

## Langley House – a story of a lost Hipperholme House.

On Towngate in Hipperholme and opposite the imposing Thornhill House once stood Langley Farm. Looking at the photograph of the house it is difficult to imagine that it could have stood where the small bungalow now stands but it did. Over time, it has been known as Langley Farm, Langley House and Langlea.



The bungalow today



Madden Bull's Cabinet/John Compton

The sketch by Arthur Comfort is dated 1913.

James Parker in his '*Illustrated Rambles from Hipperholme to Tong*' which was published in 1904 describes the area as a large open place, surrounded by antiquated houses of which one of the most noble is Langley House. It is a fine building consisting of two wings and centre and of noble dimensions. He notes that before Thornhill House was built it would have had a charming prospect. He goes on to say that Langley House was once the Manor House of Hipperholme and the Court Leet for the Brighthouse Manor was held there. However, he doesn't provide any evidence for this.

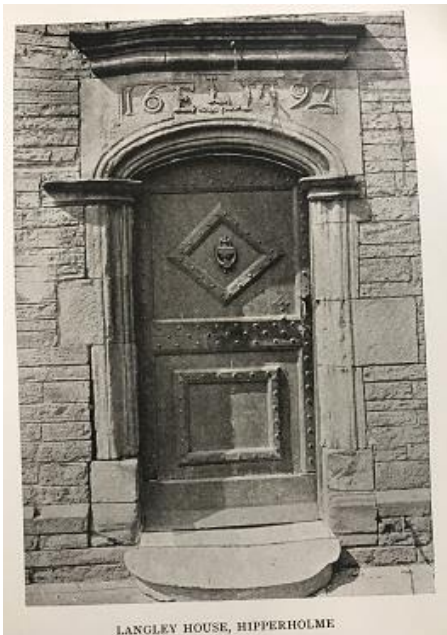
According to John Lister's article in the *Halifax Antiquarian Society Transactions* (1906), a house on the site was owned by the Saltonstall family. In 1602, the house was leased to John Northend who bought it in 1611 when Sir Samuel Saltonstall moved to live in Hull. In 1655, the house was bought by Stephen Ellis. Stephen Ellis and local preacher Oliver Heywood had, to say the least, considerable differences of religious opinions as recounted in the latter's diaries. Ellis was one of the driving forces in establishing Hipperholme Grammar School and became one of its first Trustees.

His second daughter, Mary, married Edward Langley of Priestley Green at Coley Chapel in 1679. Edward's father, Richard, was an associate of Stephen Ellis and had worked closely with him in establishing the school. Following his death, Mary inherited, gaining title in 1691. She and her husband, Edward Langley, improved the house and extended it to more than twice its size. It was at this time that the property became known as Langley Hall. Their initials were carved over the new front door E L M 1692.

The house was sold by the Langley descendants to William Walker of Crow Nest on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1765. The tenant at the time was James Stancliffe.

John Lister concludes his article by commenting that the 'housebody' contains a fine oak gallery and staircase, the latter possessing some finely carved "dog gates" and the walls are wainscoted in oak.

According to *The Old Halls and Manor Houses of Yorkshire (1913)* the oldest part of this house was built of rubblestone, probably about the middle of the C17. It is thought that there was an earlier timber house in the Middle Ages. The centre part, with the ashlar-faced walls was added a little later. The two-light windows in the eastern wing had their transoms and mullions replaced by wood sashes. The staircase was unusual, having the risers panelled and going centrally from the hall with dog gates at the foot still remaining. At the time this was written the building was being used as a workshop and other business purposes presumably in the early part of the twentieth century.



LANGLEY HOUSE, HIPPERHOLME



FIG. 24. LANGLEY HOUSE, HIPPERHOLME.



STAIRCASE, ETC. LANGLEY HOUSE, HIPPERHOLME

During the 19th century, the house belonged to William Walker of Crow Nest. In due course it was inherited by Ann Walker and was the home for Langley Farm. This consisted of several plots of land from Woodhead down to the land over the railway tunnel totalling 20 acres.

