

A survey of dialect studies in the area of the Sedbergh & District History Society

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Preface

Sedbergh (a town of around 3,000 inhabitants) is the largest settlement in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Until the boundary changes of 1974 created the county of Cumbria, Sedbergh and its nearby valleys of Dent, Garsdale, Howgill and Cautley were in the northwestern corner of the West Riding of Yorkshire. However, the nearest larger town is Kendal, with which Sedbergh has had close links, and there are various characteristics of the area which are more typical of Westmorland. In terms of local dialect it is therefore particularly interesting.

Having spoken to the Sedbergh and District History Society (SDHS) on a more general topic of dialect, I was asked what work had been done on the dialects of the Sedbergh area. The following is a summary of what I found, with my assessment of the significance of the various items I came across, which I deposited in the archives of both the SDHS and the Yorkshire Dialect Society.

Introduction

This is an attempt to examine, from the viewpoint of a dialectologist of the late twentieth century,¹ the main studies of the dialects of the area around Sedbergh.

It has to be somewhat selective, because “the Sedbergh area” can be interpreted more or less widely. Also, it is probably incomplete because there may have been studies of which I have not become aware. However, I believe I have included what a dialectologist would consider to be the most important works. These are dealt with in chronological order of their production.

In most cases, I have not attempted to describe in any detail the *findings* of these various studies. Those are for people to read for themselves, though in places I have picked on a few points of interest. What I have primarily tried to do is to describe the *methods* by which these scholars approached the task, and to make some assessment of their value.

That said, I have looked in some detail at the work of Sedgwick (1868) and to a lesser extent that of Hedevind (1967). While the other items include locations within our area as part of a wider study, these two works are specifically about Dentdale. Moreover, Sedgwick is one of the most famous and distinguished sons of our area, and in my opinion Hedevind’s book is among the most thorough and competent studies of an English dialect.

1. R. B. Peacock, *A Glossary of the Dialect of the Hundred of Lonsdale* (1869)

Though this work appeared in 1869, Peacock had died in 1864, so his studies were completed some years earlier. There must be some hesitation about its inclusion here, because the Hundred of Lonsdale was some distance west of Sedbergh, comprising the area around Lancaster (Lonsdale South of the Sands) and Furness (Lonsdale North of the Sands). But

since it was quoted by some later authorities, was published by a very reputable learned body (the Philological Society), and was edited by a famous polymath vicar (Canon J. C. Atkinson) who had himself published a well-known study of *The Dialect of Cleveland*, I think it should be mentioned. Also, besides the main “glossary”, it includes a more wide-ranging paper on the dialects of the Northern counties.

Peacock admits that he is an amateur, with “no pretensions to any great philological knowledge”, who had become interested in collecting “provincialisms” for a proposed dictionary of English dialects (see sections below). He had become fascinated by what he saw as etymological sources for local words. He had consulted fifteen dictionaries ranging from Celtic (Welsh, Gaelic, Manx), through the various “Gothic” i.e. Germanic languages, to Ugrian and Latin – looking for items which he thought had corresponding forms in Lonsdale English.

He left his material “in a rough and undigested condition”, giving his editor a big task in sorting it out. Atkinson notes that many items proved to be “words in common use among the unlearned”, by which I think he means local pronunciations of words which are Standard English. These Atkinson sought to exclude, but some such appear to have got through into the published list.

In spite of such deficiencies, the glossary does include a considerable number of items, many of which would no doubt be heard in areas adjacent to Lonsdale, such as ours. Besides the list of words, the book also includes a paper which Peacock had read to the Philological Society in 1863: “On some leading characteristics of the dialects spoken in the six Northern counties of England (ancient Northumbria)”. He is referring to England north of the Humber and the Mersey, where he says speech varies considerably from the rest of the country.

Much of his material is based on examples from HH Prince Louis-Lucien Bonaparte,² who had collected numerous versions of *The Song of Solomon* rendered in local speech – arguably not the best way to record local dialect! Peacock’s Appendices give various short extracts from *The Song*. Those for Westmorland and Craven are probably of most relevance to our area, in addition to the longer extract for Lonsdale South of the Sands.

Whereas the Glossary was mainly concerned with vocabulary, this paper is more about grammar i.e. morphology and syntax. Peacock looks at articles, noun declension, comparisons of adjectives, pronouns, verb conjugations and “particles” (conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs etc.). He looks in particular at four common items he claims are “universally prevalent in Northumbria to the exclusion of the rest of England”. These are the definite article form *t*; *i*’ for *in*; *at* for the relative pronoun *that*; forms of the verb *to be* (e.g. *is* occurring throughout the Singular).

Two general criticisms without going into specific details:

- i) His *Key to the Pronunciation* (i.e. phonetic transcription) uses the usual alphabetic symbols plus some of them modified by diacritics, italicisation etc. This was a practice more fully developed in the major work by Ellis (see Section 3 below), and is generally comprehensible. But there are times when Peacock does appear to confuse sounds and letters, a fault common among amateurs.

- ii) Throughout he refers to Anglo-Saxon, Old Frisian, Dutch, Old Norse, Danish, Low German etc., with a list of the dictionaries he has consulted. But he speaks of “etymology”, as “where these items come from”. Again this is a fault of amateur linguists. In many cases, the items are cognates, not derivations or borrowings: in other words, they have both developed from the same source, rather than one being the source of another.

Peacock’s work is interesting, but one has to acknowledge, as he admitted, that it is essentially the work of an amateur linguist and cannot be taken as definitive evidence of the dialects referred to.

2. Adam Sedgwick, *A Memorial by the Trustees of Cowgill Chapel (1868) and Supplement to the Memorial (1870)*

Adam Sedgwick’s *Memorial* (1868) and its *Supplement* (1870) are fascinating works. Their original purpose was to argue his case for the name and district assigned to Cowgill Chapel, of which Sedgwick was a founding trustee. But within the work, and especially in the various Appendices, he gives us valuable and interesting views on aspects of life in Dent (never in his time called “Dentdale”) in the years around 1800.

Though primarily renowned as a geologist, Sedgwick was obviously widely read, and his comments on various subjects are both interesting and perceptive. As a student of Linguistics, and especially Dialectology, I found his remarks in those areas of particular interest. The late nineteenth century was a time of rapid progress in the study and understanding of language. The year 1876 is regarded as an *annus mirabilis* in the history of Linguistics, with several groundbreaking developments in phonetics, comparative philology, and dialectology. Sadly Sedgwick (who, he tells us, dictated several of his Appendices, including those on dialect, from his Cambridge armchair in the late 1860s, when he was in his 80s) was too early to profit from the new insights. So his account is essentially that of an intelligent layman – and it is a mixture of perceptive and more naive observations.

An early part of the *Memorial* argues about the etymology of the name of the hamlet in which the Chapel is located. “Kirkthwaite” is declared to be an “erroneous orthography” for “Kirthwaite”, and “Cowgill” is an “ignorant mutilation” of “Cogill”. Sedgwick’s arguments about “Kirkthwaite” *not* being the older form of “Kirthwaite” include his assertion of a “sound dialectical rule” that *k* is not lost when *kirk* is compounded with another noun (cf. *kirkbank*). But he admits that when “the interposed word *by*” comes in, it does get lost by another rule (e.g. *Kir(k)by Lonsdale*). If Sedgwick had been writing a few years later, one might have thought he was familiar with the doctrine of the Neogrammarians (one of the landmark developments of 1876) that phonetic laws have no exceptions, and that some *apparent* exceptions can be explained by another interacting law. In fact, I think one could find several other examples of *k* being lost through the common phonetic change of the simplification of a cluster of consonants – and anyway the form *-by* was of course itself a noun (meaning “settlement”).

More interesting are his other statements about “Kirkthwaite/Kirthwaite/Krithwaite”. He admits in footnotes that he had recently been made aware of some ancient documents

which do have the form “Kirkthwaite”, which he had earlier passionately denied. But he claims this must be a case of what linguists call *popular etymology*: changing a form into something more easily understood (e.g. “sparrow-grass” for asparagus, “Welsh Rabbit” for rarebit etc). He alleges the same sort of change occurred in the name “Cowgill” for the well-known gill called “Cogill”.

As an aside, I wonder whether certain inhabitants of Dent today who use the pronunciation [kəʊgɪl] instead of the more popular [kaʊgɪl] are seeking to preserve the older form – or are they using a somewhat affected Received Pronunciation? If Sedgwick is correct, I think they should more accurately say [ko:gɪl].

As for the form “Krithwaite”, Sedgwick makes the amusing remark that in several words with *r* plus a vowel there is “a ludicrous struggle between the two letters for precedence”, which gives us the pairs *thorp/throp*, *firth/frith*, *grin/girn* and so on. He is essentially correct (a linguist would use the term “metathesis” for this phonetic process), but his use of the term “letter” – and also that of “orthography” – points to a problem with Sedgwick’s understanding of language to which we shall return at various points in this Section: his confusion of spoken and written language i.e. sounds and letters.

Appendix VI is a general discussion about the dialects of Northern England, especially in the Parish of Sedbergh. Sedgwick notes that this area is rather cut off from the rest of Yorkshire and has more in common with Westmorland, where the various valleys – even extending into the Lake District – have slight variations of speech but are significantly different from Cumberland or Wensleydale. He says that education is destroying dialect – a concern expressed by several more prominent linguists around that time, and one which led to the quickening of interest in dialect study. Sedgwick gives examples of changes of vocabulary and meaning which have occurred within his own lifetime. He expresses the enlightened view that an ability to use Standard English is desirable, but one should not forget the ancestral dialect.

Sedgwick gives a fair account of the history of the languages of Britain, with the succession of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon (with Celtic pushed into the western and northern areas), Danish coming from the east and Norwegian from the north-west, and French brought by the Normans. He goes on to give examples of placenames which indicate the places settled by these “tribes”: Anglo-Saxon *-ton/-ham/-worth...*; Danish *-thorp/-toft/-by...*; Norwegian *-thwaite* etc.

Then he applies this to the area in which Dent is situated. The Ribble Valley and Morecambe Bay have many *-ton* names, but to the north of the Bay we find Danish *-thorp* and Norwegian *-thwaite*. The Lune Valley has many Anglo-Saxon *-ton* names, but the Sedbergh area has more with *-thwaite* (Norwegian) and *-thorp/-throp* (Danish). Dent itself has mostly names from the Norwegians, “who overcame the old settlers”. This last statement is questionable: others would say that Angles and Vikings appear to have co-existed in separate but adjacent settlements. However, Sedgwick is happy to believe that in Dent “we are all of the blood of the North-men” – Vikings rather than the Anglo-Saxons he says are to be found in Wensleydale!

