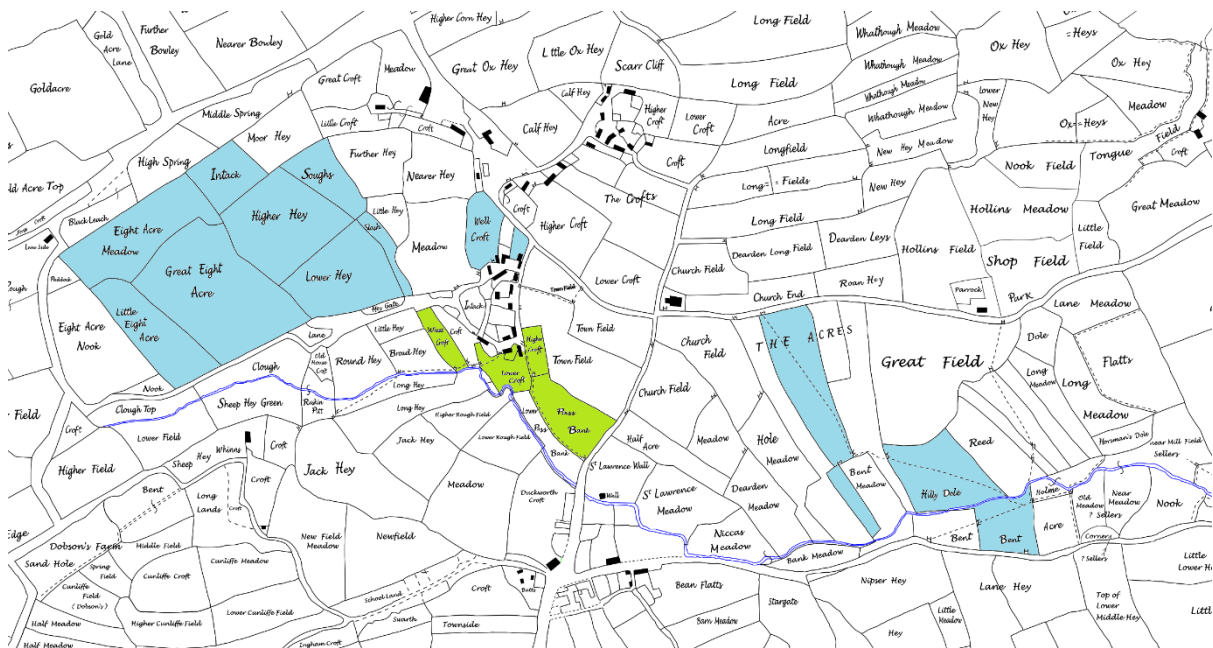


SMITH FAMILY OF GREAT HARWOOD – HARRISON’S AND LOWERFOLD

Great Harwood probably started as an area of scattered settlements; Lower Fold was one such area and was likely to have been settled early in the town’s history. By the time records are available in the 17th century up to six farms may have been associated with the area. There are maps and surveys which help to identify these farms and the people who lived and farmed there. However, it is difficult to be sure which buildings are associated with particular farms, only educated guesses can be made.

According to the register of recusants compiled in 1767, John Smith and his family, progenitors of many of the Smiths of Great Harwood, came to the town twenty years previously in 1747. However, there is a record in 1741 for John Smith of Clayton le Moors wishing to settle in Great Harwood, and it is possible this is the same John Smith. John himself isn’t included on the register, only his wife Jennet and children, Thomas, John, Isabella and Elizabeth. In 1754 he leased Harrison’s tenement, and the rental states that he was a tailor. This farm was in Lower Town with its fields to the south of Queen Street, scattered quite widely and not close to the farm house. It was over twenty acres and the yearly rent was £18.

John’s son Thomas married Jennet Giles in 1765 and they had a large family, but the two children who are mostly associated with Lowerfold were John, who married Ellen Holden and Henry, who married Ann Mercer. It isn’t known exactly when Thomas and Jennet took up residence in Lowerfold, but in 1782 they appear in the Land Tax records as the tenant of Barlow’s under Thomas Hindle, proprietor, and also another tenement at Lowerfold under Lawrence Hindle proprietor, this was known as Old Jackey’s. Barlow’s was the largest farm in Lowerfold, with fields mainly to the north west of the settlement.



Based on a plan of 1763. The fields associated with Barlow’s are in blue and ‘Old Jackey’s’ in green.

In 1803 sale particulars for Hesketh lands show that Thomas Hindle held Barlow's and the building and fields associated with the farm were:

Houses, outhousing and gardens

Well Croft

Acres

Hill

Hilly Dole

Bent

Slash

Lower Hey

Higher Hey

Soughs

Intack

Great Eight Acre

Little Eight Acre

Eight Acre Meadow

The whole being 26 acres and 15 perches customary acres or 42 statutory acres.

Thomas Smith was subletting Barlow's from Thomas Hindle, but the sale particulars also show that he was the tenant at Old Jackey's at Lowerfold:

House, outbuildings and garden

Lower Croft

Higher Croft

Wheat Croft

Pass Bank

Thomas died in 1830 aged eighty-four but may have retired some time before then. His son Henry was the tenant at Barlow's by 1818, but a William Tomlinson was the tenant for a few years before then. This information comes from a lease register of the Trappes-Lomax family who by this time had bought much of the town. The rent for Barlow's in 1818 was £90 a year, but the 1820s were difficult times in Great Harwood and the rent fell a little, and some payments were made in goods rather than cash, however all payments were met. There are some intriguing extra payments entered for 'house', 'Grey Horse', 'rent to Bridge', 'Back of Bowley' and 'Heys'.

