

'Lorton and Loweswater Eighty Years Ago'

A lecture given by John Bolton in 1891

Transcribed by Joan Head in about 2015, from a manuscript.

[John Bolton, 1855-1915, of Cockermouth, was Master at Lorton School from 1777 to 1882. He lodged at what is now Kent Cottage. He later ran the family building business in Cockermouth.

This lecture was given in 1891 at St Cuthbert's Church, Lorton, covering the buildings and families of Lorton, Brackenthwaite and Loweswater, focused on 1811. The content was based on the recollections of his wife's grandmother, supported by his own research and knowledge. The title is that given in the publicity for the lecture.]

Lecture on Lorton [and Loweswater] as it was Eighty Years ago

by John Bolton

I stand to-night on this platform in what to me is a novel character. I have sung on this platform and I may have attempted to give a speech from it, but in the character of a Lecturer I scarcely know myself. But by Lecture you must kindly take to mean a descriptive sketch of what Lorton and Loweswater-the places and the people - were like from eighty to one hundred years ago.

I need scarcely say to the majority of you here to-night that I spent nearly six years in Lorton, a part of my life that I will always look back upon with pleasure and pride, for I made friends then who have proved themselves so since that time, and very naturally Lorton has a warm place in my heart and although I do not know Loweswater and its people so well as Lorton I am proud to know that I could get a cup of tea freely at any of the farmsteads. There is no prettier Valley in the whole of England than that of Lorton. A stranger visiting it for the first time from the Cockermouth side is struck with its quiet and subdued beauty, and standing on Round Close Hill his eye will be pleased with the happy combination of wood-land and meadow-land that constitute its peculiar charm. In summer when the woods are in leaf and

the brilliant sunshine touches the summits of the fells, and all the meadow-land is in its flush of beauty, there is no more charming vale in the Lake District. It is a large picture painted by the hand of the Master-Painter of the Universe and set in a massive frame of mountains. The guide-book writers of the beginning of this century describe the Valley in glowing terms, but I believe that with more wood now than then we see the Valley to-day in a more beautiful state.

You will notice that the bills gave the title of the Lecture as "Lorton & Loweswater Eighty Years ago", & very naturally it would occur to many- what can he tell us about them? Or, where did he get his information? Well Ladies & Gentlemen I will plunge into the subject & tell you what I have gathered up, where & from whom. If anyone present will kindly notice any of the points on which I ask for information, & he or she is in a position to supply the company with it I will feel obliged.

Having lived almost six years in Lorton - as I said-everything appertaining to it was of course interesting, & when I had the rashness to take a wife, I found that her grandmother had the honour of birth at the farm called Low Hollins in Brackenthwaite. She is now 88 years of age, and although blind & rather deaf, her mental faculties are unimpaired & her memory good & reliable. Just let me give you her connection with this district & you will perceive what a storehouse of old world recollections is her memory.

Her maternal grandfather was Joshua Grave born in Skellgill, Newlands, in 1714 & she has talked with him. This man was one of those who went to Penrith Fell in 1745 to fight against the Scotch Rebels. He died in 1813 at Aitken in Newlands when she was 11 years old. Here we have two lives-from 1714 to 1891 - a bridge of 117 years!

Her paternal grandfather was Peter Iredale of Fangs who married Ann Mirehouse of Miresyke. Her father was born at Fangs in 1758 & was called Peter. This Peter Iredale & his wife Dinah Grave took Low Hollins in 1795 or 1796 & the old man lived with them. He was buried in Lorton Churchyard. At Low Hollins there were born John Iredale in 1798- the father of the present Mayor of Workington. Peter Iredale in 1800 Dinah Iredale in 1802- my informant. Joseph Iredale in 1806 who became Mayor of Carlisle & head of the Brewery firm there.

In 1813 or thereabouts they removed to Boonbeck farm then in possession of Mr Stubbs. Thus you will see how doubly interesting her old-fashioned cracks became, & when I was asked to give a Lecture here I thought that a review of the past might be profitable & pleasing. We all know the changes that have taken place in Lorton during the last 14 years - the date of my coming amongst you, but if you will bear with me a little while

we may see how much really Lorton has gone back in the matter of trade & population. In 1801 an Act of Parliament was passed for a Census. It said "As all sorts of provisions are extremely dear at this period, the Legislature wish to ascertain the increase or diminution of Great Britain". From the Church Register I find that in 1801 in Lorton & Brackenthwaite that is the one parish of two townships there were 95 families & 453 inhabitants.

In 1815 there were 105 families with a population of 489. The Chapelries of Wythop & Buttermere each had about 20 families & 100 inhabitants. In 1815 the Register contains a list of each Householder with the number of males & females in each house. This is very interesting but too long to quote. In the Register the High town is almost always written "Upper Lorton".

Now let me take you with Mrs Lancaster as for a guide through Lorton. Since she can remember, the whole of the common from Shatton to Grayson Tarn was unenclosed. There was a gate fixed somewhere beside the little beck that crosses the road before we get to Pearson Clark's lonning. This gate was called by the Lorton folk "t'moor yeat", & it was about as far as any one dare to venture at evening. A Story is told of a man who wished to impress on his hearer the sense of a great distance- It's as far, says he, as - as - Lonnon Moor Yeat!

She has walked from Lorton to Cockermouth when all was unenclosed from Shatton to where the Rose Cottage now stands - only a barn - & over the Moor to Brigham when this was wholly unenclosed to Ellerbeck. At Round Close Hill there was a round coppice railed off, that was all.

There was a tile kiln wrought by Joseph Murray's father Walter Murray. This accounts for the name Mire End.

From Shatton, however, to Lorton, the land was enclosed, but there were a lot of small fields & little dirty lonnings down to Cocker side. Where Cass How sand pit is now was as far back as 1800 the locale of boggles, & robbers. I need scarcely say that there was no Fairfield, only the farm of Gilbrea or Gilbriar or Gilbrow as it is variously put in the Register. Then came the Highside Farm, but Mrs Lancaster says that where Oakhill now stands (& a pleasanter place I do not know) there was nothing but Scrub.

Then we come to the group at Rising Sun & she remembers all Kirkfell open down to Whinlatter road, right up to the New Brig. This Bridge was built before she remembers, but not long. Perhaps Mr Wilson may be able to tell us how long the New Brig has been built.

Coming back from the New Bridge the lower side down to Whitbeck was open till we come to Tenters fields - one or two that went down to the Beck. Of course the name Tenters tells its own tale, & in 1800 - 1820 Lorton Mill was a very important & thriving place. It belonged to Mr Bowe who lived at the Tenters with his wife & daughter Mary. They were well to do people & Mr Bowe had a good business. Their son was called Arthur, & was engaged in business in London, & in 1844 he left £100 to the School for free schooling.

You all know the furthest house on the right hand side going up Whinlatter past Mr Wilkinson Jennings's house. The stairs used to be used from the outside for people going to bed. Fancy leaving your comfortable fire on a snowy night & coming outside to go to bed

The road to the Mill was between the house & the Tenters, & perhaps someone in the room will be able to tell us when the change was made to the lower side of the Tenters. Almost opposite the Tenters there stood an old house in which lived the Fuller & his wife. I need hardly tell the older portion of my hearers what a fuller was, but for the information of the younger ones I may just say shortly that as the blankets & woollen Stuffs were oily from the nature of the material - wool & a little shoddy oiled -they required scouring & cleansing & fuller's earth & other materials

were used with a plentiful supply of water. This Mill was called a "Walk Mill", a very old term meaning to scour & cleanse. To walk is used sometimes now by old people. A walker is really a fuller. We have a very old Walk Mill at Rubbybanks. It is so-called Mr Banks tells me in deeds 400 years old. Well the fuller lived in this house, which however has been pulled down & nothing remains to show its site. Here was born in 1793 Richard the son of the fuller Francis & his wife Frances Hunter — otherwise Frank & Fanny Hunter.

The Websters from Loweswater used to bring in their Woolens to the Tenters, & as the Mill at Millbeck belonged to Mr Dover, every week there was a cart-load or two of unfinished goods brought over Whinlatter, & the carts took back the finished goods to Keswick or whatever their destination might be.

Coming down Tenters Road, on the right of the road nearly opposite the Brewery stood a small cottage & here lived a couple named Joseph or Job Thompson & Nancy his wife. I think many of you may remember them. Here was born in 1802 Isaac their son, thick lke. I fancy this would be..he would have been 89. This house had simply a room up & a room down not a place Mr Alexander, the authorities would sanction now to be built.

In the house now occupied by our respected Parish Clerk, Mr John Moffat, lived William Jennings & his wife Betty. I will call him as he was called 80 years ago & I trust that no discourtesy will be imputed to me — when we remember that Mr Percy Wyndham was always familiarly named Percy. He was commonly called old Bill Jennings & Mrs Lancaster tells me she remembers him distinctly. He, was, she says, a fine looking old man, fresh & full of flesh, & used to wear a bottle green coat, a real swallow-tail with bright brass buttons. He wore knee breeches tied with tape, but she cannot remember his shoes, whether he wore buckles or not but very likely he would. He was a Maltster, & the Malt House & Kilns at the time I am speaking of ranged along the road — now called the Brewery, but at that time there was no Brewery. A small house & shop was used as storehouse & workshop. His wife was deaf & blind "Just" says Mrs Lancaster "like as I am sitting in the corner of the kitchen". It is needless to say that the family of Jennings were a strong long-lived lot. I have known five generations of Jennings says my informant.

Old Bill of all, his son John, his grandson John, his great grandson Wilkinson & his great great grandsons & daughters. This is a noteworthy fact.

Where the little garden of Mr John Moffat now is & where the Malt Kilns stand was at this time open to Whitbeck — sloping ground to the beck, but a little farther down where Mr R Burn's houses stand I presume was Peter Robinson's saw-pit & wood yard, & here the children used to play.

