

Building 'that best monument'¹: Memorialising Sir John Barrow at Ulverston

ROB DAVID

ON May 15th 1850 Ulverston 'presented an animated appearance' as the sun shone on the town. A procession made its way to the summit of Hoad Hill forming 'one of the grandest and most imposing spectacles it has ever been our lot to witness . . . the serpentine walks became gradually filled, until from the top to the bottom, an apparently endless chain of living links of human machinery appeared to have been set in motion. The effect was heightened by the display of numerous gay colored (*sic*) flags, which imparted to the whole, the character of a grand romance rather than a scene of reality' (see Figure 1).² Ulverston was clearly determined to enjoy the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone for Sir John Barrow's memorial, a sea-mark³ to be built on Hoad Hill based on the design of the Eddystone Lighthouse. It was an occasion for the people of Ulverston and Furness to show their pride in the man who had left Dragley Beck, travelled to Spitsbergen, China and South Africa, and then as Second Secretary of the Admiralty for over 40 years, enabled a whole generation of explorers 'to ride the globe'.⁴ The *Ulverston Advertiser* had described Sir John, in a eulogy written at the time of his death in November 1848, as 'a great and estimable character [who] serves to inspire others with a laudable ambition to walk in his steps'.⁵ Barrow deserved, according to the paper, 'that best monument that could possibly be erected to the memory of a human being', and in the eyes of the Committee and the people of Ulverston, the memorial on Hoad Hill would be it.⁶ Some Ulverstonians who had read Sir John's 1847 autobiography were no doubt pleased to read of his enthusiasm for his birthplace ('I cannot forego the opportunity now afforded me to say a word in favour of my native place, where my earliest, and I believe my happiest, days were passed.').⁷ They may have been further persuaded of his continuing interest in the town through his recent (June 1848) contribution to a scheme to embellish Hoad Hill and 'render it a more attractive resort for the public'⁸ and for these reasons a few were perhaps persuaded to subscribe to the Testimonial.⁹ However most of their fellow townspeople gave nothing to the appeal. They may have claimed impoverishment, or have been unsure who Sir John was, as he had failed to visit his place of birth for 50 years, probably, as Fergus Fleming has suggested, 'because it was the very place he had spent his life trying to escape'.¹⁰

Fortunately the organisers were not dependent upon raising money locally, as there was a pool of well-off subscribers. However, there were few precedents for what was happening. Never before had anyone attempted to raise a monument in the form of a sea-mark, in one of the more inaccessible parts of the country, in memory of a civil servant, and at a time when the idea of public subscription was still in its infancy. The project was idiosyncratic and expensive. So given the previous history of memorialisation, what, if any, were the precedents for a sea-mark; who were the subscribers, and why did they feel moved to honour Sir John in this way?

Funding memorials in the mid-19th century

Building publicly funded memorials to the deceased was a relatively new development in funerary architecture. It has been pointed out that 'during the 17th and 18th centuries the links between memory and death were less pronounced . . . (however) the relationship was reasserted from the later 18th century with renewed investment in the material culture associated with the deceased'.¹¹ The resulting monuments mostly memorialised great landowners from aristocratic families, who were otherwise military men, entrepreneurs, parliamentarians or diplomats. They were constructed on their estates with family money. One of the most significant of these monuments was the Anson Arch, completed in 1765 at Shugborough Hall in Staffordshire. This memorial to Admiral Lord George Anson, First Lord of the Admiralty, was commissioned and paid for by his brother Thomas. Sometimes the family money was supplemented by a gift from 'grateful tenants'. The memorial to the 1st Duke of Sutherland, erected in 1836 at Trentham Gardens in Staffordshire was commissioned by the tenants on his estate and inhabitants of the neighbourhood.¹² At this time women were rarely memorialised, and when they were it was usually through the actions of their husbands. Jesse Watts-Russell, a wealthy industrialist and builder of Ilam Hall, erected a cross in 1841 on his estate in the Peak District in memory of his first wife, based on the design of the Eleanor Crosses with which Edward I marked the stopping places of the body of Queen Eleanor of Castile *en route* from Nottingham to Westminster Abbey in 1290.

The concept of wider public subscription to fund a memorial was as yet relatively unfamiliar. One of the first occasions in the north where a memorial was paid for by public subscription was the Penshaw Monument near Sunderland completed in 1844, and erected in memory of John George Lambton (1792-1840), 8th Earl of Durham, landlord, promoter of the Durham coalfield, parliamentarian, Ambassador to Russia and a diplomat associated with Canada. The following year saw the erection, also by public subscription, of the monument to Newcastle's Admiral Lord Collingwood (1748-1810) on a coastal site in Tynemouth.¹³

However, early attempts at raising funds through public subscription were not always successful, particularly when the person to be memorialised was only of significance to a special interest group. Henry Hunt, a major figure in the movement for political reform, had been the principal speaker at the St Peter's Fields meeting in 1819 which became the Peterloo Massacre, and had died in 1835. It took seven years for his memorial, an obelisk, to be completed, as it was largely financed by very small donations from members of the working classes and from Chartists. It cost the relatively small sum of £65 5s. 6d. When the famous Cumberland-born scientist John Dalton died in Manchester in 1844, various proposals were put forward for a memorial. A clock tower in Piccadilly in the city centre and an educational memorial were proposed but faltered through lack of funds. It was not until the early 1850s that the idea of a memorial was revived and a successful public subscription raised £5,300, which paid for a statue costing £900 and endowed Dalton scholarships and prizes at Owens College.¹⁴

Sir John Barrow was a civil servant with 40 years of almost continuous service at the Admiralty. He had been created a baronet in 1835 in recognition of his work as a public

servant. He retired in 1845 at the age of 81. There were no precedents as to how a civil servant should be memorialised, and how such a memorial should be financed. His family, although fairly extensive and reasonably prosperous, had no land nor inherited wealth. Sir John had been a self-made man, a point emphasised in the obituary that appeared in the *Ulverston Advertiser*, and it is perhaps this aspect of his career, as much as his work as a civil servant, that appealed to the subscribers, particularly those from Ulverston.¹⁵ Like Sir John, George Stephenson, the great engineer and builder of railways, also died in 1848. He was also a self-made man, although this was not particularly recognised until after the publication of Samuel Smiles's *Life of George Stephenson, Railway Engineer* in 1857, which suggested that his success was due in part to his own drive and personality. In Stephenson's case it took a long time to organise the memorials. Statues were unveiled in Liverpool and London in 1854, but it was not until much later that a public subscription enabled a memorial to be erected in his birthplace on Tyneside.¹⁶ Embarking on a memorial for Sir John which was to be paid for by public subscription was a bold decision.

