

PENRITH



Dan Thompson

2016

We're doing a feature for Country Life. Survey of rural types, you know, farmers, travelling tinkers, milkmen, that sort of thing.

Withnail and I

...he who can interpret what has been seen is a greater prophet than he who has simply seen it.

St Augustine, De Genesi ad Litteram

An artist makes the world her world. An artist makes her world the world. For a little while. For as long as it takes to look at or listen or to watch or read the work of art. Like a crystal, the work of art seems to contain the whole, and to imply eternity.

Ursula K. Le Guin, Dancing at the Edge of the World

Most cultures have names for particular winds. We have but one: the feared easterly Helm Wind, which blows down into Cumberland from the Pennines. It is astonishingly local, blasting the villages that lie in the shadow of the Cross Fell range in the Eden Valley - Gamblesby, Kirkland, Melmerby, Milburn and Ousby - but said never to cross the Eden. Whenever the wind blows, telltale cloud formations appear, known as the Helm Cloud and the Helm Bar... John Ruskin regarded it as one of the 'Plague Winds' of the world.

England in Particular, Sue Clifford & Angela King, Common Ground

If I had to describe the nature of my work in one word, it would be 'time'.

Andy Goldsworthy, Tullie House, Carlisle, 24th February 2000

War had sealed us off in our pleasant sanctuary, so that Penrith was the only town left in our world; London had vanished over the rim of space.

Kathleen Raine

"Is this a typical Friday night in Penrith, do you think?" the mandolin player asks.

"Dunno," I say. "It's my first time."

Tim Dowling, August 2014

Meanwhile bondage gear sells best in the town of Penrith, Cumbria.

The Sun

The Eden valley descends from Appleby towards PENRITH, in Cumberland, the northern 'gateway' to the Lake District (as Kendal is the 'southern'). An old market town it has the ruins of a castle begun in the fourteenth century as a defence against the Scots...

Old English Towns, FR Banks, 1964

Penrith derives its name from Petriana, an old Roman Station in the vicinity, others say it signifies Red hill, obtaining its name from the hill of red stone adjoining the town. It was here the army of the Pretender halted on its retreat from the unsuccessful invasion of England. This town has a most excellent appearance, the houses being in general well built, and many of them lofty and elegant, particularly towards the centre of the main street which runs in the direction of the great road north and south. They are mostly built of a reddish coloured stone which gives them a warm and agreeable aspect and covered with blue slate from Patterdale. Elevated flag pavements for the comfort and protection of pedestrians are likewise laid along the sides of the principal streets, which contribute to the pleasant appearance of the place, and the whole town is kept remarkably clean from the sweepings of the inmates of the Poor house which adds greatly to its healthiness. The Market Place is very capacious, and it has several other large open squares. Long before the Conquest Penrith is noticed as a place of chief consequence in the County.

Allison's Picturesque Pocket Companion

A News Room is kept at the Crown Hotel and another at the Devonshire Arms to which only proprietors can have access and both are furnished with the principal London and Provincial Newspapers. A Billiard Room is kept by Mrs Pearson, Fleece Inn, Market Place and a good Bowling Green by Mr John Atkinson, Two Lions Inn, Dockray. The Excise Office is held at Mr Jacob Fletcher's the Griffin Inn, Corn Market.

Allison's Picturesque Pocket Companion

In 1974, the county of Westmorland disappeared from the map of the British Isles.

The Eden Valley, John Marsh

Brown, printer of *The Friend*, had left Penrith owing Coleridge money, so the poet went to his office to investigate the matter, and remained in Penrith for a month, without communicating with any of his anxious friends!

Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge – Delphi Edition

a large Towne, well built and accounted the second in [Cumberland] ... Here is a very great market every Tuesday for all sorts of provisions.

Sir Daniel Fleming, 1671



Penrith under the government of the native or Danish chiefs was practically an independent state and so continued until the first establishment of Norman power through the feudal system.

