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Cover Illustration:
Datestone at Lawton Fold, Grotton
Mike Buckley

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LAWTON FOLD AND THE LAWTON FAMILY ¹

Stephen Whitehead

Above Grotton Hollow, on north side of Oldham Road, a lane leads from Grotton to the hamlet of Woodbrook; halfway along lies the ancient hamlet of Lawton Fold. A lintel over a door bears the inscription ILA 1677. Today the Fold consists of:- a large two storey house called 'South View', and a farmhouse and adjoining cottages, referred to as 1, 2, 3 & 4 Westview. Two outdoor closets and several outbuildings are now demolished.



Google Earth

Figure 1 Aerial View of Lawton Fold

EARLY HISTORY

The history of the settlement can be traced back to 1580, when James Taylor in his will dated 1st March 1580 granted half a tenement at Grotton to 'his next cozen' John Lawton.² It seems certain that Taylor lived at the adjoining estate of Earnshaw Head as both the Lawtons and Taylors were tenants of the Booths of Dunham Massey and, together with others Saddleworth tenants, purchased the freeholds of their estates from the Booths in 1635. The deed of sale includes 'that Messuage in Grotton and Quick in ye Occupation of John Lawton' also 'that Messuage in Grotton and Quick in ye Occupation of Mary Taylor'.³ Shortly afterwards William Booth granted to the purchasers:-

'Release of all herbage pasture and feeding for cattle growing or renewing or which shall hereafter grow or renew in and upon All [his] parcels of land waste moor or moss lying and being in Quick aforesaid in the said County of York. And also sufficient turbary with free liberty to dig and get turves and liberty to draw rear windrow section and stack the same turves so

¹ The motivation for this study was the donation to Saddleworth Museum of a collection of Lawton Fold deeds and papers dating from 1748 to the present day. They were donated by Mr & Mrs S. Teinert of Woodbrook; Mr Teinert's father having owned a major part of the property from 1967 until his death in 2020, at the age of 99.

² Lancashire Archives (LA), WCW Supra, 1580.

³ Saddleworth Historical Society Archives (SHSA), Enfeoffment, Sir George Booth, William Booth and Peter Clark to John Buckley of Grotton and Robert Winterbottom of Stonebreaks, yeomen, 14 June 1635, H/JH/123.

digged and gotten in and part of the said parcel of lands before mentioned to be burnt spent or used at their mansion or dwellinghouses in Quick aforesaid and not elsewhere with free entry egress and regress and all ways &c. [The purchasers] to have herbage proportionate to their enclosed lands.’⁴

Later deeds and maps can be used to reconstruct the original extent of these two estates.⁵ Figure 2 show the Lawton Fold estate coloured green and Earnshaw Head coloured pink. It is clear they once formed a single larger estate which would have been that held by James Taylor in 1580.

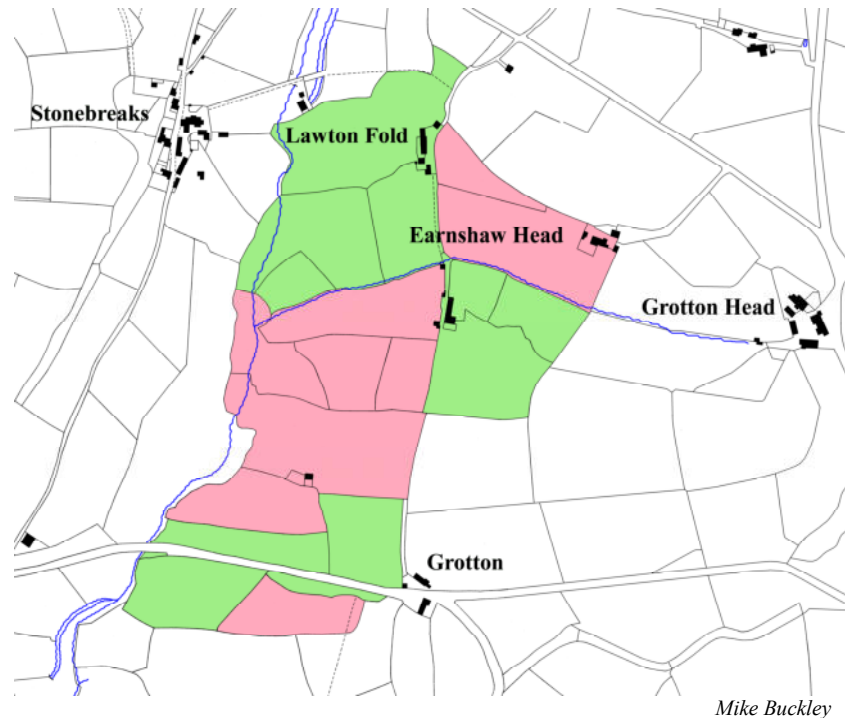


Figure 2 Lawton Fold and Earnshaw Head, c.1600

The estate acquired by John Taylor in 1690 had apparently been augmented with new land taken in from the waste before the sale of 1635. A witness to a court case of 1623 stated that about eleven or twelve years before Mr Bolt, Lady Booth’s officer, had licensed John Lawton, deceased, husband to Anne Lawton, to enclose a parcel of waste in Quickmere and that Anne Lawton was then about to erect a cottage on it; another witness also stated that one Anne Lawton had enclosed a Croft out of the wastes of Quickmoor by the licence of Lady Booth or her officers. This new enclosure must have been the northernmost part of the estate nearest to Woodbrook and which was probably later known as Kiln Croft.⁶

John Lawton was probably already settled on the estate by the time James Taylor left his will as no indication of how the estate was to be divided up was specified, it apparently was understood. He himself may have been of mature years. In 1593 he is mentioned in the will

⁴ SHSA, Release, William Booth, Esq, son and heir apparent of Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey, Bart., to John Buckley, John Winterbottom, John Gartside, Ralph Taylor, Edmund Whitehead, Edmund Halkyard, Mary Taylor, John Lawton, and Robert Winterbottom of Quick, yeomen, 2 September 1635, H/EA/16 f 61.

⁵ The 1822 Township map shows the extent of the Lawton Fold, Brownhill and Stopes estates (M. Buckley et al, Mapping Saddleworth II, SHS, 2010, p. 198). Estate maps of 1778 for Brownhill and 1779 for Grotton enable the original boundaries to be identified (SHSA, H/JH/Brownhill and Mapping II, pp. 108-9)

⁶ The National Archives (TNA), C 3/334/6.

of Thomas Gartside of Denshaw, as his brother-in-law, having probably married Thomas's sister Anne and in December 1596 he is mentioned as one of the executors of Henry Gartside of Denshaw, probably a close relative of Thomas.⁷ However at the time of probate it was recorded that John Lawton was then dead.

Another John Lawton prised (drew up and valued) the inventory of John Gartside a short time later in January 1597. Other references to him were in 1609 when it was noted that 'John Lottone of Grotton' owed money to Edward Heyward.⁸ His wife was also called Anne and he was the John Lawton who had been granted permission by Lady Booth to enclose land in 1611 or 12 and according to the Chancery witnesses was dead by 1623, his widow Anne, surviving him. In 1627, presumably this Anne, then described as wife of John Lawton, senior, of Grotton was injured in an affray with Sybil the wife of their son John Lawton the younger, husbandman, of Grotton which drew blood.⁹ Two John Lawtons signed the Protestation Return of 1641 (males over 18 were asked to take an oath of allegiance 'to live and die for the true Protestant religion etc' those who did not sign were presumed to be Catholic). These were presumably the John Lawton, senior and John Lawton, junior in the deed of 1635 (see below).

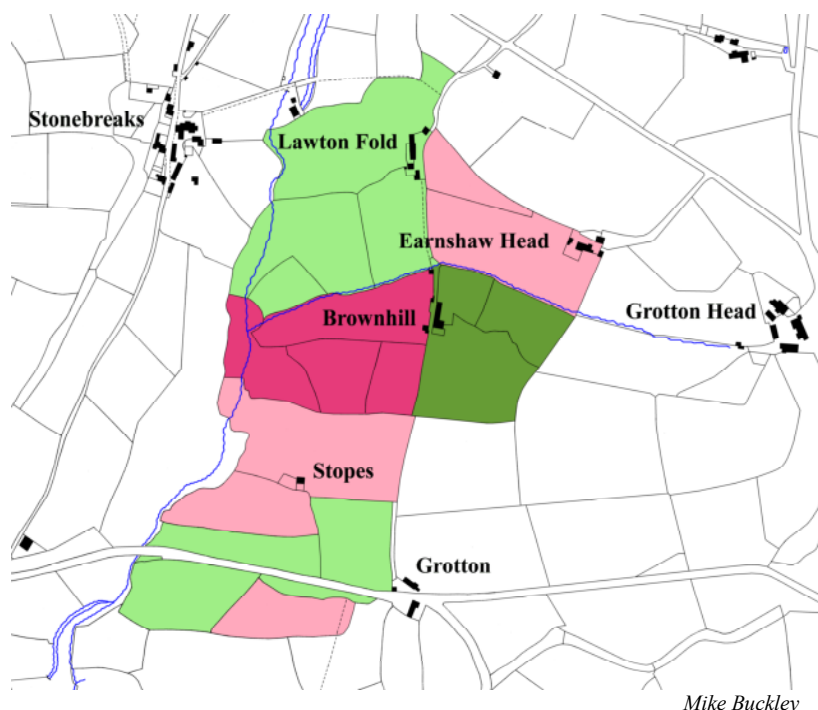


Figure 3 Lawton Fold and Earnshaw Head, c.1700

John Lawton is shown as paying the Hearth tax on one hearth in 1664-74, and was assessed tithes on 1a 10p of Oats in 1669.¹⁰ He is described as of Grotton, yeoman, in an agreement with John Lees of Alt Hill, gent., in 1671 when he agreed to pay costs concerning a right of way that had been in dispute between John Lawton, John Shaw of Grotton and John Lees.¹¹ He died in 1693 and was buried at Saddleworth on 16 January 1693. His will was proved the

⁷ LA, WCW Supra 1593, Act Book, WC 1a, 1596.

⁸ LA, WCW Supra 1596, WCW Supra 1609.

⁹ West Yorks Archives (Kirklees), Almondbury Manor Court Rolls, DD/R/M1, 23 October 1627.

¹⁰ *SHS Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 20-25; Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 11-15; Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 17-21; Vol 33, No. 2, pp. 6-13.

¹¹ West Yorks Archive Service (Leeds), Radcliffe MSS, 262 (119/13).

following February and in it he left is goods to his two sons John and James Lawton and his daughter Susan.¹²

By the beginning of the eighteenth century additional farms had been established at Brownhill and Stopes on the Earnshaw Head estate. See Figure 3. Two Lawton Fold fields, the Upper and Lower Brownhills, marked dark green in Figure 3 were sold in 1635 by John Lawton, senior, and his son John Lawton, junior, to the Shaw family of Uppermill.¹³ These passed to Henry Shaw of Lane in 1656.¹⁴ The Shaws of Lane also acquired the Earnshaw Head fields, coloured dark red in Figure 3, combining them to make up the Brownhill farm.¹⁵ The extent of the original Lawton Fold Farm was approximately 22 acres, but with the loss of the Brownhills, it is recited in later deeds as 17 acres.¹⁶

REV. JAMES LAWTON

Prior to his father's death, his son James had purchased Lawton Fold for £100 in an agreement with his father in 1669. This included the new house where his father continued to live, the great barn and outhouses belonging, the turf houses with one outhouse adjoining, a garden at the barn end, a garden adjoining the Overfield, the backside adjoining the dwelling house, the little fold below the barn, with free liberty to fetch water at the Kilncroft, half of the upper fold with the closes called the Great Meadow, the Great Clough, the Little Clough the Barley Croft, the Green Meadow, and the Marled Earth, plus the common land belonging to John Lawton at Badgers Edge, and half the common land belonging to him at Quick Moor, and elsewhere in Yorkshire.¹⁷ It appears that his father made a similar agreement with his younger son John, conveying to him the Old House, with the backside adjoining, one dye house, one turf coate, half of the upper fold one garden and two closes called the Kilne Croft and the Trailes, and the remainder of the commons. By a lease of 3 December 1687 and presumably a release the following day, John Lawton the younger, of Grotton, yeoman, conveyed this property to his brother James, then described as of Lowside in Oldham, clerk.¹⁸ John Lawton, the younger continued to live at Grotton and was mentioned in his father's will in 1692 as were his son James Lawton and three children. He appears to have rented additional land at Earnshaw Head from Alice Lees, widow of John Lees as early as 1676.¹⁹ He was dead by 1706 when the will of his nephew Rev James Lawton (see below) mentions a little house and premises in Lawton Fold purchased from James Lawton, son of his uncle deceased. The datestone on the present building, JAL 1677, probably relates to John and his wife, the datestone possibly commemorating his rebuilding of the Old House formerly purchased from his father.

¹² LA, WCW Supra, 1693.

¹³ Deed of 28 July 1635, parties included John Lawton, the elder. of Grotton, husbandman and Sibil, his wife, and John Lawton, the younger, his son and Sarah, his wife. Transcript in SHSA, H/JH/Lawton Fold..

