

Victoria County History of Cumbria Project: Work in Progress

Interim Draft

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Parish/township: **BARBON**

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INTRODUCTION

Description and location

Barbon is a rural township, in shape a long rectangle lying east and west, on the east side of the river Lune within the ancient parish of Kirkby Lonsdale, bordered on the north by Middleton and on the south by Casterton. In the eastern part of the township the land rises very steeply in spectacular fells, the highest points of which is Crag Hill (682m./2237 ft.) at the eastern extremity of High Fell to the south of the Barbon Beck, and Castle Knott (500 m./1640 ft.) to the north. Barbon Beck runs through the length of the township, through the deepening valley of Barbondale, hemmed in by a steep northern side as far as Barbon village, and thence in a less rapid decline through the flatter lands towards the Lune, which it ultimately joins below Beckfoot Farm. The township's western boundary follows the river Lune. Two lesser watercourses define parts of the township's northern and southern boundaries, Eller Beck on the north, and Little Aygill Beck on the south. The eastern boundary of the township, which seems to have been defined in 1278 by an agreement between Sir Roger de Lasceles and the lord of Dent,¹ for about half its length is also defined by a watercourse, Short Gill, a tributary of Barbon Beck, the remainder formed by an arbitrary line across the moors from the northern watershed near Calf Top to the top of Crag Hill where it meets the boundary with Casterton. A boundary stone called Hanging Stone stands on the border with Yorkshire on the slope of Calf Top at about 450m./1476 ft.

The township takes its name (recorded as 'Berebrun' in 1086) from the watercourse running through it. It has been interpreted as Old English *berabrun* ('stream of the bear'), but this is very doubtful. Although the Romans drew on Britain for their supply of bears, there is no evidence

¹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 367-8.

for the survival of bears in England later than the Roman occupation, and it is more likely that the name derives from the Old Norse *bjorr-brunnr*, ‘beaver stream’.²

Landscape

The western section of the township is underlain by siltstones and mudstones of the Silurian era. Siltstones of the Kirkby Moor group underlie the lowland area to the west of the village, while Coniston Group rocks form the steep-sided fells flanking Barbondale. Between the two, in the vicinity of the village, the bedrock is the basal conglomerates of the Carboniferous series. By contrast, the high fells at the eastern end of the township, east of Fell House, are formed of Carboniferous limestones and associated strata, and contain stretches of limestone pavement. Near the river the soil is river alluvium, deep, coarse and loamy, providing good cattle pasture.³ There is a narrow strip of sand and gravel on the river foreshore, from which three landholders are allowed the right of collection for purposes of repair and maintenance.⁴ The township covers 4261 acres (724 ha.)⁵ of which the Tithe Award of 1840⁶ shows that no more than half (2034 acres/823 ha.) was in private ownership and cultivation, all in the western part of the township on the lower land near the river. The eastern side of the township comprises Barbon Low Fell (660 acres; 267 ha), which remains as unenclosed common land, and Barbon High Fell (993 acres; 402 ha), together accounting for over 1,650 acres (668 ha).⁷ An inquest of 1612⁸ shows a very similar picture of a township divided into two halves: of 2,220 acres listed, 1,000 were described as ‘furze and heath’, 500 arable, 500 pasture and 100 meadow. Nor has the pattern changed greatly in the twenty-first century: the cultivated and inhabited part of Barbon lies between the river and the 150m. (492 ft.) contour; above that, to the east, the land is mainly used for rough sheep pasture and recreational walking and scrambling, the only habitations being Fell House, a farm lying two miles out of the village in the Barbon Beck valley, and Barbon Manor high on the hill to the north of Barbon village.

² PNWI, 23.

³ *Soils of England and Wales: Sheet 1* (Soil Survey of England and Wales. Harpenden 1983).

⁴ Cumbria County Council: Commons Register, CL 119 (Westmorland).

⁵ Bulmer *Dir. Westmd*, 1906, 344. The extent is that of the civil parish. It is noted that the ecclesiastical parish was slightly smaller, at 4204 acres, but not where or why the discrepancy arose.

⁶ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/239.

⁷ Cumbria County Council, Commons Register, CL 55 (Westmorland). The registration of Barbon High Fell (CL 164) as common land had been objected to by Lord Shuttleworth in 1972; it was de-registered in 1980: Commons Commissioner’s decision, 262/D/264 (online at www.acraew.org.uk).

⁸ *Rec. Kend.* II, 370.

Settlement

Barbon is named as a settlement before the Conquest⁹ and seems always to have had some importance among the townships making up the parish of Kirkby Lonsdale, possibly because it possessed an early chapel of ease.¹⁰ It is the only one marked on the map in Camden's *Britannia*.¹¹ Besides individual farmsteads, there were originally three clusters of dwellings: High and Low Beckfoot, and Barbon itself. The size of these clusters and their relative importance in earlier times is not easy to ascertain, as neither the Hearth Tax listing of 1670, nor that of 1674,¹² shows any division into settlements. Fewer than forty dwellings paid in those two years, but those not paying are not recorded, and an inquest of 1612 mentions 50 messuages and ten cottages.¹³ Forty estates paid Land Tax in 1773.¹⁴

All three settlements could claim some importance: from medieval times Low Beckfoot had the mill,¹⁵ the parsonage was near High Beckfoot until 1872,¹⁶ Barbon village seems to have had a church already in the thirteenth century,¹⁷ and a school in the sixteenth.¹⁸ By 1840¹⁹ the situation had changed. Although the Tithe Map shows a number of buildings at both High and Low Beckfoot, the former consisted of two farms only, the latter of a cottage, a smallholding and Beckfoot farm, which included the mill and three 'houses', probably empty buildings which had once been dwellings. In 2014 there were still two farms at High Beckfoot, while the lower hamlet had reduced to two cottages and the mill building altered to a residence.

Meanwhile, Barbon village grew in size and importance. By the age of the buildings, it seems that originally it consisted of little more than a few scattered farms and an uneven row of about eight dwellings facing the road to Casterton. One of these is called 'Heart of the Town' a name dating from at least the early eighteenth century.²⁰ The coming of the railway in 1861 led to expansion, both in dwellings and in shops to serve the population.²¹ The number of houses rose after the First and Second World Wars. The new dwellings were mainly built on individual plots

⁹ Below, 'Landownership'.

¹⁰ Below, 'Religious History'.

¹¹ Camden, *Brit.* (1st edn, 1586).

¹² C. Phillips, C. Ferguson, A. Wareham (eds.), *Westmorland Hearth Tax*, British Record Society Hearth Tax Series VI/CWAAS Record Series XIX (2008) [hereafter *Hearth Tax*], 181, 204.

¹³ *Rec. Kend.* II, 370.

¹⁴ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT/1773.

