

ART. XIV – *Hugh Lowther, Fifth Earl of Lonsdale, in the Arctic: explorer-scientist, sportsman, traveller or tourist?*

BY ROB DAVID

IN February 1888 Hugh Lowther, the fifth Earl of Lonsdale (“the Yellow Earl”), suddenly left Britain for New York *en route* for Montreal and the Canadian Arctic. Fifteen months later in April 1889 he reappeared in San Francisco having travelled via the Mackenzie river system to the shore of the Beaufort Sea, on Canada’s northern coast, and back through Alaska (Map 1). The commonly accepted reason for the expedition is that Lonsdale was escaping from a scandal.¹ His mistress, Violet Cameron, was expecting his child, and at a court hearing in February 1888 Lonsdale admitted adultery and being the father. Within a week he had left Britain to begin his Arctic adventure. The arrival of such an eminent person in New York, and later in Canada, created considerable interest amongst both the press corps and the people he met, and Lonsdale, being the self-publicist that he was, took the opportunity to fabricate an image that positioned him in the tradition of the explorer/scientist. This article examines how this image was created, and goes on to argue that far from being a latter-day explorer/scientist, Lonsdale should be seen as a traveller (in the late nineteenth century meaning of the term) at the threshold of a new era in which the arctic became the playground of a moneyed élite rather than the preserve of the traditional explorer.

Lonsdale’s expedition came at a time when British involvement in Arctic exploration had reached a low ebb. After the return of Francis Leopold M’Clintock in 1859, with conclusive evidence of the fate of Sir John Franklin and his entire crew some eleven years earlier, British enthusiasm for Arctic exploration had waned. The *Hull Advertiser* had already expressed the hope that “our countrymen will all agree that the mania of Arctic Expeditions has lasted long enough”,² and as this view was shared by many, it was not until 1875 that another major national expedition set sail for the Arctic. Though Sir George Nares established a new route farthest north, the death of some of his crew members from scurvy overshadowed the expedition’s limited success, and there was little further British interest in Arctic exploration. In the decade before Lonsdale’s departure in 1888, British exploration had been largely confined to Spitsbergen and the Arctic regions north of Russia. Even the once important annual departures of the whaling fleet to northern waters had become, by the 1880s, a low key affair in which fewer than two dozen ships participated. That Lonsdale set out for the Arctic at this time was itself somewhat unusual.

The explorer-scientist

The explorer-scientist was a product of the nineteenth century. Inspired by Captain Cook’s expeditions, in which exploration and scientific investigation went hand in hand, it became *de rigueur* for nineteenth century expeditions to have some scientific purpose, even though it often played second fiddle to exploration. As few explorers

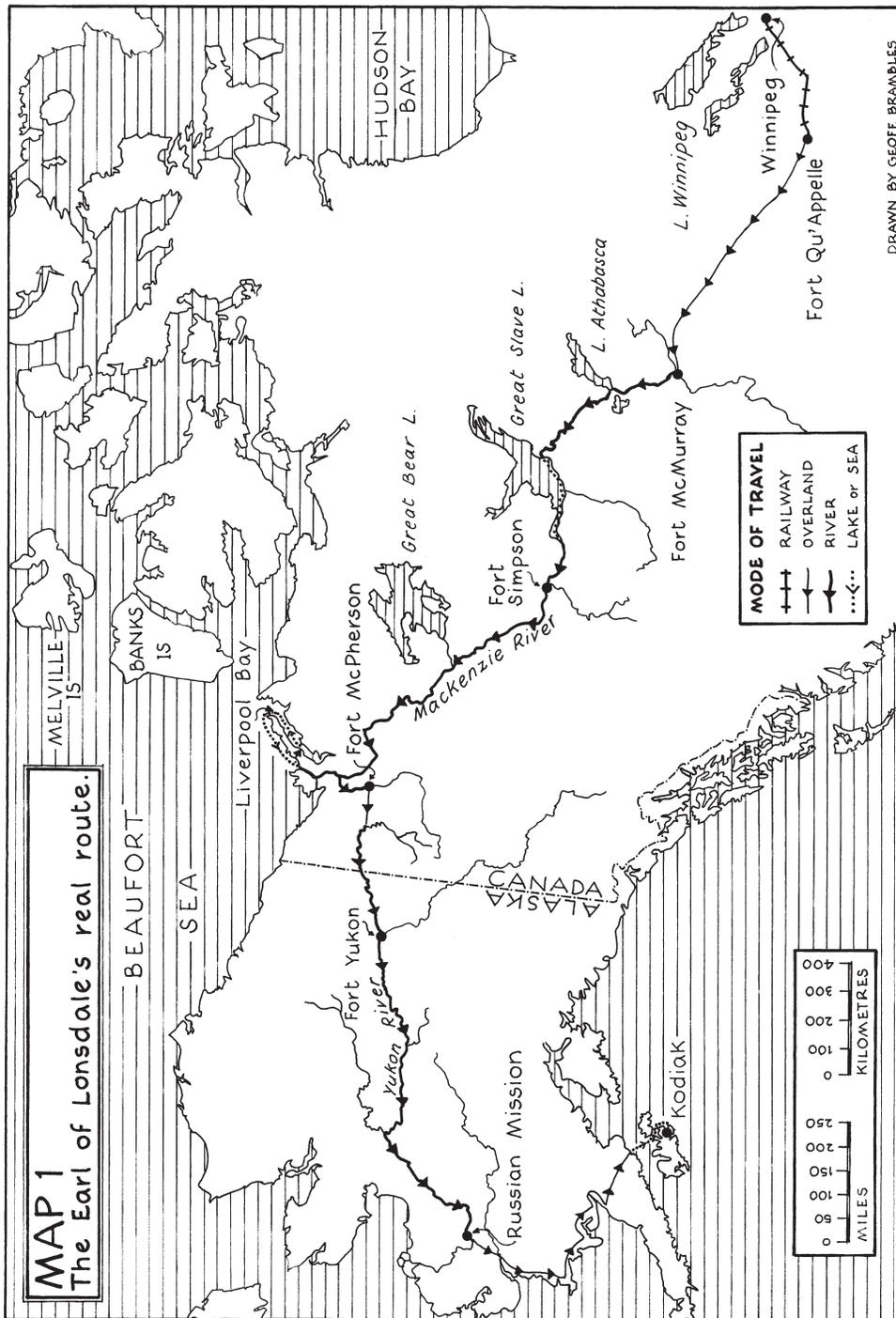


FIG. 1. A map of the route taken by the Fifth Earl of Lonsdale in the Arctic, 1888-1889. This is the real route of his journey and excludes the imaginary journeys to Banks Island and beyond and to Dawson City on the River Yukon and is based on the map in S. Krech, *A Victorian Earl in the Arctic* (London, 1989), 20-21.

