

The Radcliffes of Smith House



This chest tomb by Wakefield Road is for three members of the Radcliffe family of Smith House. Three other Radcliffes, all related, were also buried in the churchyard. This write up will attempt to explain their ancestry and then see if there is a link to the Radcliffes of Milnsbridge, Huddersfield and then Ridding Park, Harrogate, Yorkshire.

Smith House came into the possession of Charles Radcliffe after the death of his aunt Mrs Elizabeth Holmes in 1785. Her husband John Holmes had died years earlier in 1741. John Holmes had a sister Betty Holmes who married Charles Radcliffe's father, Abraham Radcliffe. The siblings father, Joseph Holmes, a non-conformist, bought Smith House in 1699 according to Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion. More about Smith House and its owners and occupiers will be explained in

The History of Smith House



Concentrating, at first, on the Radcliffes who were buried in Lightcliffe churchyard.

Abraham Radcliffe married Betty Holmes on 7th January 1731 at Sowerby Bridge. She was baptised in Halifax on 20th January 1706, the daughter of the non-conformist Joseph Holmes and the sister of John Holmes who was also baptised in Halifax on 2nd June 1708. It was John Holmes who welcomed the Moravians to Lightcliffe. He died aged just 34 years and was buried in Eastfield Chapel, Lightcliffe on 16th March 1741. His wife then favoured the Wesleyans over the Moravians, famously welcoming John Wesley to Smith House. She was a widow for over forty years dying aged 73 years in 1785. She was buried in the newly built St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe churchyard on 2nd March 1785.

Meanwhile Abraham and Betty Radcliffe had welcomed a number of children. William the eldest was baptised at Birstall on 3rd May 1733 when the family abode was Hightown. Two more Radcliffes 'of Hightown' were baptised at Birstall before the family appear to have moved to Brighouse. Two girls and two boys, including Charles Radcliffe, were baptised at Rastrick. Charles Radcliffe, the fifth child, was born on 31st July 1739 and baptised on 29th August 1739. Their father, an 'Attorney at Law', died in 1759 and was buried in an unknown plot in St. Matthew's churchyard, Lightcliffe on 23rd November 1759. He also has a June 1760 probate record in which he is described as 'of Brighouse'. His eldest son William, said to be a merchant, was also buried at Lightcliffe in an unknown plot on 25th November 1778. His death was announced in the *Leeds Intelligencer* for 1st December 1778.

On Saturday se'nnight died, after a lingering illness, Mr. William Radcliffe, of Brighouse, near Halifax

When Mrs Elizabeth Holmes died, in 1785, she left Smith House to her nephew Charles Radcliffe. He married his second cousin, Charlotte Radcliffe, at St. Mary's Church, Lambeth on 19th March 1787. This was a double wedding as Charlotte's sister, Elizabeth married Captain Thomas Horncastle on the same day as the parish record below shows.

JAMES VINTAGE

N ^o 433	Charles Radcliffe a Bachelor of the Parish of Halifax in the County of York and Charlotte Radcliffe a Spinster of this Parish were
Married in this Church by Licence	
this nineteenth Day of March in the Year One Thousand seven Hundred and eighty seven	
By me John Lloyd Curate	
This Marriage was solemnized between Us { Charles Radcliffe Charlotte Radcliffe	
In the Presence of { <i>[Signature]</i> Sarah Taylor	
N ^o 434	Thomas Horncastle a Bachelor of the Parish of Saint Mary Astorville in the County of Essex and Elizabeth Radcliffe a Spinster of this Parish were
Married in this Church by Licence	
this nineteenth Day of March in the Year One Thousand seven Hundred and eighty seven	
By me John Lloyd Curate	
This Marriage was solemnized between Us { Thomas Horncastle Elizabeth Radcliffe	
In the Presence of { <i>[Signature]</i> Ann Radcliffe	

The *Leeds Intelligencer* for 27th March 1787 confirms the double wedding as well as the fact that Charles Radcliffe was living at Smith House.

