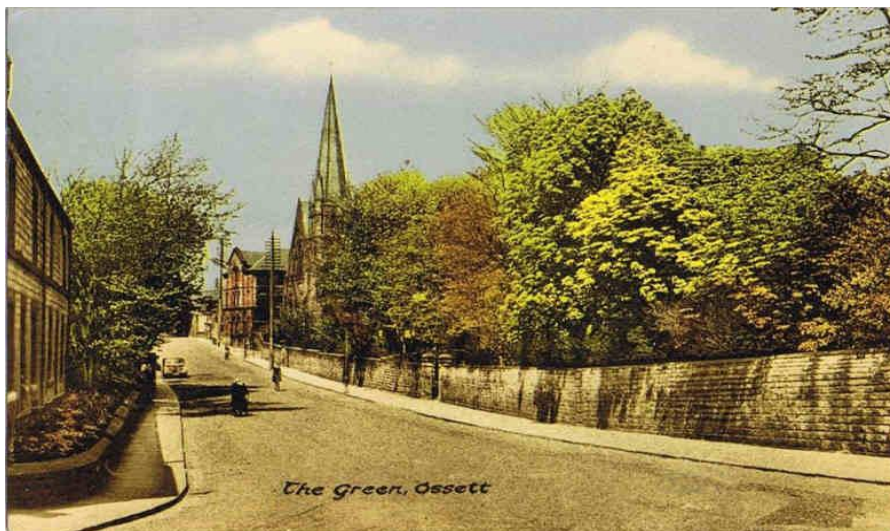


A History of Sowood House on The Green, Ossett



The Green in 1955 & 2015 with Sowood House to the right



A Doctor's Practice in Ossett 1795 to 1979 with particular reference to the Greenwood & Stoker families

Alan Howe
November 2015 (amended February 2018)

Introduction

In the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries four generations of the **Greenwood Family** were *General Practitioners, Surgeons and Apothecaries* with a practice in Ossett. For the whole of the 19th Century, and for parts of the 18th and 20th centuries, the family lived at Sowood House on The Green, Ossett. Sowood House, parts of which may date from the 17th century, was not only their home but also their Surgery, Dispensary and Operating Room.

The structure of Sowood House and its architecture suggests that the House may have been built in three stages over 300 to 400 years. The oldest part, the southern section, may date to the 17th Century, the northern section being of 18th Century construction with the front of the building being of most recent construction and re-modelling. Internally the upper floor levels are all different, that to the front being the highest, the middle section being some 8" lower and the oldest section is a further 3" below that¹.

Accepting that there are three sections explains why there are 2 halls in the house. The larger is in the northern, middle age, section which brings the three sections together, whilst the front, most recent, section has a smaller hall of its own, leading in to the larger one. The oldest section has an extensive cellar system, arranged for domestic cooking purposes and exposed beams (originally enclosed) in the upper floor ceilings². There is also evidence from 1937 that an apothecary's shop had been on the site for 300 years and that there had been a tablet over the door to the dispensary to this effect³

When the last of the Doctors Greenwood died in 1911, Sowood House continued to be used as a Surgery, first by William Louis Rene Wood until 1937 when Stephen Brandon Stoker and John Samuel Coad took over the practice. Dr Coad died in 1966 but, with some limited assistance, Dr Stoker continued until the following year when he retired from the practice. Dr Mehrotra took over what was left of the practice but by November 1979 he left and for the first time in 200 years, maybe more, Sowood House ceased to be a Doctors' Practice.

The history of the Greenwood and Stoker families and Sowood House which follows is based upon the usual source records⁴ but, in addition, information has been drawn from privately owned documents which have prompted this research. These documents are summarised at the end of this history. They all relate to the Greenwood family and also to Sowood House, The Green, Ossett or land which was once part of Sowood House.

I also wish to record here my particular thanks to Dr. John B Stoker, the son of Dr. Stephen Brandon Stoker, who has very kindly provided me with information and several photographs of his father and of Sowood House. This, of course, is first hand information since Dr John B Stoker lived much of his early life at Sowood House and indeed returned to live here with his family between 1979 and 2004. I am privileged to be able to include this information in this research.

The history is a work in progress. Other records to substantiate, contradict or embellish some of the findings are available at the West Yorkshire Archives Service in Wakefield, the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds, and by an examination of the Wills of those who lived and worked at Sowood House.

¹ Stoker family papers & their knowledge of Sowood House in which the family lived for 55 years.

² Ibid

³ Stoker family papers recording Dr Rene Wood's comments about the apothecary's shop in June 1937

⁴ Census, Birth, Marriages & Death, parish records, trade directories and newspaper accounts

The Greenwood Family in the 18th Century and their Pedigree

The Greenwood family were no strangers to Ossett in the 18th & 19th Century. John Greenwood (about 1766⁵-1831) was the son of Richard Greenwood. John had a brother, Richard, born about the same time in the 1760's/1770's. This brother married Elizabeth Liversedge of Lees Hall⁶ Thornhill in 1798 and the couple lived at the 15th Century dwelling bringing up their two daughters, Sarah and Ann Greenwood, who were born in 1800 and 1801 respectively. In 1871 spinsters, Sarah and Ann Greenwood, were visiting their cousin, Charles Wheatley, at his home, Sands House, in Hopton near Mirfield.

More importantly Richard **Greenwood's** wife, Elizabeth Liversedge, had a sister, Mary, who married a **Wheatley** in 1810 and they had a son called Charles Wheatley. The final piece of the relationship jigsaw was that Elizabeth and Mary Liversedge's mother was Sarah (nee **Haigh**). By a stroke of the pen on the Marriage Register, Richard Greenwood had secured the foreseeable future of the Greenwood family. The Greenwoods were now related to the immensely powerful Haigh and Wheatley families.

By the mid 1850's the Haigh family owned about 300 acres (10%) of Ossett land and Charles Wheatley inherited much of this estate from the Haighs in the late 1850's. It will be seen later that one of the areas he inherited was the land immediately behind Sowood House stretching almost to what is now, Station Road. The land may also have included that upon which Sowood House was built in the early/mid 18th Century.

The 1709 Manor of Wakefield Estate Book records the names of Abraham Greenwood and Daniel Greenwood as paying *Lords Rents* in Dewsbury and Hanging Heaton. One hundred years later John Greenwood named two of his sons, Abraham and Daniel; both were born in the early 1800's. The 1709 Manor Book also includes reference to *Greenwood* possessing land in Ossett. In 1775, an earlier John Greenwood⁷ was recorded as the owner of five acres of land called *Medley Sands*⁸, Ossett indicating that there was a John Greenwood presence in Ossett by that time.

An early 20th Century Obituary of George Spencer Greenwood records that, his great grandfather, John Greenwood began his Ossett practice in 1795 although it does not refer to Sowood House being the location. The Land Tax record for 1795 includes a *Mr Greenwood* as tenant of Mr Thorns. No evidence has emerged from this research that this could be Sowood House but it is the earliest Land Tax record to refer to a Greenwood as "Mr", an address used for an individual of some status. For example, a surgeon.

1) John Greenwood (1766-1831)

The earliest member of the Greenwood family who can be reliably recorded at Sowood House is **John Greenwood** (born 1766- died 1831) and his wife **Jane** (nee Greenwood, daughter of John Greenwood) (born about 1777 - died 1831). They were cousins and they married at Dewsbury All Saints Church on 22nd April **1799**.

⁵ Some sources record his birth in 1766 and others suggest 1776.

⁶ Charles Wheatley subsequently bought Lees Hall, in 1855, and rescued it from ruin.

⁷ Jane Greenwood's father was called John Greenwood.

⁸ Medley Sands is located adjacent to the River Calder to the west of Healey.

A John Greenwood is recorded in the Ossett Land Tax schedules in 1790 when he was a tenant of Joshua Thornes junior. The Thornes family owned land at the Green including a house on land which is now, Green Park. In the later 1790's John Greenwood was a tenant of woolstapler⁹ and land owner, Joshua Haigh of Longlands Hall, Wakefield Road, Flushtyke. The Haigh family¹⁰ also owned land on the Green and when the last of the Haigh line died in 1857 they left their land and wealth to Charles Wheatley¹¹.

In 1801 the following Notice appeared in the Leeds Intelligencer newspaper.



Notice in The Leeds Intelligencer 2nd March 1801

Whilst an address for the advertised *Substantial New Dwelling-House with a large barn, stable, garden and croft adjoining and belonging, situate on Ossett Green* is not included in the above Notice it almost certainly relates to Sowood House, The Green, Ossett. Reference is also made in the Notice to land at Farthing Royd Shut¹², to the copyhold nature of the land being sold and to *John Wilson*, the previous owner of the land. Because the land was copyhold any purchaser would require the approval¹³ of the Lord of the Manor of Wakefield before he was deemed to be the legal occupier of that copyhold land.

A much later Admittance record¹⁴ refers to John Greenwood having purchased from *the mortgagee and assignee of one John Wilson*¹⁵.... *a Dwellinghouse at Ossett Green with Barn, Stables,*

⁹ Woolstapler – a dealer in wool. A man who buys wool from the producer (farmer) sorts it and grades it and sells it on to manufacturers.

¹⁰ See Ossett Heritage website – Search Longlands

¹¹ Ibid

¹² The Farthing Royd land was situated on Healey Lane (now Road) to the south of Green Lea House and behind Shutts House

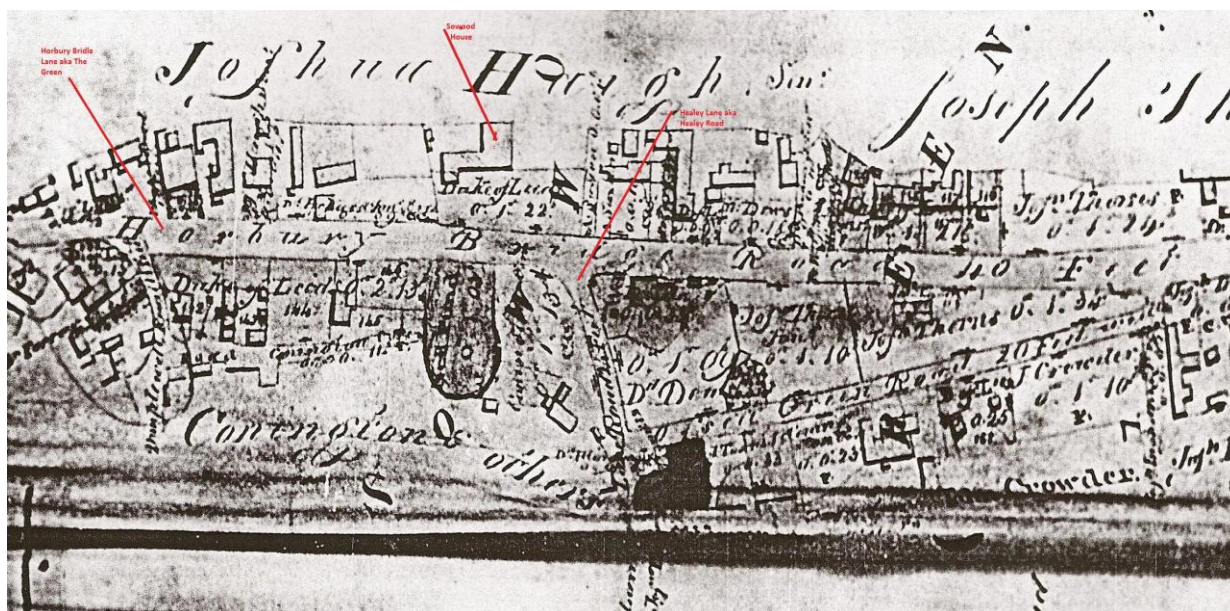
¹³ The legal terminology for this was *Admittance*.

