

# **Staveley & District History Society**

## **Journal Winter 2007**

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The views expressed in articles in this Journal are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the Society.

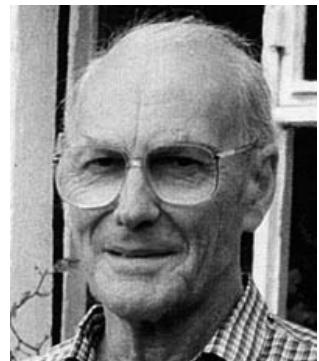
*Cover picture – Visitors at St Margaret's Tower on the Heritage Weekend*

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The next issue of the Journal (the spring issue) will be published on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2008. Any contributions (letters, articles, etc.) should be with the Editor no later than the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> March.

## Thought for ...Tomorrow?

When Joe Scott, history teacher and author, retired to Staveley and wanted to join the local history society, he was told there wasn't one; so, being the man he was, he set about organizing one. He found the district to be full of people, retired or still working, with a wide range of experience and interests, but he knew that the ones who had in past times made the area so special were the farmers and quarrymen, the bobbin-turners and shoemakers and many others, and it was to these that he first turned. Some of them (very few!) were willing to speak at a meeting; others would join in an informal discussion or reminisce with friends while a tape recorder ran. Meanwhile a few well-regarded speakers from further away added variety to the programme.



Before long a team of volunteers was amassing enough information for Joe to arrange and edit it into our first great success, *A Lakeland Valley Through Time*. Some of these people had searched out enough information on their special subjects, beyond the needs of the book, to produce a series of *Occasional Papers* - by now more than 20, and listed inside the back cover of this *Journal*. Of these authors (the youngest of whom was aged 11) one third had begun with little or no local knowledge, but which increased in step with their enthusiasm.

This kind of enterprise is the life-blood of a society such as ours. A society is either flourishing or in decline. Ours at present is conspicuously healthy; but our well being and future depend on our individual members. We have small groups studying buildings; interviewing and recording reminiscences of older people; collecting and classifying photographs of many types. Could YOU help contribute to this knowledge? Do you know of a place... a person... an activity of special interest to you? Did your parents, or grandparents, talk to you about something or someone of interest in *their* early lives? Could you write a short account of this, or speak for just a few minutes at our annual Members' Meeting? Could you lead a short walk on a summer's evening round a favourite area? We are hoping to set up a History Trail round Staveley (marked by bobbins!), and this needs help. We want to make records of changes over the years in the local pattern of farming, and in public entertainment: plays and opera... choral and band(s)... cinema (yes, there was!).

Joe Scott used to say, "History begins today", and it moves on relentlessly like a calendar. *If we lose it, it's gone.*

*Christopher Gregory*

*(If you can help – or are interested in getting involved – please contact any member of the committee – their names are on the inside cover of this Journal. We have also changed the time of our committee meetings from afternoon to evening in order for younger people still in employment to attend - our constitution allows us to co-opt anyone who is genuinely interested – Ed)*

## News from the Committee

Those of you who have been regularly to meetings will know that various initiatives are being progressed by Committee members and a few helpers. If you look inside the back cover you will see that the list of Occasional Papers has grown by two since the last issue. *Thomas Taylor and Low Mill* has been trailed in previous issues of the *Journal* and the final version, slightly re-set from that which was entered into the CLHF competition (see page 11) is now available to members.

*A History of Methodism in Staveley* was written by Marie Holland of Kendal and originally published in 1997 in the *Wesleyan Historical Society Journal*; as far as we can ascertain, no one from Staveley was involved in its writing nor did the author know of our Society. The account was discovered by one of our members, and after contacting Mrs. Holland, it was agreed that we could re-publish in our *Occasional Papers* series. With the author's consent, we have added a few pictures and made some minor corrections, and we can thoroughly recommend this paper to anyone interested in the early history of Methodism in Staveley. One thing that neither the author, nor our contacts have been able to establish precisely is the location of the original Wesleyan Church on Main Street. It was somewhere in the block bounded by Back Lane and the Abbey, but does not appear on any map. The only reference to it comes in the 1861 census, where it comes between the Tailor's shop of John Swidenbank and Isaac Peill's Boot and Shoe Maker's premises. If anyone knows of the precise location we would be pleased to hear from them.

