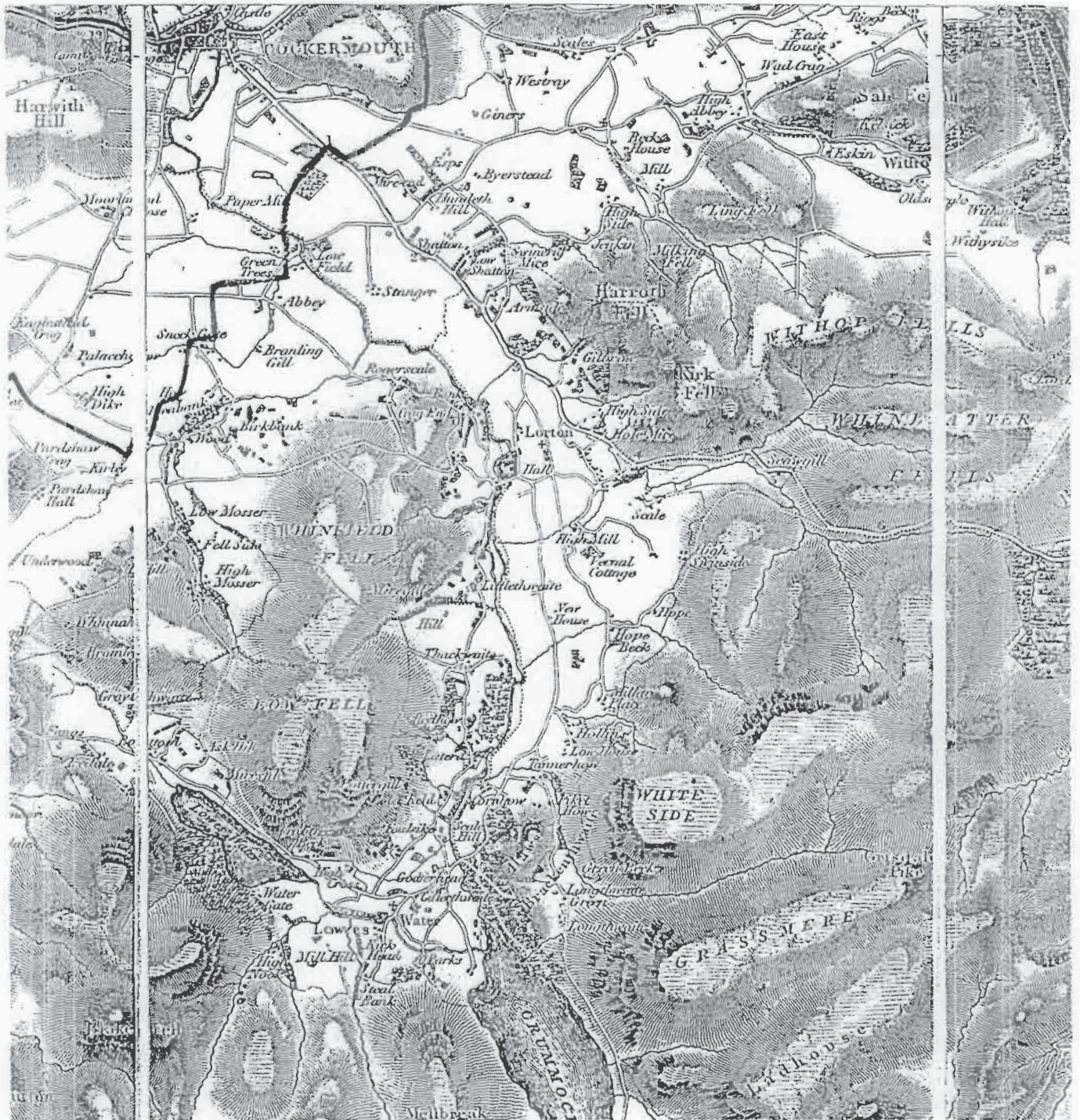


# Lorton & Derwent fells

## Local History Society



From the Greenwoods' map surveyed in about 1822. Scale 1" to 1 mile



## Editor's letter

The Society has got off to an excellent start. Interest in our inaugural lecture was much greater than expected, so much so that we were obliged to rush to find extra seating. This meant that some people at the back of the hall had an imperfect sight of the screen; we apologise for this and will organize things better in future.

