

### **NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN. Andrew Bower.**

I am pleased to present the latest edition of Re-Discovering Hope which contains a wide variety of topics. Ann Price pays homage to Annie Freeborough who compiled 'Hope: The History of Our Village' in a precious little volume dated 1931. John Talbot discusses the wood-carving skills of Micah How whose work survives in St Peter's Church. Joan Clough details some of her research into the hamlet of Brough with particular reference to transport history. Your Chairman contributes a summary of the Wakes Week display of 2023 which celebrated WS Porter and his work.... in the centenary year of the publication of 'Notes from a Peakland Parish'. John Talbot presents his analysis of the 'Gifts to the Poor of Hope' as recorded in wills and upon the Benefactions Boards in St Peter's. John also presents a detailed study of the life of Rev Henry Buckston whose incumbency saw major changes at St Peter's and to the Hope Parish boundary. Our final article 'Throwing Light on Moses and Aaron' puts in print the subject matter of a contribution to our Members' Evening held in April 2025.

Plans for another volume are already in place and Hope Historical Society would welcome contributions. Articles do not need to be lengthy or contain detailed research: personal recollections or anecdotes that also add to the history of Hope are worth putting into print before being lost. As you will observe, the number of contributors to this edition is very limited so it would be a pleasure to welcome some additional authors.

Past editions of Re-Discovering Hope can be found on our website: [hopehistoricalsoc.uk](http://hopehistoricalsoc.uk) and actual copies are deposited in The Local Studies Library at The Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock.

I would like to thank all the authors whose work is included here and express particular thanks to Di Curtis for the many hours spent getting everything ready for publication.

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### NOTES from the EDITOR. Di Curtis.

The cited authors are responsible for the research and views expressed in their articles. The editor is responsible for typing and page setting errors. Please let the editor know of any mistakes you may spot.

I am extremely grateful to the authors for their help in editing their articles and their forbearance with the editor's requests for changes to their original scripts.

Andrew Bower has produced the cover to the Booklet and been a constant support and help to me during the production of this Booklet.

We note with sorrow the passing of two members of the Society, Roger Elliot and Steve Fox, since our last publication in 2023.

# Hope: The History of our Village.

**Compiled and written by Annie Freeborough. Research Ann Price.**

In 1931 a slim green book measuring 3 inches by 5 ½ inches was circulating in Hope, priced at 2/6d. In her preface Annie Freeborough, the author, states

*‘This little book was written in response to a request by the Derbyshire Federation of Women’s Institutes and was exhibited at the Handicrafts’ Exhibition held at the Queen’s Hall, Derby in May 1931. The information contained therein was chiefly obtained from old inhabitants of Hope and members of Hope Women’s Institute.’*

Her book sets out to give a history of the village with information gleaned from local inhabitants and the stories they told her. Written over ninety years ago it has also much to tell us of the village at that time.

## **About the Author    Annie Freeborough 1881-1962**

Annie (nee Stringfellow) was already a widow when she and her daughter Agatha Ann Midgeley (b.1913) moved to Hope from Sheffield. Her first husband Arthur Midgeley had died at Cambrai in the First World War.



When Annie met George Freeborough he was already a widower twice over with three young children.

George and his family lived at Glen Wyne, now 69, Castleton Road. This photo shows George, his second wife Alice (d 1917) and their three children Phyllis, Kathleen and George Geoffrey. outside Glen Wynne (date unknown).

George and Annie lived at Glen Wynne after their marriage. They had a daughter of their own, Marguerite Joan, born in 1924.

Life must have been busy for Annie with a large family to care for, but she still found time to research and write her book.



This photo of Annie, taken several years later shows her daughter Joan (top left) with other young family members.

Annie was a keen member of the Women's Institute which at that time had a membership of 103 and met fortnightly in Loxley Hall.

Her daughter, Agatha, later married local blacksmith, Joe Holme.

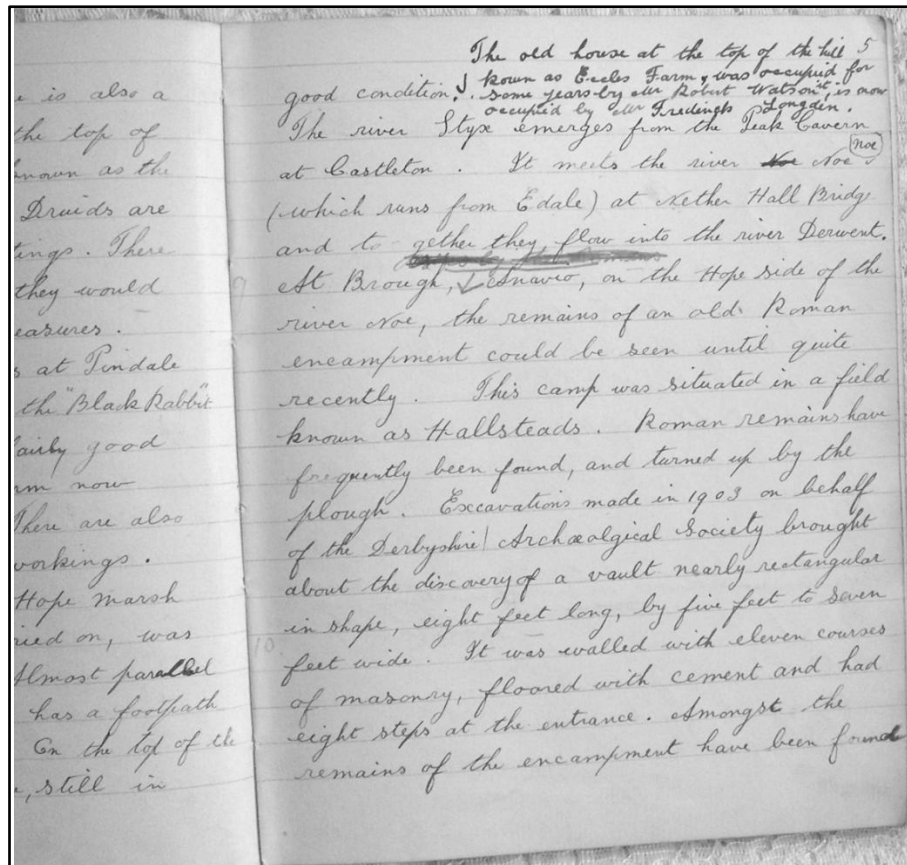
Annie eventually moved to Sunderland to live with her daughter Joan and died there in 1962.

## **The History of our Village**

Annie Freeborough has divided her book into a series of chapters with an Introduction describing Hope's location amongst the hills and footpaths of the Hope Valley and connecting the village to nearby places such as the Roman Fort of Navio. She is well versed in the myths of the local hills and the battles said to have been fought on Win Hill and Lose Hill.

She explores St Peter's Church and its history and the items held within it and describes the building of the Methodist Chapel. Interspersed with these reminiscences is information about people living in Hope at that time, such as the Firth Family. She describes some of the oldest residents, people like Mrs Greaves and Miss Middleton, who were each the last of a long line of Hope families. She lists the shops and shop keepers of the time, including the purchase of the old Middleton family farmhouse by AF Hancock which became part of his grocery store chain, (now the Spar).

Other chapter headings include Favourite Games and Pastimes, An Ancient Rhyme, Old Houses, Inns and Public Houses, Hope Fair, Old Families, Charities, The School, Ancient Buildings, Old Shops, A True Story of a Maiden in Distress, Another True Story, The Advent of the Railway, The Advent of Gas, Water, Organisations, Present Day Annual Events.



The original handwritten notebook from which the WI produced the little green book in 1931.

Today, nearly a hundred years later, Annie's little green book has become a source of history and research in its own right.

Under the section called Organisations we get a picture of a changing village. Earle's Cement Works had opened in 1929 which made a difference to local job opportunities. The St John's Ambulance Brigade had been newly formed, the first company of Hope Girl Guides was instituted, and a Village Community Council was established. There was a Fire Brigade in the village and in 1927 the Hope Branch of the Sheffield Joint Hospital Council of the 'Penny in the Pound Scheme' was established with an initial contribution of ten pounds in the first year. Other thriving organisations at that time included The Oddfellow's Lodge and the Amateur Gardening Society. She describes the job of the Pinner, held by Nicholas Tym. Many of these organisations no longer exist in the village.

The book also contains a list of 86 subscribers, the majority from Hope and Bradwell, and is an indication of the regard with which Annie Freeborough was held by local people

*We are greatly indebted to Cathy Rahmanzadeh and Helen Glat, Annie's granddaughters, and the family for information and photos of the Freeborough family and of Annie's original notebook.*

## Micah How

## Research by John Talbot

Micah How was born on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1841 in Castleton, the son of James How, a cooper (barrel maker) and chair maker, and Charlotte née Holme. He had six sisters, two of whom died in childhood, and a brother. Both Micah and his elder brother Robert continued the family trade of carpentry and coopering, Robert remaining in Castleton all his life.

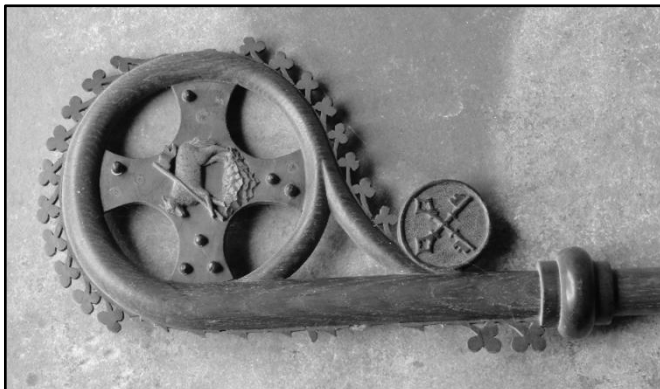
Micah was brought up in Castleton where he learnt his trade from his father and brother. In 1866 he married Elizabeth, the daughter of Robert Unwin who, at that time, was farming in Hathersage. They had 4 boys and 2 daughters although their eldest son died in infancy. Their youngest son, James Percy, was the only one of his sons who followed his father's trade as a carpenter. He went to South Africa in 1900 with Joseph Holme, from the well-known Hope blacksmithing family, and subsequently emigrated to Ohio, USA in 1906, not long after getting married.



In 1871 Micah and Elizabeth lived in Brough, moving to Hope in 1881. In the 1861 to 1881 censuses, he was described as a cooper and thereafter as a joiner and cabinet maker.

Elizabeth opened a sweet and tobacconist shop in Hope which, by the time of her death, she had run for 50 years.

Fig 1. Micah and Elizabeth How with their daughters Ettie and Mabel



Micah was a celebrated wood carver. His works in the church include a bishop's crozier which is elaborately decorated with a delicate fringe of fine carving, some of which is sadly damaged.

Fig 2. The Bishops Crozier

He is also said to have made the Hymn Board, dated 1905. A pair of large floor-standing candlestands by the choir stalls are probably by his hand and are reputed to be adapted from bedposts.

Fig 3. The Hymn Board



Fig 4. One of the Candlestands.





Also in the chancel, there is an armchair of 17<sup>th</sup> century form that has the inscription on the back 'Presented to Hope Church by Micah How August 19, 1907'; it is the only work signed by him in the church.

