

Newsletter

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

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VCH Project and Covid-19

As I am sure you will agree, the last few weeks have been extraordinary and challenging to say the least, and we now have to face a new way of living and working. There has already been an impact on the VCH, with the cancellation of our March drafters' meeting and the national VCH Day at the University of London, and the disruption is set to continue. Now that Lancaster University has closed, Fiona Edmonds and I are adjusting to working from home. But many of our volunteers and CCHT members have been social distancing or self-isolating for some weeks already and our thoughts are very much with you.

The CCHT AGM was due to take place on 6 May. We shall now need to make alternative arrangements and will send you further information in due course.

For those that wish to occupy their time with research, there is quite a bit you can do online. Indeed, research on the Lonsdale ward volume will be conducted over the coming weeks and months using exactly this sort of material. We will be looking to provide some further guidance on this, in addition to the resources mentioned in the *VCH Cumbria Volunteers' Handbook* and CCHT website. There are also some suggestions on page 4 of this newsletter. Although it will not be possible to access the University Library building at this time, there are a multitude of electronic library resources available, including ebooks and ejournals that I will be happy to access on request.

We hope you all remain safe and well during this difficult time and look forward to meeting again when circumstances allow.

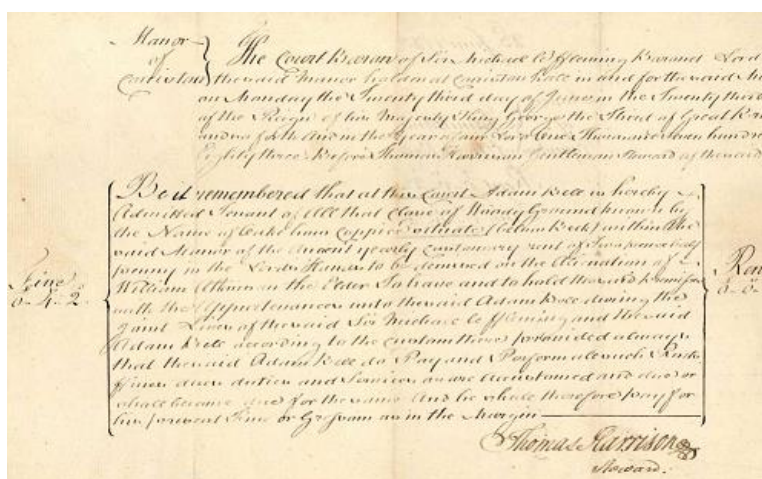
Sarah Rose, Assistant Editor VCH Cumbria

Recent Draft Articles

Since the New Year, Alan Clegg has completed his draft article for Waberthwaite (our first west-coast parish), which you can now read on the CCHT website. Alan has now moved on to the neighbouring parish of Corney. Other recent submissions include a first draft of the religious history section for Ainstable by Harry Hawkins and a complete draft of Cliburn by James Underwood. Please keep them coming!

Historical Research Skills Training

A key element of the generous funding allocated by CWAAS to the project's current phase was for a training programme to benefit the public in south-west Cumbria, potentially attracting future volunteers. CCHT Trustees have now approved the proposals drawn up by Morecambe Bay Partnership, who will organise the sessions on our behalf. The programme will begin with an introduction to desk-based and archive research. This will be followed by a series of themed sessions focusing on maps, reading the landscape, and



Reading old documents - a vital research skill

palaeography. The final session of the course will be a visit to Barrow Archive Centre. Some sessions will be held midweek and others on weekends. It was initially hoped that the training programme could begin in autumn, but given the current situation it may have to be postponed. An update will be provided in due course.

Celebrating 80 years of Lancashire Archives

On Sunday 1st March, VCH Cumbria and the Regional Heritage Centre were among many heritage organisations and societies from across the north-west who had gathered to celebrate 80 years of Lancashire Archives (formerly Lancashire Record Office). As many of our volunteers will know, Lancashire Archives is an important repository of material relevant to VCH research, particularly for those parts of Cumbria formerly in the Diocese of Chester. Indeed, it holds all the probate papers proved within the Diocese up to 1858 for the western deaneries of the Archdeaconry of Richmond (i.e. Copeland, Furness, Kendal and Lonsdale). There were 160 visitors at the open day event, some of whom came from far beyond Lancashire. It also gave us the opportunity eat some delicious cakes in the search room, which felt a little bit wrong!



