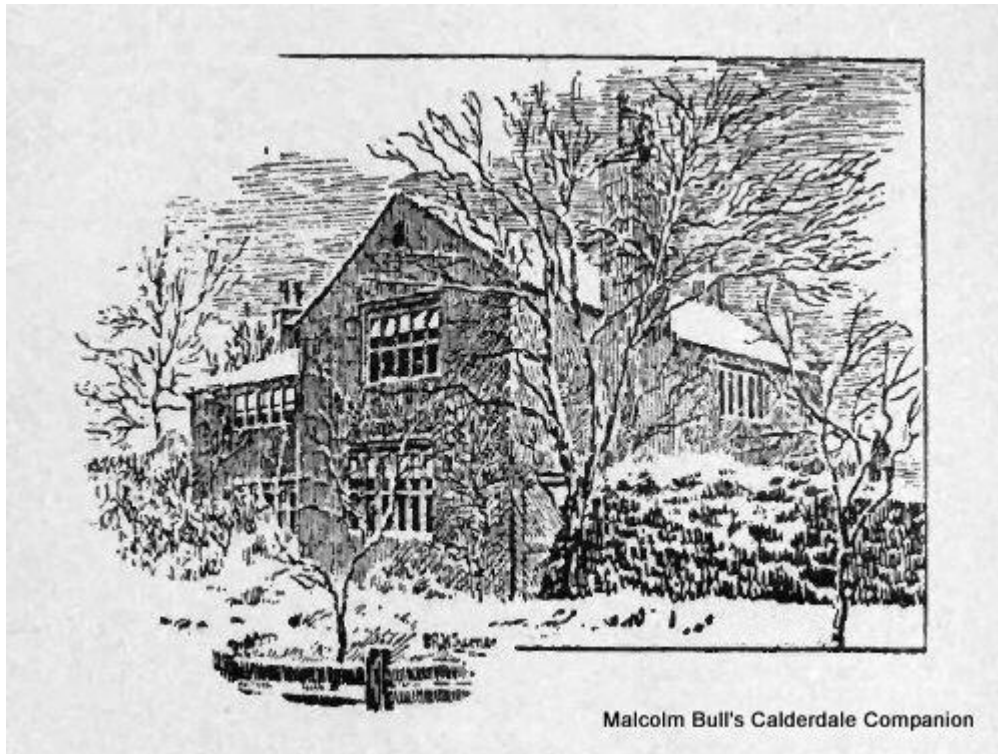


Mark Hepworth of Yew Trees

There are over seventy Hepworths buried in St. Matthew's churchyard and no doubt many of them were related. This article will concentrate on the relations of Mark Hepworth. He lived at Yew Trees, Lightcliffe – on St. Giles Road - at one time in the cottage but then at the farm. According to Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion the timber framed 16th century farmhouse was encased in stone in the 17th century. It was bought in 1647 by Thomas Lister of Shibden Hall and remained on the estate for years. This no doubt explains why Yew Trees and Mark Hepworth's family get many mentions in Anne Lister's diaries.



A sketch of Yew Trees Farm



Yew Trees Farm

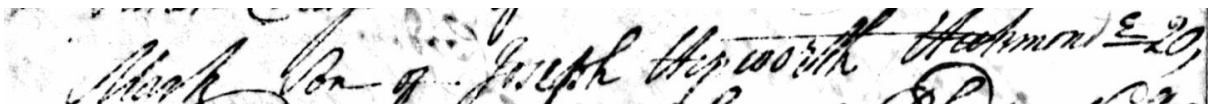


Yew Trees Cottage



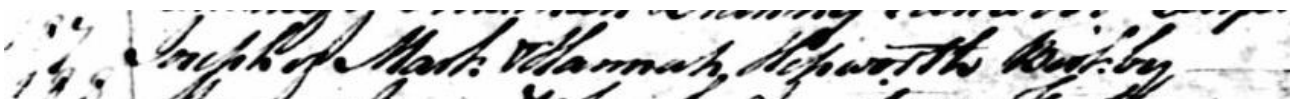
From Mark Hepworth's death age of 79 years when he died on 8th January 1860, he was probably born 1780 to 1782. There are two possible baptisms for him. One was on 28th May 1780 in St. Peter's Church, Huddersfield when his father was probably Joseph possibly Joshua and the abode was Fartown near Huddersfield.

The other – image below - was on 20th October 1782 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall. Again, the father was called Joseph and the address was in Heckmondwike. As Heckmondwike was Mark Hepworth's stated birthplace on the 1851 census this seems to be the more likely baptism even if the date is not as good.