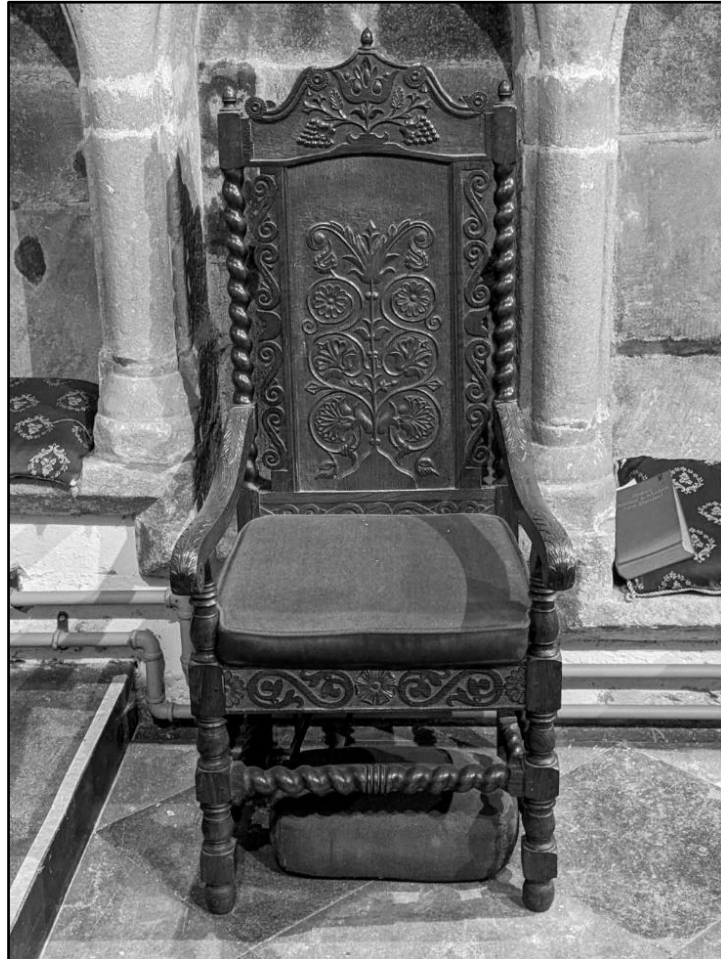


Fig 5. Armchair made by Micah How

Fig 6. Carved inscription on the back of the chair



At his death in 1917 the Derbyshire Courier praised his work at length, noting that his carvings were 'in public buildings and houses in London, Gloucester and Newcastle and other English towns, and in Ireland' <sup>1</sup>.



He was parish clerk in Hope for 11 years when Henry Buckston was vicar. In 1911 he and Elizabeth lived at Rose Cottage with their unmarried youngest daughter Mabel. He died on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1917 and Elizabeth in 1934. Elizabeth very much wanted to see her son James Percy before she died but sadly, he arrived back in this country from the USA just too late <sup>2</sup>.

Some may remember Mabel, born in 1885, who remained at Rose Cottage after her parents' deaths and continued her mother's sweet shop there. The 1939 survey showed that she was, at that time, still selling sweets and tobacco. Mabel died in 1971.

<sup>1</sup> Derbyshire Courier 14.4.1917

<sup>2</sup> Derbyshire Times 21.7.1934

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### SNIPPETS from the EDITOR

#### TWO AMUSING CARVED HEADS.

Seen from the porch roof of St Peter's but not visible from the Church Yard.

Photos Andrew Bower.



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# Brough: An Important Transport Junction

Research by Joan Clough



Fig 1. THE TRAVELLERS REST AT BROUGH

The Travellers Rest is situated at Brough Lane Head in Aston Civil Parish, a few yards north of the Hamlet of Brough and on the main road from Hathersage to Hope. This major road became a turnpike road in 1758. The present inn was built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with extensions built in recent years. The large field on which it was built is named 'Saltergate' in various documents, suggesting that it may have been a resting place for salters carrying their salt from Cheshire to Sheffield.

Documents describe the history of the Travellers Rest and of the small community at Brough Lane Head.

Fig 2. THE LORD NELSON

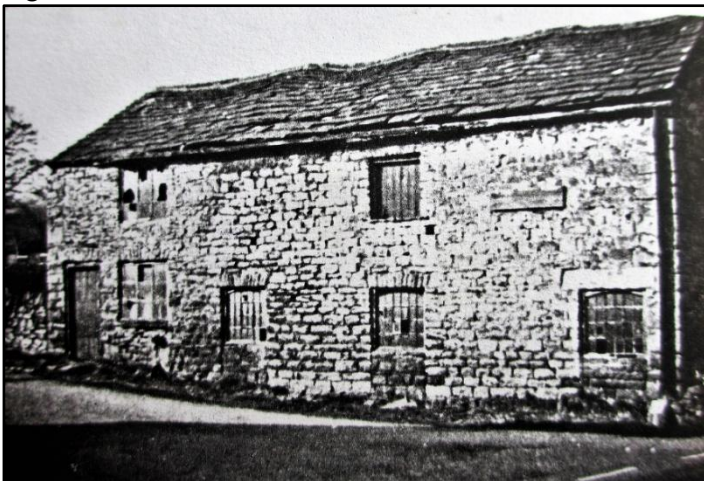


Photo: Frank Money Archive

HHS Archive (c. 1980)

We know that at the small Hamlet of Brough, which lies a mile from Hope on the Bradwell Road, there was an inn from about 1750.<sup>1</sup>

Records show<sup>2</sup> that George Barton had a license in 1753 and George Slynn also had a license from 1763 to 1775.

By 1780 Joseph Sidebottom was landlord at the inn, which was later named the Lord Nelson.

Joseph died in 1823 but his daughter, Jane, was listed as a publican in 1841 and as innkeeper in the 1851 census. Jane was then described as a beer housekeeper in 1861 but after she died in 1862, we find no trace of the Lord Nelson as an inn.

The building was used as a farm and a barn for many years and was finally demolished in 2024 after planning permission was given to build two new houses on the site.

### **PROPOSED BRANCH ROAD FROM BROUGH TO THE SHEFFIELD TO GLOSSOP TURNPIKE ROAD. (The present A 57)**

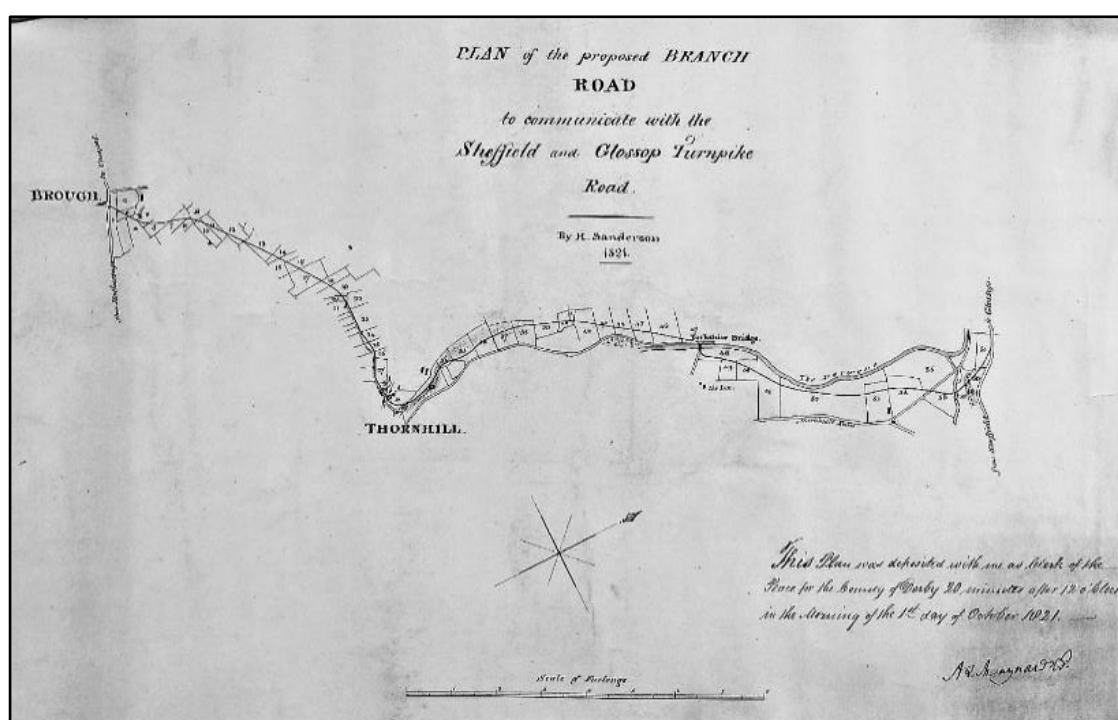
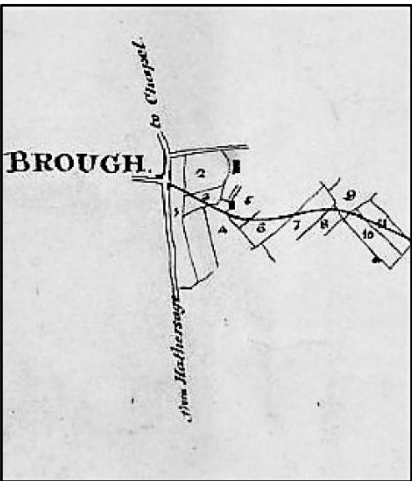


Fig 3. Plan of Proposed Branch Rd <sup>3</sup>

In 1821 and again in 1822 detailed plans were published to build a branch from the Sheffield and Glossop Turnpike, the modern A57, through Thornhill to Brough Lane Head. At this time industry had been growing in the Hope Valley, with cotton mills established in several villages including mills at Brough and Bradwell. A new bridge over the Noe at Brough, completed in 1824, was only a few yards from Brough Lane Head. Although the proposed turnpike branch was never built the plans give us information about Lane Head at that time.

The plan (Fig 3) shows clearly the fields through which the road would pass and these are numbered and

refers to a list of names of those occupying the fields.



This enlarged section of the proposed road shows fields numbers at Lane Head 1, 2 and 3 which were in the occupancy of William Eyre, presumably the joiner of Brough. There is evidence of small buildings by the roadside at Lane Head.

Fig 4. Enlarged section Fig 3

In 1841 a survey <sup>4</sup> was conducted of the estates of the Earl of Newburgh situated in the townships of Aston and Brough and Shatton. These included particulars and condition of buildings and the occupiers of these buildings.

Fig 5. Earl of Newburgh's Survey of 1841

Near Brough farm and adjoining Hatherly close		Thomas John of Shalton.		ASTON Buildings	
Stock window	Mid	House	Hanging	Walls	1/4 Mid
Floor. Stone	Super			Roof	State Bad
Cooling	Super				
Floor. Boards	Mid	Chamber		1. 0. 0	
Cooling	None				
Stock window	Mid	House		Occupied by John Lomas Esq. the tenant's garden	
Floor. Stone	Mid			1790 the walls of these two houses were then erected for a warehouse.	
Cooling	Mid	Kitchen		In 1807 that house which is occupied by Noddy Bradbury, was made out of the same warehouse, and in 1820 the other house was made.	
Stock window	Mid			2. 4. 0	
Floor. Stone	Mid	2 Chambers			
Cooling	Stone				
Floor. Boards	Mid	Out. outhouse		In 1820 built by the tenant.	
Cooling	Mid			0. 4. 0	
		Small out-building		0. 0. 0	
		Small out-building			
		Small out-building			



