

# *The Journal*

## Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite    Buttermere    Embleton    Loweswater    Mockerkin    Pardshaw    Wythop

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Lorton Park at the very end of the nineteenth century, from the Beechey Collection, L&DFLHS archive. The ladies are Miss Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord, Miss Elizabeth Harbord and possibly the third sister Mrs Margaret Alexander Sampson-Davis, order unknown.

## ***The Journal***

After a bumper issue in August I have received just one full article from members for this one, but I am very pleased to welcome Susan Hundleby, who has discovered herself to be almost a Wilkinson of Loweswater.

Space enables me to include a fairly comprehensive version of a history of Lorton Park, which is long overdue. But I would be happy to receive for the next issue a number of contributions from members, on varied themes and periods, and covering other parts of our patch. Otherwise there may be a history of another house, and you can have too much of a good thing.

*Derek Denman*

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## ***From the Chair***

A New Year and another interesting edition of the Journal. This is supposed to be the time for turning over new leaves and making resolutions, but we are resolved simply to continue to provide a focus for all who are interested in the history of our locality. Current initiatives include the

reorganisation of our archive and investigating the possibility of doing more archaeological work. There are also plenty of opportunities for those who wish to undertake their own historical research - just speak to a member of the committee. And once again we have an interesting programme of talks throughout the year. So I hope you all find your membership of the Society useful and enjoyable throughout 2010.

*John Hudson*

## ***Connections with the Wilkinson family in Loweswater***

*by Susan Hundleby*

Many of you will know what it is like to research a family line given very little information and this was my first foray into family history research. I knew my maternal grandparents well but left it too late to ask them for more information. I have memories of a very formidable, straight-laced great grandmother (Elizabeth Ann Fletcher) who lived in Leeds and ruled her husband (whom I never knew) and their children with a rod of iron, but apart from this all I knew was that my mother's father's family had come from Cockermouth. Speaking with my father, he had a vague recollection that there had been a connection with the Kirkstyle Inn at Loweswater and he produced a short article about the Wilkinson family that had been written by my mother's cousin in about 1965. This told me quite a lot about my great grandmother's family but very little about my great grandfather Wilkinson's family. I did learn however that:

- my great grandfather was called James Wilkinson;
- he had two sisters Cissie and Annie; and
- somewhere there was a connection with the Brown Cow Inn at Cockermouth.

These few facts led me first to investigate the birth, marriage, death (bmd) and census records and finally to visit Cockermouth and Loweswater when my husband and I were on holiday in the Lake District in September 2005.

Have you ever tried to trace any of the Wilkinson family on the census records? If not, I can tell you that the list of potential

names is only marginally less daunting than trying to trace my paternal ancestors who are all called Evan Davies and came from the Welsh border country.

The 1891 census record shows a James E Wilkinson, aged 14, born Cockermouth, living in Challoner Street, Cockermouth with his grandmother, Ann Clark, and his sister Sarah Wilkinson and her son John Wilkinson. Another sister, Annie, and her husband William Pattinson were living in the same household. Could this James Wilkinson be my great grandfather? The birth date circa 1877 looked about right and the two sisters Annie and Sarah (possibly known as Cissie) fitted the information I had discovered.

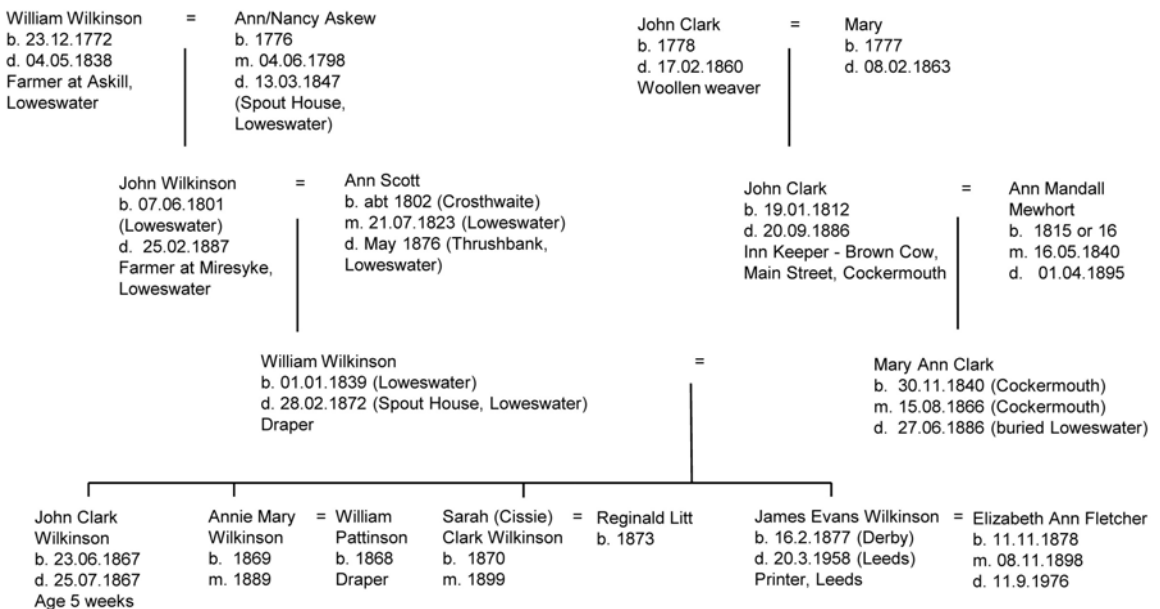
I quickly checked the 1881 census records but there was no James Wilkinson living in Cockermouth at that time. I also checked all the birth records and nothing seemed to match. There was a James E Wilkinson of about the right age but he was born in Derby not Cockermouth. In 1881 this James Evans Wilkinson was living with Ellen Evans and her daughter Nellie in Derby. Ellen had been born in Cheshire and I could not see any connection with either Cumberland or Yorkshire so I rejected the entry.

Looking at the census records for Ann Clark (the potential grandmother for my James Wilkinson) in 1881 I discovered that Ann was living with her husband John

Clark along with their daughter Mary A Wilkinson and their two granddaughters Sarah and Annie Wilkinson. I now had a potential name for James's mother, but there was no grandson, James E Wilkinson listed. The address was The Brown Cow, Main Street, Cockermouth so I was fairly certain I was looking at the right family but where was James?

Searching the 1871 census records I found Mary A Wilkinson and her husband William Wilkinson with their two daughters and Mary's parents, John and Ann Clark, again living at the Brown Cow in Cockermouth. This record stated that William Wilkinson was born in Loweswater. Could this be the Loweswater connection I needed? I quickly requested a marriage certificate for William Wilkinson and Mary Ann Clark and this gave William's father's name as John Wilkinson, farmer. I also traced Mary Ann (Clark) Wilkinson's birth and death certificates and William's birth certificate but I couldn't find an obvious death record for him post 1877 - the year of my great grandfather's birth.

However, when I looked again at the 1901 census record for James E Wilkinson I found he was living with his wife in Leeds and that they had a visitor called Ellen S Evans! Once I had realised the significance of the visitor's name, I took another look at the Derby connection but could see no reason why James's parents would have sent him to Derby and who





**Wilkinson gravestone at Loweswater**

was Ellen Evans anyway?

After further research I identified William Wilkinson's parents as John and Ann Wilkinson, farmers at Miresyke in Loweswater. It was in September 2005 that I decided to visit Loweswater. My husband and I scoured Loweswater churchyard for Wilkinson gravestones. There were quite a number of graves, but the one that really intrigued me was almost illegible. My interpretation of the inscription was:-

*"In memory of/ John Wilkinson  
 .....85 year/ Ann wife of John  
 Wilkinson/.....ay 1876/ William  
 Wilkinson/ who died.....18..../John  
 .....Wilkinson...../.....Mary  
 Ann Wilkinson wife of/ William who  
 died June/ 27<sup>th</sup> 1886 aged 45 years./  
 Joseph Wilkinson/ who died Dec  
 10<sup>th</sup>/ 1898 aged 61..../ Jonathan  
 Wilkinson died Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> 1855/ aged  
 13 years/ Ann Simon died June 30<sup>th</sup>  
 1851/ aged 27 years/ John Simon  
 her husband/ died 23 June 1863  
 aged 41"*

I could just make out enough to convince myself that I might have a match for my great, great grandmother, Mary Ann Wilkinson, and as you can imagine I

became very excited and wanted to know more. (Sadly the inscription on the gravestone has eroded even more in the last few years and it will soon be completely illegible. Hopefully this article and the Monumental Inscriptions will help to preserve the original memorial written around 125 years ago.)

