

# Richard Hardaker of Rawdon – A 30 Year Old Puzzle Finally Solved

Paul J Hardaker & J Brian Hardaker - November 2017

*Reference numbers prefaced with “#” and highlighted in blue refer to individuals in the Hardaker One-name Study database on the [HardakerFamily.id.au](http://HardakerFamily.id.au) web site*

Research into the Hardaker ancestry of Brian Hardaker and his father John (Jack) Bertram Hardaker #502 started nearly 40 years ago with the first methodical work undertaken by the late Edith Hardaker, wife of Jack. This early research progressed quite quickly for the first few generations based on plenty of good quality information from the various registers and also from the UK censuses. As a consequence we have had the following ancestry for Brian and his father Jack well documented for a considerable time:

- [John Bertram #502](#), born 2 Oct 1896 at Thackley, parents John Lee Hardaker and Rachel Stansfield Brown (m. Jun 1893);
- [John Lee Hardaker #476](#), born 4 Apr 1859 at Idle, parents Samuel Hardaker and Susanna Lee (m. May 1845);
- [Samuel Hardaker #468](#), born 2 Jul 1814 at Idle, parents John Hardaker and Mary Pullen (m. Apr 1810);
- [John Hardaker #464](#), born 19 Apr 1780 probably at Rawdon, parents Richard Hardaker and Betty Overend (m. Jan 1770).

This is as far as Edith and later Brian and others were able to trace things with any certainty. No likely birth, baptism or burial record for Richard #270, father of John #464, could be found. There was no obvious evidence of any siblings of Richard's. Various theories about Richard's ancestry were considered and eventually discarded<sup>1</sup>. The extensive Hardaker One-name Study database on this web site grew out of efforts by Brian in particular to identify Richard through a 'top-down' approach to this particular problem, starting with Roger Hardaker #4 who died in 1667 and was the presumed founder of the Hardaker dynasty at Rawdon and beyond.

This paper presents a new theory about Richard's parentage that we think finally gets us past this particular very long-standing 'brick wall'.

## Known Facts

We know relatively little about Richard. What information we do have is as follows.

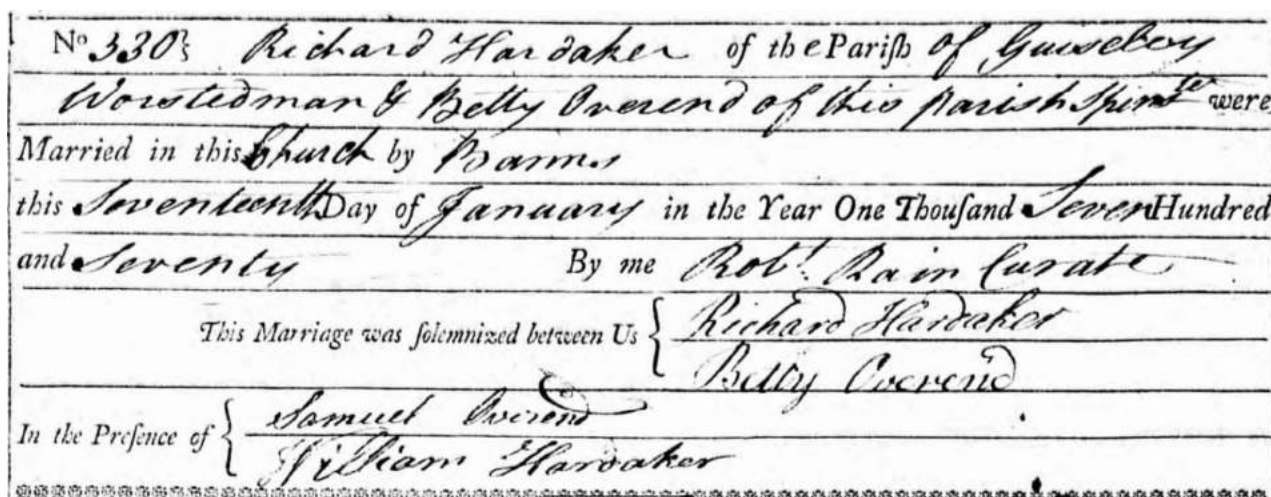
Marriage to Betty Overend (17 Jan 1770): This is the most significant record that we have available. This is the entry from the Calverley church register<sup>2</sup>:

(next page)

