



THE CALDERSTONES

From a painting in the possession of Robert Gladstone, Esq.

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TRANSACTIONS

CAPTAIN WILLIAM LATHAM AND THE CALDERSTONES

By Charles R. Hand

Read 11th February 1915

IN the Manchester Reference Library there may be seen a beautiful collection of about 250 sketches and drawings made by Captain William Latham. These were purchased by the Corporation some few months ago from Mr. Gregory, bookseller, Bath; and include views of churches and other ancient buildings and objects of antiquarian and historical interest in Lancashire,¹ Cheshire, Yorkshire, North Wales, and the Isle of Man. There are also a number of water-colour sketches made in Scotland and elsewhere.

William Latham was the son of Thomas Latham of Wigan, who inherited an independent property from his relative, Mrs. Mayfield of Staining Hall, Poulton-le-Fylde, the wife of John Mayfield, agent to the Cliftons of Lytham. His mother was, previous to her marriage, a Miss Corbin (or Cowban), member of a Roman Catholic family in the Fylde, and distantly related to Mrs. Crookall, at one time of the Wheatsheaf Inn, at Lytham. His grandfather, William Latham, descended from one of the families of that name in West Derby Hundred, was a Catholic non-juror in 1717, and registered a small

¹ One of them, St. Michael's church on the Wyre, was reproduced in our last volume of *Transactions*.

2 *Captain William Latham and the Calderstones*

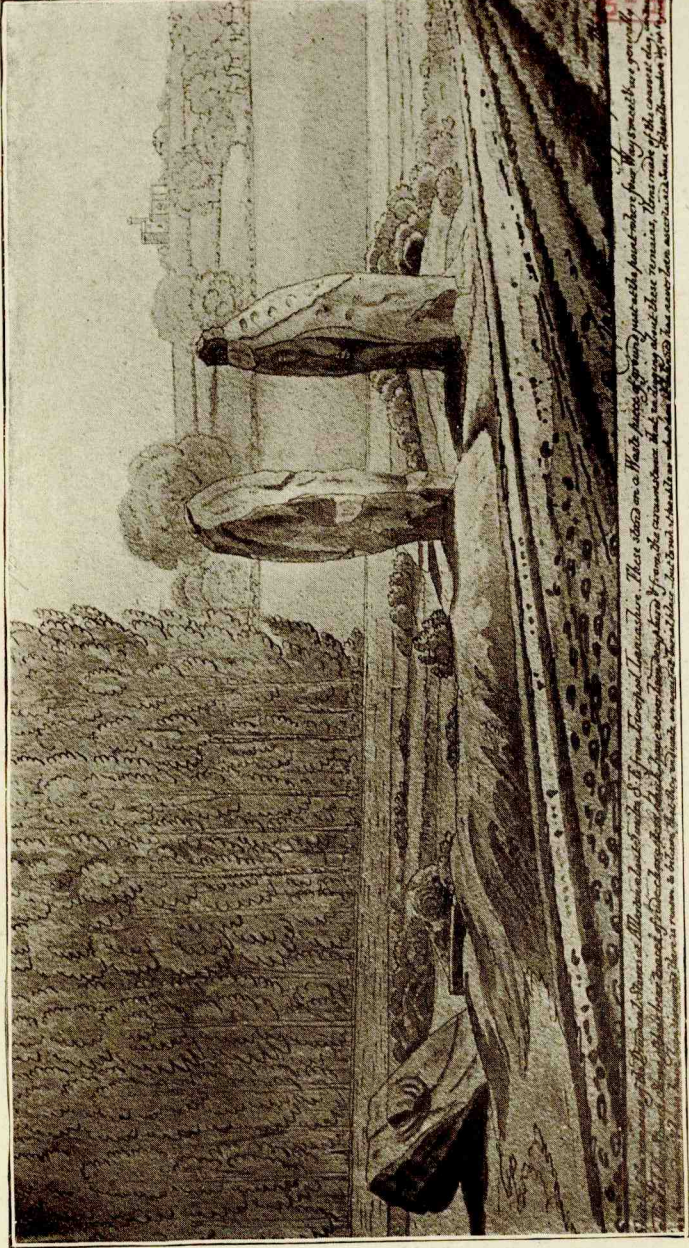
leasehold property in Tarbock, in the parish of Huyton, but resided at Westby Hall, near Lytham; he married Dorothy, daughter of Roger Leigh of Aspull, and his wife, Alice Catterick.