Your Committee has provisionally earmarked Saturday, 29 October for a Society social evening. Great things are intended so please keep this date free in your diary.

Regarding Newsletters, we are pleased to be able to offer our members this second issue and hope that you find a substantial part of the content of interest. We hope that it will stimulate some related activity on your part, be it seeking answers to your questions, or be it putting pen to paper to let the rest of us share your (history-based) problems and findings. We are equally sure that you will realise that the content of the first two Newsletters, useful as it is, has come from a very restricted source and can not be repeated indefinitely. We need material from members and quite possibly some item in this current Newsletter will produce the required stimulus. So please, let us have articles and letters.

Those who were present at the meeting last November will recall that we agreed to hold meetings on the second Thursday of alternate months, but that this would not be written in tablets of stone. To prove the point, our meeting scheduled for the 12 May has had to be put back to the following week, the 19 May, due to the non-availability of the hall. That makes two of our first three meetings having been changed from the second Thursday, but please do not think that these changes are going to continue; we will do our best to ensure a regular timetable in future. Please note the latest amendments to our future programme on the back page. Elsewhere in this Newsletter are details of talks and suchlike of other organizations. Please let us know if any of those would be of interest to you, so that, if practicable and of sufficient interest to others, we can try and arrange for something similar for our own Society.

### Local history and the local school

We believe that it would be a "Good Thing" to establish some form of contact between our Society and Lorton School. First steps have already been made and we will tell you more about this at our next meeting. However, the present feeling is that quite apart from 'local experts' amongst ourselves to talk to the children, we need someone who can establish and maintain a good rapport with children in the 10-12 years age group. Any volunteers please - perhaps you would give this idea some thought before the next meeting.

### Problem corner

During the course of research - you remember that we defined it recently as an upmarket way of saying "looking for the answer to a question" - one comes across a multitude of stumbling blocks. They can be as serious as an apparently unbridgable gap in a family tree. They can be silly little things such as the inability to read a certain word in a document of only passing interest. I well remember one of my early worries when working through a probate inventory. I just could not fathom out what was "one mear". Was I reading correctly M E A R ? Well, I was still very inexperienced and I was an off-



comer. How did a yeoman in 1700 pronounce that he had a female horse? And that was how they wrote it too - phonetically, as pronounced. Lesson number one!

Other things come to mind. Still on probate inventories, most, if not all, list a sum of money for "funeral expenses". I have seen one for a most important gentleman where the expenses were listed item by item and totalled many hundreds of pounds. But the poor yeoman, widows, husbandmen and local craftsmen in this valley just have a single figure, which varies from 10/- to about £5. What was the funeral custom in this valley between, say, 1550 and 1750 and what part of the proceedings exactly did that figure cover? Also, what conclusion can one draw, if any, from the absence of any such figure? No evidence for any of this has yet come to hand, except the frequent statement of a wish to be "buried in the church or churchyard at Lorton". Incidentally, this latter request would not have been made by Loweswater parishioners as they had their own burial ground elsewhere.

Let us hear of your problems and queries - someone may be able to solve them for you.

### Family trees

Some members with long-standing local connections may be interested in family trees. We already have a small nucleus of records, with a very small number of family trees already partially grown! If those who are interested in this aspect of our local history will let us know, we might profitably start a "family tree corner" in our Newsletters. Some of the names already in the latter category are CASS, FLETCHER, SIBSON, CARTMELL, PLASKETT, DIXON and TOWERS.

### Useful reference books

This researcher, when starting, found that there were no books dealing with this valley in the historical sense. Buttermere appeared in print as either a tourist spot or the home of the "Beauty". Lorton never even appeared as a tourist spot but had the occasional benefit of Wordsworth's yew tree. Both time and much digging have passed since then and I have found that there are a number of books that, even if not aimed at this valley, are quite relevant to those genuinely interested in a deeper understanding of the area in general. The following is a very short list of those that I think may be of widest use initially. There are others and I will be pleased to show those that I have on my own bookshelf to anyone interested.

