

Robert's paper mill and its tall owners

The Roberts family were inspirational, benevolent businessmen who have remains in several of our local graveyards, most in unmarked graves. This was not due to lack of money! The old Paper Mill at Langcliffe [ph1], opposite Willow Wood, was originally a 17th century water driven corn mill but in 1793 was converted to a paper mill, using linen and hemp rags. **Hector Christie** bought the mill in 1861, after the mill dam had burst the year before, to add to his portfolio of the mills in Langcliffe and Settle. In 1880 Hector Christie leased it to **John Roberts** who later bought it outright. John Roberts' company ran the mill successfully, albeit with some disasters — there were fires in 1940 and 1996 both of which caused considerable damage. Despite this they managed to diversify to suit the market, producing board and corrugated card and expanded to use some of Kings Mill to make blank card for Jacquard loom weaving. In 1955 Roberts also bought High Mill at Langcliffe Place which is where we recognise it today. They exported all over the globe. In 1996 the business was taken over by **Robert Jubb** but still traded under the successful John Roberts name. In 2000 both the old Paper Mill and High Mill were working as paper mills but since then the old mill has been taken over by the stone processing works. Kings Mill ceased production in the late 1980s and became residential. Despite most of the 40 or so British paper mills being undercut by companies abroad, John Roberts' Paper Mill is still trading today with fine paper bearing the original watermark.

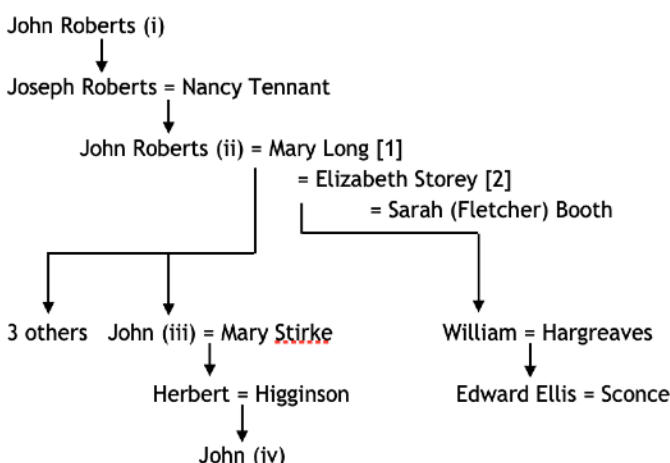


The Roberts family had been making paper in Westmorland and Cumbria for generations, with some sources dating their business back to the 1730s. **Joseph Roberts**, the son of the original 'John Roberts (i)', died in Ulverston in 1838, aged 65 *'after been confined by severe indisposition for upwards of two years, his approaching dissolution was marked by sincere penitence and pious resignation to the will of his Maker'* [1].

On Saturday last, at Ulverston, Mr. Joseph Roberts, paper-maker, aged 65—after been confined by severe indisposition upwards of two years, his approaching dissolution was marked by sincere penitence, and pious resignation to the will of his Maker.

Fortunately, son **John Roberts(ii)** was old enough to carry on the business. John(ii) had four sons and two daughters with his wife **Mary Long** but she died in 1837 after the birth of their youngest, a daughter **Mary Roberts**. A few years later in 1841, John married **Elizabeth Storey** of Penrith and they had another two sons. They moved to work in High Bradfield near Sheffield and that is where Elizabeth died, aged 45, in 1848. Their youngest son was just four. At the time of the following census return John had left six of his children with his 73 year old mum, **Nancy (Tennant) Roberts**, the eldest

John Roberts' family



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four grandsons working with her as paper makers. During the 1850s John set up business in Skipton, perhaps taking over the paper making business from **John Twisleton** who had died in 1852, aged 81. John Twisleton's memorial stone [ph3] in Raikes Road Burial Ground in Skipton tells us that he was a '*papermaker of Skipton, formerly of the Royal Navy*'. John Twisleton was born in Settle and is most likely related to our other **Twisleton** families. In 1854 John Roberts married his third wife, a widow **Sarah (Fletcher) Booth**, who was from Rochdale and she brought three children of her own with her. John's mother, Nancy, lived with them until she eventually died in 1866, aged 88 and was also buried in Raikes Road Burial Ground in Skipton. John joined her in 1875 when he died, aged 74 — the graveyard was only 'open' between 1846 and 1876 so he was just in time! They didn't have a memorial stone. Widow Sarah retired back to Lancashire with her children from her first marriage.



John and his first wife Mary had four sons, **Joseph, John(iii), Thomas** and **Nicholas**. When Thomas died in 1917, aged 87 his obituary described that, as well as living through the reigns of four monarchs, '*he was the last of four stalwart brothers, all 6ft high, who were associated with the paper making industry both at Skipton and Settle*'[2].

