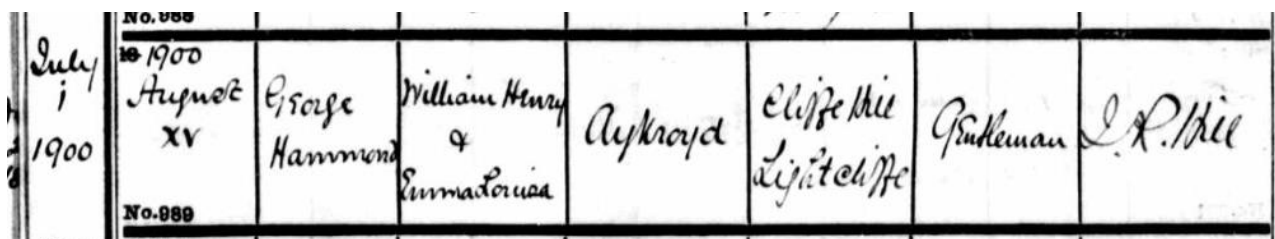


The Aykroyds of T. F. Firths & Sons Ltd. part 2

Colonel George Hammond Aykroyd, BA, TD. [1900-1972]

George Hammond Aykroyd was the third son of William Henry Aykroyd and his wife Emma Louisa née Hammond. By the time he was born on 1st July 1900 they had moved into Cliffe Hill mansion in Lightcliffe near Halifax, Yorkshire. He was baptised at St Matthew's Church by the Reverend James Robert Hill on 15th August 1900.



Baby George and his two older brothers were with their parents and six servants at Cliffe Hill on 31st March 1901 when the census was taken. Ten years later he was at Bilton Grange Preparatory School in Rugby. From there he went to Rugby School in Warwickshire. He would be too young to serve in the Great War as his brothers did. After the war he went to Trinity College Cambridge. On the 1921 census, taken on 19th June, he was recorded as being in full time education, so still a student, visiting a Bradford born Joseph Harold Smith at Ranby Hall, Retford, Nottinghamshire. Harold Smith, as he was known, was a Bradford worsted spinner who had married Beatrice Emily Aykroyd, the daughter of William Edward Aykroyd and Alice née Milnes. George's father, William Henry Aykroyd, and Beatrice were therefore first cousins. They were actually also first cousins through their mothers as two Milnes sisters, Ellen and Alice, married two Aykroyd brothers, Alfred and William Henry.

George Hammond Aykroyd graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1923. That summer he went with his father as his assistant to the USA. They returned to Southampton on the White Star Line 'Homer'. This would be the first of many business trips to the USA he, his father and brothers, would make in the years to come.



On 10th August 1924 in St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe the vicar the Reverend Harold Taylor read the Banns of Marriage between George Hammond Aykroyd of Cliffe Hill and his double second cousin Margaret Roberts Aykroyd of Birstwith Hall near Harrogate. Margaret was the daughter of Mr Frederic Alfred Aykroyd – sister of the already mentioned Beatrice Emily Aykroyd - and his wife Lily May née Roberts who was the daughter of Sir James Roberts, first baronet of Milner Field.

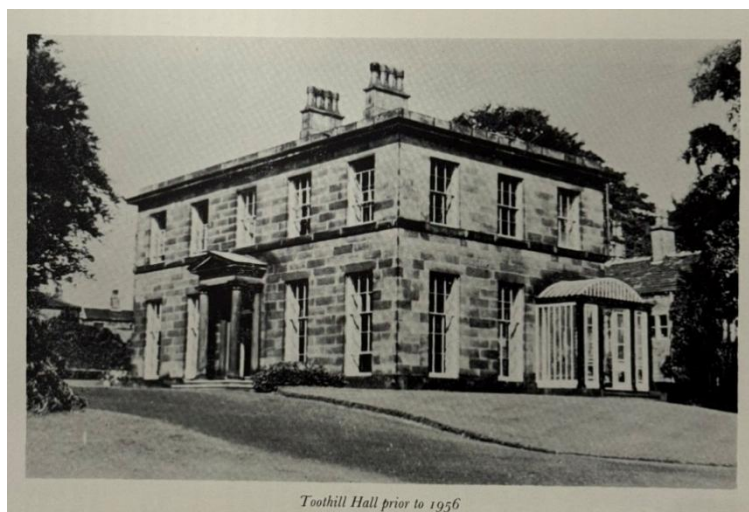
James Roberts was one of eleven children of illiterate parents from Keighley. Having started part time work as an 11-year-old in an Oxenhope mill he became a mill manager and then eventually set up in business on his own. In 1902 he bought the failing company of Sir Titus Salt & Sons at Saltaire and turned it into a successful business which he sold for £2m in 1920. As well as his many philanthropic acts in the Saltaire and Bradford area he also purchased the Bronte parsonage in Haworth providing additional funds to turn it into a museum. Sir Titus Salt, of course, rented and then bought Crow Nest mansion in Lightcliffe where he died in 1876.