The History of Penrith, J Walker

A Water Course or Aqueduct runs through this town from the river Petteril, which empties itself into the Eamont near Carleton Hall; it is said to have been cut at the expence of Bishop Strickland in the year 1400 when Bishop of Carlisle.

Allison's Picturesque Pocket Companion

The main culprit for this flooding was the 'Thacka Beck', which flows under the town.

Around Penrith in Old Photographs, Frank Boyd

The normal level of the Thacka Beck at Thacka Beck Reservoir in average weather conditions is between 0.01m and 0.13m. It has been between these levels for at least 242 days in the past year.

riverlevels.uk

Mr. J. C. Varty Smith, of Penrith, writes that in June, 1908, he found examples of a rare aquatic plant, *Ranunculus circinatus*, in Thacka Beck, Penrith, previous records of this plant in Cumberland being doubtful

Zoologist: A Monthly Journal of Natural History, 1911

'So to the firm I'll give a toast, may Thacka Beck still rule the roost, lang may we live to meet and boast, about the angel rent neet'

Mid Cumberland and West Morland Herald, 15th March 1902

In 1978 Penrith Civic Society, with the help of a Job Creation Programme, created a leisure area from the former school yard, thereby opening up a view of Thacka Beck which flows behind the building. The area was officially opened on 13 May 1978 by Miss Shaul, the School's last Headmistress. During the years following its closure, plans were made for the old building to take on a new role as a museum and information centre.

Robinson's School on eden.gov.uk

"As much water as could pass through eye of a millstone"

The right granted to draw water from Thacka Beck

A quick, slight sketch in which the variegated sky is the main subject. The bridge is perhaps not the same as that on folio 4 of the sketchbook ([D07542](#)), identifiable as Gote Bridge, Cockermouth. As folio 6 ([D07544](#)) shows Cross Fell, east of Penrith, it might be Eamont Bridge just south of the town and drawn at the time of Turner's visit to Lowther Castle.

David Blayney Brown (ed.), J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours

In the cause of charity the warm glow of female sensibility is ever distinguishable, and there are at Penrith, supported by the patronage of the fair sex, the following praise worthy associations in operation: The Sisterly Society for raising and managing a fund to relieve the sick or aged poor subscribers. Many proofs have been given of the utility of this well conducted Society. The Lying in Society for supplying the necessary assistance, clean linen, and sustenance to poor married women, when in the state denoted by the title of this Charity, has been in operation for many years. It has a Patroness Vice Patroness and a Committee who are appointed annually. The Dorcas Society for furnishing the poor with cloth for apparel and domestic use, a most useful Institution, and many have been the beneficiaries of this Society who are comfortably clad by those who are like minded in active christian benevolence to her whose name it bears.

Allison's Picturesque Pocket Companion



... for the educating and bringing up of poor gerles (in a Free School) to Read and Seamstry Worke or such other Learning fitt for that sex being the poorer sort whose parents are not able to pay for their Learning

Last Will of William Robinson, Freeman of the Grocer Company, August 6, 1661

The religion of the Celtic peoples who first colonized Penrith and the neighbouring country was a species of fire worship brought hither from the East, the most perfect form of which existed among the Persians for many centuries. But the wanderings of the Celts and their intercourse with other peoples had altered both the outer form and the spirit of their religion long before their arrival in Cumberland. Among the Hiberno Celts, the sacrifices were performed on hills in the presence or with the aid of fire, and on great occasions on the summits of the highest mountains as we learn from the name of Hill Bell, the hill of the Beltain which was a late form of fire worship.

The History of Penrith, J Walker

A winter droving festival is held each November in Penrith, Cumbria, featuring rural games such as tug of war and hay bale racing to win the Drovers' Cup. As night falls there is a masked procession featuring fire, music and people dressed up as livestock.