were trained as scientists this meant that either scientists had to be persuaded to accompany expeditions or that explorers had to be given some rudimentary scientific training. Where the latter occurred science often consisted of little more than the recording of meteorological data and atmospheric phenomena, and a, more or less, coherent collecting policy. In Lonsdale's case his unconventional education, which included a spell at Eton College, had focused more on sport than science, and had left him with little or no understanding of scientific methodology. Despite this, his regard for his public image meant that he sought to fulfil the traditional roles of the explorer-scientist. This is illustrated in an interview with the *New York Times* on his arrival in New York. The paper reported that he had said that "he was on the way to the North Pole", in other words that he was an explorer seeking one of the Holy Grails of Arctic exploration. He also intimated that he had a scientific purpose by indicating that "when he learned recently that a Scottish naturalist society wanted a bold adventurous man to go on a scientific expedition to the North Pole he decided to offer his services".³

His scientific aspirations can be easily dismissed. Not only was he educationally unprepared, he was also temperamentally unsuited for the systematic observation and recording that scientific research involved. The hard graft of scientific recording did not fit with a character that was forever searching for the next sporting challenge. Temperature and pressure readings were irregularly recorded in his journal in the early part of his journey when everything was new, and details of when the weather was particularly cold were noted in order to contribute to the heroic persona he sought. Animal and bird skins were collected but the driving force was not scientific enquiry but a perceived opportunity to convert them into items of clothing for his wife, or to add to his hunter's trophy back home. As his acquisition of material culture was uncommissioned, he lacked a systematic collecting policy, and its value has been seriously compromised by a frustrating lack of detail as to provenance. None of this is surprising given his minimal formal education, his fondness for city living, and (despite a claim to the contrary) his apparent lack of prior interest in the Arctic and in exploration, all of which ill-equipped him for the role of explorer-scientist. In addition, given his hasty departure for America, which gave him little time to plan his expedition, his attempts to present himself as an explorer-scientist would seem to be presumptuous.

For the British public the Canadian Arctic was so little known that it was not difficult for Lonsdale and his apologists to suggest that he was an explorer in the traditional mould. An opportunity to promote the explorer image emerged as he considered the publication of a travelogue in the tradition of almost all nineteenth century explorers. Initially Lonsdale thought about compiling a book of his adventures. While he was still in the United States, he was in negotiation with the experienced polar reporter, W. H. Gilder, who wrote for the *New York Herald*, to seek his assistance "in the work of preparing (the) report and a history of (his) experience in North America and the Arctic regions", although it seems that negotiations were broken off within a week.⁴ It is impossible to be sure why this happened, but it is probable that Lonsdale realised that his journey was not in the same league as that of the mid-century searchers after Sir John Franklin, or of the British Arctic Expedition of Sir George Nares in 1875-76. Most books published during the 1880s and before were written by people who could be considered real

explorers. As Lonsdale was in the vanguard of a new breed of privately financed travellers who journeyed into unfrequented territory, but were not primarily explorers in the sense of travelling through uncharted areas with, at least some, scientific aspirations, there was no established tradition of such people writing up their journals at the time when Lonsdale returned. The format of the guidebook, the hallmark of the new tourism, had not yet been transferred to such wilderness areas as the Canadian Arctic. Other travellers who left Europe at the same time as Lonsdale, on, for example, sporting expeditions to Spitsbergen and an art expedition to west Greenland, either published their accounts in a rather obscure German journal, as a short chapter in an edited book, or in book form during 1890, too late for Lonsdale's own account.⁵

There was also a problem over what he said he had achieved. American newspapers reported a claim that he had travelled as far as Banks Island and even 75° N which lies further north towards Melville Island.⁶ This claim was false, as evidenced by his journal entries which show that he was at Fort McPherson and heading west into the Yukon on the days he claimed to be in the far north, but was never denied by him, and was repeated in Lonsdale's serialised autobiography in *The People* and in Lionel Dawson's later authorised biography.⁷ Any written account would have caused this issue to surface again in the media and it was no doubt a better policy to let sleeping dogs lie. Any interest that he had had in the writing of a book would no doubt have hardly lasted beyond his return to England. His restless temperament caused him to move on to other concerns. He quickly purchased sixteen racehorses, thus signalling his return to horse racing on a grand scale; he promoted an international boxing contest; and undertook the Crawley-Reigate time trial in horse and carriage.⁸ In the event the story of his expedition was only published as a two part feature in the *Illustrated London News*, some seven months after his return.⁹

This feature article appears to have been written by a journalist from notes provided by Lord Lonsdale, and it was copiously illustrated with engravings based on photographs provided by the earl.¹⁰ The text steered a careful path between promoting the earl as an explorer (rather more than a scientist) and admitting to a significant sporting interest. The hardships of exploration were emphasised, particularly those resulting from journeying early in the season, while the weather was still wintry and the river and lake-ice was breaking up. His personal courage was shown in an extract from his journal describing a storm during which "the four natives I had with me were so frightened that they lay down in the bottom of the boat, absolutely useless, but with the assistance of McEwan, a good Hudson's Bay Company's man I had with me, we managed to get into a large open space of water", and out of danger. The articles also suggested that the expedition had been significant in both geographical and commercial terms, though scientific investigation was relegated to "examining some facts in the natural history of that region". Cartographic inaccuracies and new geographical observations were noted; natural resources such as petroleum, sulphur springs and coal measures recorded; and farming, fishing and hunting opportunities described. Little was said about the Earl's ethnographic observations. His visit to the Mackenzie Inuit camp on the shore of the Beaufort Sea was dismissed in a single sentence. The article emphasised a continuing journey, and avoided dwelling on events at the Beaufort Sea possibly