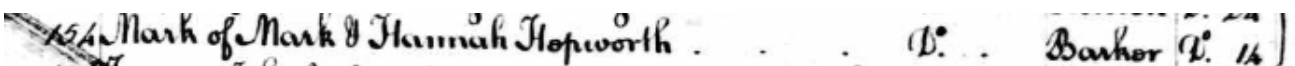
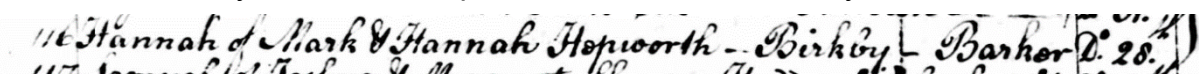


From the family's ledger stone and census data it is known that his wife was called Hannah.

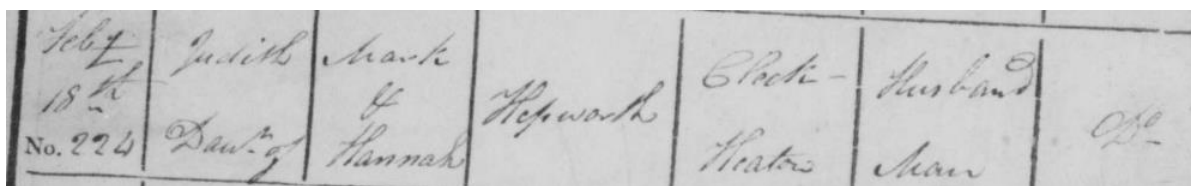
Baptism records for some of their children suggest that she was formally Hannah Barker, but no marriage record has been found. And then just to complicate things there was a 1796 marriage in Huddersfield between a Mark Hepworth and a Hannah Craven. Were they the parents of Joseph Hepworth of Birkby baptised on 14th May 1797 in Huddersfield? Possibly!



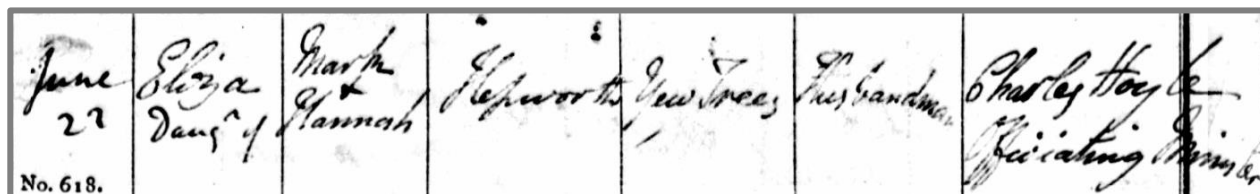
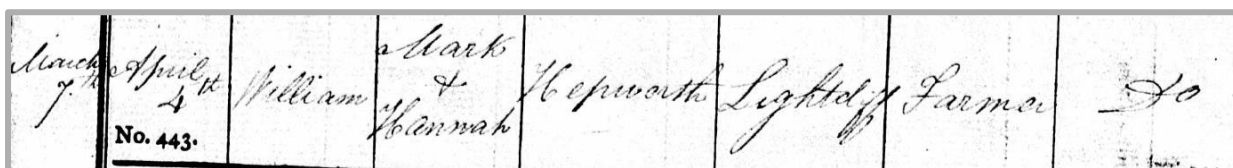
Hannah Hepworth junior, born 28th July 1800, and then Mark Hepworth junior, born 14th June 1805, were also baptised in Huddersfield on 24th August 1800 and 21st July 1805. Their parents from Birkby were Mark Hepworth and Hannah formally Barker.



No baptism record has been found for a son Richard Hepworth although from census and burial records he was born about 1806. A daughter Judith Hepworth was baptised at Birstall on 18th February 1816. Her father was a husbandman and the family lived in Cleckheaton.



Sometime between then and the spring of 1819 the family must have moved to Lightcliffe even though they took another son, William born 7th March 1819, back to Cleckheaton for his baptism on 4th April 1819.



Finally, the youngest daughter, Eliza Hepworth, was baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe on 23rd June 1822 and by then the family were living at Yew Trees Cottage.

Yew Trees Farm belonged to Anne Lister's Uncle James. It was tenanted by (Samuel?) Sowden in 1821. But by the end of 1823 the farm was to be let. There was much deliberation as to who the tenancy should be given to. But eventually Mark Hepworth, who lived in the nearby Yew Trees Cottage was ready to move in with his family mid-1824. Both Mark and his sons particularly Richard are mentioned in the diaries doing work for the Listers.

