

# *FOCAS 116*

January 2023



**Ronald Hollett in his Sedbergh premises  
(Kendal Archive Centre, ref WDB 172)**

**For more details of the recently-deposited archive of  
RFG Hollett and Son, antiquarian booksellers,  
Sedbergh, see page 17 of this Newsletter**

## ***Important message from Rob David (Acting Chair)***

As you will remember all Friends were asked to comment on a letter sent out last November on the trustees' intention to wind up FoCAS. Thank you to those who sent in responses. We had written responses from 33 Friends (out of the 100 or so on our mailing list) and of those 25 (including our President and Patron) supported the trustees' decision, two were against, and six did not have a strong view one way or another. It was indicated in the letter that the trustees would assume that those who did not respond were in effect acquiescing in the decision. We consider that this consultation, with the results given above, meets the Constitutional requirements for dissolution without the necessity of calling a Special Extraordinary Meeting. Consequently, the trustees have moved forward with the process to wind up FoCAS and this final Newsletter gives me an opportunity to update you and explain the decisions that have been made.

We are aiming to complete the winding up process by the end of March 2023 which coincides with the replacement of the county of Cumbria by the two new unitary authorities.

The most important decision the trustees have had to take is in relation to the disposal of our assets. Our main assets are financial and will amount to about £4000 - although the final figure will not be known until March. Our constitution requires the trustees to ensure that our assets 'be given to the Cumbria Archive Service or such charitable institution of institutions having objects similar to some or all of the objects of the Association'. 'The object of FoCAS is the education of the public by promotion, support, assistance and improvement of Cumbria Archive Service'. Following discussions with senior archivists at Cumbria Archive Service, the trustees have approved the transfer of remaining financial assets as follows:

'The trustees of Friends of Cumbria Archives have approved the transfer of the remaining assets of the Association to Cumbria Archive Service. These assets should be placed in the ring-fenced Donations cost centre that CAS has used for previous FOCAS donations. If and when the new Cumbria Archive Trust is established FOCAS assets should be transferred to that account. Cumbria Archive Service should consider the objects of FOCAS, namely 'the education of the public by promotion, support, assistance and improvement of the Cumbria Archive Service' when making decisions on the use of the FOCAS assets that they hold'.

The trustees were assured by the senior archivists that it is the intention that the Donations cost centre is transferred into the new financial systems relating to the unitary authorities and that the Cumbria Archive Trust is well on the way to being agreed to by the Charity Commission although this may not be achieved before April 2023.

FoCAS also owns a small number of display boards and these will be given to Cumbria County History Trust, a charity whose members are significant users of Cumbria Archive Service.

Many of you retained your Standing Orders and therefore your membership fee for 2023 was deducted from your bank account at the beginning of January. We hope that, even though you will not receive the benefits of a full year's subscription during 2023, that you will be happy to allow FoCAS to keep your subscription, which will in part pay for this final Newsletter, and regard it as a donation to Cumbria Archive Service and will form part of the assets that will be passed on Cumbria Archive Service as explained above. If you wish to have your subscription returned please contact Lorna Mullett, Hon. Treasurer, 24 Pennine Way, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 8EE, or email [wastwater@talktalk.net](mailto:wastwater@talktalk.net) who will arrange for you to receive a cheque. However, may I remind you to cancel your Standing Order to FoCAS before the end of 2023.

Many of you expressed regret that after around 30 years of activity, it has become necessary to wind up FoCAS. The trustees are confident that the intentions of the founders of the association have been met and that Cumbria Archive Service has benefitted from our existence. On another page of this Newsletter Peter Eyre draws attention to some of the innovative projects that FoCAS has supported over the years. In addition to those he mentions, FoCAS members have kept an eye out for documents of Cumbrian interest that appear on the open market. Although we have not always been the successful bidder, there are many documents in the collection which have been purchased by FoCAS, and just as importantly some that have not because FoCAS members consulted national experts and discovered that they contained little new information and were not worth the asking price.

With the bequests left to FoCAS by Dr Margaret Bainbridge, CAS has been able to purchase digitisation equipment, is supporting the new Cumbria County History Trust project to update the Victoria County History volume for Furness through extensive use of the resources of Barrow Archive Centre, and over the next three years FoCAS will offer opportunities to trainees to gain further experience with CAS through paid internships. We know that Cumbria Archive Service is considering ways that it can maintain connections with its users, volunteers and supporters, and that opportunities for FoCAS members to continue to be associated with the service will emerge.

As you would expect the trustees will ensure that as complete an archive as possible of FoCAS activities will be deposited in a Cumbria Archive Service archive centre. Below you will see an appeal for FoCAS related material which you may have kept and which could be added to the archive. Past trustees and officers, as well as Friends, may well be able to help with strengthening the archive, so please consider whether you can give material in the ways suggested.

The trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank our President, Lord Inglewood, and our Patron, Claire Hensman, for their interest in FoCAS over recent years, as well as those who agreed to serve in these honorary roles previously. Both Lord Inglewood and Claire Hensman have provided helpful advice to the trustees during this process of winding up. The trustees are delighted that Claire Hensman has received the CVO at the last New Year's Honours. As your Acting Chair I should like to pass on to all our officers and trustees, past and present, the thanks of all Friends for the work they have done on behalf of our Association and Cumbria Archives Service. This is our last communication to Friends, but I am sure many of us will continue to meet in our archive centres.

**Rob David (Acting Chair)**

### **Mrs Claire Hensman CVO**

FoCAS is delighted to learn that our patron, Claire Hensman, has been made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in the New Year Honours list. Claire has been an excellent and engaged patron of FoCAS over the past decade, as well as a supporter of all things Cumbrian, so this honour is very well deserved.

### **Can you help?**

Your trustees are determined that as full an archive as possible is deposited by FoCAS at Carlisle Archive Centre. There is already a complete archive up to 2000. If there are any past officers of the Society who have kept committee and AGM minutes and information for the years 2001-2022 could they let me know? If we find that there are any gaps in the archive we shall then get in touch with you to see whether you are able to fill them.

Thank you very much.

**Rob David: [r.david49@btinternet.com](mailto:r.david49@btinternet.com)**

## **Members' Day, 29 October 2022**

The Members' Day programme for 2022 was a particularly strong one. Reports on the four presentations are included below:

### **The Laing Storey, Chester Forster**

Chester Forster began the day with an illustrated talk on Laing, the Carlisle-based construction firm which rose from small beginnings in Sebergham to becoming the largest construction company in the world.

The growth of the company was truly remarkable and rested largely on the efforts of John William (Willie) Laing (1879-1978). The firm began by building houses in the Carlisle area and then won the contract to build Sedbergh School which took the family to that town. In 1892 the family returned to Carlisle and John Willie, aged 14, was taken on as a workman. In his time there he took time to study the firm's accounts and came up with a working costing system. This innovation enabled the firm to attract lucrative contracts, including: St Martins Church in Brampton; Bewcastle Church; Garlands Hospital; the Methodist Central Hall and Post Office - both in Carlisle. Later came Carlisle Power Station, St Barnabas' Church, Warwick Hall and massive housing estates in the London area.

John Willie was a devout Christian, putting his beliefs into practical action by giving up to 50 per cent of his profits to charities. At the end of his life he left only £365, the rest had been given away! He was also a compassionate employer who set up schemes for paid holidays, pensions, health care, savings, and shares for workers in the firm.

Although a pacifist his firm 'did their bit' in both World Wars, building barracks for the Longtown to Annan munitions factories in WWI and 'an airfield a month' (70 in total) in WWII. He was able to do this by taking advantage of American technology in the production of concrete. The firm also built the Mulberry Harbours for use after the D Day landings of June 1944.

Perhaps the crowning achievement for the firm was the restoration and rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral for which John Willie was knighted. He was a remarkable man and well recognised as such in Chester's extremely interesting presentation.

**Lorna Mullett**

### **Thoughts on conservation and digitisation, Erika Freyr**

The second presentation was given by Erika Freyr, Senior Conservator for CAS. Erika began by explaining the nature of the gift from the Friends (through the Margaret Bainbridge bequest) of enhanced equipment to facilitate digitisation of records at Carlisle as well as the other archive offices.

