

Boarbank Hall



Boarbank Hall has a long and interesting history. It has been owned by 8 people or organisations in the last 200 years and most have made alterations and additions to it that have had a big impact on it.

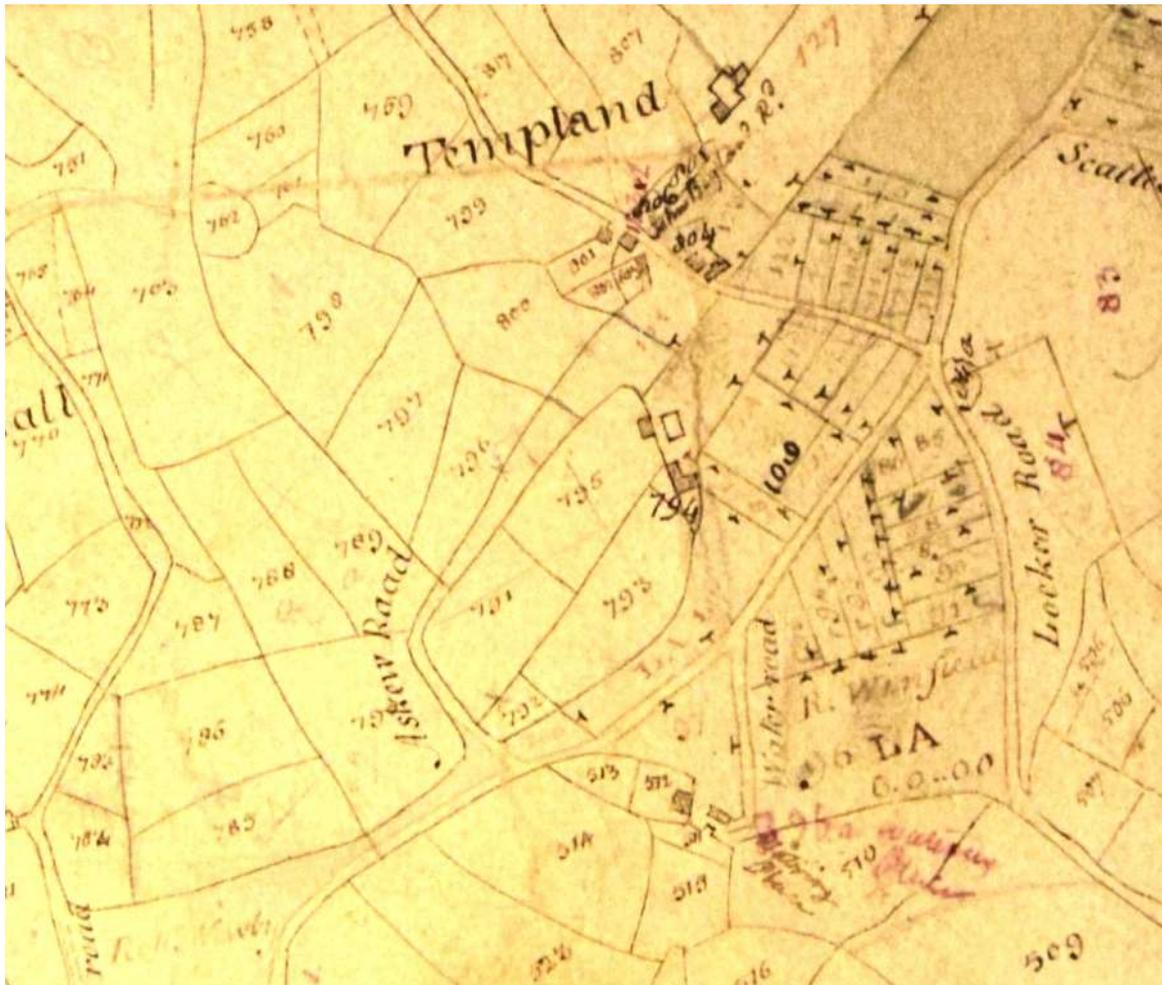
Boarbank was first mentioned in 1592 in the Cartmel Parish Register of baptisms, marriages and burials and the Barrow family occupied a property called Boarbank for several generations.

However my talk today starts with Mary Winfield Lambert who purchased Boarbank Cottage, a small holding, which was occupied by the Robinson family, from the owner Isabella Sawrey of Churchtown (Cartmel) in 1824.

