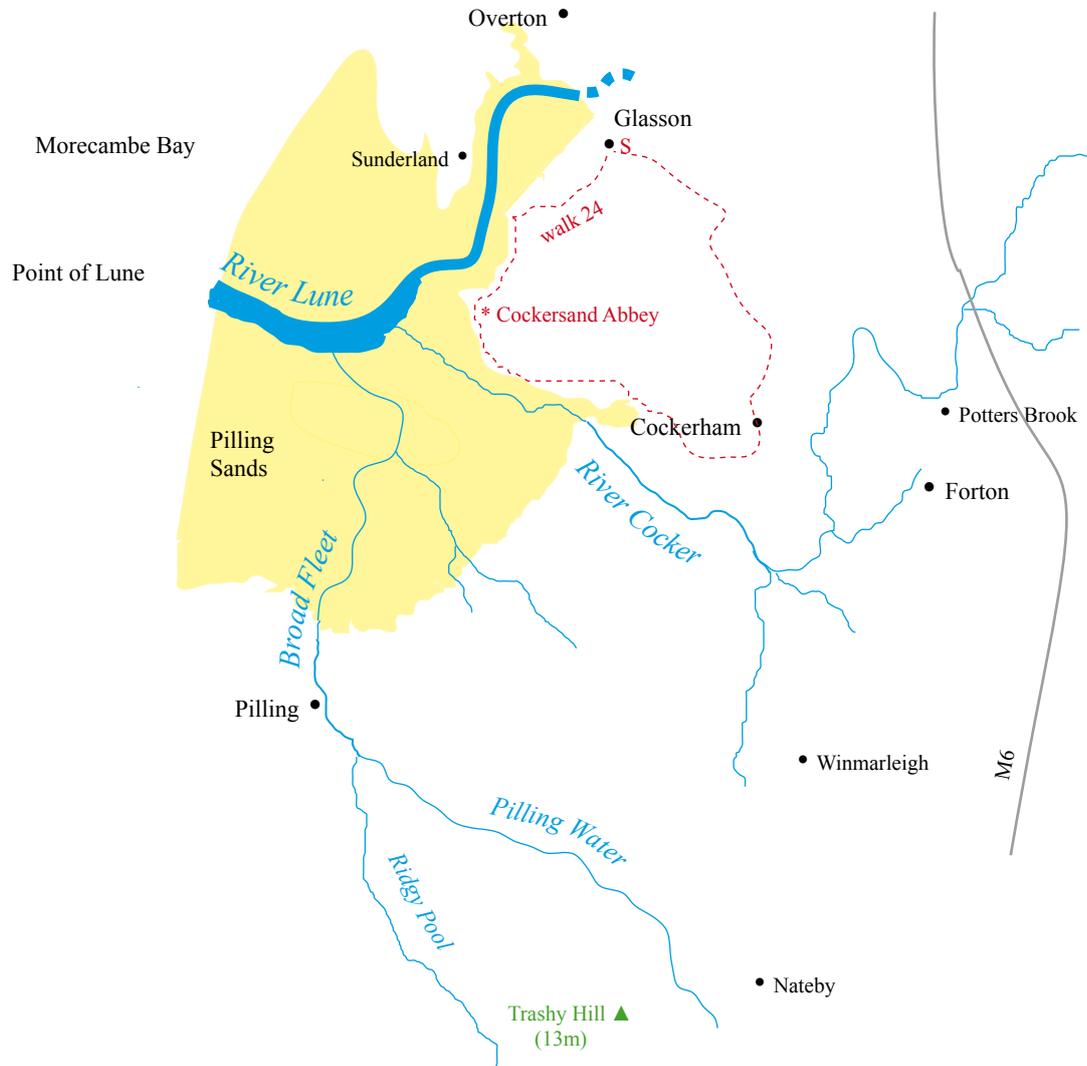


DANGER
Beware of fast tides
hidden channels and
quick sands



CHAPTER 15: Into Morecambe Bay



The Lune from the Conder (continued) ...

