

NOTES

William Edward Parry (1790-1855) Explorer – a response

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DR Rob David's study, in *CW3*, ix, of a crude painting of William Parry was scholarly and stimulating. It deduced why an image of the arctic explorer was painted on wooden panels forming the back of a cupboard above a staircase at Tower Hill, Crosthwaite. Parry's first arctic expedition in 1818 was commanded by Captain John Ross. The next was led by Parry in 1819-20, when he was hailed as a national hero. After further arctic explorations Parry took a post in Australia in 1829. His only known visit to the Lake District was in 1852. A strong case was made for an early 1820s date for the painting and for the probably source from which the image was adapted by Tower Hill's owner, Richard Cartmel. He died on 20 March 1831. His obituary described him as a self-taught artist of portraits of Cumbrian worthies. This note supports Dr David's conclusions that admiration for noble deeds was the chief motivation for the painting and that Parry did not need to visit Cumbria to be commemorated, since another local man committed similar feelings about Parry, Ross and others, to posterity through his own brand of vernacular art.

In an article in the Ancient Monuments Society *Transactions* (25, (1981)), I outlined backgrounds and interconnections of 30 people whose names were expertly carved on five huge slabs in Ecclerigg quarry, at the north-west corner of White Cross bay, Windermere. One slab is dated 1835, one 1836 and two 1837. The largest and earliest measures 22 feet (6.7m) long, with lettering over an area of 12½ x 9½ feet (3.8 x 2.9m). (Figure 1) It names Parry and Ross, with nine other people and a slogan **LIBERTY**, all left in raised relief after the background was chipped away. All the other slabs have incised lettering in the style of Fig. 2. They are reputed to have been carved by a mason named Longmire from Troutbeck, but I have not been able to confirm that. A study of each person suggests that the carver admired them for reasons which reveal his intriguing character, despite his anonymity. Most names, including even Sir Walter Scott, Sir Humphry Davy and Wordsworth need some explanation to show what had probably inspired the carver. In the following notes each name is 'quoted' as carved and it is put into an interest group, some in more than one category. Wordsworth, Nelson and Richard Watson appear twice on separate slabs.

Explorers

'Ross' and 'Parry'. Exploits in the Northwest Passage (1817-1827).

'Lander'. Richard (rather than John). He mounted three expeditions to West Africa 1827-1832.

Reached the River Niger at Bussa in 1830 and explored its course to the sea. Died in 1834.

Freedom

'Byron'. Died in 1824 while trying to help Greeks in their fight for national independence.

'Gen[era]l Lafaye[tte]' (the only foreigner included). Fought for colonists in the American War of Independence, and was a moderating influence in the French Revolution. Died in 1834.

'Robin Hood'. Legendary champion of ordinary people against oppression.

