



Cumbria Local History Federation

Bulletin 84 – Winter 2020



An evacuee and a local girl collecting scrap metal in Cockermouth – Gloria Edwards

Chairman's Chat – Graham Brooks	2
Members Contributions: Duddon Valley LHG, Walkers are Welome, Ravenstonedale PHG, Cumbria Postal History Society, Upper Eden HS	3
Caldbeck & District LHS, Asby History Group, Cumbria Vernacular Buildings Group	9
Cockermouth Heritage Group, Lorton & Derwent Fells LHS, The History of Kirkby, Cartmel Peninsula LHS	13
Research Essays: Hauliers of Yesteryear, Land Army Girls in Westmorland, The Last Wolf, A Mummy with Cumbria Connections	16
Research Articles: Flusco Quarry Newbiggin, Who Were They? Researching a War Memorial	28
Local History Publications and Reviews	33
Local History News and Thoughts: Retirement of Prof. Peter Roebuck, Of the Value of Archives, Fell Foot Forward, Cumbria Lives Website	38
CLHF Contacts	44

Chairman's Chat.

By now you should all be aware that Peter Roebuck felt he had to stand down from the role of Chairman of the Federation on health grounds. I would like to take this opportunity to wish him all the best for the future. Because the Federation, like the majority of our member societies, had to cancel our AGM and Convention I have taken over the role of Chairman in an acting capacity until we can hold an AGM.

For those who don't know me I was raised on Teesside surrounded by the heavy industry of the steel works, engineering and chemicals. This environment along with regular visits to the North York Moors with its numerous remains of the iron ore mining industry stimulated from an early age an interest in industrial history which has never left me. I moved to Cumbria nearly 40 years ago and soon became involved with the newly founded Cumbria Industrial History Society and I am still heavily involved. My main interests in industrial history range from limekilns, through coal mining especially the smaller collieries on the fells, to brick and tile making.

I was invited to join the Federation's committee about 5 years ago when Peter was looking to move the Federation forward and I feel he has made great progress in developing the role of the Federation during his period as Chairman. I hope to keep the momentum he has developed going and make the Federation a useful source for our member societies.

Alas the present pandemic has unfortunately slowed the work of the Federation. The cancelled Annual convention has been re-booked for next October. We are aware some of our members are using Zoom to hold their winter meetings and we are producing a guide to this using the experiences of those groups who have already tried this. We are also contacting the speakers in the speaker directory to find out if they are willing/capable of giving talks by Zoom and a list will be circulated when it is complete. If you feel you have any comments pertinent to using Zoom please feel free to send them in.

The Federation committee is stable at the present but it would be nice to

have a few new members to bring new ideas and help spread the load. If you would like a chat feel free to contact me.

Graham Brooks, Acting Chairman.

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## Use of Facebook during Covid Lockdown

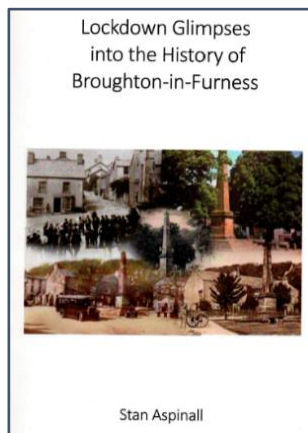
The Duddon Valley Local History Group (DVLHG) has an extensive archive of old photographs of Broughton-in-Furness and the surrounding area. Broughton in turn has its own Facebook Page. Following on from the success of last year, it had been planned to have an exhibition of these photographs in the local Victory Hall. That being increasingly unlikely, Stan Aspinall, a member of the History Group, came up with the suggestion of a daily posting of photos, with descriptions, on the Broughton Facebook page, asking for comments. Little did he know just how much interest this would generate. The responses have been phenomenal with one post alone attracting over 200 'Comments' and this from a town of just over 500 people.

Equally important was the vast amount of additional information received. Characters in photos were identified, mysteries solved and a whole raft of previously unseen photographs loaned to the History Group for copying. The majority of these responses came from folk who were not members of DVLHG. In one particular case, a recent newcomer, with expertise in ancestral research, was able to provide previously unknown detailed background information on many of the characters in the photos. A deal of information came from people who had long since moved away but still kept in contact through the Facebook Page.

After each post there was a demand for more. In all there were 57 such posts but with such a huge response Mr Aspinall had to call a halt. Some of the comments he received were:

“Brilliant, wish you wouldn't stop.” “...these posts have been a joy to read. I have found out much about the place I thought I already knew.” Perhaps the most telling was from a reader who said “The interaction with the community of Broughton has really enriched your posts Stan. A book would be the icing on the cake in these troubled times.”

Stan immediately rose to the challenge. With funding for publication coming from our society Stan soon had a draft for the printers. Such was the demand that all 220 copies sold immediately. Stan has requested that all the proceeds be donated to his nominated charity. The book will shortly be available on the DVLGH website.



A fantastic job Stan and an example for other History Groups, and one for which he has been nominated for a BALF Award.  
Ken Day, Chairman

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RAVENSTONEDALE PARISH HISTORY GROUP

House Mysteries launches ‘live audience’ history talk

With the generous support of the Newbiggin-on-Lune public hall committee and a grant from the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership, Ravenstonedale Parish History Group (RPHG) were able to entertain members to the first live history talk since February 2020. Newbiggin-on-Lune public hall ensured social distancing rules were strictly adhered to and Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership

provided a grant to support costs incurred in the use of the hall, allowing the event to go ahead despite limitation on the numbers able to attend.

An audience of 14 members attended Val Fermer's talk 'Who used to live in your house'. In her talk, Val presented history for five houses located in Ravenstonedale Parish. The history spanned from 1500 to the point when current occupiers became the latest owner of the property. The talk was developed by linking findings from a range of different historical sources including the unique references that are held by RPHG in their archive, located at the Ravenstonedale Community and Heritage centre.

These references include original sales prospectuses which are the details prepared by the auction house responsible for the sale of the property and they are extensive printed documents, containing maps, a detailed description of the property and can be cross referenced to other local history sources such as census records which can confirm identity of owner and if different the occupier.

RPHG has its own 'searchable' excel file which is an extraction of electoral registers that are cross referenced with sales prospectuses. Similarly sales prospectuses are cross referenced to the Poor Law Returns. Also known as rate returns, these were local taxes which used the valuation of freehold property, administered by parish, introduced as a tax in 1834 to enable the rising cost of caring for the poor to be financed. Local press reports, held by RPHG in collected scrapbooks of newspaper cuttings give an insight into the lives lived by the owners and occupiers, for example Joseph Ewbank, a butcher and for 60 years a Methodist preacher.

In some cases the property was occupied by the same family for almost 100 years, from 1585 to 1669. Tales from the house histories included tales of an 1876 legal dispute involving Ruth and Jane Scarborough, (an original photo of one of the sisters was presented), the scandal of the postman and his landlady (which led to their marriage in 1943) and a Gretna Green elopement (and a party to celebrate the marriage at a Newbiggin-on-Lune pub). In the case of the elopement, two versions of the story exist in RPHG archives, one from an 1851 newspaper cutting

and the contradictory report from a personal recollection collected in a published history of the Ravenstonedale Hewetson family.

The properties were owned by local landowners, distant landlords, including one who died at King's Lynn in Norfolk and another who was the founder of Kendal's former Crewdson and Wakefield Bank. William Wakefield died in a hunting accident in 1889, leaving a fortune of over £9 million (today's valuation).

In her vote of thanks, Diana Fothergill made mention of the huge amount of work the compilation of the talk will have involved, and Val Fermer was delighted to finally have the opportunity to present her findings to the RPHG members, in person, to a live audience and in a safe situation. Enquiries from readers interested in discovering more about the RPHG archive, are welcomed to contact www.ravenstonedalehistory.org.uk.
Steve Fermer

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### Cumbria Postal History Society

The Cumbrian Postal History Society, along with other similar groups, has had no meetings since the beginning of the year and the same is true of county philatelic societies. The Cockermouth Stamp Club did manage to hold an auction in September thanks to an indefatigable secretary, Mike Roberts. Other than that, with so many members of a certain age, activity has been limited to writing up material which hitherto has been in storage boxes along with the required research. Those who are tidier, have been thinning collections out by disposing of duplicates or elements of less quality.

One positive item of postal history which represents progress is the matter of postman's huts. **As a result of an item in the last bulletin**, it has been possible to update the listing of such modest buildings in Cumbria. The current list is as follows - Pica (Whitehaven), Buttermere (Cockermouth), Blencogo (Wigton), Sunderland (Cockermouth), Seascale (shared between Whitehaven and offices to the south), Lamplugh (Cockermouth), Penton (Carlisle), Braithwaite (Keswick) and Ullock (Cockermouth). Main post offices are shown in brackets.

Section 7 of the Rules for Rural Postmen lists dos and don'ts together with financial arrangements. 7(b) gives the flavour of this - "If a Postman is provided with a shelter hut, he must use it regularly and keep it clean and in good order. He must secure the door carefully when he leaves the hut, first taking every precaution against risk of fire during his absence." Elsewhere, in Section 7 (a) (iii), posties are informed, "Cleaning materials and coal scoops can be obtained, when a need exists, from the Head Office".

