

**THE HISTORY OF ROCK COTTAGES
THE ROCKS
STORRS HILL OSSETT**



ALAN HOWE

November 2012

Preface & Acknowledgements

This is the fourth in a series of histories about Sowood and the Marsden family researched and written in 2012 and 2013. The original focus of the research was the history of the Grade II Listed *Sowood Farm* built in 1689 by Francis Marsden. The extended Marsden family made the single most significant contribution to the development of Storrs Hill and this part of Sowood in the 18th Century. The other histories in this series include *Sowood Farm*, *Matty Marsden Lane and Halfway House* and *Sowood Manor*.

The usual template for these Ossett histories is a summary of the findings and history and a timeline for those who want to know something of the history but do not wish to read the full, and often very detailed study. This format is repeated in this study.

My thanks to Joan Smith for sight of her research in connection with her publication on the history of the nearby "*South Ossett Triangle*" which included reference to a branch of the Marsden family as they expanded beyond Sowood and Storrs Hill.

As with all local histories there may be mistakes in the writing and errors in the collection or interpretation of data. I hope the reader will forgive these and find something of interest in this, another episode in the life of the 18th Century Marsden family, *The History of Rocks Cottages, The Rocks, Storrs Hill, Ossett*

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Summary of the History of The Rocks – Rock Cottages Storrs Hill Ossett

In around 1680 Francisci, or Francis, Marsden (1651-1718) travelled from his home in Penistone to Sowood in Ossett. In 1689 he built, or rebuilt, Sowood Farmhouse and before his death in 1718 he and his son John Marsden (1674-1735), who had made the journey with him, set out their plans for the future Marsden generations.

The Marsdens were farmers and the key to their futures lay in the land. Not just land that they would farm but land upon which they would build their homes and raise their children. In the earliest days of the 18th Century this meant the Ossett and Horbury borderlands and that meant Storrs Hill. Before his father's death in 1718 John Marsden had twice married and had seven of his ten children. Six were boys most of whom would need to make their own way in the world since the practice then was to leave the major landholdings to the eldest son. He was also named John Marsden (1704-1742) and he had four children who were all boys. These were named after their forebears Francis, William, John and Thomas who were all under the age of 11 when their father died.

Time was pressing and land was short to accommodate all the Marsdens who had been born since Francis' arrival in about 1680. Most of the girls had been married, several to well to do Horbury and Ossett men and others had wed those from their original homelands of the Holme Valley to the south west of Huddersfield. Some had not made adulthood but hardly any remained single and that almost always meant more children.

For John Marsden's second son, William Marsden (1733-1777) life would be hard. He was barely nine when his father died in 1742 and he was left a 3 acre close of land, Storrs Hill Close, on which to make his living and bring up his family. In 1762 William married local girl Sarah Firth and built a home for them on the rocks of Storrs Hill. This home, in this study to be known, by its late 19th Century name of *The Rocks*, was more than just a home however for it also provided the space and facilities in the upper chamber for William to earn a living as a clothmaker. He also kept the odd cow and sheep and grew corn for bread for himself and his wife and two children, Mary and Sarah, on the three acres left to him by his father in 1742.

In common with many male Marsdens of the time, William Marsden died at an early age. He was only aged 44 when he died in 1777 and his youngest daughter, Sarah, died shortly afterwards in 1781 leaving his wife, Sarah, a widow with one child, Mary Marsden (1763-1851). William's Will includes an Inventory describing the contents of the Rock in 1777. His widow Sarah remained there at least until the mid 1780's and by October 1783 his daughter Mary had met and married local husbandman, Joseph Illingworth who was seven years her senior. They began their married life at the Rocks dwelling left to her by her father although common law was such that her property became her husband's. Their eight children were almost certainly born at the Rocks, all before 1809, and Joseph Illingworth had changed his occupation and become a butcher before his death in 1818.

At least two of their sons became butchers with outlets in Ossett town and by the early 1820's Mary Illingworth had left the Rocks for a home in north Ossett and, later, in the town adjacent to Joseph Illingworth Lane (now known as Illingworth Street) where she also owned land upon which the Ossett Community centre now stands. Joseph's work as a butcher was probably influential in the move from the Rocks on the outskirts of Ossett to the town and in 1821 the local Census suggests the Rocks dwelling was uninhabited. However it was not long before Mary's eldest son, William Illingworth (1790-1861), who was born at the Rocks, returned and took up residence in about 1825.

William Illingworth, a clothier like his grandfather William Marsden, married Rachel Berry in 1813 and the 1821 census records the couple elsewhere in Ossett with 6 of the 13 children they were to have. At least five of the children would be born at the Rocks between 1826 and 1837. William Illingworth lived the rest of his life and died there in January 1861 leaving his widow, Rachel, living there with three of her grown children until her death in 1863

One of Rachel's sons living with her at her death was John Illingworth (1826-1872) who was born, lived and died, a bachelor, at the Rocks. He too was a cloth weaver and, although he was not the eldest son, he had been left the Storrs Hill land and the Rocks by his father in 1861 and he continued to live there until his death in 1872. By this time his sister Elizabeth Illingworth had married John Harrop and they and their daughter, Winifred, were living with John Illingworth at the Rocks.

Elizabeth Harrop (nee Illingworth) inherited the land and dwelling from her brother John Illingworth and she and her husband and daughter lived at Rocks until 1884 when they sold it to George Harrop of nearby Rock House. George Harrop was a very wealthy mill owner and woollen manufacturer and may have purchased the land and property to expand his already substantial Storrs Hill estate or he may have bought it help his cousin John Harrop who was then living with Elizabeth and his daughter at the Rock. It is certain that George Harrop would not have lived at the Rocks.

George Harrop died in 1892 and by this time the Rocks had been divided to provide accommodation for three families. Two of the dwellings each had two rooms and a central dwelling had three rooms. Whilst George Harrop owned the Rocks at this time the tradition of Illingworth occupation was to continue a little longer because the largest of the three dwellings was occupied by Andrew and Sarah Illingworth (nee Illingworth).



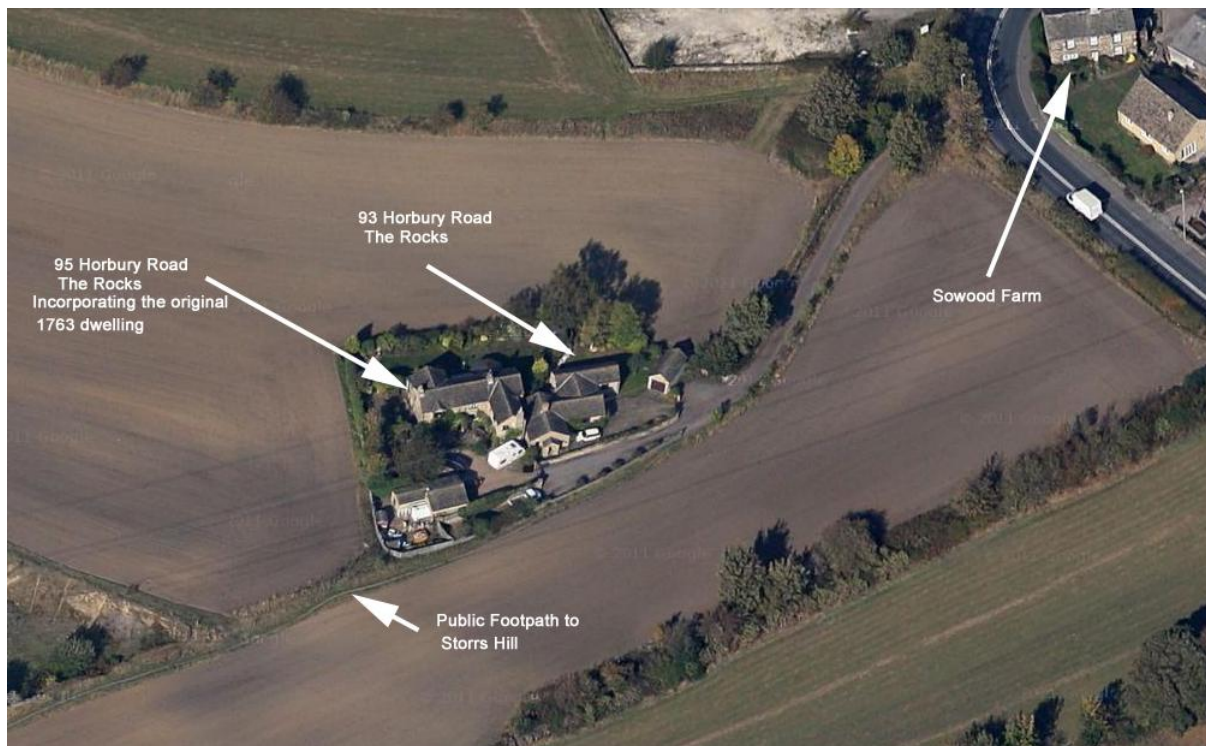
The Rocks sometime before 1984 – the rendered but otherwise little changed building constructed in 1763 by William Marsden

On his death in 1892 George Harrop left many of his land holdings, including the Rocks and the adjacent Storrs Hill Close to his son Joshua Harrop. After a bit of matrimonial difficulty, he sold it, and 7 acres of adjacent land, in a 1908 Auction to Thomas Baines Teale, a Blackpool bank clerk (although he was born in Ossett) and his wife Emma (nee Nettleton). Between 1901 and 1911 the Rocks continued in multiple occupation and in 1901 (the first census to record the address as 93, 95 & 97 *Horbury Road The Rocks*) the tenants included Joshua Illingworth who lived in two bedroom accommodation with his wife and family. This was to be the final vestige of an Illingworth or Marsden presence at the Rocks almost 140 years after it was built by William Marsden in 1763. Thomas Baines Teale died in 1945.

