

The Nicholl family of Southowram

In the article about

The Carters of Giles House

it was noted that the parents and paternal grandparents of Ellen Carter née Nicholl were all buried at Lightcliffe. This was in the now closed section of the churchyard where the majority of the stones are flat ledger stones. The memorial inscription on two Nicholl ledger stones helps in piecing together the Lightcliffe part of the Nicholl family story.



The Nicholl family plots now given the codes S*29 and U*29 are by the wall, either side of the tree in the foreground

Working back from her grandfather's death date and age Samuel Nicholl was born about 1719. There are a couple of possible Halifax baptisms around that time. But probably the best fit is a 12th November 1718 baptism of Sam Nicholl the son of Dan Nicholl of Southowram. The original record is difficult to read especially the father's occupation which may be 'Innkeeper'.

From the memorial inscription Samuel's wife was called Grace. This means that the 11th February 1741 Halifax marriage between Samuel Nicholl, a (stone) dresser and Grace Platts is almost certainly the right one. Grace was the daughter of Timothy Platts and was baptised in January 1719 (possibly on the 27th) along with a Mercy Platts, presumably her sister.

Samuel and Grace had a very large family, possibly twelve children baptised at St. John's Church, Halifax. One of them Thomas Nicholl was remembered on his parents' ledger stone. Again, his death date and age can be used to pinpoint his baptism in Halifax on 23rd December 1753. His father Samuel Nicholl from Southowram was again a (stone) dresser.

A James Nicholl was buried in the churchyard, as were the wife and two children of a James Nicholl. Unfortunately, they were buried in unknown plots without a memorial so there is no useful inscription to help identify them. James Nicholl may be the eldest son of Samuel and Grace baptised in Halifax on 11th November 1744. This James Nicholl married Ann (Nancy) Woodhead on 20th February 1780. They appear to have had three children before Ann Nicholl died. Their first-born Elizabeth was baptised at St. Matthew's Church on 16th July 1780. But then a son Abednego, born 9th November 1781, was baptised at the non-conformist chapel in Northowram on 6th January 1782. Another son Charles does not seem to have been baptised before he died. He was buried at Lightcliffe on 16th February 1786. This was three months after Ann Nicholl, the wife of James, was buried in an unknown plot on 9th November 1785.

Another Nicholl, Daniel, was definitely one of Samuel's and Grace's sons. He was baptised at Halifax on 17th April 1748. His father Samuel was again a (stone) dresser from Southowram. Daniel Nicholl married Susan Netherwood on 25th August 1771 in Halifax. She was the daughter of Timothy Netherwood and had been baptised on 18th July 1747 at Briers Chapel, another name for St. Anne's in the Grove, Southowram. Timothy Netherwood was recorded as another Southowram (stone) dresser on other baptism records. Ellen Nicholl of Southowram was baptised at Halifax on 26th November 1771. Her father Dan(iel) was a 'Comr', - a woolcomber perhaps. No other children have been found for Daniel and Susan. Ellen Nicholl married John Carter on 28th December 1789 in St. John's Church, Halifax, as announced in *Leeds Intelligencer* for 5th January 1790.

Monday was married, Mr John Carter, of Lightcliffe,
to Miss Nicholl, only daughter of Mr Nicholl, of
Lower-Place, both near Halifax.



This image of Lower Place Farm comes from John S. Wharton's book *Waterclough Valley - A History* in which he explains more about the house.

Carpenter Thomas Nicholl of Southowram married Mary Atack of Halifax on 24th April 1775 in St. John's Church, Halifax. This was where some of their children were baptised before others were taken for non-conformist baptisms to the Square Chapel in Halifax. At this time infant mortality was high. It looks as if five of these children died before reaching adulthood as there were five Nicholl children, with father Thomas, buried in unknown plots in St. Matthew's churchyard, Lightcliffe. Two were buried in December 1785. Ellen who was baptised on 9th February 1783 was buried on 9th December 1785. Her baby sister Grace who was baptised on 9th January 1785 was buried a fortnight later on 23rd December 1785. Eleven-year-old Charles Nicholl who was baptised on 26th January 1777 was buried on 9th June 1788. Younger brothers David and George had non-conformist baptisms which helpfully give their dates of birth as 2nd March 1795 and 30th June 1800 respectively as well as confirming that their parents were Thomas and Mary Nicholl. George Nicholl was buried at Lightcliffe on 23rd February 1802 followed by his brother David on 25th March 1804.

In between these two little boys' deaths, Samuel Nicholl their paternal grandfather died on 23rd June 1803. He was buried in a plot up against the Till Carr Lane wall, now given the code S*29, on 26th June 1803. Less than two years later his widow Grace Nicholl née Platts died on 25th January 1805 and joined her husband on 27th January 1805. Three years after that their son Thomas died on 11th February 1808. He was buried with his parents on 14th February 1808. This ledger stone covers the plot.