I remembered my mother once telling me many years ago that she had been transcribing gravestones in her local churchyard for a project designed to record all the Monumental Inscriptions. On the off chance that this had been done at Loweswater I wrote to a number of people and finally made contact with Derek Denman of the L&DFLHS. I was delighted to find that a record had been compiled in 1972 by Rosemary Southey and again in 1994-95 by Heather Thompson and Ellen Bentsen. Derek Denman very kindly supplied me with the following extract:

*"In memory of/ John Wilkinson (of  
 Loweswater/ who died Feb \_\_ aged 85  
 years/ Ann wife of John Wilkinson/ died  
 (Thrushbank) \_\_ay 1876/ \_\_\_\_/  
 William Wilkinson/ who died \_\_\_\_ (28th)  
 1872/ aged \_\_years/ John (Mark)  
 Wilkinson./ His son born June 2\_ 1807/  
 and was interred at Cockermonth/  
 Cemetery. /Mary Ann Wilkinson, wife  
 of/ William Wilkinson, who died June/  
 27th 1886, aged 45 years./Joseph  
 Wilkinson,/who died Dec 10th/ 1898,  
 aged 61 years./ Jonathon Wilkinson  
 died Jan 22, 1855./ aged 13 years./  
 Ann Simon, died June 30th, 1851,/aged  
 27 years./ John Simon, her husband,/  
 died June 23th 1863 aged 41 years."*

You will see that the death date for William Wilkinson (1872) was recorded as being some years before James E Wilkinson was born (1877). I concluded that either the transcription had been taken down incorrectly or that James was older than I had originally thought. Again Derek helped, and when visiting the Whitehaven record office he explored the death date further and was able to confirm that it was indeed the correct date and therefore highly likely that William Wilkinson was not James's father!

I finally requested a copy of the birth certificate for the James E Wilkinson born in Derby. The certificate gave the date of birth as 16 February 1877 and

showed his mother's name as Mary A Wilkinson - there was no father's name recorded. I finally acknowledged that Mary, a supposedly respectable widow, must have become pregnant and therefore travelled to Derby to give birth to her illegitimate son. Did the rest of her family know? How long was she in Derby before the birth of her son? Mary's address on James's birth certificate was shown as being a few doors away from where Ellen Evans lived. Presumably Mary had decided to leave James with Ellen and therefore gave James the middle name of Evans when she registered his birth as well as her own married surname - Wilkinson. What took Mary to Derby and what connection did she have with Ellen Evans? Is there a clue here as to who James's real father was? With the help of another genealogist friend Susan Scott (who incidentally is related to Ann Scott who married John Wilkinson of Miresyke, Loweswater) we have spent many hours tracing Ellen Salt Evans (nee Moore) and her family and also anybody and everybody called James, Moore or Evans to try and find a connection, without success, but that is another story.

I kept wondering what brought Mary to give up her son in those early years and what subsequently brought him back into the family fold by 1891. I therefore decided to investigate a number of copy wills that I had requested from the Whitehaven record office.

There is a very detailed will for John Wilkinson of Loweswater. John Wilkinson wrote his will in 1886 (he died in 1887) leaving his estate in trust to be split seven ways. Five parts went to his surviving children, one part went to the only child of his eldest daughter, Ann Simon, who had died young and the seventh part was to be split equally between Annie Mary and Sarah Wilkinson (James's half sisters). John's will says he died at The Park, Loweswater. Whilst disappointed, I was not surprised that James Wilkinson was not mentioned in John Wilkinson's will since it is now clear that he was not his grandson. (As an aside, I am also researching the places that the Wilkinson family lived in Loweswater, but that too is another story!)

What is surprising is that James is not mentioned in his legitimate grandfather's will either. His maternal grandfather, John Clark, the landlord of the Brown Cow, also died in 1886 and left his entire estate in trust for his two granddaughters Annie and Sarah. His daughter Mary Ann Wilkinson had died three months before him. The implication therefore is that John Clark was either not aware, or did not want to acknowledge, his illegitimate grandson, my great grandfather, James Evans Wilkinson. It was not until the 1891 census that I know for certain that James was acknowledged by his family. Was his grandmother, Ann Clark, aware of his birth? Was it Ellen Evans who explained the situation to Ann after James's mother's death? Either way, James's grandmother tried to make amends for his grandfather's will and when she died in 1895 she left her entire estate to James. The estate will have been far less valuable than that inherited by his two sisters from John Clark since Ann Clark had only received a life time interest in the Brown Cow Inn when her husband died, but it is comforting to know that she had done her best for James.

A few years later I was browsing the Cocker mouth cemetery website on the Internet, [www.cockermouth.org.uk/graves](http://www.cockermouth.org.uk/graves) and came across the following inscription:

*"In memory of/ John Clark/ of Cocker mouth/ who died February 17th 1860/ aged 82 years/ Also of Mary Clark/ his wife who died February 8th 1863/ aged 86 years/ Also of John Clark/ son of the above/ who died September 20 1886/ aged 75 years/ Ann wife of John Clark/ who died April 1st 1895/ aged 79 years/ Erected/ by their granddaughter/ M. A. Chambers/ ON THE BACK: In memory of/ John Clark Wilkinson/ of Cocker mouth/ who died July 25th 1868/ aged 5 weeks/ Also William Wilkinson/ father of the above John/ who died at Loweswater/ February 28 1872 aged 32 years/ Also Mary Ann wife/ of William Wilkinson/ who died at Cocker mouth/ June 27th 1886 aged 45 years."*

I was so excited that my sister and I decided to visit Cocker mouth Cemetery. I had checked the plan of the cemetery



**Wilkinson and Clark gravestones at  
Cockermonth Cemetery  
(Photographs by Susan Hundleby, 2008)**



before we set out and knew which area the gravestone was to be found in. We looked all around and could see very few gravestones. Thank goodness for that transcription. It was only because I knew

the stone existed that we searched even harder and eventually discovered the gravestone underneath the most enormous bush. The following pictures were taken amidst the tangle of branches surrounding the gravestone. Thanks to all this foliage the gravestone and its inscription have survived.

You will see from this gravestone inscription that William and Mary Wilkinson (James's parents) also had a son who died as an infant named John Clark Wilkinson. It states on this gravestone that he was five weeks old and died in July 1868. I now know from his birth and death certificates that he was born on 23 June 1867 and died 28 July 1867 so beware gravestone inscriptions can contain mistakes as well! However, this inscription leads me to conclude that the reference to John (Mark) Wilkinson in the transcription of the Loweswater gravestone should in fact read John Clark Wilkinson and that the transcription contains the wrong birth date for him too (1807 should read 1867). Interestingly the year of John Wilkinson's death also needs to be corrected on the Loweswater gravestone.

Following all my investigations I believe the correct reading of the gravestone in Loweswater churchyard is:

*"In memory of/ John Wilkinson of  
Loweswater/ who died Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 1887  
aged 85 years/ Ann wife of John  
Wilkinson/ died Thrushbank May 1876/  
Their son/ William Wilkinson/ who died  
Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 1872/ aged 32 years./ John  
Clark Wilkinson/ his son born June 23<sup>rd</sup>  
1867/ and was interred at  
Cockermonth/ Cemetery. /Mary Ann  
Wilkinson, wife of/ William Wilkinson,  
who died June/ 27<sup>th</sup> 1886, aged 45  
years. /Joseph Wilkinson, /who died  
Dec 10<sup>th</sup>/ 1898, aged 61 years./  
Jonathon Wilkinson died Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>  
1855./ aged 13 years./ Ann Simon,  
died June 30<sup>th</sup> 1851,/ aged 27 years./  
John Simon, her husband,/ died June  
23<sup>rd</sup> 1863 aged 41 years."*

The moral of this story is: do not discard information too early in your research; don't think everything you see is correct and don't assume your ancestors didn't have stories to hide! William Wilkinson was not my great, great

grandfather but he was a man with whom I now have a great affinity having spent so many hours researching into the Wilkinson family history. If anybody would like to see my version of the Wilkinson family tree, which is by no means complete and may contain inaccuracies, they are welcome to contact me and hopefully expand the work further. I would also be very interested to hear from anybody who can add information to this story.

## ***Lorton Park in the Nineteenth Century***

*by Derek Denman*

'The beginnings of Lorton Park are still something of a mystery' wrote the late Ron George. He noted the evidence of John Bolton, in 1891, that the house had been built by John Dodgson, and perused Bolton's description of the ancient buildings and rustic occupants of 1811. He examined the tithe map, drawn in 1840, showing earlier buildings, and the first ordnance survey of 1863 which showed Lorton Park fully formed. He concluded, reasonably, 'Thus Lorton Park, as we see it today must have been built by the Dodgson/Hutchinson/Harbord family between 1810 and 1840 and possibly further upgraded by 1863'. Given more time, Ron would have closed down this large window from evidence he had not seen, and in particular would have been able to assess the fact that the tithe map, though drawn in 1840, used a physical survey made in 1826 for the inclosure of the commons, surviving obscurely with other relevant papers in the archive of Bensons, the solicitors.