---

1 See [http://hardakerfamily.id.au/histories/Research\\_on\\_the\\_Ancestry\\_of\\_Richard\\_Hardaker.pdf](http://hardakerfamily.id.au/histories/Research_on_the_Ancestry_of_Richard_Hardaker.pdf)

2 From Ancestry.com



From this record we glean the following information:

- Richard was a 'Worstedman'. We are not entirely sure what this means. Certainly it tells us that Richard was involved in the manufacture and/or sale of worsted, a particular type of high quality yarn and fabric. Worsted yarns were combed rather than carded to ensure that the fibres all ran in the same direction and were generally made from long staple wool. For a long time West Yorkshire clothiers (manufacturers of cloth) produced woollen fabric made from short staple wool that was carded to tangle the fibres to produce cloth with good insulation against the cold. Because worsted production was 'new' technology, we suspect that Richard may have served a lengthy apprenticeship in this specialised occupation. Usually apprentices were not allowed to marry until they had completed their apprenticeship (often seven years), which allows us to guess that Richard may have been born about 1745 (so aged about 25 when married in 1770)<sup>1</sup>.
- Betty was a spinster. Statistically, this suggests that Richard was a bachelor<sup>3</sup>, but we have no way of confirming this.
- Richard was literate (signed his name), as was his bride Betty Overend.
- Witnesses to the marriage were Samuel Overend, most likely Betty's older brother, and a William Hardaker. We do now know what the relationship was between Richard and William, but it was common for a brother of the groom to be a witness to the marriage.

Baptism of Richard's children: We have records for four children that we can attribute to Richard and Betty:

- Samuel #272, born 16 Feb 1771;
- Richard #273, born 2 Oct 1772;
- Timothy #274, born 12 May 1775;
- John #464, born 19 Apr 1780.

All four were recorded (named rather than baptised<sup>4</sup>) in the register of the Rawdon Baptist chapel (established about 1712 and originally known as Cragg Chapel, later called Buckstone Chapel). From this we gather that Richard and Betty were practising Baptists.

<sup>3</sup> Our data tells us that bachelors are more likely to marry spinsters, and widowers are slightly more likely to marry widows than spinsters.

<sup>4</sup> Baptists do not believe in infant baptism, instead newborn children are named. Baptism typically occurs once the child is old enough to understand the meaning of the ceremony. However, there are no surviving records from Buckstone Chapel of naming of children before about 1750.

We also see that Richard and Betty appear to have (re)used the names of family members, this being very common practice around this time. The main indicator of this is Timothy b. 1775. We know from our research into the Overend family that Betty's father was named Timothy, and it seems that the third son was named after him. We assume that son Richard was named after his father. That then leaves Samuel and John, and we guess that one or both of these may have been named after close relatives of Richard or Betty. It was quite common for the firstborn son to be named after the father's father, and on that basis we had theorised that Richard's father might be named Samuel. Yet all efforts to locate a likely candidate resulted in nothing conclusive, or even likely.

Family moved to Idle: Three of Richard's sons, Samuel, Richard and John, can be found living at Idle in the 1841 UK census. Timothy is missing by this time, and we think it likely that he died in 1832, being buried at Bradford St Peter. We think it probable that Richard and Betty moved with their family from Rawdon to Idle sometime after the birth of their children. The Buckstone records do not record where Richard was living when his children were born, but we guess that he was living at or close to Rawdon. It is however not impossible that he was living at Idle at the time the children were born. We have a record of a Richard Hardaker, a rate-payer, at Bolton in 1784, and in 1792 he was an 'Overseer of the Poor'. We have no way of telling whether this is 'our' Richard, but Bolton adjoins Idle.

### **Other Information**

We have various other information that may, or may not help in identifying who Richard was.

Other Hardaker Namings at Buckstone circa 1775: There were only a few Hardakers naming children at Buckstone chapel over the period 1760-1790. Other than those for Richard and Betty already noted above we have:

- A Richard Hardaker named a daughter Hannah in July 1760. This cannot be Richard and Betty since they did not marry until 1770. We think it somewhat likely that this Hannah was later baptised at Rawdon church on 10 July 1761 'in the second year of her age';
- A John Hardaker named two sons, William in February 1770 and John in April 1772;
- A Samuel Hardaker named William in January 1775, Mary in August 1776, James in March 1778, Samuel in July 1780, Hannah in July 1781 and another Samuel in March 1784.