Mary Winfield Lambert had come to live in Allithwaite in 1822 aged 34 and her Aunt Harriot Carter had joined her in 1823 when her marriage to Thomas Carter failed. Mary was a spinster who had been bought up in Kendal by her aunt Harriot and her

Grandparents Richard and Mary Winfield. Richard was a wealthy cloth manufacturer who had purchased the Outerthwaite Farm Estate in Allithwaite in 1799. How different life must have been in Allithwaite for the 2 ladies after living in Kendal. Mary and Harriot lived at Allithwaite Lodge, an elegant Georgian building built in 1799 overlooking agricultural land between Kirkhead and Humphrey Head and with views towards Morecambe Bay.

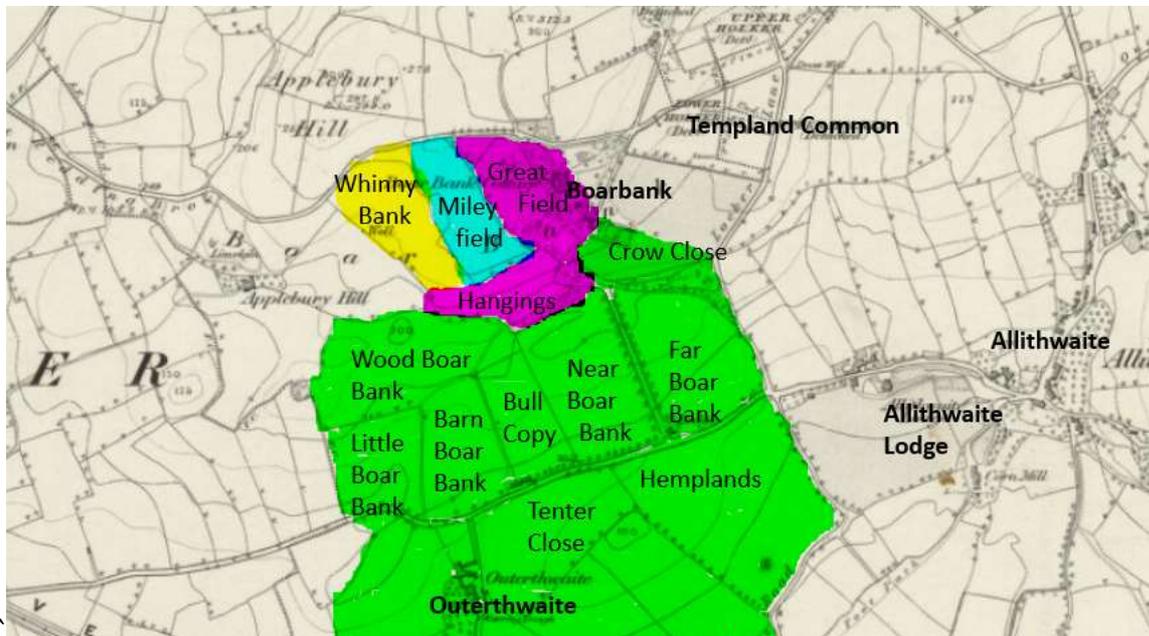
Boarbank Farm



Boarbank Cottage

This map dated 1812 is the earliest map we have showing details of the area.

Boarbank Cottage adjoined the Outerthwaite Estate and overlooked it. Being higher up the hillside than Allithwaite Lodge it had extensive views over the land and the coast.



Mary purchased the purple coloured land in 1824. Outerthwaite is coloured green purchased by Richard Winfield in 1799 that had been inherited by Harriot on his death in 1821 and passed to Mary in 1835 when Harriot died.

However Mary continued to let it to tenants until she moved there in 1836 following Harriot's death. In 1826 Boarbank Cottage was offered to let. It was described as being in perfect condition and contained 5 bedrooms, 2 sitting rooms, excellent kitchens, with a 3 stall stable, hayloft and standing for a gig, a good orchard, garden and a 2 acre field. Another advert, in 1833, stated that it was a newly built dwelling house. It is thought that George Webster, architect of Kendal was employed in designing the building.



The lodge on Allithwaite Road has a datestone of 1837 possibly showing when the works were finished.

Mary died in 1857, aged 70, never having married and her extensive estate was sold. She was a very wealthy woman and her will required that some of the proceeds of the sale were to be used to build a church, vicarage, school and school mistress's house in the village on land that Mary had set aside for the buildings.

Harriot Carter and Mary Lambert's grave on the north side of Cartmel Priory



In the auction particulars the house was described as a mansion with barns, stables, coach house and other offices, shrubbery, orchards, gardens, hot house and green house, pleasure grounds (informal landscape which is actually designed to show the mansion and its environment in the best possible light) and land.

1858 sketch of facade



This sketch was included in the 1858 auction particulars of Mary's estate.

Note the veranda wrapped around the house. Many houses had this feature in this damp corner of England at this time.

