

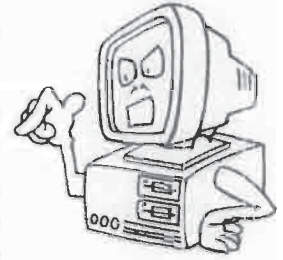
Lorton & Derwent Fells

Local history Society



SECRETARY'S LETTER

In order to produce a newsletter like this one, two main things have to happen. The first is that enough material is contributed by members to fill the issue and the second is that someone puts it all together with the help of a word processor. The first is often a problem and I then have some doubts about getting enough text to fill the Newsletter; up to now, we've made it but sometimes only just! Several members have contributed to this issue which is a very healthy sign. The second is particularly relevant at the moment because this issue of the Newsletter will be the last produced on my trusty Amiga computer. Yes, it's being superseded by the inevitable (IBM-compatible) PC and it will be interesting to find out just how powerful the WORD word processor is. Hopefully, it won't show too much in the next issue!



A few weeks ago I was walking in the Lorton area and noticed a view that was quite impressive. Massive rocks and bits of dry stone walls seemingly perched right on the edge of a sudden drop made me photograph it and I have reproduced it on the front cover - do you recognise it and do you know where it is? The answer is on the back page.

We have had a very welcome contribution from Rosemary Southey who now lives away from this area. As she says, it's not so much an article as a transcription of extracts from eighteenth century Newcastle newspapers from 1780 to 1805 and they comprise all the references to Loweswater and the surrounding area. Rosemary is in the last year of a degree course and we're very grateful that she found time to put this together for us.

I have had a letter from one of our Country Members Douglas Huntington who wrote the book "The Solway Plainsmen". He had 1000 copies of the book printed and he is delighted that all but 100 have now been sold and he has sent £1000 in donations to the Eden Valley Hospice. He worked hard to get sales and about 100 copies went to Canada and the USA and another 50 or so to Australia and New Zealand. Although they are for sale in book shops, by far the biggest number was sold by his direct-mailing the members of the Cumbria Family History Society, where an astonishing one in five of those mailed responded with an order. Incidentally, I still have one copy left for sale at the special price of £5.99 (normally £6.99). Douglas finished his letter with a wish that someone could identify the house in Lorton on the Cockermouth Road that used to be called Huntington House. Can anyone help? Views to Ron or me please and I'll pass any information on.

There's a loose page in this issue (if I remember to put it in!) for anyone who is interested in taking part in the car treasure hunt. It should be interesting and fun and it will be run if there is enough support. So if you're interested, please fill it in and return it to any Committee Member, perhaps on 8 May when you come to hear David Webb of Cockermouth on "Local railways - their rise, decline and effects"!

And on 12 June, we have the AGM and Ron George has offered to make it all worth while by giving a talk entitled "Tru & Perfecte". This is self-explanatory so I needn't elaborate, except to urge all members to come and enjoy the AGM, Ron's talk and, of course, refreshments. If anyone has an item for the Agenda, please will they contact Ron or me.

For the rest of the year:

10 July Mike Daniels "The work of the County Archeology Service"

11 September Angus Winchester "Manor Courts & the Manors' use of the fells"

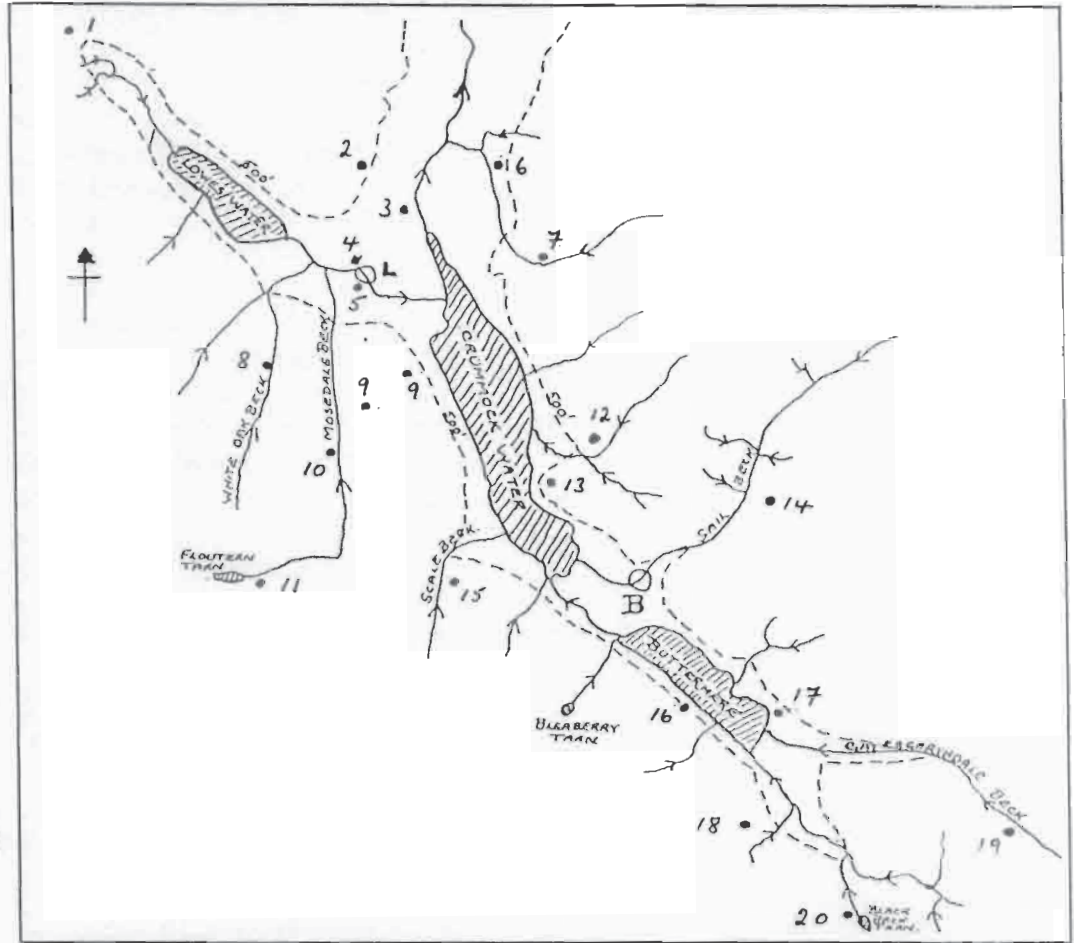
13 November To be arranged.

★ ★ WIN A BOTTLE OF WINE ★ ★

The map of our local area has 20 sites indicated and numbered 1 to 20. How many of these are actual sites of old mining activity and what are their names? And which ones are fictitious?

The competition is open to Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society members.

Answers to W Head, Hopebeck House, Lorton by 9 June please.



EXTRACTS FROM EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NEWCASTLE NEWSPAPERS

by Rosemary Southey

The following is a transcription of items from the local column of Newcastle newspapers from 1780 to 1805. Each item has been transcribed exactly as printed including such things as capitals and italics; original spellings and punctuation have been retained.

Each extract is preceded by its location eg *NC* 24 May 1791, 4d; this is to be read as follows:

<i>NC</i>	name of newspaper: see abbreviations below.
24 May 1791	date of publication
4	page number
d	column number, ie the fourth column on the page

Each extract should thus be easily located if required. All newspapers are in the Central Library, Newcastle upon Tyne and their abbreviations are as follows:

<i>NC</i>	Newcastle Courant
<i>NCh</i>	Newcastle Chronicle
<i>NA</i>	Newcastle Advertiser

All editorial additions are in square brackets.

[*NC* 8 April 1780, 4c]

[Died] Last week, at Pardshaw-Hall, near Cockermouth, in the 73d year of his age, Mr John Woodville, one of the people called Quakers.

[*NC* 17 January 1784, 4d]

[Died] Last week, Mr W. Pearson, of Langthwaite Green.

[NCh 23 October 1785, 2b]

Every additional information respecting that favourite scene of amusement, the *Lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland* will be read with pleasure. Some gentlemen lately on a visit to these pleasing wonders of nature, give the following description of a most curious WATER-FALL, called *Scale Force*, in the parish of Lowswater [sic]. The situation is about two miles south-east of Lowswater church, and near a mile from Crummock Lake; the approach to it is a most curious chasm, between perpendicular rocks, from 30 to 50 yards high on each side, and from 8 to 10 yards apart. At the distance of about 50 yards up this chasm is a fall of water 162 feet perpendicular, which appears an entire white sheet of water from top to bottom, and is perhaps the most curious and beautiful cataract in the three kingdoms.

[NCh 4 February 1786, 2b]

Early on Wednesday evening, a barn, byer, and stable, at Mockerkin near Cockermouth, were discovered to be on fire, and, notwithstanding all the assistance that could be given, the whole of the buildings were reduced to ashes, together with the crop of corn, hay, and straw; The cows and horses were with difficulty saved.- The premises are farmed by one John Graham, whose wife was delivered of her seventh child a few hours before the accident happened; the oldest child has not yet reached its ninth year and, of the three youngest, not one can walk.

