

The Jessop Family of Roundhay Mount.

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Some time ago, during the course of my research into the history of Roundhay, I found a newspaper report of the wedding of Miss Helen Mary Jessop, daughter of Mr. T. R. Jessop, of Roundhay Mount and Park Square, Leeds. My subsequent research into this middle-class suburban family forms the basis for this article.

Thomas Richard Jessop was born in Brighouse in 1837; his father, also Thomas, was a solicitor. On leaving Giggleswick School he became apprenticed for five years to the Bradford surgeon William Farrar before studying at the Leeds School of Medicine. On Jessop's death, the *Leeds Mercury* said: 'He had a brilliant career at the school, and he derived great advantage in his professional training as a pupil of the late Mr Thomas Nunneley, one of the men who in the last century did much to establish the high surgical reputation of Leeds.' Although he passed the exams for the fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons at the age of 23, (*Daily News*, 21/7/ 1859) Thomas Jessop had to wait until his 25th birthday to be admitted.

The 1861 Census shows Jessop at the head of the long list of those resident at the General Infirmary in Leeds on census night; he had been elected as Resident Medical Officer there in 1860 and would remain in the post until 1865, when he became the Surgeon at the Public Dispensary, a position he would hold for a period of five years. The next ten years saw Jessop back at the Infirmary as Surgeon General. Thomas Jessop was lecturer in physiology in 1866 and the first professor of surgery at the Yorkshire College in 1886. In 1901 Jessop was elected Vice President of the Royal College of Surgeons; although much could

be said of his eminent medical career, it is his family life that is of particular interest.

A directory for 1866 records Thomas Jessop as living at 13 East Parade, previously occupied by Dr. Clifford Allbutt (one of the Jessop daughters would later live in the former home of Sir Clifford Allbutt, Carr Manor). The following year he married Isabella Harvey, youngest daughter of the late John Blackburn, sometime coroner for the borough of Leeds, and the 1871 census shows the family living at 32 Park Square. The household consisted of Thomas and Isabella, their infant children (Helen Mary and Thomas Harvey), an assistant and a pupil, both described as students of medicine, a cook and a nursemaid.

To offset the cost of the newly acquired Park, Leeds Corporation auctioned off some of the surplus land for building. In the sale of 18 June 1876, Dr. Jessop purchased a plot of land of 9144 square yards (Lot 21) fronting West Avenue, Roundhay, at a cost of two shillings per yard, where he built Roundhay Mount. The family was installed here by the time of the 1881 census, with 32 Park Square becoming what was described as a 'home hospital'. The youngest child of the family, Gladys, was born in Roundhay, and it was from Roundhay Mount that Helen Mary Jessop was married. The 1891 census shows her future husband, the Leeds solicitor Harold Wilson, staying as a guest in the house. The household numbered Thomas and Isabella Jessop, one of their sons and their six daughters and their guest; there was a butler and a governess (relationship to the household head not described as servant, interestingly, but left blank) and six other servants. The coachman and his wife lived in their own separate household. One of the servants, the cook, was Mrs Thorne, a 67-year old widow; a Mrs Thorne was noted as having attended Mr Jessop's funeral in 1903, her name appearing next to the*servants of his then residence.

Historians have talked of the social rituals of the middle classes; one of these that showed a middle class family at its most public and presenting itself and its resources to the outside world as lavishly as possible must surely have been a wedding. On 25 August 1891 the wedding took place at Leeds Parish Church of Helen Mary Jessop. The bride's Sunday School class strewed her way with flowers after the service conducted by the Bishop of Ripon, assisted by the Vicars of Leeds and Roundhay. A hymn composed for the wedding of Princess Louise, 'Lord, who hast made home-love to be an angel to help us and ours', was sung by the choir, with the Bishop's address reminding the newly-married couple that 'it would be their duty to take part in preserving the nation's strength through the sanctity of their home.' Not only does the report in the *Leeds Daily News* of 26 August 1891 give a detailed account of who was involved, what they wore, and how the service proceeded, it also names some of the invited guests. 'Neighbours' included Sir James Kitson, the Misses Lupton, Mrs. Francis Lupton and other members of her family, Mr and Mrs John Hawthorn Kitson, Mr Edward Schunk and his wife and daughter (soon to become Mrs Albert Kitson) - all gathered to celebrate the occasion and affirm the importance to the middle class of family life and the sanctity of marriage. The guest list demonstrated the importance to the family of friends of certain standing, not just in suburban Roundhay, but also in the city of Leeds; it was certainly an opportunity to reinforce one's 'social capital', or relations with significant others.