The date of Captain Latham's birth is uncertain. He became a lieutenant in the 1st Regiment of the Royal Lancashire Militia on 14th November 1808, and captain on 9th April 1813. In 1809 he was quartered at Bristol; and during the next seven years he served with his regiment at Worcester, Nottingham, Hull, Berwick, Haddington, Dalkeith, and Penicuik. In the year 1816 he embarked at Dublin for Liverpool, and thence marched to Lancaster, where the regiment was finally disbanded on 9th March 1816. He continued in the service, however, for some years, as in one of his letters written from Westwood House, near Wigan, a residence of the Walmsley family, on 2nd June 1820, he speaks of his intended movements after his dismissal from drill at Lancaster.

Subsequent to residing for some time at Poulton, he removed to Yorkshire; but "after a tedious illness, borne with truly Christian fortitude," he died at the residence of William Gerard Walmsley, Plat Bridge House, near Wigan, on 19th July 1826, while on a visit there.

In an obituary notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, he is described as being of "amiable and unaffected manners; and possessing a perfect command of his pencil, had formed a large collection of topographical and antiquarian sketches, chiefly in Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales."¹ To the issue of that magazine for August 1824 he had contributed a view of Farnworth Church, and a fine representation of Llanassa Church window in the issue for November 1825 was reproduced from another of his drawings. There are also a few

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xcvi. p. 94.

