

James Rostron Riley

Riley Family and Preston roots

The Riley family had been cotton manufacturers since at least the beginning of the 19th century when Richard Riley (who died in 1827) had been in partnership with John Paley as Riley and Paley and had built a cotton mill in 1802, one of only 7 mills in the town at that date. Preston's development as a cotton town began when John Horrockes built his first mill in 1792. Successive Horrockses' employees were encouraged to go out and set up their own businesses and Richard Riley (senior) and John Paley who had been foreman mechanic and joiner at the Yard Works were examples of workers who became owners. In 1798 John Horrockes took an 'adventure in commerce' by allowing them to open a machine shop at Spittal Moss Factory and a second one at Canal Mill. Soon they were making all his machinery and set up a foundry and mill in Heatley Street. Horrockses' money enabled them to join William Leighton in a successful cotton-manufactory at Bank Top Mill, Salmon Street, and later a second one in Queen Street. Horrockses remained partners in this company until 1815 (Margaret Burscough(2004)The Horrockses. Cotton Kings Of Preston, Carnegie Publishing, Lancaster)

Richard's son, also Richard (born about 1801) was described in the 1851 census as a cotton manufacturer employing 435 people. His sister Susanna married Richard Rostron at Bury on 8 May 1825 and he married Betsy (or Betty Rostron (sister of Richard Rostron) born 20 March 1794, daughter of John Rostron senior and his wife Alice) on 30 Nov 1825 at St Mary The Virgin, Bury. They had 2 children, James Rostron Riley (born about 1833) and Alice Anne Riley (baptised 17 Dec 1828 at St John's Preston). The family lived at Albyn Bank, Preston (1841 and 1851 census). Betsy died March 28 1848, aged 54 (death notices in Preston Guardian Sat 8 April 1848 and Liverpool Mercury Tues 11 April 1848). Albyn Bank, the Rileys family home in 1841 and 1851 census returns, rented from the Horrockses, was situated south east of the town centre next to Lark Hill, which was the family home of Samuel Horrockes who with his brother John, owned several cotton mills including the largest one in Preston. Their Frenchwood Mill was built in 1795 and close by Lark Hill was built in 1797 for Samuel Horrockes (1766 -1842) who was MP for Preston from 1804 until 1826. Albyn Bank was built at about the same time as Lark Hill but was not purchased by Samuel Horrockes until 1833.



Albyn Bank House, adjoining Lark Hill House. Built *c.* 1800 by Messrs Wren, Corry and German, and purchased from Preston surgeon Edward Tomlinson in 1833 by Samuel Horrocks. Now the St James' Arts Centre of Cardinal Newman College (so named to commemorate the years when it was the Vicarage of St James' Church, Avenham Lane).

From Margaret Burscough (2004). *The Horrockses Cotton Kings of Preston*. Carnegie Publishing, Lancaster p67

Following the death of Samuel Horrocks, his son Samuel with his wife Eliza moved in to Lark Hill. Samuel (junior) was Preston Guild mayor in 1842 and died only 4 years after his father in 1846. His widow, Eliza remained in the house until about 1856 when she bought Merlewood, Windermere Road, Grange-over-Sands and lived there until her death in 1872. Mr Eastham and his family were tenants at Albyn Bank in October 1856 when a family member's death was announced in the Manchester Times. In 1859 Lark Hill, including Albyn Bank was sold by auction to a Roman Catholic Charity and still exists today at the centre of Cardinal Newman College. Probably the Riley family moved to Grange in 1856 when Eliza Horrocks moved there. There had been a very damaging strike in Preston in 1853-4 when all the mill owners closed their mills for several months and locked out their workers who were demanding a pay rise of 10% and this possibly bought about the Riley's decision to leave Preston.

Riley family and Grange-over-Sands

Alice Ann Riley (1828-1899)

James Simpson Young was born in Lennox Town, Stirling in 1818 and married his first wife, Betty Rostron on 10 February 1846 at Bowden, Cheshire. Betty Rostron (1827-1853) was the eldest daughter of Richard Rostron, a merchant trading with and in Brazil, and his wife Susanna Riley (see above). Betty was born in Manchester (birth 24 April 1827; baptism 28 Aug 1827; (at Holcombe), father merchant of Manchester). She died in childbirth on 22 Nov 1853 after giving birth to her and James 5th child, William, leaving James with 5 children to raise – Richard, James, George, John Edward and William. His second wife was Alice Ann Riley (first cousin of his first wife, Alice's parents were brother and sister of Betty Rostron's parents) whom he married on 10 December 1857 at Turton Church, outside Preston. Reverend H R Smith of Grange assisted and Richard Riley (junior), her father was described as 'late of this town' ie Preston (further evidence pointing to the Riley's arriving in Grange-over-Sands in 1856 or 1857). James Simpson Young purchased Abbot Hall at Kents Bank in 1858 and he and Alice lived there until James Simpson Young died in 1879. Alice remained in Kents Bank following his early death at age 60 living at Lyndock Villa(1881 census) and Monklands (1891 census). She died on 27 February 1899 at Monklands aged 70.

