

ART. XVIII – *Some Drinking Fountains in Cumberland.*

By JEREMY GODWIN, M.A.

TO combat “Drink” among the labouring classes on the streets where they worked, drinking fountains were set up in the late 1850s by Local Boards of Health of several towns at public or private expense. These supplied the thirsty with a purer water than they could often get at home free of charge, thereby deflecting them from going into public houses. In April 1859 the Earl of Carlisle presided at a big public meeting in London, at which “many munificent subscriptions” were given to set up drinking fountains in the metropolis; but there were by then several drinking fountains already working in Liverpool, provided by Mr Melly, and their “beneficial results” had been noted by a Whitehaven lady.<sup>1</sup> In 1858, Dr Elliot of the Carlisle Local Board of Health (hereafter called “the Health Committee”, its own name for itself<sup>2</sup>) noticed that drinking fountains had been set up in other towns and had done much good. At the Health Committee meeting on 26 November he moved that a sub-committee be set up to see whether Carlisle might provide drinking fountains and not lag behind other towns. He called for names of those willing to serve. “You stand alone on this, Doctor”, and “Plenty of taps already”, were two replies. Dr Elliot upbraided their apathy as neglect of their duty; and won his sub-committee to report on the proposal.<sup>3</sup> He and five others were appointed to it.<sup>4</sup>

On 10 January 1859 the Health Committee moved “that it be recommended to Council to order two galvanized iron fountains to be erected at the Lonsdale and Steel monuments according to the recommendation of the Fountains Sub-Committee”.<sup>5</sup> Next day, the City Council received this recommendation; Dr Elliot said that the Committee had in mind two public fountains, one in the Market Place by the Steel Monument, the other in Citadel Row. The cost of both would be £7. 15s. od. Other sites could be the Town Hall steps or the Courts shrubberies. The Mayor (Robert Ferguson) thought they might damage the view of Carlisle’s architecture, but Dr Elliot said that they would merely be iron pillars, like the already-existing standpipes.<sup>6</sup> Council deferred its decision, but bade the Health Committee see what price the Carlisle Water Company would charge for “water supplied to Public Fountains”.<sup>7</sup> By 5 April, they knew; it would be 6d. per thousand gallons, and the Health Committee recommended acceptance.<sup>8</sup> After further “conversation” as to the principle of having public drinking fountains at all, the City Council duly agreed to accept the Water Company’s price;<sup>9</sup> it resolved that one fountain be erected in Carlisle, and that its design and site be for the Health Committee to report on.<sup>10</sup> The Health Committee met on 26 April, and felt that the sole question now was that of its site; and referred this to a sub-committee.<sup>11</sup> On 17 May it made its choice: “Resolved, that a Granite Fountain be placed by the Surveyor adjoining the Malt Shovel property in Rickergate.”<sup>12</sup> This was approved by the City Council on 14 June,<sup>13</sup> and the fountain was duly procured, inscribed, and set up at the centre of the corner of the Malt Shovel Inn that faced towards the Sands and Eden Bridge,<sup>14</sup> and there it remained until 1927.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the City had the offer of another fountain, a surprise gift from Wilfrid

Lawson Esq., junior, of Brayton Hall, then aged thirty, and newly-returned for the first time as one of the two M.P.s for Carlisle in the election of 3 May;<sup>16</sup> on the 24th he had written to Dr Elliott, proposing to erect at his own expense one or two drinking fountains in Carlisle “as a memento of my return as member for your city”, and seeking advice as to procedure, design (“Cast iron, or what they call ‘mural’ fountains?”), and would the City pay for the water? This Dr Elliott laid before the Health Committee on 31 May, adding that Mr J. D. Carr was just back from London “full of the subject”: a London society was just formed for setting up 400 such fountains in the metropolis. The Doctor urged that they suggest to Mr Lawson that he provide one only, and that it be a handsome one: the handsomer it is, the more people would be drawn to use it. Others thought that two or three plain ones would be more useful,<sup>17</sup> but the City Council, though echoing this reaction, and pleading burdens on the rates from cost of water, came round to Dr Elliott’s view, and agreed to accept the offer. The Mayor (Robert Ferguson) remarked that “Carlisle is becoming a handsome town”, and that where a thing like this is “to last for ever, it ought to be rather ornamental”. The Health Committee was bidden to find a site for it. Dr Elliott remarked that this proposal was quite independent of their first fountain, the one for the Malt Shovel site, which was “of the plainest construction”.<sup>18</sup> The Fountains Sub-Committee’s six members were appointed on 9 January 1860 as a new sub-committee to carry Mr Lawson’s proposal into effect, for the Health Committee.<sup>19</sup> On 27 March the full Health Committee resolved “That Mr Lawson’s design for a drinking fountain to go in Court Square under the Surveyor’s supervision, be granite”:<sup>20</sup> at the meeting Dr Elliott had produced a plan of its design – “It consists of a column of grey granite, relieved by red granite, and surmounted by a lamp”. The sub-committee was authorized to have it erected;<sup>21</sup> and on 16 December 1861 the Health Committee resolved “that the water fountain in Court Square be supplied with water and gas at the public expense”.<sup>22</sup>

Its site formed an island midway between the Bank and the west Courts Shrubbery; the ward boundary passed through its centre, eighteen yards from the Bank’s door.<sup>23</sup> On a red sandstone base, it stood on two steps of grey granite, and comprised an ornamental column of polished grey granite, square at the base, becoming octagonal at the top, and surmounted by a lofty lamp. In 1905 this lamp rose to the sills of the Bank’s second floor, and had a white globe suspended from the metal surround, on an iron column rising from the domed head of the fountain,<sup>24</sup> but by 1930 the lamp had lost its globe and appears stumpier.<sup>25</sup> There it stood until 1930, by which time it was known as the Lawson Memorial Fountain.<sup>26</sup>

