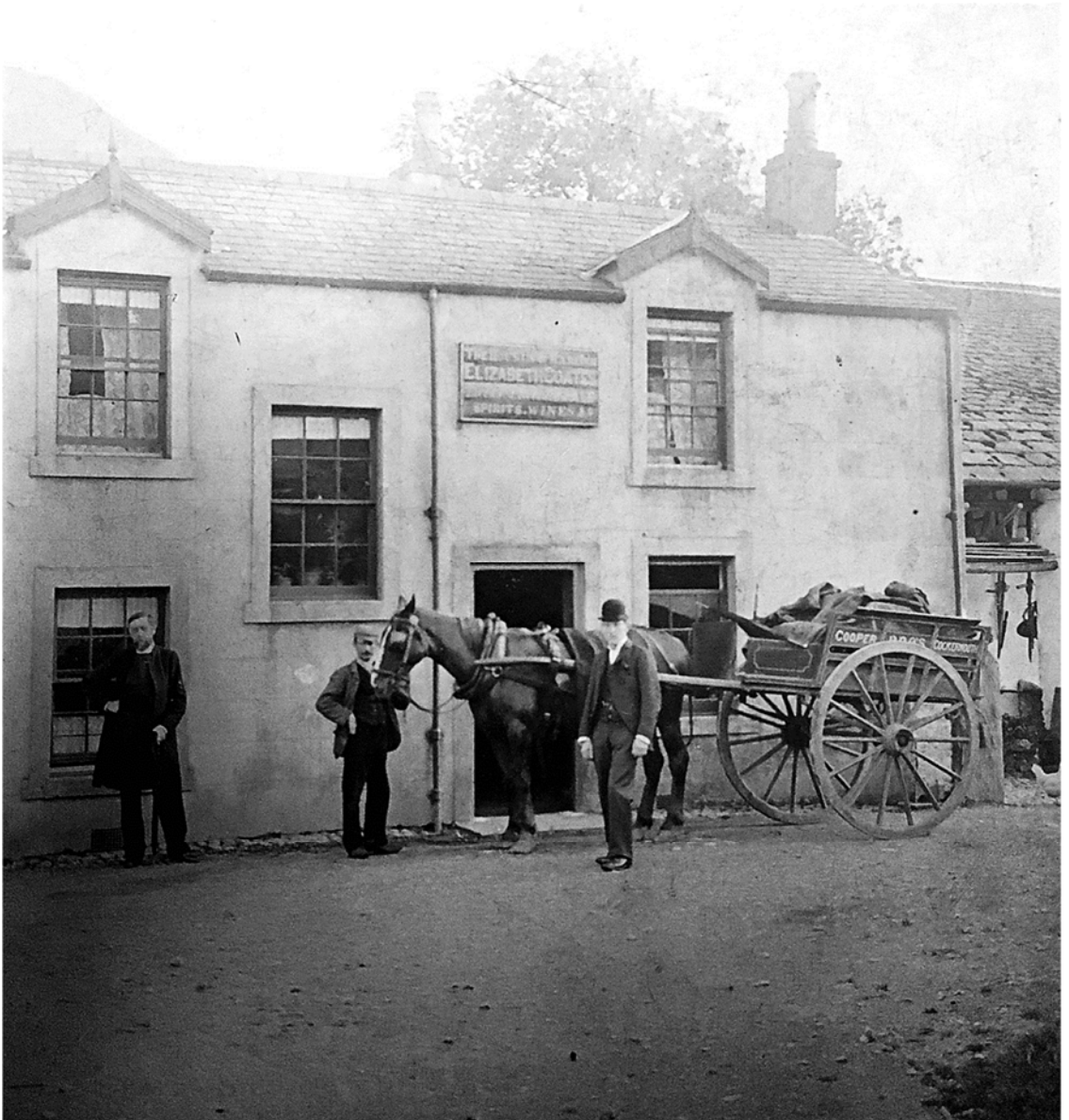


# The Journal

## Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite    Buttermere    Embleton    Loweswater    Mockerkin    Pardshaw    Wythop

[www.derwentfells.com](http://www.derwentfells.com)



*A photograph of the Kirkstile in Loweswater, then the Hare and Hounds of Elizabeth Coates. On the reverse 'Bishop of Carlisle in foreground'; early twentieth Century. Courtesy of Roger Humphreys.*

## ***The Journal***

This last regular *Journal* is much larger than usual, because it contains a number of contributions which have been in progress. While the previous issue contained much about Lorton, this one concentrates on Loweswater, and its mysteries. We also stray a little to the west to see some of Allan Sharman's current research.

Until 2006, the Newsletter was edited by the late Michael Grieve, and I remember how much satisfaction he gained from the task, as I have done, but he would print and assemble it himself, and then deliver it. I would like to remember this publication as Michael's creation, as we thank all present and past contributors who have helped to make these sixty issues such a valuable collection of work, and the Society for its continuous support.

All issues will continue to be available online, and there will be opportunities to place new material online. If you are thinking of researching and writing local history, your Society remains ready to assist you.

*Derek Denman*

## ***L&DFLHS 2017-18***

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## ***From the Chair***

Since this is the last issue of the *Journal* in the series which began in 1994, as current Chairman of the Society I thought it right to mark the occasion with a few observations about the publication.

The Society was very fortunate from its inception in having a number of members who were very active in undertaking research into local history, writing up the results of their endeavours. The resulting articles now comprise a valuable resource about the history of Lorton Vale and the Derwent Fells along with people who lived in the district. The *Journal* began its life as the Society's Newsletter, which for the first 10 years was published three times a year. Thereafter two issues have been published annually, the title changing in February 2007. All issues of the *Journal* are available online, so they are available to anyone in the world interested in local history or in family history of people in the area.

The Society can justifiably be proud of the quality of articles in the *Journal* and the professional manner in which it has been produced. This has in large measure been a reflection of the high standards set by the editor, Dr Derek Denman having fulfilled that role over the last 11 years. The Society owes a large debt of gratitude to him not only for all the hard work he has devoted to the task of editorship, but also for the extensive research he has himself undertaken into local history and the resulting articles he has written for the *Journal* over the years.

History tells us that institutions are rarely static, and that they depend for their well-being on the availability of individual people to maintain and develop them. In the case of the *Journal*, the Society's Committee reluctantly came to the conclusion that in the absence of anyone coming forward with the skills required to act as editor in place of Dr Denman, who is retiring from the role, it was in the best interests of the *Journal*'s reputation and that of the Society not to try to struggle on. So with this bumper final issue, which covers topics spanning several centuries, the *Journal* will sadly cease regular future publication.

*Charles Lambrick*

## ***Life in Loweswater before 1740 (from Wills and Inventories).***

*by Roger Asquith*

A wealth of information is contained in the wills and inventories of the departed. For Loweswater these cover the period from 1575. While an early inventory would provide an informative list and valuation of the deceased's possessions, from c 1710 valuations tended to be under the catch-all of 'goods', on a room by room basis, so then we learn something about the layout of the house, much less about the possessions and lives of the occupants. The present investigation covers the late 16C to the early 18C for which the inventories and wills are such a useful resource - around 150 wills and 200 inventories relating to some 220 inhabitants of the township/chapelry of Loweswater, including Mockerkin. Not all wills have a corresponding inventory and vice versa. All were copied and transcribed from the Cumbria (Whitehaven) or Lancashire (Preston) archives along with four Canterbury wills, and represent, to the best of my endeavours, a near 100% sample. The objective was to get an insight into life in this local area 400 years ago; was it typically one of self-sufficiency and proud independence based on profitable sheep farming, or a struggle on the edge of subsistence? The state of the woollen industry at the time and how people made a living are of particular relevance.

An example inventory is shown in fig.1, providing a basis to explore the overall picture. Ellen Pearson of Fangs (d 1663) was the widow of John Pearson (of Fangs) who died in 1623, presumably in his 40's, as there were two sons and grandchildren. Ellen must have out-lived both the sons and daughter-in-law Jennet, who left a will/inventory in 1648. She, Ellen, will have had her widow's share of John's estate for her lifetime leading to a somewhat confusing division of the property (the family is discussed in *Life in old Loweswater* by Roz Southey' p.67). While the wills provide much useful information on families, that is not the focus of this article.

### **'Apparel and riding gear'**

With apparel valued at £5 10s, Ellen Pearson was clearly one of Loweswater's better-dressed, middle gentry. A value of £1 was more typical. Normally the 'sworn men' i.e. those taking the oath to produce an honest, accurate appraisal of the deceased's possessions, were near neighbours giving an idea of the place of residence where otherwise none was given. Ellen's above average status may have necessitated appraisers of similar standing from across the township. For men 'apparel' would usually appear with 'riding gear' or 'riding furniture' (saddle, bridle, etc.) and occasionally 'purse'. Only one instance of 'apparel and riding gear' occurs in a woman's inventory, that of Sarah Fletcher of Mockerkin in 1702.

Detail of clothing appears in specific legacies in wills. 'My best raiment of clothes both woollen and linen' or 'my best coat and britches' are typical. Henry Fisher of Askill (1634) bequeathed to John Jackson of Bramley 'one raiment of blue clothes britches jerkin dublet and one pair of blue understocke'. Also, one blue cloak. Henry Dixon in 1678, single man of Waterend, left to William Borranskell 'my best raiment viz. hat stockens with coat breeches and dublat', along with shirts and 'a black coat with cloth buttons'. Henry's 'looking glass' (a rare item) suggests he took some pride in his appearance. William Iredale (1580) had 3 jackets, 3 gyrkins, 2 pair of hose, 2 dublets and 3 cloaks' total value 36s 8d. This is the only mention of 'doublet and hose', the latter item having been out of fashion, replaced by breeches, long before 1580. Shoes were less often mentioned. James (Jacobi) Hudson in 1589 (probably of Kirkhead) had 'one pair of bowtts one pair of shows with one piece of leather', value 5s. Jannat Fisher, single woman of Rigbank, in 1628 bestowed her wearing apparel all around the parish: 'my best coat and a red band ... my second coat and an undercoat, a broadcloth waistcoat, my best hat and a red band ... my second smock, a ffpipat and a quoyfe ... my best smock a ribben and a quoyfe ... my second collar and a gorgett ... a purple gorgett ..'. The value, as appraised by Thomas Allason, Henry Jackson and Thomas Wilkinson, was £1 6s 8d. The 'band', worn by men and women, was a loose turn-over collar which succeeded the ruff, the coif was a close-

fitting cap and the 'ffipat' may have been a tippet i.e. a short cape covering the neck and shoulders. (Apart from the challenge of interpreting the script of the time, spelling was optional and punctuation non-existent, making interpretation an art rather than an exact science!). Annas Wilkinson left to Mary Soulbe 'one red coote of cloth one pair of stookens and my best pair of showes'. Red coats seem to have been popular female attire - as immortalised by the Little Red Riding Hood story (*The Kendal Weaver* by John Satchell).

In 'The Old Statesman Families of Irton, Cumberland' (*TCWAAS* 1910 vol 10, by C. Moor) the observation is made: 'All accounts seem to testify that the yeomen were well dressed in substantial and picturesque attire woven and made up at home'. F. Eden writing in 1797 (Sir F. M. Eden, *The State of The Poor in England*) said of the North of England 'almost every article of dress worn by farmers, mechanics and labourers is manufactured at home, there are many respectable persons, at this day, who never wore a bought pair of stockings, a coat nor waistcoat in their lives'. Whether such a conclusion is consistent with the lack of spinning wheels and weaving looms in inventories, has been questioned, (e.g. *Prelates and People Of the Lakes Counties* by C M L Bouch, p227).

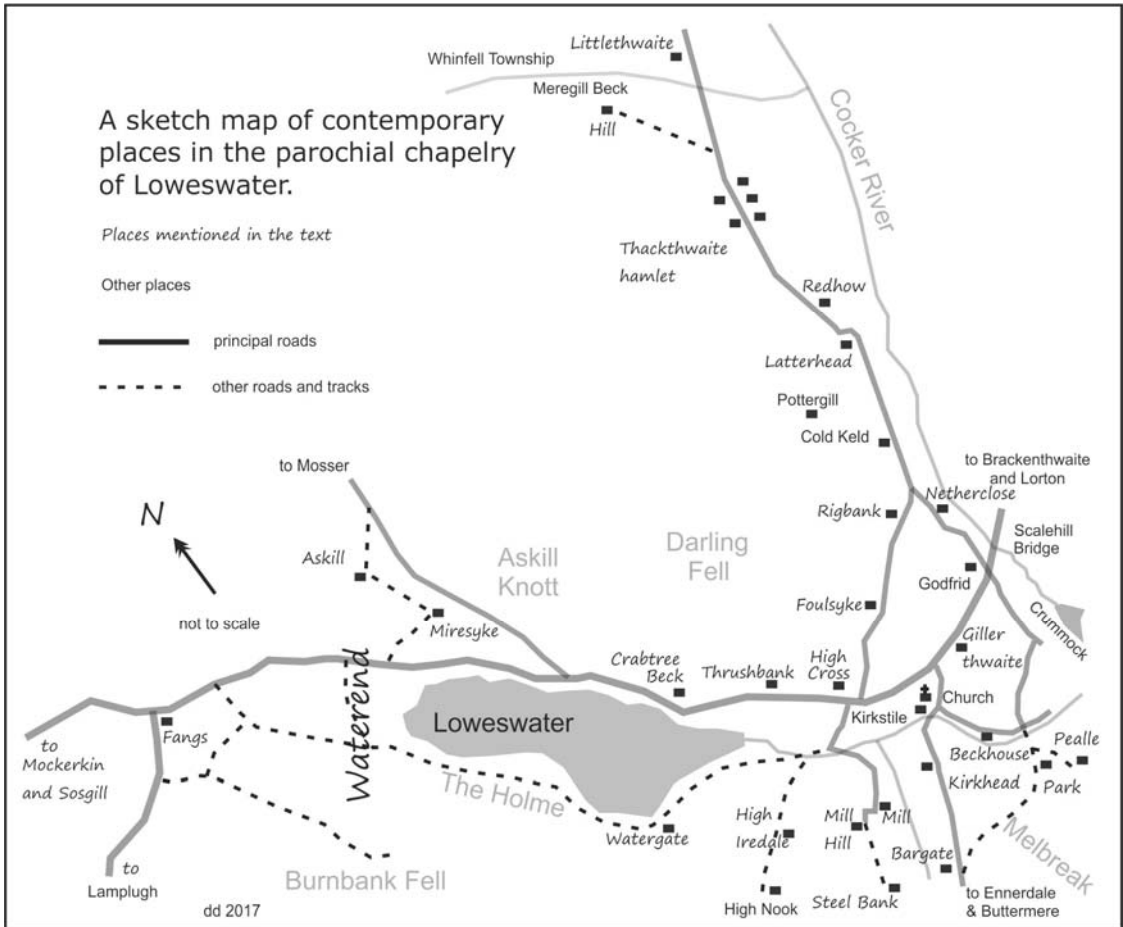
#### **'Bedstocks and happins'**

Detail regarding beds tends to be sparse. Bedstocks or a bedstead constitutes the frame, 'bed' being the mattress. Jane Woodvill of Waterend (1719) bequeathed to her granddaughter 'one bedstead standing in the bower and feather bed and a bedding of clothes'. Peter Bolton's 'one feather bed and the pillows' were valued at 10s in 1588. Henry Dixon (1679) left to his brother John one bedstead with curtains and one chaff bed, and to William Borranskill 'my bed clothes viz. rug, twilled happen, blankets and sheets'. A 'happen' or happin was a thick woollen bed cover, sheets could be linen or harden i.e. sackcloth made from the coarser fibres of hemp. Most bed clothes would have been home made. Rugs are only occasionally mentioned, more often 'coverlets', always in the context of bedding - no floor coverings arise at all. Similarly, curtains are invariably bed-curtains, rather than for windows, and indicate a more elaborate

bed with posts. A chaff bed, otherwise known as a 'dust' bed, was stuffed with the husks etc. left behind after winnowing oats or barley - the impression from wills is that a chaff bed was preferable to the alternative 'flock bed', filled with wool waste and bits of cloth.

#### **'Iron girdles and kyrsets'**

Ellen Pearson's inventory (fig.1) typically shows 'pots, pans and pewter vessel' along with a wood vessel and an earthen (i.e. pottery) vessel. It is evident that only items of significant value are mentioned. Wooden trenchers, bowls, cups - the basic everyday eating and drinking utensils - do not appear in Loweswater inventories. One or two early inventories give details of higher status items, such as that of James Hudson (1589): '5 brass potts, 16 pewter vessels - more or less', valued at 21s, also 'drink potts and pitchers with one lantern 2s 8d'. Peter Burnyeat (1597) had 9 pewter doublers (large plates) priced at 4s. Many inventories listed unspecified 'pewter', fewer listed 'brass', just one or two had tin and glass but without specific details. John Allason of Fouslyke (1700) was in a different league altogether with silver plate valued at £13. The large, relatively expensive vessels listed in almost every yeoman farmer's inventory, wooden, earthen and pewter, were presumably for the essential operations of butter, ale and cheese making. EP's 'wood vessel' at £1 9s was typically costly; sometimes it was termed a 'cooper vessel'. At this period butter was made in a wooden churn, tapering in from the base and hooped with metal rings, the lid being fitted with a staff with perforated plate that would be plunged up and down to agitate the cream. The 'wood vessel' could have been a wooden churn. In Cumberland at this time most cheese was made from the skimmed milk left after the cream was taken for making butter (Bailey and Culley), a process which needed neither a cheese press nor cheese rack (i.e. a suspended mouse-resistant shelf). EP was presumably using her 'cheese rack, press bands and shackles' to make full cream cheese. Hannah Jenkinson, widow of Waterend (1730) bequeathed 'a cheese press standing in the bake house', Esther Burnyeat (also 1730) of Thrushbank 'my cheese press and stone belonging'.



Hannah Jenkinson's house at Waterend (presumably Jenkinson Place) at this date had both a milk house and a bake house, each with loft above, in addition to the firehouse and parlour (main bed chamber). The term 'buttery' used in other parts of the Lake District (*Traditional Buildings and Life in the Lake District* by Susan Denyer) is replaced by 'milk house' in Loweswater. While every yeoman farm in Loweswater had their milk house, the bake house was a rarity before 1740, as all essential cooking supposedly used the open fire. John Robinson of Thackthwaite (1727) had the only other example. Thomas Fletcher of Thrushbank (1700) left to his daughters 'some sawn boards lying above the oven head in the backside of the chimney wall', indicating that the open fireplace had been modified by the insertion of a bee-hive shaped oven into the back wall, with the necessary projection behind it. While the baking of wheat bread was believed to be the incentive for an oven, wheat, very little grown, if at all, in

Cumberland prior to 1750 (Bailey & Culley), was expensive, being bought only for special occasions – Christmas and funerals to make 'arvel bread' (Susan Denyer). On this basis 1700 – 1730 would appear early to install ovens, unless perhaps for community benefit. Lorton had a public bakehouse in the early 19thC (John Bolton *Lorton and Loweswater 80 years ago*).

