

Cleator 1901

An excellent 2006 article by © Steve Bulman of Bulmer's History & Directory Of Cumberland, 1901: is a must when you are deciding if you wish to live in Cleator with its extensive history from Roman road to Kangol hats and along Wainwrights Coast to Coast internationally renowned route taking you into the 2018 declared UNESCO World Heritage site of The English Lake District National Park.

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Though small in extent, has risen more rapidly in the scale of material wealth and importance than any other parish in west Cumberland. Cleator is about three miles in extent from north to south, and one and a half from east to west, covering about 2,946 acres, which are assessed at £45,845. It is bounded on the north by Frizington, on the west by Kinniside, on the south by Egremont, and on the east by St. Bees.

The soil is generally clayey and naturally wet; though in a few places there are small patches of light limestone land. The source of the wealth and prosperity of Cleator is the valuable deposits of hæmatite ore that are found in various parts of the parish. Large quantities of this rich deposit are shipped from Whitehaven, or pass by rail to the centres of the English and Scotch iron industries; and the manufacture of pig iron is also extensively carried on in the district. The increase of population in this parish has been very rapid during recent years. Two centuries ago there were only a few scattered houses ranged in two lines – Cleator Maines and Cleator Row – containing a population of about 330. From that period to the commencement of the past century the number remained nearly stationary. In 1801 there were 362; in 1811, 571; in 1821, 818; in 1831 (in consequence of the stoppage of work at a flax manufactory) it decreased to 487; in 1841 it had risen to 763. From this time its progress has been rapid,

and in 1861 the population amounted to 3,995. At the present time it is not far short of 10,000. The parish contains no independent townships. Cleator appears in old records as Kekelton, so named from the small river Keekle which bounds it on the west. The origin of the name has not as yet been ascertained with any degree of certainty. A rather distant resemblance in sound to the name of the third baron of Kendal, Ketel, has suggested the name of that feudal champion as the source of the word. He may have had the manor granted to him, as he had Kelton, in the neighbouring parish of Lamplugh, by William de Meschines, the fortunate grantee of the Conqueror. The derivation of Kelton, as given in an old MS., is Ketel's Town. Ketel was a noble benefactor of the Church, and enriched St. Bees Priory, and St. Mary's Abbey, York, with several munificent grants. In an ancient chronicle the manor of Cleator appears as belonging, in 1315, to the priory of St. Bees; but by whom conferred is not stated. During the invasion of Cumberland by Robert the Bruce, the manor houses of Cleator and Stainburn were burnt, and the monastery of St. Bees plundered by the Scots, under the command of Sir James Douglas, whose cruelties have earned for him the well-merited epithet of "Black Douglas."

The manor was enfranchised at an early date, for we find by an inquisition of knights' fees in Cumberland, taken in the 35th year of the reign of Henry VIII (1543-44), that the free tenants of Cleator held the manor of the King in capite, as of his castle of Egremont, by the ninth part of one knight's fee, rendering homage, and suit of court, and 12d. seawake.

In the same inquisition, Richard Irton, Esq., of Irton, appears as possessed of Cleator, and Richard Kirkby as also holding lands within the manor, for which he paid a fee farm rent of 2s. In 1816 an Act of Parliament was obtained for the enclosure of the parish. The manorial rights of the common are vested in Lord Leconfield. The other principal landowners are Messrs. S. and J. Lindow, Lord Lonsdale, A. Mitchell-Dawson,

Mrs. Braddyll, and John Stirling, Esq., Muir of Ord, N.B.

The village of Cleator is a place of considerable antiquity, but the site now occupied by the adjacent town of Cleator Moor, was, within the memory of people still living, but a bare moor. Besides iron ore mining and iron manufacture, several other industries have been established, and, perhaps, not the least important is that of flax or thread spinning, etc., carried on in the extensive mills of Ainsworth and Sons. The Parish Church, dedicated to St. Leonard, is situated in the village of Cleator. In consequence of the dilapidated state of the structure and the dampness of the walls, it underwent, in 1841, such a complete renovation that it now presents a neat modern appearance. The chancel only of the old building, which is about 700 years old, was left untouched, all the rest being entirely rebuilt. The church now consists of nave, chancel, bell turret, and porch, and is of the Early English style. The nave is lighted by lancet-shaped windows, but in the chancel a small square-headed two-light window has been retained, which has probably never been altered since the erection of the first church. The entire length of the church is 94 feet, its width 39 feet, and it has sitting accommodation for 403 worshippers. The font, a rather plain piece of workmanship, formerly belonged to the old priory church of St. Bees. It consists of a hexagonal capital containing the basin, supported on a circular pedestal.

