

MATTHEW WADESON OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES
1749 – 1833
LEAD AND SHIPPING AGENT

Introduction

The name Matthew Wadeson keeps cropping up in unexpected places when reading local history books about the town of Stockton-on-Tees in County Durham. He was involved in many aspects of the business, industrial and social scenes being variously described as a flax merchant, lead and shipping agent, auctioneer, land owner, yeoman, Freemason, and a self-made man. Without doubt he was a committee man. He was concerned to see the town grow and the port facilities improve which would bring greater prosperity for the town, and its inhabitants, said to be about 7,800 at the time of the cholera outbreak in 1832.¹ He was involved in the cut through the River Tees and later the decision to create a railway from Darlington to Stockton. This story of one man's contributions to Stockton will not go into great detail about lead mining, the river, or the start of the railways, as these subjects have been well written up already. However it is interesting to put together some perhaps lesser known stories from many aspects of his life which illustrate what was happening in Stockton in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Family Connections

Matthew was the eldest son of William Wadeson and Margaret (nee Rigg) and was baptised on 26 October 1749 at All Saints parish church in Northallerton.² His younger brother Christopher Wadeson (born 1751) was Locker at the Customs House in Stockton in charge of the locked up warehouse³; his sister Elizabeth (born 1754) married John Watson (born 1749), a weaver and glover in Northallerton, and they had ten children several of whom died as infants. In contrast, Matthew remained a bachelor, but he took a great interest in his nephew William Watson (born 1784) who left Northallerton to start his career as a flax merchant in Stockton prior to his marriage to Caroline Cummins native of Weyhill, Hampshire, at St Thomas Stockton in 1809⁴. (A family tree is on page 13.)

It would appear that Matthew received a good education. He was a great letter writer, had a good command of the English language, and was diligent enough to keep copies of his correspondence.⁵ He was a subscriber to the Unitarian Chapel 1808-1814 along with other merchants and ships' captains.⁶ In 1829 when John Brewster published *The Parochial History and Antiquities of Stockton* he expressed 'grateful thanks and acknowledgements for his contributions to the work' to Mr Matthew Wadeson, amongst others.⁷

Flax Merchant

Trade directories list him in 1798 as a flax dresser and lead agent in Stockton⁸; the 1807 Yorkshire Poll as a gentleman with a freehold in Hemlington⁹; in 1811 Holden's directory as a lead agent¹⁰; Pigot's directories of 1828 & 1830 as lead agent of St Ann's Stockton¹¹, and he appears in Brewster's List of the Boroughholders in Stockton.¹²

In the late 1790s there were other flax merchants in Stockton: John Allison, flax merchant and canvas manufacturer; James Crowe, iron merchant and canvas manufacturer; Henry Richardson, iron and hemp merchant and flax dresser.¹³

Matthew encouraged his nephew William Watson to join him in Stockton some time before William's marriage to Caroline Cummins in 1809.¹⁴ In 1827 William was Chief Constable for Stockton Ward, Adjuster of Weights and Measures and a flax merchant living in Finkle Street.¹⁵ With William to run the flax business in warehouses on the quayside, Matthew concentrated more on shipping lead.

Lead and Shipping Agent

Matthew Wadeson's work as a Lead and Shipping Agent has been well summarised in *A Dales Heritage*¹⁶. Two of his letter books dated 5 January 1792 to 8 September 1808 were bought and transcribed by Marie Hartley and Joan Ingleby and thanks are due to them for their hard work¹⁷. The originals are on microfilm at North Yorkshire Record Office but are very difficult to read¹⁸. Sincere thanks were expressed to Marie Hartley and information was exchanged in 2001¹⁹. The following is based upon her work.

Matthew had been connected with the lead trade since the 1770s and was well respected both for his integrity and for his knowledge of the mines. He was agent for the Pomfret/Denys family, proprietors of the AD mines in Swaledale. In 1794 he was appointed steward to Sir Charles Turner of Kirkleatham, near Redcar, part owner of the CB mines in Arkengarthdale. Occasionally he wrote to Lord Darlington of Raby Castle, whose mines in Teesdale at one stage came third in importance to the great AD and CB mines, the source of most of the lead shipped from Stockton. He was a partner in the Fell End mines in Arkengarthdale and attended pay days. Matthew had shares in the brig *Satisfaction* and probably some other ships.