¹⁴ Transcript in SHSA, H/JH/Lawton Fold

¹⁵ Deed of 4 March 1656, Giles Shaw of Uppermill, yeoman to Henry Shaw of Lane, yeoman. in SHSA, H/JH/Lawton Fold.

¹⁶ In 1748 the estate was described as by estimation 10 acres: these were almost certainly Lancashire acres, a measure widely used at the time and equivalent to approximately 1.6 statute acres. Less likely was another local measure, the Cheshire acre, which was equivalent to approximately 2.1 statute acres.

¹⁷ Indenture dated 1 May 1669 between John Lawton of Grotton, yeoman and James Lawton of Glodwick in Oldham, his son and heir apparent. Oldham Local Studies and Archives (OLSA), Higson Collection, H. 26 and H.35.

¹⁸ OLSA, Higson Collection, H. 26 and H.35. The release which was required to complete the transaction has not survived casting doubts as to whether the sale was ever completed.

¹⁹ SHSA, An indenture of 10 March 1676 mentions all that messuage and tenement situate at Grotton then in possession of John Lawton the younger, H/JH/Earnshaw Head.

James Lawton had been ordained into the Presbyterian church during the Commonwealth period and at one time had been a minister in Derbyshire, and having been ejected from the living there for non-conformity in the purge of 1662, by 1669 had taken up the post of headmaster of Oldham Grammar School.²⁰ The school had been a hot bed of puritanism since its foundation. His tenure would have required a Bishops certificate to practice. There is no record of such a certificate being issued however until 1691.²¹ He must therefore have held this position for well over twenty years. Among his pupils was James Clegg of Shawfield, Rochdale who later became the Rev James Clegg, D.D., a celebrated Presbyterian Minister. Clegg later recorded in his diary:-

‘About 1669 I was removed to a school at Oldham about four miles from Rochdale. The master was Mr James Lawton. He had been a dissenting minister in Derbyshire, but I knew not whether he was ever ordained there..... The master was melancholy man who fell to love strong drink too much.’²²

The deed of 1669 indicates he was then living at Lowside, Glodwick, presumably in order to be near the school and he was still here in 1687. Due to his absence, Lawton Fold appears to have been tenanted, partly by his younger brother John Lawton, and partly by others.

James seems to have returned to preaching again, in the 1690s, the law having been relaxed in 1687 allowing dissenting chapels to be set up. Whether he had quit his post at Oldham sometime after 1691 is unclear. His subsequent career is recorded in a letter sent for Isaac Harper, then curate of Oldham to the Bishop in June 1693:-

‘Mr Lawton hath been educated in the Presbyterian way, hath had Classical Ordination more than 30 years since, but discontinued Preaching a considerable time, and became licensed Schoolmaster at Oldham. He hath at present time a Congregation at Marple in Stockport Parish where he is very much courted to continue. But this satisfies not unless he may receive Episcopal Orders.’

Harper goes on to say:-

‘He hath conquered all the prejudices of Education and Interest and cleared his Judgement of all mistakes that clouded it before I have had personal acquaintance with him these ten years and have been an instrument to bring it thus far and do really assure you he will answer every character of his testimonials to the full.’

With the support of Harper, and other influential clerics, including the Vicar of Rochdale and the Rector of Ashton, all testifying him to be ‘a man of Orthodox and Loyall principles and of sober life and conversation’, he was ordained deacon in 1693 and priest the following year and appointed by the Vicar of Rochdale to the curacy of Milnrow.²³ Very poorly paid this was clearly an interim measure and within two years he had secured a better living at Newton Chapel in Manchester where he remained until his death in 1702. He was buried at Oldham where his gravestone recorded:

‘The body of James Lawton
of Newton in the Parish of
Manchester, Clerk, was Buried
here the 4th day of Sept.
Anno Dom 1702.
Also the body of Sarah, the
wife of James Lawton, Clerk,
was Buried here the 7th Day
of Nov. 1685.’²⁴

²⁰ H. Bateson & H.B. Shaw, *A Brief History of the Oldham Grammar School and the Hulme Grammar School, Oldham, 1611-1961*, pp. 23-25.

²¹ H. Bateson & H.B. Shaw, *ibid.*

²² H. Bateson & H.B. Shaw, *ibid.*; H. Bateson, *A Centenary History of Oldham*, (Oldham County Borough Council, 1949). p. 45.

²³ Chetham’s Library, Raines MSS, Vol. 37A, pp 320-322.

²⁴ OLSA, Transcript from Higson Collection, H.26, p. 120.

James Lawton married three times. His first marriage was at Milnrow in 1661 to Grace Butterworth of Milnrow, the daughter of John Butterworth of Low House, near Milnrow, gent.²⁵ He received a legacy of £5 in the will of his brother in law Ralph Butterworth of Low House dated 11 January 1667 where he was described as Mr James Lawton of Glodwick near Oldham.²⁶ This and the baptism of his daughter, Theodosia, at Oldham in June 1667 are evidence that he was already headmaster by this date. The death of his first wife is not recorded, the Oldham registers being very fragmentary in the 1670s. His second marriage was to Sarah, whose death was recorded on the gravestone in November 1685. She may have been Sarah Greave who married a James Lawton at Manchester on 27th March 1676. The Oldham registers record that Sarah, wife of James Lawton of Lowside, was buried at Oldham on the 7th November 1685. A third wife Anne is mentioned in his will of 1698. She was Anne Radcliffe of Rochdale Parish who married James Lawton a year after the death of his second wife Sarah on 2nd November 1686. His widow, described as Anne Lawton, of Newton remarried to 'John Wylde, clerk', on 28th October 1703 at Oldham. Described as James Lawton of Newton in the Parish of Manchester, clerk, his will was proved 4 October 1702 and in the will John Wild, parish clerk of Oldham, was appointed a trustee.

It seems clear from the above that the datestone JAL 1677 could not refer to James Lawton as his marriage to Anne Radcliffe was after the death of his wife Sarah in 1685.

During his lifetime James Lawton had acquired considerable wealth in the form of property. In his will he left the reversion of his estate at Lawton Fold to his eldest son James, the reversion of land near Counthill to his son Phineas and lands at Fullwood near Sholver in Oldham to his son Joseph. The rents of Lawton Fold and Counthill were initially to be used to pay an annual sum to his wife Anne and a child's portion of £60 to his daughter Grace, then newly married to John Sydall.²⁷ He also made small payments to his daughter Theodosia²⁸ wife of John Buckley and their three children. The source of his wealth is unclear as it seems unlikely he would have been able to purchase land on a schoolmaster's or poor curate's salary. It seems most likely that they had been acquired via one of his marriages.

THE NEXT GENERATION

If James Lawton regretted his long adherence to non-conformity and late in life 'cleared his Judgement of all mistakes that clouded it before,' this was certainly not the case with his children, two of whom became dissenting ministers. We can only imagine the arguments that must have taken place within the family when the father made the decision to embrace Anglicanism.

His eldest son James became a dissenting cleric before his father's death, entering Rev Richard Frankland's academy at Rathmell in 1698, and receiving ordination at Warrington on 16th June 1702.²⁹ He is said to have succeeded Robert Constantine, the ejected presbyterian Curate of Oldham, as a minister at Greenacres Chapel; preaching there between 1695 and 1699.³⁰ He later ministered at Liverpool and it was written of him:

²⁵ 'Mr James Lawton. m. Grace Butterworth at Millrow, 23 April 1661'. Rochdale Registers, Vol 4, p. 144; Raines incorrectly states he married Jennet, dau. of John Butterworth of Low House, near Milnrow, Gent. by his wife Jane, dau. of James Scolefield of Goose-lane, near Rochdale. Gent., although Grace's name is wrong her parentage is probably correct, as evidenced by the will of her brother-in-law, Ralph Butterworth, Raines MSS, *op. cit.*

²⁶ LA, WCW Supra, 1668.

²⁷ John Siddall and Grace Lawton were married at Newton, Manchester, by Banns, 12 February 1699.

²⁸ Theodosia, dau. of James Lawton, Glodwick, baptised at Oldham, 17 June 1667.

²⁹ B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, Vol. 6, (1893), p.118.

³⁰ Rev S. H. Stowell (ed.), *'Greenacres' Being a Brief History of Greenacres Chapel, Oldham*, (1922), p. 14.

‘[He] was a worthy follower of Robert Constantine. He emulated his vigour and absorbed his enthusiasm. After a short period [at Greenacres] he moved to Liverpool, and he there founded and became first minister of what is now widely known as Hope St. Church. He was the first of a line of remarkable men who have ministered to that Church.’³¹

He married at Childwall to Alice Mercer in April 1705.³² and his daughter, Sarah, was born 18th April 1706. He died on the 7th May 1706 and was buried at Toxteth Park Chapel on the 10th May 1706.³³

In his will dated 3rd April 1706, he bequeathed the estate at Quick called Grotton (charged with £4 yearly in 1698 to Anne now wife of John Wilde and late widow of his father), to be divided, half to his wife Alice and the other half to his daughter Sarah; after the death of both Anne and Alice the whole to devolve to Sarah. He had also purchased a little house and tenement from James Lawton, the younger of Grotton, the son of John Lawton, his uncle, deceased, which would pass to Sarah after the death of himself and his wife Alice. To his brother-in-Law John Syddall, he gave an assignment, securing certain monies which he owed him; to his brother Joseph all his books except those his wife desired; and likewise, such of his apparel as his brother might think fit to wear.

Joseph Lawton, the youngest son, also became a dissenting minister. He was baptised at Oldham on 2nd October 1685, just a month before the death of his mother Sarah Lawton, and it seems probable that he went to live with his elder brother in Liverpool after his father’s death. He was minister of Gateacre Chapel in Liverpool from at least 1715 and died on 1st February 1747 and was buried there.³⁴ His gravestone bears the inscription:

‘Here lies the body of the late Reverend Joseph Lawton,
Who died the First day of February. 1747,
in the 63rd year of his age .
Amongst the virtuous there is unity in things necessary
Let there be Liberty in things Indifferent,
and Charity in all things.’³⁵

The Rev Joseph Lawton of Liverpool made his will in 1746 (he died 1st February 1747). In it he mentioned several names, those of sister-in-law, Alice; sister-in-law, Catherine; nieces Sarah, Anne, Alice, and Catherine, daughters of his late brother Phineas, senior; and nephews Joseph Lawton Syddall,³⁶ John, Phineas, Thomas, and Benjamin, sons of John and Grace Siddall, and Alice their daughter. He also leaves £120 to be equally divided and settled in trustees for the dissenting ministers of Leek, Greenacres, Doblane, Risley, Ormskirk and Gee Cross or Hyde Chapels. It seems from the will that he had no wife and children.

³¹ A. Marcroft, *Historical Account of the Unitarian Chapel, Oldham*, (1913), p. 10.

³² St Nicholas, Liverpool Register: ‘dau. of James Lawton, Lord Street’. Recorded under a list of Dissenters children born in 1705.

³³ Thomas Dickinson, the dissenting minister of Northowram, recorded deaths of notable non-conformists as well as those in his congregation. Of James Lawton he wrote: ‘Mr James Lawton, Minister at Liverpool, died May 7, 1706, buried May 10 1706. A young man had preached about 5 years and was married May 10 1705’, J. Horsfall Turner (ed), *The nonconformist register, of baptisms, marriages, and deaths: 1644-1702, 1702-1752, generally known as the Northowram or Coley register*, (Brighouse, 1881), p. 239. It was also written of him: ‘Mr Lawton a minister in Liverpool died on Monday last, May 6, after a long weakness. He was buried at Toxteth Park Chapel, last Friday, May 10 and on the 13th Mr [Charles] Owen was at Liverpool preaching his funeral service’, J.B. William, *Memoirs of Rev M. Henry*, p. 263.

³⁴ A. Marcroft, *op. cit*; Rev Joseph Lawton was witness to a deed of Settlement concerning Gateacre Chapel, 30 July 1715, B. Nightingale, *op. cit*, p. 192.

³⁵ OLSA, Higson Collection, H. 26, p. 126.

³⁶ Rev Joseph Lawton Siddall, baptised at Gateacre 20 January 1743, pastor of Chorley and Platt, B. Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, Vol. 6, p. 192.

The third son Phineas Lawton had settled in Alton, Staffordshire by 1708 when a daughter, Sarah was baptised there. Other children followed: Joseph in 1710, Ann in 1713 and Alice in 1715. A son, also called Phineas, was baptised in 1719. Phineas, senior, was buried on 23rd January 1739.³⁷ His wife Catherine was living in 1746 when she was mentioned as sister-in-law in Joseph Lawton's will. Phineas, junior, was a cordwainer, who was also resident in Alton.³⁸ He married Jane Grundy at Alton on 30th September 1742 and was buried there on 23 March 1806.

THE SALE OF LAWTON FOLD TO ST JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHAPEL

Queen Anne's Bounty was a scheme established in 1704 to augment the incomes of the poorer clergy of the Church of England. The bounty money was to be used to increase the income of livings yielding less than £80 a year. It was not paid directly to incumbents, but instead used to purchase land (generally worth £200) the income from which augmented the living.

