

Allithwaite Institute

In this year of 2015, the village of Allithwaite is celebrating the 150th anniversary since the church and school opened in 1865. However there was a school and chapel that pre-date that in the building now called the Allithwaite Institute.

In an open letter on the 19th October 1852 by W Hudson, Cartmel Priory announced that 'a new school-house, licenced for worship, will shortly be erected at Allithwaite where services will be performed every Sunday evening by one of the clergy of Cartmel Church.' This was seen as partly in anticipation of the number of navvies likely to be assembled during the railway construction (1).

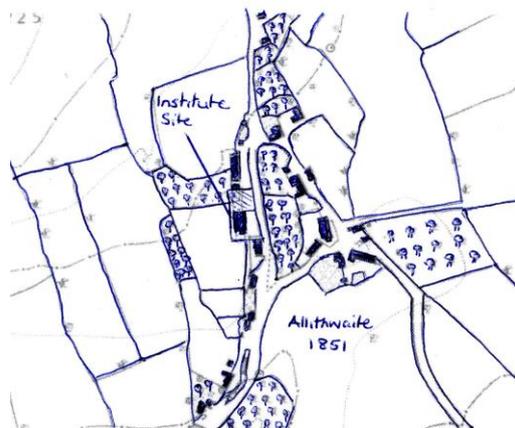
The building was erected on a site sold on 12th October 1853 to the Ministers and Churchwardens of Cartmel by John Storey of Allithwaite for £15-2-0. The conveyance states that 'all buildings thereon erected to be forever hereafter appropriated and used as and for a school for the education of children and adults, or children only of the labouring manufacturing and other poorer classes in the Parish of Cartmel'.

ft with accommodation for 80 children at a cost of £220 (2) with a grant of £20 from the National Society. The building was completed by Mr Wm. Orr, joiner and builder of Cartmel. (3). It appears that the building was dedicated by the Bishop of Chester, John Graham, in 1854.

The first 'divine service' was held in the afternoon of the 12th November 1854 with the Sermon preached by the Rev. Remington, late incumbent of Cartmel. The collection made towards the debt still due for the expenses of the building amounted to £38-13-4, including a donation of £25 from the Rt. Hon. Earl of Burlington (William Cavendish, 7th Duke of Devonshire, 1808-1891) who, with his family were in attendance (3).



Allithwaite Institute, Pat Rowland, 1990



Location of the proposed Institute superimposed on an 1851 map.

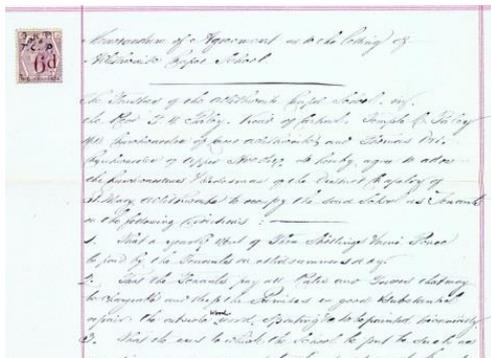
The building (on what is now known as Back Orchard Road) was to be 33 ft by 20

Even in the early days, the premises were also used for meetings of the local community Temperance meetings, and the 'new' beautiful school-room held a meeting announcing 'some striking facts in proof of the awful deaths which often follow the use of intoxicating liquor' (4). 17 adults and 6 youths signed the pledge and became members of the Total Abstinence Society. In 1861, Mr Hird presented a beautiful locally made clock to the school funded by private subscription, and the meeting attended by 50 of the principal ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood participated in the 'tea meeting', and heard

a lecture by Mr Legge (probably Robert of Boarbank, former resident in Australia) on his travels in Tasmania (5).

To date, very little information has come to light for the chapel / school, except, we now know that Mr Williams was the headmaster at the time the chapel / school moved up the hill in 1865/6 (6). A few years later a Reading Room was established at the Institute (also known then as the Institution). Mr Walter Winson, the local school master from 1868, was instrumental in establishing a successful Reading Room which 'mustered a goodly number of members'. Shortly after Walter moved back to Derbyshire in 1882, he was presented with a handsome walnut writing desk in 'appreciation of his long and valuable service as Hon. Secretary (1868-1882)' (7).