The late 1920s and early 1930s were years of great changes in the appearance of the centre of Carlisle, and several well-known landmarks were demolished or removed,<sup>27</sup> not least the Lawson Memorial Fountain, which was to be displaced by the City Council’s intended new underground conveniences in Court Square, by an Order made by the Ministry of Health under Section 47 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907.<sup>28</sup> The City had for months tried to persuade the County Council, owners of the Courts, Gaol site, and Shrubberies, to consent to having the public conveniences re-positioned, half-sunken, in the Shrubberies; but in vain. The County resolutely resisted any further encroachment on the Shrubberies, and recommended that the City provide “proper underground conveniences in Court Square, similar to those already provided in the Market Place”. Further, “they are of opinion that the existing lavatory accommodation

is unsightly and liable to create a nuisance to the Court Houses". They also now declined to have the Lonsdale Monument, or the Lawson Memorial Fountain, moved to the Shrubberies.<sup>29</sup> On 24 June a "Deputation" from the City put their case fully, but to no avail.<sup>30</sup> The Lonsdale Monument was removed to Beattie's yard on 25 July;<sup>31</sup> but on 9 December the County Police Committee was still refusing to have it in the Shrubberies.<sup>32</sup>

On 10 September 1929 the City Council agreed to put the public conveniences under Court Square:<sup>33</sup> they had had this in mind since February 1927.<sup>34</sup> Though not without dissenting voices: one of these, Mr Minns, deplored the use of Rickerby Park "as a dumping-ground for monuments". On 6 January 1930 the Town Clerk reported to the City's General Purposes Committee that he had received the official sanction of the Ministry of Health to the borrowing of £3000 for the construction of public conveniences at Court Square, repayable within not more than thirty years from date of borrowing.<sup>35</sup> The Committee next considered what they should do with the Lawson Memorial Fountain, and resolved "That the Surveyor be instructed to re-erect the fountain upon a suitable site on the vacant piece of land situate at the north end of St. Aidan's Road, near the Old Water Works".<sup>36</sup>

Four days later, the *Carlisle Journal* carried an editorial headed "Public Monuments in the Streets", discussing the current changes and commenting "It is also proposed to remove the Lawson Memorial Fountain from its original site in Court Square, and transfer it to a site between the old Waterworks and the Suspension Bridge. This can scarcely be considered an appropriate site for a memorial of this character, and we hope that before the City Council gives its sanction . . . it will carefully consider whether a more suitable site could be found", such as "the Public Park", not this "out of the way corner, where it would be of little use". Moreover, said the Editor, "Sir Wilfrid Lawson is one of the outstanding local figures of the Victorian Age", and this fountain is his local memorial.<sup>37</sup> In the same issue, the General Purposes Committee's decision is reported; the reporter adds that some citizens want the Fountain to be nearer Court Square, others assert that the children playing in Rickerby Park need it there.<sup>38</sup> A letter to the Editor the following week urged that the Lawson Memorial Fountain be placed at the south end of the Eden Bridge, near the Creighton Memorial, as an "oasis" for the crowds of all ages who flock to the Sands.<sup>39</sup> The City Council met on Tuesday 14 January, when the Mayor, moving the adoption of the General Purposes Committee minutes, said that it seemed that, if the Lawson Fountain was moved, "it would be of greater use than it was in its old position".<sup>40</sup> There were no further letters or other printed reactions from the public, and early in February the scaffolding went up round the fountain to begin the dismantling and removal.<sup>41</sup> By 25 February the work of re-erection was well in hand.<sup>42</sup>

And there, on that "vacant piece of land at the north end of St. Aidan's Road", the Lawson Memorial Fountain stands to this day, just inside the gate, on a low ridge of evidently artificially-raised ground, in front of the Stoneyholme Golf Course building, successor to the Old Waterworks buildings. The Fountain's inscription now faces towards St. Aidan's Road, and is mostly in small capitals, as follows:

PRESENTED BY  
WILFRID LAWSON ESQ., M.P.  
TO THE  
CITIZENS OF CARLISLE  
NOVEMBER 1861

Below the inscription is an oval trough, half set into the column, half projecting onto the top step; above it, the hole of a waterpipe, no doubt originally feeding an ornamental outlet. The same arrangement, below a small blank shield of polished red-brown granite, is on the north-facing side; and on each of the other two sides, a bowl of polished red granite projects, with waterpipe-hole, and lead-blob on each side where the chained cup would be. The Fountain is now disconnected, and is merely ornamental; but its visual impact is reduced by the haphazard planting of trees to west (instead of forming a vista closed by the Fountain, they merely obscure it), and by being tucked away round its corner on the "vacant land". But its polished grey column is a handsome sight; about twelve feet high, it is set on two shallow steps of total eighteen inches height; at foot of steps it is about twelve feet square; at base of column, about four feet square, the first step's top is about ten inches wide. The lamp has not made the journey from Court Square.<sup>43</sup>

But what of the fountain now to be seen in Court Square, at the edge of the former (south-) west Shrubbery? This is not shown on the first three editions of the Ordnance Survey's 10-foot map, and must therefore have been brought at some date after 1925 from elsewhere in Carlisle. This fountain today consists of a polished red granite basin and pediment set in a screen of red sandstone of ashlar quality;<sup>44</sup> the bowl is twenty-five inches wide, projecting sixteen inches, and is five inches deep. There is a small trough beneath, to receive water from the bowl, by pipe; thence drain. The screen is about eight feet wide, six and a half feet high, and eleven inches (one block of stone) thick. There are two steps up to the fountain. In the bowl is a metal jet, formerly operated by a handle; a large round metal blob marks the fountain-head; of cup, there is no sign. The polished red granite surround is twenty-five inches wide, eighteen inches high, plus five inches pediment more, projecting half an inch each side. In the gable, "1859"; below, above the bowl, "ROBERT FERGUSON ESQUIRE, MAYOR", the word "MAYOR" at centre of second line. At the centre of the screen's back, at ground level, is a metal plate secured by a stone. The fountain is set against the low retaining wall, formerly railed, that was built when Court Square was widened in 1929, shortly before the Lawson Fountain was moved to Rickerby Park.

