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**Society News**

***Message from the Chair***

A happy and healthy 2022 to all Members! Despite the disruption that has now gone on for nearly two years the Society is in good heart, the past year's programme having resembled something closer to the established pattern of earlier years.

Looking ahead, in March we shall be warmly welcoming the Society's President, Professor Angus Winchester, who will be delivering a Talk on the history of common land, setting the local history of this type of land use in the broader context of the role that common land has played over the centuries in

England as a whole. Members will be notified nearer the time as to what form the Talk will take – whether hybrid in the way I described in my message in November's *Wanderer* or entirely by Zoom as has been the practice during last year.

The programme of activities planned for 2022 will include more Society walks – at this stage another to be led by Mark Hatton in April when the Goldscope mine in the Newlands valley will be visited, while in August Derek Denman will lead a historical walk in Loweswater. A day's outing is intended to take place during the Summer, details of which will be notified to members in due course.

Another feature of the programme is the Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture in September which this year is the opportunity for the Society to organise. David Cross, the eminent art historian, will be speaking about artists in Cumbria, specifically including those who became members of 'the Cockermouth School' of painters. One of them, Joseph Sutton, lived at Rogerscale, creating what became known as the 'painting house'. To the original house he added a substantial wing and incorporated a date stone, providing evidence that this year is the 200th anniversary of the extension's construction.

It is pleasing to report that two walk booklets on the history respectively of Early Lorton and Later High Lorton are in the course of being prepared by their author, Derek Denman, and these will become available to Members in due course. They will be in a not dissimilar format to the booklet that was ...p.3

## Our future programme 2021/2

<b>10 Mar 22</b>	'Common Ground: the history of common land'.	Professor Angus Winchester
<b>24 Apr 22</b>	Historical walk. 'Newlands and Goldscope Mines' – numbers limited, must be booked.	Mark Hatton Contact James Lusher LDLHLSzoom@gmail.com
<b>12 May 22</b>	'Cumbria and the Jacobites'.	Dr Bill Shannon
<b>9 Jun 22</b>	'World War Two: Earning a Crust'.	Ambleside Oral History Group
<b>14 Jul 22</b>	'Early Naturalists in Lakeland'.	Professor Ian D. Hodkinson,.
<b>21 Aug 22</b>	Historical walk. 'Exploring Early Loweswater' 2pm-5pm (provisional date).	Dr Derek Denman Contact James Lusher LDLHLSzoom@gmail.com
<b>8 Sep 22</b>	'Harriet Martineau, writer, social theorist and abolitionist who made her home at Ambleside'.	Dr Christopher Donaldson
<b>17 Sep 22</b>	Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture 'Cumbrian Artists: Fells, Mists and Waterfalls', Dr David A Cross.	Joint with Cocker mouth Civic Trust. Details to be announced
<b>10 Nov 22</b>	'The impact of motor transport in Cumberland and Westmorland 1900-39'.	Dr Jean Turnbull

Talks are at 7.30 pm and their format will be announced when known.

### Officers and Committee 2021/22

President Professor Angus Winchester	Financial examiner Peter Hubbard
Charles Lambrick <i>Chairman</i>	Lena Stanley-Clamp <i>Membership</i>
Tim Stanley-Clamp <i>Vice-chair, talks</i>	Derek Denman <i>Wanderer, website and archives</i>
Christopher Thomas <i>Treasurer</i>	Hugh Thomson James Lusher – walks, data controller

The next issue of the *Wanderer* will be published on 1 May 2022. Please send any short items to the Editor, Derek Denman, in early April.

The *Wanderer* is published by the Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, 19 Low Road Close, Cocker mouth CA13 0GU.  
<http://www.derwentfells.com>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety>

from p.1 ... handed out to those who joined the historical Lorton walk which Derek led in August last year.

I would like to draw to Members' attention the fact that for the purpose of researching and writing the article about the history of the Low Lorton shop (see page 7), my wife Fiona made use of transcripts of two oral history interviews among other sources. Those interviews first took place in the early 2000s as a specific Society project under the auspices of the Voices of Cumbria millennium project. The purpose was to capture the memories of various people who had been resident locally. This was followed by our Three Valleys Oral History Project. In total more than 40 interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The transcripts of the interviews are a valuable resource available to Members on-line from the Ambleside Oral History website, which can be accessed at [www.aohg.org.uk](http://www.aohg.org.uk) or from the Society's own website. Do please have a look and dip into what is available. If any Members are interested in exploring the possibility of re-starting the recording of the memories of older residents in the Society's area for the purpose of adding to the Society's existing material, they should please contact Derek Denman, who looks after the Society's archives.  
*Charles Lambrick*

### **Stop Press - An Archaeological opportunity**

The Society has recently been invited to participate in a Level 1 survey of a Brackenthwaite Hows on behalf of the National Trust. This will be a basic, walk over, survey. No experience is necessary as 'on the job' training will be given. Planned dates are 21 and 22 March. Anyone interested is invited to contact Sandra Shaw  
[sandra.m.shaw@btopenworld.com](mailto:sandra.m.shaw@btopenworld.com)  
tel. 01900 829812.

## **The Wanderer – a correction and corrections**

In the November 2021 issue in the article on the Williamsons of Lorton I identified the present property with the dated door lintel as Low Stead. This should have been the adjoining Beckside, though both were part of the Williamson holding. This has been corrected, with a note, in the version on our website at <http://www.derwentfells.com/pdfs/wanderer/wanderernov21.pdf>

This provides an opportunity to mention the role of the *Wanderer* and our website as a repository for information and articles on the local history of our area. The definitive versions of the *Wanderer* and our earlier *Journal* and *Newsletter* are those on the website, going back to 1994. That allows us to make corrections and small alterations to articles, with a note, as the need arises. If authors wish to make changes to their articles, then please contact me.

Having said that, it is important to confirm that the *Wanderer* is not a journal of record, or part of the body of academic work which is peer-reviewed and forms the core of existing historiography which historians are expected to take account of. That is the role of CWAAS *Transactions*. As can be seen from this and other issues, the *Wanderer* is a Society publication accessible to all and with a wide range of content, some of which is written to academic standards to provide a reliable record for future use.

The main purposes, however, are to provide a means for members to read about and contribute on the activities of our Society, to promote the local history of our area, and to serve and develop the interests of our members. Contributions are welcome.

*Derek Denman, editor*

## Meeting Reports

### ***Historical Walk: 'The Archeology of Early Buttermere Settlements', 13 October 2021***

A group of 10 met up with Peter Style at Buttermere for a walk in which we looked at the archaeological evidence of habitation in the Scales area on the west side of Crummock Water. Peter explained that much of the site was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is particularly important because it contains evidence of habitation over a significant time period. We had a fascinating time looking at the stone remains of a large dyke, cairns, round houses, simple dwellings, a bloomery and an enclosed farmstead which had evidence of several structures within it suggesting a dwelling with barns and animal enclosures. Peter pointed out part of a causeway and also showed us an area of low mounds which he thought could be the remains of structures made of turf and could indicate a Norse settlement.

Some areas have the bracken cut back to reduce the impact of rhizomes disturbing the archaeology which also makes it easier to distinguish features. The stone bases of the round houses were on an area of higher ground and

completely covered with bracken. We were able to follow the line of stones and walk around two which gave us an idea of their different sizes but Peter was also able to show us the results of surveying that particular area which showed several round structures and a large number of cairns.

Some structures may have replaced earlier ones obscuring evidence of previous use, also stone from cairns and earlier building would have been used in later constructions. We saw evidence of a dwelling which was built alongside a large cairn and was more than likely built of stone from it. The enclosed farmstead had the foundations of a dwelling or barn outside the enclosure and had possibly been demolished and used in the new building work. In turn stone from the farmstead was probably later used in building a large sheep fold.

We made our way back to Buttermere having seen evidence on the ground ranging from cup marks to farmsteads. Peter's explanations and analysis helped us to understand the area, its links to other sites at Rannerdale and Gatesgarth and how flood events would have affected the settlement through loss of fertile soil. Seeing what was found when surveying the different sites enabled us to get some sense of the complexity of the archaeology within area.

Many thanks go to Peter for providing such an accessible oversight of this fascinating area.

*Pip Wise*

#### **The group at Buttermere Scale, photo Pip Wise**

Note: Although the walk was near Buttermere and from Buttermere, and the area was called Buttermere Scale, in fact all the remains examined were in the manor of Loweswater and are now in the civil parish of Loweswater. Ed.



**Talk: 'The Study of Cumbrian Dialect in the Nineteenth Century', 11 November 2021**

Professor Townend gave a stimulating talk on the very rapid growth in dialect studies towards the end of the nineteenth century with detailed reference to Cumberland and Westmorland. He began by sketching the context in which the study of dialect became so important. History began to focus more on the lives of ordinary people and less exclusively on the political elites and there was a corresponding growth in regional consciousness. Ironically perhaps, this was partly prompted by the threat to regional identities from the increasing political and economic power of the centre. More rapid communications combined with the centralising effects of industrialisation and standardised education across the population worked together to promote a new national

**Mary Powley, 1811-1882**



consciousness and so exert pressure on local differences. The interest in and study of dialect were a defensive response to the threats faced by regional loyalties as well as a celebration of them.

