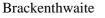
# Derwent Fells Local History Society



Buttermere

Embleton

Loweswater

Mockerkin

n Pardshaw

Wythop



SCALE FORCE, CUMBERLAND

An engraving from a drawing by Thomas Allom Esq

First published in 1833

#### Secretary's letter

At our AGM in June, Ron George summarised what had been achieved over the first seven years of our Society. In previous AGMs, Ron reviewed only the previous year so his change this time seemed to portend something. He subsequently announced that he would not be standing again for Chairman. We owe Ron a big debt of gratitude because it was his initiative in 1993 that led to the formation of the Society, when he was elected Chairman. Since then he has guided the Society and has always been available for help and information. As Secretary, I am very well aware of this. So we will miss Ron's presence as Chairman and, of course, it means a big change for the Society. Thank you for everything, Ron.

And I can now welcome our new Chairman, Derek Denman, who has already guided our Roman Roads Group to great effect. It's early days yet, but at a recent Committee meeting Derek put forward some new ideas for the Society and hopefully you will start to notice some additional events. For a bit more information on this, Derek has written a 'new Chairman's introduction' which follows this letter.

Earlier this year, Walter Head produced a property survey form which went to all properties in Brackenthwaite. He got an encouraging response and our Committee decided that, especially in 2000, it would be a good idea to carry out a similar survey for all properties in Buttermere, Lorton and Loweswater. We're looking for new and old names of properties (and nearby fields) and general features of each property. The results will all go into our Archive and should be a valuable resource for researchers. It is a big undertaking and if all goes to plan, you should get your survey form with this Newsletter.

We have expanded our collection of tithe information with the Loweswater maps, apportionments and general correspondence which have just arrived. And to recap, the other areas we already have are Lorton, Brackenthwaite and Whinfell and they are all in the Archive and borrowable.

Years ago, Walter Head sent me a short extract from Celia Fiennes' description of a journey she made in the Lake District in 1698. It paints a very sad picture and at last I have included it in this Newsletter; it is of an area in the Patterdale area I think (she went over the Kirkstone Pass) and I wonder how typical it was of other areas in the Lake District. There is also a detective article by Ron George, dealing with the attractive Wayside Cottages in High Lorton and a piece on the rich history behind the English language by Derek Denman. Plus a Walter Head special on the Romano British settlement at Lanthwaite Green (sorry Walter, in Brackenthwaite!).

This Newsletter comes with a health warning. I'm using a different printing method for some of the pages, hopefully to get better results, but the ink will not be waterproof. So please don't read this in the rain and, whatever you do, don't read it in the shower!

#### A word from the new Chairman, Derek Denman

I am sure that you all know that Ron George retired as Chairman at the June AGM after seven years of leading the Society from its inception in 1993. Ron was personally responsible for the idea of the Society, for its creation and for leading its development into a well established Local History Society. He has agreed to stay on the Committee as Vice Chairman until such time as he and Stella leave the valley for pastures new with our best wishes. In the future he will be rightly acknowledged as the founder of the Society on our membership cards. He leaves the Society in good shape, with a very successful series of talks established, and of course this excellent Newsletter, edited and produced by Michael Grieve, which always contains much of interest.

The Committee has been looking to the future to ensure that the Society can continue to develop and is using this time of change to consider what needs to be done. Obviously, the interests of the members are most important and you will find a questionnaire in this issue which I ask you to fill out and return during September please.

Already it is clear that, for the Society to continue to be viable a few years ahead and also to be able to undertake more participatory history projects, we need to broaden both our membership base and to cover more fully the area of our Derwent Fells brief. By now, you should already have noticed a higher public profile and more advertising of events, coupled with some changes in the style of our title to reflect better the broad area we cover. Do you know someone who might like to join the Society? Why not suggest it? 3

Also, the Committee is considering organising more participatory members' evenings in addition to the talks, and establishing groups, where appropriate, to pursue a local history topic. The next talk on 'Researching the History of your own House' is bound to stimulate a number of members to think about doing just that, and we would like to establish a House History Group of members who would like to put together a history of their (or some other) house. In support of this and other projects, there will be a special Archive evening on 12 October at the Yew Tree Hall at 7.30pm at which most of the content of the Society's Archive will be on display for members to see and use. Ron and others will be on hand to explain the contents and its use. This is a one-off opportunity to have a good look at what is available.