Back to George and Margaret. After two more readings of the banns their wedding took place at Hampsthwaite Church on 2nd September 1924. The groom's parents' address was given as Ingerthorpe Grange, Markington and Cliffe Hill Lightcliffe with the latter address being on the marriage certificate. The choral service was conducted by the Bishop of Bradford assisted by the Vicars of Hampsthwaite and Birstwith which clearly indicates the status of the families. The best man was Viscount Mountgarret, a friend from university and the groomsmen were Major Alfred Aykroyd and Major Harold Aykroyd, the groom's brothers and Messrs Cecil and Howard Aykroyd who were the brothers of the bride. Amongst the gifts were presents from employees at both Firth mills – Flush and Clifton -, from officers of 4th Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment and the staff of Cliffe Hill.



Second cousins: Margaret Roberts Aykroyd and George Hammond Aykroyd

On returning from their honeymoon George and Margaret moved into Toothill Hall, Rastrick which George's father Sir William Henry Aykroyd had bought from Mrs Kathleen Blakeborough (Joseph Blakeborough & Sons Ltd, a major manufacturer of valves).



Toothill Hall is just off the Huddersfield Road into Brighouse, in the upper part of Rastrick. It was a substantial mansion with grounds extending to Bradley. There was a tennis court and an outside swimming pool. The hall was surrounded by a ha-ha feature which George later filled in to produce a landing strip for his light aircraft. He was issued with his Aviators' Certificate in July 1932 by the Royal Aero Club of Great Britain.

		10654
AYKROYD . George Hammond.		
Toothill Hall, Brighouse.		
Born	1st July 1900.	at Lightcliffe.
Nationality	British.	
Rank, Regiment, Profession	Manufacturer.	
Certificate taken on	Moth. Cirrus. 85 H.P.	
At	Yorkshire.	
Date	30.7.1932.	

Four Aykroyd children were born at Toothill Hall; Patricia Jean in December 1925, Michael David in September 1928, John Richard in December 1934 and David Peter in 1937. The children's paternal grandfather, Sir William Henry Aykroyd, was already a baronet but then in March 1929 their maternal grandfather was made Sir Frederic Alfred Aykroyd, the 1st Baronet Aykroyd of Birstwith. In 1892 this Bradford businessman went into his father's dyeing business as did his cousin William Henry. But then in 1895 he began in business for himself in the wool trade with branches in Australia, New Zealand and South America. During WW1 Frederic Aykroyd was at the War Office in London in charge of the distribution of raw materials to this country and to the allies. His baronetcy was announced in the delayed, due to the King's health, 1929 New Year's Honours list for political and public services.



Escutcheon (left) of the Aykroyd baronets of Birstwith Hall (right) very similar to the one for the Baronets of Lightcliffe.

Like his older brothers George worked for T.F. Firths & Sons Ltd., which by then his father was the owner and chairman. In 1931 he and Harold paid yet another visit to the USA. He also followed his brothers' military careers. In 1932 he was listed as being a Major with the 4th Battalion, (Territorial) at the Drill Hall, Prescott Street, Halifax with Harold as Lt-Colonel. In 1938 an Anti-Tank Regiment was formed from the 4th Battalion, the Duke of Wellington's Regiment and 230 Battery was created with Major G H Aykroyd as its first commander.

