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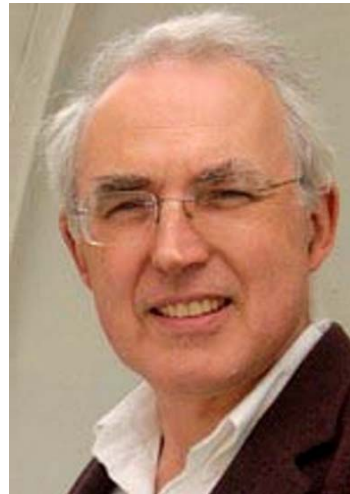
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**Congratulations**

to Society member Dr. Allan Sharman, of Cockermouth, who been awarded his Ph.D. in history by the University of Roehampton. The title of Allan's thesis is: 'Irish and Scots poverty in the far North of England, 1790-1870'. Some of Allan's work has been published in our *Journal*, nos. 58 & 60.

**Professor Angus Winchester:  
 25 years as Honorary President of the Society**



The silver jubilee year of the Society also marked 25 years since Angus Winchester took on the role of the Society's Honorary President. The Minutes of a meeting of the Society's newly established committee held on 7 October 1993 record:

'Mr George announced that Dr Angus Winchester has agreed to be the Society's President, and would give the first talk on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 1994, entitled "*The Rise and Fall of the Lakeland Yeoman*".

It is fitting, therefore, that having given the Society's inaugural Talk, *page 3*

**Our future programme 2019**

14 Mar 2019	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture. <i>Lordship and Manor: the Norman imprint on the Society's area of interest</i>	Professor Angus Winchester
22 May 2019	Summer Outing: Visit to Yanwath Hall and Penrith Museum	Contact Tim Stanley-Clamp
9 May 2019	<i>Viking longhouses in Cumbria</i>	Steve Dickinson
13 Jun 2019	AGM plus talk and exhibits <i>A social history of Loweswater through key moments in time.</i>	Dr Derek Denman
11 Jul 2019	<i>Cumbria's explosive coast</i>	Bill Myers
12 Sep 2019	<i>The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Border Regiment at the Battle of Arnhem, 1944</i>	Stuart Eastwood
Sep/Oct 2019	Autumn Outing – to be arranged	
14 Nov 2019	<i>Roman Roads through the lakes</i>	Dr Paul Hindle

Talks are at the Yew Tree Hall at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise. Visitors £3. Please do not park to the left of the entrance (looking from outside) as the road is narrow.

**Officers and Committee 2018/19**

President, Professor Angus Winchester	Financial examiner, Peter Hubbard
Charles Lambrick <i>Chairman</i>	01900 85710 Lena Stanley-Clamp 01900 336542 <i>Membership</i> <a href="mailto:ldflhsmembership@gmail.com">ldflhsmembership@gmail.com</a>
Dr Derek Denman <i>Secretary</i>	01900 829097 <a href="mailto:derekdenman@btinternet.com">derekdenman@btinternet.com</a> Tim Stanley-Clamp <i>Outings</i> 01900 336542
Christopher Thomas <i>Treasurer</i>	01900 822171 Mike Bacon Richard Easton Fiona Lambrick Sandra Shaw Hugh Thomson <i>Committee members</i>

**Diary dates**

**2 March.** Lancaster Uni. Regional Heritage Centre. 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Archaeology Forum.

**14 March.** The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture, by our President, Professor Angus Winchester. Many of his books will be on display.

*The Norman Conquest of Cumberland in 1092 created the framework for the local history of our communities. Two new great lordships, the Honour of Cockermouth and the Barony of Egremont, or Copeland, controlled our area. Grants of land created many local manors. This lecture will explore this formative phase in the history of land tenure, and the relationships of manors, parishes and townships.*

The next *Wanderer* will be published on 1 May 2019. Please send items to Derek Denman, by early April.

Published by the Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, 19 Low Road Close, Cockermouth CA13 0GU.

page 1 ...Angus Winchester is giving its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Lecture on 14 March. The subject matter, as readers will see from the information set out on page 2, provides the foundations for an appreciation and understanding of the local history of the area which is the focus of the Society's attention. Consequently, I very much encourage members to attend this event, and help to celebrate both the quarter-centenary of the Society and Angus Winchester's role over the same period, by lingering afterwards when there'll be additional refreshments.

For a number of his formative years Angus lived in Lorton, at the Old Vicarage in Church Lane. His time in Lorton Vale had a strong influence on the direction in which his studies took him, exemplified by his close interest in the history and historical geography of the area. That featured strongly in his BA dissertation and in his PhD thesis. Those studies in turn led to a succession of academic publications relevant to the Society's area of interest, the first of which *'Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria'* was published in 1987 when he was a Lecturer in Historical Geography at the University of Liverpool. It was followed in the year after he became the Society's Honorary President with the publication of his edition of *'The Diary of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood'*, an important figure in history local to Cockerthorpe and its surrounding area in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By 1994, when that book was published, Angus had been appointed to a teaching post in local and regional history at Lancaster University where his academic career flourished over the following 25 years. In 2012 his eminence in his chosen academic field was recognised by his appointment there as Professor of Local and Landscape History, becoming Emeritus Professor on his retirement. He is currently in the course of completing a

book on the landscape history of the Cocker valley.