While on the subject of food, the inventories generally reflect the same limited menu as that of Ellen Pearson, that is butter and cheese, bigg, oats, malt (for brewing ale), meal and grotts (or groats – hulled, crushed grain such as oats), beef and bacon. Other inventories list 'flesh', which presumably includes mutton – nowhere specifically identified – and suet. Fish is mentioned three times – William Mirehouse of Myresyke (1691), Thomas Dixon of Waterend (1655) and Peter Burnyeat of Crabtreebeck (1659). With perishable goods not listed it must be assumed the fish in question was preserved by drying/salting/smoking. The absence of

fruit and vegetables may in part be due to the short shelf life, to the limited crops in cultivation at the time (no potatoes, turnips, peas or beans) and to small quantities or small cash value.

Ellen Pearson's meals were cooked using the pots and pans, girdle, brandreth, crook and tongs; collectively termed iron or fire gear. The crook (often a pair of crooks) was/were the L-shaped arms enabling utensils to be hung over the fire. The girdle was a flat round iron plate used in particular for cooking 'clapbread' (oatcakes). The brandreth or brandiron was a gridiron or trivet used to stand pots over the fire. James Hudson's (1589) cooking gear included '2 old cauldrons, pans, 4 kettles, 1 brass ladle, 1 spitt, 2 little trippets (trivets), 1 frying pan, 1 kyrset, 1 brandreth and a pair of tongs'. The word 'kyrset', variously spelt, derives from cresset (an arrangement for suspending a burning light), and enabled pots to be set over the fire.

The fire 'grate' was not in evidence before 1623 but regularly after that, suggesting that the fire would originally be directly on the hearth, later contained and lifted by the grate. Whether this implies a change in fuel or the need for more efficient burning is not apparent. 'Fuel' was regularly valued with the deceased's effects, often appearing as 'fuel and poultry' valued at a few pence to a couple of shillings, presumably through being housed together. 'Peats' were the only specified fuel, apart from Peter Fisher of Beckhouseclose (1673) who had 'peets and turffs' to the value of 6d. Henry Forrest, curate, (1741) had 'goods in the coalhouse' – the first mention of coal in the Loweswater wills and inventories, although Isabella Fearon of Lamplugh had 'peets and coalles' valued at 1s 8d in 1664.

John Allason of Foulisyke (1700) had 'clock, jack and steel mill' valued at £4 10s. 'Clock and jack' would indicate a weight-driven, clock type mechanism for driving the spit, ensuring his roast was 'done to a turn'. This must have been the last word in hi-tech kitchen equipment at the end of the 17C and would surely have impressed his neighbours! The steel mill was a novel lighting device creating a stream of sparks by rotating a steel disc against a flint. According to The Dictionary of Industrial Archaeology it was invented by Carlisle

Spedding of Whitehaven about 1740, 40 years after John Allason's death! Presumably Mr. Spedding developed an existing device for use in mines around 1740. Clearly John Allason was not a typical Loweswater yeoman – 'his studdy' was valued at £83 4s 3d. (See also 'John Allason of Godfrid's mathematics book 1676' in *Journal* 38).

#### 'Chists and skembles'

Along with bedstocks, as items of furniture, arks and chests appeared in pretty well every inventory and many wills, being the essential storage for meal, clothes and much besides. There could be up to 3 or 4 of each in a household, with wills giving careful allocation to legatees. Jenat Bolton, daughter of John Bolton (1608) received 'one new ark and one chist', brother John 'the great ark in the barn, the meal ark in the bower, one armery, one great chist in the chamber standing before the ark, all the plow and husbandry gear after the death of his mother'. It seems that a box with a curved or domed lid storing meal was more likely to be termed an 'ark', while one with a flat lid storing clothes was likely to be a chest. Occasionally we find '5 boards provided for a chest'; or the previously noted bequest of Thomas Fletcher, to his daughters, of 'sawn boards'. Simple joiner-made construction is implied; wainscot chests are very occasionally mentioned. 'Chest' was consistently written 'chist', perhaps spoken as the ON 'kist'. Jenett Pearson's inventory had 'one ark, two giests which were given to her daughter Margaret', and 'other arks and giests', perhaps suggesting a pronunciation more like the 'ch' in 'loch'. Regarding storage cupboards a handful of 'armeries' arise, between late 16C and c 1680, these being ventilated cupboards most likely for prepared food, or perhaps for clothes/books. On the subject of books – they appear in 21 inventories (over 10%), with only the bible being identified. Henry Allason of Park (1699) and John Burnyeat of Crabtreebeck (1725) each had £2 worth; John Allason of Foulisyke (1700) no doubt had a veritable library, in 'his studdy' worth over £83. And to continue the culture/entertainment theme, the only musical instrument listed was the 'viall' of Peter Allason of Sosgill; this being a stringed instrument played with a bow.

A 16/17C farmhouse table comprised 'boards' with 'frames' to stand them on, as separate items, hence they could be readily removed to make space. Similarly cupboards were cup boards, boards with support frames. Dressers were similar arrangements to display pewter, etc. Hence we find 'cupboard and frame 3s', 'table and frame it stands on with a shamle 17s', 'frame belonging to dishes and dublers 6s'. Seating was mainly on forms, stools and 'shamles' (as EP had, no doubt in her fire-house). 'Shamle', also written 'shamble' or 'skemble', derives from ON 'skemil' i.e. 'a long seat without a back used in a farmhouse kitchen' (*A Grammar of the Dialect of Lorton* by Börje Brilioth). The one or two chairs would be for the yeoman farmer and his wife. What are now regarded as the traditional court cupboards appeared post 1650, not named as such but evident from individual listing and value, for example that of John Mirehouse of Miresyke valued at £4 in 1703, John Allason's two cupboards £16 in 1700 or John Wilkinson's at 'Watterend' £1 15s in 1675. Both Peter Burnyeat of Thrushbank (1694) and Peter Mirehouse of Mockerkin (1705) had clocks. 'Screens' arise occasionally from late 17C, these being wide, high-backed settles used to create a cosy seating area close to the fire.

#### 'Whyes and Oxen'

Moving on to matters agricultural (very much the foundation of Loweswater's economy) Ellen Pearson's inventory reflects the standard elements of cattle, sheep and crops. There was little sign in inventories of innovation, specialisation or agricultural improvement – a situation which still prevailed in 1794 when Bailey and Culley (B&C) produced their *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Cumberland*. Ellen Pearson's '15 head of beasts', almost certainly of a 'small, longhorn' type (B&C), will have included milk cows ('kyne'), draught animals (oxen, stotts) and beef cattle (steers and stirks), with heifers (known as whyes or quyes) and calves. The milk cow, or kyne, it seems was the essential of daily life, every independent person having at least one. Henry Forrest, the curate, (d, 1741) had cattle to the value of £5, probably 2. The only inventory to include a bull was that of John Tiffin (probably of Mockerkin) in 1593. No debts

are listed for 'cow bulling', perhaps raising the possibility of township, i.e. communal, bull ownership. Typically 1 or 2 ox(en) were kept, though the above John Tiffin had 4, suggesting that ploughing would have required the co-operation of neighbours, or a combined team with horses. Robert Stubb of Brackenthwaite, bequeathed to son Robert in 1673: 'the husbandry gear as will yoke up 6 beasts to plow with all' – presumably the maximum requirement needed for a heavy plough or steep ground. Oxen were gradually being replaced by horses as draught animals; the last mention was of a pair, in William Pearson of Fangs inventory of 1711. Annas Fearon of Mockerkin left 'one red cow', consistent with the longhorns, to her nephew as well as 'one cow called Kindly' to her brother (1676). Apparently, named cattle were quite common (Susan Denyer). Black cattle, presumably of the Galloway breed and bought from Scots drovers, were only kept by the Fletchers of Mockerkin. Lancelot (1698) and Thomas (1714) had £30 - £35 worth, around 15 to 18 in number.

#### 'Hemp growing in Mockerkin'

Ellen Pearson's inventory, appraised in June of 1663, shows 'crops prysed to seed and arder £13 6s 8d', that is the value of the crops in the ground, on the basis of cost of seed and the plough work in preparing the ground (the 'ard' being a simple ancient plough). William Iredale's inventory of June 1580 included 'seed and eardeye with teathe, 39s'. That is seed, plough work and tilth – the latter being the harrow and hand tool work following ploughing. He also had 'teathe unoccupied 12d', so prepared ground not yet seeded. Bigg (barley), oats and hay were the chief crops required to keep the meal ark stocked, the livestock fed over winter and malt supplied for ale brewing. Hemp was also grown in small quantities to satisfy the need for ropes, sacking, the coarse harden cloth and linen. The inventories point to the production of 'line' yarn and linen cloth from the fine fibres of the hemp; there is no mention of the flax which is more usually associated with linen production. Robert Iredale of Latterhead (1666) had 'corn and hay' valued at £7 7s and 5s worth of hemp; Peter Mirehouse of Mockerkin (1705) had hay at £24, hemp 5s. Isabel Burnyeat's 'hemp seed, hemp and yarn' was worth 3s 8d in 1620

(Thrushbank). There is no suggestion in the inventories of anything other than 'domestic quantities', i.e. a few shillings' worth of hemp or hemp products for home use. Thomas Dixon of Waterend had two 'ekelles' (heckles) listed with other cloth-related items, these being combs for preparing the fibres from retted hemp. A retting pond would not be necessary for these small quantities; strewing the plant stalks on a field for exposure to the elements would achieve the same result, albeit on a longer timescale.

#### **'Corn thresht and unthresht'**

Later in the growing season we get 'corn shorn and unshorn' (Peter Mirehouse of Mockerkin August 31<sup>st</sup> 1705) and through the winter months 'corn thresht and unthresht' (William Iredale, Thackthwaite, March 1683), reflecting the practice of storing corn in the unthreshed state. Ellen Pearson's inventory included 'sacks, pokes and winden cloth £1 15s', every farmer had something similar. The 'winden cloth' or winnowing cloth/sheet was used while separating the grain from the chaff, assisted by the wind. Sometimes written as 'winding' or 'window cloth' in inventories, confusion can arise with burial shrouds or window coverings (to keep out the draughts before window glazing was widely affordable). Listed with 'sacks and pokes' in an inventory the winnowing option is almost certain. A poke was a small bag or sack for carrying corn (or the proverbial pig) on a pack saddle – an item which also features regularly in the inventories. A related but rarely mentioned piece of equipment is the grindstone, in the sense of stone for grinding corn. Ann Nutt of Askill (1704) bequeathed 'to son John one gavelick and grinding stone and crook and two stone troughs'. Certain Loweswater and Thackthwaite tenants, including Henry Fisher of Askill, made an agreement with the Lord in 1619 which fixed their fines (for change of tenant, etc.) and removed the obligation to use the Lord's mill, hence the grindstone or quern could be lawfully held.

Bequests in wills, as well as items of clothing, furniture, the occasional sheep or cow, also extended to foodstuff. Jane Burnyeat of Netherclose (1710) left 'one peck of oatmeal and one stoupe of groats' to the wife of Thomas Burnyeat. Edward Clark (1721) of Hill, husbandman, left '20

thrave of straw' to neighbour William Woodburn, a thrave being 2 stooks of 12 sheaves each.

#### **'Husbandry gear'**

Most inventories valued all the farming equipment together as 'husbandry gear'. Ellen Pearson's, valued at £2 10s, was fairly typical. The essentials, specified in a few wills, were carts, ploughs, harrows, hand tools, harnesses. James Hudson's inventory (1589) provided some detail: 'cowpe wheels and cowpe, 3 carres, 3 sleds, pair of halts 22s'. A cowpe (or coupe) was a cart with closed sides and ends to contain dung, for example. Solid 'clog' wheels rigidly fixed to the wooden axle were a separate item, the cart body having projections beneath to locate the axle. This was the only inventory to specify 'sleds', though they must have been commonly used – appropriate for heavy loads on steep hillsides. Whether 'carres', i.e. carts, were always wheeled transport is not clear. The 'trayle carre', sometimes listed, could perhaps denote one with runners. A pair of halts (or holts), i.e. strong wicker baskets, hung one either side of a horse with the aid of a pack saddle for carrying peat or dung. Thomas Fletcher of Mockerkin (1657) left to his son 'the wayne coupe and wheels with iron axle nails with one yoke and one team', indicating a cart with separate wheels – no doubt an improvement in terms of road holding and manoeuvrability compared with the usual 'clog' wheels! The 'yoke' and 'team' constituted the harness equipment. Jenett Pearson's will (1648) mentions 'some worked naves and wheel felloes' amongst her possessions at Buttermere, i.e. spoked cartwheel hubs and rims. The implication is that there was a wheelwright working at Buttermere and presumably there was wheeled vehicle access before the early 19thC road was made around Hause Point.

The all-important plough comprised a wooden plough beam with iron components, the coulter (vertical cutting element), the sock (ploughshare) and the suck or sugg (horizontal cut below the coulter). Esther Burnyeat (1730) bequeathed to her cousin Joseph Gill 'my iron sieves, suggs, iron girdles, coulter, sock and gavelick'. 'Iron sieves' were probably rushlight holders. Scythes and sickles, the essential tools of hay time and harvest, were not that often mentioned, one instance being that of John



Pearson of Fangs (1623). James Hudson (1589) had '3 old lees', the lay or lee being the local term for scythe. Thomas Robinson of Parke (1672), tailor/yeoman, had 'leea shafts and staves 8d'. The Loweswater inventories would not support the notion of the scythe 'not becoming general until the 19C' (CML Bouch, S. Denyer).

Other hand tools included forks, shovels, spades, mattocks and the odd turf spade, perhaps for peat digging. Wood-working tools included axes, saws and wimbles/wombles – for boring holes. John Wilson of Mockerkin in 1674 bequeathed in his will: 'to his son-in-law William Dixon the sum of 5s and the one half of his husbandry gear which he promised on condition of marrying his daughter Agnes, now wife of the said William Dixon.' The inventory dated April 1675 showed that William had collected!

#### **'Bees and hunny'**

Poultry was generally listed with the odds and ends at the few pence end of the inventory. Ellen Pearson had 1s worth, 3 or 4 hens. Back in 1623 John Pearson had 'poultry, stone troughs, dunghill and peats 7s 4d'. John Fisher of Rigbank (1661) and Henry Fisher of Askill (1634) each had 4s worth - poultry farmers by the standards of the time! James Hudson's '2 swine 15 geese with hens 12s' (1589) was unusual in listing geese. Missing from Ellen Pearson's livestock inventory were a pig and bees, although the former was perhaps entered under the heading of 'bacon'. Jenett Pearson's 'one hogg or swine 8s' (1648) was typical, rarely there were 2, never more than 2. Manorial restrictions on pig ownership were common at this time to limit the impact on woodland. Goats had been eliminated at an earlier date, in the interests of woodland regeneration, and do not appear in the inventories. One pig was a common, almost essential part of the yeoman's survival plan though surprisingly there is no evidence whatsoever of pig breeding. Bees (and honey) occurred in 13 inventories, i.e. around 6%, throughout the township. They were clearly highly valued and regularly mentioned in wills. John Fisher (Rigbank 1661) had 'bees and hunny' to the impressive value of £5 2s 6d. His daughter Frances was bequeathed 'all my part of the bees at Rigbank and (those with) Peter Iredale of Thrushbank in full

satisfaction of her child's portion'. John Robinson of Thackthwaite (1664) shared 3 hives at Latterhead between two sons, and three hives 'at home' between two daughters. The term 'skep' for a beehive never arises, nor is beeswax mentioned. Honey only ever occurs in inventories with the bees and hives; either it was sold in small quantities not picked up in inventories or to more affluent non-locals.

#### **'Three score sheep and eight'**

'Sheep rearing, wool export and cloth manufacture must have been in a very sound financial state throughout this northern region at the end of the 15C' (to quote from 'The decline of the woollen trade in Cumberland, Westmorland and Northumberland in the late 16<sup>th</sup> C' by G. Elliott, *TCWAAS* 1961). There were fulling mills around every corner – Loweswater had two, at Bargate and lower down on Mosedale Beck – and there was a good export trade in the local coarse wool. However, 'by 1618 the wool growers were complaining that the wool trade had virtually ceased'. To develop England's manufacturing industry wool exports were banned and cloth manufacturing controlled. Kendal became this region's chief manufacturing centre. The supply of local coarse wool exceeded demand leaving the parts distant from Kendal without a market. The questions are whether the evidence of the Loweswater wills/inventories is consistent with this portrayal of the wool trade, and what happened to manufacturing based on the local fulling mills?

Ellen Pearson had three score and eight sheep valued at £17, an average of 5s per head. Her 10 stones of wool were valued at 5s per stone. In the 17<sup>th</sup> C 7-10 fleeces were needed to make one stone weight, 10 stones therefore represents her total wool clip, with one fleece being 1/7 - 1/10 of the value of a sheep, compared with 1/2 in medieval times and the 1/3 – 1/4 sometimes quoted for the 18<sup>th</sup> C (Susan Denyer). Although inventory prices fluctuated over time the picture given by Ellen Pearson's will was typical for Loweswater. William Iredale's inventory of 1580 perhaps captures the moment the changing wool market impacted upon the Loweswater yeoman. With an inventory dated mid-June (clipping time) he had nine score sheep valued at 3s 8d each. Under the

heading of debts of money owing to him was: 'Henry Atkinson for 16 stone of wool price 8s a stone whereof four marks is paid and the residue is unpaid, which is £3 14s 8d'. He expected 8s a stone but received 3s 4d, a price comparable with later inventory valuations. Henry Atkinson was probably a Kendal wool buyer - Thomas Atkinson appears in the Kendal records as a chapman in the wool trade (BC Jones, 'Westmorland packhorse men', *TCWAAS* 1959), with Henry, son of Thomas Atkinson baptised in 1561 (Registers of Kendal). There are no later indications in the inventories of any wool industry buyers. Robert Wilkinson of Park (Jan 9<sup>th</sup> 1623) possessed eight score sheep valued at £32. His stock of wool at £8 8s (price 5s per stone in 1623) would suggest he held all the most recent wool clip and much of the previous one. Henry Allason of Park (died January 1699) was in much the same position.

The evidence of the wills/inventories is consistent with the decline of the woollen trade as described by G. Elliott - a collapse in both price and market persisting into the 18<sup>th</sup> C. How farming in Loweswater adapted to the changes in an environment unsuited to other forms of farming is unclear, sheep flocks were maintained but presumably with much less profit attached - relying more on the sale of meat, skins, horn. There is no mention of a Loweswater (or any other) fulling mill, nor of any fuller, in any of the wills or inventories. Bargate, once a fulling mill, was mentioned a few times but only as a residence, mainly in the context of the abode of needy widows, worthy of small charitable legacies.

#### **Cloth Production - 'Distaffs and spindles'**

Domestic production of yarn and cloth was common. Jenett Pearson of Fangs (1648) had wool and yarn valued at £2, harden cloth and linen yarn 14s 8d. William Pearson, also Fangs (1711) had hemp cloth and woollen cloth to the value of £2. Twelve individuals between 1618 and 1720 had yarn and cloth exceeding £2 value, by far the most being £5 5s, all being yeoman farmers or widows of such, with no indication of commercial scale production. Spinning wheels (and 'cards' to prepare the wool) arise regularly in Loweswater inventories only from 1655, being listed twice before that date in 43 inventories

(<5%) and 31 times in 87 inventories between 1655 and 1700 (35%). Some 20% listed yarn pre-1655, 26% from 1655 to 1700. The distaff and spindle, which would not appear in inventories due to low cash value, must have been in common usage, particularly in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> C, less so after that when spinning wheels became more numerous. The common impression from textile industry histories is that this method had been replaced by the spinning wheel at an earlier time. However, Chris Aspin (*The Woollen Industry*- Shire Books) comments that 'at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> C all yarns were spun on single thread devices - spinning wheels or the ancient distaff and spindle'. *The Household Account Book of Sarah Fell of Swarthmoor Hall* records the purchase of 'spinells and whorles' in 1673, and 'in Borrowdale the method was still occasionally employed as late as the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> C' (*The Lake Counties 1500 - 1830* C.M.L. Bouch and G.P.Jones). The spinning wheel lacked the attributes of the distaff and spindle - cheapness and portability - which made the latter ideal for casual use in a farming environment.

