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**Society News**

***Message from the Chair***

At their recent meeting committee members decided that in the current circumstances it was appropriate to make a modest increase in annual subscriptions. Details are set out in the letter accompanying this edition of *The*

*Wanderer*. The committee believe that the new subscription rates continue to represent good value for money.

This edition contains a wide variety of articles and information. I would like to thank Lena Stanley-Clamp for all the work she put in to making this year's Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture a great success. It was delivered by art historian David Cross. He is also editor of 'Cumbrian Lives', about which you'll find more information on page 4. The Society was asked by the author of one of the 'Lives', Tim Cockerill, to consider his draft life of William Lancaster Alexander, the prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century philanthropist of Lorton and Cocker mouth. I was able to respond to various questions and made a variety of comments – the article is reproduced on pages 23 to 27.

The Society is now entering its thirtieth year, and the committee plans to mount an exhibition to mark the anniversary. At this stage it's envisaged that it will comprise summaries and historic photographs from the histories of houses and other buildings in the Society's area along with, it's hoped, audio extracts from some of the oral history recordings made in previous years by the Society.

Further plans under development are, first, to undertake more oral history recordings and, second, to establish a house history working group for those interested in learning more about how to research the history of their own house or indeed other dwellings and buildings along with members of previous generations associated with them. More information about these projects will be set out in the next edition of *The Wanderer*.

*Charles Lambrick*

## Our future programme 2022/3

<b>10 Nov 2022</b>	'The impact of motor transport in Cumberland & Westmorland 1900-39'	Dr Jean Turnbull
<b>12 Jan 2023</b>	'The Cumberland Bard: Robert Anderson'	Dr Sue Allan
<b>9 Mar 2023</b>	'Lake District Geology'	Dr Ian Francis
<b>11 May 2023</b>	'The Loweswater burglary of 1816 and its aftermath'	Ray Greenhow
<b>8 Jun 2023</b>	Our AGM and 'Feeding the industrial revolution'	Dr Michael Winstanley
<b>13 Jul 2023</b>	'The Price and Pain of Migrant Poverty'	Dr Allan Sharman
<b>14 Sep 2023</b>	'The Dacre Family, a History'	Maks Loth-Hill
<b>9 Nov 2023</b>	'Mitchells: – Auctioneers for 150 years'	John Marr

Talks are at 7.30 pm in the Yew Tree Hall, are included in membership and open to visitors at £3 in 2022. Talks are also streamed live to members using Zoom but are not recorded. Other events are expected to be added to this programme.

### Officers and Committee 2022/3

President: Professor Angus Winchester      Financial examiner: Hugh Thomson

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*Secretary*

Linda Cameron      01900 824200      Christopher Thomas  
*Treasurer*

#### Diary dates.

Saturday 26 November 2022 Carlisle Cathedral 900 years – in-person Study Day (9.30 to 4.15) in Fraternity Hall at the Cathedral. Speakers include Marta Alberti, Prof Fiona Edmonds, Prof Janet Burton and Dr Henry Summerson. Tickets £30 from the Regional Heritage Centre Lancaster

Saturday 4 February 2023, Advance notice. Hybrid study day at Lancaster University, when Dr Alan Crosby and Emeritus Professor Geoff Timmins will look (with others) at the rise of Regional and Local History Studies.

The next issue of the *Wanderer* will be published on 1 February 2023. Please send any short items to the Editor, Derek Denman, by early January.

The *Wanderer* is published by the Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society, 19 Low Road Close, Cockermouth CA13 0GU.

<http://www.derwentfells.com> <https://www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety>

## Two New Historical Walk Booklets available

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

### Historical Walk

#### Discovering Lorton's Early History

**About This Walk**  
This walk covers both High and Low Lorton villages, in Cumbria, intending to provide a history of Lorton from the earliest records in the twelfth century up to the end of the seventeenth century. The distance is about five kilometres. The walk follows good public paths, though there can be mud on the field paths after rain. Much of the route is on the public highway, and so please take great care of the traffic, ensuring that you can be seen. High Lorton has a shop and there are refreshments and facilities at the Wheel Shed in Low Lorton. The route is shown on the map on the centre pages, which uses the Ordnance Survey map of 1883. It covers most of Lorton, and shows how land use and ownership developed.

**Lorton's Origins**  
In this walk, Lorton means Lorton Civil Parish, the area which was formerly the Township of Lorton, in Cumberland. The western boundary is the old course of the River Cocker, over which are Whinell and Thackthwaite. To the North is Embleton, and to the South is Bradensthalwaite. To the East are Braithwaite and Thornthwaite, now parts of Above Derwent Civil Parish. The two rows of farmsteads at Low and High Lorton existed in the mid-twelfth century, and we have no earlier records. The 'ton' name suggests an Anglian settlement from the seventh or eighth centuries. The 'Lor' element is thought to be old Norse, suggesting a Norse-Irish population from the tenth century. Possibly the two rows at Low Lorton, on higher ground at the crossing of the Cocker, and at High Lorton, situated along the break of slope of Kirk-Fell, were created at different times by different groups.

**Lorton's 1000 year old yew tree**



1

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

### Historical Walk

#### Discovering Loweswater's Early History

This three-mile walk starts and finishes at the Church and provides an outline of the history of the settlement named after Loweswater, the 'leafy lake', and its people up to the seventeenth century. The route is shown on the map on the centre pages, which is based on the first series Ordnance Survey of 1862. Not much has been added since, though farmsteads have been lost. The route is on footpaths and minor roads, with occasional wooden stiles, sometimes in poor repair. Refreshments are available at the Kinkistie Inn.

**St Bartholomew's Church (1)**  
The earliest historical reference to Loweswater concerns a chapel here which was granted to the Priory of St. Bees, or St. Bees, in about 1139, becoming a part of the parish of St. Bees. This grant was made by Ranulph de Lindsay, a knight in the service of David I of Scotland, and Ranulph's wife Ethelreda who was a sister of Alan, the lord of Allerdale. They also made a grant out of Lorton during this period of Scottish rule. If there was a chapel here in the 1130s, then clearly there was an established local community, though we do not know which wider communities the chapel served at that time. It was only in 1230 that the approximate area covered by the later parish was formed, when the manor of Balnes, pronounced Balness, was created. This included Loweswater, Thackthwaite, Mockerkin and Soggil, and these would become three of the four 'quarters' of the later chapel, the fourth being the Park. The grant of the chapel circa 1139 meant that the tithes and other dues would go to the mother church at St. Bees, while St. Bees would be responsible for providing priests for saying mass at the chapel. The death of Loweswater would now be buried at St. Bees - some distance away. St. Bees was in the Diocese of York, and in 1281 the Bishop approved the elevation of Loweswater to a parochial chapel, allowing the inhabitants autonomy, including a graveyard. This may not have been done until the chapel was dedicated in 1404, once the Earl of Northumberland had acquired Loweswater manor. Burials were then at Loweswater and not at St. Bees.

**The Church and the Park together since the twelfth Century**



1

The Society arranged historical walks in Lorton and Loweswater in 2021 & 2022, giving accounts of the development of the two villages up to the seventeenth century. These walks, authored by Derek Denman, have now been published by the Society. They take the form of two twelve-page A5 colour booklets, similar to this *Wanderer*. They are useful both to those who would like to do the walk and those who would like to have an account of how these two villages were created and developed on the ground.

These booklets are available at [www.derwentfells.com/publications](http://www.derwentfells.com/publications) and can be downloaded and printed for personal use. However, the printed booklet format is very convenient, especially the centre map, and printed booklets can be purchased at a cover price of £3 each. Please purchase copies at Lorton Village Shop where possible, which will support the shop. Or copies can be purchased at our meetings.

If you wish to have a copy of a booklet and the above arrangements are not suitable, then please contact James Lusher by email at [LDFLHszoom@gmail.com](mailto:LDFLHszoom@gmail.com).

## Walter Head lays down his pen

This issue includes Walter Head's last intended piece, though he will always be welcome. So, this is the right time for an appreciation of the contributions which Walter has made over the years.

Our four-monthly Newsletters started in early 1994, with Michael Grieve as editor until 2005, and after 38 issues it became the twice-yearly Journal from 2006. From 2018 the quarterly *Wanderer* was developed to have a mix of news and articles, as it continues today. Only one thing has been constant through those years, and that is the regularity of contributions from Walter, for which both Michael and I have been very grateful.

Overall, Walter has made the greatest number of contributions as an author in the history of the Society. This is

partly due to an early start, because Walter's first article was in Newsletter No.8, in May 1996 over 26 years ago. Walter is one of a reducing group who have been members since the Society was founded, 1993/4, when he moved from Workington to Hopebeck in Brackenthwaite, where the Head family had farmed for centuries.

Being a native of the area gives a connection and experience which offcomer historians cannot match, particularly when writing about the history of the twentieth century and probably the later nineteenth. Walter knows local families personally, as well as historical sources, and that has made his numerous articles on the last 150 years so engaging and valuable.

His subjects are mostly about life here, in youth and in old age, in peace and in war. Walter has studied, and will continue to study, the lives of those who served and those who fell in the two world wars. He was granted Honorary Membership of the society in 2018, after the publication of *They Lie in Foreign Fields*, which can be found on the *Publications* page of our website.

To see the subjects on which Walter has written, it is only necessary to go to the *Journal* page of our website and pick a Newsletter or Journal from No.8 onwards, and more likely than not you will find an interesting contribution from Walter.

*Derek Denman, Editor*

### ***'Cumbrian Lives': – a unique online resource***

*A Dictionary of Cumbrian Biography* has been launched recently at [www.cumbrianlives.org.uk](http://www.cumbrianlives.org.uk). It is modelled on the prestigious Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, which it complements. The *Cumbrian Lives* website features the lives of a wide range of individuals, some who were prominent in their field, others less well-known.

This growing resource currently includes over one hundred especially researched long biographies and an index of 3,000 people with shorter entries. Among the men and women featured are

climbers, huntsmen, cattle breeders, cheese makers, sports and crafts people, as well as writers, artists, teachers, actors, clergymen, industrialists, engineers, lawyers and people from other walks of life. New biographies continue to be added. They are included on the basis of advocacy for each proposed subject.

The project was founded in 1998 by Dr David A. Cross, who has worked in close collaboration with Richard Hall, senior archivist at Kendal and Stephen White, librarian of the Jackson collection at Carlisle Library, as well as a wider a group of local historians, archivists, librarians and other contributors. Kevin Grice, Jean Warburton and Tim Cockerill between them have researched and written over 50 long biographies. One of the challenges is to include more biographies of women, whose lives have not been well documented.

Browsing this website can be a fascinating experience. The dictionary can be searched by surname, location, and occupation. Cumbrian Lives is a work-in-progress. Visitors are invited to leave feedback and make suggestions.

