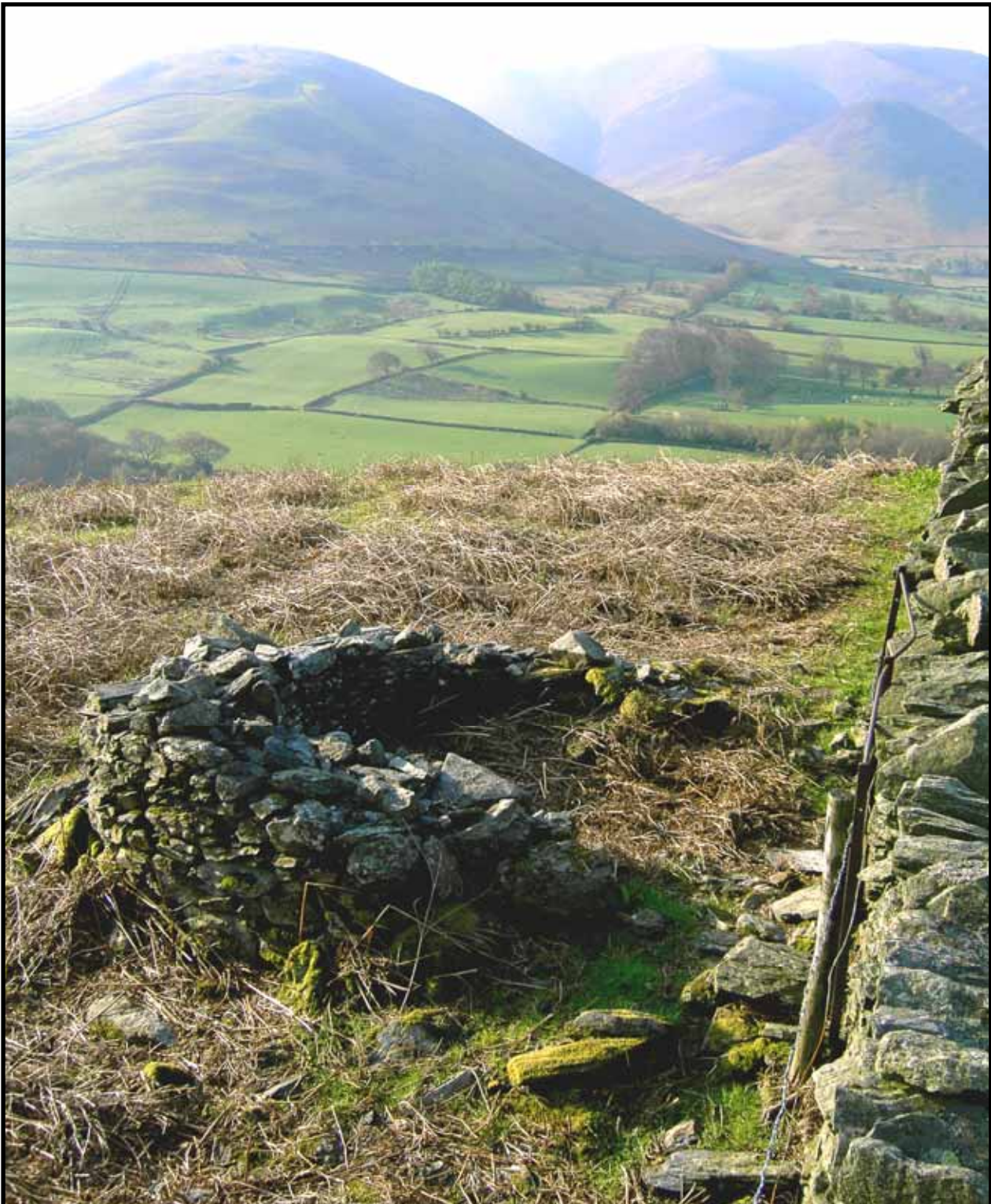


Lorton &
Derwent Fells Local History Society

Brackenthwaite Buttermere Embleton Loweswater Mockerkin Pardshaw Wythop

www.derwentfells.com



Was this a windbreak for (a few) sheep? Where is it? - it's not visible from the road. Read on!

