

May 2018

The Derwentfells Wanderer

www.derwentfells.com

Society outing Wednesday 23 May. Mirehouse – 'a manor from heaven'

A reminder from Tim Stanley-Clamp

Our next talk on May 10th will be on 'The Remarkable Literary History of Mirehouse' by John Spedding, whose family has lived there for generations. The Speddings have been associated with many of the literary families about which he will speak, particularly the Wordsworths and the Tennysons. John Spedding is a Fellow of the Wordsworth Trust and Vice-President of the Tennyson Society.



The Society's outing on 23rd May will be to Mirehouse and its Gardens, and the St Bega Church on the Bassenthwaite lakeshore. Much loved by visitors, it exudes a feeling of a cherished home, full of historic interest with an important collection of furniture, paintings and manuscripts on display.

The Outing: Join us at 1 pm at the Old Sawmill Tearoom where tickets for Mirehouse (£7.80 pp) and refreshments can be bought. John Spedding will welcome us at the house at 1.45 pm. Directions: the postcode is CA12 4QE. Please turn into Dodd Wood/Mirehouse car park opposite the main entrance (p&d). The X4, 554 and 73 buses go past Mirehouse. Please let Tim know if you intend to come.

When did they start burying the dead at Loweswater?

An article by Derek Denman

It is well known that St Bartholomew's was a chapel in the parish of St Bees, before becoming a separate parish in 1895. It is also a fact that, for a long time after the grant of the chapel to the Priory of St Bees, in the twelfth century, there were no burial rights at Loweswater. The dead had to be taken to St Bees for burial. Those long journeys started in the twelfth century,



St Bartholomew's, Loweswater.

though it seems that the chapel at Loweswater may well have existed before the Priory. In which case it may be that, in the eleventh century, the dead of Loweswater may have been buried in Loweswater, or somewhere close.

Church registers were required by law from 1538, but there are none surviving for Loweswater from the sixteenth century. The earliest testator known to have expressed a wish to be buried in Loweswater was Elizabeth Harrison in 1576; see Michael Baron in *Journal 40*. Before that we have no local records.

A burial ground came with the raising of a chapel to parochial status, though still a chapel. As evidenced by the Register of the priory of St Bees, a licence was granted

to St Bees in 1281 to raise the status of Loweswater chapel, including a graveyard. The Priory was to find the priest, mass was to be said weekly, and Loweswater was to provide everything else, plus payments in compensation to the Priory. This was during the time that the de Multons were the resident lords of Loweswater, and it may have been the initiative of Alan, or more likely his son, Thomas. Thomas took his mother's name of de Lucy, and purchased the manor of Thackthwaite. In 1286 he granted a pasture, or shepegate to the Priory in Loweswater, near Kirkhead, – see *Journal 60*.

The raising of Loweswater to a parochial chapel did not happen for a very long time, until in June 1403 a commission was granted to dedicate and consecrate the chapel of Loweswater (see *Prelates and people of the lake counties*). So St. Bartholomew, by name, may date from 1403 or 1404. Mary Fair places the medieval bell at that date.

The dead have not been carried to St Bees for over 600 years. *A short history of St Bartholomew's Church Loweswater* notes that 'popular local tradition tells of bodies for burial being taken all the way to St. Bees along the corpse road through Holme Wood'. Through it, and not around it, because the Holme was not enclosed from the common as pasture until 150 years after those journeys had ceased, and it was not woodland until the nineteenth century. We do not know by what route those bodies were taken, nor whether it was always the same route. The fell road via Ennerdale would be a good route in Summer. However, a good story makes a good walk even more enjoyable.

Reaching out to local history enthusiasts

A report by Lena Stanley-Clamp

The Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society Facebook page was launched a few months ago to connect with local history enthusiasts. We post information about talks, trips, exhibitions and other resources. Facebook makes it easy to publish and communicate – one can comment, show appreciation or share with friends - at the click of a button.

An image speaks a thousand words: our posts are always illustrated. They

include previews of exhibitions such as 'Where Poppies Blow' currently at Wordsworth House in Cockermouth, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I and celebrates the role of nature in sustaining soldiers through the horror of war.



From the exhibition at Tullie House 'The Spirit of the Cracker Packers: In our Own Words' which marked 100th anniversary of the first votes for women.

