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### George Albert Oakley – ‘A Smart Little Fellow’

By Pauline Saul

The short life of a distant relative seemed no more than a tragic footnote in her family tree until Pauline Saul uncovered a wealth of records detailing his progress from an orphan sent to Canada in the care of Barnados to his military service in the First World War. Starting with the sources close to home and then broadening her search to include migration records and holdings in the National Archives of Canada, she was able to bring his life and those of his siblings, into sharp focus.

Ellen Eliza née Oakley was my late mother-in-law. In December 1896 she and her four brothers were orphaned when their parents both died within a twelve-month period. At the time of this traumatic event the children were split up. As their father had been a regular serving soldier the two older boys were deemed to follow in his footsteps: John, 11, was sent to the Duke of York's School and Edward, 9, to the Hibernian School. Ellen, the middle child, was placed at Lady Robartes Orphanage, Lanhydrock, Cornwall ('... devoted to the training of orphan girls as domestic servants') and the next child, Sidney, 5, was adopted by an uncle, William Rose.

George Albert, the youngest child, then almost three years old, was placed with (Dr) Barnados and subsequently sent by them to Canada. He joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1916 and was killed in action in August 1918 whilst serving in France with the 75<sup>th</sup> Battalion (1<sup>st</sup> Central Ontario Regiment) Canadian Infantry. The only time George and his sister met again after their separation in 1896 was in November 1916 when he disembarked in England *en route* to France.

These few facts, a photograph taken at that reunion and a Canadian Army badge were as much as was known of George Oakley when the subject cropped up in conversation between my mother-in-law and myself in 1975. She had scant knowledge of her family background, which was disconcerting news for a beginner! However with the help of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – who sent particulars of George's grave and its location, accompanied by a map – and the Royal British Legion – who worked out a detailed itinerary with travel arrangements – we were able to realise her longed-for ambition to visit George's grave. Not an easy trip, given that she was then 86 years of age, but one that she cherished for the remainder of her life. Since George had died unmarried, that was where his story ended as far as I was concerned.

### National Archives in Canada

My interest in George was reawakened in 1990 when I had the good fortune to visit Canada, where I was hosted by a fellow family historian. Asked if I had any connection with Canada I explained about the tenuous links vis-à-vis George. There was surprise that I had not attempted to obtain his army service records but, as I explained, it had not seemed important since he seemed to play no further part in my research into the Oakley family.

However the seeds of curiosity had been sown and perhaps nurtured by having a taste of the country that had been home to George during his short lifetime. So I wrote to the National Archives of Canada giving what scant information that I had; within weeks a Statement of Service in the Canadian Armed Forces and a copy of George's Attestation paper arrived. Two items on the latter immediately aroused my curiosity: 'address on enlistment' – Parry Sound, Ontario; 'next of kin' – sister, Ellen Eliza Oakley, Edgbaston, Birmingham, England. Was Parry Sound George's original destination in Canada all those years ago and did he never have sufficient regard for any foster parents to be considered next of kin? Since he had evidently been in touch with his sister prior to 1916, when and how did this come about? If mother-in-law had mentioned this in our original conversation it had simply not registered with me and now she was no longer alive to ask!

## **Barnardos' Records**

There was nothing for it but to write to Barnardos (which no longer uses the prefix 'Dr' and seems to have lost its apostrophe). The most I hoped to learn was at what age George went to Canada and perhaps to whom. For those readers asking themselves why I had not done this all those years ago, the answer is, I do not know, except that perhaps I overlooked the obvious. Back in 1975 I knew little or nothing about Barnardos other than that they cared for orphans, but most probably I had assumed that, since George had been sent abroad, any records that might have existed would have long since been destroyed or lost. Little did I know!

Quite soon after completing the requisite forms from Barnardos' After Care Department I received a sheaf of papers containing a wealth of information plus a photograph of little George, taken on his admission to the orphanage. Not only was I impressed with the meticulous record keeping and obvious care for their charges, I was gratified to realise that I had not become blasé over the years, that I could still feel moved and excited about a sudden unexpected discovery such as this. The records from the era when George was in Barnardos' care were originally in the form of notes made by the then staff in large ledgers, which have now been microfilmed; the letters referred to in the notes no longer exist. I found myself reading extended family details that had taken me frustrating years to discover the hard way. I was consoled only by the fact that they did tally exactly with what I had found out. And nowhere did the notes give the birthplace of George's father, which had been the original stumbling block in my research.

There was a further page describing 'Family situation on admission', detailing the children, plus vital information on both paternal and maternal uncles and a maternal aunt. See below.

### **Family situation on admission on 30 December 1896**

George Albert Oakley, born 5 February 1894 (taken from Barnardos' records).

George was the youngest child of George and Kate Oakley, and a few days after the death of his father, his uncle, Mr Rose approached Barnardos. It seems that Mr Rose had been looking after George Oakley senior and his affairs for at least a year. Sergeant George Oakley was in the Medical Staff Corps and had seen service in the Empire for over 20 years. From 1879 to 1882 he was in South Africa, and he was also in the column which went to relieve General Gordon at Khartoum in the Nile. He joined the Sudan Expedition from 1884-1886, and on his return to England later that year, he was then stationed at Aldershot, then Devonport. Finally he was at Horfield Barracks, Bristol, where he was Sergeant in charge of the Hospital for nearly four years.

