

## Victoria County History of Cumbria Project: Work in Progress

### Interim Draft

[Note: This is an interim draft and should not be cited without first consulting the VCH Cumbria project: for contact details, see <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/>]

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

Author: **Emmeline Garnett**

Date of draft: August 2013

### RELIGIOUS HISTORY

The place-name 'Kirkby' ('settlement with a church') probably indicates that Kirkby Lonsdale was a religious site before the tenth century.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1090s Ivo de Taillebos gave the church of Kirkby Lonsdale and its land to the monks of St. Mary's at York.<sup>3</sup> During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the living was held by several generations of the de Kirkby family, hereditary parsons of the parish.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> After the fourth Lateran Council

---

<sup>1</sup> *PNW*, I, 42.

<sup>2</sup> These chapels will be treated under the articles for each of the townships named.

<sup>3</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 306.

<sup>4</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 305.

<sup>5</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 308.

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> The long Scottish wars began almost immediately, and whether owing to those depredations or not, in a new taxation of 1318 the Vicarage was valued at only £3 6s. 8d.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> In 1553, Queen Mary gave the advowson to Trinity College Cambridge.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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,<sup>12</sup> and Winifred, widow of Sir Thomas Strickland of Sizergh, drew a £200 annuity from the rectory.<sup>13</sup>

Supervision of churches such as Kirkby Lonsdale, remote from their superiors, was intermittent. Archbishop John le Romaine 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.<sup>14</sup> Archbishop John Kempe was said to have visited in September 1428, and again in 1441, but probably only

---

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 309.

<sup>8</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 310.

<sup>9</sup> *Rec. Kend.* III, 279.

<sup>10</sup> C. M. L. Bouch, *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties* (Kendal, 1948), 195.

<sup>11</sup> L. A. S. Butler (ed.), *The Cumbria Parishes 1714-1725 from Bishop Gastrell's Notitia* (Kendal 1998), 132.

<sup>12</sup> *Rec. Kend.* III, 47.

<sup>13</sup> *Rec. Kend.* III, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 140-1.

the second of these visits actually took place.<sup>15</sup> There were further visitations in 1578, 1591, 1595, 1633, 1664, and 1684, mainly dealing with marital transgressions.<sup>16</sup>

No complete list of pre-Reformation incumbents has survived. In 1365 Richard de Wisbeche is named.<sup>17</sup> In 1392 Nicholas de Stayngreve was vicar, when he and others alienated lands in Kirkby Lonsdale to St. Mary's Abbey.<sup>18</sup> In 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.<sup>19</sup> It is known that in 1523 there was a parish priest, a curate, and four chaplains.<sup>20</sup> A list from 1548 names a vicar, Adam Shepherd, and ten minor clergy, of whom one was the schoolmaster and two were chantry priests.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

Although the dedication of the church to St. Mary has only been recorded since the later eighteenth century,<sup>23</sup> and Machell refers to a probable dedication to St. James, 'as is supposed from the Rushbearing used on that day',<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup>

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

---

<sup>15</sup> Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 150-1.

<sup>16</sup> Borthwick Institute York. Ref. CB.

<sup>17</sup> See Introduction

<sup>18</sup> *Rec. Kend.* III, 278.

<sup>19</sup> *Rec. Kend.* III, 278.

<sup>20</sup> Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 155. No information has been found about their various responsibilities.

<sup>21</sup> R. P. Brown 'The Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW*2, xxix (1929), 166-192.

<sup>22</sup> Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 102-3.

<sup>23</sup> N & B I, 244.

<sup>24</sup> Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 19. The phrasing seems to indicate that his informants were uncertain.

<sup>25</sup> Now (2013) kept in the vestry.

most important, architecturally, in Westmorland,<sup>26</sup> but many alterations and additions have made it very difficult to interpret coherently.<sup>27</sup>

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.<sup>28</sup> Why the work was stopped, suddenly enough for the last capital to remain unfinished, has not been established,<sup>29</sup> but the discovery of charred timbers in a wall in 1866 suggests that the halt may have been due to a fire.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> The 1866 alterations

---

<sup>26</sup> RCHME, *Westmorland*, 133.