Meanwhile, the emergence of a new intellectual discipline provided resources for the study of linguistic variations. Philology focused on the development of languages through time, a historicist approach emerging elsewhere at this time in biology and in the study of cultures. We can see its culmination in the production of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, first published as *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1884-1928). Meanwhile, scholarly researchers were providing the tools for others to collect and classify local dialects though collaborative fieldwork. James Murray, Richard Trench, Jan Worsaae and William Barnes were all very influential as the great Victorian studies in language and dialect were brought about: Skeat's *English Dialect Society*, Ellis' *Existing Phonology of the English Dialects* and *The English Dialect Dictionary* by Wright, were all part of a passionately committed campaign to record and preserve local dialect.

The fact that this movement was contested – part of a Victorian 'culture war' as we might call it now – was touched on. Novels of the time were implicated as their authors adopted positions on the new inclusiveness. In some cases – Anthony Trollope, Henry James – the decision not to present characters speaking in their local tongues can be seen as a statement of intent. These were writers who were asserting the centrality of their own and their assumed readership's language and culture, while novelists such as Elizabeth Gaskell, the Brontes, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy adopted provincial settings and language as

legitimate contexts for serious reflection on the nation's identity. Professor Townend reminded us of Mrs Durbeyfield in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*:

*Between the mother, with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folklore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads, and the daughter, with her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code, there was a gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood. When they were together the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed.*

**HUMMEL, adj., sb.<sup>1</sup> and v.** Sc. Nhb. Dur. Cum. Yks. Also Glo. Brks. Sus. Hmp. Wil. Also written **humel** Nhb.<sup>1</sup>; **humil** Sc.; **humle** Sc. Nhb.<sup>1</sup>; **hummil** Sc. n.Cy.; **hummle** Sc. n.Yks.<sup>23</sup> e.Yks.<sup>1</sup> m.Yks.<sup>1</sup>; and in forms **hammil** Ayr.; **homil** Nhb.<sup>1</sup>; **hommel** Sc.; **humble** Sc. N.Cy.<sup>1</sup> Nhb.<sup>1</sup> n.Yks. e.Yks. Brks. Sus.<sup>1</sup> Hmp. Wil.; **umal** w.Yks. [h]vml, h]vml.] 1. *adj.* Hornless, without horns; also used *fig.*

Sc. That . . . was Grizzel chasing the humble-cow out of the close, SCOTT *Guy M.* (1815) ix; A gimmer and a doddit yowe, A stirky and a hummle cow, HOGG *Jacob. Relics* (ed. 1874) I. 118. ne.Sc. Four-an-twenty tailors, Chasin at a snail, The snail shot oot its horns Like a hummil coo, GREGOR *Flk-Lore* (1881) 19. Abd. Hornie was eating with the rest like the most innocent of hum'le animals, MACDONALD *Sir Gibbie* (1879) xiv. Frf. [Of a headless trunk:] An toutit thro' his hummel neck, BEATTIE *Arnha* (c. 1820) 54, ed. 1882. Per. He shook his burly hummel head And bullered to himsel', SPENCE *Poems* (1898) 56. n.Yks. A humble or hornless Galloway cow, TWEDELL *Hist. Cleveland* (1873) 93. Sus.<sup>1</sup> Humble-cow.

Closer to home, Mary Powley from Langwathby near Penrith and a prominent member of the English Dialect Society formed in 1873, was also willing to take sides and campaign for the status of her Cumberland speech. Her poem 'Difference of Opinion About Our Mudder Tongue', 1850, published in 1875, makes the point succinctly.

*A grey-haired dweller of the dale  
With his far-travelled friend, behold:  
In converse calm, till difference rose, -  
One lauds new things - one loves the old.  
You see, the railways, uncle, stretch  
Across the land, from town to town,*

*And equal privileges bring  
To spots like this - once drear and lone.  
"They'll soften life's asperities  
"What! Do they think to larn fwok, aw  
In manners - customs - where they  
reach;  
We soon shall hear, the kingdom  
through,  
Smooth uniformity of speech  
To talk alike, aw England through?  
Is Cumberland to throw away  
Auld words like ours, for sum 'at's new?"*

The poem makes clear that Powley and the other dedicated supporters of the Society who were collecting local material for posterity may well have felt that time was against them, but their dedicated fieldwork over many years led to the publication of the *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905). Of special interest to Lorton is the role played by William Dickinson, a resident of Armaside for a number of years, whose remit was to research in the Workington locality.

The talk concluded with a number of engaging examples from the dictionary, one of which is shown here, and our thanks are due to Professor Townend for a talk which combined scholarship and entertainment so successfully

An outline of Professor Townend's separate talk on the Viking contribution to English dialect is available online. Anyone interested can find it at [http://www.snsbi.org.uk/pdf/SNSBI\\_York\\_2019\\_Townend.pdf](http://www.snsbi.org.uk/pdf/SNSBI_York_2019_Townend.pdf)

The *English Dialect Dictionary* can be found via this link to Innsbruck University's online resources <https://eddonline-proj.uibk.ac.at/edd/termsOfUse.jsp>

Tim Stanley-Clamp

## Articles

### ***A History of the Shop in Low Lorton, and People associated with it***

by Fiona Lambrick

In Walter Head's article in the November 2021 edition of the *Wanderer* there is an accompanying photograph taken in the former shop in Low Lorton, and the question is raised 'Who are the two boys?' appearing in it. The answer is that the shop keeper, Dora Lister, and Joe Kennon, who owned the shop, are serving ice creams to my brother Miles Postlethwaite (the boy in the background) and to Jimmy, one of the sons of the late Joe and Peggy Beattie who lived at 2 High Armaside at the time. The ice creams are Wall's raspberry splits, and the photograph was taken in the summer of 1963 by my late mother Ermyrn Thom-Postlethwaite with my brother's then new colour film camera which he had just been given for his birthday.

I remember it was a great treat as a child to go to Dora's shop to buy a block of three-coloured ice cream (chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla) to take home for Sunday lunch. Dora sold Wall's ice cream whereas the High Lorton shop sold Lyons Maid ice cream. On the end of the shop counter opposite the door there were newspapers and magazines for sale as well as children's colouring books and 'painting by numbers' books. Dora was always very jolly and welcoming. Large glass jars full of all sorts of sweets lined the shelves, and we would spend our pocket money on a variety of them including liquorice sticks, liquorice catherine wheels, gobstoppers, tubes of love hearts and polos. Some

sweets were four for a penny in pre-decimal money. The shop held a licence so that they could sell Fireworks in the run-up to 5th November.<sup>1</sup>

Dora was born in 1926 and was brought up together with her younger brother Joe at 1 Yew Tree View, next to the Yew Tree Hall in High Lorton. They were the children of Thomas Lister (b.1895) and Jane (née Jackson, b.1899). Dora's maternal grandmother who was from a long-standing Lorton farming family had been brought up at Boon Beck Farm. The 1901 census records show Dora Jackson and her daughter Jane (then aged 1) with her father John Jackson, a retired farmer aged 86, living at Lambfold. Dora's parents, Thomas and Jane Lister and her mother, were tenants of 1 Yew Tree Cottage until 1937 when, following the death of Jane's mother, they purchased the property with a plot of 278 sq. yards across the road from Miss Annie Taylor daughter of the previous owner from Cockermonth.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Inside the shop in 1963**



<sup>1</sup> L&DFLHS Oral history transcript LH2-101

<sup>2</sup> Information kindly supplied by Derek Poate, from the deeds



**A childhood drawing of the Low Lorton shop by the author**

Dora's father, Thomas, acted as caretaker to the Yew Tree Hall and carried out much of the maintenance work for St Cuthbert's church over the years. Her mother used to clean the church. Dora told me that when he was at home her father used to take her to church on Sundays, as a small child sitting in front of him on his bicycle. She attended Sunday School in the building next to the Church which was run by Miss May Sutton (my godmother) who lived at Kirkfell House. Dora was at the Sunday School on the day that war was declared in September 1939. Thomas Lister is described in the 1939 Register as being a 'foreman and plasterer'. He was particularly skilled at repairing cornices and other fine plaster work, and at one stage he commuted weekly to work in

Barrow-in-Furness where he lodged with Tom Walling's parents for a time. Tom was the son-in-law of George Scott who established the garage and filling station in High Lorton.<sup>3</sup>

Dora and her brother attended Lorton School before going on to Cockermouth School. The school children were bussed from Lorton to Cockermouth in George Scott's charabanc which he operated from his garage. After leaving school during World War II, Dora became housekeeper in the schoolhouse for Miss Clulow who was headmistress of Lorton school for about 14 years. During the war years a teacher, who came from South Shields along with evacuee children, moved into the schoolhouse. The evacuee children were accommodated in

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<sup>3</sup> LH2-101

various homes around the village. The District Nurse was another such resident.<sup>4</sup>

In 1947 Anthony Thomas Steele Dixon, who lived at Lorton Hall, put the Hall and its Estate up for sale by auction. The Estate was divided into lots, the sale taking place in Cockermouth at Mitchell's sale room. Lot 2 in Low Lorton, opposite Holme Cottage, comprised Packhorse Cottage (formerly known as The Packhorse Inn) plus buildings to the south of the cottage, the Village Club which was a two-story building and the barn adjoining the Club on the north side, a field behind, plus garden, greenhouse, and small spinney. The Dixon family had provided the Village Club for the community. It had a full-sized billiards and snooker table downstairs while upstairs there was a reading room where dominoes, backgammon, and cards were

**The shop with a Wall's Ice Cream sign above the door, on Low Road looking south**



available. The Dixons provided all sorts of reading matter including newspapers and magazines such as the Tatler, Punch, and London Life.<sup>5</sup>

A local Cockermouth builder, Joe Kennon, was successful in his bid for Lot 2. Both Joe (b.1908) and his first wife Lillian (née Cooper, b.1904) were born and brought up in Cockermouth, marrying in July 1936. In the 1939 Register Joe is recorded as being a jobbing builder, working with his brothers ('the Kennon brothers') who were the local builders. Later, he worked for the Water Board, a job he enjoyed until he retired when he was 70.