In 1895 he was transferred to Bodmin Barracks, Cornwall, on account of his wife's health. Little information about George's mother, other than that by this date she was subject to bouts of melancholia and despondency and had been receiving treatment for this for some time. She committed suicide by poisoning, only a month after arriving at Bodmin.

Sergeant Oakley's health was greatly undermined by his services overseas, and he developed consumption. He was discharged from the army on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1895 with an invalidity pension of 2 shillings a day, on which to support himself and 5 children.

Mr Rose then stepped in to help and found the family lodgings at New Swindon near his own home, in order to look after him. It appears that the older 3 children were placed at this time, leaving Sidney and George junior with their father. Just before he died George Oakley agreed that George should be admitted to Barnardos and that Sidney should be adopted by the Rose family. It was recorded that George Oakley was a man of excellent character in every respect and had done all in his power to provide for his children. His pension continued to support John at the Duke of York's School; Edward was about to attend a similar military academy (The Hibernian School), and Ellen was similarly supported at Lady Robartes Homes. On admission to Barnardos, George was described as a healthy, intelligent child who had been baptised in the Church of England.

### **In Barnardos Care**

The pages that interested me most though were those headed 'Locations while in Barnardos care'. The succinct sentences only hint at what circumstances George found himself in thereafter and we can only guess at the thoughts and emotions he experienced during his short lifetime, but he seems to have been well-liked and, by and large, well-treated, so perhaps he fared better than some. To judge by these notes Barnardos appeared to take a very responsible attitude toward the children in their care. The business of sending little children abroad is, and will continue to be, an emotive subject; this article is not intended to be a forum for that.

**Locations while in Barnardos care** - (taken from Barnardos' records)

Admitted to Barnardos  
30.12.1896            To Stepney.

10.3.1897	Transferred to Babies Castle at Hawkhurst, Kent
17.11.1897	Placed in a Foster home at Goudhurst near Tonbridge Wells in Kent
14.03.1904	Transferred to Leopold House, 199 Burdett St., East London.
24.03.1904	Emigrated to Canada aboard the <i>SS Southwark</i>
03.04.1904	Arrived Halifax, Nova Scotia
07.04.1904	Placed in a Foster Home with Mrs W H Oldfield at Severn, Ontario
August 1904	Mrs Oldfield reported an outbreak of smallpox and requested removal of her boys.
Sept. 1904	Moved to Mr John Oliver at Beatrice.
October 1904	Mr Oliver pleased with George 'smart little fellow'.
March 1905	Letter received from Curragh Camp, Ireland (Army Base).
August 1905	Mr John B Oliver applied to transfer lad to Mr Albert Oliver at Parksville (his son)
April 1906	Written agreement for wages with Albert B Oliver received.
January 1908	Mrs Oliver wrote asking for boy to be removed. She said her husband away a lot and George needed a firm hand. Correspondence followed and Mrs Oliver agreed to give him another chance and conduct improved.
May 1908	Letter to Mr Oliver reminded him that money was due to George for wages. Lad was giving satisfaction in every way.
October 1908	Mr Oliver wrote asking for George's removal. He had sold his stock and didn't need him any more. Described George as strong, healthy and able, but not very willing. Mr Newson of Parkesville wrote asking for George to be transferred to him.
Nov. 1908	George wanted to go to Mr Newson and this was agreed.
March 1909	Mr Newson wrote asking for money for clothes for George. Refused on grounds that contract included clothing. Barnardos sent Mr Oliver a solicitor's letter for not forwarding arrears of wages.
May 1909	Mr Newson wrote saying George was not able to work due to rheumatism of ankles – Barnardos asked Mr Newson to get medical help for George.
June 1909	Mr Newson said lad was worse – couldn't walk at all – visited by staff and agreed he should be returned to the Barnardo home at Toronto. Placed with S M Gilbert at Belleville.
July 1909	Feet still troubling him but George liked living with Gilberts.
Sep 1909	Mr Gilbert says George was still of little help to him although his feet were improving. Mr Gilbert agreed to sign agreement for wages
October 1909	Feet improving – clothing sent for George.
Sep. 1910	Mr Gilbert visited Toronto and complained that George was impertinent, neglectful and wilful. Staff to be sent to talk to the boy.
Nov 1910	George returned to the Home by Mr Gilbert. George stated that he did all the work asked of him and thought the Gilberts did not want to pay for his wages during the winter.
Nov 1910	Placed with Mr Thomas Gammon at Forest. Gilbert wrote regretting sending George back – badly needing a boy. Mr Gammon said George needed clothes and Barnardos sent money for clothes. Letter forwarded to George from his sister.
Dec 1910	Mr Gammon wrote that he was satisfied with George and willing to make an Agreement. George said he was glad to be in such a good place.
March 1911	George said he liked living in Forest and asked for address of another Barnardo boy.
June 1911	George very interested in taking music lessons. Sent donations to Barnardos.
October 1911	Mr Gammon wrote saying he didn't need George any longer and asking to transfer him to Mr J Bannister at Forest.
Nov 1911	Barnardos wrote to Mr Bannister sanctioning arrangement and saying boy may make his own bargain for the future.
April 1913	George went to work for James Ellery Lester, Forest, Ontario, and was giving splendid satisfaction.
Dec 1913	Working for Fred Thomas, Forest. Strong, healthy, capable and giving good satisfaction.
October 1914	Left for the West last March – no address. Barnardos heard from George from Bracebridge, Ontario. He was enquiring about his family background. Barnardos asked for details from London and these were sent to George together with his uncle Mr J W Rose's address in Swindon, Wiltshire. Barnardos also sent George the balance of the money in his Trust Account. (Employers of Barnardos' children were required to send their wages to Barnardos' Head Office where the money was held in an account in the child's name until such time as it was transferred to them).
Nov. 1923	Former employer, Mr Lester, stated that he had heard rumour (unconfirmed) that George had been killed in action in the war.

