

22 Silver Street



Lesley Taylor
Westgate Research Group
Wakefield Historical Society

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

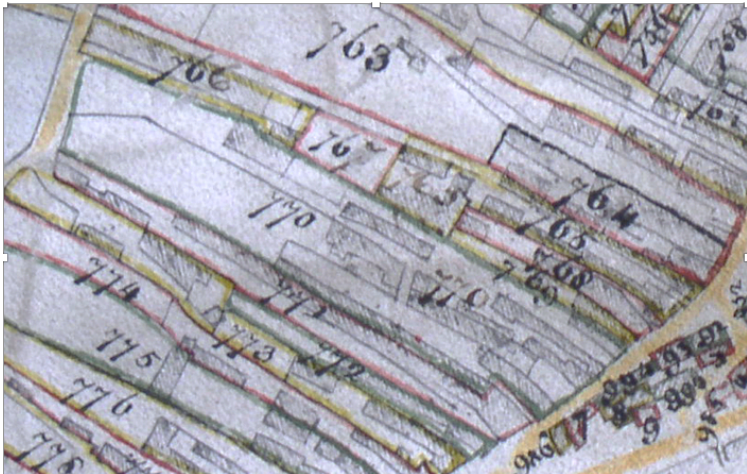
The Upper Westgate Heritage Action Zone (HAZ).

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.

22 Silver Street



From at least the early eighteenth century a large plot covering the area from Silver Street to the back lane, now called Cliff Terrace, was owned by the Barstow family. This is marked as number 770 on the 1790s

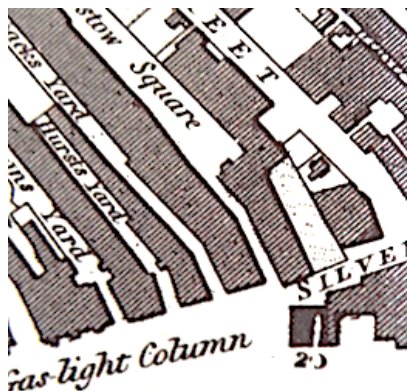
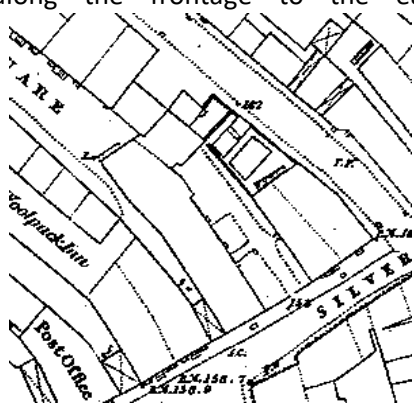


Enclosure survey¹ and covered over two acres bounded by Silver Street, the back lane and the northeast side of what is King Street today. It was a freehold property comprising several messuages, other buildings, yard, and garden.



The buildings on this plot are roughly drawn on the survey and it can be seen that there were a number of properties there in the 1790s including a long thin row of buildings running along the southwest side of the plot, and some larger buildings on the opposite side of the wide square. Lining the passageway entrance was a long building fronted by what is now No 22 Silver Street with adjoining property behind, today numbered as 2, 2a and 4 Barstow Square.

The Silver Street property, known to have been used as a shop in the eighteenth century and probably in previous centuries, was a high-status establishment, and the open space along the frontage to the east



1823 Walker Plan of Wakefield

illustrates its long-standing importance - it commanded a garden area which had not been swallowed up to provide more

¹ West Yorkshire Archives, Excerpt from the Enclosure Map of 1790 ref: QD5/3/Vol 4/28

access for businesses along the street front. This garden area is shown on the Walker town plan of 1823. It is also clear from the 1851 map which shows the detail of small beds in the garden space represented by dotted lines. The garden wall, fence and gate are also illustrated in this 1838



letter-heading for the saddlery business² in the large building on the corner of King Street.

Openings, probably doorways, provide access to the long building on the east side, and doorways still exist here. On both plans there is a wider section of building at the rear facing up Barstow Square, so this must have been added before 1823. Even on the Enclosure survey of the 1790s a building of some sort appears to extend well back into the Square.

Two roof levels are shown on this photograph from 2005, and the Google view of the roofs shows more clearly that there are two separate periods



² 1838 Bill to Street Commissioners from John Oldfield and Son, saddlers, WYAS Wakefield History Centre, Street Commissioners Voucher book WWT1/1/15.

of construction of the present buildings with the back building being a shorter, lower structure on a slightly different alignment. Today the numbers of the parts of this long building indicate the shop property, numbered 22 on Silver Street, with a small property behind, part of the same main elevation, numbered as 2 Barstow Square. The other part of the building, 2a and 4 Barstow Square, with a two-storey sandstone bay facing into the yard, was rebuilt, perhaps in the early nineteenth century, to replace a previous building.

A small yard, the remains of the garden area, is shown on the Google image. It can be accessed by means of a narrow passageway next to Hofmanns, or an equally small squeeze between buildings in a corner of Barstow Square. The street frontage section of this garden was built upon, probably in the 1850s, and there have been additional extensions on the back of these, but an open area still exists.

Today the numbering of the parts of this long building show the shop property, number 22, at the front on Silver Street, with a small property behind, part of the same main elevation, numbered as 2. Access to the whole of the first and second floors is now by means of a single set of stairs within this part of the building. The other numbers, 2a and 4 Barstow Square, are today only on the ground floor and accessed from within the passageway from Silver Street, although there are closed-off doorways on the opposite side of the building.



This study has not so far identified the uses of the property on this site before the mid-eighteenth century, although there undoubtedly had been a building or buildings here on this prominent market site for a far longer period. Only occasionally are the buildings behind the Silver Street frontage mentioned. It is likely that at some periods the whole long building was used for one purpose, or for occupations or activities relating

to the Silver Street shop and family. Sometimes there is reference to separate uses for the buildings behind and different tenants identified but usually it is difficult to isolate the occupants and activities in the back properties. Not until the late 1880s was numbering of these properties designated and used.

Clearly the Silver Street frontage building has always been the main retailing business. The three-storey, two-bay shop, for many years used as a home too, stands at the corner of the old market place and at the top of Westgate, beside the entrance to Barstow Square near the sites of the corn and wool markets which were held there for centuries.

Occupants of 22 Silver Street

William Beatson, C1750-1764

Martha Mudd	5	7	6
Mr. Barstow House and Croft	6	12	6
Mr. Beatson	2	12	6
Late Shuttleworth	1		
Two bellars under shop		7	6
Late Robert Dyche	1	5	
Late Bencroft		15	
John Arnold		15	
Widow Lindley		17	6

West Yorkshire Archives Service, Land Tax Assessment, Ref: QE13, Westgate, Wakefield.

The earliest identified occupant of this plot so far is to be found in land tax and poor rate listings³ from the second half of the eighteenth century. He was William Beatson, a mercer, who lived here from about 1750. A mercer was a dealer in fine textile fabrics. This document shows Mr

³ West Yorkshire Archives Service, Poor Rate Assessments, Ref: C1140/2. Land Tax Ref: QE13

Beatson in the land tax list for the Barstow plot in 1751. At that period the title of Mr gave significant status to a townsman.

William Beatson seems to have been successful in business. He took three apprentices: the first in 1741 was Westby Hatfield, son of John Hatfield, whose premium⁴ was £40, the second in 1746 was Thomas Purslove whose premium was £60, and in 1753 he took on Edward Spavold at £52.10.0.⁵ It may be his marriage to Ann Hirst that was celebrated in Wakefield Parish Church in 1741. Walker records that a William Beatson was Chief Constable of Wakefield for 1746, 1747, and 1748. This was a manorial role similar to the later position of mayor which was held by a leading townsman.

In 1756 a West Riding Quarter Sessions Order Book shows that William Beatson, along with two other Westgate men, George Lord and James Banks, had been expected to serve on the Grand Jury for Wakefield's January Quarter Sessions: more evidence of Beatson's status. There is no explanation of the fact that the men refused to do this, but there must be a story behind their refusal to take the role which brought the imposition of a not insubstantial £2 fine.

Jury men fined Ordered That a fine of forty shillings a piece be imposed on Mr. William Beatson Mr. James Banks & Mr. George Lord all of Wakefield in the W. Riding for not appearing to serve upon the Grand Jury at this Session being duly summoned impannelled & returned for that purpose.

West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield, QS 10/18.