<sup>27</sup> Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 458.

<sup>28</sup> Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 460.

<sup>29</sup> Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 460.

<sup>30</sup> RCHME, *Westmorland*, 133.

<sup>31</sup> CAS (Kendal), WPR19/4/3/15. Article by Rev. H. Ware, *Westmorland Gazette* 18 Aug. 1870.

<sup>32</sup> Article by Rev. H. Ware

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.<sup>33</sup> 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 been of Edward Middleton and his wife.<sup>34</sup> 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 engrailed<sup>35</sup> is set alongside the devices of three wives, which have been read as Lonsdale, Carus, and Bellingham.<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup>

The outer north aisle of the church was added in 1574.<sup>38</sup> 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.'<sup>39</sup> The church yard walls were also reported as 'in decay',<sup>40</sup> 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

---

<sup>33</sup> Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 458.

<sup>34</sup> Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> *AWL*, 205.

<sup>36</sup> Ewbank, *Antiquary on Horseback*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 100.

<sup>38</sup> Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 459.

<sup>39</sup> Bouch, *Prelates and People*, 210.

<sup>40</sup> Borthwick Institute York 1/CB2 f. 39

donated by Henry Wilson.<sup>41</sup> 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,<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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 pews and seats were installed.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup>

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,<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> Whether this was in fact the font which in 1686 was sold by the Kirkby Lonsdale churchwardens for sixpence<sup>48</sup> 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.<sup>49</sup> They were restored in 1984.<sup>50</sup>

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

---

<sup>41</sup> Ewbank, *Antiquary*, 19

<sup>42</sup> Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 458-9

<sup>43</sup> Lancashire Archives (Preston) ARR 17/24

<sup>44</sup> *Rec Kend.* III, 287

<sup>45</sup> Mannex *Dir. Westmd* (1851), 349

<sup>46</sup> M. Mellor, *The Church of St. Mary the Virgin* (Shropshire 2001), 10

<sup>47</sup> A. Pearson, ‘The probable story of a C14 font’, *CW2* xxxviii (1938), 146-56.

<sup>48</sup> CAS (Kendal), WPR/19/4/1/1 Churchwardens’ Accounts: ‘Rec’d for the old font stone 00-00-06’

<sup>49</sup> N. and P. Dalzell, *Kirkby Lonsdale and District* (Stroud 1996) 35

<sup>50</sup> Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 355

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.<sup>51</sup>

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.<sup>52</sup> He was replaced by George Buchanan who had fled from Scotland 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.<sup>53</sup>

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.<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

The next two incumbents, John Smyth (1652-1657) and Richard Tatham (1657-1660), were approved by the Commission for the Four Northern Counties.<sup>56</sup> 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

---

<sup>51</sup> R. P. Brown, 'The Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', *CW2* xxix (1929), 166-92.

<sup>52</sup> Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale' 178-9.

<sup>53</sup> Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 179.

<sup>54</sup> Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 183.

<sup>55</sup> B. Nightingale, *The Ejected of 1662 in Cumberland and Westmorland* (Manchester 1911), 1011-2.

<sup>56</sup> Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 184.

brother Edmund who was only 24 and was in post for a very short time, officially until 1664,<sup>57</sup> but in fact marked as ‘gone’ in the 1662 list of hearth tax defaulters.<sup>58</sup> 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 thence distant.’<sup>59</sup> However, he returned to his native Essex.<sup>60</sup> Henry Hoyle was appointed and served until 1676.<sup>61</sup>

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.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> Joseph Sharpe, 1791-1831, also a Trinity scholar, also married locally, Margaret Garnett of Barbon.<sup>65</sup> Among the church’s plate are a communion cup and paten given by him.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Brown, ‘Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale’, 185.

<sup>58</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 323.