Following his purchase Joe converted the Village Club into a house and created a shop on the ground floor for Lillian to run. The shop's entrance was where the gate had been into the field behind the old Village Club. Mrs Sarah Elizabeth Gibson was a tenant in Packhorse Cottage and used to run a sweetshop when Dora was a child. Lillian Kennon, who was well respected in the village, suffered from poor health, and died suddenly at the age of 51.

Following the retirement of Miss Clulow, the Headmistress of Lorton School, Dora was given the opportunity by Joe Kennon of taking on the running of the shop in Low Lorton following the death of his wife in 1955. At about the same time Joe extended the shop to provide extra space for frozen food and ice cream. The extension was behind a green curtain which can be seen in my childhood drawing on page 8.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sale Catalogue for Lorton Hall, 1947; L&DFLHS oral history transcript, spirit of Cumbria 9

<sup>6</sup> LH2 - 101

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<sup>4</sup> LH2-101

In 1960, while digging a sewer to Packhorse Cottage, Joe dug up a very early axe-head of the type associated with primitive man. In an article in the June 1960 edition of 'Cumbria' it was reported that: "The tool is perfectly shaped for using as a hand implement or for tying to a wooden handle. It has been ground smooth and has a fine cutting edge which will still split wood. Mr Kennon, a builder by trade, says that the stone is a type of granite similar to that which occurs plentifully higher up the valley". The axe-head is on display in the Tullie House Museum in Carlisle.

Dora, helped from time to time by Joe, ran the Low Lorton shop for approximately 15 years. She was well known as being a fount of knowledge on local matters. The Reverend Jim Woodhead-Dixon was vicar of Lorton from 1958 to 1980. In 1961 he bought Lorton Hall which had come up for sale. He and his wife and son moved from Lorton vicarage in Church Lane to Lorton Hall in Low Lorton just up the road from Dora's shop. He was an inventive man and had created his own standard to fly from the tower of Lorton Hall. He used to fly the flag to show when he was in residence, and I was told by my mother that one day shortly after he had moved into the Hall a visitor came into the shop and, having asked Dora if she happened to know if the vicar was at home, she came out from behind the shop counter, went out of the door, and had a quick look along the road. When she came back into the shop moments later, she was able to inform the visitor that he was out. The astonished visitor asked how she could know this by simply looking along the road, to which Dora replied that the vicar's flag was flying at half-mast.

Over the years Dora was very involved with the Yew Tree Hall and was a member of its management committee. In the early days she helped organise



**A friend of Dora's outside the shop, 1950s or 1960s**

fancy dress parties for the children at Christmas time. Joe Kennon and Dora married in the mid 1960's. The Kennons sold the house and shop in 1970 and moved into their new house, Fell View, which Joe had built on the site of the spinney which had been behind Packhorse Cottage. The Low Lorton shop continued for about six years under the ownership of Mr and Mrs Eurich until it ceased to be viable, and the building was subsequently converted to residential use.<sup>7</sup>

After Joe Kennon's death at the age of 85 in 1994, Dora sold Fell View with much regret and moved to Cockermouth to be near her daughter and family. She continued to worship at Lorton Church regularly until her death in January 2011, and was buried in Lorton graveyard.

<sup>7</sup> LH2 - 101

***St Michael and All Angels,  
Isel, in the late 1950s and  
early 1960s:  
A personal reminiscence***

Roz Southey

In 1955, my father, Charles Williams, answered an advertisement for a church organist. Although he'd been born in Bristol, he and my mother had worked their way north during the Second World War and were now living in Seaton near Workington. He was in his mid-40s and had been a church organist since the age of 15 – he had, however, always played in city churches and the church needing an organist was a country church: St Michael and All Angels, Isel.

The church was, and is, a small one, nestled in trees close to the River Derwent. The story goes that in the Dark Ages, Irish missionaries sailed down Cumbrian rivers, occasionally stopping to raise a cross on the riverbank and preach; over the course of time, the crosses were replaced by churches, almost all of them named after the missionaries' favourite

saint, the warrior archangel, Michael. Isel is supposed to be one of those churches.

When I first knew the church in the late 1950s, it was a simple building with a white-washed nave and a slightly more ornate chancel with choir stalls. It had no heating or electricity, and was lit by smelly oil lamps hanging from the ceiling. The organ in the nave was tiny, in a plain but lovely wood case nestled up against the chancel arch on the opposite side to the pulpit. It had one manual, fewer than 200 pipes and only four stops, but it did have a proper, if small, pedal board and under my father's hands could produce a surprisingly loud noise.

Unfortunately, since there was no electricity, the organ was powered by bellows pumped by means of a large wooden handle. The handle was operated from the front pew and left-handedly; moreover, it had a distinct clank, which was particularly pronounced when moved too quickly. As my father had a liking for literally pulling out all the stops and making a loud noise with as many pipes

**St Michael and All Angels, Isel,  
[www.explorechurches.org](http://www.explorechurches.org)**





#### **1957-8 Choir outing**

as possible, energetic pumping was the norm. It took a good technique to pump the handle silently and provide the right amount of wind.

My father was also choirmaster, even if the choir was usually rather small. My mother sang in it on a few occasions, although these were limited when I was too young to be left; one of my sisters and I were also in it at various times. There was another family too – the Todhunters, who lived at Kirkhouse Farm close by the church. Mr Todhunter was churchwarden, Mrs Todhunter and their three daughters were all in the choir; their son, Maurice, had the job of blowing the bellows and was extraordinarily good at it. There were also at various times young girls from other parish families in the choir – the photograph from 1958

shows seven girls on a choir outing. Usually there was only one tenor, who brought his young son to sing amongst the sopranos. My father was frequently the only bass, singing from the organ stool. Friends and relations also augmented the choir on special occasions such as harvest festival or Easter.

The choir usually sat in the front few pews on the organ side of the church so we could pick up my father's gestures and nods, to get through the more difficult passages. The choir stalls were generally not used as the Norman arch which divides the chancel from the nave cut out much of the sound; I do remember occasionally sitting there but rarely. If

something special was required, the choir would walk out into the aisle and stand on the nave side of the arch, facing the congregation (as in the photograph of the harvest festival).

We were lucky that, for most of the time my father was at the church, there were two vicars who were committed to the use of music in worship. The first, Edwin Bucknill, was an austere man, learned and erudite but with an annoying habit of getting my name wrong – calling me Rosiemary rather than Rosemary. He had two stints as vicar of the parish, from 1936 until 1942, and then from 1955-1960. He had had training in music and sang the responses beautifully. When he died in 1970, he was buried in Setmurthy churchyard, with a gravestone which simply recorded his name and dates, followed by the single word 'Priest'. He adhered to the old custom of being buried with his head to the west rather than to the east, as parishioners were; on the Day of Judgement, the old belief went, when the dead rose from their graves, they would see their priest rise up facing

them, ready to lead them into Heaven. Bucknill's successor in 1960, J W Martindale, had originally been a teacher, very friendly and likeable; he loved music in church, but admitted to being unable to sing and was happy to have the tenor in the choir sing the responses.

Choir practice was on Friday nights and both vicars made a point of inviting myself and my father over to the Vicarage for a cup of tea afterwards, before we started back home; the Vicarage was a big old house, cosily furnished and always as warm as toast. The most memorable visit was in November 1963, when Mr Martindale greeted us with the information that President Kennedy had been assassinated. I was only eleven but even at that age I knew how momentous that news was.

Choir practice took in the hymns for the following Sunday – my father had a liking for some unusual tunes – and also

**Harvest Festival 1960: Choir with Charles Williams at the organ. The vicar is Edwin Bucknill.**



the psalms, for which my father insisted on meticulous pointing. We almost always did an anthem too, although these were usually relatively simple pieces. Considering there was probably a maximum of 10 or 12 singers at any one time, we sang a surprisingly large amount of music. My father was proud of our achievements and applied to the Royal School of Church Music for one of their inspectors to come and assess us in September 1961, hoping for some hints as to how we could improve. The inspector, however, appalled my father by judging us by the same standards as he would have applied to big city choirs – a misjudgement my father never forgave.