¹⁴ Admittance dated 30th August 1895 - see fuller description later in the research.

¹⁵ John Wilson was declared bankrupt in November 1800.

Outbuildings and garden. The same Admittance record also refers to the Farthing Royd land which is mentioned in the above Notice and adds that, on 29th May 1807, John Greenwood was admitted by the Lord of the Manor of Wakefield as tenant to a *messuage, dwellinghouse or tenement at Ossett Green with barn, stables, outbuildings and garden.* This confirms that at least a portion of Sowood House was copyhold¹⁶ and that John Greenwood owned that interest.

In a conveyance dated December 1892, detailed later, Charles Wheatley is recorded as the owner of land to the east of Sowood House. A wealthy man in his own right, Charles inherited this land from the Haighs' estates in the late 1850's. A plan (below) from the 1807 Ossett Inclosure Order which shows Joshua Haigh as the owner of land behind Sowood House. The Plan also shows the name of the Duke of Leeds¹⁷ (beneath Sowood House on the plan) and a part of the House and land upon which it was built, encroaches up on the Duke of Leeds' land. Consequently it was that part of Sowood House which was copyhold land. This confirms references in other documents, used in this research, which state that Sowood House, was part copyhold and part freehold.



Plan 1807 Ossett Inclosure Order showing Sowood House The Green (under the "H" in Haigh).

In **1821** John and Jane Greenwood were living in Ossett at house number 290¹⁸ when John was described as a Surgeon. House number 290 was in the area of The Green¹⁹ and is almost certainly Sowood House. John and Jane Greenwood had at least seven children from their marriage, all born before 1821, but only five children were recorded living in the 1821 household. In **1822**²⁰ John Greenwood was described as a Surgeon with Robert Johnston, Surgeon, also practising at Ossett.

¹⁶ Copyhold land was land held from the Manor (of Wakefield). Generally required Manor consent before transactions (e.g. disposals of interests in it) were undertaken. Abolished under 1922 Act.

¹⁷ At that time the Duke of Leeds was the Lord of the Manor of Wakefield.

¹⁸ The 1821 Census does not include any property addresses but simply a property number. Knowledge of the whereabouts of other Ossett families and the property number they were allocated in the 1821 Census makes it possible to determine the approximate location of those 1821 property numbers.

¹⁹ The 1821 Census records the Pickard family living two doors away from John and Jane Greenwood. The history of Green Mount can be seen at the Ossett Heritage website (Search Green Mount)

²⁰ Baines Trade Directory

The Dewsbury Parish Burial Register shows the burials of John Greenwood and Jane Greenwood on the 3rd and 5th March **1831** respectively. The burial records refer to John as a surgeon and Jane's burial record refers to John Greenwood, surgeon, as her husband. It is clear that the couple died within days of each other in early March 1831. This may have been due to an accident in which they were both involved, a fatal illness that they both contracted or Jane may have died of a broken heart after losing her husband of 32 years.

2) George Greenwood (1805-1868)

Following John Greenwood's death, his eldest surviving son, **George Greenwood** (born March 1805 – died July 1868) took over the Greenwood medical practice at Sowood House. In **1830** the White's Trade Directory records Robert Johnstone as an Ossett surgeon and similarly records **George Greenwood**, Surgeon, at Ossett Green. In **1825** George Greenwood of Sowood House became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries. He probably worked alongside his father at Sowood House from this date.

On 4th June **1832** George Greenwood married Sarah Barker at St Giles and St Mary Church, Pontefract. Their first child, John William Greenwood, was baptised at Ossett on 21st August 1833. In **1837** George is recorded at The Green in the Ossett Poll Book.

In **1839**²¹ a solicitor, William Stewart, was *admitted* by the Lord of the Manor, to Sowood House and the Farthing Royd land. This does not signify that Mr Stewart was occupying the House but more likely that he has been granted the land and property as security for a loan or mortgage made to George Greenwood, who appears to remain in occupation of the House and land. It also appears from the subsequent 1895 documents that Sowood House and Farthing Royd land (about 1 acre) were left by John Greenwood, on his death in 1831, to his sons, George (& his wife, Sarah), Thomas (& his wife, Mary Willans) & Daniel (& his wife, Eliza). They surrendered their copyhold interest to the Lord of the Manor on the same day as Mr Stewart was admitted. It may have been the case that William Stewart lent money to George to enable him to buy out the part share in Sowood and Farthing Royd owned by his brothers, Thomas and Daniel. The 1895 documents also indicate that Farthing Royd was part of a larger allotment (2 acres & 4 perches) made to John Greenwood as a result of the Ossett Inclosure Act 1807.

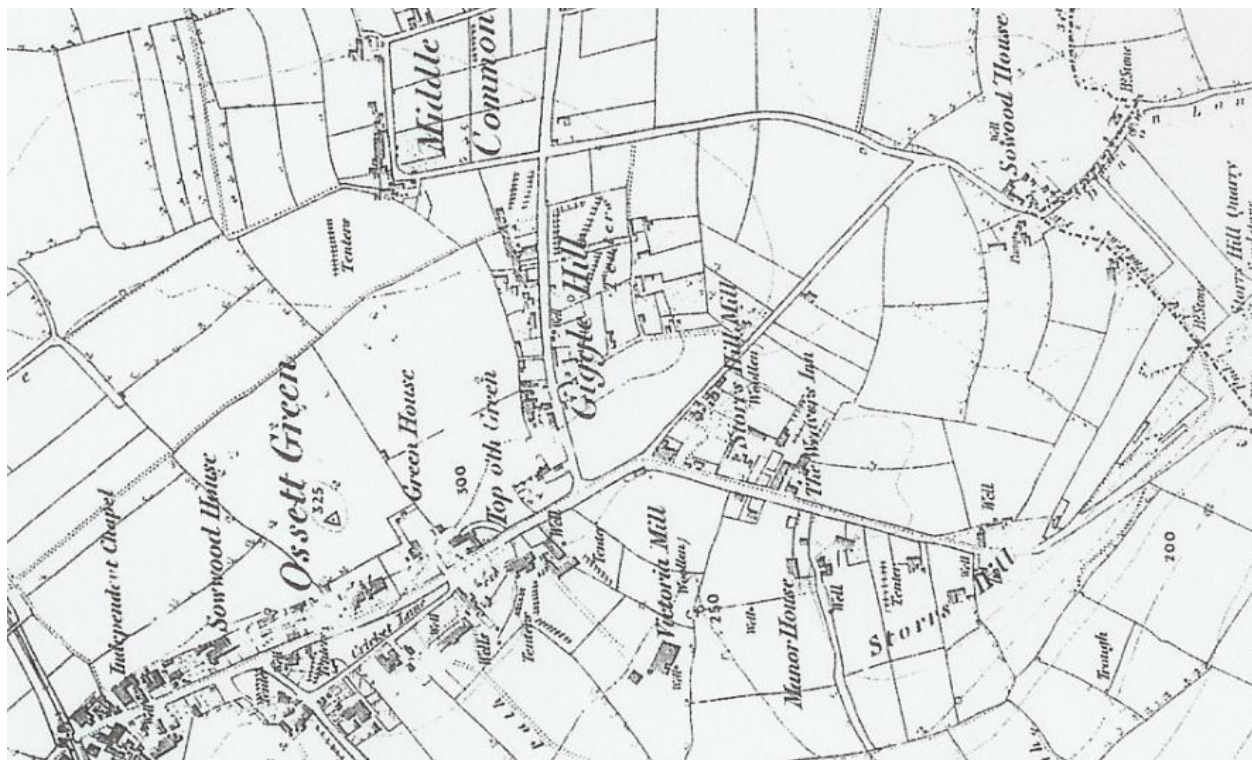
The Admittance of William Stewart was to cause George Greenwood's son, John William Greenwood, some technical legal problems some 56 years later in 1895.

In **1841** George Greenwood, a Surgeon, and his Pontefract born, wife Sarah, both aged 35 years, were living at *Green* with three of their children; John, Bransby and Georgiana born in 1834, 1838 and 1840 respectively. The children were all baptised at Ossett Holy Trinity Church and records show that George and Sarah had two other children, George (born 1836) and Alice Jane (born 1835) who were baptised at the same Church. The **1841** Pigot Trade Directory records George Greenwood, Surgeon of Ossett. The same Directory records Ossett surgeon William Wood Wiseman²².

²¹ Admittance documents dated 30th August & 20th September 1895

²² William Wood Wiseman became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries in 1833. A later incumbent of Sowood House in 1907 was, French born, *William* Louis Rene *Wood*.

The **1843** Ossett Tithe Award records George as the owner of more than 50 acres of land²³. Of this total George occupied 35 acres in his own name and rented 15 acres to others. His land ownerships were concentrated to the south of Sowood House, within the area which many believe was once part of the Manor of Sowood, also known as The Manor of Southwood Green.



Map 1850 Sowood House, The Green - bottom left. Sowood Farm House, Denton Lane - top right

In **1851** George Greenwood, G.P., was living at Sowood House with Sarah, a *surgeon's wife* and one of their children, John William Greenwood, now aged 17 years. White's Trade Directories in **1854** and **1858** each record three Ossett Surgeons, George Greenwood at Ossett Green, William Wiseman²⁴ at Streetside and L.R.Frame (sic). In **1861** George (aged 56 years) and Sarah (aged 55) were living at Ossett Green with one of their children, Alice Jane, who was 26 years of age and unmarried. They had one servant and a medical student staying with the family. Even though George had an Ossett Green address in 1861 he was not living at Sowood House but at the nearby *Cottage*, which was also owned by the Greenwood family. His 27 year old son, John William Greenwood, Surgeon was living at Sowood House, Green with his wife Mary.

