

**Ann Walker**  
**(20<sup>th</sup> May 1803 – 25<sup>th</sup> February 1854)**  
**and the Walker family**



Ann Walker of Lightcliffe became the partner of Anne Lister of Shibden Hall, Halifax. This write up will attempt to draw out the links between the Walker family and St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe where Ann, as well as many others of her family, were baptised, worshipped and ultimately interned. As the plaque, pictured above, states Ann Walker was buried under the pulpit of St. Matthew's old Church, almost certainly a reading pulpit added later. Anne Lister was also familiar with St. Matthew's church and its churchyard; from the time she visited the Priestleys at New House to when she took the Mytholm pew in the gallery of the Lightcliffe church so that she and Ann Walker could worship there together.

Ann's grandfather, William Walker (1713 – 1786), was a wealthy Halifax worsted manufacturer who was instrumental in the building of St Matthew's Church. In 1775 he had travelled to the Baltic to buy timber. This was the wood used on the roof of St Matthew's old church. William Walker also used the timber to rebuild his family home, Crow Nest, and then to build a new home Cliffe Hill, both in Lightcliffe.

William Walker married Mary Wainhouse on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1739. She died within weeks on 27<sup>th</sup> February and was buried at St. John's Church, Halifax on 29<sup>th</sup> February 1739. Seven years later, on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1746, he married Elizabeth Caygill, the sister of John Caygill who donated the land that Halifax's Piece Hall was built on. Again, the marriage took place in Halifax. They had five children baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe: namely Mary on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1747, William on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1748, Elizabeth on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1751, John on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1753 and Ann on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1757. Only Elizabeth and John would marry.

Elizabeth Walker married John Priestley of Sowerby on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1776. They lost two children as tiny babies, but five Priestley children survived to adult hood. They were left fatherless when John Priestley died in 1801. Their uncle, bachelor William Walker, and maiden aunts were then instrumental in bringing up their Priestley nephews and nieces who often stayed at Crow Nest and Cliffe Hill. This William Walker and his sister Elizabeth were reputed to have had music lessons with William Hershel, the astronomer who discovered Uranus, when he was organist at Halifax Parish Church in 1760. St. John's Church in Halifax had a Schnetzler organ. Schnetzler was a Swiss-born, London-based organ builder. This may explain why William Walker was keen to have a Schnetzler organ installed at Lightcliffe in the church his father had built. Like his uncle and mother William Priestley was very fond of music. He became a gifted musician who eventually founded the Halifax Choral Society.

Meanwhile Elizabeth's brother John Walker had married Mary Edwards on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1795. Mary was the daughter of wealthy woollen manufacturer John Edwards and his wife Elizabeth of Pye Nest, Halifax. The Walkers were living at Cliffe Hill when their first-born, William, was born but he died 21 days later, on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1798. The little boy was buried in Lightcliffe churchyard in a plot just outside the church. Daughters Mary and Elizabeth, born 10<sup>th</sup> November 1801, were baptised at St. Matthew's Church on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1799 and 18<sup>th</sup> December 1801 respectively.



As the above baptism record shows Ann Walker, born on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1803, was also baptised there on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1803 as was her younger brother, John Walker, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1804.

The children's uncle William never married and so when he died in 1809 his younger brother John, Ann's father, inherited the family estate. Aged just six, therefore, Ann Walker moved into the Crow Nest mansion with her parents, older sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, and younger brother, John. This was where her older sister Mary died on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1815. She was buried with her baby brother in the plot now given the code CC\*27.

BURIALS in the [Parish of] <i>Chapelry of Lightcliffe in the Parish of Halifax</i> in the County of <i>York</i> in the Year 18 <i>15</i>				
Name.	Atode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Mary Walker</i> <i>Daughter of John Walker</i> <i>No. 73.</i>	<i>Crownest</i>	<i>1815</i> <i>Feb 1 8</i>	<i>15</i> <i>years</i>	<i>William</i> <i>Min?</i>

As the burial record states her funeral service was conducted by the Lightcliffe incumbent the Reverend Robert Wilkinson. In 1782 this gentleman had become the perpetual curate after the death of the Reverend Richard Sutcliffe, who was the first incumbent of the old church. [See the write up about the Church Incumbents]. Rev. Robert Wilkinson may well have conducted baby William's funeral and the baptism services for the other Walker children. His youngest daughter Lydia was a very good friend to Ann Walker.