According to Samuel Washington, Ann Walker's land agent, in 1843 Simeon Shaw was the principal tenant for Langley Farm paying £38 per year for the farm and some land and a further £21 for more fields. These two rents indicate that Simeon Shaw was running a fair-sized farm. Other farms in the Walker estate were bringing in rents of £25 to £55 with Lower Crow Nest the exception at £130. When Langley Farm was advertised in the 1867 sale, the farm consisted of a farmhouse, out-buildings, 3 cottages, and gardens and pew 22 in Coley Church.

Further lots marked as Langley Farm extending from the north of Hipperholme, through Towngate, down Kirk Lane and past the Travellers' Inn were advertised but as single plots rather than as being sold as a complete farm. In the sale, the house was bought by a Mr Hellewell for £500. Whether he was acting for himself or as an agent is not clear. It may be that the owner for much of the later part of the C19 was Joseph Sunderland of Coley but this is not definite. Some of the other Langley Farm plots were sold but to different buyers so the farm was no more.

Of interest is that in the sale plan a proposed road is set out running from Towngate, alongside Langley Farm north towards what is now the garage. This would have allowed the plots on either side to be developed. It was to be called John Street. Though it also appeared in the 1902 sale plans, marked as 'intended road' it was never built.

Over the next 30 years there were several tenants in the main house and cottages. Sometimes the census details are not totally clear as Langley House also includes cottages and houses nearby. In 1871, Simeon Shaw was still living there, described as a farmer, with his daughter Mary. He was 83. Amongst others were Mary Garfitt (widow) a schoolmistress and James Taylor, a woolcomber, both of whom were named as tenants in the 1867 sale details.

Another part had the Howarth family consisting of Edwin, his sister Mary and brothers Abraham and Joseph. All were aged in their 30s. Edwin and Joseph were Ale & Porter merchants, Mary a confectioner and Abraham, a machine tenter. Thomas Rushworth was a stone delver living with his wife, Rachel\* and family. Later as a widow, she became the publican of the 'Who'd a thought it' pub in the Walterclough Valley. Albert Taylor (a stone delver), his wife Mary and one year old son, Hellewell lived here. The final family registered were stone shipper (I think that's what it says) George Hartley and his wife, Lucy. These latter two families were all young, each one just over 20. The cautionary note, again, is that the census is not precise. Thomas Rushworth and family, for example, were probably in the attached cottage or a neighbouring one.

In 1881, James Taylor, his daughter and three grandchildren are living in the house. Alongside is a 78-year-old schoolmistress (hopefully retired), her son a commercial traveller and an artist. The names are difficult to read.

In 1891, the principal occupant was Joseph W Sugden, his wife, Elizabeth and their family of seven. He was a coal merchant operating from Lightcliffe Station. The household included a cotton weaver, an office boy, a card winder, a card machinist and three scholars. There are two other families counted in the cottages, one of whom were three brothers – Edwin, Abraham and Joseph Howarth.

In 1901, Joseph Sugden's widow, Elizabeth Sugden was head of the family, some of whom were still involved in the coal trade. Son George was a coal merchant in his own right, Mary was a confectioner and Eleanor a milliner. There was also a boarder called Frances Spencer living on his own means and George Seath, a visitor. The Howarths were still living in a cottage.



On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 1902, Langley House was put up for sale at the Whitehall Inn, Hipperholme, together with 10 other lots. These lots included land from Woodhead down as far as some land over the railway tunnel in Hipperholme. The auction included Thornhill House which was immediately opposite to Langley House and Cockcroft's or Flather's Farm which was to the west of Thornhill House. None of the houses and several other lots failed to reach their reserve and were withdrawn. The principal vendor was Mr J Sunderland of Coley House. This does imply that not all of the lots belonged to him.

*Brighouse News*, June 1902.

Lot 11. A dwelling house called "Langley House", situate at Hipperholme aforesaid, as divided into house and 2 cottages, together with the cottage in the yard, Barn, (part of) Stable and outbuildings, yard and Road thereto belonging, and containing an area of 1150 square yards or thereabouts, and now in the occupation of Mrs Sugden.



Lot 9 is Thornhill House and Lot 10, extending towards Woodhead quarries was known as Cockcroft or Flather's Farm – so called because it had been in the Flather family for several generations and in the tenancy of Henry Birkett Flather\* at the time of the auction.