#### **Cloth Production - 'Sieves, riddles and weights'**

While yarn was produced 'at home', the next question concerns the weaving. To what extent was the yarn put out to weavers or was that a home activity? John Burnyeat of Thackthwaite (1700) had 'webloomes and other gear' to the value of 6s. This was the only specific mention of a loom - there was no mention anywhere of 'studdles' which would have indicated a horizontal loom. John Burnyeat's will described him as a yeoman, his inventory as a weaver. Clearly he was a yeoman farmer with weaving as by-employment (diversification came early to the farmers of Loweswater!). Instances of small payments outstanding 'for weaving' (as 'for spinning') appeared occasionally in inventories. Jenett Pearson (1648) owed Richard Peile 2s 8d for weaving. Thomas Allason of Sosgill was similarly termed 'weaver', though was a 'yeoman' in his will - 'Goods and gear in his (work) shop £2 10s' appears in his inventory (1715). Matthew Woodell lived at Littlethwaite in Whinfell. As a 'webster' he was owed 5s by neighbour, William Harrison of Thackthwaite, in 1649. His typical yeoman inventory (1663) also listed small amounts of woollen cloth, hemp

yarn, spinning wheel and cards, and 'work gear belonging to his trade £1 5s'.

On this evidence, the farming inhabitants of Loweswater were producing cloth for their own domestic needs, with the option of paid assistance from a spinner or weaver. Both spinning and weaving were skills developed as by-employment.

Ellen Pearson's inventory lists 'seeves, rydles and weights – 2s', next to 'wheele and cards', i.e. spinning wheel and wool cards. Study of the inventories reveals nine similar instances of 'sieves, riddles and weights' in Loweswater between 1661 and 1679. While sieves and riddles could be for separating grain and chaff or grading oatmeal (meal sieves were occasionally mentioned) these commodities were measured by volume not weight and here were 'weights' without scales or balances. In every case where sieves, riddles and weights were listed a spinning wheel was also listed. John Woodall of Waterend (1666) had 'whele, cards, seeves, riddle and weights 4s'. The above Matthew Woodell of Littlethwaite (1663) had 'weights, ridels and seeves 2s 6d; wheel and cards 3s 4d.' In neighbouring Lamplugh, John Wood owned 'hemp, yarn, spinning wheel, cards, seeves, riddle, shuttels and weights'. Another example appears in *The Story of the Newlands Valley* (S. Grant) p 54 – in the inventory of Hugh Mayson (1664).

The presence of weights in a textile context indicates use of the vertical or warp-weighted loom. Two issues here are that the loom itself does not occur in these inventories and that the vertical loom was replaced by the more productive horizontal loom by about the year 1300 according to many weaving industry histories. Regarding the first of these, the vertical loom could be readily improvised from a few well-chosen poles from a tree or bush, nothing needed to be bought-in. Secondly the vertical loom is suited to the domestic, subsistence environment in terms of space, portability and cost. The horizontal loom would have to be the implement of choice for the professional weaver where high productivity was the key to keeping a family fed. The vertical loom was in use in Devon at this time – 'Lime Weights' are defined as 'The weights to tension the warp in a vertical loom at which the weaver stood' (*Words from wills and other probate*

*records* by Stuart Raymond) – and in N&W Scandinavia as late as the 1950s (*Textiles in Archaeology* by John Peter Wild).

The craft of weaving abounds with obscure terminology, for example reeds and raddles, studdles and heddles. The reed is a comb-like implement with teeth spaced across a bar of weft length (i.e. the width of the cloth). The raddle is similar with two bars joined by evenly spaced pegs. In use, the reed and raddle allow even thread spacing and control the finished width. A different finished width or thread density would require the appropriate reed and raddle. The familiar word 'sieve', as in a strainer, derives from the ON for rush or reed from which they were originally made. Similarly rush lights were locally known as 'sieves' The aforementioned weaving reed originally no doubt made with rush or reed, is likely to have also been given the same name, so 'sieves and riddles' in a local, textile context equates to 'reeds and raddles'. The appearance of 'sieves, riddles and weights' in the Loweswater inventories in the later 17th C does not imply sudden adoption of the vertical loom. Rather that the acquisition of well-made, affordable items gave an improvement in cloth quality with the established loom. Uniform weights would keep a more even tension on the warp threads compared with the improvised weights used previously.

The conclusion to be drawn regarding home cloth production is that it was indeed common, but underestimated from wills and inventories. The coincident occurrence of stone troughs with weaving equipment leads to a further conclusion: that the small quantities of cloth were fulled at home by the ancient, traditional method of treading in warm soapy water, a process which continued on a domestic scale until the 20<sup>th</sup> C in the remote parts of Britain (*The Woollen Industry* by C. Aspin; also *L&DFLHS Journal* no. 5). For example, listed in the inventory of Thomas Robinson of Greene at Park (1663): 'One stone trough with wheels, cards, weights and rydles 6s 6d'. William Pearson of Latterhead (1679), had 'Spinning wheel, cards, troughs, rudle and seivs 6s 6d'. Stone troughs occur in 16 Loweswater inventories, 12 in association with 'sieves, riddles and weights' and/or cloth, just 4 where neither occur.

To complete the domestic cloth manufacturing picture, Esther Burnyeat left

to her servant, Ann Bouch, 20s, a clothes chest and her giggwheel, this being 'a rotating drum with teasel heads affixed used to raise the nap on cloth'. Knitting was not mentioned in Loweswater inventories, though Robert Scott, wright, of Buttermere (1696) owed 4d to Jaine Littledaile for 'Kniteing', as well as £4 'to the apothecary' – the only such reference found.

#### **'A dicker of leather'**

Whereas much of the Loweswater by-employment was at the subsistence level, providing labour or a service to neighbours, tanning had the potential to bring money into the township. The extensive will/inventory of Henry Fisher of Brackenthwaite, yeoman farmer and tanner, illustrates the point. At his death in 1606 he had '9 daces of tanned leather £49' and 'other odd tanned leather £3' plus 'oak bark 37s'. A dicker/dacre was ten hides or skins of leather. Outstanding debts owing to him for leather included Robert Dalton £5, Richard Sympton £3 10s and Richard M... (illegible) £3 10s, all of Cockermouth. The Burnyeats of Crabtreebeck/Thrushbank were tanning on a similar scale. Peter Burnyeat of Crabtreebeck 'tanner' (1659) besides crops, sheep and cattle had leather valued at £45, bark at £7 and 'fatts (vats) and cisterns £1 10s'. 'William Burnyeat, tanner' is mentioned in a will of 1612. Peter Burnyeat of Thrushbank (1694) had leather and bark to the value of £25 10s. Another Peter Burnyeat of Thrushbank (1712) had no leather to be valued but left 'to my man John Gasthwaite, all my bark lying in the mill loft'. His funeral expenses and Doctor's bills amounted to £10, so perhaps of late he had not been doing too much leather tanning! The Loweswater baptism registers list daughters of 'John Gasketh of Thrushbank, tanner' in 1723 & 4 – presumably 'my man' of 1711 with his name spelt correctly. Both Thrushbank and Crabtreebeck were Burnyeat residences, both involved with tanning, so the location of tanning pits and bark mill could be on either property. However the bark mill had a loft and so was a substantial building, more likely to be a water mill than a horse mill, with Crabtreebeck the obvious site.

In his lecture on *Lorton and Loweswater of 80 years ago* delivered in 1891, John Bolton described the late 19<sup>th</sup> C

discovery of ancient tan pits at Redhow and Latterhead 'with bark still in and in very good preservation'. Local knowledge offered no insight regarding operational dates, nor indeed of their existence. At the date of his inventory i.e. 1606, Henry Fisher (of Brackenthwaite) was owed 14s by 'John Fisher of Latterhead for using his vessels', i.e. his leather tanning facilities. This is the earliest indication of a connection between Latterhead and tanning in the wills and inventories. Whether there were tanning pits at Latterhead at that time is not clear. William Harrison of Latterhead (1690) was a yeoman farmer with a side line in tanning, having bark and leather to the value of £3 10s. Besides the Harrisons the other notable families of Latterhead were the Pearsons and the Iredales. The Iredales may or may not have been at Redhow in the 17<sup>th</sup> C, the first mention of Redhow is of (yet another) Thomas Iredale in 1717. There were plenty of Iredales at Latterhead, which might well have included Redhow, with glimpses of tanning activity. William Iredale (1687) was described in his will as a skinner, having leather 12s, pelts £1 4s, working tools and utensils 9s. He lacked bed, food, etc. so was clearly a dependent member of a family group. 'Pelts', rather than belonging to small, furry creatures, was the term for skins and hides prepared and ready for tanning, 'leather' being the end product. So William was a tannery worker, under an unidentified tanner. An earlier William Iredale (1649), this time of High Cross, had £13 worth of leather and bark amounting to £2. Reading between the lines of his will and inventory he was probably extended family of the Wood's of High Cross (e.g. father of Mrs Margaret Wood). So his tanning interests, and the three hives of bees listed in his inventory, may well have been at Latterhead where his brothers were living.

#### **'Taylor, Wright, Smith and Miller'**

The list of debts included in Jenett Pearson's inventory (fig.2) gives more detail than do most inventories. £6 for a fine to the Earl of Northumberland may relate to a tenement admittance fine, possibly at Buttermere. The Lord of the manor of Loweswater, Thackthwaite and Brackenthwaite at this time was Mr Lawson who was owed 3s 5d in land rent. The trade to which Jenett's son Thomas was apprenticed is not given, nor does he crop up later as a tradesman. The

only specific mention of apprentices is in the will of Thomas Robinson, yeoman/tailor of Park (1672), with bequests to his two apprentices, Thomas and John Pearson, of '5s with one pair of shears' and '5s with pressing iron and yard wand', respectively. The 24 year mismatch would suggest this is not Thomas Pearson, son of Jenett! Regarding the 'smiths', i.e. blacksmiths named in inventories, there is little information beyond their names. Of the two in Jenett Pearson's inventory, the Dixons lived at Waterend, Thomas Jackson at Park. The blacksmith's trade, it seems, was not carried on as a farmer's by-employment and so, presumably, was in the hands of younger sons. Peter Iredale of High Iredale (1664) was described as a 'wright', the later 'specialisms' of cartwright, wheelwright, cooper etc. not having been established. His inventory included wheel gear, boards, 'coupper wood', one tree and some loose woods, as well as his modest farming possessions. The co-operation of wright and smith in producing such items as wheels, ploughs and hand tools is evident from the names of 4 local smiths in his debtors list – Thomas Jackson, Peter Walker, Henry Burnyeat and Matthew Iredale.

Of the shoemakers Robert Walker (of Steelbank, 1709) had working tools and leather to the value of £2 17s 6d as well as his limited farming effects. Peter Iredale of Latterhead (1689), brother of William, the skinner, had leather and work gear amounting to 20s 7d – his assets of £1 18s 3d being well exceeded by his debts and expenses. Appended to this inventory was an account of the debts and expenses settled and discharged on his behalf by his father, John Iredale, £3 16s 8d, and an application to be dismissed from any further obligations. Thomas Fearon of Mockerkin (1648) bequeathed his shoemaker's working tools to his journeyman, Lancelot Fletcher, grandfather of diarist Isaac Fletcher of Underwood, and 'did give unto every servant now dwelling in Mockerkin a pair of new shoes'. His inventory listed boots and shoes to the value of £7 8s, which suggests there were a good few servants at Mockerkin's seven farms in 1648.

Henry Wilkinson, a single man, of Mill Hill (1679) was one of just three millers named, his income from grinding the oats

and barley being supplemented by his one cow and a little crop growing. Regrettably no 'mill gear' was listed in his inventory, which included debts for mill rent of £4 6s and suggests that milling at Loweswater at this time provided a somewhat marginal existence. John Fawcett (1605) was nephew of Peter Hudson of Kirkhead and almost certainly, grandson of James (Jacobi) Hudson (1589), who owed him, 'John Fawcett mylner' for a £10 debt. Peter Winder, miller, was owed a few pence by Peter Burnyeat (1598) and Matthew Wilkinson (1623). Messrs. Fawcett and Winder in succession could have been miller at Loweswater mill; it seems likely, though not proven.

#### **'Brought upp and learnt at schoole'**

In terms of building trades there is limited information. Allan Iredale of Gillerthwaite (1708) was a waller, according to lists of debts owed, but had probably also been doing a little livestock keeping. 'Waller' in those days meant buildings rather than field walls. Ellen Iredale of Gillerthwaite, possibly his grandmother, left 'to Allan Iredale son of William Iredale base begotten 20s'. That may be why Allan was a waller, rather than a yeoman farmer, leaving an estate of just £5 6s 3d. Others it seems carried their obvious illegitimate status right through life to their wills, such as 'William Pealle alias Burnyeat' (1666) and his sister 'Isabell Burnyeat alias Pealle' (1634). Peter Bragg of Waterend (1683) was a slater, this being his principal occupation, though he did have the statutory cow and a couple of hens to look after. To digress slightly, in his will he left a cash legacy conditional upon his grandson being 'brought upp and learnt at schoole till he attaine the age of 14 years'. The only other encounter with formal education concerned Peter Bolton (1588) 'late of Loweswater, in Pembroke Hall in Cambridge'. His debtors included his tutor at Cambridge. It would be of interest to know how, and why, the son of John Bolton, seemingly a regular Loweswater yeoman and sometime bailiff, came to be a Cambridge student in the 16<sup>th</sup> C. Back on the subject of buildings and roofs, there was not a single mention in any of these wills/inventories of thatching. Thomas Iredale, the younger, of Latterhead (1662) at his death was in possession of timber/wood £4 13s, slate 4s, 'stones led

home to house 6s'and 'stees', i.e. ladders. Clearly, he was in the throes of re-building or repair. At Crabtreebeck in 1725 there were 'Goods in the new parlour' as well as 'Goods in the old parlour'; at Watergate (1737) and High Cross (1740) there were 'Goods in the new house'. When exactly the 'Great Rebuilding' got underway in Loweswater is not totally clear.

#### 'Desperate debts'

The financial side of life in 17C Loweswater is shown by Jenett Pearson's inventory in fig.2. In common with the majority of testators she had little or no ready cash and somehow, in spite of the limited literacy of the time, kept records of credit and debt arrangements with neighbours and others further afield. It was clearly sensible to avoid having all reserves of money in cash, in one place as one theft would be disastrous. There being no banks, or certainly none accessible, at the time, the informal banking system practised by all spread and minimised the risks. Debts 'with specialty' amounted to sealed legal contracts with repayment term, timescales and security specified. Debts 'without specialty' would cover smaller, informal arrangements. Two inventories listed 'desperate debts': Robert Pearson of Latterhead (1710), £2 10s, and Peter Mirehouse of Mockerkin (1705), £60. A 'desperate debt' was one with little hope of recovery, while with a 'sperate' debt there was still hope!

Jenett Pearson (fig.2) had a substantial amount (£124) at loan 'with specialty' as well as a mortgage of £90 'laid down upon the tenement at Hill in Loweswater now in the possession of Joseph Robinson'. Shrewd engagement in this aspect of the diy banking system would appear to have been more profitable than agriculture, yielding interest payments and perhaps acquisition of the securing property in the event of default. Of the more affluent inhabitants post c 1650 most were so engaged. Thomas Tiffin of Mockerkin (1675) had assets of £347, £40 being in 'ready money' and £300 owing to him by specialty. John Woodville of Waterend (1714) had debts due to him by mortgages of £280, and 'by bills, bonds and notes', £40. His total was £389. This was clearly a time when the few with money profited from the struggles and failures of

their poorer neighbours. Peter Burnyeat of Thrushbank (1694) made provision in his will '... and it is my pleasure that if the land of William Jackson of Plumbland which is to me engaged for £30 be forfeited that then the said Peter Burnyeat (heir) shall pay the aforesaid sum of £30 unto his brother and sister....'. The financial network extended well beyond Loweswater – to Haile, Caldbeck, Holme Cultram, and Grasmere. It extended even further in the case of John Burnyeat of Crabtreebeck (1725) who had an investment of £52 in two 1/32<sup>nd</sup> part of two ships. This was the only such investment in these wills and inventories.

Regarding Borrowdale in 1687-88, Thomas Denton (*A Perambulation of Cumberland 1687-88*, Winchester, Angus J.L. and Wayne, Mary) commented that 'the inhabitants are enriched by their great stocks of sheep which with very little charge do greatly increase their numbers and their owner's wealth'. He made a similar comment on Lorton and no doubt would have said the same of Loweswater. Rather than growing rich from sheep farming it would appear, from the evidence in Loweswater wills and inventories, that money lending, including mortgages, was a far more popular way to generate wealth, and without much risk or effort. It seems that not a lot has really changed in the last 300-400 years.

#### Main sources used to interpret wills and inventories.

*The Local Historian's Glossary of Words and Terms*, Joy Bristow.

*Words from Wills and other probate records*, Stuart Raymond.

*A Dictionary of Medieval terms and Phrases*, Christopher Coredon and Ann Williams.

#### Fig. 1 The inventory of Ellen Pearson

LRO/W/RW/C/R236D/45

The whole true and perfect inventory of all the goods and chattels moveable and immoveable of Ellen Peirson late of Fangs in Loweswater within the County of Cumberland widow deceased died possessed of appraised ('prysed') the 11<sup>th</sup> day of June in the year of our lord god 1663 by Thomas Allayson of Folsyke John Woodall younger William Jenkinson William Iredall of Pealle all within the parish aforesaid appointed for the said 'prysement' the day and year first above written

<b>Imprimis</b>	
Her apparel	£5-10s
<b>Item</b>	
Bedding	£5-8s
Pots pans and pewter vessel	£3-4s
Wood vessel	£1-9s
Earthen vessel	4s
Arks and chists	£5
One bed with clothes belonging to it	10s
Bedstocks	12s
Husbandry gear with some loose woods	£2-10s
Bigg oats and malt	£5-13s
Meal and grotts	£3
Sacks pokes and winden cloth	£1-15s
Beef and bacon	5s
Girdle brandreth crook & tongs	8s
Table chairs stools and shambles	10s
Ten stone of wool	£2-10s
3 Score and eight sheep	£17
15 head of beasts	£32
Fuel to fire	£1
Poultry	1s
'Cropp prysed to seed & arder'	£13-6s-8d
Two horses	£3
'Sieves rydles and weights'	2s
Wheel and cards	1s
Three stone troughs	3s
Salt with one barrel	10d
A cheese rack press bands & shackles	1s
Butter and cheese	2s
Traces and ropes	<u>1s-6d</u>
Total	£105-7s-6d

**Fig 2 Inventory and debts of Jenett Pearson**  
LRO/W/RW/C/R235A/127

Inventory of Jenett Pearson of Fangs widow prised by John Tiffin, John Johnson, Thomas Iredale and John Woodell. Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 1648. (Part thereof).