The road south from Overton across Lades Marsh leads to Sunderland, the end of the west bank of the Lune. Unlike Overton, Sunderland has had no new building for nearly a century. It looks like the set for a film based in a 19th century fishing village, as indeed it became in 2006 when used to film *The Ruby in the Smoke*. With the tidal waters covering the road, it is detached, both physically and mentally, from the modern world.

It consists of two terraces, First Terrace and Second Terrace, reasonably enough, and, a little apart, the elegantly verandahed Old Hall, which bears a date of 1683. The hall became the home of Robert Lawson, a Quaker merchant who built warehouses and workshops

at Sunderland for the complete building and fitting out of ships. The houses all have their backs to the prevailing westerly winds and hence have views across the estuary to the masts of Glasson Dock and the Bowland Fells beyond. There is even a glimpse of our old friend, Ingleborough.

The terraced cottages are mainly 18th century, some converted from the old warehouses. They have charm but are not pretty as this is too tough a place for adornment. A few cottages are named after the 'cotton tree', once a feature of Sunderland but a victim of a gale in 1998, after surviving for nearly 300 years. The tree was in fact a female native black poplar, of which there are only two

Two pages before: The road from Sunderland to Overton.

Below: Second Terrace, from First Terrace.



in Lancashire (one is at Freeman's Wood by Aldcliffe Marsh). Or perhaps three, because there are apparently shoots from the roots of the old Sunderland tree.

In front of the cottages a dozen boats rest at anchor or doze on the mud, depending on the state of the tide. A couple of them look like active fishing boats, a remnant of the traditional occupation of Sunderland residents. The heyday (such as it was, for Sunderland can never have been much larger than it is now) was the period from 1680, when it was recognised as a 'legal quay', which meant that ships were allowed to unload goods there, until about 1750, when St George's Quay became active. During that period, many ships avoided the difficult journey up the Lune by having goods taken ashore at Sunderland for transport across land or by ferryboat to Lancaster. There was also a good trade in towing or guiding boats up the estuary to Lancaster but Sunderland's business evaporated as fast as it had begun, with the development of better docking facilities in Lancaster, Fleetwood and especially Glasson.

After the demise of the port, Sunderland had an even shorter-lived period of activity as a bathing resort. In the

early 19th century people became increasingly attracted to sea bathing, although at first this was, for the sake of propriety, not in the sea but in sea water within bath houses. Sunderland was one of the first places to have a bath house, with sea water being pumped into baths at what was then the Ship Inn. By the 1830s, however, the difficulties of access compared to Morecambe and Heysham led Sunderland to become the quiet backwater that it is today.

The most remarked upon feature of Sunderland nowadays is that it is one of only two places in England (the other being Lindisfarne) that is cut off twice a day by the tide. However, this is only the case if lack of vehicular access constitutes being cut off: Sunderland can always be reached on foot from the west. It would seem easy to provide a road on the landward side of the flood embankment but no doubt the residents of Sunderland want no more than the few visitors prepared to make a committed effort to get there.

The best way to visit Sunderland, where there is not really much space to park a car anyway, is to park at or cycle to Potts Corner on the Morecambe Bay shore and



Pebbles and old groyne (to reduce erosion) at Sunderland Point



Hang glider over Sunderland

then walk south along the coast. There are magnificent views across the bay, with the Fylde coast to Fleetwood to the south, the south Lakes coast to the Isle of Walney to the north, and on the horizon the glinting blades of the offshore wind turbines.

The mud and sea stretch for miles, glittering in the sunlight and providing spectacular sunsets. There is the odd abandoned craft and the perhaps odder individual who feels confident enough about the tides and the mud to venture far off shore but it is the enormous numbers of wading birds that catch the eye. Morecambe Bay is said to be the most important estuary in England for its seabird and waterfowl populations, especially for over-wintering birds – greylag geese, mallard, red-breasted merganser, pink-footed geese, pintail, pochard, shelduck, shoveler, wigeon, and so on. Over 160 species have been recorded. They are attracted, of course, by the food in the mud, which may look unappetising to us but contains, for example, about 5000 Baltic tellins, which are small shellfish, per square metre (I have taken the experts' word for this).