Through our many years of genealogical research we have found that it is not uncommon for different people of the same surname baptising children at the same church or chapel at around the same time to be closely related (e.g., brothers or cousins). A close examination of these three Hardaker men is therefore worthwhile on the off-chance that we are able to link one or more of them to Richard #270.

Richard father of Hannah: Our research effort into this Hannah suggests that she is probably the daughter of Richard #92 and wife Hannah Briggs. This is based largely on our presumption that she married Richard Roo in 1785 and connecting one of the witnesses to that marriage (Joseph Claughton) to Roger, the younger brother of Richard #92<sup>5</sup>. What is rather odd is the fact that Hannah was named at Buckstone Baptist chapel, and apparently also baptised at Rawdon chapel about a year later. We can find no indication that any of the other children we have attributed to Richard #92 and Hannah were named at Buckstone chapel or that the parents Richard and Hannah had any affiliation with the Rawdon Baptists. We have not completely eliminated the possibility that the naming and baptism were two

---

5 See: [http://hardakerfamily.id.au/histories/Research\\_on\\_Hannah\\_Hardaker\\_born\\_1760.pdf](http://hardakerfamily.id.au/histories/Research_on_Hannah_Hardaker_born_1760.pdf)

different children to different parents, but the available death/burial and marriage records certainly do not support this idea.

John father of William and John: Based on earlier research we have matched this person to John #697 who married Betty Broadbent in September 1765. John was the son of John Hardaker #46 and Elizabeth Howard #696, and born January 1738 at Briggate (Leeds). Unfortunately there are no obvious indications that this John and Richard #270 are directly related (for example, the name Richard does not appear anywhere in four generations of John's descendants).

Samuel father of William, Mary, James, Samuel, Hannah and Samuel: We have matched him to Samuel #100 who married Grace Dennison in April 1774. We have a probable baptism for Samuel in March 1747/48<sup>6</sup> at Rawdon Chapel (later to become Rawdon church), father's name Richard. Up until the writing of this paper, we had been unable to match this baptism to any of the candidate Richards in our database with complete confidence<sup>7</sup>. We have a record indicating that Samuel's wife Grace was buried at Buckstone Chapel in May 1789, further confirming that Samuel and Grace were baptists.


Marriage of Samuel #100 and Grace Dennison: Samuel and Grace were married on 11 April 1774 at Guiseley church. Samuel signed his name in the register, Grace make her mark. They were married on the same day as William Hardaker #239 and Hannah Airton. This fact hinted faintly at the possibility that Samuel and William might be related in some way. A William Hardaker (signed his name) was a witness for Samuel and Grace, and for a long time we assumed that this was William #239, given that he would have been conveniently on hand on the day. We have determined the ancestry of William #239 with reasonable confidence, and with the somewhat dubious assignment of Samuel to Richard #54 and Ellen Nickson, we could see no close family link between William and Samuel.

An important observation, made some years ago, is that the signature of William the witness to the marriage of Samuel and Grace is similar to the signature of William who witnessed the marriage of Richard #270 and Betty Overend at Calverley church four years earlier.

### **William Hardaker the Witness**

A closer examination of the signatures of William who married Hannah, William witness to the marriages of Samuel and Grace and William witness to the marriage of Richard and Betty turns up something of significance.

#### 1. William m. Hannah Airton (1774)



---

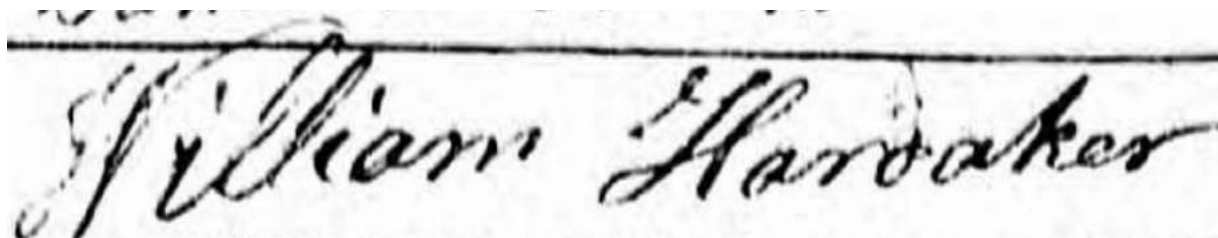
<sup>6</sup> Up until 1752 the year ended on 24<sup>th</sup> March meaning that this date is in 1748 based on the modern calendar.