The work on the 1836 Corn Rent maps is proceeding slowly; the 'cleaned up' Hugill map is now complete and a copy has been deposited with the Record Office to join the Over Staveley one deposited earlier. The transcription of the Hugill book is well advanced and should be completed early in the new year. The Kentmere transcription is also nearly complete, and work will start shortly on the map. Nether Staveley will be the last to be completed, hopefully some time during 2008.

From the HOD exhibition (see page 10 of this *Journal*) we now have an additional 8 posters to join the 21 that were produced for the 2006 exhibition in the Roundhouse. If anyone wishes to borrow any of these for a talk or similar please contact the Secretary. This offer has also been made to Staveley School.

Included with this Journal is a list of library books that are available for members to borrow. In the past, Marjorie Hooson our Librarian has brought the collection along to each winter meeting, but the sheer number of books and other publications means that recently only a selection has been possible. Please look at the list, and if there is anything you wish to see, let David or Marjorie know and they will make the necessary arrangements. The list on the web site will also be revised shortly.

The backlog of Oral History tapes requiring transcription continues to be of concern to the Committee. It has been suggested that some of the tapes could be transferred to

CD such that they could be played back by anyone with a CD player or computer. Let us know if this would make it possible for you to help.

Finally, it has been agreed that our photo collection needs a complete overhaul, to weed out duplicates and to list the photos that we actually have separately from those which we simply know exist elsewhere. This is a mammoth task, and anyone interested in helping would be most welcome. Contact Zoë Atkinson in the first place.

## Local History Quiz

*Test your Local History knowledge over Christmas with this quiz.*

1. What does the name ‘Ings’ mean?
2. Whose monument stands on top of a hill 1½ miles to the north-west of Staveley?
3. The land in Kentmere has traditionally been divided into four parts. What are these divisions called, and which one (*only*) has kept its name in everyday use?
4. What national event prompted thousands of people in the north-west to take their first-ever journey on the new railway?
5. Why was an entirely new parish church needed in Staveley in the 1860’s?
6. What was the most important international export of South Westmorland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
7. Why was so much good marble used in the construction and decoration of Ings church?
8. In the days of water power the River Kent was used at least 17 times between Kentmere and the tidal estuary to drive ten kinds of mill. Can you name five different kinds?
9. What unique service to Staveley village did the late Bill Bethom perform for many years?
10. There are countless reservoirs throughout the hills of northern England, almost all of them supplying piped water for domestic or industrial use. Kentmere reservoir has never done this. What was its special purpose?
11. What previously stood on the site of the small car-park beside the River Gowan in Staveley?
12. What was the name of the Kendal nursery garden and its product that became a nationally known vegetable?

13. Why is the stained glass in the east window of St James's church specially notable?
14. The Thirlmere aqueduct, with its distinctive gates at every wall and boundary, is easily followed through our area. But by what route do the pipes from Haweswater travel southward?
15. Who was the Staveley resident who played the church organ, taught himself Icelandic and German in order to study mosses and lichens, and organised the Working Men's Institute and the military Volunteers?
16. Windermere was a pioneer among small towns producing their own electricity supply. Whereabouts was the power generated, and during which decade?
17. What was the original function of our amateur theatre building which gave it the name 'The Roundhouse'?
18. Where were dressers, dockers-up and rivers employed together? How is the last of these pronounced?
19. The village of Ings has a parish church, but it is located in a civil parish with a different name. What is that name?
20. What was the original purpose of The Abbey, and why did it change?

*The answers to these questions will be published in our Spring 2008 Journal – but before that, if you can work out the answers, send them to our compiler, Christopher Gregory at Long Houses, Kentmere, LA8 9JJ, or hand it in at the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. The sender of the first correct set of answers drawn from a hat at our February meeting will receive a £10 book token.*

## More interesting discoveries

Elsewhere in this issue you will find the intriguing story of J H Wilson and his dealings with land near the station. Whilst compiling the article, we were contacted by a descendant of James Nicholson, who figures in the story as the purchaser of the land which accommodated Woodmans (now Greenside) Cottages.

By piecing together information from this descendant, together with some of our own records, and with an excerpt from last year's Staveley School Prizewinner Alice Brock's paper, we have managed to pull together some interesting facts about the early days of these cottages, before the railway came on the scene. Did you know there was once an inn called 'The Beehive'?

