

Lorton &
Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite Buttermere Embleton Loweswater Mockerkin Pardshaw Wythop

www.derwentfells.com

Lorton Inclosure.

TO BE SOLD

IN PUBLIC SALE,

By the Commissioner appointed by an Act of Parliament for Inclosing Lands in Lorton, in the Manor of Derwent Fells, in the County of Cumberland, at the House of

JOHN PYBUS, Innholder, at the Globe Inn,
IN COCKERMOUTH,
IN THE SAID COUNTY,

On WEDNESDAY, 17th of NOVEMBER next,
AT TWELVE O'CLOCK AT NOON,

THE SEVERAL PARCELS OF
Freehold Land,

Being Parts of the Commons and Waste Grounds in Lorton aforesaid, hereinafter more particularly mentioned and described, *VIZ.:*

LOT 1. A Parcel of Land situate on Swinside Fell-end, containing 2A. 0R. 18P. bounded on the North by the Ancient Lands of the late JOHN PEARSON, on the South by the Public Highway from Scale Hill to Keswick, and on the West by an Allotment set out to the late JOHN THORNTHWAITHE and Wife.

LOT 2. A Parcel of Land situate on Swinside Fell-end, containing 2A. 0R. 16P. bounded on the North-west by the Public Highway from Scale Hill to Keswick, on the East by an Allotment sold to MARTHA STUBBS, and on the South and West by an Allotment set out to ANN ROBINSON.

LOT 3. A Parcel of Land situate near High Blease Bridge, containing 2A. 2R. 10P. bounded on the North by the Public Highway from Cockermouth to Keswick and an Occupation Road, on the East and South by an Allotment set out to JOHN PEARSON, and on the West by an Allotment set out to JOHN MARSHALL, Esquire, and the said Occupation Road.

LOT 4. A Parcel of Land situate on Blease Brows Moss, containing 3A. 3R. 0P. bounded on the North and West by an Allotment set out to the Trustees of the late Pearson Morrison, on the East by an Allotment set out to Wilfrid Lawson, Esquire, and on the South by an Occupation Road.

LOT 5. A Parcel of Land situate on Broom Fell and Tod Fell, containing 57A. 2R. 30P. bounded on the North by an Allotment on Wythop Common, belonging to F. F. Vane, Esquire, on the East by an Allotment set out to John Fisher, Solicitor, on the South by an Occupation Road, and on the West by an Allotment set out to Thomas Irwin, Esquire.

All the above Lots will be shewn on Application to JOHN BROUGH, of Scogill, near Lorton, at any Time previous to the Sale; and further Particulars may be known on Application to Mr. HUDLESTON, of Gosforth, near Whitehaven, the said Commissioner; or at the Office of Mr. ROBERT BENSON, Solicitor, in Cockermouth, where Plans of the said Allotments may be seen.

SEPTEMBER 25th, 1830. *STEPHEN MARTIN, Auctioneer.*

THOMAS BAILEY, PRINTER, COCKERMOUTH.

Editorial

It is with much sadness that I have to report that Ron George, the Society's founder, died last October at his home in Canada. His illness was reported in the May 2004 Newsletter but the news still comes as a shock. We all know about his work, over many years in Lorton, on local history, culminating in his book "A Cumberland Valley: A History of the Parish of Lorton". What won't be known is the success of his book - I have just heard that over 300 have now been sold - and they're still selling - which is so good for a serious local history book about one valley in what was Cumberland. Ron's success is one of the things about which his family, and we, can be justly proud.

2004 was quite a year for the Society with well-attended talks - each of the last three were getting close to the magic hundred figure - and the celebration of the bicentenary of the visit of the Wordsworths to the Lorton yew which included a successful poetry competition and the publication of a book covering both the history of the tree and the visit of the poet and the writing of the famous poem. The book is selling well and has received some good reviews.

In 2003, we sold 72 Township maps, many more than we expected, but they are packed with information and look attractive. An extra map was produced last year - Whinfell - and, for the second order, we got 26 requests. However, it wasn't all plain sailing because the original printer let us down. Ink-jet printing at this size is a bit specialised and another company - after a terrible start - produced some really high quality prints. Thanks to Ward Philipson of Gateshead.

This year might be a little quieter although we have had a request from our President, Angus Winchester, Head of History at Lancaster University, inviting us to participate in a project they are setting up to put all the Cumbrian Manorial Records on-line. Please see below and the flier and if you are tempted, don't hesitate because it should be educational and fun!