In the early 1740s land was given to build a new Chapel at Hey in Lees. The consecration deed explaining the need:

'For the ease and convenience of the inhabitants of the hamlet of Lees and other neighbouring inhabitants of the Chapelries of Saddleworth and Oldham, who by reason of the distance of their several habitations from their several chapels or parish churches, cannot, especially in the winter time, without great inconvenience, repair to the same to Divine Service.'

The building of the chapel was funded by public subscription but the provision of funds to pay the stipend of a curate remained to be addressed. James Hopwood, innkeeper, of Bent Brow in Oldham provided £200 as half the endowment and a grant from the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty made up the £400 required to purchase Lawton Fold, the rents from which would fund the newly appointed curate, Rev Richard Hopwood, M.A., the son of Mr Hopwood, and his successors. The chapel was consecrated in 1744 and the curacy of Rev Hopwood was initially of a missionary character before the living could be properly established.

By this time the ownership of Lawton Fold had passed to Phineas Lawton, the younger, a cordwainer, resident in Alton, but his title to the estate was possibly problematic. After the death of Rev James Lawton in 1702 the land had been left to his eldest son, the Rev James Lawton of Liverpool and he in turn in his will of 1706 had left half to his wife Alice and the other half to his infant daughter Sarah. There was also a complication in that the Rev James, senior's, will had made provision for lifetime support of his widow, Anne who had subsequently re-married. There was also a lifetime interest in part of the estate of another James Lawton, the son of John Lawton, the Rev James Lawton, senior's younger brother. Phineas Lawton, senior's, widow, Catherine, would also have had an interest (see Pedigree B). All the circumstances of what happened after Rev James Lawton, junior's death in 1706 are unknown. It would appear that Sarah, the infant daughter and heiress had died unmarried and the freehold of Lawton Fold, or at least the Sarah's share, had passed to Phineas, senior, as the next brother and heir, and after his death to his son Phineas, junior. The Rev Joseph Lawton would also have had a claim. There may have been some agreement between the two younger brothers, Phineas, senior and Rev Joseph Lawton, after the death of Sarah, that the land at Count Hill left to Phineas, senior, in his father's will should be sold or gifted to the Rev Joseph his younger brother, and the Lawton Fold interest should pass to Phineas. The Count Hill land is certainly mentioned in Rev Joseph's will of 1746.

So, before Phineas could sell the land, irrespective of any informal agreements he might have made with other interested parties, he would have to show in law his unencumbered title to the freehold. A mechanism to do this, popular at the time was a common recovery. This was a fictitious lawsuit that barred the interest of any third party to the land and left the plaintiff

³⁷ Alton Registers - available on Ancestry.com.

³⁸ Sometimes in early references also written Alveton. See Morden's map of Staffordshire, 1695.

with a full title. An indenture dated 20th October 1743 was therefore drawn up to initiate the common recovery, the main parties being Phineas Lawton (junior), described as of Alton, Staffs, cordwainer, and Jane his wife; the other parties, Charles Bill of Farley, Staffordshire, gent., and Joseph Banks of the Inner Temple, London, gent. friendly parties in the fictitious suit.

The process of purchasing Lawton Fold as an endowment for the minister of Hey Chapel was a slow one. James Hopwood secured his gift of £200 to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty by deed of 13th August 1746 and the Governors for their part, in December 1747, granted the remaining £200 from their own funds to purchase the freehold of the estate at Lawton Fold for the benefit of Richard Hopwood the first Curate and his successors. Finally by deed dated 22nd June 1748 Lawton Fold was sold by Phineas Lawton and his wife, to Rev Richard Hopwood and his successors as curates.³⁹ Rev. Richard Hopwood died in 1766 and was followed by the Rev John Beckett who held the curacy until 1810, Rev William Winter until 1837 and Rev G.D. Grundy until 1901. In 1819 the Saddleworth tithes, which had been held by the Archbishop of Canterbury since the time of Henry VIII were put up for sale. The Lawton Fold tithes were purchased by Queen Anne's Bounty leaving the estate tithe free.

Mr Grundy was the last curate to benefit from Lawton Fold rents as in 1847, at the end of the 99 year lease, it was decided to sell Lawton Fold and presumably invest the funds elsewhere. An auction was held on 17th March 1747 at the house of Mr Benjamin Hargreaves, the Grapes Inn, Hey Chapel. The property was thus described:

A very desirable freehold estate called the Lawton Fold Estate, near Spring Head in Saddleworth comprising a dwelling house and farm buildings, three cottages and 17a 1r 37p, or thereabouts including the site of the buildings and the farmyard. The above property belongs to the Chapel of Hey and is offered for sale under the sanction of Queen Anne's Bounty. In addition to its great value as a farm, it possesses many very advantageous building situations, the turnpike road from Oldham to Uppermill running through it upwards of 300 yards. Mr Cooper the tenant will show the premises.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ESTATE 1667-1748

The deeds of 1669, 1687, 1743, and the sale deed to St John's Chapel provide a little information on the development of the estate up to 1748. From the 1669 deed it is apparent that there were already two houses, an old house and a new house and that the estate was being occupied as two separate holdings, the larger comprising the new house, in the occupation of John Lawton, the father, and the smaller, the original sixteenth century house (no doubt a timber building) with just a few fields, in the occupation of John Lawton the son; this apparently being augmented by the rent of part of the adjacent farm, Earnshaw Head. Whether Ann Lawton's intended cottage, mentioned in 1623, was ever built is unclear. It seems more likely it was the kiln which gave its name to one of the fields to the north of the site. By 1698 John Lawton the father had died and the will of Rev James Lawton, senior, indicated the estate was then tenanted and occupied in three holdings; John Lawton, the son, Henry Seddon and Jonathan Shaw. It remained tenanted until the twentieth century. By 1706, the will of Rev James Lawton, the younger, of Liverpool mentions that 'the Little house and tenement adjacent to above premises' presumably that formerly occupied by John Lawton, was then held by his son James Lawton on a lifetime lease. Although absentee landlords, the Lawtons continued to develop the estate. By 1743 it was held by Phineas Lawton, cordwainer, of Alton in Staffordshire and James Lawton's little house and tenement had developed into 'two messuages or dwelling houses, gardens and backsides thereunto belonging in the occupation of James Greenop as tenant' and the greater part of the estate had similarly developed into 'two other messuages with gardens and backsides thereunto belonging in the in occupation of Robert Mares'. Five years later, in 1748, the sale deed to St John's Chapel indicated that it was now a single tenancy of 'five messuages or

³⁹ Saddleworth Museum Archives, MA, M/DX/Sp/Law1.

dwellinghouses, with outhouses, gardens and orchards and 10 acres of land, all in the occupation of Robert Mayres'. Mayres must have been sub-letting most of the dwelling houses as cottages. Little seems to have changed in the 99 years that the property was held by St John's Chapel and it appears to have remained as a single tenancy. At the time of the sale it was described as a dwelling house, farm buildings, three cottages and 17a 1r 37p of land in the tenancy of James Cooper. The 1822 Township map shows the disposition of the fields. This is shown in Figure 3; the field names and their probable position have been added for Lawton Fold and the adjoining estates.

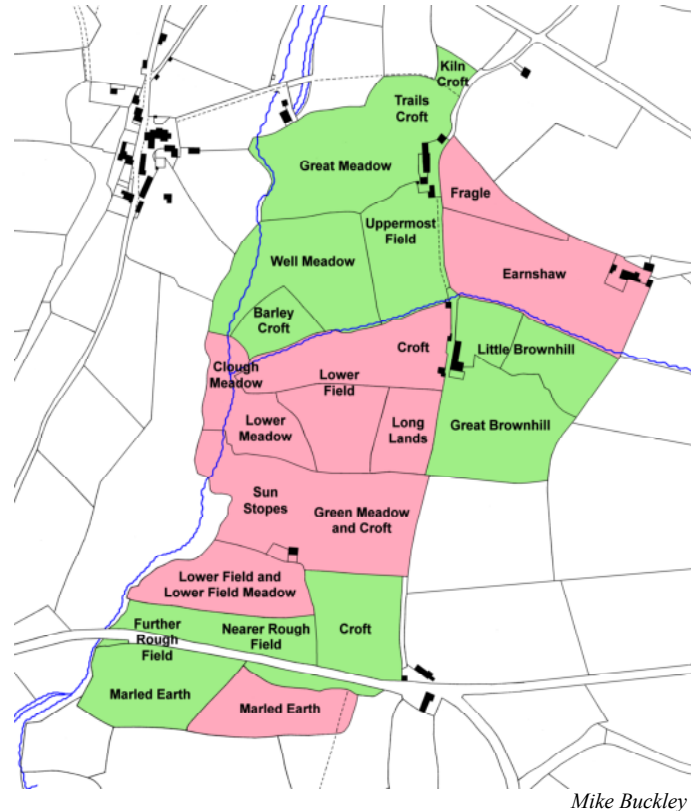


Figure 4. Lawton Fold and adjoining Estates Field Names and their Probable Locations

THE BUCKLEYS OF DYNAS MWADDWY

The result of the 1847 auction was that Lawton Fold was sold for £1,400 to Edmund Buckley. M.P. of Manchester. Edmund Buckley was born at Lydgate in 1780 but, following his father's bankruptcy, the family fell on hard times and left the district. The young Edmund had started work in a factory at 7 shillings a week but later joined Rooth and Co, a well known firm of canal carriers. He rose to become a partner then head of the company, it then being renamed E. Buckley and Co. His business activities grew to include iron, machinery and copperas manufacture as well as the carrier business. He was also the owner of a colliery. He was M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyne 1841-1847. With business success came a desire to re-establish his links with Saddleworth and his Buckley roots and he proceeded to acquire land and estates in Saddleworth that had formerly been owned by the Buckley family of Grotton Hall. He acquired the Grotton Hall estate in 1844 and carried out a major restoration of the old house. His purchase of Lawton Fold was part of this Saddleworth expansion. But although he spent some time at Grotton his main residence was at Ardwick in Manchester where he died in 1866 aged 86. He was buried at St Chad's, Saddleworth in a large vault in the Old Churchyard.

His estate and business passed to his illegitimate son Edmund Peck. In 1856 Edmund Buckley had purchased land in Wales at Dynas Mawddwy. Edmund Peck had taken up

residence here and, following his father's death, built a grand country house Plas y Dynas at a cost of £70,000. In 1862 he changed his name to Edmund Buckley and, following in his father's footsteps, also became MP for Newcastle under Lyne in 1865. This was followed by a baronetcy in 1868, when he became Sir Edmund Buckley, the first baronet. Whereas his father had steadily acquired wealth throughout his life his son proceeded to spend it enjoying the lavish lifestyle of a titled gentlemen, improving the Dynas Mawddwy estate, building a railway to connect the village to the main Cambrian main line and acquiring large tracts of land in Wales.

In 1876 he was declared bankrupt, his son, Edmund, also owing £500,000. To escape his debts, his son left Britain for British Columbia in 1902. When his father died in 1910, he became the second Baronet and returned in 1911 to discharge the bankruptcy by selling more property including Lawton Fold in 1912. He died at Aberhynant Hall in 1919 being the last of the Buckleys, his only son, another Edmund, having died in 1915 during the Gallipoli campaign of the First World War.⁴⁰



SHSA, H/ELE/13/3 p. 452

Figure 5 Edmund Buckley of Ardwick (1780-1867)

The sale of the Buckley estates took place by auction at the Thatched House Hotel, Newmarket Place, Manchester on 23rd July 1912. Lot 3 comprised:

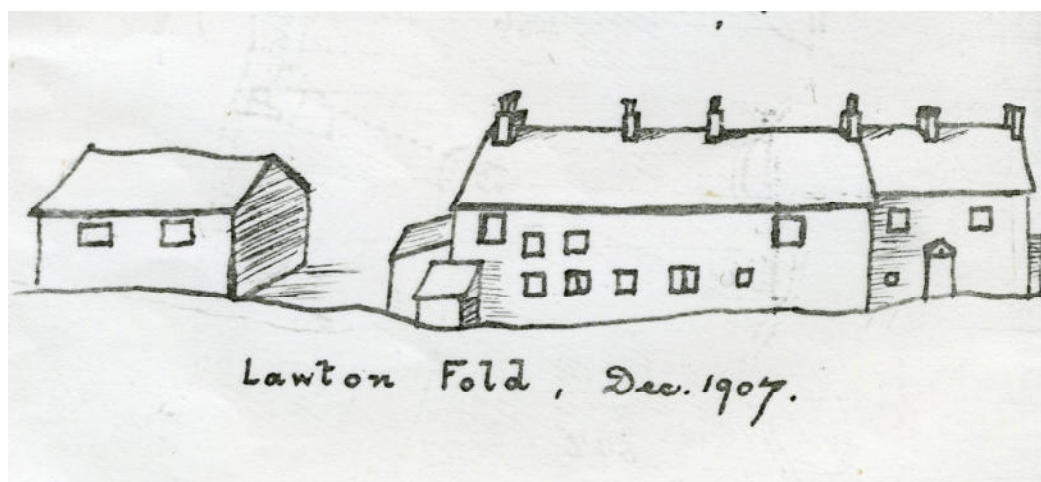
The compact small holding known as Lawton Fold Farm. The farm house built in stone, contains three bedrooms, living room, kitchen, pantry, scullery with outside closet and coal store and wash house. A labourer's cottage adjoins the house and the buildings include barn and small store, detached pigsty, two old cottages used as a fowl house, calf box, stable for two horses, and stores. The area is about 10a 2r 38p. It is let to Mr Kirby on a yearly tenancy at a rent of £21 per annum. Possession may be had at Lady Day 1913.⁴¹

The southern part of the estate, the 7 acres adjoining the turnpike road appears to have been sold earlier by the Buckleys.

