



Wordsworth, De Quincy and Dove cottage

Legacy of Dove Cottage

Jeff Cowton

Wordsworth himself, in terms of popularity, was growing as the nineteenth century developed. He sold far more copies say in the 1870s and 80s than he ever did during his lifetime. So towards the end of the nineteenth century, this realisation of the importance of Dove Cottage, the growing importance of Wordsworth and the growing readership of Wordsworth, and the fact that at that time that houses were being recognised for their cultural importance – Shakespeare, Milton, we know – it seemed to come together that Dove Cottage should be preserved for posterity, should be preserved as the Trust Deed said: 'For lovers of English poetry all over the world'. And so in 1891 the cottage was opened and it's been open to visitors ever since.

Sally Bushell

I think the lasting attraction of Dove Cottage, and of Wordsworth and his poetry, is very much linked to Wordsworth's identity as a national poet and especially an English poet. This is a very English cottage when you look at it, and it lies at the heart of the Lake District, one of our most beautiful regions. At the end of 'The Guide to the Lakes', Wordsworth makes this call for a national park system, which is then set up by those who come after him. And it's Wordsworthians who first establish the National Trust and this idea of preserving a landscape. There's no question that the need to preserve the landscape is very important for Wordsworth and for his poetry and we've seen that with poems like 'Michael' where we can go back and revisit that site which we wouldn't be able to do if the National Park wasn't here preserving it.

Commentator

Two hundred years later, his poetry still resonates within the landscape.

Simon Bainbridge then voiceover

*It is in truth an utter solitude,
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
There is a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that place a story appertains.*