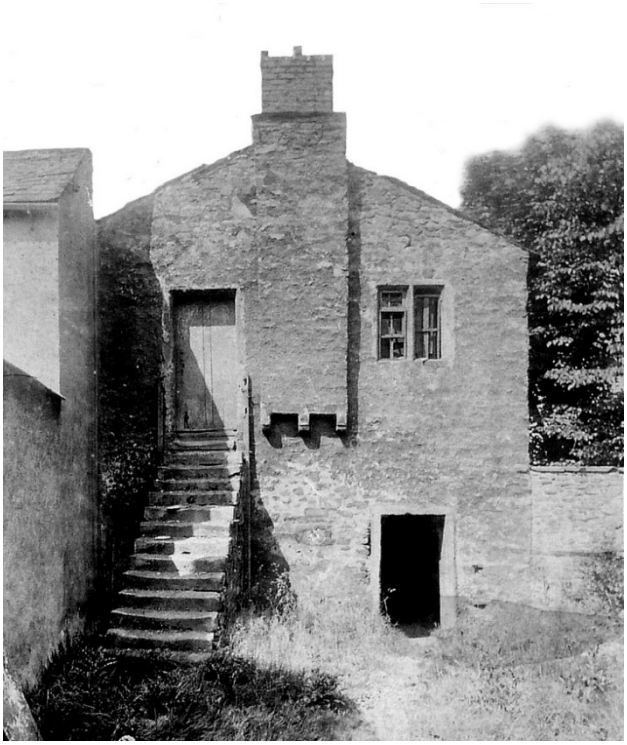
by Gloria Edwards

Following on from Walter Head's article on William Woodville in the previous edition of the *Wanderer*, I wanted to put the spotlight on another smallpox champion, also born in Cockermouth: Dr John Walker. His route into medicine and the fight against smallpox came at a much later stage in his life than did William Woodville's.

John was born in 1759, a few years later than William Woodville. John's father (another John) was a blacksmith with a smithy roughly where the former Conservative Club now stands on Main Street. He also worked as a whitesmith, decorating metal items, and carried out work for William Wordsworth's father John, since his name appears in the Household Accounts for the Wordsworth household for work done from 1771 onwards.

Dr John Walker, 1789

The young John Walker had a strict upbringing, with a Baptist father and an Independent Congregationalist mother. He was baptised in the Independent Congregational Chapel. One great regret to him in later life was never to have been accepted into the Quaker faith, despite having followed the principles of



The old Free Grammar School, in Cockermouth

Quakerism throughout his life. When young he showed musical ability (playing the flute and the violin), as well as artistic abilities, and received instruction from Joseph Faulder, founder of the Cockermouth School of Painting. That artistic talent later found an outlet in engraving, carried on in his father's smithy, after leaving school.

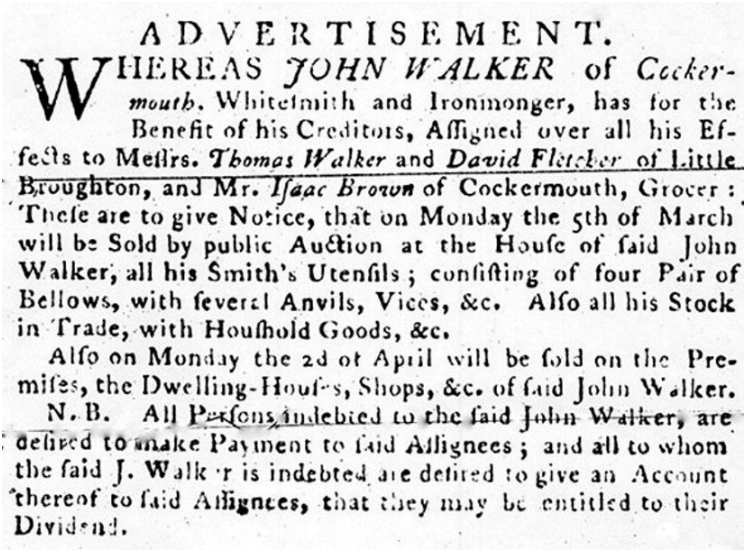
His early education had been at the town's Free Grammar School, which had also been attended by William Woodville. Indeed, when William Woodville went off to his medical apprenticeship locally, it had been agreed that John Walker would be apprenticed to the same medical man when William had served his time. At school John appears to have done no more work than was necessary, according to his biographer John Epps, who describes him as 'the idlest of boys' at his tasks, but 'at his amusements the most active'. Epps tells how his school master was prone to fall asleep whilst listening to pupils' readings in Latin from Virgil or Ovid, which they were required to learn by heart. John would take advantage of the tendency of his master to drop off to sleep after his lunch:

Young Walker had his eye fixed upon the sleeper, keeping up, at the same time, a humming sound, without articulating a syllable, till the master, giving a greater nod than usual, awoke, when the young rogue repeated the last line of his task and went to his seat.

Unsurprisingly, John was eventually found out. When he left the Grammar School it was to work with his father, engraving plates of pewter and copper, attending to his father's business in Cockermouth and Maryport for five years. During that time an Irish artist, by the name of Nicholas Primrose Henry Ash, came to the town and visited the Walker family to give artistic instruction to John and his siblings. This seems to have been a time of inspiration for John, encouraging him to think of other possibilities for a life outside of the forge. Much to the concern of his parents, John set off for Dublin in June 1779, determined not to return. According to his biographer, this was a time when press-gangs were active and a real threat. John took proactive measures to avoid this when he landed in port:

Walker was fearful for himself, and wishing to deceive the press-gang, should they come, feigned to be sick, tying up his head, and filling his mouth with chewed biscuit ready to spatter on the cabin floor.

Fortunately, he made it safely into Dublin before any gangs turned up.



ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEREAS *JOHN WALKER* of *Cockermouth*, Whitesmith and Ironmonger, has for the Benefit of his Creditors, Assigned over all his Effects to Messrs. *Thomas Walker* and *David Fletcher* of Little Broughton, and Mr. *Isaac Brown* of Cockermouth, Grocer: These are to give Notice, that on Monday the 5th of March will be Sold by public Auction at the House of said John Walker, all his Smith's Utensils; consisting of four Pair of Bellows, with several Anvils, Vices, &c. Also all his Stock in Trade, with Household Goods, &c.

Also on Monday the 2d of April will be sold on the Premises, the Dwelling-Houses, Shops, &c. of said John Walker.

N. B. All Persons indebted to the said John Walker, are desired to make Payment to said Assignees; and all to whom the said J. Walker is indebted are desired to give an Account thereof to said Assignees, that they may be entitled to their Dividend.

He must have been astonished and excited to be thrust into the clatter and bustle of Dublin life, but was also shocked by the levels of poverty that he witnessed, and the cruel treatment of the poor and infirm. For a while it was difficult for him to find suitable employment but then he became apprenticed to an artist/engraver called Esdale. John learnt much during that time, producing plates for Walker's Hibernian Magazine in the 1780s. He excelled in landscapes, and the quality of his work improved significantly. He also had access to the use of a good library, which seems to have inspired him to broaden his knowledge in all kinds of subjects, including mathematics, Latin and Greek. He subsequently became a successful schoolteacher, much loved by his pupils, opening a mathematical and classical school on Usher's Island, Dublin. His biographer notes that John had no corporal punishment in his school and treated the boys with respect. At some point John was joined by members of his family from Cockermouth. In 1781 the Cumberland Pacquet carried a notice of sale of the premises and contents of the smithy on Main Street (See image above).

Readers will be wondering where smallpox comes into John's story. It is hard to understand why John would decide to abandon what many would consider a successful professional life, and yet this is exactly what he did. A key factor seems to be his contact with a navy surgeon, who returned from the war in America in needy circumstances. John welcomed him into his home in Dublin and learnt much about anatomy from him, incorporating drawings into the second edition of his *Geography and Gazeteer* that he had first published in 1788. John resolved to study medicine and, at the age of forty, he enrolled as a student at Guy's Hospital in London, eventually gaining his degree in medicine at the University of Leyden in the Netherlands in 1799. This was the same year that he met his future wife Annie, and they were married in Glasgow.

