

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 8 – February 2021

Edited by Anne Taylor

Dear member(s)

We've gone 'lunar' this month, as well as including several articles on calendars and dates. Many thanks to contributors Steve Bartlett, Bob Butcher, Margaret Gowling and Peter Lewis. According to the Royal Observatory Greenwich, 11th February is a good time to watch the night sky, see below and this website: <https://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/explore/astronomy-space-highlights-2021>

Don't forget our Zoom meetings, listed on our website at: www.upperedenhistory.org.uk/winterprog.htm
Anne Taylor, Chairman UEHS at241@cam.ac.uk



Kirkby Stephen Churchyard by moonlight by Steve Bartlett

From Steve Bartlett:

I started with watercolour this year after finding a set of my Dad's in a cupboard. He used to paint in oils, mainly wild birds, and as a kid I tried to emulate him. As I got older, in my twenties, I used to paint pet portraits to help pay the mortgage and buy the beers. But then I forgot all about art and took to hiking and travelling, including finding Kirkby Stephen on the 'Coast to Coast'. Now I've also discovered watercolour and, after taking online courses, I'm building up enough confidence to display my work on Facebook and have been overwhelmed by the response. I haven't looked back! All in a year!



**21 astronomical events for 2021
from the Royal Observatory Greenwich**

On 11 February, there will be a New Moon, i.e. the moon won't be visible in our night skies. Without the light of the moon, this is the perfect time for stargazing. Deep-sky objects to look out for include the Pleiades and the Andromeda Galaxy. The Pleiades, sometimes called the 'Seven Sisters' is a cluster of stars easily visible towards the south, just after sunset, even from light polluted cities. The Andromeda Galaxy can be seen towards the west just after sunset near the Andromeda constellations. If you are in a dark area away from city lights, this galaxy can actually be seen with the naked eye!



THE FATE OF KIRKBY STEPHEN'S PAUPER LUNATICS

by Peter Lewis

Until the mid 1500s, lunatics were largely cared for either by their local communities or by religious institutions. Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries (1536–1541) brought religious care to an abrupt end. It was not until Elizabeth I's Old Poor Law in 1601 that the poor received some form of protection. The Act made the 'state' responsible for the poorest of the poor, although specific provision for lunatics was not included.

A word of explanation is due here – the term 'lunatic' is used because it was the common linguistic 'coinage' – the 'lingua franca' – of that time. When it entered English law it was used to denote '*an unsoundness of mind [...] interfering with a person's civil rights [...]*'. The author acknowledges that language changes with time, that what one considers controversial or unacceptable now has not always been so, and hopes that readers will be sympathetic to the continued use of the terms 'lunatic' and 'lunacy'.

By and large, harmless lunatics were left at liberty as long as they were not dangerous or socially disturbing. One of the earliest alternative options, however, came to be known as 'Single Madhouses'. These were local households paid to take in lunatics, usually singly. This 'service' was akin to a paid fostering arrangement, one that would likely have been beyond the means of pauper families.

Arguably matters improved for the pauper lunatic with the opening in 1818 of Kirkby's Gilbert Workhouse (following Knatchbull's Act of 1723 and Gilbert's Act of 1782), on the site of what is now the Briarcote flats development.

Later, after the New Poor Law of 1834, in 1836 the Gilbert Workhouse became Westmorland's East Ward Poor Law Union Workhouse. The 1841 and 1851 censuses recorded that there had been three pauper lunatic inmates of the workhouse, a haven of sorts for them.

Arising from the Single Madhouses came the Private Madhouses, privately run, profit-making institutions, frequently operated by clergymen and medical men. Some of Kirkby Stephen's pauper lunatics were transferred to Dunston Lodge, a private madhouse in the village of Whickham near Gateshead (see photo in next column).

Opening in 1831 and claiming to provide '*a humane, liberal and confiding system [of*

treatment]', its funding came from wealthier private patients and, for pauper lunatics, the Poor Rates. By 1844 Dunston Lodge held 77 paupers and 23 private patients, each at 8 shillings a week. It closed in 1900.



Report of the Cumberland & Westmorland Lunatic Asylum at Dunston Lodge, Gateshead-on-Tyne Year ending January 1, 1849

TABLE V.

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Agricultural employment, (6 hours daily)	15	..	15
Garden and Ground, (6 hours daily)	4	..	4
Tile-making, (occasional)	6	..	6
Carpenter's, Tailor's, and Shoemaker's Shops, &c.,	..	6	6
Wash-house, Kitchen, Laundry, &c.,	..	6	6
Cleaning the Wards, Stables, Bakehouse, Cowhouses, &c.,	6	6	12
Matron's Sewing-room, (6 hours daily)	3	..	3
Working in the Wards, (occasional)	2	2	4
Engaged in amusements, &c.,	14	8	22
Occasionally employed,	8	10	18
* Unemployed,	7	16	23
Average number under care during the year	71	51	122
* Causes of non-employment			
Incapacitated from old age, &c.,	..	2	2
.. from bodily disorder	2	1	3
.. from mental condition,	5	13	18
TOTAL	7	16	23

Victorian social reforms significantly changed this scenario. The 1808 County Asylums Act and the later 1845 County Asylums Act and Lunatics Act obliged counties to build new lunatic asylums. The Cumberland & Westmorland Joint Mental Hospital – the Garlands – was opened on 2nd January 1862 in Carlisle, for 200 patients.



19th century map of The Garlands in Carlisle – the curved road is Cumwhinton Drive. Today the M6 runs just below Low Butts Wood, the small wooded area top right.