The medical connection was carried on in the next generation of the Jessop family. Isabella Wellesley married Berkeley G. A. Moynihan (a former student at Leeds Medical School from 1883) at Leeds Parish Church on April 17 1895. The witnesses included her father, brother T. Harvey Jessop, and sister Helen Mary

Wilson. The wedding was reported at length in the local papers and also announced in the London *Standard*. Moynihan had been appointed Resident Surgical Officer in Leeds in 1890, after his term at the Ida Hospital (said to be 'really a ward of the Infirmary') came to an end. A daughter was born on 27 April 1897 at 5 Woodhouse Square; the couple would have two daughters (one of whom, Dorothy, was, in the 1930s, a leading light in local amateur operatic productions) and a son. Berkeley Moynihan travelled extensively and took Isabella with him on at least one of his transatlantic trips, for photographs of them as patrons of a Leeds amateur operatic society were taken in Chicago. Only days after Isabella's sudden death on 31 August 1936 the press reported 'Heartbroken Surgeon dies week after wife who inspired career' (*Daily Mirror*, 8/9/1936). Apparently the offer of burial in Westminster Abbey was turned down by the family and he was buried at Lawnswood Cemetery.

But what of the other Jessop children? T. Harvey Jessop, who was a student of medicine in 1891, was by 1903 working for the Government Pay Department of South Africa. He married Mary Smith, of Humberton, at Boroughbridge in March 1906, and the report of this wedding is in sharp contrast to that of his sister Helen twelve years earlier; 'the bride, who was attired in a blue travelling dress, was given away by her brother' (*Leeds & Yorkshire Mercury*, 9/3/06). There is no detail of guests or gifts received. D'Arcy S. Jessop was at Manor Farm in Thorer in 1903; that his father had a farm there was noted in an obituary in the *Yorkshire Post* of 7/9/03. In 1899 the *Yorkshire Herald* and *York Herald* racing reports had listed D'Arcy Jessop as riding his horse Careen in the 1.45. and 3.00. races at Wetherby Steeple Chases on 4 April.

He later lived in Knaresborough. Another of the daughters married Guy Molesworth of the Indian Civil Service, and another, a Mr Ward Smith of Shipley.

Isabella Harvey Jessop died on 1 April 1893 and *The Standard* of 28/08/1896 and *British Medical Journal* (5/9/ 1896) reported Thomas Jessop's second marriage, to Eliza, widow of the late Walter Cardwell of Dewsbury, at Giggleswick Parish Church. *Kelly's Directory* shows Thomas Jessop at The Mount, Roundhay, in 1897, but at the time of his death in 1903 he was living at The Quarries, Chapel Allerton. The funeral at St John's Church, Roundhay, was attended by family members, friends and neighbours, and 'a very large number of medical men' (*Leeds Mercury*, 21/9/03). Amongst the tributes the *Leeds Mercury* said :The reputation of the deceased was not confined to Leeds or the West Riding. Mr. Jessop in his time was probably the greatest surgeon in the North of England, and his practice was correspondingly extensive.' (*Leeds Mercury*, 7/9/03) One of the many wreaths sent to the church was inscribed "From a devoted patient whose life he saved". (*Leeds Mercury*, 21/9/03).

Thomas Jessop was known for his readiness to use new ideas, and was 'credited with having been the first man in Leeds to install the telephone between residence and surgery and Infirmary.' (*Yorkshire Post* 7/9/03) He was also described as 'a disciple of Lord Lister' and on a continental tour visited clinics in Moscow which 'he declared to be noble monuments to Lister's genius'. And 'when he could bring himself to shake off the burdens of his calling, Mr. Jessop might be found studying horticulture in his grounds at Roundhay or agriculture at his Thorner farm'. (*Yorkshire Post*, 7/9/03). And of Jessop as a family man it was said, 'No more devoted father ever lived. Himself he did not consider, but nothing was too good for his wife and children.' (*Yorkshire Post*, 7/9/03)

But what happened to those children? It is interesting to speculate on a number of questions - how did the Jessop daughters meet their future husbands - one obviously through the medical connection, and another was married to a

Leeds solicitor - but what of the others? Did the youngest two, Connie and Gladys, marry- or what became of them after their father's death? And where are the family's descendants now? Isabella Jessop married Berkeley Moynihan in 1895; Moynihan was created a baronet in 1929 and was succeeded by his son and two grandsons. The present baronet is Colin Moynihan (Chairman of the British Olympic Association and a member of the Olympic Board, which has oversight of the London 2012 games). He is the great-grandson of Thomas and Isabella Jessop of Roundhay Mount.