

Cumbria Archives @60

'Our desire is to make our collections as accessible to the public as possible.'





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SHARING OUR HERITAGE

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Cumbria Archive Service (CAS). This anniversary comes at a time of major change in Cumbria and provides us with an opportunity to reflect on both the legacy and achievements of the Service and on how it could develop in the future.



CAS was born out of the decision by Carlisle, Cumberland and Westmorland to come together to support the creation of an archive service which would cover much of what is now modern-day Cumbria.

When we look back at the first years of the Service (or Joint Archives Committee, as we were then known), we see a service that has changed beyond all recognition. The Cumbria Record Office in Carlisle opened in 1962 with just two archivists, including our first County Archivist, Bruce Jones. At Kendal, Sheila MacPherson worked alone until Nancy Woof joined in 1965.

Today, CAS is composed of four archive centres based in Carlisle, Kendal, Barrow and Whitehaven. A specialist Conservation and Digitisation Service that supports our work throughout Cumbria is also based in Carlisle. In all, twenty-four staff work to collect, preserve and facilitate access to our written heritage for researchers in Cumbria and throughout the world. County Record Offices have their origins in the Quarter Sessions and the record-keeping functions of the Clerk of the Peace, the official responsible for maintaining the court's archives and issuing legal advice. For example, a muniment room, where valuable items and documents are stored and preserved, was created in the Nisi Prius building in the Courts in Carlisle as early as 1880. During the War, Madeleine Elsas was appointed as Archivist to the nascent Cumberland Record

Office and carried out the first surveys of historic parish records scattered in church safes throughout Cumberland. Westmorland was later in recognising its archive obligations with a muniment room (still in use!) which was incorporated into the new County Hall in Kendal in 1939. Building our collections has been a major element in the story of CAS. Following the creation of the Joint Archives Committee, the new service expanded beyond official record-keeping to collecting archives that are now recognised as being of national and international significance. Acquisitions have reflected every aspect of life in Cumbria whether that be religious, political, social or economic. They also tell us how the landscape in the region has been transformed, first by the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society and, more recently, to one

supported by tourism.

A key feature of CAS is our desire to make our collections as accessible to the public as possible. This has required us to adapt our approach over the years. Before the internet, we invested in developing a network of Record Offices that were within a reasonable distance for every community in Cumbria.

The creation of Cumbria County Council in 1974 and the incorporation of the Furness area of Lancashire into the new County provided a major impetus to develop the service further. After a short period based in Dalton, in 1979 a permanent archive centre was opened in Barrow-in-Furness next to the Library.

Bruce Jones's dream throughout the 1960s of a West Cumbria Record Office was also finally realised with the opening of our first Archive and Local Studies Centre in Whitehaven in 1996.

When CAS celebrated its 50th Anniversary, we had just completed our most ambitious development with the

much-needed replacement of the Cumbria Record Office in Carlisle. This office had, over the course of the preceding five decades, provided access to our collections in the Alma Block at Carlisle Castle. Our new Archive Centre at Petheril Bank House provides state of the art facilities which help preserve and store our collections, as well as enabling us to invest in the digitisation of our collections. These

access to digital collections mirror the challenge archivists and conservators have always faced when dealing with parchment and paper. By representing the various identities and historic boundaries of the county in our collections, our network of archive centres reflect the diversity of Cumbria, encouraging pride in our communities and inspiring curiosity about their histories.



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facilities are a significant tool not only for collections preservation, but also for reaching new audiences. Today, the challenge of access includes the development of an online offer that is available to all people irrespective of where they live and when they want to see our collections. Digital capture and the means to preserve, manage and facilitate

As we start the next 60 years, we can again look forward to a transformed local government landscape and embracing new ways of fulfilling our timeless goal of collecting, preserving and sharing our heritage with future generations.

Peter Eyre,

Archives Professional Lead

JOINT ARCHIVE SERVICE

Although the Cumbria Archive Service (CAS) only came into existence in 1974, its roots stretch back almost a century earlier when, in 1880, the County of Cumberland and the Corporation of Carlisle created their own muniment rooms. The former was located in the Courts at Carlisle and the latter in the office of the Town Clerk on Fisher Street. Although Westmorland did not establish its own Archive Committee for another sixteen years, it would subsequently become the first of the three authorities to obtain a purpose-built strongroom when the new County Hall was opened in Kendal in 1939.

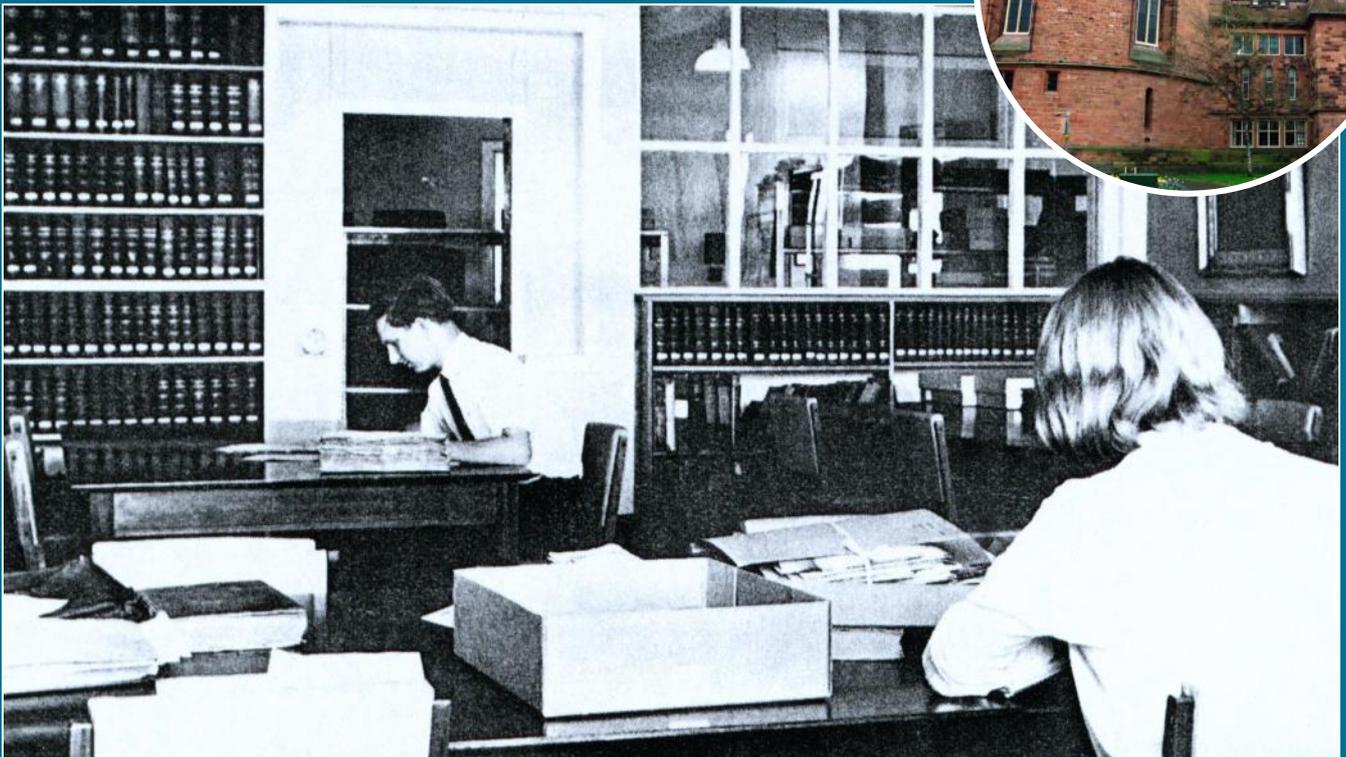
Starting in 1942, Cumberland County Council appointed their first archivist, Madeline Elsas, to organise their holdings. The work she carried out between 1942 and 1946 was later

