



Cumbria Local History Federation

Bulletin 97 –Spring 2025



Image courtesy of Cumbria Archive Service and the Nicholson family

Chairman’s Chat	2	
Migration :		
- Winifred Nicholson and the Brampton Basque story	3	
- Request for help from Cambridge regarding Cumbrian migrants in the 16 th century	6	
- 19 th century migrants from Ravenstondale to Manchester	9	
Bridges: Eden river crossings at Lazonby	14	
News from groups : Cartmel Fell LHS, SW Cumbria Hist. & Archaeology , Lorton & Derwent Fell LHS	17	
News from CCHT	23	

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Hasn't it been windy! Even though it has been a couple of weeks since those Hurricane force winds battered our county, it is still blowing hard outside as I write, despite the winter sunshine!

First I'd like to welcome Jonathan Powell to the CLHF Committee. Jonathan brings a wealth of ideas and fresh thinking and also helps balance our representation of members and groups across the county.

We are still looking for a volunteer or two to help us with the CLHF Newsletter. We know that most of you find these reminders of what's on in the County for the local historian useful. Whilst Graham is getting this out, if we are to return to a more frequent mailing then assistance is definitely required.

We are preparing our Annual Convention for October. This will again be held at Newbiggin, near Penrith, giving a fairly central location – if this is possible with such a large area and roads becoming increasingly slower to travel. The theme will be aspects of mediaeval Cumbria. A caterer has already been booked!

The other day I was alerted to a local planning application, specifically because of its possible impact on local archaeology. I live in an area with more conservation areas than most with the Roman Wall and associated remains nearby. I decided to look at the Archaeologist's assessment. The report largely suggested a watching brief as the application was for a number of poles and a conduit for a new fibre optic cable along the route of an existing telephone line. To my surprise it alerted me to a couple of listed structures I'd expected to be in danger – both former railway and canal bridges. Great, I thought, some protection for them. Then I looked at the date given for the closure of the railway. I know this was likely to have been a paper review but the author had managed to mix up his railways and dated closure as 30 years before it actually happened. I understand how the misunderstanding has arisen but would others with less knowledge. It does make you think when looking at 'trusted' sources that the authors could easily have got things wrong. It goes back to the good practise of verifying your evidence wherever possible!

Les Gilpin

From the Editor

Over the last few issues of the Bulletin there have been some interesting articles from members about Parish churches and more recently bridges. Both are topics key to local history.

This year, stimulated by Rob David's article about the Basque migrants in the 1930s, it would be interesting and topical to shine a light on Migration to and from Cumbria.

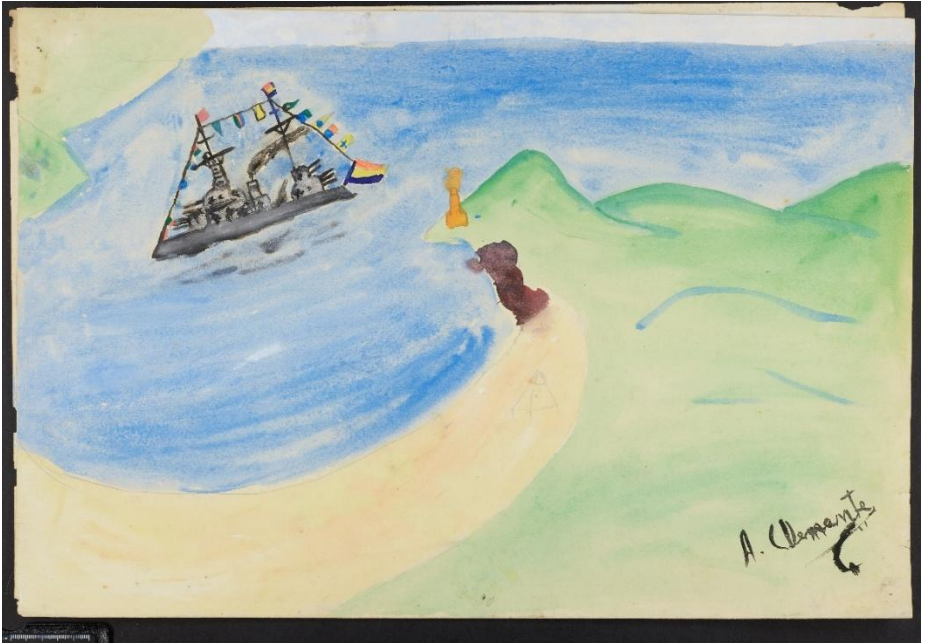
This issue includes not only the story of International Basque child migration into Cumbria but also that of 16th century Cumbria migrants to Cambridge and 19th century Ravenstonedale to Manchester migration.

If any other readers have interesting facts or stories – however short-please send them for the next issue. Meanwhile I hope you enjoy these.

Winifred Nicholson and the Brampton Basque children's hostel

Towards the end of 2024 descendants of the Cumberland artist Winifred Nicholson (1893-1981) deposited eight pictures at Carlisle Archive Centre which had been painted by the Basque child refugees at the Brampton hostel between 1937 and 1939 under her tutelage.¹ Jake Nicholson, Winifred's eldest son, kept these paintings because he knew how much teaching the Basque children had meant to his mother, and how she loved their use of bright colours.

