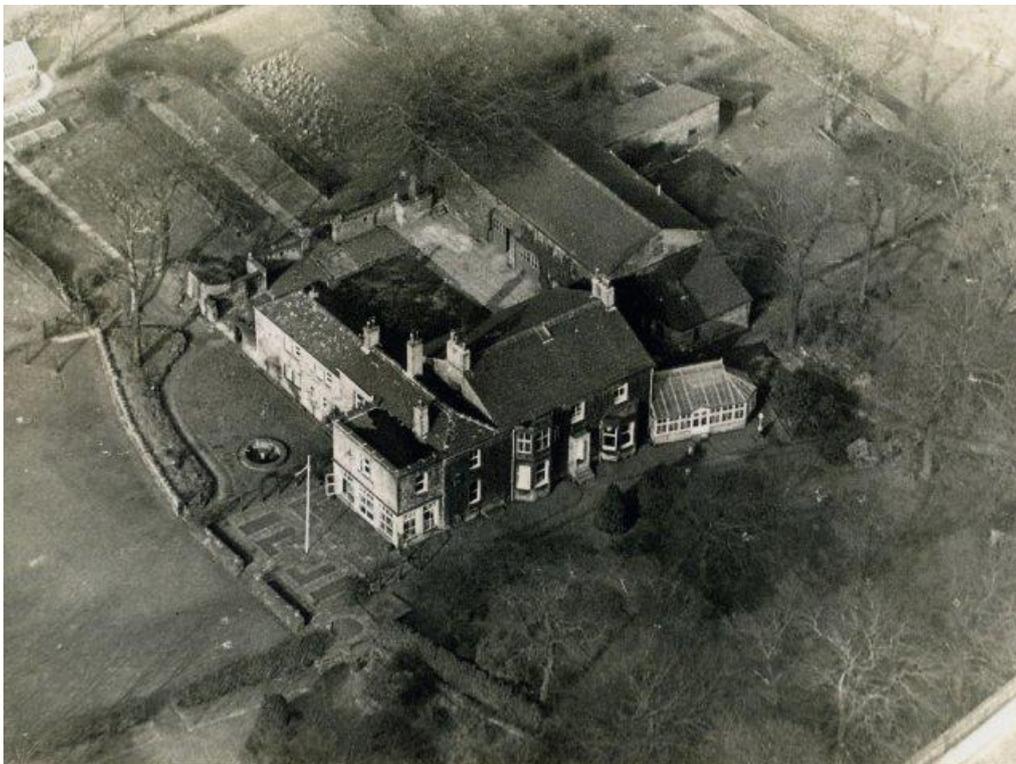


The Walker property known as Lidgate House or Farm.



Lydgate House is situated in the middle of Lightcliffe. Originally it stood on its own surrounded by farmland but is now enveloped by a recently built development. For years it was part of the Walker family's Crow Nest estate.



The spelling has also changed over the years although it appears to have been spelt more consistently with a 'y' from 1870 onwards whereas Lidgate is the more common spelling on earlier documents. On the plans drawn by Samuel Washington in 1820, the spelling is Lidgate and on the 1830 Myers map it is Lydget, other variations include Lidget, Lidgett and Ledgate. A 'lidgate' was a swing gate to prevent cattle straying from the common fields. The place name Lidgate can refer to a residence or area by a swing gate. The derivation is from the Old English pre 7th Century words "hlid-geat" and its various spellings became English surnames. In Lightcliffe there is Lidgate house as well as an area of the village known as Lidgate.

In J. Horsfall Turner's book *History of Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme* there is a very early 1503 reference to 'waste between Estfelde and Liddeyate of Hyperum'. This fits with Malcolm Bull's *Calderdale Companion* notes that there was a building on the site in 1529 (the same year that Eastfield Chapel was established) in the ownership of a Fairbank family and that Edmund ffairebanke 'to pay yerely to new chapel in the estfeld of Hiperon towards fynding of a prest ther for ever'. Excuse the old English spelling but hopefully the meaning is clear. The house and / or area of 'Lidyate' then get further references in JH-T's book which confirm the ffairebanke residence and give some idea – although the original documents cannot be checked – as to who else was living in the area.

