

111 and 113 Westgate



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Wakefield Historical Society welcomes all those interested and curious about the remarkable history of Wakefield and beyond. We encourage research, provide talks, publish books, and are happy to respond to historical enquiries.

Website: www.wakefieldhistoricalsociety.org.uk

The Upper Westgate Heritage Action Zone (HAZ).

Wakefield Council and Historic England are investing nearly £4 million pounds in 2020-2024 to regenerate historic buildings in the Upper Westgate Conservation Area to bring new life and make it flourish again. As their contribution to the project, members of Wakefield Historical Society are researching the buildings and yards and publishing their stories.

111 and 113 Westgate



111 and 115 from the yard behind.

As 111 and 113 Westgate occupy the same building it seems appropriate that both addresses are included in this one account.

The 1793/4 Enclosure map clearly shows three dwelling houses on the site on plot 155 (see Appendix 1). The properties were part of the

estate of the late John Clark and consisted of several houses and garden with an area of 2 perch and 12 roods. (See Appendix 3). They were freehold properties. He also owned plot 156 at the rear which is described as a croft of 1 acre and 18 roods. Sometime between 1823 and 1850 the plot was split into two and it was probably during this period that the present building spanning the yard entrance was constructed.

The archway which separates the ground floors of 111 from 113 leads to a yard, now known as Holt's Yard, but it has also been recorded as Rayner's Yard, for example on the 1823 map of the town by J Walker (See Appendix 2).

Researching properties on Westgate has had its challenges. When the street was constructed, there was no numbering on the early censuses, although there was always the Elephant and Castle Pub as a marker. Confusion can arise as the enumerator did not always walk the street in the same direction on every occasion. I cannot pin down exactly when numbers were introduced, but on the 1888 Ordnance Survey Map there was a numbering system in place and these houses were at one time classed as numbers 120 and 122 Westgate. The current numbering was not introduced until 1890¹. Therefore, I have only detailed families and businesses that I know occupied the buildings and therefore there may be some gaps, which will need to be filled later if concrete evidence emerges.

111 Westgate

The 1841 census lists the occupier of this side of the building as John Clay, aged 40, a worsted manufacturer, with Ann, who is presumably his wife, aged 35, Ann Senior, aged 15, and son, Charles, aged 10. The household includes a female servant Sarah Wilby who is 15. John is

¹ Wakefield Corporation Minutes 3.3.1890 pg. 172

noted in the newspapers as being one of the signatories calling for a railway line from Wakefield to Lincoln.² By 1844 he was described as a malster when he was called to serve on the Grand Jury of Wakefield Sessions.³

The 1851 map (see appendix 2) clearly shows the property with the outbuildings at the rear. In the 1851 census 111 is occupied by Benjamin Clough, aged 59 and a Wesleyan minister, along with his second wife Elizabeth, aged 51, and two sons, John U and George H, both aged 15 (which might suggest they are twins). They also had a servant, Jane Harrison, aged 26. Benjamin was born in Bradford, Elizabeth at Bawtry, but the boys were born in Colombo Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

Benjamin went to Ceylon in 1813 as a missionary, where he created numerous schools and churches and published a Singhalese-English Dictionary. His first wife Margaret died in childbirth. He returned to England in 1837 and worked in home circuits, which must be when he had a short residency in Wakefield as he moved to Southwark, Kent in 1852 and died there in April 1853.⁴

This leaves a gap, which I have been unable to fill, but on the 1861 census the house is occupied by William Holt who is registered as a retired butcher, aged 61. He is living with his brother, Thomas Bird Holt, aged 47, a butcher, with their sister Selina Bird, aged 40, acting as housekeeper along with servant Jane Schofield aged 23. By 1871 the brothers are still living on the premises, but they now have a housekeeper Sarah Broadhead, aged 37. Thomas registers that he has 'no occupation' and there is no indication that the house was used as a butcher's shop, but it's possible the outbuildings could have housed a slaughterhouse. The family's occupation of the house and yard is

² Wakefield and West Riding Herald 19.4.1844

³ Wakefield and West Riding Herald 13.9 1844

⁴ <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/37673518-a23d-321a-ae77-ccacdc9d8752?component=f8555a7d-6417-3b22-9de1-050e931445e5>

likely to be the reason why the yard was renamed Holt's Yard from the previous Rayner's Yard.

