**Discovering Loweswater's Early History
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**Published by Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History
Society, 2022**

**Printed from www.derwentfells.com**

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# Discovering Loweswater's Early History

This five kilometer walk starts and finishes at the Church and provides an outline of the history of the settlement named after Loweswater, the 'leafy lake', and its people up to the seventeenth century. The route is shown on the map on the centre pages, which is based on the first series Ordnance Survey of 1863. Not much has been added since, though farmsteads have been lost.

The route is on footpaths and minor roads, with occasional wooden stiles, sometimes in poor repair. Refreshments are available at the Kirkstile Inn.

### St Bartholomew's Church (1)

The earliest historical reference to Loweswater concerns a chapel here which was granted to the Priory of St. Bega, or St. Bees, in about 1138, becoming a part of the parish of St. Bees. This grant was made by Ranulph de Lindesay, a knight in the service of David I of Scotland, and Ranulph's wife Ethelreda who was a sister of Alan, the lord of Allerdale. They also made a grant out of Lorton during this period of Scottish rule.

As there was a chapel here in the 1130s, then clearly there was an established local community, though we do not know which wider communities the chapel served at that time. It was only in 1230 that the approximate area covered by the later parish

was formed, when the manor of Balnes, pronounced Bal-ness, was created. This included Loweswater, Thackthwaite, Mockerkin and Sosgill, and these would become three of the four 'quarters' of the later chapel, the fourth being the Park.

The grant of the chapel circa 1138 meant that the tithes and other dues would go to the mother church at St. Bees, while St. Bees would be responsible for providing priests for saying mass at the chapel. The dead of Loweswater would now be buried at St. Bees – some distance away. St. Bees was in the Diocese of York, and in 1281 the Bishop approved the elevation of Loweswater to a parochial chapelry, allowing the inhabitants autonomy, including a graveyard. This may not have been done until the chapel was dedicated in 1404, once the Earls of Northumberland had acquired Loweswater manor. Burials were then at Loweswater and not at St. Bees,
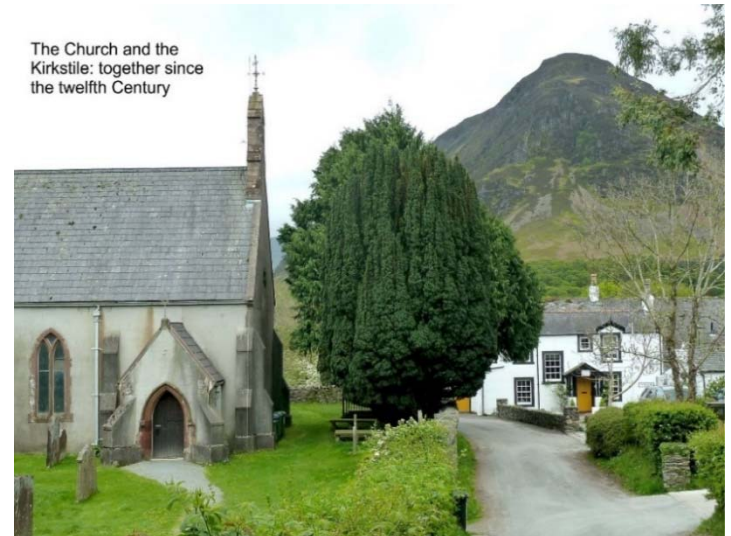


The Church and the Kirkstile: together since the twelfth Century

and so there was no corpse road to St. Bees after 1404 at the latest.

The old chapel was pulled down and rebuilt in 1827, and rebuilt again in 1884. The medieval bell, probably from the 1404 chapel, was sold to help finance the work. It was saved from melting by Canon Rawnsley and was returned in 1972. Loweswater became a full parish in 1895.

### The Kirkstile (2) and St. Bees Priory

The Kirkstile Inn is adjacent to the Church, and was built on a further grant to the Priory of land for a standard peasant tenement. This grant was made after Ranulph de Lindesay's widow, Ethelreda, had remarried William de Esseby by 1158. The grant will date to the 1150s or 1160s. This freehold grant allowed the Priory to establish a farmstead in Loweswater which would act as its grange. It would serve the Priory's growing agricultural rights, including the use of the common for livestock.