- 1563 "Edmunde ffairebanke fined 3s 4d each for not repairing a bridge at Lidyate".
- 1592 "George ffairebanke, senior, and Geo. his son conveyed a mess(uage) called Lidyate in Lightcliff ..."
- 1602 "Geo. Ffairbanke of Lidyate and his sister Anna broke the pinfold, fined 40d"
- 1610 John Norelyff for Lydyate (fined?) 6d Geo. Ffairbanke, Lydyate 11d
- 1619 John s and h Hugh Norcliff of Liddyate deceased, surr. Lyddyate to Ric. Wilson of Lidyate, reversion to Sibil widow of Hugh, now wife of Wm. Ramsden, for her life.
- 1621 John Midgeley of Halifax drew blood from Wm. Ramsden of Lidyate, 6s 8d
- 1622 Simon ffairebanke and Hen.Scolefield for the road between Lightcliffehill and Lidget Grene, 20d each
- 1626 Simon ffairbanke, ... , 5s each for road between Geo. Fairbank's house and Lydgettgrene to Lydgett yate
- 1631 Ric.Wilson formerly of Liddyate being dead, his son and heir George, paid 2s 10d heriot for the east end of a messuage, called Liddyate, with fold, bar, greatynge, lathcroft, 2 acres, formerly Hugh Norcliffe's.
- In 1634 Robert Fairbank owned a pew on the south side in Eastfield chapel

Moving forward a century we do know that two Walker brothers Richard and Abraham lived at Lidgate as this was recorded on either or both their burial and probate records. Richard who was buried in Lightcliffe churchyard on 17th April 1724 was "of Lidget, Halifax" as was Abraham. Abraham (1696 – 1725) was recorded as being a "gent of Lightcliffe" when he was buried in Halifax on 2nd August 1725. Read more at

The Walker era at Lightcliffe

Although Lidgate House was owned or tenanted by Richard and Abraham Walker in the 1720s the sun dial, which is still visible today is dated 1722 and has the initials WG or WC. [Anyone any ideas?]

Lidgate House appears, then, to have been part of the estate of the Walkers by the early eighteenth century and passed into the estate of Ann Walker following the deaths of her grandfather – Richard and Abraham's older brother – uncle, father and younger brother. The ownership was probably William (Ann's grandfather), then her uncle William, then father, John and finally brother John before his death on honeymoon in Naples.



We are not sure how the Walker estate was divided between the sisters, Elizabeth and Ann after their brother died on his honeymoon; it was a complicated affair. Some sources suggest that Elizabeth Sutherland inherited Crow Nest mansion whilst Cliffe Hill and Lidgate House were left to Ann Walker and the farms and land was similarly divided between them. From detailed accounts of Ann's estate given by her Land Steward, Samuel Washington in 1845 and 1847 Lidgate House was definitely part of Ann's estate by then.

It seems likely that Ann moved into Lidgate House around the time that her brother married in 1829 or soon after. She was there when Anne Lister began to call in 1832. There are many references in Anne Lister's diaries to Lidgate including this from: -

Tuesday 30 October 1832

Took Sykes the gardener and looked over the Lightcliffe plantation for laurels. Sat about an hour with Miss [Aunt] Walker of Cliffe Hill. Gave Miss W one of the fine large, common laurels growing at the Stags Head, and Sykes the gardener and Eastwood went for it, and just got it planted here (Lidgate) before dark. Sykes positive and stupid about it, and I got annoyed and gave him a set down. He had not got it up well.

There were also discussions between the two about renting out Lidgate if and when Ann Walker would move to Shibden Hall to live with Anne Lister. This happened in September 1834 and it would appear from the following diary extract that Lidgate House was indeed then rented out.

Saturday 6 September 1834

F58° at 8 40 am and haze and small rain - breakfast at 10 - had Washington with our rent accounts I received £190 in bills + 37 sovereigns + 1/4 leaving £50 in his hands, clear of all the payments - dawdling over 1 thing or other - wrote out journal of 27th and 28th ultimo - Mr Hird Lamplugh [sic] came at 1 3/4 and took Lidgate and all the land and the house furnished for 10 years at £100 per annum, the 1st 1/2 year's rent to be allowed for improvements - he staid about 1/2 hour and behaved handsomely