Swaledale lead mines. Photo by Author 2007

His main concerns were the market price of lead and its safe despatch on sailing ships mostly to London but also to Hull, Newcastle, and to Dutch and German ports. In

1792 the price of lead was £20 a fother; then depressed by the French war it fell, only to rise in 1795 with rumours of peace. In 1805 he was 'staggered at the price' of £32 which later rose to £40, until early in 1806 it slowly began to decline. The inflated price 'made all men miners wherever the metal can be won' and he wished 'Mine adventurers always to receive the utmost that can be obtained from his hazardous and sometimes hard earned product'. Owing to Napoleon's blockade of Continental and Russian ports and the start of the Peninsular war the value of lead fell to £23. However when the letters finish in September 1808 trade was brisk again and the price had risen to £35 a fother. One of Matthew's many anxieties was the effect of wintry weather; snow on roads and wharves; and the river at times was ice bound. In 1795 the winter was 'more severe than any I remember. . It is again come Easterly and looks stormy as ever the *Joseph & William* is laying in the mouth of our river and the *Hannah* (later damaged by ice) cannot proceed.' In the 1801/2 winter 'The frost having for a week here lock'd up our River' and in June 1805 he wrote 'The weather has been for some time so boisterous and bad, no vessels dared to venture out.'

As well as lead his shipments also included blue mill stones from Rotterdam (perhaps for his nephew's son Frederick Watson a corn miller at Portrack), wine and beer, bales of stockings knitted in Swaledale and once 'a bell of good tone which I got very reasonable from a Capt trading to Sweden'. Once three thieves attacked the wharf, and pigs of iron were stolen in London and in 1793 lead was being filched en route from the mines so he advised Peter Denys 'that a handbill offering a reward of twelve, fifteen or twenty guineas for apprehending the thief be printed and pasted all along the road'.

Marie Hartley concluded 'He was a very worthy man to be admired for his integrity and sympathy for the 'Poor Miners'.

Social Concerns

It would appear that Matthew Wadeson was a generous man both with his time and his money. In 1794 he sent a cured Tees salmon to Walkers Maltby & Company and wrote 'They are accounted very nice either Braised or Boiled. I hope yours will be found so, it was a Choice Fish'²⁰. Among the list of Subscriptions for the Relief of the Poor Residents in Stockton in 1812 was listed Matthew Wadeson who gave five pounds²¹. In 1817 the Poor Relief Book for Stockton lists him as owner and occupier of premises in Mason's Court and also owner of premises at St Ann's Hill²².

Stockton Dispensary

Living conditions for the poor in Stockton in the 18th century and their need for medical help were a cause of concern to many and on 5th October 1789 a committee met 'to attempt to establish a Dispensary to provide medical Assistance to the Sick Poor of the town and Neighbourhood'²³. In 1790 it opened at the Almshouses on the High Street. Due to a lack of subscriptions it closed in 1812. However, in 1815 a meeting was held to reopen the Dispensary and Matthew volunteered to be on the committee and canvass for subscriptions. The rules were revised. 'A subscription of five guineas would qualify the donor for a vote in management, and the more usual level of one or two guineas allowed the recommendation of one or two admissions' ie attendance. The patient required a recommendation before visiting the Apothecary, except in case of injury or emergency. The Rules of the Dispensary²⁴ in 1865 state

under Rule IX 'Patients shall be usually admitted to the benefit of the Institution by a ticket of recommendation in the following form':-

'I recommend resident in as a Patient to the Stockton Dispensary.
Date..... Signed

Leonard Raisbeck, solicitor, kept a 'Roll or List of Persons who served as non-commissioned Officers and Privates in the late Loyal Stockton Volunteers Infantry commanded by L Raisbeck Esq'.

Rule XIII is interesting. 'Every person who was a non-commissioned officer or private in the Loyal Stockton Volunteer Infantry, and served therein for one year, shall have preference without ticket or recommendation'.