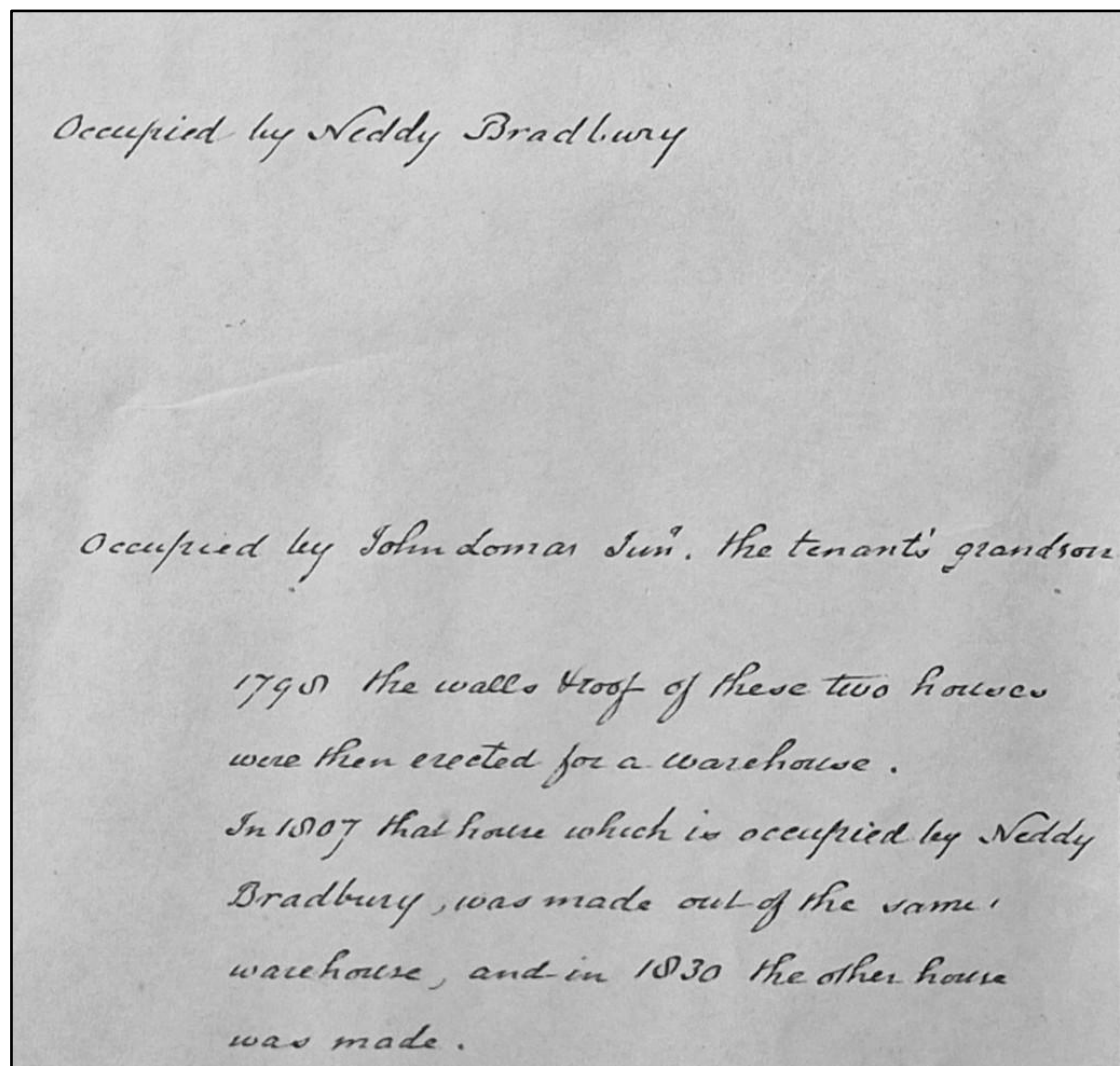


Fig 6. A page from the 1841 survey relating to Lane Head.

This page on the LHS of Fig 5 shows John Lomas of Shatton as tenant of two houses with Neddy Bradbury and John Lomas, the tenant's grandson, as occupiers of the houses. The state of the houses is described as 'mid' or 'bad'.

There is also, on the RHS, an added note regarding the history of the houses. This states that the roof and walls of the houses had been erected in 1798 to build a warehouse. Then in 1807 the house which is occupied by Neddy Bradbury was made from the warehouse, and in 1830 the other house was added.



Fig 7. Part of the Tithe Plan for Aston 1849 <sup>5</sup>

Just eight years after the survey the 1849 Tithe Plan and Index were published, which confirms or replaces information from the Earl of Newburgh's surveys.

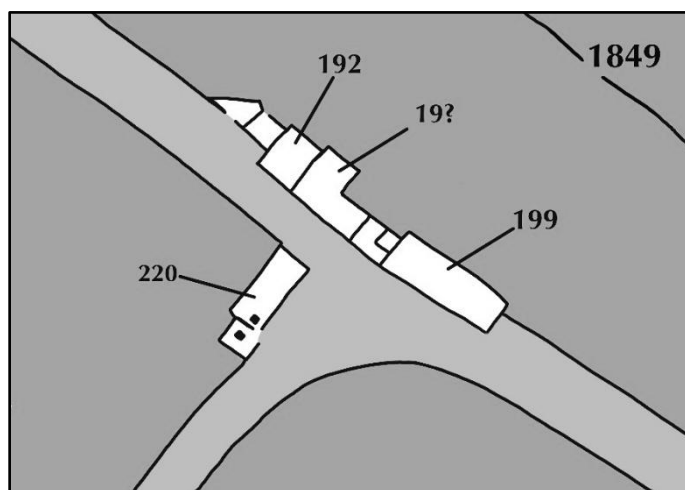


Fig 8. A sketch of the Tithe Plan at Lane Head.

The Tithe plan is not always clear but this redrawn enlargement shows the numbers on each property.

From the Tithe Apportionment Award, we find that 220 was a blacksmith shop occupied by Neddy Bradbury 199 called Upper Rough Meadow was occupied by Thomas Middleton and owned by Benjamin Broughton Pegge Burnell

191 was a house and building occupied by Neddy Bradbury

192 was a house and building occupied by John Lomas

### **CENSUS RETURNS for Brough Lane End.**

The census of 1841 show Neddy Bradbury, blacksmith, and John Lomas, carpenter living in Aston.

The returns for Lane Head in 1851 show Andrew Hide as a beer retailer, the first mention of a beer license, with John Lomas as a joiner journeyman and Neddy Bradbury as a blacksmith.

In 1861 also at Lane Head, Abraham Dakin was beer housekeeper and agricultural labourer, William Elliott

was an agricultural labourer and Thomas Bradbury was a blacksmith.

Also at Lane End in 1871 Abraham Dakin was a beer housekeeper, William Elliott and Ruth Bradbury lived at Lane Head.

In 1881 Nancy Dakin, Abraham Dakin's widow, was publican at The Travellers Rest and William Elliott was a farm labourer. This is the first mention of the name 'The Travellers Rest'.

In 1891 Peter Hall was a publican at The Travellers Rest and Lewis Carter, miller and William Elliott, retired, lived at turnpike side

In 1901 Mary Hall widow of Peter Hall was licensed victualler at Lane Head and Lewis Carter journeyman miller and Benjamin Elliott lived at Lane Head

By 1911 Mary Hall was still the licensed victualler, this time residing with daughter and son-in-law assisting. William Barndsay a general labourer and Benjamin Elliott were also at Lane Head

*Travellers Rest Brough Bradwell*

*Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1925*

*Half yearly sale of cattle*

*Sheep, pigs, implements, Etc*

*Entries to be made to Mr Voss at the inn*

*Or to T.J.J. Weaving Auctioneer*

*Castleton and Bradwell*

In 1921 George Voss lived at The Travellers Rest and is described as a farmer, furthermore there is no mention of the building being licensed for the sale of alcohol. The premises were returned to licensed premises later in the 20<sup>th</sup> C.

One notice in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph 3rd Oct 1925 attests to this interim period when the Travellers Rest was used only as a farmhouse.

There is still much to find about the history of the Travellers. We don't know exactly when it was built. We can look further into the history of the families who lived at Lane Head but can only imagine all the stories told in both Inns over the years.

## REFERENCES

1. Bradwell Historical Society
2. National Archives with Ancestry.co.uk for all census records.
3. Turnpike Plans DRO Q/RP/1/4
4. Earl of Newburgh Survey of his Estates DRO D13/2/3
5. Hope Tithe Rent Charge Apportionment Award and Map; DRO D1828/A/PI/209 1849



# William Smith Porter and 'Notes from a Peakland Parish'.

## Research by Andrew Bower

William Smith Porter was born on Surrey St. in Sheffield on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1855. His parents were John Taylor Porter, a surgeon, and his wife Sarah who was the daughter of William Smith, a barrister and JP of Dam House, Crookes. William was baptised at Sheffield Parish Church on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1856. The 1861 census records him and his sister Alice at Dam House with their widowed grandfather. In the 1871 census John and Sarah's family are listed at No 1, Eyre Street in what is now known as Leader House, near the Central Library. Three years later, William's father died at Ash Mount, Broomhill at the age of 55; it seems that the family had moved out of central Sheffield.



Fig 1. William Smith Porter aged seven years, Whitby, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1863, in the studio of Samuel Braithwaite. Photo: Sheffield City Archives.



Fig 2. William Smith Porter in adult life.  
Photo: Sheffield City Archives.

William Smith Porter was educated at Collegiate School, Sheffield before going on to Repton School. He attended Leeds Medical School and Kings College, London before completing his medical studies at Durham University; his essay on 'Chronic Lead Poisoning' was awarded a Gold Medal<sup>1</sup>. WSP returned to Sheffield to take up the post of House Surgeon to the Sheffield Infirmary (1881-1883). He served as Honorary Physician to the Sheffield Public Hospital from 1883 to 1887 and then acted in the same role at the re-named Sheffield Royal Infirmary from 1887 until his retirement in 1920<sup>2</sup>. During his working life he maintained his own medical practice based at 281, Glossop Road even though he moved out to Hope circa 1902. WSP lectured on Medicine at Sheffield University College and also advised magistrates who licensed houses 'for lunatics' and other houses for 'mental defectives' under the 'Lunatics' Act of 1845'<sup>3</sup>



Fig 3. Detail from a group photograph of medical staff on the steps of Sheffield Royal Infirmary, early 1880's. The central figure is probably Hospital Matron Annie Spencer, flanked on left by House Surgeon Christopher St John Wright and on right by Assistant House Surgeon, William Smith Porter.

Photographed by Edward Peaksome of 433, Glossop Road.  
Photo: Sheffield City Archives.

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1893, William Smith Porter married Jessie Lockwood, the daughter of the late Charles Lockwood of Greno House, Grenoside. The family home was established at 281, Glossop Rd which also provided consulting rooms. Their daughters, Edith Mary Bright Porter, Cicely Agnes Bright Porter and Barbara Bright Porter were born there in 1894, 1895 and 1898 respectively.

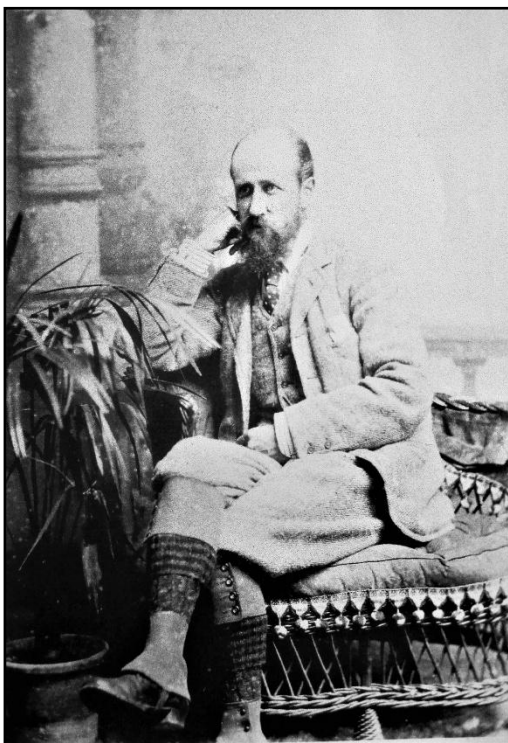


Fig 4. William Smith Porter MD 1855 -1927, and Jessie Porter (nee Lockwood) 1862 – 1922. Taken in the studio of Chas H Young at Dolgelly or Towyn, North Wales. Photos: Sheffield City Archives.

Outside of his medical career WSP pursued antiquarian and genealogical interests. He researched his own family and its link to the Bright family of Sheffield who had risen to prominence in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His detailed family trees, preserved in Sheffield City Archives, continue to provide a valuable research resource. WSP contributed two articles on the Bright family to 'Sheffield Miscellany' published in 1897. In the same year he delivered a lecture to The Sheffield and District Press Club entitled 'Sheffield Newspapers a Century Ago'.

In 1889 WSP delivered a controversial lecture in support of moderate smoking. In 1890 he gave evidence to an enquiry into lead poisoning relating to Redmires Reservoir and in 1903 appeared at the Home Office enquiry into lead poisoning that affected Sheffield's file-cutters.

William Smith Porter held several positions of note. He was the Hon. Secretary of The Sheffield Medico-Chirurgical Society (1889-1892) and its President (1895-1896). He was a Member of the Court of Governors of Sheffield University. He was President of the Sheffield and District Press Club (1891-1892) and of the Sheffield Microscopical Society (1898-1899). In later years he acted as Chairman for The Hunter Archaeological Society and helped transcribe some of the Sheffield Parish Registers published by that Society (part V, 1927). He was President of The Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society for the year 1926.

## **The Move to Hope.**

In October 1899, 'WS Porter of Glossop Road, Sheffield' purchased a rectangular plot of land called Phebe or Phoebe Croft from David Wain, farmer of Birchinlee<sup>4</sup>. Phoebe Croft (the land) is marked on the 1847 Tithe Map when it was owned and occupied by James Brown.



