

Victoria County History of Cumbria Project: Work in Progress

Interim Draft

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Parish/township: **KIRKBY LONSDALE** (township)

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INTRODUCTION

The ancient parish of Kirkby Lonsdale covered 35,945 acres (14,547 ha) of south-east Westmorland and comprised the market town and parish centre of Kirkby Lonsdale and eight other townships: to the east, beyond the Lune, Casterton (4,324 acres/1,750 ha), Barbon (4,261 acres/1,724 ha) and Middleton (7,276 acres/2,945 ha); to the south and west Hutton Roof (2,715 acres/1,099 ha), Lupton (6,059 acres/2,452 ha) and Mansergh (2,668 acres/1080 ha); to the north, Killington (4,875 acres/1973 ha) and Firbank (2,985 acres/1,208 ha). This article treats the township of Kirkby Lonsdale and the history of the parish church.

Kirkby Lonsdale, in size and in many of its features no more than a large village, is nevertheless an ancient market town serving a wide area, 'whither the neighbouring inhabitants resort to church and market'.¹ The township to which it gives its name lies at the south-east corner of Westmorland, bordering on Lancashire and within a mile or two of the Yorkshire border, the whole township covering an area of 3,253 acres (1,316 ha.) Its roughly triangular shape is bounded on the east side by the Lune for about two miles, and for another two miles by a Lune tributary flowing from Terrybank Tarn which lies at the most northerly point of the township. Beyond the tarn the boundary crosses the watershed, and meets the Blea Beck, later the Lupton Beck, which forms the township's western boundary as far as Spital. The southern boundary follows no particular natural features, crossing open country in a series of straight lines delineated by hedges and walls, until it reaches the Lune a short distance below the Devil's Bridge. The

¹ Camden, *Brit.* (1722 edn), 987.

boundaries, so much of which are formed by watercourses, are probably of considerable antiquity, although the earliest record is from the Enclosure map, surveyed in 1808.²

The land is undulating, but nowhere to any great height, from about 50m. at the Devil's Bridge to about 150m. at Terrybank Tarn. The underlying geology is Silurian mudstones in the northern part of the township and carboniferous limestone in the south, with basal conglomerates of carboniferous series outcropping around the town itself. Much of the township exhibits the 'basket of eggs' topography characteristic of glacial drumlins overlying the bedrock, with alluvial deposits along the River Lune and between the drumlins.³ Deep, loamy soils predominate in the east of the township, with heavier, wetter soils on the higher ground to the north and west.⁴ Seventeenth century inventories show that the lower land near the river was in the past associated with ploughland and cattle rearing, the higher ground with sheep,⁵ but in later times with the improvement in grassland, crop raising has been almost abandoned, cattle and sheep both grazing at all levels.⁶

Although in the seventeenth century Machell commented that the Lune all along was beautified with great plenty of wood,⁷ relatively little old woodland now lies within the township. The one considerable stretch is Green Wood, along the river surrounding and to the north of Underley Hall, the name of which indicates that it was built below a wood or clearing.⁸ In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries country villas, some with considerable areas of land, were established by landowners attracted by the 'beautiful and fertile vale',⁹ such as Nowell at Underley, Tomlinson at Biggins, Carus at Lunefield. Woodlands were then planted for amenity and shelter, in the case of Underley largely for pheasant

² CAS (Kendal), WD/PP/Box 1.

³ British Geological Survey 'Geology of Britain viewer' at <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

⁴ Soils of England and Wales Sheet 1, Northern England (Soil Survey of England and Wales, Harpenden 1983)

⁵ Based on probate inventories: Lancashire Archives (Preston), WRW/L.

⁶ See 'Economic History'.

⁷ *Antiquary on Horseback* ed. J. M. Ewbank (CWAAS. Kendal 1963), 25.

⁸ *PNW*, I, 43-4.

⁹ J. Housman, *A Descriptive Tour and Guide to the Lakes, Caves, Mountains and other natural curiosities in Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire* (Carlisle, 1802), 56.

shooting, a sport which continues though far less extensively than in the nineteenth century, when royalty visited and bags were expected of a size that would disgust present-day sportsmen.¹⁰

Settlement

The name ‘Kirkby Lonsdale’, borne by both the ancient parish and the market town and signifying ‘the church settlement in Lonsdale’, indicates that the township was the site of an early church, almost certainly of pre-Viking origin.¹¹ The surrounding hamlets of High and Low Biggins (‘buildings’), Tearnside (a name of uncertain origin, perhaps referring to osiers used in basket-making) and Underley were recorded in the thirteenth century. Another hamlet, Kearnstwick (earlier ‘Kestw(h)ayte’: ‘valley clearing’) was almost certainly of medieval origin, though not recorded until the sixteenth century.¹²

A ford across the river Lune, and the imposing bluff above it, no doubt dictated the siting of the church, and the settlement. The original area of the town was defined by four roads which met near the church. Mitchelgate (originally ‘Bichelgate’)¹³ came in from Kendal and the west. Fairbanks came from the north, ultimately from Scotland.¹⁴ The steep hill now called Mill Brow led east to the ford across the river and all that part of Kirkby Lonsdale parish on the east bank, as well as towards Settle in Yorkshire. The present Main Street was the road south to Lancaster, along the west bank of the Lune. From medieval times, this also led to the river crossing at the Devil’s Bridge.

It is not clear whether market tolls were payable on the entries to the town. The toll shown on a map of 1770¹⁵ at the junction of the road to the bridge with the road coming in from Lancaster may have been a turnpike toll. A house

¹⁰ Inf. Clementine Pease.

¹¹ Gillian Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West* (Copenhagen, 1985), 34.

¹² *PNW*, I, .43-

¹³ CAS (Kendal), WDY/8/1 In a survey of Kirkby Lonsdale of 1627 the road is Bichellgate (with ‘Bichelcroft’ beyond it.) It is so called in James Newton’s will of 1661, and Peter Lawcock’s of 1707. Lancashire Archives (Preston) WRW/L. No explanation of the name has been found. Parson and White, *Dir. C. & W.* (1829) uses ‘Mitchellgate’ and it has so remained, some authors assuming that it was the original ‘great road’ into the town.

¹⁴ Beyond Old Town, three miles out of Kirkby Lonsdale, this is still called ‘the Old Scotch Road’.

¹⁵ Thomas Jeffery, *Map of Westmorland* (1770)

above Mitchelgate, fifty yards beyond Abbot Hall, is called Tollhouse Cottage, but there is no available evidence to show that this was an ancient name.¹⁶

Within the town all the roads converge on a short and narrow stretch alongside the churchyard, now called Market Street. Behind the houses on the church side of this street lies a second row against the churchyard wall, some of which are still separate and attainable through St. Mary's Court. Market Street was called 'Shambles', meaning 'a bench where meat was sold' and probably where animals were slaughtered,¹⁷ for which purpose it is much too narrow as it stands, so it would seem that the front row of houses was built later, and that Market Street was originally a market square. The medieval market cross stood at the junction of Market Street, Mill Lane and Main Street until 1819,¹⁸ when to ease the traffic congestion it was moved to a small square on Mill Lane later called the Coalmarket,¹⁹ now the Swinemarket. Soon afterwards a new market square was opened at the north end of Main Street. The Thursday market, which continues to the present day, was granted to John de Kirkeby in 1227.²⁰

Much of Main Street near the church was rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1776²¹ although behind some of the facades remnants of much earlier buildings can be discovered. The modern commercial buildings are on the whole confined to the original house widths on the street side, although with redesigned frontages and in some cases considerable extensions backwards. Back walls away from the street frequently show remnants of older features, built-up doorways and the frames of disused mullioned windows.²² A shop in Market Street bears a small datestone of 1661, but this appears to have been reset from elsewhere. One house (54-6 Main Street, in 2013 an ironmonger and garden shop), escaped the fires and also subsequent modernisation; its very large hearth and other features from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are still in place.²³

¹⁶ It is believed to have been in earlier times, an alehouse called the 'Dancing Boys'. There are no house deeds. Inf. N. Johnson

¹⁷ O.S. 1:2,500 sheet, Westmorland XLVII-8 (surveyed 1858).

¹⁸ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 138.

¹⁹ O.S.1:2,500(sheet Westmorland XLVII-8 (surveyed 1858).

²⁰ *Rec. Kend.* II, 307.

²¹ A. Pearson, *Annals of Kirkeby Lonsdale* (Kendal 1930), 48.

²² Particularly behind nos. 44 and 52 Main Street, and in Chapel Close.

²³ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 138-9.

A substantial house, converted, on the evidence of its elegantly decorated front, at the end of the seventeenth century from a much older building, parts of which remain, stands halfway down Mill Brow, and is known as 'The Old Manor House'.²⁴ It was so used while the manor was in the hands of the Lowthers,²⁵ but the Kings Arms, in Market Street opposite the entry to the churchyard, was the original manor house for the Carus family in the sixteenth century.²⁶ Its eighteenth century facade has been added to a much older building whose great fireplace and other features remain.²⁷ Beyond it, at the bottom of Mitchelgate, stand two other large houses, Fountain House and No 4 Beckhead, evidently designed for prosperous owners.

No 4 Beckhead was rebuilt on the site of an inn,²⁸ for Henry Bickersteth, surgeon in the town from 1775 until his death in 1821.²⁹ Fountain House is on the site of the old Fountain inn, a large coaching establishment. It was largely demolished and rebuilt in 1830 by William Wilson Carus Wilson, founder of the Clergy Daughters' School at Casterton.³⁰

The town, particularly as seen from the hills on the opposite side of the valley, is still tightly compact, but has none the less grown considerably since the end of the eighteenth century. The first extensions were all to the south, along the main street towards the Devils Bridge. A house here carries on its downspouts initials of the Gathorne family and the date 1777. When first built it was considered quite a country residence, though less than 300 yards from the market cross: on the opposite side of the road the Lunefield estate of Roger Carus was built in 1815 and then said to combine 'the conveniences of the town with the elegance of the country'.³¹

At the end of Market Street, on the west side, stood a considerable inn, the Rose and Crown.³² In 1820 it burnt down, as related on an obelisk in the

²⁴ See 'Landownership'

²⁵ See 'Landownership'

²⁶ *Rec. Kend.* II, 313-14.

²⁷ W. H. Chippendall, 'The Hall in Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW2*, xxx (1930), 125-7.

²⁸ Pearson, *Annals*, 61

²⁹ M.I Kirkby Lonsdale Church

³⁰ Inf. from house deeds in the owners' possession. (For further information on Carus Wilson, see Casterton).

³¹ *Lonsdale Magazine* 1821, 161. Roger Carus was a remote descendant of Sir Thomas Carus who acquired the manor of Kirkby Lonsdale in 1565 (see 'Landownership')

³² Renamed the 'Royal Hotel', after a visit in 1847 by Queen Adelaide. (See Casterton)

churchyard raised by public subscription to the memory of five servant girls trapped in the attic and burnt to death.

The next few years saw a number of alterations to the town. The large house next to the Rose and Crown, Jackson Hall,³³ was taken over as the new inn of the same name, while its gardens on the opposite side of the road were in 1822 converted to a new market place by permission of Lord Lonsdale, lord of the manor, who subscribed a third of the £370 public subscription.³⁴

At about the same time New Road was laid out southwards from the site of the old Rose and Crown, a modernisation which led to bitter local arguments in the *Westmoreland Gazette* and *Kendal Chronicle*, between two local worthies who indulged in more of a slanging match than any logical argument about the value of a new road against the widening of Mitchelgate.³⁵ On the south side of the new Market Place a row of houses later converted to shops was built, and on the opposite side from the Rose and Crown the Savings Bank was built in 1847, designed by Thompson and Webster,³⁶ converted to dwellings in 2011.

The nineteenth century also saw the expansion of estates outside the town, and with it the rebuilding not only of the large houses such as Underley and Biggins, but also of many of the farmhouses belonging to them. These are not dated, but their architectural features consistently show improvements made in the mid- to later nineteenth-century. Particularly typical of the period are the Kearswick cottages with ornamental bargeboards and leaded windows.

In 1848 the Queen Elizabeth School moved from the churchyard to the west of the town,³⁷ and over the years spread to a large complex of buildings. In 1895, as a datestone shows, Bective Road was built by the Underley Estate, joining the top end of New Road to Mitchelgate. The twentieth century before the Second World War saw a small extension of houses at Robraine, on the old road to Lancaster on the west side of the river, and a council estate of twelve

³³ CAS (Kendal), W/PR 19 (Kirkby Lonsdale parish registers). Named from the Jackson family, of which the last relevant member appears to have been Mrs. Ellen Jackson, died 1785.

³⁴ F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture* (Kendal 1912), 127

³⁵ One wrote under the pseudonym of 'J.P.' which the other interpreted as 'Jack Pudding' (*Westmorland Gazette* 14 April 1822), a fair indication of the level of argument. 'Wretch', 'blockhead', 'scribbling slave' were some of the terms used.

³⁶ A. Taylor, *The Websters of Kendal* (Kendal 2004), 156.

³⁷ See 'Social History'

houses on the Kendal road.³⁸ In the 1950s³⁹ the first houses of Harling Bank⁴⁰ were built, a row since extended, at the top of the hill near the Queen Elizabeth School, where the new primary school was also built in 1985.⁴¹ In 1960 Lunefield was demolished⁴² and its extensive gardens became a housing estate. Later the town extended quite densely to the west, filling the angle formed by the two roads leading northwards, one continuing from Mitchelgate and the other from Fairbank. New estates called Abbotsgate and Lower Abbotsgate were built behind the restored farmhouse of Abbot Hall⁴³ which in the past marked the western edge of the town. An estate of 35 houses named Defoe Drive after a notable headmaster of the Queen Elizabeth School, was begun in 2011.⁴⁴ All these were private developments and residential only; they included no shops, businesses or other institutions except for new doctor's surgeries; these migrated to a new building beside Booth's Supermarket in 2004⁴⁵ mainly to ease the parking problem, which caused the town trouble for many years, constantly recurring in the parish council minutes since the 1930s,⁴⁶ though the introduction in the early 1990s of a one-way system round Mitchelgate, Market Street and Main Street went some way to alleviating the problem. In 2013 a development of 36 retirement apartments was begun on the opposite side of the road from the supermarket, on one of the few remaining green spaces within the town boundary.

From the later twentieth century there was some commercial development on the A65, the Kendal road, about half a mile to the west of the town. On the south side of the road a large garage and filling station was built in 1970⁴⁷ and between it and the town a small business park was laid out in 2007.⁴⁸ This developed slowly, only four of the eight units being occupied in 2012. On the

³⁸ Datestone: 'Kirkby Lonsdale Urban District Council 1932'.

³⁹ Inf. from an owner.

⁴⁰ Built on Harling Bank Meadow, so named on the Tithe Map. Harling was a considerable family name in the Kirkby Lonsdale area from the 16th century, largely dying out by 1812 (cf. parish register).

⁴¹ See 'Social History'

⁴² A. Pearson, D. Kyle, A. Phillips and M. Gresson, *Annals of Kirkby Lonsdale and Lunesdale Today* (Parthenon, 1996), 431.

⁴³ This house, though one of the oldest in the town, has no religious connections. A family called Abbott owned it in 1848: CAS (Kendal) WDRC/8/231.

⁴⁴ Lawrence Defoe, headmaster 1936-1966.

⁴⁵ Local inf.

⁴⁶ CAS (Kendal), WPC/13/1/1/4-7 (Kirkby Lonsdale Parish Council minutes).

⁴⁷ Local inf.