The shelter huts were to be used for rest and a place to eat lunch and read the newspaper. However, there is abundant anecdotal evidence that they were used as shops, selling local produce in ad hoc arrangements with farmers and smallholders. They were also used for recreation with girlfriends, card players and other illegal visitors. In Shropshire, the Cleobury Mortimer postman wrote impressive poetry in his shelter and was famous throughout the West Midlands.

Mike Mapleton

## ~~~~~ Walkers are Welcome.

As reported in Bulletin 83 – Summer 2020, Kirkby Stephen Walkers are Welcome and the Upper Eden History Society are placing Blue Plaques in Kirkby Stephen. Five plaques have now been installed with information on the website [www.upperedenhistory.org.uk/blue\\_plaques.htm](http://www.upperedenhistory.org.uk/blue_plaques.htm)

Interest has been shown in how this history was produced and the

sources used. We would like to highlight an example with 8 Market Square, a prominent three-story Grade II Listed Building categorised by Historic England as the 'SHOP TO NORTH EAST CORNER', List Entry Number: 1145032. See



<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1145032> As a starting point, we are fortunate to have old drawings by Thomas Fawcett dated to around 1817, which have been published in Kirkby Stephen by

Anne M. A. Anderson and Alec in 1985 by Titus Wilson and Son Ltd, and just reprinted. Some pictures from Thomas' sketch book are also available at Kendal Records Office. There is a drawing of the Market Square showing bull baiting with this building before remodelling and is named 'Old Brewery'.

There is also a most valuable resource of shop ledgers dating from 1756-1777 belonging to Abraham Dent who traded on this site, now archived at Carlisle. Professor T. S. Willan published his fascinating early shop keeper analysis in 1970 - An Eighteenth-Century Shopkeeper Abraham Dent of Kirkby Stephen, Manchester University Press. Abraham's father, William traded in Kirkby Stephen as a shopkeeper and wine merchant and it can probably be assumed at the same premises.

First mentioned in 1784, Abraham initially partnered with Portrees and Mason branching out into brewing. This ties in with the 'Old Brewery' naming, the extensive cavern-like cellar and 15 feet deep well accessed from the rear basement entrance and a short tunnel. This excellent location to brew beer was between two public houses in which Dent appears to have had a later interest, The Sun Inn and The Golden Fleece.

Residents know that this building later housed the business of J. W. Braithwaite & Son, postmaster, bookseller, stationer, bill poster and printer. He produced early tourism guides to Kirkby Stephen and the first Kirkby Stephen Monthly Messenger produced in at least 1890 to 1892. Copies of these publications survive and contain fascinating historical and contemporary information that has been invaluable to local historians. Descendants were able to add additional information remembering the days of the Braithwaite shop run by daughter Mabel.

Ann Sandell

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Upper Eden History Society

Upper Eden History Society's lecture programme usually runs from October to April, with trips out during the summer. February, March and April meetings were cancelled of course, and trips were not possible but,

as Chairman of the Society, I did not want us to lose contact with each other – we’ve had a strong membership for the last 34 years.

One member suggested a monthly newsletter, which we started in July, with contributions from the members, each one based on a theme: rush bearing, the history of our schools, and recently lime kilns and navvies. This is a physical document, printed out and delivered, because many of our members prefer not to use computers.

We normally open our archives to the public once a month, in Kirkby Stephen Quaker Meeting House, but that venue has not re-opened. Instead, the Town Council gave us permission to set up a couple of tables in The Cloisters – so we are outside, but under cover. We don’t display fragile documents, but copies of newspaper cuttings, old postcards, and books from our library. This has proved to be a much better venue. Cold yes, but we have more visitors – people who are shopping in town or walking the dog come and browse then share memories about where the post office used to be, or school life during World War Two.

But how to return to meetings? In October, while it was still possible to meet in groups of six, we hired the Masonic Hall and asked members to book timed entry and bring some of their ‘finds’. What a collection! Clay pipe fragments, animal skulls and teeth, a cannon ball said to have been found near Brough Castle, and a few mystery objects. We wore masks, had plenty of hand sanitizer, placed tables and chairs at 2 metre intervals, and enjoyed ourselves discussing the size of the canon, the date of the clay pipes and admiring the skeletons, particularly that of a duck. A successful session that we plan to repeat, once restrictions ease again.
Anne Taylor

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## Caldbeck & District Local History Society

The Society’s programme for 2020 was due to start in March with a talk by Dr Jim Cox on *‘Caldbeck Surgery –the first fifty years’*. After that we had planned to hold monthly meetings through to October but the programme had to be postponed because of the coronavirus. Although the Parish Hall is expected to re-open in November after building work, current regulations prevent us from holding public meetings and it looks unlikely that our programme can resume before March 2021. We hope that we will then be able to resume the programme planned for 2020.

We will carry forward annual membership fees that you have already paid unless we hear that you would prefer a refund.

We do not expect to hold an AGM and supper at Denton House in November this year as we have done in the past. We are trying to do as much as we can to keep the Society's affairs in order through the Business Committee. We met in the open air on 9<sup>th</sup> September and reviewed the accounts presented by the Treasurer, Matthew Cosgriff. The Society's financial position is secure and after audit the committee will finalise the annual accounts.

The Society's recent book *'Caldbeck – A Special Part of Lakeland'* by Tony Vaux is now available at a special price of £9 instead of the initial price of £12. We have sold more than 500 copies and have made donations from the proceeds for the refurbishment of the school library and towards the youth work of the Northern Fells Group. All future income will go to the same causes. If you already have a copy yourself perhaps you may like to give a copy to someone else as a Christmas present. Because of the virus the book may not be available in local shops so please contact me or Sally Vaux directly if you would like a copy.

We are also updating and reprinting the leaflet 'Short walks around Caldbeck Village'. This was previously on sale for 20p but will now be offered free from [vauxt@aol.com](mailto:vauxt@aol.com) or 016974 78626  
Tony Vaux



This guided walk around the village of Great Asby on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 was organised by the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership which is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It has been said that the trouble with local historians is that they may lead you into "a morass of loving but futile detail". An important warning for this local historian leading this particular walk!

Great Asby is probably a so-called ‘planned village’; one of a number established in northern England at some time after 1092. So its basic ‘bone-structure’ may date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although this may overlay a displaced earlier settlement and landscape layout. We don’t know all the details of the earlier manorial structure. Perhaps there was originally a *single* Asby manor, later divided into *three*. All of the present-day village lies within two of them, ‘Asby Cotesford’ and ‘Asby Winderwath’, divided by Asby Beck.

Village farmstead *sites* – some may date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century – have obviously seen many reconstructions, culminating in the well-documented period of regional rebuilding in stone in the later 17<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The walk pointed to date-stones from 1680 to 1748 but also drew attention to *continuing* changes and the building of new houses.

Within this village framework, the walk moved back and forth across the centuries and across a number of themes and stories; pointing out the buildings and lands associated with them; interpretation of minor place-names of fields and landscape features; significant buildings from, respectively, the 14<sup>th</sup> and late 17<sup>th</sup> century – The Rectory and Asby Hall; use of water-power; a possible early horizontal water-mill; a 12<sup>th</sup> century millpond; an 18<sup>th</sup> century bark-mill; a 19<sup>th</sup> century marble-polishing mill and generation of electricity from 1928 until 1952 .

Also a probable site of the medieval archery practise ground at ‘Butts Green’ – a large level area just to the east of the church; a mystery of how the village inn, the ‘Three Greyhounds’, derives its name from animals which feature on the coat of arms of the Machell family of Crackenthorpe.



An exploration of the equal mystery of why the ‘church bridge’, giving access to St Peter’s, was referred to in a 14<sup>th</sup> century Rector’s will as ‘Patrick’s Bridge’; charitable actions by local benefactors to establish Asby

Endowed School in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and St Helen's Almshouses in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as funding of the demolition and rebuilding of the parish church by Anne Newell Hill in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century after she inherited the manor of Asby Winderswath. So much more could have been added and explored but that 'morass' threatened!

Keith H. Cooper

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Despite having postponed the entire year's programme from March, until 2021, CVBG has not been idle. Work goes on, on several fronts.

The committee holds its regular quarterly committee meetings on Zoom, and is in regular e mail contact. Our Annual General Meeting was held on Zoom, also, in September, and was well attended.

We send out a quarterly newsletter, and an e mail news in between. The September newsletter was accompanied by the second Occasional Paper (see Bulletin review), and an index to all newsletters so far published. There was also a Library list, now that the collection of books and journals has a permanent home at Brougham Hall, where it can be consulted. Paul Lewis, vice chairman of CVBG (Lewis Conservation), has made space available in his office, and members may either read books there or request books by post.

Plans are well advanced for other publications. With the Christmas newsletter, we aim to send another Occasional Paper on Barns. Material is being collated for a book to follow up the last events we held, in January and February, to relate the traditional buildings of Cumbria to the geology. Dr Alan Smith, one of our members (a retired geologist) who has written many books on the subject, is advising us.

