

## **E-mail from Deb Walker 0.02.2003**

Hello John

I have just been looking at your Hebblethwaite website. I downloaded the two pedigree charts which you had posted there (donated by a fellow researcher in Germany I think) because I am descended from the Hebblethwaites of Mirfield.

I have to say that whilst I can think of nothing better than to be descended from the Hebblethwaites of Sedbergh I am afraid that I don't believe that John Hebblethwaite of Mirfield born circa 1725 has got any connection with them. You see John was actually baptised in Mirfield on 26th Jan 1724 under the surname HEBLET.

Many of the early Hebblethwaites in Mirfield were recorded as Heblet and the spelling of the surname continues to vary right up to the early 1800s when it became standardised on Hebblethwaite. I have no idea why this was, but I have always considered it to be something to do with the mysteries of the broad west yorks dialect. Anyway, I have the will of my ancestor John who died in 1787 and in it he quite clearly lists his family.... Ann his wife (formerly Lee), John, his son (my ancestor), Thomas his son (the gentleman listed on the tree on your site born 1746) and two daughters Elizabeth (known as Betty) and Mary.

There is a great deal of evidence to support the Heblet / Hebblethwaite situation - for example Mary (above) was baptised as Mary Heblet, but when she married John Wright in 1782 she was Hebblethwaite. Also, and perhaps more conclusively, Samuel baptised in 1773 the son of Thomas "Hebblethwaite" 1746-1818 (above) was actually baptised under the spelling HEBLET.

I don't wish to be a spoilsport and as I said above, I would LOVE to able to claim a pedigree going back to the 1400s but alas it ain't so. I have attached a MS Word text file which more or less summarises the Hebblethwaite of Mirfield situation, and wonder if you would be kind enough to pass it on to your source. I am more than happy to share any Hebblethwaite / Heblet data I have with yourself or your source in Germany.

Very best wishes

Deb Walker  
Dewsbury  
West Yorks

## **From HEBLET to HEBBLETHWAITE**

### **The story of the Hebblethwaite family in Mirfield**

The surname HEBBLETHWAITE is derived from a combination of two North Country dialect words; 'Hebble' meaning 'plank bridge' and 'thwait' from the Old Norse 'Thveit' meaning a woodland clearing; hence 'HEBBLETHWAITE' roughly translated means 'a clearing near a plank bridge'. It takes the form of a whole variety of peculiar spellings, For example;- Heblthwait, Hebblewait, Ebyllthwayte, Hebylthewet, Hobblewite, Hepplethwaite, Heblethwayte, and a great many more, but most of these can be probably be explained by poor pronunciation, illiteracy and the unreliable spelling standards of the past.

HEBBLETHWAITE is an essentially Yorkshire surname, particularly prolific in the Halifax area, but which probably originated from the small village near Sedbergh which bears it's name. Several HEBBLETHWAITE families can be traced back to this area and HEBBLETHWAITE HALL at Sedbergh is referred to in an indenture of 12th May 1502 which refers to the sale for an amount of £1,200, by Edward Middleton and James Heyber, to Sir Richard Shuttleworth of Lancashire, Knight of "their capitall messuage or manor house called Heblethwayte..... and also one water cornemyne there called Hablethwayt Myll with all stremes dames floddes watercourses pounds fyshinge soyte sute and suken...." (reproduced courtesy of the Sedbergh Society). A family of HEBBLETHWAITEs were amongst the first Quakers in the neighbouring village of Dent.

The HEBBLETHWAITE connection for our family is, of course, through Mary-Ann HEBBLETHWAITE, who married Alan Holt at Mirfield Parish Church in April 1879. Starting from this point I began to trace her ancestry backwards and, after achieving some initial success, the trail appeared to dry up with a baptism of a John HEBBLETHWAITE son of John, on 16th May 1765. Prior to this date the surname HEBBLETHWAITE vanishes completely from the Mirfield Parish Registers. Originally my inclination was to accept this fact at face value and to assume that it was an indication that the family had relocated from another part of the region.

Some months later I was browsing through my IGI extracts for HEBBLETHWAITE (the International Genealogical Index; a remarkable index produced by the Mormon Church containing millions of baptisms and burials arranged under Counties and Surnames) when, quite by chance, I came across some references to the surname HEBLET at Mirfield, which by sheer good fortune, just happened to be included on the first page of HEBBLETHWAITE extracts. Out of curiosity I gave them a closer examination and found that a pattern emerged showing a family of HEBLETs dating from 1723 and disappearing after 1760, five years before my earliest HEBBLETHWAITE date. I was rather intrigued and began to wonder if there was a possibility that the HEBLETs and the HEBBLETHWAITEs were one and the same family.