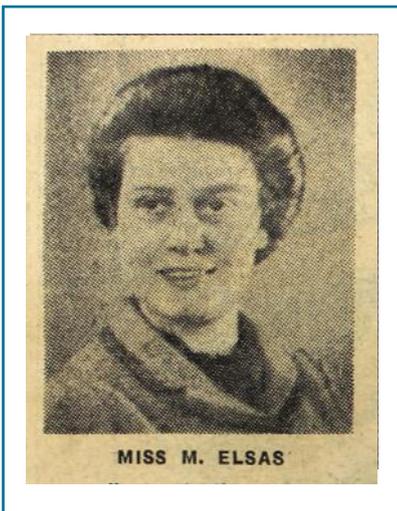
credited for laying a firm foundation for the Joint Archives Committee, the predecessor of CAS.

At Tullie House, the Director, Thomas Gray, secured

permission for two librarians to undergo archival training. One of these librarians, Elizabeth Ward, was appointed assistant

Alma Block: The interior of the Searchroom of the Joint Archives Committee's office in Carlisle Castle.





archivist in 1947. Gray effectively unified local authority records and manuscripts provision in Carlisle. He was by virtue of his role at Tullie House de facto archivist to Carlisle City Council and in 1948 was appointed consultant archivist to Cumberland County Council. The impetus for the creation of the Joint Archives Committee ultimately came in 1960, when the Earl of Lonsdale offered the Lowther estate archive to an institution which could make it accessible to members of the public. Neither Cumberland and Westmorland County Councils nor the City of Carlisle had the storage space or resources necessary to take on the Earl's archive. The County Record Office for Cumberland was so full that the cellars of neighbouring council buildings had to be used to store the overflow. Researchers were similarly pressed for space,

with their visits confined to 'a small narrow room where consultation of even a limited number of books or papers was a discouraging and frustrating pastime'.

The library at Tullie House agreed to offer one of the rooms in the museum as temporary storage for Earl Lonsdale's collection, but the plan was jeopardised by opposition from museum staff. To prevent the collection from being relocated to Durham University, interested councillors and officers for Cumberland, Westmorland and Carlisle decided to work together. The resulting Joint Archives Committee was established in December 1960 and commenced meetings in

Kendal. Thomas Gray was originally appointed as archivist to the new Committee, but his death at Christmas 1961 led to the appointment of Bruce Jones who would lead the Joint Archive Service (and later CAS) until 1985.

On 1 April 1974, the historic counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, along with parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, were subsumed into the newly created county of Cumbria. The Joint Archive Service, which already served most of the new county, thereafter became known as the Cumbria Archive Service (CAS). CAS immediately began an expansion, appointing an archivist to serve the Furness district even though no Record



The library at Tullie House agreed to offer one of the rooms in the museum as temporary storage for Earl Lonsdale's collection, but the plan was jeopardised by opposition from museum staff.



April of the following year. Work quickly began to secure a site to house a new Carlisle Record Office, with the Committee eventually settling upon the city's Castle. The subsequent year, the Committee also opened an archive centre at County Hall in

Office yet existed. Although the new Dalton-in-Furness Record Office was opened in 1976, it closed at the end of 1978 and was replaced the following year by a new branch in Barrow-in-Furness. Further expansion took place over the subsequent two decades,

most notably in 1992 when a new records out-store was opened in Houghton and in 1996 when a new Record Office was opened in Whitehaven. Since then, further advances have been made by CAS, especially with regard to digitisation and the adoption of new technology. In 1998, for example, archive management software was introduced, and at the turn of the millennium, recognising the increasing importance of the internet, CAS launched a website. More recently, in 2008, the Cumbria Archive Service Catalogue (CASCAT) was created, allowing the public to search its collections online for the first time. By 2012, CAS was adding roughly 50,000 new catalogue entries annually and receiving around 100,000 online catalogue searches each year.

In 2009, CAS also introduced a digitisation service to enable greater online access to its collections. Since then, CAS has collaborated with Signal Film

documents for researchers and manages over eleven miles of documents. In 2013, two years after the opening of the new state-of-the-art Archive Centre



The library at Tullie House agreed to offer one of the rooms in the museum as temporary storage for Earl Lonsdale’s collection, but the plan was jeopardised by opposition from museum staff.



and Media to digitise and catalogue the Sankey family photographic collection and with Archives+, Manchester, to digitise Cumbria’s wealth of oral history resources. To improve its digital offering and keep pace with technological developments, CAS has also begun the procurement process for a new digital preservation system. Today, CAS each year receives around 10,000 enquiries, produces around 15,000

at Petteril Bank in Carlisle, CAS became the first archive service out of roughly 2,000 throughout the UK to receive Archives Accreditation. This status is awarded to archives that excel in their service to stakeholders, are adaptive to change, are clear about their mission and meet rigorous national standards in the preservation of their collections. This status, which was renewed in 2016 and again in 2020, is perhaps the greatest tribute that could be paid to the founders of the Joint Archives Committee and all those who have followed in their footsteps since 1961. It is thanks to their hard work and vision that Cumbria Archive Service continues to manage our written heritage.



Left: The strong room at County Offices Kendal, 1963.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Over the past sixty years, the Cumbria Archive Service has been transformed beyond all recognition. Reflecting on its history, there are a number of key individuals who stand out as being particularly deserving of recognition for their contributions.

MADELEINE ELSAS

Madeleine was born in Frankfurt in 1913 to a Jewish Anglo-German family. Her father brought the family to England in 1933 to escape Nazi persecution.

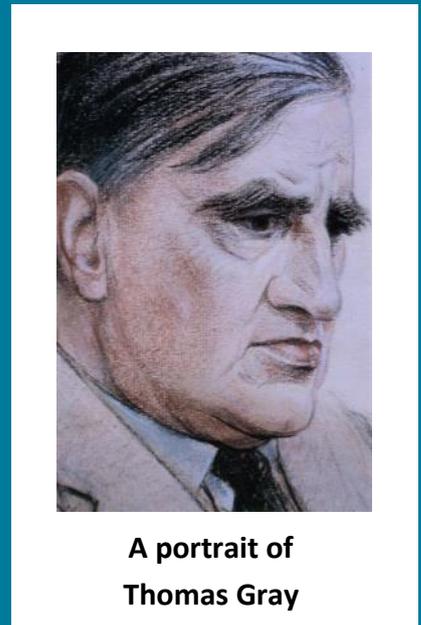
Madeleine pursued library training in London and archival and conservation training at Bedford Record Office under Dr G H Fowler and F G Emmison. After work at both Somerset and Essex Record Offices she was recruited to be the first county archivist for Cumberland County Council in 1942. In four hectic years she supervised the care and return of evacuated records back to Carlisle, conducted numerous surveys of parish records and carried out the work of a whole local government archive service on her own, answering enquiries, repairing and repackaging records and promoting the service to local people. She resigned in 1946 to become County Archivist for Glamorgan

and had a distinguished career there until her retirement in 1973. She was succeeded as Cumberland County Archivist by the archivist and medieval historian John Lavan Kirby (1912-2002) in early 1947. He resigned later the same year.

