

60 and 62 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard: 1850-1914



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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.

60 AND 62 WESTGATE AND 2-4 THOMPSON'S YARD: 1850-1914

INTRODUCTION

This essay examines aspects of the histories of three adjacent Wakefield properties, 2-4 Thompson's Yard and 60 and 62 Westgate. It concentrates on the period from 1850 to 1914 as these are the best documented years in their history. The three properties are not only linked by their location, but also by shared ownership and occupancy and by the fact that since 1977 they have been Grade II listed buildings.¹

Of the three properties, 2-4 Thompson's Yard is the oldest. Built as a house in the 1790s, it is a double-fronted brick-building of three storeys with a two storeyed bay window. In 1979, following a fire, part of the house was demolished by Wakefield



Thompson's Yard entrance and the Gissing house door
© Lesley Taylor

Metropolitan District

Council, but the demolished section was soon afterwards faithfully restored. The property was in the shared occupation of the Gissing Trust and the NatWest Bank in January 2022.²

¹ For details of the listing of 60-62 see <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1258897> . For 2-4 see <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1258713>

² The history of the properties is traced in C. Brook, 'George Gissing's Birthplace: 60, Westgate and 2&4 Thompson's Yard', Gissing Newsletter, vol. XIII, no. 2, April 1977, pages 8-16, and in

Numbers 60 and 62 Westgate date from the 1840s. Both are built in brick and have three storeys and originally each had a cellar kitchen. Number 62 extends westwards over the arched entrance to Thompson's Yard while there is access from number 60 to 2-4 Thompson's Yard. In January 2022, number 62 was occupied by a convenience store and number 60 by the NatWest Bank.

Until properties in Westgate were renumbered c1890, number 60 was number 55 and number 62 was number 57. To avoid confusion, the modern numbering is used throughout this essay. The two buildings stood in the part of Westgate known in the nineteenth century as the Corn Market. This area owed its name to the open air dealing in corn which took place there until the opening in 1820 of Wakefield's first corn exchange. Erected on a site between Westgate and Silver Street, this building was supplanted in 1838 by an imposing new corn exchange in Westgate. When 60 and 62 were built shortly afterwards they were almost opposite this building.

The Corn Market was used for various gatherings including political meetings. It was, for example, from the balcony of the building replaced by numbers 60 and 62 that in the early nineteenth century Yorkshire's M.Ps. addressed the public when they visited Wakefield.³

OWNERS

During the Georgian period Wakefield was a centre of the woollen trade. Among those who benefited from this trade was Samuel Thompson, senior, a wool merchant, and he was responsible for

K. Taylor, '2-4 Thompson's Yard, Wakefield: Home to a Talented Family', in K. Taylor, ed., 'Wakefield District Heritage', vol. II, (Wakefield, 19790, pages 30-31.

³ K. Taylor, 'The Making of Wakefield 1801-1900', (Barnsley, 2008), pages 86-88, deals with the corn market; 'Wakefield Express', 24.12.1870, page 8, has an article by 'Rasper' based on a conversation with an 'old inhabitant', probably Henry Clarkson, describing the building 60 and 62 replaced.

building 2-4 Thompson's Yard in the 1790s.⁴ By 1850, the house was part of the Thompson's Yard estate of William Wilkinson, an estate which included the recently built 60 and 62 Westgate. Wilkinson's property in Westgate and Thompson's Yard was offered for private sale in 1850 and in 1865 it was sold in lots at auction.⁵ The purchaser of 2-4 Thompson's Yard and 60 and 62 Westgate was Thomas Gissing, a pharmacist who was leasing the first two properties. In 1874, Gissing's widow, Margaret, sold all three properties to John Chaplin, the pharmacist who had bought her late husband's business. Following his death in 1913, John Chaplin's property was inherited by his son, Edward. He sold 62 Westgate to the Britannic Insurance Company in 1932 and later 60 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard were bought by Boots the Chemists.

OCCUPANTS: THE CENSUS

The decennial census provides a series of snapshots of the households living in the properties. As 2 – 4 Thompson's Yard was usually occupied by the same household as 60 Westgate, it is omitted.

Census	62 Westgate	60 Westgate
1851	George Nichols Bookseller, stationer and printer	Matthew Hick Chemist and druggist
1861	John Mc Cabe Bookseller and stationer	Thomas Gissing Pharmaceutical chemist
	Richard Grice Aked Landed proprietor	

⁴ J. Goodchild, 'Wakefield and Wool', (Wakefield, 1981), pages 16-17, outlines the careers of Samuel Thompson, senior and junior.

⁵ 'Wakefield Journal', 1.3.1850, page 1; 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 13.10.1865, page 2.

1871	William Carruthers Hatter	Margaret Gissing
1881	William Carruthers Hatter	John L Chaplin Pharmaceutical chemist
1891	James McInnes Newspaper proprietor	John L Chaplin Pharmaceutical chemist
1901	Henry Gloyne Tailor	John L Chaplin Pharmaceutical chemist
1911	No residents	John H Chaplin Pharmaceutical chemist

OCCUPANTS: OTHER SOURCES

Other sources supplement the information provided by the census. These sources are particularly useful for 62 Westgate because the property had a more rapid turnover of tenants than 60 and it was sometimes in multiple occupancy. A trade directory of 1853 mentioned not only Matthew Hick, bookseller, at 62, but also James Elliot, accountant and agent.⁶ Four years later, another directory listed John McCabe, bookseller, at the address and William Walker, agent to the Wakefield Charities.⁷ Another directory, this time from 1888, named three solicitors, William Lymington, John Rowlands and Thomas Catterall, together with Watson, Williams and Watson, dressmakers, as the occupants of 62. A newspaper advertisement from 1904 gives 62 as the business address of Charles Richardson, architect.⁸ Richardson is not mentioned as a tenant in the 1910 tax valuation of the property, but Johnson Brothers, dry-cleaners, are named. It is possible that Richardson was not included because he was

⁶ W. White, 'Directory and Gazetteer of Leeds, Bradford ...', (Sheffield, 1853), pages 356 and 357.