⁴⁸ Local inf.

opposite side of the road the town's veterinary practice moved out to a converted barn in 1989.⁴⁹

Beyond the town, the estates of Underley and Biggins were largely rebuilt and extended in the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ Now an outlying hamlet to the south of the town, Biggins once had its own importance as the centre of the Curwen estate, as shown by the 1640 inquest on George Preston, who had acquired the Curwen property.⁵¹ Deansbiggin, to the north, now a farmhouse, has internal features such as a chimney which show that the 1623 datestones marked modernisation of an older building.⁵² Tearnside Hall, in the hamlet of that name, bypassed since 1953 by the Kendal road, was built in 1686 by John and Ann Baylife. It is a handsome house of its period, with a decorated two-storeyed porch facing the old Kendal road. No evidence has been found that this was the centre of an estate of any size, but it may well have been an inn. The stylised leaves surrounding the initials on the datestone and repeated on the porch lintel are of a type that has been found on several houses in north Lancashire which may have been inns.⁵³ These features, the large barn and stabling block attached, and another very large agricultural building nearby with the same date and initials, make it a strong possibility.

The early history of Spittal farm, on the Kendal road at the boundary of the township with Lupton, is discussed under 'Religion'.

Communications

As has been said, the seventeenth century saw a considerable development in industrial and commercial activity. The development of Kirkby Lonsdale had been considerably influenced by its position with respect to other centres of population, the nearest being Kendal (16 m./26 km.), Lancaster (20 m./32 km.), and Settle (17 m./27k.) Four main roads, from these three centres and from Penrith, converged at Kirkby Lonsdale to cross the river Lune, originally by a ford at the bottom of Mill Brow. The precise position of the ford is not known, as the river has changed its course and a large island has developed in midstream. The

⁴⁹ Local inf.

⁵⁰ see 'Manors and Estates'.

⁵¹ *Rec. Kend.* II p.321-2

⁵² see 'Manors and Estates'.

⁵³ E. Garnett, *The Dated Buildings of South Lonsdale* (Lancaster 1994), 205-6.

Lune rises very rapidly after rain in the surrounding hills, and this ford must frequently have become impassable. The problem was addressed by the building of the Devil's Bridge, the oldest structure in the township apart from the church. It shares its name and legend with several in Europe, always buildings of great antiquity and with features, either of height or unusual width of arch, or both, which gave credence to the myth that there must have been a superhuman builder. There is still doubt as to the origin of the current structure, estimates ranging from about 1200⁵⁴ to about 1500.⁵⁵ The earlier date is suggested as the time when the church was being built by masons of St Mary's York with skills which were not available locally.⁵⁶ Nicolson and Burn state that there was a grant of pontage for the repair of the bridge in 1275, which would fit with this suggestion.⁵⁷ The later date is based on the style of the arches, which may indicate a rebuild of an earlier structure.⁵⁸ In 1365 Richard de Wisbeche, vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale, and Thomas Banes were granted in aid of the repair of the bridge pontage for six years on things for sale passing by or under it between the priory of Hornby and Gratrehals.⁵⁹ If the word 'under' had any real meaning it could not have applied to the bridge as it currently stands, built directly on to rocky formations extending into the waterway. There has therefore been speculation that there was originally a bridge higher upstream,⁶⁰ somewhere near the ford. This is unlikely and no evidence has been found; 'by or under' was more probably a lawyer's phrase to cover all eventualities.

The 'repair' authorised in 1365 may date the bridge as it stands, the stonework appearing to be mainly of that period. A reason for its survival more or less in its original form is that the outcrops of rock above it throw the water straight through the central arch without wearing the supporting piers. At the crown of the bridge the roadway is only eleven feet (3.4 m.) wide, and the heavier traffic of the twentieth century, particularly the coming of motor transport, made a replacement essential. In 1931 the Stanley Bridge was built 150 yards

⁵⁴ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 463.

⁵⁵ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 136.

⁵⁶ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 463

⁵⁷ N & B, I, 244. Their source for this statement has not been found.

⁵⁸ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 136.

⁵⁹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 311. The place name 'Gratrehals' has not been identified.

⁶⁰ Pearson, *Annals*, 120-1.

downstream,⁶¹ designed by Charles Hines, Westmorland County surveyor and bridgemaister,⁶² who had the foresight to make it wide enough for twenty-first century traffic. In spite of the withdrawal of wheeled traffic, in 2010 the old bridge was on the English Heritage ‘at risk’ register, and it was reported that a full restoration would cost £300,000.⁶³

In 1861 a proposed railway line from Clapham to Lowgill was opposed by 68 signatories to a petition, largely from local landowners.⁶⁴ Possibly this was the reason that the Kirkby Lonsdale station was built a mile and a half outside the town, near Cowan Bridge in Lancashire. The tradesmen and other inhabitants of the town did not share the objection of their betters. More than 50 of them signed another letter to the railway company, asking that the station should not be at Casterton, as the toll bar then still in operation would cause expense and annoyance to prospective passengers.⁶⁵ In 1899 plans were mooted for a branch from this line to Kendal, passing through Kirkby Lonsdale. One of the main reasons put forward was the advantage to the town’s economy of the expected boost to tourism, an early mention of the modern town’s chief industry, which developed after the Second World War with the proliferation of motor transport. Some correspondence has survived, but stops abruptly. The plan was evidently abandoned.⁶⁶

Population and Social Character

Kirkby Lonsdale was ranked by Daniel Fleming as the ‘greatest towne save Kendale, in this county’⁶⁷ although the 1662 Hearth Tax lists no more than 101 dwellings.⁶⁸ By the traditional multiplier of five persons per household the total population, including the hamlets of Biggins, Kearstwick, Tearnside, and the outlying farms, was 510, a small town even by the standards of the time. In 1773 171 properties paid Land Tax, indicating a population of perhaps 850.⁶⁹ The

⁶¹ Datestone on the upstream parapet.

⁶² Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 330.

⁶³ Kirkby Lonsdale Town Council Minutes, 14 July 2010. (With the Council Secretary)

⁶⁴ CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/33.

⁶⁵ CAS (Kendal), WDY/139.

⁶⁶ CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/33.

⁶⁷ *Fleming-Senhouse Papers*, ed. E. Hughes (Carlisle, 1961), 5.

⁶⁸ C. Phillips *et al* (ed.), *Westmorland Hearth Tax*, 160-1.

⁶⁹ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT (Lonsdale) 1773

growth of industry in the later eighteenth century⁷⁰ accounts for the expansion to 1,283 in 1801, rising to 1,643 in 1821 and remaining fairly stable until the end of the century. The population rose to 1,800 at the end of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ Thereafter it declined: the town lost 42 men in the First World War,⁷² industry was no longer appropriate to an isolated small country town, and tourism awaited the widespread private ownership of motor-cars. The lowest point in the census record was 1,240 in 1951, but then tourism, and the necessary services to tourists, began to develop. In 1971 the population was 1,300, the next forty years saw considerable new housing, and by 2001 the population had almost reached 2,000. This growth was partly due to the greater ease of commuting to work in larger neighbouring towns, and by the presence of large primary and secondary schools.⁷³ These ensured that the age range of the population was more balanced than it might otherwise have been, as the town's compact size, good shops, three active churches, varied sporting and social activities and beautiful countryside made it very attractive to retired people.⁷⁴

In the twenty-first century Kirkby Lonsdale was an unmissable part of tourist itineraries through the Lune Valley and as an appendage to the Lake District. The crowds were the economic lifeblood of the place, and therefore tolerated, but the town continued to have a busy social life of its own, acting as the service area for the south-east corner of Cumbria and adjacent parts of Lancashire and North Yorkshire.

⁷⁰ See 'Economic History'.

⁷¹ Census returns 1891.

⁷² War Memorial in the churchyard.

⁷³ See 'Social History'.

⁷⁴ In 1951 20% of the population, and in 1981 33% were of retirement age (Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 270). The national figures for over-60s were 16% for 1951, 20% for 1981: Vision of Britain website URL:http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10001043/cube/AGESEX_100UP

LANDOWNERSHIP

In medieval times St. Mary's Abbey, York, held most, possibly as much as three-quarters, of the modern township of Kirkby Lonsdale, of which a small part on the southern boundary, was given, about the year 1200, to Cockersand Abbey. The remaining portion, based on Deansbiggin, was held of the barony of Kendale. After the Reformation, the township was divided between private estates, of which the main ones were Underley to the west of the township, progressively absorbing Deansbiggin and subsequently much of the town, the Lowther estate with no capital messuage, and Biggins to the south. These three estates grew throughout the nineteenth century, but all broke up in the twentieth, Underley alone continuing into the twenty-first, by which time the township was largely the property of small owner-occupiers.

Manors.

Kirkby Lonsdale

Before the Conquest Thorfinnr held Kirkby Lonsdale as one of his twelve manors in Austwick. By 1100 Ivo Talebois held it as Baron of Kendal and gave the church with its land, amounting to perhaps three-quarters of the township, to the monks of St. Mary's Abbey, York.⁷⁵ At the dissolution it passed to the Crown and was granted in 1558 to the lawyer Thomas Carus of Halton near Lancaster who became a justice of the Queen's Bench.⁷⁶ He was succeeded by his son, another Thomas Carus, who held the manor in chief by one part of a knight's fee, and died in 1575.⁷⁷ His only child and heir was Elizabeth, wife of Sir Nicholas Curwen of Workington,⁷⁸ whose estate at her death in 1611 was estimated at 30 messuages, 7 tofts, 2 mills, 1 dovecot, 30 gardens, 300 acres of land, 300 acres of pasture, 10 acres of wood, and 1500 acres of furze and heath. Her heirs were her daughters, Mary, wife of Henry Widdrington of Widdrington Castle in Northumberland, and Jane, wife of William Lambton, also of Northumberland.⁷⁹ It is not known when the manor passed from them to George Preston of Holker,

⁷⁵ *Rec. Kend.* II, 305. See under 'Religion'.

⁷⁶ *Rec. Kend.* II, 304.

⁷⁷ *Rec. Kend.* II, 305

⁷⁸ *Rec. Kend.* II, 315-17.

⁷⁹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 319.

who was seised of it at his death in 1640,⁸⁰ with Over Biggins Hall as its capital messuag. In 1640 Preston was succeeded by his son Thomas,⁸¹ who was succeeded by another Thomas. One of the two⁸² had sold the manor to Sir John Lowther by 1672, on the evidence of the manor court records.⁸³ The Lowther family thereafter kept an agent in the town who is presumed to have lived in the 'Old Manor House' on Mill Brow, but probably not until it had been rebuilt in its present form: Richard Trotter, steward, conducted the manor courts from 1672 to 1684 but does not appear in the Hearth Tax returns of 1674.⁸⁴ From 1685 to 1694 the courts were conducted by Roger Moore, steward,⁸⁵ who died at Holmehouse in Whittington parish but left directions for his burial in Kirkby Lonsdale.⁸⁶ James Knowles, who followed Moore as steward to the Lowther estate, almost certainly lived in the house until 1727, because his inventory details a large house on four floors, including both 'garrats and cellers',⁸⁷ a very unusual type of house in the area at the time, but possible in this case owing to the steep slope of the ground. The house was finally sold from the Lonsdale estate in 1839, to Arthur Foster, printer and bookseller.⁸⁸

The Lowthers were still lords of the manor in 1822 when the newly laid out Market Square was bought by public subscription and transferred to the manor to be held in trust for the townspeople. Their rights were not finally extinguished until 1928.⁸⁹

Deansbiggin

The manor of Deansbiggin was held of the Barony of Kendale.⁹⁰ In 1229 John de Kirkeby queried the right of Richard de Copeland to own land in Deansbiggin which Richard had held since before 1200. A concord between them regarding

⁸⁰ *Rec. Kend.* II, 321.

⁸¹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 322.

⁸² *Rec. Kend.* II, 306.

⁸³ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12.

⁸⁴ *Westmorland Hearth Tax*, 123-4.

⁸⁵ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12.

⁸⁶ Lancashire Archives (Preston) WRW/L Will of Roger Moore 1695

⁸⁷ Lancashire Archives (Preston) WRW/L Inventory of James Knowles 1727

⁸⁸ House deeds, courtesy of the owner

⁸⁹ See 'Local Government'

⁹⁰ The name of Deansbiggin has been adduced as showing a connection to the church, but it has also been strongly argued that the origin is a personal name with no religious connections: see W. H. Chippindall, 'The Manor of Kirkby Lonsdale' *CW2*, xxvi (1926), 298-306.

an exchange of land was made in 1231.⁹¹ The Deansbiggin quarter to the north of Kirkby Lonsdale town was confirmed to the Copeland family and held in 1283 by Alan de Copeland from William de Lindesay baron of Kendal.⁹²

Before 1400 it was in the estate of Sir Thomas Tunstall of Thurland Castle in Tunstall, Lancashire, and it was granted in that year by trustees to his younger son, also Thomas, not directly from his father, but from Robert Banes of Melling and Robert Holme, who had received it as a gift from Sir Thomas the father.⁹³

The reason for these transactions has not been found.

In 1523 it was held by Edward Middleton by fealty and a rent of 2d. per annum.⁹⁴ In 1605 Christopher Middleton died holding the manor of Deansbiggin of Thurland Castle, in socage by fealty and a rent of twopence yearly for all services. He was succeeded by his son James aged thirteen,⁹⁵ but it was sold before 1623 to Joseph Booth, a Kirkby Lonsdale lawyer. At this date rebuilding took place, marked by the datestones on an upstairs fireplace and on the two-storeyed porch. Three generations of the Booth family remained at Deansbiggin until a later Joseph Booth sold it in 1680 to John Borrett, a lawyer of the Inner Temple, son of Edward Borrett, mercer of Kirkby Lonsdale. In 1777 Susanna Borrett, John Borrett's granddaughter, sold the estate to John Batty of Kirkby Lonsdale, grocer.⁹⁶ After his death in 1791 it was sold to Henry Bickersteth,⁹⁷ on whose death in 1821 it was acquired by Alexander Nowell of Underley Hall and added to that estate.⁹⁸

Other Estates

Cockersand Abbey

Between 1184 and 1200 four acres of land were given by the hereditary parson Ketel de Kirkby to the canons of Cockersand 'for the health of his soul and the

⁹¹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 308.

⁹² *Rec. Kend.* II, 309.

⁹³ *Rec. Kend.* II, 312.

⁹⁴ *Rec. Kend.* II, 305.

⁹⁵ *Rec. Kend.* II, 88.

⁹⁶ W.H. Chippendall 'Deansbiggin near Kirkby Lonsdale' *CW2*, xxix (1929), 242-7. The deeds, used by Chippendall, were then at Underley, but their earliest date is not clear.

⁹⁷ M. I. Kirkby Lonsdale Church

⁹⁸ Chippendall, 'Deansbiggin, 242-7

soul of Heixstilda his wife', followed by another four acres.⁹⁹ Adam son of Ketel confirmed these gifts and added another nine acres.¹⁰⁰ This land lay to the west of the vill. Its exact boundaries are unknown, the reference being to 'Ruhcroft', a name which has been lost. It was defined as 'by the stream of Lindale well to another stream which descends into Lupton brook,' and thence along the boundary of Lupton to the boundary of Hutton Roof, and so back to the well.¹⁰¹

Biggins

The hamlet of Biggins, to the south of the town, developed into a separate landed estate from the seventeenth century. Over Biggins Hall had been the capital messuage of the manor of Kirkby Lonsdale in 1640, but the manor house seems already to have been separated from the rest of the manor by then.¹⁰² Thomas Carus, later a judge of the Queen's Court under Elizabeth¹⁰³ had been granted the Kirkby Lonsdale manor in 1558, which included Biggins. His son, another Thomas, married Anne Preston, and their daughter and heir Elizabeth, after the death of her husband Sir Nicholas Curwen of Workington in 1605,¹⁰⁴ gave part of the Biggins estate to the Kirkby Lonsdale school,¹⁰⁵ and enlarged the tenement buildings, marking the new wing with a datestone 'EC 1606'. The group of buildings, with considerable medieval features, had fallen into a very poor state of preservation¹⁰⁶ until restored, late in the twentieth century, to three dwellings.¹⁰⁷

In the late eighteenth century Thomas Tomlinson of Arkholme in Lancashire and his wife Ann Battersby acquired the Biggins estate and built a house which still stands. Eight children of their son Edward remained unmarried but continued to live together.¹⁰⁸ In 1848 the 300-acre estate was held in three parts, in the names of two surviving brothers and 'the Misses Tomlinson'.¹⁰⁹ In 1889 Elizabeth, the last of the family, died, by then owning the whole estate,

⁹⁹ *The Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey* (Chetham Society New Series 56), p. 912.

