

# The story of St Elphin's Park before 1888

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## Introduction

I have researched to find out more about the occupants and building history of the estate now occupied by Audley St Elphin's Park Retirement Village. I used Parish records and census returns as well as Electoral Rolls, historical maps and other archives in the Matlock Record Office. Other evidence came from online searches in the British Newspaper Archives, Ancestry and FamilySearch websites and via Google searches. Sometimes hard evidence is available but, as is always the case when looking back into the past, I have had to make suppositions about some of the story. Please get in touch with me if you have evidence to improve this article and I shall add it, with acknowledgement, of course.



Openstreetmap 2018 <https://www.openstreetmap.org> showing the position of St.Elphin's Park Retirement Village (formerly the Grove) on the hill side of the A6 (Dale Road South).



OS 1884 Derbyshire XXIX 29 National Library of Scotland <https://maps.nls.uk/index.html>. This shows the position of the Grove estate. The present day A6 runs from NW to SE of the map. Grove Lane passes to Upper Hackney to the SE of the Grove. There are other large houses to the river side of the A6; from the north The Weldons (now known as Rotherwood), Hackney Lane House (now known as Normanhurst and the unlabelled building to the NW of The Rookery), The Rookery itself and The Lodge (now known as Darley Lodge). To the north of The Lodge on the hill side of the A6 is Darley House.

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## 1 Who built the first house and when?



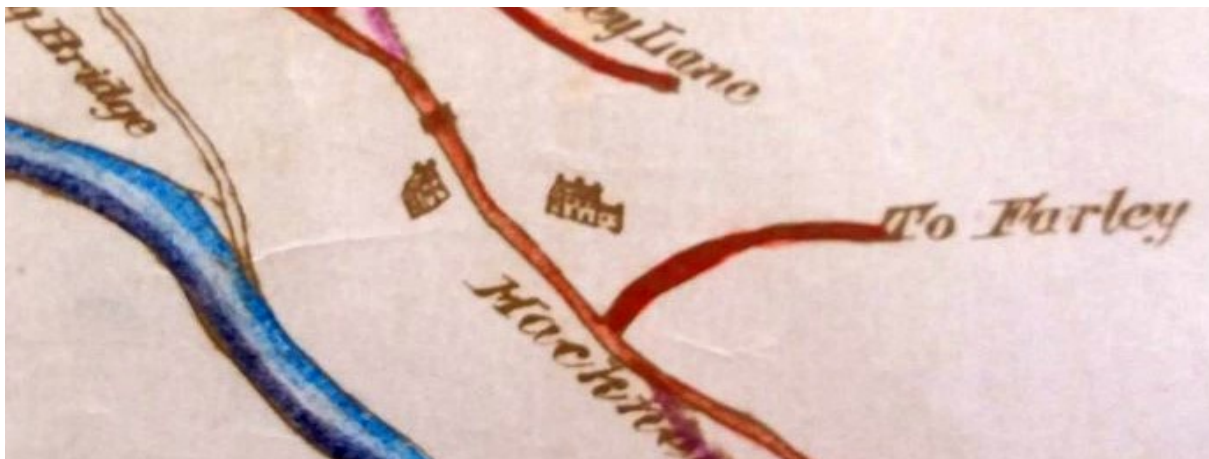
[D216/ES/1/3/11](#) Residential estate in Darley Dale known as The Grove. Auctioneer George Marsden at the New Bath Hotel, Matlock Bath, 31 May. Plan 1876.

This elevation faced the main road, Hackney Lane, now known as the A6.

The illustration above shows a large Georgian building and park called “The Grove”, “Darley Grove” or “The Grove Estate” which was on the site, before the present Victorian building and grounds. The first part of this article describes what is known about this older structure.

The map illustration below shows that there was a substantial building at this site by 1759. However it does not appear to have the symmetry associated with the Georgian core shown in the illustration. Atkinson states that stylistic evidence suggests that the central part of a Georgian building was in place from around 1780 (Atkinson 1, 2) with an “extension” to the rear. It may be that the building to the rear represents an even earlier house which was modernised with the addition of the central Georgian façade shown in the illustration.

Between the 1830s and 1840s it is believed that the Georgian building was expanded when the two wings, a verandah, conservatory and the pediment was added. (Further interesting details about the property history are given by Craven and Stanley, 1 and 2.)



