

# Lorton & Derwent Fells

# Local history Society

A.B.

Dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 1910

Messrs Jennings Bros. Ltd.

to

Mr J. Dover Pearson  
and others

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Agreement

For Letting Premises at  
Lorton known as the Yew  
Tree Hall

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Term 4 Years  
Rent £ 3-10-0.

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*J. Jennings*  
*Lockwood*

**PUBLIC LIABILITY  
INSURANCE**



**RAILWAY PASSENGERS  
ASSURANCE COMPANY**

The Shares of which are vested in and the  
Contracts of which are guaranteed by the

**NORTH BRITISH & MERCANTILE  
INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED**

Newcastle Office

Agency Carlisle Sub Office

Policy No. T.P. 184511

Name Board of Management of  
Yew Tree Hall

Renewal Date 4th February

**NOTE: The Insured is particularly  
requested to read the Policy with  
its Conditions & Endorsements.**

The covers of two old Yew Tree Hall documents (the insurance is 1939) but please see Walter Head's article about the Hall's very early years



## Secretary's letter



First of all, may I wish all readers a very happy and successful New Year; and yes, it's our fifth year and perhaps we are beginning to see some new developments. In March, we're having a talk about important changes that are taking place now in Whitehaven – in other words, tomorrow's history. And I'm pleased to say that Derek Denman has responded to the invitation in the last Newsletter and the result is that we now have a working group called the **Lorton Roman Roads Group**. Derek has written a first report for this Newsletter.

When our President, Angus Winchester, talked to us recently, he urged members to record old names that had fallen into disuse. Later, on reflection, he thought that he had better set an example to us and he has sent an interesting article, which is in this Newsletter. They are good examples and there are now no excuses for members to hold back! Seriously, this is an important aspect of local history and getting such names in the Newsletter and recording them in our archive would be interesting and could be invaluable for researchers in the future.

Walter Head's article about the Yew Tree Hall up to 1909 made me search the old Hall files that I have inherited but I found that very little exists pre-1939. I hope the two on the front cover create some interest, especially the 1910 Agreement. While on the subject of front covers, may I invite everyone to think what you would like to see on the fronts of the Newsletters; I have chosen all the covers to date and I'm sure that I must be missing out on many interesting topics. Please send me anything that you think would be suitable and I'll take it from there. Thank you in advance!

**Correction and apology:** Ron George would like to correct one of the entries on page 6 of the last (September) Newsletter in the list of books in the Society's archive. The "Atlas of World History" is not by Richard Gough but by **Kinder and Hilgemann**. And the promised list of remaining documents isn't complete yet but it should be in the next Newsletter. Sorry about both.

The Society is now the proud owner of an epidiascope ("a what?" was the response I got when I contacted several potential suppliers). I can remember the one we had at school in the 1940s – a large brass construction which ran very hot and produced a dim and out of focus image! An epidiascope is a projector that works with reflected light instead of transmitted light so you can project photographs and pages of a book and, to a certain extent, solid 3D objects. Obviously, looking at the new one, brightness is still a problem because you really need to use it in a pretty dark room in spite of the use of two 375 watt lamps! But early signs are that the focus is good. It does mean that special transparencies don't need to be prepared. I'm looking forward to seeing it in real action and perhaps that might be at a members' evening or perhaps at a mini-talk following the AGM. Any offers or suggestions?

## Village ponds

by Walter Head

In September 1997, a letter was printed in the Daily Mail on the subject of village ponds and part of the letter was as follows:



*"when village ponds were made in the old days, they had a hard core track running in and out of the water to allow farm wagons and carriage carts in to let the verrys (wheel wedges) soak and tighten up.*

*Water carts were backed up to the hardstanding and filled by bucket or pump to take water to outlying cattle and steam plough engines.*

*Carters, when they came in from ploughing in the winter, would wash the dirt and clay from their shire horses before they went into the stables."*

Did any local villages or farms have ponds or, in the case of Lorton, did the ford across the river behind the Yew Tree Hall serve the same purpose?