Now, thinking caps on - we're looking for new areas for August walks - ideas and, better still, offers to any Committee member please!

Michael Grieve



Yew Tree Day in Lorton Vale – a Report by Derek Denman

Despite the light rain a small crowd gathered at 11am on 16th October for the ceremony to plant the millennium yew at Crossgates. Wendy Dempster officiated for the parish council and three generations of the Tyson family



were there to plant the tree. A welcome lunch was then served in the Yew Tree Hall by members of the Lorton WI and the exhibits to celebrate the ancient yew tree and commemorate the visit by the Wordsworths in 1804 was open for the afternoon. This included a display of work and a special artwork based on the bicentenary, created by Lorton School and artist Karen Macdougall. Plus the photographs taken by David Herrod for the book and a timeline illustrating the life and times of the 1000 year old tree.

The highlight of the afternoon was the giving of prizes for the Society's poetry competition, judged and presented by local poets Jeremy and Marita Over. The poems winning the three sections, attracting over 60 entries, have since been published in the Times and Star and the Link.

In amongst the excitement the Society's book 'Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew tree' was launched.

The day and its event was enjoyed by all, a particular delight being the presence of so many children. Thanks are due to Awards for All and the Cockermouth and District Neighbourhood forum for grants of £2635, mostly for the book printing cost. One hundred copies were subscribed for, which gave confidence to proceed.

The book has now sold over 300 copies, meaning that the Society has received considerable funds. The Society therefore was able to provide £400 towards the school artwork, which will be on display at the school. The Committee is considering how the remaining funds might best be spent to benefit the members and the community.

The Cumbria Manorial Documents Register On-line



**Manorial Documents
Register**

See the insert about this project and how Society members can be involved in some projects using manorial records, with help available.

Our website www.derwentfells.com now has a links page which can easily connect you to many related organisations, and to a good range of archives, including the Manorial Documents Register.

Cover Photograph ~ Newsletter No. 33, September 2004

This photo was on the front of the last Newsletter and I said it came from Ted Petty and that "we don't know who the people are". I should have called Ted beforehand because he has since sent me this!!



The photograph may well be the work of one of the *Youdale* family, most likely *William H. Youdale* a draper of Cockermouth. The print was found in a box of miscellaneous documents and photographs that came to light during the recent clearance of Wordsworth House.

The possible existence of such a box within Wordsworth House was known, for this was stated very clearly in a letter in the Kirkgate Museum records. The contents of the letter were made known to the representatives of the National Trust, during negotiations with the Kirkgate Museum Group regarding the long term loan of the former Cockermouth workhouse bell to the Museum Group. The bell from the workhouse was originally fitted to a 19th century sailing ship the 'Lord Eldon of Sunderland', but that is most definitely another story.

In due course the box was found and passed to the Museum Group, together with the workhouse bell and a long case clock, made by a Cockermouth clockmaker Anthony Simpson. The officers of the National Trust, to whom we are indebted, were of the opinion that the clock (now in the Mayor's parlour) should remain in the town.

The box contained a good deal of Cockermouth ephemera and also many photographs, of which the cover picture was one. It is possible that the bowler hatted gentleman was Mr. Youdale senior, or another member of the family on a group outing to Lorton.

Within our Group's archive there is the photograph on the cover of Newsletter No.33, a shot of the waterwheel at the barn of Boon Beck farm *and* this photograph of the Whinlatter road at the junction with the road into High Lorton. We have no record to suggest that these photographs were all taken around the same time, though the probability is high, for the prints were apparently made on the same paper, the photography is not of the highest order, but nevertheless still of value to local historians; and they are from the same source ~ the 'box'.



The 'box' was given to Mr. Bernard Bradbury by Miss Elsie Youdale, a daughter of William more than 25 years ago, for a future Cockermouth museum; then Bernard Bradbury left it in the safe keeping of Wordsworth House. Cockermouth is still without a full time Museum, but we are getting there.

Ted Petty

Cumberland County Council, 1928 - Bye-Laws for the good rule and government of the County

Michael Baron has shown me the above bye-laws and points out that they tell, by implication, how people behaved in the 1920s. Here are some of the choice ones.

