

Women's Institute.

Cartmel Branch.

Notes on
Old Cartmel
and
The Valley



Notes on
Old Cartmel and
The Valley



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The Church Town in Cartmel and its Trades.

CARTMEL formerly was not just the little old town as we know it to-day, but a wide district, bounded by the Parishes of Beetham on the eastern side, Windermere and Colton to the west, and on the Estuary, Ulverston. It is now known as the "Ancient Parish of Cartmel" and only used by the Grammar School Foundation, to define which Schools may now send their Scholars to the Centre.

The dominating feature of the place is of course the Priory Church of S. Mary, originally called "The Church of Our Lady and St. Michael," but this is a subject by itself, and half a dozen books and pamphlets have been written about it. In the old days there were no Churches at Grange, Lindale, Allithwaite, Flookburgh or Staveley, and people came from these villages to the Mother Church for baptisms and marriages, and one Vicar of Cartmel arranged that each out-lying village should have its own special Sunday for coming to the Holy Communion. There is one thing that all the Guide Books have omitted to mention, namely that in the payment at the back of the organ is a stone, which almost certainly was the top of the Pre-Dissolution High Altar; it measures 8 ft. 4 ins., which is far longer than any ordinary pavingstone. There is another stone near the North Transept which measures 7 ft. 8 ins. and may probably have been part of one of the Side Altars. If it is ever conclusively proved that these stones were part of the Pre-Dissolution Altars, one hopes that they may be raised, and be no longer trodden under foot.

6 THE CHURCH TOWN IN CARTMEL AND ITS TRADES.

Traces of the days when Cartmel was a Monastic place are to be found in old, almost forgotten names—for instance, the old houses at the back of Cavendish Street used to be called "The Friarage," and one wonders whether it was where the Preaching Friars lodged. One of the fields by the Vicarage is called "Farmery," and this may have taken its name from the Monks' Infirmary, or from being near the Monastic Dairy. There is a tradition that in "Castle Meadows," a field on the right hand side of the road which goes up to Green Bank from Cartmel, the Church bells were founded or cast, and that the Cartmel people came and put their gold and silver into the melting metal—but this may be a fable.

It may be of interest to Cartmel people to know that the Church bell at Grange once belonged to Cartmel Church. It was given by Margaret Marshall of Aynsome, and was sold to Grange in 1853 for £5 7s. od.

Another old Cartmel bell seems to have strayed to Lindale, but it appears to have been re-melted in 1828. "Its first known office," says Lindsey Aspland, "was centuries ago to ring the good folk attending Cartmel Market to accompany the Monks to early Mass. At a subsequent period it was removed, probably when the singular diagonal upper belfrey was added to the tower of the Priory Church, and a more regular Peal instituted.

After lying long disused it was sold, with other discarded Church property, and at length came into the possession of John Wilkinson of Castle Head, who used it to summon his workmen. On the dispersion of his property it resumed its sacred office—being purchased for Lindale Church."

One wonders what bell hung in the 'Sanctus Bell Cot' at the West end of Cartmel Church!

THE CHURCH TOWN IN CARTMEL AND ITS TRADES. 7

People still speak of "The Market Cross," although there is no Cross there now and no Market, but "The Fish Stones" still remain, and many a fine salmon must have been laid there in times gone-by, ready for the Tuesday's Market. The last relic of those days is that the District Bank still opens on that day. Mr. Rigg, Carrier, used to take the money from the Bank over-sands to Lancaster, and many of the Cartmel ladies used to prefer to ride with him to travelling in the Coach, as they said that they felt safer!

There is a little bit of the old Colonnade still remaining in the south-west corner of the Market Place, but by far the most noticeable thing in this part of the Town is the old Gate House, and a most interesting little book about this has been published.

A strong wall surrounded the precincts of the Priory, and parts of it may still be seen on the road to the Grammar School and in the kitchen-garden of Fairfield. The wall went through two houses in Barngarth and in the smaller of them is a spiral staircase with a stone step at the bottom.

The South Cross at the southern limit of the Church lands was used by funerals as a halting place to rest and form a procession before going on to the Church. In earlier days, it is said, travellers offered prayers there, for a safe journey across the Sands. Upwards of a hundred people, who had met their deaths by drowning, are buried in the old Churchyard. Wm. Taylor, the Poet Wordsworth's old Schoolmaster, was also buried at Cartmel.

The Tithe Barn in Barngarth will have had many and various things brought into its keeping, for in the olden days people brought the tithe, or tenth part, of such things as fruit and honey, and the produce of the land for the Church, and these were brought to the Tithe Barn.