Lamplugh Wickham Hird of Bradford had married Frances Hale of Acomb on 8th July 1834 at St. Stephen's Church, Acomb, York. The dates fit for the newlyweds to have moved into Lidgate House in September perhaps after their honeymoon. Their son William Wickham Hird was born in Lightcliffe presumably at Lidgate House and baptised at St. Matthew's Church on 18th October 1835. On the night of the 1841 census, 6th June, 'Ironmaster' Lamplugh Wickham Hird, his wife Frances and 5-year-old son were at "Lidgate" with 4 servants. The house was listed near Knowl Top - misspelt as Nowl -, Lower German House, Roydlands Farm and New House so their neighbours were the coal merchant James Hinscliffe, his brother in law John Cordingley, farmer Thomas Riley, farmer and Shibden Hall tenant William Hardcastle and wool comber William Holland who had moved into New House the former home of William Priestley, Ann Walker's cousin.

These houses and neighbours help distinguish Lidgate House from other houses with the address 'Lidgate' on the census form. On a different census listing there were two blacksmiths and a publican, Hannah Walker - no relation - listed as residing at 'Lidgate', Hipperholme cum Brighthouse with Clay Pond, German House and Harley Head as places nearby. This was the area of Lidgate and not the house Lidgate.

A year later Frances Hird 'of Lidgate' died. She was buried in St. Matthew's churchyard on 20th October 1842 in plot V*8. The following memorial inscription is on her ledger stone.

**IN A VAULT UNDERNEATH THIS STONE ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF
FRANCES WIFE OF LAMPLUGH WICKHAM HIRD ESQUIRE
AND DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM HALE ESQUIRE OF ACOMB NEAR YORK.
SHE DIED THE 14TH DAY OF OCT 1842 AGED 37 YEARS**

By 1844 the original 10-year lease on Lidgate House was up and the then named Lamplugh Wickham Wickham and his son moved out. The change of surname needs to be explained. Lamplugh was the youngest son of Rev. Lamplugh Hird of Low Moor Bradford who had exchanged his own surname of Wickham for that of his wife Sarah Elizabeth Hird. When the reverend died, also in 1842, the family reverted back to their actual surname of Wickham, hence Lamplugh – that was his grandmother's maiden name – acquired this memorable name. He remarried and for fifty-eight years was actively engaged in the management of Low Moor Iron Works.

Samuel Washington's accounts to the Committee (of Ann Walker's Lunacy, i.e. George Mackay Sutherland) have these entries.

'December 1844, L (Lamplugh) Wickham Wickham paid £100 annual rent for the furnished Lidgate Farm. The furniture was sold April 1845 for £172 4s 8d (less cost of sale, £11 4s. 0d). Samuel Washington became the tenant at £63 per annum, unfurnished.'

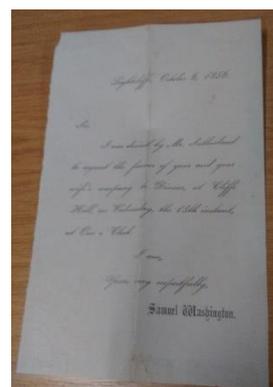
The property was advertised in January 1845. It looks as though Samuel Washington and family moved in as no other tenant could be found. The selling of the furniture indicates that a decision had been made that Ann Walker would never return to Lidgate. In the 1848 'Poll of Knights of the Shire' record Samuel Washington was listed as being of 'Lidgate' and in the 1851 census Samuel Washington and family were living at Lidgate. Again, there is evidence that this was Lidgate House and not the area known as Lidgate where the publican Hannah Walker resided.

The widow Hannah Walker was the tenant licensee of the Horseshoes Inn, Lidgate in 1851. This was a public house belonging to Ann Walker and it was immediately opposite to Lidgate House on the other side of the Wakefield Road turnpike. (now The Poplars, 72 & 74) The cottage next to the bridge was built as a toll booth and later was a blacksmith's workshop. The turnpike was re-routed to make room for the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway line and station in 1850 which would have taken land from the front of the house. The boundary wall for Lidgate House may have been built at the same time.

