

The CLHF Convention, 2 November 2013 WATER and its significance in Local History

Aspects of water as a resource for human settlement will be the theme of this year's Convention, to be held at Newbiggin, Stainton, west of Penrith. The large subjects of the sea and the Lakes will not be the main focus, but rather the local, practical, industrial and ritual uses of water in the everyday lives of past Cumbrians. So we will consider the history of mills, wells, springs, ponds, land drains, pumps, textile processing, including retting ponds, drinking troughs and fountains, ornamental landscapes.....the list goes on. If you feel you have a contribution to make, from your locality, however brief, please contact June Hall: *email: junelennahall@hotmail.com*



Full details to follow in August

Cumbrian Vernacular Buildings

The three short courses led by June Hall at Swarthmoor, Newbiggin (Penrith) and Hesket Newmarket were well attended and generated interest in forming a society to record and understand some of Cumbria's wealth of traditional buildings. If you have a skill in research, photography, surveying, drawing, architectural history, geology or are just intrigued by old buildings and can hold one end of a tape measure, please feel welcome to join in a very enjoyable, sociable and worthwhile activity.

Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group will be launched on Saturday 15 June 2013, at Millhouse Village Hall, near Caldbeck. Coffee at 10.00am, launch at 10.30 am, followed by a dayschool, closing at 4.00pm. Programme and booking forms, membership applications and directions available from *junelennahall@hotmail.com*

[picture: drinking fountain at Keswick]

Archaeology in Shap

In August 2012, Shap Local History Society organised its first dedicated archaeology exhibition displaying prehistoric stone tools found in the local area.

During the previous few months, a small team of dedicated field-walkers had investigated several ploughed fields in the area and discovered hundreds of worked flint and chert tools including arrowheads, blades, scrapers and cores. These items were then catalogued on a database detailing location, size, condition and type before being displayed at the Heritage Centre in Shap, the local Library and Orton Farmers Market throughout August and September 2012.

We had a great response from the public who came to see the exhibition. As a local society we feel it is of vital importance for these artefacts to be seen and handled by as many people from the nearby communities as possible. It helps to put into context how our ancestors were starting to live and settle in this area many thousands of years ago and lays a basis for all later history. The stone tools found were from Mesolithic and Early Neolithic dates and show that there must have been a fairly large

settlement in the area with the importing and manufacture of flint tools a necessity for surviving in this wild and rugged landscape.

These finds tie-in with the stone monuments that surround Shap and adjacent villages and this year we are setting up an exhibition to encourage local people to discover their ancient heritage through the fascinating stone circles, burial mounds and stone avenues that are easily located in the area. Shap is probably most famous for the vast avenue of stones that ran through the centre of the village. Although many stones have been destroyed, it is still possible to get a feeling of the great importance these monuments must have had for our distant ancestors.

Surrounding the village are many stone circles such as Gunnerkeld and Oddendale, burial mounds and the remains of early settlements. Whilst these have been surveyed by many archaeologists in the past, it would be nice to have something here in the village for people to study and enjoy. Shap Local History Society has a main exhibition on the local Shops and Businesses running through the summer, with the archaeology exhibition on show in August.

More details can be found on our website: www.shaplocalhistorysociety.wordpress.com

*Patrick Neaves
Shap LHS*



Above: Viewing the exhibition

Right: Three small (but very sharp) stone implements



Chairman's Cheerful Chat: Local History Day 2013

Many of you will know that in addition to being CLHF's chairman I am also the Local Studies Librarian based in West Cumbria, and that my alter ego is responsible for organising the annual Local History Day. I started this after enjoying one of Alan Crosby's talks for CNWRS at Lancaster University, and badgering Jim Grisenthwaite, then in charge of Libraries, Archives and suchlike, into providing the initial funding to enable people in Cumbria to enjoy the quality of subject and speaker much closer to home. Since 2008, in co-operation with Alan we've run 4 splendid days (yes, all you clever maths types, we missed a year in 2009 when we didn't get the booking sorted in time!). This year's very successful topic was the Old Poor Law and we had a fascinating day. Moor Close Centre near Workington provided the usual venue with masses of free parking & friendly library people providing refreshments.