The Rocks continued to be tenanted until 1959 when widow Emma Teale's executors sold number 93 Horbury Road The Rocks to Phyllis Wrigley (the sitting tenant) and numbers 95 & 97 to Frank Wood.(the sitting tenant). In January 1957 an article in the Ossett Observer, tells that there were four families living at the Rocks and Phyllis had something to say about how she loved her home and its surroundings which were compared to the Cotswolds. At this time number 93 provided a home to Phyllis who lived in the converted single storey former weaving shed. A Mrs A Hardcastle appears to have lived in the northern most part of the 1763 built dwelling, possibly number 95, and the remainder of the dwelling carried the address of 97 Horbury Road The Rocks.

Sometime after 1959, number 97 ceased to be an address and in 1984 number 95 (the whole of the 1763 dwelling) was purchased by John and Brenda Martin who lived next door to Phyllis Wrigley She continued to live in number 93, the converted weaving shop, until her death in 1989 ,aged 92, when this was also sold, perhaps to Kathleen Thompson.

Today (see aerial photograph below) the property is much altered from that described by John Illingworth in 1861 as *all that messuage or dwellinghouse, weaving shop, mistal and other buildings... at Storrs Hill now in my own occupation*. Indeed it is barely recognisable as the dwelling which stood here as recently as 1984 as adaptations and extensions have been made to make the building fit for 21st Century living. In 2012 John and Brenda Martin continue to own and live in number 95 and number 93 is in the ownership of John Watson and Caron Beverley Lee-Robinson.



Next year is 2013, the 250th anniversary of the William Marsden built dwelling which came to be known as The Rocks or Rock Cottages. A fitting tribute to the Marsden family who came to Ossett in about 1680 and left their mark on the physical and social landscape of the town and ,in particular, upon Sowood and Storrs Hill.

There is more about the 18th century Marsden family of Storrs Hill and Sowood in companion histories *The History of Sowood Farm* and *The History of Halfway House and Matty Marsden Lane* and more of Sowood in the *History of Sowood or South Wood Manor* published by the same writer in late 2012.

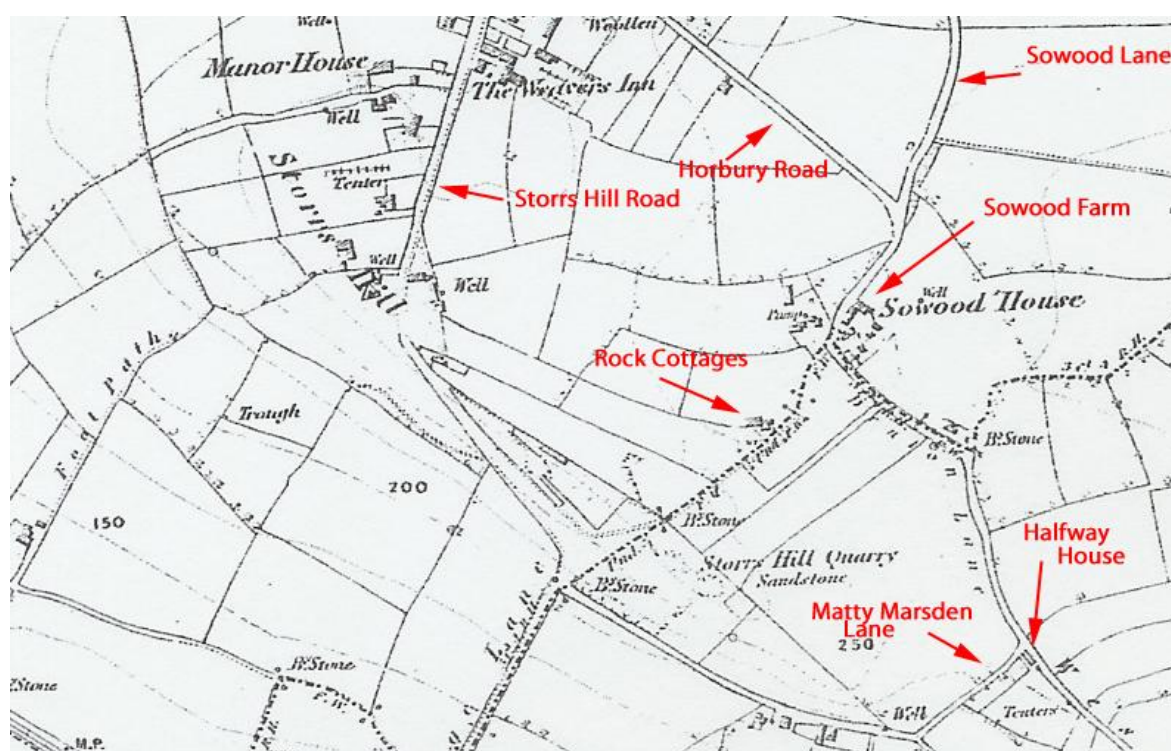
The Rocks – Rock Cottages - Timeline

- 1680** Francis Marsden (1651-1718) arrives in Sowood and builds/re-builds Sowood Farm
- 1733** William Marsden (1733 -1777) great grandson of Francis
- 1762** William Marsden marries Sarah Firth and builds *The Rocks*
- 1777** William dies and leaves the Rocks to his widow for life & then to his daughters (one dies in 1781)
- 1783** William's surviving daughter , Mary Marsden (1763-1851) inherits the Rocks and marries Joseph Illingworth
- 1790** Mary & Joseph's eldest son William Illingworth (1790-1861) is born
- 1818** Joseph Illingworth, butcher. The Rocks appears to be uninhabited in 1821.
- 1825** Joseph & Mary's eldest son William Illingworth & wife Rachel move to the Rocks
- 1826** William & Rachel have their 7th child at the Rocks and have 6 more children born there.
- 1851** Mary Illingworth (nee Marsden) dies elsewhere in Ossett aged 88 & William inherits the Rocks
- 1861** William Illingworth dies at the Rocks & leaves to wife Rachel for life then to his son John (1826-1872)
- 1872** John Illingworth, bachelor, dies & leaves the Rocks to his married sister Elizabeth Harrop who is living with him in 1871
- 1884** Elizabeth & family live at Rocks and sell to George Harrop of Rock House. Rocks is divided to provide 3 homes for tenants. Two homes have two rooms and one has three rooms. An Illingworth couple still live there
- 1892** George Harrop dies and leaves to son Joshua Harrop
- 1901** The Rocks, now known as 93, 95 & 97 Horbury Road is still let. An Illingworth family live in one
- 1908** Joshua Harrop sells to Thomas Baines Teale and his wife Emma Teale (nee Nettleton)
- 1957** The Rocks is home to four tenant families - 3 in the 1763 dwelling including Frank Wood and Miss A Hardcastle. Phyllis Wrigley lives in the converted single storey weaving shed (no.93)
- 1959** Widow Emma Teale dies. No. 93 The Rocks (ie the weaving shed and land) is sold to Phyllis Wrigley (sitting tenant) & nos 95/97 (1763 dwelling & land) sold to Frank Wood (sitting tenant)
- 1961** Phyllis Wrigley is living at no.93 with Frank Wood at 95 and Jean Brook at 97 Horbury Road.
- 1984** John & Brenda Martin buy no. 95 the Rocks from Frank Wood
- 1989** Phyllis Wrigley dies, aged 92, and no. 93 is sold, perhaps to Kathleen Thompson
- 2012** John & Brenda Martin own 95 and Neil John Watson & Caron Beverley Lee-Robinson own 93. Both dwellings have been much adapted since the 1980's
- 2013** the 250th Anniversary of the building of the Rocks, Storrs Hill, Ossett

1680 – 1763 Four Generations of Marsdens

In about 1680 farmer Francis Marsden travelled from his home near Penistone with his wife and three children to begin a new life in Ossett and Sowood. In 1689 he built, or rebuilt, the Sowood farmhouse situated on land on the east side of, what was then, Denton Lane. He also farmed land on the south west side of Denton Lane at Storrs or Stauge Hill.