This article builds on Ron George's work, using sources relating to the Dodgson/Hutchinson/Harbord family, particularly those of the Hutchinson/Harbord trust fund, to give an account of Lorton Park in the context of those families and the development of the relationship between properties and families in Lorton at that time. It is concluded that the evidence supports John Bolton's statement, and that the original Lorton Park, though Regency in style, dates to the late

1820s, by which time the former Prince Regent was nearing the end of his reign as George IV.

### **Before Lorton Park (see plans p.13)**

The earliest surviving detailed map of High Lorton, with owners, is the Huddleston survey of 1826, which was made to evaluate the claims of each landowner to allotments on Lorton commons, and to help to plan those allotments. The only detailed physical survey for High Lorton before the nineteenth century was the 1649 Parliamentary Survey of the manor of Lorton and Allerthwaite, held by the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral, which included High Lorton. But this survey included no map. It gave a description of element in each customary tenant's tenement, or holding. Each property item was listed, named and measured, and located by the adjacent items on the North, East, South and West. Therefore it is possible to create a map – well almost, and to align it with the 1826 survey – or sometimes not.

The 1649 survey confirms that the medieval core of the village of High Lorton was a row of farmsteads between the highway at Tenters Lane and the lane to the common at Holemire, or White Ash, both of which were marked by watercourses which probably delimited the row. This row and High Mill existed in 1158. In 1649, there were two farmsteads at Boonbeck and a further farmstead which appears to have occupied the space of Lorton Park. The highway to Cockermouth was, as today, to the west of the original row of farmsteads,

### **Lorton Park, from 1990s sale particulars**



and the land to the west of that highway, which became the park of Lorton Park, was once open arable land. It contained a row of crofts, each associated with a farmstead. The highway would probably have developed from the headland upon which the medieval plough was turned, with its numerous oxen. By 1649, all the land of Lorton Park was divided among particular owners in parcels or closes, but was still, where identified, arable land, and therefore not in need of fencing.

By 1649, if the survey is read literally, two farmsteads were on the west of the Cockermouth Highway, because the farmsteads of Thomas Wilson and William Robinson were said to adjoin their Croft, rather than the highway or their Boonhouse close, that is the close above the house. Farmsteads on the former open arable land are unexpected, because they would interfere with ploughing, but in both cases there is corroboration. In the 1841 tithe apportionment, Thomas Wilson's croft took the distinctive name of House Close, though any house had gone, while the name of 'croft' was retained for all the other closes in the row.

William Robinson's farmstead appears to be on the site later developed into Lorton Park, and this part-holding was described in 1649 as 'one dwelling house, a Barne, with a parcel of Arable ground called Common Crofte, adjoyneing to the same contayninge by estimation One Acre One Rood'. William Robinson had been admitted in 1626. It appears that the farmstead had been built on Common Crofte, which, being common, was not associated with an existing farmstead.

John Bolton, in his lecture in 1891 based on the oral testimony of his grandmother-in-law, Mrs Lancaster, described this same farmstead as it was in about 1811: -

*Opposite Wholemire Lonning end, where Miss Harbord's house is there stood a very old house and outbuildings, very likely an old farm. The end of the house came on to the road and the way in was round the left of the gable up a kind of fold. Here was the doorway of large free stone bands and the windows were mullioned, with lead lights. Evidently a very old block. Here lived Bella*

*Thompson, a short-thick roundabout body who kept a bakehouse. ... Next to this was John Martin's.*

In 1826 John Huddleston undertook a survey as commissioner for the inclosure of Lorton commons, making the first detailed plan, in which that old farmstead can be identified from the 1649 survey and from Bolton's 1891 lecture. The claim for an allotment made by John Dodgson on the behalf of the owner of this property, the Rev Lancaster Dodgson, 1763/4-1828, the Vicar of Brough, demonstrates that the situation described by John Bolton still applied on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1826, and that Lorton Park, the house, had not been built.

*Revd. Lancaster Dodgson A.M. claims a right of Common ... in respect of a Messuage and Tenement one Acre of Land in the occupation of Isabella Thompson, also five acres in the occupation of Anne Musgrave, & a Cottage House and Garden in the occupation of Mary Martin as farmers.<sup>1</sup>*

Mary Martin was the widow of Lorton-born farmer John Martin, 1753-1822, who was Lancaster Dodgson's tenant in 1811, as was Isaac Thompson, 1735-1824, the father of Bella the baker, 1788-1856. In 1811 they were named on the income tax assessment for Lorton, income tax being a temporary measure imposed to fund the French wars. Bella Thompson's bakehouse is of historical interest and worth a diversion, because this was not a baker's shop, where bread may be purchased, but rather a bakehouse, where those who had no bread oven would bring their own bread, and perhaps pies, to be baked by the baker. The bakehouse can be positioned through the discovery, in the 1990s, of three bread ovens in an older structure forming part of the kitchen of Lorton Park, the square part to the left of the main hose in the photograph.<sup>2</sup> The Thompsons were a Lorton family. Bella had a number of siblings who lived together. Later, in the first detailed census of 1841, they were split between two properties, one group at what is now Wayside Cottage, the other group, including Bella, with John Payle in the old block that was located on the site

<sup>1</sup> CRO/C/DBen. Lorton Inclosure

<sup>2</sup> Letter in the Society's archive from the late Dr Nicholson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 1998



of The Bungalow. Both Bella and her sister-in-law, Mary, were bakers, but whether and where they had a bakehouse in 1841 is unknown. Bella never married but had one daughter, Mary, in 1819, who married John Benson. They lived in that old block.

It is clear that in 1826 the site of the greater part of the Lorton Park house was occupied by an old farmstead, owned by Revd Lancaster Dodgson, as customary tenant of the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral, and was let to local tenants. Lancaster Dodgson had purchased the property in 1809 from Thomas Dixon of Rheda, and although a list of title deeds from 1875 traces the property back to a transfer from George Ritson to George Marshall in 1684, the link with William Robinson in 1649 cannot be made through known documents.

In 1827 Lancaster Dodgson made a purchase to complete the ownership of the property which formed the later house, by purchasing the adjacent houses.<sup>3</sup> These were once owned by Henry Cherry, and occupied in 1811 by John and Betty Graft, and their tenants, Nanny and Becca Fisher, the dressmaker sisters. Henry Cherry, 1731/2-1807, had three wives, the last being his widow, Elizabeth. In 1803 he sold his property to William Nicholson, a gentleman who lived at the house now called Graceholm, but retained occupation and rents to himself and his wife for life, in an arrangement which we would now call 'equity release'. After his death in 1807, Henry's widow married John Graft, retaining the property until her death in 1819. In 1827 Lancaster Dodgson purchased the property from Isaac Nicholson of Keswick, son and heir of William Nicholson, for £120. In 1828 Rev. Lancaster Dodgson of Shatton, in Embleton, died.

### **The Dodgson/Hutchinson family (see page 11)**

Lancaster Dodgson of Shatton, 1731/2-1815, the father, had acquired or inherited considerable property, sufficient to be styled a gentleman and to establish his



**Shatton Lodge in Embleton**

children as gentry. The first son, and heir, John Dodgson 1761/2-1831, had connections with Liverpool, presumably mercantile, leaving 'messuages, dwelling house and premises' there when he died in 1831. But John and Jamima Dodgson were resident locally. They lived at Low House in Brackenthwaite from at least 1811 to 1828. Mrs Lancaster recalled to John Bolton that when going to Loweswater School they 'very often ... met a lady and a gentleman on the road to whom they made their honours – the boys touching the forelock and girls by dropping curtsy. These were Mr John Dodgson and his wife... Mrs Lancaster was very anxious to impress it on my mind that she was a lady ... .' The second son, Rev. Lancaster Dodgson, benefitted from an MA at Queens College Oxford, and was curate of Embleton from 1803-12, rebuilding the church in 1806 to a low standard, but apparently mostly from his own pocket. Then he became Vicar of Brough. The third Dodgson child was Mary, 1768/9-1852. She married a Liverpool merchant, Joseph Hutchinson, eighteen years her senior. They had a family of four girls, Mary in 1796, Margaret in 1797/8, Eleanor in 1799 and Ann in 1801. All were born in Embleton, and Mary died at Shatton, aged fifteen, which suggests that the family lived at Shatton for some years before moving to Liverpool, where the family established a large merchant's house at 98 Upper Parliament Street, Toxteth.