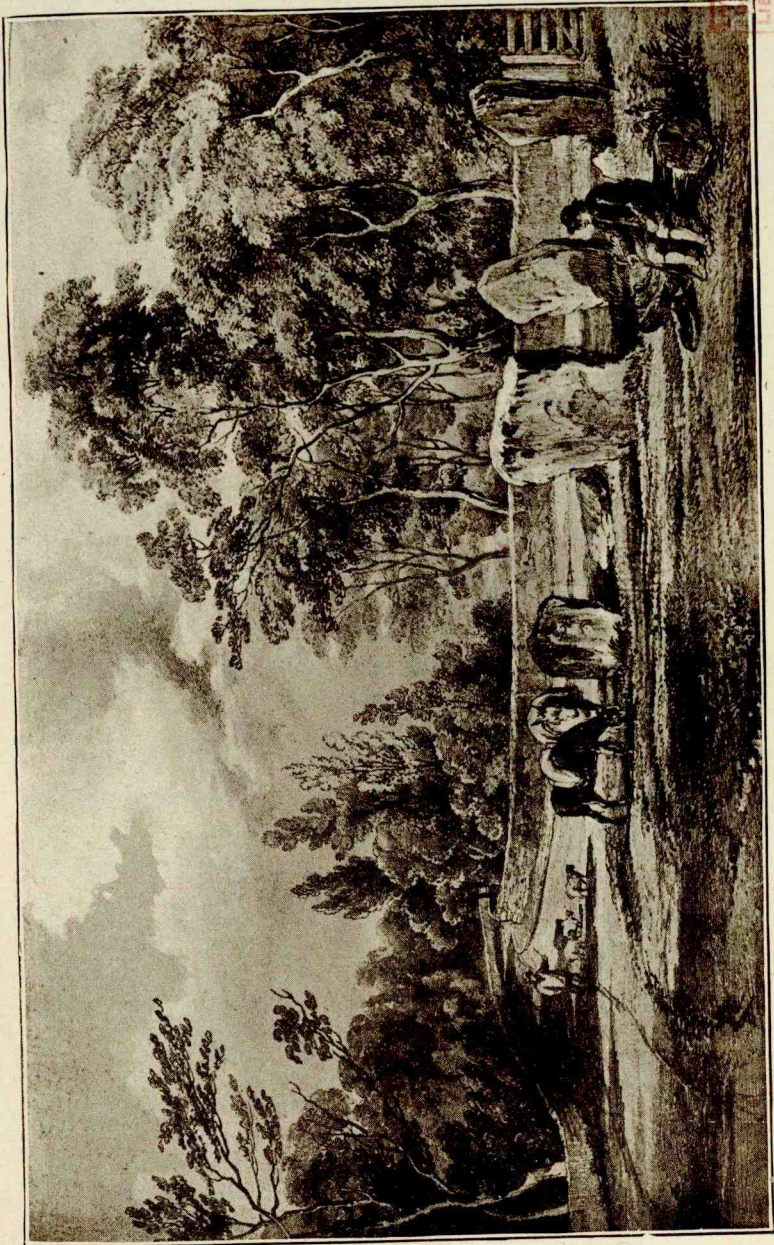


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These stones are a White Limestone, and are found in the same strata as the Portland Stone, and are of the same age. They are supposed to be the remains of a prehistoric monument, and are of the same size as the stones found at Stonehenge. The stones are of the same size as the stones found at Stonehenge, and are of the same age. They are supposed to be the remains of a prehistoric monument, and are of the same size as the stones found at Stonehenge.

THE CALDERSTONES

11th October 1825



THE CALDERSTONES

“About 1840”

other sketches by him in Dr. Samuel Hibbert-Ware's *Collection of Antiquarian Notes*, in the Manchester Reference Library.

Included in Whittle's *History of Lytham*, published about 1830, is "A Desultory History of Lytham in 1799, by Captain Latham." From a short account of him in the same publication, we learn that "our author was frequently in the habit of visiting Lytham for sea-bathing, and being persuaded by a select few to write a cursory account of the place, he at last undertook the task, and published the same at Preston. When he composed the little work he was about thirty-five years of age. Had more pains been taken by Mr. L. in amplifying the history of Lytham, a work would have arisen which would have done credit to his name."¹

But the interest which Liverpool people will certainly take in his work will be stimulated by the fact that the above-named collection of his sketches includes a beautiful sepia drawing of the Calderstones.

This picture, $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $5\frac{1}{8}$ inches in size, is superscribed "Taken by Will. Latham, Anniversary of Camperdown, 1825." Under the drawing is written the following description :

"Sketch of the remains of the Druidical Stones at Allerton, about 5 miles S.E. from Liverpool, Lancs. These stand on a waste piece of ground just at the point where four ways meet, and are generally called Calder Stones. Some of these bear traces of rude characters which have never been decyphered; and from the circumstance that in digging about these remains, urns made of the coarsest clay, containing human dust and bones, have been discovered, there is reason to believe they indicate an ancient burial place, but to what people or to what age it belonged has never been ascertained. Some of these urns were dug up 60 years ago."

¹ *History of Lytham*, p. 52.

It will be noticed that this descriptive paragraph is practically identical with that contained in Baines' *History, Directory, and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster*, published in 1825.¹

Latham's view—looking, I think, towards the west—shows only two of the larger stones erect; two, to the extreme left of the picture, in a recumbent position, and another stone lying on the ground immediately behind one of the standing stones—five in all. The "large mound high above the roadside," upon which Robert Peers² stated the stones lay in 1815, had not been entirely removed; the other stones were probably covered by some of the sand of which the mound was composed, and which is shown to be yet remaining. I am not able to name with certainty the buildings delineated on the higher ground towards the right of the drawing, but suggest that the large house may be "Hartfield," and the cottage on its right the building which for many years was the local police-station. Perhaps some of the members may be able to confirm or correct my suggestion.³