Daily Telegraph, 2015

Join the Herd for a spectacular celebration of winter and Penrith's agricultural heritage – illuminating Penrith with fire, animation, music and merriment.

winterdroving.uk

Eden Hall "at which is an old drinking glass, called 'The Luck of Eden Hall', a gift of the fairies, the breaking of which, it is said, will bring misfortune on the house."

Sharp's British Gazetteer

Giants' graves are found countrywide. For example, the four hog-back stones in Penrith churchyard, Cumberland mark the grave of Ewan Caesarius, a fifth-century killer of monsters and wild boars.

England in Particular, Sue Clifford & Angela King, Common Ground

At Joyce's suggestion, Harriet Weaver had commissioned a piece of writing from him at the end of September. The piece was to become the opening paragraphs of *Finnegans Wake*, and Joyce wrote to her on 8 November 1926 to tell her how it was progressing. He sent her the first draft of the piece on 15 November.

In September 1926 Joyce had suggested to Harriet Weaver that she might 'order' a piece of writing from him, a commission similar to those that Renaissance sculptors and painters received from wealthy patrons. She replied from Penrith in Cumbria, where she was holidaying, with a commission for a piece about a hog-backed tomb, known as the 'Giant's Grave,' in the yard of St Andrew's Church.

Jamesyoyce.ie

In the north side of the Church yard is a noble relic of antiquity rich with the uncouth sculpture of former times; it consists of two upright pillars of stone formed like the ancient spears and rounded, the upper square tapering to a point ten feet six inches in height, five feet in circumference in the lower part, and fifteen feet asunder standing, in a direction east and west. On each side are two others of a semicircular form with an edge upwards, thin in substance. It is most likely a sepulchral monument but whether its origin is to be attributed to the British, Romans, Saxons, or Danes is not agreed upon by antiquarians.

Allison's Picturesque Pocket Companion

These stones seem to have been monumental and are evidently Christian as appears from the cross on the capital, fable says that they were to perpetuate the memory of Cesarius, a hero of gigantic stature or son of Anak, whose body extended from stone to stone, but it is probable that the space marked by these columns or obelisks contained several bodies or might have been a family sepulchre.

Thomas Pennant 1769

" in the church yard of Penrith is a monument of a giant Sir Ewaine Csesarius a knight I suppose of their King Arthur two pyramidal stones with rude carvings and letters on them seemingly Runic"

William Stukeley, Iter Borcale

April 4 – In our stage to Penrith I introduced Anne to the Ancient Petreia, called Old Penrith, and also to the grave of Sir Ewain Caesarius, that knight with the puzzling name which has got more indistinct. We breakfasted at Buchanan's Inn, Penrith, one of the best on the road, and a fine stanch fellow owned it. He refused passage to some of the delegates who traversed the country during the Radical Row.

The Journals of Sir Walter Scott, Vol. 2 Athelstan, first king of all England, dies



Athelstan, king of Wessex, pushed the boundaries of his kingdom to their furthest extent, until he could rightfully be described as the king of England. In 927 AD, he took York (Yorvik) from the Vikings, and forced the submission of Constantine of the Scots and of the northern kings. The five Welsh kings submitted to a huge annual tribute and he also subdued Cornwall. In 937 AD, he defeated a combined invasion force at the Battle of Brunanburh. He was buried in Malmesbury Abbey.

bbc.co.uk

With the sketchbook turned to the left and right are two sketches of the ruins of Penrith Castle. With the book turned to the right is a view of the castle ruins from the north, and with the sketchbook turned in the opposite direction is a view from the south-west. Between the two sketches are two outlines of distant hills, presumably the Cumbrian hills to the south. Other sketches of Penrith Castle appear on folios 34 verso, 41 verso, 49 and 53.

David Blayney Brown (ed.), J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours



I have been in the place where was killed Gwendoleu,
The son of Ceidaw, the pillar of songs,
When the ravens screamed over blood.

