

Victoria County History of Cumbria Project. Draft parish/township histories

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Parish/township: RENWICK

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Date of draft: 3.12.2012

RENEWICK¹

RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Renwick was recorded as a parish in 1291,² but the church of All Saints - a dedication recorded only from the eighteenth century, perhaps preceded by St Benedict³ - was termed a 'chapel' in the sixteenth century. In 1704 the church was in a poor state of repair, 'without plaister, floor or glass'.⁴ It was replaced in 1737 by a church described in 1840 as 'a plain building consisting of nave and chancel, with a bell gable and entrance at the western end',⁵ and said to be in a 'very indifferent state' by 1814.⁶ That building was, in turn, replaced by the present church, completed in 1846, which had a bell gable and door at the western end, and was 'in simple Norman style, with simplest Norman chancel arch and wide splays to the windows'.⁷ The cost of reconstruction was just under £500, of which the patron William de Lancy Lawson gave £230, George Nicholson £65, Queen's College Oxford £50, the Society for Building Churches £40, the incumbent curate John Watson £37, and the remainder raised from the rates and small donations.⁸ Two medieval church bells, believed to

¹ The author would like to thank the following for their assistance during the preparation of this article: Jane Platt, Lydia Gray, David Grisenthwaite, Graham Brookes; Michael Riordan, archivist at The Queen's College, Oxford, David Bowcock and Tom Robson at Cumbria Archive Centre, Carlisle, Stephen White at Carlisle Central Library; and local residents in Renwick.

² *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* 129.1

³ N&B, 434; Todd (1710) gave St Benedict: CAS (C), DX1915/3; Chancellor Walter Fletcher's Diocesan Book (1814) gives St Benedict or All Saints'.

⁴ Nicolson, *Misc Acct*, 119.

⁵ Jefferson, *Leath Ward*, 107.

⁶ Chancellor Walter Fletcher's Diocesan Book, 1814.

⁷ Hyde and Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 588.

⁸ CAS(C) PR72/13 (page of accounts inserted in Register of Burials, All Saints, Renwick).

have been originally made and installed at Renwick, have been dated to about 1400.⁹ The larger bell, inscribed with 23 letters of the alphabet in Lombardic capitals and replaced in 1893, was transferred to Carlisle Cathedral Treasury in 2012.

Patronage, Income and Endowment

Renwick church or chapel was rectorial until about 1340, when it was appropriated to Hexham Priory.¹⁰ The ancient glebe lands amounted to about 35 acres (14.5 ha); and in 1479 there was a priest-house adjoining the church.¹¹ After the suppression of the priory, the ‘chapel or church of Ranwicke, called Ranwicke Chapel’ was leased by the crown to Thomas Owen for 13s 4d p.a., and sold in 1578, reserving the advowson, bells and lead and the right of patronage. Also reserved was a sum of £4 for the stipend of the curate to be paid out of the lands then sold.¹² The glebe land and most of the tithes were thereafter in the hands of lay impropiators.¹³ In 1704/5, the owners of the tithes, William Towry of Croglin Hall and Philip Walker of Lazonby, were presented for non-repair of the chancel, and Thomas Sowerby, who owned the glebe land, was said to be responsible for the repair of the ‘Quire’ - perhaps the responsibility was shared.¹⁴ The patronage, retained by the crown in 1577, appears to have been exercised by the impropiators. For about 150 years the tithes and glebe lands were in divided ownership and the patronage may have been exercised alternately.¹⁵ In 1739 James Westmorland became principal impropiator and patron.¹⁶ In 1757 he sold to George Lawson whose son William Lawson (1736-1819) was patron in 1814; and in 1849 William Lawson's grandson William de Lancy Lawson was described as ‘the true and undoubted patron of the perpetual curacy of Renwick’.¹⁷ When Joseph Nicholson purchased the Lawson landholdings in

⁹ Rev H. Whitehead, ‘Church Bells in Leath Ward, No 5’, *CW1* (1896), 259f.

¹⁰ *The Register of John Kirkby 1332-1352*, ed R. L. Storey, (CYS 79 and 81, 1993-5), p. 39 (no235) and p. 131 (no 645); the widespread suggestion that it was appropriated to St Mary's College York is mistaken.

¹¹ J. Raine (ed), *The Priory of Hexham*, (Surtees Society, 46, 1865), II, 12.

¹² *Cal Pat 1575-1578*, 3251.

¹³ Denton *Perambulation*, 330 states that the vicarage and the tithes belonged to Queen's College and were demised for 21 years to the inhabitants, but QC muniments are silent on the point.

¹⁴ CAS(C) DRC/6/122 (Bishop's Transcripts); Nicolson *Misc. Acct.* 119.

¹⁵ Jefferson, *Leath Ward*, 107, makes this suggestion.