Loyal Stockton Volunteer Infantry

In 1797 Napoleon was appointed to command forces for the invasion of England and there was a real fear among the population of a French invasion, particularly of the ports along the north east coast. Matthew Wadeson wrote in January 1804²⁵ 'A number of our vessels are carrying corn and flour to the different military stations along the coast.' and in November 'A privateer has done much mischief on our Coast ... serious fears are entertained for Captain Hansell.' Voluntary corps of infantry were established throughout the country. Matthew, whose business interests in importing flax and shipping lead to London and elsewhere, was elected to the volunteer committee along with John Allinson (flax merchant and a Unitarian), Leonard Raisbeck (lawyer) and other dignitaries and merchants. Wadeson wrote 'I know not how the Londoners feel at the threats of the French, but here we are all learning the use of Arms. My House shop, office and barges produce five men and my neighbours all exhibit great spirit.'²⁵

He made enquires of one of his correspondents, William Atley of Whitby, about the Military Association in Whitby.²⁶



Front cover addressed to Mr Mathew Wadeson, Stockton. single sheet.
Stamped WHITBY. from Mr Atley 3rd Jany. 1797.

D. Sir

Immediatly on my Wife's getting home she told me of your request concerning our Military Association, But Mr Yeoman the Adjutant, being from home, who I thought the only person to be apply'd to (having formerly been in the Army) I cou'd not see him till this morning.

It is now about three years since the Volunteers were rais'd, the Batalion consists of six Companies, each having three Commissioned Officers, three Serjeants, & about 50 Rank & File, with drummers etc and I think are as well diciplined, as

most of the Militia Regiment I have seen, the Officers (I think 18 in the whole) have the Kings Commissions, & receive pay from Government, same as the Army, when under Army, which is two days in the week, non commissioned officers, & privates, the same. The Commissions were obtained, by the Application of Lord Faulchonborg, but the Adjutant is of opinion, that such commissions cou'd not now be obtained, as recent applications have been made & refused. The arms, drums, cloathing for the privates, & every thing necessary, were provided at the expence of Government. If public necessity should call forth the Volunteers, we have no doubt, they wou'd act, & acquit themselves, with propriety, but I hope that will never be the case. If I cou'd give you any further information you may freely command me, in which case you will please to point out particulars.

During the last war, a similar institution was form'd here, in which I serv'd as Serjeant, but we had nothing from Government but the Arms, & Commissioning, the Officers & Serjeants, were cloath'd at their own expence, the Rank & File by a Subscription of the Town, But the whole serv'd then without pay.

I return you thanks for the Attention you paid my wife, & the business she came to Stockton about, & hope the Measures you have taken & will take, will prove effectual, if any thing be to be done by us, yourself, or Mr Clark, will have the goodness to inform us.

In haste

With due respect I remain your Obd. Servt.

Willm. Atley

In further correspondence William Atley on 18 July 1797 wrote:

'Having this opportunity I thought it necessary to inform you, Mr Mellanby sail'd yesterday for the Humber, to join the Convoy which sails from thence next Thursday.'

Joseph Mellanby of Whitby was Master of the *Active* 1781/2 a Whitby ship owned by Lawson Fleck; and Master of *Adventure* 1781/5. In the same letter Atley acknowledges an order for porter.

'We thank you for the recommendation of our Porter, & shall be happy to execute the order you mention, but wou'd just observe that we wish the Cart to travel with it on the Night, as the heat of the day at present, wou'd cause a fermentation, that wou'd greatly injure the liqueur, which is now remarkably fine.'

Another letter written the same day:

Front cover addressed to Mr Mathew Wadson, Merchant, Stockton.

To be open'd immediately if Mr W be not at home.

From Mr Atley on U of C Acd(?) : 18th July 1799

Dr Sir

I make no apology to you for the trouble I am giving you. Our Brig Rose, lately Captur'd on her voyage from hence to London, is this moment arriv'd in our Harbour from N. Bergin in Norway, the Captain informs us, that the Capt. of the

Stockton Ship Neptune, has furnish'd him with money to purchase the said Rose, & has wrote his owners in Stockton to make insurance upon her. I have to request you will have the Goodness, immidiatly to apply to the Owners, to prevent the insurance being made, as an insurance has already been made at Hull, in the name of John Anderson & Co – unknown to our Capt. we suppose the letter to Stockton ordering the insurance, may not yet have come to hand. The Neptune wou'd not venture out at the time the Rose sail'd which was last Monday.

*I am Dr Sir in hast yours sincerely
Wm Atley*

Whitby Friday night 11 O'Clock July 18 1799

Matthew Wadeson's reply to William Atley on 31 July 1799.