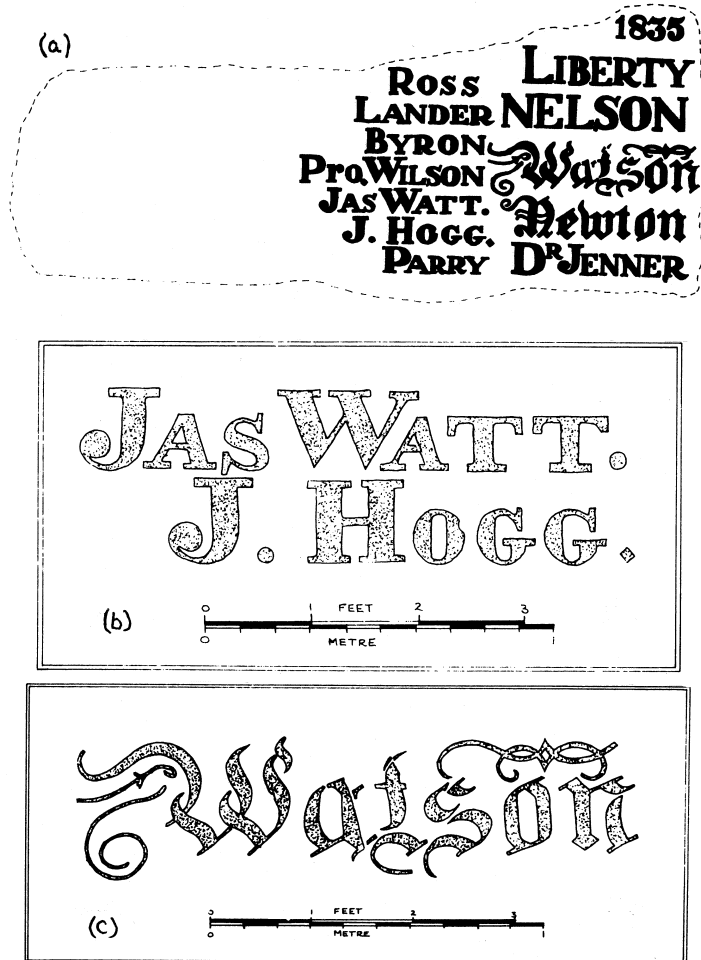


FIG. 1. (a) Sketch of the largest and earliest slate slab to show general arrangement. Slab size: Total length 22 feet (6.7m); carved portion $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ feet (3.8 x 2.9m). (b) & (c) Rubbings from this slab to show typical style of lettering in raised relief.

Heroes of War

'nelson' and 'Heroic Admiral Nelson'.

'Field Marshall Wellington'.

'[John] Shaw' (prize fighter). Life-Guardsman, led by Wellington against Traver's Cuirassiers and personally killed nine of them before dying of wounds at La Haye Saint, Waterloo, 1815.

Literary figures

'Byron', poet. Also trained in fighting techniques by 'Gentleman' John Jackson in London.

'Prof[f] Wilson'. John (an off-comer), locally famed for prowess, Cumberland & Westmorland wrestling and yachting. Lived at Ambleside 1811-1816, moved to Edinburgh. Professor of Moral Philosophy, but kept Lakeland links. The 'Christopher North' of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

'J. Hogg', poet. James had athletic physique. Known as the Etrick Shepherd. Friend of Prof. Wilson and Wordsworth. Associated with founding *Blackwood's Magazine*. Died 21 November 1835. (Slab date 1835).

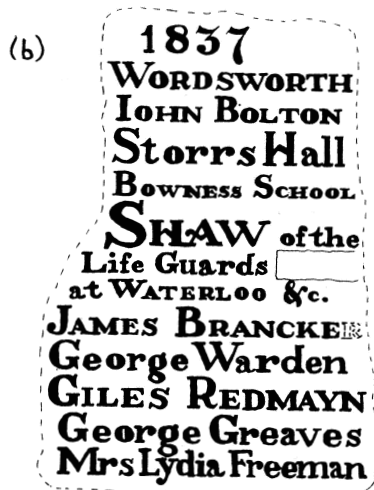
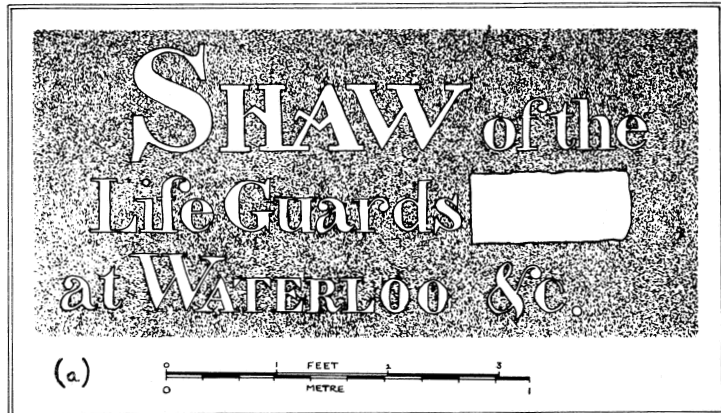


FIG. 2. (a) Rubbing to show the style of incised lettering on the other four slabs.

(b) Sketch of the slab containing the above inscription.

Slab size: 5 to 8 feet x 11½ feet (1.52 to 2.44 x 3.5m)

'Walter Scott Author'. Visited Lake District 1805, stayed with Bishop Watson and climbed Helvellyn with Wordsworth and Humphry Davy (scientist and poet). In 1825 Scott visited Prof. Wilson and went to a social event at John Bolton's mansion at Storrs Hall. Died in 1832.

'Wordsworth Poet Rydal'. Published his *Guide to the Lakes* 1810, 5th edition 1835. Moved to Rydal Mount 1813. Stamp distributor for Westmorland until 1842. Dead 1850.

Scientific Icons

'Newton', Isacc. Most famous for his work on Gravity. Died 1727.

'Dr Jenner'. Physician who developed vaccination against smallpox in 1798. Died 1823.

