

Just within the town boundary stands Simonscales Mill, now converted into dwellings. It is marked as a paper mill on a map of 1775 and is probably that leased to John Brougham in 1772, described as having been recently made into a paper mill. Later it changed to bobbin production, making a wide range of bobbins, reels, spindles, pulleys, etc., not only for local mills but for the textile mills of Lancashire and Yorkshire. This trade reached its peak in the Lake District about 1850-70. Simonscales was auctioned as a bobbin mill at the Globe in 1881, the property having water power, bobbin mill, dwelling house, five cottages and 12 acres of land. [1] The wood along the opposite bank of the Cocker is Bobbin Mill Plantation.

On the outskirts of the town is Double Mills, traditionally so called because another mill once stood on the opposite bank. If so this second building could only have been Wood or Badgkin Mill, across and lower down the river, and a more likely origin for the name is the existence of two wheels in separate channels, both fed by a race from a weir upstream, the Sal Dam. A length of substantial walling is all that remains of this weir. Wood Mill is referred to in 1478 as “newly situated opposite the corn mill”, [2] which places the origin of Double Mills before this date. It remained a corn mill for over 400 years. A drying kiln once stood on the higher side and there are still the mill house and outbuildings on the lower.

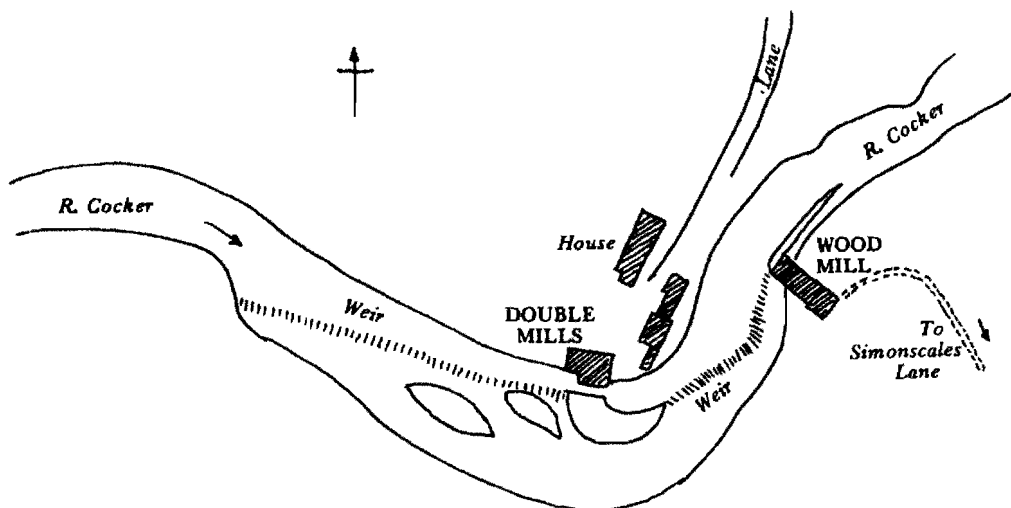


Fig. 52. Double and Wood Mills (based on OS 1863 map).

There was a period when the mill was the centre of much activity which almost changed its character. In 1741 the Duke of Somerset leased it as a corn mill to John Fearon for 21 years at an annual rent of £16. [3] The Duke's successor, Charles Wyndham, visited the works of the Low Mill Edge Tool Company in Egremont. He was impressed and thought “such works must be for the good of the County”. In April 1754 the firm approached the Earl, saying they understood John Fearon wished to resign his lease and “that situation being very convenient for our Iron Forge, we are very desirous to have a lease of the said mills for sixty three years with liberty to build Iron Works on the common adjacent”. [4]

A letter towards the end of the following year refers to the Earl's agreement to this and points out that

“it will be necessary to give us leave to pull down, alter and rebuild, and make enlargements on the adjacent Common; and highten and inlarge the weers, and to lengthen, widen and deepen the Mill race or races - as we shall find necessary for the obtaining a sufficient fall of water to carrie on the works, and to build store houses and other conveniences on the adjacent Common”. [5]

The Company further asked leave to proceed without waiting for the completion of the legal arrangements.

By the following June all was set for the development of an iron forge on the site, with a large mill pool to power the trip hammers, bellows, etc. Then suddenly for some reason the whole proposal fell through. Barepot ironworks near Workington was built about 1762 and the name of the negotiator involved was the same, so it is possible that this replaced the Cockermouth scheme.

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Fearon had already left, but he returned and the mill continued to grind corn under a succession of lessees, who usually took it for 21 years. We quote the list of equipment signed as belonging to the landlord when George Hodgson took the mill in 1814. - [6]

Two Water Wheels	One pair of Wheat Stones
Wheat Mill, cogg Wheel and Trunnels	Dressing Mill and Card Wheel
Dressing Machine	Hopper and hopper Stangs and crubbs
Barley Mill for Skilling Barley	One pair of Gray Stones
Pitt Wheel and Trunnels	Machine and two arks
Mill Tackle for raising Stones and ropes	Band wheel for Machine
Sack Tackle.	

At the end of this ten-year lease Hodgson made a proposal to rent at £90, almost twice the previous rent, "the Earl of Egremont agreeing to expend the sum of £200 in building a Dwelling House and Stables and in purchasing a pair of French Burr Mill Stones and putting up a Barley Mill".

French stones were made from several pieces of coarse flint quarried near Epernon and bound by iron hoops which, when used as the top stone, split open the ears and 'shelled' the grain from the husks. They now stand against the bank by the mill.

A lease of 1860 includes not only the mill, warehouse, dwelling house, etc., but Simonscales Wood (on the slopes of Cocker Brows) and fourteen acres in five closes adjoining the mill premises.

The metal rims of the two wheels remain alongside the mill. An offer of £5 was made for them in 1942 but the Council (now owners of the mill) refused to sell. The stone channels have slots in which boards were inserted to divert the flow.

In 1900 the mill was marked on maps as 'Disused'. Two years later the UDC bought it for £600 to use as an isolation hospital, to obtain electricity by water power or as the basis of a recreation ground. [7] None of these plans materialised and it was eventually let to the Youth Hostels Association, Cocker mouth UDC being the first council in the country to help the YHA in this way. It was opened on 13 April 1933 in the presence of E. St. J. Catchpool, national secretary of the newly formed association, and Richard W. Hall, a Cocker mouth enthusiast. In the early days the warden lived in a nearby house (the Council divided the mill house into two, but it has recently reverted to one dwelling). There is now a resident warden. There is accommodation for 28 and this attractive hostel becomes increasingly popular.

The new water main of the 1960s crosses the river here, to pass through the lower part of the park and climb to the upper side of Railway Terrace and the lower end of Fern Bank.

On the opposite side of the river to Double Mills, just above the footbridge, stood a small mill which was probably the fulling mill of 1578 which was in Moor Closes [8] and, as we have seen, mentioned in the Minister's Accounts of 1478. It was not mentioned in a list of 1437/8, which puts its construction in the period 1437 to 1478.

An indenture drawn up between Sir Henry Fletcher and Andrew Green, dated 1830, refers to

"All that Fulling and Spinning Mill and premises... at Badgkin ... in a certain close ... called Leather Mill Field but formerly known by the name of Badgkins Close which sd. premises were lately occupied by Mrs. Beeby and used by her as a spinning and carding mill."

In 1832 Andrew Green leased it to Jonah Fleming, a cooper, and William Fisher, an ironmonger, for a period of 14 years for £3 a year - a rent indicative of the small size of the premises. The following notice of letting referred to this mill:-

"Leather Mill to let.

To be let by proposal & may be entered upon at Cand' 1848 all that Water Mill situate & being on the Banks of the River Cocker in the Township of Cocker mouth in the County of Cumbd, called the Leather Mill and now or lately used as a Saw Mill & Forge for the making of Siciles and Edge Tools & in the Occupation of Mr. Joseph Fleming." [9]

This is another example of a lease not being auctioned but granted on the basis of offers made. Joseph Fleming may have been a relation of or the same person as Jonah of the 1832 letting. The two lessees of 1832 had combined in running a saw mill and forge, both wood and iron being required in the manufacture of sickles and edge tools.

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When the first OS map appeared in 1863 the mill is labelled 'Wood Mill (Bobbin)', so it may have been let for bobbin making in 1848.

Thus this small building was at different times used for leather, spinning and carding, wood sawing and tool making, and bobbin manufacture. The cutting into the rock for the race and wheel pit may be clearly seen from the footbridge and a little stone walling remains beneath the turf. Travelling down stream through the lower part of Harris Park we reach the remains of 'Tinker's Dam' and the site of Rubby Banks Mills. Two 3-storey mills stood on the flat land between the houses and the river and in the boundary wall of this area may be traced mill doors and windows. The last of the buildings were demolished in 1971, being unused and dangerous, the weir having been breached earlier.

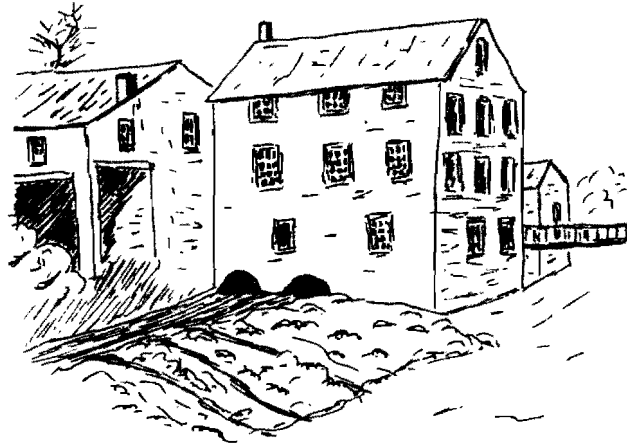


Fig. 53. *The Rubby Banks mills, race, weir and footbridge.*

The two mills had parallel wheel pits, one of which still contained the wheel at the time of demolition, and the tops of the arched channels may just be seen above the levelling of the site.

There is a record of Ribbey Banck Milnes (the early spelling varied, Ruby being common) being leased by the Earl of Northumberland to Thomas Fletcher, a Cockermouth merchant, in 1596, the lease to run for three lives at an annual rent of £7. When Thomas Dodgson leased it in 1714 he erected a corn mill nine yards square, using £5 worth of timber. Two mills now stood on the site and in the successive leases and sub-lettings it is often difficult to determine which of the two is involved.

However, in 1759 the Earl leased Rubybank water corn mill to Thomas Smith, dyer, for 21 years at £16 10s. and eight years later there was a lease of the Ruby Bank fulling mill and mill premises lately erected adjoining the water corn mill to Thomas Smith, dyer, Mary Barnes of Cockermouth, widow and Daniel Barnes of Crookdale, miller. Depending on the interpretation of 'lately' this may signify recent rebuilding and/or extension of the earlier mill. We also have evidence that Thomas Smith was now a lessee of the whole complex. The first member of the Smith family noted, in the 1750s, was Matthew, who had property elsewhere. His son Thomas I came to Cockermouth and it was to him that the lease was granted in 1759 for 21 years, with Permission to build anything required.

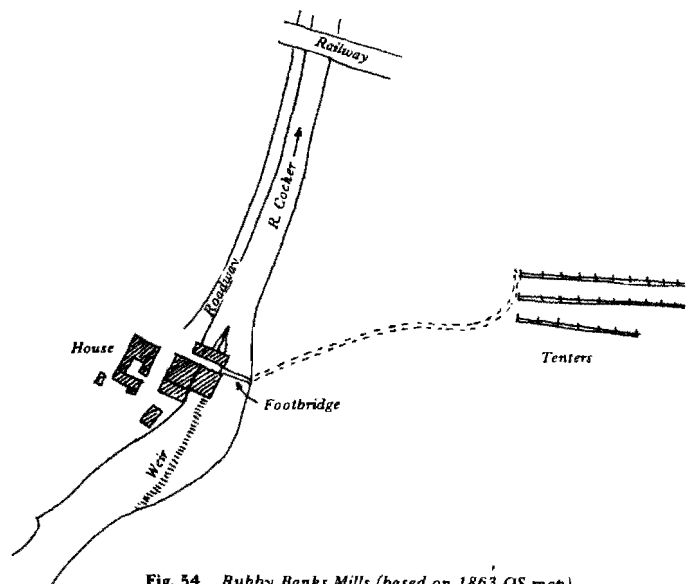


Fig. 54. *Rubby Banks Mills (based on 1863 OS map).*

He let the corn mill for £20 a year and either he or his son Thomas II (who succeeded him) built a fulling mill, for a later lease of 1783, by the Earl to the cousins Richard and Matthew Smith, described Rubby Bank Mill as formerly held by Henry and Thomas Dodgson and late by Thomas Smith father of the said Richard and refers to "all that fulling Mill lately erected near the Water Corn Mill by the said Thomas Smith".

Richard succeeded to the business when his father died, about 1760. The two cousins probably had, in addition to Rubby Banks, property extending from South Street (then Back Lane) along the

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river to Main Street, including Cocker Bridge and Croft Mills. They were engaged in woollen manufacture and dyeing.