It is likely that this William made his will in 1764 in Sandal Magna parish, and the burial of a William Beatson is recorded in the same year in the Sandal Magna records. The family appear to have been connected to Chapelthorpe or Hollingthorpe in the Sandal parish.

⁴ A legally agreed sum of money paid to a master at the commencement of an apprenticeship. In the eighteenth century apprenticeships usually lasted seven years.

⁵ The National Archives, Board of Stamps, Apprenticeship Books, 1710-1811

The following selection of Beatson and Barstow names in the Poor Rate records from 1757-1763 shows a highly-rated Beatson property on the Barstow plot. The 1757 rate book is the earliest year of these surviving records. After these there is a gap until 1769 in these records, but the name of Beatson does not reappear in later Poor Rates. It is useful to note that a smaller property - perhaps now No 2 Barstow Square - was occupied by a Miss Beatson in 1757 for £1. In the same year a Mary Beatson took an apprentice Hannah Heptinstall so perhaps there was some connected activity such as dressmaking going on behind the frontage shop. However in 1761 a kitchen is mentioned within the Beatson property for which the charge is perhaps the same £1. By 1762 and 1763 a little shop joining Mr Beatson's was empty: these entries may refer to the same small property.

1757

Mr Barstow

House stands and croft £6 5s

Miss Beatson £1

Mr Beatson £12 12 6

1761

Mr Barstow owner

Himself and croft 22

Mr Beatson house, stables (empty) and Kitchen 13 2 6

1762

Mr Barstow owner

Himself and croft 19

Mr Beatson 12 2 6

A little shop joining Mr Beatson's empty

1763

Mr Barstow owner

Himself and croft 19

Mr Beatson 12 2 6

A little shop joining Mr Beatson's empty

Another member of the family seems to have had a related business further down the street. A Mrs Beatson leased a 'valuable house and shop' just a couple of plots away on land owned by Arthur Bolton just the other side of Thompson's Yard. She appears in the first surviving Westgate poor rates of 1757. The 'dwelling house and well-situated shop' adjoining the house were put up for sale in 1766.

To be SOLD,
 By Retail, at the Prime Cost or under,
 At Mrs. Elizabeth Beatson's Shop in Wakefield,
ALL the said Mrs. BEATSON's Stock in
 Trade, consisting of a large and good Assortment
 of LINEN-DRAPERY and MILLINERY Goods, she
 being (on account of her Indisposition) about to decline
 Business. All Persons to whom Mrs. Beatson stands in-
 debted are desired to send her an Account of their respec-
 tive Demands; and those who are indebted to her are
 required forthwith to pay their respective Debts, with-
 out further Notice.

However on 31st December 1771 in the Leeds Intelligencer an Elizabeth Beatson was selling up her stock of 'linen drapery and millinery goods'⁶. Her will was made in 1773 and she died in 1774. These two Beatson women provide an example of single women, either widowed or unmarried, who became successful businesswomen in the busy, fashionable eighteenth-century town.

Thomas Smith, Linen-draper 17??-1793

Meanwhile change was happening on the Silver Street plot. Messrs Smith and Hill were renting the main property from 1772 or before, to 1777. The pair were both linen drapers. Their partnership was dissolved as is shown

⁶ Leeds Intelligencer December 1771

in this Leeds Intelligencer announcement of March 14th 1777. The description as the 'the Old Shop' suggests that the building had already been used for drapery for many years. From 1777 Thomas Smith remained on this site. The two men, Thomas Smith and John Hill, were then both separately recorded as Wakefield linen drapers in the Bailey's Directories 1781 and 1784.

WAKEFIELD, March 14, 1777.

THE PARTNERSHIP betwixt THOMAS SMITH and JOHN HILL, Linen-Drapers, dissolves by Consent on the Twenty-fifth of this Instant.

THOMAS SMITH desires to inform his Friends and the Public, That he intends carrying on the Business on his own Account, at the Old Shop; returns Thanks for past Favors, and solicits a Continuance, which shall be duly acknowledged, by

Their oblig'd humble Servant,
THOMAS SMITH.

In 1785 Smith, described as 'a haberdasher', insured his 'goods in his now dwelling house, shop and warehouse under one roof situate in Silver Street Westgate Wakefield' for £100 and his utensils and stock therein for £1900. The value of his stock is particularly noticeable and today's

500059 Thomas Smith of Wakefield in the County of York, Draper & Haberdasher On his household goods in his now Dwelling house Shop & Warehouse under one Roof situate in Silver Street of Westgate Wakefield aforesaid

£2.10.-
13/9
13/9
£2.17.3
Hartley

Brick Stone & Lattic not exceed? One hundred pounds 100
Utensils & stock therein only not exceed? Nineteen hundred Pounds 1900
1900
1900

Attest My hand & the Seal of the Office of the Surveyor of the City of Wakefield this 14th day of March 1785

Attest My hand & the Seal of the Office of the Surveyor of the City of Wakefield this 14th day of March 1785

equivalent would be about £150,000.⁷ Luckily he was insured as in 1792 he had a fire in his warehouse, at the back.⁸

Last week a fire broke out in the warehouse of Mr. Thomas Smith, linen-draper at Wakefield, but being instantly discovered, it was fortunately extinguished without doing any material damage.

He seems to have recovered financially from the fire fairly quickly, perhaps as a result of this insurance, because in November 1792, still a linen draper, he insured 'his new warehouse', and his adjoining 'house, shop and offices not finished' in 'Pig Street near the swine market Wakefield' with Sun Life Insurance.⁹ He was investing in building his own house and business, rather than leasing. By Christmas 1793 he insured 'two houses adjoining situate in the Swine Market, Wakefield, not quite finished, intended for the occupation of private families' which he valued at £800¹⁰. This new highly-valued housing was useful for providing regular rental income. The swine market, was probably the other side of the market place¹¹ so he seems to have left Silver Street after the fire.¹² What rebuilding was required to the warehouse behind the Silver Street shop is unknown, but this might be the occasion when the present two-storey Barstow Square building was erected.

Thomas Smith seems to have continued to trade in Wakefield. In 1809 'Thomas Smith, the Elder, and Thomas Smith, the Younger of Wakefield, Linen drapers, Dealers, Chapmen and Co-partners, Bankrupts'¹³ were required to attend the new Court House in Wakefield to disclose their estates and effects so that their creditors could prove their debts. However in the Wakefield entries for the Commercial Directories of 1814-15 and 1816-17 Smith and Son linen drapers of Westgate appear to have re-emerged from bankruptcy. Whether this elder Smith was the

⁷ Calculated by the National Archives Currency Converter. London Metropolitan Archives.

⁸ Leeds Intelligencer 13th February 1792

⁹ London Metropolitan Archives, Sun Life Insurances, Ms 11936/390/608336

¹⁰ LMA, Sun Life Insurances, Ms 11936/390/609330

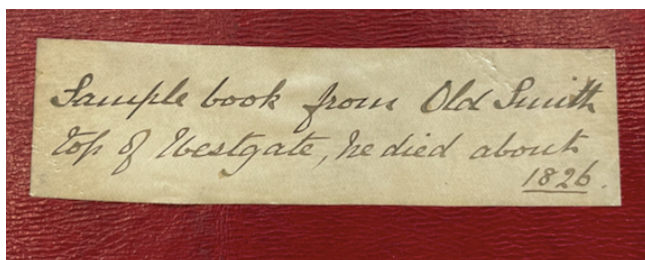
¹¹ Peter Brears, *The Buildings of Tudor and Stuart Wakefield*, p. x, Wakefield Historical Publications, 2019.

¹² Henry Clarkson, *Memories of Merry Wakefield*, p 2, Wakefield Historical Publications, 1985.

¹³ Leeds Intelligencer, Monday October 30th 1809.

original Silver Street Thomas requires further research. Also in question is the connection with 'a respectable old couple' also named Smith recalled by Henry Clarkson as a boy.¹⁴ They kept a 'good silk merchant's shop' on the opposite side of Westgate:

'you were surprised to find a stately old gentleman behind the counter, dressed with the most punctilious care, his wife and himself both wearing hair-powder, and vying with each other on the scrupulous civility and politeness bestowed on their customers, This shop was frequented by the surrounding gentry, and the higher class of people in the town, and purchasers were always invited into an inner room to partake of refreshment, consisting of Port ... with biscuits...'



This same 'Old Smith' appears again on this cover of a sample book held by Wakefield Museum. According to Clarkson this was Tommy Smith, apparently a well-known character in Wakefield.