This was not the first alteration to the West Shrubbery. Between 1865 and 1900, its sharp eastern corner had been rounded off;<sup>45</sup> but the alterations of 1929 were more drastic. Court Square and the Crescent were widened; as was English Street itself, up to the two projecting wings of the Court entrances: these were pierced with arches for the new pavement.<sup>46</sup> At this time, too, the late Victorian three-tiered ornamental (not drinking-) fountain was removed from the West Shrubbery.<sup>47</sup> And where the 1859 drinking fountain now stands was till 1929 the site of a gentlemen's urinal.<sup>48</sup>

Strangely, there is no mention in the City minutes, files, or in the newspaper, of the reason or date of bringing this 1859 fountain to this site, nor of whose bidding this was; but its inscription, and the fact that the City in 1859 had only one fountain set up, and the photograph<sup>49</sup> of that fountain still in position at the Malt Shovel Inn shortly before that inn's demolition, all point conclusively to the present Court Square fountain's having come from store in 1929, having been saved in 1927 when the Malt Shovel was demolished and rebuilt. Perhaps it was put here as a sop to those Councillors and others opposed to the departure of the Lawson Fountain.

A similar fountain to Rickergate's (now Court Square's) was set up at the head of Wilson Street, Workington, also in 1859, near the Market Place junction of King Street,

Curwen Street, Nook Street, and Jane Street. It's red granite bowl is slightly bigger than that at Carlisle (it is about nine inches deep and 2½ feet wide); the bowl projects from the pedimented slab, which is inscribed below the pediment. It is set in a freestanding wall of local yellow sandstone, rusticated, in shape rather like a kitchen fireplace; above the "mantelpiece" are set three courses, three, two, and one long stone; on the two ends of the "mantelpiece" are iron stains, circular, suggesting the former bases of gas-lamps here; at ground level, beneath the bowl, was until recently a trough. The back of the fountain's wall is even more like a fireplace; the "grate", about three feet wide, is now a concrete block about two feet high. In the pavement in front of the grate is a hollow. The wall is about 6½ feet high. The inscription reads:

PRESENTED TO THE TOWN  
1859  
BY  
C. LAMPORT, ESQ.

On either side of the pipe-hole (now stopped) is a blob suggesting a chained cup. The bowl is about two feet above the ground, which here is sloping, being higher on the left of it.<sup>50</sup>

"C. Lamport, Esq." was Charles Lamport of Park End House, Workington, and High Yard, Workington, shipbuilder.<sup>51</sup> He was a leading member of the town's Improvement Trustees, and in December 1858 was their Chairman.<sup>52</sup> On 23 October 1854 the Trustees received Mr Hawksley's Report on the proposals to bring water into the town; on 14 December 1854 they resolved to seek if possible a cheaper version of the plan from Mr Hawksley; and on 14 June 1855 they resolved to order the pipes required.<sup>53</sup> By August 1858 the pipes had been laid, but the contractor (unnamed) "had left some of the streets in a very rough state".<sup>54</sup> The water was "for watering the streets, flushing the sewers, and cleansing the channels";<sup>55</sup> but by December, Mr Charles Lamport had thought of extending the scheme to include at least one public drinking fountain. On 10 December 1858, Charles Lamport Esq. in the Chair, it was "Moved by Mr Allison and Seconded by Mr Bell, That Mr Lamport's offer to Present the Town with an Ornamental Drinking Fountain, be accepted with thanks";<sup>56</sup> and on 14 January 1859, same Chairman, it was unanimously agreed "That the offer of the Workington Water Works Co. Ltd. To supply the Town with all the water required for watering the Streets, flushing the Sewers, cleansing the Channels, and supplying the Drinking Fountain or Fountains for the sum of £50 per annum . . . Be accepted for 12 Months"; and the Trustees also resolved to buy the Water Works Co.'s standpipe, and also two further standpipes, "the Delivering Pipe", and 120 yards of hose.<sup>57</sup>

At the Trustees' meeting on 13 November 1860, Mr Guy gave notice of motion at the next meeting "that a less amount than £50 per annum be paid for the water for watering the Streets etc . . . and supplying the drinking Fountain;"<sup>58</sup> but he did not, and there is no further mention of the Fountain, or of the water supply, in the rest of this minute book.<sup>59</sup> However, Mr Guy's notice proves that the Wilson Street fountain was the only one to be gifted or otherwise provided for the town in those years, and that the words "Fountain or Fountains" in the minute of January 1859 were over-optimistic.

