

# *The Newsletter*

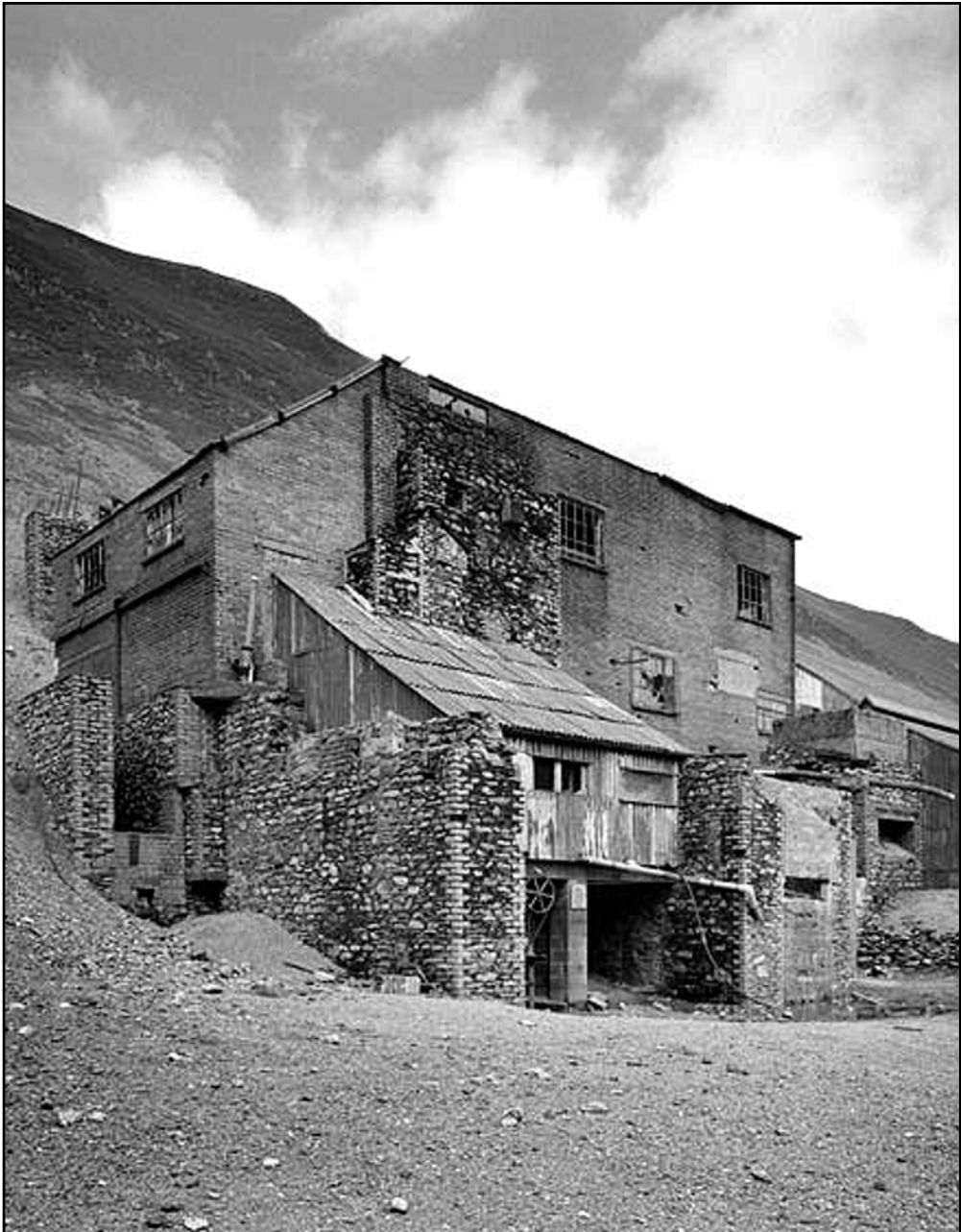
No 36 - August 2005

## Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite    Buttermere    Embleton    Loweswater    Mockerkin    Pardshaw    Wythop

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We have arranged a trip to the Mill at Force Crag Mine in Coledale; the date is Thursday, 13 October 2005 and you'll find details inside

## Editorial

There has certainly been a change in the Society this year. At the AGM in June, I stood down as Secretary and we have been looking for some time for someone (or more) to take over. I do want to stress the fact that the Society is now in a difficult period. Derek Denman is standing in, but this can only be for a relatively short time. As the notice in the last Newsletter said, we are looking for either one person to take over the secretarial work (it's not that onerous!) or for two people, one of whom would be the Society Secretary and the other the Membership Secretary - both pretty easy jobs. **This is a serious situation**, so please think about it and if you feel you could help in some way, ring Derek on 01900 85551.

Part of the change is right in front of you now - we have decided to communicate with members four times a year instead of three as at present. This was really triggered because producing 130 copies of the Newsletter had become almost a full-time job for a week or so three times a year so we looked at the possibility of having the Newsletter professionally printed. The outcome was a Newsletter printed at B5 size and to be produced twice a year, in August and February; so as not to lose space over the year, we're going up to 16 pages. And so that we can keep members more up-to-date with what's going on, we will produce a Bulletin in between the Newsletters - in November and May. The Committee agreed to these changes, subject to a successful initial 12 months so if you have any views on these plans and how they work out, please let us know sometime in the next year because we really would appreciate your feedback. And this seems to me to be a good time to invite contributions to the Newsletters - if you have a historical story, in any shape or

form, or photograph (better still both!), please contact me and we'll see if we can produce something to include. We really do need material from more members.

Last year, we produced the commemorative book "Wordsworth and the famous Lorton yew tree" and sales have been very successful - 400 copies sold up to now. From the profits, the Committee has decided to buy some display boards which will be kept in the Yew Tree Hall for the use of anyone using the hall. In this way, we hope that the book will contribute to the community.