When Charles Barstow of Halifax finally sold 22 Silver Street in 1876 the deed describes the whole property and confirms the succession of tenants after Smith: 'And also all that messuage dwelling house and tenements with the shop thereto in Silver street with the outbuildings and conveniences thereto belonging and a large court thereto adjoining also the cellars under Silver street formerly in the occupation of John

¹⁴ Henry Clarkson, 'Memories of Merry Wakefield, p2, WHP 1985. Clarkson was born in 1801 so that this memory is likely to have been from the second decade of the century

Hardcastle afterwards of George Haigh then of ____ Jackson but now of Robert John Mathers his undertenants and assigns.’¹⁵

John Hardcastle, linen draper and silk mercer, ?-1830

Records for this property during the years at the end of eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries are scarce, but the Commercial Directories for 1814-15 and for 1816-17 record John Hardcastle as a linen and woollen draper in Silver Street, and a fragment from a poor rate entry of 1823 suggests this is likely to have been in this shop.¹⁶ Here the owner of the Silver Street property was still a Barstow, William Barstow, with a tenant in the shop named John Hardcastle. In the Baines Directory of 1822 Hardcastle is listed as a linen draper and silk mercer, and in Pigot’s Directory of 1829 as a linen and woollen draper. He may have been running the shop for some considerable time before 1823 as he had retired by 1830.

It is fortunate that Henry Clarkson described the prominent shop at this time in his volume of *Memories of Merry Wakefield*:

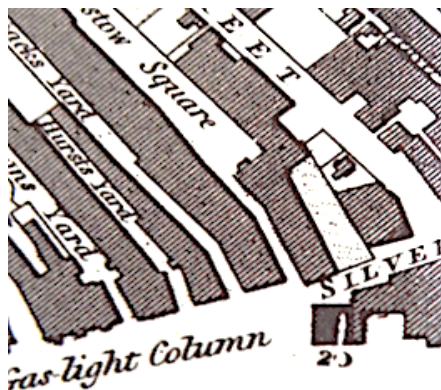
‘... there was not a single shop until an old established druggist’s – where the Leeds and County Bank is now, kept by Mr Potter; next to this was the shop of a grocer and hop merchant adjoining the entrance to Barstow Square, and on the upper side of this was a draper’s shop kept by Mr John Hardcastle, which extended half-way over the street, leaving only just enough room for one carriage to pass. The principal window in Hardcastle’s shop, therefore, looked straight down Westgate. This serious obstruction to one of the main thoroughfares was allowed to exist till about 1830, when it was purchased by the town, and taken down.’¹⁷

¹⁵ West Yorkshire Archives Service, Registry of Deeds 1876 Vol 757 p 724 no 851

¹⁶ West Yorkshire Archives Service, Poor Rate Assessments, Ref: C1140

¹⁷ Henry Clarkson, *Memories of Merry Wakefield*, p 88, Wakefield Historical Publications, 1985

The jutting frontage of this building is suggested on the 1823 plan. The position of the front of the western side of the building faced directly down Westgate and would have made the shop very prominent.



Walker Town Plan, 1823

It appears that Hardcastle was a leading townsman. By 1830 he is listed as John Hardcastle gent, living in Westfield House, today a Grade 11 listed building, at the top of North Avenue. Hardcastle had built this house in 1824 and later retired there. Henry Clarkson recalls that 'this area between Eastmoor and St John's was occupied a good deal by vegetable and fruit gardens and was entirely unbuilt upon.' This was the 'earliest building in the

neighbourhood and was then quite in the country, and it was thought a lonely walk to it.'¹⁸ The agricultural nature of the area may explain North Avenue's name of Sludge Lane, as marked on the 1851 ordnance survey map.

George Haigh, linen and woollen merchant, c1830 -1858

The Parson and White West Riding Directory of 1830 includes an entry for Philips and Haigh, linen drapers and silk merchants, Silver Street, but in the 1834 Pigot Directory Mr George Haigh of Silver Street is advertising by himself. In Directories for 1838-8, 1842, 1847, 1848 and 1853 George Haigh is listed as a Linen and Woollen Merchant and in the earliest available Censuses of 1841 and 1851 his household is listed.

In 1841 he had two apprentices, Thomas Jackson and Thomas Boston and a female servant. In 1851 he was employing two hands who did not live

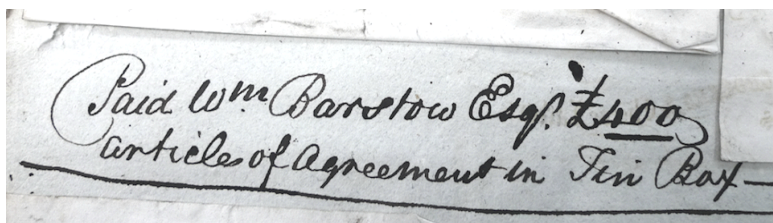
¹⁸ Henry Clarkson, *Memories of Merry Wakefield*, p 17, Wakefield Historical Publications, 1985

on the premises, and he had two female servants, one of whom was also working as housekeeper of the Wakefield Dispensary operating at that time in Barstow Square. However Haigh, originally from South Kirby, appears to have been a bachelor as no wife or children are listed.

	Road, Street Etc ad No or Name of House	Name and Surname of each person	Relation to the Head of the family	Condition	Age male	Age female	Rank Profession or Occupation	Where born
1841 Census	Silver Street	Geo Haigh			30		Draper	
		Thomas Jackson			15		App	
		Thomas Boston			14		App	
		Mary Etherington				20	F S	
1851 Census	44 Silver Street	George Haigh	Head	U	40		Draper - employing 3 hands	South Kirkby
		Mary Etherington	Servant	U		43	House Keeper of the Dispensary	Fairburn
		Mary Do	Do	U		17	Servant	Horbury

In the Wakefield and West Riding Herald of Oct 26th 1854 he was advertising for 'a respectable youth' as another apprentice.

A very important change to the shop's street frontage may have occurred during Haigh's occupancy. Henry Clarkson's account of the obstruction caused by the gable end of the shop jutting into the narrow street was



probably rectified by the Street Commissioners.¹⁹ In June 1828, as recorded in the Street Commissioners voucher book²⁰, an agreement was made by the Commissioners and Mr William Barstow Esquire for 'purchase of part of his property in Silver Street for the purpose of widening the street'. He was paid £400. Haigh had further contact from

¹⁹ The Street Commissioners were established in 1771 and were able to raise a rate to clean, maintain and improve the main streets of the town.

²⁰ WYAS Wakefield History Centre, Street Commissioners Voucher book WWT1/1/15

the Street Commissioners when in 1841 they requested that he repaired his flags and grate outside his shop.²¹ In 1853 on 16th April he and Mr Linfield next door applied to the Commissioners for an additional lamp at the west end of Silver Street. Henry Clarkson himself was at that time Clerk to the Street Commissioners.

In the 1850 Street Commissioners' Lighting Rates book Haigh's house and shop are rated at £39. As a comparison the Woolpack public house, brewhouse and stables was valued at £55.15s. This would suggest that Haigh's shop was regarded as of high standing and his business was successful. Indeed an article in the Wakefield Express of 31st December 1870 recalls that 'Mr George Haigh carried on for many years one of the best and most select drapery businesses in the town'.

Notice.

WE, the Undersigned, hereby agree to
CLOSE our respective SHOPS, from the
FIRST of APRIL to the FIRST of OCTOBER at EIGHT
O'CLOCK; and from the FIRST of OCTOBER to the
FIRST of APRIL at SEVEN O'CLOCK, Saturday
Evening Excepted.

GEORGE HAIGH,
SIMEON PICKARD,
JOHN G. WOOD,
ISAAC G. WALLIS,
HARNEW & GLOVER,
J. & G. LOCKWOOD,
GEO. WILSON,
GEO. BENNINGTON & CO.,
J. PERKIN,
CHAS. BENNINGTON & CO.
JOSEPH PERKIN,
JOSEPH NOTHER,
JAMES COWELL,
THOS. SERLE,
G. G. BINNS.

As was expected of a substantial shopkeeper George Haigh was an active townsman: The Wakefield and West Riding Herald of 9th February 1844 shows his interest in the question of shop closing times. These still seem long opening hours for Wakefield shopkeepers but at least there was a move towards agreement to close at the same times. His name at

the head of the list perhaps indicates an organisational role in bringing this issue to public notice.