¹⁵ *Rec. Kend.* II, 369.

¹⁶ Below, 'Religious History'.

¹⁷ Below, 'Religious History'.

¹⁸ Below, 'Social History'.

¹⁹ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/239.

²⁰ Lancs. Archives (Preston), WRW/L Will of John Garnett

²¹ Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd* 1906, 346.

until, after the railway track was finally removed in 1967, the station site was used for a group of fourteen bungalows, and in 2001 eight houses were built on a field in the middle of the village belonging to Yew Tree Farm. The parish council's position in 2013 was that it would like to see a development of perhaps four affordable homes, but acquiring land and interesting a builder in such a proposition was thought not to be easy.²² In 1829 Barbon was categorised as a 'neat, pleasant village'²³ a summing up which has remained appropriate.

Population and social character

In 1674 39 households paid hearth tax, suggesting a population of c.180, but the list does not include those households which were excused tax. The majority of taxpayers (25) had more than one hearth.²⁴ Daniel Fleming's listing of the inhabitants in 1695²⁵ for tax purposes showed 30 properties containing 105 persons, though it is doubtful whether all the children were included. There were also nine bachelors above 25 years of age, with no indication whether any of them owned their own property, and 48 'poor'. In 1801 the population was recorded as 242, and 348 in 1821; no reason has been found for this sharp rise.²⁶ The peak of population (364) in 1861 was associated with the building of the North Western Railway's branch line from Ingleton to Tebay, but it declined again, falling to 274 by 1911 and continuing to drift lower. In 1991 it was 208.²⁷ Of the three large houses of the nineteenth century, Underley and Barbon Manor had little effect on the social character of the township. For the second half of the nineteenth century, Underley was inhabited by a tenant farmer. In 1901, there was a skeleton staff which seems to indicate that family use was occasional. Barbon Manor was inhabited by a gamekeeper, and was presumably opened up for the shooting season.²⁸ Whelprigg was the only large house with a resident family.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the farming community diminished, to be replaced by commuters and people retiring to the country. The use of private cars resulted in the loss of public services, but the introduction of people with more leisure also resulted in a flourishing social life centring on a large and well-appointed village hall. Kirkby Lonsdale, three miles away, was the nearest centre for most shopping and other services.

²² Inf. from M. Kingsbury, clerk to Parish Council (2013).

²³ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 690.

²⁴ *Hearth Tax*, 124.

²⁵ CAS (Kendal), WD/Ry/4/4/3/9.

²⁶ Possibly an error: all other indications show stability until later in the nineteenth century.

²⁷ *Census*.

²⁸ *Census*.

Communications

The main road, now the A683, was built, probably from a narrow lane, in 1774 as a turnpike between Sedbergh and Kirkby Lonsdale.²⁹ It runs across the township between two other north-south routes, the old Beckfoot road to the west and the road from Casterton to Barbon village to the east. North of Barbon Beck, the turnpike followed the line of the Roman road between Burrow-in-Lonsdale and Carlisle which also crossed the township, and which at one point near the border with Casterton³⁰ is marked by a stone about a metre in height, carrying an incised cross, of a type not uncommon in medieval times.³¹

The western route, now in some places no more than a footpath, leaves the A683 at Lowfields and rejoins it at Blackbeck Bridge in Middleton, connecting on its way the settlements of Lowfields, Low and High Beckfoot in Barbon, and Treasonfield in Middleton. It crosses the Barbon Beck below High Beckfoot by means of a packhorse bridge, only 2 ft.5 in. (72.5 cm.) between the parapets and 4 ft. (120 cm.) wide overall. This bridge has a single span of 23 ft. (7 m.) and already in 1729 was recommended for careful preservation as being unique in the barony of Kendal.³² It may have been built c.1671, when John Hardy of Beckfoot's debts included 22s. 4d. towards 'The bridge'.³³ Barbon village does not lie on the route of the turnpike, but a short distance to the east, on a side road which follows Barbondale and leads over the hills to Yorkshire, descending into the Dent valley at Gawthrop. Where this road leaves the A683, the Barbon Beck is crossed by Hodge Bridge, possibly dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth century.³⁴

When the 'Little North-western Railway' was planned, Barbon sent a petition signed by 75 inhabitants, headed by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, to the company to request a local station, as they understood the nearest would be at Cowan Bridge, four miles away.³⁵ In 1875 the Earl of Bective completed a road bridge³⁶ across the river Lune and a driveway across the fields to allow his many important guests at Underley³⁷ to catch the train at Barbon. The line closed to

²⁹ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/TT/Sedbergh.

³⁰ At SD 627 810.

³¹ P. Graystone *Walking Roman Roads in Lonsdale and the Eden Valley* (Lancaster, 2002), 6.

³² *Rec. Kend.* III, 297.

³³ Lancs. Archives (Preston), WRW/L.

³⁴ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 35.

³⁵ CAS (Kendal), WDSO/108/5/11/41. Their argument that the parish of Dent, and the inhabitants of Mansergh and Lupton 'when the river Lune is fordable' would all benefit, was a tenuous one, but they got their station.

³⁶ Datestones 1872/1875 on the parapets of the bridge.

³⁷ See Kirkby Lonsdale.

passenger traffic in 1954, and to goods traffic in 1965.³⁸ At the beginning of the twenty-first century the only public transport was one bus to and from Kirkby Lonsdale on Thursday, market day.

LANDOWNERSHIP

Manor of Barbon

On the eve of the Conquest Earl Tostig held three carucates in Barbon, one of the vills belonging to Whittington (Lancs.) There is no information as to how this holding descended or was re-allocated after his death at Stamford Bridge in 1066, but a century later, shortly before 1200, a grant of land in Middleton to the canons of Cockersand gives the donor as Richard of Barbon ('de Berebrun').³⁹ He may have been from a minor branch of the Lowther family, as in 1195 he held six bovates from that family for a rent of one pound of pepper at Christmas, and it has been suggested that these easy terms indicate a family relationship.⁴⁰ This gift to Cockersand was confirmed in the mid-thirteenth century by Roger de Lasceles, who held the manor until at least 1292.⁴¹ He was the great-grandson of the original donor, whose mother Alice or Amice of Barbon had inherited and married into the de Lasceles family.⁴² Her husband, Thomas (d. 1239),⁴³ son of Roger de Lasceles of Escrick near York, held the manor of the Richmond fee by wardship, cornage, and relief,⁴⁴ which descended through some eight generations of the Lasceles family until shortly before 1450, when Margaret, daughter and heir of Roger Lasceles, married James Pickering of Killington.⁴⁵ Their son, another James, predeceased her, and her grandson Sir Christopher Pickering inherited in 1498. His heir was a daughter, Anne, who had at least one son by her second husband, Sir Henry Knevet, and more children by her third, John Vaughan. During Anne's lifetime the Yorkshire estates were settled on the Knevet family, while her eldest son by her third marriage, Francis Vaughan of Sutton-upon-Derwent in Yorkshire, was allocated the manor of Barbon at about the same time. He immediately resettled the manor on trustees for the benefit of his mother during her lifetime. She died a year later, in 1582.⁴⁶ The manor is said

³⁸ G. O. Holt, *Regional Histories of the Railways of Great Britain: Vol. 10, The North-West*, 177-180.