Editorial

Although many of you already know, I should like to mention that Ron George, the Society's founder and first Chairman, is very ill at his home in Ontario. I know that we all send our prayers and best wishes to Ron and Stella.

This year, an interesting bicentenary occurs in October and you'll read quite a bit about it in this Newsletter, in particular in the flier. It was in 1804 that William and Dorothy Wordsworth visited Lorton and saw the then famous Lorton yew tree. The visit led to the famous poem and the yew's name "The Pride of Lorton Vale". Please see Derek's explanation further on.

The new audio-visual equipment was installed in the Yew Tree Hall in February and consists of a 2m square pull-down screen, a hearing loop for hearing-aid wearers and a sound reinforcement system so that speakers can be heard as well at the back of the hall as at the front, even with a large audience. The positioning and volume settings for the six loudspeakers are critical and the installer spent some time getting it all right. At our meeting in March, it all worked very well. Why not come to our next meeting (13 May) and see and hear for yourself! Which reminds me, there will be a full-sized copy of an 1803 plan of the Lorton Hall estate on view at this meeting too.

We've had one or two queries (three actually!) as to whether the five "half size" maps are still available to order - these were reduced from the large maps representing local townships around 1840 and which were displayed at the anniversary exhibition last year. Last year they were £19.60 each in a bulk order, but we intend to get another quote from the printer later in the year so if anyone else is interested, please contact me (it would bring the price down too!).

Michael Grieve

Your Society Needs You - can you help?

The Society runs quite an ambitious programme of talks and activities, which have been popular and successful. But we are now in an increasingly serious situation where volunteers are really needed to keep the programme going and to generate new ideas for the future. People who have been contributing for some time are quite reasonably wishing change and we need some new people to participate in the organisation of the programme. It is best that a number of people take on limited roles for a short time, so the Society does not become dependent on a few people.

Already we have to forgo an autumn historical coach trip because there is no one to do the organising. There are opportunities in several areas: to organise the future talks programme, the media publicity and the refreshments and also to extend our photo-record and archive database. So there are jobs to do whatever your skills, interests or amount of time available. And we are not short of cash to support good ideas. It is not necessary to join the Committee to be involved, but additional Committee members would also be welcomed.

Please let any Committee member know if you can spare some time.

Derek Denman



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Some useful websites for armchair family history research

Michael Baron has given me an article from The Sunday Times, 8 June 2003 which showed how powerful the internet has become in carrying out family history research. Here are the recommendations, but please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

freebmd.rootsweb.com (no www) Expanding site to give access to the Civil Registration index of births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales

www.familyrecords.com This is the Mormon genealogy site - an enormous listing, but beware of errors!

www.genuki.org.uk Guidance and collection of genealogical information for England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Channel Isles and the IoM

www.ancestry.com "The largest collection of family history records on the Web" - over 2 billion names from many countries

www.origins.net Split into English, Irish and Scots databases with a specialist search engine

www.genealogylinks.net A directory of internet links to mostly online surname databases

www.ukgenealogy.co.uk Genealogy index for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland

www.sog.org.uk The Society of Genealogists website

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk The General Register Office for Scotland website

Michael Grieve

The Famous Lorton Yew – Wordsworth Bicentenary

Of course the Lorton yew was famous well before the visit of William and Dorothy Wordsworth in late September 1804, but that visit gives a unique opportunity to celebrate the long life and times of one of the few ancient yews that still survives - just - as a storm-battered ‘picturesque ruin’.

You will find in your Newsletter a flier for a quality commemorative book on the yew, featuring the Wordsworth connexion, which aims to tell its story through writings and portraits - mostly historical. This project can only proceed with grant funding, contributions, and a good level of subscription sales at a special price. It is a one-off chance to make a proper record of this 1000 year old tree before a final storm takes it from us. A list of subscribers will be included within it. Publication is planned for the end of September. What a good Christmas present this would make!