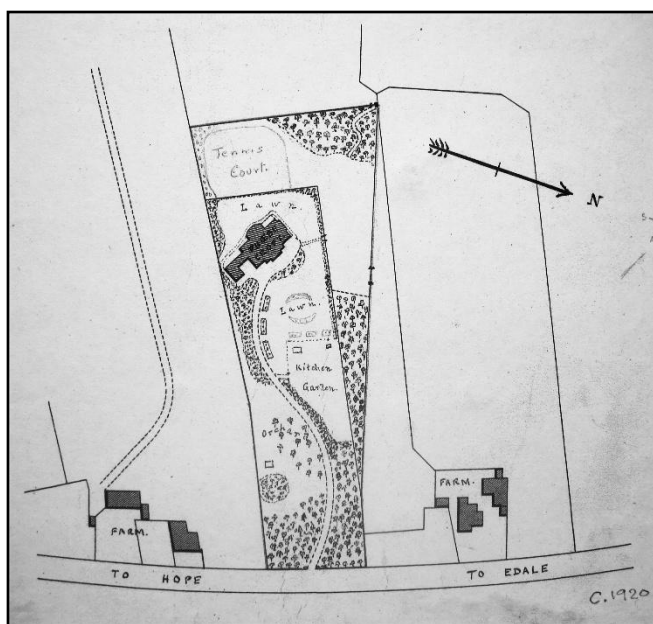
Fig 5. Entrance Front- Phoebe Croft.



Fig 6. Garden Front- Phoebe Croft. Photos by Cicely Porter, circa 1920.<sup>5</sup>

WS Porter paid £190 for the plot. The survey plan that accompanied the indenture was drawn by AE Turnell of Sheffield. In March 1901, AE Turnell, architect of Foster's Buildings, Sheffield advertised for contractors to help build a 'New House at Hope'<sup>6</sup>. It seems likely that Turnell was the architect, or at least clerk of works for Dr Porter's new residence which bears the date 1902.

The name Phebe or Phoebe Croft is thought to commemorate Phebe Cresswell who died in 1730/1 (buried 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 1731). She was the widow of Jacob Cresswell, Vicar of Hope from 1696 to 1722. Both of them left charitable bequests and WS Porter discusses the Cresswell charities on pages 51-52 of 'Peakland Parish'.



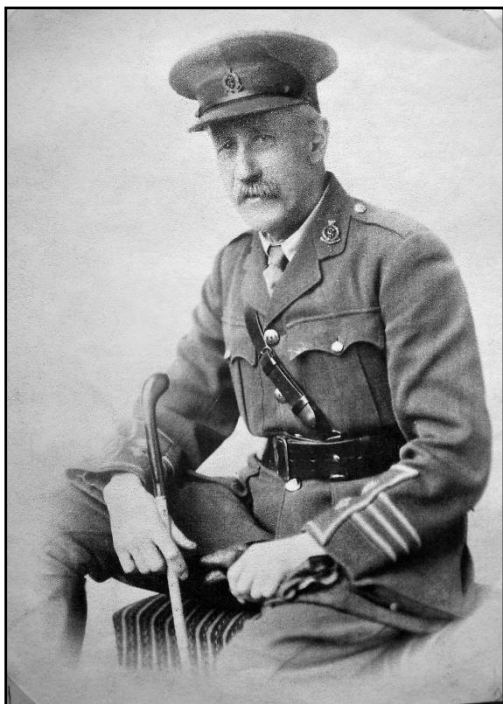
There is no mention of the croft on Edale Road being part of land from which income was derived to support the charities.

In November 1902 'William Smith Porter of Phoebe Croft' purchased adjoining land from Robert Howe Ashton of Castleton for the sum of £148. The footprint of the new house on the original croft and the land additions are clearly shown on a contemporary plan.

Fig 7. Plan circa 1920 which shows the completed house within the original rectangular plot of Phoebe Croft and the additional land purchased in 1902. (Hope Historical Society Archives).

Most of WSP's published work dates from his time as a resident in Hope. In 1909 he gave a lecture to The Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society entitled 'Notes from a Peakland Parish'; the associated pamphlet proved to be the precursor of his book published in 1923. In 1908 WSP compiled the 'Handbook and Guide to Sheffield' for The British Medical Association's visit to the city. He contributed to and edited the 'Handbook and Guide' for the British Association's visit to Sheffield in 1910. (Sheffield City Archives). The 1911 census for Hope lists all family members at Phoebe Croft together with a governess and three female domestic staff.





During The 1st World War, WSP served in the RAMC as a Lieutenant-Colonel on the staff of The General Military Hospital based at Collegiate Hall in Sheffield. He was mobilised on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1915, and continued in the role until the end of May 1919.

Fig 8. In Uniform during WWI.

Photo: Hope Historical Society Archive



Fig 9. The family at Phoebe Croft during WWI. Photo: Hope Historical Society Archive.

From L to R; Edith Mary, Ronald Lockwood (cousin), Jessie, Cecily; WSP and Barbara

In the 1921 census (June 19<sup>th</sup>), WSP and his eldest daughter Edith Mary are listed at The Trevissa Hotel, Cornwall whilst Jessie and the two other daughters remained at Phoebe Croft. Jessie Porter

may have been in poor health because a decision had been made to move back to Sheffield. Phoebe Croft was put up for auction in the spring of 1921 and subsequently offered for sale by private contract (Harold John Smith purchased the house in 1922 for £2,550 from 'Dr Porter late of Phoebe Croft now of Sheffield')<sup>7</sup>. Jessie Porter died at 8, Sale Hill, Broomhill on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1922, aged 59.

The Porter family home at 8, Sale Hill, Broomhill, Sheffield was built just before 1870 and named Myrtle House. It was one of only three houses entered from the east side of Sale Hill and was set in spacious grounds. A former resident was James George Ronksley (1861-1916), a banker with keen antiquarian interests. Ronksley's transcription of John Harrison's 'Exact and Perfect Survey and View of the Manor of Sheffield' (1637) was privately printed in 1908. His important collection of documents was purchased by Sheffield Libraries Committee in August 1916 and is now held by Sheffield City Archives.

It is likely that WSP knew this house long before he lived there.



Fig 10. The Porter home on Sale Hill, Broomhill, Sheffield. Originally known as Myrtle House then as No. 8 in WSP's time.

Photo: Andrew Bower.

In 1920 William Smith Porter retired from his role as Physician to The Sheffield Royal Infirmary. This gave him the opportunity to continue his studies on 'The Hallamshire Family of Bright' (the unpublished manuscript dated 1920 is preserved in Sheffield City Archives). He prepared the manuscript for 'Notes from a Peakland Parish' (dated 1921) and also worked on his book 'The Sheffield Literary & Philosophical Society-A Centenary Retrospect 1822-1922' (published 1922).

In the 1921 census, Edith Mary and Cicely Porter are both shown as working in Sheffield. Cicely was working as a photographer at The Sheffield Royal Infirmary; her skills were utilised to provide the photographs for 'Notes from a Peakland Parish'. Cicely copied pre-restoration photographs of St. Peter's Church and, in doing so, preserved very precious images.

William Smith Porter's book 'Notes From a Peakland Parish'<sup>8</sup> was published in 1923 illustrated by Cicely Porter's photographs except that of the east end of St Peter's Church. It has recently been realised that the oblique view of the church taken from the southeast includes the only known photographic record of The Shambles that stood on the perimeter of the churchyard opposite Edale Road<sup>9</sup>. The book was financed by subscription and had a print run of 180 copies. The majority of subscribers listed in the book have Sheffield addresses and many are WSP's associates from his professional life and society connections. Approximately a quarter of subscribers are from Hope and elsewhere. It was always realised that the book was not an attempt at a complete village history, but an account of historical events culled from selected documents then in the possession of the Hope Church Wardens (now transferred to the Derbyshire Record Office). As such it is a valuable record that has left plenty of scope for further historical research.

With time on his hands, WSP set down his recollections of his early childhood in Sheffield. The typescript, preserved in Sheffield City Archives, includes fascinating information on the medical men of his father's time. He recalled The Sheffield Flood of 1864 and a trip to view the destruction upstream; he remembered returning from school at Repton on a newly constructed railway line. In a newspaper article of 1924 entitled 'Hope Valley Bird Migrants'<sup>10</sup>, WSP gave details of the birdlife he had observed during his time in Hope; this has proved to be of considerable interest to present-day ornithologists.

William Smith Porter's final book was an account of 'The Medical School in Sheffield 1828-1928'. Unfortunately, he never saw its publication because he died suddenly on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1927, aged 71. His funeral took place at St John's Church, Ranmoor and he was buried in Crookes Cemetery along with his wife Jessie. The house on Sale Hill remained in family ownership and Jessie's brother, Thomas Porter Lockwood, died there in 1934. Edith Mary and Barbara Porter were still in the house in 1939.



Fig 11. Family Grave at Crookes Cemetery, Sheffield.  
Now partially dismantled. Section HH/ No 4378.  
Photo: Andrew Bower.

Jessie Porter's brother and his wife are also interred there.



## REFERENCES

A large collection of William Smith Porter's manuscripts, photographs and miscellaneous papers may be inspected in Sheffield City Archives. Ref: MD 7755/ (Acc 2018/44). These were gifted by Prue Stokes, grand-daughter of WSP.

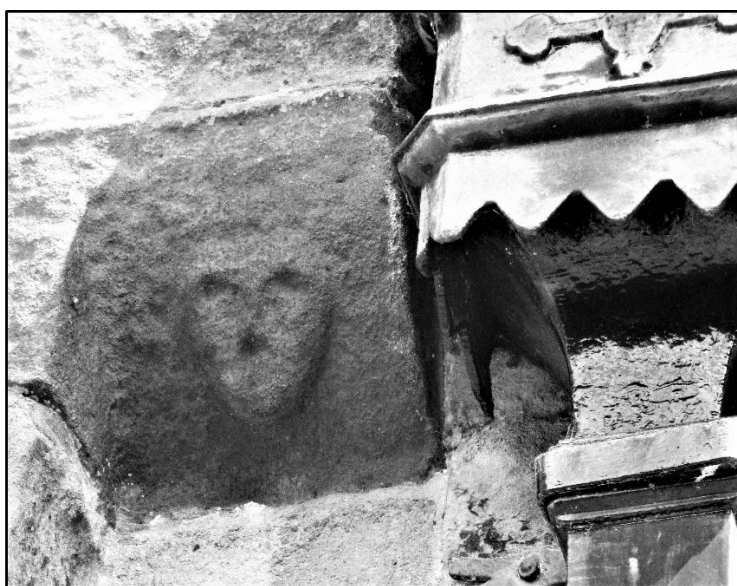
A number of miscellaneous papers, mostly relating to his life in Hope, including a photograph album taken by Cicely Porter are held by HHS Archives.

1. Copy in Sheffield University Library: Special Collections.
2. Obituary: Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1927.
3. [www.mentalhealthlaw.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthlaw.co.uk).
4. Personal Information from documents in the possession of the current owners (2025) of the house, now known as High Peak Hall.
5. Phoebe Croft photographed by Cicely Porter: Hope Historical Society Archives.
6. Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1901.
7. Obituary: Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1927
8. 'Notes From a Peakland Parish' was reprinted in a facsimile edition of 100 copies in 2000.  
Second-hand copies of the original book and its reprint can still be found.
9. See article on the Rev Buckston in this edition of RDH.
10. Sheffield Daily Telegraph 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1924.

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## ANOTHER SNIPPET from the EDITOR

Hope Historical Society's emblem is based on an ancient carved head on the outer north wall of the tower of St Peter's Church. A similar head peers down from the west wall of the south aisle to the left of a cast-iron rainwater hopper. Photo Andrew Bower.



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# **Gifts to the Poor in Hope Parish Wills 1600-1850**

## **Research by John Talbot**

Hope Church, like many others, contains a number of plaques and wall monuments that record and praise the generosity of parishioners who donated to the poor. These memorials celebrated particularly munificent donors, but there were others with less wealth who are not so well known.

Little evidence remains of those who made donations to the poor during their lifetimes, but we do have a written record in the large numbers of wills parishioners left, and which are preserved. From this parish, they are to be found in the Lichfield Cathedral archive, now digitised and stored in the Staffordshire Record Office, and from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, kept in the National Archive. These two collections, amounting to 1,056 sets of documents, have been transcribed by the author and inform the data for this article. Analysis of wills and inventories up to 1650 was part of an earlier report, 'Medieval Lives in Castleton and Hope'<sup>1</sup>, which included some of the background analysis used in this article.

