

Staveley & District History Society

Journal Summer 2021

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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 photo: July walkers on the Roman agger at Mislet

The next issue of the *Journal* (No 53, the Winter 2021-22 issue) will be published about the 12th December 2021. All contributions (letters, articles, etc.) are welcome at any time but should be with the Editor by early November.

A History And Archaeology Of Kentmere Hall. Part 1

Introduction: Kentmere Hall is an iconic and much appreciated range of buildings which has made its mark on innumerable walkers as well as historians, lying as it does at the point where the verdant lower dale gives way to the dramatically mountainous upper valley of the River Kent and from where the Garburn Pass leads to the fell tops and ancient route-ways.



Fig. 1: Kentmere Hall from the south in February 2007 prior to the restorations

The now completed restoration of the Hall, which began in 2007, has provided a unique opportunity to reconsider its history and archaeology and it has been a privilege to have been involved as archaeological consultant throughout the project. This article has been developed from a talk that was given to Staveley and District History Society in January 2017 and describes the Hall as it was known at the beginning of the project. At that point in time there were number of unanswered questions about the Hall which were clarified as a result of the ongoing work on the fabric of the building and which will be discussed in a future article.

For editorial reasons this first article is divided into two parts the next appearing in SDHS Journal 53 to be published in December 2021.

Historical Background: Until 1974 Kentmere was in the historic county of Westmorland but in that year local government changes resulted in it being included in the new administrative county of Cumbria along with Cumberland which was twice its size. The name *Westmoringa Land* was first recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for 966 and means District of *those living west of the moors* (presumably the Pennines - which is no doubt indicative of the interests and location of the chronicler of this entry.)

In the medieval period Westmorland consisted of the two baronies, or lordships, of Kendal and Westmorland with Kendal occupying the southern half of the county—mainly the valleys of the Lune, Kent and Windermere. The Norman Conquest proceeded slowly in the Lakes Counties and it was not until 1092 that William II (Rufus) and his army reached Carlisle. On his death the barony passed by the marriage of his widow Lucy to Ranulf de Meschines, another Tenant in Chief who already had the baronies of Carlisle and Westmorland (Appleby). On Ranulf's succession to the Earldom of Chester these baronies reverted to the Crown in the person of Henry I who granted Kendal to Nigel de Albini and whose son, Roger de Mowbray, granted it to Wm de Lancaster sometime before 1140. William was the son of Gilbert, a Norman knight who had been senechal of Kendal Castle and held a similar post in respect of Lancaster from which he took his name. William's granddaughter Helwise was to marry Gilbert fitz Reinfred and the barony passed in turn to their daughter, another Helwise, who married Peter de Brus II.

Gilbert was the son of Roger fitz Reinfred, Sheriff of Sussex and Berkshire and Constable of the Castles of Windsor, Wallingford and Bristol and the Tower of London, and the nephew of Walter de Coutances, Archbishop of Rouen. But as he was illegitimate, he could not inherit his father's lands and was granted the barony of Kendal by Richard I in 1189 in the right of his wife. Gilbert rose high in Richard's favour being a justiciar and his dapifer. He was Sheriff of Lancashire under King John from 1205 until 1215 and was amongst those whose opposition was to lead to the signing of Magna Carta. He and his son William de Lancaster III were amongst those holding Rochester Castle against the King for which he was fined 12000 marks (£8000) as well as having to surrender his castles at Kendal and Morhull. Amongst the hostages given up as security for his future obedience were Benedict de Radmayne, Roger de Burton, Adam de Yealand, Thomas de Beetham and Robert de Strickland.