Dr Sirs

Your letter wrote on Friday night at 11 o'clock, I delivered at the Shipping Office Company the next day at half past 3 and found they had rec'd no letter from Mr B....., or advice of his purchase till the Monday after – as they wrote you next post although.... I was to do so because that they consider themselves entitled to insurance on the Rose tho' they could not have made insurance on her, I am led to inform you what I know, whereas ...of the Master. If I can do anything more for you – note that and it shall be set about w'h great pleasure by

*Yours most respectfully
M W*

The correspondence between Wadeson and Atley covers various problems with shipping, possession of land, insurance matters, and Wadeson's loan of a Galloway horse to Atley, who replied on 28 August 1797:

I have taken this favourable opportunity of returning the Galloway, & thank you sincerely for the use of it, which I dare say has assisted in the recovery of my health, which is now pretty well establis'd, yet a considerable degree of weakness and swelling remains about the ankles & shoulders, and am now (as I am so much better) order'd to take very little exercise, as they think the swelling etc is increased by too much action. My Mother Appleton, who is come to spend a little time at Acklam, with my child, that is rather unhealthy rides the Galloway, & the young Man who delivers this took the Child before him. If Mellanby's mortgage be ready she will give you a call & take it, if not you may probably get it ready before she leaves Acklam.

Should be glad of a line when you get the Horse safe. Mr & Mrs Clarke join us in respectfull compli[m]ents] to yourself & Miss Wadeson.

I am your Oblig'd Willm Atley

Who was Miss Wadeson mentioned in William Atley's letter?

The story was revealed in Matthew's will of 1830²⁷. He left the residue of his personal estate 'in trust for my daughter or reputed daughter Elizabeth Wadeson White wife of Richard White of Oakley Park County of Salop Land Surveyor'. On 12

January 1777 Elizabeth Wadeson Barwick, daughter of Elizabeth Barwick, was baptised at St Thomas's church and no father's name was given²⁸. The middle name of an illegitimate child often indicated the known father's surname. Wadeson was 27 years old when she was born. Nothing is known of her childhood but it is possible that she helped her father in his shop at St Ann's Hill. When Elizabeth Wadeson Barwick, 21, of Stockton, married Richard White, 21, yeoman of Grindon, in 1799 at St Thomas's Stockton by licence²⁹ it was her father who pledged surety for the marriage bond³⁰. Among Matthew's letters at Teesside Archives is a small card advertising the opening of a school for Board & Education by Miss Kitching and dated February 16 1797³¹. Was his daughter to be a teacher there, or was it received because he had subscribed to the foundation of the new school? It would seem that he had supported his daughter all her life but had remained a bachelor. This is also confirmed by the fact that he presented a snuff box to the Freemasons' Lodge 'on behalf of the bachelor members'³².

The Stockton Freemasons

The Stockton Freemasons had met at the Queen's Head Tavern, then moved to the Black Lion Hotel. In 1788 it was resolved that the name should be *The Lodge of Philanthropy*³³. After meeting for twenty years at the Black Lion Hotel in 1795 it was removed to a new room in Mason's Court, built for the Lodge by Brother Wadeson³⁴. It was 40 feet long and contained a lofty marble and carved wood mantelpiece, a recess behind the Master's Chair, and an organ loft at the west end with seats for instrumentalists. The room was approached from the High Street by a long and narrow passage, known as Break Neck Yard, and up some steps. 'If the Brethren could safely negotiate this torturous labyrinth, with the aid only of dim lanterns, it speaks well for the sobriety of the brotherhood in those days'³⁵. Matthew reserved the right of letting the room, when not wanted by the Lodge, for concerts and assemblies at £3 per annum and two fires when necessary. John Appleton described the Free Masons Lodge No.30, as 'held in a handsome long room in Mason's Court, leading from the High Street to the River'³⁶. Matthew was a Worshipful Master [W.M.] and gave 36 years service to the Freemasons 1786-1822. 'In 1816 Bro. Wadeson was deputed to go to London to attend the Lodges of Reconciliation in order to ascertain the new Lectures for the improvement of this Lodge.'³⁷ In 1824 at a meeting of the Lodge in the Vane Arms 'it was unanimously agreed that the thanks of the Brethren be presented to Bro. Wadeson for the handsome manner in which he has for a number of years accommodated the Lodge with a Room, as well as for his great care and attention in watching over the interest of the Fraternity and that the same be communicated to him by the Chairman.'³⁸

