

ART. VII.—*Some documentary evidence on woodlands in the vicinity of Windermere.* By CHARLOTTE KIPLING.

*Read at Carlisle, September 27th, 1974.*

THE vegetational history of the Lake District over the past 15,000 years has been studied by means of pollen analysis of cores (Pearsall & Pennington 1973,<sup>1</sup> Pennington 1947,<sup>2</sup> 1973<sup>3</sup>). This present paper is concerned only with woodlands in the vicinity of Windermere over the past 750 years and is based on documentary evidence.

The questions of interest are: the extent of the woodlands, whether they were ever completely cleared, and the species of trees present.

The main area considered (Fig. 1) is the drainage basin of Windermere, which includes Langdale, Grasmere, Rydal, Troutbeck and Esthwaite; some references have also been made to other nearby places. Pollen analysis has shown that in this area the high land, over 1,000 feet above sea level, had been progressively deforested since Neolithic times, with very extensive clearances between the 2nd and 6th centuries A.D., therefore it can be supposed that by the 13th century most of the high land above the steep valley slopes was bare.

The available documentary evidence is inevitably patchy and incomplete, and for historical reasons is not consistent throughout the area.

In the middle ages the north and north east section

<sup>1</sup> Pearsall, W. H. & Pennington, W. 1973. *The Lake District*. London.

<sup>2</sup> Pennington, W. 1947. "Lake sediments: pollen diagrams from the bottom deposits of the North Basin of Windermere." *Phil. Trans. Roy Soc. B.* 233, 137-175.

<sup>3</sup> Pennington, W. 1973. "The recent sediments of Windermere." *Freshwat. Biol.* 3, 363-382.

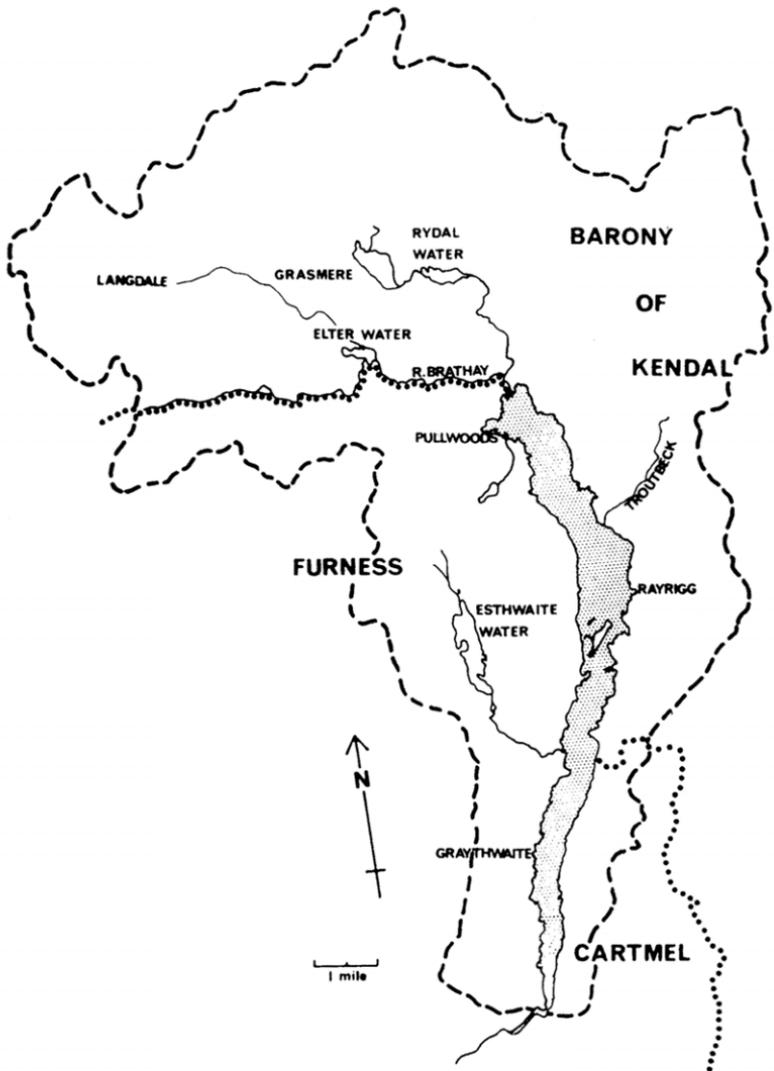


FIG. 1.—Map of the drainage basin of Windermere.

formed part of the Barony of Kendal, the west shore and land as far as Coniston was held by the Abbey of Furness, and the small section in the south east was in the parish of Cartmel.

For the Barony of Kendal the evidence consists mainly of lists of property, grants and court cases, among which there are many references to woodlands (Farrer 1923/4).<sup>4</sup> In 1663 a national census of trees was being carried out, and a list has been preserved which gives details of trees in some parts of the Barony of Kendal (Browne papers). Legal documents have provided information about coppice woods, mainly in the 18th century, and evidence on plantations has been derived from bills for the purchase of seedlings and from account books (Browne papers).