On 23rd February 1844 the same paper reported that he had been appointed one of three constables for Westgate and in 1848 he was elected Local Government Assessor for St John's Ward. On 16th Sept 1853

²¹ WYAS Wakefield History Centre, Street Commissioners minutes (WWT1/1/2)

he was one of many prominent citizens who promised 'a tray' for a Church Institute Soiree and he attended the Wakefield Water Works Company general meeting as reported in the Herald of 6th July 1855. In 1856 he acted as one of three undertakers at the funeral of the late Benjamin Gaskell of Thornes House, riding 'on horseback in front of the hearse'. On 7th January 1859 he was listed as George Haigh, gentleman, when he sat on the Grand Jury of the West Riding Christmas Quarter Sessions held in Wakefield.



Photo: Kathleen Shepherd

Inevitably his business suffered from theft. On March 8th 1844 the Herald reported thefts from his shop of trousers for which the thief was 'privately whipped', and silk handkerchiefs on 22 March when 'it is supposed that the thieves entered the kitchen door immediately after the shop was closed'. In another setback a gale blew down a large chimney which fell into the garden of Mr Haigh and did considerable damage in 1850. If these stacks were like the high chimneys on the rear property in Barstow Square which still survived in this photograph taken in 1977 then this accident would have been potentially very dangerous.

D E C L I N I N G B U S I N E S S .
G E O R G E H A I G H , L I N E N D R A P E R , S I L K M E R C E R , &c.
I S N O W S E L L I N G O F F T H E W H O L E O F H I S S T O C K
at a great Reduction in Price, as the whole must be sold off immediately.
No. 2, Silver-street, Wakefield.

In the Wakefield and West Riding Herald of 8th January 1858 Haigh

announced the end of his time at 22 Silver Street, then numbered as 2 Silver Street. Like Hardcastle, he retired 'to a neat country residence' just out of town, in this case in Sandal.

Thomas Jackson, draper, 1858-1870

1861 Census	46 Silver Street	Thomas Jackson	Head	Un	35	Draper	do
		Maria Do	Sister	Un	32	Housekeeper	Do
		Joseph Rolling Lindley	Assistant	Un	23	Draper's Assistant	Silkstone
		William Thompson	Apprentice	Un	17	Do	Northallerton
		Edwin Hall	Do	Un	17	Do	Wakefield
		Maria Parfuns?	Servant	Un	19	House servant	Wakefield

One of Haigh's first apprentices, Thomas Jackson, who was a 15-year-old from Horbury in 1841, took over the house and shop in 1858. Following his apprenticeship he may have continued as one of the three draper's assistants who are mentioned in the 1751 Census. The 1861 Census shows a household of six with Jackson's sister Maria acting as housekeeper. He had two apprentices and an assistant to help in his drapery shop. Jackson had advertised for apprentices on 3rd February 1860 and later on 6th May 1864 in the Wakefield and West Riding Herald. The family had one female servant.

Upon taking on the business he was immediately met with more shoplifting as recounted in a report from the Petty Sessions in the Wakefield and West Riding Herald 14th May 1858:

'a decently dressed married woman, with a child in her arms and who is said to be the mother of eight children was charged with having, on the 22nd January, pretended to Mr Thomas Jackson, draper, that she was a person called Wilkinson, who had a daughter in service at Mr Thistlewood's, at St John's, and thus obtained by false pretences drapery goods of the value of £1 14s 9d.'

On the same day the woman visited a Mr Armstrong, pawnbroker, and pledged a shawl which Mr Jackson later recognised as his property.

Following a number of other thefts she was committed for trial. In the Herald of 4th March 1859 Thomas Jackson was selected for the Grand Jury at the West Riding Intermediate Sessions, along with a number of manufacturers and shopkeepers, tradesmen and gentlemen.

The end of the Jackson tenure was announced when on 22 January 1870 Jackson advertised that he would be declining business.

DECLINING BUSINESS.
THOS. JACKSON,
DRAPER, 2, SILVER STREET, WAKEFIELD,
RESPECTFULLY thanks his numerous
Friends for the liberal support he has received whilst
he has been in business, and begs to inform them that he is
now declining the same, and intends **SELLING** the whole
of his **STOCK** at greatly Reduced Prices.
The Shop will be **CLOSED** on **MONDAY** and **TUESDAY**, the
24th and **25th**, to re-mark the Goods previous to commencing
selling off on the **26th**.

He was still selling his stock in March 'at greatly reduced prices after a further remarking of the goods 'in order to effect an entire clearance'. On 5th March he was drawing attention to his mourning stock which 'is large and greatly reduced in price'. By 26th March he announced his last week for selling off his stock and again 'respectfully thanks his numerous friends for the liberal support he has received'.

Robert Mather, linen draper, silk mercer, undertaker and hearse and mourning coach proprietor, 1870 - 1884

Meanwhile a Mr Robert J Mather from Leathley, near Otley, had taken on the shop and on 25th June 1870 the Wakefield Express printed a joint advertisement which heralded the passing over of the business. Mr Jackson, by then listing himself as 'linen draper, silk mercer and undertaker', again thanked his friends and informed them that he had disposed of his business, requesting their continued custom for Mr Mathers. The latter advertised himself in the same fashion as Jackson but

with the addition that he was a Hearse and Mourning Coach Proprietor and was able to completely furnish funerals with a 'large stock of black silks' and 'every requisite for family, complimentary and servants mourning'. Here is a new aspect of this business and the limitations of his premises suggest that Mather was likely to have been renting space for his hearse, perhaps in some other part of the Square.



The announcement of his summer acquisitions showed the range of products in the shop, and the type of households he aimed to attract, he:

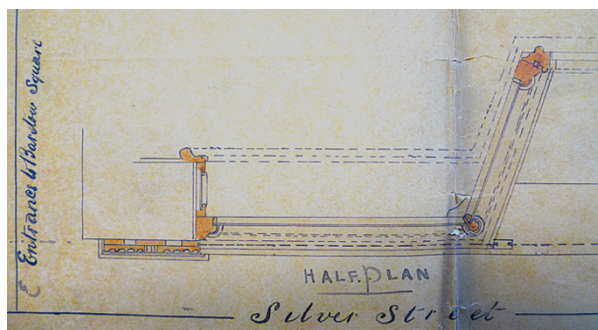
'having returned from London and the Provincial markets with a choice selection of all the leading Novelties of the season in dresses, skirts, gloves, ribbons hosiery, laces, shawls, silks, lace and leno curtains, damask table cloths with napkins to match, laces, silks, ticks, sheetings, huckabacks, long cloths etc'

Before opening his business Mather had announced in the Wakefield Express of Saturday 21st May 1870 that he had made alterations to the shop frontage, and a commentator in the Wakefield Express on December 31st 1870 who signed himself as

Rasper was very complimentary about these changes. His enthusiasm might suggest that large windows for shop displays was an innovation in Wakefield at the time.

'but it remained for Mr Mather, the present occupant, to show the good appearance this old and successful drapery establishment could be made to present externally. I think it will be conceded that he has effected the greatest improvement that could possibly be designed; and it is, in my opinion, the handsomest frontage in town.. the Old Corn Exchange ought to come down, or Mr Mather's improvement will remain comparatively hidden.'

The faded, delicate plans for the design of his shop front are available in the West Yorkshire History Centre.²² On the left is a plan view of half the shop front showing an ornate column with an inset window or doorway perhaps designed to increase window display space. The decorated columns are shown on the right.



In 1871 the household of Robert Mather consisted of himself, his wife Bessie, his baby daughter, two assistants and a servant. Ten years later he

²² WWD9/Box15/0618, WYAS, Wakefield History Centre

had four children, three girls and a boy, but his shop assistants were not living on the premises.

1871 Census	43 Silver Street	Robert J Mathers	Head	Mar	30	Silk Mercer	Leathely
		Bessie Mathers	Wife	Mar	27		Bartherton?
		Laura A Do	Dau		18m		Wakefield
		Edwin Hall	Assistant	Unm	25	Drapers Assistant	Alverthorp
		John Mumby	Do	Unm	22	Do	Lincs Kerreby
		Mary Hall	Serv	Unm	20	General Servant	Knottingley
1881 Census	36 Silver Street	Robert J Mathers	Head	Mar	40	Silk mercer and undertaker	Leathley
		Bessie do	Wife	Mar	37		Otley
		Edward P do	Son		9	Scholar	
		Mable J do	Daur		7	Do	Brotherton
		Edith H do	Daur		4		Wakefield
		Constance Do	Daur		1		do
		Sarah A Hutchinson	Serv	Unm	26	General servant (domestic)	Reedness Goole

In the 1870s Mather endeavoured to attract an elegant and fashion-conscious clientele to view goods in his different 'departments'. On 7th June 1873 in a lengthy advertisement he announced in the Herald that he had returned from London and other markets with 'a beautiful selection of English and French novelties': costumes, robes, jackets and shawls, dresses, skirts, collars and cuffs, parasols, umbrellas ribbons, cuffs, scarfs and hosiery all described in detail, with various curtains and blinds. This stock was entirely new and 'selected with great care from first-class manufacturers only'. He laid particular emphasis on Lyons black silks and velvets which he could offer bearing the Wakefield Coat of Arms. In addition he then listed the items in his Household Linen Department including Communion cloths and napkins. In his Mourning Department he not only supplied clothes, palls, scarfs, hatbands and gloves but also offered to conduct funerals with 'economy, punctuality and neatness'.

