

New Street, Langcliffe

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New Street leads from near the fountain in the middle of Langcliffe to the main road from Settle to Stainforth. It is only about 100 m long with a terrace of houses on the north side and just a few properties separated by a garden and croft on the south side (Figs. 1, 2 and 3). The more one questions the origins and searches for past occupiers of these houses, the more complicated does the story become. The census returns of 1841 onwards, the Tithe map of 1841 and Tithe Assessment of 1844 help to identify the landowners and occupiers and their occupations, throwing some light on living conditions in the village in Victorian times. There was no water on tap until 1914 [1]. The report on the Langcliffe Water Supply of 1908 notes that there are 89 houses in the village averaging 5 persons per house with very few water closets. Gas was supplied to the village from Christies High Mill by the Locks in the 1930s [2]. Electricity similarly did not become available until the 1930s.

Firstly one can ask why the street is named New Street. Although it is easy to find fields named New Close and Newfields for example centuries ago when they were subdivided from larger fields or taken in from waste land, it is not expected to find ancient New Streets in small villages. The oldest map of Langcliffe is that of 1800 but it is only a sketch of the central area and does not clearly show any buildings along New Street apart perhaps from what is now no. 1 [3]. The next map is that of the Tithe map of 1841, with the Assessment in 1844 giving the names of land owners and occupiers, which can be presumed to be accurate and which shows houses on New St. more or less as we can see today [4]. However, careful scrutiny reveals puzzling differences. It seems likely that the street was only named in the mid-1800s – the 1851 census records the name without house numbers. House numbering and street names only became more common after 1857 [5]. Although the Tithe map shows a linear terrace on the north side, currently the row comprises three sets of houses angled so that there is a pronounced curve. Inspection of the house fronts shows that no. 1 appears older than all the others, nos. 2 to 5 form the next set, nos. 6 and 7 differ slightly at a small angle, then nos. 8 to 11 form a final set. This final set has a plaque over no. 9 with the initials RH and 1887 (Queen Victoria's golden jubilee, commemorating 50 years after accession to the throne) (Fig. 4). A view of the roof lines and chimney pots shows that these three sets of houses nos. 2 to 11 were built at different times. No. 11 has a small extension built on the small plot of adjoining land shown in 1841.

The private yard behind the houses on New St. was the farmyard of what is now Manor Farm House. The non-linearity of the building line is clearly seen from the yard. The Tithe map shows some sort of outbuilding behind nos. 8 and 9, no longer extant. There is therefore some explaining to do.

On the south side the houses shown on the Tithe map are essentially unchanged. One new house has been built on what was a croft at that time and there is a row of outhouses - old privies and coalsheds used by the north-side residents. There were no indoor conveniences at that time.

In 1849 the Claytons were bankrupted and the three Langcliffe mills they owned were sold to Richard Bashall, who sub-let them in 1852. In 1855 his business also failed because of a slump in the cotton trade, and the mills shut down causing emigration to 'Little Langcliffe' in

Accrington. Many houses were left empty and it is said that grass grew on the streets of the village.

The Buildings on the north side

The houses on the north side are on a site reckoned to be number 38 on the 1841 Tithe map, labelled Houses in 1844 (the site number is missing). Robert Hill, yeoman, was landowner of all the property on the north side of New St.

The house no. 1 on the north side is clearly an old property, perhaps rebuilt in the late 1600s or early 1700s. It is probable that it is on the site of a much older house supported on large plinth stones still to be seen. It has some very thick walls, including that separating the house from no. 2 next door. It is on the edge of the village green, a probable site of one of the earliest houses of late medieval days. The population of the village was perhaps several dozen families of typical average size of five persons, estimated from the area of arable land and pastures available in the late medieval period and say 30 acres of arable land needed to support a family. The Hearth Tax of 1662 lists 34 tax payers plus nine 'omitted by reason of poverty'. Where were all their houses? Such a house as no. 1 would not originally have been constructed completely of stone. Only in the period of the 'great rebuilding' in stone in the late 1600s was there a marked change and improvement of the quality and size of domestic buildings.

Members of the Carr family were in Langcliffe in the 1600s [6]. It is tempting to suggest that the house no.1 is where one of the many William Carrs lived, neighbouring the farm house built by Leonard and Isobel Carr in 1678. A William Carr was the nephew of Leonard Carr and he inherited the farm when Leonard died in 1696.

