

Robert John Bentley

The great brewing family, of which Timothy Bentley was the sire, had the distinction of founding several of the North's most famous breweries. At Lockwood, Huddersfield, Timothy Bentley established a brewery as early as 1795, and that prospered as Bentley and Shaw's Lockwood Brewery until 1944.

Timothy's son, Henry, founded the Eshaldwell Brewery at Woodlesford near Leeds. That developed into Bentley's Yorkshire Breweries, whose "BYB" signs became very familiar throughout what is now West Yorkshire and beyond.

The Rotherham Old Brewery was established on Westgate in 1820 by Robert Bentley (born in 1801), Timothy's eldest son.

Robert John Bentley was born in 1823 in Rotherham and married Sarah Hirst, who was born in Bradford in 1825. She was the daughter of Arthur Hirst, who had been persuaded to move to Rotherham from Bradford to manage the Rotherham Brewery. Arthur lived at 'The Mount' on Westgate until his death in 1901, four years after his wife, Margaret.

The Bentley family acquired land in what became East Dene and Clifton and lived for a time at Eastwood House. They had a farm where they grazed the dray horses. They gave a parcel of land as a Cholera Burial Ground and established a very popular racecourse. In 1851 Robert John was living at Finningley Hall. With him were Robert (1848) and Harriet Maud (1850). He had nine servants at the Hall. In 1861 he was living at West House, on Westgate and had living with him: Philip Arthur (1855); Constance Sarah (1856); Netherwood (1858); Fanny Agnes Isobel (1859). He had nine servants. The Parker Rhodes family also resided at Finningley Hall in the late 19th Century.

In 1881 Robert was a widower (his wife died in 1870) with seven servants. Staying with him at West House was a nephew, Edward Massey, a cotton spinner, born in Burnley, Lancashire. Edward was part of the Massey family who were brewers in Burnley.

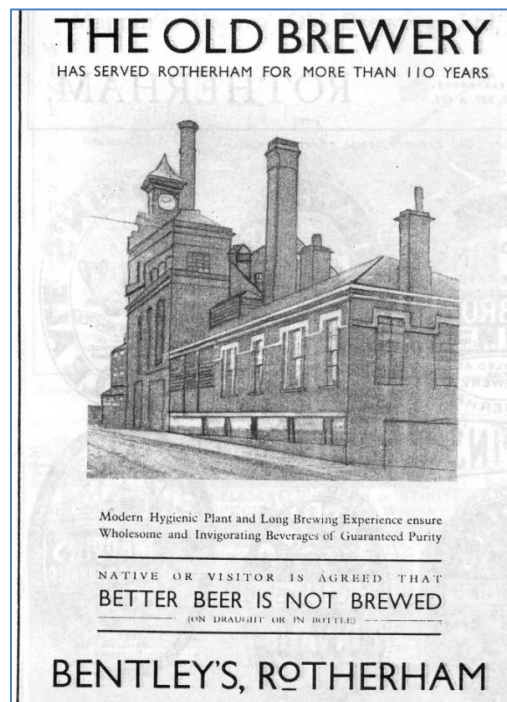
Edward's mother was the sister of Robert Bentley's dead wife. The two ladies were daughters of brewers J and H S Hirst at Low Moor Brewery, Clayton Heights in Bradford. This brewery was taken over by (Henry) Bentley's Yorkshire Brewery in 1892.

Robert John Bentley died in the summer of 1890. After his death, Arthur Hirst managed the brewery for some years, but the Trustees of R.J.Bentley took control of the land holdings and sold it in plots to facilitate house building in Clifton and East Dene. Two sons of R.J.Bentley, Robert and Philip, predeceased their father; a third, Netherwood, was living in Grantham in 1891 and died in that town in 1893.

Harriet Maud was in a lunatic asylum in York in 1891. She was probably also the Harriet Maud Bentley who died in Darlington in 1898 at the age of forty nine.



Bentley's Brewery Canklow Road



Constance Sarah married William Champion, a snuff manufacturer, living at Upper Shibden Hall, Northowram, in 1881 and at Cantley Hall, Doncaster in 1890. In 1901 they had retired to Coney Weston in Suffolk.

Agnes Isobel married Leonard Foster a civil engineer and railway contractor. They were living at Ickleford House, Ickleford, Hertfordshire in 1891.