From E Bogg, 1898

We have invited Lorton organisations to consider some suitable celebrations/events focussed on the bicentenary. This programme is not yet agreed, but please see the Link or our website for updates.
Derek Denman.

Mockerkin Endowed School - by Walter Head; Part 2

As noted by one of the education inspectors, attendance was affected by the isolated location and the following are some comments from various school documents:

November 1884. James Maxwell of Branthwaite has left this school, the distance being too far for him to travel in winter.

June 1885. School closed due to the inclemency of the weather.

March 1886. Could not get to school on 2nd and 3rd because of snowdrifts, but on Thursday we forced our way across the fields and on Friday got a road cut.

16 August 1886. Wrote to Rev Thwaites asking for a cartload of coals - got a reply on Wednesday stating that it was too soon to require coals during the summer months.

January 1888. Stormy weather, only 3 children turned up and all too wet to remain.

February 1888. School closed due to snow.

October 1888. School closed due to snow. Started with fires.

January 1895. School reopened, weather very wild - roads are in a dangerous condition, in many parts are almost impassable being one sheet of ice. Consequently the attendance is very meagre, there being only 4 present.

25 January 1895. Very severe snowstorm accompanied by strong wind equalling a blizzard - only 3 children came and these were too wet to remain, consequently school had to be closed.

30 January 1895. School was closed Mon and Tues as we were unable to get to school, the snow having drifted in many parts of the road to a great depth. Today, a cutting has been made but only 3 children from Mockerkin are present and they only in the morning.

5 February 1895. School was reopened again this morning after being closed since Wednesday morning. Although no snow fell on Wed night, a strong wind had drifted what was lying to such a depth that it was impossible to get to school. Mr Dodgson wrote to get a man to cut the road, this was done yesterday. The attendance is however extremely poor - only 7 being present. Snow continues to fall today. School was only open once last week.

12 February 1895. School has again been closed since last Tuesday on account of deep snow. Wednesday we experienced the severest snowstorm there has been for many years. The snow drifts along the school road being 5 and 6 ft deep. Numerous men were at work from Thursday, the cutting being completed on the main road on Sunday. The road from the fell gate to school is not yet cut but the snow was frozen so hard that we could walk along the top of the drifts this morning. 5 children are present, the other children who come by the fields have not been able to get since the first snow fell.

In addition to the school being closed due to the weather, it was also closed at times for other reasons, for example the Loweswater Show, the Pardshaw Sunday School Treat, the Loweswater Treat and the Lamplugh Club Walk. Sometimes the attendance was low due to other factors, for example (Oct 1885) poor attendance due to several children absent gathering potatoes; (Jan 1896) a sale in the neighbourhood, consequently all the boys except one away in the afternoon; (July 1896) attendance poor due to some of the elder boys being turnip thinning; (Nov 1889) attendance poor due to measles.

I have only seen one reference to punishment and this was in 1889 when the teacher “had to cane Joseph Jackson for running out of school during morning lessons”; the reason given - could not do his sums! The Inspector’s report in 1888 included the statement that “..... an infants’ desk should be supplied and one of the other desks lowered”

By 1894, the original endowment was worth £232 13s 8d yielding £6 3s 8d interest with rent from the allotment at Mossdale of £5. The value of the grant from the Education Department on 18 January 1894 was £38 2s 0d. The Master’s salary at this time was £60. An extract from the inspector’s report reads “The remote and exposed situation of the school adversely affects the attendance and consequently the attainment of the scholars.”

In 1888, 3 children left to go to Loweswater School which was free and a further 4 went in 1892. In October 1892, a decision was made by the Trustees to make the school free to all. By 1894, the attendance had fallen from an average of 20 to 15.7 and in the first week of February 1894, the lowest ever attendance of 6.6 was recorded. Attendance continued to fall, to 13 by 1895.

