

CCHT Newsletter



No. 51 Autumn 2024

Welcome to the CCHT e-newsletter. Keeping you up-to-date with the VCH Cumbria project.

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CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND
ANTIQUARIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Supported by

Administrator Sought

CCHT is looking for someone who would be interested in offering some help and input to the administration of the work of the Trust on a part-time basis. This could include help with membership, event organising, marketing, press links, and input into the running of our website and social media platforms. The Trust would anticipate offering an honorarium. If you would be interested in discussing this appeal or wish for further information then please contact the Secretary, Lorna Mullett at cchistorytrust@gmail.com in the first instance.

Volunteer Activities

Congratulations to volunteers Richard Brockington and Harry Hawkins, who completed their draft history of the ancient parish of Ainstable in the summer. This piece is now available to view on the [CCHT website](#).

Several new volunteers have come forward to help us with our work to update the Lancashire North of the Sands volume and to start new work in the north of Cumbria. A warm welcome to them all.



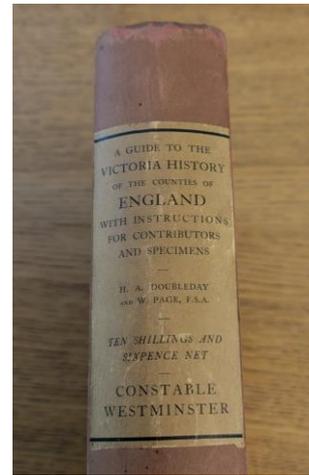
*Above: St Michael's Church Ainstable
(Geograph website)*

VCH Volunteers Visit Carlisle Library

On Thursday 31st October, VCH volunteers met at Carlisle Library. We began the day by having a look at the large wooden box which contains some of the research papers of Canon James Wilson (1856–1923), vicar of Dalston and editor of VCH Cumberland. Wilson oversaw the publication of two general volumes on the county, the first of which covered natural history, prehistory and the Middle Ages, including medieval sources such as the early Pipe Rolls and *Testa de Nevill* ("the Book of Fees"). The second VCH volume focuses on ecclesiastical history, political history, industries, sports and forestry.

Wilson began research on a topographical volume, but fell out with the VCH over pay and his manuscript was destroyed following his death. You can read more about the work on the early VCH and the role of John Wilson in John Beckett's article on the subject in [CWAAS Transactions](#).

Wilson's surviving papers in Carlisle Library include an original guide for VCH contributors. This stresses the need to focus on local history rather than national; to stick to their subject; and to be both brief and accurate. There are a number of notebooks containing references to material held at what was then the Public Record Office in London, such as Feet of Fines and State Papers.



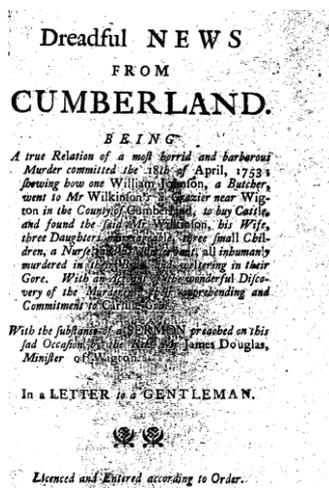
Above: Original guide for VCH contributors



Above: Portrait of William Jackson, from the frontispiece to *Papers and Pedigrees* (1892)

The core of the Local Studies section at Carlisle Library is formed from the collection begun by the Revd William Jackson F.S.A. (1823–90). Though born in Lincolnshire, Jackson lived and worked for much of his life in Cumbria. An early member and Vice-President of CWAAS, Jackson had a passion for the history and antiquities of the region. The Jackson Library contains over 20,000 items of printed and manuscript material relating to the history of Cumberland and Westmorland, as well as north Lancashire and the Anglo-Scottish border.

Among the most interesting items in the Jackson Library are several folders of more than 200 chapbooks dating from the 1600s to the 1800s. These booklets were collected by Jackson, with additions from the collection of Thomas McMechan of Wigton. These booklets were part of the common literature of the early modern period. They were cheaply made, publicly sold and they were an important medium for news and entertainment. They are of intrinsic interest in their own right and they are an exceptional source for studying Cumbria's social history. Many of the chapbooks give insight into historical tastes for scandal and romance, the sensational and the supernatural. Many respond to or reflect on local circumstances. Among the latter is *Dreadful News from Cumberland*, which presents a 'true relation of a most horrid and barbarous murder committed the 18th of April 1753'.



Above: 'Dreadful News from Cumberland'

One Hundred Interesting Facts on Cumbria

We have now achieved our target of posting one hundred Interesting Facts on the CCHT website! We began posting these back in 2017, with Facts being submitted by our volunteers and friends. You can access [a full list of all the Facts here](#), so you can browse looking for anything that takes your fancy.