Angus's energetic research, writing, and teaching is accompanied by fulfilling other roles including close engagement with the running of the CWAAS, of which he is a past President, and membership of various advisory panels relating to local and landscape history and to Quaker studies. Fortunately for the Society these commitments have not prevented him from taking a close interest in its affairs. Notably, he has delivered Talks approximately every other year since he became Honorary President. He has also supported several members in undertaking higher education courses, and in the earlier years often wrote articles for the Society's Newsletter and Journal. In addition, Angus has encouraged the Society to be involved in various projects. These have included the Cumbria Manorial Records Project, which led to the formation in 2005 of a manorial records group within the Society to support his work on that subject, and the Victoria County History of Cumbria which led to work done by a number of members in 2012 in contributing to the Jubilee Digests of the civil parishes in the Society's area. And it was Angus who was the inspiration behind the Society's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition of 20 objects of local historical interest.

All members will I am sure feel proud to have such a distinguished local and landscape historian taking a close interest in the Society and its affairs since its foundation. I salute Angus Winchester and his achievements, and on behalf of all members of the Society thank him most warmly for his willingness to fulfil the role of Honorary President over the past quarter century. I sincerely hope he will be willing to continue in the role for many years to come.

*Charles Lambrick,  
Chairman*



## Society News

### Yanwath Hall

### *Our Summer Visit to Yanwath Hall and Penrith Museum*

*by Tim Stanley-Clamp*

On Wednesday 22 May we are fortunate to have the opportunity to visit Yanwath Hall at Eamont Bridge. Not open to the public, it has many points of interest to recommend it to the keen local historian. It dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and is extremely well preserved. Among its attractions is a strong connection with William Wordsworth – Thomas Wilkinson, his friend and co-agitator against the enclosures of common land, was born there. It is now owned by the Altham family who have opened their doors to us for what should be a fascinating tour. After lunch we shall visit the newly refurbished museum at Penrith with its extensive collections of local artefacts and fine art.

Details of travel and costs will be published nearer to the time. Numbers

will be limited to around thirty and it may be advisable to reserve a place. Please contact Tim Stanley-Clamp on 01900 336542 or [tdsc50@icloud.com](mailto:tdsc50@icloud.com)

### *Website Improvements*

*by Derek Denman*

Our website, [www.derwentfells.com](http://www.derwentfells.com), has had a makeover to make it more friendly when viewing on a mobile, and generally to update the pages and content throughout.

It will be a repository of our publications and of local historical information, while our young Facebook page engages more dynamically with our members and the community.

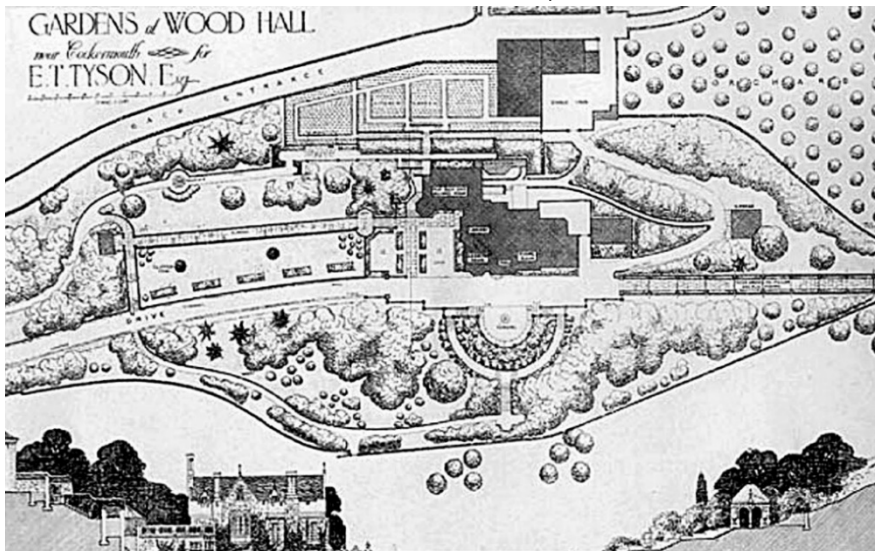
The website will grow its Publications, Features, and Sources pages. These have recently been restructured, and more information has been added. For example, our six Township Maps, showing all inhabitants, landowners, farms and fields from around 1840, are available to view and as downloads.

## Promoting the Society on Facebook

by Lena Stanley-Clamp

The Society's Facebook page allows us to disseminate our lectures and publications to audiences far and wide. Among the interest groups we reach out to are Old West Cumbria, Old Cockermouth, Cumbria Past & Present, Bygone Cumberland and Lake District & Cumbria Life. To our surprise the audiences we reach include people in Australia, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain and the US. The most popular posts are seen by up to 4,000 viewers. In addition to publicizing our own activities, we also post about other subjects of Cumbrian interest. In the past few months the subjects have included Cumbria's 20<sup>th</sup> century gardens designed by the eminent landscape architect Thomas Mawson,

Plan of Wood Hall garden near Cockermouth by Thomas H Mawson (1861-1933), at Kendal Archive Centre.



and an overview of historic Lake District Architecture.