It is in Appendix VII that Sedgwick gets down to a more detailed discussion of dialect. The nineteenth century had seen a quickening of interest in the subject, and he refers to several of the early works, notably that of Carr on the dialect of Craven published in 1824. He says this contains most of the provincial words heard in Dent, but there are differences and Dent is closer than Craven to Norwegian-type dialect.

There follow some six pages which largely concern phonetics, and it is here that Sedgwick's observations are most variable in quality. Sometimes it is clear that he is referring to the Standard Language; at other times it is dialect; but in other places one cannot be sure. Some of his remarks are quite perceptive for a layman; some are more questionable; others I find incomprehensible. As he says at the start, "there is a great difficulty ... in giving a real phonetic spelling to provincial words"; one really needs "a new alphabet" – in other words a phonetic transcription. Having to work without such an aid leads to the danger of confusing sounds with letters, and when added to Sedgwick's understandable lack of familiarity with the developing subject of phonetics, this results in some apparently naïve assertions.

Sedgwick says that the "elements of our articulate sounds" can be divided into vowels, diphthongs and consonants. A vowel sound is one which can be prolonged (i.e. lengthened without a change in quality), whereas a diphthong is a union of two vowels as one syllable. So far, correct. But then his examples show confusion. He says that in "house" and "head" the vowels unite to form one syllable, but in "fear" and "hear" the vowels do not unite into a diphthong and in the dialect are sounded as two syllables. Now:

- i) "house" does indeed contain a diphthong, if we assume that in dialect it was pronounced [aʊs], as the *Survey of English Dialects* (see Section 7 below) records for Dent; but with "head" there *could* be a diphthong if he is referring to the dialect form [ɪæd] – but one wonders whether Sedgwick is looking at the spellings with "ea" in these items. In other words, was he confusing sounds and letters?
- ii) "fear" and "hear" *would* be described by phoneticians as having a diphthong [ɪə] in their usual pronunciation. It is only when pronounced in what Sedgwick seems to imply is a *more* dialectal form as [fɪ-ə, ɪ-ə] that they are two syllables.

These examples begin to illustrate the difficulty in interpreting Sedgwick's account. But let us continue to his third type of sound. He says that a consonant gives no sound by itself but needs a following vowel for us to hear it. Partly correct, at least. Then he says that there are four consonants called "liquids" (*l, m, n, r*) which can "flow on" i.e. give sound in themselves, either before or after a vowel. Correct again – though later these four sounds were divided by phoneticians into "liquids" and "nasals". But then he starts to go astray. He says he wants to add *v*, which is "as good a liquid as any of them", because it can be lengthened in itself in the same way. He would also add *f* to his liquids, by the same reasoning. Still partly correct (*v* and *f* are the same articulation, pronounced with or without vocal cord vibration). However,

- i) Phonetics would describe *f/v* as fricatives – and *all* fricatives can be prolonged, including the pairs [s/z, ʃ/ʒ, θ/ð], a point which Sedgwick has missed.
- ii) He also says *v* has “strangely and falsely long been associated with *u*, which is a vowel and sometimes a diphthong”. Leaving aside the latter dubious assertion, I can only think Sedgwick is thinking of *letters* written *v* and *u*, which are indeed associated typographically (being used interchangeably say in Latin inscriptions). Phonetically [v] and [u] are not related: it is *w* [w] which is the consonantal form of [u].

It is when he starts to discuss vowels that one really gets the mental picture of old Sedgwick sitting comfortably in his armchair in Trinity College and dictating his rather confused opinions. He starts by saying grammars used to speak of five vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*) or possibly six (if *y* is included). Clearly he is here referring to *letters*, as indeed he says. A phonetician would certainly say there are more than five vowel *sounds*, even if we do not count long and short vowels separately. But then Sedgwick says that only three of them are true vowels, because

- i) *i* is not a true vowel because it cannot be prolonged: it is a diphthong of *a+e*. Here he is talking about the letter *i*, but then he refers to the sound of the *name* of this letter: [ai] – a total confusion of speech and writing!
- ii) He says *u* is a vowel (as it can be prolonged), but it is often combined with *q* as a consonant – again confusing speech and writing, since *q* is merely a (redundant) letter of the alphabet and is always sounded as [k]. But in words like *cube* or *use* he says *u* is a diphthong i.e. [ju:] (though in fact phonetics would regard this as a semivowel + long [u:]). For all these reasons he says he cannot retain *u* in his list of vowels.

The third vowel he rejects is *y*. This is never a distinct vowel: it is either a consonant as in *you*, or “in place of short *e*” in *only*. To speak of the word as containing any sort of *e* just illustrates Sedgwick’s total confusion of sounds and letters. In other words he wants to talk about spoken language, especially dialect, but he cannot get written language out of his mind. Having reduced his initial six vowels to three, he then says the “prolonging” test shows there are in fact six. Where does he get his new three?

- i) He says “the first letter of the alphabet” (*sic*) gives us two separate vowels: to be heard in the words *father* and *hate*. Again he is getting tied up over letters and sounds. He makes a correct observation that in *father* it is “guttural” (i.e. what would be described phonetically as a back vowel) – but then he loses me completely by saying “it differs from the other gutturals in being unconnected with the aspiration of the letter *h*”. He goes on to say that both *a*’s can be long or short. The [ɑ:] of *father* and [a] in *hat* are indeed long and short, but what can he mean by a short-vowel form of [eɪ] (or [e:~?]) in *hate*?
- ii) The “double vowel in words like *look* is only an unfortunate spelling”; it is one vowel sound and can be prolonged. Quite right: he is talking about the sound [u:], but unfortunately he still keeps referring to spelling.

- iii) His sixth “good vowel sound” he calls “ô guttural”, as in *hall*. He is speaking of the long vowel [ɔ:], and he says many Northerners cannot pronounce this, so he believes it did not exist in the old dialects of the area.

His attempt at a phonetic description of this vowel as “like a low note in music, entirely from the throat, with an open mouth and the tongue at rest” might amuse a phonetician. But he is correct in saying that this sound [ɔ:] is a true vowel and can be prolonged. He then spoils things by criticising its use in *Saul* and *Paul* where he claims the “despotic authority of custom” has decided on the pronunciation with [ɔ:] while several other languages sound the two vowels separately as a diphthong. This remark is as misguided as his saying that two of his six vowels are “natural and guttural sounds, unchanged by the lips and tongue, and unconnected with the hard breathing of the letter *h*.” Whatever is intended by the last part of this, the first part is totally inaccurate: the essence of vowel sounds is that all the different vowels are produced by different positions of the tongue and lips. Indeed, he says shortly afterwards that all our vocal sounds are produced through the windpipe (i.e. using what phoneticians would call the pulmonic airstream mechanism), “setting the membranes at its top (i.e. the vocal cords) in a sonorous vibration”, which is then modified by the lips and tongue. So again we have a mixture of perceptive and naïve statements.

When turning to some individual consonant letters (*sic*), we find some interesting remarks. On *h*, he contrasts the “hard/soft breathing” which distinguishes *hear/ear*, but then he says that, though in some counties this sound hardly exists, and in some it is “wrongly affixed” (what would now be called *hypercorrection*), “this vulgar abuse does not characterise the Northern dialects”, and in Dent “the letter is hardly ever misapplied”. This apparent claim that in Dent dialect *h* is used as in the Standard language is surprising – and goes contrary to the findings of other studies, such as *SED*, which found *h* to be absent more often than not.

Sedgwick is interesting when he comes to *w*. He says it is “erroneously called a consonant”, whereas it is very much like the vowel *oo* [u:]. If it is used in words like *wanton*, it is sounded like a diphthong run rapidly together. So it is not really a consonant. He is essentially correct: [w] is classed now as a semivowel i.e. the vowel [u:] used as a consonant (though [wɔ] is not regarded as a diphthong).

When the “letter” *oo* (he means the sound [u:] – or rather [w]) is combined with *h* in words such as *what* or *where*, he says that the spelling ought to begin with *hw*, because the pronunciation is *hoo-at* etc. said rapidly. He claims that in the North such words have aspirated *w*, whereas in the Standard English of the South it is sometimes lost “to the great enfeebling of the English tongue”! It is obvious that Sedgwick is claiming that in nineteenth century Dent the usual pronunciation was one which by the mid-twentieth century was only found in Northumberland among the Northern counties (cf. *SED*).

Concluding this general discussion about phonetics, Sedgwick says, “Having thus pointed out one or two distinctions between provincial and good English...” and goes on to summarise his conclusions about vowels. The sentence just quoted illustrates the fact that he has what linguists would regard as an incorrect appreciation of the distinction between the

standard language and dialects. In fact, Standard English (or Received Pronunciation, if one is thinking mainly of phonetics) is not “good English” as compared to other forms. It is simply a historical accident that one dialect (that of a certain class of speakers in one part of the country – which we now call Standard English) and one form of pronunciation (that of a small minority belonging to a higher social class – which we call RP) have attained that status. As forms of language and speech they are no more “good” or correct than any other.

Later in the same paragraph Sedgwick says “the vowel *oo* replaces diphthongs; so *cow* becomes *coo* and *house* becomes *hoose*... Not only are these changes made, but they seem to defy all obedience to any intelligible rule.” This again shows his misunderstanding of the relationship between the different forms of English. The forms of Standard English/RP are not in any sense primary: they do not “become” i.e. *change* into the nonstandard forms. Rather, the different forms developed alongside each other, in different geographical areas and in different social classes – and they all did so through thousands of changes, many of which (in pronunciation at least) occurred according to regular “rules”. But we cannot blame Sedgwick for living a few years before these facts were more clearly stated and appreciated.

After this lengthy more general discussion, Sedgwick points out “some of the peculiarities of the northern dialect”, and this is a more interesting section.