'Ja[me]s Watt'. Died 1819.

'John Laundon McAdam'. Born at Ayr 1756. Developed his road-making process while working near Falmouth and Bristol. In 1824 he resurfaced Stricklandgate in Kendal, the street by which the carver would enter town. Died in November 1836.

'Sir Humphry Davy'. Of miners' lamp fame. Chemist and respected poet. Before 1801 he worked at

Bristol and befriended Southey and Coleridge, probably influencing his visit to Wordsworth in 1805. Died 1829. Some of his poetry is in memoirs of his life written by younger brother John Davy (1770-1868) who lived at Lesketh How, Ambleside, from its erection in 1844.

'Wren', Sir Christopher. Died 1723.

Local Worthies

'Rich^d Watson'. Born at Heversham. Became bishop of Llandaff 1782. In 1787 bought Calgarth Park, Windermere. Lived as a well-connected country gentleman, neglecting his diocese. Died 1816.

'Rich^d Luther Watson'. Grandson of the above. Lived in Dover as an absentee owner of the quarry site until 1846 when he moved to Ecclerigg Cottage, a new mansion half a mile north of the quarry.

'Matthew Piper / Built & Endowed / 3 National Schools' with £2,000 each (1817) at Lancaster, Kendal and Whitehaven, plus £1,000 for a soup kitchen for the poor of Whitehaven. Quaker, died 1821.

'John Bolton / Storrs Hall / Bowness School'. Born at Ulverston 1756. Made fortune in the Liverpool West Indian trade. Bought Storrs Hall in 1807. Paid for the new school with a lending library. Foundation stone laid on 13 April 1836. He died on 24 February 1837. (Slab dated 1837).

'James Brancke[r]'. Liverpool sugar refiner. Bought Croft Lodge, Clappersgate 1828. Moved in 1844 to Aigburth, for his wife's health. Keen Windermere yachtsman in *Dolphin*. Died in 1852.

'George Warden' Of Glasgow. Absentee owner of Wansfell Holme, Ambleside, 1836. (Slab dated 1837). Moved in at marriage in 1840. From 1843 listed in Liverpool directories. Business at 12 Dale St. and lived at 3 Rodney St. Sold Wansfell by 1848. A sugar broker in 1861 census.

'Giles Redmayn'. Born near Ingleton 1793. Wealthy London mercer, bought Brathay Hall estate 1834. Paid for rebuilding Brathay Church 1836 and for a new peal of bells 1837. (Slab dated 1837).

'George Greaves'. Of Briery Close, 1832. Keen yachtsman in *Yager*, 1838. Moved away by 1840.

'Mrs Lydia Freeman'. (the only woman included). Wife of Revd. John Mackereth Freeman of The Howe, Applethwaite, who died in 1805. She moved to Clappersgate by 1811, bought Howsley Cottage in 1834. Died 2 March 1837, aged 95, buried at Troutbeck. Gave £100 to the poor there, and £500 to help build St Thomas's church, Kendal (built 1835-7). (Slab dated 1837).

Wordsworth.

Prof. Wilson.

Political (All except the first, are on a slab dated 1837).

'Liberty'.

'George 3'. Died 1920.

'William Pitt'. Political career began 1781 as M.P. for Appleby, as a Lowther nominee. Died 1806.

'National Debt L 800,000,000'.

'O, save my Country, Heaven!' From Alexander Pope, *Epistle to Lord Cobham* (1733).

'Money is the Sinews of War'. Adapted from Francis Bacon (1561-1626), *Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms*, which asserts 'Neither is money the sinews of war (as it is trivially said) where the sinews of men's arms . . . are failing'.

It is clear that the carver placed human freedom high in his priorities, not only in 'Liberty' but in names of war heroes and three acknowledged freedom fighters. Bravery also inspired him in these people and the explorers, but he recognised scientific and literary talent too, with James Hogg as the only little-known person. The carver was clearly impressed by generosity among local worthies: Matthew Piper, John Bolton, Giles Redmayn and Mrs Freeman. All but Piper's gifts were made while the carving was taking place. There are also cases of honouring recent deaths between 1832 and 1837 including Parry, Scott, Lander, Lafayette, Hogg, McAdam, Bolton and Mrs Freeman, so he was clearly influenced by topical news. He admired skill in contact sports as with Lord Byron, Prof. John Wilson and John Shaw and also competitive yachtsmen