In 1709¹ Francis is recorded as owning a messuage² and land at Sowood Green, a half acre at Horbury Westfield and he was farming land rented from Thomas Beatson at Storrs Hill. It seems probable that the Beatson land totalled about 20 acres and it included land upon which the dwelling, now known as Rocks Cottages³ was subsequently built.



1850 Map showing Rocks Cottages in relation to Sowood Farm & other landmarks

The above map illustrates the proximity of the Rocks to Sowood Farm and the more or less straight footpath which connects the two properties. It can be no great surprise that the Marsdens of Sowood Farm had a hand in the building of this dwelling. However the footpath linking the two dwellings was probably much older than the 18th century Rocks as it continues beyond to join Storrs Hill Road (in 1850 known as Horbury Bridge Lane) and, possibly, an ancient footpath across to Jenkin Lane and Horbury.

¹ The Wakefield Manor Book 1709 [Charlesworth published 1939]

² Messuage - a piece of land usually with a dwelling built upon it

³ Rocks Cottages is the dwellings' current name but in earlier times it was known as the Rocks and this is adopted in this history to describe the dwelling(s)

In about 1680 when **Francis Marsden (1651-1718)** arrived in Ossett he was accompanied by his wife, Ann and three children, John (Johannes), Mary (Maria) and Elizabeth (Elizabetha) all baptised at Penistone between 1674 and 1679. His elder brother Richard also accompanied the party but the Horbury parish record shows *Richard Marsdin of Sawid greene buried 3rd day of January 1696.*

Francis and Ann had three more children, Ann, Alicia and William (Guilielmus) who were baptised at Dewsbury between 1683 and 1689. William died in 1757, a bachelor without issue, and so all of those Marsdens born in Ossett in the 17th and 18th century are likely to be descended from Francis Marsden and his eldest child, John Marsden of Sowood Farm .

In 1699 Francis Marsden's eldest daughter, Mary Marsden (1676-) , married a Horbury man William Pollard (1674-1729) of Hallcliffe and in 1704 his second daughter, Elizabeth (1679-), married an Ossett man John Illingworth (1679-). Both women had married well and this latter marriage was the first of several between an Illingworth and a Marsden. The marriages to fairly wealthy men from Horbury and Ossett parishes is an early and telling sign of the Marsden influence which was to be seen in both parishes in the 18th century.

Francis Marsden had two sons but the eldest, **John Marsden (1674-1735)** was the only one to have children and he had ten. Following the deaths of his parents Ann, in 1717, and his father Francis four months later in 1718, John Marsden and his second wife, Mary Charlesworth lived at Sowood Farm with children from both of John's marriages (his first wife Sarah Cartwright died in 1712).

John and his first wife Sarah had four children and eldest was a boy also named **John Marsden (1704-1742)** who was the first of many future 18th century Marsdens to die in their 30's and 40's. John Marsden was most probably born at Sowood Farm although he moved to nearby Ossett Lights and did not move back to Sowood Farm in 1735⁴ following his father's death. On 2nd March 1731 at Dewsbury All Saints Parish Church, John Marsden married his cousin, Elizabeth Illingworth, who was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Illingworth (nee Marsden).

John and Elizabeth had four children, all boys, between 1731 and 1739 with the eldest Francis baptised at Horbury St Peter's and St Leonard's Church on 4th December 1731. Their second son was named **William Marsden (1733-1777)** and he was followed by John and Thomas. Even though they were all under the age of 11 when their father died in 1742 each was left land in his Will. As was the custom most, and the best, of the land holding was left to the eldest son and so Francis inherited Sowood Farm. Their father, John's, Will does not mention a dwelling on any of the land left to the three younger children and it is likely therefore that any building on these lands was later than 1742, and bearing in mind the age of the children, probably not before the mid 1750's.

By this time Sowood, nearby Horbury and more particularly Storrs Hill was becoming crowded with the expanding families of Marsdens and whilst some had moved, or would move elsewhere, and others had died in infancy, many continued to live in the vicinity.

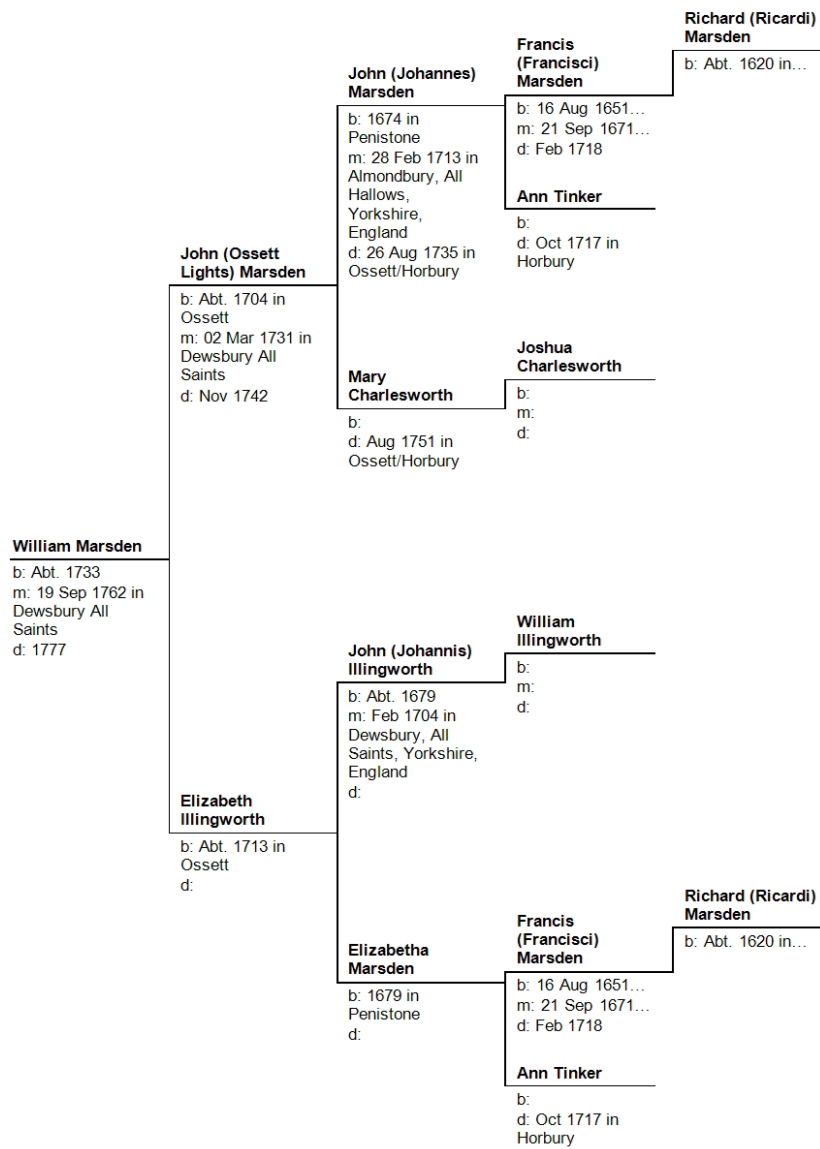
So it was for 9 year old William Marsden who had been left the (almost) 3 acre Storrs Hill Close⁵ in his father's 1742 Will which made no reference to a dwelling being on the land. William's father was only 38 years of age when he died and his widow Elizabeth (nee Illingworth) only 29 but with four children under the age of 11. There was little that she could do to survive other than marry again and in 1747 widow Elizabeth Marsden wed widower Robert Archer. It is not certain where William spent the rest of

⁴ John's Will in 1735 has him as being "of Ossett Lights" which is close to Sowood but to the east.