In this case the confidence of the committee which organised the testimonial was amply repaid. The fact that the appeal raised over £1,182 within about a year,¹⁷ enabled the Committee to embark on a substantial memorial, and this success no doubt encouraged other committees to seek the public's support to memorialise a variety of other mid-Victorian worthies. The death of Sir Robert Peel on 11 July 1850, just after the organisers of the Barrow appeal were able to begin construction on the monument on Hoad Hill, provided an opportunity for the public to support the construction of a civic monument to the great parliamentary reformer in one northern town after another. In every case the public contributed so generously that the funds existed for substantial memorials to be erected, the first to be built by public subscription in those communities.¹⁸ The consequence of the acceptance of public subscription as a means of raising funds to memorialise the dead, can be seen in the plethora of later Victorian statues, obelisks and fountains erected in memory of the great, the good and the unusual in urban spaces across the country. Although the sea-mark at Hoad Hill was out of the ordinary, the support it had received from the public helped to encourage the development of late-Victorian memorialisation throughout the country.

Choosing 'that best monument'

Since the mid-18th century revival of monuments memorialising the deceased, designs and motifs had been predominantly borrowed from classical architecture. The Anson Arch (1765) had been modelled on The Arch of Hadrian which had been illustrated by the architect James 'Athenian' Stuart in his book *Antiquities of Athens*.¹⁹ The Chester architect Thomas Harrison redesigned and supervised the construction of the classical column to Lord Hill at Shrewsbury (1814-1816).²⁰ A similar memorial was built for the 1st Duke of Sutherland at Trentham (1836). These classically inspired columns were surmounted by a statue.

The most striking classical memorial in the north of England was the Penshaw Monument (1844) which was built on a grand scale as a double-sized replica of the

Temple of Theseus in Athens. In 1855 it was described as 'remarkable for its grandeur, simplicity and imposing effect, nothing in its ornament or meretricious decoration being introduced; for as it is intended to be viewed principally from a distance, any enrichment would be lost.'²¹ However, despite such plaudits, it was spectacularly non-utilitarian and referenced a classicism that was already becoming outdated.

By the mid-19th century classically inspired memorials were being replaced by ones with gothic influences. Arches, temples and columns were no longer in favour. In various mid-century editions of *The Builder*, the trade journal commented on the unsuitability of columns with the 'figure on the top making it appear indifferent to its position in the clouds, at a height sufficient to make the brain of an ordinary mortal reel'.²² It was suggested that obelisks were 'expressive of the purpose'²³ and it endorsed the suitability of a neo-gothic cross in Mansfield market place which had been built as a memorial to Lord George Bentinck, rather than the alternative suggestions of a cathedral monument or new buildings attached to hospitals or educational establishments.²⁴ Despite a developing interest, particularly amongst women subscribers, in constructing buildings and facilities of value to the community as memorials, there was still a strong counter argument that memorials should be recognisable as monuments, preferably built in a conspicuous location where passers-by could reflect on the significance of the life memorialised.²⁵ Urban public spaces or hilltops rather than aristocratic estates, churches or graveyards, were becoming the favoured locations.

Given the directions in which memorialisation was being driven in the mid-19th century, the Committee organising the Testimonial for Sir John Barrow therefore had a limited number of options. There was no alternative to it being publicly funded through subscription. It needed to be a monument located on public land, be durable and be conspicuous. Two possible types of monument do not seem to have been considered. No one suggested a statue, as 1849, the year in which the Committee launched the Testimonial, was just before the time that town centre statuary in the north of England became the memorial of choice following the death of Sir Robert Peel in 1850.²⁶ Similarly an obelisk was not considered, perhaps because by the mid-19th century it was the memorial most frequently raised to those such as philanthropists, doctors, clergy, working-class radicals and trade unionists, where the funds were often insufficient to commission anything more dramatic.²⁷ The Ulverston Committee would also have known of the cast-iron obelisk at Lindale that had been erected as a memorial to 'Iron Mad' Wilkinson who had died in 1808.²⁸ If Sir John Barrow was to have 'the best monument' it needed to be more eye-catching.

In letters of reply to the Committee, some of the contributors to the Testimonial made suggestions as to what they thought would constitute a suitable memorial, while another debate filled the columns of the *Ulverston Advertiser* during 1849 and early 1850. The London subscribers to the Memorial were suggesting that 'the raising of a Pillar, or Column . . . would be a fitting and appropriate shape' for the memorial. The Admiralty hydrographers gave more specific advice. Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort introduced the idea that a memorial could be useful as well as imposing, and suggested that it should be 'made subservient to some distinct and notable benefit to the navigation of anyone of the adjoining ports or channels'. Captain H. M. Denham, the surveyor

of Morecambe Bay, followed this up by suggesting that Chapel Island would be the best location for a sea-mark.²⁹ However, a correspondent 'N.N.' in the *Ulverston Advertiser* disagreed with the idea of a sea-mark, as given the location of the hills in the neighbourhood of Ulverston, 'the erection of a column of this kind would not be of the slightest use to mariners'. He proposed a 'memorial of a more useful character', which for him meant using the money to 'increase the endowment of Townbank School, in which this worthy baronet was taught the rudiments of his education'.³⁰ Given that this idea might have found favour amongst the women of Ulverston, their silence suggests that locally women were not emerging as an articulate group, and consequently 'N.N.' appears to have found few supporters. The newspaper reasserted its support for the view that the prime aim was the construction of a '*memento*' to the late baronet, and that no case had been made that Hoad Hill was inappropriate for the secondary aim of making 'it serve the purpose of a *sea-mark*'.³¹ The idea that a monument (as opposed to a memorial in the form, for example, of an endowment) should have a purpose was unfamiliar, and perhaps as a result of local criticism, the newspaper returned to the subject the following week, by pointing out that the construction of a column on a neighbouring eminence could also have wider economic benefits through 'inducing pleasure-seekers and curiosity-lovers to visit the town . . . [so] that its trade and commerce would be materially improved'; as well as additionally demonstrating to the 'youths...what talent and ability can achieve when supported by habits of industry and temperance'.³² The paper went on to urge the town to embrace both the monument and the endowment of the school for the benefit of the community.