Robert Hill, the landowner in 1844, died in 1846 leaving his estate to his son John (who died in 1853). It is surmised that Robert Hill lived at no.1 or the old house opposite and that he built all the other houses shown on the 1841 map extending along the north side of New St. The depth of no.1 front to rear is now much less than the other houses 2 to 11 on the north side but any original houses further along might have been similar in depth, comparable to the current nos. 8 to 11, since the entrance to the yard of the farm would otherwise have been rather constricted. After 1841 all these original houses were it seems eventually replaced or demolished to build rather better and larger houses mainly for mill workers. Robert's son John then grandson Robert would have been responsible for this development.

The reasoning is that because a complete set of houses joined as a straight terrace is shown on the 1841 Tithe map, yet nos. 8 to 11 are dated 1887, then earlier, perhaps identical, rather poor houses were on the north side in 1841, except for no.1. Houses nos. 2 to 5 could have been built after 1841 to fit a space made by demolition, with no.2 joined to no. 1, blocking its gable end window. Nos. 6 and 7 were perhaps also rebuilt after 1841. They do not appear to post-date 1887 so were joined with the set of original houses as drawn on the 1841 map.

Then in 1887 the original houses at the end of the row were demolished and rebuilt at a slight angle as better houses for the new influx of mill and quarry workers. This explanation is tentative but fits the observed features.

The Buildings on the south side

The situation on the south side is less complex but not without questions arising. Tithe map site 40 was owned by John Preston (assessed as Houses) (Fig. 1). In 1844 John Green Paley owned the two Tithe map sites 39 assessed as Houses and Garden. Sites 41 and 42 (corner with Stainforth Road) were owned by Robert Hill. The descriptions of sites and the map are not in complete accord which leads to some uncertainties. The numbers 38 (north side) and 42 are missing on the plan No. 4 of the Tithe map and it is not certain which is site 42, occupier Joseph Morphet – but is assumed to be fully on the Stainforth main road, not New St.

Facing the village centre, site no. 40, now named Tara, recently housing the post office and shop, had two households in 1841, but one household in 1851, owner John Preston. In 1841 and 1851 Benjamin Robinson, school master, and Elizabeth Thornber housekeeper were in this house and surprisingly noted in 1851 as being in New St. The front door now faces Main St. not New St. but a side door exists on to New St.

The two sites No. 39 next along New St. do not show houses on the map even though the Tithe Assessment says Houses and Gardens. The house on the south side opposite no.1 has the name The Old Liberal Club. It appears to be 18th century in style and obviously had two doors on to the street, one now blocked up. The occupation by two families in the 19th century is therefore not surprising. The house on site 41 clearly shown in 1841 is that which was called Chogolisa (a mountain in the Himalyas) by a mountaineering owner, and is now White Rose Cottage. A bench mark stone now lying on the right hand side of the front door was found in the back yard during renovation, originally sited on the main road. A modern house now sits on part of the site 41 which was a croft.

Finally, the corner house, occupier Christopher Wright, has some notoriety as a beer house where an altercation took place in 1871. A transcript of the court case held at the West Riding Spring Assizes in 1871 (prosecution of Ellis Parker alias Nelson) includes a plan of the beerhouse (at the sign of the Bayhorse) showing also the dairy, brewhouse and barn (now all demolished) fronting the road with a garden behind. The top of the cellar opening can be seen on the gable end. The house has no main door on New St. but Christopher Wright was here in 1851 noted as New St. by the census-takers and corroborated by the events reported in newspapers in 1871.

The people of New Street

Much of the information about people abstracted here was gathered for the Millennium booklet *Langcliffe – Glimpses of a Dales village*, and here supplemented by notes supplied by Roger Hill Parker and Richard Kirkbride.

The owners of the land were, in 1841, Robert Hill, John Preston and John Green Paley. These families, amongst others, were wealthy and owned much of Langcliffe township between them. The occupiers of New St. houses were therefore all rent payers at this time.

Hills and Parkers

Robert Hill, yeoman of Langcliffe, died in 1846; his son John Hill died in 1853 and is buried in Langcliffe churchyard along with others of his family. The 1851 census records John as a farmer and grocer, wife Sybilla and five children, one of whom was Robert, the eldest. Robert the son built the set of New St. houses nos. 8 to 11 dated 1887. John was described as

a gentleman in his will. Alice Hill, his daughter born in 1849 married Christopher Walker Parker.