⁵ There were several Horbury and Ossett fields with this name in 1775-1843 property records

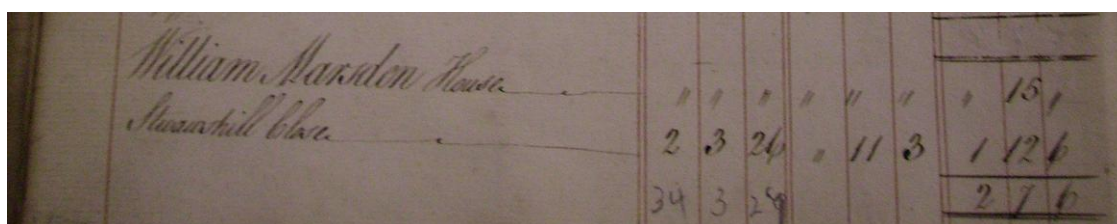
his childhood but he came of age in 1754 and on 19th September 1762, aged 29, he married Sarah Firth at Dewsbury All Saints Parish Church.

Pedigree Chart for William Marsden



1763 – 1901 The Marsdens & Illingworths at the Rocks

No evidence has emerged of an earlier building on the 3 acre Storrs Hill Close left to William by his father in 1742 and it is probable that **William Marsden** and his wife Sarah (nee Firth) built the Rocks as they began their married life in September **1762**. It is known with certainty that a dwelling had been built on this Close by **1775** when the Ossett Valuation Book records **William Marsden** in possession of a House and Storrs Hill Close. There are several closes named Storrs Hill Close but the one mentioned in the 1775 Valuation is 2 Acres 3 Roods and 26 Perches⁶. This compares with the size (2A3R35P) of the 2 closes named Upper Hill and Lower Hill in the 1843 Tithe Award. There is only 300 sq yds difference in measurement and it is in one of these closes that Rocks Cottage is built. .



Extract from The Ossett Valuation record 1775⁷

William and Sarah had (only) two children, both girls, in 1763 and 1765. The second child, also named Sarah died aged 15 in 1781 and it is probable that William, Sarah and his other daughter, Mary Marsden (1763-1851) remained living at the Rocks until William's death in 1777 aged only 43. William's wife Sarah is mentioned in his Will confirming that she was alive in 1777 and the Land Tax records for 1781-1785 show a Sarah Marsden living in the vicinity of the Rocks.

William Marsden's Will is dated 7th April 1777 and he was buried on 11th April suggesting that his death was sudden and unexpected. William Marsden, clothier, is described in his Will as William of Storrs Hill. He has surrendered that part of his land ownerships in Ossett and Horbury which is copyhold, to the Lord of the Manor of Wakefield (the ownership was mainly freehold and part copyhold) as was the practice. He leaves his estates to his wife Sarah and authorises her to raise funds (£40) from Joshua Thornes secured against William's properties which added to the £120 previously borrowed from Mr Thornes. William's Will instructs and authorises Sarah to raise funds elsewhere should Mr Thornes not agree to advance further monies. It is clear that these additional funds are required to pay for the funeral and other expenses. The Will also specifies that if and when his daughters reach the age of 21 then his estate be divided as to one fifth to his wife and two fifths each to his daughters. He names his wife Sarah as sole Executrix.

In the event one of his daughters died before reaching 21 and the whereabouts of his wife is unknown at the time Mary comes of age but it seems likely that by one means or another Mary becomes owner of the Rocks by the time of, or shortly after, her marriage in 1783. At that point, common law provided that a married woman's property became the husband's and consequently the property built by and the land owned by William Marsden became the dwelling and land of William's son in law, Joseph Illingworth.

William Marsden left a further legacy in the form of an Inventory of Rocks which is shown below. The Inventory is dated 17th April 1777 and differs significantly to the earlier and later Wills of the Marsdens

⁶ There are 4 roods in an acre and 40 perches in a rood

⁷ The Ossett Valuation 1775 John Goodchild Collection West Yorkshire Archive Service

of Sowood Farm and elsewhere. It is clear that the Rocks is the home of a clothmaker not a farmer even though William has a cow and sheep for his own and his family's purposes.

An Inventory or Appraisement of the Goods and Chattels Cattle and Effects of William Marsden late of Ossett in the Parish of Dewsbury and County of York Clothmaker deceased taken by us whose Names are under written this seventeenth Day of April one Thousand seven hundred and seventy seven

In the House		3. 3. 0
Purse and apparel	_____	1. 1. 0
Range and plates Grange Tonge fire poker	_____	0. 5. 0
one Iron Pot two Fosnetts Pot hooks & Briggs	_____	0. 3. 0
one kit and Flask	_____	0. 2. 0
one Iron Sack one hamber one Fostein Sack	_____	1. 5. 0
one old flock	_____	0. 12. 0
Beef and Bacon	_____	0. 9. 0
one Chest one Table one Ironcher Case	_____	0. 5. 0
Six common Charis	_____	
In the Parlor		3. 10. 0
Best Bed one Childs	_____	0. 10. 0
one Box and Drawers	_____	0. 12. 0
one Table four Charis	_____	0. 4. 0
one Cubard and Spoons and Cups and Saucers	_____	0. 1. 0
one Seeing Glass	_____	0. 1. 0
one Range	_____	
In the Chamber		0. 7. 0
Three Subs one Barrel one Churn	_____	0. 10. 0
one Bed one Med Ask	_____	0. 8. 0
Two wool Baskets one oil Sack	_____	2. 10. 0
one Broad Loom and wearing off Reel	_____	1. 4. 0
Two Scribling Boxes one flock two Baskets one figing one pair Scales	_____	0. 3. 0
Three pair of Beards two Trufes and Hodging bill	_____	6. 0. 0
one piece one web	_____	3. 0. 0
Seaven Stone of Wool	_____	0. 7. 0
Fluffment	_____	6. 10. 0
out of Doors	_____	1. 12. 0
one Cow & hay	_____	
sheep	_____	

By the age of 19, on 13th October **1783**, **Mary Marsden**, spinster, married 27 year old **Joseph Illingworth**, Batchelor (sic) and Husbandman who was her cousin (once removed) and they will have lived at the Rocks home built by their father some 20 years earlier. Both signed their own names on the registration. Mary's mother's name does not appear and one of the witnesses is Jno Laverack who was a Church official. The other witness, Thomas Illingworth, was Joseph's brother.

N ^o 659		Joseph Illingworth	of this Parish
Batchelor & Husbandman		Mary Marsden of this Parish	
Spinster		were	
Married in this Church by Banns			
this	13	Day of October	in the Year One Thousand seven Hundred
and	eighty three	By me	Matthew Fowler Vicar
This Marriage was solemnized between Us		Joseph Illingworth	
		Mary Marsden	
In the Presence of	Jno Laverack		
	Thomas Illingworth		

Mary Marsden & Joseph Illingworth – Marriage Register entry 13 October 1783

The **1798** Land Tax Redemption record shows Joseph Illingworth listed next to Francis Marsden (son of John Marsden of Toad Hole Silkstone) who owned land adjacent to the Rocks which also confirms **Joseph Illingworth** at the Rocks in 1798.

The 18th and 19th Land Tax records do not record specific addresses and property locations but they do show **Joseph Illingworth** as an owner and occupier of land. From other records it is certain that Joseph is living in the vicinity of Sowood farm and it is almost certain he was living at Rocks until **1803** and probably until his death in **1818**. By this time Joseph had become a butcher and it would have suited the family to live closer to his business in Ossett town and it is probable that the family had moved from the Rocks before 1818. Joseph and Mary Illingworth (nee Marsden) had eight children between 1790 (7 years after their marriage) and 1809. Their first four children were boys and the eldest was named William Illingworth (1790- 1861) after his maternal grandfather.