¹⁰⁰ *Cockersand Chartulary*, p. 913.

¹⁰¹ *Cockersand Chartulary*, p. 911.

¹⁰² *Rec Kend.* II, 319.

¹⁰³ *Rec. Kend.* II, 315.

¹⁰⁴ J.F. Curwen *A History of the Ancient House of Curwen* (Kendal 1928), 129.

¹⁰⁵ See 'Social History'.

¹⁰⁶ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 136.

¹⁰⁷ Part of this complex of buildings is still known locally as 'the Courthouse'.

¹⁰⁸ M. I., Kirkby Lonsdale Church.

¹⁰⁹ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/231.

which she left to a very distant relation, Dr. William Paget. Born at Forton in 1848, he practised medicine for eighteen years at Blundellsands and London, until his inheritance, when he added the name of Tomlinson,¹¹⁰ built himself a large country house at Biggins,¹¹¹ and until his death in 1937¹¹² devoted himself and much of his fortune to the affairs of Kirkby Lonsdale. He was the church choirmaster for 45 years,¹¹³ gave £1,000 and land for tennis courts to the Queen Elizabeth School,¹¹⁴ was prominent in the foundation of the Institute,¹¹⁵ and founded the Kirkby Lonsdale Fellowship, an adult education group, in 1927.¹¹⁶ He was a considerable landowner and employer, a Deputy Lieutenant, and in 1897 served as High Sheriff of Westmorland.¹¹⁷ In 1928, to celebrate his 80th birthday, the people of Kirkby Lonsdale presented him with a piece of plate and an illuminated address.¹¹⁸

Underley

From at least the seventeenth century, Underley, lying about a kilometre north of the town, was an important holding in the township, though there is no early information as to the extent of its land. Henry Wilson of Blackwell Hall in London, a rich man and benefactor to the church and school, held at his death in 1640 a capital messuage there.¹¹⁹ In 1670 his great-nephew and heir, another Henry Wilson, paid on eight hearths, more than any other house in the township.¹²⁰ In 1732 Mr. Thomas Wilson, son of Henry, sold to Hugh Ashton of Bispham, whose widow was still there in 1773,¹²¹ and who died in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1782.¹²² Her great-grandson, Joseph Burrow, sold in 1808 to Alexander Nowell, originally from Gawthorp Hall in Lancashire, who had made

¹¹⁰ *Westmorland Gazette*, 11 Feb. 1937.

¹¹¹ This burnt down in 1942, and no trace remains. A photograph can be found in N. and P. Dalziel, *Kirkby Lonsdale and District* (Stroud 1996), 71.

¹¹² Cumbria Family History Society, *The Memorial Inscriptions of St Mary the Virgin Kirkby Lonsdale* (2000) pp. 73, 78

¹¹³ Wall Tablet in St. Mary's Church, Kirkby Lonsdale.

¹¹⁴ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 157-8.

¹¹⁵ CAS (Kendal), WPR 19/13/2/1.

¹¹⁶ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 157-8.

¹¹⁷ *AWL*, 298.

¹¹⁸ *Westmorland Gazette*, 11 Feb. 1937.

¹¹⁹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 323.

¹²⁰ *Westmorland Hearth Tax*, 161.

¹²¹ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT Land Tax (Lonsdale Ward) 1773.

¹²² CAS (Kendal), W/PR 19 /1/1/9.

his fortune in Bengal and became a landowner and notable racehorse trainer.¹²³ The estate at that time consisted of ‘Underley Hall now used as a farmhouse’ with a ‘total acreage of 133 acres’.¹²⁴ In 1825-8, having demolished the old house, Nowell employed George Webster to design in Jacobean style a fine country mansion of its time,¹²⁵ but one which proved much too small for the later Victorian dynasty started by William Thompson in the 1840s and continuing until the 1940s. Paley and Austin were responsible in the 1870s for additions to the Webster house, more than doubling the length of the garden front and adding a 100ft. (31m.) tower as its central feature. The gardens were in keeping with the house, covering over 50 acres. A bridge across the Lune to give access to the nearest railway station at Barbon was built between 1872 and 1875 and cost £10,000.¹²⁶

Alderman William Thompson, who bought the estate in 1840 for £120,000, was born at Grayrigg, went south and made his fortune in the iron trade, and became an alderman for the City of London, serving as Lord Mayor in 1828.¹²⁷ He became MP for Westmorland in 1841, the previous member having inherited his father’s title as Baron Lowther and moved to the House of Lords.¹²⁸ Thompson retained his seat until his death in 1854. His daughter Amelia had married an Irish peer, Thomas Tylour, earl of Bective; their son, another Thomas, inherited the property on the death of his mother in 1864 and the title on the death of his father in 1893, but died the following year.¹²⁹ Once again the heir was a daughter, Caroline, who had married Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck.¹³⁰ The estates she inherited stretched to about 25,000 acres (10,000 ha), including large tracts beyond Kirkby Lonsdale, in Kendal, north Lancashire, and Dent in Yorkshire.¹³¹ Lady Bentinck died childless in 1939, and a distant relative inherited. Doris Crichton was a great-great-granddaughter of William Thompson, through two female lines. She married Philip Pease of Co. Durham, and in 2013

¹²³ *AWL*, 218.

¹²⁴ Underley Estate Title Deeds (in private hands).

¹²⁵ Taylor, *Websters of Kendal*, 115.

¹²⁶ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 466.

¹²⁷ *AWL*, 293.

¹²⁸ *Return: Members of Parliament 1705-1874* Part II p. 389

¹²⁹ *AWL*, 292.

¹³⁰ *AWL*, 292.

¹³¹ Maps of Underley estate, in possession of Davis and Bowring, estate agents, Kirkby Lonsdale.

the Pease family remained in possession.¹³² It is said that Lady Bentinck had made no provision for inheritance tax, and much of the property, including Underley Hall, was broken up and sold. The Underley estate shrank to a little less than 5,000 acres (2,000 ha), the greater part lying within Kirkby Lonsdale township.¹³³ It was shared between two branches of the Pease family, one based at Underley Hall, and one in Co. Durham.

¹³² *AWL*, 292-3, 228.

¹³³ Inf. from Henry Armitage, Davis and Bowring, estate agents, Kirkby Lonsdale (2010)

ECONOMIC HISTORY

The economic history of Kirkby Lonsdale is mainly divided between agriculture and the small but busy market town. Apart from small-scale quarrying, there is little evidence of industrial activity in the rural parts of the township. The underlying geology did not yield minerals, as noted by Leonard Hodgson of Ingleton, called in to inspect the Lonsdale estates in 1843: 'There was no prospect of finding any coal or minerals'.¹³⁴ Both building stone and limestone were quarried in the nineteenth century. A town quarry marked on the Tithe Map, about two miles north of the town, beyond Kearnstwick, was probably for the quarrying of stone to build field walls.¹³⁵ Eleven limekilns have been identified, of which three are in the hamlets of High and Low Biggins, and five, probably from the mid-nineteenth century, at Tearnside, where a quarry is identifiable in a field now grassed over.¹³⁶

Agriculture

Agriculture in the township was from early times centred on single farmsteads, with the exception of the hamlets of Biggins, Tearnside and Kearnstwick. The land is nowhere very high, and the soil is well-drained, coarse and loamy over the underlying rock. It is mainly suitable for stock rearing, though cereals can be grown, particularly near the river. Of the township's total of over 3,000 acres, nearly 1,000 acres of common pasture, mainly in the north and on the western border of the township, were enclosed in 1810.¹³⁷ Alexander Nowell was allotted 230 acres and purchased another 150 to extend Underley. The Lonsdale estate acquired 250 acres, and Deansbiggin 70 acres. Many of the other allotments were very small, measured in roods rather than acres, reflecting the patchwork of smallholdings into which part of the land, particularly that lying south of the Kendal road, was divided. The Tithe Map of 1848 shows these varying between two and seven acres - the Abbot Hall farm, for instance, letting out 25 of its 90 acres in eight small parcels.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ CAS (Kendal), WD/PP/Box 8

¹³⁵ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/231.

¹³⁶ These were part of a commercial venture which is not identified in directories. P. F. Barker, *A Survey of Limekiln Sites in S. Cumbria and N. Lancashire* (Milnthorpe 1997), 69-70, 72-3.

¹³⁷ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/I/48.

¹³⁸ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/231.

Smallholders had other occupations. In 1851 only ten farmers were listed as such, and these mainly tenants of the big estates.¹³⁹ By 1906 the pattern had changed, the number of farmers had increased to 23, although only two of them were owner-occupiers.¹⁴⁰ In 1943 of 26 holdings, seven were held by Biggins in the southern part of the township, and twelve by Underley towards the north and west. At this time, apart from some smallholdings mostly in the Tearnside area, farms were between 100 and 150 acres, with the exception of Underley, Biggins, Deansbiggin and Spittal, all over 250 acres.¹⁴¹ By 2012 only five working farms remained in the township: Wood End, Spittal, Hotridding, Underley and Deansbiggin, the first three covering some 800 acres between them, the last two of 700 acres each.¹⁴² The farmhouses, and many farm buildings, had been converted to dwellings for people working in the towns or retired.

In earlier times there was more cultivation of crops than was the case later. Inquisitions post mortem such as those of Thomas Carus in 1575¹⁴³ and Lady Elizabeth Curwen in 1611,¹⁴⁴ indicate a fairly even division between ploughland and pasture. Seventeenth-century inventories show the main crops to have been oats and barley, hay for winter feed and occasionally wheat.¹⁴⁵ Beans were an unusual but not unknown crop, possibly in gardens rather than in fields: in 1684 John Briscoe of Kearswick had 'beanes growing on the ground', and in 1693 William Briscoe, probably his son, had beans listed with his oats and bigg.¹⁴⁶ It is said that potatoes were introduced to the district in 1730.¹⁴⁷

In 1791 a traveller commented that the Lune Valley 'consists principally of grass farms which is certainly a wise conformity to the climate and the country, for crops of corn must be very uncertain where so much rain falls and where the winter sets in so early. Here is however, some tolerably looking wheat, and the

¹³⁹ Mannex, *Dir. Westmd* (1851), 359.

¹⁴⁰ Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* (1906), 525.

¹⁴¹ TNA, MAF 32/194.

¹⁴² Inf from Henry Armitage, Davis and Bowring, land agents (2010).

¹⁴³ *Rec. Kend.* II, 307.

¹⁴⁴ *Rec. Kend.* II, 319.

¹⁴⁵ Analysis of 40 Kirkby Lonsdale inventories, 1675-1720 in Lancashire Archives (Preston), WRW/L.

¹⁴⁶ Lancashire Archives (Preston), WRW/L: inventory John Briscoe of Kearswick, 1684; inventory William Briscoe of Kearswick 1693.

¹⁴⁷ *Rec. Kend.* III, 283.

oats and barley are luxuriant.¹⁴⁸ In 1848 of the township's 3000 acres only 400 (13 per cent) were dedicated to arable, although some of the meadow was occasionally ploughed.¹⁴⁹ During the Second World War between fifteen and twenty per cent of the land was ploughed but much of this was due to wartime encouragement or instruction: the main crop was oats, with small areas of wheat and barley, and significant amounts of kale, turnips and potatoes.¹⁵⁰ By then the first steps had been taken towards mechanisation: there was one tractor at Spittal and ten farms had electricity to drive an engine.¹⁵¹

In 1799 the Kendal Agricultural Society was formed, covering an area including Kirkby Lonsdale. In 1839 Kirkby Lonsdale set up its own annual show, possibly because at that time the Kendal Show was in financial straits.¹⁵² It was held on the second Tuesday in August, and has so continued ever since. Classes for shorthorn cattle were introduced in 1845, marking the demise of the traditional longhorns. In this as in other respects the Underley estate exercised considerable influence in the nineteenth century. In 1868 Lord Kenlis started a shorthorn herd on which he lavished money - in 1874 he sold 55 animals for nearly £20,000.¹⁵³

Although foot-and-mouth disease was endemic on the farms in early times, Kirkby Lonsdale market was only once affected, a particularly bad outbreak in 1749 leading to its closure.¹⁵⁴

Market Town

A Thursday market was granted to the parson John de Kirkeby in 1227¹⁵⁵ and has been held ever since, although it would seem with varying success. In the sixteenth century John Leland seems to have been more impressed by the church, calling Kirkby Lonsdale 'a very great and famous parroch', while naming Kendal

¹⁴⁸ A. Walker, *Remarks made in a tour to be taken of Westmoreland and Cumberland in the summer of MDCCXCI* (London 1792), 48.

¹⁴⁹ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/231.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, MAF/32/194.

¹⁵¹ TNA, MAF/32/194.

¹⁵² F. W. Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture 1800-1900* (Kendal 1912), 225.

¹⁵³ Garnett, *Westmorland Agriculture*, 128.

¹⁵⁴ *Rec. Kend.* III, 70-1.

¹⁵⁵ *Rec. Kend.* II, 307.

as the 'one good market town' in Westmorland.¹⁵⁶ In the century after Leland wrote, the market seems to have grown in importance, as did also the yearly fair which John de Kirkeby had been granted, to be held on church land on 7-9 September, the eve, feast and morrow of the Nativity of St. Mary.¹⁵⁷ By 1675, Daniel Fleming could describe Kirkby Lonsdale as 'a fair Market Towne....a town of note, whither all ye people round about repair to church and mercate,'¹⁵⁸ and in 1692 Machell wrote that the lord of the manor had all the tolls both of fair and market, and that both fairs and market afforded 'great store of cattle and all sorts of grain in great plenty.'¹⁵⁹

The market centred on Market Street next the church which was probably originally a square.¹⁶⁰ When new market rules were introduced in 1822, with the building of the new Market Square, the detailed directions for the sale of livestock and heavy goods probably reflected the customs already in place. All cattle were to be shown in Fairbank¹⁶¹ and Mitchelgate, sheep and drove pigs in Queen Street, and bulls in the south-west corner of Queen Street; horses in the New Road between the junction of Mitchelgate and the corner of Mr. Roper's stables, and all shows and caravans were to be stationed near the wall of the church yard.¹⁶²

At the same time the market cross was moved from its position at the junction of Market Street and Main Street to a small square between Mill Lane and the churchyard,¹⁶³ which was called the Coal Market¹⁶⁴ or later the Swine Market. With the consent of Lord Lonsdale, lord of the manor, and public subscription,¹⁶⁵ the new Market Square was established at the south end of Main Street, on the gardens of Jackson Hall, a mansion which after the destruction of the old Rose and Crown by fire, became the new inn of that name, changed to the Royal after Queen Adelaide slept there on a visit to the lakes in 1840.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁶ *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (London 1964), V. 45-7.

¹⁵⁷ Below, 'Religious History'.

¹⁵⁸ E. Hughes, *Fleming-Senhouse Papers*, 5.

¹⁵⁹ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 24.

¹⁶⁰ Above, 'Introduction.'

¹⁶¹ *PNW*, I, 43. The name, quoted in 1611, is originally topographical rather than having any reference to the sale of beasts.

¹⁶² From a contemporary poster (copy in possession of Kirkby Lonsdale Civic Society).