This information came to us too late for inclusion in this issue – the story will now feature in the next issue in April. Meanwhile if anyone else has any further information on these early days, we would be pleased to hear from them.

## Piked Howe

*In the early years of the Society, Mike Houston led a summer walk to Piked Howe; Joe Scott provided a set of notes on the history of the farm, and these, not having been published elsewhere, are reproduced below.*

It is probable that in the 14th century this area was part of the park established by Marmaduke Thweng, Lord of the Manor. Evidence for this comes from the fact that one of the fields of the farm was still known as ‘deer park’ in 1836, and 17th century court roll evidence (below) points that way. (The common arable fields of Over Staveley were half a mile to the north and the whole area from Longbank to Barley Bridge and then along the Kent and up by Frost Hole and Birk Field was probably the park.) Population expansion of 15th & 16th centuries probably caused establishment of more farms in the park and the lordship was split up between various heirs, possibly the hunting didn’t matter so much.

In the 1612 Court Roll Henry Nicholson was a customary tenant in the Gilpin part of the manor, and is fined for keeping 12 sheep on the common, contrary to an established rule that the ‘parkers’ - tenants within the park - had no right to do this. It follows that if Nicholson was at Piked Howe it was in the Park.

In 1686 Alan Gilpin was admitted tenant of a customary holding rent 10s.4d, by purchase from Henry Nicholson, and paid an entry fine to the lord of £8.5s.4d. In 1716 his son John Gilpin is admitted tenant of land, rent still 10s.4d, now specifically named ‘Piked How’ (fine now £12). With the 74-year gap between the Henry Nicholson of 1612 and the one of 1686 it is probable that the second was the son of the first.

Alan Gilpin was rather well to do, as his inventory shows. His total assets were worth £224.17s.6d compared with an average of £66.7s.0d for 38 local people in the years 1700-1725. He had (c. 100?) sheep worth £15 (cf average £4.6s.2d) and “beasts” worth £13 (6 or 7 cows and calves - cf average £9.13s), and a horse worth £2.15s.0d, but his real wealth was in ‘Money owing to the deceased’ - £165.17s.6d. His will leaves the farm and *all my goods chattels and personal estate, mortgages forfeited and not forfeited whatsoever*, so he was clearly in the money-lending business. This was not unusual locally; there were no banks or safe investments but lots of cash flow problems. Among his legatees were his wife, Margaret, his son John and his daughter Elizabeth’s husband John Hall of Longbank.

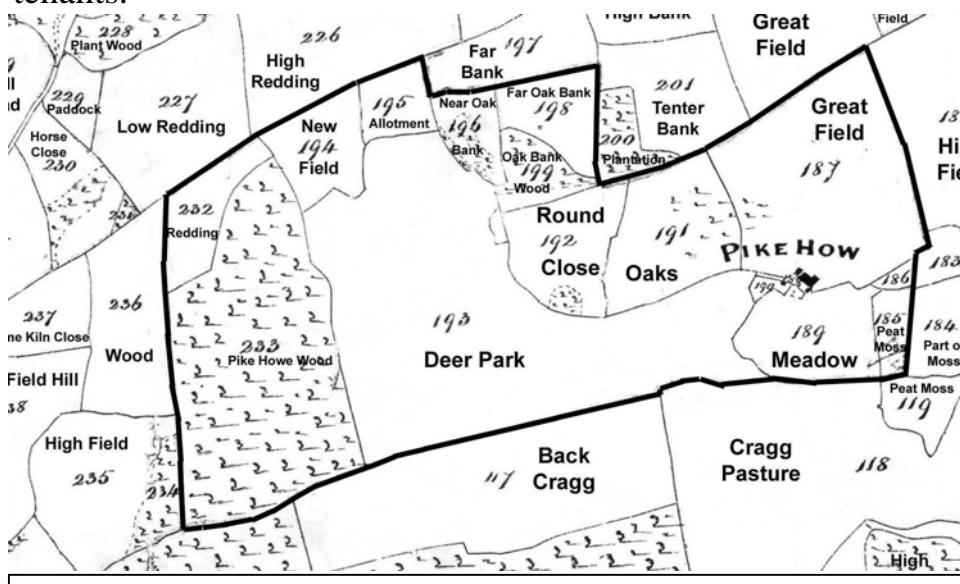
His house had the following rooms;

• <b>The House</b> with pewter and wood vessels	£1.13 .0.
Brass and iron (pots and fire irons)	£1.0.0.
A cupboard, table etc	£1.5.0.
• <b>The Chamber</b> with 3 chests and 2 prs of bedstocks (2 beds)	15/-
• <b>The Low Chamber</b> with chests, studdles (looms) and other things	£1.2.6.