In **1866** White's Trade Directory records three Ossett surgeons as in earlier years. George Greenwood was operating as *George Greenwood & Son* (John William), William W. Wiseman (Ossett Street) and Lockhart Ross France M.D. This latter name is probably that recorded in 1854 & 1858 as *L.R. Frame*

²³ The Return of Owners of Land 1873 records only 8.5 acres in the hands of Geo. Greenwood, Exors.

²⁴ In 1851 William Wood Wiseman was living at Town Knowle, Ossett but by 1861 Springstone House with his wife, five children and two servants

George Greenwood , Surgeon and Apothecary, of the Cottage, died on the 1st July 1868²⁵ and probate was granted on 31st August 1868 to his son, John William, surgeon, and Robert Alford of Clapham Rise, Surrey, Coach Builder. Robert Alford was George Greenwood's son in law, the husband of George's daughter, Georgiana²⁶.

3) John William Greenwood (1833-1904)

At the age of 22 years in 1855 John William Greenwood was registered as a Doctor qualified to practice in the U.K. In the same year he became a Licensed Midwife and in 1856 he was admitted to the Royal College of Surgeons and became a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries.

John William Greenwood married Mary Thompson at Sheffield in Spring 1860 and by 1861 (aged 28) he was working as a G.P. at Sowood House. White's Directory of 1870 records four surgeons' practices working in Ossett. John William was recorded at Ossett Green, William Wood Wiseman at Streetside with Lockhart Ross Frame M.D. and John Greaves Wiseman L.R.C.P.²⁷ operating different practices in the town centre. For the first time, Ossett had four surgeons.

In 1871 John William and his wife, Mary, were visiting a London solicitor, Frederick W. Snell²⁸. John William was recorded as a General Practitioner, Midwife and Apothecary. Two of their children, William and Nora, were living with their spinster aunt, Alice Jane Greenwood, at *Sowood Green House* Ossett. By 1881 John William Greenwood had been appointed the Medical Officer of Health for Ossett Borough. In the same year he and his wife were living on The Green with their four children, George Spencer (born 1862), William (1863), Bransby (1864) and Claude (1866).

The couple had a fifth child, their only daughter, Nora, born in 1868 but she was not recorded at home in 1881. George and William were medical students studying at London University and Bransby was a Law student and Articled Clerk. The family also have a live in cook, housemaid and a page. Their closest neighbours were the Pickards at Green Mount.

John William's wife, Mary, died, aged 55, in Spring 1887 and in 1891, John William aged 58 was working at Sowood House alongside his sons, William and George Spencer Greenwood who had also qualified as Doctors. By 1893 George Spencer Greenwood had succeeded his father as Ossett's Medical Officer of Health and about this time John William Greenwood, aged 60, moved to live in Scarborough.

In the same year John William Greenwood increased his family's land and property holdings in Ossett by acquiring the neighbouring Green Mount property and adjacent land from the estate of the Pickard family²⁹

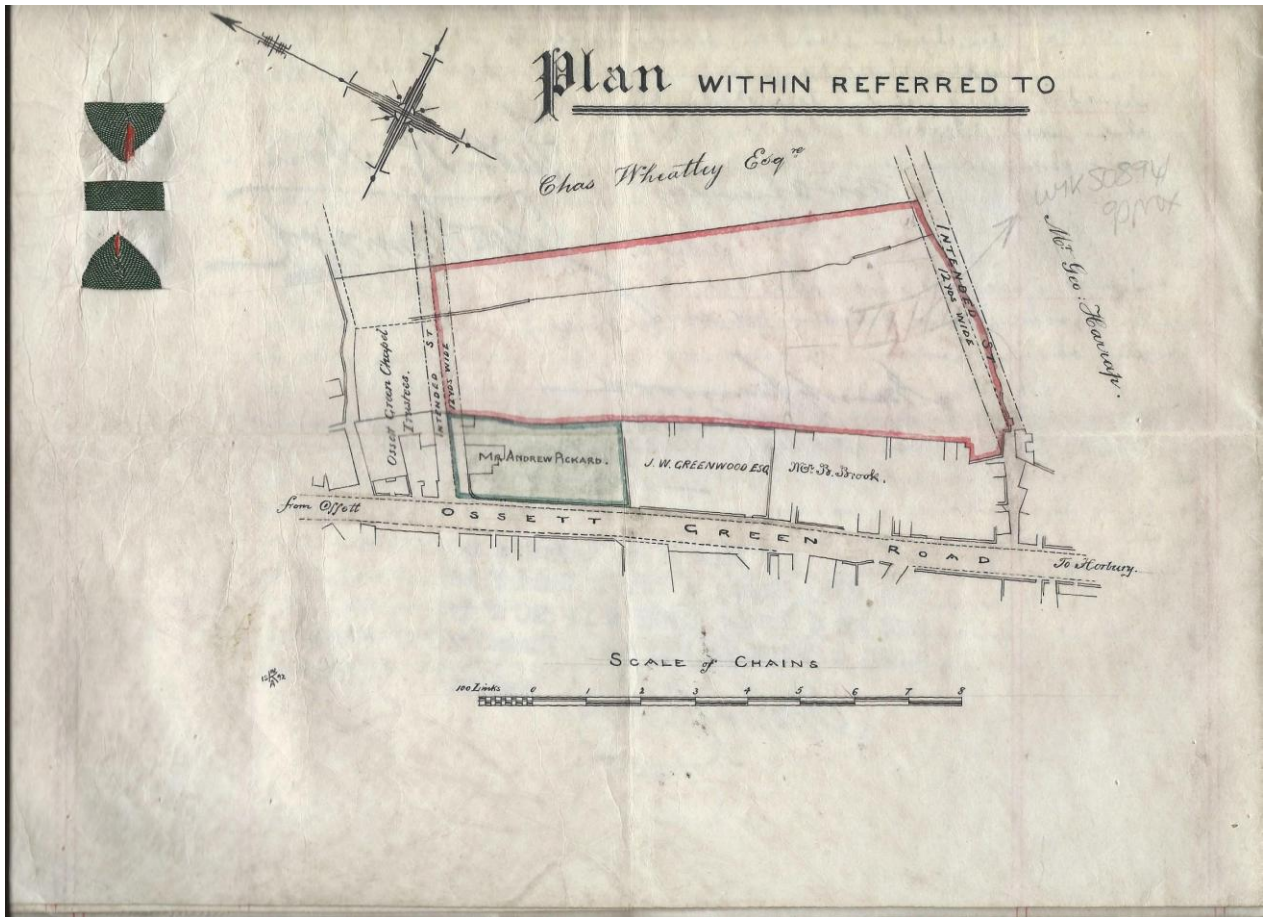
²⁵ Ossett Observer 4th July 1868.

²⁶ Georgiana and Robert Alford married at Thornhill, At Michael and All Angels Church on 20th September 1860. The couple lived in Surrey. Georgiana died on 1st May 1904 and Robert re-married in 1906..

²⁷ L.R.C.P Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians

²⁸ Snell appears again in 1923 on the death of Robert Alford when he was an executor of Robert's estate.

²⁹ Ossett Heritage website – Houses – Green Mount



The above **Plan** is included in a Conveyance dated 21st December **1892** between Frederick Robert Hird and John William Greenwood. Sowood House is shown with the initials J.W. Greenwood and stands between Green Mount (Andrew Pickard) and Mr Bennett Brook (farmer of Sowood Farm). The Conveyance is described in more detail at the end of this research but it deals with the purchase of the copyhold Green Mount (shown in green) and almost 4 acres of freehold land (shown in red) by J.W. Greenwood from F.R. Hird who had inherited Green Mount and the land in early 1892 from the last of the Pickard line; an adopted son called George Pickard³⁰. The Conveyance also indicates that Andrew Pickard, George Pickard's unmarried uncle, had purchased Green Mount in May 1876 and the adjacent land in 1881 from Charles, Richard and Caroline Wheatley.

John William Greenwood paid £850 for the copyhold interest in Green Mount and £2,000 for the freehold portion of the land. By disposing of his interest in the copyhold Green Mount land, Frederick Robert Hird, was required to surrender³¹ his interest to the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Wakefield³². Simultaneously, to secure his interest in the copyhold, John William was required to seek *admittance* to the land which was duly granted by the Lord and Lady of the Manor. The freehold land acquired by John William Greenwood in this transaction was subsequently developed to extend, and provide dwellings along, Lime Street. Plots with a Southdale Road frontage were also sold for development.

³⁰ The Conveyance also records that Andrew Pickard had purchased Green Mount in 1876 and the adjacent freehold land from the Wheatley family in 1881.

³¹ F.R.Hird surrendered his copyhold interest to the Wakefield Court Baron dated 6th January 1893.

³² At that time the Lord and Lady of the Manor were the Earl and Countess of Yarborough, Charles Alfred Worsley and his wife Marcia Amelia Mary (nee Lane Fox)

Subsequently, on 24th December **1895**, John William Greenwood entered into a Deed of *Enfranchisement* with the Lord and Lady of Manor of Wakefield. By way of this deed and on payment of a fee of £21, John William was able to buy out the Wakefield Manor's copyhold interest in Green Mount. In the same transaction, John William also bought out the Manor's copyhold interest in land at Farthing Royd Shutts (Healey Lane – later Healey Road) and, more importantly, he also bought out a part copyhold interest in Sowood House.³³ These transactions had the effect of converting the copyhold land to freehold which allowed John William, and his heirs, to dispose of the land and property at will and not be beholden to the Lord and Lady of The Manor for consent.

John William Greenwood of 11, Grosvenor Road, Scarborough died on the 31st July **1904**, aged 71, and probate was granted on 3rd October 1904 to his sons George, surgeon, and Bransby, solicitor. His estate value was £17845.4s 6d. John William's address at the time of his death was the Scarborough home of his 68 year old spinster sister, Alice Jane, who had lived in Scarborough for some years³⁴. Alice died in early 1911, aged 76 years.

Obituary of John William Greenwood, Ossett Observer, 6th August 1904³⁵;-

Dr John William Greenwood died at Scarborough where he had lived for the previous 12 years. He was in his 72nd year and had been Ossett's first Medical Officer of Health. The medical practice which he had carried on had been established more than a century earlier by his grandfather, John Greenwood, and had been continued by his father, George Greenwood.

He was educated at Bramham College and Leeds Medical School and was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, a licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries and of the Royal College of Physicians. He was briefly a house surgeon at Leeds General Infirmary and in 1855 joined his father in Ossett. Of a genial nature he became one of the most widely known and respected men in the town.

