14 Benjamin Fish d October 1914

JUDITH FISH
DIED 24TH FEBY 1876,
AGED 73 YEARS

LAWRENCE FISH
DIED 21ST JANY 1877
AGED 77 YEARS

ALSO MARTHA
DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE
DIED THE 17TH AUGUST 1887
AGED 46 YEARS

JUDITH
BORN 29TH MARCH 1861, DIED 18TH SEPT 1863

EDMONSON
BORN 7TH APRIL 1863, DIED 28TH MAY 1867
INTERRED AT ULVERSTON

WALLACE PERCY
BORN 14TH AUGUST 1874, DIED 19TH APRIL 1875

WALTER SCOTT
BORN 14 AUGUST 1874, DIED 29TH APRIL 1875
CHILDREN OF BENJAMIN AND MARY JANE FISH

REUBEN HARTLEY
THEIR SON DIED 2 JUNE 1877, AGED 1 YEAR

FRANK
THEIR SON DIED 19 JULY 1879 AGED 8 HOURS

BENJAMIN FISH
ALDERMAN OF THIS BOROUGH AND MAYOR 1897-1898

BORN 11TH JUNE 1836, DIED 7TH OCTOBER 1914
ALSO MARY JANE, HIS WIFE
BORN 14TH JULY 1836, DIED 15TH JANUARY 1915



Cumbria BMD tells us that Benjamin Fish and Mary Jane Charnley got married at St Mary's, Dalton in 1860. They are listed as having the following 12 children, 6 of whom died in infancy and are listed on the monument:

Judith 1861
Barrow 1864
Benjamin 1866
Richard Charnley 1868
Ada Mary 1869
Lilly 1870
Nancy 1871
Lawrence Charles 1873
Wallace Percy 1874
Walter Scott 1874 (Twins)
Reuben Hartley 1876
Frank 1879

1911 Census records show that he was born in Blackpool and his wife in Fleetwood. Living with them at 19 Infield Park was Sarah Elizabeth Charnley (aged 54), listed as a Housekeeper but probably also a relative of Mrs. Fish. She was born in Penrith. Benjamin Fish identifies himself as a Retired Builder.

A figure of some controversy, as the extracts below show. There was a simple death notice in the *News*, telling us that he lived at Infield Park, but no lengthy account of the funeral. Perhaps he had fallen out with the local press.

Barrow News 10 October 1914: THE LATE MR. B. FISH Another of Barrow's great citizens has passed away in the death of Mr. Benjamin Fish, who played an important part in the town up to a few years ago. He held the mayoralty of the borough in the year 1897-8, and was for many years an alderman of the borough, and before that for still more years a councillor. Mr. Fish was a very shrewd business man, and he had the happy knack of argumentative speaking. He was in every sense a strong member of the Council, and when he took up sides on any question he did so with well considered conviction, and with forceful declamation. I am disclosing no secret when I say he was at once one of the best speakers on public questions, and that he always carefully looked at every feature before taking sides. His speeches were always worth listening to, and the way in which he always hit the nail on the head, and the ponderous way in which he did it won for him many friends. Mr. Fish would never join any clique, preferring to be a man on his own basis, as fearless as he was convincing. He played during his life a great part in the building of property and houses in the town, and always showed a firm and strong business capacity in his work. He has lived to a good ripe age, and the people of Barrow will all join in a feeling and expression of sympathy with all the members of his family in their great bereavement.

Derek Lyon, former Town Clerk, is reported in the Evening Mail of 27 May 2008[1] as saying:
So when Vickers of Sheffield bought the Naval Construction Works and began to benefit from the international re-armament boom in 1896 they wanted a stable workforce not seen since the heyday of the steelworks. To this end they took over the Isle of Walney Estates Company, which had been set up by a syndicate headed by Benjamin Fish.

[1] http://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/millom/Walneys-40-year-wait-to-get-road-bridge-028b5ac2-515f-4310-bf3b-4305cba9063f-ds

Fish was an entrepreneur who came to Barrow to make a killing in housing development and by the 1890s was amongst the local “big boys”. So it is not surprising that he cast his eyes upon Walney and produced in 1899 a glorious scheme for a seaside resort around Earnse Point and workers’ housing to the east.
Whether or not he had any real financial backing is in some doubt, so perhaps he was greatly relieved when Vickers bought the company and announced that they were going to build a Port Sunlight-type estate.

Alternative accounts tell a similar tale: Great plans and ideas were conceived for Earnse Point in the earlier days of 'modern' Walney-Island. Lead by Mr. Benjamin Fish of the Isle of Walney Estates Company had debated on a seaside resort, which they had aptly named 'Walney-on-Sea' and was to include a pier to allow for the provision of a steamship service between Earnse Point, the Isle of Man and North Wales.

The Furness Railway Company were known to be against any form of bridging Walney Channel during the late 1800's and early 1900's as they themselves were the sole owners and operators of the Walney-Island to Barrow-Island steam ferry service, although their statements for disapproval at the time were focused on the navigation of the channel to shipping, hence why to this day there is an opening span in the bridge's centre.
A certain Mr. Benjamin Fish 'as manager' of the Walney Estate Company was in favour of a bridge to Walney, primarily to give the Barrow folk access to Biggar Bank, yet later during 1904 he openly declared his 'disbelief' in the requirement for such..
When the 'Bill' for Walney Bridge was presented to parliament it was still heavily opposed by the Furness Railway Company, inferring that the opening span of 100ft wasn't acceptable at all and therefore insisting that nothing less than 120ft could be accommodated. Although winning their case for a wider span at an extra cost of £12,000, compensation for loss of 'ferry service' revenue and larger dolphins (The timber structures between the opening spans, shipping lane) the construction was approved, the contract was awarded. Sir William Arrol & Co being named as the contract company of choice for its construction.
http://www.walney-island.com/jubilee_bridge_01.htm

(see top of side 1) Painting, oil on canvas, of Mayor Benjamin Fish. He was elected Alderman in 1877 and was Mayor from 1897-1898. Benjamin Fish presented the portrait to the town of Barrow, May 6th 1901. Mayor Ben Fish had proposed creating on Walney a seaside resort on the west of the island and a workers’ estate on the east. After failing to win a building contract for the new houses and being replaced as manager of the Estates Company by Vickers, thereafter Fish became a staunch critic of Vickerstown and the plans for a Walney Bridge. He became, naturally, an unpopular figure on Walney. This painting is mentioned in a Schedule of Property in the Account Books of the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness in 1901.

http://www.dockmuseum.org/info.php?v=0&s=VISUAL%20WORKS&type=browse&t=objects&f=CATEGORY1&d=&page=5