Maybe he had been caught up in the excitement of medical developments at the time to counter the scourge of smallpox. Jenner was putting forward his theories on vaccination through the use of cowpox, but there was enormous controversy about the issue, as demonstrated in a satirical cartoon of the time, produced by James Gillray. John had clearly decided to devote his medical career to smallpox vaccination and, indeed, he would later become known as the 'apostle of vaccination'.

On 1st July 1800 John boarded the 'Endymion' in Portsmouth with his friend Dr Marshall, undertaking a dramatic sea journey around Europe, involving sea

James Gillray's cartoon, 'The Cow Pock'

battles, violent altercations and threats to life. The two had been sent by the Duke of York to vaccinate army and navy men involved in the build-up to the Napoleonic Wars, visiting Gibraltar, Minorca, Malta, Naples, and Egypt. On many occasions they feared for their lives but eventually returned home to England at the start of 1802.

In London John now set to with a public vaccination service in part of a house in Lombard Street owned by Mr Fox, a celebrated dentist of the time. In 1803 the Royal Jennerian Society had been established under Edward Jenner, and John Walker was appointed resident vaccinator, based in Salisbury Square. However, it seems that he upset various people by his attitude and decided he must leave the Society. Friends subsequently helped establish the London Vaccine Institution with John at its head. It is highly likely that John and William Woodville would have crossed paths in London, where William was physician to the Smallpox and Inoculation hospitals up until his death in 1805. John Walker was made a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians in 1812. He worked six days a week vaccinating people, and there were claims that he had vaccinated more than 100,000 people by the time he died in 1830. This was said about John in the Annual Report of the Vaccine Institution (1831) after his death:

> *He was a man who, day after day, month after month, and year after year, watched with the care of a parent the cause of which he was so experienced an advocate; who was willing to know nothing but the object of his early love, vaccination; who for upwards of a quarter of a century, never omitted one lawful day going his rounds to the numerous stations of the Institution; and who it may be almost said ended his life with the lancet in his hand, for he went round to the stations two days before he died.*

Portrait of an Elegant Lady: Sarah Hervey of Bridekirk

by Adam Baker

Some of you may know the magnificent white marble memorial to Sarah Hervey (pronounced Harvey) just inside the entrance door of St Bridget's church, Bridekirk [image right]. The urn is a particularly fine carving and would have required a great deal of skill to produce. It would have been relatively expensive and is in addition to Sarah Hervey's grave stone in the cemetery.

The memorial inscription reads 'Sacred to the memory of Sarah wife of the Revd. H. A Hervey, vicar of this parish, died Novr. 3rd 1827, aged 55 years. "The memory of the just is blessed". "And the Spirit shall return to God, who gave it".'

Rev Humphrey Archer Hervey was the vicar at Bridekirk for nearly 50 years from 1795 and married Sarah Mawson, aged 22, the same year. They lived in the vicarage next door to the church. Their first child, Mary Anne, was born in March 1796. While the average number of children to a family at the time was five, Humphrey and Sarah had eight in total over 15 years! With names like 'Jane Hephzibah' and 'Thomas Lamplugh', their children's names reflected both their vocation and geographic locality. Married life must have been intense for Sarah but she probably had help looking after the children; the Mawsons, Sarah's parents, were a large, local family.

Rev Hervey was a well-known figure at the time and at a period in history when a parish vicar was a very well regarded figure in the community. He must have been a man of means, not only supporting his large family and household but able to pursue other interests. He and Sarah were instrumental in mentoring and sponsoring Fearon Fallows (the other son of Cockermouth) who went on to be His Majesty's (George IV) first astronomer of the Astronomical Society, establishing the observatory in Cape Town. But before he

went, he married the Hervey's eldest daughter, Mary Anne. So Rev. and Mrs Hervey became Fearon's father and mother-in-law respectively.

As was fashionable at the time, in fact *de rigueur* for people of standing, there would have been family portraits.

We live in an artist's, Georgian 'painting house' – and as featured on the Cockermouth history wall on the Old Kings Arms Lane in Cockermouth. The artist in question was Joseph Sutton, 1762-1843, a local painter, whose patrons included aristocracy and the great and the good of

Cumberland. Sutton studied at the Royal Academy and became a very successful portrait, landscape and domestic animal painter as well as being an excellent copy artist. At one point he had six apprentices working for him.