Similar advertising followed in 1874 in which he mentioned his two departments. By 1874 his premises were housing the family, a warehouse for household goods, and a separate mourning department. This organisation into separate sections perhaps suggests that he was using premises behind the shop and/or upstairs for this accommodation.

In the summer of August 1875 Robert Mather, describing himself as a silk mercer, undertaker and damask linen warehouseman, announced an annual midsummer clearance sale with great reductions in all areas. On

13th May 1876 he listed the latest novelties in every department and offered to manage funerals in any part of the kingdom.

However, by July and August he advertised a further great clearance sale, and again on 3rd February 1877 in the Herald he offered his stock at much reduced prices. His comment that this provided families with the opportunity to 'replenish their households with linens of the best quality at a very cheap rate' might suggest a less ambitious sales pitch than in his earlier years. By 1877 his advertisements were still regular but smaller and less grandiose than in previous times.

The Herald of 2nd June 1883 gives an account of an action which Robert Mather, took out against the two executors of the will of the late Timothy Pearson of Wrenthorpe and against his widow to recover £26 15s 9d for mourning clothes. Just before the funeral Pearson's daughters had requested mourning clothes to be sent to Wrenthorpe, and a day or two later the mother and a daughter called at the shop to order more goods, explaining that the executors would pay the bill. However this bill was returned to Mather unpaid. In court the judge decided that the costs should be split, with items purchased for the funeral being paid by the executors, and the rest to be met by the widow and her daughters.

A year later, on 19th July 1884, Mrs Mather and family were thanking 'their numerous friends for their kind enquiries during the illness of Mr Mathers'. This seems to have been his last illness.

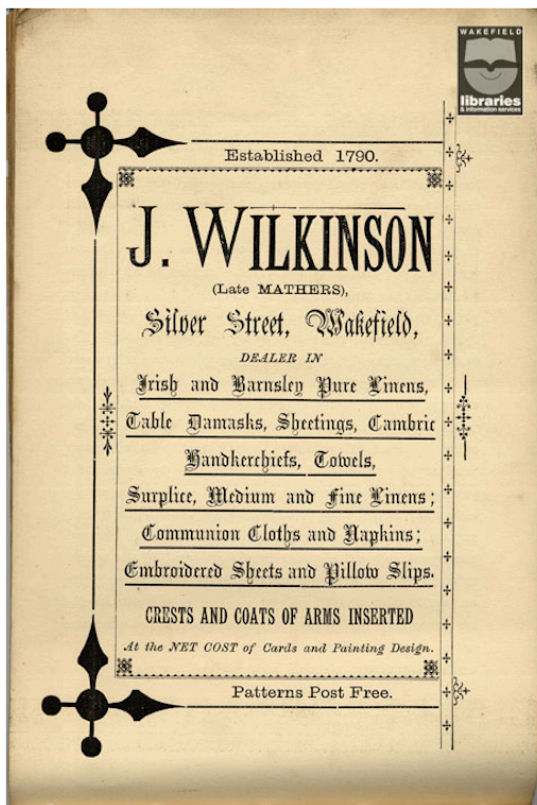
Mr Wilkinson, draper and silk mercer, 1884 -1889

In the Herald of 24th December 1884 a Mr Wilkinson announced the reopening of the shop on 7th April 1885. He mentioned new items in each department and included the offer of 'Dressmaking by experienced hands', although whether this was on the premises is not clear. In 1885

A reporter's stroll around the Christmas Eve shops describes his business as a drapery and dressmaking business, and his display as of 'tapestry and finest materials for ladies' evening wear'.²³

In 1887 Wilkinson advertised in a pamphlet for the Corn Exchange Festival.²⁴ His continued reference to Mathers shows that he wished to continue in a similar tradition, appealing to Mathers' clientele, and his choice of wording emphasized fine fabrics with the possibility of inserting crests and coats of arms. In Bennett's Business Directory of 1888 he maintained this emphasis on old-fashioned quality by describing himself as a 'silk mercer' and paying for his entry to be in capital letters.

However 1889 brought change as he attempted to sell much of his stock and eventually to move his business as advertised in the Wakefield and West Riding Herald 24th Aug 1889. It is as yet uncertain whether Wilkinson lived on the premises as his tenure was between censuses.



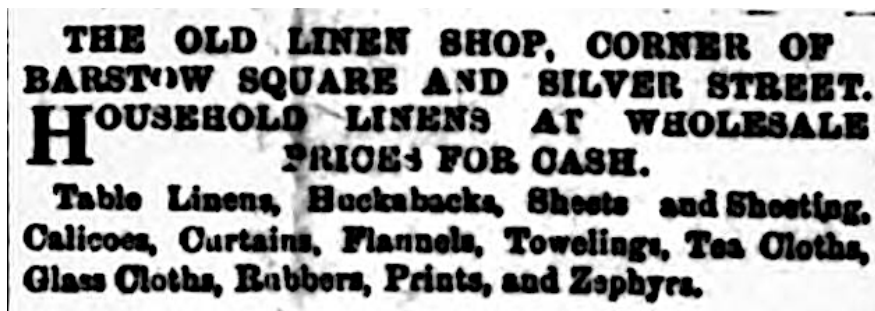
²³ Wakefield and West Riding Herald 24th Dec 1885

²⁴ Twixt Aire and Calder xli1285

Changes were occurring in the numbering of Westgate shortly after this removal and so it becomes more difficult to see who had the shop, but it may be for a very brief period that Mr Wilkinson moved a few doors along the street with a much-reduced stock. In 9th November of 1889 he is advertising at 16 Silver Street with 'novelties, lace and embroideries, umbrellas, aprons and linen sets, servants caps and aprons, gloves, silk squares and sashes, and pin cushions'.



It is perhaps Wilkinson's former shop from which in August 1889 a T Summers is advertising a great summer sale in the Wakefield Free Press. By April 12th 1890 the Herald has a sale from 'the Old Linen Shop' with no mention of the business owner.



In the next few years the position of the shop is described in advertising rather than using a number. This is likely to be indicative of a period of confusion because of the changing of numbers which turned this property from 2 Silver Street to number 22, placing number 2 at the Wood Street end of the short street. At the same time the numbering of the back properties provides early clear evidence for what was going on in this part of the long building: businesses in 2, 2a and 4 Barstow Square were named for the first time. An entry in the 1887 Directory for a Mr

Lockwood, tea dealer, in 2 Barstow Square was followed ten years later by the listing of three different businesses using 2, 2a and 4 Barstow Square.

Legg and Millard, tailors and breeches makers, 1891 – 1895

THE OLD LINEN SHOP,
OPPOSITE THE OLD CORN EXCHANGE,
WAKEFIELD,
Is now OPENED by
LEGG & MILLARD,
TAILORS AND BREECHES MAKERS,
AND they respectfully invite an Inspection
of their Various Departments.
— — —
GENTLEMEN'S HIGH CLASS TAILORING
at reasonable prices.
— — —
LADIES' COSTUMES, JACKETS,
HABITS, & COATS.