He was a successful medical practitioner and as Medical Officer of Health was ahead of most of his contemporaries in recognising the importance of sanitation and the spread of sanitary knowledge among the public. He was also the Medical Officer of Health for the Poor Law districts of Ossett. He resigned as the town's Medical Officer of Health in 1892 and was succeeded by one of his sons, Dr. George Spencer Greenwood and in his two posts by another son, Dr William Greenwood. After retiring from his practice in 1894, he moved to Scarborough. He had four sons and two daughters. He was a Liberal in politics and a Congregationalist in religion attending the Green Church of Sowood House, the town's Medical Officer of Health

³³ These latter interests, in Farthing Royd land and in Sowood House, were acquired, some 90 years earlier by John William's grandfather, John Greenwood, between 1801 and 1807.

³⁴ Alice Jane Greenwood of Summerfield, Grosvenor Road, Scarborough, died at Sowood House on 25th January 1911, aged 76 years. Probate was granted to Bransby Greenwood, solicitor. Effects £3661 10s 1d.

³⁵ Ossett Observer Obituaries for John William, George Spencer and William Greenwood Courtesy of David Scriven

4. George Spencer Greenwood (1862-1905) & William Greenwood (1863-1911)

George Spencer Greenwood became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in **1886** and a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries in **1889**.

George Spencer and his brother William had been involved in the family practice at Sowood House for several years before their father moved to Scarborough and they had made their mark on, and gained the respect of, the local community. In addition to working as G.P.'s they had both achieved high office with the local borough. By **1893** George Spencer Greenwood was the Medical Officer of Health to the Corporation and William Greenwood was the Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator Ossett District, Dewsbury Union.

In **1901** George Spencer Greenwood, aged 39, surgeon, was recorded in the census as the head of Sowood House. His brother, William, aged 38, was also a surgeon living in the household. In addition their sister, Nora, aged 33, and their brother, Claude, a Civil Engineer, were also living at Sowood House. Only Claude was recorded as being married³⁶, although his wife is not recorded in the household. John William Greenwood, aged 67, a retired surgeon, completes the household except to the extent that the family also employed a live in cook and a housemaid.

William Greenwood married, Clapham born, Alice Alford in late **1905**³⁷. Alice was the daughter of William's uncle and aunt, Robert Alford and Georgiana (nee Greenwood). Consequently William and Alice were also cousins. The couple were to have four daughters from their marriage. Nora was born in 1907, Joyce (Alice) in 1908 and twins, Mary and Sarah, in 1909. It is likely that William and his family lived at Sowood House after the marriage and the arrival of four children³⁸ would bring some light and happiness into a home which otherwise saw dark times in the early years of the 20th Century.

George and William's spinster sister, Nora, died in Ossett on 5th September **1904**, just five weeks after the death of her father, John William, on 31st July 1904. Nora was just 36 years of age. Probate of her estate was granted to her brother William on 22nd December 1904 and her effects were valued at £4134 10s.

George Spencer Greenwood died a year or so later on 2nd October **1905** and Administration of his estate was granted to his brother, William. His effects were £8106 17s 4d. The Grant of Administration indicates that George did not leave a Will which may also mean that his death was sudden and unexpected. He was 43 years of age and unmarried.

Obituary of George Spencer Greenwood, Ossett Observer, 7th October 1905;-

Dr George Spencer Greenwood of Sowood House, the town's Medical Officer of Health, died in his 45th year. His health had broken down two years earlier, but he had seemed to recover. His great-grandfather, John Greenwood, began to practice as a surgeon in 1795. The practice was then continued by his grandfather, George, and his father, John William, before he and his brother,

³⁶ Claude married Mary Ellis, eldest daughter of Eli Ellis of Park House, at the Congregational Church. Ossett Observer 28th June 1890.

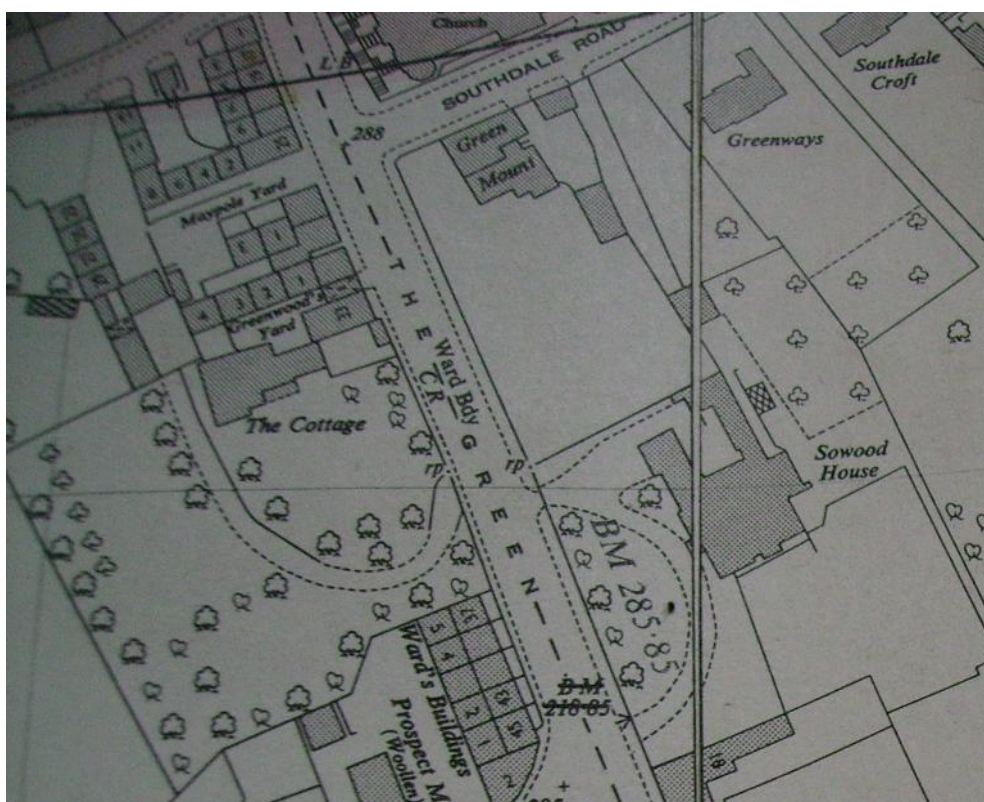
³⁷ The marriage was registered at Brentford.

³⁸ Nora, Mary and Sarah's births were registered in Dewsbury. Joyce (who, later, appears to be known as Alice Joyce) birth was registered in Tendring, Essex.

William, took it over. He was educated at Silcoates and then at a private school in Nottingham conducted by a former Silcoates master before completing his studies in Germany.

His medical training was at Leeds College of Medicine and he spent a few months in London. He was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and held a diploma in Public Health, London. He became the Medical Officer of Health on the retirement of his father in 1892. His reports were examples of what reports should be and he was frequently outspoken.

By **1910**, following the deaths of his father and his elder brother, **William Greenwood**, inherited ownership of Sowood House, Green Mount and other land in the vicinity. Green Mount which in 1901 was rented to Samuel Ellis was now rented to Henry Briggs, woollen manufacturer. William's younger brother, Bransby, had also inherited some of the land and property including his home at The Cottage, on the opposite side of The Green to Green Mount, and a row of cottages, known as Greenwood's Yard, adjacent to The Cottage³⁹.



Map (1960's) showing The Cottage, Greenwood's Yard, Sowood House & Green Mount⁴⁰

Southdale House – top right – built 1938 was the home of Architect & Surveyor, Charles Kendall.

³⁹ The Cottage is now the building known as Dimple Lodge Hotel

⁴⁰ All of these dwellings were owned by the Greenwood family.

William Greenwood, died on 20th January 1911, aged 48. It seems that, like his brother, he died intestate and the administration of his estate was granted on 25th May 1912, to his widow, Alice Greenwood (nee Alford). His effects were £6377 5s 2d. William's death saw the end of the Greenwood family's occupation of Sowood House as a home and workplace. William's wife and four young daughters, all under the age of five years, moved south and in 1911 widow Alice Greenwood and her four daughters were living at 403 Upper Richmond Road, Putney. She named her house *Sowood* to remind her of her husband and happier times. Alice, living on private means, had a live in nurse and a servant to assist with her children and chores. Her nephew, George Greenwood⁴¹, a 19 year old Law Student, is also recorded in the household.

Obituary of William Greenwood, Ossett Observer, 21st January 1911;-

Dr William Greenwood died, in his 49th year, at Sowood House. He was educated at Silcoates, then Germany and then a private tutor in Nottingham. He was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (London). About four years earlier he had been joined in partnership by Dr W.L.R. Wood. He was genial and popular and had an extensive practice. For many years he was President of the Ossett Cricket Club and, like his father, he was deeply interested in its success. He left a widow and four children.

The death of William Greenwood in January 1911 saw the last of the Doctors Greenwood who had occupied Sowood House for more than 100 years. The House continued to provide the facilities for a Doctors' Surgery for almost another 70 years.

5. William Louis Rene Wood (1877- 1942)

The 1911 Census⁴² records the 33 year old, French born, **Dr. William Louis Rene Wood**, Physician and Surgeon, living at the 12 roomed Sowood House with his wife of three years, 36 year old, Emily Gertrude (nee Haslam). Living with them in the household was Gertrude's mother, two domestic servants and a 24 year old Physician & Surgeon, Clifford Crawshaw Pickles. Dr. Wood had worked alongside William Greenwood in the Sowood House practice since 1907 and would spend the next 30 years there.

William Louis Rene Wood was born on 16th August 1877 at Baccarat, Lorraine, France, the son of William Louis and Josephine Juliete Wood, both subjects of France. It is not certain when William Louis Rene first came to England but in 1891 he was 13 years of age and a pupil at Turton Hall School at Gildersome. William, aged 21 years, received his Naturalisation Certificate having made his Declaration and sworn his allegiance to the Queen on 18th October 1898 whilst a medical student residing at New College, Harrogate. His 1898 Declaration confirmed that he had resided in the United Kingdom for five of the previous eight years.

