

# John Hardaker, Miller of Wibsey: Facts and Fallacies

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*Numbers following the hash mark # are id numbers in the Hardaker One Name Study Tree*

Most family history involves a good deal of guesswork, so it is easy to get things wrong. There is a tendency to 'own' the ancestors you have identified, so that it is then particularly galling to discover that you have made an error – usually pointed out by someone else. An uncovered error can mean that you lose a whole limb from your family tree. This family history story is different since, as far as I know, John Hardaker, corn miller of Wibsey, was at best only a distant relative of mine. I am therefore more comfortable about making my guesses public in the hope that some reader may be able to help me sort fact from fallacy.

Curiously, the story of this branch of the Hardaker family appears to link the places of Wibsey, now a suburb of Bradford on the southern side, Idle, on the northern outskirts of Bradford, Kippax and Ledsham, adjacent villages to the east of Leeds, and Thornhill, a village to the south of Dewsbury. It is by no means clear why these Hardakers were so peripatetic, although there are some clues.

## **John and Jane, corn millers of Wibsey**

That John Hardaker #1641 was a corn miller at Wibsey in the late 18th century is clear from the Bradford Parish Church registers. He baptised a number of children there between 1778 and 1800 and some of these records give his place of residence and occupation. It is also clear that he operated a windmill at Wibsey for there is a record in the West Yorkshire Archive Service of a 'lease and release' for John Hardaker (the younger) of Allerton\*, yeoman, of a windmill in Wibsey, dated 8-9 Nov. 1776. Then in 1790 there is a record of the tenants of the manor being summoned to appear at 10 am on 12th May that year at Royds Hall Manor Court, which was to be held 'at the House of John Hardaker known by the name of the Windmill in Wibsey.'\*

The Wibsey Windmill no longer exists but was located behind where the Windmill Inn now stands at 162 High Street.

The baptismal record of John's son Charles #1656 in 1797 gives the name of the mother as Jane, which is confirmed by the admon of her husband who died in 1820.

Admon for Jane Hardaker #1642, relict of John late of Wibsey, farmer, deceased, 17 July 1821 to get all her husband's possessions. Jane made her mark, witnesses include John Hardaker.\*

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✉ Catalogue finding number MISC:468/112-113. Allerton is a village near Bradford, about 5 km as the crow flies to the north-west of Wibsey.

✉ Source: *The Wibsey Word* via the Internet:  
[www.thewibseyword.co.uk/wibsey/history/history\\_group\\_june.html](http://www.thewibseyword.co.uk/wibsey/history/history_group_june.html)

✉ Transcribed from records at the Borthwick Institute, University of York. Who the witness John Hardaker was is unclear, but I suspect that he was the John born 1807, an illegitimate son of Jane's daughter Sarah.

From the memorial inscription at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity, we learn that John Hardaker of Wibsey died on 8 Sep. 1820, aged 74 (born c. 1746), husband of Jane. However, the burial register gives his age at burial on 12 September of that year as only 70 (born c. 1750).\* I am inclined to put more faith in the record in the burial register as MIs are quite often wrong or are so degraded that they are wrongly transcribed.

The first recorded baptism of a child of John and Jane I have found was in 1776, so I assume that they married about 1775. In fact, John Hardaker #1641 (transcribed Hardaire) married Jane Wrigglesworth #1642 at Ledsham parish church by licence on 27 Nov. 1775, he of Idle in Calverley parish and she of Ledsham.\*

If we assume that John was about 25 when he married, we might hope to find his birth in Idle in about 1750. Unfortunately, there is no obvious candidate. The most likely choice seems to be John son of John Hardaker #1643 baptised at Kippax on 11 Oct. 1749. Kippax is only about 5 km from Ledsham.

That John the corn miller was the son of another John is supported by the record of a burial of John of Wibsey at Calverley church on 28 Aug. 1782, not John the husband of Jane, since he died much later. I am guessing that John buried 1782 was the father of John baptised at Kippax in 1749, and that this John was a one-time resident of Idle who had gone to live with his son at Wibsey in his declining years, but who wished to be buried at his own parish church of Calverley. It may also be relevant that there were windmills at Kippax, Ledsham and Wibsey.

I believe that Jane was baptised at Sherburn-in-Elmet on 6 Jul 1755, the daughter of William Wrigglesworth #1647.