⁷ 'Kelly's Post Office Directory of the West Riding', (London, 1857), page 720.

⁸ 'Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser', 5.8.1904, page 2.

a tenant of Johnsons who were themselves tenants of John L. Chaplin.⁹ In 1915, there was still an architect's office at 62, although the practice was headed by William Bell.¹⁰ By 1920, Bell had been joined in his practice by Mitchell Kay.¹¹

Number 2-4 Thompson's Yard was in multiple occupancy at the time of its sale in 1865. A newspaper advertisement gives the tenants as the Wakefield Charities, Ralph Lindley and Thomas Gissing.¹²

NOTES ON SOME THE OCCUPANTS OF 60 WESTGATE AND 2-4 THOMPSON'S YARD

MATTHEW BUSSEY HICK, 1822-1905, was born in York and was the son of Matthew Hick, a watchmaker, and his wife Mary.¹³ He trained as a druggist and chemist and worked as a druggist's assistant for Richard Newby in Bradford.¹⁴ He moved to Wakefield where he opened his own business, although the precise location of his shop is unknown. In 1849, he took the shop at 60 Westgate and possibly 2-4 Thompson's Yard. Following the departure of the bookseller George Nichols from 62, Hick ran the bookshop as well as the pharmacy. In 1856 he gave up his pharmacy in order to concentrate on his chemical and dyeing business in Wakefield's Chald Lane. Among his other business interests was an insurance agency and a directorship of the Wakefield Rolling Stock Company. He was also the president of the Wakefield Equitable Permanent Benefit Building Society, an organisation his successor at the pharmacy, Thomas Gissing, was also involved in.¹⁵

⁹ West Yorkshire Archive Service, (WYAS), Wakefield, C243/508, 1910 tax valuation, entry number 182.

¹⁰ 'Building News and Engineering Journal', vol. 108, 1915, page 288.

¹¹ 'Leeds Mercury', 31.1.1920, page 3.

¹² 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 13.10.1865, page 2.

¹³ For Hick's life see, A. Petyt, 'The Gissings' Wakefield Circle IV: The Hick Family', Gissing Journal, vol. XLIII, no.1, January 2007, pages 23-32.

¹⁴ 1841 census.

¹⁵ 'Wakefield and West Riding Herald', 11.1.1873, page 3, advertisement for the Wakefield Rolling Stock Company; 'Wakefield Free Press', 28.11.1863, advertisement for the Wakefield Equitable Permanent Benefit Building Society.

Hick attended All Saints, Wakefield's parish church, before giving up his pharmacy and later went to St Michael's at the end of Westgate. An active member of the Church Institution, an Anglican adult education organisation, he also belonged to its rival, the Mechanics' Institution. Like many Anglicans, he was a Conservative in politics. He served on the borough council from 1857 until 1860 as a councillor for the St John's Ward. For 38 years he was also on the governing body of the Clayton Hospital and Wakefield Dispensary. In addition, he was the secretary of the West Riding Chamber of Agriculture, an organisation which promoted the interests of landowners and farmers. A keen theatre goer, Hick was in the 1850s one of the organisers of the public readings given at the Corn Exchange by the actors Fanny Kemble and Charles Macready. He also formed a company of his own, the Tragedians of the City, which in 1894 presented Bulwer Lytton's 'The Lady of Lyons' to large audiences in the Corn Exchange.

In 1849, Hick married Mary Archer, the daughter of an Ossett solicitor, John Sanderson Archer, and they had three sons and six daughters. Mary predeceased her husband in 1879. Hick supported the Gissing family after Thomas Gissing's death and in 1886 George Gissing sent him a copy of one of his novels with the inscription, 'To Matthew B. Hick from the Author, in grateful recognition of kind words and deeds innumerable.'¹⁶ Gissing also counted Hick's son Henry, who became a doctor, among his friends. Hick's probate valuation was £2,578.¹⁷

THOMAS WALLER GISSING, 1829-1870, was born in Halesworth, Suffolk, and was a son of Robert Gissing, a master shoemaker, and his wife Jane.¹⁸ Thanks to the generosity of Ellen Sophia Whittington, a lady of independent means, Gissing attended Halesworth Academy, a school which provided a far more advanced education than most

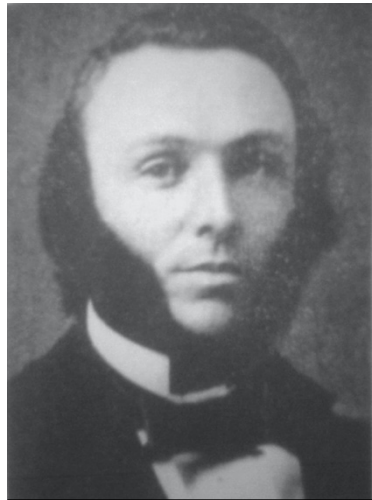
¹⁶ P.F. Mattheisen, A.C. Young and P. Coustillas, eds., 'The Collected Letters of George Gissing: vol. 3 1886-1888', (Athens, Ohio UP, 1992), page 33, note 3.

