

Newsletter

No. 10

April 2013

Welcome to the tenth CCHT e-newsletter intended to keep you up-to-date with the VCH Cumbria project.

Next Steps 2013-14

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

A small core of volunteers has embarked on researching and writing full parish/township histories to the VCH template but we recognize that not all volunteers will want to undertake such work. There are 3 ways in which we suggest that those who have compiled 'Jubilee Digests' might continue their endeavours to keep the VCH project moving forward.

Developing the online 'Resource bank'

On the right hand-side of each digest page we are developing links to a 'Resource Bank' of material relating to the place in question. Some items have already been added to this, including an explanation of the digests, images that volunteers have submitted, and a reference map (produced by Eric Apperley) for each place. The intention is to develop this further by adding:

1. links to relevant websites
2. a place-specific bibliography
3. further research on aspects of the history of the place in question

You can find out more about these activities in the 'Next Steps' Guidance Note, available at: <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/volunteer-resources>. VCH volunteers are also welcome to attend a meeting about these next steps at Penrith Methodist Church on Thursday 9th May, 2-4pm. Please contact Sarah Rose if you wish to attend (s.rose2@lancaster.ac.uk).

Volunteer training, Spring 2013: an overview

The final series of volunteer training sessions that are funded by the RDPE have been taking place this spring at Carlisle and Lowther.

Dr Sarah Rose has contributed a series on palaeography in April and May at Lowther Castle, including work on later and some earlier hands. By clustering people into groups according to their previous experience in the interpretation of early handwriting, she has been able to support people at whatever entry point they have reached, and to guide several groups concurrently.

Dr Michael Winstanley, following on a session about the Poor Law in February at Petteril Bank, followed this up in early April with a full-day presentation on Education in Cumbria before 1944. This proved highly popular, with fifteen participants. The material handed out was greatly appreciated, particularly given the abundance of sources available and the need to understand how to navigate through them. A Guidance Note on education in Cumbria before 1944 is now available on the website.

Finally, Professor David Wilcock's first introductory session on the geology and geomorphology of Cumbria was so well received that he is giving a further full-day session on 7 May at Lowther Castle, at which he will talk about the geology and glaciation of Cumbria. Bookings for this event are still open.

The CCHT steering group will undertake a thorough evaluation of the training programme from its inception, but immediate thanks are due to the RDPE for essential funding, to the tutors who have put together material of great interest, to the staff of Petteril Bank and Lowther Castle who have been supportive throughout of the requests made to them, and to the volunteers who have enrolled as enthusiastic participants in what has been an experimental process throughout. We have learnt a lot about what constitutes useful training for people involved in the VCH Cumbria Project, and how best to offer it to them.

Marion McClintock, Training Coordinator [m.mcclintock@lancaster.ac.uk]

VCH Project Receives Research Archive

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

Meticulously well organised and listed, the core of the collection consists of 30 numbered lever arch files, each containing Gordon's notes and copies of archival and printed material on a particular area or topic: the bulk are arranged by place (Gilsland Barony; Inglewood Forest; Holm Cultram; Aspatria, Westward etc); others cover themes (common fields; 19th-century farming; shielings and transhumance, for example). The collection also includes an extensive set of maps, including copies of manuscript maps in estate collections (the superb Gilsland barony map of 1828-30, for example) and his set of Ordnance Survey maps reconstructing areas subject to Parliamentary enclosure.

It is a rich resource and we are most grateful to Gordon Elliott's family for passing it on. Volunteers will be able to consult the collection by appointment: please contact Sarah Rose if you are working on Economic History for any parish or township in historic Cumberland.

Angus Winchester

Cumbria County History Trust AGM

CCHT held its third Annual General Meeting on Saturday 16th March at the Rheged Centre, Penrith. Professor Angus Winchester outlined the progress made by the VCH Cumbria project over the past year and the hopes for the next twelve months. Professor John Beckett of the University of Nottingham launched the Jubilee Digests and offered words of encouragement to volunteers. Richard Brockington then spoke about his experience as a VCH volunteer and drafting the article for Renwick.

Skelsmergh Draft Article

We are delighted to announce that the full draft article for Skelsmergh has been completed by Tony Cousins. The result of Tony's labours can be viewed on the right-hand side of the Skelsmergh Jubilee Digest page, or by following this link: <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/township/skelsmergh>.

The Skelsmergh draft joins those completed by Richard Brockington on Renwick and Angus Winchester on Mosser. Also available on the website is a part of an interim draft article for **Kirkandrews on Esk** produced by Fay Winkworth. This includes the introduction, landownership, economic and religious history sections. Although Fay is currently unable to continue her research on the history of the parish, she has kindly agreed that these interim drafts should be posted to make the fruits of her work available to others.

Manorial Records Day

Several VCH volunteers were among the many who attended the Manorial Records Day on Saturday 20th April. The event was hosted by the Centre for North West Regional Studies (CNWRS) at Lancaster University. Speakers included Alan Crosby, former County Archaeologist for Cumbria Philip Holdsworth, as well as Angus Winchester, Sarah Rose, and CCHT Trustee Bill Shannon. For more information about CNWRS please visit: <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/cnwrs/>

Additions to Cumbria Archive Service

Kendal Archives Centre has recently acquired the parish collection for Appleby St Lawrence, dating from 1694. The collection includes baptism, marriage and burial records from 1694-1992; Church wardens accounts 1696-1925; Terriers from 1730 and many records relating to the Church fabric and its preservation in the 20th Century.

CONTACTS

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