

A Brief History of the Cottages

The five historic cottages at corner of Water Street and Waterloo Street West (originally just Waterloo Street) were built in the early 1800's. They were the subject of a lease between William Roe and a Thomas Harrop dated 20th March 1824 for a term of 999 years at a rent of four pounds thirteen shillings and five pence – about 93p in modern day pence per house, per year. Harrop had however to build the houses. *“with brick or stone or both to be set in lime mortar and the floors and roof timber to be of good sound oak or fir”*. He was also obliged to *“pave, and drain and flag Water Street and Waterloo Street”*.

The tenants' benefits included the use of a *“common yard”* and shared outside toilets!

Water Street runs off Roe Street where William Roe and his family lived. The cottages were, most likely, built to be used by their workers.

William Roe's father Charles had discovered a copper mine in the *“Isle of Anglesea”* whilst on holiday in Wales. Ore was taken to Liverpool where it was refined and then transported to Macclesfield where, in 1758, he established the Copper Works. Old coins still exist bearing the head of Charles Roe. Round the edge was stamped *“Payable in Macclesfield, Congleton and Liverpool”*.



Obverse of a Roe & Co. Halfpenny of 1789

To Charles Roe belongs the distinction of being the first man to introduce silk throwing into Macclesfield.

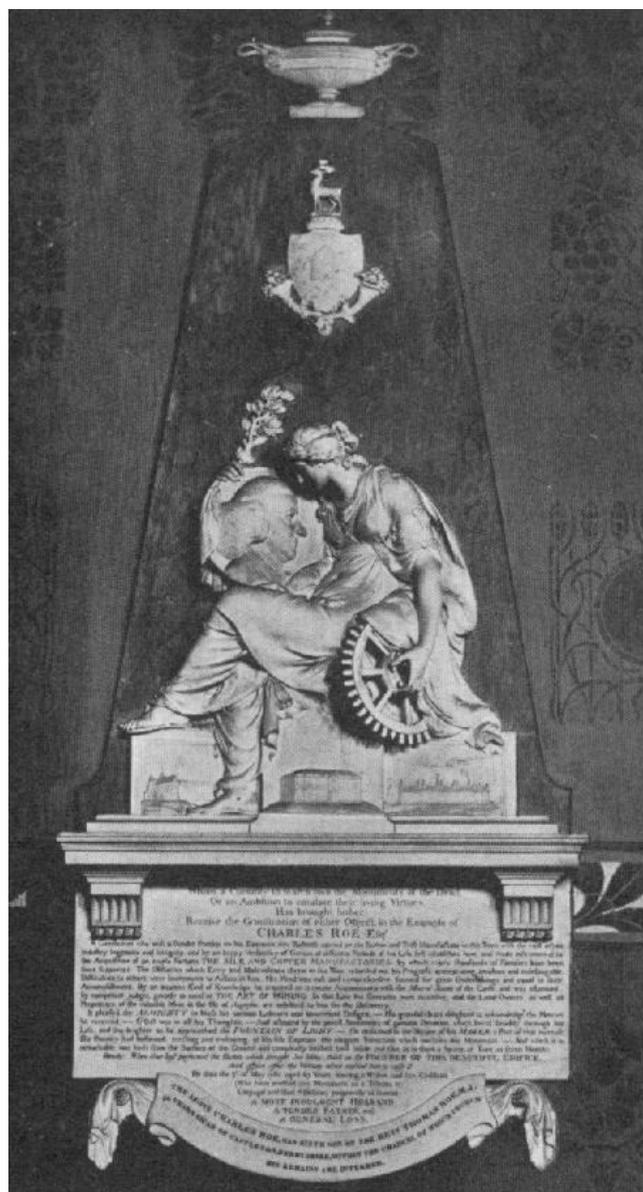
By 1881, Mary Collins, a widow and her daughter Sarah *“ Provision Dealers”* lived at 28 Water Street with number 30 being an adjoining *“Bakehouse”*. In the other cottages lived the Barbers and the Unsworths, who were variously a *“Silk Mill Overlooker, Silk Warpers”*, a *“Silk Weaver”*, a *“Silk Knotter”*, and a *“Dressmakers Apprentice”* together with Clara Ford, a lodger who was a *“Silver Burnisher”*.

Charles Roe was buried in Christ Church yard. He had built the church, which still stands just a few yards from the cottages, entirely at his own cost and opened it on Christmas day 1775.

A history of Macclesfield written in 1819 records:

“The first carriage set up by a resident of Macclesfield was a chariot, by Mr Roe in the year 1770, and among other proofs of the increase of wealth, there are now (in 1819) ten coaches kept by opulent individuals in this town.”

The cottages now all enjoy up to date facilities but retain the historical charm of centuries past.



The memorial tablet to Charles Roe in Christ Church, Macclesfield across the road from the cottages.