For those of you who didn't make it – do try harder next year! - here's a very brief account of some of the things we enjoyed. The first session was a good look at the history of provision for the poor from monastic charity (not always as generous as might be hoped) to the 16th century introduction of the notion that communities should look after their own people, especially the deserving poor. Undeserving poor ran the risk of being deemed vagabonds, locked up and branded under the 1572 Act! Alan described how previous legislation was gathered into the famous “43 Elizabeth” Act for the Relief of the Poor that, with some amendments, coped pretty successfully, until late 18th century opposition declared the old poor law encouraged dependency and was too expensive. Reform followed in 1834, and

the new Poor Law was created as a deterrent to seeking poor relief.

The complicated question of settlement was the morning's second session, and we learnt why it was important – the whole community was involved either through contributing to the poor rate, or by receiving help as a pauper – but clearly belonging to a parish or township was the vital element. Early law was relatively straight forward with birth, residence or simple property qualifications but subsequent Acts changed the qualifications & created complicated conditions. Settlement and removal, particularly of those who might become a drain on parish resources & could be shunted elsewhere, loomed large in the overseers duties and after lunch Alan told us more about those duties and their records.

Overseers had to keep good records as they were personally responsible for disbursing the poor relief & needed to keep accounts. As these were parish records they were secured in the Parish Chest with church registers and similar parish documents. An overseer needed local knowledge to decide on payments, and while a good overseer could be very good, like the little girl with a curl on her forehead – a bad one could be horrid! This session and that on the role of the local magistrates were illustrated with examples of local records that made it all the more interesting. Our final hour looked at the Quarter sessions records where paupers had exercised their right to appeal to the JPs against overseers' decisions. Each petition was written to a standard formula, usually by a scribe who was paid by the pauper – a risky investment judging by the examples we saw, as positive outcomes seemed few!

All in all a most fascinating and enjoyable day, and we hope to repeat its success next year. In these straitened times we have to be self-financing, so if you've thought about it but never quite made the effort, do come along and meet lots of friendly people with interests in common. For our faithful regulars – please keep spreading the word! Probably next year it will be in May so keep those eyes peeled for advance warning!

Jenni Lister, Chairman, CLHF

Chapel Challenge!

I'm contacting you on a very long shot!

My father decorated a small chapel in the Lake District soon after WW2. I came and saw it in the early 70s but have forgotten where it was; my mother is now too old to remember. I know it's extremely unlikely, but I wonder if there is any organisation which might know which chapel it was. It was a very small chapel and if I remember rightly, either circular or hexagonal and his name was Leonard Douglas Beard. I believe he worked with a partner called Ronnie Chapman but can't be sure. My father was a gilder, and I suspect it's still intact (although can't be sure) and I remember we found his signature when we were there.

I appreciate that it's extremely unlikely, but nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Many thanks, Alison Finch

NB: Alison later added that for the 1970s visit the family stayed in Ambleside, and that as they did not then have a car, the chapel must have been within a reasonable distance of a public transport service.

Responses to Jenni Lister please:

jenni.lister@cumbriacc.gov.uk

Clear Waters: an oral history of people's understanding of fresh water

The following item from a non-member organisation is included in this Bulletin as a warm-up for the CLHF Convention on 2 November. There's a lot of history in water.

Do you remember?

Do you ever remember ice skating on the lakes?

Have you been fishing in the Lake District for the last 50-60 years?

What did the bird life used to be like on the lakes?

Did you ever go boating or sailing as a child?

The FBA Oral History Project

The Clear Waters oral history project is run by the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA). A year-long project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, it began in April 2013 and aims to record people's memories of the fresh water bodies of the Lake District in the last 50-60 years. As part of this fascinating project we are looking for contributions from local people. We would like to speak to long-term residents with an interest in wildlife or recreation, anglers and sport fishermen, and former employees and members of FBA.



We wish to interview people about their memories of the lakes, to discover their perceptions of changes that have taken place. The areas we are interested in are wildlife, fishing, boats, recreation, local businesses and tourism related to the lakes and rivers. If you or anyone you know, has memories of this and would like to contribute to the project, we would be delighted to hear from you. The Clear Waters project compliments the highly successful High Fell oral history project run by Cumbria Wildlife Trust last year [see www.highfell.org.uk].

Become involved

An important element of the Clear Waters project is encouraging members of the local community to participate, through opportunities to volunteer. Roles include interviewing, audio and film recording, transcribing oral recordings, photography and researching archives. Volunteers will learn about the wildlife and history of the Lake District and the changes that have occurred in the years since WWII. Throughout the project there will be training sessions, talks and events for participants. The information gathered will be made available to the public, through a website and an exhibition which will tour around Cumbria in a variety of public places and museums.

