

Stubbylee Hall



Situated just off New Line, Bacup, Stubbylee was the home of the Holt family built around 1808. The Holt estate originally covered the all the South side of the River Irwell from Cowpe across Brandwood Moor to Shawforth and then Sharneyford. John Holt was the only child of James Holt and his second wife Ann daughter of John Heyworth of Greensnook.

John married Judith Maden daughter of James Maden of Greens, on 25th June 1828. John became the second Magistrate of Bacup in 1838 and was one of the Poor Law Guardians. As such he became a target for the hand loom weavers anger in 1843, on a dark February night a friend approaching Stubbylee through the extensive grounds and thick shrubberies surrounding the house was shot at. The would be assassin was never found even though the Chief Constable of Preston offered a reward of £200 for information leading to the arrest.

Judith was suffering from influenza at the time and it is thought the shock of this incident helped to shorten her life and she died in March 1843. Followed six months later by Julia , Judith and Johns eldest daughter who died of Typhoid at the age of twelve.

John died in 26 December 1856, leaving two children James Maden Holt born in 1829 and Emily Sarah Holt born in 1836. James Maden Holt became a J.P in April of 1858 and became the first Bacup-born local MP when the North East Lancashire constituency was formed. His wife Anna whom he married in 1870 was the daughter of the Rev James Haworth of

Penistone, Yorkshire. For five years James served on the local board and at the General Election of 1863 he was returned to the House of Commons as an Independent Conservative, and sat for the North East Division of Lancashire for twelve years. In 1876 he introduced the cruelty to Animals Bill to prohibit the practice of vivisection.

James Madens gift to the people of Bacup was to provide the land and funds to build St Saviours Church, Vicarage and School which he did between the years 1858-1865. St Saviours Church was consecrated by the Right Rev. Bishop James Prince Lee on January 23rd 1865. The cost of the erection of the church, schools and vicarage was borne entirely by Mr J Maden Holt, and amounted to £8.000, £2.000 and £1.400 exclusive of the value of the sites.



The first vicar of St Saviours was the Rev William Whitworth who came from St Judes, Ancoats, Manchester he remained until August, 1869 when he resigned to resume the vicariate of St Mary's Rawtenstall. During the cotton famine of 1862-1865 James found work for the unemployed male cotton workers by constructing a "cotton panic road" behind Height Barn farm and through Lee Quarries and over Brandwood Moor the road was never completed due to the depth of the moorland peat and gorse. James, Emily and Anna spent much of their time away from Stubblelee living in London at which times the house was managed by a housekeeper.

Sarah who became a successful author publishing several books such as Alls Well, Clare Avery, Earl Hubert's Daughter died in London aged 57 in 1893 and James on the 11th September 1911, leaving £72071, 6s .2d.

Popular belief is that the hall was bequeathed to the Bacup Borough Council by James Maden Holt, this is not correct; the Council actually purchased the hall. The Town Council minutes of March 1913, record the Bacup Town Council negotiating to purchase the site of the hall and surrounding buildings, tip road (Park Road) and site of entrance to St Saviours Church.

On the 7th May 1914 the Town Clerk reported to the Town Council meeting that he had completed the contract for the purchase using money provided from the will of Miles Ashworth of Holme Bank, Stacksteads who had expressed a wish that a portion of Stubbylee should be used for a park or recreation ground.

A covenant was attached which stated the hall could only be used for a Town Hall, Municipal Offices, Picture or Art Gallery, Museum, Library, School, Hospital (other than for infectious diseases) Infirmary or Park, Recreation Ground. The will of Miles Ashworth stipulated that any land purchased from his bequest should be confined to be used as a Park or Recreation Ground. Over the following years the grounds were laid out and the hall altered for use as municipal offices.



James Maden Holt.

Further detailed information contact email: bacuptimes@yahoo.co.uk