- i) Sedgwick says that “in the old tongue of Dent” the Definite Article in a phrase like *in the abstract* would be *i th’abstract*, while in Craven it would be *t’abstract*. “As a general rule *the* is not suppressed but sounded strongly”. It is a pity he gives only one example, of a word with an initial vowel; before a consonant would the article be [t]? The alternation of [θ] before vowel ~ [t] before consonant occurred in parts of Yorkshire (though generally further south), but Sedgwick’s examples imply [θ] in both contexts, which certainly is not heard today. The *SED* for Dent (in the 1950s) records [t] in both contexts except for one example *in the oven* [ɪ ð ʊvŋ].
- ii) Sedgwick notices the major isogloss between North Midland and Northern dialect areas which passed between Dent and Sedbergh. He says Dent would say *Our brawn caw ran dawn th’ braw* with [aʊ] in several words, while in Sedbergh it would be *Oor broon coo ran doon th’ broo* with [u:].
- iii) Whereas the above two are important points affecting many words, Sedgwick’s third of what he calls “dialectic corruptions” is a more occasional phenomenon: to “replace a good old word with a modern word of similar sound”. Thus *Harbergill* became *Harbourgill* and *Risell* became *Rise Hill*. He is not too sure about those examples, but (if I interpret his attempted phonetic spelling correctly) he is confident in saying that *Baughfell* is [bɔ:fel] not *Bowfell* [bɔʊfel].
- iv) The letters (he means sounds) *h*, *v*, *w* are “often misused in provincial dialects”: *h* is often lost, and *v/w* are interchanged. But according to Sedgwick, this never happens in his native valley. We have referred above to *h*-dropping; the confusion of *v/w* is indeed irrelevant to Dent.

- v) The “suppression of the guttural sounds” is a major change in the spoken language of the north. By this he means the palatal fricative [ç] in *sigh, night* and the velar [x] in *trough, rough*. Though he calls the latter a “grand sonorous guttural” from the chest, he is correct in observing that the two sounds differ in being further forward or back along the roof of the mouth. He recalls hearing the fricative in both sets of words, but now we “polish and smooth our language” and thus cut ourselves off from our ancestors!
- vi) Whereas the above referred to all northern dialects, he now turns to some which are more restricted to Westmorland and the Lake Counties. All northern dialects tend to make long vowels and diphthongs into two syllables: for example, *more, late* become *ma-er, la-et*. But this change varies regionally in its effects. Unfortunately Sedgwick here repeats his confusion of sounds and letters. For instance, he criticises Carr’s work on the Craven dialect for spelling *more, sore, pace* as *maar, saar, paas*, and objects “no doubling of *letters* can make â *guttural*” (my italics), and then reverts to some of his dubious statements about the vowels of English.

Then we have Sedgwick making some interesting statements about Standard English and dialect. He points out that in Standard English we hear two vowels in *fear, beard*, but not in *seat, meat*. However, northern dialects are more consistent in that the latter are pronounced *se-at, me-at*. He goes on: “our northern dialects have become vulgar by refusing to conform to the inconsistent standard of the South of England”.

Without getting involved in the detail of those specific examples, Sedgwick is here making a correct observation. Dialects have indeed come to be regarded as somehow “vulgar” or substandard in relation to Standard English, whereas in fact they are just as genuine developments – and sometimes are more consistent than Standard English which in some areas has adopted forms from different dialects, and is no more “correct” in any absolute sense.

This section ends with some further statements with which linguists would not disagree. Time produces changes in language; as society changes we have to increase our language. But let us not go on polishing till we rub things down and rejecting items to the point where we cannot understand our ancestors. The most dangerous of the succession of invaders of England is “the schoolmaster and his followers”.

The penultimate part of the discussion of language and dialect in the *Memorial* concerns a number of words which Sedgwick says have survived from the time of Chaucer. A few of these have undergone changes of meaning in Standard English, but not in Dent: for example *silly*, which means feeble, but in body rather than mind. A longer list of words is now unfamiliar in Standard English, but the words continue in dialect (without a change of meaning): for instance *lake* (play), *lathe* (barn), *mell* (meddle). Other items are survivals in dialect but which have changed phonetically: *thropple* (windpipe: *throte-boll* in Chaucer) or involve customs not familiar outside the Dales: *rake the fire* (keep it going overnight). One is dubious about some of these items – and also about Sedgwick’s saying they cause him to suspect that “Chaucer had visited our northern Dales”!

The concluding pages of the book illustrate my own conclusions about Sedgwick's views about language. Some are perceptive and were to be echoed by later scholars of Linguistics. He expresses a wish that words and phrases "now almost obsolete but still lingering among our northern Dales" might be recorded in small tracts. It is probably coincidental, but Sedgwick's *Memorial* came out in 1868; in 1870 the first clear call came for the founding of an English Dialect Society, and in the next thirty years there was a flurry of activity in new or reprinted "glossaries" and descriptions of dialects.

Of more mixed value is Sedgwick's somewhat poetical description of the mechanisms by which speech is produced, transmitted and perceived by the human body. However, undoubtedly true is his belief that language is "a great gulf between man and every other living thing". Linguists have shown that, whereas other species can indeed communicate to varying extents, language in its literally infinite possibilities is uniquely human.

In the *Supplement to the Memorial* (1870) Sedgwick returns to the "orthography" of the name *Kirthwaite*. He now admits that some old documents have been found with the spelling *Kirkthwaite*. But he still thinks *Kirthwaite* has better historical support. He strongly believes that, in spite of numerous instances of places with *Kir(k)by* as part of the name, "it would violate all the rules by which dialectical changes have been governed" for the *k* to be lost in many other contexts. He says there are exceptions to this rule, but they are very rare. This slightly contradicts what he said (see p. 3 above) which had echoes of the later Neogrammarian hypothesis about phonetic laws *not* having exceptions.

Sedgwick returns to the etymology of Cowgill and Kirthwaite. He now thinks that Danish *Ko* (cow) suggests that *Cogill* is the more historically accurate form, and this with Old Norse *Kyr* (cows) shows that "the two names stand side by side as of kindred stock". The *Supplement* also has a lengthy section where Sedgwick speculates about the names of old Dent families and their etymology or derivation. This includes his own name (*Sedgwick*), various names with *-thwaite* suggesting Norse settlers, and nicknames like *Harry o' Shoulbred* or *Adam o' th' Parson's* (referring to himself?).

It seems appropriate to end this Section by referring to Sedgwick's final remarks relating to language. For these illustrate a point that has recurred throughout: that in relation to language a highly intelligent man can come to a mixture of perceptive and fanciful conclusions. Sedgwick says he has alluded to rules of language. One great rule in the development of language is that of Euphony, by which he means agreeable sound which fitted the original purpose. So "the ancient and vulgar sounds ought not to be forgotten". They belong to the real history of a language and provide a link to our ancestors. Sedgwick says if he were to speculate further on this subject, he might perplex his aged brain!

That "rule" is certainly an old man's speculation. But in the previous paragraph he makes a point about rules of language that all linguists would echo: that language came before the rules. We might question Sedgwick's words about language being made "in conformity with the original faculties of the human mind", but we would certainly agree that true "rules of language" are statements of what has been observed to occur rather than something which teachers tell us to obey.

3. A. J. Ellis: *On Early English Pronunciation. Part V: The Existing Phonology of English Dialects* (1889)

Alexander Ellis was a prodigious polymath: he published on Latin and Greek, music and mathematics as well as on English. But he is best known for *On Early English Pronunciation*, Parts I-IV of which appeared between 1869 and 1874 and dealt with the phonology of English from Chaucer's time to the present. For Part V he planned to cover the existing pronunciation of English dialects, a subject in which he had been interested for about twenty five years. This turned into an enormous task, and did not appear until fifteen years later, when it was published as a separate work of 855 closely-printed pages. It marked an important change in emphasis in English dialectology: from vocabulary to phonology, and it was the first major survey of English dialects.

Ellis says he was concerned to record the different forms taken during the last 100 years of the same word "passing through the mouths of uneducated people": in other words to give a historical account of the phonology of nonstandard speech. But he did very little data-collection himself. He justified himself by saying that the "peasantry" were "bi-dialectal", and to an unfamiliar educated person they would probably have used their "refined" pronunciation. So he relied on secondhand information, supplied by over 800 voluntary helpers who provided material ranging from a few words to large samples of transcribed local speech.

Notable among the latter major sources were HH Prince Louis L. Bonaparte (see Note 2 below), who provided a number of specimen texts and also gave Ellis his "first conceptions of a classification of English dialects", and his most prolific source, Thomas Hallam, who covered much of the Midlands and the north in his working life for a major railway company, and interviewed many "old and if possible illiterate peasants". But another major helper, and the one of most interest to us, was J. G. Goodchild. He was a Londoner, employed for many years by the Government Geological Survey, and was "thus constantly in the society of dialect speakers". Presumably Ellis believed he had managed to get his informants to use their natural rather than a refined pronunciation, in spite of being an educated Southerner. Only a very capable educated man could have mastered Ellis's system of phonetic transcription (see below). Ellis says he verified Goodchild's accuracy in using this through interviews with speakers themselves, and that he provided "wonderful phonographs, so to speak, of the pronunciation of Cumberland, Westmorland and North-West Yorkshire".

Ellis developed three "tools of investigation" at different stages of his work. First he produced a "Comparative Specimen", which was a passage of fifteen sentences to be produced by informants in order to see dialect forms of familiar words and constructions. Later, because he wanted to obtain examples of more words that the Comparative Specimen could contain, he prepared a "Classified Word List" of 971 items. Over 700 were items containing examples of all the vowels in words of Wessex or Norse origin; around a hundred were "English" but of unclear origin; and the remainder were of Romance origin. To the list he appended a few grammatical constructions, and instructions to characterise the intonation of the dialect by underlining adjectives such as "rough, smooth; thick, thin; indistinct, clear;

hesitating, glib; whining...”. He sent the list to village clergymen. Most were ignored, and many just gave the equivalents of only a few of the 900-odd words. But Ellis felt the effort had been worthwhile. Finally he produced a “Dialect Test”: a shorter passage of just seventy six words, with a set of hints and instructions, e.g. FIND “notice whether the word is like *fined* or *finned*”. From different localities he got perhaps a full “comparative specimen” or a “dialect test” – or just a partial “word list”. But often the combination yielded a reasonable amount of data.

Most of this reached him in the form of modified orthography, and it was turned into phonetic transcription by Ellis himself – though a few of his major helpers, including Hallam and Goodchild, mastered the system well enough to provide their material ready transcribed. Ellis called his transcription “palaeotype” because it employed only “old” letters, i.e. normal alphabetic symbols rather than special phonetic ones. The alphabetic symbols could be used as lower case, capitals, italic, reversed, inverted, doubled, etc. Ellis admits that with all the different phonetic values for these various symbols, it “requires much careful study to understand it thoroughly and use it easily”!