I've had an interesting and welcome reply from Ann Peck about "A signpost mystery" in the last Newsletter. Ann had noticed the signpost's progress as well and decided to do something about it! A letter was written to Cumbria Highways about keeping the old signs and suggesting some other signs which need some attention. Ann sent me a copy of the reply that she

received from Peter Marr which was encouraging and the relevant paragraph reads "I believe quite strongly that the old cast iron finger posts should be retained as part of our heritage and I shall endeavour to maintain and repair them. Unfortunately, budget limitations restrict my aspirations on this matter, I shall, nevertheless, ask the Highways Technician to inspect the conditions of the signs at the locations you describe and to instruct action if affordable."

Michael Grieve



## Loweswater Lead Mines

by Walter Head

The Loweswater area is situated on old sedimentary rocks which cover an area of 200 square miles known as the Skiddaw Slate Group. The 2800ft thick Loweswater Flags lie on the much older blueish-black and grey striped Hopebeck Slates. One interesting fact is that, although the Hopebeck Slates were laid down in quiet waters, no evidence of fossils has been found. The Loweswater Flags, which have alternating sequences of grey flaggy sandstone and grey or greenish mudstone with occasional grits or fine conglomerates, show signs of being deposited in waters with currents, do contain fossil graptolites.

The Loweswater Mine was situated on an igneous intrusion or box metal vein in the slate base. Mineral veins are a fracture or fissure in the rock which has been filled up with mineral substances and ores of various kinds. The Loweswater vein runs in a NW-SE line from Whinney Ridding to about 50 yards SE of the present Moss Cottage. It then swings round approximately 30 degrees and crosses the River Cocker very close to the north side of Scalehill Bridge.

A line drawn on a map from Stoneycroft in the Vale of Newlands, through Force Crag to Scale Hill in the Vale of Lorton, shows that such a line connects the mines at these three places and other minor mine workings further west. There can be little doubt that all these mines are in one vein and if the line is continued further to the east from Stoneycroft across Derwent Water, it will be seen that the vein fissure of Cat Gill between Walla Crag and Falcon Crag is on the same line and that it too may be regarded as a continuation of the same vein.

## Loweswater Mine

Most mines on the vein mentioned were drift mines but the Loweswater Mine was accessed by two vertical shafts; the larger shaft, known as the Old Wheel Shaft was located near to the mine office and the second shaft was known as the Flat Rod Shaft. The mine buildings were situated opposite Netherclose Farm and Moss Cottage was originally part of the mine office and the "wash house" was originally the mine smithy. About 30ft from the cottage is the old explosives store, 12ft square. In 1973 when the old wooden floor was removed, the odd-shaped timbers were found to form one side of a waterwheel.

The Loweswater vein was discovered during drainage work in 1816 and the mineral rights were leased by Messrs Joseph Skelton and Skelton Wood in 1819. The mine, which was on the estate of Skelton Wood of Godferhead, opened in 1829. A shaft was sunk to a depth of 17 to 18 fathoms (100 to 110ft). A considerable amount of ground was excavated and a good deal of ore obtained from it.

Between 15 to 20 fathoms (90 to 120ft) into a shaft, either horizontal or vertical, the air supply fails and a method of air circulation is required. One way is to have a waterfall which creates a current of air but the most popular method at this time was to have a second access to allow air circulation.

Loweswater Mine was a wet mine with constant ingress of water and at the Old Wheel Shaft a large overshot waterwheel 40ft in diameter was installed to pump water from the mine and also to supply water for dressing the ore. The waterwheel was supplied with water from a dam high up on Crabtree Beck and evidence of the leat around the end of Low Fell can still be seen at various points and the small stream now running past Moss Cottage is probably part of this leat. The waterwheel was also

used to haul the ore to the surface and to propel the dressing machine.

The vein was worked at 20 fathoms (120ft), 30 fathoms (180ft) and 40 fathoms (240ft), each for a distance of approximately 260 fathoms (1560ft). The richest ore was obtained between the two shafts between 30 and 40 fathoms.

I have seen no records for the quality of the ore extracted but galena normally contains approximately 86% lead and 14% sulphur. The ore extracted from the Force Crag Mine on the same vein contained 35oz of silver per ton. In 1909, the weight of silver extracted from lead ore in Cumberland was 9cwt 3qtr 23lb (506kg) with a value of £4,422. The lead-bearing veins at Force Crag were between 3 to 5ft thick although one worked in 1872 was 10ft thick.