¹⁶³ *RCHME, Westmorland*, 138.

¹⁶⁴ OS 1:2500 sheet Westmorland XLVII-8 (surveyed 1859).

¹⁶⁵ Pearson, *Annals*, 173.

¹⁶⁶ see Casterton.

The new market rules of 1822 were both precise and elaborate, though it is not certain that all the goods mentioned were ever actually on sale. 'At the Market Cross called the Little Market might be sold Fish, Coal, Turf and Fuel. In the New Market Place on the South Row of stalls Butchers shall stand with their stalls facing South. In the remaining stalls on the said Row and in the middle Row should be shown Hardware, Linen, Fustian, Cotton, Leather, Hats, Brushes, Hemp and Flax Manufactures, Haberdashery, Hosiery, Books and Wooden Wares. The 3rd Row of Stalls should be set apart for Clothiers and people exposing woollen goods for sale. Against the North Wall should be shown Pots, Glass, Earthenware, Butter, Eggs, Fowls, Fruit and other produce exposed in baskets. On Market Days Potatoes should be placed at the bottom of the New Market Place but on all Fairs in the Horse Market.'¹⁶⁷

The number of fairs had increased from the original grant: Machell adds Maundy Thursday, St. Thomas' day,¹⁶⁸ and a fortnightly fair between an unidentified Thursday and Michaelmas.¹⁶⁹ In the first quarter of the nineteenth century this was reduced to five - Maundy Thursday, Holy Thursday,¹⁷⁰ three weeks after Holy Thursday, 5th October and 21st December.¹⁷¹ By the beginning of the twentieth century Maundy Thursday had been replaced by the second Thursdays in February and March.¹⁷² The auction mart opened in the town in 1903. In 1905 948 head of cattle and 1278 sheep were offered for sale. From 1914 livestock sales were held in a new Auction Mart building at the side of the Market Place,¹⁷³ but about 1970 the building converted was to shops.¹⁷⁴ Stock sales in the town were finally stopped by the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in 2001.¹⁷⁵

In the third quarter of the seventeenth century there was considerable growth in the town. The inventories of those who paid on more than one hearth

¹⁶⁷ Poster in possession of the Kirkby Lonsdale Civic Society.

¹⁶⁸ Probably either 3 or 7 July, the Translation of St. Thomas the Apostle, or the translation of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

¹⁶⁹ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 24.

¹⁷⁰ An old name for Ascension day, four weeks after Maundy Thursday,

¹⁷¹ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 687.

¹⁷² Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* (1906), 511. This author adds 'and every alternate Wednesday' which seems to indicate that the word 'fair' had been downgraded to mean no more than a cattle market.

¹⁷³ The building is dated.

¹⁷⁴ Local information.

¹⁷⁵ Local information.

in 1671, where these are available, indicate industry only on a domestic scale, but there was important commercial growth at this time and into the eighteenth century. There was already one important inn, as Lady Anne Clifford and her retinue, en route from Appleby to Skipton, stayed overnight at Kirkby Lonsdale in 1657, ‘in the Inne there, as I usually doe in my journey betwene Westmerland and Craven.’¹⁷⁶ Soon after this several other inns were recorded, evidence of the town’s position as a trading centre on a busy confluence of routes close to the county boundary. The richest tradesmen in the town were those who kept an inn or a shop, many of them lending out their profits. Miles Hodgson, gent., died in 1683, leaving £350 in bills and bonds, £50 worth of plate, and an inn, which he calls ‘my manor house’ and names in his will as ‘The Red Dragon’, containing sixteen rooms.¹⁷⁷ Richard Preston, another innkeeper, also died a rich man in 1711.¹⁷⁸ His inn had fifteen rooms and can be identified from his initials over a dated fireplace.¹⁷⁹ Mr. John Baynes left in 1696 a house of thirteen rooms, as well as goods in the ‘High Shoppe’ and the ‘Apothecary Shoppe’.¹⁸⁰ Simon Washington’s inventory of 1698 amounted to £862, of which nearly £600 was lent out. His trade is not mentioned, but his house had fourteen rooms, and included a workshop and a ‘selling shoppe.’ Tempest Husband died in 1703, with shop goods worth £339 in two shops,¹⁸¹ and a house with fourteen rooms.¹⁸² Not all ventures were successful. Mr. James Hudson died in 1690, owning an eighteen-roomed house, including some ‘new building’, but with assets totalling only £35. All the above, except Miles Hodgson, were new names in the town since the 1669 hearth tax. Kirkby Lonsdale was clearly seen as a place worthy of commercial investment.

The development in the late eighteenth century of mill-based industries depended on the management of water power. The land outside the town is well-watered by becks finding their way down to the Lune, several of which run

¹⁷⁶ D. J. H. Clifford, *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Stroud 2003), 137-8. With thanks to J. Argles, who drew attention to the quotation.

¹⁷⁷ In the main street, near the old market place, still (2013) trading under the same name.

¹⁷⁸ Lancashire Archives (Preston) WRW/L Richard Preston 1711

¹⁷⁹ Also in Main Street, nearer the new Market Place. The Green Dragon, regrettably renamed in the 1990s the ‘Snooty Fox’.

¹⁸⁰ He had a third shop, ten miles away in Ingleton, Yorkshire.

¹⁸¹ The second one was probably in Bentham, Yorkshire, where a branch of the Husband family lived.

¹⁸² Lancashire Archives (Preston) WRW/L Tempest Husband 1703

underground for part of their course, and are therefore difficult to trace. At the north-east corner of the township, Terry Bank Tarn lies at 150m., and it was long believed that it was this water, over its last few hundred yards down Mill Lane to the river, which provided power for a number of small industries.¹⁸³ In fact, this water re-emerged at Kearnstwick, where at one time it operated a sawmill on the Underley estate, while water for industries in the town was gathered from various springs to the west of the town.¹⁸⁴ The date of its first channelling is not known, but may have been much earlier, as two manorial flour mills are listed in 1611.¹⁸⁵ Early in the eighteenth century Defoe included Kirkby Lonsdale among the 'pleasant, populous and manufacturing towns' of the north-west, although the manufacture he specifies ('chiefly woollen cloths'),¹⁸⁶ would at that time have been a domestic industry.

In 1773 Sir James Lowther owned more than one mill in the town,¹⁸⁷ marking the development of larger industries. In 1801 manufacturing was well-established, the beck turning seven wheels on its way to the river, one of which was for the making of snuff and one serving a fulling mill.¹⁸⁸ The same observer remarked that stocking knitting by hand, once a considerable industry, had greatly declined. Thirty years later two thrashing and grinding mills, a wool carding mill, and two tanneries, among others, were cited as being turned by the same water power.¹⁸⁹ The town's corn mill was at the bottom of the hill on the river bank. A carpet and blanket factory supported a number of workers who wove coarse linen cloth, ginghams and calicoes. From 1777 the clerk keeping the parish register had begun to identify trades, particularly of bridegrooms - mason, apothecary, cordwainer, weaver in that year. In 1804 are named an ostler, brazier, mason, roper, gardener, butcher, watchmaker, chaise driver, shopkeeper, innkeeper, postmaster, joiner, tailor, grocer, two manufacturers, three tanners, four shoemakers and four weavers. The list is from the marriage register and therefore

¹⁸³ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.* (1829) p. 686

¹⁸⁴ OS 1:2,00 Westmorland sheet XLVII-3 (1911 ed.). Inf. M. Kingsbury and J. Thompson.

¹⁸⁵ *Rec. Kend.* I, 319.

¹⁸⁶ D. Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London 1983), III, 149.

¹⁸⁷ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT Land Tax (Kirkby Lonsdale). 1773. The document does not say how many.

¹⁸⁸ Pearson, *Annals*, 67.

¹⁸⁹ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 686.

weighted towards the younger end of the population. Nevertheless, it indicates a busy little town of trades and tradesmen - labourers hardly feature.¹⁹⁰

Many of the manufacturing trades had declined by the mid nineteenth century, when only a printing works, a mill and a tannery were mentioned as water-powered.¹⁹¹ Linen textile manufacture survived in 1829 but had ceased by 1851.¹⁹² Other trades which disappeared between 1829 and 1851 included chairmakers, hatters, maltsters, and fellmongers. By the beginning of the twentieth century manufacturing had vanished from the town except for two wheelwrights, a smithy and a saddler. They had been replaced by the building and decorating trades which service house owners, enough retail shops to completely serve the needs of the population, and the new transport trades - cycle shops and motor engineers.¹⁹³

The economy of the town has been mainly based on tourism since the widespread development of motor transport in the mid-twentieth century. In 1982, the old fairs long dead, but the original date still a memory, a Victorian Fair was set up on the first weekend in September, which attracted up to 20,000 visitors and raised large sums of money for charity,¹⁹⁴ until, enthusiasm waning, it died a natural death in 2007, to be replaced in 2010 by a Christmas Fair.¹⁹⁵

Many of the older houses in the town, picturesque but congested, became second homes or holiday lettings. By the early twenty-first century, many shops catered for hill-walking and other outdoor pursuits, and for holiday-makers. There were numerous cafes and restaurants, probably more than the town could support, since they tended to change hands very frequently. In 2012, six of the old licensed houses continued to trade.¹⁹⁶

The establishment of Booths, a large supermarket at the top of New Road, in 2000, resulted in the closure of most food shops in the town, though an

¹⁹⁰ CAS (Kendal), W/PR191/1/9.

¹⁹¹ Mannex, *Dir. Westmd* (1851), 348.

¹⁹² Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.* (1829), 694-5; Mannex, *Dir. Westmd* (1851), 358-9.

¹⁹³ Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* (1906), 524-6.

¹⁹⁴ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 276-7.

¹⁹⁵ Inf. Janet Atkins.

¹⁹⁶ The Red Dragon and Snooty Fox mentioned earlier, the Royal, the Kings Arms, the Sun and the Orange Tree (originally called the Fleece; renamed in 1996 after the famous Twickenham pub to appeal to Rugby enthusiasts).

old-fashioned butcher, a specialist cheese shop, and a home bakery, survived in 2013.

SOCIAL HISTORY

The social character of Kirkby Lonsdale must have been influenced from an early period by the presence of a very large church and the clergy who were needed to serve the town and its eight outlying townships. The first recorded mention of a school is in the later sixteenth century but its presence in a building close to the church suggests a much earlier foundation.¹⁹⁷ This small town or large village had therefore a greater proportion of educated inhabitants than most places of its size. On the other hand, owing to St. Mary's York being the landowner, there could be no important lay inhabitants until after the Reformation, and thereafter until the nineteenth century the larger landowners were absentees or lived on their estates outside the town. Although the 'Kings Arms' near the church, which still has many sixteenth-century features,¹⁹⁸ was probably built by Thomas Carus when he acquired the manor in 1558, his duties as a serjeant-at-law and subsequently judge of the queen's bench make it extremely unlikely that he ever lived there.¹⁹⁹ His grand-daughter, Lady Elizabeth Curwen, may have done so briefly between the death of her husband, Sir Nicholas Curwen of Whitehaven, in 1605, and her own death in 1611. By 1638 it would seem that the building was already an inn, according to the rhymes of 'drunken Barnaby'.²⁰⁰ At that time the other important houses in the township were outside the town - Sir Thomas Preston at Biggins and Joseph Booth the lawyer at Deansbiggin. Henry Wilson who owned Underley in the seventeenth century and did much for the school and the church, was based at Blackwell Hall in London, where he made his fortune.²⁰¹ The Lowthers were represented by an agent.²⁰² The descendants of William Thompson at Underley, between 1854 and 1943, seem to have been the first to live locally and to have a strong personal interest in, and influence on, the town.

¹⁹⁷ See under 'Schools'.

¹⁹⁸ W. H. Chippindall, 'The Hall in Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW2*, xxx (1930), 125-7. Since he described it, the original building has been divided into three. This was the inn mentioned by Lady Anne Clifford (see 'Economic History').

¹⁹⁹ J. H. Baker, 'Thomas Carus (c.1510-1571)', *ODNB*.

²⁰⁰ Chippindall, 'Hall in Kirkby Lonsdale', quotes 'Thence to Lonsdale where I view'd/ An Hall, which like a Tavern Shewed'.

²⁰¹ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 22-3.

²⁰² Above, 'Landownership'.

In the eighteenth century the Lowthers, as lords of the manor, owned the market rights and considerable land. It was worth their while to keep an agent in the town.²⁰³ Later the most powerful influence, particularly in the later years of the nineteenth century until the Second World War, was that of the Underley estate and its owners, as landlords of considerable property, as employers (in their heyday just before the First World War they were said to have 150 indoor and outdoor servants on the estate),²⁰⁴ and as customers for local services. Alderman William Thompson and his descendants, particularly his grand-daughter and her husband, Lord and Lady Cavendish-Bentinck, were almost synonymous with Kirkby Lonsdale, which they ruled, since they were landlords to a very large proportion of the town,²⁰⁵ with the exception of the doctors, lawyers, and a few other middle-class inhabitants, as kindly, often generous, but absolute, monarchs,²⁰⁶ a rule which came to an end in 1941 with the death of Lady Cavendish-Bentinck and the break-up of the estate.

Kirkby Lonsdale, as the centre of a sparsely populated area, has always provided the services, economic and social, of a much larger town. The expansion of the town in the forty years after 1970 led old inhabitants to regret the days when, in the small and close-knit community with many related families, everyone knew everyone else by name. To newcomers, however, it remained a close-knit and friendly town, with a distinct life of its own which carried on under the crowded surface presented by thousands of tourists. Many of the most influential inhabitants were born there, some of them the product of long-standing families. Between 1902 and 1988, with a gap of only seven years in the 1920s, the doctor's practice was in the hands of three generations of the Mathews family.²⁰⁷ The first Pearson, a surgeon, came to the town from Longmarton in 1780,²⁰⁸ and his son established a firm of solicitors in 1820 which continued into the twenty-first century, although there was no longer a Pearson in it after Alexander Pearson's

²⁰³ Above, 'Landownership'

²⁰⁴ J. D. Battle, ed. *Underley Hall: A History of the House and Occupants* ([Kirkby Lonsdale], n.d. [1965?]) [Copy in Kendal Public Library] This may be an over-estimate, but the 1891 census shows 40 indoor servants waiting on two family members.

²⁰⁵ It is not clear when acquisition of properties in the town began, but the Inland Revenue Valuation Record of 1910 lists over 500 separate properties, a large proportion of them within the town: CAS (Kendal), WT/DV/2/52

²⁰⁶ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 261-4.

²⁰⁷ Inf. Dr. G. Mathews.

²⁰⁸ Pearson, *Annals*, 210.

death in 1954.²⁰⁹ The Wilman family appear as plumbers and glaziers in the census of 1851; soon afterwards they acquired the Green Dragon, and then the Royal Hotel, which they kept until 1957.²¹⁰ The family of Jonty Wilson, for many years the town blacksmith, has a family tradition that goes back to Cromwell's day.²¹¹

Since the eighteenth century Kirkby Lonsdale has not lacked for social amenities. In 1791 it was called 'a pretty town and inhabited by genteel people'.²¹² In 1829 eight inns were listed: the Fleece, Green Dragon, Red Dragon, Kings Arms, Sun, Talbot, Wheatsheaf, Rose and Crown, the last renamed the Royal after Queen Adelaide's visit in 1840. Two of them, the Green Dragon and Rose and Crown, were posting houses.²¹³ Old posters show that travelling theatrical companies gave performances in the assembly rooms behind the Green Dragon. A Savings Bank was set up in 1818.²¹⁴ In 1854 the 'Market House' was erected at the corner of Market Street and Main Street, financed by a joint stock company.²¹⁵ It held a Mechanics' Institute, a circulating and reference library, and a hall used for concerts and other entertainments, and for the monthly county court. Part of the ground floor was also used for the weekly corn market.²¹⁶

The growing social needs of the town outgrew this building, although it continued in some form until 1960, when it went into liquidation, and the ground floor was taken over by shops, the upper floor becoming two flats. In 1892 the Rev. John Llewellyn Davies²¹⁷ had circulated a statement outlining the need for 'Public Rooms' in Kirkby Lonsdale. He specified a parish room for classes, a gymnasium for the young men, a library and reading room, and possibly a hall for lectures and concerts. He had consulted Lord Bective, who would provide land for such a venture, and he himself headed the list of donations with £500. The resulting Institute opened in 1895 in the New Road with no debt, a handsome

²⁰⁹ Local inf.