Lot 11 can be recognised as Langley House by the distinctive H-shape.

Sometime between this sale and 1910, Langley House and cottages was bought by Mr John Herbert Fletcher. It is shown in the 1910 in the West Yorkshire Tax Valuation as being in the possession of Mr J H Fletcher. By the time of the 1911 census the name of the property has been changed to Langlea.

It would seem likely that he would need to bring the property back into a single unit and to make improvements to their taste. Quite possibly this was when local carver, H P Jackson, was brought in. He produced carved panelling to head height incorporating masonic symbols, doorcases with fluted pilasters topped by protruding capitals and a door with a decorated centre panel featuring interesting imagery. An article in *The Halifax Daily Courier and Guardian* of May 1940 noted that Langley House had been marked down for demolition and the owners, Mr & Mrs Fletcher of Coley Hall had decided to preserve as much of the woodwork as possible. Certainly, examples of Jackson's work were transferred to the Lady Lever Art Gallery (Liverpool) in 1939. The museum's curators are looking for details.

John Herbert Fletcher (1867-1949) was a partner in Earnshaw & Fletchers based at Lumbrook Mills, Coley. On a business trip to Canada he describes himself as a 'cloth manufacturer' in 1921 on a business visit. The company was a fancy worsted coating manufacturer and worsted spinners. Prior to Lumbrook, the company had been at Brow Mills, Hipperholme.

He married Ethel Moreton Davies in Wallasey, Cheshire, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1894. They had two daughters. Lilian May was born on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1902 and Marjorie, born 20<sup>th</sup> July 1907. In the 1911 census, the family were living at Langlea, Hipperholme so the name of the house had changed by then. Also with them were Magda Olsen a Norwegian governess, Hannah Norburn, cook and Amy Hoggard, housemaid. John was actually away from home the night the census was taken 19<sup>th</sup> June 1921 but was listed as the house owner. Those at home at Langlea were his wife, Ethel, daughter Lilian May and a domestic servant, Ellen Lambert from Foulsham, Norfolk.

Ethel died 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1938 and was buried at St John's Coley. She left £6,100.

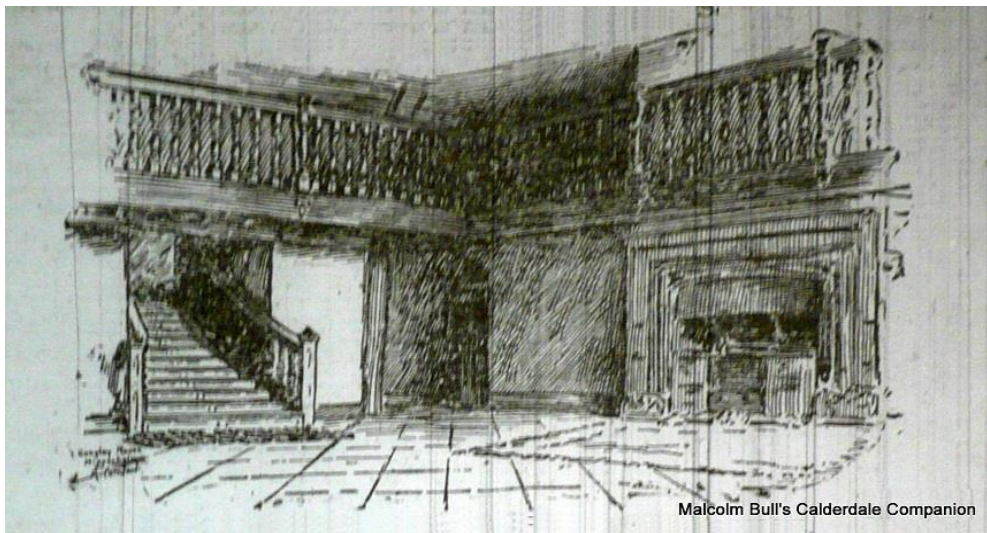
In the 1939 register, John was living with his two daughters. Lilian was now Lilian Webb.

On 14th March 1940, he married Alice Langdale Mortimer Sunderland in Caxton Hall, Westminster, London. They lived at Coley Hall.

