

William and Dorothy Wordsworth

William Wordsworth was a poet who was writing in the 18th and 19th Centuries. He lived in the Lake District, and was living in a small cottage, called Dove Cottage, in Grassmere when he wrote the poem 'Daffodils'.

Wordsworth did not live alone. He was married, often had lots of visitors staying in his cottage, and his sister Dorothy also shared the cottage.

Dorothy was a keen naturalist (enjoyed learning about flowers and wildlife). We know from the diaries that they kept that both Dorothy and William were great walkers as well as writers. They often walked several miles to visit friends who also lived in the Lakes.

Thomas Clarkson

One of Williams's friends that he often went to visit was Thomas Clarkson. Clarkson lived with his wife in Eusmere on the Eastern side of Ullswater.

In April 1802 Dorothy and William went to visit Thomas Clarkson and his wife Catherine. Thomas Clarkson was a very political man. At that time slavery was still being debated in politics and Thomas Clarkson openly spoke out about it and argued that it should be abolished. He believed that slavery was totally wrong and was a strong campaigner for equal rights for all men of all races. Slavery was still going on at this time in the Caribbean, and North America as well as other parts of the world. Haiti was one of the first countries to fight slavery. Thomas Clarkson must have talked at some length about this with William Wordsworth...find out later why we know this.

One blustery April day on lake Ullswater

It was in fact on their way back from Thomas Clarkson's house that April that they came upon the daffodils that Wordsworth writes about. The weather was wild and blustery, and as they walked back to their house, via the lakeside at Ullswater, it was there that Dorothy first spotted the daffodils that have now become so famous and pointed them out to William.