In 1895, Rev Stevens started to hold Sunday Services in the school in an attempt to keep it viable. By 1896, the school was struggling to survive and the Inspector's report of 29 June 1896 made reference to this "From whatever cause, there appears to be a distinct falling off in the condition of the school since last year the school is scarcely in as efficient a state as might reasonably be expected the grant under Article 105 of the Code is allowed with some hesitation. It will not be renewed unless the school is better taught."

By 1898, the average attendance had fallen to 10.5 and the Trustees sent the following letter to the Education Authority at the end of September: "The certificated Mistress left at the end of September 1898 and the one we have now, whose 3 months expires 30 Dec, is not certificated. We advertised for 3 weeks in 'The Schoolmaster' and Cockermonth newspapers, offering £60 and not a single application. Last year we had a voluntary house to house collection of subscriptions which raised £16 to help keep the school open."

The school formally closed on 16 March 1899 "abandoned by its last pupils. A Marie Celeste of a school, sealed as a time capsule with cinders in the fire grate, blackboard and desks intact." (1)

In December 1900, William Mirehouse of Ullock charged 8/3 to provide two new window shutters 4ft 3in by 2ft 10in to make the school secure and charged 5/6 for labour to paint the windows and doors.

Masters and Mistresses of Mockerkin School

There are a few gaps and it can only be assumed that during these periods, there were no certificated teachers present.

John Noble	St Bees	23 June 1783	June 1787
Isaac Tyson	Cleator	25 June 1787	August 1787
Thomas Browning	Keswick	28 August 1787	March 1790
Thomas Robertson	Ennerdale	19 April 1790	October 1790
Joseph Rooke	Westward	22 November 1790	December 1791
Robert Sanderson	Egremont	9 January 1792	January 1793
Joseph Graham	Mockerkin	21 January 1793	August 1798
Henry Crosthwaite	Parton	20 January 1800	July 1800
William Graham	Mockerkin	15 July 1801	July 1810
Thomas Furnas	Bassenthwaite	17 September 1810	December 1810
Thomas Graham	West Newton	8 April 1811	September 1814
Joseph Wylde	Glasson	20 November 1814	May 1815
John Holiday	Maryport	15 May 1815	January 1822
William Black	Mosser	15 January 1822	January 1827
Robert Satterthwaite	Irton	15 January 1827	January 1832
James Borrowdale		23 January 1832	July 1833
Charles Creighton	Gosforth	5 August 1833	January 1836
William Litt		27 January 1836	July 1836
John Mirehouse	Loweswater	18 October 1836	February 1838
Henry Collins	St Bees	22 March 1838	May 1840
John Beattie	Greysouthen	12 May 1840	September 1841
Francis Jollie	Workington	1 November 1841	January 1843
Joseph W Bainbridge	Workington	6 February 1843	July 1844
Peter Fisher	Irton	15 September 1845	April 1869
James Wilson	Harrington	25 May 1869	October 1869
John Fleming	Wilton	10 January 1870	November 1873
Jane Ashburn		25 September 1874	May 1876
Peter Thompson	Pardshaw	1 July 1878	October 1884
Rachel Dixon	Branthwaite	3 November 1884	June 1888
Jane Maria Bennett		9 July 1888	November 1889
Rachel Beeby		30 December 1889	January 1890
Charlotte Vann		3 February 1890	October 1892
Caroline Marsh		31 October 1892	November 1892
Maggie Ross		21 November 1892	December 1892
Caroline Marsh		16 January 1893	February 1893
Sarah Jane Houghton		13 February 1893	October 1895
Sarah Henderson		21 November 1895	October 1896
Miss Hodgson		3 October 1896	?

So far, I have been unable to find details of teachers from 1896 to the closure.