# Wayside Cottages by Ron George

One can easily be misled by this attractive little terrace of three 18th century cottages. 18th century they are nothing of the sort, in spite of the fact that No.1 contains a dated transom above the fireplace bearing the inscription P

Р Н 1700 А

We will find that behind the facade of a simple cottage lies a very complicated and intricate history of both buildings and family. That we now have difficulty in discovering and understanding their history is not surprising. It had already been forgotten by 1891 when John Bolton gave his lecture on Lorton as it had been eighty years earlier. But let us go back and try to find their beginnings. The story which follows is pieced together from the documentary sources in the Society archive, and by the physical details discovered during modifications and repairs to the three properties at the very end of the twentieth century, and for which information I am indebted to Sally and John Birch at No.3 and Josh Morgan at No.1.

By implication we can go back to the early 17th century. Immediately behind the site of the present cottages was a close known as Peirson's Boon House Close, from which we deduce there was a dwelling on that site in 1649.

On 30th April 1751, John Sewell surrendered to the Dean and chapter "his messuage or dwelling house, garth or garden, with appurtenances situated in the Manor, of customary rent 1d, to the use of John Grigg and Mary his wife, their heirs ......" etc. There is no evidence in that document of how John Sewell came by the property, but from the parish registers we know that on 30th December 1579 Christopher Skynner married Ellen Casse, and their grandson Martin was baptised in 1623. Rebekah the daughter of John Skinner of Upper Lorton was baptised in November 1716 and married John Sewell in December 1747.

We next have an Indenture dated 11th May 1780 which refers to an enlarged property. Joseph Fisher, yeoman, purchased from Wilson Pearson, Esq. of Bridekirk (the different spelling of Pearson is believed not to be significant as spellings were not only idiosyncratic but tended to vary over time) for £62, a dwelling house, byre, garden, and parcel of ground lying on the backside of the dwelling house at the east end of the barn, rent  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Fisher also purchased from Pearson the said barn, rent  $\frac{1}{4}$ d, for another £20. The immediate conclusion is that the Skinners were tenants of the Pearsons and not the owners.

At the request of Joseph Fisher the whole was sold on to William Nicholson as a Trustee for Joseph Fisher. The documents are not more forthcoming on this point, but again we must make the assumption that the purchase by Joseph was to put the property into Trust for his son, Joseph. Thus William Nicholson became owner of:

"that dwelling house and byre with the garden thereunto adjoining also all that piece of ground on the backside of the house lately enclosed by William Nicholson by a wall from the corner of the kitchen to within one foot of the east side of the barn door. Also the Dunghillstead at the High End of the field called High Flatts and also a piece of waste ground at the east end of the barn with the liberty of erecting ladders in the field called Boon House".

This description ties in very neatly with the current extent (July 2000) of the three cottages and their gardens taken together. Nicholson remained as Trustee during the natural lives of Joseph Fisher and his wife Ann and then to sell by public Auction and pay the net proceeds to Mary, wife of George Ritson of Ullock and Sarah Westray of Greysouthen, the widow sisters of Joseph Fisher.

We do not have, in Lorton registers, the burials of either Joseph or Ann, but the property was transferred to

George Ritson and his wife Mary for rent 3/4d on 11th August, 1788. William Nicholson remained in occupancy as tenant and was admitted as such by the Manor court Jury in October 1796. He was also a tenant at the nearby farm of "White Ash", from whence Sarah Dalton had married Thomas Westray of Greysouthen, the latter thereby becoming owner of the 'Lambfold' half of 'White Ash'.

On 5th May 1814, Mary the wife of John Fisher and eldest daughter and heir of George Ritson was admitted as tenant to the above described property, which, we note, at this date was still described as one dwelling, barn and byre.

The next document relates that Jane Wilson, as Devisee of Joseph Fisher, was admitted as tenant to that same property on 20th March 1865, and thereupon surrendered it to Richard Harbord who was then admitted tenant. Who was Jane Wilson? Was she Joseph Fisher's married granddaughter or niece? She has not been found in the Lorton registers.

The subsequent transfers of the property are well documented but present a new and knotty problem, since in 1886 Eleanor Harbord inherits not one but two cottages and a byre. Then, in 1924, the property is sold to Annie Hartley, now worth £310 and the deeds of sale are for not two, but three cottages, each with a tenant - Hubert Wells, Miss Braithwaite, and Mrs. Thornthwaite. The byre has disappeared, but how, and when?