It was with Richard, and possibly also Matthew, that Richard Radcliffe became involved in promoting the installation of one of Richard Arkwright's water frames in the mill in 1781. [10] This was to manufacture cotton thread. In the same year came the great fall in wool prices and difficulties in the West Indian and American trade in which the men were involved via Whitehaven. The next few years were hard times. From 1783 to 1788 the greater proportion of deaths in Cocker mouth were registered as 'paupers', a term eventually applied to 75% of deaths recorded. This implied a slump. Radcliffe was one of several mill-owners who went bankrupt, but Richard Smith kept going and it has been suggested that he was unscrupulous in his business methods. There is a record of him manufacturing shalloons in 1790, at which time he had over 300 employees. [11]

When the lease expired in 1801 the mill was let to Richard Smith for a further 21 years at a rent of £80, a four-fold increase on 1759. This was presumably for the fulling mill only, for the corn mill was let in 1802 to Joseph Wilkinson who sublet to Richard Burgess for £80 a year. Wilkinson was given permission to build over the race but found he could not do so because of Smith's large fulling mill and the backing up of water from Smith's wheel presented a further difficulty. He complained to the Earl, from whom Smith held his lease, and in his complaint referred to Smith as spinning and carding worsted. [12]

Richard Smith seems to have been a very difficult person with whom to have dealings. Wilkinson complained about interference with access, using water which should have gone to the corn mill, and the effect of Smith's building activities. It is not clear whether he demolished all the fulling mill or whether by his rebuilding he had virtually erected a third mill on the site and was fulling, carding and spinning in adjacent premises. One tenant, Daniel Duglinson, appears to have left in disgust about 1810 and rebuilt Little Mill. In 1821 Smith was paying £80 rent for the site and recouping this by sub-letting the corn mill for the same amount.

The lease for the mills expiring in 1821, they were advertised for sale and a castle record shows the difficulties created by the sitting tenant, now 69 years old and owing the Earl two years' rent.

"It is apprehended that Smith keeps people back from making an offer for the Corn Mill, giving out that he means to take both Mills, and then to alter the Mills, so as to make the Corn Mill worth little or nothing."

His son Thomas offered £60 a year for 21 years, but father refused to do business with him. There followed a period of confusion regarding tenancy and responsibility for repairs. In October 1822 Smith was given notice to quit. In November the Earl's agent ordered him to put the whole property "into complete and perfect repair". [13] No progress was made and further confusion was produced by Lord Egremont agreeing to sell the property to Andrew Green, who already had the neighbouring land.

Son Thomas was apparently the only one to make an offer, for on 5th May 1823 was recorded -

"Thomas Smith refuses to pay any more Rent than he has already offered. The Mill was advertised for several weeks successively last autumn 12 month. I do not think there will be any use in advertising it again. Something should be done as the Mill is in a very bad state of repair and I am afraid that the length of time that has elapsed from Lady Day 1822 will go a long way to exonerate Rd. Smith, and it is clear that he will do nothing until he is compelled. A Notice has been served on him to repair it a long time ago, but he contends that he had nothing to do with the building after Lady Day." [14]

On the 16th. of the same month the writer further reported -

"I have seen Thos. Smith and his Mother about this Mill. Richd. the Father is in good circumstances, but quite in his dotage. Thos has promised to pay the Arrear of Rent and put the Mill in Repair, but says that he cannot offer more than £60 - but if he continues tenant from year to year and puts the Premises into Repair I see no objection to it."

On into the next year - 19th April 1824.

"I am still of opinion that Mr. Green is better without the Mills. They must however either be sold or an action must be commenced agst. the Extriix of Richd Smith, for I believe there is very great doubt whether the Rubby Banks Mill will not tumble down before the Winter."

So while the buildings continued to decay argument continued as to who should have the lease and, if Thomas Smith, whether he should get away with a rent as low as £60. Richard had obviously died by April 1824.

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Then on 1st November 1824 Richard's widow was threatened with legal action unless the mills were repaired, the estimates being £129-12s-0d. for work by Thomas Mackreth and £14-10s-6d. for work by William Cape. [15] Thomas moved in and repaired the property, at a cost of £160, but he does not appear to have stayed long. Andrew Green did finally buy the premises, for in 1827 he leased to Jeremiah or Joshua Wharton, linen manufacturer in Waterloo Street,

"all that Mess (uage) Ten(ement) or Dwelling House and Flax Mill with the Stove Dry House, Heckling Lofts and other Appurts thereto belonging and adjoining sit. and being at Rubby Banks nr Cockermt h afsd with the Liberty of using one half of the Water of the River Cocker for carrying the Wheel of this Mill (the other being reserved for the use of the Spinning Carding and Fulling Mill adjoining)." [16]

In the same year Green leased to Edward and John Sancton, woollen manufacturers and sub-tenants of Graves in Waterloo Street, the spinning, carding and fulling mill with the stove dry house appurtenances and half the water. So there were two textile mills in operation, the corn mill having been converted to flax. There is mention in these agreements of the tenter field across the footbridge over the Cocker.

In 1844 Andrew Green leased to Thomas Wilson, hat manufacturer, the newly erected mill called Rubby Banks lately a flax mill with a store or drying house, the rent to be £35 per year. Again 'newly erected', this was possibly recent rebuilding, major repairs or even Thomas Smith's repairs of nearly 20 years earlier. Did Wilson go there while his factory near Cocker Bridge was being built? Certainly his stay was short, for from about 1847 Wharton and Peile are recorded as having the whole mills, carrying on fulling and linen, thread, woollen cloth and hat manufacture. [17] Their occupation lasted until the mid-1890s (from 1827 in one mill) and they probably succeeded in keeping going so much longer than many other mill owners because of their diversity of interests.

In 1893 half the complex was let to George Tinker. He manufactured coverings, skirting and collar checks, plaidings, tweeds, blankets and rugs. He would make up customers' own wool or produce rag carpeting from their own rags. In this he used string warp and rag weft for lengths 4½ feet [1350mm] wide. He also made coarse woollen druggetting for floor covering. At the turn of the century George Tinker advertised that he was to be found on Mondays at No. 9 stall in the New Market. [18] Patterns of his products could be had on application. Although he left the mill in 1920, at the time of demolition 50 years later it was still referred to as 'Tinker's Mill'.

In 1920 Joseph Messenger worked in the premises as a cooper, wood turner and pattern maker. He was followed by Hartley, another wood turner producing rollers, hay rakes, stools, dolly sticks, etc. This business was continued by his son Oswald Hartley who added wooden bowls to the list of products. Latterly the wheel drove a dynamo to power the mill and the mill house. From 1963 the building was used for a short time by a Bassenthwaite timber merchant. [20]

Between Rubby Banks and the railway arch stands Railway Terrace, a row of six houses erected in 1882. Cockermouth's waterworks once occupied this walled site. (Figs. 70 & 72.)

On this same bank, mid-way between Victoria Bridge and Quaker Bridge, Wood's 1832 map marks Sim's dyeworks, a site now occupied by houses numbered 7 and 8. The same map shows Sim as having a house on Main Street, directly opposite to the Globe, with a long garden running down to the Cocker. In 1832 there was no building on the river bank here, but a small one is shown in 1863. The following advertisement suggests that Sim left the site further upstream for either the bottom of his garden or elsewhere in the town:-

"Dyehouse and Premises to Let.

To be let and may be entered immediately all that Dyehouse with the Drying Room Store Room Tenter Ground etc. Premises situate on the Banks of the River Cocker late in the occupation of Mr. Joshua Sim. Furr Parties. apply to Mr. Bragg Solr. Cockermouth who will receive offers of rent for the same. Cockermouth. Nov 9 1841." [21]

Certainly Sim was successful in business and able to buy woollen mills in Thornthwaite and Braithwaite for his two sons, but they went bankrupt and Joshua sold all his property to pay their debts. [22]

On the left bank below Quaker Bridge stands the former Croft Mill, now converted into flats. A lower building on the northern end housed the mill engine and at the time of conversion, although the interior had been cleared, there were still high on the walls the brackets which had supported the shafting for belt-driving the machinery. An interesting feature is the roof ridge, pointed in the normal

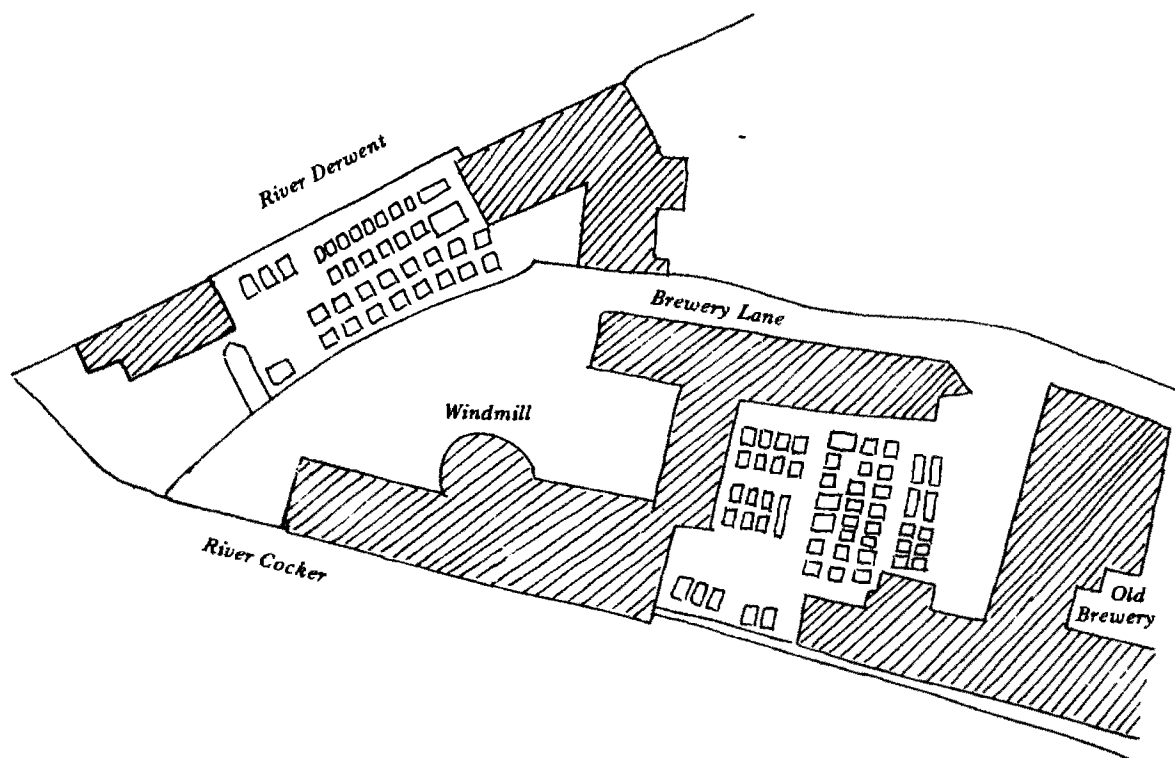
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way at the town end but broadening to a flat width of two or three feet at the upstream end. On maps Croft is always referred to as 'woollen', but this was probably varied from time to time.

Just below Croft Mill was Cocker Bridge (End) Mill, extending to Main Street where the Midland Bank now stands. From the opposite side of the river may be seen bricked-up windows and doorways in a long stretch of wall which once formed part of this mill.

On the right bank of the river the Town Hall occupies the site of Sanderson's woollen mill. The riverside car park was the mill's drying ground and on the terrace below the churchyard was a row of ten cottages known as Mount Pleasant. Ruined buildings and sheds littered the area until it was cleaned up and landscaped by the UDC in the 1970s, happily retaining the archway as a reminder of earlier industry. (Plates 15, & 16.) Where the road curves round to enter the riverside car park, and built right up to Cocker Bridge, was one of Cocker's most famous industries - Thomas Wilson's hat factory. (Fig. 44.) The first hatters probably came to Cocker in the early 1700s. The Wilson family moved from Belfast to Carlisle and on to Cocker, where Thomas was born in 1791. He succeeded to and developed his father's business, being helped by many journeymen hatmakers who came from Lancashire about 1841 when times were bad. [23] At its peak the factory produced about 4000 hats a week, some of which were probably exported to America from Whitehaven.

Writing in 1866 John Askew said "the splendid and thriving business which he has created has passed away with him; the workmen whom he employed have long since left Cumberland to seek labour in other places; the extensive premises which during his lifetime were a hive of industry are now a deserted wreck." In 1883 Bulman wrote [24] of the mill as tenantless and the trade as having fled. Ideas for the use of the empty buildings were mentioned in an earlier chapter.



**Fig. 55.** *The tanneries at the foot of the Cocker, showing buildings and pits (based on 1863 OS map).*

Thomas Wilson was held in high regard in his native town. He was a principal promoter of the Cumberland Union Bank and built Grecian Villa as his family home. [25] He contributed liberally to the rebuilding of All Saints Church after the fire and a wall tablet therein has the inscription -

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"In memory of Thomas Wilson, hat manufacturer, of this town, who, left to his own resources in early life, by a steady course of diligence, integrity, and enterprise, largely extended the trade and industrial employment of the town, and raised himself to an affluent and honourable position in Society. Died January 28th. 1857, aged 65 years...."