"The Local Historian's Encyclopedia" - John Richardson - Historical Publications, 2nd Ed 1986, £13.95

"Traditional Buildings and Life in the Lake District" - Susan Denyer - Victor Gollancz/National Trust, 1991, £8.99

"Famine in Tudor and Stuart England" - Andrew Appleby - Stanford University Press, Calif, 1978 (out of print). NB This is actually based on Cumberland and Westmorland

"Village Records" - John West - Phillimore, 1982, £14.95

"Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties" - R W Brunskill - Faber and Faber Paperbacks, 1978, £2.95

"Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria" - Angus J L Winchester - John Donald Pub, 1987, £20

Ron George



## Course in local history

Brief notes on a course being given by Lancaster University are given below. This, and similar courses, are equivalent in level to the first year of an undergraduate degree course. They are free-standing qualifications in their own right, but successful completion may help gain entry to a degree or diploma course at some Higher Education Institutions. Credits gained with this Demi-Certificate will be eligible for transfer into the Open University. No formal qualifications are required for this course and the following has been extracted from the Lancaster University prospectus.

### *DEMI-CERTIFICATE IN LOCAL HISTORY*

*This course is designed to help you to acquire the skills necessary to carry out serious local historical research in your area of interest. It aims to give you an understanding of the approaches, themes and techniques of local history as an academic subject, with particular reference to the history of communities in northern England. You will also acquire the skills required to carry out independent research on the history of local communities from the 17th century. Course Director: Dr Angus Winchester.*

*The course is made up of 3 modules. 2 are taught by study packs, the third comprises a supervised project involving original research on a locality of your choice. Modules 1 and 2 are complemented by 3 study days each, held at either Lancaster or Ambleside. The length of time each module will take to study will vary for each student, but we estimate that a student spending about 4 - 6 hours per week on the course will complete a module in about 6 months.*

#### *Module 1: LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN ENGLAND: APPROACHES TO LOCAL HISTORY*

*This module introduces the principal themes in the social and economic history of rural and urban communities in northern England since 1600. Topics include population history, social structure, wealth and poverty, agriculture, rural industry, religion, education and culture, migration, urban growth, the industrial revolution, and industrial society.*

*Note: You will need to have access to both audio and video cassette players for this module.*

#### *Module 2: ARCHIVE SOURCES FOR LOCAL HISTORY*

*This module provides both the practical and conceptual skills required by students using archive sources for serious local historical study.*

*Note: You will need to have access to a video player for this module and to be prepared to make regular visits to your local record office and local studies library.*

#### *Module 3: RESEARCH PROJECT*

*An individual study in which you work under academic supervision to carry out independent research from primary sources on a topic approved by the University and write a dissertation of 7,500 to 10,000 words.*

The next course starts after the summer break but we have heard that the places are already filling up so prompt application is advisable if you are interested. The tuition fee for each module is currently £75 (which can be paid in three instalments) and a reduction of £5 has been agreed for members of a group of 5 or more from this Society as a gesture of encouragement and goodwill if sharing tapes, which are on loan only. As places are limited, it is essential to apply quickly.

If you would like to see the Lancaster University leaflet, please contact Ron George or Michael Grieve. If you would like to discuss the course with the University, please contact:

Hilary Thomas, Adult Continuing Education, Lancaster University, The Storey Institute, Lancaster, LA1 1TH. Tel: (0524) 849494

MSG



## Report on meeting 20 January 1994

Spellbound may, perhaps, though I am not too sure of that, be a little too strong a word to describe the attention that the gratifyingly full audience gave to Dr Angus Winchester during his talk. Dr Winchester described how the class who called themselves yeomen grew from more humble beginnings, thrived and eventually fell prey to the gradual changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. He drew our attention to the myth of permanency of ownership or of tenancy by one family, and of the influence of the difference between fell and upland on the one hand, and of valley bottom and lowland on the other, in relation to the enfranchisement or otherwise of ownership. It would be inappropriate to list here all the points that Dr Winchester made; suffice it to say that he suggested numerous themes and ideas for further investigation. We hope that they will be taken up and followed and bear fruit.