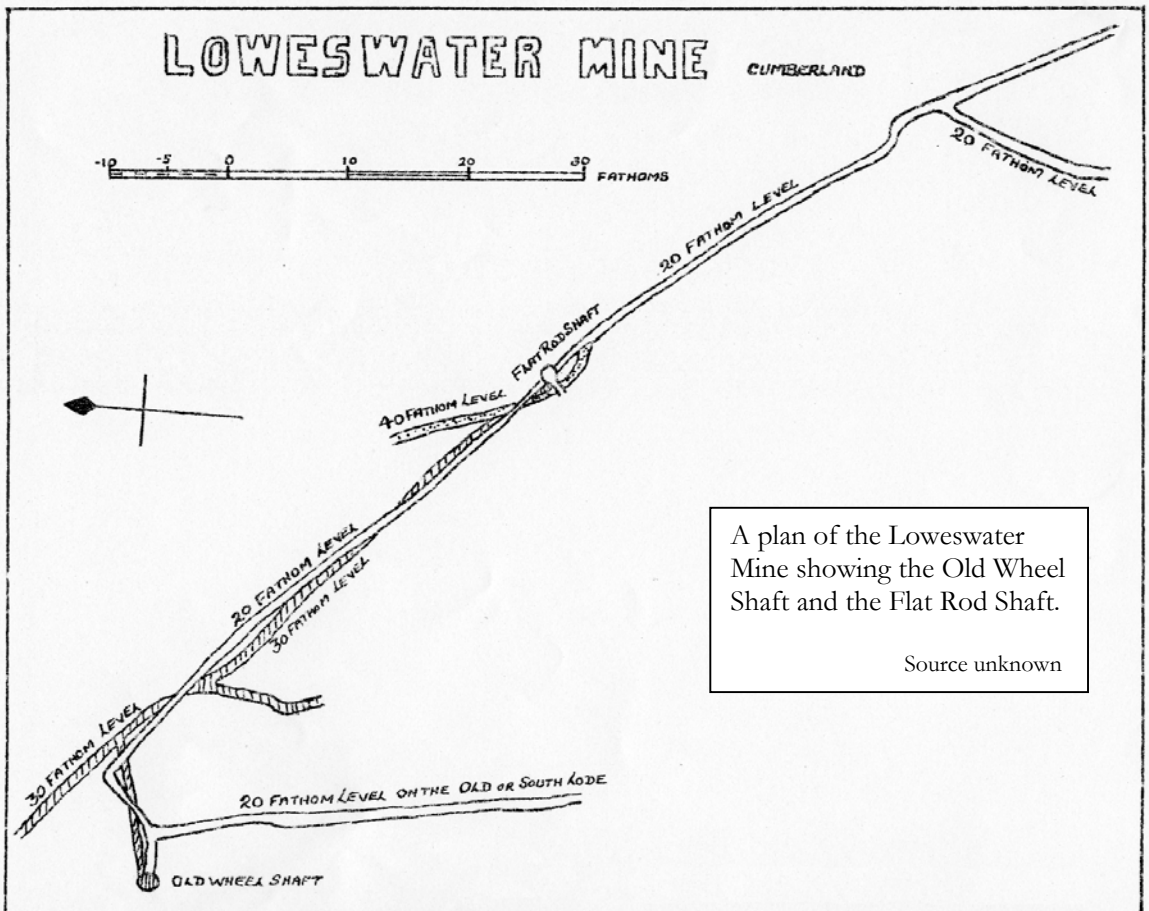
In 1839, the Loweswater Mine was leased by Messrs Mellor, Pratchett, Jones,

Clemence-elder, Clemence-younger and Sealby who appointed William Jeffrey as mine manager. In 1840, a 50 fathom (300ft) level was driven eastwards from the Flat Rod Shaft and a small vein struck which yielded good quality ore. The mine lost £6,000 during its working life before it closed in 1841.

Following closure, the timbers quickly rotted due to the damp conditions and the roof fell in and, in 1856, the two mine shafts were filled with rubble and allowed to settle; in 1868, the final few feet of the Flat Rod Shaft were finally filled in.

The southern end of the Loweswater vein had been explored by a working approximately 40ft in length to the north of Scalehill Bridge below the Scale Hill Hotel. This was a small scale working which was not commercially viable.

In 1993, the tunnel entrance was uncovered and the workings entered by



A plan of the Loweswater Mine showing the Old Wheel Shaft and the Flat Rod Shaft.

Source unknown

M.O.L.E.S. (**Mines Of Lakeland Exploration Society**). The workings were dry and inside was found a 4 to 5ft thick pile of old bottles, some of which dated back to 1920. The old workings had obviously been used as a bottle dump by the Scale Hill Hotel. A number of the bottles were donated to the Scale Hill complex as mementos.

I have seen a photograph in the album of a local family of a small railway engine with the notation "Loveswater Mine Locomotive" but I have seen no other reference to an engine, rolling stock or track products.

### **Kirkgill Wood Mine**

The Kirkgill Wood Mine was to the SW of the Loveswater Mine, approximately 300 yards from the Kirkstile Inn. The mine had two levels, the north and the south, which in 1839 were worked by Isaac Sealby. The south level was approximately 50ft long but at approximately 25ft there was a 6 ft square shaft known as the Steel Shaft, its depth is recorded as 21ft but some old documents state 54ft deep. The level continued past the shaft to exit into the open and was driven for ventilation purposes. The Steel Shaft is reputed to have yielded small quantities of good lead and copper ore. The north level was approximately 100ft long but yielded no viable quantities of ore.

A 10ft long level on the opposite side of Park beck was supposedly associated with this mine.

### **Whiteoak Mine**

In 1864, Messrs Steel, Robinson and Waugh took out a lease on a mining venture between Whiteoak and High Nook Becks called the Whiteoak Mine, using the old Loveswater Mine buildings as headquarters with a temporary building at Whiteoak. In 1887, the lease was taken over by Henry Vercoe and on 30 April

1888, the Loveswater Lead Company took over the lease. One of the directors was John Sawry, later to become a founder of the Buttermere Slate Company.

The vein worked is parallel to the Loveswater Mine vein and this mine consisted of several levels and one shaft which was approximately 100ft deep. This shaft was the full width of the tunnel at the top but only 2 to 3ft wide at the bottom and was probably part of an attempt to construct a drainage shaft to drain water from the mine. There used to be evidence that the 40ft waterwheel from the Loveswater Mine was relocated there to pump water from the mine. The vein was poorly mineralised and by August 1891, the shareholders refused to supply any further money and the company went into liquidation.

On 28 July 1892, a sale was held at the Loveswater Mine with R Mumberson of Keswick as auctioneer. The equipment from the Loveswater Mine was included in a combined catalogue with the Brandley Mine. The list included:

- 1x 40ft waterwheel with 3ft 6in breast, wrought iron axle, cast iron ring, centres and pedestals, pitch pine arms, etc
- 1x Blakey Patent Stonebreaker 15in x 9in
- 2x triple compartment jiggers, pedestal, brasses etc
- 1x Cornish Crushing Mill with 30in rollers, elevator levers etc - complete
- 1x wood house with corrugated roof
- 1000x pitch pine logs
- 2000ft white pine deals 3in; 2000ft white pine deals 1½in; 1000ft pitch pine troughs and stand.

Other equipment from the Whiteoak Mine was transferred to the Threlkeld Mine.

In approximately 1993, this mine was also explored by M.O.L.E.S.

### **Other mine trials**

Trials were carried out on Whinney Ridding but without success.

A short 30ft trial working was carried out near the river bank at Cold Keld near to Thackthwaite.