The Dialogue of Gwyddno Garanhir and Gwyn ap Nudd from The Four Ancient Books of Wales

... the two stones that I had chosen were moved into position. I always find it hard to move large stones - not just because of their size, but more out of a heavy sense of responsibility of taking it from the place where it has rested for so long.

Andy Goldsworthy on Sheepfolds, 5th Dec. 2000

Mayburgh and King Arthur's Round Table, Penrith; St John's in the Vale, Keswick; Yanwath Hall, Penrith; and a Sketch 1831

Pencil and watercolour on white laid paper, 267 x 213 mm, folded, and torn unevenly along the left edge

Watermarked with an elaborate armorial crest of a post horn in a cartouche under a crown surmounted by three fleur-de-lys

Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856

This sheet contains several sketches. The topmost register is a schematic representation of the relationship between King Arthur's Round Table and Mayburgh Henge, the two henge monuments at Eamont Bridge near Penrith.

David Blayney Brown (ed.), J.M.W. Turner: Sketchbooks, Drawings and Watercolours

...components in a landscape dominated by steep sided valleys and fast flowing streams...focused on a spring which lay between Mayburgh and King Arthur's Round Table, and which connected them to the River Eamont.

David Barrowclough, Prehistoric Cumbria

A supreme consistory of Druidical administration.

Thomas Pennant on 'Mayborough'.

We conceive that Mayborough was appropriated solely to religious rites and that here the pupils received their documents in the mysteries of that religion Its similitude with that in Anglesea confirms this opinion and that Mayborough was the place for the northern regions of the supreme consistory in religious matters it was well adapted for study and contemplation shut in by a solemn grove and perhaps in its original state fenced about with a lower and outward wall to set bounds to the vulgar.

Robert Hutchinson, 1773

I believe that the ancient Cumbrians were prospectors and traders. They originally explored the fells for rock that was suitable for making tools such as axes, but as we moved away from stone tools and embraced the new metal technologies the veins of copper, lead and silver that can be found in various locations throughout the fells would probably have been known to many people. There is evidence of prehistoric copper extraction at Coniston. This would probably have been a natural progression. . The quarrymen would have become surface miners and the knappers would have become bronze smiths. One hint of this may be Stukeleys report of a 'bronze celt' (probably an axe) found ritually buried in the entrance to Mayburgh Henge 10km north of Shap.

shapcumbria.wordpress.com

He was brave but he was no Arthur

Welsh saying



Near Lowther Bridge is a plat of ground called King Arthur's Round Table belonging to R Tinkler Esq, Eden Lodge, Bolton, the scene of many a joust and tournament where the brave of other days vindicated their knighthood by feats of arms and trials of skill at all military weapons, in the mimic war, in the days of chivalry. It has lately been inclosed so as to take away the effect which naturally exists in viewing places of antiquity. It is a trench of a circular shape including an area of twenty nine yards in diameter, with two apertures opposite to each other where the champions entered and is still distinguished by its raised tumuli. Not far from it is another ditch of a similar form but of larger dimensions and without apertures. Perhaps within this circus, equestrians, and the knights of the table round, exhibited their agility at which all that was gallant, noble, and courteous, assembled to vie in attraction or prowess. It formerly had two entrances one at the north end and the other at the south .

Allison's Picturesque Pocket Companion

Drovers brought news, gossip and money; the Black Ox was the symbol of one of their banks, later crucial in the development of Lloyds Bank, the Ox evolving into the black horse.

England in Particular, Sue Clifford & Angela King, Common Ground

From the later Middle Ages through to the 19th century – when the railways took over the trade – herds of Scots cattle were driven through eastern Cumbria to destinations further south. Up to 200 cattle or 2000 sheep would move at something like 6 to 12 miles a day along routes with appropriate facilities along the way – overnight pasturing, inns for the accommodation of their human companions, and fairs and markets at which the animals could be bought and sold. These routes would originally be wide and unenclosed. The routes mostly converged on Carlisle, continuing south to Penrith.

cumbria-industries.org.uk

Drovers were needed as the towns grew in size, to drive cattle from the county markets to the big cities. Everywhere trade needed transport and better transport increased trade.