such as James Brancker and George Greaves even though all but Wilson had, at best, brief contact with the Lakes. The carver admired strong leadership as with Nelson, Wellington, Pitt and Wren. If it seems surprising that he did not rate Victoria worthy of attention when she became Queen on 20 June 1737, perhaps it indicates that he preferred those who had been tried and tested by his own judgement, a sign of a strong personality. From the limited scope of the single painting at Crosthwaite, Rob David found enough to show that Richard Cartmell and the Troutbeck carver both admired similar characteristics. My interest in finding other examples of vernacular craftwork revealing clues to such people were helped by Mike Davies-Shiel who advised me to look at Wreak's Bridge, near Broughton-in-Furness. The result is published in the *Transactions* of the Ancient Monuments Society (1990, 133-150) and compares interestingly with the Ecclerigg work. Copies of my articles are in Kendal and Carlisle Record Offices and Kendal Library.

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William Edward Parry (1790-1855) Explorer – a reply to a response

ROB DAVID

THE slate slab at Ecclerigg Quarry bearing the names of two Arctic explorers, Parry and Ross, and the date 1835 is of considerable interest in relation to Richard Cartmell's portrait of Parry painted on wooden boards, probably dating to 1821-22 and forming part of the structure of Tower Hill, Crosthwaite.¹ Dr. Tyson's suggestion that fame, rather than necessarily a local connection, probably inspired these representations, is likely to be correct.

In 1835 Captain John Ross (1777-1856) and his nephew, Commander James Clark Ross (1800-1862), were the most famous polar explorers of the day.² The mason who carved the name 'Ross' on the slab may have been referring to either or both men. The two Rosses had returned from an expedition to the North-West Passage in 1833 as if from the dead. With financial support from Felix Booth, gin manufacturer, John Ross had sailed to Lancaster Sound and the unexplored straits beyond, in *Victory* in 1829 but the vessel became iced in and eventually had to be abandoned, and this resulted in the expedition spending four winters in the Arctic. By 1833 it was assumed in Britain that the entire crew had perished, so their rescue by the whale ship *Isabella*, and return in October 1833, received extensive coverage in the national and regional press, and was the cause of national rejoicing. The *Westmorland Gazette*, for example, printed the developing story in almost every weekly edition between the 19 October and the end of November.³ It soon became apparent that this voyage had resulted in the most significant achievements.

Surveys had been made of hundreds of miles of previously unknown coast ..., the Gulf of Boothia had been discovered ... and the Rosses' map of Boothia was the best available for over a century ..., [the expedition brought] back the greatest continuous series of scientific observations compiled until modern times and large natural history collections. More information was collected on the interior, and on the Eskimos than by any previous expedition. And all this was crowned by James C. Ross's discovery of the North Magnetic Pole.⁴

The scientific achievements were already being advanced by December 1833 when

James Clark Ross read a paper ‘On the Position of the North Magnetic Pole’ to the Royal Society. Interest in the expedition was maintained when early in 1834 a panorama opened at Leicester Square in London. *A View of the Continent of Boothia, discovered by Captain Ross*, was painted by the proprietor, Robert Burford, from sketches by John Ross. A few weeks later a ‘Grand Scenic Representation of Captain Ross’s Expedition to the North Pole’ opened at Royal Gardens, Vauxhall. This involved an enormous panoramic painting covering over 60,000 square feet of canvas, the last part of which included ‘Immense Icebergs, upwards of seventy feet high’ and included at the close of the show, ‘a gigantic image of Captain Ross in Polar Costume, rising from amidst the Icebergs’, as well as ‘A Superb Exhibition of Fire Works’. The reviewer for the *Times* was overwhelmed by the spectacle:

It is almost impossible by verbal description to convey an accurate idea of the effect of this exhibition, which is in every respect the most interesting both in general arrangement and detailed execution that has been submitted to the visitors to these gardens.⁵