### **Larger than life**

George had suddenly become larger than life! From being a mere name on a headstone in a French cemetery nearly twenty years ago I now felt an unexpected affinity with this 'smart little fellow'. My questions had been answered too: Parry Sound was his last port of call, not his first; his sister had contacted him as early as 1910. Similarly the letter from Curragh Camp in 1905 was presumably from one of his older brothers. Here I must digress for a moment. From Lady Robartes Orphanage his sister Ellen was placed in service with a family who treated her so badly and where conditions were so harsh that she eventually ran away, to be rescued by Uncle Will Rose. I suspect that he had quietly kept tabs on all the children over the years

and it was he who put Ellen in touch with all her brothers, for I do know that once they were reunited they maintained a close relationship for the rest of their lives.

I now needed to complete the picture as far as I was able. Barnardos kindly provided photographs of the Babies Castle, Kent, Leopold House, East London and Farley Avenue, Toronto. Passenger lists at the Public Record Office, Kew, confirmed that the *SS Southwark* had sailed from Liverpool on 24 March 1904 carrying 566 adults and 218 children. I was fortunate in this because such lists at the PRO cover only the years 1890-1960. At a modest cost the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, was able to supply a photograph of that ship with information about its construction and owners.

From an atlas it was easy to plot George's movements in Canada and various friends there were able to fill in local geographical details. Then suddenly and unexpectedly two more exciting events occurred. I was put in touch with Parry Sound's local historian and journalist, John Macfie, who took a keen interest in my story. He was able to locate two of the farms on which George had worked and to confirm that a family by the name of Lester still owned the one in Forest. Of greater fascination to him though was the Army badge in our possession. Seemingly George originally joined the 162<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 'Timber Wolves', which had a fairly short lifespan as it was broken up in England and its soldiers posted to other battalions. John's own family had served in the war, and he was a trustee of the Parry Sound Museum, with a large collection of memorabilia of his own, and yet John had never come across a badge of its kind. Whilst all this correspondence was going on I received an invitation to speak at the family-history conference in Canada during 1993. Fate had definitely taken a hand!

So it was that I made my pilgrimage to Parry Sound – a wonderfully exciting time with a roller-coaster of emotions. It was a strange feeling to see George's name listed on the plaque on the British Legion building, a fact previously unknown. I visited the farm at Beatrice where George had worked for the Olivers; a new farmstead occupies the site but relics of the old one survive. I covered a lot of miles, spoke to a number of people who remembered the Barnardos children or who could recall someone who had fostered one. Parry Sound is a beautiful district, once famed for its logging industry but now more for its tourism. At the end of my visit it gave me great pleasure to present George's army badge as an exhibit in the museum.

### Full Circle

I subsequently learnt that in April 1917 George would have fought with the Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge, France. Thus in 1995 I went to see the Canadian National Vimy Memorial. I defy anyone not to be moved by this majestic monument, its surrounding park and what they represent in terms of human sacrifice. It remained only to revisit George's grave in Hill Side Cemetary, Le Quesnel. Thanks to the continuing care of the Commonwealth Graves Commission the site was as immaculate and peaceful as it had been in 1975 but, needless to say, my second visit held far more meaning and poignancy than the first. The wheel had come full circle.

### The author

Pauline Saul embarked upon genealogy as a hobby in 1974. From 1985 until her retirement in 2000 she was Administrator of the Federation of Family History Societies during which time she travelled extensively and often lectured on the subject. Author of 'The Family Historian's Enquire Within' and co-author of 'A Breath of Fresh Air: Birmingham's Open Air Schools 1911-1970', she is a Vice-president of the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry and a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists.