³⁹ *Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey* (Chetham Society NS 57, 1905), 926-7.

⁴⁰ F. W. Ragg 'Early Lowther and de Louthers,' *CW2* 16 (1915-16), 110.

⁴¹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 368.

⁴² *Cockersand Cart.*, 927.

⁴³ Known as Thomas de Magneby. The family used both names until about 1300. *Rec. Kend.* II, 365.

⁴⁴ *Cal. Pat.* XVI, 675.

⁴⁵ *Rec. Kend.* II, 365-6.

⁴⁶ *Rec. Kend.* II, 366.

to have been briefly owned by John Middleton of Middleton Hall, before being acquired, possibly as the result of a mortgage foreclosure,⁴⁷ by the Shuttleworths.⁴⁸

By 1588 the manor had come to Sir Richard Shuttleworth (d.1599), of Gawthorpe and Smithills in Lancashire, serjeant at law and chief justice of Chester, seized of the Barbon estate by his charter dated 1596. In spite of the distance from Gawthorpe (about 50 miles/80 km.), the estate was a profitable investment: the annual court expenses were reckoned in shillings while the yearly income from the park and sheep pasture at Barbon totalled c. £53.⁴⁹ By 1612 the manor appears to have covered the whole of Barbon township including the small amount of land and pasture given to Cockersand Abbey by various members of the Barbon family in the thirteenth century,⁵⁰ re-absorbed after the Reformation.

The first Shuttleworth owner was unmarried and his nephew Richard (d. 1669), son of his brother Thomas, inherited.⁵¹ He was followed by a son and a grandson, both called Richard.⁵² One of these paid hearth tax in 1674 on a modest house in Barbon with two hearths, which was presumably the residence of an agent, since the family continued to live at Gawthorpe.⁵³ Following in the direct line was another Richard, M.P. for Lancaster in ten parliaments between 1683 and 1749, who in 1716 enfranchised his tenants,⁵⁴ keeping no farms but only the steep and barren land on the north side of Barbon Beck, and a small amount on the slopes of Barbon Low Fell, unsuitable for tillage, but good for sheep grazing.⁵⁵ His son Richard (1715-1773) was also a Lancashire M.P. from 1741 to 1768.

Two generations later, Robert Shuttleworth (1784-1818) died young, leaving an infant daughter Janet as sole heir. In 1842 she married Sir James Kay (1804-1877), secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, who on his marriage abandoned the civil service and became a landowner, changing his name by deed poll to Kay-Shuttleworth.⁵⁶ At that time the estate covered 960 acres (389 ha) in the township, consisting of one farm, Fell House, and the high

⁴⁷ *Antiquary on Horseback*, 28-9.

⁴⁸ Perhaps because for several generations the heads of the Shuttleworth family were all called Richard, confusion has arisen as to the date of transfer. *Rec. Kend* II, 370 confirms their ownership in 1612 but in *Rec. Kend* II, 364 Farrer states that the first owner was the Sir Richard (d. 1687).

⁴⁹ *House and Farm Accounts of the Shuttleworths of Gawthorpe*, ed. J. Harland (Chetham Soc. Old ser. 35, 1856), vol i, 96.

⁵⁰ *Cockersand Cart*, 927-9.

⁵¹ *Rec. Kend*. II, 371.

⁵² *Antiquary on Horseback*, 29.

⁵³ *Hearth Tax*, 181.

⁵⁴ N&B, I, 251.

⁵⁵ Estate maps: with thanks to Lord Shuttleworth.

⁵⁶ R. J. W. Selleck, 'Shuttleworth, Sir James Phillips Kay (1804-1877)', *ODNB*.

land on the north side of Barbon Beck,⁵⁷ which he developed as a recreational estate with a shooting lodge, Barbon Manor, high on the fellside. This, described variously as an 'Italianate villa' and 'a small French town hall',⁵⁸ was designed by E. M. Barry and built in 1863,⁵⁹ by which time the Clapham to Lowgill branch of the North Western Railway provided convenient access.⁶⁰ Originally of three bays with cast-iron balconies and a mansard roof, the house was considerably extended in 1893, and reduced again about 1940 when a tower was removed.⁶¹

Sir James' Kay-Shuttleworth's son Ughtred (1844-1939), M.P. for Clitheroe 1885-1902, was created Lord Shuttleworth in the latter year, in recognition of his various public offices. The family suffered very badly in the first and second world wars: both the first Lord Shuttleworth's sons, Lawrence and Edward, were killed in 1917. Lawrence's two sons, Richard and Ronald, the second and third Lords Shuttleworth, were killed in 1940 and 1942. Edward's son Charles, fourth Lord Shuttleworth, inherited from his grandfather and died in 1974, when his son, Charles, fifth Lord Shuttleworth, inherited.⁶²

Other Estates

Another considerable estate was centred on a house at Low Barns, or Lowfields, later renamed Underley Grange. Some distance from Barbon village, it lay on the road through the hamlets of High and Low Beckfoot. The present handsome house was built by James Harrison in 1770,⁶³ but the family appears to have been there for several generations, as James Harrison 'senior' died at Low Barns in 1727.⁶⁴ By 1773 this was the second largest landholding in the township, paying Land Tax of two-thirds of that paid by the Shuttleworth estate, (£2 3s. against £2 19s) considerably more than any other estate in Barbon.⁶⁵ In 1809, James Harrison was still a large landholder,⁶⁶ but by 1830, although a later James was the tenant,⁶⁷ the estate had been sold to Alexander Nowell of Underley in Kirkby Lonsdale.⁶⁸ In 1840 the estate of 350 acres (142 ha) consisted of three farms, Lowfields, Beckside and Beckfoot.⁶⁹ In 1910, by then part of the

⁵⁷ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/239.

⁵⁸ Hyde and Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 127.

⁵⁹ Datestone above the main door.

⁶⁰ Below, 'Economic History'.

⁶¹ Hyde and Pevsner *Cumbria* 127-8.

⁶² *Burke's Peerage* (105th ed.1970) and family inf.

⁶³ Datestone reported to be in an outbuilding.

⁶⁴ CAS (Kendal), W/PR/19.

⁶⁵ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT/1773 (Lonsdale Ward).

⁶⁶ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT/1809 (Lonsdale Ward).

⁶⁷ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT/1830 (Lonsdale Ward).