This brings us back round to the hazy subject of pronunciation and spelling. With our modern diction we are inclined to pronounce HEBBLETHWAITE in all of it's three syllables "Hebb-le-thwaite", but if one considers the idiosyncrasies of the Yorkshire dialect regarding the village of Slaithwaite, which is invariably called "Slawwit" or "Slathwait" by locals, one can perhaps, with a little imagination, perceive that HEBBLETHWAITE could originally have been pronounced 'Hebblet', 'Heblet' or 'Hebbleat'. I was very cautious about this theory in the beginning, but further investigations have revealed that this is exactly what happened and that our HEBBLETHWAITEs appeared in a variety of spellings as the fancy took them, often depending upon whether they actually signed their own names or if they were written down by someone else. Indeed the spelling did not become standardised until at least the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Mirfield Parish Registers record a marriage on Monday 15th October 1723 between Thomas HEBLET of Halifax and Sarah THORNTON of Mirfield, conducted by the Rev. Thomas Hardy. (this Sarah Thornton was baptised on Saturday 30th February 1695, the daughter of Peter Thornton. The Thorntons were quite a notable Mirfield family and it is possible to trace Sarah's ancestry back to the early 1600s).

I have not, as yet, managed to track down the exact origins of our Thomas of Halifax, although the PR for Elland does record on 28th April 1695 the baptism of Thomas, son of Thomas Hebblethaite of Rishworth, so perhaps this is our man. However, there have been HEBLET and HEBBLETHWAITE families living in Halifax since the 1500s, the earliest reference being Gilbert son of Thomas Hebblethwaite, baptised on 25 April 1539 and marrying Isabell Threpland in 1573. Not knowing exactly where in Halifax our Thomas came from proves to be a considerable obstacle at the current time.

In any event, our newlyweds, Thomas & Sarah HEBLET seem to have remained in the Mirfield area, at least initially, because their son, John, was baptised on Saturday 26th January the following year which, confusingly is still 1723.

The explanation for this is that England continued to use the 'Julian' Calendar up to 1751, meaning that the New Year commenced on March 25th. By 1751 the Julian Calendar was 11 days out of step and in that year it was decreed by Act of Parliament that the New Year should begin on 1st January as it does now. Thus, the year 1750 began on 25th March 1750 and ended on 24th March 1750/51 and 1751 commenced on 25th March 1751 and ended on 31st December 1751. Therefore 1752 was the first year that commenced correctly on 1st January. This move was for a time very unpopular with the people, who felt that they had somehow been cheated, leading to cries of 'give us back our 11 days'.

Thomas & Sarah HEBLET apparently had no more children baptised at Mirfield Parish Church, and there are no subsequent references to either of them in the PR. It seems likely that they relocated to the Halifax area and that Thomas died prematurely. An Administration was granted to a Sarah Heblat the widow of Thomas of Rishworth, Halifax, who died in 1734. I have so far been unable to establish what exactly became of Sarah; but it is likely that she remarried. However, her son, John, retained his links with both Mirfield and the Thornton family and was subsequently married at Mirfield on Thursday 26th December 1745, to Ann LEE, baptised in 1727, the daughter of Aaron Lee.

Although we know very little about John & Ann's life, we do know that John HEBLET took a close interest in the running of the Parish. His signature is found on many pages of the Town Record Book (1718-1795) and in 1749 he, and Richard Wheatley were responsible for auditing the Church accounts. The Town Record Book also tell us us that Abraham Hemmingway and John Heblat were Overseers For The Poor in the year of 1768, when John was also a Churchwarden. The surname HEBLET or HEBBLETHWAITE appears regularly in the Vestry Minutes up to and after 1806 and Samuel also is mentioned, but the HEBLET spelling still occurs from time to time as late as the 1820s.

Thankfully, John's considerable involvement with the church did not prevent him from raising a considerable family. He and Ann produced at least five children; Thomas in 1746, John born & died in 1747, Susanna in 1748, Betty in 1751 and Mary in 1760. My ancestor, John HEBBLETHWAITE, baptised in 1765 was their last child.