[NA 6 August 1791, 2d]

The Lakes. - Lord and Lady Tyrconnel, Lord Strathmore, Mr Williams, Mr Fenwick, Miss Daniel, and Miss Augusta Daniel, with their attendants, arrived at Whitehaven, on Sunday. They left the town on Monday, and proceeding by Maryport and Allonby, on a tour to the lakes. - Several of the nobility and gentry have, in the course of the present summer, taken that town into the lake-circuit, where the harbour, the coal-works, etc. afford a pleasing variety, and the route by Ennerdale, to Loweswater, etc. (which unfolds many striking beauties, and indeed a scenery hitherto little noticed) begins to be known, and will probably be much frequented.

[NA 13 October 1792, 2c]

Longevity. - Mr Joseph Wilson, of Sosgill, in the parish of Lowswater (one of the people called Quakers) is now in the 93d year of his age. The strength of his memory is so amazing, that he will relate the particulars of the rebellion of 1715, with several incidents that have happened since that aera [sic], with such regularity and clearness, as surprize the hearer. He will also trace out the genealogies of, and tell the changes that have taken place in, several families, within his own knowledge, for many years past. By the force of his memory he is remarkably quick in figures. He is deprived of sight, and has also a small defect in his hearing. It ought to be observed too, that in the whole course of his life, he never drank the quantity of two pints of ale, and has twice tasted spirits. He is remarkable for a constant cheerfulness of temper, and tells some little anecdotes of his own life, with the greatest glee and good humour. - In short, he is one on whom old age fits with the most agreeable aspect, and in whom, it is viewed with a mixture of pleasure and veneration.

[NC14 June 1794, 4b]

[Married] Lately, at the Friends Meeting-house, at Cockermouth, Mr John Story, of Great Orton, near Carlisle, to Miss Hannah Jenkinson, late of Water End in Lowswater.

[NC1 August 1795, 4c]

[Died] Friday the 10th inst. at Lorton, near Cockermouth, in the 20th year of his age, Mr Joseph Fletcher, son of Mr John Fletcher, of that place. A singular and affecting mortality hath occurred in Mr Fletcher's family. He hath had snatched from him in the space of little more than twelve months, his wife, two sons, and three daughters! An awful instance of frailty of human life, and the instability of human hopes. "I was at ease, but he hath broken me." Lay it to your bosoms, ye gay and unthinking. Mrs Fletcher was greatly respected, and the others, whose decease in noticed in this obituary, fell regretted by all who knew them.

[NA 18 February 1797, 3a]

[Married] Saturday se'nnight, at Lorton, the Rev. William Wright, of Warrington, Lancashire, to Miss Fletcher, eldest daughter of Mrs Fletcher, of the former place.

[*NC* 30 March 1799, 4d; *NA* 30 March 1799, 3a; *NCh* 30 March 1799, 2d]

[Died] Lately, Mr Joseph Wilson, of Sosgill in Loweswater, Cumberland, at the age of 100 years. He was never known to drink either malt or spiritous liquors; and his faculties remained unimpaired to the last.

[*NA* 28 September 1799, 2d]

[Died] Suddenly, on Wednesday se'nnight, at Isell-Hall, near Cockermouth, in an advanced age, Mr John Fisher, one of the people called Quakers.

[*NCh* 8 February 1800, 3a]

[Died] The 26th ult. at Lorton, near Cockermouth, the Rev. Thomas Fisher, aged 85 years; sixty of which he had held the perpetual curacies of Lorton and Embleton.

[*NA* 10 January 1801, 4d]

[Married] On Wednesday se'nnight, at Lorton Vald [sic] Cumberland, Mr Charles Aldrich, of New-Bond-Street, to Miss Ann Nicholson, of the former place.

[*NC* 30 April 1803, 4c]

[Died] Saturday last, at Mockerkin, in the parish of Loweswater, Thomas Harrison, Esq. in the 49th year of his age, a captain in the royal navy. He distinguished himself in Kepple's engagement, on the 28th of May; and on the glorious first of June, under Lord Howe; and also in that of Lord Bridport, off L'Orient, in which his clothes were set on fire by a red hot ball.