This church was at an early period of its history appropriated to the Abbey of St. Mary, Calder, and remained in the possession of that house until the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII. In the Valour of Pope Nicholas, taken in 1292, the revenues of this church are returned along with those of Calder Abbey; but the tithes and Easter offerings, a portion only of the income, were valued at £4 4s. 5d. This sum, small and insignificant as it may now appear, represented at that time an amount twenty times as large. When the inventory of the possessions and revenues of the various monastic houses

was taken by the commissioners of Henry VIII, preparatory to their dissolution, it was found that the church of Cleator had an endowment of seven marks per annum, or about £4 13s. 4d. This endowment still continues to form a portion of the minister's stipend; in addition to which there is also a yearly pension of £1 18s. received from the Crown out of the confiscated property of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The endowment has been increased by donations from Queen Anne's Bounty Fund, Parliamentary grants, and a bequest from Lady Gower. The income now derived from the endowment, together with the royalty received from the iron ore found under the glebe land, has raised the stipend to £300. The patronage of the living belongs to the earldom of Lonsdale, having passed by purchase to that family from the Gales, of Cleator Hall. Several of the landowners have redeemed the tithes of their farms; the remaining tithes were sold to Thomas Ainsworth, Esq., of The Floss, and now belong to D. Ainsworth, Esq.

The Parish Church of St. John's, Cleator Moor. – In the autumn of 1868, the Most Noble Richard, Marquis of Westminster, placed the sum of £6,000 in the hands of the Honourable and Right Reverend Samuel Waldegrave, Lord Bishop of Carlisle, for the purpose of forming two Peel Districts in his Diocese – one at Cleator Moor, and the other in the parish of Dalton-in-Furness. Cleator Moor at that time had a population of nearly 5,000 people, and was without a church, Divine services being held in a licensed schoolroom, kindly lent for the purpose by John Stirling, Esq., now of Firburn, Muir of Ord, N.B.

In March of the following year, Cleator Moor was constituted a Peel District. A committee of gentlemen was appointed to raise subscriptions for the erection of a Parish Church. Liberal sums were given for this purpose and for the erection of a Vicarage; and on the 25th day of June, 1872, the church was completed and consecrated. The church is said to be one of the best in the North of England. It is a most substantial

edifice, and is a good specimen of the Norman-Romanesque, or Anglo-Norman, architecture, and was designed by Messrs. Cory and Ferguson, architects, Carlisle, though to Mr. Ferguson is attributed the conception and arrangement of its plan. It is calculated to seat about 900. It consists of a large and lofty nave, with clerestory windows, with large side aisles on both sides. At the north end is a large chancel, with crypt and vestry, and at the south end a very massive tower sixty eight feet high, which contains a peal of six bells. The interior of the church is so exceptionally good in the details of its design that they are worth recording. The whole of the interior is one mass of masonry, the roof being arched throughout; that of the chancel is exceptionally fine, being intersected with "fan" groined arches, crossing and re-crossing each other in moulded and carved stone work. The church was thoroughly decorated in 1899, at the expense of John Stirling, Esq., by Messrs. James McClennan and Son, of Egremont, under the able supervision of Mr. Anthony McClennan, and the achievement is indeed a work of art. The communion chancel presents a rich appearance; the roof is beautifully painted in pale blue and gold, with the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy," inscribed in gold letters; the floor is neatly laid with mosaic tiles, and three handsome stained and painted glass windows, to the memory of the late Samuel Lindow, John Burns, and Isaac Burns, throw a rich shaded light. Beneath the windows is a massive oak reredos in nine arches, in which are inlaid panels with the Decalogue, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, &c., the gift of the late Joseph Fearon, Esq. Within the crypt stands an organ of large size and power, made by Bevington and Sons, London. The chancel seats are of massive oak, richly carved. The nave stands on very massive stone columns, with richly carved capitals, from which spring eight arches, four on each side. During the recent re-decoration the arches throughout the church, which are of brick, have been covered with a special preparation resembling stone. They have now the appearance of massive stone work. The roof of the nave presents a pleasing effect in blue and gray.