After the death of Ethelreda, Loweswater manor reverted to the baron of Egremont. Around 1200 the lord of Egremont, Richard de Lucy, granted a small extension of land at the farmstead to accommodate a vachary, or dairy farm, of 20 cows and their followers with pasture in the forest.

Peter Burnyeate of Loweswater Kirksteill was recorded in 1525 and in 1549 the name was Kirkestille. That name also identifies the place where clergy, visitors, and horses, would be accommodated for chapel services.

### Church Bridge (3) and Dub Beck

Dub Beck appears to have acted as the boundary between the enclosed lands of the early settlement of Loweswater, say up to 1230, and the forest and common beyond. The farmsteads themselves would lie along the road between the bridge over the Cocker, once called Deepa Bridge, and Crabtreebeck as it entered Loweswater Lake. The walk will visit Loweswater's open arable land later. By late medieval times the enclosed lands would have extended south at least to the line shown on the map.

Beyond Crabtreebeck on the north shore of Loweswater was the manor of Adam of Mosser, defined by a charter circa 1202, and to the north of the Loweswater farmsteads was Thackthwaite, held as a freehold manor within Egremont. In the early 1200s Loweswater was not a freehold manor, its inhabitants being direct tenants of the barony of Egremont.

### The creation of Balnes, see map page 3

Crossing over Church Bridge, before 1230 this was part of the commons used by Loweswater people, within the private forest of Coupland. In 1230 there was a major division of the baronies of Egremont and Allerdale, and the Honour of Cockermouth. Two de-Multon brothers had been married to two very young heiresses, Alice and Amabel, the daughters of Richard de Lucy. The brothers' father had married the Lucy widow in the time of King John, and had gained control of the family and property, at great expense.

In 1230 the elder brother, Lambert, took the barony of Egremont while the younger brother, Alan, took the other property. However, the Egremont property was greater in value and so approximately one twentieth of the barony of Egremont was separated and granted to Alan. This became Balnes, which included Loweswater, Mockerkin/Sosgill, and the manor of Thackthwaite, plus extensive areas of forest as far as Brandreth. Balnes, was constructed from several settlements, rather than having a natural coherence, and later became Loweswater parish.
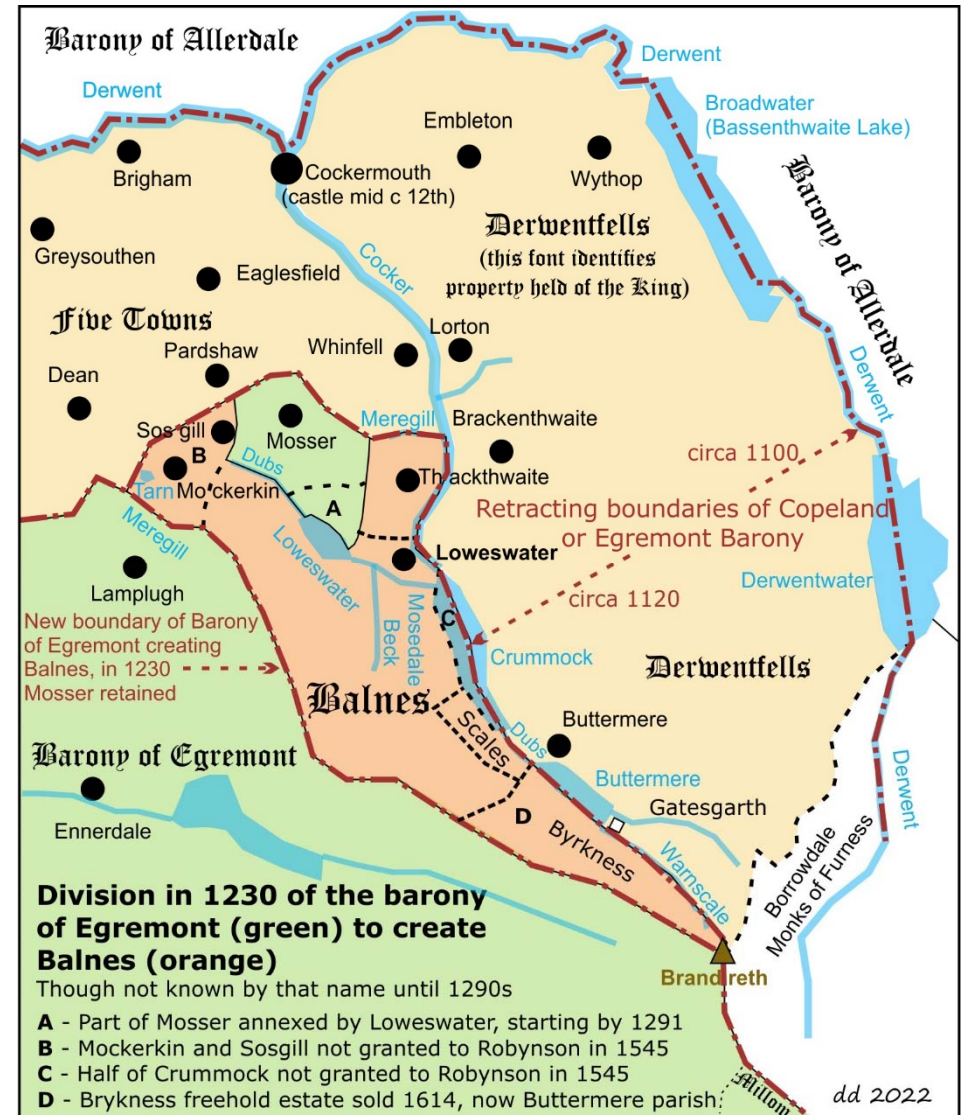
Both de Multon brothers would hold their lands directly of the king, at the level of a baron, and so Balnes was no longer within Egremont barony. It would seem that Balnes was taken from the north-east of the barony so as to be contiguous with Alan's properties in Derwentfells, Five Towns, and Allerdale. Lambert held Egremont Castle but Alan did not hold Cockermouth Castle, which came to the Count of Aumale, in Normandy.