An auction sale took place in 1905 of 'a messuage and shop' occupied by Ralph Parker (Tithe plot 42 on the corner of New St. and Stainforth Road (Lot 1)). The property 'holds a Beer and Wine Licence to sell 'off''. The gross rental was £53-4-0. Also for sale as Lot 2 was 'a shop and four cottages adjoining (all recently erected), situate in New Street aforesaid, in the occupations of Messrs. Capstick, Warnes, Bannister and Flippons'. (Presumably nos. 8 to 11). Also 'Seven other cottages situate in New Street aforesaid, adjoining the above, and in the occupations of Messrs. Wright, Wight, Taylor, Fox, Ball, Ovington and West' (presumably nos. 1 to 7) [7].

Alice Parker (née Hill) bought these Lots 1 and 2 from the estate of her brother Robert Hill (who died unmarried in 1904) in 1906, for £1,800. She borrowed the money as a mortgage to Richard Wooler paid off by 1909. In 1912 George Arthur Paley sold to Alice houses on New St. (plot 39) and Middle Fold which he had inherited from his great grandfather John Green Paley; George Paley sold all the Paley holdings in Langcliffe by about 1920 and emigrated to South Africa.

Alice died in 1923 owning 21 cottages and a shop. The Parker family sold the various cottages after the Second World War, mainly to sitting tenants.

The Old Liberal Club on land owned by John Green Paley had four occupants listed for 1844, two of whom are also listed in the 1851 census. John Atkinson, formerly a shoe maker, was living there with his wife Jane. In the same property were John Hill, farmer and grocer, his wife Sybilla and five children (son of Robert Hill who was perhaps living in no. 1 opposite). Were there also Christopher Harrison and Miles Knowles living there in 1841? As lodgers perhaps?

Middletons of 10 New Street

Jimmy, as John James Middleton became known, worked at Hill Top farm in Dent until 1914 when he joined the Tank Corps. It was during his service that he met and befriended Leslie Jackman, and through this friendship was introduced to Bella, Leslie's sister. Jimmy and Bella were married in 1918 at St John's Church in Langcliffe. Their first home was in Main Street, then they moved to 10 New Street and it was there that their eleven sons were born.

On leaving the Tank Corps in 1918 Jimmy worked as a Lime Drawer at Nibble Quarry in Horton in Ribblesdale but in the evenings and at weekends he did odd jobs round the village, one of which was grave digging. As his boys grew older they helped and took over as grave diggers. Eventually, Dick, and Jimmy's great grandson, John Henry, continued the tradition. The Middletons have been responsible for digging graves in Langcliffe for more than 80 years.

Both Jimmy and Bella worked for Dr Tony Hislop who seems to have been a good friend to the family. He always turned up on baking day to enjoy some of Bella's freshly baked bread. Jimmy was well known for his gardening skills and it is said that for many years after he retired his pipes were still being found in Dr Tony's garden. Bella also worked at Bowerley and at Langcliffe Hall.

The brothers had lots of fond memories of their childhood. Their tiny two-bedroom cottage was always full to bursting but Bella was well-known for always finding a place for a friend, offering good food and friendly chat.

‘Upstairs there was no door and we had a double bed and a single bed with a piece of wood in’t middle. We slept top-to-tail. Mam and Dad lived in’t front bedroom. Last into bed blew’t candle out’.

‘Friday night were bath night and it were three in the bath wit youngest first. By time it got to’t middle ,watter were black. Mam’d pull down a shirt from’t rack and say ‘Get it put on!’ even if it were our Pom’s’.

‘We had rabbits, bread pudding and rice. The lady next door made big rice puddings that she and her husband couldn’t finish so she sent them round’. Violet’s mother made big meat and potato pies which everybody shared. Breakfast was bread, milk and toast.

At the age of fourteen the boys left school. All except one went into farming. Poppy became a barber. Violet at fifteen, went cotton spinning. All the boys married local girls.

Capsticks

In 1881 Alexander Capstick aged 30 was living in New St. as a general labourer out of employment. His wife Isabella was a cotton reeler and they had two daughters Mary and Elizabeth. They were still in New St. in 1891, Alexander now a greengrocer, and with a son James. In the 1901 census James ‘Copestick’ aged 18 was a greengrocer assistant. His sister Elizabeth was working in the cotton mill. James married Rosie Sayers (who was also living in New St.). Bertha Capstick their daughter married Richard Kirkbride who had a son Richard now living in Langcliffe. James continued the grocery business after his father died and also ran a coal business. He left New St. to move to Hopehill Farm.