Arguably Sutton's best copy hangs in Muncaster Castle – Charles I in Three Positions by Van Dyke. In fact the painting is so good, it was specially examined to see if it was a Van Dyke. Sutton has a number of pictures hanging in Muncaster, some huge, where he was commissioned to paint a variety of family portraits, copies and even a naval battle. Other paintings adorn Mirehouse and Hutton-in-the Forest.

Living in Sutton's old 'painting house' meant we were on the lookout for a painting of his. That's the great thing about the internet; you can set alerts for things like paintings in auctions and when something comes up, anywhere in the world, you get automatically emailed. And out of the blue an email popped up with a painting by Joseph Sutton entitled 'A portrait of an Elegant Lady'. That's how the listing appeared in the catalogue at an auction near Boston, Massachusetts. As it turned out, the painting cost very little comparatively – people don't seem to want large, old oil paintings. Once we had the painting in our possession, we researched the 'elegant lady' – it has Sarah's name on the back with a date of 1808. It's a very good painting, in good condition and Sarah is certainly 'an elegant lady'. Once we learnt who 'Sarah Hervey' was, a trip to St Bridget's opened up all the research above.

And so this [left] is Sarah Hervey in June 1808, aged 35, after six children.

Do have a look at Sarah's memorial next time you're in St Bridget's (it'll be 200 years since her death in November 2027) – you'll now be able to put a face to the name.

Joseph Sutton would have certainly painted the Rev Hervey and possibly the Hervey children as a group, around the same time. We'd also like to think there's an undiscovered portrait of Fearon Fallows (there are none known) somewhere.

So if anyone knows the whereabouts of a fine portrait of Rev Humphrey Archer Hervey, we'd be very pleased to hear from you!

Ordnance Survey bench-marks in the north-western Lake District: their significance and historical value

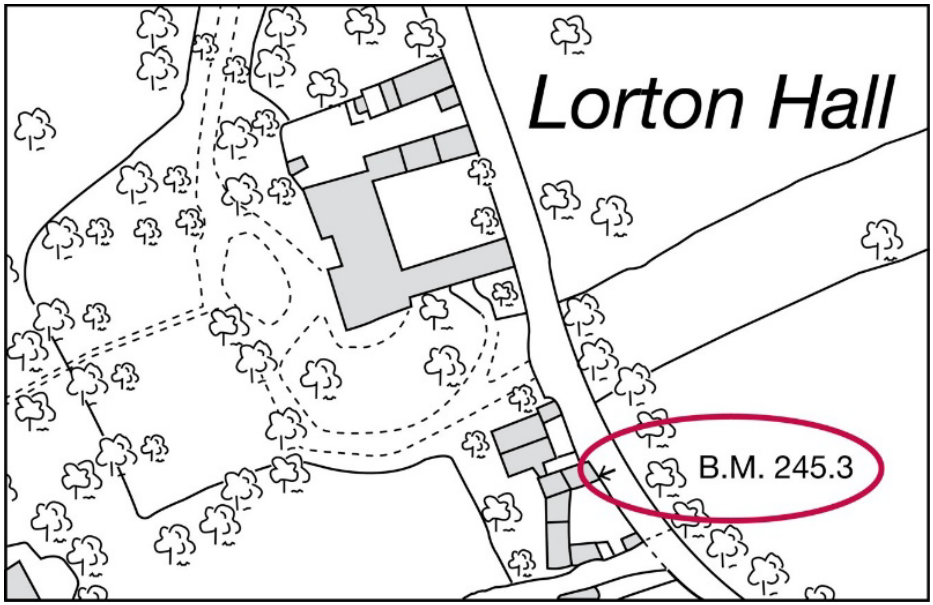
by Peter Wilson and Frances Wilson

Amongst the various categories of people who use Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, landscape historians probably rank quite high. But it is unlikely to be the modern maps to which they turn; rather, their interests usually relate to the earlier editions, particularly those at a scale of 1:10,560 (6 inches to 1 mile) that were published in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. These maps are an invaluable record of 'how things were' in urban and rural areas, and enable historians to evaluate the changes of the last 150-200 years.