The south front is described as a 2-bay pedimented centre with lower one bay links to 2 taller bays.

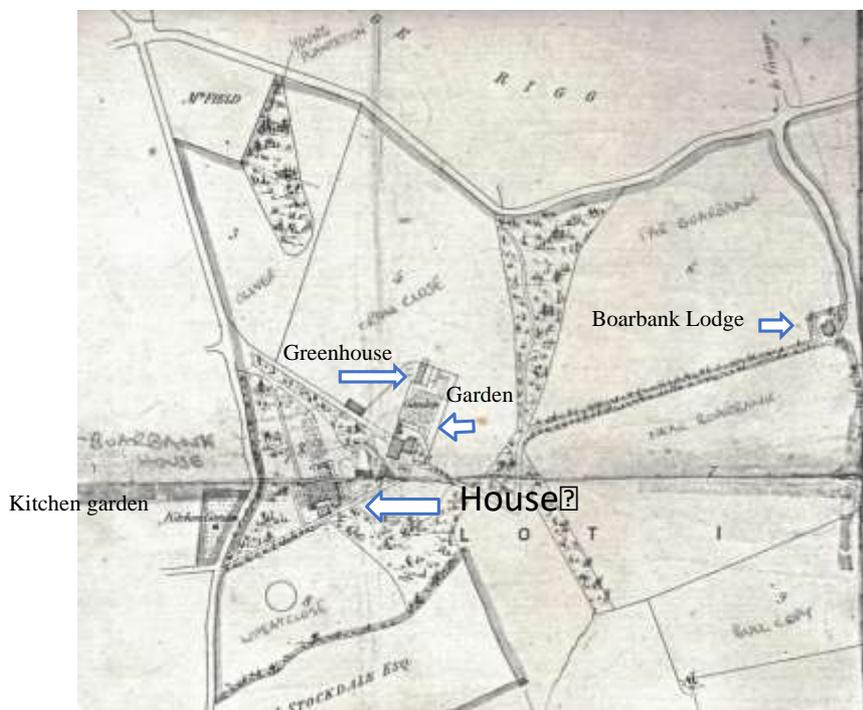
Note the windows which have thin glazing bars that do not obscure the view.

The house comprised on the ground floor a large and small parlour, steward's room, butler's pantry, servants hall, roomy kitchen, scullery and brewhouse. On the first floor were a large landing or salon, a dining room, a drawing room, a sitting room, 3 large and airy bedrooms, a smaller bedroom with dressing room attached. On the second floor were several more bedrooms. There were wine and beer cellars underneath the house.

Presumably the main living area was on the first floor to enable appreciation of the wonderful panoramas from the house. The ground floor was a reception and working area for managing all of Mary's estates and her house.

It has been said that the front was rebuilt following a fire in 1857 I have not been able to find evidence of this but fires were common because of open fires and candles.

Mary had created an elegant life in Allithwaite. The furniture and contents of the house were sold in a sale lasting 4 days. High quality furniture, five hundred books bound in calf, 500 ounces of silver plate, 28 dozen port and sherry wines were advertised. The bedrooms described as lodging rooms had a very massive four post bedstead with carved pillars draped in Damask (a reversible figured fabric of silk, wool, linen, cotton, or synthetic fibres, with a pattern formed by weaving), Moreen (a strong, ribbed cotton fabric, used chiefly for curtains) and Chinz (A printed and glazed cotton fabric, usually of bright colours) and 10 large white goose feather beds were included. There were 3 large dinner services comprising between 150 and 200 pieces each. I understand some of the service is still in the house today.



Plan from 1858 auction particulars

Boarbank House sold for £4250 and was purchased by Robert Legge, described in the 1861 census as a landed proprietor born in Dublin in 1804, but he only lived in the house for 5 years before returning to Australia.

1863 photo of Boarbank Hall



The auction was held on 20 May 1863. The description only included one addition to what was described in 1858. There was now one water closet. Mr Legge had not altered the building during his ownership.

Henry Chandler of Manchester bought the estate. He was a wealthy, award winning, agricultural implement manufacturer trading under the name of Richmond and Chandler of Salford. He was born in Guildford, Surrey in 1813. He had recently married Harriett Smith, in 1861, and by 1869 they had 5 children. In the 1871 and 1881 census Harriett's mother lived with the family which had 4 servants and when the children were young a governess. He still visited Salford frequently, which was easy to do as the railway station was close by and 4 of his 5 children were born in Salford. The family had retained their house there so Boarbank was probably a weekend and holiday retreat.