<sup>7</sup> For a number of years we had Samuel #100 as the son of Richard #54 and Ellen Nickson #694; however Richard #54 appears to have lived in the Chapel Allerton area, and baptised children locally, thereby putting considerable doubt around the assignment of Samuel (baptised at Rawdon) to these parents.

2. William witness to Samuel m. Grace Dennison (1774)



3. William witness to Richard m. Betty Overend (1770)



At first glance, all three could be the same person. However there are some particular differences:

- #1 has a much larger W with last loop ending well above the two l's. For #2 and #3 the end of the W ends just above the first l. The images are not clear enough to be sure, but the start of all three W's looks somewhat different between all three signatures.
- #1 has the two i's in William dotted just under the level of the top of the two l's, for #2 and #3 the two l's extend well above the two i's.
- #1 has an up-tick at the end of the m at the end of William, #2 and #3 do not.
- The start of the H for #1 is different from #2 and #3. #1 appears to start with a figure 8 loop (same as the start of his W). #2 and #3 start fairly straight, and then go into a tight loop before the start of the H.
- #1 ends his r's at the bottom, whereas #2 and #3 end at the top.
- Complicating things somewhat, the d in #1 and #2 look very similar, while in #3 it looks like it may have the reverse loop that was quite common in writing of the time.

It is important to keep in mind that a person's signature will vary slightly over time. Also we should consider that these signatures will have been written with different quills on old paper in a gloomy church by individuals who may not have a need to sign their names very frequently, so some differences are almost inevitable.

Despite some uncertainty, our conclusion is that it is likely that the William who married Hannah Airton is not the person who witnessed the marriage of Samuel and Grace. Further, that William the witness of the marriage of Samuel and Grace is probably the same person who witnessed the marriage of Richard and Betty. If this William is closely related to both Richard #270 and Samuel #100, it then follows that Richard and Samuel may also be related.

### Hypothesis

Our new hypothesis regarding Richard #270 is that he is the brother of Samuel #100, the case for this being based on:

1. Richard and Samuel were both Baptists and naming their children at Buckstone chapel at about the same time, and

2. The same person (based on approximate signature match), probably a brother, was a witness to the marriages of both men.

If correct, this then finally provides us with a family connection between Richard #270 and another person other than his wife and children. This also provides us with the name of Richard's father, that being Richard. Unfortunately, and as noted above, we were very uncertain about the parentage of Samuel #100. Having rather tentatively connected 'our' Richard to him, it became very important to work out who the father (Richard) might be. This investigation is the subject of a separate paper<sup>8</sup> which concludes that the most likely candidates for the parents of Samuel and Richard are Richard #61 and Alice Holdsworth #688, who married on 20 Dec 1733, most likely in the vicinity of Halifax (to the south of Bradford). We are now fairly certain that Richard and Alice returned to the Rawdon area after their marriage, presumably Richard's home, and that they were part of the congregation at Buckstone Baptist chapel. The evidence supporting this is that:

- Richard who married Alice was described in the Nonconformist Register as Richard of Crag, which we believe may have implied that he was a member of the Congregation of Cragg Baptist Chapel, Rawdon, later to become Rawdon Buckstone Baptist Chapel. That supposition is made more likely because, in the record of the marriage in the Halifax church register, Richard is described as of Guiseley parish.
- A Richard Hardaker and an Alice Hardaker both signed a covenant in the Church Book of Buckstone Baptist Chapel in November 1755. While they were not specifically recorded as husband and wife, they are the only two Hardakers to have signed. It is clear that Richard signed his name, so we know that he was literate. This is a promising indicator, since we know that Richard #270 and Samuel #100 were also literate, and our broader research suggests that literacy often ran in families at around this time. Further, this tells us that Richard and Alice were both still alive in 1755, which is well after our estimated birth year for Richard #270.
- An Ales Hardaker was buried at Buckstone chapel on 16 Jan 1786. There was no record of her husband's name (assuming she had one), or whether she was widowed or not. Her age, 73 years, was recorded and matches very closely with the known record of Alice Holdsworth's birth – that being 1712 at Northowram near Halifax.

Finding that Richard and Alice were part of the Buckstone chapel congregation during the period 1733 (marriage date) and 1755 (date of the covenant) helps explain the lack of a birth/baptism record for Richard #270. This is because there are no known records of births for Buckstone until after about 1750, and no known burial records until after about 1753. As noted above, our estimate for Richard's year of birth is about 1745, and in that case his birth was not recorded (or the record is missing). Likewise Samuel #100 born in 1747 was too early to be in the Buckstone records.