⁴¹ George was the son of Bransby and Lizzie (nee Stonehouse) Greenwood, The Green, Ossett. George served as a Captain in the 4th Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI) and is recorded in the Ossett Observer Roll of Honour dated 24th December 1914 (see Ossett Heritage website (search WWI Ossett Fallen)

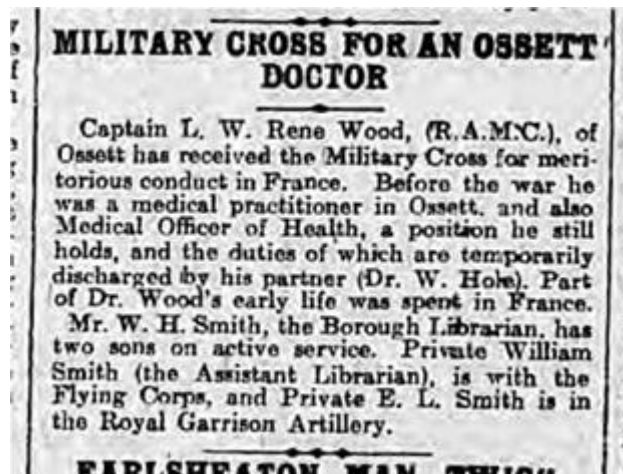
⁴² Electoral records show William Louis Rene Wood at Belgrave Street Ossett in 1911 suggesting that he may have moved to live at Sowood House shortly thereafter, following William Greenwood's death.

By 1901 William Louis Rene Wood was a medical student and boarder at New College Harrogate which was operated by the Haslem family. The head of the family was Reverend John Haslem who had been Headmaster and proprietor of Turton Hall, Gildersome. When the lease expired on Turton Hall in 1898 Haslem bought land in Harrogate and established the independent proprietary school which he called New College. William Louis Rene Wood attended both the Haslem run Turton Hall and New College and he also married Gildersome born, Emily Gertrude Haslam, the daughter of Baptist Minister, John Haslam, on 24th April 1907.

William Louis Rene Wood was licensed to practice as a doctor on 19th May **1905** first becoming a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries and, in **1908**, a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians.

Sometime after the declaration of war on 4th August 1914 Dr. W.L.R. Wood enlisted, joined the R.A.M.C. at the rank of Lieutenant and subsequently Captain, attached to the 69th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He embarked for his home country of France on 16th April 1915.

He was awarded the British and Victory Medals for his service in a theatre of war and the 1914-15 Star Medal to recognise his service overseas on or before 31st December 1915. His medal card indicates that he was awarded the Military Cross, a decoration for gallantry during active operations in the presence of the enemy. Commissioned officers with the rank of Captain or below or Warrant Officer were eligible for the award. His medal card also includes the word "Emblem" which signifies that he was also Mentioned in Dispatches for which he was entitled to wear an oakleaf on the ribbon of the Victory Medal.



Batley News 9th September 1916

Dr Wood's partner, Dr W.Hole, continued the Sowood House practice during WW1 whilst Dr Wood served as a Lieutenant and later as Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps attached to the Royal Field Artillery. It was while serving in France that he was awarded a Military Cross for meritorious conduct. Meanwhile back in Ossett there is evidence that a young woman, Constance Elliot-Birks⁴³,

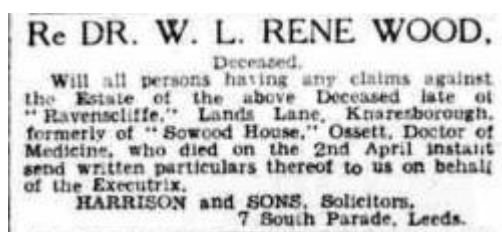
⁴³ A biography of Constance Elliot-Birks can be seen at <https://ossettheritage.co.uk/ossett-in-ww1/nurses/miss-constance-elliott-birks/>

spent some time at Sowood House during the last year of the war. Constance was a nurse for a period during WW1, serving, close to the front line, at the Scottish Women's Hospital in Royaumont, France. Her short stay at Sowood House in 1918 is puzzling but her father, James Shipton Birks, who appears to have accompanied her to Sowood House, had served in many capacities during his working life. His various employments included work as a chemical agent, a commercial traveller and a manufacturing chemist. This may have been the reason for his presence in Ossett.

Dr Wood was still occupying Sowood House on 3rd December **1928** when he entered into a new ten year lease with a five year option, offered to him by Alice Greenwood, the widow of William Greenwood and the administrator of his estate following his death in 1911. Alice's address, 1133 Upper Richmond Road Putney, was similar to the address at which she lived with her daughters in 1911.

Perhaps contemplating a change in tenant, and/or a change in use for Sowood House, in February 1937 Alice Greenwood instructed the family solicitors, Messrs Snell & Co, to commission Ossett architect, Charles Kendall A.R.I.B.A. of 10, Bank Street, Ossett. His brief was to undertake a survey of Sowood House and to make recommendations regarding any necessary remedial work which may be needed to secure the future of Sowood House.

William Louis Rene Wood remained at Sowood House until 1937, the year before the end of the ten year lease term. By 1940, aged 63, Dr Wood had moved to Ravenscliffe, Lands Lane, Knaresborough and he was living there when he died in Harrogate General Hospital on 2nd April 1942. His widow, Emily Gertrude, survived him and he left effects to a value of £ 8176 19s 9d.



Yorkshire Post Saturday 11th April 1942

6. Stephen Brandon Stoker (1904 – 1979) & John Samuel Coad (1907-1966)

The results of Charles Kendall's **1937** survey findings are included in Appendix 1 but interestingly his opening remarks in the report stated that *the property is over 200 years old in parts & very badly weathered and dilapidated.....* His report does not specify his sources for this information, which dates the house to before 1737, but Charles Kendall had lived all of his life in Ossett and knew a bit about vernacular architecture⁴⁴. It does however beg the question regarding the Notice of Sale in The Leeds Intelligencer on 2nd March 1801 which refers to Sowood House as *a very good substantial new dwelling –house*. By Charles Kendall's reckoning **parts** of the House would be about 75 years old by 1801. This fits the premise mentioned earlier that Sowood House probably had three phases in its development. The oldest stage, its origins, in the early 18th century or maybe even the 17th century was followed by the second phase, perhaps in the late 18th Century as suggested in the 1801 Leeds Intelligencer Notice which refers to a *new dwelling*.

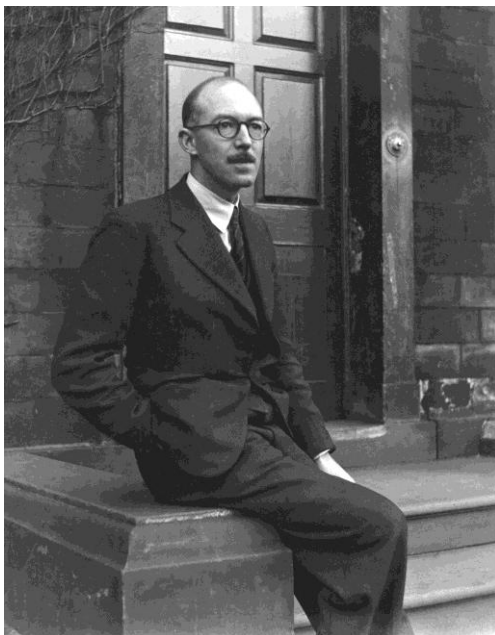
It is not known whether Charles Kendall's recommendations regarding remedial and re-modelling work were acted upon but in the same year as his report, **1937**⁴⁵, Dr. S.B. Stoker and Dr. J. S. Coad

⁴⁴ a category of **architecture** based on local needs, construction materials and reflecting local traditions.

⁴⁵ British Telephone records

had moved into Sowood House and commenced a new Practice. In June of that year Dr. Stoker took over the last year of Dr Wood's lease and at the end of this an offer of a further ten year lease of Sowood House was taken up by Dr Stoker. At the end of this 10 year period in March 1948, Dr Stoker purchased Sowood House⁴⁶ The Greenwood family had reserved some land to the north east of the House which was subsequently developed for further house building along the adjacent Lime Street. There is more about this to follow.

Stephen Brandon Stoker was born on 21st September 1904, the elder son of Stephen Stoker and his wife, Jane Rebecca (nee Brandon) who was born in Abbeyleix, County Laois, Ireland. The couple married there in 1902 and by 1911 they had two sons and the family was living at Huyton with Roby in Lancashire. Stephen Stoker had progressed to a senior management position with the London & North Western Railway which enabled the family to employ a female servant who was living in the household. The family was reasonably affluent and could also afford to send their two sons, Stephen Brandon and Arthur Desmond (born summer 1909) to study medicine in Edinburgh and for their daughter, Aphra⁴⁷, born spring 1913, to train as a teacher.



Stephen Brandon Stoker (pictured opposite in 1948) completed his undergraduate studies at Edinburgh University, but then, unusually, chose to sit his qualifying examinations with the Royal College at Edinburgh *and also* the Royal College at Glasgow, both in 1927. He was successful in both examinations and his qualifications in 1927 are L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. Ed. and L.R.F.P.S. Glas. (Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh and Licentiate of the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow).

Immediately after qualifying, he was making arrangements to go to Africa as a medical missionary under the aegis of the Church of Scotland. He went to what was then Nyasaland in Portuguese East Africa, sailing from London⁴⁸ on 26th June 1928 and arriving in Beira, Mozambique at the beginning of August 1928. He supervised the building of a hospital and was the only doctor present in the area and managed the mission together with the Church of Scotland minister.

He left Mombasa, Kenya, aboard the Llandovery Castle, arriving in Southampton on 20th September 1932. His UK address was given as 124, Bramhall Lane, Stockport and he was 27 years. Shortly thereafter he started his post graduate surgical training in Newcastle. He worked in various hospitals in the area, undertook professional visits to Portugal and Sweden and had a period of research in the Department of Physiology. He was awarded his FRCS (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh) in 1936.

⁴⁶ Dr.Stoker family papers.

⁴⁷ Aphra was named after her mother's sister, Emily Aphra Brandon, who was born in October 1872 and died aged 4 months, in early 1873.

⁴⁸ His home address was given as 39, Cowgate, Edinburgh, he was 24 years of age & his occupation was *missionary*

Stephen Brandon Stoker married Jane W Giles in Summer **1935**. The couple sailed, 2nd Class, to Lisbon for their honeymoon on 13th July 1935 aboard the Royal Mail Line Ltd ship, Arlanza. Their home address was given as 6, Woodbine Av., Gosforth. As planned, Jane, a teacher, returned home (on 29th August 1935) after their holiday together while Stephen Brandon remained in Portugal conducting medical research before returning to the UK on the Highland Chieftain on 26th September 1935. The port of arrival was given as London and his proposed UK address in the ship's log was Tyrley, Cheltenham Rd, Evesham, Worcs. Realising that General Practice was his calling, and after working in various practices around Newcastle, he moved to Ossett in June 1937. The couple had three children there, John B (born 1937), Margaret J (1941) and Marjorie R (1944).