She went on to provide a fascinating explanation of parchment and the challenges that documents on parchment present to conservators, commenting that past attempts to intervene with chemicals and water had not stood the test of time, and had often resulted in further decay of the original document. Digitisation of records on parchment had been found to be the best solution and hence the Friends gift was an extremely valuable asset to the conservation team at CAS.

**Rob David**

### **Modelled on the ODNB: A Dictionary of Cumbrian Biography, David Cross**

To begin David Cross provided an outline of the history of biography, beginning with Plutarch who began writing biographies of those around him describing their virtues and failures in the 2nd century AD. Such writings carried on with Vasari with his *Lives of Artists* in the 16th century although understandably these were biased towards the Florentines.

He then went on to explore the history of county biographical histories, beginning with *The History of Worthies of England* by Thomas Fuller in 1662. Nearer to Cumbria was William Cockin (1736-1801; ODNB), a schoolmaster at Lancaster Grammar School who knew both Father West and George Romney. Cockin wrote short local biographies of major figures from the Lake Counties and also urged the commemoration of famous Cumbrians by placing inscribed stones on the fells.

The Cumbrian Lives project was founded by David Cross in 1998 and is an online record of men and women who have been significant in Cumbrian history and culture from the time of the Romans to the 21st century. It is a riveting read and full of surprises with new information on well-known characters and details on those one, perhaps, did not know had a connection with Cumbria. David highlighted two women whose biographies are included, Helen Kapp (1901-1978), founding Director of the Abbot Hall Art Gallery in Kendal and Lady Mary Tudor, an illegitimate daughter of Charles II. Others include Britain's first black policeman, John Kent (1805-1886), who was born in Low Hesket, and a range of modern business names including Francis C. Scott, (1881-1979) Chairman of the Provincial Insurance Company.

David is seeking more contributions to Cumbria Lives, be it in the form of new entries, fund raising, editing or picture researcher for the website. The entries can be very brief, a paragraph or a four-page life in the style of the ODNB. To find out more explore the website to see what has been done already or if you need further information please contact [editor@cumbrianlives.org.uk](mailto:editor@cumbrianlives.org.uk)

**Diana Matthews**

## Muncaster Castle's Wartime Secret: Protecting the Tate Gallery Collection during the Second World War, Rob David

If only pictures could talk ... when Vincent Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' was recently attacked by a tin of tomato soup in its current home in London – was that painting thinking back to the days of World War II when it was safe from any attack by Hitler!

Rob David gave us a very informative talk which took us back to the war years when the Tate Gallery in London evacuated their art works for safe-keeping around the United Kingdom to keep them safe from bombing raids and other wartime exigencies. 'Sunflowers' and other artworks were packed in 200 crates and transported by train under guard to Ravenglass where local residents helped to transfer them on to lorries for storage at their new home, Muncaster Castle. Staff from the Tate Gallery remained at Muncaster keeping guard and cleaning and conserving the paintings. Whilst at Muncaster, the collection was expanded with the bequest from Sir Hugh Walpole being taken there before moving on to London.

Margaret Martindale

### *The added value Illustrations provide in the Cumbrian Lives website*

Illustrations are an important part of the many biographies that are included to date in the Cumbrian Lives website. Here David Cross provides a brief description of the people who feature in a family photo on the site.

This is my great great grandfather William Telford Gunson (1839-1924) who appears fully written up in Cumbrian Lives. He was a schoolmaster at Great Broughton, near Cockermouth and later surveyor, architect and city councillor of Manchester, being involved in the Thirlmere Dam. His name appears on the plaque there as a member of the Manchester City Water Board. The elder girl is my granny, Beatrice Gunson, daughter of Ernest Gunson, the Cumberland External Rating Surveyor. Her sister is Phyllis.



### **Cumbria County History Trust**

The Cumbria County History Trust (CCHT) would welcome current members of FoCAS as members, volunteers or supporters in any guise. The CCHT exists to research and publish the history of Cumbria as part of the Victoria County History Project. This work makes extensive use of archives, and indeed the CCHT is grateful for the recent grant from FoCAS to support this work. Further connections with FoCAS members would be most welcome. There are many ways of supporting us, if you are not involved already, from simply being a recipient of our newsletter to volunteering or joining as a member.

To find out more, please email us at [cumbriahistorytrust@gmail.com](mailto:cumbriahistorytrust@gmail.com) or visit our website [www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk](http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk).

## **Responses to Covid19 epidemic**

The worst of Covid appears to be past, but the disruption it caused was profound, and affected everyone. For the past year, Ambleside Oral History Group has interviewed people from every walk of life, young and old, about their experiences of living in Covid times, and how the pandemic affected people both physically and mentally, sometimes in quite surprising ways. As AOHG is an ongoing project, it is hoped that our archive will be of use should similar pandemics occur in future.

Interviewing in the Ambleside area, we explored the huge contribution given by volunteers, and how this was skilfully co-ordinated to provide a wide range of basic services, using Ambleside Parish Centre as a hub for help. A grant from the Prince's Countryside Trust funded delivery of hot lunches daily to the housebound, the elderly, those shielding and other vulnerable people, sourced from Windermere School kitchens, where furloughed chefs volunteered their time to cook the main courses and puddings. These were packed in polystyrene hot boxes donated by takeaway businesses. In Ambleside more volunteers waited to portion it out, ready for doorstep delivery of up to 80 meals a week. The Parish Centre's hub of volunteers also offered everything from dog-walking to home hairdressing services, and teams of them volunteered to ring those living alone regularly for a chat. People of all ages whose mental health was suffering from stress and isolation went to the Centre just to talk to someone, including three who had suicidal thoughts and another, whose attempted suicide in the toilets was interrupted by staff, and for whom staff arranged new housing and a fresh start.

It wasn't only the elderly who were deprived of regular clubs and meet-ups and felt lonely. Health Centre services ceased abruptly as staff had to stay home, and with no baby clinics or advice from health visitors, new first-time mothers were left without any support all day at home with small babies. Nor could they meet at mother and baby groups to share experiences. One mother described it as "Often lonely, but never alone". Then when restrictions were lifted and toddlers could play together, often for the first time, mothers wary of Covid couldn't relax with little ones in close contact. Children isolated by lockdown had to learn basic sharing and socialising with others, and with no exposure to everyday bugs among babies and the early years, colds and coughs spread widely among them, and laid low their exhausted parents.

That first Lockdown spring weather in Cumbria was glorious, and many locals relished the novelty of not having



to share this unexpected solitude with visitors. Getting out to exercise was very much easier for locals, with such beautiful countryside on the doorstep, and no travel rules broken. Many local parents involved with tourism who normally worked unsocial hours were brought together with their children at home during lockdown. One headteacher described lockdown as "Amazing rich family time which they'd never had before. And it was good weather. And they just had a lovely family time and locked down". However, she also noticed children with heightened anxiety levels, picking up from their parents' fears: "I've had more children talking to me about dying than I've ever known before, fear of dying, fear of their family dying ... and fear of things going on in the world, things being wrong, because we were talking about death and dying in front of children". Schools themselves had the complications of online teaching, family 'bubbles' and teaching the children of key workers, particularly with Government rules changing all the time.

Older students grappling with online teaching for forthcoming GCSEs and A levels were in particular difficulties. Not all had laptops and some followed lessons on their mobile phones. Then the Government cancelled GCSE exams with only weeks to go, and students' work was assessed by their teachers. Some teachers were available offer extra help, but others were not. With plenty of outdoor places locally to

Gather, older students were able to meet outside and enjoy a little time out, to the benefit of their mental health. One A Level student even commented that learning to work on her own was a good preparation for university.

'Staycation' brought a massive influx of visitors to the Lakes, not always to the benefit of residents, although it did boost the local economy hugely and not a single business in the town failed at this time. The downside was visitors' lack of care for the local environment, and the litter, traffic jams and obstructive parking this caused. With second home owners rushing to stock up on food, local people found empty shelves in their shops. Some 'Eat to Help Out' cafes used outside seating, but for others, social distancing limited capacity too much, and



*Illustrations. Page 6: Socially distanced Remembranced Above: Rubbish left by staycation visitors left on the shores of Lake Windermere (photos by Richard Attenborough)*

with staff shortages they stayed shut. With extremely complicated rules about serving pub customers, one tenanted pub decided it was not worth opening for some of this period, managing on furlough, rates holidays and rent relief from the brewery.