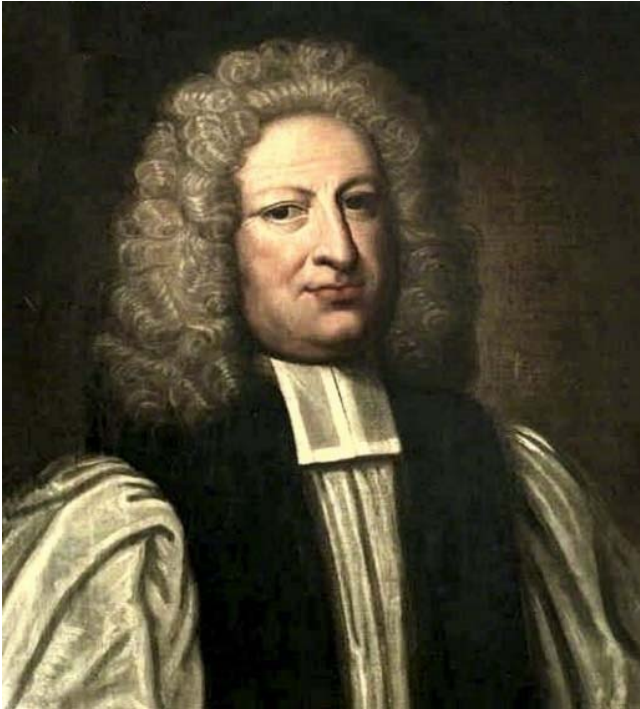
*Lena Stanley-Clamp*

## **Meeting Reports**

### ***Talk: 'Early Naturalists in Lakeland' 14 July***

Professor Ian Hodkinson delivered a talk on the early naturalists in the Lakes area. Ian's career was as a professional biologist, and since his retirement he has turned to researching the history of natural history studies in the Lakes area. Two years ago, his book *Natural Awakenings: Early Naturalists in Lakeland* was published by the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, and his talk was based on this.

Ian introduced us to eleven of the very earliest naturalists, wandering their local fells and valleys identifying plants and sharing their findings with other people, both locally and nationally.



**Bishop Nicholson by Michael Dahl**

Without exception the people talked about were men, many were clergymen, several were shoemakers and several from Kendal. They cover the period from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century to early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In this report, space does not allow more than the briefest mention of these pioneering individuals, with a little background and a few interesting facts.

Thomas Lawson (1630 – 1691) was a Quaker schoolmaster and plant collector, born in Yorkshire, but who lived most of his life in The Lakes. He sent specimens to John Ray, who produced the first scientific classification of British plants. Lawson's name lives on in that of a variety of hawkweed from France, described in 1779 and given the name *Hieracium Lawsonii*.

William Nicholson (1655 – 1727) was Bishop of Carlisle, a man of wide interests including fish, fossils and antiquities as

well as plants. He was a friend of Lawson but opposed in philosophy. He too sent rarities to John Ray.

John Robinson (active 1690 – 1710), also known as John Fitz-Roberts, on account of there being too many others named John Robinson in Kendal. He was a shoemaker and botanist who collected fossils and plants, selling them on to scientists and other collectors in Oxford and London. A group of 16 of his specimens is now preserved in the Natural History Museum.

Thomas Robinson (circa 1646 – 1719) was another clergyman, a naturalist of Ousby. He was a flat-earther and creationist and saw his botanical study as being to

the glory of God and to demonstrate his theological beliefs. In an interesting link with our Society's recent activities, he invested heavily in the Goldscope Mines and when they went bust, he lost his investments and ran off to sea. Robinson published *An Essay towards a Natural History of Westmorland and Cumberland* in 1709.

Charles Leigh (1662 – 1707) was a physician and naturalist of Manchester, a self-publicist of little talent, whose work was poorly regarded. However, his name is remembered in three North American sunflowers named *Helianthus Leighia*.

John Wilson (1696 – 1751) was born at Longsleddale at a time when a family of herbalists called Lickbarrow was active in the dale, using herbal medicine to cure illness. He became another shoemaker of Kendal and was a lifelong atheist. Wilson taught himself Latin in order to follow his botanical interests and in 1744 published what we might call an early field guide to wildflowers, complete with illustrations of

the flowers and leaves, written in English to serve a general readership. He called this *A Synopsis of British Plants in Ray's Method*. Wilson added two previously unknown species of plants to the English list and later had a genus named after him – the Australian Silky *Wilsonia*.

William Hudson (1634 – 1793) was born at Kendal, where he received a better education than Wilson and went to London to be apprenticed as an apothecary, where he also became a demonstrator at the Society of Apothecaries' Chelsea Physic Garden. He made regular donations of plant specimens to the Royal Society and in 1762 published *Flora Angelica* in Latin, containing local plants not previously identified.

James Jenkinson (1738 – 1808) was another Quaker, born in Yealand Conyers, Lancashire. He was a botanist, master of the Friends School in the village and he later published *A Generic and Specific Description of British Plants* in 1775, in English and aimed at the general public.

William Richardson (1699 – 1767) was another clergyman; curate and schoolmaster at Crosthwaite before being appointed vicar of Dacre church. He published on the natural history of the Ullswater area, focussing primarily on mammals, birds and fish, but including the rarer plants.

John Heysham (1753 – 1834) was born in Lancaster, and attended the school where Jenkinson was schoolmaster. He then studied medicine at Edinburgh and later settled at Carlisle where he worked as a physician. He made an important contribution to public health in such matters as rabies in dogs and typhus (then known as jail fever). His interest in bills of mortality (lists of causes and ages of death) led to an approach by the Sun Life Assurance Company and ultimately to actuarial tables of life expectancy. Heysham is famous for producing the first serious attempt at an extensive catalogue of animals in Cumberland. Published in 1794, *A Catalogue of Cumberland Animals* included mammals and fish, though insects were almost entirely absent. This now serves as a baseline of species then

abundant in the county and provides stark evidence for what we have lost – sweet mart (pine martin), foul mart (pole cat) and the wildcat, ptarmigan, dotterel, and corncrake; all common then, but now lost. Heysham was buried alongside Carlisle Cathedral and there are several memorials: one in Richardson Road cemetery, and commemorative windows at Carlisle Cathedral and Lancaster Priory.

John Gough (1757 – 1825). Known as 'The Blind Philosopher', Gough was born in Kendal into a Quaker family, though he was later disowned when he married in a conventional church. He was blinded by smallpox at the age of three but did not let this stand in his way. He learned to use all his senses, including touch, taste and smell and developed a prodigious memory. He taught himself maths. later instructed John Dalton and set mathematical puzzles in magazines. He was a friend of Wordsworth and featured in *The Excursion*. He published fifty papers, covering a range of topics including the effect of sound on unsighted people. He kept meticulous records of meteorological events, the migration of birds, linking these to observed data on temperature and climate. He described the effects of temperature on animals (torpor in dormice) and the importance of water for plants. For example, stonecrop takes up water from its roots, not the atmosphere as had been previously thought. Duckweed dried out for decades can spring back to life if provided with water. Gough was buried at Kendal and is only recently becoming recognised for his considerable achievements.

What this talk illustrated is the both the different backgrounds of these men, while at the same time, they enjoyed close connections. They were exploring the same area of interest and shared their findings locally while making links to the wider world, some of which live on in the names of plants. They really were on the map in their own time and, thanks to Ian Hodkinson, that place in the world is now being celebrated more widely as it deserves.

*Sandra Shaw*

## ***Historical walk: 'Discovering Loweswater's Early History', 21 August***

The earliest mention of Loweswater in the historical records is in 1138, relating to the grant of a chapel on the site of the church. So it was appropriate that our exploration of the early history of Loweswater should start here. Derek Denman furnished us each with a detailed set of notes, maps and pictures, to guide and illustrate our route. The current building dates from the nineteenth century, only the bell is medieval (see Wanderer May 2022 for its story).

As we walked past Kirkhead Derek told us something of the ancient parishes that covered the area, the influence of the St. Bees priory and the establishment of the deer park area extending down to High Park. Further up the path off to the right are the remains of Bargate, a fulling mill at this time. It is likely that the raised earthworks in the adjacent field was a 'Tenters' site where the woollen cloth would have been stretched over wooden frames to dry. We dropped down to Mosedale beck where the route of the leat that powered Bargate could clearly be seen.

Returning to the main Mosedale path we were in a good position to appreciate just how extensive a parish Loweswater is. At one time its southerly range included all that we could see, Melbreak, Hen Comb, Starling Dodd and beyond to Brandreth. Even today it extends up to Sour Milk Ghyll opposite Buttermere.

The next destination was Loweswater Pele.

This is the raised dome adjacent to Crummock water. Could this feature have been the origin of the word 'Balnes' (ball-shaped) the ancient barony that Loweswater is based on? It would be a splendid setting for a grand manor house, occupying as it does a good defensive position and likely surrounded by a moat at the time. Derek explained that a manor was more likely to have been sited closer to other habitations. A nearby ruin was identified as a suitable spot for a history group to enjoy tea and sandwiches.

Derek has done a number of these historical walks each focusing on a different period. This early period runs up to 1485 the founding of the Tudor dynasty. On the return to the church Derek gave us a taste of the next century's developments, how Richard Robynson worked to create something more like modern Loweswater from the patchwork of medieval holdings. Thanks are due to Derek for giving us an interesting and enjoyable day.

*Richard Easton*

### **A Pictorial Report**

As with the Goldscope walk, Roger Hiley has included this walk in the August report

**The group enjoys a glimpse of Loweswater – photo by John Macfarlane**



on his Loweswater Cam website. There you will find many more images from the afternoon, and you may notice an opportunity to purchase a lavishly illustrated calendar for 2023.

Please see the report at:  
[http://www.loweswatercam.co.uk/220817\\_History\\_and\\_a\\_History\\_Walk.htm](http://www.loweswatercam.co.uk/220817_History_and_a_History_Walk.htm)

### **Talk: 'Harriet Martineau; resident of Ambleside, Citizen of the World' - 8 September**

The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was announced just an hour before the start of this meeting, and so after a minute's silence the talk proceeded for the forty people attending in the hall and online.

There was a previous talk in 2005 on Harriet Martineau (HM) in Ambleside, given by Barbara Todd, and this talk, by Dr Christopher Donaldson of Lancaster University, complemented the earlier one by widening the scope to include her growth as a writer and her international travels and relationships.

#### **Harriet Martineau in 1833**



When Harriet Martineau came to live in the Lake District in 1845 she was an established and well known writer of some celebrity, looking for a quieter and more pleasant environment in which to continue her writing after another illness. That celebrity, however, caused her to leave the area during the high season, to escape her role as a tourist attraction. Dr Donaldson illustrated her world-wide celebrity through the visit to see her in Ambleside by three very welcome American visitors, William Wells Brown and Ellen & William Craft, who had escaped and gained their freedom from slavery and would consult her on their campaigning for abolition. HM had written stridently against the British West Indian slavery in the 1830s, and in her tour of 1834-6 had not been welcome in some of the slave states of the US. *Society in America* was published in 1837.

HM was born in 1802 the daughter of Norfolk textile manufacturer descended from the Calvinist Huguenots, refugees from Catholic France. Their Unitarian beliefs ensured a good education for the girls, but by 1814 she was aware of her deafness, which limited her future options as a governess. Turning to writing, her work was published in the Unitarian *Monthly Repository* in 1822, which was to become her source of income after her father's business failed in 1829. Proselytising for Unitarianism was followed by a similar approach to promoting political economy as the driving principle of reform in the early 1830s, through the *Illustrations of Political Economy*, or the *Poor Law Tales*. This series of fictional stories was very successful as a popular presentation of basic economics as applied, for example, to justify the New Poor Law and the workhouse system, and she soon gained the support of the utilitarian and radical Whig politicians of the time. It was the basis of her celebrity and earned her living. This confirmed her long-term political beliefs in liberalism and self-improvement.

Before coming to Ambleside she had published her novel, *Deerbrook*,





1839, set in English village life. Though not so well received at the time, perhaps through having a flimsy plot, it is now regarded as important in the transition from the works of Jane Austen, which HM read in preparation, to the Victorian novels of female writers. Her acquaintance Charlotte Bronte spoke well of it.