Carlisle and Workington had opted for stone fountains in red and grey granite, whether set in a sandstone wall or freestanding; Whitehaven chose to have iron fountains,

graceful, decorative, and painted. The idea came from Miss Murray, who had seen the good effect of the fountains in Liverpool set up by Mr Melly, a "merchant prince" there; and early in 1859 she "was the first of those benevolent persons who took steps to get this boon for Whitehaven". She got in touch with Mr J. B. Wilson, who was Chairman of the Water Committee and a member of the Whitehaven Town & Harbour Trustees, and "urged him to bring the matter before the Trustees, for a gratuitous supply of Water, and at the same time offered to subscribe for the first cost of the fountains".<sup>60</sup> The next meeting of the Trustees, on Saturday 12 February, had seven items on the agenda, of which Item 3 was the Report of the Water Committee. Mr Harrison was in the Chair, and Messrs. Collins, J. B. Wilson, Paitson, and eight others were present. The Report was read by the Secretary. Mr Wilson moved confirmation, mentioning the timing of the mains' re-laying; the Chairman backed him. Then "Mr Wilson begged to mention another matter", the drinking fountains, and gave notice of motion for the next Board meeting. "Should the cost be met by the Trustees, though, or by public subscription; and, if the latter, would the Trustees pay for the water, so that use of the drinking fountain would be free to the public?" The Chairman thought that public subscription "would go a very short way", and so the Trustees would end up paying most of the cost. Mr Wilson refused to be drawn into further details, saying merely "Motion next meeting". The Water Committee's minutes were then carried.<sup>61</sup>

By 26 April, the fountains had been a week on order; "Mr Burrell, the water engineer" had ordered them. The Water Committee had unanimously backed their Chairman in this, "as one of those public improvements which should be effected by a public board"; and the Trustees had also approved, so the fountains should be ready in a fortnight. London had just had its public meeting; the issue was now "almost national", and the North had beaten them to it.<sup>62</sup>

However, the first fountain to open in Whitehaven was not one of the six (originally four) intended by the Trustees, but one gifted by "the Society of Rechabites, of this town" to go into the centre of the Green Market, "one of the most frequented parts of the town, (where it) will doubtless be a great boon to those classes who are so constantly occupied in our streets, and to whom a drink of pure water during the summer season is highly acceptable. The fountain is to be opened by a lady well known in this town". Thus declared the *Pacquet* of 10 May, adding that the fountain should be completed and erected this present week.<sup>63</sup> It was to be "of an ornamental character", and had been accepted by the Trustees as an additional fountain on the Water Committee's recommendation. It was opened on Thursday evening 12 May by Mrs J. B. Wilson, in front of a large crowd "chiefly consisting of the working classes" in the Market Place, and a large number of genteel persons (mostly ladies) watched from the surrounding windows. An "impromptu platform" had been erected behind the fountain; Mrs Wilson's party (more ladies) were on this with her, and Mr J. B. Wilson together with five fellow-Trustees stood near them. Mr J. Walker, of the Loyal Lebanon Tent of the Independent Order of Rechabites, spoke first. Unfortunately, his and the other speeches were drowned by "the murmur of voices and the noise of vehicles passing", but he said that the fountain uses Ennerdale water; and that it was "Mr Bateman Wilson's idea and championing". Mr J. Jackson jun. then handed Mrs Wilson a silver flagon; she drew off some water from the fountain, tasted it, passed the cup round, and declared the fountain open (loud applause). Mr J. B. Wilson then spoke, as Chairman of the Water Committee; he said

that "Whitehaven was one of the first places in the kingdom to secure a supply of the best and purest water for all ordinary purposes", and he wondered why they'd not thought sooner of drinking fountains. "Unfiltered Ehen water was purer than most filtered supplies", he said. He accepted the fountain for the Trust, and declared it open, with much pleasure. Mr Musgrave moved a vote of thanks to the Rechabites. He said that "the Trustees' water supply has cost £24,000 – £25,000; many come to view it. The Trustees will erect fountains elsewhere in the town." Capt. J. Jackson, seconding, said "though the local taxation was high, he had never yet heard a grumble about the water, for it was so good in quality that everybody cheerfully paid for it". Several further speeches of thanks to the water-bringers followed with "let's have more drinking fountains in the town." Mr Taggart called for three cheers for the Lord of the Manor and for the Trustees: "Lord Lonsdale was an able statesman and practical businessman, and he had endeavoured, by the erection of baths, wash-houses, etc., to promote the comfort and well-being of the labouring population of the town. (Hear, hear) . . ."

Three cheers; two further speeches; then all tried the new drinking fountain. "A fife and drum band, conducted by Mr Hunt, attended during the proceedings, and played several airs". "We may add", says the *Pacquet*, "that the fountain is a handsome casting of iron, ornamented with a variety of grotesque looking heads on the upper part; and two white metal drinking utensils are attached by chains to the fountain, one being placed on each side of the jet of water. The fountain was procured from Glasgow by Mr Whittle, ironmonger, Roper-street, and the entire cost has, it is stated, been about £10. The fountains to be erected by the Trustees will probably be proceeded with this week".<sup>64</sup>

These latter were now to be placed thus: "one at the top of Lowther-street; one in New Town, near to the foundry; one in George-street, near the end of Church-street; one at the Sugar Tongue; one near Bransty Arch; and the other in Queen-street".<sup>65</sup>

By the 20th or so, work had at last begun on erecting them; and not before time, for there was now a drought and a heat-wave, with thunderstorms locally on 29th and 30th May. The 30th was a Monday. The Water Committee met that morning, and at the end of their meeting they "went in a body" to the opening of the first of their six fountains to be ready, that at the Castle end of Lowther Street. "The wooden covering of the fountain having been removed, the water was turned on from the main and set flowing from a grotesquely formed head in the upper portion; and Mr Wilson then took a drink of the water flowing from the structure, which was pronounced duly opened. The fountain, which is fitted into the wall, is of iron, and, like the others to be erected by the Trust, bears the arms of the Lord of the Manor, with the inscription "Whitehaven 1859". The iron work is supplied by Messrs. Frew, & Co., of the Hamilton Foundry, Hamilton, near Glasgow; and the total cost of each fountain, when erected, will be about £3.10s.0d. They are all to be painted, in imitation of granite, like the one just erected, and will be rather ornamental than otherwise. The other five are to be proceeded with forthwith, and will, no doubt, be completed in a very short time. We understand that the fountain in Queen-street will be next opened, probably in the course of a very few days, being now almost if not quite completed". The Editor ends by thanking the Water Committee for being so quick about it;<sup>66</sup> and indeed, Whitehaven's eager response contrasts well with the more typical cautious official responses in Carlisle and Workington.

