

George Robinson

(before 28th December 1788 – 6th January 1850)

George Robinson was the second of the six sons of John and Hannah Robinson. And like his father he was a card maker probably working originally within the family business.

Card maker George Robinson married Hannah Sutcliffe on 15th August 1811. They were both 'of Hipperholme'. This and the memorial inscription data suggest that she was the daughter of William and Rachel Sutcliffe of Sutcliffe Wood Bottom baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe on 12th October 1783. If this is correct then one of Hannah's sisters, Martha, was the Martha Sutcliffe who married Samuel Sowden,

Read The Sutcliffes and the Sowdens

This then means that two of Anne Lister's 'key tenants' on the Shibden Hall estate– See the book *Female Fortunes* by Jill Liddington - were brothers in law. Both Samuel Sowden and George Robinson feature in the diaries of Anne Lister of Shibden Hall. And both were expected to vote as she wanted them to in the 1835 election. I will leave the reader to find out how they both avoided voting in that particular election.

In 1818 George and Hannah Robinson were planning to move into a property called Lower Brear on the Shibden Hall estate. The following extract comes from Helena Whitbread's book *The Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister*:-

17th March 1818. In the afternoon went with my uncle & George Robinson to Lower Brea.... to see what repairs would be wanted before George and his wife could get into the house. Found it in a sad, dirty, forlorn, pulled-to-pieces state. The roof must be taken off & £200 laid out - besides a new barn that will cost about £150. We were 2½ hours looking about in spite of the cold & boisterous wind & flying showers

Apparently, the necessary repairs were completed, and it then became 'an elegant and substantial farmhouse'. George Robinson also rented a water powered wire mill at Mytholm on the Shibden Hall estate. The photograph below shows the front of Lower Brear in 1912.



The following extracts from Anne Lister's diaries were kindly sent to me by David Glover, President of Halifax Antiquarian Society.

Monday, May 13th [1822]. - "Speaking to George Robinson about the machinery for making cards without hand-labour. He says it is the most ingenious contrivance -- like clockwork - seven, he thinks, different motions complete the card; but they are obliged to prick the leather dry instead of wet, and on this account he has no fear. The machinery makes a prettier card than they (the Robinsons) can make; but the leather of theirs improves 20 per cent. after it dries, for having been pricked wet, while the other shrivels up, and rather peels off; that, in fact, these cards do not answer like the hand-made cards, and people begin to be obliged to own [this] after having given two or three trials or more - long and fair trials - for the machinery has been set up in Manchester six or seven years. It belongs to Joseph Dyche, I think he said, Port-street, near Piccadilly. The Strutts of Derby (I think) five brothers, or three, who all attend to the practical part themselves, are most excellent mechanics, and are said to be, therefore, the best spinners (cotton) in England, and they have much patronised this machinery, but they are now taking to handmade cards again, and the Robinsons have now an order from them. It had been thought the Government assisted the proprietors, because they made all their payments in bank paper that had never been issued before. There are only three establishments of this kind - this one in Manchester, one in America, and one in France. It is, I believe, an American invention."

Monday, August 4th [1823]. - "One of Samuel Webster's sons, a boy aged five, was unfortunately drowned in the Red-brook about 4 p.m. yesterday, the bridge being widened with planks for George Robinson to lead his hay over (the Upper Brook Ing), that he has bought of my uncle. A stake was driven into the middle of the water "brash," and there was a strong current, and the child, sup-posed to have slipped off the edge of the bridge, stuck fast, and was lost. They knew not how long he had been under water, but every means tried to restore life proved unavailing. Mr. Robinson, the surgeon and apothecary, was not at home, but his young man attended."

Sunday 23rd Sept. [1832] George Robinson came at 6 40... [his mill] got 17 orders (opened 17 accounts) in Scotland, but [he] means now to stay at home...has got a traveller to whom he is to pay on commission.

Note the reference to Mr Robinson, the surgeon and apothecary. This was almost certainly Charles Robinson, George's youngest brother.

See Charles Robinson Surgeon

The diary entries give you a feel for the combination of small-scale farming combined with industrial enterprise that went together in this part of the West Riding. Many tenants rented small acreages of land but then ran other businesses.

Presumably, George was one of the sons involved in his father's business of John Robinson & Sons card makers, curriers and wire drawers. Then after his father had died George was listed as George Robinson of Lower Brear under various trades including card maker, currier & leather seller, wire drawer and tanner in trade directory lists for both Halifax and Hipperholme. He rented a number of properties including mills and land from Anne Lister of Shibden Hall as recorded in the Northowram Township survey and valuation of 1837.

On 6th June 1841 either living with George and Hannah or next door – it is difficult to tell - was another card maker, Samuel Sowden. This was almost certainly Hannah's nephew the son of her sister Martha and fellow Shibden Hall tenant Samuel Sowden the elder. This Samuel Sowden the younger was not with his parents and unmarried siblings at Sutcliffe Wood Bottom on census night 1841.

1841 census

George Robinson 52 Card maker

Hannah Robinson 50

Samuel Sowden 28 Card maker

Alford Sykes 18 ditto

James Fawcett 40 M.S.