Peter de Brus II (1196-1241) Lord of Danby and Skelton in Cleveland was a major landowner whose family held 96 Yorkshire manors at the time of the Domesday Book. He was himself a successful speculator in lands, ward-ships and franchises and owed service for 16 knights. He died on way back from Marseilles in 1241 and was buried at Guisborough Priory. He was succeeded by his son Peter de Brus III and on the latter's death without issue in 1272 his estates were divided amongst his three sisters with Laderina, the wife of John de Bella Aqua (or *de Bellew*) received Carlton and Kentmere. The manor subsequently passed on the marriage of their daughter Sibilla to Milo de Stapleton and remained in the Stapleton family until the reign of Charles II. Bella Aqua is a somewhat shadowy figure whose main seat of power was again elsewhere, this time in Nottinghamshire whereas the Stapletons were a Yorkshire family who eventually settled on their estates at Carlton nr Selby. It seems clear that the above landowners were 'absentee' landlords who would have left the running of their Kendal estates to local men -a not uncommon circumstance in the north west. The family most associated with Kentmere Hall were the Gilpins and it is said that Richard Gilpin, "Richard the Rider", was granted the estate of Kentmere by

the Baron of Kendal in 1206 because of extraordinary services in war and peace and for having killed a wild boar thus winning the right to a coat of arms of a Boar Sable and the motto '*Dictis Factisque Simplex*' (sincere in word and deed). If this was the case then the Baron at the time would have been Gilbert fitz Reinfred.

Richard was reputedly the father of William Gilpin who was a Juror at the Inquisition Post Mortem of Thomas de Thweng in 1360 and gave witness in 1373 to the ownership of the manor by the Stapletons. However as Burn and Nicolson have pointed out the dates are clearly too far apart for this father-son relationship to stand scrutiny. There was another Richard Gilpin (referred to as Richard II) who was granted by deed the manor and lands of Ulthwaite in 1268 but again it is difficult to see him as the father of William based on the known dates. It does however seem to be the case that in 1375 this William, who was clearly already important in local affairs, married a daughter of Thomas Ayray, the bailiff. The Ayrays were the wealthiest family in Kentmere when the Lay Subsidy was taken in 1332 and it may be that this marriage provided the Gilpins with a further step up the social scale.

Other Gilpins of significance were a later William who was Captain of horse at the Battle of Bosworth Field, 1485, where he was slain along with his King Richard III but without issue. The Kentmere estate accordingly passed to his brother Edwin then to the latter's son, William. The family appear to have prospered under the new Tudor dynasty with George, Edwin's 2nd son, being Queen Elizabeth's Ambassador to Holland, and Bernard, the 4th son, (the 'Apostle of the North') born in 1517 becoming Archdeacon of Durham. (Note that the Reverend William Gilpin (1724 – 1804) artist, clergyman, schoolmaster, and author, best known as one of the originators of the idea of the *picturesque*, and his brother Sawrey, animal painter, illustrator, and etcher who specialised in paintings of horses and dogs and was made a Royal Academician, were from a branch of the family who lived in Carlisle c.1695/6.) Christopher Gilpin - last of male line - sold the estate to Sir Christopher Philipson of Crooke thence to Sir Daniel Fleming. By 1900 the owner was Mr C. W. Wilson and by 1934 Mr Matthew Gibson.

Plan of the Hall and early descriptions: As will be seen from Figure 1 the Hall presents a shallow 'H-shaped' footprint comprising a central limewashed building (the central hall) with two wings. That to the west is in the form of 'pele' tower and that to the east being a gabled building known locally as 'Chapel Barn' having something as a chapel-like appearance. The whole of this three part unit is a Grade II* listed building because of its special architectural and historic interest. At right angles beyond the east wing is another agricultural building which was a ground floor shippon or byre with a hay loft over which is Grade II Listed due to its Group Value as part of the Hall complex. To the rear of the central building is a two storey outrigger which can be seen on the floor plan at Figure 2 below which is taken from the survey by the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments in England (RCHME) which was carried out in 1932.