1881 finds George Scott in residence. He is a 67-year-old foreman in a worsted factory living with his wife Margaret, aged 60, and their daughter Marian J, a 25-year-old dressmaker. There is also Margaret's mother, Margaret Sunter, aged 90, living with them. 1887 sees an entry in Kemp's Directory of a Geo. Scott of Scott & Besley dressmakers occupying the address. Geo. Scott was in his seventies by then but his daughter, Marian, is listed as a dressmaker, and may have worked in the partnership.

By 1891 the current numbering system is in place and 70-year-old widow, Margaret Scott, is occupying the property along with her son-in-law John Longstaff, aged 32, and daughter Marian Longstaff, aged 35, and their children Stella, aged 3 and Doris aged 1. Also living there is her sister Elizabeth Gunter, a retired schoolmistress aged 68. John works as a stationer and printer. It is interesting to note that Elizabeth Gunter and John were born in Westmoreland and John and Marian's daughter Stella was also born in Appleby, Westmoreland, so the family moved to Wakefield around 1889 as Doris is registered as born in Wakefield.

The reason for the move could be explained in the Penrith Observer dated 15 May 1888 when a notice was placed informing readers of the liquidation of the egg and butter merchant's business John had run with his father Joseph. This loss of occupation seems to have brought the young family down to Wakefield to live with mother-in-law Margaret Scott .

By the 1901 census life has changed for the Longstaff family. Mother Margaret Scott and sister Elizabeth Gunter are no longer listed, probably deceased along with John Longstaff. Marian is now a 45-year-old widow, still living with her daughters Stella and Doris along with servant Sarah White. Marian is making a living as a dressmaker.

In 1899 the Wakefield & West Riding Herald noted that 11 year old Stella of the Wesleyan School had won a Storie Scholarship.⁵ In 1907 Doris had passed her exam in model drawing at college⁶. The 1911 census has the family living at 11 Bank Street and Doris is now a dressmaker along with her mother.

An entry in the Wakefield Corporation minutes in 1898⁷ noted that the drains in the cellars of 111 Westgate were '*in such a state as to be a nuisance*'. At the time the premises were owned by a William Smith and were occupied by Fredrick Benjamin Crossley. This raises questions as the Longstaffs are registered on the 1901 census as living there.

In March 1902 the portfolio of properties was sold to Charles Hofmann by millowner George Stubley⁸. A road widening scheme on Drury Lane meant that the Hofmann's business and home across the road would be demolished so they took the opportunity to purchase the properties and land offered across Westgate by Mr George Stubley. No purchase price is recorded.

The purchase consists of no. 111 plus two other dwellings (presumably nos. 113 and 115 as all three properties are owned by the family today), stable, coach house, outbuildings and garden occupied by Mr Longstaff (this is strange as he does not appear on the 1901 census), Miss Mellor and James Ward. Also purchased is a malt kiln (this is clearly marked on the 1888 OS Map) with cottage, yard (this must be in Holt's Yard) and outbuildings occupied by Messrs Howarth brothers. In addition, there was land at the back covering 2741 sq. yds. occupied by Charles Clifton. The whole purchase amounted to 5,700 sq. yds.

⁵ Wakefield & West Riding Herald 30.9.1899.

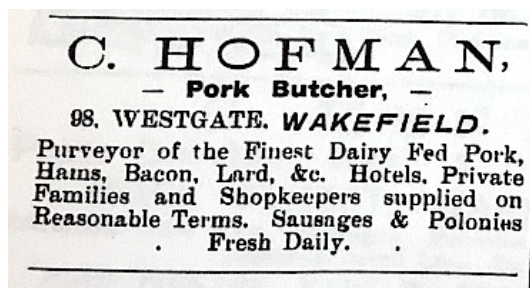
⁶ Wakefield & West Riding Herald 7.9.1907

⁷ Wakefield Corporation Minutes 1898-99 pg. 40

⁸West Yorkshire Archive Deed Index vol.10 pg.908 no.438

Bound north by Westgate; south by the railway line; east by Mr J Hesling and others, and west by the property of Dr Wright.

Charles Hofmann was born in Halle, nr Stuttgart and arrived in England in 1896. He married Sophia Schumm in April of that year, in Goole, before moving to Wakefield where they set up business and lived at



98-100 Westgate, which was near the corner of Drury Lane. The advertisement below from Bennet's 1898⁹ Business Directory shows the produce on offer.

Descendant David Hofmann related a family story that Charles Hofmann thought he had embarked on a voyage to America and when he arrived at Goole was told he had arrived in New York. This has amused the family for generations, but as Charles seemed an intelligent enterprising, hardworking man it is difficult to believe he mistook Goole for New York! He did however, emigrate because of the primogenitary laws in Germany, which meant he had to either work for his older brother or establish his own business. The rapid industrial expansion in Britain opened up opportunities for butchers, such as Charles, bringing with them traditional family recipes, to offer convenience foodstuffs at economical prices for the workers.

