

Master John Rycroft

Serjeant of the Larder to
Kings Henry VII and Henry VIII.
and a
Benefactor to the inhabitants of Kildwick

Some notices as to John Rycroft's career.

Comments upon the Rycroft blazon
as displayed in the windows of Kildwick parish church,
and subsequently assumed by other Rycrofts.

An account of John Rycroft's Charity
and the subsequent complications.

By

Christopher Rycroft

INTRODUCTION

In 1958 I became sufficiently interested to research my RYCROFT heritage. Upon trawling through the books in the public libraries, I soon hooked on to Master John Rycroft, he became my target and hero. Could he be my Kinsman?

Christopher Rycroft

MASTER JOHN RYCROFT

John Rycroft in his will dated 1532 and in other documents is described as being Serjeant of the Larder to King Henry VII and to King Henry VIII¹. He was born in the parish of Kildwick-in-Craven, in the West Riding. This and other evidence suggests his date of birth circa 1474 or earlier? In later years, moved by his awareness of the number of poor people in his native parish he endowed a charity for their relief and maintenance.

The circumstance of his admittance to the King's Household may be through the influence of the Cliffords of Skipton Castle, Lords of the Honour-of-Skipton, and staunch Lancastrians; for the Rycroft family may well have come to London with the Lord Henry Clifford (1453-1523), the latter had been in hiding during the reigns of the Yorkist kings, but on the taking of the throne by the Lancastrian, Henry Tudor, in 1485, Lord Henry Clifford came to London in support of the King and to claim the Skipton estates. Be that as it may, John Rycroft evidently joined the the King's Household as a young man, and soon obtained a position of importance and trust, for he was appointed Serjeant of the Larder to Henry VII.

A John Rycroft was named in a grant dated June 25, 1495 at Westminster: -

*Grant during pleasure to John Rycroft, King's Servant,
of office of bailiff of the Lordship of Hechyn, co Hertford.
By p.s. [Privy Seal?]²*

But was this John also the John serjeant of the larder? [see Appendix].
There is a reference some six years previously to a **Henry Rycroft**:-

*1489 John, son of Thomas Crowche of Dacheworth,
to Henry Rycroft, yeoman of London, John Bernard of Leuesham co. Kent,
Robert Robynson, 'hattermerchant' of London and Thomas Frebrygge of
Dacheworth, their heirs and assigns.
Release and quitclaim of all lands and tenements, rents and services
in Dacheworth, Brantfield, Tuwyng and Watton atte Stone co. Hertford,
late of Thomas Crowche, his father.
Dated 10 February, 5 Henry VII.
Memorandum of acknowledgment, 10 February.³*

These two references to RYCROFT dated 1489 and 1495 are the earliest yet found outside of Yorkshire.

Note, both refer to estates in co. Hertford.

Was Henry a kinsman of John?

Earlier Yorkshire references include:-

1450 John and Nicholas Rycroft, of Morkar

[Morkar was a grange belonging to Fountains Abbey, that is to say it was a farm with a barn for storing grain].⁴

John Rycroft is mentioned in further documents.

“1502 Nicholas Brogrove and Alice Brogrove his sister, executors of Agnes Drake his widow, late wife and executrix of Richard Drake merchant of the staple of Calais, **to John Rycroft esquire.**

Indenture witnessing sale for 100£.

(of which they acknowledge receipt of 45£.)

of Richard's lands etc. in Kinges Walden, Preston, Polettes, **Hytchyn**, Womeley, Gosmore and Ikiford co. Hertford and Holwel and Shitlingdon co. Bedford, which by his last will he desired to be sold;

estate in fee simple to be made, premise discharged and evidences delivered before 1 March next; in fulfilment of Richard's will,

John [Rycroft] shall find an honest priest to sing his masses and other divine services for the souls of Richard, his parents, wife and friends and all Christian souls for seven years after 1 May next in the parish church of St. Bartholomew the Little of London where he is buried, and for the ensuing 10 years in the parish of Hicchyn and keep a yearly obit or anniversary for the same 17 years in the same churches, paying 10m. [ten marks] yearly to the priest in london and 9m.in Hicchyn; and at each obit he shall spend 13s. 4d., and during the 17 years he shall "geve and dispose in pore maidens marriages moost needie and lest helpe havying" 17£. and in every Lent season to every house of the four orders of Friars in London "a cade of good rede hering" to be dealt among the convent to pray for the souls abovesaid and the like to every of the prison[er]s of Newgate, Ludgate, Kingesbench and Marchalsee to be dealt among the most needy prison[er]s.

Given 17 January, 17 Henry VII.

1506 Memorandum of acknowledgment, 20 November this year”⁵

1504, May 17 [recognizance to the King] for 100£. by **John Reicrofte of the king's household, esquire**, Nicholas Brograve of London, draper, and Richard Dawes of Huchyn, dyer.

Condition (English): **John** to account truly as bailiff of the lordships and manors of Huchyn and Anstie co. Hertford from Michaelmas last. (signed) Malhom.⁶

1509, Henry VII's funeral. John Rycroft and his staff took part in the magnificent obsequies and funeral procession to Westminster, viz representing The Larder:-

John Rycroft, sergeant
Ralph Dampart, clerk
John Foster, yeoman
Th. Assheley, groom
John Gogh, yeoman
John Dale, yeoman
Ric. Appulby, groom
Rob. Warner, groom
James Myghell, groom
Rob. Wilkinson, page
Th. Deane, page.

1509, 24 June. The Coronation of Henry VIII (he then aged seventeen), the Household were attired in scarlet livery cloth; representing The Larder: -

John Ricroft, serjeant
Wm. Blacknall, clerk
John Foster, yeoman for the mouth
John Gogh, yeoman usher
John Dale, yeoman of the larder
Richard Appulby, groom usher
Thomas Asshley, groom
Robert Warner, groom
James Myghell, groom
John Grove, page.⁸

Note that the above listed surnames are associated with the locations from Craven to Halifax, viz - Foster, Assheley, Appulby, Myghell [Mitchell] and Wylkyson [Wilkinson].

The records of account show that as Serjeant of The Larder John Rycroft handled large sums of money in the purchase of provisions for the King's Army: -

1510, 29 April. P.S. For Officers of the Royal Household. Pardons, to Richard Guylle, late serjeant of the bakehouse, . . .
John Rycroft, late serjeant of the larder, . . . [et al., reasons not specified];
In the household of the late King. Greenwich, 29 April 1 Henry VIII.
delivered to Westminster, 29 April.⁹

1512, 1 May 4 Henry VIII. Recognizances for the Repayment of loans . . .
John Rycroft. [sum unstated]¹⁰

1513, 9 April. VICTUALLING OF CALAIS. Commission to **John Rycroft**, serjeant of the larder, to provide for six months, 20,000qrs. of malt, [for the brewing of small beer, such that impure water and malt when boiled produced a sterilized beverage], 3,000qrs. of beans, 3,000 qrs. oates, 300 oxen, and 1,000 lambs, in cos. Norf., Suff., Camb., Herts, Beds, Hunts, Northt., Linc., and Leic., with conveyance. Westminster, 9 April. . . .¹¹

1513, July. King's Book of Payments. . . **John Rycroft**, malt, beans and oates for Calais, 500£. Victuals for the army against the Scots, 500£.¹²

1513, EXPENCES OF THE WAR. (Account of moneys remaining in the hands of divers accountants . . .) . . . **John Rycroft**, late appointed to provide malt and oates for the King's army in France, 927£. 17s. 9d. (whereof 629£. paid to Daunce) and 1771£ 18s. 8d. . . .¹³

1514, EXPENCES OF WAR. Debts in the Auditor's books due to Henry VIII upon divers declarations concerning the late wars against France. Debtors:- . . . **John Rycroft**, for surplus of wheat and malt.¹⁴

1514, 27 Feb. MALT. Receipt, 27 Feb. 5 Henry VIII., by **John Rycroft**, serjeant of the Larder, from Sir John Daunce, of 300£. towards provision of malt for the intended royal army by land.¹⁵