THOMAS GRAY

Thomas Gray was born in Carlisle in 1883 and began working at Tullie House at the age of just 14.

Despite his youth, Thomas's talents were recognised by his employer and promotion soon followed, first to the position of Chief Assistant Librarian, and subsequently in 1903, to the position of Deputy Librarian. Although only nineteen years of age, as Deputy Librarian, Thomas was responsible for running the Emigration Office, a function he dutifully carried out for seven years until a further promotion saw him become Librarian at Tullie House. Thomas's promising career was interrupted by the



outbreak of war in 1914, during which he saw action in Salonika with the Royal Army Medical Corps. After being demobilised in 1920, Thomas returned to his post at Tullie House and in 1929 was appointed Director, a position he held until retirement in 1949.

Thomas was an autodidact with an ability to manage large quantities of information in his mind without resorting to pen and paper. In his spare time, he was a member of Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian

and Archaeological Society, serving variously as honorary librarian, honorary curator, honorary secretary, and ultimately in 1948, vice president. In that same year, following the resignation of the County Archivist, Cumberland County Council decided to offer Thomas the position of part-time consultant archivist. That he was chosen for the post is as much a reflection of his expertise as it was his antiquarian and historical interests. Although not an archivist by training, Thomas was successful enough in the post that in 1961 the Joint Archives Committee resolved that the new combined service should be led by him. Sadly on 27 December of the same year,

Thomas died at his desk in Carlisle. The flag of the County Council was flown at half mast, a testament to the respect which he commanded after all his years of dedicated service. His successor, Bruce Jones, wrote of him, 'His quick and active mind, his knowledge of the history of the county and his skill in teaching and stimulating others to take an interest in history and historical records, won him many friends and were qualities which outweighed his lack of method and professional training.'

BRUCE JONES

Bruce Jones joined the Joint Archives Committee in June 1962, leaving his post as

Archivist to the City Borough of Southampton following the sudden death of Thomas Gray in December 1961.

Upon his appointment, Bruce was responsible for managing the complex transition to a combined archive service intended to serve the peoples of Westmorland, Cumberland, and Carlisle.

Although Thomas Gray had kept little in the way of written records, preferring to rely more upon his memory, Bruce found that the groundworks already laid by his predecessor more than compensated for this.

Bruce greatly valued the assistance of his team during these early months, writing that 'the success of the new organisation' depended upon them. By the mid 1960s, the Joint Archives Committee under Bruce's leadership was already being considered as a model for combined archive services in both Scotland and Cambridgeshire. Over the next two decades, Bruce led the Service to further success, overseeing the creation of a further Archive Centre in Barrow and improving the management of and access to Cumbria's wealth of historical records. By the time he retired in 1985, Bruce had transformed the fledgling combined service into a modern, well organised



Bruce Jones pictured in the Strong room at Alma Block, Carlisle Castle.

council department. He was succeeded in the post the following year by Sheila MacPherson who had worked with Bruce since 1962 when she had been appointed Assistant Archivist at Kendal.

SHEILA MACPHERSON

Sheila MacPherson joined the Joint Archive Service in 1962.

As the archivist in charge of the Kendal branch, Sheila was responsible for building up its archive service, a task which included liaising with all manner of people and organisations in order to obtain vital records to be added to Kendal's expanding collection. Up until this point, the archive had largely consisted of various statutes, council minutes, law books, and a 'formidable series of old county council papers'. In the absence of a Westmorland archivist prior to Sheila's appointment in 1962, these had all been crammed into County Hall's small strongroom in such a manner that it seemed completely full, 'an illusion,' wrote Bruce Jones, 'created by haphazard arrangement' and 'shelving that was clumsy and wasteful of space.' Sheila was in charge of streamlining and organising the ramshackle collection, a task likened by Bruce to 'fitting a quart into a pint pot'. Despite



Sheila MacPherson, 1970s

the overwhelming work she had to undertake in the first few years, Sheila's enjoyment was clearly observed by others and in 1965, Mr Himsworth, Clerk to Westmorland County Council, received a letter from his opposite number in Cumberland thanking both him and his colleagues for making Sheila's job 'both an enjoyable and rewarding one'. Following the creation of Cumbria in 1974, Sheila was promoted to the post of Deputy County Archivist, a position she held until the retirement of Bruce Jones in 1985, whereupon she was chosen as his successor in the post of County Archivist. As head of the Cumbria Archive Service, Sheila oversaw a range of developments including the opening of records outstore at Houghton and the approval of a new Record Office in

Whitehaven. Sheila was also instrumental in the establishment of Friends of Cumbria Archives (FOCAS), a charity dedicated to 'the education of the public by the promotion, support, assistance and improvement of the Cumbria Archive Service'. Although Sheila retired in 1992, her contemporary Richard Hall has reflected that during her short period as County Archivist, 'She laid the foundations of the present Archive Service and secured Westmorland's archival inheritance for future generations.' Sheila herself ended on a note of optimism, commenting on the eve of her resignation that, 'if present developments can be continued and built upon, the Cumbria Archive service may yet prove to be a tiny jewel in Cumbria's crown.'

JIM GRISENTHWAITE

Jim Grisenthwaite, was County Archivist from 1992 to 2001. Jim's tenure came at a time of significant innovation for the Archive Service.

The development of the internet saw the service's first tentative steps towards providing a website which offered a guide to available services. It was around this time that the relationship

between Library and Archive services were formalised in a new Heritage Services Department, paving the way for shared Archive and Library provision on two sites. In 1996, the long held ambition of opening an Archive Centre to serve West Cumbria was finally realised, when the Cumbria Record Office and Local Studies Library at Scotch Street in Whitehaven was opened. The new Record Office involved the imaginative refurbishment of a former Victorian police station in the heart of the town. This development represented a major innovation, with the establishment of a new joint Archives and Local Studies service that brought Archive and Library staff together as one team for the first time. Developments at Whitehaven were followed up with a substantial refurbishment at Barrow Archives in 1998 that involved the creation of a new searchroom and local studies library in the courtyard of the Archive Centre, as well as the establishment of new strongroom accommodation to ensure more of Barrow's collections were available locally. As with Whitehaven, a new joint Archives and Local Studies Team was established to deliver the new service. In both cases opening hours were extended to accommodate

demand for the wider range of sources available.

ANNE ROWE

Anne Rowe succeeded Jim in 2002. Under Anne's leadership. Major advances were made and the Service continued to go from strength to strength.