Ellis published findings for 1,070 localities in England (plus seventy five in Wales and Scotland). On the basis of this large amount of material he was able to classify English dialects into six major “divisions” (Southern, Western, Eastern, Midland, Northern and Lowland) further subdivided into forty two “districts” (e.g. Eastern North Midland), each broken down into “varieties” and in a few cases further divided into “subvarieties”. He also found that he could draw ten “transverse lines (i.e. what would later be called major “isoglosses”) across England e.g. the northern limit of the pronunciation of *some* as [sʌm].

Almost every aspect of Ellis’s work came under criticism: the variable quality of his helpers; the problems in interpreting their recordings; the complicated nature of his transcription for anyone trying to write, read, or typeset it; the unevenness of his geographic coverage; and so on. Later scholars sometimes decided his findings must be inaccurate; in other cases they found that he had recorded points which they later confirmed by their own work. Ellis’s work is difficult to use, but no dialectologist could afford not to examine it.

How does all this relate to our area?

At the outset one has to agree with the last point above: Ellis is certainly hard to use. The arrangement of the book means that references to our area are in several different places within a section of a hundred pages which relates to the “District” our area is assigned to. The small typefaces, countless abbreviations, and the constant need to check the interpretation of palaeotype symbols all add to one’s frustration. But there is obviously some good and fascinating material to be found, and one has to persist.

Let us look first at our area in relation to the Ellis’s classification of dialects. One of his “transverse lines” is that dividing the pronunciation of *house* as [hu:s] (to the north) and [haʊs] to the south. This is described as “a very close and sharp division” of dialects, which enters Yorkshire just south of Sedbergh where one hears [hu:s], and north of Dent [haʊs].

The isogloss then runs through Garsdale along the River Clough to the Western boundary of the North Riding.

Though this major [hu:s/haus] isogloss actually cuts across it, Ellis nevertheless assigns the whole of our area to the same “District”. This is District 31 (D31),³ labelled “West Northern”, and it is part of the Northern “Division” of dialects – whereas much of the West Riding and Lancashire is classed as “North Midland”, part of the major Midland Division.

D31 is divided into six main “Varieties”. These include Var i (the extreme West of Yorkshire, including Upper Swaledale, Upper Wensleydale, part of the North-West horn of Yorkshire and North and Mid Craven); Var ii (Lonsdale);⁴ and Var iii (Westmorland south of the watershed⁵ with part of extreme West Yorkshire. This Variety embraces Dent and Sedbergh in Yorkshire and Kendal, Longsleddale and Orton in Westmorland. It borders onto Var i, which includes Craven).

Among the “Authorities” (i.e. sources of material) of interest to us are Casterton and Kendal in Westmorland, and Cautley by Sedbergh, Dent, and Howgill in Yorkshire. These Ellis tells us were recorded in very careful palaeotype transcription by JGG (J. G. Goodchild: see above).

Ellis says it is very difficult to draw the boundaries of the six Varieties of D31, though natives can readily localise people, but only by slight variations in intonation, vowels and vocabulary. To illustrate the differences within D31 and some of the differences and similarities with the bordering D30 (MidYks) and D32 (parts of Cumberland and Northumberland), he gives twenty two interlinear versions of the Comparative Specimen (i.e. the longer reading passage) referred to above. Nineteen of these are from D31, but No 1 is from MidYks (D30) and Nos 21/22 are from D32.

Of particular interest for our area are No 6 (Casterton), No 7 (Dent) and No 8 (Sedbergh). The Casterton version was dictated by a Mrs Wilson (born 1825), who had lived most of her life at Casterton, but had moved a few years ago to be a tollgate keeper at Penrith. That from Dent was dictated by a Mr Parrington: he was a native of Dent’s Town and was by trade a shoemaker. For the last ten years he had been an innkeeper in Keld but he continued to use the Dent dialect, and he had with him a young man fresh from Dent. He still used various particular forms mentioned by “Prof. Sedgwick”,⁶ and remembers some others (but not all of them).

Regarding No 8 (Sedbergh), Ellis says the speech is strictly the same as Westmorland, Sedbergh lying to the north of the [hu:s/haus] isogloss. The parish of Sedbergh included Dent and Cowgill, Garsdale, Dowbiggin, Howgill and Cautley. From Howgill Goodchild recorded a Word List (see below), and at Cautley he recorded a version of the Comparative Specimen. This was obtained from Mr Gibson, a farmer who had picked up enough learning to become a National Schoolmaster in Cautley, but who was certainly not an educated man. The Sedbergh version was dictated by a Mr Foster, an “uneducated native” born in 1811 who had lived forty years in Sedbergh, then a few years in Keighley, then Askrigg before finally becoming a tollgate keeper near Penrith. Ellis says there was not much communication between Cautley

and Sedbergh (just some market day visits), but the dialects are almost identical. On the pages with the interlinear Comparative Specimen he uses the Sedbergh version because it was from an older man, with notes about any variants at Cautley. However, the versions from Sedbergh (No 8) and Dent (No 7) are so similar that Sedbergh words are represented by ditto symbols unless they differ from what is recorded on the line above as from Dent.

There are footnotes appended to each version of the Comparative Specimen. For example, for the Casterton version, the at+Infinitive construction is noted (“I’d trust him at speak”). At Dent, the *r* in *for* is said to be “fully trilled”, and the form [wraŋ] for *wrong* was remembered, though [raŋ] was now used also. To the Sedbergh version, various minor differences of phrasing are noted at Cautley; at+Infinitive occurred; postvocalic-r is recorded, but is also said to be omitted.

As mentioned above, besides the Comparative Specimen, Ellis gives a Classified Word List for our area. This was the long list of 970+ words of Wessex and Norse/English/Romance origins for which Ellis sought local equivalents. Unlike some other locations, for this area Ellis was provided with forms for a majority of the items. Goodchild obtained these from the Dent informants detailed above and also got those for Howgill. The latter were obtained from a Mr. Best of Kirkby Thore, who had previously lived fifty years in Howgill. The forms listed are prefixed D or H unless the same form was obtained for both locations.

It is for those interested to examine this wealth of material in detail. They are sure to find points that are worth noting. For instance, right at the start of the hundred-page section on D31 I noticed a reference to the pronunciation of *me*, *green* etc as [meɪ, greɪn], one of the first features of the traditional dialect of our area which struck me.

Ellis is frustrating but fascinating!

4. The English Dialect Society and its activities

In 1870 we read the first clear call for a systematic effort for “the collection and preservation of our provincial words. In a few years it will be too late. Railroads and certificated teachers are doing their work...”! Note the emphasis on vocabulary, which up to this time was the main concern of British dialectology. But the following year Ellis used less restricted terms when he followed up the preceding call: “It is highly desirable that a complete account of our existing English language should occupy the attention of an English Dialect Society.”

There was a positive response, and the Society was formed in 1873, with the Rev. Walter Skeat, later Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge, as its Secretary and Director. Skeat was a remarkable man; his first studies were in Mathematics and Divinity, but after an illness forced him to give up his work as a parish priest in Norfolk, he returned to Cambridge and became interested in the historical study of English. His large range of work included an *Etymological Dictionary* and many contributions to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, whose editor J. H. Murray received both scholarly and financial support from Skeat.

Over the next twenty five years the Society put out some eighty works, grouped in four series:

Bibliographies: works that illustrate the various dialects of English

Reprinted Glossaries: word lists of varying length published over previous centuries

Original Glossaries: new works relating to various parts of Britain. The title of the series is misleading, since not all are purely lexical in emphasis

Miscellanies: various items, including specimens of various dialects, short papers on dialects portrayed in literature, and so on.

Though there were some important items in the above lists with a wider or different emphasis, it is clear from an early date and from its published “Aims” that the Society was primarily interested in vocabulary: Skeat talked of producing some “complete and exhaustive provincial glossary” – in other words a dialect dictionary for English. There was a period of bickering about who should be in charge of this project, but in 1895 Skeat wrote to his son that “At last, after 20 years, I have got hold of the right man.” It was announced that Joseph Wright would become secretary of the Society and editor of *The English Dialect Dictionary* (usually abbreviated to *EDD*): see Section 5 below.

Is there any particular relevance of this activity to our area?

First, among the data for compiling the *EDD*, Wright used all previously published materials. This would certainly include the works relating to our area described in the preceding chapters: Peacock, Sedgwick, Ellis.

Second, Skeat himself had a Sedbergh connection. His daughter, Bertha Marian Skeat, was also a scholar of English language, and after studying at Cambridge and then obtaining a PhD in Zürich, she embarked on a teaching career. She lectured at a women’s training college in Cambridge, but then helped to found a school at Barnard Castle which moved to Sedbergh in 1901 as Baliol School.⁷ During her time here she published various articles and books and compiled a Word List for the English Dialect Society. There can be no doubt that this material found its way into *EDD*.

5. Joseph Wright and the *English Dialect Dictionary* (1905)

Wright was another remarkable man. He grew up in the village of Windhill near Bradford, speaking the local dialect. Illiterate until his teens, he eventually trained in Germany, the seat of philology in the late nineteenth century. Returning to Britain, he went to Oxford and soon became Deputy Professor of Comparative Philology. In 1892 he published one of the works produced for the English Dialect Society referred to in the preceding Section. This was *A Grammar of the Dialect of Windhill*, a historical description of the phonology and grammar of his native speech. This influential work became the model for many studies of the dialect of a particular area.

The aim of the *English Dialect Dictionary* was to detail “the complete vocabulary of all dialect words still in use or known to have been in use in the last 200 years”. As a start

Wright had the materials the English Dialect Society had collected before his appointment (see previous Section), plus the “monumental work of the late Dr A. J. Ellis” and other studies. He sent out some 12,000 copies of a postal questionnaire containing around 2,400 words with instructions on how to transcribe them phonetically. He also set up groups such as the Yorkshire Committee of Workers (later to become the still active *Yorkshire Dialect Society*) to collect more material. He and his wife undertook the mammoth task of collating and editing all this data.