- 1514, 10 April. VICTUALLING. Receipt, 10 April 5 Henry VIII., by **John Rycrofte**, serjeant of the Larder, from Sir John Daunce, of 1,000£. towards provision of malt, wheat, beans and oates.¹⁶
- 1514, VICTUALLING. (Declaration of the account of John Myklowe, Thomas Byrkes and Brian Roche, for victualling.)
Received of . . . **John Rycroft**,
7,845 qrs., 1 bu. malt, at 5s. 4d. a qr. . . .¹⁷
- 1514, 6 May. VICTUALLING. Indenture, 6 May 6 Henry VIII., witnessing receipt by **John Rycrofte**, serjeant of the Larder, from Sir John Daunce, of 1,000£. in further prest for provision of malt, wheat, beans and oates for the King's next intended army royal by land.¹⁸
- 1514, 28 May. VICTUALLING. Receipt, 28 May 6 Henry VIII., by **John Rycroft**, serjeant of the Larder, from Sir John Daunce, of 1,000£. for malt, wheat, beans and oates for the intended army royal.¹⁹
- 1514, June. MALT FOR CALAIS. File of 33 receipts given by Thomas Byrkes, one of the clerks of the Green Cloth, to **John Rycrofte**, serjeant of the Larder, for malt delivered at Calais in June 6 Henry VIII. Showing the ships in which the malt came, with other particulars. Filed with accounts concerning the Calais garrison in the time of Henry VII. and Edward VI.²⁰
- 1515, 23 Jan. R.O. VICTUALLING for the ARMY.
Account by **John Ricroft**, serjeant of the Larder, for wheat, malt etc. for the King's army intended for France, 6 Henry VIII., from 27 Feb. 5 Hen. VIII. to 23 Jan ensuing.
Money Received: for arrears, 451£. 10s. 7d.; for provisions, 3,300£.
Paid, for malt, 2,260£. 8s. 5d.; and for 416 qrs. more, 126£. 10s. 8d.
Loss in sale of ditto, 196£. 6s. 10d.; and in the sale of 140 qrs. of wheat, 11£. 14s. 4d., at 7s 4d. per qr., carriage included.
Wages: for himself, 2s. per day; clerk, 1s.; servants, 8d.
Sum of all payments, 2,695£. 18s. 6d.²¹
- 1515, Obligation for Wards, 7 Henry VIII. . . .
[money received from] Sir John Daunce, for the arrears:-
John Ricroft [ward not stated] for the arrears of 1,000£. for the East Marches, for the expences of ambassadors, and for the King's works, 24 Henry VII . . .²²
- 1515, 17 July, S.B. For John Shirley and others.
Release to John Shirley, Thos. Byrkys and John Miklowe, clerk, comptroller of the same, and Elizabeth widow and executrix of Brian Bothe, late serjeant of the accatry or purchaser of the larger provisions of the Household, of 4,885£. 8s., 11d., received of the King as a loan through Sir John Daunce, of 261£., 17s. through Rob. Fowler, teller of the Exchequer, for victualing the armament

abroad; of 7,060 quarters of malt received by them of **John Ricrofte**, and 371 quarters 4 bushels of malt from the said **John**, as the increase on measures; and of 44l. 11s. arising from part of the provisions sold for use of the King. Knoll, 17 July 7 Henry.²³

1515, 15 October. For **John Rycroft**, serjeant of the Larder, Release of 3,300l. received from Sir John Daunce for victualling the army against France, and of 451£. 10s. 7d. retained by him as arrears. 7 Henry VIII²⁴

1520. A solemn banquet will be held at Guisnes, at which the French King and all his court will be present. The charge of it is committed to the officers of the household. . . // Names of the noblemen and others appointed to attend upon the King and Queen at the interview with the French King at the Field of the Cloth of Gold . . . The Larder: **John Rycroft**, serjeant; ten others.²⁵

*"The King had sailed from Dover on the 31st May 1520 with his Queen, his nobles and a train of beautiful ladies, and on the 7th June, not without some suspicion on both sides, the two monarchs met at a camp, or tilting-ground, in the open field south of Calais. Until the 24th June the monarchs and their two courts competed in manhood and Splendour, and the story of the jousts, the dancing, the brave clothes, the courtesies, and the pageantry is told in the enthusiastic pages of Hall; but the amity was as temporary as the wonderous buildings and all the magnificence which, for a short time, transformed a dull Pickard plain into the Field of the Cloth of Gold"*²⁶

1520, 16 July. Expenses of the King and Queen and their household at Calais and Guysnes, while the Emperor [Charles V of Germany], the French King and Queen, and Cardinal and other noblemen were there from Tuesday 31 May to Monday 16 July, 12 Henry VIII. **Coquina**: . . . To **John Rycroft**, wages to cooks and pastlers, at 20d. a day. Labourers in the Larder, privy kitchen, scalding house, hall kitchen and boiling house, at 4d. a day.²⁷

1521, 11 Nov. Obligations. Henry VIII. Hen. Frowyke, John Spilman, John Raynsford, **John Ricrofte**. 28

1523, 1 Jan. King's Payments: To **John Rycroft**, Edw. Weldon, Wm. Honying and Nic. Warying, in prest for vitualling the King's ships, 2,000£.²⁹

1525, 3 June, (Rycroft is involved in an exchange of letters), when one Permenter in a letter petitions Wolsey (? "your grace"), as Chancellor, to the effect that he is owed monies by John Rycroft, serjeant.

1525, Answer of John Rycroft to the above. At Permenter's request he has lent great sums bove the 140l paid to Permenter for purchase of grain, but has been unable to get any account from Permenter".

[Written on three large sheets of paper. These letters are the most personal memorabilia yet known to be extant. It would be interesting to see (a photocopy) of this letter, for it might reveal Rycroft's handwriting and signature, and the seal he used.³⁰

Transcript of the Will of **John Rycroft**, Proved 17 October, 1532.

"IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN The xxith day of August the yere of our Lord Jesu criste M V xxxij And in the xxiiijth yere of our Soverayne Lord King Henry the viijth I **John Rycroft** Esquire and sergeant of the larder of our said soveraigne lorde make ordeyne and dispose this my present and last Will in manner and fourme folowing that ys to Wytte ffirst I bequethe and recomend my soule to allmyghty god my maker and saviour And to the glorious virgyn our lady sainte Mary and to all the hollye company of Hevyn And my body to be buryed in christen buryall as yt shalbe thought convenyent by myn executrice or executours

Item I bequethe to Elisabeth Jenkyns my servante all my stuffe of household being nowe within my dwelling house and ellswere in anny other place and xli [ten pounds] in money

Item I bequethe to John Perkins turnor xvli [fifteen pounds] wherof he hath in his hands xli [ten pounds] and a gowne of puke lynnd wth chamblytt and gardid wth velvit

Item I bequethe to Wyllyam Maehe vli [five pounds] and A gowne of pewke furred wth blacke boodge

Item I bequethe to Annes wife of the same John A gowne of blacke chamblytt

Item I bequethe to Wyllyam Thynne chief clerk of our said soverayne lordes Kechyn my gowne of damaske lynid wth sarcenett

Item I bequethe to James Mighell [a groom of the Larder] my gowne of blacke chamblett furred wth martrous and ijli [three pounds] in money

Item I bequethe to Lawrannce Thaxstede yoman of our said soveraigne lordes Kychen my gowne of tawny chamblett furrid wth martrous

Item I bequethe to Dawson xxs [twenty shillings]

Item I bequethe to Thomas Inglyshe xxs

Item I bequethe to John Burkett my gowne of tawny chamblett lynid

Item I bequethe to **Wyllyam Rycroft my brother** iiijli [four pounds]

Item I bequethe to **Annes Leyrod my suster** besides **Hallifax** ijli [three pounds]

Item I bequethe to Richard Saunder myn apprentice vli [five pounds] and my tawny gowne