Reference (1): 'Hills and Around' by Whiteoak, Times & Star 12 February 1993

Correction to Part 1: Following the receipt of further information, the section referring to the windows should have read "There were two 3 feet by 2 feet windows in each of the long sides, one facing the coast and one facing Loweswater." *The final part will give details of the school after the closure to the present day.*



The school in the late 1970s

Lime Burning

Lime needed to be applied to the soil to reduce the acidity to levels suitable for growing corn. Natural carboniferous limestone was quarried and burned in kilns to produce quicklime, which was either slaked with water before application or spread on the fields directly to be slaked by the rain. The Cocker mouth area has much suitable limestone, particularly in Brigham where commercial quarrying still continues. But small limekilns would be made locally and at Byersteads, just to the east of Hundith Hill, there are closes called Lime Kiln Close and Little Lime Kiln Close, indicating a local production probably for agriculture.

In total there are fifteen closes on the 1839 Embleton map including the word 'kiln', involved in producing bricks, tiles, pottery, quicklime, potash for fulling, or drying grain or malting barley. Plenty of scope here for a study of the local rural industry!

References

1. Caird, James, 'English Agriculture in 1850-51' 1852 London, Longmans, p361
2. Keates, Tony, 'Field Drainage Techniques and their Development in Cumbria'. Article in The Cumbrian Industrialist, Volume 4

Archaeology in the Lake District - 23 November 2003

This was the title of the 2nd annual conference in Windermere for a day of illustrated talks on current projects, from the Neolithic to the 18th century. It may not be widely known that the Lake District National Park Authority has a small team led by John Hodgson devoted to survey and conservation work of our archaeological and historic environment. Only 20% of that environment has been surveyed. So it was not surprising that a packed hall of local historians, and professional and amateur archaeologists, gathered to listen to what's happening. In the morning we learned about a rock painting in Chapel Stile, England's earliest blast furnace with bloomery at Cumsey Beck (Windermere), and the ongoing work at Glencoyne Park (Ullswater) on the Roman-British settlement site in use, it was propounded, from c.2400 BC to c.600 AD. The latter would be good for a LDFLHS visit. The session ended with Dr David Shotton treating us to an assured overview of Roman Lakeland but with a reminder that these known Roman sites are only a sample of what might be, and too small to draw conclusions from about the occupation and control of this corner of North-West England. Where, for example, he asked, is the Roman encampment at Keswick - maybe the remains are under the town?

In the afternoon, the centuries were rolled further back for news of fresh discoveries at the Langdale axe-factory, not least the disclosure in the upland peat of trackways that the workers would have used for access. And then on to the burnt mounds (also known as boiling mounds), a project of John Hodgson's. These are in the lower fells, waiting to be revealed to the observant eye of an archaeological walker who has to combine in his search the shape - kidney or crescent, the place - near or by a stream, the height - about 3 to 4 feet, and the remains - piles of burnt stones and charcoal. The use - early communal cooking places, the period - late Bronze Age to post-Roman. Findings to the LDNPA.

The above is a summary of a full and rewarding day for the four members of the LDFLHS who attended. To be put on the mailing list for this year's conference, please write to the Archaeological Team at the LDNPA at Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

Michael Baron

Having trouble with your English?

Actually, English many hundreds of years ago. Michael Baron has told me of a website which is produced by CERES, the Cambridge English Renaissance Electronic Service. The topic is 'English Handwriting 1500-1700: An Outline Course' and is described as 'one of the most substantial and one of the best designed teaching resources online'. You can find it at www.english.cam.ac.uk/ceres and both Michael and I have looked at it and have been impressed. There's one interesting section which gives the meanings of the many abbreviations used in old documents - some of these can be worked out but many, I'm sure, can't. Well worth looking at.

Michael Grieve

Borrowscale, Borranskall, wills

We recently received a collection of old wills of the Borrowscale (spelt in many ways) family which was kindly donated by Joan Borrowscale, a country member. We're very grateful for these, each of which consists of a copy of the original will and Joan's transcription into modern English.