(Apparel, goods and livestock, etc amounting to £79 14s 2d)

**Debts owing without specialtie unto testator:**

John Rudd of Pickethowe	£1-10s-0d
Nicholas Nutt of Askell	£1-0s-0d
(plus 9 others totalling	£9-2s-0d)

**Debts owing with specialtie unto the said testator**

A mortgage	<u>£90-0s-0d</u>
The total sum	£305-6s-2d

**Debts owing by the said testator with specialtie:**

To Margaret Allason widow	£21-17s-0d
To the Earl of Northumberland for a fine	£6-0s-0d

**Debts owing without specialtie:**

To John Rudd for grazing	12s-0d
Mr Lawson for land rent	3s-5d
William Pearson her son for land rent	£2-10s-0d
Ellen Pearson of Fangs widow	3s-0d
Agnes Jackson of hall	5s-0d
Elsabeth Walker for wages	3s-0d
The constable William Burnyeat in arrears for taxes	14s-5d
Richard Peile for weaving	2s-8d
William Bell for mowing	6d
Thomas Dixon smith for work	6s-4d
Henry Jackson wife for drink	6d
Thomas Jackson smith for work	1s-4d
John Spenser wife for spinning	5s-3d
Peter Robinson for one pair of shoes welting	6d
(Plus 8 other items totalling	£6-4s-0d)
Paid for her son Thomas apparel the testator was bound to find the same during his apprenticeship	18s-9d
Funeral expenses	£1-10s-0d

***Paddle School, the 36; a Correction***

*by Sandra Shaw*

In my original article on Paddle School's Roll of Honour in Journal No 57 (page 3) , I transcribed F Moffat as F Mossop, so not only did I record his name incorrectly, I researched the wrong name. In my defence, the Roll of Honour was not fully in alphabetical order; his name having been listed after C Mossop and N Mossop. My follow-up article on the 36 who returned in Journal No. 59 (page 7) repeats the error.

Repeating the research, using the correct name of F Moffat, has made little difference. The only F Moffat in Cumberland in the 1911 census was George F Moffat of St Helen's Street, Cockermouth and he was only one year old. There was one F Moffat listed as a prisoner of war in Germany, who was serving as a gunner with the Royal Artillery (1459061) but there is insufficient information to tell if these are the same person. Similarly, there is insufficient information to gain meaningful results from a search of other military records. The index for WWI references in the Cumberland News and the Whitehaven News, contain no one with the name F Moffat. I apologise for getting his name wrong. That has now been corrected, but we still know nothing of him.



## **Thomas Allom's sketches of Crummock Water and Loweswater**

*by Michael Winstanley*

In LDF *Journal* 55 (2015) I outlined the background to Thomas Allom's prints of the area which were published in *Westmorland, Cumberland, Durham and Northumberland* (1832-35). Since then the Wordsworth Trust at Grasmere have catalogued and digitised a number of Allom's original pencil sketches which he made on site and which formed the basis for the finished illustrations he submitted to the publishers, Fisher and Son. These include two of this area: Crummock Water and Loweswater from Water End. The outlines of the sketches are clearly recognisable in the later prints but comparing the pencil drawings with the later versions enables us to see the features which Allom incorporated from his more general observations such as characters in the foreground to give perspective or scenes of daily life, such as the horse drawn waggon on the road. The full set can be searched by querying on line for Wordsworth Collections fine arts search.

Search online for Wordsworth Centre Collections: <https://wordsworth.org.uk/about-the-trust/the-collection.html>

**A part of the sketch for Loweswater, photograph by the author, with acknowledgement to The Wordsworth Trust**

- Choose 'Search the Collection' and then the subcategory 'Fine art: paintings, drawings and prints
- Type 'Allom' in the box for 'Creator; and it will give you a full list of all his works they hold.
- Type 'Pencil' under medium - this gives 61 results – the full set of pencil sketches.
- You can narrow it down by typing 'crummock' or 'loweswater' into keyword (use lower case only.)

Further details about Allom's work in the Lake District and elsewhere has also surfaced in a catalogue of works held by Royal Institute of British Architects Library, housed in the Victorian and Albert Museum. This comprises an extensive catalogue of items sold in 1873 after his death. Unfortunately it contains no illustrations. Among those listed, however, is a complete set of his artist's proofs for several of his books, including *Westmorland, Cumberland* illustrated, several dozen 'finished drawings' or watercolours including some of the Lake District and finished paintings completed over a twenty year period. Apart from one of the Langdale Pikes, which is in my possession, the whereabouts of most of these is now unknown.



## ***Irish poverty in Whitehaven and Cleator Moor: 1840- 1860***

*by Allan Sharman*

### **The Opening Scene**

The opening scene in the drama of poverty in the far north of England as seen by writers such as the Cocker-mouth-born poet William Wordsworth, was one of quiet romantic calm soon to be disturbed as the nineteenth century progressed. Employment became scarcer in Ireland and job seekers found their way in increasing numbers into this remote region where industrial growth was once again on the ascendency after the decline of the late eighteenth century. By 1801 the mood was pessimistic amongst the entrepreneurial class, and it was in this mood that the region entered the nineteenth century but was to see far more optimism as the spirit of regeneration took hold.

Irish migration into the far north had been long and continuous, and poverty became inextricably linked with the hardship that the Irish endured in their search for a better life. It also brought a level of destitution so far unknown in the region. Paradoxically, itinerant wandering work-seekers were a feature of both prosperity and economic decline. On the one hand, industrial growth was a magnet for itinerant labour, and on the other economic decline had the inevitable consequence of jobless tramping. Various official reports highlighted the difficulties of the social problems at the time which included: poor housing, sanitation and water supplies; rapid population growth; squalid slums; trade recession and heavy local unemployment. Seasonal migration by agricultural workers had been a feature of labour movement during the eighteenth century but the flow, particularly from Ireland, intensified in direct proportion to the success or failure of the Irish potato and grain harvest, as well as the slump in the linen trade. The Irish who came to England were therefore considered by some to be classic responders to the push factors of a patchy rural economy, and the pull factors of a more vibrant industrial economy. A

series of crop failures in Ireland between 1817 and 1845 took their toll on the population and the poor of course suffered the worst effects. This article will attempt to gain some insight into how these strangers were absorbed into the Cumberland population: where they lived and the attitudes they had to deal with and how they survived in their homes faced with a plethora of health, diet, and employment problems. It also tests the assumption that the English poor lived differently to the Irish poor.

From the charitable attention to the poor at the beginning of the century the pendulum swings into an era in which the state gradually takes over responsibility for the poor. The poor came to be seen as those 'without discipline, idle and indigent, a description attached to the Irish with all the hyperbole the press could generate in a cocktail of imagery which the historian is challenged to comprehend. The stereotype of the drink sodden Irishman was well known and, like all myths, does not stand up to close scrutiny. At the front of the quest to form public opinion on the Irish character and identity were the newspapers. The central component of this reportage was the hierarchical relationship of the Irish and British identity, namely: British superiority, Irish inferiority. There was no shortage of articles across the region that sought to inform the public on the subject of 'the idle Irish pauper':

At present Whitehaven attracts within it all the wretchedness and misery of the district, and degrades every unfortunate labourer seeking work there down to a common level. The property of Ireland swarms over to a kindred misery; disease, death and oppressive poor-rates, are the consequence.<sup>1</sup>

This grim portrait of the labourer's life in Robert Rawlinson's report to the General Board of Health revealed the wretchedness that awaited the Irish migrants who came to Britain in the hope of a better life. His evocative description reveals something of the personal connection he must have felt, as the man who had the power to change the lives of many, through his timely

<sup>1</sup> Robert Rawlinson, *A Report of the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Enquiry into Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water, and*

*Sanitary Conditions of the Inhabitants of the Town of Whitehaven, 1849, pp.8-11.*

	1851	%	1861	%	1871	%
<b>England</b>	499,229	2.98	573,545	3.06	544,533	2.56
<b>Wales</b>	20,730	1.78	28,089	2.18	22,007	1.56
<b>Cumberland</b>	9,866	5.1	10,529	5.1	11,870	5.4
<b>Northumberland</b>	12,666	4.2	15,034	4.4	14,506	3.8
<b>Cleator Moor</b>	525	25.9	1,438	36	2,497	35.4
<b>Whitehaven</b>	1,822	6.9	1,448	6.9	1,238	5.8

**Table 1. Irish adult population census data**

assessment of the health of the inhabitants and the conditions in which they lived. Commissioned to report on the state of the sanitary arrangements in the town he attempted to isolate the Irish as those who suffered in the midst of this 'consequence'. However, his criticism of the authorities and the way in which the civic amenities were administered, was unwelcome in Whitehaven.

West Cumberland, as an 'industrial heartland' of the far north is an ideal place for the historian to start if the history of this region is to be uncovered. As a principal port on the west coast; a passenger service terminal for the Irish Sea crossing; a commercial hub for the iron and coal trade and a dis-embarkation point for Irish migrants, this industrial oasis offered hope and prospect of a better life.

By 1851 the urban areas Cumberland and Northumberland contained around 50% of the population of the entire region. Many of the inhabitants were Irish migrants and recorded as 9866 (5.1%) in Cumberland and 12,666 (4.2%) in Northumberland, more than any other county except the engine room of the first industrial revolution – Lancashire (Table1). Whilst acknowledging that immigration during the famine period of 1845-1851 contributed substantially to the labour supply, it accounted for less than a third of the increase. Livelihoods of the migrants, alongside the English host population, were cyclical in manufacturing and seasonal in agricultural work, an important determinant even in periods of economic prosperity. In a good season, there was a bare sufficiency of income. In a bad season, or period of economic recession, the numbers affected by hardship in the winter months could rise significantly. It was a time also that the habits, habitation and morality of the Irish were a constant preoccupation of the authorities and there was no difficulty in finding testimonies to

this in government reports. Comments such as 'the Irish emigration into Britain is an example of a less

civilised population spreading themselves, as a kind of substratum, beneath a more civilised community'. Language like this separated the Irish poor from the 'poor' *per se* by placing them on the extreme fringe of society.

### **Housing options**

The Irish poor had limited options available to them as migrants on arrival at their destination port. Few could afford to rent a house as an independent person or family. For those who had friends or family already established in the town there was the potential to live as a lodger. For those with minimum money and no connections the common lodging houses were available in most towns. As a last resort, for those without any support network and no money, it was the workhouse and public relief. To fall under the control of the authorities was to risk having to endure the workhouse regime and in due course removal back to Ireland as their only legal place of settlement unless they had been resident in the parish for a minimum of five years after 1846. Evidently this excluded those Irish famine migrants fleeing starvation after 1845. Of course, there was always the option of 'sleeping rough' in barns, sheds or the open air, but this immediately branded the individual as a vagrant and liable to arrest and a potential sentence of hard labour. These were the hazards that the Irish poor faced in the lowest order of the working population.

With their high level of cultural coherence, generated within and outside of their homeland, connections in their new environment were readily made but could be construed as a wilful desire to be segregated from the host population. The debate regarding the strength of this conclusion is inconclusive but the main factor determining choice of housing was largely socio-economic, notwithstanding the strength of cultural ties. That some Irish migrants did live in *some* of the most squalid conditions before and after the famine

migration is generally acknowledged but it was from this that the image of the 'ghetto-Irish' emerged and with it a package of fears amongst the host community'. These fears were generated in part by the rising tide of Irish immigration and statements such as 'the product of moral degeneracy led inexorably to the 'contagion' of Irish migrants'. Reference to the size of Irish households as the reason for their poverty took little account of the fact that households often included more than one family. However, this aspect of habitation manifested itself, the term 'ghetto' had by this time developed as a socially divisive term to separate a socially and economically deprived marginalised minority.

#### **The lodging house phenomenon and policing the system**

Setting aside those who could afford to rent a house independently, the two remaining housing options for the poor (apart from the workhouse) were either to pay as a lodger with an established family, or the common lodging house, the cheapest place that provided shelter for a night or longer. The definition of the 'common lodging house' was conceived by the legislators to mean 'that class of house in which persons of the poorer classes are received for short periods and who, although strangers to one another, are allowed to inhabit one common room'. If any regulation was to be enforced, it was of course essential to ensure that the agencies knew what they were dealing with. Any room in which there were lodged more than the members of one family came within this interpretation. Common lodging houses, like the casual ward in the workhouse, were a major concern for the 'respectable classes'. They were seen to be exceedingly undesirable places as 'common lodging houses foster these seed-plots of mendacity and vagabondage'. The driving force behind the concern about the common lodging houses came from a number of sources. First, the Guardians of the union district had a preference to use them in lieu of the workhouse, mainly because they were more economic. Second, the public's need to maintain a 'clean town policy', free from the vagrant nuisance. If vagrants had a few pence they generally preferred the common lodging house option rather than a night in the workhouse casual ward.

Third, the police who, as acting relieving officers in many union districts needed to maintain some degree of regulation and control.

Policing the system to contain and control the poor and destitute could only be managed provided the numbers did not escalate beyond the level of the available accommodation. Thus, it was that, by the 1840s, the lodging house had become a thriving business for many landlords. The difficulty for the authorities was to regulate these premises in a legal manner and maintain a standard of cleanliness which would avoid the spreading of infectious diseases. By 1848 the Cockermouth Poor Law Union had adopted the option of police supervision and a similar system was recommended to be used in Whitehaven where vagrancy 'entirely owes its existence to the most thoughtless members of the community who direct their sympathies into the wrong channel'. This view was not uncommon amongst those who were determined to stamp out charitable giving on the grounds that such charity thwarted the police in their efforts to keep an eye on vagrants in the places designated by the authorities.

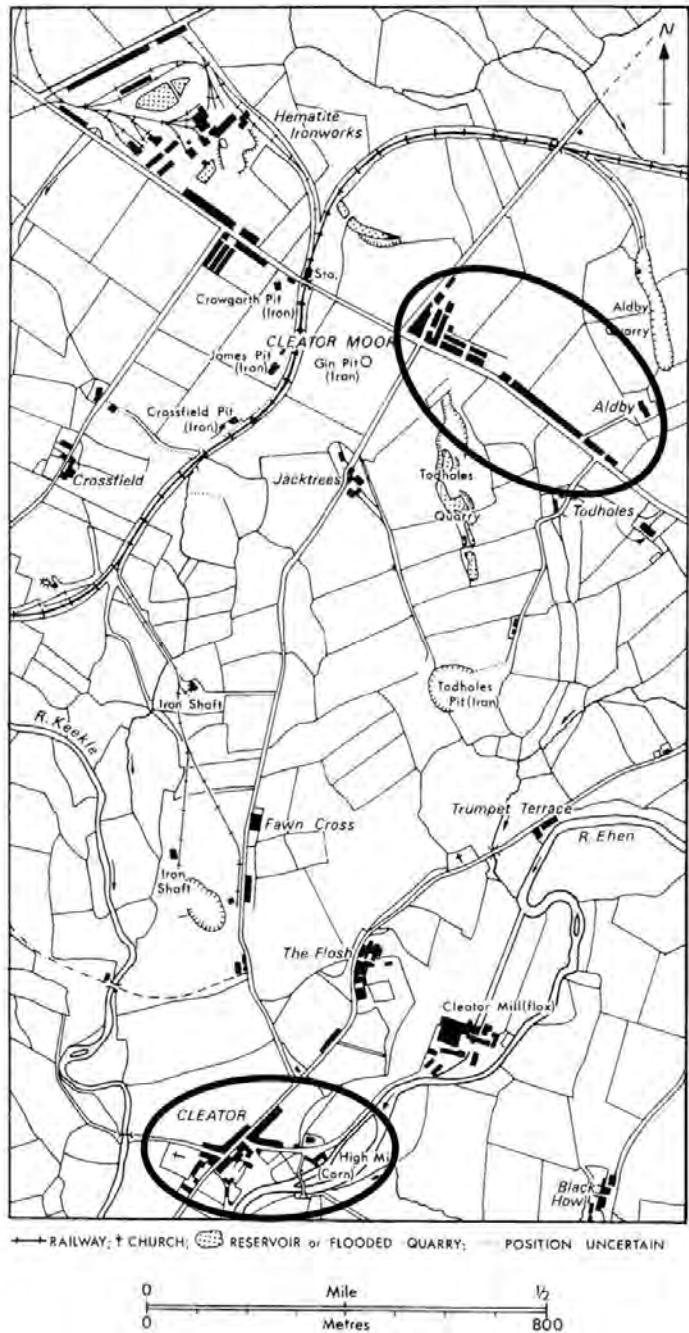
To meet the growing demand for labour, housing in Whitehaven and the surrounding mining villages was stretched far beyond its capacity. The haematite rich ore mines of Cleator, where numbers of Irish men had made their homes since 1760 just three miles inland from Whitehaven, contained 'a few good houses, about eighty cottages occupied by the workmen and employed at the two large iron forges and a flax mill' in 1829. Today the fields around Cleator Moor are spotted with the grassed over mounds of slag heaps and spoil from the excavations, evidence enough of the local English and Scottish entrepreneurs who had exploited this underground resource since the first mine opened in 1802. There was good money to be made here. Eighteen to twenty-five shillings per week was the rate in 1831 for a 'hewer' at the coal face and the renowned Irish physique was ideally suited to this demanding manual labour. One well known mine owner in the region was John Christian Curwen recorded in the mining business since the mid seventeenth century. In 1831 his Chief Colliery Agent J. Peile made it clear

to the shareholders that 'Our men have no real cause for complaint, their greatest evil is such a disposition for Idleness and Disinclination to Work, and their present poverty is our security'. This comment broke new ground in its forthright utilitarian approach to the state of the labouring class by claiming that the maintenance of the poor, in a state of poverty, guaranteed the land and mine-owning class the lifestyle to which they had become accustomed. Marx would have undoubtedly concurred with this comment!