¹⁷ National Probate Calendar, 1905, page 140.

¹⁸ For Thomas Gissing's life, see, P. Coustillas, 'The Heroic Life of George Gissing. Part 1: 1857-1888', (London, 2011), particularly pages 13-21, and B. Postmus, 'Thomas Waller Gissing before his Move to Wakefield: Some Materials towards his Biography', Gissing Journal, vol. XLVI, no. 1, January 2010, pages 1-18.

elementary schools.¹⁹ Armed with this schooling, Gissing became an apprentice to a chemist and druggist in Ipswich. He then worked as an assistant in pharmacies in Leicester, Worcester and Salisbury. In 1856, he purchased Matthew Hick's Westgate chemist's business and in 1865 he bought at auction 60 and 62 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard. He was already a tenant of part of the latter along with the Wakefield Charities and Ralph Linfield.

Gissing was deeply involved in the political and cultural life of his adopted town. He had been a Chartist while living in Leicester, but in Wakefield he established himself among the town's leading Liberals and was a councillor for the St John's Ward from 1867 until his death in 1870. His prominent position made him the target of an unsuccessful Conservative plot to outbid him at the auction at which he bought 60 and 62 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard.²⁰ Parliamentary elections in Wakefield were marked by widespread bribery and corruption, something Gissing seems to have



Thomas Waller Gissing, *The Gissing Journal*, J W Stainer

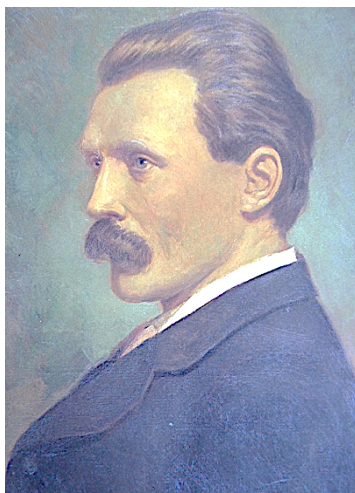
been willing to condone in the case of the Liberals. In 1859-1860, he defended Wakefield's corrupt Liberal parliamentary candidate in the pages of 'The Leader', a radical weekly.²¹

¹⁹ For Ellen Sophia Whittington, see B. Postmus, 'Ellen Sophia Whittington's Generosity: The Sources of the Whittington Fortune', *Gissing Journal*, vol. XLVIII, no.3, pages 3-22.

²⁰ 'Wakefield Free Press', 11.11.1865, page 8; 'Wakefield and West Riding Herald', 10.11.1865, page 2.

²¹ B. Postmus, 'Thomas Waller Gissing and the Wakefield Bribers', *Gissing Journal*, vol. LIV, no. 4, October 2020, pages 16-31.

Along with many other Wakefield Liberals, Gissing was a member of the Mechanics' Institution and served on its committee and as its librarian. In 1865, Gissing was one of the members of the Mechanics' Institution who co-operated with their rivals in the Church Institute to organise the Wakefield Industrial and Fine Arts Exhibition. Gissing had more than a professional interest in botany and published two books on the subject, 'The Ferns and Fern Allies of Wakefield' in 1862 and 'Materials for a Flora of Wakefield' in 1867.²² He was also a poet, four volumes of his verse appearing before his arrival in Yorkshire. Among the other local bodies Gissing played a part in were the Clayton Hospital and Dispensary, the Lancasterian School and the School of Art and Craft. In addition, he was a vice-president of the Wakefield Equitable Permanent Benefit Building Society.²³ Gissing was eager to raise the standards and status of the pharmaceutical profession and was the very active local secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society.



George Gissing, © Gissing Centre

While he was in Worcester, Gissing met Margaret Bedford, the daughter of a solicitor's managing clerk. The couple married at Grasmere in 1857 and had five children. After her husband's death Margaret Gissing sold her husband's business to John Chaplin and in 1874 Chaplin bought 60 and 62 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard from her. She remained in Wakefield where her daughters, Margaret and Ellen, later opened a successful boys' school.

²² For Gissing the naturalist, see R. A. Baker, 'Thomas Waller Gissing and his Wakefield Friends: Their Work in Natural History from 1850 to 1870', *Gissing Journal*, vol. LI, no. 4, October 2017, pages 22-31.

²³ Gissing's obituaries in the 'Wakefield Free Press', 31.12.1870, page 8, and the 'Wakefield Express', 31.12.1870, page 5, detail the many organisations Gissing belonged to.

Her son George established himself as a writer who is best-known today for his novel 'New Grub Street'.

Gissing's probate valuation was 'under £4,000', that is between £3,000 and £4,000.²⁴

RALPH LINFIELD, 1810-1866, was born in Richmond, Surrey, and was the son of Thomas Linfield, a butcher, and his wife, Elizabeth. He became an ironmonger and tinner and had a house and shop in Silver Street from at least the 1840s. When in 1865 Thomas Gissing bought 60 and 62 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard, Linfield was one of the tenants of the Thompson's Yard property.²⁵

Linfield was an Anglican and was a churchwarden at All Saints, Wakefield's parish church. He was also a member of the Church Institution and served as its lay secretary.²⁶ When In 1855, the Institution was planning to build its own premises, he was among the first trustees of the proposed building, the Church Institute.²⁷ He also played a role in Wakefield's local government as a highway surveyor and as an overseer of the poor and a poor law guardian.²⁸ In 1842, he married Sarah Parkinson, daughter of a Hemsworth farmer, Paul Parkinson. They had at least two children and their son, Ralph, became an Anglican clergyman. After her husband's death, Sarah Linfield remained in Wakefield. When she died in 1881, the probate valuation of her estate was 'under £5,000', that is between £4,000 and £5,000.²⁹

The circumstances of Linfield's death were described at an inquest held at the Woolpacks Inn in February 1866. After he had attended a

²⁴ National Probate Calendar, 1871, page 107.