## Two queries

A non-member has told Ron that he attended the "school" run by Dr and Dr Edwards in Lorton Hall in 1953-1954. He would be interested to hear from anyone who remembers the Edwards family. Ron understands that it might have been a school for handicapped children; any recollections to Ron or me please and they will be passed on. I'll put anything of general interest in the Newsletter too.

And Janet Graham would like to know why Cass How is so called. Some brief enquiries have yielded nothing so, again, answers to Ron or me .....

## Lost Names of the Cocker Valley

by Angus Winchester

When I talked to the Society in September, I urged members to try to collect old place-names which failed to make it on to the Ordnance Survey maps and hence are liable to fade completely from memory as the older generation who have lived here most of their lives fades away. I have long been fascinated by place-names, perhaps particularly the minor names which hover along the boundary between being remembered and forgotten. They all have a meaning (not necessarily easy to recover) which often sheds light on how past generations viewed and used the environment in which they lived. More particularly, they are sometimes vital in enabling us to identify places mentioned in early documents, as two of the examples I'll quote below demonstrate.

Having urged the task of recording such lost names on the Society, I thought I ought to take a lead by putting on paper the names I noted in conversations with octogenarians in the valley back in the late 1960s and early 1970s. One of my principal informants was Elizabeth Alexander of Low Park, Loweswater, who had taken an interest in what she was told by elderly neighbours when she came to live in the valley in the 1930s. The following names are thus probably those used by the generation born in the 1860s or thereabouts:

**Deepa Bridge** was the old name for Scalehill Bridge (NY 148 215). As well as surviving to be told to Beth Alexander in the 1930s, it appears on a manuscript estate plan of 1782 (Cumbria Record Office, D/WM, plan of Foulisike etc.). It is almost certainly to be identified with the name 'Dupwath', mentioned in 1286 in a dispute about the boundary of the lord's deer park at Loweswater (the memory of which is preserved, of course, in the names Low and High Park) (*Register of the Priory of St Bees*, ed. J. Wilson, Surtees Society 126, 1915, p. 145). The root of the name, I suspect, is 'deep wath', meaning the 'deep ford'.

**Dick Robin** and **Dick Knave** were the southern ends of Darling Fell and Low Fell (NY 129 224 and NY 136 223). Dick Knave is shown (apparently over Low Fell) on the map of the wad mines at Borrowdale published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1751 (and reprinted in William Rollinson's *History of Man in the Lake District*, (London, J M Dent, 1967), plate 13).

**Ardale** or **Iredale** was in the vicinity of Maggie's Bridge (NY 134 210). Beth Alexander told me that the field on the right of the lane between High Nook and Watergate was known as 'Ardale Green' and used to be covered with daffodils. I think that this is a clue to the location of a lost name of some importance: 18th-century manorial documents refer to an estate called High Iredale, which belonged to the Burnyeat family, who also owned Crabtreebeck, Thrushbank and High Nook (see *Diary of Isaac Fletcher*, pp. 403 (n.39), 420-1). It appears to have been half of a 17th-century holding called High Iredale, which was held in 1646 by Thomas Robinson. He had purchased it in 1616 from Thomas Iredale, and had filed a bill in Chancery over a dispute about the purchase money. (Public Record Office, C3/375/34). The ownership by the Iredale family poses an



interesting question: did the family take their name from the their farm at 'Iredale' or *vice versa*? It was the *family's* name, of course, which was later transferred to Iredale Place. If the family originally took their name from the farm, and 'Iredale' originally referred to a settlement near Maggie's Bridge, the name itself probably sheds light on the early settlement of Loweswater. Its meaning is presumably 'the valley of the Irish', recalling the settlement of Irish-Norse colonists in the 10th century.

Among the other names I have heard are the following:

**Dry Thrapple Hall.** According to my grandfather, who was brought up in Cockermouth in the 1880s and 1890s, this was the local name for the ruined building on Whin Fell marked on the Ordnance Survey map as 'Crosshill' (NY 130 254). It was presumably an ironic name, 'dry throat hall' being a witty appellation for a cottage surrounded by rushes! Or, maybe it did have problems with its water supply. The name cannot be an ancient one: the cottage must date from after the enclosure of Whin Fell in 1826.