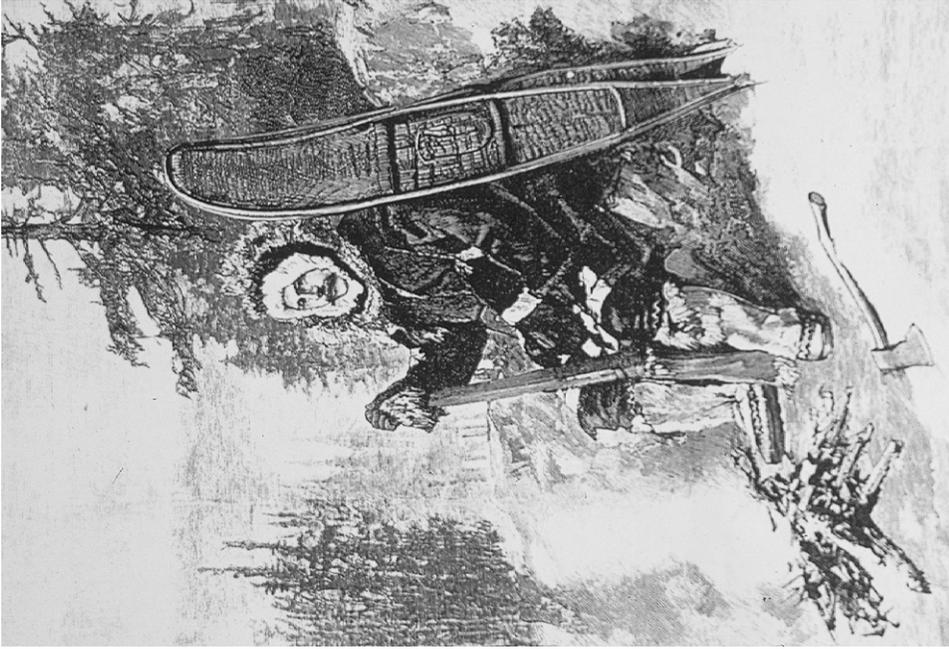


PLATE 2. "Lord Lonsdale in Arctic travelling attire";
Illustrated London News, 11 January 1890.



PLATE 1. Studio photograph of the Earl of Lonsdale by
Taber of San Francisco, 1889.
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because with Lonsdale's false claims to have travelled even further north, the less that was written about that area the better. The article cast the Earl in the heroic tradition of polar explorers through its emphasis on danger and discovery, however meagre the reality of the latter.

The choice of illustrations also points to Lonsdale the explorer. Two of the engravings were based on studio photographs taken of the earl on his return to San Francisco. Both photographs portrayed him as a polar explorer by showing him dressed in Arctic clothing, but as shown in the example in Plate 1, the engraver has further enhanced the explorer image in the published version (Plate 2) by placing the earl in a wilderness context.¹¹ Many of the remaining engravings, some representing landscapes and others portraying native peoples, their homes and artefacts, were based on photographs, some of which may have been taken by Lonsdale himself. The landscape images were all of the River Mackenzie and its tributaries, and emphasised the vast scale of the empty regions through which Lonsdale travelled (Plate 3). The engravings of the Inuit and their encampments made no attempt to adhere to the emerging rules for ethnographic photography at that time, and did little more than depict travellers' records of scenes and people encountered during the journey (Plate 4). Through their emphasis on the primitive, they imply the bravery and pioneering spirit of Lonsdale, the representative of European civilisation. The remaining engravings were based on photographs given to Lonsdale, though this was not always made clear. In one (Plate 5), there is an assumption in the caption ("A noonday halt. Temperature 55 degrees below zero") that it represents a scene from the journey. On the reverse of the original photograph there are other titles. Lonsdale wrote "My Camp close to Katmac near Cook's Inlet" – a location in Alaska near the end of Lonsdale's journey; while another hand has written "Noonday halt near York Factory: Temperature -55°F", an outpost well off Lonsdale's route. As always the caption frames the representation, and the unsuspecting viewer is led to believe that the picture depicts hardships and dangers actually faced by Lonsdale, further promoting his image as an explorer. Clearly any scientific pretensions had been rapidly abandoned as unsustainable.

Lonsdale later used the final episode of his life story, published as a serial in *The People* during 1937 and 1938, to recast events in order to further promote his heroic image.¹² As interest in the unusually lengthy series perhaps began to wane, the best episode, headlined "The Klondyke (*sic*) Gold-Rush" was saved for last. In the article Lonsdale's diary entry relating to an episode near Fort Yukon, "in a little pan I got a few grains of gold" was changed to "half a glass of the yellow metal" which was according to the article "the discovery of Klondyke gold . . . which later on was to thrill the world".¹³ Many discoveries of gold were being made in the Yukon at that time, and the discovery that triggered the Klondike stampede was not made for nearly another decade.

Imaginative accounts of his time in the Arctic half a century previously bore little relation to his journal, or the account of his progress in the letters to Lady Lonsdale, but were used by Lionel Dawson, to write the earl's biography shortly before his death.¹⁴ Dawson devoted two chapters, some twenty-six pages, to the fifteen month long Arctic journey, and portrayed Lonsdale as the intrepid explorer. The Violet Cameron episode remains unmentioned, any scientific pretensions have been

forgotten, and shooting and ethnography only make incidental appearances. Dawson, repeating the account in *The People*, suggests that Lonsdale was sought out as a polar explorer. He wrote that the journey was the result of a meeting between Lonsdale and Sir John Rose, head of the Hudson Bay Company (who offered the assistance of the company), and James Gordon Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*, who was keen for Lonsdale to investigate the fate of an earlier American expedition who had gone in search of Franklin, and who paid his expenses. Linking Lonsdale to Rose suggested an affinity with arctic personnel. The connection with Bennett, the newspaper proprietor who had earlier sent Stanley to find Livingstone and the American Frederick Schwatka to search for Sir John Franklin, explicitly linked him to exploration. Dawson went further and suggested that the journey was the result of Lonsdale's own long-standing interest in the Arctic, and in the fate of Franklin. No evidence is provided for these interests, but the library at Lowther Castle contained at least some books about Arctic exploration, although that does not of course mean that they had been read by the earl.¹⁵