The usual services were Holy Communion every other week, alternated with Mattins, and evensong at 6.30 in the evening. My father hated having to get up early, particularly as he had to practise for half an hour or so on the piano at home before leaving. After the morning service, we would drive home again – we were living in Loweswater by the time my memories of Isel really start – have Sunday dinner and then turn out again for evensong. The big occasions of the church year could be even more of a burden. Good Friday, for instance, called for a three-hour service; my father would play for an hour, take a break at the Vicarage while the next hour was spoken, then come back for the final hour. Christmas always demanded a midnight service and a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols: my father not only dealt with the music for the latter but also persuaded local residents into reading lessons. I often had a lesson to say, and had it drilled into me to speak more slowly than I thought I should. In later years, a Christingle service also became fashionable. All these services were scattered with my father's favourite music: 'O Sacred Heart Sore Wounded' on Good Friday; 'Jesus Christ is risen today' on Easter Sunday; 'The Little Drummer Boy' and Bach's version of 'In Dulce Jubilo' at Christmas. As for

voluntaries, my father always believed you couldn't go wrong with either Bach or Buxtehude, and his copies of their voluntaries, which I still have, are dog-eared from loving use.

On rare occasions, my father had a soloist with him, generally for the outgoing voluntary. A German friend of my elder sister was an excellent player of the treble recorder and enjoyed playing duets with the organ; another soloist was a violinist (a female relation of the pianist Myra Hess); this violinist often visited a friend in the neighbourhood and would help in the voluntaries. Unfortunately, she was inclined to be imperious and would not practise the pieces as much as my father thought was necessary.

My father knew all the internal workings of the instrument and did his own tuning whenever needed. He was always on the hunt for stray cyphers – when one of the palletes letting air from the windchest into the pipe got a bit sticky, perhaps with dust, and didn't shut properly; this would allow a thin trickle of air to dribble into the pipe, which could be heard as a constant discordant whistling behind the music. On one occasion, he was convinced there was a problem in the organ and had my brother-in-law helping him dismantle the instrument to find it – they were still struggling with the problem gone midnight, with a wedding scheduled for the following day. My brother-in-law was falling asleep but my father carried on and had the organ fit to play twelve hours later, although my brother-in-law suspected that some of the parts had just been stuffed back inside the case for later sorting.

There was one unusual stop on the organ that my father never used: a transposing stop. If a hymn was too high or too low for the congregation, the organist could turn this knob and the keyboard would physically move and play different pipes, thus changing the pitch of the music. One visiting organist turned the knob once, rather than the necessary

twice, so that when he pressed one key on the manual, he activated two pipes. The wedding march was apparently a novel experience.

In 1962, mains electricity came to the parish and my father, an electronic engineer by trade, set about installing it in the church. Between June and September of that year, half the pews were



**Charles Williams with recorder soloist,  
1968**

moved, old heating pipes removed, and new ones installed, no fewer than 52 heaters added, and electric light put in. All this was finally connected to the new mains supply in December 1962, and in the parish magazine, Martindale commented that 'the church is now comfortably warm'. The church – eventually – lost that musty, greasy smell of the oil lamps and the lingering tang of damp. The meticulous accounts kept by my father for the work still survive.

My father probably never envisaged leaving the church but in 1967, a new vicar, Hugh Prince, arrived. Prince did not believe that there should be a choir, or any special music. For him, music was a distraction and a hindrance to worship, and all attention should be on the written word – only an occasional hymn was needed. After some attempts to persuade him otherwise, my father decided to leave. For him, good music, both vocal and instrumental, was an integral part of worship: it gave glory to God, and helped the congregation meditate on their beliefs. He moved on to another church.

A year or two ago, I visited Isel again with one of my sisters. Walking in that door, into the cool nave, was like stepping back in time. Back to memories of my father bolt upright on the organ stool, his hands shifting up and down the keyboard, and his feet heel and toe-ing the pedal board. To memories of concentrating on the pointing of psalms, of pumping the bellows' handle up and down and wincing at the odd clank, of watching my father nod an entry into an anthem. Sad to say, when we reached the organ in its plain, lovely case, we saw that the pedal board and organ stool had been taken away and only a chair stood in front of the closed manual. A sure sign the organ is now played by a pianist and that almost certainly there is only a hymn or two sung there, and perhaps a short piece to play the congregation in and out.

## ***The Manor of Brackenthwaite, in Brigham, and its sale in the 1590s***

by Derek Denman

Brackenthwaite was a manor, then a township, and later a Civil Parish, lying on the east of the River Cocker and stretching ten kilometres between Lorton and Buttermere townships. See Figure 1. Today it is probably remembered most widely in Brackenthwaite Hows, maybe less so in Brackenthwaite Fell, and also by a few of the inhabitants with an interest in its history. This obscurity may be a consequence of its loss of identity in 1934, when the civil parish was divided between Lorton and Buttermere. Brackenthwaite was not an ecclesiastical parish, but was part of Lorton parochial chapelry, within Brigham Parish, though it once had a medieval chapel at Rannerdale. Between 1883 and 1886 the Church of England divided Brackenthwaite and served it up three ways, among the new parishes of Lorton, Buttermere, and Loweswater.

This article considers landownership in early-modern Brackenthwaite, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the old feudal landholding system was transformed by Brackenthwaite's prosperous inhabitants – more successfully than in Loweswater.

### **Early Brackenthwaite manor**

The manor of Brackenthwaite was created by a freehold grant circa 1160s, and that manor was, geographically, the forerunner of the township and the civil parish. Its southern limit was defined geographically as Rannerdale Hause, but its northern limit was defined as the cultivated land of Lorton.<sup>1</sup>

Lorton would be 'an old settled community' at the time of this grant and Angus Winchester considers that:

*The 'cultivated land of Lorton' was presumably a fluid boundary, shifting as population growth there pushed the village's lands southwards up the valley. The complex interlocking boundary with Brackenthwaite is probably the result of piecemeal appropriation of a buffer zone, probably partly wooded, between two communities.*<sup>2</sup>

Brackenthwaite had been granted from the forest of Derwentfells, the forest land between the Cocker and Derwent, and from 1355 to 1549 both Derwentfells and the manor of Brackenthwaite were in the same hands. This single ownership would facilitate land appropriation by either community because the rental would be paid to the same lord, whether as a part of the manor of Brackenthwaite or as manorial tenancies within the forest of Derwentfells.

This creation of cultivated land continued until at least the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Below the Hopebeck road, the large tract of land between Whit Beck and Hope Beck was forest or common in Derwentfells manor up to 1473, after which it was enclosed, cleared, drained, and cultivated as Lorton Head by Lorton tenants.<sup>3</sup> Brackenthwaite tenants also continued taking in land, called improvements in the surviving manorial records of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

The extent of the cultivated land of the tenants of Brackenthwaite became important in the sixteenth century, when

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<sup>2</sup> Angus Winchester, *The Language of the Landscape*, 2019, pp. 111-3, for the boundary

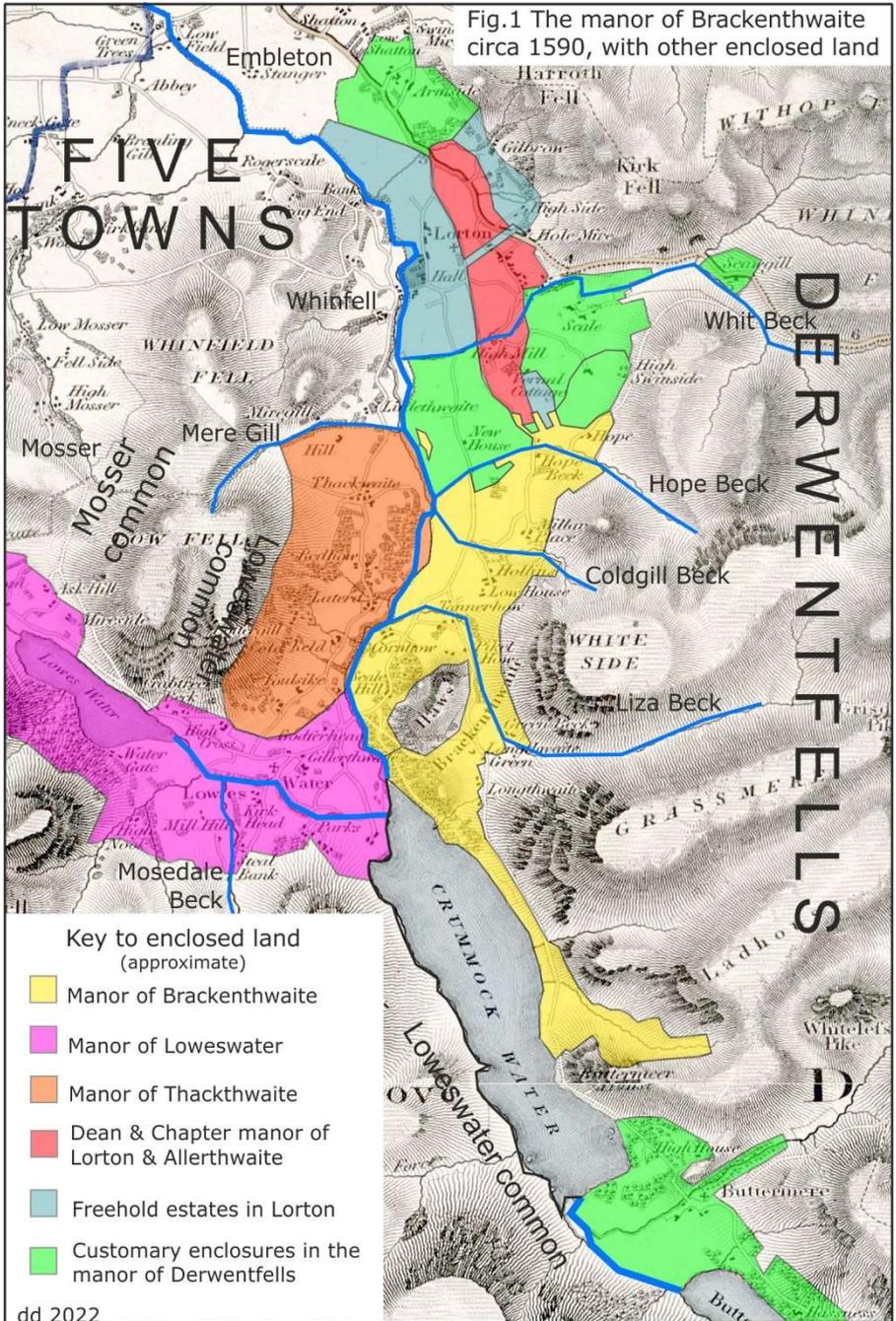
<sup>3</sup> CASW/DLec 299T, Fos 311, 13Ed.IV, p.6; see also Angus Winchester, *Landscape and society in medieval Cumbria*, 1987, p.147