It can easily be seen from the Dodgson family tree why Mary Hutchinson became the rich widow of Shatton. As her

<sup>3</sup> Copy in Society archive of deed 7<sup>th</sup> July 1827, owned by Harbord descendant

wealthy parents and husband died, followed by her elder brothers without issue, finally in 1831 the wealth of the family accumulated in her hands. Her surviving three daughters had married well in Liverpool, to a surveyor of shipping, a warehousman, and a surgeon, and at some stage after the death of her husband in 1825, Mary Hutchinson returned to the Dodgson family home at Shatton, where she lived until her death in 1852. Mary Hutchinson was clearly an educated and capable business woman, who managed her own estates and kept accounts, acted as sole executrix of the Dodgson family wills and left a will herself running to twenty manuscript sheets. During her time at Shatton she purchased Wood Farm in Whinfell and part of Fellside Farm in Mosser.

In Lorton, in 1809, the Rev Lancaster Dodgson had acquired the property described above in his claim for an allotment in 1826, and had added the Henry Cherry cottages before his death in 1828, but the property was undeveloped and tenanted. As a customary tenancy, the Lorton property was not mentioned in his will, but became the property of his elder brother and customary heir, John Dodgson. It seems likely that John Bolton was correctly informed that John Dodgson was 'the gentleman who built what is now Miss [Eleanor Hutchinson] Harbord's House' because he and Jamima removed from Low House to the Lorton property. In the will of John Dodgson, gentleman, of Lorton, dated 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 1831, he left: -

*to my dear Wife Jamima Dodgson and her assigns, all that my message or dwelling house wherein I now reside with the several other messuages or cottage houses thereunto adjoining and also the gardens outhouses and the closes of land containing about 8 acres thereunto also adjoining or contiguous situate at High Lorton ... and also all my household furniture, plate, linen and china and other effects in or about my said dwelling house .. during the term of her natural life ... [then] ... unto my sister Mary Hutchinson, Widow.* <sup>4</sup>

Mary Hutchinson did not set out to expand her holding in Lorton, and purchased only three closes in what was to become the park, before her death in 1852. These were Taylor Croft, Barr Croft and Bouch Croft, which came up for sale in 1837 with the remainder of Midtown Farm. John Garnett, described as a 'lish<sup>5</sup> young fellow' by John Bolton, had inherited the farm from his respected father Anthony, but he held only 34 acres, excluding commons allotments, and the indentures show that the farm had been mortgaged for £900, which led to its sale and the break-up. Before leaving Midtown farmhouse, to live in Smithy Fold, he engraved his name with a diamond in a window pane. The decline of Midtown Farm was, however, only symptomatic of a general change in the row of properties in High Lorton, which converted to a row of tradesmen, artisans and householders as the farmland became increasingly attached to the peripheral farms of Lorton. This process was stimulated firstly by the turnpike of the late eighteenth century, which brought new non-farming opportunities, and then by the reduction in value of the arable crops of the village land compared with pastoral products of the periphery.

In her will made in 1850, leaving an estate worth at least fifty thousand pounds, Mary Hutchinson distributed her cash, investments and freehold property among her three surviving married daughters, Margaret Alexander, Eleanor Harbord and Ann Bradley, all of Liverpool. Having enjoyed financial independence and autonomy as a widow, she went to great lengths to ensure, though the provisions of her will and the appointment of trustees, that the bequests went to the use of her daughters and then her grandchildren, and specifically was not subject to the 'interference' of their husbands. Before the matrimonial causes Act of 1857 and the subsequent two Married Women's Property Acts, married women lost their separate identity with respect to property and children, becoming extensions of their husbands, though a husband needed his wife's consent to sell property that she had inherited during the marriage. The devising

<sup>4</sup> Dodgson Wills:  
Lancaster Dodgson TNA/Prob/11/1574  
Rev. Lancaster Dodgson

John Dodgson TNA/Prob/11/1787  
Mary Hutchinson TNA/Prob/11/2160  
<sup>5</sup> 'lish' active, nimble - OED

## The Dodgson, Hutchinson, Alexander, Harbord families

Numbers indicate the sequence of ownership of the Lorton Park property. 3 & 6, life interest. 7, in trust. 8= by purchase in 1885.

Lancaster Dodgson  
d. 10 Jul 1815 aged 83  
of Shatton, Embleton

Mary Fearon  
d. 9 Sep 1820 aged 83

### Dodgson family

**2. John**  
d. 2 Feb 1831 aged 69  
of Low House, B'rnwaite  
then High Lorton

= **3. Jamima**  
d. 29 Jun 1831 aged 63

**1. Lancaster**  
d. 5 May 1828 aged 64  
curate of Embleton  
then Vicar of Brough

= **4. Mary**  
d. 9 Sep 1852 aged 83  
of Shatton Hall, Embleton

= Joseph Hutchinson  
d. 14th May 1825 aged 74  
of Liverpool

### Hutchinson family

Mary  
d. 30 Apr 1812 aged 15  
at Shatton, Embleton

= Margaret  
b. 1798 Embleton

= William Alexander  
b. 1787/8  
inspector of shipping/  
merchant of Liverpool

William Harbord  
customs officer

1825

= **5. Eleanor**  
b. 1799 Embleton  
d. 22 Jul 1875  
Liverpool

= **6. Richard**  
b. 28 May 1803,  
Yarmouth  
d. 20 Dec 1878  
warehouse owner  
of Liverpool

Ann  
b. 1800 Embleton

= Edward Bradley  
druggist/surgeon  
of Liverpool

5+ children

### Alexander family

Richard Armitstead  
Rector of Moresby  
Incumbent St James, Whitehaven

Jonathan Wilson  
bp. 27 Apr 1780  
Bouch House, Embleton  
Rogerscale, Whinfeil  
then Ivy Cottage, Lorton

Frances  
b. 19th Feb 1815  
d. 17th Sep 1890

William  
1799-1870  
curate of Lorton  
1826-1864  
of Oakhill

Mary  
b. 1823/4  
Liverpool

= John  
b. 1823/4 Rogerscale  
d. 16 Apr 1917  
of Fairfield, Lorton

Kelsick  
b. 1825/6

a son

**7. William Lancaster**  
b. 15th Jan 1821 Liverpool  
d. 31st Mar 1910  
of Shatton and  
Oakhill, Lorton

1857

Mary  
1800-1869  
of Oakhill

William  
1799-1870  
curate of Lorton  
1826-1864  
of Oakhill

Mary  
b. 1823/4  
Liverpool

Kelsick  
b. 1825/6

### Harbord family

Richard  
b. 23 Sep 1826  
d. 9 Nov 1894  
m. 17 Mar 1853  
Charlotte  
Huddleston  
8/10 children,  
West Indies and UK

Mary  
b. 6 Jan 1828  
d. 31 Aug 1884  
m. 23 July 1857  
William Rowe Jolley  
5/6 children UK

= **8-. Eleanor Hutchinson**  
b. 18 May 1830  
d. 17 Feb 1924  
of Lorton Park

Elizabeth  
b. 18 May 1831  
d. 28 Oct 1905  
of Lorton Park

Margaret Alexander  
b. 29 Apr 1832  
d. 24 Jul 1900  
m. 1 Jun 1880  
**8-. Rev. Wm  
Sampson-Davis**  
incum. Emb. & Lorton

Dodgson  
b. 2 Apr 1834  
d. 7 May 1927  
m. 1. 1866 Eliz. Musgrave  
4/5 Children Australia  
m. 2. 1895 Camilla Dahl

Oliver  
b. 11 Jun 1835  
d. 27 Nov 1881  
m. 1. 1863 Hannah  
Lockett, 1 child UK  
m. 2. 1868 Elizabeth  
Hornby, 8 children UK

William  
b. 3 May 1837  
d. 1 Feb 1885  
m. 5 Nov 1863  
Sarah Walker  
7/12 children UK

William  
b. 23 Jul 1838  
m. 1. 1862  
Anastasia Cahill  
2 children UK

Lancaster  
b. 29 Nov 1839  
d. 29 Jan 1928  
m. 18 Sep 1862  
Francis Maples

Henrietta  
b. 29 Nov 1839  
d. 29 Jan 1928  
m. 18 Sep 1862  
Francis Maples

Mary Ellen Hirst  
m. 2 14 Jan 1874  
Francis Maples  
note: #/# indicates number of grandchildren  
surviving Eleanor Harbord, out of total born

Edward  
b&d. 1833

of customary property, including the Lorton estate, provided further problems in that the heir to be admitted by the manor court was determined by custom, not by a will. On purchasing the three Lorton closes in 1837, Mary Hutchinson asked her friend and later trustee, John Richardson of Cockermonth, to be admitted as customary tenant; so that on her death he would be able to dispose of the property according to her wishes, when she could not. Mary Hutchinson left nothing to chance.