Fact 99 was on the topic of [Long Meg and Her Daughters](#), which is the third largest stone circle in England. Our 100th fact reflects on the [name 'Cumbria'](#) and its use over the past 1,000 years and more, from the first mention of 'Cumbra land' in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 945AD, up to the abolition of Cumbria as a local government authority on 1 April 2023. There is also a new background paper on one of the first facts we posted, which was on the topic of [mining in the Lake District](#).

New Gallery Images: Richardson's *Furness Past and Present*

The Gallery page of the CCHT website now hosts images taken from Joseph Richardson's *Furness Past and Present, Its History and Antiquities*, which was published in 1880 [<https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/gallery/furness-past-and-present-its-history-and-antiquities-j-richardson-1880>]. Richardson, of Barrow-in-Furness, set out in 1870 with the intention of producing an updated version of West's *Antiquities of Furness*, which he believed was 'very incomplete'. Ten years in the making, the result was a copiously-illustrated, two volume work, which not only covered the antiquities of the Furness peninsular, but also brought the history up-to-date with his accounts of the growth of Barrow, and the industries of the district, plus pen-portraits of the movers-and-shakers of the later 19th century, such as the railway pioneer John Brogden, MP, who lived at Lightburn House, Ulverston.

The work has around one hundred illustrations, both black-and-white and in colour, the latter mainly lithographs (note the words "Drawn on stone by..." on many of the illustrations), generally taken from photographs. A dozen examples are included in our gallery, including antiquities, landscapes, gentlemen's' residences, and a view of a street in Barrow.

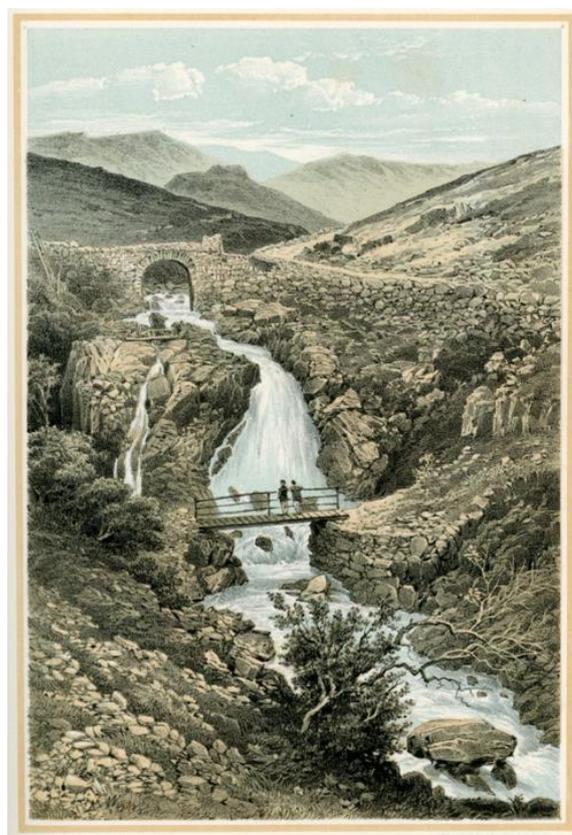


Image: *The Lower Falls, Copper Mines, Coniston*

Kendal Archives

As you may be aware, the closure of County Hall in Kendal has resulted in alternative arrangements for accessing material held at Kendal Archives. Documents can now be viewed at Kendal Library. The Herdwick Room, located upstairs in the Local Studies section, is available to archive users Wednesdays-Fridays, 10am – 4pm, with no closure for lunch. You will need to make an appointment at least 72 hours in advance and pre-order documents [<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/archives-centres/kendal-archive-centre>]

Out of County Records

We have been made aware that the records of the Cumberland Miners' Association / NUM (Cumberland Area), 1887–1985, are held at the University of Warwick Library. There are 12 boxes of records, which have now been fully catalogued: <https://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/CMA>

If you know of any collections held in surprising locations outside the county, which could be of interest to the project, then please let us know.

Supporting CCHT

Your support of CCHT is greatly appreciated. If you know anyone who you think might be interested in helping our work, please ask them to consider becoming a supporter. There are several ways they can help:

- Keep in touch with us: sign up to receive our newsletter and keep up to date with the project. You can also follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) [@VCH_Cumbria](#)
- Come and support us: by giving any monthly or annual donation through our website www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk
- Come and join us: membership is open to any interested individual, society, or organisation for an annual subscription of at least £25; life membership is a one-off contribution of £1,000.
- Come and work with us: anyone interested in researching local, regional or family history can contribute to the VCH Cumbria project. Training and guidance will be provided by the project team at Lancaster University. To find out more, please email cchistorytrust@gmail.com or visit our website www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk

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