

Department of History, Lancaster University
Victoria County History: Cumbria Project

Briefing Note No. 4

Checklist of Sources: Religious History

These notes are intended to complement VCH national guidance notes on 'Religious History' and should be read in conjunction with them: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/local-history/writing-parish-history/religious-history>

The sources available to you will depend in part on whether your township/parish lay before 1856 in the Diocese of Carlisle (northern Cumbria, north of the Derwent – Dunmail Raise – Stainmore line) or in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, which formed part of the Diocese of Chester from 1541 (southern Cumbria, south of that boundary).

1. Starting points

- *CW1, CW2, CW3*: these contain numerous articles on individual places of worship, many of which are well-researched and provide useful data.
- Church guidebooks can be useful as a starting point – but remember that you should aim to check for independent evidence of the statements they contain.
- 19th- century trade directories (e.g. Mannix & Whellan, *Dir. Cumb* (1847); Bulmer, *Dir. Cumb.* (1901)), which often summarise the institutional history of the Anglican church and list of places of worship of other denominations: www.historicaldirectories.org
- 1851 Religious Census (PRO, HO129), which includes returns from all places of worship, giving numbers attending services on 30 March 1851 (a wet day!), details of the building and when it was erected, number of sittings etc. Records are arranged by Registration District:
 - Cumberland: HO129/564 (Alston) to 572 (Bootle)
 - Westmorland: HO129/573 (East Ward) to 575 (Kendal)

For the **church building**:

- M. Hyde and N. Pevsner, *Cumbria: Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness. The Buildings of England* (London, 2010).
- Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *Westmorland* (London, 1936)
- *The Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne in Cumbria 1833-1872*, ed. L.A.S. Bulter, CWAAS Extra Series Vol. XXXVI (Kendal, 2011)

2. 'Origins of the church and parish' section

C. M.L. Bouch, *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties* (Kendal: Titus Wilson, 1948) contains lists detailing evidence for the dates of foundation of churches and chapels, which often allow one to short-circuit the standard sources (*Taxatio* and *Valor Ecclesiasticus*), though *Calendar of Entries in Papal Registers* ought to be checked:

- *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae, auctoritate Papae Nicholas IV circa 1291*, ed. T. Astle and J. Caley (RC, 1802) See: www.hrionline.ac.uk/taxatio
- *Valor Ecclesiasticus, temp. Henrici VIII*, ed. J Caley and J Hunter, 6 vols. (RC, 1810-34). Latin only, in record-type.
- *Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*, ed. W H Bliss and others, 14 vols. (HMSO, 1893-1960). Now fully on-line on British History Online: www.british-history.ac.uk/catalogue.aspx?type=3&gid=150

For the antiquity of **church dedications**:

- T.H.B. Graham and W.G. Collingwood, 'Patron saints of the diocese of Carlisle', CW2 25 (1925), 1-27

3. 'Patronage, Income and Endowment' section

The key sources to obtain an overview are the snapshots provided by 18th- and 19th-century episcopal visitation records. For the pre-1856 diocese of Carlisle:

- William Nicolson, *Miscellany Accounts of the Diocese of Carlile: with the Terriers Delivered to Me at My Primary Visitation*, (George Bell and Sons, 1877). This contains Bishop Nicolson's notes on the parishes in his diocese, made at his primary visitation in 1703.
- 'The Diocesan Book of Walter Fletcher, Chancellor of Carlisle Diocese, 1814-46'. This is a manuscript in private hands, a scholarly edition of which is currently being prepared for publication by Surtees Society by Dr Jane Platt. Copies of the relevant entries will be made available to volunteers working on particular parishes.

For those parishes in the diocese of Chester until 1856:

- *The Cumbria Parishes 1714-1725 from Bishop Gastrell's Notitia, with additions by Bishop Porteous 1778-1779*, ed. L.A.S. Butler, CWAAS Record Series Vol. XII (Kendal, 1998)

Property belonging to a living will be listed in *glebe terriers*, late 17th to early 19th centuries, preserved in parochial or diocesan archives.

Where a living was appropriated to a religious house, details will usually be found in the cartulary of the monastic house in question. Those in print for Cumbrian houses are:

- *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey. Vol. II, Parts ii and iii*, ed. J. Brownbill, Chetham Society new series Vols. LXXVI and LXXVIII (1916, 1919) [these sections of the Furness cartulary contain most of the Cumbrian material]
- *The Cartulary of Byland Abbey*, ed. J.E. Burton, Surtees Society CCVIII (2004)
- *The Lanercost Cartulary (Cumbria County record Office MS DZ/1)*, ed. J.M. Todd, Surtees Society, CCIII; CWAAS Record Series XI (1997)
- *The Register and Records of Holm Cultram*, F. Grainger & W.G. Collingwood, CWAAS Record Series VII (1929)
- *Register of the Priory of St. Bees*, ed. J. Wilson, Surtees Society CXXVI (1915)
- *The Register of the Priory of Wetherhal*, ed. J.E. Prescott (London and Kendal, 1897).

For other Cumbrian houses, check the material in W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: a history of the abbeys and other monasteries....in England and Wales*, ed. J. Caley et al., 6 vols (London, 1846)

4. 'Religious Life' section:

This is likely to be the longest part of the Religious History section of your article. Depending on the size and complexity of your parish/township, it may be necessary to further divide this into chronological sub-sections (see the VCH National Guidelines). The account for a township without an Anglican church will obviously be much briefer than that for a parish with an ancient parish church and one or more nonconformist places of worship. Each of the following classes of record should be consulted:

Parish records – the contents of the 'parish chest', most of which are now deposited under the terms of the Parochial Records Measure of 1975 with Cumbria Archive Service, where they have the reference PR (WPR at Kendal and YPR at Whitehaven). Many extend back to the 18th century; some as far back as the 16th. Key documents which contain evidence for the religious life of the parish community include churchwardens' accounts, vestry minutes, registers of services and church inventories.