²⁵ Surrey History Centre, P7/1/5, St Mary Magdalene, Richmond, baptismal register, 4.5.1810; WYAS, Wakefield, D36/19, St Helen, Hemsworth, marriage register, 4.7.1842, where the occupation of Thomas Linfield is given as butcher; 1841-1861 censuses.

²⁶ 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 14.5.1869, page 2.

²⁷ The history of the Institution is covered by K. Taylor, 'The Encouragement of Kindly Intercourse: Wakefield Church Institution 1845-1930' in K. Taylor, ed., 'Aspects of Wakefield 3', (Barnsley, 2001), pages 166-178. Linfield is mentioned on page 168.

²⁸ Wakefield Libraries Local Studies Index, 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 2.3.1866, page 2; 14.4.1848, pages 4 and 5; 7.11.1851, page 7; 3.4.1852, page 5

²⁹ National Probate Calendar, 1881, page 452. The Rev. Ralph Parkinson Linfield proved Sarah Linfield's will.

service at St Michael's, Linfield had collapsed in Westgate and had died within five minutes. His last words, 'I beg your pardon', were spoken to a railway station clerk he had fallen against. The jury returned a verdict of 'natural death'.³⁰

Linfield's estate was valued at 'under £2,000' for probate, that is between £1,000 and £2,000.³¹

THE WAKEFIELD CHARITIES were one of the tenants of 2-4 Thompson's Yard when Thomas Gissing bought the property in 1865. The trustees or governors of the charities were described by the solicitor William Banks, a friend of Thomas Gissing's, in his book, 'A List of Provincial Words in Use in Wakefield in Yorkshire', (Wakefield, 1865).

'GUVERNERS. "The Governors of the Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth at Wakefield, in the county of York", are popularly known as "T'Guvernors", or "Governors of the Charities". Being a well-known corporate body under the Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth, 19th November, 1591, numerous devises and bequests have been made to them, as trustees for particular charitable purposes; and they now administer a great variety of donations ... The various estates are now chiefly Real property, of improving value, situate in many parts of the county, and producing at present about £3,200 a year, of which rents from the now weekly Cattle Fair are part. They are fourteen in number, and their chairman, elected by themselves yearly, is called "Spokesman"'.³²

JOHN LAMBERT CHAPLIN, 1825-1913, was born near Colchester and was the son of John Chaplin, an oil merchant, and Sarah Chaplin, his wife. He served an apprenticeship with a Colchester chemist and druggist before working for chemists 'in London and the country'. In 1854, he moved from J. Bell and Co., Oxford Street, to take over the 'Drug and Chemical Establishment' of Robert Lyon in Colchester's High

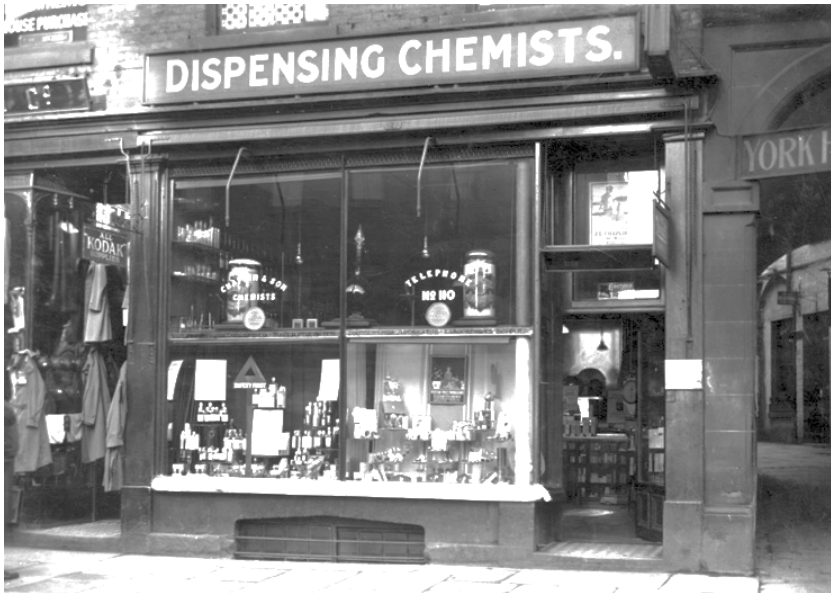
³⁰ WYAS, C493/K/2/1/100, coroner's notebook, inquest on Ralph Linfield, 26.2.1866.

³¹ National Probate Calendar, 1866, page 276.

³² W.S. Banks, 'A List of Provincial Words in Use in Wakefield in Yorkshire', (Wakefield, 1865), pages 30-31.

Street. In the advertisement Chaplin placed in the 'Essex Standard', he noted that he was going to use Lyon's prescription books and his formula for 'all proprietary medicine peculiar to his ship.' Six years later, he expanded his business by opening a 'Photographic Depot' next to his shop.³³

In 1871, Chaplin disposed of his Colchester business to T.W. Bates and took over Thomas Gissing's old pharmacy. Three years later he purchased 2-4 Thompson's Yard and 60 and 62 Westgate from Margaret Gissing. He lived at 60 and 2-4 until his retirement more than 30 years later and then moved to Wentworth Terrace.³⁴



Chaplin's shop, © Wakefield Libraries Photographic Collection

³³ TNA, RG4/1509, Lion Walk Independent Meeting House, Colchester, baptismal register, 17.10.1825; 1841 census; 'Essex Standard', 17.11.1854, page 1 and 23.3.1860, page 1.

