

Troutbeck

“Mayor Hunts”



Bi-Centenary

1780—1980

Troutbeck “Mayor Hunts”

There are records amongst the Browne Family’s papers, formerly at Town End but now in the Record Office at the County Hall, Kendal of Mayor Hunts at Troutbeck in 1779 and 1780, and again in the seventeen nineties. They were often held at Troutbeck Bridge where there was an inn (at the bottom of Bridge Lane) called **The Black Cock**, kept by John Camm.

At that time the “Hunting Mayor” was elected by ballot by the company attending the gathering, no doubt at a meeting in the evening. The Hunting Mayor in 1779 was R. Birkett, and in 1780 Thomas Dixon of Kentmere. In 1796 “The Rev. Mr. R. Lambert” was elected (by a majority of one vote). Mr. Lambert became Curate of Trolltbeck in 1779.

The hounds will have been harriers, and it was customary to give the Mayor a hare on his election. Hare hunting was more popular than fox hunting, though a few “trencher-fed” hounds were kept in Troutbeck. The Coniston Foxhound were not started until 1825.

Then there is a long gap in the records. Nothing seems to have been kept relating to the nineteenth century festivities. But it is known from the “Westmorland Gazette” that the Hunts were held annually.

In 1912, James Wildman was Mayor, in 1913, Charles P. Fleming of Ecclerigg, and in 1914, Richard Clapham of Troutbeck, the noted writer on field sports.

After the first World War the event was held again from 1920 to 1939 with the exception of 1922 when there was foot and mouth disease in the district.

The List of Mayors between the Wars is as follows:—

1920—21	Sam T. Beaumont
1921—22	James N. Gregg
1923—24	Wm. Leek
1924—25	J. J. Leak
1925—26	John James Hutchinson
1926—27	J. W. Bland
1927—28	Thomas Bland
1928—29	C. P. Fleming
1929—30	Nicholas Wilson
1930—31	S. T. Beaumont
1931—32	W. Leek
1932—33	J. J. Hutchinson
1933—34	Adam Blades
1934—35	W. Ion Atkinson
1935—36	Thomas Bland
1936—37	R. B. Fleming
1937—38	J. J. Leak
1938—39	Renee Atkinson
1939—40	T. Armstrong

After the second World War the event was not revived again until 1953, when Richard B. Fleming was Mayor, and the festivities have been held ever since.

Nowadays the Mayor one year nominates his successor for the next year but does not announce his choice until the middle of the evening sing-song. The duties are confined to arranging the programme for the day — getting the foxhounds and harriers to meet in the morning, fixing up the clay pigeon shooting in the afternoon, and presiding at the entertainment in the evening.

It used to be the practice to give away tickets for the dinner, or tatie-pot and to supply free draught beer in the evening. The expense was met by going round the parish with a book, collecting donations. More recently tickets have been sold at a fixed price.

The origin of Mayor Hunts is lost in obscurity, but they were not uncommon in this part of England in the eighteenth century. The election of a Mayor seems to have been done with mock solemnity, and at Bowness they even produced a mock Charter. The Bowness Mayor Hunt was always on St. Luke's Day, October 18th, and the records begin in 1763. One was held at Ulverston away back in 1746 and another was held at Carlmel Fell.

Troutbeck alone survives.

Mayors since 1953:—

1953—54	R. B. Fleming
1954—55	T. Wear
1955—56	W. Watson
1956—57	J. Noble Gregg
1957—58	W. T. Atkinson
1958—59	B. L. Thompson
1959—60	C. Clark
1960—61	E. Wilson
1961—62	J. Black
1962—63	J. Coates
1963—64	W. H. Allen
1964—65	J. Wharton
1965—66	Mrs. C. Clark
1966—67	John D. Atkinson
1967—68	R. Clarke
1668—69	W. Aspinwall

1969—70	J. D. Scott
1970—71	Bob Thompson
1971—72	D. Freeman
1972—73	R. Westmoreland
1973—74	M. Cousins
1974—75	R. Black
1975—76	D. King
1976—77	M. Pattinson
1977—78	A. Chapman
1978—79	J. C. Wharton
1979—80	A. Gregg
1980—81	