OS maps also carry information related to the surveying processes that led to map production. This information, indicated by the capital letters BM (bench-mark), a tiny arrow symbol, and the height of that location in feet above sea level, is to be found on all 6" map sheets except for the first editions (Figure 1). Sites of bench-marks are also indicated on the first metric versions (1:10,000 scale) of these maps, but are no longer shown on the most recent editions. Map production is now a digital process utilising satellites and GPS ground receivers, and the majority of bench-marks are no longer required by the OS. Nevertheless they are significant historical artefacts that are worthy of protection and conservation because of the part they played in mapping the nation.

Lorton is no different to other areas of the UK with regard to OS mapping and bench-mark placement. Over the years tens of thousands of marks were created by surveyors as they traversed the country with their spirit levels. As map revisions were scheduled, so additional surveying was conducted. Existing bench-marks were made use of, but in all areas, and for

Figure 1. Extract of the 1861 6" OS map covering Lorton, showing location of a bench-mark (B.M.) on the outer wall of a building associated with Lorton Hall. The height of the mark is given in feet above sea level. We have not been able to find this mark; it has probably been destroyed.



different reasons, some marks had been destroyed. So new ones were made and became part of the network. Today, the population of bench-marks is made up of some dating from the 1840s, when the 1st (Primary) Geodetic Levelling (aka 1GL) commenced, and others that were created in association with later levelling schemes (2GL and 3GL) of the 20th century. All these schemes followed lengths of the road network and the 1GL line that came closest to Lorton went from Penrith to Workington and was levelled between October 1855 and March 1856. It passed through Keswick, Embleton and Cockermouth. Therefore the earliest bench-marks in the Vale of Lorton must have been placed after the 1GL line had been levelled, and these were likely created as the OS 'filled in the gaps' either side of the lines. The 2GL scheme of 1912-21 did not include north-western Cumbria but lines associated with the 3GL scheme of 1951-56 went from Wasdale to Cockermouth, passing through Gosforth and Lamplugh, and Cockermouth to Wetheral via Caldbeck, Wigton and Dalston. Episodes of bench-mark placement would have preceded the revision of each map sheet, until the 1990s when the final bench-marks in the UK were made.

Finding Bench-marks

Different editions of the 6" maps and metric equivalents show locations of bench-marks (Figure 1), but for an area that is covered by several map sheets it may be difficult to source all editions of all sheets in order to obtain a complete (past and present) distribution of marks. An alternative is to use the Bench Mark Database website (*www.bench-marks.org.uk*) that is freely available to everyone. By selecting the Search tab and entering a postcode or grid reference and a radius distance around that location, the site will generate a list of all known bench-marks of all ages within that radius. For the grid reference NY 160 256 (the Lorton Village Shop) and a radius of 5 km, a list of 68 bench-marks will appear along with details of their locations (8- or 10-figure grid references), and nature of their host structures and physical conditions. If requested, the website will also produce lists of bench-marks made along all the lines surveyed as part of the 1GL, 2GL and 3GL schemes.

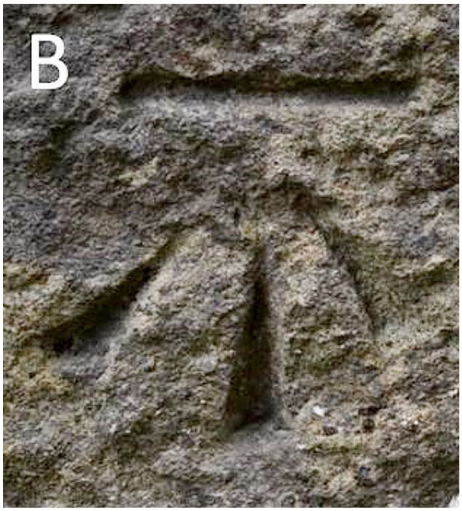
However, some bench-marks in these lists no longer exist, having been destroyed as a consequence of redevelopment, and in some areas unrecorded bench-marks may be present and await discovery. Enthusiasts can register with the site and record the bench-marks they locate and also report those that they cannot find. In the case of the 68 bench-marks mentioned above, 27 are reported as 'not found'; they have probably been destroyed.