There were other buildings in the town where hats were at times manufactured and, judging from Senhouse's rabbit sales, the industry was in being early in the 18th. century.

Below Cocker Bridge John Stoddart's cotton mill was on the right bank, occupying probably more than one building. One which remains, marked 'Vinegar Hill' on the 1863 OS map, has 'J. & M. S. 1800' carved over a doorway and is now used by the brewery.

Below Stoddart's was the Old Brewery and then the Old Brewery Tannery, now both replaced by modern brewery buildings, and beyond them the iron foundry and the windmill. There was also a tannery on the bank of the Derwent.

The Cocker turned wheels on the right bank and was then deflected by a weir across to the wheel of a churn factory on the left bank. From the footbridge may be seen the stone support for the axle. This building fronted on to High Sand Lane. Also in High Sand Lane was the cooper's where the barrels for the brewery were made, being trundled over 'Barrel Bridge'.

The windmill is in an unusual situation - on the banks of two rivers which could easily provide water power. Its most likely use was crushing bark for the neighbouring tanneries, but it may have milled corn originally. Certainly the building has been adapted. A pitched roof was substituted for a movable cap and windows were added at some time. The upper bin floor has a trimmed opening for the main drive from the windshaft. [26] The mill, some 25 feet high, was brick built instead of the usual sandstone and an oil painting in the vestry of All Saints Church shows it with six sails.

The windmill collapsed and was then scheduled for total demolition in the early 2000's. Adjacent to the windmill was a foundry and Foundry House stands by the footbridge. A girder over a doorway in the foundry building has on it 'COCKERMOUTH 1874'. The business was run by W. and J. Herbert. A severe fire in 1877 destroyed sets of engine patterns, but three drawings which have recently come to light show that the products were quite ambitious. That they got beyond the drawing stage is proved by an old photograph of a brewery wagon which matches one of the diagrams. [27]

In 1875 Messrs. Herbert, described as of 'Derwent Foundry', supplied a new hot water heating system for All Saints Church. A bell for Grasmere Church was cast in Cockermouth in 1809. [28] This was too early for Herbert's foundry and where the bell was made is unknown.

The foundry passed from the Herberts to the Noble brothers and the Noble Engineering Works was still extant in 1938. They were agricultural blacksmiths but also produced grates, gully covers, etc. When the business was advertised in 1930 it was described as having a blacksmith's workshop, gas engine, steam hammer, drill, loose tools and two warehouses. [29] After the engineering business the premises were used for coach body work and upholstery.

Beer has been brewed on the same site below the castle walls for 150 years. Malt beer was at one time an important drink. In Dorset, for instance, farm workers were allowed a gallon a day and it is reasonable to assume that there would be a similar demand in the fields around Cockermouth. Inns tended to have their own malthouses, but an independent maltster was often a wealthy and important member of the community.

Near enough to the Cocker to be included in this chapter is the old malthouse in South Street, built on a garden by Joseph Clementson in 1810 and still standing. It was described in an 1843 transfer as a malthouse and malkiln with all equipment. [30]

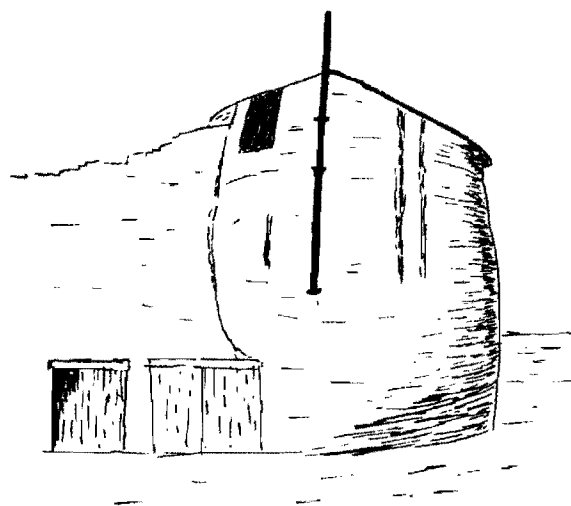


Fig. 56. The Windmill and Foundry buildings in 1972.

### *Industrial sites along the Cocker*

The Castle Brewery benefits from the purity of the water obtained from the brewery's own well which goes down to a depth of 70 feet. The present Jennings Brothers Ltd. was registered as a limited company in 1887 when it acquired the business of brewers and maltsters carried on by the Jennings family in Cockermouth and Lorton employing about 100 men. The founders of the company were three members of the family, but there are no links today. At its foundation the new company had two breweries, three maltings and 16 licensed houses. In 1921 it amalgamated with four West Cumberland breweries and five years later absorbed the Keswick brewery of Faulders. In the first half of the 1970s over half a million pounds were spent on improving 89 public houses spread within a radius of 30 miles from Cockermouth. The malt remains after extraction go to local farmers as cattle feed and hop remains are sent to Dovenby Hall Hospital for use as fertiliser. [31]

Like many other Cumbrian breweries have been taken over by major concerns, but Jennings is proud of still being a local brewery, employing local people and catering for local consumption. [But see Chapter 40]



We turn to a consideration of the industries which thrived along the banks of the two streams which were "a great convenience to the manufacturers". Tom Rudd Beck, rising in the low fells south of Embleton, flows through the cemetery and under the former railway, then immediately passes the ruins of two tanneries. Wood's 1832 map records that the upstream building belonged to George Beeby at this date (it was extended before the 1863 OS map) and the downstream tannery to Joshua Threlkeld. In Beeby's building could be seen, until demolished in 1979, the culvert which took the race from the Beck and the mill house with ornamented door pillars. One or both of these buildings were known as High Tom Rudd Tannery or Long Croft Tannery. A licence was granted in 1906 to Jn. Johnston of Skinner Street to carry on the offensive trade of gut scraper at Long Croft Tannery, Windmill Lane. [1]

Cockermouth's second windmill stood on Windmill Lane at the corner of the roadway to the tanneries. (Fig. 34). All traces have disappeared but its position is shown on early maps. The earliest known reference to it was in 1823 [2] and an article in the Carlisle Journal in 1829 stated that the Cockermouth Independent Chapel (now the United Reformed Church) possessed "a powerful and fine-toned organ built by Mr. Mark Hall, a poor man who resides at the Windmill, near this town". [3] Bolton commented in 1912 that the windmill "will be remembered by many of middle age in the town". [4]

Across Tom Rudd from the two tanneries stands Little Mill. This was probably the corn mill referred to in the pre-1215 charter of Alice de Rumelli and the fulling mill of the Minister's Accounts of 1437/8. By the 1578 survey it was the "corn mill on the Lord's waste", near Long Croft (the old name for Windmill Lane). There are numerous references to it during the next 300 years.

The lease of Little Mill was often linked with other matters. Thus when it was let in 1667, for 21 years at a rent of £12, there was reference to small tithes, parcels of demesne land, stints, small tolls and the office of Scavenger.

In 1763 came a change, when the mill was leased to a tanner for grinding bark. It continued as a bark mill until Daniel Dunglinson moved in, tired of his difficulties at Rubby Banks. He took it for 28 years at £17 a year, and although the previous tenants should have restored it for corn, it was Dunglinson who agreed to demolish and rebuild the premises. John Mackreth's estimate for the mason's work was £321. A further £20 was spent on clearing the old building and sinking the tail race and £40 was deducted for old materials reused. In addition there was the millwright's estimate of £315 for wheels and machinery. Shortly afterwards, in 1814, another £205 was spent on two new waterwheels and repairs to buildings and the floodgate. [6]

Unfortunately Dunglinson ran into difficulties and an inventory was made (including crops growing near the house) for distraint, the total value being £71-4s. This was in 1824 and presumably he remained, for it was not until 1828 that the mill was re-let, not by auction but in the light of proposals made for the "Earl's Water Corn Mill Little Mill at Head of Kirkgate" with the house and closes. It went to an Ambleside miller, Thomas Townson, for £60 a year. but he proved an unsatisfactory tenant and as his seven-year lease was ending he was told by the Lord's agent, Robert Benson, that unless he put the buildings and equipment into good condition proceedings would be taken against him. [7] He stayed on another two years and was then followed by a succession of millers and flour merchants. The mill is shown as disused on 1923 and 1938 maps, but became a saw mill. The large mill pond is filled in and grassed, and has now been used for modern dwellings. The mill stands derelict. As 'farmer' of the tolls the lessee of Little Mill used to keep a boar for the benefit of the town. In 1754 a statement was made by John Meales, then nearly 70 years old, that he remembered

"Thomas Stoddart who was farmer of the Little Mill and Tolls in Cockermouth about 60 years ago; and that the said Thomas kept a Boar, and commonly received the Tyth Piggs from the Inhabitants of Cockermouth. their usual method of tything was, for the Owner of the Piggs to take one out of the whole, and then Stoddart had his choice of the remaining number." [8]

### Industrial sites on Tom Rudd and Bitter Becks

Later a shilling might be paid instead of the pig and another record, dated 1752, said that one pig was taken out of every litter of ten and that for smaller litters a proportionate money payment was made. [9] The same record also said that no boar had been kept for some time.

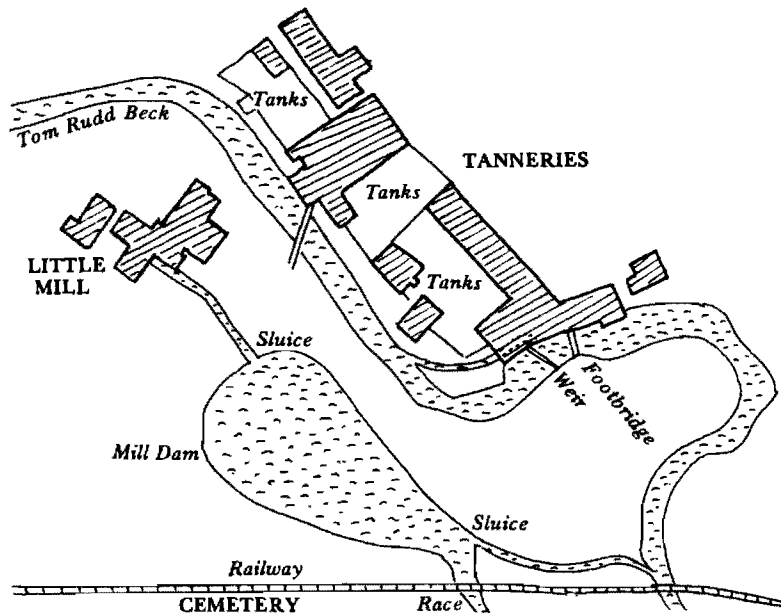


Fig. 57. Long Croft Tanneries and Little Mill (based on OS 1863 map).

Below Little Mill stands Low Tom Rudd Tannery, now converted into dwellings. Looking down from Lorton Road one may see the blocked-in recesses of the former louvered openings which were a feature of tanneries and the large garden area once filled with pits. An early nineteenth century map names it as Mr. Atkinson's tannery, Wood's map as John Threlkeld's.

Passing under Lorton Road into Skinner Street we are, as

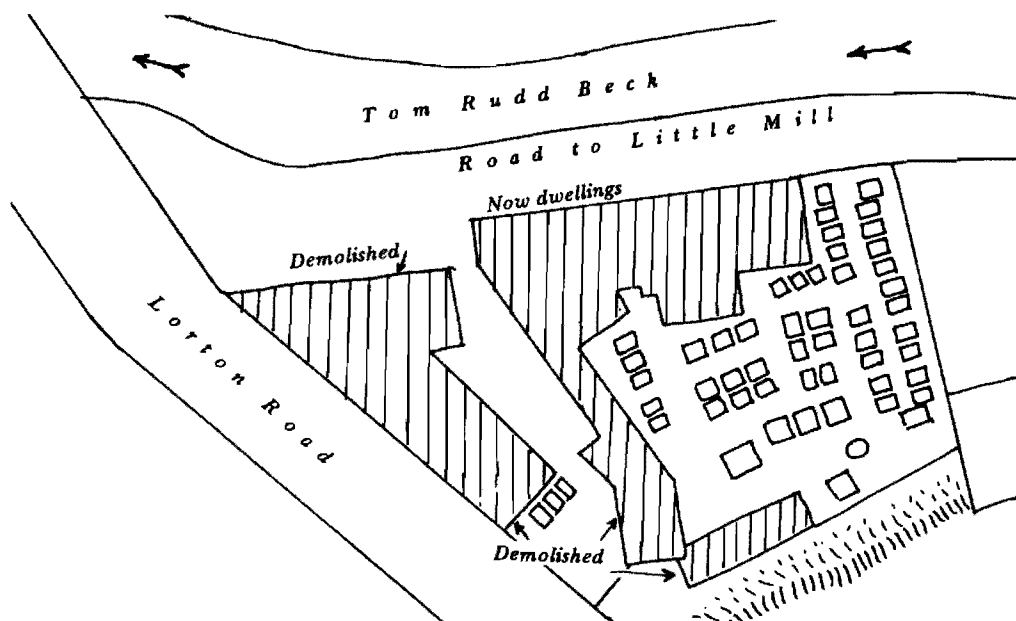
the name implies, in an area of skinneries and small tanneries, one of which was still operating in 1914.

