

## Ann Walker's Charity

The *In Search of Ann Walker* group has recently revived the charity established by Ann Walker's will 170 years ago. The target was to match, in today's equivalent, the money Ann wanted to be distributed to those in need. Their appeal set itself a target of £1000 for Christmas 2022 to go to the Brighthouse Central Bank. At the end of the article, the amount raised will be updated. Rest assured, the target has been met and exceeded.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/in-search-of-ann-walker>

In an appendix in our book *In the Shadow of Lightcliffe's Old Tower*, we gave details of a number of charities that were established in the parish to help the poor, including Ann Walker's.

This short article draws on both sources so we are much indebted to the *In Search of Ann Walker* group and, in particular, Martin Walker. By coincidence, local historian, Chris Helme, has an article in his December edition of *Heritage Newseum* on some local charities.

The Benefactors Board which used to hang in the old church is now stored within the tower, vertically, and attached to battens. It measures about 12' x 3' 9" and looks to be oak with gold leaf script. It has a ladder fixed diagonally across it making parts difficult to read. The key inscription is at the very top of the board and even more difficult to photograph. It would have been on the right when hung in the church.



This inscription records a bequest from William Walker who was Ann's uncle. It reads,

*William Walker AD 1810*

*Left by Will*

*Extract from Will: I give my Executors & Trustees & their heirs one annuity clear yearly rent or sum of £10 upon trust that they or the survivors or survivors of them or his heirs shall do distribute the same at the Chapel of Lightcliffe on Christmas Day every year for ever; to & amongst such poor persons of the Township of Hipperholme aforesaid as they shall think fit the sum of two pounds part thereof being the interest of £50 paid to me under the will of the late James Gledhill & the residue thereof I declare to be donated from myself.*

In his will William charged his brother and heir, John, to continue with this bequest. This was then continued when Ann's will made provision for a sum of £10 to be distributed to the poor of Lightcliffe on Christmas day every year. As the will states:

*“this bequest as a substitution for and in satisfaction of a similar bequest made by my uncle William Walker Esquire but which has been discontinued from circumstances rendering it not legally payable.”*

This is the bequest in more detail, from William Walker's will, proved on 15 February 1810:

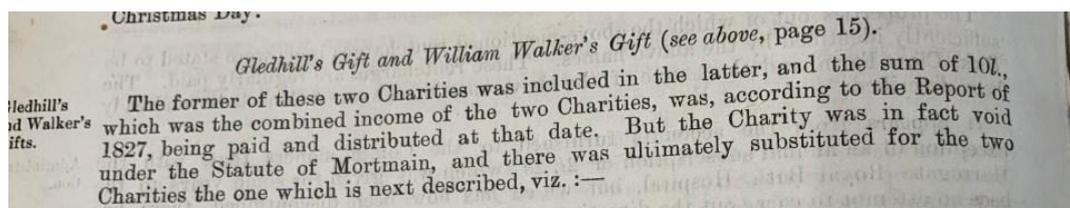
*“I also give to my said Executors and Trustees and their Heirs one Annuity clear yearly Rent or Sum of ten Pounds, Upon Trust that they or the Survivors or Survivor of them or his Heirs shall and do distribute the same at the Chapel of Lightcliffe on Christmas Day in every Year for ever to and amongst such poor persons of the Township of Hipperholme aforesaid as they shall think fit, the Sum of two Pounds, Part thereof, being the Interest of fifty Pounds paid to me under the Will of the late James Gledhill, and the residue thereof I declare to be a Donation from myself, and I also charge my Estates hereinafter given to my said Brother to and with the Payment of the same.”*

£2 of this £10 was derived from a 1789 gift of £50 from a James Gledhill (the James “Gledhill” of the will) to William Walker, the interest on which to be distributed to the poor of Lightcliffe on Christmas day. Gledhill's gift is interesting in that some of the benefit is in clothing not just cash.

*“The sum of £10 a year is regularly paid, and £8 thereof is distributed by the executors of the testator on Christmas day, among poor people of Hipperholme, in money or clothing, and the sum of 40s. a year, under Gledhill's gift, is applied, one half in linen, to eight poor women, and the other half to the use of a Sunday school.”*

This James Gledhill's request is also on the Benefactors' Board.

The circumstances rendering the William Walker bequest not legally payable are not clear. However, it appears that the charity became void under the *law of mortmain*, which was a series of Acts of Parliament dating from 1259 restricting the transfer of property to the church, in order to evade feudal obligations.