John Samuel Coad was born at Cramlington, Northumberland in Spring 1907, the second surviving son of Colliery Cashier Samuel Coad and his wife Jane Weatherston⁴⁹ who married in 1902. In 1911 Samuel and Jane were living at Farm Cottage Cramlington with their two sons. They also had a live in servant.

John Samuel Coad studied Medicine at Durham University where he gained a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. On 13th July **1933** he was first licensed to practice and in 1937 he joined Stephen Brandon Stoker in the Sowood House practice. He married Joyce Fearnside at Ossett in summer 1940. The couple had, a son, Derek Samuel in late summer **1941** and a daughter, Pamela, in **1944**.



Sowood House in 1948 (Photograph courtesy of Dr John B Stoker)

There had been extensive coal mining in the area, and many old properties had suffered subsidence. By this time, **1948**, the National Coal Board judged that the subsidence was complete, accepted responsibility, and agreed to fund a major repair. The whole of the outer wall of the front of the house was taken down, and the existing stones used to re-build it. Many of the ceilings were

⁴⁹ Jane's second name appears to be Wetherston but her surname is illegible. She died at 4 Benton Crescent Horbury on 7th January 1965. Her home address was given as Buttermere Avenue, Whicklam, County Durham

extensively repaired. The upper floor of the old dispensary, examination and surgery block was removed and replaced with a flat roof.

The opportunity was taken to re-position the surgery premises, in retrospect rather along the lines suggested by Charles Kendall in his 1937 report (Appendix 1), although it is not known if the Stoker family were aware of that report at that time. The room on Kendall's 1937 plan labelled "Dining room" became the Consulting room, with the "Housemaids pantry" becoming the Examination room. The room labelled "Kitchen" became the waiting room and the office was in the "Old engine room", at this time referred to as the "Sun room" as it had been used for UV light therapy. Domestically, the "Waiting room" became the kitchen, and a new doorway was made into the "Smoke room", which became the Dining room. The "Old coach house" had been demolished some years earlier.

By **1946** Dr Coad was working at the Sowood House practice, as equal partner with Dr Stoker. All of his normal practice work took place there but he also saw the occasional private patient, and undertook other examinations, such as for insurance purposes, at Enfield House, Sowood Lane, Ossett. Sadly his only son died on 19th July 1963, aged 21 years.

Three years later, on 12th November **1966** Dr John Samuel Coad of 4, Benton Crescent, Horbury died in Leeds General Infirmary. He was 59 years of age. Probate was granted to his wife, Joyce. His effects were £15745.



After Dr Coad died in November 1966, Dr D.M. Broughton helped Dr Stoker in the Sowood House practice but many of Dr Coad's patients had changed to other practices. Dr Stoker, now approaching his mid 60's, was finding the strain of managing essentially a single handed practice hard. Unable to attract a suitable partner he retired in December 1967, aged 63 years although he did continue with his role as Police Surgeon⁵⁰ and also undertook some industrial medicine work until shortly before his death. **Dr Stephen Brandon Stoker pictured opposite in 1967 (Ossett Observer photograph courtesy of his son, Dr John B. Stoker)**

What was left of the practice was then taken over by Doctor A.P. Mehrota but he also had other premises and Sowood house was never his main base. Whilst he continued to see patients at Sowood House he spent less and less time there such that by 1979 he was spending three short sessions there each week. Dr Mehrota left finally in November 1979.

After almost 200 years and eight doctors, November **1979** was the end of Sowood House as a Doctor's Surgery, Dispensary and Operating Room. This was also the year when Dr Stephen Brandon Stoker died aged 74 years. He had operated the Sowood House practice for more than 30 years between June 1937 and December 1967 and even today, 50 years after his retirement many people of Ossett speak of him with respect and high regard as a man and a Doctor.

⁵⁰ The author of this history only came to live in Ossett in 1973 and so did not know Dr Stoker. However he did meet Dr Stoker in 1969 in a consulting room in Leeds for a medical examination required for the start of a career at Leeds City Council. Dr Stoker was one of those rare people who were *once met, always remembered*. The above photograph is as I remember him in 1969.

By 1979 one of Dr. Stoker's sons, Dr. John B. Stoker, was working as a Consultant in Cardiology and General Medicine at St James' and Killingbeck Hospital in Leeds. Partly to support his ailing mother, Dr John Stoker and his wife purchased Sowood House, and with their three children they moved back there in Autumn 1979. It was to become their family home for the next 25 years.

A major refurbishment was started in 1980 and lasted some 18 months. The wall between the front of the house and the southern section behind was found to be defective and required re-building from foundations to roof. The roof on the northern section was replaced and some chimney stacks removed. Extensive re-plastering, including specialist re-moulding of cornices, replacement of the central heating, re-wiring, dividing the old waiting room to be a utility room and a bedroom / study and complete re-decoration were carried out. The window styles in the house were all different; whilst all were replaced in about 1980, the original shapes and styles were retained with the exception of the northern section which had originally sash windows.



Sowood House in 2003 (Photograph courtesy of Dr John B. Stoker)

The house continued as a private residence until February 2004, when it was sold to become a hair dressing and beauty establishment. Sowood House was purchased by Gary Howard Price and Linda Amanda Price for £470,000 and in May 2004 a planning consent was granted for a change of use from dwelling to mixed use for a dwelling and beauty salon. Subsequent planning applications for the building of a detached house on land to the rear of Sowood House were considered in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010 and June 2015. With the exception of 2008 all of the applications have been refused. In 2016 Sowood House continues to be operated as a Hair and Beauty Salon.

Dr John B Stoker, son of Dr Stephen Brandon Stoker and once (or perhaps twice) of Sowood House, *fully* retired in 2002 and in 2004 he and his wife moved to Inverness to be closer to their own family. Both he and his father were keen photographers and founders of the Ossett & District Colour Photo Club. Today, in 2016, Dr John Stoker has a little more time to indulge his pleasure of photography and something of his very special skills and technique can be seen at this link <http://highlandprintstudio.co.uk/a-story-on-john-stoker/>

He has kindly provided the photographs of his father and of Sowood House now included in this history. Much of the above information about his family at Sowood House and about the 20th

Century refurbishments of the building that was his home has also been provided by him. Without his input and support the history would have been far less complete. Ossett has a special place in his memories and his family will forever be remembered for the contribution to the wellbeing of those many men, women and children who were patients at the Sowood House Medical Practice.

7. Summary in a nutshell

This has been the story of Sowood House seen through the lives of those who lived and worked there between about 1790 and 2004. The Greenwoods' association with Sowood House began in the late 18th century and ended in the early 20th Century. Along the way, 120 years or so saw four generations of the Greenwood family and produced five Doctors who lived and worked from Sowood House administering care and comfort to the people of Ossett, often in times of distress.

The Greenwood dynasty was followed by French born Doctor William Louis Rene Wood who served for 26 years until 1937 when Doctor Stephen Brandon Stoker and Dr. John Samuel Coad, took over the practice and ran it for more than 30 years, until the mid/late 1960's. Following Dr Coad's death in 1966 and Dr Stoker's retirement in 1967 Dr A.P. Mehrota took over what was left of the practice but by 1979, the Sowood House Surgery, Dispensary and Operating Room was no more.

Still, the association between the Stoker family and Sowood House was unfinished business and in 1979, Dr John B Stoker, the only son of Dr. Stephen Brandon Stoker, was by then working as a Consultant at St James and Killingbeck Hospital, Leeds. Having purchased the property, Dr John B Stoker and his wife lovingly restored and refurbished it as a family home. He and his family lived there for 25 years until February 2004 when Sowood House was sold. The Stoker family had occupied the house between 1937 and 1967 and between 1979 and 2004, a total of 55 years⁵¹.

The Doctors were gone but Sowood House continued without them and between 2004 and 2016 the House was in use as a Hair and Beauty Salon.

Alan Howe

November 2015 (amended August 2016 & February 2018)

⁵¹ The Stoker family owned Sowood House for a total of 56 years between 1948 and 2004.

Photographic Gallery of 20th Century Sowood House (Courtesy of Dr. John B. Stoker)



Left: 1. Sowood House North aspect 2003
The side facing north. The block on the right is the old dispensary block, the upper floor being removed in 1948. The brick facing was probably added later, but before 1937. Note the windows are “squarer” than those at the front and were originally with sashes. The stone setts in the courtyard and drive were the original ones and were never re-laid.



Left: 2. Sowood House South Aspect 1960
The side facing south – the oldest section, about 1960. Note the totally different window style compared with the rest of the house. The ground floor window is to the Morning Room (see photos 3&4) and the bedroom (photo 7).



Above: 3. Morning Room in 2002



Above: 4. Morning Room in 2003

The Morning Room is the dining room on Kendall’s 1937 plan. The ceiling is very different to those in the front section reception rooms; significantly lower and a different design.



Above: 5. Drawing Room 2003 with beautiful marble and antique Dutch tiles, probably now gone



Above: 6. Main Hall 2003 Probably the most outstanding feature of the interior



Above: 7. Bedroom 2003 One of the two bedrooms in the southern, oldest section. Both bedrooms have an exposed beam across. Note the comparatively low ceiling.

The photographs and comments in this section are kindly provided by Dr. John B. Stoker

Peripheral Matters and Loose ends.

When the Greenwood family sold Sowood House to Dr Stoker in 1948 they retained a parcel of land to the north east of Sowood House..

Alice Greenwood, the widow of Dr. William Greenwood, died on 24th June 1952 *without having fully administered the estate of William Greenwood* (who died 41 years earlier, in January 1911). Alice's second daughter, Joyce (but known as Alice Joyce), survived her mother and on 3rd May 1957 she was granted letters to administer that part of her grandfather, William's, estate which had not been administered in the period (56 years) after his death.

By way of a conveyance dated 1st March 1967⁵², Alice Joyce Greenwood of 433 Upper Richmond Road, Putney⁵³, acting as administrator of William's estate, agreed to sell land to the north east of Sowood House, to Edward Broadhead Nettleton of Greenfield House, Lime Street, Ossett. The consideration for the land was £1,250 and the land was part of a larger piece of land bought by John William Greenwood from Frederick Robert Hird on 21st December 1892.



Plan from Conveyance of 1st March 1967 – sale to E.B.Nettleton shown in red

⁵² Conveyance dated 1st March 1967 between Alice Joyce Greenwood and Edward Broadhead Nettleton. Memorial copy filed at West Riding on 10th March 1967 reference Volume 62 Page 609 No. 281.

⁵³ Situated on the same road (and perhaps the same property) that her widowed mother and four daughters moved to within months of William Greenwood's death in January 1911, when Alice Joyce was just three years old.