Bathing

6. Unless effectually screened from view, no person shall bathe in or from any public place within 200 yards of any dwelling house or pier, or, after the hour of eight o'clock in the forenoon, from any boat, yacht, or vessel within 200 yards of any other boat, yacht, or vessel having persons on board after the said hour, from the banks or strand of any water within 200 yards of any boat, yacht, or vessel, having persons on board without wearing suitable drawers or other sufficient dress or covering to prevent indecent exposure; provided that this Bye-law shall not apply to bathing in any water situated in private ground, which is not within view of any public road or footpath, or of any house not situated in such private ground.

Steam organs, roundabouts, &c.

7. (i) No person shall, in any street or public place, or on any land adjoining or near thereto, use or play, or cause to be used or played, any steam organ, or other musical instrument worked by mechanical means, to the annoyance or disturbance of residents or passengers, providing that this Bye-law shall not apply to any fair lawfully held.

Committing nuisance

13. No person shall do any act whereby any offensive fluid shall lie or flow on or over any public footway.

Noises by excursionists, pleasure parties, &c.

15. No person upon any public coach or other public vehicle for the conveyance of passengers, or on any coach, brake, char-a-banc, wagonette or other vehicle hired or used for the conveyance of pleasure parties and the like:- ... (b) Shall, while passing through any town, village or hamlet, throw any money, sweets, or other articles to be scrambled for by children or other persons on the road or footway; ...

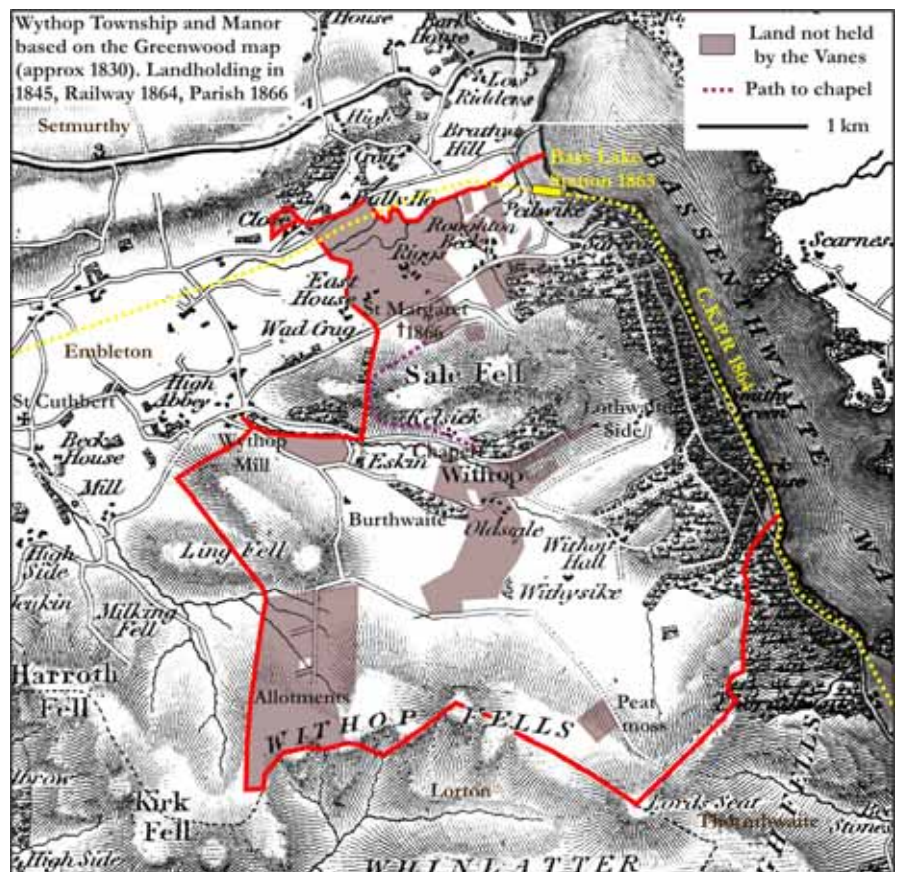
Wythop, a Railway Renaissance - by Derek Denman