The small building which until recently spanned the beck a little lower down was powered by a water wheel beneath the floor. Marked 'Mill John Threlkeld' on the 1832 map it was probably used as a tannery, at one time crushed bark for the nearby tanneries of Skinner Street and more recently was used for a portable buildings and fencing business. For many years it was a warehouse for the shoe-making business of the Rydiard family. Joseph Rydiard began business on Cocker Bridge in 1850, his son George crossing the road to build the shop in 1864 on the site of a lower building which had been the street frontage of Wilson's hat factory. John F. Rydiard followed his father in the business and when he died in 1941 it was continued for the fourth generation by his daughter and her husband, Nora and John Quail, until it passed out of the family in 1972. The firm is a good example of Cockermouth's self-sufficiency, for, although no shoes are made on the premises today, there was until 1939 a staff producing not only shoes but a very hard-wearing brand of farm boots. [10]

Between Tom Rudd Beck and the railway once stood the large mill of the Cockermouth Tweed Company - hence 'Tweed Mill Lane'. The building was erected in 1872-4 at a cost of £36,000 and the 120 feet high chimney became a landmark. The ground floor was the warehouse and above it were fulling, scouring and drying machines, a hydraulic press and carding and twisting rooms, with 40 looms in the weaving room on the top floor. Other features were a Glover's gas meter for 200 lights, a lift with a patent safety brake, steam piping for winter heating and a patent coal economiser, similar to one recently installed in Harris's linen mill and which was to save its cost in 18 months. There were also a dyehouse and a scouring house. Water was brought by a 315 feet drift from the Cocker to a reservoir measuring 100 by 48 by 12 feet. [11] The mill produced rugs and blankets, including imitations of leopard and tiger skins. The business was not a success. Already in the general depression of 1877 employees were being dismissed [12] and in 1883, less than ten years after completion, the mill was sold to William Brown and Company of Selkirk for £6,000. [13] At its peak between three and four hundred people were employed. By 1897 the premises were known as the Atlas Works [14] and occupied by A. and H. Rea, manufacturing confectioners.

### *Industrial sites on Tom Rudd and Bitter Becks*

Then in January 1913 they were leased by a syndicate newly formed to manufacture cycle cars, under the management of J. A. Forrester, son of a local coach-builder. There was a growing demand for these small three or four wheeled cars with motor cycle features and the Cockermouth firm planned to produce two models. 'The Cycle Car' of August 1913 commented -



**Fig. 58.** *Low Tom Rudd Tannery, showing over 50 pits (based on OS 1863 map).*

"Far away in the little town of Cockermouth, on the West Coast of Cumberland, an old tweed mill has been converted into an up-to-date cycle-car manufacturing works, and is now engaged in turning out two cycle cars of unusual design. The first is chain-driven with an 8 h.p. J.A.P. gearbox by a Coventry silent chain and thence the rear axle... The clutch is of the internal cone type, lined with Ferodo, and fitted on the primary shaft. The brakes are of the external band type, one being operated by a side lever, the other by a foot pedal, and both working on the rear wheels.... the whole machine sells for 122 guineas." [£128] [15]

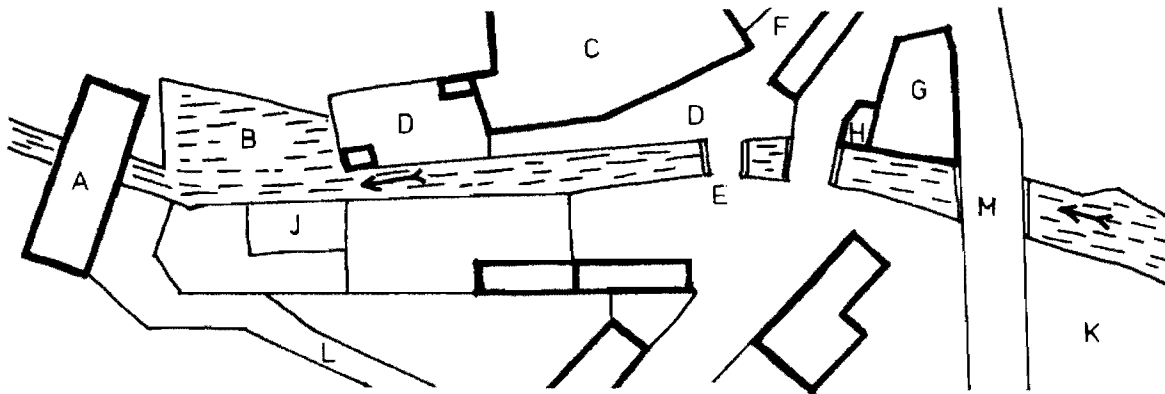
The second model, of 6-8 h.p., was air-cooled and had a specially designed Sturmey Archer gearbox giving three forward speeds and reverse and sold for 97 guineas.(£102)

This new Cockermouth industry was presumably killed by the outbreak of war in 1914. As far as is known no 'Cumbria' car survives, only one wire-spoked wheel and it is not known whether this was made in the tweed mill or supplied from elsewhere. [16]

The mill was demolished about 1918, many of the slates, etc., being bought by the Council. [17] One block of single storey buildings was left and has been used for storage by a number of firms in the town Sealby Bros., grocers of Station Street, were there by 1925 [18] and in recent years Leslie Cleeland, furnishers of Main Street, have used it as a warehouse. The Angle American Oil Co. Ltd. and the Shell Oil Company have both had petrol stores in the tweed mill grounds, with a railway siding for tanker wagons. [19] Since they left, the area has been used by coal merchants, builders and agricultural machinery suppliers.

The first industrial site on the Cocker's other tributary, Bitter Beck, was a brick works in the wood to the east of Wyndham House. The 'frog pond' formed by the diggings was a favourite skating rink until filled in by refuse from the castle. [20] Just above the town St. Helen's Tannery stood on the Beck. This is thought to be a very early tannery site, possibly that known to be in Cockermouth in the 12th century. Certainly the stream was referred to as 'Sketirbek' in about 1442, a name given to it because of its polluted state from the tanning processes. Until recently two buildings remained, with the typical slatted 'windows', but one was destroyed in February 1975 when four boys were playing cards by candlelight amongst the hay stored there. [21] The remaining building is in reasonable condition, though not the original 15th century structure, brickwork indicating a much later date.

*Industrial sites on Tom Rudd and Bitter Becks*

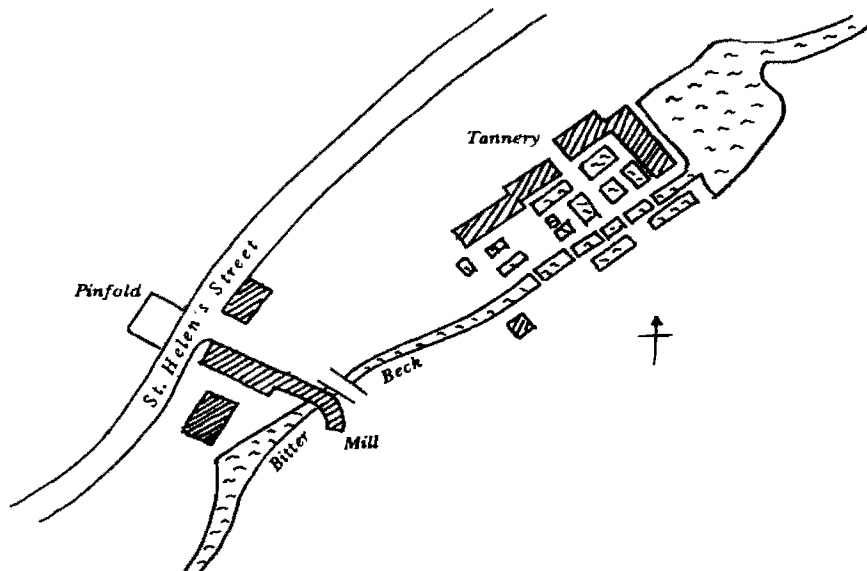


**Fig. 59.** Based on an early 19th-century map of Tom Rudd Beck below Skinner Street.

- |  |                                   |                           |                          |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>A</i> Saw Mill, later Rydiard's etc | <i>B</i> Reservoir                | <i>C</i> Workhouse        | <i>D</i> Workhouse yards |
| <i>E</i> Workhouse Bridge              | <i>F</i> Richard Baty's Skin yard | <i>G</i> R. Baty's        | <i>H</i> Hat shop        |
| <i>J</i> Mr Atkinson's Skin yard       | <i>K</i> Mr Atkinson's Tan yard   | <i>L</i> Road to Saw Mill | <i>M</i> Skinner Street  |

There are the remains of a dam upstream and drainage holes in the bank of the beck which took waste from the tannery yard. The resulting name of 'Skitter' was eventually changed to the more respectable 'Bitter'.

Just below the new footbridge from St. Helen's Street are the remains of a small mill which was powered by the beck. This may have been a corn mill or may have been connected with the tannery.



**Fig. 60.** St. Helen's Tannery with pool and tanks and mill downstream (based on 1863 OS map).

The 1839 title map shows three weaving shops in the upper part of St. Helen's Street, but these would have no connection with the beck and the next large industrial site was probably the hat factory at the outflow into the Cocker.

The highest link with industry on the Derwent was the weir at Ladyboat, to which we shall refer presently. There was a proposal in 1797 for a thread mill in this area below the castle and a draft agreement [1] was drawn up between Thomas Benson, the Earl's agent, and Daniel Mowbray and James Davenport, both Newcastle merchants, with John and Joseph Bank, linen manufacturers of Cockermouth. The four men were promised

"a good and sufficient lease of a certain piece or parcel of land part of the Earl's lands at Cockermouth aforesaid called the Little Horse Close and the Lands, not exceeding in the whole thirty yards square, at the south end of the said Closes. With liberty to erect and build thereon Houses Mills and other works for the Dressing and Spinning of flax and tow.... with liberty to erect and make a Water Wear in the sd. River Derwent and cut and make a sufficient Water Race or Watercourse therefrom...."

and then a channel as near the south end as possible to convey the water back to the Derwent. The scheme was never implemented.

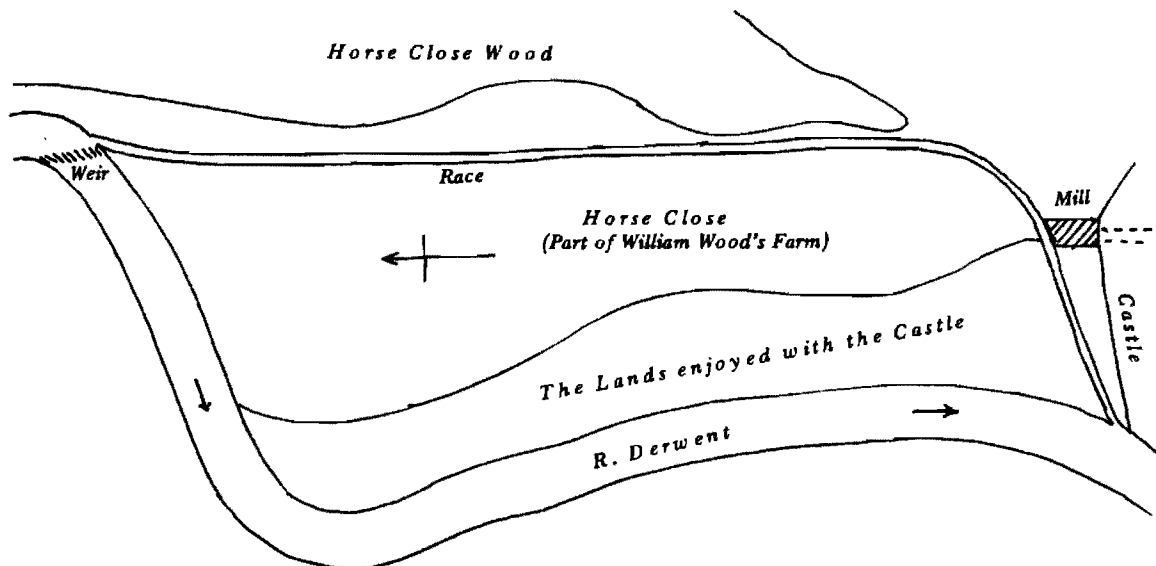


Fig. 61. The Plan for a Mill below the Castle.

Next was the tannery on the Derwent bank below the castle. Beyond the Cocker outlet the angled building of what was originally Wharton's linen mill still stands, facing on to Waterloo Street and backing on to the Derwent whence it was powered. Wharton and Banks later went to Simonscales Mill. At the far end of Waterloo Street was the former Graves's woollen mill. Both mills were built in the 1820s and had wheels, in a race which ran along this bank of the river, culverted in places as shown in old photographs and paintings (Plate 12). Graves's building had a feature common to industrial buildings in the town of this period - a small pointed window high in the gable end, seen in both gables of this mill, in the 'hospice' of Spittle Ing, in Croft Mill until its recent conversion into flats and elsewhere in the town.