Bathia Sharp 22 F.S

Ann Longbottom 19 ditto

Mary Beckton 19

Elizabeth ditto 11

Address **Lower Brear , Northowram**

Sixty-one-year-old George Robinson died on 6th January 1850 and was buried in plot BB*7 of St. Matthew's churchyard on 10th January 1850. There is an image on the *Prerogative & Exchequer Courts of York Probate Index, 1688-1858* for a George Robinson of Northowram dated March 1850. His name also appears on *the Index to Death Duty Registers*.

It looks as if Hannah then moved into Halifax where she was for the 1851 census.

1851 census

Sarah Crossland Head Widow 62 Confectioner

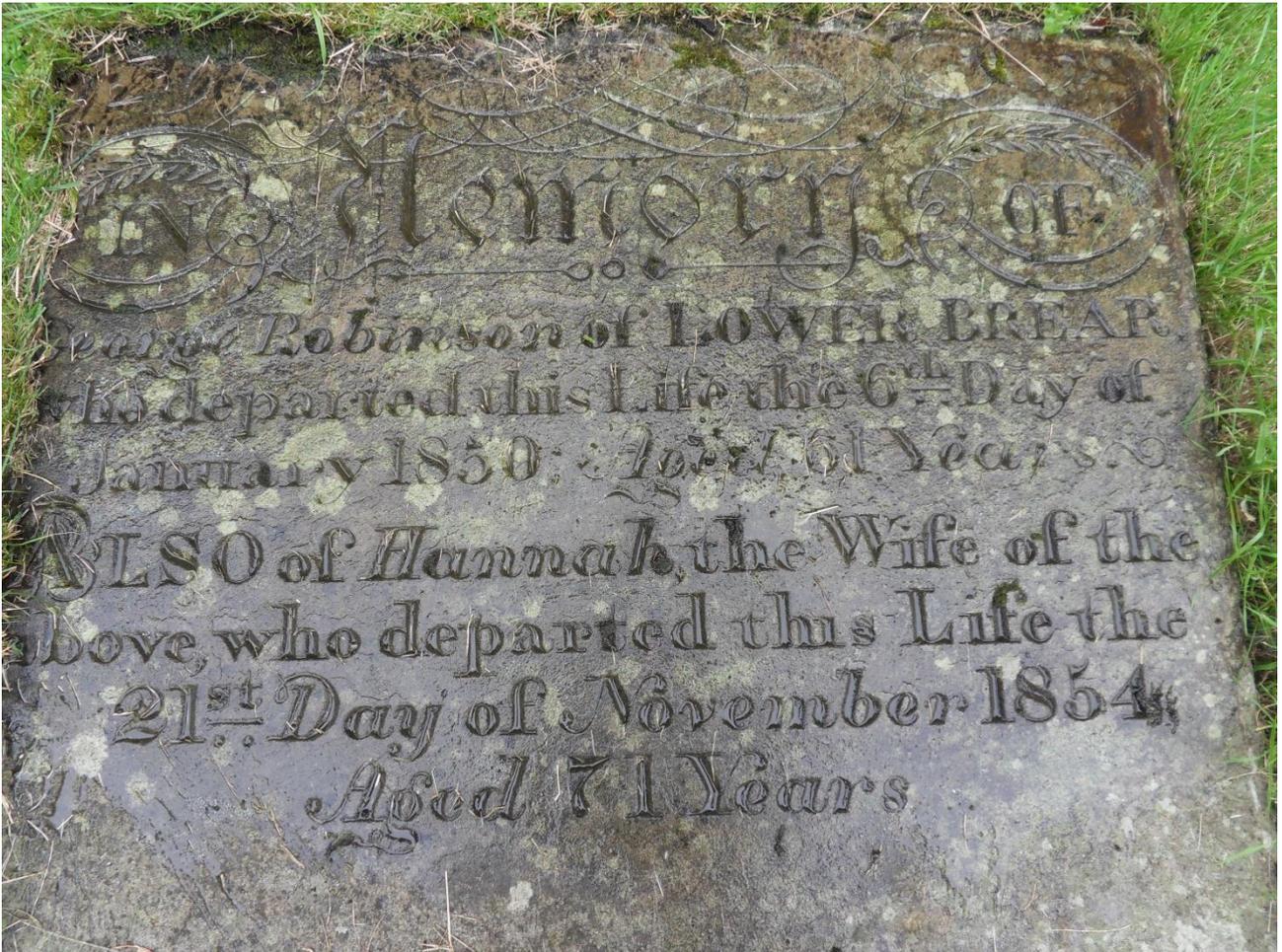
Hannah Robinson Lodger Widow 66 Prop^s of Houses

Isabella Ainson Servant Unmar 16 Domestic Serv

Address **82 Bull Green, Halifax**

But when Hannah died on 21st November 1854 and was then buried in plot BB*7 three days later her abode was given as Hipperholme. George and Hannah do not appear to have had any children.

The flat ledger stone for plot BB*7 is in the old closed part of the churchyard quite close to the other Robinson ledger stones but not adjacent to them.



IN MEMORY OF

GEORGE ROBINSON OF LOWER BREAR

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 6TH DAY OF JANUARY 1850 AGED 61 YEARS

ALSO OF HANNAH WIFE OF THE ABOVE

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 21ST DAY OF NOVEMBER 1854 AGED 71 YEARS

Now read about the next sons

Dan Robinson Chemist and Druggist

William Robinson Ironmonger

Charles Robinson Surgeon

And if you missed them

John Robinson and Sons

Thomas Robinson Card Marker, Currier and Wire Drawer

D.M.Barker

June 2020