The most striking feature of Wythop is the splendour of its church. The parish church and burial ground of St Margaret (of Antioch) were consecrated in July 1866, to replace the old chapel of the same name at Kelsyck. It cost £1000 to build a stylish church for a reducing township population of below 100, only 3km distant from St Cuthbert's, Embleton. It appears that the large walls fronting the road are there to retain a substantial terraced earthwork, presumably required to make possible the burial ground on a steep fell side. The older chapel of St Margaret, now a ruin, was a chapel of ease within the parochial chapelry of Lorton, in the huge original parish of Brigham. It was located more centrally for Wythop at Kelsyck, being first recorded in 1552, though a lintel is dated 1673. The registers for Wythop ceremonies were held at St Cuthbert's, Lorton. The deceased of Wythop are thought to have been carried over the fell, coming down through Highside, Lorton, and then to the Church by the footpaths that still exist. From 1792 to 1866 St Margaret's chapel kept its own register of baptisms. But why did this tiny declining township, a victim of agricultural decline and the classic Cumberland rural depopulation, then come to support such a church building for a new parish?



The origins of Wythop are found in the manorial records and have been described by Angus Winchester¹. The manor was granted out of the hunting-forest manor of Derwentfells (subinfeudated in the jargon) to John De Lucy c.1260, when it was waste and worth 20s. for herbage, but built on and improved it was worth £10 yearly by 1307. Unusually the grant included a bounded block of waste, the origins of Wythop Common, though there were disputes later with neighbouring townships over pasture rights. Wythop Hall has ancient origins, for soon after the manor passed to the Lowthers, Hugo de Lowthre is recorded in the patent rolls as obtaining in 1319 a licence to crenellate 'suum mansum de Wythope inDerwentfelles, Cumb'. This would be just in time to defend against the army of Robert the Bruce, which laid waste Embleton in 1322. In 1606 the lordship and 'ancient hall house' were purchased and rebuilt by Sir Richard Fletcher, of Cockermouth, a wealthy merchant. The Fletcher family also purchased, from the Huttons, the manor of Hutton-in-the-Forest, where Hutton Hall later became the seat of Sir Francis Fletcher Vane, Baronet, Lord of the manor of Wythop into the 1830s. By this time most of the farms, or tenements, in Wythop were owned by the Fletcher Vanes and occupied by tenants. Wythop commons were enclosed after 1830. In 1845 Sir Henry Ralph Vane, Bart, owned 2500 of the 3000 acres of the township, including

Wythop Hall, Kelsick, Lothwaiteside, Withesyke, part of Routenbeck, Smithy Green, the Pheasant Inn (at Peil Wyke) and Wythop Mill. The principal yeoman farmers were Henry Fisher at Old Scale and Joseph Hudson at Routenbeck, while Riggs, Eskin and lands at Close were largely tenanted. The extent of the Vane estate is shown by the map, the Vanes effectively controlling the township and its institutions. For example, while the yeomen of Embleton were able to enclose their commons by an 1812 Act of Parliament to grow corn for market, the Vanes of Wythop held sufficient property to decide Wythop's enclosure and its timing (Act of Parliament 26th June 1830) – though Wythop commons were in any case mostly unfit for corn.



The little hamlet of Wythop Mill requires some explanation, because it lies slightly to the north of Wythop proper, on Wythop Beck. The true Wythop Mill, the corn mill for the township, is the angled building on the south west of the bridge, and is the only building there actually in Wythop. The mill to the north of the bridge was Embleton High Mill, which has been used for corn, fulling and more recently for timber. The bridge, the road and much land about was once in Derwentfells common, and the properties built in that part of the hamlet were placed in Setmurthy township by the late-medieval accountants. Therefore census figures for Wythop include only its own mill.

Apart from the traditional mixed farming, Wythop had only some oak-based woodland, valued at over £500 in 1687, and the lord had fishing rights in Bassenthwaite Lake, or Broadwater. But Wythop was a backwater, the main route from Cockermouth to Keswick being along the East of the lake. The first turnpike road from Cockermouth to Keswick, authorised in 1762, passed over Whinlatter, and it was not until around 1824 that the turnpike road through Embleton, Wythop and Thornthwaite was completed, presumably bringing trade to the Inn at Peil Wkye. The Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith railway provided the real impetus for Wythop. Built in 1864, its main purpose was to bring Durham coke to the blast furnaces of Workington, but when it opened for passengers in 1865 the station at Bassenthwaite Lake made the woods, moors and lake at Wythop accessible for shooting and fishing parties. A valuable sporting trade was developed by the Vanes on their Wythop estate, centred on the Pheasant Inn at Peil Wkye. Lothwaite Side, a farm up to 1871, became the gamekeeper's house. One gamekeeper was resident in 1865 but two gamekeepers were employed by 1881, and guest accommodation was supplemented at Routenbeck. By 1901 Peil Wyke had a resident boatman for the lake fishing, among the thirteen family and resident staff.