- **The Loft** with bedstocks, bedding and other things £1.0.0.
  - **The Low Loft** with wool and other things £2.0.0.

This looks like three rooms on the ground floor and two above. The loom is pretty normal in local cottages.

In 1724 Alan's son-in-law John Hall inherited Piked Howe. The customary rent was still 10s.4d a year, though the annual value was estimated at £6.10s.0d in 1726. In 1755 Pike Howe was owned by John Hall, clerk, probably the son of the first John. It was now a freehold - the Lowthers, now lords of the manor, having 'enfranchised' the land. This means that they went on collecting the 10s.4d a year, but abandoned the entry fines in return for a lump sum payment. This John Hall, Clerk still held the farm in 1784. He does appear in lists of local clergymen, so presumably he let to tenants.



## The Pike(d) Howe land shown on the 1836 Corn Rent Map

was retained by the landlord, presumably for coppicing. In 1851 the farm was of 60 acres, perhaps then including Birkhag Wood, and was owned by Richard Barnes, who also owned Gill Bank, Low Gill and High Elphow. In the Enclosure of the Over Staveley common of that year, he was allotted another 84 acres, though how much of it he allotted to Piked Howe, if any, is not clear.

In the 1851 census William Bousher, Agricultural Labourer, aged 40 lived at Piked Howe with his wife and four children, all born in Orton, and his 84 year old father-in-law *Pauper, formerly agricultural labourer* born in Kentmere.

In 1881 Robert Rawsthorne aged 42 is the farmer, with 200 acres of land, and the family consists of his aged mother and his two unmarried sisters. By 1911 Robert Rawsthorne, now of Crook, still owns Piked Howe, but it is now only 65 acres, is farmed by John Preston and has a rateable value of £45 pa. In the 1925 business directory William Withers, farmer is listed, and in 1938 Allan Roger, farmer.

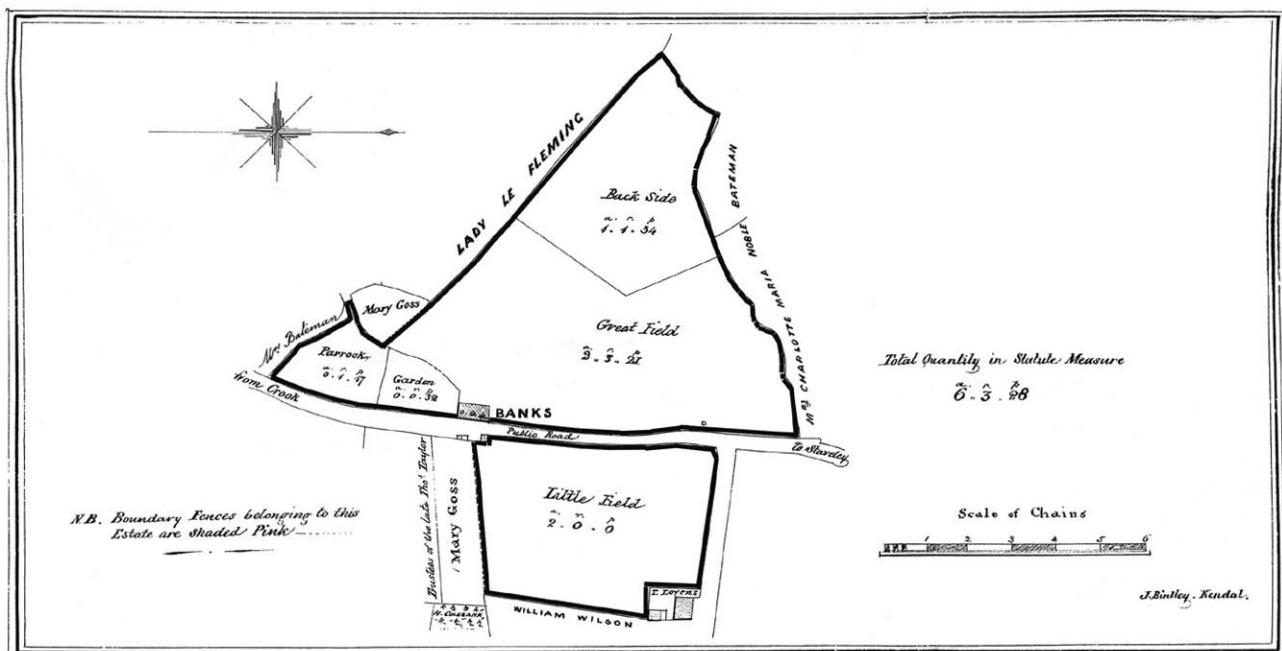
Between 1784 and 1836 we have no information. In 1836 from the Corn Rent map and schedules James Wilson was tenant, and Robert Cawthorpe owner. The farm was 46.915 acres, not including 'Pike Howe Wood' (this became Birkhag Wood on the later OS maps), which