In the records of the Furness district woodlands are mentioned in grants and court cases, and in particular in the lists of property and rents compiled in 1537 at the dissolution of the monastery (Beck 1844,<sup>5</sup> Atkinson 1886/7,<sup>6</sup> Brownbill 1915-19<sup>7</sup>). Later evidence is available for the Furness district on account of the importance of the iron industry, which was dependent on wood supplies. (Fell 1908).<sup>8</sup>

There are many descriptions of the scenery in guide-books and travellers tales, but these need to be used with discretion.

### The Barony of Kendal.

The documents from the middle ages provide convincing evidence of the widespread occurrence of

<sup>4</sup> Farrer, W. 1923/24. *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale* (ed. J. F. Curwen). 2 vols. Kendal.

<sup>5</sup> Beck, T. A. 1844. *Annales Furnesienses. History and Antiquities of the Abbey of Furness*. London.

<sup>6</sup> Atkinson, Rev. J. C. 1886/87. *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*. 3 vols. Chetham Society.

<sup>7</sup> Brownbill, J. (ed.). 1915-19. *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*. 3 vols. Chetham Society.

<sup>8</sup> Fell, A. 1908. *The early iron industry of Furness and district*. Ulverston.

woodlands and of their importance in the day-to-day economy.

For example, in 1222 William de Lancaster made a grant to the free burgesses of the borough of Kirkeby in Kendale (i.e. Kendal) which allowed them to "take of his wood between Kent and Wynandermere their necessaries without view of his foresters".

Lists of property were compiled on the death of each holder of the Barony, and these contain many references to woodlands. In 1272 "Walter de Lyndesay held at his death the forest of Trutebeck worth £20 yearly, . . . . . also 3a [acres] meadow worth 3s yearly, and the pannage of Appeltwayt and Trutebeck with the foreign herbage<sup>9</sup> worth 50s yearly."

In 1283 "William de Lyndesay held at his death . . . . . a forest called Trutebeck . . . . . there is another forest there . . . . . there is also a park there . . . . . the pannage of the said forest is worth 20s yearly, 6a meadow in the said forest are each worth 12d yearly", and "in Appilthwayt . . . . . the pannage is worth 6s. 8d. yearly". Similar entries occur in lists made in 1334 and 1437.

In 1340 a grant was made to William de Coucy and his heirs of free warren (hunting rights) in Windermere, Grasmere, Langdale, Ambleside, Troutbeck and Applethwaite and "licence to impark his wood of Troutebek and to hold it so imparked without impediment from the King or his ministers".

In 1346 there were complaints that Adam de Ursewyk, who had recently been granted the chief forestership of Troutbeck, had misappropriated the profits. His predecessors had received the following benefits "bark, dead wood and stallage of the old park of the Bradewode and of a moiety of the

<sup>9</sup> Pannage: "the right or privilege of pasturing swine in a forest, or acorns, beech mast etc. on which swine feed."

Herbage: "... grass etc. as used for pasture 'a liberty that a man hath to feed his catell in another mans ground, as in the forest. Cowell 1450'." Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

Bradwode, 2 cart-horses with their issue for 3 years in the park of Troutebek . . . . ., one acre of meadow near Le Halle of Troutebek, 1d. for each tally of a full £1 for all beasts agisted in the said places, a robe and 20s yearly or a tenement in the forest of Kendale to the value of 40s yearly and all cinders in the forest as pertaining to the office of the Forestership of Kendale”.

In 1347 John de Coupland was granted, as part of his reward for taking prisoner David de Bruys at the battle of Durham, a portion of the manor of Kendal “saving to the King the several park and wood upon Le Bradewood, a wood in the island of Wynandermere . . . .”.

In 1365 and 1366 the widow of John de Coupland complained that Gilbert of Kentmere and others including John de Lund forester of Staveley “broke her parks at Troutbek, Calgarth and Kirkeby in Kendale and entered her free chace at Kirkeby in Kendale, fished in her several fisheries at Troutbeck and Casterton, felled her trees at the said town of Kirkeby and carried away trees, fish and deer from the parks and chace”.

In 1390 a rental contained an entry for Ambleside “William de Grenerige holds 14a in the forest, renders yearly £1”.

In 1440 Henry Waren was granted the office of keeper of the park of Troutbeck, with the herbage, pannage, “wyndfall” and “browesyng”, and in 1442 Walter Strykland the park of Calgarth “with the herbage and pannage thereof and the fishery in the water of Wynandremere”.

