

February 2018

The Derwentfells Wanderer

www.derwentfells.com

Society outing to Carlisle on 1st November

follow up by Sandra Shaw

Within hours of the society's visit to the Museum of Military Life at Carlisle Castle and the Guildhall Museum in the main square last year, Roger Hiley had posted a fully illustrated report of the visit on his blog at loweswatercam.co.uk. There is a link to it from our own website at derwentfells.com and I urge anyone who has not already done so to take a look.



Outside the Guildhall Museum – photo by Sandra Shaw

While at the Castle we were given advance notice that a poppy sculpture will be coming to Carlisle Castle from 23 May to 8 July 2018. Named *Weeping Window*, this new sculpture, by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper, will be one of two from the original artwork of 888,246 poppies entitled *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* which was unveiled at the Tower of London in 2014. The new installation will comprise thousands of the ceramic poppies cascading from the top of the castle's keep forming a sea of red which will arch over the inner ward wall and flow down into the outer ward of the castle complex, in a breath-taking display. No doubt further details will become available closer to the event.

Was there a fire at Queens College?

After seeing the previous Wanderer, a number of readers commented to me

that the image of the Queens College gateway appeared to show it on fire. This is more evident in the printed image than when viewed digitally. I found an image online where it is clearly some kind of creeper, turning colour for autumn. It was painted by William Matthison (1853–1926) who earned a considerable reputation for paintings that were later used in chocolate box style post-cards. Sandra Shaw

Ray Greenhow's talk - The Derwentwater Disaster: 1898.

follow up by Sandra Shaw

For those who missed Ray's talk on 11 January, it concerned the tragic accident on that lake on 12 August 1898 in which five young women from Nelson in Lancashire were drowned. His book of the same title as his talk was published by Bookcase in February last year. It is available for £10 through bookscumbria.com or at local book shops. There is an excellent review of the book, including a summary of the incident by Steve Matthews on the website. Ray has posted several route descriptions of walks he has undertaken along with some of the history he has uncovered. His blog is at scafellhike.blogspot.co.uk and members might like to view some of his routes there.

Dispersal of monies

by Sandra Shaw

The Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture, arranged by this society, was reported in the previous Wanderer. After expenses, there was a surplus of £286.38 which was divided equally between the three organisations which have historically been involved in the organisation of these lectures; Cockermouth Heritage Group, Cockermouth Civic Trust and ourselves. Each received £95.46.

The Society hosted a very successful coffee morning on 11 November as part of the Melbreak Communities 'coffee and cake' series. An excess of £144.55 after expenses was distributed as follows - £100 to Cumbria County History Trust and the balance between Tullie House for the benefit of the Guildhall Museum and Cumbria's Museum of Military Life. The event could not have gone ahead without the hard work of all those who baked in advance, served and tidied up on the day or attended to consume coffee and cake. The committee extends its thanks.

Loweswater and tenuous links to the Admiral Lord Nelson and Captain Bligh

by Walter Head

Thomas Harrison, Captain of HM Ship Dromedary is buried in the Churchyard at Loweswater. He was the son of Jonathan Harrison, a mason from Mockerkin, and his wife Eleanor, nee Dickinson. They married at Loweswater on 5 May 1746. Thomas was born at Mockerkin in April 1752 and was baptised at St Bartholomew's Church Loweswater on the 2 May 1752, the second of four children.

Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson, was the 6th of 11 children and was born on the 29 September 1758, to Rev Edmund Nelson and his wife Catherine, who were a prosperous Norfolk family.