You can view our page on <https://www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety>.

## They Lie in Foreign Fields: an update

by Sandra Shaw

Members of the Society will have received a copy of this WW1 commemorative booklet along with their November 2018 edition of the Wanderer. This brief will update members on other actions and events.

**Distribution** – in addition to being sent to existing members, free copies were offered to new members joining the society during the remainder of 2018 and the first meeting of this new year. This measure has resulted in an additional six members joining. Copies were also sent to the following categories of recipients - the authors, families of servicemen (where known), the two local schools (Paddle and Lorton), local press, local churches, civil parishes, Cumbria local studies

libraries, Cockermouth and Keswick libraries, Keswick Museum, Cumbria Museum of Military Life, other local history organisations and a small number of other local groups.

**Posting** – The booklet has been posted in pdf form on the Society's website at <http://derwentfells.com/pdfs/foreignfields.pdf>

**Additional information received** – the society has received two additional photographs of men covered in the booklet; namely John Needham and Emanuel Norman. These are included in the pdf version online, on the relevant pages (23 and 24) of the booklet, and are credited.

**Events** – The Society was represented in two local events commemorating the centenary of the Armistice.

Firstly, Walter Head addressed a meeting on Saturday afternoon 10 November at the Yew Tree Hall, Lorton; part of an Arts Festival held over the centenary weekend. This included two films and an exhibition of memorabilia and poetry. There is an extensive photographic report on the Melbreak Communities website, available via a link on their home page, or at <https://melbreakcommunities.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/yth-wwi.pdf>

Secondly, Sandra Shaw addressed a candlelit, commemorative ceremony at a packed Mosser Fell Church on the evening of 11 November. This event was part of 'Battle's Over – a Nation's Tribute', which had aimed to involve 1,300 different places, each holding their own commemoration, culminating in playing the Last Post, followed at 7.00pm by the lighting of a beacon. Sandra's talk about the eight men of Blindbothel Parish, who gave their lives, was followed by local teenager Sam Moore reading Laurence Binyon's poem, For the Fallen. The Times and Star reported this, including film footage of the event, which can be seen on their website by going to

<https://www.timesandstar.co.uk/news/17219813.blindbothel-beacon-lit-as-part-of-battles-over-tribute/>

## Additional Press Reporting

A press release, written by Tim Stanley-Clamp, was sent to a number of local news outlets and of course there was a promotion on our own Facebook page, which reached several thousand people, at home and abroad. This can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Lortonlocalhistorysociety>

The Times & Star carried a very nice report of an interview with Walter, including a photo of Walter holding the booklet, sitting on the churchyard wall at Lorton.

The Keswick Reminder, Whitehaven News and News and Star also included reports.

## Meeting Reports

### Markets to Supermarkets 200 years of shopping

report by Fiona Lambrick

The Talk on 8<sup>th</sup> November was given by Dr Michael Winstanley, an L&DFLHS honorary member and prominent historian with particular knowledge of regional history in the north west of England. As we have come to expect from previous occasions when he has addressed the Society, it was a lively and entertaining Talk well illustrated by numerous images.

Dr Winstanley began by identifying the market established in Cockermouth in 1221 as the origin of the means of buying and selling food and goods in the area. Markets were subsequently established in Wigton and other towns such as Penrith and Kirby Lonsdale. In many instances, the location of markets, typically taking place once and often twice a week, was near the church and therefore the

centre of the town. Hence the designation of such an area in many towns as the market place. 'Shops' were in the future.

As populations of towns and surrounding countryside grew markets became more crowded and lacked space to expand. Dr Winstanley drew attention to the existence in the earlier days of many markets of an area designated the shambles – where animals were brought in by farmers to be slaughtered and prepared by butchers for selling as meat. However, because of increasingly cramped conditions and the insanitary nature of the shambles, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century these areas were moved away from the market, as in Keswick, to a separate location nearby.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century open markets in larger towns, particularly those with rapidly increasing populations, were superseded by covered market halls built for the purpose. Dr Winstanley said that in the case of Cockermouth Lord Egremont arranged for a market hall to be built in place of the old moot hall, and the building remained in existence until its demolition in 2009. It did not, however, displace the open market which continued to operate. Simultaneously with these arrangements, as people's relative prosperity gradually increased, shops were established in towns, and also in villages. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Cockermouth had 33 grocers, 20 tailors, 19 boot/shoe makers, 9 butchers, 6 ironmongers, and 5 greengrocers. In High Lorton a grocer's shop was established by John Moffat, and another one was set up in Low Lorton. Very often a village shop would be combined with a sub-post office.

Referring to the significant development of the co-operative movement in west Cumberland from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Dr Winstanley made the point that in

Cockermouth, the 'co-op' store was one of the branches of the Maryport co-operative society. And although 'chain stores' began to be established in the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century, few of them set up branches in Cockermouth.