1824-03-05 (journal; WYAS)

— my uncle spoke to Mark Hepworth, promised him Yew Tree farm, and to give him the 1st 1/2 years rent, and lent him £50. or more if he wanted it, besides —

1824-05-05 (journal; WYAS)

— and at 6 25/60 set off and walk to Yew trees — Mark to go and see the state Sowden left it in —

— Saw Mark's wife who looks fitter for the miserably small cottage in the yard, in which they have lived these 15 years, than for the farm-house which seems so large to her (4 low rooms and 4 chambers over them) she is frightened to live in it by themselves, and wanted a couple of cottagers for company — I go with the name of the thing and have thought it best to take it on myself but I would not have let such a farm to Mark my idea was as I told my uncle to keep the place in my own hands and let Mark farm it for me till I could let it to my mind — The man knows how to farm, and I hope he will do well in time — Walked to Yew trees (along Southedge lane) in 1/2 hour — returned the same way and got home at 8 10/60 —

— Sat up talking about Yew trees, etc. etc. and my father's affairs,

1824-05-08 (journal; WYAS)

— she walked with me to Yew trees to see how Jackman was going on, pointing the slate, setting fire-places, etc. etc. ready for Mark to get into the house —

Mark Hepworth took the farm for another year in April 1825

1825-04-30 (journal; WYAS)

— Mark Hepworth came to speak to my uncle and sign his lease (from year to year) of Yew trees — read aloud the lease to him, then witnessed his having made his mark a cross, wrote his name for him, and signed my own at full —

But then he annoyed Anne Lister!

1825-07-19 (journal; WYAS)

— then to Jackman blocking up the Cheese hill style — he told me, Mark Hepworth has in spite of all let off a cottage from Yew trees house — promised not to mention it till I had been and found it out myself —

1825-10-10 (journal; WYAS)

— and then went by Lidget to Yew Trees — Mark not at home — saw his wife — angry at their having let off 1/2 the house as a cottage —

1825-11-18 (journal; WYAS)

— and whether raising Mark Hepworth's rent would not be the best punishment for his having let a cottage off the house (at yew trees) [this was a question for Mr Robert Parker]

By the end of the year Anne Lister was also unhappy with how Mark Hepworth was farming.

1825-12-11 (journal; WYAS)

— Mark Hepworth was selling off his wheat straw — he was a very slovenly farmer —

1825-12-17 (journal; WYAS)

— Mark Hepworth came — Gave him a good jobation — said he farmed ill — must keep more cattle, and farm better or 1/2 his land would be taken from him, and if he did not still farm to please me, he should lose the other 1/2 also — he should keep more cattle — 5 horses and 1 cow were proper stock for that farm — and he would not be allowed to sell off — He said the cottager had been in the house ever since March — said he must pay after the rate of four-pounds a year additional rent for all the time he had had this cottager — I found Mark telling a heap of stories to excuse himself, but told him it would not do; for he could not deceive me —

But the Hepworths remained on Yew Trees Farm and took it for another year apparently with Anne Lister's blessing.

1826-06-08 (journal; WYAS)

— Desired Mr. Briggs to remind Mark Hepworth of his debt to my uncle of £46.6.3 — said he ought to pay some part of it every rent day —

1826-07-05 (journal; WYAS)

— settled with all the tenants before dinner except Mark Hepworth who was not come —
— about 8 Mark Hepworth came and paid all his rent and £5 towards his debt of 46.6.3 — told him I should divide his farm — he begged to be tried (said Mr. Briggs) another year, and he would farm well, and pay rent and debt too — Hardcastle had told Mr. Briggs Mark had borrowed £20 of him the last rent day, and he had nothing more of it ever since — told Mr. Briggs to make the best of it, and try Mark another year

1827 does seem to have been a better year for Mark Hepworth as Anne Lister noted that he was hoping to pay off some of his debt to the Listers which presumably he did as there is no further diary entry about him in 1827.