³⁴ Coustillas, 'The Heroic Life', page 53; 'Wakefield Express', 17.5.1913, page 11, obituary of J. L. Chaplin. The obituary wrongly states that Chaplin moved directly from London to Wakefield.

In its obituary the 'Wakefield Express' described Chaplin as 'a man who held tenaciously to his Nonconformist principles'. A Congregationalist, he was one of Zion chapel's deacons and in 1892 he was elected a chapel trustee. He supported the Streethouse Mission, near Pontefract, serving as its treasurer for many years, and he was also a 'good friend' of the London Missionary Society. In addition, he was a governor of the Yorkshire Independent College in Bradford, a training school for Congregational ministers.

Unsurprisingly for a Nonconformist, Chaplin was a Liberal in politics, but he seems to have largely avoided involvement in local government. This may have been because of his unassuming character and his dislike of what the 'Express' termed 'argument' and 'discord'. He did, however, join the Wakefield Tradesmen's Association, becoming its president, and he was a member of the committee of the Clayton Hospital and Dispensary. Chaplin also joined the West Riding Chamber of Agriculture soon after arriving in Yorkshire. He was also linked to the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union: when it met in Wakefield in 1882, he led one of its excursion groups.³⁵

In 1855, after he had taken his shop in Colchester, Chaplin married Elizabeth Mitchell in London. They had two daughters and three sons, two of whom survived their father. Elizabeth Chaplin predeceased her husband. On his death, his estate was valued at £7,503.³⁶

JOHN HENRY CHAPLIN, 1859-1912, was born in Colchester and was the eldest son of John Lambert Chaplin and Elizabeth Chaplin.³⁷ After his parents moved to Wakefield, he attended Silcoates School and then trained as a pharmaceutical chemist in Leicester, Colchester and

³⁵ 'Wakefield Express', 17.5.1913, page 11; 'Sheffield Independent', 20.6.1895, page 7, Yorkshire Independent College; 'Leeds Mercury', 29.1.1872, page 4, Chamber of Agriculture; 'Huddersfield Chronicle', 12.9.1882, page 3, Naturalists' Union.

³⁶ 'Chelmsford Chronicle', 23.3.1855, page 3; 'Wakefield Express', 17.5.1913, page 11; National Probate Calendar, 1913, page 354.

³⁷ Unless otherwise stated, this biography is based on Chaplin's obituary in the 'Wakefield Express', 17.2.1912, page 8; Civil Registration Birth Index, April-June 1859, vol.4a, page 257.

London.³⁸ On his return to Wakefield, he joined the family business and lived at 60 Westgate and 2-4 Thompson's Yard. His obituary in the 'Wakefield Express' notes he had 'intelligence and business abilities of a superior order'.

Like his father, Chaplin worshipped at the Zion Congregational Chapel where he was a deacon and superintendent of the Sunday school. Although he did not enter local politics, he took a keen interest in political matters and supported the Liberals. He became both a governor and a trustee of his old school, Silcoates, and belonged to the Tradesmen's Association. A sufferer from chronic asthma, his conditioned worsened in 1912 and it contributed to his death at his Westgate home. Chaplin, who remained single, left an estate valued at £4,336, later re-sworn at £4,217, for probate.³⁹

EDWARD MITCHELL CHAPLIN, 1867-1948, was born in Colchester and was the second son of John Lambert Chaplin and Elizabeth Chaplin. He attended Silcoates School and then worked in the office of the public analyst for Leeds before working for an analytical and pharmaceutical laboratory in London. After studying at the University of Würzburg in Germany, he was awarded his Ph.D. in 1892. The following year, he was appointed city analyst for Wakefield, a position he held for more than thirty years. In 1908, he

Boots at No 60 © Wakefield Libraries Photographic Collections



³⁸ The membership records of Zion Chapel, Wakefield, indicate Chaplin was in Leicester between 1876 and 1879: WYAS, Wakefield, C28/4, Roll of Church Members, 1875, and C28/14, Roll of Church Members, 1879. At the time of the 1881 census, he was a chemical student/analytical chemist lodging in Great Ormond Street, London.

³⁹ National Probate Calendar, 1912, page 357.

also became city analyst for Lincoln.⁴⁰

Following the death of his father in 1913, he inherited 2-4 Thompson's Yard and 60 and 62 Westgate as well as the family's business. The pharmacy was carried on by a manager until Chaplin sold it to Boots. Chaplin married Martha May Dawson in 1899. Before the First World War they lived at 2-4 Thompson's Yard and 60 Westgate, but later they moved to Ilkley.⁴¹

NOTES ON SOME OF THE OCCUPANTS OF 62 WESTGATE

GEORGE NICHOLS, 1821-1875, was the son of Thomas Nichols, a Wakefield printer, and his wife Margaret.⁴² In 1833, Thomas Nichols bought the 'Wakefield and Halifax Journal' from Rowland Hurst, junior, but in the following year he was bankrupted. He revived his printing business and on his death in 1848 it was inherited by his sons James, Thomas and George. The following year, they founded a Liberal weekly newspaper, the 'Wakefield and West Riding Examiner'. This was a financial failure and it was absorbed by the Tory 'Wakefield Journal' in 1852.⁴³ One of the creditors of the firm was J. Greenwood and in 1851 Greenwood sued George Nichols for breaking into his premises and seizing printing materials.⁴⁴ These setbacks no doubt played a part in Nichols' decision to give up his book and stationery shop to the chemist Matthew Hick.