However, it is clear that his role as an explorer has been consistently exaggerated. Lonsdale, accompanied initially by his valet, Porter,¹⁶ and the Hudson Bay Company employee, Billy McEwan, took with him printed maps of his entire journey, although admittedly they were incomplete in matters of detail and at times inaccurate.¹⁷ At no point was he traversing territory that had not been seen by white travellers previously. For the most part Lonsdale relied on support from various trading company and missionary personnel and a range of facilities which were already well established along the entire route of his journey. In fact he travelled to within a short distance of his most northerly point on the *Wrigley*, a steamship which connected the settlements along the lower Mackenzie. It was only during his journey from Fort McPherson to Liverpool Bay on the Beaufort Sea that Lonsdale traversed territory rarely visited previously. It was during this stage that he contributed his only significant anthropological observation, a description of a beluga hunt by the Mackenzie Eskimo. However its value is limited as it was not written with any scientific objectivity, but as a travelogue in which Lonsdale gave himself a central role.

With the earl's death in 1944 it became possible to write a more impartial commentary. A second biography was published in 1965.¹⁸ Douglas Sutherland, the author, had been given access to the Lowther archive by the Seventh Earl, and in this biography, despite the repetition of the claim that the expedition was the result of the invitation from the Scottish Naturalist Society to collect specimens, little effort was made to suggest that the events were anything more than the earl's response to the developing scandal over his liaison with Violet Cameron. Subsequent authors have continued to link the journey to the Cameron affair and by casting doubt on the existence of the Scottish Naturalist Society, have further challenged any scientific rationale.¹⁹

The philanthropist

As Lonsdale travelled north he regularly reinvented reasons for his journey. Once beyond the railway tracks and cities of southern Canada news of his movements, often accompanied by newly created aims, continued to filter south. Newspaper

reports generally reiterated the North Pole story,²⁰ but when Bishop Bompas, Anglican Bishop of the Mackenzie River and a leading figure in the Church Missionary Society, met Lonsdale on Great Slave Lake, he reported a conversation in which Lonsdale suggested a different reason for his journey. Bompas recorded Lonsdale's sporting interest, but in addition he wrote that Lonsdale "comes it would seem partly on account of the interest expressed by Her Majesty the Queen in 'The North'" and that "he is commanded to report to the Queen herself the conditions and needs of the Indians".²¹ This new rationale, in which Lonsdale attributes to himself the status of expert adviser and saviour of the downtrodden, in the largely imagined tradition of Britain's most famous explorer of the previous half century, David Livingstone, was no doubt said to impress the bishop.²² At no point do Lonsdale's diaries and letters reveal any serious interest in the condition of the people he encountered, although there is some evidence that he appears to have seen it as his duty to support the work of the missionaries working in northern Canada. He was thanked by St Matthew's Mission, Peel River, for his "charity towards the poor of the flock" and was probably surprised, but no doubt delighted, when the leader of the mission later wrote that they considered him "a fellow worker in the grand Missionary effort of Christianising the heathen".²³ He also took it upon himself to report, to Wladimir, Bishop of Alaska, lax behaviour amongst the missionaries at some of the Russian missions at which he stayed.²⁴

The sportsman

Given the Earl's sporting background it is hardly surprising that he tempered his invented scientific zeal with a rather more real enthusiasm for hunting. Even in the New York interview, in which he attempted to lay out his scientific credentials, he had confessed to a personal ambition "to hunt the white bear of the frozen north."²⁵ This aim is the more plausible because by the 1880s game in Africa, the traditional playground of the sportsman, had been hunted almost to oblivion and during that decade legislation began to be introduced to preserve the remaining stocks, particularly in southern Africa.²⁶ Consequently sportsmen, such as Lonsdale, began to look elsewhere, and increasingly the Arctic was seen as an attractive destination, as the acquisition of specimens from the region significantly enhanced a hunter's trophy and status. This probably explains Lonsdale's choice of the Arctic as his destination for this year of adventure. His claim to be visiting the Arctic, at least in part for sport, is an early example of this development. Clive Holland, in his encyclopaedia of Arctic exploration, only refers to one other sporting expedition prior to that of Lord Lonsdale.²⁷

By the time that Bishop Bompas met Lonsdale on the Mackenzie the latter's hunting instinct was already more apparent than his interest in the condition of the native Indians or in any scientific study. When Lonsdale's diary did not describe the rigours of the journey, it focused on hunting, although his success was clearly limited.²⁸ For example he described an unsuccessful week's hunting from Fort McMurray when he stalked moose and caribou, but only succeeded in bagging some grouse. He lamented in May that there was a shortage of big game. "We have had a long talk with 'Le Pine' who is the celebrated old McKenzie river guide and been with all the expeditions and he says there is nothing like the game in the