In Penrith they had no drinking fountains whatever in 1859, nor thought to have them. The *Pacquet* reports that Penrith is dependent on the River Eamont for its water, and is now very short of it, as Ullswater and its outflow, the Eamont, are at their lowest level in memory: at Pooley Bridge one can cross dryshod.<sup>67</sup> By 21 June, Ennerdale Water was at its lowest for thirty years; in Whitehaven the water mains were being re-laid.<sup>68</sup>

Of the seven drinking fountains set up in Whitehaven in 1859, only that in Lowther Street remains in position; that in Queen Street was removed to Whitehaven Museum some time ago, but is identical to that in Lowther Street, though in poorer condition.<sup>69</sup> It is set in the wall of grounds on the south-west side of Lowther Street, near Whitehaven Castle, and is still, though now disused, "rather ornamental than otherwise". The iron structure is about five feet high by about two and a half feet wide, within a frame about nine inches thick. The whole is arrow-shaped. The fountain has long been painted green, and was repainted green in 1984.<sup>70</sup> The "grotesquely formed head" is actually a gilt lion's head; below it is a graceful projecting basin shaped like a shell; below that are the "arms of the Lord of the Manor" (the six annulets of Lowther on their golden ground); below that, the words "BOROUGH OF WHITEHAVEN"; below that, "1974"; below that, near ground-level, a hooded trough. The date "1974" was added at the time of local government reorganization.<sup>71</sup> As for the other six, only an oblong metal cover in the pavement marks the site of the Rechabites' fountain in the Market Place; of the fountain on the corner of Customhouse Quay and the Old Tongue there is no sign (it stood on the south-east corner of the police station, now also closed, on the west corner of the Tongue);<sup>72</sup> the New Town fountain has gone, as has most of New Town; it stood at the south end of New Town, on the north-east corner of a projecting terrace, north of Christ Church;<sup>73</sup> this terrace has now gone. The Queen Street fountain was set on the west side of the street, opposite Schoolhouse Lane; it projected from the wall of St. Nicholas' Churchyard onto the pavement.<sup>74</sup> The George Street drinking fountain appears on none of the Ordnance Survey maps of the town, and there is no sign of it in the street either. The Bransty Arch drinking fountain was a semi-circular projection on the Arch's north side, west pier, east end nearest the roadway;<sup>75</sup> it had gone by 1925, though the Arch itself remained.<sup>76</sup>

In all three towns, then, it took an individual's enthusiasm and skill to set the official wheels in motion: without Dr Elliott, Charles Lamport, Miss Murray, or Mr J. B. Wilson, Carlisle, Workington and Whitehaven might have been slow to get public drinking fountains; or might not have got them at all. So also with Wigton, whose sole public drinking fountain opened in the Market Place in 1873, the splendid Moore Memorial Fountain erected by George Moore of Whitehall Esq. in memory of his beloved first wife Eliza, whom he had married in 1840 and who died in London on 4 December 1858. She had long wanted him "to do something for Wigton"; and so, having improved Whitehall, as they both had planned, he called a public meeting in Wigton in September 1868 and put to it his proposal for a memorial drinking fountain. It's first design by J. T. Knowles had to be adjusted, as the site was too constricted; but Knowles in London persevered, and in 1872-3 the monument rose, a granite pyramid, its base seventeen feet square, rising thirty-three feet to the gilt bronze ball and cross. The granite was from Shap, supplied by Messrs. G. & J. Fenning there. The four Works of Mercy adorn the sides of the base, cast in bronze by Woolner; floral designs in bronze adorn the pyramid;

on each of the four pediments above the cornice was set a gilt bronze bust of the first Mrs Moore (bronze work by Messrs Hardman, Birmingham). And from four basins, connected to the town supply, came the water for the drinkers.<sup>77</sup> The whole cost £12,000, “and is considered to be the finest of the kind in England”.<sup>78</sup> There was no ceremony either for the foundation-laying or as an unveiling; “the hoarding was removed on Friday 21 March 1873, and the Moore Memorial Fountain stood revealed to the town”. The four lamps were added later, and modified to suit modern needs; and later, also, the Fountain was railed off to deter “vandals”.<sup>79</sup>

The Fountain is on the site of the town’s Market Cross, a “lofty wooden pillar” which came to a sudden end in the town’s huge Trafalgar bonfire in 1805, which “in the exuberance of their joy” was built round it.<sup>80</sup> Next occupant of the site was “t’ Pump”, an ornamental iron structure of the 1830s, fed from an underground spring; it was often dry, and as such was a great talking-point locally.<sup>81</sup> The town (like Alston)<sup>82</sup> also had four public wells<sup>83</sup> – that is, if the trough which the Ordnance Survey calls “Belted Will (trough)”, be counted as one. This is still in place, in flow and it is in the north wall of the junction of the Silloth and Oulton roads, just north of the Station’s bridge. Water runs from a man’s head in the wall-alcove, into a stone trough.<sup>84</sup> The former trough called Hutton Spout in Penrith is of a similar type. It gave a good supply of water, but is now dry. Hutton Spout is set in the north wall at the east end of Benson Row; it was fed by pipe from a small reservoir in the Flatt, on the Scaws.<sup>85</sup>