I think the family of John and Jane comprised\*:

- William #1644 bap. 3 Nov. 1776 at Bradford St Peter, son of John Hardaker of Allerton, farmer – see the lease mentioned above of the Wibsey windmill to John a farmer of Allerton a few days after this baptism.
- John #1645 bap. 19 Jul. 1778 at Bradford St Peter, son of John, miller of Wibsey.
- Benjamin #1646 bap. 27 Feb. 1780 at Bradford St Peter, son of John, joiner [sic] of Wibsey. He died in 1782 and was buried at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity on 3 Sep. aged 2, son of John of Wibsey.
- Mary #1648 bap. 28 Dec. 1781 at Bradford St Peter, daughter of John, corn miller of Wibsey. She died 30 Sep. 1783 aged one year, and was buried at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity on 2 Oct. The record in the register was transcribed as Mally, but she was recorded as Mary on the MI.
- Jonathan #1649 bap. 2 Oct. 1783 at Wibsey chapel, son of John, miller of Wibsey Windmill. He died in 1815, aged 33, of Royds Hall Mill, and was buried at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity on 9 Jul.

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Information supplied by the South Bradford Local History Alliance.

Ancestry.com.

BMDs have been derived from various sources including [www.sblha.com](http://www.sblha.com), IGI, Ancestry.com, [www.calverley.info](http://www.calverley.info) and transcriptions of the BTs or registers. Images of many church registers from the West Yorkshire Archive Service are now accessible via Ancestry.com. In the absence of any birth or baptism records currently available, birth dates are estimated from census information.

- Elizabeth #1650 bap. 24 Jul. 1785 at Bradford P.C, daughter of John, miller of Wibsey. She died in 1789 'aged under 7', and was buried at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity on 8 Jan., recorded as Betty, daughter of John, miller of Wibsey.
- Sarah #1651 bap. 19 Aug. 1787 at Bradford St Peter, daughter of John, corn miller of Wibsey. I suspect that she was the Sarah, spinster of Great Horton, who was the mother of John Hardaker #1652 baptised at Bradford St Peter on 18 Sep. 1807 when this Sarah would have been about 20 years old. The re-use of her father's forename encourages me in this belief.
- Jonas #1653 bap. 12 Jul. 1789 at Bradford St Peter, son of John, corn miller of Wibsey.
- Peggy #1655 bap. 28 Apr. 1793 at Bradford St Peter, daughter of John, miller of Wibsey.
- Charles #1656 bap. 5 Feb. 1797 at Bradford St Peter, son of John and Jane of Wibsey. He died in 1818 at Royds Hall Mill, aged 21 and was buried on 5 Nov. at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity.
- James #1675 bap 12 Oct 1829 at Bradford St Peter, son of John and Jane of Shelf, father a farmer. In the margin of the register it is written that James was born in 1800. It is possible that the place or residence and occupation referred to James himself rather than to his father.

Note that John Hardaker bap. 25 Oct. 1801 at Wibsey chapel, son of John, appears to me not to be a son of this family because the place of birth is Carr Lane and the occupation of the father is 'collier' [coal miner]. He might have been a grandson, son of John above, born c. 1778. However, I can find no marriage around this time or other evidence to support that notion. Similarly, I have assumed that Mary Hardaker bap. 16 Jan 1791 at Bradford St Peter, daughter of John of Wibsey, a shoemaker, was also not a child of the above family.

Jane, the mother of the above 11 children, outlived her husband by around 14 years. It is clear that she continued the milling business for she was listed as a corn miller of Wibsey in Baines Directory and Gazetteer for 1822.\* However, by 1815 it seems that the milling business had been moved from the hilltop windmill at Wibsey to Royds Hall Mill, a couple of kilometres south west. This was a water mill on Royds Hall Beck. Presumably, the beck offered a more assured source of power than the wind.

Jane died at Wibsey on 28 Nov. 1834 at the good age of 82. She was buried at Bradford Low Moor Holy Trinity on 3 Dec. in the same grave as her husband.

### **John #1643 father of John the corn miller**

Now the story gets more speculative. After much head-scratching, I have formed the view that John Hardaker senior, father of the miller of Wibsey, married Sarah Woofended #1658 (perhaps Wolfenden in modern spelling) at Thornhill-by-Dewsbury on 10 Dec. 1741.\* Some evidence to support this link with Thornhill will be revealed later. The couple apparently baptised four children at Dewsbury: three daughters between 1743 and 1745, then John in 1747. I have assumed that this son called John

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☒ [www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/WRY/Bradford/Bradford22Dry.html](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/WRY/Bradford/Bradford22Dry.html)

☒ No other information given in the register.

died and another son, baptised at Kippax in 1749, was given the same name. John born circa 1749 fits better with the reported age at burial of John the corn miller of Wibsey than does the one baptised in 1747. Then I think John senior and Sarah had two more daughters, both called Mary baptised at Kippax, in 1759 and 1760.