If you keep your eyes to the west, as you should, you will miss Sambo's Grave, which is to be recommended. This is apparently a tourist attraction but it is a tawdry and maudlin site, a poignant but pathetic memorial to our own inglorious past as much as to Sambo, a slave who died at Sunderland in 1736: "here lies poor Sambo: a faithful Negro", isolated as a heathen unfit for consecrated ground.

If you must look landward, look instead for the Belted Beauty moth. This endangered moth has colonies

at only three sites in England and Wales and, until the colony at Sunderland was confirmed in 2004, it was thought to live only on coastal sand dunes. Here its habitat is salt marsh, with sea rush and autumn hawkbit. The males fly at night, as moths tend to do, and rest during the day; the poor females are wingless.

Searching for moths in salt marsh is not to everyone's taste but the moths' existence here is an indication of the special nature of this vulnerable promontory. If you continue the walk south to Sunderland Point (there is no public footpath but I don't think anyone will object), you'll see that the fields, some 2m above beach level, are virtually unprotected and appear to be crumbling fast under the western gales.

From the end of the promontory, we can see across to the Plover Scar lighthouse and may fear that our journey down the Lune and its tributaries has come to an end. But if the beginning of a river is always a matter of debate, so is its end. At high tide the Lune is 1km wide from Sunderland Point and disappears into the wide expanses of Morecambe Bay, but at low tide the Lune can be considered to continue for a further 7km or so between Cockerham Sands and Middleton Sands before finally joining the waters of Morecambe Bay at the Point of Lune. According to the Environment Agency by-laws, the Lune estuary lies landward of a line from Knott End jetty to Heysham No. 2 buoy and thence to Heysham lighthouse. For the sake of completeness, then, we will take the Point of Lune as the end of our story, which will enable us to include the gentle tributaries of the River Cocker and Broad Fleet.



Plover Scar lighthouse

The River Cocker

The Cocker is barely large enough to be a river but is not sprightly enough to be a beck. It arises north of Cocker Clough Wood on a ridge between the Conder and the Wyre, carefully avoiding both. It runs past Hampson Green, under the M6 and railway line, past Bay Horse, and is joined by Potters Brook just before crossing the Lancaster Canal.

Potters Brook flows from Forton, known to many through the distinctive Forton (recently renamed Lancaster) Service Station, with its tower no longer a restaurant-cum-viewpoint. For travellers from the south the tower marks a gateway to the dramatic northern landscapes. Forton has long been on travellers' routes: before the railway and canal, the Roman road from Lancaster passed here, probably by Forton Hall Farm and Windy Arbour. Today, Forton consists mainly of new bungalows, plus the 1707 United Reformed (formerly Independent) Church, with bright yellow door to enable it to be located in the overgrown churchyard.

The Cocker swings north towards Ellel Grange. This Italianate villa, as it's always described, was built in 1859 for William Preston, who became High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1865. It is said to be modelled on Queen

Victoria's Osborne House (completed in 1851), but then so are innumerable contemporary British villas. The grange is now the international headquarters and Special Ministries Unit of the **Ellel Ministries**.

The Cocker continues south past Cockerham, flowing under Cocker House Bridge, where there is an old boundary stone. Cockerham is an old village, appearing in the Domesday Book as Cocreham. Its church, thought to have been founded in the 11th century and rebuilt in the 17th century, 1814 and 1911, is a plain, sturdy structure standing apart from the village.

At the north end of Cockerham is the vicarage built in 1843 for the Rev. Dodson, whom we met in Littledale. The earnestness we saw there is seen also in his determination to rid Cockerham of all sinful activities, such as cock fighting, hare coursing, horse racing and even bowling. After the Rev. Dodson left, a public house was built in 1871 without, it seems, unduly disturbing the peace of the village. Apart from the pub, the only other establishments in Cockerham today seem to be a beauty salon and a funeral directors. I'm not sure if the Rev. Dodson would approve of the implicit philosophy of life.