⁶⁸ CAS (Kendal), WD/U/3/3.

⁶⁹ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/239.

Cavendish-Bentinck Underley estate in Kirkby Lonsdale, it had enlarged to 500 acres (202 ha),⁷⁰ and so continued into the twenty-first century.⁷¹

The third estate of any size, Whelprigg, is named as an estate in 1545 when it was acquired by Francis Tunstall esq., from Thomas Curwen, gent.⁷² It then included three messuages and fifty acres, but in the nineteenth century the name was applied to a modest twenty acres of land with one small farm.⁷³ Joseph Gibson, who held it in 1687,⁷⁴ was of an ancient yeoman family. In 1773 his descendant, another Joseph, paid only five shillings in Land Tax,⁷⁵ but William, a younger son, flourished as a banker in Kirkby Lonsdale and his son Joseph inherited Whelprigg in 1833. The house, which had been rebuilt in 1815⁷⁶ from an older one⁷⁷ was again rebuilt in 1834 by George Webster in 'Jacobethan' style, with gabled mullioned windows and canted bays.⁷⁸ The estate was also gradually enlarged, including land in neighbouring townships.⁷⁹ The Gibson name died out with the death of Joseph Gibson (1844-1885) and the estate descended through his sister Mary Anne (1843-1903) who married Henry Ernest Hollins of Mansfield (1842-1920). Their son Joseph (1877-1953) retook the name of Gibson by royal licence in 1898.⁸⁰ By 1910 he owned some 330 acres (136 ha) in Barbon, comprising six farms and thirteen village houses, but no longer lived at Whelprigg which was let.⁸¹ In 2013 the family, now known as Hollins-Gibson, were still owners of some individual houses, and one member lived in the village. In 1924 Joseph Gibson sold Whelprigg to the Bowring family, who continued there into the twenty-first century⁸²

ECONOMIC HISTORY

Barbon presents a fairly well wooded landscape on its lower ground but little of this is very old. In the seventeenth century of 2,200 acres (890 ha) listed, just 20 acres (8 ha) were wooded.⁸³ In 1840 woodland accounted for a mere 160 acres (65 ha), but with the exception of nine acres

⁷⁰ CAS (Kendal), WT/DV/2/37.

⁷¹ Inf. from Davis and Bowring, estate agents, Kirkby Lonsdale (2013).

⁷² *Rec. Kend.* II, 370.

⁷³ CAS (Kendal), WDRC/8/239.

⁷⁴ Burke, *Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland* (London 1898), I, 577.

⁷⁵ CAS (Kendal), WQ/R/LT/1773.

⁷⁶ A. Taylor, *The Websters of Kendal* (ed. J.Martin), (CWAAS Rec. Ser. XVII, Kendal, 2004), 93.

⁷⁷ Date unknown. The 1700 datestone at the back of the present house with a 'G' for the family name is not in situ, and may have been acquired by the Gibsons to establish authenticity.

⁷⁸ Taylor, *Websters of Kendal*, 93.

⁷⁹ Inf. from J. S. Hollins-Gibson, Sebergham (2013).

⁸⁰ *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1969 edn), p.239.

⁸¹ CAS (Kendal), WT/DV/2/37.

⁸² Inf. from J. S. Hollins-Gibson (2013).

⁸³ Inquisition post mortem Ric. Shuttleworth, kt, 1612: *Rec. Kend.* II, 370.

along the bank of the river, part of the Underley estate, this was made up of small stands, typically a few perches in extent, close to houses, presumably planted for shelter and amenity.

At the end of the seventeenth century there is reference to an earlier park with fallow and red deer of which nothing then remained.⁸⁴

The modern pattern of agriculture is that managed farmland lies below the 150m. contour, with some farms also having grazing rights on the common land above that height. In the thirteenth century the family of de Lasceles allowed Cockersand Abbey pasturage for several hundred sheep.⁸⁵ Sir Richard Shuttleworth's inquest of 1612 lists 500 acres arable land, 100 acres meadow, 100 acres moor and turbary, 500 acres pasture, 20 acres wood, and 1000 acres furze and heath. This division between cultivated and uncultivated land has altered little to the present day.

Throughout the seventeenth century, with few exceptions farms were small and livestock numbers low, typically between six and ten cattle and fewer than 50 sheep. Eight farmers out of a sample of 35 analysed from inventories⁸⁶ owned oxen for ploughing, five of them with a team of two, but three others with half a dozen beasts each, enough to rent teams out to those who had none. Young cattle are frequently mentioned, but no bull was recorded. Oats, barley and some hemp were grown. There seems to have been some breeding of horses: many of the inventories include three or four, too many for the needs of the average small holding, and some are specifically labelled as 'staggs'.⁸⁷ Bryan Russell who died in 1646 was a beekeeper on a considerable scale: he had six quarts of honey in his possession, and left to a friend or relation, who possibly lived nearer to the moorland heather, 'all the bees which are now at her house'.

In earlier times there may have been agreed rules for the use of the grazing land, but if so over time they were ignored, and by the beginning of the twentieth century Barbon Low Fell was badly overstocked.⁸⁸ A farmers' and landholders' meeting in 1921 agreed a stinting regime.⁸⁹ It was decided that 935 sheep could be stinted, and that the occupiers had the right to 5/8 of a sheep per £1 rateable value of their agricultural land. It was also laid down that three geese equalled one sheep, while a horse equalled six sheep. There was no rule for cows, which suggests that this high pasture was not used for cattle. The land was to be cleared of stock for

⁸⁴ *Antiquary on Horseback*, 30. No earlier mention of parking or disparking has been found.

⁸⁵ *Cockersand Cart.*, 926-9.

⁸⁶ Lancs. Archives (Preston), WRW/L (1586-1685).

⁸⁷ 'staggs': young, unbroken horses.

⁸⁸ Inf. from F. Hodgson, retired farmer (2013), whose family has farmed Howriggs since around 1900.

⁸⁹ Copy preserved on loose sheet of paper in Parish Council Minute Book (held by the clerk, M.

Kingsbury, 2013)

the month of March and for six weeks in November/December. A shepherd was employed, who had the right to graze his own sheep. Stintholders' meetings were held regularly in the following years but later fell into disuse.⁹⁰ Ownership of Barbon Low Fell (267 ha) was registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965 by the Underley estates, with a total of 981 stints allocated to Treasonfield (12), Lowfields (227), Box Tree (169), High Beck Foot (86), Underfell (51), Howriggs (119), Yew Tree (15), Underbank (13), Town End (30), Moorthwaite (36), Beckside (71), Whelprigg (100), Barbon Manor (55).⁹¹ Other registered use rights included the right to harvest bracken, to collect loose stones for building purposes, and to excavate 'sammel' for farm road repairs.