Dr Winstanley rounded off the Talk, delivered with his customary light touch but packed with much learning, with a canter through more recent shopping history, touching on the rise and fall of department stores in larger towns, the growth of out of town shopping centres, and concluding with a reference to internet shopping.

### ***The Postal History of Cumbria***

*report by Tim Stanley-Clamp*

Mike Mapleton, who is the Chairman of the Cumbrian Postal Society, brought extensive knowledge and an engaging wit in the talk he gave to our Society in January. It was very warmly received by his audience, which was rewarded with a meticulously researched story of our postal past.

He began with an account of the doings of Loweswater's Drunk Joe. His deliveries took him from Cockermouth to Buttermere with a pony and trap, and some aspects of his work ought to have brought him into dispute with his employers rather sooner than it did. The clue lies in his nickname. Eventually he was brought to book and dismissed, whereupon the people of Lorton Vale raised a petition and got him reinstated.

No such controversy surrounded the work, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, of the fondly remembered Moffat family whose matriarch, Ann, lived until she was 100 years old, having run the post office in Lorton and 'more or less everything else' according to the speaker.

Turning to the history of the nation's postal services, we learned



**Lorton Post Office in Smithy Fold, mid-C20th**

that it began in a small way for the very wealthy in the medieval period and was reformed soon after the end of the Civil War. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a service for the whole country, though it did not surprise to hear that the far North West was last in the queue. We had to wait until the Great North Route was branched across the Pennines in the 1680's; Penrith and Cockermouth were chosen as the main Post Offices.

The costs to both senders and recipients were astonishing. A letter sent in the from London to Carlisle cost 1s 2d, an enormous sum. There were no deliveries to homes at this time; people had to go into town to collect their mail and then pay a charge for it. Not surprisingly, a good proportion of letters were refused, especially where the intended recipient knew that he was about to be charged for receiving an invoice.

By the end of the 18th century, things had moved on considerably. The coaches travelling the five main Post

Roads were fast and reliable with armed guards and an impressive horn (demonstrated very capably by the speaker) for warning the public of its approach. But getting the mail from the principal centres into the country was dark work, usually carried out by very young boys walking with a mule along deserted country roads. Robberies, many of them extremely violent, were frequent, in spite of the fact that stealing the King's Mail was punishable by hanging.

In 1840, thanks to the genius of Rowland Hill, the postal service was transformed with the introduction of a flat rate for all letters, wherever it was sent from within the British Isles and whatever its destination. The Penny Black and its even more valuable sibling the Twopenny Blue had arrived and with them the world's first properly universal national postal service. And so local post offices – in Lorton Loweswater, Buttermere – sprang up to manage the huge increase in posted items encouraged by Hill's reforms. For 180 years we have enjoyed a service which is recognizably that which began with the great reform of the 1840s.

## Articles

### **John Benson's Home: Smithy Fold?**

by Mark Elliott

Walter Head's remarkable project celebrating the centenary of the World War Armistice included a full account of what is known of John Benson, the only casualty of WWI who is commemorated by a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone in Lorton churchyard. I have been asked to add to the record this supplementary note on the Benson family's association with our own small quarter of High Lorton in Smithy Fold, and possibly with our own new front garden.

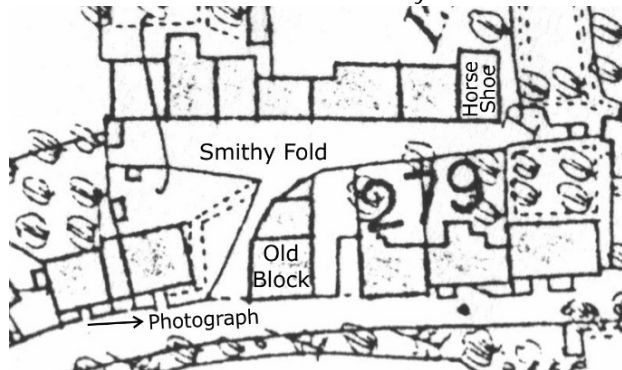
Our first acquaintance with the Bensons derives from researches into the census records by my godmother Barbara MacLean when we moved into Smithy Fold in 1996. At the time of the 1841 census the principal residents were the Lennox family who ran the Blacksmith's Arms (later the Horse Shoe Inn) and the smithy, and the Robinsons who owned the carpenter's shop at the northern end of the Fold; no mention of the Bensons then. But by 1881 an older John Benson appears as head of one of the five households forming the group described as the Horse Shoe, next to the Lennoxes. His son Isaac is head of the household by

1891 (described as "husbandman"), and the census lists six of his children including our John then aged eight.

The census records do not help us much with locating the Horse Shoe group where John lived, although it is clear from them that it was distinct from the inn and smithy complex where we now live. But papers kindly supplied by Derek Denman now throw a good deal more light. The old block identified in John Bolton's lecture of 1891 (on the LDFLHS website) as having been Martha Payle's house 80 years earlier was described by Bolton in his own time as Mary Benson's house – this is the two-storey building shown in the contemporary photo on page 10, which was pulled down to make Scott's garage, itself later replaced by the extension of the wooden bungalow which in its turn was pulled down by us in 2015 to construct a garden. Mary Thompson, aged 20, is identified as one of the residents of that house in 1841 on the Lorton Township map of which many of us have copies; she lived with her mother Bella Thompson, who was the village baker – the bakery which was replaced by Lorton Park mansion about 1827, the bakery becoming the kitchen. Mary married John Benson in July 1841, and they were the grandparents of the unfortunate John through his father Isaac.