The Cocker dawdles through flat land drained by many ditches in Winmarleigh Moss. This is Lancashire's



Two oddities at Forton: (left) a semi-Roman milestone - it reads "Garstang III³/₄ miles" and (right) six hexahedrons by the canal near Nateby Hall Farm

largest remaining uncultivated peat mossland, supporting rare insect species such as the large heath butterfly and bog bush cricket. Winmarleigh itself is a scattered village. Winmarleigh Hall was built on the site of Old Hall in 1871 for John Wilson-Patten, MP for Lancashire North for 42 years. He became Baron

Winmarleigh, the first and last, as he outlived his two sons and grandson. The hall is now owned by NST Travel Group, which claims to be "Europe's largest educational and group travel company". Residential visitors can tackle a variety of challenging activities set out in the grounds of the hall.



Lancaster Canal near Winmarleigh

The **Ellel Ministries** make the name of Ellel known to people throughout the world but few of those people are aware that the name refers to a tiny village near Lancaster. The story of the Ellel Ministries begins in 1970 when Peter Horrobin was repairing a sports car and – here I must quote from their website so that you don't think me lacking in due seriousness – “God spoke to him about how he could straighten the chassis and rebuild the car, but much more importantly, God could rebuild broken lives.” And if He whispered ‘Ellel’ that was fortunate because apparently in old English it means ‘all hail’.

When Ellel Grange came up for sale in 1985 Horrobin raised nearly £0.5m from supporters to convert the grange into a ministry. The Ellel Ministries are now an international brand with branches in Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Norway, Singapore, South Africa and the United States.

What do the Ellel Ministries do? This may be as treacherous as the sands of Morecambe Bay, but I will venture in. The mission is “to proclaim the Kingdom of God by preaching the good news, healing the broken-hearted and setting the captives free.” In practice, this means “discipleship, healing and deliverance training”.

The theology, however, is controversial. According to others, the Ellel Ministries have “extreme doctrinal positions on deliverance and demonology” that “are void of biblical foundations”. A review of Horrobin's book *Healing through Deliverance* concluded that it argued that “those who did not believe that Christians can be demonized ... are themselves demonized.” Verily, I should steer clear, at least until my broken heart needs healing.

Beyond Cocker Bridge, the Cocker runs between sea defence embankments built in 1981. In 1969 the only colony of natterjack toads in Lancashire had been found on Cockerham Moss. Natterjack toads are the rarest of six British amphibians and are protected by law. The site was washed over by the highest tides but not after the wall was built. Perhaps coincidentally, the colony became extinct after 1981. The Herpetological Conservation Trust is now trying to restore the habitat and reintroduce the natterjack toad.

Part of Cockerham Moss was enclosed only after draining in the 19th century. The few buildings are modern and of brick. The terrain is flat and featureless, given over to sheep and cattle, with some arable farming if dry enough.

Similarly, north of the Cocker Channel, lies the flat drained land of Thurnham Moss. At the seaward extremity of this bleak landscape are the remains of **Cockersand Abbey**. The meagre remains today do not indicate the extent and importance of the abbey. Originally, the abbey stood up to where the sea wall is now. Today, there are just a few stones scattered about with only the chapter house still standing, partly because it was used as a burial place after being adopted by the Daltons. The red sandstone masonry of the old abbey was re-used in nearby farm buildings and in the sea wall, a somewhat ironic use of the stones since the abbots lived in fear of being submerged by the sea.



Left: Ellel Grange.



The remains of Cockersand Abbey

Walk 24: Glasson, Cockersand Abbey and Cockerham

Map: 296 (please read the general note about the walks in the Introduction).

Starting point: Near Glasson marina (446561).

This is a walk best done on a grey, rainy day with a strong westerly wind and a high tide – to better get into the spirit of the place. (Only joking.)