In the past few months, we featured the historic maps of Cumberland available on the Society's website. This post was viewed by over 4,000 people and attracted a lot of 'likes' and shares. The most popular so far was the short history of a Grade II listed Loweswater landmark: the Red Phone Box, featured courtesy of our members Roger and Ann Hiley at www.loweswatercam.co.uk.

We invite you to follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety

The Nuts of Askill, Loweswater

An article by Roger Asquith

Rarely did the earlier Loweswater wills make reference to places beyond the boundaries of Cumberland, so an item in Ann Nutt's will, written in January 1704, stood out. 'To my son Jonathan 40s and to my daughter Ann £3 if they send a sufficient discharge under their hands to my executors out of the province of Pensilvania where they both live. And if they be dead or do not send over or come themselves to give such discharges then the said legacies to remain and be to the use of my said executors'. Given that the Nutt family had few assets besides their

customary holding at Askill (c. 23 acres of enclosed land, 6s 6d per year ancient rent), how did daughter Ann (b. 1685) and her brother Jonathan (b. 1678) get to Pennsylvania, and what became of them? Whilst the elder son of a yeoman farmer (John Nutt in this case), would be heir to the customary land holding, younger sons had a decidedly uncertain future. A daughter's prospects depended largely on who she managed to marry. So did the Nutts in Pennsylvania fare better than those in Cumberland?



Askill, Loweswater. Image by author.

Like most families at Waterend in Loweswater at this time, the inhabitants of Askill were Quakers. William Penn's 'holy experiment' i.e. Pennsylvania, had been founded in 1681, providing an escape from religious persecution. It became the destination of choice for Quakers from this region, with established meeting houses and support network. Whereas the prospects for finding out the fate of Ann and Jonathan Nutt would otherwise have been slim, Quaker records were good, enabling the usual family history sources to provide answers. Thomas Watson and family (four children and wife Rebecca) of Strawberry How, Cockermonth left Cumberland for Falls Township, Bucks County, Pa. in 1701 accompanied by a

family by the name of Bowman and Jonathan Nutt (also, presumably, sister Ann). The Bowman family has proved elusive both in Cumberland and Pennsylvania. Thomas Watson and his wife (Rebecca Mark) were both of noted Cumberland Quaker families. Thomas' parents were married at Pardshaw in 1650; his father, also Thomas, was buried there in 1667 – his premature death being attributed to time spent in Carlisle gaol due to his beliefs.

Thomas Watson named his newly acquired 300 acre estate 'Strawberry How', and played a prominent part in the life of Bucks County – a Justice of the Courts and a member of the Colonial Assembly. Jonathan Nutt and Ann would have been well known to the Watsons through the Quaker community at Pardshaw Monthly Meeting. By what arrangement they travelled to Pennsylvania with the group we can only speculate. In Falls, on the west bank of the Delaware river, Jonathan married in 1706 Susannah daughter of Edmund Lovett (one of the 'first landers' of 1681) and had a family of five. Ann married Roger Moon youngest son of another prominent Falls family in 1708. She produced seven children, on the 125 acre family plantation, before her death in 1732. Roger remarried adding a further seven. Jonathan's will of 1749 described him as a 'Yeoman'. From family tree research sources, it would appear that the Nutt and Moon descendants of Ann and Jonathan survived and prospered through 11 or 12 generations down to the present day.

In terms of Pennsylvania's early settlers and family roots the Nutt brother and sister were significant characters. The history of the Nutts in Loweswater on the other hand is largely unrecorded in either Nutt/Moon family trees or Cumbria local history.

Henry Fisher, customary tenant of Askill, in his will of 1634, identified Nicholas Nutt as heir and sole executor. George and Ellen Nutt received significant legacies. Nicholas was admitted tenant of Askill by the Manor Court. Henry's will shows an absence of children – his wife, mentioned in another will, presumably predeceased him. On Nicholas's death in 1649 his son John Nutt (1) was admitted as tenant. The inference is that Nicholas, George and Ellen

were siblings, perhaps grandchildren of Henry or otherwise closely related. After Nicholas, John (1) held Askill until his death in 1697. With Ann, who wrote the aforementioned will in 1704, John (1) had 6 children besides Jonathan and Ann who went to Pennsylvania. Their elder brother John (2) held Askill from 1697 until he died in 1748, sister Jane married James Peill of Beckhouseclose, Loweswater in 1703; youngest brother Isaac is discussed below. Of the other three, Thomas died in infancy and there is little in the records regarding William and Nicholas.