Modernisation continued apace with the delivery of an online public catalogue underpinned by a new collection management system used by staff to catalogue and locate records. There was significant investment in staff and digitisation equipment to help preserve fragile original

records and enable remote access to them. A crowning achievement of this period was the opening of the new Archive Centre at Petteril Bank House in Carlisle in 2012. The new Centre replaced a much loved but wholly inadequate Record Office located in Carlisle Castle, with accommodation that meets contemporary standards for care, preservation and access to collections. The Archive Centre has become an asset to the wider community, hosting adult learning courses, the registration of births, marriages and deaths, and becoming a popular venue for weddings.

TODAY'S SERVICE

Cumbria Archive Service is led by a small management team of three, including **Archives Professional Lead, Peter Eyre**, who is responsible for the overall management of the service. Peter joined the Service from Warwickshire County Record Office in August 1993 and has worked in all four Cumbria Archive Centres.

Our Senior Archivist is Robert Baxter.

Robert joined the service in 1994 before moving to Kings College London. Since returning in 2002, Robert now leads on collections development, including the development of and access to online resources.

Senior Conservator, Erika Freyr, joined us from Alnwick Castle in 2020. Erika oversees the development of collections care, as well as the Conservation and Digitisation services.



CUMBRIA ARCHIVE SERVICE CENTRES



CARLISLE



KENDAL



BARROW



WHITEHAVEN

CARLISLE

The Carlisle branch of the Joint Archive Service was first located in the Cumberland County Records office at the Courts. The Joint Committee, aware that they needed to act quickly if they were to secure the Earl of Lonsdale's offer of the Lowther archive, managed to obtain a forty-two-year lease on the Alma barrack block at Carlisle Castle. Having obtained the necessary permissions for the new

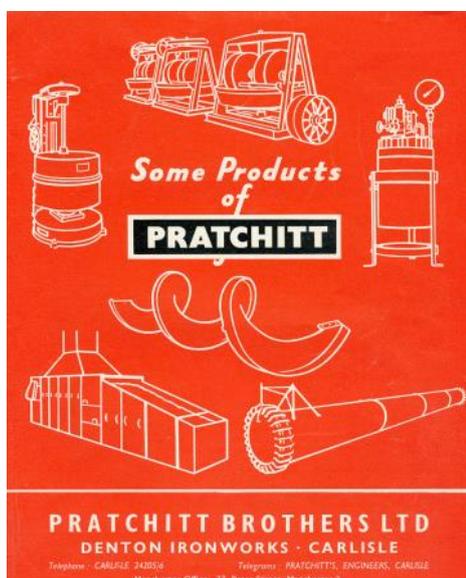


Record Office from the Bishop of Carlisle and the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the various items held in the muniment room at the Courts

were boxed up and prepared for transportation, a task which ultimately required six furniture vans. The conversion of the Alma block into an archive was a monumental undertaking but much of the work was achieved by the end of the year, and in 1963, the new Record Office was finally ready to house the Lowther archive.

During the 1970s, the Carlisle Archive Centre expanded into

Far left: The front cover of a promotional booklet for Pratchitt Brothers Ltd. of Denton Iron Works, Carlisle-makers of stationary engines. Ref: DB 56. Below right: Packing biscuits at Carr & Co. biscuit works which was founded in 1831 in Carlisle. Ref: DB45.





Petteril Bank House, Carlisle

the Castle's Arroyo block and opened a 'temporary' store on Ashley Street. Between 1988 and 1992, this would become the headquarters for both the Records Management Unit and the Conservation Unit. Hopes for further expansion were dashed, however, when CAS's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding towards a new Record Office was rejected in 1998. Despite this setback, in 2004, the Council approved another application, this time for an Archive Centre at Petteril Bank. The same year, the Records

Management Unit also acquired new premises on Lord Street which were refurbished and converted into a new Record Office. Although severe flooding in 2005 led to delays, by July 2006, the renovation was complete. This came on the back of further good news

from the Heritage Lottery Fund which had agreed in March to contribute £4.8 million towards the Petteril Bank development. By 2009, construction had begun, and in 2010, over 900m³ of records were relocated to the new Archive Centre from Houghton, Ashley

Right: Letters patent of Charles II, which requires all officers of the city & their deputies to take oaths of obedience before admission to office, 1664. Ref. CA/1/20 p1.



Street, and the Castle. The move required between four and six deliveries per day over a fifty-eight-day period, figures which stand in stark contrast with the move of 1962 and indicate the extent to which the archive had expanded over the decades. Despite the vast amount of material moved, by 2011 Petteril Bank was ready for public use and was officially opened in 2012 by the mountaineer Sir Chris Bonington.

In addition to the Earl of Lonsdale's archive, the Carlisle branch of CAS houses a wide range of local authority, district council and parish records, as well as collections donated by businesses, families, organisations, and private individuals. During the 1960s, Carlisle became the custodian of papers belonging to the suffragist and founder of the

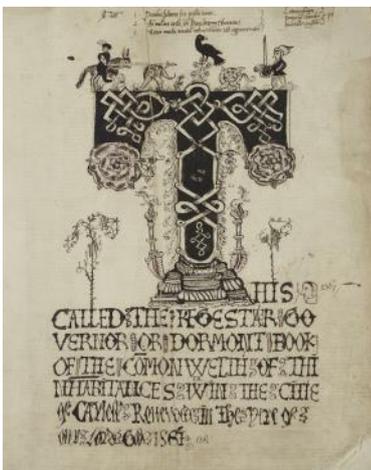


Above: Cowans Sheldon Co., Ltd, civil engineers of Carlisle. Ref: DB 40.

Keswick branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), Catherine Marshall. In the following decade, Carlisle also obtained the archive of Carr's, the famous biscuit manufacturer founded in the city in 1831. The collection includes recipes, accounts, correspondence, legal documents, and marketing materials which provide a fascinating glimpse into an integral part of Carlisle's

manufacturing heritage. Recent acquisitions at Carlisle include the Sankey Family photographic collection and records belonging to the Fletcher-Vane family of Hutton-in-the-Forest and the Roberts Family of Boothby. The latter collection contains the personal papers of Charles and Wilfrid Roberts. Charles was a radical Liberal MP who served in Asquith's third ministry and later became chairman of Cumberland County Council.

Below left: Carlisle City's Dormont Book, 1561-1950 records the documenting of oaths by city officials; regulations for governing Carlisle; a register of apprentices 1645-1849; and admission of honorary freemen 1889-1950. Its title page is beautifully decorated. Ref: CA/2/17.



A photograph from Cumbria Constabulary Collection (SCONS/5)



Lanercost cartulary, 1252-1370.
Ref: DZ/1.

occupying its buildings. Set against this tumultuous and uncertain backdrop, the canons at Lanercost created the Lanercost Cartulary, a book which set forth the history of the Priory, detailed their claims to the estate, and maintained a record of any legal disputes which arose. The canons continued to regularly update the Cartulary but a slow and lasting decline in their fortunes meant that further additions ceased in 1364. By 1537, the Priory was one of the first monastic houses to be dissolved and the Cartulary eventually came into the possession of the Howard family. Although once thought to have been lost in a fire at Naworth Castle during the 1840s, the Cartulary was entrusted to the care of CAS during the 1980s and has been described by English Heritage as ‘an extraordinary document, giving a detailed insight into the workings and history of the Priory.’