<sup>59</sup> E. J. Whittaker, *Thomas Lawson, North Country Botanist, Quaker and Schoolmaster* (York 1986) 67

<sup>60</sup> Cited in *Dictionary of National Biography* (Compact Edition 1975), 1744. See also Scott Mandelbrote, ‘John Ray (1627-1705)’, ODNB.

<sup>61</sup> Brown, ‘Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale’, 188.

<sup>62</sup> Brown, ‘Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale’, 189.

<sup>63</sup> Brown, ‘Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale’, 189.

<sup>64</sup> CAS (Kendal) WPR/19/2/1/1 *Articles of Enquiry*. Undated, from internal evidence c. 1780.

<sup>65</sup> Brown, ‘Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale’, 188-90.

<sup>66</sup> *Record of Church Furnishings*, (NADFAS), 102.



John Hutton Fisher, in post from 1831 to 1862, got into serious financial difficulties, and the living was sequestered during his vicariate.<sup>67</sup> 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.<sup>68</sup> 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 Square. He was an honorary chaplain to Queen Victoria and an original member of the Alpine Club.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup>

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.<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> 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.<sup>73</sup>

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.<sup>74</sup> It was now

---

<sup>67</sup> Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today*, 113.

<sup>68</sup> Brown, 'Vicars of Kirkby Lonsdale', 190-1.

<sup>69</sup> *Annals Today* 113-4

<sup>70</sup> A. F. Hort (rev. H. C. G. Matthew), 'John Llewelyn Davies (1826-1916)', *ODNB*.

<sup>71</sup> Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 219.

<sup>72</sup> CAS (Kendal) WPR 19/2/1/1 Articles of Enquiry 1808

<sup>73</sup> TNA, HO 129/575 (1851 Religious Census)

<sup>74</sup> *London Gazette* 23 Sep. 1938

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.<sup>75</sup> The local name for this team ministry which involved seven churches was 'The Rainbow Parish'.<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup>

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;<sup>78</sup> Father John Turner, Roman Catholic parish priest from 1996 to 2005, regularly attended Sunday evensong at St. Mary's.<sup>79</sup> Numerous other examples of collaboration include a Good Friday procession through the town in 2012 combining the members of all three churches.<sup>80</sup> 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

---

<sup>75</sup> Order in Council 18 Feb 1976. Thanks to Eleanor Scott and Jean Hardman, Church House, Carlisle, for help with this information.

<sup>76</sup> Later Preston Patrick was included, but the name continued to be used.

<sup>77</sup> Order in Council 18 Feb 1976

<sup>78</sup> Kirkby Lonsdale Parish Leaflet, July 1966.

<sup>79</sup> M. J. Dugdale, *What Time is Mass?* pamphlet (2012), 38.

<sup>80</sup> Local information.

be.’<sup>81</sup> This was the last flicker of the building’s original charitable purpose, which was finally extinguished in 1551.<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> In 1692 it was said to have been recently demolished by Richard Bailiff,<sup>84</sup> perhaps as a source of building stone when Tearnside Hall was rebuilt by the Bailiff family.<sup>85</sup>

### ***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.<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup>

### *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.<sup>88</sup> 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

---

<sup>81</sup> R. P. Brown, ‘The Chantries of Kirkby Lonsdale’, *CW* 2 xxvii (1927), 54-99.

<sup>82</sup> *Rec. Kend.* II, 344.

<sup>83</sup> 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.

<sup>84</sup> Ewbank, *Antiquary*, 24.

<sup>85</sup> See above, Introduction.

<sup>86</sup> Lancashire Archives (Preston) ARR/15/40, Compert Book 1665. He was not the master of the Grammar School, who was Richard Garthwaite 1656-1670.

<sup>87</sup> Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 219.