Langlea House was demolished in 1943. The 1692 doorway was moved to Coley Hall and, in the 1940 Courier article mentioned earlier, the following appears; 'The door was of an unusual construction for this period being fitted with styles, rail, head and sill together with mouldings nailed upon boards. When the door was taken down it was found to be decayed and the owners decided to have a replica made. An old oak beam from the house provided the wood and local joiner Mr William Smallwood built the door. The Sunderland coat of arms was carved by Mr Ernest Stevens for the centre of the door where the door knocker had been together with two similar ones to be alongside the door.' (photo of doorway today.) Later that year the Courier reported that the dog gates from the house had been transferred to Coley Hall and were installed in the entrance hall.



In its *The Trend of Things*, the Halifax Evening Courier of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1935 had a short article on Langley Hall together with the sketch of the hall, staircase and oak gallery.



Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion

Alice died 7<sup>th</sup> May 1949 leaving £41,000. John died 6th December 1949, leaving £46,000 including a bequest to Coley Church.



Alice Langdale Mortimer Fletcher and John Herbert Fletcher



**Resources:**

The Old Halls and Manor Houses of Yorkshire. Louis Ambler Batsford 1913

In and about our old homes and Our home & country. Sketches by Arthur Comfort which were published in the Halifax Weekly Courier.

Halifax Antiquarian Society Transactions.

1906 An old Hipperholme Homestead by John Lister

1994 753 and 1997 780 articles on H P Jackson of Coley by David Cant

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\*Further information on the Rushworth and Flather families can be found on the Friends of St. Matthew's Churchyard website, [People of Interest](#) then scroll down. Or use the specific links [Henry Birkett Flather.pdf](#) and [Private Arthur Rushworth.pdf](#). Arthur Rushworth was one of the sons of Thomas and Rachel Rushworth.

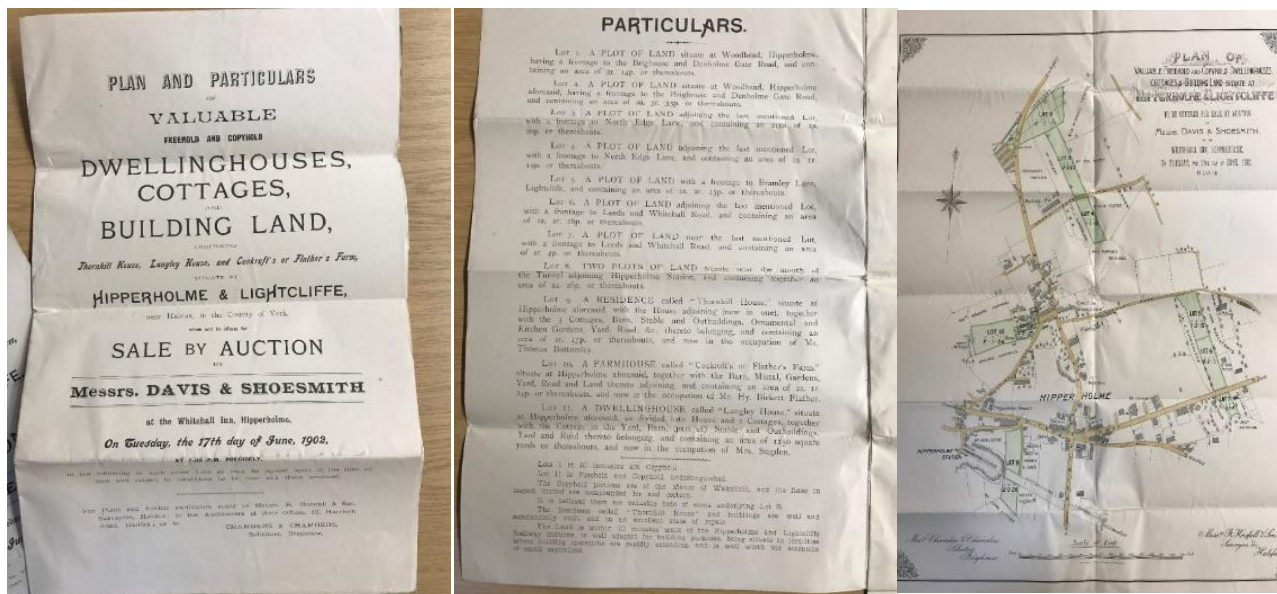
Thanks to David Cant and Bob Horne

Thanks to Dorothy Barker for additional research.

