

Chapter Five

MANCHESTER CORPORATION AND THE DAM.

The Reservoir Scheme

As yet, no sign appears of the threatened invaders except a couple of men wandering about taking levels.

The Manchester Guardian, 1st October. 1918

Manchester Corporation, the Waterworks Authority at the time, obtained the Haweswater Act in 1919; this gave it powers to acquire the lake in Mardale and the large surrounding catchment area for a major reservoir. The scheme was to be developed in stages, and included works to divert water from neighbouring catchment areas. It also allowed the construction of subsidiary reservoirs in Swindale and Wet Sleddale, the water from these to be taken into the main Haweswater reservoir. The Wet Sleddale reservoir was completed in 1962, but Swindale has not been built.

Hawes Water the natural lake of Mardale, was the highest of the English Lakes, being 694 feet above sea level, an important consideration when the water had to be taken to consumers eighty or ninety miles away. Work on the building of the dam started in 1930 but was suspended about a year later because of the national financial crisis. In 1934 work on the original scheme was restarted; it was estimated to cost £12 million.

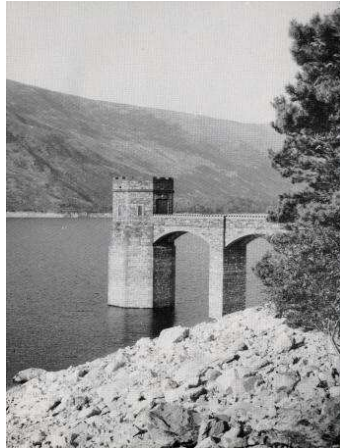


Construction of the Dam, Mardale

The dam is 96 feet high and 1550 feet long. It is of the hollow massive-buttress type and embodied features, which were unique in Britain at the time of its construction. The reservoir has a capacity of about 18,600 million gallons and a top water level of 790 feet above sea level. The surface area of the full reservoir is three times as great as the size of the natural lake it replaced. The average rainfall over the catchment area is about 75 inches, and the safe reliable yield from the Haweswater scheme is 66 million gallons a day.

Tower and Tunnel

The reservoir's water is drawn off through the tower, which stands, on the shore about half a mile beyond the hotel. Its windows, and most of its stone, came from the demolished Church.



Mardale Haweswater Take off tower

The take off tower, which is where the water begins its journey to Manchester, some of the stonework and window and doors from the old church of Holy Trinity, were used in its construction.

From the tower an aqueduct goes first by the Mardale tunnel 1660 feet under Branstree to Longsleddale. The aqueduct goes on by pipeline underground along the eastern slopes of Longsleddale, though now there is little sign of it. Near the summit of Artlecrag Pike there is a tall, pillar-like, stone construction, which was used in the survey for the pipeline. There is another of these strange constructions on Great Howe north of Stockdale.

In 1934 the pipeline was connected at Garnett Bridge, at the lower end of Longsleddale, to the Thirlmere Aqueduct. This was to enable the Haweswater supply to be used before the rest of the pipeline to Manchester was built. Further progress southwards from Garnett Bridge of the Haweswater pipeline was delayed by the Second World War, and was not resumed until 1948.

Burnbanks.

Aquaville is possibly the name to be given to the temporary town shortly to spring up in the wilds of Westmorland. The town will be built a few miles from the hamlet of Brampton to house 700 navvies.

Daily Mail 29th May 1929



Burnbanks

At the very beginning of the Haweswater construction a number of small bungalows were built at Burnbanks, until then an almost bare fellside, to house two hundred men working on the tunnel and the dam. Many of these houses are still occupied.

THE NEW ROAD

The Haweswater scheme required the building of a new road to replace the old narrow curving road which ran along the west shore of the lake and which would be flooded by the rising water. Eventually it was decided that the new access road would be on the other, east, side of the valley, cutting along the steep slope through Naddle Forest. Its width of 24 feet was held to be quite unnecessary for a road, it was said, which would never have to carry much traffic. On the west side of the reservoir a footpath was provided, today an attractive route to the valley head and beyond, as well as being a link in Wainwright's popular 'Coast to Coast' route.

AFFORESTED?

In the earliest days of the Haweswater project extensive afforestation of the catchment area was contemplated, presumably in pursuance of a policy similar to that which had been carried out at Thirlmere, fortunately nothing came of the afforestation scheme.

FINALLY

In 1973 when the new water authorities were set up, Manchester Corporation Water Undertaking was transferred to the North West Water Authority. Manchester retained only the Haweswater Hotel, which is still managed by the Corporation. It is the only habitation in Mardale beyond the dam.

Chapter Six.

Mardale Meet Smoking Concert In the Dun Bull

. The Mardale Hunt, produced at a Mardale Shepherd's Meet in 1904 and sung for the first time by Mr. Joe Blackburn, of Kendal with Mr. A. S. Dixon as Chairman, and Mr. W. C. Skelton as accompanist, got a good "launch" in the prescience of a galaxy of musical talent from Manchester. Mr. Winston Scott was the composer one verse is as follows:

The Mardale pack is on the trail,
Away! Away!"
The fox is leading through the dale,
Away! My lads away!
Hound millers on the scent I'm told
So foot it lads thro' frost and cold,
The mountain breeze is pure as gold
Away! My lads, away!