This does pose the question of why was Samuel #100 baptised at Rawdon chapel in 1747 as well as having presumably been named at Buckstone, while older brother Richard evidently was not baptised as an infant. This is not easy to explain, but we do have other examples of this somewhat unusual activity. One of these is Hannah Hardaker noted on page 3 above born in 1760 and named at Buckstone chapel (father's name Richard). We have a probable baptism for this Hannah at Rawdon chapel on 10 Jul 1761, father Richard, Hannah recorded as being 'in the second year of her age' (so born 1759-60). We have other examples of non-conformist families baptising or naming their children within their chosen faith, and also having the child baptised in the established church, sometimes later in life. We can only speculate as to why Richard and Alice parents chose to baptise Samuel, but evidently not their other children.

---

<sup>8</sup> See [http://hardakerfamily.id.au/histories/Research\\_on\\_Richard\\_HARDAKERS\\_of\\_Rawden.pdf](http://hardakerfamily.id.au/histories/Research_on_Richard_HARDAKERS_of_Rawden.pdf)

## Parents of Richard #61 (m. Alice)

Having finally identified the parents of Richard #270 (although still with some level of doubt), the next question is who was the father of his father? Annoyingly, this is also not easy to work out. We examine this problem in detail in the separate paper noted on the previous page and conclude that he could be either:

- Richard son of Joshua(y) Hardaker #14, born 13 Apr 1707, baptised at Guiseley Church;
- Richard son of Rodger Hardaker #17 of Yeadon, baptised 17 Aug 1704 at Guiseley church.

While we so far have found no data that allows us to decide between these two, we opt for the latter of these two solely on the basis that Rodger #17 was the son of John #7, a renowned non-conformist and early Baptist in the late 1600s.

## William the Witnesses

We need to return to the question of who was William Hardaker who we believe was a witness to the marriages of both Richard/Betty (1770) and also Samuel/Grace (1774). We suspect that this person was a close relative, possibly a brother. We think we can eliminate William #239 who married Hannah Airton on the same day that Samuel married Grace (signature analysis detailed earlier). The other possible candidates for whom we have birth/baptism records between about 1720 and 1760 are:

- William #167, born about 1720, married Susannah Briggs in 1748. He would have been 20-30 years older than Richard and Samuel, so most unlikely on that basis. However, we do not know whether this William was literate, so he cannot be ruled out entirely.
- William #157, born about 1732, married Hannah Rhodes in 1764, and we think raised a family at Bramley (Leeds). No sample signature available. Seems unlikely.
- William #225, born about 1737, married Elizabeth Marshall in 1757. Signed his name; however the signature is a poor match to the two samples we have.
- William #699, born 1741, married Martha (possible Myres) date unknown (no marriage record has been found). We know about this couple through his will, and from this have determined that he was the brother of John #697 (m. Betty Broadbent, and who baptised two sons at Buckstone chapel). We do not have a sample signature for this William, but given that he may have also been a member of the Buckstone congregation along with his brother John, he could have been well known to Richard and Samuel. If our theory that Richard #61 is the son of Rodger #17, then William #699 is the second cousin to both Richard and Samuel (i.e., they share the same great grandfather, John #7), so hardly a close relative, but a possibility even so.
- William #117, born 1756, married Elizabeth Brown in 1780. He was illiterate, so can be ruled out.
- William #230, born about 1758, married Mary Turner in 1783. He was illiterate, so can also be ruled out.
- William #551, born about 1758, son of William #225 (above). No known marriage or death/burial. Unlikely.

From this list, William #699 is the most likely possibility since it seems possible that he may have been known to Richard and Samuel through the Buckstone chapel.

We need to consider the very real possibility that William the witness was in fact a brother of Richard and Samuel, and for whom we have no birth/baptism record for the same reason that we do not have a record for Richard (i.e., if he was named at Buckstone it was prior to 1750 and he was

not baptised). We do have a record of a William Hardaker buried in 1829 at Guiseley church aged 85, so born about 1744, who we cannot match to any of the known births/baptisms, and this birth year is very much about the right time. Having nothing to link this William to Richard and Samuel, however, and with no sample signature to compare with the others that we have, we cannot form any confident conclusion.

For now, the identity of William the witness remains a mystery, but our suspicion remains that he was a brother of Richard and Samuel, sons of Richard and Alice.

