

# Rockliffe House



Rockliffe House situated at Wesley Place, Bacup was home to the Maden family built in 1866 by John Maden cotton spinner and manufacturer, on land once known as Raw Cliffe. John Maden started off life as a humble handloom weaver, born at Bent in the hamlet of Heald. At the age of twenty he married Miss Alice Ackroyd and this meant that little humble hand loom cottage at Bent could no longer support two families and so John went off to work for Mr Ormerod at Waterbarn Mill, as a woollen weaver.

He was fond of telling the story of how he saved his first £5.00 encouraged always by his wife. In order to do this thy had put away 2s 6d each week the effort compelling many sacrifices. The possession of such a large amount caused him many a sleepless night for fear that thieves might break into his house and carry the money away with them, and so he hit upon the idea of putting the money into the bank. On the first Saturday he could spare , he marched over Rooley Moor to Rochdale and there deposited the five pounds into Fentons Bank. He often was heard to remark that the proudest moment of his life was when he became possessed of a bank book. John and Alice had like many of the day a large family.

Henry being the only son to survive, his brothers John and Phillip dying as babies. There were also three daughters Elizabeth who married Frank Hodson, Mary Ann who married George Maxwell, and Alice Jane who married Joshua Mellor and whose son Robert became the Meller of the firm Kidd,

Meller and Fletcher, solicitors. Sometime prior to 1837 he had gone into partnership with Mr Joshua Hoyle father of Edward Hoyle, Daniel Baron and Richard Bridge at Midge hole mill in Todmorden Road. At this time looms could be bought for about £1.00 each. The business prospered and when the mill became too small they built Throstle Mill in 1837. Living at Oak House which had been built in front of Throstle Mill on the main road the house had been built with a side door that led into the warehouse and it's said John often went into the mill at night to examine the quality of the cotton being produced. He later leased Lee Mill from Mr Holt and by the late 1850's had purchased Throstle mill from his once partners and built Springholme Mill.

After John Holt refused to provide land for a new church to be built at Wesley Place John gave the land and also defrayed almost half of the building costs. John Maden died on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1869 after a long and lingering illness, and he was interred in the family vault in the Wesleyan Chapel at Mount Pleasant, his wife Alice being interred in August of the same year after her death on the August 30<sup>th</sup> of the same month.

Henry born in 1829 carried on the business his father had built up and at the age of 50 he married his housekeeper Martha Darlington on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1878 in the parish church at Bettwys- y- Coed. Henry and Martha had no children that survived infancy Henry however did have an illegitimate son John Henry Kay, whose name was changed by deed poll in 1885 to John Henry Maden. Prior to this he lived in Salford with his mother being educated at Manchester Grammar school and after leaving school took up a position as salesman in his father's family business. After his name was changed John came to live in Bacup taking a great interest in the welfare of the town and its people. By 1890 Henry's health had begun to cause great concern to family and friends. Suffering from throat complications and later Brights disease.

He spent much of his time at apartments in North Shore Blackpool it was whilst he was staying here that he was asked by the Blackpool Liberals to become their candidate but he declined on account of his health. Although a County Councillor and Magistrate Henry had always refused to sit on the local board, school board or town council. Henry died on September 21 1890 at his residence in Blackpool, and such love and respect did the people of Bacup have for him on the day of his funeral the whole town put on mourning, shops were closed and mills ceased to work throughout the town. Laid to rest at Mount Pleasant in the family vault he was placed alongside his mother and father as well as his very much loved wife Martha who had died a short time before him.

In April 1891 John Henry married his cousin Miss Alice Meller in the seaside town of Southport on their return home to Bacup, cannon was fired at intervals and at night there was a torchlight procession with bonfires and fireworks in every direction. The happy couple were also serenaded by the various local bands who went to Rockliffe House to do the honours. Shortly after his marriage the death of the Duke of Devonshire caused a vacancy in the Rossendale Division which was then represented in the House of Commons by the Dukes son the Marquis of Hartington. Mr Maden was adopted and his name put forward as the most suitable of candidates and when the day of election came Mr Maden was returned by a majority of 1,244 votes over his opponent Sir Thomas Brooks.

In 1892 the Madens were blessed with a son named after his father but more fondly known by locals as Hal. 1893 Henry gave the land for the new Liberal Club on Burnley Road, presented the Maden Recreation Ground and on 16 December the Maden Public Baths were officially opened. At a special meeting of the Town Council on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 1893 it was moved by the Mayor

Alderman Thomas Disley the council desired to express its very high regard for the invaluable services rendered to the borough by John Henry Maden and as such would bestow on him the freedom of the Borough of Bacup.

In 1896 he was elected to Bacup Council and became the youngest serving Mayor. 1895 saw him returned to the House of Commons once again as Member for Rossendale division this time with no opposition. But towards the end of 1899 he sent in his resignation, he was re-elected as Mayor again in 1900 and again in 1916. In 1912 a drinking fountain made of Aberdeen granite was erected in Bacup centre as a memorial to the Maden family, the memorial was moved to Stubbylee Park in 1923. On 31st March 1913 Hal the only son of Mr and Mrs Maden attained his majority and came of age. In 1n July of the same year John Henry was presented along with his wife to the the King and Queen on their visit to Bacup.

In 1915 John Henry was offered a Baronetcy but as he did not approve of hereditary titles he accepted the title of Sir Henry Maden Kt. In 1916 Sir Henry and Lady Maden celebrated their silver wedding. Sir Henry died of cancer at the age of 58 in 1920. His only son Hal pictured below choose not to follow his father into the cotton industry and became a lawyer and in 1923 married Miss Alice Fletcher at Holmfirth Parish Church he died childless in 1960.