No nineteenth-century drinking fountains were set up in Allonby, Alston, Aspatria, Brampton, Cleator Moor, Cockermouth, Dalston, Egremont, Flimby, Harrington, Longtown, Millom, Parton, or Silloth;<sup>86</sup> though by 1900, Penrith had one in the middle of the road at the top end of Sandgate, and another in the middle of the road in Cornmarket (this latter had gone by 1925).<sup>87</sup> The only drinking fountain in Silloth was set up in 1911 by the Silloth Ratepayers Association and Improvements Committee. A domed-top column of grey granite, about eight feet high, it stands on the Green opposite Christ Church and near the west pavement of Criffel Street.<sup>88</sup> Maryport had a drinking fountain at the east end of the Docks footbridge in 1864, but this had gone by 1900, leaving the town with none.<sup>89</sup> Keswick in 1862 had no drinking fountains, but in 1865 acquired a handsome one, in memory of Frances Rolleston, at the foot of Station Road, near the bridge over Greta, set into the wall of Upper Fitz Park; it has a polished red granite basin arched in a green slate surround, with Biblical text John 4.14.<sup>90</sup> Both Wigton and Workington continued with one each.<sup>91</sup> By 1899 in Whitehaven the drinking fountain at the Old or Sugar Tongue had ceased, and by 1925 that at the Bransty Arch had ceased also.<sup>92</sup>

And Carlisle, which in 1865 had two, by 1915 had three more, in the “Giant’s Grave” shrubbery island opposite Carr’s at the west end of Caldewgate; at the top of Stanwix Bank, in the middle of the road; and in Kingstown Road near Stanwix Cemetery. This last was about eight feet long, of granite, with two troughs, the top one for horses and cattle and the bottom one for dogs etc., and a push-button tap and chained cup, much used on market days.<sup>93</sup> The original two Carlisle drinking fountains have survived<sup>94</sup> (though disconnected and prey to litter, graffiti, etc.), but each on a site different from their original in 1859 and 1861.

## Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 26 April 1859, p. 5.

- <sup>2</sup> E.g. Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 29 November 1859, following Minute 645, which shows that this Committee referred to itself as "the Health Committee".
- <sup>3</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 26 November 1858, p. 6; C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 23 November 1858, Minute C/376; C.R.O., Carlisle, Carlisle City Minutes, ref. Ca/C1/1/2, 14 December 1858, approved.
- <sup>4</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 23 November 1858, Minute C/376.
- <sup>5</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 10 January 1859, Minute C/417; Ca/C1/1/2, 11 January 1859, Minute 1588.
- <sup>6</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 14 January 1859.
- <sup>7</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C1/1/2, 11 January 1859, Minute 1588.
- <sup>8</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 5 April 1859, Minute C/480.
- <sup>9</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 15 April 1859, p. 6; C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C1/1/2, 12 April 1859, Minute 1645.
- <sup>10</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C1/1/2, 12 April 1859, Minute 1645.
- <sup>11</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 29 April 1859, p. 7.
- <sup>12</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 17 May 1859, Minute 513 [*sic*, without the C/]. Rickergate was then a teeming, and rough, part of Carlisle.
- <sup>13</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C1/1/2, 14 June 1859.
- <sup>14</sup> Ordnance Survey 1/500 (10-foot) map, Cumberland Sheet XXIII.3.20, 1st-3rd editions, 1865, 1900, 1925. (May be seen at C.R.O., Carlisle).
- <sup>15</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 28 February 1927, p. 4: photograph of the Malt Shovel Inn with the drinking fountain still in position, just before the inn's demolition.
- <sup>16</sup> He was M.P. for Carlisle 1859-65 and for Cocker mouth 1886-1900 and 1906, and succeeded to the baronetcy in 1867. Sir Wilfrid was perhaps best known for his ardent zeal for temperance reforms. In politics he was Liberal.
- <sup>17</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 3 June 1859, p. 5; C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 31 May 1859, Minute 521; Ca/C1/1/2, 14 June 1859, Minute 1666.
- <sup>18</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 17 June 1859, p. 6. No doubt Dr Elliott was playing down any suggestions of wasteful decoration.
- <sup>19</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 9 January 1860, Minute 712.
- <sup>20</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 27 March 1860, Minute C/759; Ca/C1/1/2, 10 April 1860, passed.
- <sup>21</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 30 March 1860, p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, Ca/C10/6/3, 16 December 1861, Minute 1416. The fountain was evidently set up in November 1861, to judge by its inscription.
- <sup>23</sup> Ordnance Survey 1/500 (10-foot) map, Cumberland Sheet XXIII.7.5, 1st-3rd editions.
- <sup>24</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, DX/168, view of Botchergate in album of Carlisle views photographed by Valentine's and published by W. Jackson, Carlisle, c. 1905.
- <sup>25</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 7 February 1930, p. 4 (photograph).
- <sup>26</sup> It is indexed in the printed Carlisle City Minutes under "Lawson Memorial Fountain".
- <sup>27</sup> The *Carlisle Journal* made a point of photographing them, before the changes, as a paper of record. On Tuesdays these photographs were usually on page 2; on Fridays, on page 4.
- <sup>28</sup> Carlisle City Council printed minutes, 1929-30 volume, p. 16: General Purposes Committee, 2 December 1929, Minute 50; *ibid.*, p. 105: City Council, 10 December 1929, Minute 185. The Order was made on 7 March 1930 (*ibid.*, p. 312, Minute 488).
- <sup>29</sup> Cumberland County Council printed minutes, Vol. XLI, 1929, p. 274: Police Committee, 29 April 1929, Minute 35. For the City's intentions, see the map inserted between pages 552-3 in the printed City Minutes, 1925-6 (General Purposes Committee, 13 April 1926, Minute 718).
- <sup>30</sup> Cumberland County Council printed minutes, Vol. XLI, 1929, p. 508 (24 July 1929, Minute 68).
- <sup>31</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, Friday 26 July 1929, p. 4 (photograph) and p. 7 (report).
- <sup>32</sup> Cumberland County Council printed minutes, Vol. XLI, 1929, p. 715: 9 December 1929, Minute 128.
- <sup>33</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 13 September 1929, p. 9.
- <sup>34</sup> Carlisle City Council printed minutes, 1926-7, p. 232: General Purposes Committee, 28 February 1927, Minute 402.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929-30, p. 111-2, Minute 197.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929-30, p. 112, Minute 198.
- <sup>37</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 10 January 1930, p. 6. The paper did Sir Wilfrid proud when the centenary of his birth fell in August 1929, being, like he was, Liberal in politics. The main features appeared in the issue of 30 August, pages 6 and 9.