Cartmel people always held their own in various crafts. We read that in 1675 William Hobson, Weaver, received 4/6 for working 19 yards of "Huggabacke" for Swarthmoor Hall, and 8/6 for the same work in the following year. In the year 1610 an Act was passed by Parliament to encourage the making of course woollen materials called "Kendals" and "Cartmels." "Swilling," or the making of rough baskets was a trade that often went down from father to son.

INNS: In the days when home-brewed beer was largely drunk, and when Cartmel was on the high-road between Furness and the rest of England by way of the Sands, there were many Inns in all parts of the town. In Town End was "The Pig and Whistle," now called "The Devonshire Arms." Another near the Post Office was "The Nag's Head." "The Blue Bell" was in Devonshire Place, and "The Crown" where "Shaftsbury House" is to-day. At Brook House in Cavendish Street much ale was brewed.

Old Houses.

There are all sorts of interesting features in many of the houses in Cartmel—little cupboards built into the walls, fire-places with beautiful mouldings, an Adam's side-board put in when the house was re-built, and arched alcoves and passages—but without doubt the most interesting house in the Town is Priory Close—

Tradition says that this was where the Prior dwelt, and there seems to have been an underground passage out of Priory Close into the Church. A late owner said that her mother, then a girl, explored the passage and came up some steps into the Church near one of the pillars in the Nave—unfortunately *which* pillar it was she was unable to remember, but the Choir who were having a choir practice fled, thinking that she

was a ghost! In the Attics of Priory Close may be seen Tudor work, the "Cock Loft," and the old steep Thatching Beams which supported the former thatched roof. There is a most beautiful old black-oak staircase with wide shallow steps and bannisters which have the alternate double twist; the floors are in many cases of black oak. Near the former entrance to the underground passage is a small dark room which has a walled-up window quite near to the ground.

At the time of the Dissolution the inhabitants of Cartmel were given leave to keep their Church "un-plucked down," and they might also keep a "Chales, a Masse Book, and a Vestement." Mention was also made of "A suit of Copes" which were to be kept for the Parish Church of Cartmel. One wonders what became of these things, and whether, if Priory Close were the Prior's house, they may have been hidden there, and may be there yet! There are one or two places where things might be safely hidden.

Green Bank is another house with an even more beautiful old staircase. It belonged to the Michaelson family, one of whom married a Burscough of Cartmel. Their daughter, Ellin, married Thomas Machell of Aynsome. There is an old faded piece of hand-made paper on which are beautifully written these words: "Miss Betty Remington you are desired to the funeral of Mrs. Machell of Aynsome on Wednesday the 2nd of August 1775. To dine at Mrs. Gregg's house in Cartmel Town. You are intended a bearer."

This is the last we hear of little Ellin of Green Bank, but an old letter speaks of her husband being inconsolable after her death. Her youngest daughter, Catherine, married a second-cousin, Reginald Remington of Melling, and it is said that she rode over-Sands on a pillion in a scarlet riding-habit from Aynsome to her new home at Melling!

One of her sons, the Rev. Thomas Remington, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Vicar of Cartmel walked up to the top of Hampsfell every morning before breakfast, in winter starting from his home at Aynsome in the dark, and as a Thankoffering for all the beauty he had seen there he had the Hospice built, and the following words by Heber inscribed inside :

“O God, O Good beyond compare,
If thus Thy meaner works are fair,
If thus Thy Bounty gilds the span
Of ruined earth and sinful man,
How glorious must those mansions be
Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee.”

In very clear weather, generally just before, or just after heavy rain, Snowdon and the Great Orme may be seen from the Hospice.

Bigland Hall is an interesting old place situated on the fells a few miles from Cartmel. There is a large tarn, full of fish and waterlilies. From a spur, near the Hall, is a most wonderfully beautiful view of the Peat Mosses, Windermere and the Lake Mountains, which is said to be the finest view in England.

In those days on the top of the screen in Cartmel Church there stood a Barrel-Organ in a Gallery, and there were other Galleries named “The Dark Gallery,” “The Light Gallery,” and “The Children’s Gallery.”

Vicar Remington was up in London and brought back with him the tune (ought we to say “Record”?) which we sing to-day for “Ye holy angels bright,” but while in London he caught small-pox, and he died of it at his childhood’s home at Milling on May 5th 1855, aged 55 years. The first time that the Hymn was sung in Cartmel Church was the Sunday

after his funeral. The first part of the great Restoration of the Church was started by the Revd. T. Remington and continued by his successor, Canon Hubbersty.

It is said to have taken two years to remove the thick coats of white-wash which entirely covered the interior of the Church, and it is this scraping of the stone which has given the new fresh look to the walls—in fact visitors who know nothing about Architecture find it difficult to believe that the Church dates from 1188.

From Thomas and Ellin Machell are also descended the Grayrigge family of Wood Broughton, and they belong to an elder branch, as "Kitty Machell" of the scarlet riding-habit was the youngest daughter of Thomas and Ellin of Aynsome.