On the 1939 register, Margaret Aykroyd is shown to be living at Toothill Hall with her younger sons. George was presumably away on military service and the older two children, Patricia and Michael, were away at school. In May 1940, the children's paternal grandparents Sir William and Lady Emma Aykroyd took George's and Margaret's four children and two cousins, Harold's daughters, to the USA via Montreal Canada. This must have been a difficult decision for all to make. Their fathers were involved in the war effort but crossing the Atlantic to the safety of North America was not without risk as the U-boat campaign had started. They crossed on the Canadian Pacific *RMS Duchess of Atholl* which had been converted into a troopship the previous year. The *Yorkshire Post* reported the return of Harold's daughters and so presumably the other four Aykroyd cousins with their paternal grandparents in November 1943.

Meanwhile 230 Battery as part of the 58th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery saw action in the North African campaign, in Italy, Palestine and Greece. It is not known how involved Major George Hammond Aykroyd was, but he was awarded the Territorial Decoration in August 1943. A 1954 newspaper report said that he also commanded the artillery ranges in Lydd, Kent.

After the war the family moved almost immediately to The Priory, Nun Monkton, near York. They were certainly in residence by 1946. With a keen interest in farming and rural pursuits George at some stage became a Master of Foxhounds, like his brother Alfred. He still worked at Firths and, in 1947, became co-director of the company.



LIEUT.-COL. G. H. AYKROYD

In November 1954 various newspapers reported that the Queen had made Lieutenant-Colonel George Hammond Aykroyd an Honorary Colonel of 382 Medium Regiment R.A. (D.W.R) T.A., the Halifax unit formerly the 4th Battalion the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. Their headquarters were in Halifax, but they also had a battery in Brighouse. 230 Battery held a reunion in 1962 attended by the then honorary Colonel George H. Aykroyd.

In 1966, George became Chairman of Firth Furnishings Ltd. He retired two years later after 40 years with the company.

His death, on 30th September 1972, was reported in numerous newspapers including *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*. He was buried at St Mary Priory Churchyard, Nun Munkton, Harrogate. Probate was granted in November at £178,709.



Margaret Roberts Aykroyd née Aykroyd died on 27th July 1981 and was buried with her husband in Nun Monkton where there is the above unreadable plaque.

Mary Hammond Aykroyd OBE [1902 –1988]

Mary Hammond Aykroyd was the youngest child and only daughter of William Henry Aykroyd and his wife Emma Louisa née Hammond of Cliffe Hill, Lightcliffe. She was born on 15th August 1902 and was baptised at St Matthew's Church on 27th December 1902 by the vicar, Rev James Robert Hill.

She lived with her family at the Cliffe Hill mansion until she was eighteen. On 2nd April 1911 the 8-year-old was there with her parents and five servants. Her three older brothers were all away at boarding school. It is not known where Mary was educated. By the time the 1921 census was taken on the 19th June, Mary had moved with her parents to Ingerthorpe Grange near Harrogate leaving her brothers at Cliffe Hill. By then her father had been created Sir William Henry Aykroyd, the 1st Baronet of Lightcliffe.

In 1924 Mary accompanied her parents, her brother Harold and a maid on a trip to the USA when they all gave their U.K. address as Cliffe Hill. They travelled first class on the Cunard's ship *RMS Aquitania* which left Southampton on 26th April 1924 for New York. This was presumably at least a part business trip following the pattern set by Sir Algernon Firth.



He made frequent trips to the company's two mills at Firthcliffe and Auburn in the USA. Firthcliffe was located on the western bank of the Hudson River in the township of Cornwall. The Auburn mill was 225 miles north towards the Canadian border. We have details of one of his visits and it seems likely that the Aykroyds would follow a similar itinerary.

Arriving in New York from Southampton or Liverpool he stayed at top hotels such as the Waldorf, Manhattan and then travelled by train on the New York, Ontario & Western Railway to Firthcliffe. The company maintained accommodation for the owner's family in the form of a large house, Firth Villa, in Firthcliffe. The train journey would continue to Auburn where Sir Algernon stayed at Osborne House before the return journey. These almost annual trips lasted about four weeks.

The Aykroyds returned from this 1924 trip arriving back to Southampton on 3rd June from New York again travelling first class on the *RMS Aquitania*. Sir William and his sons would cross the Atlantic many more times in the years to come to check on their business interests in the USA.

In the early 1930s Mary again travelled with her parents but it seems that these trips were for pleasure. In March 1930 they went on a month-long Mediterranean cruise and then in 1932 the three of them went to Lisbon in Portugal.