²¹⁰ A. Pearson, D. Kyle, A. Phillips and M. Gresson, *Kirkby Lonsdale and Lunsdale Today* (London, 1996) 296-300.

²¹¹ Inf. Audrey Phillips, née Wilson.

²¹² Walker, *Remarks in a Tour of Westmoreland and Cumberland*, 50.

²¹³ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.* (1829), 694.

²¹⁴ Mannex, *Dir. Westm.* (1851), 350.

²¹⁵ CAS (Kendal), WD/PP, box 6, minute book 1854-1961.

²¹⁶ Kelly *Dir. Cumb. & Westm. 1873*, 928.

²¹⁷ See 'Religion'.

building on two floors, designed by Vernon Crompton,²¹⁸ which continued to be well used by the town in the twenty-first century.

The first lending library in Kirkby Lonsdale was in the early seventeenth century, when Henry Wilson of Underley ‘made a small library in the Church of Kirkby, and gave several books.’²¹⁹ What happened to these is not known; some may have lasted long enough to be absorbed into the book club set up in 1794, and possessing by 1829 some 500 titles, kept at the house of the printer, Arthur Foster, whose 60 subscribers paid 14s. per year.²²⁰ This book club was still active in 1851,²²¹ and was perhaps absorbed into the Mechanics’ Institute which then, in common with others of the movement, outlived its usefulness and probably closed in the 1890s.²²² Davies’ plans for the Kirkby Lonsdale Village Institute in 1892 included an ‘adequate and creditable’ library, and the building when complete had both a library and reading room. Exactly how it was organised in its first few years is not clear, but in 1903 the local council adopted the Libraries Act²²³ and took over the responsibility. It was probably at that point moved to the large house at 10, Beckhead, which in 1894 had been taken over for the new council offices,²²⁴ and where it remained for nearly a century, on the first floor and difficult of access for the less able part of the population. In 1980 the old Sandemanian chapel, which had had various educational uses,²²⁵ was taken on a long lease by Cumbria County Council from the district council, and the library was rehoused once again.²²⁶

The social groups in the town at the beginning of the twentieth century included the Agricultural Society and sports clubs, Free Gardeners’, Druids and Oddfellows’ Lodges, and the temperance groups - Rechabites, Band of Hope, Church of England Temperance Society.²²⁷

The Rugby Club was founded in 1877, the bowling club in 1888, both with the help of the Underley Estate. The Cricket Club was well-established by

²¹⁸ CAS (Kendal), WPR 19/3/2/1.

²¹⁹ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 23.

²²⁰ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.* (1829), 688.

²²¹ Mannex, *Dir. Westm.* (1851), 350.

²²² J. Burgess, *Libraries of Cumbria* (Carlisle 1989), 26

²²³ CAS (Kendal), WPC/7/102A Free Public Library Rules 1903

²²⁴ Kelly *Dir. Westm.* (1894), 90.

²²⁵ See ‘Education’

²²⁶ Local inf.

²²⁷ Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* (1906), 520-1.

1852, but it did not acquire the ground on Lunefield Park, near the Devil's Bridge, until the beginning of the twentieth century.²²⁸ In 1906 a nine-hole golf course was laid out at Woodend Farm, Biggins, approached from the Whittington Road. In 1938 the lease was terminated, and the club moved to another site on the Whittington Road, outside the township boundary. In 1954 it moved to Casterton and in 1991 to Barbon.²²⁹

In 1927 the Miss Wearings of Eavesleigh donated a piece of land in the town, between Tram Lane and the New Road, for a children's playfield, which remains a grassy space, but with amenities such as a large cycling area added more recently.²³⁰

The Gardening Association, with over 300 members in 1996, was started in 1841 as the Lunesdale Floral and Horticultural Association.²³¹ The Kirkby Lonsdale Band was founded in 1815 as the Brotherly Band and has continued, it is believed, ever since, although details have been lost for parts of the nineteenth century; since 1988 it has organised an annual contest held in the Market Square on the third Saturday in June, drawing brass bands from a wide area.²³² The earliest Women's Institute in Westmorland was set up by Lady Bentinck in 1917 at Kearsywick.²³³ Meetings were held in a strangely ecclesiastical building, now a dwelling, which was built as a memorial to the Earl of Bective who died in 1893.²³⁴ The Women's Institute closed in 1997 when membership had dwindled to thirteen, those who wished to continue as members migrating to Casterton.

In the 1960s social groups in the town were listed as: Chess Club, Gardening Association, Bell-ringers, Royal Observer Corps, Young Farmers, Camera Club, Mothers' Union, Metropolitan Club, Open Youth Club, Over Sixties, Fellowship, Badminton, Young Wives, Young Communicants' Guild, Women's Institute and Girl Guides.²³⁵

²²⁸ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 395-6.

²²⁹ J. Parsons (ed.), *Kirkby Lonsdale Golf Club 1906-2006 The Centenary Book* (Kirkby Lonsdale Golf Club 2006), 18, 27

²³⁰ Inf. Audrey Phillips

²³¹ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 411-13.

²³² Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 389.

²³³ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 419.

²³⁴ Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* (1906), 517.

²³⁵ Kendal Public Library *Kirkby Lonsdale parish leaflet* Jan. 1967.

The Kirkby Lonsdale Civic Society was founded in 1972. It spearheaded objections to the District Council's proposal, subsequently withdrawn, to establish a country park at the Devil's Bridge.²³⁶ In 2012 a plaque was set on a house in Queen's Square to celebrate the Society's foundation, which had arisen from a group of residents objecting to proposed development of that area.

Education

Edward Godsolve of Whittington in Lancashire,²³⁷ some time before 1580, promised £100 for the founding of a free school in Kirkby Lonsdale, provided that a similar sum could be raised in the township.²³⁸ In 1581 the churchwardens and 24 principal inhabitants of the whole parish were ordered to appear before the court of Edwin Sandys, archbishop of York, to report progress. The vicar and Edward Middleton of Middleton, whose names appear at the head of the list, were to ensure that all parishioners contributed, and if they refused their names were to be forwarded to the ecclesiastical court at York.²³⁹

This was not the first school in the town. In his will of 1550 William Helme, priest, left his copyhold lands and £3 6s. 8d. for his 'scole at Kyrkby'.²⁴⁰ His successor as schoolmaster, William Burrow of Biggins, died in 1591, and in that year the committee of Kirkby Lonsdale residents petitioned the Queen for a charter for a free grammar school.²⁴¹ As well as some difficulty in raising the sum needed, it would seem that they waited for the earlier school to be abandoned. The fact that the money raised was invested specifically for a schoolmaster's salary seems to show that they took over an existing school building, which only 30 years later. 'being but a mean thatched house', needed total renewal.²⁴²

The charter for the Queen Elizabeth School was granted to a committee of 24 feoffees.²⁴³ John Willinson, vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale from 1559 to 1607,

²³⁶ Westmorland County Council, *Devils Bridge Kirkby Lonsdale: A Plan for a Country Park* (1972)

²³⁷ There was a family of this name in Whittington, but no Edward is mentioned in the parish register.

²³⁸ CAS (Kendal), WDS/1/6

²³⁹ Borthwick Institute, York, Ecclesiastical Commission Court Book 1580-1 ff. 90, 98, 106

²⁴⁰ Lancashire Archives(Preston) WRW/L Will of William Helme 1550. The will is much damaged, but can be seen to distinguish between the 'mayntenance of the scole' (probably the testator's copyhold) and the 'upholding of the same Scole' for which he leaves £3 6s. 8d. The latter may be for the master's remuneration.

²⁴¹ CAS (Kendal), WDS1/6.

²⁴² Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 22.

²⁴³ CAS (Kendal), WDS1/7.

headed the list. Apart from Christopher Bainbridge, of Hawkin Hall in Middleton, a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, but also a considerable landowner, no other feoffees were churchmen. It is not clear exactly how the twenty-four were chosen, but all seem to have been men of standing, drawn from all the townships in Kirkby Lonsdale parish. Chief among them and the only one to be designated esquire, was Edward Middleton of Middleton Hall. In the acquittance of 1582,²⁴⁴ which passed the original gift of £100 to Henry Wilson for the use of the proposed school in perpetuity, they refer to themselves as having been appointed, but nothing is known of the process or whether it was a peaceful one. However achieved, the charter was firmly established, the school being largely organised under its terms until 1882.

The original school, rebuilt by Henry Wilson of Underley, whose datestone gives him as 'Fundator 1628',²⁴⁵ was on land given by Dame Elizabeth Curwen, the lady of the manor, who also donated land for its upkeep just outside the town, near Biggins.²⁴⁶ The turnover of teachers at first was rapid: seven are listed between 1628 and 1655.²⁴⁷ Staffing was generous by the standards of the time. Although not specified in the letters patent, there was from an early date a second master, or usher, who taught in the second ground-floor room,²⁴⁸ allowing a division between older and younger pupils. In 1724 Mr John Pooley was mentioned as 'Head Schoolmaster.'²⁴⁹ The usher was typically a young man waiting to go to university, but one of them, Thomas Johnson, who took holy orders during his tenure, was in post at least from 1727 until his death in 1750.²⁵⁰ The school was well provided in other ways: a note of 1661 records a generous £3 12s. spent on books.²⁵¹

Over time the building deteriorated both in itself and in its position. It was surrounded by tanpits and skinyards, a bonemill and a warehouse for bones,

²⁴⁴ CAS (Kendal), WDS 1/6.

²⁴⁵ This was moved to the first building erected for the new school, where it remains.

²⁴⁶ N & B, I, 246.

²⁴⁷ P. J. Wallis, 'Westmorland Schools about 1676: Christopher Wase's Survey', *CW*2, lxvii (1967), 168-85.

²⁴⁸ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 22.

²⁴⁹ CAS (Kendal), WPR/19/1/1/9

²⁵⁰ CAS (Kendal), WPR 19/1/1/9

²⁵¹ CAS (Kendal), WD/PP, Box 7.

and roadway through which ran an open sewer.²⁵² So it was described in the early nineteenth century, at which time the building itself had barely altered since Henry Wilson described it to Thomas Machell in 1692.²⁵³

The new site chosen was the land at Biggins Lane originally donated by Dame Elizabeth Curwen, and the first building was erected there in 1848, designed for both day boys and boarders. Throughout the nineteenth century the number of pupils rarely rose above twenty, taught by a single master. The Endowed Schools Act of 1869 led to new schemes of management countrywide, one of which was implemented at Kirkby Lonsdale in 1882.²⁵⁴ This aimed to broaden the recruitment of the governing body, to bring the curriculum up to date,²⁵⁵ to impose a fairer system of fees and scholarships, and to raise the standard of teaching. Unfortunately these admirable demands were not backed by any system of inspection. However, by degrees and under a series of increasingly efficient head masters, the tide turned.

A photograph taken in the 1890s shows only 26 boys,²⁵⁶ but by 1930 there were 142 pupils, about equal numbers of boys and girls, 54 boarders and 88 day students.²⁵⁷ This rise meant that diversity was guaranteed by the employment of assistant teachers, and a list of salaries from 1921 shows six women and two men on the staff.²⁵⁸ Through the twentieth century, in spite of two world wars, the second of which brought 137 evacuee girls and eight teachers from South Shields with only a day's notice, the school continued its upward trend. An analysis from 1944 shows that the pupils included 60 from the Kirkby Lonsdale locality, 50 from Sedbergh, 50 from the Bentham and Ingleton area of Yorkshire, 56 boarders from a wide variety of counties, and the last eleven South Shields evacuees.

In 1946 it was proposed to restructure Kirkby Lonsdale education, to shrink the Grammar School to 300 who would have passed the 11-plus exam.,

²⁵² Rev. James Harrison, Vicar of Barbon 1872-127, educated at Queen Elizabeth School, Kirkby Lonsdale, contributed 'More School History' to the School Magazine, Christmas 1919. Quoted in P. W. Randell *400 Years a School* (Cumbria C.C., 1991), 15

²⁵³ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 22.

²⁵⁴ CAS (Kendal), WDS1/30: Scheme for the Administration of Kirkby Lonsdale Grammar School 1882-1910

²⁵⁵ To comprise reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, English grammar, composition and literature, mathematics, Latin, French, natural science, drill, vocal music. Greek was an optional extra.

²⁵⁶ P. W. Randell *400 Years a School* (Cumbria C.C., 1991), 21.

²⁵⁷ CAS (Kendal), WDS 1/34: minutes of Governors' Meetings.

²⁵⁸ CAS (Kendal), WDS 1/38: minutes of Governors' Meetings.

and build a Secondary Modern School for 150 children aged 11 to 14, including those from local villages as well as the town. This plan was not implemented, and was overtaken by later developments.²⁵⁹ The school became comprehensive in 1985, and lost its boarding element. By the 1990s there were 600 pupils, and in 2011 there were some 1,370 names on roll.²⁶⁰

In the mid-nineteenth century there were alternatives to the Queen Elizabeth School. The Independent minister conducted a school at the chapel; three were probably small ‘dame schools’, though one was conducted by a man; and the Misses Ann and Ellen Johnson kept a ‘Ladies’ Boarding School’ in the Market Place.²⁶¹

A more comprehensive establishment, for the education of the children of poor parents, known as a subscription school, was opened in 1856 by a committee of Kirkby Lonsdale residents. The pupils paid a penny a week for tuition and a penny a week for coal.²⁶² Within twelve months 145 children were attending, but the accommodation in part of the old workhouse was overcrowded and unhealthy. A public meeting in March 1857 had decided that ‘National Schools in Connection with the C. of E.’²⁶³ should be erected and the two organisations combined to plan a National School a short distance outside the town, on the old Kendal Road, designed for 100 boys, 100 girls, and 50 infants under the age of seven. It opened in 1858 with 70 boys and 45 girls.²⁶⁴ The head teacher was Jonas Gill until his death in 1880²⁶⁵, when he was succeeded by John Taylforth, who had himself been through the school as pupil and pupil-teacher, and who remained in post until 1918.²⁶⁶ In 1894 the school was extended by the building of another storey, a new classroom and cloakrooms, and central heating. It now had accommodation for 140 boys, 140 girls and 120 infants, although it did not

²⁵⁹ CAS (Kendal), WC/E, box 10, *Development Plan for Primary and Secondary Education : County of Westmorland*

²⁶⁰ Local information

²⁶¹ Mannex, *Dir. Westmd* (1851), 358.

²⁶² CAS (Kendal), WDS 155/17.

²⁶³ CAS (Kendal), WDS 155/18: National Schools Minute Book

²⁶⁴ CAS (Kendal), WDS 155/18.

²⁶⁵ Memorial inscription in Kirkby Lonsdale churchyard ‘25 years schoolmaster of this parish’.