On 4th April 1891 the Leeds firm of Legg and Millard were giving notice of their opening, clearly stating that they were in the 'Old Linen Shop opposite the old Corn Exchange'. On 11th April in the Wakefield Free Press they mentioned 'gentleman's high-class tailoring', 'Ladies costumes jackets habits and coats' and clerical outfitting and servants liveries, umbrellas and mackintoshes. A week later, on 18th April, their battery of advertising continued in similar style, but addressing 'the gentry of Wakefield and District' and stressing their role as tailors and hatters, clerical

outfitters and ladies' costumiers'. This was a very different tone to the household drapery of previous business owners. The 1991 census shows no residents: the property had definitely become a lock-up shop with a manager. This would have provided more room to be used for the advertised 'departments' but the status of the shop was already well in decline and at least two chains put in managers.

in their advertising no manager's name is mentioned during the four years of the Legg and Millard tenure: the personal emphasis disappeared. However, in the Wakefield Express of October 8th 1892 they announced their autumn and winter arrangements with a long statement expressing their good fortune 'in securing the services of one of the most 'stylish and successful foreman cutters in the profession.' This would mean that they could 'guarantee to turn out garments equal to style and fit to any of the best London West End tailors at most reasonable prices.' This new arrangement may not have been as successful as was expected as there was no more advertising in Wakefield, although the firm continued to advertise their Briggate business extensively in Leeds and Yorkshire newspapers. It seems that during this period the shop declined.

George Pawson, draper, 1895 - 1906

A newspaper article of 21st December 1895 in the Wakefield and West Riding Herald describes nostalgically the shop's recent decline, although a revival seems to have been identified by the writer in the arrival of Mr Pawson, the new draper. The article traces all the previous owners and outlines the strong drapery tradition of local men serving their customers.

Walking along Silver Street our attention was called to the old shop of Messrs Legg and Millard, tailors, which for the last nine months has been carried on as a high-class drapery establishment by Mr G. H. Pawson, whose venture up to the present time has been eminently successful – thanks to advertising and strict attention to business! The premises of Mr Pawson for fifty years before Messrs Legg and Millard took them over were in the occupation in turn of Mr Geo Haigh, Mr Jackson, and Mr R. J. Mathers, all of whom, we believe, were most successful Wakefield drapers in their day and generation. Notwithstanding the break in the long line of succession – the letting of the shop to the firm of tailors named – Mr Pawson seems to have come to the rescue, so to speak, at the proper time, and gives every promise of

becoming a worthy follower of his predecessors in resuscitating the defunct drapery business.

The writer continues by describing Mr Pawson's Christmas shop window displays so reminiscent of the tall softly-lit shop windows of Upper Westgate as painted by Louis Grimshaw in 1896.



His premises are illuminated throughout with bright incandescent lights, which at night show everything to advantage, and his windows have a bright and cleanly appearance. He has a charming evening window containing lovely tints in silks and crepons, also some four or five stylish blouses and fascinating opera cloaks. It is effectively draped with coloured laces, and at once takes the eye of the appreciative passer-by. The second window is set out with fancy articles and gloves, all suitable for Christmas presents, with here and there a number of mantles and jackets in every style of material.

TO THE LADIES OF WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT.

GEORGE H. PAWSON,

COSTUMIER, MILLINER, SILK MERCER. AND LINEN DRAPER.

Begs to announce that he will commence Business on

TUESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY,
And invites a Visit of inspection.

22, SILVER STREET.

Pawson was a local boy baptised on 5th February 1860 in Stanley. His father was a whitesmith. As a young man he is likely have been learning his trade working as an assistant in one of the other drapery establishments in Wakefield, perhaps Kingswells. However, on 16th February 1895 the

Herald advertised the opening of Mr George H Pawson's shop at 22 Silver Street. His business immediately seems to have followed that of his drapery predecessors rather than the more recent tailors, and, in addition, he was also advertising millinery. His newspaper wording and layout was clear, short and very regular, always announcing some new, suitably seasonal items in stock, or a special display of particular types of materials and clothes, and the advertisements were to be found at the top of the page with his name or headline in very large letters, unlike the restrained, small and often wordy Legg and Millard compositions. By 13th April 1895 he was looking for a well-educated youth as an apprentice to 'live indoors'. However, as Mr Pawson is listed in the Burgess Rolls as living at 18 Westfield Terrace at this time the young man would have been on his own.

Pawson very soon advertised a sale on 29th June 1885 in the town's Free Press. He seemed to be using the three local papers of this period for different markets.

G. H. PAWSON, 22, Silver-st., Wakefield.
BALL AND EVENING GOWNS.
A Beautiful Selection of NEW MATERIALS, SILKS, OPERA CLOAKS, WRAPS,
FANS, GLOVES, &c.
CHILDREN'S SILK and LACE EVENING DRESSES. LADIES' SILK UNDER SKIRTS.
G. H. PAWSON, 22, Silver Street, Wakefield.

There was always something new and simply worded: grand shows of millinery, winter sales, up-to-date travelling coats, balls and evening gowns, underclothing, curtains, opera cloaks, spring goods, Whitsuntide preparations, boys' suits and bargains in all departments. On 29th February 1896 a Free Press advertisement included the neat image of a lady in a corset.

This Herald advertisement of 19th September 1896 shows that he was arranging his shop into departments with an assistant described as a 'principal' serving in each. To provide space for these he would probably have been



G. H. PAWSON
AND THE PRINCIPALS OF EACH DEPARTMENT
HAVE RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO THE
LEADING CENTRES OF FASHION,
AND HAVE MADE A CAREFUL AND CHOICE SELECTION OF THE
LATEST NOVELTIES,
WHICH WILL BE SHOWN EACH DAY NEXT WEEK.
— A VISIT OF INSPECTION RESPECTFULLY INVITED. —
22, SILVER STREET, WAKEFIELD.

able to use the upper floors, now not required for family use. However the ground floor premises behind the shop, by this time numbered as 2, 2a and 4 Barstow Square, were not within Pawson's tenure as newspaper advertisements show that these were occupied by other tradesmen.

In 1896 he was offering dressmaking and on 7th November the Herald

suggested that 'the ladies of Wakefield' would be reviewing their wardrobes for the winter season for which he was not only offering the materials they might need but also the dressmaking service which would make up their outfits. 'This Department' he writes, 'is under most Efficient Management and Ladies may rely on having a perfect fitting Gown at moderate charges'. In another advert of the same date he adds 'patterns of new dress materials are ready and will be sent post free on application'. He advertised for dressmakers in 21 April 1906 in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph when he wanted 'good Coat and Bodice hands for a good class trade permanent situation.'

We can learn much about other aspects of the life of this successful local Westgate shopkeeper, thanks to the detailed articles in the period's local papers. He was a Methodist participating in all the activities of the Wakefield Circuit. He provided part of the entertainment for the annual sale of work at his local chapel, Eastmoor Wesleyan Chapel, reported on 3rd June 1880 in the Wakefield Free Press. 'A waxwork entertainment was also given by Mr Signor Opel – Mr George Pawson acting as that important gentleman - which elicited considerable attention and cause a great deal

WAKEFIELD BAND OF HOPE UNION.

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL,

**will be held in the
CORN EXCHANGE,**

On TUESDAY, 4TH MARCH, 1884.

**Mrs. B. H. Brown, Miss Birkinshaw, Mr. A. Pawson,
Mr. S. Cooling, and**

A CHOIR OF 270 VOICES.

Pianoforte Mr. A. E. S. SUGDEN.

Harmonium Mr. G. H. PAWSON.

Conductor Mr. A. J. PAGE.

An Address will be delivered by the

REV J. R. WOLSTENHOLME, M.A.

**REV. A. B. MATTHEWS, (The President),
will occupy the Chair.**

For Prices of Admission, see Bills.

of mirth.’ Later that year at the opening meeting of the Eastmoor Band of Hope, a Methodist Temperance group, he ‘conducted the singing’. On March 1st 1881 in the Wakefield Free Press he is found played the harmonium in a Band of Hope Union Annual Festival Concert in the Corn Exchange, and on 1th November 1884 he provided the organ accompaniment to a rendering of the Hallelujah Chorus for a choir of over 45 voices.

On Nov 6th 1885 he married Emily Rowley of East View, Pinderfields, at West Parade Chapel. He and his wife continued to take part in Eastmoor Chapel events. In 1887 the Herald referred to Mrs George H Pawson of Pinderfields Terrace who helped to arrange the Young Ladies’ Sunday School stalls and Christmas tree. In the Free Press of 3rd October 1891 Pawson read the financial statement at the chapel anniversary which was followed by a recitation also given by him. It seems that he was a talented amateur musician and all-round entertainer.

In December 1894, the year before he took over the Silver Street shop the Free Press reported a violent storm which caused damage to this house on Pinderfields Terrace :

‘the wall surrounding the Wakefield Cricket Club’s Ground at College Grove was blown down and close at hand some damage was done at the residence of Mr George Pawson where part of wall and a coal house succumbed to the gale’.

A burglary report of 1898²⁵ at the home of Mr George Pawson shows that by then the family had moved to 18 Westfield Terrace.