Her arrival in Ambleside in 1845, as a form of social retirement, marked the start of ten years of good health and productive work. In October 1846 she began an eight-month tour of Egypt, the Holy Lands, and the Middle East, *Eastern Life, Past and Present*, 1848. Before that she had designed her house, The Knoll, had it built, and had established her presence in the district. Keen on the promotion of healthy living conditions and improvement, her tendency to publish everything she did, for example *Life in the Sick Room*, 1844, and everything she believed was right, resulted in *A year in Ambleside*, 1850, and the didactic *Our Farm of two Acres*, 1859. For the tourists she was prevailed upon to write her *Guide to Windermere*, 1854, which was quickly

### The eleven stages of womanhood, 1840s

followed by her popular *Complete Guide to the Lakes* in 1855.

HM believed in promoting, through her writing and her actions, what she thought was right, and in Ambleside she did not court popularity or the good opinion of the principal inhabitants. She had a wider circle of visitors, including Charlotte Bronte and those from other continents such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom she had first met in the US in 1836.

Though her political and humanitarian opinions were constant, her religious beliefs changed over time, moving by 1851 to a published promotion of her atheism, which clearly affected her local social relations and caused a break with her brother James. She was also susceptible to pseudo-sciences, crediting her recovery in 1845, and her years of good health in Ambleside, to Mesmerism, which she promoted even as a cure for cattle.

In Ambleside she was disgusted, in print, with both the physical and moral state of the town's inhabitants and houses, and she instigated projects to improve the state of housing, sanitation and personal improvement. As an improver she had a complicated relationship with that other famous writer, the elderly Wordsworth at Rydal. Dr Donaldson spoke of how her approach to the railways was very different from that of Wordsworth, though she arrived just after the 'rash assault' debate was settled. While Wordsworth saw the inhabitants of the Lake District as being physically and morally in harmony with the land they farmed, and in need of protection from the contamination of an industrialising society, Martineau thought that the railways could only bring improvement to a society deeply in need of it.

The discussion focussed on whether HM was a feminist, though in the 1840s the term would not be understood, and the judgement must be a modern one in retrospect. Her place in women's studies and the consequent interest in her life and works seem to affirm a feminist label, evidenced for example by *Female Industry*, 1859. She provides a rare example of how one independent woman could successfully ignore the customary divisions between the proper roles and interest of men and women, rather than being simply a general campaigner for the rights of women. Her life and her opinions are extremely well documented through her work, including in her *Autobiography*, started in 1855, but published posthumously in 1877. Michael R Hill's *An Independent Woman's Lake District Writings: Harriet Martineau*, was noted as a valuable compendium.

Though she was briefly engaged to be married in 1826, her intended's death from 'brain fever' provided an escape before stage four of a woman's expected life (see image p.9). She may not have been well suited to the role of a dutiful wife and mother. 'I am, in truth, very thankful for not having married at all', she wrote in her biography.

*Derek Denman*

## **'Cumbrian Artists: Fells, Mists and Waterfalls' – 17 September**

**This Bernard Bradbury Memorial Lecture was organised by the Society and held at the Kirkgate Centre**

Dr David A. Cross gave an entertaining and wide-ranging lecture about the artists associated with Cumbria over the past three centuries. He went far beyond the fells and waterfalls promised in the title to present a personal selection of artists and their work grouped according to genres.

The lecture began with the artists of the Cockermouth School of Painting (1730-1880), who were mostly portrait painters - this was a genre from which they could make a living. Joseph Faulder (1730-1816) is considered the founder of the Cockermouth School. The only remaining example of his work is a Royal Coat of Arms at St Mary's Church in Harrington. His nephew and pupil Joseph Sutton (1762-1843) was very successful in Cumbria as a portrait painter. He lived at Rogerscale where he trained apprentices and built a studio. A portrait of Reverend Lancaster Dodgson, who was a curate of Embleton, and later Vicar of Brough, is a good example of Sutton's work. Joseph Sutton had many commissions from the family at Muncaster Castle. He painted their portraits and copies of works by the masters *The Triple Portrait of Charles I* by Anthony Van Dyke was commissioned by the king to serve as a model for his bust by the Italian sculptor Bernini. These two original works are on display side-by-side in the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace while Sutton's copy hangs at Muncaster Castle.

George Sheffield Senior (1800-1852) was among Sutton's most gifted apprentices and had some success in Cumbria, exhibiting at Carlisle Academy and in Whitehaven. He later studied at the Royal Academy Schools and for a time tried to establish himself in London without much success. Sheffield's portrait of John Pennyfeather with a rose in his buttonhole alludes to the sitter's

interesting life story. He was abandoned as a baby on the steps of Flatt Hall in Whitehaven. He had a penny and a feather in his hands, hence his name. Pennyfeather was taken in by Lord Lowther and became his head gardener. He trained at Kew Gardens and was one of the founder members of the Royal Horticultural Society. Samuel Crosthwaite (1791-1868) was another of Sutton's pupils who became a noted Cumbrian painter in his time. John Lewthwaite's (1806-1866) painting of John Steel MP for Cocker-mouth is in the collection of the Cocker-mouth Heritage Group.

Dr Cross pointed out that among the many artists associated with Cumbria there were dynasties of artists such as the Gilpins. Captain John Bernard Gilpin established a drawing school in Carlisle in his retirement. His son Reverend William Gilpin became well-known as the advocate of the picturesque and of the aesthetics of the sublime. His travel guide for the tourists provided also guidance to artists on what to paint. This was satirised by Thomas Rowlandson in the Dr Syntax prints. William's brother, Sawrey Gilpin, became a professional painter specialising in horses and dogs; he was a member of the Royal Academy. Born in Wigton, Robert Smirk (1753-1845) was a painter and illustrator as well as scenery painter for the theatre. He was a member of the Royal Academy. Among his pictures is the dramatic portrait of the famous actress Sarah Siddon as Lady Macbeth. His son Robert Smirk (1780-1867) was an architect who designed the British Museum and other public buildings. He, too, was elected to the Royal Academy.

William Collingwood (1819-1903) was a noted watercolour artist and a member of the Royal Watercolour Society. His son, William Gershon Collingwood (1854-1932), was an author, antiquarian and artist. He was a friend and biographer of Ruskin. Collingwood's interest in Nordic mythology found an expression in a number of paintings and engravings of Nordic gods. A painting by his sister Dora Collingwood Altounyan (1886-1964) depicts their sister Barbara. This peaceful



**John Pennyfeather, by George Sheffield**

garden scene with a Lakeland view in the distance dates back to World War One and shows her reading a newspaper containing a list of casualties. Dora Collingwood's children inspired Arthur Ransome to write *Swallows and Amazons*.

The Heaton-Cooper dynasty of artists began with Alfred Heaton-Cooper (1863-1929), a painter well-known for his landscapes of Norway and the Lakeland, who established his studio in Ambleside. His successful career benefitted from the increase in Lakeland tourism. The human figures in his landscapes tell a story and convey a sense of the grandeur of their surroundings. Alfred's son William Heaton-Cooper (1903-1995) was a celebrated landscape painter. His knowledge of the Lakeland Fells and interest in geology found expression in his painting *Scafell Pike from Upper Eskdale*. He was elected a member of the British Institute of Watercolour Painters and was a President of the Lake Artists Society. William moved his father's studio to Grasmere where his success was boosted

by the improvement in colour printing technique. William's wife, Ofelia Gordon Bell (1915–1975), was a noted sculptor whose figure of St Bede can be seen at the Catholic Church in Carlisle.

Among the other artists that were elected to the Royal Academy, Dr Cross mentioned the sculptor Francis Derwent Wood (1879-1926) who was born in Keswick. His sculpture Atalanta was exhibited at the Royal Academy. Wood's exposure to the disfigured soldiers he saw while volunteering in hospitals in World War One led him to construct special masks which reflected the men's looks before their injuries. James Bateman (1893-1959) was born in Kendal. He specialised in rural subjects and pastoral landscapes. His *Commotion in the Cattle Ring* depicts a dramatic scene at Banbury when the bull escaped and the dealers scrambled for safety. Sheila Fell (1931-1979), who was born in Aspatria, is well-known today. She was befriended by L.S. Lowry who thought highly of her work. They used to paint side by side at Maryport and elsewhere. Her expressionistic landscapes of Cumbria earned her the membership of the Royal Academy.

The German Dadaist artist Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948) was a precursor of pop and installation art, whose work was branded as degenerate (*Entartete Kunst*) by the Nazis. He sought refuge in Britain but was interned on the Isle of Man where he continued to work with whatever materials he could find. He spent his final years at Ambleside painting conventional scenes and portraits to earn a living. A grant from the Museum of Modern Art in New York allowed him to work on one of his most cherished creations: the Merzbarn installation on the Cylinder Estate at Elterwater. This unfinished work is now on display at Newcastle University.

Josefina de Vasconcellos (1904-2005) lived most of her long life in Cumbria. She worked in bronze, stone, wood, lead and perspex. During the war, while living in Little Langdale, she worked on large sculptures such as *The Last Chimera*, representing the youth of Britain

fighting the Nazi monster. Her works were exhibited at the Royal Academy and can be seen in many public spaces including in Cumbria. In old age she found it difficult to work in stone, the material in which she produced her best work. She worked in stone again on her final piece *Escape to Light* (2001), a commemoration of the men of the Off-Shore Rescue Service at Haverigg on the Cumbrian coast.

Among the masters in portraying the human figure was George Romney (1734-1802). Born in Dalton-in-Furness, this son of a cabinet maker was the most successful portrait painter of his day. His favourite model was Emma Lady Hamilton portrayed in various mythological guises. Romney's special talent in portraying children can be seen in his portrait of Edward and Randle Bootle, the children of a Lancashire MP.

Jumping a couple of centuries, we saw a portrait of children and their mother by George Howard, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carlisle (1843-1911), who was a patron of the arts and a gifted artist. It depicts his daughter *Lady Cecilia Roberts and her Children Winifred and Christina*. Winifred Roberts was to become Winifred Nicholson (1893-1991), a renowned Cumbrian artist and a member of the Nicholson dynasty of artists. James Durden (1878–1964) lived near Keswick, his portraits and Cumbrian scenes are in the collections of the Keswick Museum. He designed the Whitehaven War Memorial in the 1920s.

Among the many Cumbrian landscapes featured in the later part of the lecture a few caught my particular attention: *Waterfall at Ambleside seen through a window* by William Havell (1782-1857); *Windermere from Troutbeck* by J.C. Ibbetson (1759-1817); *Summer in Eskdale* by James Macintosh Patrick (1907-98) and finally *Maryport* by Percy Kelly (1918-93).

Dr Cross's erudition in presenting this eclectic selection of artworks demonstrated the great variety of genres and styles of Cumbrian artistic heritage and gave the audience a taste for exploring it further.

*Lena Stanley-clamp*

## Articles

### *A Country Boy's Pets*

*by Walter Head*

After over twenty years writing articles for the Society's Newsletter, Journal, and Wanderer I have decided to put down my pen and relax. So, my final item is a more light-hearted article of a snapshot of life of a young village boy in the 1950s.

Although my father was raised at low Hollins Farm in Brackenthwaite, where he and his brothers all had their own dogs, we never had a dog at Dean as my father said we didn't have enough space to give a dog the freedom it deserved. So, I never had a pet until one day the farmer from across the road from our house came to the gate and took from his jacket pocket a young rabbit, which he said I could keep

as a pet. As we had nowhere to keep it, I took it back to the field and let it go free. I then thought that it could be fun to have a pet rabbit. My father built a large hutch to keep a rabbit in. It was raised up off the ground on wooden legs and had a separate section for sleeping and a large area with a wire mesh front for it to move about in. However, before I could go to catch a young rabbit we were in the car and came across a young jackdaw with a broken wing. We took it home but as often the case with a bird with a broken wing it died a few days later.