The population chart shows how Wythop, in agricultural decline by 1861, rebuilt its population and shifted its location after the coming of the railway, and of the sporting trade that the railway brought. Shooting and woodland management went hand in hand, supporting the sawmill at Wythop Mill (Embleton) and requiring much casual labour

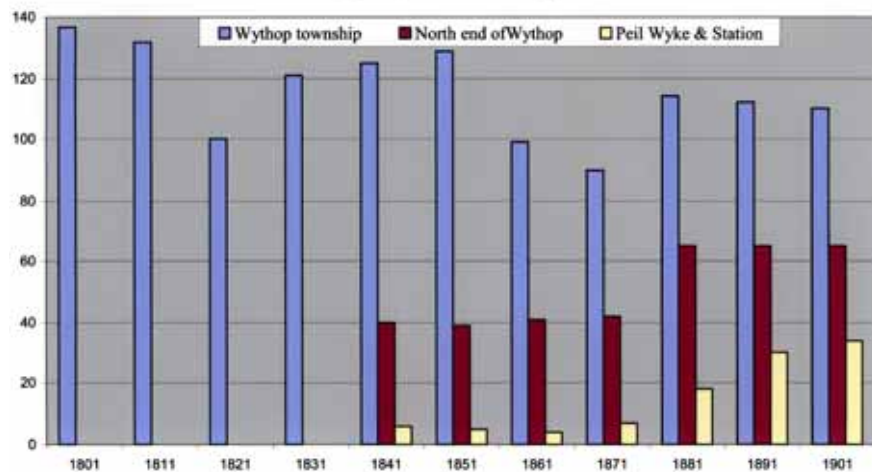
for hospitality services and beating etc. Naturally the local game-larder would have tempted some to self-service, the Cockermouth Petty Sessions (Magistrates' Court) being very occupied with those 'going for conies' for example, though the records survive from 1880 only. At the station and its cottages, three railway families were growing. The most prolific was pointsman William Armstrong and his wife, Mary, who came from Bridekirk in 1880 with one

child and baptized another sixteen by 1902, perhaps a local record, though not all the children survived. Overall, the population of the Riggs, Routenbeck and Peil Wyke/station area grew from 30% of the township in 1851 to 59% in 1901, without counting the growth of the hamlet of Wythop Mill to fifty, nor the visitors around Peil Wyke.

So it was appropriate that Bishop Waldegrave arrived by train at Bass Lake Station at 11am on 31st July 1866 to preside over the consecration of the new parish church, followed by an elegant luncheon at the Peil Wyke Hotel for forty ladies and gentlemen. The new church location made sense for the way in which Wythop was changing, but the major growth came later. Sir Henry Vane, the patron, had presented the land, a commons allotment, on which to build the church and the later Sunday school. Its location would be of obvious benefit for the convenience of the clientele of the sporting activities starting to develop. Was this his plan, or just fortuitous? The credit for raising the £1000 cost of building was given solely to the previous curate of Wythop, Rev. James Ormiston, who had led a nationwide campaign for funds, though he had moved to St David's, Islington, by the time of consecration, Rev. L Sanders becoming the first vicar.

The baptism register of the old chapel served a traditional farming community, but with births to railway navvy families at 'Beck Wythop huts' in 1863 and a 'Barff Cottage' in 1864. The baptism records of the new church also reflect a normal rural community of the time, but with a busy railway station and active gamekeepers. One local girl caught a local husband whose occupation was proudly given as 'rabbit catcher'. But from 1885 to 1905 approximately 30% of the marriages involve local girls, perhaps better trained by the professor of dancing at Riggs, who married non-local gentlemen, or sons of gentlemen, who then disappear from the record. The burial register is still in use and has not been seen for this article, but it will include the

Wythop Census Populations



ten graves of the Armstrong family, without stones, that lie to the west of the church. A family that perhaps best represents the new Wythop of the late Victorian and Edwardian age.

Acknowledgement. I have freely used a valuable collection of material in our archive on Wythop and Embleton assembled by the late Ann Bowman, who researched the history of Wythop Mill.