How to contact us

If you are interested in taking part in the Clear Waters oral history project through volunteering or being interviewed, please contact Faith Hillier, Project Officer on 01539487720, fhillier@fba.org.uk or at the following address: The Freshwater Biological Association, The Ferry Landing, Far Sawrey, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 0LP
www.fba.org.uk/fba-oral-history-project

The first events and training sessions will start in early June but you can join the project at a later stage if you wish.

If you have any questions or would like further information about the project, please ring Faith for an informal chat. We are looking forward to hearing some interesting stories about the lakes which will be archived for future generations.

Swarthmoor Hall residential course

Over the weekend of 30 August to 1 September 2013, the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre will be running a residential course at Swarthmoor Hall, titled "Fox in Context: Religious life and thought in 17th century Westmoreland".

Specifically, the course will explore:
issues such as the religious/political interface in mid-17th Britain and the meaning of religious language;

the wider movement of radical preachers, including the Westmoreland Seekers;

the influence of high Anglicanism/Catholicism and Puritanism;

the beliefs and practices of the Reverend William Lampitt of Ulverstone, described by Fox as a 'high notionist' who was 'full of filth';

the political economy of the region that encouraged Justice Fell to be so open to radical preachers basing themselves in his home.

In addition to gaining a wealth of knowledge about the socio-economic and political context behind George Fox's vision and leadership, you will have the chance to debate whether and why ideas that came from a time of extreme religious ferment have relevance and value today.



Diana Jeater is the co-ordinator for online and off-site courses at Woodbrooke. She has 20 years' experience in teaching and researching history, and was a pioneer in developing online teaching in History at British universities, while also researching African history.

Price £184. For booking details, see:
www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Helena Thompson Museum, Workington

ONE of the most important developments in the history of Workington's Helena Thompson Museum took place last December with the return for permanent display of a translucent stone chalice – the Luck of Workington, originally gifted to the town's influential ruling family by Mary Queen of Scots in May, 1568.

The gift to the Curwen family was a spontaneous gesture made by the fleeing queen after she crossed the Solway Firth by boat to seek their hospitality and shelter following her abdication from the Scottish throne. Her own luck was running out and eight months after her one-night stay in Workington Hall she was arrested. Eighteen years later, and with the Protestant throne deemed under threat from a Catholic conspiracy in which she was implicated, she was executed at Fotheringay Castle on February 8, 1587 on the orders of her cousin, Elizabeth I.

The Luck of Workington, small and beautifully formed of striated Scottish agate, is insured for £50,000. It remains the property of the Curwen family – whose popular head Mrs Susan Thornely of Windermere presented it to the town's Helena Thompson Museum for an indeterminate loan period. It is now housed in a secure and specially-lit cabinet in the museum's Costume Gallery – just over the road from the ruins of the roofless hall, whose fabric began to deteriorate unchecked after it was gifted to the borough in 1946. It is currently closed to the public.

The grade 1-listed hall, parts of which date to the 12th century, is the subject of a campaign by Workington Heritage Group, the volunteer body which runs the museum, to persuade the owners, Allerdale Borough Council, to initiate new investment. So far, the council has made no commitments but a think-tank workshop session last month (February) threw up some workable options. The next step is to fix on a theme and cast the net far and wide for funding from private and public sources. Workington Heritage Group hope to see the hall re-opened in a limited capacity, by Christmas, 2013. Their

case for action is strengthened by the decision last year of English Heritage to place the hall on its 'at risk' register.

Museum manager Pat Hall said: "Our visitor numbers for December doubled the November footfall after the arrival of The Luck. There is huge interest, especially from school groups, in such a rare object with such a direct and personal link to Mary. It is a beautiful object in its own right and is the museum's most important acquisition since it opened in 1949. Our hope is that one day, it will be returned to the hall and put on permanent display there. That is clearly some way distant, but we remain optimistic."

The next big date at the museum is the opening of an 1888 time capsule, which will take place on May 15 with a lot of media coverage. The capsule, a glass bottle sealed with cotton wool and wax, was concealed in a stone block supporting a pillar during the re-build of one of the town's most important free churches - in its last days known as the Thompson Street Assemblies of God Church. The capsule was discovered by contractors when the church was demolished in 2003 to make way for the re-modelling of the town centre. Since then it has been in storage – but its condition was recently seen to be deteriorating. It is known to contain newspaper cuttings, letters and documents – and who knows what else. The breaking open of the capsule will be supervised by professional curators from Carlisle's Tullie House Museum.

