

The Journal

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite Buttermere Embleton Loweswater Mockerkin Pardshaw Wythop

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Mireclose in Loweswater, from the South West, 1875

The Journal

We had a bumper issue in February and so by comparison this issue is a little slimmer, but I hope to have some more articles from members for February 2011.

Please note that more photographs by John MacFarlane of the June outing can be seen on our website, and that provides me a good opportunity to remind you that back issues of the Journal are on the website from Newsletter (as it was) No.36, at www.derwentfells.com/journal

Mireclose looks very impressive but out of place in its Gothic splendour on the front cover. It was built circa 1870 by the younger Marshalls, but failed to sell in 1875.

Derek Denman

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L&DFLHS 2011-12

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A Walk through Brackenthwaite in the 1950s

by Walter Head

Travelling along the B5292 road from Braithwaite to Lorton and past the top of Whinlatter Pass, the first properties on the

left were two semi-detached cottages owned by the Forestry Commission called SWINSIDE No 1, occupied by Mr Bernard Tyson, and SWINSIDE No 2, occupied by Mr Jim Mossop. Further on from these houses a narrow road went off to the left signposted Hopebeck (U2199). Taking this road and bearing left at the: 'Y' junction, (U2209) the first property encountered on the right, through the first fell gate, was HIGH SWINSIDE FARM, farmed by Mr Tom Alston. This was the location of the first Jennings Brewery. HIGH SWINSIDE COTTAGE was also here and occupied by Mr Kenneth Alston.

The next property on the left, after the second fell gate, was HOPE FARM farmed by the Armstrong family. Below this, at the 'T' junction (U2209/U2208) on the right hand side was HOPEBECK HOUSE, home of Leslie & Mabel Milburn (Leslie ran the village shop in High Lorton). On the left at the junction was HOPEBECK FARM, farmed by Mr Harry Tinnion, and then the Watson family. Part of this large house and a section of the adjoining bam were converted into HOPEBECK COTTAGE by Mr Haywood in the late 1950s. Turning left at the junction, the next property on the left was MILLBECK, farmed by Joe Downs. Further on, up a small lane on the left, was MILLER PLACE, the kennels of the Melbreak Foxhounds and occupied by the Huntsman Billy Irving who was preparing to retire. Living next door at MILLER PLACE COTTAGE was Whipper-In and second in command Harry Hardisty and family. Harry took over as Huntsman in 1951. Back at the end of the lane the road continued along until it met the B5289 at a 'T' junction.

Approximately half a mile along this road to the right, and on the right, was NEWHOUSE FARM farmed by Hilton Hope and family. Back at the junction the road to the left went towards Loweswater and after approximately half a mile the B5289 road turned towards Buttermere, but carrying straight on along the C2030 towards Loweswater the next property up a narrow road to the left, TURNER HOW, was on the right, the home of Mr & Mrs Catheral. This road continued past Turner How to join the B5289. Staying on the road to Loweswater the next property on the left was PALACE HOW, home of Leslie & Mary Cunningham and site of the village Post Office. On the opposite side of the road, up a farm track

on the right, was CORNHOW COTTAGE, occupied by Tim & Eddie Armstrong. At the end of the track was CORNHOW FARM, farmed by Joe & Doris Hope, and also CORNHOW FARM COTTAGE, occupied by John Hope.

Back on the road the next building on the left was a barn conversion used as an annex to Scale Hill Hotel. Past this on the right was SCALE HILL HOTEL, run by Mr Milburn, who also ran a Shell & BP petrol pump. At the bottom of the hill over the river Cocker was Loweswater. Returning to the junction of the C2030 and B5289, and taking the road to Buttermere, the next properties were up a farm track on the left. The first was LOW HOLLINS FARM, farmed by the Robinson family, and further up the track was HIGH HOLLINS, farmed by Mr & Mrs Storr. Back on the road, just past this lane and on the left was LOW HOUSE, home of Mr & Mrs NELSON. Then further along on the right down a farm road was PICKETT HOW, farmed by George & William Mackereth. Next, continuing on the road to Buttermere, on the right was BECK HOUSE, occupied by the Coulthard family. Further along the next property on the right was LANTHWAITE GATE FARM, farmed by Mr T Rawling. Rather further on, again on the right, was LANTHWAITE GREEN FARM, farmed by Mr & Mrs Jackson. The next property on the right was LANTHWAITE COTTAGE, home of Jack & Nora Studholme. Much further on the next property on the left was RANNERDALE COTTAGE, owned by Dr Mary A Deacon, but rented out at this time. Finally on the left was RANNERDALE FARM, farmed by Mr Porter, and here we end this walk.

My thanks go to Richard Armstrong for his help with this article.

Editor's note:-

The old township of Brackenthwaite disappeared in the late nineteenth century when the civil parishes were created, and so the name in the 1950s was a place-name. Walter has included some houses in the text which were not in Brackenthwaite Township. This is to fit with the other articles in the series. New House was always in Lorton, and High and Low Swinside were in Buttermere Township, and then Lorton civil parish. The more recent forestry cottages are in Lorton.



Keswick in 1794 – a bloody shambles

by Derek Denman



The Keswick of 1800 was very different from the Keswick of 1750, and so were the people and their interests. In 1794 the lords of the manor, the Greenwich Hospital, decided that it was time to pull down and rebuild the dilapidated shambles and shops that had stood to the north of the Moot Hall for a century.¹ Were the locals pleased, as they were when the good Lord Derwentwater bestowed upon them the Moot Hall, shops and shambles just before 1700? Not at all! They liked the pulling down part, but wanted the shambles built somewhere else, anywhere else other than in the middle of Main Street.