Alan de Multon enclosed a deer park from the forest on this south side of Dub Beck, near to Crummock, to support his hunting interest in Balnes.

### Kirkhead (4)

The sheep farming interests of the Priory, focussed on the Kirkstile, would have increased rapidly in the thirteenth century through the tithes of lambs and wool from the manor of Balnes. In 1286 the Priory found itself in dispute with the son of Alan de Multon, Thomas, who had taken his mother's name of Lucy. Perhaps this name reflected his claim to be the rightful lord of Cockermouth, temporarily in the hands of the Aumales. Thomas had extended the park in Loweswater and, according to John Denton, had established his seat there. This had



**Division in 1230 of the barony of Egremont (green) to create Balnes (orange)**

Though not known by that name until 1290s

A - Part of Mosser annexed by Loweswater, starting by 1291
B - Mockerkin and Sosgill not granted to Robynson in 1545
C - Half of Crummock not granted to Robynson in 1545
D - Brykness freehold estate sold 1614, now Buttermere parish

dd 2022

**The mansion at Kirkhead, in 2003**

interfered with the Priory's access to their grazing, and Thomas de Lucy now granted the Priory access at 'Kirkeheved', or Kirk Head, and they obtained pasture rights in this general area. This access became Church Bridge and the grazing became the Loweswater 'Shepegate' of 1549, aka Mosedale heaf for 300 sheep. This was confiscated from the dissolved priory in 1539, as a sheep heaf on the moors worth 10s rent.

In 1286 'Kirkheved' was recorded as a place-name to locate the Priory's access. John Hudson of Kirkhowe was recorded in 1535, so that the late medieval Mosedale Heaf would have been beyond Kirkgate. In 1624 Kirkhead was known as the Hall, probably the seat of the previous lords John Robinson and Henry Patrickson. It was rebuilt by the Hudson yeoman family in the eighteenth century as the finest house in Loweswater. The current house named Loweswater Hall was a new build in the 1870s, named Mire Close at first.

The history of Kirkhead/Kirkgate and the exact boundaries of the park and of the unfenced Shepegate are uncertain. After the dissolution, the common was probably entered at Kirkgate, and the was road then unfenced except by enclosures of Kirkgate and, later Bargate. The full

enclosure of the common up to Bargate would be after 1550.