- **For an account of the Oakley family and their Alveley ancestry please refer to 'Alveley Historical Society Transactions' for the year 2000**

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### Alveley Methodist Baptisms 1852-1878 – by Margaret Sheridan

16 Jan	1874	John	s. John <b>Bennett</b> , labourer, & Elizabeth	Bap.
22 Feb	1869	Harriett & Elizabeth	d's. James <b>Butler</b> , labourer, & Harriett	Bap.
19 Oct	1873	James Thomas	s. James <b>Butler</b> , labourer, & Harriet	Bap.
26 May	1872	Jessie	d. John <b>Clarke</b> , farmer, & Elizabeth	Bap.
16 Aug	1854	George	s. Thomas <b>Edwards</b> , labourer & Ellen	Bap.
26 Mar	1856	Martha & Mary	d's Thomas <b>Edwards</b> , labourer, & Ellen	Bap.
12 Aug	1857	Ellen	d. Thomas <b>Edwards</b> , labourer, & Ellen	Bap.
28 Mar	1871	Joyce Hannah	d. Thomas <b>Evans</b> , labourer, & Sarah	Bap.
13 Jan	1871	Mary Ann	d. Richard <b>Hay</b> , labourer, & Louisa	Bap.
22 Aug	1865	William George	s. John <b>Hayward</b> , labourer, & Elizabeth	Bap.
28 Jun	1868	Alice	d. John <b>Hayward</b> , labourer, & Elizabeth	Bap.
Jan	1871	Mary Jane	d. John <b>Hayward</b> , labourer, & Elizabeth	Bap.
11 Apr	1874	John	s. John <b>Hayward</b> , mason, & Elizabeth	Bap.
19 Jan	1868	William Henry	s. William <b>Higgs</b> , butcher, & Emma	Bap.

19 Jun	1870	John James	s. William <b>Higgs</b> , butcher, & Emma	Bap.
3 Sep	1872	Arthur	s. William <b>Higgs</b> , butcher, & Emma	Bap.
5 Dec	1869	Elizabeth Georgina	d. George <b>Holloway</b> , waggoner, & Sarah	Bap.
5 Dec	1869	Amelia	d. George <b>Holloway</b> , waggoner, & Sarah	Bap.
18 Oct	1871	Louisa	d. George <b>Holloway</b> , labourer, & Sarah	Bap.
7 Dec	1873	Alice	d. George <b>Holloway</b> , labourer, & Sarah	Bap.
14 Jan	1877	George	s. George <b>Holloway</b> , labourer, & Sarah	Bap.
3 Mar	1854	William Henry	s. David <b>Jones</b> , carpenter, & Mary Ann	Bap
4 Jan	1863	David Gustavas Eugene	s. David <b>Jones</b> , quarryman, & Mary Ann	Bap
10 Apr	1871	Agnes Anne	d. Anne <b>Lloyd</b> , servant	Bap
11 Jun	1872	John Thomas	s. Alfred <b>New</b> , labourer, & Mary Ann	Bap
26 Mar	1871	Sarah Eliza	d. William <b>Painter</b> , livery servant, & Ann	Bap
26 Mar	1871	James Henry	s. William <b>Painter</b> , livery servant, & Ann	Bap
26 Mar	1871	Ann Irena	d. William <b>Painter</b> , livery servant, & Ann	Bap
May	1873	Emma	d. Thomas <b>Parton</b> , & Emma	Bap.
3 Aug	1869	Ann Elizabeth	d. Olive <b>Randle</b> , servant	Bap.
24 Jan	1869	Fanny	d. Sarah <b>Reynolds</b> , servant	Bap.
25 Feb	1852	Rebecca	d. Jonathan <b>Roberts</b> , foreman, & Ann	Bap.
25 Sep	1853	Louisa Wood	d. Richard <b>Rowley</b> , shoemaker, & Sarah	Bap
15 Feb	1855	George Jeffrey Wood	s. Richard <b>Rowley</b> , shoemaker, & Sarah	Bap
5 Sep	1860	Rebekah	d. Richard <b>Rowley</b> , shoemaker, & Sarah	Bap.
15 Aug	1869	Harriet	d. William <b>Scriven</b> , farm labourer, & Amy	Bap.
21 Apr	1872	Selena	d. William <b>Scriven</b> , labourer, & Amy	Bap.
3 Aug	1869	Alice	d. Alfred <b>Turley</b> , wheelwright, & Amelia	Bap.
21 Jan	1872	Leah Elizabeth	d. George <b>Wall</b> , wheelwright, & Emma	Bap.
31 Aug	1873	Thomas Richard	s. George <b>Wall</b> , wheelwright, & Emma	Bap
22 Apr	1857	Benjamin	s. George <b>Wood</b> , labourer, & Mary	Bap
4 Mar	1863	Henry Sidney	s. George <b>Wood</b> , Stone sawyer, & Ellen	Bap
28 Mar	1869	Jeffrey	s. George <b>Wood</b> , quarryman, & Sarah	Bap.
2 Aug	1871	Sarah Elizabeth	d. George <b>Wood</b> , quarryman, & Sarah	Bap
15 Jan	1878	Ada Henrietta Ethel	d. George <b>Wood</b> , quarryman, & Sarah	Bap
6 Dec	1871	Jeffrey	s. James <b>Wood</b> , quarryman, & Elizabeth	Bap.

## Alveley in the Civil war - By Tim White

Did Alveley play a part in the English Civil war? Well it may have done? To date there is no documentary evidence that we know of to confirm or refute this, however with the battle of Bridgnorth just six miles away, it is possible that there was some connection with the troubles of the time.

In the 17th century most of Shropshire and Worcestershire were loyal to the king and so I presume its fair to say that most of the good folk of Alveley would also have been for the king.