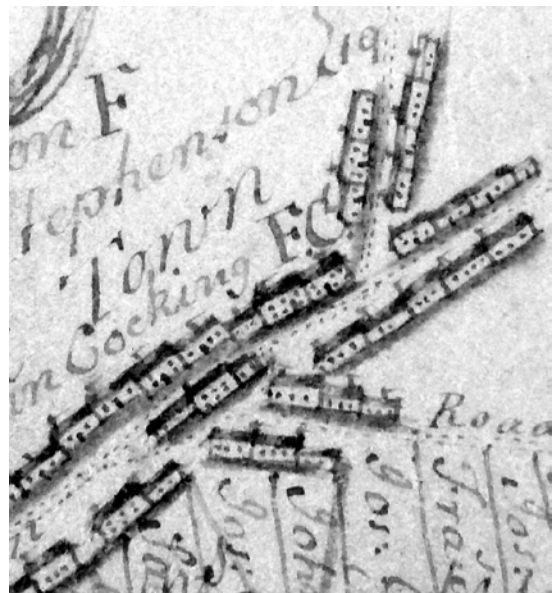
The shambles and the six shops belonging to the Greenwich Hospital were between the old Moot Hall and the Saturday market, in the place of the steps in the photograph of the new Moot Hall above, which was re-built by the Greenwich Hospital in 1813. The old Moot Hall occupied mostly the same space as the new, but was less grand.

¹ Most of the information is contained the records of the Admiralty within The National Archives at Kew. ADM65/79 is the main source where stated otherwise.



James, last Earl of Derwentwater

The Royal Greenwich Hospital for Seamen received the estates of Lord Derwentwater from the crown in 1735, after the Earl was executed in 1716, for his part in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. In 1736 the Hospital had its new estates surveyed by Isaac Thompson, who provided the representation, below, of the old Moot Hall and the shops, which were open on the ground floor but with rooms above.² The annotations are later identifications of the owners of the plots.



² TNA/MPII 1-40

The purpose of the estates was, of course, to provide an income to support the navy pensioners and the disabled seamen in the care of the Hospital. So the Hospital was not permitted to deviate from a policy of optimising its income, to support those who had defended the country and helped to expand the empire. In 1747 they sold the mature timber on the estate, after spending eight years trying to obtain a fair price for it. But just as the Derwentwater woods were being felled, Derwentwater was 'discovered' as an English Arcadia and the Greenwich Hospital became the grasping villains who sold the oaks of Crow Park.

The Hospital was therefore used to criticism when it planned to rebuild the shops and shambles, which it thought would be beneficial to the townspeople. But Keswick had changed by 1794 from a run-down mining town and small market town, with a population of 500 or fewer, to one of the most fashionable resorts in England with over 1000 inhabitants. During the French wars, from 1793, those who would once have made the Grand Tour now had to make do with Keswick and the English Lakes. The picturesque tourists, persons of 'rank and fashion' would all spend some nights in Keswick, with their servants and equipage, and would at least do the circuit of the lake.

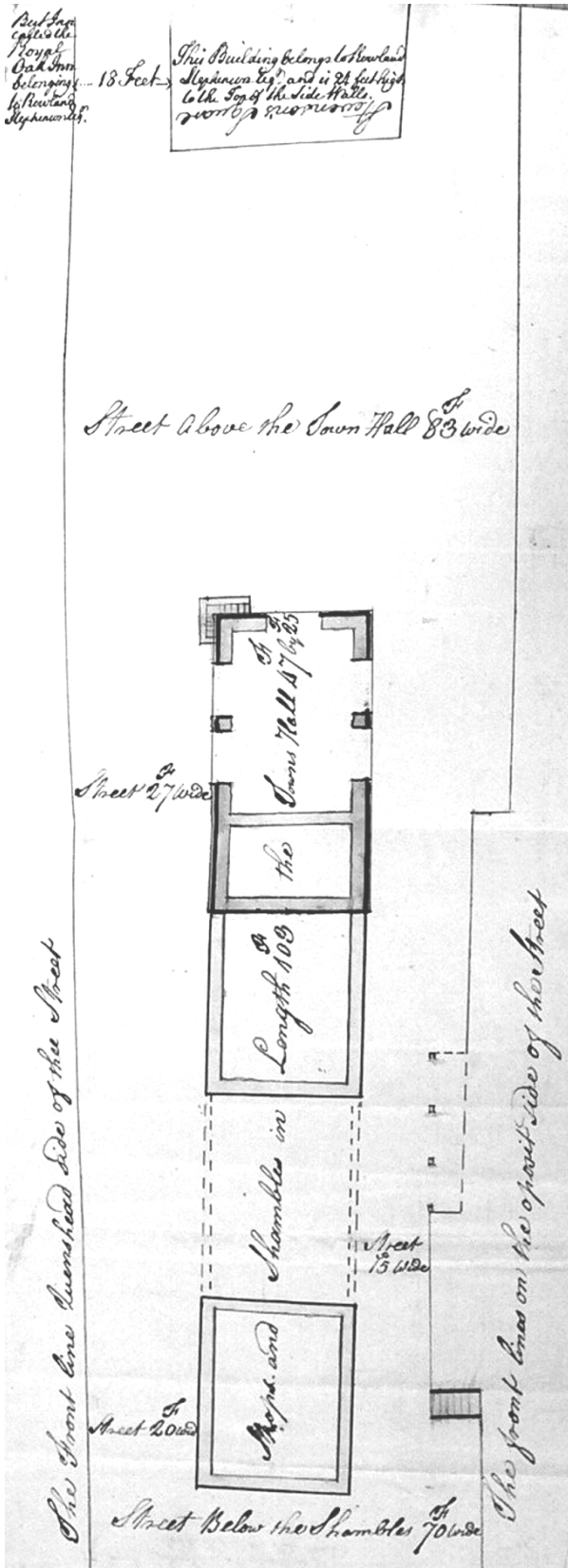
In November 1794 a petition arrived at the Admiralty Office requesting the Hospital to build its shambles and shops somewhere else. The leading signature was that of Lord William Gordon, who owned the Water End estate, occupying the eastern shore. The signatures of about forty of the most prominent residents of Keswick followed, including Joseph Pocklington, who still had his island, Rowland Stevenson, who owed the prestigious Royal Oak and Low Door Hotels and had been MP for Carlisle, and of course Peter Crosthwaite of the museum.

The first complaint was that the 'main street is Divided by these Erections into two very narrow ones'. The division from the Queens Hotel was only twenty feet, and George Wood, who owned the Hotel, was of course a signatory. The next complaint was that the buildings were to be one storey higher, and the third complaint, pinned on as an afterthought,

was that the adjacent market was too small and needed the space. The trade and population was claimed to have grown threefold in the last 35 years. This made the market place 'twenty yards square quite inadequate, being so thronged weekly, as greatly to incommode the Inhabitants, the country Market People, & the great concourse of Gentry who visit the Lakes'.

