

Alfred Binyon of Manchester and Merlewood

Merlewood, situated in a superb position off Windermere Road, between Grange-over-Sands and Lindale, is currently being refurbished and extended by the Holiday Property Bond Company.

It was originally built in the 1850s as a retirement home for Alfred Binyon. He had been born in Manchester in 1800, but already had a family connection with this area as his grandparents Benjamin Busby Binyon and Ruth Wakefield were married in the Friends Meeting House, Kendal, in 1760. In 1823 Alfred spent a holiday with his distant cousins Robert and Dorothy Benson and their family at Parkside, Kendal, writing back to his mother in Cannon Street, Manchester thanking her for "allowing me to enjoy the pure air of this delightful spot". He must have found the contrast with the polluted atmosphere of Manchester

quite amazing.

Alfred had spent some of his school years in Ann Gauntley's small



Alfred Binyon

Quaker Boarding School in Broughton, Lincolnshire, four miles west of Welbourn where his mother had been born. By the 1820s he was in business in Manchester as a calenderer and a coal agent, but in 1828, following his marriage to Lucy Hoyle, he was made a partner in his father-in-law's calico printing firm, Thomas Hoyle & Sons, of Mayfield Printworks,

Manchester. The firm became one of the foremost calico printers in the country, and was on the itineraries of many foreign dignitaries who visited Manchester, then considered the workshop of the world, during the 1840s. In 1839, Alfred had travelled to Paris to attend the Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures, taking samples of patterns both on cotton and *mouseline de laine* (wool and cotton), and seeking more business for his firm. Ladies from all walks of society were very pleased to possess a dress made from material bearing one of the well-known Mayfield designs.

In 1844, Alfred and Lucy and their six children moved two miles out of central Manchester to enjoy residence in a rather fine property, Bella Villa, around which the estate agent described the country as "picturesque, the soil dry, the rides delightful,

November's AGM

Our Society's AGM was well attended this year, with upwards of 20 members attending.

The AGM was, as last year, followed by short talks from some of our members, including one by John Becket who has also written the main arti-

cle in this Newsletter.

Other talks included one on the information to be gleaned from affidavits (in this case from affidavits relating to Mary Lambert) by Pat Rowland.

Nigel Mills provided a Powerpoint presentation which got members involved in dis-

cussing research possibilities in our local area, and also the possibility of working with recorded sources such as census material. Plenty of room for thought there—if anyone has any suggestions for a research project please let us know.

Lecture Programme 2009

26 February: H. James Walklett, 'Jiggers and Spelks—the boats of Morecambe Bay'

26 March: Ken Broadhurst, 'Cumbrian Tollroads'

30 April: David Sanders, 'History of Cartmel Priory'

28 May: Tour of Cartmel Priory with Gail Swanson

25 June: Dr. Ruth Hughes, 'Our Forgotten Architect: William Moss Settle and Vickerstown'

24 September: Dr. Michael Winstanley, 'The Edwardian Domesday 1909-1914: a unique source for local history'

29 October: Janet Smith, 'The Families of Holker'

26 November: AGM and short talks by members

All our lectures take place in Cartmel Village Hall and start at 7.30pm. There is plenty of car parking space available and all are welcome to attend.

Carried forward from p.1

and near to the highly enriched gardens of the Botanical Society". Alfred and his gardener began to exhibit at the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society's shows, Alfred winning prizes for calceolarias and melons, and his gardener for the best written and most correctly spelled labels.

Alfred, Lucy and two of their daughters enjoyed a seven weeks continental tour in 1850, and soon afterwards Alfred acquired a small estate near Grange-over-Sands, where, on the 19th of May 1853, he laid the foundation stone of Merlewood. The designs for the house and the lodge at the end of the drive had been made by George Webster, then living in retirement at Eller How, Lindale, "to oblige Mr Binyon as a neighbour". In September of that year, Alfred wrote to George Webster from the Pyrenees, where he and his family were en-

joying another continental holiday, enquiring about the progress of the building. Unfortunately the holiday ended tragically with the death of Lucy on the 6th of November.

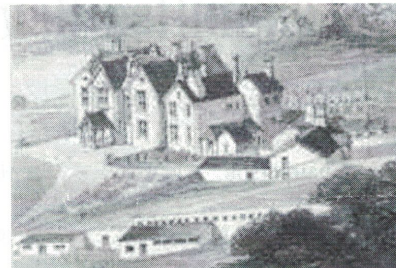
After arranging the burial of his wife in the Protestant part of the public cemetery at Bagnères de Bigorre, (they had both left the Society of Friends in 1836), Alfred and his daughters returned to Grange, and on the 24th December 1853 Alfred gave his rearing dinner, celebrating the raising of the roof timbers of Merlewood, to between fifty and sixty of the people involved in the building work at William Strickland's house at the Slack. The Binyons were living at Yewbarrow Lodge whilst Merlewood was being built, and progress on the building during 1854 must have been slow for they were still in Yewbarrow in December

of that year, finally moving in during early 1855.

Alfred was not able to enjoy his new home, greenhouses and gardens for long, however, as he died from heart disease on 21st August 1856, and is buried in the churchyard at St Paul's, Lindale. Alfred devised his estate to be divided equally between his children and Merlewood was sold by auction in May 1857, but several members of his family and their descendants continued to live in or have connections with this area.

John Beckett

'Ladies from all walks of society were very pleased to possess a dress made from material bearing one of the well-known Mayfield designs'.



History Society photographic archive & library

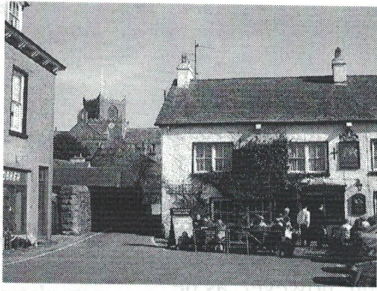
Many of our members may be surprised to know that we do have a photographic archive, courtesy of the hard work of member Peter Wain. He has diligently compiled well over 1,000 historical images of our area and copied them onto CD. These CDs are held in

Grange Library for our members to peruse. Please ask to see it when next you visit the library—it really is a fascinating source.

We also have a number of books belonging to the society which have been deposited with the Grange and Kendal libraries.

Peter has also informed us that he is now selling his large collection of Lake District books and will provide the secretary with a copy of his list of books for sale.

It should also be available at the next meeting in February.



Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society

Contact: Dr Ruth Hughes
3 Devonshire Place
Kents Bank Road
Grange over Sands
Phone: 01539532591
E-mail: ruthhughes@tiscali.co.uk

Our society was founded over 10 years ago to promote the history of the Cartmel and District area. Some years ago we changed the name to more accurately reflect the geographical area our Society encompasses.

We try to arrange, for each lecture season, a wide variety of topics to interest all our members and visitors. For example, last year we had lectures on Roadways in Cumbria, Hadrian's wall, Manorial Documents, etc. This year we have arranged lectures to include maps used in local history, the families who have lived at Holker Hall, the Newland Iron Furnace and more.

We have recently tried to widen our remit to include more family-based history, as we realise that many of our members and visitors do not have their roots in this area, myself included.

We are always open to suggestions from our members about the ways this Society can grow.

Committee Members 2009

Chairperson: Barbara Copeland (Tel: 01539533165)

Treasurer: Nigel Mills

Secretary: Ruth Hughes (Tel: 01539532591)

Publicity Officer: Gail Swanson

Committee Members:
Trevor Moore
Peter le Mare
Malcolm Arthurton
Stewart Allen

STOP PRESS: We are now on the web at <http://www.cartmel-peninsula-lhs.org>