The full family appears to have been:

- Dorothy #1659 and Eleanor #1660 bap. 27 Dec 1743 at Dewsbury church. It seems Dorothy never married and was buried at Dewsbury All Saints on 7 Apr 1827 aged 78. She left a will that I have yet to see. I believe Eleanor married Thomas Bromley at Dewsbury church on 30 Dec 1766. According to the record of publication of their banns, both were of Dewsbury parish.
- Betty #1657 bap. 25 Aug 1745 at Dewsbury church.
- John #1661 bap. 3 Aug 1747 at Dewsbury church and presumed to have died in infancy.
- John #1643 bap. 11 Oct 1749 at Kippax church, who I assume became the miller of Wibsey.
- Mary #1663 bap. 17 June 1759 at Kippax church and presumed to have died in infancy.
- Mary #1664 bap. 3 June 1760 at Kippax church.

All were recorded (in the IGI) as children of John, with no name given for the mother. I have yet to check the register entries.\*

The transcript of the marriage record from Thornhill gives no indication of places of residence of the parties or of the occupation of the groom, which is disappointing. It would have added credence to my guesses if it had shown that John senior was from Calverley parish.

The next question, of course, is to identify a birth or baptism of John senior. Unfortunately, there is little to go on other than his presumed marriage in 1741 and his burial at Calverley church in 1782. If he was about 25 when he married, he would have been born around 1715, implying that he would have been 65 to 70 years old when he died – all quite plausible. The earliest record I have found of a Hardaker in Idle was in 1766, so it is necessary to broaden the search. I therefore turned to the records of Calverley church, in which parish Idle used to be included. Apart from one much earlier outlier, Hardakers were recorded in the registers there from the early 1700s. However, the first John was the son of Robert baptised in 1726. If baptised as a baby, he would have been only about 15 at the time of the marriage in 1741, which is possible but unlikely. There were John Hardakers born in Carlton, near Guiseley in 1704, Rawdon in 1715, Chevin End in Guiseley parish in 1715, Leeds Shambles in 1720, and Eccleshill in 1721, among others. I have no basis for picking any one of them as the one I am looking for, hence the birth of John senior must remain a mystery until some further evidence turns up.

It may be relevant that the Upper Chapel at Idle was opened in 1717 as a congregation of Protestant Dissenters. Some members of the Hardaker family were of that persuasion. Unfortunately, however, the baptismal registers of Upper Chapel prior to

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☒ Those for Kippax are recorded in Ancestry.com as Hunslet Moor St Cuthbert. I believe this to be an error.

1790 were destroyed in a fire and there is no known copy. Some things can never be known if the records do not exist.

### **William Hardaker #1644, son of John and Jane**

On 21 June 1799 William Hardaker #1644 (21) of Bradford married Charlotte Wrigglesworth #1642 (21) of Ledsham by licence. Their ages come from the marriage licence. Experience suggests that such ages are not always reliable. In this case, if I have the right baptism for William, and if he had been baptised soon after birth, he would have been 22 when he married, which seems plausible. I have failed to find a birth or baptism for Charlotte. I think William and Charlotte were the parents of:

- Polly #1666 bap. 2 May 1800.
- Elizabeth #1667 bap. 19 May 1802, bur. 29 Sep 1802.
- John #1668 bap. 18 Sep 1803.

These three were all recorded at Ledsham. Then came:

- Haley #1669 born Wibsey, bap. 8 Apr 1806 at Bradford.
- Ann #1670 and Jane #1671, both bap. 4 Aug 1812 at Wibsey chapel.
- Hannah #1672 and Sarah #1673, both bap. 26 Jun 1819 at Thornhill-by-Dewsbury.
- Elizabeth #1674 bap. 30 Jun 1822 at Thornhill-by-Dewsbury.

For the baptisms at Hannah and Sarah the mother's name was given as Charlotte, tending to confirm that she was Charlotte Wrigglesworth of Ledsham. So here we have a link between John Hardaker senior #1643, who I presume married at Thornhill, and his presumed grandson William #1644 who later resided there.

William's occupation was generally given as a carpenter, although in 1812 when he was at Wibsey he was listed as a miller. It is interesting that on one occasion, John the corn miller was reported to be a joiner, suggesting a further link between John and William. I imagine that in those days millers would have had to have good skills in woodworking.