Back home at Grantley Hall, which her father had purchased in 1925, Mary was a keen horsewoman. The oil painting on the right with the title *Mary Aykroyd in Riding Habit* was by Sir John Lavery. When it was sold in 2007 it was described as being 'rather severe with none of the easy charm of many Laverys.' But look what it sold for in 2007! Mary's name appears regularly in reports of agricultural shows in Yorkshire, such as at Harrogate and Otley, for not only showing Grantley Hall hunters, brood mares, geldings and foals but winning prizes with them too.



In June 1933 her engagement to a newly qualified barrister Harold Edmund Banks Newell, from Derbyshire was announced in newspapers across the country.



YORKSHIRE ENGAGEMENT.—
Miss Mary Aykroyd, daughter of Sir
William Aykroyd, Bart., Grantley
Hall, Ripon, whose engagement to Mr.
Harold Newall is announced.

But then in early August 1933 many of the same newspapers announced that the engagement had been called off 'by mutual consent'. In December 1936 she was unable to attend a Ripon ball as she was 'convalescing from appendicitis'. The 77-day cruise her parents took her on in early 1937 to Madeira, Panama, Honolulu, California, Havana, Miami, and the West Indies hopefully helped her recovery.

In 1938 Mary entered the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS). When war was declared she became the acting County Organiser and then was appointed the West Riding Regional Administrator. On the 1939 register, she was visiting her newly divorced brother Harold Hammond Aykroyd at Hollins Hall with her parents. The following year she took responsibility for the whole county which had over 90,000 members involved in the war effort. When her parents took her nieces and nephews to New York she may have remained at Grantley Hall even when it became a convalescent home from 1941 to 1946.

The following newspaper article gives an insight into Mary Hammond Aykroyd's life before the war and then her thoughts on what woman should do afterwards.

The *Yorkshire Observer* 25th July 1941



WHENEVER I have drawn anyone connected with the W.V.S. – Lady Allerton or Dr. Margaret Sharp – they have always said : “When are you going to draw the Joint Administrator?” and I could never tell them, for, frankly, I had heard that she did not relish publicity and I did not relish the idea of approaching her.

“The Joint Administrator of the West Riding Area of the W.V.S.” sounded extremely intimidating and I was only too glad to leave her alone.

And then one day at the Queen's, Leeds, I saw Lady Ramsden lunching with an exceptionally attractive young woman, in the uniform of the W.V.S. Something about her face — lean, clean-cut, vitally intelligent, and sparkling with humour — attracted my

attention. Her hands, I noticed, were quite perfect, and the set of her beautifully coiffured head was that of a thoroughbred.

What a lovely drawing she would make!” I thought as I went over to pay my respects to Lady Ramsden. But would she sit. “Certainly.” She said, with no beating about the bush.

“Do you know?” I told her “You are the first woman connected with the W.V.S. who has not said ‘When are you going to draw the Joint Administrator?’”

“For a very good reason,” she replied with a smile, “I am the Joint Administrator!”

“Do you mind coming back to our headquarters?” she asked when I had ‘come to’. Of course I didn’t. “I hope you don’t find the atmosphere here aggressively feminine,” she said as she arranged a few flowers in a cool, green bowl. “Some people call it ‘ the boudoir’ but I don’t think that is quite fair.”

Neither do I. Some people think that unless one works in thoroughly depressing surroundings and hates every moment of one’s work, one isn’t working at all. Mary Aykroyd works in attractive surroundings and adores every second of it, but she gets through as much work as any woman in England to-day.

“It’s so enthralling,” she told me. “There are so many facets to it. There is simply no angle of life which doesn’t come within the orbit of the W.V.S. That is why it *must* continue after the war. Women will not go back to the empty lives that they lived before.”

“What sort of life would you go back to?” I asked.

“Hunting,” she replied. “There in a word you have my life as it *used* to be.” I recalled her portrait in hunting attire by Sargent. “I’d much rather be drawn in this,” she said indicating her uniform.

And this is from a girl who had everything. Hunting may have been her primary interest, but her life embraced all the other interests which are the prerogative of her class. She travelled a great deal, did “The Season”, and lived in one of the stateliest homes of England, Grantley Hall, built on one of England’s loveliest rivers, the Skell and set amidst a chain of lakes and waterfalls. It is one of the show

places of Yorkshire, and thousands of visitors a year come to see the famous Brimham Rocks.