In 1866 he advertised for builders, interested in contracting, to carry out extensive additions and alterations to the Boarbank residence. It is said that the house was destroyed by fire in 1870 and rebuilt in a

formal Italianate style, probably designed by a Kendal architect but I have not been able to find any information to confirm this story though there is no doubt the house looks very different to the 1858 sketch.

Boarbank House 1858 (drawing from auction particulars)



1863 image



1898 Sales particulars

The front is Italianate in red rock faced stone with buff dressings and an Italianate Tower was added at the back right.

Note other differences

The elegant, ornate verandah has been removed

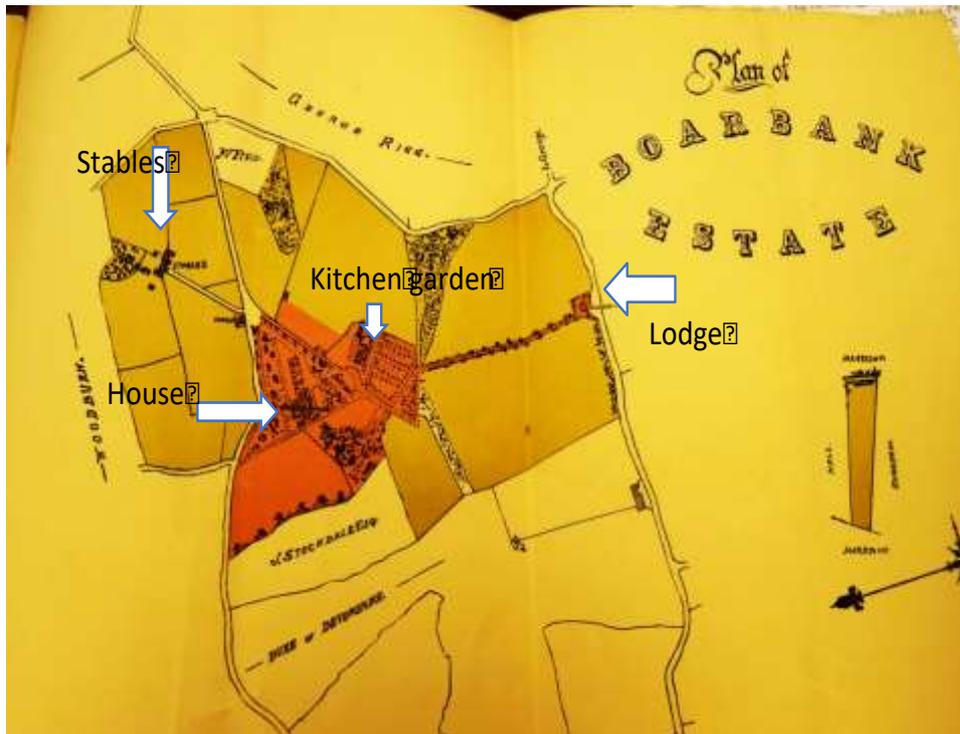
window style is different

gables on the wings

porch on the front

During Henry's ownership the house was enlarged and he purchased Boarbank Farm and redeveloped that. In 1877 he built more stabling, a coach house and farm buildings which were designed by J W Grundy of Ulverston.

Henry Chandler died in 1887 and the family sold the property with a wealthy brewer John Ratcliffe of Oldham becoming the new owner.



Boarbank Estate Plan from 1898 sales particulars

The 1891 census describes John Ratcliffe as a retired brewer aged 57, born in Rawtenstall, Lancashire. He owned the Coldhurst Brewery in Oldham with a large number of public houses and hotels. However from 1892 the Hall was regularly advertised for sale but it did not sell for ten years. The 1892 advert described the house as follows

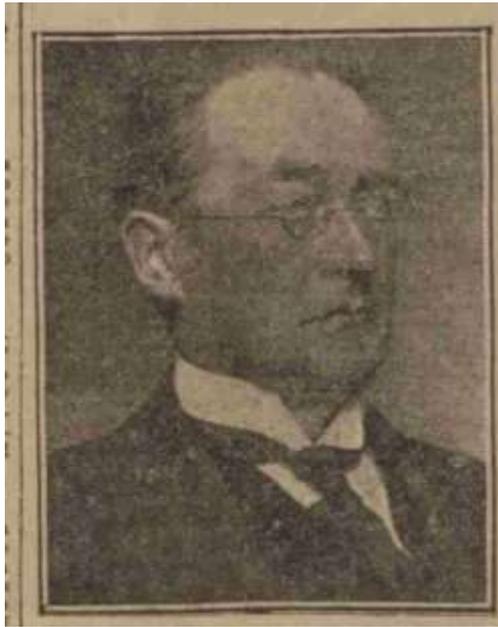
the stone MANSION known as Boarbank Hall, with 62 acres of land, containing large entrance hall, dining room, drawing room, morning room, library, billiard room, servants' hall, kitchen, laundry and the usual out offices; also 12 bed and dressing rooms, servants' bedrooms, bathroom and lavatories; fitted throughout with gas and water.....