The development of an effective vaccine that worked was welcomed with relief by most, even though people were randomly sent either to local doctors' surgeries while others trekked 20 miles or more to vaccination centres, depending on whether they had the Astra Zeneca or the Pfizer vaccine. After the second wave of Covid and another lockdown, a local pharmacy converted half its shop premises into a vaccination centre, which was then targeted by anti-vaxxers, who accused the pharmacists of 'sins against humanity', then daubed their shop windows with anti-vax slogans in yellow paint. Not a trace remained by the following morning, thanks to kind neighbours who couldn't bear to see such a hardworking team of pharmacy staff targeted in this way.

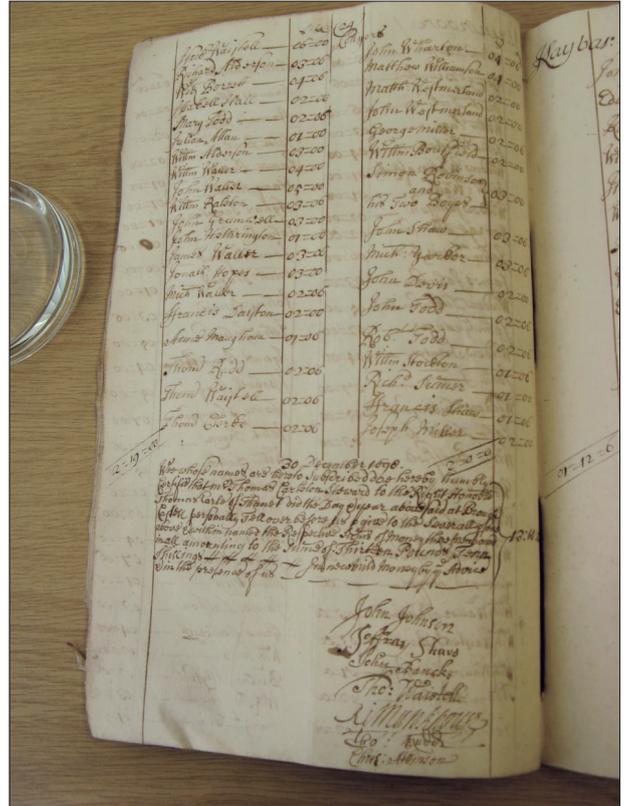
When the primary-aged children eventually went back to school in autumn 2021, some were wary of others, having been apart for so long and told not to get near people. Teachers noticed they had lost the ability and strategies to negotiate playground disagreements or look out for one another. However, the ethos of the school soon regenerated their sense of altruism: "...I think we've come out of it strong in lot of ways. We know what we're about. We know that relationships are the most important thing in terms of making school work", the Primary headteacher said.

After fear of Covid subsided and the pandemic dwindled, it took a while before people, especially the elderly, began to meet up once more at clubs and coffee mornings. The organisers reached out to those most reluctant to join in normal activities, to help them socialise again. Many other towns and villages will have been amazed at peoples' willingness to help others in so many practical ways, and with it an impressive legacy of organisational skills ready to snap into action whatever the adversity.

**Jane Renouf, Ambleside Oral History Group**

## Surveying the poor in Westmorland and London

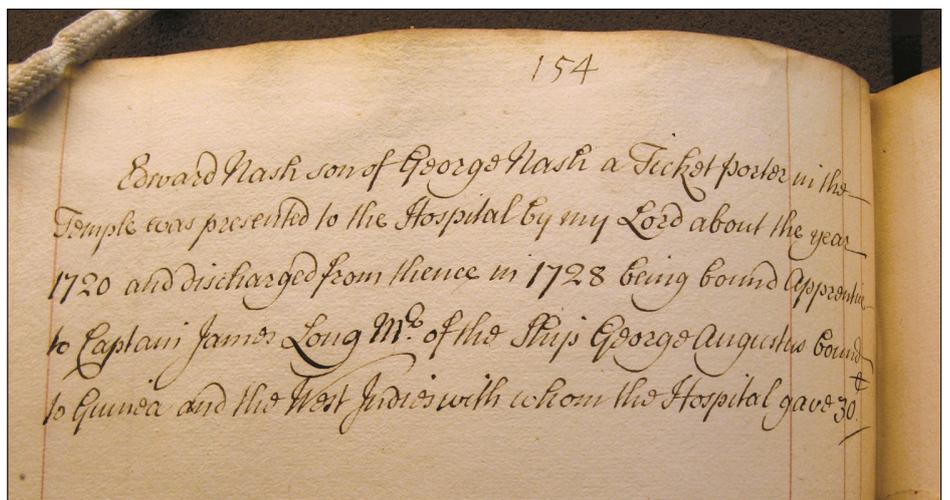
On a recent visit to the archives in Kendal I requested a box of charity papers in the Hothfield collection (WDHOTH/2/11) not knowing what to expect as no detailed description was available on CASCAT. Members may know of the reputation of the 4th Earl of Thanet (1644-1729) for philanthropy having given away much of a considerable fortune, but the organisation and targeting of it survives in some of these documents (c.1692-1712).



Illustrations. Above left: Part of entry for the Stainmore dole in 1698  
 Above right: Return for a part of London including Spittal fields (both from CAS/K/WDHOTH/2/11. Please note that the items in the box are not separately listed or described so they share the same reference)  
 Below: Entry re Edward Nash's apprenticeship (courtesy of the Bodleian Library; MS.Don. c.85—p.154)  
 With thanks to Lord Hothfield

Firstly, there are several layers to the documentation chiefly for the earls manors in the Barony of Westmorland, which include not just cash doles to the poor but also disbursements of clothing and accounts for the same which detail payments to poor local weavers as well as trade bought in from Wakefield etc. The surprise was then to find in the centre of many of the bundles (separate years being kept together) smaller notebooks containing details of payments made to poor recipients identified in London. Like the Westmorland listings these identify the parish concerned but go into further details of the address giving particulars of street etc. The London surveys in particular tend to give information about the subject's condition (whether from Westmorland), circumstances and sometimes way of life and misfortune.

So both of these dole lists have the qualities of providing useful, if selective, geographically oriented surveys. Thus in the year to Lady Day 1699 £214/10/06 was given in Westmorland 'to the poor Gentry, Indigent clergy and the widows of Such And to the poor ten(n)ents and other poor in Westmorland and Cumberland'. There are the expected stipulations such as



'none are to share in his Charity but such as frequent the Church ....' but 'Tennants as are by old age Sicknesse or Infirmity disabled from working; or are by Stewertship Charge of Children, or Misfortune Reduced to Poverty, & have lived in good Repute; Or such as have beene burdened with ffines & to such other poore as most want & best deserved but little or Nothing to such as are younge & able to worke...' To balance this picture of beneficence it is perhaps necessary to point out that the earl's interests extended very widely, as was the case with the preferment accorded to some of the poor boys he sponsored. The evidence for this comes from a manuscript listing much material that has disappeared from the Hothfield archive since 1729 (MS.Don.c.85, Bodleian Library). Poor boys from humble backgrounds in London were sent to Christs Hospital (private school) which by Royal Charter of 1673 was enabled to teach mathematics for navigation. A few are listed who were provided the necessary recommendation for work in the slave trade from west Africa, as in the case of Edward Nash (see attached illustration).

Haydn Charlesworth

### ***The impact of the M6 Motorway on rural Cumbria***

Through the late 1960s the northern stretch of the M6 motorway was under construction through the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland. It was a massive endeavour, involving thousands of workers and several of the country's largest building contractors - it was, perhaps, the largest civil engineering project ever undertaken in this area. By the time the motorway opened in October 1970 it had made a significant impact on the surrounding countryside, with communities and farms separated, and numerous roads diverted to facilitate the movement of people, goods and services in the areas affected.

