

INTRODUCTION

The Tattershalls of Silkstone Common

BACKGROUND

The name Tattershall and names derived from it such as Tattersall, Tattershaw, Tattershill, Tattersell and Tetsall are from the place name Tattershall in Lincolnshire. The surname has been particularly common in Lancashire from an early period.



TATTERSHALL CASTLE, LINCOLNSHIRE

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The place name Tattershall and the surname derive from Sir Robert de Tateshale who started building the Castle in 1231. There are a million bricks in the tower that was built in the fifteenth century for Lord Cromwell, Lord Treasurer to King Henry VI.

GEORGE TATTERSHALL (1777 – 1837)

George Tattershall was born in 1777 and married Ellen Mellor at Felkirk Parish Church on 24 November 1800. George wrote his signature, Ellen made her mark. Relatively few people could read and write at this time. The entry in the parish register reads: -

George Tattershall of this parish and Ellen Mellor of the same parish married in this church by Banns on 24th day of November in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred.

Their only son William was born at Brierley, a parish of Felkirk, about five miles north east of Barnsley. It was only a small village of less than 500 people at the time. William was christened at Felkirk Parish Church on 18 October 1801. No record has been found of any other children born to George and Ellen in the parish baptism registers for either Felkirk or Silkstone All Saints nor was there any other evidence to suggest that they had further children.

It appears that the family moved to Silkstone when William was very young. It is mentioned in the “History of Silkstone and Silkstone Common” website that George Tattershall had a nursery at the beginning of the century near Silkstone Cross, opposite Silkstone Church. The nursery was cut in two when a waggonway was built in 1809 to carry coal from Silkstone to the Barnsley Canal. The canal had been built to link with the Aire and Calder rivers and transport coal from the Silkstone collieries more quickly to markets across the country. George Tattershall was clearly very enterprising as he had a pub built in 1813. The Bonny Bunch of Roses was to be in the family’s hands for over a hundred years. George was included in Baines Directory for Silkstone for 1822 as a nursery and seedsman. He was again mentioned in Pigot’s Directory, 1834 when the business was shown as George Tattershall & Son. The inclusion of “& Son” suggests that William was now taking an important role in running the business. George was 57 years old. He died

three years later at the age of 60 in early September 1837 and was buried at Silkstone All Saints Church.

WILLIAM TATTERSHALL (1801 – 1876)

William was born at Brierley but moved with his parents, George and Ellen, to Silkstone when he was very young. They were a quite prosperous, middle class family. William would have helped his father with his nursery business from a young age and by 1834 was a partner in it. William and not his father, George, is included in the register of electors in the Barnsley Poll Book for 1935 which suggest that by then he was the householder and his parents were living with him. William had a difficult start in running the business by himself after his father died in 1837. It is also mentioned on the “History of Silkstone and Silkstone Common” website that William lost 30,000 rose trees in the great storm of 1838.



Silkstone Church

William had married Elizabeth Moakson on 7 April 1825 at All Saints Church, Silkstone. He signed the register and Elizabeth made her mark. They had ten children, seven sons and three daughters including two named Mary. The second Mary Tattershall found in the parish register for 1831 was born and baptised that year but no trace of her was found in the 1841 or subsequent censuses. George who was born and baptised in 1826 was also not found in any of the censuses or in the All Saints burial register. It was common to name the first son after the father's father as in this instance. The survival rate for William and Elizabeth's children was not good. Three children born in succession died very young. John died aged 3 (6 January 1833 - 27 January 1836), Joseph at 14 months (12 January 1835 - 23 March 1836) and William who was probably only a few days old when he died in January 1839 (baptised on 27 January 1839). It must have been a very unhappy time in the Tattershall household. Of the ten children only Mary, James and Thomas are known to have definitely survived to adulthood. James was the eldest son to survive.

William died in 1876. He had been a widower for many years. His wife, Elizabeth was not on the 1851 Census so presumably had died between the birth of Robert, their last child, who was christened on 12 November 1848 and 30th March 1851 (when the 1851 Census was taken). Research at the National Coal Mining Museum elicited that William Tattershall owned small mine workings in the Silkstone area. Like his father, George, had clearly been an enterprising man - owning a nursery, a public house and mine workings.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Mary (b.31 July 1827), James (11 July 1829 - 1900), and Thomas Tattershall (b.1839)

Both James and Thomas helped their father in his nursery business. They were very lucky that they did not have to work in the pits as many had to even as children - both boys and

girls of 10 years old and younger. Twenty-six children were drowned in the Huskar Pit Disaster on 4 July 1838, twenty of them from Silkstone and there is a memorial to them in All Saints Churchyard. There was a national outcry about the tragedy because of the women and children working in mines and the terrible conditions that they were working under. The Children's Employment Commission on mines was set up as a direct result and published its report on 7 May 1842. This enquiry led by Lord Shaftesbury resulted in the banning of women and children from working underground. At the time of the 1851 Census Silkstone children as young as ten years old were working in the mines although not underground presumably. There were a thousand Yorkshire women working in pits at that time.