In December John Ross was given a knighthood, and in early 1835 he was in south-west Scotland seeking election as a Tory for the Wigtown Burghs, the area of Galloway in which he had been born. This provided additional publicity although he was not well received in this traditional Whig area, and on the 14 January 1835, the *Dumfries Times* reported that ‘Sir John Ross has abandoned his canvass of the burghs. All the cold he felt at the pole was nothing to the coldness of his reception by the electors’.⁶ In April, John Ross’s account of the expedition was published in two volumes.⁷ Newspapers, such as *The Times* and the *Observer* were generally enthusiastic. However, Sir John Barrow, an Ulverstonian by birth, and promoter of arctic exploration as Second Secretary at the Admiralty was more hostile. He had been an antagonist of John Ross since Ross’s first unsatisfactory expedition in search of the North-West Passage in 1818, and not unsurprisingly he berated the book in the *Quarterly Review*.⁸ For eighteen months after their return in the autumn of 1833 the Rosses, especially John Ross, had been in the glare of publicity. Despite failure in the Wigtown Burghs and the criticisms of Sir John Barrow, their achievements had been lionised across popular culture. No other polar explorer, or for that matter any explorer, was more likely to have caught the eye of the Eccleirigg carver, when he chose to inscribe the name ‘Ross’ on the rock face in 1835. Tyson is probably correct to place Ross in the ‘explorers’ category, although a case can be made for placing the name in the ‘Scientific Icons’ category, especially if it was James Clark Ross, rather than John Ross, who was the explorer on the carver’s mind.

It is rather more difficult to understand why ‘Parry’ was inscribed on the rock face in 1835. William Edward Parry had been Britain’s most significant Arctic explorer between 1818 and 1827. However, in 1829 he had left Britain to take up employment as commissioner of the Australian Agricultural Company. Although he was successful in that role, his role was of no significance in Britain. By 1835 he had returned to Britain, and when the carver inscribed his name on the rock face he was assistant poor-law commissioner for Norfolk, well out of the public eye. Parry’s fame as a polar explorer may have survived his eight years of subsequent obscurity, or it may have been the Rosses’ fame that triggered the association in the mind of the carver, as Parry had been second in command to John Ross in 1818, and had been accompanied by James Clark Ross on all his subsequent arctic expeditions. Whatever the reasons, Ross and

Parry were probably the two arctic explorers whose exploits were most well known to the public. The only other contender would have been John Franklin whose overland expeditions in northern Canada had taken place during the 1820s, but since then he had been out of the public eye. Despite considerable publicity at the time, his journeys were perhaps not so vividly remembered by a predominantly sea-faring nation. The Ecclerigg carvings, coming so soon after the Crosthwaite painting, confirm the impact on the popular imagination of polar exploration in an area of the country distant from centres of power and the ports associated with arctic exploration.

Richard Cartmell's obituary also refers to his portraits of local worthies, the names of a group of whom were also carved into the Ecclerigg rock face. Amongst Cartmell's worthies was Lord Brougham, the great parliamentarian and leader of the movement for the abolition of slavery within the British Empire. Given, as Tyson points out, the Ecclerigg carver's interest in 'liberty' and 'human freedom', and the passing by parliament in 1833 of the act abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire – an act championed by Lord Brougham – it is perhaps surprising that he did not carve the name of Lord Brougham onto any of the rock faces. However, as the name of the Ulverston born John Bolton of Storrs Hall, the eminent Liverpool slave trader is carved on the 1837 slab, perhaps the carver's enthusiasm for liberty and freedom did not extend to all conditions of humankind.

Notes

1. R. David, 'The Painting of the Arctic Explorer Captain William Edward Parry (1790-1855) at Crosthwaite, near Kendal', *CW3*, ix, 175-185.
2. The other explorer carved on the rock face at Ecclerigg was Richard Lander who explored in West Africa where he was attacked and died in 1834, a year before the carving was executed. Lander's exploits and death were only mentioned in two editions of the *Westmorland Gazette*, compared with the story of Ross's return which was spread across five editions.
3. *Westmorland Gazette*, 26 October 1833, 2, 9 and 23 November 1833. During weeks when there was no further news (16 and 30 November 1833), the paper maintained interest in the arctic by publishing information about other expeditions. The *Kendal Chronicle*, *Lancaster Gazette* and *Cumberland Pacquet* all kept their readers informed of the Ross story during October and November.
4. E. S. Dodge, *The Polar Rosses: John and James Clark Ross and their Explorations* (London, Faber and Faber, 1973), 158-9.
5. *The Times*, 31 May 1834.
6. M. J. Ross, *Polar Pioneers: John Ross and James Clark Ross*, (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 180-1.
7. J. Ross, *Narrative of a second voyage in search of a North-west Passage, and of a residence in the Arctic regions during the years 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833*, (London, A. W. Webster, 1835). There was a second volume referred to as the *Appendix*.
8. Ross, *Polar Pioneers*, 186-7.