¹⁶ E Hughes, ed, *Fleming -Senhouse Papers*, 108; CAS(C) DX1705, box 1, package 5. Westmorland did not own the title of wool and lamb, which had been held by Thomas Gosling in 1614, the Fetherstonhaugh family to 1664, the Towry family to 1775, and Bowman and Gibson to 1842, when it was commuted: The College, Kirkoswald: Fetherstonhaugh family muniments, A-20-5 (1614); A-20-49 (1775); CAS(C), DRC8/161.

¹⁷ Chancellor Walter Fletcher's Diocesan Book, 1814; Lyson *Magna Britannia* (1816), IV, 150; CAS(C) QRJ2/26 (return of freeholders 1759), and DCR/22/226 (indenture of 19 Apr. 1849).

1873 he also acquired the patronage.¹⁸ After his death in 1895 it was held by William Salkeld until his death in 1935, and then by George Wilfred Armstrong, until the grouping with Croglin in 1941 introduced alternate exercise of the office.¹⁹ Later regroupings transferred the function to the Bishop of Carlisle.

After the loss of the glebe land and tithes the living, a perpetual curacy, was very poor. Jeffrey Gosling (curate from 1589 to his death in 1616) supplemented his income by holding a customary farming tenement at Outhwaite.²⁰ After his death there is no record of a curate at Renwick until William Atkinson in March 1642 about whom nothing is known.²¹ George Mires, a Commonwealth appointee in 1649, lived in Renwick until his death in 1668.²² Between 1668 and 1807 there were long periods during which the curacy was served by the incumbents of other churches such as William Wilkinson (vicar of Lazonby 1741-1762).²³ John Rumney, a clergyman schoolmaster, was at first curate of Renwick alone from 1680, then of Kirkoswald and Renwick 1690-1712, and again 1724-1737.²⁴ Thomas Robinson, who started his ministry at Croglin and was curate of Renwick 1807-1831, was also a teacher. Robinson's successor John Watson, curate of Renwick 1832-1866, who oversaw the rebuilding of the church in 1845/6, was also curate of, and lived in, Cumrew.²⁵ None of these men were university graduates.

The £4 stipend for the curate was augmented from lands purchased with £600 from Queen Anne's Bounty (and a further £200 from the countess dowager Gower). Lands at Hunsonby were purchased before 1749, and at Ruckcroft, Ainstable before 1777. In 1749 moduses were payable in lieu of tithes for corn hemp and lime from the hamlets of Scalehouses and Outhwaite, and from the parish at large for hay; and small fees were payable for rites of passage, and a smoke penny at Easter.²⁶ The value of the living was stated to be £13 in 1749; £40 in 1777; £70 in 1814; £90 in

¹⁸ Bulmer, *Dir East Cumb*, 1884; CAS(C) D/BS Box 797, Renwick 9 (admittance of 1873).

¹⁹ CAS(C) PR72/6.

²⁰ QC, 5A-13 (admittance 1598); CAS(C) DRC/5/1 (1606); P 1589 Westmorland, P 1616 Gosling.

²¹ Renwick Protestation Return 1642.

²² CAS(C) DRC/5/2 (1665); P 1668 Mires; Mires was not mentioned by Nightingale.

²³ CAS(C) DMH/10/3/5; Wilkinson was also curate of Cumrew: in Renwick 'they complain of having service once every 3 weeks', wrote Chancellor Waugh in 1748.

²⁴ CAS(C) DRC/5/5 and 5/6 (call rolls of clergy in Cumberland Deanery); and cf *Social History*.

²⁵ CAS(C) DRC Acc A3966 (visitation returns 1858f).

²⁶ CAS(C) DRC/22/226, terriers of 1749 and 1777.

1847; and £125 in 1884.²⁷

The living was enlarged to a vicarage in 1867, the incumbent Michael Valentine Kennedy being like most of his successors, but not his predecessors, a graduate.²⁸ A vicarage was built in the 1870s from public subscription on land (thought to be the site of the medieval priesthouse) donated by the patron William de Lancy Lawson; house and land were sold in 1956.²⁹ In 1917-1919 £850 was raised from grants and local fund-raising, and the income from these funds, from a legacy and the proceeds of sale of the land at Hunsonby and Ainstable, allowed the vicar's annual stipend to be raised to £250 in 1920, and to £300 in 1927.³⁰ The benefice was reconfigured on several occasions: Renwick was united with Croglin 1941-1954; with Kirkoswald 1954-1976; with Kirkoswald and Ainstable 1976-2000; with Kirkoswald, Great Salkeld and Lazonby from 2000. The parish of Renwick was enlarged in 1941 by the addition of parts of Kirkoswald High Quarter; and in 2012, when Croglin was added, it became 'Renwick with Croglin'.³¹

Religious Life and Nonconformity

Presentments in bishops' visitations 1663-1720, and later commentators, record general adherence to the Church of England.³² There were however dissenters in Renwick from the interregnum onwards. George Mires, Commonwealth appointee in 1649, appears to have been Presbyterian: he conformed after 1660, and died in Renwick in 1668 having enjoyed the friendship and confidence of influential men like the bailiff Thomas Gosling.³³ In 1676 there were 10 dissenters (and one recusant) out of 30 persons of an age to communicate.³⁴ An independent chapel had been functioning at Parkhead (in Kirkoswald, one mile from Renwick) since 1653.³⁵ Two Renwick families (Hilton and Sowerby) baptised their children at Parkhead between 1700 and 1750, and in 1693 a Hilton marriage had been

²⁷ *ibid.* and Chancellor Walter Fletcher's Diocesan Book, 1814; Mannix & Whellan *Dir Cumb* 1847; Bulmer *Dir East Cumb* 1884.