D1053 Z/P1 Map of the roads from Rowsley and crossroads between Rowsley Bridge and the Cross post on Wirksworth Moor, covering Rowsley, Darley Dale, Matlock and Cromford. The road eventually forming the A6 runs from NW to SE and Grove Lane is labelled "To Farley". This map shows the area in the same orientation as the two maps above. There is a substantial building on the hill side of the A6 at the site of the Grove and a smaller house on the river side of the road in the position of The Weldons.

Given that the house was owned by rich men from at least 1778 to 1876 when it was demolished, I suspect that there were several periods of restructuring, modernisation and expansion which have passed undocumented. An advertisement selling the demolished materials from 1877 give a flavour of opulence of this developments.

**MATERIALS** of which "The Grove" is constructed (stone, slate, and few other items excepted), comprising upwards of 60 squares of grooved and tongued floor Boards and Joists, two handsome polished plate-glass oriel Windows, several other large-sized polished plate-glass Sash Windows, plate-glass French Casements and folding doors, about 50 sash and other Windows, 60 Panel Doors, and Casings complete, Gothic and other Staircases, about 400 running feet of Gothic and other Wainscoting, several panelled Ceilings, quantity of 3-inch Studding, a number of first-class Mahogany Bath and Lavatory Fittings, handsome Gothic Screen, fitted with large-sized plate-glass Mirrors; 1,000 square feet of Minton Tile Flooring, the whole of the Roof Woodwork, great weight of Sheet Lead and Lead Piping, quantity of Brass Taps, Galvanised Cisterns, Zinc and Metal Eaves, Gutters, and Down-Pipes; together with a number of excellent INTERNAL FITTINGS, including large-sized Book Shelves and Cupboards, Dressers, Venetian Blinds, Curtain Poles and Rings, Brass Picture Rods and Stair Rods, Bells and Fittings complete, Shelving; also a Conservatory, with complete Apparatus, Vinery, Greenhouse, and numerous other Effects.

Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald 7 February 1877

The stable block to the south west of the house may be the only part of the old Grove which remained after demolition. (Personal communication – Mark Askey- Derbyshire Dale District



Council). This was converted into St. Elphin's School chapel in 1916 and is now two semi-detached houses.

As to the owner who built the Georgian house, research has raised the following possibility. The owner Rev. John Wood, who is described in section 2 below, lived in Edensor Vicarage which had been commissioned by the Duke of Devonshire and built Joseph Pickford, the Derby architect, in 1777-9. Pickford also built Swanwick Hall for John Wood's brother Hugh in c. 1771 (Saunders). There are stylistic similarities between the Georgian building at the Grove and the original core of Swanwick Hall, particularly considering that the pediment on the Grove is believed to have been added in the 1820-30. It may be that the very early building from 1759 may have been redesigned in the Georgian style by Joseph Pickford for John Wood during his ownership.



Swanwick Hall, with Georgian central core, built by Joseph Pickford, now part of Swanwick Hall School. Compare this with the illustration above, "The south-west view of the Grove"

In summary, I have evidence for a building being in place on the site by 1759 but I have been unable to identify who built this house. There is circumstantial evidence that it might have been redesigned by Joseph Pickford for John Wood in the Georgian style in the 1770s with further modifications in the 1830s and 1840s.

## **2 Rev. John Wood – at least 1778 – to 1796**

Rev. John Wood (1723-1786) was from a long established Derbyshire family who had the good fortune to own land around Swanwick with mineral rights and they became rich through coal mining. The first records (land tax assessments) which name him as owner (or proprietor) date from 1778 but there is no evidence that he ever lived there. Indeed Darley born men, John Jepson and later his son George Jepson, occupied the estate during this period. John Wood died at Edensor in 1786 but his estate trustees continued to own the building until 1796, according to these tax records.

John Wood himself has been a difficult person to research as there are several prominent John Woods living in Derbyshire during this period, not least his nephew, Rev. John Wood. After disentangling the false lines of enquiry, evidence confirms that he was chaplain to the Duke of

Devonshire, like his nephew, and lived in the Rectory at Edensor which had been built by Joseph Pickford.