Dr Winchester gave his audience a stimulating evening and thereby set the scene, and a target, for those amongst us that follow. He came direct from a full day of teaching at Lancaster University, to which city he returned the same evening. We are most grateful to him for taking the time for this visit and hope to see him with us again soon.

RCG

## Tomorrow's history today

When Thomas Watson sold half of White Ash to John Dalton in 1714, he wasn't thinking of me. When Jonathan Hudson took over the fishing rights in Buttermire Water at an annual rent of 3s 4d in 1633, did he care about what the other villagers thought of him?

Luckily, records of these events and countless others like them have survived. Unluckily, no records have survived to tell us why they did those things, what they were thinking and how those events affected (or were affected by) their everyday life. In fact, precious little evidence of "the daily round, the common task" remains, if ever it was written. We can only infer from the existing records. This, of course, is one reason why local history societies exist - the quest for information and to fathom out and understand the unknown, both the unique and the common-place.

Let it not be said, therefore, that we who are now looking backwards are not sufficiently aware of the need to record the present for those who follow.

So - VOLUNTEERS PLEASE to undertake the recording of the here and now, the happenings of today for the local historians of the future to work on tomorrow. Here are some suggestions to start you thinking and to start you writing and recording:-

*Pen portraits of interesting folk that you knew in the valley and have recently departed, eg Ada Cass, Miss Moffat, Mrs Milburn, Rex Pitches, Annie Burns - why is it that only ladies have jumped to mind? - what about the farmers like Peter Hall?*

*The Loweswater Show, the Mellbreak Hounds, the advent of electricity to the valley (1934), the public water supply (photos of the construction of the new reservoir on Whinfell have already been taken), the modifications that you have made to your traditional farm houses and barns, photographs of your present houses before you make changes.*

*The early postal services (though that may be asking too much of the current population), The advent of motor transport in the valley and the introduction of the public bus service and it's demise. The results of the First and Second World Wars on the valley. Changes in farming practice - and the reasons for them - during the last 50? 70? years.*

There is an enormous range of material that can be recorded - with references please where appropriate and known. If you start on any project, please let me know so that others can avoid duplication, or work with co-ordination.

RCG



## Next meeting

\*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*\*\*

Our next meeting is on Thursday, 19 May 1994 (please note the new date) and is a members' evening. There will be plenty of table space and all members are invited to bring along anything you think is, or may be, relevant such as family histories, photographs (for example war photos or records relevant to the valley's war effort, perhaps of the Lonsdale Battalion), house deeds, maps, artifacts etc. And remember that recent events can be of interest too - local history happened last year or even yesterday. Alternatively, just come along to see and discuss what is on display!

It would help the Committee to plan this evening's action if those proposing to bring material would let us know rough details in advance - say by **Thursday, 5 May**. Please contact MSG or RCG.

Recently, our Society was awarded a 'Priming Grant' by the Neighbourhood Services Unit of the Cumbria County Council and our local Neighbourhood Development Officer, Pat Ackred, will be coming along to the meeting to present the cheque for £250. So I hope that we put on a good show for her!

MSG

## Report on meeting 17 March 1994

Thirty five members and guests braved the poor weather on the evening of the 17 March to hear David Bowcock, who is the Assistant County Archivist at the Carlisle Record Office, explain all about the Record Office - what it contains, how it is run and how the public can use it.

David explained the role of an Archivist and some of the misconceptions that the public have of his job, from "Activist" to "County Librarian"! He told us about the organisation of the Record Office for security, fire prevention and filing the vast amount of ever-increasing material. The sheer amount of room needed is always a problem although this will be eased slightly when the new Record Office opens in Whitehaven later next year.

The second part of David's talk involved a variety of old papers that he had brought from Carlisle. The originals were on display but they were also overhead-projected on to a screen for the actual talk. These papers were mainly Lorton records from Church, coroner and court and they gave a fascinating insight to what treasures may lurk in the Carlisle Record Office store rooms.