Christopher Wright

The Tithe map site 41 on New St. is where Christopher Wright is named as occupier in 1844. This house, now White Rose Cottage, has been renovated in recent times.

Site 42 is situated on the corner of New St. and the Settle to Stainforth main road. It is labelled as House and Garden but there is no house shown on the 1841 map. Christopher Wright was here in 1851 noted as New St. by the census-takers and corroborated by the events reported in newspapers in 1871. He is noted as beer seller, with his wife Agnes and Mary Ann Ellison, servant. (In 1844 a Richard Ellison is living on the north side of New St.) The house has a rear door for access to New St. as well as a front door facing the main road. In 1871 Christopher was 75 and had lost his right arm but was running a beer house at the sign of The Bay Horse. Some navvies were drinking in the house when labourer Ellis Parker and his mate Tom arrived and joined in. At 11.00 pm Ellis and Tom refused to leave. Obviously in a drunken state Ellis became violent after hearing that a policeman was supposedly coming and Christopher was knocked down. He died a week later from his injuries. Ellis Parker was arrested when he was sleeping in a railway hut at Willy Wood and later sentenced to five years penal servitude. The house became a shoe shop at the front and selling-out of beer at the back (despite loss of the licence). Locally the place was called the Pig and Whistle.

Other tenants

The census returns are relevant but in those of 1841, 1861 and 1871 New Street is not named or numbered, only census schedule numbers which vary from census to census. Furthermore the census-takers did not locate individual houses and did not necessarily call at each house in order so we cannot be sure who was living in each house.

In 1851 in New St. there are 13 adult men and 23 adult women and 35 younger people (under 21) living in 16 households it is thought in 16 houses. This means an average of 4.4 persons in each house, the household size varying from 2 to 8. There are 22 persons working in the cotton mills (31% of the occupiers), 12 scholars, four shoemakers, four servants/housekeepers, two labourers, and one each of a school master, butcher, dress-maker, joiner, beer seller, hawker and farmer/grocer.

In 1881 there are 19 adult men, 20 adult women, 28 young people under 21 living in 17 households giving 4.2 people per house if there were 16 houses in occupation. The household size varied from 2 to 9. A reduced number of 10 were employed in the cotton mills (15% of all the occupiers), 9 scholars, 2 shoemakers (cordwainers), 3 servants/housekeepers, 8 general labourers, 3 dress-makers, 2 blacksmiths, 2 farmers, and one each of a grocer, joiner, tailor, grocer/shopman, butter dealer, limestone quarry man, paper mill engine driver/stoker and mason/bricksetter. A few were noted as lodgers or boarders.

Conclusion

The houses on both sides of New Street are small, where employed workers and tradesmen lived and lodged. Household sizes were variable from 2 to 10 in houses with two small upper bedrooms. Services of water, gas and electricity were not installed until the early 1900s. Coal was the normal fuel for all heating. The houses were rented until the mid-1900s for the most part.

One of the houses, no.1 New St., is considered to be centuries old and rebuilt in stone in the late 1600s or early 1700s. A set of houses owned by Robert Hill was in place by 1841 along the north side of New St. It appears that these were gradually replaced, nos. 2 to 5 first, then 6 and 7, by John and his son Robert Hill, then nos. 8 to 11 in 1887 – Jubilee Cottages built by grandson Robert Hill.

Few of the houses on the north side are now lived in permanently – the others are holiday cottages. These changes over 170 years or so have affected life in the village. The cotton mills closed, although converted to other business employing many fewer people. The quarries ceased to operate. Small farms amalgamated and converted to sheep grazing rather than local milk and butter production. In the early 2000s the primary school had to close for lack of pupils and the post office closed, leading to closure of the associated shop. Langcliffe lies too near Settle to maintain an independent village infrastructure.

Acknowledgements

Dr David Johnson and Alison Armstrong provided extra useful information about the mills, no. 1 and the brewhouse.