¹ The eight paintings include three by Alfonso Clemente Pérez (aged 14 in 1937), one by his younger sister Ana Clemente Pérez (aged 9 in 1937), one initialled AR which is Alfonso Ruiz López (age 14 in 1937), one by Fernand V which may be by Fernando Villanueva Guerre (aged 13 in 1937). In addition there are two paintings which are unsigned.



These youngsters from the Basque region of Spain were amongst about 4000 refugee children from the Spanish Civil War who came to the United Kingdom. Over 100 of them were accommodated at the Brampton hostel and they were taught by two Spanish teachers who had accompanied them from Bilbao, along with a number of English and foreign teachers engaged by the Roberts family of Boothby.² Charles and Lady Cecilia Roberts were the driving force behind the establishment of the hostel, and Winifred Nicholson (née Roberts) who had a house at Bankshead, near Lanercost in Cumberland was one of their daughters and became one of Britain's most distinguished artists of the mid twentieth century.³ Wilfrid Roberts, the MP

² For a history of the Basque children at Brampton see: R. David, *'Happy and Safe': The Basque Child Refugees in Cumberland and Westmorland 1937-1939* (Carlisle, Fell Foot Press, 2023).

³ Winifred had married the artist Ben Nicholson but they separated in 1931. Between 1937 and 1939 Winifred was living near Brampton and among other

for North Cumberland and an avid supporter of the Spanish democratic government, was Winifred's brother.

Although it seems that Winifred was living outside Cumberland in Paris and Surrey between 1937 and 1939 she is thought to have spent her summers either at Bankshead or with her parents at Boothby. It was probably during the summers of 1937 and 1938 that she taught the Basque children at Brampton. She had an interest in education and apparently enjoyed teaching as at one time she ran a small school at Bankshead and possibly at Boothby too.

The eight paintings in this collection are characterised by the use of vivid colours. Winifred clearly invited the children to paint the landscapes that were familiar to them in Spain. The pictures reflect the bright light of the Basque region, and in the case of two paintings by Alfonso Clemente Pérez, the landscape he depicted can be identified as that around the bay of his home town, San Sebastian. It is possible that the painting depicting a battleship was the earlier of the two when the trauma of war remained uppermost in his mind. The other picture depicting well-known features of the town and bay with yachts perhaps came a little later by which time his memory of the war was fading.

Much later in life one of Winifred's pupils, Alfonso Ruiz López, described Winifred Nicholson as 'the most marvellous person...who began giving us water-colour classes and, as we progressed, introduced us to oils'. He went on to say that he 'enjoyed these classes as I was very keen and loved painting'.

In early 1938 or 1939 the Basque Children's Committee announced that it was mounting an exhibition of paintings by Basque children and those at Brampton were asked to take part. Alfonso tells us that 'Mrs Nicholson was very enthusiastic and set us to work tirelessly. Eighteen of my pictures

activities, ran a small school at Banks Head. A useful short biography of Winifred can be found in: Crane Kalman Gallery, *The Nicholson Women* (London, 2204).

went, and they were all sold in London, ending up in English homes as reminders of us. I received £38 from their sale, which was a small fortune for me, and I had already decided how to spend it. We weren't short of anything ourselves, so I would buy clothes for my siblings in Spain who didn't have any'.⁴

These paintings join the substantial archive relating to the Basque children in Cumbria deposited at Carlisle Archive Centre by various members of the Roberts family. This archive is now one of the most significant deposits for the study of these child refugees in the United Kingdom.⁵

Rob David

Cumbrians migrating to Cambridge in 16th century

Request for help from Cambridge historian

Honor Ridout, a Cambridge researcher interested in the 16th century – town rather than gown- has discovered a number of men who were born in Cumberland or Westmorland and were admitted to the Freedom of the Borough in Cambridge from 1544 – 1578. She is looking for more information about their background in the hope of finding some clues to explain their relocation.

Honor writes: 'We have a good Borough record for the middle of the century, which includes the names and birth places of those men admitted to the Freedom of the Borough. On the attached list you will see 17 men recorded as having been born in Westmoreland or Cumberland. Four had been apprenticed in Cambridge (one to a relative?), but the record gives no other detail to indicate how or why all these men had come to live in Cambridge. Several appear in the records in later years, showing participation in the Corporation's affairs, and it's possible that John Jenkinson was the Mayor in 1601-2. I wonder if any of your members recognise these family names and can add any detail about the individuals' backgrounds?

⁴ N. Benjamin (ed), *Recuerdos: Basque Children Refugees in Great Britain* (Oxford, Mousehold Press, 2007), 145-6.

⁵ I am grateful to Shirley Nicholson and Jovan Nicholson for additional information.

Name	Place of birth W=Westmorland C= Cumberland		Apprentice master	Sponsors	
Christopher Waters	Hackthorpe 4m S of Penrith	W		Martin Gill	Richard Ramsey
Roland Lynsey	Casterton	W			
Launcelot Wynters	Malmes Mekoccr.	W			
Thomas Plomer	Kirbilandsdale	W			
George Inneman	Cokermouth	C		Alexander Smythe	John Chase
William Baynes	Albye Cooper Alby field, Cumrew	C		W Griffin	Miles Praunce
Hugh Gyll	Cumrew	C			
William Hodson	Castellcarrock	C	Christopher Hodson		
John Jenkinson	Loveswater	C	Robert Jenkinson		
Christopher Raie	Brough by Sands	C	Thomas Smith ald		
Thomas Raie	Burrowghe	C			
Michael Scarrar	Arusbie	C		Leonard Taylor	George Ynneman
John Holestocke	Mosellgate ? Mossergate	C	Edward Lambert		
Robert Jenkinson	Copland	C		John Collinson	George Ree
Alexander Richardson	Bastonswatte Bassenthwaite	C			
Henry Jackson	Cokermouth				
Roger Jackson	Cokermouth				

