

Building on the 'Jubilee Digests': Next Steps 2013-2014

Thanks to the massive effort of more than 100 VCH Cumbria volunteers, the 'Jubilee Digests' have been completed for Cumberland and Westmorland. They provide a 'front page' on the CCHT website for each of the places for which a VCH township/parish article will eventually be written. Now that the important groundwork has been established, we need to look to the future.

A small core of volunteers has embarked on researching and writing full parish/township histories to the VCH template but we recognize that not all volunteers will want to undertake such work. This note suggests ways in which those who have compiled 'Jubilee Digests' might continue their endeavors to keep the VCH project moving forward.

Developing the online 'Resource bank'

On the right hand-side of each digest page we are developing a 'Resource Bank' of material relating to the place in question. Some items have already been added to this, including an explanation of the digests, images that volunteers have submitted, and a reference map for each place. The intention is to develop this further by adding:

1. links to relevant websites
2. a place-specific bibliography
3. further research on particular aspects of the history of the place in question

❖ Websites

The web carries increasingly rich and often unexpected local historical resources, including transcripts of online sources, images and histories of individual places. We would like to gather links to other websites which contain historical information relevant to the place for which a digest has been produced. One task that volunteers might undertake is to search the internet for these websites. They fall into several categories, including:

- Local history societies websites (e.g. <http://www.harringtonhistory.co.uk>)
- Websites produced by individual local historians (such as that by David Bradbury <http://www.pastpresented.ukart.com/>)
- Websites by family historians (e.g. <http://users.tinyworld.co.uk/peterostle/journal.html>)
- Community websites (e.g. <http://www.ravenstonedale.org/>)
- Local business websites

We are asking you to use a search engine such as Google to identify websites containing historical information about the parish or township in question, and to take a look at them to discover what they contain about the place in question. Please send a brief summary of the historical material on the website (a very brief description will suffice, along the lines of: 'contains a full transcript of the diary of Joseph Bloggs (1853-1912)'; 'includes images of Ambridge iron works in early 20th century', for example) along with the URL of each website to Sarah Rose (s.rose2@lancaster.ac.uk)

❖ **Place-specific bibliography**

The aim here is to begin to compile a bibliography of published work specifically relating to the township/parish in question. Some volunteers began to do this in 2011, but not many places were covered. For now, please ignore references to particular places in general articles on Cumberland or Westmorland. VCH articles regularly make use of and cite reliable, high-quality published research. To start with, we suggest you concentrate on the following:

1. ***Transactions of Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society***. The online index at <http://cumbriapast.com> allows you to carry out a full search of articles in *Transactions* from 1866-1900 and 1960-2008 and a more limited author and content search for 1901-1959. Searching for the name of the parish or township for which you are compiling a bibliography in the 'Content Database' should enable you to locate substantive research on the place in question. To save typing, we suggest that you use the standard abbreviation for *Transactions* when compiling your bibliography: *CW1* for Old Series (up to 1900); *CW2* for New Series (1901-2000); *CW3* for Third Series (2001-).
2. **Journals and newsletters of local societies**, where these include sound original work based on primary sources. Into this category would fall publications of both Cumbria-wide special interest groups (e.g. *Cumbria Gardens Trust Occasional Papers*) and local historical societies (e.g. *The Journal of Lorton & Derwentfells Local History Society* - <http://www.derwentfells.com/journal.html>).
3. **Popular local histories** specific to the place in question. Most of these are likely to be of limited use for VCH purposes (since a key feature of VCH research is going back to original sources) but some may contain pointers to primary sources not readily identifiable (e.g. papers or photographs in private hands).

We ask you to compile a bibliography of such works and to submit it as a Word document, making sure to provide all the following information:

For an article: Author Title Journal Volume no Date page nos

Example: Margaret Parsons, 'Pasture farming in Troutbeck, Westmorland 1550-1750', *CW2* 93 (1993), pp. 115-30.

For a book: Author Title Place of publication Publisher Date

Example: Harriet Ritvo, *The Dawn of Green: Manchester, Thirlmere and modern environmentalism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

❖ Developing the Digests

The digests offer a useful starting point for further research which could build towards a VCH article in future. Volunteers are invited to pursue research into a particular aspect of the history of a place, perhaps a place of worship or other institution. In this example from Long Marton, the sheer number of institutions which will need to be researched for an eventual full parish/township history is illustrated. Each of the places underlined could provide the focus for a self-contained piece of research.

Places of worship: Norman parish church of St Margaret and St James in Brampton township (restored 1880). CofE services on alternate Sundays recorded at Knock school in 1885. Mission Room built 1906. Long Marton Wesleyan Chapel built 1818; Brampton Wesleyan Chapel built 1834 and rebuilt in 1866; Knock Wesleyan Chapel built 1840 and rebuilt 1873. Close Houses (Knock) Primitive Methodist Chapel built before 1800; Espland Hill preaching house built by Primitive Methodists c.1833.

Institutions: Parish School endowed 1824 in Long Marton township; now served by Long Marton Community School. Brampton School built by subscription 1833; enlarged 1900. School in Knock recorded in 1885, when CofE services held there every alternate Sunday afternoon. Long Marton Parish Institute built 1893-4; still in use today. Brampton Institute & Parish Reading Room built 1922.

If you decide to research the history of an individual institution such as these, we recommend that you use the guidance given in the Volunteers' Handbook as a starting point. This is available to view and download for free from the CCHT website: <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/vch-cumbria-volunteers-handbook>. Alternatively, hard copies can be purchased from Sarah Rose for £5.

Start by drawing up a list of the sources, both published and manuscript, which the Handbook suggests might be expected to yield information. You will find guidance to sources on the history of individual places of worship in the Religious History section and sources for the history of schools under 'Education' in the Social History section.

If you decide to carry out such a piece of self-contained research, decide how you will keep your research notes. When you come to write your piece about your chosen subject, remember that you should include footnotes giving details of the source for every piece of information you have gathered. We ask that you retain your research notes, so that that may be consulted at a later date by whoever writes the article for that parish/township.

Moving on to the next phase

If you decide to undertake one of the tasks suggested above, please speak to Sarah first about the location you are working on and which task you wish to carry out. This will save duplication of effort and avoid treading on other people's toes! VCH volunteers are welcome to attend a meeting to discuss these next steps at Penrith Methodist Church on Thursday 9th May, 2-4pm.