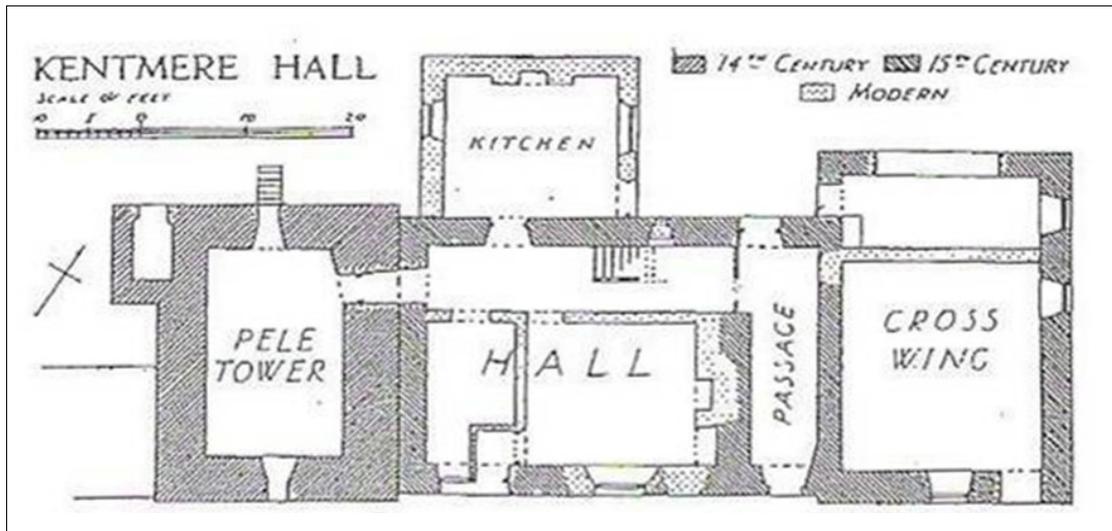


Fig. 2: RCHME survey -1932

This ‘H-shaped’ footprint is typical of the large houses occupied nationally by families of provincial or considerable local importance and comprising a central hall (often open to the roof originally and used as communal living space), with more private quarters for the Lord and his family often being added later and a service or cross wing being added at the other end so as to house the kitchens and other domestic services and divided from the hall by a cross-passage. As in many instances in the Kendal barony the family quarters at Kentmere took the form of a defensive tower clearly intended to provide a place of refuge in times of danger. The RCHME survey assigned a 14th century date to the Tower. This accords with others in the area and was no doubt required in response to the substantial depredations by the Scots which saw them raiding as far south as Chorley in Lancashire in the years after their victory over the English at Bannockburn in 1314. A possible late 14th or 15th century date was assigned to the central hall and the cross wing suggesting that the pele tower may in fact have stood alone originally or that the hall building had been redeveloped. The rear outrigger was regarded as modern which in this context probably meant early 19th century and reflected the additional facilities required by Dales farmers at that time.

The earliest contemporary reference to the Hall was in 1540 by John Leland who was visiting the monasteries to assess their wealth for Henry VIII at the time of their dissolution. He probably passed through Kentmere en route from Conishead to Shap via High Street or Nan Bield and simply noted that: “*Kenne nuage J and more is a 8 myles flat nothe from Kendall on the way to Perithe, c and ther is a chapell long-ynged as a parte onto Kendale paroch, Kentmore Haul, Gilpins howse.*” Thomas Machell was more informative when, as ‘An Antiquarian on Horseback’ in 1691 he noted Kentmere Hall as being ‘*an old black building having an antique tower of ragstone at the west end of it*’ and produced an informative drawing of it shown at Figure 3. It is noticeable that whilst he describes the tower as ‘antique’ his description of the hall suggests that he also regarded this as being of a considerable age.



Fig.3. Machell's drawing of the South front of the tower and its window arrangement looks largely accurate, see Fig.1. The oversailing 'bartisans' at the corners of the battlements seem overdramatic although the painting of Fig.4 shows remnants of similar features as does the photo of Fig.5.



Fig.4: Painting attributed to John Harden (1772-1847) of Brathay Hall. Note the low garden wall which probably marks out the barmkin for the Hall; also the low range of buildings beyond, largely now replaced by the bank barn and the north gable of Chapel Barn. The service wing is also visible, but not the rear outrigger to the central hall.

Other features of Machell's drawing include an apparently mullioned window at the west end of the central hall. This was subsequently converted to a doorway but remnants of the mullions and the surrounding frame are still visible (see Figure 6 below) and they can also be seen on a sketches by Green dated 1814 and Bland's of 1834 at Figures 7 & 8 below. On first appearance the central hall appears to be stopped off at the east end by a many windowed gable. However this is illusory and what we are looking at is in fact the south gable of the Chapel Barn which made up the service wing of the Hall. As with many draftsmen of the period Machell was still getting to grips with three dimensional drawing!