She entertained her friends here and went to Paris for her clothes. Now she prefers work, seldom stirs out of her office, and is never seen out of her uniform. That, I think, says a lot for her character.

But I'd like to think that it says a lot for other young women too. I'd like to think that she is only the symbol of the new "new woman".

The old "new woman," the rampant feminist, thought that man had made a mess of the world, and that it was time that woman took the reins. The new "new woman" does not think that. She thinks it is time that man and woman shared the reins.

"There is a great deal that only a woman can do," says Mary Aykroyd gently.

With women like her at the helm, I should say there is very little they can't!

Mary Aykroyd appears to have been involved in raising money for charities with the Princess Royal, the Countess of Harewood as the figure head. Living relatively close to one another the Aykroyds do seem to have moved in the same circle as those at Harewood House. The *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* in February 1941 noted that friends and business acquaintances of Mary Aykroyd had funded eight mobile canteens. Between them the Firth Carpet Co. and T.F. Firth & Sons, Ltd, companies run by her brothers, had purchased three.

In January 1945 Mary Hammond Aykroyd was appointed as an Officer of the British Empire (OBE) for her work as the Regional Administrator with the W.V.S.

With the war over and having lost her parents in September 1946 and then April 1947 Mary resigned from her position with the W.V.S. in Yorkshire. By July 1947 the whole of the Grantley Hall estate had been sold and Mary was planning to move south in the September. This was when the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* had an amusing anecdote about the portrait she was given as she left the Yorkshire W.V.S.

On the subject of uniform, Miss Mary Aykroyd, whose portrait in W.V.S. uniform was presented to her the other day in token of her years of leadership in this region, consulted, the artist, Miss Joyce Plarr, about her earrings. They decided that as she was never seen without them, the earrings must go into the portrait. But they reckoned without one of the subscribers, who counselled, halfway through the sittings, "no earrings". So, the offending pearl studs were painted out.

Presumably this alteration was made because it is considered incorrect to wear jewellery with uniform. As Miss Aykroyd was allowed to appear with her fingernails varnished red in the portrait, however, I see no reason to quarrel with the earrings.

The move south was to Rydinghurst, a large house, in Cranleigh between Guildford and Horsham. A year later Mary sailed to Buenos Aires, Argentina in November 1948 for a two month stay. There is a report, from October 1953, of her house, being broken into but the burglar fled when her three foot tall Great Dane appeared and frightened him. The dog was called 'Grantley' for obvious reasons.

Mary Hammond Aykroyd died on 1st November 1988, aged 86, at Smithwood House, Cranleigh. She left a sizeable fortune of just over one million pounds.

Sir William Miles Aykroyd, MC, Bart [1923 –2007]

3rd Baronet Aykroyd of Lightcliffe



William Miles Aykroyd was born on 24th August 1923 at Hargreaves Head, Northowram, near Halifax, the second child and only son of Alfred Hammond Aykroyd and his wife Susan Ambler née Walker. Susan was a WW1 war widow with a young daughter Vivien Sylvia Thorne when she married Alfred in 1919. They had another daughter Ann Prudence Aykroyd in 1920 before William arrived.

He was most probably educated at his father's old school Charterhouse, Godalming, Surrey. This was likely to be where the 16-year-old was when the 1939 register was taken in the September. Like his father he was in the Officer Training Corps and so it is no surprise that he then served with the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards as part of the Royal Armoured Corps. The *London Gazette* noted his promotion to 2nd Lieutenant on 10th October 1943.

On 12th August 1944 he was involved in the tank action described in this military record.