[*NCh* 11 June 1803, 4c]

Dr Woodville, physician to the inoculation [sic] hospital in London, (formally of Cockermouth) has inoculated *eleven thousand eight hundred* persons with the *cow-pock* matter, who never had the small-pox; and of these, he afterwards inoculated 1056 with *small-pock* matter; not one of whom took the last infection.

[*NC* 13 October 1804, 4d; *NA* 13 October 1804, 4d]

On Saturday evening, Mr John Robinson, of Pardshaw, Cumberland, was found dead on the road between Oldfield and Eaglesfield; he had been attending a sale at the former place. His horse was standing composedly over his lifeless body, from which circumstance it is inferred that he had fallen off horseback- perhaps in a fit.

[*NA* 24 November 1804, 4d]

The marriage of Mary Robinson, of Buttermere, has been contradicted in the Provincial Paper from which it was copied.

[*NCh* 2 November 1805, 2d]

Centenary. - Saturday se'nnight, Mr John Mirehouse, a respectable yeoman, of Miresike, in the parish of Loweswater, (Cumberland) invited between thirty and forty of his friends and neighbours, to partake of an entertainment provided for them, on the occasion of his having that day completed the *hundredth year of his age!* - This veteran, who enjoys all his faculties (*sight* only excepted) and who is also an intelligent man, has possessed a strong robust constitution, and is of a chearful [sic] disposition. He received his company seated in a *new* oak-chair, and dressed in a *new* coat; that it might hereafter be (truly) said, "these were first used on the day that John Mirehouse was an hundred years old." - He also observed to his friends, amongst other sallies of humour, (the offspring of a mind at ease) that, with *care-taking*, they might serve *his lifetime.* - We read of many more splendid entertainments; but of none, perhaps, of so singular a nature. The festivity which prevailed at it, (and it was greatly heightened by the hilarity of the venerable host) was all that reasons could wish; and the sensations, excited in the breasts of the visitors, were such as may be more easily imagined than described. It is worthy of observation, that both the father and mother of this worthy man arrived at nearly the same age; and there are instances of several of the family having attained to that remarkable period of longevity.

STRAYS

by Walter Head

From time to time, when checking old records, you find an entry in a Parish Register for a person far removed from the parish in question. I give below an example from the Bromfield (between Aspatria and Wigton) Parish Register. It was of no interest to me but may be of use to someone researching the Bowe family of Lorton at some future date.

"John Bowe, Lorton married Mary Litt 3 June 1781 Bromfield Parish"

If any other member finds an entry like this one, then may I suggest that they ask the Secretary to include it in the next Newsletter. It may be of use to future LDFLHS members. [Sec: I quite agree - and, interestingly, one of our country members has this name so maybe this entry will be of interest now!]

THE FLOODS OF 1938

by Gill Griffin

As I drove into Workington one morning in February, I glanced across at the fields lying beside the Derwent along the A66. It had been a dreadful spell of weather and with the rivers in spate and high tides, the danger signals were obvious and West Cumbria was on 'red alert'. This time, Whitehaven bore the brunt of it but with two volatile rivers meeting in its centre, Cockermouth is no stranger to flooding.

Some weeks later, sorting through some of my mother's books, I came across a cutting from the West Cumberland Times that she must have found and kept. This was dated 3 August 1938 and I read with interest a vivid account of that August Bank Holiday weekend.

"On the eve of August Bank Holiday, 1938, Cumberland experienced its greatest and most damaging deluge within living memory. Rain, almost of a torrential character, started early on Friday morning and did not cease for 30 hours. Focus point appeared to be the Cocker and Derwent valleys.....Cockermouth....caught the full force of flooding that turned streets into rivers."

Most of the very graphic accounts referred to Cockermouth, with stories of broken bridges, homes and shops flooded to the first floor, pavements and drains lifted and fishing in Main Street. There were several comments that this was "worse than the flood of 1918". Indeed, there had been floods before and were to be again, but even today it is the 1938 flood that people remember and refer to - a sort of yardstick of awfulness.

According to the article, the Cocker is "one of England's fastest rivers" and it certainly lived up to its reputation on this occasion as it was the Cocker that was responsible for most of the devastation in and around Cockermouth. The rapidity with which it rose took

AN ARCHAEOLOGY AND LOCAL HISTORY DAY

is to be held by the National Park Authority at Brockhole on Sunday, 14 September 1997. I've just had a letter from Annette Morris, the Events Officer there (015394 46601), who says "we will be providing a full programme of lectures, plus a range of exhibitions, displays and other activities for adults as well as children." I understand that last year's event was very successful and if anyone wants more information, please ring Annette or one of her Events Team on the above number.

everyone by surprise and, at one time, it was riding 6 feet higher than the Derwent - its waters forming a "miniature Niagara" as they cascaded into the Derwent at their confluence.