The *EDD* appeared in six large volumes between 1898 and 1905 and is still a standard work of reference. Wright’s criteria for inclusion were a) a usage must have been recorded since about 1650; b) it must have some *written* authority i.e. it had appeared in literature or articles or dialect writing of some sort. This latter criterion is surprising, since much dialect has never been written down and it seems likely that some forms could have been excluded for this reason.

As part of Volume VI Wright included the *English Dialect Grammar (EDGr)*, which also appeared as a separate publication. Wright considered this to be the most interesting part of the work – a sign that interest among dialectologists was shifting from vocabulary to phonology and grammar. About half of the *EDGr* is the Index! This Wright composed first, and it is in fact an alphabetical list of words (most of them everyday rather than dialectal items) with their various dialect pronunciations and where these are found. There are about 16,000 forms listed: for instance, thirty pronunciations of the word *house*. From the Index Wright drew the material for the 247 pages of Phonology, a historical account of the development of sounds from West Germanic through Old and Middle English to the modern dialects. A shorter section of forty two pages is Accidence, which shows various peculiarities of dialect grammar. As the name suggests, this was mainly to do with inflectional morphology; only a few points of syntax were included.

With the launching of *EDD*, many influential dialectologists (including Skeat) felt they could relax. The job was done, they thought, and the English Dialect Society was actually wound up in 1896! Surely there must be material in this enormous work which is relevant for someone interested in the study of the dialects of our area? Indeed there must, but it is difficult to identify it. One can look up words that are thought to have existed around Sedbergh or Dent, and they may be recorded – with a reference to Ellis or Peacock or some less well-known source. But if the item had not appeared in any written source up to the date of Wright’s work, it may well not be there.

More serious is the vagueness of the locality references. Usually we only find abbreviations for the counties where a form has been attested: *Wm*, *Cu* or at best something like *NWYks*, and of course there are no details about the speakers. There are no maps, so the regional distribution of forms can only be worked out from the lists of counties named. Sadly then, *EDD* is not a work which can count for much when considering the studies of dialect in our area.

6. T. O Hirst, *The Dialect of Kendal* (1906)

This work started as a dissertation written at Victoria University (Liverpool), but it was later considerably enlarged and rearranged. Hirst was a serious scholar, and the bibliography includes many standard works in English and German. Besides various texts in Old and Middle English, there are works of reference wellknown in that time of historical emphasis in the study of language. Also in the bibliography are several items referred to elsewhere in this survey: Peacock, Ellis, Wright, Skeat, and others.

Of particular interest is the fact that the phonetic descriptions and the transcription employed are based not on Ellis (who is quoted throughout) but on the work of the great pioneer of English phonetics, Henry Sweet.⁸

The title of Hirst's work does not reflect how relevant it is to our area. As he says at the start of Chapter I, it is in fact based almost entirely on his observations of a speaker from much closer to Sedbergh. Roger Capstick had moved to Liverpool only three years before Hirst began to study him: previously he had lived all his life as a farmer at Low Park (north of Lowgill), and his wife was from Cautley. Hirst says Capstick had "preserved the dialect spoken in his youth admirably."

While his informant came from close to Sedbergh, Hirst says that what he regards as the "Kendal dialect" was spoken over an area roughly bounded by Tebay, Staveley, Windermere, Whitbarrow, Kirkby Lonsdale, Garsdale ... He says it is essentially "Northern" rather than Midland, with a Scandinavian element which seems to be largely East Scandinavian (i.e. Danish), which is surprising when compared to what we read elsewhere. However, Hirst admits that some words are definitely West Scandinavian (e.g. *fell*, *force*). There is also a sizeable Romance element, but only a dozen or so words of Celtic origin.

Hirst says the dialect has eleven "simple" vowels, and these are classified (as per Sweet) in terms of High/Mid/Low, Front/Back, Narrow/Round. There are four diphthongs ending in [u], three ending in [i], and two ending in [ə]. There are twenty six consonants, many of them "pronounced exactly as in Polite English". Examples are given of words containing all these sounds.

Chapter I (as just outlined) is essentially "descriptive", and attention then turns to the "historical" dimension which was the main preoccupation of that period. Chapters II-VII are historical phonology, relating the dialect to its origins in Old English and so on. There are two sets of three related chapters. Chapter II examines the Kendal vowels and diphthongs and their "OE equivalents". Each sound is described in terms of its origins in Old English, Scandinavian, Old French, or Celtic, and its developments in various environments through the Middle English period to the present. Copious examples are provided. Chapters III and IV are then summary tables of vowel changes. First we have a table of each Kendal vowel and its origins (e.g. Kendal [i] = seven origins in OE, two in Scandinavian, one in Old French, and so on. This chapter is essentially "looking back", while the following one looks the other way: OE vowel x > Kendal x, y, z ... Scandinavian x > Kendal a, b ... Old French/Anglo-Norman j > Kendal k ... and so on.

Chapters V-VII do the same for consonants: the first gives examples of the Kendal consonants and their origins in OE/Scand/OFr/Celtic, and the two following chapters are tables of changes. Chapter VI lists Kendal *k* etc and its origins; Chapter VII lists changes in the other direction: consonant *x* of OE > Kendal *y, z ... b* in Scandinavian > Kendal *c ...* and so on. On the subject of consonants, it is worth noting that Hirst implies that *r* is pronounced before another consonant, and that *h* is “preserved when initial”. Both of these are points where other descriptions have differed.

It was noted earlier that emphasis in the study of English dialects moved from vocabulary to phonology, and Hirst’s work reflects this. But Wright had also directed attention to matters of grammar, particularly morphology – or at least “Accidence”, to use the current term for this aspect of word structure. Chapter VIII of Hirst is titled *Outlines of the Accidence of the Kendal Dialect*, and it is worth noting some of his remarks as he goes through the parts of speech.

He starts by saying that “Kendal has preserved relatively few of the older inflections, its position in this respect being similar to that of Polite English”. He then turns first to Nouns, noting that the Plural is usually formed in *z*, (sometimes *-əz* or *s*), though there are some Umlaut plurals (*men, geese, kye* [phonetically transcribed]), zero plurals (*sheep, deer*, etc), and so on. He also notes the syntactic point that expressions of weight have no plural marked (*two pound of ...*), and also mentions that the common northern form *childer* is unknown, the form used being *barns*.

Short sections on Numerals and Adjectives are followed by some remarks about the Definite Article – a subject that recurs in most works on the dialect of the area, not all agreeing with each other. Hirst says it is expressed by a remnant of a Neuter Plural Dative (*-t*), which is “lost before Stops”, its place being taken by a more emphatic pronunciation of the consonant “with possible slight glottal closure”. It is sounded before certain sounds (which would be described as liquids, nasals, semivowels ...); and when preceded by prepositions such as [*bi, i, intə*] etc. which end in a vowel, the *t* is “always preserved no matter what consonant follows”.

Regarding pronouns, we may note the Second Person familiar forms [*thoo/thu/tə*]; and the fact that the relative pronoun *who* is unknown, always being [*ət*]. The conjugation of the Verb is given as: [*a kum/thoo kumz/he kumz/wi kumz/ji kum/ðə kum*].

The history of Linguistics showed a development of attention from phonology to morphology (word structure) and eventually to syntax (phrase and sentence structure), with the realisation by the 1950s that the last area is vastly complex. In Hirst (published in 1906) this subject occupies Chapter IX: *The Sentence* – and covers all of two pages!

Chapter X is interesting, being some eight pages in phonetic transcription of *Specimens of the Kendal Dialect*. This is presented as his informant speaking, but one wonders how Hirst took this down in the days before mechanical recording. If he was writing it from speech, it would have needed to be so slow as to be less than natural.

Finally, we have something reminiscent of earlier works on dialect: a *Glossary*. This is a word list in phonetic transcription (arranged as closely as possible to the order of the normal alphabet) in the following form:

item (phonetic transcription)
part of speech
meaning (i.e. alphabetic spelling)
paragraph reference.

This occupies some seventeen pages with around seventy six items on each – a total of nearly 1300 words.

For its time Hirst's book is an accomplished and thorough piece of work.

7. The Survey of English Dialects (1962-)

After the publication of *EDD* there was something of a feeling of “We did it – but just in time.” What was considered to be “pure dialect” was rapidly disappearing, but English scholars thought they had made an excellent record of it. In the following forty years the most important studies concentrated on particular areas, largely following the model of Wright's *Windhill* (see above). The study by Brilioth of *The Dialect of Lorton* in the Buttermere valley was the closest to our area, but that is not near enough to include in this survey.

In 1946 Eugen Dieth, a Professor of English at Zürich, pointed out that Britain was not in fact a leader in the field, as Skeat had claimed following the publication of *EDD*. Many other countries in Europe had produced or at least started work on a full dialect atlas. Dieth's challenge was taken up by Harold Orton of Leeds University, and he and Dieth as joint directors launched the *Survey of English Dialects (SED)*.

Though the emphases of Linguistics had changed over the last half-century, English dialectology was rooted in university departments which were largely concerned with the historical development of the language. So the aims of *SED* were very “traditional”. It chose to concentrate on the oldest generation of rural speakers i.e. those most likely to produce “genuine dialect”, and to gear its investigation to finding the modern developments of Middle English or other historical forms. A questionnaire of 1,322 questions in nine “Books” (e.g. the Farm; Animals; the Body; Numbers, Time and Weather) was used. More than half the questions were primarily designed to elicit vocabulary, though it was assumed that these as well as 387 specifically-designed items would elicit phonetic information. Only around 200 questions were framed so as to obtain grammatical data (word or phrase structure).

A network of localities around England was to be investigated (eventually 313, including two in the Isle of Man), with the general aim of finding points with preferably 400-500 inhabitants and not more than about 15 miles apart. Fieldworkers were given phonetic training at Leeds, and they stayed in the locality chosen for around a week and administered the questionnaire to informants they selected. It was a laborious process, since they took down the responses in a detailed phonetic transcription (tape-recorders in those days were cumbersome – and not always usable e.g. in a cowshed!), so often different informants were

used for different “Books”. Fieldwork lasted between 1948 and 1961, and the results started to be published in 1962.