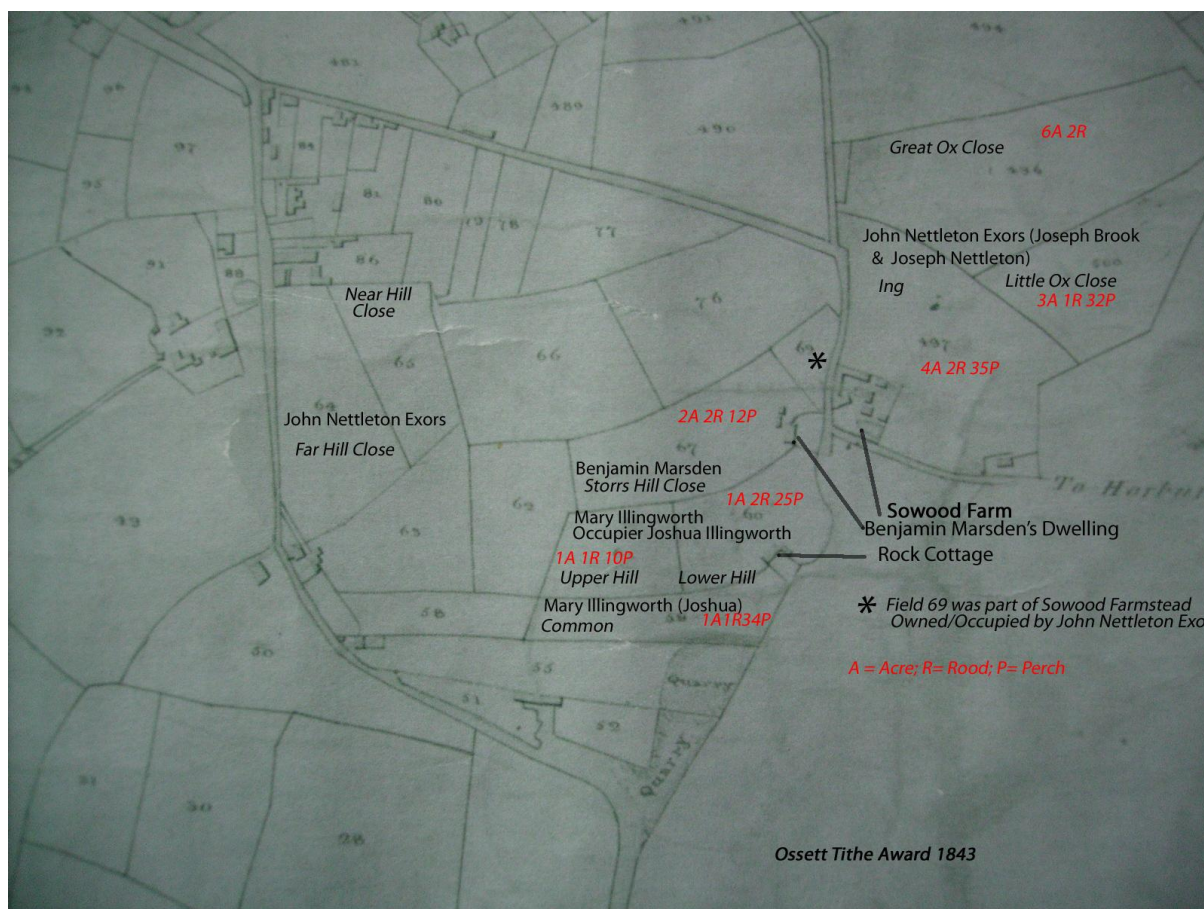
The **1821** Census appears to show the Rocks is **uninhabited**. All censuses are a single snapshot of one evening each ten years (twenty years in this case) and so the occupiers may simply have been elsewhere for a day or two and would be recorded elsewhere or it may have been empty for a while. Widow Mary Illingworth is living elsewhere in Ossett, possibly in north Ossett or the town area, with her family so it certain she is not living at Rocks in 1821. The eldest son **William Illingworth** is also recorded living with his wife Rachel Berry, who he married in August 1813 but he had moved back to the Rocks by about **1825**⁸. Land Tax records covering the 1820's and 1830's do show a Joseph

⁸ The 1871 Census records William's son John and daughter Elizabeth as Storrs Hill and if this is correct the family lived at the Rocks from at least 1826.

Illingworth (one of Mary's sons) who could be living at Rocks but it is uncertain because by this time the Land Tax records had moved from an enumeration route basis (in 1803) to an alphabetic basis and this made property locations impossible to determine from the record.

By **1841** however occupancy and ownership of Rocks look more certain. The Census records **William and Rachel Illingworth** with a Denton Lane Ossett address and this is likely to be the Rocks. By this time they have 13 children and the seven youngest are living with them at the dwelling and William is a journeyman clothier and probably still working the upper chamber at the Rocks.

The 1843 Tithe Award shows Mary Illingworth as owner of the closes on which the Rocks was built and the occupier of the land (probably farming it) is Joshua Illingworth who was William's younger brother. By 1843 the field previously known as Storrs Hill Close in 1775 is split and they are known as Upper Hill and Lower Hill. Mary Illingworth also owns the adjacent field known as "Common" The first two fields are pasture and the third is arable.



1843 Tithe Award⁹ showing Mary Illingworth's ownership including Rocks. The land was occupied by Joshua but the dwelling was occupied by William – both sons of Mary

In 1841 Mary Illingworth, aged 75 and of independent means is living at Ossett town with her sons John (a butcher like his father) and Joshua (a clothier) and two daughters Mary and Hannah. Next door is home to Thomas Illingworth, a cordwainer¹⁰ and his family. The Tithe Award 1843 also records

⁹ In 1843 Benjamin Marsden was living in a dwelling shown on the map to the west of Sowood Farm and Rocks situated near the site which subsequently was occupied by the Tram Sheds. Benjamin was a cousin (once removed) of Mary Illingworth (nee Marsden)

¹⁰ A worker of leather

that Mary Illingworth owned a Croft at field number 334 (2 roods 2 perches) between what is now Bank Street and Prospect Road which is bounded on the north side by the road known today(2012) as Illingworth Street. She also owns field 192 at Healey (2.0.16), Field 179 (Low Farthing Royd 1.3.9) and field 348 (Back Lane Croft 1.0.5). This latter ownership is now home to Ossett Community Centre.

Consequently the 1841 home of Mary Illingworth was situated on field 334 adjacent to Joseph Illingworth Lane now known as Illingworth Street. The Census Enumeration District description is shown below. The late Joseph was a butcher with premises in town so it was convenient for them to live there rather than at Rocks.

Registrar's District Ossett
No. of Enumeration District 8
Description of ditto All that part of the Township of Ossett which lies to the North of Joseph Illingworth's lane leading from the town gate to back lane on the North West side of back lane to Kaye Lane on the North east

1841 Enumeration District 8 description showing Joseph Illingworth Lane –now Illingworth Street

The female Marsdens generally enjoyed greater longevity than the males and in 1851 the 87 year old Mary Illingworth (nee Marsden) is living with her two sons (both butchers) and two daughters at her home in Ossett town alongside Joseph Illingworth Lane, named after her deceased husband. Her home and living companions are the same as they were 10 years earlier. Her eldest son, **William Illingworth**'s living arrangements also echo those of 1841 and in **1851** he and his wife Rachel continue to live at the Storrs Hill address - the Rocks - but now have only five of their 13 children still living with them. William is now aged 60 and recorded as a woollen weaver and perhaps still working the upstairs chamber at the Rocks with some help from the five 'children' (aged between 14 and 31) who are living with William and his wife Rachel. It seems unlikely that there would be sufficient work generated at the Rocks to sustain the family and some will almost certainly be also working elsewhere.

In May 1851 Mary Illingworth (nee Marsden) died at her home in Ossett town thus bringing to an end 90 years of Marsden ownership of the Rocks, built by her father William Marsden and the dwelling in which she was born in 1763. The name on the door for much of this time was Illingworth but only because common law deemed it to be so. The Rocks was very much a creation of the Marsden family and inherited by William Marsden's surviving daughter, Mary, on his death in 1777. Mary Illingworth had made her Will on 4th June 1847, signing it with her own name, and naming her second son, John, and her daughter Hannah, both of whom lived with her, as Executors.

Mary Illingworth's Will (proved on 18 November 1851-effects under £200) refers to her as Mary Marsden spinster (to differentiate her from her sister in law Mary Illingworth who was five years younger and died in 1852). Mary, wife of the late Joseph Illingworth, butcher, left her messuages, dwellings closes lands tenements and hereditaments at Storrs Hill, 'otherwise Sturge Hill' in Ossett to her eldest son William. She instructs that William and his heirs should discharge the mortgage or other security charged against the dwellings and land. This may provide a clue as to the nature of several future land deeds involving some of William's descendants. Mary also leaves £50 legacies to her daughters Mary and Hannah and the same sum to the children of her late daughter Sarah Ellis

(nee Illingworth) wife of Joshua Ellis. The remainder of her estate is left to her son John and daughter Hannah.