On the other side of the Derwent is an industrial area which has developed in recent times from the first mill building of 1834. The Quaker family of Harris began linen manufacture in Cockermouth in Low Gote Mill early last century and built Derwent Mill for their expanding business in 1834, enlarging it considerably in 1847 and 1855. (Plate 15) The 'hospice' building near Low Gote was erected in the firm's early days for drying flax (it appears on the 1832 map) and a compulsory purchase order made by the County Council in 1975 has ensured its preservation. Harris embroidery thread, produced in over 200 different shades, became famous. The firm also wove linen and at times employed 800 people. Bolton's book of 1912 carries an advertisement for Harris Linen, Harris Flax and Silk Cloth, Harris Cumbrian Embroidery Silks, Harris Flax Embroidery Thread and Harris Art Embroideries. An advertisement on the back of Mate's Guide reads

### *Industrial sites along the Derwent*

"Visitors to Cockermouth should inspect the Art Embroidery Show Rooms at Jno. Harris and Sons, Ltd., Derwent Mills. Admission is free to Showrooms. Visitors can be shown through the Flax Spinning and Weaving Mill at a charge of 6d. [2½p] each. Specimens of the beautiful embroidery made in the workrooms may be seen and purchased nobody should omit this item on a visit to the town."

The fast dyes won a wide reputation. A stall of Harris Art Linens embroidered in thin flax threads won a gold medal in Manchester and 'Derwent' shot dress linens were included in the trousseau of Princess Maud of Wales. There were showrooms in Old Bond Street in London, King Street in Manchester, Corporation Street in Birmingham and also in Paris. [2]

Unfortunately the firm closed following the depression of the early 1930s. They are said to have solved the problem of mixing artificial silk with other materials in weaving fabrics [3] and could probably have weathered the difficulties. In 1934 a new company 'Jonathan Harris and Sons (Cockermouth) Ltd.' was formed to manufacture linen in part of the mill and the thread business sold to Henry Campbell and Co. of Belfast. [4] However, the firm ended a little later, paying about 18s. in the £ and selling the factory for £ 1000. [5]

There is mention of a new industry in the building in 1937, employing some 60 girls, [6] but it was early in the war that the premises were fully used again when Millers (Great Yarmouth) Ltd. brought their footwear machinery and about 200 key operatives from the east coast. This evacuation became permanent and the firm once employed 1100 in the Cockermouth factory and the branches it opened in Workington, Frizington and Egremont. About 40,000 pairs of sandals, boots and ladies' and children's shoes were produced each week, being sold in bulk to many of the well-known retailers. Manufacture was very labour intensive, a pair of shoes passing through as many as 150 processes. The firm catered for majority needs, not for specialised fittings, and had its own design section and pattern department, the former in close contact with leading fashion centres on the continent. [7]

A number of smaller concerns developed in the vicinity of Derwent Mill.

After swinging round the Sandair field the Derwent comes back to just below Low Gote Mills. William Jackson wrote in 1878

"It may well be that the well-known mill called 'Goat Mill' dates from this period a very respectable age of seven centuries, but I am much disposed to ascribe it to an origin eight centuries earlier, and to believe that we have here a mill occupying the very site of a predecessor, which ground corn for the garrison of the neighbouring Roman fort The name of Goat... is, it seems, the equivalent of the Icelandic 'gioto', a drain; technically 'goit', the channel which takes the water from the mill wheel back to the parent stream." [8]

The term may have a wider meaning covering the whole of a mill race. Its use in Cockermouth is variously spelt 'goat' and 'gote'.

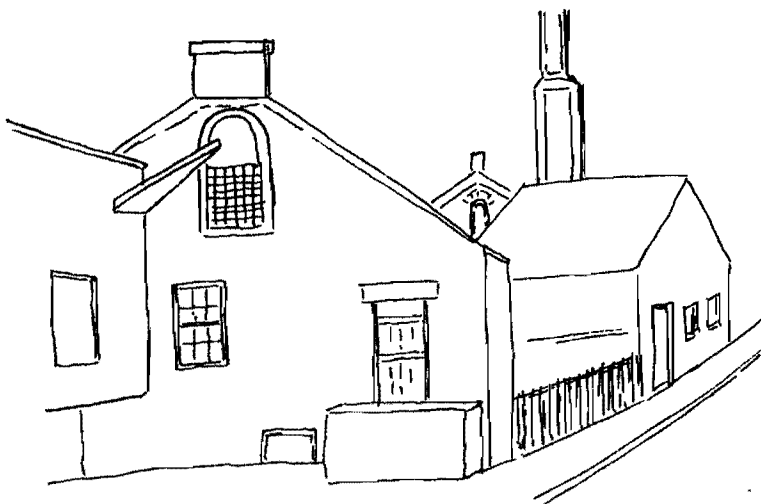


Fig. 62. An outline sketch of Low Gote Mills seen from the Papcastle road. Waterworks building and chimney beyond.

A half mile leat left the Derwent at Ladyboat above the castle and passed along the river side of Derwent Mills. Portions of its stone-lined channel and sluice gates may still be seen. Elizabeth I is said to have granted permission for its width to be doubled and certainly it existed before 1700. [9] If there was a water mill at Low Gote in pre-Norman times it may have been powered directly from the Derwent if the tradition is correct that the river once followed a course

along the foot of Mickle Brow to the present channel west of this mill.

### *Industrial sites along the Derwent*

Low Gote comprised two mills. The lower one was demolished and the upper converted into dwellings in 1978. [10]. The restored water wheel of the upper mill remains and until demolition the axle of the lower mill wheel projected through the wall and the derelict building still contained bevelled cogs and connecting shafts.

A mill was built here for corn in 1609, rebuilt for textiles in 1779 and reverted to corn in 1858. The two mills were probably of different dates. A map dated 1727 [11] labels them 'Logwood mill. Wheat mill. Corn mill.' Wood shows them both as flax mills in 1832, the upper one belonging to Thos. Mawson and the lower to Jona. Harris, who was here until 1847. The first OS map (1863) labels the whole area, including High Gote across the main road, as 'Goat Mills (Corn)'.

High Gote, often referred to as "Harkness's", spans the race, the course of which may be seen between the mill and the main road. At times it was a textile mill, but corn was usually the business here and the Harkness family were millers of flour and grain, roasters of barley for brewing, and suppliers of feeding stuffs for cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry. [12] There is a reference to the mill in 1786 and it worked until 1969. Most of the premises here are now used by a road haulage firm.

The hamlet of 'The Gote' which grew in this area from the early 19th century was an isolated community separated from the town by fields, in one of which flax was spread to dry. 'Bleach House' near High Gote Mill is a reminder of this practice. The inhabitants of the Gote found work not only in the various Gote mills but also in the Fitz Mill complex across the Derwent. A variety of activities took place in the Fitz Mills, which belonged to the Senhouse family. Wood gives nothing beyond 'Fitz Mill. Capt. Senhouse' in 1832 and the first OS map 30 years later marks it 'Flax'. A map shows a corn mill in 1774. [13]

In 1883 Richard Senhouse leased [14] to Allan Banks of Cocker mouth the cottage, garden, dye house, drying loft, bleaching house, bleaching green and out offices at Fitz Thread Mill for £1-4s-8d. a month. The mill and engine house were not included. In March 1893 Banks was given notice to quit and the following year the premises were leased to a syndicate for "manufacturing woollen goods and the spinning of carpet and other yarns". In the agreement (which did not include the bed of the Derwent and its fish and gravel) everything was listed in the greatest detail, even the number of wooden props supporting the floors. The document refers to the old mill, new mill, boiler house, engine house, dye house, store room, thread shop, old store room and old cottage. [15]

The syndicate, the Fitz Mill Co. Woollen Spinners, insured their part of the premises (some parts were empty) for £1100, paying a premium of £18-2s-0d. The policy mentions two and three storey buildings containing a wilying house (one willy machine and one testing machine); rooms for carding, scribbling, mule spinning, reeling and twisting; wool, shoddy and cow hair stores; a dwelling house; a gearing house; a steam engine house; water wheel; etc. [16]

The venture was apparently very short-lived, the insurance premiums telling the story. In July 1895 the policy described the mill as "silent and at rest", the premium being reduced to £2-15s-0d. In August 1896 the policy stated the "mill being silent it is also empty" and the premium was down to £1-7s-6d. On a map of 1900 it was labelled 'disused' and three years later part of the upper floor was being used by Wilkinson Jennings as a paper store. [17]

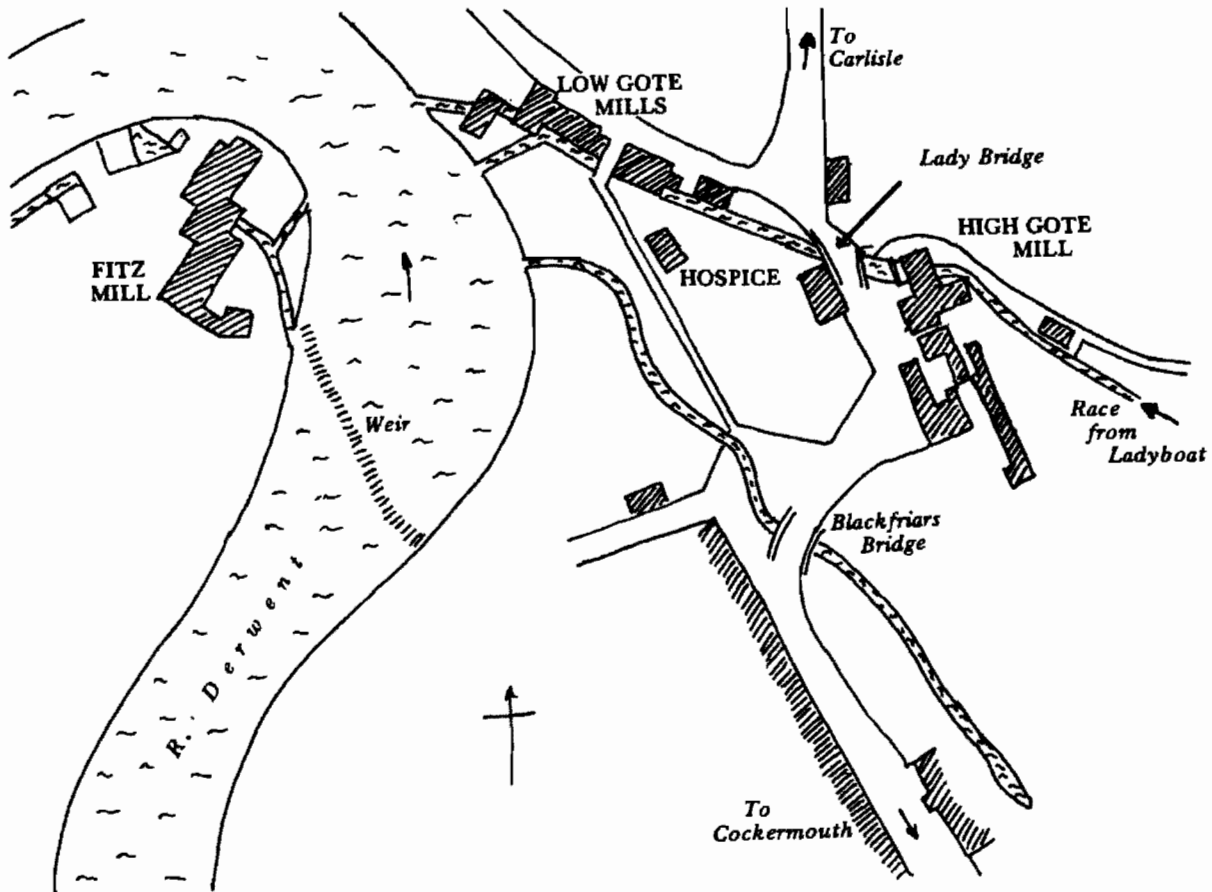
The salmon pass at the Fitz was designed by Thomas Rook, who became an important man in the fisheries office on Cocker Bridge. [18] The mill is said to have made an interesting contribution to town life when, for a special occasion, one of the wheels generated electricity which lit fairy lights in Main Street. [19]

The new factory of James Walker and Company Limited manufactures seals and gaskets for liquids and gases under pressure, used in industry, shipping and domestic appliances, and also produces insulators for transformers. The products are basically of rubber and rubber-proofed fabric, but several other components are used. James Walker began his business in a London railway arch about 1880, mainly concerned with marine steam engines, and moved to Woking after the first world war. Marine work predominated during the wars, but the water, gas, oil and electricity services are now the firm's main concern. The Cocker mouth branch was opened in mid-1969, in a building designed for another firm which withdrew before completion of the premises. It is interesting to note that the angle at which the building stands was decided with a view to frontage on to the Cocker mouth

### *Industrial sites along the Derwent*

bypass, which at that time was expected to run north of the town instead of along the present A66 line.

