

Holme Wood Loweswater

Diary of a Local Wood

Woods - the DIY store

From 8th Century, woods protected by laws.

Lord of the Manor owned the timber (oak). Used for building. **Commoners** had rights to estover for fuel (*by hook or by crook*); **bote** for repair of house, fences, tools; bark for tanning; pannage.

During C16th **Lords of Loweswater** wall and ditch *The Holme* to prevent access. Commoners pull them down!

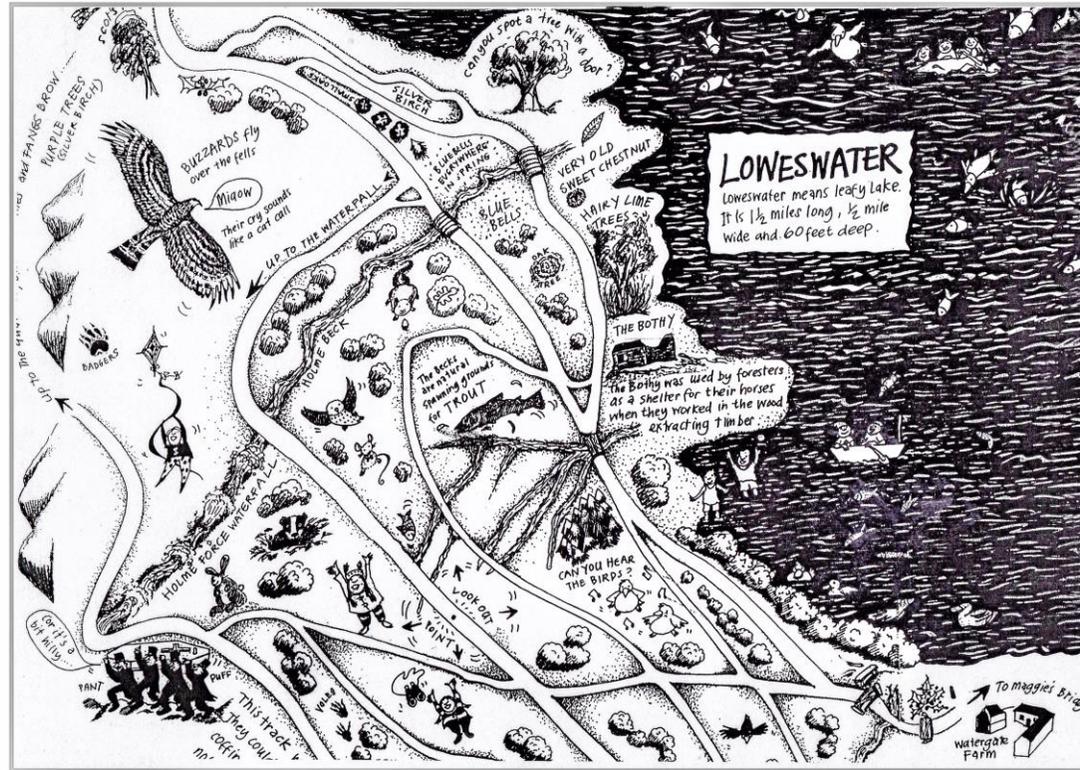
1594. Anthony Patrickson, Lord of Loweswater, uses bailiffs and dogs to deny commoners access.

Commoners sue Lord Patrickson. Final court hearing in **Loweswater church, 1598**. The Lord was permitted to wall off *The Holme*; commoners given some rights of access & stronger rights of tenure.

Lawsuits continue until Patrickson sells the Lordship in **1622** to (Sir) **Wilfred Lawson** of Isel Hall.

Lawson family owned Holme Wood for 2 centuries, their estates described as, 'best wooded manor in all Cumberland' (Perambulation of Cumberland, 1687-1688 by T Denton).

From C16th, the need for **charcoal** for iron smelting led to sustainable management of the wood by **coppicing**. Charcoal burners lived in the wood.



Annotated map provided byMark Astley, National Trust Ranger

Wildlife. "In winter, Loweswater swarms with wildfowl...marts, foxes, wildcats, red deer..." (Hutchinson, 1794). Last eagle killed locally 1780.

1800s Holme Wood and (*Mare's Tail*) **waterfall** recommended in W Green's *Tourist New Guide*, and other guides.

1807. Lawson family sell Holme Wood to **Joshua Bragg** of Lorton Hall for £14,000.

1808. Bragg fells the trees for cash (for only £1,500) and lets the land for pasture.

1809. Bragg dies. Buried in Lorton Churchyard.

1814 John Marshall, industrialist from Leeds, buys much local land (including **Loweswater** estate and **Holme Wood** for £10,500).

1818 Holme Wood replanted. **William Wordsworth** helps with the design; deciduous trees near lake for aesthetic appeal (many still standing), larch on fell side (commercial). **Wordsworth** hated larch!

1934 Marshall family put up the **Three Lakes** for sale.

1937 Loweswater, Crummock & Buttermere estates bought by **National Trust**, after public appeal.

1940s Extensive tree felling for **war effort**. Trunks floated across lake from Watergate to Crabtree. Cable stretched across lake from Holme Wood to deter enemy seaplanes.

1950s Wood replanted in the shape of a **PHEASANT**, designed by Johnston Edwards MBE, former Queen's forester at Balmoral. Have you spied the eye?

1960 Kendall Vickers, local forester, awarded **Royal Forestry Society Medal**.

1970s Holme Wood **bothy** (built C19th, former fishery and shelter for shepherds, horses & charcoal burners) converted to self-catering bothy by Manchester University students. Now run by NT.

2008 Archaeology research reports Bronze Age funerary barrows, charcoal pits and hags in the wood.

2020...*Phytophthora ramorum* fungus infects some larch, requiring felling; Ash dieback disease noted.

Produced by Dr John Macfarlane with apologies for any inaccuracies!
Contact: jtmacfarlane@gmail.com
October 2020
For more information, see articles by Dr D Denman, *LDLHS Journal*, v48, 52.