

**Roundhay (Allerton) Hall:
Putting the Record Straight**
© By Margaret Plows

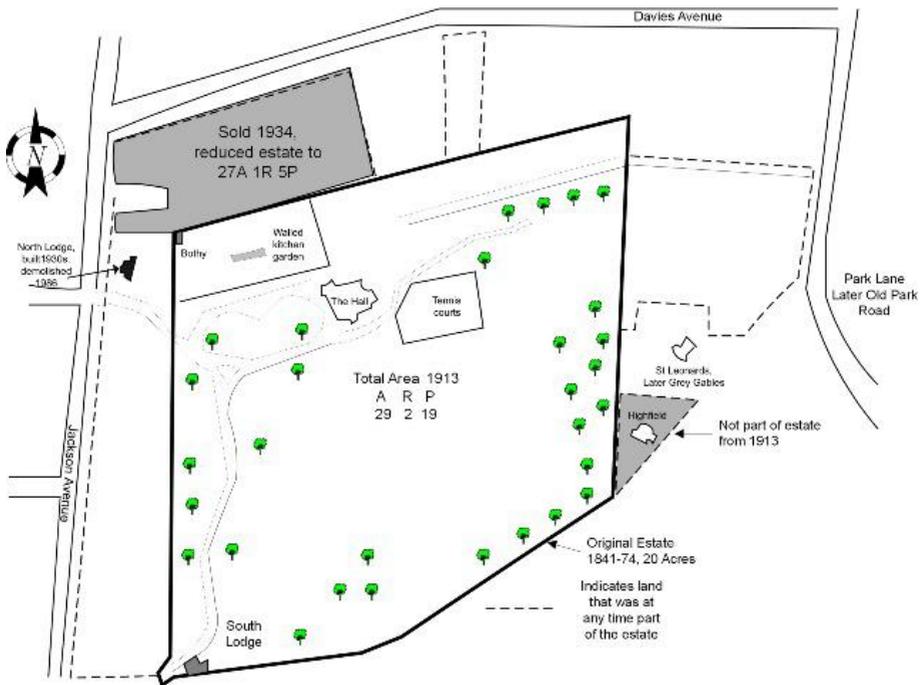
In 1929 my father, then an apprentice gardener to Lord Brotherton, planted crocuses in the spinney opposite the South Lodge of Roundhay Hall. By the 1950s, when I was a child living at South Lodge, the crocuses formed a spring carpet of purple and white. It is this personal knowledge that led me to write an article entitled: 'Roundhay Hall A Personal History.' This was published in *Aspects of Leeds* 3 in 2001. Since then new evidence strongly indicates that the then accepted origin of Roundhay Hall is incorrect. This article will 'Put the Record Straight'.

1842-1868 First Owner, William Smith

It had been thought that the Hall was built in 1822 by John Clark for John Goodman. However, Baines's 1834 map does not show any buildings on the site. Of course, Baines might have omitted them, but this seems unlikely given their social significance.



Roundhay Hall. Photograph taken in 1951.



Roundhay Hall Sitemap

In addition, Joan Newiss lent me William Smith's memoirs compiled from his hand-written notebooks by his fourth great-granddaughter, Laurel Lyndon Walters, with whom Joan has corresponded.

The memoirs not only reveal that William Smith was the first person to own Allerton Hall, and to be responsible for its building, but also how and why the Hall was built. His personal memoirs were written in 1867, whilst wintering in Biarritz. They state:

In the year 1838 I was very desirous to take a house in the country, but could meet with nothing suitable. [William then rented a house at Headingley that he considered too expensive at £300 per annum.] After occupying the [rented] house sometime, I made up my mind that I would build a house of my own at Gledhow. I bought twenty acres of land [in the township of Chapel Allerton] from John Dixon at the price of three thousand two hundred pounds, for the lot. I employed Mr Samuel Sharp as my architect, and he drew out plans following the instructions I had given him. Mr Sharp put out the plans of the house

to the trade requesting tenders, from such parties as were willing to compete, but not binding himself to accept the lowest tender. The competition was very great, because many parties were out of work, in consequence of the badness of trade, and were very desirous of employment for their workmen. The first sod was dug up early in April 1841 and the house finished in eighteen months, and I took possession of it in September 1842. The entire building including, land, hothouse, stable, coach house, two cottages and several other outbuildings with a great part of the furniture cost me upwards of sixteen thousand pounds. Such is the great advance in building since 1842 that I am sure such a building as Allerton Hall Gledhow could not now be built for double the money it has cost me. Mr Sharp kept all the builders and joiners to their tenders, and there was not a single deviation from them, except additions to the house and these amounted to three hundred pounds, and were for alterations in the cornices and fitting up of the kitchen, with cupboard drawers etc.

William Smith was born in 1785, and in 1808 married Elizabeth Burrows at Leeds Parish Church where he and his two brothers were acclaimed Bell Ringers. The family were also strong supporters of the Methodist movement. The overall impression I felt after reading William's memoirs was that he was a self-made man who was clever enough to see it made business sense not to go into manufacturing with all its overheads. Essentially he was a stuff merchant (cloth merchant) who would also see a fashion trend such as copying the cloaks that Queen Victoria wore. He would buy cloth when prices were low and then have it made up when the factories were looking for work. His warehouses can still be seen on Great George Street and Cookridge Street.

Like many people of the time William suffered losses in his family. His beloved wife died of puerperal fever after giving birth to their seventh child; this child, also called William, later

died at school in Tadcaster of typhus fever aged fourteen. Another boy died as an infant and three daughters, Elizabeth, Sarah and Anne, all died of infectious diseases in their teens or twenties. Anne died whilst travelling with her father in Italy. Lyndon Smith, a grandson, died trying to rescue a young woman who had fallen through the ice in Gledhow Valley Lake.

William travelled widely throughout European countries. In Italy he commissioned sculptures to be made for Allerton Hall. He had his coat of arms put over the front door of the hall. Both the sculptures and the coat of arms have been previously attributed to Lord Brotherton.

1868-1872 Second Owners, George Smith and Maria Beverley

William Smith died at Allerton Hall in 1868. The Hall then passed to his surviving children George Smith and Maria Beverley.

1872-1893 Third Owner, Henry Price Bowring

Henry Price Bowring bought the hall in 1872. He increased the estate to twenty six acres by buying two parcels of land in Roundhay, one in 1874 the other in 1875.

Henry had moved to Leeds after being a partner in C T Bowring, a shipping firm in Liverpool. This move occurred on his retirement following his marriage in 1865 to the daughter of William Illingworth of Illingworth, Ingham of Leeds (Timber Merchants). Henry died in 1893.

1893-1908 Fourth Owner, Mrs S Bowring

Mrs Bowring and her children continued to live at Allerton Hall; Mrs Bowring was well known for her charitable work. But after her son and daughter's marriages she rented a house at Meanwood and put the Hall up for sale. However, in 1908 she died and the property passed to her children.

1908-1913 Fifth Owner, Henry Illingworth Bowring and Mrs J C Wright

The property and estate must have taken some time to settle,

as it was not until 1913 that her son Henry Illingworth Bowring and her daughter Mrs J C Wright finally disposed of it.

1913-30 Sixth Owner, Lord Edward Allen Brotherton

Lord Brotherton purchased Allerton Hall on the 29 October 1913 and renamed it Roundhay Hall. He paid £13,477.10s; this amount is less than it originally cost to build! Extra land was bought that increased the estate to over twenty nine acres. By the time he bought Roundhay Hall, Lord Brotherton had already made a fortune from his chemical works at Wakefield. He had developed unique processes and exploited niches in the market.

He was born in Manchester, in 1856, the son of Theophilus Brotherton, a cotton manufacturer. Leaving school at fifteen, he then attended evening classes at Owens College where he laid the foundation of his knowledge about the chemical industry. He married an artist May Brookes in 1883, but she died in childbirth during the first year of their marriage and he never remarried.