In 1885 a *Memorandum of Agreement* was made between the Trustees and the Churchwardens and Sidesman of the District Chapelry of St Mary Allithwaite (rent 3/9d payable on mid-summers day) (8) for the 'room' to be utilised for Parish purposes (9). At that time the Trustees were Rev. F. H. Paley, vicar of Cartmel, the vicar's brother Temple C Paley, churchwarden of Lower Allithwaite and Thomas Orr, churchwarden of Upper Holker.



Memorandum of Agreement 1885

By 1888, a committee managed the running of the building known then as Allithwaite Institute and Reading Room, with Thomas Molyneux of Allithwaite Lodge as President, and William Lamb (the Schoolmaster at that time) as Secretary.

Around that time, a good many improvements were effected at that time and a large and substantial bookcase was acquired (10). After Thomas died in 1891, his son Arthur became President. In the next 20 years membership ranged between 20 and 40 and in that period. Meetings were held for Mothers / Women, Men, and there was also a class for Allithwaite Church Workers and The Allithwaite Ambulance and regular Temperance meetings continued (11) (12). The Institute was also the venue for important public meetings. For example: a meeting of ratepayers was held in 1888 to consider the question of whether there should be a new burial ground located on land adjacent to the church, as the churchyard in Cartmel was full (10).

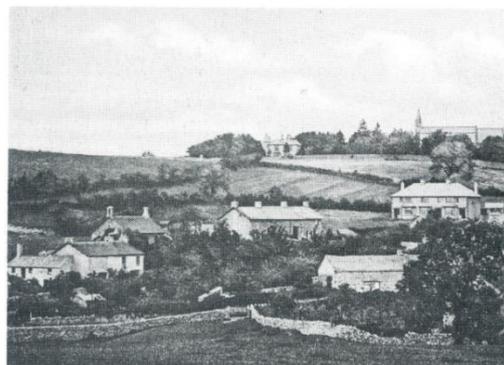
Towards the end of the 19th century as the village grew, there was clearly a stronger sense of community and with it the formation of groups and the Allithwaite Meteors football club in 1896 with its' headquarters at the Institute (11) (12). Fund-raising started for a billiard room extension to the reading room. To aid the fund-raising, the Allithwaite Institute Amateur Minstrels were formed in 1895 for the purpose of giving a series of entertainments. Mr William Lamb, the organist and choirmaster from the Church, was the inspiration as the musical director and pianist, and he was accompanied by the tambourines and bones. The room was packed for the first performance in November with all seats taken up and a large number standing to see a variety show, compared by Mr Wm Robinson, of songs, dances, speeches and a sketch. At the conclusion of the concert the band continued playing for dancing. The Minstrels made a welcome reappearance in February 1896 with an entirely changed programme and performed to a packed and enthusiastic audience with dancing afterwards until 2am (13).

Sometime after the 1911 census, when Percy Lamb and Harry Higgins were due to immigrate to Canada, members of the church assembled in the Institute to wish them "God Speed". Each was presented with a handsome and costly scarf pin. There was tea, speeches and a musical programme, and Mr Ridehalgh spoke words of encouragement and hoped they will shun the saloons and gambling places! (13).

In 1911, the premises were described as the Church Institute, Reading and Recreation Rooms with Robert Burrow as the Caretaker (14). Between 1907 and 1920 the only minutes for Allithwaite Church are for the Easter Vestry meetings. The first meeting of the newly formed Church Council occurred on the 7th January 1920. The Men's Club were major users of the Institute in the 20th century, and the club appears to have originated in 1919, when the club was first mentioned in the Easter Vestry minutes when a Young Men's Club was intimated.

In November 1923 there was serious concern over the dilapidated state of the building, and the Church Council demanded a meeting with the Institute Committee with an ultimatum that failure to meet will result in closure (15). Ultimately in January 1924 the Church Council agreed to execute all the external repairs and the Institute Committee were expected to do the same to the interior of the building and to effect needful reforms in the management of the 'social room'. Matters rumbled on and the church council decided to obtain possession of the keys in June as the Institute was not being used by the parishioners. This prompted Mr James Robinson from the Young Men's Committee to meet the church council in September to discuss the future of the Club and in November, 2 of the council members were nominated to serve on the Young Men's Club Committee. The poor state of repair continued with mention of

the requirement for a new floor in November 1925, and at a special meeting in October 1925, there was a proposal to install ventilation in the big roof, repair the roof, paint the walls and windows in the big room and the ante-room, fix weatherboard on the ante-room door, pack the joists between the reading room and the ante-room, replace the entrance door and paint the outside woodwork. The Institute was closed again in Lent 1928 to replace the floor boards. The caretaker, Mr Burns, purchased the redundant floorboards for 10/- and a Whist Drive and Dance was organised to inaugurate the new floor. The candle grease used on the floor at dances to protect the new floor appears to have caused issues as the council imposed a 20/- extra charge in November 1926 if it was applied.



