

John Crossley

1812 - 1879

Born on the 16th May 1812, John was given a commercial education, though he started work part-time at 12 years old. He was the senior partner in John Crossley and Sons of Dean Clough after his father's death in 1837, and was its Chairman 1864-1877. Of the three partner brothers, he early took a prominent part in the public life of Halifax, serving as a Liberal Councillor and Alderman from the Borough's incorporation in 1848. John was Mayor of Halifax for four terms, more than any other man; he promoted the building of the Halifax Town Hall on its present site, and was mayor when it was opened in 1863.

For a period, he owned the *Halifax Courier* newspaper; he helped develop the White Swan Hotel in Princess Street, and the Mechanics' Institute and Crossley Street, Halifax, was named after him. After the Akroydon building scheme was launched in 1861, John Crossley formed a committee of local businessmen to plan an estate of improved dwellings called the "West Hill Park Model Dwellings" to the north of Lister Lane cemetery. The objective was to encourage thrifty workers to purchase freehold homes for themselves, with building society aid. The scheme was completed in 1868.

Having succeeded in life, John had a splendid mansion erected for himself at Manor Heath, near Skircoat Moor, where he entertained the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) in 1863. He worshipped at Square Chapel, later transferring to the adjacent Square Church, where he served as a Deacon.

On the 25th August 1873, as John was being driven in his phaeton to Dean Clough, the horse took fright, and the carriage struck a lamp-post; overturning, John was thrown out, banged his head severely, and was carried off in an insensible condition. He made a good recovery.

From 1874 John served as an M.P. for Halifax, but was forced to resign in 1877 following unwise speculation which had serious consequences. He was forced to sell the contents of Manor Heath, and put the house itself on the market (though it did not sell). He left Halifax, living for a time in Putney, London. Coming back to Halifax to stay with his daughter and son-in-law at Broomfield, John died quite suddenly on the 16th April 1879, following a heart attack. The oldest of the three brother partners, he was the last survivor. He married twice; he and both his wives lie buried at Lister Lane, as does one daughter, and his only son, the inventive Louis John Crossley.