In the same register 'Little' John Smith is recorded as being at Lowerfold, with 'Widow' and then 'Thomas' being inserted over his name, showing the change of tenant. This tenancy ran from 1822 – 1836 and seems to have been for a cottage the rent being £4 4s per year. The last payment was made by Henry Smith. This John Smith is almost certainly the John born in 1769 who married Ellen Holden. They had several children including Thomas born in 1797 and Henry born in 1802; it could be the brother of Thomas paying the last rent charge, or his uncle Henry, John having died in 1825.

Thomas, son of John and Ellen married Elizabeth, or Betty Aspinall in 1818, but the first mention of them in the register is in 1836. It is for a cottage rent of £2 12s, and ran from 1836 to 1847, the latter year being the end of this register. Thomas died in 1839 and 'now Betty Smith' is inserted over Thomas in the register.

The reason why Henry Smith was making payments in respect of the Grey Horse is explained when his son Thomas is described as an innkeeper and of Cliff when he married Elizabeth Loynd in 1837.

The Grey Horse was the first building at Cliff after Lowerfold. Thomas died in 1839 aged only 21, with his son Thomas being born posthumously that year. Betty herself died in 1840, having made just one payment in her own name for the Grey Horse. Her father, George Loynd, took the pub from 1840 to 1843 when Lawrence Catterall took the tenancy.

The 1841 census shows eleven dwellings at Lowerfold, four of which are occupied by Smiths. There is something known as the 'enumerator's walk', a route, not set in stone but usually the most sensible and easiest way to visit all the places in a schedule. The household before the first entry for Lowerfold in the 1841 census is the Grey Horse at Cliff and the household after Lowerfold is Church Lane. At that time the only houses on Church Lane, or Church Street as it is now called, were on either side to the south of where Haydock Square now stands. It seems sensible to conclude that the enumerator would enter Lowerfold at the northern end and work towards the southern end. Lowerfold isn't linear so it isn't possible to be more precise. That in mind, three households are recorded before that of Henry Smith aged about forty and a weaver, this is the son of John and Ellen. The next household is that of Ann Smith aged about twenty and listed as farmer, this is the daughter of Henry and Ann Mercer. Living with Ann is Robert Mercer aged fifty; this is her uncle and brother of her mother Ann Mercer; Henry Smith her father, although still the tenant of Barlow's, which this address must be, is living on Church Lane. Next to Ann is Alice Smith and her family. Born Alice Kemp she had married Joseph Smith in 1828, he being born in 1805 the son of Henry and Ann. He died in 1840.

Next listed at Lowerfold is another farmer, James Brunton. The lease register has James as being in Lower Town, but it is clear he has the lands formerly held by the Mercer family for very many years (since before 1675) as in 1844 part of his land is taken for the building of Lawrence Catteralls factory. This was what became the first true cotton factory in the town, Bank Mill on Church Street, and was built on part of Lower Pass Bank, part of the Mercer Lowerfold holding.

Listed after James Brunton is Betty Smith aged forty, cotton weaver, and her family. This is the widow of Thomas Smith the son of John and Ellen.

From the above information it seems very likely that buildings and houses associated with the two farms rented by Thomas Smith, and later Henry, are those at the very north end of the hamlet and those at the very south end of the hamlet. The Mercer building would be those in between, abutting onto what is now Lowerfold Road and including the large barn demolished in the 1970s and which had a datestone with 'TM 1752', which most probably relates to the Mercer family.

Another Trappes-Lomax lease register records rentals at Lowerfold after 1847 and shows that Henry Smith continued to rent Barlows until March 1855 when it passed to Braithwaites. The 1851 census shows Henry and his wife Ann living now at Lowerfold, a farmer of twenty-eight acres employing one man. They are the only Smiths now remaining in the hamlet, but his daughter Ann is still there but now married to Thomas Boardman, who is listed as a cotton warper. Ann, Henry's wife, died in 1854 so perhaps that was the reason Henry relinquished the lease on Barlows.

Henry and Ann's daughters Jane, Ann and Margaret all married Boardman men. Ann and Margaret married two brothers, and Jane had married a John Boardman who was probably the uncle of these two men. The family of Henry Smith and Ann came to have extensive interests in public houses in the town: their daughter Mary married James Worden, innkeeper at the Dog and Otter; when Jane's husband John Boardman died she married Thomas Cunliffe who was innkeeper at the Cross Axes; Thomas and Betty were at the Grey Horse for a short time before they both died; Ann's husband Thomas Boardman died and she married Joseph Howard innkeeper at Cock Bridge. John Boardman and Margaret however, remained farmers taking over what had been perhaps the largest and most

prosperous farm in the town, what had been known variously as Cockshutts and Bentleys and was located on the Town Gate.

In his will made in 1862 Henry mentions his six surviving children, Jonathan Smith, Robert Smith, Mary Worden, Jennet Cunliffe, Ann Howard, Peggy Boardman and Thomas Smith son of his late son Thomas.

What became of Harrisons tenement the original holding of the first John Smith and Jenet his wife? When John Smith made his will in 1800 he left his leasehold tenement in Great Harwood to John Smith his son; this was Harrisons. Richard Cottam of Whalley had purchased the farm, with others, from the estate of Alexander Nowell in 1771 and Cottam either built a new farm house or substantially rebuilt the old house as the building has a datestone showing RC 1788. There are few records available after this until RG Lomax bought it in 1822, but those available show that a John Smith was either tenant or sub-tenant at Harrisons. From 1822 the lease register entries show a John Smith there to 1848, when his death is recorded in the parish register, but with a birth date of about 1775, so not the son of the first John Smith, but possibly a grandson. After his death Robert Smith, cotton manufacturer, son of Henry and Ann took the lease. He lived there until 1866 when he moved to Spring Villa. A license was acquired to change the farm house into a public house by Daniel Thwaites - and the Walmesley Arms came into being.