

Newsletter, No. 31 Winter 2018

www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk

Victoria County History of Cumbria (VCH) Update

Since the last update the peer reviewers' comments and Central Office's report on the VCH Short have been received. They were both extremely complimentary of the high standard of the work which has been researched and written by volunteer Richard Brockington under editorial guidance from Lancaster University. Richard, Fiona Edmonds, Sarah Rose (co-author) and myself have met to discuss the feedback and consider amendments where necessary. Richard has already made rapid progress in addressing Central Office's requests, for example, by incorporating more archaeological evidence. It is hoped to submit a revised version by the end of February or early March. This will be the first printed VCH history of a Cumbrian parish. We intend to arrange a launch in Kirkoswald in the summer or autumn depending upon how quickly Central Office can produce the book.

Other VCH volunteers have continued to submit draft articles. I have enjoyed reading drafts on 'Landownership' from Haydn Charlesworth (Brough under Stainmore) and Patricia Garside (Bampton). I have also been reviewing draft material for Kirkby Lonsdale produced by Emmeline Garnett with a view to taking work forward on a future print publication.

Fiona Edmonds and I attended several public events in the autumn. Fiona gave a talk to the Cumbria Local History Federation on Saturday 14th October at Askam in Furness which was a very popular event, attended by at least ninety people. She also spoke about 'Mountain names and Myths in Medieval Cumbria' at the Kendal Mountain Festival on Saturday 18th November. On Sunday 5th November I spoke at the annual Cumbria Family History Society Conference, outlining the links between family history and local history and the resource that VCH research offers for modern family historians. We are delivering several training sessions with Morecambe Bay Partnership in the spring.

The Cumbria County History Trust (CCHT) website continues to be updated and is still available at <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/>. Web wardens are working on the township pages for wards in the north eastern part of the county (Leath and West ward) but we would welcome more volunteers. There are eleven wards covered by the website; five in the historic county of Cumberland (Eskdale, Cumberland, Leath, Allerdale Above and Allerdale Below), four in the historic county of Westmorland (East, West, Kendal and Lonsdale) and one each for the parts of the historic counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire West Riding which are now in Cumbria. The aim is for each of those wards to have a web warden who will oversee the content posted to each township page within their respective wards. If you are interested, please contact Bill Shannon by email at bill_shannon@msn.com.

Since the autumn we have been tweeting Cumbria facts via twitter (https://twitter.com/VCH_Cumbria) with links to a fuller description on the CCHT website. Please do follow @VCH_Cumbria on Twitter and send in your facts. If you are interested in getting involved in activities please contact me at j.p.bowen@lancaster.ac.uk.

James P. Bowen

Supported by:



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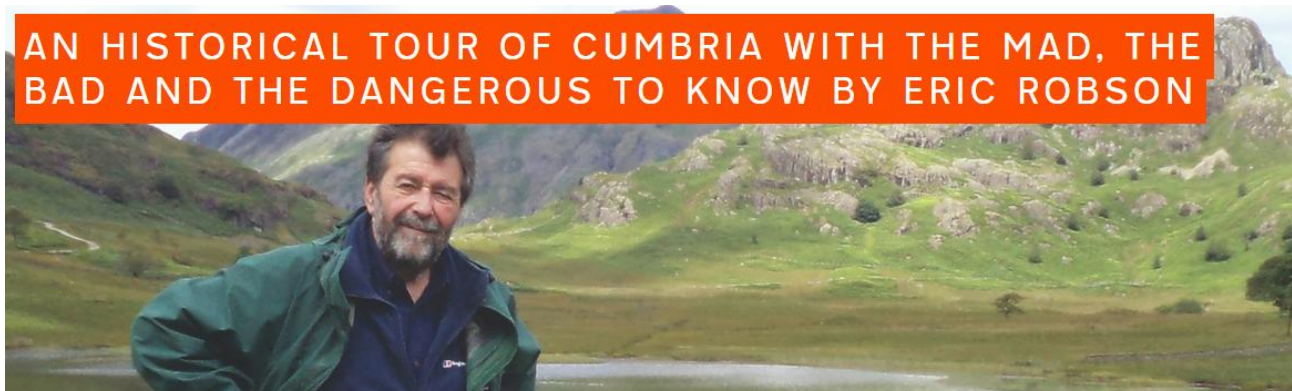
Tweet us: @LancasterHistor

Drafters' Meeting

The next drafters' meeting is being held between 11am and 1pm on Thursday 8th March in the Sandgate Room at Penrith Methodist Church. The first half of the session will consist of a presentation by Peter Messenger whose research interests include vernacular architecture, building histories and building conservation and, in particular, clay buildings. Peter has kindly agreed to explore aspects of 'The Built Character' section of the VCH template illustrated with examples from Cumbria and also discuss links with landownership. This should build on the fieldtrip to Troutbeck in September 2017 when a volunteer group visited Townend, the home of a wealthy yeoman farming dynasty and followed Brunskill's vernacular trail. The second half of the session will concentrate on the revised VCH template circulated by Central Office in November 2017 which is based on the VCH Cumbria Project Volunteers' Handbook. The session will also provide the opportunity to raise issues and share experiences of research. If you are interested in volunteering with VCH Cumbria and the CCHT please do come along.