Spinster aunts Mary Walker and her sister, Ann Walker lived at Cliffe Hill. Presumably they swapped mansions with their brother John and his family after their bachelor brother William Walker died.

The eldest aunt, Mary Walker, had a bad fall in the hall at Cliffe Hill in July 1822 breaking her bones in her thigh. She never recovered dying on 13th September 1822. Again, Rev. Robert Wilkinson conducted the funeral service on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1822.

West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1985 for Mary Walker				
Lightcliffe, St Matthew > 1822				
Mary Walker, Spinster No. 510.	Cliffe Hill	Sep <sup>r</sup> 20	76 years	R. Wilkinson Min <sup>r</sup>

Because Mary Walker was buried within the church there was obviously no headstone. Instead, the plaque below would have been displayed over the vault. The plaque explains that she was the eldest daughter of William Walker, of Crow Nest, and that she was buried in a vault. Her death date and age were recorded in Roman numerals.

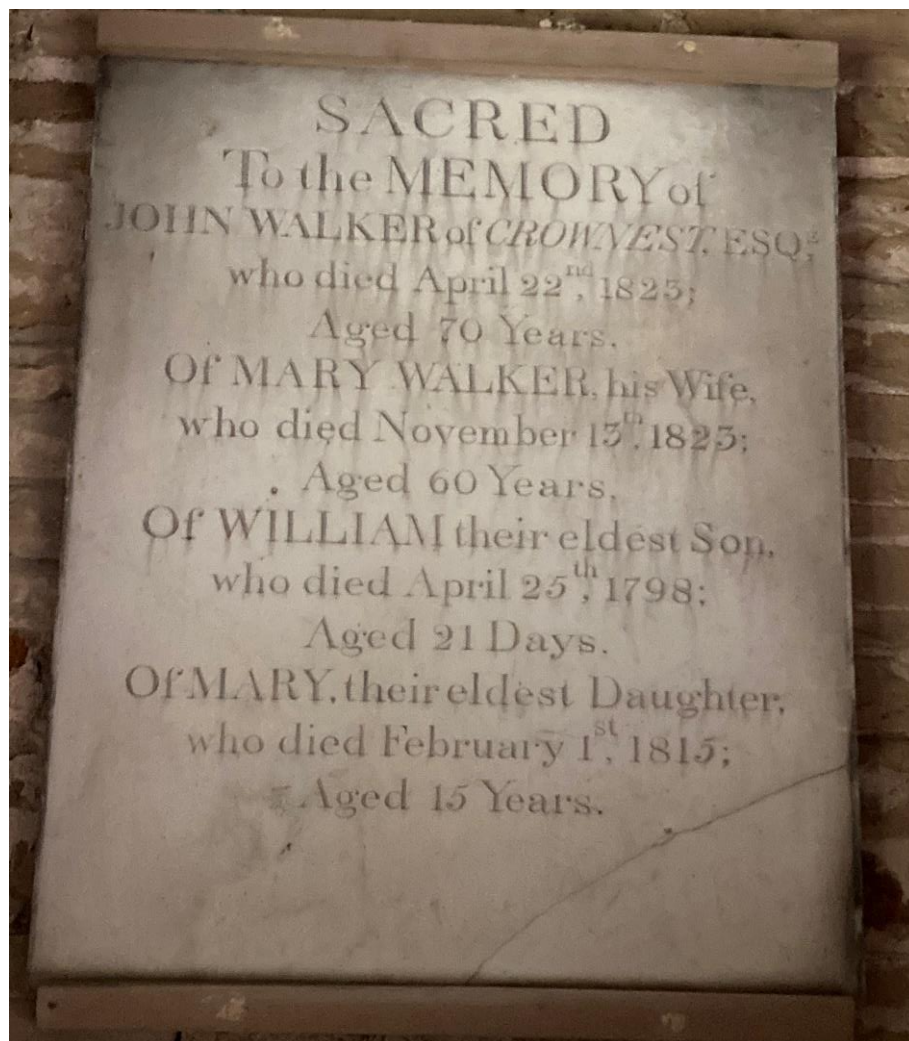
September XIII, MDCCCXXII Aged LXXVI.