*Phil Cram
Helena Thompson Museum*

A-Z of Speakers request

If you have had good talks from speakers who are not in the 2011 CLHF "A-Z of Speakers", and you think they should be heard by more societies, please email the editor at: pastpresented@tesco.net






by the end of May, supplying the name and email address of the speaker, and the title of the talk(s) you enjoyed.

EVENTS DIARY






Area indicators: North  South  East  West  Central 

Meetings start at 7.30 pm unless otherwise stated


MAY 2013

-  9 Lorton and Derwent Fells LHS The Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton
Cumbria from early 19th century Prints: the life and work of Thomas Allom
(1804-72) - Dr Michael Winstanley 01900 85482
-  9 Hesketh Local History Society Low Hesketh Village Hall
The Men who built Carlisle Cathedral 1100-1419
- Ms Shirley Grundy BA. FRSA. 016974 75923 or 73253
-  13 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Orton Market Hall
"Through the Glass Darkly" New light on the Dark Ages in Cumbria
- Rachel Newman 015396 24410
-  16 Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society Cartmel Village Hall
Frith Hall on Holker Hall Estate and other archaeological surveys
- Dan Elsworth of Greenlane Archaeology 015395 32234
-  16 Levens Local History Group Levens Village Hall
The Lancaster Slave Trade - Janet Nelson 01539 560318




JUNE

-  6 Levens Local History Group Levens Village Hall
A Walk round Lancaster - Janet Nelson 01539 560318
-  13 Hesketh Local History Society Low Hesketh Village Hall
Hadrian: The man who built the wall
- Professor John Derry (Univ. of Newcastle) 016974 75923 or 73253
-  13 Lorton and Derwent Fells LHS The Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton
AGM to be followed by talk - subject and speaker to be notified
01900 85482
-  week beginning 17 or 24 Hesketh Local History Society
Visit to Dumfries House 016974 75923 or 73253
-  20 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Tebay Methodist Church
Lunacy in Eden in the 1700s & 1800s - Peter Lewis 015396 24410



JULY

-  11 Hesketh Local History Society Low Hesketh Village Hall
The Drover's Boy 016974 75923 or 73253







JULY continued

-  11 Lorton and Derwent Fells LHS The Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton
West Cumberland Shipping Through the Ages - David Ramshaw
01900 85482
-  18 Hesketh Local History Society Low Hesketh Village Hall
Evening tour of Kirkoswald - Sheila Fletcher 016974 75923 or 73253
-  22 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Orton Market Hall
Chapmen, Pedlars & Hawkers in Cumbria - Barrie McKay 015396 24410


AUGUST

-  5 - 31st Cockerthwaite Museum Group Kirkgate Centre (open 10am - 4pm)
Exhibition on "The Fair Field in Focus: past usage and importance in
Cockerthwaite Life" Free admission
-  15 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Tebay Methodist Church
Ravenstone, Reflections & Relatives - Bernard Thornborrow
015396 24410






SEPTEMBER

-  12 Hesketh Local History Society Low Hesketh Village Hall
C20th Defence Architecture in Cumbria - Russell Barnes
016974 75923 or 73253
-  12 Lorton and Derwent Fells LHS The Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton
The Bobbin Mills at Force Satterthwaite 1826 - 1923 - Dr Suzanne Tiplady
01900 85482
-  16 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
Historical Pageants in the North West - Dr M Winstanley 01524 782198
-  19 Levens Local History Group Levens Village Hall
Viking Cumbria - Rachel Newman 01539 560318
-  19 Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society Cartmel Village Hall
Building on Tradition (Lake District Vernacular Buildings) - Andy Lowe
015395 32234
-  19 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Orton Market Hall
The Goodwins of Orton Hall - Lyndi Dambrumenil 015396 24410

OCTOBER

-  2 Sedburgh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
By the Sword Divided - Eric Matthews 015396 22505
-  10 Hesketh Local History Society Low Hesketh Village Hall
The Splendours of the Carlisle Settle Railway - David Alison
016974 75923 or 73253



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-  16 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
Sarah Losh and Wreay Church - Raymond Whittaker 015396 22505
-  17 Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society Cartmel Village Hall
Only half a story: historical letters with an emphasis on local material
- Professor Brian Wilson 015395 32234
-  17 Levens Local History Group Levens Village Hall
The Kendal Home Guard - Margaret Owen 01539 560318
-  18 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Orton Market Hall
St Mary's, Mallerstang - Ian Murray 015396 24410
-  21 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
Inn Signs - Peter Marshall 01524 782198