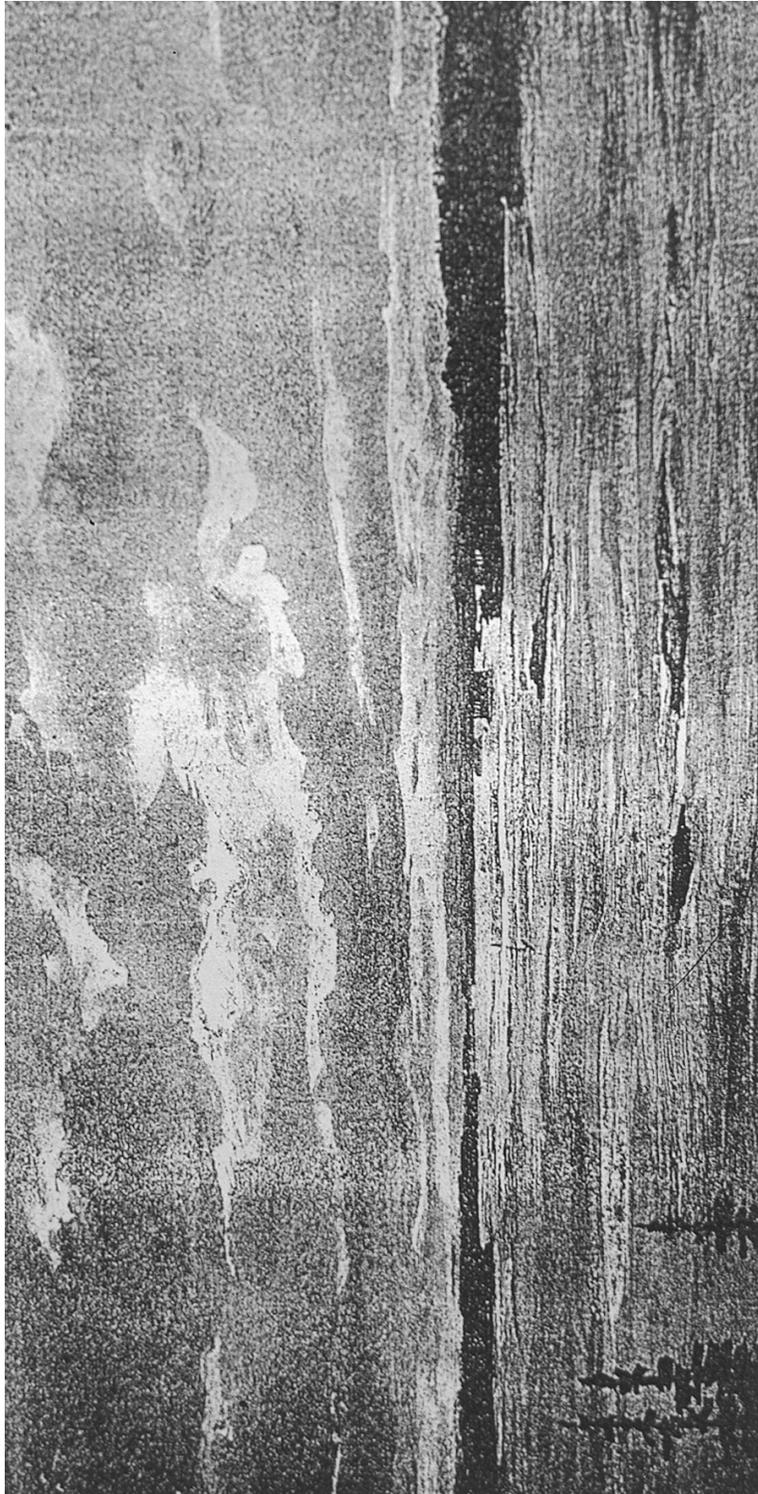


PLATE 3. "View on the Mackenzie River", *Illustrated London News*, 11 January 1890.

country there was 10 or even 5 years ago. At one time 1000 moose and 2 to 3 thousand reindeer were brought to the station every six months – now 6 moose and 50 reindeer”. However he tried to remain optimistic despite his sense of disappointment, when on the following day he wrote: “But from all I hear there is no sport to be had at all among big game of any sort. Very disappointed having come all this way – but live in hopes”. By June, his spirits were at a particularly low ebb as a result of being trapped by ice for four weeks and because of the swarms of mosquitoes, and he wrote in a letter to Lady Lonsdale that, “I don’t think this country has anything in the world to recommend it, and certainly there is no sport so far worth coming for at all. Moose shooting is a very overrated sport not half as much fun as stalking or shooting deer in the park at home”.²⁹ On 25 June he was suggesting to his wife that she should join him for some “elephant shooting in India” on his return home.³⁰ Despite reaching the Arctic coast in August and being an observer of an Inuit beluga hunt, possibly the most exciting hunting experience of his entire journey, his mind seemed to be more on what he was missing than what he was experiencing. He wrote to Lord Worcester:

Having safely returned from the sea coast and the wild inhabitants living on its shore, I thought you might like to hear an account of our proceedings since I last wrote to you. I often think how this month last year we were enjoying ourselves on Shap Fells, and I very much miss the grouse lets which next to the hunting I enjoy shooting more than anything else. However I kept up the 12th of August by shooting 6 brace of Arctic grouse, some Rock Ptarmigan and golden plovers, and thought of you while so occupied.³¹

Although clearly disappointed by the poorer than expected opportunities for hunting, he tried to remain optimistic, commenting rather wistfully, in a letter to his wife, on what he believed existed over the horizon:

I have found out the best hunting ground in America, about 300 miles from here. You can see 50 or 60 bear a day, and deer, walrus and sea lion etc etc. I will tell you where it is when I see you . . . I also know where thousands of Walrus and Polar Bear breed, and we could easily get at them in a yacht; and I mean to try but not just yet.³²

However, although the hunting had not been as good as he had hoped, he was able to fulfil his intentions of both returning with skins for his wife, and of enhancing his trophy at Lowther Castle. When writing to Lady Lonsdale he told her about the skins he was bringing back for her. On different occasions he wrote that he had “got a beautiful little duck which I skinned for you for a hat, a lovely silver breast and bronze back”; and “I have some nice furs for you”; and “I got you a beautiful black beaver such a lovely one”.³³

These and the animal heads and skins he acquired for Lowther Castle must have initially been treated at the various river stations he passed before being sent up the Mackenzie river by boat and back to Winnipeg where they were properly cured and preserved by a taxidermist, William Hine.³⁴ He ran up bills at most Hudson Bay Company trading posts for the transport of his skins. For example at Fort Smith he was charged for 20 prime beaver, nine foxes and 12 wolverines; and at Nushegak, eight seal skins, two Arctic hare skins and the cost of cleaning a bear skin.³⁵ His diary does not always make clear whether he shot these animals himself, or bought them from traders or trappers, or had them given to him, but whichever was the case he had them sent back to Lowther. His obituary in the *Westmorland Gazette*

commented that Lonsdale “returned to Lowther with a handsome addition to the already large collection of game heads” and that in *The Times* referred in particular to the fine moose and wapiti heads he had acquired in Alaska.³⁶ The catalogue of the sale of the contents of Lowther Castle lists a few items such as polar bear and musk ox skin rugs which were presumably collected at this time.³⁷ Other specimens such as a mounted polar bear and a juvenile musk ox were acquired by Kendal Museum.

