

Hope in the 1850's

5. Hope Marsh Smithy

Local residents may remember Cyril Wainwright's smithy on Castleton Road which stood just beyond the gates of the telephone exchange. It was demolished in the 1960's as part of a road widening scheme, but it was thought to be one of the oldest buildings in the village.

In 1851 it would have been the last building before the road crossed the Hope marshes to Castleton. It wasn't a smithy then but was described as a weaving shed and John Robinson, a weaver of Edale Road, may have worked there. It is thought that the cloth would have been sacking for agricultural purposes.

Earlier title deeds described it as a workshop known as the Village School in Marsh Lane. This was possibly the building in which Francis Langton taught in 1559 before the erection of a new school in School Lane. Another use ascribed to it was as a toll bar cottage on the toll road to Castleton. Unfortunately there are no records to prove the accuracy of these assertions, just folk memory which often contains more than a grain of truth.



It became a smithy sometime around 1870 when Joseph Wainwright moved there from Castleton. His son George and grandson Cyril later carried on the business. Gordon Randles remembers



hurrying from school to help Cyril Wainwright blow the bellows to ensure the metal ring for a new wheel was glowing white hot and then dousing the wheel with water to shrink the iron tyre into place. Horses were shod there and it was an exciting place for local schoolchildren to congregate. The smithy harks back to an age when horses and carts were of primary importance in an agricultural community and the wainwright or cartwright was an essential part of the village.

Ann Price Photos from Jane Bramwell's collection, HHS photo archive.