So far no one was suggesting that the monument should be anything more elaborate than a navigational aid in the form of a column or pillar. Captain John Washington was asked by the Committee to visit Morecambe Bay and suggest the best location for such a sea-mark. Various locations apart from Hoad Hill had been suggested and he visited all of them. These included Black Combe, Birkkrigg, Chapel Island, Hammerside Hill, Bigland Heights, Outrake and the Flan.³³ However, Washington favoured The Hoad, and during 1849 it became the chosen location, and the subscribers had a reasonable idea of what they were supporting. When the First List of subscribers was announced in *The Times* on 15 September 1849, the preamble contained the following statement from the Committee:

Sir John Barrow's whole life was passed in usefully serving his country, and his friends being desirous that this memorial should be also practically useful, have resolved that it should be so placed as to serve as a Sea-mark for the navigation of an intricate and dangerous part of Morecambe Bay, the site on the Hoad-hill, at Ulverston, having been approved by the Trinity House.

On 27 December 1849, the *Ulverston Advertiser* reported that the idea of the monument on the 'Hill of Hoad' as a 'sea-marker to vessels navigating Morecambe Bay' had been accepted by the Admiralty but the paper went on to suggest that, without detracting from the primary objective of memorialising Sir John, the monument could usefully take the form of 'an Observatory, Lighthouse, and a Signal and Telegraph Station'. In explaining further what it meant, it is clear that the paper was suggesting that the memorial should have all of these functions. Enthusiasts for the idea of a lighthouse were clearly not considering the limitations of a structure, a mile inland, on a hill 450 feet high which was often shrouded in mist. There was already a lighthouse on Lundy

Island (1819) in the Bristol Channel, which was situated at 470 feet above sea level (20 feet higher than Hoad Hill) which had proved to be of limited use to navigation for that very reason.

Creating a memorial in the form of a sea-mark, and in the shape of a lighthouse, had no precursors. The idea of a lighthouse had been raised as a possibility for an early memorial to a woman, the public memorial to Grace Darling, by the *Gateshead Observer*. Grace Darling (1815-1842) was the daughter of the lighthouse keeper of Longstone lighthouse in the Farne Islands, who had become a national hero when she and her father rowed half a mile through stormy seas in 1838 to rescue nine survivors of the wreck of the paddle steamer *Forfarshire*. The family did not approve of a lighthouse memorial, nor did they approve of an alternative idea that the memorial should take the form of the restoration of the chapel of St Cuthbert on Great Farne Island. In the end a very traditional monument, a canopied tomb in the Decorated Gothic style with recumbent figure, was erected in St Aidan's Churchyard, Bamburgh in 1844.³⁴

Unsurprisingly the ambitious suggestions promoted by the *Ulverston Advertiser* were not followed up. In March 1850 it reported that the committee of the Elder Brethren of Trinity House had visited Ulverston and supported the construction of a 'sea-mark' on Hoad Hill. By May, Mr Andrew Trimen's design of a 'sea-mark' in imitation of the Eddystone Lighthouse (but as a light was not to be included, it was never seen as being a lighthouse) had been chosen by the Committee, and the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone was held. The inclusion of Hoad Hill and a vignette of Sir John Barrow's Monument on the new edition of the Admiralty chart for Morecambe Bay published in 1850 demonstrated a belief in its potential value for navigation.³⁵ That it would have a secondary role as an attraction for townspeople and visitors was also recognised as is revealed by further discussion in the paper about the layout of paths and the planting of shrubs on the hill. The memorial was to be a memento to Sir John's memory, an impressive and utilitarian structure of value both to seafarers and to travellers crossing Morecambe Bay, and additionally a place of recreation for townspeople and an attraction for visitors. Few memorials of that period had so many demands placed on it.

The publicity surrounding the building of the monument and its completion on 9 January 1851, seems to have inspired other monuments of a similar nature.³⁶ Sir Robert Peel's home town of Bury, as well as erecting a bronze statue in the Market Place, built a tower as a second memorial to him on Holcombe Hill in 1852. This was designed to be both a durable and a conspicuous landmark and became a popular destination for families on Sundays and during holidays. A few years later in 1857, when instructions were given to the potential designers of the memorial to the 1st Earl of Ellesmere, they were told that it should be 'substantial and durable rather than elaborate and ornamental, and that it should be easily seen from a distance'. The chosen design was a slender Gothic tower, the Gothic equivalent in height and cost to the Barrow Monument on Hoad Hill.³⁷ The Hoad Hill sea-mark probably influenced the building of a similar structure at Kilmersden in Somerset. The Ammerdown Column was built in 1853 as a memorial to commemorate Thomas Samuel Joliffe. It is more

loosely based on Smeaton's Eddystone Lighthouse than the monument at Hoad Hill, though originally it did have a glass light at the top, despite being many miles from the sea.³⁸ Being well away from the coast, it had no purpose whatsoever and it is best described as a folly. 'Sea-marks' as memorials did not become a Victorian fashion.

The Hoad Monument's subscribers

Why did so many subscribe to Sir John Barrow's testimonial? He had been born at Dragley Beck in 1764 and received what formal education he had at Town Bank School in Ulverston. He left at the age of 13, and after a variety of jobs which included serving on a whaling ship in Arctic waters near Spitsbergen, he reached London, where he became tutor to Thomas Staunton, the unusually gifted son of Sir George Staunton. While Sir John tutored the young boy, Thomas taught Sir John to read and write Chinese. Sir George acted as his patron and through his connections arranged for him to join Lord Macartney's embassy to China as his interpreter. When Macartney was later sent to South Africa, Barrow again accompanied him, this time as one of his secretaries. Contacts he made in South Africa enabled him to gain the ear of Lord Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, who appointed him Second Secretary of the Admiralty on his return to London in 1804. He held this position, with only a brief interruption during 1806 and 1807, until his retirement in 1845 at the age of 80. Unlike most of his predecessors in this role, he remained in office regardless of the political affiliation of the government. Serving thirteen administrations, Barrow was in effect the first career civil servant. His experience made him increasingly indispensable.