Yesterday se'nnight was married at Lambeth, in Surry, Mr Charles Radcliffe of Smith-house, near Halifax, to Miss Charlotte Radcliffe. ----- At the same time were married, Capt. Horncastle, of Surrey place, Kentish-Road, London, to Miss Radcliffe, daughters of the late Charles Radcliffe, Esq; of York.

Charlotte and Elizabeth Radcliffe were the younger daughters of another Charles Radcliffe and his wife Frances née Towne who had married in York on 30th October 1755. This Charles Radcliffe, from Wakefield when he married, was the first cousin of Abraham Radcliffe (1696 – 1759) as will be explained later. As the announcement implies, this Charles Radcliffe born in 1718 had died. He was buried at York on 1st November 1768. His wife, Frances, would see the double wedding of their two youngest daughters before she passed away in 1789.

Charles and Frances Radcliffe had three daughters. Frances was baptised at Warmfield, Yorkshire on 14th August 1757. The family abode was Heath as it was when Elizabeth was born on 14th June 1759 and baptised at Warmfield on 19th July 1759. The youngest daughter Charlotte was born in York on 13th August 1761 and baptised on 11th September 1761.

The Horncastles had at least five children Thomas (1788 – 1854), William (1790 - ????) Elizabeth (1791 – 1865), Maria (1793 - ????) and Charles (1796 – 1863) who will be of interest later!

The Radcliffes of Smith House had just two children, a son and a daughter. William Towne Radcliffe was born on 12th April 1789 and baptised at St. Matthew's Church on 11th May 1789. His little sister Charlotte Lucretia Francina Radcliffe was born on 29th December 1794 and was again baptised at Lightcliffe on 15th June 1796. Just over a year later these two young children lost their mother on 13th September 1797. She was buried on 18th September 1797 in the Lightcliffe plot now given the code A*14 and marked with the chest tomb above. The *Leeds Intelligencer* announced the death on 27th September 1797.

On Wednesday se'nnight died, after a long and tedious illness, which she bore with great patience and resignation, Mrs Radcliffe, the wife of Charles Radcliffe, Esq.; at Smith-house, near Halifax.

The nearly sixty-year-old widower Charles Radcliffe then had to bring up two very young children on his own. Twenty years later he died aged 78 years. Anne Lister records his passing in her journal.

1817-12-18 (journal; WYAS)

[Mr Radcliffe of Smith-house died near Halifax -]

He was buried with his young wife in A*14 on 24th December 1817. But what would happen to his by then adult children and Smith House. Things seem to have moved very quickly as the following appeared in the *Leeds Intelligencer* on 12th January 1818.

To be LET

A Capital MESSUAGE or DWELLING HOUSE, called Smithhouse , in Lightcliffe, in the Parish of Halifax, in the County of York lately occupied by Charles Radcliffe, Esq; deceased, with a Coach-house, Barn, Stables, Cow-house, and a good Garden, well-stocked with Wall Fruit Trees, a Hot-house, and Melon Frame, and about Twenty-six Acres of Land, thereunto belonging, or lately held therewith. The Person who takes the same, may be accommodated with an additional Quantity of Land, if required, The Land to be Entered to at Candlemas, and the Housing at May-Day next.

Smithhouse is a very eligible Place for a Merchant or Manufacturer, being distant from Halifax, Four Miles from Bradford and Huddersfield, Six Miles and Thirteen Miles from Wakefield and Leeds; and is situated near the Turnpike Road, leading from Wakefield to Halifax.

A Person, who is now upon the Premises, will shew them, and for further Particulars, Application may be made to Mr Carter, of Lightcliffe, aforesaid; Mr Ledgerd, of Mirfield; or to Mr Jonas Hobson, of Mitham Bridge, near Holmfirth

January 2d, 1818

Not long after, the Leeds Intelligencer of 9th February 1818 had this death announcement.

On the 23rd ult. aged 23 , Charlotte Francina Lucretia Radcliffe,
only daughter of the late Charles Radcliffe, Esq; of Smith-
House, near Halifax

After their father's death a double tragedy unfolded as Anne Lister explained in her diary.