Just in case the message had not been understood, William Banks, a market-looker for thirty years, enclosed a separate letter about the state of the market and the options for another site for the shambles. There were '... now upwards of twenty cartloads of produce, as much corn, butter, chees, pigs, potts, meal, bread stands. Many other stands so that the sd. Market is a confused bustle nearly all day ...'. This could be resolved 'By removing those old butchers shambles to Another place & moving some part of the sd. Thong to this place, wch. place is a very improper spot for the shambles being in the middle of the Street where often in the market day morning lays sometimes forty or more dead Calves Killed scarce possible for people to pass along; Besides the sd. Kenels [channels] & street running Blood to the River almost half a mile; wch. must be very Injurious to the health of the Inhabitants in that part of Town'. Perhaps William Banks earned a complimentary ale from George Wood, whose Queen's Hotel had, with the Royal Oak, become patronised by the political class, and gentleman of the most refined sensibility. Piles of dead animals and blood running outside the front door did not assist in tuning the sensibilities and recalling to mind the associations which were necessary for a correct and picturesque appreciation of Derwentwater.

The bureaucracy of the Admiralty could not ignore such a petition, and so the top-level General Court of the Hospital, at the Admiralty, asked the Board of Directors of the Hospital to investigate and report, who in turn asked the Receivers at Gateshead, who instructed their bailiff in Keswick, John Scott. The Receivers wrote a full report for the Hospital Secretary. They noted that George Wood was the chief promoter of removing the shops and shambles, that there was no obstruction of the street and that their bailiff, John Scott, 'cannot recollect such a thing, or that there ever



was a want of Room in the Market Place of Keswick'. They urged the Directors to retain the 'Valuable Scite', but agreed that the shops with rooms above, next to the Moot Hall, would be no higher than eighteen feet at the top of the side walls, and the shambles adjacent no more than eleven feet. The Hospital would lose £6 per annum in rent by this reduction but the cost of the work would be reduced to £353 9s 10d. They attached an extract of the manor court record of 14 October 1700, to show that 'the ideas of the Inhabitants were different then from what they appear to be at present'. In 1700, gratitude was the correct response to Lord Derwentwater's recent building of a Moot Hall, shops and shambles, and his paving the road. Each property owner would level the ground outside his property and would keep the kennels [channels] and passage clear.

A final decision had to await the meeting of the General Court on 23 June 1795, when the Receivers' report, as recommended by the Directors, could be considered. The widths of streets, heights of the walls, revised budget and the response to the complaints about space and inconvenience were duly considered by three Lords of the Admiralty with two Secretaries, two Flag Officers, four Commissioners of the Navy and seven Directors of the Hospital, chaired by Earl Spencer.³ For a while they had a little time off from fighting the French and decided that Keswick would have new shops and shambles, and they were built as on the plan.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, with prices and rents rising, the Hospital started to improve its estates by investing more of its income back into the North of England. It also regarded the tourism business of Keswick as a benefit to its revenues, and started to be rather more liberal towards the inhabitants. The visitation of 1805 noted that the Moot Hall was very much out of repair and that the clock had failed and needed replacing.⁴ In 1813 the present Moot Hall was built, as the new manor court house for the Hospital, but retaining the adjacent shops and shambles.

³ TNA/ADM67/13

⁴ TNA/ADM80/195, pp.18&20

Presumably the upper floor of the shops connected with the Moot Hall through the door now reached by steps. The tower of the Moot Hall was needed to house the new bell, paid for by the inhabitants of Keswick. The Moot Hall was noted in a visitation in 1815 simply as 'a plain substantial building with a tower and clock'.⁵

During the recession of 1816 the Hospital was severely criticised in Parliament for excessive expenditure. In 1817 the independent surveyors John Claridge & John Bower were asked to survey the whole estate and its management. The Moot Hall now appeared to have been an extravagance, when they reported that 'we are of the opinion that a building upon a much less scale, and at less expence, might have answered every requisite purpose, and if it had been made of a lighter construction, it might have been equally useful as well as ornamental to the town'.⁶

It was too late to reverse a decision recently taken to remove the



The Town Hall, by William Green

shops and shambles that had been built only in 1795. Claridge and Bower noted in 1817 that these 'old buildings', producing £24 rent, were to be 'forthwith taken entirely away; we consider their removal will give a greater space to the Market, and will be an act of liberality in the Hospital, to forego the loss of present income.'⁷ The butchers' shambles was moved into one of the old courts, as shown in the extract of the first Ordnance Survey, made in 1862. The unpleasantness had been removed behind the scenes.

In the new Moot Hall, William Green of Ambleside was permitted to sell his prints of scenes in the English Lakes, and after his death, in 1823, his widow continued the sales at a rent of £5 per annum. His drawing of the new Moot Hall, above, shows how it was not just the shambles that moved to the courts in the old burgage plots, but that was also where the growing population lived. His drawing is taken from one of those courts, through a seventeenth century Main Street property, because the shops and shambles would be in the way of the view in the first photograph. His drawing shows the converted or replaced farm buildings or workshops which flanked his viewpoint, with Jonathan Otley's steps by the pump. The Main Street continued to grow smarter, housing the hotels commercial properties as middle class tourism developed.



⁵ TNA/ADM79/58, p.34

⁶ TNA/ADM79/59, pp.29-30

⁷ TNA/ADM79/58, p.30

Exploring the Historic Houses of Setmurthy and Isel

A report on the summer outing on 8th June 2011, by Sandra Shaw

Dunthwaite

This was the first outing organised for us by John Macfarlane in his new role of outings organiser and such was the attraction of the programme he had arranged, that his initial quota of 20 places was very rapidly filled. Luckily he was able to negotiate a small increase with the venues. We began our tour at Dunthwaite (NY173328), where Mark Astley the National Trust [NT] ranger with responsibility for the whole of the NT estate in the Buttermere and Ennerdale valleys, welcomed us in the courtyard space between the barn and the main house, with a very interesting introductory talk. This is a property which came into the hands of the NT in 1947. The house itself is not normally open to the public, but the NT hopes to be able to open the barns and garden three times per year. In 1989, the NT set out four and a half miles of permissive footpaths round the property. Our opportunity to explore the house arose as it is currently undergoing extensive renovation between long-term lets. In the past, the NT's policy was to let its properties at a modest rent, while the tenant agreed to be responsible for necessary repairs and maintenance. The

long term consequence of this has been a gradual decline in the fabric of the property.