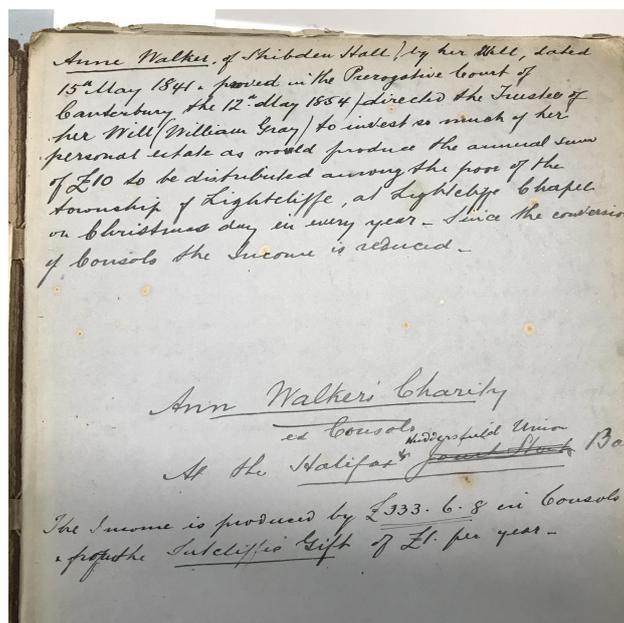


West Yorkshire Archive Services, Wakefield, WDP47

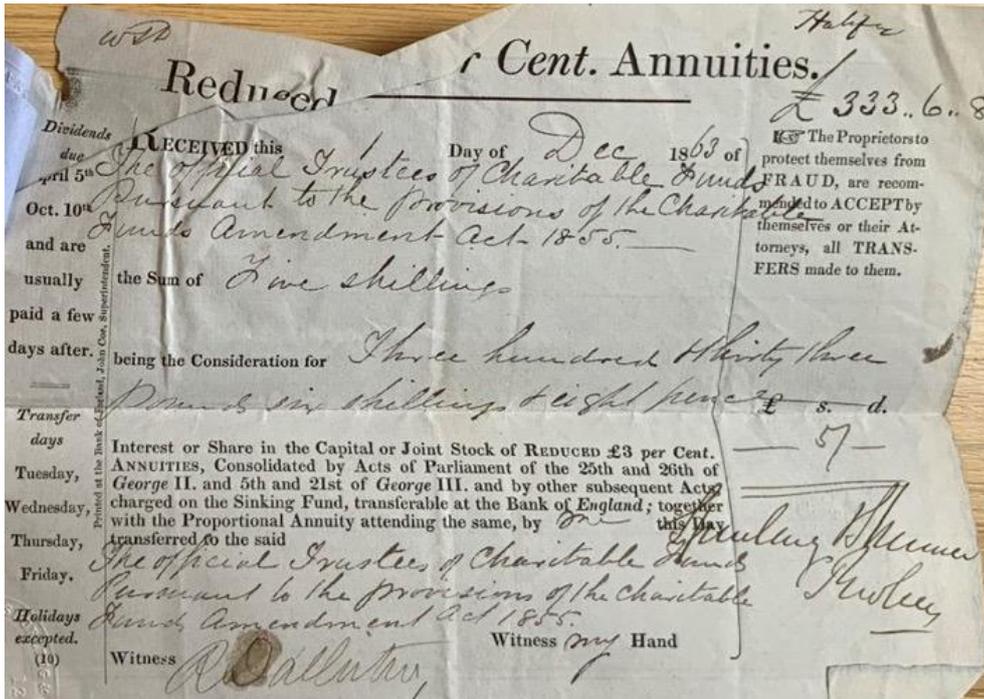
The extract of payments under the will of William Walker are in the West Yorkshire Archives (St Matthew's Lightcliffe) WDP 47

Christmas		No.	Shillings	pence	the	1804
Grace Hemingway	Lane End	1	4	1	4	1 4
John Lodge's Wife	Stude Lytle	2	4	2	4	2 4
Anne Hemingway	Lightcliffe	3	4	3	4	3 4
Sarah Barber	Lightcliffe	4	4	4	4	4 4
Widow Mary Harpfull	Stude Lytle	5	4	5	4	5 4
* Samuel Allen's Widow	Hove Edge	6	4	remov'd		
William Sutcliffe	Stowood Green	7	4	6	4	5 4
Widow Holmes	Stowood Green	8	4	7	4	7 4
* Joseph Sharp	Bramley Lane	9	4	8	4	8 4
* Joseph Shawmuth	Stowood Green	10	4	9	4	9 4
* Ann Bamcroft	Hove Edge	11	4	10	4	10 4
* Widow Brown	Stowood Green	12	4	11	4	11 4

Ann requested in her will that after her death her executor, William Gray, should invest enough of her personal estate in consolidated 3% annuities (a type of government bond, known as "consols") to generate an annual return of £10. Ten pounds is 3% of 333 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence, and this amount of consols was duly purchased.