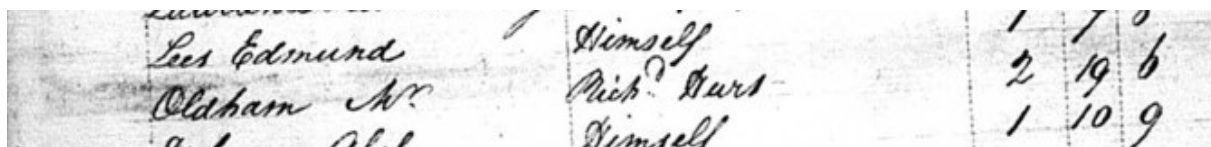
In a slightly different way, it has been difficult to find any more details about the Jepsons, the tenants, who were not from prominent Derbyshire landed gentry with a more public, recorded presence. Parish documents of this period give no extra information about their occupation other than to confirm the family births, marriages and deaths but old newspapers have no records of them, suggesting that for the most part they led quiet blameless lives.

### 3 Robert Mason 1797 – 1807

Land Tax Assessments show that Robert Mason was proprietor and occupier of the house for about 10 years. For similar reasons to the Jepsons there is very little in the record to give extra information about him except that he may have fallen on hard times. He had moved to Darley Hillside by 1816 when his daughter was born, when he is described as a labourer and his widow Ann is described as a pauper in the 1851 census.

### 4 Mr. Charles Hurt 1809 – 1812

During this period Charles Hurt was the occupier of the building and Mr Oldham was the proprietor. For reasons similar to those described above I know nothing more about Mr Oldham. However Mr Charles Hurt was from a prominent Derbyshire family whose lineage has a greater degree of documentation. He was a younger son of the rich lead mining Hurt family of Alderwasley Hall. His father Charles lived at Wirksworth and his mother Susannah was a daughter of Sir Richard Arkwright. Three of his children, Caroline, Richard Desaguliers and Sophia, were christened at Darley helping to confirm his occupation at the Grove.



Part of the Land Tax Assessments for Darley and Little Rowsley 1811

### 5 Mr. Charles Arkwright 1813 – 1818

The ownership during this period is successively Mr Oldham, and then his trustees followed by Francis Brindley. Research into these men has again been unsuccessful. And, as before, the tenant of the house was from a well-known family, the Arkwrights. Charles's father was Richard Arkwright junior who was a banker who sold many of his father's mills and used the proceeds to invest in houses and land. He owned Darley Hall in Darley Dale at this time and paid the largest amount of Land Tax in Darley; £13.14.11 compared with £2.19.6 for the Grove. Eventually Charles moved to Dunston Hall Staffordshire, which is believed to have been gifted to him by his father Richard. However on his death Charles was interred in St Mary's Church Cromford, where many of the Arkwright monuments are to be found.

This means that for a period of about 10 years the two successive tenants at the Grove were Sir Richard Arkwright's grandchildren.



Photograph of the memorial to Charles and Mary Arkwright, in St Helen's Church, Cromford.

## 6 Rev. John Gisborne 1818 – 1835

The next owner and occupier is most likely to have been the Rev. Gisborne but there is some conflicting evidence.

On the one hand there is a Gisborne family tree in Glover's History and Gazetteer of the County of Derbyshire 1833 which gives the family home as Hackney Lane House (known today as Normanhurst) on the other side of the A6 directly opposite the entrance to the Grove. In this period house names are very rarely given and very few of the Parish records, Parliamentary Registers or Directories attached to people in Hackney Lane give a more detailed entry ; this an unusual record.



D1978/A/P1/22/1 Parish of Darley St Helens Tithe Award map. The map has been annotated to show the position of the drying green in relation to the Grove and Hackney Lane House

There are two contrary pieces of evidence which come from documents produced in the next decades referring back to this time. One is the sale notice for the Grove in 1851 saying that it had been occupied by Rev Gisborne. The other is a newspaper article reporting the theft of a shirt from the drying green adjoining the house of John Gisborne. The Tithe map shows that there was a drying green adjoining the Grove to the north. This description could not relate to a house across the A6 as Hackney Lane House was.