Lorton Women's Institute - 1989 to the 1997 celebrations by Maud Vickers

1989 began with a slide and talk show by Bernard Bradbury entitled 'Old Cockermouth'. There were two resolutions to be discussed at the annual meeting in the Albert Hall, one about the treatment and disposal of toxic waste to prevent pollution of the environment, and the other about compulsory DNA testing in areas where violent crime is committed. Members helped with tea at the garden fete at Lorton Park in aid of Save the Children Fund. Mrs Mills went windsurfing on Ullswater, an event organised by our County Committee.

By 1990, The Doomsday Project had been completed and was on view at Cockermouth School. There was a very interesting visit to Maryport Maritime Museum and some members went to Gateshead Garden Festival. A coffee evening was held at White Ash Barn in aid of funds. Because of a change in the policy of the Health Service, the running of the hospital at Dovenby was changed and their League of Friends ceased to function. This was a charity we had supported for many years, but help in the hospital shop and tea bar came to an end and the money remaining in the fund was to be used to buy two computers and equipment for patients remaining there.

1992 was the 70th year Lorton WI and it began with a round of the county darts was held at Lorton in February. The birthday party held in March at the Hundith Hotel, where 33 members extracts from the first and minutes - all very different present day living. One item of mentioned playing "live whist" consisted of children dressed playing cards running around room to be shuffled and then



Going back to 1974 - it was obviously a good year!

into four hands. Where, we wondered, would we find 52 children in the village now to spend an evening like this. There was a competition for a home decorated bonnet, won by Mrs E Norman. This was a year when quite a few visits were made by members: some went on a walk round Jennings Brewery, some joined a trip to Harrogate, some drivers enjoyed an evening at Lloyds garage learning about car safety and mechanics and some visited other WIs at Eaglesfield, Bridgefoot and Ennerdale. The spring county event was held at Egremont. This was the first year that our annual meeting was held in May in answer to the county committee's request to hold AGMs in light nights as their executive members who visit, do not have to go far in the dark nights. We held our meeting with a fish and chip supper. At the hospital garden fete we had a bottle stall and raised £131. Mrs Longshaw had an open day in her garden with raffle etc. Mrs Armstrong had a coffee evening at her home. In October, we had a visit to Rushton's kitchen shop with a demonstration. A whist drive held at Hundith Hill raised £96. Some members visited the Blue Box Theatre at Keswick for a play performance. Mrs Eland and Mrs Norman won through to the darts finals. A Christmas cake icing demonstration was very popular in November. Christmas parcels were given to the older residents of the village and members had a jolly party night ending with carols and candlelight.

1993 saw the end of the Sunshine Home at Allonby to which we had contributed for many years. Lorton members were joined by members from various parts of the County for a walk and tea provided by us in the Yew Tree Hall. One member won first prize in flower arranging at the County Show. The June meeting was a visit to a show house which was open on a new estate, high over Whitehaven with a view over the town. In 1994, our visit was to the Toy and Model Museum in Cockermouth. The oak table, given to the Yew Tree Hall to mark the WI's Golden Jubilee, was no longer suitable for use on the new wooden floor so it was sold and the money used to buy lighter weight tables which would be more suitable. The copper urn which we won at the pageant at Greystoke Castle in our very early years, was unable to be stored in the newly modernised hall kitchen so was sold to a long standing Institute member. Some members went ten pin bowling in 1995. A very successful garden trail was organised, with five gardens in the village open to the public, and tea provided at Crag End Farm at Rogerscale. The weather was very warm and sunny and a happy day was enjoyed by all. Our visit was to Isel Hall.