We are very fortunate in having many talented people among our members. We have members who prepare material for publication, and read proofs, who draw plans, look after the library, the funds, the website and social media, and are there as consultants whatever arises.

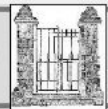


Two small groups have been on recording expeditions, while adhering to current guidance. One was to a farmhouse, complete with flower-rich hay meadows and old farm buildings, in Upper Lunesdale. This has been left, in lieu of death duties, to the Cumbria Wildlife Trust, who asked CVBG to make a report. The other was to record an outbuilding in Culgaith village, near Penrith. It has two pairs of crucks, (see example in image) not yet entered onto the national cruck database, so we can contribute to that. Cumbria has relatively few cruck buildings amongst its rich built environment, especially those on the national database map, although we see the evidence for them in the great numbers of re-used crucks found. We always welcome information, so if you know where crucks, or re-used crucks can be found, please let us know.

June Hill

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## Cockermouth Heritage Group



Like most other groups, Coronavirus has put paid to all regular face-to-face meetings. We managed to produce a condensed online version of a planned Wordsworth commemoration exhibition, which can be viewed on the Kirkgate Centre's website: [www.kirkgatearts.org.uk](http://www.kirkgatearts.org.uk). Additionally, we had also planned an exhibition in Cockermouth Library to commemorate VE Day. At the request of Allerdale Librarian Kathryn Lynn we were instead able to provide online contributions on WWII Evacuees,

Moota Prisoner of War Camp and a local connection with the D-Day Landings for a library service display. Text and images for a planned book ('Wordsworth's Cockermouth'), to tie in with the Wordsworth commemoration, were sent to the publisher. Sadly, this is still on hold in view of the present uncertain situation. Our group is unusual in that we have a large collection of photographs and artefacts, so we have no shortage of copying/cataloguing work to be getting on with, and we will shortly be tuning into an online talk on digitisation which should be of value with our photographic collection. We look forward to happier times when we can all meet together again.

Gloria Edwards

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Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

Online Talks. Along with all our fellow Societies we have not been able to deliver talks in the normal way and because it is too soon to start planning for a resumption of normal service we are looking closely at providing talks through Zoom webinars and we are hopeful that we will be able to offer them over the coming months. We are grateful for the advice this which was shared among fellow members of the Federation.

Reaching out to members and a wider audience. At a time of lockdown and social distancing the Society has relied on its quarterly newsletter, the Wanderer edited by Dr Derek Denman, to maintain the interest of members in local history and to provide a service. The Wanderer is usually a mix of Society news and information, plus a few articles from members on local history topics, using a physical format similar to the CLHF Bulletin. Our archived Wanderers and the earlier Journals are freely available at <http://derwentfells.com/wanderer.html> and <http://derwentfells.com/journal.html>

During 2020 we have considerably stepped up the content of articles and have been fortunate to acquire new contributors from the membership. Perhaps the disruption to our Talks Programme has stimulated members to do more research and writing, which the Society has always encouraged and supported. The interest in this part of Cumbria area on the part of our President, Professor Angus Winchester, was confirmed in

his recent book *The language of the Landscape* and that may well have served as a timely source of motivation. A stimulating range of subjects has been covered recently, from a serious concentration on the early history of Loweswater, by several contributors, through to more esoteric debates about the value of fictional narratives in conveying historical facts and truths, such as W G Collingwood's Thorstein of the Mere. The history of houses, or more properly of those human actors associated with a particular house, has always been a valuable entry point for local history studies, and these are well represented in our Wanderer.

A digital resource for the 'New Domesday' 1909-1915 property survey of our area. The Society maintains a core archive of records appropriate to its various townships and manors, to support members and others in their studies. Rather by good fortune, it was in February that we compiled a digital resource of the material in the 'New Domesday' survey covering our parishes. This source has excellent coverage of Cumbria, and gives a good pre-WWI starting point for property history, perhaps more accessible than the tithe commutation material from the 1840s.

The problem with the Domesday material is that it is spread between The National Archives at Kew and Carlisle Archive Centre. By making a complete copy as a database, we make this material far more accessible to members and enquirers on a property-by-property basis. This database is not online, but held on computer. Information on the content is at www.derwentfells.com/NewDomesday.html. The society is happy to discuss this project with other interested societies so please contact Tim Stanley-Clamp tdsc50@icloud.com in the first instance if you would like to follow this up.

Social Media. We have benefited significantly from reaching out to a wider readership via our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Lortonlocalhistorysociety. Apart from the general interest which it has prompted, several members of the public have been stirred to join us at our Talks, some of them going so far as to take up membership.

Tim Stanley-Clamp

The History of Kirkby

Due to the lockdown, rule of six etc., we are holding no meetings at present or for the currently foreseeable future but we have moved our meeting place from Becksides Rooms which have been the main village Hall for very many years to our newly rebuilt and refurbished Community Centre in Low Becksides. We are also hoping to get our web site revised and back up and running in the not too distant future. Unfortunately due to the aged programme that it was written with it is no longer capable of being updated and so is sitting in the doldrums at present.

Charles Rowntree

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## Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society

We managed to host two lectures in the early part of the year before lockdown had its inevitable impact. Since then our committee has kept business ticking over with virtual zoom meetings and in the absence of a “real” AGM in November we continued the occasional email update to members with “An Alternative AGM” paper giving the reports we might have given if we had held an AGM. This was well received by our loyal members, no doubt in part because next year’s membership fees are being waived for paid up 2019 members.

Local research activity has continued by a number of members. Quite a number of new articles have been posted on our website and documents are being added to our Archive. One special find has been a collection of Cartmel and Holker Almanacs dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Nigel Mills

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RESEARCH ESSAYS

Hauliers of Yesteryear

The packhorse trade, which lasted almost a thousand years in Cumbria, left an indelible mark; particularly on Kendal, whose woollen industry it served. The Auld Grey Town’s coarse, hard-wearing fabrics, created on

handlooms from Herdwick fleeces, included Kendal green, worn by Kendal bowmen at Crécy in 1346, Poitiers in 1356 and Agincourt in 1415 and later mentioned by William Shakespeare in Henry IV (Part 1). The fabric worn by the Bard's "three misbegotten knaves" was thought to have been dyed with a wild local yellow broom flower then re-dyed with blue woad, to create the desired shade.

The packhorse men were the hauliers of their day – the equivalent of Eddie Stobart, if you like – and the pack trade's heyday, between 1650 and 1750, prompted a surge in the building of dedicated narrow hump-back bridges, which were nothing new. Glance beneath Netherbridge over the River Kent which, like many of the bridging points on the packhorse trail network, was accompanied by a ford and reveals a seventeenth-century packhorse bridge alongside later extensions - added as methods of transport changed. Documentation shows that the right to charge pontage – a crossing toll that would help with the triple-arched structure's maintenance – was granted by King Edward III as long ago as 1376.

During the mid-eighteenth century, 214 Galloway and fell-bred ponies were recorded as leaving Kendal every week. Only 12-14 hands high, these sturdy and reliable plodders carried a wide variety of goods, including raw wool and cloth. The town council's motto *Pannus Mihi Panis* – "Wool (or cloth) is my bread" is a reminder of the trade's importance to the local economy. Kendal's coat of arms features the teasels which raised the nap of the fabric, and wanty hooks that were used for securing the wool bales.

Teams of up to twenty "Gals", as packhorses were generally known, transported loads weighing between two and two and a half hundred weight in panniers carried either side of the horse. Bulkier cloth pieces were slung over the horse and secured underneath. Most pack trains were bound for the south and east, bearing local wool and cloth heading for London and the coast for export, even in medieval times.

In 1690 the 263 miles from Kendal to London was the longest pack route in the country and, since packhorses never travelled without a load, such

journeys gave the opportunity for them to return with interesting items such as raisins, taffetas and dyestuffs.

Eight years later the intrepid Celia Fiennes, who wrote about her journey in *Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary*, commented on Kendal's dependence on packhorses and the lack of wheeled transport. She didn't see a single cart on the narrow lanes leading from the town to Windermere, although she observed ponies dragging "little wheelbarrows". These were probably sleds – used for moving a range of bulky local goods like hay, and especially slate, minerals or quarry stone.

While waggons were used on major and more level routes, progress was slow and their wheels often became bogged down on unsuitable or badly drained tracks, not least through the encumbrance of heavy loads. Consequently, packhorses were favoured for their speed and reliability. Long after turnpike roads were constructed around Kendal in the mid-eighteenth century, it was still practical to move goods over the local hills on the Galloways and avoiding turnpike tolls too.

In addition to the long-established cottage industry of handloom weaving, hand-knitted items were an essential element of local trade. There were gloves, caps for slaves in the colonies, and a massive hosiery production that is said to have accounted for 30,000 dozen pairs of stockings leaving the town by packhorse every year. Even that amazing figure could be under-estimated. Historian Dr Arthur Raistrick recorded that 5,000 people in Kendal were employed in the hosiery trade in the late 1700s. Production was boosted when stockings were produced for men fighting in the American War of Independence between 1775 and 1783 and later during the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815.