BENEATH THIS STONE LIES THE BODY OF SAMUEL NICHOLL
OF UPPER PLACE SOUTHOWRAM
WHO DIED JUNE 23RD 1803 AGED 84 YEARS.

ALSO THE BODY OF GRACE WIFE OF THE ABOVE SAMUEL NICHOLL
WHO DIED JANUARY 25TH 1805 AGED 86 YEARS

ALSO THE BODY OF THOMAS SON OF THE ABOVE SAID SAMUEL NICHOLL
WHO DIED FEBRUARY 11TH 1808

Upper Place Farm no longer stands but according to Malcolm Bull's *Calderdale Companion* it included a quarry as well as 21 acres of land. This fits with Samuel Nicholl and other members of his family being stone dressers.

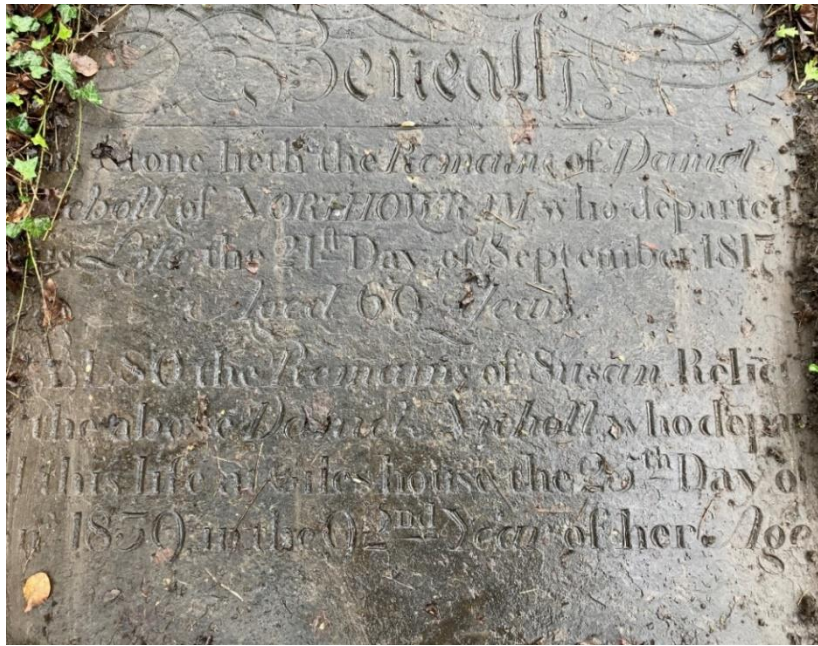


This image of Upper Place Farm was taken by John Farrar in the 1960s. It was featured in John S. Wharton's book *Waterclough Valley - A History*

James Nicholl of Southowram was buried at Lightcliffe in an unknown plot on 31st March 1814, aged 68 years which does not quite fit with a baptism in 1744.

Not long after his brother Thomas Nicholl died, Daniel Nicholl moved from Lower Place Farm to Northowram which was where he died on 21st September 1817. He was buried near his parents and brother in plot U*29 on 25th September 1817. His death was recorded on a handwritten inscription on a windowpane at Giles House, the home of his only daughter Ellen Carter. It is reputed to have said that Daniel Nicholl died on September 20, 1817, which almost agrees with his memorial inscription. His wife Susan was a widow for over twenty years during which time she almost certainly went to live with her daughter and son in law.

Her son in law John Carter had a non-conformist burial in Wyke – as explained in the Carter article – after he died on 6th October 1835. Four years later his mother-in-law, Susan Nicholl née Netherwood died at Giles House on 25th January 1839 and was buried with her husband Daniel Nicholl in plot U*29 of Lightcliffe churchyard on 30th January 1839.



BENEATH THIS STONE LIES THE REMAINS OF
 DANIEL NICHOLL OF NORTHOWRAM
 WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 21ST DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1817 AGED 69 YEARS
 ALSO OF SUSAN RELICT OF THE ABOVE SAID DANIEL NICHOLL
 WHO DIED AT GILES HOUSE THE 25TH DAY OF JANUARY 1839
 IN THE 92ND YEAR OF HER AGE.

This left Ellen Carter, the daughter of Daniel and Susan Nicholl, as the only surviving member of the Nicholl family with any remaining Lightcliffe connections. She had lost her husband John Carter in 1835 and a son, Henry in 1840. Another son Daniel Carter – no doubt named after his maternal grandfather – was living with his new wife and family in Giles House. So where was Ellen Carter?