The most famous section of this stretch of the M6 was the cut through the steep-sided Lune Valley gorge, south of Tebay. This location became the haunt of photographers and film makers in the late 1960s and it is therefore well documented. But the impact on the countryside was much wider and huge swathes of rural farmland and moorland were gouged out to create the motorway.

The impact of the M6 on one rural corner of South Lakeland can be seen in the two photographs accompanying this short piece. The first was taken in the early 1960s, before construction began, and the second c.1968. Both are taken from the same location. The top image suggests a tranquil rural scene with the Lancaster canal in the foreground, and beyond that Crooklands Garage and rolling farmland. The lower photograph shows the ongoing construction of a long elevated section - the start of the rise towards the fells between Kendal and Sedbergh. The concrete bridge shows the height at completion. It also shows the permanently blocked Lancaster Canal on the right. However, despite the upheaval the surrounding fields and hedges remain unchanged and the garage (hidden behind the concrete bridge) is a flourishing concern today.

Jean Turnbull

*Photographs courtesy of Betty Prickett*



# Cumbria Archive Service

## Service-wide news

As 2023 begins we finally have a degree of certainty over the future of Cumbria Archive Service. From 1 April the service will be hosted by the Cumberland Council as one organisation. Much remains to be resolved, such as how we will be supported by both of the new Councils and what we will be called. These will become clearer over the next few months. However it is relief to know that we will continue to work as one team across Cumbria and share the rich diversity of our written heritage from Barrow to Bewcastle.

As one era comes to an end, Cumbria Archive Service marked its 60th Anniversary in style with an open day at Carlisle Archives. 'Open Day' somehow does not do justice to a fabulous celebration of our service and local history in Cumbria. We hosted a local history fair in the search room and map room bringing organisations together as diverse as the Solway Aviation Museum and the Norman Nicholson Society from Millom. Of course it was wonderful to have the support of our friends and stakeholders from FoCAS, Cumbria Family History Society, the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society and the Cumbria Local History Federation.

In addition to the Fair we hosted four booked-out talks from Dr Jean Turnbull talking about the role of photographs as a source of historical research to Dr Chris Donaldson shedding light on the County's American connections. Dr Jane Platt gave an illuminating talk on the hidden history of one of our first antiquarians, Thomas Machell. Robert and I spoke about the early 'Pre-History' of Cumbria Archive Service, in particular the story of Madelaine Elsas, our first County Archivist in Cumberland. Visitors were also able to take part in tours, fun activities based on our collections in the family zone, and refreshments were available in the Victorian Kitchen. The Escape Room was another popular activity. In all around 500 visitors and stallholders joined us for a great celebration of local history in Cumbria.

We also took the opportunity to formally commemorate our anniversary with the planting of a Yew Tree in the grounds of Lady Giffords House. The planting was also an opportunity to honour our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee and support the Green Canopy project established for this event. Mrs Claire Hensman, Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria, planted the tree and spoke about the service and the late Queen's Green Canopy project.

Our 60th Anniversary celebrations would not be possible without the fantastic dedication and hard work of staff from across the Service who came together to support us in November. Another legacy of the day is a history of the Archive Service that can be accessed as an e-book at:

[Exhibition Gallery of Archives | Cumbria County Council](#)

As we look forward to the new year, Cumbria Archive Service has completed a period of stocktaking to address a number of essential collections management tasks that are difficult to accommodate during the usual operation of the service. The Archive centres closed for two weeks in late November and early December to tackle collections that can pose access problems due to legacy catalogues and labelling. The fortnight also gave us an opportunity to bring colleagues together for some essential training on salvage in the event of a flood or fire.

Cumbria Archive Service has a vast wealth of digitised archives and we are working to share these collections with researchers. As a first step we are offering access to digital collections through our search rooms with an ever expanding selection of gems from our collections that have been digitised. We have a wealth of historic photographs, maps and manuscripts to share. We are also acquiring a digital preservation system that will enable us to accept deposits of what are called born digital records and share these with the public as well. A key benefit will be online access rather than having to visit the Archive Centre to see them.

Finally I want to pay tribute to the support of Friends of Cumbria Archives over many years. Whatever the future holds, our stakeholders, friends and supporters play a vital role in the work of Cumbria Archive Service. FoCAS has given us a legacy of innovative projects that have enriched the service to the wider public and all age groups. In this short space I would highlight support for the work FoCAS and the Archive Service did to encourage school visits to Archives with travel grants. This enabled our service to reach remote rural schools that would not have been able to arrange visits to the Archive Centres in other circumstances.

FoCAS has also supported us as we look forward to the future. A very generous grant of £8000 has enabled us to develop our digitisation capacity with the upgrade of a camera and additional equipment that has enabled us to create, in effect, a third digitisation suit which can be taken to sites around the County. Further work will enhance our ability to digitise large maps and plans.

**Peter J Eyre, Archives Professional Lead**

## **Update from Carlisle Archive Centre**

### **Accessions**

We have received an interesting selection of deposits over the last quarter. These include the records of four local Women's Institutions: Castle Carrock, Dovenby, Linstock, and Watermillock. It seems that declining membership numbers and a lack of face to face meetings during the COVID pandemic, has forced many of these local organisations to close down. Fortunately, we are able to safeguard their records which serve as a permanent reminder of their many achievements and contributions.

A big thank you to FoCAS who donated funds to enable the purchase of a set of sale particulars: a copyhold estate at Hewerhill, Castle Sowerby, 1808; Solway House and other estates, Bowness-on-Solway, 1881; properties in English Street, Lowther Street, Scotch Street etc, Carlisle, 1867; Linstock Castle and Castle Shields estates, Stanwix, 1868; Border Estate, Holm Cultram, 1884; sale poster for Field Foot, Kirkclinton, 1823; stock, crop and furniture sale at Langwathby, 1858.

Another recent purchase includes a set of plans of property and building ground: Pen and ink manuscript copy of a plan of Park Gate Hall Farm, Wigton belonging to J Thomlinson. The farm was originally surveyed in 1789, but this copy has a watermark of 1817; plan (ground floor and elevation) of a property on Scotch Street, Carlisle belonging to Joseph Rome, June 1885; colour plan of Botcherby Mill Estate building ground, including Greystone Road, Marjery Street, Norman Street and Jackson Street, surveyed by William Wood, September 1896. We received even more plans through a recent donation. The plans relate to The Nunnery at Staffield Hall Estate and include fitting a modern bathroom, building a new byre and cooler as well as improving the drainage scheme. There are also ground floor, second floor, front elevation, and drainage plans of Hutton-in-the-Forest.

The Senhouse Museum at Maryport deposited a complete set of annual reports and accounts for the years 1986-2017. We also received deposits of minutes of meetings from several parish councils: Great Broughton, Dacre, Borrowdale, Under Skiddaw, Castlerigg, St. John's and Wythburn. Also of note was a deposit of programmes of concerts and shows for Carlisle Choral Society, 1930-1991 and a run of *Lakesbeat* (The Newspaper of The Cumbria Constabulary), 1981-2003.

### **Outreach**

On 12 November the Carlisle Archive Centre hosted an open day showcasing archive services and collections from around the county as part of celebrations for Cumbria Archive Service's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As a lasting legacy to mark this anniversary, a yew tree was planted in the grounds of Lady Gillford's House by Mrs Claire Hensman, Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria. We were also thrilled to welcome 20 organisations from around the county to a history fair featuring local history groups, museums, libraries and heritage sites. We hosted four excellent talks from Dr Jean Turnbull, Dr Chris Donaldson, Dr Jane Platt and finished the afternoon with Peter Eyre and Robert Baxter. We delivered behind the scenes tours to more than 80 people and curated an exhibition featuring original archives from around the county. We challenged visitors to take on the escape-room style census challenge and welcomed adults and children to the Victorian kitchen for refreshments and a range of activities.