Thirty four of the 311 survey-points in England were in Yorkshire, the largest county. By happy coincidence Dent was one of those chosen (Locality Y5); the nearest others were Muker Y6, Askrigg Y7, Horton-in-Ribblesdale Y13 and Burton-in-Lonsdale Y12. Fieldwork in Dent was carried out over the period 30 September-5 October 1952 by Stanley Ellis, a Yorkshireman from Bradford. Ellis was the most prolific *SED* worker, investigating 118 localities while touring round in a caravan between 1951 and 1958. In Dent he used three male informants (aged 76, 77 and 64) and one female (aged 76) to complete the various Books of the questionnaire. The names of these informants were recorded confidentially, and only their initials were published. Two of the males were from Deepdale and were lifelong residents and farmers; one of them was also described as a stone-waller and builder, and he was the one who was taperecorded in free conversation after the interview. The third male had always lived in the village, while the female was the widow of a farmer in Cowgill. For some localities the list of informants includes a note of some particular feature of the local speech considered to be important. For Dent it is noted that /r/ is retroflex or flapped, never rolled (i.e. it is not a specifically regional pronunciation, such as occurs in Northumberland).

Soon after the *SED* fieldwork was completed, the findings began to be published. In 1962 there appeared three volumes of *Basic Material* for the *Six Northern Counties and Man*. These contained the responses to all the questions in the nine Books of the questionnaire, arranged in list form by locality. Later came atlases of particular items of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar (in that order in terms of the amount of each type of material mapped).

The *Basic Material* volumes have an index which makes it easy to identify items of possible interest and to look in the relevant listing for the form recorded in Dent. But this does not provide an immediate impression of the regional distribution of various forms. For this one turns to the atlases produced over the following thirty years or so.

The first to appear was by a research assistant of Dieth, Edward Kolb. In 1966 he produced a *Phonological Atlas of the Northern Region*, based on selections from the *Basic Material* for the six northern counties. It is a set of “symbol-type” maps, with a separate symbol used to indicate the form recorded at each survey locality, different responses being indicated by different symbols. From the clustering of symbols it is possible to see whether the pronunciation used in Dent is the same as those to the north or west, and so on.

Next appeared *A Word Geography of England* (1974) edited by Orton and Natalia Wright. This is an atlas unashamedly concerned just with vocabulary. Unlike Kolb’s atlas, the 200+ maps do not use the method of placing a symbol at every locality to indicate the response there. Instead they use the other approach developed within dialectology but based on that of the “isobars” of meteorology. A line called an *isogloss* is drawn between areas where one or another particular response appears to be the form used at the majority of localities. Thus for “stream”, isoglosses (on Map M39) indicate that England has three main forms in fairly well-defined parts of the country: *burn*, *beck*, *brook*. If a form occurs on the

“wrong” side of an isogloss, this can be indicated by using the symbol method. Thus, an isogloss shows that *burn* is the predominant form used in Northumberland, and *beck* in Durham; but the symbol for the former response appears at four localities in Durham, showing that this form is heard there as well as *beck*.

The Introduction in Orton and Wright has a useful section about areas of Scandinavian influence. Dent is said to be on the edge of the area of Norwegians coming from the West, whereas the Lower Dales are influenced by Danes coming from the East. Where words from Norse contrast with those from Old English sources, Dent usually shows the former. For example: the Old Norse *stithy* occurs across the Scandinavian area; by the 1950s *anvil* was already known at most locations, but it did not occur as a Dent response (see Map M15). ON *clipping* predominates north of a line from the Ribble to mid-Norfolk, but OE *shearing* is progressing northwards from south of this line (Map M43). In the northern counties except Northumberland and South Lancashire ON *laik* occurs, but OE *play* has also come to be used in most localities, including Dent (Map M45). (Of course, it should also be noted that *play* can occur in a wider range of contexts than *laik*.)

A few other interesting points from Orton and Wright. Map M2 shows that Dent is in the most northerly part of the area where a cowshed is a *shippon*; further North *byre* is usual. Map M12 makes it clear that *tup* is the more common form used over most of the country, including the South Midlands; the Standard English *ram* was definitely a southern form. Map M33 suggests that *gorse* is commonest over the Midlands; the South has *furze* and much of the North had *whin* – though *gorse* was clearly making ground. Maps M23 and M24 suggest that forms of *naught* and *somewhat* were the commoner words used over most of England, but they are being replaced by *nothing* and *something*. In Dent the responses were indeed local forms of *somewhat* and *naught*: they are *summut* and *nowt*. For the latter the *Basic Material* lists suggest that both the pronunciations [naot] and [noot] were heard in Dent.

Almost exactly thirty years after *SED* began work, the *Linguistic Atlas of England* (1978) was published. It is a set of maps of very much the same type as those in Orton and Wright: isoglosses drawn round areas where particular forms predominate, with a symbol indicating where this form occurs outside that area, and so on. There are 474 maps, including a further sixty five mapping items of vocabulary not included in Orton and Wright. But the majority are termed “phonological”. To many students of modern linguistics, for whom “phonology” has a different usage, this would not be an appropriate term: the maps are actually historically oriented and show the current *phonetic* forms of the various Middle English vowels (and a few consonants). There are 249 such maps. In addition to the sixty five lexical maps already mentioned, there are just ninety two which relate to grammar: eighty three to morphology (word forms) and nine to syntax (phrase structures).

Looking at the phonological maps, it is interesting to see that what many would regard as the most typically “Northern” markers (short [a] in *last* etc. and the absence of an [ʌ/ʊ] contrast in *but/put*) extend so far to the south: see Maps Ph4 (*last*) and Ph50 (*butter*). Dent is, of course, where we would expect it to be in regard to such northern features.

Of more specific interest for our area are the following forms. On first coming to the Garsdale area I was struck by the pronunciation of words such as *green* as [grəm]. The map for this item (Ph94), and several others, indicate that Dent is in an area, mostly in the northern Dales, where this form occurs rather than [grɪ:n] which is usual in most of the North. Map Ph54b shows *wool* without the final [l] in Dent, recalling the knitting song “tarry woo”. In Ph177 we see that Dent had [jʊ] for *ewe*, while adjacent areas had [jəʊ]. Ph189b *mow* has Dent in an area of [ma:], while most of Yorkshire and Cumbria had [mɔ:].

Among the lexical maps we find that Dent recorded *girdle*, whereas just to the south we see *backstone*: this is surprising in view of the local name *Backstonegill*. For the mid-morning snack, Dent recorded both *bait* and *drinking*, while many of the localities to the north and south had one or the other of these terms.

In the Morphological maps, M9 shows “I’m not” as *I isn’t* in Dent, while places around had *I’s not*. M33b shows Dent with *he dussent* for “he dared not”. And in M80 we find Dent with *hissel* for “himself”: this occurs over most of the Northern counties, though a large chunk of Yorkshire has the *hissen* form familiar to me from childhood. In the small section of Syntax maps, we might note that Dent recorded the phrase *a week on Friday* while localities north of here had *a week come Friday*.

Since the publication of the *Linguistic Atlas of England*, several other books have appeared which are based on *SED* findings. We shall look briefly at just one of these: it is a shorter and more simplified atlas, but with a very useful commentary on each of the ninety maps included. It is *An Atlas of English Dialects* (1996) by Upton and Widdowson, both closely associated with the Leeds University home of *SED*.

Maps 1-25 are mainly concerned with features of pronunciation. Map 1, for example, shows that for the first vowel in *buried* Dent is in the area of [ə], but close to the border of an [e] pronunciation to the north. In Map 9 *find*, we note that the older short [ɪ] pronunciation is common over most of northern England. Map 15 *arm* shows that Dent is non-rhotic (i.e. /r/ is not pronounced before another consonant or at the end of a word). Map 23 *house*, where most of England has no /h/, Dent is shown to be close to the area in the north-east where /h/ is pronounced.

Maps 26-35 are mainly of grammatical features. In Map 26 *give it to me* (an example of Syntax) Dent has “give me it” rather than “give it me”. Map 30 *caught* (an example of Morphology) has Dent with “caught”, not “catcht”. Map 33 *You sg.* shows Dent to be well inside the area still using the old familiar form “thou”.

Maps 36-90 are mainly of vocabulary items. Map 55 *splinter* shows Dent to be in an area of south-west Cumbria with “speel”; all locations nearby have “spell”. In Map 55 *adder* Dent has “adder” but is close to the border of where “hagworm” is usual in the north-west.

With Maps 64 *beak* and 84 *dig*, Dent is right on the border of the areas of two forms: “beak/neb” in the former, “dig/grave” for the latter. In Map 75 *Easter Egg* Dent is in the “pace egg” area, north of the isogloss crossing Yorkshire with “Easter egg” to the south of it. Map 79 *play* has Dent firmly in the “laik” area, with “play” to the south and also in the north-

east; but a comparison with Orton and Wright (see above) shows this to be a simplification, since the latter noted that Dent produced both responses – a point readily confirmed from the *Basic Material*. This illustrates the fact that a simple isogloss does not show the whole picture: it is an editor's interpretation of the material he has.

8. B. Hedevid, *The Dialect of Dentdale* (1967)

This was the first major study of a West Riding dialect since Wright's *Windhill* (1892), and it is similarly groundbreaking. Nearly all dialect studies in England had been historically oriented and appeared largely unaware of the change of emphasis in Linguistics from that approach to one of examining the structural relations within a language as used at one point in time. Hedevid was well grounded in both traditions, as is clear from both the text itself and the copious bibliography, with its vast array of items in English, German and Scandinavian – from both the American era of structural linguistics and the more traditional approaches. As he says at the start, his aim is to give a comprehensive account of the present-day dialect of Dentdale and also to trace the history of each element and the process of changes from Middle English to the present day.

An interesting introductory section gives a geographical and economic survey of the area, touching on climate, geology, farming, local industries, education, communications, history and dialectal origins. Noting the succession of Celts, Angles and Norsemen, Hedevid says that a Scandinavian such as himself soon finds the dialect saturated with Norse words, though it is not always possible to distinguish Norwegian elements (brought via Ireland) from Danish. He looks at all the farms and hamlets in Dentdale and Deepdale to consider the origin of placenames. He considers that placenames relating to features of hills, watercourses, valleys, clearings, farmland and buildings shows around 60% of Scandinavian elements. Then using certain test-words for East/West Scandinavian, he concludes that placename material strongly supports the theory of a chiefly Norwegian (i.e. West Scandinavian) colonisation.