For the next three censuses Ellen Carter née Nicholl was recorded as living at Smith House, Lightcliffe apparently looking after William Towne Radcliffe, a lunatic. In 1841 her son William Carter, a land agent, and a grandson John Carter were also living there. In 1851 she was described as the housekeeper. By 1861 another grandson, another John Carter, the son of Daniel and Mary of Giles House, was also at Smith House. Interestingly the census return says that his grandmother was a 'Guardian' of head of the household William Towne Radcliffe who died a year later in 1862. Read more in

The Radcliffes of Smith House

After that Ellen Carter probably then moved back in with her son Daniel Carter and his family at Giles House. She died there eighteen months later on 4th January 1864 aged 92 years as her memorial inscription on plot II*6 says underneath that for her sons Henry and William.

ALSO ELLEN WIDOW OF MR JOHN CARTER OF GILES HOUSE
 AND MOTHER OF THE ABOVE
 WHO DIED ON THE 4TH OF JANUARY 1864
 IN THE 93RD YEAR OF HER AGE.

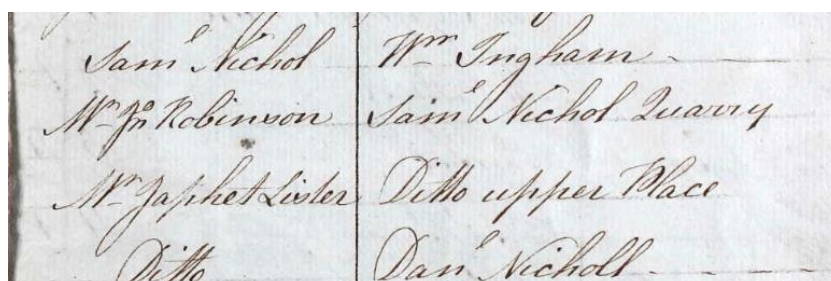
It is unusual in a *People of Interest* article not to get further into the censuses where lots of details can be checked out ensuring that the right person is being followed.

But some original documents have been found confirming some of the above Nicholl information.

Starting with Samuel Nicholl (1718 – 1803) who farmed at Upper Place, Southowram where there was also a stone quarry. He is named on the Southowram Township records dated 15th June 1748. There are other records naming both Samuel Nicholl and Timothy Netherwood as overseers of the poor of Southowram.

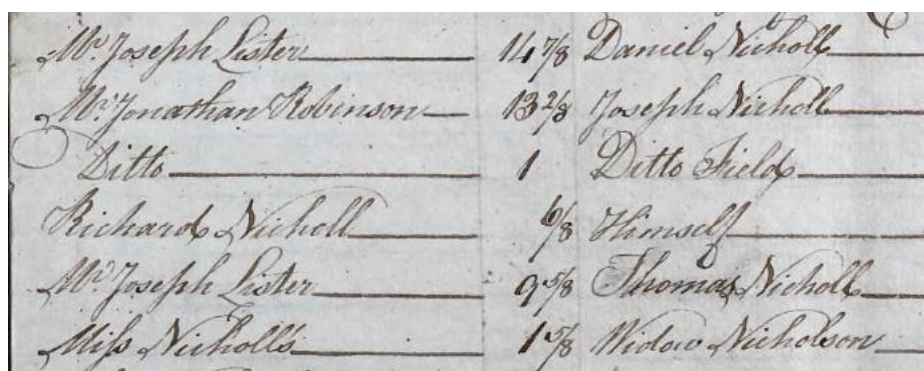
And then from 1781 onwards members of the Nicholl family appear on *West Yorkshire, England, Select Land Tax Records, 1704-1932* of Owners and Occupiers.

From the 1781 entry both Samuel and his son Daniel occupied Mr Japhet Lister's property 'Upper Place'. Samuel Nicholl also rented a quarry as well as owning a property.



By 1785, after Japhet Lister died in 1782, a Miss Lister owned the quarry and property Presumably this was again Upper Place Farm that was still occupied by some of the Nicholl family. Another son, Richard, lived in a cottage he owned and he also rented a quarry.

Ownership of the properties had passed to Mr Joseph Lister by 1788 but two quarries, one rented by Samuel Nicholl and the other by Richard Nicholl, were owned by Joseph Walsh. In 1796 four Nicholls – brothers? – as well as a Miss Nicholl(s) appeared on the list.



Daniel Nicholl remained in property owned by Joseph Lister until in 1806. He must then have moved to Northowram into a property he owned, according to the 1807 list of owners and occupiers. He must have died there as it says on the memorial inscription on his ledger stone.