NOVEMBER

-  6 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
The Angkor Temple Complex - Dr Raynor Shaw 015396 22505
-  14 Heskett Local History Society Low Heskett Village Hall
Walls in the Landscape - Harry Hawkins 016974 75923 or 73253
-  14 Lorton and Derwent Fells LHS The Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton
Cumbrian Ice Houses and the International Trade in Ice - Dr Rob David
01900 85482
-  14 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Tebay Methodist Church
A Career in Ruins - Andy Lowe 015396 24410
-  18 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
Turnpike Roads in Westmorland - Dr Jean Turnbull 01524 782198
-  20 Sedbergh & District History Society Memorial Hall, Dent
From Engine Cleaner to Main Line Fireman - Bill Kitchen 015396 22505
-  21 Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society Cartmel Village Hall
AGM 015395 32234
-  21 Levens Local History Group Levens Village Hall
Sizergh castle: Dig in the Park 2013 - Jamie Lund 01539 560318



DECEMBER

-  12 Heskett Local History Society Low Heskett Village Hall
Chairman's night with Christmas social 016974 75923 or 73253
-  16 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
Christmas Function 01524 782198





JANUARY 2014

-  15 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
"Wordsworth in Cumbria" - Stephen Miller 015396 22505






JANUARY 2014 ctd.

-  20 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
"A Fox in the Fell": The Quaker Journey - Janice Wilson 01524 782198
-  27 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Orton Market Hall
Folklore, Traditions, Customs of Cumbria - Jean Scott-Smith
015396 24410

FEBRUARY 2014

-  5 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
"Lakeland Architecture through the Centuries" - Andrew Lowe
015396 22505
-  19 Sedbergh & District History Society Memorial Hall, Dent
"Treasure Trove of Memories" - Anthea Boulton 015396 22505
-  17 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
AGM followed by "The Bayeux Tapestry" - Kathryn Smith 01524 782198
-  20 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Tebay Methodist Church
Tracing Your House History - Katy Iliffe 015396 24410

MARCH 2014

-  5 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
"Over Shap by Track, Road and Rail" - Jean Scott-Smith 015396 22505
-  17 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
Any Old Iron: Fingerposts and Foundries in Cumbria - Mike & Kate Lea
01524 782198
-  19 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
"High Bank House, Barbon": Mike Kingsbury 015396 22505
-  20 Orton & Tebay Local History Society Orton Market Hall
AGM 015396 24410
-  22 Sedbergh & District History Society Settlebeck High School
AGM 7 for 7.30 pm 015396 22505

APRIL 2014

-  14 Holme & District Local History Society Kendal Memorial Hall, Burton
The Story of the Ordnance Survey - John Parker 01524 782198

The events diary

You will have noticed that the period covered by the Events diary is longer than usual. To help mitigate the effects of production delays, the editor has decided that for the foreseeable future, the events diary will include entries as far ahead as possible, which will mean that some events will appear in multiple Bulletins as their time approaches.

Ambleside Oral History Group The Lake District Oral Archive

The Ambleside Oral Archive has been in some demand recently. With 450 interviews made over the past 37 years, the archive spans a period from the 1880s to the present day, covering every aspect of local life as well as experiences of the wider world in general. We have a number of illustrated audio presentations which we have been delivering to history societies and other groups around the county, and any CLHF group who would like a presentation can find out more on our website, www.aohg.org.uk or contact 015394 34640.

We are being asked with increasing regularity to help new oral history groups to get started. To meet these requests, we are offering two training workshops each year, and still have places available for the autumn one on Saturday October 12, 10am-3.30pm, at Ambleside Library. A small charge is made per delegate, email info@aohg.org.uk or ring 015394 34411 for details.

Over 100 researchers a year from all over the world are requesting access to search our online archive. Research enquiries came from historians, family historians, students and journalists on a wide range of topics. In recent months we have been approached by a number of groups currently running oral history projects who wish to place their transcript archive on our website, so they can benefit from our search facilities. We already host the Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society archive alongside our own and we are now setting up the systems needed to incorporate other archives on our website. With the addition of every new archive, the oral testimony for the history of Cumbria grows. If your society is interested in this development, contact us through our website, or write to Ambleside Oral History Group, Ambleside Library, Kelsick Road, Ambleside LA22 0BZ.

To access or search the transcripts go to www.aohg.org.uk The site does not include sound extracts.

Paul Renouf
IT Officer, AOHG

Cumbrian Railways Association- part 1

The Cumbrian Railways Association is pleased to announce that direct internet access is now available to about 20,000 references to past railwaymen who worked in the area and in North Lancashire. The information is derived from a wide range of sources including many which would not normally be searched by family historians including railway accident reports. Much data has also been drawn from official company records.