Friends and Family

One of his friends, Joseph Ritson of Stockton, in December 1781 printed a little satirical tract, called 'The St-ckt-n Jubilee: or, Shakespeare in all his Glory, a choice pageant for Christmas Holidays,' which consists of extracts from Shakespeare, applied to most of the principal inhabitants of that town, descriptive of their several characters. In a letter to his friend Wadeson, in January 1782, he speaks jocosely of the tract.³⁹

"I find that a most impudent and malicious rascal has been libelling the all-accomplished inhabitants of Stockton, in a twelfpenny pamphlet. Among the rest, I perceive he has taken the liberty to pay you a very handsome compliment on your distinguished knowledge of music, which, to be sure, all the world allows is not to be paralleled. Especially in the nice distinctions between Harmony and Melody, of which you are perfect master. Well, after all, a

horn for my money! I am this moment informed the above scoundrel is caught by Tim Painter and Charles Wharton, and is to be publicly baited at the bull-ring, next Friday, in a pate [badger] skin. Is it true, know you?" "My compliments to Mr Sanderson; for, tho' a Custom House officer, he may live to be an honest man."

John Sanderson, who married Matthew's cousin Alice Wadeson, was the Comptroller of the Customs House in 1799⁴⁰. In 1827 he was Receiver of the Primage Duty payable to the Newcastle Trinity House on all goods imported from foreign parts⁴¹.

Matthew was also involved with the Port of Hartlepool and in 1813 when the Commissioners for the Pier & Port of Hartlepool were elected by ballot Matthew Wadeson replaced Sir Henry Vane Tempest who had been on the committee of 1810⁴².

In the will of Christopher Wadeson, Matthew's brother, dated 1827 he left two shares Nos 143 and 180 in the Tees Navigation Company to his wife Ann⁴³. On her death in 1834 the shares were passed to her nephew Thomas Mercer of Yarm, a gentleman. The Wadesons, Watsons and Sandersons were all involved in shipping from Stockton, at that time the main port between Hull and Newcastle.

The River Tees

There was a great necessity for better transportation of goods, particularly coal from the Durham coalfields and lead from the Dales, much of which was shipped out along the twisting River Tees. In 1802 a committee was appointed (including Matthew) to look at Edmund Harvey's plan to make a cut across the neck of land between Stockton and Portrack to improve navigation of the river Tees. The Tees Navigation Company formed under the Act of 27 May 1808 included amongst the original shareholders Matthew Wadeson, flax merchant, agent for lead mines and lead shipments, and the Mandale cut was opened in September 1810⁴⁴. There was a great celebration as three sloops decorated with flags proceeded through the cut from Portrack, attended by the Volunteer Band and the Custom House boat. An interesting consequence of the cut was that land was gained and the ownership of the new land was set out as follows:⁴⁵

'We the undersigned James Crowe Matthew Wadeson and Richard Wright do hereby give notice to you and each and every of you that the ground which hath accrued and been gained and added to the ancient lands now belonging to the said James Crowe and Matthew Wadeson situate lying and being in the parish of Stockton upon Tees and now in the occupation of the said Richard Wright by or in consequence of the recess of the River Tees for the whole extent of the South Side or boundary of such ancient lands is the property of and belongs to the said James Crowe and Matthew Wadeson And do hereby discharge and forewarn you and each and every of you from entering or coming on the said newly acquired ground or any part thereof for any purpose whatsoever And you and each and every one of you are hereby informed that if you assume to enter or come upon the same after this notice such trespass will be considered wilful and malicious and you will be dealt with accordingly Dated this eleventh day of September 1821.

To Messrs John Russell Rowntree, Robert Clarke and William Grey.
Signed by Jas. Crowe, Matth. Wadeson, Richard Wright'

A similar notice was given to the same people from James Crowe, Matthew Wadeson and John Jordison concerning land gained to the West and South Sides or boundaries.

