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ART. XVIII – *The Machell and Remington Families of Aynsome, Cartmel*

By TIMOTHY COCKERILL

IN 1745 John Machell, a wealthy Iron Master at Backbarrow, bought Aynsome, Cartmel from the co-heirs of Henry Marshall of Aynsome.¹ His descendants were to remain there for over one hundred and fifty years.

John Machell (1678-1750) is shown in Burke's Landed Gentry (10th Edition, 1900) as a son of Hugh Machell of Crackenthorpe, but this is spurious. There had been Machells in the Cartmel area since at least the early seventeenth century.² John Machell's father was James Maychell of Haverthwaite, ship's carpenter, who made his will on 1 November 1702,³ leaving his son John his iron forge at Backbarrow. The Inventory of his goods taken on 7 November 1702 amounts in all to £458 12s. 9d, the largest single item being his "stock at forges" of £100.⁴

In 1704, John Machell married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of William Walker of Hollow Oak, Colton. They lived there until Aynsome, always a much admired place,⁵ came on the market, when the Iron Master was in his late fifties. The family moved there shortly afterwards but he only lived for a further five years and died at Aynsome in 1750.

By his will dated 1 March 1749⁶ John Machell left Aynsome to his third son, Thomas (1726-1802), together with his share of the partnership in the Backbarrow Iron Works. Thomas married a local girl, Ellen Michaelson of Greenbank, Cartmel in 1752⁷ and they had several daughters but only one surviving son. Their portraits by Christopher Steele, George Romney's master, have recently been acquired from descendants of the family by Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal.

The third generation of the Machell family to live at Aynsome was their son, Thomas Michaelson Machell (1759-1826), who remained single until 1817, when he married Margaret, daughter of Richard Postlethwaite, a merchant and former mayor of Lancaster,⁸ but they had no children. His sister, Elizabeth, married her cousin James Machell of Newby Bridge at Cartmel on 22 June 1789, but Thomas Michaelson Machell preferred his youngest sister Catherine, always called Kitty, who in 1796 had married Reginald Remington of Melling-in-Lunesdale and, in particular, their son Thomas, who was already making a name for himself at Cambridge.

Thomas Remington, who thus inherited Aynsome on the death of his uncle Thomas Michaelson Machell in 1826,⁹ was born in 1801, entered Trinity College, Cambridge and had a distinguished career at the University, being Second Wrangler and a Fellow of his college. Ordained in 1826 he became curate of Buckden, Huntingdon until, in 1835, the Duke of Devonshire presented him to the Vicarage of Cartmel.

Remington obtained permission from the Bishop of Chester to live at Aynsome, where he was looked after by an unmarried sister. He remained a bachelor and spent much time and effort superintending the restoration of Cartmel Priory at a cost of almost £7,000, although he died before its completion. He loved the Vale of Cartmel and its people and there is a story handed down in the family that he was offered the bishopric of Chester but firmly declined it as he said he could never bear to leave the area. He

built the Hospice on Hampsfell (727 feet), a folly from which to view the surrounding scenery and, both in summer and winter, climbed up to it each morning, leaving Aynsome at 6 am.¹⁰

We can catch a glimpse of Cartmel Priory, at a slightly later date, from A. M. Wakefield. Speaking of her childhood she recounts that the church was so cold that even the sturdy old farmers and hardy youths were not ashamed to bring coats and blankets, as the sole attempt at heating was a small brazier in the central aisle . . . “there was, however, a curious pew belonging to the Bigland family”¹¹ which was on wheels or large castors and so could be moved about to the least cold part of the Priory depending on the prevailing wind! “It was entered by steps behind like an omnibus and had square openings as if for windows in the high front and sides; it was also roofed in, allowing a beautiful seclusion and possibilities of undisturbed repose”.¹² Whether the Rev. Thomas Remington approved of this contraption is not recorded but it survived his restoration of the Priory, although it is sadly no more.¹³



“Aynsome” from the Rookery Field.

Perhaps the Vicar of Cartmel should have remained in his beloved Vale, for in 1855 he went to London to collect the hymn tune of “Ye Holy Angels Bright”, caught smallpox there and died at Melling on his way back.¹⁴

The Rev. Thomas Remington bequeathed Aynsome to his elder brother Henry (1797-1866), an Ulverston solicitor and man of property.¹⁵ Henry had been articled to Thomas Thompson, an attorney in Lancaster, and was admitted a solicitor in 1820, when he set up in practice on his own in Ulverston, building a new office for himself near Holy Trinity Church. According to his grandson the appearance in the town of this tall, handsome young man caused quite a flutter amongst the young ladies of the district and before long he had established both a good practice and a prominent place in local

society. In 1826 he married Mary, the only child of Thomas Ashburner of Holmbank, Urswick, yeoman. She was a noted beauty and known as "The Rose of Furness". In 1830 the Remingtons purchased 34 Queen Street, Ulverston, a substantial property, formerly the town house of the Rawlinsons of Duddon Hall, and it was here that four of their six children were born. By the time that Henry Remington succeeded his brother at Aynsome in 1855 his friend, Dr Bernard Gilpin, had jokingly likened him to a hare as he possessed so many seats – his ancestral home, The Crow Trees, Melling, his house in Queen Street, Ulverston, Longlands, a Georgian mansion near Cartmel and nearly three hundred acres nearby. In fact, by 1863, he is shown in Burke's Landed Gentry under Remington of Melling, as an established landowner and he lavished considerable sums of money on beautifying Aynsome and its surrounding demesne, as Stockdale's *Annals of Cartmel* and photographs in my possession amply confirm.¹⁶