The information mainly relates to railwaymen who were in service before 1925. The collection is strongest for men - and they are almost all men - who worked in West Cumbria, though other areas of the county are covered. However, Carlisle, which had by far the greatest concentration of railwaymen in the county with up to 3,000 in the industry and working for seven separate railway companies up to 1923, is so far very thinly represented.

The information has been collected over many years by several members of the Association, but has now been sorted for presentation by member Peter Bacon, originally of Workington. The Association - and all users of the data - are much indebted to Peter for his work on this project.

The files are sorted by surname, and can be accessed on the website of the Cumbrian Railways Association at: cumbrianrailways.org.uk Go to Resources and Services and scroll down to Family History.

Peter Robinson
CRA

Wendy Fairer

I prefer not to include obituaries in the CLHF Bulletin, but I have to report that Wendy Fairer, a long-standing member of the committees of CLHF and several other organisations, died at the beginning of March.

Cumbrian Railways Association- part 2

The AGM resulted in the same committee being re-elected but with one new member joining, which is always nice to see.

Having carried out an exercise to see just how many of the 400 members actually contribute to the running of the Association in any way it was found that over 30 do! This ranges from the 'official' positions to somebody who 'meets and greets' members at our meetings. Only twice a year but it is essential that a welcoming face is at the door and because he has done it for so long he knows everybody and when a new person arrives he can instantly go into a different mode and ensure they are told all they need and make them feel welcome. It also means that the meeting organiser is free to deal with everything else without having to worry that he may miss a new attendee.

The CRA produces an excellent Journal and not only does it have an editor but he has a team that help with setting out, proof reading, checking historical facts and dates where necessary, producing drawings, touching up photographs and many other roles. These are all carried out remotely with most communication being by e-mail and it allows members the length and breadth of the country to be involved.

This year will see a Carlisle Railway History Conference being held 11 - 13 October. A small group of members have come forward to do the actual organising but others have said they will 'help on the day'. Already, including speakers, over 20 people are involved! On Friday afternoon there is an opportunity to see behind the scenes at either Tullie House, Carlisle Library or Cumbria Archives Centre (small charge). In the evening the Carlisle & District O Gauge Guild and Border Railway Society invite you to visit their respective clubrooms on Carlisle station. Feel free to bring along items of rolling stock in either O or OO gauge to run on their layouts. Saturday will see a full day with guest speakers covering all aspects of the Railway.

Full details on the website:
www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk

How well do you look after your Volunteers? In previous years we have held an 'Officers' Conference and spent a full day looking at how we can move the Association forward but! There is always a but. It was felt that 'Officers' excluded ALL of those who helped out in anyway but were not 'Officials' so this year it will be a 'Volunteers Conference' and everybody who helps in anyway is being invited. We are also asking members if they think they would like to help but are uncertain how or if it is for them to come along. They will be made most welcome and hopefully will join and help out in some small way. Food for thought?

Next meeting is a field trip. Saturday 15 June. Location subject to change because the planned leader is now unavailable.

Philip T Tuer
Secretary, CRA

Long Marton History Group

We had a surprise telephone call in January from a lady in Dorset. Her grandfather had been the Station Master at Long Marton in the 1920s. Her mother was one of five children born and brought up in the Station Master's house. She had several photographs of her grandfather, the house and family, and the station on the Settle Carlisle line which was closed in 1970.

She had found us using the Long Marton village website, and wondered if we were interested in having the photos as no one in her family had taken any interest! I said we were, as the LM Group had built up an archive of local family photos, so she sent them in the post together with another surprise- her grandfather's whistle, an ACME Thunderer. It must have been heard many times during the lifetime of the station.

Keith Spence
Secretary, LMHG



Cumbria update

Thanks to the massive effort of more than 100 VCH Cumbria volunteers, the 'Jubilee Digests' have been completed for Cumberland and Westmorland. They provide a 'front page' on the CCHT website for each of the places for which a VCH township/parish article will eventually be written.

On the right hand-side of each digest page we are developing a 'Resource Bank' of material relating to the place in question. Some items have already been added to this, including an explanation of the digests, images that volunteers have submitted, and a reference map for each place.