William and Rachel and some of their family continued to live at Rocks in the 1850's but William died, aged 70, on 16 January 1861 and was buried at South Ossett Church five days later. William's Will is dated 10 April 1859 and proved at Wakefield on 19 July 1861 by his executors Rachel and his sons John and Henry. He left £40 each to his children Hannah wife of Robert Auty, Emma widow of Thomas Riley, Joseph (first son), Josiah and Elizabeth. He left a life interest in his real and personal estate to his wife Rachel (who died in August 1863) and then on her death to his second son John he left "***all that messuage or dwellinghouse weaving shop mistal and other buildings and 2 closes of land containing about 3 acres situate at Storrs Hill now in my own occupation***" This is the Rocks. To his third son Henry he left *the messuage or dwellinghouse butchers shop croft of land yard and premises situate near the Church at Ossett.*

In March 1861 widow **Rachel Illingworth** aged 68, two of her sons John (aged 35) and Josiah (27) and a daughter Elizabeth (24) are living at a Denton Lane address which will be the Rocks. Widow Rachel Illingworth died in 1863 but it is likely that some of her grown children, including bachelor John Illingworth (1826-1872) continued to live at Rocks, the dwelling left to him on his father's death in 1861 which became his on the death of his mother Rachel in August 1863. **John Illingworth** may have been born at Rocks in 1826 and he certainly lived there with his parents from 1841. The 1871 Census records his birth place and that of his sister Elizabeth as Storrs Hill and if this is correct the family lived at the Rocks from at least 1826. Variousy described in censuses as a cloth journeyman, cloth weaver and wool weaver, John carried on the cloth work tradition established by his great grandfather, William Marsden.

Three months after his mother's death in August 1863 John Illingworth, of Storrs Hill, Clothier, enters a Deed with Francis Briggs, Rag and Mungo Merchant (West Yorks Archives Service WYAS Deeds Registry reference XU 61 45) dated 16 Nov 1863 regarding "*....two closes formerly one near to and adjoining on to Storrs Hill known as Storrs Hill Close formerly in the occupation of Joseph Illingworth the elder and lately in the occupation of William Illingworth deceased but now John Illingworth and also all that Dwellinghouse Shopping Stable or Cowhouse and other buildings erected and built upon the two closes and now also in the occupation of John Illingworth..*No acreage is mentioned in the Memorial of the Deed but taken with information from a later record of 1873 (below) this land is that known as Upper and Lower Hill shown on the 1843 Tithe Award map above. The specific purpose of the transaction is unclear from the memorial of the Deed but earlier and later transactions suggest it is a mortgage from Briggs secured against the land and buildings including Rocks.

In 1871 **John Illingworth**, wool weaver aged 45 is living at 'Denton Lane on Storrs Hill' with his brother in law John Harrop (1837-1904)¹¹ and his wife Elizabeth (recorded as John Illingworth's sister in law but actually his sister) and their three year old daughter Winifred. John Harrop and Elizabeth Illingworth were married in the Sept quarter 1861. John Illingworth is the head of this household suggesting that the dwelling was still housing only one family. This house is the Rocks. John Illingworth died on 29 May 1872 and was buried at South Ossett Church on 31 May. *The Will of John Illingworth late of South Ossett in the Parish of Dewsbury in the County of York Clothier who died 29 May 1872 at South Ossett was proved at Wakefield by Elizabeth Harrop (wife of John Harrop Clothier) of South Ossett the sister the sole Executrix" Effects under £150.* John's Will was proved at Wakefield on 22 June 1872 and he left all his personal effects to his sister Elizabeth.

There is no specific mention of the Rocks in John's Will and in 1873¹² Frank Briggs is recorded as owner of 2 acres 2 roods and 30 perches of land in Ossett which is only 14 perches different to the 1843 Tithe Award acreage recorded for Lower Hill and Common Closes. The 1873 Return of Land also records 'Messrs Illingworth' owning 1 acre 2 roods and 29 perches which is only 4 perches

¹¹ This John Harrop was son of John Harrop (1797-1865) Wool Manufacturer and Martha (nee Illingworth). John Harrop senior was the cousin of George Harrop (1813-1892) who built Rocks House Horbury

¹² Return of Owners of Land 1873

different to the 1843 measurement of Upper Hill Close upon which the Rocks dwelling is built. This suggests that by 1873 the Illingworths have disposed¹³ of much of their land ownership on Storrs Hill and now own only the acre and a half (approximately) Upper Hill Close and the Rocks dwelling remains in their possession. Subsequent events however suggest otherwise.

Although there is no specific mention of the Rocks in John's Will it appears that it is inherited by John Illingworth's sister Elizabeth Harrop and in 1877 she and her husband, John Harrop, enter another deed with Frank Briggs the purpose of which is unclear from the memorial¹⁴. This may be the sale by them to Briggs of another part of the Upper Hill close although there is no mention of this or any land measurements in the deed. It may on the other hand be a mortgage or a redemption of a mortgage on the Rocks dwelling and land or more simply the recording of a right of way. Subsequent events suggest that, whatever was the purpose of the 1871 and 1877 transactions between the Harrops and Briggs it was the Harrops who owned the land by 1881 and it seems likely therefore that the transactions were mortgage(s) or a long lease.

In any event in **1881 John Harrop his wife Elizabeth (nee Illingworth)** and their daughter Winifred are recorded in the Census as living at the first address on Denton Lane which will be the Rocks. Later that year in April 1881 *Francis Briggs and "Elizabeth Harrop, wife of John Harrop, and George Harrop"* enter a Deed (WYAS ref 857 448 486 dated 29 April 1881) The purpose of this is also vague in the Memorial but since it includes Frank Briggs it suggests that George Harrop is purchasing an interest (or perhaps an option) from both Briggs and Harrop. This suggests the earlier Briggs' transactions were mortgage(s) or lease(s) to Briggs, either of which would give him an interest in the land which Elizabeth Harrop was seeking to sell to George Harrop. George was a well to do mill owner who had built the adjacent Rocks House.

In 1884¹⁵ finally it is clear that John and Elizabeth Harrop (nee Illingworth) do sell the dwelling and the Storrs Hill Close land to George Harrop, Cloth Manufacturer and soon afterwards John and Elizabeth Harrop move to Horbury. From George Harrop's viewpoint the acquisition of the Rocks and the associated land may seem odd bearing in mind that by this time he had already built the nearby Rocks House, a grand Victorian villa in substantial grounds. The land was formerly in the ownership of Joseph Thornes and when he died George Harrop bought many of his substantial landholdings including Green House which once stood on Green Park Ossett. The acquisition of additional land close to his new home at the 1870's Rock House would extend his Horbury estate to the east and south across Storrs Hill.

There is no evidence in 1881 that the Rocks was housing more than one family but it is possible. By **1891** however it is certain that this is the case and this may be to do with the new owner George Harrop who unlike previous owners would view the Rocks as less of a home and more of an investment and income stream. More dwellings means more income and it appears that the Rocks is now providing homes for **three families**. The address is no longer Denton Lane but Horbury Road and the occupants are Mary Bradley (2 rooms), Andrew and Sarah Illingworth (nee Illingworth) in 3 rooms- probably the centre property - and Thomas Watson (2 rooms).

After about 130 years the Rocks is no longer in the ownership of the Marsden or Illingworth families but nevertheless the family is still represented by third cousins Andrew and Sarah Illingworth who shared a great,great,great grandfather, John Illingworth. George Harrop the builder and owner of Rocks House and also the owner of the Rocks died on 1st July 1892 and probate was granted to his son Joshua in December 1892. Joshua inherited many of his father's landholdings including Rocks House Horbury and the Rocks, Ossett both situated on Storrs Hill.

In **1901** the census records **three families** living at *Horbury Road The Rocks* – the first Census to record the dwelling(s) with this name. Mary Ann Bradley is living in 2 rooms (as she was in 1891) but Andrew and Sarah Illingworth have moved on and they are replaced by Rachel Laycock in the centre property (in 4 rooms). The Illingworth family continue to have a presence at the Rocks in the form of

¹³ It is also possible that this transaction was a long lease to Frank Briggs

¹⁴ West Yorkshire Archive Deeds Registry Deed reference 739 330 380 dated 21 December 1877.