²⁶⁶ G. Pepperell, A. Phillips, J. Sparrow-Niang, *Kirkby Lonsdale National School & St Mary’s Church of England Primary School* (Kirkby Lonsdale, 2008), 22. His children and grandchildren were connected with the school as pupils, teachers and governors until 1981.

reach those numbers,²⁶⁷ and was served by a staff of two men and five women with five pupil teachers.²⁶⁸ During the Second World War the number of local children remained stable at about 140, but numbers rose and fell with the inclusion of evacuees from the Newcastle area, and later from Barrow-in-Furness.²⁶⁹

In spite of alterations and additions the buildings became increasingly dated and unsatisfactory. An attempt to raise money for a new school in the 1960s was unsuccessful²⁷⁰ and it was not until 1986 that a new school, St. Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School was built on a site nearer the town, next to the Queen Elizabeth School. By that time it served children from all the Kirkby Lonsdale townships, as the local schools closed,²⁷¹ except those from Firbank, Killington, and the northern half of Middleton, who moved to Sedbergh.

By the end of the nineteenth century the dame schools had vanished. In 1906 there was, however, a Pupil Teachers' Centre at the Institute, though it is not clear whether this was authorised as part of the state system, or was a private venture.²⁷² In 1891, the building in New Road which had been the Sandemanian chapel and would later house the public library,²⁷³ was home to an interesting experiment. Alfred Harris, a banker from Bradford, had settled in the town at Lunefield, which he rebuilt about 1870 to plans by Alfred Waterhouse.²⁷⁴ He was a rich man and took a particular interest in art and architecture. His initials occur on several buildings in the town, all of which are in a Gothic style. His chief contribution to the life of Kirkby Lonsdale was the establishment of the school of handicrafts with places for 60 pupils.²⁷⁵ The prospectus announced "The aim of the classes is to provide instruction in Drawing in its application to various handicrafts.....In connection with the Board of Education and the County

²⁶⁷ Kelly, *Dir. Westmd* (1910) p. 91

²⁶⁸ CAS (Kendal), WDS 155/18.

²⁶⁹ Pepperell *et al*, *Kirkby Lonsdale National School*, 73.

²⁷⁰ Pepperell *et al*, *Kirkby Lonsdale National School*, 86

²⁷¹ Middleton and Mansergh closed 1952, Casterton 1972, Lupton 1980, Barbon 1982, and Whittington in Lancashire, which was also included, in 1973.

²⁷² Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* (1906), 524.

²⁷³ *Westmorland Gazette*, 1 Jan. 1982.

²⁷⁴ Dalziel, *Kirkby Lonsdale and District*, 42.

²⁷⁵ CAS (Kendal), WDSO 135/1/1.

Council of Westmorland.²⁷⁶ Classes were held two or three times a week. By January 1891 43 students had been enrolled, the majority boys aged between fourteen and sixteen. The students paid a penny or two pence per session. The first subjects covered were freehand, model drawing, and design, but by 1894 prizes were being awarded for painting, drawing, design, pottery, metalwork, photography, woodcarving and leatherwork.²⁷⁷ Alfred Harris was chairman only until 1899, leaving the area in 1900 and dying soon after, the classes continuing under the chairmanship of Dr. Paget-Tomlinson.²⁷⁸ The scheme flourished - by 1907 75 students were enrolled, and although at starting the age of entry was thirteen, Saturday morning classes for children of ten to thirteen were added. With the advent of war, the curriculum widened to include subjects such as first aid. A later wartime poster advertises poultry industry, wartime cookery and food production, cheesemaking and gardening.²⁷⁹ After the First World War enthusiasm and support declined, although the 'Art Class Room' was improved in 1938 at a cost of £200.²⁸⁰ There was still a dressmaking class in the winter of 1946-7, but thereafter the movement seems to have dwindled to nothing, and without a precise date of closure the movement seems to have dwindled to nothing, presumably as improved transport made the better facilities of Kendal readily available.²⁸¹

Another educational venture in the town was at Cressbrook, the house on the Kearsrick Road which had belonged to the Gregg family (see Hutton Roof). In 1913 a boys' preparatory school was established there by Felix Needham Dowson, one of its masters for a short time being the Rev. Theodore Bayley Hardy²⁸². When Mr. Dowson retired in 1949 the school under David Donald enlarged from 30 pupils to 110, but in time even this was too small to be viable, and in 1976 the board of governors decided to close it.²⁸³

Underley Hall passed through various hands after the estate was broken up following the death of Lady Bentinck in 1941. From 1939 to 1940 it had been

²⁷⁶ CAS (Kendal), WDSO/135/1: prospectus 1903-4.

²⁷⁷ CAS (Kendal), WDSO/135/2.

²⁷⁸ CAS (Kendal), WDSO 135/1/1.

²⁷⁹ CAS (Kendal), WDSO/135/33

²⁸⁰ Kelly *Dir. Westmd* (1938), 82.

²⁸¹ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 388.

²⁸² He was a decorated soldier: V.C., D.S.O., M.C. See D. Raw *'It's only me'* (Gatebeck 1988).

²⁸³ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 383-5.

a reception centre for children evacuated from the north-east. A boys' preparatory school, Hordle House from Hampshire, then rented it for the rest of the war. A girls' school, Oakfield, acquired the property and was there until 1959.²⁸⁴ In 1960 it became a junior seminary²⁸⁵ and in 1976 was bought by Acorn Care and Education for use as a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In 1990 the Garden School was established in another building on the same site, for children with physical problems added to their other difficulties, the combined establishments being rechristened the Hall School.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ H. A. L. Rice, *Kirkeby Lonsdale and its Neighbourhood* (Kendal n.d.), 16.

²⁸⁵ See 'Religious History'

²⁸⁶ Local information.

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

The place-name 'Kirkby' ('settlement with a church') probably indicates that Kirkby Lonsdale was a religious site before the tenth century.²⁸⁷

Of the ancient parish's eight outlying townships, it appears that Barbon, and possibly Hutton Roof, had chapels by the thirteenth century. Parts of the present Killington Chapel date to the fourteenth century: it was then probably a private chapel to Killington Hall as there was also a public chapel in the very north of the township, shared with Firbank, and identified by field names; nothing remains and nothing is recorded of it until 1585 but it may have been much older. There was a chapel in Middleton Hall which may have dated to the fourteenth century and seems to have been used by the township. Casterton had the chapel of St. Columba which may have dated to the twelfth century, but it appertained to the manor, not the parish; the church was built in 1833. Mansergh chapel dates from 1726, and Lupton from 1858.²⁸⁸

In the 1090s Ivo de Taillebos gave the church of Kirkby Lonsdale and its land to the monks of St. Mary's at York.²⁸⁹ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the living was held by several generations of the de Kirkby family, hereditary parsons of the parish.²⁹⁰ Ketel de Kirkby and Adam his son are mentioned towards the end of the twelfth century. John de Kirkby, son of Adam and grandson of Ketel, was the last in this line.²⁹¹ After the fourth Lateran Council of 1215 the canon law against married clergy was enforced more strictly, and John de Kirkby may have bowed to church rules, remained unmarried, and perhaps ended his days in St. Mary's, York.²⁹²

It is not known exactly when the church was appropriated to St. Mary's Abbey, York, and a vicarage created and endowed, but this had occurred before 1291 when the vicarage was valued at £16 annually, the rectory at £86 13s. 4d.²⁹³ The long Scottish wars began almost immediately, and whether owing to those

²⁸⁷ *PNW*, I, 42.

²⁸⁸ These chapels will be treated under the articles for each of the townships named.

²⁸⁹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 306.

²⁹⁰ *Rec. Kend.* II, 305.

²⁹¹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 308.

²⁹² Alice the daughter of John de Kirkby who married Richard Coupland of Deansbiggin (see manor of Deansbiggin) was probably the daughter of another John, of Kirkby Ireleth.

²⁹³ *Rec. Kend.* II, 309.

depredations or not, in a new taxation of 1318 the Vicarage was valued at only £3 6s. 8d.²⁹⁴

In 1535 Thomas Dobson was the incumbent. His income, from house, glebe and tithes, was £20 15s. 2d. to which was added £4 13s.4d. from the chantry of St. Leonard. Ten years later a further survey reported an equivalent sum from the chantry of William Middleton.²⁹⁵ In 1553, Queen Mary gave the advowson to Trinity College Cambridge.²⁹⁶

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the income of the parish without its outlying townships was almost £50 annually, made up from the glebe £16 8s., the Easter dues £19 15s. 7d. and various small sources. There was also £8 annual income from near Kilkenny in Ireland, land given to the church by a member of the Redman family.²⁹⁷ At this time two Catholic families drew a considerable income from the parish. Hugh Lord Clifford owned Kirkby Lonsdale tithes to the value of £150,²⁹⁸ and Winifred, widow of Sir Thomas Strickland of Sizergh, drew a £200 annuity from the rectory.²⁹⁹

Supervision of churches such as Kirkby Lonsdale, remote from their superiors, was intermittent. Archbishop John le Romayne of York intended to pay a pastoral visit in 1294, but this may not have got past the planning stage. Archbishop Alexander Nevill possibly visited in 1377.³⁰⁰ Archbishop John Kempe was said to have visited in September 1428, and again in 1441, but probably only the second of these visits actually took place.³⁰¹ There were further visitations in 1578, 1591, 1595, 1633, 1664, and 1684, mainly dealing with marital transgressions.³⁰²

No complete list of pre-Reformation incumbents has survived. In 1365 Richard de Wisbeche is named.³⁰³ In 1392 Nicholas de Stayngreve was vicar, when he and others alienated lands in Kirkby Lonsdale to St. Mary's Abbey.³⁰⁴ In

²⁹⁴ *Rec. Kend.* II, 310.

²⁹⁵ *Rec. Kend.* III, 279.

²⁹⁶ C. M. L. Bouch, *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties* (Kendal, 1948), 195.

²⁹⁷ L. A. S. Butler (ed.), *The Cumbria Parishes 1714-1725 from Bishop Gastrell's Notitia* (Kendal 1998), 132.

²⁹⁸ *Rec. Kend.* III, 47.

²⁹⁹ *Rec. Kend.* III, 48.

³⁰⁰ Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 140-1.

³⁰¹ Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 150-1.

³⁰² Borthwick Institute York. Ref. CB.

³⁰³ See Introduction

³⁰⁴ *Rec. Kend.* III, 278.

1441 John Bryan, who had been presented to the vicarage three years earlier, was given a two-year permission to celebrate private masses in order to earn money to restore his vicarage which had been destroyed by fire.³⁰⁵ It is known that in 1523 there was a parish priest, a curate, and four chaplains.³⁰⁶ A list from 1548 names a vicar, Adam Shepherd, and ten minor clergy, of whom one was the schoolmaster and two were chantry priests.³⁰⁷ It has been surmised from the discovery of large dressed stones, possibly foundation stones, underground to the north side of the churchyard, that all of them may have lived together in a clergy house.³⁰⁸

Although the dedication of the church to St. Mary has only been recorded since the later eighteenth century,³⁰⁹ and Machell refers to a probable dedication to St. James, 'as is supposed from the Rushbearing used on that day',³¹⁰ a medieval dedication to St. Mary is probable. The early connection with St. Mary's Abbey, York, and the grant of the yearly fair in 1227 to be held at the feast of the nativity of St. Mary point towards this, as does the discovery during the 1866 restoration of a broken alabaster carving representing the Assumption of the Virgin, thought to have belonged to one of the three altars then in the church, under the floor of the north aisle.³¹¹

The church is an imposing building dating from 1100, standing on a cliff above the river and dominating the valley. It has been described as perhaps the most important, architecturally, in Westmorland,³¹² but many alterations and additions have made it very difficult to interpret coherently.³¹³

The first building stage is responsible for the respond and the three great pillars of the north arcade, the most striking feature of the interior. All different, they strongly resemble those in Durham Cathedral, so that it has been conjectured that the Durham masons were at work here. They were completed by 1115, and suggest an intention to build a church considerably larger than the present one.³¹⁴

³⁰⁵ *Rec. Kend.* III, 278.

³⁰⁶ Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 155. No information has been found about their various responsibilities.

³⁰⁷ R. P. Brown 'The Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW2*, xxix (1929), 166-192.

³⁰⁸ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 102-3.

³⁰⁹ N & B I, 244.

³¹⁰ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 19. The phrasing seems to indicate that his informants were uncertain.

³¹¹ Now (2013) kept in the vestry.

³¹² RCHME, *Westmorland*, 133.

³¹³ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 458.

³¹⁴ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 460.

Why the work was stopped, suddenly enough for the last capital to remain unfinished, has not been established,³¹⁵ but the discovery of charred timbers in a wall in 1866 suggests that the halt may have been due to a fire.³¹⁶ When building was resumed towards the end of the twelfth century it was on a much less grandiose scale. The rest of the nave and the east wall with its three fine windows were built early in the thirteenth century. The east wall is set askew. Of the three lancet windows in the east wall, the northerly one is complete, the southerly one uncomfortably cut and crowded by the wall's failure to meet the two lines of arches at right angles. The decoration behind the high altar is similarly uneven, the wall decoration on the south side having six circles, while on the north side there is only room for four. This odd feature of the east wall not at right angles with the aisle has been found in many churches of the period, and interpreted as representing the droop of Christ's head on the cross. It has been suggested that the east wall was built first, and the arches later, but this is not so, as is shown by the bonding of the masonry and certain identical masons' marks on both features.³¹⁷ The altar must originally have been considerably forward of its present position, as the piscina, normally placed close beside the right hand end of the altar, is in a pillar four metres from the east wall, well outside the present sanctuary. Above the triple window is a small window called a vesica, or pointed oval. This was a feature in the medieval church, cut in half when the Tudor roof was put on. It was rediscovered and reconstructed in 1866.³¹⁸ The 1866 alterations were also responsible for lowering the floor of the church. This is visible in the bases of the pillars, and the impractical height of the piscina above the floor.

The tower was built about 1200, and there is work from every century afterwards. About 1400 the north and south walls were taken down and built further outward, broadening the aisles; the two Norman doorways in the south wall were also moved outwards.³¹⁹ There is, perhaps unusually, no north doorway.

In 1486 the Middleton chantry chapel was built at the north-east corner, projecting into the churchyard and containing centrally a stone tomb, said to have

³¹⁵ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 460.

³¹⁶ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 133.

³¹⁷ CAS (Kendal), WPR19/4/3/15. Article by Rev. H. Ware, *Westmorland Gazette* 18 Aug. 1870.

³¹⁸ Article by Rev. H. Ware

³¹⁹ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 458.

been of Edward Middleton and his wife.³²⁰ The monument itself was recorded by Machell in very much the fragmented state it is in today - the tomb cut down by three-quarters, leaving only half of the male figure on the top and three worn coats of arms round the base, on which the Middleton saltire engrailed³²¹ is set alongside the devices of three wives, which have been read as Lonsdale, Carus, and Bellingham.³²² A local tradition, handed down from father to son and drawing on the memory of a man born in 1726, relates that the chapel was still standing in the first half of the eighteenth century with the fragmented tomb in the centre.³²³

The outer north aisle of the church was added in 1574.³²⁴ Some of the corbels carry a Tudor rose and the letter M, presumably for St. Mary. In 1578 a visitation from the Diocese of Chester reported ‘relics of popery’, the wall-paintings not having been completely defaced. ‘The body of the church is in decay in rooffe and glass.’³²⁵ The church yard walls were also reported as ‘in decay’,³²⁶ which establishes the large church yard as being defined from an early period.

Some forty years later Henry Wilson of Underley was mainly responsible for rectifying the state of affairs in the church building. In 1691 Thomas Machell found the building ‘well beautified within’ but noted that most of the ancient monuments were defaced. He also noted the library and the pulpit, both donated by Henry Wilson.³²⁷ The original three-decker, with its carved panels ‘Soli Gloria Deo 1619’ and ‘HW Fundator’ was later lowered and reworked.

In 1705 the top of the tower was rebuilt,³²⁸ and in 1743 the churchwardens were quite satisfied with the situation ‘We have everything required in Decent and Good Order’, they reported at a visitation by the Bishop of Chester.³²⁹ In 1807 the lead roof, estimated at about 36 tons, which had been laid in the sixteenth century, was replaced by blue slate. At the same time new

³²⁰ Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 19.