The pulpit and reading desk are of richly carved oak, yew, and ebony, of massive appearance, with a basis of moulded masonry, and were presented to the church by John Stirling, Esq. The seats are of modern design, large, and comfortable. There are three handsome stained and painted glass windows in the nave of the church, one to the memory of the Hon. and Right Rev. Samuel Waldegrave, late Bishop of Carlisle, to whose indefatigable efforts and Christian influence the church was built and the parish formed, and one to the memory of Agnes Burns. Beneath the tower is the baptistry, which is large and comfortable, furnished with seats. The font stands on marble pillars in the centre; it is of massive appearance and tastefully carved, and was the gift of the children of the Sunday Schools, assisted by the children of John Stirling, Esq. It is lighted by three large stained-glass windows, presented by Mrs. George Lindow, to the memory of George Lindow and Ruth Lindow. The entrance porch is a fine specimen of the Norman-Romanesque doorway. There are four arches, one on solid masonry and three on six stone columns richly carved with the chevron and zig-zag work peculiar to this style of architecture. Both outer and inner doors are of massive appearance in oak. The whole of the stone carving in the church is the gift of John Stirling, Esq. An unusually handsome set of communion plate in silver gilt was the gift of the Rev. Charles and Mr. Hugh Parkin to this church. In the year 1881 the population had increased to 11,420. It was deemed necessary for the convenience of the people residing at Wath Brow to build a mission church, which is a neat little edifice with a substantial tower and spire. It is calculated to hold about 300 people, and is comfortably furnished. It was licensed for Divine service on the 24th of November, 1881, by the Right Rev. Harvey, Lord Bishop of Carlisle. The site of the mission church was the kind gift of Jonas Lindow, Esq., of Eden Hall; the site of the parish church, that of Thomas Brocklebank, Esq., of Greenlands. There is also a very handsome set of schools in connection with the church, built by John Stirling, Esq., of Fairburn, at a cost of £8,000; and

Sunday schools and caretaker's house are in close proximity to the church. The living is styled a vicarage, valued about £300 per annum, and held by the Rev. R. Haythornthwaite, assisted by the Rev. William Brydges Sayers and the Rev. John David Jones. The vicarage is a good substantial residence close to the church.

The Catholic Church, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Our Lady, is a handsome structure in the Decorated style, erected in 1853 at a cost of £6,000, raised by subscriptions, collected through the unwearied exertions of the Rev. W.G. Holden. It is supposed to occupy the site of a chapel which stood there, it is said, before the Reformation. The building consists of lofty nave, aisles, large sanctuary and two side chapels. The high altar and reredos are of Caen stone and marble, beautifully carved. The altar rails and screens separating the side chapels from the body of the church are of carved oak of exquisite workmanship. The Lady chapel contains a fine altar piece and reredos in Caen stone, carved to represent different passages in the life and passion of Our Blessed Lord and of His virgin mother. The nave and aisles are separated by lofty pointed arches resting on massive pillars. Most of the windows are filled with beautiful coloured glass, and the church is rich in life-sized statues. The priory adjoins the church, and is the residence of the three Benedictine priests who minister to the spiritual wants of the congregation, viz.: the Rev. Edward Norbert Ward, O.S.B., rector; the Rev. James Maurice Kelly, O.S.B., and the Rev. Michael. D. McDonnell, O.S.B.

Attached to the pile is a burial ground. The old church is used as a school (mixed and infants).

The Wesleyan Chapel, erected in 1862, is a large building in the Gothic style, capable of seating 600 persons. There is also a Sunday school. The Presbyterian Church situated in Ennerdale Road has accommodation for 240. The Primitive Methodist Chapel, Ennerdale Road, is a handsome stone

building, erected in 1892. The Congregationalists and the members of the United Methodist Free Church, have also chapels here.