## J H Wilson, a station and the prodigal son

When researching the history of the railway cottages in 2003 (*Occasional Paper 19*) a small anomaly in the title was noted but thought not to be significant. The owner and occupier of the land at Bankside was listed as Thomas Furness in the 1844 bill *Book of Reference* whereas the land transfer to the railway company was from John Furness. It was assumed that perhaps Thomas had died and John had taken over in the period between 1844 and 1847.

Papers deposited in the Kendal Record Office by Peter Johnson in 1979 tell a different story. In a bundle of miscellaneous Staveley deeds were some seven documents relating to the Furness sale.

From these we learn that Thomas Furness senior and his wife Margaret, who took over the Bankside smallholding in 1783, had two sons, John and Thomas. John was the elder, born in 1785, and Thomas the younger, born in 1791. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century John emigrated to Canada and was not heard of again and assumed by his parents and brother to have died about 1807. When the ageing widow Margaret came to sort her affairs in 1830, she completed an ‘Indenture of Feoffment’ passing all her rights to the estate to her surviving son, Thomas. To complicate the matter further, Thomas then almost immediately went and sold part of the estate (the corner cottage site on the Banks now known as Greenside) to a James Nicholson, who, having built a pair of cottages thereon, in turn sold it to an Isaac Levens.



The land which Wilson sought to purchase

The Kendal & Windermere Railway obtained its Act in June 1845 but for some unknown reason, J H Wilson, a Director of the new Company, sought in September 1845 to purchase the land and property at Bankside for himself. The draft contract for the sale makes it clear that Wilson knew that some land would be required for the railway. Subsequently, in a conveyance of 18<sup>th</sup> April 1846, Wilson bought the land

and property from Thomas Furness for £650 (Just under £100,000 at today's prices). Wilson also purchased the cottages on the Banks from Isaac Levens for £80.

No sooner had these transactions had taken place when John Furness, having returned from Canada and now living in Ormskirk, Lancashire, arrived on the scene to claim the Bankside estate as his own, being the elder son of the late Thomas. The files list various correspondence between solicitors as to how to handle this tricky situation.

We also learn from the files another connection with Ormskirk and of how the Furness family acquired the additional plot of land allocated in the 1816 Enclosure Act to one Mary Brewer. Mary Brewer was Furness' sister and her daughter, also Mary, married Mr. A.B. Goss, a hatter, from Ormskirk. Perhaps it was Mary Goss who tipped off John Furness about the land sales in Staveley.

Eventually it was decided that the 'Indenture of Feoffment' was 'not effectual' and to proceed with three more transactions to right the wrongs. J H Wilson had to pay John Furness £150 of which it was agreed £80 would go to Isaac Levens; the remainder was to compensate John Furness for additional land at the rear of the cottages which Wilson had tried to buy from his brother. In a further 'Release' in May 1847 Wilson was to receive £450 from Thomas Furness for the estate which had by then been sold to the railway company by John Furness for £800.