Fig.5. Note remnants of bartisans on tower and large entrance opening to first storey. The 'modern' rear outrigger is also visible.

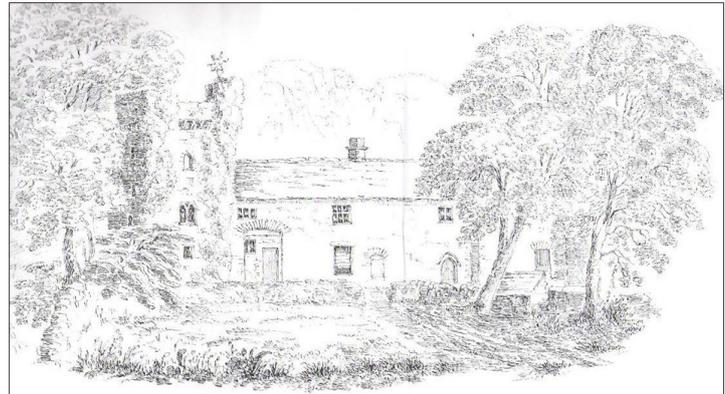


Fig.6. Remnants of mullioned window



Fig.7. Green's sketch of 1814 showing the mullioned window. Note also the small range of buildings to the right also shown on Harden's painting and now replaced by the bank barn.

Fig.8. Bland's sketch of 1834 showing the mullioned window now converted to a doorway.



To be continued. Part 2 of this article will continue with a look at some of the earliest archaeological surveys of the hall and more detailed descriptive elements.

John Trippier

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Abbreviations

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TCWAAS: Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society

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May walk: Around Troutbeck with Andy Lowe

It was with *deep joy* that fifteen folk including some potential new members assembled on June 3rd (the scheduled day in May saw torrential rain so the walk was postponed) at the foot of Green Gate, Troutbeck, where it meets the A592 at Corfoot Bridge. This was the first summer walk since the onset of the Covid-19 epidemic. And it was not just any old walk, but was one led by Andy Lowe. The last time we were blessed with a walk (around Askham) with Andy was in July 2018. One of the members on that walk was Alan Lord, and it was the last longish walk he managed. He died from Covid-19, he was a

founder member of the Society and thus the longest serving member too. He will be much missed.

A similarity between the two walks was the presence of a family who had a major part in the development of each village; for Askham it was the Lowther family while the Brownes lorded over Troutbeck. Perhaps the Brockbank family will eventually be seen as doing the same for our own Staveley? Before the walk began we were given an appreciation of why the village was situated there. An easterly high location above the valley and an important road going north were two of the main reasons. We initially walked south on the A592 until the public path to the right was taken which took us down into the valley bottom and up again over Troutbeck (river) on the new bridge to arrive at the southern end of the village where the first properties of Town Foot and Croft stood on Bridge Lane. From there we walked north and were given a comprehensive description of the



From there we walked north and were given a comprehensive description of the

properties to a few yards north of the Post Office. Townend was the obvious highlight of the walk and was just one example of why Andy considered Troutbeck to be the finest preserved vernacular village in Cumbria. The superlatives just kept coming and it would be unfair to single any buildings out except for the aforementioned Townend. My most memorable moment was being shown a first floor ‘sloping out’ hole at Thwaite (previously called Low House). We returned to our vehicles leaving the spine of the village by descending Green Gate.

Don Morris



June Walk: A visit to Crag House Farm, Ings

Location : OS Explorer OL7 (SE English Lakes). GR 435966

The group met in the farmyard of Crag House Farm on a glorious warm and sunny afternoon. Farmer Edward Park welcomed the assembled company and gave a brief introduction to his property which he acquired in 2017. He described it as a traditional farm of some 187 acres composed of a mixture of woodland, meadow, pasture and rough grazing. Although the land is not very productive it had never in recent times been subjected to chemical fertilisers. It supported a substantial number of beef cattle and mixed flocks of sheep, including native Herdwicks. We learned of the problems of tick infestation which was a constant threat to man and beast. Then Edward and SDHS stalwart Peter Noble led the party of some seventeen members out into the wilderness.

