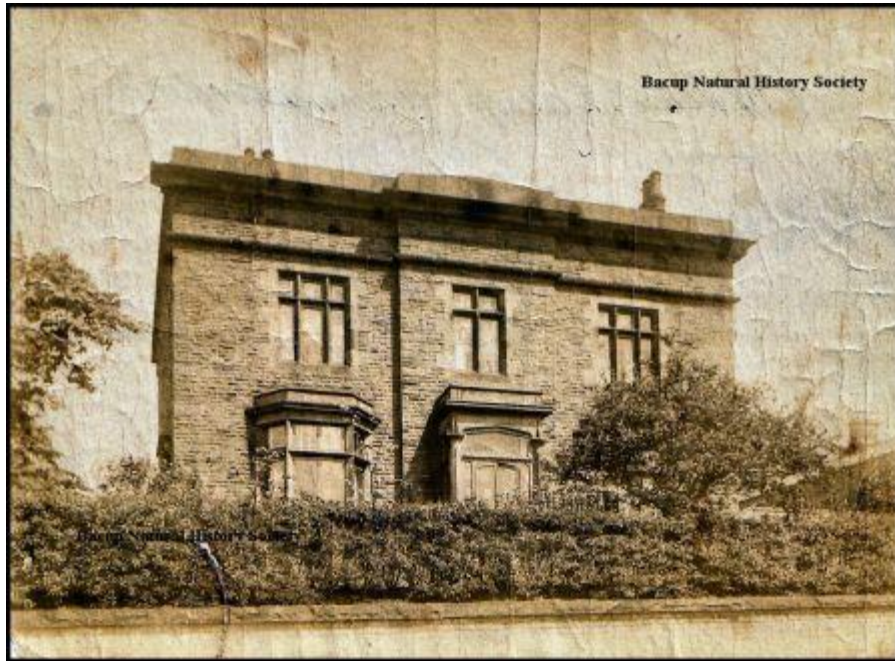


Oak House



Richard Smith son of James Smith of Bankside House, lived in Oak House on Todmorden Road, Bacup previous to 1861 he lived with his family at Bankside House. Richard had been married twice by the time he moved to Oak House his second wife Sophia being stepmother to his children, Robinson, Richard and Mary Ann their mother Mary Greenwood having died in 1842. Sophia was the daughter of Betty Cockcroft a shop keeper on Todmorden Road, her shop was right across the road from the Green Man Hotel she was also owner of that block of property. The shop had then a very small front window with a rounded top as also had the door. Betty was a neat and tidy looking woman and was known to be wealthy. However it is said that some of her children worked at the mill owned by Richard Smith. The shop was taken over at a later date by Betty's son " Old James Cockcroft" Sophia's brother.

James ran the barbers business for a few years but eventually turned to drinking and loafing about. His children worked in the mill owned by his sisters husband which meant he had a small income from their earnings. However it was said that whatever money Cockcroft had it all went in one direction. When he left home in the morning he would be clean washed and shaved, wearing a old black cravat and his clogs shined to perfection. Towards the end of his life he was known to stand in the street and lecture to himself (if he could not get passers by to listen to him) the scriptures, Shakespeare or poetry. He was also known to make noises something between an Indian Wo-op and a shout, thrown up his arms and perform a miniature war dance.

Richard who had already lost two children in childhood suffered tragedy again when his daughter Mary Ann died in 1862 aged 21 Sophia dying two years later in March of 1864 and another daughter Elizabeth Hamilton in December of the same year. Robert Smith died in 1867. Richard and his brother Robert where said to be good employers building cottages for their employees that were described as the best in Bacup known as Smiths Buildings, they comprised Brick Street and Clay Street. Richard sold Tong Mills to his brother in law Joshua

Lord and retired in 1817 living at Oak House with his third wife Elizabeth, who died aged 58 in 1879. After Elizabeth's death Richard lived with his widowed sister Sarah Ingham at Oak House with his two servants. Robinson Smith the eldest son married Elizabeth Downs they had seven children Robinson lived at Primrose Bank, Stacksteads but died shortly before the birth of his son Clarence Agar Smith Elizabeth, died in 1909 in Bradford.

Richard had begun suffering from pains in his head and sleeplessness, these coupled with his advanced age were thought to have disturbed his mind and he tried to commit suicide by cutting his own throat with a table knife in March 1888. His daughter in law was in an adjoining room and heard a noise which attracted her attention, entering the breakfast room she found Richard on the floor with a deep gash to his throat, calling for the housemaid Lucy Ward a doctor was summoned and everything done to save his life Richard died two days later in the early hours of the morning. Like his father he was interred at Mount Pleasant Wesleyan Chapel.