There have been several extensions of the factory from 1974 onwards, including new offices in 1975. In 1979 the work-force was about 300, only six of whom had come with the firm from the south of England. This was made up of 250 in the factory and 50 in the offices, 200 men and 100 women, of whom 60% lived in Cockermouth. In 1995 there are about 350 employees. The firm is currently installing new machinery with new technology. It celebrated its centenary in 1982, the



**Fig. 63.** *The Fitz and Gote Mills (based on a map of 1833).*

official opening of the new building by Harold Wilson, M.P., being a far cry from the founder's first efforts in a railway arch. 'James Walker' now has factories in Australia, America, France, Belgium, Holland and Spain. On the Cockermouth site particular interest has been shown in maintaining the background of trees and in preserving a rich natural flora found in the factory grounds. [20].



There were a number of industrial and commercial concerns in the heart of the town away from the river banks. One of the largest was the timber firm of Thomas Armstrong Limited. The first Thomas Armstrong set up as a joiner, cabinet maker, etc., at 18 Main Street about 1800. When he died in 1853 his son John carried on until accidentally killed on the Moota road in 1873, when John's son, another Thomas, inherited the business. It was now in South Street. An 1885 advertisement describes the firm as sawmillers, timber and saw merchants, explosives agents and undertakers, and they had at that time about 60 employees, some of whom lived in Sawmill Cottages which stood in the South Street yard. At one time 40 to 50 horses were stabled in various places in the town, used for dragging timber in the woods or in teams of four hauling the log lorries. In 1930 the firm was reconstructed as Thomas Armstrong Ltd., a private company with a share capital of £250,000.

In 1860 the South Street premises had a chimney for the steam engine. This engine was replaced by a Tangye gas engine in 1914 which in turn gave place to electrical power about 40 years later. In Cockermonth the firm also used the Low Road Station and a number of other sites in the town.

Although most of the timber formerly went to the pits or the railway, Armstrong's has played a more intimate part in the life of the town. Elm and oak were used for coffins; alder and birch were favoured for clog soles by the town's cloggers; firewood could be collected on Saturdays; and a boy could always have a cricket bat cut to size, known, from its lack of same, as a 'spring anle'.

Because of its growth the firm was divided into six subsidiary companies which cover joinery, plumbing, central heating, timber, heavy goods vehicles and related equipment, concrete and building blocks- this last mainly in the north-east of the country where house building was developed by Armstrong's after the second war but later discontinued. [1]

There are, and have been, a number of joinery and building firms in the town. They are too many to list but we may note in particular the various members of the Mackreth family who were also brickmakers. They are commemorated in Mackreth Row off Kirkgate. An interesting development was the co-operation of Bolton (stonework), Robinson (joinery) and Hesketh Fletcher (plumbing) in keeping their men occupied during severe frosts, when it had been customary for all building work to stop. Bolton set his men to dressing stone at the Brigham quarries and Palmer Robinson's joiners made window frames and doors which were stored for later use. [2] Brick and stone were at first used only around windows and doors, until dressed stone from Brigham and other quarries became more readily available. The expert can tell from the grain and colour from which sources the stone of Cockermonth buildings was procured.

The first brick houses were in Walker Street, followed after the first war by Kirkbank and Castlegate Drive. There have been other timber-based activities in the town. Swill baskets were made in Butts Fold [3] early this century and chairs, mangle rollers and barrels were manufactured by different firms in High Sand Lane.

Within a short distance from the town are the various plantations of Thornthwaite Forest, one of the earliest of state forests, dating from the first planting on Whinlatter in 1920. In addition to large areas in Thornthwaite and Whinlatter, this forest also has plantations along the west side of Bassenthwaite Lake, on Dodd Fell to the east of the lake, and further north in the Watch Hill, Setmurthy and Castle Inn areas.

There has been a considerable number of blacksmiths in the town - South Street, Challoner Street, St. Helen's Street, Main Street (the Conservative Club site), two in Crown Street, etc. Alongside No. 27 Crown Street may still be seen the metal saucer on which wooden cart wheels were laid while the heated metal rims were placed round them and then doused with cold water to contract the rims on to the wheels. (Fig. 50).

Most villages had their own blacksmith and Fisher and Co. of Station street (now Firm's) was one of the firms supplying their requirements - bars of iron, nails, etc. [4] Horse traders supplied farmers, shopkeepers and families with their needs and Joseph Tolson of New Street was a coach builder who could supply all types of conveyance, or second-hand carts, hand-carts, dog carts, gigs, waggonets, and elegant traps and digbies for the aristocrats could all be obtained here, together with accessories such as carriage lamps and waterproof aprons, and the firm advertised an anti-candle burner using paraffin which would fit any carriage lamp. [5]

## *Industry and commerce away from the rivers*

Self-sufficiency extended to the clothes of the townspeople and their neighbours in the surrounding villages. We have referred to footwear being hand made in the town. Most people wore clogs and a number of clog shops were kept busy making and repairing, that near the Mayo statue of John Huddleston, a pleasant-natured member of the council as well as a good clogger, being recognised as a meeting place for collecting and dispensing news. [6]

There were at one time as many as 60 tailors in the town, attached to such firms as J. W. Bowe, W. Clarke, J. Cooper, J. C. W. Drummond, W. Elliott, P. W. Fletcher, Renwick and T. Smailes. [7] The tailors of each firm not only worked in the tailor workshops (that belonging to Fletcher still stands behind what was the shop, on the bank of the Cocker) but went round the villages and farms taking orders or doing work on the spot. A man could spend a whole morning at a house such as Isel Hall taking orders and measurements for the family and staff. [8] Clothes were often 'turned' to get further wear from the material. Tailoring was very varied, ranging from working clothes to coachmen's liveries and the suits of the gentry, and in an effort to raise their standard of living the Cockermouth tailors went on strike in 1877 for a rise of 3s.(15p) a week. [9]

There were in the town a number of major concerns which have disappeared, such as John Robinson's mill off Challoner Street where he made blankets, duffles, plaidings, druggets, trimmings, checks, etc.; hat manufacture in Birkett's Buildings; [10] and the making of ropes in the 'walk' leading off the bottom corner of Kirkgate square and now a right-of-way to St Helen's Street or the ropewalk which extended along the backs of the Station Street shops on the west side.

On the other hand there has developed in the town the West Cumberland Farmers' Trading Society Ltd., started early in the century by a group of farmers joining together to buy feeding stuffs in bulk. The first branch was opened in Cockermouth in 1922 (plans for the present building were approved in 1938) and by 1932 the Society had nine branches. Various other societies have since been absorbed. In 1976 sales passed the £100 million mark at over £114 million, more than a million pounds being paid to members in interest and trading bonus, bringing the total paid back to members in the firm's 65 years to some £14 million. [11]

Not only was there much more noise and smoke in Cockermouth in comparatively recent times, but some trades produced distinctive and pervading smells. On certain days the town was flooded with the aroma of roasting coffee or smoking hams, farmers bringing in their bacon for curing either to full-time bacon curers or to grocers who cured as a side-line. [12] Not all smells were so pleasant. Knackers, bone boilers and gut scrapers were scattered throughout the town, licences being issued for premises in Strickett's Yard off Main Street, Waterloo Street, St. Helen's Street, etc., as recently as the 1910's. [13]

Candles were made by some of the grocers, such as Chris Mayson in the Market Place and Josiah Hall at 22 Main Street, where there was a candle factory behind the shop. The wicks were dipped in tallow and hung on a three-tiered revolving frame, similar to a modern postcard rack. They were sold by Josiah Hall in 3 pound bundles, many of them going to iron ore miners in Frizington, who used nuts off railway wagons as holders. [14] Isaac Fletcher (later Mounseys) sold candles to the castle. If a candle went out it was sold back to the shop, it being considered unlucky to relight it. [15]

Another trade which has left the town is clock-making. Lott Barwise was well known for his clocks in the latter half of the 18th century and in 1847 the directory lists four makers - Anthony Furness in 38 Main Street, George Graham at 85 Main Street, M. Mitchell at 44 Market Place and Joseph Thompson at 112 Main Street. [16]

Hidden away in the yards and lanes of the town were many other activities important in their day. Mrs. Burgess starched collars in Crown Yard. [17] There were two communal bakehouses, heated by wood, where the family loaves, with their distinguishing marks, could be baked in long ovens for prices from 2½d. to 4½d. according to the quantity. Mrs. Johnson managed one bakehouse early in the 20th century at the top of the Crown Inn yard and Mrs Tinniswood had the other half way up Mark's Lane by Barclay's Bank. [18] In a passage which ran down to the river near St. Joseph's School, Alex McAdam employed more than 20 men on handlooms making 'carpets' from discarded garments cut into lengths. [19] Also somewhere in the town a six-week training course could be taken, qualifying for domestic service. At the end of the course the girls were given a black dress, black shoes, two aprons and two caps, value one guinea. [20]

### *Industry and commerce away from the rivers*

It is fascinating to study the advertisements in an old guide book or bazaar programme. Through them one may gain an impression of life in an earlier day or of the enthusiasm with which an invention was received that today we take for granted. H. Fawcett and Son at their Mantle Showrooms guaranteed that all ladies' garments were fitted with the Patent Princess of Wales Ventilator which effectively prevented the gathering of damp. [21] John B. Banks of Market Place (a firm still there), had in 1895 the latest improvements in Domestic Economy and Comfort - the asbestos curfew, the Bissell carpet sweeper, the Progress potato peeler, the Dorman sewing machine and all the hundred and one things included in General, Furnishing and Builders' Ironmongery, while their electric bells and speaking tubes incorporated 'Improved principles'. [22]

Sometimes an advertiser was carried away by enthusiasm for his products, as when J. L. Yeowart of Cocker Bridge described his firm as the largest drapery establishment in Cumberland and exhorted people to see his windows for special value in millinery. "Follow the crowds, for the crowd follows the Cheapest Market. I will not allow anyone to undersell me. Sooner give the goods away." [23]

We conclude this chapter with a brief reference to banks in the town. The first was the Carlisle City and District Bank on the north side of Market Place, now an angling supplies shop, but in recent times a grocery shop and then 'The Granary Wholefoods shop'. The strong-room door at the back of the shop and the steps down to the small room with its racks for deed boxes were fortunately preserved during extensive reconstruction in 1977-8 necessitated by dry rot.

In early days a number of tradesmen acted as bankers in addition to running their normal businesses and issued their own bank notes. [24]

The aim of the 'Cockermouth Bank for Savings' was

"to encourage individuals of the Labouring Class, in Cockermouth, and the neighbourhood, to save a portion of their earnings, and to secure the same at interest, by making small deposits therein from time to time, as may suit the convenience of the parties."

This could be done at first between 6 and 7 p.m. on Saturdays. The bank was not intended for large deposits. Not more than £30 could be paid in any one year and the accounts were limited to £150. When interest had raised this to £200 no more was added. Charitable and friendly societies might deposit £100 a year, with a limit of £300 exclusive of interest. Membership was extended to married women and miners and interest was paid at 3%. Various amalgamations with other savings banks have taken place, and the Cockermouth branch is now in the Lloyds TSB Bank.

Late in the 19th century the town also had branches of the Cumberland Union Bank and the Midland Bank. By 1910 there was also the London Joint Stock Bank. The Westminster Bank and the District Bank were in Station Street by 1925 and the National Provincial opened a branch on the corner of High Sand Lane in 1927. The exact titles changed from time to time as amalgamations took place and the most recent groupings have reduced the town's banks to four - National Westminster, HSBC (ex-Midland), Barclays and Lloyds TSB.

When the Cockermouth area drifted back into isolation after the Romans left, the roads from Papcastle deteriorated to such an extent that today their very existence, though surmised, cannot always be proved on the ground and of those definitely located long stretches lie beneath fields. For centuries there were only local inter-village tracks, then routes to Norman castles or between monasteries and their sheep-rearing areas. The 14th-century Bodleian map shows no roads within the Lake District, the Shap route being the nearest, and Speed in 1610 has no roads at all. John Ogilby in 1675 has four Cumbrian roads, on two of which Cockermouth lies, so it had again become a road junction.

From the many 18th-century maps, some of them highly inaccurate in their placing of villages and lakes, we may broadly conclude that there was a road eastwards round the foot of Bassenthwaite Lake, one NE to Carlisle (on some maps via Plumbland), another W and one SW to Egremont. Only at the end of the century does the Lorton-Whinlatter road appear, to supersede the Ouse Bridge route as the way to Keswick.

Essential supplies which could not be produced locally and such commodities as wool and ore were moved by packhorse, a traffic which had become highly organised by the mid-18th century. The horses followed regular routes, strengthened with stone where necessary, and provided with bridges having low parapets which would not foul the loads. Of some 230 horses passing in and out of Kendal each week, one 'gang' of 15 came to Cockermouth and possibly other gangs would come this way. [1] The Pack Horse Inn was next to the Globe Hotel, but a number of inns were used as halts or termini for packhorse trains.