There were two Secretaries, who together were the most influential people in the Admiralty – a fact which was reflected in their salaries. Barrow, as Second Secretary, was paid as much as the First Lord of the Admiralty – £2,000 per annum. The First Secretary was a politician and responsible for dealing with the political aspects of running the navy. The Second Secretary 'was responsible for running the Admiralty office and supervising the very extensive correspondence with naval officers all over the world, as well as with agents of other boards'.³⁹ This was a role that the ambitious Barrow made his own. He wrote 195 geographical reviews, mostly about exploration, for the *Quarterly Review*; became a friend of its publisher, John Murray, who also published many of Barrow's own books; received the degree of LL.D. from Edinburgh University on the strength of his promotion of science and his literary endeavours; and was elected to the Royal Society, the Linnaean Society of London, and the Royal Geographical Society. At the Royal Society he was often a guest of Sir Joseph Banks, its President, at his London house. Banks and Barrow shared a passion for exploration, and Barrow was able to use his position at the Admiralty to further their joint enthusiasms, with projects in Africa, Australia, Antarctica, and in particular the Arctic. For much of his time at the Admiralty he championed the sending of a succession of British expeditions to discover a sea route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, north of the Canadian mainland. By 1844 the probable route had been established and only about 900 miles still awaited navigation. As a final act before his retirement he submitted a 'Proposal for an attempt to complete the discovery of the North West Passage' to Lord Haddington, First Lord of the Admiralty. The consequence was the fitting out of a new expedition to be led by Sir John Franklin in 1845.

Barrow was therefore a man, who by the time of his death on 23rd November 1848, had a small number of close friends, but a vast circle of ex-colleagues and acquaintances. His career had brought him into contact with eminent people in many walks of life. He had met administrators, diplomats and adventurers during his early travels in China and Africa, although many of them had predeceased him. During his time at the Admiralty he had worked with most of the senior naval personnel of the first half of the 19th century. Although by temperament conservative, he had also met or corresponded with ministers in all of the governments since 1804. As the organiser of numerous journeys of exploration he knew many of the leading naval commanders and officers whom the Admiralty employed. As a member of the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society and the Linnaean Society of London, he was acquainted with many of the country's leading scientists, travellers and geographers. There could have been few people with such a range of wealthy and influential friends, colleagues and acquaintances. All such people were potential subscribers to the memorial at Ulverston. In addition there were of course family members and the citizens of his home town.

The overwhelming majority of the subscribers, as was usual at that time, were men. Sir John's professional life had been spent entirely in a man's world, so this was not surprising. Only 17 women subscribed in their own right. Apart from Queen Adelaide, the Queen Dowager, most were members of Barrow's family. Some of the others may have been the widows of men who had been involved with Barrow professionally. The only Ulverston woman subscriber was almost certainly a relation. In addition there were three women, Lady Franklin, Lady Ross and Lady Richardson, who contributed on behalf of their husbands who were travelling in the Arctic at that time.

Two committees were formed to raise funds for the memorial. The London Committee of eight included Sir John's sons, Sir George and John, and was chaired by his old friend, Sir George Thomas Staunton Bt., with Commander A. B. Becher as its Secretary. The Ulverston Committee was chaired by Mr Bernard Gilpin with Mr Thomas Woodburne as Vice-Chairman. Various lists of subscribers were printed and widely circulated, providing evidence of the success of these committees in raising the necessary funds for the proposed memorial.⁴⁰

Figurehead subscribers

It is always helpful to organisers of appeals if they can indicate that the subscription is being supported by significant people. When a flyer was circulated in November 1849 by Bernard Gilpin, the Chairman of the Ulverston Committee, attention was drawn to the fact that subscribers already included Queen Adelaide as well as ten named members of the nobility. In a letter to the Committee, the Queen's Chamberlain, Earl Howe, wrote that she wished 'to convey her entire approbation of the intended Column'.⁴¹ Queen Adelaide was a generous subscriber to institutions and her private donations were equally liberal.

The family subscribers

Sir John's close family were major subscribers to the Testimonial. His widow Anna Maria gave £50, his eldest son Sir George, a colonial administrator, another £50 and his second son John, who was following in his father's footsteps at the Admiralty, £100. Of the other children, Peter, a Vice-Consul at Caen in France, and one of his daughters, Johanna Maria, gave donations. From the extended family donations were received from the Pennells, Sir George's wife's family, and the Batty's of Kirkby Lonsdale, Johanna's husband's family. Further donations came from more distant members of Barrow's family, including some who still lived in the Ulverston area. One of these was Captain James Barrow, a cousin of Sir John, who was a pilot in the Barrow Channel.⁴²

Ulverston's remoteness from the world that Sir John Barrow had come to inhabit is reflected in the small number of family and friends who attended the laying of the foundation stone ceremony. From the family only his sons George and John were present, and from amongst his friends only Major Davis of the 52nd Light Infantry, whose regimental band had accompanied the procession. Subscribing friends such as Sir George Staunton and John Wilson Croker were not present.