I then decided to have a jackdaw as a pet and as I knew where there was a jackdaw nest in a hollow tree. I caught a young bird just as it was ready to leave the nest. Back home we treated it to get rid of any fleas, lice, etc., and installed it in the hutch. At that age I didn't know how to sex a jackdaw, in fact I still don't know

how to, and so I gave it the exotic name of Jack. It was a period of warm sunny weather, and I would sit in the garden with the jackdaw tethered to me by a length of string. This had a 'D' shaped loop in the centre with the straight part of the 'D' replaced by elastic so that if the bird got to the full length of the string it didn't get a sudden jerk. It had a perch and a bowl of water in which it frequently took a bath and seemed to enjoy it.

After about seven to ten days: disaster. As I opened the hutch door the jackdaw flew past my arm and flew off into the sky. It did three or four rounds of the house and then came and landed on the hutch roof. It was never shut in again. It would sit on my shoulder and liked to sit on my shoulder as I rode my bicycle. Jack loved cheese and onion flavoured crisps. If it was given plain crisps it would just throw them away.



Normally Jack flew around the village area with the flock of wild jackdaws, and it was a good sight to see when I whistled and the jackdaw peeled away from the flock and glided down in a graceful arc to land on my shoulder or outstretched arm. When waiting for the school bus Jack would sit beside me on the garden gate. When I boarded the bus it flew away to join the other jackdaws. It was sitting on the gate when it was time for me to return. For a bird who liked to have a bath it never liked heavy rain. The door to our back kitchen or utility

room was normally left ajar and in there was a wooden rail suspended from the ceiling. We always knew when heavy rain was imminent as Jack would come back and sit on the rail bar in the back kitchen.

I enjoyed this jackdaw but one day it never returned, and I never knew what happened to this free-flying pet.

# **Joseph Sutton: a Quaker Artist in the Lorton Valley, 1762-1843**

by Lena Stanley-Clamp

My curiosity about this largely forgotten painter was first aroused when I came across his portrait of Jeremiah Spencer of South Lodge.<sup>1</sup> The main source for what is known about Sutton's life and work is Mary Burkett's book *Sutton and His Circle* in which she devoted a chapter to him.<sup>2</sup> Burkett herself drew, among other sources, on a passage in John Askew's *Guide to Cockermonth* of 1866. The *Guide* was published over 20 years after Sutton's death; the author relied on the recollections of the locals, which sometimes proved unreliable.<sup>3</sup> Hoping to discover more, I decided to dig deeper and look at sources contemporary to Sutton. This article puts on record new facts and insights into Sutton's life and work.

## **The Cockermonth beginnings**

Joseph Sutton was born on 28 December 1762 in the house of his uncle Joseph Faulder in Cockermonth. The Sutton family were from Tarraby, near Carlisle. Sutton's father Benjamin was a skinner and a member of the Carlisle Quaker Meeting. Joseph's mother Mary was a sister of Joseph Faulder, who was a mentor to the young Sutton and a remarkable man.

Joseph Faulder, aka Falder, (1730-1816) was a sign and portrait painter. He was a Quaker who did not believe in life after death and argued convincingly about complete annihilation. Askew mentions that his 'blameless life as regards the

fulfilment of every social duty saved him while living from any violent attacks'. A testimony by the composer John Woodcock Graves (author of *D'ye ken John Peel?*) gives a full measure of the man. Graves attributed his best education to an old bachelor, Joseph Falder: 'He fixed me in the love of truth and bent my purpose to pursue it'.<sup>4</sup>

Faulder's reputation as a portrait painter was noted by Askew but none of his portraits has survived. In his will, Faulder left freehold land adjoining his garden in Cockermonth to Joseph Sutton. In a codicil dated 1783, he wrote 'As my Nephew Joseph Sutton is Arrived at Manhood I think it would be a Pity to sell my utensils or Stock in Trade therefore I wish he had it for his share'.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that the 21-year-old Sutton was already a painter by that time. It was Faulder who encouraged Joseph Sutton to enrol at the RA at the rather mature age of 36.

## **The debate on visual arts in the Quaker Press**

Visual arts, and portrait painting in particular, were not well-regarded in the Quaker communities. In fact, they were anathema to many members of the Society of Friends. Both art making and art collecting was frowned upon in Quaker society. Thomas Clarkson in *A Portraiture of Quakerism* commented that in all his intercourse with the Society of Friends he has rarely seen more than three or four paintings or prints in Quaker homes. These were either an engraving of *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* by Benjamin West, a print of the plan of a slave ship showing the inhumanity of the slave trade, and a

<sup>1</sup> See 'From Antigua to Cockermonth: The Story of South Lodge and its Residents' by Lena Stanley-Clamp, *Wanderer*, August 2020

<sup>2</sup> Mary E. Burkett, *Sutton and His Circle. The Cockermonth School of Painting 1750-1880*, Skiddaw Press 2001. See also the recent article 'Joseph Sutton and the Painting House' by Adam Baker, which is based on Burkett's book, *Wanderer*, August 2022.

<sup>3</sup> J Askew, *Guide to Cockermonth with an Account of its Remarkable Men and Local*

*Traditions*, 1866. The preface to the second edition of 1872 mentions that the complaints concerning errors have been numerous.

<sup>4</sup> *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 4, 1972, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/graves-john-woodcock-3654>

<sup>5</sup> CASW/DWM/764/8/2, J. Faulder's will dated 21 December 1773, Codicil of 7 January 1783

plan of the Quaker School at Ackworth in Yorkshire.<sup>6</sup>

A debate conducted on the pages of the Quaker magazines *The Friend* and *The British Friend* - in response to an article in the September 1844 issue of *The Friend* - presented the fine arts as the source 'from which so many of our moral evils flow'. This view was rather apologetically opposed by those who held that while fine arts were associated with much that was objectionable, they were essentially praiseworthy.<sup>7</sup> In the early years of his career as a painter Joseph Sutton could have been something of a local curiosity as a Quaker portrait painter were it not for the teaching and support of Joseph Faulder.

### The Royal Academy years 1798-1801

Sutton had the good fortune of studying at the Royal Academy during what came to be known as the Golden Age of British Portrait

Painting and the general blossoming of the arts. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), the first president of the Academy, was the proponent of the Grand Manner of historical and portrait painting. Reynolds and the leading painters of the period idealised their sitters and depicted them

in informal poses in lavish interiors or in architectural or pastoral backgrounds that exalted their social status.

Sutton was a student at the Royal Academy from 1798 to 1801. Reynolds's influential *Discourses on Art*, which dealt with the purpose of art and the artist's relation to tradition, were first delivered as lectures to the RA students between 1769-1790. They would have been fundamental texts during Sutton's time at the Academy and have remained in print ever since.

While at RA Sutton would have attended lectures and life-drawing classes. An aquatint dated 1808 *Drawing from Life at the Royal Academy, Somerset House* although satirical in intent gives an impression of what those classes looked like.<sup>8</sup>

**Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Charles Pugin, etching, aquatint and watercolour.**



DRAWING FROM LIFE AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, SOMERSET HOUSE.

*London: The Author's School at the Antiquarian Repository of Arts, 1808.*

<sup>6</sup> Ben Beck, 'A dissertation on Quaker Aesthetics', <https://benbeck.co.uk/dissertation/2aesthetics.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Ben Beck, op cit

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/drawing-from-life-at-the-royal-academy-somerset-house>

The only evidence of Sutton's work during his time at the RA can be found in the catalogues of the three annual exhibitions in which a few pictures by Sutton were shown. Unusually, the 1798 list of exhibitors showing their 'Places of Abode' in London, did not record his address. In subsequent years he was listed only as Joseph Sutton, Cockermouth, Cumberland. It is possible he stayed as a guest in the London homes of his Quaker connections. In the 1798 exhibition, Sutton's first, there were over 1000 works on show and among the hundreds of exhibitors there were 38 Academicians and 14 Associate Members.

**Christie's Catalogue description: Portrait of a Young Girl, in a White Dress with a Blue Sash, a Book in Her Right Hand, in a Landscape, J. Sutton, 1798.<sup>9</sup>**



The star attraction of that exhibition was a huge historical painting by William Beechey: *His Majesty Reviewing the Third Dragoon Guards and the Tenth Light Dragoons*, commissioned by George III. Historical scenes were then still the most highly valued genre. Sutton exhibited a *Portrait of An Artist* and two works entitled *Portrait of a Young Lady in the Society of Quakers* (of unidentified sitters). These last two portraits are almost certainly the ones I found recently in the Paul Mellon Centre photographic archive. The images are signed and dated 1798. The following year just one picture by Sutton was listed in the catalogue: *Portrait of a gentleman*. The catalogue of the 1800 Exhibition mentions only a *Portrait of Miss Hoskins*. Neither of these images or sitters can be identified.

**At home at Rogerscale**

A few years after his return from London, on 29 November 1803 Joseph Sutton married Ann Winder in a Quaker ceremony and settled at Rogerscale, Whinfell, for the rest of his long life. At the time of their wedding they were both 40 years of age. Ann Winder was a woman of independent means; she inherited her brother Peter Winder's property at Rogerscale on his death in 1802.<sup>10</sup> In her will of 23 January 1823 she made provisions for all her 'Messuages Lands Tenements in the Townships of Whinfell and Lorton' and everything belonging to her (all her household goods, livestock, shares in ships etc. ) to be held upon trust by her executors, sold at auction and their value distributed to a long list of beneficiaries in Ann's twelve-page will. To her husband Joseph she left seven closes of

<sup>9</sup> The paintings were in an anonymous sale at Christies, 31 October 2007. Digital image from the Paul Mellon Centre Photographic Archive <https://photoarchive.paul-mellon->

[centre.ac.uk/objects/494434/portrait-of-a-young-girl-in-a-white-dress-with-a-blue-sash](https://www.paulmelloncentre.ac.uk/objects/494434/portrait-of-a-young-girl-in-a-white-dress-with-a-blue-sash)  
<sup>10</sup> CASW/DWM/764/5



land which she granted him to occupy, possess and enjoy during the term of his natural life.<sup>11</sup>

Joseph Sutton owned or leased several properties in Cockermouth, beginning in 1789 with a lease for 100 years of a house on Cocker Bridge concluded between him and Joseph Faulder. The many files of documents from Waugh & Musgrave solicitors concerning Sutton's properties are kept at the Cumbria Archives in Whitehaven. They await a local historian to whom the subject may appeal. On a torn piece of paper dated August 1830, a Commissioner for Enclosures at Lorton recorded that Joseph and Ann Sutton were required to erect fences on their allotment of 3 acres 3 roods at Bleas Brow and Thwaite.<sup>12</sup>

The Suttons' family life at Rogerscale was struck by tragedy in 1805 when their infant son William died aged 11 months.<sup>13</sup> They had no other children. In 1832, Sutton's nephew and namesake Joseph Sutton, who lived at Rogerscale, committed suicide when of unsound mind.<sup>14</sup> Edward Robinson, who lived in the vicinity at Whinfall Hall and whose father was a contemporary of Sutton, thought the couple's marriage was not happy. He speculated that 'Sutton was glad at times to retire to his "painting house" – everything not always being smooth with his mate'.<sup>15</sup> In 1822, Sutton extended the farm dwelling on his property by building an adjoining Painting House for himself and his apprentices.<sup>16</sup>

Sutton's wife Ann died in 1836.<sup>17</sup> She lived on her own in the later part of her life. The announcement of the sale by auction of her 59-acre property at Rogerscale in the *Carlisle Journal* mentions that she lived there 'lately'.<sup>18</sup>

It is recorded in the 1840 Tithe Apportionment for the Township of Whinfall that Joseph Sutton was the owner and occupier of an estate at Rogerscale of 15 acres of arable land, pastures and wood (Round Close and six Wilson's fields). He also owned two acres of arable land at Ridding Houses. Sutton's nieces Martha Sutton, Mary Jackson and her husband John Jackson lived with him at Rogerscale in his final years.<sup>19</sup>

#### Sutton's art and his sitters

Sutton's standing as a painter would have been much enhanced by his training at the Royal Academy. John Askew in his *Guide* styled him a Member of the Royal Academy, but Sutton was never in contention for that elevated status. He was however in great demand as a painter by the local aristocracy, gentry and others.