1997 was our celebration 75th year which began with a Christmas dinner held at the Hundith Hill Hotel. A varied programme of talks and demonstrations followed throughout the year which included fun with chocolate, wood carving, sewing machine use with "Granny Alice", line dancing, sculpture, decoupage,

of the dance and a contest

was Hill heard early from interest which as the dealt

and the work of magistrates, when five magistrates held a mock court. Competitions featured some old articles including a Christmas card, a tin and a postcard. The birthday meal was held at the Manor House Hotel in Cockermouth, when four past presidents joined us and Mrs L Brough from the County Executive Committee came along and, in a light hearted talk, told us a little about the County WI history. The annual subscription is now £13. At the County Annual meeting, our delegate received a certificate for 75 years from the National Federation. At the Annual meeting, both the President and Secretary wished to retire from their posts after eight years; however, owing to the difficulty of finding replacements, the President agreed to carry on for one more year. An enjoyable outing to Maryport Aquarium was held with refreshments on the way home. A stall was held at the Village sports day and part of the proceeds given to the organisers who work hard each year to stage this event. One member taught patchwork to some who attended a day kindly hosted at Winder Hall Hotel. A very special event held in September, was a concert given by the Hungate Singers from Lincoln, some of whom holiday with Mrs Steel at Crag End Farm and offered to perform in honour of our birthday. Mrs Steel and Mrs Parkes kindly supplied accommodation, and a happy evening of entertainment was held in the Yew Tree Hall. The year closed with the December Christmas party when fifty members and guests enjoyed a supper of meat and salads along with super desserts made by the committee. A family of singers from Brampton entertained and a Christmas story and a dialect tale followed; and parcels for some older residents were distributed.

So our first 75 years ended with carols and candlelight along with sherry and mince pies, accompanied on the piano by Mrs Stagg, who has joined us on many occasions to provide music ever since playing for our Victory Dance at the end of the war.

This completes Maud's interesting history of the Lorton WI from its start in 1922. The previous parts were in Newsletters 25 (up to WW2), 29 (wartime), 30 (to the 50th anniversary in 1972) and 31 (to 1988).

Future events

These have come to my notice:

14-16 May - 'Cumbrian Sacred Landscape' with visits to sacred sites. Higham Hall £98 (017687 76276).

14 May - visit to Nenthead Mine, Nenthead Heritage Centre - and Yanwath Hall (fortified farm house) en route. Contact Dorothy Hind (Keswick Historical Society) on 017687 72771.

24 June - guided tour of Brampton Parish Church with stained glass windows of William Morris and Burne-Jones. Again, please contact Dorothy Hind.

There are also many courses and talks run by Lancaster University - please telephone 01524 593770.

Talks & Activities for the remainder of 2004

13 May	Talk by Dr Ian Saunders "The North West of England in Early Maps"
17 June	AGM , followed by "Wordsworth and the Famous Lorton Yew Tree" an illustrated presentation by Derek Denman and Michael Baron on the Lorton Yew, its famous visitors and its celebration in prose, poetry and picture
8 July	Talk by Angus Winchester "Quakers in and around Pardshaw during the 17th to 19th centuries"
8 August (Sunday)	Historical walk around Embleton - "Mills & Murder". Join Derek Denman and Dorothy Graves at St Cuthbert's Church, Embleton at 2pm
29 August (Sunday)	Joint Society and Lorton WI event - "Tea & Photographs". Look through our archive of old local photographs, have tea and see a display on the 'Famous Lorton Yew Tree' plus publications and old objects. In the Yew Tree Hall, 11am to 4pm, for hall funds
9 September	Talk by Ben Edwards "The Vikings in North West England"
2 October (Saturday)	Celebration of the 200th anniversary of Wordsworth's visit to the Lorton yew and launch of the book "Wordsworth & the Famous Lorton Yew" in the YTH (provisional)
11 November	Talk by Dr David Shotter "Rome's Northern Frontier"

The talks start at 7.30pm in the Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton, but please check in the press, adverts and our website www.derwentfells.com in case of changes.

Front cover photograph

The dry stone structure is just off the B5292, the Whinlatter road, above High Lorton. It is at GR 167259, on the top of High How, which, I believe, used to be part of the wooded area called Sunny Brow. It isn't marked on the old 25 inch OS maps. Can anyone help?