The Ulverston subscribers

The attitude of Ulverston townspeople to the Memorial wavered. There were not many Ulverston subscribers, perhaps because, as Captain Washington reported to the Committee, there was a strong local feeling that the Testimonial should either take the form of an endowment for Sir John Barrow's school, or alternatively the 'foundation of almshouses for a certain number of poor women, the widows of sailors'.⁴³ However, it could be the result of few people in Ulverston being approached for a donation, possibly because with a minimum amount for a donation apparently being set at 10s. 6d., subscribing was beyond the reach of most of the inhabitants of the town. Whereas much later in 1873, 17,683 people gave 6d. or less to the memorial for the Bolton doctor and philanthropist Samuel Taylor Chadwick, less than 20 Ulverstonians subscribed to the Barrow Testimonial. However, whatever their views the townspeople flocked to Hoad Hill on the day of the laying of the foundation stone, and many more of the town's leaders sat down to a sumptuous dinner than had subscribed to the Testimonial.⁴⁴ By the time of the completion of the Memorial, interest seems to have waned, and the *Ulverston Advertiser* says nothing about any official opening ceremony.⁴⁵

The most complete lists of Ulverston subscribers are contained in a letter from Mr Bernard Gilpin (Chairman of the Ulverston Committee) to Captain Becher (Secretary of the London Committee) written in July 1849,⁴⁶ and in an article in the *Ulverston Advertiser* of July 1851.⁴⁷ Put together the lists name 18 people and two businesses (Messrs. Town and Fell, and John Fell and Co.). However, not all the names are on the official lists of subscribers published in *The Times*,⁴⁸ but all but one are on another list of all the subscribers which was placed at the entrance to the tower at the time it was built.⁴⁹ This list contains other names of people who might be local to Ulverston, but cannot be identified for certain. It is therefore difficult to be certain about the level

of local support, or precisely who the subscribers were. It is probable that the amount subscribed in Ulverston was around £35 out of the £1,182 collected in total.⁵⁰ In addition to Bernard Gilpin, a surgeon, other subscribers included the vicar of Ulverston, Revd Richard Gwilym, the postmaster Moses Mawson, the proprietor of the *Ulverston Advertiser*, Stephen Soulby, a naval officer, George Sunderland (or Sutherland), and two solicitors, Henry Remington and Thomas Woodburne. The only woman named is Miss Anne Barrow, who may have been a relative of Sir John. Unsurprisingly the subscribers were mostly professional and business people. By the middle of the 19th century Ulverston was not a prosperous community. The canal had not brought the expected increase in trade and the arrival of the Furness Railway in 1846 was of more benefit to the emerging town of Barrow-in-Furness than it was to Ulverston. Perhaps there was too little disposable income amongst the townspeople, or maybe, through absence, Sir John Barrow's name meant little to younger Ulverstonians.

Admiralty subscribers

Having spent over 40 years at the Admiralty, it is not surprising that many of the people with whom he had worked contributed. Nearly all the First Lords of the Admiralty who had not predeceased him, subscribed. Some, such as Viscount Melville, had been supportive of Barrow's Arctic activities; others such as The Rt. Hon. Sir James Graham Bt. had family connections with Cumbria, and had had long and outstanding political careers. The Earl of Haddington had been First Lord when Barrow retired, and had supported Franklin's 1845 departure for the North West Passage. The First Secretaries such as the Rt. Hon. John Wilson Croker, who had recommended Barrow for a Baronetcy, and his successor the Rt. Hon. Sidney Herbert, who had allowed his house to be used as a place to store huge numbers of Admiralty records found by John Barrow junior, and saved from destruction by him and his father, were subscribers.

As well as politicians senior serving officers subscribed, some of whom were also Lords of the Admiralty. People like Admiral Sir William Hall Gage who described Barrow as 'that good and useful man to his country' and Admiral The Hon. George Elliot who said of Sir John, 'of whose useful abilities I entertain a sincere regard – independent of personal feelings of the same kind'.⁵¹ Barrow's extraordinary range of naval contacts is shown in the professional roles of many of the subscribers. Admiral Sir William Parker had been commander-in-chief in China and in the Mediterranean; Admiral Sir George Seymour, commander-in-chief in the Pacific; Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, a post he had held since 1829; Sir Benjamin Outram, a surgeon and naval officer, who became inspector of fleets and hospitals in 1841; Captain E. J. Johnson R.N., Superintendent of the Compass Department in 1848 and Lt. Henry Raper, author of *Practice of Navigation and Nautical Astronomy*, a book of such value that in 1843 the Admiralty decided to make it available on every ship.

Subscriptions were received from civil servants of every rank. Supporters included Croker's successor as Second Secretary, Captain W. A. B. Hamilton, and Sir James Meek who had been Comptroller of Victualling and Transport for the Admiralty. Barrow's impact at the Admiralty is revealed through the number of clerks of all ranks who subscribed. At the top was H. F. Amedroz, who was Chief Clerk at the time of

Barrow's death. Various senior clerks as well as Piers O'Barrington, clerk of the 3rd Class, subscribed.

Explorers as subscribers

After the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, Barrow soon found every opportunity to promote the exploration of Africa and the Arctic at the Admiralty. His interest in Africa was to map the course of the Niger river. Many of the explorers who went to that area at Barrow's behest died in Africa, and of those who did not most had predeceased him, and it seems that nobody from that era of Barrow's life contributed to the Testimonial. Another problem for the Committee in 1849 was that many of those who had profited from the Admiralty's enthusiasm for Arctic exploration were caught up in the beginning of the search for Sir John Franklin's expedition. There had been no news from Franklin during 1847 or 1848, and the new Second Secretary quickly found himself out of his depth and largely unsupported by the new First Lord, Lord Dundas, as demands grew that the Admiralty should do something to establish what had happened. At the time of Barrow's death in November 1848 Sir John Franklin and his second-in-command, Captain James Fitzjames, were of course thought to be somewhere north of Canada. Sir John Richardson and John Rae were travelling north through Canada to the shore of the Arctic Ocean, Sir James Clark Ross was following in Franklin's footsteps through Lancaster Sound and into the maze of islands and straits north of Canada, and Thomas Moore, who had been sent to the western Arctic via the Pacific to await Franklin's emergence from the Passage was beginning to search the coastline north of Alaska. Some of these men who did subscribe, did so *in absentia* through their wives or friends. While the Committee in London continued to raise money during 1849 and 1850 many other veterans of Barrow's Arctic expeditions such as Horatio Austin, Erasmus Ommanney, Sherard Osborn, William Penny, John Rae and Robert McClure were either in the Arctic or on their way there. Some of these officers subscribed as did the more elderly explorers such as Sir George Back, Sir Edward Parry and Captain F. W. Beechey, who were contributing their expertise through the Arctic Council which was advising on the search for Franklin. Parry, who was living at the Haslar naval establishment, apologised for his small contribution due to his straightened circumstances.⁵²

Although most Arctic explorers had held Barrow in high esteem, as shown by their presentation to him of a 'piece of plate' on his retirement in 1845,⁵³ two of the most famous names in Arctic exploration are conspicuous by their absence from the Testimonial, but they both had good reasons for not subscribing. One was Commander (later Sir) John Ross who had been appointed, against Barrow's wishes, leader of the first of the expeditions to the North West Passage in 1818, and who had not fully explored Lancaster Sound claiming, incorrectly as it transpired, that there was no passage through as the end was blocked by a range of mountains which he called the Croker Mountains. This 'led to nearly 40 years of acrimony from both sides',⁵⁴ and Ross was never re-employed by Barrow and was roundly condemned in the 1846 edition of Barrow's *Voyages of Discovery within the Arctic Regions from the year 1818 to the present time*. The other was William Scoresby, the extremely successful Whitby whaler, self-taught scientist, and rather like Barrow himself, self-made man, who despite his

knowledge of, and experience in, the Arctic, had been ignored by Barrow throughout his time at the Admiralty.