5501. Wk.48807/405. 60th. 2/42. W/L.P. Op. 656. Forms/W.3121/6. Army Form W.3121

Brigade _____ Division _____ Corps _____

Schedule No. _____ Unit 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards

Rank and Army or Personal No. WS/Lieut 295884

Name William Miles AYKROYD

Date recommendation passed forward _____

Brigade 25 Aug 44 Passed 26 Aug 44

Division 25 Aug 44 12 Sep 44

Corp 16 SEP 44 28 SEP 44

Army 25 OCT 1944 8 NOV 1944

Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
On 12 Aug 44 Lt AYKROYD was in comd of a tp advancing at Pt 266, SE of CAUVILLE (880409 Map FRANCE, Sheet 7F/3 1/50,000) when his leading tk was knocked out by an A tk gun at short range. Another tk in his tp became immobilised. Completely disregarding the enemy's fire Lt AYKROYD towed this tk from its exposed posn and continued the most spirited offensive action, destroying the A tk gun and killing or taking prisoners the whole of its crew. Throughout the ops in this area, where the Regt was engaged continuously from 3 to 14 Aug, Lt AYKROYD showed great initiative and offensive spirit, which together with his complete disregard to his personal safety set a very fine example to his comrades. Throughout the ops in this area, where the Regt was engaged continuously from 5 to 14 Aug, Lt AYKROYD showed great initiative and offensive spirit, which together with his complete disregard to his personal safety set a very fine example to his comrades.	Lt. Col. J.E. Swetenham Comd 5 DG	Immediate MC	72
	<i>J. P. Stoeas</i> Maj-Gen Comd 43 Div		

B. h. Randomey

UK, Recommendations for Honours... > None > None

LIEUT-GENERAL
SECOND ARMY

Basically, the recommendation for the award of the Military Cross stated that : -

'Lt Aykroyd was in command of a troop advancing near Cauville when his leading tank was knocked out by an anti-tank gun and another tank immobilised. Disregarding enemy fire, Lt Aykroyd towed this tank from its exposed position and continued the most spirited offensive action, destroying the gun and killing or taking prisoners the whole of its crew. Over a 11-day period when the Regiment was in continuous action, Lt Aykroyd showed great initiative and offensive spirit, which together with his complete disregard to his personal safety set a very fine example to his comrades.'

Just a few months later the young lieutenant's name appeared on this list of wounded with the date 24/10/44, but he recovered. After the war his parents gave £1000 to Harrogate and District General Hospital being grateful that he had survived the conflict.

<u>Wounded</u>					
<u>Royal Armoured Corps</u>					
ATKEY	W/Lt.	C.N.J.		217278	23.10.44
AYKROYD	W/Lt.	W.M.		295844	23.10.44
GERSON	W/Lt.	H.	Reece, Corps.	300864	24.10.44
PAYNE	W/Lt.	R.W.		308091	19.10.44
STUBBS	A/Capt.	H.G., M.C., M.M.		307825	22.10.44

William Miles Aykroyd does not appear to have been very involved with the family businesses T.F. Firths & Sons Ltd, in the West Riding of Yorkshire nor Firth Carpet Company in the USA. But he was for a time, 1950 to 1969, a Director of Hardy Amies Limited. He featured in a photograph with the title *The New Mayfair Edwardians* by the fashion photographer, Norman Parkinson. This image is now in the National Portrait Gallery. We think William Miles Aykroyd is the gentleman with his back to us!



On consecutive days in March 1954 the Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer had these two offerings.

22nd March 1954

Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer

[as part of a review of a book "Just So Far"
by Hardy Amies]

Dealing with his adventures in establishing himself in Savile Row, Mr Amies acknowledges the many-sided advice and help received from a Yorkshireman in the wool business. "Bill Aykroyd," who became his personal assistant – now Sir Cecil William Aykroyd, the second baronet of Birstwith Hall, near Harrogate, and a director of Hardy Amies Ltd.

Of him the couturier writes: "He understands the niceties of dress and behaviour of what is called the 'County Set' he always has excellent taste."

23rd March 1954

Yorkshire Post and Leed Intelligencer

"Bill Aykroyd"

A correction

In The Yorkshire Post yesterday in a review of a new book. "Just so Far", by Mr Hardy Amies, a reference was made to "Bill Aykroyd," a director of Hardy Amies Ltd., and personal assistant to Mr Amies. He is Mr William Miles Aykroyd, not Sir Cecil William Aykroyd (of Birstwith Hall, near Harrogate) as our reviewer was informed. Sir Cecil is not connected with Hardy Amies Ltd., in any way.

Mr William Miles Aykroyd is the son of Sir Alfred Aykroyd of Linton Spring, Wetherby. We regret any inconvenience which our misstatement may have caused.