CLEATOR MOOR, like most modern towns, is laid out on a very liberal scale; the streets are wide and conveniently arranged, and notwithstanding the enormous amount of traffic that passes through them, the town may be described as generally clean. The Market Hall stands in a spacious square, and though not erected with a view to the display of architectural beauty, it forms a comfortable mart, and is admirably adapted for a public market. One of the most important and useful institutions of the town is the Montreal Schools, erected in 1866, by J. Stirling, Esq., proprietor of the Montreal Iron Ore Mines. The original building consisted of two departments (boys' and girls'), each with accommodation for 150 children; but in consequence of the very great increase in the population, it was soon found necessary to extend it. It now forms a splendid school of five departments, viz.: (I and II) senior and junior boys, (III and IV) senior and junior girls, and (V) infants. The number on the books in the various departments is 930. Evening science classes are held in the winter months. The schools are appropriated to the Church of England and are managed by five trustees.

The Cleator Mills British School, situated close to the Flax mill, has two departments, mixed and infants, with 362 names on the books.

St. Patrick's Catholic Schools, situated in Cleator Moor, have 776 names on the registers; and St. Mary's, Cleator, 150.

The Roman Road from Cockermouth passed through this parish. It enters at the boundary stone on the road to Frizington, and pursues a south-westerly direction past the Catholic Church, and is then probably merged in the high road through Cleator village. It is described as having been 15 feet wide, and formed of cobbles and freestones, and though much of its old-

world appearance has been obliterated by modern improvements, yet, in several places, distinct traces still remain.

The deposits of iron ore lying within the parish of Cleator are perhaps the richest and most valuable along the Cumbrian coast, and to this bed of wealth the prosperity and rapid progress of Cleator are to be attributed. When our first History and Directory of Cumberland was published in 1847, the parish contained only 151 cottages, the inhabitants of which were chiefly employed at the flax mill, the iron forge, and the coal pits. The works of the Whitehaven Hæmatite Iron and Steel Co., Ltd., were commenced at Cleator in 1842. For some years the production of pig iron in the country was limited, and confined entirely to these works. The company have now four large furnaces and give employment to 180 hands. These works are fitted with all the latest improvements for the economical production of the metal, and the iron turned out is highly valued in the markets. We may here mention, as an evidence of this age of progress, that the aggregate production of the three original furnaces erected by this company was only 240 tons of pig iron weekly.

The iron ore of Cleator district is that kind known as red or kidney ore, and is thus described by Mr. Dick in "Iron Ores of Great Britain," Part I: "Compact red hæmatite; easily scratched by a file; lustre earthy; colour, purplish grey; streak, bright red; fracture, uneven; containing cavities lined with crystals of specular iron; and containing, in some cases, quartz." Two samples analysed yielded respectively 66.6 and 63.25 of metallic iron.

The Montreal mines consist of six pits, five iron ore and one iron ore and coal. They are the property of John Stirling, Esq., Muir of Ord, N.B. The Glebe Pit is worked by Messrs. S. & J. Lindow, as also are the Longlands and Row Foot pits.

The Flax Mill, the property of Ainsworth and Sons, manufacturers of linen thread and flax spinners, is a large

building on the river Ehen. It has an extensive business, and gives employment to about 600 hands. At the Forges, Cleator, the property of S. and J. Lindow, spades and shovels are extensively manufactured.

Co-operation at Cleator Moor has proved an eminent success, and the business carried on by the society is one of the most extensive in the north of England.

The Town Hall, erected in 1877, at a cost of £3,265, is a handsome stone building, containing the Petty Sessions Court and Public Offices. Adjoining it is the Free Library, erected in 1895, at a cost of £800. It has a large collection of books, and is well supplied with the local and other newspapers, etc., etc. Cleator Moor Gas Works are the property of the Urban District Council. They contain one holder, with a capacity for 50,000 cubic feet.

Several handsome residences grace the parish of Cleator. Ehen Hall is a fine stone building, standing in about eight acres of ground, the property of Jonas Lindow, Esq., J.P. and D.L. The Flosch, the seat of David Ainsworth, Esq., J.P. and D.L., is a handsome mansion of stone. The grounds, three acres in extent, are tastefully laid out, and contain conservatories, orchid houses, vineries, etc. The farm attached, is noted for its breed of prize Leicestershire sheep.

Wath Brow is a hamlet in this parish.

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