In 1560 in Ambleside the wife of George Fisser “reaped willows at Skalgill which belong to Robert Jakeson’s tenement” and was fined 3s. 4d., and the wife of Thomas Jackeson and 14 others were fined for keeping cows “illicitly on bark of the lord’s wood”,

and in Troutbeck Will Ellerowe and John Byrkhead, son of Gavin, were each fined 3s. 4d. for cutting "Le Ellers" [alders]. In the same year fines for cutting down trees were imposed at Windermere, 3s. 4d. for a "tymber tree", 6d. for a "byrry-thorne", 12d. for two thorns, and 5 persons 6d. each for thorns (Farrer 1923/24).<sup>10</sup> The existence of 'parks' in Troutbeck resulted in more clearance of woodlands than in other districts, and, excluding common land (which was not wooded), it is unlikely that more than a quarter of the remaining land was wooded at the end of the mediaeval period. Court rolls of 1442 and 1443 record that tenants of Applethwaite, Troutbeck, Ambleside, Grasmere and Langdale paid green-hew, the acknowledgement of the lord's right to the forest. "Woods of warrant" (not to be cut down without the consent of the lord) are defined as oak, ash, holly and crabtree, and "underwood" as hazel, willow, elm, rowan, yew and alder. (Armitt 1916).<sup>11</sup>

### The Furness area.

In 1246, shortly before his death, William de Lancaster, 4th Baron of Kendal, made a grant to the Abbey of Furness:

"And further I have granted to the same abbot and monks in perpetuity two suitable boats, namely one on Windermere, and another on Thurstanswater [Coniston], to carry their wood and timber and whatever else they need."

An almost identical grant was made by Margaret de Roos at some date between 1274 and 1297.

In 1537, at the time of the dissolution of the monastery, two lists of property and rents were compiled, one by the Abbot, the other by the King's

<sup>10</sup> Farrer, W. 1923/24. *Records relating to the Barony of Kendale* (ed. J. F. Curwen). 2 vols. Kendal.

<sup>11</sup> Armitt, M. L. 1916. *Rydal* (ed. W. F. Rawnsley). Kendal.

Commissioners, and records of a court held at Hawkshead have survived.

The abbot's list, quoted by Brownbill (1919),<sup>12</sup> includes the following:

Issues of the Woods in Furneys Felles	And of £20 from John Sawrey and William Sandes, farmers of three "smythes" in Furneys Felles employed for making iron, for licence to enter, cut down and use wood and water sufficient to maintain and keep up the said "smythes" . . . . And of £4. 3s of like issues of the same woods called the grenehew; viz. according to the rate of 4d yearly from each tenant in Furneys Felles who keeps a fire, payable at Easter only, by ancient custom. And of £6. 11s. 7d of similar issues from the woods for fines of various workmen for licence to cut down various trees within the woods there as well for the "bastyng, <sup>13</sup> coolyng and blekyng" as for the making of "carte-sadles, cartwheles, cardebourdes, cupps, hoopes for cowers" and other necessaries, payable at Easter as appears by the court-rolls.
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Sum £30 14s 7d.

The report of the King's Commissioners in 1537 is quoted by Beck (1844)<sup>14</sup> in *Annales Furnesienses*:

Woods in Furneysfelles. Also there is moche wood growing in Furneysfelles in the mounteynes there, as Byrk, Holey, Asshe, Ellers, Lyng, lytell short Okes, and other Undrewood, but no timber of any valewe, wherein the Abbots of the same late Monastery have been accustomed to have a Smythey, and sometime two or three, kepte for making of Yron to thuse of their Monastery. And so nowe the said Commyssyoners have letten unto William Sandes and John Sawrey as moche of the said woodes, that is to say of Byrkes, Ellers, Hasells, old rotten trees and other undrewoods, as wyll maynteyne iij Smythys, for the which they ar content and agreed to paye yerely to the Kinges Highnes, as long as hit shall please his grace they shall occupye the same, X X li. [£20].

<sup>12</sup> Brownbill, J. (ed.). 1915/19. *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*. 3 vols. Chetham Society.

<sup>13</sup> Bast: the fibrous inner bark of the lime *Tilia parvifolia* used for making ropes or mats.

<sup>14</sup> Beck, T. A. 1844. *Annales Furnesienses. History and Antiquities of the Abbey of Furness*. London.

Also there ys another yerely profytte commyng and growing of the said Woodes, called Grenehewe, Bastyng, Blecking, byndyng, making of Sadeltrees, Cartwheles, Cupes, Disshes, and many other thynges wrought by Cowpers and Turners, with making of Coles, and panage of Hogges, according as hath alwayes ben accustomed to be made in the said woodes, to the yerely valewe by estymacyon of xiij li vjs viij d. [£13. 6s. 8d.].

Tithes were paid to the Chapell of Hawkshead “. . . in Corne and Haye, Wolle and lambes. . . .”

A summary of the proceedings of the court of Hawkshead in 1538 is given by Brownbill (1919)<sup>15</sup>:

. . . Others had cut fuel and “wandes” in Watsyde wood. Brian and Robert Rig and others had burnt charcoal and sold the same to persons living outside the lordship of Furnes Fells; others had sold bark and trees outside the lordship. Others had cut wood to make wheels. William Blumer of Saterthwait and others had made charcoal and used the smith’s art. John Macreth and others were presented as “basters”, having taken the bark of “lyndes” without licence. William Sawrey of Sawrey, and others, had taken “holyngs thornes and hasylles” to exercise an art called “elyn of asshes”. Giles Sandes and others had taken ash trees and exercised the art called “thrawyng of the disshes” without licence. Richard Holme of Ernesyde and another were “cowpers”, having made “palis, skeles” and other instruments from the King’s wood.