A number of trials were carried out in Mosedale, probably on a continuation of the Whiteoak vein. At one point on the west side of Mosedale beneath Hen Comb the vein was worked for approximately 30ft on the surface and then underground for approximately 26ft but only a very little galena was found. A second 30ft working was tried approximately 170 yards to the right of the original workings but it was unsuccessful.

Small scale trials were also carried out on the east side of Liza Beck.

### **Other facts about Cumberland lead mines**

10 distinct varieties of lead were found in the Lake District.

In 1912, the shaft at the Thornthwaite Mine was sunk to 85 fathoms (510ft) with new pumps being installed capable of lifting 350 gallons of water per minute and powerful enough to go down to 105 fathoms (630ft). A reservoir on Whinlatter had a storage capacity of 1,000,000 gallons of water giving a head of pressure at the shaft top of 500ft.

In 1909 to 1911, 1742 tons of galena were mined with a value of £15,355.

A variety of equipment and artefacts retrieved from local mines is on display at the Mining Museum in Keswick.

### **Main sources**

“Mines and Mining in the English Lake District”, Postlethwaite, 1913

“The Geology and Metalliferous Mines of the Buttermere and Loweswater Valleys”, The Cumberland Geological Society, Vol 2, Part 4, Feb 1970

“The Geology of the Lake District”, F Moseley, Yorkshire Geological Soc Pubs No 3, 1978

“History, directory & gazetteer of the counties of Cumberland ...”, Parson and White, 1829



### **Earthquakes? Not here in Cumbria!**

*Another of Frank Carruthers' weekly columns  
Evening News and Star, 11 March 1977*

Earthquakes are things that happen to somebody else.

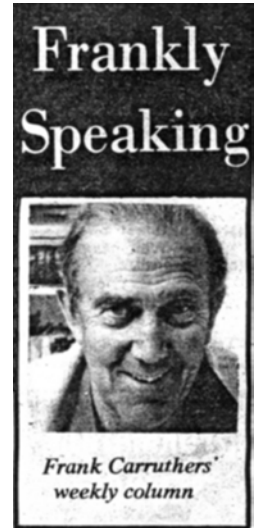
Here in Cumbria we take a sympathetic, but distant view of the tragedy which last week struck Rumania, our view of it being coloured to some extent by the fact that we are not in an earthquake zone ... they are fairly accurately mapped out in the earth's crust.

Around the Mediterranean, down the San Andreas Fault on the spine of the Americas, in Japan, China, India, Pakistan, the Middle East ... the list of earthquake zones is ominously long, and I wonder if perhaps we are not a bit closer to earthquake danger than we have hitherto thought.

It gives cause for some hesitance in saying: “It couldn't happen here” when a glance inland from Cumbria's coast reveals a tangle of fells that came about simply through massive upheavals in the earth's crust.

### **Upheavals**

Admitted, these upheavals, along with the volcanoes of which only the “plugs” remain in places (Castle Head, outside Keswick, is one of these) happened long



before man appeared on the Cumbrian, or any other scene.

But we cannot be altogether complacent about it and say that under our particular bit of the world, the earth's core has gone to sleep permanently.

I don't wish to seem alarmist, but there have been some queer goings on under this county of ours in days long gone and we should not discount the possibility that an earthquake could happen.

In the last century there have been several "earthquake" alarms in Cumbria, but most of them could be blamed on mining activities.

Fortunately any real Cumbrian earthquakes have not been serious. I will mention a couple, just to shake us out of our complacency.

### **Violence**

The worst earthquake on record happened on Friday, August 11, 1786. It was felt principally in Cumbria, but also over most of the north of England and southern Scotland.

What happened was a matter of sufficient interest to take up a fair bit of space in the influential "Gentleman's Magazine".

A resident of Cockermouth, unnamed, gave the following description: "About five minutes before two we had a smart shock of an earthquake, which continued three or four seconds, attended by a noise as if a well-packed hogshhead had been thrown with violence on a boarded floor. The strings of a spinet were heard to vibrate. Others thought thieves had broken in."

Not, one would suggest, a very frightening occurrence, but the very fact that the happening was worth recording supposes that it was out of the ordinary.

At Whitehaven things were worse. "The consternation caused by the earthquake was inexpressible. A chimney was thrown down in Tangier Street; three

people in different parts of the town were thrown off their feet, and one considerably hurt."

At Egremont part of the massive castle walls was thrown down, as well as some chimneys. At Dumfries some shocks were felt, the worst being two with an interval of three or four seconds between them.

A Doctor Heysham, of Carlisle, made a careful record of his observations of the earthquake: "About two o'clock on Friday morning, 11th August, a slight shock of earthquake was very sensibly felt by many persons in Carlisle and the neighbourhood. Those who were perfectly awake, or who happened to be out of doors, report that the concussion continued about four or five seconds, and that it was immediately followed by a hollow tremulous sound."

### **Detectors**

"Many were awakened out of their sleep by the shaking of their houses, beds, doors and window shutters. Birds in cages were likewise sensible of the influence and fluttered as if greatly agitated and alarmed. Very providentially very little or no damage was done."

"The concussion seemed to take its direction from east to west, and extended quite across the island, being felt both in Newcastle and Whitehaven; from the north, southwards, it extended from Glasgow to the northern parts of Lancashire."

I find it interesting that at least two of the reports noted the effect of the 'quake on birds. Nowadays birds are kept by the Mines Rescue Service and taken into disaster areas principally as detectors of gas (relax, bird lovers; the rescue men also have with them a special resuscitation device for the birds if their little feathered friends do get overcome).

However, an ancient miner friend involved in a disaster or two once told me that me

birds were better at detecting - even predicting - falls of roof!

Yes, the volcanoes of the Lake District are extinct; the last one to spew lava over the surrounding countryside did so when there was nobody on earth to see it. There is little fear that Keswick will, become another Pompeii ...

But ... on August 14, 1903, the people of one small part of Lakeland thought for a few minutes that the district's mighty volcanoes were preparing for action.

There is no explanation for the ominous rumblings which shook the Brackenthwaite and Loweswater area in THREE WEEKS preceding August 14.