CCHT lecture

The CCHT lecture is being held on Friday 23rd March 2018 at the Rheged Centre, Penrith. This year's lecture will be given by Eric Robson, television broadcaster, author and documentary film maker who has lived for most of his life in Cumbria. The lecture 'An Historical Tour of Cumbria with the Mad, the Bad and the Dangerous to Know' will start at 7pm followed by a question and answer session. Tickets are £25 to include a buffet supper with a glass of wine or £10 for the lecture only. You can book tickets online here <https://www.rheged.com/event/an-historical-tour-of-cumbria-with-the-mad-the-bad-and-the-dangerous-to-know-by-eric-robson/>.



AN HISTORICAL TOUR OF CUMBRIA WITH THE MAD, THE BAD AND THE DANGEROUS TO KNOW BY ERIC ROBSON

Hosted by the Cumbria County History Trust The last time broadcaster Eric Robson made a Great Railway Journey of the World was for the BBC, it took him from London to the borders of Czechoslovakia changing trains 25 times on the way. This railway journey is rather more of a challenge. Carlisle platform 6 to Carlisle platform 2 in search of the footnotes of history. If you're leaving the train make sure you take your personal obsessions with you!

Join us for a delicious 2 course buffet supper after the lecture – a perfect opportunity to reflect upon and discuss ideas raised in this fascinating talk.

7pm Lecture and Q & A | 8pm Buffet supper with a glass of wine £25 including a buffet supper | £10 lecture only

Menu

Westmorland Lamb Hotpot made with lamb from our own farm, served with homemade pickled red cabbage

Vegetarian option: Vegetable Hotpot served with homemade pickled red cabbage

Followed by

NEXT AVAILABLE

FRI 23 MARCH 2018
7.00pm

BOOK

SEE ALL

Heritage Skills workshops

Fiona Edmonds, Bill Shannon and James Bowen are delivering a series of Heritage Skills workshops on palaeography, maps, landscape history and place-names with Morecambe Bay Partnership in the spring which you might like to attend, particularly if you have just started volunteering. Further information including how to book is available online, see

<https://www.morecambebay.org.uk/events/Heritage%20Skills%20workshop>.

Volunteer Profile: James Underwood, Cliburn

'In Alan Bennett's comedy *The History Boys*, dim-witted Rudge cheekily dismisses history as "just one ****ing thing after another". Shamefully I confess that, as a science-oriented medical student and then as a busy young doctor, my attitude to the past was similar to Rudge's. The clinical immediacy of the here-and-now was far more compelling than accounts of a bygone age. But later my interest in the historical foundations of modern medicine grew strong, both in the arduous quest for effective new treatments and in the origins of often harmful practices based on ancient beliefs about disease.

After many years at the University of Sheffield as Professor of Pathology and latterly Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, in 2010 my wife and I moved to Cumbria. We live in a converted barn next to a derelict watermill beside the River Lyvennet in Cliburn parish. Curious about the mill's long history, I had already started researching it when June Hall (now Hill) encouraged me to join the VCH project and thereby to extend my research to cover the whole parish.

Cliburn is a small rural parish about six miles south east of Penrith. The earliest records reveal that it was divided into two moieties - Cliburn Hervey and Cliburn Tailbois - but later held as one manor by the Francey family who subsequently adopted Cliburn as their surname. Cliburn Hall, now a modern farmhouse, is based on a 14th century pele tower built by Robert Cliburn who represented Westmorland in Parliament in the 1380s. In 1667 Cliburn manor and demesne were bought by Sir John Lowther. The parish's fortunes were boosted in the 19th century by the arrival of the railway and the construction of Cliburn Station. The increasing population necessitated the enlargement of St Cuthbert's church, which dates from the 12th century, during which inscribed Roman stonework was excavated. There was also a mediaeval chapel at Winderwath, a detached portion of Cliburn parish, but no trace of it remains.

In his *Westmorland Heritage* Alfred Wainwright described Cliburn as "the sort of place where nothing of more than local importance is expected to happen and nothing does". This may seem unpromising territory for a local historian, but thanks to much support and expert guidance from those leading the VCH project in Cumbria I have gathered a wealth of fascinating material about this tranquil parish which has become my home.'

James Underwood



Above is an image from British Library Yates Thomson 13 fol 85v St Thomas Becket which James Underwood has sent in as a Cumbrian fact. For the context of the image, see <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/background-kings-meaburn>.

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Looking forward to seeing you at the next drafters' meeting in Penrith (at the Methodist Church, not the castle!).