Occupations, found in other documents

Thomas Plomer	Draper, 1567
William Hodson	Brewer 1562
John Jenkinson	Glover 1595
Robert Jenkinson	Glover 1565
Thomas Smith	Tallowchandler 1547?
Richard Ramsey	Tanner 1595
John Chase	Draper 1563
Miles Praunce	Brewer (free 1543)

The only other Cumbria-Cambridge connection for this or even earlier periods, is the possibility that Kendal cloth was being sold at the great annual Stourbridge (Sturbridge, Stirbitch - choose your own spelling!) Fair, held in Cambridge fields. Certainly cloth was coming to the fair from Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The admission to the Freedom in Cambridge was a way into the public affairs, with the chance of involvement in the rather strange process of voting for the officers (annual appointments, made every August) and of being elected to one of these posts. The Cambridge Corporation was very insistent that its officers and MPs should all be resident in Cambridge, so I assume there was an assumption that the Freeman (Burgesses - Cambridge was a borough, not a city) would probably be resident too, though I haven't so far found anything to say they must be.'

Many thanks for any information that any CLHF reader has about any of these names

Honor Ridout

If anyone has any information please contact Honor at honor.ridout@hotmail.co.uk

Ravenstonedale :The Migrants

A tale of migration and what happened next

In the mid 1800's Manchester was booming as the world's first industrial city. From 1801 to 1851 the population increased from 88,577 to 339,483 drawn by the prospect of sharing in Manchester's industrial success. By the 1900s the population was around 700,000.

I had the idea for this research project, whose working title was 'Manchester Migrants', because I had, for a while, become one. Except I hadn't been born in Ravenstonedale. The idea was to find anybody who had been born in Ravenstonedale but at some time had migrated to the Manchester area as an economic migrant.

One of the difficulties in finding Ravenstonedale families, who migrated to Manchester, was that quite often on the Census returns the place of birth was only quoted as 'Westmorland' and that could be transcribed in a number of incorrect ways. Also, to find where they were in Manchester I had to search for 'Lancashire', which resulted in Liverpool, Lancaster, Barrow, Ulverston etc also showing.

What I found interesting was that the migrants included young single ladies and widows.

Some of the migrants returned to Westmorland.

On 3 occasions, they became emigrants in the more usual sense, with people going to Canada, Australia and New Zealand as though Manchester was used as a stopping off point, or they had the idea from people they met there and they presumably felt they could better themselves by making the much longer and arduous journey.

11 families from similar backgrounds, migrate from Ravenstonedale to Manchester between 1800 – 1911.

The Aireys succeeded in making their fortune – around £1 million in today's money.

The majority become established in a trade, and in some cases own their own businesses, including the Udall sisters who become independent businesswomen.

By 1890, our migrant families include a University Professor and one of the 'rotters'.

By the early 1900's the lure of Canada and Australia emerge as more distant and attractive destinations for Ravenstonedale migrants.

The Airey family

3 of 6 sons made their way to Manchester in the early 1800's, a fourth, Oswald, went to Liverpool. Their sister, Elizabeth, baptised 27/3/1795 joined them prior to 1822. Their parents were Thomas, a 'cooper' from Ravenstonedale and Mary nee Ireland, so they were children of a 'tradesman'. Thomas and Mary had married in March 1792. Another sister, Isabella moved to Manchester later in life to lodge with her brother-in-law, William Carver.

The three sons were: Thomas baptised in 1793,

 John baptised 1804

 William baptised in 1807

Their sister, Elizabeth, baptised in 1795, joined them prior to 1822 as that is when she married William Carver, a successful carrier from Halifax who established substantial business operations in Manchester. As a consequence of her marriage, she would have been prosperous and enjoyed great wealth. When she died in Manchester in 1867, without leaving a Will, her estate was valued at under £3,000 (now £138,000).



William and Thomas Airey are both mentioned on a gravestone in St. Oswald's churchyard, and, at the former United Reformed Chapel Ravenstonedale (High Chapel) as being 'late of Manchester'.

I found a report of William's death from the extract of BMDs (Births, Marriages & Deaths) from the British Newspaper Archives. William is stated to have died at 'Town Head' at the house of his brother-in-law. He had died on 15/2/1849. His death certificate states

he was a 'slate merchant' and that he died of 'hepatitis'. I cannot trace that he made a Will or that anybody administered his estate. Even the Probate Office in York couldn't find anything about his estate. The brother-in-law referred to was John Langhorn who had married Isabella Airey, (baptised 23/5/1800) in June 1847. He was a widower with 2 children.

Both the gravestones, in St. Oswald's and the in High Chapel, have identical inscriptions. The burial services would appear to have been carried out at St. Oswald's.

Although John Airey is mentioned on the gravestone, it does not mention the fact he was also in business in Manchester as an 'extensive flag merchant' in Manchester, under the firm of Airey and Brothers. When John died in April 1859, he was stated to be 'of Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Manchester' and that he was a gentleman and a bachelor.

John died of 'disease of the heart' in Ravenstonedale, and a Sarah Metcalfe was present at death. I haven't been able to confirm who she was or where exactly he died.