The first time the local inhabitants heard the rumbling they said: "Thunder somewhere", and got on with whatever they were doing: important because it was haytime in the valley, and if somebody else was having a thunderstorm it was just their bad luck!

But the weather remained fine everywhere. No reports of thunderstorms came in over the inter-valley grapevine. The dalesmen got on with haytime.

Then the rumbling was heard again, and again; and it started happening at night. This coming on clear days and nights began to trouble the dalesmen and they set to work to try and locate the source of the noises.

### **Mighty**

After a few days they located the sound. It was coming from inside Whiteside, neighbour to mighty Grassmoor, a mountain which overlooks the little hamlet of Brackenthwaite in the Lorton valley.

When located, the rumblings grew louder, loud enough to make the ground shake; loud enough to send the hardy little Herdwick sheep scurrying about their heaf as if running for their lives.

A shepherd felt the ground shake under his feet, a mountain groaned and

rumbled one evening. He left the fellside and his flock in a hurry because he thought the ground was about to open beneath his feet.

The rumblings increased, now coming mostly at night. The people in the vicinity slept fitfully in their beds and kept clothes and boots handy for a rapid evacuation.

Then one evening Mr W. C. Hope, of Cornhow, was leading hay when Whiteside spoke again. The mountain gave a great groaning rumble and instinctively Mr Hope looked over at it.

He got the shock of his life when he saw what looked like a great cloud of smoke rising.

Then, through the cloud, came bounding a number of large boulders, which he thought had been shaken off the side of the mountain. Their rolling down the fellside made even more noise before they stopped in a rattle of smaller stones and settling dust.

There had been other witnesses of the phenomenon. One said that the cloud of "smoke" had appeared before the rock avalanche; another that it was "like an explosion".

### **Erupted**

Whiteside has not "erupted" again since that day, and no satisfactory explanation of its long, protracted rumbling has ever been given, although some enterprising journalists suggested that they could be a sign of a slumbering volcano starting to stir.

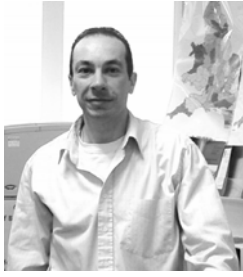
A geologist said that the rate of cooling of the earth's crust was so slow that it was not impossible for volcanic activities under the crust to make their presence felt above ground.

The earth's crust has cooled another 74 years since then ... so, have we heard the last of it? As I said, I don't want to worry anybody.



## People and Poverty in Nineteenth Century Cumberland & Westmorland

Our talk on 8<sup>th</sup> September in the Yew Tree Hall at 7.30pm will be by Robert Baxter, who is archivist at the Whitehaven record office. People think



of Cumberland as poor, but in the first half of the nineteenth century there was plenty of work and good wages for able-bodied men, with local industry growing and a ready market in Lancashire for corn. The New Poor Law was focussed on the problems of excess people in the south, but the new regime of workhouses and the prohibition of 'outdoor relief' was applied to the North as well. Cumberland had applied the old law well, poor-rates were low and mostly only the elderly, or infirm or widows and single mothers were 'on the parish'. The new law from 1834 caused a few local difficulties.

Robert will discuss the legal and economic background but will concentrate on the relationship between the administrators of the poor law and the recipients of their bounty. The records of the Cockermouth and Whitehaven unions paint a detailed picture of the day-to-day operation, a picture that Robert will bring to life for us.



### Lucock-Bragg of Lorton Hall to the Wordsworths' rescue, December 1805

by Derek Denman

On 21st December 1805 Joshua Lucock Bragg Esq., of Lorton Hall, stopped his carriage outside Dove Cottage to collect a valuable book, which he had agreed to take personally to London<sup>1</sup>. This followed a

previous incident in which manuscripts, entrusted to a local carrier, had been stolen and later discarded<sup>2</sup>. This event provides the second documented link between William Wordsworth and Lorton, the first being the visit to the famous Lorton yew tree in October 1804<sup>3</sup>. But the later link begs the question; why did Joshua Lucock Bragg carry the book? It is well known that Joshua Lucock of Cockermouth built or rebuilt, in 1745, the fine house that is now Wordsworth House. This was the birthplace of William Wordsworth in 1770,



A photograph of Wordsworth House c.1912 from John Bolton's *Wordsworth's Birthplace*

his father John being agent to Sir James Lowther, known appropriately as Jimmy-grasp-all. Wordsworth and his siblings have interesting linkages with two of the grandchildren of Joshua Lucock; Joshua Lucock Wilkinson and the heir, Joshua Lucock of Lorton Hall, who added Bragg to his name on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1805<sup>4</sup>. In 1794 Joshua Lucock (Bragg) married his cousin, Rebecca Wilkinson, the sister of Joshua Lucock Wilkinson, a friend of Wordsworth. The sad history of these Lucock Braggs of Lorton Hall, 1800-1875, has been covered previously in the Newsletter<sup>5</sup>. This present article seeks to collect together the linkages between the descendants of Joshua Lucock, and the Wordsworth family up to 1806.

### The Lucock descendants

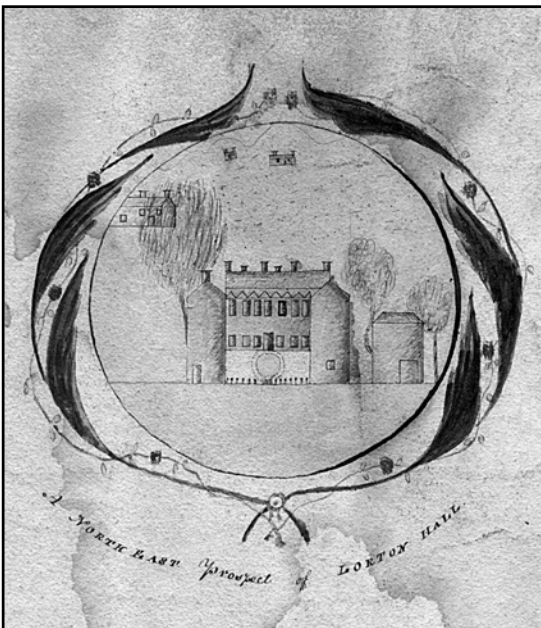
Joshua Lucock of Cockermouth married three times, as shown on the family tree. It