In April 1902 Simpson & Richardson deposited plans with Wakefield Corporation for '*shop fronts to two houses at Westgate for Mr C Hofmann*'.¹⁰ This allowed the premises to be converted into the butcher's shop frontage we see today. The Corporation seemed keen

⁹ Bennet's Business Directory 1898

¹⁰ Wakefield Corporation General Works Committee 14.4.1902 pg. 227

The photograph below shows Charles and Sophia outside their new premises and although it is not dated it must have been taken shortly after their move in 1902 as the young girl is their daughter, Elsie, who looks around 4 years old and was born in 1897 in Wakefield. Son Harry, who was born in 1900, is holding the dog, the other child is not known.



With kind permission of the Hoffman family

The 1911 census details the property as having eight rooms. Charles, Sophia, Elsie and Harry share the house with mother-in-law Christine Schumm aged 63 plus August Feuchter, a German citizen aged 20 and Robert Swinton aged 17, both assistant pork butchers. There were also two domestic servants: Annie Reiter, a German citizen aged 22 and Lizzie Grundy aged 16.



With kind permission of the Hofmann family

The photograph above shows Charles and Sophia, along with Elsie and Harry at the rear of their shop. They look as though they are on their way to church. They used a horse and cart for their deliveries, but this rig looks too fine to be transporting meat products, so they must have had another one for this purpose.

The outbreak of World War One caused a great deal of anti-German feeling, especially after the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915. Charles avoided internment because he was now a naturalised citizen, but he still suffered from boycotts and had his windows smashed. Things improved when rationing was introduced and customers had to nominate a particular grocer and butcher for their goods. Charles died in 1919 aged only 49, leaving his wife Sophia to run the business until Harry was old enough to take over. Probate showed his effects amounted to £5170 11s. 0d.

Harry had two sons John and Frank. John joined Harry in the business, whilst Frank joined the RAF. After leaving the RAF Frank developed

the bakery side of the business, whilst John concentrated on the butchery.



This photograph shows Sophia on the right. Note the change of sign above the shop but Charles Hoffman's name is still at the bottom of the window.

Photograph with kind permission of the Hoffman family

The 1939 war census shows that Harry was now a master butcher and serving in the Auxiliary Fire Service. He married Flossie M in 1927 and they lived on the premises with mother Sophia, housekeeper Rachael Reid, and domestic servant Margaret Mount.

They began to expand the business with the building of a new slaughterhouse¹². The plans show the property still had a garden and field at the side and rear. Mrs John Hofmann (Betty), who lived at the

¹²WWD9/Box148 WMDC Plan No. 18966 (1959)

address from 1954 until 1975 recalls how she enjoyed looking after the garden.

The plans for the slaughterhouse were submitted on 22 May 1959 and were initially not approved after the medical officer for health wrote a memo to the city engineer advising of 13 alterations that were needed to the plan to bring it up to regulations. These alterations were carried out resulting in the building of a of 3,600 sq. ft. single storey extension with red brick walls, concrete floors and asbestos roof. The slaughterhouse ceased operating when EU regulations became prohibitive for a small business.

Harry died in 1969 aged 50, leaving sons John and Frank to take over the business.

A new bakery, covering 1900 sq. Ft. was installed in 1970¹³ at a cost of £8000.00.

By the 1980s the name of H Hofmann & Sons was displayed over seven shops in the Wakefield area, employing around sixty staff, with its main outlet located on Silver Street. They also supplied wholesalers, corner shops and schools with produce. Their pork pies and sausages have won many awards over the years and their pork pies even get a mention in cricket umpire Dick Bird's autobiography.

Frank ran the bakery business with his two sons Ian and Stephen until his retirement in 2004 when his sons also left the business.

An article in the Wakefield Express dated 21 June 1991 tells of Tom Barker serving his last customer at the shop and retiring at the age of 81. He joined the firm at the age of 20 and worked from 5am until 7pm most days, but longer at busy periods. *"There was no grumbling allowed and we just got on with the job but times have changed and it is much easier now, he laughs"*. Mr Barker said he was always treated

¹³ WWD99/Box 220 WMDC Plan No. 32017 (1970)

as one of the family by the Hofmanns and lived for many years in the flat above the shop.