### Bargate (5)

Follow the road up to the area of Bargate – see page 8. In the 1430s manorial land on Mosedale Beck was rented to John Richardson of 'Thursbank' for a new fulling mill. A water-powered fulling mill was necessary for the finishing of woollen cloth, before use or sale. This was a second fulling mill in Loweswater, though it might have replaced the first. It involved a new and large dam being constructed on Mosedale Beck, suggesting a high volume of work. The extensive commons of Loweswater supported many thousands of sheep, over 7000 in the nineteenth century, and if the wool was being exported as cloth rather than fleeces, then the inhabitants would have been largely employed in spinning and weaving.

The close to the west of the road, containing some earthworks (6), was called Tenters in 1839, indicating that the locally made woollen cloth had once been hooked onto structures here to dry. Another close called Tenters, downstream on Mosedale Beck, suggests the location of the first fulling mill. By 1839 fulling in Loweswater was a distant memory remaining in close names, and it is likely that fulling did not survive more than, say, a century after the dissolution of the Priory in 1539. Fulling for the valley continued in Lorton. Bargate continued as a farmstead but is now a ruin, destroyed by fire around 1900. It is on private land.

### The Lord's corn mill (7)

The location of the lord's corn mill in Loweswater had long been a mystery, with speculation of a windmill being

located at the farmstead Mill Hill, on a dry slope. A recently discovered old plan has confirmed that it was a water mill near Mill Hill, fed from a leat off Mosedale Beck. That leat started downstream of Bargate and may have continued further to provide water for the first fulling mill. Before the sixteenth century, Loweswater and Thackthwaite had separate corn mills, but by the end of the that century both Thackthwaite and Loweswater manorial tenants were obliged to use the lord's corn mill at Loweswater. They would have their oats ground at perhaps three-week intervals.

The name High Cross (8) will derive from the crossroads at the road from Thackthwaite to the mill. This road continued, to cross Dub Beck at Stockbridge, originally a bridge made of cut logs which was some way downstream of the Victorian Maggie's Bridge. This area is on private land.

### Loweswater Lake and the dispute with Mosser.

Continuing from Bargate, go through the gate on the fell road. This was the gate dividing the later enclosed lands of Kirkgate and Bargate farms, from the open commons beyond. This gate gave Bargate its name, and its purpose was to control stock movements. However, the commons were enclosed and divided in the 1860s, when the commons wall and the gate became less important.

Beyond the gate, do not take the drift road through the modern plantation of Scot's Pine, not native in this area, but continue on the old fell road bearing right.

Further along at (9) a view opens to the right to Loweswater lake and the fells beyond. In the early thirteenth century the farmsteads of Loweswater extended to Crabtreebeck, at the eastern end of the lake. Beyond that from 1202 the manor of Mosser occupied the northern shore and the land north of Dub Beck feeding Loweswater. The men of Loweswater had rights of common in this part of Mosser, called Waterend Wood, but not to settle and enclose land. However, by 1290 Loweswater men had enclosed land at

'Moreschalsthuait', or at Waterend north of Dubs Beck. This suggests that land at Waterend had been used as common and served by sheilings or huts in 1202, but had been settled by 1290.

The Loweswater men were permitted to keep that land but the men of Mosser were also permitted to enclose some land, perhaps at Graythwaite which is just in Mosser. Disputes over the common between Mosser and Loweswater lasted into the nineteenth century, with Loweswater winning.

### The mill dam on Mosedale Beck

At (10) is a crossing of Mosedale Beck to Hencomb, outside of the boundary wall and now on right-to-roam land. Go down to the beck, a pleasant place for refreshments. At this point, before the cascade, a large dam was built, probably in the 1430s. This provided the start of the leat to the fulling mill at Bargate. The start of the leat can be clearly seen east of the beck, below the fence (11). On the western side there appears to have been another leat which provided the water supply to Steel Bank, now gone, and to the farmstead at Mill Hill, now a barn.

### Mosedale

Return to the fell road and continue south into Mosedale, between Melbreak on the left and Hen Comb on the right. Walk as far as you wish on this road and return, the enjoyment of which greatly depends on the weather.