However, if pouring over maps or scrolling through website pages does not appeal to you, then simply walking around and looking at various structures such as bridge parapets, gateposts, churches, farm buildings, roadside walls and earth-fast boulders will soon yield a range of bench-marks. Some will be sharp and clear, others may be painted over, encrusted in lichen, or hidden by thick vegetation. Usually most will be low down on vertical host structures, within about 50 cm of the ground surface, but some will be at a higher than expected level, so don't forget to look high as well as low.

Bench-mark styles

Several styles of bench-mark were made by the OS surveyors. The most frequently used mark on vertical surfaces was the standard cut bench-mark (aka a crow's foot). This consists of an incised horizontal line below which an incised broad arrow points upwards. The horizontal line represents the height above sea level of that point. Several of these marks exist in and around Lorton, in various states of clarity (Figure 2A-E). Perhaps the most unusual location for a crow's foot is to be found inside Cobblers Cottage (a holiday property) where an old gatepost with a very clear cut-mark has been used as part of a fire hearth! Although the gatepost and

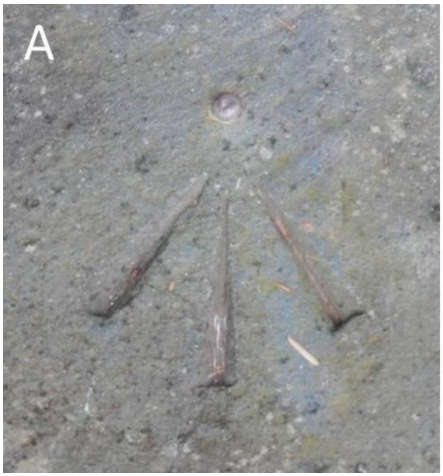
Figure 2. Selection of cut bench-marks (aka crow's feet) in the Lorton and Loweswater area.
A. On boundary wall pillar of private house (Broomlands). The mark is circled.
B. On parapet of Low Liza Bridge.
C. On gate post of St. Bartholomew's Church.
D. On gatepost along the Mosedale track.
E. Adjacent to the front door of the Wythop Sunday School building.
F. On roadside building, part of Scale Hill Hotel.



mark are now out of context, it is probably safe for the foreseeable future. Other marks are at the mercy of the weather, encroaching moss and lichen, and/or redevelopment of properties and infrastructure.

Two less frequently occurring bench-marks are rivets and pivots. Both types are usually found on horizontal or near-horizontal surfaces, such as earth-fast boulders or flag stones. The former consists of an inscribed arrow with a prominent rivet fixed directly above the tip of the arrow (Figure 3A). The latter bench-mark has a shallow circular or rectangular depression above the tip of the arrow. The circular depression was cut to hold a steel ball-bearing on which a Surveyor's staff could pivot, and thus remain in position, while both forward and backward sightings were taken by spirit level. The rectangular depression served a similar purpose but without use of a ball-bearing. A hybrid pivot/rivet bench-mark is shown in Figure 3B. With both rivets and pivots a horizontal incision was not usually part of the mark.

Figure 3 (below). A. Inscribed arrow with rivet at tip, on flag stone in Keswick. B. A hybrid pivot/rivet bench-mark in Portinscale. The arrow is on the bevelled edge of a bridge parapet capstone. Above the tip of the arrow, on top of the capstone, is a shallow rectangular depression into which a surveyor's staff would be positioned. At a later stage a rivet has been inserted at the front edge of the depression.



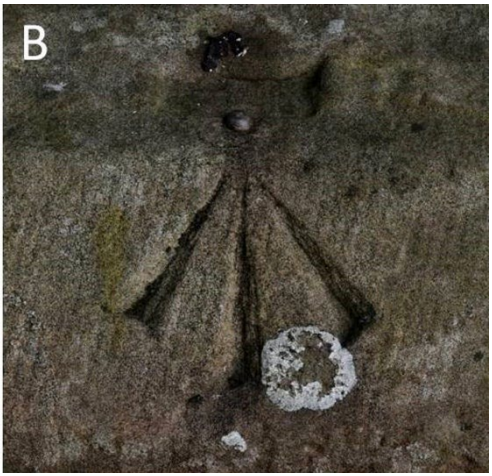


Figure 4. Triangulation pillars with S-series flush brackets on Fellbarrow (left) and Ling Fell (right). The pillars were constructed in the 1950s.Adjacent to the spider are three brass loops by which that equipment can be secured by cords.