Putting this together, and on the basis of further study of the church and census records, we may conclude that our John Benson's grandparents John and Mary lived in the old block which stood in what is now our front garden, at least up to the 1880s; that their son Isaac

**Smithy Fold on the OS  
survey of 1898, annotated**



**High Lorton street, soon after 1891,  
showing the old block at the entrance  
to Smithy Fold**

was probably born there; and that though Isaac had most of his family after moving to Rogerscale, he and his family moved back into Smithy Fold at least by 1891 when John was eight years old. They could at that time have been in the old block, which was certainly still standing and which, assuming that it was John Benson's home as appears to have been the case, was described in the 1881 census as in the Horse Shoe; or almost anywhere else in Smithy Fold other than the inn itself.

### **John Sumpton, convict, from Thackthwaite.**

by Mel Turner

John Sumpton was sentenced to death at Carlisle assizes on 25 July 1788, for a second offence of sheep stealing. The Cumberland Pacquet of 30 July 1788 reported that this offender 'is 68 years of age and a notorious offender, having, it is said, twice abused the Royal

clemency which has been extended to him. The judge pronounced the sentence with an awfulness and solemnity which affected the whole court'. (Earlier, a more detailed article in the same paper dated April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1788 stated he was 76 years old at the time of his trial!).

This suggests he may well have been the same John Sumpton who was charged with counterfeiting of the King's coin at Kelton Mill near Ennerdale in May/June 1742. A Thomas Crosthwaite gave evidence against John Sumpton and the miller Joseph Simpson on 8 August 1743. John denied all charges against him at a hearing three days later. Joseph Simpson went on to become a wealthy mill owner in that area as evidenced in the Brockbank & Helder archive, DBH24/23/17, deposited at Whitehaven.

John was a farmer living with his wife Rachel at Latterhead, in Thackthwaite, from at least 1746, when his son John was baptised at Loweswater. There were five more children by 1762, including my ancestor, Jonathan, in 1757. He was apprenticed as a tailor, possibly to John Bell at Latterhead, and later worked from

Low Park, Loweswater, in 1792.

Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to trace the births of either John or Rachel, nor their marriage. John may possibly have been related to the family of William Sumpton, who acquired a large freehold farm at Cornhow, in Brackenthwaite, in the early eighteenth Century. Alternatively, there was a family of Sumptons living at Lamplugh around this time including a John, son of Henry baptised 23 May 1714.

On 3 November 1768 John Sumpton purchased from Thomas Burnyeat 'a little close above the highway called the Hemp Garth, and a Garden adjoining with all the houses thereto belonging'.<sup>1</sup> He was admitted at the manor court as a customary tenant, at an annual rent of 1s and paying a fine of 2s. John clearly had a mortgage from John Fisher of Cold Keld, because the customary tenancy was immediately transferred to Fisher, as security. John Sumpton was now a small property owner in Thackthwaite, but would still need farm for another, unknown, landowner.

On 15 December 1773, John Fisher surrendered the customary tenancy for the admittance of John Sumpton, but on the same day John Sumpton surrendered the tenancy to his wife, Rachel. This was the last entry for John Sumpton, and most unusual. It suggests that John was no longer involved with the property. On 26 November 1774 Rachel Sumpton released the customary tenancy to John Green of Corn How. Rachel had taken a mortgage of £20 from Green, which was to be repaid with interest by 14 May 1775. John Green was a farmer at Corn How and could sign his name, while Rachel Sumpton made her mark, as had her husband in 1768.

The mortgage of £20 was later



The Thackthwaite and Latterhead area in 1770 – Donald and Hodkinson map

transferred, with the tenancy, back to John Fisher. Rachel was to repay by 14 May 1776, but she did not repay until 1779. To repay the mortgage it was necessary for Rachel to sell most of the property, leaving herself with the houses. On 8 October 1779 she released to John Iredale, a yeoman farmer of Thackthwaite, 'the Hemp Garth, and a Garth or Garden a back of the Barn, and also the Barn and Stables', at a customary rent of 6d, half of the original.

Rachel died in November 1782 and was buried in Loweswater. Her remaining property in Thackthwaite passed to the eldest son, John, and was described as 'two messuages [houses] and a parcel of land behind the same'. John sold in 1784 to James Muncaster.

The next record of John Sumpton, snr, is dated 15 June 1784, when

complaints were made to Alexander Hoskins J.P. by three local farmers, Isaac Johnson at Littlethwaite, Isaac Sibson at Brow, and Wilson Towers at Mire Gill. They all stated that sheep had been stolen from their land about three months earlier and that they had subsequently been discovered on the land of John White of Castle Vernon. John White confirmed that he had been sold the sheep by John Sumpton.