Above: Sarah Rose (VCH) and Sam Riches (RHC)

High praise for *Kirkoswald and Renwick*

It was a very proud day in the VCH office, both in Lancaster and in London, when very favourable reviews of *Kirkoswald and Renwick* were published simultaneously in two prominent academic journals. One in *Landscape History* commented that ‘...when considered as a whole, it is very difficult to find fault with this excellent new local history....The production quality is outstanding...’. The other review, published in *Northern History*, remarked that ‘...it takes considerable effort to find fault. The book is thorough, detailed and yet concise....’. These comments are all the more encouraging given this was our first parish history to appear in print. It has also been recently nominated for the Lakeland Book of the Year award (2019).

VCH Online Exhibition

To mark the 120th anniversary of the VCH in 2019, the Central Office team asked every active VCH county to fill a red box with objects and accompanying text explaining how they illustrate the history of their county. These were then used to create an exhibition held at the IHR in November as part of the national ‘Being Human: A Festival of Humanities’. There is now a virtual gallery of all the objects on the VCH national website, so please do take a look:

<https://www.history.ac.uk/research/centre-history-people-place-and-community/chppc-red-boxes-gallery>

CCHT Website Updates

The following resources have recently been added to the CCHT website:

- The Industries and Economy of Cumbria: an Overview
- The Administration of Cumbria: an Overview
- Sport and Recreation in Cumbria
- Using the CCHT website (PowerPoint presentation)
- Waberthwaite Draft Parish History
- Publications on the history of Westmorland
- Volunteers’ Handbook (2019)

Our thanks to Eric Apperley for continuing to help us with this. If you have any ideas for our website content, please get in touch.

New project: 'Archives of the Borderland'

Fiona Edmonds, Sophie Ambler (also of Lancaster University) and Bryan Gray are involved with a project to establish the potential for engagement with various family muniment collections across Cumbria and Northumberland. The Friends of Cumbria Archives have generously awarded funding to enable the group to employ a Research Associate to carry out a feasibility study. This report will feed into future, large-scale funding applications. Such a project would potentially have many benefits for CCHT and the VCH Cumbria volunteers. It is hoped that the project will go ahead as soon as is practicable (bearing in mind the current social distancing measures).

Appeal for Speakers

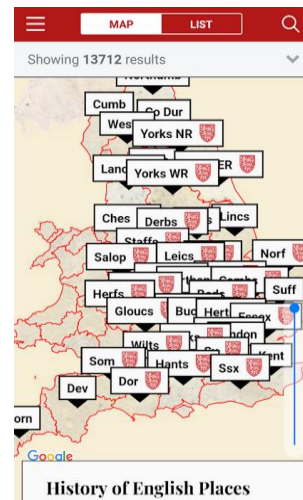
The CLHF (Cumbria Local History Federation) has a Directory of Speakers on its website www.clhf.org.uk, and would like to invite all VCH volunteers to consider joining the Directory. The current directory is available on line and is used mainly by local history groups. Each entrant is able to specify their own topic(s), geographical distance they are prepared to travel and fee together with transport expenses.

VCH volunteers have provided some excellent talks in the past, so if you are interested please follow the link on the website. It can be an excellent way of sharing what you are finding out in your local area and involving others.

Ruth Lawley

New VCH App

In January, the VCH launched a new smartphone app 'A History of English Places'. The free version allows you to access information drawn from Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary of England*



(1848) and the first edition OS map, while a subscription allows access to relevant VCH entries on 'British History Online' for the places they have been written.

VCH Research Online

There is an ever-increasing amount of historical source material online which can be used for VCH purposes. Some websites you might like to visit are:

- <https://archive.org/> has millions of free books, including regional historical society publications, biographies and memoirs. Even worth searching by place name.
- <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> offers an interactive OS base map which can be explored using various mapping tools
- <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/> the National Archives offers free online tutorials in palaeography and Latin for beginners.

The IHR will be making its transcribed historical sources on British History Online (including the State Papers, calendars of patent and close rolls and others) which are normally available by subscription for free to individuals including all VCH authors and volunteers until 31 July. More details available here: <https://blog.history.ac.uk/2020/03/supporting-the-historical-community-the-ihrs-contribution/>

CONTACTS

VCH Cumbria Project Director: Dr Fiona Edmonds, Tel. 01524 594297; f.edmonds@lancaster.ac.uk

Assistant Editor: Dr Sarah Rose, History Department, Bowland College, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YT. Tel. 01524 593141; s.rose2@lancaster.ac.uk

CCHT Secretary: Ms Tiffany Hunt, Yew Tree Cottage, Barn Garth, Cartmel, Cumbria LA11 6PP. Tel. 015395 36302; tiffanyhunt59@gmail.com