

## CHARLES HERBERT BINSTEAD (1862-1941)

Mark Lawley  
email: [m.lawley@virgin.net](mailto:m.lawley@virgin.net)

This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

*A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists* is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

### *Bryological career*

Charles Herbert Binstead joined the Moss Exchange Club at its inception in 1896, becoming President of the British Bryological Society in 1926-8. He added *Cheilothela chloropus* and *Scorpidium turgescens* to the British list, discovered *Rhynchostegium rotundifolium* near Wells, Somerset in 1887, and wrote papers on the mosses of the English Lake District, French Riviera, and Herefordshire.

Binstead's plants are at the Natural History Museum in London, Oxford, and the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club in Hereford. In addition, the National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff has about 800 specimens that he collected between 1885 and 1938.

### *Family background*

The Binsteads lived in Hampshire for many generations, better-off sections of the tribe being of yeoman-class. Edward Binstead (Charles Herbert's great-great grandfather) married Mary Freeland at Portsea in 1755. Their son, also Edward (1758-1801), married Elizabeth Slight at Portsmouth in 1779, and they produced eleven children, the eighth being Cheeseman Henry Binstead (1796-1875), Charles Herbert's grandfather.

Cheeseman's two brothers joined the army, but he enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1810. His early years of service must have been eventful, with the Napoleonic Wars in full swing. After that he participated in the naval blockade of North American ports, then came the Battle of Algiers, action to subdue the African slave-trade, and manoeuvres off the Brazilian coast. Later in his naval career, as a Lieutenant, Binstead supervised the transport of troops to various colonies of the British empire.

In 1841/2 Cheeseman Binstead ceased active naval service, and went on half-pay. This necessitated moving out of barracks in Portsmouth, and may also have prompted a need to supplement his income with alternative employment. In any event, Cheeseman took his family to live in Wakefield, Yorkshire, where he became a railway inspector and

superintendent for the Manchester and Leeds Railway Company. In 1847 this became the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and the following year Binstead was dismissed from his post. However, following considerable public protest at this treatment, he was reappointed as manager and passenger superintendent of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and remained in their employment for the next 21 years, until he retired in 1871 when the company was restructured.

Throughout this period, Binstead remained on half pay with the Royal Navy, so could have been called up if the need arose. In 1870 he was made Rear-Admiral, and also appointed Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire. In 1875 he was promoted to Vice-Admiral, and retired from the navy, aged 78.

Cheeseman Binstead married Emily Fulleck (1805-1855) at Bramshott, Hampshire in 1833. She was the daughter of John Fulleck (1777-1858) of Bramshott. The couple had six children, of whom two died in childhood. Charles Henry Binstead (1835-1871), Charles Herbert's father, was the only surviving son. In 1861 he married Elizabeth Bailey (1838/9-1909), daughter of Thomas Bailey, gentleman of St. Johns, Wakefield. They had two sons, Charles Herbert being the first born, with Ernest Arthur arriving in 1863. Charles Henry trained to become a civil engineer, and went into business as a land and mineral surveyor, initially in Wakefield; later he moved with his family to Grasmere in the Lake District. Thus, the Binstead boys spent their formative years in the Lake District, which probably explains why Charles Herbert frequently revisited the Lakes in later life, and investigated the region's very rich bryoflora.

Ernest Arthur Binstead (1863-1941) became a solicitor, and married Mary Openshaw (1876-1928), daughter of James Alfred Openshaw of Kendal at Hastings in 1915. Mary became a successful novelist and author of articles, writing under her maiden name. Interestingly, Edgar Prichard, a cousin of Augustin Ley (who was Charles Herbert Binstead's predecessor as Herefordshire's foremost bryologist) married an Openshaw girl whose paternal family originated (as did James Alfred Openshaw) from Bury in Lancashire.

### *Biography*

Charles Herbert was intended for the Church, and was a pupil at Fawley Vicarage in Hampshire at the time of the 1881 Census. He was at Oxford from 1881 to 1884, and curate at Aspatria in Cumbria from 1887 to 1890. In that year he married Mary Agnes Browne (c.1863-1951), daughter of the Reverend William Sainsbury Browne (1829-1915) of Somerset. William Browne was a son of Richard Browne (1789/90-1855) of Brixton, Surrey, gent., and Sarah Jane (*née* Sainsbury, ?1789).

Binstead moved to Herefordshire once he had married, and spent the next fifty years serving in the diocese of Hereford, first as curate at Eardisley (1890-1897), then as vicar at Breinton (1897-1906), and rector of Whitbourne (1906-1912) and Mordiford (1915-

1923). Charles and Mary had one child, a daughter, Elsie Marguerite (1894-1980) who married John Pincke Lee (born 1884) in 1921.

Outside bryology, Charles Herbert Binstead was knowledgeable in all branches of field botany, keenly interested in sketching water-colours and growing garden flowers and fruits.