Old John Jennings was the first Brewer of the celebrated Lorton ale, the good properties of which some folks attributed to the water used. This reminds me of a tale I have heard of Mrs Beattie's mother Ann Chambers, or Churnside.

A funeral party from Buttermere had put up at the Pack Horse, & while the men would likely have ale, the women folks had tea. She had made it pretty strong, & one of them said "This is a famish cup o' tea, Ann, ye muss ha' some good watter!" "Ay" says Ann 't' watter's reet eneuf, but its 'tea at does t' trick." And I think it is the same with good Lorton ale — it was the malt that did the trick.

In the house now occupied by Mrs Musgrave there lived 80 years ago a Mr & Mrs Nicholson, & they were well to do people. Directly opposite their house was a gateway that led into an orchard or garden, & in it were some very fine fruit trees— especially so were the plum-trees.

They had a son who was an officer in the army — Isaac was his name. Plenty of one-armed & one-legged men used to come round begging -men who had lost their limbs in the service of their King & Country, & to Mr & Mrs Nicholson's memory & credit let it

be recorded that their Kail-pot was always at the service of any old soldier or sailor.

The next house to Mrs Musgrave's - now commonly called Yew Tree - was owned & occupied 100 years ago by Thomas Crosthwaite - popularly called old Tom Crosthwaite. The house since then is not much altered. Mrs Lancaster says it was a white-washed house when she knew it, & she thinks it had been done up by old Tom anew. There was no porch, but a little court wall at each side of the doorway.

This old Tom Crosthwaite was a tallish, slenderish man & was rather lame, the result of an accident, she thinks, & he used to work at the quarry on Whinlatter - the one lately worked by Mr Musgrave. He was a good-tempered jolly fellow & was parish clerk. As Parish Clerk I shall have something more to say about him. His wife was Mary or Mally, & she did not share her husband's good nature.

But I find that to be the rule. She was snappy rather with the children who used to run over her pavement - reminding me of an old lady who lived not very far away from my lodgings in this respect. Their daughter Mary was born in 1777 & she took after her mother. Sally was born in 1782 & took after her father. Sarah married Peter Pearson of Bridgend. This house I believe now belongs to Mr Allen Pearson, Sarah's son.

Most of you will remember the old houses that stood - I rather should say fell - where Mr Burn's new house stands. They are described you will perhaps remember Mrs Alexander in the deeds as "all those two mansions". In the one nearest to Tom Crosthwaite's lived Mally Borrowscale or Borranskill & Henry Robinson her father. She kept a dame's school & taught reading & knitting & sewing. She was a sister of Peter Robinson whose epitaph many of you may have seen. In the next house lived a very old couple John Crosthwaite & his wife. Mrs Lancaster says he was called old Jack Crosthwaite & he was one of the oldest men in Lorton at that time. I fancy these two houses belonged to him as the property came to the Misses Crosthwaite who own the house where I used to lodge. The Yew tree was flourishing then, & the last thing I saw of it was in Mr Armstrong's yard where it was lying - too hard really to work into anything.

The block what I may call Mary Benson's house was 80 years ago one large house. It must have been a house of some repute when built, for a very good oak cabinet, well carved used to be in it. Perhaps it is yet Mr Towers? It was occupied by a woman named Martha Pale & when I was looking through the Registers, I saw the name & thought it was a mistake for Peale or Peile. But it came over & over Pale, & was pronounced I find Peall. She was an elderly body & kept a publick back-hus. The door front was flagged with rammels, & when the lads ran over them (as lads will) old Martha used to wait for them with her long-shanked malin, so the game would not be all on the boy's side. You know the old Cumberland expression "as black as a malin". When Martha's work was over she used to put on a clean blue gingham bed-gown & sit in a low chair & shuffle her clogs backwards & forwards. She had a son John, but I never heard the name except in connection with Lorton. We turn up the Smithy fold & there we find a few changes from old lang syne. The Smithy & public house were owned by Mrs Sarginson whose husband I should think was called James Sarginson as I find in 1778, John the son of James Sarginson was baptized. There was another son Joseph or Job. Very likely on James Sarginson's death his widow did not wish to carry the Smithy on & it was taken by John Lennox the grandfather of my respected friend Joseph Lennox. Mrs Sarginson, however, kept the Inn, but when she died John Lennox bought the lot and brought his wife & family to live there.

He was a middle-sized man, gaily stout & jolly, with a cheery face & a pleasant word for every one.

He had some fun in his nature it would seem. He was the parent of a much quoted saying - "Holloa! says Lennox". The origin of it was this. When anyone turned into the Smithy, perhaps he would have been hammering away & on suddenly looking up would exclaim "Holloa"! Mrs Lancaster says "We used to go to get our clogs caukered, Catching sight of me he would say "Holloa, my lass, what doesta want? Come on, an'

I'll lift the' on't' Smiddy hearth"! He was a kind bain lal fellow an' was weel liked. His wife was Jane. I am told that his son John was only 18 when his father died. The property still belongs to the family & I hope it may remain so for generations. Peter Robinson, described in the Register as a carpenter lived in a house next to the Joiner's Shop up the Smithy fold. He had married

Mary Harrison of the Crown & Mitre Inn, Cockermouth, a very decent, kind worthy woman. Peter in his younger days had been a fiddler & was reckoned a good one. When he became a religious man it is said that he burnt his fiddle. This is untrue for his fiddle & his big fiddle are now in safe custody in Mayo Street, Cockennouth.

Peter was considered a clever workman, & was generally well respected. His headstone sets forth pretty well his character & I would advise any of you who have not read it to do so. They had four children- three girls & a son Peter who died a few months ago.

In the same range of buildings (what are now three cottages) were some byres & a barn & a dwelling house at the far end. In this house lived old Jonathan of all's sister who was Musgraves Todd's grandmother. She farmed (or perhaps owned) a bit of land & kept a few cows. Very likely Peter Robinson would convert the barn &c into a dwelling house as they afterwards belonged to him. The large house at the corner of the entrance to the fold had a barn in connection with it, & here lived old John Jennings. He was born in 1782 Decr. & married Miss Wilkinson of Scales -a very nice person I am told. This was the first brewer, having been specially trained to malting & brewing. The little house between the corner one & the one where I lodged has been converted out of the barn I mentioned. There used to be, as Mrs Lancaster says, a large walnut tree in the garden behind. I believe it is there still.

In the next house there lived a Mrs Crosthwaite, an elderly lady & an old servant. The house belonged to her, & I fancy would be aunt to the present owners the Misses Crosthwaite of Whitehaven.

We now come to the house where Mr Brown lives in, Eighty years ago it belonged to & was occupied by Anthony Garnett & his wife Nancy. His brother Peter lived with him. Anthony was reckoned a very clever, knowledgeable man & was a person well thought of. Their daughter Betty was born in 1784 & had married John Bell. Their son John was born in 1792 & was a lish young fellow 80 years ago. He subsequently married Betsy Iredale of Red How, & one of their children is Mrs Nixon of Cockermouth. There was no Methodist Meeting House or Wesleyan Chapel in those days, & it was thought a terrible thing to be a Dissenter. But Anthony Garnett allowed meetings in his big kitchen, & a man named Sammy Ruston from Broughton used to come to preach. They called him a Presbyterian, but I should think he was more like a Baptist. These meetings were a little livelier than the Church service, & young folks used to go to this impoverished meeting place. Old Ben Key one of Lorton's worthies used to say "Tou sees, Peter there wart' Iredale lassies fra Reed- how an t'Stainton's fra Rogerskill. Aye, Aye, we ken weel eneuf they come to lait t'lads up to set 'em heame". Well, in this they were wise, & in one case we see old Ben was a true prophet.

There was one thing Anthony Garnett did that was to make his children good scholars. Priest Sewell lived in the house called (Huntingdon House when I was here) that fronts the Cockermouth road. He owned it & some fields & farmed them himself. He kept a few cows, & was as good at all kinds of farm work as any one in Lorton. He was an elderly man, perhaps 60, a nice gentlemanly man, & we used to have to drop a curtsey to him when we met him. He had the Chapelries of Wythop & Setmurthy, & in fine weather he used to go to Wythop over the hills then on to Setmurthy or whatever place he might be officiating at on that day. One Sunday he lost himself on the hills through a dense mist coming on, & he was out all night much to the dismay of his housekeeper Nancy Key, a daughter of Mirehouse Key, but he turned up all right in the morning. This Mr Sewell used to act sometimes for the Revd. Lancaster Dodgson at Embleton, & I have seen his name also in the Lorton Parish Register as officiating at Weddings.

On his death the property came to the Huntingdons who were a Loweswater family. At the time I am speaking of the valley was well off for Priests. There were Priest Sibson at Rogerscale, Priest Stainton, at Rogerscale, & Priest Sewell at High Lorton.

At the little shop next to Huntingdon House lived John & Mary Turrel, a middle aged couple. He was a middle sized man, stoutish & good looking. He was a noted hedger & good at all husbandry. They sold tea & coffee, tobacco & snuff & it was a noted shop for marbles & mint cake. "Mary Turrel's mint cake" was almost as well known as "Lorton Ale". Their son Matthew was born in 1799.

John Turrel's brother Joseph & his wife Mary lived at Gilbrea in 1792 & afterwards at Piked Howe, & they had amongst others Williamson Turrel. Joseph Turrel & his child were drowned by the bursting of the Reservoir at Crabtree Beck & carried to the lake.

A little beck crossed the Cockermouth Road here, & there was a foot bridge of flat rammel stones on the right hand side of the road. The children used to amuse themselves by setting coppers on this bridge. There was another small rammel bridge down by Miss Harboard's, but this bridge was on the left hand side of the road. Can any one here remember them & when they were cleared away & the runners enclosed?

