

ART. XIII—*Loweswater Pele and Parks.* By MARY C. FAIR.

Read at Carlisle, July 2nd, 1935.

(Ordnance Survey 6 inches to 1 mile, Sheet Cumberland LXIII, S.W.).

LOWESWATER PELE is an interesting site not much of whose history has survived, nor does the site itself supply very explicit data upon which to reconstruct its past. The late Mr. J. F. Curwen suggested that the place might have been the pele-garth home of Ranulphe de Lindesaye who with his wife was certainly connected with Loweswater during the mid-12th century. This remote corner of Lakeland too, though so out of the way, was within easy reach of the main highway by which Scottish raiding parties could come from the Border, and place-names suggest that it was used as a refuge from that scourage of medieval times: across the lake (Crummock Water), about a mile north-east of Loweswater Pele, is a homestead bearing the name of Peel Place which may have been another fortified dwelling, and rather further away, northwards, there is Pickethow, a look-out post, and Tindle Crag where a warning beacon station may have been established.

Loweswater Pele is at the northern end of Crummock Water on the western side under the massive bulk of Melbreak. The place must formerly have been well protected by swampy ground, for it is a kind of peninsula of firm ground jutting into the lake where it forms a sheltered bay. To increase its defences there was a wide ditch with outer and inner embankments which possibly had stockades on the top. On the lake side are the foundations of something which may represent the

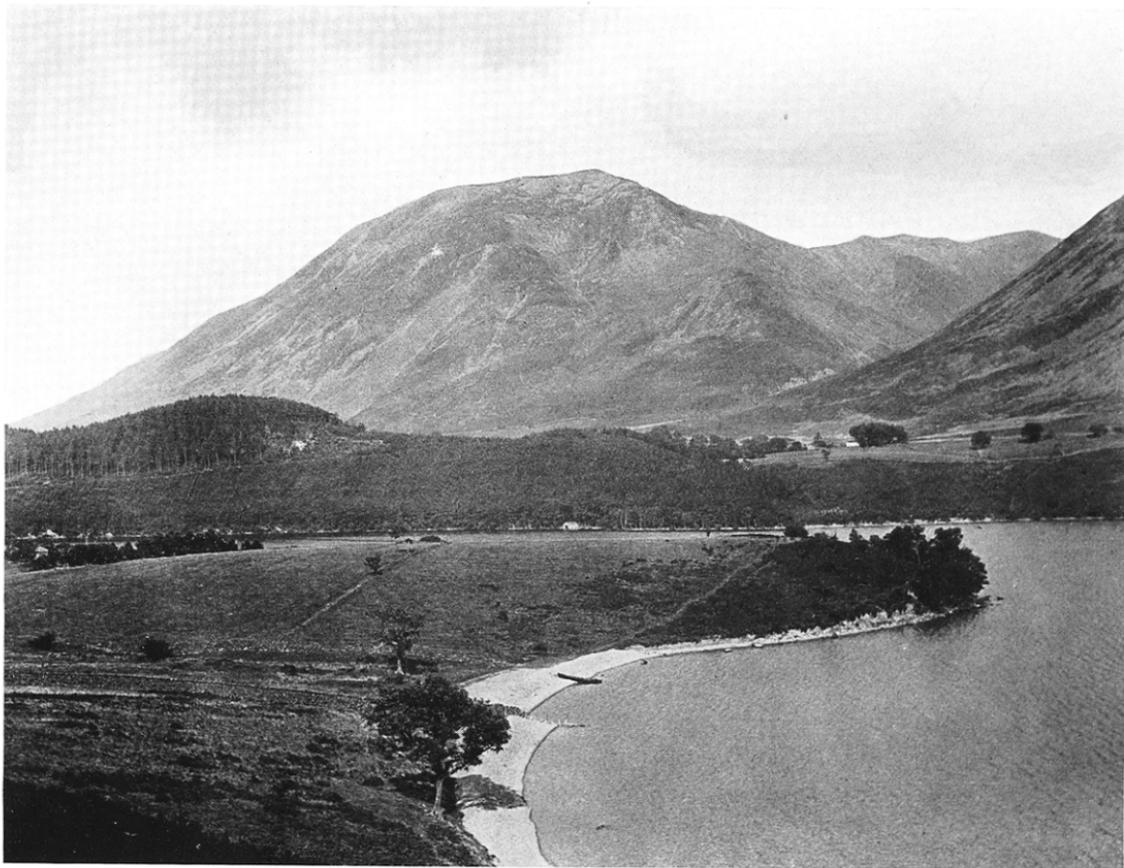


Photo.

LOWESWATER PELE.—On the Shore of Crummock Water.

M. C. Fair.

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Photo.

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LOWESWATER PARKS.

M. C. Fair.

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cellar of a pele tower, or may possibly be something of later type such as a sheep-washing dub. On the landward side, upon the edge of the ditch, are the ruins of a small tenement, a house and farm offices probably built from the material of the pele of stone which succeeded some early wooden moated manor. The remains are confused and years of agricultural operations have swept away the possibility of tracing anything unless trenching might bring to light foundations underground.

Loweswater Manor was held in the 17th century by the Patrickson family of Stockhow, who sold it in 1624 to Sir Wilfrid Lawson, though it would appear that Sir Wilfrid did not immediately enter into possession, for Henry Patrickson was exercising manorial rights in 1630, 1632, and in 1634 he answered a complaint dated 27th November, 1632, by Margaret Mirehouse, widow, that Henry Patrickson and Henry, his son, and others had in 1631 ejected her from the tenement called the Peele in Loweswater, belonging to her late father, Matthew Robinson. (*Trans.*, N.S., xxv, p. 199). I have not been able to find any other mention of Loweswater Pele in local records.

Loweswater Parks are on the northern slope of Mel-break, between that noble mountain and Loweswater church, their memory still kept alive by Low Park and High Park homesteads; Low Park being the northerly of the two. Charter No. 106 (p. 144) of *The Register of St. Bees* tells something of Loweswater chapel and parks and their connection with the de Multons, Lords of Egremont in the 13th century. The Old Park (High Park) was made (a useful footnote informs us), by Alan de Multon, and the New Park (now Low Park), by Thomas de Lucy, his son. The stream which is crossed on the way from Loweswater church to these farmhouses is to-day known as Park Beck, formerly Dub Beck, crossed by Park Bridge, nearby which the ford, Dub Wath of the charter,

is still surviving. The chapelry of Loweswater was granted to the priory and monks of St. Bees by Ranulphe de Lindesaye and his wife, Ethereda (Charter 75, *Register of St. Bees*), and confirmed to them by Cecily, Countess of Albemarle (Charter No. 28) and Richard de Lucy (Charter 29).

NOTE.—An interesting analogy to this site is that of TROSTERMOUNT-ON-ULLESWATER of which description and plan were published in *Trans.*, n.s., xii, pp. 99-101, by the late Mr. J. F. Curwen.

This site, which covers some 5 acres, appears to closely resemble that of Pele on Crummockwater: it is a triangular area with its base on the lake of Ulleswater, its two sides surrounded by a ditch the ends of which enter the lake exactly as at Pele, making the enclosed area into an island further protected by marshland outside the ditch. So similar is the plan as to suggest a similar period of design and construction.