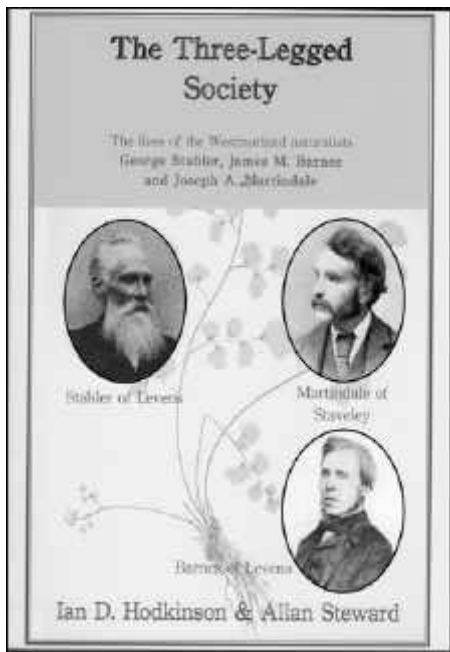
Dr. Sarah Rose
Volunteer Co-ordinator VCH Cumbria Project
email: s.rose2@lancaster.ac.uk
(works on project Thu & Fri only)

The Department of History [Lancaster University] has recently received the research papers of the late Gordon Elliott of Hull, who pioneered the study of field systems in Cumbria in articles in Transactions of CWAAS in 1959 and 1960. Gordon, who died in December aged 80, was a native of Penrith and had asked that his papers be donated to Lancaster University. I visited Hull to collect them on a snowy day in March; they are now housed in the VCH project offices in the History Department. They form an extremely valuable body of material, which will be a first port of call for anyone researching the Economic History section of a parish or township article for Cumberland.

Angus Winchester
from the *Cumbria County History Trust newsletter*, no. 10 (April 2013)

AND ON A RELATED TOPIC-

Your readers might be interested in our publication of a book (in Dec 2012) about 3 forgotten South Westmorland naturalists. Their oblivion was ensured by the non-publication of the Westmorland volume of the VCH.



The Three Legged Society: The lives of the Westmorland naturalists, collectors and friends George Stabler, James M. Barnes and Joseph A. Martindale.

by Ian D. Hodkinson & Allan Steward
Centre for North-West Regional Studies,
Lancaster University
ISBN 978-1-86220-297-9

110 pp + 26 pp of colour pics. Price: £14.95

A **catalogue database** of the plant specimens collected by the trio, now in the keeping of Kendal Museum, is also available. email info@kendalmuseum.org.uk or download from the website www.kendalmuseum.org.uk

MOOTA AND WORLD WAR II

Around 70 years ago, in 1942, the Moota POW Camp near Cockermouth opened its doors to Italian prisoners-of-war. The camp was built to accommodate around 1,200 men. Germans would later follow the Italians as inmates, and after them came a whole host of Displaced Persons from eastern Europe. Having researched the camp and the lives of some of the people who found themselves there, I had always hoped that there would be some kind of acknowledgement of those men (and some women) who had found themselves far from home and with a very uncertain future, as regards to returning to their homeland. Thus it was with great pleasure that I recently found myself outside the Great Escape coffee shop at Moota Garden Centre, along with members of the Cockermouth Museum Group and Cockermouth Rotary Club, who together provided the funding for a substantial Honister slate commemorative plaque. Muriel Simpson, the owner of the Garden Centre, kindly agreed to have the plaque placed there and, indeed, is very keen to celebrate the history of the camp. A bright but bitterly cold day made it easier to imagine the harsh living conditions that inmates would have experienced at the Camp for several months of the year in such a bleak and exposed location.

Many of Moota's inmates are now very elderly or have passed on, but the stories keep coming in. A few months ago I was contacted by a former German POW, who has spent the past 50 or so years raising a family and building a life in Ohio, USA. He had been captured in Brest, Brittany, in 1944, and was taken to a camp in Texas. In 1946 he believed himself to be en route for Germany and home, but instead was taken, via Liverpool, to Moota. This is a common thread in many of the men's accounts of their war experiences: transportation from American camps and then being settled in another camp, rather than being immediately repatriated. Wolfgang (or Wolf, as he is now known) would have to wait until the summer of 1947 before getting back home to Germany. He eventually returned to America to start a new life. He had read the Moota book and wanted to add some memories of his own:

"A number of events and names came right back into memory. I was one of the three violin players. Of the many names mentioned, ZENZ popped up. His bunk bed was next to mine. He was an architect from Munich, quite a bit older than I was. He got involved with Jehova's Witnesses who started

The former World War II hut chapel at Moota POW camp, from the Tassell Collection at Tullie House Museum, Carlisle (the decoration was painted over soon after the POWs left, and the hut no longer exists)

Next page: The recently-unveiled commemorative plaque at Moota





a group at the camp and tried to explain things to me. LENZ, another name, was a teacher. We became friends. Some time after I had returned home, I looked him up during a trip to Berlin. He was trying to get back into teaching High School ...”