Portrait painting was a flourishing genre in the Georgian era. The new wealth in the country flowing from the profits of the East India Company, the slave trade and slave labour in the West Indies financed more luxurious ways of life. It was a matter of prestige for the prosperous members of society to display works of art and family portraits in their homes. The most celebrated artists could command very high fees. In the later part of the 18th century a portrait commission could cost between 30 and 100 guineas depending on the standing of the artist and the size of the painting. These figures were very far above Joseph Sutton's fees back in Cumbria. In a letter to Lord Muncaster in 1812, Sutton states he had only rated his labour at about the wages of a clerk in middling class. In an account he submitted the following year he charged three guineas per portrait.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> CASW/DWM/764/3, Ann Sutton's probate will in which she appointed as her executors John W Fletcher, Jonathan Cooper and Isaac Harris.

<sup>12</sup> CASW/DWM/1/5

<sup>13</sup> England & Wales, Quaker Burials 1578-1841, via Findmypast

<sup>14</sup> CASW/DLEC/6/4/143/6, the verdict of the inquest.

<sup>15</sup> 'Extracts from Letters Written by Edmund Robinson ... to J.G. Brooker, 1931-1943'.

<sup>16</sup> J Askew, op cit; Adam Baker, op cit.

<sup>17</sup> Her death record could not be found. Her will was proved 18 April 1836.

<sup>18</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 11 June 1836

<sup>19</sup> CASW/DWM/764/2/1 Joseph Sutton's will dated 24 June 1840.

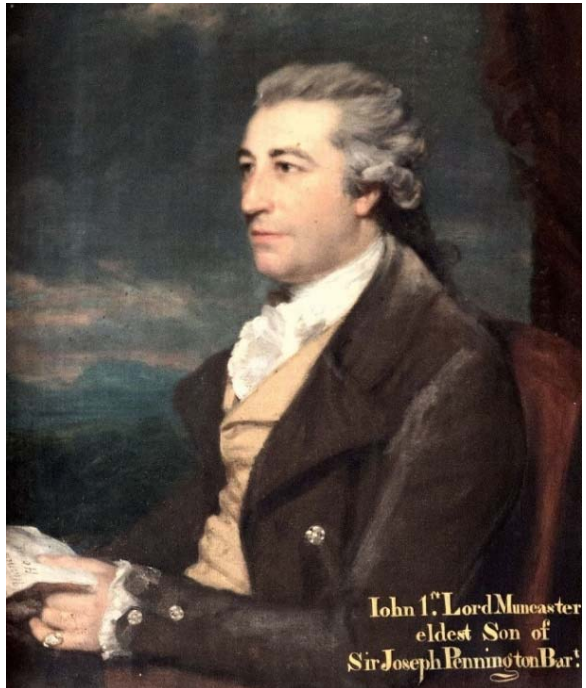
<sup>20</sup> Burkett, Mary, op cit, Appendix III, p.26

**The patronage of the Muncaster family**  
 Sutton had many commissions from the Muncaster family beginning with John Pennington, the 1st Baron Muncaster (1740-1813), who had the castle remodelled into a gothic mansion.<sup>21</sup> Lord Muncaster's portrait by Sutton shows a man of substance and dignity. His gaze is directed to a distant point, perhaps to the future. He holds a manuscript in his hand which, I think, alludes to his authorship of *Historical sketches of the slave trade, and of its effects in Africa. Addressed to the people of Great Britain.*<sup>22</sup> (This text became a recognized source book for the abolitionists.) An open sky and a view of his land and the fells provides added interest in the background. This is one of the most interesting of Sutton's portraits. It hangs in very good company at Muncaster Castle where there are beautiful portraits by Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough. Among the versions of this portrait, one is at Balcarres, the home of Muncaster's direct descendants. It was customary to have copies made and Sutton was a prolific copyist. There was a question of attribution attached to this portrait at one time, Sutton having been utterly forgotten.

*The Great Picture* is a very large painting on display in the Library. It is a portrait of Lord Muncaster and his two daughters. It shows a much older Lord Muncaster standing with his right hand raised in a dramatic pose. His eldest daughter Ann Jane Penelope Pennington is standing next to him. The younger daughter Maria Margaret Frances Pennington sits to his right holding a miniature of her

brother, who died in infancy. The painting conveys a sense of dramatic grandeur but its characters look frozen in time. Lord Muncaster's black dress references that he is in mourning after his wife's accidental death in 1806 while canvassing for him in the general elections. His declamatory gesture may be drawing attention to his achievement in rebuilding the castle or to indicate his involvement in political discourse. An early supporter of William Pitt the Younger, Lord Muncaster was disappointed in his chief ambitions in public life: to become MP for Cumberland and to hold public office.<sup>23</sup>

**John, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Muncaster ©Muncaster Castle. By kind permission of the Pennington Family of Muncaster Castle**



<sup>21</sup> *The Official Guidebook to Muncaster*, by Peter Frost-Pennington and Sarah Greenwood, Jarrold Publishing, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Published for John Stockdale, bookseller, London 1792. Found in the Roland Library catalogue, University of Manchester.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/pennington-sir-john-1741-1813>



at Mirehouse of horses, dogs and cattle in local country settings are attributed to Sutton. One of these works is signed by him and dated 1839. They show that Sutton was fluent in that genre. They lack however the poise and expression present in the animal paintings of his contemporaries George Stubbs or George Morland.

Sutton must have been

***The Great Picture* © Muncaster Castle, by kind permission of the Pennington Family. The Great Picture was completed in 1813 after Lord Muncaster's death.<sup>24</sup>**

There is a portrait at Muncaster of James Lindsay (1783-1869), the 24th Earl of Crawford and Balcarres who married Maria Margaret Frances Pennington in 1811. The portrait is dated 1812.<sup>25</sup> Elegantly dressed, James Lindsay looks straight out and, one is tempted to say, without blinking. There is however something evasive about his expression.

Although Joseph Sutton was known as a portrait painter, he worked also in other genres. In the accounts submitted to Lord Muncaster and his executors, Sutton mentions sea battle scenes that cost him 218 days of labour.<sup>26</sup> He also painted for the Muncaster family copies of portraits of historical characters by Anthony Van Dyck. A number of paintings

inspired by the views of the Lorton Vale but very few of his landscapes are mentioned in the sources. A view of Armathwaite Hall and Bassenthwaite Lake is at Hutton-in-the-Forest. The owners, the Vane family, also commissioned from Sutton copies of the portraits of their ancestors. These were painted by Sutton in a style that reflects the period of the originals. There were three murals painted by Sutton on the staircase of the house at High Rogerscale, which reportedly depicted scenes of Loweswater.<sup>27</sup> According to Edmund Robinson of Whinfall Hall a mural there was of the Scale Force waterfall.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Eliza Bell and her daughters**

Two fine portraits of the Bell family are in a private collection. They hold some surprises. The painting titled *Unknown Woman* circa 1830 in Mary Burkett's book, is in fact the portrait of Eliza Bell, née

<sup>24</sup> Sutton's account of 1813 mentions finishing the Great Picture, Burkett, Mary, op cit, Appendix III

<sup>25</sup> Paul Mellon Centre Photographic Archive

<sup>26</sup> Burkett, Mary, op cit, Appendix III

<sup>27</sup> Burkett, Mary, op cit, p. 19, footnote 3.

<sup>28</sup> 'Extracts from Letters Written by Edmund Robinson, Late of Whinfall Hall to J.G. Brooker, 1931-1943'

Smith (1783-1839). She was the wife of John Bell the pharmaceutical chemist, who was a founder and president of the Pharmaceutical Society. The Bells were a prominent Quaker family who lived in London and had Cumbrian roots going back many generations.<sup>29</sup> The Bells appreciated the visual arts. Their elder son Jacob studied art although he did not continue in that path. He was close friend and patron of celebrated artists such as Edwin Landseer and William Powell Firth. The Quaker communities had extensive social networks; it is likely that Joseph Sutton was introduced to the family through his Cumbrian connections. It is interesting to note that Sutton must have travelled to London for this commission giving him an opportunity to visit the art galleries. The family's tradition confirms that the portraits were painted in London.

Eliza Bell's portrait shows a woman of mature years. She is looking with confidence at the artist and at us. Her intelligence and warmth radiate from the picture. She is wearing a fashionable bonnet; her dress leaves only her face uncovered as befits a married woman. If one looks at this portrait long enough one may come to think she is someone one knows – a hallmark of a good portrait.

Another portrait by Sutton in this collection shows two young women mistakenly identified in Mary Burkett's book as Marian Spencer and her sister. Marian or Mary Ann Spencer of South Lodge, Cockermouth was born in December 1831 so would not have been born yet or, at best, would have been a small child when the portrait was painted.

The young women in this portrait are Eliza Bell (1808-1886) and Anne Bell (1811- ?). They were the daughters of Eliza and John Bell. The sisters look very



**Eliza Bell née Smith, circa 1830,  
private collection**

demure and about 20. They both look away from the viewer. Their closeness is shown in their posture. One of them, probably the younger Ann, rests her arm on the other's, probably Eliza's, shoulder. A closer examination repays the effort: they are at a music stand, Eliza's hands resting on it and holding sheets of music. Incidentally, the family were musical. There is a mention of singing *en famille* in their niece's diary.<sup>30</sup>

In the same collection there is an interesting portrait of Jeremiah Spencer (1789-1865) of South Lodge, Cockermouth, dated 1832. Jeremiah Spencer was also a Quaker; he became a wealthy landowner by marrying an

<sup>29</sup> 'The Spencer-Bells of Fawe Park on Derwentwater' by Lena Stanley Clamp, *Wanderer*, May 2021, p.18

<sup>30</sup> Adelaide's diary in a private archive.



**Eliza and Anne Bell, circa 1830,  
private collection**

heirss. He is depicted sitting at home in an elegant interior poring over a map of the world. This alludes to his wife Lydia's origins in the West Indies.<sup>31</sup> The view behind him is of a sun-lit sky and wooded grounds at South Lodge. The sitter is positioned at some distance, his gaze turned downwards. He does not seem at ease having his portrait painted.

#### **Exhibitions at the Carlisle Academy of Art and in Whitehaven**

Sutton's output must have been very considerable but only a limited number of his paintings can be seen today. In the 1820s, Sutton exhibited his work at the

(short-lived) Academy of Art in Carlisle and in Whitehaven. A search through the newspapers has revealed the titles of his exhibits and how his work was appreciated by his contemporaries.