It has to be remembered that Hope Parish at the time was large, extending from Fairfield and Fernilee on the Cheshire border in the west to Grindleford Bridge in the east and from Hope Woodland in the north to Grindlow and Wardlow in the south. Castleton with Edale constituted a separate parish. Rationalisation of Hope Parish did not begin until the end of the period discussed here. This review will, therefore, take in wills from a wide range of villages.

### **Donations to the poor in Hope wills.**

Of the 1,056 sets of documents, 270 contained no wills; all but 4 of those were from intestate estates. Of the 786 remaining wills, 39, or 5%, contained gifts to the poor of one sort or another.

Fifteen of these wills were from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 20 from the 18<sup>th</sup> and only four from the 19<sup>th</sup>, the last dated 1834.

Nearly half of the donors were yeomen. Widows and gentlemen made up the bulk of the remainder with only 3 husbandmen contributing. The rest were men who gave their professions: miner, blacksmith, farmer, webster and the Vicar, Jacob Cresswell. The proportion of well-off donors is to be expected but the small number of donors as a whole reflects the relative poverty of the district, compared to elsewhere in the country. Twelve of the donors were from Hope itself and nine from Smalldale and Bradwell. The rest were evenly distributed throughout the parish. Many wills donated to the poor of several villages and Hope itself benefitted from 18 donations. In six wills donations were made to parishes beyond Hope, particularly Castleton and Tideswell, but extending in a few cases into South Yorkshire and Cheshire.

The donations can be divided into two groups. People either left their donations absolutely as gifts to the poor or they left an annuity, making arrangements for money to be given on an annual basis. Only one donor, John Oliver, a yeoman from Fernilee, did both. What follows are illustrative extracts from some of these wills.

### *Single gifts*

In 23 of the wills, a fixed amount was given as a one-off. Such gifts can appear modest now, between 10 shillings and £20. The smallest gifts of 10 shillings were by Ann Kitchin, a widow from Hope in 1735 and Hugh Bradwall, a yeoman from Abney in 1783. This seemingly small amount would be worth around £60 today. At the other end of the scale, Ralph Bocking, a yeoman from Hope, left £20 to the poor of Hope and Castleton in 1662. The equivalent now would be well over £2,000.

Brigett Hill, a widow from Abney Grange, left her old clothes to the poor of Hope in 1633. This apparently demeaning gift would very likely have been welcome at the time. In that year, the Baptism, Marriage and Death (BMD) Register shows the annual death rate in Hope was the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the first half of the seventeenth century. The reason is unknown although explanations include poor crop yields and starvation and perhaps this was a time of particular need.

Jonathan Fisher from Bradwell in 1693 wrote in his will: 'Item I give & bequeath to poore friends belonging to our Meeting two pounds'. This refers to the Society of Friends or Quakers, confirmed by his instruction that 'my Body to be buried at Slack-hall Buring place'. Quakers could not be buried in consecrated ground and Slack Hall, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, owned by the Quaker Lingard family, became an important burial ground Quakers. Jonathan Bowden, preacher, and five others, including Jonathan Fisher, were all fined under the Conventicle Act against Dissenters in 1683 and it is notable that Jonathan Bowden was one of his executors.<sup>2</sup>

In some cases, donations were more complex and would have required significant administration. Richard Marshall, a yeoman from Hazlebadge, in 1612 wrote: 'Item I gyve and bequeath unto ffortie poore people w'hin the parishe of Tideswall everie of them xiid'. Mary Morten, a widow from Hope, in 1674 gave £2 each to the poor of each of the parishes of Hope with Aston, Bradwell and Castleton, and £1 to the poor of Thornhill. John Oliver in 1702 gave £2.10.0 divided equally between 7 villages in west Derbyshire and Cheshire, as well as 10 shillings to the poor of his own village, Fernilee.

Jane Robinson, a widow from Brough, in her 1795 will, instructed that 'the remainder of my Estate of what nature or kind soever I give and bequeath to twelve of the poorest persons in the Neighbourhood that my Executors may think the greatest objects of Charity'. This may not have amounted to much as the rest of her will bequeathed only £7.12.0 to 9 people.

In all, £76 was left in cash amounts to poor people, in addition to bequests such as the clothes and residual estate described above, in the years 1603 to 1824. Two wills, those of Richard Bennet of

Fernilee in 1667 and George Bagshaw of Hazlebadge in 1743, specified that two pence each should be distributed to poor attendees at their funerals and Brigitte Shallcross of Shallcross in 1607 gave £2 divided among any poor who attended. In fact, this was a common practice at the time and ensured good attendance at funerals. However, John Balguy, discussed below, who had firm ideas about vagrancy, stated ‘my funerall be as private as decency will admitt of and that there be no dole given to beggars which tis my firm opinion is so far from Charity’.

### *Annuities*

Bequests in wills that were to be paid annually were about as common as the single gifts but much more complicated to administer and, in the long run, more generous. Many were for unspecified amounts, dependent as they were on rental income.

In a few cases, regular payments were very modest. In 1742 Thomas Middleton, a farmer from Smalldale bequeathed ‘the yearly sum of five shillings for Ever at the discretion of the Overseer of the poor upon St Thomas day’ (3<sup>rd</sup> July). William Jeffery, a yeoman from Bradwell, in 1803 gave, after the deaths of several members of his family, 6 pence a year to poor women and fatherless children in the village. Samuel Robinson, a miner from Hazlebadge, in his 1750 will instructed his executors to sell his personal estate after his wife’s death and give the income from its subsequent investment to the poor, and ‘I particularly desire the poorest families within Hazlebadge may have each One Shilling in Money and a Six penny Brown loaf at Christmas Eve’.

Thomas Hallom was a webster from Bradwell who gave the rent from half an acre of land for poor widows and orphans in 1729. Seth Evans<sup>3</sup> reported that George Barnsley, who for many years occupied this land at the rent of 12s. 6d., sold it about the year 1806 as his own property. It was not until 1830 that a Commission of Inquiry put this right.

Some of these regular bequests were complex to administer. Thomas Hibert from Fernilee in 1675 gave an unspecified donation to put a poor boy to trade in four villages on an annual rotation: Fernilee, Coombs Edge, Whaley Bridge and Taxal. He was unique in requiring a memorial to be erected in Taxal Church recording his gift: ‘Item that this my Legacie may bee the better Understood by the Inhabitants of the severall places to which I have disposed this my Charity & may bee p<sup>r</sup>served from Mistakes ... cause the substance of this my legacie to bee engraved on a Copper plate in apt & Intelligible English words & cause the same plate to be fixed & set upp in some convenient publique place w<sup>h</sup>in the parish church of Taxall’. Sadly, this memorial is no longer to be seen in the church.

Some were immensely generous. Henry Balguy, a gentleman from Rowlee who built Derwent Hall in 1672, was a famously, even notoriously, wealthy lawyer. Whatever his reputation, what he said in his 1686 will ‘ wheras I have found for many years last past yt lenders of some small sumes of money to poor indigent psons in tyme of need to be a great help succor & comfort to them & p<sup>r</sup>vents them

making of hard losing bargains & cruelty of hard & hasty Landlords w<sup>ch</sup> may ruine both wife & children for ever ‘ belies an intelligent and generous nature. He made several bequests to the poor: £20 to Hope Woodlands, £10 to Little Ashop, £10 to Hope, £10 to Derwent, £5 to Hathersage and £5 to Tideswell ‘without any Interest consideracon or gratuity whatsoever except thankfulness’. He was concerned that ‘the Interest thereof may be bestowed for putting forth poor children as app<sup>r</sup>ntices & servants within the sev<sup>r</sup>all pishes & liberties, or for raising a stock to set the poor on work’. He also gave £10 to the Free School in Hope.

Henry Balguy’s generosity had its downside; family debt that echoed down the generations. John



Balguy, who lived at Hope Hall, now the Old Hall Hotel, also a lawyer, was the prime mover for setting up the market in Hope in 1715. He was Henry of Rowlee’s grandson and the second son of his father, also Henry, and his principal legatee.

John complained bitterly in his own 1712 will that his executor, his younger brother Gervase, ‘will distribute as much in this manner as his Circumstances will admitt of as my ffathers debts lye very heavy now upon me he will find them I doubt Equally if not more weighty to him and will requier his utmost prudence and care to manage’.

Nevertheless, he determined that his grandfather’s legacies should be fulfilled but made the important proviso that there had to be a limit that had not been specified in the original testament. Perhaps this was Henry’s original intention, but John’s legal mind ensured that it was better expressed in his own will. He instructed that there should be a maximum given to each village and that there should be an annual sum paid to each, up to that amount. Thus, for instance, the poor of Hope would receive £1 per year up to a maximum of £20. He also donated an annuity of £4 for a preacher at Derwent Chapel and £4.11.0 toward the Hope Free School. Further, it could be said that the foundation of the market in Hope was itself altruistic and, in its way, increased the prosperity of the village with benefit to the poor.

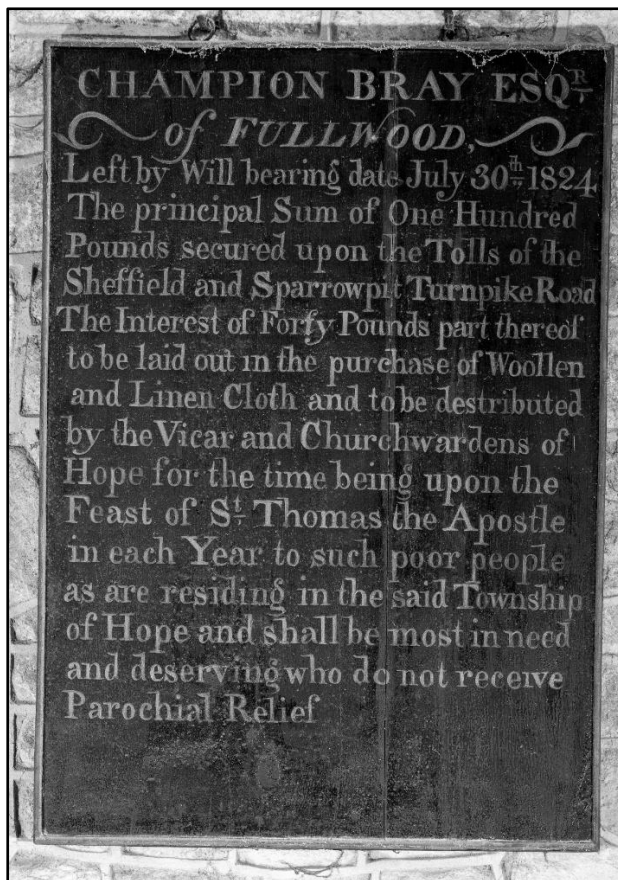
Fig 1. Henry Balguy of Rowlee from his brass monument in the chancel of Hope Church.

The bequests made by the Rev. Jacob Cresswell and his wife Phebe were well known in Hope. Jacob was Vicar of Hope from 1696 to 1722. In his will he bequeathed 'All those pieces or parcells of Land with their Appurtenances lying & being in or near Apple ffurlong in Hope afores<sup>d</sup> which I purchased of M<sup>rs</sup> Mabell Lucas In Trust that they yearly on New Years Day distribute y<sup>e</sup> Rent & produce thereof without favour or Affection to & amongst y<sup>e</sup> poor of y<sup>e</sup> Hamlett of Hope According to Each ones Necessity'. His widow, Phebe, followed his lead in her will of 1731, instructing the Vicar and Overseers of the Poor 'to for ever all that my Close or parcel of land called the Hall-croft-head lying & being in the Said Hamlet of Hope & now in the possession or Occupacon of Christopher Bocking and also all that my part or parcel of building & land called the Garden Situate lying & being in Castleton in the County aforesaid which was purchased of & from Mark ffurnace' and 'employ & dispose of the Rents & produce thereof for the putting forth & binding Apprentices Such poor Children of the Hamlet of Hope aforesaid & unto Such Arts or Trades as they in their Discretion shall think best'. She also left £25 to her executor to buy land with an annual return of £1 'to procure two of the poorest Children of the Said Hamlet of Hope to be yearly & every year for ever taught to read English & write by the Master of the ffree school of Hope'.

Six other wills made their donations in a similar way, arranging for rent from specified pieces of land to be collected annually for the poor. For instance, in 1729 Thomas Middleton, a yeoman from Bradwell, rented some land to John Bradwall, 5 shillings of which income he gave to the poor. John Salt, also from Bradwell, in 1740 left land to provide apprenticeships for poor children.