Henry Remington died shortly before his seventieth birthday in 1866, being outlived by his mother-in-law, Mrs Agnes Ashburner who died at Aynsome the following year aged almost one hundred.¹⁷ Mrs Henry Remington lived on at the property until she died in 1883 when Aynsome was inherited by her youngest son the Rev. Thomas Machell Remington.

Born in 1836, Thomas was educated at Durham Grammar School and Trinity College, Cambridge (B.A. 1859, M.A. 1863) and was Vicar of Arkholme, Lancashire (1866-1873) and Rector of Claughton in the same county from 1873 to 1885. In 1869 he had married Alice, daughter of Alfred Binyon of Merlewood, Grange-over-Sands, whose sister Frances was already married to his elder brother the Rev. Reginald Remington, squire and patron of Fritwell in Oxfordshire. The Binyons were a Quaker family from Manchester; Alfred being a partner in Thomas Hoyle and Sons, one of the major producers of printed cotton in the country at the time. Laurence Binyon the poet and Arthur Ransome the writer were closely related.¹⁸

The Rev. Thomas Machell Remington did not enjoy good health and when his wife died in 1884 he decided to resign his incumbency and retired to Aynsome. Perhaps retirement is the wrong word to use because he soon became heavily involved in local affairs as a member of Ulverston Board of Guardians, a Governor of Cartmel Grammar School and numerous other organisations. He took an especial interest in the Holker and District Fire Brigade, the members of which were entertained by him annually at Aynsome. When he died in 1900 a large crowd paid their last respects to him as he was lowered into the family vault in Cartmel Priory.¹⁹

The rest of the story is soon told. The next owner of Aynsome was the last Remington to inherit the property, the Rev. Thomas Machell Remington's son and namesake, who, on emigrating to New Zealand, sold it to Sir Evan MacGregor, G.C.B., a former Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty. His daughter again sold the property soon after Sir Evan's death in 1926²⁰ and it subsequently became, and remains, an hotel sporting the grand title of "Aynsome Manor".

Some idea of the size and comfort of Aynsome in the time of its private occupation can be gleaned from sale particulars probably dating from the 1920's. They describe the house as "of considerable charm, standing in some sixteen acres, with an ornamental lake, woodlands, meadows and pleasure-grounds, tennis and croquet lawns, with two gardeners' cottages, loose boxes, cow stalls, greenhouses and the mansion itself comprising, on the ground floor, the dining room, kitchen, servants' hall and butlers' pantry,

on the first floor the drawing room, four principal bedrooms, with two dressing rooms and on the second floor four servants' bedrooms and good, dry attics". What more could the Machell and Remington families, who lived in these delightful surroundings for over 150 years, have asked for at Aynsome in Cartmel?