James Simpson Young was a very wealthy man having made his money in calico printing (partner in Simpson, Rostron and Co with his cousins from about 1840) and coal mining (partner in Simpson and Young with his cousin Thomas Simpson who was also a partner in Simpson, Rostron and Co) in Oswaldtwistle. On his retirement in 1858 much of his time and wealth was subsequently invested in purchasing land and buildings in Kents Bank and Grange and he was very involved in the development of the area during the 1860s and 1870s. He was church warden at St Paul's Church, Grange 1864 -1866. Allithwaite Church was consecrated in 1865 and he subsequently became very involved with that Church. With Alice he had at least 13 more children

Richard Riley (1801-1865)

In the 1861 census Richard and James were living in Grange in a 'new house above Cart Lane' as described in the census (Underwood Cottage which at that date was on the very edge of Grange, only a short distance from the small number of residences at Cart Lane and Kents Bank) and Richard is described as a landed proprietor and James a cotton agent. Richard Riley was church warden at St Paul's Church, Grange from 1860 -1863. Richard died on 19 May 1865 at Underwood Cottage (death notice in Preston Guardian Saturday 27 May 1865).

James Rostron Riley (1833-1908)

James married Rose Elizabeth Cooper on 22 August 1866 at Staveley in Cartmel Church. Her brother Thomas, incumbent at that time, officiated. From 1888 until 1907 he was incumbent at St Paul's Church Grange.

James and Rose had 3 children. In the census from 1871-1891 they lived at Underwood, Kents Bank Road, Grange-over-Sands. He was described as a landowner and a railway

shareholder in two of the census occupation records.

1. Rose Alice was born in 1868, never married and died in 1947 aged 79.
2. Arthur F. was born in 1870 and died in 1877 aged 7.
3. Caroline Mildred was born in 1872. The 1901 census records that she was a nurse at St Bartholemews Hospital, London. She did not marry and her death was registered in Church Stretton district , Shropshire in 1912 aged 41.

James was church warden at St Paul's Church, Grange for 19 years (from 1866 until 1884) and secretary and treasurer of Grange National School for 30 years. In an obituary (Grange-over-Sands Parish Magazine March 1908) he was described as a founder of Grange School with Cannon Smith, Dr Beardsley, Mr Young and Mr W H Wakefield having taken over from Dr Beardsley who was the first secretary. He and his wife were very involved in the school as Teachers and Superintendents. He was also a Trustee of the Grange Institute. It was also pointed out in his obituary that when his father Richard built Underwood in about 1858 there were no houses between it and Mossop Corner (junction of Kents Bank Road, Pig Lane and Grange Fell Road). Mr W Jackson built Fernhill, adjacent to Underwood, about the same time and the school was built in 1863 between it and Mossop Corner. The location is now called Fernhill Road.

James's wife, Rose Elizabeth, died in 1899, aged 66 at Brentford Middlesex.

The 1901 census shows James and his daughter Rose visiting Grange-over-Sands. They were registered at Summerfield, Kents Bank Road, Grayrigg Terrace. In 1903 and 1905 he was at Oakdene on Rocklands Road (Grange Red Book). A death notice in the Westmorland Gazette dated 1 Feb 1908 records that he died on 29 January at Grange-over-Sands aged 81 years with the funeral being at Grange Church on Saturday 1 February at 2.30pm.

James, Rose and their 3 children are buried in Grange Cemetery on Grange Fell.

Rose Cooper (1833-1899)

Rose Cooper was born in Brantham, Suffolk, the daughter of Thomas Cooper of Braham Hall, Brantham. In the 1841 census she, her brother Thomas and sister Frances were living in Ipswich with Frances and Caroline Smith (Church St, St Clement). Rose and Frances haven't been identified in the 1851 or 1861 census but Thomas was still living with Francis and Ann Smith at Lower Brook Street, St Mary Key, Ipswich in 1851. In 1861 Thomas was curate of Fenton and lodging at High Street, Stoke upon Trent. Thomas John Cooper was perpetual curate at Staveley in Cartmel from 1864 until 1874. He then moved to St Cuthbert's, Carlisle. In 1888 Canon Cooper was appointed to St Paul's Church Grange-over-Sands, succeeding the second incumbent Canon Smith, where he remained until his retirement in 1907.

James Rostron Riley and his contribution to Grange-over-Sands

1865 or 1866 - 1898 Treasurer to Grange School. Listed in 1903 in Grange Red Book as Treasurer.

1866 Trustee of The Institute with William Henry Wakefield. Site acquired from James Simpson Young by Canon Henry Robert Smith, vicar of Grange.

1866 -1884 church warden at St Paul's, Grange-over-Sands.

Pat Rowland July 2013

Underwood in 1929