1827-04-20 (journal; WYAS)

— Mark Hepworth will pay something handsome towards his debt at midsummer —

If the 1841 census is correct, then a John Hepworth was born about this time, but no baptism record has been found. The twelve-year-old was living with Mark and Hannah Hepworth and other family on 6th June 1841

Usually, the only recorded events in the decade before this census would be births, marriages and deaths from parish records. Perhaps there might be the odd newspaper report. Anne Lister has provided a window into the world of people around her including the Shibden Hall tenant Mark Hepworth and his family. Some of the diary entries are very mundane and repetitive chronicling his work with his carts bringing stone, rubble, soil or even Hull timber from or to places such as Northgate house, Whiskum quarry, Hipperholme quarry, Low Moor, Elland wharf etc. Three sons, Mark junior, Richard and William were also employed sometimes acting as additional cart drivers – he does seem to have had more than one cart. Anne Lister records what she pays him for this work but there is still the question of his rent and his debt, not forgetting how he is farming. A selection of the hundreds of diary entries that come up involving the Hepworths are recorded below. Hopefully they give a flavour of what life was like as a tenant farmer on the Shibden Hall estate on the 1830s.

In 1831 Anne Lister was again not happy with Mark Hepworth.

1831-06-23 (journal; WYAS)

— said he would order a notice to be sent also to Mark Hepworth but if he really would farm better and pay his debt he might try another year —

1831-06-25 (journal; WYAS)

— Stopt at Mr. Parker's and signed the notices to quit to Benjamin Bottomley and Mark Hepworth in the carriage —

1831-09-01 (journal; WYAS)

— the notice to quit was sent to Benjamin Bottomley and Mark Hepworth —

1831-09-08 (journal; WYAS)

— (had Mark Hepworth for 1/4 hour a little before 6, to speak about his notice to quit — begged off — said he had brought 90 cart loads of manure from H-x [Halifax] and had a fine heap in the farm yard if I would but look at it — had 8 or 9 cows — had seen Mr. Briggs and satisfied him — very well — whatever Mr. Briggs did would be right — I should never disturb anybody who farmed his land well)

1832-10-18 (journal; WYAS)

— Hepworth the joiner came before we had done breakfast about the frame-work for the greenhouse to be made (...) 14 by 7 1/2 +) and bargaining to have 2 coats of paint on, got Hepworth's estimate at 9.15.0.) he charging only 20/. for the wood, and engaging to his job for the sum estimated —

Hepworth the joiner was William Hepworth who would later be apprenticed to George Mosey and become a wheelwright.

1833-06-13 (journal; WYAS)

— and that at this day Mark Hepworth's debt = £19.6.3. and that £38 per 1/2 year to be remitted to Jeremy Lister ...

1833-06-14 (journal; WYAS)

— I should consider it setting her up in life in the same way my uncle had set up Mark Hepworth who had not yet paid off the money advanced —

In 1834 the diary entries are about carting soil, stone and wood.

There was an election in 1835 and Anne Lister was keen that the Shibden Hall tenants, who were eligible to vote, voted as she wished them to. To qualify their rent had to be £50 or more per annum and the lease had to be for at least 20 years.

1835-05-04 (journal; WYAS)

— Thomas Pearson fancies he had a right of vote from paying £50 a year rent — said no! because he was not under 20 years lease but I would say nothing about it — got his vote such as it is —

Thomas Pearson of Denmark farm did vote for Anne Lister's preferred candidate, John S Wortley. **The Pearson family of Shibden Valley** have already had their back story told beginning with

[Thomas Pearson of Denmark Farm.pdf \(lightcliffchurchyard.org.uk\)](http://lightcliffchurchyard.org.uk/Thomas%20Pearson%20of%20Denmark%20Farm.pdf)

Mark Hepworth does not appear to have had a vote in the 1835 election. Jill Liddington in her book *Female Fortunes* wonders if he was not franchised. Perhaps his rent and the terms of his lease did not qualify him for a vote.

In April 1835 he was seen ploughing his 'flat field' at Yew Trees and Anne Lister had a discussion with him about buying 'a great big bay horse'. But will it be a good gin horse?!

1835-06-15 (journal; WYAS)

— found Mark Hepworth waiting for me — thinks the great bay horse will make a good gin horse after the pit is bottomed — the gin can still be raised an inch and the road humoured to make all

1835-06-23 (journal; WYAS)

— Mark Hepworth to take the great bay horse to H-x [Halifax] fair at 1 p.m. tomorrow but will not sell him for less than £10 —

How her tenants voted was still on Anne Lister's mind at the end of August 1835 when she meet Mark Hepworth. She seemed to think that he had the right to vote.

1835-08-28 (journal; WYAS)

— Mark Hepworth told me this afternoon he should like Hill top — I asked what he valued it at — he reckoned up 18 DW [days work] of the old part — said a Lightcliffe DW [days work] was now only 50 x 50 yards) at 40/. a DW [days work] and give my buildings in — I merely answered — 'I must have a vote — you cannot have it — for you have a vote already, and I must have another.' — But I said nothing of or against his son Richard's having it nor was he alluded to —

Six months later Hill Top was still up for renting and Mark Hepworth said his son Richard was interested as were others.