In the 16th century Aynsome belonged to the Marshall family who, tradition says, were descendents of Willam Mareshal, Earl of Pembroke, the founder of Cartmel Priory.

Not many years ago a suit of chain-armour was found at Aynsome in what used to be called "The dark Attic," but it is impossible to say who may have owned it. There are still a few beautiful round Tudor chimneys in and around Cartmel which one hopes may be preserved.

Dances and concerts used to be held in one of the barns in Cartmel in the olden days, and it is said that the great Mrs. Siddons once acted in it.

Sports and Games.

“Pace-Egging” was a great pastime 100 years ago. Bands of children came—and still come—in Holy Week, to everybody’s door singing a song which begins with these words :

“Here’s two or three Jolly Boys all in one mind.
We’ve come a Pace-egging, we hope you’ll prove kind,
We hope you’ll prove kind with your eggs and strong beer
And we’ll come no more nigh you until the next year.
Foll-der-i-iddle-i-day.”

The eggs collected were boiled hard, sometimes wrapped in onion-peelings or bits of bright ribbon, then rolled in the park to find the “Conqueror” and were finally eaten.

The Races are held on Whit-Monday in the park and draw large crowds, but in by-gone days they were held near Broughton Lodge on what was formerly called “St. Andrew’s Moor.” There was a Chantry Chapel here with, it is said, an underground passage to Cartmel Church.

Old Tales and Superstitions and Weather Lore.

To hear a cock crow late in the evening means that there will be rain the next day:

*"If the cock crows when he goes to bed
He will wake the next morn with a watery head."*

The following is a local saying:

*"Gull, Gull fly to the sand,
There is always bad weather when you're on the land."*

"A dark Martinmas, a light Christmas"

refers to Moonlight.

*"Epiphany, a cock's stride,
Candlemas an hour wide"*

has to do with the way in which the days lengthen in the very early Spring.

*"If the ice at Martinmas bears a duck
The rest of the Winter is slush and muck."*

When the first star was seen in the evening sky, the thing to do was to wish for something and say: *"Star bright, Star light, the first star I see to-night. I wish I may, I wish I might have the wish I wish to-night."*

The bridge in Aynsome Lane was a "Wishing Bridge" and it was said that if you particularly wanted anything you should wish for it as you went over and drop a crooked pin into the stream.

A certain Yew Tree between Ivy Cottage and Aynsome Lane was said to be haunted.

"Cock Hill" in Cartmel Park formed a portion of the Cock Pit boundary where, in by-gone days the mains were fought. Part of the hedge that surrounded it was still growing less than half a century ago. 11

At the cross roads, near Broughton Lodge, built into the wall, is "Egg-Pudding Stone," which has always been said—and most truly—to turn round whenever it hears Cartmel Church Clock strike midnight!

The last Wolf in England is said to have been killed by Sir John Harrington at Humphrey Head.

Most of the old houses have their ghosts of a harmless kind, also some of the ancient trees, and there still exists an old barn where the Devil and some of his satellites are said to come for a midnight game of cards!

Of food in the Olden Days in Cartmel.

Rum Butter: It was always the custom at Christenings to have Rum Butter, and some was given to all friends who came to visit the babe and its mother. The following is a very old recipe—"Melt together $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of butter and 1 lb. of soft brown sugar, but do not let it boil. Add a little grated nutmeg. Beat it up well and then add one tablespoonful of rum. When it is beginning to cool put it into a dish or basin."

A dish was used in Lent and Holy Week called "Herb Pudding."

Easter Ledges—sometimes called "Passion Dock," with young nettles, were gathered and very well washed, boiled and chopped up finely. Chopped hard-boiled egg, pearl barley, (previously cooked), butter, pepper, and salt were added after it had been well drained. It was pressed into a basin, made hot, and turned out into a vegetable dish. F 11

Scouse: was another Lenten dish. Salt salmon was soaked overnight in water, and the following day it was drained, mixed with mashed potato and served with Egg Sauce.

The most curious dish of all was "Fig Sue." In the days when hardly anybody could read or write, no doubt the Monks would teach the people Church doctrines by other methods. This curious drink—still made I believe at *one* house in Cartmel, was given to people on Good Friday. It is compounded of figs, beer, treacle, cloves, bread, and possibly other ingredients, but the strange thing is there was said to be an inner meaning attached to everything that was put into the "Fig Sue." I was told "that the cloves were to remind us of the Nails of the Cross, the beer for the vinegar given to Our Lord, and the black treacle stands for our sins."

On the Church and Gate House can still be seen growing a little green plant called "Pellitory of the Wall." It is still used by Herbalists for cases of dropsy, and no doubt was used, if not brought here, by the Monks.