John also continued to work in the butcher's shops well into his 80s helping his sons David and Nigel, who still run the business today. However, modern shopping habits and the relocation of the Westgate railway station has seen a decline in the retail business, so the shop was closed and is now a ladies' boutique. There is currently a planning application for the conversion of the property into apartments.¹⁴

113 Westgate

This house is recorded as having 6 rooms.

The 1841 census notes 70-year-old Robert Rayner living on independent means along with his 50 year old servant Lydia Whitely. This makes sense as the yard between 111 and 113 was known as Rayner's Yard until it was renamed Holt's Yard some time later. He had clearly been there for quite a few years as Rayner's Yard is marked on the 1823 map.

Another law enforcement officer appears in the 1851 census at 113: Thomas Moss, aged 31, who is described as a 'Sheriff's Officer'. He was born in Ossett, as was his wife Jane, aged 32, and his widowed mother-in-law 60-year-old Elizabeth Barmby. They also had a domestic servant, Hannah Rothery, aged 13. 1853 saw Moss dissolving his partnership with William Child.¹⁵

We can establish that from at least 1854¹⁶ until the sale of the premises in 1885¹⁷ Miss Harriet Rogers ran a school for ladies'. Firstly, it would seem she ran the establishment with her sister, but by the

¹⁴ WMDC planning portal Ref. 21/01891/full

¹⁵ Wakefield & West Riding Herald 16.4.1853

¹⁶ Wakefield & West Riding Herald 13.1.1854

¹⁷ Wakefield & West Riding Herald 29.8.1885

1861 census Harriet is the only Miss Rogers listed. She was described as a 35-year-old school mistress, born in Middlesex, and had Miss Sarah Parkinson aged 32 as her assistant. Also living with them was her niece Florence Rogers aged 6 and domestic servant Mary Parr aged 17. Miss Rogers died on the 19th March 1890 aged 68 whilst living in Southgate.¹⁸ There is a slight anomaly with the age, but feel this is still the right Miss Rogers.

Educational.
THE MISSES ROGERS continue to receive
a select number of **DAILY PUPILS** at their
residence 120, Westgate, where a prospectus and
further particulars may be obtained. The School
will **RE-OPEN** on **MONDAY** the 23rd.

Wakefield & West Riding Herald 13.1.1854

Puzzlingly both the 1871 and 1881 censuses place Miss Rogers as living in Holt's Yard, which is at the rear of 113 Westgate. As there were only two cottages in Holt's Yard, but three entries on the census I find it difficult to believe that Miss Rogers moved her school from Westgate into Holt's Yard. Also, the property sale previously mentioned relating to No. 111 states that Miss Rogers was occupying the house next to Miss Scott, with the Haworth Bros running the malting business and Mr Woodcock a butcher living in what is now named Holt's Yard.

On the 1891 census we find William Mellor in residence. He was a 60-year-old shoemaker living with his wife Jane A aged 64; daughters Alice E A aged 30; Mary A aged 27, an elementary teacher; another Mary A aged 25 was a dressmaker, along with servant Sophia Munns, aged 13 and a lodger John Wm Shrigley aged 21 another elementary teacher.

¹⁸ Wakefield Free Press 23.3.1890

Mary A was definitely using the house for her dressmaking business as the advertisement in June 1894 below shows.¹⁹

By 1901 Jane Mellor was registered as head of the family, so William was not living with them by then. Mary A no longer listed herself as a



dressmaker. They now had a boarder, Thomas Adams a 27-year-old bank clerk. William has now moved to his shop in Kirkgate. In 1902 William Mellor is still listed as a shoemaker in Kirkgate²⁰

In the 1904 trade directory the premises are occupied by a Mr Herbert Rayner. He lists himself as a confectioner, but on the census, he is a greengrocer and he is still there in 1927. The 1911 census lists him as 36-years-old and he is helped in the business by his wife Kate aged 37. They are still registered there on the electoral roll of 1921.

For many years Avery Scales ran a shop on the premises. It has changed its occupants several times and is now occupied by the Composite Door Company.

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¹⁹ Wakefield Free Press 23.6.1894

²⁰ Wakefield Libraries Ephemera Box 5 (Wakefield Mutual Plate Glass Insurance Society Jan 1902)

Appendices

1. 1793 Enclosure Map showing plots 155 and 156



2. Section of the 1823 map surveyed by J Walker and published by Richard Nichols Books in 1823.



3. This section of the 1850 Ordnance Survey Map shows the buildings along with the gardens belonging to the properties. Map coloured by Kyle Carpenter.



**This series of booklets about
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and designed by members of
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