About that time her brother, John Walker, began suffering more seriously with gout. He died eight months later on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1823 and then his wife died later that same year on 13<sup>th</sup> November. They were buried with their baby son and teenage daughter in plot CC\*27 just outside the church his father had built. Years later their grandson Evan Charles Sutherland Walker had the plaque shown below erected in the now demolished church. It currently resides in Lightcliffe Tower all that is left of the old church.

John Walker No. 544.	Crownest	April 29	70 Years	William Min
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Mary Walker, Widow No. 572.	Crownest	Nov 20	60 Years	William Min
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In between her parents' deaths Ann Walker lost her elderly grandfather John Edwards in July 1823. By the age of nineteen, therefore, Ann Walker had lost a sister, her parents and her maternal grandfather. The next year she would lose a cousin, Edward Priestley who regularly stayed with his Walker aunts at Cliffe Hill. Apparently, he was expected to marry his cousin Elizabeth Walker but clearly this did not happen. When Edward died on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1824 his Sowerby burial record for 1<sup>st</sup> June 1824 states that although he was 'of Kebroyd' he was 'late of Cliffe Hill' .

Read more about the Priestley family including William Priestley and their Lightcliffe connections.

### **Elizabeth Priestley née Walker and family**

After their father's death the Crow Nest estate passed to John Walker junior, but ample financial provision was made in a very long and complicated will for the sisters Elizabeth and Ann. John Walker senior seemed to have thought of most scenarios including as to whether or not his daughters would marry.

Elizabeth Walker did marry, on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1828 at St. John's Church, Halifax. Her husband was a Scotsman, Captain George MacKay Sutherland of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Sutherland Highlanders. Their daughter Mary Sutherland was born in Scotland on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1829 and baptised at Stevenston, Ayr in October 1829.

Ann Walker's aunt Elizabeth the widow of John Priestley - he had passed away in 1801 - died at the end of July 1829 aged 78 years. She was buried at Sowerby on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1829.

In the same week John Walker junior married Frances Esther Penfold on 28<sup>th</sup> July in Steyning, Sussex. Fanny, as she was known, was one of the very large family of Reverend John Penfold and his wife Charlotte Jane Penfold née Brooks. Born on 26 August 1803 Fanny was baptised on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1803 in Steyning. At least two of her younger brothers were given the middle name Rawson. They were related to the Rawson family through their mother's sister who was married to Christopher Rawson. These Rawsons had no children of their own and often had some of her nieces and nephews including Fanny living with them at Hope House, Halifax. This may well explain how Fanny met John Walker. After the wedding John and Fanny set off for a honeymoon in Italy. But on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1830 twenty-five-year-old John Walker died on his honeymoon. He was buried at the old Protestant cemetery, Corso Garibaldi, Naples.

It took a long time for this news to reach the Walker family and for pregnant Fanny to return to England. Apparently, Ann Walker went down to Dover to meet her, the Walker family being fearful that a child would inherit. But later in 1830, at her parents' home she gave birth to a still born son. With no heir and no will – John Walker died intestate – matters were complicated. There was much reading and rereading of his father and grandfather's wills and financial wrangling that went on for a number of years. Eventually Fanny Walker received a substantial inheritance, but the sisters Elizabeth Sutherland and Ann Walker still became very wealthy coheiresses.

Widow Fanny Walker had a memorial to her husband, John Walker, erected on the southern wall in St. Matthew's old church alongside one of the pulpits. It survives, in two parts, and is now stored in the only remaining bit of St. Matthew's old church, the Tower, now owned by the Friends of Friendless Churches. The sculptor was said to be Westmacott RA (father or son) but it is not mentioned in their list of works.