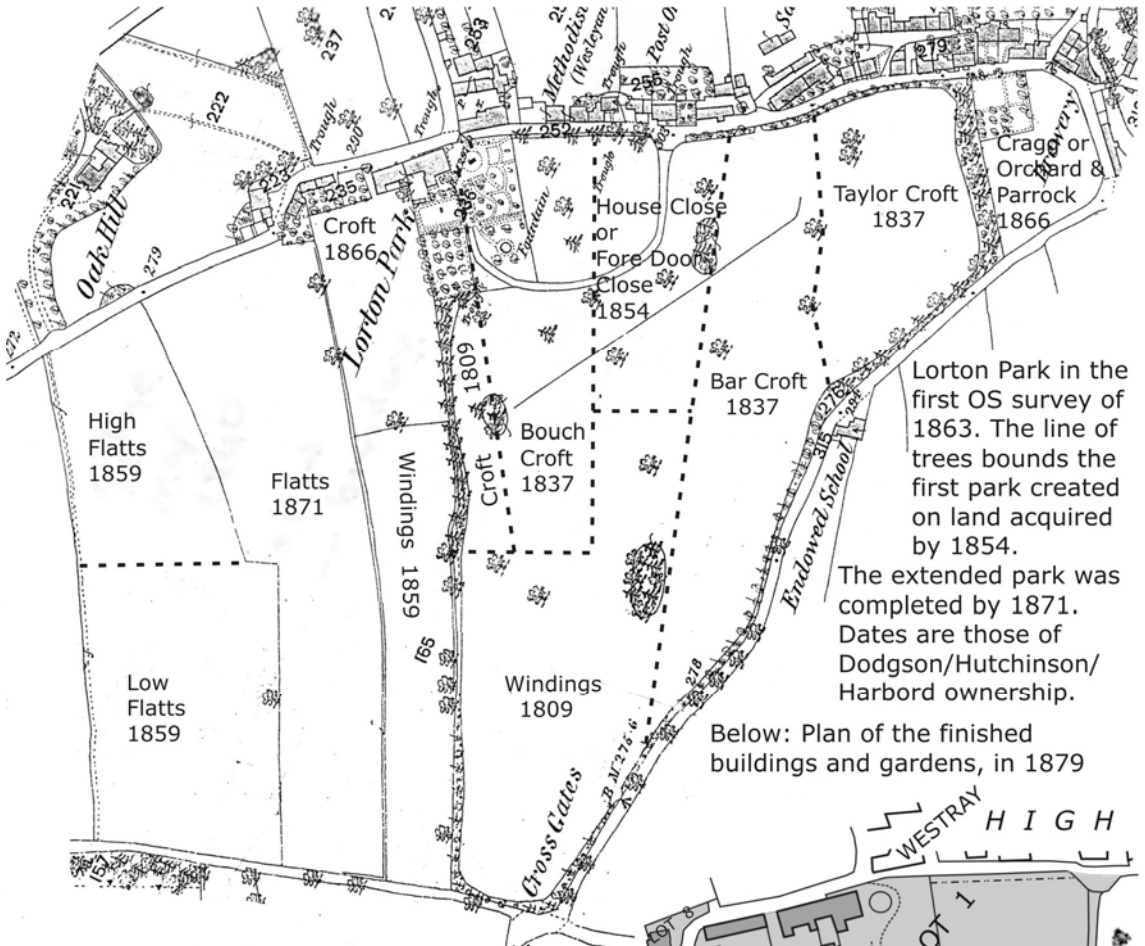
When Mary Hutchinson died in 1852 the eldest daughter, Margaret Alexander received the family home at Shatton, Bouch House in Embleton, and the property in Braithwaite and Thornthwaite. Eleanor Harbord received the property in Lorton, plus Wood Farm in Whinfell and an interest in Fellside Farm in Mosser, while Ann Bradley, the youngest, received the more distant property in Gilcrux. It seems that the two older sisters were more closely connected with the home territory of the Dodgson family, and both the Alexanders and the Harbords maintained and developed those connections with Embleton and Lorton through the nineteenth century.

Additionally, the daughters each received a capital sum of over £6,000 plus a share of Mary Hutchinson's investments in railways, turnpikes and banks. Eleanor's share of the money and investments, £6,800, was left to trustees appointed under the will. They were to manage the capital sum and to pay the annual income to Eleanor, and to allow Eleanor, and not her husband, to bequeath the capital sum under her own will. The inheritance, including the Lorton property, was clearly to be the property of Eleanor Harbord personally, and was intended to later benefit Mary Hutchinson's grandchildren. There is of course no suggestion that the fortune needed protection from Richard Harbord, 1803-1878, who was wealthy in his own right, from his business as a warehouse owner in Liverpool. But fortunes in trade could be lost more quickly than they were made, and it seems clear that the principle of a married woman's ownership of her property was important to Mary Hutchinson, who appears to have had a Shatton-based

matriarchal position in the Hutchinson/Alexander/Harbord families.

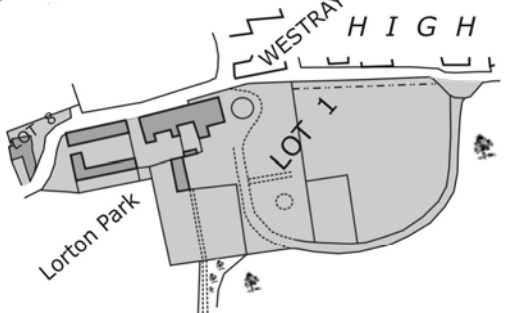
Mary Hutchinson was clearly fond of her young grandson, William Lancaster Alexander, 1821-1910, to whom she left her gold watch and chain. He was living with his parents in West Derby when the will was written in 1850, but his grandmother made him one of the four trustees of the trust fund for his aunt Eleanor, together with three of her friends and contemporaries, John Richardson the brewer of Cockermonth, Isaac Dodgson of Mockerkin and Jonathan Wilson of Ivy Cottage, Low Lorton – next to the bridge that existed in Low Lorton until recently. William, aged 29, was clearly appointed because of his ability to administer the trust, whereas the other three died soon after Mary Hutchinson. In 1857, in Embleton, William Lancaster Alexander married Frances Armitstead 1815-1890, the much-younger sister of William Armitstead, the curate of Lorton from 1826 to 1864. Frances, William and Mary Armitstead, who all came to live locally, were son and daughters of Richard Armitstead, the Rector of Moresby and incumbent of St James, Whitehaven. In the 1861 census the three Armitstead siblings and William Lancaster Alexander were at Oakhill, the gentleman's residence they built in the 1850s adjacent to Lorton Park. Oakhill itself was owned by the Armitsteads but in 1870, after their deaths, it became the property and home of WL Alexander, generally acknowledged as Squire of Lorton.

Another trustee appointed by Mary Hutchinson, Jonathan Wilson, was born in Bouch House, Embleton in 1780 and died in 1853, a year after Mary Hutchinson. His son, John Wilson, 1823/4-1917 was born at Rogerscale in Whinfell, and succeeded his father as a trustee; so that from 1853 William Lancaster Alexander and John Wilson became the active trustees of aunt Eleanor Harbord's inheritance. Two years later, John Wilson joined the Hutchinson/Alexander family by marrying William Lancaster Alexander's younger sister, Mary, granddaughter of Mary Hutchinson. They built and lived in another gentleman's house, Fairfield in Lorton. Therefore it was the Alexander/Wilson family who became the resident gentry in Lorton and Shatton, while the Harbords remained a Liverpool family with a country

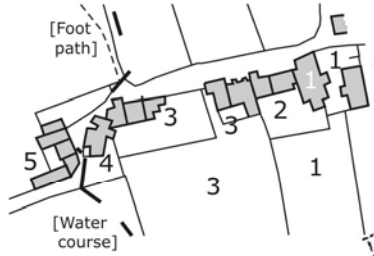


Lorton Park in the first OS survey of 1863. The line of trees bounds the first park created on land acquired by 1854. The extended park was completed by 1871. Dates are those of Dodgson/Hutchinson/Harbord ownership.