*Westmorland Gazette* published a lengthy report about the first exhibition at the Carlisle Academy of Art in Finkle Street held in October 1823. Two paintings by Joseph Sutton were on display: *Bacchante* and *The Sisters*.<sup>32</sup> The first after Sir Joshua Reynolds, the face of the celebrated Lady Hamilton; the second is an original production, we believe, and both have merit. Mr Sutton, indeed, may be called the *father of Cumberland Art*: to him many artists of eminence are indebted for that taste which originally attached

them to the pursuit.<sup>33</sup>

The report of the 1826 Exhibition at the Carlisle Academy mentions three works by Sutton: *Portrait of Miss Walker*, *Portrait of Mrs Sutton*, *Tarraby* (most likely the wife of his nephew George Sutton of Tarraby). The sitter for the *Portrait of Mr Sutton*, *Workington*, remains an enigma.<sup>34</sup>

The Exhibition in Whitehaven in September 1826 included Sutton's painting after Joshua Reynolds, *Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy* which shows the celebrated actor David Garrick having to choose between the two muses. The reviewer in the *Cumberland Pacquet* wrote: 'An excellent portrait of Garrick, so at least we have been told by those who

<sup>31</sup> See 'From Antigua to Cockermonth: the Story of South Lodge and its Residents' by Lena Stanley-Clamp, *Wanderer*, August 2020, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> It would be tempting to identify the latter painting as a portrait of the Bell sisters but the dates do not fit.

<sup>33</sup> *Westmorland Gazette*, 18 October 1823

<sup>34</sup> *Carlisle Patriot*, 11 November 1826

have seen him ... we alas! had never that felicity. 'Tis easy to perceive which way he will be led; Comedy is evidently gaining the ascendancy and who could resist the witchery of her smile – the humour of which is lurking in her every feature?'.<sup>35</sup>

#### **Sutton's will and estate**

Joseph Sutton died at Rogerscale on 17 February 1843 at the age of 81.<sup>36</sup> He was buried at the Quaker Burial Ground in Cocker mouth. A brief notice in the *Cumberland Pacquet* of 28 February 1843 summed-up his life: 'The deceased obtained much celebrity as an artist, and was deservedly respected by a numerous circle of friends.'

In his will, Sutton left his estate to his surviving nephews and nieces in equal shares taking into account that his nephew George Sutton of Tarraby was indebted to him in the sum of £300 which was secured by a mortgage on his estate. The same nephew was also indebted to Sutton's niece Mary and Sutton left meticulous instructions for this debt, the mortgage and interest arrears to be repaid by George.<sup>37</sup> Sutton's executors were his niece Mary and her husband John Jackson. The residuary account of his estate shows the value of his assets as £1,361<sup>38</sup> less various payments and expenses. The funeral expenses were £13.4.7.

Sutton's property and land at Rogerscale were put up for public auction at Cocker mouth: 'All those several Closes or Parcels of Land, situate at Rogerscale, in the Township of Whinfell, and Parish of Brigham, lying adjoining the River Cocker and the Road leading from Rogerscale to Lorton, commonly known by the Name of Wilson's Fields, and containing Admeasurement Fourteen Acres, Two Roods, and Thirty Perches, or thereabouts, late the Property and in the Possession of Mr. Joseph Sutton, lately deceased.'<sup>39</sup>

#### **Sutton's legacy**

Sutton was a prolific and successful painter until the end of his long life. His studies at the Royal Academy would have developed his artistic skills and knowledge of European and British art. Sutton's portraits, copies of old masters and animal paintings were much in demand in Cumberland among the local aristocracy, gentry and others who could afford them. His work inevitably reflected the taste of his patrons. The paintings in Sutton's possession at his death were put up for auction in Carlisle.<sup>40</sup> They were mainly copies of works by celebrated artists: Joshua Reynolds, Paul Rubens, George Morland, Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, David Wilkie, Adrien Van Ostade and David Teniers. Their names reveal who were Sutton's most admired artists.

Towards the end of his life Joseph Sutton was considered the Father of Cumberland Art by the local papers which must have pleased him. Among his apprentices was George Sheffield (1800-1852) who later became an accomplished artist. A notable painter, Samuel Crosthwaite (1791-1868), who was not Sutton's apprentice, was influenced by his teaching. Among the lesser known of Sutton's apprentices were T or J Askew (active 1789 - d.1848), Robert Hird (late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> C), Thomas Scarrow (1810-1848), John Lewthwaite (1806-1866) and Robert Taylor (1807-circa 1870). They later became known collectively as members of the Cocker mouth School of Painting.

#### **Acknowledgement**

The author wishes to thank Peter Pennington of Muncaster Castle and Caroline Ainscough for sharing digital images of Sutton's portraits.

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<sup>35</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 16 September 1826

<sup>36</sup> England & Wales Deaths

<sup>37</sup> CASW/DWM/764/2/1 Joseph Sutton's will dated 24 June 1840.

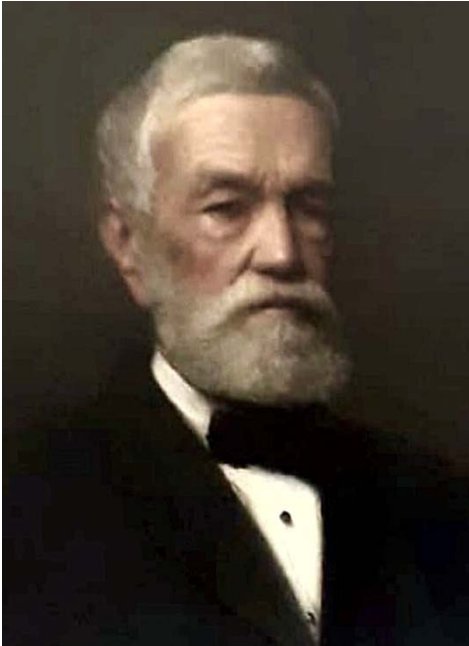
<sup>38</sup> The National Archives currency converter evaluates the purchasing power of this amount to be worth approx. £82,000 or 254 cows.

<sup>39</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 7 March 1843

<sup>40</sup> *Carlisle Patriot*, 1 July 1843

# ***William Lancaster Alexander (1821-1910), Landowner and philanthropist<sup>1</sup>***

*by Tim Cockerill*



## **Ancestry and early life**

William Lancaster Alexander was born on 15 January 1821 at Toxteth Park in Liverpool, the elder son of William Alexander (1787-1884) of Mount Vernon Green, Edge Hill, Liverpool, surveyor of shipping to the Liverpool Underwriters and later to the Liverpool Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. His mother was Margaret (1798-1871) the elder daughter of Joseph and Mary Hutchinson of Shatton Lodge, Embleton, near Lorton, Cumberland (married at Embleton in 1817). Her sister Eleanor Hutchinson married Richard Harbord of Lorton Park, Lorton, another family with Liverpool connections. Joseph Hutchinson, was a Liverpool merchant and Mary Hutchinson, his wife, was the

daughter of Lancaster Dodgson (d.1815) of Shatton, whose elder brother was the Revd Lancaster Dodgson (d.1828), incumbent of Embleton 1803-1818, then vicar of Brough, Westmorland from 1817. From this family William Lancaster Alexander derived his second Christian name. As a boy William often visited his maternal grandparents at Shatton Lodge, a house which he later inherited and which had been in his maternal ancestor's ownership since 1721. He lived there from the late 1850s until in 1870, he moved, with his wife, to Oakhill, High Lorton, a house owned by his wife's family, the Armitsteads ( see below). In 1902, after her death, he bought Oakhill and continued to live there for the remaining eight years of his life.

The Alexander family originally came from Dumfriesshire but William Alexander senior was born in Whitehaven, where his father John Alexander had married Ann, daughter of John and Elizabeth Kelsick of Whitehaven in 1786. The Kelsick family were a prominent merchant family with involvement in shipping and the West Indies. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century this family was of considerable importance and influence in the Whitehaven area.

William Lancaster Alexander was brought up in Liverpool and was educated at the local Vernon House Academy before being bound apprentice for seven years from 1836 to the Liverpool firm of Messrs Molyneaux, Taylor and Co, who were immensely wealthy brokers dealing in cotton, sugar and produce from the East Indies. As an example of their financial dealings, in 1868 the Molyneaux family was owed £55,000 (about £5 million today) by the bankrupt former mayor of Liverpool Robert Hutchinson (1861-2) who may have been related to the above-mentioned Hutchinsons of Lorton. They were sufficiently wealthy to have weathered the crisis. It is unclear what William did immediately after he completed his apprenticeship in 1844 but he immediately became a freeman of the

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<sup>1</sup> This biography is taken from the 'Cumbrian Lives' website at:

<https://www.cumbrianlives.org.uk/lives/william-lancaster-alexander.html> , two images added

City of Liverpool. He may have remained with Molyneaux, Taylor and Co. for a time before either joining a rival firm, assisted his father or branched out on his own. In 1851, William was aged thirty-one, unmarried and living with his parents in Liverpool. His younger brother Kelsick Alexander (1825-1890), and his sister Mary (1824-1908), both then unmarried, were also living there. Both brothers were described as 'unemployed' but at this time this probably simply meant that they were of independent means.

#### **The move from Liverpool to Cumberland**

By 1861 the two brothers and their sister had moved permanently to Cumberland and were all married. In 1857, W.L. Alexander had married Frances (1815-1890), a daughter of the Revd. Richard Armitstead (1765-1821) JP, DL of Whitehaven, whose wife was Agnes (1769-1853) eldest daughter of William Lewthwaite (1740-1809) JP, of The Cupola, Whitehaven (later the Town Hall) and Broadgate, Millom. They had no children. Frances's brother, the Revd William Armitstead (1799-1870), a bachelor, was the incumbent of Lorton from 1825 to 1864 and lived at Oakhill, Lorton which he shared with his unmarried sister Mary. This house had been built in about 1860 by John Wilson of Birkbank, Mosser but he sold it soon afterwards to the Armitsteads and built himself another substantial house called Fairfield, where he lived for the rest of his life. Both houses were important enough to be mentioned by name on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey for the county in the 1860s and in subsequent editions.

Kelsick Alexander married Deborah Slee (b.1834) in 1852, in Edinburgh. She was the daughter of William Slee of Stainton, Penrith, yeoman (d.1854) and the couple settled in Papcastle, Kelsick later becoming the chairman of the Cocker-mouth Board of Guardians. Mary Alexander, the only sister of William and Kelsick, married in 1855 the above-mentioned John Wilson (1823-1917) JP of Fairfield, Lorton, a local landowner who left many descendants, some of whom are



**Silhouette of Miss Armitstead, photo by the author**

in Canada. Their father, old William Alexander, was ninety-six when he died in 1884 leaving the equivalent of £4.8 million today. Kelsick returned to live in Liverpool, where he was a ship-owner. When he died in 1890 he left a fortune of £60,304, now about £4m. Between them, the Alexanders and Wilsons owned about 1,400 acres in and around Lorton and William Lancaster Alexander continued to buy up land until his death. William and his brother-in-law John Wilson became local magistrates as well as immersing themselves in many local, charitable and philanthropic works, strongly supported by their respective wives.

#### **Philanthropic and public work**

William Lancaster Alexander was a member of the Board of Guardians of Cocker-mouth Workhouse and was for nearly fifty years a trustee of Embleton School. As treasurer in the 1890s he raised £744 towards the building of the



Master's house, contributing himself over £1,000 to this project and other school buildings. In addition, he was chairman of the Cockermonth and Papcastle School Board, gave most of the £1,800 to finance the building of Fairfield Girls' School in Cockermonth and was also for fifty years the chairman of the managers and trustees of Lorton school, to which he also contributed a great deal of time and money. He and his wife regularly presented prizes to successful school children and, although they had no children of their own, they liked to have young children around them and each summer held a garden party for them at Oakhill. William's brother-in-law John Wilson also played his part as chairman of the governors of Lorton School for fifty-six years and also as superintendent of Lorton Sunday School for thirty years.