References.¹ Winchester, Angus. *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria*. Edinburgh, John Donald 1987. Gives the origins of many local townships. If anyone sees a copy for sale, please buy it for me.

Space does not permit full referencing. These can be obtained from the author. The Society Archive holds much information about Wythop, including census enumerations, parish register editions and tithe commutation information and maps. The enclosure award is at Carlisle.

PIGEON SHOOTING.—On Wednesday last a pigeon shooting took place at Piel Wyke, under the auspices of Mr Crosthwaite, of the Pheasant Hotel. The competition was for a handsome silver cup, with entrance money added. Notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather there was a pretty large gathering. There were thirty-two entries, and each competitor was allowed five birds. Five only of the competitors killed all their birds, namely T. Dixon, Mr Irving, Mr Donald, Mr Furness, and Mr Birnie. In shooting off the ties T. Dixon killed all his birds, and won the cup; Mr Donald second with one miss, and Mr Birnie third. The affair was well conducted and all passed off in a very agreeable manner. Dixon shot for Halifax, having missed his first bird in shooting on his own account. Afterwards there was a sweepstake, which was divided among five. Mr George Tickle, of Thornthwaite, acted as umpire, and gave every satisfaction.

From the West Cumberland Times, 1876. Thomas Dixon, the gamekeeper, is distinguished from the gentlemen.

Wordsworth, Nature, the 'Famous' Lorton Yew Tree, the poem - Part 2 by Michael Baron

It is enjoyable to speculate about the sunny afternoon in late September 1804, perhaps on the road outside the Yew Tree Hall - then an open space - when William and Dorothy visited 'the Patriarch of Yew trees ... the largest tree I ever saw', they pulled up the jaunting car - 'the 'outlandish Hibernian vehicle', let the horse browse on the grass, and descended. Like a patriarch, the spread of the great tree would have dominated the adjoining field. A boy would have come forward to hold the aged nag for a penny, or less. Possibly this family carriage was becoming well known in the Lake District. William would rush forward, the 'thick limbs' observed by Thomas De Quincey making him appear 'like a cade a cade being some sort of insect which advances by an oblique motion'. Dorothy would observe, with a letter in mind for Lady Beaumont. 'The Wordsworthian legs' De Quincey described in his 'Recollections of the Lakes and The Lake Poets' certainly not ornamental' but 'serviceable legs beyond the average standard of human requisition' would take him swiftly to the Yew. Did he find that, alas, its 'vast circumference' was too vast to be clasped, let alone hugged? Sadly, no letter, no journal entry, no late life reminiscence, will tell us. This is the moment when history turns into fiction. In the same way the solid four square on the ground fact of the yew that afternoon, is turned by the poet's imagination and craft into a fiction that the men of Lorton hacked off lengths of yew for their long bows. And fashioning them in their humble dwellings marched off at the bidding of the Lord of the Manor, the Percy's, Earls of Northumberland, to skewer a few unfortunate Scots on the windswept and disputed borders. No record, either, of the same good men, shouldering yew bows and embarking in leaky carracks for France in the Hundred Years War to try eye and muscle at Agincourt, Crecy and Poitiers. Much later, but when the Border was still a troubled debateable land, in 1545 the Elizabethan scholar and writer (later tutor to Lady Jane Grey) Roger Ascham still advised that 'ewe of all things is that whereof perfite shootings would have a bowe made'.

Wordsworth was right not to add to the list of great battles where archers carried their yew bows, those of the Civil War. The last recorded use of the longbow was at the siege of Devizes in 1645. Time was running fast then in every way against the utility of the home-grown yew. Seventy years before, yew wood was in such short supply that it was being imported from Spain, and the Hansa towns of North Germany and the Baltic. The best bows from Spanish yew cost 6s 8d; for English yew the price was down to 2 shillings.

So, Wordsworth, having - at some date between 1803 and 1815 (when the poem was published) - started on 'Yew Trees', does his visionary embodiment within the five yew trees of Lorton and Borrowdale of past history, military prowess, old religion, awe and melancholy, afford clues to the time or times of composition? The 'pride of Lorton Vale' is no ordinary tree, not a forlorn thorn tree. It is aged, timeless, a survivor, standing in the landscape as it 'stood of yore', so there has to be for Wordsworth a narrative special to the tree. In 'The Prelude', Book One, written before 1803, he muses about themes for poetry thus.... 'I settle on some British theme; some old / Romantic tale, by Milton unsung'; a reference to Milton for not writing the nation's historical epic. In 1803, after the breakdown of the brief Peace of Amiens, the Napoleonic War resumes, ending in 1815. In May he joins the Grasmere Volunteers, a gesture of patriotism and uselessness, mirrored this century in the listed pillbox in the fields below Dunmail Raise.