¹ The Preface, or "Advertisement," is dated "Leeds, September 19th, 1825." If that represents the date of actual issue to the public, Baines wrote the description three weeks before Latham made his drawing (11th October 1825); but if Baines' date was set down—as it probably was—on the completion of his manuscript, just before being placed in the hands of his printer, Latham anticipated him by a short time, and Baines was the copyist. I think it advisable to draw your attention to this little circumstance, but I have been unable to discover any certain testimony either way, other than the statement from the Registrar at Stationers' Hall, that "search has been made in the years 1823-1826 inclusive for History, &c., of Lancaster, but no entry can be found."

² Mr. Edward W. Cox in *Liverpool Daily Post*, 20th November 1896, and the writer's *Calderstones* (1912), note, p. 18.

³ I have made exhaustive inquiries as to the date of the erection of "Hartfield," but have not succeeded in tracing the present house back beyond 1845. The owner, Mrs. Walmsley, kindly wrote to me on the subject, but was unable to render me any material assistance in this direction. What is certain is that a building of good proportions stood on this same site as far back as the date of Yates and Perry's map (1768), but whether it was the present "Hartfield" or not, I am quite unable to say. The old cottage—once the police-station—is also clearly shown on this map.

The second picture is the property of the Society, although probably before I had searched for it and found it, its existence was unknown to the members. For its recovery I am much indebted to our late Honorary Librarian, Mr. G. T. Shaw, who after some trouble ascertained its whereabouts and passed it on to me for reproduction.

The *Proceedings* state that at the first meeting of the second session of the Society, held in the Board Room of the Collegiate Institution, on 8th November 1849, T. Lindsey Aspland, Esq., of Sawrey, Lancashire (who was not a member), presented to the Society a beautiful pencil drawing of the Calderstones, taken about 1840.¹

This drawing is a fine piece of work. The point of view I take to be looking south-east. Four of the larger stones are now shown in a standing position, and two of smaller size lie on the ground. The mound has entirely disappeared, and the surface has been levelled. The thick mass of trees on the right is evidently the same clump shown on the extreme left of Captain Latham's view; the two stones on the right-hand side are those appearing erect in the first drawing, and the gate stands apparently just where the entrance to the estate now is.

Although the drawing is without signature, there can be little doubt that it is the work of Mr. Aspland himself. Our Hon. Librarian, Dr. R. T. Bailey, has drawn my attention to the fact that, along with the Calderstones picture, Mr. Aspland also gave to the Society "a drawing in sepia of Cartmel Church." On page 48 in the Catalogue of the Society's Library, published in 1876, the following entry appears: "Cartmel, Lanc. Drawing of Cartmel Church, &c., by T. Lindsey Aspland, *the donor.*" Dr. Bailey justly states: "On the above

¹ *Proceedings of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Session II., No. 1, p. 2.

evidence, we must take it that Mr. T. Lindsey Aspland did the pencil drawing of the Calderstones."

It is gratifying to feel that by the discovery of these drawings a distinct advance has been made in our knowledge of the appearance of the Calderstones before enclosure. We shall probably never know the true meaning of these mysterious emblems, but in any case the pictures are undoubtedly of much interest and value, especially from the fact that Captain Latham's drawing is the earliest authentic representation of the Calderstones yet known.

To complete the set of early views of these antiquities Mr. Robert Gladstone of Woolton has allowed Dr. R. T. Bailey to take a photograph of the picture in his possession. The picture is glazed, and a reproduction made some time ago was not satisfactory, but Dr. Bailey's excellent photograph will, it is hoped, add to the value of this essay.

I beg to tender my best thanks to Mr. C. W. Sutton, M.A., Chief Librarian of Manchester, and to Mr. G. H. Rowbotham, of Chorlton-cum-Hardy, for their kindness in furnishing me with photographs, negatives, tracing, and notes; also to Mr. Robert Gladstone, jun., through whom permission to reproduce the third picture was obtained.