Sir Cecil William Aykroyd [1905 – 1993], was the son of Sir Frederic Alfred Aykroyd, 1st Baronet Aykroyd of Birstwith, and his wife Lady Lily May née Roberts. Through their fathers the two bachelors were second cousins once removed.

(We know, it is difficult to get your head round the family relationships. If you remember George Hammond Aykroyd, Sir Alfred's younger brother, married their second cousin, Margaret Roberts Aykroyd who was Cecil's slightly older sister. William Miles Aykroyd being one further generation down was thus Cecil's second cousin once removed. A simplified family tree at the end attempts to show where the different people mentioned in the article fit in, hope it helps!) Then there is the obvious confusion as to which baronetcy the different Sir Aykroyds belonged to. No wonder the *Yorkshire Post* reviewer got in a muddle!

Of course, William Miles Aykroyd did also become a baronet, the 3rd Baronet Aykroyd of Lightcliffe, when his father, Sir Alfred Hammond Aykroyd, died in 1965. William along with his mother and sister then inherited his father's collection of porcelain and art. Living in London William, or Bill as he was known, appears to have been a regular customer in Pimlico Road antique shops adding to his father's collection.

In 1966 William was living in Belgravia, London when this happened as reported by the London Evening News on 27th July.

BARONET HURT IN BELGRAVIA ATTACK

A man attacked Sir William Aykroyd, aged 42, and beat him about the face when he opened his front door at Eaton-place, Belgravia, late last night. Then he fled.

Mr Henry Gibbs, Sir William's butler, said "I was out taking Albert, Sir William's French bulldog, for his late-night walk when the man came to the door.

"Sir William, thinking it was me, opened the door to him. A doctor was called after the attack."

Sometime later, the bachelor moved to Dorset to Buckland Newton Place, Dorchester. The house, a Queen Anne mansion, and the adjoining church are said to be the inspiration for Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*.



Sir William Miles Aykroyd died there on 18th July 2007 with the funeral service taking place on 27th July at Buckland Newton Church. In December 2007 Duke's of Dorchester held a sale of some of his extensive porcelain and art collection during which many items exceeded their estimate. The portrait of his aunt Mary Hammond Aykroyd in riding habit sold for £62,140 well above the hoped for £12,000.

As William had no son as a direct heir, his first cousin Michael David Aykroyd, son of George and Margaret, succeeded to the baronetcy as 4th Baronet Aykroyd of Lightcliffe.

It is the policy of the Friends of St Matthew's Churchyard not to attempt detailed research within recent time. What follows is an outline of the lives of the succeeding Baronets.

Sir Michael David Aykroyd, Bart. [1928 – 2010]

Michael was the eldest son of George Hammond Aykroyd and his wife Margaret Roberts Aykroyd née Aykroyd. In 1952, he married Oenone Gillian Diana Cowling. They had three children, Henry George and 2 girls.

He was Chairman of Firths Carpets for a few years before the company ceased trading.

He became a captain in the Yorkshire Yeomanry. This was possibly the Queen's Own Yorkshire Yeomanry which was a light cavalry regiment between 1956 and 1971.

In 2003 he was living in The Homestead, Killinghall, Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

On the death of his cousin Sir William Miles Aykroyd in July 2007, he succeeded to the baronetcy as 4th Baronet Aykroyd of Lightcliffe.

Sir Henry Robert George Aykroyd, Bart. [1954 -]