⁴⁰ The above account of the Buckley's is taken from several sources including Julian Hunt, *Arriving at Dinas Mawddwy*, (Meirion Mill Ltd, 1973); C.E. Higson, 'The Buckleys of Grottonhead', *Oldham Standard*, 15 February 1930; and F.S. Stancliffe, *John Shaw's, an Account of the Society, 1738-1938*, (Sherrat & Hughes, 1938), p. 250-253.

⁴¹ OLSA, 'Lawton Fold', Higson Collection, H. 26, p. 132.

The auction advertisement paints a bleak picture of the condition of the buildings at the beginning of the twentieth century with the five messuages or dwellinghouses described in 1748 reduced to a farmhouse and a labourer's cottage in 1912, the other housing either derelict or demolished. The census returns of 1841-1911 support this picture. Throughout the Buckley's ownership there had been a succession of short tenancies of both the farm and cottages, with an increasing number of the cottages being described as uninhabited from 1871 onwards. The 1891 census describes the only cottage then occupied as being of two rooms. Living conditions must have been harsh with entire families living in such cramped conditions. Most of the tenants during this period were cotton workers at Radcliffe's and the other mills at Grotton. In 1912 it would seem that the premises were essentially Victorian or early nineteenth century in appearance but much of what remains today appears to be largely a rebuild by Thomas Bardsley, the purchaser in 1912. A worn datestone on the cottages reads 'WEST VIEW RESTORED 1913'. The only remnant of the original fabric today is the datestone and doorway of 1677 now built in the East wall of the farm. John Radcliffe in his book of Saddleworth datestones states that the datestone was 'over the doorway of an unoccupied house (inside) at Lawton Fold near Grotton, owner Sir Edmund Buckley, Bart.'⁴² He was writing in the 1890s and in an article published in the *Oldham Standard* in 1911, Charles Higson wrote 'The farm building itself bears few traces of antiquity but about three years ago certain stonework was removed and a built-up doorway was once more exposed to view. This perhaps implies that the farmhouse itself had been remodelled at this time and the datestone and doorway moved to their present position.'⁴³ Figure 6 is a sketch of the premises by Higson as they appeared in 1907. The proportions of the buildings are much as they are today but the fenestration is much altered as is the position of the seventeenth century datestone and doorway. An agricultural building stood where Southview is today.



OLSA, Higson Collection H.26, p. 134

Figure 6 Drawing of Lawton Fold by Charles Higson, December 1907.

RECENT HISTORY

Following the auction in 1912, Lawton Fold and 10a 2r 38p of land were bought by Thomas Bardsley, a Butcher, of 159 Oldham Road, Grotton, for £380. He held Lawton Fold until 1942, when Thomas, then described as 'of Grotton and Harrington Road, Blackpool', sold 1, 2, 3 and 4 Westview and that messuage or dwelling erected by him and known as Southview, to Walter and Grace Winifred Sykes of Grotton Farm, for £1,400. No 1 Westview was sold

⁴² OLSA, John Radcliffe, 'Doorheads', unpublished notebook, c.1890, Hewkin Collection, D-HEW42a.

⁴³ C.E. Higson, 'The Lawtons of Lawton Fold', *Oldham Standard*, 17 January 1911.

LAWTON FOLD AND THE LAWTON FAMILY

by Grace Winfred Sykes to Eric Stubbs for £300 in 1953, and Southview, by her son Phillip, acting for her, to his brother Hubert Sykes (a Beam Stretcher) in 1955.

Following an inheritance from Grace Winifred Sykes, Phillip Sykes, who then lived in Toronto Canada, donated his half share of 2,3 & 4 Westview to his sister Margaret in 1961, who in the same year sold them to Lawrence Edward Sharples and Irene his wife for £175, with sole use of two privies next to Southview.

In 1967 several conveyances took place, Hubert Sykes sold Southview to Alojzt (Alec) and Mildred Teinert for £950, Margaret Alcorn (née Sykes), sold Alec and Mildred 6.9 acres of land attached to Southview for £450. Margaret also sold 0.75 acres of land attached to no 1 Westview now owned by Hartley Colin Edwards for £45, and 2.7 acres of land attached to 2 3 and 4 Westview to the owners Lawrence Edward Sharples and his wife Irene for £165. A release of easement from H. C. Edwards and L. W. Sharples extinguished the right to use the two privies, and permission was granted by the local authority to extend Southview, but this was not carried out.



Google Earth

Figure 7 East Elevation of Lawton Fold Farmhouse showing Position of Seventeenth Century Doorway and Datestone

The estate is now made up of Southview and 6.9 acres; No 1 Westview and 0.75 acres; and 2, 3 and 4 Westview and 2.7 acres making up the 10.25 acres sold in 1912.

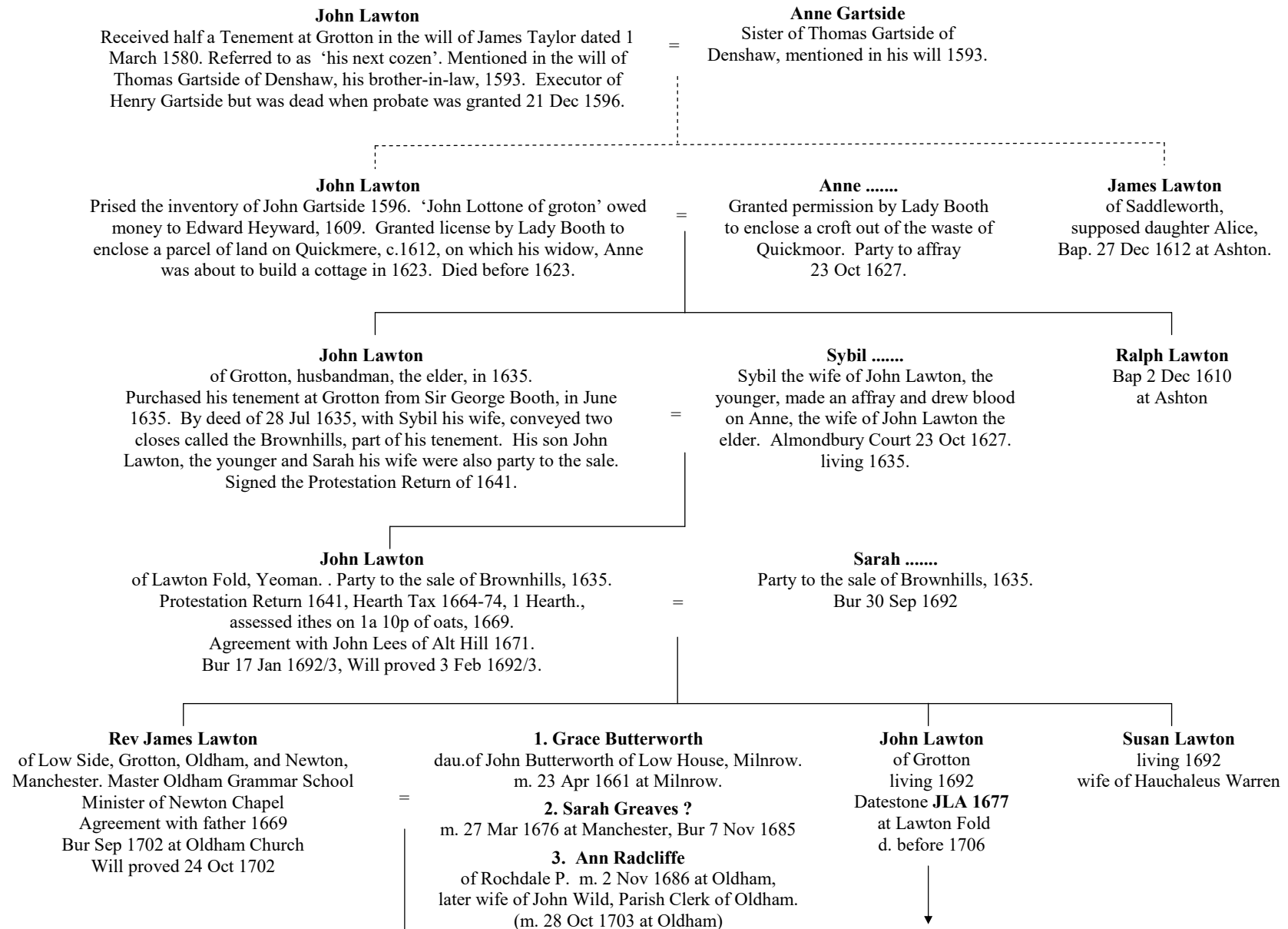
In 1968 mains water was finally connected to Southview, the properties at Westview having been connected in earlier in 1965, however, Hubert Sykes at Southview declined a connection. In 1990 Southview received planning permission to extend the accommodation over the Garage. Mildred Teinert died in October 2015 and Alec, her husband in 2020. Southview was then sold for £431,000. No 1 Westview was sold for £280,000 in 2019.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks are due to Mike Buckley for his major contributions to this study.

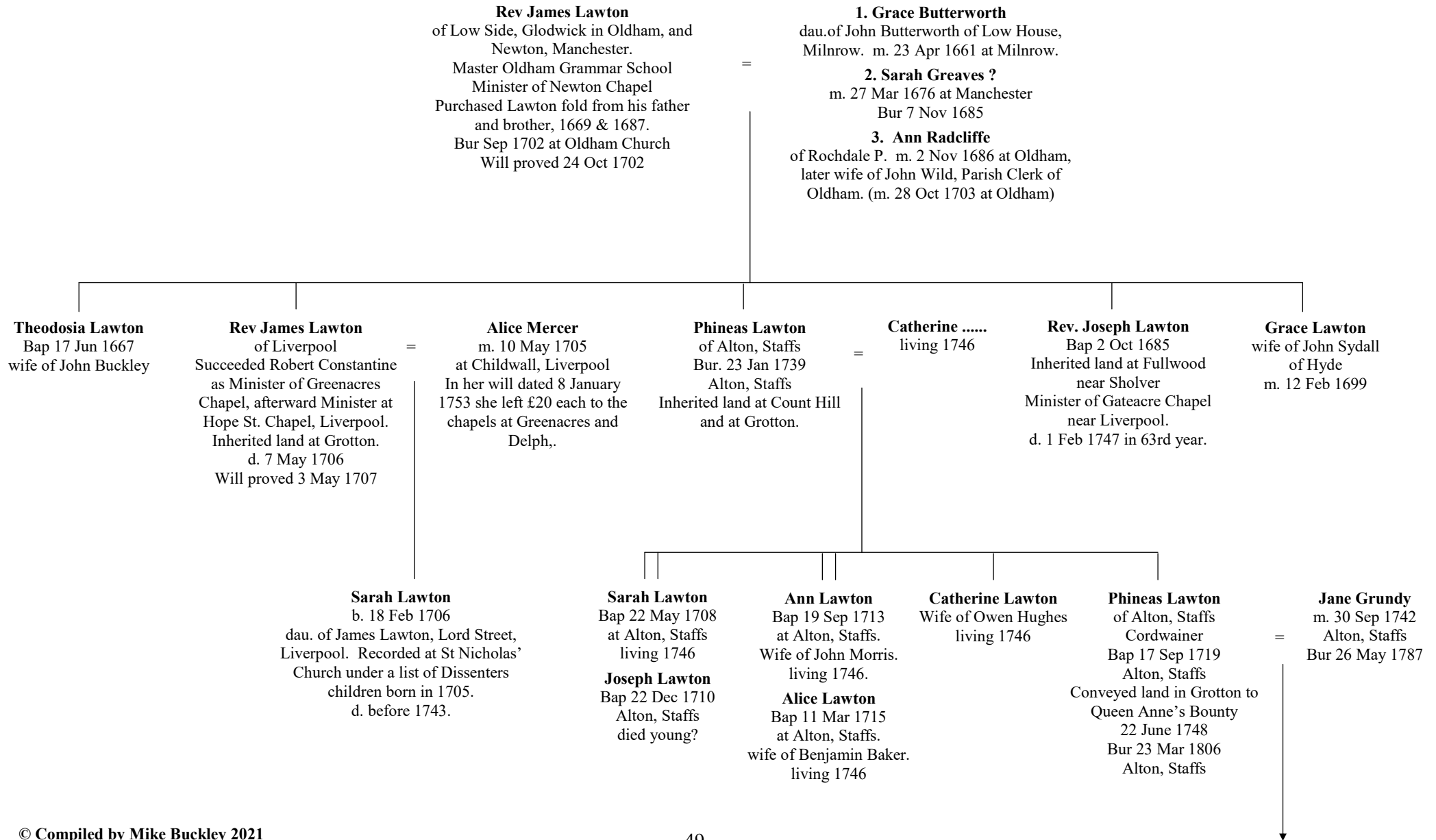
LAWTON FOLD AND THE LAWTON FAMILY

THE LAWTON FAMILY OF LAWTON FOLD, SADDLEWORTH, YORKSHIRE (A)



LAWTON FOLD AND THE LAWTON FAMILY

THE LAWTON FAMILY OF LAWTON FOLD, SADDLEWORTH, YORKSHIRE (B)



THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS - A FAMILY OF PAINTERS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS - PART 2

Phil Wild



SHSA, H/D.CONG/45

Figure 12. Dobcross Congregational Church Choir excursion to Sherwood Forest, 1904. John Whitehead (Back row, 7th from L.); Elizabeth Whitehead, (Front row, 3rd from L.).