Item I bequethe to John Rutter xxs [twenty shillings]

Item I bequethe to maister Coferer A ring of golde

Item I bequethe to Edward Welden clerke comptroller of our said soveraigne lords house my greate gylte spone

The rest of my goods cattalls and debts whatsoever they be after my debts paid the coosts of my burying doon And this my present testament and last will fulfillid holy

I give and bequeth the to the said Elisabeth Jenkyns my syrvente to dispoase the same for the healte of my soule as she shall thynke best by her godly wysdome and discrecion

And of this my present testament and last will I make and ordeyne myn executours the said Elisabeth my servante and John Perkins

And overseers of the same I make and ordeyne the said Wyllyam Thynne and Ambrose Wolley grocr(?) and Thomas Reigold clothwiker

And I bequethe to the same Ambros for his labour in the premisses xls [forty shillings] and a coate of velvit

yoven [probably the old use of "y" for "g". hence "goven" = given] the daye and yere abovesaid

These wyttnes maister Raufe Bentley curate Thomas Reignolde
Wyllam Mache John Rutter et alijs.*

*[A later hand has inserted after "curate" - "of St. Dunstan's in the East, London, where testator was buried - see Stow's Survey"].

Proved by Elizabeth Jenkyns, the executrix named in the Will, before Richard Gwent at the prerogative Court of Canterbury, 17th October, 1532.³¹

John Stowe noted and recorded in his Survey published in 1598, a memorial to John Rycroft. "This church of St Dunstan is . . . a fair and large church of an ancient building, and within a large churchyard; it hath a great parish of many rich merchants . . . The monuments in that church be these:-

In the choir . . . [many noted including that of] John Ricroft, Esq., sergeant of the larder to Henry VII. and Henry VIII."³²

The church lies a short distance to the east of The Tower, it was largely destroyed in The Fire of 1666, and again in the Blitz of 1940.

There remains the tower and some ruined walls, now landscaped into a pleasant enclosed public garden.

It seems there was another John Rycroft, for a deed dated 1546 shows that a mansion, houses and buildings abutting onto lands of the dissolved priory in Hichin, Hertfordshire, belonged to a John Rycroft. This John was assessed in the Subsidy Rolls for Hertfordshire, the hundred of Edwinstree, in 1545, "John Ricroft, on goods, iijjs iiijd"³³

The will of a Richard Rycroft of Edgebaston, Co. Warwickshire was proved in the P.C.C., in 1557; the Registered Copy is filed in volume **51 Wrastley**, now held in the P.R.O. Further research might elucidate Richard Rycroft's identity, and whether he was a kinsman?

"In 1532, John Rycroft, of Kildwick, left 80 pounds to his parish for the purchase of 120 cattle, the profits from the herd to support a perpetual obit for the repose of his soul and to provide for the relief of the poor of the community. etc. . . .". An account of this charity is to be found in following pages.

John Stow in his Survey also tells: -

"The other side of this high street from Bishopgate and Houndsditch, the first building a large inn for receipt of travellers, and is called the Dolphin, of such a sign. In the year 1513, **Margaret Ricroft**, widow, gave this house, with the gardens and appurtenances, unto William Gam, [and] R. Clye, their wives, [being] her daughters, and to their heirs, with condition they yearly do give to the warden or governors of the Grey Friars Church within Newgate forty shillings, to find a student of divinity in the university for ever"³⁴.

Margaret was the relict of Jn. Taylour and Henry Ricroft; her will dated 1517³⁴.

Upon searching for listings of RYCROFT pre 1560, in excess of 45 are noted in Yorkshire. The I.G.I. lists only one pre 1560 entry outside of Yorkshire: - 1545 6 June, Lawrence Ricroft married Alice Buttell, at Nonington, Kent. Whilst the earliest London listings in the I.G.I. commence in 1583 with the marriage of a Christopher Rycroft in 1583, followed by the baptism of his seven children³⁵.

From the foregoing, we can make some conjecture:-

Master John Rycroft's origin and kinsmen are likely to be found in Kildwick.

He was born circa 1474 or earlier? Unlikely he married and begat children?

He was the son of Henry Rycroft (flor.1489)?

Henry at some time was married to Margaret, widow (flor.1513)?

Margaret had two daughters who married, and perhaps had issue?

There follows: -

in Part 2, an account of heraldic Arms associated with Rycroft;

in Part 3, the Charity endowed by Rycroft;

and in Part 4, an account of persons named Rycroft living before the year 1600.

Endnotes

1. King Henry VII reigned from 1485 to 1509;
King Henry VIII reigned from 1509 to 15447
2. Calendar of Patent Rolls; Henry VII (London, H.M.S.O., 1916),
volume 1, 1494-1509, page 21.
3. Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the P.R.O.;
Henry VII, volume 1, 1485-1500 (London; H.M.S.O., 1955)
page 133 (470)
4. Surties Soc., vol 130, pages 111-229.
5. Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the P.R.O.:
Henry VII, volume 2, 1500-1509 (London, H.M.S.O.,1963)
pages 259-260 (693) membrane 17d.
6. Ibid, page 125 (362) Membrane 16d.
7. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII,
2nd edition, revised by R.H.Brodie (London, Longman, 1920)
volume 1, pt., 1, page 18 (20) f. 139.
Note, there is no index entry for Rycroft from volume 4
(ie. from 1524) onwards.
8. Ibid, page 39 (82).
9. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII,
arranged and catalogued by J.S.Brewer (London; Longman, 1862).
volume 1, page 152 (1023).
10. Ibid, volume 2, part 2, page 1482.
11. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII,
arranged and cataloged by J.S.Brewer (London, Longman, 1862),
volume 1., page 529 (3871).
12. Ibid, volume 2, part 2, page 1462.
13. Ibid, 2nd edition (London, Longman 1920); volume 1, part 3 ?, page 1117.
(2540)
14. Ibid, (London, Longman, 1862 edition) volume 1, page 959 (5723).

15. Ibid, 2nd edition, (London, Longman, 1920),
volume 1, part 2, page 1168 (2677).
16. Ibid, volume 1, part 2, page 1221 (2798).
17. Ibid, volume 1, part 2, page 1232 (2833).
18. Ibid, volume 1, part2, page 1252 (2882).
19. Ibid, page 1275 (2948).
20. Ibid, page 1308 (3048). Exch. Accts., 208 (5). R.O.
21. Ibid, volume 2, part 1, page 15 (54)(three pages of large paper).
24. Ibid, page 275 (1034).
25. Ibid, volume 3, part 1, pages 239 and 244.
[See preface, page lviii for discriptive details.]
26. Edward Hall, (died 1547), he wrote the large chronicle covering the
period from the reign of Richard II. till the end of Henry VIII.
"The Uniting of the Two Noble Families, Lancaster and York".
It is published in two volumes, in 1904.
Hall's writings give us a background to John Rycroft's career,
and perhaps may give us an inkling as to how it came about Rycroft's
career evolved from his birth in Craven to his coming to London,
to find favour with the King, and to obtain a position of importance
and trust in the Royal Household?
27. Ibid, page 334 (919).
29. Ibid, volume 3, part 2, (2750).
30. Letters and Papers of the reign of Henry VIII,
Addenda, volume 1, part 1, (462), folios 249 and 252.
Large paper, three pages preserved in the P.R.O.
31. This transcript has been taken by my friend John Thompson from a
photocopy of the Registered Copy filed in volume "18 Thower"
now held in the P.R.O.
If the original will and probate documents exist such might be found in a
box of contemporary documents held in the P.R.O. at Kew.
32. A Survey of London written by John Stow in the year 1598;
reprinted, 1994 Ed., page 156.
33. Herts Genealogist and Antiquary, Vol. 1.
34. Stow' Survey, page 180.
35. Index of Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London;
Rycrofte, Ellen, wid., St Bot. Bpg.; admon./W.; <O.W.> year 1554;
Register 13, Folio 49v, 53.
Ricroft, Margt., rel. of Jn Talour & Hy. R.
of Bpg. St., St. Bot. Bpg.; W. & codicil; year 1517;
Register 9, Folio 37v.