The NT is now faced with finding considerable funds at a time when resources are sorely limited to bring Dunthwaite up to standard. The estate comprised the three properties of Dunthwaite House, Kirkhouse and Shepherds Field [probably the gamekeeper's cottage] along with approximately 300 acres of farmland, 60 acres of woodland and the fishing rights along the River Derwent. The NT does not enjoy detailed knowledge of the early history of the property, but it was in the hands of the Harrison family for close to 250 years. Indeed Bulmer's History of Cumberland of 1901 records it being the residence of John Harrison Esq and his son Rev Daniel Harrison MA, vicar of the Parish of Setmurthy. Mark explained that it is believed that parts of the property date to the 15th century but that most is to the 17th and 18th.

We moved on to explore the house at our leisure. It was clear that it had been subject to alterations and extensions at times in its past. The accommodation is now set out on various levels in two almost separate buildings. There were some extremely attractive and interesting features as well as much evidence of the considerable amount of work still required. There was some beautiful plaster work to ceilings, fabric lined walls, a gothic cast and

The (north facing) front of Dunthwaite house in spring





The L&DFLHS visitors on the barn steps

painted fireplace, a blue patterned WC. A couple of factors intrigued the visitors – the barn-like extension to the south of where we entered the main house appeared to be older than the house itself. Did the ornamental window on the south side, overlooking what is now used as the main entrance from the courtyard indicate that this had originally been the front of the house? Several were not convinced, and believed the house had originally been approached and entered from the north, the Derwent river aspect, where the main lawn is; the south facing ornamental window being used to illuminate the dark staircase and landing, looking down onto the rear of the property. The only piece of furniture now remaining in the property is a huge 17 century wooden chest in the attic, its sides carved with strange symbols (see later). When the NT acquired Dunthwaite, there was other furniture which has been removed over the years. The chest would probably have gone the same way but for the fact that it will not fit through the hatch and down the stairs. How did it get up there??

Moving outside we were able to explore the stable block built and later extended onto the west end of the house. Mark had been at the property early in the morning to cut the very long grass for our visit, so we were able to view the property from the river side. From this aspect, it bore the classical 'Georgian' symmetrical

appearance, still obvious despite the stable extension at the west. Some examined the extensive brick-built kennels standing across the courtyard on the south. Finally we entered the barn where Nick Trustram-Eve; trained as an archaeologist, and now working at Wordsworth House, gave a PowerPoint presentation on his research into graffiti found in old properties, some of which is believed have an apotropaic purpose to ward off evil. Many of these date to the 1660s when witchcraft was feared as a real threat. Nick pointed out that the wooden chest in the attic was decorated with a random scattering of concentric rings and

these too are believed to have the same apotropaic reason. Armed with a pocket torch, Nick then illuminated several examples of ancient and modern graffiti on the barn walls; some comprising simply names and dates signed on the limewash, or columns of figures totalled in some business calculation. The most interesting however were 6-petal daisy wheels, the meaning of which is not clear, but can be found in other very old buildings throughout Cumbria and nationally. We then turned our attention to the wooden threshing machine which dominates the barn. This bears a date of 1847, although it appears to have been moved to its current location from elsewhere. This is evident from the adjoining room where there is only the smallest gap between the top of the feed chute (where the corn to be milled would have to be tipped in) and structural timbers above; surely not the way anyone would design a working piece of equipment.

A considerable amount of time and money has been spent on expert restoration. Originally both the threshing machine and the milling equipment were designed to be powered by the huge water-driven iron mill wheel still housed under the ramp leading to the barn's upper floor, where horse drawn carts would have entered the barn. At some stage it was converted to run on steam. Much of the mechanism including the French burrstone mill stones, the water wheel and gearing still survives to be inspected.

Higham



The different styles of Architecture at Higham Hall

Now we made our way to our second port of call at Higham Hall (NY184315). Before entering, we took advantage of the fine weather to pause outside to admire both the castellated Gothic style of the architecture and the extensive view from the terrace. John Hudson gave some brief information about the house. It was built between 1827-8, by the owner Thomas Alison Hoskins. He probably designed it himself with assistance from an architect; thought by Pevsner to have been George Webster. The ornamental front, where the family crest is displayed, is constructed of limestone, whereas the wings are of Skiddaw slate cobbles. The earlier farmhouse that stood on the site is incorporated into the south wing. The ground floor rooms include kitchen, dining room, library, hall, music room and drawing room. The principle bedrooms are situated along the front of the house, while servants' bedrooms overlook the courtyard at the rear. The north wing housed stables and the west side comprised workshops. During his life, Hoskins planted many trees, some of which still survive. In its time the gardens would have supplied the kitchen with fresh produce, grown in the vegetable garden

and glasshouses in the walled garden. They are well maintained today and well worth a visit. While strolling round the house, the mounting block can still be seen.

After lunch, John imparted a little more history of Higham; although unfortunately many of the original deeds were destroyed when the Midland Bank vaults in Cockerthorpe were flooded in 1918. The property has been in the hands of just two families; the Fishers and the Hoskins. A farm at this location was owned by the Fishers between 1547 and 1695 and a stone farmhouse was built towards the end of that period. In 1827 the property was bought by Thomas Alison Hoskins whose grandfather had moved to Great Broughton in 1748; the family accumulating great wealth from West Cumbrian industries. As we had heard, TA Hoskins built the house to give an impression of great solidity and durability. He was a man of power and influence, a County Councillor, High Sheriff in 1854 and Deputy Lieutenant of the County. He lived the life of a country gentleman and expanded his estate by buying neighbouring farms. By 1840 he had amassed 385 acres. He increased his fortune through investment in the railways and was Chairman of the Cockerthorpe, Keswick and Penrith Railway.