**JOSEPH TOTHILL, stealing from a line in the drying-yard adjoining the dwelling-house of John Gisborne, Esq. in the parish of Darley, a fine linen frilled shirt. To be confined in the county gaol for twelve months, and kept to hard labor.**

Derby Mercury 21 July 1830



My assessment is that John Gisborne lived in the Grove and I believe that the Glover entry may have arisen when the word "House" was added to his address "Hackney Lane". However it may be that he owned both houses but this is less likely.

John Gisborne was prestigious enough to have an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography. He was a poet and his iconic poem "Reflections" was well known and written when he lived in Darley Dale. Similarly his diary from this period, published by his daughter after his death, contains his musings; as she said, "Nothing escaped his observant and picturesque eye". He was pious and congenial and did good works as a country gentleman in the local Parish. For example in 1830 he gave coal to the poor of Darley Dale. Also he was a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire. However, somewhat frustratingly, throughout his wordy diary he never names his house in Darley Dale.

His father, also John Gisborne, was a very prominent and wealthy Derby resident and his elder brother Rev. Thomas Gisborne was active in the abolition of slavery. As the two previous occupiers had been, he was another younger son in a prominent family. (Note 1)

## **7 John Alsop (3) 1836 – 1848**



Photographs downloaded from the katherinealsop family tree on Ancestry.co.uk and used with her permission.

In past references, the building of the Grove has been attributed to the three generations of John Alsop family, variously to 1790 or 1820. As argued above there is evidence for a building at the site from at least 1759. Further there is no evidence for this family living in Darley before 1836. It may be that this family did modify and extend the house during their ownership but it is clear that they are not responsible for its original erection.

There were three generations of John Alsops who were lead miners, lead merchants and barmasters who ran a lead smelter at Lea Bridge with a house next to the site. John Alsop (1) was originally from

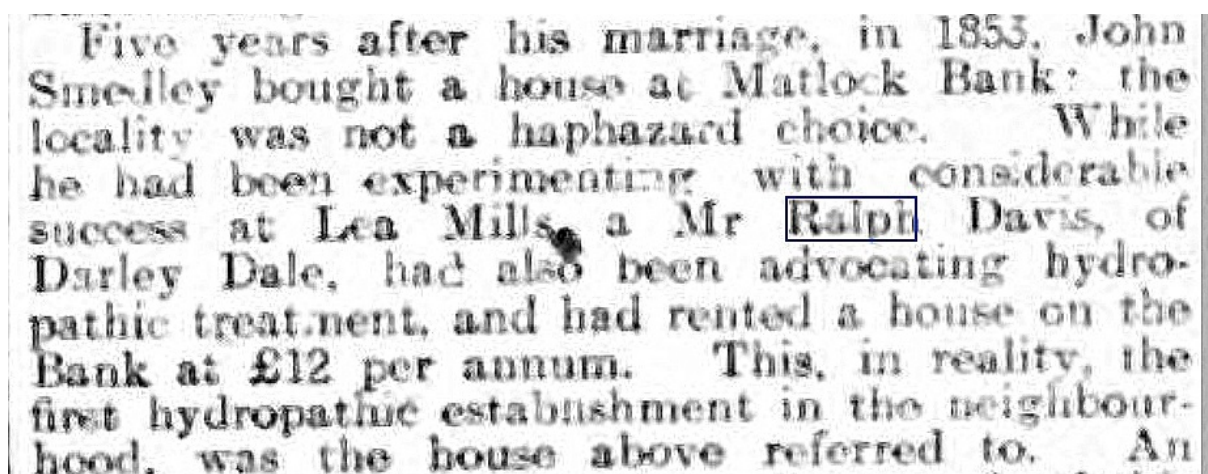
Lea Wood and was the clerk to Peter Nightingale of Lea Hurst. There was no church in Lea at this time and other local parish records show that the people of Lea used several other local churches for registration of births, marriages and deaths. Thankfully their place of abode is usually shown as Lea or Lea Bridge. John (1) was never recorded as living in Darley. As there were several people with the same name from several different families, the tracing of the correct family has had to be carefully confirmed. John Alsop (1) was buried in Darley in 1831 suggesting that the family had a developing connection with Darley Dale.