Heraldry 1500 –1600

Coats of arms and crests were widely recognised symbols that marked the ownership of buildings and objects. They displayed the social rank of individuals and families, or their allegences to a ruler. Although coats of arms take a form that suggests military power they did not originate in warfare, despite popular belief. Heraldry was developed in order to indicate ownership or loyalty and it was used especially on seals to confirm the owners agreement to a legal document. On family trees, portraits and tombs, they were used to record important marriage alliances between families.



The blazon of

Master John Rycroft
as displayed in the windows of

Kildwick Parish Church

THE RYCROFT ARMS

John Rycroft died in the year 1532, a monument was set up in his memory in the church of St Dunstan-in-the-East in the City of London;

Stow in his Survey of 1598 noted: -

The monuments in that church be these: in the choir ...

John Ricroft, Esq., sergeant of the larder unto Henry VII and Henry VIII., 1532.

What heraldic arms or seals Rycroft used in his lifetime I do not know?

The earliest record of his arms, and also the first of any Rycroft arms (to my knowledge), is recorded in a Survey of Yorkshire Churches made in the year 1621 by Roger Dodsworth¹.

At the parish church of Kildwick-in-Craven (near Skipton); Dodsworth recorded in concise heraldic terminology particulars of the stained glass shields displayed in the church windows:

In all the South windows. These armes, vide licet,

party per bend sinister gules and Or;

3 griffins' heads erased counterchanged 2, 1;

on a chief Argent a flower-de-luce azure

entre 2 roses gules seeded and pointed Or.

underneath in faire letters Master John Rycroft

That is to say: -

the shield was divided diagonally from the top left (*party per bend sinister*, as viewed from behind as is the convention, so to appear divided from the top right when presented); the upper part coloured red (*gules*) and the lower coloured gold (*Or*); on which were 3 heads of the heraldic fabulous griffin, these heads are eagle-like but with pointed ears, their necks are shewn ragged in three tails (*erased*); displayed 2 heads in the upper part, 1 in the lower part, their colouring counterchanged such that the upper 2 are coloured gold and the lower is red; across the top of the shield a silver band (*a chief argent*) on which is a blue (*azure*) fleu-de-lis placed between 2 red roses, these with gold seeded centers and gold points.

Dodsworth also noted: - "*John Rycroft bought six score kine (cows) and put them out to the poor of the parish to the end that they should pay a yearly benefit to the maintenance of a free school at Kildwick.*"

When Sir Wm. Dugdale made his Visitation in 1666, he delineated from the windows of Kildwick Church the following shields: -

"Master John Rycroft, whose name and shield yet remain in several windows, and have survived all other remembrance of him, excepting that he bought eighteen score kine, and put them out to the end that they should pay a yearly benefit to the poor of the parish of Kildwick".

¹ Y.A.S.Record Series, Volume XXXIV,
Roger Dodsworth's Survey, p.148.

Whitaker,¹ writing in the 1870's refers to the Kildwick's Lang Kirk:-

"In the windows of the north aisle are several shields:-

The third window 5th shield:-

Per bend sinister gu. and or.,

three griffins' heads erased counter- changed;

on a chief arg. a fleur-de lis az. between two roses of the first.

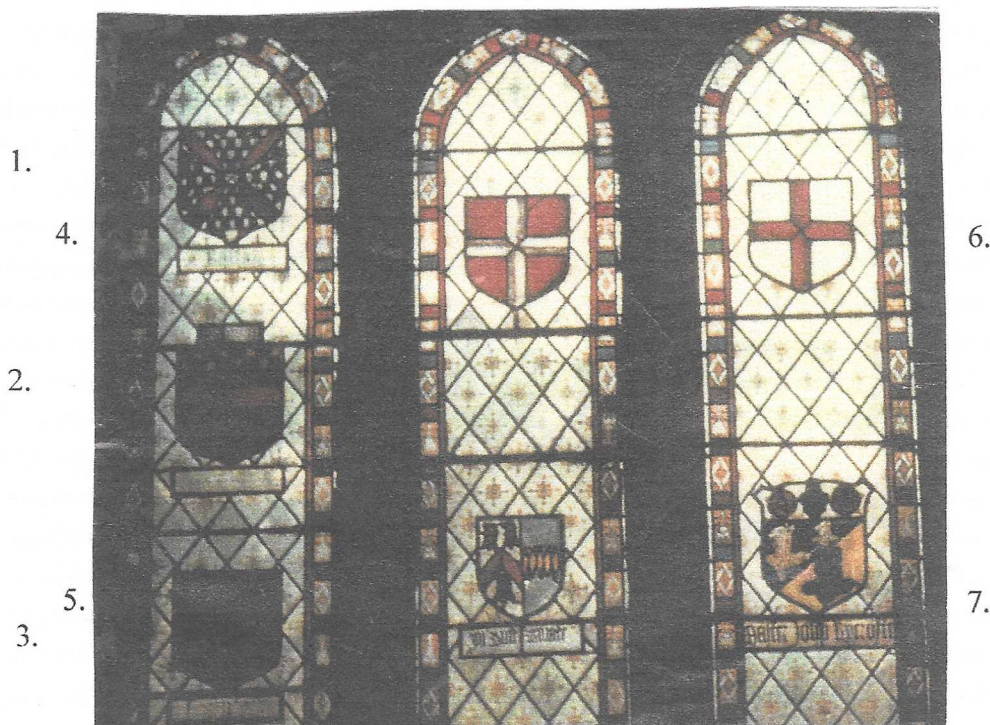
'Master John Rycroft'

This shield also appears in [the windows of] the south clerestory."

Documents dating from the reign of Edward VI² state that John Rycroft, late Serjeant of the Larder, was born in Kildwick and had given monies for the relief of the poor in that parish. In memory and in acknowledgement of such beneficence, stained glass bearing his shield with his name below were displayed in the windows. It is probable that some of these windows were destroyed by Cromwell's men during the Civil War 1642-1648.

Subsequently these windows were patched up. For today, of the ten clerestory windows the Rycroft arms appear in the 4th with "Master John Rycroft" lettered below; in the 6th the name alone; and in the 8th and 10th window from the east end, the shields only.

The Rycroft arms with the name below also appear in a composition with six others displayed in the 3rd window of the north aisle.



¹ Whitaker's *History of Craven*, 3rd Ed. page 212;
with footnote: "Hopkinson's MS., I think from Dr. Johnson".

² Court of Augmentations, Misc. Book 520, folio 113; at the P.R.O.

1. If representing Bolton Priory, ought to be 'Gules, a cross patonce vair'; the arms originally of William de Fortibus, Earl of Aumale or Albemarle.
2. Chequery Or. and azure, a fess gules; the arms of Le Gros, Earl of Albemarle, though said to be that of Clifford.
3. Fountains Abby: - azure, three horseshoes Or.
4. Gules, a cross argent; for Clifford.
5. Rocliffe of Cowthorpe impaling Plumpton; (Sir William slain at Towton).
Rocliffe: argent, a cheveron between three lions heads erased gules.
6. Argent, a cross gules.

7 Master John Rycroft

This window and several of the clerestory windows are in the East portion of the church. This portion was added in about 1500 by building over land used for interments which later caused the pillars to become unsafe, so during 1901-3 this eastern part was rebuilt and the windows reset, so some blazons became reset differently from their previous settings.

It would be interesting to find out when and where these arms first appeared: a) in John Rycroft's lifetime; b) on his monument; c) the stained glass at Kildwick; e) perhaps the blazon depicted in Josiah Rycroft's portrait was inspired by that on John Rycroft's memorial?