Learned societies' subscribers

Barrow's control of exploration was further enhanced by his election to the most significant learned societies connected to developments in the fields of science and geography. In 1808 he had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, largely on account of his books, and as a 'natural philosopher'. Two years later he was elected a Fellow of the Linnaean Society of London. Those who nominated him, all long-established and senior fellows of the society, commended him as 'a gentleman very conversant in various branches of Natural History, and well known by his voyages and travels in Asia and Africa'. He was a founder member of the Royal Geographical Society when it was created in 1830, the driving force behind its development in the early years and at different times both President and Vice-President. Through his membership of these societies he was in contact with a wide range of explorers, scientists and aspiring members of London society. Many fellows of these societies were also part of Barrow's circle of acquaintances and colleagues at the Admiralty, so many contributors to his Testimonial had more than one reason for doing so.

The societies do not seem to have been asked to support the Testimonial as institutions. Some of the officers of the Royal Society contributed (for example, the Marquis of Northampton, the President of the Society at the time of Barrow's death in 1848, and the parliamentarian Sir Robert Harry Inglis Bt., a Vice-President in 1849), as did individual fellows such as the surgeon Sir Benjamin Collins Brodie, who referred to Barrow in the letter accompanying his contribution, as 'my late excellent friend',⁵⁵ and the Arctic explorer Frederick William Beechey, both of whom had been proposed by Sir John.⁵⁶

Barrow does not seem to have played a significant part in the affairs of the Linnaean Society of London beyond serving on Council in 1813 and 1827. The only committee member who subscribed was the Bishop of Norwich (President 1837-1849). The small number of fellows who subscribed also supported the testimonial in their capacity as Arctic explorers – people such as Sir John Richardson and Sir James Clark Ross – or fellows of other societies such as Sir Roderick Murchison, Vice-President of the Royal Geographical Society in 1850.⁵⁷

The Royal Geographical Society's financial state in 1848 – 'at no very distant day the total funded capital of the Society will be exhausted' – meant that it was in no position to subscribe as an institution.⁵⁸ However, given Barrow's contribution to exploration, many officers of the Society, like Captain William H. Smyth, another founder member and President in 1849-1850, and ordinary fellows contributed individually.

Government and diplomatic subscribers

Sir John had been in post during so many governments that it is not surprising to find that many senior politicians, beyond those directly connected to the Admiralty,

contributed to the Testimonial. These included prime ministers such as Viscount Palmerston, who wrote in his accompanying letter that his support testifies 'the very sincere regards which I always felt for one of my earlier political and official associates',⁵⁹ the Earl of Ripon, and the Rt Hon Robert Peel, as well as a Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nicholas Vansittart, Earl of Bexley, and numerous less exalted politicians with junior government posts, such as the Earl of Hardwicke.

Barrow's involvement as a young man with Lord Macartney in China and South Africa was so many years previously that few of the people with whom he associated at that time were still alive. One who was, and who contributed to the Testimonial, was Acheson Maxwell, Lord Macartney's secretary at the time of the embassy to China, and his joint secretary along with Barrow on the mission to South Africa.

Colonial administrators, in particular naval officers who became governors of British territories, also contributed. Barrow had 'continued to take a lively interest in the varying circumstances of our interest'⁶⁰ in China, and Sir Charles Elliot, a colonial administrator in China, was a contributor. Barrow had also championed a greater official British presence in Australia, so it is not surprising that subscribers included past Australian state governors such as Captain Sir James Stirling Bt., who played a significant part in the development of Western Australia, and Captain Sir John Hindmarsh, the first Governor of South Australia.

Cumbrian notables

Some of the landowning gentry in Furness and Westmorland also wanted to be associated with the memorial. Henry Cavendish, Earl of Burlington, who knew Barrow through membership of the Royal Society, donated £20 once he was satisfied that 'there will be nothing (about the Testimonial) to give it the character of party politics, but that it is simply a testimonial in honour of a most distinguished public servant, which may be equally supported by persons of all politics'.⁶¹ William Lowther, Earl of Lonsdale, contributed £5 and offered 'a site for the proposed monument and recommended "Black Comb" as being the highest and most commanding position in the vicinity of Morecambe Bay'. He recognised that its being in Cumberland rather than Lancashire could be a problem, but felt that if 'it be found the best site for facilitating the navigation of the Bay', it should not be insurmountable. A comment from John Barrow Junior made the rather obvious point that Black Combe 'must generally be enveloped in clouds and a seamark could be of no possible use on the summit'.⁶² Capt Wilson Braddyll Bigland R.N. of Bigland Hall gave two guineas and offered 'the hill bearing my name'. However, he later withdrew that as being too high, and suggested Birkrigg Common. James Ramsden who was becoming a key figure in the development of the Furness Railway and the port of Barrow, gave one guinea, perhaps seeing his association with the Testimonial as a means of gaining kudos and recognition in his adopted area.