There seem to have been around seven camps for holding Italian or German POWs during WWII in what is now Cumbria. Apart from a detailed account of the history of Grizedale Hall camp, I have been able to find very little published research – unless anyone out there knows any different! I am particularly interested in knowing more about Merry Thought Camp, which was near Calthwaite, following a recent enquiry from an Italian living in Sanremo, whose grandfather spent some time at Merry Thought. I have been able to send him Red Cross reports concerning conditions at the camp, and how the men spent their time when they were not out working, but I know he would greatly appreciate any pictures of the camp or any other information that may still be in existence. If you can help with information about this camp, or indeed any other Cumbrian camp, I would be very pleased to hear from you, since it would be good to bring all this together before it is lost for ever.

Related books: *Moota Camp 103: The Story of a Cumbrian POW Camp* and *The War Years: Life in Cockermouth and at Moota POW Camp*

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Picture Challenge!

My family are from Darwen in Lancs and for generations have holidayed in Arnside. They always used to stay at Mrs Boardman's guesthouse. We love the area and the Lakes itself. I think my Mum picked up the picture at a jumble sale or junk shop years ago on holiday and I recently inherited it. It a lovely little delicate watercolour view over the estuary of Grange over Sands.

The signature is very faint but looks like T or I Hil....? f..??. Handwritten on the back it says. *'This is Grange over Sands done by the artist who did all the paintings on the ceiling at the Scala (now known as *) for my father when he did all the decorations there for the opening, given to Mr A Hall by him.'*

I now live in Cornwall and am about to hang it on my dining room wall.

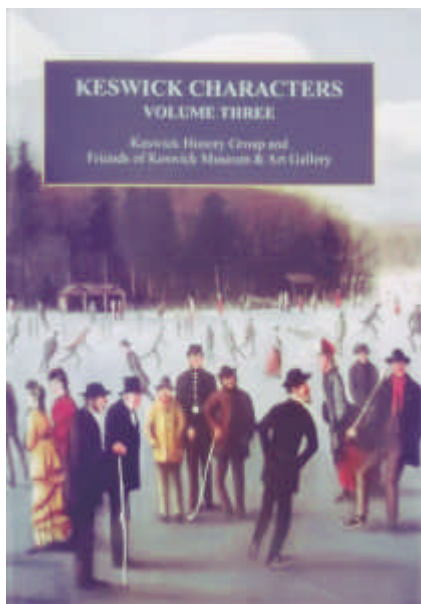
So does anyone know the cinema/theatre, the artist or anything??

Lynda Gregory (nee Crossley)
email: lyndgreg@hotmail.co.uk



* Editor's note: I presume the Scala became the Palace- unless you know otherwise!

Book Review



Keswick Characters: Volume Three

Co-ordinated by Brian Wilkinson from work by Keswick History Group and the Friends of Keswick Museum & Art Gallery

Bookcase (Carlisle), 2012

ISBN 9781904147664

Pbk, 168 pages, b/w illus, price £10

Three volumes in, and this series still finds subjects of great interest and significance although it is perhaps fair to note that the net is now conspicuously spread to Keswick's hinterland of elegant country residences, such as Hugh Walpole's Brackenburn, William Brownrigg's Ormathwaite, and, nicely justifying the whole expansion, Lord's Island, former seat of the Earls of Derwentwater.

One remarkable thing about this new selection is the light it throws on the history of the town in general. A co-founder of Keswick Convention, a guide-book publisher whose face is, for very good reason, sculpted on the main gates of Fitz Park, and perhaps most surprisingly, "Keswick's greatest benefactor," Henry Hewetson, whose biography had previously been rather ignored for the simple reason that it was quite difficult to find anything out about him! The last named character in the book, the splendidly rumbustious journalist and writer Alan Hankinson, makes it unsuitable for younger readers (so with any luck, hordes of nine-year-olds will become acquainted with the delights of history by trying to find out why).

Like previous volumes in the series, this book includes portraits of the subjects where available, and, where appropriate, illustrations of places relevant to their lives. There is also a timeline showing the subjects from all three books in their chronological context, and a bonus chapterlet at the end about a well known feline character.

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