<sup>4</sup> CASW/DLec 299T, Fos 238, p.32; Fos 270, p.12, Fos.154, p.19 as examples

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Manuscripts Commission/National Register of Archives/Lucy Cartulary/no. 221 for the text translated

Fig.1 The manor of Brackenthwaite circa 1590, with other enclosed land



the manor of Brackenthwaite was recreated and redefined by the sale of its farm tenements by Edward VI. The consequence of this sale provides the subject of this article.

#### **Brackenthwaite manor under Henry VIII**

In the early sixteenth century the honour of Cockermonth was the property of the Percys, earls of Northumberland. The honour included the manor of Brackenthwaite and the superior manor of Derwentfells. Some other manors within Derwentfells, such as High Lorton and Embleton, were freehold estates held by intermediate or mesne lords. Across the Cocker, the manors of Loweswater, Thackthwaite and half of Whinfall were also part of the Percys' property.

In 1531 the sixth earl, Henry Percy, he who had unfortunately been betrothed to Ann Boleyn, granted his lands into the safekeeping of Henry VIII. They were intended for the inheritance of his young nephew, Thomas, but the nephew's father, also Thomas, became involved with the Pilgrimage of Grace and was executed in 1537. After this treason the grant to the king was made unconditional, just before the sixth earl died. In 1545 Henry VIII sold the Percy manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite, plus the Chantry of Brigham, to Richard Robynson, Clerk, who came from that Loweswater family.<sup>5</sup>

This sale of most of the old manor of Balnes did not affect Brackenthwaite, which remained in the king's hands until his death. The death of the Henry VIII in 1547 triggered a general fine in Brackenthwaite, for which a rental survives. A transcription of this by Ron George lists 35 customary manorial tenements with a total rental of just under £10.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently, Brackenthwaite was in the hands of Edward VI until 1549, when it was granted by the king to William Grey, Baron Gray of Wilton.<sup>7</sup> In 1548 he had laid waste Dalkeith and Musselburgh, as part of the 'rough wooing' campaign, aimed at acquiring the infant Princess Mary of Scotland as a bride for Edward VI. Grey's reward included several properties which were in the king's hands. Locally the grant included some possessions late of the Earl of Northumberland and some late of St Bees Priory. Part of this grant was immediately turned into cash by sale to Richard Robynson, who added the manor of Brackenthwaite and the former St Bees monastic property in Loweswater to his lordships of Loweswater and Thackthwaite.

In that same year, 1549, Richard Robynson died and left his property to his young cousin, John Robynson of Loweswater<sup>8</sup>. He was to be educated by the trustee of the will, Thomas Stanley, a goldsmith from the Dalegarth family who would become master of the mint. However, John Robynson was a minor. Henry VIII had revived the medieval Court of Wards which allowed the crown to grant, or sell, the wardship of minors who inherited property held in capite, of the king. Under Mary and Philip, favour returned to the Catholic Percys, and this wardship did not go to Thomas Stanley. The income from the manors was lost from John Robynson's benefit. When he came of age in 1555/6 and sued out of wardship, the annual value of the manor of Brackenthwaite was £10-8s-6d, but it paid a fortieth of a knight's fee plus 16s-8d 'for augmentation of his majestyies [Philip's] crown'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> CASW/DWM/11/160/10 Inspeximus of Letters Patent of Edward VI, 19 July 1549

<sup>8</sup> TNA/prob/11/32/557 Will of Richard Robynson, Clerk, 1549,

<sup>9</sup> CASW/DWM/11/160/2, Indenture pursuant to suing out of wardship: Court of Wards and Liveries to John Robynson, 27 Jan 1555/6

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<sup>5</sup> CASW/DWM/11/160/1, Letters patent, Henry VIII to Richard Robynson, 23 Aug 1535

<sup>6</sup> L&DFLHS Archive, Ron George, notes of Gen. Fine 1547, from DLec/314/38 ff.44-6

In September 1557 John Robynson released to Thomas Stanley the manor of Brackenthwaite and the other property that had come via Lord Grey.<sup>10</sup> Littledale believes that this was 'probably by way of mortgage' and that possession was not taken by Stanley at that time.<sup>11</sup> It is likely that Robynson would be in debt to Stanley at this point, due to the loss of income during wardship. By May 1562 Thomas Stanley had taken possession of all three manors, having purchased Loweswater and Thackthwaite for £1500.

<sup>12</sup> John Robynson ceased to be lord of the manor of Brackenthwaite. Thomas Stanley held the lordship until his death in 1571, after which it passed to his daughter, Mary, and her husband Sir Edward Herbert.<sup>13</sup> They held it until 1592/3.

#### **Tenantright in the North of England.**

Those who had scrambled to acquire property from Henry VIII's confiscations found, or their successors found, that manorial properties lost their value through the second half of the sixteenth century. This was largely due to the inflation caused by Henry's debasement of the currency. Agricultural produce doubled in price, while the manorial rents stayed fixed by custom. The benefit from increased prices for cash crops came to the tenants and not to the new lords,

whose investments did not rise in value with inflation.

New ways had to be found to extract more income from the tenants. Principal among these ways was to increase the fines payable on change of tenant, or the general fine on the death of the lord – though the change of the lord by sale would be a more acceptable trigger for a fine. Fines were arbitrary, not fixed or certain, and were related to the current economic rent of the tenement, rather than the low, fixed, ancient rents.

This general attack on the customary tenantright, which was claimed by manorial tenants, could also be supported by the removal of the need for border service from the tenants, following the settlement with Scotland in the mid sixteenth century. The rights of inheritance of property which the tenants enjoyed, and sometimes the right to sell, could be challenged as being connected with and dependent on border service. Without tenantright the tenants held their property only at the will of the lord, and they could be converted into leaseholders rather than owners.

The battle for tenantright was widespread in the English borders and fought through the courts. Generally speaking, under Elizabeth the judgements supported tenantright, but then tenantright came under the severest challenge from James I, after the union of the crowns. In his proclamation against tenantright of 1620 James decreed that the union had extinguished tenantright, the memory of which 'ought to be damned to perpetuall oblivion'.<sup>14</sup>

#### **The issues in Brackenthwaite**

The manor of Brackenthwaite differed in nature from those of Loweswater and Thackthwaite, in that while the latter two had extensive commons as part of the manor of Loweswater, Brackenthwaite as

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<sup>10</sup> CASW/DWM/11/160/2, Feoffment of the manor of Brackenthwaite [not Loweswater as in catalogue] by John Robynson of Loweswater, gent, to Thomas Stanley, citizen and goldsmith of London, 7 Oct 1557

<sup>11</sup> Ralph P Littledale, 'Some notes on the Patricksons of Ennerdale', *Transactions CWAAS*, 1925, p.185

<sup>12</sup> CACC/DLAW/1/240, John Robynson of London, goldsmith, to Thomas Stanley of London, gent, for £1500, manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite.

<sup>13</sup> Exemplification of fine levied Trinity 1583, between Thomas Herbert, gent., querent and Edward Herbert and Mary Herbert his wife, deforciant - 19 Jun 1584

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Denton, ed. Angus Winchester *A perambulation of Cumberland 1687-8*, 2003, pp.483-4, for the text

granted in 1549 included no common, but just the tenements with rights on the common of Derwentfells. Disputes over Loweswater common started soon after Richard Robynson bought the manor in 1545. Between 1547 and 1553, nine of the Robynson tenants in Loweswater and Thackthwaite attempted to enclose the Holme by the Lake, now part of Holme Wood.<sup>15</sup> The enclosure was thrown down by the tenants of Mockerkin and Sosgill. They had been part of the old manor of Balnes and had rights on Balnes or Loweswater common. However, Mockerkin had not gone to Robynson and remained in the Percy lands, though in crown, and the Percys and their stewards were no friends of Robynson. Disputes between the lords and tenants over the use of the common would complicate and aggravate any negotiations aimed at a settlement of tenantright.

East of the Cocker, the manor of Brackenthwaite sat within the superior manor of Derwentfells, within which the tenants had clearly defined and undisputed rights of common. Because, after 1549, the lord of Brackenthwaite did not own that common or control its use, negotiations on tenantright in Brackenthwaite were more straightforward and a settlement was easier.