I sought the opinion of Rowland Bretton, the late Halifax antiquarian. Upon examining photographs of this Rycroft blazon as displayed in the several windows at Kildwick, together with my notes, he kindly wrote to me in 1963 expressing his opinion that these arms: -

"could possibly have been granted to him temp. Henry VIII, or possibly late in the reign of Henry VII. I judge from its design (method of division of the shield and the number of charges upon it), that it is not likely to be earlier than the Tudor period. I do not think the chief [the band across the top] is an augmentation of honour. The name does not occur in my list as such; but of course without recourse to the patent it cannot definitely be said whether it is such or not. . . I feel sure that the version in the glass at Kildwick Church is an incorrect rendering of the blazon of John Rycroft's shield."

The existing blazon at Kildwick accords with the description as set down by Roger Dodsworth in his Survey of 1621, and in accord with Dugdale's of 1666.

Now, from examination of the arms, it seems they are particularly appropriate to him in his capacity as Serjeant in the King's Household. The red rose and fleur-de-lis borne on a chief have the significance of being an augmentation; the red rose being the badge of the House of Lancaster, used by Henry VII on taking the crown in 1485.

John Rycroft would prefer the red rose to the union rose, as he had been brought up under the influence of the staunchest of Lancastrians - the mighty Cliffords of Skipton. The fleur-de-lis featured in the Royal arms; and here displayed on the chief perhaps indicates his service to the King.

The blazon may derive from the seal he used in his capacity as provisioner to the King's army. Contracts of intention to purchase provisions would be signed and sealed, the documents would have attached to them by a ribbon a wax disc bearing the impress of his metal seal, additional seals would also be attached. Such archive documents were stored in the Victoria Tower of the Houses of Parliament, where they are known as the Pipe Rolls; Perhaps John Rycroft's original will also bore his seal.

It seems probable that the blazon was designed as being appropriate, and allusive to John Rycroft's position in the King's Household. and perhaps displayed upon the memorial tablet as set up on the walls of the choir in St Dunstons in the East (this church was destroyed in The Great Fire of 1666, and again in the London Blitz of 1940).

Gullim gives the Rycroft arms as "per bend or and gules" etc., as does the latest edition of Papworth's Ordinary. This suggests the glass in Kildwick church might be incorrectly constructed in displaying - "party per bend sinister [etc]"; ie. incorrect diagonal division?

John Rycroft's will was proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1532¹, bequests were limited to his personal possessions, and small monetary bequests: -

“to Wyllyam Rycroft my brother iiijl [four pounds]
to Annes Leyrod my suster besids Hallifax ijil [three pounds]”.

There is no indication that he had children, nor is there reference to Kildwick. The residue of his goods and monies were to be disposed of for the health of his soul at the discretion of his servant and executrix Elizabeth Jenkyns. Yet surely he must have been a wealthy man, for it was usual for persons about the King's business “to line their own pockets” and to be appointed to residences and landed estates of “grace and favour” (Research not yet undertaken: - to search the printed calendars of the Inquisitions Post Mortem, etc. Inquisitions were taken on the deaths of chief tenants of the crown; they name heirs and provide much information on the ownership of landed property prior to the abolition of feudal dues in 1646).

This was the first Rycroft will to be proved at Canterbury; followed by that of a Richard Rycroft of Edgebaston, Co. Warwickshire in 1557 (kinship not known?). Whilst there were proved at the court in York wills of dates 1467, 1514, 1539, 1547² and later. It appears therefore that John Rycroft was amongst the first to leave a will, and the first to do so in the south of England. If the foregoing be accepted, that the arms were devised for John Rycroft

¹ registered in Vol.18 Thower; photocopy and typed transcript obtained.

² typed transcripts were kindly provided by Mrs Nora K.M.Gurney.

solely, who then are the numerous individuals alluded to in Gullim's notice? What relationship have others who subsequently displayed these arms? Two such persons were Josiah Rycraft in 1646, and Richard Nelson Rycroft in 1783.

The earliest record I find of Rycroft arms otherwise than these at Kildwick is from "A Display of Heraldry" by John Guillim, published in 1724: -

"He beareth per bend or and gules, three griffin's heads erased counter changed, on a chief argent a fleur-de lis between two roses of the second, by name of Rycroft, who, from Abbeville in Normandy, planted themselves in Lancashire; from whence are derived the several stems in Shropshire, Cheshire, Devonshire and London; and is borne by Josiah Rycraft of London, Merchant".

[though Gullim asserts as to there being collateral Rycroft stems in Shropshire, Cheshire and Devonshire; their stems were mostly in Yorkshire and in Lancashire.]

Josiah Rycraft was the author of several books, viz. *A Survey of Englands Champions*, published in 1647; the frontispiece has the author's name spelt "Josiah Ricraft" together with an engraved portrait of Ricraft with his blazon. In this version of the shield the roses look like mullets, but I think that roses were intended; the crest is of a hand grasping three ears of rye.

It seems that Guillim is quoting from a Herald's Visitation of Cambridge-shire, perhaps that of 1619? Earlier visitations were in 1575 and 1584.

JOSIAH RICRAFT flourished in 1646 as an author and merchant; and said to be the son of James Ricrafte, a sailor of Stepney.¹ He is depicted in a portrait engraving incorporating a blazon of the arms of Rycroft.² Perhaps this blazon was taken from John Rycroft's memorial in St Dunstan?

The Rev. Henry Rycroft, vicar of Kirby Stephen, sealed various documents with the arms of Purchase (lion rampant, on a fess three bezants) that being the family of his first wife, and upon her death he set up a memorial brass bearing the arms of Rycroft and Purchase, composed: - the left half, three griffins heads erased, on a chief three fleur-de lis, for Rycroft; and the right half, a lion rampant, on a fess [a horizontal band] three roundels, for Purchase.³ Upon my writing in 1960 to the vicar inquiring as to this memorial brass, he replied by letter saying he was unable to find this brass, then by a subsequent

¹ see National Dictionary of Biography for a fuller account.

² *A Survey of Englands Champions*, 1647.
Also his "copious collection of th' Orient characters for fair direction to learn those tongues". This illustrates an amusing alphabet, the letters formed by slender men contorting so to form each letter in progression!

³ Westmorland Church Notes by Bellasis, 1889.

letter telling he had found the brass plate, it was concealed within the compartment housing the organ pipes.

The Rev. Henry Rycroft, by his will dated 1745, bequeathes farm lands to Richard Nelson, (then aged 8yrs) upon condition that he changes his name to Rycroft and enters Holy Orders. It appears there was a friendship between the Rycroft and the Nelson families stemming from Richard Nelson's father and also his uncle having been born at Coniston Cold (near Skipton). The latter also being curate to the Rev. Henry Rycroft, who himself was likewise born at Coniston Cold. The Rev. Henry Rycroft had no issue, his two brothers had surviving female issue only; he therefore devised part of his estate to young Richard Nelson provided Richard complied with the conditions¹. Richard was the only surviving issue of John Nelson of Hatton Garden and Mary his wife (records are silent as to her surname?). He was born in the parish of St Andrew's Holborn, in November 1736; on the 28th December 1758 he changed his name from Richard Nelson to Richard Rycroft and took Holy Orders. Since that time he assumed and bore the Arms of Rycroft quartering Nelson.

The Arms as confirmed by the College of Arms on 12th December 1783 comprised:

*Quarterly 1st & 4th Per bend Azure and Or, three Griffins heads erased counterchanged,
on a Chief Ermine a Fleur de Lys between Roses Gules (for Rycroft);
2nd & 3rd Per pale (vertically) Or and Sable a Cheveron between three Fleurs de Lys counterchanged (for Nelson).*

The Reverend Richard Rycroft, mentioned above, was created a Baronet on the 22nd January 1784, the dignity still continuing to recent times.

The Reverend Richard Nelson, upon assuming the name Rycroft in 1758, and being created a Baronet on the 22nd January 1784, then became Sir Richard Nelson Rycroft, 1st Bt., Rector of Penshurst, Kent, the only surviving son of John Nelson of Calton in Craven.