Walk southwest through Glasson to Tithe Barn Hill, and then turn right along Marsh Lane to Crook Farm. Follow the sea wall south to the Abbey Lighthouse Cottage, Plover Hill (7m high) and Cockersand Abbey, to which make a short detour. Across the shimmering waters of Morecambe Bay, Fleetwood and the Isle of Walney may be seen.

Continue past Bank Houses and the Cockerham Sands caravan park, and along the 1km embankment. Turn right towards the Patty's Farm holiday cottages, before which you cut southeast through the Black Knights Parachute Centre, which may be busy with planes and parachutists (but not if you've chosen a windy day). Across the fields, turn left on the A588 for 200m, and then walk to St Michael's Church. From the church take the path northeast to the Main Street of Cockerham.

Walk north through Cockerham and take the path northeast to Batty Hill. Continue north along a muddy track and then walk northeast to Cock Hall Farm (the high point of the walk, at 27m). Turn northwest past Thurnham Church and walk through the Thurnham Hall Country Club and across a field to Bailey Bridge. Cross the bridge and stroll along the canal towpath back to Glasson.

Short walk variation: Follow the long walk past Bank Houses to the end of the embankment and then turn left instead of right. Walk north either past the fishery of Thursland Hill or through Norbreck Farm, renowned for its pedigree Belgian Blue cattle. Either way you will eventually reach Moss Lane. Continue due north, either across fields or on a quiet lane to the east, to cross the canal and then turn left to the marina.

Cockersand Abbey was established as a monastic cell in the 12th century by Hugh the Hermit, as he would need to have been to choose this bleak, exposed, otherwise godforsaken spot, cut off from the mainland by Thurnham Moss. By 1190 this St Mary's of the Marsh had become a Premonstratensian abbey.

The abbey became very rich during the 13th century, through being granted much land in the northwest of England. At that time people were desperate to go to heaven and believed that a prayer on their behalf from monks would help. A gift to the abbey proved your piety.

The monk's life was not entirely one of cloistered contemplation. According to *British History Online*: in 1316, the abbey suffered badly from Scottish raids; in 1327, a canon was pardoned for the death of a brother; in 1347, the abbot and four canons were accused of using violence; in 1363, the abbey was ravaged by plague; in 1378, the king was begged for special compensation because "each day they are in danger of being drowned and destroyed by the sea"; in 1402, there was fear of violence from parties with whom they were in litigation; in 1488, two apostate canons were excommunicated, the brethren were forbidden to reveal the secrets of the order, and two other canons were accused of breaking their vow of chastity; in 1497, the canons were forbidden to "exchange opprobrious charges" and to draw knives upon one other; in 1500, various diseases were attributed to "inordinate potations" and there were minor disorders, such as disobedience to the abbot, lingering in bed and neglecting services on pretext of illness.

It all gives new meaning to the Dissolution of the Monasteries. At that time (1539) Cockersand was the third richest abbey in Lancashire. Its annual income was estimated at £157, revised (to no avail) to £282 after it was decreed that monasteries with an income less than £200 would be taken over by the king. Its lands, valued at £798, were bought by John Kechyn of Hatfield in 1544 and then passed to Robert Dalton of Thurnham Hall.

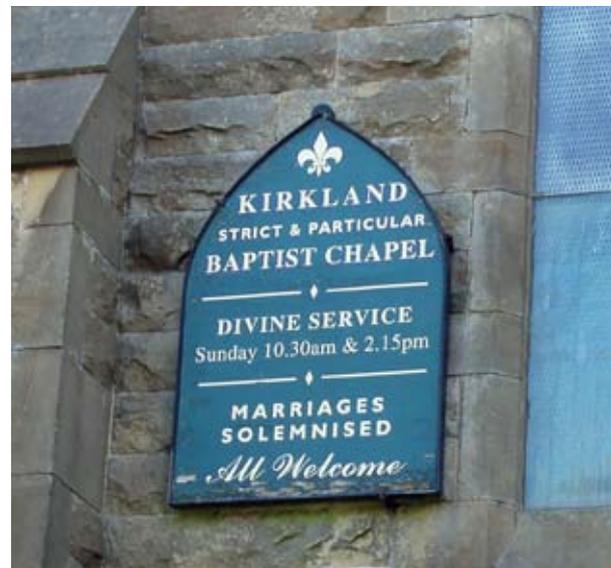
Beyond the sea wall and embankment the Cocker disappears into the mudflats of the Lune estuary and Morecambe Bay, forming part of the Wyre and Lune Sanctuary Nature Reserve, established as a national wildfowl refuge in 1963. This affords protection for internationally important numbers of wintering knot, grey plover, oystercatcher, pink-footed geese and turnstone. It also provides an important staging post for birds such as sanderling. The embankment runs 8km west, past the village of Pilling, and is crossed through flood gates by Wrampool Brook and Broad Fleet.