⁴⁰ Civil Registration Birth Index, 1867, July- September, vol. 4a, page 295; National Probate Calendar, 1948, page 119; 'Food and Sanitation', 30.9.1893, page 297, reports Chaplin's Wakefield appointment and details his early career. Chaplin was reappointed Wakefield's analyst as late as 1927: 'The Municipal Journal', 1927, page 1697. 'Nottingham Evening Post', 7.10.1908, page 7, appointment in Lincoln.

⁴¹ Civil Registration Marriage Index, July-September 1899, vol. 9d, page 661; the Electoral Register for the Pudsey and Otley Electoral Division, 1922, page 90, gives the Chaplins' address as Denton Road, Middleton, Ilkley.

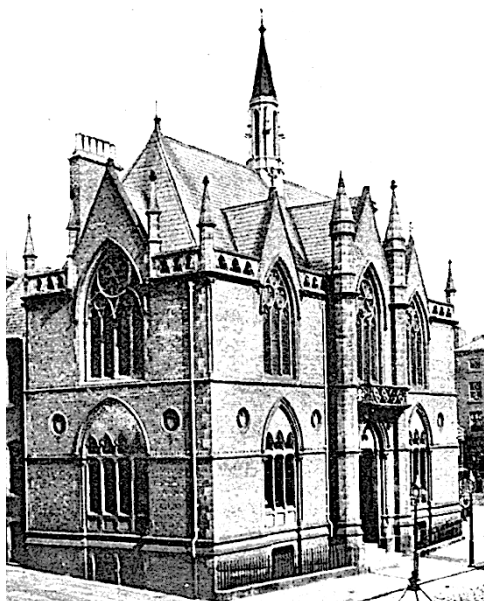
⁴² WYAS, Wakefield, WDP3/2/2, All Saints, Wakefield, baptismal register, 29 June 1821.

⁴³ K. Taylor, 'The Making of Wakefield', page 65; 'Leeds Mercury', 23.2.1850, page 6 and 13.7.1850, page 1.

⁴⁴ Wakefield Library Service, Local Studies Index, 'Wakefield Journal', 2.5.1851, page 8.

In 1852, Nichols married Mary Ann Sanders, the daughter of an exciseman, and the couple emigrated to Australia where Nichols opened a book and stationery shop in Melbourne.⁴⁵ They returned to Wakefield at least once as one of their daughters, Amy Isabell, was baptised at All Saints in 1859.⁴⁶

JOHN McCABE, c1805-1869, was born in Edinburgh. He worked for fourteen years as a manager for a York bookseller before moving to Wakefield in 1853 when he purchased Matthew Hick's bookshop. McCabe retired because of ill-health in 1868 and the bookshop was run until 1870 by Thomas Ridge.⁴⁷



Church Institute. ©Wakefield Museums and Castles

McCabe was an Anglican and attended All Saints, Wakefield's parish church. In 1860, he helped to organise a performance of the 'Messiah' at the corn exchange to raise funds for the restoration of the church.⁴⁸ He was also a committee member, lay secretary and treasurer of the Church Institution. In 1855, together with Matthew Hick, he was among the first trustees of the new premises planned for the Institution, the Church Institute.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ WYAS, Wakefield, D3/35, All Saints, Wakefield, marriage register, 27 June 1852; Wakefield Library Service, Local Studies Index, 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 7.10.1853, page 5, letter from Nichols in Australia.

⁴⁶ WYAS, Wakefield, WDP3/2/8, All Saints, Wakefield, baptismal register, 6 January 1859.

⁴⁷ 'Leeds Intelligencer', 29.10.1853, p. 1; 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 15.5.1869, p. 2.

⁴⁸ 'Barnsley Chronicle', 7.1.1860, page 4.

⁴⁹ 'Wakefield Journal and Examiner', 15.5.1869, p. 2; Taylor, 'Wakefield Church Institution', p. 168.

Thomas Gissing was one of his neighbours and in 1862 Mac Cabe was among the subscribers listed in Gissing's book 'The Ferns and Fern Allies of Wakefield.'

McCabe married Ann Johnson at Bramham in 1835.⁵⁰ They may have been childless: no children appear in censuses from 1841. After her husband's death, Ann McCabe moved to Cliffe Place, Wakefield. When she died in 1872, her will was proved by Matthew Hick. McCabe's estate was valued at under £200 for probate.⁵¹

RICHARD GRICE AKED, c1799-1880, was lodging with John and Ann McCabe when the 1861 census was taken. He was born in Bradford and like many businessmen in that growing town he was a worsted manufacturer. During the famous 1825 strike in the local worsted industry, he was among the manufacturers who defeated the workers' trade union.⁵² Among his other business interests was a coal merchants and he invested in the Leeds and Bradford Railway, the Halifax Joint Stock Banking Company and the Bradford Water Company.⁵³ He was active in Bradford's public life, serving on the management board of Bradford Infirmary and joining in protests against the foul state of the Bradford Canal.⁵⁴ In the 1830s and 1840s he subscribed to public appeals to relieve poverty in Bradford, Ireland and Scotland.⁵⁵ Aked never married and the 1861 and 1871 censuses show him living as a lodger or boarder in Wakefield, a town where he had relatives. His probate record, which describes him as 'late of Wakefield', indicates he had a personal estate of £17,000-£18,000.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Ancestry, England, Select Marriages, 1538-1973, marriage of John Mac Cabe and Ann Johnson, 10 January 1835.