As an established and successful shopkeeper Pawson was becoming more vocal in expressing his views on subjects which affected his business, particularly to the local Councillors who could bring about change. Councillor Tattersall was guest at a sale of work at the Wesleyan Schoolroom, Eastmoor.²⁶ He spoke proudly of the great improvements in

²⁵ 16th July 1898 Wakefield Express

²⁶ 31st December 1898 Wakefield Express

the streets of the town in recent years. Mr Pawson rejoined that the Council needed to be pressed to bring about further improvements. His rather unusual suggestion was that narrow streets like Silver Street and Little Westgate should be paved with wood. Councillor Tattershall responded that he disagreed 'because wood absorbed unpleasant liquids and solids and he preferred Yorkshire setts or macadamised roads.' Pawson's idea might suggest that Silver Street was not well surfaced, even at the end of the nineteenth century.

From 1895 to 1902 Pawson was active in the Wakefield branch of the Tradesmen's Association which had a powerful voice in the town raising issues of interest to many. The question of completing the provision of plaques for street names and the changes in numbering of houses, which had dragged on for a number of years, was regularly raised by the Association. On 30th November 1895 there were 70 attendees at the Wakefield Tradesmen's Annual Dinner in its 24th year²⁷. The President welcomed the Mayor, W H Milnes, who addressed the meeting on the subject of the recently-constructed waterworks at Rishworth, which was bringing clean Pennine water to Wakefield. Later Mr Pawson was delegated to welcome the representatives from other towns. He commented that:

'he believed these Associations are doing a great amount of good. They are able to wait upon railway companies with regard to the running of frequent market trains, and are supporting the bus company, and bringing entertainments to the city so that people do not need to have to go to other towns in search of amusement.'

He pointed out that Dewsbury and Halifax were ahead of Wakefield in bringing in a universal half-day closing, a subject which was dear to his heart. In 1896 he was voted onto the Tradesmen's Committee and, following a meeting of shop assistants who suggested a one o'clock half-holiday as a celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the tradesmen

²⁷ 30th November 1895 Wakefield and West Riding Herald

discussed the early-closing question in general.²⁸ The following year Pawson said that he would be in favour of closing at one o'clock in the afternoon on one day a week if it could be made general.

*'At present about half the tradesmen closed at four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon and he thought it would be unfair to ask tradesmen to close at one o'clock unless it was a general closing (hear hear).'*²⁹

By 1900 he was clearly regarded as the Tradesmen's spokesman on this issue. He joined the President of the Wakefield Association and representatives of the West Riding Federated Chamber of Trade in a trip to a conference organised by the London Chamber of Trade on the early closing of shops and other bills. The article comments that 'Mr Pawson has some strong, and we believe reasonable views on the subject'³⁰

Other issues important for the development of Wakefield streets were on the Tradesmen's agenda. In 1900 the Association was keen to support the national telephone company's plan to lay underground telephone wires. Overhead wires were unreliable in storms. Pawson felt sure that the Corporation would agree that it would be beneficial for the city.³¹ Another issue was the tramways scheme raised at the Association's monthly meeting of 4th May 1901. All were strongly in favour of the scheme 'which will, if carried out, greatly promote the prosperity of Wakefield and the surrounding district. We believe that the objections raised because of the state of Wakefield bridge are much exaggerated'. There were proposals that the Kirkgate bridge over the Calder would need to be widened but the meeting discussed this and thought that two sets of tramlines across the bridge would regulate the traffic. Mr G Pawson spoke in support of the resolution.

It does not require many words to show that we all desire tramways in Wakefield. (hear, hear) In the twentieth century

²⁸ 8th Feb 1896 Wakefield and West Riding Herald

²⁹ 29th May 1897 Wakefield Express

³⁰ 2nd June 1900 Wakefield and West Riding Herald

³¹ Dec 8th 1900 Wakefield Free Press

it is high time a tramways system was laid down in Wakefield. (hear, hear). In this respect the town is well behind most other towns of a similar size, and this does not go forward in Wakefield as well as in younger towns, We are a little bit ancient and, I dare say, proud of it. But that does not bring grist to the mill. (applause). What we want is to make Wakefield what it ought to be: to have the up-to-date conveniences that other towns possess. Members of the Corporation who failed in rightly interpreting the wishes and the feelings of the bulk of the ratepayers 'ought to be given notice to quit.'

The meeting discussed other towns which had gone ahead with tramways such as Normanton, Dewsbury and Leeds. Not going ahead would leave Wakefield in splendid isolation. The meeting's view was that:

'for the last twenty years the tradesmen had done their very best to make the town attractive (hear, hear) and have done everything possible in order to draw the rural populations into the city. Thousands of pounds had been spent in shop fronts. Now Corporation 'apathy' was setting the town back. 'As the Association represented 300 men who contributed a large portion of the rates they ought to have more attention paid to matters they brought before the Corporation.'

Again Grimshaw's painting bears witness to the tradesmen's desire to make their town attractive. Their investment in this urban improvement and their daily experience and contact with the public meant that they were a powerful pressure group when it came to municipal decision-making.

It was not only the Corporation that the Tradesmen's representatives met with. In February 1902 the Yorkshire Post noted that Pawson was representing the Tradesmen's Association as its Secretary in a deputation from Wakefield public bodies to meet the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway directors. The concern they expressed was that at Kirkgate Station approaches to the station should be improved: 'these are so bad that

travellers unacquainted with the spot have great difficulty in finding the place, particularly at night', a problem which has only recently been tackled effectively.

As Joint Secretary of the Association Pawson was also a major organiser of the ninth annual Tradesmen's Association Fete in Wakefield Park on Bank Holiday 1902³². Unsurprisingly, with his background in entertainment, it was a lavish affair with acrobats, jugglers, cannon ball experts, trapeze artists, comedians, fireworks, and a brass band.

Pawson also became more senior in his other main area of commitment, Wakefield Methodism. As the 'popular' president of the Eastmoor Wesleyan Schools he entertained members of the Eastmoor Cricket Club in January 1898³³. He continued to contribute to musical items. In 1903 Mr Pawson, Joint Honorary Secretary of the Wakefield Methodist Circuit, accompanied the singing on the piano at their meeting.³⁴ In 1907 he was the vocalist at a meeting of the West Parade Brotherhood.³⁵

His business did not always avoid problems. He was obliged to sue a Mrs S E Symonds of 146 Westgate for £26 12s 4d as reported in the Herald on 25th July 1903. He had a running account with Mrs Symonds and in November she and a daughter had purchased a large quantity of articles for the daughter's wedding. He was told that the future husband would pay for these but no payment was forthcoming. He won the case.

During all this time the newspapers had very regularly carried his advertisements but suddenly, in 1906, George Pawson's regular advertising disappeared, and on 3rd November 1906 the Sheffield Daily

George Hobkinson Pawson, draper, 18, Westfield Terrace, and 22, Silver Street, both Wakefield. First meeting November 12th, at 2.10 p.m., at the Official Receiver's Offices, 6, Bond Terrace, Wakefield. Public examination December 6th, at 11 a.m., at the Court House, Wood Street, Wakefield.

³² Wakefield and West Riding Herald 26th July 1902 H

³³ Wakefield Express 15th Jan 1898

³⁴ Wakefield and West Riding Herald 1903 March 7th

³⁵ Wakefield and West Riding Herald 1907 Feb 2nd

Telegraph, relaying information from the London Gazette, reported that he was to be called by the Official Receiver to the Court House in Wakefield to begin the process of dealing with his bankruptcy. By 17th January 1907 the Liverpool Daily Post announced that the auctioneers, Owen and Owen Ltd, had a sale of 'important stock' which including Pawson's goods valued at £1687 7s. Perhaps his busy life and local prestige may have caused him to neglect the foundation of his community standing, the business. How he spent the next eighteen years has not been followed but George Hobkinson Pawson died in Leeds aged 65.

A. E. Wells and Co., 1907 - 1908

THIS WEEK
AT
A. E. Wells & Co.
22, Silver Street.

Ladies' Shirt
Blouses - 1/0½

Ladies' Fancy
Blouses - 1/6½

Ladies' Fancy
Collars - 1d.

Ladies' Cream,
White and Black
Long Lace Gloves,
6½d. & 7½d.

Fast Black Hose
2½d.

Ladies' Hats from
1/0½.

ALL MILLINERY
TRIMMED FREE.