John Heblat died on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1787, his widow Ann survived him by over two decades, dying in March 1809. Interestingly, we can learn a considerable amount about John & his family from his will dated 4th July 1786, but mysteriously not proved until April 1818. He is described as a 'Clothier' of 'Hopton' (unfortunately, it doesn't tell us exactly where in Hopton!) and he leaves his house, tenement and farm to his younger son John (a tenement is that in law which is permanently held by a tenant). Ann, his widow, is to inhabit the farm and receive an annuity of £5pa and all the *'bedstocks, bed and bedding'*. His elder son Thomas is to receive a legacy of 10 shillings 'over and above what he had already received'. His daughter Elizabeth, the wife of William Mallinson was to receive £1 10 shillings and his other daughter Mary, the wife of John Wright, was to receive £1 per annum for 10 years, with the stipulation that if she died the payments will continue for that term towards the *'support and maintenance of her children'*.

It is difficult to say exactly when the HEBBLETHWAITEs took up residence at Sheep Ings, but certainly, they were already there by 1793, because a Church Pew Survey, taken on Wednesday 30th October that year lists the HEBBLETHWAITEs of Sheep Ings as owning and occupying a pew in Row 6, in the middle class, between the aisles.

Sheep Ings itself is a very old property and reference to it occurs as early as 1560 in the records of Hopton Manor where it is spelled 'Shepe Ynge'. In the early 1600s Thomas Hepworth lived there with his family, and this is first mentioned in the Parish Register in July 1605

*"Jane, dau of Tho Hepworth of Shepeinges was christened ye xivth day"*.

In 1720, the Whitley Beaumont Estates Survey Map describes it as a property of 15 acres, 1 rod and 2 perches, rented by Jeremiah Oxley for £10 6d per annum.

Our own John HEBBLETHWAITE (born in 1765) married Elizabeth Sheard at Mirfield Parish Church on Monday 13th April 1795. The wedding was conducted by Licence rather than Banns. Elizabeth was the daughter of Abraham Sheard, the Parish Clerk, and she had been baptised on 24 September 1763. I have obtained an extract of the Marriage Allegation and Bond from the Borthwick Institute at York, but the information therein was not especially revealing in this case; John Hebblethwaite, a clothier of Mirfield, and Elizabeth Sheard of Mirfield to be married at the Parish Church. Bond dated

9th April 1795. The Bondsman was William Roebuck, another Clothier of Thornhill. Both Bride and Groom stated that they were 'over 21'.

They certainly were. Working backwards from information provided by the Census, Age at Death and Baptism records, we know that, at the time of their marriage, John was about 30 and Elizabeth about 32, which were quite 'great' ages for a couple in those days. However, the Bride was certainly pregnant at the time of marriage (this might explain the use of a Licence rather than Banns) as, on the 10th August that year we find the baptism record of their first son, Abraham (named, no doubt, after Elizabeth's father). John and Elizabeth went on to have a further seven babies, ending with my Great-Great Grandfather, Sidney, born in 1809 and baptised on the 28th May. At the time of his birth his mother would have been about 46 - so she did very well for a late starter!

John HEBBLETHWAITE died on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1835 and left the Sheep Ings property equally divided between his two surviving sons John and Sidney, with a detailed proviso about the procedure which had to occur if either one wished to relinquish his share of the property. His two surviving daughters Mary the wife of John Haworth and Eliza the wife of Thomas Whitehead were both left a sum of £10. The will instructed that his widow Elizabeth was to continue to enjoy a comfortable home at Sheep Ings and that his family were to provide her with every possible comfort during the '*remnant of her days*'. This will is dated 4 Nov 1835 and was proved on 29 Jan 1836. Elizabeth survived her husband for another decade and died on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1846. Interestingly John & Elizabeth were interred with his parents at Mirfield Parish Church and on the tombstone all four are described as HEBLET not Hebblethwaite.

It would appear that the farming life was not for Sidney's elder brother John and when he eventually married Charlotte Pickersgill in 1843 he was subsequently to become the Landlord of the Shepley Arms, so perhaps he was not particularly interested in farming as a career. The couple had no children and Charlotte died in 1857, with John following her some two years later. However, in the intervening period he remarried, his bride being a lady called Martha Marsden, a spinster of 'full age' living at Royds House, Mirfield, but formerly of Kirkburton. The wedding took place in September 1858. In his will, John leaves his brother Sidney '*the share and interest in the land and buildings at Hopton for which I have already received the money and which I formerly owned and was possessed of one half*'. His new wife Martha is given £100 and enough furniture and effects to fill two rooms and the rest of his goods and chattles are to be divided equally amongst his 12 nieces and nephews who are all individually named.