Diocesan records – the records generated by the system of ecclesiastical administration, specifically:

- *Bishops' registers* contain ordinations and appointment of clergy among many other matters. Those for Carlisle diocese from 1292 to 1972 are in Carlisle Archive Centre, reference DRC 1. The surviving medieval registers have been published by the Canterbury and York Society (CYS) as follows:
 - *John Halton 1292-1324* ed. W N Thompson (CYS vols 12, 13, 1913)
 - *John Kirkby 1332-52 and John Ross 1325-32* ed. R L Storey (CYS vols 79 and 81, 1993-5)
 - *Gilbert Welton 1353-62* ed. R L Storey (CYS vol 88, 1999)
 - *Thomas Appleby 1363-95* ed. R L Storey (CYS vol 96, 2006)

- *Parish bundles.* For parishes and chapelries formerly in Chester diocese collections of documents concerning clergy appointments etc are preserved in parish bundles transferred to Cumbria Archive Service, reference DRC 10.
- *Diocesan visitation records.* The records generated by the visitation process, whereby the church authorities enquired into the state of church fabric, clergy and lay morals, can shed valuable light on the religious life of a parish:
 - For parishes in Carlisle diocese: Carlisle Archive Centre, DRC 5/22 et seq. Visitation call books, 1731 to modern times; DRC 5/128-131. Churchwardens' presentments, 1690, 1696-1717, 1734, 1737.
 - For parishes formerly in Chester Diocese: Lancashire Record Office, Preston, ARR/15: visitation records, 'Compert books' etc., from 1665. Cheshire Record Office, EDA 6; EDV 7: articles of enquiry 18th and 19th centuries, recording incumbents' answers to enquiries about services, patronage, nonconformists etc.
 - The archbishop of York also carried out visitations. Records of these 'metropolitan visitations' survive in the Borthwick Institute, York, for Carlisle diocese in 1693/4 and for Chester diocese for several visitations between 1571 and 1694.
- *Ecclesiastical court books.* Cases ('causes') brought before the church courts included disputes about clergy discipline etc, which are relevant to this section of a VCH article. Many cases concerned tithes (which may be useful for the 'Patronage, Income and Endowment' section) and matrimonial matters (which generally aren't relevant). The early eighteenth-century court books for Carlisle diocese are discussed in Mary Kinnear, 'The Correction Court in the Diocese of Carlisle, 1704-1756', *Church History*, 59 (1990), pp 191-206.
 - For the diocese of Carlisle: Consistory court records (1571-1990s) are held at Carlisle Archive Centre, reference: DRC 3 and DRC 5
 - For the diocese of Chester: Consistory court books in Cheshire Record Office, EDC 1
 - Cases which went on appeal to the archbishop's court are in the Borthwick Institute, York, and are listed in W.J. Shiels, *Ecclesiastical Cause Papers at York: files transmitted on appeal 1500-1993* (Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 1983).

Clergy records. For career and biographical details of Church of England clergy:

- For the period between 1540 and 1835, look at the Clergy of the Church of England Database: <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>.
- For the period since 1855 use Crockford's *Clerical Directory*, parts of which are available online at <http://www.crockford.org.uk>.

Remember also the registers of alumni of the ancient universities:

- *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part 1, to 1751, Part 2, 1752-1900, comp. J. Venn and J. A. Venn (Cambridge, 1927-1954)
- *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1500-1714; 1715-1886, ed. J. Foster (Oxford, 1888-92)

5. Nonconformist History

For general guidance on the records of non-Anglican denominations, see Michael Mullett, *Sources for the History of English Nonconformity 1660-1830* (British Records Association, Archives and the User No. 8, 1991).

In addition to the key sources listed above (1851 Religious Census; 19th-century trade directories, for example), start with:

- B. Nightingale, *The Ejected of 1662 in Cumberland and Westmorland*, 2 vols. (Manchester, 1911). This not only lists Puritan ministers who lost their livings at the Restoration but also much detail of the incumbents of each parish in the two counties in the 17th century.
- Nonconformist meeting house certificates from 1689, when nonconformist places of worship were required to be registered with Quarter Sessions or with the diocesan authorities.

For Quaker congregations, start with:

- David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 2 vols (London, 1999) [The standard work, which (for Cumbria) updates and should be used in preference to his *Quaker Meeting Houses of the Lake Counties* (London, 1978)].
- *The First Publishers of Truth*, ed. Norman Penney (London, 1907). [Prints the text of return requested by London Yearley Meeting in 1720 about the origins of each Quaker meeting].

The administrative records of many nonconformist denominations have been deposited with Cumbria Archive Service. Type the name of the denomination and place into CASCAT (<http://www.archiveweb.cumbria.gov.uk/CalmView/default.aspx>) to locate these records.

For Roman Catholics see:

- Registers of papist estates: useful for establishing Roman Catholic families [CAS, QRR/12/21]
- 'Compert Books' and churchwardens' presentments include lists of 'Papists' in the later 17th century.
- **Protestation Returns** of 1641-2, which include the names of Recusants who refused to take the oath of protestation. The Westmorland Protestation Returns are available in print: *Westmorland Protestation Returns 1641-2*, ed. M.A. Faraday, CWAAS Tract Series

vol. XVII, 1971. Copies of the original Cumberland Protestation Returns can be found in Carlisle Archive Centre.

SAR and AJLW

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