It was recorded in 1801 that a gang of packhorses would descend on Kendal every week from Sedbergh and Dent carrying 840 pairs of stockings. Add to that the 1,000 pairs produced in Ravenstonedale alone every fortnight, along with the total from all the villages in the area, and the likely figure grows ever more impressive.

The superior knitting skills of Dent's residents were noted by Robert Southey in his book *The Doctor*, in which he coined the phrase "the terrible knitters e' Dent" on account of their dexterity and high output, achieved by using a sheath in their waistbands. Dentsdale children too young to attend school were taught to knit; even the men knitted as they walked the fells checking their flocks. In his later years, the eminent Adam Sedgwick, Britain's pioneer geologist and beloved son of the village, reflected nostalgically about the spirit of Dentsdale around 1800, and the long-gone pack Gals which were bred locally.

For around six centuries Kendal's men, women and children were involved in the various stages of cloth production, including spinning, weaving, dyeing, wool combing and the like. One of the important processes of treating cloth was for it to be stretched tautly on a tenter frame and secured with hooks by its selvages until dry; the expression of "being on tenter hooks", which describes the feeling of being uncomfortably tense, has its origins in that process. The tenter fields utilised ground that was unproductive, a practice repeated in Hawkshead. When Thomas Gray visited Kendal in 1769, as the light was fading, he was struck by the castle's silhouette and the cloth drying in the tenter fields.

On Stricklandgate in the town is the former Woolpack Inn and opposite the town hall, itself on the site of the former cloth hall, is Ye Olde Fleece Inn. Both buildings hark back to the days of the wool trade, when they provided hospitality for carriers passing through and accommodation for those staying overnight, as well as stabling for the Gals.

Also worth seeking out in Kendal is the charming seventeenth century Master's House, on Highgate. It was built by the Quaker Thomas Sandes (1606-1681), who was Mayor of Kendal and a wool merchant. Through its archway he built Sandes Hospital – eight almshouses provided to accommodate poor widows. Sandes also created a school and



library over the gateway and accommodation for the school's master. According to the Kendal Civic Society's plaque on the wall outside, trustees of Kirkbie Kendal School still own the property. Above the arch are the arms of the Sandes family and those of the Shearman's Guild. There is a date of 1659, a wool swag and the tools of a shearmen and cutter of cloth, which was Thomas Sandes' own trade.



Sleddall Hall Antiques on Wildman Street is a delightful building and is especially quaint internally, with its higglety pigglety floors and walls. Thomas Sleddall, another Kendal mayor, built the property around 1600. Interestingly, it was formerly the Packhorse Inn. If walls could speak.....
Maggie B Dickinson

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## Kendal Oral History Group

### Land Army Girls in Westmorland

Kendal Oral History Group (KOHG) was formed in 1987 to record the life stories of people who have spent all or most of their lives in and around Kendal. Their recollections are helping to create a collective history of the district which complements the official records of the time. Over the years Kendal Oral History Group have interviewed over 400 people including a number of ex-Land Army girls and here are some of the stories from these interviews.

Recruiting women to take on the jobs of farm workers and thereby releasing men for the army was first used in World War I. The scheme was closed in 1919 but re-introduced at the start of World War II when Land Army girls came to live in hostels and farms all over the country. The

ones that came into Westmorland came from towns and cities such as Wigan, Liverpool and Newcastle and Manchester.

Most Land Army girls had little idea of what they were letting themselves in for and country life was a real eye opener. One such young naive woman came from Birmingham and as she arrived at Milnthorpe railway station she saw blue tits flying around and said to her friend "Ooooh look at all those budgies."

Some were given a little bit of training but most were plunged straight into work such as picking potatoes or muck spreading and then they came into contact with the farm animals.

Marjorie Parkin had just arrived on the farm when the farmer said to his son "You take her with you and get the cows in." I think his son was 'frightened of me' and I was frightened of these big cows but he rounded them up and we took them up a narrow road very nervously. Then they all stopped. "What have they stopped for?" I said. "The gate's shut you go and open it." "I can't walk through all those cows." He said "If you are going to be a Land Girl you'll have to." So she had to walk between these 50 cows and she'd never ever been near a cow in her life before.

Another farmer thought that Margaret Leigh 'had been sent from heaven' when she agreed to milk his cows. He said "You get more milk out of 'em than I did. Because its soft hands, you know". So she had to go early every morning and milk for him and at night as well. Farming was very different then to what it is today. Cows were milked by hand and farms often kept sheep, pigs, hens and turkeys. Some slaughtered their own animals and made black puddings and smoked their own bacon from the pigs.



Most girls lived at the farms they were working on but Margaret and her friend Rita were one of the first to live in a hostel for the Land Army volunteers in Milnthorpe. It was luxury compared to a lot of the farms. However one of the setbacks was there were twelve women living there and only four baths.

When they first arrived their uniform was in a parcel on the floor of the hostel – velvety, khaki coloured dungarees and boots, a khaki hat and a coat which Margaret thought looked awful. (See Photograph) Her father got her some “proper” plaid jodhpurs, which was much appreciated.

One of the jobs was on Milnthorpe Marsh, right next to the railway line, planting and picking potatoes. They used to wave to the soldiers on the trains as they went by and got many a block of chocolate thrown at them.

For others life on a farm was an eye opener in many ways. The first time Ivy Ferguson was invited into the farm kitchen for a meal she was served the traditional meat and two veg with lots of gravy. She got through it all but left gravy on the plate. She was then asked “Would you like some rice pudding?” “Yes please.” This was plonked on the plate in the middle of the gravy.

Another, Josie Wellings, lived on a farm which had electric light downstairs but when she started to go to bed the farmer’s wife gave her a candle. She asked, “What’s this for?” “To go to bed with,” she was told “Well where’s the light?” It turned out the electric was for downstairs and the dairy, the candle was for upstairs. They had a generator but when the farmer was milking they didn’t have the lights on in the house.

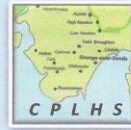
The pay was not brilliant at ten shillings (50p) a week plus your board. For the first six weeks the Government paid and after that the farmer paid your wage but it was still the same amount.

The Land Army Scheme carried on after the war until 1950. By this time many of the girls had married local men (a good number married farmers’ sons) and stayed in Westmorland.

Peter Holme

## CARTMEL PENINSULA LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

*"Bringing Local History to the Community"*



### Who killed England's last wolf?

Those that know the legend put the blame firmly on John Harrington – he who built Holker Hall and whose effigy is found in Cartmel Priory.

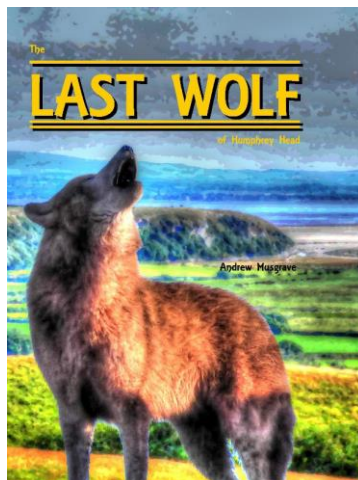
In 1906 Mrs Jerome Mercier, putting prose to an 18th century ballad, tells us the last wolf had its lair in the arched cave on Humphrey Head on Cumbria's south coast. The wolf was pestering the flocks of Sir Edgar, Lord of the Manor of Wraysholme (near Allithwaite). Sir Edgar offered a reward of land, and marriage to his niece, to whichever knight could kill this last annoying beast.

According to the legend, on the fateful day a posse of 30 local hopeful knights gathered to flush the wolf from its lair, and thus began a pursuit all around south Lakeland – a sort of Knights v Wolf marathon. And Edgar's estranged son John won, killing the wolf and marrying his niece Adela (his childhood sweetheart)!

How much historical truth is there in the story? Most legends have some grain of truth to them, but they are legends because the historic version cannot be verified. There is a history of wolves in the locality evidenced both by place names and by bone fragments. Kendal Museum exhibits the Helsfell wolf skeleton dating from the 12th century. Historical documents record that the nobility offered rewards for capturing wolves.

Other places in Britain claim similar tales, but the tale of Humphrey Head seems better anchored: Lakeland being a forested backwater away from England's cultivated heartland has always provided a refuge for persecuted predators. The place name Ulpha, six miles east of Humphrey Head derives from ulfr meaning 'wolf' and that wolves may have been trapped there. A wolf's head weathervane can be seen on the roof of Cartmel Priory, hinting at past encounters.

John Harrington, having been a parliamentary peer from 1324, died in 1347. His tomb had intricate decorations of various beasts, dragons, lions, etc, but none depict wolves. If in his lifetime he was famous for such a feat, surely such evidence would have been depicted on his grave. The feet of John Harrington's effigy rest upon a carving of a lion (not a wolf), while that of his wife (whose name was Lady Joan Dacre (not Adela as in the legend)) rests upon a dog.



Wolfa, a farmstead near Great Salkeld, also lays claim to being the place where the last wolf was slain. But Salkeld seems to have dubious copycat claims for other legends, too, such as The Luck of Burrell Green which appears to mirror another local myth (The Luck of Edenhall).