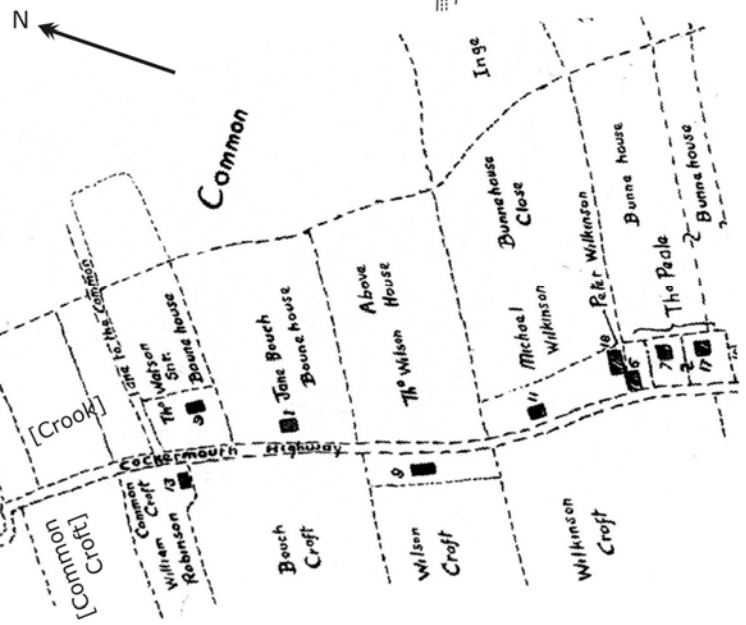
Below: Plan of the finished buildings and gardens, in 1879



Below: Map of High Lorton 1826  
 1. Rev. Lancaster Dodgson 1809  
 2. Graft. Dodgson 1827  
 3. Bell. Harbord 1866  
 4. Hinde. Harbord 1857  
 5. Fisher. Harbord 1865  
 CRO/C/DBen282 (Traced)  
 Schedule: D/Lec 78



Right: Part of reconstruction of High Lorton in 1649, by Ron George. Lorton Park main house is roughly in the position of house 13



residence in Lorton. This overall grouping, heavily linked through Whitehaven to Liverpool, provided the social leadership, while Lorton Hall housed the last generation of Lucocks, the great-grandchildren of Joshua Lucock of Cockermouth.

### **The Harbords and Lorton Park**

Richard Harbord was the son of William Harbord, 1779-1873, a customs officer. He was successful enough to give evidence to Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1848 on the Liverpool dock bills, in which he described his business: -

*I am the owner of warehouses at Liverpool, and have been engaged in business there twenty years. The warehouse property with which I am connected as owner or lessee is of the value of 230,000£., as near as I can calculate; that represents a rental of about 14,000£. a year, exclusive of land-tax; the parochial rates for that property exceeded 3000£. during the last year ...<sup>6</sup>*

Although the children were born in Embleton, the Hutchinsons clearly became a Liverpool family, until Mary Hutchinson returned at some time after the death of Joseph in 1825. Six months after her father's death, Eleanor married Richard Harbord and they and their family took over the house at 98 Upper Parliament Street, becoming well established in Liverpool. The interest of the Harbords in the property in Lorton, which Eleanor inhabited in 1852, was in having a country residence near to family and friends in Lorton, Embleton and Whitehaven. Presumably they would have travelled by ship, at least before the railways provided a convenient alternative.

In Mary Hutchinson's will of 1850, the house at Lorton was described as 'my newly erected dwelling house with the garden, outhouses and buildings ... in the occupation of [blank] James and others ...' which might indicate further work by Mary Hutchinson, though not her occupation. As inherited in 1852, the Lorton Park property, the house and the gardens, was

self contained and could have been made useable by the Harbords, but it seems that they did not use it until 1859 at the earliest, from the absence of references in Eleanor's diaries, restarted in 1857 after a sixteen year break. The Shatton property was the family focus. The Harbord family, starting with son Richard in 1826, was complete by 1839 and so by the early 1860's, when the house and park came into regular family use, Eleanor and Richard were over sixty and grandparents. Home for the family in 1861, including the children who remained unmarried, was still 98 Upper Parliament Street in Toxteth, the likely location for the family portrait painted around 1840. It would have been the grandchildren who would have childhood memories of summer visits to Lorton Park. In September 1859, Alfred Jolley, Eleanor's grandchild was born in Lorton. Eleanor's youngest daughter, Henrietta, was married in St Cuthberts, Lorton, to Francis Maples on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1862, but no Harbords were baptised there, nor buried there until the twentieth century.

During the 1850s, the Harbords acquired more of the park land and had the land, garden and presumably the house altered to suit their needs. This work was complete by the time of the visit of Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, in 1863. Prince Arthur caught a fish in the pond and planted a tree which still has a plaque commemorating the event.<sup>7</sup> But the boundaries of the park then were not those of today; it was created in two distinct phases. The park perimeter of the Harbord plan of the 1850s is clear from the tree plantings on old hedge lines which survive from that time. The phases of development are shown on page 13. John Dodgson, living there in 1831, had the garden to the west of the house. Mary Hutchinson, not resident here, had made purchases of Midtown Farm land that allowed the garden to the south of the house to be developed, but had left just one close to be acquired to make the first Harbord park entire.

Eleanor's trust fund capital could not be used to purchase property because it was tied up. But her trustee, William Lancaster Alexander, and Richard Harbord hatched a cunning plan by which, in 1853, the trustees provided the full sum of

<sup>6</sup> Webster, Thomas. *Minutes of evidence on the Birkenhead and Liverpool dock bills, 1848.* Chapman & Hall London 1850 p.29

<sup>7</sup> Diary of Eleanor Harbord, from Mrs Lynda Daddona

£6,372, that is £6,800 less legacy duty, to Richard Harbord as a mortgage on his recently purchased warehouse property in Liverpool, worth over £10,000. The interest he paid would provide the trustees with the income to pay Eleanor. The trust capital now belonged to Richard and could now buy property in Lorton. In 1854 Richard Harbord made the missing close his first purchase, but had to pay the huge sum of £450 for two acres. This was House Close but now called Fore Door Close, purchased from the Huntington/Haytons of Rose Cottage across the road, these being residual components of the Thomas Wilson tenement of 1649. A further £20 was paid to have the hedges and stones removed. Now Richard Harbord could create his main entrance at a respectable distance from the house and might manage a princely visitor's approach along a fine carriage drive. Opposite the entrance, Huntington House, a smart house originally built by Rev. William Sewell, was renamed Park View.

The first phase of the park was therefore complete in 1854, but Richard Harbord continued to make further purchases to extend the boundaries up to 1871, by when the whole of the land south of the footpath had been acquired. In 1857, £100 was paid to the Hindes, or their successors, for the rights to the small piece of land, at Conkey's Corner where stood a very poor cottage, now replaced by a Victorian smokehouse. John Bolton noted that this old house was where the exciseman lived; 'when he first came this was the only empty house and he had to take it'. In 1859, an opportunity rose to purchase High and Low Flatts, for a slightly more reasonable £610, from the Hayton/Whiteside heirs. In the same year the last Windings close was purchased, so that the Harbords now owned over half the land between the existing park boundary and the footpath to the north, which would provide the practical northern limit of private land.

In 1866, by which time the park was in regular use, two key purchases were made which would allow the park boundaries to be pushed out to the present wall to the south, and the stables to be

built. In the early nineteenth century, William Nicholson, gentleman and provider of mortgages, of the house now called Graceholm, had established a small formal orchard in the close opposite called Cragg. The continued ownership of that land by the Nicholson heirs caused the Harbords to plant the belt of trees on their boundary. In 1866 the trustees of the deceased son, Isaac Nicholson of Keswick, sold the property at Lorton, including Cragg which went to Richard Harbord for another large sum of £259. The belt of trees still remains.

Also in 1866, the Harbords were able to purchase, for £500, the houses and croft that contained Park Cottage and the old buildings that were converted into the stables. In 1811, according to John Bolton: -

*Still lower down there was a kind of fold, and in this block of old buildings Robin Hartley had his house and weaving shop. ... The next house to him was occupied by was occupied by John Bell a waller and Betty his wife. She was a youngish woman and taught a girls school or dames school. She was Anthony Garnett's daughter.*

This property was built on another piece of land called Common Croft in 1649, which can be traced in the admittances of the manor from 1771 as two acres at a rent of 6d. Dorothy Fisher married Peter Garnett of Loweswater in 1731, and they came to own Midtown Farm. Dorothy Garnett inherited the Common Croft property as a 'toft and

**The Harbord family completed, probably at 98 Upper Parliament Street in 1840. On the right is most likely Mary Hutchinson**



croft' in 1771 and by 1804 it was worked by her son, Anthony Garnett, with Midtown. But whereas Midtown went to John Garnett, whose fall from grace was discussed earlier, this separate small piece of customary property went to John's sister, Elizabeth, presumably as her child portion. Elizabeth married John Bell in 1803, and they lived in the cottages, as described by Bolton, which were converted after 1866 into the stables. The Bells let the other premises, later Park Cottage, as a weaver's shop to Robin Hartley. But, as with the other cottages to the south, these cottages had earlier been the subject of a mortgage from William Nicholson, and the Bells had no equity left in the property, only a lifetime usage which expired with Elizabeth in 1861. In 1865 Richard Harbord had purchased the cottages at Conkey's Corner for £165 from the Fisher heirs, and so he was able to provide both those cottages and Park Cottage with matching Victorian facades as worker's cottages. He was also able to divert the watercourse at this point to provide a supply for the stables and an ornamental stream through the trees that had previously been the park boundary.