It must have been difficult to know how much to make of the sporting side of his journey. Despite the claim in *The People* that “Lord Lonsdale is more than a sportsman”,³⁸ that is what the public primarily saw him as, so it is unsurprising that the obituaries dwelt on the sporting aspects of his Arctic adventure. However sport had not figured significantly in his early interviews, or in the articles in the *Illustrated London News* or *The People*, or in the various biographies. On his return, perhaps out of some embarrassment with what, to many people, would seem a rather frivolous reason for his expedition when compared with past explorers of the Arctic, his sporting pretensions on this journey were downplayed. By the 1880s travelling in, what was by then well trodden parts of Africa and the Indian sub-continent for sporting purposes was an accepted activity for the wealthy, but the Arctic was still seen as territory for explorers. If Lonsdale had promoted his sporting activities, it would have demeaned his role as an explorer.

The traveller-tourist

Recent commentators have seen Lonsdale as a traveller or a tourist. In the introduction to the book written to accompany an exhibition of the ethnographic artefacts collected by Lord Lonsdale and later donated to the British Museum, J. C. H. King referred to him as a “Victorian traveller”, while Clive Holland called Lonsdale’s journey a “British tourist and sporting expedition”.³⁹ Historians of tourism have identified a third category which should also be considered in this context, namely the anti-tourist.

The word “tourist” made its first appearance in English in the late eighteenth century as a synonym for “traveller”, but during the early nineteenth century, at a time when the exclusivity of the Grand Tour was being challenged, it began to acquire a new meaning. In 1849 a commentator in *Fraser’s Magazine* implied that there was a distinction to be made between the terms, when he wrote that “he was rather a tourist than a traveller”, meaning something akin to the Reverend Kilvert’s later assertion that “if there is one thing more hateful than another, it is being told what to admire and having objects pointed out to one with a stick. Of all the noxious animals too the most noxious is a tourist”.⁴⁰ By the mid-nineteenth century rail travel had brought crowds to places such as the English Lake District and to much of continental Europe, both places that had at one time been the preserve of the wealthy traveller intent on experiencing the culture of these areas in some degree of solitude. In 1889, the year of Lonsdale’s return, John Murray III, who had done as much as anyone to popularise and regiment travel through his series of guide books, reflected on how much more enjoyable travel in Europe had been when it had been necessary to rough it.⁴¹ By the late nineteenth century the tourist followed an itinerary created by someone else, expected promised facilities to be in place, and was blind to the spaces between recommended sights, whereas a traveller was



PLATE 4. "Esquimaux at Peel's River, Alaska", *Illustrated London News*, 11 January 1890.

someone prepared to find out for himself, accept the rough with the smooth and was as interested in the spaces between sights as in the sights themselves.⁴² The anti-tourist was a traveller who sought out a particularly “‘romantic’ form of the tourist gaze, in which the emphasis is upon solitude, privacy, and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze”.⁴³ Lonsdale’s journey in the late 1880s took place at the time when the tourist, the anti-tourist, and the traveller, were all taking advantage of increased leisure time, greater wealth and new means of travel, to experience to different degrees some representation of the “other”. Can Lonsdale really be described by one of these terms?

For those backwoodsmen, familiar with the Canadian north, Lonsdale was no more than a tourist. The president of the Alaska Commercial Company, whom Lonsdale had asked for support, and who was no doubt very familiar with the terrain that Lonsdale planned to cross, clearly saw through any claims Lonsdale might make as to his being a scientist-explorer. In a letter addressed to his agents in the field he diminishes, as one might expect, Lonsdale’s ambition when he wrote, “The bearer of this letter, the Earl of Lonsdale, intends making a tour of Alaska and the Yukon river during the coming season, bent on pleasure and sport”.⁴⁴ Though the trading companies provided an infrastructure for travel in the Canadian Arctic, what was available did not in any way compare with the contemporary facilities provided by the travel companies of the era such as Thomas Cook.

Lonsdale’s “tour” for “pleasure and sport” was not undertaken in a tamed environment. Although the Canadian north was gradually being opened up, it remained, unlike the tropics which was already considered a suitable destination for the independent traveller, including women, a remote and unfrequented area in the 1880s. Although Lonsdale was able to take maps of the area with him, there were of course no guidebooks, and no stations from which to admire pre-selected views as were provided for visitors to less remote areas. Unlike the journeys of contemporary tourists his journey was noticeable for its lack of significant markers. *Portages*, traversing difficult stretches of land or river, the huddle of buildings around a Hudson Bay Company trading post or a mission station became the markers on his route. Getting from point to point, in other words the spaces between, are what dominate the diary entries. The steamboat *Wrigley* did not ply the lower reaches of the Mackenzie river for the benefit of tourists, it followed its schedule for the convenience of those people who had jobs to do in that region. Lonsdale would have been one of its few passengers who had no job to do. In the far north, a person like Lonsdale, bent on “pleasure and sport”, was rare in the 1880s.

Lonsdale cannot be considered to be an anti-tourist. Anti-tourists flourished in an environment frequented by tourists. As James Buzard indicates “anti-tourists *required* the crowd they scorned and shunned, for they built their travellers identities in opposition to the crowd”.⁴⁵ In northern Canada there was no other itinerary frequented by the crowd; there was, as we have seen, no “object of the gaze”, and Lonsdale did not seek out “solitude and privacy”. He had no need to, he had them all the time, and his journal makes clear his joy at reaching trading posts and meeting up with people. The worst times were when the weather was bad, or the ice barred progress, or the mosquitoes confined him to his tent and he was limited to his own company. Given the weather and the difficulty of the terrain and the need to survive “semi-spiritual relationships” with the people or environment they were a