1818-01-25 (journal index; WYAS)

Miss Radcliffe burnt to death at the York asylum. Young R- Radcliffe took poison some days ago.

Charles Radcliffe left a long and complicated will, which is almost impossible to read. It does mention his children and some of his Radcliffe brothers. Probate was granted at *England & Wales, Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858* on 3rd June 1818. Again, an entry in Anne Lister's diary helps.

1818-11-27 (journal; WYAS)

and to the prerogative court office to see the will of the late Mr Radcliffe of Smithhouse, Mr D-[Duffin] having his house in Micklegate on lease from him – In failure of issue by his son and daughter (the poor girl burnt to death in the York asylum a few days after her father's death last Xmas) his brother has a life estate, and then the whole to his godson Charles Horncastle § § December 26 my uncle says this godson Charles Horncastle is his nephew, a sister's son –

Charles Horncastle (1796 – 1863) was indeed a nephew, the son of his wife's sister, Elizabeth Radcliffe who married Capt. Thomas Horncastle, as explained above.

Whether Smith House was let or not is not known. But William Towne Radcliffe remained living there. Who looked after him is an interesting question. The Mr. Carter referred to in the 1818 notice was almost certainly Mr. John Carter of Giles House. Read

The Carters of Giles House.

And then this notice appeared in The Morning Herald for 19th January 1831. Similar notices had appeared in 1830. This was obviously some years after Charles Radcliffe, William Towne Radcliffe's father, had died.

WHEREAS, by an Order of the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, made in the Matter of WILLIAM TOWNE RADCLIFFE (a Lunatic), it was referred to the Honourable Robert Henley Eden, now the Right Honourable Lord Robert Henley, one of the Masters of the High Court of Chancery, to inquire and certify who is or are the HEIR or HEIRS AT LAW, of the said Lunatic. Therefore, all Persons claiming to be such Heir or Heirs at Law are, on or before the 13th day of February 1831, to come in and make out their claims before the said Master, at his Chambers, in Southampton-buildings, Chancery Lane, London; or, in default thereof, they will be peremptorily excluded the benefit of the said Order.

BATTYE, FISHER and SUDLOW, Chancery-lane

Presumably Charles Horncastle, William Towne Radcliffe's first cousin, came forward.

On 6th June 1841 John Carter's widow, a son and a grandson were living at Smith House. It is impossible to tell whether this was a formal or informal arrangement. The Horncastles were in Hackney.

1841 census

William Ratcliffe	50	Ind
William Carter	25	Land Agent
John Carter	8	
Ellen Carter	65	Ind
James Sykes	50	M.S.
Sarah Sykes	20	F.S.
Ellen Helm	15	F.S.
Address Smith House, Hipperholme cum Brighthouse		

1841 census

Charles Horncastle	44	Ind
Julia Horncastle	35	
Charles Horncastle	15	
Julice Horncastle	12	
Maria Horncastle	4	
Marianna Horncastle	2	
Edward Horncastle	4	Mo
Eliza Nichols	20	F.S.
Address Navarine Place, Tower Hamlets, Hackney		

And then in 1842 Charles Horncastle attempted to sell Smith House to Ann Walker - at the time residing at Shibden Hall - as it was adjacent to other land on the Walker's Crow Nest estate. Samuel Washington, Ann Walker's land agent, signed the purchase agreement at the end of September 1842. But then he quickly realised that although Charles Horncastle had been bequeathed the property by his uncle Charles Radcliffe, his cousin William Towne Radcliffe had a life interest and was still living there.

This all became very complicated and led to the case *Horncastle v Walker* which is explained in more detail at [PACKED WITH POTENTIAL - Horncastle vs Walker](#) . The case ran for months but in the end, Smith House did become part of the Walker's Crow Nest estate in 1845 as explained in the article. But William Towne Radcliffe continued to live in the house.