### The growing housing crisis

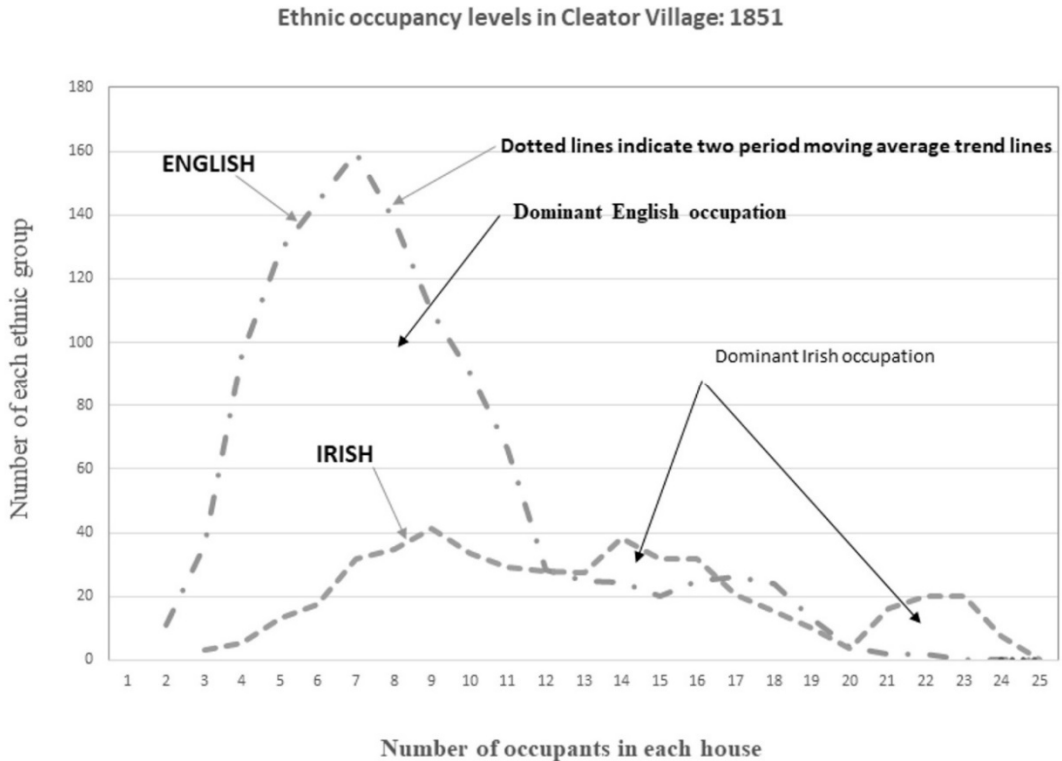
Migrants anxious to find accommodation at minimal cost were crowding into small houses of the two-up two-down or back-to-back type, where they may have had relatives or friends already established in the town who were prepared to accommodate them. They found houses like these in Cleator (Map1) which were not uncommon in poorer districts of many towns and villages: poorly constructed; damp and poorly ventilated; no sewer connections; all the conditions recognised as those likely to give rise to disease in its various forms. Three houses in Cleator Moor with exceptionally high occupancy levels provided good examples of how blame was allocated, not without justification, for health problems in the town. At No.2 Church Lane there were twelve inhabitants: the head of household, his wife and their two daughters, and eight lodgers. At No. 4 Church Lane there were seventeen inhabitants: the head of the household, an Irish woman with seven children; a single Irish woman with her four children; and four lodgers. At No. 4 Cleator Street there were fifteen inhabitants. These three examples demonstrate that 'overcrowding' in houses in Cleator Moor was not simply an Irish problem. In one house, English

### CLEATOR AND CLEATOR MOOR



Map 1: Cleator and Cleator Moor  
Source: J D Marshall, *TCWAAS*, 1978, p.166

lodgers took advantage of the facility offered by an Irish household to provide them with bed and board; in another, English and Irish lodgers lived in an Irish household; and in another Irish and English families lived in an Irish household. There were many other examples of this complex



**Figure 1: Ethnic occupancy levels in Cleator Village**

permutation of Irish, English, Scots, single, married, widowed, infants and elderly, who all lived together in the same house. The word 'crowded' takes on a different meaning here to today's definition when six or seven individuals in a small house of the size referred to above would be thought to be crowded. In the nineteenth century large families, of all religious faiths or none, were the norm. In 1847 what appeared to be the most dire living conditions, were seen as the problem of those who lived in such circumstances rather than a structural problem for the authorities. It was the threat of disease spreading across the workforce; the cost of intervention to arrest this contagion; and the risk of infection of the growing middle class and landowning gentry, that drove the demand for authoritative action, not the state of the poor.

In Cleator Village the English occupancy rate was almost the same as the

Irish in Cleator Moor (8.7 and 9.1 persons per house). The English in Cleator Moor were the least dense at 6.7 persons per house. For an even more accurate picture of the ethnic groups in Cleator Village, houses having a range of occupancy of from two to twenty-five persons were plotted (Figure 1). The important thing to note in Figure 1 is the dominant English occupancy. This is shown for those houses accommodating from two to twelve persons and for seventeen to nineteen persons as the moving average dotted line.<sup>2</sup>

The key question here is: where does the level of over-crowding begin? For a house with four rooms, two rooms on each floor, the separation of male from female sleeping areas was considered by the authorities to be important for the moral well-being of the occupants. This criterion was rarely met, particularly in lodging houses where the beds as well as the rooms were overcrowded. Six persons per house was the most frequently recorded in this sample. If this maximum house 'size' is applied the English evidently lived in over-crowded conditions in the graphical area

<sup>2</sup> This allows some 'smoothing out' of the data to show a clearer 'trend line' using the average of the two nearest values at each point.

shown for those houses having more than six occupants, which was the majority of houses. The Irish also lived in similar house 'sizes' as the English in the entire range of house 'sizes' plotted, but in smaller numbers. Where the Irish were dominant were those houses which accommodated thirteen to sixteen and twenty to twenty-five persons, again in smaller numbers. The Irish and the English therefore lived in overcrowded conditions alongside each other and occasionally separately.

#### **Into the Courts and passageways of Whitehaven**

Like many towns in Britain during the nineteenth century, the rural to urban population shift that took place was also seen in Whitehaven. As trade expanded in Whitehaven housing needs escalated as the population more than doubled from nearly 9,000 in 1801 to over 20,000 in 1851. The report by Robert Rawlinson was written with the express aim 'to place the town in such a sanitary condition as shall reduce its mortality below 23 in 1000'. Ironically the town was imaginatively enhanced by the architects in their nomenclature of streets to house this burgeoning population by names such as: Mount Pleasant, Harmless Hill, Rosemary Lane and even the name of the town itself, which could hardly be applied to the state of the housing the sanitary inspector found when he visited the town in 1848. In reality, the poor lived in the most marginalised and meanest of conditions, which were to become characterised by the type of housing which provided the barest of essentials in living space. Much of this was built by speculative builders in the minimum of time and led to the overcrowding which is now well known as part of the urban nineteenth-century landscape.

The mortality rate in Whitehaven had been recorded as between 28.13 and 32.75 for the years 1841-1848. This was far too high for the medical superintendent and totally unacceptable to him. Rawlinson referred to the occurrence of disease and the significance of the lodging houses in its prevalence when he said, 'Of the 26 cases in Mount Pleasant in 1848, one quarter were fatal. Nearly all the cases in Ribton Lane were brought from one or two lodging houses which are always crowded with

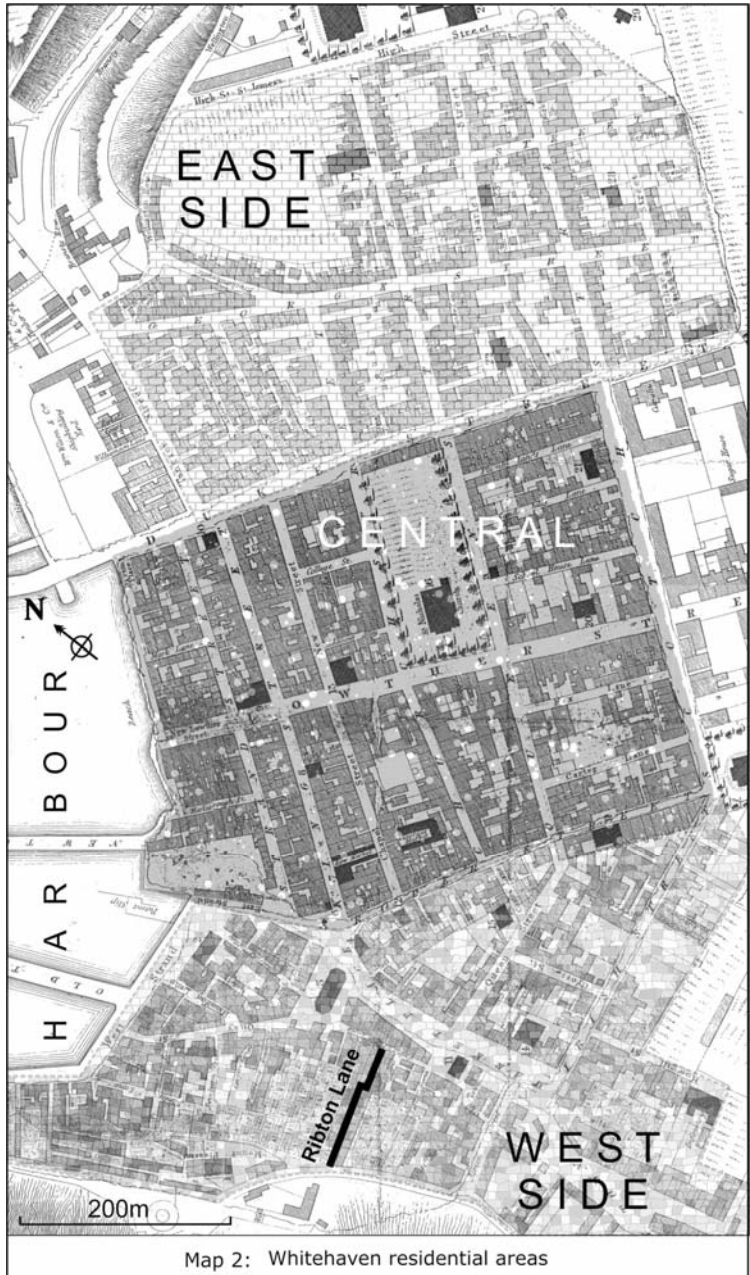
innumerable Irish. From Harmless Hill twelve cases were recorded entirely from one lodging house.'<sup>3</sup> However, in these observations he has not provided any evidence that the Irish residents occupied more or fewer of the homes visited; nor did he indicate that there were more or less Irish homes that were more or less dirty than the English. He simply used the word 'many, which there is no reason to doubt, but impossible to enumerate. He was more specific in his categorisation of the five home types in the next section of his report. In the range of dwellings, he described he considered the high density of the population in the locality as a factor frequently associated with the Irish. A feature that the press was prone to use in their polemical articles. One witness at the meeting, called by Rawlinson to examine the state of the town, claimed that 'much of the overcrowding referred to in statements by previous witnesses occurred in the houses occupied by the Irish immigrants which included cellars, small room tenements, courts, passages and vagrant lodging houses assessed for size, occupants and livestock, including pigs, kept indoors'.

To test the assertion that the Irish were the principle occupants of the common lodging houses, Ribton Lane was isolated as one of the worst examples of housing conditions in the town (Map 2, based on John Wood, c. 1830, Carlisle Record Office). The most recurrent job classification, on the census enumerator's sheets, was 'coal miner' followed by 'agricultural labourer' with a further twelve listed including cotton weaver, fisherwoman, hatter, stone mason, coach driver, servant, and one male who was listed as an Irish schoolmaster occupying a house with his wife and eight-year-old daughter. Note here the absence of the 'well paid' miner and also the fact that a census snapshot offers no clear indication of the length of residency of any of the occupants nor whether they were in or out of work. This example could be considered at the extreme edge of the poverty spectrum when considering accommodation for the poor. The survey was carried out using the data from the 1851 census. The three-year gap since Rawlinson's report would inevitably have resulted in some demographic change in the town, but a

<sup>3</sup> *Rawlinson Report*, 1848, p.11.

report carried out fifteen years later in 1863 indicated little change in either housing conditions or occupancy levels to those of 1848 therefore the 1851 census figures can be used with some confidence. Ribton Lane was comprised of 25 houses occupied by 64% English, 34% Irish, 2% Scots. For the twelve houses defined as common lodging houses there was a relatively even distribution of Irish and English with an overall proportion of 52% of English, 45% of Irish and a small proportion (0.3%) of Scots. The high level of Irish occupancy in these particular houses on this particular street, when compared to the overall level of occupancy in the rest of the town, was extraordinarily high and it was these figures that were eagerly taken up by the press which isolated percentages to emphasis prejudice, but two important elements emerged. First, Ribton Lane had a majority of English occupants – *twice as many* as Irish occupants. Second, the two houses with the largest number of occupants, one with 20 residents, the other with 25, had contrasting numbers of Irish and English occupancy ratios: one with 14 Irish to 6 English, the other 5 Irish to 20 English. These findings demonstrate

with clarity that in the 'worst street' in Whitehaven there were more English occupants than Irish, and in the two houses with the highest number of occupants there were similar numbers of Irish and English. 'Always' and 'innumerable' were unfortunately words which were casually applied in the authority's reports and promoted misconceptions and inaccuracies to be embedded in the language of the day. However, this was only one street in the whole of Whitehaven. What of the rest of the town?



Map 2: Whitehaven residential areas

To clarify this a sample area consisted of sixteen streets, courts and lanes was examined which provided a remarkably similar picture to the 'one street' Ribton Lane survey. Only two small courts of four to six houses were recorded as having 50-57% of Irish occupants. For the other 216 houses in fourteen lanes and courts the Irish were in the minority. Most importantly, all were characterised by their multiple occupancy of English and Irish residents. None were exclusively English or Irish. There was a clear indication of the

dominance of English heads of households in the sample which was recorded as 61%, compared to the Irish heads of households at 39%. Where the Irish may have displayed their particularity was in the number of lodgers residing with them. In short, Irish households tended to include more than one family. The frequency of lodgers in all households suggested the high value of the income supplement for families on low incomes and could be construed as an intrinsic coping strategy.

To widen the sample area even further, data from the 1851 census was analysed. The sample was limited to the town's main residential area where the majority of the migrants were known to have lived and excluded the outer residential areas of Harrington, Hensingham, Preston Quarter and the rural hinterland even though they were known to contain Irish residents. The town was divided into roughly three parts: the west side, the east side and the central area (Map 2). The sample size of 14,373 residents comprised 12,319 English (86%), 1,777 Irish (12%), 277 Scots (2%) (Table 14). Although the sample did not record occupancy levels of individual houses, and therefore measure any degree of overcrowding, it clearly indicates that all groups lived alongside each other in all areas, including the poorest areas referred to in Rawlinson's report. Of the 277 Scots recorded across the town there did not appear to be any concentration of occupation except for one street where thirteen Scots were located. Instead, they were found to be generally 'sprinkled' across the town in small numbers as lodgers or residents in all areas. The only difference between the Irish and Scots occupancy was the number of persons, not the preferred location.

#### **Irish Catholics in Whitehaven**

The children of individuals and families provided further insights into the overall picture of settlement and movement of migrants into and beyond Whitehaven. From the baptismal records of the Catholic chapel built in 1761 in the heart of the town's western housing area there was a strong indication of the perceived need for the rite of baptism in the lives of Whitehaven's Catholic population. Baptism in the nineteenth-century was not just

desirable by the parents it was a cultural necessity for both Catholics, Protestants and non-religious across all social classes. In the years 1845 to 1851 there were an average of 182 catholic baptisms a year, reaching a maximum of 216 in 1850-1. Some indication of the Irish parentage of these infants was obtained by examining the surnames bearing in mind the unreliability of testing for 'Irish' names which can be similar to Scots and English. In 1851 there were 104 identifiable names (48% of the total registered) which could be confidently assigned to Irish heritage. There is also no reason to doubt that there would have been a number of Irish born residents firmly in place prior to the 'famine wave' of immigrants into Whitehaven in 1845-9. The number of Catholic baptisms climbed steadily through 1847, the critical year in Irish famine history, to record a small drop in 1849 after which it rose again to a plateau in the census year of 1851, with a little over an average of four per week. What is surprising is that the cumulative total of those children identified as of Irish parentage and baptised in the Catholic Church between 1845 and 1851 amounts to 635 (48% of 1274), a far larger number than those Catholic children under six years old who lived in Whitehaven at the time. The question arises, 'where did they all go'? As discussed earlier in this chapter many migrants tramped inland to places like Cleator, Egremont and the surrounding villages where they could hope to find employment in the iron mines. Even in Cleator, which was the largest settlement village and the one that offered the greatest chance of employment for those moving inland, there were only 516 Irish-born inhabitants in 1851, which accounted for a possible 60 children (using the sample percentage used in Whitehaven), and this does not allow for those children who would

**Table 2: Percentage of occupants of English, Irish in Whitehaven**

<b>Town Area</b>	<b>English (% occupants)</b>	<b>Irish (% occupants)</b>
<b>West Side</b>	81	17
<b>Central</b>	89	9
<b>East Side</b>	87	11



have been of protestant parentage. The most probable answer was that they made their way eastwards with high hopes of employment where increasing numbers of Irish were settling in Tynemouth, Newcastle, and Middlesbrough, towns where ship building and the coal mining industry were rapidly expanding. The east-west routes via Stainmore to Middlesbrough and via Hexham to Newcastle were well-established carriage routes for commercial and passenger purposes. Furthermore, the new railway connecting Carlisle to Newcastle was opened in 1839, followed by the opening of the northern route connecting Newcastle and Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1847. Both these lines would have been available for passengers when the influx of migrants accelerated in the 1840s. As an alternative to being on foot or in an open carriage, this was a far more favourable option for the few who could afford the fare. In addition to the attraction of potential employment, there was a more subtle inducement to move on to the east of the region. This came in the form of 'the most favourable surroundings...and the solvent nature of the society into which they entered. The Irish here 'were accorded no blame for 'Irish fever', or for the epidemic'. There would have been an awareness of this societal ambience from kith and kin who offered support to new-comers from the west of the region. The long cart ride or tramp of 110 miles from Whitehaven must have been worth enduring for some, if only to escape accusations of blame for the ills of the host population. These connections between the western landing point of the migrants and the Tyneside and Newcastle magnets of employment must have been worth exploring, particularly if housing conditions in Whitehaven were as bad as Rawlinson described. The housing conditions that awaited them at the end of this journey however were not unlike the conditions that they had left behind.

### Conclusion

Is there an objective response to the assertion that the Irish poor lived differently to the English poor? Rawlinson's report was based on the housing conditions and state of the town rather than the density of population of the Irish and inevitably his attention was drawn to the

sanitary and health problems of the poorest areas and their connection with the mortality rate. With limited options, the Irish poor frequently chose places to live on the extreme margins of the lowest economic continuum which included the common lodging houses where they had some chance of meeting up with their fellow countrymen. This did lead to some degree of 'clustering' in overcrowded accommodation. However, no evidence of the 'ghetto phenomenon' was found and the hypothesis that the Irish lived exclusively in 'disease ridden ghettos' cannot be substantiated. The Irish were almost as likely to be in a household size of two to six persons as a household of ten to fifteen persons and even in the 'worst' houses in the 'worst streets' there was no dominance. On the contrary, it was shown that the English and the Irish poor lived in similar conditions to others in the same area in shared housing and shared streets. In addition, the results demonstrated the existence of 'poverty ghettos', defined as areas where there was a significant problem of poverty, confined to a specific area, exhibiting the kind of problems that Rawlinson found in his report.

In exploring the evidence and statistics which contribute to the overall picture of life for the migrant communities not one story from the hand of the Irish poor has emerged. What is left to the historian are the stories of those who rejected them, counted them, controlled them and cared for them. Without their personal stories now lost in the shadows of history, writers on this topic will continue to have difficulty in understanding the complexity of their condition.

### Further reading on Irish Immigration:

- Gertrude Himmelfarb, *the Idea of Poverty* (New York, 1984)  
 Steven King, *Poverty and welfare in England 1750-1850* (Manchester, 2000)  
 D. M. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration, The Irish in Victorian Cumbria*, (Liverpool, 1998)  
 D. M. MacRaild, *The Great Famine and Beyond* (Dublin, 2000)  
 J. D. Marshall and John K. Walton *The lakes Counties from 1830 to the mid-twentieth century* (Manchester, 1981)  
 Paul O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration*, (Dyfed, 2000)

## ***The forgotten WWI Air Aces of Loweswater***

*by Walter Head*

Thomas Robinson was born at Greenlands, Cockermonth, in 1844 and his wife Elizabeth was born in 1862, at Liverpool. Following their marriage, part of their life was spent living and working in South Africa, where they were classed as Colonial Residents, and it was here in the Transvaal that both their sons were born. Percy Dickinson Robinson was born in 1894 and Thomas Vivian Robinson was born on 23rd March 1896. By the time of the 1911 census they were all back in England, living at the Grange, Loweswater.