Egremont in west Cumbria also has a tale of a wolf being slain, as revenge for killing Lady Egremont. And Lady's Dub in Dunnerdale is named after the lady of the Manor of Ulpha was chased by a wolf, jumped into a lake and drowned. But neither of these tales claim to be about the *last* wolf.

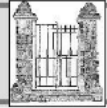
By Medieval times wolves had become so numerous and annoying that their numbers needed to be checked. An official wolf hunting season was established lasting from January to March. King John offered rewards for the capture of wolves, and in 1433 Henry VI sponsored wolf hunts (all since John Harrington's death).

Wolves became extinct in England between 1485 & 1509. That being so, John Harrington who died in 1347 couldn't be the culprit for its demise. It is unlikely we will ever know who killed England's last wolf.

In February 2020 an up-dated, fully illustrated version of the legend was published: "The Last Wolf of Humphrey Head" by Andrew Musgrave (ISBN: 9780995586857).



# Cockermouth Heritage Group



## A Mummy with Cumbrian Connections

As improbable as it may seem, this is the story of a mummy with Cumbrian connections – or more precisely, the mummy of Pocaontas II of South America. Several hundred years after her death she could never have imagined that she would undertake an epic journey, leaving the sun-kissed land of her birth, hit the international news headlines, and finally would bequeath her withered hand to a museum display cabinet in Belgium of all places. This was, indeed, poor Pocaontas's fate, and a formidable lady from Cockermouth helped to determine it.

Mrs Aitken, born Annie Kay in Cockermouth in 1851, went out with her husband to Peru in the 1870s and quickly became assimilated into a thriving British community there. Two sons, Claude and Harold, were born in Lima and were eventually sent to a religious college in Melle, Belgium, for their continuing education. After their time there Mrs Aitken was keen to show her appreciation for the efforts made on her sons' behalf and decided that she would procure a mummy for the College museum.



After a long wait, the British Consul in Tereca was able to offer her a mummy for this purpose and it set off on its journey, via England to Belgium.

All was going well until it reached London, care of the London and North Western Railway, where an inquisitive and unsuspecting porter opened the packing case to investigate the contents. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1901. Imagine his horror when he discovered what he believed to be a corpse stuffed inside the packing case. His mistake was an easy one to make, since South American mummies are mummified in an upright position with their knees drawn up to their chest, unlike Egyptian mummies. Naturally, the police had to be summoned and the inevitable inquest followed. The coroner's jury returned its verdict:

*“... this woman was found dead at the railway station ... and did die at some unknown date in some foreign country, probably South America, from some cause unknown. The jury are satisfied that this body does not show any sign of any recent crime, and that the deceased was unknown, and about 25 years of age.”*

Needless to say, the press, at home and abroad, had a field day. Meanwhile, the mummy continued on its weary way, repackaged and duly despatched to Belgium. Unfortunately, by the time it reached its destination, decomposition had started to set in because it had been interfered with, and it no longer smelt as pleasant as it had done at the start of its journey. Having arrived at Melle, the order was given by the Belgian authorities for the mummy to be buried in the local cemetery.

As might be imagined, Mrs Aitken was rather put out that her generous gift, acquired after much negotiation with bureaucracy over many months, had been stopped short in its tracks. She decided that she would sue the railway company for the damage that had been caused, and the subsequent court case in London once again attracted the attention of both the national and international press. A booklet, running to some twenty-two pages (tracked down at the Library in Melle), describes with some incredulity the investigations of the British police, their discussions with their Belgian counterparts, and conversations with the bemused staff of the religious college in Melle. It is fair to say that the British police investigators, who travelled to Melle, became the laughing stock of Europe with their pedantic questions regarding the crime that never was.

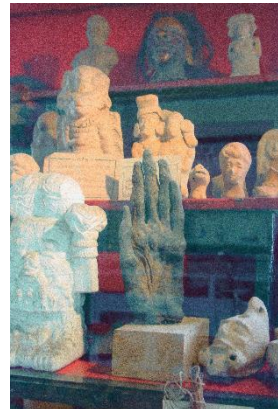
The ‘Standard’ newspaper described the discovery of the body thus:

*“A horrible discovery was made on Monday morning at Broad Street Station. The body of a young woman was found in a chest which was addressed to a museum on the Continent ... The body was, so to speak, folded in two, but the only trace of violence was a slight wound on its neck. The station detectives were summoned immediately, and all the indications were that an abominable crime had been committed ...”*

Meanwhile, Mrs Aitken (now living back in Cockermouth) had received a letter from Monsieur Ernest at the college in Melle, informing her of events:

*"You will be moved by the lamentable end of your poor mummy. She arrived last Saturday. On Sunday, after a visit from the local authorities, I received a letter ordering me to have her buried without delay in the cemetery. One can only suppose that the sea air and atmosphere of England brought about her decomposition. I am deeply upset that your generosity and your kindness should have been thus rendered in vain ..."*

Mrs Aitken's writ against the railway company came before the King's Bench on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1901. There was intense amusement that an inquest had been opened on a mummy, so much so that the Clerk of the court is reported to have upset his ink-pot in the general hilarity that ensued in the court room. Mr Kemp, acting on behalf of Mrs Aitken, asserted that she was entitled to claim not only the £45 that she had paid in shipping costs, but also an amount for the value of the mummy. A key point in the argument centred around whether a mummy could be owned: was it a piece of merchandise with a value, or was it a corpse that no-one could own? The Chairman of the Court pointed out that there was no right of ownership over a corpse. This created further puzzling questions: when does a mummy cease to be a corpse? (answer: uncertain), and isn't a corpse always a corpse? (no: but once a corpse has become a mummy, it is always a mummy!). The Chairman noted that the Belgian authorities had treated Pocaontas as a corpse, having had her buried in the cemetery, to which the plaintiff's counsel replied: *"People do funny things in Belgium."* The Chairman declared that he would leave this question for the jury to ponder and he hoped that the case would determine statute law henceforth. Mrs Aitken appeared before the Court herself to give evidence. She is described as being a lady of 'respectable age, with the beautiful grey hair of a marchioness'. She described how the mummy was in a perfect state of preservation when last she saw it in South America: *"I watched over it myself. She was in a sitting position and it made me hope that she would arrive safely in that position ..."* (cue much laughter in court). There was further laughter when Monsieur Ernest's letter was read out, in particular the sentence:



*"I shall never think of the mummy without thinking of you, madame."*

The jury retired to consider its verdict, found in favour of Mrs Aitken and she was granted the sum of £75 damages and interest. All was not lost, however: Pocaontas may have been buried in the cemetery at Melle (I was unable to track her down when I visited), but her brown withered hand survives in a display cabinet in the college museum at Melle.  
Gloria Edwards

*(Gloria tells me that she lives in the house Annie Aitken used to live in at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after returning from South America and it was only after reading an article about a Cumbrian mummy in the Times and Star many years ago she realised she had that connection to her. Editor)*

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

Flusco Quarry, Newbiggin.

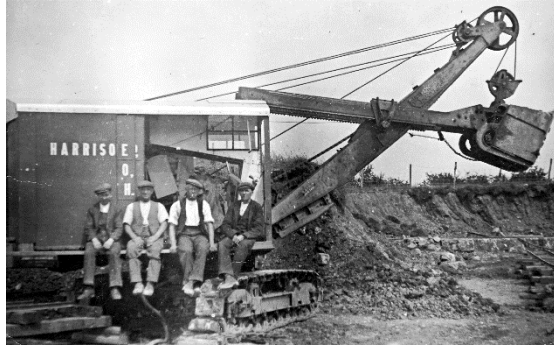
The quarry is situated in a limestone landscape three miles west of Penrith, close to the village of Newbiggin. Small-scale quarrying in this area has almost certainly taken place for hundreds of years. The 1775 Enclosures Award for the township granted the Newbiggin landholders a right to take stone for their own use at a number of public quarries. Apparently the stone was particularly valued for building because it was relatively soft and easy to work when quarried, but hardened after extraction. The image was taken in the 1940s and it shows some local men working at the Flusco Limestone Quarry. Their names are not known, but the third from the left had the nickname of 'Frosty' on account of his white hair. The excavator behind was electric powered, but later converted to diesel because it was unreliable.

Larger scale quarrying began in 1890 when the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith railway was built nearby. The company opened a quarry to provide ballast for the tracks. In 1907 a local landowner began to quarry some of his land for limestone extraction and constructed a kiln for the production of fertilizer. At this time it was thought that it was necessary

to burn the limestone in order to produce the fertilizer. However, the observant landowner noticed that the vegetation grew more vigorously at the side of his farm tracks surfaced with crushed lime, and surmised that the expensive burning process was not needed to make fertilizer. The limestone just needed to be crushed.

Limestone was also in great demand for the production of cement and steel. Quarries were also opened at adjacent

Blencow and Flusco Lodge and in their prime, probably covered 70 hectares. Many of the workforce were



from Newbiggin, but the proximity of the quarry made life there less than pleasant. In a 1950s feature in the Penrith Observer, columnist Frank Haley reported 'I glanced around the lime-whitened village. Dust decorated the walls on each side of the road.' A resident told him, "when they are blasting in the quarry we are apt to feel it." Blasting took place several times a week!