A Charles Robinson was named as the committee for William Towne Radcliffe in these negotiations. Presumably he looked after the financial side of the properties bequeathed by Charles Radcliffe to his son for life and then after that to Charles Horncastle. This estate extended beyond Lightcliffe as this next newspaper notice explains.

Halifax Guardian 28 October 1848

REVERSIONARY INTERESTS
IN MELTHAM

To BE SOLD by PRIVATE CONTRACT, REVERSION in FEE SIMPLE, expectant on the determination of the Estate of William Towne Radcliffe, Esq., a Lunatic, of and in sundry FREEHOLD ESTATES, situate in Meltham, in the Parish of Almondbury, in the County of York, comprising together 418 Acres or thereabouts, 103 Acres whereof are Old Inclosures, and 315 Acres Common Lands, allotted under the Meltham Inclosure Acts. Together with an extensive Fulling Mill, sundry Farm Houses, Barns, Stables, Mistaks and Outbuildings, Plantations, Cottages and other improvements thereupon. And also all the Manorial and other rights of and in One-sixth of the Manor or Lordship of Meltham aforesaid, appertaining thereunto.

The Lunatic will be 60 years of age on the 12th day of April next.

Considerable portions of the Estates are under Lease for Term certain; and the residue thereof rented by respectable Tenants from year to year.

Convenient Allotments will be made to suit the applicants for purchase, or the whole may be purchased in one Lot.

The Estates are beautifully situated in a thriving Manufacturing District, within 5 miles of the Town of Huddersfield, and abundantly supplied with pure and never-failing Springs and Streams of Water. The Common Land abounds in Moor Game, and has been well preserved.

For further particulars apply CHARLES HORNCastle, Esquire, No.11, Navarine-Terrace, Dalston, London; MR. WILLIAM CARTER, Land Agent Lightcliffe, near Halifax; or at the Swan Inn, Meltham; or at the Offices of

Messrs, RENTON, JONES & ARMITAGE

Solicitors, Huddersfield,

Huddersfield, 19th October 1848

William Carter, the land agent, died at Smith House on 21st October 1850.

But his mother widow Ellen Carter née Nicholl, a friend of Ann Walker, continued to live there as you can see on the 1851 census. Read more in

The Nicholl family of Southowram

1851 census

William T Radcliffe	Head	61	Landed Proprietor
Ellen Carter	Housekeeper	79	Landed Proprietor
Thomas Wilcock	Servant	66	Servant
Hannah Gledhill	Servant	53	ditto
Ann Drake	Servant	25	ditto

Address Smith House, Lightcliffe

The next property on the census list was the Cliffe Hill manstion. By then Ann Walker had returned to live in the house she was born in after her aunt Ann Walker died in 1847.

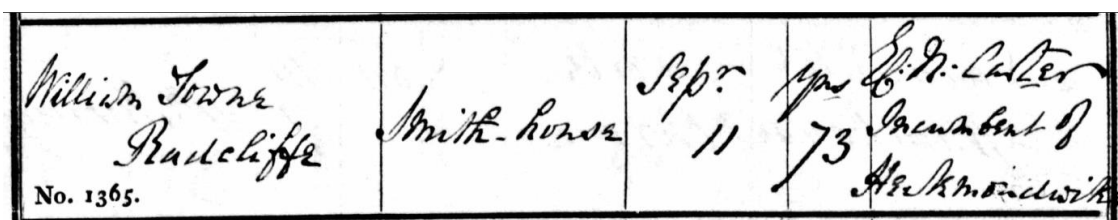
1861 census

John [should be William] Radcliffe	Head	71	Gentleman (Lunatic)
Ellin Carter	Guardian	89	Widower
Thomas Wilcock	Servant	??	Servant
Hannah Gledhill	Servant	??	General Servant
Martha Jackson	Servant		ditto
John Carter		14	

Address Smith House, Lightcliffe

The 1861 census entry is messy. Not only is there the wrong name but the servants' ages are crossed out. However, they can be worked out from the 1851 census. But it is interesting to note that the elderly widower, Ellen Carter, was described as his guardian. The teenage John Carter was a grandson, the son of Daniel Carter of Giles House.