Edward Broadhead Nettleton lived at Greenfield House (see Plan) which, at that time, was the last house on Lime Street. The unmarked plot adjacent to Greenfield House had consent for a bungalow in 1966, prior to E.B. Nettleton's acquisition of the land (marked red) in 1967. Subsequently another three dwellings, with a frontage to Lime Street, were built on the purchased land.

Edward Broadhead Nettleton was elected Mayor of Ossett in 1940-41 and, again, in 1957-58. Alice Joyce Greenwood, born 2nd February 1908, died ⁵⁴in January 2001, aged 93 years.

⁵⁴ Death registered at Wandsworth

**APPENDIX 1 Charles Kendall A.R.I.B.A. Architect & Surveyor, Ossett – Survey of Sowood House
March 1937**

The following manuscript letter, on lined foolscap, was addressed to Messrs Snell, the representatives of widow Alice Greenwood, by local architect, Charles Kendall who had been instructed by Snell & Co to undertake a full survey of the state of Sowood House in 1937. This survey was undertaken the year before the final year, 1938, of the 10 year lease of Sowood House to Dr William Louis Rene Wood. The plans referred to in the letter are in pencil on tracing paper and are also reproduced below.

I am grateful to Ron and Angela White of Lime Street Ossett for the opportunity to examine the original letter and hand drawn plans and to include them in this history of Sowood House.

Messrs Snell & Co.

5th March 37.

Sowood House Ossett belonging to Mrs A. Greenwood & tenanted by Dr. W.L.R. Wood

In compliance with your instruction of Feb 16th I have inspected & examined the above property & report as follows.

The property is over 200 years old in parts & very badly weathered and dilapidated. There has been settlement in many places owing to defective foundations on clay subsoil and day hole (getting coal from the surface) mining operations in days gone by, evidence of these operations has been found.

I have made a rough plan, copies of which I enclose, to help you to understand the various buildings referred to.

Plan "A" shows the buildings as existing and Plan "B" the suggested rebuilding and alterations.

The drive from the front gate to the yard is of old stone setts and the yard behind is particularly very uneven & hollows here and there making it unsafe for patients attending the surgeries. This requires levelling up & top dressing with asphalt or roughened concrete.

On the left of the drive the dog house ashpit, closet, garage, old loose box (now used as wood & bottle store, coal place & scullery are all falling to pieces – the stonework having weathered away & the roof & floors unsound. The walls are 9" out of plumb in parts & the ceiling falling down owing to the rotted timbers.

I suggest all these buildings be pulled down & the width of the roadway be reduced.

On the right hand side of the drive the old coach house (now garage & heating chamber & coke store) has fallen over 8" & fallen away from the back wall – the building has been bolted through- but has not been successful.

The heating vault floods & requires proper draining.

The outside 4 ½ " skin of the stable now used as dispensary was rebuilt on 2 sides some years ago but the inside walls were not touched & should have been done as they are falling away. The floor of the dispensary is the old brick stable floor, up & down & in a shocking state – the left one is definitely unsafe & rotten & dirt & plaster shower through.

The operating room & surgery formerly harness room has 2" crack in the outer wall which has pushed out & leans badly- approach to these places is 3 steps below the main house floor. An old staircase leads from here to the derelict loft above.

This portion which is all 2 stories (sic) should be pulled down & then rebuilt one story (sic) high & floor lifted to present house level & the old coach house rebuilt slightly larger to house 2 cars & the heating boiler & coke store.

The passage way between the field behind and & the derelict buildings is 6 or 7 feet below the field & water percolates from the back land on to the passage & forward to the house.

The embankment is supported by wooden sleepers & a variety of materials – these should be done away with & a retaining wall built out of the old material from the demolition & the area drained.

The main house front has several cracks which we are continuously filling up. – but I am afraid there is no method of arresting the slight movement of the front which will possibly stand for years – although I have seen these cracks enlarge in the last 2 years.

A lot of the stonework which is in an unsuitable local stone has decayed very badly & it is a matter of some difficulty to decide how far to carry on with the pointing and repairing of this.

There is considerable evidence of damp both in walls, floors & ceilings in the house. The floor of the room on the right of the front door has fallen 1 ½ " towards the front wall.

The drainage in the back yard was relaid about 2 years ago – but if the other drains round the house are half as bad as those we found in the yard they will require a considerable amount of attention . Some of the fall pipes to the main house have trapped gullies.

The main roof & gutters leak in many places & a lot of work is necessary here. I should suggest the big kitchen (at present has no water) be divided to form a scullery & coal & W.C. place -to take the place of those to be pulled down & the present waiting room made into the kitchen.

I should also pull down a portion of the old engine room behind the house.

These suggested alterations would make the house much more easily worked & less costly in upkeep – although the house is far too big & rambling & so badly planned that it could ever be made really satisfactory.

It is difficult to describe the 101 small jobs which require attention

The housemaid's pantry sink are worm eaten & rotten & the sink disreputable.

I do not know how long Dr Wood will stay at Sowood & it is useless to spend money on this property if it is not going to be a doctor's house – it would be impossible to let it for private occupation, perhaps anybody taking the practice would require a modern house only one third as big as Sowood in the same district to be run at much less expense & with a minimum of labour.

Dr Wood has spent a considerable amount on the house but I should not think we should be able to get another tenant to do the same.

Whatever is spent, and I should say the suggestions I have made would be in the region of £400 would not do away with the fact that owing to the age & general condition of the old house which

has had its day there would be of necessity a growing amount for repairs to the general fabric annually.

If you are able to come up to Ossett I am sure it would be time & money well spent on Mrs Greenwoods behalf to look into the property. I would even go so far as to suggest that the idea of building a small modern house with the necessary offices beyond the present house & letting the house breakers take Sowood may be considered from a future financial & investment point of view.

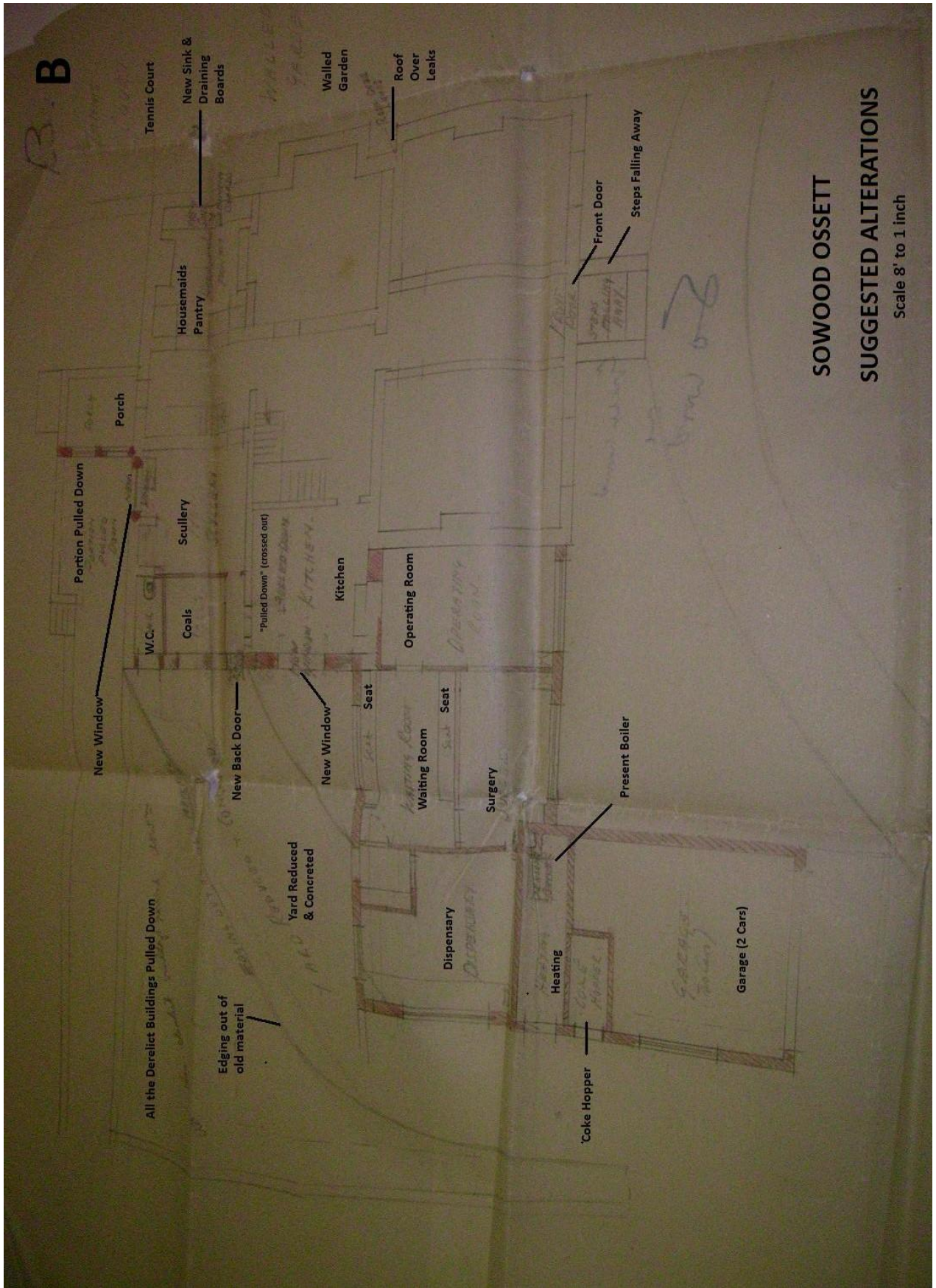
I shall be pleased to give you any further help or information that I can

Yours faithfully

CKendall (signed)

Solicitors

Tunbridge Wells



SOWOOD OSSETT
SUGGESTED ALTERATIONS
 Scale 8' to 1 inch

Plan B of Sowood House with proposed alteration works. Plan drawn by hand on tracing paper in 1937 by Charles Kendall A.R.I.B.A. (Additions in type 2015 to assist interpretation)

APPENDIX 2 Summary of the content of Deeds and Documents consulted in this History

I am grateful to Ron and Angela White of Lime Street, Ossett, for the opportunity to study the documents, listed & detailed below, which have been fundamental to this history of Sowood House. Copies of some of these freehold documents will be held at The West Yorkshire Archives Service, Registry of Deeds, Wakefield. A copy of the details in the copyhold documents will be held at The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, in the form of the Manor Court Roll. However the condition of the Roll may be poor and unavailable to the public. The lease document and Charles Kendall's survey of Sowood House (above) are likely to be unique.

1. 21st December 1892: Conveyance of land & property from Frederick Robert Hird & John William Greenwood.