HMS Dromedary began life as the Royal Navy ship Janus, named after the two-faced god of Roman mythology. It was a 44 gun, Robuck class, fifth rate ship, built by Robert Bateson of Limehouse, and launched on the 14 May 1778. A fifth rate ship was very fast and manoeuvrable, commonly used for patrols and to disrupt enemy shipping lanes. To be assigned to a fifth rate ship was considered an attractive assignment. The Janus was re-classified as a 24 gun store ship in 1787 and renamed HMS Dromedary on 3 March 1788. It is worth noting that the first Captain of the re-named ship Dromedary was one Captain Bligh who became famous with the mutiny on his ship the Bounty in 1789. The Dromedary carried 22 x 9 pounder guns on the upper deck and 8 x 6 pounder guns on the quarter deck, and was involved in the first action of Monti Christi. The death of

her captain, Bonovier Glover, left the command open for Nelson, technically her captain from March to September 1780, although he never actually set foot on board as he was too ill.

As the systematic recording of the service careers of naval officers did not commence until 1840 it has so far been impossible to determine exactly when Thomas Harrison took over the command of HMS Dromedary, but it must have been after 1788, as she was named Dromedary when under his command. He was also captain of HMS Resistance in 1793 and of HMS Calcutta in 1795. He was not Captain of the Dromedary when the ship was wrecked on 10 August 1800 on the Parasol Rocks near Trinidad. Thomas Harrison died on 23 April 1803 age 51 years.

The Harrison family had their share of bad luck as their daughter Mary died in 1782 aged 28 and their youngest son David perished at sea near the Isle of Whithorn in December 1785 age 21 years. There is no record of this incident in sources I have consulted, however I am confident that David Harrison was one of the eight men who perished when the two-masted square-rigged merchant vessel, the Brig Industry, foundered off the Galloway coast in December 1785.

November Talk - From Barren Waste to National Treasure; how we learned to love the Lake District

report by Tim Stanley-Clamp

When she passed through Cumberland on her extended tour of England in the last years of the 17th century, Celia Fiennes declared it a 'barren waste', a place untouched by the civilizing effects of modern commercial life. No doubt she was responding in part to the landscape itself, but what struck her most it seems was the obvious difficulty people had in making economic use of the steep sided hills and the rocky summits.

A similar thought seems to have occurred to Daniel Defoe who travelled here about thirty years later. He too was struck by the intractability of the landscape and pessimistic about the chances of ever making money from it.

Greville Lindop's well received talk in November began with these early characterizations of the Lake District, as it would later be known, and moved on through

those of Thomas Gray and then soon after Thomas West, written some hundred years after Celia Fiennes' visit. By now, landscape was beginning to engage the attention of artists for its own sake. Until then, the physical setting played only a supporting role, important as a way of locating the moral or

religious focus of the painting or the poem but not itself the object of attention.

Gray particularly, and West after him, were early advocates of the region's attractions as a place to visit for those with the leisure and the inclination to seek out the experience of landscape as an aesthetic adventure. These early tourists

arrived with gadgets designed to reproduce the effect of looking at a painting. They used shaped mirrors and hand-held devices which enabled the looker to select a view and frame it as an artist would. They were educating, as well as entertaining themselves, though it was not until the Wordsworths and the circle around them that this focus on the purely aesthetic was expanded to include a moral dimension.

The early tourists found the Lakes exciting because it afforded glimpses of an untamed wildness – the 'sublime' - which both stimulated and soothed. It prompted fearful thoughts of the unknown while at the same time providing safe spaces from which the unknown could be contemplated. In the popular culture of the time, Gothic novels and the Catherine Morelands who enjoyed being scared witless by them fulfilled a similar need, but William Wordsworth saw more deeply into the matter. The talk dealt very interestingly with those passages in *The Prelude* where the young poet was taken (as if led by Nature) from the safe settings of family and childhood to experience the limits of a natural world which was both terrifying and nurturing. As the young Wordsworth skated, explored Lorton Vale and took his boat on furtive nocturnal rowing trips, he discovered depths in himself which had been hidden. What had been for the visitors on their British Grand Tour a purely aesthetic experience was thus transformed into something more profound, bearing on humanity's moral connections with the natural world.