Names come and go: even the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1860) records the names of buildings which have now disappeared: Swinerigg Mire, near Armaside, and Steelbank, near Mill Hill, Loweswater, for example. And new names appear. I believe I am right in saying that the pool on Haystacks named **Innominate Tarn** on the modern Ordnance Survey maps got its name in the following manner. My great-uncle, the rock-climber Richard W. Hall (1882-1935), was asked, I think by Bartholemew's the map-makers, what the tarn was called. He asked Alan Nelson of Gatesgarth, who replied, 'It hes neah nyamm' and thus the designation 'Innominate' was born.

I'm sure there are many more lost names waiting to be recorded and I do hope that one or more members of the Society might like to make the task their own, publishing their findings in the *Newsletter*.

Perhaps I could end with a quotation from Tim Robinson's evocative book on the Aran Islands, *Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage* (Penguin, 1990), p. 188. The author has a passion for minor names and their meanings and what they tell us of traditional life in the islands. His comments are equally relevant to minor place-names everywhere:

"Individually, none of the names I have mentioned is of much intrinsic interest. But if we think of all the place-names that humanity has applied to the surface of this planet as constituting a single vast fingerprint, can we neglect even its most minute particularities in trying to identify ourselves?"

### The Lorton Roman Roads Group

There was a good response to a questionnaire on interest in Roman roads given out at the last meeting and the first meeting of a small group was held at Winder Hall on 17th December. The group intends to learn more about road building in the area and will visit and record road remains on the Whinlatter pass. Members are keen to search for the road which is believed to have been made from Lorton over Whinfell towards the fort at Moresby.

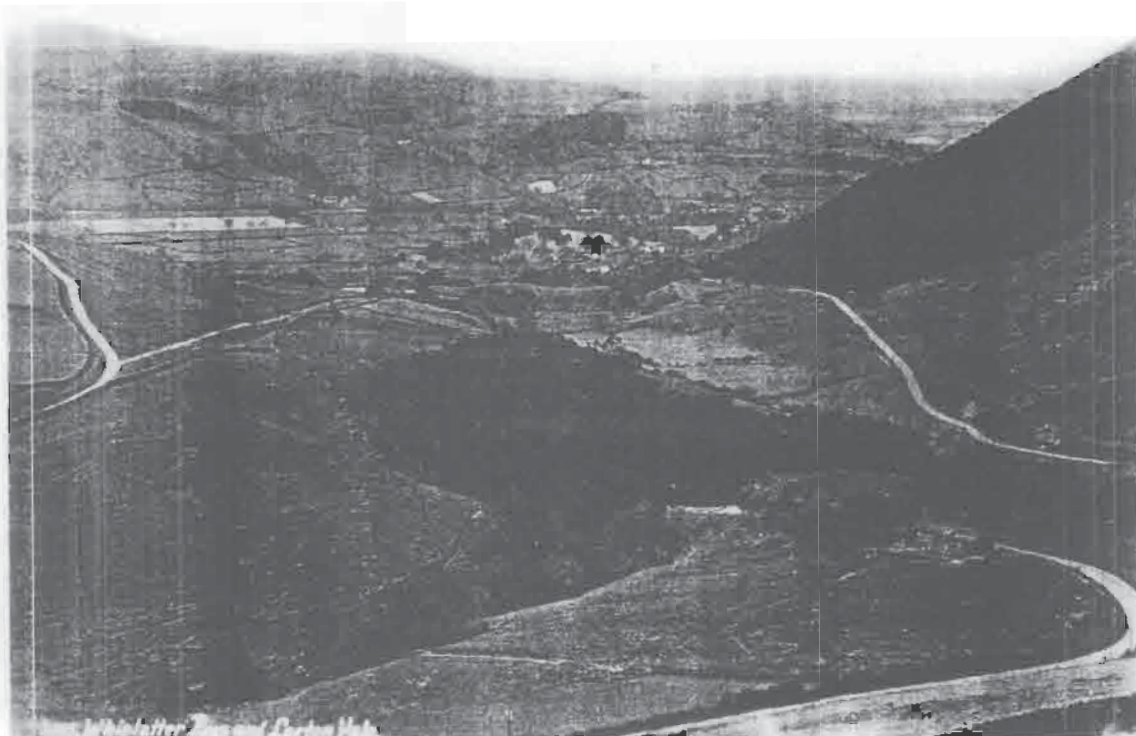


Would L&DFLHS members please let me have any information which might help the group. Regular reports on our progress will be given in future issues of the *Newsletter*.