Sum of fines £6. 4s. 6d.

The jury ordered that no tenant shall cut down any green wood on his neighbour’s soil; that Raynold Brathwayt shall remove his “unreasonable” mare from the common pasture before Whitsuntide; that no tenant keep cards or dice in his house or play therewith.

It is clear that the woods were being heavily exploited. The situation apparently deteriorated quickly, mainly because of the demands of the bloomsmithies, and a complaint about the destruction of the woods was sent by the tenants of Hawkshead and Colton to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. As a result the bloomsmithies were abolished in 1546 by a decree of Queen Elizabeth. The decree (which

<sup>15</sup> Brownbill, J. (ed.). 1915-19. *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*. 3 vols. Chetham Society.

runs to 4,000 words and is quoted in full by Fell, 1908)<sup>16</sup> states:

“the . . . woodes . . . be sore decayed and dailie more and more are like to fall into greater decaye not only by reason of certaine iron smithies . . . but also for that the customarie tenntes . . . as well for their proper fuell and for mainten'nce of their hedges and other necessaries as for the reliefe and necessarie sustac'on of their beasts, shepp' and other cattall have alwaies heretofore tyme out of the rem'ebrance of man yearly used and yet yearly doe use to fall and cutt the underwoodes and to shred lopp' topp' cropp' and bruse all other woodes and trees. . . .”

The tenants agreed to pay the rent of twenty pounds to the Queen, which had previously been paid by the owners of the bloomsmithies. The tenants now plainly had an interest in conserving the woods, so complete destruction was averted and the woods improved again.

In 1564 a decree allowed tenants to use wood to make iron for their own use, but the iron was not to be sold. In 1567 the Surveyor of the Woods of the Duchy of Lancaster made a report which included a list of the woods of Furness.<sup>17</sup> The relevant sections are shown in Table 1. In the whole of High Furness there were 1,280 timber trees and 8,260 saplings.

Eighty years later there were many more timber trees, as in 1649 a Parliamentary Survey recorded that

There are growing upon the lands of Customary Tenants in High Furness between three and four thousand Timber Trees (most of them but of small growth) which we estimate worth to be sold

DCCXiii <sup>ii</sup> X <sup>s</sup> [£713. 10s.].<sup>18</sup>

In 1550 Thomas Sandes of Graythwaite sold to Christopher Sandes a property “called Consey close, with woods, . . . .”. In 1621 the lease of Cunsey Forge included “liberty to lay timber, underwoods . . . . and ‘grubbe up’ woods and trees near the dam.” (Graythwaite papers).

<sup>16-19</sup> Fell, A. 1908. *The early iron industry of Furness and district*. Ulverston.

TABLE 1.

## 1567. Woods in the Furness Fells.

Conyston Waterhead & Ternchose	woods in Hawekeshead of 300 acres of underwood slenderly beset with hollin ashe crabtree thorn and hasel — 100 timber trees 2100 saplings 100 plants & 100 doteded oaks which serve to be brusing for their cattle.
Elterwater Park & Skelthwait	of 400 acres underwood slenderly beset with hollin and hasel — 200 timber trees 800 saplings 100 plants & 100 doteded oaks — for firewood and brusing of cattle.
Brathowe & Hawkeshead Field	woods of 300 acres of hollin and hasel underwood 100 timber trees 100 plants 100 saplings 100 doteded oaks as aforesaid.
.....	
Wraa & Colthouse	of 460 acres of ash underwood 20 timber trees 80 saplings and 30 doteded oaks.
Sawraye & Elehouse	of 20 acres of hasel thorn hollin and crabtree undergrowth 300 saplings.
Grathwait	of 400 acres of hasel hollin and crabtree underwood 700 saplings and 300 doteded oaks.
Consaye Close	of 70 acres of underwood 500 saplings.
Haverthwait, Fynsknot Stot Park &	of 400 acres of hasel hollin elli and ash underwood 500 timber trees 2000 saplings 100 plants 200 doteded oaks.
Brendwood.	(Fell)

In 1638 "Arthur Benson of Skellwith had 1 timber tree cut down and sold same for a forge hammer shaft or beam. Woods taken and cut down by several persons for coleing."

and "A great number of oaks have been cut down in last two years in the ten<sup>b</sup> of sd Arthur Benson and were prepared (amongst other uses) for making 40 loads of coals."<sup>19</sup>

### The 17th Century and later.

During the 17th century the making of charcoal (coaling) became increasingly important with the

growth of the iron industry, and in the 18th century coppice woods used for charcoal burning were a valuable source of income to landowners. At the end of the 18th century, however, techniques of making iron changed and the demand for charcoal largely disappeared, although in a few areas charcoal burning continued until the early 20th century. Some coppice wood was used for other purposes, for example, making hoops and bobbins. The main official interest in woodlands throughout the country was the provision of timber for the navy.