Amongst ephemera to be found in the records of Dobcross Congregational Church which span over 100 years was an admission ticket to a Coronation Celebration Dinner in 1902, issued to Mrs William Whitehead (Figure 11).¹ The dinner was part of a co-ordinated celebration overseen by a committee of fourteen local men, including, John Whitehead, Joseph Brierley and the vicar. The invitation's provenance reinforces the nature of the close relationship between the Congregational Church and Elizabeth's family. In fact, for all the long standing and extensive involvement of the Whiteheads in the management of the Sunday School it is noteworthy that Elizabeth's own maternal family were also prominent members of the church itself.

By the time of the Coronation Dinner Elizabeth was in her seventies. A couple of years later she was invited to join a church choir excursion to Sherwood Forest. It is not known if her presence there reflected her choral prowess or whether her many maternal kinsmen, who clearly were regular choir practitioners, had invited her along for social reasons. A photo of

¹ SHSA, DCC Coronation Dinner Admission Ticket H/D.CONG/44.

the excursion reflects her suppleness despite advancing years in her erect, seated posture on the ground. See Figure 12.² She died in Dobcross on 14th December 1908. As the oldest member of Dobcross Congregational church, a special memorial service was held at the chapel on Sunday 20th December. Her obituary observed:

‘She was a native of the district and was brought up at the Dobcross Congregational Church. She attended school when Bridge House was used, and with her husband, the late Mr William Whitehead worked most assiduously for the new school-church. The latter, who was in business as a painter and decorator, spent his evenings doing all sorts of jobs which would effect a saving in the outlay. His brothers interested themselves in like manner and Dobcross Congregationalism owes much indeed to the Whitehead family.’³

The appreciation of the local Congregational community was quite mutual and the gratitude of Whitehead family members towards the school and church, which had helped to educate them and develop their sense of community, is evidenced by specific legacies to help fund their beneficial influence on future generations.

In 1906 John Robert Whitehead (Pedigree F) died at the age of 44. In his will he made a legacy of £50 to Dobcross Congregational Church.⁴ The gesture was later mirrored by Robert Whitehead (Pedigree F) when he bequeathed the beneficial interest in his Dobcross Liberal Club shares to the Trustees of Dobcross Congregational School.⁵

It is noteworthy that the Congregational Church deacons contributed to local education beyond the scope of their own Sunday School. In 1894 a committee was formed in Dobcross to consider the best means to meet the demands of new statutory education regulations. The committee comprised a number of eminent local industrialists, including Ben Hirst and James Hollingworth, as well as the well-respected local physician, Dr Ramsden, and the Vicar of Dobcross, Rev. W Simpson. Also elected however, were the earlier-mentioned Congregationalists, Messrs John Whitehead (of Ash Grove, see Pedigree E), John and Joseph Brierley, Elizabeth Whitehead’s half brother and his son. Commenting on the election of such prominent non-conformists, Mr E.L. Edwards, son of the vicar’s successor and son-in-law, annotated his copy of the circular ‘On the whole it seems likely that the constant fear of an increase in the rates was more powerful than the desire to maintain a school of a definitively religious outlook.’⁶ Over the next four years the committee initiated major extensions to the school on Platt Lane to meet the requirements of the Education Department. Funds totalling £708 13s were raised and amongst the contractors appointed were Henry Ainsworth Whitehead for the plastering, painting and whitewashing work totalling nearly £50 and John Whitehead for plumbing work.⁷

Notwithstanding John Whitehead’s prominence as a non-conformist in the village of Dobcross, matters of denominational affiliation were of secondary relevance to the communal harmony of the district’s patriotic celebrations. It was evidently customary for many years that John Whitehead led the choral singing at Whitsuntide in the village square. A strong tenor he was also founder of the Saddleworth Vocal Society. John Whitehead also served as an Overseer in Saddleworth and had a staunch interest in Liberal politics, serving on the Executive of the Colne Valley Liberal Council as well as being one of the founders of Dobcross Liberal Club. In April 1915 he exercised his prerogative as an elected Congregational Church deacon to conduct the baptism of Marguerita Brierley, School Teacher, aged 28, who was the daughter of his friend and colleague, Joseph Brierley. A few

² SHSA, Dobcross Choir Outing to Sherwood Forest, Group Portrait, DCC, H/D.CONG/45 & 46.

³ Obituary of Elizabeth Whitehead, *Oldham Chronicle*, 19 December 1908 & 26 December 1908.

⁴ SHSA, DCC Church Record Book, H/D.CONG/5.

⁵ Principal Probate Registry, June 1928.

⁶ SHSA, E.L. Edwards Collection, ‘Guardbook of Dobcross’ (c.1910), H/ELE/1/96.

⁷ SHSA, E.L. Edwards, Enlargement of Platt Lane School accounts in ‘Guardbook of Dobcross’ H/ELE/1/106.

years later, in February 1920, on the occasion of his 70th birthday, John Whitehead was presented with a framed portrait, embellished with a commemorative plaque in recognition of his life-long service to Dobcross Congregational Church and Sunday School (Figures 13)⁸. His death a few months later was noted in the church's memorandum Burial Register and the entry is annotated 'Deacon Supt Treasurer'.⁹

Despite his humble upbringing, John Whitehead had earned a good living locally from his trade as a plumber and gas fitter, supplemented by income from his wife's grocery business in the village. John's commitment of his spare time and energy to his community had epitomised the characteristic self-reliance of Saddleworth people, exemplifying the 'spirit of energy and singleness of heart' highlighted by F. Midwood, Esq., a principal benefactor of Dobcross Congregational Church, fifty years earlier. Throughout John Whitehead's life and under his dedicated leadership, Dobcross Congregational Church was manifestly a community committed to education, built (in all senses of the word), managed and maintained by a close network of like-minded, working families and friends who shared common purpose and values.

WHITEHEAD FAMILY TRADING AFTER JOHN WHITEHEAD & SONS

Shortly after the death of his eldest brother, William, in May 1885, Henry Ainsworth Whitehead lost his younger brother, Benjamin, a victim of enteric (typhoid) fever, just a week later.¹⁰ This ostensibly left Henry Ainsworth Whitehead as the sole remaining partner of the firm, John Whitehead & Sons, founded by his father, or at least of its re-named (or reconstituted) format, William Whitehead & Brothers. The available evidence is not unequivocal however. William and Benjamin Whitehead had not only been principals in the firm, they had also been co-executors of their father's will, and it seems that over the previous twelve years they had not completed the disposal of his assets, as a further grant of probate of John Whitehead's personal estate valued at £450 was made to his widow, Mary on 12th February 1886.¹¹ Although no reason or supporting evidence supporting the supplementary application, survives in the records of Wakefield Probate Registry it seems reasonable to speculate that the likely nature of these undistributed assets related to the partnership firm John Whitehead & Sons. The residuary beneficial interest in such assets was shared equally by John Whitehead's surviving children and surviving issue of his deceased children.

Nevertheless, the established Whitehead business prospered beyond 1885, securing plastering work for the new Manchester & County Bank in Delph, announced in November 1884, for which John Whitehead also secured the plumbing work, and in 1888 a payment of £18 18s was made by Holy Trinity Church, Dobcross, to Whitehead Brothers for plastering work in a major refurbishment project commissioned to install 25 new side windows.¹²

The market for plastering and painting services remained buoyant, and the listing under 'Painters and Plumbers' in *Worrall's 1891 Directory* of Oldham suggests that the family business had fragmented further into multiple sole traders. Separately listed were Henry A. Whitehead, John Whitehead, Robert Whitehead and William Whitehead, all of Dobcross, as well as John W. Whitehead, of Greenfield.

In addition, Thomas Whitehead, who had split from the family partnership in 1872, was listed under 'Plasterers' in *Kelly's 1877 and 1881 Directories* and in *Slater's Directories of 1891 and 1895*. In July 1874 he was paid £8 0s 0d for whitewashing, staining and varnishing in the

⁸ SHSA, DCC, Framed Portrait and Plaque, H/D.CONG/49.

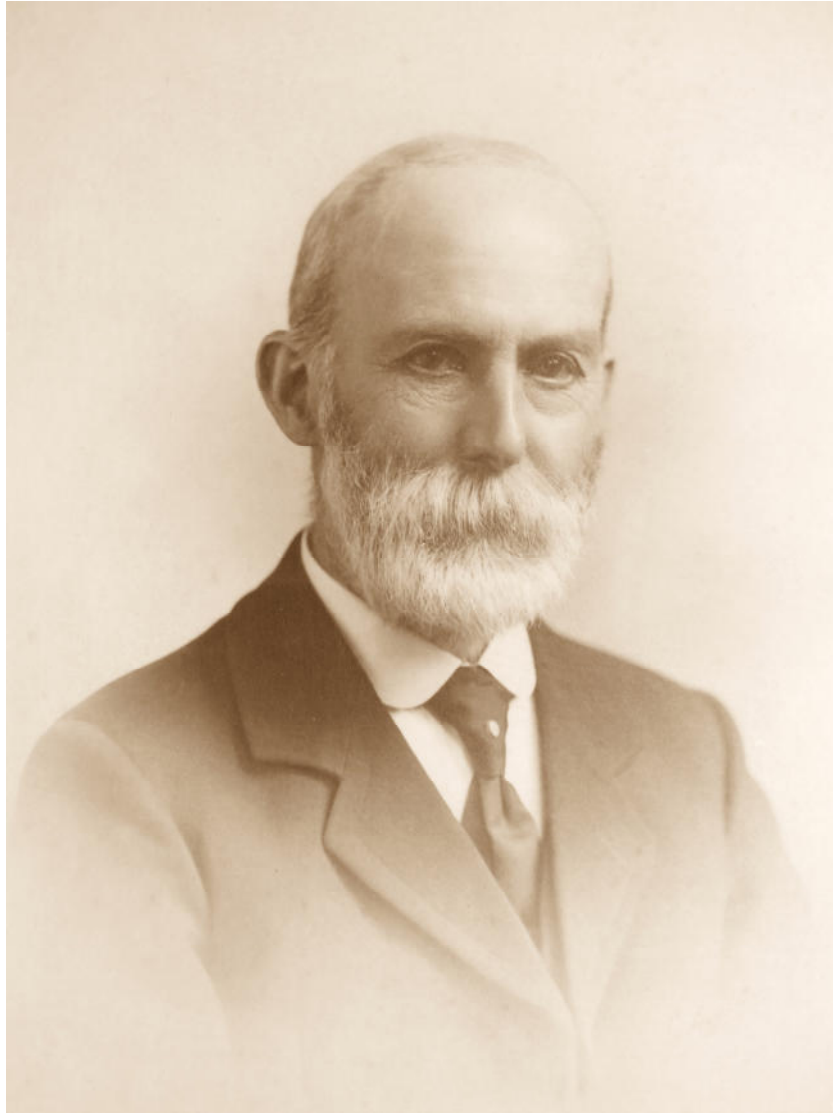
⁹ SHSA, DCC Church Record Book, H/D.CONG/5.

¹⁰ BMD, Saddleworth 9a 189, June 1885.

¹¹ Probate Registry, Wakefield, 12 February 1886. A third grant was made to James Whitehead in December 1897.

¹² *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 22 November 1884; SHSA, 'Guardbook of Dobcross', H/ELE/1/80.

THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS



SHSA, H/D.CONG/49

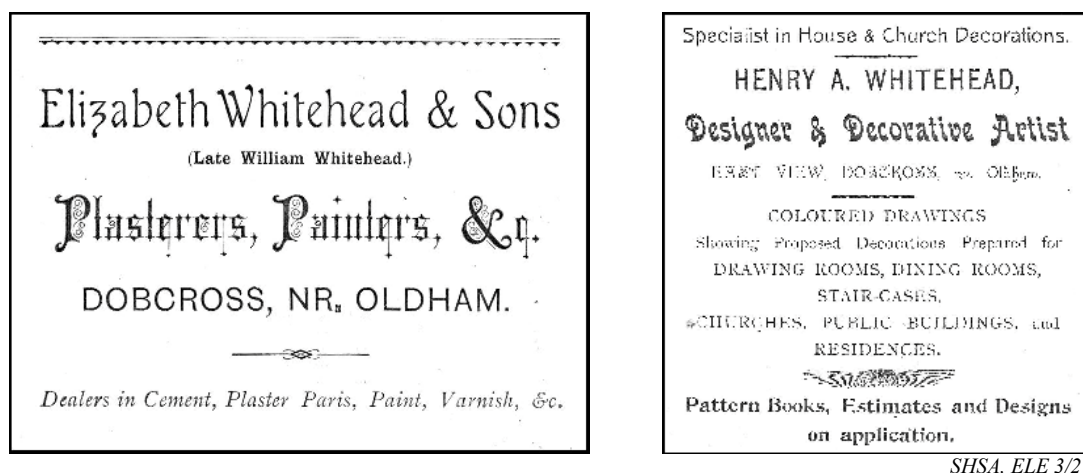


SHSA, H/D.CONG/49

**Figure 13. Portrait of John Whitehead
presented to him on his 70th Birthday, 1st February 1920.**

new infant room at Platt Lane School and a -Raising Bazaar expenditure petition recorded further improvements pending, tendered for by Messrs Whitehead in the sum of £9.¹³ In 1884 Thomas had secured the plastering work for £52 17s 3d at St Thomas' Mission Church and Infant School in Delph.¹⁴ By the turn of the century Thomas and his eldest son John Robert were joined in the business by his younger sons, Marshall, Frank and Tom, yet Thomas Whitehead & Sons was evidently sufficiently prosperous to advertise for an additional 'good steady painter' and a plasterer 'who could cornice'.¹⁵ In the meantime another son Reuben Whitehead had established his own business in Greenfield and was advertising for 'a painter and paperhanger'.¹⁶ See Pedigree G.

It might seem logical to assume that Henry Ainsworth Whitehead consolidated the residual trade and goodwill of John Whitehead & Sons and its successor William Whitehead & Brothers. Henry was indeed a prominent trader, specialising in churches and public buildings. In 1893/4 he secured a major decorating project at Holy Trinity, Dobcross worth £36 and plastering work at Delph Wesleyan Chapel in 1895.¹⁷ In both projects John Whitehead secured plumbing work, and also painting at the Wesleyan Chapel. Evidence from a Trade advertisement reveals, however, that the residual business and trade name of William Whitehead & Brothers was adopted by William's widow, Elizabeth, who was also listed by *Worrall* as a shopkeeper in 1891. By the time of the 1901 census, at the age of 72, Elizabeth's primary source of income was no longer grocery, presumably for reasons of increased competition, and she was identified as a 'Painter and Paper Hanger - own account' employing her son, Arthur and (probably) Herbert (Pedigree F).¹⁸ In all likelihood, thanks to her long and prominent associations with the Congregational Church, Elizabeth had clearly achieved literacy in adulthood and, despite her age and status in a principally patriarchal Victorian era, developed sufficient business acumen and respect in the community to operate,



SHSA, ELE 3/2

Figure 14. Elizabeth Whitehead & Sons and H.A. Whitehead advertisements, Holy Trinity Bazaar catalogues, April 1904 & April 1905.

nominally at least, in competition with her kinsmen. In 1894, when her brother-in-law Henry Ainsworth Whitehead had billed Holy Trinity Church the sum of £36 for decorating work, as

¹³ SHSA, 'Guardbook of Dobcross', H/ELE/1/66.

¹⁴ M. Rodgers & G. Dent, *Heights Church and Friarmere : A Potted History 1768-2018*, (Delph, 2018), p. 15.

¹⁵ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 May 1900 and 15 June 1900.

¹⁶ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 May 1902; see also *Kelly's Trade Directory*, 1922 and 1927.

¹⁷ SHSA, Churchwarden accounts in 'Guardbook of Dobcross', H/ELE/1/98; *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 8 June 1895.

¹⁸ TNA, 1901 census, RG13 4090, 95, p.14.

THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS

noted above, the bill of £16 17s 6d for 'pointing tower' was paid to Elizabeth Whitehead.¹⁹ In 1899 Elizabeth donated 4 shillings to the church fund for improvements to the tower clock, which had been purchased by public subscription in 1844. The primary purpose of the project was to improve safety by installing steel ropes to support the clock weights, but the prestigious decorative element of the refurbishment for 'gilding and painting faces', costing £6 10s, was entrusted to Mrs E. Whitehead, who also contracted to paint the church porch in 1901.²⁰

Like his elder brother William, Henry Ainsworth Whitehead secured trade from local institutions which enabled him to prosper and acquire property in Dobcross. In 1903 he purchased Bridge House, the location of the Congregational School until 1870, and the residence of a number of his kinsmen. Later in 1903 he raised a mortgage from Uppermill Co-operative Society secured on the property, and this had been repaid by 1910.²¹ In 1907 Henry attended an auction of properties owned by Joshua Hirst and acquired further property at Bridge House, including two dwelling houses and a workshop on Ash Grove (probably his home at East View), which he was already occupying as a lessee of Hirst.²² H.A. Whitehead was assessed as the owner of property at Mytholm as well as several residences at Bridge House.²³ He probably also leased premises on Nicker Brow, later owned by his nephew, Harry Whitehead and used as a paint-shop (Figure 15).



SHSA, H/HOW/126

Figure 15 Harry Whitehead, Painter & Plasterer, Hillside Cottage, Nicker Brow, Dobcross c.1925

Henry Ainsworth Whitehead was a prominent backer of Dobcross Band Club and, like Robert, was a member during the period of its integration within the 34th West Riding of

¹⁹ SHSA, E.L. Edwards, Churchwarden accounts in 'Guardbook of Dobcross', H/ELE/1/98.

²⁰ Ibid. H/ELE1/105 and 1/111.

²¹ WRD, 3 625 273; 54 304 133 & 26 307 122.

²² WRD, 23 867 380. See also F.G. Battye, 'The Estates of the Hirst Family of Dobcross', *SHSB*, Vol. 2. No. 4, (1972), p. 55.

²³ Tax Valuation, West Yorkshire, 1910; available on ancestry.co.uk, C243/249 (accessed 27 March 2019)

Yorkshire Rifle Volunteers.²⁴ Both men retained their militia connections and fondness for parades, becoming experienced volunteers in the National Reserve. Henry was one of the first to join the Saddleworth Detachment of its Huddersfield Battalion and was appointed as Sergeant of 1st Company (Diggle and Dobcross). He was present at Wentworth when King George V reviewed the battalion in 1912 and even at the age of 72 Henry Whitehead was 'ever one of the first on parade.'²⁵ When Henry died in 1913, twenty members of the Saddleworth National Reserves, under the command of Captain A.H. Mallalieu and Sergeant J.W. Platt, walked in front of his hearse, in honour of a colleague who had served nineteen years in the West Riding Rifle Volunteers as Band-Sergeant, and was said to have been a Dobcross Band member for over 50 years.²⁶

Also amongst his Company's ranks were his nephews, Thomas Whitehead's son, Thomas Walter Whitehead, Painter, and Benjamin's son-in-law Ephraim May, while William's son Robert Whitehead, of Denshaw, aged 57, was amongst the ranks of the 2nd Company.²⁷ See Pedigrees G, H and F respectively.

Ephraim May was the son of Samuel and Mary May who were licensees of the Nudger Inn, where the Dobcross Band had a practice room for over twenty years. In 1901 Ephraim married Eva Whitehead, who, following her father's prior death, would have benefited directly to some degree from the supplementary distribution of her grandfather, John Whitehead's estate in 1886 and 1897. Ephraim May was also a supporter of Dobcross Band Club, having loaned £40 to the club in 1898.²⁸ An indenture was registered at Wakefield Deeds Registry in May 1907, concerning land on which the present Band Club is established. Memorandum details recorded are insufficient to identify the precise nature of the transaction and the parties, however it seems that Halifax Permanent Benefit Building Society, acting as lessors, conveyed the plot, owned by Ephraim May, probably as part of Platt Lane farm which he had acquired in 1906, to a number of parties, who were presumably acting as Trustees of the Band Club.²⁹ Amongst the signatories were John Whitehead and Joseph Brierley, who, as previously noted, were senior figures in Dobcross Congregational Church, reinforcing its leaders' close community links to the local band and reservist militia.

Henry Ainsworth Whitehead had been joined in partnership by Benjamin's sons Henry Whitehead, known as Harry, and Julius Whitehead (Pedigree H). As noted, in 1898 the firm undertook plastering and painting work in the expansion of Platt Lane School and in 1908 the firm completed plastering, painting and varnishing work for Holy Trinity church in the sum of £83 16s 6d.³⁰ After their uncle's death in 1913 Henry's two nephews continued to trade in the name of H.A. Whitehead, also employing their brother-in-law Frank Platt, until they dissolved their partnership in 1918.³¹ Thereafter Harry Whitehead continued using the trading style of Henry Ainsworth Whitehead, as well as listing a Painting and Plastering business in his own name.³²

²⁴ H. Livings, p. 18. It is not clear why Livings identified H.A. Whitehead as a baker, rather than a painter.

²⁵ Obituary of Henry A. Whitehead, *Oldham Chronicle*, 29 November 1913.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; also *Oldham Chronicle*, 6 December 1913. Henry Whitehead presumably played in Dobcross Amateur Brass Band which dissolved in 1875. As previously noted Dobcross Band participated in Saddleworth Crimea Peace Procession in May 1856.

²⁷ SMA, National Reserves, Huddersfield Battalion: Saddleworth Detachment, 1912; M/GX/KB/52.

²⁸ H. Livings, p. 26.

²⁹ WRD, 23 864 379.

³⁰ SHSA, E.L. Edwards, Holy Trinity Dobcross Churchwarden accounts in 'Guardbook of Dobcross', ELE1/106 & 142.

³¹ *London Gazette* 14 January 1919; see also SHSA, 'Saddleworth Tribunals 1916', ELE/4/4.

³² *Kelly's Trade Directory*, 1922 and 1927.

THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS

Harry Whitehead (Figure 16) would later become a Justice of the Peace and held the record for long service as President of the Co-operative Society, after his re-election by the Uppermill Society for the 49th time in succession in 1943.³³ When Dobcross Band became Champion of Champions at Belle Vue, Manchester in 1935, he was perhaps the Harry Whitehead attributed with having characterised his native village as ‘The land of puff and blow, where childer can blow a double B afore they know their ABC.’³⁴



Oldham Chronicle

Figure 16.
Harry Whitehead. J.P. (1869-1944).
Photograph published in the *Oldham Chronicle*, 16th January 1943, on the occasion of his re-election for the 44th time as President of the Uppermill Co-operative Society.

After the death of their only son in 1892, Robert and Rebecca Whitehead (Pedigree F) moved to Denshaw, where Robert was engaged for a couple of stints as landlord of the Printers Arms between 1894 and 1897 and from 1899 to 1904 (Figure 21).³⁵ By 1908, the year his redoubtable mother Elizabeth died, Robert Whitehead had resumed his trade as a painter, listed in Denshaw in *Kelly's Directory*, and in 1910 he inherited the business and stock-in-



Phil Wild Collection

Figure 17. Unidentified Group outside Printer's Arms, Calf Hey, Denshaw; the licensee, Robert Whitehead, is believed to be centrally seated in the front row; c.1897.

³³ *Oldham Chronicle*, 16 January 1943.

³⁴ The Boarshurst Centre: Saddleworth: www.boarshurstcentre.org.uk/saddleworthdob.html, accessed 4 November 2018.

³⁵ R. Magee, *Saddleworth Pubs and their Licensees c.1674-1998*, (Manchester, 1998), p. 70.

trade of his youngest brother, Arthur.³⁶ In 1920 Robert returned to Dobcross to live in Crib Cottage, which he acquired with capital inherited by his wife, Rebecca from her father, Joseph Woodcock.³⁷ When Robert retired it is likely his younger brother Herbert Whitehead took over as head of the business, listing himself as a painter in Trade Directories dated 1922 and 1927.³⁸ Herbert had evidently been apprenticed to his father, William, for (echoing the critique of William Whitehead's painting skills by Joseph Thornton noted earlier) Ackroyd recalls that Herbert Whitehead was 'known for his graining.'³⁹ Ackroyd also recalled the paint-shop of H. Whiteheads on Chancery Lane (Backside), which may have been used by Herbert Whitehead, given that his cousin Harry Whitehead's workshop has been identified on Nicker Brow (Figure 15).

The rapid development of trade by the family and the evident prosperity it generated is impressive. But the expansion was not sustained into the twentieth century. In addition to John Whitehead, Congregational Church deacon, whose marriage was childless, other Whitehead family members, Henry Ainsworth Whitehead, Herbert Whitehead, Harry Whitehead, JP, Arthur Whitehead, John Robert Whitehead and Reuben Whitehead, all died as adults without issue. In addition, Robert Whitehead died without a male heir.