Furthermore there is no record to show that John Alsop (2) ever lived in Darley Dale either, although he was buried in Darley in 1834, like his father. Some expansion and modification of the Georgian building between the 1830s and 1840s which has been suggested by architectural experts is most likely to have been carried out by John Alsop (3). There are polling registers, the tithe map and parish registers which confirm that John Alsop (3) lived with there between 1836 and 1847 and seven of his children were christened at St Helen's Church, Darley. The 1841 census records John and his wife Mary with their three children living there without "live in" servants suggesting that they had another type of arrangement to help run the large house. One of his children died in Adelaide, Australia so using appropriate dates, this suggests that the family left the house and emigrated between May 1847 and August 1848.

It seems that this area continued to be in his thoughts as he named his house in Melbourne "Darley". It still exists today and is on the Heritage Council of Victoria Building list.

## **8 Dr Antoine Rischaneck and the first Hydropathic Establishment 1848 – 1851**

In December 1848 newspaper advertisements announced that Antoine Rischaneck had completed the conversion of The Grove into "a hydropathic establishment". Further evidence for the Hydro development came much later from a court case about the Sharder spring water when Atkins set up the second Hydropathic Establishment in 1889. The previous usage of the water by the Austrian Dr. "Reichnig" was used as evidence. The establishment of such a therapeutic hydro in Darley Dale predates the first one in Matlock set up by Ralph Davis on Matlock Bank. Several newspapers in the 1900s writing about this time, state that Ralph came from Darley Dale so it may be that Davis, who was a framework knitter in Matlock in the 1841 census, was trained by Dr. Rischaneck and moved back to Matlock to set up his own spa business.



Five years after his marriage, in 1853, John Smedley bought a house at Matlock Bank: the locality was not a haphazard choice. While he had been experimenting with considerable success at Lea Mills, a Mr **Ralph** Davis, of Darley Dale, had also been advocating hydropathic treatment, and had rented a house on the Bank at £12 per annum. This, in reality, the first hydropathic establishment in the neighbourhood, was the house above referred to. An

Derbyshire Times 29 July 1905 p.7

Dr. Rischaneck was a well-established Austrian physician who moved to Derbyshire from the Ben Rhydding Spa in Yorkshire via the Alderley Edge Spa in Cheshire. At this time The Grove had “accommodation for 20 patients” and “extensive pleasure grounds tastefully laid out and irrigated with springs of the purist soft water”. In fact Dr. Rischaneck installed piping from the Sharder Spring to “a large underground reservoir” to be sure of a continuous supply. This tank is described later in the sales particulars of 1876.

In the 1851 census there were seven visitors including three from Ireland and one from Germany, who were looked after by five indoor servants and the doctor. However this first attempt at using the building for a Hydro seems to have only lasted for, at the most, three years and in September 1851 Dr. Rischaneck ordered a sale of furniture and he returned to Yorkshire to practice. He had advertised the lease in the previous year as of interest to “medical gentlemen and others with the right and interest of the proprietor in the establishment and practice”. It may be that the first hydro in Darley Dale was financially insecure for most of its existence.

## **8 Reverend William Hiley Bathurst 1852 – 1863**

By 1852 Rev. William Hiley Bathurst was in occupation at Darley Grove. He was from a noble Gloucestershire family and was Rector at Barwick in Elmet, Yorkshire for 32 years. He resigned due to “conscientious scruples in relation to parts of the baptismal and burial services in the Book of Common Prayer” and moved to live at Darley Grove where he with his wife and children lived for about a decade. He is recorded in the directories of White 1857 and Harrison 1860 and the 1861 census. He is the author of many psalms and hymns but these were written prior to his residence in the Peak District so it cannot be that the scenery here inspired his works as has been suggested. (Reflections 1) There are poignant memorials in the grave yard of St Helen’s Church, Darley for his wife Mary Ann and his daughter Fanny. In 1863 he inherited the family estate, Lyngley Park in Gloucestershire and moved away from the area, (Atkinson 1) although he officiated at his son’s marriage at Darley to a local bride in 1864.

## **9 Robert Keith Pringle 1863 – 1876**

Rev. Bathurst sold the Grove in late 1863 to Robert Keith Pringle who was from Scotland and married in India while working for the East India Company Civil Service. He rose to be the chief secretary to the Government of Bombay. While living in Darley he was a Justice of the Peace and three of his children were born at the Grove. The census of 1871 shows that he kept a large establishment. There was his wife and seven children, together with four members of his extended family, who were all looked after by a governess, nurse and butler and five other servants. He appears in the local directories published by Kelly, 1864, Harrods, 1870 and the Post Office, 1876. The House was evidently in the hands of another very wealthy and influential man.