The first powered flight across the English Channel took place in 1909. The Royal Flying Corp, R.F.C. was formed on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1912. The R.F.C. merged with the Royal Naval Air Services, R.N.A.S. on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1918 to form the Royal Air Force. The R.F.C. was used during the First World War, initially to observe and report enemy positions, but this inevitably led to armed conflict in the skies with the enemy. Due to the unreliable nature of the new flying machines, and the fact that the enemy pilots had vastly more experience in combat, the R.F.C. became known as the Suicide Club. A new pilot arriving at the front had a life expectancy of 11 weeks and an 85% chance of being either killed, wounded, or captured. A contributing factor to the high death rate was the fact that senior officials sitting behind their desks in London decided not to issue parachutes to the pilots, as they thought that this would encourage pilots to abandon their damaged aircraft rather than fight on.

**PERCY DICKINSON ROBINSON** joined the R.F.C. and trained at the Grahame White School, at Hendon, and on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1914 gained his R.A.C. certificate, No 843. He joined 57 Squadron after its formation in June 1916. He rose through the ranks, being promoted to Lieutenant on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1915 and to Flying Officer on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1915. By the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1917 he was described as Captain and Flight Commander. For some reason, in March 1918 he was described as Temporary Captain in the Army. Described as an intrepid pilot, he was awarded the Military Cross for his daring work against the

enemy, and tackling a number of enemy planes single handed. The citation reads: -

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. While on a photographic reconnaissance he was attacked by ten enemy aeroplanes. He handled his machine with such skill that his observer shot down two enemy machines and dispersed the remainder. Though his machine was very badly damaged and almost unmanageable, he continued to take photographs, and finally brought his machine back safely. He has taken part in a large number of photographic reconnaissances and over seventy bomb raids, and has shown the greatest courage and determination on all occasions.

In 1917, 57 Squadron were equipped with Airco D.H.4s, they were two seater biplanes of all wooden construction which were used for long range bombing and reconnaissance missions. On the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1918, Percy, now flight commander, along with his observer, 18-year-old Lieutenant John Quintin Frederick Walker, climbed aboard their plane serial No A7674 and took off for a duty bombing mission over enemy territory. When they failed to return they were reported missing. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1918, both were officially recorded as killed in action. Percy was aged 24. No bodies were recovered and Percy's name is listed on the Arras Flying Service Memorial located in the Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery in Arras, France. It contains the names of almost 1000 airmen who lost their lives on the Western Front and have no known grave.

**THOMAS VIVIAN ROBINSON** married Sarah Gertrude Illingworth in 1915. Thomas farmed at Waterend Farm, Loweswater, but in late 1917 he decided to enlist in the forces, and sold all his stock of 28 head of cattle and 6 horses at Cockermonth, on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1918. These raised just short of £800. Thomas Vivian enlisted in the R.F.C. on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1918, was allocated serial Number 117641 He was listed as a farmer on his enlistment documents. He completed his training and transferred to the R.A.F. as an observer with the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. He embarked for France. In 1918 No 20 Squadron was equipped with Bristol Fighters which were two-seater fighter and reconnaissance aircraft with a top speed of 198Km/hr. These planes were

very manoeuvrable and could hold their own with the single seater enemy fighters.

On the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> July 1918, Thomas wrote a letter home saying that he had returned safely from an engagement with the Huns, two British aircraft had been lost and the enemy had lost five planes, some observers had been killed. Later that day, 4<sup>th</sup> July, he climbed aboard his aeroplane, along with his Canadian pilot 23-year-old 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Allan James McAllister, a very good pilot, and son of John & Mary McAllister of Quebec Canada. They were to carry out manoeuvrability tests and to test their guns on the firing range. While carrying out a steep vertical climb the aircraft engine stalled and the plane nose-dived to the ground. The pilot was killed on impact but Thomas was pulled from the wreckage alive but unconscious. Thomas died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. Both men had elected to fly together and had survived many aerial combats. Thomas had been in France for 3 weeks and died age 23.

The men were buried alongside each other in Longuenesse (St Omer) Cemetery, Thomas in grave ref V.C.45, and Allan in grave ref V.C.46.

The death of Thomas left behind a young widow Sarah Gertrude and an eighteen-month son, Thomas Anthony, born on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1916. It was the second tragedy to hit Sarah, as her younger and only brother, Bruce Garnett Illingworth private 20237 of the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers, had been killed at the Somme on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 1916, age 19. He died 3 hours after being hit in the neck by shrapnel while advancing into enemy trenches. His body was not recovered so he has no known grave. His name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial pier and face 8C, 9A and 16A. Sarah Gertrude had therefore lost a husband, a brother, and brother in law in the fighting.

## ***The Kirkstile and the Monastic Lands of Loweswater (revised)***<sup>1</sup>

*by Derek Denman*

The Kirkstile in Loweswater is very rare, as

a farm tenement in our area which can be placed in the twelfth Century, and that is thanks to the grant of the chapel and land to the new Priory dedicated to St Bega, now known as St Bees. Little has been written on the monastic holdings in Loweswater, and nothing on what happened to them after the dissolution. A hypothesis was floated in the article on Loweswater Mill in Journal 58, and this article will take that investigation further; perhaps as far as it can go, because the records are few.<sup>2</sup> This article relies on the work of other researchers, and a few new scattered clues, to produce what will remain just a hypothesis on the monastic lands of Loweswater, and other new sixteenth century enclosures, but which is consistent with all available evidence.

An Annex is attached discussion the lords of the manor from Richard Robinsin in 1545, up to the sale to the Anthony Patrickson in 1593. A new assessment of Richard Robinson is proposed.

### **St Bega's Priory and the Kirkstile tenement.**

This area was brought into Norman England in 1092, and so we have no Domesday for Loweswater or Cumberland. The Benedictine priory of St Bega, a cell of St. Mary, York, was founded in approximately 1125, or certainly between 1120 and 1135, by William Meschin, baron of Egremont. It had a prior and six monks. The priory was endowed with gifts of land and chapels, creating the parish of St Bees. One such gift was 'the Chapel of Lawswater and two bovates of land and common of pasture'.<sup>3</sup> This grant was made by Ranulph de Lindesay, who died before 1158. Loweswater was probably a pre-Norman settlement, already sufficient in size to have a chapel. The grant of the chapel gave the priory the right to the tithes and offerings of the wider settlements and population it served, while the priory was to provide ministry to that population.

The two bovates of land were not identified, other than being in Loweswater. While a bovate was a measure of land, often about twenty statute acres, a grant of two bovates meant a standard peasant holding, the cultivated land of a farm tenement, to support a peasant family. The hamlet of Loweswater was a settlement in the forest

<sup>1</sup> This article has been revised in May 2019 following further study of the origins of the manor.

<sup>2</sup> Journal 58, p.22-3

<sup>3</sup> James Wilson, *The register of the priory of St. Bees*, Surtees Society, 1915, p.2

of Copeland, in the barony of Copeland/Egremont, with its open arable land lying towards Crummock. The common of pasture would be a shared right to keep stock on the commons normally used by the inhabitants of Loweswater. The priory would own the freehold of the land for one farm tenement, to be developed, but not an enclosed part of the common. This grant was supplemented c.1200 by the grant from Richard de Lucy of the facilities for a 20 cow dairy farm.<sup>4</sup>

The farm tenement developed by the priory is not identified as the Kirkstile until after the dissolution of St Bees Priory, in 1539. It first appears by name in the grant of the confiscated monastic lands in Loweswater, in 1549, by Edward VI to Lord Grey of Wilton and John Bannister.<sup>5</sup> This was a small part of a grant of monastic and other confiscated property made to Lord Grey, who had commanded the cavalry at the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh in 1547. This was a part of the 'rough wooing', a war promoted by Henry VIII, and intended to encourage the Scots to agree to the marriage of the infants Edward Tudor and Mary Stewart. This grant to Lord Grey in 1549 was, in effect, made by Edward Seymour, self-appointed Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector of the realm and the infant King's person. A few months after this grant, Somerset fell from power.

#### Identifying the monastic property in records

The survey for the dissolution of the priory, and the grant of 1549, also identify a large sheep heath on Loweswater common, belonging to the priory, which is not present in the original grant to the priory in the twelfth century. To understand the monastic lands, it is best to give the relevant extracts from documents first, and then make an interpretation of the Kirkstile and the sheep pasture.

At the dissolution, the survey in 1539 of the monastic property included: 'A shepe

pasture upon the morez at Lowsewater, xs', that is; valued at 10s rent.<sup>6</sup>

In July 1549, the above grant to Lord Grey, of extensive monastic lands and other attainted lands, included, in addition to the manor of Brackenthwaite: 'premises called Kirkstile, Kirkclose and Millhow in Loweswater, and premises at Brickness Field or Gascarth in Buttermere, all in Cumberland, all lately held by Henry Earl of Northumberland; land on Loweswater Moor in the tenure of James Robinson, lately held of the dissolved Priory of St Bees'.<sup>7</sup>

Almost immediately, in July 1549, Lord Grey sold the manor of Brackenthwaite and the property in Loweswater to Richard Robinson, who already held the manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite, by purchase from Henry VIII in 1545; 'in 3 Ed. 6. there is a licence to them to alienate unto Richard Robinson clerk a cottage called Kirkstall and two little closes called Kirkcroft and Milnehow in Loweswater, and pasture for 300 sheep on Loweswater moor, late parcel of the possessions of the cell of St. Bees'.<sup>8</sup>

In Richard Robinson's will of 1549, his Loweswater property included the manor, 'Brickness Field' and 'the Shepegate of Loweswater'.<sup>9</sup> This shepegate appears once more in 1551/2, in a purchase of George Lamplugh's rights to it, and his sheep on it, by Thomas Stanley, Robinson's executor.<sup>10</sup>

Lastly, the 1590s disputes between Anthony Partickson and his tenants included:-

Henry late Earl of Northumberland was seized of the manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite in fee and of all the messuages lands and tenements in Loweswater and Thackthwaite saving one tenement in Loweswater called the Kirkstele and one heaf called Mosedale Heaf and a parcel of ground called Birkness field... and that the said tenement called Kirkstele and the said heaf and the parcel of ground called Birkness field being come into the hands of the said late king Henry the eighth some part by the dissolution of the Abbey of St Bees and some part otherways – came to the said Richard Robinson.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, *Register St. Bees*, no.29p.57

<sup>5</sup> CACW, DWM/11/160/10

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, *Register St. Bees*, p.598

<sup>7</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/10, Letters Patent of Edward VI, 19 July 1549, to William Grey Baron Grey of Wilton and John Bannister, esquire. CACW/DWM/11/160/1, Letters Patent of Henry VIII granting Manor of Loweswater to Richard Robinson, clerk.

<sup>8</sup> Nicholson & Burn, *The history and antiquities of the counties of Westmorland and Cumberland*, 1777, Vol.2, p.61

<sup>9</sup> TNA/PROB11/32/557, will of Richard Robynson or Robinson, Clerk

<sup>10</sup> CACC/DLAW/4/1/1

<sup>11</sup> CACW/DWM/11/172

1530	1531	1539	1545	1549 July	1549 October
<b>Henry Percy, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl</b>					
Manor of Loweswater	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Richard Robinson	Richard Robinson	Richard Robinson
Manor of Thackthwaite	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Richard Robinson	Richard Robinson	Richard Robinson
Byrkness Field	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Richard Robinson	Lord Grey <sup>12</sup>	Richard Robinson
Chantry of Brigham	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Richard Robinson	Richard Robinson	Richard Robinson
Manor of Brackenthwaite	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Lord Grey	Richard Robinson
Mockerkin & Sosgill	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Edward VI <sup>13</sup>	Thomas Percy, 7 <sup>th</sup> Earl
<b>St. Bees Priory</b>					
Kirkstile tenement	Priory St Bees	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Lord Grey	Richard Robinson
Mosedale sheep heaf	Priory St Bees	Henry VIII	Henry VIII	Lord Grey	Richard Robinson
Loweswater Chapel	Priory St Bees	Henry VIII <sup>14</sup>	James&Wm Robinson	James&Wm Robinson	James&Wm Robinson

**Table 1. The descent of the various property elements**

Analysis of the records above shows that in 1539 the monastic property contained a large freehold sheep-heaf in Mosedale, that is the valley of Mosedale Beck, which could support 300 sheep, and had a rental value of ten shillings. In July 1549, the tenant of this sheep-heaf was James Robinson. This same sheep heaf was called the Shepegate by Robinson. A shepegate is a term which appears in some surveys of monastic property for the dissolution, for a pasture on the common. In the survey for the dissolution of Fountains Abbey, in the manor of Malham: 'Item, ther is a Shepegate upon the common morez in somer for a wether flock and a yow flock, wiche is worth by yere, late in the hands of the Monastery afforesaid, xiijs. iijd'.<sup>15</sup>

The documentary evidence suggests that the sheep-heaf or shepegate on the Loweswater common at Mosedale, was a discrete and exclusive pasture with boundaries, if not fences, which could be sold and occupied at the dissolution.

Also, analysing the above records, 'premises called Kirkstile, Kirkclose and Millhow', from the 1549 grant, the 'cottage called Kirkstall and two little closes called Kirkcroft and Milnehow', from Nicholson and Burn's description of the 1549 sale and the 'tenement in Loweswater called the Kirkstele', are three descriptions of the same property. That is the farm tenement called the Kirkstall/Kirkstile or Kirkstele in 1597, comprising the farmstead, its closes and its common rights, but not including the 'heaf called Mosedale heaf'. 'Milnehow' was not the customary farm tenement, Mill Hill.

#### **The origins of the Mosedale sheep-heaf or shepegate.**

How and when did the priory acquire their own substantial sheep-heaf at Mosedale, considering that they were originally granted just rights on the common with their peasant-sized landholding? Before 1230 there was no manor of Loweswater, and the monks were able to develop their commercial interests though a direct relationship between the priory of St Bega, its superior abbey of St Mary's at York, and the lordship of Egremont. The principal source of wealth, created by the monasteries of northern England, came

<sup>12</sup> Byrkness was granted twice by the crown.

<sup>13</sup> The grant of lands to Lord Grey, taken from the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl must have preceded the restoration of local lands to the seventh 7<sup>th</sup> Earl.

<sup>14</sup> VCH/cumb/vol2/pp178-183. On 21 November 1541, Thomas Leighe was granted a lease for

twenty-one years of 'St. Bege monastery, with the rectory of Kyrkeby Beycoke and chapels of Loweswater, Ennerdale, Eshedale and Wasedale.'  
<sup>15</sup><http://www.kirkbymalham.info/KMI/malhamm oor/tarnhouse.html>

from the wool trade, exported through the east-coast ports to markets in Europe.

In 1230 part of the Barony of Egremont was separated to equalise the inheritance of two sisters. That new manor, to be held of the King, and containing Loweswater, Thackthwaite, Mockerkin and Sosgill, came to Alice de Lucy.<sup>16</sup> She was the wife of her step-brother, Alan de Multon (abt. 1205 – c.1270). The area of that created manor, later known as Balnes, is remembered by the area covered by the pre-reformation chapel of Loweswater. That same area would contain the commons of Loweswater, which provided a shared resource for the hamlets named about, and for the monks of St Bees.

Alan de Multon created the first deer park there, enclosed from the common. The park would be a safe space for a herd of deer to be bred and contained. They would be released as necessary for hunting, presumably within the new manor, which would retain its role and its management as forest.

Alan de Multon's son, Thomas de Lucy (abt. 1230 - bef. 1305), who took his mother's name, was said by Thomas Denton, to have been seated at Loweswater.<sup>17</sup> However, the nature and purpose of his building at Balnes in the late thirteenth Century is unknown.

After his father's death c.1269, Thomas extended the Park, by taking more land in from the common, causing a dispute with the priory in 1286 over access to grazing. Carta 106 of the *Register of the Priory of St Bees* records the dispute and the resolution.<sup>18</sup> Thomas de Lucy's extended park had brestricted the access of the monks, with their animals, to the dubs in the beck eck and the commons beyond. Carta 106 records that the monks were to be allowed access to the dubs, with their animals and carts. Also, they would now be able to lead their animals, when necessary, from the chapel of Loweswater as far as the Kirkeheved [Kirkhead] and have access to a pasture.

The pasture has no stated bounds or a size, and is not said to be enclosed or exclusive. However, it does appear to be the origin of the monk's grazing rights at Mosedale, which developed into the pasture

for 300 sheep, as noted by the commission valuing the monastic property for the dissolution. The sheep would be fell-going, and the Mosedale pasture would presumably be a large additional exclusive asset. The access this pasture would be from the steading, now the Kirkstile Inn, and directly over the ford now crossed by Church Bridge. Kirkeheved would be the headland near the church, now represented by a property of that name, but there is no evidence that there were dwellings over the beck at Kirkhead or Kirkgate in the thirteenth century.

The evidence of Carta 106 suggests that the priory's sheap-heaf included land beyond Kirkhead, which is to the east of Mosedale Beck. The natural boundaries would be Church Beck and Mosedale Beck, in a ravine. The eastern boundary might be the wall of the extended deer park. The name Kirkgate is not known to be recorded before the reformation, though the name would easily describe the point of access to and from the monks' pasture, and the old fell road branching to provide the shortest routes to Buttermere by one branch, and to Ennerdale and St Bees by the other. The road to Fangs brow gained more importance when Whitehaven was created, and the important modern motor roads are not necessarily the roads once used on foot and with stock.

Figure 1 illustrates these medieval elements.

### The fulling mills

The medieval land use in Lorton and Buttermere has been established by Angus Winchester, but there does not appear to be sufficient information about Loweswater for that to be done.<sup>19</sup> In particular, because the manor had been granted or sold by the Henry VIII to Richard Robinson, there is no Percy Survey of 1578 to provide a staging point, except in Mockerkin and Sosgill, which was restored to the Percy family. Other than the Park and the sheep heaf, there seems to be only one medieval documentary clue to land use over Church Bridge, and that is the fulling mill. I am grateful to Angus Winchester for use of his notes, which contain a reference, in the

<sup>16</sup> Cal. Docs. Scotland, Vol.1, no. 1106

<sup>17</sup> Angus Winchester, Ed John Denton's history of Cumberland, 2010 p.54

<sup>18</sup> Wilson, *Register St Bees*, p.144-6, Carta 106

<sup>19</sup> Angus Winchester, *Landscape and society in medieval Cumbria*, John Donald 1987, Appendix

Figure 1. Plan of medieval features concerning the property of St Bees Priory.