In the next little house lived old Jonathan Musgrave & his wife Grace who was a daughter of old Bill Jennings. His son Jonathan was a little fellow in petticoates when Mrs Lancaster lived at Boonbeck. He was born in 1808. Their eldest son William was a fine little fellow who

was drowned in Whitbeck. He had been playing below Whitbeck bridge & it was thought his cap had fallen, & on trying to get it he had fallen in himself. As I shall have something more to say respecting old Jonathan's connection with the Church & Sunday School, I leave him for the present.

The "Rising Sun" belonged to Nanny Peile who married Isaac Harrison. They had a large family, many of them girls. They sold the "Rising Sun" & took the White Ash farm. While Mrs Lancaster was at Lorton Isaac Harrison took Gaskarth, & part went there to live.

Nanny was rather a talky body, but a very decent woman. She used to ride on horseback herself, but when with her husband she rode on a pillion saddle. Nancy was once at the Scales at Mrs Robinson's when Mrs Lancaster was there to tea. She asked after us all, & when she was coming away she said "noo than, mind though tells thy mudder to git into a fell-heid spot if they want to mak any money! "Love Nanny", said Mrs Robinson, "'thoo does talk"! But they didn't stay long at Gatesgarth but went to Thornthwaite.

In the adjoining house called Wholemire lived Mirehouse Key & his wife Sarah.

He was a very old man, & used to wear a grey russet wig, bare on the front & looped at the back. He was a tallish man & used to wear short knee-breeches, that just came over the knee, & were fastened with a strap & a little buckle at the side. He wore low shoes, with broad silver gilt buckles on. Mr Mirehouse Key evidently had been an old swell. I find that a son of his also Mirehouse Key was born in 1777 & a granddaughter Agnes born in 1794 at High Hollins. This was a daughter of Jonathan who went to Redmain. His wife was an old person, rather what is called a tizzy-tazzy body, but old Mirehouse was a very sensible man & greatly looked up to & respected. He was Churchwarden in 1801 for Lorton. In this house there was at this time an iron case in which were kept the bits & stirrups & spurs & shoe buckles and the women-fwok used to clean them regularly. A long table used to stand all the length of the kitchen, it was an oak table, but cleaned as bright as hands could make it. I acknowledge I have a great respect for Mirehouse Key & should liked to have had a crack with him. Wholemire lonning was then a very narrow, dirty, watery lonning & no doubt deserved its name of Wholemire.

Opposite Wholemire lonning end where Miss Harboard's house is - there stood a very old house & out buildings, very likely an old farm. The end of the house came on to the

road, & the way in was round the left of the gable up a kind of fold. Here was the doorway of large freestone, bands, & the windows were mullioned, with lead light. Evidently a very old block. Here lived Bella Thompson, a short, thick, round-about body who kept a bakehouse. I fancy that Mary Benson whom I knew would be just such another as she. Next to this was John Martin's. Further down the road, perhaps where Mr Braggs' house stands was a house fronting the road & in it lived John & Betty Graft. He was called Jwonnie Graft. He very likely owned it, & the adjoining one occupied by two sister dressmakers Nanny Fisher & Becca Fisher. Jwonnie was a shortish man, walked half double & had some curious says. Her name had been Betty Cherry & he used to say "At t'graft had run away wid't Cherry"!

Still lower down there was a kind of fold, & in this block of old buildings Robin Hartley had his house & weaving shop. Mrs Lancaster says that she used to look into the weaving shop with surprise when her mother took linen down to him for towels & sheets, & she distinctly remembers him sitting weaving. The next house to him was occupied by John Bell, a waller, & Betty his wife. She was a youngish woman, & taught a girls' school or dame's school. She was Anthony Garnett's daughter. Behind this house stood another old house, & here the exciseman lived. I noticed a birth or two of Excisemen. This was the house he lived in. Mrs Lancaster says that when he first came this was the only empty house in Lorton, & he had to take it. Close to this house ran the small runner I have mentioned before as having

a small bridge over it. On the other side of the road where John Eland lives now stood two or three old cottages, in one of which John Thompson lived Mrs McDowell's father.

I have omitted to say who lived in the good house next to Matthew Turrell's this house belonged to Capt. Russel of Workington, & he used to come in Summer & stay with his family perhaps five or six months. He made a seat on Kirkfell breast it was kept up by him & painted white. It was called "Russel Seat". Does any one here remember it or the name?

The Rising Sun is little changed since I remember it, says Mrs Lancaster, "but the trade has fallen off I am told. I have seen as many as twenty carts standing there at one time, & the Mail Coach horses used to bait there sometimes meal & water. When we were there we used to go on to Whinlatter to see the Coaches pass. My brother & I went to the dancing school at the Rising Sun, & we danced in a room up stairs. Our dancing master was Mr Carrodus. He was a fiddler as well, & he went up & down the country teaching. He was a smallish man & wore pantaloons - not knee-breeches & they came down to his ankles & were tied with tapes, so they didn't fash him when he was dancing. He had pumps & white stockings. He got vexed sometimes & gave the lads slaps". She doesn't say anything about the girls - perhaps they didn't need slapping. In one of the cottages lived Mr & Mrs Best. He was a kind of retired tailor - he didn't do much work; & in another lived Richard Smithson, a waller who had a young family.

The person who held Boon Beck farm before Peter Iredale took it was a man named Brown who left Boonbeck for his own place at Bassenthwaite. Before that Porter White was the tenant & here was born in 1794 his son Joseph, & another son was Ballantyne White. This Porter White was the grandfather of Joseph White of "White & Stoddart", Cockermouth. When Mrs Lancaster's father took the farm, farm produce was extremely dear on account of the war with France, & the rent was consequently dear. After the close of the war 1815 things came down, but the country was in a very bad state. While they were at Boonbeck the barn & threshing machine, & sheds were built, & the race & water wheel &c made.

The man who did this work was Gilbert Sowerby of Cockermouth. The Yew tree was a very big tree then but Mr Stubbs cut down a great many large limbs & sold it to make Weaver's shuttles? What would Wordsworth have thought if he had known the tree he wrote about was cut down to make weaver's shuttles?

I believe Miss Sim had some furniture made out of a portion of it, & Mr Grayson has in

his possession some furniture made from it.

There is a Yew tree, pride of Lorton vale
Which to this day stands single in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore.
Not loth to furnish Weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy, ere they marched.
To Scotland's hearths; or those that cross the sea,
Perhaps at earlier Cressy or Poitiers
Of vast circumference & gloom profound,
This solitary tree a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay,
Of form & aspect too magnificent to be destroyed.

The farm called High Boon Beck was occupied by Daniel Hodgson, & he farmed all the Scales land that belonged to the Low Lorton Pearson's. He married one of the Misses Robinson – Mary Ann of the Scales, & they afterwards took Low Boon Beck & then Wholemire. They had no family.

Peter Fletcher & his wife Martha (Williamson) lived in Hollin Berry Hall. It was an old house then, with lead lights & ivy covered. There was a big family, & the grandson of this Peter is Peter Fletcher of the Castle Tannery.

"Shut if thoo dar: shut if thoo dar"!

In the house where Mrs Gaskill is now living Mr John Robinson, & his family lived the farm belonged to him, & he had been abroad, & was well to do. They had two children - girls about the age of Mrs Lancaster & these used to play together. He was a very nice gentleman,

& was rather an authority on parish affairs. He was very friendly with old Wilson Robinson of Whinfell Hall, & Mrs Lancaster remembers very well seeing the present respected Wilson Robinson going up Scales Brow with his father to visit at the Scales. These two would no doubt have been boys to-gether, as this John Robinson was Lorton born & bred.

Thomas Burnyeat lived on his own place at High Swinside & one of his brother's daughters lived with him. Peter his brother lived a Birkett house & was a retired Exciseman. Birkett House belonged to Thomas Burnyeat. Thomas was Churchwarden in 1800, & was a noted man in the Parish - & acted as Will Maker & executor in many cases.

John Pickering & his wife Ann lived at High Mill. The house was a low one, & has been altered much since then. They had 3 sons, Tom, John, & Henry. Tom was Miller at the Goat & died last year. The lads used to plague Tom & say he was a lass- & Tom used to cry & say "Isn't I nut a lass Dinah?" One day he landed up to Boonbeck with about 1/4 stone of flour packed in tightly "Here Dinah my mudders sent ye some flour. She says I oft eat yer pudding"! & Apples. Henry was a draper & married a Miss Richardson- John Richardson's sister at the Brewery. John Henry Pickering in Mr Mayson's Shop was his son.

The old (School Room or) School House consisted of a building with a gable end to the road as at present, & the door was in this – no porch. The fire-place was in the other gable - & there were two windows in each of the side walls - looking into the fields on each side. There were forms on each side of the school for the lesser end who were only readers. There were two table or rather desks set across the School. One was for the counters, & one was for the writers.

The Master was Mr Sorrel, & he lodged with Anthony Garnett. He afterwards married Martin, a daughter of Stephen Martin, Auctioneer. He was considered a very good master, & begging Mr Jones' parden might I say the best Lorton ever had?

Now we will take a run through the Low Town & here we will notice the great change 80 years have brought about. How many of you could tell a stranger the position of Lorton Cross. Well, I saw that Jonathan Musgrave of Lorton Cross was mentioned in the Register.

Lorton Cross was the block of buildings at the corner of Burtrees Road & there is no doubt from the name there stood at some remote period a Cross at this place. It might be market cross from which proclamations were read & near which the stocks stood, or it might have been a cross set up by her Roman Catholic Ancestors. These wayside crosses were common – as the name indicates in Crossthwaite – Cross by Cross Canonby – Crossbarrow, & wherever you find a cross you will find a wath or ford. The block of buildings forming Lorton Cross has disappeared, & on the site we have Mr Dixon's summer house & garden.