appears that there were mural tablets in All Saints, Cockermouth, recording his family. These tablets were lost in or after the fire which destroyed the Church in 1850. Their content was recorded in 1912 by John Bolton, in 'Wordsworth's Birthplace.'<sup>6</sup> Only one son, Raisbeck from Joshua's third marriage to Elizabeth Raisbeck of Dovenby, grew to maturity and inherited the Lucock estate. Raisbeck's son, Joshua Lucock was born in Cockermouth in 1772, and inherited the family estates in 1798 or 1799. These included the Low Field estate in Setmurthy, to which the first Joshua was admitted in 1753<sup>7</sup> and in 1765 through guardians, plus land in Brigham with the reputed lordship of Brigham, and some closes at Graysons in Cockermouth near Strawberry Howe. Records of the acquisition of Lorton Hall and its estates have not been found. The mural tablet

mortgaged the hall to John Nicholson of Hill in Brigham<sup>8</sup>. John Peile-Barnes was in residence until his mother, Eleanor, died there in 1800. It would be after this that the young Joshua Lucock obtained Lorton Hall, perhaps though the mortgage, and there must be a question over the accuracy of Bolton's record of the lost tablet. An estate map of 1803<sup>9</sup> records the Lorton Hall estate as owned by Joshua Lucock, and shows that the house and stable at that time formed a C shape fronting the road, much as at would have been left by the Winders in 1699. The grand additions, described by Pevsner<sup>10</sup>, and the carriage drive were to be added later by the son, George Lucock Bragg, in around 1840, as was the mock pele tower, which he built without windows. As the owner, also, of several other Lorton farms, Joshua Lucock settled in Lorton as squire and JP, but died in 1809 aged 37, leaving a family of six, of whom four were later certified as lunatics. The family history suggests a genetic problem, and none of his family produced children.

From the second marriage of Joshua Lucock of Cockermouth, only Rebecca survived to adulthood, marrying in 1767 George Wilkinson of Cockermouth, then a Lieutenant in his majesty's navy. They were in Liverpool when Joshua Lucock Wilkinson was born in 1769<sup>11</sup>. His sister, Rebecca Wilkinson, was born in 1774. She married her cousin Joshua Lucock in 1794, moving with him to Lorton Hall in 1800. Clearly the Wilkinsons were a Cockermouth family of lower status and wealth than the Lucocks, but a navy family and therefore mobile. Captain George Wilkinson was lost at sea in 1782. His wife, Rebecca Wilkinson, died at Lorton Hall in 1801, presumably in the care of her daughter, Rebecca Lucock. Joshua Lucock Wilkinson proved his mother's will as her heir. His claim to fame, other than as a friend of Wordsworth, lies in his book *The*



A sketch of Lorton Hall from a plan of the Lorton Hall Estate, property of Joshua Lucock Esq, made in 1803

inscriptions recorded by Bolton in 1912 speak of the first Joshua Lucock, who died in 1782, as 'of Lorton Hall' but the Peile-Barnes family held Lorton Hall at that time and in 1797 John Peile-Barnes

*Wanderer*, published in 1795<sup>12</sup>, combining records of his travels in Europe in 1791 and 1793, with his political and anti-religious thought.

### Wordsworth and Joshua Lucock Wilkinson

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1792, aged 22, and ten months into his time in France, William Wordsworth wrote from Blois to his elder brother Richard, then at a solicitor's office in Gray's Inn, to obtain urgent funds of £20. But he went on to make arrangements for October:

*I look forward to the time of seeing you Wilkinson and my other friends with pleasure. I am very happy you have got into Chambers, as I shall perhaps be obliged to stay a few weeks in town about my publication you will I hope with Wilkinson's permission find me a place for a bed. Give Wilkinson my best Complts I have to make for not having written to him...*<sup>13</sup>

Shaver<sup>14</sup> (1961), makes a convincing case that this Wilkinson is Joshua Lucock Wilkinson, then a clerk at Gray's Inn, the same age as Richard Wordsworth, and who is sharing lodgings. That identification at this time is key to a linkage made by Shaver between a passage in *The Wanderer* and Wordsworth's *Voudracour and Julia*, in *The Prelude (Book IX)*. This latter is regarded as a disguised allegory for Wordsworth's affair in Orleans with Anne-Marie (Annette) Vallon, which resulted in the birth of his illegitimate and secret child, Anne-Caroline, baptised 15<sup>th</sup> December 1792<sup>15</sup>, for whom Wordsworth had to provide from his already limited funds. In October 1792, when Wordsworth stayed with Wilkinson, Annette was seven months pregnant. Though he did not marry Annette,

Wordsworth acknowledged his daughter and agreed to her marriage in 1816 as Anne Caroline Wordsworth. Though unknown to the public until the twentieth century, the birth of Caroline ten years before Wordsworth's marriage became known to at least Mrs Clarkson, Mrs Marshall, Henry Crabb Robinson, Miss Horrocks, the Monkhouses, Helen Williams and the Hutchinson family. That Wilkinson knew of this affair even before the birth, which indicates a very close relationship, is suggested by a coded reference in *The Wanderer* ii, 205-6 :

*I flattered myself with the hope of being permitted to insert a woeful tale of the loves of a chevalier near Blois, and a young bourgeoisie, his consequent imprisonment and insanity ...; but as the gentleman, who is possesses of the facts, intends to throw the substance into the stile of a novel, the public will receive it in a much more finished form, than if curtailed and despoiled of its numerous circumstances, to suit the varied and detached mood of the *Wanderer*.*

This, essentially, foretold the writing of *Voudracour and Julia* by Wordsworth. Shaver considers that this might indicate that Wordsworth was intending to write a novel, but perhaps to write 'poem' for 'novel' might have identified the gentleman too closely. The friendship survived, because Dorothy Wordsworth records in her diary that on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December 1801, after she, William and Mary Hutchinson had walked to Keswick, 'After tea message came from Wilkinson, who had passed us on the road, inviting Wm. to sup at the [Royal] Oak [Inn]'<sup>16</sup>. The next day she recorded 'Wilkinson went with us to the top of the hill'. His mother had died in Lorton Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> December and he

proved her will in London on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 1802<sup>17</sup>, but no further reference to Joshua Lucock Wilkinson is known.