This adjustable and reliable, though slow, form of transport was still remembered when William Dickinson wrote in 1853-

"...only yeomen and the larger occupiers could boast carts; the produce of the farms, hay, corn and peat, being brought in on railed sledges and the more portable articles on pack horses. Coal and lime were conveyed by the last method across the miry moors and commons... and many persons now living remember the very common use of the pack horse both as the general carrier from town to town and the vehicle in transit for grain to the mill or market, and for manure, etc., on the farm." [2]

The 'clog carts' which were superseding pack horses by the end of the 18th century were poor affairs, with solid wheels fixed to rotating axles -single horse for local use, two horse for longer journeys. [3]

In 1783 Thomas Jackson extended his Kendal-Cockermouth carrying business to Workington and Whitehaven, a two or three day delivery service ran twice a week. [4] A few years later there were services to Workington and Maryport twice a week and to Whitehaven three times, all returning the same day, and two Carlisle-Whitehaven services spent one of the two nights en route in Cockermouth, Joseph Blaire using the Ship and Wilfred Robinson 'inning' at the Packhorse. Samuel Norman ran a carrying service to Keswick three days a week, leaving his own house, the George and Dragon, at 3 a.m. and calling at the Globe, and the Globe was also the halt for a Kendal-Whitehaven service twice a week.

Carrying charges were determined by the Justices of the Peace and from Cockermouth were:-

	Miles	Per stone	Per pack
Cockermouth to Newcastle	84	6¾d	9s-2½d
Cockermouth to Carlisle	28	2¼d	3s-0¾d
Cockermouth to Whitehaven	13	1d	1s-5d
Cockermouth to Penrith	30	2½d	3s-3¼d
Cockermouth to Kendal	44	3½d	4s-9½d

A pack was more than seven pounds. The penalty for overcharging was £5 "to be levied by Distress and Sale of his or their Goods". [5]

In the carrier services of the early 19th century, for horses, wagons or both, the King's Arms, the Black Bull and the Tip Inn (probably the Tup, later the Crown) were starting points. As the wagon routes became more metalled, cattle were increasingly moved along drove roads. Slowly moving herds, covering some 12 to 15 miles a day, came from the great Scottish fairs to be fattened on the Cumbrian plains or on their way further south, or after fattening converged on the Cumbrian markets for resale. When these roads were fenced they had wide grass verges, and may often be recognised by these, as on the Lorton road.

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Before the advent of rail and then cattle wagon transport, resting pastures were spaced and here blacksmiths would work throughout the night to shoe the cattle if they had to travel along metalled roads. [6] The great fairs were a part of the droving system and were great agricultural and social events, held three times a year. Rosley, near Wigton, was very important in this area, being the destination of the drove roads which passed through or near Cockermouth from the south-west. The site was of 40 acres (the Hope and Anchor Inn now stands on it), purposely chosen to be central and away from populated areas to give the necessary space, for in addition to the needs of the cattle there had to be room for people to camp and for the necessary stalls of food, etc. [7]

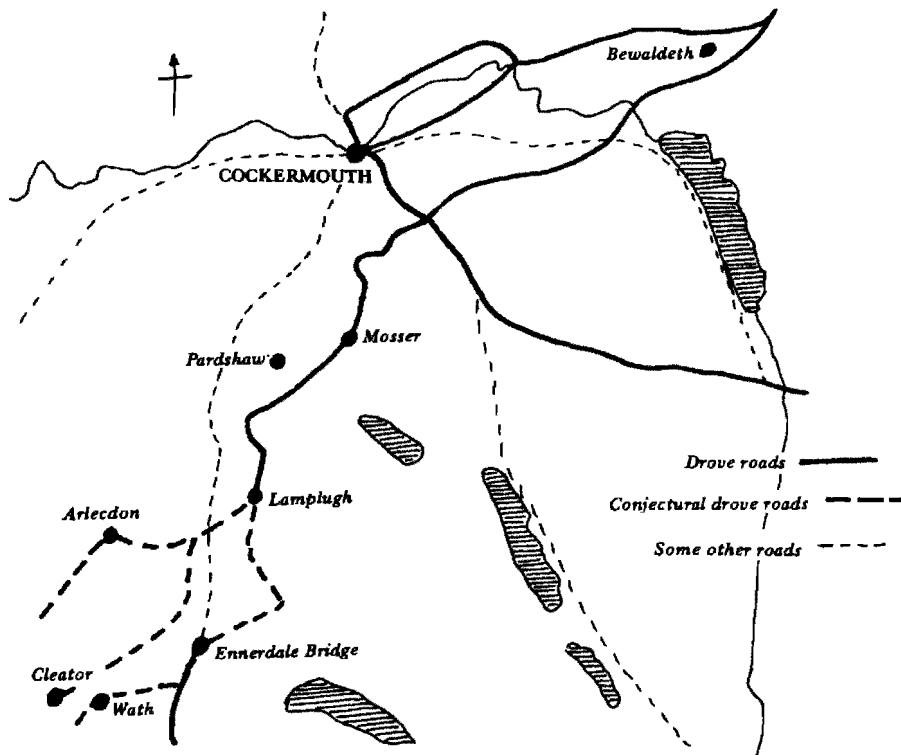


Fig. 64. Drove routes in the Cockermouth area (based on a map in 'Old Lakeland' by J. D. Marshall).

Marshall writes:-

"The great fairs .. attracted circuses, potters or gypsies in their hundreds, yet more hundreds of self-styled judges of horseflesh or sheep or cattle, young girls showing off the latest styles or searching for husbands, housewives selling eggs or gingerbread, members of the quality rubbing shoulders with ruffians, labourers in search of jobs, drovers from Inverness, and scores of farmers disposing of surplus grain or wintered stock or fat cattle. They were, before the age of railways, social occasions of a very special character." [8]

Rosley would attract Cockermouth people for business and pleasure.

To return to ordinary roads, the parish was responsible for those within its boundary and parishioners had to work on them for six days a year without pay. Any inhabitant who owned a cart and at least three horses had to send a horse team. [10] Work was directed by the parish surveyor, one of the local landowners appointed for a year - also unpaid. This system continued until an act of 1835 gave parish vestries power to levy rates for road maintenance and payment of qualified surveyors, then in 1862 parishes were grouped into highway districts for greater efficiency. One of the greatest causes

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of complaint was the use made of main roads by through traffic which made no contribution to maintenance, a complaint heard continuously until the institution of 'trunk roads'.

Cockermouth tried to get some help in 1748 when it based a petition on the experiences in the 1745 rising. Cannons were moved from Whitehaven to the end of the turnpike at Bridgefoot, but had then to be dismantled and carried by packhorse for three days to reach Carlisle.

Cockermouth asked that the military road being made between Newcastle and Carlisle, in consequence of the difficulties of moving troops in the same rising, should be "brought on from Carlisle ...over Darwent Bridge in this Town and so to Bridgefoot ... but the crisis had passed and no help came. [11]

Immediate responsibility for the most important roads passed from the parishes with the formation of turnpikes, first organised by justices of the peace but soon to become the concern of turnpike trustees. Road users contributed to road upkeep and improvements by tolls paid when passing through gates placed at intervals. Parishes still had the ultimate responsibility (and still maintained minor roads), but the trusts were to be short-term means of improvement. Each new turnpike necessitated a parliamentary bill. Two acts for London areas in the late 17th. century were the first of 50 before 1750 and another 1600 by 1790. [12] Whitehaven Turnpike Trust was set up in 1739 (by 1746 their roads were "equal to the best turnpikes around London" [13] and there were another 15 trusts in Cumbria by the end of the century. [14] The Quarter Sessions at Cockermouth in 1777 had little business except for road bills, "it being now the general opinion of the people, that the first opening to the improvement of a country, so far back in husbandry as this, is good roads". [15]

An appeal of 1755 for investment in the proposed Cockermouth-Kendal turnpike stresses in considerable detail the many advantages -movement of travellers, cattle and a long list of merchandise, the linking of the ports via Cockermouth with the rest of England, greater intercourse between the two towns, etc., and hopes that in particular the Egremonts, Lowthers, Penningtons, etc., will support the venture. Proposals included

"the Tolls collected at Each Gate be a penny every day, for a Single Horse and so in proportion for other Cattle, Carts, and other Carriages, with half Tolls for Coals.... one Gate be placed near Curgate in going out of Cockermouth towards Whinlatter the Commissioners intrusted with the Execution of the said Act be, for Cumberland, the Bailiffs of Cockermouth,...together with such persons duely qualified as shall agree to Lend Fifty pounds or upwards at the Interest of 4 pct. on the Credit of the Tolls... That Provision be made in the same Act, for repairing all Branches contiguous to the same road. ..." [16]

A turnpike committee contained 50 to 100 trustees who must own land worth at least £100 a year, so they were landowners or professional men. The newly-formed Cockermouth-Carlisle Trust in 1824 included six Lowthers and a Musgrave, Graham, Curwen and Senhouse. The financial support and the co-operation of such people in allowing land for improvements was vital, but the actual administration was largely in the hands of solicitors in the towns along the road. Often families were associated with a trust over a long period - the clerk of the Cockermouth-Penrith Trust from 1803 to 1857 was a member of the Fisher family. [17]

As trusts were envisaged as temporary, a renewal act was needed every 21 years, an expensive business and responsible for some 25% of the debts incurred.

Although administered locally, trusts were subject to national controls, such as the number of gates permitted on a length of road, the number of payments that could be demanded of one vehicle in a day and the rates chargeable for different categories. Early trusts were much concerned with the weight of loads and the width of wheels and made regulations governing both. Sometimes weighing machines were installed. A minimum width for wheels was stipulated, with higher charges for narrow ones because of the greater damage they caused to the road surface.

A trust was often responsible for roads other than the one between the two towns named in its title. Thus the Cockermouth-Maryport Trust controlled 42 miles, six times the distance between the two places and including the Maryport-Allonby-Wigton road. The Cockermouth-Penrith Trust had over 60 miles, twice the distance between the towns. The average mileage of the 24 Cumbrian trusts was 24.66, [18] so obviously in contrast to distances such as 42 and 60 miles some bodies controlled quite short lengths. Trusts were reluctant to amalgamate and there was often overlap of interests, but families such as the Senhouses and Lowthers with a financial interest in a number of turnpikes were a unifying influence. Sometimes trusts had a clerk in common, which helped towards unity, an example

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being the clerkships of Edward Steel and Edward Waugh to the Cockermouth-Carlisle, Cockermouth-Workington and Cockermouth-Maryport Trusts over a period of 30 years. [19]

The five trusts serving Cockermouth were the Cockermouth-Workington (formed in 1753), Cockermouth-Keswick-Kendal (1761, but divided in 1824 when the Ambleside Trust became responsible for the southern section), Cockermouth-Carlisle (1824), Cockermouth-Maryport (1825) and Cockermouth- Heskett- Penrith (1761).

Considering in detail the Cockermouth-Maryport road, we may note that the Act required not only Cockermouth solicitors (Steel and Son) but London parliamentary agents (Benson and Rose). The trust, which included the names Lowther, Vane, Dykes, Fletcher, Senhouse and Spedding, had to meet within 14 days of the passing of the act, which it did in the Globe. Tolls were fixed at

Horse, etc., drawing coach, etc		4d.
Horse, etc., drawing wagon, etc.	If wheels not less than 4½ inches	½d
	If wheels narrower than 4½ inches	2d
Horse, etc., not drawing.		1d
Horse, etc., drawing empty or laden lime for manuring		1d
Drove of oxen, cows or neat cattle		10d per score (in proportion for less)
Drove of pigs, hogs, calves, sheep, lambs		5d per score (in proportion for less)

At any gate, the toll needed to be paid only once a day and on the Cockermouth-Maryport section horses, carriages, etc., need pay at only one gate. with the exception of vehicles hired for profit. The rights of the Senhouse (Ellenborough) and Dykes (Dovenby) families to have wagon ways crossing the road are safeguarded, but the flange rails must be between road level and ¼ of an inch (19 mm). below it. [20]

The period of the trusts coincided broadly with the time of enclosure and the Enclosure Commission had an interest in the re-alignment of roads and in the planning of new roads over enclosed commons. There was no difficulty about using common land, but when private land was taken due notice had to be given and compensation paid, while the garden and land immediately round a house could not be interfered with. [21]

The actual widening, straightening, planning of gradients and surfacing of old roads and the creation of entirely new stretches was a skilled task. The two best-known specialists, Thomas Telford and John Loudon McAdam, were both active in Cumbria. Telford was the more costly but did a good job, avoiding steep gradients and using a broken covering, made convex for drainage, on a firm foundation of large stone. McAdam being cheaper was much in demand, but for the lower price he used less foundation. He is first heard of locally when the Cockermouth-Penrith Trust asked him to recommend a surveyor in 1823, but he was probably involved earlier than this. During the 1820s and 1830s he advised at least eight Cumbrian trusts and had so much work in Cumbria that he took a house in Keswick. Both men appointed sub-surveyors as they were also busy in other parts of the country, but in 1824 McAdam was personally responsible for ten miles of new road between Keswick and Penrith and four miles between Keswick and Cockermouth. [22]

The work of both men was criticised. It was said that the large stones on McAdam's roads lamed the horses, but a Liverpool writer said his roads were good for draught horses and carriages, though

“For human beings in dry weather they are almost beyond endurance; for they are one continual cloud of dust, blinding to the eyes, filling the nostrils, going down the mouth and throat by quantities to suffocation and completely ruinous to all decent clothing. Houses by the road are inundated with dust, and all cleanliness destroyed and useless. The fields are so covered on each side, according as the wind blows, that they are of much less value an acre than those more distant from it.” [23]

An example of development of an existing road was the improvement at Cockermouth Town Head, along St. Helen's Street. The surveyor of the Cockermouth-Heskitt road was told in 1786 to demolish the wall at this point and to widen and ditch the road, cost not to exceed £30. The work was done for £25 and the surveyors were granted a turnpike ticket

“for the sum of twenty-five pounds at 4½% interest to be issuing out of the tolls arising from the Turnpike road leading from Heskitt by Ewes Bridge to Cockermouth”

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Not all proposed turnpike plans reached fruition and frequently a number of alternative routes were considered, such as the Cockermouth-Wigton plan of 1808. The advantages of the route were the avoidance of the steep Gote Brow and the high land of Moota, so often wet and misty; shortening of the distance by two miles; and the use of common land for part of the way. [24] The road was not built and the present road was turnpiked in 1824. (Fig.66)

Before the making of the Belle Vue junction, at the time of enclosure, the Carlisle road forked right immediately beyond the entrance to Hames Hall (a length of track still remains here) to join the present road at the lay-by by the entrance to Wood Hall.