In 1785 Thomas the son of Christopher Fisher (Kit) was born at Lorton Cross – I think it would be in the house where Mr John Moffat kept his leather.

In one of the houses in the fold, where either Harry Peile or Martha Key lived, there lived Joseph Wilson a man who was rather lame & was gardener & handyman for the Hall. In this case history repeats itself.

The house where Miss Birkett lived was a farm house at this time, & here lived Bartholomew Stagg (commonly called Bath Stagg) & his family. He farmed the Lorton Hall land. In the little house where my old friend Tommy Scott lived, was once occupied by Stephen Martin who died in it Stephen was born in one of the houses nearest to Oak Hill vide Askew's Guide.

He was married on the 10th November 1793 by Mr Wright to Jane Rawling in the presence of John Dover & John Barnes. Twenty years after this Mrs Lancaster knew him. He was a shoemaker by trade, & Auctioneer by profession, & he was considered a good Seal-Cawer in those days. He was of a lively turn, & had a good, clear, ringing voice. The story goes that before he took out his Licence he was practicing his persuasive powers, alone, as he thought, but Mrs Bragg was listening.

His first trial was a pair of shoes "Come away noo, come away to the Sale! Now the first article I see before me is a pair of shoes nearly new & without a split or rip in them". What shall I be allowed to say for them" & after some very spirited bidding he knocked them down to Mrs Bragg of Lorton Hall. At this Mrs Bragg could stand it no longer & rallied him on his power of not speaking the truth. "Well you see, Mam, it won't do for me to tell t'truth olas, bit I'll come as nar as I can"! There are other stories told of him, but not altogether to be taken without a grain of salt.

But the fact remains that he was a popular man & much sought after at one time to "caw a seall".

The house lately occupied by Mr Joseph Burns stood on what was called The Green. Eighty years ago Mr & Mrs Woodhouse lived there & I find in 1806 an entry in the Register Joseph the son of Joseph & Bella Woodhouse (formerly Fletcher} baptized-1806. They were gentlefolks, & Mrs Woodhouse was a terrible fine lady. She was the leading singer at the Church & in connection with this I shall refer to her again. In 1813 I find Mr Joseph Woodhouse acting as secretary & Treasurer to the Sunday School.

John Bank farmed the house & Land in connection with it directly opposite the Pack Horse. He was a Bank of Miller Place, & his son John Bank married Elizabeth Head, seventh daughter of Skelton Head of Miller Place who is now alive & perhaps the oldest woman in Brackenthwaite

The Holm farm belonged at this time to Mrs Thompson of Bridekirk, & was occupied by John & Sally Ewart & a numerous family. John was a very quiet, decent, respectable man, a good farmer & a quiet neighbour. Sally was a very industrious, active, careful body, perhaps rather too much so but it is a good fault in a woman. Old Jwonne Graft used to say "Sally Ewart wad skin a flint worth hoaf a farden, an' spoil a knife worth

tuppence". He used also to say rather spitefully & not quite truthfully "She wadn't sell a ha'porth o' new milk if yer gev her a groat for 't".

As I have said they had a numerous family & old Sally used to boast she had six yards o' lads, an' eighteen yards o'lasses! I think she had thirteen children, & when the last one was christened some one said, - Loave Sally, when are ye gaun to stop"? "Stop? Stop, be hanged, we're a hundred pund better every barn yit". And although this might have seemed a bit of bounce, it was true as they were able to live retired. They farmed Holm Farm 41 years. Mr Ewart the respected Station master at Embleton is a grandson of this worthy Lorton Couple. His father was William, who at one time held the Low Mill.

When Mrs Lancaster attended the Sunday School the Superintendent was Jonathan Musgrave, mentioned previously. She describes him as a tall, slenderish, man something like what the late Mr Jonathan Musgrave was like, but darker looking if anything. She says that she was a great favourite with him in school as she "always was able to say her collect or couple of verses".

Perhaps by no one during a long period was greater care & thought given for the improvement of the young than by him, & it is to his credit that he faithfully fulfilled his trust.

No sketch of Lorton would be complete that omitted the practical form of mental & spiritual improvement shadowed forth in the plan of the Lorton Sunday School instituted in 1813, the original of which I have had by kind permission of Mrs Davis. You will notice that attendance at the Sunday School was looked upon then, & rightly so, as a privilege, & many poor children owed their education wholly to Sunday School efforts.

Here Read the Sunday School Circular Instituted A.D. 1813.

Old Jonathan Musgrave – Superintendent

1813 -1814

President

Vice President

Revd John Sibson

Revd. Jonathan Stainton

Treasurer & Secretary

Mr Joseph Woodhouse

Rules - among others - The children shall attend school at nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, in the afternoon from half-past one to service time; & afterwards till five o'clock. They shall be required to come clean & neat, & to be obedient to their respective teachers.

Printed by Bailey, Printer, Cocker mouth. From an original in Mrs Davis' possession.

Now Ladies & Gentlemen when I come to deal with the Pearson family, I have to speak of a family that has been rooted in Lorton from time immemorial. As far back as we can go in the annals of Lorton we find Pearsons, & Peiles & Heads & Normans. I shall have to mention them again in connection with the Church & the Registers, so I proceed at once to say what the families were 80 years ago. The Bridge End family & the Low Lorton family were then distinct as now – but in the old times there is no doubt there is no need to inquire which was the older branch.

The oldest Bridge End Pearson Mrs Lancaster remembers hearing of was Peter who married Mistress Dover, Spinster, a sister of John Dover. I have mentioned being present at Stephen Martin's marriage in 1793. This Peter was a good sized man, & those who knew him said he was a free, jovial, good-looking man. Mrs Pearson was rather a superior person & an excellent house-wife. Their eldest daughter Mary was born in 1784 & was never married. She was the Miss Pearson of that day. Peter the eldest son was born in 1781, & in his younger days I am told he was a jolly, good looking man. He married Sally Crosthwaite who was a year younger than he. Another son was John, the father of John Dover Pearson, who surely takes after his grandfather as a "jolly, good-

looking man".

Most of you must remember old Peter as he was called who was only dead a few years before I came to Lorton at the advanced age of—years.

The Bridge End estate included almost all the land up to New House, but is now part of the Lorton Hall estate.

The Low Lorton family also have their roots deep in the soil of Lorton's history. The oldest couple Mrs Lancaster remembers were John & Sarah who lived where Mrs Mumberson their granddaughter lives. Of course you know the house has been altered in its character.

They were a very decent worthy couple, & old John had a pride in his shoe-buckles & was seldom seen without them. They had a large family mostly girls. Sarah married to R Head of the Hope. Mary, Catherine, Hannah, Martha & John. Henry was born in 1792 but John was the only surviving son, & it was he who built the new house where Robert now lives.

The High Boonbeck farm also belonged to him & Scales Farm. From what I know of the two existing families at Boonbeck & Town end there is no immediate fear of the Pearsons dying out.

The old ruinous building behind the Smithy in Low Lorton belongs to this family, but Mrs Lancaster cannot remember it being worked in. She thinks that it was a Malt Kiln & that old John's father made malt in it. She never heard of anyone getting malt there. Perhaps some one will be able to clear this point afterwards.

There was no licence at Mr Fletcher's house then, but the house was much the same now except the kitchen has been added to the house. It belonged to old John Fletcher, a Veterinary Doctor, & he worked his own land. He was an old man, & wore a russet-wig something like Mirehouse Key's. He was a tall man, & wore short knee-breeches. He was reckoned a very clever man among cattle & horses & was highly respected. He was a great favourite at all the "clippings" & although he had a thin quavery voice he used invariably to sing "Tarry wool is ill to spin, But may be clothing for a Queen". Mrs Lancaster says that he used to go to their clippings at Low Hollins & she remembers this was his favourite ditty. He was never called anything but "Auld Doc. Fletcher". His wife was some connection of the Pearsons & there is an entry relating to Fletcher Pearson of Low Lorton in the Register.

I now bring you to the "Pack Horse" an Inn famous in Story & full of interest. It is curious to note the connection between Village Kirks & the Inn, & the reason is not far to seek. In olden times the people had to travel long distances to services or to bring infants to be baptized or the dead to be buried. Thus arose the needs for Inns with stabling

accommodation or stalls & very often an Inn of this kind was part of the Church property, the same glebe. The old name of Kirkstyle at Loweswater is given in old deeds as Kirk-stall, & the Pack Horse is described as the Inn at Kirk-Style.

When Mrs Lancaster was a girl the Inn was kept by George Chambers & his wife Sally who was a daughter of the brother of Mirehouse Key & sister of Ben & Matty Key (Mrs R's mother) George was the miller at Brackenthwaite Mill when Mrs Lancaster lived at Hollins. He worked for John Head at Turner Howe. It was said "If there be an honest miller George Chambers 'ane". The old proverb says "An honest miller has a golden thumbs" meaning there were no honest millers, as they were too fond of takin 't' mooter'.

I see the wealthy miller yet
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?

The slow wise smile that round about
And full of dealings with the world.

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup
I see his grey eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest – grey eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of the soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound & clear, & whole
His Memory scarce can make me sad.

Tennyson.

He was a middle sized man, not a stout man but a fresh man. He wore short knee-breeches always, at work as well as when he went to Kirk. The breeches for waur-days were of buckskin, & George sported dark velvet ones for Sundays.