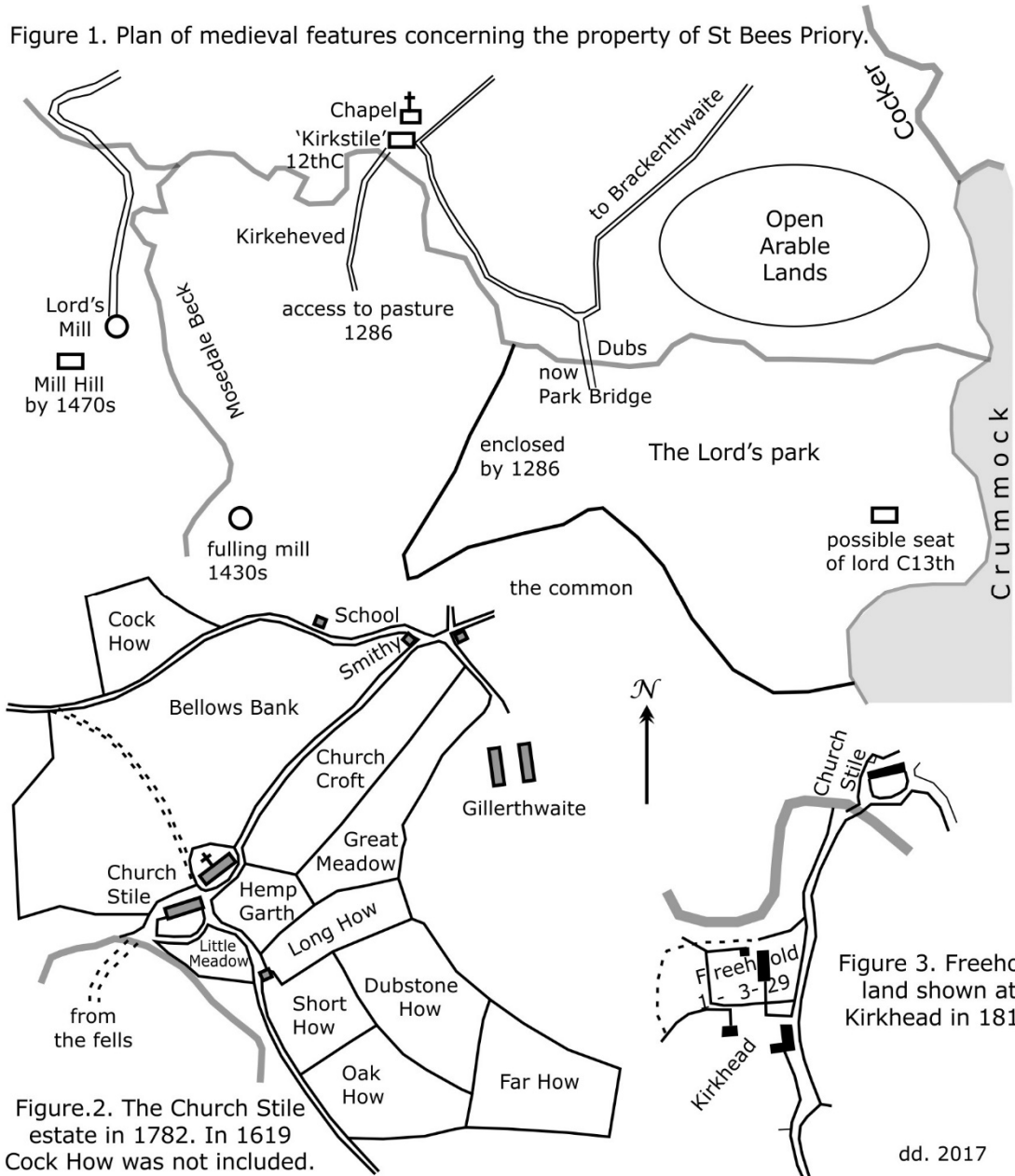


Figure 2. The Church Stile estate in 1782. In 1619 Cock How was not included.

1430s, to a newly built fulling mill: '2s from farm of a certain parcel of land on [super] Mosedalebek let to John Richardson of Thursbank for a fulling mill newly constructed, as appears by the court roll 5 years ago'.<sup>20</sup> This fulling mill was created some 150 years after the priory's pasture rights were created, and it would be on land taken in from the commons. It is likely to be the fulling mill at Bargate, though the

name at the time is not known and the land needed would be small. Placed at the extremities of the enclosures, the fulling mill might mark the end of the priory's pasture. From the kiln references in the close name of 1780, the farmstead called Steelbank (Stilebank) to the west of Mosedaleback, may have grown from a potash kiln attached to the fulling mill, harvesting and burning bracken from the bank.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> DLEC/29/1 Reeve's accounts, Loweswater, 1437-8

<sup>21</sup> See *Journal* 58, pp.22-3

A fulling mill is used to treat woollen cloth, prior to the cloth being sold or used locally. This new mill, perhaps augmenting or replacing one nearer the foot of Mosedale Beck, was supportive of the priory's thriving enterprise in sheep. It created options to sell wool for local village industry, or to have their fleeces processed and to sell cloth, rather than the lower quality wool from fell sheep.

**The use of the Kirkstile tenement by the monks - commercial.**

Ten years after the dissolution of St Bees Priory, the tenement was identified as a cottage called Kirkstall or Kirkstile, with closes called Kirkcroft and Milnhill.<sup>22</sup> The monks would need that property to manage their profitable agricultural interest in sheep. To achieve that they could lease the tenement to a farmer who would manage their sheep and wool – a small monastic grange in the proper sense. The tithes of wool and lambs of Loweswater chapelry were due to the priory, and so every tenth lamb born in the parochial chapelry of Loweswater might join the Kirkstile flock, and every tenth fleece sheared would be delivered at the Kirkstile. In 1839 the Loweswater fells supported over six thousand sheep, and so it can easily be seen how the tithes could have helped the priory's Loweswater flock to grow early and rapidly.<sup>23</sup> When, in 1549, Richard Robinson described the ex-monastic property, which must include the sheep heaf, in his will as 'the Shepegate of Loweswater', the name reflected the dominant purpose.

**The use of the Kirkstile tenement by the monks - ministry.**

The monks needed to provide for ministry to the chapelry. A churchyard had been licensed in 1281, again in the time of Thomas de Lucy.<sup>24</sup> The monks were in no hurry to act on that licence. Mary Fair gives the date of Loweswater being raised to the status of a parochial chapelry as 1404, but gives no reference.<sup>25</sup> In the sixteenth century, the chapel would require the full

range of Catholic clerical services, including burials.

The question is, was there a resident chaplain, or would a priest visit for services, staying at the Kirkstile? The frequent appearance of a chaplain, Thome de Lawswater, in the Registers of the priory in the late fourteenth century, suggests a resident chaplain. However, the name Kirkstall or Kirkstile suggests an accommodation of horses, and perhaps of people, associated with church services and sacraments. For example, in *The History of Myddle*, written in 1701, Richard Gough described a seventeenth century rector, Thomas More, whose 'residence was at Ellesmere. He kept a curate at Myddle ... . Hee came constantly once a month to officiate at Myddle. Hee would ride to the Church-style, goe straighte into the Church, and after the Service and Sermon ended, he would take horse at the Church-style and ride back to Ellesmere.'<sup>26</sup>

There is evidence of two more Catholic chaplains being resident in Loweswater, as noted by Michael Baron in *Journal* 40. The presentments at the manor court of Loweswater do not involve chaplains as such, but inhabitants who have transgressed, or used the lord's rights. In 1505, Robert Wilkinson, Chaplain, was fined 2d for oak wood, which presumably he had cut.<sup>27</sup> In 1508, they presented 'Richard Robynson, Chaplain, for wrongfully upbraiding the inquisition taken between parties and scolding against the said inquisition (8d). Also they present Richard Robynson for cutting down the lord's wood viz ash trees, mastic trees [a resinous tree, possibly Scots Pine] and cherry trees (12d)'.<sup>28</sup> This was a chaplain who was actively and argumentatively involved in managing land in Loweswater. It is likely that chaplains were resident at the Kirkstile, and might combine the commercial and pastoral roles on behalf of the Priory. Richard Robinson will be discussed in the Annex.

<sup>22</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/10

<sup>23</sup> See *Journal* 57, pp.20-4 for sheep and tithes in Loweswater, 1839

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, *Register St Bees*, p.387-394, Carta 389

<sup>25</sup> Mary Fair, 'Three West Cumberland notes', *TCWAAS* 1951, p.94

<sup>26</sup> Richard Gough, Ed David Hey, *The history of Myddle*, Penguin Books, 1981, pp.41-2

<sup>27</sup> CACW/DLEC/299T/No.10, 1505

<sup>28</sup> CACW/DLEC/299T/No.12, 1508



### What became of the Kirkstile and the sheep-heaf or shepegate?

In July 1549 Richard Robinson purchased the manor of Brackentwaite, the Kirkstile tenement, the sheep heaf on Loweswater Moor, and Brickness or Byrkness Field from Lord Grey. These last three were freehold properties, but by the end of the sixteenth century only Byrkness field was freehold. Brykness or Brickness Field was the vast tract of fellside above Buttermere Lake in the manor of Loweswater from 1230, the twin of Gatesgarthside, and later in the parish of Brigham and the township of Buttermere. It was also in the sale of Loweswater manor to Robinson in 1545, and so the crown sold it twice.<sup>29</sup> It passed from Richard Robinson, through subsequent lords, to be sold by the Patricksons to George Lamplugh in 1616.<sup>30</sup>

However, the Kirkstile tenement, purchased as freehold, was incorporated into the manor as tenanted customary property, despite never having been a manorial property. There were precedents for this in Loweswater, in that the Park was the lord's demesne and by the fifteenth century had been let as a number of customary tenancies, though at a higher total rent of 80s.<sup>31</sup> Richard Robinson's meticulous will, of 21 November 1549, lists the manor of Loweswater and the Shepegate, but not the Kirkstile tenement.<sup>32</sup> Probably Robinson had already arranged its incorporation into the manor. If that is so, then it was at a small customary manorial rent, rather than an economic rent. There are no manorial records for this time, but in 1679 the Kirkstile tenement was rented at 5s 2d, in line with the rents of medieval holdings.<sup>33</sup> In 1549 there would have been an entry fine of up to two years' economic rent, but these arrangements would still be generous and paternalistic, perhaps benefitting the Robinson kin.

The Kirkstile tenement is shown as part of an estate plan of 1782.<sup>34</sup>

Fortunately, the outline can be adjusted to 1619, see figure 2, because at that date the Kirkstile tenement was not included in the tenements purchasing fine-certain status. It was surveyed, valued and mapped, in 1819, with the remaining fine-arbitrary lands, by John Norman for John Marshall, lord of the manor.<sup>35</sup> 'Cock How' can be removed to find the 1619 boundaries, which may be little changed from 1549.

Now considering the sheep-heaf, in 1551/2, when Thomas Stanley was administering Robinson's estate, Stanley purchased George Lamplugh's tenant right of a property, Marshall Flatte, the fishing of Loweswater, plus his rights to the Shepegate of Loweswater, and all his sheep on it.<sup>36</sup> Why this was taken back is unclear, but the point is that the Shepegate retained its identity within the late Robinson's estate, at that time, and had not been incorporated into new tenements. From 1552 the sheep heaf could be incorporated.

A further clue to the location of the sheep-heaf, is the fact that at Kirkhead there was a small piece of land, belonging to the lord, which was freehold into the nineteenth Century. It was shown on John Marshall's manor map of 1819, sketched here as Figure 3. The house, Kirkhead, sits on that site on the modern map, while Kirkgate, the farm, was a customary tenement in 1597. This freehold land was not listed in the grant by Henry VIII to Richard Robinson in 1545, in which the King's Acre was clearly in Brigham. In 1624, Henry Patrickson, son and heir of Anthony, granted a lease for a year of 'the hall and the hall acre', plus the fishing of Loweswater, to Thomas Robinson of Park.<sup>37</sup> Henry Patrickson was resident in Loweswater, as was John Robinson at times.<sup>38</sup> This 'hall' should not be confused with the current Loweswater Hall, which was built as Mire Close by the Marshall family in the 1870s.

<sup>29</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/1

<sup>30</sup> CACC/DLAW/3/3/4. Sale of Birknesse Field to George Lamplugh of Gray's Inn, for £260

<sup>31</sup> Winchester, *Landscape and society*, p.51

<sup>32</sup> TNA/PROB11/32/557, will of Richard Robynson or Robinson, Clerk

<sup>33</sup> CACW/DWM/11/121, Court Book 1645-1688, 1679

<sup>34</sup> CACW/DWM/2/96, 1782, Plan of Foulisike, Godfrahead, Church Stile and Infield estates.

<sup>35</sup> CACW/DWM/1/105, John Marshall's manor of Loweswater, 1819; CACW/DWM/11/249/15, survey and valuation of fine-arbitrary lands.

<sup>36</sup> CACC/DLAW/4/1/1, Lamplugh to Stanley

<sup>37</sup> CACC/DLAW/1/214/2 Patrickson to Robinson

<sup>38</sup> Robinson 'of Loweswater' in occasional legal documents, including sale to Stanley in 1558. Baptisms at Lamplugh; March 3 1600, 'Henrie Patrickson son of Mr Henrie Patrickson of Loweswater'

The evidence suggests that the freehold sheep-heaf would be in the area of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Kirkgate/Kirkhead and Bargate farms. After 1551 the hall acre might have been retained for a high-status building at Kirkhead, while the rest of the sheaf-heaf might have become, in whole or part, a new farmstead of Kirkgate. As with the Kirkstile, Kirkgate had a modest customary rent, of 18s 10d in 1619. This location for the sheep-heaf would fit with Carta 106, which gives Kirkeheved as the access point, and with the greatest convenience for the priory. This area of 80 acres is illustrated in Figure 4.

#### **Commons enclosures in the 16th century.**

In *Journal* 58, it was observed that to the west of Mosedale Beck there was evidence, from the first Ordnance Survey map, that there could have been an earlier commons boundary, or head dyke, which ran through Mill Hill, the old High Iredale, and Watergate farmsteads, an area of 150 acres shown in Figure 4.<sup>39</sup> The Mosedale sheep heath could be the 'banks' closes between that head dyke and the boundary known from later maps, before the enclosure of the commons in the 1860s. However, that did not explain High Nook, which is not in Mosedale. This study has identified the area east of Mosedale Beck as the most likely location of the sheep-heaf, with some good evidence. It seems large enough for 300 sheep. However, it is possible that the area west of Mosedale Beck, between supposed old and new head dykes, might also be, in part, more of the old sheep-heaf. This would require the tenement Mill Hill, at least, to precede the sheepheaf of 1286. This location would involve difficult access for the monks, along Church Beck and past the Lord's mill and Mill Hill. Mosedale Beck is in a ravine below Bargate, and difficult to cross. It is unlikely that the priory's sheep heaf extended west of Mosedale Beck.

A new explanation for a possible move of the head dyke is required, and the one to be tested is that in the second half of the sixteenth century, in addition to Kirkgate and Bargate, new farm tenements were created at Steel Bank and High Burnyeat, which appears to be the early name for

High Nook. This was a time when such enclosures were being made, mostly by landowners wishing to gain extra income from rearing stock, on what was common land. In the second half of the century, inflation, intentionally created by Henry VIII, mostly by debasing the coinage, caused prices to double. Fixed rents, such as at Loweswater, benefitted the larger tenant at the expense of the lord, and led to disputes. It is curious that Thomas Stanley, executor of Richard Robinson from 1549 to 1555, and lord of Loweswater from 1562 to 1571, was the very person who debased the coinage, and created the new coinage under Elizabeth.

This hypothesis of new tenements has been tested in several ways. Firstly, by looking for the tenement names pre-reformation, secondly by considering the changes in rental, before and after the reformation, and thirdly by looking in detail at the lords of the manor over the period to 1593, in the context of their relationship with the manor and its tenants.<sup>40</sup> These changes, if they were changes, were complete before the era of the Patricksons, and of their disputes with the tenants over land tenure.

#### **Tenement names**

Clearly any named tenement which existed before the reformation cannot have been created by enclosing the commons. A search was made of the manor court proceedings in DLEC/299, in translation and transcription, covering 1472 to 1528, to list tenement names in use. Unfortunately, these names are rare, being used only when there was a need to place a person, or when the proceedings involved that place. A check was made in published material covering Loweswater, and Angus Winchester kindly checked his transcriptions of DLEC 29 covering the early fifteenth century. There is other material which has not been checked.

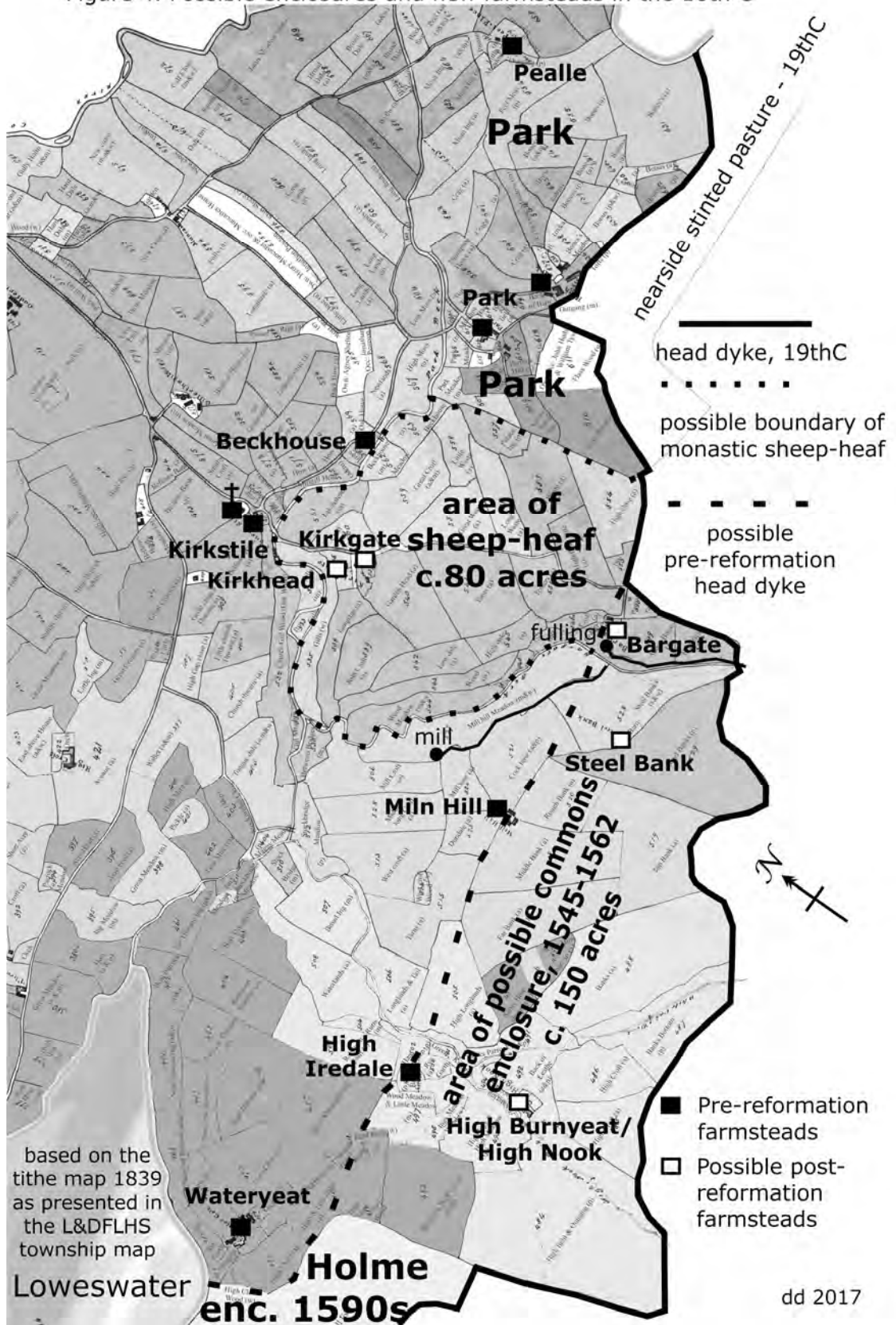
This produced Park, Beckhouse, Mill hill, and Wateryeat as pre-reformation farmsteads. It also found Burnyeat, but neither High Burnyeat of High Iredale. Such places, named after families, might change names when families moved. High Burnyeat appears to have changed its name to High Nook in the mid C17th, with John Burnyeat

<sup>39</sup> *Journal* 58, pp.22-3

<sup>40</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/6A, Feoffment of the Manor of Loweswater by Sir Edward Herbert of

Powis Castle, to Anthony Patrickson of Stockhow, Cumberland, gent, 2 Nov 1593.