¹⁵ Ibid: 906 531 700 dated 21 March 1884

Joshua Illingworth and his family who are living in 2 rooms. This is the last year that the Illingworths are recorded at the Rocks

1901 – 2013 New Owners and structural change

In 1908 Joshua Harrop of Cliffe House Horbury disposed of many of his Ossett and Horbury land holdings including the 4 acre Sallot Royd¹⁶ on the east side of Westfield Road, which was sold to James Hampshire Nettleton, the former and future Mayor of Ossett. This was land which was once occupied by the Marsden family of Halfway House Horbury. Green House in Green Park Ossett was sold¹⁷ to his half brother John Harrop who had lived there for several years whilst the House was owned by his father George

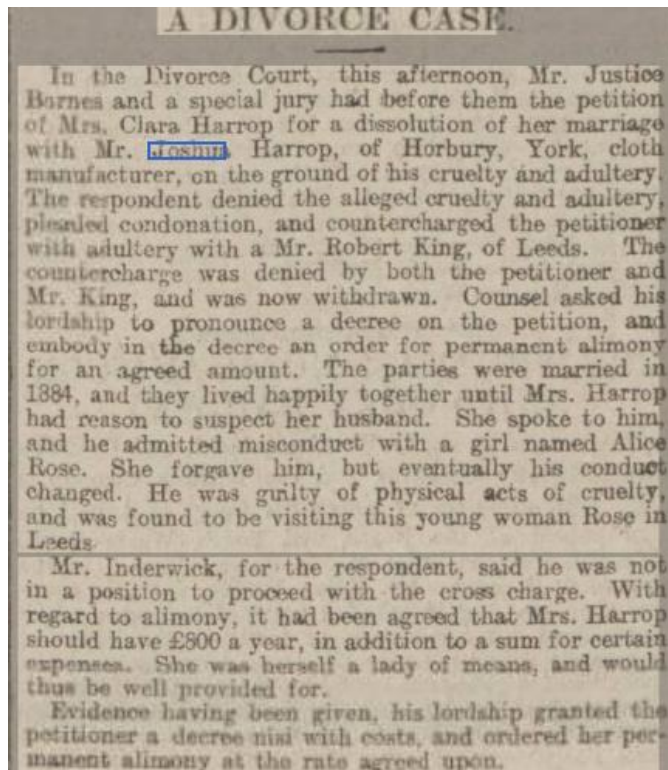
In this history however the important disposals are those relating to the Rocks and adjacent lands. George Harrop had acquired several ownerships to the south and west of the land which is nowadays part of the Rock House estate. On the death of his father in 1892 Joshua Harrop inherited this land – 7 acres in total – including the Rocks and the adjacent Storrs Hill Close. On 23 September 1908 an auction was held at the Temperance Hall Ossett when this seven acres formed Lot 9 on the sale catalogue. Lot 9, including the Rocks and 7 acres, including the land formerly known as Storrs Hill Close, was sold to the highest bidder, Thomas Baines Teale, *a bank clerk from Blackpool*, and his wife Emma Teale. Actually Thomas was born in Ossett and worked as a bank clerk in the town moving to Blackpool by 1908. He married Emma Nettleton in Ossett in 1906.

The timing of the Joshua Harrop disposals in 1908 is interesting. In January 1884 Joshua Harrop married Clara Felicity Bolton at Yeadon and in 1891 they were living at Raynor Yard Horbury. There are no children in the household. In 1901 Joshua is living alone at Cliffe House Horbury and is described as a single man suggesting something had happened to Joshua Harrop between 1891, when he was recorded as a married man, and 1901 when he was single.

In January 1899 The Manchester Evening news carried the story which conveyed the answer.

¹⁶ Ibid: 43 324 137 dated 3 November 1908

¹⁷ Ibid: 43 127 58 dated 2 November 1908



This may have been part of the reason for Joshua parting with so many properties and land holdings at one time in 1908. Perhaps he had had enough of Ossett too and in 1911 he is recorded as single man, aged 52, a visitor to the Hotel Metropole Blackpool. Ironic perhaps that three years earlier he had sold the subject of this history, the Rocks, to a bank clerk from the same town. Joshua Harrop died in Ossett on 9th March 1923. Probate was granted on 17 December 1923 and his estate had a value of £252500. (£5.5 m at current values).

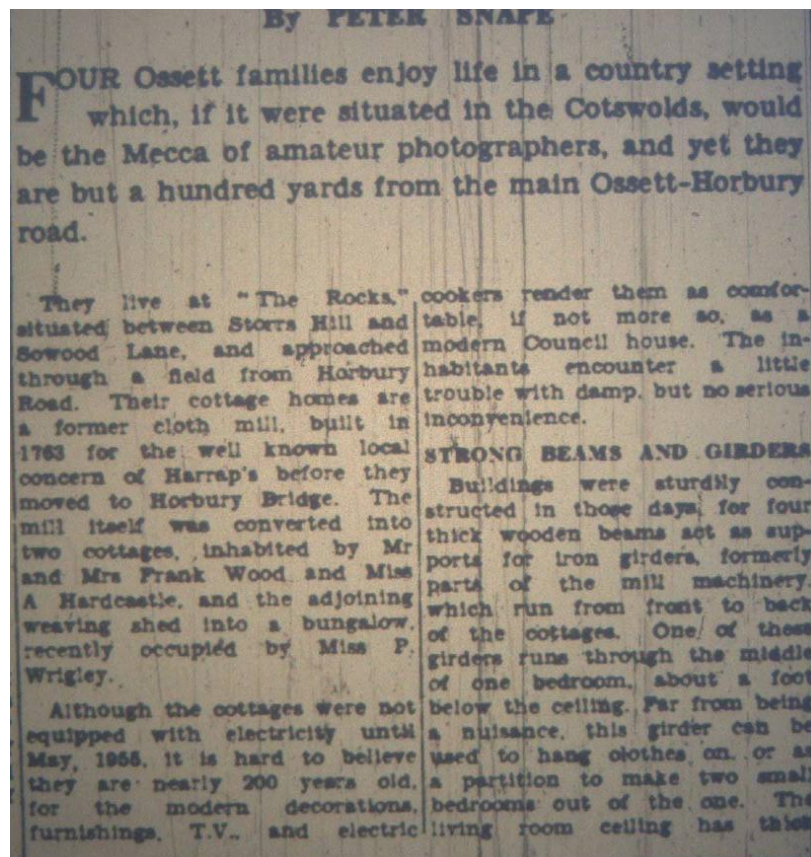
Except to the extent that Joshua Harrop and his father George owned the Rocks between 1884 and 1908 this tale is not of great significance to this history. What is of more relevance is that in **1908** the Rocks was owned by **Thomas Baines Teale** and his wife Emma. Part of the land on which 93 The Rocks stood was copyhold and on 3 November 1908 Joshua Harrop surrendered this part to the Lord of the Manor of Wakefield and on 20 November 1908 the Teales were admitted by the Lord (as was the custom of the Manor since the 14th Century)

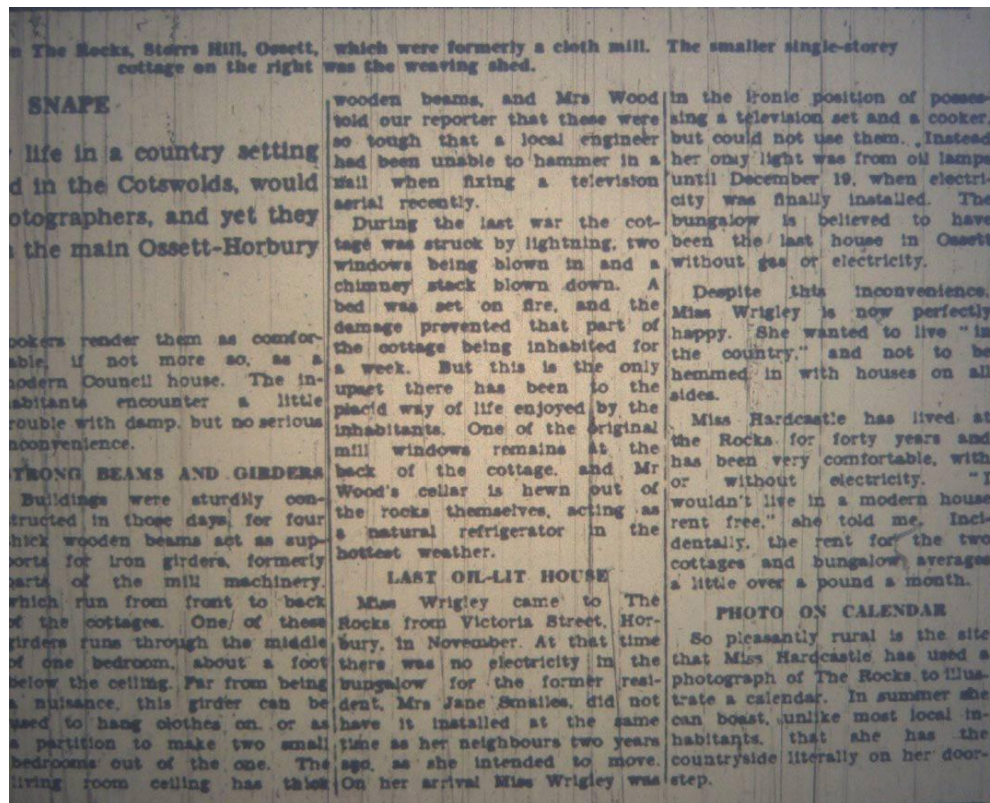
In **1911** the Teales continue the practice of renting the Rocks to **three families**. In the Census of that year the dwelling(s) have slightly different addresses yet again. They are now known as 93, 95 and 97 *The Rocks Ossett* Mary Ann Bradley lives at 93 (2 rooms – where she has lived since 1891 or earlier), Sam Longley at 95 (3 rooms) and S Baines Teale, retired grocer at 97 (house and bedroom). S Baines Teale is probably Samuel who was Thomas Baines Teale's father

Thomas Baines Teale of the Bungalow Kingsway Ossett died on 23 May **1945** and probate was granted at Llandudno to his widow Emma Teale. His estate was £ 41055 and his widow **Emma Teale** inherited the Rocks. It has not been possible to identify tenants after 1911.