⁵¹ National Probate Calendar, 1869, page 2; National Probate Calendar, 1872, page 3.

⁵² J. James, 'History of the Woollen Manufacture in England', (London, 1857), page 405;

⁵³ 'Leeds Times', 4.3.1848, page 2 and 21.2.1846, page 1; 'Leeds Mercury', 19.2.1853, page 3; 'Bradford Observer', 26.4.1838, page 1.

⁵⁴ 'Bradford Observer', 29.1.1852, page 1, and 12.10.1840, page 5.

⁵⁵ 'Bradford Observer', 30.3.1837, page 5, 6.2.1840, page 3 and 14.1.1847, page 4

⁵⁶ National Probate Calendar, 1881, page 33.

WILLIAM DIXON CARRUTHERS, c1839- ?, was born in Lockerbie, Dumfries, and was the son of William Carruthers, a draper.⁵⁷ He became a hatter and he was living at number 62 at the time of the 1871 and 1881 censuses. In 1881, his business failed and at a meeting of his creditors it was disclosed that his assets amounted to £341 and his liabilities to £1,067.⁵⁸ Following the liquidation of his business, he moved to Northampton where in 1891 he was working as a hatter's manager.⁵⁹ While he was in Wakefield, he was a member of the Tradesmen's Association and he was involved in the management of Wakefield Trinity Football Club, serving as a vice-chairman in 1879, and also in Wakefield Swimming Club.⁶⁰ In 1869, Carruthers married Maria Annie Baker of Shrewsbury, the daughter of an upholsterer, and they had at least eight children. After 1894, Carruthers disappears from the records.

WILLIAM LYMINGTON WILLIAMS, JOHN WILLIAM ROWLANDS and THOMAS CATTERALL were three solicitors who occupied part of 62 in 1888. They benefited not only from Wakefield's position as a commercial centre, but also from its role in the local government and judicial systems. Although all three had left 62 by 1893, they remained in Wakefield: Williams was at Egremont House in Northgate, Catterall was also in Northgate while Rowlands' office was in the Old Corn Exchange. In 1888, the solicitors shared 62 with a firm of dressmakers, Watson, Williams and Watson, but this business had also gone by 1893 and seems no longer to have been in Wakefield.⁶¹

JAMES MCINNES, 1844-1915, was born in Crieff, Perthshire, and was the son of Peter McInnes, a general agent. As a young man, he became a journalist for the 'Wakefield Free Press', the town's first weekly 1d newspaper. By the time he was living at 62 Westgate in 1891, he was the paper's owner and editor and its printing works were in

⁵⁷ WYAS, Wakefield, WDP3/3/16, All Saints, Wakefield, marriage register, 1 January 1869.

⁵⁸ 'Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser', 28.10.1881, page 4.

⁵⁹ 1891 census.

⁶⁰ 'Sheffield Daily Telegraph', 26.2.1880, page 8; 'Leeds Mercury', 17.9.1879, page 8; 'Leeds Times', 18.6.1881, page 3.

⁶¹ 'Kelly's Directory of the West Riding', (London, 1893), pages 888, 880 and 883.

Thompson's Yard. McInnes sold the paper c1901 and it seems to have ceased publication in 1902.⁶²

McInnes was a radical Liberal in politics. He was elected a Wakefield councillor in 1887, a position he held for more than ten years, and he also served briefly as an alderman. A fellow councillor described him as 'a fighting man', one who never hesitated to speak his views. One of the causes he supported was Wakefield's adoption of the Free Library Act, although he had to wait until 1905 before the town's first public library was opened in Drury Lane. McInnes was also a member of Wakefield school board and a governor of the Wakefield charities.

McInnes was the hon. secretary of the Normanton Division Liberal Association and played a part in parliamentary politics as the election agent for the Lib-Lab candidates for the Normanton constituency. The constituency, where the majority of voters were colliers, was represented by the miners' leader Ben Pickard from 1885 until 1904. McInnes strongly supported the miners' union and during the prolonged and bitter 1893 coal dispute, he worked with the Nonconformist Relief Committee at Normanton.⁶³

In 1871, McInness married Sarah Anne Clapham, daughter of a Wakefield corn factor, and they had two sons, both of whom became journalists. Sarah McInnes died at the end of 1914 and her husband, who had been in failing health for some time, died shortly afterwards at his home in College Grove Road. His effects were valued at £11,199 for probate.⁶⁴

HENRY WALTER GLOYNE, 1849-1928, was a son of Henry Gloyne, a Wakefield grocer and tea dealer, and his wife, Johann.⁶⁵ He became a tailor in Wakefield and in 1877 established his own business in Wood

⁶² 'Wakefield Express', 13.2.1915, page 10, obituary of Mc Innes.

⁶³ 'Leeds Mercury', 7.12.1893, page 8.

⁶⁴ Ancestry, West Yorkshire Non-Conformist Records, 1646-1985, West Parade Chapel, Wakefield, marriage register, 7 March 1871; National Probate Calendar, 1915, page 194.

⁶⁵ WYAS, Wakefield, C28/1, Zion Chapel, Wakefield, baptismal register, 20 August 1850.