He was a champion of human rights throughout the Empire and chaired the Aborigines' Protection Society. The collection at Carlisle includes his papers on the massacres and enslavement of indigenous peoples by the Peruvian Amazon Company. It also includes the diary of Roger Casement, the journalist and Irish nationalist later executed for treason, who had exposed the abuses in Peru in 1910. Charles's son, Wilfrid, followed in his footsteps, becoming Liberal MP for North Cumberland in 1935. Even more radical than his father, Wilfrid was a vociferous supporter of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War, was monitored by MI5 during the 1940s, visited Moscow to meet Stalin in 1945, and defected to the Labour party in 1956. Included in the collection are Wilfrid's papers relating to

the Parliamentary delegation to China in 1947 and copies of talks he gave on the BBC Home Service. One of the oldest documents held at Carlisle is the Lanercost Cartulary. Lanercost, a priory founded in 1169 by Robert de Vaux, Sheriff of Cumberland, was home to a community of Augustinian canons. The Priory found itself victim to the ambitions of Baron Thomas de Multon, son of Sir Thomas Moulton, Sheriff of Cumberland, constable of Carlisle Castle, and a veteran of King John's campaigns against the French and the Welsh. Thomas had married into the de Vaux family, claiming the rights to the Priory's lands and

STAFF LIST

- ARCHIVISTS:** Michael Stephens and Kelda Roe.
- ARCHIVE ASSISTANTS:** Helen Cunningham, Helen Sewell, Sarah Wood, Andy Wright and Fiona Blake.
- VISITOR & BUILDINGS COORDINATOR:** Suzanne Browning

PRESERVING OUR COLLECTIONS



Left: Lee, Fay, Erika and Helen.

Ever since the creation of the Joint Committee in 1962, there has been a Conservation Unit based in Carlisle. The Unit, which is tasked with the preservation of historical records in Cumbria, was, for many years, based out of Alma Block at Carlisle Castle. The

workshop was, however, 'seriously congested,' and reports in both 1981 and 1985 recommended that the Unit be moved to a more spacious environment. In 1991, £40,000 was allocated for relocation, and the following year, the Unit duly transferred its operations

to Ashley Street, where a new workshop was built. Today, the Conservation Unit has two professional conservators and a collections assistant who are skilled in the most up-to-date preservation and conservation techniques. They run a regular volunteering programme for those interested in helping to preserve CAS's collections and who wish to learn more about conservation. The Unit undertakes two types of conservation: preventative

Below left: strongroom at Carlisle and below right repairing a damaged document.



and remedial. Preventative conservation, as the name suggests, involves preventing damage to extend the life of records. This is achieved by ensuring collections have adequate storage and protection for collections, monitoring and controlling their environmental conditions, establishing safe handling and suitable transit procedures, creating digital surrogates, and preparing for disaster scenarios. In contrast, remedial conservation involves intervening to stabilise materials. The work, which can be time-consuming, includes the cleaning and consolidation of books and documents, the humidification and flattening of rolled plans and manuscripts, the lining of maps, and the strengthening of fragile and/or torn documents. Remedial conservation is undertaken only when necessary, to ensure the long-term safety of vulnerable material. When repairing a document, the Unit endeavours to retain as much of the original as possible, whilst ensuring that long-term stability and accessibility are maintained. As well as conservation, CAS also launched a Digitisation



Service in 2009. The team create digital facsimiles of archive collections and provide customers with high-resolution images for publication. Importantly, they also work hand in hand with the Conservation Unit to ensure the effective functioning of the Archive Service. An excellent example of how this works in practice can be found in the ongoing preservation of wills from the Diocese of Carlisle. Dating from between 1540 and 1858, the wills are currently part of a repackaging and digitisation project: first, they are removed from their existing packaging, which is replaced by archival-quality paper sleeves. Next, the wills

are placed in custom-made boxes designed to protect the documents and maximise shelf space. Once repackaged, they are then prepared for digitisation. Sometimes wills are damaged or cannot be scanned due to creasing. In such instances, the Digitisation team then passes them back to the Conservation team who can make any necessary interventions. By working in tandem, the Conservation and Digitisation teams enable CAS to increase public access to information whilst simultaneously reducing the need for the original documents to be handled and undergo remedial intervention.

STAFF LIST

SENIOR CONSERVATOR: Erika Freyr

CONSERVATOR: Fay Humphreys

COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT: Lee Storey

DIGITISATION TECHNICIANS: Francesca Halfacree, Helen Leech, Guy Pawle, George Platt

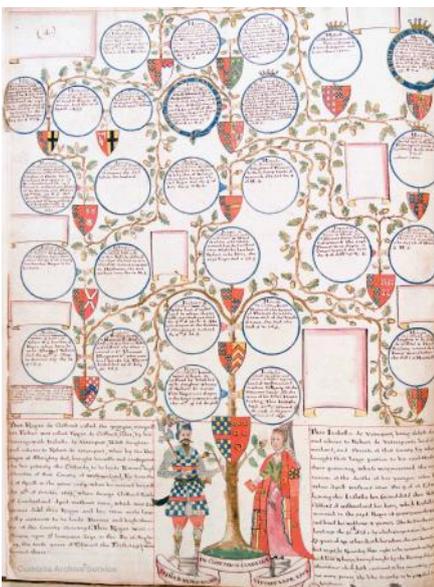
KENDAL

The Kendal Archive Centre was first opened in 1962. Unlike its sister site in Carlisle, the Joint Committee did not have to find new premises for the Kendal branch which continued to operate out of County Hall. Although this meant the transition to a combined service was inevitably less disruptive at Kendal, the lack of space constrained the rate at which the branch could expand. In 1963, an initial attempt at rationalising the storage



system at Kendal was made by Sheila MacPherson who laboriously emptied and reshelved the entire strongroom. Despite this, by 1965, Bruce Jones was still conscious that the 'office is small and very restricted for

space.' In 1967, the Council decided to erect a prefabricated building which relieved the pressure on the Kendal Archive Centre and freed up vital room. Further strongrooms were created between 1971 and 1978 and during the 1990s, the search-room for visitors was doubled in size by demolishing the wall which separated it from the office. Most recently, in 2019, a fourth strongroom was built, providing the Archive with essential space much needed



Above: Detail from the Great Books of Record. Ref: WDHOTH. Above right: County Offices, Kendal.



Above: One of the records kept by the Browne family of Townend. Ref. WDTE.