His sister, Elizabeth Carver, who was also living in Manchester was granted Letters of Administration to his estate, as he had died intestate. These are granted by the probate office when there is no Will. It is generally granted

to the 'next-of-kin'. However, it would appear that she left the estate unadministered as in 1868, Isabella Langhorn, his other sister, then also living in Manchester, and the only other surviving next of kin, was appointed to sort the estate out. The value of the estate was under £6,000 (now £258,960). Although I have found John Airey's on various censuses, I cannot confirm they are the correct ones. As Isabella was the only next of kin she probably inherited the estate. Notably when she died in 1872 the value of her estate was only £1,000. Although it is possible some may have gone to Elizabeth Carver's children.

Thomas Airey married Mary Bowden 24/9/1829 at St. Mary's Church, Manchester when he was described as a 'Flag dealer'. One of the witnesses was a John Adamthwaite, which gives more credence to the fact it is the correct Thomas Airey it being a local Ravenstonedale name. Mary was married with the consent of her mother as she was only 19. She died aged 26 in March 1836, so she may have died in childbirth.

In 1841 Thomas was living in Bowden, Cheshire and was described as a 'stone dealer'.

Thomas became a successful Manchester businessman. He built up a business with his own fleet of canal narrow boats. In a newspaper report of 1823, it is obvious that he owned his own canal boats as one of them was unfortunately involved in an accident when a young boy fell off a lock he was closing for Thomas at Todmorden. By 1829, he was in business with his brother Oswald in Manchester as a slate and flag merchant. Although Oswald was a partner, he was primarily based in Liverpool where he died in 1844.

In 1844 Thomas paid £2,894 (now £127,625) in tolls to the Rochdale Canal Company for the transport of his goods, which had come from the Pennines. This was 10% of the total tolls paid in that year. The flagstones were used in road building. In that year, the transport of stone accounted for 28% of the income of the canal company.

By 1851 he was still in Bowden and described correctly as a 'widower' and a retired 'stone dealer'.

I found a record of his death from the same source as his brothers, William & John. It showed that he had died 16th March 1854 at the Low Wood Hotel, Windermere and that he was formerly of Ravenstonedale and Manchester. It is likely he was residing there in his later years.

In his Will he left £150 (just over £8,000 now) to the Churchwardens of the parish of Ravenstonedale which were to be placed on Trust and invested in 'real or government security' and for the interest to be paid on an annual basis and to be distributed 'among such of the poor inhabitants of the said Parish of Ravenstonedale'. The Churchwardens had to decide who were the most deserving. This Trust is mentioned in the first volume of the 'History and Traditions of Ravenstonedale' by the Rev. William Nicholls.

It was amalgamated, along with 7 other charities to form the "Ravenstonedale Relief-In-Need Charity" in 1972. In that year the value of the assets of the 8 were £630.34 which was invested in 2 ½% Consolidated Stock, and the income was approximately £23pa. Interestingly, one of the other 7 was 'The Charity of John Airey' founded by a gift in April 1859, which was when he died but didn't make a Will, as mentioned earlier.

Thomas left his real estate, comprising of 'dwellinghouses', 'messuages' and 'hereditaments' in Chorlton on Medlock to his siblings and after their deaths it was bequeathed to the children of the longest lived. Only Elizabeth Carver had children and Isabella lived the longest, so what actually happened to the estate I don't know. If it went to Elizabeth's children, there were 5 surviving in 1867, including John Carver who owned a string of properties in Ravenstonedale.

The value of Thomas's estate was quoted as 'under £8,000' (about £468,240 now).

The Airey migrants were 3 brothers, Thomas, John & William. The total wealth achieved by 2 of them as a result of their migration was £14,000 (now £728,000) plus their sisters were able to secure their financial independence through their Manchester introductions and connections.

Val Fermer

The above is an extract from the book 'Ravenstonedale Tales Volume Two,' telling the story of families who migrated from Ravenstonedale to seek their fortune in Manchester. As a contribution to the CLHF Bulletin 'migrants' project, the migration chapter of the book is being serialised. The chapter is nearly 8000 words, so this is the first of a series of instalments.

Ravenstonedale Tales Volumes One and Two are available from The Bank House Press - stevetbhq@gmail.com for £18 per volume plus postage and packing.

BRIDGES

This has proved an interesting topic for local historians and here is an article from Sheila Fletcher written from research done by the now defunct Lazonby History Group.

Eden River crossings around Lazonby

Research into Lazonby Bridge (now often called Eden Bridge) led me to think about other river crossings in my part of the Eden valley. It is interesting to see the types of crossings that were used, possibly from the earliest settlers, needing to find good pasture and safe homesteads. Eventually venturing across the Eden to find new agricultural land, new resources for fuel and building, markets, communal meeting places.

Over many years the need for certain crossings would change because of extending boundaries or as a result of natural hazards such as floods and river movement.

Land ownership and usage on both sides of the river can indicate where crossings might be situated. In this area, getting to work in the gypsum mines, droving animals and fetching coal from the fellside were of vital importance.

Lazonby History society studied possible crossings by looking at maps, documents, oral history, land features, following old routes and walking them. You will see that there are many possible types of river crossings, not all of which are available today but were frequently used in the past.