Thomas Alison Hoskins died in 1886, but only three of his eight children survived him. One son Reginald had a career in the army and the other two, his son and daughter George and Mary, both unmarried, inherited. George was vicar of Setmurthy Church from which post he retired in 1892. He tried to sell the property, then comprising 903 acres with six dairy farms in 1896, but the reserve price was not reached and the sale failed. George died in 1899, followed by Mary in 1904. The property passed to the third child Reginald who lived in Worcestershire. He put the property on the market, Joseph Fisher made a low and cheeky offer, but his calculation was correct. Reginald was prepared to sell and the offer was accepted. Joseph Fisher was a local man, having grown up at Cragg farm on the Higham estate, rented from the Hoskins family. He continued to expand the property, buying up farms and making improvements to the fabric of the house. His money came from an advantageous marriage into a shipping family in the North East, transporting coal

to London. Joseph Fisher had 9 children and when he died in 1921 his son George inherited, continuing the family tradition of buying up land. When he died in his turn in 1947, the estate comprised more than 1,000 acres. However, in order to offset death duties, the house and 4 acres were given to the Crown. The remaining land passed to George's son Francis and this still remains with the Fisher family to this day.

Higham Hall itself began a period of change.

It was empty for four years before being given to the Youth Hostels' Association on 1951. Alterations were made to bedrooms, but essentially it was in the wrong place. In those days hostellers were expected to arrive on foot or bicycle, but none of the mountains were accessible in a day's walk from Higham. The hostel closed in 1954 and was sold to Cumberland County Council for £7,500. It was run as a boarding school for girls with special educational needs until 1974 when Local Authority reorganisation created the Cumbria County Council who changed the use at Higham to a residential Adult Education College, which continued until 2007. At that stage a charitable Trust was formed which purchased the property in 2008. Alex Alexandre, the Principal, gave us an insight into the large range of interesting courses that now run and are proving to be very popular.

Famous connections include, Evelyn Waugh who stayed at Higham for two nights in 1926, Arthur Ransome [Swallows and Amazons] who stayed around 1940 and Melvyn Bragg whose great-grandfather was coachman at Higham between 1890 and 1903.

Isel Hall

Finally we retraced part of our route and crossed the Derwent to arrive at our final destination at Isel Hall (NY158337). While waiting to be admitted, the solid Pele Tower dominated the view and in the direction of the River Derwent, several examples of the curious Lawson arms [the arms of law holding up the sun] carved in



The pele tower and house front at Isel Hall, with the Lawson arms in foreground

stone could be seen. Miss Mary Burkett herself welcomed us on the back terrace, with a brief overview of the history of the buildings, before we were divided into parties of six to be taken on a special tour led by four excellent guides. Isel Hall will be familiar to many as it is open to the public, by tour, on a regular basis. The tour demonstrates the long history of occupation on the site, with the alterations and additions made over the years. The rooms are without exception filled with architectural features of great interest, plus portraits of family members, interesting memorabilia and other art-work of various styles, from various periods including many fine felt-work pieces. Many visits would be required to fully appreciate everything there is to see. Anyone can visit and take the tour and indeed members are encouraged to do so, thus this article just provides the very sketchiest history of occupation and ownership of the site.

In brief, some Saxon stones have been found and it is likely that when the Norman church of St Michael was built on the banks of the Derwent in 1130, some form of fortified manor house was built where Isel Hall was later built. The Pele Tower is known to have been restored following destruction in 1388. Further building works can be seen that date from an Elizabethan wing, the addition of a billiard room in possibly 1848 and the rebuilding of buttresses in the 1930s. During the tour, attention is drawn to two

aerial paintings of the estate by Mathias Read dated to c1715 to 1718 and these illustrate some of the changes that have occurred since. One reason that these changes have been relatively modest, is that the Lawson family who owned Isel from the 16th to 19th centuries, chose during the 18th century to make Brayton Hall [near Aspatria] their principle residence. Brayton was destroyed by fire in 1918. The family portraits at Isel are extensive and during a brief visit, the names can appear confusing. There are memorabilia associated with Jane Austen, a distant relation of the Leigh family and my final task in this article is to summarise very briefly the ownership of Isel and state the Austen connection.

Isel was originally a demesne of Allerdale and in 1138 the manor passed into the hands of the Morville family and shortly thereafter into that of de Multon. In 1315, after 4 generations of Multons, Isel passed by marriage to the Leigh family which derived from Cheshire. They held the manor for 250 years, covering 8 generations. Thomas Leigh, the last of that line died in 1573 and the manor then passed by marriage to Wilfred Lawson, later knighted by James I. The Lawsons were a Yorkshire family and Sir Wilfred was Steward to the Earl of Northumberland's properties in Cumberland. Isel remained in Lawson hands for nearly 200 years until the direct line came to an end in 1806 with the death of the last Sir Wilfred Lawson. To confuse matters, Isel then passed to a nephew called Wilfred Wybergh who took the name of Lawson! He was created the first baronet of Isel and Brayton in 1831 and his heirs continued to own Isel until the death of the fourth baron in 1959. He had never married and died intestate. When the property had to be sold in 1960, it was bought by the fourth baron's cousin Mrs Margaret Austen Leigh who made it her home. She had no children and left it on her death in 1986 to her friend and distant cousin Miss Mary Burkett. The connection with Jane Austen comes through Mrs Margaret Austen Leigh [as the name suggests!] Her husband Richard Austen Leigh was the great nephew of Jane Austen through her brother Henry's marriage.

As readers can see, this was an exceedingly interesting outing and several members have already expressed a wish for it to be repeated. John Macfarlane will assess the level of interest and see whether it is possible to arrange another group visit this year. Anyone interested in this should send their names and contact details [preferably email address] to John – jtmacfarlane@gmail.com or tel. 01900 85289.

Our grateful thanks are due to Mark Astley and Nick Trustram-Eve for their organisation and fascinating insight into Dunthwaite, to Alistair Starling and Penny Webb of the NT for their support of the society and permission to visit; to Alex Alexandre and his team at Higham Hall; John Hudson for his detailed talk; Miss Mary Burkett and her team of expert guides for welcoming us to Isel Hall for this specially arranged visit; and the John Macfarlane for negotiating and organising the outing.

Written by: Sandra Shaw, based on notes taken during the visit to Dunthwaite, notes on Higham Hall supplied by Dr John Hudson our chairman and notes taken and the published guidebook to Isel Hall.

Photographs by John Macfarlane. More images can be seen on the society's website at www.derwentfells.com/outingjun11

***John Marshall and the
woodlands of Loweswater,
Buttermere and
Brackenthwaite, 1814-1845***

by Derek Denman

John Marshall (1765-1845) was a wealthy Leeds industrialist, and the pioneer of flax-spinning, who purchased large estates in the English Lakes, advised and assisted by William Wordsworth. From 1814 to 1824 he created the majority of his large estate in Loweswater Buttermere and Brackenthwaite, essentially wishing to own and control the environs of the three lakes. His estate forms the basis of the National Trust's Buttermere Estate, and of its covenants, purchased from the Marshall family in 1937. Marshall's main purpose appears to be to plant the shores and fell-sides to create prospects and, secondarily, to generate income. This article provides an outline of his creation and management of woodland.