In 1663, because of concern about the supply of timber for the navy, a national census of trees growing on crown lands was carried out. For some parts of the Barony of Kendal a list has been preserved which gives details of the number and value of trees. The instructions given to the commission included the following items:

The said comm. are carefully to marke and sett out all such trees as are remaining within his Mat. said Barrony and are fitt for Ship timber for the service of his mat. Navy and all young trees and saplings like to grow up and become tymber trees fitt for the said service in time to come, that all such trees and saplings as aforesaid may stand and be preserved for his Matis. future service and comfitt.

The said comm. are to certify and return their proceedings in marking and setting out the said trees and saplings in writing under their hands and seals expressing the certain number of and valewe of them and in what place they grow.

The said comm. are to certify and return in form aforesaid the quantity and value of all other his Matis. woods and trees within the said Barrony according to their judgement and discretion.

The list is headed "Trees and saplings standing and growing within the towns and Hamletts hereafter mentioned marked for the service of his matis. navy. The places where they grow and number of trees and sp., value, the value of the residue of the woods growing upon the same tenements." The individual

holdings (tenements) are listed and identified by the names of the occupiers, and are grouped according to place. A summary of the relevant section of the list with the totals for each place is given in Table 2. The second column shows the number of tenements: the entry for Applethwaite is queried as part of the page has been damaged by mice.

**TABLE 2.**  
**1663. Tree census.**

Place.	Number of tenements.	Number of trees and saplings.	Value of trees and saplings.	Value of the residue.
			£ s d	£ s d
Undermilnbeck in Windermere <sup>(a)</sup>	20	162	06 - 03 - 07	45 - 03 - 04
Applethwaite <sup>(b)</sup>	24?	475	24 - 12 - 02	235 - 10 - 00
Ambleside	45	321	19 - 06 - 00	181 - 14 - 08
Grasmere	3	54	01 - 08 - 00	20 - 00 - 00
Langdale	2	0	00 - 00 - 00	05 - 00 - 00
Loughrigg	14	537	39 - 11 - 00	115 - 11 - 00
Troutbeck	36	260	12 - 14 - 04	85 - 10 - 00
Totals	144	1,809	£103 - 15 - 01	£688 - 9 - 00

<sup>(a)</sup> Bowness on Windermere.

<sup>(b)</sup> Windermere.

The value of individual trees ranged from 4 pence to at least 2 shillings. It is clear that timber trees formed only a very small proportion of the woodlands, as the non-timber trees (the residue) were nearly seven times as valuable, and individual non-timber trees would be worth less than timber trees. Loughrigg contained more timber trees, and their value was proportionally higher, than the other places. The species of trees are not mentioned, but it is likely that they were predominantly, if not exclusively, oak; certainly this was so in an adjacent area in 1707. In that year a valuation was made of "the timber growing upon the Lady Otway's ground . . ." in the Brathay and Pullwyke area, on the north west shores of the lake. The main

item was 1,415 oak trees valued at £184. 7s. od. The complete valuation is shown in Table 3. In 1748 the

**TABLE 3.**

7th April 1707

A particular value of the Timber growing upon Lady Otway's ground within the manor of Hawkshead.

	oak trees marked & valued to	£	s	d
In a close called Brathay Wood	184	27	7	0
The Bark thereof value to		5	0	0
In Pull field	668	88	17	0
In the Lowhill of sd Pull field	168	16	6	6
On the east side of sd „	350	43	13	6
In the meadow w <sup>th</sup> in sd „	045	08	3	0
The Bark of the severall ? abovementioned valued to		40	0	0

[In addition there were 969 oak polls valued at £36 - 5s - 6d.

and 600 "cropt trees" (species unknown) at £38 - 1s - 3d.]

(Browne papers)

coppice wood of Scale How in Troutbeck (a wood of 3 acres) was offered for sale "excepting thirty eight old standard oaks and 28 young standards all marked with red lead", in all 66 oaks. In 1790 at Scale How there were 240 sapling oaks and 430 young trees of other species, and an unknown number of "marked timber trees". In 1973 there are 256 oaks in this wood and no saplings. These figures are quoted to provide a comparison with the 1663 census figures. They suggest that timber trees were scarce in 1663, as in the seven districts covered by the census there were only 1,809 timber trees and saplings.

Much detailed information is available for the land in Troutbeck which was owned by the Browne family. In all, fourteen coppice woods are mentioned, mostly in the lower part of the valley, ranging from about 2 acres to at least 26 acres, and all, with the possible exception of two, are woodland today. However, a plantation of at least 1,500 fir trees made in 1788/9 is

now an open field with no tree stumps or evidence of the plantings.

Sales of property in Troutbeck included, in 1795, “. . . upwards of thirty customary Acres of very good arable, meadow and pasture grounds, and five Acres of Coppice Wood . . .” and in 1799 “. . . upwards of 21 Acres very good Arable Meadow and Pasture Ground and three Acres of Coppice Wood . . .”. In these cases the coppice wood was respectively  $1/7$  and  $1/8$  of the total acreage.