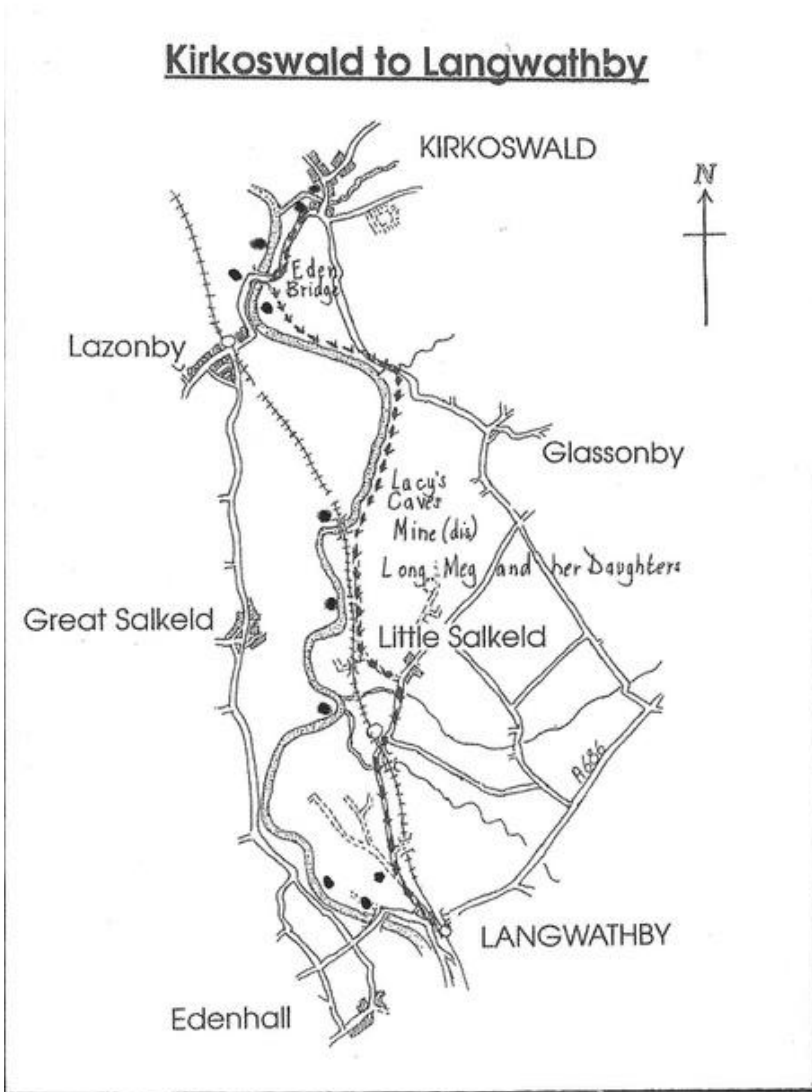


Figure 1: Map of River Eden showing crossing points as black dots.

We started our study in Kirkoswald, where the earliest crossings were on the Raven Beck which flows into the Eden. An early ford was superseded by a bridge, later widened to accommodate more traffic. Also at Kirk Mires

below the church, the 1245 Holm Cultram charters tell us that *'To Martin Rector, 6 acres of land lying in the cultura of Kirkmire from Fulbriche Syke to ditch and bridge.'*

Between Kirkoswald and Lazonby an early crossing is marked on the first edition OS map, leading from a footpath. This could have been a ford but could also have been an earlier wooden bridge later washed away. In 1354 & 1374, money was left in wills for repair of bridge, presumably wooden.

A ferry boat recorded as being used in the Pool of Lazonby was rowed by a local farmer in 1679 while an early 18th Century ferry boat crossed from Mains Farm on the Glassonby Road to the Lazonby side.

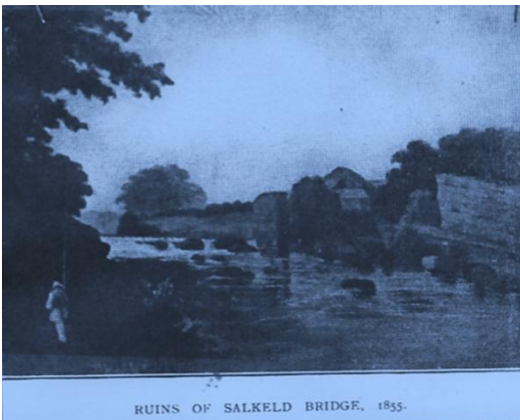
Building the modern Lazonby Bridge

Deaths by drowning in the Eden were recorded in a petition for building the bridge. Built in 1762, money was all raised by subscriptions showing its value to local communities.

A ford crossing the river was also used and stepping stones by the more foolhardy.

Batemans Lane Lazonby was a possible lane leading to a ford. A viaduct for the Settle Carlisle railway, was not only used by trains but also illegally by workman crossing to the Gypsum mines at Little Salkeld. Guarded at each end during first World War.

A most important crossing at Eden Lacy was halfway between Lazonby and Great Salkeld. Here, there was an early mill, Force Mill, and a packhorse bridge still evident in the river.



This route led to Alston and beyond. This bridge was of strategic importance and rebuilt 3 times often by intervention from local landowners and clergy needing to reach far parishes.

The wath at Great Salkeld is well documented and map evidence of paths leading to it is strong. During the

English Civil war troops were recorded as crossing here.

Further up river, a local wath or ford was used by farmers accessing their land on either side of the river.

Langwathby

The original bridge from 1686 washed away in floods in 1968. It was replaced by the Bailey type bridge which flooded again in 2005 and 2015. Another crossing is shown on an old map following a route from Penrith but is difficult to pinpoint exactly.