In fact Thomas and his brother Joseph gave up paper making when their father died and became bakers in Skipton. Thomas had married **Maria Fairburn** and they had six children but their son, **Thomas Roberts** (Jnr) died an infant, six months after great-grandmother Nancy and was also buried in Raikes Road Burial Ground, hopefully with her. Nicholas left paper making in Skipton to set up a Jacquard card business in Bradford.

MR. T. ROBERTS, SKIPTON.
The death took place yesterday morning of Mr. Thomas Roberts, of West House, Skipton, one of the founders of the paper-making industry in Yorkshire. He was the last of four stalwart brothers, all 6ft. high, who were associated with the paper-making industry of other days both at Skipton and Settle. He was one of Skipton's oldest and most respected residents, and had reached the advanced age of 87 years. His memories went back to the days of Cobden, and his experiences of the Corn Laws were vivid and interesting. He had lived in the reigns of four monarchs—William IV., Queen Victoria, Edward VII. and King George.

It was John and Mary's son, **John Roberts** (iii) who first made his mark in Settle. He started off his career running a paper mill at Kirkoswald near Penrith in partnership with **Thomas Parker**. In 1880 John took on the lease of the Langcliffe Paper Mill from Hector Christie and seemed to do an excellent job. Nine years later the Craven Herald reported that Mr Roberts gave his annual tea and entertainment to his workpeople (and their wives and sweethearts), neighbours and a few friends, '*all being kindly received and made heartily welcome*'[3]. Over 100 people sat down to a sumptuous tea. '*Since Mr Roberts occupied the mill nine years ago a steady increase in the business has been noticed under the able direction of Mr Roberts, and a once dilapidated place has grown into an important and prosperous concern, employing at least double the number of hands that it did when he took over. Extensions have been made and new machinery fitted up in almost every space available.*' There were parades and speeches and toasts and hearty cheers to the Roberts family for their good relations with workers, sterling worth and business qualities. John was an active Liberal, hosting several hustings at the mill for Liberal candidates[4]. He also supported the Primitive Methodist cause.

TREAT TO WORKPEOPLE.—Mr Roberts, of the Paper Mill, Langcliffe, on Saturday evening last gave his annual tea and entertainment to his workpeople, neighbours, and a few invited friends of the family; the wives and sweethearts of the workmen were also invited, one and all being kindly received and made heartily welcome. Since Mr

ANOTHER ENTHUSIASTIC MEETING AT LANGCLIFFE.

A large and enthusiastic meeting was held on Monday evening at Langcliffe mills, in favour of Mr. Roundell's candidature. The chair was occupied by Mr. Roberts, who, in opening the meeting, expressed the hope that every effort would be made to secure the triumphant return of the Liberal candidate.—Mr. T. Marsden proposed, and Mr.

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In 1866, aged 38 John had married **Mary Stirke**, a stonemason's daughter from Skipton, and they had five children. The three sons continued to run the mill after John's death in 1898, aged 70. John was buried in Langcliffe graveyard with a memorial stone which is now illegible and hidden under a tree, unfortunately. When Mary died in 1912, aged 71, she was buried in Langcliffe graveyard with her own memorial stone (hidden by summer foliage at the time of searching!).

Ever loving memory of Mary Roberts who died September 13th 1912, aged 71 years. Rest in the Lord.

John and Mary's daughter, **Mary Alice Roberts**, married into the highly respected Maudsley family. Her husband was **Joshua Maudsley**, a successful school inspector.

As well as being senior directors at Langcliffe Mills [ph4] John and Mary's sons **John Arthur Roberts** and **Frank Roberts** also ran Hurcot Paper Mill Kidderminster in Kidderminster. John Arthur lived in Worcestershire and Frank returned to Stackhouse in his later years where he died in 1938 aged 59. Two years later a fire of unknown cause destroyed the mill. *'The main building was completely gutted; the machinery and stocks of paper being destroyed. About 35 workpeople are, it is understood, employed by the firm.'* [5]



Eldest son, **Herbert Roberts** married **Olive Higginson**, 20 years his junior and they had a son, another **John Roberts**(iv) and a daughter **Mary Catherine Roberts**. Olive died in 1930, aged 44 when John(iv) was just 11. In 1937 Mary Catherine had married **Frederick Gray** who was originally from Durham and Frederick helped out at the Paper Mill. Herbert, son John and son-in-law Frederick were in charge at the time of the fire. Herbert died in 1940, aged 72 after being in ill health for some months — the fire won't have helped. Herbert was a keen Liberal, former vice president of Settle Cricket Club, and an active supporter of Langcliffe Institute. John was just 21 when his father died but stepped up to take over the business, helped by Frederick Gray who was 15 years older. John married **Margaret Wrathall** in 1946. Upon his death in 2007, aged 87, John's obituary in the *Craven Herald* explained that he still had the forward-looking business sense and benevolence of his ancestors. Like his father, John was cremated in Leeds after a service at St John's in Langcliffe.