His wife Sally Key sister of Ben Key was a gaily jolly body, not quite so stout as either Mrs Churnside or Mrs Beattie, but was a real good type of an English hostess. She was as kind a body as need be, & Ladies & Gentlemen, I can quite think she was, if she was any-thing like Mrs Beattie, her granddaughter. The sign was a swinging one, & the "Pack Horse" was depicted on both sides. I need not describe the painting only I would draw the attention of anyone who has not observed the sign carefully to the mode of fastening the pack on, & the bells on the neck collar. The sign is still in good state, but should not be allowed to spoil through neglect. There is the companion picture turned to the wall. Mrs Lancaster says she has seen pack horses going through Brackenthwaite to Buttermere, but not a string of them. The house has been altered from what it was 80 years ago. The front windows were mullioned windows with old lead-lights- up-stairs & down- & the kitchen has had a moderate fire-place & oven put in. The upstairs were not ceiled & all was open to the slates.

I find from the Registers that their daughters Anne was born 21st June Baptized July 13th 1804. Mrs Lancaster & Ann were very friendly & have talked to-gether in Yew Tree Croft many a time. She married Robert Churnside (Hurnsides) & kept on the Pack Horse, & had a daughter Sarah whom we all knew. I can remember Mrs Churnside, & she & her daughter were also good types of Landladies. Let it be put on record that Mrs Beattie was one of the kindest hearted woman I ever knew & strangers took away a good impression of Lorton folks after seeing Mrs Beattie.

When Mrs Lancaster went to Boonbeck there was no Smithy at Low Lorton, but Jonathan Hetherington a young fellow started it while they lived at Hollins.

A retired tailor (this was the second retired tailor) named Richard Wilson lived in the house now occupied by Mr Joseph Lennox, or the house next to Mrs Fletcher's.

This latter is an old house, & there is an old date stone used as a lintel for the coal house door, dated 16--.

And now Ladies & Gentlemen, we come to Lorton Hall. Eighty years ago the old Hall was an old Picturesque place, full of memories of old time, but to-day the Hall stands renewed, & let us wish there may be Dixons of Lorton Hall as long as there have been Peels of Lorton and Sumptons of Brackenthwaite. Before passing on to the inmates of Lorton Hall let me say a little about an old carved stone close to the small gateway at Lorton Cross.

This redstone fragment evidently has been the door lintel of a Hall before the Old Hall. It is curiously carved & bears shields or coats of arms. They are I believe those of Winder or Sands, or Hudlestons – the families who held Lorton. I believe the weather will efface the inscription in time.

Mrs Lancaster says that she remembers Mr Joshua Lucock Bragg hunting in

Brackentwaite. He kept a pack of hounds & hunted regularly. He was not like "John Peel" with his coat so grey", but wore a scarlet coat. Mr John Dover of Rogerscale was another keen hunter. Mrs Bragg made Peter Iredale a present of a saddle bridle on his marriage. Mrs Bragg was Rebecca. Raisbeck Lucock Bragg was the eldest son- he was born I believe in Castlegate, Cockermonth. Then there was John born at Lorton in 1800, Sarah in 1802 Joshua in 1804, & George & Elizabeth in 1806. Mrs Lancaster says that she remembers Mrs Bragg & family coming into Church. John & Joshua were about the same size. The two girls were blue eyed & light haired, & they used to wear red coats made something like these common ulsters. It was fine scarlet cloth. They had red hats with large white Ostrich plumes. The youngest boy used to come up the Church with his hat in his hand, then he opened the large pew door & stood by to let Mrs Bragg pass. As she passed in George used to make a grand bow, then came the others & then George went in.

Perhaps some of you may remember where the Bragg pew was about half way up the aisle on the left – a roomy pew, but no curtains. Elizabeth married Mr Bridge & on George Lucock Bragg's death in 1847, the Hall came into their possession. The history of Lorton Hall for the last 80 years is a singularly sad one. There was an old custom faithfully kept up at the Hall. Its origin was lost in what is commonly called the mists of antiquity.

Mrs Bragg used to ask all the girls in Low Lorton whose ages might range from 8 to 14, to the Hall on Pancake Tuesday evening. On their arrival in the kitchen with its huge fireplace & the great rannel-balk. They were seated on forms, & when all had arrived, Mrs Bragg & her family of girls came in to see the fun.

There was a large bowl of batter made ready & the cook commenced to fry the first pancake. When it was ready – it was not a very little one – it was put out on a plate, & given to one of the invited lasses. If she had not finished her pancake before the next was fried the other girls would click her up legs & arms & away with her on to the middin! Those who had been epanghiced then had a chance with the others, & so the fun went on till each one had had her turn.

With a present of money from Mrs Bragg to each, they left the Hall, but those who had been carried out heard of it next day at school. The invitation was, I believe, strictly confined to those of Low Lorton. Now, Ladies & Gentlemen can any of you tell us if you were one of the invited pancakers?

The Ecclesiastical parish of Lorton formerly embraced the townships of Lorton & Brackentwaite, the latter extending to Horse Point. The Church is dedicated to St. Cuthbert, & tradition says he was deposited here one night on the way to Workington. It will be a well to state that 90 years ago this part of the County formed part of the Diocese of Chester, & remained so until 1835 or so. The township & Chapelry of Buttermere & the township & Chapelry of Wythop were connected with Lorton for ecclesiastical purposes & each Chapelry with Brackentwaite had the right to nominate a Churchwarden, In 1800 the Curate at Lorton (or the Priest as he was commonly called) was the Revd. John Sibson who lived at Rogerscale. He was no doubt a native of the Vale, as he was uncle of John Sibson who owned & lived at the Brow & Uncle also of Isaac Sibson of Littlethwaite which belonged to the latter, & he was also uncle to Sarah Cocks or Coux of the Bank - nee Gyllbanks. "The brow leading to "the Brow" is sometimes called Sally Cocks Brow". Mrs Lancaster's mother & Sally Cocks were Cousins.

Mr Sibson was a gay, stout, well-built man, not so tall & stepped out well. In all probability he was a St Bees man, & was doubtless possessed of means. I shall ask you to bear with me in these particulars not only because it serves to illustrate this sketch, but chiefly because Priest Sibson conferred an immeasurable benefit on Lorton Church & the Lorton folks by copying out all the old Registers - a work I may tell you that would take me every day for a year to do – supposing I were able to decipher the old writing. There is no one who has deserved better of the people of Lorton & Brackentwaite &

Buttermere than he, & I consider him worthy of some public recognition of this fact. He came in 1800, & I find that the Churchwardens who signed the terrier in that year were

Thomas Burnyeat of Swinside.

Wm Mawson of Scale Hill.

Jos. Hurd of Buttermere

Jona Stout of Wythop.

Some idea of Mr Sibson's labours may be gathered from a base recital of facts. The old Registers of Marriages were ordered to be kept in England in 1538 & it is worthy of notice that in the County of Cumberland or rather the Diocese of Carlisle the Registers of Lorton, Loweswater & St Bees are the only ones that go back to that date.

Not only do the Lorton Registers go back to 1538 but to the first month, & in January of that year is the first entry. It was a double event quite a family affair "John Thompson & Agnes late wife of Peter Norman were wedded 30 daye of Januarye. Also Robert Norman & Elizabeth Thompson".

The first Pearson named in this Register is the year 1541 - three years after its commencement. "William Peyrson married to Annes (Annice) Wilkinson 1541. The Christenings commence in 1596, & the first entry is. "Mable Bell daughter of John Bell of Lorton was baptized 13th Jan 1596". The second is that of Mary Peil also in 1596.

In 1806 a faculty was applied for to the Bishop of Chester for leave "on account of the ruinous state of the Chapel & the ill pewed manner at present existing the majority of the parishioners are wishful to pull down the old Chapel, & on the same site as near as may be to build a new one, with a steeple, & to repair the same. Very trifling must have been the alterations at this time as the cost was so small, & I am glad that a steeple was not built.

The priests' pulpit was at the East end of the Church, & old Tom Crosthwaite's desk was below. The quire or choir consisted of the topmost pews -two - but the choir of singers consisted of the Clerk & Mrs Woodhouse. The Church was well flagged, & the pews were not out of the way large. There were no hymns of course, the metrical version of the Psalms were used instead for singing.

Old Tom Crosthwaite was great on these occasions. Dressed in his best black coat-narrow sleeves, with bright buttons, & short knee breeches, a large shirt neck-coller with a black neckerchief on Tom would stand up to give out the Psalm "Let us sing to the praise & glory of God part of the 92nd Psalm beginning at the first verse. Then he read the first two lines: How good & pleasant must it be to thank the Lord most High, And with repeated Hymns to praise His name to magnify".

Then he straightened his collar, blew his nose, blew the pitch-pipe, & raised the tune.

When none of the Ewarts or Pearsons were there the Clerk & Mrs Woodhouse made a duet of it. Occasionally Priest Sibson omitted some portion of the service & this threw Tom out, & he would turn up to Mr Sibson "Hey Mr Sibson yev'e forgitten "Oh, be joyful". "Never mind Tom he would whisper we'll put it in afterwards". But from what I have learnt the services at Lorton at this time were decent & orderly.

No doubt many of you will remember the place where the bells were rung from, & a few may have heard notices of sales given at the Church door, or a notice of cattle that were lost &c. If any of the young men in Lorton want a pleasant job for the coming summer let two of them make each a copy of the headstones in the Churchyard & Mr Davis will be glad to put the correct copy away with the other parish books. Before leaving the Church may I ask what has become of the pitch-pipe? Mr Davis has never seen it. It may be in the village somewhere. It is parish property & ought to be in charge of the Vicar or Churchwardens. Also, has any one any old warden's books? These if extant would be very interesting. There are none in the Church. There should be one book kept, & handed down frn one set of Wardens to another. I threw out this hint to Mr Towers & Mr John Bell of Latterhead whom I am pleased to see here.