The owners were continuing to live an extremely privileged lifestyle in contrast to the inhabitants of Allithwaite Village. They had a conservatory, peach house, vineries and greenhouses. The kitchen garden was producing vegetables and an orchard provided fruit.

As I have not been able to find a description of the house when the Chandlers sold it I cannot be sure who added the bathroom, billiard room, more bedrooms and a gas supply provided by gas apparatus on site. Probably Henry Chandler was the major contributor to the alterations as Mr Ratcliffe was only in the property for about 3 years before he started to try to sell it.



He was not successful until 1902 when Joseph Bliss bought the estate. Joseph Bliss, was born in 1853 in Leyland, Lancs. For 30 years he had lived in Turkey, Persia and Russia and bred Arab and Thoroughbred horses. In 1902 he and his wife returned to England and whilst holidaying in Grange-over-Sands discovered Boarbank Hall was for sale. They decided to buy it and became very involved in local life and politics. Soon after buying it Mr Bliss offered to pay £168 to have mains water connected. Before that water would have come from a well and rain water would have been stored in tanks.



Joseph Bliss 1910

1910 OS map



From late in 1914 Boarbank Hall was used as a military convalescent hospital. Mrs Bliss was in charge and electric baths, massage and upto date equipment was installed. Mr Bliss was very active in recruiting soldiers and helped transport many to places where they could sign up. The Hall was also used as a recruiting station.

Joseph was very active in politics. Twice in 1910 he failed to be elected as MP for the local area but in 1916 he was elected MP for the Liberal Party for the Cockermouth area. His constituency was abolished in 1918 and he failed to be elected to the newly created local seat for North Lonsdale. Soon after, he took the decision to sell Boarbank and move away from the area.

1921 Sales Advert showing that access is from the lower road between Allithwaite and Flookburgh

MORECAMBE BAY AND LAKE DISTRICT.
Glorious Sea and Inland and Mountain Views.
10 to 200 Acres.
Conveniently near Station and supplies, and within easy reach of Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, and other Towns.
"BOARBANK HALL," GRANGE-OVER-SANDS.
FINELY PLACED COUNTRY RESIDENCE.
In splendid order, occupying an ideal position with a due south aspect, and commanding panoramic views of great extent and beauty.
Approached by a long drive, with lodge. The accommodation comprises:—Vestibule, Central Hall, 26 x 15; Drawing-room, 35 x 17; Dining-room, 26 x 18; Study Morning-room, and fine Billiard-room. Above are 15 Bed and Dressing-rooms, Bathroom, and good Offices. Useful Outbuildings, Stabling, Garage for three, Coach-house, &c.
BEAUTIFULLY MATURED AND TIMBERED GROUNDS
with spreading Lawns, Yew Hedges, fully stocked Kitchen Garden, Orchard, &c., all in excellent order, and inexpensive to maintain.
Electric Light, Central Heating, Telephone, Modern Drainage.

1921 Auction advert

On 9 June 1921 the Hall was offered for auction at The Station Hotel Carnforth but it failed to sell. The advert described the house as having a vestibule, central hall, drawing room, dining room, study, morning room and billiard room. There were 15 bedrooms and dressing rooms, one bathroom and good offices. Beside stabling there was a garage for three and a coach-house. The grounds were extensive and there was a fully stocked kitchen garden, orchard etc. It had electric light, central heating, telephone and modern drainage.

So Mr Bliss had not change much. The accommodation is very similar to that described in the 1892 advert except 12 bed and dressing rooms had become 15. However now there was need for garaging. Central heating and telephone had been added too but still there was only one bathroom.

After the auction a deal was agreed and the Hall was purchased by the sisters who still own and occupy it today, nearly 99 years later. It was stated in the newspaper that the estate was sold for £12750. It excluded Boarbank Farm which Mr Bliss retained until the 1930s.

1933 OS map



Note building added. The main house is described as a convent and an extension has been built to the west. Other alterations and additions have been carried out since then.

1990



May 1990 Coffee Morning at Boarbank

Over the years Boarbank has been occupied by a variety of very different landowners, industrialists and wealthy people who have improved, changed and enlarged it from the modest 5 bedroomed Cottage that existed in the 1820s and they have also contributed to the life and growth of the hamlet into the village of Allithwaite.

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Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society
March 2020