Numerous feedback cards and verbal reports were received with hugely positive comments about the day and individual events from stallholders, regular archive users and many people who had never been inside the building before. See overleaf for a few comments from open day attendees:

*Illustration on right: History fair at Cumbria Archive Service 60th Anniversary Open Day, 12 November 2022*



*"Fantastic event, didn't want to leave! Feel I have entered a whole new world. Everyone so friendly and helpful." "Very entertaining and interesting talks."*

*"Brilliant event – haven't been before but I'll be back."*

*"This has been most interesting and informative. We would like to return to another visitor day. Didn't realise the wealth of history in Cumbria."*

*"I'm inspired to volunteer!" "I had no idea there were so many local history groups around."*

*"Many thanks for the opportunity to experience areas of Cumbria we don't normally see".*

In the last quarter we also delivered a primary school workshop on the industrialisation of Carlisle and women's role in this process. We were also pleased to welcome a group on a textile touring holiday of the UK to view fabric sample books.

### Cataloguing

Cataloguing and inventory work has continued on a number of collections including: church faculties, Maryport building plans, Cowans Sheldon plans, the Fletcher Vane Family of Hutton-in-the-Forest, the Mounsey-Heysam family of Castletown, Cumberland Quarter sessions petitions, and a large number of annual reports and publications from various council departments and organisations.

### Records appraisal

November's appraisal day saw the completion of appraisal of 86 boxes of Cumberland County Council Highways department records. Comprising more than 470 extremely varied files, these required careful evaluation to ensure that important historical information was retained and records without historical significance were disposed of confidentially to make best use of our limited strong-room space. Descriptions for these records will be uploaded to the electronic catalogue in due course.

### Building work

October and November saw several weeks of building renovation and cleaning work taking place. These included roof repairs, cleaning of the outside of the archive building and repainting of a number of windows.

**Kelda Rose & Michael Stephens, Archivists**

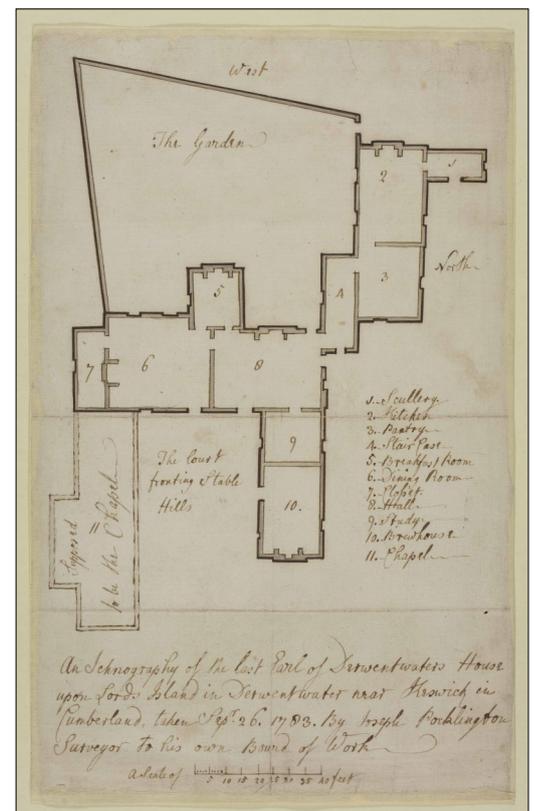
### Derwent Island

A fascinating engraving entitled 'A view from the north of Pocklington's Island, near Keswick in Cumberland' was recently produced in the map room at Carlisle Archive Centre. It was drawn in 1787 by Joseph Pocklington, esquire, of Carlton House, near Newark, Nottinghamshire.

FoCAS members may be aware that Pocklington Island has been known by various names and owners. Originally belonging to Fountains Abbey, by the 16th century it was named Hestholm, an old Norse word meaning 'Stallion Island'. Later in this century this roughly oval-shaped island was acquired by the Company of Mines Royal and was used to brew beer and bake bread for the Bavarian miners bought over to extract minerals in the local area (particularly copper). By the 18th century, Vicar's Island or Paradise Island was owned by the Ponsonby family who felled the groves of sycamore and grew wheat. In 1776 and 1777, Joseph Pocklington detoured on his way home from Edinburgh to visit the Lake District. In 1778 he bought Derwent Island and began its transformation.

The main focal point of the engraving is the mock church. With its Gothic windows and doors, the nave was a wooden hoarding; the bell tower was a stone structure with a room at the base. The other building in the engraving is the boathouse, built in the style of a Nonconformist Chapel.

For further reading on Joseph Pocklington and Pocklington's Island, FoCAS members are directed to *The Regatta Men* by Alan Hankinson and *Keswick Characters, Volume 2* by Keswick Historical Society and Friends of Keswick Museum and Art Gallery, available for loan via Cumbria Libraries. Other documents in this series relating to the Pocklington family have a reference of DSEN/14/6, a full list can be viewed on CASCAT.



**Sarah Wood, Archives Assistant**

*Illustration: Plan of Derwentwater House, DSEN/14/6/4*

## News from Whitehaven Archives

### New material at Whitehaven Archives

Embleton Parish Council minutes, 2013-2018 (YSPC 36)

Western Fells Methodist Circuit, financial papers relating to the former Whitehaven Methodist Circuit and Moresby Parks Methodist Church, late 20th century (YDFCM 2)

Assorted local history books: *Letters from the Lakes* by W R Mitchell; *Folk Tales in Cumbrian Dialect Rhyme* by Ethel Fisher MBE; *Portrait of The Lakes*, by Norman Nicholson; *Rambles and Scrambles in Western Lakeland* by Roland Taylor (added to LS Library)

Additional records for Mr Holliday's Local Studies collection, including mining photographs, Whitehaven postcards, Parton deeds, 1773-1873 (YDX 765) - see a selection of images from this collection below

Conveyance of Square Bank, a close in Briscoe, Egremont, 1780 (YDX 665)

Jack Lancaster, additional papers: Micklam Brickworks research notes; the lecture papers of DR Wattleworth, local historian; letters to and from Jack Lancaster (YDX 129)

Irton Manor Watermill - history, excavation and conservation, Oct 2021 by David Fortune (LS Library – 24 WAT)

Photograph of Robert Murray (former St Bees School pupil, born in Whitehaven), 1956 (PH/1680)



### Recent cataloguing

This cataloguing has included West Cumbria Coroners' records, 1993-2008 (YTCR 3); and some outstanding Waugh and Musgrave deeds relating to Setmurthy (DWM/402-404). More British Coal Corporation records have been added to Calm as the collection is sorted, arranged and listed (TNCB). The correspondence files of Daniel Hay, borough librarian, have been added to the holdings for Whitehaven Library (WHL). More of the volunteer listing of Marchon photographs is now searchable in Calm (YDB 59). As part of a purchase of sales particulars and plans, we now hold a 1779 survey of three fields in Distington belonging to Benn Gilliat (YDX 776), which is currently with the Conservation team.

Lately we have been working to relocate records (and updating location information) in our out store at Carlisle to make room for the expected transfer of post-1974 records from the district councils following the Local Government Reorganisation in April 2023. Another project still ongoing is the sorting and improved listing of the correspondence files within Millom Rural District Council's Surveyor's records.

Continued overleaf

## Outreach

In September, we hosted a talk on the Dukes of Atholl as Lords of Mann, given by Gareth Pugh. Gareth is the cataloguing archivist for the Atholl Papers and based at Manx National Heritage. The talk also covered the links to our county and Whitehaven and Cockermouth merchants. The event attracted 25 people including some antiquarians over from the island for a tour of Cumbria.



*Illustration: The search room here at Whitehaven, set up for our Treasures of the Archives Discovery*

continued to contribute to the monthly Explore Your Archive themes; the latest of these being Animals (Barney the Goose), Learning (children's book from 1822 and Eskdale Outward Bound Mountain School) and Community (Kells and District Community and Miners' Welfare Centre).

October saw the return of our Archive Discovery Evenings with the subject of 'Treasures of the Archives'. This was a chance to get out some of our most popular, unusual and remarkable items along with some staff favourites. We are currently preparing for our next ADE, which will be a talk on the book *The Testimony of Sal Madge* (the Whitehaven resident and coal miner) given by the author John Little.