Mr Roberts was educated at Giggleswick School and fought in North Africa and Italy during the Second World War. During his working life he was classed as a 'doer' and was particularly gifted in craftwork, carpentry and engineering. He was at his happiest when working with his hands and his expertise was constantly impressive in every task he tackled — from devising a machine to lay paving stones on his own patio to creating elaborate fancy dress outfits for his grandchildren. He could also be relied upon to roll up his sleeves and dismantle and repair any faulty machine at the mill.



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He was a private man, never enjoying limelight or attention by his own choice. However, he was always warm, polite and generous as many will fondly remember. He was also an exponent of recycling long before it became fashionable. Langcliffe Paper Mill used entirely waste paper to turn out its product.

Interestingly, during the heyday of Langcliffe Paper Mill, the paper machine itself was driven by a steam engine, the waste exhaust steam was then used to dry the paper as it wound back and forth between a number of heated rollers. It is remarkable that, in an age obsessed with ecology and recycling, an enterprise such as Langcliffe Paper Mill, which not only reduced the need to cut down trees for paper but supplied employment, put so much back into the community through the Swimming Pool paper collection which generated around £15,000 per year for Settle Pool [3].

There was another paper mill manager from the Roberts family in Langcliffe. John Roberts and his second wife, Elizabeth Storey had a son, **William Roberts**. From the time of the 1881 census onwards William lived in Stainforth and described his occupation as papermaker, working with older step-brother John. William married **Sarah Lindsay Hargreaves** of Wakefield and they had four children. William died in 1893, aged 50 and was buried in Stainforth graveyard, in an unmarked grave. After William died widow Sarah Lindsay joined several other women, including **Eliza Poole**, who ran boarding houses at PenyGent View. Then she became a cleaner and caretaker at Settle Girls School at Overdale on Duke Street, run by **Marie Auerbach** and **Esther Maria Pickard**. It's possible that William and Sarah Lindsay's daughters had been educated there. Sarah Lindsay was probably buried with her husband at Stainforth.

William and Sarah Lindsay's daughter **Lyly Edith Roberts** married **Christopher Harold Graham**, an engineer, descending from the successful grocery business in Settle. William and Sarah Lindsay's son **John William Roberts** became a carpenter, working for Brassingtons. He married **Nancy (Annie) Love** from Langcliffe who died in 1916, aged 40 when their only surviving child, **Ellen Lindsay Roberts**, was just six. She was buried in Langcliffe graveyard, later joined by John William and then a memorial stone was erected. The inscription also remembers two children who died in infancy.

In loving memory of John William Roberts, died Jan 5th 1938, aged 65 years. Also Annie his wife who died Dec 29th 1916, aged 42 years. Also of their children John and Lyly



In 1937, a year before John William died, Ellen Lindsay married the well known decorator and cellist **Clifford Haygarth** and they had long lives together. They are buried in the *New graveyard K56*.



Remembered with love, a treasured husband and father, Clifford Haygarth, 'Cellist, died 17th November 1975, aged 66 years. Also a dear wife and mother, Ellen Lindsay Haygarth, died 20th April in 1982, aged 71 years, sweethearts from childhood.

William and Sarah Lindsay's son **Edward Ellis Roberts** worked as a railway porter and then became an assistant teacher in Leeds. Then, in 1895, *'he was the first in England and second in the British Isles in open examination from over 2000 candidates, promoted by the Excise department of the Civil Service'* and worked as an inland revenue officer until 1902. However, despite his obvious talent Edward Ellis returned to teaching in Batley where he met and married **Edith Sconce**.

Settle Graveyard Project

In 1904 Edward Ellis was appointed as assistant headmaster of Settle Primary School, under the headmaster **Wilson Hewitt** and took over on a temporary basis when Mr Hewitt became ill in 1909. On 19 February 1911 Wilson Hewitt died after 'a sharp attack of influenza'. Wilson had been headmaster for 17 years and had achieved impressive inspection results, especially in religious education. Wilson was buried in Settle graveyard in plot *Old G45* with a simple inscription. His widow Mary (Robinson) Hewitt, and daughter Marjorie Mary Hewitt, moved away.



In dear and tender memory Wilson Hewitt

In May 1911 Edward Ellis Roberts was formally appointed as headmaster. At the time of the 1921 census Edward Ellis and Edith lived at the schoolhouse in Upper Settle with their only child, **Margaret Roberts**. Edward Ellis was listed as the headmaster of the school and unusually, but wonderfully, Edith was listed as the headmistress of Keasden School.