Other subscribers

Sir John Barrow's immense range of interests is exemplified through the extraordinary range of other subscribers who were happy to support the Testimonial. Engineers such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who worked for the Admiralty during the 1840s developing the screw propeller, and James Rendel, a civil engineer, bridge designer, and the improver of many harbours particularly in the south-west of England, both subscribed, as did the publisher, John Murray, son of the John Murray who had published many of Barrow's books, his numerous articles for the *Quarterly Review*, and the books written by the Arctic explorers on their return from the voyages that Barrow promoted. Authors included William O'Byrne, compiler of the *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, the fruits of a ten years project which involved access to Admiralty records which were made available by Sir John; and R. S. Surtees from County Durham, the author of many books of sporting interest. The portraitist Stephen Pearce, who was about to start work on one of his largest canvases, *The Arctic council discussing a plan of search for Sir John Franklin*, which included John Barrow, Sir John's son in the group, and a portrait of Sir John on the wall behind the council members, subscribed. The Master Warden and Elder Brethren of Trinity House eventually contributed £100 once they were satisfied that Hoad Hill was the most satisfactory location for a sea-mark,⁶³ and J. Herbert Esq. of Trinity House contributed on his own account. Even the architect of the Barrow Monument, Andrew Trimen, contributed.

Various other notables such as the Bishops of Oxford and Gibraltar, and the Mayor of Liverpool subscribed. So did the bankers for the memorial committee Coutts and Co., and a number of other firms – Messrs. Graves and Co. and Messrs. Wakeling and Sons. The most unlikely subscriber was Thomas Downs of Portsmouth who, according to the letter enclosing his £1 subscription, had heard about the Testimonial from a newspaper, and wanted to show his gratitude towards Sir John for finding an opening for him in the Navy.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The Sir John Barrow Monument is a memorial of considerable significance. It commemorates a man who was central to the administration of the Admiralty for 40 years during the first half of the 19th century, and who in particular enabled the Royal Navy to be at the forefront of Arctic exploration. It is the only memorial of that scale to a civil servant, and it is amongst the earliest memorials to be financed by public subscription. The regard in which Sir John was held is evidenced by the size of the public contribution and the short time span between announcing the Testimonial and the construction of the monument. Although some mid-19th century memorials were supported by greater numbers of citizens, few, if any, were supported by such a range of leading figures in the worlds of government, the services, the aristocracy and the intelligentsia of the time.

From Sir John's memorial can be seen 'the grandest monument in England', Lord Ashton's memorial to his second wife, constructed after her death in 1904 on the Lancaster skyline.⁶⁵ With this monument, Lord Ashton, in one sense, through creating

a memento, was harking back to an earlier period of memorialisation, one dominated by private wealth, although on this occasion the wealth was that of a captain of industry, rather than that of the traditional landed aristocracy. His enormous financial resources enabled him to construct a memorial that outdid all others in scale and grandeur. However, in another sense it can be said that he had noted one of the secondary aims of the memorialists of Sir John Barrow, through his decision 'to erect a *useful* and ornamental structure in the Williamson Park'.⁶⁶ (Author's italics.)

Sir John Barrow's memorial was what the *Ulverston Advertiser* said he deserved: 'that best monument that could possibly be erected to the memory of a human being'. Like the better known Ashton Monument, the Hoad 'Sea-mark' is a memorial that is worthy of preservation.

Acknowledgements

This research has been supported by the Cumberland and Westmorland Research and Grants Committee. Librarians and archivists at Barrow Record Office and Local Studies Library, the Royal Society, the Linnaean Society of London, and the Royal Geographical Society have helpfully answered questions and made available material. David Cross, Dan Elsworth, John Garbutt, Jack Layfield and Mike Winstanley have responded to my questions and provided helpful information. My wife Sue helped edit the article.

Notes and References

- ¹ *Ulverston Advertiser* 30 November 1848.
- ² *Ulverston Advertiser* 15 May 1850. The ceremony was also reported and illustrated in *The Illustrated London News* 25 May 1850.
- ³ Sea-mark was used to describe a navigation marker which did not contain a light.
- ⁴ E. Parry, *Memoirs of Rear-Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry* (Longman, London, 1859), 3; quoted in F. Fleming, *Barrow's Boys* (Granta, London, 1998), 425.
- ⁵ *Ulverston Advertiser* 30 November 1848. Another obituary appeared in *The Times* 1 December 1848.
- ⁶ *Ulverston Advertiser* 30 November 1848.
- ⁷ J. Barrow, *An Autobiographical Memoir of Sir John Barrow, Bart., Late of the Admiralty* (John Murray, London, 1847), 5.
- ⁸ CRO(B): BDKF/150/32 and BDX/129. This episode is referred to in: D. W. Elsworth, *Hoad, Ulverston, Cumbria: Archaeological Landscape Interpretation* (CDRom).
- ⁹ During 1849 documents refer to 'The Barrow Testimonial'.
- ¹⁰ Fleming, *op. cit.*, 421.
- ¹¹ E. Hallam and J. Hockey, *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (Berg, Oxford, 2001), 15-16.
- ¹² G. T. Noszlopy and F. Waterhouse, *Public Sculpture of Staffordshire and The Black Country* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2005), 68-69, 103-104, 163-164.
- ¹³ P. Usherwood, J. Beach and C. Morris, *Public Sculpture of North-East England* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2000), 207-209.
- ¹⁴ T. Wyke with H. Cocks, *Public Sculpture of Greater Manchester* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2004) 61, 157.
- ¹⁵ *Ulverston Advertiser* 30 November 1848.
- ¹⁶ Usherwood, Beach and Morris, *op. cit.*, 149-152.
- ¹⁷ CRO(B): BPC2/1; *Memoir of Sir John Barrow Bt. and description of the Barrow Monument erected on the Hill of Hoad, Ulverston. A.D. 1850*. This booklet published by S. Soulby in Ulverston contains the accounts.