Another type of bench-mark is a flush bracket. These comprise brass plates of approximately 18x9 cm that are embossed with the letters OSBM and a small arrow. A horizontal slot directly above the arrow is the height reference point. In addition they carry a unique identifying number. Two flush brackets exist within the 5 km radius of the Lorton Village Shop referred to above. They are on the triangulation pillars at the summits of Fellbarrow and Ling Fell (Figure 4). Another, a little farther away, is on a wall at Bassenthwaite Lake Station House (Figure 5). These pillars and the brackets date from the 1950s and are associated with a major phase of re-surveying. In each case the brackets are of the S-series type (the identifying number is preceded by the letter S). This style of bracket came into widespread use from the 1930s and was used on both summit triangulation pillars and walls along lines of the 3GL, and in other locations.

Triangulation pillars are a little more complex than they might seem at first sight. In addition to the side-mounted flush bracket, the top of each pillar has a brass 'spider' with three grooved legs 120º apart designed to hold a theodolite or beacon (light) during surveying.

Beneath and within the pillars are a lower centre mark and an upper centre mark. These consist of brass bolts firmly fixed in position. The former mark, usually set into bedrock below the pillar, defines the location of the survey station and is independent of the pillar. Should the pillar be toppled or destroyed, this mark would allow for the precise re-positioning of a replacement. The latter mark, usually set in concrete within the base of the pillar, is aligned exactly above the former and is the surveyed mark. In addition, pillars have sighting/drainage tubes towards the base and a centre tube covered by a screw cap in the middle of the spider. The spider acts as a forced-centring fitting that ensures a theodolite, when mounted on the spider, is centred over the marks at the base of the pillar.

Significance and Historical Value

With the exception of some triangulation pillars and fundamental bench-marks (the nearest example of which is at Nether Wasdale, and therefore not described

Figure 5. S-series flush bracket on wall of Bassenthwaite Lake Station House.

above) the majority of bench-marks are no longer used by the OS. Their numbers are declining as a consequence of changes to the structures on which they were placed and, in the case of some triangulation pillars, vandalism. In recent years the pillars on the summits of Loughrigg Fell, Eel Crags/Crag Hill, Scafell Pike and Pillar have all been vandalised in some way.

It seems that bench-marks of whatever style have no statutory protection. If the structure on which a bench-mark occurs has protected or conservation status then this should mean the bench-mark does as well. However, even on listed buildings, weathered stonework that carries a cut-mark, brass rivet, pivot or flush bracket may be replaced, resulting in the loss of the artefact.

The removal of bench-marks, either through ignorance or intention, represents the loss of significant artefacts that played a key role in mapping the nation. Bench-marks are important physical and historical markers of the OS remit to produce accurate maps, and although of small-scale deserve to be recorded and, where possible, protected.

To this end, local societies and individuals can play a part by noting the occurrence of bench-marks within specific areas and establishing when they were placed. It would be useful if a list of all bench-marks within a set radius of Lorton was obtained from www.bench-marks.org.uk. These could be field checked (present/absent), and for extant marks a note made of their physical condition. A watching brief could be kept for developments that might result in the removal of marks, and representations made against proposals that would lead to their destruction. The refurbishment of a bench-mark-bearing structure need not result in the loss of the mark. In some circumstances, cut-marked stones have been retained within the fabric of refurbished structures, although not always in their original position (Cobblers Cottage for example). In some other cases marked stones have been retained within their re-built host structure but have been inverted to signify that the mark no longer indicates an accurately levelled location.

We believe that bench-marks deserve recording, protecting and conserving. Most have been around for longer than most of us. Let's hope they will remain for a long time to come and give future historians the opportunity to understand and appreciate how OS mapping was conducted in the pre-digital era.