Melbreak and Hen Comb are totally in Loweswater, as is all that can be seen to the south. The boundary was created in 1230 when Balnes was taken from barony of Egremont for Alan de Multon and his hunting. In front, Starling Dodd is on the boundary, which is the watershed running from Blake Fell and Mockerkin How, unseen to the right, and past Buttermere to Brandreth, well to the left. The manor of Balnes, aka Loweswater, suffered some loss to Buttermere in the sixteenth century, but Loweswater to this day stretches as far as Sour Milk Gill and includes Scale Force, which is in Loweswater parish, not Buttermere.

To Whitehaven & Workington

Crabtree

Thrushbank

B.M.461.8

Loweswater

E R

T H A C K T H W A I T E

Fish Pond

Godferhead

Spring

Fish Pond

Deepa Bridge

To Keswick & Cockermouth

Scalehill Hotel

B.M.408.4

Scalehill Bridge

B

B

Lanthwa

W

an idea of the extent of Loweswater's enclosed land circa 1230

Highcross

445

Watergate
before 1508

High Iredale
(lost)

400

N

possible late medieval commons boundary

High Nook

S    W    A    T

cres

9414    987

500 metres

Mill Hill
before 1475

Steelbank Foot Br.

Tarn

Tenters

Barnes

Fulling
mill

9

Leat

11

Dam

10

To Buttermere & Ennerdale

12

Commons enclosed 1860s

Corn
Mill

7

Mosedale Beck

Leat

Fell Lane

6

Maggie's Bridge

Loweswater School
(Endowed)

1839

17

High    Cross

8

B.M.440.5

Stockbridge

first
Fulling
mill?

Tenters

400

Kirkhead

Kirkhead

4

Kirkgate

Old
gate

B.M.445.2

454

5
gate

The Parsonage

B.M.389.6

21

Bellows Hill

B.M.363.7

St. Bartholomew's Ch.
(Per. Curacy)

1

Church Stile
(Hare &Hound CH.)

2

3
Church Bridge

Beckhouse Br.

Foot Br.

Park Bridge

Park Bridge

14

Lowpark

Shepegate

Lord's Park

Flass Wood

Flass
Wood
Top

gate

13

Green Wood

Flass Green

Dropping
Crag

Raven
Crag

Near side

Smithy
20

Post Office
Gillerthwaite

17

Longlands
Field
(open arable)

16

Mean Ing

Crag

Highpark

Boness

Peel

15

Peel

Crummock

R

18
Muncaster House

Jenkin Gap
Guide Post

Old Lead Mine

Poulsike

dd Aug 2022

**Bargate before the fire**

This well-made fell road forks further along to cross Mosedale Beck providing a Summer route to Ennerdale and then on, significantly, to St. Bees. However, the main route from here continues alongside Melbreak and then round to Buttermere. The first destination of the road, Scales Stinted Pasture, aka Buttermere Scale, is and was in Loweswater, and was the site of huts used by the Loweswater tenants to manage their stock on the common. In 1305 there were two iron forges or bloomeries, which may have been at or near Scales.

### The road to the Park

Return along the fell road and take the fork **(12)** above the plantation of Scots Pines in the direction of Crummock. This path soon joins the commons boundary wall, from before 1860, and continues past Flass Wood, an ancient oak wood. Follow the path to enter the park through the gate **(13)**, noting the settlement High Park over the wall to the right. Once through the gate, carry straight on through the hamlet of Low Park to reach the road to Park Bridge **(14)**.

### Loweswater Park History.

The deer park was created by Alan de Multon, but then extended by his son, Thomas de Lucy, by 1281. Thomas was said to have seated himself in the park,

which is supported by some evidence. Firstly, the attempt to raise the chapel to a parochial chapelry in 1281, which had the consent of the bishop but may have been long delayed by the Priory. This type of action which might be taken by a resident lord increasing the status of his settlement and the autonomy of his local tenants. Secondly, his extension of the park before 1281 removed the Priory's access to the dubs and commons around the area of Park Bridge. That extension may have been for his seat. Thirdly, there were three charters granted at 'Balneys' in the late thirteenth Century, suggesting a building.

No such building has been found, though the historical records of Multon/Lucy and the archaeology of Loweswater Pele have been combined to suggest that Thomas de Lucy was seated at Loweswater Pele. It also could have been at Low Park.