When questioned the following day, Sumpton made no defence and was remanded in Carlisle gaol. His trial was held 13 August 1784, when he was found guilty and sentenced to death. Afterwards he was pardoned on condition of his being 'continued in gaol for the space of one year'. After release in 1785 he took up residence for a time in Cockermonth, and later at Warwick, a parish east of Carlisle where he may have worked for a time as a butcher.

In 1788 he was once again stealing sheep. In January and February of that year Thomas Burnyeat of Swinside, in Lorton, had seven sheep taken from Whinlatter Fells and four other sheep from Swinside Fells. Robert Gilbank, of Scales in Lorton, had seven sheep taken in January from Swinside Common, and a further three in February. John Pearson of Low Lorton, on behalf of his father Henry Pearson, complained that he had six sheep taken from Swinside Common.

Following the thefts, an advertisement was placed in the Cumberland Pacquet on 26 March and again on 3 April 1788, offering a five-guinea reward for information. Various specific markings on the sheep were described.

John Graham of Wetheral then came forward and claimed he had been sold the sheep by Sumpton in two lots in January and February that year.

Depositions were taken from the involved parties and John Sumpton was questioned on 30 April and 1 May. He claimed that he had bought and paid for the sheep from two horse-dealers in Cockermonth, Isaac Cuthbertson and John Green. He also claimed that Green had offered him ten guineas if he would shoot a local attorney, Mr. Thomas Benson. Cuthbertson and Green were questioned separately on 1 May and denied that they had any recent dealings with Sumpton. They denied that they had seen him since his release from gaol in 1785.

John Sumpton was found guilty at his trial on 25 July and was again sentenced to death. However, an appeal for clemency was lodged on 31 July 'due to some favourable circumstances appearing on his trial'. This was accepted on 5 September and his sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

On 17 November 1789 the Cumberland Pacquet reported that the keeper of Carlisle gaol had received an order to convey 'John Sumpton, a person of near 70 years of age' to London for transportation. He was boarded onto the *Surprize*, part of the infamous Second Fleet, and she sailed from Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, on 17 January 1790, along with the *Neptune* and *Scarborough*, bound for Port Jackson, New South Wales. Information regarding that dreadful voyage, and details of the appalling conditions and treatment of the transported men, can be found in a letter from a William Hill, Second Captain of the transport, to Jonathan Wathen, a friend in London.<sup>2</sup>

Of the 900 convicts shackled onboard that ship, over 370 died en-route, including John Sumpton, of Thackthwaite.

<sup>1</sup> D/WM11/124&125, Loweswater Court Books

<sup>2</sup> <http://archival.sl.nsw.gov.au/Details/archive/110312939>

## Notes:-

1) I should be very interested to hear from anyone who has enjoyed this article and, in particular, if anyone has some information or possible clues as to the origins of John and Rachel Sumpton. John birth probably c.1720 and marriage to Rachel [?], c.1745.

2) Thank you to Derek Denman for his assistance with the Loweswater manorial records.

## ***The medieval manor and seat of Balnes, Loweswater***

*by Derek Denman*

We know that Alan de Multon created a park in Loweswater, after his wife inherited Loweswater in 1230.<sup>1</sup> Also, that his son, Thomas de Lucy, taking his mother's name, 'seated himself there' and extended the park.<sup>2</sup> In 1286 Thomas resolved the consequent dispute with the Priory of St Bees, after which the monks had an enclosed pasture, or Sheepgate, based on the 'Kirkeheved'.<sup>3</sup> He must have been instrumental in the licensing, in 1281, of the Priory to raise Loweswater chapel to parochial status – though it took them over one hundred years to do it.<sup>4</sup> We also know that the seat and manor of Thomas de Lucy was called Balnes: as Angus Winchester states, 'The name Balnes ... derives from the location of the manor house on Bowness, the headland beside Crummock Water at NY151 202'.<sup>5</sup> It was probably situated on that hill at Peel, though nothing remains except the remnants of the moat, see page 16.<sup>6</sup> What has not been discussed is why Thomas de Lucy placed his seat in

Loweswater, how it was used, and for how long it was used. This article will address those issues, illustrating the importance of medieval Loweswater.

### **Thomas de Multon's route to Cumberland**

Thomas de Multon, lord of Moulton, near Spalding in Lincolnshire, was born after 1150, and died as Sir Thomas Moulton in 1240. Genealogical websites suggest that he was not of Norman descent, his ancestor being Haco de Moulton, born around 1050 in Witham, Essex.<sup>7</sup> In 1190 Thomas married Sarah de Flete, of Fleet near Holbeach in Lincolnshire. They had three sons, Lambert, Alan (who created the park), Thomas, a cleric; and a daughter, Juliana.

Thomas was sheriff of Lincolnshire 1205-8, and as a knight, he served King John in Normandy, in Wales, and in Poitou up to 1214. Joining the rebels in 1215 led to imprisonment, but he was re-instated in 1217 by Henry III. In 1218 he became an itinerant justice for the five northern counties, which would involve him in the litigation of the West Cumberland lordships. He was sheriff of Cumberland 1233-36.<sup>8</sup>

### **Acquiring the property of the Lucy family – the triple marriages**

One strength of the de Multons was their ability to produce male heirs, while the holders of West Cumberland baronies tended to produce females. In the absence of a male heir, estates were divided equally among the daughters, or often held by widows. Widows were expected to re-marry,

and if they held property directly from the king, their remarriage needed the King's licence. Widows and heiresses were a route to advancement.