The Birth of the Railways

A second cut having further improved navigation on the Tees, attention turned to a possible railway. Matthew was at the first meeting in 1818 held in the Darlington Town Hall when it was resolved 'That a canal or rail or tram road from the River Tees to the Collieries and the Interior of the County will essentially promote, as well the Agricultural as the Mining and Commercial Interests of this District.'⁴⁶ It was attended by Noblemen, Gentlemen and at the end of the long list were the Merchants including Matthew Wadeson. He was at the following November meeting when it was decided that a rail or tramway was preferable to a canal, and an extension in the direction of Richmond was to be considered which would assist with the transport of lead from the Dales. Anyone who subscribed £500 or more was appointed to a Committee of Management. When the Bill received Royal Assent on 19 April 1821 Matthew was among those who subscribed to 'The Stockton and Darlington Railway Company'. The official opening ceremony on 27 September 1825 was the most exciting event in people's lives. The first train 'Locomotion' built by George Stephenson pulled coal wagons and passenger coaches from Darlington to Stockton. Was Matthew on one of the coaches? Possibly, and at 76 years old he would have enjoyed the dinner, music and celebrations that followed.

Land Owner and Auctioneer

Matthew Wadeson as an auctioneer and land agent dealt a lot with property on behalf of others and on his own account. Mason's Court, and his home at St Ann's Hill with shop and office have already been mentioned, as well as land beside the River Tees, all in Stockton. In 1799 he bought an estate at Thorpe, Co Durham, from the Rev. Thomas Davison consisting of 185 acres with freehold messuage and the tithes of corn and grain on lease for 21 years from the Master and Brethren of Christ's Hospital in Sherburn, presumably let to a tenant farmer⁴⁷. In 1817 A Terrier Account for Ingleby Greenhow mentions Wadeson's land adjoining the Charity School in Stockton near Norton Stell.⁴⁸ In the 1823 Fine of the Stainton Tithe Lease he paid rent of £106⁴⁹ and in 1832 there is a Lease and Release re High Farm in Coulby in Cleveland Matthew Wadeson to Leonard Raisbeck⁵⁰. There are many further documents in the three County Archives.

Further details of his property at the time of his death in 1833 were revealed in the British Library Newspaper Collection⁵¹, as seen in these extracts. The auctions were all held at The Black Lion Hotel in Stockton by Mr William Wadeson Watson, Auctioneer, son of his nephew William Watson.

The Newcastle Journal Saturday 6 September 1834 ⁵²

A Very desirable estate called Saint Ann's Hill, situate about Half a Mile from the Town of Stockton on Tees, late belonging to Mr Matthew Wadeson, deceased, consisting of a very neat and commodious Dwelling House, occupied by Mr Wadeson, up to the Time of his Death, with Excellent Gardens and Pleasure Grounds, which contain upwards of an Acre of Land, and are ornamentally as well as usefully laid out, and of several other Dwelling Houses near thereto; and of Eight Closes or Parcels of excellent Grass Land, containing 29a 2r 16p or thereabouts.

Lot 1. The Messuages or Dwelling Houses and Gardens, and Four of the Fields nearest thereto which contain 17a 0r 7p or thereabouts.

Lot 2. The remaining Four of the Fields, which contain 12a 2r 9p or thereabouts.

‘Valuable Warehouses, Wharf, and other Property at Stockton on Tees and also Two Farms

Lot 1. All the valuable Buildings and other Property lately belonging to Mr Matthew Wadeson, Deceased, situate in Stockton on Tees and extending from **Mason’s Court to the River Tees**, consisting of several **Dwelling Houses, Granaries**, and excellent **Warehouses, the Mason’s Lodge, and a Wharf or Quay**. This is a most desirable Property for all Commercial Purposes.

Lot 2. **A Freehold Farm, called Lingfield House, in the Township of Newham**, and in the parish of Marton in Cleveland aforesaid, with a Farm-House and requisite Outbuildings, and 103 acres 13 perches or thereabouts, of Arable, Meadow and Pasture Land, divided into convenient sized Fields or enclosures, and now in the Occupation of Messrs Coates, as Tenants thereof. Together with the Tithes of Corn and Hay arising from this Property, and which are holden by Lease for Twenty-One Years under the Archbishop of York.