There were three main elements to Marshalls local purchases, the Loweswater manor in 1814, the Gatesgarth estate in 1815 and the Brackenthwaite estate in 1824. The Gatesgarth estate was purchased from the Duke of Norfolk, who held Greystoke and was lord of the manor of Marshall's Hallsteads property on Ullswater. The other two were major parts of the estate that had been accumulated by Joshua Locock Bragg of Lorton Hall. He had died in 1809 and his estate was managed by three trustees. They put the Loweswater manor up for sale in late 1813. It included the freehold of Loweswater Lake, the Holme of 124 acres and the land at Rigg Bank.

Most of the estates in Loweswater were customary, except for Mill Hill, and that meant that the lord of the manor owned all the woods on those estates. In 1808 Bragg had sold all the timber on the estate for around £1500, and so when the manor was sold again in 1814 there would be just the young wood springing from the stools, except at Mill Hill. Marshall, like Wordsworth, particularly appreciated woodland and was keen to plant and grow timber in Loweswater, as elsewhere on his estates, but he could only plant on his freehold land and could protect the wood growing in the customary estates. On Loweswater common he could not plant at all, or rather he could plant but could not exclude sheep.

After his purchase of the Gatesgarth estate he held much of the shore and fellsides to the south west of Loweswater, Buttermere and Crummock lakes, and he enlisted the help of Wordsworth to plan his planting: -

William [Wordsworth] and I spent three days, the week before last, with Mr Marshall at Scale Hill, Lowess Water, Buttermere, & Crumock, viewing his estates and manor there, and planning his proposed plantations and Improvements. He is going to plant very largely by the side of the two last lakes – and, as he will only plant native wood, and in no wise sacrifice beauty to convenience, we expect that his

labours will not only be profitable but ornamental.¹

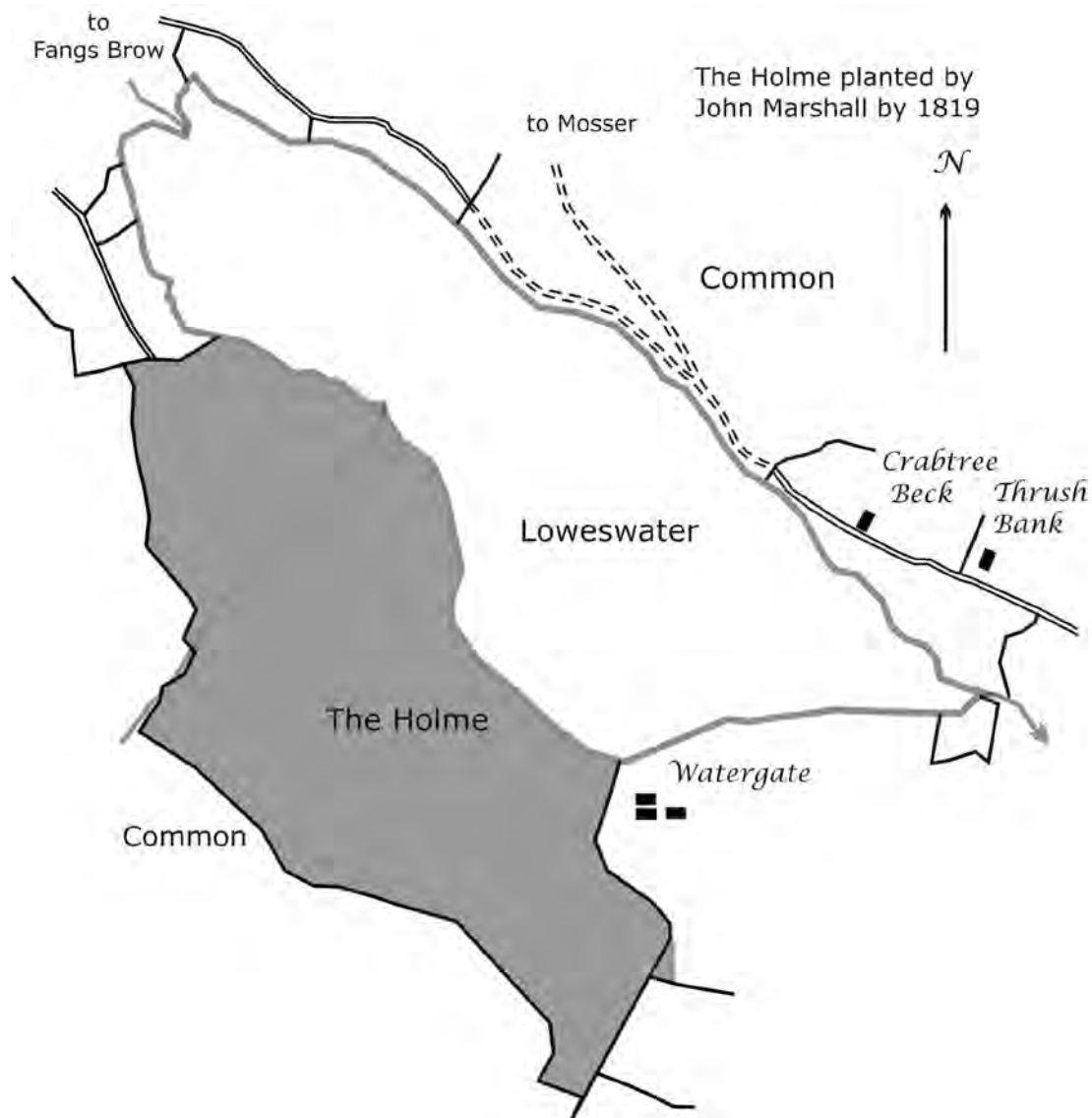
Three days' duration suggests a detailed joint survey, rather than a viewing and approval. In the event Marshall's planting plan and choice of species were rather different from those that Sara Hutchinson noted. Firstly, Marshall was not able to plant the shore of Crummock, which was either common or stunted pasture. Secondly, Marshall did not share Wordsworth's distaste for the larch, and was keen to plant larch on higher dry ground both for ornament and an income. Larch provided a more open woodland than the present day evergreen conifers and the land could also be grazed after ten years. Marshall preferred native species on low ground, rejecting both larch and Scot's fir, or pine, and he liked his larch plantations to look as natural as possible, without square patches or straight lines.

