



In Loving Memory of
THE REV. JAMES BARTON BELL,
WHO DIED 7TH MAY 1912, AGED 65 YEARS.
FOR 35 YEARS CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER AT ULVERSTON
“FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH”
ALSO OF **MAGGIE**, WIFE OF THE ABOVE,
WHO DIED JUNE 4TH 1913.

Barrow News Saturday 11 May 1912:

REV. J. BARTON BELL
DEATH AFTER FOUR MONTHS RETIREMENT

It is with the deepest sympathy that we record the death of the Rev. J. Barton Bell, retired Congregational minister, which occurred at his residence, Glenfield, Dalton, on Tuesday, somewhat unexpectedly. Though the deceased gentleman, who was 65 years of age, had been ailing for some time, he had been able to get about; in fact he journeyed to Barrow on Sunday morning, and preached at the Abbey-road Congregational Church. He was also to have occupied the pulpit in the evening, but was not sufficiently well to do so. On the previous Thursday he had contracted a chill, which he was not able to throw off.

On Monday he became seriously ill, and despite devoted nursing, and medical treatment, he passed away at 9.45 a.m. this (*i.e. Tuesday*) morning. A pathetic feature of the occurrence is that the rev. gentleman only retired from active ministerial life four months ago. It was on December 31st last that he preached his farewell sermon at the Ulverston Congregational Church, after a strenuous and faithful ministerial career covering 42 years, 35 of which were spent in the service of the Congregational Church, Soutergate, Ulverston. He leaves a widow, one son, and two daughters, to mourn his loss.

By the death of Rev J. Barton Bell the district has sustained a distinct loss, for in addition to his devoted and fruitful labours as a minister of religion, the deceased gentleman has been a great power in other spheres for the promotion of the well-being of the people as a whole. Notable amongst his numerous activities was the prominence and usefulness of his lengthy connection with the work of education. That work covered a period of 35 years, and it was only on April 1st, that at a representative meeting of local authorities at Ulverston Town Hall, the rev. gentleman was the recipient of a handsome gold watch, on the case of which was the following tribute: *Presented to the Rev. Jas. Barton Bell by members of the late School Board, the education committees, and teachers as a mark of appreciation of his 35 years valued services in the cause of education.*

There follows a long list of his involvement in various educational bodies around Ulverston, and a similarly lengthy description of the several long-serving ministers of the Congregational Church in Ulverston. It then continues:

Mr. Bell was one of the founders of the Mutual Improvement Society, of which he filled the presidency ever since its formation 33 years ago. For 34 years he discharged the secretarial duties for the Furness Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and has acted in a similar capacity for the Religious Tract Society for a period of twelve years. He has been closely identified with the Ulverston Temperance Society, and for many years was chairman of the committee. In connection with the Furness and District Congregational Union the reverend gentleman was president, and for 21 years he served as editor of the Congregational Union Magazine. He was a past president of the Lancaster and Westmorland Federation of Free Churches, and also of the Furness and Cartmel Free Church Council.



The deceased gentleman was a prominent member of the Executive Council of the Liberal Association and took an active part in every Parliamentary election since North Lonsdale was formed as a separate constituency in 1885. The flags were hoisted at half-mast at the Town Hall, Victoria Grammar School, and Liberal Club out of respect for the memory of the deceased.

Barton's brother William Bell published a memoir in Dundee in 1912, the year of Barton's death. (Cumbria Archives BDx937/52) from which much of the next few lines of biography are taken:

James Barton Bell was born on 23 November 1846 at Sunnybrae, Middlebie, Annandale, Dumfries, and baptised on 7 December 1846 son of George Bell and his wife Margaret, née Barton. His parents were originally United Presbyterians. When he was five his father, a hand-loom weaver, died, and his mother worked in the fields and at the spinning wheel to bring up their children. Barton got a post as pupil-teacher in the Lancastrian School, Edinburgh, then prepared for the Ministry. He was ordained in 1870 at Aberfeldy; moved to Belmont Street, Aberdeen in 1873, and took up the post in Ulverston 7 January 1877. He married Maggie Grosset in 1877, the daughter of a paper manufacturer.

The *Glasgow Herald* 30 December 1876 reported: The Rev. James Barton Bell, formerly of Belmont Chapel, Aberdeen, has received and accepted a unanimous invitation to the pastorate of the Congregational Church, Ulverston, Lancashire.

Ancestry tells us:

The **1881 Census** for Ulverston has living at 5 Hoad Terrace James B. Bell (34) Independent Minister, Soutergate Chapel, Ulverston, born Scotland; Maggie Bell (38) born Scotland; Fanny G. Bell (3) born Ulverston; Mary E. Bell (1) born Ulverston, and General Servant Margaret Wilkinson (14) born Urswick.