#### **Sales by Sir Edward Herbert**

By the 1590s Sir Edward Herbert and Mary, in distant Montgomeryshire, had decided to sell their Loweswater, Thackthwaite and Brackenthwaite property, and the purchaser would be Anthony Patrickson, of Stockhow in Lamplugh. His interest appears to be primarily financial, but also he wished to provide a seat for his son Henry, as lord. In November 1593 the manors of Loweswater and Thackthwaite, complete with the old Balnes commons, were sold

to Anthony Patrickson, marking the start of an aggressive legal dispute between him and his tenants there which would last through the reign of James I. Notably, a judgement under Elizabeth confirmed tenantright in 1597.<sup>16</sup> Fresh litigation under James I resulted in the indenture of 1619, by which the great majority of the Loweswater and Thackthwaite tenants purchased certainty of fines and other benefits, but without gaining their freeholds.<sup>17</sup>

In Brackenthwaite the process was more harmonious and advanced. The majority of the yeoman-tenants in Brackenthwaite apparently wished to purchase their freeholds, rather than to remain as manorial tenants with rent and fines, arbitrary or fixed. Without the complication of a common, it was possible to divide the manor into two freehold estates, one larger part to be sold to the tenants, or their trustees, and the other smaller part to be sold to Patrickson as a continuing manor of Brackenthwaite – being just a freehold estate of a few tenements.

The process of these sales is visible through the two surviving sale documents for Brackenthwaite. The sale of eight manorial tenements to Patrickson was completed first, on 3 Feb 1592/3.<sup>18</sup> These tenements are listed in Table 1, and add to a total manorial rental of £3-1s-0¾d.

The sale of the major part of Brackenthwaite was more complex. The twenty tenements were not purchased and enfranchised by the individual customary tenements in twenty transactions but were instead purchased by a consortium of four of their number as a freehold estate. These were Robert Fisher John Wilkinson Thomas Rudd and John Fisher

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<sup>15</sup> See L&DFLHS Journal No.60, p.36. Revised Feb 2024 to reflect the tenants making the enclosure, not the lord for his use.

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<sup>16</sup> CACW/DWM/11/172 includes a C19th transcription of the 1597 judgement

<sup>17</sup> CACW/DWM/11/172 contains a C19th transcription of the 1619 indenture

<sup>18</sup> CASC/DX94 is an original indenture of the sale to Patrickson, 1592/3

<b>Tenements sold to Patrickson, 3 Feb 1592/3. Ref. DX94</b>	<b>Tenants purchasing indentures, 20 Sep 1598. Refs. DWM/11/160/11 &amp; DLaw/1/254</b>
Thomas Rudd rent 6s 4d	Tenement called Hollinges of Robert Rudd rent 6s 4d
Robert Stubb 14s	Tenement of Robert Stubbes rent 13s.
John Rudd of Pichow the younger 6s 5d	Tenement of John Rudd of Pichowe younger of 6s 5d
Heirs of John Towson carpenter and Richard Towson -19s 4d	Tenement John Towson son of John Towson deceased rent 15s 3d One close called Cryngle Myers rent 1s 6d One close called Holmes rent 4d One close called Justice Judge rent 2d
John Rudd of Beckhouse 6s-5d	Tenement of John Rudd of Beckhouse rent 6s 5d
John Towson 5s 6¾d [of Low House in the record of taking possession]	Other tenement called Lowehowse of the said Robert [Rudd] rent 5s 6¾d.
Thomas Towson 2s	Certain parcels of ground in the holding of John Towson son of Thomas rent 2s
Lawrence Mirehouse 12d	Close of Lawrence Mirehouse rent 1s
Total ancient rent £3-1s-0¾d	Total ancient rent £2 17s 11¾d

**Table 1. Brackenthwaite tenements sold to Anthony Patrickson, forming his manor**

Following this purchase those four were, at least for some time, joint lords in the same way as was Patrickson. The process by which the individual tenants would then purchase their freehold from the four was not defined in surviving documents, as it would be in a similar but more developed and formal process of trusteeship in Embleton a century later.<sup>19</sup>

The sale of the twenty tenements as a freehold estate to the four yeomen for £372 was made by Sir Edward Herbert on 16 April 1593.<sup>20</sup> The tenements and rentals are listed in Table 2 and have a total manorial rental of £7 16s 7¼d. The tenants paid a total equal to 45 times the ancient rent for their freeholds.

In Brackenthwaite the total value of the manorial rentals sold was £10 17s 8d. The split between the new Patrickson manor and new potential yeoman freeholds was, by rent, 28% to 72%.

By this second sale Sir Edward Herbert had sold his remaining interests

in Brackenthwaite, and it was in November that year that he then sold Loweswater and Thackthwaite to Patrickson in their entirety.

#### **Identifying the new Patrickson manor**

The listings in Tables 1 & 2 use the customary tenant and their rental to identify a tenement, or property holding, and locations are given where necessary to identify the tenant – not to identify the location of the property. It is not possible to identify directly those twenty properties which were sold to the four yeomen because very few deeds of sale survive, and parish registers provide limited information. To identify the smaller number of tenements in the continuing Patrickson manor is easier because of that smaller number and due to the availability of manorial records from 1547, 1614, and then becoming increasingly complete from the mid seventeenth century. Once the Patrickson manor has been identified, the remaining tenements must be the freehold properties.

<sup>19</sup> See L&DFLHS *Wanderer* Nov 2019, p.17 for the enfranchisement in Embleton.

<sup>20</sup> CACW/YDX/394/2 contains photocopies of the original indenture

A further listing of the Patricksons tenants was made in 1598, when his manorial tenants purchased their indentures (discussed later).<sup>21</sup> These 1598 tenants are also given in Table 1 and help to identify the farmsteads.

The first six of these were tenements which included a farmstead, while the last two were small holdings of land. From examination and analysis of manorial records, the following farm tenements formed the Patrickson manor in 1592/3:

**High Hollins** - Thomas Rudd - rent 6s 4d.

**Low Hollins** – Robert - Stubb 14s.

**Picket How** - John Rudd the younger - rent 6s 5d.

**Lanthwaite Green**, Cringle Mires, Holmes, Justice Judge Heirs John Towson carpenter & Richard Towson - 19s 4d.

**Beck House** - John Rudd - 6s-5d.

**Low House** John Towson 5s 6¾d.

These farm tenements are shown on figure 2, distinguishing the customary from the freehold. Many named farmsteads had previously been divided into two or more holdings, each with a dwelling, and so while it is now possible to identify the wholly freehold farmsteads, it is harder to show that a customary farmstead did not have a second dwelling which was freehold.

There were two further small customary tenements which were holdings of land only. That held by Lawrence Mirehouse at 12d rent was the intake on the fell above Miller Place. The Thomas Towson holding of 2s rent cannot be identified completely, but it appears to include two grasses in Brackenthwaite Hous which were not attached to a farmstead. This will be discussed later.

#### **The customary manorial farmsteads**

Of those six identified above, Low Hollins was an entirely customary manorial

<sup>21</sup> CASC/DLaw/1/254, Copy, 1812, of indenture between Anthony Patrickson and his Brackenthwaite tenants, 20 Sep 1598

Tenant	Rent
<b>Four joint purchasers</b>	
Robert Fisher	17s 4¼d
John Wilkinson	7s 5d
Thomas Rudd	12s 10d
John Fisher	9s 8d
<b>Other tenements</b>	
Richard Fletcher	7s 0½d
Richard Towson	9s 4d
Elen Peele	11s 8½d
Anthony Wilkinson	3s 11½d
John Towson	7s 4¾d
Peter Fysher	18s 2d
Janet Wilkinson	7s 0½d
Peter Pearson	9s 11d
Christopher Meyrehouse	6s 0d
Margaret Myrehouse	6s 0½d
Lawrence Peereson	13s 6d
Alan Peele	10d
Robert Towson	1s 6d
Rychard Towson	8s¾d
Peter Pearson of Lorton	5d
Cuthbert Peele	5d
Total £7 16s 7¼d	

**Table 2. Brackenthwaite tenements sold to four yeoman purchasers 15 April 1593**

holding which was passed down through generations of Robert Stubbs into the nineteenth century, being finally extinguished when sold to the Marshalls, the lords of the manor, in 1910.<sup>22</sup>

Lanthwaite Green, with part of Lanthwaite Wood on Crummock, may also have been entirely customary, but records of its content have not survived to give confirmation. This tenement was sold to Joshua Lucock Bragg of Lorton Hall in 1805 to combine with the freehold estate descending from Robert Fisher, the leader of the four purchasers of the freeholds in 1592/3.<sup>23</sup> When Joshua Lucock Bragg

<sup>22</sup> CASW/DWM/497/27 Low Hollins purchased in 1910 for £1125

<sup>23</sup> CASC/DNT/31/4 provides the epitome of title for the sale from Bragg's trustees to Marshall, 1824

became lord of the manors of Loweswater, Thackthwaite and Brackenthwaite in 1807, his customary holdings within these manors, including Lanthwaite Green, would now automatically become his freeholds.