It was the objective of the de Multons/de Lucys to be seated at Cockermouth Castle, which was in the disputed hands of the Counts of Aumale through this period. Eventually Anthony de Lucy, grandson of Thomas, gained Cockermouth Castle in 1323, through his performance in the Scottish wars of independence. There would then have been no use for a manor house at Balnes, and soon no use for the park at all.

By 1437 the park had been let to manorial tenants for £8, with at least one part being a quarter for £2. The three farmstead sites at Low Park, High Park and Peel probably emerged from that division and letting, but before 1546 a part had reverted to the lord, being 'Balnesparkke' of twelve customary acres, or twenty statute acres.

To give an idea of the working population, in the 1841 census High and Low Park were home to 42 people, 18 of whom were children.

### Loweswater Pele (15)

Take the footpath within the park, alongside Park Beck towards Loweswater Pele, and stop at the ruined farmstead, Peel. There is either a direct, branching, and sometimes boggy path with stiles, or keep alongside Park Beck and take a right turn near to Crummock. There are good views up the valley, which will be discussed at Loweswater Pele.

The farmstead at Peel provides a chance to look at a ruined house/barn/byre with origins in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries. This one was last used in about 1900. Many old farmsteads and cottages in Loweswater have been lost, mostly because of the change to pastoral farming from labour-intensive mixed-farms, when every tenant grew their own oats. Also due to reducing textile manufacture, which might start from the dissolution of the Priory. Apart from residences and tourism, Loweswater did not develop new industries in the way which Lorton did.

Peel farmstead sat above a moat which enclosed the promontory, Loweswater Pele. This moat is thought to be pre-historic and not to have been created by Thomas de Lucy. Climbing to the top, this promontory appears to the feature which gave the name to Balnes, perhaps as a ball-shaped promontory rather than a bow shape as in Bowness. There is no sign of de Lucy's moated manor nor any stone-built defensive building on this site. However, it may have been a refuge or store facility in the Scottish wars of independence of the early fourteenth century. The term pele implies wooden structures of a more temporary nature.

While Balnes is descriptive of the promontory and the name of the manor, it has been credibly proposed by Hugh Thomson that this promontory, as delimited by the moat, could be the island of Sleningholme. That island was in

Crummock and was part of de Lucy's manor of Balnes, which included the western half of Crummock. Sleningholme was important and of value. It was let to Sir Thomas de Ireby, the lord of Embleton who was killed and his manor house destroyed by the major incursion of the Scots under Robert the Bruce in 1322. In 1323 it was let for 100 years to Sir Hugh de Moriceby, lord of Brackenthwaite and a significant warrior in the Scots wars. This suggests that Sleningholme had some military significance which the other small islands in Crummock could never claim. If Loweswater Pele was Sleningholme and let to others, then a de Lucy seat for Balnes, would be elsewhere in the park.

From the top of this defensible hill there is good visibility. Looking south, Haystacks, in Balnes, can be seen with Great Gable behind it. Brandreth, to the left of Green Gable, was the distant limit of the manor of Balnes.

### The medieval open arable fields

Take the bridge **(16)** over Park Beck, canalised since around 1900 when the level of Crummock was raised by about a metre as a water supply. This bridge separates the lord's park from the enclosed arable and meadow land of the medieval tenants. Many settlements in the area, such as Buttermere, Lorton and Embleton, developed to exploit an area of alluvial deposits which could be used to grow mainly oats. Loweswater was fed by this large area, now flat from cultivation, between Dub/Park Beck and the string of farmsteads along the present road. Walking along the headland, where the oxen and plough were turned, the arable land is to the west while that to the east may have been the meadow land, providing animal feed for the winter. The divisions between closes on the map align with the direction of the furrows, though there would be no closes or walls in these medieval fields. They would be open and worked communally, though particular strips would belong to the individual farmsteads. Note the long narrow strip on the map called shirt sleeve **(17)**.