Norman Nicholson, in his book “Cumberland and Westmorland” describes this area very well: “The Silurian rocks as a whole are not very assertive. They form, in the main, the easy going country south of Coniston, near Hawkshead and on the Westmorland Side of Lake Windermere. The hills are never very high. They are long

and flat and smooth with broad valleys dented into them.. The hills shape themselves into languid lumps”.

As we wended our way gently downhill, Edward explained the management of the landscape. The impervious rocks lead to rapid flooding of any hollows and fast run off of water which he described as “droughty”. In general the grazing is poor and management of the extensive bracken cover is done by crushing which bruises the plant, stunting its growth, rather than the application of chemicals.



After a pleasant fifteen minute stroll we arrived at our objective, a possibly C18th sheep dip (see SDHS Journal 47, Winter 2019/20, Hiley and Noble). The beck can be accessed from a sheepfold and, by temporarily damming it, turned into a pool for dipping. A paved ramp allowed the sheep to get out of the water. Peter pointed out the



salient features, including the hogg-hole through which lambs were separated. Washing involved no chemicals, only beck water. The objective was to make the wool as clean as possible before shearing. Clean wool sold for premium prices.

The prospect of afternoon tea provided the stimulus for weary walkers to make the uphill journey back to the farm via an alternative route. Edward indicated one of the six ponds on the farmland. They are natural hollows - possibly Kettleholes? As we reached the highest point of our homeward way we came upon a mysterious metallic structure for which no-one had an explanation. Did aliens once land at Crag House Farm? Is it like the obelisk in “2001”? Cue spooky music!

Our intrepid historians returned to the farmyard where, in best Enid Blyton manner, they enjoyed “cakes and lashings of ginger beer” (alright, tea). On a perfect Lakeland day what could be better? The Park family entertained us right royally and were duly thanked by the Chairman.

David Telford-Reed

July Walk: Along the Roman Road with David Ratledge



A party of twenty-one led by David Ratledge, a renowned expert on laser ground surveys, walked part of the Roman Road through Ings on 15th July, starting at Misset Farm. The road is part of the route from Watercrock, Kendal to Galava, Ambleside, and thence over Dunmail Raise to the north. As David was quick to assert, there is no evidence for a Roman road over High Street. The clearest evidence for the road in Ings lies on the lands of Misset Farm. The route roughly followed the current line of the A591 from Staveley before striking NW at White House, passing through Misset. Just beyond the farm the route reaches the top of Misset Brow on the Moor Howe Road. The Roman Road thereafter roughly followed the Moor Howe Road toward Troutbeck.

We walked SE first, half way to White House, to the Misset boundary with Broadgate. Had that huge cubical boulder there not seen service as a Roman milepost? Looking back NW to Misset, the route is gentle and inviting, the farm lying near the head of a shallow valley. We walked back beyond the farm, across