The Fishers were the principal family in Brackenthwaite and held Cornhow as freehold from 1593, though that name did not enter the surviving parish registers until 1612. Robert Fisher, the father or son, later purchased High Hollins, which became his seat as a gentleman, holding a considerable estate. His status was unfortunately demonstrated in February 1655/6 when he joined a list of gentlemen who were delinquent in making his contribution to fund Oliver Cromwell's militia in Cumberland and Westmorland. On the value of his estate, 'Robert Fisher of Brackenthwait' was assessed for £15, while for example 'Sir Patricius Curwen, knight and baronet' was assessed at £40.<sup>24</sup> High Hollins itself became a mix of freehold and customary holdings through sales and purchases, while Fisher also became owner of the freehold farms of Scale Hill, Lanthwaite Gate and Peel Place.<sup>25</sup>

The other customary farmsteads, Picket How, Low House and Beck House were in the territory dominated by members of the Rudd family, who also sold High Hollins to Robert Fisher. This ancient and prosperous family have been well researched in Mary Amelia Rudd's *Records of the Rudd Family*, from which the photographs of four Brackenthwaite farmhouses before 1920 have been reproduced here.<sup>26</sup> The Fishers, Rudds and Tolsons/Towsons/Tollysons were very

deep rooted in this part of Brackenthwaite.

After Anthony Patrickson purchased the residual manor in 1592/3, the problem of low income to the lord remained and Patrickson, needing cash to pay debts elsewhere, strove to obtain more through arbitrary fines in Brackenthwaite, as well as in Loweswater and Thackthwaite. But while the tenants of the last two manors fought for their existing rights through the courts, with judgement in 1597, the tenants of Brackenthwaite watched that dispute and took a different course. All the manorial tenants in Brackenthwaite came to an agreement with Anthony Patrickson, and by indenture of 20 September 1598, they purchased for £101-17s-11d a right to fixed fines of two years' ancient rent, plus recognition of their ancient tenantright and customary practices.<sup>27</sup>

The indenture permitted them to alienate, or sell, their properties in whole or part and to have the purchaser admitted as customary tenant, and, unusually, they could devise their property in a will rather than rely on customary inheritance. This avoided the practice of appointing a younger trustee as customary tenant to work around customary inheritance. The stated purposes of the indenture included the enabling of the tenants to better perform their border service, which by 1598 was rather minimal.

While Anthony Patrickson appears to have honoured his agreement with the Brackenthwaite tenants, his son Henry did not, perhaps encouraged by the campaign of James I against tenantright. The tenants took their complaints to the court of Chancery in 1607, seeking to have the conditions of their 1598 indenture enforced. That was confirmed in the ruling of 8 June 1607.<sup>28</sup> The Patricksons then

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<sup>24</sup> State Papers, Feb 1656, Commissioners for Cumberland and Westmoreland to the protector, Vol. xxxv, p. 276

<sup>25</sup> The Fisher Estate can be followed in 'Scale Hill and Early Tourism', L&DFLHS *Journal* 44 Aug 2009, pp.9-17; also in CASC/DNT/31/4

<sup>26</sup> Mary Amelia Rudd, *Records of the Rudd Family*, 1920, p.194, Internet Archive

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<sup>27</sup> CASC/DLaw/1/254, see ref 21

<sup>28</sup> CACW/DWM/11/160/11, Inpseximus 3 Aug 1607 of Chancery decree 8 June 1607 touching the Manor of Brackenthwaite

returned to focus on Loweswater and Thackthwaite and to undermine and challenge the 1597 ruling. In 1619 most of the manorial tenants of Loweswater and Thackthwaite purchased, by indenture, rights similar to those that Brackenthwaite had held since 1598.<sup>29</sup>

#### **The freehold farm tenements**

When the four yeomen, Robert Fisher, John Wilkinson, Thomas Rudd, John Fisher, purchased a freehold estate of twenty tenements in 1593 they became, for a while, joint lords of three quarters of the former Brackenthwaite manor. At that time the Fishers were at Corn How, the Wilkinsons had held Scale Hill though the sixteenth century, and Thomas Tolson was probably at Withbeckraine, now Palace How, though Tolsons were also at manorial property at Langthwaite.<sup>30</sup>

The next stage would logically have been for each tenement holder to purchase his or her freehold from the four, as happened later at Embleton. Each of the four would also need to purchase their own freeholds. The new freeholders would retain their rights to use Derwentfells common and would pay a part of the free rent of 16s-8d payable from the manor of Brackenthwaite to the lord of Derwentfells.<sup>31</sup> If, for some reason, the tenement owner did not wish to purchase their freehold from the four, then they could sell their manorial tenements to one of the four and become leasehold farmers. In that way did Robert Fisher create an extended estate.

The above logical process is not spelt out in any records, and there are very few known surviving records of transactions in the process. Those that exist have survived in the archives of

Balliol College Oxford, because that college purchased the farmsteads of the Marshall estate in 1937, in parallel with the National Trust's purchase of land.<sup>32</sup>

The few surviving deeds do show some of the purchases by Robert Fisher. On 29 June 1597 Robert Fisher purchased from the other three, John Wilkinson Thomas Rudd and John Fisher, the freehold of a messuage and tenement in the occupation of Helen Peill of the annual rent of 11s-8d.<sup>33</sup> This may well be Peel Place, which later became a property leased by the Fishers. At the same date Robert Fisher also purchased, from the other three, the freehold of a message and tenement in the occupation of Robert Tolson and Robert Fisher of the annual rent of 18d.<sup>34</sup>

The majority of the properties became freehold under their original manorial tenants, judging by the continuity in the parish registers, and in the absence of other documents.

#### **Stinted pastures at Brackenthwaite Hows and High Ranerdale**

Brackenthwaite tenants held two stinted pastures, that is larger undivided areas of rough grazing which were shared and rented by a few owners, rather than being a common over which all tenants of a manor or township had rights. The important question is, were these parts of the manor of Brackenthwaite from 1549, or parts of the manor Derwentfells, out of which Brackenthwaite was created?

The inspeximus, or certified copy, of the grant of Brackenthwaite to Lord Grey

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<sup>29</sup> CACW/DWM/11/172 contains a C19th transcription of the 1619 indenture

<sup>30</sup> The fourth entry in Table 1 is Langthwaite Green, as sold to Bragg in 1805

<sup>31</sup> DLEC/314/39 f.26, 15 Jun 1578 Edward Herbert, Knight, Brackenthwait value £10 2s, 'restored to the said Earl which is now payable 16s 8d'

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<sup>32</sup> Archives of Balliol College, Oxford, J1-9 plus maps, some photographs now in L&DFLHS archives

<sup>33</sup> Balliol Archives, J/9/7, release by John Wilkinson Thomas Rudd and John Fisher, to Robert Fisher of messuage and tenement occupation of Helen Peill rent 11s-8d, 29 June 1597

<sup>34</sup> Balliol Archives, J/9/8, release by Wilkinson Rudd and Fisher, to Robert Fisher of messuage and tenement occupation of Robert Tolson and Robert Fisher rent of 18d, 29 June 1597

# Freehold and manorial farm tenements in Brackenthwaite from 1593

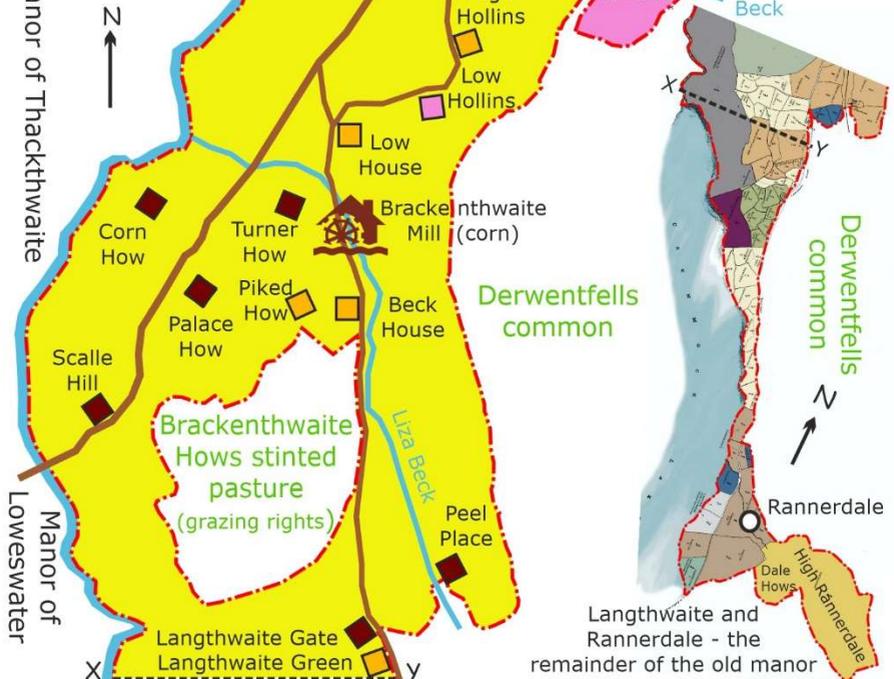
dd 2022  
rev 2024  
Palace How  
Freehold

- Freehold farm tenements
- Manorial farm tenement, B'thwaite
- Manorial or part-manorial farm tenement
- Tenements which were absent in 1593
- Enclosed land of Brackenthwaite in 1844, approx the pre-1592 manor

500m, main figure

Manor of Thackthwaite

Manor of Loweswater



by Edward VI in 1549 granted 'all those lands meadows pastures ... called Dalehowe and Thwayte'.<sup>35</sup> Rannerdale was not mentioned, even though in 1547 there were seven shares of 'Ranerdell' in the rental.<sup>36</sup> However, Dalehowe was part of High Rannerdale and may well have been the crags newly enclosed by John 'Jak' Newcom around 1500, whose farm at Rannerdale escheated to the lord due to Jak being a murderer.<sup>37</sup>

By some process not known, it was settled that the customary tenants of High Rannerdale were tenants of the land, and not just the grazing, and that the freehold lay within Brackenthwaite manor from 1549. When enfranchised from 1593, they would hold freehold shares in Rannerdale as joint tenants, which shares could then be traded.