As the Rev. Mr. Rycroft doubtless had not proved his right to the Tudor coat of arms, changes were made as follows, such as are always made (making the arms a new grant) when arms are claimed without proof of descent from the former rightful owner, viz.

- 1). an alteration was made to the colouring of the base of the shield, from red and gold to gold and blue;
- 2). the chief was given the fur ermine in place of the metal argent;
- 3). the fleur-de-lis was coloured red, not blue.

The grant included the motto: "FAYTHE HATHE NO FEAR".

¹ Additional information held on file.



Of all the Gems of Gods most sacred Secret,
 The Gift of Tongues seems of much precious merit,
 By which, Man, mainly, differs from a Beast,
 And all rare Knowledge riches is increas'd,
 How much, to our Inventions Ricraft, then,
 Is due, for his great Paines and Industrious Pen,
 Whose, thus, hath made so Copious a Collection
 Of the Orient Characters, for our Direction
 To learn those Tongues, of Work most Excellent,
 And, of more Worth than Pearls, do most Orient,
 For which, with grateful heart, due God the Praise,
 And Crown to our Ricrafts Bravos with fragrant Bayes.
J. Vickers Scripsit. W. Faithorne fecit.

Josiah Ricraft

His portrait in 1647
 With a display of his Blazon

A
SURVEY
OF
ENGLANDS CHAMPIONS

AND
Truths faithfull Patriots

OR
A Chronologicall Recitement of
the principall proceedings of the most
worthy Commanders of the prosperous Armies
raised for the preservation of Religion, the Kings
Majesties Person, the Priviledges of Parliament,
and the Liberty of the Subject, &c.

With a most exact narration of the severall
Victories, as also the number of Commanders
and Souldiers that have been slain on both sides
since these uncivill civill wars began.

With the lively pourtraitures of the severall Commanders.

By **JOSIAH RICRAFT.**

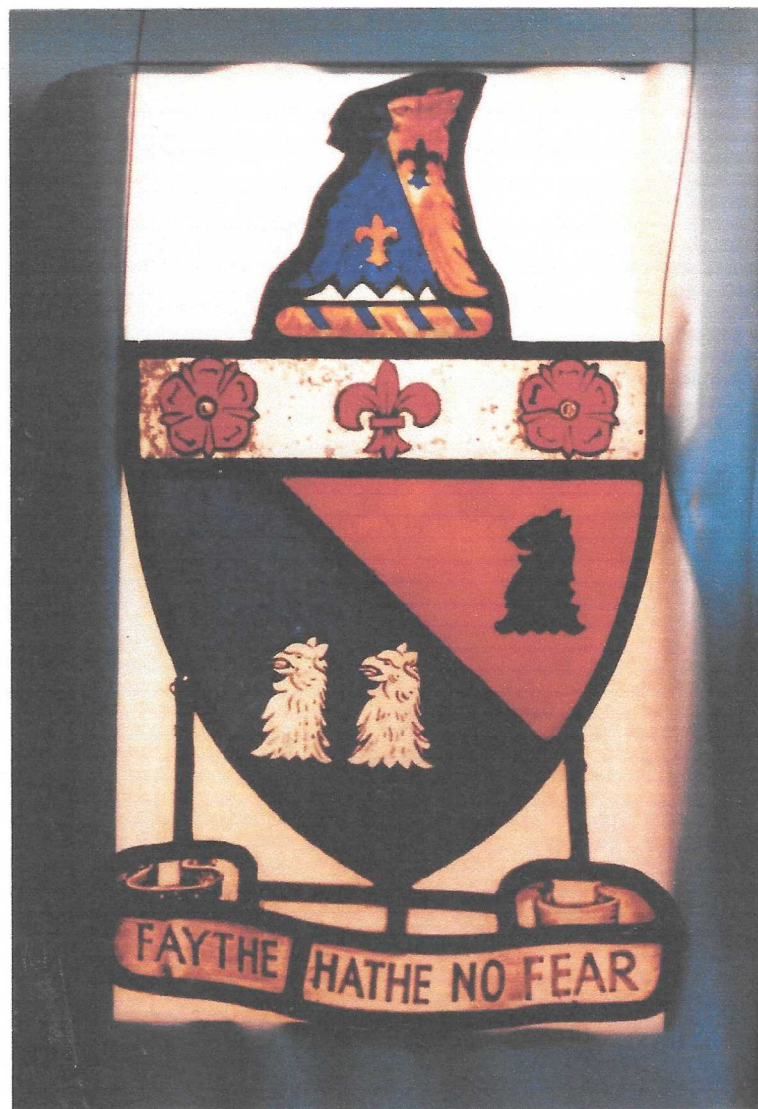
Published by Authority.

Psal. 44. 5. Through thee we have thrust back our adversaries, by thy name have we trodden down them that rose up against us.

*London: Printed by R. Austin, and are to be sold by
H. in Popes head Alley, and in Cornhill near the
Royall Exchange 1647.*

The title page of Josiah Ricraft's Survey,
from his book in the Leeds Public Library

In about 1935, my grandfather George Henry Rycroft and his son Charles had an extension built on to their home "Westfield", in Ramsey, Isle of Man. This was a large castellated porch, the door had a circular window in which was displayed the Rycroft shield. The composition of this glass blazon was as the grant of arms to Nelson-Rycroft. Inside the porch, suspended from hooks there was also displayed a pair of elephant skulls, these from animals shot by Charles when in Malaya.



The RYCROFT CHARITY

This account is based upon writings found within the "Curren Manuscripts". In about 1963 I located these manuscripts in Victoria Park Keighley, at that time the building there was used as a museum. Upon several visits I copied from these manuscripts. But upon a recent visit to the Keighley library the librarian found not trace of such Curren Manuscripts. They were probably compiled by W.A.Brigg in 1926 and based upon documents formerly in Kildwick Church vestry, returned thereto in 1934, and missing in 1961. Described as being "four brief sheets in XVIII Century script written on both sides, mounted on modern paper and endorsed with a copy of the original endorsement and entitled *An Account of John Rycroft Esquire's Benifaction to the Parish of Kildwick* and several proceedings in relation to it extracted from old papers in Mr Richardson's possession."

These documents would be known to and probably added to by John Richardson Curren, he was the owner of Kildwick Hall from 1763 to 1784, and the source of much of Dr. Whittaker's *History of Craven*.

JOHN RYCROFT never forgot his native Aire valley or its people; he founded a charity for the relief of the poor inhabitants of Kildwick parish, which has endured almost to the present day and is called "The Winter Silver." From ancient documents it appears that in consideration of being born in Kildwick, he gave to the Vicar and Churchwardens eighty pounds and directed they buy 120 milch kine (cows) and farm these cattle to his kinsmen and otherwise to the poorest parishioners at the yearly rate of 8d per cow; he shrewdly anticipated the income from letting, though initially amounting to £4, would increase as the stock of kine multiplied. He further directed an obit should be kept yearly within the Church at the time of year as he should chance to depart, and at the obit there bestowed: - 30/- in bread, milk and cheese to be given to the poor, 10/- to the Churchwardens, 20/- for the amendment of the Church ornaments, 20/- for the maintenance of the stock of kine and the rest to be bestowed in some godly use for the relief of the poor. John Rycroft gave this sum of £80 during his lifetime, the money was held by Nicholas Gibson, a grocer of London. Mr Henry Curren, a parishoner, received it and paid it to the Vicar and Churchwardens. 120 kine were bought with £60 and 40 more with the remaining £20, and the obit was duly kept each year.

Kildwick Church and much of the surrounding land belonged to the monks of Bolton Abby, but the Priory was utterly destroyed in 1540 under Statute initiated by King Henry VIII whereby all colleges, chantries and all goods and chattels belonging to the same were given up for the augmentation of the King's revenue. Kildwick Church did not escape notice, for a few years later, under the same Statute, it was ordered that the Vicar and Churchwardens should "stay the kine in their hands to the King's use". Whereupon in the 6th of Edward VI (1553), the Churchwardens appealed by a Bill of Petition exhibited in the Court of Augmentations of the Revenue of the King's Crown, setting forth that the assessment was unjust and to the extreme impoverishment of the poor of the parish.