But patriotic sentiments were as likely and more so as his political beliefs moved rightwards with the self-evident betrayal by Bonaparte of any latent revolutionary idealism to the end of the war and defeat at Waterloo. Moreover the poem was not in the bundle of manuscript poems that, copied by Dorothy and Sara Hutchinson, Coleridge took to Malta in April 1804. Dorothy in concluding in May 1805 her account of the 1803 tour in Scotland, describes, disparagingly, towards the close of the narrative a Scottish yew tree, a 'dwarf' compared to 'the giant of Lorton'. Remember always the symbiotic relationship between brother and sister, the sharing of words and phrases - the Daffodil poem and the sonnet on Westminster Bridge are two well-known examples. And Jonathan Wordsworth in his 'The Music of Humanity' warns that the Fenwick dates are very approximate, noting that the poet 'was looking back over a period of nearly fifty years' and 'Wordsworth's own comments about, in this case, the 1797 'The Ruined Cottage' are almost certainly misleading'. This great-great-nephew adds 'the relative position of entries in a Wordsworth manuscript are also misleading'.

Now Geoffrey Hartman, an American scholar in a learned paper 'The Use and Abuse of Structural Analysis: Rifaterre's Interpretation of Wordsworth's "Yew Trees"' which is not the easiest of academic studies to understand, delves into, for example, 'sexual-organic sources', a 'near vampiristic pressure of unification' throughout the poem. And provides a certain amount of wordplay and hints of the working of unconscious forces by reading 'united' in the closing lines of 'Yew Trees' as '*yewnited*', an emblem of the closeness of nature to eternity. Apart from the sheer pleasure one gets from putting sex into Wordsworth, it is gratifying that Professor Hartman, too, has doubts when the poem was conceived. In a footnote, thus, 'It is possible that the Lorton yew verses were composed ca.1804 and the rest between 1811 and late 1814.' Indeed, in one draft of the poem there is an evident gap between the first three lines of the Lorton sequence and the Borrowdale sequence. A start in, say, 1804 and a return to the notebook some years later?

One biographer only has offered an opinion. Mary Moorman suggests the whole poem represents 'a change in Wordsworth's handling of natural themes' and associates it with 'Laodamia' of 1814. One might ask too that, if it was written in 1803 or 1804, why did it not appear in the collection published in 1805 - why a wait of 12 or 11 years - until 1815? This for a poem which the lawyer, diarist, close friend, Henry Crabb Robinson recalled Wordsworth 'much admired', though to his diary Robinson confessed he did 'not understand in what their excellence consists'. Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* of 1817, to the contrary, employed the Borrowdale section - which is the longer, the more fictional or mythical with its ghosts, temple and altar - as an example of 'the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word'. Over 'five or six immense yews' seen near Seathwaite by Crabb Robinson on September 16, 1816, which he admired for their '*natural* curiosity..... Wordsworth has thrown.... the natural charm of a highly poetical imagination - *vide* the new edition'. There the four had grown to 'five or six'. If the entry is correct, Crabb Robinson would have to done a hard day's riding or marathon walking because the previous day he was at Hardknott in Eskdale, with the other Cumberland Seathwaite much nearer to the perambulating diarist.

Did Wordsworth, brooding on the 'fraternal Four' - standing today in Seathwaite - hear 'the ghostly language of the ancient earth'? He may well have had the insight and numinous moment of a greater truth only given to the true artist.

The present view - the word on the Grasmere street - by the experts in the Wordsworth business is that the poem was written between 1807 and 1811. An opinion based on the position of the drafts in the notebooks, the style and content, and handling of the subject matter. And the influence, conscious or unconscious of other writers, dead or contemporary he might have been reading before and after the visit of September 1804 - might that be thrown into the mix of the poet's dreaming mind?