Villages, Edward Osmond, 1957

In the West Midlands and the North in particular, motorways have acted as great agents of decentralisation – allowing people to live anywhere, drive anywhere and work anywhere.

Sir Peter Hall, professor of planning and regeneration at The Bartlett School, University College London

The section of the M6 that runs over Shap Fell in Cumbria is 1,050 ft (320 m) above sea level, one of the highest points on any motorway in the UK (junction 22 of the M62 on Saddleworth Moor is higher). The motorway engineers here chose to follow the route of the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway engineered by Joseph Locke (now part of the West Coast Main Line) where the motorway runs in a split-level cutting above the railway in the descent from Shap Fell through the Lune Gorge into southern Cumbria.

Wikipedia

Locke reasoned that by avoiding long routes and tunnelling, the line could be finished more quickly, with less costs, and could start earning sooner. The 'up and over' school of engineering.

Tour notes, Dan Thompson

The opening of the Preston By-pass marks the beginning of a new era of motoring in Britain. It is the first link in the network of motorways, which, progressively completed, will contribute to an increasing extent to the health of the community and to the national economy.

Official guide to the opening of the M6

Deer intrusion is a particular problem in spring and autumn and can cause serious accidents on the motorway network resulting in injuries and fatalities. This section of the M6 has been identified as a hot spot so we are upgrading the fencing in the area to help reduce incidents. The fencing aims to encourage deer to cross the M6 at two overpasses at either side and will also prevent otters from accessing the motorway.

Peter Gee, Highways England, 2015

Junction 40 was opened in 1968, at the time Penrith had been a major bottle neck on the A6 north with a narrow one lane traffic light controlled section right in the town centre. To improve this the government brought forward the bypassing of Penrith earlier into the M6 program than they may have done. Thus on 7th November 1968 the Penrith bypass section of the M6 opened from a temporary junction just south of Penrith to junction 41 to the north.

route6.co.uk

Last year, the Forest Fayre was followed by an illegal gathering at Castlemorton, near Worcester, that attracted 25,000 travellers and ravers and left West Mercia police with a huge bill. There were 100 arrests. Police forces nationally were determined to ensure that such a gathering never happened again. A national intelligence unit was established, based at Devizes, Wiltshire, for the South of England, and Penrith, Cumbria, for the North. Now every traveller's vehicle is logged on computer, along with its whereabouts. An estimate of the number of persons in a convoy is included, together with details of any targeted individuals. Many of the vehicles and their occupants have been photographed.

Independent, May 1993

I stepped out of a dark train into the blackout of Penrith Station with my two weary children... We had heard Chamberlain's speech declaring the country to be at war with Germany. From the pitch-black night beyond the platform came the scent of wet fells, and sheep, and the North.

Kathleen Raine, on arriving at Penrith Station with her children as evacuees, 1939

Most cultures have names for particular winds. We have but one: the feared easterly Helm Wind, which blows down into Cumberland from the Pennines. It is astonishingly local, blasting the villages that lie in the shadow of the Cross Fell range in the Eden Valley - Gamblesby, Kirkland, Melmerby, Milburn and Ousby – but said never to cross the Eden. Whenever the wind blows, telltale cloud formations appear, known as the Helm Cloud and the Helm Bar... John Ruskin regarded it as one of the 'Plague Winds' of the world.

England in Particular, Sue Clifford & Angela King, Common Ground

Our view of the Cumbrian environment has been conditioned to accept the land as 'landscape'. Hundreds of years of artistic interpretation, especially since the visual conventions of the eighteenth century, have led us to see it as 'picturesque' and 'romantic.