Sheila Fletcher, researched in 2012

Cartmel Fell Local History Society

The origins and rewards of a local history society

My husband Alan and I were always interested in local history, but it was fired up when he was asked if he would take on the not very onerous task of being chairman of Lambrigg Township in the 1960s, a community of farmsteads grouped around Lambrigg Fell with no centre, no church, and not even a letter box. We did have a phone box however.

One summer night we came home to find a black tin chest on the front doorstep, closed with a hasp but no lock. It had the legend LAMBRIGG TOWNSHIP painted on the side in white lettering. For those who are not in the know, many Lakeland communities are designated "Townships" when they are not a parish or a borough

After carrying this item into the kitchen we found that it contained documents relating to all the dealings of Lambrigg going back several hundred years, so we went to bed very late that night, poring over all those ancient documents. Some related to clearing the cundreths (drains), others to disputes about cattle or illegal impounding of a trespassing horse. We were not in possession of the treasure chest for long because our friend and neighbour Sheila Macpherson was then the archivist at Kendal Record Office. She told us that the best place for these antiquities was in her keeping at County Hall. I think it was this incident which made us realise what a lot there was to learn.

When we moved to Cartmel Fell in 1982, we realised what a wealth of old farmsteads there was in the area and we wondered if there would be any interest in forming a Local History Society. The only way to find out was to

put a suggestion on the Post Office notice board which invited interested parties to come to our house on a given night. We didn't have enough chairs when the time came, but started the society at once. I used to go to the Stavely Local History meeting to learn a bit about the how, who, when and why elements of running a group and we began with about 40 members.

Cartmel Fell township is a scattered community of approximately eight miles long with the highest point of 1,054 feet at the summit of Gummers How. The Western slopes run down to Windermere where the lake shore was colonised by wealthy industrialists in the 19th and 20th centuries. The oldest farmsteads are largely on the Eastern side where the rising sun warms the hillside, the oldest recorded property being Thorphinsty Hall which is documented in 1275-6 in a lawsuit when the plaintiff's grandfather was Henry, son of Ketel. Cistercian pottery was found there about twenty years ago and what may have been a pele tower base.

The first undertaking of our new society was to record all that was known of the old settlements. We photographed each of them with their occupants and asked if they knew of any stories attached to their property, if they had dated cupboards or carved initials, if they had wells or cheese presses, if they had their deeds and so on. On one occasion, the lady of the house was using the 1810 Land Tax book to record recipes on the unused pages, but she allowed us to photocopy the book at Kendal Record Office with a copy for our society as well as KRO. The occupants of the Quaker Meeting House had all their documents in a tin top hat box! They also allowed us to copy them at Kendal Record Office.

One winter's evening, we had a phone call from a young farmer who had been having a clear-out after his father had died. The front parlour was never used but had an oak chest in there with a lot of documents in it. He brought us a banana box with about 40 different items which ranged from the diary from the 18th century of the caretaker of the Quaker Meeting House to school books of the son of the house in 1810. The boy, George Gibson, went to the village school in Stavely-in Cartmel but he was learning land measurement, trigonometry, how to change pounds, shillings and pence into currencies as varied as guilders and shekels, or how to change ells of cloth into yards for sales to Paris. George's diagrams were as clear as steel engravings. There was also a diary of a maid in the house, detailing haytime on their land.

One of our summer meetings was to measure and record the dimensions of Hodge Hill, a yeoman's handsome building. Then we discovered that it had been built in two sections, a smaller house first, later, a wing with much thicker walls on the Eastern side. An inventory of 1715 mentions "Goods in the kitching inn." which implies a hostelry at the road junction when the house was owned by the Philipsons. This building might be the smaller cottage at right angles to the main house with its own ample larder or dairy. Other investigations were into evidence of occupation in barns, some having walled up windows and wattle and daub walls in the roof-space. One very old barn has plastered walls on its North Eastern side with traces of moulded decoration.

Once it became known that we were interested in everything and anything unusual, residents responded whenever any new finding came to light. One of these was a leg-iron, uncovered in a walled-up recess of a very old farm. The rotating office of Constable among yeomen of the Fell might at one time been assigned to the occupant of this farm, but that was the only suggestion for the object that we could come up with. Another 9th or 10th century discovery was part of a crudely carved stone crucifix, being used as a coping stone in a bothy quite near to the present 16th century church. This is now in Kendal museum. Had there been an earlier chapel?

We used to hold our meetings in the evening once a month with visits to places of interest in the summer afternoons, but lately, because of dwindling numbers, we have experimented with afternoon gatherings in the winter and it has certainly improved attendances. Cartmel Fell's old school is the meeting place, but it is very well hidden among the lanes and woodland, so daylight makes visiting lecturers life easier too. Many of our long-time friends who came from Lancaster University to give us talks are either retired or thinking of it, so they find it easier to come in daylight, as do one-time denizens of the Fell who have now moved to a nearby town. If anyone is thinking of starting a Local History Society, I think you may be surprised at the response you will get from the community. It's fun too – with the thrill of the chase.

Jennifer Forsyth

South-West Cumbria History & Archaeology Society (affiliated to CWAAS)

Our Society was conceived around the early 1950's, by several people in the Seascale, Irton, Drigg and Gosforth area who were meeting, probably at each other's houses, as a group interested in the history and archaeology of south-west Cumberland.