Another change near the town was the realignment of the Embleton road, the former route now being a public footpath (Fig. 67).

There was an even earlier road to Embleton. In 1810 a dispute arose regarding a right of way which resulted in a case coming before the assizes at Carlisle, William Scott v Benson and others. The defendant's plan of the area concerned, where his carts used a track which the plaintiff claimed they were not entitled to use, indicates 'a very ancient road to Embleton'. This continued due east from Long Croft Lane (now Windmill Lane), following a course a little way up the south side of Slate Fell above the old railway track. It is still possible to locate sections below the Fell. How 'ancient' the road was we cannot say - certainly it must have existed long before the days of turnpikes.

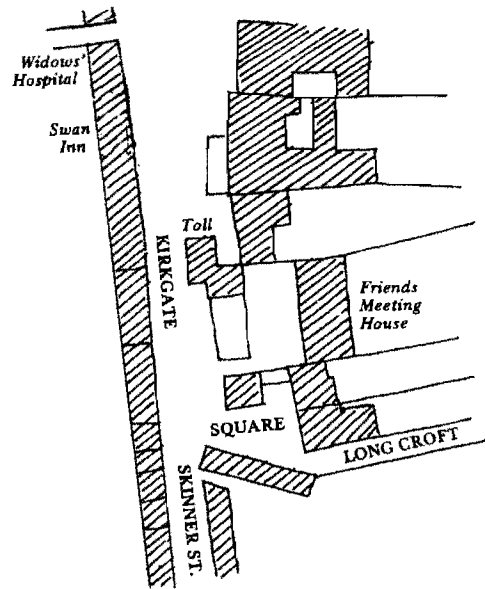


Fig. 65. The top of Kirkgate (based on Wood's 1832 map).

We have seen that the early route to Keswick was via Ouse Bridge and along the eastern side of Bassenthwaite Lake and that later the Whinlatter route became the main road. Proposals for the completion of the road along the western side of the Lake were put forward in 1825. [25] There were three sections to be made, the nearest being from Close to Dubwath, avoiding the climb over the end of the hill towards Higham.

It became increasingly clear that a trust needed an efficient full-time surveyor if the roads were to be well built and if the standards laid down by the Commissioners for new roads in enclosure areas, and inspected by them during construction, were to be attained. A salary such as the £15 for the surveyor of the Cockermouth-Penrith Trust in 1807 would not attract a full-time competent man as would the same trust's £110 fifty years later. The officials connected with the Cockermouth roads included a number of well known names, as the list shows. (Appendix 18). For the trustees themselves, there was little to do once improvements had been made; just occasional appointments and the routine task of letting the tolls. This is reflected in the fact that in 20 years from 1804 to 1824 meetings of the Cockermouth-Penrith Trust were adjourned 50 times for lack of a quorum. [26]

A trust had two sources of income - investment and tolls. Landowners were in general interested - the Earl of Lonsdale had over £4,000 in the Cockermouth-Penrith Trust although he had little if any property along it and only used it to travel between Lowther and Whitehaven. On the other hand, many local churches, charities, etc., invested small amounts. The Trustees of Lorton School and the Trustees of Keswick Dissenting House each had £100 in the same trust, and the Trustees of the Cockermouth Dispensary invested £50. In the Cockermouth-Workington Trust the church-wardens of both Cockermouth and Brigham had £50. As private investors died their holdings passed to their heirs, often "to persons totally unconnected with the County". [27]

The second aspect of financial income was the collecting of tolls. Because of the difficulty of ensuring that a tollgate keeper handed over all his takings the gates tended more and more to be let by auction, at a sum which did not indicate how much would be taken at any particular gate in a year but which would be sufficiently below the takings to give the collector a reasonable profit.



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Every year in November and December notice was given in the press of the auctioning of tolls for the following year and, as some guide to prospective purchasers, the last letting figure was given. Thus in 1777 the Cumberland Pacquet [28] contained notice of the auctioning at the House of John Meals, Innholder, Cockermouth, of the Kirkgate Turnpike Tolls, the income from which had averaged £80 a year over the last three years. Kirkgate Toll was let for £81 and Town Head Gate for £55 in 1783. [29] The auctions were held in varying inns but eventually settled in the Court House.

The following were the amounts paid for the four years 1875 to 1878 for two Cockermouth gates:- [30]

	1875	1876	1877	1878
Cockermouth and Carlisle Road Gote Gate	250	288	316	328
Cockermouth and Workington Road Fitz Gate	102	83	82	81

The amounts paid for toll gates indicate facts, such as the probability here that the traffic along the Gote road was about four times that on the Workington road in 1878, but they also pose questions which only a knowledge of very local history can answer. Was the drop in the use of the Fitz Gate connected with quarrying?

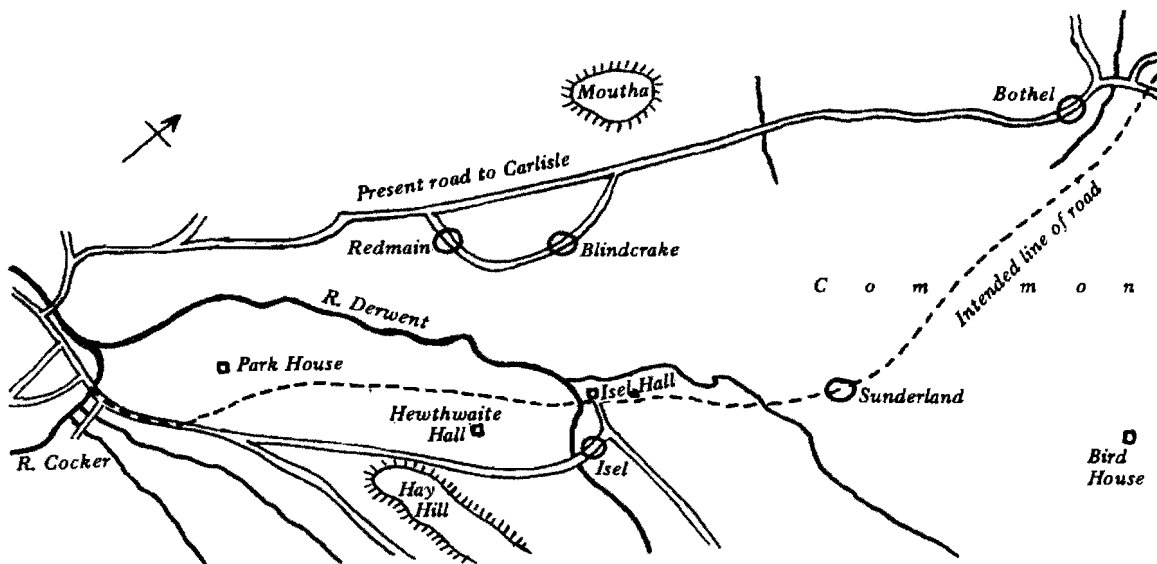


Fig. 66. Proposed road Cockermouth to Wigton, 1808.

Local gates of the Cockermouth-Penrith Trust were Kirkgate, Whinlatter, Cockermouth Town Head and, probably replacing this, St. Helens. A minute of 1768 refers to the turnpike road “from Heskett by Ewes Bridge to Cockermouth and from thence by Lorton over Whinlatter to Keswick”. [31]

In the period when roads were improving and railway competition had not developed, traffic naturally increased. The 1820s and 1830s saw a great increase in the number of coaches and better roads brought other social benefits, - quicker news from the rest of the country, a greater spread of new ideas and of education, markets more accessible, and of course an increase in trade. In the reverse direction countrymen were tempted to the cities by the tales told. Toll receipts went up and up. Then came the railways. Already by 1838, at the very beginning of the railway era, all the Cumbrian trusts except two were in debt to a total of over £135,000. [32] Cockermouth-Penrith owed £13,740. Then receipts fell as the railway network spread. The lease of Bridgefoot Gate averaged £70 in 1875-8; one hundred years earlier in 1782 it was let for £162. [33]

It was the opinion of trustees that the railways would last only a short time and that their competition was a temporary setback. Expecting better times, in 1823 the Cockermouth-Workington Trust was paying off its debt at only 1% per year and the Cockermouth-Penrith and Cockermouth-Maryport Trusts as a matter of policy always gave priority to repairs over repayment of debts. Then in 1849 it was made compulsory for all trusts to pay 5% into a sinking fund, with the result that when the Cumbrian trusts came to an end only three were still in debt. [34]

Short distances and frequent users always presented problems. Complaints were made about the re-siting of gates to intercept more traffic to the new railways, which used the roads as feeder routes,

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but if the gates were put in the right positions the tolls benefitted by such developments.

On the other hand, roads could be crowded with carts of coal and lime, heavy loads which damaged the surface and yet paid nothing because of the positions of the gates. Trustees complained too about tolls being evaded by the use of side roads and were anxious to bring such roads under their

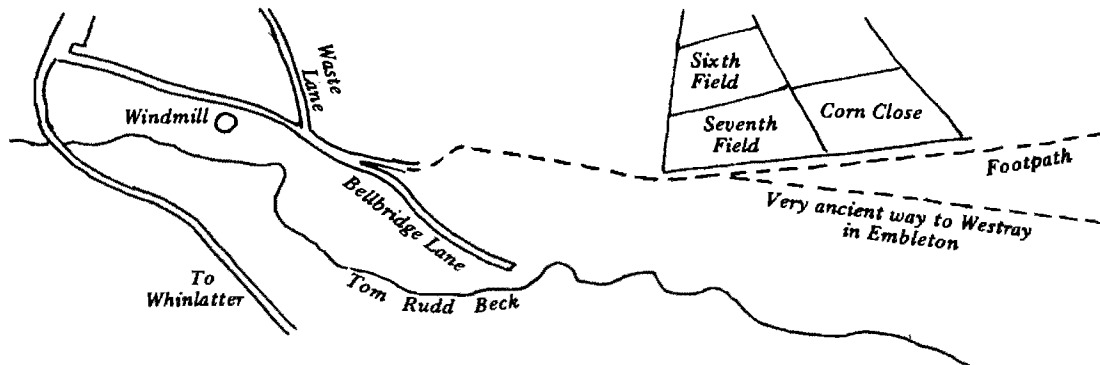


Fig. 67. *The Ancient Way to Embleton (based on a dispute map of 1810).*

jurisdiction. When it was eventually realised that the railways had come to stay and that long road journeys were largely finished, the trusts sought to compensate for losses by developing their role as feeders to the railways. However the fall in receipts was not reversed and steps were taken to dissolve the trusts.

Those for the roads from Cockermouth to Workington, Keswick and Carlisle were wound up in 1883 and that to Maryport in 1885. The Whitehaven Trust had already gone in 1870 [35]

So ended an era of 150 years of road development around Cockermouth. The return of the roads to the local councils placed a heavy burden on them until 1878. The 'Highways and Locomotives Amendment Act' then ruled that all roads dis-turnpiked since 1870 should be designated 'main roads' for which the county should bear half the cost of maintenance, the local council sharing the other half with central government. Unfortunately Cumberland was slow to implement the act and the Quarter Sessions decided that the county would only take over responsibility for roads which were in good condition in the opinion of the county surveyor and which carried a large volume of non-local traffic. In 1879 only Alston and Whitehaven met the qualifications, but there was a rush to improve the ex-turnpikes and by 1890 the county had taken over most of them. [36] They then extended their responsibility and of the 508½ miles of main road which the county managed in 1900 some 206 miles had never been turnpiked. [37] The county already had responsibility for a large number of bridges and was now able to integrate bridge and road maintenance.

Local councils still had their problems. In 1899 Cockermouth Rural District Council asked for county help in maintaining the Honister road, a very expensive stretch carrying heavy seasonal traffic, but the request was refused. [38]