

William Douglas died 1810

William was known as Owd Bill but looking at the character of the man one would think that was not what you would call him his face He was also known as Black Douglas, a much disliked man, and whose grave is long gone as he was such a hate figure it was desecrated .Reading accounts of William it is hard to say what was attractive about him, if anything at all, although he did end up with a large bank balance..... William married but how he met his future wife Mary Hargreaves isn't known but they wed in Manchester Cathedral 6th July 1769,

By the time of his marriage William was it seems of Manchester other researchers are struggling with him as he was married and lived n Manchester they think he must be from there and are stuck because he wasn't born in the County.

In the 1770s William was a fustian merchant of St Ann's square though where he actually lived is not known. William appears in Raffalds Manchester directory of 1772 By 1799 he has a warehouse on Birch Lane near Church Street /High Street Manchester and he is advertising in the Manchester Mercury of that year regarding the theft of a bale of pernambuco cotton weighing 6 pounds Info needed.

William married Mary Hargreaves who was the daughter George Hargreaves and Mary Marsden who in turn was a probable child of James Marsden of Hoddlesden who died leaving a wife Mary nee Rothell whom he had married in 1628 and two girls Mary and Ann. James Marsden died aged 47 in 1733 and he had been a governor of Blackburn Grammar school. . He did have two boys who died in his lifetime in 1717 so William had picked himself an heiress though what money and property she brought to the union ... no idea.

George Hargreaves and Mary Marsden were married at Over Darwen 22nd June 1745 and they can then be found producing children in Haslingden with baptisms at St James.

Mary possibly March 1746 the register is rather unclear apparently her father is described as a mercer. Married Wiliam Douglas [note this is different here to what you have got]

Marsden bap 14th Feb 1748/9 father Gent

Elizabeth bap 25th Jan 1750/1 father described as Gent died in infancy buried St James 5th March 1750/1 father a Gent is in register.

George bap 18th Jan 1774 father described as Mercer married Mary Hart and could have been of Hoddlesden . [

John bap Aug 1755 said to have died Manchester in 1797 not buried Manchester Cathedral

Oliver bap 14th May 1754 entered Manchester grammar school 9th Jan 1764 and in the footnotes he is said to be the son of George Hargreaves shopkeeper of Haslingden deceased Oliver may have stayed on in Manchester as there is a churchwarden by the same name in 1802 He may also have moved on to Derby as buried at St Michaels Derby. is Martha described as second daughter of Oliver Hargreaves of Manchester aged 20 buried 25th Dec 1821 Oliver possibly married Martha Mellor at St Peters Bolton in 1797 There is a Oliver Hargreaves Gent living at church Street Haslingden in 1828 , Could he be some relation as Oliver is not a particularly usual name in general in this area

Said son James born July 1752 missing in the registers of St James, in fact no suitable James at all

Alice bap 14th Feb 1758 married Edward Chew

Said son Plenry ought to be Henry and true to form Henry bap St James 21st Oct 1756 died Haslingden in 1828 Henry married Jenny Holt of Bridge end though wither this the one in Glamorgan is another matter .

The above George Hargreaves Gent of Haslingden died on 14th Oct 1758 aged 42 buried at St James Haslingden and he was buried St James on the 16th Mary his wife said to have died aged 75 6th Jan 1796 .The death of George fits with the footnotes to the effect that Olivers father was dead on his entry to Manchester Grammar

Once back in Manchester Douglas production began

Maria bap St Ann Manchester 11th May 1772 died aged 15 years and 7 months and was buried 24th Nov 1787 at St Thomas Pendleton which at the time was a chapel of ease set up in 1767 and not consecrated until 1776 and which is no longer it being replaced in 1831 with a new church dedicated to St Thomas. Maria died of consumption

Sophia died aged 19 buried 18th April 1795 St Thomas also died of consumption

Apia bap St Marys Manchester 17th May 1773 nothing further known but said to have died young

Charlotte bap St Marys Manchester 28th Oct 1774 she seems to turn up as a spinster of Leaf square Pendleton in the 1820s there is a an 1837 marriage of a Charlotte in Manchester Cathedral but can't say it is this one

John bap 17th Sep 1770 Stt Ann Manchester and Williams's heir

Mary, wife of William, was also buried at St Thomas 3rd of Oct 1788 aged 42 she also died of consumption.

There is apparently a plaque to the memory of William Douglas in St Thomas Church in an upper gallery but it is not known what it says or records. William was buried in the same chapel as his wife and two daughters, some sources say three, so it would be Aphia but can't find her William buried 2nd Feb 1810 Also buried as of the Old Hal Pendleton was Alice Smith Jan in 1810 she died only a few days apart from William also with consumption This does beg the question did William also die of the disease but the register is silent as to what killed him

Many of the places associated with William Douglas are said to exhibit paranormal activity. Of course the theory is that this is due to the suffering he must have caused Walter Greenwood writes about Salford life and the gist of what he says is He was a man who never did a kind act in his life His child labour worked from dawn until dusk like slaves. If they should run away they were returned chained and fettered and made to sleep chained the girls were treated to the grossest indecencies [interpret this how you will] and the boys were whipped and beaten if not working hard enough. Some committed suicide and others who did survive were deformed Williams factory was call the cripple factory..... It was also called the white slave factory

William's brother may have been the Thomas Douglas who was a bleacher near the Spaw in Salford. The Spaw was the local interpretation of the word spa due to their being a natural pool of very good clear cold water there in which bathing took place. It was conveniently situated below a pub which was built over it. Thomas at one point offered 20 guineas for the return of velvet cloth that had been stolen from his croft which was out to dry. An apparently a common problem for the bleachers working in Salford at the time.

William went on to live at Old Hall Pendleton nearby to his factory.

William crops up in articles etc about cotton manufacture and seems reasonably active in his field. He was in 1785 warning of the deeds of Adam Douglas [related or not don't know] who seemed to like and make living from poaching employees and getting them to other mills in areas where there was a shortage of labour. William and John, his son, even put adverts in the Manchester Mercury trying to locate missing articulated workers most likely who could not stand the conditions any longer and who had absconded.

There is no direct evidence that William was engaging as a banker as such though he may have got the idea in his head from the following. In the 1790s he approached the Bank of England wanting them to guarantee a bank in Manchester called James Barker and co. Two of his business associates were also involved in banking in Stockport which and this was having a rocky time in the 1790s.

In 1800 he is chairing a meeting in Spencers Tavern Manchester of merchant's manufacturers etc to consider further what they had discussed previously at The Bulls Head in relation to the export of cotton and duty thereon.

The Manchester Mercury of 6th Feb 1810 carries his obituaryWilliam Douglas of Old Hall Pendleton... he bore a long illness with the greatest fortitude and resignation his last moments were tranquil and he expired without a struggle the same day. There may be more about him in that obituary.