It closed in 1960 and was subsequently used for tipping, now known as 'landfill', eventually becoming a county landfill site and recycling centre. Long-term plans for the site include ponds and a re-wilding area.

Alan Rich

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## Who were they? (or Researching a War Memorial)

Have you ever asked that question to yourself as you glanced at a War Memorial, you pause and think a little deeper, where did they live? Who were their parents and siblings, were they married, where did they work, how old were they, and the most important questions where and how did they make the Supreme Sacrifice?

We generally pass by and put those questions out of our mind, but in 2016 many people paused a little longer and posed those questions to the Parish of Our Lady & St Joseph's Church Carlisle. We couldn't answer as there were no records whatsoever in the Parish or diocese. Faced with 75 names, some without an Initial or Christian name, on an 18ft white marble Memorial my two colleagues, James Robinson and Alex Proudfoot, and I decided to try and answer some of those questions and fill a huge gap in the parishes history.

Our starting point was to the Royal British Legions local branch as they had a few words on some of the men. We assumed that all of the men where parishioners, were lost during the conflict and came from the city and were in the Border Regiment. We assumed incorrectly.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's on-line data base holds details of the fallen and limited further background, however we didn't rely on the all of their information particularly the men's ages as it is well known that many when "Joining Up" gave false ages, which the military did not have to verify.



Ancestry and FindmyPast, hold many records, including limited Military Service History files which survived the Blitz and we slowly worked through them. We also found that for men, who had emigrated and returned with Commonwealth Forces that ships passenger lists added to our interest. Free BMD was very valuable too.

Local Military Museums, including Cumbria's Museum of Military Life and the Devils Porridge at Annan hold additional regimental records and carried out some research filling our gaps. They often had Medals, artefacts, diaries, photographs and items of interest relating to the named men.

Parish Records, baptisms, although in Latin for Catholic Churches, were a key document as they helped to focus on the date of birth, and other

family members, a God Parent may be brother or sister of the Baptised Child, side notes offered an insight to where they lived and the correct date of birth. We were fortunate in being able to trace via the Indian High Commissioners Office the Baptismal records for Trevor John Clancey from which we were able to verify his names noting that he was one of the men recorded on the War Memorial by his Rank and surname only.

Some Colleges and Universities held, and shared valuable records. Cumbria has a first-class on-line listing of all of the Great War servicemen who were mentioned in the local newspapers, this shows the publication, date, page and column numbers, and includes not only War Office Lists but also obituaries, personal notices and articles. We identified very quickly that the Battalion or Service Number with which the men started the war, changed during their service, and many of those who were granted Commissions, were allocated to a different regiment too. Cumbria Archive Centre publishes online a list of the War Memorials in the County and the names of the fallen, as they are recorded. They also hold Wills which supported the lineage particularly for those men who are recorded on the memorial without initials or Christian names.

Cemetery records were valuable and we looked for family memorials and headstone as many commented on that long-lost son, possibly other family members too.

The National Archives hold records of Officers, Medal Records and Battalion War Diaries which were valuable. The Forces War Records and the Imperial War Museum gave us a steer, but it is worth noting that their records were only as accurate as the information that they had been given. The Western Front Association and International Red Cross Records added important pieces of information. A word of caution, when you read something on a web site, use it as a source, not a gospel, and if you are unable to verify the comment either discount or qualify it.

We sought information from the wider community by engaging with the local press, and Parish Priest ran an occasional update in the Parish Magazine on the progress that we were making, and fellow parishioners offered us valuable family information.

None of us has a Military Background but our understanding of records terminology and initials and anagrams was solved by reading around the subject.

As I mentioned earlier, we had assumed that the men were local, parishioners and Catholic. Irish born Patrick Moorehead lived and served with the Inniskilling Regiment, signed the Oath of Allegiance to the King, and in so doing changed his name, dropping the first 'E'. He fought alongside men from the Border Regiment.

Francis McNiff heralded from Sunderland, where he was educated and commenced his training for the Priesthood at Ushaw College, Durham but his name is one of the seventy-five, and may have been placed there at the request of the Parish Priest.

Joseph McIntosh was from Flintshire, recorded in some documents as MacIntosh, was lost when the RMS Lianster went down in the Irish Sea on in October 1918, why he is on a War Memorial in Carlisle we do not know, and can only surmise that it was requested to be placed there by a local friend or distant relative.

James Murray served with the navy, and upon being discharged he joined the Argyll & Southerland Highlanders under the alias of George Brown, we were able to trace him by his civilian death certificate, verifying him through his father and home address, as he died post war.

We came across many spelling variations for Malloy, the Recruiting Sergeant completing Patricks Attestation Form with one spelling; Census enumerators using others. By correlating; checking; cross checking, and linking our notes, we were able to accurately draw together the life history of our subjects and get to know them as though they were our next-door neighbours, publishing our findings in 'Our Lady & St Joseph's Heroes Remembered'. (See Book review below)

Derek Nash

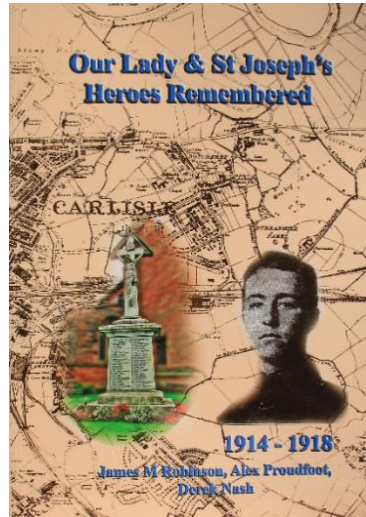
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LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

Our Lady & St Joseph's Heroes Remembered 1914 -1918.

James M Robinson, Alex Proudfoot and Derek Nash. Published by P3 Publications £20.00. 183 Pages, A4 size, numerous colour and black and white photographs.

The church of Our Lady & St. Joseph is on Warwick Road, Carlisle and like most churches in the county has a white Sicillian-marble war memorial with 75 names inscribed on it of men who had died in the First World War. This book gives the background and life stories of these 75 men. This sounds like it should have been a straight forward research project to produce a book. It soon becomes clear that this was not a simple bit of research. There are no documents stating why the War Memorial was erected and why the names on it were inscribed there.



The majority of the book is composed of individual chapters on each of the men except for two names who have failed to be traced. With this being a parish memorial one would expect that the people commemorated on it would have a close tie to the parish. But despite the attempts of the authors the reason for the names of some men being on the memorial has not been found.

One of the problems with researching the history of individuals who served in the First World War is the loss of a substantial quantity of records due to fire during the Second World War. Despite all these problems the authors have done a tremendous job in researching these men and although you would have thought reading 73 biographies of men who had served and died during the First World War was going to be

repetitive, this book shows that the stories of all these men are unique and it is a tribute that their stories are told in such a way to make each one unique.

I would recommend anyone with an interest in people, military history or looking at writing a biography to read this book. It is certainly not only for the members of the parish.

Graham Brooks

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## Warwick Bridge & District LHG

The Warwick Bridge Local History Group has published a leaflet describing a walk around the village with emphasis on the role of Peter Dixon (of Dixon's chimney in Carlisle) in developing the factory in the village. Price £1.00 plus 70p p&p.

## Cumbria Industrial History Society

CUMBRIAN INDUSTRIALIST VOLUME 12. The

CIHS has published the 12<sup>th</sup> volume of

Miscellaneous Papers which include:- *Ship*

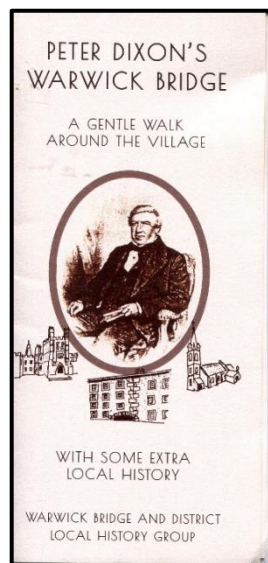
*building and aspects of ship investment in the Cartmel Peninsula during the 18<sup>th</sup> century* by

Les Gilpin, *Gaslight illumination at Fell Foot* by

Kevin Grice et al and *The transport of coal in Cumbria 1650 – 1750* by Graham Brooks.

Price £6.00 plus £1.40 p&p. Both available from Graham Brooks, Fairhurst, Aglionby, Carlisle CA4 8AQ

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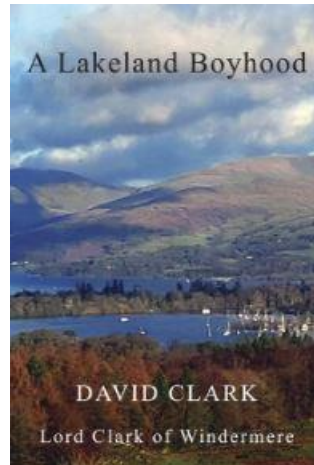


David Clark, *A Lakeland Boyhood*

Hayloft Publishing Ltd. Kendal, 2020, pp. x + 182, £12.00.