An Ossett Observer article (see below), from January 1957, reproduced below by courtesy of Neville Ashby, indicates four families were living at the Rocks and it seems likely that Miss A Hardcastle (mentioned in the article) is living in 95, which was the north end of the 1763 dwelling (on the right in photographs shown later) and Phyllis Wrigley is living in number 93, the single storey weaving shed. No 97(the remainder of the 1763 building) was occupied by Frank Wood. All were still tenants of Emma Teale.

Phyllis speaks fondly of her home on Storrs Hill and two years later she, and her neighbouring tenant Frank Wood, were able to buy the properties which, by 1957, they were renting. The historic accuracy of the article however is incorrect and does not reflect the facts. George Harrop did own the Rocks but not until 1884 but by then he had established his Horbury business and built the grand Rock House nearby the Rocks. Neither was the Rocks ever a mill in the sense we might understand today or then. It was however the case that the upper chamber of the dwelling was used for the purpose of cloth and wool making processes and a weaving shop existed on the site. The structure built in 1763 was a dwelling built by William Marsden and not by George Harrop. Because of the Harrop involvement the history as suggested in the article, has become confused and, understandably, embellished over time.



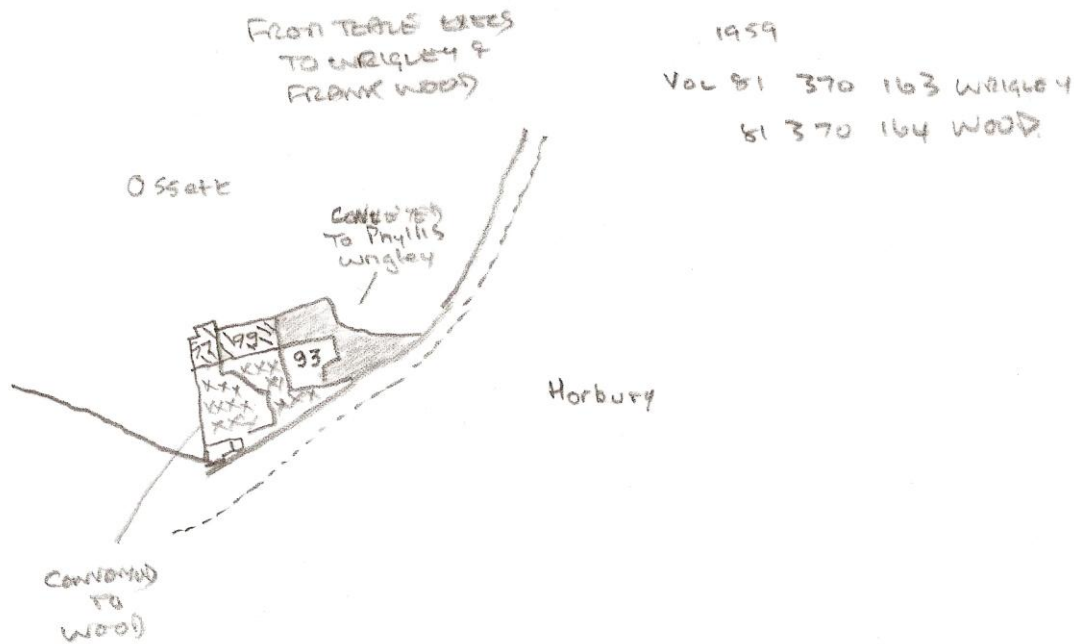


Ossett Observer 19th January 1957

Emma Teale of The Bungalow, 51 Kingsway Ossett died 5th February 1959 and probate was granted at London on 10th March 1959 to John Bernard Gawthorpe, retired brigadier HM army, George Stanley Gawthorpe bank manager, Ronald Oldroyd chartered accountant and Arthur Thorp solicitors' managing clerk. Effects were £86,455. It is not known when the Teales sold the majority of the 7 acres they purchased in auction in 1908 but on 21 April 1959 the Executors of Emma Teale's estate sold 93 Horbury Road (The Rocks)¹⁸ to **Phyllis Wrigley** for £30 and sold numbers 95 and 97¹⁹ to **Frank Wood**

¹⁸ West Yorkshire Archives Deeds Registry reference 81 370 163

¹⁹ Ibid: 81 370 164



Copy of the plan from the Deeds of Sale by Emma Teale's Executors in 1959. No.93 is not part of the 1763 dwelling but the adjacent single storey weaving shed

These deeds of sale demonstrate that the original 1763 *dwelling* was wholly contained in the area sold to Frank Wood and subsequently purchased by John and Brenda Martin. The area known as, and shown above as, number 93 contained only the weaving shop and some land and it was in the converted single story weaving shop building that Phyllis Wrigley lived out her life.

In 1961²⁰ Phyllis Wrigley is living at no.93 with Frank Wood at 95 and Jean Brook at 97 Horbury Road. Sometime between 1961 and 1984 or shortly thereafter, number 97 was no longer an address and no.95 became the only address of the original dwelling. No.93 was the weaving shop and adjacent land (owned by Miss Wrigley) and no. 95 was the address of the original 1763 dwelling which was owned by Frank Wood and had formerly been sub divided to provide two homes.

Whilst it is certain that these were the addresses in use from about 1961 it may not be the case that the 1901-1911 addresses of 93,95 and 97 applied to the same buildings. It is thought more likely that all these addresses at that time applied to the original 1763 structure and this is supported by the three door entrances to that building shown in the photograph. At that time the whole of the Rocks site was in the ownership of single owners. Joshua Harrop owned it until 1908 and Thomas Baines Teale and his wife Emma owned it from then until her death in 1959.

It is probable that it was at this time, that Emma's executors sold 95/97 (ie the 1763 building and land) to Frank Wood and 93 (ie the weaving shed and land - for £30) to Miss Wrigley. Both were sitting tenants.

²⁰ Dewsbury Directory 1961



The Rocks or Rock Cottages, in about 1984. Number 93 was the single storey weaving shed on the right. The 1763 building (now 95 Horbury Road) can be seen on the left ²¹



The Rocks 95 Horbury Road shortly after 1984 – the extensions and adaptations which can be seen in the 2012 aerial photograph shown later.

²¹ Photographs above courtesy of Neville Ashby

On 12 January 1984 John and Brenda Martin purchased number 95 (the 97 address was redundant by this time) from Frank Wood. The above photographs were taken shortly afterwards. Phyllis Wrigley died, aged 92, in August 1989 and it is assumed that no.93 ie her land and the weaving shed was sold at that time. There is a March 1994²² record suggesting that a Kathleen Thompson owned no. 93.

Today the property is much altered from that described by John Illingworth in 1861 as *all that messuage or dwellinghouse, weaving shop, mistal and other buildings.... at Storrs Hill now in my own occupation*. Indeed it is barely recognisable as the dwelling which stood here as recently as 1984 as adaptations and extensions have been made to make the building fit for 21st Century living.

The following aerial photograph from 2012 shows the **two** dwellings which now stand on the site of the Rocks. The original 1763 dwelling is wholly a part of number 95 and the property known as 93 has been built on the land which at one time housed the old weaving shop.



In 2012 number 93 The Rocks Horbury Road is recorded²³ in the possession of Neil John Watson and Caron Beverley Lee-Robinson and number 95 The Rocks Horbury Road is recorded in the possession of John and Brenda Martin.

Next year is 2013, the 250th anniversary of William Marsden's 1763 marital home at the dwelling which came to be known as The Rocks. A fitting tribute to the Marsden family who came to Ossett in about 1680 and left their mark on the physical and social landscape of the town and, in particular, upon Sowood and Storrs Hill.

Alan Howe November 2012

²² Land Registry

²³ Land Registry