Figure 18.
John William Whitehead
(1858-1923),
c. 1895.

Evelyn Mee (née Whitehead) Collection

The pattern was broken by Thomas Whitehead, however, who was, principally a plasterer rather than a painter (Pedigree G). Thomas had six sons, who mostly earned a living in the same trade, but they all left the district and their own children developed different careers. Only his grandson Enoch Whitehead, illegitimate son of daughter Syvilla, has been identified as returning to the Saddleworth to continue the trade into subsequent generations.⁴⁰ Other factors contributed, of course, including social migration and the impending Great War. . It is interesting to note that a Mossley and Saddleworth Branch of the National Association of House Painters and Decorators had been formed as a representative trade body and in 1909 it complained to Saddleworth Board of Guardians about the use of casuals or inmates for painting at Saddleworth Workhouse rather than such work being awarded to rate-paying

³⁶ Probate Registry, 11 November 1910.

³⁷ *Kelly's Trade Directory*, 1908. See also 1911 census, TNA, GBC_1911, RG14 26190 0047, and WRD, 135-281-109.

³⁸ *Kelly's Trade Directories*, 1922 and 1927.

³⁹ Memoirs of Frank Ackroyd (1924), *SHSB*, Vol. 29 (1999), No. 2, p. 20.

⁴⁰ Advertisements in Greenfield, *SHSB*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (1997), p. 21.

societies of the district.⁴¹ It is not known whether or how the Whiteheads were represented on this trade organisation.

John William Whitehead (Pedigree F) apprenticed his two sons in the trade in Uppermill, before himself changing career to be an Auctioneer, but both his sons, Fergus and Frank Whitehead emigrated for a new life to Canada where both declared themselves 'Congregationalists' on their respective marriage registrations in Toronto.⁴²

In January 1923, to commemorate the life of John William Whitehead, Dobcross Band organised a procession from the Square in Uppermill to Saddleworth Church where it played to the congregation 'as a mark of respect for one of its founders.'⁴³ The news report of this tribute to a well-respected man also provides corroborative evidence of the important role played by the family in the establishment of Dobcross Band.

The Whiteheads of Saddleworth descended from an indigenous yeoman family which has contributed extensively to its traditions of husbandry, cloth-making and bakestone-mining. In 1824 a junior branch of the family settled in Dobcross for over a century and adapted its skills to suit the changing industrial landscape, becoming a dominant presence in the local plastering and painting trade as well as within a thriving Congregationalist community. Exemplifying Saddleworth traditions of enterprise and self-reliance, when they arrived they were an illiterate family, but successive generations benefited from and collaborated in progressive initiatives which extended access to education for children, the establishment of a local church and school, and contributed in many different ways to the cultivation and perpetuation of local cultural traditions of musicality and pageantry in Saddleworth's brass bands, choirs and Whit parades.

POSTSCRIPT

Reflecting on Whitehead family pedigrees dating back to the sixteenth-century highlights the cyclical recurrence of traditional names for their sons, across many generations. The pattern is evoked in a poignant verse by twentieth-century Saddleworth Dialect poet (and distant cousin, descended from the same Whiteheads of Delph), Harry Buckley Whitehead, whose anthology contains 'Family Names' inspired by his own genealogical research - a fitting tribute to a shared Saddleworth Whitehead ancestry:

Family Names

On parchment old I read their names,
Henry, Robert, John and James;
Family names of a yeoman line,
Bygone names of a breed that's mine;
Hardy men of sterling worth,
Who took their living from the earth;
Who tilled the land and tented hay,
And reared their stock for market day;
A life hard lived with little yield
Their lasting love the croft and field.
Would they say I waste my time,
Writing songs and bits of rhyme;
That I live a life of misspent days,
One of their breed with bookish ways?

Or did they see with the poet's eye,
The may morn break and the changing sky,
And heard the thrush in his upland tree,
And have their dreams come down to me?
I shall never know for they're lying still
Near a moorland church on a windswept hill;
But my heart grows proud as I read the names
Henry, Robert, John and James.

H.B. Whitehead

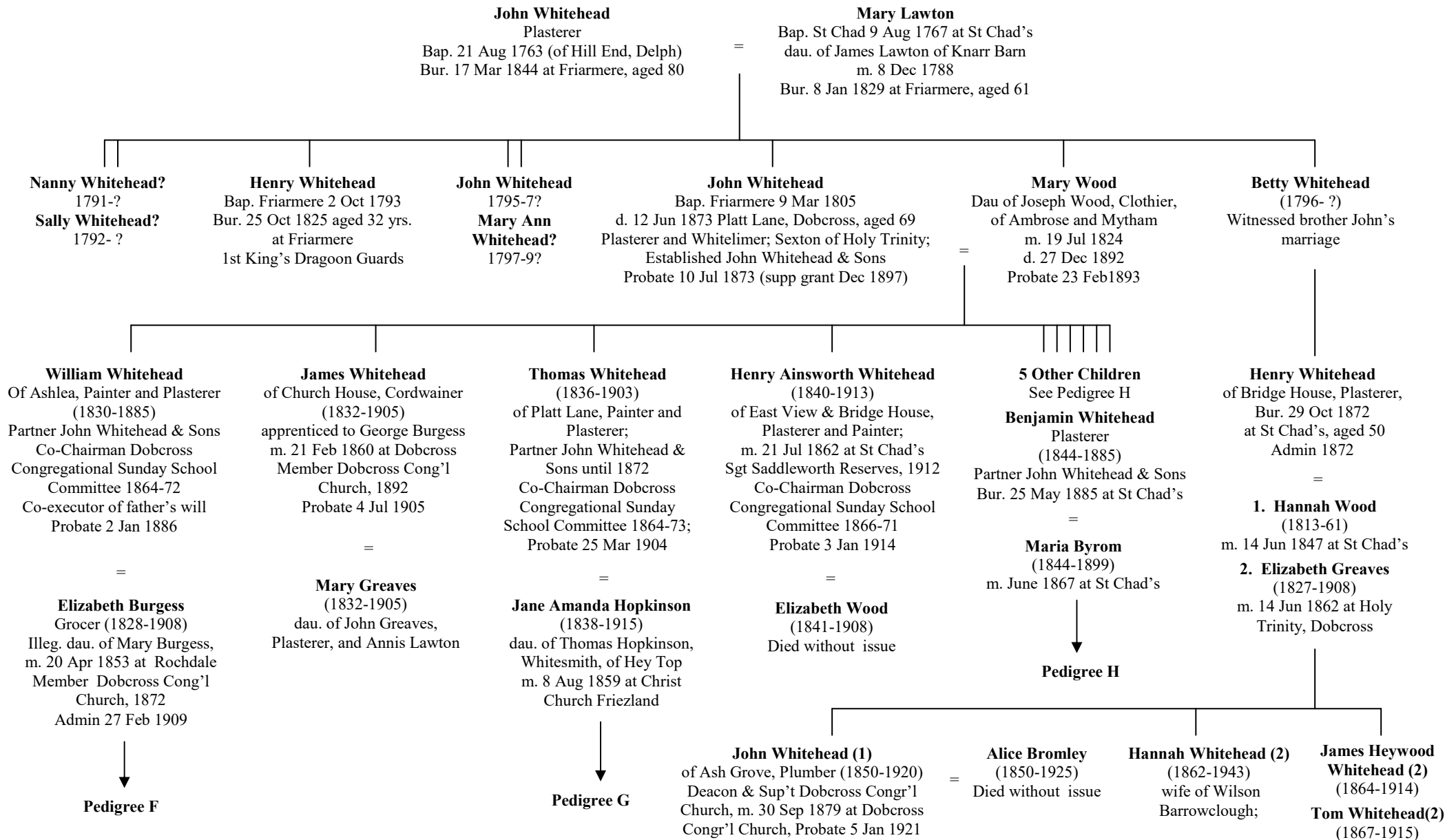
⁴¹ *Mossley & Saddleworth Reporter*, 6 February 1909.

⁴² Marriage Registry, Toronto, Ontario.

⁴³ *Oldham Chronicle*, 31 January 1923.

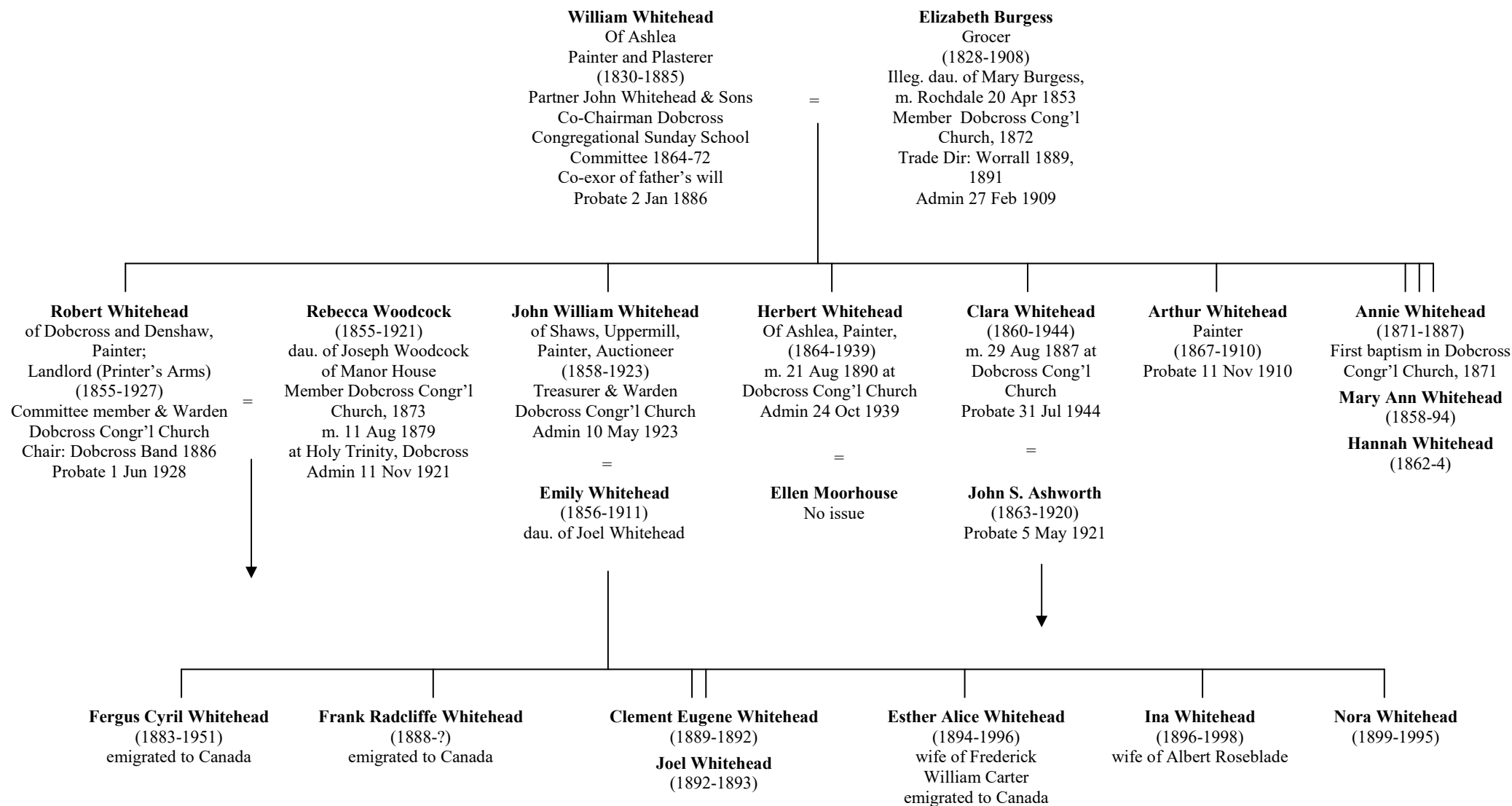
THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS

PEDIGREE E. THE WHITEHEAD FAMILY OF DOBCROSS, YORKSHIRE (A)