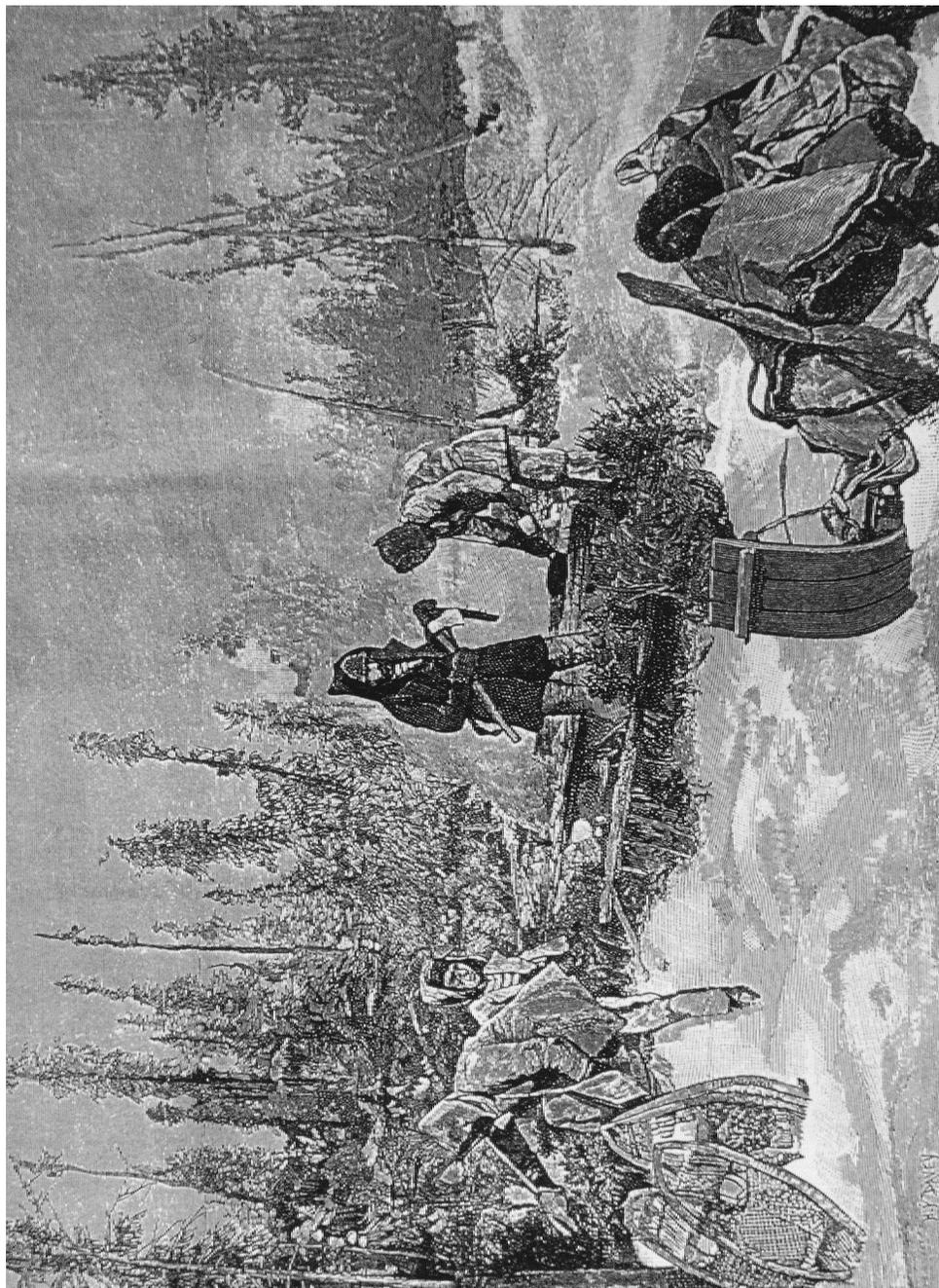


PLATE 5. "A noonday halt. Temperature 55 degrees below zero", *Illustrated London News*, 11 January 1890.

luxury that he could not afford. Though a travelling infrastructure was in place, the scale of Lonsdale's journey, the enforced solitude, the difficulty of the terrain, the lack of guide books, the extremes of climate which he had to face, the need to take the rough with the smooth, preclude the appellation tourist (or anti-tourist), and make him a traveller/sportsman in the late nineteenth century meaning of the phrase.

Conclusion

Lonsdale travelled to the Arctic towards the end of a century during which the region had been the preserve of explorers, many of whom had become household names, and mankind's scientific, geographical and ethnographic understanding of the polar regions had continuously advanced. In 1888 it was expected that the only people who would visit the Arctic were explorers, employees of the trading companies and a few missionaries. Although Clive Holland records one sporting expedition to the Barents Sea, and the first tourist cruises to Svalbard, the most accessible part of the Arctic, during the decade before Lonsdale's expedition, the concept of the Arctic as a place for "sport and pleasure" was largely unheard of. Lonsdale's significance does not lie in being part of a tradition of exploration and scientific enquiry. It is rather as an early representative of a new type of moneyed traveller who saw the Arctic as a playground that provided exciting and different opportunities for the late Victorian traveller to have an adventure. As we have seen Clive Holland hardly refers to sporting or "tourist" expeditions prior to that of Lonsdale's in 1888. In 1888, as well as Lonsdale's expedition, there were three sporting expeditions to Spitsbergen and an art expedition to Greenland. In the decade following his return in 1889 there were almost annual "tourist" cruises to Spitsbergen where the infrastructure included, from 1896, a Norwegian built hotel designed to accommodate the growing number of visitors. In addition there were eighteen other sporting, "tourist", painting and mountaineering expeditions to an increasingly diverse range of Arctic destinations including a considerable number to the Mackenzie River basin. Although the Yellow Earl thought, at least so far as his public image was concerned, that he should seek to emulate the Arctic explorers who had preceded him, unwittingly he had become a pioneer of a new breed of Arctic traveller. While still in Winnipeg before he had left for the north, he wrote in his diary, "I hope I shall have some fun, they think it is a dangerous journey and that I cannot do it – But I shall! They don't think I can do the 1st part but I will and the 2nd part -3rd -and 4th and bring lots of heads and skins back".⁴⁶ He proved that ordinary, even unprepared, travellers could journey through the Arctic, and enjoy themselves, and in that lies his importance.