### Wordsworth and Joshua Lucock Bragg

Joshua Lucock Bragg, of Lorton Hall, was four years younger than Wordsworth, and the same age as his cousin and wife, Rebecca Wilkinson. They would have been three when Wordsworth went to school at Hawkshead, aged seven, and therefore were unlikely to be close childhood friends. Joshua Lucock Bragg appears in the Wordsworth letters from late 1805 as Mr Bragg(e) or ‘a gentleman who is a friend of ours’, in a more respectful and distant manner, perhaps due to his status, than Joshua Lucock Wilkinson, who is Jos. Wilkinson or just Wilkinson. It is therefore likely that the relationship between the



A sepia-wash drawing of Wordsworth's cottage at Town End c. 1806, formerly the Dove and Olive, by Amos Green (1735-1807)

Wordsworths and Joshua Lucock Bragg was established through the Wilkinsons. In the letters, the relationship relates solely to the carriage of parcels, and in 1804, when the Lorton Yew Tree is visited, there is no reference to Joshua Lucock, as he was then, or to Lorton Hall. In 1805 the Bragg's four surviving children, later to be labelled lunatics, would already have noticeable learning disabilities, for it is the youngest, George, born 1806, who leads

the family into church at some few years after his father's death in 1809<sup>18</sup>. But Joshua Lucock Bragg, a keen huntsman who kept hounds at Lorton Cross where now the Low Lorton notice board stands, was presumably competent and trustworthy, despite being styled ‘our capricious squire’<sup>19</sup> by the vestry meeting.

The unreliability of the post was often an irritation for Dorothy Wordsworth, but the worst problem occurred somewhere between 29<sup>th</sup> November and 14<sup>th</sup> December 1805<sup>20</sup> when a parcel was lost containing manuscripts of the third part of Dorothy's ‘Recollections of the Scotch Tour’ and five books of William's ‘Prelude’, fortunately not the only copies. ‘We have lately had a lesson in how little carriers are to be trusted ... the carrier missed it from his cart, turned back immediately, and every possible search was made but no parcel could be found’<sup>21</sup>.

The letters from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> December then describe how Mr Bragg(e) collected a valuable book from Dove Cottage on 21<sup>st</sup> December for delivery to Richard Wordsworth, Attorney at Law, No 11 Staple Inn. Wordsworth writes on Christmas day to Richard:

*Mr Bragg was so good as to take charge of a Book to be delivered by him to you. This Book is of very great value, and I beg you would have the kindness to put it by in a safe place: and when a servant of Sir George Beaumont calls for it to see that it is delivered to him.*<sup>22</sup>

Dorothy makes the arrangement with Lady Beaumont in the letter of 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> December:

*My brother sent the Houbraken by a Gentleman, a friend of ours, who is to leave it at my Brother's Chambers ... We did not part*

*with it without anxiety as we had not time to pack it up, for the Gentleman came unexpectedly and did not get out of his Carriage, it being late at night; but we gave him the strictest charge to get it properly packed at Kendal, and to take all possible care of it. We have lately had a lesson how little Carriers are to be trusted, having lost a parcel ...*

Fortunately Dorothy's friend, Mrs Thomas Clarkson of Suffolk, had taken a copy of the lost Scotch Tour manuscript, and Dorothy is quick to ask Mrs Clarkson, by letter of 22<sup>nd</sup> December, to arrange a further copy and to send it to London before Mr Bragg returns to Lorton. 'Mr Bragge ... will return in about 5 weeks, and we think we are not likely to have so good an opportunity again. ... Perhaps Mr Bragge may return sooner than he talked of therefore it will be best to lose no time.' William makes the arrangements with Richard Wordsworth 'Mr Bragge also offered to bring down any thing for me which I might want: you will receive a parcel from Mrs Clarkson by the Coach from Norfolk, this is a Manuscript of Value, will you see that it is safely put into Mr Bragge's hands.'

The new Braggs-of-Lorton carrier service is clearly too much of an opportunity, for Dorothy writes to Richard in January 1806:

*...I have requested Mr Lamb to purchase some books for me which he will send to your chambers and if Mr Bragge can bring the parcel down without inconvenience I am sure he will do it – and as he did not scruple about the size of the parcel which he conveyed to London for us I hope he will be able to bring it<sup>25</sup>.*

But some time after 19th January the missing manuscripts were found, discarded by the thieves. Dorothy writes to Mrs Clarkson on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1806, attempting to stop the copying of the Scotch Tour and describing the circumstances:

*The bags in which the manuscripts were packed have been found in a corner of a field near John Fletcher's house, rifled of everything but the manuscripts which were uninjured though soaked with rain ... We suspect that some persons of Grasmere must have been the Thieves – John Fletcher vows he will leave nothing undone to find them out, and accordingly is going to the wise Man, beyond Carlisle, a man both deaf and dumb.*

### Conclusion

We do not know if Joshua Lucock Bragg's services to English romanticism ended with the delivery of the Houbraken, whether he did return with either the unnecessarily copied third part of the Scotch Tour, or with the books purchased by Mr Lamb. Nor do we know whether he entered Dove Cottage on his return trip to Lorton Hall in 1806. But it appears that the sodden manuscript of the third part of the Scotch Tour was not preserved<sup>24</sup>, and therefore, given that four of the five weeks had elapsed before Mrs Clarkson could be told, it is likely that the copy was made and carried to Dove Cottage by Mr Bragg.