### **James Hardaker #1675, son of John and Jane**

By 1839 the tenant of Royds Hall Mill was a James Hardaker, I think this one, who was still there in 1849, occupying a house, outbuildings, a corn mill and some farmland, a total area of over 7 ha (nearly 20 acres). From the censuses, however, it seems that his occupation was as a farmer, not a miller, though apparently he was also a part-time corn merchant.

I am confident that he was James 1675 born c. 1800 the son of John #1641 the miller of Wibsey because his wife Harriet was buried in the same grave as John and Jane. However, the ages recorded for him in the 1851 and 1861 censuses indicate that he was born between 1804 and 1807 at Shelf or North Bierley. If the information in the margin of his adult baptism was correct, it seems he lied about his age in the censuses (or did not know when he was born).

I am reasonably confident that he married Harriet Mallinson #1676 at Bradford St Peter on 7 Jan. 1833. She died on 9 June 1849 aged 45, wife of James and, as noted, was buried at Low Moor Holy Trinity in the Hardaker grave with John and Jane (MI).

In 1841 the household of James and Harriet in Manorley Lane, North Bierley, included:

- Charles #1679 born c. 1829. Since this is well before the presumed marriage of James and Harriet in 1833, he may not have been their son. \* In 1851 I think he was a soldier at Fullwood Barracks, Manchester aged 20.
- Ann #1680 aged 8, evidently the daughter of James and Harriet bap. 8 Sep. 1833 at Bradford St Peter.
- Jane #1681 aged 6, also presumed to be the daughter of James and Harriet bap. 19 Apr. 1835 at Bradford St Peter. From later censuses it is clear that she was the unmarried mother of two children, Harriet Emily, born Northowram c. 1856, and George, born North Bierley c. 1859.
- Sarah #1682 aged 4 born c. 1837, presumably another daughter whose baptism I have yet to find.
- Mary #1683 aged 3, I presume the daughter of James, farmer and corn merchant, North Bierley, and Harriet his wife bap. 26 May 1839 at Bradford St Peter.
- Harriet #1684 aged 7 months, born c. 1840, yet another daughter.

Manorley Lane still exists at Beck Hill and there is still a Mill House Farm, close to where the watermill used to be.

By 1851 Harriet née Mallinson had died and James had an unmarried son John #1678 living with him, aged 24, so born c. 1827, again before his marriage to Harriet. I have not located the birth or baptism of John. To account for the two sons apparently born before James's marriage to Harriet, I have presumed he had a relationship with another woman by whom he had John #1678 born c. 1827 and Charles #1679 born c. 1829.

Also in the household were the four youngest children above, Jane, Sarah, Mary and Harriet (recorded as Arriet!). By 1861 James had married again to Ann – see below. His daughter Mary #1683 was still at home, as was his granddaughter Harriet Emily #1685, daughter of his daughter Jane #1681. She later married a man called Albert Dalby #1686. Jane appears to have had a second illegitimate child, George I. Hardaker #1687, born about 1859.

James remarried on 26 May 1854 at Bradford St Peter to Ann Bradley #1688. He was a widower, aged 49, a farmer of Bierley, son of John, also a farmer. She was a widow, aged 43, of Bradford, daughter of John Hartley #1727. Witnesses were James Horn and William Holmes. It appears from the 1861 Census that the couple did not have any children together. My guess is that Ann was the born the Ann Harley born on 29 Feb 1812 at Skipton, bap. there on 18 Mar., recorded in IGI batch 6929337 as the daughter of John and Ann Cownan #1728, (perhaps Cowan, which was a more common name in those parts). I also guess that Ann the daughter first married Michael Bradley #1726 at Slaidburn in 1838 but evidently he died for she was a widow when she married James Hardaker.

I think James died at Mill House Farm, North Bierley on 11 August 1863 leaving his widow Ann née Hartley to apply for Letters of Administration on his effects worth under £200. In the Admon he was described as a farmer and corn miller.

☒ Relationships between household members were not recorded in the 1841 Census.

## Later generations

No doubt many of the children listed above, in addition to those whose families I have listed, would also have married and had children. I know this to be the case for some. For example, John Hardaker #1652, illegitimate son of Sarah #1651, appears to have married Betty Draycup #1689 at Bradford in 1827. Details of the family of this couple and their descendants are available from a number of sources, including the Light-Wells-Bywater-Hardaker Tree on Ancestry.com. I have copied the family, chiefly from that source, into the Hardaker One Name Study tree without attempting to check all the information. In a few cases I have been able to add some information from other sources. I have chosen not to detail this tree here.