Inevitably, the Lorton valley experienced flooding along its whole length and there are some tantalising glimpses of what happened in the valley. Mention is made of débris, including whole trees, being swept along the river and "a crowd on the Goat Bridge saw a huge fir tree, said to have come from as far up the valley as Crummock, snap like a stick against the central buttress." It must have made a spectacular journey! (and how did it negotiate the bridges in between?). There was considerable loss of stock and crops, Mr Jackson of Lorton lost 16 acres of hay and a dutch barn near the village was scooped clear of its contents and left derelict. The Post Office van was stranded at Buttermere, unable to return to Cockermouth. A new waterfall was created on Hobcarton, a "wide glistening cascade" replacing Hope Beck. Rabbits were washed out of their burrows in thousands in the low lying fields opposite Cass How.



I say "tantalising" because there must be many more stories to tell of this drastic weekend in the valley and there are still many people living here, including many of our members!, who must have vivid memories of this event. Michael has photocopied the WCT article for the Society's archive and it would be interesting to add to these sketchy references with members' own first-hand accounts. So start reminiscing please!

Incidentally, one other point of interest from the above article:

"...despite the extraordinary position in Cockermouth and district at the weekend, the service of the Mid-Cumberland Electricity Co. Ltd. was not interrupted, the Company's servants being prepared for and meeting any emergency, and keeping constant vigil."

Norweb please note.

[Sec: May I follow up Gill's suggestion with an invitation to anyone with recollections, however small, to let me have them for a "1938 flood corner" in the next Newsletter. We might even be able to cover the subject in depth! There are many aspects that would be interesting, including any maximum heights that the water got to, and it all would be worth having in our archive.]

THE CUMBRIA LOCAL HISTORY FEDERATION

In the just-out May 1997 Bulletin, Anne Rowe, who is the Assistant County Archivist in Kendal, makes a strong plea for people to consider depositing their original records with the Archive Service. Concerning the records themselves, she makes two important points. First, that photocopies are far from permanent and even when kept away from light and in the best environmental conditions, they will only be preserved for about 30 years (modern papers have a high acidic content). Second, that the average house is much too hot for old documents - especially photographs - and to survive in the long term they have to be kept at relatively low temperatures and a constant level of relative humidity. She points out that depositing records is easy, free of charge and permits the owners to have as much access as they want. It's like depositing money in a bank - it's still yours, but it's much safer and you can withdraw it when you like!

The CLHF is holding its AGM and day of lectures and discussion at Newton Rigg on Saturday, 1 November. More information will be available later.

A 1932 DIARY - by Walter Head

The following details are from handwritten notes found in a diary dated 1932:

Lot 1	Gatesgarth	1487 Acres 1136 Unenclosed common	Rent £240
Lot 2	Cottage		
Lot 3	Plantation		
Lot 4	Wilkinsyke Farm	108 Acres 497 Sheep 20 ? B Scales	Rent £125
Lot 5	Bouderick Cottage		Rent £27-10s.
Lot 6	Buttermere Lake	1¼ miles long ¼ mile broad 230 Acres	Rent £20
Lot 7	Croft House Scale Knott	260 - 175	Rent £100
Lot 8	Trevene (?) Cottage		Rent £35 Rent £2
Lot 9	Cottage Mr Edmondson		Rent £7
Lot 10	Cottage Opposite		
Lot 11	Cragg House Farm	72 Acres 7½ (?) 200 Sheep	Rent £90
Lot 12	Wood House	23 Acres	Rent £84
Lot 14	Lanthwaite Green	149	Reduced Rent £153
Lot 15	Crummock Water	Length 3 miles Breadth 1 mile 622 Acres	Rent £102 Workington Mrs Milburn £60 Hanlon £10
Lot 16	Low Hollins	57 Acres 178 Sheep	Rent £65
Lot 17	High Hollins Ra.. .(?)....	151 Acres 60 Acres	Reduced Rent £103-10s. 91
Lot 18	Corn How Cottage Land and Wood	3 Acres	Rent £8 Mrs Pattinson
Lot 19	Netherclose	10 Acres	Rent £12-10s.
Lot 20	Oak Bank		Rent £46.

[Sec. These are interesting facts and just to single out one aspect - it could be interesting for present occupiers to compare the acreages given in the table with their present values. As always, if anyone has any views or additional information, please let me have them.]