<sup>88</sup> *The Lonsdale Magazine*, August 1820

and Whitehaven.<sup>89</sup> Meetings in Kirkby Lonsdale were first held in a house in Mitchelgate; it was demolished when Bective Road was cut through.<sup>90</sup> In 1828 a new meeting house was built off the New Road.<sup>91</sup> Owing to the steep slope of the ground, the large room was built with two small dwellings underneath. In 1851, a congregation of about 70 met three times on Sundays.<sup>92</sup> The chapel was mentioned in local directories until 1858,<sup>93</sup> but had gone by 1873.<sup>94</sup>

### *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.<sup>95</sup> 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.<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup> In 1798 James Coates, a prosperous twinespinner, was granted a certificate to use a building next his house as a meeting place for dissenters.<sup>98</sup> Later he sold a piece of his garden to a group of Methodist trustees to erect a Wesleyan Methodist chapel,<sup>99</sup> 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 1893<sup>100</sup> and again by

---

<sup>89</sup> T. Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches* (Keighley 1930), 33.

<sup>90</sup> *The Lonsdale Magazine*, August 1820.

<sup>91</sup> 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.

<sup>92</sup> TNA, HO 129/575 (1851 Religious Census).

<sup>93</sup> Kelly, *Dir. Westmd* (1858), 38.

<sup>94</sup> Kelly, *Dir. Westmd* (1873), 928.

<sup>95</sup> *Journal and Diaries of John Wesley*, ed. W. R. Ward and R. P. Hertznerater (Nashville 2003), vol. 23, p. 484, vol. 24, p. 244.

<sup>96</sup> Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 219.

<sup>97</sup> CAS (Kendal), WPR/19/2/1/1: *Answers to enquiries from Chester*, undated copy during Marwood Place's vicariate (1766-91).

<sup>98</sup> *Rec Kend.* III, 287

<sup>99</sup> 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.

<sup>100</sup> CAS (Kendal), WDFC/M2/49.

considerable enlargement and rearrangement of the premises in 2003.<sup>101</sup>

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.<sup>102</sup> For a short period, from 1929 to 1938, the church had a resident minister,<sup>103</sup> but the 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.<sup>104</sup>

### *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.<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup> 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.<sup>107</sup> 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

---

<sup>101</sup> Local inf.

<sup>102</sup> Inf. Pat Hanson.

<sup>103</sup> T. P. Bryer, *A History of Methodism in Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedburgh* (Kendal 1987), 35.

<sup>104</sup> Inf. Pat Hanson and members of the congregation.

<sup>105</sup> Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches*, 33-4.

<sup>106</sup> TNA, HO 129/575 (Religious Census 1851).

<sup>107</sup> Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches*.

treasurer, indicates an unsustainably small congregation.<sup>108</sup> The church finally closed in 1965, and in 1966 was sold to the Roman Catholics.<sup>109</sup>

### *Roman Catholic*

There were seven Papists in Kirkby Lonsdale in the early eighteenth century but only two in 1779.<sup>110</sup> These were reported to be an innkeeper and a watchmaker.<sup>111</sup> 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,<sup>112</sup> 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.<sup>113</sup>

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.<sup>114</sup> 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.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Whitehead, *Dales Congregational Churches*. Apart from this reference, no documentation has been found, and is presumed destroyed.

<sup>109</sup> CAS (Kendal), WDEC/C7/Acc 2597

<sup>110</sup> Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 131, 219.

<sup>111</sup> *Articles of Enquiry* Marwood Place 1766-91

<sup>112</sup> St Mary's (Hornby) Diary and Records 1919-2012, quoted in M. J. Dugdale, 'What Time is Mass?' (n.d.)

<sup>113</sup> Inf. M. J. Dugdale.

<sup>114</sup> Pearson *et al*, *Annals Today* 363-4

<sup>115</sup> Dugdale, 'What time is Mass?' 37-8

In 2005, on the retirement of John Turner, the diocese decided to run the church once more from Hornby, now with Caton as well.<sup>116</sup> There was a Sunday morning mass, and one also on Thursdays, Saturdays and Holy Days.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Dugdale, *What time is Mass?* 41-2

<sup>117</sup> Information in the church.