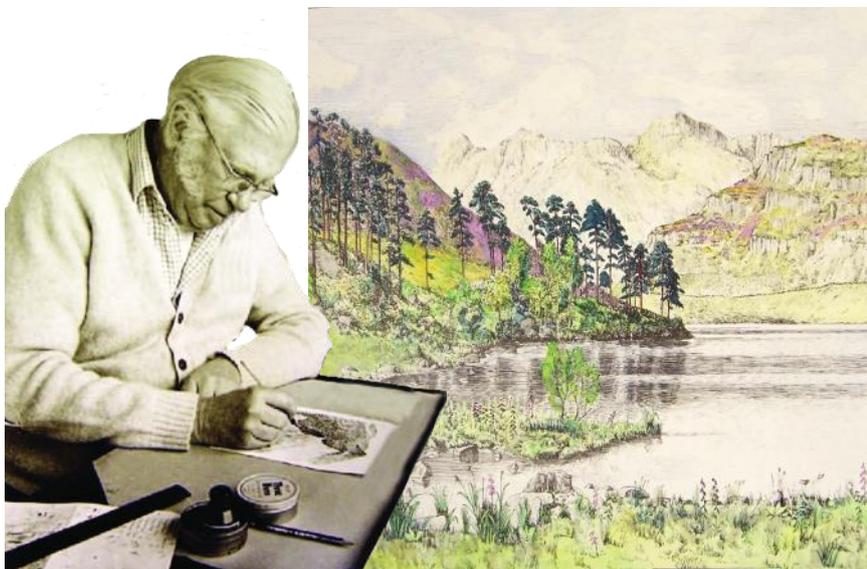


Right: Heraldry from the Hothfield collection. Ref. WDHOTH.

for further expansion. Over the years, Kendal has become home to a range of important artefacts and records. During the 1960s, a vast collection of books and papers from the Browne family of Townend were entrusted to the care of the Archive. Although the Browns were a family of yeomen farmers, they could boast a High Constable of Kendal in the family and were prolific collectors of books. Although most of these remain at the family home in

Troutbeck, the majority of the family's extensive papers are kept in the Kendal Archive Centre and have been described by the Libraries Curator of the National Trust as 'an outstanding source for the history of the Lakeland.' Other key collections donated to Kendal Archive during the 1960s include the papers of the Le Fleming family of Rydal Hall and the papers of the Hothfield family of Appleby Castle. The latter contained the archive of the Clifford family, amongst

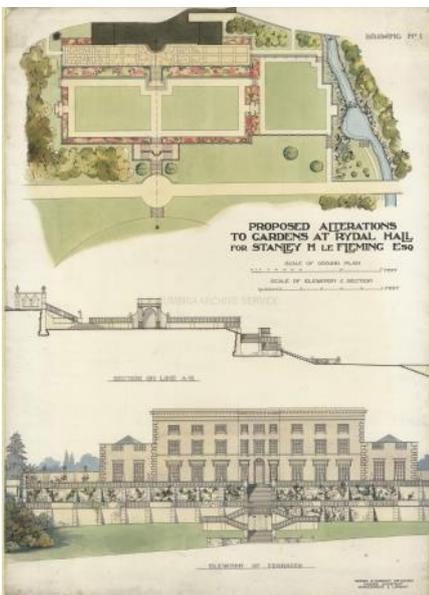
which was a three-volume set of Lady Anne Clifford's Great Books of Record which supported her claim to the family estate. Anne originally commissioned three sets of the Great Books of Record and the second was later deposited at Kendal in the 1980s. The third, which contains by far the most extensive annotations by Lady Anne, would prove more elusive but was finally obtained in 2005 after being purchased by CAS at Sotheby's. Other collections of particular importance include the Mawson and Wainwright archives. Thomas H. Mawson has been described as an 'early pioneer in the town planning movement' and was commissioned by the Prime Minister of Greece to redesign



Left: Alfred Wainwright at work and one of his many watercolour illustrations of the Lake District. Ref: WDAW

Salonica following the Great Fire of 1917. However, his main interest was in landscape gardening. Mawson would come to great success, receiving commissions from, amongst others, the King of Greece and Alexandra of Denmark, the wife of Edward VII. Notably, Mawson also won an international competition to design the grounds at the Peace Palace in The Hague. The Mawson archive, which was donated to CAS following the closure of Thomas H. Mawson & Son in 1978, includes various papers and correspondence, over 14,000 plans, and roughly 6,500 photographs. The Wainwright archive consists of maps, photographs, sketches, notes, and various

Below: Thomas H. Mawson's plan for the landscaping of the terrace at Rydal Hall. Ref: WDB 86



Above: Publicity for Gawith's famous Kendal Brown Snuff

other papers belonging to Alfred Wainwright, the fell-walker and author famous for his seven-volume Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells. Wainwright's archive was secured by CAS in 2011 thanks to generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Friends of the National Libraries, and Frances Lincoln, the publisher of his guides. Other interesting collections donated to the Kendal Archive Centre over its history include papers from Friends of the Lake District, a pressure group established in 1934 to campaign for the Lake District to become a national park; papers from the archive of

K Shoes, a major factory based in Kendal who at one point in the 1960s employed roughly twenty per-cent of Kendal's working population; papers from the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, a pioneering group founded in 1906 when rock climbing as a sport was still in its infancy; and papers from Samuel Gawith & Co., tobacco manufacturers based in Kendal since 1792 who were famous for their 'Kendal Brown' snuff and still operate today under the name of Gawith Hoggarth & Co.

STAFF LIST

SENIOR ARCHIVIST, CUMBRIA: Robert Baxter
ARCHIVISTS: Hazel Gatford and Anthony Hughes
ARCHIVE ASSISTANTS: Max Clark and Sandra Buckland

BARROW

Following the creation of Cumbria County Council in 1974, the newly established Cumbria Archive Service appointed Brett Harrison as archivist for the Furness district.

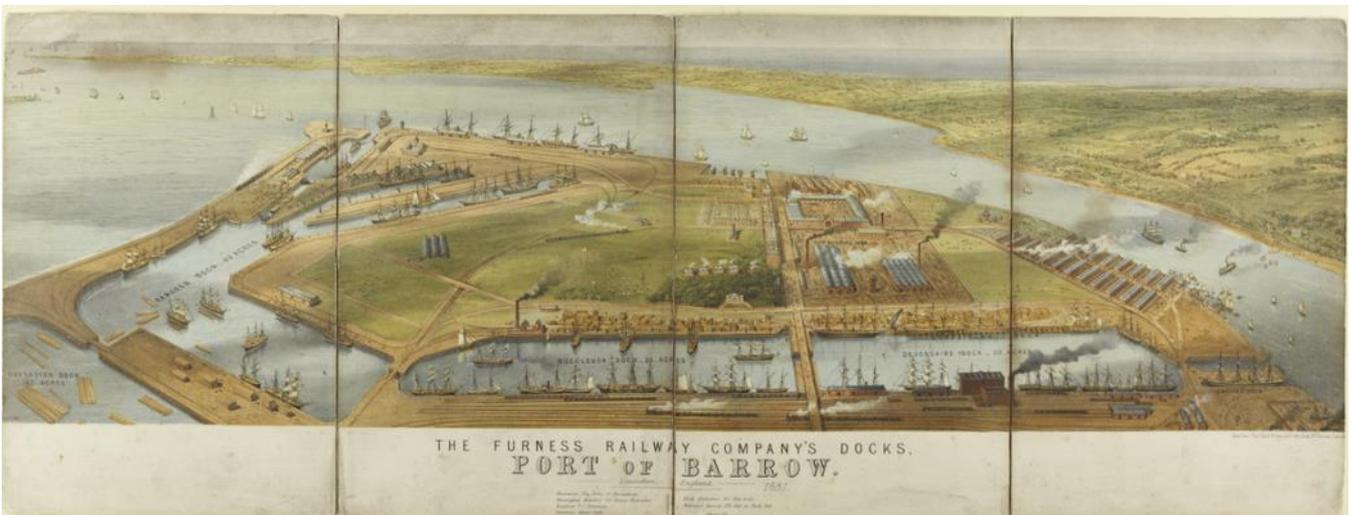
There was not, as yet, a record office to serve the area, so Brett worked in offices in Barrow and Dalton-in-Furness. Bruce Jones wrote of the Barrow office that, 'every time a document or parcel is moved, clouds of dust mingled with some kind of rat poison rise up to choke you'. In 1976 a record office was finally created in Dalton-in-Furness.