FIAT LUX!

Derek Denman 85551





Even though this photograph was exhibited at the Lorton Festival in 1996, I make no apology about including it here because I find it very interesting(!). The original has a lot of detail on it but I hope that this photocopied version will still be of some interest. This is the only photo I have seen showing the Lamb Inn; all you see now is a filled-in door in the wall by the side of the Whinlatter Pass road (preferably when you're not driving!) and some foundations out of sight behind the wall. The other thing I noticed initially was the forest on and above High How – now completely gone. Would anyone like to estimate the approximate date of this photo?

### **The Yew Tree Hall – the early years as a village hall**

**by Walter Head**

The Jennings family had been brewing beer in Lorton since 1809, but from 1872, Jennings had progressively moved more and more of their brewing operations from Lorton to Cockermouth and by 1908 were looking for alternative uses for the old malt kiln at Lorton (now known as the Yew Tree Hall).

On the 18 June 1909, a meeting was held at Broomlands, Lorton at which were present Rev G Pallister, J D Pearson, G Oglethorpe, J Mirehouse, J Jackson, H Pearson and C L Burrows. The meeting was chaired by Mr C L Burrows who told the meeting that the opinion held generally was that Lorton and district stood in need of a room or hall as a place of recreation and amusement. Because of this, he had, with the cooperation of Rev Pallister and Messrs Oglethorpe and Pearson, sometime ago opened negotiations with Jennings Brothers with a view to acquire the use of the old malt kiln at Lorton for this purpose. Jennings required a rent of £3 to £4 per annum. The Chairman and J D Pearson were appointed to carry out further negotiations. All present agreed to guarantee between them to cover the rent and expenses required to make the premises in such a condition as to render them capable of being self supporting. Jennings had agreed to make the building weather tight and remove the 2nd floor of the main hall after this had been taken down by the “tenants”.

An on site inspection was carried out in the malt kiln on 8 September 1909 and at 8 pm the meeting was adjourned to Broomlands. At this adjourned meeting, the following terms were discussed by those present and agreed:

- The rent to be £3-10-0 per year with a six month notice of termination.



- The rates and taxes, subject to the usual exceptions, to be paid by the tenants.
- The premises to be made wind and weather tight by the landlord.
- The landlord to put a skylight over the aperture, formerly a ventilation shaft, in the room over the old furnace and glaze the windows in that room.
- The landlord to take down and remove the 2nd floor and the tenants to contribute £2-10-0 towards the cost. The tenants to be allowed to use any floorboards they wish in order to renovate floors and other parts of the premises.
- The tenants to have the liberty to carry out any structural alterations provided that they do not weaken or endanger the main walls or timbers.
- The tenants to keep the inside of the premises in good repair.
- The landlord to keep the outside, the main walls, roof and timbers in good repair.
- The tenancy was to commence when the premises were fit for occupation.

At this meeting, it was also resolved that Rev Pallister, J D Pearson, G Oglethorpe, J Mirehouse, J Jackson, H Pearson and C L Burrows be formed into a committee to be styled "The Management Committee" for the purpose of transacting all business in relation to adoption and use of the malt kiln as a public room or hall. Membership of The Management Committee was not to exceed 9 with 3 persons required for a quorum. On 21 September 1909, Messrs J W Hardisty and J H Stoddart were elected on to The Management Committee.