We now have recourse to an independent new set of documents - the Tithe Awards and map of 1840. The latter inadequately differentiates between the various parts of the single property numbered 278, apparently a dwelling on the site of No.1 with an attached barn lengthwise along the road in the direction of Cockermouth. There is what appears to be another small construction on the present site of No. 3. The whole is enclosed by a wall, corresponding to the present limit of the three properties. At that time, 1840, the owner is given as Joseph Fisher, with 'John Harris and others' as tenants. The close immediately around the house, "Above House" (i.e. 'Boon House' - the name has not changed since 1649) is now in the ownership of Henry Freshmaker Thompson, and farmed by John Ewart. How Thompson comes into the picture is not yet known, but he also owned 110 acres around the village including Holme Cottage in Low Lorton and he seems to have been a bit of an entrepreneur.

So to complete the story from documented evidence it seems that between 1865 and 1896 Richard Harbord built a second cottage, and that between 1886 and 1924 George Harbord converted the byre into the third cottage, at the same time making all three similarly faced and matching his two cottages known as Park Cottages across the road; and those two are almost certainly of 17th century origins.

Of the questions that remain to be answered, there is one not previously discussed. Do the deeds representing the property No. 3 truly relate in their entirety to No. 3 or, as seems more likely, to the entire plot now occupied by Nos. 1 - 3? If the latter, then it is relevant to see what the Deeds of Nos. 1 and 2 have to say. In a word, 'they don't'. They only cover the latter since 1861, but it is at this point that physical repairs come to our aid, without providing convincing proofs.

Some major refurbishment of No.2 was made in February 1999. Stripping out the plaster revealed very roughly made random stone walls which would not have been typical of an original wall for a dwelling. There was evidence of a large window having been placed in the front to the right of the existing window as seen from the road. It also appeared that the rear half was an earlier extension - a definite break in the stonework occurs immediately behind the door between the two downstairs rooms, and a stone staircase also suggests that the upstairs back room is a later addition in place of a



'cat-slide roof '. At the foot of the stairs in No 3 is a timber lintel in the party wall with No.2, much of which wall in between the two front living rooms is of brick. The inevitable conclusion is that cottages Nos. 2 and 3 were originally one, (even the stone flagged upstairs corridors on both sides correspond) and were split during the period 1886-1924. In refurbishing his cottage, No. 1, Josh also discovered evidence of two small vertical slit windows that suggested it might well have been converted from a barn. Finally, a blocked-up window in the upstairs east wall of the front bedroom was discovered and is now opened.

It remains only to point out that although often called "Wayside Cottages", they should, strictly speaking, be called "Park Cottages" as that is how they are described in the house deeds.

I read in a Sunday paper early in the year that there was a move to consider changing from AD (Anno Domini) to CE (Common Era) to identify dates after the year zero. The stimulus for this would be the new millennium, now commonly accepted throughout the world. The purpose would be to remove the religious basis of the date, this change being for the benefit of those who have a non-Christian culture. Dates before zero in the new scheme would be BCE (Before Common Era) rather than BC (Before Christ). I think that this proposal may have fallen by the wayside, but it led me to do some reading on ancient ways of counting the years and on the basis of the names of months and days. The results show how rich and multicultural a heritage we have and, I think, how pointless it is to tinker with part of it.

## Numbering the years

All Cumbrian history (ie the written texts rather than the archaeology) is clearly AD, starting around AD75 with the Roman conquest, but dates have not always been written as AD. Regnal years are the most commonly used in historical records; I have an indenture, for example, which is dated both the 38th year of the reign of George III and AD1797. In fact the AD dates were not in use anywhere until introduced in the sixth century, based on the calculation by Dyionysius Exiguus (d.550) of the date of the Annunciation. Going back further, before the shadowy Rheged period to the start of the fifth century, we find the Romans in charge in Cumbria. We all know that Caesar invaded Southern Britain in 55BC and departed in 54BC, to be followed by the occupation proper under Claudius in AD43, about one hundred years later. Of course Caesar did not know that it was 55BC. Romans counted in years AUC (Ab Urbe Condita 'from the founding of the city'). So that for Caesar it was 699AUC when he invaded Celtic Britain, and 'years AUC' would have been the official dates in Cumbria during at least the early part of the 325 years of the occupation.