The **1891 Census** lists the Bell family at 5 Hoad Terrace, Ulverston. James B. Bell (44) Congregational Minister, born Scotland; Maggie Bell (48) born Scotland; Fanny G. Bell (13) Scholar, born Ulverston, Lancs; Mary E. Bell (11) Scholar, born Ulverston; and James B. Bell (5) Scholar, born Ulverston. They have a General Servant (Domestic) Mary Stainton (14) born Urswick, Lancs.

The **1901 Census** has the Bells at 16 Alexander Road, Ulverston. James B. Bell (54) is a Congregational Minister, born Scotland; wife Maggie Bell (58) was also born in Scotland, and the three children were all born in Ulverston. They are Fanny G. Bell (23) Certificated Board School Teacher; Mary E. Bell (21) no occupation recorded; and James B. Bell (15) Apprentice Marine Engineer.

In the **1911 Census** living at 16 Alexander Road, Ulverston were James Barton Bell (64) Congregational Minister, born Parish of Middlebie, Dumfries, Scotland; Maggie Bell (68) born Denny, Stirlingshire; Fanny Georgina Bell (33) Single, Certificated Teacher (Elementary), County Council. born Ulverston, Lancs; Mary Eliza Greenall (31) Married, Daughter, born Ulverston; David Irvine Greenall (3) Grandson, born Ulverston; Katherina May Greenall (6 months) Granddaughter, born Walton, Lancs. Maggie Bell had been married for 34 years, and had three children, all living; Mary Eliza Greenall had been married for eight years and had three children, all still living.

I now leapt down a rabbit-hole trying to find the third child of Mary Eliza Greenall. Where was s/he, and where was Mr. Greenall?

*Mary Eliza Bell had married Joseph Proctor Greenall in Ulverston in Q1 1903. Joseph Proctor Greenall had an interesting life. Born in Lancaster, son of a shoemaker, he became a shoemaker himself. Court records for 1907 show him being tried in Lancaster on 25/26 October for "obtaining goods by credit under false representation and incurring debts obtaining credit by false pretences November 1906 – February 1907." Apparently he was going bankrupt. He was sent to prison for six months. Joseph Greenall's absence from the **1911 Census** is explained by the fact that he sailed from Liverpool to Philadelphia on SS Friesland on 9 November 1910. In 1917 he and Mary Eliza were living in Prince George County, Virginia, USA. His army enlistment card states that he has his own business as a shoemaker at 31 Poythress Street, Hopewell, VA.*

A fourth child, Dorothy Fanny Greenall, was born in Blackstone, Virginia on 26 January 1913. A fifth child, was born in Virginia on 23 October 1917. John Bell Greenall, died in an RAF air crash near Grantham 1 May 1940. He was a wireless operator in a Handley Page Hampden which crashed on return from a bombing raid.

<https://losses.internationalbcc.co.uk/loss/109237/>

The family appear to have returned to the UK in 1919. The American Line ship SS Haverford sailed from Philadelphia, arriving at Liverpool on 12 April 1919, carrying Joseph Greenall (40) Shoe Merchant; Mary E. Greenall

(39) Wife; David Greenall (9); Margaret Greenall (11) Katherine Greenall (7); Dorothy Greenall (5) and Jack Greenall (11 months). They were heading for 11 Derwent Road, Lancaster. So it is Margaret Greenall who is the third child, missing from the **1911 Census**. I have been unable to find the right Margaret Greenall in that Census.

Joseph Greenall in the **1939 Register** is a Flagman (Road) – presumably managing traffic flow at roadworks – in Darlington, County Durham. Joseph, Mary and John Greenall are all buried in Darlington.

The **National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1912** has:

BELL James Barton of Glenfield Dalton in Furness **Lancashire** died 7 May 1912 Probate **Lancaster** 3 June to Maggie Bell widow. Effects £817 15s 9d.

The *Barrow News* 7 June 1913 reported:

SUDDEN DEATH OF DALTON LADY

The death occurred with painful suddenness on Wednesday night of Mrs. Bell, an old lady who resided in Chapel-street, Dalton. She had been ailing for several months, but was apparently fairly well that day. About 10 o'clock, however, her daughter, Miss Fanny Bell, heard the sound of a fall in her mother's bedroom and on going to ascertain the cause found Mrs. Bell in a dying condition. Medical assistance was promptly summoned, but Mrs. Bell expired shortly afterwards. The deceased lady was the widow of the Rev. Barton Bell, formerly pastor of the Congregational Church, Ulverston, but who retired from the ministry about twelve months ago and came to reside in Dalton, but died within a week or two of his arrival. The news of Mrs. Bell's sudden demise came as a shock to the neighbourhood, as she was well known, and only the previous day he had been seen sitting at the window of her house, and apparently interested in a furniture sale taking place in the vicinity.

The **National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1913** has:

BELL Maggie of Glenfield Dalton-in-Furness **Lancashire** widow who died 4 June 1913 Probate **Lancaster** 30 August to Fanny Georgina Bell spinster and James Barton Bell fitter. Effects £999 18s.