**The schoolmaster's house at Lorton, towards which W L Alexander contributed £744**

From 1878 William Lancaster Alexander and John Wilson employed about a hundred professional navvies, many from Ireland, to construct an extensive and expensive drainage system in the northern reaches of the vale of Lorton and reclaim some two hundred acres of low-lying land. The Lorton main drain transformed the farmland through which it passed, including Alexander's own property; he was the driving force behind the scheme and probably largely financed it. He persuaded all the landowners between Lorton and Stanger to agree on the construction of the drain, which was 36 inches in diameter and ran for 2,500 yards. The expense must have been colossal but it prevented seasonal flooding. It is still in use today, in the winter months sometimes carrying as much as eight million gallons of drain water each day away from the farmlands north of Lorton. As part of the drainage works, Alexander built at his own expense a bridge over the ford at Embleton, installed at least fifteen drinking troughs on field boundaries in the area for cattle, sheep and horses and at least one trough at the roadside. Some of these had

plaques and inscriptions on them which are still readable. He was an early advocate of national insurance contributions and old age pensions for all, long before they were introduced. He and his wife were great benefactors to Lorton and were known locally for their care of the poor and their generous contributions to the church and other local institutions. He was also chairman of Lorton Parish Council for many years and a strong advocate of legislation in local government, especially in education. He was fortunate enough to inherit considerable wealth from his father, as well as from his Hutchinson and Dodgson relations, ploughing much of it back for the benefit of the young and poor of Lorton. His wife who held her own property in both Cumberland and Yorkshire was also a generous local benefactress. The presentations and testimonials William received in his lifetime and his obituary in the local newspaper provide ample evidence that he was both a generous benefactor and a well-respected local figure in the community.

Mrs Alexander died on the 17 September 1890 at Oakhill, Lorton, aged eighty-five. Her will appointed her husband and 'my friend John Stirling (DCB; q.v.) of Fairburn (Ross and Cromarty) and Ennismore Gardens, London' as her executors and revealed that she owned one half of an estate called Winder in the parishes of Lamplugh and Arlecdon, together with its mines and minerals as well as land and premises at Arncliffe, Halton Gill and Litton in Yorkshire, the home of her Armitstead ancestors.

### The later years

After his wife's death Alexander continued to play a prominent part in local affairs. He was a JP on the Cocker mouth bench from 1877, acting as chairman from 1907 and was still on the bench in his ninetieth year when he died on the 31 March 1910. (In this long lived family, his father had died at 96). William left the equivalent in today's money of £5.4 million, together with land and farms in the Lorton area of some seven hundred acres. He and his wife were buried together in Lorton churchyard, where their gravestone is still visible.

The Alexanders, with their relations the Armitsteads, the Wilsons of Fairfield and the Harbords of Lorton Park (Mrs Eleanor Harbord was the maternal aunt of W.L. Alexander), became the leading families in Lorton during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. William Lancaster Alexander was generally acknowledged as the squire of Lorton, being so described in a poem written by John Bolton, a local schoolmaster. Although the Dixon family of Rheda, Frizington, had bought 'the big house', Lorton Hall, in 1882, the primary social leadership in the village remained with William Alexander until 1910, when the Dixons became pre-eminent.

The long obituary of William Lancaster Alexander in the West Cumberland Times spoke of him as always unselfish, sympathetic and generous, every act of his life appearing to be due to his consuming desire to help and uplift humanity. Above all his passion for

improving the lot of the poor and the education of the local children was backed up not only by practical help and advice but also by large amounts of his private fortune. He has been described as the archetypal Victorian improver and philanthropist, whose money, vision and guidance have left a lasting impression on Lorton and the immediate area. He certainly changed the lives of many local people and he is still remembered in the village. His fine oil portrait, by George Spencer Watson (1869-1934) RA, was presented to him in 1901 and is still hanging in Lorton School. The author possesses silhouettes of some of the Armitstead family, whilst the Cocker mouth Heritage Centre holds photographs of him, his parents, his wife, his brother and sister and their spouses. Recently, McCarthy and Stone built a retirement complex called Lancaster Court, in Isel Road, Cocker mouth, next to the new hospital, stating that the name 'honours a local philanthropist William Lancaster Alexander who used his wealth to significantly shape and improve the lives of those in Cocker mouth and the surrounding areas'.

### Sources

My main source of information has been *One man's life in the Vale of Lorton*, by Mick Jane (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2010) who kindly allowed me to draw on his work and provided answers to further points.

Charles Lambrick, chairman of the Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society, has also been of great help by drawing attention to relevant articles in the Society's Journals.

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Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society, Journals, no.53, 19-20 (re Lorton Vale drainage) and No 56, 3-7 (re Lorton School).

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Powell, Jim, *Losing the Thread; Cotton, Liverpool and the American Civil War*, 2021, 160

Return of Owners of Land 1873, Cumberland.

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Walford, Edward, *County Families of the United Kingdom*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1904, 12.

Whitehaven Archives, DWM/294, deposit from Waugh and Musgrave, solicitors of Cockermouth, 1645-1957, 'The Alexander/ Armitstead family of Oak Hill, Lorton and Shatton Lodge, Embleton, 1847-1914'. Also see YDLEW 6/5 and DBH 23/2 for wills, probates and business records of both families.

Portrait of William Lancaster Alexander, photographed by Charles Lambrick by kind permission of Olivia Harrison, head-teacher of Lorton School.

## ***The Pearsons of The Hope in Brackenthwaite, and the Court of Wards<sup>1</sup>***

*by Derek Denman*

In a recent search in the Internet Archive, I found this record of correspondence from one Thomas Layton to Sir Robert Cecil:

*1599, July 3. – The Queen has a title of wardship in the lands of Peter and Lawrence Pearson of Brakenthait, Cumberland, deceased, who purchased them from Sir Edward Herbert. Prays for the wardship of the children.<sup>2</sup>*

In the August 2022 *Wanderer* Janet Pearson was recorded in 1649 by the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle as responsible for



**The Hope in Brackenthwaite**

the payment of roughly half of their free rent from Brackenthwaite, for the tenement they later identified as Hope. Also, the November 2021 *Wanderer* detailed the sale in 1593 by Sir Edward Herbert of the majority of the manorial tenements of Brackenthwaite, to his manorial tenants as freehold.

Royal wardship, and the Court of Wards and Liveries, has intervened in these pages on several occasions. This article uses the new information to help piece together the Pearson family of Hope. It also provides an account of royal wardship and its curious relationship to Brackenthwaite and the child-heirs of yeomen freeholders.

### **The purchase of the Pearson freeholds and the wardships**

In 1593 Sir Edward Herbert, as lord of the manor, sold most of the Brackenthwaite tenements to four local yeomen, effectively in trust for the twenty customary tenants involved. They were to purchase their freeholds from the four.<sup>3</sup>

Lawrence Pearson and Peter Pearson, as named in the letter above, held two of those tenements at ancient manorial rents of 13s 6d and 9s 11d. They

<sup>1</sup> The Pearsons and Mirehouses are spelt in various ways in the records. Except for direct quotations I will use the modern spellings for names.

<sup>2</sup> *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon the Marquis of Salisbury: Pt IX*, Historic Manuscripts Commission, 1902, p.224

<sup>3</sup> See *Wanderer* November 2021 for details

had both clearly purchased their freeholds from the four yeomen by 1599. Both had died leaving minor heirs, who had become royal wards, because in 1593 the twenty individual yeomen had become tenants in chief of Elizabeth I for their individual farms. One wonders if an unfriendly person had spied out the Pearsons and reported them for a reward, they being rather too trivial and remote to catch the royal gaze.

In 1599 Sir Robert Cecil was the recently appointed master of the Court of Wards and Liveries. Thomas Layton has not been identified, but may be of the Yorkshire Laytons, a family who would probably have no connection with the Pearsons. When Thomas Layton 'Prays for the wardship of the children' he wishes to be granted the wardship of the heirs and to receive the current market rental value of their tenements, perhaps less one third for a widow, and he wishes to know the price he might have to pay for the wardship. The value would be far more than the ancient rent. We must hope that the wardship was granted instead to a member of the Pearson family, but we do not know.

#### **The Pearsons of Hope<sup>4</sup>**

It would be good to know for certain which Pearson, Lawrence or Peter, owned The Hope, but unfortunately the parish registers are sparse, with baptisms starting in 1596. Mabel, daughter of Lawrence Pearson of Brackenthwaite, was baptised on 28 February 1597/8, and Joan, daughter of Peter Pearson of Brackenthwaite, was baptised on 19 April 1599.<sup>5</sup> Both could have been fathered by the unfortunate yeomen in time for the vulturous Thomas Layton to prey on the royal wards of Brackenthwaite. We have

no wills of Lawrence or Peter to identify older children.

Looking at earlier manorial records we have the rentals for the general fine on the death of Henry VIII, lord of the manor of Brackenthwaite in 1547. He also had a minor heir. The Pearsons and Mirehouses, who are associated with Hopebeck, held the following in 1547:

*Peter Mirehouse 6s 8d*  
*John Mirehouse, formerly Hugh, 4s 6d*  
*John Mirehouse, share with Robert Pearson, 4s 11d*  
*Robert Pearson 7s 9d*  
*Robert Pearson, improvement from Robert Skinner, 2d.<sup>6</sup>*

This makes a total of 24s manorial rent for the Pearsons and Mirehouses, probably all of Hopebeck, including Hope.

In 1592/3, when all the Brackenthwaite tenements were sold either to the four yeomen or to Anthony Patrickson, these same two Brackenthwaite families held manorial rents:

*Peter Pearson 9s 11d*  
*Lawrence Pearson 13s 6d*  
*Margaret Mirehouse 6s ½d*  
*Christopher Mirehouse 6s.<sup>7</sup>*  
*Lawrence Mirehouse 12d [not enfranchised, intake on common].<sup>8</sup>*

Total 36s 5½d, which is 12s 5½d more than in 1547

This suggests that just one of the Pearson holdings in 1593 was at Hopebeck. Given that rents tended to increase with improvements, it is more likely that Lawrence Pearson held Hope. 'Lawrence' may be a Hopebeck name of Pearsons/Mirehouses because there are no other occurrences in the St Cuthbert's

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<sup>4</sup> See also Susan Laville, *The Pearsons of Lorton Vale*, L&DFLHS Newsletter, no.9, Sep. 1996

<sup>5</sup> The new year started on 25 March, and 1597/8 identifies the period from 1 Jan to 24 March, at the end of 1597

<sup>6</sup> L&DFLHS Archive, transcription by Ron George of rental for Brackenthwaite for General

Fine on death of Henry VIII, 1547, from DLec/314/38 ff.44-6

<sup>7</sup> CACW/YDX/394/2 contains photocopies of the original indenture, 15 Apr 1593

<sup>8</sup> CASC/DX94, is an original indenture of the sale to Patrickson, 1592/3

registers before 1800, except Lawrence Salkeld of High Lorton who was buried in 1690.

The probable descent of Hope as manorial property would be from Robert Pearson, perhaps the one buried in 1560/1, down to Lawrence who died between 1597 and 1599, and then as freehold to his heir in law. Freehold property is difficult to trace

unless the old deeds and wills have been kept.