Hannah Washington 'of Lidgate' died in July 1852 and her husband Samuel Washington died in November 1857. Both he and Hannah were buried in St Matthew's Churchyard. Read more at

The family of Samuel Washington

As recorded in the Bradford Observer of 18 July 1839 Samuel's father James Washington was "a faithful servant, having acted for half a century as bookkeeper to the firm of the late Messrs. William and John Walker, cloth merchants, Crow Nest". His son then served both Ann Walker and Anne Lister as Land Agent and Land Steward dealing with the complexities of the two adjoining estates, Crow Nest and Shibden Hall. There are many West Yorkshire archive documents detailing the work he did for the two ladies and then for Ann Walker's heir. This included sending out this invitation to a celebration for 'Mr Sutherland's' coming of age October 1856. This was before the settlement of the will when Evan Charles Sutherland had to add the name Walker in order to inherit.



So, who took over as the Crow Nest land agent after Samuel Washington passed away in 1857 and where did he live?

By 1859 Evan Charles Sutherland Walker, who inherited the majority of the Crow Nest estate including Lidgate House, when his aunt Ann Walker died in 1854, had brought a fellow Scot and his family down from Edinburgh to be his land agent.

Read more

John Smith – Land Agent for the Crow Nest estate

James and Johanna Levack Smith of 'Lidgate' baptised their son James Smith Smith – yes that repetition is correct – at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe in September 1859. This was probably not Lidgate House but one of the other Crow Nest properties in the Lidgate area. It might even have been the former Horseshoe Inn which was advertised as a dwelling at the beginning of 1857 in the Bradford Observer.

LIGHTCLIFFE

TO BE LET, with immediate possession, as a private dwelling, all that HOUSE at Lidgate in Lightcliffe, lately occupied as the Horse Shoe Inn. The house, built two years since, contains two sitting rooms, pantries, cellars and kitchens, and five bedrooms. There is also an out kitchen, stable, mistal and barn. A good garden can be made if required. Inquire of Samuel Washington, Lightcliffe, steward for Evan Charles Sutherland Walker.

The large Smith family were in 'Lidgate' on census night 1861 as were three unmarried Washington daughters, a 'Fundholder' and two 'Proprietors of Houses'. Again, by making a judgement on the neighbouring houses - their neighbours included an architect Mallinson and then in Bramley Lane David Abercrombie who had Perth House and Perth Villas built - the Washington daughters were most probably still living in Lidgate House. Further evidence for this comes in the 1863 marriage announcement for Esther Washington in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph 11 June 1863.

On Wednesday, the 10th June, at St. Mary's Sheffield, by the Rev. W. Wilkinson, M.A., William Chambers, Esq., solicitor, Brighouse, to Miss Esther Washington, of Napier-terrace, Cemetery-road, Sheffield, daughter of the late Samuel Washington Esq., of Lidgate House, Lightcliffe, near Halifax. No cards.

If all the Washington sisters had moved out of Lidgate House by 1863 then who moved in and when?

Halifax Guardian 1 Feb 1868

LIGHTCLIFFE

Evening classes for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, were open during the winter months, and through the generosity of Mr. J. Smithson of Lydgate, the committee had been enabled to pay teachers for juvenile classes; the great necessity for such classes being apparent from the ignorance displayed in the rudiments of primary education

This was Joshua Smithson, a gentleman of Lightcliffe, when he stood as a trustee in a bankruptcy case reported in April 1865. So, he may well have resided at Lydgate House before 1868.

Meanwhile the Crow Nest estate was put up for auction in 1867. It was the Scottish land agent John Smith who had overall responsibility for dealing with potential buyers. Lidgate Farm was advertised as being with barn, stables, coach house, mistal, yard, garden, shrubberies and pleasure gardens and the rights of pew no. 47 at St Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe. The property did not reach its reserve of £5000; the highest bid was £2250.

Joshua Smithson rented Lydgate House and Farm under a tenancy agreement that lasted until May 1878 at £61 per annum. In 1869 he advertised for a

“Married Man as Groom and Gardener with greenhouse experience”.

And then in 1874 he was able to buy the property and surrounding fields out right as the sitting tenant which was why the house and land did not appear on the 1890 Crow Nest estate sale. Presumably, Joshua Smithson negotiated with Sutherland Walker for the house, farm and other neighbouring lands. He would then be able to do what he wanted to it. This map from 1894 shows two building with the main house to the right. The image can be related to the 1867 description of a substantial farmhouse with outbuildings.