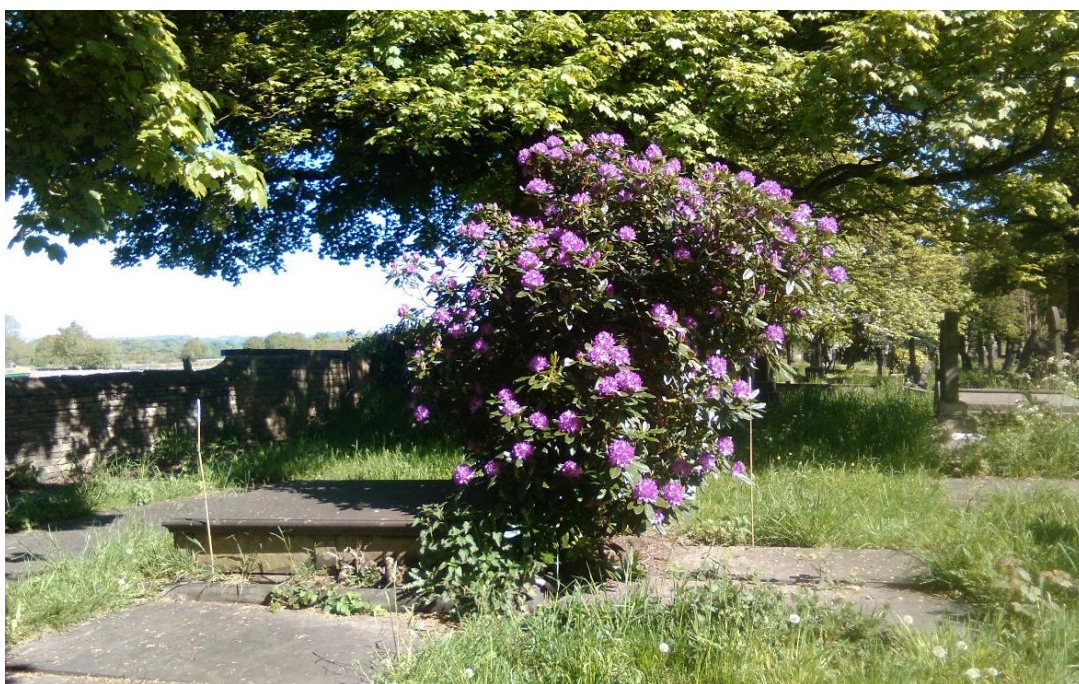
Fanny appears to have returned to Halifax during this time probably to stay with the Rawsons of Hope House again. Whilst there she met and then married, on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1832, the Reverend Courtney Kenny Clarke, a landowner from Dublin. The Clarke family then moved to Cornwall where tragedy struck twice. Their four-year-old daughter died on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1838 followed by her mother's death on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1838.

Meanwhile Ann Walker had moved into Shibden Hall with Anne Lister. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1840 whilst travelling together in Koutais (now Kutaisi in Georgia) Anne Lister died of a fever possibly after being bitten by a tick. George Mackay Sutherland travelled to Europe to bring his sister-in-law home. Anne Lister had given Ann Walker a life interest in Shibden Hall which was where she then chose to reside until 1847.

The details of Ann Walker's subsequent inquisition and lunacy are told in other articles.

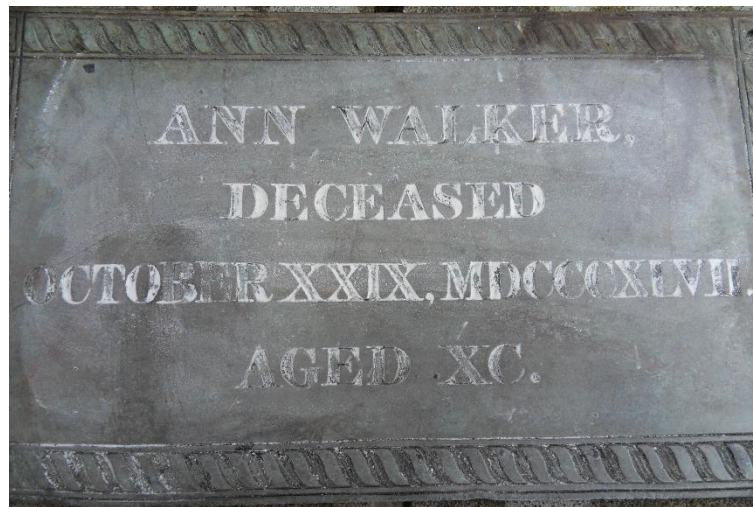
Her sister Elizabeth Sutherland died of tuberculosis on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1844 at Abbey Lodge Merton, Surrey. She was buried on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1845 in the churchyard of St Mary's Church in Wimbledon, then in Surrey. Her husband and young children returned with their aunt Ann Walker to Shibden Hall which was where teenager Mary Sutherland died on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1845. She was buried in Lightcliffe churchyard on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1845 and remembered on her paternal grandparents' ledger stone. By then the Walker burial plot CC\*27 was full.