## **10 J.B. Greaves 1876 – 1877**

In 1876 the Pringle family retired to Cheltenham (Atkinson 1) and The Grove was sold to John Brook Greaves, a Sheffield solicitor and money lender for £10000 which equates to £1.2 million today



which is recorded on the sale document which still exists in the Matlock Record Office. It is possible to study the full extent of the magnificent property and to see a sketch of the large old building. However newspaper announcements from 1878 suggest that Greaves was on the road to bankruptcy at the time he owned The Grove so this might explain his short ownership. Another explanation is that Greaves was only acting for the next owner but by February 1877 it is clear that the old Grove building was owned by William James Roberts.

**MATERIALS of which "The Grove" is constructed (stone, slate, and few other items excepted), comprising upwards of 60 squares of grooved and tongued floor Boards and Joists, two handsome polished plate-glass oriel Windows, several other large-sized polished plate-glass Sash Windows, plate-glass French Casements and folding doors, about 50 sash and other Windows, 60 Panel Doors, and Casings complete, Gothic and other Staircases, about 400 running feet of Gothic and other Wainscoting, several panelled Ceilings, quantity of 3-inch Studding, a number of first-class Mahogany Bath and Lavatory Fittings, handsome Gothic Screen, fitted with large-sized plate-glass Mirrors; 1,000 square feet of Minton Tile Flooring, the whole of the Roof Woodwork, great weight of Sheet Lead and Lead Piping, quantity of Brass Taps, Galvanised Cisterns, Zinc and Metal Eaves, Gutters, and Down-Pipes; together with a number of excellent INTERNAL FITTINGS, including large-sized Book Shelves and Cupboards, Dressers, Venetian Blinds, Curtain Poles and Rings, Brass Picture Rods and Stair Rods, Bells and Fittings complete, Shelving; also a Conservatory, with complete Apparatus, Vinery, Greenhouse, and numerous other Effects.**

Derbyshire Times 17 February 1877

## 11 William James Roberts 1877 – 1888

In 1877 an advertisement appeared in the local press for the sale of the "whole of the building material" "as the mansion was about to be pulled down for re erection" on the instructions of William James Roberts.

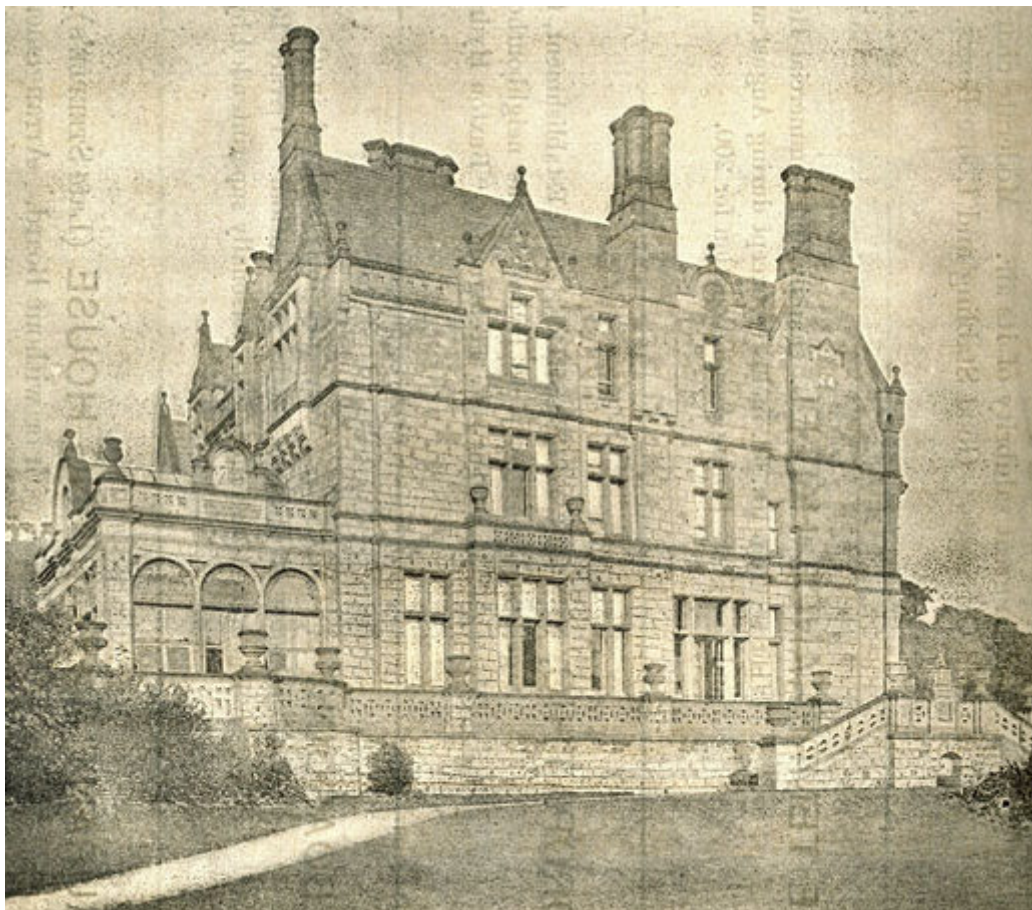
William James Roberts was born in Darley and became very rich as a brewer in Manchester. He is an example of a person from a local farming family who moved away and was able to thrive in the Victorian industrial boom period in Manchester. In later life he invested much of his wealth in the town of his birth. There have been two articles written by local people which include information about this philanthropic man (Atkinson (3) and in Reflections). I have checked some of the detail using internet sources and am able to add several interesting facts to William Robert's story.