## The Months of the Year

Thinking of Anno Domini, it occurred to me to check how many of the names of months and the days have a religious basis, and of course many do but in England they are all pre-Christian. The months of the year are wholly Roman and from the classical period (though months themselves go back through Greece, Egypt and Babylonia where recorded history starts around 2500BC). Originally there were ten Roman months of only 304 days, with January and February added as stopgaps. In 708 AUC, during Julius Caesar's third consulship and based on existing Egyptian practice, the current year was extended by 151 days so that the year 707AUC could start on January 1st and run for 365 days. In 737AUC (AD4) the leap day was added by counting February 25th twice every fourth year. The resultant Julian Calendar then survived until AD1582, when Pope Gregory made the final correction and adjustments (which England was rather slow to adopt).

The Latin names of the months and derivations are:

- Januarius......After the double-faced Janus, god of all beginnings, an old Italian deity
- Februarius.....The month of expiation (15th was the feast of expiation and purification)
- Martius......After Mars, father of Romulus (progenitor of the Roman people), god of war
- Aprilis......Month of opening. From latin aperio (to unclose or open)
- Maius...... After Maius, daughter of Atlas and Pleione, mother of Mercury and Jupiter
- Junius......After Juno, daughter of Saturn, sister and wife of Jupiter! Foundress of marriage
- Julius.......Renamed in honour of Gaius Julius Caesar, previously Quinctilis the fifth month
- Augustus......Renamed in honour of Emperor Augustus. Previously Sextilis the sixth month
- September....The seventh month (originally)
- October......The eighth month
- November....The ninth month
- December....The tenth month

# The Days of the Week

The seven days of the week are more difficult since the origin precedes written history. It appears to be based on the Sun, Moon and the five moving stars (the visible planets) which ruled the lives of the first settled Neolithic farmers from before the 8th millennium BC. The Greeks and Romans, however, had no use for the week, though the Babylonians are believed to have used it from 700BC. The best known week is of course from the book of Genesis, first written down in the eighth century BC, in which the universe is made in six days and the seventh becomes the Sabbath. But there seem to be very few historical references to the week until the Roman Empire adopted Christianity in the fourth century.

In modern languages there are historically based differences between southern and northern Europe. The

former (Italian, Spanish, French) are Italic languages based on Latin. The latter (German, English and most Scandinavian languages) are Germanic in origin, with English being developed after the Anglian and Fresian invasions of the fifth century and the demise of the post-Roman Celts (such as those in Rheged including the legendary Arthur). Put simply, the Germanic countries had a Norse Mythology and the Italic countries had a Roman mythology. So that two sets of gods now inhabit the days of the week. For example:

Italian	Meaning		French
domenica	the Lord's day (Christian)		dimanche
lunedi	day of the Moon (Latin luna)		lundi
martedi	day of Mars		mardi
mercoledi	day of Mercury		mercredi
giovedi	day of Jupiter = Jove		jeudi
venerdi	day of Venus		vendredi
sabato	the Sabbath (Jewish)		samedi
English	Old English	Meaning	
Sunday	sunnandoeg	day of the sun	
Monday	monandoeg	day of the moon	
Tuesday	tiwesdoeg	Tiw's day =Norse god Tyr, god of war	
Wednesday	wodnesdoeg	Woden's day = Norse god Odin, the chief god	
Thursday	thunresdoeg	Thunder's day = Norse god of thunder, Thor	
Friday	frigedoeg	Freya's day, Teutonic goddess of love and beauty = Norse goddess Freya,	
			leader of the Valkyries
Saturday	soeter(nes)doeg	Saturn's day, the Roman and Italian god of agriculture	

In West Cumbria we are aware of the Norse inheritance of place-names and dialect words. But we are perhaps not so aware of the Norse pre-Christian culture and beliefs that would have been the norm in the Buttermere/Lorton valley when settled around the tenth century AD, when the names of the weekdays would have celebrated the gods.

#### In Conclusion

When we use a date such as Wednesday 15th March AD2000 we are speaking of the Germanic god Woden's day in the month dedicated to Mars, the god of war, in the year of our Lord 2000. The numerals and decimal numbers are Arabic, and when we start counting to base 60, as in minutes and seconds, we are using the ancient Babylonian system of mathematics. Every day, and without a second thought, we make use of an immensely rich multicultural inheritance built up over five millennia. We try to make radical change at our peril.

