

PUBLICATION

A County of Refuge: Refugees in Cumbria 1933-1941



Rob David



CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND
ANTIQUARIAN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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A County of Refuge: Refugees in Cumbria 1933-1941

by Rob David

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This well-illustrated book examines Cumbria's response to the refugee crisis of the 1930s and early 1940s. Drawing on a wealth of archive material and oral testimony the author demonstrates that at that time many Cumbrians welcomed refugee groups from Spain, Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Central to the narrative are the individuals, often determined women, who led Cumbria's response. Much was also achieved by voluntary organisations which enabled many people to become involved with meeting the needs of refugees. The context of the refugees emerges from their back stories, and in addition the author draws on his own family's experience as refugees from Germany. A special feature of the book is the analysis of the Enemy Alien Tribunal held at Whitehaven in 1939. The rare survival of records relating to this event has enabled the author to examine in detail the refugee experience in west Cumbria. Attention is drawn to the significant contributions of many of these refugees to the county, and at a time when refugee numbers are increasing and government and society's attitudes are hardening against refugees, the book compares the attitudes of the 1930s to those of today.

'This is a finely written book which is an important contribution, not just to our knowledge of the past, but also to our understanding of the present. It reminds us of the important, indeed vital, contribution made by voluntary groups and determined individuals to the welfare of refugees'. *Dr Elizabeth Roberts, Emeritus, Regional Heritage Centre, Lancaster University.*

'This book contains much original research which will be of particular interest to those living in Cumbria as well as a more general readership'. *Professor Charmian Brinson, Emeritus Professor of German, Imperial College, London.*

Dr Rob David was President of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society from 2017 to 2020.

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