William's maternal grandfather was Thomas Gregory who was the Parish Clerk of St Helen's Church, Darley Dale, and local school master and he was an important person in the 1700s and 1800s. Further information about him is given by Paulson. He held the posts for 44 years and died when he was 93 years old, a feat which was recorded with amazement in those times.

William's parents were George Roberts who came from a local farming family, and Martha Gregory, and all their children were baptised in St Helen's Church, Darley, including William James in 1806. He married Martha Brocksope, from Ashover in Darley Church in 1830 and moved to Manchester by 1831 where all his five girls were christened. According to the Manchester Poor Law Rent books he was brewing from this date and by 1840 he owned a brewery in Hulme. His businesses thrived and he soon owned several breweries with offices and stables, public houses and beer houses, hotels and domestic houses. His most notable business was the Crown Brewery in Hulme. All five of his children married brewers or wine merchants.

His family life was disrupted at some time between 1846 and 1861 because Martha his wife disappeared from the family census records and I presume that they became estranged. (For further information see note 2) It is certain that she will have had no influence on the building of the new house in Darley Dale, an idea which has been suggested elsewhere. (Reflections 1)

By 1869, Slater's Directory recorded William as living the Oaks Farm in Didsbury and in the 1871 census his daughter Fanny Bagshaw and her family were living on the estate nearby. This arrangement continued in the 1881 Didsbury census but by then William was also recorded as living at The Grove in Darley in Kelly's directory. In fact he had ownership rights in Darley Dale from 1876 when he first appeared on the Electoral Roll possibly through his connection to Abbey Farm or the Church Inn. (His maternal grandfather ran this inn in 1782 when he became the Parish Clerk.)



Darley Hydro in Kelly 1891

As shown in evidence given earlier, he demolished the old house in 1877 and erected the building which still stands today. His initials WR were carved into the newel posts of the grand staircase



which has been carefully restored by Audley, when St Elphin's Park was developed as a retirement village. There are three carved stone heads staring down into hall and stairs which may also date from this time. It is possibly that one or more of these represent the only glimpse of William Roberts's appearance that I have been able to find.



Newel post with initials W and R William Roberts, stone head in hallway, possibly of William Roberts.

On the night of the 1881 census The Grove was unoccupied rather than under construction. This suggests that he could have been living in the new house any time between 1877 and 1881. It was not uncommon for rich Mancunians to have considerable property both in the city and in Derbyshire and the Grove Estate was likely to have been his country home for possibly the last ten years of his life.