Figure 4. Possible enclosures and new farmsteads in the 16th C



resident. In 1619, from the few fine-arbitrary closes, High Iredale appeared to be in decline, and became split between the owners of High Nook and Watergate. A joint National Trust and L&DFLHS survey was made of this lost farmstead.

The names Kirkgate/Kirkhead, Bargate, Steel Bank and High Burnyeat/High Nook are all absent from pre-reformation records. This is consistent with a hypothesis that these are all post-reformation tenements, but certainly not proof that they did not already exist, because of the thin data and the fact that names can change.

### Rentals

If there were new customary tenements created, then the total rental of the manor should increase. This investigation remains to be attempted, but it will be made difficult by the fact that the rentals of the new tenements, including the Kirkstile, totalled only approximately £3-5s, which is a small increase to find reliably.<sup>41</sup> These fixed rentals will reflect the fact that this would be mostly grazing land to be developed, but even so they seem low for 250 acres. Compare for example the new £4 rental for the much smaller Parks area, probably created some two centuries earlier.

Clearly, they were either medieval farmsteads, or new farmsteads created on the medieval basis, including rights on the common. This seems favourable to the tenants, as with the Kirkstile, and suggests an early enclosure in the Robinson era, before rental values were eroded. The entry fine might be high, but only a fraction of the value of the tenement. If the right to sell the properties, or full 'tenantright', was included, then those properties would become more valuable with inflation.

### The date of any enclosure

If part of the common to the west of Mosedale Beck was enclosed in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, as customary tenements, then when, and under whose lordship, would that be? The annex makes the relevant background analysis, and presents a view which differs from previous representations of some of those involved.

Richard Robinson held the manor from 1545 to 1549 and had the opportunity to make the enclosures to the west of Mosedale Beck. He also appears to have incorporated the Kirkstile into the manor on the same basis in 1549, from the lack of its inclusion in his will as a separate freehold. But the Shepegate was in lease to George Lamplugh after Robinson's death. The evidence from the Annex and the foregoing suggests that Robinson was paternalistic towards Loweswater inhabitants, many of whom benefitted directly from his will and many of whom were his kin. The creation of new tenements on the favourable medieval tenure would fit with Richard Robinson, and would need to be early, before inflation would show up the unsustainability.

Richard Robinson was engaged in making an enclosure for his own use, which would provide some compensatory benefit. I am grateful for permission to use some evidence from correspondence between Angus Winchester and Michael Baron, when he and the late Hetty Baron were studying the disputes between Patrickson and his tenants from the 1590s. The inhabitants of Mockerkin and Sosgill presented, c.1597, a background to the disputes over the enclosure of the Holme, meaning island, and applying to the pasture to the south of the lake, and not necessarily the fellside above. 'It had been taken in when Richard Robinson, clerk, owned Loweswater temp. Edward VI. The enclosure was pulled down within three months by the tenants of Mockerkin and Sosgill at the command of the King's officers'.<sup>42</sup> The tenants of Mockerkin and Sosgill were not the tenants of Richard Robinson, because that part of Loweswater was still in crown, and would be regained in 1549 by Thomas Percy, the Catholic 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland. However, Mockerkin tenants had the rights to use Loweswater common. The enclosure of the Holme was distant from the inhabitants of Mockerkin and Sosgill, but would affect Robinson's tenants in Loweswater. Given the bad relationship between Robinson and the Percy family, whose Loweswater manor he had purchased, the involvement of the tenants of Mockerkin and Sosgill in throwing down the enclosure can be understood. This does

<sup>41</sup> Rents in 1619, High Burnyeat 15s-4d, Steel Bank 10s-11d, Bargate 12s-2d, Kirkgate, 18s-10d.

<sup>42</sup> Letter Angus Winchester to Michael Baron, 2 May 2001, summarising material at Alnwick Castle (X.II, box 10).

not necessarily mean that Richard Robinson was in conflict with his tenants, who might be benefitting from their own enclosures at low rents, while Robinson gained freehold land by enclosing the Holme.

John Robinson was owner of the Manor from 1549, when he was a fifteen-year-old son of a Loweswater yeoman, until 1562, when he was a goldsmith of London.<sup>43</sup> However, Thomas Stanley, a prominent London gentleman, was executor of the will of Richard Robinson, and had management of the manor until 1555, and then again as lord after 1562. It would seem unlikely that John Stanley, as executor, would permit the enclosure of the land west of Mosedale Beck, at low customary rents. It might be within John Robinson's lordship and residence, that the sheep-heaf became a farmstead and a seat might have been established at Kirkhead.

In 1558 John Robinson was a gentleman of Loweswater, when he transferred the title to some of his property to Stanley, perhaps in recognition of debt. This included the manor of Brackenthwaite, Byrkness, and the monastic property, described as Richard Robinson had purchased in 1549.<sup>44</sup> This change of ownership seems to conflict with the Kirkstile tenement having been incorporated in the manor, and with a later incorporation of Kirkgate into the manor, but the transfer of title may not have been relevant to the actual management of the property, given the close relationship of the parties and the fact that John Robinson later sold the other part, the manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite, to Stanley in 1562, for £1500.<sup>45</sup> After that, nothing is known about John Robinson.

Thomas Stanley was a Cumbrian, but not of Loweswater, and would not have the close relationship with the tenants that the Robinsons had. With fixed rents now a general problem in the 1560s, it seems unlikely that Stanley would be creating new tenements at low fixed rent levels. However, between 1562 and 1571, 'Mr Stanley' ... enclosed Holme again 'for to feed his oxen until he had builded a howse

to keepe his court in'. This enclosure was pulled down within one and a half years by order of the earl of Northumberland's officers.<sup>46</sup> This sequence was continued into the 1590s by other lords, with increasing disputes with tenants about terms of tenure, levels of fines, and rights.

### Conclusions

It was well known that the Kirkstile was a monastic property. Starting as a new peasant landholding, soon after 1125, it fulfilled the role of a residence for a chaplain and a grange for managing the priory's agricultural interests, including the sheep on the sheep-heaf. After the reformation and the dissolution of St Bees, the Kirkstile became a tenement within the manor of Loweswater, probably in 1549 through the actions of Richard Robinson. The boundaries of the tenement in 1619 have been established.

This research started by looking for the monastic sheep-heaf to the west of Mosedale Beck, but has ended by placing it east of Mosedale Beck, with a good probability but no proof. It probably had its origins in the agreement between Thomas de Lucy and the priory in 1286, after the park had been extended. The access was across Church Beck at Kirkhead, and the sheep heaf probably comprised about 80 acres of land south of the beck, between the park wall and Mosedale Beck, extending to Bargate, which was the site of a fulling mill created on the common, long after the sheep-heaf. It may be that Kirkgate was a new farm tenement, created in the time of John Robinson's lordship and residence, between 1555 and 1562. If so, it became a customary manorial tenement. It may also be that case that John Robinson, and later Henry Patrickson, were seated in a new hall, on retained freehold land at Kirkhead.

Some land to the west of Mosedale Beck appears, from the pattern of walls and enclosures, and from the history of tenement names, to have been enclosed from the common. Some investigations have been made to test the hypothesis that the farm tenements of Bargate, Steel Bank,

<sup>43</sup> CACC/DLAW/1/240, Sale of Loweswater and Thackthwaite manors by Robinson to Stanley for £1500

<sup>44</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/3, John Robinson of Loweswater, gent, to Thomas Stanley, manor of Brackenthwaite (not Loweswater as catalogued)

and other property. Transcription in CACW/DWM/11/254/12 omits the Kirkstile.

<sup>45</sup> CACC/DLAW/1/240, Robinson to Stanley, Loweswater and Thackthwaite manors for £1500

<sup>46</sup> Letter Angus Winchester to Michael Baron, 2 May 2001, extracts (X.II, box 10).

and High Burnyeate/High Nook were parts of one post-reformation enclosure from the common, with the old head dyke running through Mill Hill, High Iredale, and Watergate. While the evidence is thin, nothing has yet been found to contradict the hypothesis. It is not proven.

If there was a substantial enclosure from the common in the second half of the sixteenth century, then the changes in lordship, and the fact that those farmsteads were customary tenements, suggests that the first choice of responsible lord would be Richard Robynson, between 1545 and 1549, and the second choice would be John Robynson, between 1549 and 1562.

To assist this investigation, a study has been made of Richard Robynson, and the lords who followed, up to the Patrickson purchase of 1593. It is suggested that M A Clark's study of Robynson, without the benefit of local records, may misjudge Richard Robynson and may misunderstand the relationship between John Robynson and Thomas Stanley. If Thomas de Lucy is the person who created Loweswater, as we know it, in the thirteenth century, then Richard Robynson should be remembered as the Chaplain of Loweswater in 1808, who may have been fully engaged with the reformation, and who re-created early-modern Loweswater for the intended benefit of its inhabitants.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to Angus Winchester for the use of his research notes, and with together with Michael Baron, for the use of material and correspondence created when he and the late Hetty Baron were researching the Patrickson disputes. Also, Roger Asquith for information and for discussions on some issues. The responsibility for the use of the material lies with the author.

#### **Annex: Lords of the Manor of Loweswater from 1545 to 1593**

##### **Richard Robynson, Clerke, of Loweswater.**

Was Richard Robynson, chaplain of Loweswater in 1508, the same Richard Robynson who was barred from his Chantry in Brigham Church in 1532, who purchased

the manor of Loweswater from Henry VIII in 1545, and the monastic lands of Loweswater in 1549, and who died in London in 1549, leaving his estate to his Loweswater kin? It would seem reasonable that they were the same person, and if he took up the chaplaincy of his township in around 1506, then he might be born around 1480 and have been around seventy when he died. M A Clark's excellent factual research on Richard Robynson, assumes a younger Robynson, born about 1500, based on a Robynson 'likely therefore to have been a university man', and of an unidentified Richard Robynson gaining a Cambridge degree in 1523.<sup>47</sup> But Clark has no other evidence of age, nor knowledge of the 1508 chaplain. Robynson was of yeoman stock, his kin were in Loweswater, and he made numerous bequests to Loweswater Robynsons, which all suggests a close relationship.<sup>48</sup> Clark establishes that, from 1525, Richard Robynson acquired several positions and pensions which demonstrated a strong connection with those close to the King. It is possible for the years between 1508 and 1525 to have been a period of considerable advancement for an ambitious and disputatious Loweswater Chaplain.

Clark presents Robynson as an unappealing character, a worldly opportunist. 'No other [chantry priest] has scattered his name around the records with the generosity of Richard Robynson and for this sudden illumination we must be grateful — even when it is the light of notoriety that shines'.<sup>49</sup> Clark does consider whether Robynson might have died a Protestant, from the form of his will and the gifts of church goods to the poor.<sup>50</sup> He does note that the role of Chantrist at Brigham required a life spent praying for the souls in purgatory. However, that is an afterthought which does not inform the piece itself.

If one considers Richard Robynson as a reformer, and becoming increasingly of service to the King, and his agents, in the fiercely independent and Catholic north, his actions appear more principled. There is a consistent opposition to, and arguments with, the Catholic Earls of Northumberland; from Robynson's disputatious behavior on the Earl's common in 1508; through the

<sup>47</sup> M A Clark, 'Richard Robynson, Clerke, chantry priest of Brigham', *TCWAAS* 1988, pp.97-105.

<sup>48</sup> TNA/PROB11/32/557, will of Richard Robynson or Robynson, Clerke

<sup>49</sup> Clark, Richard Robynson', *TCWAAS* 1988, p.97

<sup>50</sup> Clark, Richard Robynson', *TCWAAS* 1988, p.104

neglect of the Brigham chantry and his ejection by its sponsor, the Earl, in 1532. This was a weak time for Henry Percy, sixth Earl of Northumberland, who we remember for being earlier betrothed to Anne Boleyn. In 1531 Henry Percy, had found it expedient to give his properties to the king for safe keeping. Robinson recovered his chantry with the involvement of Thomas Cromwell. Relations between Robinson and the Percy family, their title and lands being lost following the Pilgrimage of Grace, cannot have been helped when the King sold Robinson their manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite in 1545, with that chantry of Brigham. Nor with the purchase in 1549 of the Loweswater property of the dissolved Priory, which was probably once Robinson's patron. Only Mockerkin and Sosgill was left, to be returned to the new seventh earl, Thomas Percy, also in 1549, and to be accommodated, strangely, in Derwentfells manor, perhaps in remembrance of Brackenthwaite, now held by Robinson.

From his will it appears that also in 1545, Robinson had purchased the lease of the chapel of Loweswater, for fourteen years from the superior leaseholder. The tithes, dues and, presumably, the advowson, were held by William Robinson (of Pele) and James Robinson, probably to benefit the people of Loweswater, now good Protestants. With the manor, the chapel, and the monastic lands, in 1549 the Robinson clan controlled Loweswater, apart from Mockerkin, answerable to the King.

**John Robinson of Loweswater, Thomas Stanley, goldsmith, and Sir Edward Herbert, of Powys Castle.**

This list of the lords of the manor of Loweswater from 1549 to 1593 appears at first glance to imply a string of disconnected purchases, but that is far from the case. To understand who might have incorporated the manorial property into the manor, and possibly allowed new enclosures from the common, it is necessary to understand this sequence. This is useful to set out, to question some of the interpretations of Clark.

When Richard Robinson died on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1549, a day after signing his will and therefore probably in London, he had

no descendants and, I suggest, he was around 70, not 50. The tradition of unmarried clergy was continued until Edward VI repealed the six acts in 1547. As Clark observes, it was his clear intention to establish a Robinson dynasty in Loweswater, and as heir to his property he named a long sequence of male Robinsons, who would inherit in turn if those earlier in the sequence failed to produce an heir, male, of his body, lawfully begotten. The list started with the three sons of Matthew Robinson, who was the son of James Robinson, deceased. These three sons each received a ring set with a stone. The list of default heirs continued with three other Robinsons, and finished with the heirs at law of Richard Robinson.

In 1549 the heir, John Robinson, was fifteen, because he came of age, 21, on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1555.<sup>51</sup> His siblings were younger. Their place of residence was not stated, but from 1549 the family would have owned the Kirkstile. Richard Robinson named young people as his heirs. It seems that his purpose was to ensure that the next lord should be properly trained for the task. He made Thomas Stanley joint executor of his will, with the young John Robinson, and also willed that Thomas Stanley should have the custody, keeping and bringing up of John Robinson until he came of age. In Loweswater, the period from 15 to 21 would normally be a farm apprenticeship. This made Thomas Stanley the managing executor of the will, and responsible for Robinsons bequests to individuals, to the poor of Loweswater, Mosser and Brigham, and for the management of John Robinson's properties, including three manors, until 1555. An onerous set of responsibilities. It appears, as Clark demonstrates, that John Robinson left Loweswater and became a goldsmith. By 1558 he was 'of Loweswater', and in 1562 a goldsmith of London. His wife was Martha. His heirs are unknown, nor is how the sale was compliant with the will.

Thomas Stanley, d.1571, was the third son of Thomas Stanley, of Dalegarth, Cumberland, and his wife Margaret, daughter of John Fleming, and therefore, like Richard Robinson, a Cumbrian, but from an important gentry family. A younger man, he would be a good choice as executor.

<sup>51</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/2, Indenture pursuant to suing out of wardship.

## **L&DFLHS – Programme for 2017/18**

Date	Event
14 <sup>th</sup> September	A passionate sisterhood, by Kathleen Jones.
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> October	6th Bernard Bradbury Lecture, Cockermonth's relationship with the railways, 1847-1966, by Eric Cass. At Kirkgate Centre, Cockermonth, 8 pm
9 <sup>th</sup> November	From barren waste to national treasure: how we learned to love the Lake District, by Grevel Lindop.
11 <sup>th</sup> November	Melbreak Communities coffee morning, Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton, 10:30 – 12:00. Offers of assistance welcome, to Sandra Shaw.
11 <sup>th</sup> January	The Derwentwater disaster, by Ray Greenhow
8 <sup>th</sup> March	The great war – Ambleside's story, by Judith Shingler
Talks are held at the Yew Tree Hall in Lorton at 7.30pm. Visitors £3.00 with refreshments.	

A London goldsmith, he was appointed Assay Master of the Mint in March 1545, and was instrumental in a major effort to prop up the economy by debasing the currency, which continued through to 1549. In causing great inflation to reduce the value of the debts of Henry and Edward, he was responsible for decreasing the value of the fixed rents in manors such as Loweswater. Despite that role, Stanley prospered under both Mary and Elizabeth, having control of the mint from 1555 to 1571, and even supervising the re-coinage. His fall came only a few months from his death, and through the time of his involvement with John Robinson he was highly successful. His only daughter, Mary, married Sir Edward Herbert (c. 1542–1595), second son of the Earl of Pembroke. The transfer of Loweswater property to Edward Herbert was therefore due to his wife's inheritance.

Clark considers that Richard Robinson was 'ill-served' by Thomas Stanley. He implies that John Robinson was cheated by Stanley, when in 1558 he made over to Stanley the title to the property bought from Lord Grey in 1549, and later when believes that Robinson sold the manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite to Stanley in 1562 for a mere £14 12s 6d, a small fraction of their value.<sup>52</sup> Firstly, Clark does not take into account the Court of Wards and the possibility that Robinson could be in debt to Stanley. Secondly, the manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite sold in 1562 for £1500, not £14-12s-6d.<sup>53</sup>

The Court of Wards was created by Henry VIII in 1540, to exploit the fact that wardship of minor heirs of a tenant in chief

was one of the king's ancient feudal incidents. Because Richard Robinson had bequeathed his property, held of the king, to a minor, the rents and profits could accrue to the Exchequer until John Robinson became 21. Perhaps in 1549, Stanley and Robinson might have expected a grant of wardship, and the revenues, to Stanley, under the favourable regime of young Edward VI. However, John Robinson had to sue his manors out of wardship under Philip & Mary, on 27 Jan 1556/7.<sup>54</sup> The eight-year value charged on his manors, the chantries of Brigham and Crosthwaite, and the Kings Acre in Brigham, came to just over £291. This sum would reduce the value of John Robinson's inheritance. Meanwhile, Thomas Stanley, as executor, would be responsible for the numerous bequests to individuals, the ongoing ten-year payments to the poor, and the upbringing of John Robinson.

What is clear is that the way the lordship was managed and transferred, up to 1592, followed from the will of Richard Robinson, and that a true alienation of the manor occurred only in 1592, with the sale to the Patricksons. From 1545 to 1549 and from 1555 to 1562 Loweswater manor was owned and managed by sons of Loweswater, which implies that the tenants might have considerable influence. After 1562, the lords became more distant, and probably less sympathetic.

### ***The Journal***

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<sup>52</sup> Clark, Richard Robinson', TCWAAS 1988, p.103.

<sup>53</sup> CACC/DLAW/1/240, John Robinson of London, goldsmith, to Thomas Stanley of London, gent,

for £1500, manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite.

<sup>54</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/2