In 1943 Barbon contained fourteen farms.⁹² Five of them were individually owned, three of these being smallholdings. Barbon Manor, Lowfields and Whelprigg estates each owned three farms, none very large: the largest, Boxtree, on the Lowfields estate, covered 208 acres (84 ha). There was no mains electricity to any of the holdings, although most had piped water. Mechanisation was represented by two Fordson tractors. The proportion of ploughed land varied between five and twenty per cent,⁹³ oats, roots and kale being the main crops, with a little barley and a single acre of wheat. On most of the farms, twice as much land was allotted to sheep as to cattle.⁹⁴ The Shuttleworth estate of Barbon Manor included Barbon High Fell, as well as some grazing rights on the Low Fell, which enabled its two farms of Oak Tree and Fell House to keep 2,500 sheep between them.

A feature of twentieth-century farming was the annual employment for June and July of Irishmen who left their own smallholdings to help with the hay crop, a practice which died out around 1960 as the farms became mechanised.⁹⁵ In 1965 there were still thirteen working farms in the township,⁹⁶ but by 2012 there were only six: Fell House, Low Bank House, Howriggs, Oak Tree, Beckside and Beckfoot. None of them ploughed land, although grass for silage and haylage was still extensively grown. Grazing of beef cattle had replaced dairy herds. Howriggs, the last farm in dairy production, abandoned its milking herd at the beginning of the twenty-first century in favour of 12,000 free-range poultry. The cessation of cutting bracken for cattle

⁹⁰ Inf. from F. Hodgson (2013).

⁹¹ See Kirkby Lonsdale.

⁹² TNA, MAF 32/194/74.

⁹³ Above normal owing to the encouragement of wartime food production.

⁹⁴ An estimate is that an acre of grass supports 1 1/2 cows, or 3-4 sheep.

⁹⁵ Inf. from F. Hodgson (2013).

⁹⁶ CAS (Kendal), WDX/139/25: *W.I. Jubilee Scrapbook*.

bedding, and the grazing of fewer sheep, resulted in unchecked bracken growth on many high pastures.⁹⁷

There was a corn mill at Low Beckfoot, probably from very early times. In 1370 William the miller was among those listed as owing tithes.⁹⁸ In 1599 Sir Richard Shuttleworth died possessed of a water mill.⁹⁹ When William Cowert (d. 1759) was the miller, it was not a large or wealthy operation: his inventory amounted to £37, of which milling operations accounted for £2 6s.¹⁰⁰ The mill was mentioned in 1829,¹⁰¹ at which time there was also a maltster nearby, and was still working in 1851,¹⁰² but it was abandoned soon after.¹⁰³ Nothing remains of the buildings, although there are traces of the millstream and millponds. Nearby there is a mound called Mill Mire, which, according to local tradition, was once surmounted by a windmill, but this seems unlikely. The name may, however, relate in some way to the Low Beckfoot mill.

About 40 abandoned coalpits have been found on Barbon Moor.¹⁰⁴ Observation has shown the workings to be a mixture of bell pits, shafts and adits, and air photographs have shown the bellpits to range from one metre to fifteen in diameter.¹⁰⁵ The seams were thin and the coal of poor quality. Some of these were being worked in 1692 when Machell noted them although he did not visit them.¹⁰⁶ A 'coal-digger of Barbon' was married at Whittington in Lancashire in 1789.¹⁰⁷ There was still some activity in 1831 when Adam Braithwaite died at Barbon Colliery as a result of a roof fall.¹⁰⁸ Some coal may have been used domestically, but the greater use was for the burning of lime in the kilns of which there are four ruined examples in the Bullpot area.¹⁰⁹ In 1843 James Windle stated that he had 'lived in Barbon for 43 years and near Barbon and Casterton coalpits and has worked at both as a collier and a banksman ... Barbon pits of small value now worked only for use of three limekilns.'¹¹⁰ In 1861 a miner was recorded as living in Barbon, but at the age of 65 he may have been retired.¹¹¹

⁹⁷ Inf. from F. Hodgson (2013).

⁹⁸ *Rec. Kend.* II, 369.

⁹⁹ *Rec. Kend.* II, 370.

¹⁰⁰ Lancs Archives (Preston), WRW(L).

¹⁰¹ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 696.

¹⁰² Mannex, *Dir. Westmd* 1851, 359.

¹⁰³ No miller was recorded in census returns after 1871.

¹⁰⁴ M. Kelly, *Geology of the Lune & Upper Ribble Coalfields* (British Mining No. 85), 22.

¹⁰⁵ Inf. from M. Kingsbury (2013)

¹⁰⁶ *Antiquary on Horseback*, 47.

¹⁰⁷ Lancashire Parish Register Society Vol 176. Thanks to Jennifer Holt for this and the following note.

¹⁰⁸ *Lancaster Gazette*, 3 Dec. 1831.

¹⁰⁹ Inf. from D. Johnson (2013).

¹¹⁰ CAS (Kendal), WD/PP/Box 8/36. For the above paragraph thanks to M. Kingsbury.

¹¹¹ 1861 Census.

In the nineteenth century the village trades included a blacksmith, a joiner, stonemasons whose number varied with the buildings currently in progress,¹¹² and more than one small shop. No doubt there were also beer sellers, but no inn is recorded until the arrival of the railway.¹¹³ From 1861 onwards there were always railway workers living in the village, but again the numbers fluctuated, the largest number (fifteen) being recorded in that year. The censuses also indicate the importance of the railway as a link with the wider world: at different times there were trades such as coal agent, tea dealer, surveyor and machine agent. From 1861 onwards there were two cabinet makers in the village, though it is not clear if they had separate workshops. John Mattinson spent most of his life in Barbon and is buried in the churchyard. Joseph Kilbride lived there between 1886 and 1900.¹¹⁴

The pattern of village life changed gradually with the coming of motor transport. The railway, which had stopped its passenger service in 1954, finally closed to goods traffic in 1964,¹¹⁵ and in 1965 the Lunesdale Farmers' creamery, which had opened after the First World War, closed.¹¹⁶ At that time there was still a builder, general store, post office, blacksmith, provender haulier and taxi driver, as well as a resident incumbent and police constable,¹¹⁷ none of which survived at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 2013, however, a village store and coffee shop was reopened in the old Post Office building.

In 2014, industry was represented by a maker of garden furniture employing five people, established in 1999 just outside the village on the Sedbergh road, and a franchise business for boarding kennels which opened its offices in the village in 2005, employing eight people. Few of the staff of these businesses lived in the village,¹¹⁸ probably reflecting the high cost of village housing in the twenty-first century.¹¹⁹ The Station Inn had ten bedrooms, used by holiday makers, and the Underley estate ran a holiday cottage business using seven dwellings, including Underley Grange which could sleep sixteen. This, and the outdoor maintenance of the estate, employed nineteen people.¹²⁰

¹¹² Twelve in 1861, when both Barbon Manor and the railway buildings were in course of construction, seven in 1891 when the church was being built.