## Connection to Idle

The main connection to Idle in Calverley parish is that that was the given place of abode of John Hardaker #1641 when he married Jane Wrigglesworth #1642 at Ledsham in 1775. It is unusual for those times to find a person so far from home. I wonder if John might have been apprenticed to a miller in either Kippax or Ledsham. But we also have to consider why he then moved to Wibsey, quite far from both Ledsham/Kippax and from Idle.

Another connection between Idle and Wibsey is that both were hotbeds of early Nonconformity. There were certainly links between the Independent chapels at Wibsey and Idle, for in 1827, when a Sunday school was opened by the Independents of Wibsey, sermons were preached by two men from Idle Independent Chapel.\* How far back these Nonconformist or Dissenting ties went I do not know, but religious links could have led to social, commercial and employment connections.

In addition, there is a link through the Lordships of the Manors of Wibsey and Idle. Not far from the location of Royds Hall Mill lies Royds Hall itself, the seat of the Lords of the Manor of Wibsey. In 1538 William Rookes was granted ownership of the house and manor for Knight's service.\* The Rookes family continued as Lords of the Manor of Wibsey until the hall and manor passed to other hands in 1789.

Meanwhile, in the eighteenth century on the other side of Bradford, there was a 'changing of the guard' in the Manor of Idle. By an Agreement dated January 6th 1755, it was arranged between Sir Walter Blackett and Robert Stansfield that Robert 'should purchase the Manors of Idle and Yeadon and all appurtenances in Esholt, Hawksworth, Yeadon, Guiseley, Idle and Shipley, that he should enter into the capital messuage at Esholt (the Hall) with furniture etc., etc., on the thirteenth of February next (except plate, linen, china, knives and forks, family pictures, books and the needlework of the late Lady Calverley) and enter into possession of the fulling mills (Buck Mills) on the thirteenth of May next; the purchase price to be paid as follows: £20,000 on the thirteenth of February next, and £20,000 on the thirteen of May, 1757.\*'

Robert Stansfield ran a successful business as a dry-salter and had accumulated a substantial fortune, enabling him to buy considerable lands scattered over a large area. On 7 Sept. 1758 at Otley church his sister Ann Stansfield (1729-1798) married

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☒ William Cudworth (1876), *Round About Bradford*, Thomas Brear, Bradford, p. 26.

☒ [www.judywoods.dial.pipex.com/Royds Hall.html](http://www.judywoods.dial.pipex.com/Royds%20Hall.html)

☒ Watson, Wright, 1950, *Idlethorp*, published privately, p. 52. The total price paid would be about £3 million in today's terms.

William Rookes of Royds Hall by licence. Witnesses were John Wright and Robert Stansfield, Ann's brother.

Robert, who also benefited from legacies from his brothers, died in 1772 leaving his wealth to his sister Ann Rookes of Royds Hall. Her husband William died in 1783 and presumably she acquired his property also. Ann Rookes of Esholt, widow of William Rookes died in 1798. In her will she made disposition of lands in Esholt, Yeadon, Guiseley, *Idle*, Shipley, Baildon, Hawksworth, Bingley, Bradford, *Wibsey*, Shibden and Barrowby [my emphasis].\* In other words, Ann Rookes née Stansfield clearly linked Idle and Wibsey. Her brother, Robert, was Lord of the Manor of Idle, and her husband, William, was Lord of the Manor of Wibsey.

How might that account for John Hardaker of Idle being a corn miller at Wibsey? In former times a corn mill was commonly owned by the Lord of the Manor who appointed a miller to operate it. Residents of the manor were then obliged to take their corn to the mill to be ground, at risk of prosecution if they went elsewhere. Typically, both the miller and the Lord then took a share of milled product. Perhaps John Hardaker senior could have been known to Ann in Idle before she married in 1758.\* Then later, when Ann was at Royds Hall and there was a need to appoint a new miller at Wibsey, it seems that John Hardaker junior was invited to take up the position.

Of course, we cannot know if this was really the case, and in any event the Rookes-Stansfield link does not explain connections of this branch of the Hardaker family with Kippax/Ledsham and Thornhill. But it least is offers a possible partial explanation of how John Hardaker the miller came to be at Wibsey.

### **Postscript**

Like all such efforts, this story remains a work in progress. It contains a fair amount of speculation. Perhaps in time, some of the gaps will be filled, some of the uncertainties resolved and some fallacies corrected.

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☒ Ibid., p. 54.

☒ He might have learned his trade at Buck Mill which, although a water mill, and recorded as a cloth fulling mill, might also have had a capacity for corn milling. His son John perhaps learned the same trade from his father.