The Smithson family, Joshua had six siblings, were Westmoreland Quakers who became successful and therefore wealthy wholesale tea and coffee merchants, wholesale grocers and/or cotton spinners and manufacturers. Joshua born 1818 was the oldest and Joseph born 1833 the youngest. Both these two brothers, two unmarried sisters and his widowed mother ended up in Lightcliffe. The ladies lived with Joseph Smithson and his family at Yew Cottage, Lightcliffe where they moved to from Halifax before the 1881 census. Joshua resided at Lydgate House on the 1871 census and all subsequent censuses until his death in 1906.

The No. 47 pew plaque which came with 'Ledgate' House.

But did Joshua Smithson as an Elder for the Society of Friends ever attend St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe and sit in this pew?



There are many references to Joshua Smithson's standing in the locality including his appointment to the newly formed Hipperholme Local Board in 1869 when he was vice chairman to Jonas Foster of Cliff Hill (of Black Dyke Mills) before becoming Chairman in 1874 and serving until 1881. He was also governor of a Quaker school in Harrogate along with members of the Backhouse and Pease Quaker families. After he lost his wife Elizabeth nee Nash, from another Quaker family, in 1888 her niece Elizabeth Edith Nash came to live with him at Lydgate House. He died there on 14th December 1906.

As he had no family of his own probate was granted to his nephews, his brother Joseph's sons; namely "Joshua Smithson the younger, Charles Holmes Smithson and Joseph Smithson the younger, stuff-manufacturers and printers. Effects £9982 13s 8d". These young men were also active members within the Lightcliffe area. They feature in many newspaper reports having given talks to local societies, entered dogs with the forename 'Lightcliffe' in dog shows including Crufts and turning out for Lightcliffe Cricket Club. There is a team photograph with the Smithson brothers in rather splendid blazers. Presumably, it was some or all these Smithson brothers who in 1922 sold the parkland behind Lydgate House at 8d per square yard; a total of £2,000. The money was raised by public donations to form a memorial to those who lost their lives in WW1. In 1923 it was renamed Lightcliffe Stray.

On census night 2nd April 1911 Walter Naylor, his wife and children were living at Lydgate House. He was a "Manufacturer of cotton and worsted dress goods". He died later that year, a wealthy man as his probate confirms.

NAYLOR Walter of Lydgate House Lightcliffe Halifax died 26 October 1911 Probate London 6 January to Louisa Naylor widow Herbert Greenough Naylor merchant and Arthur Vincent Naylor manager. Effects £16819 10s 3d



Is this the Naylor family?

As the Smithsons had no children and his brother had lots of sons it probably is not them.

Hopefully, someone can help us with this.

Notice the bay windows above and on the present-day image to the right.

The main façade of Lydgate House may have been plain in Ann Walker's time with the ground floor bays added in the Victorian period. The upper floor bay, on the left of the front door, has a date of 1922 which helps to date early photographs.



When the 1939 register was taken at the beginning of WW2 Bernard Outram Osborn and his wife lived at 'Lidgett House'. He was "Gov(ern)ing Director of Knitting Yarns". In 1911 he was the 'Director of a Private Company' living at Knowl House, Lightcliffe just a short distance away. He too was a wealthy man leaving over one hundred thousand when he died in Kent in October 1954.

Below is the Google Earth view of the Lydgate House today. The greenhouse may not be the one Joshua Smithson needed a "gardener with experience of greenhouse" for but it may be one of its (many?) replacements! Did you notice the greenhouse on the other bird's eye view? We wonder when that image was taken? The other question is did the 1832 planted Lightcliffe laurels flourish despite Sykes' incompetence?



Our current interest lies in the time that Lydgate House belonged to the Walker family. But we are interested in any information about its subsequent history.

If anyone has copies of deeds, photographs of 'period' interiors or early photographs, please contact us.

We really would like to see a copy of the deeds!

Our thanks to local historians, David Glover, Steve Crabtree, Malcolm Bull, Bob Horne, Jill Liddington, Anne Choma, an unnamed transcriber of the Anne Lister diaries and to Dave Lister for additional photographs.

Ian Philp

Dorothy Barker

Friends of St Matthew's Churchyard.

September 2020

The articles highlighted in red including the family histories for the Walkers, Washingtons and Smiths can be found on our website under the *People of Interest* heading and then scroll down.

<https://www.lightcliffchurchyard.org.uk/people-of-interest>