Old John Fletcher was not the only Veterinary in the Valley. He shared his honours with Richard Robinson of Hopebeck who was a skilful man among cattle & was a famous bone setter & Doctor. Mrs Lancaster says he attended her when she had fallen into a pan of boiling water & severely scalded herself. The Robinson family is a very old one. Sarah his daughter was born in 1785 Mary in 1791 John the father of Mr R Robinson, Wm & Mrs Robinson of Cockermonth in 1794. This John lived in Lorton & his family was born at Lorton.

The Heads of Brackenthwaite as I have said were a very ancient family, & we find generation after generation of them mentioned in the Registers. I find Oswald Head born at Turner Howe in 1780, and Oswald son of John Head & Mary (Tyson) in 1802. Three weeks younger than Mrs Lancaster. And I believe there is an Oswald Head here to-night.

I find Mary Head the daughter of Skelton Head & his wife (a Miss Hewitt) of Miller Place baptized in 1801 & I believe there is a Skelton Head present to-night. I look over the water & I find Skeltons of Foulsyke & High Cross - a family of note when Queen Elizabeth was on the throne. I look a little nearer Latterhead & I find another descendant of this Skelton Head family rooted on his own place.

Another very old family in Brackenthwaite is the family of Sumpton of Corn Howe & Palace Howe. I find a daughter of John Sumpton was baptized Grace in 1777, & under date 1799 I find in Lorton Register "Joseph Fisher, Gentleman of Crosthwaite & Grace Sumpton were married 5th December 1799 by Osburn Littledale off. Curate in presence of Jno Fisher & Mary Strickett.

Mrs Lancaster tells me that she remembers being at their House at Corn Howe when she was quite a little thing, & she tells me that she remembers Mrs Fisher's funeral passing in front of the Hollins. This was in 1809 when she was only 7. Her father was one of the bearers being a near neighbour, & all the bearers & mourners wore long white mourning.

As a girl Mrs Lancaster went to Loweswater School & she says that very often they met a lady & gentleman on the road to whom they made their honours - the boys touching the forelock & the girls by dropping a curtsey. These were Mr John Dodgson & his wife who lived at the Low House at that time. Mrs Lancaster was very anxious to impress it on my mind that she was a Lady for she clinched matters by saying "She used to give us apples & plums". I think I am right in saying that this Mr Dodgson was Mr Alexander's great-uncle, & the gentleman who built what is now Miss Harbord's house. His elder brother was the Revd. Lancaster Dodgson of Shatton M.A. Queen's Coli. Oxford. He was the Curate at Embleton & held the Chapelry of Loweswater I believe. He was appointed to Brough, but being on a visit to Embleton - Shatton - he died there & was buried in Embleton Churchyard.

The Rev Lancaster Dodgson & this Mr John Dodgson were brothers of Mrs Mary Hutchinson. - Mr Alexander's & Mrs Wilson's & the Mrs Harboard's grandmother. The old School-house at Loweswater is still in existence.

It is the small house - now used as a dwelling house - standing close to the road that leads past the Vicarage, & is about halfway between the Vicarage & the Smithy. Eighty years ago there were two Smithys at Loweswater. The one nearest Scale Hill was at the top of a strait lonning that led down to Gillerthwaite. This was kept by Bob Beck, & it was the Smithy where most of the horses were shod. Then after crossing a little beck over a little bridge made of long rammed stones there was another smithy at the corner of the two diverging roads. It was kept by old Willy Rothery, a short, thickset man, who wore knee breeches, and the scholars used to laugh about old Willy's fat legs. He did not shoe horses, only jobbing work, caukering clogs & lal pettling jobs.

The school-house door was in the corner, & the fire-place at the opposite gable a wide fireplace it was. Round the room were fixed seats or forms, the usual breadth & about 8' thick. In the middle of the room lengthwise from the doorway towards the

fireplace were two tables. The master's desk was at the top end. When the scholars were seated round the tables, there was no space left for a passage & the boy who wanted to come from the top of the school to go out had to step up on the table & come the whole length.

The floor of the school was paved with cobbles, & in this respect it was like Lorton School. The School Master when Mrs Lancaster attended the School was a Mr Jackson who had received his education at St Bees, & subsequently was ordained priest. He was somewhat bad tempered. Mr Bell's father, of Latterhead attended School while Mr Jackson was there, & about the last year of his schooling a terrific "barrin 'oot" took place. Usually the whole of the scholars, or the bigger end of them went inside & blockaded the door, but on this occasion only three big lads were in.

Mr Jackson on this occasion did not want to give holiday & became furious at being barred out. Finding the lads would not open the door, he sent down to Willy Rothery's for his sledge hammer & broke the door in. Two of the lads made for the chimney & got up, but couldn't get out at the top. Mr Jackson used his stick to such an end that these lads never came to the school again.

One barring out is so much like another that I need not enter into this matter any fuller.

The rhyme the children used to shout when Mrs Lancaster went to school was:-

"Pardon Maister! Pardon
Pardon for a pin
If you wont pardon, Maister
We'll nivver let ye in"

(Then a collection was made)

Another master at Loweswater about 70 years ago was a man named Lowden who punished old Isaac Tyson of Gillerthwaite by fastening string round his fingers until they were swollen & then pricked them with a pin. Diabolical!

The old School at Mockerkin is called the school 'on the common'. It was built in 1781, & was endowed by Mary Mirehouse with £200. Is this date correct?

Previous to the erection of the Loweswater School, the scholars were taught in the old Church, & just in passing I may be allowed to say that the celebrated "Wonderful Walker" of Seathwaite very likely taught School in Loweswater Church.

The Parochial Chapelry of Loweswater was generally included in the parish of St. Bees, & a customary payment to the Curate of St. Bees was paid of 3/4 if sent, but 6/8 if the Curate had to send for it. The old Chapel of 80 years ago gave place to a modern one in 1827 & since then has been further restored or altered.

Mrs Lancaster describes the old Chapel as having an old porch on the Kirkgate side, & just inside the Church was the old font. It was here that the bell-ringer stood. She thinks that there was only one bell and that not a good one. The stairs sprang from beside the font, & the gallery extended along the west gable – covering the portion where the font stood, & supported by pillars. I have read that beside the pillars the scholars were taught. Can any of my hearers say if they know anything of any brasses on which the Curate's names were placed?

There were pews on each side of the aisle or 'a-lay', large, roomy, high-backed oak pews. There was an arch dividing the nave or body of the Church from the Chancel, & it was against this arch on the left-hand side -looking toward the Chancel -that the pulpit stood.

The pulpit for the priest & the one for the clerk were also of oak .-.there was no paint or sham about the place - good, old, self-coloured oak. There was a reading desk close to the pulpit one step or so up from the floor- the clerk's 'lal cabin' as she calls it was on the ground floor.

The portion beyond the arch was called by very old folks 't' wheer'. Mr Bell's father has said that it was always called 't' wheer' by old folks. Now, what is the origin of this name? I called it Chancel a minute or two ago, but in very old Churches it was the "Chior", or "quire", you see the change from qu- to what in the old pronunciation of quiet or whiet, & similarly from "quire", to Whire- makes the name. Let the Vicar of Loweswater if present take note of this.

Well 't' wheer' was the better place, & the bettermer folks had their pews there- which faced into the aisle- not down the Church. The families from Fouslyke - Miresyke - High Cross & other places had their ancestral pews in this place.

The windows were long & very narrow, & arched & filled with leaded lights.

The priest when Mrs Lancaster attended was Mr Jonathan Stainton who owned & lived at the House at Rogerscale lately occupied by the late Joseph Cristopherson. He was a rather spare man but was very active, & useful in many ways outside his Church. He was a Doctor, but whether he had been educated for that profession as well as for the Church I cannot learn, but he did not of course practice publicly. Old Joseph Wood, my old blind friend at Thackthwaite, remembers Mr Stainton bleeding him, & he says he didn't make a very good job of it, & he bears the mark to-day. He was an excellent man amongst cattle, perhaps better than with humans.

The clerk was not an old man, he was John Jackson of Bar-Yeat Farming under Mr Fawcett, & was a fresh, good looking man. His son John went to school with Mrs Lancaster, but he was a good deal older than she.

The service did not differ much from that of Lorton already spoken of, except, that before the Psalm was sung John used to march down the Church aisle, & up on to the gallery, & gave the Psalm out, the Congregation turning their backs on the Priest to face the singers. Loweswater Singers were considered good ones. There was a square pitch-pipe at the Church. What has become of it? If it is in the district it ought to be given up as it belongs to the parish- I might just repeat what I said about the Registers.

They commence in 1538, & are in fair order up to the present time, but if there are any Wardens ale books they are not at the Church.

Kirkstyle was anciently called Kirk-stall, & no doubt was an ancient hostelry. 80 years ago it was owned by the Skelton family & occupied by John Bank & his wife Nelly, they were very homely people, old fashioned, & well respected. John Bank's brother Joseph farmed Kirkgate land at this time. Mrs Lancaster says that the ale brewed at Kirk Style was noted, & she used to have to call with her yeast bottle when they had not been brewing at Scale Hill. Nelly used to wear a long bed-gown down to her knees, & the ends were pinned back, & looked like coat tails, & usually she wore a long lugged white cap. Their youngest son Joseph was Mr John Banks father of Cockermonth.

Old Mr Hudson owned & lived at Kirkgate with his wife Fanny. He lived till 1835 & died at the good old age of 90. Mrs Hudson used to ride a black horse with a white snip face, & went regularly to Cockermonth market she wore a cloak with cape & skirt to keep her clean. It was this lady who used to complain to the master at Loweswater School if any of the children did not make their "honours". "She never gave us out, nut a lal apple". She attained the venerable age of 86.