Prior to the opening of the hall, the following took place:

- ◆ 100 white wooden chairs, with hat rail, were supplied by Palmer and Robinson at 2/7 each and were delivered on 18 November 1909.
- ◆ 5 wall lamps, duplex type instead of type 7559, plus 4 wrought iron bracket lamps of 45 candlepower, were supplied and delivered by Banks & Son of Cockermonth.
- ◆ The lower window sills inside the building, which originally sloped outwards, were levelled off and boarded over.
- ◆ The walls were colour washed up to a height of 5ft (1.5m). The walls above this level and the underside of the roof were lime washed.
- ◆ Curtains of serge material were provided for the doors at a cost of 1/6½ for 52" wide and 2/3½ for 72" wide.

By November 1909, £50 to £60 had been spent on the building. A donation of £2-2-0 was sent to the committee by "two Liverpool friends". The first position of Cleaner/Caretaker was awarded to Jane Davidson and her pay was increased to 15/- per quarter in 1910.

The name was changed from the Malt Kiln to the Yew Tree Hall in November 1909 and a five year lease taken out from 11 November 1909.

The first event in the hall was held, prior to the formal opening, on 25 November 1909 by the Girls Friendly Society. Following this event, complaints were received regarding the low temperature of the hall and damage to clothing from the wall colouring not being 'fast'.

To improve the heating, the ceiling was covered to eliminate wasted space at a cost of £10-10-0. One Contesse stove size 3 was purchased at a cost of £4-5-0 with 3 others taken on loan. To prevent damage from clothing from the wall colouring, the walls were covered with a self-coloured paper. Also, at this time, one barrel of Royal Daylight Oil was purchased at 6¾d per gallon along with a nickel tap, paraffin tin and lamp filling tin.

The following articles, believed to have belonged to the old reading room, were transferred to the Yew Tree Hall on 6 December 1909: painted cupboard, sundry books, oak top table, 2 wooden forms, 12 stained wooden chairs (5 damaged), 1 old arm chair (damaged), 2 bagatelle boards (both damaged), 5 bagatelle balls, 1 table cover (old and damaged), 1 harp lamp (not working), 1 hanging



lamp (not working), 1 small wall lamp (not working), 1 old cushion, 1 lamp chimney, 2 draughtboards and sundry draughtsmen and a lamp flame spreader (old and in poor condition). The Yew Tree Hall was formally opened on 10 December 1909 with a concert, which was followed by a Ball. The Ball was to finish not later than 2.30 am. Receipts were £10-7-3 with an expenditure of £7-0-5 giving a profit of £3-6-10. Approximately 100 people attended. The West Cumberland Times of 15 December 1909 records that "The night was dark and wet, the roads perfect quagmires and in some cases almost impassable by reason of floods."

Initial charges for the hall were:

	For locals	For any person outside Lorton, Whinfell or Brackenthwaite
Small room only, entrance by east door	3/6 any part of day	3/6 any part of day
Lecture if free admission	5/-	5/-
Lecture if charge made	7/6	7/6
Concert	10/-	12/6
Ball to midnight only	7/6	12/6
Ball to 2.30 am	10/-	15/-
Concert and Ball	15/-	£1
Bazaar 1st day	10/-	10/-
Bazaar 2nd day	7/6	7/6
Political meeting, normal	7/6	7/6
Ditto, during election period	15/-	15/-
Travelling entertainment	7/6	7/6
Any other purpose	Charges to be fixed individually	Charges to be fixed individually

Water was fed to the hall from a well on the land of Mr H Pearson.

*(To be continued)*

### Lake District National Park Management Plan: Draft for Consultation

As you may know, we, as a Society, were invited to respond to the above draft plan and the Committee decided that we should respond. Due to the short timescale involved, there was no time for widespread consultations and so a reply was put together at a Committee meeting and I give the main part of our reply to the Lake District National Park Authority below:

#### **“Archaeology**

Although Lorton is acknowledged as of Viking origin, the site of the original settlement is not known. It is an open question whether the original site is where the present church was built, mid-way between the twin villages of High and Low Lorton, which have certainly had separate identities since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It would be of considerable historical interest to know whether or not the church is indeed on the original site of the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century settlement and, if not, explore possible alternatives.