Anyone interested in Cumbrian history will find this book both enjoyable and valuable. Much has been written about the economic travails of the north of England, compared with the midlands and the south, during the inter-war years. Here we are reminded that certain northern groups fared much less well than their contemporaries, not just in the '30s but well into the post-war period.

David Clark's grandfather and father were both employed on the Lowther estate near Penrith. The latter, seeking to better himself, moved to the Threave estate near Castle Douglas, where David was born in 1939.



The family moved back to Bowness in Cumbria in 1947, but in one key respect their situation did not change. As a gardener in Scotland and England, and again in 1950, following the death of their new employer, the family were obliged to live in 'tied' cottages, leaving them ill-paid and fundamentally vulnerable to ill-fortune. Work on the land as gardeners, agricultural labourers and even small farmers yielded poor rewards for this community of working-class people. These circumstances were a chief well-spring of Lord Clark's lifelong commitment to the Labour Party.

Yet the book is not primarily about what motivated an active political career which culminated in 2017 in leadership of the process whereby UNESCO declared the Lake District a World Heritage Site. Rather, it provides a systematic and precise, remarkably detailed and, indeed, exhaustive account of what life was like for a young person in Bowness during the 1940s and 1950s – relations with parents, domestic conditions, food and drink, schooling, leisure pursuits, friendships with boys and girls, early efforts to find work, and much more.

Here, therefore, is an in-depth description and analysis of working-class life through the remembered eyes of a young person. The texture of that life, its atmosphere, and the manner in which it was lived are revealed in a calm, balanced manner which commands conviction.

I could write a great deal more in praise of this book, but space does not permit. Suffice it to say that it would make a splendid Christmas present for a local historian.

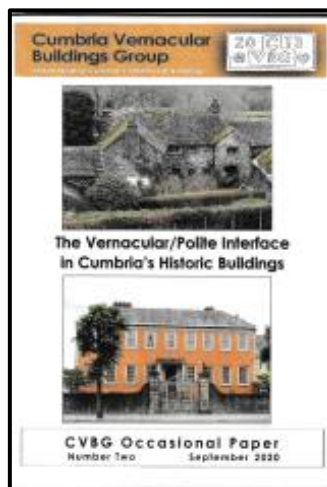
Peter Roebuck

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## The Vernacular/Polite Interface in Cumbria's Historic Buildings.

This is the second **Occasional Paper** published by the C.V.B.G. and covers an aspect of the study of historic buildings often somewhat confusing to many, dealing with the situation nationally as well as locally.

In two sentences (and, with apologies for, perhaps, risking over-simplification), vernacular buildings reflect local geology and are constructed by local craftsmen in traditional, local styles. Structures became “polite” when ideas were brought to localities from other areas and more fashionable buildings were erected with the assistance of architects, often utilising materials sourced away from the locality.



Contributors are Dr. Adam Menuge, Dr. Adrian Green, Dr. Peter Messenger and Paul Lewis, all members of the Cumbria Group and the national Vernacular Architecture Group.

The four authors deal with the broad differences between vernacular and polite buildings, the way in which those differences became blurred and the contrast between Cumbria and Northumbria. The final paper provides a detailed look at a particular Cumbrian farmhouse, Gaythorne Hall, Asby

in the Eden valley and identifies its significance in illustrating the interface.

Copies of this fascinating and learned paper available at £5.00 incl. p&p from the C. V. B. G. Please e-mail [secretary@cvbg.co.uk](mailto:secretary@cvbg.co.uk)  
Stuart Harling

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Kirkby Fragments –Volume 16

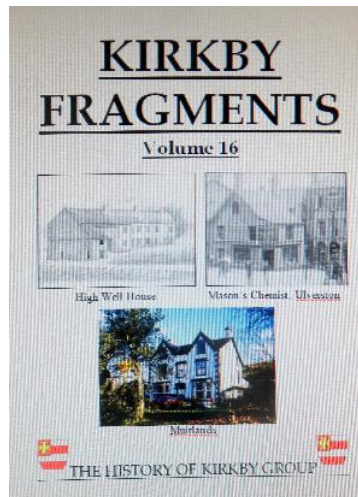
The History of Kirkby Group is happy to announce the imminent publication of the 16th volume of Kirkby Fragments, just in nice time for Christmas. It is in the usual A5 booklet form with 68 pages, colour pictures, etc., as usual. The three subjects covered are;

Low & High Well Houses, yet another part of the township that has been abandoned since the late 1950's, giving occupancy details and how they probably looked in their heyday;

The Atkinson-Mason family, prompted by a tomb in the church yard which mentions a young member of the family lost in the West Indies with the Schooner "Fly". We are trying to do some further research on this as we have discovered a schooner called "Fly" in the American archives which had a letter of marque which indicates that it could have been acting as a privateer, however finding the relevant information is not proving to be a simple task;

and Guards farm, Muirlands House and the Todd Newcombes who were an important family in the township. All researched by members of the Group.

Priced at £4 per copy plus postage. Please contact C.A.Rowntree, Old Mill, Becksides, Kirkby in Furness, Cumbria LA17 7TH. Tel 01229889373. e-mail alaric42@sky.com or P McPherson, 1 Coombe Crescent, Kirkby in Furness, Cumbria LA17 7UE. Tel 01229889382 or . e-mail mcpersonroundhead@gmail.com



LOCAL HISTORY - NEWS & THOUGHTS

Retirement of Professor Peter Roebuck as chairman of CLHF

The CLHF was most fortunate when, at a critical stage in its history, Professor Peter Roebuck agreed to accept nomination for election as chairman at the AGM in November 2016. Bringing a wealth of experience as an economic historian, who has always been involved with local history groups, both through his lectures and through his papers in the *Transactions* of the CWAAS and his several pioneering studies on cattle droving through Cumbria, his personal conviction of the value of local history was noted in his first 'Chairman's Chat' : 'if you do not know where you have come from, you may have some difficulty in deciding where to go'.

Ever a pro-active and effective chairman, Peter was able to recruit new blood to the committee and oversee major developments in the Federation's offer to its members (who have increased in numbers over the past four years), including the launch of a refurbished website (incorporating the Directory of Speakers, Walks / Tours, and Research Assistance); the adoption of a new Constitution and the award of charitable status to the Federation; the initiation of a series of planned visits to local museums and local history libraries; and the active seeking of the feedback of members, including through the series of four Cluster Meetings with member representatives last year, which, inter alia, led to the provision of a Guide to Good Practice in Booking Speakers and of a complementary Guide for Speakers. Regrettably, the bid the Federation submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a grant to finance the 'Managing Local Archives' project, submitted in response to expressed need, to assist member groups, was a casualty of the onset of the pandemic, the NLHF cancelling all current applications to conserve its resources to assist existing projects; the Federation Committee now hopes to explore how the bid might be re-considered in the light of the NLHF's recent decision to resume accepting applications for grants. Also in the archives field, Peter was much involved in endeavours to assist the Cumbria Archive Service, including in the recruitment of volunteers, the drafting of an application to The National Archives for grant aid to list

archives of the Musgrave family and estate, and, not least, in discussions with the management in strong advocacy of the vital role of the Archive Service in its provision of Archive Centres and the ready availability of their resources to researchers.

It was with much regret that the Federation's Committee learned of the health issues that led Peter to express his wish to relinquish the chairmanship as from what would have been the meeting of the AGM in October this year. It is to be hoped that he may be able to continue to be involved in the Federation's activities for many a further year; the Federation owes him a great debt.

CLHF Committee

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## Of the value of archives

In a year in which the impact of the pandemic has restricted the physical contacts we can enjoy with one another and with the resources that libraries and archives offer, our reliance on virtual meetings via Zoom and on digital resources has increased; likewise our appreciation of the response of such as the following bodies in providing virtual lectures: The National Archives (including through its Boredom busters at <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tag/boredom-busters/> ), English Heritage (through its series of podcasts at <https://soundcloud.com/englishheritage> ), the Churches Conservation Trust (through its weekly series of online talks and lectures via its Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/ChurchesConservationTrust/>), and locally Cumbria Library Service (local history talks hosted by Stephen White at 'Cumbria Library Service' on YouTube.com, in supplement of the Library Service's historical newspaper and other online research resources which can be accessed from home ).

An increasing proportion of the holdings of record offices is in the form of born digital records, 5<sup>th</sup> November this year, World Digital Preservation Day, connecting the digital preservation community and 'celebrating the positive impact digital preservation has had in a year which has seen a sudden and global reliance on digital information and infrastructure'. A

salutary reminder of the value of physical archives is provided in Richard Ovenden's *Burning the Books, A History of Knowledge under Attack* (John Murray, 2020), chronicling loss and destruction from Mesopotamian clay tablets in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the destruction of archives and libraries in Bosnia in 1992. Britain has not been immune, the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII resulting in the loss of countless books and archives (besides works of art). Fortunately, the archives of the state did not suffer such wilful destruction such that while relatively few mediaeval archives survive in Cumbrian repositories, an increasing number of TNA's medieval (and later) archives have additionally been made freely available through digital images (those relating to the English justice system downloadable free of charge at [www.http://aalt.law.uh.edu/](http://aalt.law.uh.edu/) or through such searchable databases as 'England's Immigrants 1330 – 1550' ([www.englishimmigrants.com](http://www.englishimmigrants.com))).