Fletcher Pearson owned & farmed Low Park, but his wife Ann was dead. She was a daughter of Jona Bank of Low Park. Fletcher Pearson's son Jonathan went to School with Mrs Lancaster but was almost a young man. He was born in 1799 died 1848 Sarah his wife died 1868 aged 60.

Old Isaac Tyson of Gillertthwaite? Was a very old man, & wore short knee-breeches, - & a grey russet wig. He had a large, broad backed, blue cloth coat with a very long back, & large bright buttons. It was not a swallow tail, although the laps were slightly cut away, & in the lap part of the coat were the broad pockets. When the weather was fine the old man used to come up the lonning, & nothing pleased him better than

to "scrammally lal apples" beside the Smithy, & hotch & laugh at the lads & lasses on the road together. He had a son John & a daughter Sally. Mrs Lancaster never remembers old Isaac's wife, but she was alive at that date. I think Isaac Tyson of Gillerthwaite will be the old man's grandson.

Peter Hudson & his wife Elizabeth were then living at Place, & John Holliday at Fangs Yeat.

John, the servant man, Mrs Dodgson & Bella & Mary were bound, but the servant girl got under the bed, but crept to the man & cut the cords & the man gave the alarm. They were discovered by the labels of the Mockerkin School-books.

A Dr Head lived at High Cross, & this gentleman was a connection of the Greysouthen Harris's.

Mr Isaac Huntingdon lived at High Park, & had a son called Lanty. Isaac was well to do, & had a weaving shop at High Park. It was this family who came into Lorton, & gave the name to Huntingdon House.

Henry Muncaster & his wife Sarah were living at Muncaster House, & their daughter Mary & Mrs Lancaster went to School at the same time.

Mr Richard Skelton of Godferhead was a portly old gentleman & was greatly looked up to in the Parish as a man of experience in business matters. His grandson Skelton Wood was living with him, & went to School.

When this boy was born at Low House there was a great rejoicing, but a day or two after his birth, this was changed to dismay when the poor little fellow couldn't suck & did nothing but cry. In great trouble Mrs Wood & his grandmother landed up to Mrs Iredale's at Low Hollins & asked her to go & see what ailed the little fellow. A short inspection of his mouth showed him to be tongue-tied, & so the doctor was sent for in hot haste, & this was soon remedied. The Woods were a very old family, & owned Low House & other property. Skelton Wood's grandmother at Low House is described as a kind, homely, friendly lady, good to everyone rich & poor alike, & when she died she was greatly lamented.

Another ancient family in Loweswater was that of Fishers of Cold Keld – Keld meaning spring, & Mrs Lancaster remembers Mr John Fisher as large, fine looking, good type of Cumberland Statesman. He died in 1835 at the good age of 86. It was said of him that he could hold a horse by a hind leg, & that he had been known to lift a cow out of one field into another.

Down the west bank of the Cocker we have some old families, the Burnyeats of Latterhead, & the Iredells of Red Howe, & the Iredales of Thackthwaite. I was telling Mr Bell of Latterhead that the late Mr Iredell of Red Howe had found the old tan-pits used on this place, & Mr Bell told me that while he was making a sheep dipping place in a portion of his Orchard they dug into a tan-pit, with bark still in, & in very good preservation. The sides of the pit were boarded, & he has a portion which he took **out**- firm & strong as heart of oak. From this it would appear that a thriving industry had been carried on here, & the name Oak

Bank probably points to an origin of the trade. But this pit must have been closed a very long time as Mr Bell's father Richard never mentioned knowing anything of its existence. Perhaps it was carried on by Mr Bell's great-grandfather as the plumbtrees that were growing near were of a great age. A discovery of this kind s interesting & noteworthy.

No sketch of Loweswater 80 years ago would be complete if we omitted mention of the Ancient family Mirehouses of Myresyke. The headstone in Loweswater Churchard deals with the heads of this family since 1679. In this year was born John Mirehouse who lived till 1771 & joined the majority at the fair good age of 92. His wife Mary was born in 1697 & died in 1776 aged 77. Mrs Lancaster's father - Peter Iredale- was a grandson

of this couple. Their son John died in 1807 but Mrs Lancaster although 5 years old then - cannot remember him. Her father used to call him "Uncle Jwonnie Mirehouse" & was at the Jubilee the old man had when he was 100 years old -his hundereth anniversary. There was a large gathering of relations & friends at Miresyke, & the old man was presented with a new top-coat, & a new oak arm-chair. The old man joked & said "He whoped wid care 'at chair wad see him oot".

The chair did see him out, & the chair is now in the Brewery House at Carlisle. He died August 1st 1807 aged 101 years perhaps the oldest person buried in the Churchyard. His wife had pre-deceased him 20 years, 78 years old. They were succeeded at Miresyke by their son John who died in 1814 aged 76. This old gentleman & his wife Betty, who died in 1816 aged 65 Mrs Lancaster has stayed with, going over Whinfell from Lorton. This one was a great fisherman & his favourite dish was eel-pie. They are described as a plain, kind homely couple, who had no children.

They were succeeded by a brother Joseph who died in 1828 aged 88 years, whom Mrs Lancaster remembers very well. Their son John was a sailor & his son Capt Mirehouse is the present owner & occupier & I think you will echo my wish that he may live to see 100. The old house had what was called an entry & the door from this to the left led into 't' hoose, which was a great roomy place, with a large oak table, black oak polished, - standing in front of the windows. A very old cup-board or what is now called a cabinet, stood between the window & the parlour door- really forming a partition. The kitchen fireplace was not an open one like that at Lorton Hall, but was a good sized place with a turn cruik or crane. There was a fine lot of pewter dubbler & pewter plates, & also clean white, wooden trenchers or dinner plates. There were two or three copper kettles, one constantly in use - the others polished & hung up on the bauk. The parlour was a large room & an old fashioned four-poster bed with teasters, and a carved bed-head but curtains round the other three sides. The chairs through-out were oak with backs long and narrow. There was not a bit of carpet in the whole house, but the boards were as clean as Cumbrian hands could make them. I have given you this description by one who knew the old house as a typical house of the better kind 80 years ago.

Mrs Lancaster tells me that a sheep fair was annually held on Lanthwaite Green, & this fair was looked forward to very anxiously by the young folk of the Valley. When it commenced to be held on the green I have no means of knowing. But 80 years ago it was in its best.

There was no Auction Mart & a journey to Cockermonth with a flock of sheep, and take the chance of a sale in the public streets was no light matter. There were also Sheep fairs held at Borrowdale & Newlands, and other places. The pens were supplied by the Scale Hill & Kirk Style people & were fixed against the wall, & the farmers, & traders from the low country came to buy. There were tents for refreshments from Kirk Style & Scale Hill, and after the sales were over wrestling was indulged in either for money or fleeces of wool. This fair about 45 years ago discontinued, & the fair was held alternately at Kirk Style & Scale Hill.

Very probably the Loweswater & Brackenthwaite Agricultural Show has been the outcome of this fair. To a Londoner the terms used in sheep farming would be as intelligible as Germain to Harry Peel. Hogs & gimmers & twinters & wedders, & heafs, & marks - Rit on nar ear-, Stove on nar ear, speun-shankt on far &c.

In Rannerdale 80 years ago there was a survival of the very oldest system of land tenure & cultivation. Eighty years ago High Rannerdale was a stinted pasture. It is scarcely necessary to explain more fully than this, that the pasture was held in common, & the tenants knew their own Stints - that is the number of cattle of a certain class, & the number of sheep they were entitled to put on. It was really a Commonwealth. Heifers & calves went in on the 19th of May, & came off 10th Oct. Each year the separate tenants had to provide a young bull, either his own or an approved one. This system has fallen into disuse - first one owner & then another sold his stint right until Mr Grayson was the only stint owner except Mr Marshall, & I believe he has effected an exchange & so

the common-Stock system of pasturage in Rannerdale is obsolete. Most of you know Langcroft or Longcroft- that stretch of good land in Rannerdale as the name indicates. This Longcroft or Low Rannerdale was worked on the four year system- two years to have white crops - two years to be grazed never mown. This is the oldest common system in England, & had many advantages. Each tenant (or stint owner) had his own portion of the croft a division as old as history recognizes, & each portion was divided from his neighbour by a low sod dyke, or more simply a double sod turned up. These divisions were called Reans, & probably gave the name to Reanerdale. When it was a crop year, they must all crop, & when it was to be grazed, they knew their stints, & on Longcroft the cattle might be bullocks or heifers two years old. This also has gone the way of many old customs & Longcroft is now divided into fields owned by various farm proprietors.

At Buttermere Seal, however, the common stock right exists. This Buttermere Seal pasture is in Loweswater at the far end of Melbrake. It extends to Scale Force from the Lake & has 52 stints in it. The time for cattle was the same at Rannerdale & the Seal, & formerly the sheep that went in had to bear their owners mark & the Seal mark. This was eighty years ago or more; a piece of red cloth or flannel sewed onto the wool on the far hook. This is perhaps the rudest way known, & yet it served the purpose as it was easily detached. The present Seal mark is a black pop on the far huick.

I could give you an account of clippings 80 years ago but as they did not vary much from what they were 40 years ago, I need not trouble you, only to say that many of the children in Brackenthwaite used to be Christened on the clipping day- taking advantage of the presence of the priest, & then being publicly baptized in Church afterwards.

The priest of Buttermere Osbern Littledale was a famous clipper, but he was good at all kinds of farm work. He lived in an old-fashioned House on the site of which now stands the Victoria Hotel. He farmed the fishery at Buttermere & was famous for his receipt for potted char.

The old road over Rannerdale Knot.
Buttermere Beauty & Hatfield.
Bidden weddings at Lorton.
Christening festivities – rum butter stealing.
Children's games & popular rhymes.
Funeral customs — 2nd Sunday- men with hats on.
Spinning- Linen & woollen.
Church dues & tithes.
Customary fines - land tenure &c.
Salmon spearing.
Boggles & fairies.