Sheepfoldscumbria.co.uk

(Photograph omitted)

Jim Peet on his ostrich farm near Penrith, Cumbria. The birds, which have proved adaptable to the climate, are kept for their red meat and feathers. Mr Peet was recently elected chairman of the newly formed British Domesticated Ostrich Society, which is campaigning for an end to the birds' classification as 'dangerous wild animals'

Independent, Dec 1992

The Sheep Trust is collaborating with geneticists, developmental biologists and environmentalists to understand more about the genetics of the Herdwicks, their origins and their adaptive fitness traits that will be of considerable use to the future of farming and national food security.

The Sheep Trust

Hefting is a traditional method of managing flocks of sheep on large areas of common land and communal grazing. Initially, sheep had to be kept in an unfenced area of land by constant shepherding. Over time this has become learned behaviour, passed from ewe to lamb over succeeding generations. Lambs graze with their mothers on the "heaf" belonging to their farm instilling a life long knowledge of where optimal grazing and shelter can be found throughout the year.

On many tenanted farms there is a 'landlord's flock', which goes with the farm whenever there is a change of tenant. This ensures that the land continues to be successfully grazed by its resident 'hefted' flocks of sheep.

DEFRA

Hefting is practised in most upland and remote areas, usually among the poorest and most difficult land in the country. It is also practiced on lowland expanses of open space and is often associated with the grazing of Commons.

In 2005 there was a total of 8,675 different commons in England and Wales, covering 550,000 ha. Many of these commons are of environmental importance. Over 48% (178,000 hectares) of common land lie within National Parks. Nearly 50% are either wholly or partly SSSI's (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) with 63% assessed as being in an unfavourable condition. 31% are wholly or partly within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), 30% are in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

Assessment of the impact of hefting (heafing or learing), ADAS Report

The first Herdwick sheep probably came with Norse settlers in the 10th century. Although they may have been part of the flocks of the Cistercian monks of Furness Abbey. Either way they have been indigenous for the last 1000 years. The Herdwick is seen around the Duddon Valley, the Coniston Fells, the Buttermere Fells and through Borrowdale and Wasdale up to the highest land in England, the Scafell.

The Swaledales are found throughout the northern counties of England, and on the Pennines. The Rough Fell breed roams the Howgill Fells around Kendal, Sedbergh, Tebay and up to Shap in south-east Cumbria.

Hefted sheep cannot be understood in isolation. The sheep are inseparable from the farmers who live on and care for the land where the sheep live.

Hefted Sheep - a phenomenon cast aside? by Astrid Goddard

DNA analysis suggests that Herdwick sheep really did come by boat with the Vikings a thousand plus years ago. Their closest relatives live far to the North.

James Rebanks

Beatrix Potter Heelis understood only too well that 'times change', but with her bequest she attempted to ensure that the unique culture of hill farming and the breeding of Herdwick sheep would continue. As a far-sighted benefactor, she tried her best to protect a vulnerable landscape. Balancing the demands of fell farmers, tourists, wildlife and forests has become increasingly difficult as Beatrix knew it would. Her imaginative stewardship in the Lake District continues to be a challenging obligation today.

Beatrix Potter: A Life In Nature by Linda Lear

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, unremembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree

Little Gidding by TS Eliot



There are a number of conflicting sources for John Wesley's first visit to Penrith, but by 1780 a community was meeting in a room owned by William Varty as part of the Dales circuit. In 1815 the first chapel was built at Sandgate Head in Fell Lane, and then when the congregation needed more space, the present Methodist Church in Wordsworth St was built in 1873. The Primitive Methodists first met in Fell Lane and then in 1857 built a chapel in Arthur St, eventually moving to the former Wesleyan chapel at Sandgate Head in 1873. The Arthur St chapel was converted to a Temperance Hall.

cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk

Listen, we're bona fide. We're not from London!

Withnail and I

danthompson.co.uk