In 1805 he would have read the posthumously published last collection of William Cowper (1731-1800) - 8 entries in the Oxford Quotations - to him we owe 'God moves in a mysterious way' - 'I am monarch of all that I survey' and 'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still'. He loathed blood sports as a desecration of the countryside; the only poet of the time to have enthused in metre on the steamy qualities of manure.

At Hawkshead Grammar School, Wordsworth had learned by heart Cowper's long nature poem 'The Task'. It is known that the Wordsworths were reading Cowper in Grasmere on 25 October, 1800; further in a letter of December 1814 William wrote 'with the exception of Burns and Cowper, there is very little of recent verse, however much it may interest me, that sticks in the memory (I mean which I get by heart)'. T.S Eliot offered a dictum on poetic influences in saying 'bad poets borrow, good poets steal'. In his preface to the volume where 'Yew Trees' appeared in 1815, Wordsworth classes 'The Task' as an excellent example of a poem combining 'The Idyllium' - the 'Didactic' and the philosophical. 'Yew Trees' being in the 'Lyrical' class.

The last part follows in the next Newsletter along with acknowledgements galore and a bibliography!

Mockerkin Tarn

This text is from a photocopy of an old book, details of which have gone I'm afraid.

This quiet tarn among rolling fields at the foot of the fells, with its curious name that stays in the memory, has been the source of a good deal of story, some probably based on fact, a good deal on imagination, but all pointing to the possibility of its having been the site of an ancient village of lake dwellings which was submerged at some period of history.

In 1208 the name of the tarn was Moldcorkyn, later Molcorkilne and Molkerkyn. This may be derived from *moldi*, Old Welsh for "top of head", and *corcan*, diminutive of an Old Irish personal name, *Corc*. The early historian, Jocelyn of Furness, wrote of a city and castle of Morken, king of the Cumbri tribe, who was buried in his royal town of Thorpe Morken. A later legend - told by William Dickinson in his *Cumbriana* of 1876 in the form of a ballad, *The Legend of Mockerkin Tarn* - is made colourful by the character of evil Sir Mochar, who pillaged and looted the countryside, riding his charger Black Rook along with his gang of villains and packs of dogs. One night three maidens whom he had captured escaped. He followed and slew all three. He found his gatekeeper asleep on his return and vowed he would slay everyone in his castle even if it sank twenty miles deep. It did. Now the tarn is haunted by Black Rook, and by the bells of the village that was drowned with the castle.



In 1230 the tarn was also known as Lake Thermaran, or Ternmeran, which may have some connection with the River Marron below. In 1956 the remains of a neolithic boat were dug up not far away, close to the village of Dean.

The formation of the tarn seems to be the result of a conflict between the ice flowing down from the Crummock-Loweswater valley, and the great glacier of the Irish Sea moving south and east, producing a ring of very definitely formed moraines with steep sides. It is not in line with Snary Beck close by, but is fed by a small runner on the east, and its outlet is a slow-running dyke between the moraines on the west. There are trout and perch in the tarn, which is privately owned, and at one time there were pike. Some years ago, in the River Marron below, a buzzard was found with its claws firmly fixed into the back of a pike, both being dead. It is thought that the bird saw the pike basking in the shallows of the tarn and attacked, but it could neither lift such a weight nor release its hold, and was drowned, and both had been washed down by floods.

A small boathouse stands on the western shore, and waterlilies grow in summer, as does the starry water lobelia. In 1948 a great crested grebe made its home there; mallard are usually to be seen, and curlews nest in the nearby marshes.

Altitude: 378 ft Surface area: 376,600 sq ft Maximum depth: 10 ft Grid reference: 35/083232

Talks and Activities 2005 to July

Regretfully, Mary Burkett is unwell (December) and cannot talk to us in January. We wish her a speedy recovery and hope to rearrange her talk on lakeland artists for the autumn.

13 January 05	Talk by Andrew Lowe "Roadside Heritage"
10 February	Panel session led by Walter Head "World War - the West Cumberland experience"
10 March	Talk by Dr John Todd "The North-West and the Celtic past"
23 April, 2pm	Visit and guided Society tour of Mirehouse, with tea
12 May	Talk by Barbara Todd "Harriet Martineau at Ambleside"
9 June	AGM followed by a presentation
14 July	Talk by Dr David Shotter "Rome's Northern Frontier"

The talks start at 7.30pm, normally on Thursdays in the Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton, but please check in the press and adverts in case of late changes. Details will be available on our website www.derwentfells.com