Broad Fleet

Broad Fleet slides into the Lune estuary from Pilling Moss, via its tributaries of Pilling Water from Nateby and Ridgy Pool from Eagland Hill. In the Lake District a 'water' is a lake; Pilling Water is not a lake but it flows little faster than one. And Ridgy Pool flows like a pool.

Nateby and Eagland Hill are 10m above sea level and some 10km from the Lune. Obviously, the region is flat. There are long, wide views over large, rectangular fields for cows, sheep and intensive crop production. Given the monotonous terrain perhaps I should argue that Broad Fleet is not really a tributary of the Lune and not bother with this section. However, there is nowhere that some expert in something doesn't find engrossing. Unfortunately for the visitor, the main interest here is underground, where recent studies have revealed unexpected insights into the past, present and possibly future of Pilling Moss.

The story begins with the Ice Age, when boulder clay was dumped over the Fylde region, leaving occasional small drumlins. By 4000 BC, the region had become a forest, as shown by the large number of 'moss stocks', that is, old tree trunks uncovered in the fields and dated to that period. The roots were upright and the trunks had been hacked off, showing that the trees were felled and



The rather serious Nateby church

that there was a large local community to carry out this arduous work.

This is supported by extensive finds of Neolithic implements and the discovery of ancient earthworks around Nateby. Today, the gentle undulations in the fields appear unremarkable but aerial photographs reveal various regular shapes, such as a 200m-diameter henge dated to about 2500 BC. Many Bronze Age remains have been found north of Nateby.

With the forest removed, the region became heathland but after the climate became damper in about 1400 BC it slowly turned into a bog, a process thought to have been complete by 800 BC. Old tracks, formed by laying down tree trunks to cross the bog, have been dated to that time. Over the centuries, layers of peat were formed, the first 1m or so being of rough peat, from the heathland vegetation, and then up to 4m of softer peat, mainly from sphagnum moss. The extent of the bog can be judged by the place names on today's map: I counted eight Moss Sides and three Moss Edges surrounding an area of about 25 sq km.

During the investigations of the Nateby earthworks a Roman road (or by-road) was discovered. It has been traced to join the Roman road that we've followed south from Lancaster and is believed to have continued west, south of Pilling Moss, to meet a port on the River Wyre. In the following centuries, habitation was limited to the drumlins raised a metre or two above the bog. Many farmsteads were drolly given a name with 'hill' in it. Unsurprisingly, there are few old buildings of architectural merit. For example, the village of Nateby, mainly a row of semi-detached houses today, was little more than a church a century ago. The new buildings in the region are mostly of red brick.

Pilling, however, is an old village, being owned by Cockersand Abbey in the 12th century and passing to the



*The weather-vane at Island House
(exaggerating the steepness of the island a little)*

Dalton family in the 16th century. It was very isolated, having the sea to the north and Pilling Moss to the south. There are only two buildings that interrupt the flat horizons: Damside mill and the church steeple.

The windmill was built in 1808 to a height of 22m, the tallest in Fylde. By the 1940s it had become derelict but, rather miraculously, it has been restored as a residence, complete with a traditional 'boat top', installed in 2007. It puts into perspective a proposal for two 125m wind turbines at Eagland Hill, which was rejected in 2008.