Local gossip has it that a battle or skirmish took place in a field close to the Royal Oak, and so perhaps this is why the pub took a name associated with King Charles escape from Cromwell's troops after the battle of Worcester. Close inspection of a map from 1849 shows a field close to the Royal Oak called Battle Field, is this the site? [See maps].

Perhaps the only way to confirm this theory would be to search the field [with the permission of the land owner] with a metal detector?

Another tradition tells of the grave of a number of soldiers buried beneath the base of the preaching cross, situated outside the main entrance of St Mary's church. The broken shaft is said to have been used by soldiers for sharpening their swords on.

Other stones said to have been used by Cromwell's soldiers for sharpening swords are to be found on top of the church wall, to the left hand side of the Lych gate! [see photograph].

Is any of the above true, well the reader must make up their own mind, but perhaps there is an element of truth somewhere?

## **Murder Most Foul** - By Tim White

The following two items are worth recording here for the reader as a matter of interest, no research has yet been carried out and we would welcome any information that would enable us to complete the stories.

The first is an inscription taken from a gravestone, (see photograph) located in the top churchyard of St Mary's. The left hand side of the gravestone has the following:-

In the Memory of MARY wife of Thos WIGGIN  
of the Parish of Areley  
who died March 1st 1810, Aged 66.

The right hand side continues:-

Also Edward Son of Tho. And MARY WIGGIN  
who died 26th Nov 1812 aged 37 years  
shot by a villain.

The second item is an entry taken from the church registers:-

30<sup>th</sup> January 1782, William Snibson was buried. He was murdered and thrown into the Severn on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1781 and his body found on Saturday last the 26th January 1782. The murderer was tried at Stafford condemned and executed.

## **The Church Yard Walls** - By Tim White

During October/November 2000 part of the church yard wall opposite the former Bell room collapsed into Bell Lane, the reason for the damage appears to have been due to workmen digging out the road close to the foundations of the wall, with very high rainfall through November a further portion of the wall came down exposing part of the church graveyard.

Discussions got under way between the P.C.C. the Parish Council and the insurance companies, with the inevitable red tape, work on the rebuilding did not commence until May 2002. (see photographs).

Just prior to the rebuilding, most of the fallen stone was brought from the courtyard of the former Bell Inn, where it had been stored close to the site. One of these stones was of particular interest due to the carved shape on two sides of the stone. With the permission of Rev Nick Armstrong I removed the stone for photographing and measuring, I should add that the stone was returned latter.

A few observations can be made from the condition of the small sandstone block, as soil was removed from the carved face of the stone we can assume that this side was facing the grave yard, and this may explain why the carved side was in such fine condition with no signs of weathering.

When was the stone built into the wall? If we presume that the stone was cut and dressed for the actual church building but not used, then we can safely say that it must at the least, date to the late 1800,s, this being the last time the church received major building alterations by the Victorians. The stone may date earlier than this? It would be an interesting exercise to have the photographs looked at by an expert on church buildings to try and ascertain what part of the church the stone may have been used for.

The rebuilding of the wall was completed in July 2002 and I have to thank the builders for allowing me to take various photographs during this time.

The work is to a very high standard and I am grateful to the builders for pointing out to me a number of interesting items during the course of the rebuilding work.

## **Holiday Memories**

Dear Mr. White,

With reference to your recent letter in the 'Stourbridge News' asking for people to share memories of Alveley, I and my family have many very happy memories.

My mother and father actually met each other on a camping holiday at Charlie Evans farm situated adjacent to the Nautical William and later we had a wooden bungalow on a field on the farm, which we used for weekends and holidays.

I remember my father constructing the sections of the bungalow in our garden at Quarry Bank and these were then transported to Alveley and erected on the site, which contained a variety of holiday homes including an ex-railway carriage, which was next to us and next to a very small gypsy-type caravan.

We had our bungalow from approximately 1951 until we sold it to another member of the family in approximately 1959. When we first had it we had only paraffin lamps or gaz lamps and cooked by calor gas. Later we had an electric supply by overhead cable from the farmhouse. Water was fetched by bucket from a pump in the yard outside the farmhouse, later a tap in the farm yard. This was supplemented by soft (rain) water from the butts for washing etc.. We had a small stove for heat, which also had an oven.

We had quite a community spirit as many of the families had their caravans for years and each summer we would have a Sports Day and an evening coach trip (a mystery trip! Usually to Clee Hills).

On hot summers days we would take our picnic to the lido at Fenn Green, just up the lane, and stay there all day. It was then very pleasant with ornamental gardens and both a swimming pool with a waterfall and paddling pool with a fountain.

Several members of my family from the Netherton/Dudley area had properties on the same site and also there were people from the Harborne area and 'The Cape' (Smethwick).

Yours sincerely,  
Ann Blunt

### **The Great Hampton Loade Ferry Disaster** - by Philip Dodd.

The unplanned trip in 1957 of Captain Bill Parkes

Hampton Loade is a small settlement between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster, on the banks of the River Severn in south Shropshire. There have been several ferries over the centuries across the river at the hamlet.

In the beginning, there was no ferry. The Romans crossed the Severn at that point with the aid of boulders as stepping-stones and gave the crossing the name of Hampton Loade.

To be accurate, the east bank is 'Hampton Loade', and the west bank 'Hampton', despite the railway station on the west side being 'Hampton Loade'.