**The Stubb's later farmhouse and barn at Book Beck, dated 1733**

#### **Anthony Pearson of The Hope**

The first person recorded as living at Hope was Anthony Pearson of 'The Hope', meaning the hop valley, whose daughter Isabel was baptised in 1618. Anthony Pearson of 'Hope' then baptised his son John in 1623. Anthony's wife, Mabel, died at Hope in 1624. It may well have been that Anthony was the infant heir of Lawrence in 1699, born before the start of the surviving parish registers.

In his will of 9 August 1647, Anthony Pearson of Over Lorton, yeoman, left the residue of his goods and chattels, less the third due to his un-named wife, to his eldest daughter Isabel and her husband Robert Stubb.<sup>9</sup> Isabel Pearson and Robert Stubb of Hollings were married in 1638. Anthony's heir for his freehold property 'as yet preferred' was his daughter Janet, to whom he also gave a child portion of £130 to 'make her better preferment'. Perhaps he meant a more attractive marriage prospect. If this is the same Anthony as that of The Hope, then son John was not mentioned and would have to be dead. Janet Pearson does not appear in the baptismal register.

In her will of 23 February 1647/8 Elizabeth Pearson, widow of Over Lorton, left her farm stock and personal possessions in 28 bequests, but without identifying any relatives, even her recently deceased husband.<sup>10</sup> Her probate inventory, made after her death, notes debts 'owing to her late husband, Anthony Pearson deceased' which places her as Anthony's second wife. Janet Pearson was presumably not her child and received bequest number 28. Anthony's second marriage does not read as very harmonious.

At the time of their deaths in 1647 and 1647/8, Anthony and Elizabeth Pearson lived at Over Lorton, which usually means High Lorton within the manor of the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral. We have a full parliamentary survey of the manor in 1649, at the start of the Commonwealth period in which the bishops lost their roles and property.<sup>11</sup> This survey is effectively the starting point of the surviving records. It quotes older records going back to the sixteenth century which did not find their way back to the Dean and Chapter, maybe

<sup>9</sup> Lancashire Record Office, WRW/C/R235A/66, will of Anthony Pearson of Over Lorton, yeoman, 1647

<sup>10</sup> LRO, WRW/C/R235A/125, Will of Elizabeth Pearson, widow, of Over Lorton 1649

<sup>11</sup> CASC/D&C/8/8/8

consigned to a parliamentary bonfire. The 1649 survey names Jannet Pearson as the Brackenthwaite freeholder paying the free rent, which was associated later with The Hope.

The 1649 survey also stated that Robert Stubb held a dwelling 'above the beck', ie at Boonbeck with a half-tenement of land, in the right of his wife, who could have been Isabel Pearson, plus a second tenement of land.<sup>12</sup> While Janet was preferred in Anthony's will, that would only apply to freehold property, such as The Hope. Customary manorial property could not be devised in a will, but went to the customary heir, as identified by the jury of the manor court. A jury verdict of 1650, catching up with events, confirms that Isabel was the customary heir of all the Stubb property. This implies that son John would be dead, and explains how and when 'above the beck', later called Boonbeck, first came to the Stubb family, who then held the farm, including the Lorton yew tree, for centuries:

'Antho Pearson we find Isabell Stubb the wife of Robert Stubb heir to Anthony her father for one ten[emen]t and a halfe ten[emen]t 10s 11d'.<sup>13</sup> Overall Isabel Stubb inherited 52 statute acres of land at Over Lorton from her father, Anthony Pearson.

There was a second co-located dwelling 'above the beck' in 1649, belonging to John Wilkinson together with the other half-tenement of land. The present single farmhouse at Boonbeck is dated 1733. High Boonbeck was built around 1800.

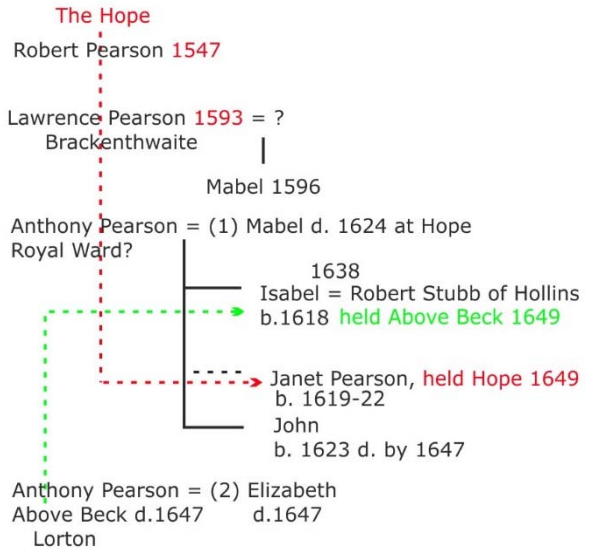
**Pearsons of The Hope.**

Janet Pearson should therefore be the second daughter of Anthony and Mabel

Peyrson of Hope, born between 1619 and 1622. She would be the Janett Pearson who was the holder of the Brackenthwaite free rent for Hope, under the Dean and Chapter in 1649 and 1661, and she died or sold before 1673, when John Wood was recorded.

Anthony Pearson would probably have once been the Queen's ward when Lawrence (or maybe Peter) Pearson died. A family tree is given below.

**Pearsons of The Hope and Above Beck**



**Wardship as a feudal incident.**<sup>14</sup>

All landed property in England is held of the Crown, and our freeholds are rights in property held in fee simple. This dates back at least to the feudal grants to the Norman barons. Those who held their property directly of the Crown, as tenant in chief, or *in capite*, were subject to various feudal incidents, which were only abolished with feudal tenure in 1646. When, for example, a medieval baron died, if his heir was a minor, under 21 for a male and under 14 for a female, then there would be a need for guardianship.

<sup>12</sup> CASC/D&C/8/8/8, fos.52&56,  
<sup>13</sup> CASC/D&C/8/8/10, Jury Verdicts 14 Jan 1650/1

<sup>14</sup> For more detail see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court\\_of\\_Wards\\_and\\_Liveries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court_of_Wards_and_Liveries)

The guardians had care of the heirs and would often arrange their marriages.

A right of royal prerogative entitled the king to all the revenues of a deceased tenant in chief with a minor heir, excluding one third of the lands as dower for a widow. The king could then sell or grant the wardship, including the revenues, to whoever he wished by letters patent.

The best-known local example was that of the young daughters of Richard de Lucy, who died circa 1212 holding the barony of Egremont, part of Allerdale and half of the Honour of Cockermouth. Thomas de Multon, the justiciar, purchased the wardship of the two young heiresses from the king for a thousand marks, thereby gaining the revenue of their estates while under 14. To consolidate his position, he also married the widow, Ada de Morville, without the king's permission. He then married the two young heiresses, Amabel and Alice, to his two sons by his first marriage, which was the reward for the high purchase money.

#### **Tudor revival**

During the late medieval period the practice of the crown taking the revenues of minor heirs fell out of general use, but Henry VII, rebuilding the crown finances, exploited wardships as a source of income, with a Master of Wards created in 1503. Henry VIII established county-based systems with officers charged with finding and exploiting minor heirs of lands held as tenant in chief, as a source of revenue for the king's private funds. In 1540 the Master of Wards became the master of a Court of Wards, which expanded in 1542 to become the Court of Wards and Liveries.

The image shows the Court of Wards under William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who



**William Cecil presiding over the Court of Wards**

was Master from 1561 to 98. Robert Cecil became Master 21 May 1599, a little over a month before receiving the letter from Thomas Layton.

#### **The wardship of John Robynson, heir of Brackenthwaite.**

The lands of Henry Percy, the childless sixth earl of Northumberland were voluntarily placed in crown in 1531, awaiting his nephew's coming of age. With the Percy's role in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, Henry VIII assumed full ownership. These lands included Brackenthwaite, which had been subinfeudated out of the superior manor of Derwentfells to a mesne lord circa 1160s. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Derwentfells was held of the King by the Percys as tenant in chief, and Brackenthwaite was not.

The manor of Brackenthwaite was granted to Lord Grey by Edward VI in 1549 in a mixed bag of Crown confiscations. He

was 'to hold ... [various manors] ... and the premises in Brakenthwayte of the king in chief by the service of a fortieth part of a knight's fee. ... rendering yearly ... for Brakenthwayte 16s 8d ... at the augmentations'.<sup>15</sup> Thereby the link with Derwentfells as a superior lordship was broken, though rights on Derwentfells common were still needed. Brackenthwaite was immediately sold to Richard Robynson.

Richard Robynson died on 21 October 1549, and the chosen heir of his property was his cousin John Robynson, aged 14. John Robynson already had a guardian, Thomas Stanley, from the will of Richard Robynson, but as a royal ward the revenues of his property held of the King, and then held of Queen Mary and King Philip, were the property of the Crown and at the disposal of the Court. Quite possibly the revenues were granted or sold to Thomas Stanley, we do not know.

After John Robynson came of age, on 26 October 1555, he sued out of wardship on 27 Jan 1555/6, under Sir Francis Inglefeld as Master and Robert Keleway as Surveyor of the Liveries.<sup>16</sup> Brackenthwaite was stated to be held in capite, of the king and queen, with rents of £10 18s 6d and a (yearly) payment for the augmentation of the crown of 16s 8d. When the lands of the Earl of Northumberland were restored under Philip and Mary on 16 August 1557, without the premises at Brackenthwaite, the yearly sum of 16s 8d was granted as a rent out of Brackenthwaite.<sup>17</sup> This became a free rent implying superior lordship, which was no longer the case.

The grant out of crown to Lord Grey, and the wardship of John Robynson, clearly established that the tenements of Brackenthwaite, defined as those accounted for in 1549 by the reeve of Brackenthwaite, were held of the Crown. When subsequently sold to yeomen they would still be held of the Crown and subject to feudal incidents such as royal wardship, until abolition in 1646.

### **An Englishman's home is his castle**

This old saying has roots in the sixteenth century, and generally refers to a dwelling as a place in which people have a right to defend themselves and their property from assault, by whatever reasonable means is necessary. In most parts of England the early-modern manorial peasantry lost any rights of ownership and inheritance and became leaseholders on large estates. In the border counties much of the peasantry retained customary rights of ownership and inheritance and converted those rights into small freeholds. If that freehold was purchased from a tenant in chief, rather than a mesne lord, then the yeoman's house became a castle in a more nuanced way. Feudal incidents, such as royal wardship, which had been created to manage the baron in his castle, became applicable to the heir of a yeoman in his farmhouse, such as The Hope.

It is interesting to consider the various financial claims on the new freeholder, Lawrence (or possibly Peter) Pearson of Hope in 1593, apart from the contingent but potentially devastating confiscation of its whole rental value during wardship. There was the small free rent payable to the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral, for no benefit and consequent upon some ancient and forgotten transaction. There was a portion of the 'free rent' payable to the lord of Derwentfells which might more properly have been applied to the use of the common and its manor court.

More seriously the tithes, once paid to support the clergy, were now the property of a lay impropiator, consequent upon the confiscation from the Collegiate Church of Staindrop, by Henry VIII, of the tithes and advowson of Brigham Parish. Then there was a rate to support the chapel building at Lorton, but at least the Pearsons had benefit. These were all in addition to the other civil rates and taxes.

Fortunately, the Pearsons were in a position to meet all these costs, being at the top level of the yeomanry.

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<sup>15</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, 3 Ed VI, 19 Jul 1549

<sup>16</sup> CASW/DWM/11/160/2, f.3

<sup>17</sup> Cal Pat R, 4&5 Philip & Mary, 16 Aug 1557