³²¹ *AWL*, 205.

³²² Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 19.

³²³ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 100.

³²⁴ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 459.

³²⁵ Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 210.

³²⁶ Borthwick Institute York 1/CB2 f. 39

³²⁷ Ewbank, *Antiquary*, 19

³²⁸ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 458-9

³²⁹ Lancashire Archives (Preston) ARR 17/24

pews and seats were installed.³³⁰ The organ, which had been built in 1799 and enlarged in 1810, was broken in pieces in 1844 by a fall of stones which were being hauled up to repair the tower.³³¹

A further, very thorough, restoration was undertaken in 1866 by E.G. Paley, paid for by Lord Kenlis of the Underley family, who are commemorated in a chapel at the east end of the south aisle. Most of the stained glass is by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake,³³² but a fine window in the south aisle depicting Faith, Hope and Charity is from a design by Henry Holiday. The 1866 font has been replaced by one dating from the fourteenth century. This was discovered in 1937 in a farmyard at Killington, where it was used as a receptacle for water from a downspout in the farmyard. It was acquired by Alexander Pearson and presented to the church.³³³ Whether this was in fact the font which in 1686 was sold by the Kirkby Lonsdale churchwardens for sixpence³³⁴ is doubtful, considering its weight and the distance it would have had to have travelled.

The fine wrought-iron gates with their ingenious hinges, leading from Sun Street into the churchyard, are dated '1823 WJ' for William Jackson who made them in his smithy in Fairbanks.³³⁵ They were restored in 1984.³³⁶

The post-reformation history of the church starts with the passing of the advowson to Trinity College in 1554. It is not clear how many of the first vicars after this date lived in the parish. John Willinson (1560-1607) seems to have done so, since he was buried there. Jeremy Waterhouse who followed him was probably an absentee. He must have been one until 1612 at least, as he held his fellowship until that year, which would have compelled him to live in College. He left for Greystoke in 1616 and died there in 1633.³³⁷

Four vicariates followed with little recorded incident; the last of these was Charles Jones, who resigned his living in 1640 after only three years, but no reason is recorded.³³⁸ He was replaced by George Buchanan who had fled from Scotland

³³⁰ *Rec Kend.* III, 287

³³¹ Mannex *Dir. Westmd* (1851), 349

³³² M. Mellor, *The Church of St. Mary the Virgin* (Shropshire 2001), 10

³³³ A. Pearson, 'The probable story of a C14 font', *CW2* xxxviii (1938), 146-56.

³³⁴ CAS (Kendal), WPR/19/4/1/1 Churchwardens' Accounts: 'Rec'd for the old font stone 00-00-06'

³³⁵ N. and P. Dalzell, *Kirkby Lonsdale and District* (Stroud 1996) 35

³³⁶ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 355

³³⁷ R. P. Brown, 'The Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW2* xxix (1929), 166-92.

³³⁸ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale' 178-9.

for refusing the Covenant. Archbishop Laud appointed him to a church in Essex, but his south-country parishioners being unable to understand his accent he appealed to Trinity College, who effected an exchange with Kirkby Lonsdale. Here however he was persecuted for his high church tendencies by two of his puritan parishioners, who had him arrested twice, 'once out of the Church; another time out of his bed from his wife (then big with child)'. He was three years in jail and then, being freed, fled into Yorkshire. After the Restoration he received compensation from Parliament of £100 but did not come back to Kirkby Lonsdale.³³⁹

From 1645 to 1652 William Cole was the minister, approved by the Classis and, he said, called to the post by a meeting of the parish, which, if this was an accurate account, must have been largely of a puritan cast.³⁴⁰ In 1646 the Committee for Plundered Ministers sequestered from Sir Henry Bellingham and Captain Thomas Wilson as delinquents the rectory, which was worth about £60, with £40 each for the chapels of Hutton, Barbon, Middleton, Killington and Firbank.³⁴¹

The next two incumbents, John Smyth (1652-1657) and Richard Tatham (1657-1660), were approved by the Commission for the Four Northern Counties.³⁴² Richard Tatham, a local man from Tunstall in Lancashire and an ex-pupil of Kirkby Lonsdale School, was presented by the Lord Protector himself. After the Restoration he conformed to the Church of England but by that time was of Kirklington in Yorkshire, to be replaced in Kirkby Lonsdale by his younger brother Edmund who was only 24 and was in post for a very short time, officially until 1664,³⁴³ but in fact marked as 'gone' in the 1662 list of hearth tax defaulters.³⁴⁴ It was probably then that the benefice was offered to, and refused by, the famous botanist John Ray, a Trinity College man who knew the northern counties from a botanising tour made in 1661. He wrote to a friend 'One great motive to have induced me to take it was, because of its vicinity to the Yorkshire Alpes, and especially Ingleborough Hill, which is not above six or seven miles

³³⁹ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 179.

³⁴⁰ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 183.

³⁴¹ B. Nightingale, *The Ejected of 1662 in Cumberland and Westmorland* (Manchester 1911), 1011-2.

³⁴² Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 184.

³⁴³ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 185.

³⁴⁴ *Rec. Kend.* II, 323.

thence distant.³⁴⁵ However, he returned to his native Essex.³⁴⁶ Henry Hoyle was appointed and served until 1676.³⁴⁷

From 1676 to 1831 there were only four holders of the benefice, all of them living in the town. John Briggs held it from 1676 to 1737, dying at the age of 91. A Lancastrian, his only other appointment was to Heysham in Lancashire, of which he was deprived in 1674 for simony, but his long incumbency at Kirkby Lonsdale seems to have been without incident.³⁴⁸ Tobias Croft (1737-1765) was a local man, born at Heversham, educated at Trinity College. He lived in Kirkby Lonsdale, as the parish records show, but was a pluralist, having been also appointed rector of Linton-in-Craven in Yorkshire.³⁴⁹ Marwood Place (1766-1791) was a Trinity College man, Vicar of Sedbergh for two years before being appointed to Kirkby Lonsdale. He married Ann, co-heiress of Roger Wilson of Casterton Hall, and was responsible for building the handsome vicarage at Kirkby Lonsdale. He admitted to spending time outside the parish for his health, but his curate, to whom he allowed £35 a year, lived in the town.³⁵⁰ Joseph Sharpe, 1791-1831, also a Trinity scholar, also married locally, Margaret Garnett of Barbon.³⁵¹ Among the church's plate are a communion cup and paten given by him.³⁵²

John Hutton Fisher, in post from 1831 to 1862, got into serious financial difficulties, and the living was sequestered during his vicariate.³⁵³ The next appointee, Henry Ware (1862-88) was a distinguished Trinity College scholar who was a Canon of Carlisle Cathedral and became Bishop Suffragan of Barrow in 1889. During his vicariate the church building was restored and he was responsible for establishing the various chapelries (except Lupton) as separate parishes.³⁵⁴ He was followed by John Llewellyn Davies, another scholar of distinction, who considered the social as well as the religious life of the town by establishing the Institute, and building a sheltered butter market in the Market

³⁴⁵ E. J. Whittaker, *Thomas Lawson, North Country Botanist, Quaker and Schoolmaster* (York 1986) 67

³⁴⁶ Cited in *Dictionary of National Biography* (Compact Edition 1975), 1744. See also Scott Mandelbrote, 'John Ray (1627-1705)', *ODNB*.

³⁴⁷ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 188.

³⁴⁸ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 189.

³⁴⁹ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 189.

³⁵⁰ CAS (Kendal) WPR/19/2/1/1 *Articles of Enquiry*. Undated, from internal evidence c. 1780.

³⁵¹ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 188-90.

³⁵² *Record of Church Furnishings*, (NADFAS), 102.

³⁵³ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 113.

³⁵⁴ Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 190-1.

Square. He was an honorary chaplain to Queen Victoria and an original member of the Alpine Club.³⁵⁵ The breadth of his religious views led him to be one of the founders of the National Church Reform Union in 1870, and may well have stood in the way of his rising in the church hierarchy.³⁵⁶

In 1779 two services including one sermon had been held each Sunday, and the Sacrament was celebrated eight times a year. The tally of 64 communicants at Easter does not suggest a very fervent congregation, perhaps typical of the late eighteenth century.³⁵⁷ In 1808 there was also a sermon in the afternoon in the summer months, prayers every Wednesday and Friday, and 60 children attending Sunday school.³⁵⁸ The religious census of 1851 reported a considerable advance, with a congregation of 423 at the morning service and 285 in the evening. At that time 250 of the seats were free.³⁵⁹

The most radical change in organisation came a century later. In 1969 Kirkby Lonsdale was the subject of one of the earliest experiments in team ministry, a form of organisation which could use to greater effect the dwindling number of clergy. Mansergh was already linked to Kirkby Lonsdale. In the 1920s the patronage of that living had lapsed from the vicar to the bishop of Carlisle, who, after the death of the incumbent in 1938, in spite of vigorous opposition from the parishioners, had merged it with Kirkby Lonsdale.³⁶⁰ It was now proposed that the other townships of the original parish, except Killington and Firbank, which had already been moved to Bradford diocese, should be served by a rector and a vicar, both based at the mother church. The full implementation of this plan, which depended on the death or voluntary transfer of the various incumbents, was not completed until 1976, when an Order in Council confirmed the Church Commissioners' scheme for the new enlarged parish of Kirkby Lonsdale, comprising the parishes of Kirkby Lonsdale with Mansergh, Hutton Roof with Lupton, Holy Trinity, Casterton, Barbon and Middleton, to be served by a rector and a vicar.³⁶¹ The local name for this team ministry which involved

³⁵⁵ *Annals Today* 113-4

³⁵⁶ A. F. Hort (rev. H. C. G. Matthew), 'John Llewelyn Davies (1826-1916)', *ODNB*.

³⁵⁷ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 219.

³⁵⁸ CAS (Kendal) WPR 19/2/1/1 Articles of Enquiry 1808

³⁵⁹ TNA, HO 129/575 (1851 Religious Census)

³⁶⁰ *London Gazette* 23 Sep. 1938

³⁶¹ Order in Council 18 Feb 1976. Thanks to Eleanor Scott and Jean Hardman, Church House, Carlisle, for help with this information.

seven churches was 'The Rainbow Parish'.³⁶² Trinity College now became only one of five members of the patronage board: the others were the bishop of Carlisle, the archdeacon, the Peache trustees and the parochial church council.³⁶³

By the later twentieth century, relations between the parish church and other denominations were close. The parish church moved its Sunday morning service by half an hour so that the church bells should not disturb the nearby Methodist service. In 1966 the vicar was asked to conduct prayers at the Methodist Quarterly Meeting;³⁶⁴ Father John Turner, Roman Catholic parish priest from 1996 to 2005, regularly attended Sunday evensong at St. Mary's.³⁶⁵ Numerous other examples of collaboration include a Good Friday procession through the town in 2012 combining the members of all three churches.³⁶⁶ In 2013 the service on each fourth Sunday of the month was an ecumenical one, held alternately in the parish church, the Methodist and the Roman Catholic chapels.

St. Leonard's Hospital

St. Leonard's Hospital, presumably a leper hospital to judge by its dedication, was founded on the very western edge of the township. It probably dated, like many other leper hospitals, from the thirteenth century. By the mid-sixteenth century it no longer served its original purpose, the chaplain relinquishing the property in 1544 because 'I am crased and not able ne mete to occupie it accordyng as aght to be.'³⁶⁷ This was the last flicker of the building's original charitable purpose, which was finally extinguished in 1551.³⁶⁸ Nothing of the hospital remains above ground, but the present Spittal farmhouse incorporates traces of a much older building in its back wall. A chapel at Tearnside was recorded as early as 1250, and it has been argued that this was the chapel for the Spittal.³⁶⁹ In 1692 it was said to

³⁶² Later Preston Patrick was included, but the name continued to be used.

³⁶³ Order in Council 18 Feb 1976

³⁶⁴ Kirkby Lonsdale Parish Leaflet, July 1966.

³⁶⁵ M. J. Dugdale, *What Time is Mass?* pamphlet (2012), 38.

³⁶⁶ Local information.

³⁶⁷ R. P. Brown, 'The Chantries of Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW2* xxvii (1927), 54-99.

³⁶⁸ *Rec. Kend.* II, 344.

³⁶⁹ Brown, 'Chantries of Kirkby Lonsdale'. A building called Oldearth, marked on the first OS 1:10,560 map (Westmorland, sheet 47, surveyed 1858) and now vanished, stood at SD 583 799 (c. 300 yards on the Kirkby Lonsdale side of the Spittal). Local tradition says that this was the hospital's burial ground.

have been recently demolished by Richard Bailiff,³⁷⁰ perhaps as a source of building stone when Tearnside Hall was rebuilt by the Bailiff family.³⁷¹

Nonconformity

In 1665 there were 27 parishioners who did not attend church. Of the nine who refused to pay their assessments one was John Topin, a schoolmaster.³⁷² In 1778 there were said to be two Papists and two Quaker families, as well as a Methodist congregation. By the late eighteenth century, the Methodists and the Inghamites had become the first nonconformist groups to have separate places of worship in the town.³⁷³

Sandemanians or Inghamites

The first representatives of this sect came to Kirkby Lonsdale in 1748. They lodged and held meetings in cottages opposite the 'Green Dragon' in the main street, but were attacked with fury by the locals. A visiting preacher was captured by the mob and rescued by James Ashton of Underley Hall, who knew the man and took him to the vicarage for safety.³⁷⁴ After this episode, nothing is known until 1761 when a new bridgehead was established by James Allen. Allen was originally a Methodist minister from Gayle near Hawes. He converted in 1761 and established meeting houses in his own village, Kirkby Stephen and Kirkby Lonsdale, before moving on to larger northern towns - Colne, Liverpool and Whitehaven.³⁷⁵ Meetings in Kirkby Lonsdale were first held in a house in Mitchelgate; it was demolished when Bective Road was cut through.³⁷⁶ In 1828 a new meeting house was built off the New Road.³⁷⁷ Owing to the steep slope of the ground, the large room was built with two small dwellings underneath. In

³⁷⁰ Ewbank, *Antiquary*, 24.

³⁷¹ See above, Introduction.

³⁷² Lancashire Archives (Preston) ARR/15/40, Compert Book 1665. He was not the master of the Grammar School, who was Richard Garthwaite 1656-1670.

³⁷³ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 219.

³⁷⁴ *The Lonsdale Magazine*, August 1820

³⁷⁵ T. Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches* (Keighley 1930), 33.

³⁷⁶ *The Lonsdale Magazine*, August 1820.

³⁷⁷ Parson & White, *Dir. C & W* (1829), 688. The building thereafter had a number of uses (see 'Social History'), in the early twenty-first century housing a branch of the County Library.

1851, a congregation of about 70 met three times on Sundays.³⁷⁸ The chapel was mentioned in local directories until 1858,³⁷⁹ but had gone by 1873.³⁸⁰

Methodist

John Wesley's journal mentions Kirkby Lonsdale only twice, as a place where he stopped to change horses while travelling, once in 1784 on his way from Settle, once in 1788 coming from Pateley Bridge, on both occasions on the way to Kendal.³⁸¹ He may not have known that there was a small and struggling Methodist meeting house, reported in 1778, the members said to be few in number and decreasing.³⁸² There was considerable dissension among them: it was reported about this time that there was not only a licensed meeting house but two other groups meeting in private houses.³⁸³ In 1798 James Coates, a prosperous twinespinner, was granted a certificate to use a building next his house as a meeting place for dissenters.³⁸⁴ Later he sold a piece of his garden to a group of Methodist trustees to erect a Wesleyan Methodist chapel,³⁸⁵ which is dated 1834 and in 2012 was the oldest chapel in the Kendal circuit, with the only pipe organ still in use. The original building was enlarged and modified by the addition of a new schoolroom, vestry, organ chamber and reseating in 1893³⁸⁶ and again by considerable enlargement and rearrangement of the premises in 2003.³⁸⁷ Membership declined across the twentieth century. In the 1960s there were fewer than 40 members, the gallery was closed and the staircase removed. By 2011 the membership had risen to over 80 and the gallery was reopened.³⁸⁸ For a short period, from 1929 to 1938, the church had a resident minister,³⁸⁹ but the

³⁷⁸ TNA, HO 129/575 (1851 Religious Census).