²⁸ Crockford, *Clerical Directory*, 1884.

²⁹ Bulmer, *Dir East Cumb*, 1884; CAC(S) DRC/22/226.

³⁰ Vestry minute book at Kirkoswald Vicarage.

³¹ CAC(S) PR72/6 (1941); Orders in Council published in the London Gazette 30 Mar. 1941, 16 Apr. 1954, 11 Mar. 1976, 4 Dec. 1999; draft scheme of the Church Commissioners, Feb. 2012.

³² CAS(C) DRC6/122 (1662, 1698/1710 - '*de articulis omnia bene*'); Hutchinson, 212.

³³ CAS(C) - P 1667 Westmorland, P 1668 Mires.

³⁴ The Compton census, transcribed from a document at the Bodleian, by F.G. James *The Population of Carlisle in 1676*, CW2 (1951); the figure of 30 seems a serious underestimate.

³⁵ TNA RG4/566.

presented as 'clandestine', suggesting at least two generations of dissent.³⁶ The Watson family of stonemasons are known to have heard John Wesley preach at neighbouring Gamblesby in 1780, and were prime movers in establishing Wesleyanism in Renwick,³⁷ as were the farming family of Greenop, still prominent in the Renwick Methodist Chapel in the 21st century. Methodism in Renwick, at first practiced in association with a group at Gamblesby,³⁸ was officially certified in 1813, and the first Renwick Wesleyan chapel was built in 1818.³⁹ The number of Methodists in the parish was described as 'a few' in 1825.⁴⁰ The Wesleyans established a Sunday School in 1817;⁴¹ added a schoolroom to their chapel in 1863;⁴² and continued to run a Sunday School in Renwick until the 1980s (the Anglican Sunday School was discontinued in the 1960s, after which Anglicans supported the Methodist school).⁴³ In 1905 the Wesleyans rebuilt their chapel, replacing the simple cottage-like building of 1818 with a sandstone church, surmounted by a small spire, and with windows in the Perpendicular style.⁴⁴

In 1851 attendance at the Wesleyan chapel was 75; a group of 38 Primitive Methodists attended a service held in a private house; and 40 persons attended the parish church.⁴⁵ It seems that Methodists continued to attend regularly at Anglican services, and to use the church for rites of passage, for most of the nineteenth century. The average attendance at church in 1858, when services were held every Sunday either in the morning or the afternoon, was 40 or 75 respectively; communion was infrequent (3 or 4 times a year) and the number of communicants usually 10. In 1858, the curate John Watson gave charity sermons for 'Indian sufferers', SPCK and the Bible Society. By 1900 'scarcely 20%' of the population attended church, and communion was held monthly, with 8 communicants.⁴⁶ Falling attendance at the parish church was again noted in 1963, and from that time began the annual church fete, one of a number of widely supported fund raising

³⁶ *ibid.*, and CAS(C) DRC6/122 (bishop's transcripts 1693).

³⁷ Jane Platt, 'Thomas Watson, peasant-poet', *Northern History*, XLIX (2012), 323-44; *Cumberland and Westmorland Advertiser*, 1 July 1884, p. 6.

³⁸ Durham Archive Service, M/BC2 (1801)

³⁹ Certificate of Methodist Worship 1813 (in Renwick Methodist schoolroom); foundation deed 1818 at the Manse, Kirkoswald.

⁴⁰ Chancellor Walter Fletcher's Diocesan Book, 1825.

⁴¹ CAS(C) DFCM 4/5/160; Parson & White *Dir. C. & W.* 1829, 510.

⁴² Bulmer, *Dir East Cumb.*, 1884, 686.

⁴³ Attendance registers of Renwick Methodist Sunday School, held by Mr L.H.Greenop, Renwick.

⁴⁴ *Mid Cumberland and North Westmorland Herald*, 15 Jul. 1905. Photograph (c.1900) of 1818 building in Methodist schoolroom; Hyde & Pevsner, *Cumbria*, 588.

⁴⁵ HO 129/565 (religious census 1851).

⁴⁶ CAS(C) DRC Acc A3966, 1858, 1900.

schemes continued into the 21st century.⁴⁷ In 2012 there was a tradition of joint services five times a year: despite 50 years of steadily declining congregations, both church and chapel continued to function as places of worship.

⁴⁷ Parochial Church Council minute books held at Kirkoswald vicarage.