- ¹⁸ Wyke with Cocks, *op. cit.*, 111- 113, 195-196, 251, 258, 356-357. Noszlopy and Waterhouse, *op. cit.*, 159-160. In Manchester 1,057 individuals and businesses collected more than £5,000, and in Salford 'The People's Monument Committee' raised £402 from factories and workshops from 9,020 individual contributions. £1,200 was raised in total.
- ¹⁹ Noszlopy and Waterhouse, *op. cit.*, 103-104.
- ²⁰ J. Champness, *Thomas Harrison: Georgian Architect of Chester and Lancaster 1744-1829* (Centre for North West Regional Studies, Lancaster, 2005), 104-110.
- ²¹ W. Fordyce, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (Newcastle, 1855), Vol. II, 567; quoted in Usherwood, Beach and Morris, *op. cit.*, 166-167
- ²² *The Builder*, Vol. VIII, No. 379, 223-224.
- ²³ *The Builder*, Vol. VIII, No. 379, 223-224.
- ²⁴ *The Builder*, Vol. VIII, No.364, 43.
- ²⁵ See F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980).
- ²⁶ Wyke with Cocks, *op. cit.*, x.
- ²⁷ Barrow's family had raised an obelisk over Sir John's grave in the burial ground of St Martin's in the Fields, Pratt Street, Camden Town.
- ²⁸ J. Darke, *The Monument Guide to England and Wales: A National Portrait in Bronze and Stone* (Macdonald, London, 1991), 238.
- ²⁹ CRO(B): BPC2/1; letter from Sir Francis Beaufort and letter from Captain H. M. Denham.
- ³⁰ *Ulverston Advertiser* 27 September 1849.
- ³¹ *Ulverston Advertiser* 27 September 1849.
- ³² *Ulverston Advertiser* 4 October 1849.
- ³³ CRO(B): BPC2/1. Also Elsworth, *op. cit.*, 21.
- ³⁴ Usherwood, Beach and Morris, *op. cit.*, 12-13.
- ³⁵ CRO(B): BPC2/1. The 1847 edition of that chart had not marked Hoad Hill.
- ³⁶ Around the time of the laying of the foundation stone ceremony there was coverage of the memorial in national and regional newspapers including *The Times*, *Illustrated London News*, *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, *Liverpool Mercury* and *Preston Chronicle*, as well as in a number of trade journals concerned with architecture and building.
- ³⁷ Wyke with Cocks, *op. cit.*, 192-193.
- ³⁸ Darke, *op. cit.*, 77; also www.pharos.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/ (1/1/08)
- ³⁹ C. Lloyd, *Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty* (Collins, London, 1970), 75.
- ⁴⁰ In 1895 John Barrow presented the cottage at Dragley Beck where his father had been born and two volumes and a collection of plans concerned with the construction of the Barrow Testimonial to the town of Ulverston. CRO (B): BPC2/1, 2 and 3. Contained in BPC2/2 are lists of subscribers printed in *The Navy List*, *Nautical Magazine*, *Quarterly Review*, *The Times*, *Literary Gazette* and *United Services Gazette*. Further information about many of the national subscribers can be found in www.oxforddnb.com/articles; Lloyd, *op. cit.*; Fleming, *op. cit.*
- ⁴¹ CRO(B): BPC2/1
- ⁴² W. Rollinson, 'The diary and farm accounts of William Fisher, a Low Furness yeoman farmer, 1811-1859', *CW2*, lxvi, 382-401.
- ⁴³ CRO(B): BPC2/1; letter from Captain Washington to the Committee.
- ⁴⁴ *Ulverston Advertiser* 16 May 1850.
- ⁴⁵ J. Layfield, *The Sir John Barrow Monument: The Story of Hoad 1848-1859* (Handstand Press, Ulverston, 2005), 80.
- ⁴⁶ CRO(B): BPC/2/1 List of subscribers from Ulverston – enclosed in a letter from Mr Bernard Gilpin to Capt. Becher, 25 July 1849.
- ⁴⁷ *Ulverston Advertiser*, 17 July 1851.
- ⁴⁸ CRO(B): BPC2/1 and BPC2/2. Three lists were compiled – dated 15/9/1849, 14/5/1850, 28/6/1850. The total at the end of the third list was given as £1,006. However, four additional names have been added in ink, and the *Ulverston Advertiser* includes further names. A further list can be found in CRO(B): BPC2/1; *Memoir of Sir John Barrow Bt. and description of the Barrow Monument erected on the Hill of Hoad, Ulverston. A.D. 1850.* which states that £1,182 8s. 0d. was subscribed.
- ⁴⁹ This list has been published on www.sirjohnbarrowmonument.co.uk/subscribers1850_contents.htm
- ⁵⁰ According to the *Ulverston Advertiser*, 8 July 1852, the cost of the monument (including the repairs

resulting from the lightening strike in February 1850) was £1,193 13s. 6d. An additional subscription was begun to pay for the repairs, but it did not need to attract much new money.

⁵¹ CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁵² CRO(B): BPC2/1; letter from Sir Edward Parry to the Committee.

⁵³ Royal Geographical Society: LMS116. Letter to Sir John Barrow, 20 March 1845. Reprinted in Barrow, *op. cit.*, 477-478.

⁵⁴ A. G. E. Jones, 1972, 'Sir John Ross and Sir John Barrow', *Notes and Queries*; reprinted in A. G. E. Jones, *Polar Portraits: Collected Papers* (Caedmon, Whitby, 1992), 219-228.

⁵⁵ CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁵⁶ Royal Society Library: Journal Book of the Royal Society, Vol. XLIX (1843-1859), 30 November 1848 contains a minute recording Sir John's death; There is no mention of the Testimonial in *Royal Society Minutes of Council 1846-1858* (Taylor and Francis, London, 1858), Vol. 2.

⁵⁷ Linnaean Society of London, Council Minute Book, No. 3 (1843-59); Certificates of Fellows (John Barrow F.R.S.); A. T. Gage and W. T. Stearn, *A Bicentenary History of the Linnaean Society of London* (Academic Press, London, 1988).

⁵⁸ Royal Geographical Society Library: Finance Committee 22 January 1848. In 1849 the Society appears to have been in the red: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. 19, (1849), v; Royal Geographical Society Library: Committee Minute Book 1841-1865.

⁵⁹ CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁶⁰ CRO(B): BPC2/2; a memoir written about Sir John Barrow by Sir George Staunton.

⁶¹ CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁶² CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁶³ CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁶⁴ CRO(B): BPC2/1.

⁶⁵ N. Pevsner, *Lancashire: 2. The Rural North* (Harmondsworth, London, 1969), 163.

⁶⁶ Lancaster Corporation Minutes, 1904-5, 16. Quoted in P. J. Gooderson, *Lord Linoleum: Lord Ashton, Lancaster and the Rise of the British Oilcloth and Linoleum Industry* (Keele University Press, Keele, 1996), 219.