Wilson was then left with only the cottages and land surrounding them. To answer why Wilson tried to buy the Bankside estate we have to look at what was happening in Staveley at the time. Wilson's Abbey Hotel was complete, but down the road competition was nearing completion in the form of the new 'Eagle & Child'. We know from the Stockbridge papers (*Journal 10*) that the railway company was proposing to site the station at the rear of the Eagle; after all, with most of Staveley at that time being situated along Staveley Gate (Main Street), a station at the end of the street would seem logical. Further support for this comes from the first advertisement for the lease of the 'new' Eagle & Child in January 1847. This included a reminder that the new station would be built 'close by'. A station on the Crook Road would be out on a limb, in the middle of fields. It is also clear from the engineering aspects of the railway that the surveyors had the Eagle site in mind.

The railway climbs all the way from Burneside to the summit at Blackmoss, mainly at a gradient of 1 in 80. However from just before the Staveley level crossing, and as far as the Crook Road, the gradient eases to 1 in 147. With a station at the Eagle, and the goods yard in its built position, level crossing, station and goods yard would all be on this easier gradient. You can see the gradient board marking the start of the steep incline to Blackmoss on the left of the photograph shown in Issue 8 of the *Journal*.

Logical though this would seem, it would not suit Wilson. His preference was to have the Station adjacent to the Crook Road, so that alighting passengers would have a clear route to the Abbey, and the Eagle would be hidden away down a small lane.

A further pointer towards the Eagle site is the track from Stockbridge Farm which now forms part of the 'Dales Way'. The existence of a wall and hedge on the non-railway side suggests that it was built with the intention of it being something more than a field track. We have no doubt that the decision to locate the station near the road to Crook had considerable effect upon the subsequent development of Staveley. Perhaps the builders of the large Victorian houses on Station Road would have instead built on Kendal Road, and the areas which are currently being 'infilled' would have been developed earlier. We can only guess.

*John Berry*

## CLHF Convention 2007

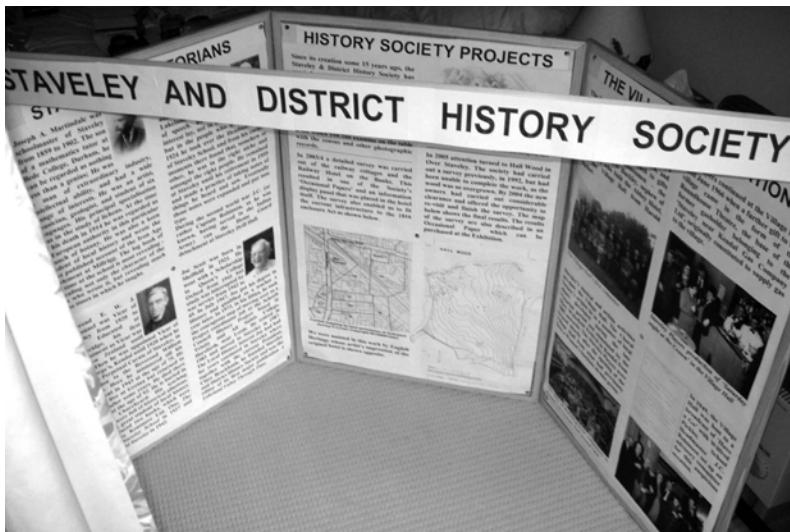
The Annual Convention of the Cumbria Local History Federation was held in September. It was attended by no fewer than 80 delegates representing Local History Societies from all over the county. The event, held as usual at Newton Rigg - now part of the University of Cumbria, began with the Annual General Meeting when among other things members were pleased to hear of the closer links which are being forged between the CLHF and C&WAAS with the aim of providing even better support to local societies.



The morning session was about on-line resources -- what's available, how to find them and how to make best use of them for research, for storage and retrieval of archive material and for making information on our own findings available to others via the internet. The lead speaker in the first session was Dr Michael Winstanley of Lancaster University who gave an enthusiastic commentary on ways of finding and using on-line sources and resources. He talked about ways of using these sources and provided lists of national sites which could be accessed freely including some files from the National Record Office and similar national institutions. He was supported by speakers from local groups sharing their ideas. These included John Berry who very succinctly described how the Staveley and District group is developing an effective electronic archive which is both easy to add to and easy to access and retrieve. Chris Cant from Bampton and District LHS explained the process they had followed in setting up their own web-site and Bill Myers, a journalist with Barrow Evening Mail, explained the evolution of new media and using the press for accessing and for publishing local history.