School records [ph2] show that there was a 'startling increase' in the headmaster's annual salary through Edward Ellis' tenure, no doubt a reflection of his success. Mr Hewitt had earned £175. By 1918 Edward Ellis received £200 (and also had assistants) but by 1921 his salary had increased to £392. Edward Ellis Roberts maintained an immaculate school log book [ph2]. It includes details of the school trip to see the solar eclipse in Giggleswick on 29 June 1927. 78 of the older children met at 4.20am and were taken by staff to an observation field behind Giggleswick Chapel, a prime position, to see the eclipse, with 23 seconds of total eclipse. Afterwards the children were sent home and were expected to be back at school at 9am. Edward Ellis doesn't report on attendance figures that day!

On 3 May 1935 the school celebrated the Silver Jubilee of George V — the actual jubilee date was Monday 6 May which was declared a bank holiday. Children were treated to a Jubilee Tea and given gifts from the council and the County Alderman, and the main room was

'appropriately and tastefully decorated by the staff at their own expense.' Gifts included fountain pens, propelling pencils and Penny Bank pass books. Are any of these still in existence today?

Professionally Edward Ellis was a Union man, being on the committee and President of the West Riding Teachers' Association and was secretary, treasurer and president of the Ingleborough Association of the National Union of Teachers. Outside school Edward Ellis was an 'ardent supporter of organised games' resulting in the school football team winning the Marlor Cup, and he was captain of the second XI of Settle Cricket Club. He was a forward in both Rugby and Northern Union Football (Rugby League). He was also secretary of the Settle Naturalist and

Mr. Hewitt in 1903 received £175.

A startling increase is noted in Mr. Roberts' time. In 1918 he was receiving £200 with an assistant £135 and a beginner £65, but in 1921 his salary increased to £392 and the assistant to £261.

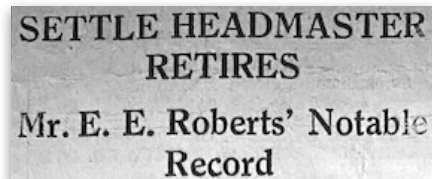
June 29th Seventy-eight children, from Stds IV to VIII, met at school at 4.20 am today and were taken by the full staff to open Pasture, an observation field behind Giggleswick Chapel, to witness a total eclipse of the sun at 6.23 am and of 23 secs duration. After a cloudy beginning an excellent view was obtained of the total eclipse, the corona, & the huge flames. The last vestige of eclipse vanished at 7.23 am when the children were sent home until the opening of school at 9 am.

May 3rd Staff sheets completed, in duplicate, and returned to the Divisional Clerk.
Jubilee Tea tickets distributed to children at noon.
Mr. J. Moore, as representative of the Managers visited school at 2.30 pm and distributed Silver Jubilee Gifts to the children, as follows:-
Provided by West Riding County Council:-
71 Fountain Pens to children of 11 years of age & upwards
91 Propelling Pencils to children under 11 years of age
Provided by County Alderman G. B. Lomas, Walker, J.P. and his friends:-
107 Yorkshire Penny Bank Pass-books containing deposit of one shilling.
Closed school at 4 pm. for special Royal Jubilee Holiday of two days.
The main room was appropriately and tastefully decorated by the staff at their own expense.

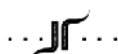
Settle Graveyard Project

Antiquarian Society, sectional leader of the Settle West Riding Special Constabulary and involved with the British Legion. Edward Ellis Roberts retired through ill health in October 1937, and the newspaper wrote about his '*notable record*' [ph2]. He was replaced at Settle School by **John William Carrington**.

Edith had died in 1925, aged 45 and was buried in another unmarked grave in Settle, *Old KX30*. After his retirement Edward Ellis Roberts moved out of the catchment area of Settle school to live in Long Preston. He died in April 1940, aged 65, and was buried in St Mary's graveyard in Long Preston in another unmarked plot, just inside the church gate. Daughter Margaret was 15 when her mother died. She graduated from Royal Holloway College, the women's college at London University and then records cease, presumably due to marriage.



SETTLE HEADMASTER
RETIRES
Mr. E. E. Roberts' Notable
Record



This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.

The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project). The 'Old Settle' family tree on Ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Bradford Daily Telegraph, 3 – Craven Herald, 4 – Nelson Chronicle, 5 – Bradford Observer

ph1 – photo credited to the Dales Community Archives website, mills collection, ph2 – with thanks to Settle Primary School for access to their archives and log books, ph3 – thanks to Jean Robinson of Raikes Road Burial Ground, ph4 – thanks to the Back in Settle facebook site, submitted by Paul Hammond