William Towne Radcliffe died on 6th September 1862. The officiating officer at his funeral was Rev. Edward Nicholl Carter, another one of Ellen Carter's sons. Did she organise the funeral? Her family seem to have been somehow involved with looking after William Towne Radcliffe for some time. He was buried with his parents on 11th September 1862 in plot A*14.



William Towne Radcliffe has a probate record.

3 October [1862] Letters of Administration of the Personal estate and effects of William Towne Radcliffe late of Smith House Lightcliffe near Halifax in the County of York Esquire a Bachelor deceased who died 6 September at Smith House aforesaid were granted at the Principal Registry to Charles Horncastle of 13 Wilton-road Park-road Dalston in the County of Middlesex Gentleman the Cousin-German and one of the Next of Kin of the Deceased he having been first sworn. Effects under £10,000

A year later Charles Horncastle died, he was buried in Hackney cemetery on 7th November 1863. His probate record says that his effects were 'under £2000'.

The memorial inscription on the top of the Radcliffe chest tomb is very difficult to read.



BENEATH THIS TOMB LIES THE REMAINS OF CHARLOTTE
THE WIFE OF CHARLES RADCLIFFE Esq.
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 13TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1797
AGED 36 YEARS

LONG WISHED FOR DEATH DISARMED OF TERRORS CAME
AND IN AN INSTANT SEIZED HER FEEBLE FRAME
LIKE ONE WHO JOURNEYS TO HIS ABSENT HOME
SO JOURNEYED SHE REJOICING TO THE TOMB

REST THEN HER ASHES FREED FROM MORTAL CARE
HER SOUL'S REMOVED TO HEAVENS TRIUMPHANT SPHERE
SHALL REST ETERNAL FROM ALL LABOUR KNOWN
AND EVERY SORROW SHE ENDURED BELOW

ALSO THE REMAINS OF THE ABOVE SAID CHARLES RADCLIFFE Esq.
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 18TH DAY OF DECEMBER 1817
AGED 78 YEARS

ALSO OF WILLIAM TOWNE RACLIFFE Esq.
SON OF THE ABOVE CHARLES AND CHARLOTTE RADCLIFFE
OF SMITH HOUSE
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 6TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1862
IN THE 74TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

This brings the Lightcliffe Radcliffe story to a close.

But were these Lightcliffe Radcliffes related to the Radcliffes of Milnsbridge and hence the baronets who then moved to Rudding Park near Harrogate?

Abraham Radcliffe buried in Lightcliffe churchyard in 1759 was said, on a number of documents and in various family trees, to be born in Meltham, near Huddersfield, Yorkshire. A date, 7th February 1696 which could be his birth date or his baptism date, is given in some places but an original document confirming this has not been found. [It would have been helpful to know his age when he died – but nevermind!] Similarly, it is not certain that his father was another Abraham Radcliffe. There were two Abraham Radcliffes on a 1741 *UK, Poll Books and Electoral Registers, 1538-1893*. The first column is 'Where Freeholds Lye' followed by 'Places of Abode'. It does, therefore, seem likely that this was father Abraham and son Abraham as well as a few other sons or nephews in the Milnsbridge area.

Radcliffe Abraham <i>Gent.</i>	<i>Almondbury</i>	<i>Almondbury</i>
Radcliffe Charles Esq;	<i>Barkland</i>	<i>Mills Bridge</i>
Radcliffe William	<i>Mills Bridge</i>	<i>Mills Bridge</i>
Radcliffe William Esq;	<i>Leverfedge</i>	<i>Mills Bridge</i>
Radcliffe William	<i>Cowpit Lane</i>	<i>Sheffield</i>
Radcliffe Abraham <i>jun.</i>	<i>South Cross Land</i>	<i>Brighouse</i>

Abraham Radcliffe senior was buried in Huddersfield on 1st April 1747. [Again, a death age would have been helped!] His burial record says he was an 'Attorney at Law'. He has a 1747 probate record which describes him as a 'Gent. of Almondbury'

It seems likely that he was the eldest son of Rev. William Radcliffe and his wife Mary née Beaumont who probably married in 1664. She was an heiress, the daughter of Abraham Beaumont 'of Meltham, yeoman, a gentleman who possessed considerable landed property in the district'. Again, family trees rather than original documents – it is very early for these – will have to be relied on for his birth or baptism date of 21st December 1665. The fact that he was apparently named after his wealthy maternal grandfather fits.