In a Coda to his book, addressed to the 'holders of power', Richard Ovenden, who trained as a librarian and is now in charge of Oxford's Bodleian Libraries, highlights five functions of libraries and archives that we lose when they are lost or destroyed: they support the education of society as a whole and of specific communities within it; they provide a diversity of knowledge and ideas; they support the well-being of citizens and the principles of the open society through the preservation of key rights and through encouraging integrity in decision-making; they provide a fixed reference point, allowing truth and falsehood to be judged through transparency, verification, citation and reproducibility; and they help root societies in their cultural and historical identities through preserving the written record of those societies and cultures. It is to be hoped that an appreciation of these values will lead to the necessary resources being made available to libraries and archives to fulfil their vital functions. Exploring the theme of cultural loss and recovery across the centuries is also the three-year Out of the Ashes Lecture Series ([www.tcd.ie/trinitylongroomhub/whats-on/details/2018/out-of-the-ashes.php](http://www.tcd.ie/trinitylongroomhub/whats-on/details/2018/out-of-the-ashes.php) ).

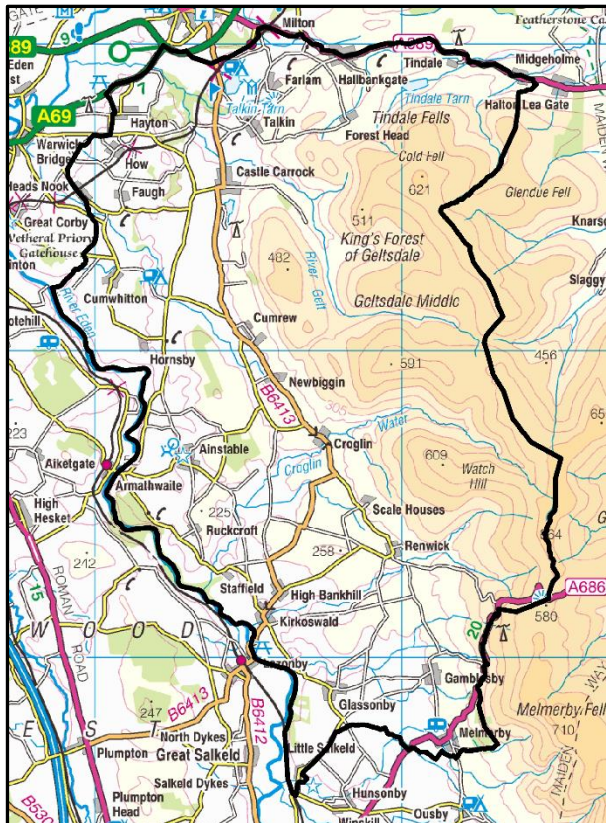
Adrian Allan



## Fell Foot Forward in North East Cumbria

A new programme, Fell Foot Forward, has now launched in north east Cumbria and will run from 2020 to 2024. Led by the North Pennines AONB Partnership with Lottery funding, the Fell Foot Forward Landscape Partnership Scheme is a major project to conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage. The area covered spans from Melmerby in the south to Hallbankgate in the north along the Pennine Fellsides and a similar distance up the River Eden. Although the funds available for historic work are relatively small the aim will be to involve communities in investigating more of the local heritage in this area. One

historic focus will be built heritage specifically including Kirkoswald Castle and Long Meg Stone Circle. Jamie Barnes, an Historic England Inspector, is a member of the Advisory Board and will be involved in assisting to restore and improve interpretation. A second focus will involve the dense scatter of prehistoric ceremonial and burial sites in the locality including



not only Long Meg in the south but also Broomrigg Plantation near Ainstable, the surviving single stone (probably an outlier, like Long Meg

herself) from the destroyed Grey Yauds stone circle, and the spectacularly placed Cardunneth Pike above Cumrew. The Fell Foot Forward group have been collaborating with VCH volunteers in the area and also Sarah Rose of Lancaster University. Currently a programme of work is being developed which will include volunteer training. More information will be made available in the next bulletin.

[www.northpennines.org.uk/what we do/fellfoot-forward/#](http://www.northpennines.org.uk/what_we_do/fellfoot-forward/#)

Ruth Lawley

**Tony Vaux writes:** I recently read David Olusoga's '*Black and British -A Forgotten History*'. This contains a section about the Moorish soldiers who served in Roman times on Hadrian's Wall, at Brough by Sands. This led me to wonder about the possibility of a more comprehensive study of black people in Cumbria over the years. There is some good material from CWAAS/Transactions on the slave trade from Whitehaven and about the remarkable abolitionists who worked in the southern part of Cumbria. Diane Rushworth has written in Transactions about a slave of Malayan origin who lived in Cumbria. There is a recent book by Raymond Greenhow about John Kent, reputed to be Britain's first black policeman. Apparently a blue plaque is to be put up in Maryport in his honour. The Rum Museum in Whitehaven has exhibits relating to the slave trade. There are quite a number of references to families in Cumbria in the database of those who were compensated when slavery was abolished but the details are scanty.

In Caldbeck church (for example) there are memorials to men who were active in the Caribbean during the time of slavery and the slave trade but no details are given. I suspect that there are many more such memorials in other churches but the problem is the lack of historical detail. Tullie House has a twitter feed relating to Black Lives Matter month but I could not locate any significant historical material. I suspect that I have missed a lot and would be interested to hear from anyone else exploring this issue and about any further sources of material. Please respond direct to Tony. His email is:- [vauxt@aol.com](mailto:vauxt@aol.com)

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Update on Cumbrian Lives [a.k.a. The Dictionary of Cumbrian Biography]

Members will recall the announcement of a website which is envisaged to be the home of biographies of interesting and important Cumbrians who are not currently included in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography [ODNB]. The website was designed early in 2020 and during the pandemic 40 lives have been written by nine contributors, following the ODNB format. These biographies, many with portrait photographs, are now installed on the draft DCB website. A further fifteen lives are either in progress or being peer reviewed, making a total of 55 lives. This is very encouraging, as the vast proportion of the work has been done without access to libraries or archives.

Among the 55 subjects are Sir Hugh Askew [c.1500-1562], royal cellarer; Admiral Skeffington Lutwidge [1737-1814], explorer; Thomas Bland of Reagill [1798-1865], sculptor; Sir James Whitehead [1834-1917], politician; David MacIver [1840-1907], ship owner; Edward Wooll [1878-1970], judge and playwright; and Sir Leonard Redshaw [1911-1989], shipbuilder. It would be good to share this material more widely and we aspire to launch the website soon. The editor would be glad to hear in advance from members interested in submitting new lives, to avoid duplication. He is also looking for potential co-editors to share in this interesting process. Please e-mail dcrossart@gmail.com
David A. Cross, DCB Editor

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**Ian White writes:** Cumbria Family History Society has for some time been purchasing documents of local interest in order to preserve them. There was recently an opportunity to purchase some documents in bulk and this was negotiated by the society. These documents are an archive of solicitor Thomas Wright (later Wright, Brown and Strong) who had offices in four locations in Carlisle, Whitehaven, Cockermouth and Maryport. He acted for many persons nationally in connection with Cumbrian affairs and so thoroughly monopolised the legal arrangements in town and country at the early to mid-nineteenth century. They contain a wealth of information in various deeds, wills and other legal documents. The Society has now been able to sort and index the first batch of these documents and this index can be searched by opening

our website [www.cumbriaafhs.com](http://www.cumbriaafhs.com) and clicking on the bar below the introduction. Each file is made up of from four to as many as ten or twelve pages, they have been indexed to reflect the major identities, trade or profession and location, all this information is available online.

When you find documents of interest we can provide a photocopy of the genuine article or we can provide the original Document should you so wish. The documents are rare and over one hundred years old and will offer an opportunity to view an original hand-written agreement usually signed personally by the actual person(s) involved and the solicitor himself. Priced at £8.00 per copy and £15.00 for the actual document, they will enhance any research student's collection of memorabilia.

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Liz Kerry Membership Secretary writes: We now have 63 member groups and 52 individual members. I appreciate most of you will have been unable to meet for some time, and arranged programs are on hold, but do please remember that you can send me news for circulation to members either by email or on the website. Thanks all and keep safe.

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**Nigel Mills Bulletin Editor writes:** Thank you to all the contributors in this very full edition of the CLHF Bulletin. It makes my job and that of the sub-editors more enjoyable when there are plenty of submissions. A few had to be held over this month so apologies if this was one of yours. Although the next Bulletin is not due until April please send me items of interest between now and then, especially interesting photographs for the cover.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, from the CLHF Committee.

#### CLHF Contacts

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For membership and events listing please e-mail [lizkerrey@gmail.com](mailto:lizkerrey@gmail.com)