At intervals of about 14 years the coppice wood was sold for charcoal making, and among the Browne papers are many records of such sales, for example:

December 1st 1726 Then sold all my woods in the New Close to Gawen Braithwaite and Will<sup>m</sup> Mackereth except what is hereinafter mentioned for the sum of £41-10-0. Exceptions One great Ash in the Cragg and a long Ash at the same place and Ashes by the Lowe side to w<sup>th</sup> Orchard Nook, One Black Cherry tree and all plain Trees<sup>20</sup> and the snagging and faggots and 2 years to fell and take away. But he did not take it off nor fell it till 1729 and it was all felled and taken off in that one year.

But I had satisfaction for loss of my spring 2 years and Interest for my money that I should have had in 1727 and 1728 for I was not paid till Candlemas 1729.

There was Coals 39 loads at £1-6-0 a load  
Bark 48 q<sup>rters</sup> and a Halfe at 0-17-0 a quarter

Coals came to	£50-14-6
Bark came to	39-04-6

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89-19-0

I received in all for my wood

Interest and Damages

Forty five pounds £45-0-0.

In 1790 four coppice woods were sold, and there is no further mention of sales from Troutbeck of wood for coppicing. But in 1806 an agreement was made for the sale from one of these woods of “Hoops Sticks and Radling”:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Plain or plane trees; sycamores.

<sup>21</sup> Radling: long flexible rod or stick, interwoven between upright posts to make a kind of fence.

“Long hoops for twelve pounds p<sup>r</sup> Thousand  
 Smart hoops for one pound p<sup>r</sup> Thousand  
 Radling for eight shillings p<sup>r</sup> Thousand.”

Some evidence on the species of trees present has been obtained from the conditions of sale of coppice woods:

- 1711 “excepting the Hollins, 2 Ashes, 2 plain Trees”  
 1714 “except one broade topt Oake standing by itself in the High ende”  
 1714 “except three plane trees and one oake Tree standing in the Lone gill”  
 1734 “excepting and always reserving all wood and Timber within a foot of any fence and Hollins and Crabtrees and four Ashes”  
 1741 “except 30 or 40 young ashes . . . 2 pieces for 2 ox yoaks and one piece for ox bows”  
 1790 (see Table 4), a list of totals for four coppice woods of “young trees excepted in this sale in the coppices viz of the last fall growth (besides the old m<sup>d</sup> Timber Trees).” The list therefore covers only trees which were less than 14 years old (the previous felling was in or about 1776) and does not include previously marked older trees.

In addition there is information concerning Scale How wood, near Troutbeck Bridge, which was sold for coppicing in or about the years 1714, 1734, 1748, 1763, probably 1776 and 1790 (in 1776 an entry in an account book records that money was received for a sale of woods, but does not mention the names of the woods concerned). In 1714 the wood was sold “excepting all the Ashes Hollins Crabtrees One Birch and all the Oak Trees which stand in any fence and within one foot of any of the fences round the Close and forty or fifty young okes to remain. . . .” Thirty-four years later, in 1748, “Thirty eight old Standard Oaks and

TABLE 4.

## Troutbeck.

1790 Young trees excepted in the sale of four coppice woods

Total Oaks	1,170
Ashes	1,030
Birches	484
Alders	145
Sycamores	86
Elms	4
Linns	4
Hunt. Willows	2
Hockberry	1
Mountain Ashes	78
	<hr/>
	3,004

Besides all the Firrs, Cherry Trees, Hollies, Crabtrees, Thorns etc.

(Browne papers)

28 young Standards all marked with red lead" were excepted. In 1790 besides an unknown number of old marked Timber Trees (obviously including the survivors of those mentioned in 1748), there were the following young trees in Scale How wood: 240 sapling oaks, 231 young ashes, 48 birches, 86 alders, 16 sycamores, 3 elms, 46 mountain ashes, and some firrs, cherry trees, hollies and crabtrees and thorns. In 1792 248 larches were planted there. In 1973 there are 256 oak trees, of which 10 are large (it is tempting to speculate that they are survivors of the 240 saplings of 1792), and about 50 birch, 20 sycamore, 20 cherry, 20 holly, 5 beech, 1 larch and 1 hornbeam. The area covered for this recent count was 2 acres (0.8 ha). A further section of 1 acre (0.4 ha) divided off by a wall, formed part of the original wood; the trees in this section are almost exclusively birch and are not included in the above estimates. Also compiled in 1790 there is a complete list of trees in Hagg wood, Table 5. In another wood nearby the following trees were marked in the autumn of 1791: 656 oaks, 228 ashes,

88 mountain ashes and 10 birch. It can be seen that many more species were present at the later dates.

TABLE 5.