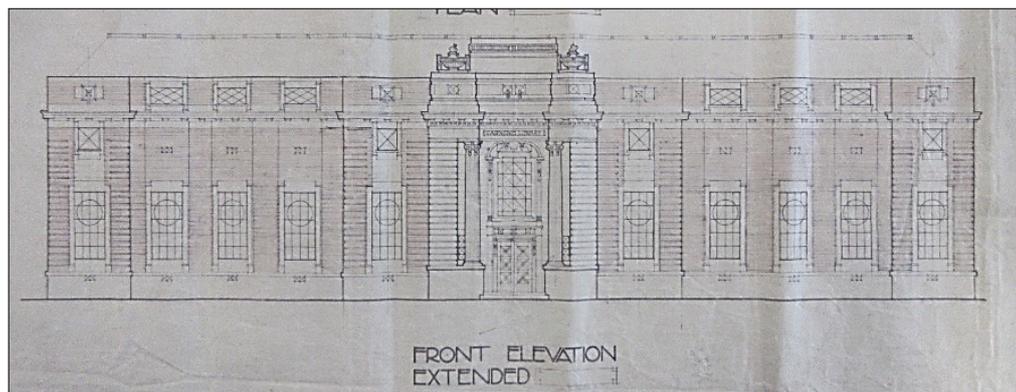
Ten pupils and five staff came to visit Whitehaven Centre in November. They had a tour of the strong-room and used maps and photographs relating to old Whitehaven, shops and transport.

We have just contributed to the display of original documents (including records of Percy Kelly, the Wellington Pit Disaster and John Fletcher Miller) at Carlisle Archives for the Archives Open Day as well as the countywide exhibition on the history of the service and the anniversary booklet. Whitehaven has

**Diane Hodgson, Archivist**

## Update from Barrow Archive Centre Centenary of Barrow Library Centenary of Barrow Library

The first public library was opened in 1882 in a metal building in Duke Street (later the fire station, then a police station was built on the site and now the Holiday Inn). Five years later the library moved into the newly opened Town Hall where it remained until 1922. £17,500 was given by the Carnegie Trust for the new library and building work began in 1915 but in 1916 work had to stop due to the war. The date stone above the front door was already in position so it still says 1915. The Mayoress, Mrs Walker Fairbairn together with Alderman J H Brown JP, chairman of the Library and Museum Committee officially opened the library. Mr J A Charles, the architect, presented Mrs Fairbairn with a large gold key with which she opened the door. A total of 27,000 books had to be moved by staff.



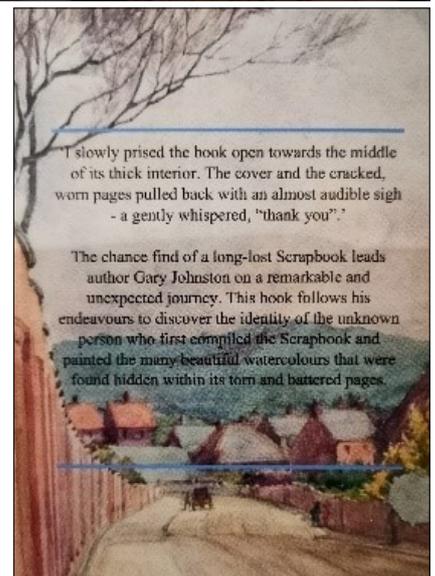
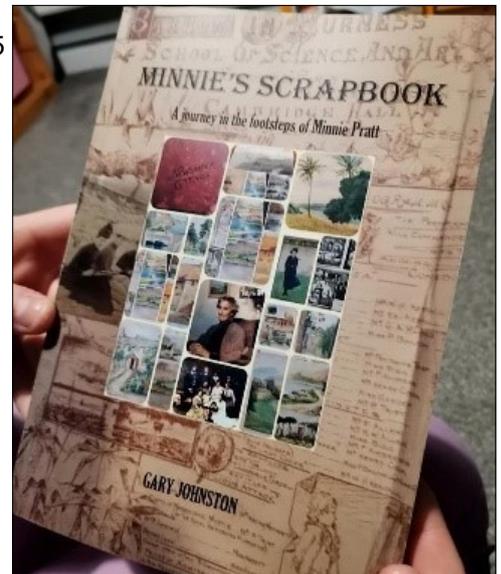
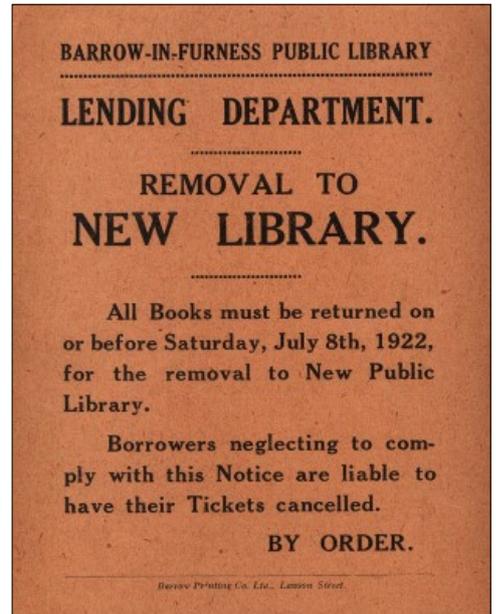
*Illustrations. Top: Sankey photograph showing how many people turned up to watch the opening of Barrow Library on 5 October 1922. Bottom: Elevation from Barrow Borough Council Surveyor's collection (BA/S)*

On 8th October we celebrated the centenary of the library with a day of activities and a cake. A saxophonist played, Gill Jepson provided games and sweets from the 1920s, the Archive Centre had old photographs and guidebooks out for people to look through and a local artist provided activities based on the history of the building.

### Minnie Pratt 1880-1980

Minnie Pratt was born in Southampton in 1880 and moved to Barrow as a baby when her father Robert came to work in the School of Art and Design. Minnie trained as an art teacher and taught at the Barrow School of Art, the Barrow Secondary School for Girls and then the Girls Grammar School. She retired from teaching in 1936 due to ill health. Minnie travelled extensively recording her travels through a series of water colours which she kept in a scrapbook. This was bought by Gary Johnstone from an auction house in Carlisle and led to Gary researching Minnie's life and setting up a Facebook group (Minnie's Scrapbook). The result is an exhibition in The Dock Museum, Barrow until February 2023 and a book. Items from Barrow Archive Centre are included in the exhibition including a water colour by Minnie (see below left: Z/270/3. Painting on vellum of *Comus Herbacea*, 1917).

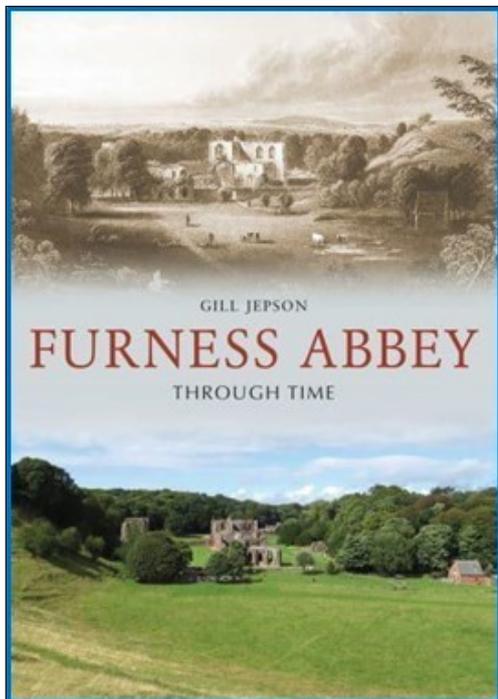
**Minnie's Scrapbook. A journey in the footsteps of Minnie Pratt** £12.95 plus £2.50. Contact Gary via Facebook (see cover on left).



### Two new School collections

We recently received two logbooks (1960-1987) and an admission register (1960-1987) from John Ruskin School in Coniston (a secondary school) (ref BDS 89). Sometimes records come from unexpected places. This was the case with the admission register for Roa Island School (1877-1898) (ref BDS 91) which had ended up in the hands of a local man. A local headteacher recently asked me what she should do with admission registers found in the roof space of her school when work was carried out after a fire. We haven't received these yet, but it will be interesting to find out why they were put in the roof.