The writer (Skelton) paid a visit in 1917 to the locations of the 25th division as they were out of the line resting at Marles. There was an old piano in the canteen without a single ivory on the keys. A request was made for a singsong. The 8th Borders were strongly in evidence. The two first songs on the programme that night were "Mardale Hunt" and "Joe Bowman." These set the ball rolling merrily. The last named song was produced by Dr. G. F. Walker of Southport who afterwards issued a revised version. The chorus of this song goes:

*"When the fire's on the hearth and good cheer abounds
We'll drink to Joe Bowman and his Ullswater Hounds,
For we ne'er shall forget how he woke us at morn
With the crack of his whip and the sound of his horn."*

D. W. S. Eaton, of Ennerdale, has written a song called "Mardale Meet Hunting Song" which goes to the tune of "Bonnie Dundee." A couple of verses are as follows:

*"Come join the glad chorus and off with a swing,
Let the wilds of old Mardale with "Tally-ho" ring
Tho' the flowers of the forest are withered and gone,
Old Joe's on the mountains, so boys follow on;
Tho storms sweep the mountain and thunder resounds,
Joe Bowman, despite them, will follow the hounds.*

*Tally ho! Tally Ho! Tally Ho! With a ding
Let the wilds of old Mardale with Tally Ho ring.
If for hunting and song you try Mardale meet, then thou's lucky me lads, ta git
yam on thi feet.
Now we're on reynard's track with the hounds in full cry,
O'er hill and down dale and upto the sky,
To the bold beetling crags of the mist and the storm,
Where reynard seeks earth, "Hark away, Tis the horn"
Joe Bowman is calling, draw deeper your breath,
And let every good hunter be in at the death.*

Dr. Eaton has also written a touching "lament" forecasting Mardale in years to come (may they be very many years yet) when the scheme for conveying water from Mardale to Manchester has been completed. Here are two short verses from the lament.

*The Dun Bull now lies deep down 'neath thy waters,
No more with wild song will its rafters resound,
Nor hunters be cheered by Mardale's fair daughters,
For where in the land could such beauty be found.*

*Thy quaint little churchyard-beneath the old yew trees,
No longer peeps out from their dark sombre shade,
Where humbly the dalesman looked up to his maker.
And in their last sleep, Kings of Mardale were laid.*

Skelton 1921.

For years the Mardale Meet's popularity relied on the reputation of Joe Bowman (Hunty or Auld Joe) and his Ullswater Foxhounds. Visitors travelled to the meet from all parts of the country and some the world, they travelled in a variety of ways- "Rolls-Royces, carriages, horseback and on foot walking over the high mountain passes sometimes in bad weather (snow was not uncommon) and my Great Uncle Brait and Trimmer his hound actually got lost on the tops in bad weather. Trimmer subsequently won his trail. Expensive furs, kid gloves and silver mounted walking sticks mingled at the meet with woollen clothing, hand made walking sticks and fustian jackets. Most people walked and Tommy Fishwick who was once heard to say to a friend "Yan wants nowt wi 'riding as lang as yan legs' ell carry yan summed up the general view

Hinchcliffe quotes that after a good days sport, huntsmen, shepherds, visitors, sheep dogs and terriers (hounds were not admitted) all turn towards the Dun Bull for a meal.

In the evening, a smoking contest took place. Skelton records "*the main portion of the pack, cast off in the large dining room and every room in the house filled with overflow meetings-or rather concerts*"

The big room was the focal point, a tray was sent round and money subscribed for the evening's refreshment. Each individual orders his choice of drink and the chairman pays out of the general pool. Toast's and song follow in quick succession. The chairman selects the singer and everyone is supposed to sing at least one song and there was an element of pride in singing one that had not already been sung that evening. If the song had a good swing or chorus the men got particularly enthusiastic, the shepherds beating the tables with their sticks in time to the tune and the sheep-dogs and terriers howling either in enthusiasm or execration, no man knows which.

The first toast was to the shepherds, coupled with the name of the oldest, a verse of "While Shepherds watch their flocks by night" reverently and tunefully sung.

Joe Bowman retired in 1924, when a large "do" took place at the Dun Bull, presentations took place and new songs launched including the following where a verse will suffice.

*There's varra few like Joe in heaven;
Oh, ho, ho!
They've mappen gitten six er seven
Oh, ho, ho!
Gay sports who gev Auld Nick the slip
Oh, ho, ho!
An kap 'im aff wid hounds and whip
Oh, ho, ho!*

Mardale folk and those of dale's surrounding Mardale may be dead but they were not forgotten and were recalled in story and song.

Jossie Green, of Naddle, was recalled for his fine rendering of "Tarry Woo" however it took time and much ale to work him up to the stage where he could sing it at the right pitch.

*Tarry Woo! Tarry Woo! Tarry Woo' is ill to spin;
Card it weel! Card it weel! Ere you begin;
When it's carded, rolled and spun, then your work is
But half done;
But when woven, dressed and clean, it be clothing
for a queen.*