He died in 1888 a very wealthy man leaving the equivalent of £88 million. An article in Reflections states that this event was before the building work was complete. It seems more likely that the house was completed and occupied to a very substantial degree because there are very extensive house contents described in the sale advertisement of 1889 after his death. Also a date stone repositioned at the back of the building during the conversion of St Elphin's School into St. Elphin's Park Retirement Village shows a date of 1878. (Note 3)

It has been suggested that his children were uninterested in living in Darley Dale. (Reflections 1) However there is evidence to suggest that his daughter Fanny and her husband Joseph Bagshaw owned Normanhurst from before 1882. (Note 4) In a similar way to William, they had a town house in Didsbury and a country house in Darley which was conveniently situated over the road from Fanny's father in The Grove. In the 1891 census Fanny was recorded living there with three of her children. It was also the place where she died, although she was buried in Didsbury with her husband. (Note 5)

From as early as 1865 William Roberts used his wealth to benefit his old home Parish. He made improvements to St Helen's Church and churchyard in 1877, at the same time as he bought The



Grove and he used workmen from the house to carry out these changes. A newspaper article announcing the reopening of the church listed the improvements paid for by William Roberts. A major one was to pay for much needed land to extend the churchyard and its enclosing wall and gates. This ensured that there was room for his own burial in Darley Dale. Both Sir Joseph and Lady Louisa Whitworth are buried in this new churchyard nearly.



William Robert's gravestone in the new graveyard, on land donated by William Roberts, with the Whitworth graves in the background.

St Helen's Church, showing the clocks, gate and post, donated by William Roberts.

He also paid for new roofing, damp proof flooring, lighting, tiling and ironwork as well as for a new tower clock with three faces. Furthermore the church wardens must have been pleased that he paid all their outstanding liabilities. The ironwork fence to protect the "venerable" yew tree in the church yard and the restoring of a Norman font to its correct position by the main church door have also been attributed to him. In fact these were carried out at the same time but at the expense of Charles Lister who was Sir Joseph Whitworth's agent and the churchwarden who oversaw the refurbishment.

After William Robert's death in 1888 the Grove estate was sold to William Atkins and it was refurbished as a hydropathic establishment and renamed the Darley Dale Hydro and a new era of The Grove's history had begun.

## Notes

Note 1. By coincidence, John Gisbourne senior commissioned Joseph Pickford to build St Helen's House, Derby in 1766-7 and John Gisbourne junior was born there.

Note 2. I have recently found evidence that Martha Roberts had a son, James, who was born in 1842 at Press a very small hamlet near Ashover, which suggests that she returned to her mother's farm to

give birth. William Roberts is given as the father on the birth registration and given as James on the parish baptism record. Martha (mistranscribed as Mary) and James were living together in the 1861 Census of Chorlton upon Medlock around the corner from the William's home. In later censuses James's occupation is given as merchant's or brewer's clerk which suggests that he may have been employed by William. He lived in comparatively comfortable circumstances and left £250,000, adjusted for inflation, when he died.

I have found no evidence to explain why James, as William's only son, did not seem to be recognised as such, and did not play a greater part in running of the brewery. He did not live in the luxury afforded to William's five daughters and he did not inherit the business. The circumstances of his birth and the subsequent estrangement of William and his mother suggest that he may have had another father. There was likely to have been a short period of reconciliation between William and Martha because Fanny, the youngest child, was born in 1846 and she benefitted from her father's largess. Unfortunately the 1851 census record for the family has been lost due to water damage and this might have provided a clue to solving this mystery.

Note 3. The date stone on 1878, which may relate to the completion of William Robert's house or alternatively to the foundation of the building, has been repositioned with two other sculptured stones "A" and "W". It is to be assumed that these relate to William Atkins who owned The Grove after William Roberts and made several alterations to the building and have been transposed during this recent work.



Note 4. After Fanny died in 1891 the contents of Normanhurst were advertised by the Trustees of the estate of Joseph Bagshaw who had died in 1882. In the marriage announcement of Joseph and



Fanny's daughter, Flora, in 1891 Joseph is described as "of Manchester and Normanhurst, Darley Dale"

Note 5. Normanhurst was altered and enlarged in 1888. (Ward) Could it be that Joseph Bagshaw owned Normanhurst from before his death in 1881 and that Fanny carried out these changes to the old house? The alterations of 1888 have been attributed to Arthur Stanley Marsden-Stanley but I can find no evidence for his ownership before 1895.

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