Continued overleaf

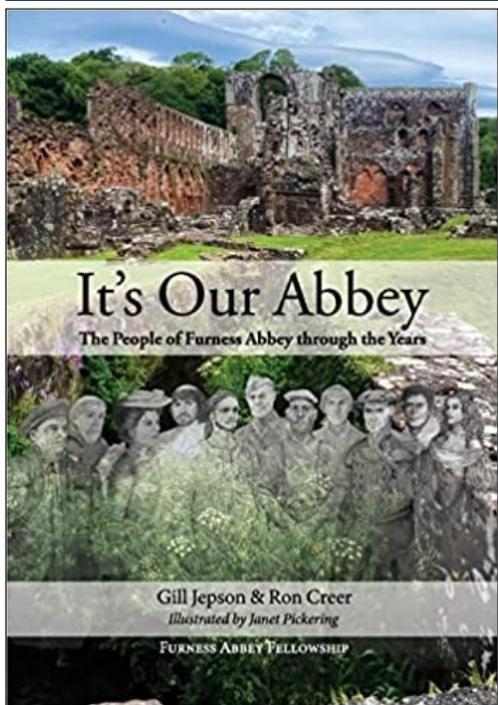


**Gill Jepson, *Furness Abbey Through Time***

Amberley, softback, 2022. £15.99. ISBN 9781398100022

The magnificent ruins of Furness Abbey are now in the care of English Heritage and attract thousands of visitors every year. Dating back to the 12th century, the abbey was one of the wealthiest Cistercian monasteries in the country. Over the centuries, writers and artists including William Wordsworth and Turner have been inspired by the splendour of the sandstone ruins and the tranquillity of their location in a peaceful valley.

In *Furness Abbey Through Time*, local historian Gill Jepson, Chair of the Furness Abbey Fellowship, presents an excellent visual chronicle that looks at how the abbey precinct has changed over the last century and more. Using an impressive collection of archive photographs, postcard views and colour photographs, readers will see that successive generations have been drawn here to explore the abbey's heritage and enjoy the scenery. In addition to the main abbey precinct, photographs of its closer landholdings, such as Piel Castle, Bow Bridge, Abbot's Wood and Dalton Castle, are also included, to provide a more comprehensive collection.



**Gill Jepson, Ron Creer & Janet Pickering, *It's Our Abbey: The People of Furness Abbey through the Years***

Softback, 2022, £14.72. ISBN 9781913898359

Our Abbey' is more than stones and arches, gargoyles and pillars. It's also a place where people have lived and worked, visited and enjoyed. Over nearly 900 years so many different people have worshipped and laboured, rested and recuperated, and these people are as interesting as the remains of the old buildings.

This book attempts to tell the story of the Abbey through the people who were here, whether monks in the 12th century, soldiers in the 16th, tourists in Victorian times or children in the 20th century. Twenty-eight people over the centuries tell their story and their relationship with the abbey, from the men who built it from 1127 onwards all the way to the Site Manager who looks after it on behalf of English Heritage today.

**Susan Benson & Hazel Gatford, Archivists**

***Update from Kendal Archive Centre***

**Some recent accessions**

RFG Hollett and Son, antiquarian booksellers, Sedbergh - invoice books, 1960-1989; letters, 1960-2014; photographs of shop; papers regarding valuations, shop closure, advertising and publicity, Sedbergh 'Book Town' correspondence, binding lists; visiting cards; catalogues, 1967-2013; stock lists of various subjects 1-179 [gaps] (ref WDB 172)

Stramongate House, Kendal – deeds, 1718-1991 (ref WDX 2065)

Brough Parish Council - correspondence regarding Brough-Kirkby Stephen Cyker Way 2009-2013; papers regarding public inquiry into de-registering common land (Murton Fell, Hilton Fell, Burton Fell, Warcop Fell) 2018; monthly and annual statements 2006-2018, etc. (ref WPC 33)

Tebay Co-operative Society - ledgers (2): drapery department, 1967-1968; coal department and groceries, 1955-1981 (ref WDB 157)

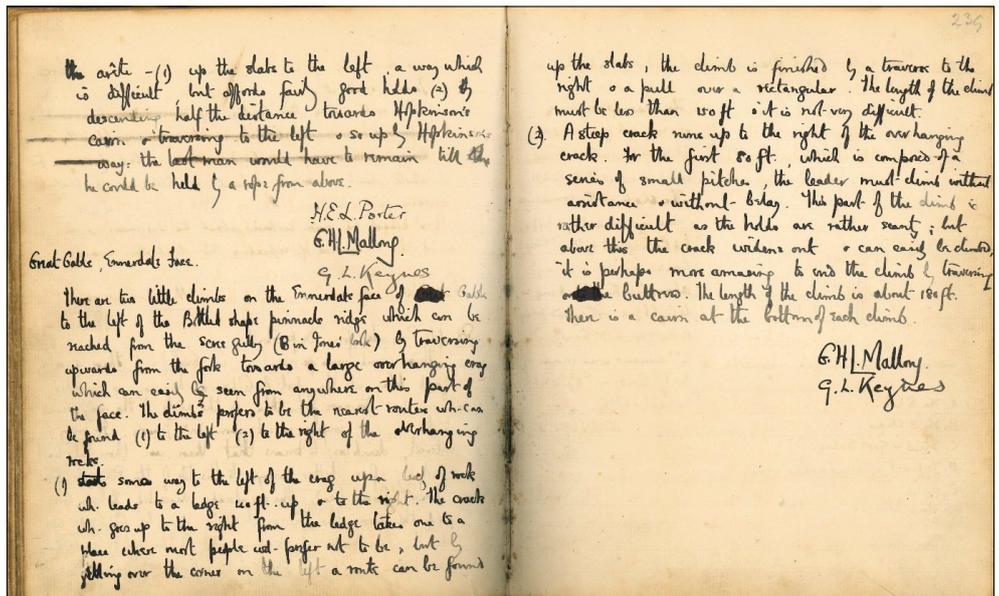
Far Cross Bank, Kendal - deeds relating to 16 & 18 Far Cross Bank, Kendal [later 16 & 18 Appleby Road, Kendal], 1776-1951 (ref WDX 2067)

K Shoes Male Voice Choir – minutes, photographs, newspaper cuttings, etc. (ref WDSO 157)



## Outreach continued

To tie-in with this year's Kendal Mountain Festival in November we set up a 'pop-up' archive in the Pennington Room in Kendal Library. We showed off copies of some of our most interesting documents relating to mountains and mountaineering and there was also a chance to try your hand at drawing in the style of Alfred Wainwright and view an exhibition about him. Popular items included photographs of a climb to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Napes Needle, and selections



of entries from the Fell and Rock Climbing Club climbing books in which new routes were described. The Wasdale Head climbing book includes an entry describing an ascent by George Mallory on the Ennerdale Face of Great Gable. An item that generated a lot of interest was an account of an ascent of Pillar by Aleister Crowley, the occultist.

In November we also hosted a Save Grange Lido group visit, which included a tour of the archive and a chance to view some documents relating to Grange Lido that we hold. These documents included some Joseph Hardman photographs, minutes of Grange Urban District Council relating to the planning and construction of the Lido, and programmes including one for the opening of the Lido in 1932.



### Illustrations.

Top: Wasdale Head Climbing Book (ref WDSO 163/5/1/1).

Centre: Grange Lido by Joseph Hardman (ref WDHD/66)

Bottom: Photograph from the Margaret and Percy Duff collection (ref WDMPD)

## **Volunteers**

Our volunteers have been working on a couple of projects this year. A few volunteers have been cleaning and re-packaging documents in the Browne family of Townend collection that we hold (ref WDTE) and another volunteer has been listing photographs collected by Margaret and Percy Duff which includes a large quantity of Kendal streets and yards and local buildings (ref WDMPD). We are very grateful for the work the volunteers have done this year.

We have also welcomed two students on placements as well as a work experience pupil to Kendal this year. It's been great to have so many different people engaging with the archives, including researchers who book into the searchroom, school children, volunteers, and attendees at outreach events.