The activities of Mary C. Fair (1874-1955) and the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society, at that time, would have been a source of great inspiration and by 1958 the group were accorded the honour of becoming an affiliated society to the CWAAS so joining the other three affiliated societies at Carlisle, Penrith and Kendal (Westmorland). We were called: "Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society - South-West Regional Group"

As Windscale (Sellafield) grew, particularly from the 60's, the enthusiasm for local history and archaeology accelerated, particularly from employees of the nuclear industry and the education establishments.

The early activities of the SW Group were very wide ranging, involving talks, visits and excavations plus the occasional exhibition in the Beacon, Whitehaven. The number of talks, speakers and range of subjects has been enormous and at times members even gave talks about their foreign holidays!

In the late 1960s a training course for members was run by Dorothy Charlesworth at Eskdale

Youth Hostel about excavation techniques and artefact identification. This must have been inspiring and the Group became very active and involved with many local archaeological excavations over the years something which continues to the present day. These include:

St. Bees Abbey Mill - the route of the mill leat, John Todd.

Branthwaite Boat, Workington, Jean Ward

The restoration of Grey Croft Stone Circle, Seascale

The excavation of a cairn at Mecklin Park, Irton

The Shielings of Ennerdale

Mesolithic site at Drigg - from McDonald and Nickson, the Cherrys, Croft and Coward

...and many more. It has joined and assisted other groups in projects such as:

Romans in Ravenglass (still continuing)

History of Irton
In the footsteps of Mary Fair
Tonguesdale Moss
Duddon Longhouses
Cragg Farm, Birkby

The membership reached its pinnacle with numbers of around 80 and a larger venue was required. Wyndham School, Egremont being a local Further Education Centre at the time seemed perfect. We met on Friday evenings but as the average age of members increased many preferred not to travel on winter evenings and meetings were eventually moved to Saturday afternoons. In the late 1980's changes at the school meant that society meetings had to be moved and the Supper Room at Egremont Market Hall became the venue.

In 2003/4 membership was down to about 60 and has continued to fall to about 30 in 2024. The affiliated groups at Penrith and Carlisle have recently closed because of difficulty in finding members wanting to take on committee roles leaving us as one of only two surviving affiliated groups.

In 2012 we decided to change our name by informing CWAAS Council and revising our first and only Constitution of 1974. We decided to rename the society "South-West Cumbria History & Archaeology Society (affiliated to CWAAS)"

Egremont Town Council needed the room in the Market Hall for another purpose and in 2023 the society moved yet again to its present location, the Egremont Parish Hall of St Mary & St. Michael's Church. Here we still continue with our talks on the 3rd Saturday of the month, October to March at 2pm. We have two outings in the summer months and hope to engage a wider audience by introducing further activities throughout the year with a questionnaire recently going out to the membership asking what they would like to see from the Society going forward.

We look forward to greeting new members with fresh ideas to maintain the longevity of this group to it's 75th anniversary and beyond!

Sharon Arrowsmith

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

The Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society was founded over thirty years ago and on the face of it, it is thriving. Over the years we researched and published books, journals and newsletters covering a wide range of subjects about our area; they are all accessible online. We have a considerable digital archive open to our members and anyone interested, a website and a Facebook page. Our membership numbers have grown considerably in recent years. It could be said that we are doing well except for one big challenge: we find it difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of members to serve on the committee and take responsibility for key roles in the society.



Lorton and DFHS outside Carlisle Cathedral. photo: Roger Hiley

This problem seems to be experienced by many voluntary organisations in the area. Is it generational? Our older members have served on the

committee for many years in various roles, sometimes coming back after a break. It could be that the early retirees of the 1990s were better placed and more willing to take responsibility for a local history society. As one of us put it a few years ago, “in the past many of our members were doing local history, now they are consumers rather than historians.”

The talks are well-attended in hall and transmitted via Zoom to those who cannot attend in person. We believe the articles in our quarterly *Wanderer* are read and appreciated. Our readership is much extended beyond the society by everything being available online. Our Facebook page allows us to reach out to large numbers of people by sharing the articles and information about talks to various local groups. Guided walks and visits are enjoyed when someone volunteers to organise them. But is it all sustainable?

Lena Staney-Clamp

Secretary, Lorton & Derwent Fells Local History Society

The Cumbria County History Trust Project: 2025 and Beyond

Summary

The Cumbria County History Trust (CCHT) exists to publish the definitive history of all 348 parishes and townships in Cumbria from the earliest written records to the present day. This is a project for the people of Cumbria, those resident in the county, and those with ties to the county or interest in its history who live elsewhere. It is creating an archive of thematic information relating to Cumbria that is of enduring value as a reliable work of reference, accessible worldwide.

As the regional element of the national Victoria County History (VCH), the project is exemplary in its quality. The research is published on the internet and in ‘Red Books’, of which sixteen will cover Cumbria. Our website, <https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk>, is a key starting point for historical work on Cumbria.

Our first Red Book (forthcoming this year, 2025) will cover the area around Kirkby Lonsdale, giving the detailed histories, from prehistoric times to the present day, of the thirteen ancient parishes which make up the Kirkby Lonsdale Ward: Kirkby Lonsdale, Barbon, Casterton, Firbank, Hutton Roof, Killington, Lupton, Mansergh, Middleton, Burton in Kendal, Holme, Dalton, and Dillicar. This is also the first such publication within the VCH for the old county of Westmorland.