1836-02-19 (journal; WYAS)

—Had Mark Hepworth — he is to recommence carting soil from Northgate on Monday — shewed him where to lay it — his son Richard would like to have Hill Top — said I was afraid it was too dear — £42 in the state it is except my doing what I talked of at the 9 DW. [days work] great field — Mark Hepworth said the farm was cheaper at £42 than Yew trees — I told him to consider the matter well — paid Mark Hepworth for carting stuff from Whiskum quarry —

1836-02-22 (journal; WYAS)

—they asked the rent of Hilltop farm - I said £42 per annum taking it as it is - but nothing could be in worse condition - I thought of farming it myself for a year - not anxious about letting it till I could get a tenant to my mind - did not want to strain anybody's conscience, but wanted a vote and would make the place worth £50 per annum - stood some while talking to Mark Hepworth about this - he said might get the rent out of the farm even this year - M. Hepworth began again this morning carting - but it would cost £10 per D.W. to get the land into right condition ∴ 9+3D.W. (the latter the clover lay) at £10 = £120 + £50 laid out upon the buildings would make the farm worth £50 per annum —

Son William Hepworth, the joiner, was apprenticed to George Mosey whose work for Anne Lister is noted in

[The Tomlinson and Mosey families.pdf \(lightcliffchurchyard.org.uk\)](http://lightcliffchurchyard.org.uk)

1836-03-07 (journal; Frankie)

— Mark Hepworth at H-x binding his son William apprentice as wheel-right and carper [carpenter] to Mosey of Halfhouses near Hove edge -

The following diary entries would seem to confirm that the tenancy of Hill Top was given to Mark Hepworth and that he later took on other fields. There were still complaints about how he was farming which he was juggling with carting stones and wood.

1836-04-20 (journal; WYAS)

— Had Mark Hepworth and paid his bill and gave him £20 in a/c [account] of 2 sturks £11 (young cattle) bought for Hill Top, and for a cow to be bought at Atherton fair tomorrow and ... —

1836-08-20 (journal; WYAS)

— agreed with Mark Hepworth to find stone and carting for the Hill top walling at 7/6 per rood —

1836-09-17 (journal; WYAS)

— then had Mark Hepworth paid him his farming bills for the 9DW fallow at Hilltop, labour and carting line (18doz. 8 sacks) - £20.17.2 but Mark wished me to keep the money for the rent of the 3 grass fields let till 1 November next for £20 be paid at Xmas - did keep the £20 on this a/c and paid Mark the balance 17/2 –

Mark Hepworth with a fleet of four or more different types of carts continued to move stone, timber, manure, gates etc., etc.. for Anne Lister in 1837. He also seems to have been involved again in the buying and selling of horses to pull these carts, including Shibden Hall horses for Anne Lister.



In the 1837 election Mark Hepworth and all the other Shibden Hall estate tenants voted as Anne Lister wished them to.

On Christmas Day 1837 his son Mark junior was married to Jane Wentworth. He was a 31-year-old farmer (at Hill Top?) and Jane was a 24 year old servant the daughter of a joiner Edward Wentworth. [Notice that Charles Musgrave officiated at the ceremony in Halifax.]

1837. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Halifax in the County of York								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
277	Dec 25	Mark Hepworth Jane Wentworth	31 24	Bachelor Apprentice	Farmer servant	Hetherholme Hetherholme	Mark Hepworth Edward Wentworth	Farmer Joiner
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by me, Charles Musgrave, M.A. after the names of								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		Mark Hepworth & his mark Jane Wentworth & her mark		in the Presence of us,		Wm. Kesteven Isaac Ingham		

Their son Edward was baptised at St. Matthew's Church. Lightcliffe on 18th October 1838.

18 October	Edward Hepworth Son of	Mark and Jane	Hepworth	Lightcliffe	Farmer	James Hoggan Off. Minister
No. 1586						

At the beginning of 1839 Anne Lister asked Mark Hepworth to look after a Shibden Hall horse 'for a few days to cure him'. This he seems to have done returning the horse 'Captain in good spirits' a few days later.

But there we must leave Anne Lister's help in telling the Hepworth story with grateful thanks to

West Yorkshire Archives Services, Calderdale SH:7/ML/E/ 2 to 20

and all the diary transcribers.

The story of Mark Hepworth of Yew Trees continues in part 2.

D.M. Barker

July 2024