The succession of ferries were inherited in 1780 by the former owners of the Dudmaston Estate, earlier ancestors of the Wolryche-Whitmore family. In the early 1900's there had been a steel boat used to move horses and wagons over the Severn when crossing by the ford was impossible due to high water. This boat had broken free in 1920, taking the ferryman and Mrs Mottershead (possibly related to the Mottershead farming family who occupied Lye Hall at the top of Hampton Loade bank) down to Arley where they were rescued.

The Severn has a fast-flowing and strong current. A ferry in use for much of the twentieth century made use of this. The boat itself was flat-bottomed, tethered to a hawser which ran overhead across the river. The paddle on the "downstream" end of the ferry moved the boat across the river by using the force of the current. The ferry operator was summoned to transport customers by the ringing of a hand bell. All very environmentally friendly.

There is a row of terraced cottages along the east bank of the Severn at Hampton Loade, called Severn Terrace. Bill and Clara Parkes occupied the northern-most cottage in the 1950's when I grew up there. The Parkes ran a shop serving snacks for the fisherman who came to Hampton Loade at weekends. They kept chickens and rented out a caravan. Bill Parkes collected takings from the field used as a weekend car-park, as well as operating the ferry, for which the fare was three Pennies per crossing.

Bill and Clara were like an uncle and aunt-I remember them with great affection.

Bill Parkes had his share of mishaps. He bought an old valve radio at a jumble sale. It came complete with aerials and headphones. It caught fire in his living room, so he had to throw it through the window. His culinary skills were no better. There was an almighty bang from his kitchen one day he had steamed a pudding without making any holes in the tin. The pudding was all over the walls and ceiling! On another occasion he managed to reverse his Austin Cambridge car over his cat "Alveley". He was forever losing his spectacles, to

eventually find them still on his head-but in a vertical position.

It was perhaps not surprising that there eventually was a disaster involving Bill and the ferry. One Monday night in August 1957, the ferry broke away from the hawser, and set off carried by the strong current. It began to submerge, causing Bill to climb up the mast. Bill could be heard shouting. My father ran to the phone box at the Lion public house to phone for help.

Bill Parkes survived. His ferry ended up on Arley bank, some five miles downstream. Four men were awarded the Royal Humane Society's Certificate for their part in saving him. The ferry was towed back to Hampton Loade by motorboat. It was renovated, to be re-launched on Sunday 25th May 1958. Captain Whitmore sold it to Gerald James, the porter and signalman at Hampton Loade station. Mr. James reduced the fare from three pennies to two pennies. The ferry was operated by the James family for many years.

In 1958 attempts were made to get public funding for the Ferry from Salop County Council. Nothing changes-in January 2002, there are reports that the ferry is again in financial difficulties.

## **The Grave of Molly Jones - Follow up**

By Pauline M. Ritter nee Flewett

At the time of writing last year's story on Molly Jones, I was missing various pieces of information. This follow up and the attached family trees should fill out the story of our Molly and her family.

Molly was the daughter of Edward Gyles, a farmer, and his wife, Ann Smallman. Edward and Ann were married in the parish of Chetton on May 21, 1773 by license, with witnesses Richard Smallman and Mary Hassall on hand to observe the event.

Edward and Ann had nine children. John, Edward, Richard, Thomas and George were all baptized at Chetton. Molly was baptized at Glazely as was another child, Benjamin. The last two children, Ann and James, were both baptized at Chetton. Benjamin is not shown on the Gyles family tree as his birth has not yet been confirmed by this author. If he was the sixth child of Edward and Ann, then Molly would have been the seventh child, just like her first husband, James Adams Flewett.

Edward Giles's., was shown as a Church Warden during the years 1789 and 1796 in the Chetton parish registers. He was buried on May 13, 1807 at Chetton. His wife's death is not known but no record of Ann's burial could be found in the Chetton parish registers up to 1812.

I previously thought that the Ann Gyles who was a witness at the marriage of Molly and James was Molly's sister, Ann. Unless a burial record for their mother, Ann, can be found, then the witness, Ann Gyles, is left open to debate. She could have been the mother or the sister. The other witness at Molly's wedding, John Gyles, I feel safe in assuming was Molly's eldest brother, John. Molly's sister Ann, was buried on May 17, 1879 at Gibraltar, Bewdley, four years after Molly died. The death certificate shows "Decay of Nature" as the cause of death.

The death certificate of Molly's daughter, Mary Ann, showed the date of death as November 9th 1846. This agrees with the date of death shown on the death duty register of the will of James Adams Flewett, Mary Ann's father. She was only twenty nine years of age and died of Phthisis, consumption, or in our times, tuberculosis.

Molly's grandson, Edward, was found to have been born at Chelmarsh on February 27th, 1840. Her second granddaughter Emma, was born on February 21st, 1842 also at Chelmarsh.

Edward Hughes, Jr., made out his will on July 30th, 1864 when he was only twenty four years old. He left his father as the sole executor of his estate. However, Edward, Sr., died in 1879 and Edward, Jr., did not pass away until July 14th, 1881. Edward, Jr.'s sister, Emma Bellow, was the one who took care of the estate. She and her husband, John were both shown on the 1881 census, however, by the time of Edward's death in July of that year, she was a widow.