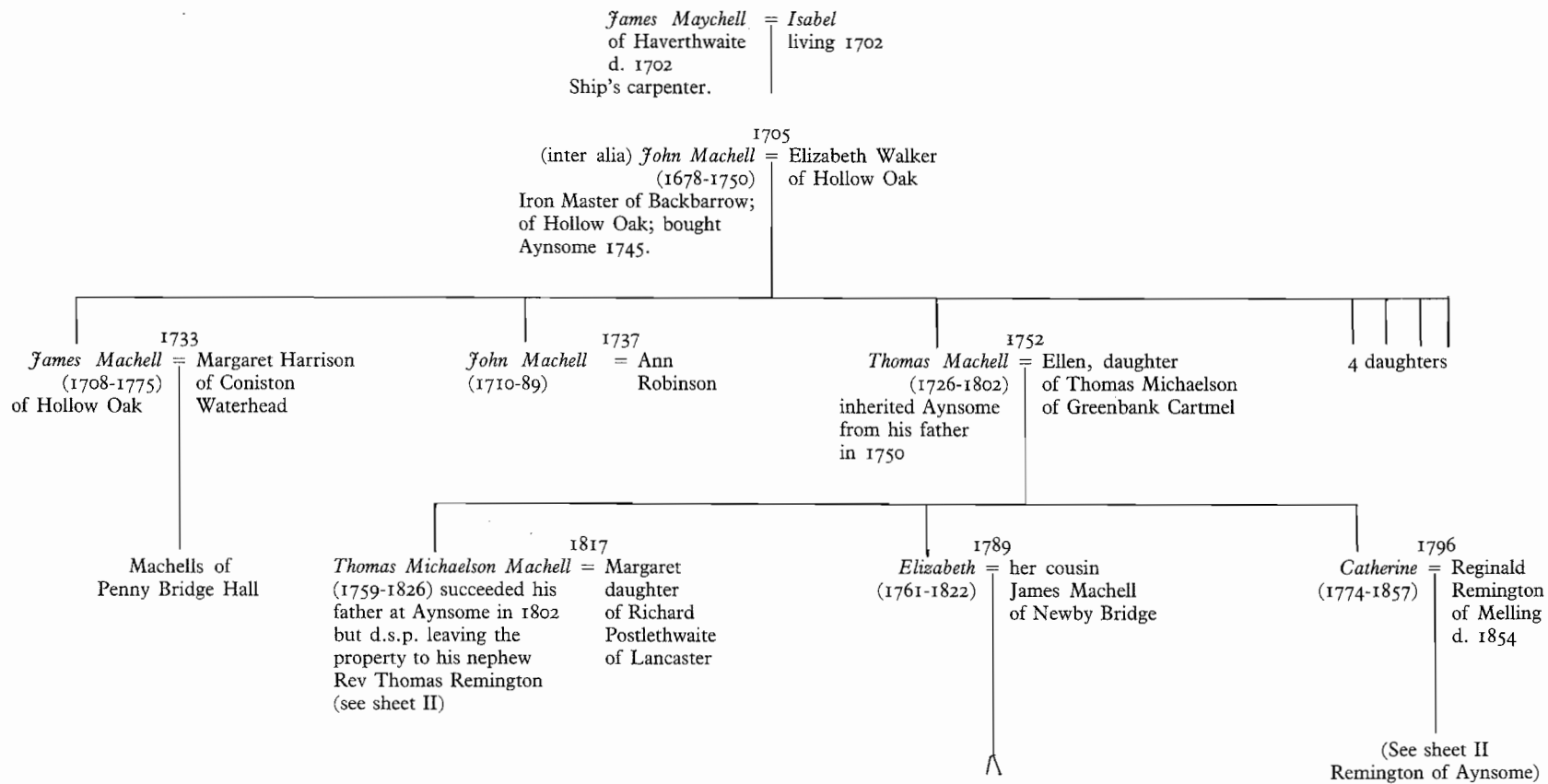
Acknowledgements

The main source material for this article has come from the papers of the late John Stewart Remington of Harpenden, a grandson of Henry Remington of Aynsome and author of *A Peep into the Past* (Titus Wilson & Son, 1935) and the notes kindly lent to me by my friend C. Roy Hudleston F.S.A., whose unfailing knowledge and help I wish to record. I also wish to thank Mrs Lorna Machell of Penny Bridge Hall and Mr Geoffrey Bibby of Denmark for their help.

Notes and References

- ¹ R. S. Boumphrey, C. R. Hudleston and J. Hughes, *An Armorial for Westmorland and Lonsdale*, CW Extra Series xxi (1975), 200.
- ² E.g. James Maytchell of Cartmel 1607 and John of Grange 1631; Wills at Lancashire R.O., Preston.
- ³ Lancs R.O. ref WRWF 1702.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ J. Stockdale, *Annals of Cartmel* (1872), 512.
- ⁶ Lancs R.O. WRWF, John Machell, 1753.
- ⁷ Married 8 October 1752 at Cartmel.
- ⁸ According to J. S. Remington's *A Peep into the Past* (Kendal, 1935), 25, she was Miss Margaret Postlethwaite of Broughton-in-Furness "so that by this marriage the Remingtons, Postlethwaites and Lewthwaites of Broadgate became related". This is quite inaccurate as Margaret belonged to a separate Postlethwaite family from Dalton-in-Furness and the Remington-Lewthwaite connection arose through Mrs Agnes Ashburner (nee Cragg of Lowscales, Millom), mother of Mrs Henry Remington, whose sister Eleanor had married William Lewthwaite of Broadgate in 1791.
- ⁹ Will at Lancs R.O. WRWF, Thomas Michaelson Machell, 1826.
- ¹⁰ All this paragraph is from J. S. Remington's family scrapbook in the author's possession.
- ¹¹ A. M. Wakefield, *Cartmel Priory and Sketches of North Lonsdale* (1909).
- ¹² *Ibid.* 57-8.
- ¹³ I have tried in vain to trace its ultimate fate. The Biglands of Bigland Hall do not know.
- ¹⁴ J. S. Remington's family scrapbook in author's possession.
- ¹⁵ *A Peep into the Past*, 30.
- ¹⁶ Author's collection of photographs of Remington family, Aynsome and its demesne.
- ¹⁷ Stockdale, *Annals of Cartmel*, 516, says she died in February 1867 aged "ninety-nine years and six months". She was baptised at Millom as Aggy Cragg, daughter of Thomas Cragg, in 1767.
- ¹⁸ All this paragraph is from J. S. Remington's family scrapbook in author's possession.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ See table in *Cartmel Priory and Armorial for Westmorland and Lonsdale*, 195.

Pedigree of Machel of Aynsome



Pedigree of Remington of Aynsome