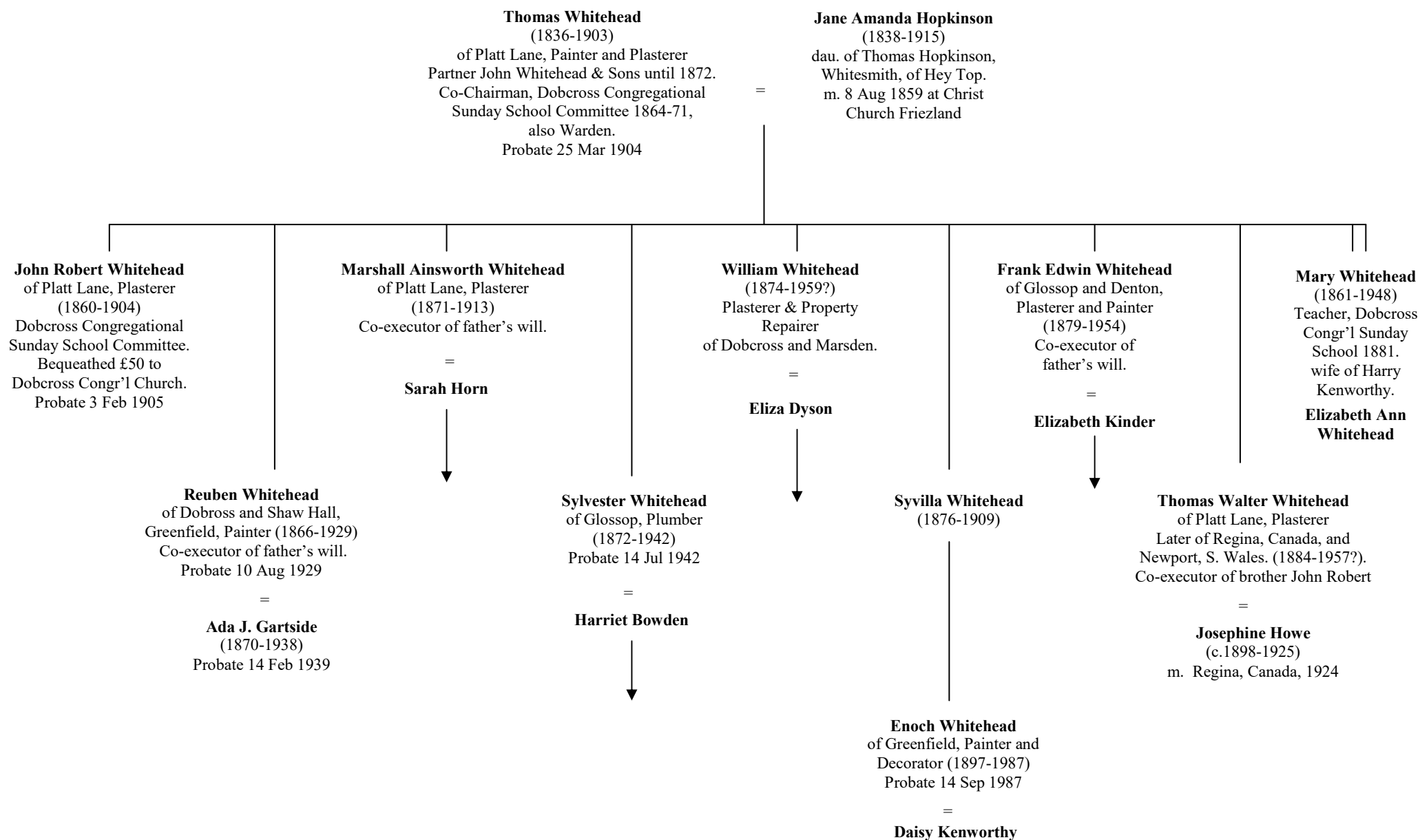
THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS

PEDIGREE F. THE WHITEHEAD FAMILY OF DOBCROSS, YORKSHIRE (B)



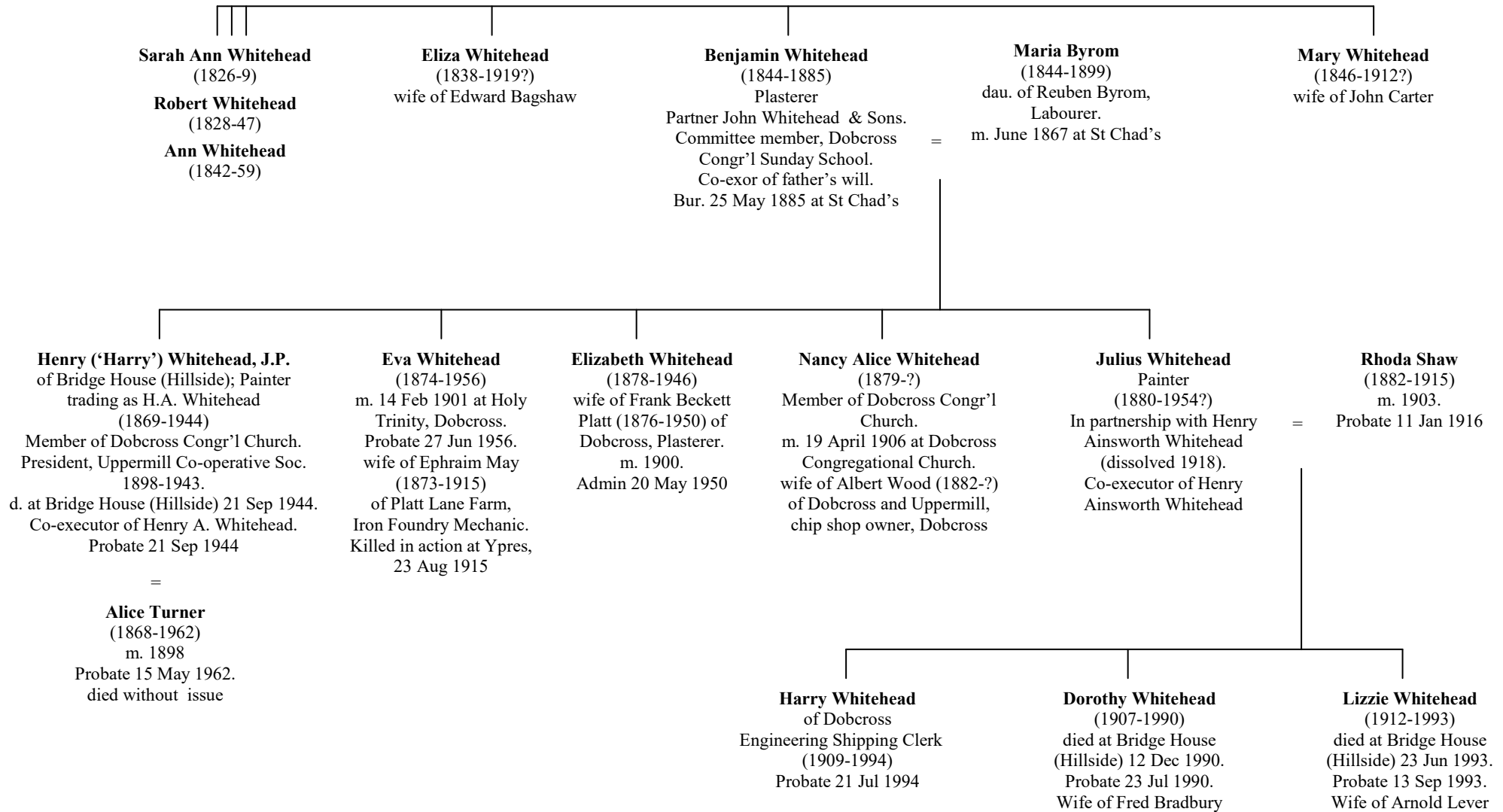
THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS

PEDIGREE G. THE WHITEHEAD FAMILY OF DOBCROSS, YORKSHIRE (C)



THE WHITEHEADS OF DOBCROSS

PEDIGREE H. THE WHITEHEAD FAMILY OF DOBCROSS, YORKSHIRE (D)



OBITUARY

John Alan Widdall (1942 - 2021)



Christine Widdall

John played a major role in the production of the Society's publication Mapping Saddleworth II in 2010 and the high quality of the map reproduction in the book is largely due to his expertise at photography and photo editing. It was not easily achieved and John's liaisons with the printers and his advice and help in reproducing the decayed 1822 Township Map were pivotal in achieving the final much admired result.

John was born in Oldham on 15th March 1942 and passed away on 25th February 2021.

He graduated in Physics from Manchester University and became a Chartered Electronics Engineer, beginning his career at AVRO in Chadderton. In time, he moved to British Aerospace (BAE), Woodford, where he became Head of the Avionics Research Facility.

John was a scientist, a thinker and an inventor and has his name on a number of patents, including international patents for 'Testing the balance of an aeroplane propeller in flight'. His achievements in the aircraft industry were what he was most proud of. Working in the Military Aircraft Division, he performed top secret work during the Falklands' War, then moved to the Civil Aircraft Division, where he and his team designed flight deck avionics systems for the new 'fly by wire' planes. In his work with BAE, John travelled to Europe and the USA to collaborative meetings with Airbus, Boeing, Aérospatiale, Vulcanair and Fokker.

After 32 years with BAE, John took early retirement and spent the last ten years of his career teaching Maths, Physics and IT to Further and Higher Education students at Stockport College. He became a parent governor of Ashton Sixth Form College and served as an Independent Governor, representing Industry, through the College's transition to Independence.

John loved the Lake District, France and French food, classical music, theatre and photography. He was a prominent member of the Oldham Photographic Society for 45 years, where he had been President four times and only retired as Treasurer shortly before his death.

JOHN ALAN WIDDALL (1942-2021)

In February 2021, the Lancashire and Cheshire Photographic Union conferred on him their 'Roll of Honour Life Membership', for outstanding service to the society and the Union - though he was in hospital and couldn't receive it personally, he was very pleased and honoured to become a recipient.

John knew many, if not most, of the paths in Saddleworth, which he walked regularly and was very pleased to have been invited to serve on the Publications Sub-Committee of the Society.

He is survived by his wife Christine and step-children James and Clare.



David Harrison

OBITUARY

Marie-Thérèse Porisse (1926 - 2021)



On the 9th June Saddleworth said goodbye to Thérèse (Terry) Porisse, one of the Society's longest serving members and supporters.

Thérèse was born on 17th May 1926 in La Madeleine, a suburb of Lille, an industrial town in Northern France, into a textile manufacturing family. She was the eldest child of Raphael and Marie-Thérèse Porisse and was followed by her brothers Julien and Robert in 1927 and 1928. Her childhood in France was a happy one with holidays spent with her parents and grandparents in both the North and South of the country. Her love for her native country never diminished and she remained a French citizen throughout her life. But all this changed in 1932 when the family firm purchased a failed woollen company in Mossley, and shortly afterwards two other mills. Her grandfather and father moved to England the following year to help run the new acquisition. At the age of seven, in December 1933, Thérèse, with her father and grandfather arrived at Oaklands in Saddleworth. She vividly remembered the journey from Manchester; in many ways the landscape looked just like the industrial North of France that they had left.

She initially attended a private school at Fernthorpe with her brothers, and later the Hulme Grammar School for Girls where she made lifelong friends. The family initially maintained close links with France with regular visits but this all stopped with the outbreak of WW2. But some contact was maintained during the war and her parents hosted Free French service men on leave for a few days at a time.

On leaving Hulme she attended Salford Technical College, now Salford University, and in 1948 obtained a Distinction in Dressmaking from the City & Guilds Institute. She taught dressmaking and French at night school, and also taught at Norman House and at Stoneyhurst College. She sewed for private clients and also acted as an interpreter.

MARIE-THÉRÈSE PORISSE (1926-2021)

Her mother went back to France after the war and Thérèse was effectively left to run Oaklands and to look after her father and two brothers. The 1950s were largely a very happy time for her; she had an active social life that centred mainly around Oulton Park and Sale Rugby Club, where her brothers, converts to English Rugby, both excelled. She was also active in the social occasions provided by the firm, presenting prizes and organising events. Reminiscing of a bygone era, she once told me that, as a girl, she often attended social events in Werneth, where she had to wear white gloves and curtsy to the host and hostess.

After returning to France for a few years, where she married and her two children Patrick and Anne-Marie were born, she returned once more in 1968 to live in Saddleworth at Oaklands. A new chapter had begun. She threw herself into Saddleworth life with her customary enthusiasm and energy and joined the newly formed Saddleworth Historical Society, chairing its social committee and playing a leading role in organising the themed parties it became famous for. She was a committee member of the Civic Trust from its formation in 1964, enthusiastically participating in its various projects to beautify Saddleworth and also a life long supporter of Saddleworth Museum. She re-joined Tame Valley Tennis Club and was President in 1982. A patron of the arts, she was a member of the Chamber Concert Society and enjoyed doing the suppers at Roger Tanner's house after the recitals. She was also an avid supporter of the Saddleworth Festival of the Arts. In later life she became a member of the Marie Stewart Society and a Friend of the Whitworth Art Gallery, enjoying trips both at home and abroad with both societies. Thérèse loved fund raising for the various organisation and charities she joined. A founding member of the Saddleworth branch of the RNLI, she was also a longtime supporter of Save the Children and the Dr. Barnados.

The French Connection was something very close to her heart, her love for her native country never diminished and she remained a French citizen throughout her life. She made full use of the Channel tunnel when it was finally built, and was delighted that the two countries that she loved so much were at last connected. A member of the Cercle Francais in Manchester, she regularly arranged exchanges for the children of her English and French friends and family, and as the oldest member of the Mossley Twinning Committee (Mossley is twinned with Hem, near Lille) attended all the reunions. Going back to Cannes was always a joy and she spent many extended holidays there.

Thérèse loved Oaklands and Saddleworth, and was hugely attached to both and to her life and friends here. But 'vive la difference' - at her core Thérèse remained French.



Thérèse with Elsie Broadbent at a Saddleworth Historical Society 20s Night in March 1989