¹¹³ None mentioned in 1829 (Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 696), 1851 (Mannex, *Dir. Westmd*, 359) or 1861 (Census). Then 'Station Inn'.

¹¹⁴ Below, 'Religious History'.

¹¹⁵ Women's Institute, *Cumbria Village Book* (Newbury 1991).

¹¹⁶ Inf. from M. Kingsbury (2013).

¹¹⁷ CAS (Kendal), WDX/139/25: *Women's Institute Jubilee Scrapbook* 1965.

¹¹⁸ Local inf.

¹¹⁹ The estate of 16 houses on Barnrigg, once the site of the railway, is known locally as 'Quality Street'.

¹²⁰ Inf. from Mrs. C. Pease (2013).

SOCIAL HISTORY

A school was established in Barbon from an early time. A schoolmaster is recorded in the visitation of 1578.¹²¹ In 1692 Thomas Machell met Samuel Gibson, schoolmaster, a young man aged 24, who had already travelled to the Holy Land and come back with both arms tattooed.¹²² A donation of land from John Garnett of Barbon in 1721 produced £2 6s. for the teaching of four poor scholars.¹²³ It was noted in 1725 that although there had been no curate at the church for at least thirteen years, the inhabitants paid for a schoolmaster, who taught in the chapel.¹²⁴ A separate school building was built by subscription and assessment in 1815 at the same time as the new chapel;¹²⁵ some traces of it remain in outbuildings in the graveyard. In 1851 the schoolmaster was also the chapel clerk.¹²⁶ In 1867 a new school and schoolmaster's house was built, again by subscription, at the south-west corner of the village, on a site given by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth.¹²⁷ In 1946 there were plans to build a new two-class school in Barbon on a different site, for 45 pupils, taking in children from Casterton and Middleton,¹²⁸ but these plans were never implemented. The school in the neighbouring township of Middleton closed in 1952 and some children transferred to Barbon¹²⁹ which in 1970 was reported as having 26 on roll.¹³⁰ It closed in 1982, the parents of the eleven remaining children being given the option of transfer to Kirkby Lonsdale or Sedbergh.¹³¹ The buildings were adapted to dwellings.

The first recorded charity in Barbon was a gift of land in 1721 from John Garnett which produced £7 a year for the poor. In 1737 Tarndale's Close was purchased and produced £8 a year. In 1758 Margaret Hadwen left £10 which provided another nine shillings, and other small amounts made in all nearly £19 for annual distribution to about a dozen recipients.¹³² These provisions, and a charity known as the Poores Rent, from a four-acre field near Hodge Bridge, were all included in a Charity Commissioners' scheme of 1966, which set out the means by which, the value having diminished over time, all were rolled into one account, the trustees of

¹²¹ C. M. L. Bouch *Prelates and People of the Lake Counties* (Kendal, 1948), 241.

¹²² *Antiquary on Horseback*, 28-9.

¹²³ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 220.

¹²⁴ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 133.

¹²⁵ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 690.

¹²⁶ Mannex *Dir. Westmd*, 1851, 359.

¹²⁷ Bulmer *Dir. Westmd*, 1906, 344.

¹²⁸ CAS (Kendal), *Development plan for Primary and Secondary Education: County of Westmorland* (1946)

¹²⁹ CAS (Kendal), County Education Committee Minutes, 30 Oct. 1952.

¹³⁰ CAS (Kendal), County Education Committee Minutes 1970, p. 165.

¹³¹ CAS (Kendal), County Education Committee Minutes 8 Dec. 1982, p. 610.

¹³² Quoted in Charity Commissioners' scheme, 1966: copy with Mrs. A. Wightman, hon. sec. to the Trust (2013).

which were to be appointed by the parish council.¹³³ At that time the fund was used to give a Christmas gift of £10 to each of three elderly women, but after these recipients died no other needy person was identified within the township. In 2014 no use had been made of the charity money since 1995, when a grant of £50 assisted a local schoolgirl to join a group going to a drama festival in America.¹³⁴

The Rev. James Harrison,¹³⁵ among his many good works for the Barbon community, established and paid for a men's reading room in the village, which carries his initials and the date 1884. It closed in the 1960s and was then altered to a dwelling.¹³⁶

In 1921 a Women's Institute, one of the first in Westmorland, opened with gusto, thirty members deciding that nineteen of them should be on the committee. One of their earliest meetings was a social, which did not break up until midnight. The early minutes record many more whist drives, outings to Blackpool, children's sports days, picnics and other social events than the improving lectures which are commonly supposed to be the staple W.I. diet. During the Second World War the W.I. gave an opportunity to people who might otherwise have felt that they were too sheltered from reality: records show lectures on Civil Defence and First Aid, the making and selling of 700 lbs. of jam from wild fruits, £900 invested in National Savings, and the knitting of 58 pairs of socks, fourteen scarves, four pairs of mittens, nine helmets and a pair of sea boot stockings.¹³⁷

Across the later twentieth century, and particularly with the coming of the private motor car, Barbon became largely inhabited by commuters and retired people. An estimate in 2013 suggested that about seventy per cent of the population was over retirement age, and that the cost of housing ensured that most of these were of professional standing.¹³⁸ Social life flourished but local services moved to Kirkby Lonsdale, three miles away. In 2013 there was an inn and a small store but no post office, school, doctor or resident clergyman. The post office provided a hosted service for two hours a week, a police constable attended for one hour a month, and a mobile library also paid a monthly visit. At the same time the village hall,¹³⁹ built in 1926 and

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Inf. from Mrs. A. Wightman, hon. sec. to the Trust (2013).

¹³⁵ Below, 'Religious History'.

¹³⁶ Inf. from L. Thornber, chairman Barbon Parish Hall (2013).

¹³⁷ CAS Kendal, WDSO/192.

¹³⁸ Inf. from Mrs. B. Lord (2013).

¹³⁹ Presumed to have been a War Memorial Hall, but no records remain: inf. from L. Thornber, chairman (2013).

considerably enlarged and updated in 2005,¹⁴⁰ typically advertised as its regular commitments meetings of a bridge club, indoor bowls, an art class, a quilting group, a yoga class, and the embroiderers' guild.