- <sup>38</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 10 January 1930, p. 7 column 1.
- <sup>39</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 17 January 1930, p. 7.
- <sup>40</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 17 January 1930, p. 9 column 2. The paper gives no further details, and the City's printed minutes (1929-30, p. 190) merely state that the City Council adopted this Committee's minute without comment.
- <sup>41</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 7 February 1930, p. 4 (photograph).
- <sup>42</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 25 February 1930, p. 4 (photograph), showing the lower part of the column already set on its two steps, in front of the old brick building of the Old Waterworks.
- <sup>43</sup> Noted by myself on visits to the Lawson Memorial Fountain in Rickerby Park, 18 January and 15 April 1985.
- <sup>44</sup> As at 15 April 1985. The trough's drain-cover is by Porter Bros., Carlisle.
- <sup>45</sup> Ordnance Survey 1/500 (10-foot) map, Cumberland Sheet XXIII.7.5, 1st and 2nd editions, 1865 and 1900.
- <sup>46</sup> As proposed by the City's General Purposes Committee in 1926; the two projections were at that time the Courts' entrances, and the street pavement was on their outer sides. For a photograph of this, see *Carlisle Journal*, 4 October 1927, p. 4; for a plan of it, see the City's printed minutes, 1925-6, between pages 552-3. The work's progress is indexed in the City's printed minutes under "English Street Improvement Scheme". The printed minutes of both City and County show that the work was done only with the County's rather reluctant assent.
- <sup>47</sup> This fountain is shown on the Ordnance Survey's 1/500 (10-foot) map's second edition (1900), but not on its first edition (1865). For a photograph of it, see C.R.O., Carlisle, DX/168. The City's General Purposes Committee's proposed improvements plan (1925-6, between p. 552-3) marks it as still in place, i.e. in April 1926 their mind was to leave it alone.
- <sup>48</sup> On the Ordnance Survey's 1/500 (10-foot) map of Carlisle, second edition, 1900, the City's urinals are marked but (rather coyly) not named as such. Both the Courts Shrubberies had one, each for six gentlemen at a time.
- <sup>49</sup> *Carlisle Journal*, 28 January 1927, p. 4. The *Cumberland News* (but not the *Carlisle Journal*) reports on 15 October 1927 that the old Malt Shovel Inn is now "levelled to the ground", and that its successor is arising. This *Cumberland News* cutting is the first mention of the matter in the Carlisle & District State Management Scheme's press-cuttings files for 1927 (C.R.O., Carlisle, T/SMS/2/ 1926-7).
- <sup>50</sup> Own observation and photographs, 12 January 1985.
- <sup>51</sup> Kelly's *Post Office Directory of Westmorland [sic] & Cumberland*, 1858, p. 233-4 (Workington). Kelly that year also lists another Lamport of private means there, Thomas Warren Lamport Esq., of Brow Top.
- <sup>52</sup> See the frequent references to him in the Trustees' minute books, C.R.O., Carlisle, SMB/Wo/1/1/3-4; for the December 1858 meeting see SMB/Wo/1/1/4, p. 77.
- <sup>53</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, SMB/Wo/1/1/3.
- <sup>54</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, SMB/1/1/4, at 13 August 1858.
- <sup>55</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, SMB/Wo/1/1/4, 10 September 1858.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1858.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 January 1859. At this meeting the Trustees also resolved that "the Public Privy and Ashpit at Cross Hill . . . be cleaned out and closed".
- <sup>58</sup> C.R.O., Carlisle, SMB/Wo/1/1/4, 13 November 1860.
- <sup>59</sup> It ends at 22 March 1864.
- <sup>60</sup> The words "merchant prince" are Mr J. B. Wilson's as reported in the *Cumberland Pacquet*, 17 May 1859, p. 6. For Miss Rossina Murray, who died aged 82, see her obituary in the *Whitehaven News*, 16 October 1890, p. 5; her entry in the 1851 Census of Whitehaven; and her Will, proved at Carlisle on 27 November 1890 (C.R.O., Carlisle, P1890, p. 816). Her family's home in Whitehaven since at least 1847, 75 Lowther Street, is now the local office of the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages.
- <sup>61</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 15 February 1859, p. 5. As the Trustees' minutes have not survived at all, it is fortunate that the *Pacquet* reports their meetings in detail.
- <sup>62</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 26 April 1859, p. 5.
- <sup>63</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 10 May 1859, p. 5 col. 4.
- <sup>64</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 17 May 1859, p. 6 (full-column report, with headline).
- <sup>65</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 17 May 1859, p. 5 col. 4.
- <sup>66</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 31 May 1859, p. 5.
- <sup>67</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 14 June 1859, p. 5.