And now Ladies & Gentleman, I draw to a close, I think we may look back on our predecessors with pride. Many of them had their failings, but viewed in the light of these latter days, we cannot fail to award them much credit.

Kindliness of heart, hospitality, combined with frugality, industry, & uprightness were the distinguishing characteristics of many whom I have noticed to night, & I trust that you have heard with as much pleasure, as I had in writing the simple history of "Lorton & Loweswater 80 years ago". Let me thank you for the patient hearing you have given & conclude in my brother's words'. –

"Ere since this Elysium was Cumberland named,
Her sons & her daughters have ever been famed
For Virtue, & Valour, for Beauty, & Might,
Still denouncing the wrong, & upholding the right
The last to relinquish, the foremost in fight"

[This concluded the written lecture. Other material followed]

[John Bolton Lecture – appended material]

An old custom which has quite fallen into disuse, was that of the Christmas Waits. While reading the introduction to the series of Sonnets on the River Dudden by Wordsworth, I came across this greeting on Xmas morning, & I have never seen it explained or commented on. William Wordsworth dedicates the sonnets to his brother the Rev Dr Wordsworth, Bishop of London in these lines.

The minstrels played their Xmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage eaves
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves
Gave back a rich & dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through Hill & valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze
Nor check the music of the strings,
So stout & hardy were the band
That scraped the cords with strenuous hand.

And who but listened! Till was paid
Respect to every inmates claim:
The greeting given, the music played
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call
And "Merry Christmas" wished to all!

O, would that thou with me & mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light,
Which nature & these rustic powers
In simple child-hood, spread thro 'ours.

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds,
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelabourate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when, at midnight sweep
Snow-muftled winds, & all is dark,
To hear- & sink again to sleep:
Or at an earlier call, - to mark
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self complacent innocence.

The mutual nod – the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er:
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, & heard no more:

Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid.

These thoughts can make who fail to find
Short leasure even in busiest days:
Moments to cast a look behind
And profit by those kindly rays
That through the clouds do sometimes steal
And all the far-off past reveal.

This poem was published in 1819 & the custom no doubt was a very ancient one. Let me tell you how Christmas greetings were given in Brackenthwaite about 1810.

On Christmas eve the village fiddler – if there happened to be one with perhaps half a dozen young fellows would start on their rounds a bit before midnight. After calling at several farm-houses it would be "Xmas day in the morning". On one occasion at Hollins it was Richard Bowman from Hodyhead or Lamplugh who was the fiddler, & the company arrived at the front about 2 o'clock. This Bowman was a capital fiddler, & he struck up with "The Hunsup". When this tune was finished all the inmates of the house would be awake.

Good morrow, Peter Iredale!
Good morrow, Dinah Iredale! It's past two o'clock
An' a fine frosty mornin'!

Then they fiddled another bit perhaps a hornpipe, & one of the young fellows gave an exhibition of his dancing powers on the rammel flags in front of the door.

Then they proceeded to call each of the sons & daughters by name & ended by giving a call for the "Infant in the cradle laid". It often happened that the men who went round knew there was a servant girl kept at the farm, & in order not to miss her out the orator of the company used to call out

"Good morrow to your servant maid
Her name we doan't know,
But if she'll come & tell's her neame
We'll give her anudder ca!

Then the fiddler struck up another lively tune & off they went to ca' some-one else. The fiddler & his companions very likely would come round seeking their gifts on the day on which Scale Hill merry-neet was held, & the gifts were money & pies.

The expression "Good morrow" has a real old – English flavour about it, & I don't think any one can excel my old friend John Jackson in its use. "Good morrow" from him is almost as startling as a sudden gust round the Malt Kiln comer.

The Scale Hill was kept at the time I am speaking of by Harry Hewetson whose wife was a Sancton of Cockermouth. I knew his son Dick as we called him. Harry Hewson was a tall man, rather thin-faced- his wife was I am told a particularly nice woman- they were known as Harry Hewetson & Mrs Hewestson. I do not say anything as to the superiority of the house, for I fancy it is even now John Mounsey & Mrs Mounsey!

There was always a Merry-neet at Scale Hill in Christmas or New Years week, & Richard Bowman was the first fiddler there. I need hardly tell you that these Merry-neets were annual events promoted by the Innkeepers for their own benefit as well as for the

pleasure of the young folks. At this remote period from the time of Merry-neets we look back perhaps with wonder to the carryings on of our forefathers, but we must not forget that newspapers were very scarce & dear; books were likewise scarce, dear, & unattractive. Concerts were things unheard of for the poorer classes, & there was no such thing as a Piano or harmonium in the whole-fell side. Modes of locomotion - except foot - were dear. There were no cheap trips, or week end excursions to break the dull monotony of life, & the Springs were looked forward to with expectancy for a few days fleeting pleasure, & the Merry-neets were in like manner eagerly welcomed. There was an annual Merry-neet at Scaugill, which 80 years ago was owned & kept (the Inn not the Merry-neet) by Jwonne Brough & his wife Sally.

This Inn was not the quiet little Inn it now is with its primitive sign, but a very good trade was done with the coal & lime carters who came over Whinlatter to Greysouthen for coals, & to Brigham for lime.

The Merry-neet was held at the Rising Sun in Christmas week & Isaac Harrison & his wife Nancy-Peile- were the host & hostess. At this Merry-neet it was the custom for one man to take bread round haver bread & white - & another one to take a good country cheese, & these gentlemen served the company who sat round the room on forms. There was no tea or coffee made not even for the ladies.

But the most famous of all Merry-Neets in the neighbourhood was that given by George & Sally Chambers at the "Pack Horse". This event was always held on Candlemas Day at night, & as it was looked on more as a social gathering, than as a dancing night, old & young, the well to do Yeoman as well as his servant man were found at the "Pack Horse" Merry neet. Each man who attended paid 2/-, women & young lads paid 11- each. This was called 'paying their shot' & many of the householders who did not attend sent their Shot - not wishing to appear shabby. The festivities commenced about 7 o'clock, & the dancing was upstairs. I remember going to one says my informant - & as there was no one from Boonbeck, I thought it was a terrible thing to 'tak 't' shot'. Jane Turrel went with me, & her mother warned us to be careful of "powsoudy". How many of us could tell what powsoudy was? It appears that this was the special make of the "Pack Horse" hostess who was famous for it. There was a saying "as strong as Sally Chambers powsoudy." The shot was reckoned up, & about ten o'clock Mrs Chambers with Mrs Ewart & other good wives started to make this powsoudy. It was made in a great set-pot in a little out kitchen. Many of you will know the place - it is a kind of lean too building. First of all the quantity of ale was measured & then the women-folk were busy toasting shives of white bread, & as the ale in the set-pot became gaily hot these shives of bread were cut into nice squares about an inch a piece, & they were popped into the ale- together with sugar & nutmeg. It was soon ready to be served into basins. Is it any wonder that Mrs Turrel should warn them to be careful o't' powsoudy? On this occasion there were not basis enough, & so it was put on the table in a big milk-bowl, & the visitors were asked "to mak their sel's at hearne". Dancing was kept up till daybreak, & during the proceedings a collection was made for the fiddler. There were no policemen in those days to keep order, & sometimes a visitor from Buttermere or Mockermine who had boasted too freely of his sheep clipping powers would find himself going home next morning 'a sadder & a wiser man'. In reviewing an old custom like this we must not judge harshly. There was an excess of good fellowship, & the opportunities for more rational amusements were toally absent.

It was at John Sibson's at the Brow where a rather strange card-playing episode was enacted, Three card lant or loo is still I believe a favourite game in these fell dales, & Mr John Sibson had invited a party to the Brow to spend a social evening with him, & have a friendly game of lant. Mr Scott, of the Sun Inn, Cockermouth was one of the party, & for a few deals in succession he happened to have the club knave dealt to him.

He laughed with the rest at the occurrence for some time, but on its continuing to be repeated he grew angry, & supposing someone at the table had put the trick on him, he threatened what he would do with the sleight-of-hand performer if he should find him out. The play continued, & more frequently than welcome the hateful club knave stared among his cards, & almost always in "Harry" till Mr Scott began to be more afraid than angry.

The fear grew on him to such a degree that his knees & even his jaws & teeth shook. This went on till he declared that if his hand should open with that 'devil card' in, he would play no longer.

He had scarcely finished speaking till there it was again as black as ever! Down went his cards, not in anger now, but in real fear. He turned pale & staggered from the table almost fainting, & begged Mr Sibson to yoke his Chaise & take him home. He was so much affected by this incident that he could scarcely walk to his carriage, & his wife said he could not compose himself to sleep that night. The fear gradually subsided, but it never entirely left, & it was never declared if the cards had been tampered with.

The late Mr John Norman of High Dyke was present on this occasion & he related it to his son-in-law William Dickinson of Thorncroft, Workington who mentions the incident in his book "Cumbriana" a book I recommend to those who take any pleasure in matters relating to "old Cumberland". The affair was publicly talked of, & I have reason to believe the account given is a true, unvarnished statement of what occurred.

The Sun Inn at Cockermouth has always been considered a Lorton House, & 80 years ago, was next to the Globe in importance as a market day house & posting establishment. The millers from Lorton, Brackenthwaite, Southwaite, & other mills made it their quarters. The Mr Scott mentioned before used to run post-chaises & gigs & cover Whinlatter. His colour, I am told, was yellow for chays with his name printed in a prominent place. The chaises were chiefly two horse conveyances. He was followed at the Sun by a Mr Galloway whom some of you may remember & Mr Galloway was succeeded by one of the very bainest men who ever drove into Lorton- I mean John Thwaite.