The township increasingly provided recreation for visitors. In 1991 a nine-hole golf course was laid out on land rented from the Underley estate, on the west side of the main road, where Scaleber Lane leads to Low and High Beckfoot.¹⁴¹ The eastern end of the township, uninhabited except for the remote Fell House farm, provides a large area of Access Land for walking and picnicking, heavily used in the summer time. In the year 2011 a poll of the inhabitants resulted in a narrow majority in favour of Barbon being included in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.¹⁴²

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Although the present church dates from 1893 and incorporates nothing of any earlier building, it is clear that Barbon had a church from medieval times. Part of a late thirteenth-century capital, found in a neighbouring barn, is stored in the vestry, together with part of a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century window.¹⁴³ A church was marked on Speed's map of 1610. A bell of unknown age¹⁴⁴ was re-hung in the tower in 2001, also rescued from a neighbouring outbuilding.¹⁴⁵

A chapel at Barbon was recorded in the later sixteenth century. In 1571, the inventory of John Hardy shows a debt of 2s. to the chapel.¹⁴⁶ In 1586 Thomas Garnett of Barbon owed the chapel 10s. and desired to be buried in the chapel yard, indicating that the chapel had quasi-parochial rights.¹⁴⁷ In 1598 Henry Garsdale's will gave five shillings to the chapel masters of Barbon towards the maintenance of God's quire.¹⁴⁸ In the same year John Hardy left forty shillings towards God's service at the chapel.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁰ As recorded on the building.

¹⁴¹ *Kirkby Lonsdale Golf Club 1906-2006 the Centenary Book* ed. J. Parsons (2006). This is the fourth site for this club.

¹⁴² 89 in favour, 83 against, from 76 per cent. of the adult population: Council minutes.

¹⁴³ RCHME, *Westmorland*, 34.

¹⁴⁴ Presumably later than 1692 when Machell noticed that there was no bell. Bishop Gastrell's *Notitia* (1714-25) also remarked the absence of a bell: Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 133.

¹⁴⁵ From notes displayed in the church.

¹⁴⁶ Lancs. Archives (Preston), WRW/L/1571.

¹⁴⁷ Lancs. Archives (Preston), WRW/L/1586.

¹⁴⁸ Lancs. Archives (Preston), WRW/L/1598.

¹⁴⁹ C. F. Hardy *The Hardys of Barbon*, (London 1913), 33.

During the seventeenth century the chapel may almost have been abandoned. In 1692, although Thomas Machell remarked that it had been lately rebuilt, he also commented on the lack of wit shown by the inhabitants who had failed to take up the offer made some few years before by the lord of the manor, the Shuttleworth of the day, to endow the chapel with £5 or £6 per annum.¹⁵⁰ Bishop Gastrell's notes dismissed Barbon briefly: 'Of late years there hath been no preaching Minister'; indeed, no minister was recorded at any visitation between 1712 and 1725.¹⁵¹ The ancient salary was £2 10s per annum, which at the beginning of the eighteenth century had risen to £3 1s. 6d. That modest rise does not seem to have brought new life to the parish. Between 1726 and 1768 the vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale notified the bishop of twenty-seven brief appointments of someone 'to perform the office of a curate in my chapel at Barbon ... until he shall be otherwise provided of some ecclesiastical preferment.'¹⁵²

Two augmentations from Queen Anne's Bounty, in 1743 and 1762, laid out in land in Barbon and Kellet (Lancashire), raised the revenue to £18 4s.¹⁵³ Richard Carter was the licensed curate in 1778; the church was then in decent repair, but the parsonage house in such a poor state that shortly afterwards it was abandoned altogether.¹⁵⁴ It was replaced by a house at High Beckfoot of which nothing remains except the walls outlining the site, so the date of building is unknown, but it seems likely to have been a prompt renewal as Edward Shaw, appointed in 1779, remained at Barbon for ten years, and thereafter the appointments took a more normal course. It is not known whether the Beckfoot house was on the site of its predecessor, nor why a position should have been chosen a good mile from the church, to which the shortest route was a ford across Barbon Beck.

It was reported in 1778 that there were neither papists nor dissenters in the township, though the visitation return commented on one man 'who was first Protestant, then Quaker, next Methodist. What he is now we will not pretend to say'. There were two services and one sermon on Sundays, the Sacrament was not administered, and the catechism was expounded only in summer.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ *Antiquary on Horseback*, 28.

¹⁵¹ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 133.

¹⁵² CAS (Kendal), DRC 10, uncatalogued material concerning Barbon church. It is not known whether these appointments also involved teaching in the school.

¹⁵³ Butler, *Cumbria Parishes*, 220.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

The late-seventeenth century church measured fourteen yards long and four wide,¹⁵⁶ and was replaced in 1815, partly by subscription and partly by a rate levied on the inhabitants of the township.¹⁵⁷ The new building lasted less than eighty years before being relegated to use as a mortuary chapel, when the fourth church was erected a few yards to the south. Nothing was saved from the interior of the 1815 church but the royal arms; its porch, used as a shed, an uneven patch of ground and a pile of stones in the graveyard show that the site for the new building was moved a few yards to the south.¹⁵⁸ Paley, Austin and Paley were the architects of the present church; built in 1892 in a freely treated perpendicular style, it is regarded as one of their best.¹⁵⁹ The lectern is the work of a master carver, Joseph Kilbride (1857-1933), who lived in Barbon between 1886 and 1900, and whose work is in many other Westmorland churches and houses, including Barbon Manor. The chancel screen, organ casing and much other woodwork was also made locally, by John Mattinson, who lived and worked in the village for fifty years.¹⁶⁰ The stained glass for all but one window is by Shrigley and Hunt of Lancaster.¹⁶¹ The £3,000 cost of the church was largely borne by Lord Shuttleworth, the earl of Bective and Mrs. Eastham, widow of a Kirkby Lonsdale solicitor, who left £1,000 in her will.¹⁶² Later additions include two extra bells to make a peal of six.¹⁶³

In the 1830s there were three short incumbencies, and then Benjamin Hopkins was appointed as perpetual curate in 1842 and served for 30 years. He was a Cambridge scholar and is believed to have been the son of a Methodist minister.¹⁶⁴

James Harrison, who held the living from 1872 until his death in 1927, greatly influenced the life of the village during his long incumbency.¹⁶⁵ The son of a Kirkby Lonsdale innkeeper,¹⁶⁶ educated at Kirkby Lonsdale school¹⁶⁷ and related to the Harrison family of Lowfields,¹⁶⁸ he had considerable private money and spent much of it on Barbon, where the church and village became his life's work. He abandoned the old vicarage at Beckfoot and built a handsome new

¹⁵⁶ *Antiquary on Horseback*, 28.

¹⁵⁷ Parson & White, *Dir. C. & W.*, 690.

¹⁵⁸ A photograph displayed in the church shows it to have been a very small building, probably about the same size as the earlier one described by Machell.

¹⁵⁹ J. Price *Sharpe, Paley and Austin* (Lancaster, 1998), 89.

¹⁶⁰ Census returns.

¹⁶¹ Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 127.

¹⁶² Bulmer, *Dir. Westmd*, 1906, 344

¹⁶³ In 2003: note in the church.