How we work

Our approach in Cumbria is based around the support of volunteers to research and draft parish histories. The project is a partnership between the CCHT and Lancaster University's Regional Heritage Centre (RHC) whose experienced staff, provide scholarly expertise, and are central to the education and training of these volunteers. To date our publications include *Cumbria: An Historical Gazetteer* (2016) produced by Professor Angus Winchester and 100 volunteers and available free on the CCHT website. A VCH 'short', *Kirkoswald and Renwick*, compiled by volunteer Richard Brockington and Dr. Sarah Rose, came out in 2018. Other volunteers have produced draft parish histories from Angerton to Waberthwaite which are available on the website and will, in time, become incorporated into Red Books

The project currently has over forty active writers, as well as numerous new volunteers. As we finalise publication of the Lonsdale Ward Red Book we are also working on Lancashire North of the Sands, covering Furness and Cartmel. The basis for this Red Book already exists within volume 8 of William Farrer's *Victoria County History of Lancaster* (1914). The medieval and early modern sections need some updating but the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remain to be covered in detail. This will involve working with local societies and volunteers. We are working with the aim of completing the volunteer-based work for the volume by autumn 2025.

Many organisations within the county have and are supporting the project both financially and with active encouragement. The Morecambe Bay Partnership have partnered the CCHT with the delivery of education and training programmes. This is a project that engages with partner

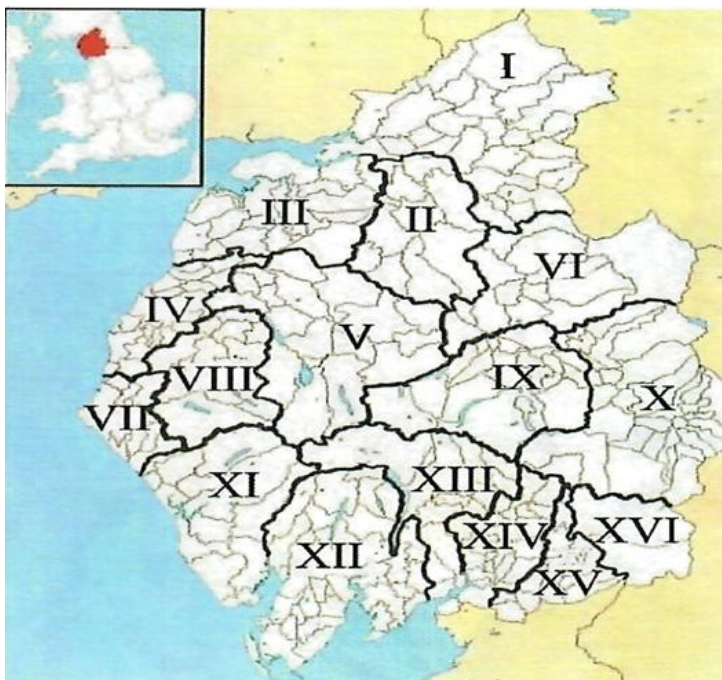
organisations across the county in the firm belief that all the expertise latent in the area should be used for the benefit of the Cumbrians of today and tomorrow.

CCHT website

Mention has been made above of the importance we place on our website. This is visited by people from across the world and has done much to further people's interest in the county's past through its historical summaries on every community in the county and the 'Fascinating Facts' section, which challenges visitors to widen their interests in Cumbria's past. A post from 2020 about the first African community in Britain (soldiers of the Roman army stationed at Burgh by Sands) continues regularly to draw visitors with 1672 individual accessing that page in 2023. The website is currently attracting around 4000 'sessions' a month overall, with 80% of new users coming from the UK and 7% from the USA. Website highlights include: 'About a place', 'About the county', 'Resources' and 'Gallery'.

The future

As noted in the Summary the ultimate aim of the project is to publish all sixteen Red Books covering Cumbria, and for the material to be available on the internet. The map below shows the areas to be covered by these sixteen volumes, of which XV (Lonsdale Ward) is complete and XII underway. Following this, detailed work on I (Eskdale Ward) will begin. The project's momentum will increase as volunteers complete their draft histories and we learn from the experiences of producing the first two volumes. The 2020s will also see a major programme of training in the Solway regions to support work for volumes I, III, and IV.



The division of the sixteen Red Books

Finally

If after reading this brief outline of the continuing work of the project you feel that you or your society might be interested in becoming involved, either as a volunteer(s) or to offer financial support please do contact us. As a charity we are entirely dependent on donations and grants from those who support this major project to document the history of Cumbria's parishes. You can reach me at **cchistorytrust@gmail.com** and I will point your interest to the most appropriate member of the CCHT team.

Lorna M. Mullett, Secretary to CCHT

Congratulations to CCHT

on passing their original target of posting **100 Interesting Facts** - and are still adding to them! They began posting these back in 2017, with the Facts being submitted by volunteers and friends.

Where were there five leper hospitals in Cumbria?

Which year was Carlisle United top of the football league?

Who was the first woman in the country to be elected to a county council?

An assassin from Appleby - who was the victim?

Answers can be found at :

<https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk>



Cumbria Local History Federation

Save the date !

CLHF

Convention 2025

October 4th

at

Newbiggin (nr. Penrith)

CLHF Contacts

To contact the CLHF Committee please see www.clhf.org.uk

Bulletin Editor please e-mail ruthlawley@hotmail.com

Membership and events listing please e-mail solwaypast@yahoo.com