Daniel Nicholl's daughter, Ellen, moved to Giles House after she married John Carter on 28th December 1789. She was on visiting terms, not only with the Listers at Shibden Hall but also with the two Ann Walkers at Lidgate House and Cliffe Hill mansion. The selection of excerpts, at the end of this article, from Anne Lister's diaries and one entry from Ann Walker's journal give an indication of their acquaintance. Other events involving the Carters also occupied Anne Lister.

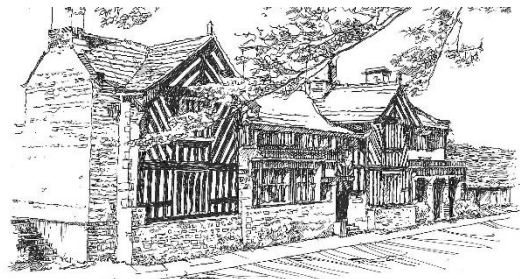
The 1822 saga of Henry Carter, the son of John and Ellen, having his name crossed out and then reinstated as a nominee for the trusteeship, of something, is noted in the Carter write up. The dispute seems to have involved Anne Lister's uncle James, the Walkers, the Priestleys and the Waterhouses. In 1826 Henry Carter was churchwarden at St. Matthew's Church, so clearly involved in the life of village along with the Walkers and Priestleys.

In early 1833 a yew tree – presumably on Lister land - was cut down and sold to a carpenter. But who authorised its felling and who sold it was the issue. Old Mr (John) Carter acknowledged that he had given up management of his affairs to his sons. One of them, Daniel Carter, had sold the yew tree to the carpenter. This issue seems to have been resolved amicably with Anne Lister writing on Sunday 24th February 1833,

'Sir whatever sum you consider me entitled to on account of the yew Tree I beg you to accept, or distribute in charity in whatever way you may think best – I am sir etc etc A Lister' –

This was in a note which she

wrote and sent off at 7 by John note to 'Mr Carter Giles house'



The following extracts from Anne Lister's diaries held at West Yorkshire Archives and transcribed by various volunteers – names in brackets – hopefully give some idea of the social contact between the four houses illustrated above. From top left going clockwise Giles House, Shibden Hall, Cliffe Hill mansion and Lydgate House.

1823-06-09 (journal; Kerstin H)

– Miss Ellen Carter called (from Giles House) and staid almost an hour

1828-11-05 (journal; WYAS)

Mrs. Carter of Yew cottage (Daniel Nicoll's daughter formerly of Lower Place) drank tea with us,

Mrs. Carter who went away between 8 and 9 said she should be very glad if I would call and see her some time — her mother (still living) always inquired very particularly after my aunt

1832-12-19 (journal; WYAS)

– at Lidgate about 3 1/4 — Mrs. Carter came immediately and staid above 1/2 hour

1834-01-06 (journal; Kerstin H)

– walked with Miss W– (Walker) to Cliff hill and sat an hour there with her aunt – then walked with her to Mrs Carter, and left her there and walked over the fields to yew trees and thence to Shibden –

1835-02-18 (journal; ISAW)

– off with Adney to Cliff hill at 3 1/4 – there from 4 5/.. to 4 35/.. Mrs. Carter there – Mrs. Ann Walker very civil

1835-02-18 (AW's journal; WYAS)

- German House so called from the Moravians from Germany settling living there, before they settled at Wike – Mr. Carter 62 [should it be 82?] years of age his father lived at German house

1835-04-04 (journal; WYAS)

out at 2 1/4 with A- [Ann] at Cliff hill at 3 5/.. — staid till 4 10/.. Mrs. Carter and then Mrs. Macauley coming while we were there soon after our arrival and staying us out

1835-05-18 (journal; WYAS)

– A- [Ann] had called this afternoon on Mrs. Carter and sat an hour with her

1835-06-09 (journal; WYAS)

– Had old Mr. Carter of Giles house (aetatis [age of] 83 1/2) from 10 to 12 — came to ask me ...

1835-10-09 (journal; WYAS)

– A- [Ann] wrote note to Mrs. Carter of Giles house offering leave for the funeral of her husband to pass along the Crownest road to Wyke tomorrow. A- [Ann] enclosed her note under cover to Mr. Washington desiring him to take it himself to Mrs. Carter tomorrow morning early

1837-10-04 (journal; Frankie)

– B- wishes to be considered as 1st speaker for the farm, if the widow Carter should give it up

1838-12-10 (journal; Kerstin H)

– [Ann] wrote to her sister and copy of note to Mrs Carter her aunt's compliments and thanks for her coming so often to inquire after her – not well enough to see company – when sufficiently well to see Mrs Carter, would send John and let her know

Anne Lister's diary extracts from

West Yorkshire Archives Services, Calderdale SH:7/ML/E 7 to 20

D.M.Barker

April 2024