It was in 1871 that Richard Harbord was able to push the northern boundary of the park to the footpath by purchasing, for £420, the field Flatts, which had been in the hands of George Lucock Bragg of Lorton Hall, then with his trustee, Edward Waugh. The title to Flatts was tangled with the Chancery cases that complicated the Bragg's affairs, and this sale was part of a general auction of Lorton Hall property in 1870, by order of the Court of Chancery.

By 1871 the ownership of the wider park was complete. Richard Harbord made other purchases in Lorton outside the boundary of the park, notably White Ash Farm and the Crook closes, presumably intending, in part, to control the environs of the house. The farming of Lorton Park was let with White Ash. In addition, Darling Howe farm, a new farm built on commons allotments, was purchased as an investment.

#### **Lorton Park after Eleanor Harbord 1875-1925**

Eleanor Harbord died in 1875, three years before her husband. The Lorton property,

with all the additions and improvements, was held in her name, but in her will her husband was given the use of the freehold and customary Lorton property during his lifetime, unless he remarried. Eleanor Harbord followed the example of her mother, Mary Hutchinson, in establishing a trust fund providing an income for her children and grandchildren, ensuring that her married daughters benefitted in their own rights. The will rolled up her mother's trust fund, her own property and her other assets into a new trust fund, managed by her own trustees, except for £1000 that Eleanor left to her son Richard and a token £50 to each trustee.

The trustees named in Eleanor's will, for the Hutchinson/Harbord trust, were Robert Dudley Pearson, accountant of Liverpool, her nephew John Dickinson Esq. of Lamplugh, Henry Dodgson of Cockermouth, Doctor of Medicine, and of course her nephew William Lancaster Alexander Esq., of Lorton, who managed the trust fund for the rest of his life. The trustees were required to sell the property, principally Wood Farm in Whinfell and Fellside in Mosser, and to invest the proceeds to provide an annual income for the beneficiaries of the trust. The Lorton property was to be sold after the death of her husband, who died in 1878. Lorton Park was therefore not, for Eleanor, a family property to be handed down, but an asset to be realised to benefit all her family. Wood Farm and Fellside were easily sold in 1876 to Thomas Dixon of Rheda for just over £12,000, but Lorton Park and the Lorton estate had been overvalued in the books of the trustees, and failed to meet the reserve when offered at auction in 1879. Consequently the Lorton estates continued to be let by the trustees to provide income.

One of Eleanor's daughters, Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord, 1830-1924, was keen to live at Lorton Park, but with ten of twelve children surviving, each had only one tenth share of the trust's income. Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord was in no position to buy out the interest of her siblings. Following the failure of the attempted sale of Lorton Park in 1879, and the tenancy of Walter Lamplugh Brooksbank, the trustees agreed to rent the house and gardens, as Lorton House, to Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord, which she took for three years from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1881 at a rent of £80



pa. But this rent was almost exactly the equal to the amount of her income from her mother's trust. A partial solution was provided by the second unmarried sister, Elizabeth Harbord, who moved into Lorton House bringing a further tenth share of the trust income, though the date of this is not available. But the means to provide a lasting resolution was provided by a third sister, Margaret Alexander Harbord, 1832-1900. In 1880, at age 47, she married the Rev. William Sampson-Davis, 1829-1910, who was the Curate of Embleton and Lorton from 1875, and later the vicar of both. It appears that the three unmarried sisters, despite the principles and the best endeavours of their mother and grandmother, did not have the resources to acquire the property without at least one marriage.

After Richard Harbord's death, in 1878, the Harbord siblings had another source of income through his trust fund, operated by three trustees including Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord. The main asset was the dockside land and buildings on which the Hutchinson/Harbord trust fund had a charge of £6,372. The trustees of Richard Harbord's trust agreed to sell the dock property to Liverpool Corporation for £40,000, though it took until 1884 to complete. The Liverpool property had sold for four times what Richard had paid. This provided some £33,000 to Richard Harbord's trust fund, and an income to the siblings somewhat in excess of that from the Hutchinson/Harbord trust. In 1885 the Lorton property was again offered at auction, and this time the fall in value of the property was accepted. Lorton House, stables and park was sold to William Sampson-Davis and Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord for £1,210, and White Ash Farm for £3,810. Other sales, including Darling How to AJS Dixon of Rheda, took the total to £9,599 net, £3,144 below the 1879 valuation. By 1885 all the property had been sold and the value of the trust fund stood at just over £20,000. The trustees had complied with the terms of the will, but Lorton Park had stayed in the family. The house and park had fetched far less than the amount that Richard Harbord had spent just on the additions, but the sisters were happy. It is probably the three sisters, Eleanor, Elizabeth, and Margaret, who appear in the photograph of Lorton

Park on our cover just before 1900, though Margaret lived with her husband in Embleton. The property stayed in the ownership of the Harbord/Sampson-Davis family until Eleanor Hutchinson Harbord died in 1924, and the estate was sold out of the family in 1925.

### **The Hutchinson/Harbord Trust**

Some mention must be made of the trust itself and its management, which seems to have been a major task for William Lancaster Alexander, assisted by Waugh and Musgrave. On Eleanor's death, her mother's trust of £6,372 received fixed interest as a mortgage on Richard Harbord's warehouses, and was rolled up with her own. Eleanor's trust included all her assets except the £1,000 for son Richard, and the income from those assets was to be distributed among her ten surviving children, and to their children after their deaths. Out of the 44 grandchildren born there were 35 living after her death and therefore 45 potential recipients of payments twice a year.

Next there was the problem of keeping track of the beneficiaries, and of the contingent beneficiaries, because six of Eleanor's children, from a mercantile family, were highly mobile and spread throughout the colonies, including Jamaica and Australia. In some cases they married twice. Knowing the existence and location of each child or grandchild was essential, because each time the income had to be distributed the trustees had to value the assets and divide the notional capital and actual income among the current beneficiaries of the trust. In the early days the income was around £80 per annum per share. But when one of the ten died, their share had to be divided among their surviving children, and if there were no grandchildren, or all the known grandchildren had died, that share had to be redistributed among the surviving children, or the grandchildren left by those who had died. By 1900 the trust fund had undergone its fifteenth complex re-division since 1885.

It was impossible always to have the necessary current information, and William Lancaster Alexander had to deal with increasingly remote relatives from distant lands, some of whom had not prospered. His work was meticulous and

fair, from the records he left, but this did not save him from family disputes, and three times, in 1886, in 1900 and in 1905, family cases went to the Court of Chancery. When he died in 1910 he had earned the gold watch he had received from this grandmother and the £50 from his aunt many times over. The trust was finally wound up by Edward Musgrave, solicitor, in March 1933, with the distribution of the sum of £1093.

### Conclusion

The subject of this article has been the creation and use of Lorton Park in the nineteenth century, and those who owned it, but history is by definition primarily about people, and the opportunity has been taken to examine the changing relationship between people and the ownership and use of land in High Lorton.

The Georgian house at Lorton Park was built by John Dodgson between 1828 and 1831 as his main residence, after inheriting the property from his brother, Lancaster. From 1831, on inheriting from her brother John, to her death in 1852, Mary Hutchinson of Shatton owned the property and rented it to tenants, taking the opportunity to purchase adjacent land and possibly developing the house and garden further. Eleanor Harbord, on inheriting the property from her mother did not make personal use of it until the early 1860s, by which time the first phase of the park was complete and the house and gardens had been improved to provide a summer residence suitable for the Harbord family. The stables were added after 1866 and the park boundaries extended to their final limits by 1871. After her death in 1875, and her husband in 1878, and attempts to sell the property by her trustees in 1879, it was bought by her daughters in 1885, who owned it until 1924.

