

Beech House



Beech House situated on Todmorden Road Bacup was the home of Mr James Smith Sutcliffe, born December 21st 1834, at Hempstead's Bacup he was the son of William Sutcliffe and Mary Smith daughter of James Smith of Bankside House. There were two other sons William who died in 1858 at the age of 20 and John aged 29 who died 1861. As a boy he attended Mount Pleasant Day school. He left Wesley College Sheffield in 1850 at the age of 16 and went straight into business. His father was partner in the firm of James Thompson and Son, and they carried on business in Bacup and Rawtenstall. Renting premises of the old mill in Burnley Road. Following a dispute with his father he took over a corn mill in Rochdale known as Lark Flour Mill, near Oldham Road. This mill being destroyed completely by fire in 1882. With other mills in Rawtenstall, Bacup and Britannia.

He was a member of the Bacup Local Board and it was said although he did carry out his public duties well he wasn't a very popular person preferring to keep himself to himself however he was a good employer and could be approached by his servants when they had any problems. He became a magistrate in 1869, and took his seat regularly on the bench. A member of the Town Council he was Mayor during the Jubilee year of 1887. In 1885 he presented the Mayoral badge and chain to the corporation.

Married on July 15th 1862 to Miss Lucy Heald Wood, daughter of Dr Peter Wood of Southport, he lived from that date to his death at Beech House, she was described as being the light of his life. They had six children three daughters and three sons. Named Mary Eliza Agnes, Lucy Heald, William Ernest, James Wood, Arthur Edward, and Margaret Ann when his wife died in 1890 it is said he lost all reason for living.

Mr Sutcliffe arranged a trip to the Holy Hand and took with him his sister Mrs Dugdale, of Burnley, Miss Sutcliffe and Miss Lucy Heald Sutcliffe, and the two misses Hoyles daughters of Mr Edward Hoyle of Moorlands. Leaving London in February they returned two months later in April.

Mr Sutcliffe died 23rd May 1891 following a illness which started as influenza and turned to pneumonia and ending in pleurisy.

Beech House in 1891 was occupied by William Sutcliffe who married Miss Helen Blanche Hardman in 1903, his brother James and sister Margaret, with only a minimal staff of Nurse Clements, a cook and domestic servant. By 1901 there is only James and Arthur living at home and yet the servants had increased to a Cook, 2 Housemaids, Kitchen maid, Butler and of course the faithful nurse Maria Clements who had been with the family working at Beech House for 42 years when she died in August 1916 aged 72.