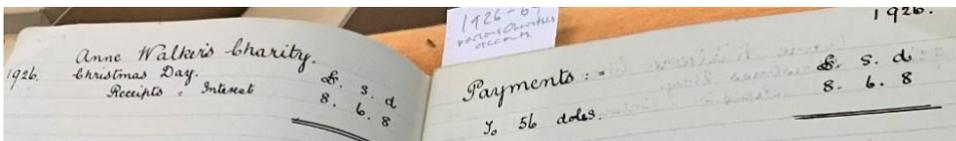


This summary also mentions Sutcliffe's Gift. This is also recorded on the Benefactors' Board. Rev Rich<sup>d</sup> Sutcliffe was curate at the time of the rebuilding of the old church. His 20 shillings a year was funded on the rents from his property at Sheard Green in Hove Edge (Green Lane area).



Receipt for the 5 shillings brokerage fee on the purchase of the bonds invested for Ann Walker's Charity, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Calderdale,

The £10 consol dividends were received and distributed each year until 1888, when the interest rate on the bonds was reduced to 2¾%. The rate was further reduced to 2½% in 1903, reducing the yield to 8 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence:



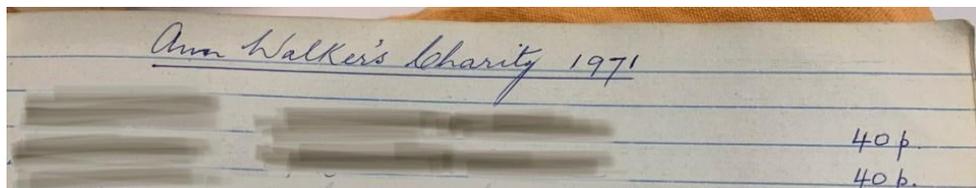
St Matthew's charity accounts, 1926 West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield, WDP47

Also from these archives, the account book shows payments from 1920 to 1923. This is an extract showing payments over the period. In some cases, payments cease with a note indicating the death of the recipient.

Ann Walker's	1920	1921	1922	1923	Charity	1920	1921	1922	1923
Edwin Harrison	3/-	2/6	3/6	2/6	M <sup>rs</sup> Bailey	3/-	2/6	2/6	2/6
M <sup>rs</sup> Sharp	3/0	2/6	2/6	2/6	M <sup>r</sup> Goodger Senior	4/6	2/6	2/6	2/6
M <sup>rs</sup> Smith	3/-	2/6	2/6	2/6	M <sup>rs</sup> Mallinson	3/-	2/6	2/6	2/6
M <sup>rs</sup> Mary Lockman	3/-	2/6	2/6	5/-	M <sup>rs</sup> Somersall				
M <sup>rs</sup> Knight	3/6	2/6	2/6	2/6	M <sup>rs</sup> Renshaw	3/0	2/6	2/6	2/6
M <sup>rs</sup> Midgley	3/-	2/6	3/-	2/6	M <sup>rs</sup> Wall Marshall	4/6	2/6	2/6	2/6
M <sup>rs</sup> Thompson	3/-	2/6	3/-	2/6	M <sup>rs</sup> Newis	3/-	2/6	2/6	2/6
M <sup>rs</sup> Llewellyn	3/-	2/6	2/6	2/6	M <sup>rs</sup> Owen	4/-	2/6	2/6	2/6

£8.6.8 shared between 56 people equates to approximately 3 shillings (or 15p), each. In 1926 this equated to a real (income equivalent) value of about £50 today.

By 1971 (the year when decimalised currency was introduced in the UK), individual beneficiaries of Ann's charity were only receiving 40 or 45p each:



St Matthew's Charity accounts, 1971 West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield, WDP47

Sometime during the 1970s as the real value of the payments sank to nominal values, the charity became unviable (as with many others both locally and nationally), and the payments ceased.

Measured against the UK's RPI (Retail Price Index), £10 in 1854 would be worth around £1000 today. Since 2020 *In Search of Ann Walker* has been raising money for a local food bank, in the first year they raised over £1300 for Wyke Foodbank. In 2021, £1686 was raised for Brighouse Central Foodbank and this year (2022) they hope to raise another £1000 for Brighouse.

The amount raised so far is around £2,500 and rising.

Ian Philp  
December 2022