Another useful reference to our Hebblethwaites is found on the 1841 Census, taken on the 6th June that year, which gives us the following information;-

At Lower Sheep Ings;

John HEBBLETHWAITE, Head, aged 35, Clothier  
Sidney HEBBLETHWAITE, Brother, aged 30, Farmer  
Elizabeth HEBBLETHWAITE, Mother, aged 75.

The ages given here can lead to confusion. For some reason, on the 1841 Census, the age of adults was officially supposed to be rounded down to the nearest five years, although children under 15 were usually correctly aged (although up until 1911, approximately 6% of all children under the age of 1 years were omitted from returns). As I have said before, one also has to bear in mind that in an age of predominant illiteracy, details were generally recounted to enumerators over the doorstep and thus scribbled down, leading to a great deal of mis-information and mis-representation.

The first official Census was taken in 1801, and thereafter every 10 years. However, up until 1841 they were purely numerical, that is to say that individual names were not required. However, some industrious enumerators took it upon themselves to make up their own lists of households and these sometimes turn up in the Parish Records held by County Record Offices. Generally speaking, therefore, the Census of 1841 is the first useful information of this kind which is available, as are the successive Censuses of 1851, 1861, and so forth up until 1891. Census information only becomes publicly available after 100 years, although it is possible to obtain information from more recent Censuses by written application to St Catherine's House in London. However, there is a quite considerable charge for this service and you would be required to prove that you were related to the person or persons about whom you were enquiring.

During the 1840's Sidney HEBBLETHWAITE began courting a local girl by the name of Anne FIRTH. Anne was the

daughter of Valentine Firth who was a Stone Mason living in the Northorpe area. Anne was baptised at Mirfield PC on Sunday 6th June 1824 and was, therefore, some 15 years younger than Sidney. At the time of their courtship she was probably in her early 20's and he in his mid 30's. I have a feeling that Sidney's mother Elizabeth did not approve of this relationship, perhaps it was the age difference, although it was socially acceptable for the man to be considerably older than the woman; the other way round would have been really shocking!! In any event, young Anne became pregnant and gave birth to a little girl, on 31st March 1846, who was christened Elizabeth HEBBLETHWAITE Firth. Some two months or so later, Sidney's mother died and was buried on 5th June, and 20 days thereafter Sidney and Anne were married at the Parish Church by the Rev. Ralph Maude. This does smack rather of 'unseemly haste' after a death. However, if the only obstacle (in the form of his Mother) was out of their way, the young couple would have been understandably keen to regularise their relationship.

Whatever the reasons, the union seems to have been a successful one, as they proceeded to have some nine children, four boys and five girls (including twins) and ending with a son, John-Arthur, who was born in 1865.

Sadly, we have little information about the family's daily life or personal & business affairs, and we must turn again to the Census for any clues. The one taken on the evening of the 30/31st March 1851 tells us that Sidney and his young family are living at Beck and that he is a farmer of 11 acres. The couple have three young children and the smallest is John who is 10 months old. Sadly, this little boy died in the September of the following year.

Of Sidney's nine children, six eventually married, at least four of these going on to have children of their own.

Mary-Ann we know about, and also Fanny her sister, who both married the same man, Alan HOLT.

Abraham HEBBLETHWAITE, married a lady called Harriett (surname currently unknown) in 1889 and had five children between 1892 and 1904, all baptised at Mirfield Parish Church.

The following extract from "One More Time - Old Mirfield Days & Ways" by F G Pilling, refers to Abraham HEBBLETHWAITE:-

*".....I think that the oldest family in Hopton, and probably Mirfield - The Hebblethwaites - would be connected with the coke producing business their land adjoined. They were good sound people and their Sheep Ings Farm, still intact, is a little oasis in the midst of change. All my life it has been a hive of agricultural industry, a bid stack yard at harvest time, a picture of trim stacks, properly thatched, and at threshing time, buzzing for a week with the sound of Hamshires threshing machine. I can see and hear it all now, the men carrying the full bags of corn to the granary, another son building a stack with the newly threshed bats of straw. The boss himself, Abraham Hebblethwaite, seeing that all was right. He was the absolute embodiment and example of the yeoman as you would picture him, a giant of a fellow in all ways. He was tall, well built, wore a good suit always, and a blue and white spotted stock, a good white collar and all crowned by a box hat. He did not carry a stick, as any little drover would, he carried a long staff and walked up the middle of the lane, a bit of an autocrat, not much to say, and most of all a gentleman, measured not by today's 'Gold Standard', but by the bit of good breeding that showed through as it did in all the good horses and cattle that he kept....."*

William HEBBLETHWAITE, born in 1851 married Hannah Sykes and had a short, rather tragic life. William & Hannah lived on Lower Hopton and he was a Warehouseman. They had two children who died in infancy; Sidney Arthur 1881-1883, and Annis who was born and died in 1884. In August 1886 William himself died at the early age of 34. Hannah returned to live with her family in Huddersfield, but only survived him for three more years, dying in 1889, aged 35. They are both buried at Mirfield Parish Church.