However, this was soon replaced by the current premises in Barrow which opened in 1979 and were recently refurbished at the end of 2020.

In 1978, in preparation for the grand opening the following

year, the Furness Collection was transferred to Barrow. The collection includes everything from mining records and research papers to photographs and plans. Worthy of particular note are the Soubly collection of handbills from the early 19th century and the sketchbooks of the famous portrait painter George Romney. Romney was born in Dalton-in-Furness in 1734 and left school at the age of eleven to become an apprentice cabinet maker to his father. In 1755, Romney moved to Kendal where he became a



Above: Port of Barrow map detailing a panoramic view of the docks, Barrow-in-Furness, 1881-1885. Ref: Z/558



**Above: George Romney sketch Ref: Z /241
Below: Stank miners, 1879. Ref: BDP 37**

pupil of the portraitist Christopher Steele. He soon became an artist in his own right and moved to London in 1762 where he won a prize at the Royal Society of Arts for his painting, *The Death of General*



Wolfe. As his career progressed Romney made trips to France and Italy to develop his craft. Whilst in Italy, he met the Pope and studied the frescoes of Raphael in the Vatican. After returning to England, Romney became a popular portraitist, receiving commissions from the richest and most fashionable members of London society. He famously adopted Emma Hamilton as his muse, paving her way into the

beau monde in the years leading up to her scandalous affair with Admiral Lord Nelson. The sketchbooks held at Barrow, which date from Romney's early career and travels in Italy, provide a fascinating insight into the development of his early style. A collection with particularly important links to the local area is the archive of the Buccleuch estates in Furness. Although the papers predominantly concern the estate's mining interests in the area, they also include manorial documents, letter books, and other assorted records. The dukes of Buccleuch have a long-standing relationship with Barrow, and one of the docks in the Port is even known as the Buccleuch Dock in honour of the 5th Duke. His mineral agent, Edward Wadham, later became a director of the Furness Railway, was thrice elected mayor of Barrow, and contributed greatly to the development of the town as a centre of industry. Between 1851 and 1913, Wadham maintained diaries which are held at the Archive Centre. The archive of the Furness Railway is similarly held at Barrow. The Railway was founded in 1846 and was used to transport iron ore and slate to the town. It



A drawing of Dalton Book Club, 1923, which claims to be the oldest book club in the world. Established in 1764, it still meets each month. Ref. BDSO 130/8/5/1

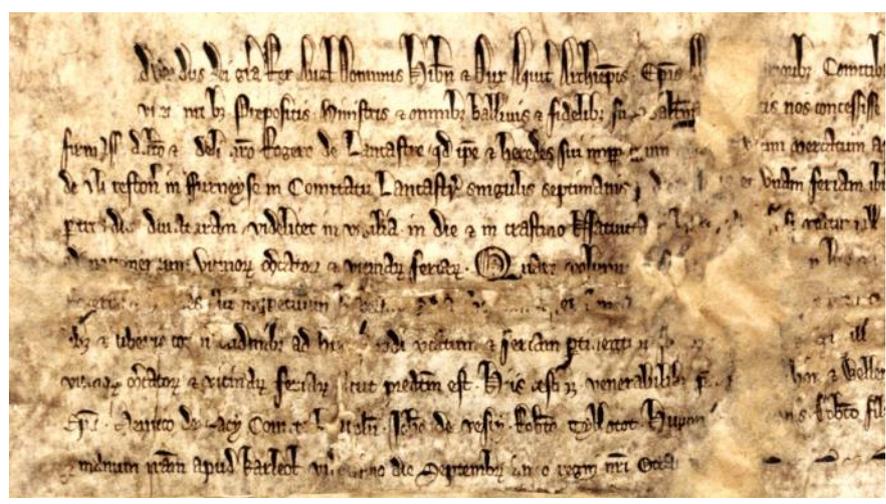
Sellafield. Another recent acquisition is the Covid-19 Community Archive, a collection of photographs, videos, notices, diaries, poems, artwork and booklets produced by the people of Cumbria during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 Archive serves as a symbolic link between the

Barrow Archive Service and the community it serves. It also highlights the importance of documenting the present so that future generations may better understand the past.

Below: A Charter from Edward I to Roger of Lancaster granting a market at his manor of Ulverston. Ref: BPR 2/M/1/1

later came under the control of the London, Midland and Scottish Railways (LMS) in 1923, before being nationalised in 1948. The archive at Barrow includes plans of the stations and their routes, as well as staff registers and building elevations. Other collections held at Barrow include papers from the region's workhouses and hospitals, as well as other items of interest such as Margaret Bainbridge's diary from the Second World War which records her experiences during the Barrow Blitz. Margaret's collection also includes her father's diaries from both world wars and photographs she took in the area between the 1930s and 1980s. One of the more unique collections acquired by Barrow is the

papers of Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment (CORE), a group established in Barrow in 1980 to protest against the generation of nuclear energy at Sellafield. To this day, the group remains dedicated to anti-nuclear activism and continues to monitor developments at

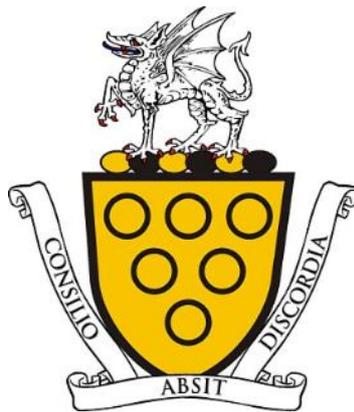


STAFF LIST FOR BARROW
ARCHIVISTS: Susan Benson and Hazel Gatford
ARCHIVES ASSISTANT: Selena Kendall.

WHITEHAVEN

In 1992, work began to convert a mid 19th century police station on Scotch Street into a Record Office for the Whitehaven district.