On behalf of the King it was alleged that contrary to John Rycroft's Will, £6. 13. 4d had for some for some years been paid in the finding of a priest to sing and serve within the parish Church and in keeping the obit, this superstitious practice being contrary to the Statute, the King was entitled to these monies.

From depositions of witnessess at the hearing it appeared that 180 kine had been bought and let to the poorest parishioners, that the stock had been maintained and the profits bestowed in the relief of the poor and in the other uses expressed by John Rycroft, and an obit had been kept with a part of the profits. Whereupon a question arose whether the monies were within the case of the said Statute, and upon a full and deliberate hearing it was decreed, on the 29th October, 6th of Edward VI (1552), with the consent of the Vicar, Churchwardens and parishioners, that they shall peaceably have and enjoy all the kine and the profit thereof yearly ~~uiouioioi~~for the relief of the parishioners according to the godly uses prescribed by the last Will of John Rycroft without impediment, and that the Vicar and Churchwardens shall therefore pay into the hands of the Receiver of the Revenues of the Court in the County of York to the King's use the sum of £70 as follows: -

In the day of the making of the decree	£10
At Lady Day the next	£10
And at the Feast of All Saints the next	£10
And so yearly at the Feast of All Saints from time to time until the £70 be fully paid.	

And it is further ordered that bond of six of the most substantial persons of the parish shall be taken for payment of this sum.

However, the money was not paid, and in 1583, the 25th of Queen Elizabeth, one John Collyns, a groom of Her Majesty's Chamber, filed a bill in the Exchequer against the Vicar, Churchwardens and parishioners of Kildwick stating the above decree at large, and that King Edward VI died before the bond was taken, after whose death the said £70 was concealed from His Majesty's officers and stood unsatisfied and yet doth belong either to the late Queen Mary or to the present Queen; which sum her present Majesty by her letters patent dated at Richmond the 14th November in the 20th year of her reign (1578) granted to the said John Collyns by virtue whereof he demanded the said £70 of the Vicar, etc., but they refused to pay statcing: - "that from some hope given them by the Queen's Surveyor that they should be discharged from the payment of the £70, they had bestowed the revenue of the said kine upon a free grammer school and that several persons were willing to dispose charitably of their goods to the school if it be established, and they therefore pray to have the said sum for this use without any molestation from Collyns or his assigns". This petition refers to Collyns as being a native of Kildwick brought up there at the school.

There is another petition from the Vicar to the Queen for a licence to erect a free school in the parish of the Foundation of Queen Elizabeth. But it does not appear from any of these writings what proceedings were had in the suits ~~no~~ or what was done upon these petitions, neither have I been able to learn how long the stock of cows were kept up, though it appears they were

subsequently sold and the proceeds were in the year 1620 laid out in the purchase for £80 of two rent charges on lands in Cowling which yielded £4. 14. 0 a year.

In addition the Charity also possessed other rent charges totalling £9. 12. 0, which were purchased partly in the years 1653 and 6, but nothing is known of the origin of the funds with which these purchases were effected.

The rent charges were eventually sold and the monies reinvested, and the income accrued almost to the present day, though I understand there has been no distribution in recent years. The charities are under the supervision of the Charity Commissioners and the trustees who have been regularly appointed over the centuries (Mrs Mason tells the rents continued to be collected until c1960 and that the Charity was wound up c1998).

The following are copied from "the Curre Manuscript"

"In the 6th of Edward the 6th upon a Bill of Petition exhibited in the Court of the Augmentation and Revenues of the Crown by the Roger Garforth and Robert Collyng churchwardens of the Parish Church of Kildwick, for and in the name of all the parishioners, there being upwards of 1800 persons, setting forth that John Rycroft Esq. (born at Kildwick) deceased about 20 years last past, delivered into the hands of the vicar and churchwardens £80 to buy 120 milch kine according to such devises and uses as should be expressed in his last will. The will directs, that the vicar and churchwardens, for the time being should let to farm all the said kine to the said John Rycroft's kinsmen and other of the poorest parishioners, after the rate of 8d a cow, to be yearly paid to the vicar and church wardens.

That he further willed that one obit should be yearly kept, within the church at such time of year as he should depart, and 30 shillings parcel of the profits of the payment for those kine be yearly bestowed in bread, drink and cheese, to be given to the poor, and the rest to be bestowed in some godly use, for the relief of the poor at the discretion of the vicar and churchwardens.

This £80 was paid to the Vicar and Churchwardens by Mr. Henry Curre a parishioner who had received it of Mr. Rycroft in London and that 120 kine were bought with £60 and 40 more with the remaining £20.

By Statute whereby all Colleges, Chauntries and all goods, chattles that belonged to the same were given to ye King, it was, for a time ordained that the Vicar and Churchwardens should stay the Kine in their hands to ye Kings use.

On ye King's behalf it was alleged that Nicholas Gibson, on delivery of the said £70 took security from the parishioners by Bond to bestow ye same on milch kine and employ profits thereof to ye finding of a priest to sing and serve within the parish church for ever and that 170 kine were bought, and a priest found, and a yearly obit kept, whereby the King was entitled to the same.

It was afterwards decreed by the Lord Chancellor that the King was not entitled to the kine etc. and that the Vicar and Churchwardens should pay to the King's use £70.

In the reign of Elizabeth, John Collyns, one of the grooms of her Majesty's Chamber filed a bill in the Exchequer against the vicar and churchwardens stating the above decree, and that Edward the 6th had died before the Bond was taken, according to that decree, after whose death the said £70 was not paid to the late Queen Mary nor to the present Queen [Elizabeth]. She granted the sum to Collyns who demanded it, but the Vicar would not pay.

The above accounts have been based upon ancient documents now held in the P.R.O. viz: -

Augmentations Misc. Books 520. pages 113-5. Edward VI;
the "Curre Manuscripts" contain transcripts as follows: -

29th October 6th Edward VI, 1552, A Bill of Petition exhibited
To the Right warshippfull Sir Rychard Sackvyle Knight Chancellor
and other the Kynges Majesties Generall Surveyors of his Court
of Augmentation and ye Revenues of his Graces Crowne

In most humble wyse Compleynynge shewen unto your Mastershippes your dealy Orators Roger Garffarth and Robert Collynge Churchwardens of ye parishe church of Kyldwyck in Craven in ye Countie of York for and in the names of all other the parysheoners of the paryshe of Kyldwyck aforesayd beinge eightyne hundreth persons and more **That whereas one John Ryecroft esquyar deceased late serjeant of the Larder unto ye late Kyng of most worthie and famouse memory Kyng Henry ye vijth father to our most Dreded soverign Lord ye Kings maiestye that now is for and in consyderaton that he was borne at Kyldwyck in Craven aforesayd and beyng a man of great substancee myndynge to Releve the greatt numdre of people that he in his tyme knew to be wythin ye sayd paryshe of Kyldwyck aforesayd delivered in his lyf tyme dyverse sumes of money into the hand of ye vicar and churchwardens of Kyldwyck aforesayd they for the tyme beyng to be by them employede to dyverse impotent persons wythin ye said paryshe and to such other uses as should by him in his last will and testament declared and expressed** And shortely after ye sayd John Ryecroft made his last wyll