## Troutbeck.

1790	Trees stand <sup>s</sup> in the Hagg Spring	No.
viz	Oaks older than one Fall	37
	Do of one Fall standing	—
	Ashes older than one Fall	9
	Do of one Fall standing ring <sup>d</sup> round with black	1,806
	Cherry Trees do	11
	Sycamores do	7
	Birches do	4
	Mount <sup>n</sup> Ash do	29
	Egypt <sup>n</sup> poplars new planted do	110

(Browne papers)

In 1783 a new element had appeared in the management of the woodlands, with a bill for tree seedlings from Messrs Archibald Dickson and Son of Hassendeanburn, Hawick, shown in Table 6. Further orders followed in 1788, 1790, 1792 and 1796 and the main

TABLE 6.

## Bill for tree seedlings to Mr George Browne of Troutbeck.

1783	to Archibald Dickson & Son	
Feb to	1,000 one year transp <sup>d</sup> Scots firs	7 - 6
	60 Silver firs 12 inches	4 - 0
	60 White American Spruce do	10 - 0
	30 Balm of Gilead firs do	5 - 0
	30 Cluster pine do	5 - 0
	Matt	1 - 2
	Carriage to Kendal 9 stone	4 - 2
		<hr/>
		1 - 16 - 10

Aug 1783 received the above in full

Arch<sup>d</sup> Dickson junr.

(Browne papers)

items are shown in Table 7. The orders were "directed to be left at Kendal till called for". On 18 February 1788 an entry in the diary reads "my firs came from Hawick 74 stone and on 25 February

"1/- gave maid Agnes going to Kendal for trees"  
(Browne papers).

Nathaniel Spencer published in 1771<sup>22</sup> an account of a tour which included the Windermere area:

But the greatest curiosity in this neighbourhood, is Winander-Meer, one of the most beautiful lakes in England. The south east shores are covered with wood, cut into distinct plantations, and running to the top of lofty mountains. On some spots corn is seen growing, and the whole has a most delightful appearance.

The north shore consists of two hills, both cut into the finest enclosures, and from the top the traveller is presented with such a variety of prospects as seems to resemble the universe in

TABLE 7.

Extracts from bills to Mr George Browne of Troutbeck  
from Messrs Archibald Dickson & Son.

1788	6,000	Two years transp <sup>d</sup> Scots firs @ 10/-		3 - 0 - 0
		3 Red Canadian elm		1 - 0
		3 Dutch do	5 feet	- 9
		6 Black American Spruce	1 foot	1 - 6
		20 Hornbeams	3 feet	1 - 3
		3 Black larch		1 - 0
		6 Limes	5 feet	1 - 0
		6 pine aster	1 foot	1 - 0
		6 Black Italian poplar	4 feet	- 9
1790	120	Egyptian poplars	6 & 7 feet	6 - 6
1792	500	larch	3 feet	1 - 5 - 0
	1,200	two year transp <sup>d</sup> Scots firs		12 - 0
1796	300	Scots firs	1 foot	3 - 0
	60	Norway spruce	1½ foot	1 - 6
	300	larch	3 feet	15 - 0
	300	Sycamore	2 feet	7 - 6
	60	Balsam poplar	3 feet	4 - 0

(Browne papers)

<sup>22</sup> Spencer, N. 1771. *The Complete English Traveller*. London.

epitome. The western shore is surrounded with rocks and precipices, with small clusters of shrubs growing in different parts. Every part of this lake appears, when viewed from the north, to be shaded with trees, but when viewed from the east, it is seen to be interspersed with several small islands. The barren mountains on one side, and the cultivated ones on the other, with the lakes, islands and woods are all equally beautiful, and presents a greater variety of objects to the eye of the traveller, than is to be met with in some kingdoms.

This suggests that some planting had already been done to the south east of the lake, but that part of the western shore (probably from the islands northwards) was at that time not planted.

In 1792 "A Rambler"<sup>23</sup> (Captain J. Budworth) gave some descriptions of the scenery:

"Low Wood is thickly wooded"

"[looking southwards] we see Bowness church, and a chain of low hills partly covered with heath, apparently extending to the extremity of the lake, and occasionally interspersed with small fields and some woods . . . . About one we landed upon Thompson's Island . . . . After a plentiful meal near some wild myrtle, and amidst ash and other trees, I penetrated through the wood . . . ." "Sewry [Sawrey] Heights have a cool look, and must be very valuable every fourteen years, when the wood is cut down for charcoal." ". . . . had a comprehensive sight of the Rothay, winding into the lake, with Ballam tarn, over some high wood that divides it from the head of Windermere." "From Brathay bridge Loughrigg Fell rises . . . well wooded and watered."

The woods in Applethwaite (i.e. present day Windermere) were producing charcoal and bark in the 18th century. An account from 1771 for three woods in the Rayrigg estate shows a profit of £196. 19s. 2d. after expenses (£69. 0s. 4d.) for felling, peeling, making the charcoal and transport to the lake shore (Rayrigg papers). In 1973 two large trees were felled on land which had formed part of the Rayrigg estate; the sycamore was found to be 170 years old and the oak

<sup>23</sup> "A Rambler." 1792. *A fortnight's ramble to the Lakes in Westmoreland, Lancashire and Cumberland*. London.