Brackenthwaite Hows was not named in the grant of 1649, nor in the general fine of 1547, where certain tenants held part of a 'moor'. The manor of Brackenthwaite, as defined by the letters patent, therefore contained only the rights held within the tenements granted, which rights were interpreted, at some time, as grazing rights or grasses only. Ownership of the land remained with the lord of Derwentfells, without any known challenge. The sale of manorial tenements to Patrickson in 1592/3 included one tenement which was only land with no farmstead, that to Thomas Towson of rent 2s. This included, from later records from 1708 & 1709, two

grasses in Brackenthwaite Hows in the manor of Brackenthwaite of rent 1s.<sup>38</sup> The rights to those two grasses had earlier become detached from a farm tenement. They were carefully described in later manorial documents as grazing and grasses, and never as a close, or land.<sup>39</sup>

In records of 1716 and 1719 these same two grasses were in Rudd Hows or Red Hows, the name probably deriving from the dominance of the Rudd family around this area.<sup>40</sup> Thomas Rudd of Cockermouth, in his will dated 1704, gave 'to my said wife [Frances] all the Beast grasses and Sheepgrasses which I have in Mortgage of and from John Rudd dec[ease]d remaining two beast grasses in the summer season and thirty five hogs grasses in the winter in the parcell of ground called Ruddhowes in Brackenthwaite ... holden of Wilfred Lawson Esqre by and under the yearly Rent of one shilling'.<sup>41</sup> The records above all concern the same two grasses.

Brackenthwaite Hows was never enfranchised and is now registered common land, while High Rannerdale is freehold.<sup>42</sup>

### The mills

Brackenthwaite had two mills, Brackenthwaite mill for corn on Liza or Leasey Beck, and Little Mill on Coldgill

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<sup>35</sup> CASW/DWM/11/160/10 Inस्पeximus of Letters Patent of Edward VI, 19 July 1549, in Latin

<sup>36</sup> DLec/314/38 ff.44-6, general fine 1547, includes seven holdings in 'Ranerdell', three with two joint tenants.

<sup>37</sup> CASW/DLEC299T/fos.129, p.9, Derwentfells head court, 17 HenVII, he 'enclosed common land'; fos.357, pp.11-13, for the Derwentfells court report on the murder in 1516; see also Winchester, *Language of the Landscape*, p.189-90 for the story of 'Jak' Newcom

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<sup>38</sup> CASW/DWM/11/123, Court Book, p.40, John Wilson & John Burnyeat to John Banks two grasses in Brackenthwaite Hows 1708; p.41, 1709, fine for the same

<sup>39</sup> CASC/DLAW/1/250, 1735 'a parcel of pasture ground called Red How' was crossed out and replaced by 'Two cattlegates ...'

<sup>40</sup> CASW/DWM/11/123, Court Book, p.46, 1716, John Bank of Miller Place surrendered two grasses in Rud Hows; p.54, John Dickinson surrendered two grasses in Red Hows, Thomas Rudd admitted.

<sup>41</sup> Rudd, *Records of Rudd Family*, p.175

<sup>42</sup> I am grateful for advice from Angus Winchester on the case in 1982 confirming the registration of Brackenthwaite Hows under the Commons Registration Act of 1982, which concluded that only grazing rights were held. See <https://www.acraew.org.uk>

Beck. The Little Mill was near the Low Road and may have been used primarily for fulling woollen cloth.

Brackenthwaite Mill was sold to the four yeomen in 1593 as part of a tenement, and was or became a part of Turner How. John Head first appears in the manorial records as a customary tenant in 1675.<sup>43</sup> His rent of 3s derived from customary parts of High Hollins, but he farmed from Turner How.<sup>44</sup> Ameila Rudd notes an undated sale of Turner How plus the corn mill for £390 from Thomas Rudd to Jno. Head of Moorside in Blindbothel, grandfather of the John Head of Turner How who was buried in 1722.<sup>45</sup>

The Little Mill would be that which had fallen into disuse and disrepair by 1529 when 'the lord's fulling mill there is in the hands of the lord and has not been demised for two years having been lately occupied by the wife of William Robynson at the farm of 2s a year and that the timber of the said mill for want of repairs is rotten and waste'.<sup>46</sup> This same mill was the subject of a dispute in the 1650s between the lord, now Lawson of Isel, and Robert Stubb of Low Hollins. In 1844 the Stubb descendant still held the customary closes called, Above Mill and Under Mill. Robert Stubb had enclosed a piece of waste land there for his own use, including the millstead which had been destroyed by fire some twenty years earlier. He had rebuilt the ruinous mill. Stubb was allowed to enter the mill property, provided that he acknowledged that it was the lord's property, and not his.<sup>47</sup>

The names of the present properties Mill Beck and Miller Place are not good pointers to mill locations. Mill Beck



Low House



The Hollins



Turner How



Picket How

**Pre-1920 photographs, Amelia Rudd, p.194**

<sup>43</sup> CASW/DWM/11/122, p.77-8, Customary tenants in Brackenthwaite, 1675

<sup>44</sup> CASW/DWM/11/121, p.17, this tenement of 3s created from others and Thomas Rudd of Turner Howe admitted, 27 Feb 1662/3

<sup>45</sup> Rudd, *Records of Rudd Family*, pp.172-3

<sup>46</sup> DLec/299T/fos.311, 20 Hen.VIII, p.51

<sup>47</sup> CASC/DLAW/1/242, contains the case and Stubb's confirmation of 1652

appears to be the only new modern farmstead, appearing between 1820 and 1844 with no obvious predecessor. It may have been on a watercourse or leat created between Hope Beck and Little Mill. Miller Place or Milner Place is a name known from the seventeenth century, but may well be the property formerly known as Caldbeck in the early sixteenth century, being on Coldgill Beck.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Other Families**

The ancient Brackenthwaite families of Fisher, Rudd, Tolson, Peile, Wilkinson, and the notorious Newcoms of Rannerdale, have been mentioned above. To these must be added the Mirehouse family, who held Hopebeck and the Hope in the sixteenth century, also being fullers.<sup>49</sup> Plus the valley-ubiquitous Pearsons in at Lanthwaite and later the Hope. As noted in the context of mills, the Heads came to Brackenthwaite in the later seventeenth century and became the most prominent resident family into the nineteenth. The Heads entered Rudd territory by purchase, but the Woods entered by marriage with the Rudds, when Henry Wood married Jane Rudd in 1703, establishing the next generation of Woods as owners of Picket How.<sup>50</sup>

#### **Conclusion**

Brackenthwaite was a small manor granted in the twelfth century out of the superior forest manor of Derwentfells. When ownership of Brackenthwaite reverted to the lord of Derwentfells, the ancient manorial boundaries became less important than the economic boundaries created by new cultivation and rental. When in 1549, Edward VI granted the

manor to Lord Grey, out of the lands formerly of the earl of Northumberland, the manor was then defined as the sum of tenements of the Brackenthwaite tenants. It became a freehold estate, without ownership of a common but with rights for the manorial tenants on Derwentfells common, similar in nature to High Lorton, Embleton or Wythop. Its farm tenements were held by a few yeoman families who were long-established and prosperous, especially the Fishers and Rudds.

The lordship of Brackenthwaite was early combined in ownership with those of Loweswater and Thackthwaite, though all three lordships were distinct. This distinctiveness allowed the lord and tenants of Brackenthwaite to take a different path towards enfranchisement in the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries. The path taken by Loweswater and Thackthwaite tenants is better known and even celebrated. There were complications arising from a disputed common and perhaps a lack of common objectives and interests. This led to protracted, expensive, and well-recorded legal disputes with Anthony and Henry Patrickson, resulting in a failure of the tenants of Loweswater and Thackthwaite to gain their freeholds in this period.

In Brackenthwaite, those tenants who wished to gain their freeholds combined to purchase them from Sir Edward Herbert in 1593, using a consortium of four substantial yeomen to make a single agreement with Herbert. This left Patrickson to purchase only the residual quarter of the manor. Those who became Patrickson's manor of Brackenthwaite all combined in 1598 to purchase, by indenture, their fixed or certain fines and other rights. They had those rights confirmed at law in 1607 when challenged by Henry Patrickson under James I. In comparison the tenants in Loweswater and Thackthwaite were not enfranchised and mostly purchased their indentures as customary tenants in 1619, still leaving a small group with ancient arbitrary fines.

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<sup>48</sup> Holdings in general fine of 1547; always of Hobback in C17th registers of St Cuthbert's Lorton; The Hope confirmed c.1600 by analysis of CASC/DCHA/8/8 archive, free rents in Brackenthwaite

<sup>49</sup> CASW/DWM/11/123, p.45 Customary tenants in Brackenthwaite 1716, Jane Wood wife of Henry Wood

<sup>50</sup> Registers of St Cuthbert's, Lorton,