Memorial at All Saints Churchyard in Silkstone to commemorate the twenty-six children that drowned in the Huskar Pit Disaster in 1838.

Below is a short extract from the book, CHILDREN of the DARK by Alan Gallop, about the disaster.

“They were Queen Victoria’s invisible subjects; an army of women and children labouring beneath England’s “green and pleasant land” harvesting coal to fuel the furnaces of the industrial revolution. The “children of the dark” toiled half naked and out of sight for wealthy “Coal Kings,” chained like beasts of burden and crawling on all fours through miles of narrow passageways dragging their coal carts. They lived in daily danger of lethal gas leaks known as “firedamp,” the roof of their tiny tunnels caving in, injury or death from rotting ropes and primitive winding gear lowering them deep into the earth for 18 hour shifts. They went through life without an education, few could read or write, and those who survived became stooped or deformed from working in cramped conditions.

And then an accident happened in a Silkstone colliery in 1838 that shocked Britain to its core. Twenty-six children were drowned after a storm flooded a mineshaft through which they were attempting to leave. Following a report in The Times, the public at large learned for the first time that children in Queen Victoria’s Britain worked like moles underground. There was a public outcry, led by politician and champion of the poor, Lord Ashley who called for an official Royal Commission inquiry into the working conditions of children and women in Britain’s mines.”

George Tattershall (1847 - 12 February 1923)

George was christened at All Saints Church, Silkstone on 16 May 1847. The record in the baptism register at All Saints Church, Silkstone notes that his mother was Mary Tattershall, single woman. There was no father mentioned. Mary was 19 years old when George was born. At the 1851 Census, George was living with Mary and his grandfather, William. Mary's occupation was given as housekeeper.

George was the first member of the Tattershall family to work in a coal mine. At the 1881, 1891 and 1901 Censuses George's occupation was given as a coal miner. In 1901 he was working at the coalface as a coal hewer. Cutting coal was the job that miners progressed to after they had served their time in the pits. Silkstone was a village that was very industrial as can be seen from this extract from the National Gazetteer for Great Britain and Ireland, 1868: -

SILKSTONE, 4 miles S.W. of Barnsley, is a station on a branch of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire railway. The village, which is situated in a valley on a branch of the river Dearne, is well built, and principally consists of one long street. A portion of the inhabitants are engaged in the collieries, nail factories, iron and wiredrawing works, and in the manufacture of linen. The coal obtained is of excellent quality, and is wrought chiefly by R. Clarke, of Noblethorpe. There are also quarries of good building-stone. The produce of the mines and quarries is conveyed by a short railway of 2 miles to the basin of the Barnsley canal, whence it is sent to London and various other markets.

The railway mentioned is the waggonway that was built in 1809 to carry Silkstone coal to the canal and cut through the middle of George's grandfather's nursery.

No history of a mining family would be complete without an account of the way that they lived. There was so much that was different about the way that the whole mining family lived compared with other occupations and communities. The traditional view held in the twentieth century was of mining towns and villages with row upon row of grimy terrace houses each one the same as the other. Many of the men spent their leisure time drinking in pubs, tending their allotments and breeding and racing pigeons. The women had little leisure time. Looking after a large family and washing clothes covered in dirt and coal dust worn by the men folk, and cleaning up after them was a full time job without to-day's labour saving devices. There was great loyalty and community in good times and bad. Families were close particularly so because there were many marriages between different mining families. There was a common sense of resentment about the way that they were exploited by the mining owners and butties who they worked for but also owned the shops and pubs where they were required to spend their hard earned wages.

The coal industry was the powerhouse behind Britain's industrial revolution which made the country the leading world economy from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century. By 1870 there were half a million miners and over a million by 1920. It was a dirty and dangerous job. Between 1860 and 1897 mining accidents left 13,000 widows and over 30,000 orphaned children. The conditions that miners worked in also resulted in diseases such as bronchitis, rheumatism, pneumoconiosis and silicosis.

George married Alice Schofield in 1872. They had eight children, four sons and four daughters. It appears that only Mary who was born in 1875 died very young. The inscription on her parents' headstone at All Saints churchyard shows that she died in 1877 when she was only two years old. James who died in 1905 aged 20 was also included on his parents' headstone. William, the eldest son, was a domestic gardener (aged 21) probably

working for his aunt, Hannah Tattershall at the 1901 Census. His younger brother, Henry (aged 20) was a coal trammer working underground. Trammers were young miners.

George Tattershall died on 12 February 1923 aged 75 and was buried in Silkstone All Saints Churchyard with two of his children, Mary and James, and was later joined by his wife, Alice, who died on 30 January 1933 aged 79. He had an unfortunate start to his life being born illegitimate but was accepted by the family and when his uncle James Tattershall died in 1900 he was an Executor.