The largest plantation by Marshall was of the 124 acres of the Holme, on the south-west shore of Loweswater and the fellside above. In both 1807 and 1813 the Holme was let as pasture, in 1813 at a rent of £68, but in the plan drawn by John Norman from a survey in May 1819 the Holme was woodland. Here Marshall put in place his general larch scheme, planting native deciduous hardwoods alongside the lake, and larch higher up the fell. Just over 2000 young larch trees, at 11d each, were sold as thinnings from the Holme in 1838.² There is reason to believe that Marshall wished to extend the Holme planting along the lake shore of the Watergate tenement. In September 1816 he demanded a fine from the customary tenant, John Harrison, on the basis of a wrongly worded admittance under Bragg in 1809. In 1817 Marshall was pursuing Harrison's ejectment at the King's Bench, but failed to remove him.

The head of Buttermere had no wood of note in either William Green's drawing published in 1814, or in his Guide of 1819. Green describes woodland only on

¹ Sara Hutchinson, *The Letters of Sara Hutchinson from 1800 to 1835*, Ed. Kathleen Coburn, Sara Hutchinson to Mr Monkhouse 1 Nov 1816, p.93

² CACCW/DWM11



the inhabited north-eastern side of the lake, criticising the recent villa at Hassness, 'erected by the late Thomas Benson Esq.' for its plantings of larch on the higher ground, and exotics in the lower grounds.³

Along the head of Buttermere, the Duke of Norfolk had fenced off and planted four acres, described in 1815 as new plantations.⁴ Marshall's plantings, following the survey with Wordsworth, included the three acres of Cragg Close

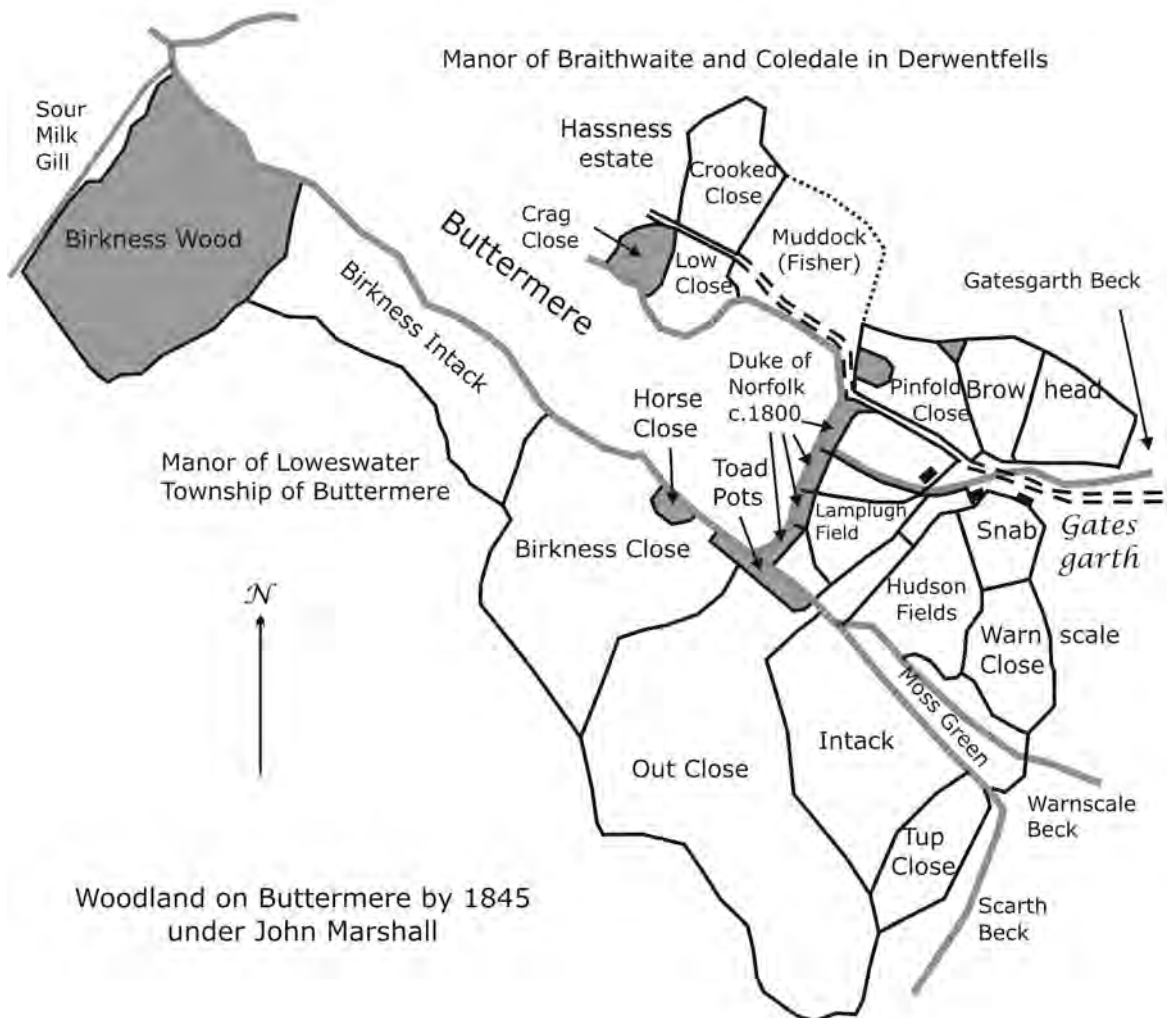
adjacent to Hassness. On the south-western side of the lake, and the inlet of Warnscale Beck, Marshall planted two small existing closes of four acres, Toad Pots and Horse Close.

In the freehold pasture of Birkness, Marshall enclosed 132 acres in two new closes, Birkness Intack and Birkness Wood, otherwise Burtness Wood. These closes, with irregular outlines, seem as part of the old estate.