At the end of that session presentations were made to the winners of the Joe Scott Memorial Essay Prize and I am delighted to record that John Berry received the second prize with his essay on 'Thomas Taylor and Low Mill'. In the afternoon and another presentation, this time The British Association for Local History Award to Jill Wishart the founding chair of CLHF, Dr Alan Crosby, who is the editor of The Local Historian and is currently working with the BBC on several history programmes including the new series of "Who do you think you are?" gave a very enlightened and enthusiastic talk about his view of the state of English local history.

The final speaker was Derek Denman who is secretary of CLHF who gave a short presentation entitled ‘History and Heritage – what is the future of Cumbria’s past?’



Our Stand for the exhibition

of interests and research programmes undertaken by large and small groups across the county. The event proved that we can all learn from each other and provided a secure platform from which CLHF can offer better links between societies and better support in helping them to achieve their aims. Next year’s event is likely to be on 27<sup>th</sup> September and it could be worth making a note of that date in your new diary.

*Iain Johnston*

## Heritage Open Weekend 2007

For the first time, the Society took an active part in this year’s Heritage Open Weekend, organised by the Civic Trust in conjunction with English Heritage. All three parish churches were open for three days between 10am and 4pm and the Society provided free leaflets for visitors on the history and on significant features.

As an additional attraction this year, we arranged for St Margaret’s Tower to be open on the Saturday and the combined efforts of Alan Lord and David Hooson in tidying up the tower base and preparing exhibits were well appreciated by a steady stream of visitors (see our cover picture). As a result of the interest shown, Alan arranged for the tower to be open for a few hours on the Sunday as well. Unfortunately we could not allow visitors to climb the tower, as the steps are not in a fit condition for general use. In

These two expositions provided many talking points and there followed a very lively question and answer session bringing the day to an end on a very encouraging note. A feature of this year’s convention was the exhibition space allocated to local history societies. No fewer than 14 societies, including our own, took advantage of this. It was fascinating to see the varied presentations of a wide range



The partially restored face of the 1744 clock on view for the first time

addition to the clock face shown on page 11 the single hand and the old clock mechanism were also on display.

In the Wood Yard, Hawkshead Brewery kindly allowed us to mount an exhibition on the history of the bobbin mill, showing for the first time some of the colour pictures that were taken in 1960 of the mill still in operation. As with our exhibition at Easter 2006, some of the visitors were able to put names to people shown in the photographs previously unidentified. We were extremely grateful to SID Designs in the Wood Yard for printing the display posters at cost.

The history tour of the village, which many members enjoyed in June, was repeated on both the Friday and the Saturday, led by John Berry, and with a limit of 20 we were not disappointed with 19 on one walk and 20 on the other. Our member Geoff Ducker followed one of the tours with his video camera to give us a record of the occasion. John also led tours to the turbine room beneath the brewery, permission for this having been kindly granted by David Brockbank. A limit of 10 on each of the four tours was in place; all were fully subscribed and an extra tour was hurriedly arranged for the Saturday afternoon at the conclusion of the village tour. All agreed it was a worthwhile exercise and one that we could perhaps repeat. Anyone with ideas for next year's Heritage Open Weekend (Sept 11-14) should contact a member of the committee in the first place.



John Berry explains the workings of the turbine system to visitors

## **Do you remember this?**

Fifty families between Staveley and Windermere experienced a traditional candle lit Yuletide this year because of a 19-hour Christmas Day power cut. The lights went out for 550 people at 7.50pm on Christmas Eve when a fault occurred in an 11,000 volts underground cable feeding Staveley.

Frantic work by electricity engineers on a circuit switching operation isolated the fault and, by 10.15pm, 500 people heaved a sigh of relief as the lights flickered on. But for about 50 consumers in the rural area west of Staveley, Christmas Day was a candle-lit affair until about 6.30pm when the cable was repaired.

A Norweb spokesman said that that it was very sorry that the fault could not have been repaired quicker and said that it could not have been expected in any way. He added: "The type of fault was unusual and not predictable and it was extremely unfortunate it happened when it did".