John Nutt (2) (1675 – 1748) married Sarah Johnson (1683 - 1727), of Place, Waterend in 1704. Their son John Nutt (3) (1705 - 1784), although heir to Askill, became known as John Nutt of Sosgill. He and wife Sarah were near neighbours of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood (ref.1). A second son, Joseph died in infancy (1716) and daughter Sarah at 15 years (1707 – 1722), leaving three daughters, Dinah (b 1712), Ann and Deborah. When John Nutt (2) made his will in 1745, Askill was mortgaged, as was his messuage and half tenement at Miller Place, Brackenthwaite. Ann Nutt was bequeathed the latter property. Daughters Deborah Nutt and Dinah Robinson received token legacies. When 'John Nutt of Askill' (i.e. John Nutt (2)) died in July 1748 his inventory indicated that he was still actively farming – crops, cattle and sheep.

Isaac Nutt (1691 -1763) spent his earlier adult life as a servant/farm worker at Crabtreebeck by Loweswater, being mentioned in the wills of the resident Burnyeat family. However in his will of 1763 he was 'yeoman' of Crabtreebeck, with the typical assets of a yeoman farmer. From Manor Court records Isaac was customary tenant (effectively owner) of Askill (from 1749) as well as the neighbouring Spout House, these being occupied and farmed by others. At his death Isaac owed £120 by a bond to nephew John Nutt (3) of Sosgill (a figure somewhat exceeding his assets). Isaac had married Sarah Paile (d 1760) of Thrushbank in 1754, son Isaac Nutt (2) being born in 1756. The infant Isaac was admitted customary tenant of his late father's holdings at Askill and Spout House, and entrusted to the guardianship

of John Nutt (3). By 1783 Nutt involvement with Askill (and Spout House) had ended, Jonathan Wilkinson being admitted customary tenant. Isaac Nutt junior married in Whitehaven (1787) where he became a butcher.

John Nutt (3), of Sosgill, would appear to have been the most successful of the Nutt family – whether by being particularly astute or in part by a fortunate marriage is not clear. He acquired his property at Sosgill in 1730 (ref.1). Neither the identity of his wife Sarah nor the date of their marriage is known. His will of 1785 shows there were no surviving children. The Sosgill property was divided three ways, equally between his sisters Dinah Hudson of Waterend, Deborah Fearon of Deanscales and nephew Isaac Tiffin. This division was still apparent in the Tithe Map schedule of 1840, showing that John Nutt, at his death owned 100 acres, and that of the four farmhouses in Sosgill at the time John's was on the west side, nearest to Sosgill Beck. A 1/16th part of the Brigg Unity, Master Henry Piper, was bequeathed to nephews Jonathan and Isaac Fearon.

Thus ended 150 years of the name Nutt in Loweswater. Regarding the name Askill, or Ask Hill, the usual early rendering Askell would seem to be consistent with the derivation being ON 'ask keld', i.e. a spring with ash trees (ref 2). The name of the nearby, now ruinous 'Spout House' would seem to reinforce this by also referring to the water supply.

References

1. Angus J. L. Winchester, 'The Diary of Isaac Fletcher of Underwood, Cumberland 1756 – 1881'.
2. Diana Whaley, 'A Dictionary of Lake District Place-Names'.

Other Sources:

Loweswater wills and other probate records for: Ann Nutt d 1704, Henry Fisher d 1634, John Nutt d 1697, John Nutt d 1748, Isaac Nutt d 1763, John Nutt d 1785. (Whitehaven Archive Centre).

www. Ancestry.co.uk

D/WM/ 11 Loweswater Court books 1645–1925.

DRC/8/121 Loweswater tithe map 1839–43.

Our future programme 2018

10 May	The Remarkable Literary History of Mirehouse	John Spedding
Wednesday 23 May	Visit to Mirehouse, hosted by John Spedding. For details see page 1	Tim Stanley-Clamp
14 June	AGM + Stone Circles of Cumbria	Dr 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

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Christopher Thomas <i>Treasurer</i>	01900 822171	Richard Easton <i>Talks</i>	01900 85708
Mike Bacon <i>Committee member</i>	01900 812188	Vice- Chairman	vacancy

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

The next issue of the Wanderer will be published on 1st August 2018.

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www.derwentfells.com

Diary dates

There is until 10 May to visit Keswick Museum to view the HERstory exhibition, 10am to 4pm. This celebrates the contribution of local women to the history of Keswick.