David made us feel that the public get a very good welcome from his staff and are encouraged to use the archives on registering and receiving a card which, incidentally, is valid for all Record Offices. He told us that, after several thefts, they now have to insist that large bags and cases are left outside the viewing room - a precaution only too necessary these days unfortunately.

Tea and biscuits followed and the new kitchen and toilet facilities admired. We welcomed three new members, bringing our total membership to 53.

Daphne Holbrook

## Logos

We thank those who supplied the three entries in our logo competition. This is not a large number from which to select a high profile device and we would like to see more suggestions before making a decision.

RCG

## Cumbria Local History Federation

Our Society has joined the Cumbria Local History Federation which issues a Bulletin and Diary three times a year and it is our intention to highlight relevant parts of them in our Newsletters. Any comments or suggestions on this aim would be most welcome.

The January 1994 Bulletin contains:-

A report on the Federation's AGM held last September containing the complete Chairman's Report.

Diary dates -

Saturday 14 May 1994 - day visit to the Helena Thompson Museum, Workington. Full details in next Bulletin.

Saturday 24 September 1994 - AGM and Study Day (?) to be held at Newton Rigg College, Penrith.

Spotlight on Keswick Historical Society

Letter to the Editor - from someone researching the surname KILNER.

Jottings and Queries - The Female Constable of Sedbergh

Book Review - "Towns and Villages of England: Aspatria by Anne Usher Thomas, published by Alan Sutton Publishing £6.99.

Speakers Register - gives list of speakers with their topics.

The January 1994 Diary includes:-

Meetings etc of the member Societies (January - April)

Relevant Evening Classes, Weekend and Day Schools.

The next Bulletin and Diary are due out in mid-April.

If anyone would like to see the January Bulletin and/or Diary, please contact Michael Grieve.

MSG



## Announcement of the AGM

The Society's first AGM is to be held on 16 June 1994 at 7.30pm in the Yew Tree Hall.

Please make a note of this in your diary and come along because it is the time when we can air any changes (if any) that people feel would be worthwhile to our Constitution or to the day to day running of the Society.

An Agenda will be put into the notice boards in the Yew Tree Hall and the village shop about a week before the AGM takes place. If you have any items for the Agenda, please let one of the Committee know as soon as possible.

MSG

## A map reference

I do not believe that an up-to-date list of maps of the Lake District exists, but if anyone knows of one, would they please let me know! In fact, the only list that I know of that sets out to be as complete as possible was published in 1918. For anyone interested, the reference is

Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archæological Society Transactions,  
NS XVIII, 1918, pages 1 - 92

"The Chorography, or a Descriptive Catalogue of the Printed Maps, of Cumberland and Westmorland" by John F Curwen, FSA

MSG

## Stop press

Items from the just-received May Cumbria Local History Federation Diary:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 4 May   | Talk - Slides of Frizington by Les Davies (Workington & District Local History Society - Mr Harrison 0900 601825)             |
| 14 May  | Federation day visit to the Helena Thompson Museum, Workington<br>Please see the loose sheet                                  |
| 21 June | Talk - 'The Ice Ages in the Lake District' by Dr F J Cockersole (Friends of Helena Thompson Museum - Mr McCleary 0900 603312) |
| 23 July | Visits to Maryport Museum and Holme Cultram (Matterdale Historical & Archaeological Society - Dr Hutchinson 07684 82465)      |

MSG

## Future programme, 1994

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 19 May<br>New date | Members' Evening - please bring your family histories, old photographs, house deeds, maps, artifacts etc. Please see announcement above |
| 16 June            | AGM - please see announcement above   |
| 14 July            | Mrs S Denyer, Historic Buildings Representative of the National Trust, NW Region - "Vernacular buildings of the Lake District"          |
| 8 September        | To be arranged  |
| 29 October         | Society Social Evening - please see Editor's letter above   |
| 10 November        | Members' evening ?  |

Meetings will normally be held in the Yew Tree Hall, Lorton at 7.30pm