The steeple belongs to the St John the Baptist Church built in 1887 by Paley and Austin again. Here, they not only tackled the novelty (for Loyne) of a steeple but enlivened it by using different coloured stones, such as pink ones for the parapet. The church replaced one that still stands in the field behind, with a date of 1717 over the door and a sundial bearing the name of George



Pilling from Lane Ends



Damside mill, Pilling

Holden, who in Pilling literature is said to have “devised the modern tide tables”.

On this journey I have learned to be wary of simply repeating such claims. The facts are far from simple. Holden’s Liverpool Tide Tables, said to be the first high-quality such tables, were published for many years from 1770. There were three George Holdens involved. George I (1723-1793) was vicar of Pilling Church from 1758 to 1767, after which he moved to Tatham, to become curate there until he died. George II (1757-1820) lived in Horton-in-Ribblesdale, where he was a schoolmaster, from 1783. He succeeded George I to the Tatham curacy but still lived in Horton. George III (1783-1865) was the curate at Maghull near Liverpool from 1811. I am relieved that George III had no children.

The publication of the tide tables was passed on as a lucrative family side-line. Notwithstanding the fact that George I lived in the Pilling parsonage right beside the tidal floodgates, Pilling’s pride in its involvement seems

exaggerated, for three reasons. First, the original tide tables were published by brothers, George I and Richard (1718-1775). Richard was a teacher in Liverpool, specialising in mathematics and navigation. He seems the more likely to have had the necessary skills to prepare the tide tables. Secondly, the Holdens’ closely-guarded ‘secret method’ was checked against the meticulous data gathered by William Hutchinson, the Liverpool dock master. This data was never returned and I can find no details of the ‘secret method’. Hutchinson himself had theories about lunar effects on tides and the extent to which the Holdens were dependent upon him is unclear. Thirdly, none of the tide tables were produced while George I was actually in Pilling: the Georges beavered away on the tables while in Tatham, Horton and Maghull. (I bet you wish now that I had just repeated the claim.)

Today, Pilling Moss is farming land, crisscrossed by many ditches. It was drained in the 19th century, after which it was possible to lay a railway line across it in 1870. The single-line track ran, rather informally, from Garstang to Pilling and, later, Knott End. The ‘Pilling Pig’, named from the sound of the engine or whistle, became a familiar feature, and today a model of it stands at Fold House as one of the few things for tourists to look at. The line closed for passengers in 1930 and for freight in the 1950s.

Once the bog had been drained, the peat began to shrink and much of it was cut for fuel, an activity that ended in the 1960s. The farmland is now lower (leaving some lanes perched 1m or more above it), the rich soil is disappearing, and, who knows, the area is ready for its second flooding.

This is precisely what the Pilling Embankment built in 1981 is intended to prevent. In the meantime, the embankment provides (from the section open to the public between Lane Ends and Fluke Hall) a view of Broad Fleet seeping into Morecambe Bay, and of the Lake District hills behind Heysham Power Station and, suitably enough, of where we began, the Howgills, far behind the Ashton Memorial. And to show that I am not alone in considering this still to be within Loyme, the last house as the road peters out beyond Fluke Hall is called Lune View Cottage.

Here’s a fascinating fact that I’ve kept up my sleeve in order to finish this flat Fylde section with a flourish: when it’s in the mood, the River Lune can bring 700,000,000,000 litres of water into Morecambe Bay in one day. We now know where they all come from.



Broad Fleet entering Morecambe Bay

Reflections from the Point of Lune

And so, at the Point of Lune, the waters of the Lune and all its tributaries finally merge into Morecambe Bay and the Irish Sea. The final sentence of *Return to the Lune Valley* (2002) concludes that a tour down the Lune valley is “an interesting journey and a pleasant one”. ‘Pleasant’ is perhaps as positive as one can be about the Lune valley itself but it is possible to support a claim that the wider area within the Lune watershed is the most varied of any river in England.