We make a plea for the Vales of Lorton and Buttermere, together with that part of Loweswater township which falls within these valleys, which contain a number of known, but unexplored, historical sites, to be included in your five year priority programme as outlined in paragraph 7.9 of the Draft Plan.

#### **Preservation of existing features**

We are concerned at the gradual deterioration of many of the region's attractive features and would like to see a policy



adopted for the systematic reinstatement, repair and preservation of old field boundaries (stone walls and hedges), traditional farm buildings, meadows and heather moorland. Most of these points are covered in the Draft Plan but we would suggest that, in order to cover the reinstatement of hedges that have been replaced by fences, the third bulleted item in paragraph 7.6 could read "**the repair and renovation of traditional farm buildings and field boundaries with selected reinstatement of hedges;**". Our point about heather moorland may be covered by "dwarf-shrub heath" in paragraph 6.9; if not, we should like to see "heather moorland" added here.

### **Broadleaved woodlands**

We strongly support the proposals concerning improved management of broadleaved woodlands as detailed in the Draft Plan. To amplify just one, in the aims in paragraph 9.9, the last item refers to the encouragement of natural regeneration. There are certain wooded areas that are literally dying through total lack of natural regeneration, mainly due to sheep grazing, and although some of these areas are quite small, they can be important both from a visual and a wildlife point of view. So this last item could read "**encourage where appropriate the use of natural regeneration as a means of restocking old, and creating new, woodlands.**"

### **Conflict between recreational pursuits**

We are concerned with the increasing problems caused by mountain bikes and bikers. There are both mandatory and guidance rules which apply but these are frequently ignored. We hope that suitable education and advice on the fells in the future can enable people to partake in this pursuit without conflict with others. Paragraph 6.3 in the Draft Plan covers the education of mountain bikers but makes no mention of any Ranger involvement on the actual fells.

A more recent problem, not in our area as yet, is posed by off-road 4 wheel drive vehicles and we hope that the steps already taken by the National Park Authority are followed through with determination. This problem seems to be covered in three parts of the Draft Plan - paragraph 4.45 for green lanes only, paragraphs 6.31 and 6.32 for the fells and paragraphs 7.23 and 7.24 for byways and UCRs. We are a little concerned that this might dilute the impact of what is needed; for example, there is no mention of talks with LARA in relation to the fells in paragraphs 6.31 and 6.32.

Today's actions and the reasons for taking them become tomorrow's history. In planning and activating major proposals affecting the lives and resources available to local communities, it is very desirable that all local history societies be kept advised, if for no more than maintaining their local archives up to date and complete.

We should like to thank you for involving us and we are encouraged by much of what we have seen in the Draft Plan. We do hope that the National Park Authority will be able to argue for and obtain the resources that will enable it to maintain and improve all the various aspects of our beautiful area.

Yours sincerely"

We had a reply from the National Park's Archaeologist, John Hodgson, and it was clear that our letter had been read carefully by several people and he assured us that our points would be included in the consideration of all the replies received. He also said that it is proposed that recommendations for changes to the draft plan will be presented to the NP Authority's Planning Policy Committee in February 1998.

### **1998 meetings**



Our meetings are normally on Thursdays, in the Yew Tree Hall, at 7.30 pm:

8 January 1998	"Pills and potions" by Jean Ward. About medicines etc used many years ago.
12 March	"The Whitehaven harbour project" by Terry Ponting. Terry is the Chief Executive of the 'Whitehaven Development Company'.
14 May	"The history of the boundary of Cumberland" by John Todd.
11 June	Our AGM, perhaps followed by a short presentation.
10 July	"Bellmen, Handywomen and Arval Bread" by Brenda Callaghan. Based on her college course entitled "Death in the Lake Counties 1500 - 1900". Don't worry, it's not at all morbid!
10 September	"The history of policing in Cumbria" by David Garner. David is the Curator of the Cumbria Constabulary Police Museum in Penrith.
12 November	Presentation of old local Wills and Probate Inventories by Ron George.