Whereby Mr Hird sold land and property to John William Greenwood. This included the house known as **Green Mount** which Mr Hird inherited from George Pickard, the adopted son of David Pickard. Green Mount, built partly on copyhold land **and adjacent freehold land** (3 acres 3 roods 30 perches)⁵⁵ to the east of Green Mount and to the north of Sowood House were the subject of the Conveyance.. Because Green Mount was copyhold the Conveyance also included an obligation (covenant) for Mr Hird to surrender his interest in Green Mount to the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Wakefield. A plan of the land and property in question is included in the foregoing text. The consideration for Green Mount was £850 and for the freehold land, £2000.

The freehold land in question included a frontage onto Lime Street which was subsequently sold by the Greenwood family to Edward Broadhead Nettleton who developed the land in the 1970's for the construction of 2/3 dwellings.

A memorial (summary) of this document is held at West Yorkshire Archives Service (W.Y.A.S.), Registry of Deeds Office, Wakefield under reference Volume 43, Page 647, Number 316.

Subsequently additional notes were made on the sleeve of the Conveyance to indicate that part of the freehold land which had frontage to Southdale Road was also sold, as follows;

On 24th September 1936 land with a 66 foot frontage to Southdale Road was sold Mr Charles Kendall, Architect & Surveyor. He designed and in 1937 built a house there called Southdale Croft.

On 29th April 1937 land with a 12 foot frontage to Southdale Road and 3901 sq yds was sold to Maud Armitage, Walter Armitage and Charles Ingham. This may have been the access to and the land upon which the house, Chellow Dene was built

On 15th January 1938, 1930 sq yds of land was sold to Arthur Clark. This may have been the land upon which the house, Greenways was built.

A memorial (summary) of the above documents are held at West Yorkshire Archives Service (W.Y.A.S.), Registry of Deeds Office, Wakefield

⁵⁵ There are 4 roods to an acre and 40 perches to a rood (or 160 perches to an acre). In the above case the freehold land was almost 4 acres.

2. 6th January 1893: Admittance Frederick Robert Hird & Uxor (wife) to John William Greenwood

Whereby Mr Hird & his wife Adeline, fulfilled their obligation under the Conveyance dated 21st December 1892 to surrender their copyhold interest in Green Mount to the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Wakefield. Mr Hird & his wife fulfilled this obligation by surrendering that interest at a Wakefield Court Baron on the above date. At the same Court, John William Greenwood, was admitted as tenant of the Lord to the **Green Mount** property and land.

The Manor Court Roll, held by The Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Y.A.S.) at Leeds will record the above admittance but the condition of the Roll may be poor and may not be available to the public.

3. 30th August 1895: Admittance William Henry Stewart Esq., the heir to William Stewart Esq. Deceased

NOTE. This and the next document (see 4. Below) represent a legal tidying up exercise to enable John Greenwood to enfranchise⁵⁶ the copyhold land at Sowood House & Farthing Royd. John William Greenwood was able to do this in a Deed of Enfranchisement on 24th December 1895 (see 5. Below)

This Admittance document relates to the, relatively small, copyhold part of **Sowood House**⁵⁷ and to other copyhold land, **Farthing Royd Shutt** on Healey Lane (now Healey Road) south of the house known as Green Lee and just west of the house known as The Shutts. The document relates that at a Court Baron, on 9th August 1839, William Stewart, solicitor of Wakefield was admitted tenant to Sowood House and the land at Farthing Royd, Healey Lane. The latter comprised 1 acre ,1 rood & 12 perches of land which was part of a larger field, The Shutts, which comprised 2 acres & 4 perches which was allotted to John Greenwood as a result of the Ossett Inclosure Act 1807.

The document is silent as to William Stewart's legal interest in Sowood House & Farthing Royd but it is likely that he was a lender of funds (as many solicitors of the time were) to the Greenwoods. Mr Stewart's security for the loan was Sowood House & Farthing Royd, hence his presence on the face of the document.

However the above is merely (but interestingly) a recital of the background to the main purpose of this document which was as follows;

It appears that following the death of William Stewart, on 14th December 1886, his executors had failed to notify and surrender to the Lord of the Manor, Mr Stewart's copyhold land interests in the above land and property. This document puts right that omission. A Wakefield Court Baron on the above date *Admitted* William Stewart's eldest surviving son & heir ,William Henry Stewart. An added complication was that William Stewart's first son, Charles had died, aged 4 in 1844. Therefore the Stewart family had to demonstrate to the Court Baron, that William Henry , the eldest surviving son, was thus the legal heir to his father's estate.

⁵⁶ Effectively convert his copyhold interest to a freehold interest by payment of a fee to Wakefield Manor. The Copyhold Act 1852 enabled tenants to demand enfranchisement.

⁵⁷ It is known that the document relates to Sowood House because it recites that it is in respect of the *messuage, dwelling house or tenement purchased by John Greenwood from the mortgagee or assignee of John Wilson*

The document is an interesting diversion and includes some information about the Stewart family but it has little bearing on the history of Sowood House.

The Manor Court Roll, held by The Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Y.A.S.) at Leeds will record the above admittance but the condition of the Roll may be poor and may not be available to the public.

4. 20th September 1895: Admittance William Henry Stewart to John William Greenwood.

William Henry Stewart, was thus admitted at the Court Baron on 30th August 1895, (see 3. above) and this document relates the business of the Wakefield Court baron of 20th September 1895. This sees William Henry Stewart surrendering his copyhold interest in **Sowood House** and the **Farthing Royd** land to the Lord/Lady of the Manor. It also records the admittance of John William Greenwood as Lord's tenant to Sowood House and the admittance of John William Greenwood & Robert Alford (John William's brother in law, husband of Georgiana Greenwood) to the land at Farthing Royd.. Thus John William Greenwood would then be in a position to enfranchise the small copyhold part of Sowood House and his part of the Farthing Royd land.

The document also recites other information which relates to the history of Sowood House. On 7th June 1839, George Greenwood & wife, Sarah, Thomas Greenwood & wife Mary Willans & Daniel Greenwood & wife, Eliza surrendered their copyhold interest in Sowood House. This suggests that their father, John Greenwood deceased, had left Sowood House to his sons George, Thomas and Daniel on his death in 1831.

The document recites that the above couples had entered into an *Indenture of Release* (a Conveyance) of even date with William Stewart, solicitor. The Greenwood brothers thus surrendered their copyhold interests to enable William Stewart to be admitted as *tenant* of the Lord to Sowood House and Farthing Royd. This does not mean that Mr Stewart tenanted the House and Farthing Royd. Rather it is a technical term recognising that Mr Stewart had a copyhold interest in the land.

Thus, as indicated above, this suggests that William Stewart had lent money to the Greenwoods and secured the same against Sowood House and the Farthing Royd land. The land and property though was to be held in trust *for the use of George Greenwood and his heirs and to be surrendered or otherwise disposed of as he or they should from time to time order or direct...* George and his heirs were thus to remain very much in control .William Stewart may have loaned money to George Greenwood to enable George to buy out his brothers' copyhold interests in Sowood House and Farthing Royd.

The document highlights a further complication. George Greenwood died on 1st July 1868 and by his Will (on 17th November 1866) he left his real estate and residual personal estate to his son, John William Greenwood, and to his son in law, Robert Alford (husband of George's daughter, Georgiana). Of his real estate he left Sowood House to John William and Farthing Royd to Robert Alford & John William.

Thus the purpose of this document was for William Henry Stewart, to surrender his copyhold interest in Sowood House & Farthing Royd, which he did willingly, (presumably because the loan, made by his father in 1839, had long been repaid). John William Greenwood was thus *admitted* to Sowood House and he and Robert Alford, were admitted to the Farthing Royd land.

The Manor Court Roll, held by The Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Y.A.S.) at Leeds will record the above admittance but the condition of the Roll may be poor and may not be available to the public.

5. 24th December 1895 Deed of Enfranchisement. The Right Honourable The Earl & Countess of Yarborough to John William Greenwood.

The tortuous explanation of the purposes of the documents, at 3 & 4 above, having been completed we arrive now at the document which was John William Greenwood's primary objective; the *enfranchisement* of his copyhold interests in **Sowood House** and **Farthing Royd**. John William had also included the copyhold **Green Mount** in this document.

As mentioned earlier *enfranchisement* means, simply, that in exchange for a fee, the copyhold bits of the land and property would be converted to freehold. John William could consequently do what he wished with his land and property and he would no longer require any consents from the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Wakefield.

The first one and a half pages of the document simply recite the recent history of the Lords of the Manor to provide evidence that the persons being asked to allow the enfranchisement are entitled to do so.

In exchange for £21 John William extinguished the copyhold interests in Green Mount, Sowood House and, jointly with Robert Alford, the Farthing Royd land. The land and property freehold was now theirs....except to the extent that the mineral rights below their, now freehold, ground remained in the ownership of the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Wakefield.

The Manor Court Roll, held by The Yorkshire Archaeological Society (Y.A.S.) at Leeds will record the above Enfranchisement but the condition of the Roll may be poor and may not be available to the public.

6. 3rd December 1928 Lease of all that messuage or tenement situate and known as Sowood House Ossett

A ten year lease, from 20th November 1928, consideration £100 per annum. Between Alice Greenwood (widow of William Greenwood died 1911) of 1133, Upper Richmond Road and William Lewis (sic) Rene Wood of Sowood House Ossett, Surgeon. The lease included an option to extend the lease by five years. This was not exercised by Dr. Wood.

This document is likely to be unique

7. 1st March 1967: Conveyance Miss Alice Joyce Greenwood to Edward Broadhead Nettleton

This Conveyance related to land to the north east of Sowood House which Miss Greenwood of 433 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, Surrey was to sell to Edward Broadhead Nettleton of Greenfield House, Lime Street, Ossett. Miss Greenwood was the daughter of William Greenwood (died 1911) and his wife Alice (died 1952) and the land was part of William's estate which was still not fully administered 56 years after his death.

The document recites this history adding that Alice Joyce Greenwood has been awarded Letters of Administration to enable her to conclude her father's estate, including selling this land for £1250. A subsequent Memorandum to the Conveyance reveals that on 1st August 1977, Edward Broadhead Nettleton sold a piece of this land, Plot 3, to Roger Tiffany Green.

A memorial (summary) of the 1967 Conveyance is held at West Yorkshire Archives Service (W.Y.A.S.), Registry of Deeds Office, Wakefield under the reference Volume 62, Page 609, number 281.

The 1977 Conveyance, mentioned in the above Conveyance will not be available at W.Y.A.S. but a note of the transaction may be held at Land Registry, Nottingham.