Lot 3. **A Freehold Farm, called the High Farm, situate in the Township of Coulby**, otherwise Colby, in Cleveland aforesaid, with a Farm House and Outbuildings, and 82 acres and 3 roods or thereabouts, of productive Arable, Meadow and Pasture Land, now also in the Occupation of Messrs Coates as Tenants, Together with the Tithes of Corn and Hay arising from this Farm, and which are holden by Lease for Three Lives under the Archbishop of York. And also together with One undivided Third Part of and in the Manor or Lordship of Coulby aforesaid.

The York Herald, Saturday 18 January 1834 ⁵³

All that **Valuable Freehold estate** late belonging to Mr Matthew Wadeson deceased pleasantly situated **on Banks of River Tees in the several Townships of Yarm and Low Worsall** consisting of a Good Farm House with commodious and suitable Out-offices attached thereto and upwards of 200 acres of rich Arable, Meadow, Pasture, and Wood Land well watered and fenced and now in the occupation of Mr John Baker.

There are upon the estate 3 newly erected Cottages and also another good house with a garden in front of it and convenient Out-offices behind which, with some small alteration, might be made a Residence for a respectable Family. The southern part of the Estate, containing about 45 Acres has a stream of water running through it, which is well adapted for manufacturing purposes, and here a Bleaching Ground might be most advantageously laid out. About 30 Acres of the Property are covered with thriving Trees, of some years growth, which are capable of rendering an annual profit by thinnings. The Estate is distant from the Market Town of Yarm 2, and from that of Stockton 6 miles. The Tenant, Mr Baker, or John Moor, the Woodman, will show the Premises.,

The York Herald, Saturday 18 January 1834 ⁵⁴

A Freehold Farm, called Cuckoo Hill, situate in the Township of Low Worsall, in Cleveland aforesaid, consisting of a neat and convenient Farm House with a Garden in front, and excellent Farming Outbuildings behind the same, and of about 20 acres of particularly productive Land, now in the possession or occupation of John Baker, as tenant thereof.

Matthew Wadeson’s last Will dated 5 July 1830⁵⁵ referred to his personal estate, which after expenses, was left in trust for his daughter Elizabeth Wadeson White, wife of Richard White, a land agent. The Memorial of his Will⁵⁶ refers to his real estate in Stockton and St Anne’s Hill and in the townships of Newham, Marton, Coulby, Hemlington, Stainton, Worsall and Yarm along with tithes and hereditaments in Marton and Stainton held by leases under the Archbishop of York together with their appurtenances. It was not until 1845 when his estate was finalised.⁵⁷

Conclusion

One of Matthew’s letters mentioned that amongst his mixed shipments he twice had ‘huge gravestones’⁵⁸. Who were they for? The family perhaps?

On 17 August 1832 a cholera epidemic broke out in Stockton, and sadly on 21 August William Watson, flax dresser, was ‘seized with the Malignant Cholera’ and died the same day, age 48. He was one of the first out of 126 people who died of cholera in

Stockton and one of the last to be buried in the Parish Churchyard. After that the other cholera victims were buried outside the town, where the ruins of Holy Trinity church now stand. His Will⁶⁰ from amongst 'his Papers of Moment' was read out, a copy made and he requested the addition of 'I appoint Robert Lamb of Stockton Merchant, Henry Goldsbrough of Smeaton Joiner and Cartwright, and my eldest son William Wadeson Watson Executors of my Will.'. It was 'read over to him but he died before he could execute the same.' Robert Chrisp Foss, surgeon of Stockton, was in attendance. The Will expressed the wish that 'my business as flax dresser be carried on in my premises in Finkle Street, or if thought of benefit to my family the houses may be sold for the support of my wife Caroline and her children William, Frederick, John, Charles, Simon and Robert,' the youngest being only nine years old. A real family tragedy, but just one amongst so many in Stockton at that time.

Only eight months later Matthew Wadeson died on 10 April 1833 aged 84 and was buried at St Thomas parish church, Stockton, on 13 April⁵⁹. The graveyard has been cleared to create a grassed area and some headstones are placed around the perimeter; Matthew Wadeson's headstone has disappeared, but fortunately the headstone for his brother Christopher Wadeson, Locker at the Custom House, who died on 21 April 1831, is still standing near the path.

Matthew Wadeson worked hard, was well respected, and contributed through various committees to the growth and prosperity of Stockton. It would have been a privilege to have known my 5 x great uncle.

(6370 words)

Sources

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 Durham County Record Office – DCRO
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