### **The Family of Richard and Alice**

Richard and Alice married in 1733, and may have been having children together up until 1755-60. There is time for the couple to have had at least 10 children over this period. The only births that we can now attribute to them are Samuel, and by association, Richard. As noted above, we suspect that there was a brother William, birth date unknown. Hannah born 1760 is a very remote possibility (see discussion above). Identifying other children of the couple is very difficult because there is almost certainly no record of their births (or deaths, particularly if they died as infants and were buried at Buckstone prior to 1753).

Our best chance of finding any other children is a search of the marriage and burial records for individuals with no matching birth/baptism record, and for whom we think we can establish a link to Richard and Alice. We have found one such individual - an Alice Hardaker of Rawdon who married Joseph Booth of Yeadon at Calverley church in January 1786. We believe this couple named two children at Buckstone chapel in 1786 and 1790. With Alice being a relatively unusual name at the time, and noting the Baptist connection, it is at least possible that she is a daughter to Richard and Alice<sup>9</sup>.

We have then the following possible family makeup for Richard and Alice:

- William, perhaps born about 1744, and witness at the weddings of his younger brothers;
- Richard, we think born about 1740-45;
- Samuel born 1747/8;
- Alice, probably born around 1745-50;

### **Conclusion**

Our hypothesis that Richard #270 is the son of Richard #61 and Alice Holdsworth is supported by this rather limited evidence:

1. The signature of William who witnessed Richard #270's marriage to Betty Overend is an approximate match to the William who witnessed the marriage of Samuel #100 and Grace Dennison, and further we have a probable baptism for Samuel, father's name Richard, in 1747 with Richard #61 as a likely candidate. From this we postulate that Samuel #100 and Richard #270 were brothers and both children of Richard #61 and Alice.
2. Richard #270 and Samuel #100 were both naming children at Buckstone Baptist chapel around the same time suggesting a possible family connection between the two.
3. Richard #61 and wife Alice Holdsworth were evidently practising Baptists, and we have evidence that both were alive, residing near Rawdon and part of the Buckstone chapel congregation at least until 1755, thereby establishing the possibility that they could be the

---

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately the marriage record does not tell us whether Alice was a spinster at the time of her marriage, so we have to allow for the possibility that this was a second marriage for her, and in that case this eliminates her as a potential daughter to Richard and Alice.



parents of an unknown number of children born between about 1733 (their marriage) and 1755-60. The absence of any records for these children is explained by the lack of birth records for Buckstone chapel before 1750.

Readers may feel that the limited evidence in support of this hypothesis is quite weak, and that is not contested. Another important factor to consider is the complete absence of any other genuinely plausible candidates for Richard's parentage from amongst the various Hardakers alive at around this time and living in the general area. In effect, we have essentially eliminated all other likely candidates and we suggest that this strengthens our case that Richard #270 is the son of Richard #61 and Alice #688, and quite possibly the great-grandson of John Hardaker #7, the noted non-conformist. At least until additional contradictory evidence comes to light, or a better hypothesis comes forward.

i There is a record of a Richard HARDAKER, Apprentice Indenture, 1766, Clayton, Yorks To John Armitrage, stuff. (Ref 24/220, Harvester Index). We think that 'stuff' may well encompass worsted cloth. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

*In the context of materials, stuff can refer to any manufactured material. This is illustrated from a quote by Sir Francis Bacon in his 1658 publication New Atlantis: "Wee have also diverse Mechanicall Arts, which you have not; And Stuffles made by them; As Papers, Linnen, Silks, Tissues; dainty Works of Feathers of wonderfull Lustre; excellent Dies, and many others." In Coventry, those completing seven-year apprenticeships with stuff merchants were entitled to become freemen of the city.*

*One type of stuff was a type of coarse thickly woven cloth manufactured in various places, formerly including Kidderminster. Originally it was probably entirely of wool, but later a 'woolsey-linsey' cloth, made with a warp of linen, yarn and a worsted weft.*

*The gowns of most English lawyers are still described as 'stuff gowns' (though probably now made of other fibres). This is in contrast with those of Queen's Counsel, which are made of silk, whence they are termed 'silks'. Thus, 'stuff' in this context refers to fabric not made of silk or silk substitutes. The word was still in English upper-class usage in this sense in the 1960s.*

*In Victorian dressmaking terminology, stuff was used as a generic term for woven fabrics, with cloth generally reserved for woollens (as opposed to worsteds).*