



National
Trust

Nicholas Size

The characters of Buttermere

Nicholas Size

Nicholas Size had grand ideas for Buttermere. He owned the hotel in the centre of the village, known today as the Victoria Hotel, and dreamed of transforming this quiet valley into something that could rival the Alpine ski resorts. He envisioned a chair lift to the top of High Crag, constructing a large beer garden behind the hotel complete with a oompah band and wanted to develop the services for the growing numbers of motorists passing through (a revolutionary thought for the time).

Unfortunately many of these dreams were to remain just that; although he did create a few tea gardens! Perhaps his greatest accomplishment was a nine hole golf course in the fields leading down to Crummock, known locally as 'the Golf Links'.

Despite this lack of fruition, 'Auld Nick' was a much-loved character of Buttermere. He championed the idea that people were free to experience the countryside, which caused controversy with many local landowners. He enjoyed the company of others and spent many days chatting to visitors in his hotel. His name lives on in his book 'The Secret Valley', which is based on Buttermere and tells the story of how the Normans attempted to conquer the inhabitants but were repelled by the fierce local spirit.

Nicholas was buried in his own plot of land on the rocky fell side above the Bridge Hotel, at the head of the Fairy Glen. Unfortunately for Nick, his funeral was marred by dreadful wet weather, which meant his coffin had to be lowered into the water-filled grave with stones placed on top to hold it down. Thus ended the story of one of Buttermere's most colourful characters.

The epitaph, which he wrote himself reads:

*"No tombstone virtues will ornament my grave,
No over confidence about my Salvation,
Write me down one that loved his fellowmen
And was a credit to his generation."*