Natural England has produced an analysis of England in terms of 159 ‘National Character Areas’, that is, areas that are “distinctive with a unique ‘sense of place’”. The Loyne region includes parts of ten of these National Character Areas. No other English river of the size of the Lune and its tributaries, if any at all, passes through so many Character Areas. In the following review of our journey, the Character Areas are indicated in italics.

The River Lune rises in the *Howgills*, which are composed of ancient sedimentary rocks that have been eroded into steep, rounded, grassy hills, incised by swift-flowing becks and grazed by sheep, but largely devoid of people. As the Lune swings west, on its northern side are the *Orton Fells*, composed of limestone. Below dramatic limestone pavements, there is fertile soil supporting improved pasture.

At Tebay, the Lune turns south and is joined by becks from the western Howgills and, from the west, from the Birkbeck and Shap Fells, part of the *Cumbria High Fells*. Below Sedbergh, the Lune forms the western boundary of the *Yorkshire Dales* Character Area, which is not the same as the National Park. From the Yorkshire Dales the major tributaries of the Rawthey, Dee, Greta and Wenning flow. This part of the Yorkshire Dales is mainly of limestone, overlain with sandstone and siltstones, capped by millstone grit on the highest tops. It includes some of the best limestone scenery in England, with impressive pavements, gorges, potholes and cave systems.

As the Lune continues south of Sedbergh, its western watershed is much closer than that to the east. The rolling semi-improved, upland pastures from Firbank Fell down to Kirkby Lonsdale form part of the *South Cumbria Low Fells*, which stretch west towards Windermere and Coniston. From Kirkby Lonsdale the west bank of the Lune forms the eastern fringe of the *Morecambe Bay Limestones* Character Area, which extends to Kendal and Ulverston.

To the east of the Lune south of Kirkby Lonsdale is the *Bowland Fringe*, an area of lush pasture, hay meadows, woodlands, marshes and becks, in which there are many isolated stone farmsteads and small villages. The pace of change is slow and many prehistoric features survive, including traces of Roman roads. The Lune and

its tributaries are notable for the number of medieval and later halls and manor houses, later adapted for a variety of contemporary uses.

As the Lune flows on in its widening floodplain, it is joined by becks from the *Bowland Fells*, an area of millstone grit forming a wild, windswept, upland plateau of bog and heath. Just north of Lancaster, the Lune becomes tidal and enters the *Morecambe Coast and Lune Estuary* Character Area. Here the low-lying land is covered with glacial and alluvial deposits and was once an area of fens, marshes and bogs. Today, it has been largely drained to provide pasture but there are still extensive areas of inter-tidal marshes. Finally, joining the Lune estuary, are rivers and drainage channels from the flat lands of the northern Fylde, part of the *Lancashire and Amounderness Plain*.

From this great variety of landscape types derives a range of human activities, although the Lune and its tributaries remain relatively undeveloped. It also provides such varied scenery and specific habitats for wildlife that much of the area has been recognised nationally and internationally, through designations as parts of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Most

of the region is farmed but even the areas that seem most like wilderness require a delicate balance between conservation and development, between the past and the future.

Even within such an apparently timeless region as Loyne, the threat of the future looms. On many mornings I set off to investigate a part of Loyne without a cloud in the sky. As the day progressed and the boots became muddier and the legs became wearier, so the sky often became hazier. But this was usually not a natural haze. It was caused by the vapour trails of the jets crossing the Loyne skies. The Loyne is on a busy flight path: often I could count a dozen or more jets in the sky at one moment.

As I wander on the green hills and among the grey villages of Loyne, many thousand people a day cross the skies above me. Clearly, I am misguided. I am envious of people who have acquired a sufficiently deep appreciation of their local surroundings and can, in a week or two, similarly appreciate wherever they are off to. Perhaps I should join them, but I suspect that I will look forward most to seeing those green hills and grey villages out of the jet's windows as I return.



The last view of the Lune, at high tide from the embankment beyond Fluke Hall, with the Bowland Fells in the distance.