The various sketches of the descent of some component parts of the park illustrate the changes from the mid seventeenth century to the mid nineteenth. The Parliamentary survey of 1649 was made at a time when High Lorton was still a row of farmsteads, many held by yeoman families, and where the land that became the park was still the arable land that fed the village and its draught animals. Through the later

eighteenth century and during the Napoleonic wars, with its high grain prices, the price of arable land was high and became reflected in high values of equity held by yeoman farmers in Lorton, as elsewhere. Many yeomen realised this value as cash through mortgages, to pay child portions to their siblings, to spend on improving the land through liming and drainage, or even to buy land or second farms from those who were selling. John Bolton's survey of 1811 predates the fall in prices of 1816, and the shake out of small owners from farming when small farms became unviable and/or divided among co-heirs, or when mortgage terms could not be met. This long process allowed those whose assets were in cash or mortgages, such as William and Isaac Nicholson, to gain property at the lower prices. It allowed incoming landowners, such as the Alexanders and Harbords, to create new and larger estates. However, in Lorton, Richard Harbord tended to pay high arable-land prices for particular closes, while farming in Lorton was moving to a pastoral future and while the village centre became populated with tradesmen and artisans, which is why the sale expectations of 1879 were not met.

Lastly, the contrast between the Harbords and the previous owners of the land purchased, illustrates the change in social structure in Lorton, from that fairly homogeneous self-regulating farming community of around 1800, to the more varied economic and social structure of the Victorian period. Mary Hutchinson seems to have been concerned mainly with family and property, but the Alexanders, Armitsteads, Wilsons and Harbords, of Oakhill, Fairfield and Lorton Park, emerged to form a Victorian middle class with a keen sense of social responsibility and leadership, based on the Victorian twin values of improvement and religion. In the second half of the nineteenth century it was William Lancaster Alexander, a mix of the old Cumberland Dodgsons and the mercantile spirit of Liverpool, who provided the function of Squire of Lorton, and who chaired the meeting in 1891 at which John Bolton, ex Lorton schoolmaster, gave his lecture on the olden days.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See *Mr William Lancaster Alexander, 1820-1910* by Mick and Jean Jane, Cockemouth, for more on his local life and work.

### Acknowledgement and references

I would like to thank Mrs Lynda Daddona, great-great-granddaughter of Eleanor Harbord, for information and much assistance in writing this article, and other Harbord descendants who have left material in our archive.

The major source of material on the Dodgson, Hutchinson/Harbord family in Cumberland is contained in the archive of solicitors Waugh and Musgrave of Cockermouth. CRO/W/DWM445-453, Harbord family.

Quotes from Ron George and his 1649 reconstruction from *A Cumberland Valley, the Parish of Lorton*. 2003 Available from the Society Material by John Bolton from his lecture on *Lorton as it was eighty years ago*, given 1891. Copy in the Society archive and also published in *Cockermouth Miscellany*

Other Lorton/Embleton family information from the parish registers and memorial inscriptions of St Cuthberts, Lorton and Embleton, and census enumerator's books.

### ***On the inadequacy of female servants, 1850***

*by Derek Denman*

In the mid nineteenth century the key word for the mid-Victorian farmer/landowner was improvement. Improvement in his methods of farming resulted not only in higher productivity and profit, but also in pride in his own improvement, to be shared with and noted by others, in his quest for recognition as part of the emerging Victorian middle class. This was the age of the Prize Essay Competition, and on October 1850 William Dickinson, of North Mosses, Cockermouth, had the honour to be awarded the Premium offered by Rev. Canon Parkinson, the Principal of St. Bees College. His winning *Essay on the Agriculture of West Cumberland* was duly published as a booklet, and the copy purchased by W Gilbanks, of Lamplugh, has survived to be picked up recently in a second-hand bookshop.

The essay was almost wholly positive about the improvements and current good practice in farming in West Cumberland, a distinct contrast with the wartime surveys for the Board of Agriculture in the 1790s. But in just one place, William Dickinson indulged in a rant. The Victorian farmer was also responsible for the improvement of his employees, in both the performance of their duties and their moral conduct, or standards of

behaviour. But what chance did he stand with such poor material and only a six month hiring? He complained: -

*Proverbial as farmers have long been rather wrongfully held for complaining, there is no subject on which they can more justly complain than on the wasteful carelessness and incapacity of their female servants. With some few creditable exceptions, and others approaching in various degrees to servant-like qualifications, a very large majority of them, though not always indolent, are thoughtless to excess both of their employer's interest and their own credit; their chief object appearing to be to obtain a half-year's home and the means of purchasing gaudy and unserviceable dresses. Trained as they mostly are in the cottages of colliers and other labourers in towns and villages, too often without any kind of education tending to fit them for the servitude they are necessitated to undertake; and probably without a single word of caution from their ignorant parents as to their future moral conduct, or a word of instruction as to the duties of servants, they are decked out and sent to the hiring markets to make the best bargain they can. They enter upon their servitude lamentably ignorant of most of what they ought to know; and it is no wonder that they give rise to almost universal complaining of the untidy and inadequate performance of their duties. It is very evident that this grievance must continue to be felt in its full force, until some system can be adopted of providing useful instruction for the classes from which servants spring, beyond the courses now styled education; which barely consists of reading and writing, without a word on the duties which are to constitute the chief employment of their lives.*

William Dickinson included this partly to define himself as something better than 'the classes from which servants spring', and to impress Rev. Canon Parkinson, but it also gives an insight of into the breakdown of farm service, as unrealistic expectations were placed on the colliers' daughters. Farm service had worked well in homogeneous farming communities, where

young people of both sexes, from the age of around 14 up to 25, moved to other farms for employment and experience before becoming farmers or labourers, or wives of the same, or migrating. However, this process was also that through which marriages were made and couples were fitted to livings and houses. Many did not marry, Cumberland having the highest numbers of never-married women, but also the highest illegitimacy rates, and those who could not marry were accommodated within the farming community.

The values of William Dickinson allowed only the service element of farm service, especially for outsiders such as the colliers' daughters. Disadvantaged by the lack of a farm childhood or farming-family connections, they had only their labour and their ability to make a good marriage; a risky process involving the essential 'gaudy and unserviceable dresses'. Otherwise, without family or property, or some other claim to the produce of the land, the unsuccessful female servant could look forward to a life of service or labour, and the care of the workhouse or out-relief when no longer able to work.

### ***Letter to the Journal***

*from Janet Jacobson*

I very much enjoyed the article on Scale Hill in the July issue of The Journal, partly because members of my ancestral Head family lived there for around fifty years.

Skelton Head (1761-1819) and his wife Catherine lived at Scale Hill from when they were first married in 1786 until at least 1792. We know this from the baptismal register because the Vicar has included the words "of Scale Hill" in the register with the entries for their daughters Judith born 1787 and Jane born 1792. We do not know when they moved the family to Miller place but the first baptism to

mention Miller place was that of Mary in 1801. Of course as a young married couple they may not have lived in the main house but in one of the small cottages nearby.

Sarah Head was the second child of Skelton and Catherine Head and she married Thomas Dobinson of Scale Hill at Lorton on 11 June 1810. They were living at Millerplace when their first child was baptised but by 1813 when their second child, Anne, was born they were at Scale Hill and Thomas is described as Innkeeper in the register.

Thomas must have farmed the land as well because he is described in the 1841 census as a farmer at Scale Hill. In the 1851 census Thomas was just described as an inn keeper and after his death in 1855 Sarah continued as inn keeper. In the 1861 census she is described as age 70, Inn keeper, occupier of 50 acres. It is likely that they always kept the inn and farmed

Thomas was the innkeeper at Scale Hill for at least forty two years until his death in 1855. Sarah lived there after his death as the Innkeeper until at least 1861 and probably for a few more years after 1861. So it is likely that in total they ran the inn for around fifty years .

By the time of Sarah's death in 1870 Scale Hill was a well established inn with accommodation for visitors and by the end of the century it was a well known hotel. I like to think that some of its popularity in the first half of the century was due to the hospitality provided by the Sarah and Thomas Dobinson and their children. who also helped to run the business

Sarah died 17 November 1870, aged 80, at Jenkin Hill, Loweswater, the home of her daughter Jane and her husband William Norman.

### ***The Journal***

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<b><i>L&amp;DFLHS – Programme for the remainder of 2010</i></b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
11 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Personal Names and Cumbrian History – Dr Angus Winchester
13 <sup>th</sup> May	Two Keswick Men of Science, Geologists Otley and Ward – Alan Smith
10 <sup>th</sup> June	AGM to be followed by a member's talk
8 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Whaling from Whitehaven – Dr Rob David
9 <sup>th</sup> Sep	An Introduction to Industrial Archaeology – Graham Brooks
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	The Railway History of Cumbria – Peter van Zeller
Talks are held at the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton s at 7.30pm. Visitors £2.50 with refreshments.	