**A fine Georgian house at Low Park, 2003**

### Early culture of the people

The open arable fields would serve the earliest settlement, and we have no evidence for the people, other than the remains of the fields on old maps. Loweswater, with both Old Norse and Old English roots, may have been created by Anglian settlers from Northumbria to the East, say in the 700s or 800s, or perhaps by Norse-Irish immigration from the West around 900. In the eleventh century Loweswater would have been part of Strathclyde, aka medieval Cumbria, a district in mid-Britain that embraced the Solway and in which the chapel at Loweswater, if existing, would have been part of the diocese of Glasgow.

In 1066 Cumberland was left in Malcolm's Scottish control, until the start of Norman direct rule in 1092. The division between the baronies of Allerdale and Coupland (later called Egremont) ran at first along the Derwent, so that both Lorton and Loweswater were in Coupland - see Page 3. Allerdale had a strong native lord, probably based at Papcastle before Cockermouth Castle was built. A Norman lord, William le Meschines, held Coupland, but it seems that he soon ceded to Waldeof, lord of Allerdale, the territory of Derwentfells, between the Cocker and Derwent and the Five Towns, starting at Whinfell. Around 1120, the boundary between the two baronies became the Cocker and Mere Gill, between Thackthwaite and Whinfell. In 1230 that also became the boundary of Balnes, now also detached from the shrinking barony of Egremont.

The above is all suggestive of a Scottish attachment in the Cocker Valley in the twelfth century, which was associated with the native lordship of Allerdale, rather than supporting the alien Norman lordship being established at Egremont under William le Mechines. Norman rule lasted for 44 years, until the death of Henry I and the seizing of the English throne by Stephen, the last Norman king. David I of Scotland supported Matilda's claim for England against Stephen, and Northern England had Scottish rule from 1136 to 1157.

In the Scottish incursions of 1136-8, culminating in the notorious Battle of the Standard, the men of Allerdale fought on the Scottish side, with Ranulph de Lindesay being one of David's principal knights, under William fitzDuncan. The Norman lordship of Egremont was defeated at that time and David's native commander, William fitzDuncan, married Alice, the daughter of William le Mechines, to take the barony. On whose side did the men of Loweswater fight?

### Gillerthwaite and the village centre

Walk to Muncaster House **(18)** to reach the end of the headland, but note that Muncaster was not a medieval farmstead, but was planted here by Henry Muncaster in the nineteenth century, after he had sold Nether Close to the lord, John Marshall, and had become the bailiff.

Walk up the road before Muncaster, through the arable land, now used as grazing, and then take the footpath right to Gillerthwaite, from which can be seen the church and the 1839 school, now the village hall **(19)**. Continue to Gillerthwaite **(20)** which probably was a medieval farmstead, though we have no confirming record. The buildings were once more extensive than those which remain - see the photograph. The Gillerthwaite area was the location for the village trades, the joiner and the smithy, and would have been the working centre of the village, at the major road junction. A short distance up Bellows Hill, Rose Cottage **(21)** was built as the first day-school in the 1780s, though the curate/schoolmaster would have been teaching well before that.

### Lords with key roles in Loweswater and Balnes manors

Returning to the Church **(1)**, note that the walk has covered the medieval period, i.e. up to the Tudor monarchs starting in 1485. The end of the walk is a good place to enter the sixteenth century, to consider the confiscations of Henry VIII and the subsequent work of the priest, Richard Robynson, to purchase and reassemble Loweswater almost as it had been.

Before that, however, there are two other important lords who should be remembered from the walk.

In the early twelfth century Loweswater was a settlement of tenants of the barony of Coupland/Egremont, with a chapel. The first known lord of Lorton and Loweswater was Ranulph de Lindesay, who was an Anglo/Scottish knight and was involved in the notorious Scottish incursions of 1136-8. Those and other manors came with marriage to Ethelreda, sister of Alan of Allerdale, probably as a reward from David I and William fitzDuncan, the new lord of Egremont. The manors then came to Ethelreda and reverted to Egremont after her death, less the chapel and the Kirkstile which they had granted to St Bees priory. Ranulph granted the chapel to St Bees Priory, and Ethelreda later granted land for the Kirkstile.