160 years old, thus dating them to the early years of the 19th century.

In 1783 a sale of property in Applethwaite included “. . . twenty five Acres of arable and meadow Land, and thirty seven Acres of Wood Ground, well fenced, from eight to thirteen years growth . . .”. Here the coppice woodland exceeded the other land in acreage. The 1663 census, Table 2, suggests that woodlands were then extensive in this district.

On the west side of the lake in the Pullwoods and Brathay estates large scale plantings were carried out at the end of the 18th century. In 1784 21,370 trees were planted and the number of trees of each species are shown in Table 8. Some of these trees were obtained from Keswick and the bill for 13,550 trees was £30. 2s. In 1790, seedlings were obtained from Messrs Archibald Dickson & Sons of Hawick, 10,000 each of Larch, Spruce and Scots firs. An entry in a notebook shows that there were already some older fir trees in the woods in 1784:

“May 8th 1784

The Pull House wanting new floors and as also the

**TABLE 8.**

**Pull woods and Brathay estates.**

Totals of planting : Spring 1784.

9,500	Scotch firs
1,500	Spruce pine
1,500	Larch „
4,020	Ashes
3,700	Birch & seal [willow]
900	Lombardy poplar
100	Berry bearing poplar
100	Cherries
25	Horse-chestnut
25	Beach

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21,370 Trees

(Brathay papers)

barn directed Isaac Holme to fell trees for this purpose 11 firs and four ashes." (Brathay papers).

North of the ferry on the west side of the lake there were some coppice woods in the 18th century and at the end of the century some large-scale plantations were carried out here.

It is certain that part of this area was less wooded in 1780 than today (1973), as in that year William Braithwaite erected a summer house, known as the Station, on the slope of the hill behind the ferry landing. From here the tourists enjoyed views to the north, east and south. Today the site is surrounded by trees and the views can scarcely be seen. A contemporary map of the Curwen estates, which stretched northwards from the ferry for about three miles and included the lake shore, shows the dates of plantations made by John Christian Curwen. They range from 1798 to 1802. In 1798 30,000 larches were planted in one section and in the same area in the same year the ground was "dibbled" with acorns. The extent of the woodlands on this map is, with small exceptions, the same as today. In the 19th century these plantings produced much valuable material. To give only a few examples from account books covering many years: in 1824 22 tons of larch bark and 3 tons of oak bark were peeled, and in 1825 25 tons of larch bark, in 1837 15 tons of oak bark were sold for £7 a ton, and the total income from the sale of wood and bark was nearly £2,000. In the first World War (1914-1918) these woods were felled extensively. (Curwen papers).

To the southwest of the lake the woodlands were mainly devoted to coppice, and in some parts of this area coppicing continued until the 20th century. In the Graythwaite estates the policy differed from that elsewhere, as no plantations of soft woods were made until 1850, and even then were of small extent. Some of the present oak woods are derived from coppice

stools. Today 2/3 of the acreage of the estate is woodland, and approximately this proportion has been maintained since at least the 18th century. (Graythwaite papers).

To the southeast of the lake there was also some coppice woodland, but in this area in the early 19th century plantations were made on land which had not previously been wooded. The Bishop of Llandaff, who lived at Calgarth, was an ardent supporter of agricultural reform. He wrote in 1794 (Pringle, 1794):<sup>24</sup>

“Yet the highest and most craggy parts, two acres of which do not afford sustenance for six months of the year to one sheep, might, with a great prospect of success, be planted with larches . . . .”

and in 1800 in a letter to Lord Carrington:

“When our barren mountains shall be covered with firs and larches, and the barrenest will grow larches, we shall have deal, pitch, tar, rosin, turpentine, within ourselves, instead of importing them at enormous expence from other countries . . . .”

and later:

“I made, in 1805 and 1806, a large plantation, consisting of three hundred and twenty-two thousand five hundred larches, on two high and barren mountains, called Berkfell and Gomershow, situated near the foot of Winandermere.” (Watson, 1818).<sup>25</sup>

### Conclusions.

It is clear from the evidence presented that woodlands have been extensive in the vicinity of Windermere throughout the past 750 years. There is no suggestion that large areas were ever cleared of trees, although

<sup>24</sup> Pringle, A. 1794. *General view of the agriculture of the county of Westmoreland with observations on the means of its improvement*. Edinburgh.

<sup>25</sup> Watson, R. 1818. *Anecdotes of the life of Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*. 2 vols. London.

there was a danger of deforestation due to over exploitation in the Furness district in the 16th century. However, this danger was quickly recognised and action taken to avoid it. Troutbeck, with its mediaeval parks, probably had a smaller proportion of woodland than the other districts. The only recorded large-scale alteration in the use of land occurred about the end of the 18th century when plantations were made on land which had not previously been wooded, particularly near the south east shores of the lake. Before the 18th century the main species of tree were oak, ash, alder, hazel, holly and thorn. During the 18th-19th centuries many different species were planted, including birch, poplar and sycamore, and Scots fir, larch and other conifers.

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