His first main chapter is a survey of the position of Dentdale dialect and previous work of dialectologists. The Anglian dialects of Old English (Northumbrian and Mercian) progressed through Middle to Modern English (Northern and Midland); by any criteria Dentdale is in the Northern area, though not far from the boundary with North Midland. The nineteenth century saw the start of methodical dialect study in England, though previously there had been odd collections of stories and glossaries. Carr's work on Craven (1828) shows awareness of the Northern/Midland boundary, but Ellis (1889) is the first systematic work (see Section 3 above). Hedevid summarises the work of Ellis relating to Dent, and says that his findings were largely confirmed by his own work. Contrary to the assessment of some scholars, he believes that Ellis's work was mostly correct and will continue to be of use even after all the findings of *SED* have been published (note that Hedevid was working before any of the products of *SED* had appeared). Where he found differences from what Ellis had described (e.g. pronunciation of [w] in words like *wrong*; presence of /r/ before another consonant; *at* + Infinitive rather than *to*), he believes there may have been change over time in the direction of the more Standard form.

Hedevind examines the work of Wright in *EDD* and *EDGr* (see Section 5 above), and regrets that Wright's locality references (e.g. *Wm*, *NWYks*) are too imprecise to be of real use. Moreover, though Wright had aimed at completeness in recording dialect vocabulary, Hedevind found thirty items in Dentdale which were either not included or were not labelled *Yks*: for example *pikelet* (pitchfork), *jopper* (large haycock).

Various studies of the Northern/Midland boundary and of individual Northern dialects are briefly noted, including Hirst (1906) (see Section 6). After a brief introduction to some chief characteristics of current Dentdale English, Hedevind says that in fact most dialect speakers unconsciously become bilingual. They use "Broad Yorkshire" with fellow villagers and equals, but a modified Received Standard with strangers and professionals. This results in some confusions of sounds.

He goes on to describe his fieldwork in the dale. This occupied a total of some six months, but this time was spread over around six years in the late 1950s. Besides conducting interviews, he joined in conversations and even helped with haymaking. He was assisted in finding suitable informants by the vicar, Rev Dr Stanley Bennett, and the GP from Sedbergh, Dr Henry Thistlethwaite. His main informants were twelve men and six women. Three of the men were called Middleton, a common name in the dale, and some of them, such as the Hodgsons of Dillicar, have descendants still on the family farm. He notes which were the broadest spoken, and observed that one woman tried not "to sound too broad but easily lapsed into the vernacular"!

Chapter 2 is the one where Hedevind breaks new ground in the study of an English dialect. With an approach familiar from the classical period of American structural linguistics (the bibliography contains the great names from that period), he describes the "phonetics and phonemics" of Dentdale dialect in terms of well-developed concepts of *phonemes* and their *allophones*, established through *contrastive/complementary distribution* and *free variation*. The *phonetic realisations* are however described mainly in terms of the work of the London school of phoneticians.

Twenty vowel phonemes are established, and for each of them a *phonetic norm* is described. For example, there is a phoneme /u/ with a close back rounded realisation [ʊ]; this is quite different from Received Pronunciation which has the two phonemes /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ in the corresponding word sets. Long vowels /e:/ in *ail*, *bait* and /o:/ in *calf*, *coke* have realisations [ɛ:] and [ɔ:]. There is a phonemic contrast /ei/-/e:/ in *weight/wait*, and the still common pronunciation of [ɛɪ] in *sheep*, *me*, *feet* is a standard phonetic realisation. As for consonants, the most interesting discussions are the following. The phoneme /t/ when it occurs as the Definite Article often has the realisation [ʔ], but this will depend on how it is linked to the ensuing noun: sometimes it is [t] when enclitic [stɒp it əvz] *stop in the house* or proclitic [ta:l drɪvɪl] *the old devil*. The /r/ phoneme has various allophones, and Hedevind notes that word-final *-r* may be sounded after a long vowel but is less likely after a short. As for *h-*, Hedevind found that this was mainly used to add emphasis or when wishing to "speak proper", and that whereas normally *arm* and *harm* would both be [a:m], they could both be [ha:m]! He considers that Sedgwick had claimed too much is saying "the letter h (*sic*) is not subject to vulgar abuse in Dent".

The following chapter forms the link between the synchronic study of Chapter 2 and the historical approach beginning in Chapter 4. Hedevind takes each stressed vowel phoneme and gives examples of how it corresponds to what he takes to be the origins of particular words. For instance, present-day short /i/ may be the modern reflex of

Old English	i <i>bin</i>	Old English	y <i>dip</i>	Old Norse	i <i>smithy</i>
OE	ī <i>linen</i>	OE	ȳ <i>thimble</i>	ON	y <i>rig</i>
Old French	i <i>pinch</i>	OF	ũ <i>skim</i>	EarlyMidE	e <i>ever</i>

etc. etc.!

As expected, short /u/ includes all items which in Received Pronunciation have become /ʌ/. And it is interesting to note that /ei/ as in *fight*, *weight* is quite a rare phoneme. Hedevind's conclusion is that whereas in Late Northern Middle English there were five short vowel phonemes, seven long vowels, and six diphthongs, in Dent the corresponding numbers are six short, three long, and ten diphthongs.

The succeeding chapters turn to a historical examination. Hedevind takes each phoneme of Northern Middle English, with examples of its origins in Old English, Old Norse, Old French, and gives a detailed account of its phonetic development in various environments. He uses various sources (wills, inventories etc.), and at times compares his conclusions about Dent with what is found in Ellis, Wright, and other works relating to northern locations such as Lorton and Kendal (see references above). NME short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs, unstressed vowels, and consonants occupy his attention in successive chapters, with copious examples of Dent items he has observed.

One can only pick out a few points of interest from this vast amount of detail. For example, in his discussion of NME long vowels, Hedevind points out that all have become diphthongs in Dent dialect: NME /e:/ > Dent /əɪ/ in *see*, NME /i:/ > /aɪ/ *bide*, and so on. With the major boundary between Northern and North Midland dialects, where ME /u:/ > Northern /u:/ or NMidland /aʊ/, in a detailed discussion he shows that while Sedbergh and Garsdale have forms derived from /u:/ (phonetically now [əʊ]), Dent has /aʊ/. And on this subject he quotes Ellis with his observation that it seems strange that while both Sedbergh and Dent have much in common with Westmorland, on this point Dent goes with Craven, so perhaps the road over to Ribblesdale brought some North Midland features into Dentdale.

In contrast to the diphthongisation of earlier long vowels, the most common NME diphthongs /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ have in most words become long vowels /e:/ and /a:/ in Dent. In discussing vowels in unstressed syllables, Hedevind observes that /ə/, /ɪ/ and /ø/ exist as in the standard language, their incidence is different e.g. /ɪ/ occurs in [mɪsəl] *myself*. He gives some interesting examples of the occasional phonetic processes such as apheresis (mazed = *amazed*), syncope ([memrɪ] *memory*), and svarabhakti ([akərən] *acorn*).

In considering consonantal changes, Hedevind starts with a discussion of Scandinavian influences on back plosives, where there are obvious examples of *k/g* not becoming palatalised as in the standard language: *kirk*, *kist*, *brig*, *rigg* etc. Was this borrowing from Norse, or a partial assimilation of English words to Norse phonology? Other changes which

he notes include the common use of /m/ for *-ing*; /d/ for /ð/ in *smiddy* etc; /s/ for /ʃ/ in *shall*, *should* etc.; numerous cases of assimilation (progressive/regressive, partial/complete) e.g /tle:/ *clay* and so on; loss of consonants: *wick* < /kwik/ and so on. On this last point, Hedevid examines the statements about initial *h-* by Sedgwick, Goodchild and others, and the possibility that *h-* survived longer in Northern rural dialects than in towns. He thinks it was probably lost in Dentdale within the last hundred years.

On the subject of /r/ after a long vowel or before another consonant, on which subject there had been contradictory statements in previous works, Hedevid says categorically that /r/ is never articulated in such contexts. The chapter ends with examples of occasional phonetic processes affecting consonants such as epenthesis; voicing/unvoicing; absence of compensatory lengthening (*foss*, not *force*); and so on.

Having devoted eight chapters to various aspects of phonology, Hedevid in Chapter 9 turns to grammar: morphology and syntax. Unlike the earlier treatment, he admits that this chapter “does not aim at an exhaustive description”. I pointed out above that his work is different from almost all other studies of dialect in that he was clearly also well aware of modern approaches to linguistics. This is evident in his treatment of phonology, but it does not extend very far into his description of grammar. Modern linguistics had developed models for the description of morphology and was by the 1950s and 60s (when Hedevid was working) increasingly concerned with syntax. But apart from some statements about Nouns, where he speaks of the Genitive and Plural having the “usual allomorphs in complementary distribution”, he mainly looks at the various parts of speech from the viewpoint of noting dialectal peculiarities. Having said the above, it is fair to add that Hedevid’s section on grammar is at least as extensive and thorough as can be found in other works on a single dialect.

On the Definite article Hedevid examines in detail the evidence of earlier works including Sedgwick and Ellis, and suggests that the form /θ/ before vowels gave way to /t/ only in the nineteenth century. On Nouns he notes some interesting points, such as the loss of a consonant in the Plural e.g [krɔfs, anz] *crofts*, *hands*, and double Plurals like *bellowses*. Regarding Adjectives, he remarks on a predilection for understatement: *middlin*, *notsobad*, and for Adverbs he makes the obviously correct statement about Double Negatives that there is “no feeling in the dialect that two negations neutralise each other”: *There’s never been no good hay gotten there*. He gives the typically dialectal forms of Numerals: *yan*, *twea* ~ [təʊ] ... *sebn* ...

On Pronouns Hedevid gives a comprehensive list of the forms of the various types: personal, reflexive, reciprocal, interrogative, relative, indefinite and demonstrative (noting expressions such as *this here* and *that there*), and he observes that Weak Forms predominate: [a] *I*, [mə] *me*, [ðə] *thou*, [ðə/tə] *thee* etc.

In respect of verbs, he correctly observes that both Second and Third Persons Singular take the *-s* form: *tha comes*, *e comes* etc, and that First Singular and all Persons Plural usually take the zero form after a Personal Pronoun (*a come*, *we come* etc), but may take the *-s* form in some specific environments. There are numerous dialectal forms which involve a Strong

Preterite, and conversely some have Weak forms where the standard language has Strong. Description of Prepositions and Conjunctions complete the chapter on grammar.