Champion Bray was a wealthy fustian manufacturer<sup>4</sup> who made his money in North Manchester and came to Fullwood Holmes in Hope to retire. He had childhood allegiances in the area, having been born in Castleton, and had, for a time been Benjamin Pearson's partner in the cotton mills in Brough. He bequeathed many of his stocks and shares to a wide range of friends and relatives but had no children himself. One of his investments was in the Sheffield to Sparrowpit turnpike road. In his 1824 will he put £100 out to interest from the turnpike tolls to buy linen and woollen cloth for the poor, 40% of which was for Castleton, 40% for Hope and 20% for Edale.

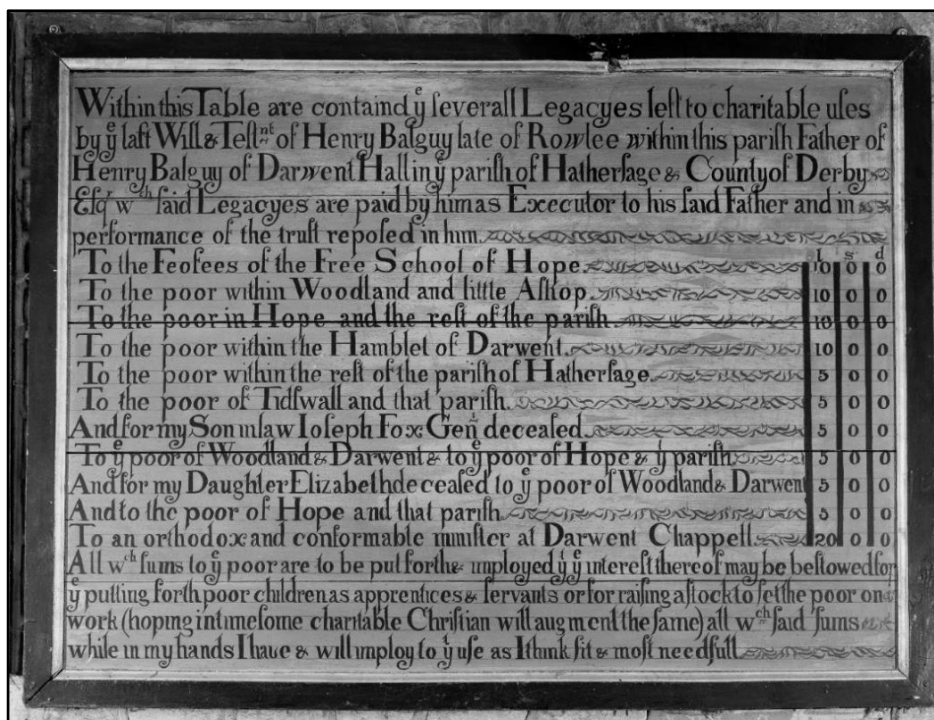
## Benefactors Boards in Hope Church



There are three boards recording some of these bequests in the church.

One, near the door, records Champion Bray's generosity.

Fig 2. The board recording Champion Bray's gift to the poor



Another on the south wall describes Henry Balguy's donations.

Fig 3. Board recording Henry Balguy's gifts to the poor



A third undated record at the West end of the church contains a list of donors to the poor, including Jacob and Phebe Cresswell, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Hallom, all included in this survey. It also includes bequests from Thomas Eyre of Rowter, Mr Artram and Mr Champion of Edale.

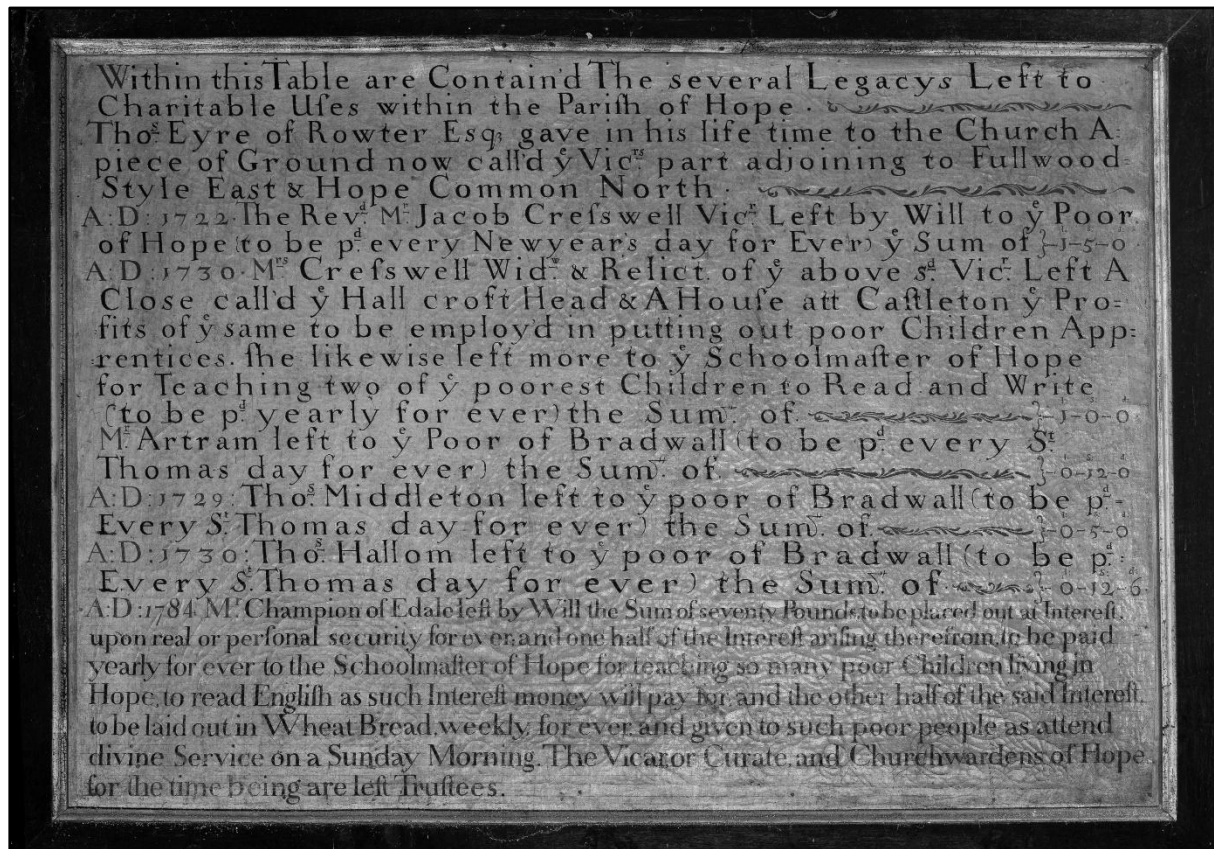


Fig 4. The board recording several donations to the poor at West end of the church

Thomas Eyre of Rowtor (Rowter) who died in around 1717 was the grandson or Rowland Eyre of Hassop and became the Vicar of Birchover. Famously he had steps, doorways and seats carved on Rowtor Rocks, which were on his land, and where he was said to give sermons. He was an important agent of the Crown, given the task of improving waste land and, in the process, enriching himself<sup>5</sup>. This memorial describes the donation of land near Fulwood Stile to the church.

Mr Artram gave twelve shillings to the poor of Bradwell. He was probably a member of the Outram family who had property in Bradwell and later around Grindleford Bridge, then in Hope Parish. Two family members, Robert and Isaac, had 19<sup>th</sup> century wills included in this collection but neither included charitable gifts.

Mr Champion has not been identified although WS Porter reported him to be Joseph Champion<sup>6</sup>. The Champions were yeomen in Castleton and Edale. Several of the family wills have been seen but none of them date from 1784 as described on this board and none of those from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that have been reviewed contain charitable donations. Perhaps he made his donation whilst

he was alive. Here it is clear that he gave £70, the interest of which was for the schoolmaster at Hope to teach poor children English and to give poor people attending church wheat bread.

## **Management of gifts to the poor**

More than 60% of these bequests to the poor were to be handled by the executors, both simple single gifts and the annuities. This must have been a daunting task. In most cases the will was explicit in requiring the executors to take on the work although in a few it was vague but without nominating anyone else to do it. Often the word “discretion” was used when it came to executors having to decide which paupers should receive the testator’s gifts. Executors probably sought assistance from others, particularly the Overseers of the Poor and the Vicar. In seven, the will gave the job to the Overseers with, sometimes, the local Vicar and rarely churchwardens. In the rest the donors appointed men who were not otherwise involved in the will.

In the great series of Acts passed by the Elizabethan government, and particularly in the Poor Law Act of 1598, parishes were made responsible for those born there, or those who had been resident there for more than a year. Innovations included Overseers of the Poor, apprenticeship schemes for girls and boys, and introduced taxation and a parish obligation for poor relief amongst other measures. These statutes lasted for the whole period of this study.

## **Wills**

The poor were, to some extent, regarded as Christ-like and worthy of charity, and charity itself was, in part, a religious duty: ‘The rich men by their alms uphold the poor ... and the poor men again overshadow the rich men with their prayers’<sup>7</sup>. Philanthropy fell largely to the wealthier classes and, of necessity, only a small proportion on husbandmen and others. In this regard, as noted before in a study of inventories. Hope had disproportionately few well-off parishioners.

From the early mediaeval period, wills were governed by canon law. They were an important vehicle of influence for the church and therefore in the minds of the dying, for seeking forgiveness for their sins. One way of atoning for men’s sins was through bequests to the poor. In other words, wills were sacred documents and the promise of charity within them was, in the minds of those nearing death, important for ensuring benefit in the afterlife. It might be thought, therefore, that a large number of wills would contain such generous gifts, but this study has shown this not to be the case in Hope.

It has been asserted that charitable gifts in wills were influenced by the religiosity of donors, their wealth and whether they had children<sup>8</sup>. In the latter regard, it is postulated that those with fewer children, and therefore with more assets to dispose of, may have been more generous. Here, however, 17 of the donors left legacies to their children or grandchildren. All but two of the remainder left money to nephews, nieces, siblings and widows as well as to the poor.

This review has shown that charitable donations to the poor in Hope Parish were infrequent but, as was often the case at the time, many were celebrated by beautifully presented memorials in the church. Thirty-eight donors, with another two recorded on one of the boards, gave money to the poor. A further seven, not within this study, gave money to their local Free Schools only, including three for Hope.

Some of the sources of money for annuities have lapsed, the tolls for the turnpike road for instance. Eight of these wills put aside fields and other property so that the income from rents could be given every year to the poor of their villages. WS Porter, in 1923, named their trustees<sup>9</sup>.

It is interesting to speculate a hundred years later what has happened to those fields, and to the rentals intended for charity.

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All photos by Andy Bentham.

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## **Henry Buckston      Research by John Talbot**

Henry Buckston was Vicar of Hope from 1871 until his resignation in 1903. He was unusual for his length of service in the village, the longest since Thomas Wormald died in 1764<sup>1</sup>, for his unusual family and for the controversial alterations to St. Peter's Church during his incumbency.