References

- [1] Foxcroft, H., 2004. *Water, Water everywhere*. NCHT Journal
- [2] Letter from Frank Peel to P J. Hudson, 2006.
- [3] Johnson, D.S., 2019. *The Green, Langcliffe: making sense of an enigmatic building*. NCHT Journal
- [4] North Yorkshire County Record Office. Giggleswick Tithe maps and Assessment ZUC 2
- [5] <https://postalheritage.wordpress.com/2011/08/16/house-numbering-in-the-uk/>
- [6] Slater, M. J., 2003. *Carrs in Langcliffe*. NCHT Journal
- [7] North Yorkshire County Record Office. ZXF 4/18

Appendix

Number 1

No. 1 has exterior 700 mm thick walls typical of the late 1600s and some re-used oak roof and ceiling timbers suggesting an earlier construction. It has blocked window openings in the west gable end showing that it was free-standing when built. The gable end shows signs of the house originally having been single storey with two small bays with smaller windows than now seen. Alison Armstrong and Dr David Johnson have carried out a detailed vernacular building survey.

Numbers 2 to 5

These four houses joined on to no.1 have a common roof in line with no.1 and perhaps are those drawn on the 1841 Tithe map. There are two shared chimney stacks with four flues, one flue for each house.

Numbers 6 and 7

At no. 6 there there is a change in angle of the building line at the rear to allow joining the end of no. 5 to the beginning of no.8. At the front the change in direction starts half-way along no.8. The plan of no.7 is not rectangular in shape and the roof construction is awkward. These two have another common chimney stack with two flues. The roof ridge beam is not lined up with that of no. 5 or the next set 8 to 11; they are clearly 'infills' of two houses between 5 and 8. (See the Google Earth plan view).

Numbers 8 to 11

The angle of the building line changes again and this set of four Jubilee Cottages was built in 1887 according to the dated plaque. No. 11 was extended some time later. The deeds for no.11 state that the end of no. 11 was built as a shop – the altered shop window opening can be seen. The address given in the deeds up to 1962 is no.1 New Street, but known locally as no.11! It may be that the Post Office renumbered houses starting from the village centre, as common elsewhere, after this time.

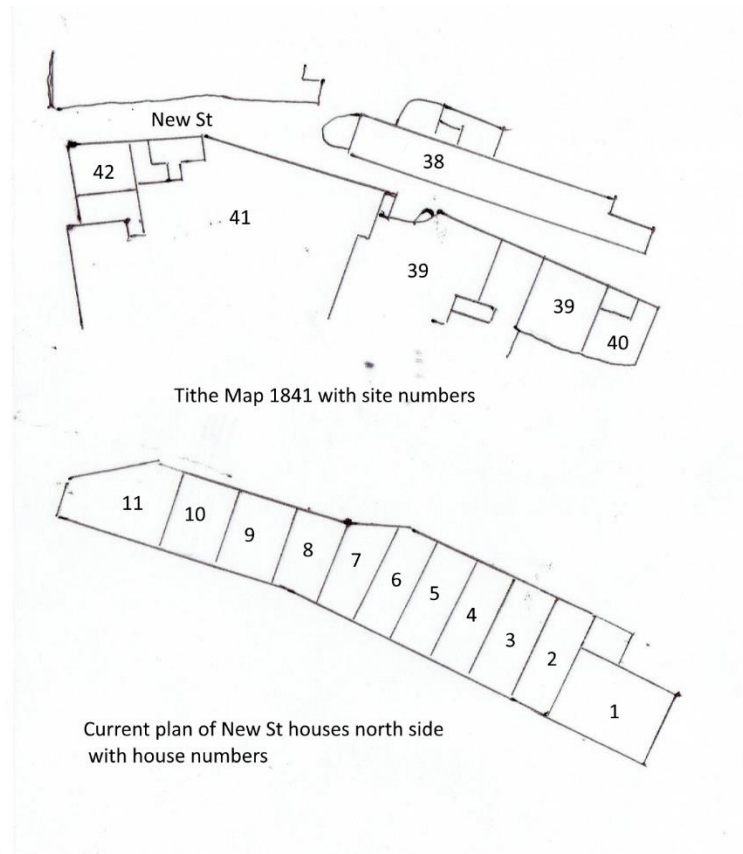


Figure 1 Plans of New Street houses



Figure 2 New Street village centre end showing no. 1 on right



Figure 3 New Street Stainforth Road end showing no.11



Figure 4 Plaque on Jubilee Cottages