Chapter 10 provided Hedevind with “a prolonged occupation, at times tiring and frustrating ...”, even though he had some help from his supervisor Harold Orton (see Section 7 above). He had conducted conversations with some named informants when speaking unscripted, and recorded these on a Grundig taperecorder (no doubt of inconvenient size in those days!). About half of the recordings were then transferred to (gramophone) disks, and every word and speech sound on the disks was interpreted, analysed and transcribed in a detailed phonetic script, with a parallel transliteration in conventional script. This chapter is interesting both to the dialectologist and to the more general reader.

To round off this wealth of material, Hedevind includes what early dialectologists had thought was their main task: a glossary, which also serves as a word index with page references. He includes all the words referred to in the book. They are listed in their form from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*; if they do not occur in that volume they are listed and spelled as in the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *English Dialect Dictionary*; if they do not appear in any of these sources, they are given in a broadly phonetic spelling. This list occupies thirty three pages with about seventy items on each – and this very fact serves to emphasise that Hedevind’s work is undoubtedly one of the most thorough treatments of an English dialect.

9. E.-M. Maislinger, *The Dialect of Sedbergh* (1974)

This is an unpublished dissertation by a student from the University of Salzburg. Maislinger was aware of previous work on the Northern dialects, including that of Skeat, Wright, *SED* and Hedevind, and she was clearly studying modern Linguistics rather than traditional historical approaches to English. The work contains some points of interest, but sadly it is fundamentally misguided in its approach, as will be described below. Moreover, it has too broad a title since Maislinger deals only with pronunciation: dialect also involves grammar and vocabulary, so she should preferably have called her subject “The Accent of Sedbergh”. And as she admits, she has not attempted to deal with several aspects of pronunciation, such as intonation and stress patterns. (But a more accurate title such as “The segmental phonemes of Sedbergh” would be less than attractive!)

Maislinger lodged with Stan and Freda Trott, who helped her to find informants and get them talking. In order to try and obtain natural conversation in spite of the presence of a taperecorder, the Trotts helped to suggest subjects. Unfortunately these often involved farming and sheep-breeding, which caused some difficulty for Maislinger, but she says the presence of the helpers, who were themselves native speakers, encouraged the informants to talk naturally.

She obtained about seven hours of recorded conversation from a total of twenty five informants, though the quality of her recordings suffered because the session was often held in the kitchen or living-room. She had decided not to use lists of specific words so as to avoid influencing her speakers, but she concluded that it would have been better to have some form

of questionnaire. She noted that whereas Orton (*SED*: see Section 7 above) said that men were more likely to use the vernacular consistently and genuinely, she obtained her best material from women informants.

Most of the informants were elderly, but some were middle-aged and she also got a few children aged 5-6 from Sedbergh Primary School. The informants are listed by name, and they included: Mrs Margaret Handley (b. 1908) [mother of G. D. Handley?], Dr Henry Thistlethwaite (aged c65) [a local GP with an interest in dialect, especially placenames], Jack Dawson (c55) [the current Mayor of Sedbergh], and a Rosemary Harper (b. 1952?) and Richard Harper (b. 1961?) who may still be alive. Maislinger says it was “hard to decide whether a particular informant was speaking genuine local dialect ... Many had hardly left Sedbergh but did not remain uninfluenced by the strong pressure of the standard language.”

Maislinger says that, following the example set by a former Salzburg student working on an English dialect, she uses “the RP phonemes as a basis for the analysis, treating the equivalents in a particular dialect as allophonic realisations of the RP phonemes.” This is fundamentally misguided, and her supervisor should have made this clear. Such an approach implies that somehow RP is the basic form of English pronunciation and that other varieties are secondary to it. In fact RP is simply one historical development alongside many others. It has come to enjoy a form of linguistic prestige because it is the variety used by a certain minority of the British population who enjoy social prestige. A fundamental tenet of Linguistics is that all varieties are equally worthy of study and should be described in their own terms. Maislinger could reasonably have decided to do a *comparative* study of RP and the pronunciation used in Sedbergh, but she should not have described the latter in terms of the former.

The main sections of the work deal with the RP Vowels, Diphthongs and Consonants and the corresponding sounds in the Sedbergh dialect. She uses the standard work of A. C. Gimson (*An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, 1962) to cite the description of each RP phoneme. She then describes, using a narrow (i.e. detailed) phonetic transcription, what she thinks are the Sedbergh equivalents, plotting these and the RP forms on a Cardinal Vowel chart. Each section contains some points of interest.

With regard to vowels, we must first note how her flawed approach leads her into error in respect of the two archetypal features of a Northern accent.

- i) With words such as *butter*, *run*, *mother* etc., Maislinger says that /ʌ/ is [ʊ] or [ə], or that /ʊ/ is “very often used to replace RP /ʌ/ in Sedbergh”. In fact, of course, while there are two phonemes /ʌ/ and /ʊ/ in RP, the former does not exist in traditional Northern dialects. It developed as a separate phoneme in the South from around 1600; its use spread through the South and South Midlands but has still not become fully established in the Northern half of the country, where the situation of one /ʊ/ phoneme continues. It is therefore incorrect to say that RP /ʌ/ is [ʊ] in Sedbergh; /ʌ/ simply does not exist there.
- ii) With words like *glass*, *bath*, *laugh* etc., Maislinger says that RP /ɑ:/ is short [a] in Sedbergh. Again this is a situation where it is RP which has changed and

Sedbergh preserves the older Northern form. Several hundred years ago a fashion developed in the South for lengthening the [a] sound before voiceless fricatives /s, f, θ/ and certain other sounds. This change also spread around the South and South Midlands, but it has affected the Northern half of the country even less than the above [ʊ→ʌ] development. Both RP/Southern English and Northern English do have /ɑ:/ and /a/ phonemes (both distinguish *cart* from *cat*, for example), but in a certain set of words the North still has /a/ while the South/RP now has /ɑ:/. It is *not* the case that “RP /ɑ:/ in these words is [a] in Sedbergh”; the latter simply still has the /a/ phoneme here.

Other points of interest concerning vowels are statements that many words spelled with *oo* e.g. *book* have /u:/ instead of /ʊ/, with a “strong tendency to diphthongisation” to something nearer to [əʊ]. Some forty years later this pronunciation is still heard, but as in many other areas of the North it is mainly used by older people. But /u:/ occurs in many other words and a diphthongised form is said by Maislinger to be “one of the most striking features of the Sedbergh dialect”.

Concerning the diphthongs, her observations include that /eɪ/ is often replaced by a monophthong [ɛ:]; that /aɪ/ often has a backer start-point and the second element is reduced, giving [ɑ:] or [ɑ:i] in words like *Aye* or *lile* (little); and that /əʊ/ has a backer start-point ([ɔʊ]) but there is a “considerable range of variations”. On this last point I wonder whether she is confused by the fact that in some parts of Yorkshire some people have both /o:/ and /ɔʊ/ phonemes.

Maislinger’s discussion of consonants is confined to those which show striking differences from the RP situation. For instance, she notes the long discussion in Hedevid (see preceding Section) about the Definite Article, and she has observed that in Sedbergh this takes the form of a glottal stop [ʔ], rather than [t] as it is normally represented in written form. However, she found that before liquids and semi-vowels /t/ can occur and “become syllabic” in forms like [tre:n] *the rain*. Regarding /ŋ/, she says /ŋ/ is “frequently reduced to [m] in words ending in *-ing*. This is of course oversimplified: such a reduction occurs in participles, etc., but not in words like *thing* or *sing*, which she has just given as examples of the /ŋ/ phoneme. As for /h/, Maislinger observes that in Sedbergh initial *h* is “frequently lost”, though occasionally [ʔ] occurs instead, and she also notes occasional hypercorrections (which Hedevid had noted that Sedgwick had claimed did not occur), and the explanation by some informants that these were “an expression of the wish of some people to speak proper English and to hide their dialectal pronunciation”.

An Appendix gives a list of “Speech Patterns” numbered 1-24. I found it difficult to understand what these referred to; are the numbers particular informants or phrases she found interesting for her analysis? And she notes that sheep-farming, which (as mentioned above) occupied quite a lot of her recorded conversations, has expressions which are strange even to English-speakers from other regions – especially the system of numerals for counting sheep in groups of twenty!⁹

Notes

1. This wording is deliberate. Though I am writing this in 2014, it was in the period between 1970 and 1990 that I was active as a scholar and teacher of Linguistics and especially the study of dialect. See especially: K. M. Petyt: *Emily Brontë and the Haworth Dialect* (1970); *The Study of Dialect: an introduction to dialectology* (1980); *Dialect and Accent in Industrial West Yorkshire* (1985).
2. Louis-Lucien Bonaparte (1813-1891), a nephew of the French emperor. He was born in England, where his father was interned, and apart from a period in French politics he spent most of his life involved in linguistic scholarship in this country.
3. Ellis constantly uses abbreviations: D31, Var i, Wm, NWYks etc. I have tried to make this account somewhat easier to read.
4. Ellis refers to R. B. Peacock's work (see Section 1 above) on Lonsdale and the Six Northern Counties.
5. Ellis says this watershed runs from Helvellyn over High Street to Orton Scar and the Howgills.
6. Ellis cross-references to earlier volumes of his *Early English Pronunciation*, where he had mentioned Sedgwick's *Memorial*, so clearly the passages in Sedgwick about language and dialect had come to the notice of serious scholars of those subjects.
7. See the article by Elspeth Griffiths, "Balliol School", *Sedbergh Historian* (Annual Journal of Sedbergh & District History Society), Vol. VI, No. 3 (2012), 41-46.
8. Sweet (believed to be the model for Professor Higgins in Shaw's *Pygmalion*) classified English sounds and devised a transcription called "Romic". If only essential differences are to be recorded, it can be "Broad Romic"; if more detail is required, then a more "Narrow" transcription is used. (For example, [r] is used in broad transcription simply to record the consonant *r*, but if one needs to show whether it is rolled, flapped, retroflex, etc., then a more detailed symbol is employed.) In addition to Romic, Sweet also occasionally used "Organic" symbols, which were intended to indicate positions of articulation. Hirst also adopts these at times. But they are not easy to understand readily and this system fell out of use. While these symbols are unknown today, much of Sweet's approach is still familiar, though with certain developments introduced by the next great figure in English phonetics, Daniel Jones.
9. This Section has perhaps been too critical. Maislinger was after all only a student working with limited time and perhaps less than adequate supervision. She produced a carefully-worked dissertation, which she concluded with the hope that it would encourage further studies on the dialect of the Sedbergh area.

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