

CCHT Newsletter



No. 52 Spring 2025

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

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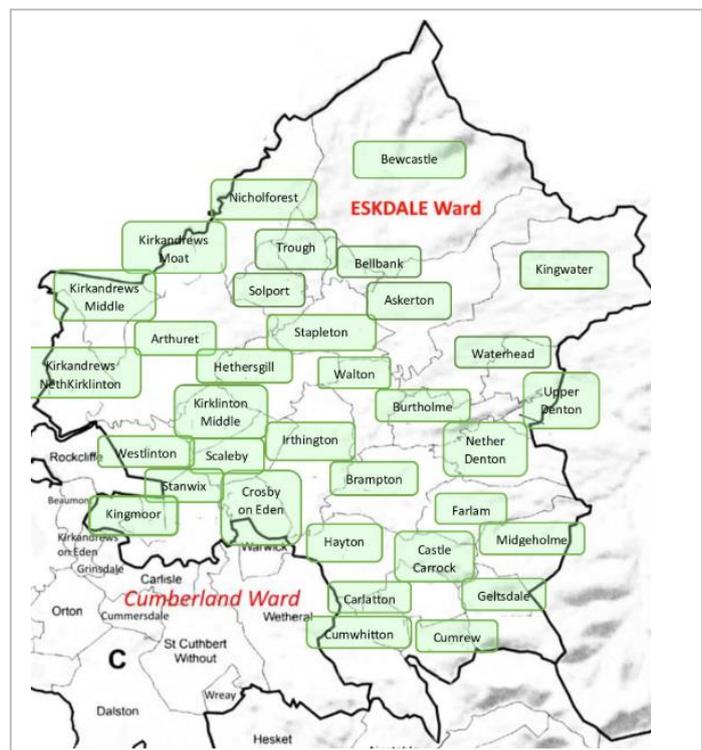
CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND
ANTIQUARIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



CCHT AGM

The CCHT AGM was held at Penrith Methodist Church on 11th March. It was held earlier in the year than usual in order to match the change of the Trust's financial year to run from 1 October, which better aligns with funding of the core project activities at Lancaster University. It was noted that this year will see the publication of our first Red Book, covering Lonsdale Ward. This will be the 250th Red Book to be published since the inception of the Victoria County History in 1899. We are planning for a launch event in Kirkby Lonsdale on 23rd September. It was reported that the Trust currently is in a healthy financial position and all active members have now paid their 2025 subscriptions. The Chairman informed members that the Trust was actively pursuing the employment of freelance Administrative Support to help with the administration of membership. Bill Shannon reported that the website was taking around 5,000 sessions per month resulting in a year-end figure of over sixty thousand.

Over the next funding triennium (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2028), the VCH project will focus on two further Red Books. We will aim to complete and publish the Red Book for Lancashire North of the Sands, covering Furness and Cartmel, for which we have received funding from CWAAS. We also plan to complete a full draft, prior to peer review, for Eskdale Ward in northern Cumbria. This will be the first Red Book for the historic county of Cumberland in the modern era.



MA Student Placement with CCHT

We are delighted that Rebecca Brown, an MA History student at Lancaster University, who is undertaking a placement with CCHT this term. Rebecca is helping us to develop an educational resource to complement the Red Book launch. This resource will align with the National Curriculum for History at KS1 and KS2.

Chris Donaldson interviewed Becky about her historical interests and her work on the placement.

Q1. What got you interested in studying History, and what sparked your interest in our region's history in particular?

I have wanted to study History since reading Vile Victorians in the Horrible Histories series; I remember begging my mum to buy me a Victorian maid outfit and following the 'daily routine of a scullery maid' as best I could. I'm sure my parents weren't complaining!

My interest in Cumbrian history is more recent, developing after I moved to Carlisle in 2023 and spent my days off either walking on the fells, or helping with the collections at Keswick Museum. As a landscape densely layered with cultural meaning I found the Lake District fascinating, being particularly inspired by one woman's 1894 account of a Lakeland walking tour with friends. Drawn to her descriptions of the land, the routes taken, and how much she hated her heavy backpack, I began to think about the practicalities of, and responses towards, land access and walking in nineteenth century Cumbria.

Q2. You're completing a placement with the VCH of Cumbria this term. What's the focus of your placement? What will you be producing?

My placement revolves around community engagement, and I will be using the upcoming Lonsdale Red Book, alongside historical sources, to develop resource packs and activities on Lonsdale for local primary schools. Working alongside teachers, and adhering to the national curriculum, these resources are intended to spark pupils' curiosity about landscape and built heritage of Lonsdale, encouraging them to engage in narratives of change and continuity.



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VCH Director Chris Donaldson and I were lucky enough to visit St Mary's Primary School in Kirkby Lonsdale at the start of February, being particularly inspired by the creative, expressive ways (did someone say chocolate brownies?) in which pupils were encouraged to interpret the Maya civilisation. This placement is a unique opportunity to interpret the Red Book for such an audience, extending the reach of the publication, and providing a rich historical grounding in a place that pupils already know and love.

Q3. What else are you busy with at University this term?

It's a busy term: for the next few months, I am working with the VCH and producing a reflective report on the process, whilst also completing a module on critical heritage studies which provides the necessary theoretical groundwork for my placement.

I am also taking a 'spatial history' module, which primarily uses computer mapping software to ask questions of the relationship between space and time in history. For this module, I am currently looking at historic footpath data on nineteenth century Scottish OS maps (a fantastic array of historic maps is available through the *National Library of Scotland* website, for anyone interested!).

Interesting Facts on Cumbria

After meeting our target of gathering 100 Interesting Facts in the autumn, Bill Shannon has been busy adding even more. Four new facts were added in January, covering highly varied topics: the Pensioner Monks of Shap Abbey; Catherine Parr; Kendal Mint Cake; and the rather odd tale of Barnacles and the Barnacle Goose. In the past, people thought Barnacle Geese did not hatch from eggs like other birds – but emerged from barnacles, at places like Piel Island!



In February, Bill added information about the cloth called Kendal Green; Black Combe and the Ordnance Survey; and the manufacture of Sulphuric Acid on Copperas Hill near Workington. This was followed by a piece on Ousby and its status as the only 'Thankful Village' in Cumbria, so-called because it lost no-one to the First World War. There is also an item on the history of the Co-op and how the closure of Millom Co-op in 1969 led the Co-operative Permanent Building Society to change its name to Nationwide.

You can see our full list of Interesting Facts here:

<https://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/full-list-interesting-facts>

VCH Training and Support

Over the coming months, Sarah Rose, will be speaking at several workshops organised by VCH Central Office, in order to help new county projects around the UK recruit and train volunteers. This includes VCH Day itself, on 15 May, where our work on the built environment in Kirkby Lonsdale will be used as an example at a training event.

Closer to home, a visit has been arranged for our own volunteers to the Armit Museum and Library in May, in order to learn more about their collections:

<https://www.armitt.com/>

WWII and the North West

The Regional Heritage Centre and Lancaster Military Heritage Group will be holding a Study Day themed around 'The Second World War and the North West'. The event is designed to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the end of the War. It will take place in the Library Events Space, Lancaster University on Saturday 24th May. Full details, including how to register can be found on the RHC's Website: [The Second World War and the North West, Saturday 24 May, 9:00am - Lancaster University](#)

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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