The Wordsworth family, not quite single-handedly, but with enormous effect, defined for us most of the reasons we have come to love this part of the world so much. The sense that the natural world at its loveliest can be a moral educator as well as a nice place to spend a holiday, came most eloquently from the work of the brother and sister and their friends in the early years of the nineteenth century. The area was designated a National Park in 1951, and then a World Heritage site in 2017. As Greville Lindop pointed out at the close of a fascinating exercise in cultural and local history, these decisions were born out of values which were developed over nearly three centuries. In effect, the country, and then the rest of the world, decided that it agreed with Thomas Gray and William Wordsworth, not with Celia Fiennes and Daniel Defoe.

More place names

Lorton – first recorded c.1150 as Loretona. The origin is unclear. It has been suggested that the first element could be from Old Norse Hlora meaning roaring, possibly referring to one of the becks that flow through High Lorton; probably Whitbeck which has more of a tumble to it. The second element appears more straightforwardly to be from Old English Tun meaning village or farmstead.

Loweswater – first recorded as the lake of Lowsewatre in 1230, meaning leafy lake, from Old Norse laufsæter meaning leafy lake with the Old English waeter added, perhaps for clarity. In 1780 Thomas West referred to 'hanging woods, little groves and waving inclosures' in his Guide to the Lakes.

Sandra Shaw

A date for your diary

Our Spring outing will be to Mirehouse near Bassenthwaite Lake on May 23rd. Its owner, John Spedding, will be there to greet us and introduce his home, rich in the history of Cumbria and in the cultural life of the nation. The house itself is fascinating and the grounds contain the beautiful church of St Bega's, a ten-minute walk towards the lake. Those who were made to study Tennyson's Morte d'Arthur at school will be able to see the lake as Tennyson did when he imagined Bedivere's feebleness, Arthur's final moments and the arm 'clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful' which reclaimed Excalibur from the world of men. More information will follow.

Tim Stanley-Clamp

Our future programme 2018

| | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 08 March | The Great War – Ambleside's Story | Judith Shingler |
| 10 May | The Remarkable Literary History of Mirehouse | John Spedding |
| Wednesday 23 May | Visit to Mirehouse, hosted by John Spedding. Full details in due course | Tim Stanley-Clamp |
| 14 June | AGM + Stone Circles of Cumbria | Tom Clare |
| 12 July | William Brownrigg MD, FRCS 'a physician and philosopher eminently distinguished' | Dr Phil Sykes |
| 13 September | 'Breaking up is hard to do': selling the Lowther Estates in West Cumberland | Dr Alan Crosby |
| 08 November | Markets to Supermarkets: 200 years of shopping | Dr Michael Winstanley |

Talks are at the Yew Tree Hall at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise. We are asked not to park to the left of the entrance (when looking at the hall) as the road is narrow there and can cause problems for passing vehicles. Visitors £3.00.

Officers and Committee 2017/18

President Professor Angus Winchester Financial examiner Peter Hubbard

Charles Lambrick
Chairman 01900 85710 Lena Stanley-Clamp
Membership 01900 336542

Sandra Shaw
Secretary and Wanderer 01900 829812
sandra.m.shaw@btopenworld.com Tim Stanley-Clamp
Outings 01900 336542

Christopher Thomas
Treasurer 01900 822171 Richard Easton
Talks 01900 85708

Mike Bacon
Committee member 01900 812188 Vice-Chairman vacancy

The archive is still housed at the home of Dr Derek Denman who will assist members with their own research within the archive. He is at 19 Low Road Close, Cockermouth CA13 0GU. Please contact him at derekdenman@btinternet.com or on 01900 829097.

The next issue of the Wanderer will be published on 1st May 2018. Please send any short items to the Editor, Sandra Shaw in early April.

The Wanderer is published by the Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, Pardshaw Hall, Pardshaw, Cockermouth CA13 OSP.

www.derwentfells.com



Claife Viewing Station, Windermere – image from the speaker