and testament in wrytynge and by the same wylled declared and devysed that after his decease ye sayd vycar and churchwardens wyth the goods and money of the sayd John Ryecroft shuld buy the number of syx score kyne **And** further wylled and devysed by the said wyll that the sayd vycar churchwardens and parysheoners shuld have and enjoye ye sayd syx score melch kine so by them provyded and bought to them and theyre successors vycars churchwardens and parysheoners of the sayd paryshe to observe fullfyll and keep his devyse in ye sayd wyll declared wych devyse and wyll was that ye sayd syx score melch kyne shuld be by the vycar and churchwardens of ye sayd paryshe for the tyme beyng and by theyre successors lettyn to farme and granted to dyverse of the sayd John Ryecroft his kynsmen and other pore persons of the sayd paryshe at ye dyscretion of the sayd vycar churchwardens and parysheoners and theyre successors **And** that hys sayd kynsmen and other poore honest persons to whome the sayd kyne shuld be so granted and lett shuld fynd securyte to pay to the sayd vycar churchwardens and parysheoners for ye tyme beyng ye yerely sume and payment of four pounds wych is after the yerely rate of eight pence the cowe and further ye sayd John Ryecroft by his sayd wyll devysed that one obytt shuld be kept yerely wythyn the said paryshe church at such tyme of the yere as the said John Ryecroft shuld chance to depart **And** further wylled that at every such obytt theyre shuld be threttye shelynges parcell of the sayd iiiij^s yerely bestowed in breyd and drynk and cheyse and ye same to be dystributed amongst ye pore people of the paryshe aforesayd and tenne shelynges yerely to ye amendament of ye ornamente of the sayd church and twenttye shelynge yerely to the maintenance of the stock of ye sayd syx score kyne as by the sayd wyll redy to be shewyd more plenelie doyth and may appeare **And** after ye sayd John Ryecroft of a further zeale and good mynd beryng towards his sayd natyve countrie Kynsmen and poore people of the sayd parishe gave and delyveryd in his lyf time to Nycholas Gybson late of London grocer deceased the sume of foure score pounds to the intent to be bestowed in Kyne and the same Kyne to be grantyd and lett to his Kynsmen and other pore honest persons of the sayd paryshe after ye rate of viij^d the cowe **And** the same money by them receyved for the sayd kyne to be dystributed and ordered at the dyscression

of the sayd vycar churchwardens and parysheoners and theyre successors yerely for ye onely relieff and sustaynnence of the poorest parysheoners of Kyldwyck aforesyd as by his letters dyrectyd to ye vycar churchwardens and parysheoners of ye sayd paryshe for that intent and purpose more plenylye doyth and may appere **And** after the sayd John Ryecroft dyed after whose death the said Nycholas Gybson delyvereyd to ye churchwardens of the sayd paryshe church three score and tenne pounde parcell of the sayd foure score pounds and tooke bound of them that they with the proffette thereof shuld fynd one preste which was contrary to ye mind and wyll of the sayd John Ryecroft as by his sayd letters doyth appere **And** the number of two hundreth poore parysheoners of the sayd paryshe have been at all tymes synce the makynge of the sayd good devyse menteyned and found as well with the havynge to farme of the sayd Kine as also with money comynge of the yerely proffette of the same **And** theyre haith also a preste been somtymes mentayned with part of the proffette thereof at ye wyll and pleasure of the sayd vycar and churchwardens for to teach yonge children of the said paryshe to the greatt releiff of all the inhabytants of the sayd parish **Nevertheless** so yt is if it may please your good Masterrshippes that ye Kynges Maiestie Surveyor of ye Westryddyng within ye sayd Countie of York haith now of late without any law right equitie or iustyce surveyd ye sayd Kine and wylled your sayd Orators to answeere ye same or ye piecethereof to ye Kynges Maiestie **And** further right warshipffull masters one William Clapham Esquyar and John Lambart gentylman have now of late called before theym such of the pore parysheoners as had any of the sayd Kyne to fareme and would have tayken to the Kynges Maiesties use as they sayd; whereas ye sayd Kyne nor any of the proffette thereof comynge are within ye compass of the Estatute whereby all Colledges Chauntreys Free chapelles and Fraternetyes were gyven to the Kynges Maiestye, nor the Kynges Maiestie is not thereby nor otherwise entytled to the same, by reason whereof your sayd Orators and all other the pore parysheoners there are much dysquyted **And** ye foregoynge thereof shuld be to the extreme impoverishment of all the pore inhabytauntes and papysheoners there **In** tender consyderacion whereof your sayd Orators most humblye beseech your good Mastershippes that they may enjoye the sayd kyne to theym gevyn

and appoynted as is aforesayd wythowt any interruption of the Kynges
Maiesties Officers accordynge to there iust tittle in and to the same for such
godlie uses as they were heretofore appoynted **And** your sayd Orators
shall pray for the preservation of your good Mastershippes longe warshipp

An aunswere and Declaration for ande upon the Kinge Maiesties
behalf to the bill of Compleynte of the paryshyoners of Kildewyke

FIRSTE the said bill of compleynte is uncerteyne ande insufficient in the
lawe to be aunswered unto for dyverse apparantecauses therin conteyned, yet
neverthe lesse for the declaration of the truthe concernynge the premysse
mencioned in the saide bill of compleynte for and upon the Kingee Maiesties
behalf true it is that the saide John Rycrofte named in the saide bill of
compleynte did not only delyver in his life time at several tymes certeyne
sumes of money to the saide paryshoners but also willed by his last will ande
testamente certeyne other somes of money amountinge to the some of
fourscore pounds to be employed and bestowed by the saide paryshoners of
Kildewicke to buy certayne mylche kyne to the numbere of eight scoore
whiche said kyne to the numbere afforseide were bought by the saide
paryshoners accordingle **And** the saide John Rycroft by his last will ande
testamente willed ande devysed that the some of thirte shillinge parcell of the
profette comynge ande growinge yearely of the saide Kyne shulde be
bestowed upon the findinge ande mayntenance of a certeyne obyt to be kepte
yearely in the saide paryshe church of Kildewycke mentioned in the saide
bill of Compleynte for ever, whiche saide obyt haith been for the moste
parte duringe the space of xv years nowe last paste comonlye kepte ande
maintained accordingle within the paryshe church afforsaide **And**
furthermore one Nycholas Gybson of Londone grocer deceased in
accomplishement of the intente ande last will of the saide John Rycrofte did
also delyver to the sayde paryshoners of the paryshe afforsaide the sume of
foure score poundes of good ande lawfull money of Englande by him to them
devysed upon the delyvery whereof the saide Gybsone did take certeyne of
the parysheoners afforsaide bounde to the saide Nicholas Gybsone for to buy
likewise mylche Kyne withe the saide sume and to imploye the proffitte of

the saide stocke of Kyne and for the findinge of a preste to singe ande serve within the paryshe church afforsaide for ever wherewithe the saide parysheoners boughte eight score kyne more, whiche saide nombre of Kyne have been also for the moste parte by the space of xv yeares now last past comonlye bestowed and letten to certyne of the parysheoners of the saide paryshe after the rate off viijd for every cowe by the yeare **And** furthermorethe parysheoners afforsayde for the most part of the sayde time of xv yeares before the makinge of the laite Estatute whereby Colleges ande Chauntreys and others were given to ye Kinge Maiesties have bestowed ande employed the some of sexe pounce thirtene shillinge ande fourepence being parcell of the saide proffette growinge ande comynge of the saide stoke of Kyne for and towards findinge a preyste to singe and serve in the paryshe church afforesayde **And** for all the residue of the proffette growinge ande arysinge of the stoke and stoore afforsayde other than the saide thirtie shillinge payde for the maintenynge of the obit in forme afforsaide the saide parysheoners have from tyme to tyme frome the firste delyvere thereof to their custodie ande possession used occupied and employed the same at their own will ande pleasure ande accordinge to their discreyscions Without that yt the said Surveyor named in the saide bill did unjustly without law equytie or Justice survey the said kyne or wrongfullie did will the said compleynante to answeere the premysses to the Kinge Maiesties or profite of yt **And** withoute yt there is anythinge else conteyned in the said bill of compleynthe here not aunsered confessed avowed or travarsed that is true.

Bibliography: *Endowed Charities*, Vol.II, pages 491 and 492.
A note on Rycroft's Charity says: -
"see John Hindles for full account, page 151";
a copy of this was in the vestry of Kildwick church in 1889.