³⁷⁹ Kelly, *Dir. Westmd* (1858), 38.

³⁸⁰ Kelly, *Dir. Westmd* (1873), 928.

³⁸¹ *Journal and Diaries of John Wesley*, ed. W. R. Ward and R. P. Hertznerater (Nashville 2003), vol. 23, p. 484, vol. 24, p. 244.

³⁸² Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 219.

³⁸³ CAS (Kendal), WPR/19/2/1/1: *Answers to enquiries from Chester*, undated copy during Marwood Place's vicariate (1766-91).

³⁸⁴ *Rec Kend.* III, 287

³⁸⁵ Five of the nine original trustees were from Kirkby Lonsdale: Robert Lamplugh Gregg, tanner; William Willan, labourer; Edward Gorrill, weaver; Thomas Bracewell, joiner; Richard Dobson, husbandman.

³⁸⁶ CAS (Kendal), WDFC/M2/49.

³⁸⁷ Local inf.

³⁸⁸ Inf. Pat Hanson.

³⁸⁹ T. P. Bryer, *A History of Methodism in Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedburgh* (Kendal 1987), 35.

appointment was not repeated, and in 2012 the minister lived in Kendal and served three chapels - Kirkby Lonsdale, Sandylands in Kendal, and Cowan Bridge in Lancashire.³⁹⁰

Congregational

In 1815 a minister from the Independent church in Lancaster, with a group of friends, preached in a room in the town, and the response was encouraging enough to lead to the purchase of a newly-erected barn in Back Lane, and its adaptation to the uses of a Congregational chapel seating 260. This was over-optimistic, although the church flourished for a while and established preaching stations at Barbon, Hutton Roof, Kearsywick, Old Town, as well as Whittington and Wray in Lancashire. After 1835 unexplained difficulties arose between the church and some of its out-stations, particularly Wray, and the church, which in 1817 had had an attendance of 200, dwindled to four members.³⁹¹ Ensuing years saw some recovery: in March 1851 the attendance was about 50 for each of three Sunday services, with 32 children in the Sunday School, though it was reported that these figures were low owing to an outbreak of measles in the town.³⁹² In 1861 a Mr. Sharpe started a more successful ministry which lasted 30 years, during which time a new chapel with a more realistic capacity of 120 was built on the old site in 1888, the school, the chapel, and the manse being all established under one roof.³⁹³ In the twentieth century membership declined. The list of office holders in 1930, when the Wolfenden family provided four of the nine deacons, the organist, the Sunday School superintendent, the delegates to the Congregational Union, the secretary and the treasurer, indicates an unsustainably small congregation.³⁹⁴ The church finally closed in 1965, and in 1966 was sold to the Roman Catholics.³⁹⁵

Roman Catholic

³⁹⁰ Inf. Pat Hanson and members of the congregation.

³⁹¹ Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches*, 33-4.

³⁹² TNA, HO 129/575 (Religious Census 1851).

³⁹³ Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches*.

³⁹⁴ Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches*. Apart from this reference, no documentation has been found, and is presumed destroyed.

³⁹⁵ CAS (Kendal), WDEC/C7/Acc 2597

There were seven Papists in Kirkby Lonsdale in the early eighteenth century but only two in 1779.³⁹⁶ These were reported to be an innkeeper and a watchmaker.³⁹⁷ From 1820 the nearest Roman Catholic church was in Hornby, Lancashire, ten miles away. In 1924 the District Bank allowed the Hornby priest to celebrate Mass every Sunday in an upstairs room in Morphet's Yard, behind their building in Kirkby Lonsdale main street,³⁹⁸ an arrangement which continued until 1965, when the former Congregational Chapel, manse and school came on the market. These premises were repaired, refurbished, and opened in 1966. A parish priest was appointed in 1967 and until 1976 the parish included a chapel at Underley Hall, then a Roman Catholic Junior Seminary.³⁹⁹

Between 1977 and 1994 the post was held by a colourful character, Lawrence Hardman, known as 'the Bishop' because he had been a bishop in Nyasaland for 22 years. He retired voluntarily when that country became independent, thinking it more appropriate for them to have an African bishop. He was an inspiring churchman, but also a keen sportsman who had played football for Preston North End in his youth.⁴⁰⁰ In 1996 Father John Turner was appointed, and undertook a considerable rebuilding programme. While this was in progress, Mass was celebrated in the parish church, and coffee served afterwards in the Methodist hall. A spirit of friendship and cooperation between the three churches was engendered which continued, Father Turner regularly attending Sunday evensong at St. Mary's. In 2010 the Methodists used the Catholic church during a refurbishment, in recognition of which they donated a paten which was subsequently used at every Mass.⁴⁰¹

In 2005, on the retirement of John Turner, the diocese decided to run the church once more from Hornby, now with Caton as well.⁴⁰² There was a Sunday morning mass, and one also on Thursdays, Saturdays and Holy Days.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁶ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 131, 219.

³⁹⁷ *Articles of Enquiry* Marwood Place 1766-91

³⁹⁸ St Mary's (Hornby) Diary and Records 1919-2012, quoted in M. J. Dugdale, 'What Time is Mass?' (n.d.)

³⁹⁹ Inf. M. J. Dugdale.

⁴⁰⁰ Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today* 363-4

⁴⁰¹ Dugdale, 'What time is Mass?' 37-8

⁴⁰² Dugdale, 'What time is Mass?' 41-2

⁴⁰³ Information in the church.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Lowther family bought the manor of Kirkby Lonsdale about 1672,⁴⁰⁴ and the court books have been preserved from that date.⁴⁰⁵ At that time the court appointed annually 30 officials, including assessors who set the fines, overseer of the poor, byelawmen or constables, common viewers or moorlookers, aletasters, scalers of weights and measures, swinelookers, becklookers, cornlookers, supervisors of the highways, fish and fleshlookers, overseer for Kearstwick Mooryeat, and searchers and sealers of leather.⁴⁰⁶ From this list it can be seen that the court was responsible for the good order both of the town, and for that part of the wider parish belonging to the Lonsdale estate, commonly known as Kirkby Lordship, for trading standards, as well as for agrarian matters such as overstocking on the township's common land. Four 'lookers' were appointed to seek out beasts on the common which did not belong to the lordship, and bring them into the pinfold until their owners paid to remove them. At a later date land tax and window tax collection were also the business of the court. The office of constable involved most access to money and in 1704 it was stipulated that the constable then appointed should not hand out money to wayfarers unless he was checked by a second person.⁴⁰⁷

The burden which this considerable list of duties laid on the male population of a town which was no more than a large village is striking, and perhaps had some influence on the fact that throughout the eighteenth century most of them gradually vanish from the records. By 1771 the appointments comprised overseer of the poor, two becklookers, two swinelookers, two byelawmen for the town and two for the lordship, and two surveyors of the highways, one for the town and one for the lordship. The town surveyor was particularly important owing to the watercourse which ran through and in some places under the market place and down Mill Brow. In 1740 property owners were assessed at three pence in the town for flagging and repairing the town beck, but it continued to present problems. In 1772 the surveyor was ordered by the court to

⁴⁰⁴ Ewbank, *Antiquary*, 18.

⁴⁰⁵ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12 (In five books, 1672-1925)

⁴⁰⁶ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/1 (1672-96).

⁴⁰⁷ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/2 (1697-1746).

‘flag and cover up...a watering place in the road leading to the church near the Sun Inn, which we think dangerous to his Majesty’s subjects’.⁴⁰⁸

No information is given as to the reason or method of changing the pattern of the courts, but from 1777 two courts were held on the same day, the first being the court leet, which had no business beyond swearing in a constable, followed by the court baron and customary court of dismissions which dealt with the transfer of property. The first of these dwindled in importance, being held at wider and wider intervals until it vanished in 1797. There was then a five-year gap before the courts baron restarted.⁴⁰⁹

The court continued in an attenuated form into the nineteenth century, sitting at widening intervals of years.⁴¹⁰ There were no more juries after 1822, their place being taken by direct submissions to the earl of Lonsdale, and the courts baron moved to the Lonsdale estate steward’s office in Penrith. Between 1844 and 1906 only six courts were held. As a final gesture the last one of all was convened again in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1925 on the abolition of copyhold tenure, with a jury of six men chaired by William Little, steward of the manor, by that time in his nineties. It dealt with five transfers of property, the sums involved amounting in all to 1s. 8¹/₂ d.⁴¹¹ The manorial rights in the market were transferred to the Urban District Council in 1928.⁴¹²

In 1680 the court had ordered an assessment to be made of the poor of the whole of Kirkby Lordship and had allowed twelve pounds annually for their relief, which was raised by an assessment of property owners at five pence in the pound.⁴¹³ The number of poor persons in the town varied from year to year, sometimes as many as thirty. They were given help either weekly, monthly, or quarterly, presumably according to their ability to manage their financial affairs. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the lordship met an annual bill of £550, of which £345 was in weekly pensions to the poor and £164 in casual relief.

⁴⁰⁸ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/3 (1746-1776).

⁴⁰⁹ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/4 (1777-1905).

⁴¹⁰ Parson and White *Dir. C & W* (1829) states that a court leet continued to be held every October to appoint, among other officers, five inspectors and regulators of fairs, and this responsibility was not finally extinguished until 1928. However the existing court books make no reference to markets or fairs.

⁴¹¹ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/5 (1906-1925)

⁴¹² CAS (Kendal), Urban District Council Minutes WSUD/KL/11

⁴¹³ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/1.

The overseer received an annual salary of fifteen guineas.⁴¹⁴ In the twentieth century there was still an annual ‘assembly of the electorate’ at which the Trustees of Amalgamated Charities reported the grants they had made, typically, in 1969, 32 grants of £1 at Easter and 37 grants of £3 at Christmas.⁴¹⁵

As early as 1735 the court recorded the establishment of a ‘new erected workhouse on a certaine piece of waste ground called Millbrow’.⁴¹⁶ No other information has been found until the years 1782-6, during which the parish register recorded 31 deaths as occurring ‘in the poorhouse’, with an age range of ‘infant to 88’. At what stage the vestry became responsible is not clear.⁴¹⁷ Vestry minutes for 1812 show a list of furnishings bought, and expenses for ‘building’ the workhouse, but the latter are clearly for extension of an existing building, made necessary by the establishment in 1811 of a Poor Law Union embracing the townships of Kirkby Lonsdale itself, Barbon, Casterton, Middleton, Firbank, Hutton Roof, as well as Old Hutton in Westmorland, Whittington, Arkholme, Melling, Cantsfield, Tunstall, Burrow and Leck in Lancashire, and Burton and Thornton-in-Lonsdale in Yorkshire.⁴¹⁸ In 1816 contributions were received from other parishes: Whittington £93, Old Hutton £71, Leck £27, Burrow £32, Arkholme £27, Firbank £49 and Killington £21.⁴¹⁹ The organisation was short-lived and came to an end not long after the passing of the Poor Law Act of 1834.⁴²⁰ Later the building housed, at least in part, the first National School,⁴²¹ and a vagrant ward,⁴²² which seems to have continued into the twentieth century, providing lodging for tramps who paid for their stay by stone-breaking.⁴²³

The first Local Board was set up in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1869, the need for it arising out of complaints to the Kendal Board of Guardians under the Sanitary Act of 1866 that the sewage arrangements of the town were extremely ineffective. After considerable delays, the first water and sewerage scheme was carried out in

⁴¹⁴ CAS (Carlisle), D/Lons/LS/2/12/4.

⁴¹⁵ Parish Council Minutes 16 March 1970.

⁴¹⁶ The General Workhouse Act, 1723, empowered parishes, or unions of several parishes, to establish workhouses.

⁴¹⁷ The vestry minutes are available only from 1801.

⁴¹⁸ Parson & White, *Dir. C & W* (1829), 688. Presumably Lupton and Mansergh were included as extensions of Kirkby Lonsdale.

⁴¹⁹ Vestry minutes.

⁴²⁰ Vestry minutes 1839, reference to building ‘formerly used as a workhouse’.

⁴²¹ See ‘Social History’

⁴²² CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/11 Urban District Council minutes 23 Sep. 1891.

⁴²³ M. Gresson, *A Stroll through Kirkby Lonsdale* (Kirkby Lonsdale 1996), 19.

1876.⁴²⁴ In 1892 offices for the Board were established on the first floor of an altered old house at Beckhead, which housed the butter market on the ground floor.⁴²⁵

In 1895 Kirkby Lonsdale was created an Urban District Council, which in the following year took over the powers of the parish council and the vestry.⁴²⁶ The manorial rights in the market were transferred to the Urban District Council in 1928.⁴²⁷ In 1932, under the Local Government Act of 1929, it was downgraded to a parish council, in spite of vigorous opposition from the town, and a narrow majority (twelve to nine) in the county council, which acknowledged that the town's affairs had been run both competently and cheaply.⁴²⁸ Owing to the size of the population, the new council was allowed nine members and a clerk, and it was allotted three seats on the South Westmorland Rural District Council.

Increasingly over the next forty years⁴²⁹ the council's chief preoccupation was the problem of traffic. As early as 1920 the need for ladies' conveniences had been discussed 'in view of the large number of visitors arriving by motor'.⁴³⁰ The first attempt at one-way traffic was made in 1928, with a suggestion (still under discussion in 1930) that arrows should indicate circulation round the market square. In the same year the council sought a byelaw to curtail the proliferation of filling stations in the town.⁴³¹ In the years 1962-72 the subject of motor traffic, congestion or parking was raised at every meeting.⁴³² Small towns move slowly, and the desirability of a one-way system, which seems an obvious solution and was ultimately implemented, was resoundingly rejected by a public meeting in October 1966.⁴³³ Another meeting on the same subject in 1971 attracted 200 people.⁴³⁴ Some time later a one-way system was introduced in Mitchelgate, Market Street and Main Street, and the situation was further relieved by the

⁴²⁴ *Kirkby Lonsdale Local Board*, 7.

⁴²⁵ CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/7.

⁴²⁶ CAS (Kendal), WPC/7/33RO.

⁴²⁷ CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/11.

⁴²⁸ Under a country-wide downgrading of small Urban District Councils, among which Kirkby Lonsdale, with a population of 1300, was one of the smallest. The salaries involved amounted to £396 p.a.

⁴²⁹ The council minutes have been preserved until 1972. Unfortunately, from this date to 2000 they have been lost or destroyed.

⁴³⁰ CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/10.

⁴³¹ CAS (Kendal), WSUD/KL/11 and 12

⁴³² CAS (Kendal), WPC 7/125 Parish Council Minutes 1962-1972

⁴³³ CAS (Kendal), WPC 7/125.

⁴³⁴ CAS (Kendal), WPC 7/125.

provision in 1985 of car parks at Booth's store at the western edge of the town followed by others round the new doctors' surgeries in 2004.⁴³⁵

Under local government rules, a parish council of this size may, if it wishes, designate itself a town council, and in 2002, Kirkby Lonsdale, finding that the change would bring certain advantages,⁴³⁶ and cause its concerns to be taken more seriously at district level, opted for the change and became Kirkby Lonsdale Town Council. Later, perhaps anxious to raise its profile still further, the council considered adopting a town crest and motto, but nothing came of this.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ Local inf.

⁴³⁶ Local information says that the tipping point was the status of the town's two public lavatories.

⁴³⁷ Council Minutes September 2009.