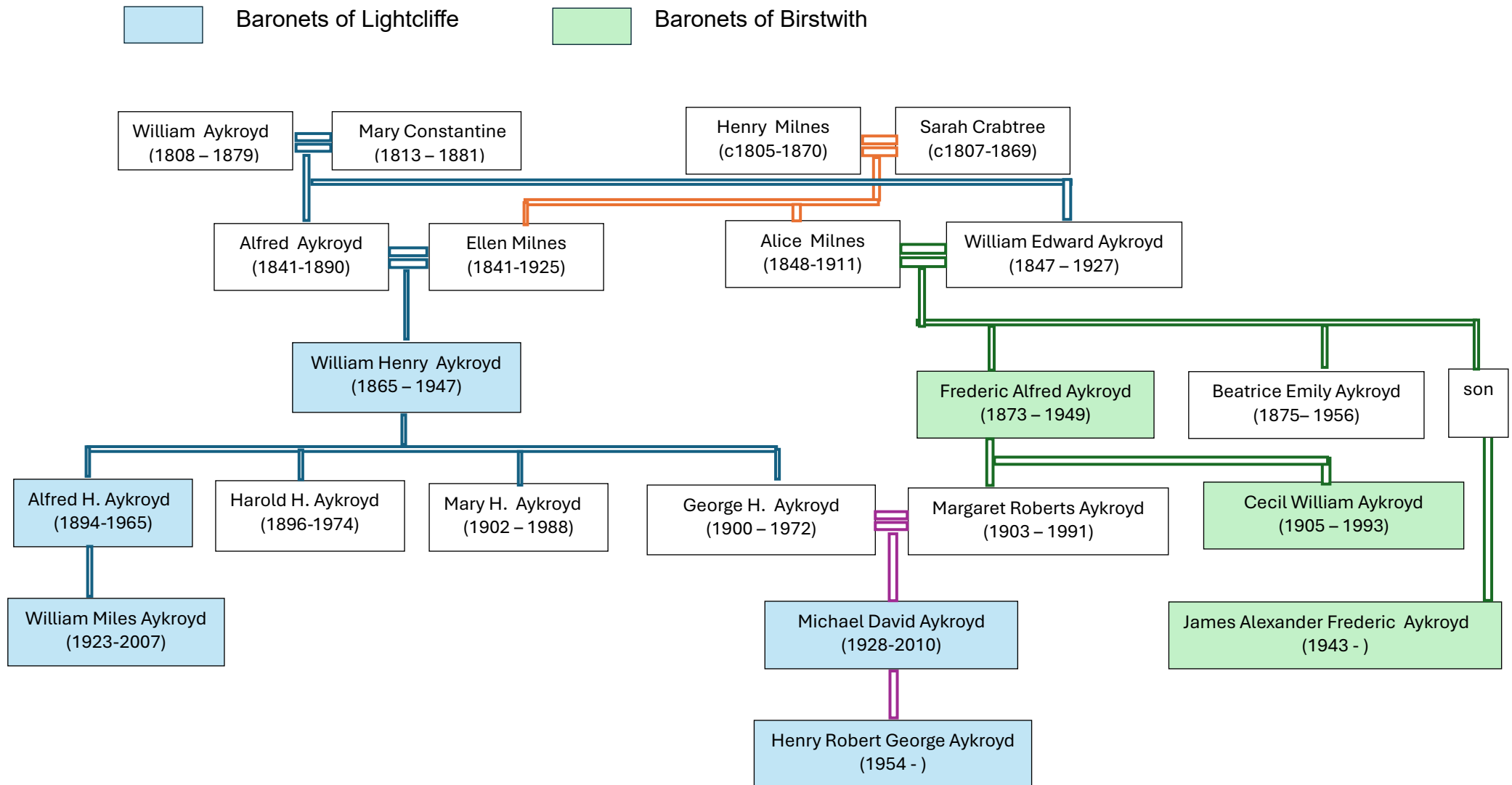
Henry is the son of Sir David Michael Aykroyd . On 21st March 2010 when his father died, he succeeded to the baronetcy as 5th Baronet Aykroyd of Lightcliffe

Henry was educated at Charterhouse, as some other members of the family had been. In 1975, he married Lucy Merlin Brown. They have five children, George Jack (born 1977), Emma Rachel (1978), Bertie Thomas (1983), Kate (1989) & Rose (1989). In 2003 the family were living in Cushnie, Auchterless, Aberdeenshire.

George Jack Aykroyd is the heir to the baronetcy of Lightcliffe.

Ian Philp and Dorothy Barker, December 2025

The Aykroyds mentioned above - remember it is not a complete family tree.



Acknowledgement and sources.

Jane Bentley, Colonel Harold Aykroyd's granddaughter.

Andy Eccles, My Rastrick.

Rob Hamilton, member of Halifax Military History Society.

'150th Anniversary', a Firth company booklet.

'Grantley Hall.' Michael Holyoak, Senior County History Adviser, North Yorkshire County Council

Hipperholme and Lightcliffe Memorial Stray by Bob Horne

Lightcliffe Cricket Club – 150 years by Bob Horne

Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion website

Ancestry website

Findmypast website

Saltaire collection website

Wikipedia website

With grateful thanks to all the above.