#### A Further Note of Caution for Revolutionaries

The biggest failure in changing the calendar followed the French revolution. Year one started on the 22nd September 1792. Each year contained twelve months of thirty days, with five or six extra days added to align with the solar year. The months were renamed and divided into three ten-day 'decades' - no weeks, no Sundays. This was the official calendar in France until 1806, but in practice it was never accepted. The biggest success in calendar change followed the Russian revolution in 1917, but this was achieved by moving to the calendar already in use throughout the rest of Europe!

Major sources: 'The Calendar' by David Ewing Duncan, Fourth Estate and 'Europe, a History' by Norman Davies, Pimlico.

#### Extract from "The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes", 1698 (Ed by C Morris) from Walter Head

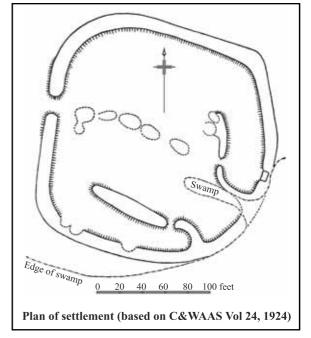
Here I came to villages of sad little hutts made up of drye walls, only stones piled together and the roofs of same slatt; there seemed to be little or noe tunnells for their chimneys and have no morter or plaister within or without; for the most part I tooke them at first sight for a sort of houses or barns to fodder cattle in, not thinking them to be dwelling houses, they being scattering houses here one there another, in some places there may be 20 or 30 together, and the Churches the same; it must needs be very cold dwellings but it shews something of the lazyness of the people; indeed here and there was a house plaister'd, but there is sad entertainment, that sort of clap bread and butter and cheese and a cup of beer all one can have, they are 8 mile from a market town and their miles are tedious to go both for illness of way and length of the miles.

#### Romano British inhabitants in Brackenthwaite by Walter Head

The Roman Roads Group has been looking for, and found, evidence of Roman presence in the area, but what of the local inhabitants at this time? Well, there is evidence to be found in Brackenthwaite.

In the north, several distinct types of native settlements from the Romano British period have been identified. The majority of these were small non-defensive enclosed homesteads or farms. Some enclosures were of stone, some round, some square and near the Scottish border the enclosures were scooped into the slope of a hill. The standard layout included one or more stone round houses situated towards the rear of the enclosure and facing the single entranceway. In front of the houses were pathways and small enclosed yards. In the Cumbrian uplands the settlements were of less regimented form and unenclosed clusters of houses were not uncommon.

A rare example of this type of Romano British enclosed settlement with an associated annexe can be found on



relatively flat land on Lanthwaite Green in Brackenthwaite, a short distance to the east of the B5289 Cockermouth to Buttermere road at Grid Reference NY 15972101.

The settlement is sub-circular in plan, measures approximately 58 metres in diameter internally and is defended by a rubble bank or rampart up to 3m wide and 0.3m high, through which there is an entrance on the western side. The interior of the settlement has been scooped out to form a saucer-like hollow, around the rim of which the rampart runs. Possibly this rampart was originally topped by a wooden fence. There are traces of three hut circles measuring 3m to 4m in diameter scooped into the interior side of the rampart on the south side of the settlement. These hut circles front into an inner enclosure which has two sides formed by a low curving bank of stones and a third side formed by traces of a thin line of stones. There is a narrow entrance near the north-east side of this enclosure. On the eastern side of the settlement there is an almost identical inner enclosure with a narrow entrance. Within this enclosure the only feature is a rectangular stepped recess approximately 2.3m wide, cut into the side of the settlement's rampart; two hut circles approximately 3.6m in diameter are cut into the outside of this inner enclosure bank. Elsewhere within the settlement there is a line of five low oval-shaped rubble mounds which may have functioned as hut platforms, and faint traces of three small enclosures or stock pens built by using the settlement's rampart as one wall.

Associated with the sub-circular enclosure are the remains of an ancient field system which spreads out over the gently sloping, well drained, area to the south and south east of the enclosure and is visible on the ground as a series of stone cairns and low stone banks. These small, irregular shaped, plots were probably used in a mixed system of pasture and arable farming and the cairns and stone walls were a result of stone clearance from the areas to be cultivated.