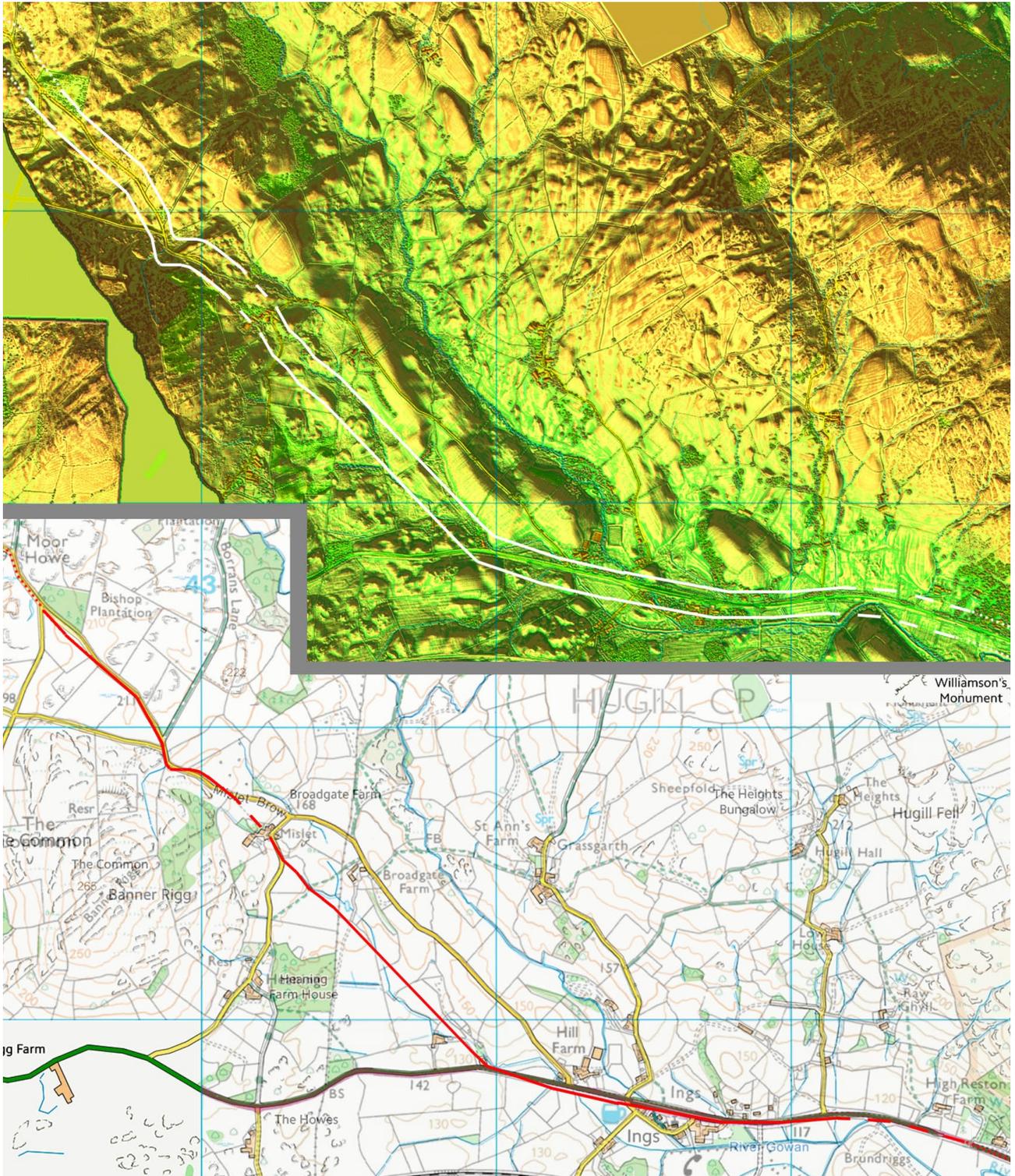


the Moor Howe Road into the field opposite. There lies a clearly defined agger, the ridge or embankment on which Roman roads were built. Thence, back to Misset and a much needed cup of tea, laid on by our host James Walling and his willing sister Anne. We were grateful to James for the opportunity to walk the Roman route across his land, his hospitality extending to a path cut through his meadow!



Special thanks are, of course, due to Roman expert David Ratledge. His knowledge of the subject is encyclopaedic and he fielded every question with authority. He convinced us all that we were indeed on the old Roman Road. Subsequent to the walk, he wrote: "Following last week's lovely summer walk I think we are a bit closer to locating the Roman road passing Ings and Misset. This (see map, p12)

would be my take on where it most likely is. Please pass on to those interested."



David Ratledge's 3D LIDAR imaging studies of the Roman Roads in Cumbria can be found at his website: <http://www.twithr.co.uk/cumbria/cumbriapages.html> 'Travelling with the Romans'. In particular, the section 'The Roman Road from Watercrook to Ambleside', makes for fascinating reading. It includes photos and maps of the complete route, much of it familiar ground of course, including that section above. Where the route is a matter of conjecture, he uses a dotted line. Since his visit to Misset, much of the route through Ings is now no longer 'dotted'.

John Hiley