Street, but in 1880 it was liquidated by arrangement.⁶⁶ He then found work as a foreman tailor, probably for J. and C. Clarkson of Cheapside. In 1886, he succeeded to the Clarksons' concern and 1894 he moved to 62 Westgate. By 1905, however, he had moved again, this time to Barstow Square.⁶⁷ Gloyne was a socialist and in 1894 was the secretary of the Wakefield branch of the Fabian Society. As a Fabian socialist, he supported the slow but sure permeation of society by socialist principles.⁶⁸

In 1872, Gloyne married Anne Elizabeth Law, the daughter of a Goole gas fitter, and they had nine children, one of whom died young. At least one of their sons, Ernest, became a tailor. The liquidation of Gloyne's business in 1880 seems to have disrupted his domestic life as in 1881 his wife and children were living in York Street while he was a boarder in St John's Court. Gloyne and his wife died within a few weeks of each other in 1928.⁶⁹

CHARLES WILLIAM RICHARDSON, 1849-1931, was a son of Charles and Harriet Richardson and was born in Horbury where his father kept the Fleece Inn.⁷⁰ He became an architect and established a practice in Wakefield and from at least 1904 had an office at 62 Westgate.⁷¹ William Bell, a Scot, was his assistant in 1903-1904 and Bell had succeeded to Richardson's practice by 1915. After the First World War, Mitchell Crichton Kay, another Scot, was Bell's assistant and later partner at number 62. In 1924, however, Bell and Kay's office was in Wood Street.⁷²

⁶⁶ 'Wakefield and West Riding Herald', 17.11.1877, page 4; 'Manchester Courier', 10.7.1880, page 4; 'Wakefield and West Riding Herald', 24.12.1886, page 4; 'Wakefield and West Riding Herald', 19.8.1905, page 4.

⁶⁷ 1881-1911 censuses.

⁶⁸ 'The Fabian Society List of Members', (London, 1894), pages 8 and 26.

⁶⁹ 1871, 1881 and 1911 censuses; Ancestry, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915, April-June, 1872; WYAS, Wakefield, C28/4, Zion Chapel, Wakefield, burial register, 6 January 1928, burial of Anne Elizabeth Gloyne, and 31 January 1928, burial of Henry Walter Gloyne.

⁷⁰ WYAS, Wakefield, WDP135/1/2/2, St Peter and St Leonard, Horbury, baptismal register, 8 July 1849; census 1851.

⁷¹ 'Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser', 5.8.1904, page 2.

⁷² On William Bell and Mitchell Crichton Kay see the 'Dictionary of Scottish Architects' at www.scottisharchitects.org.uk ;

Richardson undertook a variety of public and private work. In 1904, he was the architect for the reconstruction of Wakefield's cattle market at Ings Road. Other projects Richardson was involved in were improvements to the Music Saloon, Wood Street, the home of the Mechanics' Institution, in 1882 and the new co-operative stores in the High Street, Horbury, in 1878. A more unusual commission, was the design of a hatchery for salmon and trout for Wakefield corporation at its East Ardsley reservoir.⁷³ The hatchery commission was apt as Richardson was a naturalist. He was local treasurer for the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union and when the Union met in Wakefield in 1882, he was one of the five local guides.⁷⁴

In 1874, Richardson married Alice Walley, the daughter of a Leeds wool merchant. They had five children, all of whom survived to adulthood. At least one of them, Clifford William Richardson, became an architect. The Richardson family never lived at 62: in 1901 their home was Darton near Wakefield and in 1911 it was in Leeds.⁷⁵

The firm of JOHNSON BROTHERS was founded in 1817 in Liverpool as a silk dyeing business. It was one of several dyers which from the 1860s adopted the new French method of dry cleaning. At the start of the twentieth century Johnson Brothers had over 100 branches, making it the largest dry -cleaning business in the country.⁷⁶

CONCLUSIONS

Our three properties had only two important changes of ownership in the period 1850-1914: the first was when Thomas Gissing bought them

⁷³ 'Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser', 5.8.1904, page 2; 'Leeds Times', 7.10.1882, page 5; 'Leeds Mercury', 21.8.1878, page 5; 'Sheffield Independent', 7.1.1889, page 74 'Sheffield Daily Telegraph', 17.1.1881, page 4; 'Huddersfield Chronicle', 12.9.1882, page 3.

⁷⁵ 1901 and 1911 censuses.

⁷⁶ J. B. Jefferys, 'Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950', (Cambridge, 1954), page 474.

⁷⁶ Old Ordnance Survey Maps, Wakefield (North), 1890, Godfrey Edition, extract from Kelly's Directory of Wakefield, 1888.

from William Wilkinson and the second was when Margaret Gissing sold them to John L. Chaplin. Throughout these years number 60 was a chemist's shop and it had only three proprietors - Matthew Hick, Thomas Gissing and John L. Chaplin. Number 60 was not only a commercial property, it was also the home of the Hick, Gissing and Chaplin families: they lived above the shop.

Like 60, number 62 was also a shop and a house, but it had a more rapid turnover of tenants than its neighbour and was used by a great variety of businesses. By the end of the period, unlike 62, it had ceased to be a residence. Linked to 60 was 2-4 Thompson's Yard. For most of the period this provided residential accommodation for number 60's household, although in the 1850s and 1860s it was used for commercial purposes.

Although some of the owners of the businesses at 60 and 62 were born in Wakefield, many came from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Wherever they came from, they all faced commercial pressures and two businesses were financial failures. The arrival of Johnson Brothers at 62 in the early twentieth century was an example of the rise of a chain store, a development that was to have a profound impact on many high streets.

The businessmen who were based at 60 and 62 were often active in different aspects of Wakefield's social and political life. They were divided as regards their religious and party allegiances and among them there were Anglicans, Nonconformists, Conservatives, Liberals and even a Fabian socialist. In 2022, the tenants of the three properties featured in this study continue to contribute to the life of Wakefield. Number 60 is a convenience store, 62 a branch of the NatWest Bank and 2-4 Thompson's Yard houses the Gissing Trust's museum.

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