Birkness Intack was not planted in Marshall's lifetime, but Birkness Wood was a new plantation of 79 acres by 1820, rising high up the fell side, abutting Sour Milk Gill and the Scales stinted pasture. While the name Birkness remembers

³ William Green, *The tourist's new guide*, 1819, Vol II, p.196

⁴ CACW/DWM11/302. Epitome of title to the Buttermere, Crummock and Lowswater Estate, 1934



ancient birch, and Marshall may have planted native species by the shore, the plantation was mainly larch.

According to William Green in 1819, the arable delta between Crummock and Buttermere, and the higher ground on its east, which formed the immediate prospect at the head of Crummock, was 'an enclosed and verdant plain, beautifully ornamented with woods and hedgerow trees'.⁵ In 1816 Marshall had no control of this delta, in the manor of Derwentfells, but in 1818 he had John Hudleston survey Croft Farm, which had six acres of the oak wood and much of the delta land and hedgerows. In 1824 Marshall purchased Croft Farm and could control the delta woodland.

In 1824 Marshall purchase the Brackenthwaite estate from Bragg's trustees, including High Hollins, Lanthwaite Green, Scale Hill, Peel Place and land at Rannerdale. With this he obtained Lanthwaite wood, which had been increased in extent to 79 acres by Bragg after he had bought Lanthwaite Green. This wood was oak and larch in 1804, the larch pre-dating Bragg's ownership. As was his practice, Marshall took it in hand from the Scale Hill tenement. In 1835, handing over the management of this commercial woodland to Richard Atkinson, Marshall advised that 'the Lanthwaite Oak Wood has been cut as coppice & since I bought it I have only cut the thinning, & I have about 200 acres new plantations to thin'.⁶ This

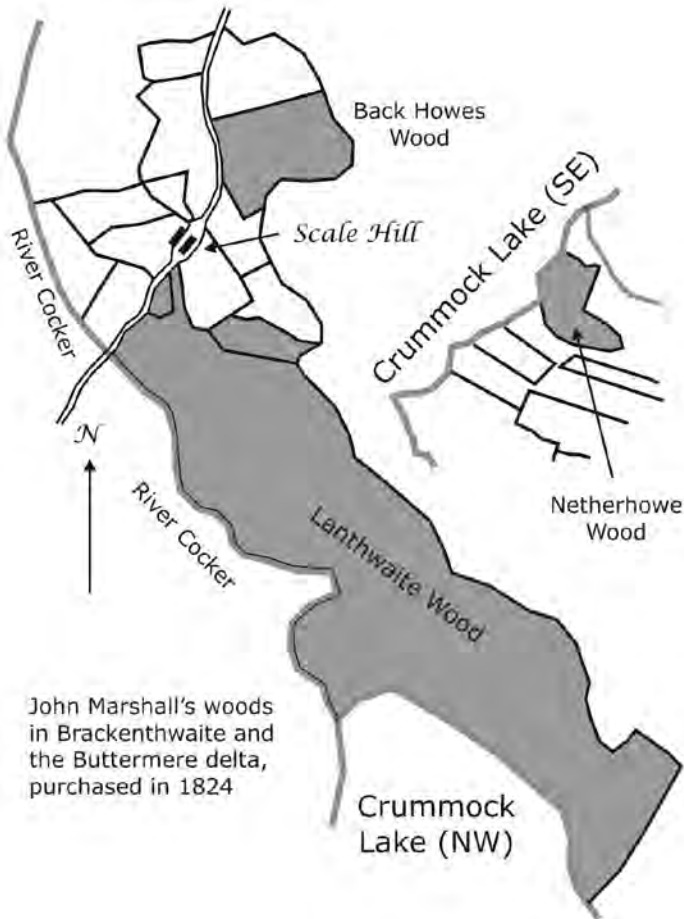
⁵ William Green, *The tourist's new guide*, 1819, Vol II, p.179

⁶ CACW/DLec.ATK, JM to Atkinson 22 Oct 1835

L&DFLHS – Programme for 2011

Date	Event
8 th September	<i>Mardale – the Drowned Valley</i> by John Falshaw
10 th November	<i>Lorton as it was 200 years ago :- updating John Bolton's lecture of 1891</i> by Derek Denman

Talks are held at the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton s at 7.30pm. Visitors £2.50 with refreshments.



John Marshall's woods in Brackenthwaite and the Buttermere delta, purchased in 1824

would be mainly the Holme and Birkness wood. Marshall was allowing the oak wood to grow. He instructed Atkinson in 1836; 'If Mr William Marshall goes over to Loweswater, I would have the wood cut as he orders John Clark. Those parts of Lanthwaite Wood that are to be cut as spring wood, should have their bounds set out, as much as convenience will allow, to avoid the appearance of square patches'.⁷ This management practice applied to the oak in 1837: 'I wish to cut as much Oak yearly as can be done without hurting the appearance of the

wood, ..., and not to cut it in square patches, but to vary the outline of the part that is cut down You know that I wish to raise as much timber as I can, & to cut down only that standing on ground too poor to grow timber'.⁸ That is, he wished to grow timber rather than coppice.

At the Scale Hill Inn, which he owned, the trees were ornamental. Dorothy Wordsworth advised the Misses Marshall in 1829 that 'you will both want to look after the Scale Hill Trees which you have so heroically planted in the cold and wet. By the bye the scheme of improving the precincts of the Inn pleases me much ...'.⁹ In 1841 Marshall wrote to his steward, Richard Atkinson, from Scale Hill: 'Dobinson [the tenant] will lay the two fields, in front of the house, together & leave the oak tree standing, & will clear away the brushwood along the wall in the field next the road, but I would not allow him to cut down any trees'.¹⁰

John Marshall was clearly a man who was very keen to see mature trees in the landscape of the English Lakes, and who had the money to indulge this passion in Loweswater, Buttermere and Brackenthwaite.

The Journal

Journal 49 will be published for 1st February 2012. Please send contributions by 7th January.

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Published by Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, Beech Cottage, High Lorton, Cockermouth CA13 9UQ

⁷ CACW/DLec.ATK, JM to Atkinson 31 Oct 1836

⁸ CACW/DLec.ATK, JM to Atkinson 15 Mar 1837

⁹ Dorothy Wordsworth to Mary Anne Marshall 19 Nov 1829.

¹⁰ CACW/DLec.ATK, Marshall to Atkinson 10 Sep 1841