The baronies of Skipton, Allerdale and Egremont (which included the insignificant hamlet of Loweswater), plus the Five Towns and Derwentfells, had all been joined in 1138 through the marriage of Alice Rumley and William FitzDuncan. They produced one son, the Boy of Egremont who died without issue, and three daughters. The estates were eventually divided among those three daughters – one barony each. The offcomer-Norman, Reginald de Lucy, married the second daughter, Amabel, acquiring the barony of Egremont, including Egremont Castle as a seat and the hamlet of Loweswater. Their son, Richard, inherited in 1200.

Richard de Lucy, Baron of Egremont, married Ada de Morville and they had no son but two daughters, Amabel and Alice, in about 1205 and 1207. In 1213 Richard Lucy died, leaving the Barony of Egremont with a young widow and two child-heiresses. King John gave the wardship of the daughters to Thomas de Multon, who had lost his wife, Sarah, and was a widower with unmarried sons. Thomas married Ada de Morville without the licence of the King, for which her lands in Cumberland were seized. On 13 August 1218, the year in which Thomas became an itinerant justice covering Cumberland, Henry III ordered the lands and barony of Egremont restored.<sup>9</sup> The barony was now held by Thomas de Multon's wife.

The future inheritance of the Barony of Egremont lay with his two young wards/step-daughters. Thomas had a further son with Ada, another Thomas, but that son could not inherit and was eventually married to a Vaux

heiress, to become the lord of Gillesland. After 1218, Thomas Multon set about securing the Lucy inheritance, and then maximising that inheritance. As guardian and step-father of young Amabel and Alice Lucy, he had them both married to two of his sons by his first marriage, Lambert and Alan. Amabel and Alice would be between eleven and eighteen and would marry as and when instructed.

The inheritance of Amabel and Alice was potentially more than just the barony of Egremont, and in 1223 Thomas had William de Fortibus, Earl of Albemarle (Aumarle in Normandy), summoned to answer to the King. The Earl had taken possession of property reverting from Alice Romely/FitzDuncan, who had died in 1312/13 with no heirs. Thomas claimed that a half share of it should have come to the Lucy family, through the grandmother of Amabel and Alice.<sup>10</sup> This was successful. The inheritance of his wards/stepdaughters/daughters-in-law now included most property in Derwentfells, between the Cocker and the Derwent, and much more. The Earls of Albemarle retained Cockermonth, including the castle which had now been built, though the de Multons coveted it.

### **Settling the de Multon dynasty**

In 1230, after the death of their mother, Ada, the inheritance of the Lucy family was divided between the two sisters, Amabel and Alice. Amabel and Lambert de Multon would have the Barony of Egremont, while Alan and Alice de Multon would have the remaining property, including Derwentfells. However, the whole of Egremont exceeded Amabel's half share, and for balance a new manor was carved out of the Barony of Egremont and was given to Alice. This

<sup>1</sup> James Wilson (Ed), *The Register of the Priory of St. Bees*, 1915, no.104 note 4

<sup>2</sup> Angus Winchester, Ed, *John Denton's 'History of Cumberland'*, p.54

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, *Register St. Bees*, no.106

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, *Register St. Bees*, no.389 note 2

<sup>5</sup> Angus Winchester, *Landscape and Society in Medieval Cumbria*, 1987, pp.84&97

<sup>6</sup> Mary Fair, 'Loweswater Pele and Parks', *TCWAAS* 1935

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.geni.com>

<sup>8</sup> Sourced indirectly from *ODNB* 'Moulton, Sir Thomas of (d.1240)',

<sup>9</sup> Cal. Docs. Scotland, no.699

<sup>10</sup> Cal. Docs. Scotland, no.864

new manor had defined boundaries, which included the hamlets of Loweswater, Mockerkin, Sosgill and the service of Thackthwaite. This was held of the King, as tenant in chief.<sup>11</sup>

Why was Loweswater chosen? One reason would be its proximity to Alan's lands in Derwentfells, through which it was geographically connected to Cockermonth, rather than to Egremont. A manor from the Barony of Egremont, based on Loweswater, would be contiguous with Derwentfells, would have an affinity with both Egremont and Cockermonth, and would retain the connection with St Bees. Lambert now had the seat at Egremont Castle, but Alan had no seat.

#### The lordship of Alan de Multon

During the time that Alan de Multon and/or Alice held Loweswater, from 1230 to 1288, the name Balnes does not appear in any known surviving record, though the fact of Alan's creation of the park at Loweswater does survive. Alan's use of Loweswater as a base for hunting is clear, which might have needed a hunting lodge, but there is no evidence of a seat, or of his being resident. Alan's estate was far more extensive than Loweswater and Derwentfells, including Caldbeck for example. Alan held superior lordship over his freehold mesne-lords in Lorton, Embleton, and Thackthwaite.