¹⁶⁴ *Alum. Cantab.* vol. II (pt iii), 437.

¹⁶⁵ Below, also 'Social History' and 'Local Government'.

¹⁶⁶ In 1851 Joseph Harrison kept the 'Green Dragon': Census.

¹⁶⁷ P. W. Randell *400 Years a School*, 15.

¹⁶⁸ Above, 'Landownership'

one in the village in 1872.¹⁶⁹ During his vicariate the new church was built and he was also responsible for enlarging the churchyard, installing the tower clock, four bells, a new organ, and the lych gate.¹⁷⁰

In March 1851 the congregation was 59 at the morning service and 57 in the afternoon. The two Sunday schools attracted 45 and 50 scholars. Of the 193 sittings, 79 were free.¹⁷¹ During James Harrison's long incumbency he held two services each Sunday until about 1920, when the number was reduced to one, and a visiting curate came in to assist.¹⁷²

In 1954 the benefices of Barbon and Middleton were combined.¹⁷³ The diocese of Carlisle first mooted plans in 1969 for creating a united benefice of Kirkby Lonsdale, and in 1976 the benefice of Barbon with Middleton was part of the Order in Council which established what was locally named 'The Rainbow Parish'.¹⁷⁴ Walter Blackett, the last vicar of Barbon with Middleton, appointed in 1962, retired in 1975 under the new plans. Thereafter there was no resident cleric; a service was held every Sunday morning, the diocesan returns for 2008 showing a congregation averaging 33.¹⁷⁵

Nonconformity

In 1810 the house of Thomas Winn was licensed for a Quaker meeting.¹⁷⁶ The Methodists in Barbon celebrated 150 years of their community in 2005.¹⁷⁷ The old Wesleyan Chapel stood in the main street of the village. The memorial stone on its gable end, later removed, stated that it was laid by Rev. G. Abbott, chairman of the Carlisle District, in 1888. The foundation stones, with the names of James Armistead, William Robinson, Elizabeth Bradley and George Ambler, remain. The first £100 to build the chapel was donated by John Winster of Beechwood by his will of 1885. Middleton Moore of Grimeshill, though not a Methodist, gave some of the building stone. About the time of the First World War, the church had 30 members, perhaps its most flourishing time.¹⁷⁸ In 1931 a schoolroom was added to the building, and a list has been

¹⁶⁹ Initialled datestone 1872.

¹⁷⁰ Biographical notes in the church; Kirkby Lonsdale parish records. Lych Gate dated 1915.

¹⁷¹ TNA, HO 129/575.

¹⁷² Service books after Harrison's death for the rest of the 20th century have not been found.

¹⁷³ *London Gazette*, 8 November 1954.

¹⁷⁴ Inf. from E. Scott and J. Hardman, Church House, Carlisle (2013).

¹⁷⁵ Church House, Carlisle: diocesan returns, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ *Rec. Kend.* III, 47.

¹⁷⁷ Any official documentation before 1923 has disappeared, together with anyone who might hold memories or traditions.

¹⁷⁸ Information displayed in the church, but it is not known what sources were used.

preserved which shows 29 names of those who laid foundation stones.¹⁷⁹ Of the chapel trustees at this time, only one lived in Barbon, four in Kirkby Lonsdale and one each in Middleton, Casterton, Lupton and Sedbergh. Until the Second World War, the chapel had a regular Sunday afternoon service, with an evening service once a month, the latter abandoned in 1946. The Sunday School met regularly from 1902 to 1995, except for a ten-year gap between 1971 and 1980, when there were no children. The congregation improved the interior of the chapel in 1985, but its days were numbered. The membership declined to nine. The building was sold for conversion to a dwelling in 2008, the members recording that they wished this to be affordable housing.¹⁸⁰ When the church closed the congregation, by local agreement, moved to the north aisle of the parish church, taking their own altar table, font and cross.¹⁸¹ Methodist services were reduced to one a month,¹⁸² with a very attenuated membership, some members preferring to attend services in Sedbergh.¹⁸³

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Manorial courts were held in the sixteenth century by the Shuttleworth estate. In 1589 the estate accounts noted 6s. 8d. for ‘expenses at Barbon when the courte was kepte there.’¹⁸⁴ No other records of local government have survived until the nineteenth century. Vestry minutes from 1836¹⁸⁵ show an elaborate and time-consuming organisation, a heavy drain on the manpower of a small township. The vestry appointed six constables, a surveyor of roads who also acted as pinder, a chapel warden and two sidesmen, six overseers and a molecatcher.¹⁸⁶ Much time was expended as a different meeting was called for each appointment. These duties, and the proliferation of meetings, were gradually reduced over the next forty years. A surveyor of roads and pinder was no longer appointed after 1861. By 1870 the constables and overseers were reduced to five. In the 1890s there were four overseers of the poor, a surveyor of highways, an assistant overseer and a guardian of the poor, the last post being held by the vicar, James Harrison,¹⁸⁷ who chaired the meeting from his arrival in 1875.

¹⁷⁹ List in the parish church.

¹⁸⁰ CAS (Kendal), WDFC/M2/72.112, H6486.

¹⁸¹ As these were all moveable items, no permission was necessary beyond local agreement.

¹⁸² Notice in the church.

¹⁸³ Local information.

¹⁸⁴ *Shuttleworth Accounts I*, 52.

¹⁸⁵ CAS (Kendal), WPC 65.

¹⁸⁶ No reason has been found for the proliferation of constables and overseers.

¹⁸⁷ Above, ‘Religious History’.

Until 1888 the vestry meeting consisted of landowners and ratepayers and dealt with township as well as parochial matters. By 1894 two meetings were being held, a week apart, James Harrison chairing both, as he continued to do when in 1895 a parish council was set up with five members, meeting six times a year. The vestry meeting became an annual one, dealing only with ecclesiastical matters: the appointment of churchwardens and sidesmen, and receiving the churchwardens' accounts. Harrison resigned from the parish council in 1911, having seen the village greatly improved and modernised; the council's first action had been the establishment of a fire brigade, followed later by street lighting and the provision of a satisfactory water supply. Harrison continued to chair the vestry meeting until his death in 1927.¹⁸⁸

In the early twenty-first century, the parish council worked at a modest level: it owned nothing except six benches and the war memorial, was one of only two parish councils in Cumbria to have an unpaid clerk, and had a very small precept. Its main subjects of discussion were to do with the township's lines of communication - road surfaces, winter gritting, grass verges and footpaths - for which it passes its concerns to the county council. Other matters which exercised the parish council included disturbance by low-flying aircraft, the siting of wind turbines, and problems raised by the passing of travellers to and from Appleby horse fair annually in June.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Minutes (held by the clerk, M. Kingsbury, 2013).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.