In 1913-14 when he was Lord Mayor of Leeds, his Lady Mayoress was his niece by marriage Mrs Dorothy Una Ratcliffe. She was an author, traveller and aviator whom he treated as a daughter ultimately bequeathing her Roundhay Hall.

During 1914 he personally funded the Leeds Pals Battalion and offered the services of his chemical works to the country for the war effort. A holder of many civic and national offices in both Wakefield and Leeds, he was also a great benefactor to many charities and institutions taking a personal interest in them all.

From 1922 onwards Lord Brotherton developed an interest in manuscripts and first editions and had the study extended at Roundhay Hall to house these works. He endowed the University of Leeds with a library, which still bears his name, and his collections are now kept there. It was his wish that literature should be accessible to all and that his collection and others should stay in this country. On his death in October

1930 he was given full civic honours at Leeds Parish Church followed by burial at Lawnswood Cemetery.

Lord Brotherton's nephew and managing director Charles Frederick Ratcliffe (subsequently adopted the name Brotherton) was a benefactor of the Brotherton Wing at the Leeds General Infirmary in 1942.

1930-36 Seventh Owner, Dorothy Una Ratcliffe

She inherited Roundhay Hall with Lord Brotherton's hope that she and her husband, Charles Frederick Ratcliffe would live there. However, they divorced in 1932. In the same year Dorothy remarried and became Mrs McGrigor Phillips. She offered Roundhay Hall to Leeds Corporation but they turned it down.

Planning permission had been granted on land to the west adjacent to Jackson Avenue, for the building of houses and a road but this never went ahead. However, land to the north, abutting Davies Avenue, was sold in 1934 for the building of detached or semi-detached houses.

1936-45 Eighth Owner, Edward Warwick Broadbent

Edward Broadbent, representing Finsbury Estates, purchased Roundhay Hall in January 1936.

During the Second World War, the Leeds General Infirmary used the Hall as a sixty two bed annexe to the infirmary and it was sold to them in 1945 with twenty six acres of land for £25,000. There is no record that Mr Broadbent ever lived at the Hall.

1945-1986 Ninth Owner, Leeds General Infirmary (LGI)

Initially, the Hall continued as a convalescent hospital.

My father, Joseph (Joe) Thirsk, had left Roundhay Hall in 1930 to better himself. But in 1946 he returned as gardener to Roundhay Hall after serving in Burma. He and my mother, Connie, lived in the renovated South Lodge that was a tied cottage where I lived from 1951 until I married in 1971.

The Preliminary Training School (PTS) for nurses at the LGI moved to Roundhay Hall in 1951 with a purpose built nurses' home constructed in the south-east corner of the kitchen garden. In 1969, the PTS moved back to the LGI and the Hall remained empty with my father as a gardener and caretaker until his retirement in September 1973.

In March 1974, the Hospital for Women moved temporarily to Roundhay Hall while a new hospital was built in Leeds. This involved the addition of some new buildings next to the old hall; in total there was accommodation for ninety patients. After the new hospital at the LGI was completed in the early 1980s the hall stood empty until it was finally sold to BUPA private hospitals in 1986. Not all the land was sold; the LGI retained ten acres with access to Old Park Road that was subsequently sold for housing.

1986-2007 Tenth Owner, BUPA Hospitals

The site re-opened as a seventy-eight bed BUPA hospital in September 1989 after a £6m project to add new buildings to the renovated Hall. The Hall and South Lodge are Grade II listed buildings.

October 2007 Eleventh and Current Owner, Spire Hospitals

Whilst the hall is owned by Spire Hospitals, in 2011 the South Lodge was put up for sale and is now owned by a firm of Architects. Richard Burt, their managing director, kindly invited me to look round South Lodge in December 2012, the first time I had been inside the Lodge since my parents moved out in January 1973.

Reference

Additional material about my life at the Lodge can be read in Plows, M Roundhay Hall: A Personal History in Aspects of Leeds 3 Discovering Local History, edited by Stevenson Tate, L 2001 pp 27-42. Wharnccliffe Books.