Allithwaite Institute middle-left (undated – around 1900?). Picture by Robinsons of Allithwaite (16)

The Men's Club was formed in October 1928, with strict rules that they were responsible for the rates and upkeep of the premises, with instructions not to open on Sundays or Good Friday. In February 1929 the tenancy terms were discussed, and the request to remove the 'no alcohol' policy was refused. In January 1930 the Club was said to be flourishing. Later that year the recently appointed Vicar, Rev Hughes, met many of the young men of the Parish and had a pleasant evening in their company in October 1930. He explained carefully to them how the Institute was beyond dispute was Church property. There was concern at that time that the Institute was in need of urgent repairs and shortly afterwards in

April 1931, a subscription list was opened appealing for assistance on behalf of the Emergency fund and alterations (15).

The Trustees of Cartmel were willing to waive their right to possession so long as the Vicar and Wardens paid then 1/- per year in April 1932. At that time, the Church Council approved the building of a new billiard room including new lavatory accommodation under the proviso that they would renounce all claim to the property. The building of stone and slate was put out to public tender in November and those listed below, being collectively the lowest were accepted:

James Akister, plastering walling and slating, £252
T Knipe, joinery, £75
H Sowden, plumbing, £36-6-0
Burkett & Gasgarth, painting, £15-7-6
A Hutton, electric light, £13-2-0
Mr Hutton waived his architect fees (£30) (17).

The treasurer had £200 in the emergency fund towards the £400 required and wondered where the rest was coming from! The following guarantors of the Vicar Rev. Hughes (£50), Mr Smalley (£100) and Mr Hutton (£50) assured in a few moments, amid applause, that they could proceed forthwith with the works. Regarding the Management for the opening of the Club, a meeting was held to draw up rules and arrangements and 3 church council representatives were nominated to serve on the Management Committee (Messrs Tyson, Nelson and Walker) (17).

Meanwhile the Institute continued to be used by the Church. For example in 1936 during a year-long mission initiated by the Rev. Hughes there were rallies held on the premises. Later, during the second world war when evening services in the Church had to be abandoned due to the difficulty of blacking out the windows, for a while worship moved to the Institute (18).

In 1947, the PCC transferred the Trusteeship from Cartmel to the Diocesan Board of Finance. From 1947-1970 the Institute was used for mid-day school meals, and during this time the Men's Club (active up to 1961 (19)) and Women's Institute (provided additional equipment in 1962) used the building (20). Today the main user, Acorn Montessori Nursery School, is continuing the use of the building to educate the children of the Parish.

It is noted that the intention to build a Chapel-School was announced in late 1852, approximately eighteen months after Mary Lambert had sold the land at Little Templand to Trustees (21) for the purpose of building a church, school and parsonage with her legacy. This implies that the church at Cartmel were probably unaware of Mary Lambert's bequest.

In the 19th century, the Anglican Church had a deep interest in education as a means of extending its influence throughout the region, and the local church provided many of the schoolmasters for parish schools. These incumbents and curates were apparently often 'forced' to teach to augment their meagre incomes (22). The clergy from Cartmel may have taught in the chapel-school as the census record for 1861 do not show a school mistress / master in the village.

The establishment of church and chapel meeting rooms encouraged the move away from the public house (22) (the Royal Oak in Allithwaite) and this 'sobering-up' of the village was further encouraged by the work of the Temperance movement and the Band of Hope charity who met throughout the peninsula. Later in the 19th century, the establishment of the reading room would have provided newspapers (heavily taxed at that time) and books for the continuing education of the community.

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to Mrs Lamb of Killington for loaning a family scrapbook which contained cuttings and memorabilia from Mr William J Lamb.

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Phil Rowland May 2015 v1