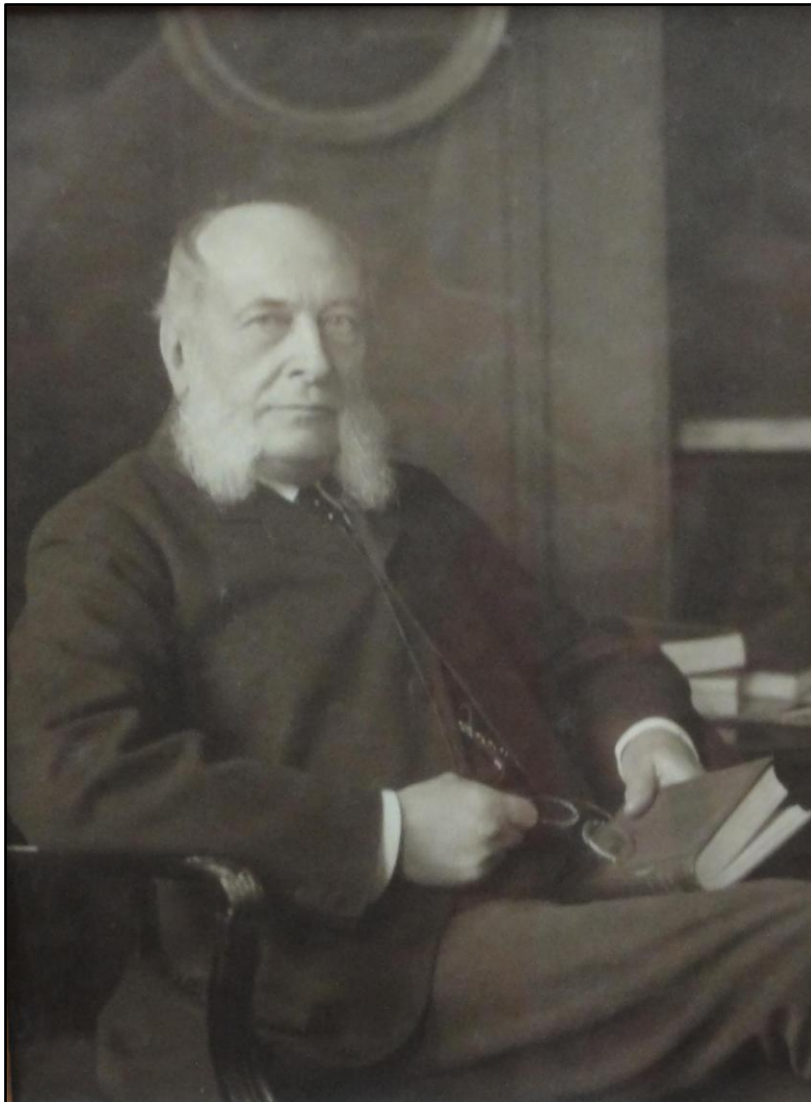


Fig 1. Henry Buckston

### **The Buckston Family**

His family were considerable landowners around Ashbourne and many of them were Church of England Vicars. His father, Henry Thomas Buckston and grandfather George Buckston were both in the Church as was his father's brother, German Buckston. German's son, Rev. Rowland German Buckston, another Vicar, lived at Sutton Hall, Sutton-on-the-Hill, which was also his vicarage. The

latter had an unhappy marriage and was estranged from his wife although his attempted divorce in 1875 was dismissed.<sup>2</sup>

Part of the reason for the close association with the local churches was that the family had the advowson for the posts, that is they had the right to appoint their own choices of vicars. The tradition went back to 1609 when George Buxton purchased the glebe land of All Saints Church, the remains of Bradbourne Priory, to build Bradbourne Hall<sup>3</sup>. Henry was described in documents as from Bradbourne and many of his family are memorialised in All Saints Church which is next to the hall. The family name was changed from Buxton to Buckston at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1820, the Buckstons, who were successive Vicars of Sutton-on-the-Hill, also built Sutton Hall as their vicarage, a short walk across the fields from the church.

Henry's father, Rev Henry Thomas Buckston, married Mary Goodwin Johnson in 1832. Her family owned property at Fenny Bentley and her brother, John Goodwin Johnson, built Callow Hall, also near Ashbourne. He committed suicide in 1871, having suffered a prolonged serious illness, and died childless<sup>4</sup>. As a result, Mary inherited Callow Hall. Henry and Mary had two sons, Henry, born in 1835, and George Goodwin Buckston in 1837, both in Bradley where their father was Vicar<sup>5</sup>. George became solicitor to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in London<sup>6</sup>. Henry's father died young, aged only 35, in 1842. This pattern of family tragedy recurred at other times in Henry's life.

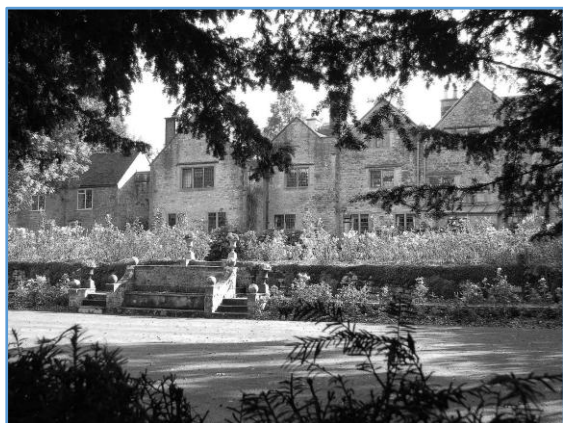


Fig 2. Bradbourne Hall



Fig 3. Callow Hall

## **Early career.**

After her husband's early death, Henry's mother moved to Church Street, Ashbourne whilst Henry received some of his education at the house of William Gibbs Barker, Curate of Matlock Bath, along with five other students<sup>7</sup>. He and his brother both went to St. John's College, Cambridge where Henry achieved his degree in 1856 and was ordained deacon in the following year<sup>8</sup>. He was appointed to a curacy in Rugely in 1857 where he remained until 1866, and then to a curacy at St. Mary's, Lichfield until his preferment to Hope<sup>9</sup>. He was at first appointed as a curate in Hope, although in sole charge, and then as Vicar in 1871.<sup>10, 11</sup>

## **Family.**

Soon after his appointment, in 1876, he married Eliza Amy Marrow, the elder daughter of William John and Kinbarra Swene Marrow.<sup>12</sup> He was a wealthy corn merchant from Liverpool and a director of the Royal Insurance Company. Mr. Marrow subsequently donated the church organ, commemorated by a small plaque on the organ dated November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1883.<sup>13</sup>

Henry and Eliza had two sons. Henry Beresford was educated at Eton and Cambridge but died in 1902 aged only 25, soon after being ordained. George Moreton, born in 1881, was also educated at Eton and Cambridge. He was a first-class cricketer, playing for Cambridge and then Derbyshire. After the Great War, in which he served in the Derbyshire Yeomanry he returned to playing cricket and was captain of Derbyshire in 1921. He lived at Sutton Hall after his father's death.

## **Vicar of Hope.**

From the moment he arrived in Hope, he was a busy man.<sup>14, 15</sup> He was widely reported for his activities, both religious and secular, as all contemporary vicars were. Hope was a very large parish, extending from Fernilee to Shatton, and, although assisted by curates, his diary must have been burdensome.

## **The Chancel dispute.**

At the outset of his tenure, reservations about the state of St. Peter's Church were publicly expressed. In 1870 the Derbyshire Times said "We sincerely trust that during the Incumbency of the Rev. Henry Buckston, we may see the old parish church restored to somewhat of its original beauty. At present the effect of white-washed walls, inconvenient pews and cumbrous gallery has a depressing influence upon the worshipper" and later "This tottering and dangerous chancel is at last 'condemned' and doomed to be taken down ere it falls".<sup>14, 16</sup> Mr. Buckston was well aware that parts of the church were in a parlous state and, as he wrote after the approaching row was over, "I am to some extent responsible for the safety of the choir who sat in the Chancel", which was thought to be in danger of collapse.<sup>17</sup>

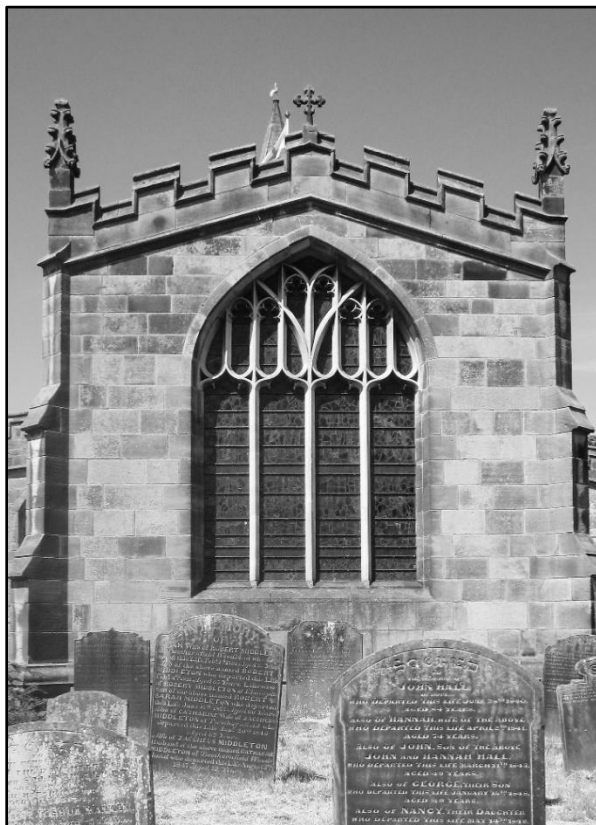
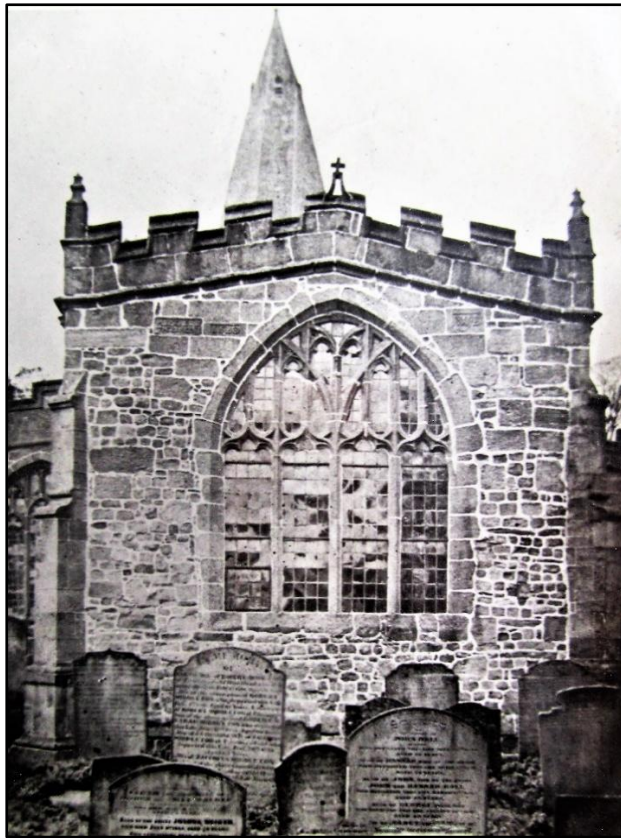
It is important to put the ensuing acrimony into historical perspective. At the time, many churches had become dilapidated. The Gothic movement was in full swing and restoration, often implying rebuilding in an elaborately mediaeval perpendicular style, was fashionable, with famous architects such as George Gilbert Scott and William Butterfield leading the way. Many historically significant artefacts were lost. Between 1840 and 1875 more than 7,000 medieval parish churches were restored or rebuilt, amounting to nearly 80 per cent of all parish churches.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, a vigorous movement against such ‘improvements’ arose, whose proponents included William Morris who jointly founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. Not surprisingly therefore, Hope Church was not unique locally in being restored. Eyam and Norton Churches were also being improved<sup>19</sup> and Gilbert Scott completely remodelled the west front and the interior of Lichfield Cathedral in 1855-78.

In 1881 Mr. Buckston proposed to demolish the chancel entirely and rebuild it. He had the sensitivity to inform the Derbyshire Archaeological Society (DAS), of which he was a member, of his plans and invited them to send an expert to review the state of the building, making it clear that he did not plan to restore the chancel but to ‘rebuild if from the foundations; the walls are in a ‘dangerous’ state’.<sup>17</sup> He considerably offered to arrange to meet the expert at the railway station. Messrs FJ Robinson and WH St John Hope were despatched to Hope. They particularly criticised the plan for a pitched roof which was to be covered with slates, rather than the flat lead roof there already. They disliked the plan to replace the windows and the priest’s door in the south wall.

On receipt of this report via the DAS a month later the Dean of Lichfield, who had responsibility for Hope Church, sent his own inspector, Oldrid Scott<sup>17</sup>. However, by this time, the work on the Church had already started under the supervision of Mr. Abbott, a Sheffield architect. Mr Scott agreed that the walls were ‘in a bad state’ and that in the past the roof probably had been pitched. He thought that the chancel should be rebuilt as closely as possible to the original. However, J Charles Cox, a well-known antiquarian and author of ‘The Churches of Derbyshire’, described the proposed work in Hope as ‘the most wanton destruction of historic work ever perpetrated in the country’, a case of ‘Vandalism’ and suggested that funding should be cut off for the project<sup>16</sup>. What now changed the hitherto business-like debate was that Arthur Cox, the secretary of the DAS, published the reports and all the correspondence in the newspapers.<sup>20, 21</sup> It is notable that Henry himself did not respond publicly although his comments are recorded in the DAJ article.