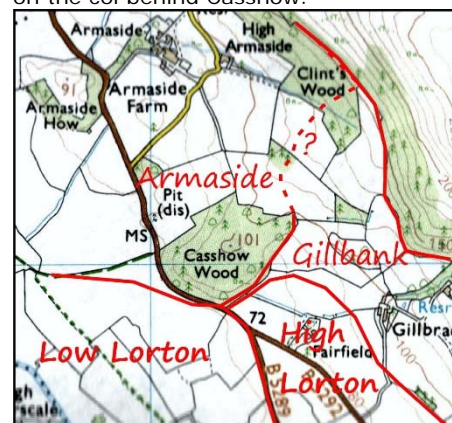
The Wordsworth House exhibition *Where Poppies Blow* runs until 28 October, 11am to 4pm, except being closed between 9th and 15th July. This exhibition demonstrates the importance of the countryside to those who served in WWI.

The CLHF Convention and AGM is on Saturday 6 Oct at Newbiggin Village Hall, CA11 0HT. The free AGM is at 9.30. The Convention is £12, including lunch, and starts at 10.30. Subject: *The Victoria County History of Cumbria: Studies in Local History*.

What is the origin of the name of Casshow, in Lorton?

An article by Derek Denman

Casshow is that small wooded hill, or how, that you drive around with care approaching Lorton from Cockermouth. It is just before the fork between High and Low Lorton, which is of some significance, because it is just past Cass How that the twelfth-century freehold manor of High Lorton began, the land east of the road if you continue straight on to the Church, on the old Crossgates Lane boundary. The road below Casshow is probably an ancient terrace or causeway, because the land below Casshow Beck, was part of the other twelfth-century freehold manor of Low Lorton. Casshow was in neither manor, and nor was it in the thirteenth-century freehold grant of Gillbank, or Gillbrae, which was above the High Lorton land and on the col behind Casshow.



Casshow was the southern extremity of Armaside, which was tenanted before 1368. This was not freehold, but a tenancy in the manor of Derwentfells. One major difference in this tenancy was that the wood still belonged to the lord, and was strictly controlled by the bailiffs. Angus Winchester notes in his excellent *Landscape and society in medieval Cumbria*, that 'in 1269 restrictions were placed on the burgesses of Cockermouth taking estovers in the wood below Armaside'. The Armaside area became a general resource of wood for manorial tenants, maintaining their properties.

The Armaside tenant of Casshow held it for grazing, and when trees were felled

they were fenced from the stock and allowed to spring again, unlike on the common. So that Armaside in general, and probably Casshow in particular, contained Lorton's late surviving natural woodland; oak, ash, and birch. This situation ended in 1777, when the freehold of Casshow was sold, with the wood, to Thomas Robinson of Pardshaw, as trustee for the Fletcher family of Kirkgate End, in Low Lorton see *Journal 49*. Thereafter it joined the Lorton Hall estate until the late nineteenth century.

Why Casshow? The earliest manorial tenant of this Armaside farmstead, which I could find, was Robert Casse in 1547. He was, perhaps, the man who married Isabell Bell at Lorton in 1545. By 1569 the holder was Richard Casse. And in the Percy 'great' survey of 1578, it was possible to place John Casse, probably of High Armaside, as tenant of 'one close of arable pasture and wood called the How divided into divers closes containing twelve acres'. These were customary acres, being 19 statute acres. Elsewhere, 'Casse place of the How' is mentioned, demonstrating an established connexion between the family and this landmark hill.

The origins of this Casse yeoman-dynasty at Armaside may begin well before 1547, but we can find its end, in 1646. In 1641, Christopher Casse transferred the customary tenancy of Casshow, a part of his tenement, to Cuthbert Peile of Kirkgate End. This was a condition of a mortgage received from Peile, a principal Lorton yeoman. The elder brother, Myles Casse, consented to this. The mortgage was to be repaid by 1646, but we can assume it was not repaid, because the customary tenancy of Casshow was retained by Cuthbert Peile, as owner. Sometimes the names of places change with the owner, but in this case the familiar name was retained as Casshow, for at least the next 372 years.

One more Place Name

related to our outing in May

Mirehouse Recorded as Mirus in 1717 and Myrehouse in 1736, means the house by the marsh. The first element is myrr or mire, meaning a wet and boggy place. Mirehouse was built on a low lying place by Bassenthwaite.

Sandra Shaw