Caroline or Carrie HEBBLETHWAITE (Fanny's twin sister) was married to Thomas Firth in 1890, a distant cousin on her mother's side, this couple had two sons.

John Arthur HEBBLETHWAITE, who became a Grocer, was married on 26 September 1892 at St Paul's Parish Church, Shepley, to a young lady called Annie Matthews. The couple set up home in Shepley, but sadly John-Arthur died in 1898 at the early age of 33.

Anne HEBBLETHWAITE (nee FIRTH) died in 1888, aged 64 and her husband Sidney died in the March of the

following year, aged 80. They are both buried at Mirfield Parish Church.

I have a copy of Sidney's will, made in November 1888. All his children are mentioned by name, with the following reference to his eldest child, Elizabeth;-

*"I give to my daughter Elizabeth all the household furniture, plate, linen, china and fruits in the middle room and bedroom over it for her own use absolutely and also the use of the middle room and bedroom or the cottage now occupied by Rachel Brown for the term of her natural life and at her death, the cottage shall revert to my son Abraham..."*

This Elizabeth, who never married, pursued a quiet spinsterly career as a Dressmaker until her death on 15th November 1927, aged 81. Her brother Abraham survived her by 7 days.

Little is known of Annis HEBBLETHWAITE's life, but according to the 1871 Census she is living at Esholt Place in Mirfield, aged 14, and working as a domestic servant to Thomas & Alice Howarth & their one year old child John. It turns out that this Thomas was actually her 29 year old cousin.

That draws our HEBBLETHWAITE story to a close. However, there are also many descendants through Thomas, the eldest son of John HEBLET & Ann Lee, which have spread from Mirfield to many parts of the UK and as far as America - the youngest descendant on that branch being little Delton Clagget of Alaska USA, born in 1992. There follows a little detail about this branch of the family (you will need to look at the pedigree chart to understand the following);-

David HEBBLETHWAITE (1798-1833), married to Hannah HIRST, was a Maltster & Woolstapler of Turnpike Side in Mirfield. He died suddenly in his early 30s, leaving no will, and administration was granted to his widow. His estate at October 1850 was valued at under £300. However, when Hannah subsequently died an inventory of her personal property and effects, including shares and a considerable insurance policy totalled a value of just under £4,000. Their eldest son, Joseph Hirst HEBBLETHWAITE\*\* was granted administration of the estate together with his three sisters and youngest brother George (a minor at the time). The properties included a cottage and building ground at Sheepridge and some mortgaged cottages at Shelley. All in all, it took David's family a period of over 20 years to sort out his estate.

\*\*This Joseph Hirst HEBBLETHWAITE of West Royd was responsible for raising money for the installation of a new Organ at Christchurch Battyeford, and was voluntary organist there for 13 years until his death in 1864.

John HEBBLETHWAITE (1803-1853) who married Ann Ranson, lived a 'Brickhouse' and in 1851 is listed as a Maltster & Farmer of 87 acres employing 12 men. John & Ann and two of their children are buried at Mirfield Parish Church together with John's parents Samuel (1773-1824) & Rachel (1767-1834) HEBBLETHWAITE.

Thomas HEBBLETHWAITE (1807-1866) who married Maria Briggs, and had several children baptised at Wakefield (Maria's home town) lived on Easthorpe Lane and was a Maltster.

George HEBBLETHWAITE (1809-1873) lived at Lee Green and Water Hall on Knowle and is listed as a Maltster & Farmer in 1851 of 13 acres, employing 3. According to the Return of Owners of Land in the West Riding 1873 he actually owned just over 4 acres.

George Hirst HEBBLETHWAITE (b.1832) and the son of the above mentioned David, was a prosperous businessman, living at Knowl Villas, West Royd and pursuing the trades of Wool Merchant, Cotton Merchant and Driving Belt Manufacturer, variously. His wife, Sarah Elizabeth Watts, came from Yeoville.

Benjamin Briggs HEBBLETHWAITE, (son of Thomas & Maria Briggs) was also a Maltster and married Sarah Anne Whitely at Mirfield Parish Church on 03 Dec 1857. They had two children, David & Louisa, in 1860 and 1862 respectively.