Although marriage records have not been found, Edward, Sr., did have two more children. Both girls, Ann and Catherine Fanny Hughes, were mentioned in his son's will as his half sisters.

Edward, Jr. died of "Chronic Brain Disease of many years standing Convulsions 48 hours". He died at Stretton House, Church Stretton, forty-one years of age, with the informant being the superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum, Stretton House. What a sad way to die.

**Nicholls of Alveley** by Alan James Nicholls

In my book "The History of Alveley" which I published in 1994, I referred to the reason that I had first become interested in Alveley. The reason was that I was looking for my Shropshire ancestors and Alveley was the home of a Nicholls family which were possibly of my family line. I had collected quite a lot of detail about the Alveley family and have added to that detail since publishing the book. I have now pulled together all the Nicholls references which I have found and have presented them in date order in the following article. The Nicholls family held property throughout the parish but their main holdings were at The Lowe, The Bowells and Perry House.

There were several different Nicholls families residing in Alveley but I have been unable to find whether they descended from a common ancestor.

However I have a copy of a 17<sup>th</sup> century pedigree chart which is in the possession of John Parry Wingfield, descendant of the Lee family of Coton, which shows that the Nicolls family which lived at Bowhills descended from the Nicolls family of Faxton in Northamptonshire. I have tried to link the two families but have so far been unsuccessful. I believe that this link was used by Nicolls of Bowells to claim the arms of the Faxton family but proof of this has not been found.

**1521** Humphry Nicolls the elder, born (see 1584)

**1538** **John Nycols** witness to eleemosynary land deed - Kings Lea p.67.

30 Henry VIII (1539) Final Concord – William Whorwood, armiger & **William Nicholls & John Nicholls, clerk**, deforcients of 2 messuages, 200 acres of land, 20 acres meadow, 12 acres pasture, etc. in **Romsley, Lenmores, & Alveley**. Deforcients remitted all right to William Whorwood for which he gave them £110.

**1548-9 Public Record Office (PRO). Ref. E310/46 Sir George Blount – his propert in Alveley – nice roll – difficult latin.**  
Chantry house in Alveley & property there and in Nordley – **in tenure of James Nycolle**.

A messuage called Platters – Thomas Elcock. A messuage – William? Jordan. A messuage in Northley of Humfrey Fearnall. A pasture called Knotley, Tadpole, The Held – Humfrey Holloway. A pasture called Wymonde Field – John Holwey. A cottage – Thomas Clerk. A cottage – Elizabeth Smith & Roger Elcock. A pasture called Ales Furlong – Humfrey Potter. Le Shams? – Thomas Longmore. John Longley, John Bykardine, William Perry? Thomas Potter, Edmund Sheynton, Thomas Spytt.

**1558** **Thomas Nycolls** – Took inventory of goods of Edward Jurden – Will of Edward Jurden – Lichfield RO

**1559** Will of William Else- Lichfield RO.

**Margaret Nycolls** owed William Else 2s.

**Humfrey Nycolls** owed William Else 2s.

I have a takyng of a lesowe of **John Nycolls of the Stonne Howse** joyning unto Lydebroke for as many yeares as I had of the same John Nycolls of a leasow upon the Tucke Hill & 2 years further.

The same **John Nycolls** owes me 8s.

**c. 1560** Kings Lea p.33. Harl. 605 – chantry rents.

f.16v. **The Chantry House**, with three closes or pastures, one meadow and certain arable lands with their appurtances in Alveley in tenure of **James Nicholles**, leased to him by indenture for a term of years, paying by the year 40s.

f.17. A third part of one meadow called **Brewers Meadow** in tenure of **William Nicholles** at will, paying by the year 3s.4d.

f.17. Similar rents arising from divers lands and tenements in occupation of **John Nicholles**, by the year 8d.

Parish Register	1561	William Nychals	Warden
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**6 Oct 1562** Fine (Shropshire RO - **BO 1/2/49**)

**Humfrey Nycolls** plt. – Thomas Throckmorton and Margaret his wife deforcients. – moiety of 4 acres of meadow, 100 acres pasture & 6 acres wood in Alveley & Romsley.

**1562** Will of John Baskerfield of Alveley – Lichfield RO (My Ref 401d)  
Debts owing the testator – **John Nicolls of Stonhouse** – 17 strikes of barley  
**John Nycoll** – 16d.

**1562** Will of Agnes Gravenor – Lichfield RO witness **Peter Nycolls**

25 Apr	1562	Mark	s. Jhon Nicoles	Bap
4 Jun	1562	William Nicholls		Bur
13 Jun	1562	Alice	d. Thomas Nycoles	Bap
15 Jul	1562	Mychaell	s. Henry Nycoles	Bap
27 Sep	1563	Thomas Nycoles	s. James and Alice Nycoles	Bap

**1 Feb 1564** (C66/999 membrane 12 – long roll in latin – would be nice to get copied.- have only noted names and fields where I can decipher them. Needs much time to transcribe) Land held by the Chantry.