Ian Philp, November, 2024

**Appendix: The 1902 Sale.** West Yorkshire Archives: SH-2/SHE/HP/1902/2

This is the full plan for the 1902 sale. Lots 5, 6 & 7 can be seen as a strip leading from Bramley Lane down and across the Leeds Whitehall Lane. It is marked on the 1867 Crow Nest sale plan as belonging to Mr Sunderland.



*Brighouse News*, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1902 printed this account of the sale.

It was not a very successful sale.

## THE PROPERTY MARKET

### SALE AT HIPPERHOLME

On Tuesday evening, at the Whitehall Inn, Hipperholme, Mr. Shoemith (Messrs. Davis and Shoemith) offered for sale several lots of valuable dwelling houses and building land, situate at Hipperholme and Lightcliffe. Messrs. Chambers and Chambers (Brighouse) were the solicitors for the vendors, and Mr. R. Horsfall and Sons, Surveyors. Mr. J. Sunderland, of Coley House, was present at the sale as the principal vendor of the property.

Mr. E. P. Chambers read over the conditions of sale, and Mr. Shoemith said it was the intention of the vendors to sell if at all possible.

Lot 1 consisted of a plot of land situate at Woodhead, Hipperholme, having frontage to Brighouse and Denholmegate-road, and containing an area of 3 roods 14 poles. Bidding commenced at 1s per yard and rose by bids of twopence to 1s 10d per yard, when it was withdrawn. Lot 2 consisted of a plot of land in the same district, the area being 2 acres 3 roods 36 poles. Bidding rose at 6d per yard, and after advancing by bids of halfpennies to 7d., it was withdrawn. Lots 3 and 4, consisting of plots of land adjoining the previous lots, and with frontage to North Edge-lane, containing an area 3 acres 1 rood 35 poles, only fetched one bid of 6d, and it was accordingly withdrawn. Lot 5 was a plot of land with frontage to Bramley-lane, Lightcliffe, the area being 1 acre 1 rood 15 pole, and the plot of land in lot 6 adjoined lot 5 but the frontage was to Leeds and Whitehall-road, and the area 2 roods 16 poles. Offered jointly, bidding started at 9d., and

the lots were withdrawn at 1s 10d. Lot 6 was then offered separately and was purchased by Mr. J.F. Walsh, architect, Halifax, at 1s 6d per yard. Lot 7 adjoined the previous lot and contained 3 roods 16 perches. An opening bid of 9d, was refused and bidding opened at 1s 6d., and the lot found a purchaser in Mr. Hind at 3s 3d. per yard. In lot 8 were two plots of land, which are near the mouth of the tunnel which adjoins Hipperholme station, the entrance being from Tan-house-hill. The area was 2 acres 26 poles. Mr Shoemith stated there were valuable beds of stone underlying the lot. Certain of it was, however, barred, having found a purchaser in the Lancashire and Yorkshire and Yorkshire Railway Company. The stone barred, however, was only that which was actually over the tunnel. An opening offer of £300 was made and rising by £50s, it was withdrawn at £600. Lot 9 was made up of the residence called Thornhill-house, with the house adjoining (now in one) together with three cottages, outbuildings, ornamental gardens, the area being 2 acres, 1 rood 24 poles. The house was in the occupation of Mr. Thomas Bottomley, and the rental accruing from the lot was £71 1s. £100 was the opening offer, and rising by £100's, the lot was withdrawn at £1,400. Cockcroft's or Flather's farmhouse with outbuildings and land, having area of 2 acres, 1 rood 24 poles, and in the occupation of Mr. Hy. Birkett Flather formed lot 10. Mr. Shoemith mentioned that members of the Flather family had occupied the house for some 300 years. The estimated rent was £30. £300 was the opening offer, and the lots was withdrawn at £600. The last lot consisted of Langley House, and the outbuildings. An opening offer of £300 was made, and the lot was withdrawn at £400.