Over the next four years, extensive work was carried out: not only was the building stabilised and re-roofed, but redundant buildings were also demolished, air conditioning was installed, and various facilities such as a search room were installed. During this period, preparations for the transfer of records were begun under the supervision of the



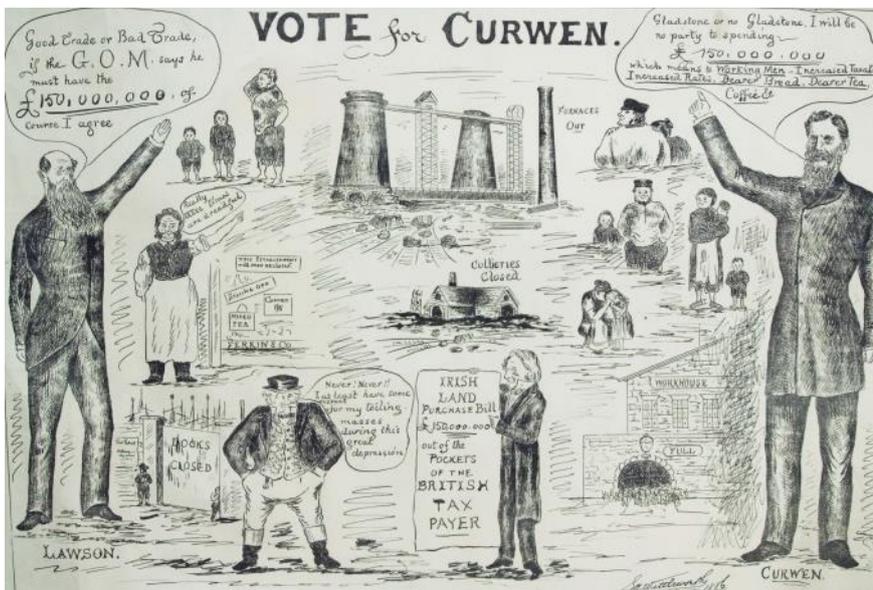
new Area Archivist, Katy Goodrum. In total, 120m3 of records were relocated from Carlisle over a seven-day period in July 1996. Although Sheila MacPherson had been the driving force behind its conception, she retired in 1992, leaving the reigns of the

service in the capable hands of Jim Grisenthwaite who oversaw the opening of the Whitehaven Record Office in August 1996. Its completion meant that all Cumbrians now lived within a thirty-mile radius of an Archive Centre and was, therefore, a key milestone in the history of CAS.

Amongst the many collections held at Whitehaven are the St Bees Grammar School archive, the Shipping registers and customs records for the port of Whitehaven between 1786 and 1988, records

Below; Cleator Mill Girls' Football Club, 1917. PH 1594/9. Below right: a beautifully illustrated envelope by Percy Kelly. Ref: YDX 427/1/13





'Vote for Curwen' election poster by S A Wattleworth. Ref: DH 340/2

relating to the steel industry in the area between 1656 and 1992, and records relating to the coal industry in the area between 1779 and 1954. As an area with a rich industrial heritage, Whitehaven is also home to the Sellafield Stories oral history collection of interviews with over one hundred former employees, managers, local residents and anti-nuclear protesters from the region. Further insight into the history of the Whitehaven and Copeland areas can be found in the collection amassed by Whitehaven librarian Daniel Hay (1910-1980), a diverse archive of business, church, and school records, newspaper cuttings, building plans, and other curiosities dating from between

dating from between the 17th and 20th centuries. One of the oldest collections held at Whitehaven is the archive of the Pennington family of Muncaster Castle which contains items dating back to the 12th century. Although primarily consisting of title deeds, manorial records, and estate papers, the collection also includes correspondence about the 1745 Jacobite Rising as well as the parliamentary papers of Edward Horsman MP (1807-1876), Chief Secretary for Ireland between 1855 and 1857.

Whitehaven is also home to the papers of the Curwen family of Workington Hall, the single largest private collection of family papers at the office. It includes medieval and early modern records but is particularly notable for the extent of the papers relating to John Christian Curwen (1756-1828), a local member of parliament and agricultural reformer who devoted much energy and capital in developing Workington's collieries, harbour and industries.



Membership card of the 'Ancient Order of Froth Blowers', 1926. Ref: DH/472/1

STAFF LIST FOR WHITEHAVEN

ARCHIVISTS: Barbara Clark and Diane Hodgson
ARCHIVE ASSISTANTS: Alison Hurst and Lesley Park

OUR SERVICE TODAY

VOLUNTEERING



I have been volunteering with Cumbria Archives Service in Kendal for over eight years now and there's so much I enjoy about my work at the Archives: the satisfaction of achieving something worthwhile; the thrill of detective work to make sense of what I am looking at; camaraderie with the professional archivists; and sometimes sheer excitement at an unexpected discovery.

- *Richard Daly*

RESEARCH

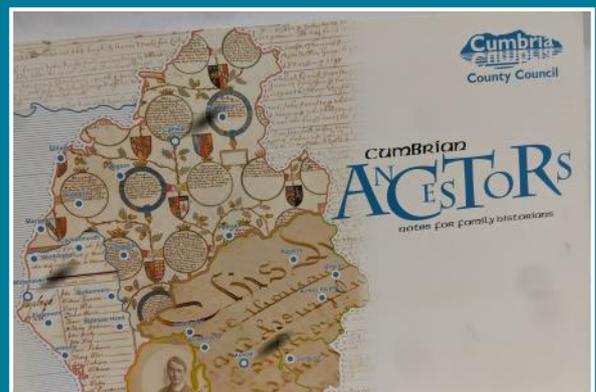
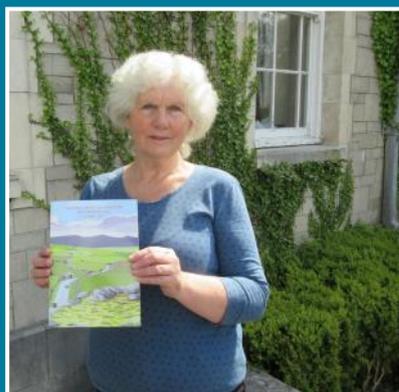
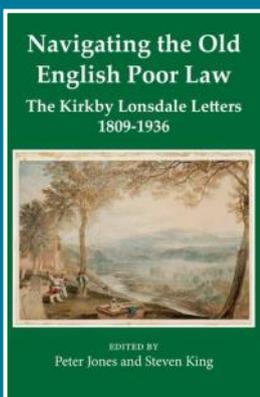
As a historian, I am a regular user of Cumbria Archive Centre. I am currently researching and writing about several places in the county, for which I must consult a range of original sources, dating from the medieval period to the modern. These can include anything from manor court rolls and rentals, estate maps and plans, parish records, as well as archive material from many different social organisations and institutions. I use all of this to try and reconstruct local communities of the past and trace how they might have changed over time.

- *Sarah Rose (local historian)*



PUBLICATIONS

The Curwen and Kirby Archives Trusts, administered by the Archive Service, gives grants to local historians to support publication of research covering Westmorland and Furness.



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SERVICE STAFF
FROM 1961 TO PRESENT

STAFF FROM 1961 TO PRESENT

ARCHIVISTS TO THE JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Tom Gray 1960-1961
Bruce Jones 1962-1974

CUMBRIA COUNTY ARCHIVISTS

Bruce Jones 1974-1985
Sheila MacPherson 1985-1992
Jim Grisenthwaite 1992-2002
Anne Rowe 2002-2015

BARROW

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Aiden Jones
Michael Stephens
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Robert Baxter
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Sally Cholewa
(Hazel Gatford)
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Sonya Waplington
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Karen Wright
Administrator
Mary Steele





COMPILED BY ADAM BUCKLAND

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and the Friends of Cumbria Archives (FOCAS)

Designed by Sandra Buckland