Fig 4. Hope Church chancel before (Sheffield City Archives MD 7755S W Smith Porter Collection) and after alterations. (Photo: Andrew Bower).



In the event, the building works went ahead at a cost of £1,195, the gift of ‘various benefactors’<sup>22</sup>. Some of the suggestions made by Messrs Robinson and St John Hope were respected in that the roof remained flat and the piscina and sedilia were replaced as before. The DAS treated the modifications as a triumph of lobbying: ‘Surely what has occurred at Hope proves, if proof were wanting, that a society like ours was very much needed in Derbyshire.’<sup>17</sup> Mr. Buckston took a different view: ‘Allow me to inform you that your Society’s recommendations had nothing whatever to do with these changes; the moment the reports of Messrs. Robinson and St. John Hope, and of Mr Scott appeared in the newspapers, they ceased to have any weight whatever with the Building Committee.’ He also averred: ‘It would be an evil thing for your Society, if its members were to imagine that writing violent one-sided letters to the newspapers could produce any effect on the minds of practical men.’<sup>17</sup>

## Later restorations.

As noted, Henry Buckston's father-in-law donated the organ in 1883 and in the same year the spire was renovated<sup>22</sup>. Captain Arkwright gave the clock at a cost of £140. In 1887, the nave was improved and heating installed at a cost of £2,050, funded by Edward Firth. On this occasion, no architect was employed and the work was carried out by Alfred Hill from Tideswell.<sup>23, 24</sup> A new roof and windows were installed and the gargoyles restored by his brother, the well-known wood- and stone carver Hedley Hill. The gallery at the west end of the church was removed and a window reopened. The pews were replaced using old wood and Mr Buckston donated a fine eagle lectern, also carved by Hedley Hill. Mr Bingham from the Old Hall donated some land adjoining the churchyard.

To commemorate Edward Firth's generosity there is a plaque on the north wall of the nave, linking the refurbishment with the Queen's Golden Jubilee. The notice includes the names of Henry Buckston, the churchwardens John Bagshaw and James Brown and the builder Alfred Hill. This is the only memorial to Henry Buckston in the Church. It is noteworthy that there was no protest or correspondence in the newspapers about the additional alterations.

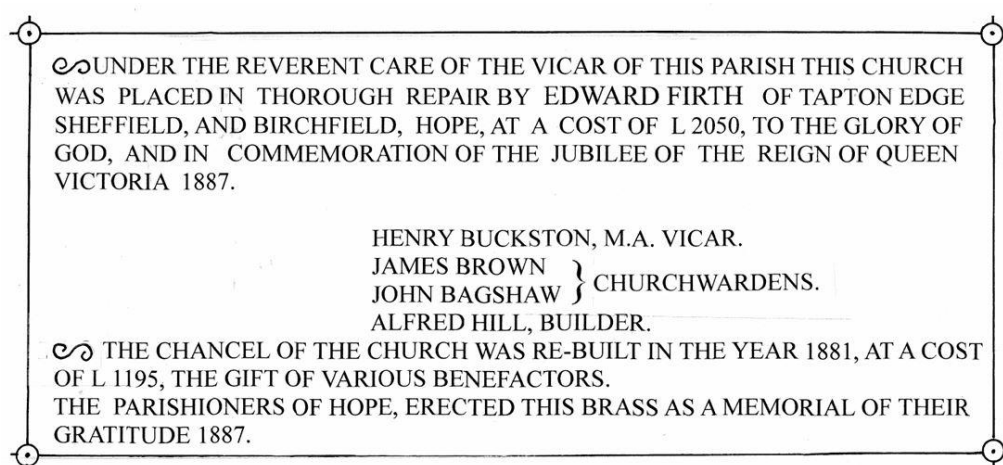


Fig 5. Wall plaque in Hope Church redrawn from a photograph by Andrew Bower.

During the repairs, Church services were held in the Old School. The Church was reopened on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1887 by the Bishop of Southwell and at a celebratory public luncheon afterwards, 'about 500' sat down to eat in a marquee behind the Church, chaired by the Vicar.<sup>22</sup>

## Henry Buckston's other activities

The Vicar had an important role at Hope School, governed as it was by the Church of England. Henry Buckston's name appears in every month of the school logbook, either as a teacher of a range of subjects or, sometimes, as the local inspector.<sup>25</sup>

For much of his time as Vicar, Mr Buckston was active politically. He represented Hope as a member of the Rural District Council<sup>26</sup> and was elected to the Derbyshire County Council representing Castleton in 1893.<sup>27</sup> He remained in the latter post for the rest of his incumbency. He was one of two Conservative members representing the High Peak<sup>28</sup> and had been chairman of the Buxton Conservative Association.<sup>29</sup> He was on the Board of Guardians in Chapel-en-le-Frith.<sup>30</sup>

In his retirement sermon he said that ‘when he first came to the parish it was 100 miles in circumference.’<sup>31</sup> Bradwell Church was consecrated in 1868 and in 1875 he gave £60 per year out of his own stipend towards the new living.<sup>32</sup> The very necessary rationalisation of Hope Parish continued with the formation of a new parish of Fernilee in 1888. Mr Buckston offered part of his stipend towards the new living there as well.<sup>33</sup> He went on in his sermon ‘that it was now possible for the Vicar to be known to all his parishioners’.

He was a keen bird fancier. He was the first president of the Bradwell District Fanciers’ Association.<sup>34</sup> He showed poultry at local shows with limited success.<sup>35</sup> He was also a supporter of the Longshaw sheepdog trials and donated a silver cup in 1899, being described at that time as ‘that good friend of the shepherd, and indeed of everybody else in that rural district.’<sup>36</sup>

Mr Buckston was a considerable property owner. He owned Bradbourne Hall and later, through inheritance, Sutton Hall. He inherited Callow Hall from his mother, which was rented out whilst he was Vicar. Through other family connections he was Lord of the Manor of Ash and Mapleton.<sup>37</sup> He had an address in London at 18 Holborn Hill.<sup>38</sup> He bought Higher Hall in Hope from Captain Arkwright in the busy year of 1887 and presumably rented it out as his residence in 1891 was still the Vicarage.<sup>39, 40</sup> He bought the buildings next to the gates into the churchyard in order to demolish them and facilitated the removal of the Shambles to the north of the churchyard.<sup>41</sup> Just before the end of his tenure in Hope, in 1902, his son, also Henry, died after a short illness. He had just been ordained and appointed to a curacy in South Molton, Kent.<sup>42</sup>

## **Retirement**

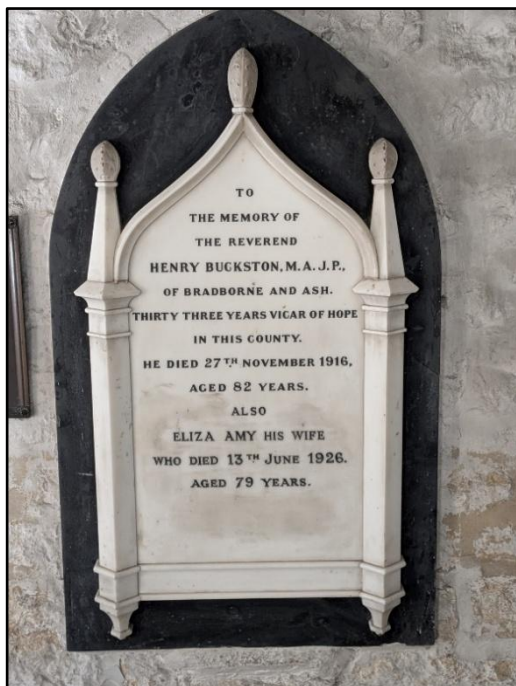
In 1903, his cousin Rev Rowland German Buckston, Vicar of Sutton-on-the-Hill and owner of Sutton Hall, died. Henry Buckston now inherited that estate and resigned as Vicar in Hope. He was promptly elected Alderman of Derbyshire County Council<sup>43</sup> and appointed a County Magistrate in 1904.<sup>44</sup>

Sutton Hall gardens became well known. He and his gardener Arthur Shambrook exhibited regularly and very successfully at home and abroad.<sup>44</sup> In 1906 they won a gold medal at the Royal Show for a collection of gloxinias<sup>45</sup> and in 1909 a silver Flora Medal at the Royal Horticultural Society for a 150 square foot display of cyclamen.<sup>46</sup> In 1916 they won the Derbyshire Gardeners’ Association gold medal for greenhouse and stove plants.<sup>47</sup>



Fig 6. Sutton Hall

He died at Sutton Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1916 and was buried at Bradbourne, greatly mourned locally



and in Hope. His memorial is in All Saints Church, Bradbourne. Eliza, his wife whose name is on the same memorial, survived him by 10 years and died at the family home of Callow Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1926. His legacy, although little celebrated in St. Peter's Church, was considerable. Even in recent times, the work he directed in the Church, much of which he quietly funded himself, has attracted criticism.<sup>48</sup> However, despite many family tragedies, he was not deterred and steadfastly followed his convictions. He was undoubtedly a man of determination and considerable leadership skills who used his wealth and influence to do much good in his parish.

Fig 7. Henry Buckston's memorial in All Saints Church, Bradbourne.

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## **'Throwing Light on Moses and Aaron: the curious paintings in St Peter's Church, Hope'. Research by Andrew Bower**

Our Members' Evening in 2025 included a short presentation with the above title. The group of four paintings now hang at the west end of the north and south aisles; they are very hard to appreciate due to layers of old varnish and centuries of grime. They depict Moses, Aaron, Time and Death... only Aaron is in reasonable condition. JC Cox, writing in 1876, noted that Moses and Aaron hung in the chancel whilst Time and Death were in the north aisle<sup>1</sup>. An attempt to achieve some improvement by photography and digital manipulation results in a better image of Moses and 'readable' images of the allegorical figures of Time and Death.

Back in May 1981, Evelyn Jakeman<sup>2</sup> contributed an article to Hope Parish News in which she discussed the paintings and what seemed to be known about them. References in WS Porter's book 'Notes from a Peakland Parish' showed that the churchwarden's accounts mentioned 1s 6d being spent in 1730 'At ye setting up ye Pickters'. Another reference in 1791-2 included pictures in a list of items to be 'painted' (more likely to mean 'varnished'). Evelyn Jakeman spotted the name 'Kindle' in the margin of the accounts and suggested this might be the name of the painter.

Related information was cited from the diary of Hon. John Byng who travelled through Dronfield in 1789<sup>3</sup>. After gaining sustenance at an alehouse, Byng visited the church where he remarked on the paintings of Moses, Aaron, Time and Death. From this evidence it was conjectured by Evelyn Jakeman that the Dronfield paintings might have been moved to Hope (although it was recognised that the Byng report of 1789 did not agree with the Hope dates).

A fresh look at this topic is assisted by easier access to old newspapers and obscure publications. The Buxton Herald of April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1881, mentions paintings of Moses and Aaron in Eyam parish church that once flanked the chancel arch but were, by then, consigned to the vestry. The Derby Mercury of 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1883 stated that Eyam now had stained glass windows by Clayton and Bell which depict Moses and Aaron. These windows survive in the west window of the tower but the paintings that inspired them are long since gone.

A visit to the parish church at Silkstone, near Barnsley has revealed restored paintings of Moses and Aaron in their original frames. They are regarded as early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and possible artists have been identified. Moses and Aaron also appear on painted boards in the parish church of Marton, Cheshire.

'The Oxford History of Anglicanism'<sup>4</sup> states that paintings of Moses and Aaron usually date from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, appearing in churches all over England and Wales, when the ban on the internal decoration of churches was rescinded following the Reformation. So it seems that the Hope

paintings are not historically rare, but they may prove to be rare survivals. Old newspapers do mention similar paintings having been lost, damaged or discarded. There do not seem to be mentions of sets of four paintings as seen in Hope and as formerly existing at Dronfield. It is a distinct possibility that an itinerant artist was responsible for the paintings at Dronfield before receiving a similar commission at Hope.

The cost of cleaning and repairing the Hope paintings is likely to be very considerable. If they, as a group of four, can be shown to be a rare survival then perhaps funding might be worth applying for at some future date.

The digitally enhanced images of Moses and Aaron, which are depicted on the back cover (Moses LHS), were taken by Andy Bentham.

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