Though Alan de Multon was the first lord of Balnes (by whatever name it was then known) from 1230, it was his son, Thomas de Lucy, who had, perhaps, a manor house in the park, and established the settlement of Loweswater as the core of his coherent manor of Balnes. He attempted to have the chapel, probably to cover Loweswater, Thackthwaite and Mockerkin/Sosgill, raised to a parochial chapelry but he had a difficult relationship with the Priory, who otherwise would have been the dominant power in Loweswater. Thomas also purchased the lordship of Thackthwaite, a freehold manor within Balnes, so that the inhabitants became, in time, direct tenants within Balnes.

### Richard Robynson and the reassembly of modern Loweswater

By 1400 the Lucy manors had come through marriage to the Percys, Earls of Northumberland, and the distinctiveness of Balnes was lost. Loweswater, Thackthwaite, and Mockerkin/Sosgill joined Lorton, Brackenthwaite, Buttermere and Whinfell in a long list of contiguous Percy holdings.

In 1531 Henry Percy, the sixth Earl who is remembered for being betrothed to Anne Boleyn, entrusted lands to Henry VIII, intended for Henry Percy's cousin when he came of age. After the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, Henry VIII took those lands. In 1539 Henry VIII dissolved the Priory of St Bees and appropriated the chapel, the Kirkstile and the Shepegate. In whose hands the component parts would end up was a matter of finance and favour.

In 1545 Richard Robynson purchased the confiscated manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite from Henry VIII, together with the lands endowed to the Chantry at Brigham. Robynson had been the priest at the chantry, in Brigham Church. His role would be to pray almost continuously for the souls of the deceased Percys, which by 1532 he had failed to do to the satisfaction of the living Percys. Robynson gained the support of Thomas Cromwell, no less, in resisting ejectment from the chantry, and was clearly already a significant King's man in the area, and not the Earl of Northumberland's man.

**Gillerthwaite, early twentieth century**

He was a Loweswater Robynson, and had been chaplain there in 1508, engaging in farming activity, presumably from the Kirkstile. His family and connections there are evident from the numerous bequests in his will of 1549, which left his manors and estates to a dynasty of Loweswater Robynsons.

Robynson's purchase in 1545 gained most of the ancient manor of Balnes, i.e. Loweswater, Thackthwaite, and the whole of the commons, including the freehold of Birkness up to the old limit of Brandreth – see page 3. However, he did not gain the land and tenants of Mockerkin and Sosgill, except for Mockerkin tarn. The half of Crummock which had belonged to Balnes was not mentioned. When the remaining lands of the Earls of Northumberland were restored by Mary I to the seventh earl in 1557, all of Crummock came to him. So, explicitly, did the tenants of Mockerkin and Sosgill, who he included for convenience as tenants of Derwentfells.

In 1545 Robynson had not gained the Loweswater property of the dissolved St Bees Priory, that is the chapel and tithes, the Kirkstile tenement and the Shepegate. Except for the chapel, he gained these in 1549, in a deal though which Lord Grey of Wilton would be rewarded by Edward VI for the battle of Pinkie Cleugh at Musselburgh in 1547, part of the failed rough wooing of Mary Queen of Scots, aged 4. Grey gained various confiscated properties which were, in part, for immediate onward sale to Robynson, and probably to others. Robynson bought the Kirkstile tenement, the Shepegate and the manorial tenants of Brackenthwaite, which had not been part of Balnes. Separately he purchased the chapel and tithes of Loweswater for the remaining term of a crown grant, from the widow of Thomas Legh. Born in Distington, Legh had been one of Thomas Cromwell's 'visitors' of the northern religious houses.

That sequence of actions demonstrates how Richard Robynson must have set out to reassemble a self-governing greater Loweswater, based on the manor of Balnes and the parochial chapelry of Loweswater. Thereby he avoided its return to the Percys, or its fragmentation. His young nephew, John Robynson, was trained to be lord, and having come of age was resident, probably at Kirkhead. It also appears to be the case that more common land was enclosed and let to Loweswater tenants during the lordship of the Robynsons. The Robynson dynasty lasted only until 1562, and there this walk must end.

**Sources and further reading:**
*Life in old Loweswater*, by Roz Southey, Ed. Derek Denman, Lorton & Derwent Fells LHS 2008. Available with much other material from *www.derwentfells.com*
*The Language of the Landscape*, by Angus Winchester, 2019.