Immediately adjacent to the south-west side of the settlement, there is a large annexe bounded on three sides by a stone bank up to 2m wide and 0.2m high. It measures approximately 70m by 60m and has an entrance which is situated immediately to the south of the entrance to the settlement.

A short distance from the enclosed settlement on the western side are the remains of a simple two-roomed structure, one approximately 7m by 4m and the second, with a round end to the east, is about 3m by 3m. These are thought to be shielings, or seasonal dwellings, which were situated in an area of upland summer grazing and often occupied by women and children who would look after the cattle while the lowland pastures were given time to recover. Documentary evidence for similar shielings at Ennerdale has suggested that they were occupied in the middle of the 14th century<sup>4</sup>.

On Lanthwaite Green there is also a number of rectangular stone settings about 0.8m by 0.4m which could be the remains of stone-lined pits.

Limited excavation within the settlement by Professor John Marr in 1919 found a stone hammer (Photo 1), a number of pot boilers (cobbles heated and then dropped into water) and a flat slate disc with a hole bored through it which was possibly used as a net sinker (Photo 2). Also about this time, a quern-stone (for grinding corn) was found on the site. All these items were presented to the Keswick Museum. Both photographs are ©National Trust.

The settlement is now a National Monument, reference number 27659, and is perhaps the oldest recorded structure within the area covered by the Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society.





#### Sources

- 1. Family knowledge
- 2. English Heritage National Monument No 27659
- 3. C&WAAS Journal Vol 24 1924
- 4. "An Archaeological Survey of an Enclosed Settlement and its Environs at Lanthwaite Green, Crummock", Lund, J 1999, unpublished National Trust report
- 5. Keswick Museum and Art Gallery
- 6. Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge
- 7. Special thanks to Alan Whitworth of Hadrian's Wall Coordination Unit at Carlisle



#### ★ Next meetings, all at 7.30pm ★

14 September - Christine Craghill "Researching the history of your house" at Loweswater Village Hall
12 October - Archive evening in the Yew Tree Hall
9 November - John Todd "St Bees Man", YTH

Michael Baron has provided the following selected external lectures in Cumbria from Newcastle University for 2000/2001. He says that they should interest any of our members who wish to cross the frontiers of Lorton!

**Vikings**. Jean Ward at Cockermouth School - 10 meetings - Wednesdays 7.00pm - 9.00pm starts 17th Jan. **Mediaeval Houses**. Charmian Robson - 10 meetings at Evergreen Hall, Penrith, Fridays 10-12 noon starts 29th September.

**Using Your Local Archives**. Catherine Clarke - 10 meetings - Thursdays 7.00-9.00pm at County Archives Office, Whitehaven starts 28 September - "an opportunity for hands on study to lead to experience and confidence in dealing with old documents".

**The Slave Trade** - Jean Ward - 5 meetings 7.00-9.00pm Tuesdays at Whitehaven School starts 16 January; also at Helena Thompson Museum, Workington, starts 19th January, Fridays 10-12.00 noon.

Carlisle's Industrial Past - Dennis Perriam - Sunday at Higham Hall 8th October.

**The Handwriting of History** - an introduction to reading historical documents - Catherine Clarke - Sunday at Higham Hall 5th November.

**The Parish Chest: Church Records** - documents of Cumbria's parish churches - Catherine Clarke - Sunday at Higham Hall - 3rd December.

**Monastic Cumbria** - John Todd - one day at Summergrove Conference Centre, near Moor Row, Whitehaven - 20th February.

**Peasants, Knights and Priests in Mediaeval Cumbria** - John Todd - Sunday at Higham Hall - 4th February. **Counting The People** - an introduction to censuses - Catherine Clarke - Sunday at Higham Hall 18th February - Note:

thus, in 2000/2001 there are 3 'archive' Sundays at Higham Hall. **Getting Around North Cumbria** - transportation - means and routes from the Romans onwards - Dennis Perriam -Sunday at Higham Hall 4th March.

Residential courses at Higham Hall: Cesspits, Sewers and Sanitation - Jean Ward - 9-11 March. Roads and Trackways of Cumbria - Paul Hindle - 20-22 April.

For further information contact Jean Ward at Moss View, Low Asby, Lamplugh, Workington CA14 4RT 01946 861600 (9am to 5pm only)