His father William Radcliffe was baptised in Oldham, Lancashire on 20th March 1639. Mary Beaumont was born on 18th January 1642 in Meltham. Her husband became vicar at Thorpe Salvin near Rotherham, Yorkshire where the baptisms of several children – but not Abraham – were recorded. The family would then move to Dinnington, Yorkshire where Rev. William Radcliffe was rector until his death in September 1727. His wife Mary née Beaumont died at Dinnington on 4th Mary 1725.

One of their other sons, another William, was baptised at Thorpe Salvin on 20th October 1670. He appears to have inherited the Milnsbridge part of his grandfather's landed property. Amongst his children were a daughter Mary born in 1707, a son William born in 1711 and another son Charles in 1718. This Charles Radcliffe (1718 – 1768) - the cousin of Abraham Radcliffe (1696 – 1759) as detailed above - married Frances Towne on 30th October 1755 and so was the grandfather of the first cousins William Towne Radcliffe and Charles Horncastle.

The eldest son William (1711 – 1795) was a Lieutenant Colonel in the West Yorkshire Militia. He was a bachelor. As he outlived his siblings he bequeathed his estate to the son of his sister Mary who in 1740 had married Joseph Pickford (- 1755). This was on the condition that his nephew took the name Radcliffe.

Thus, Joseph Pickford Radcliffe (1744 – 1819) became the owner of the Milnsbridge estate. Before then he had married Elizabeth Sunderland on 16th November 1765 at St. John's Church, Croydon. The marriage record notes that she was a 'minor'. She was the daughter of Richard Sunderland of Surrey and granddaughter of Samuel Sunderland of Coley Hall. One of their daughters was Frances Pickford (1778 – 1861) who was born at Royton on 16th April 1778. She features a number of times as Miss Pickford or 'Pic' in the 1823/4 diaries of Anne Lister of Shibden Hall.

1823-07-06 (journal; Steph Gallaway)

Wrote a short note to Miss Pickford – George to leave it on his return from church – To ask when she can ride with me, she having told me her nephew Sir Joseph Radcliffe was coming on Saturday (yesterday) and she had some hope of his leaving her a horse (...) – Sir Joseph Radcliffe, 2nd Baronet (1799-1872) Joseph inherited the title of Sir Joseph Radcliffe 2nd Baronet on the death of his grandfather Sir Joseph Radcliffe 1st Baronet (formerly Pickford), father of Frances Pickford. Debrett's Peerage

1824-06-25 (journal; WYAS)

half hour reading and musing over my letter to Pic pleased with it

As Anne Lister explained Joseph Pickford Radcliffe of Milnsbridge became the 1st Baronet in 1813. This was after serving as a Justice of the Peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire and being 'energetic in the pursuit and interrogation of Luddites'. This made him deeply unpopular in the area, but it did earn him a baronetcy.

After his death in 1819 his nephew, the 2nd baronet, sold the Milnsbridge estate in 1824 and purchased another estate Rudding Park, near Harrogate, Yorkshire.

In conclusion the Lightcliffe Radcliffes were related to those who owned first Milnsbridge estate near Huddersfield and then Rudding Park near Harrogate. And the link is a double one for poor William Towne Radcliffe on both his paternal and maternal ancestral lines.

D.M.Barker

April 2024

Anne Lister diary quotes from
West Yorkshire Archives Services SH:7/ML/E/1 and then 6 and 7