Following Pawson's tenancy, 22 Silver Street was briefly taken on by A. E. Wells and Co. The shop opening was advertised on 9th July 1907 in the Wakefield Advertiser and Gazette with an extremely detailed list of stock, quite different from Pawson's clear simple communication. It is no wonder that the firm joined a competition run by the newspaper in which readers won a prize if they spotted a deliberate spelling error! It was, perhaps, the only way that anyone would read through the full extent of their offerings.

The Intentional Error occurred in the advertisement of Mr A. E. Wells, the word "Alpaca" being mis-spelt "Alpacca."

Their advertising soon became more direct, listing prices for main items. It appears also that these prices were very cheap from this

comment in the same paper on Christmas Eve 1907, although the quality of the goods was perhaps called into question here too.

Despite continued advertising this firm quickly went bankrupt by 12th May 1908.

A. E. WELLS AND CO.
My attention was called to this shop in Silver Street owing to the ridiculously low prices the goods were marked in the window. Surely there never was such a show in hats, corsets, hose, skirts, etc. The reductions certainly are sweeping.

Jefferson's, drapers, 1908-1918

By 1908 another firm, Jefferson's, had taken on the shop with the regularly advertised promise of cheap drapery goods and sales. Like A E Wells, the Jefferson brothers appear not to have been local – Edwin came from Keighley. This advertisement is from the Wakefield Express on September 9th 1911. Messrs Jefferson were listed as new members of the Wakefield Tradesman's Association in the Herald of 3rd May 1913 and they ran the shop until at least 1918.

JEFFERSON'S,
The Popular Drapers.
SWEEPING REDUCTIONS for last few days of Sale.
22, SILVER STREET.

Goodson's Ltd, 1918-1938

After the First World War Goodson's Ltd a mantle³⁶ manufacturers advertising from Leeds took the shop as part of their chain. They had been in existence from before 1900 and, as Robert Goodson and Sons Ltd, had

³⁶ mantle: a loose sleeveless cloak or shawl, worn by women

a large shop in Boar Lane. They were advertising deliveries daily from Paris, Berlin and London! According to an issue of shares advertised in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph of 23rd February 1920 'Goodson's Mantle and Costume Co Ltd were retailing ladies' mantles, costumes etc and had its head office in Manchester with many branches in London and elsewhere, and especially in the great towns of the North.' Their profits had risen from £27,526 in 1914 to £85,415 in January 1919.

The Yorkshire Post of 4th December 1920 announced the sale of the 22 Silver Street property with 'the other premises adjoining' and these were purchased by a Mr A Atkinson of Leeds for £2,800. However Goodson's remained as tenants. They did not appear to advertise in the Wakefield papers but in the Yorkshire Evening Post of 17th Aug 1922 they required a 'young lady as 2nd sales, experienced to exclusive trade for Goodsons Lt, 22 Silver Street, Wakefield'³⁷

POST, FRIDAY, JULY 1, 1938

GOODSON'S

SUMMER SALE

NOW PROCEEDING
Reductions in all Departments

**Coats
Costumes
Gowns and
Millinery, etc.,**

at:

**24-28, Boar Lane - - Leeds
5-7, King Street, Huddersfield
15, Spurriergate - - - York
22, Silver Street - Wakefield**

On July 1st 1938 they were still in the property. In this era, although its customers may have been more affluent than during the previous years of rapidly changing businesses, the shop had become a minor part of a large chain.

Recent Years

³⁷ Yorkshire Evening Post 17th August 1922.

At 22 Silver Street a remarkable run of shopkeepers had, through several centuries, maintained the focus on drapery and clothing. Each business had brought an individual interpretation and offer of goods and services to keep the shop viable as times changed. Those local businessmen whose livelihood came from the one shop seemed more appreciated in the town than the chains which from time to time took over. However, in more recent times this Silver Street site has become less central as the town's busier shopping areas have moved away from Westgate. Larger chains have superseded these smaller independent shops and ready-made fashions have replaced the need for drapery. After Goodson's time it is not clear what happened to the shop for several decades but certainly, by the 1970s, the shop had lost its connection with any form of drapery.

Information from the Council Planning Portal and recent photographs show the rapid turnover in the different types of businesses using this property in the last few decades. In 1979 an application for change of use of the first-floor premises of 22 Silver Street to a Health and Beauty Salon was accepted.

In 1981 the ground floor shop was Coombs shoe repair shop. This image from 1981³⁸ shows a well-presented shop, with advertising for a solarium and hairdresser in

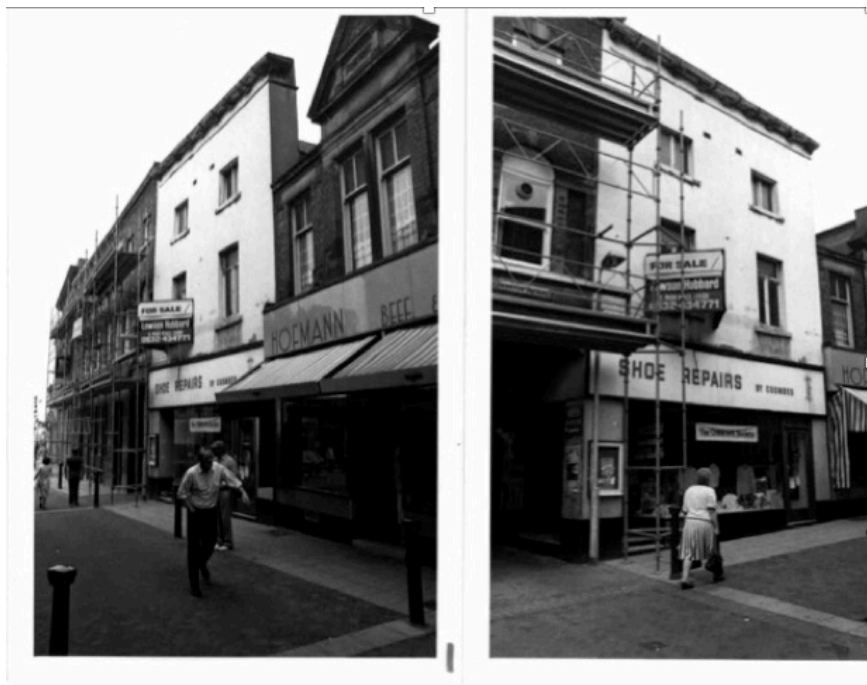


the premises above. In August 1985 a restaurant and hot food takeaway took over the ground floor, although it is not clear how much of the building was in use for this purpose – it may only have used the frontage shop. This cannot have lasted for long as by September 1987 the Brittanica Assurance Company was applying for planning permission. The whole

³⁸ Wakefield Libraries, Twixt Aire and Calder: x102594

length of the building - 22 Silver Street with 2/2A/4 Barstow Square - was specified in this application.

The complete vacation of the property by earlier businesses at that time allowed a survey of the whole building leading to a Heritage Environment Report prepared in 1988 by Peter Thornborrow, Historic Buildings Officer



for the West Yorkshire Archaeological Service.³⁹ This is available to read online and there are related photographs and a plan of the building available to view in the History Centre.⁴⁰ These Silver Street frontage photographs taken for this report show that the building was for sale and the shoe shop had become a Children's Society charity shop. The property seemed a great deal more run down than the previous photograph taken seven years earlier.

³⁹ West Yorkshire Historic Environment Report R/13001 <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>.

⁴⁰ WYAS Wakefield History Centre WYHER/13001

There have been several changes of use since then. A decade after the Britannic Assurance moved in the frontage shop became a newsagents. Upstairs was a health and beauty salon from 1979, then a tanning studio, and, in 1996, the Central Recruitment Agency had the premises.

This photograph of the entrance to Barstow Square⁴¹ in 1996 shows that at that stage there was a doorway leading from within the passage entry to access the stairs leading up to the Recruitment Agency. Today these are accessed from a door on the Silver Street frontage which leads to First Choice Recruitment Agency who occupy the first floor of the whole building.

The story of this building reflects the constant reinvention of businesses over hundreds of years as tenants stamp their characters and retail ideas on their shop. The newsagents now in 22 Silver Street have completely refitted the interior and the frontage is newly painted.



©Lesley Taylor 2022

⁴¹ Wakefield Libraries, Twixt Aire and Calder x106186.

**This series of booklets about
Westgate buildings has been written
and designed by members of
Wakefield Historical Society as a
result of research for the Westgate
Heritage Action Zone project
2020-2024.**

We are grateful to Historic England and
Wakefield Council for their help in funding
the printing.



Historic England



WAKEFIELD
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

wakefieldcouncil