There was a competition, as already described in 1223, between the Multons and the Earls of Albemarle, who owned Cockermonth and who developed the castle and town. One problem was that both parties shared most of the waste in Derwentfells, between the Cocker and the Derwent but excluding Borrowdale, which had been granted to Furness Abbey in

1212.<sup>12</sup> In 1247 disputes had to be resolved by dividing the waste of Derwentfells in two, north and south, based on a boundary starting at Lorton High Mill and running up Whitbeck.<sup>13</sup> This division, with Alan taking the northern half, made difficulties for the expansion of Lorton and Buttermere, as described by Angus Winchester.<sup>14</sup>

#### Re-booting the Lucy dynasty

Alan de Multon's son, Thomas, was probably born before 1230. He took his mother's family name of Lucy, a Norman name. As a young man he had local interests, because before 1256 he purchased the freehold of Thackthwaite from Agnes Dundraw, and gave it to his sister, Margaret, in 1268, though it later reverted.<sup>15</sup>

After the death of Alan, by 1270, his widow held the estate until 1288 as the Lucy heiress, though Thomas acted in her name, extending the park by 1286. Thomas married Isabel de Bolteby, and their sons, Thomas and Anthony, were born between 1280 and 1283. There is evidence that Thomas de Lucy created his seat in Loweswater, as claimed by John Denton.<sup>16</sup> If Balnes was a manor house, it would be reasonable to claim these offspring as natives of Loweswater. The first son, Thomas, lived to inherit in 1305, aged 24, but died without issue before 1308, when his younger brother, Anthony de Lucy, inherited, aged 25. It was he who became Lord Lucy and eventually gained the prize of the honour of Cockermonth, in 1323. He could then complete the move of his seat from Balnes in Loweswater to Cockermonth Castle. Through most of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the de Multons were lords of Egremont,

and, with that change of name to Lucy, also the lords of Cockermonth

#### The seat called Balnes in use.

The name Balnes is given for the manor of Loweswater in 1305, in the Inquisition Post Mortem (IPM) of Thomas Lucy, the son of Alan, and in the IPM for Thomas's son Thomas in 1308.<sup>17</sup> The 'manor of Balnes' appears in the Close Rolls for 1309.<sup>18</sup>

For contemporary evidence of the seat, or manor house, there are, in the Lucy Cartulary, just four documents which were 'given at Balnes', in the times of Thomas de Lucy and Anthony de Lucy.<sup>19</sup> The Lucy Cartulary is a list of documents, c.1400, with brief abstracts, relevant to the inheritance of the Earls of Northumberland. I appreciate the advice of Angus Winchester on using this source. Three documents of Thomas de Lucy were given at 'Balneys' in 1297 and 1298, which provides strong evidence of a manor house. The fourth was given by Anthony de Lucy in 1312/3 and was witnessed by knights and landowners.

In total there are, so far, seven contemporary documents which identify Balnes as a seat or manor, dating from 1297 to 1313. During this time the name applied both to the seat by Crummock and the manor carved out from the Barony of Egremont, that is the hamlets of Loweswater, Thackthwaite, Mockerkin and Sosgill, served by the chapel at Loweswater.

The documents given at Balneys cover local matters, particularly

concerning Thomas de Ireby, and his son, Thomas, who held Embleton as freehold manor, with a moated manor house and park. Thomas de Lucy, at Balnes, was their superior lord.

The last document marked as 'Balneys', in 1212/3, saw Thomas de Ireby release the Island of 'Sleningholme', which would be in the half of Crummock then belonging to Balnes manor, and may align with the current island called Holme.<sup>20</sup>



LIDAR image of Balnes<sup>21</sup>

It may be that the seat at Balnes had little further use. In 1322 the army of Robert the Bruce sacked Embleton and killed Thomas de Ireby. We do not know what they did to Balnes. In 1323, in those troubled times, when Anthony de Lucy gained Cockermonth Castle, he no longer needed a seat or park at Loweswater. Was that the end of the manor house at Balnes, after just twenty to forty years of use?

<sup>11</sup> Cal. Docs. Scotland, no.1106

<sup>12</sup> Cal. Docs. Scotland, no.554

<sup>13</sup> Lucy Cartulary, no.119

<sup>14</sup> Angus Winchester, *Landscape & Society*, pp.138-49

<sup>15</sup> Lucy Cartulary, nos. 62&66

<sup>16</sup> Angus Winchester, *John Denton*, p.54

<sup>17</sup> IPM Ed I, file 119, no.322; IPM Ed II, file 10, no.146

<sup>18</sup> Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward II Vol.1, 1307-13, March 1309.

<sup>19</sup> Lucy Cartulary, nos. 63, 64, 65, & 93.

First three wrongly noted Ed.III, for Ed I.

<sup>20</sup> Lucy Cartulary, no.93. Cal. Doc. Scotland no.1106, includes 'the moiety of the lake of Crumbokwater' in the manor – probably lost to Derwentfells in the C16th, as were Mockerkin and Sosgill.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.lidarfinder.com>