Her father George Mackay Sutherland also died at Shibden Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1847. He too was buried at Lightcliffe on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1847 but in what had to be a new plot now given the code II\*4 over which there is this tomb to the left of the rhododendron bush.



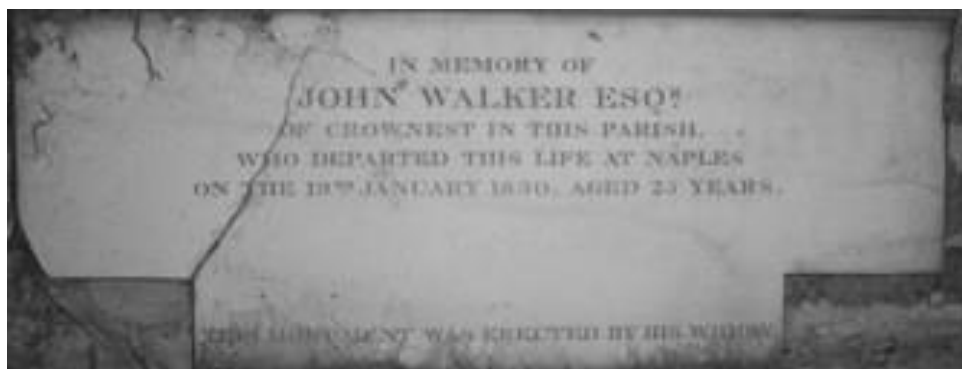
The area to the north – far side – of this tomb is where we think his baby grandson William Sutherland Walker, son of Evan Charles Sutherland Walker, was buried. It looks as if the space was secured for other Sutherland Walker burials, but none took place. Read more in the articles about some of the missing memorials in the churchyard.

Ninety-year-old Ann Walker senior also died in 1847 on 29<sup>th</sup> October. Like her older sister Mary Walker, she was buried in a vault within the church her father had built on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1847. Again, there is no headstone but there is another plaque with Roman numerals for the date of death and her age. Both these plaques are now kept in St. Matthew's new church further up Wakefield Road towards Hipperholme.



After the death of her brother-in-law and elderly aunt, Ann Walker moved back to the Cliffe Hill mansion where she was born. This was where she was on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1851 with her friend Lydia Fenton née Wilkinson as her housekeeper and six servants. It was also where she died on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1854 aged 50 years. She was buried with her maiden aunts in the vault within the church on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1854. No plaque, similar to that for her aunts, has been found but her nephew and heir did erect a brass plaque to his aunt and some of his siblings. This plaque hung unnoticed in the Lightcliffe Tower for years, but it has recently been restored and repositioned.





**The John Walker sculpture which is also now in the Lightcliffe Tower**

**Below is the Walker gravestone on plot CC\*27 and its inscription.**





**IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM WALKER THE SON OF JOHN AND MARY WALKER OF CLIFFE HILL  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE  
THE 26<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL 1798 AGED 3 WEEKS.**

**ERE SIN COULD BLIGHT OR SORROW FADE  
DEATH CAME WITH FRIENDLY CARE  
THE OPENING BUD TO HEAVEN CONVEYED  
AND BADE IT BLOSSOM THERE**

**ALSO SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MARY WALKER DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE JOHN AND  
MARY WALKER OF CROW NEST  
WHO DIED FEBRUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 1815 AGED 15 YEARS**

**BELOVED AND LAMENTED  
SHE PASSED FROM THE CHANGEFUL SEASONS OF THIS LIFE  
TO BLOOM FOREVER IN THE PARADISE OF GOD**

**ALSO, OF JOHN WALKER OF CROW NEST AND FATHER OF THE ABOVE NAMED CHILDREN  
WHO DIED APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup> 1823 AGED 70 YEARS**

**ALSO, MARY WALKER THE WIFE OF THE ABOVE NAMED JOHN WALKER  
WHO DIED NOVEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> 1823 AGED 60 YEARS.**

**ALSO, IN MEMORY OF MARY SUTHERLAND DAUGHTER OF GEORGE MACKAY  
SUTHERLAND ESQ. OF UDALÉ SCOTLAND AND GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE JOHN  
AND MARY WALKER WHO DIED JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> 1845 AGED 15 YEARS**

D.M.Barker  
Updated May 2023