- <sup>68</sup> *Cumberland Pacquet*, 21 June 1859, p. 5. No further reports or mentions of drinking fountains in the next three weeks in the *Pacquet*.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ex inf.* Harry Fancy, Curator of Whitehaven Museum.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ex inf.* Harry Fancy and R. A. Jackson (Cleator).
- <sup>71</sup> *Ex inf.* Harry Fancy.
- <sup>72</sup> Ordnance Survey 1/500 (10-foot) map, 1st edition, 1863, Cumberland Sheet LXVII.2.17. Strangely, the O.S. 25" 1st edition (1862-3) sheet omits this fountain, though it marks others in its area. As for that Tongue's name, on the O.S. 1st edition it is "Old Tongue"; on the O.S. 2nd and 3rd editions, it is "Sugar Tongue".
- <sup>73</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", e.g. 2nd edition, 1899, Cumberland Sheet LXVII.6.
- <sup>74</sup> Ordnance Survey 1/500 (10-foot) map, 1st edition, 1863, Cumberland Sheet LXVII.2.18.
- <sup>75</sup> Ordnance Survey, 1/500 (10-foot) map, 1st edition, 1863, Cumberland Sheet LXVII.2.13.
- <sup>76</sup> Ordnance Survey 25" map, 3rd edition, 1925, Cumberland Sheet LXVII.2.
- <sup>77</sup> T. W. Carrick, *History of Wigton* (1949), p. 159-163; T. Bulmer, *History, Topography, and Directory of East Cumberland*, 1884, p. 350. Pevsner gives its date wrongly as 1871 (*The Buildings of England: Cumberland & Westmorland*, 1967, p. 207).
- <sup>78</sup> T. Bulmer, *History, Topography, and Directory of Cumberland*, 1901, p. 514.
- <sup>79</sup> Carrick, *l.c.* The railings have now gone. The four corner lamps were removed on 28 June 1964, together with their granite bases. The Wigton R.D.C. had had them removed to improve motorist's visibility; and it was also then considering the removal of the Fountain itself, for the same reason; only a local outcry saved it. For a photograph and report of the lamps' removal, see the *Cumberland Evening News*, 29 June 1964, p. 7; for outcry over the Fountain, see e.g. *Cumberland News*, letters, 17 January 1964. For a photograph and description of the Wigton Pump and its companion Lamp removed in 1872 to make way for the Fountain, see Solway II, A Cumbrian Diary, *Cumberland News*, 10 November 1961, p. 12. All these may be seen together in C.R.O., Carlisle, DX/769/338. The Pump and Lamp are shown on the Ordnance Survey 1/500 (10-foot) map, 1st edition, Cumberland Sheet XXIX.5.20.
- <sup>80</sup> T. Bulmer, *History, Topography and Directory of East Cumberland*, 1884, p. 350.
- <sup>81</sup> Carrick, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
- <sup>82</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 1st edition, 1859-61, Cumberland Sheet XXXIV.9. These wells are not shown on the 2nd edition (1899).
- <sup>83</sup> Carrick, *op. cit.*, p. 136-139. Their names were Halliwell (south end of the town), Strandwell (east end), Dogspout (west end).
- <sup>84</sup> Ordnance Survey, 25", 1st edition 1865-8, and after, Cumberland Sheet XXIX.5. This trough is now (1985) threatened by the proposed line of the Wigton By-Pass.
- <sup>85</sup> See C.R.O., Carlisle, D/Lons/L/Penrith/1/24. The Flatt Reservoir is shown (unnamed) on the c. 1818 map of Penrith (C.R.O., Carlisle, D/Lons/L/Plans); it abutted on the east fence of the site of the future Brent House, east of Fell Lane. In 1851 Penrith had two water-carts plying between the River Eamont and the town, selling the water at about ½d. for four gallons; the use of the open (polluted) Thacka Beck; and 72 liquor outlets (Rawlinson, *Report to the General Board of Health . . . on Penrith*, 1851, p. 29-30).
- <sup>86</sup> See the respective Ordnance Survey 25" maps, first and second editions; however, these maps sometimes omit drinking fountains – e.g. Workington's at Wilson Street, though set up in 1859, is not on the first edition 25" (1865-8); nor is Silloth's 1911 drinking fountain shown on the third edition 25" (1926).
- <sup>87</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 2nd and 3rd editions, Cumberland Sheet LVIII.4. Sandgate's drinking fountain has now also gone.
- <sup>88</sup> Noted on visit, April 1985.
- <sup>89</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 1st to 3rd editions, Cumberland Sheet XLIV.8.
- <sup>90</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 1st and 2nd editions, Cumberland Sheet LXIV.6, 1862 and 1899. It is now dismantled.
- <sup>91</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 2nd and 3rd editions, Cumberland Sheets XXIX.5,6 (Wigton) and LIII.6,7,11 (Workington).
- <sup>92</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 1st to 3rd editions, 1861-3, 1899, 1925, Cumberland Sheets LXVII.2,6.
- <sup>93</sup> Ordnance Survey 25", 2nd and 3rd editions, Cumberland Sheets XXIII.3,4,7. By 1925 the Stanwix Bank fountain had been moved to the road's east side; the Caldewgate fountain remained. For the Kingstown Road fountain see the *Cumberland News*, 10 and 17 May 1985, p. 4.
- <sup>94</sup> Two drinking fountains at either end of Platform 2 on Rugby Station, identical to that now in Court Square, Carlisle, and in Wilson Street, Workington, suggest that this design was a standard product of some central supplier.