Similarly we cannot be sure that the affair and child with Annette Vallon was confided to Joshua Lucock Wilkinson by Wordsworth in 1792 in that turbulent year after leaving Cambridge, rejecting a position in the Church and becoming intoxicated with revolutionary France and its people. The secret was not made public during Wordsworth's lifetime, nor did he

record the circumstances except through allegory. But the apparently close relationship between Wordsworth and Wilkinson at that time, and the tale of the events near Blois in *The Wanderer* both suggest that the affair, if not the child, was known to Wilkinson and support the association of *Vaudracour and Julia* with that affair, as Shaver (1961) implies.

We can, though, associate both Joshua Lucock Bragg and Joshua Lucock Wilkinson with Lorton Hall and with Wordsworth.

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> December 2005

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth to Catherine Clarkson, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1806

<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, 7<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> October 1804

<sup>4</sup> Wordsworth, William, 1770-1850. Ed. DeSelincourt The early letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 1787-1805/ Oxford: Clarendon, 1935 p656

<sup>5</sup> Denman, Derek, *Under the churchyard beech tree - the sad history of the Lucock Braggs of Lorton Hall*. L&DFLHS Newsletter 22, Jan 2001

<sup>6</sup> Bolton, John. *Wordsworth's Birthplace, being the parochial history and local government of the ancient borough of Cockermouth*. Cockermouth. John Fletcher. 1912 (Copy in Society archive)

<sup>7</sup> Whitehaven RO DLec/EO/Derwentfells admissions 1749-1772, 3/7/1753 and 19/8/1765

<sup>8</sup> Indenture held at Winder Hall, Lorton

<sup>9</sup> L&DFLHS Archive holds a digital copy, original with Rev. Woodhead Keith Dixon

<sup>10</sup> Pevsner, Nikolaus, 1902- Cumberland and Westmorland. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1967. Pevsner's description of a medieval tower was, sadly, incorrect

<sup>11</sup> Turner, Katherine, *Joshua Lucock Wilkinson (bap 1769, d. in or after 1802)*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, OUP 2004

<sup>12</sup> Wilkinson, Joshua L. *The Wanderer; or a collection of anecdotes and incidents, with reflections, political and religious, during two excursions, in 1791 and 1793, in France, Germany, and Italy*. J S Jordan, London 1795. (Copy in John Rylands Library, Manchester)

<sup>13</sup> William Wordsworth to Richard Wordsworth, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1792

<sup>14</sup> Shaver, Chester L, *Wordsworth's Voudracour and Wilkinson's The Wanderer*. Review of English Studies, 1961, pp 55-57

<sup>15</sup> Harper, George McLean, 1863-1947.

Wordsworth's French daughter: the story of her birth, with the certificates of her baptism and marriage. Folcroft Press, 1969

<sup>16</sup> William Wordsworth to Charles Lamb, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1802

<sup>17</sup> Will of Rebecca Wilkinson of Cockermouth, proved 1802. TNA/prob/11/1369

<sup>18</sup> Bolton John, *Lorton and Loveswater Eighty Years Ago*, (lecture of 1891) in Cockermouth Miscellanea, Cumbria Family History Society, undated p 16

<sup>19</sup> Denwood, E R. *Lorton and its Church, a short history with some literary associations*. 1946

<sup>20</sup> Reed, Mark L. *Wordsworth: the chronology of the middle years, 1800-1815* / Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975 p 307

<sup>21</sup> Dorothy Robinson to Lady Beaumont 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> December 1805

<sup>22</sup> William Wordsworth to Richard Wordsworth 25<sup>th</sup> December 1805

<sup>23</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth to Richard Wordsworth, January 1806. *Wordsworth, William. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth VIII A supplement of new letters*. Ed Alan G Hill Oxford, Clarendon Press 1997

<sup>24</sup> *Wordsworth, William. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth VIII A supplement of new letters*. Ed Alan G Hill Oxford, Clarendon Press 1997 p 2, note 1, to Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 1806



## Society Visit to Force Crag Mine – the Mill

We have booked a special visit to the Force Crag Buildings in Coledale for Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October. The buildings - shown on the front cover - are set at 900ft at the end of the mining road, and so it is as much a walk as a visit. The visit begins at 3pm and the tour will last about an hour. This will be led by one of our members, Mike Bacon, who is a guide for this National Trust site.

The mill separated the lead, zinc and barytes that were mined here, and it stopped working in 1990. There has been a mill on site since 1840.

Numbers are limited and so it will be first come first served. We will make no

charge for members. You will need to walk (or cycle) to get there. It is 2.5 miles from the Grisedale Pike car park above Braithwaite or you could go from



Lanthwaite Green over Coledale Hause. Whichever you choose, you will need to walk back again and to allow at least an hour each way. On a good day this is a very pleasant afternoon but, if it pours with rain, then we go another day. Please return the enclosed slip to Derek Denman if you wish to go on the visit.

### ★ Future activities ★

We are on the look out for interesting, historical, places to which we can organise Society trips. In the past, these visits have proved very popular and enjoyable. If you have any suggestions, there's room on the (same!) enclosed slip for your thoughts. Suggestions for other activities would also be very welcome. Please give it a bit of thought and thank you.



Just another nag about the need for secretarial offers.  
Here they are, only the names are missing!!

### Remaining talks and activities 2005

7 August (Sunday)	<b>Walk</b> led by Derek Denman "Landscape History, Lorton & Brackenthwaite" start Lorton pound, 2pm, 5 miles. If the weather is bad, the walk will be a week later
8 September	<b>Talk</b> by Robert Baxter "People and Poverty in 19th Century Cumberland and Westmorland". Please see the summary on page 9
13 October (Thursday)	<b>Visit</b> to the Force Crag Mine, Coledale, 3pm at the mine. 5 mile total there and back walk from the Grisedale Pike car park up the Pass from Braithwaite. There's a flier for this in this Newsletter
10 November	<b>Talk</b> by Mary Burkett "Some Lakeland Artists and their work, 17th to early 20th century

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