**Anthony Hughes, Archivist**

## ***Update from the Conservation and Digitisation Unit***

### **Stocktaking**

As you will be aware, the archives closed to the public for two weeks at the end of November. This time was invaluable to the archive staff as it gave them the chance to take stock and pick up some projects that they usually would not have time for. For conservation and digitisation, this was a chance to work with our colleagues on understanding and refining our catalogues and lists.

Fay has been doing great work identifying items which have been historically listed as being 'in conservation' but which are no longer, in fact, in the lab. Once we have confirmed the items that are not with us, we intend to do a bulk correction in the catalogue, and hopefully we will find that all (or most) of these items are located within their collections. Any outstanding can then be prioritised for stocktaking.

In addition to this, the digitisation team are taking the opportunity to make sure their filing is in order. This may seem like an obvious task, but as we are nearing 20TB of data, the filing has become a crucial part of the task of digitisation. The team are busy chasing up any loose ends or inaccurate references.

The main task for conservation during stocktaking has been to deliver salvage training to all staff. Salvage is the procedures by which we plan to recover the archive after any emergency or disaster situation. Defining an emergency or disaster is tricky, but essentially, we have to be ready for anything - from floods to lockdowns, our response needs to be outlined in a written plan that we are all familiar with. As part of this, we undertake training at each site to ensure staff are familiar with the quirks of each building - where to turn off the water and power, how to open the building out of hours, and who to call in the event that one of us finds ourselves dealing with a situation alone. I hope it reassures our researchers that we are ready for anything.

Major disasters in archives, museums, and galleries, are more common than you might think. Minor incidents from localised flooding are more common still, especially in Cumbria. Once the emergency services have put the fire out or the flood water has receded, and once the building is declared safe to enter, the salvage operation can begin. We do not train our staff to actually deal with an emergency situation - that's for the emergency services - but we do train staff to be confident and resilient in the face of these situations, and to liaise effectively with emergency services to get the best possible outcome.

As it is likely that the hands on salvage of the archives would be carried out by staff and volunteers, we train hands-on: Everyone gets a chance to handle damaged fragile items. We have a collection of materials specially for this, which we refer to as 'sacrificial archives'. These items are usually things that have been damaged beyond repair, or duplicate items that have been weeded from the collection. As we have a very limited stock of items like this, conservation uses the opportunity to treat the damaged items in more extreme and interventive ways than we would treat material from the archive - this makes the training a two stage affair which benefits all staff hugely.

Prioritising collections care is difficult in emergent situations (as it should be). However, that is our job - this training is designed to help staff confidently assert their specialist knowledge and be confident in what is needed to get the job done. We found this training very helpful in 2020, when we had to argue to be allowed back on site to care for the collections. You may have seen articles during the Covid lockdowns about people working in heritage who were among the first to be allowed back to work after front line personnel. It's been a very interesting time for our industry, and one consequence has been that many more people now understand that the quiet work of conservation is a fundamental part of the heritage sector. It is fundamental to the preservation of our history, and crucial to ensuring the value of our collections is protected for generations to come.

**Erika Freyr**

## Ian Jones, *The Off-Comers of Windermere: Birth of a Vibrant Victorian Township*

Troubador Publishing, softback, 2022. £18. ISBN 9781803133157

So, who were the founding fathers of Windermere, the quaint hamlet of Birthwaite which quickly became the well-known village a mile uphill from the lake?

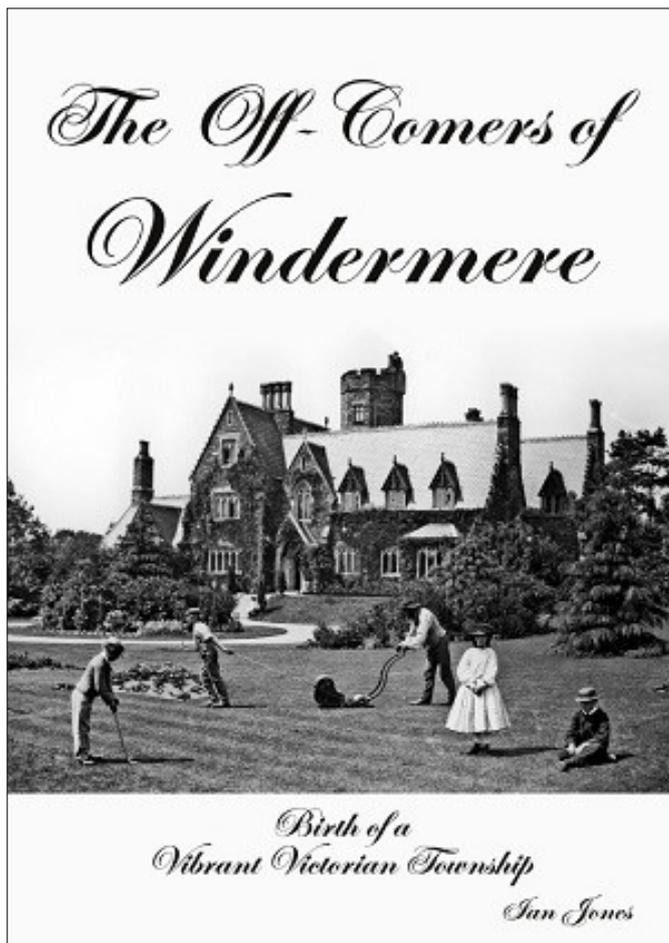
Ian Jones makes a good case for it to be the Reverend John Aspinall Addison who commissioned a group of buildings centred on St. Mary's Church in the 1850s. Addison spent much of his fortune in buying land and then building his mansion called St. Mary's Abbey, the chapel / church of St. Mary's initially to seat a congregation of 200, a two-roomed school for the children of the poor, a college for the sons of clergymen, a middle school for the sons of tradesmen and then two small villas. The whole complex was architect designed and well built. He eventually over-reached himself, the little ecclesiastical campus went pear-shaped and he left the area. However, he not only left his mark on the area but provided Windermere with a handsome legacy of buildings and facilities.

Who are the other contenders for the accolade of being the founding father of Windermere? Without the railway arriving in Windermere in 1847 would the new Victorian village have got off the ground in the way it did? The person with the vision was Cornelius Nicholson, born in 1804 in Ambleside and largely self-taught. Today we might think of him as a good networker. He was in contact with wealthy merchants and business owners and also with civic affairs. He was also in communication with James Cropper who, in the 1840s, had bought a small paper mill in Burneside and would no doubt need a railway facility for the growing business. The Gandys were mill owners in Kendal probably with a similar need for good transport. Nicholson gathered together a steering committee to work out how to create a Kendal to Windermere railway line branching off the main line from London to Scotland at Oxenholme. Apart from wealthy Kendal business men, his committee included Kendal banking families such as the Wakefields, Crewdsons, Wilsons and Gandys. Many committee members became directors of the railway. The Directors commissioned the Windermere Hotel whose tenant provided a coach service to the Central Lakes. Kendal must have been a busy smoky environment as some of the town's bankers and others built themselves villas within a mile of the new Windermere Railway Station so they could retreat to Windermere's clean air at weekends. This in turn encouraged others to build villas so a community soon grew up with many of the families of the new grand houses intermarrying. Ian Jones picks up on this genealogy in the narrative and with a diagram in the appendix.

The working village of Windermere began to grow with action around Church Street, located from the present NatWest Bank and to opposite the entrance to the school at Elleray. As Windermere started to develop, many of the shops, offices and accommodation was built by William Harrison. Ian Jones analyses these buildings well and explains the difference in style with the two other builders operating in the area at the time. Many of the streets are named after trees and it would be interesting to know why. Tracts of land for building the village were sold by the Reverend Fletcher Fleming of Rayrigg Hall. Without such sales, the village might have looked quite different.

There is also a case for including John Garnett who was a local tradesman based on Church Street. He was involved with books and stationery, printing, the Post Office, running a chemist, being a long-serving churchwarden and generally regarded as a formidable figure.

The structure of the book takes the reader on tours in different periods of the village giving a flavour of how Windermere has developed into the place we know today. So, who do you think should be called the founding father?



**Diana Matthews**