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manuscripts from the Lowther Archives. Geoff Brambles kindly contextualised Figure 1. I am also grateful to my wife Sue for reading and commenting upon earlier drafts of this article.

Notes and References

- ¹ D. Sutherland, *The Yellow Earl: The Life of Hugh Lowther Fifth Earl of Lonsdale, 1857-1944* (London, Cassell, 1965). The account was repeated by J. V. Beckett in his introduction to S. Krech, *A Victorian Earl in the Arctic* (London, British Museum, 1989), 9-19; and in H. Owen, *The Lowther Family* (Chichester, Phillimore, 1990), 402.
- ² *Hull Advertiser*, 28 October 1854.
- ³ *New York Times*, 4 March 1888.
- ⁴ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/1/3. Letters dated 21 May 1889 and 29 May 1889.
- ⁵ W. J. Clutterbuck, *The Skipper in Arctic Seas* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1890); Polargebiete, *Petermanns Geographische Meittelungen* 34, (1888), 374-5; A. R. Carstensen, *Two Summers in Greenland. An Artist's Adventures among Ice and Islands, in Fjords and Mountains* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1890); A. Pike, "A Winter in the Eightieth Degree" in A. Chapman, *Wild Norway. With Chapters on Spitsbergen, Denmark* (London, Edward Arnold, 1897), 343-51.
- ⁶ *New York Herald*, 6 April 1889.
- ⁷ *The People*, 30 January 1938, 9; L. Dawson, *Lonsdale* (London, Odhams, 1946). Dawson's biography incorporated a map which depicted Lonsdale's assumed route to Banks Island. Figure 1 in this article shows the real route based on the evidence of his journal.
- ⁸ L. Dawson, *Lonsdale* (London, Odhams, 1946); Krech, *A Victorian Earl*, 92.
- ⁹ *Illustrated London News*, 4 January 1890, 20-23, and 11 January 1890, 44-47.
- ¹⁰ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/5. Letters from Alfred Taylor, Lonsdale's business manager, to Lonsdale dated 18 October 1889 and 1 January 1890.
- ¹¹ Such studio photographs were common. See for example the photograph of Robert Peary in R. Peary, *The North Pole* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), frontispiece.
- ¹² *The People*, 30 January 1938, 9.
- ¹³ See *The People*, 30 January 1938, 9. Also Letter to Lady Lonsdale, 1 October 1888, CRO(C) D Lons L27/3/3.
- ¹⁴ Dawson, *Lonsdale*.
- ¹⁵ Books by the Arctic explorers William Parry, John Ross and John Franklin were listed in the sale catalogue of the contents of Lowther Castle, June 1947: CRO(C) D Lons L. The bookplate of the earl has been found in a copy of J. J. Shillinglaw, *A Narrative of Arctic Discovery, from the Earliest Periods to the Present time. With the details of the measures adopted by Her Majesty's government for the relief of the expedition under Sir John Franklin* (London, William Shoberl, 1850). (www.hrkaahnbooks.com/CAT5819thb.html [15 October, 2001])
- ¹⁶ His valet, Porter, suffered from the cold and was sent back to England by Lonsdale during April 1888.
- ¹⁷ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/4/1.
- ¹⁸ Sutherland, *The Yellow Earl*.
- ¹⁹ J. V. Beckett in his introduction to Krech, *A Victorian Earl*, 9-19; Owen, *The Lowther Family*, 402.
- ²⁰ See for example: *St James's Gazette*, 7 Sept. 1888; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 Jan. 1889; *Evening News*, 17 Jan. 1889.
- ²¹ CMS Arch G1 C1/0: 10 July 1888 and 1 August 1888. Quoted in Krech, *A Victorian Earl in the Arctic*, 24 and 42.
- ²² For a recent assessment of Livingstone's importance see J. M. MacKenzie (ed.), *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa* (London, National Portrait Gallery, 1996).
- ²³ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/5. Letter dated 6 September 1888.
- ²⁴ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/5. Undated letter from Bishop Wladimir.
- ²⁵ *New York Times*, 4 March 1888.
- ²⁶ J. M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1988), 200-24.
- ²⁷ C. Holland, *Arctic Exploration and Development c.500BC to 1915: An Encyclopedia* (New York, Garland, 1994), 315.

- ²⁸ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/1/1 and L27/1/1/2. Quotations following are from entries on: 15 April 1888; 17 May 1888; 23 December 1888.
- ²⁹ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/3. Letters dated 24 April 1888; 25 June 1888; 20 July 1888.
- ³⁰ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/3. Letter dated 25 June 1888.
- ³¹ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/2. Letter dated 19 August 1888. This seems unlikely, for according to his diary on 12 August he slept until 1 p.m., went to church at 4, and “spent otherwise an idle day”.
- ³² CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/3. Letter to Lady Lonsdale, 20 December 1888.
- ³³ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/3. Letters to Lady Lonsdale 24 April 1888; 19 June 1888; 20 July 1888.
- ³⁴ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/5.
- ³⁵ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/2/1.
- ³⁶ *The Times*, 14 April 1944, 8; *Westmorland Gazette*, 22 April 1944, 4.
- ³⁷ CRO(C) D Lons L; Catalogue of the sale of the contents of Lowther Castle, June 1947.
- ³⁸ *The People*, 3 October 1937, 8.
- ³⁹ J. C. H. King, “Introduction” in Krech, *A Victorian Earl*, 7; Holland, *Arctic Exploration and Development*, 361.
- ⁴⁰ F. R. Kilvert, *Kilvert’s Diary: Selections from the Diary of the Rev. Francis Kilvert, 1 January 1870 – 19 August 1871* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1960), 79.
- ⁴¹ “The Origin and History of Murray’s Handbooks for Traveller’s”, *Murray’s Magazine*, 6 (November 1889), 625-6.
- ⁴² For a discussion of travellers and tourists and their nineteenth century meanings see: J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to “Culture” 1800-1918* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993).
- ⁴³ J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, Sage, 1990), 43.
- ⁴⁴ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/3/5; Letter dated 28 March 1888.
- ⁴⁵ Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, 153.
- ⁴⁶ CRO(C) D Lons L27/1/1/2: Journal entry 18 March 1888.