"Sweet Pie," a by no means Lenten dish, was extraordinarily rich! It was covered with puff-pastry, and inside were all the things that are put into Christmas Mince-Meat, with often the addition of a Tongue finely chopped.

"Hunting Nuts": these small round gingerbreads are made by an old Machell recipe. They were convenient to put in the pockets when going out hunting as they took little room, and were both warming and sustaining. They are still made and sold in Cartmel.

Of Cartmel Families.

It is interesting to see how many of the old names still continue in Cartmel and its neighbourhood. In the old Church Book of Cartmel we read: "April 12th 1624. It is this day agreed between the Churchwardens and the twentie fourtie and Rowlande Swainson . . . that the said Rowland shall have 2/- a yeare for the hangeinge of the bell's clappers . . . The moneye to bee payed yearlye on Easter Tuesdaye." The name of Agnes Swainson is mentioned in the early Registers on Dec. 7th 1562. An old document of an early date mentions someone called Gaskarth. The way in which names were spelt was often very quaint, for instance "Allic Maytchell" on January 10th 1561, but the name of Machell was spelt in a variety of strange ways!

The Thornburghs were a noted family in the North—one Cissilye Thornburgh is mentioned in the Cartmel Registers in 1581. They lived at various halls in Westmorland and North Lancashire, and seem to have come from Thornburghe in Yorkshire. Hampsfield Hall, Selside Hall and an ancient house at Witherslack all seem to have been homes of Thornburghs, and even to-day the steep little hill between Witherslack village and the Church is called "Thornburgh's Hill." They lived at Hampsfield Hall from about the time of Edward III (1327—1377) until the sale of the Hampsfield estate to Robert Curwen of Carke and Robert Rawlinson his nephew. One of the Thornburghs married Margaret Washington, a daughter of John Washington who was a direct ancestor of the great George Washington, the first President of the United States.

Among some well-known names with their dates are the following:

Webster—Jany. 22, 1562.
Agnes Dickinson, 1577.
Leece—1618.
Bigland, "20 Maye, 1559."
Anne Mytchell, Sept, 16th, 1568.
Curwen, 12 Decr. 1560.
Mychaell Hodgsoun, 1560.
Richard Rigge of Church towne, 1585.
Agnes Knipe, 1613.

The name Fishwick (probably a monk of Cartmel) seems to have been in the glass which came from Cartmel and is now in the East window of Windermere Parish Church (S. Martin's). Fishwick is still a Cartmel name.

Probably these families lived in and around Cartmel long before the dates mentioned above, but Parish Registers only began to be kept in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Old Rights of Way and Packhorse Roads.

A pleasant path is the one from Aynsome Mill to Tanley by "Cheney Lows" (Channel Meadows) and "Sammy Garden," and another is from "Seven Acres" to Mere Beck, which went at one time by the name of "The Three Dollies" because a man used to live there, who married three times, and each wife was called *Dorothy*!

If one wished to ascend the Fell there were various paths by which one might go. One was up the drive to Longlands, through the yard, and into a field, where until lately there was a bit of the old Pack-horse lane. Within living memory there grew in this lane a little blue flower (Omphalodes) which the old people of Cartmel used to call "Blue-eyed Mary." This bridle-path was said to be the old route for crossing the Sands—probably to the Port of Milnthorpe.

All the coming and going between Milnthorpe and towns and villages in Furness has ceased, but still the rooks from Dallam Tower fly over Cartmel morning and evening, except in the nesting-season, quite undisturbed by all the changes in road traffic! At the Three-lane ends below Greenhurst *still* a Guide Post directs way-farers to Milnthorpe.

There was a Packhorse path from Templand to Birkby Hall, through Bankside and the corner of the wood into Holker Bank, then down the wood, or else along Mount St. Bernard Lane and so down the wood to the Peat Mosses.

The bridge over the River Ay at Bankside is said to be the only Pack-horse bridge now left in this district. One often comes across a succession of old forgotten stiles, as for instance those which lead from "Old Town" to Green Bank. People used to be allowed to cross Penny Bridge, go through the gardens, and come out into the Market Place, but this "short-cut" was closed about twenty years ago.

There are various old lanes both from Cartmel and Flookburgh which led to the "Holy Well" at Humphrey Head, and we can trace the way the pilgrims went up the Allithwaite road from Cartmel, by Boar Bank lane, and then across the road from Allithwaite to Flookburgh near the French Gardens.

If "Women's Institutes" in other neighbourhoods are instrumental in reviving Folk Lore and old, almost forgotten History, they will have done a useful work, for these things, once lost, can never be recovered.

10th October, 1928.

L. A. BUTTERWORTH.

P. NASH.

A. PEDDER.