(Chantry) lately of **Jacobi Nicholls**, one message called Platters. Thomas Clerik, George Jurden in Nordley. Humfrey Ffearnall a pasture called Knotley and one called Tadpoles Meadow & Le Held. Humfrey Holloway a pasture called Symonde & ?. John Hardett?? a cottage and all pertaining. Thomas Clerke a cottage and all pertaining. Roger Elcocke – Ales Furlong. Humfrey Potter. Thomas Longmore. **William Nicholls** – Alveleyfeild.

9 Apr	1564	Frances	d. Humfrey Nycoles	Bap
17 Sep	1564	Launcelot	s. Jho Nycoles	Bap
21 Oct	1565	Johane	d. Henry Nycoles	Bap

**1565/6** Will of Roger Holway – Lichfield RO – **Margaret Nycols**, widow, owes me for 4 strikes of malt.

	1566	Henry Nycols	Warden	
30 Sep	1566	Jacobus Nycolles s. Hugonis Nycoles	Elizabeth Adams de Claverley	Mar
29 Jan	1567	Thomas	s. Humfrey Nicoles	Bap
27 Jul	1567	Margaret	d. James Nycoles	Bap
2 Oct	1567	Margaret	d. James Nycoles	Bur
13 Dec	1567	James Nycoles		Bur

**18 May 1567** Arbitration (Shropshire RO – BO 1/2/55)

Arbitration between **Humfrey Nycolls** of Dowelles (Bowells?), yeoman, **Humfrey & Francis his sons** vs. Thomas Pennell of Wodson co. Worcester, yeoman & Agnes his wife one of the daughters of Humfrey Lowe; concerning land and tenements of Humfrey Lowe dec.

**Humfrey Nycolles the elder** claims in right of his son Humfrey all the mansion house called the Lowe but the Lowe was divided between the parties. Humfrey Nycolles the younger shall have all the womens settes or kneeling in the church of Alveley, belonging to the Lowe. – Witnessed by **Richard Nycholletes** etc.

20 Mar	1568	Margery	d. John Nycoles	Bap
10 May	1568	Hugh Nycoles		Bur
8 Jun	1568	Hugh	s. James Nycoles	Bur
29 Aug	1568	Francis Nycoles		Bur
20 Mar	1569	Margery	d. John Nycoles	Bap
25 Jun	1569	Cassandra	d. Henry Nycoles	Bap
25 Jun	1569	Cassandra	d. Henry Nycoles	Bap
18 Sep	1571	William Payne	Clemens Nycoles	Mar
25 Nov	1571	Margaret	d. Thomas Nycoles and one Katherine, servant of Mr Humfrey Lee of Coten	Bur
1 Dec	1572	Thomas	s. Thomas Nycoles	Bap
28 May	1574	Abraham	s. John Nycoles, (ston) sen	Bap
5 Sep	1575	Joane	d. James Nycoles	Bap
7 Oct	1575	Joane	d. Henry Nycoles	Bur

**1576** – Kings Lea p.55. **John Nicholls**, church warden, & yeoman. **Humphry Nicholls**, witness.

**Patent Rolls** – **19 Jan 1577** – Richard Nicholletes son of William als. Richard of Wyketon, Hereford – Richard Nicholletes son of James.

3 Feb	1577	James Nycoles	Elizabeth Overton	Mar
23 Jan	1578	Frances	s. James Nycoles	Bap
31 May	1578	Margaret Nycoles		Bur
14 Feb	1579	John	s. James Nycoles	Bap
10 Mar	1579	Humfrey	s. John Nycoles	Bap
28 Apr	1579	Mychaell	s. Henry Nycols	Bur
3 Aug	1579	Frances	d. Humfrey Nycoles	Bap
10 Oct	1579	Margaret Nycoles		Bur

**18 Feb 1579** – Patent Rolls 1127 (C66/1182?) – Pardon for Edward Brown of Tatton, Cheshire, servingman indicted with David Lawley of Compton, Staffs, & Arthur Lawley, for stealing a horse worth £4 from **Richard Nicolles** of Alveley on 26<sup>th</sup> Apr. last.

31 Aug	1580	Jane	d. James Nycoles	Bap
26 Oct	1580	Jhoane	w. William Nycoles	Bur
7 Nov	1580	Jonas	s. Humfrey Nycoles	Bap
13 Nov	1580	Agnes	d. James Nycoles	Bap
12 Dec	1580	Joane Nycoles		Bur
29 Jan	1581	Margaret Nycoles		Bur

**1581** – Ped. Fin, 23 Eliz, Pas.( Bird. 523) **Humfrey Nicolls the younger**, deforcient, recognises that he holds of George Blyke, the plaintiff, certain lands by fealty and the yearly rent of one penny.

??	1583	Thomas	s. James Nycoles	Bap
28 Jul	1583	Margaret	d. James Nycoles	Bap
10 Feb	1584	Peter Nycoles		Bur
23 Aug	1584	Mary	d. Humfrey Nycols	Bur
30 Aug	1584	John	s. William Nycoles of the Stonehouse	Bap
3 Oct	1585	John Nycoles		Bur
16 Jan	1586	Humfrey	s. James Nycoles	Bap
20 May	1586	Priscilla	d. Humfrey Nycoles	Bap

**1584/5** – **Humfrey Nicolls, the elder**, called to corroborate evidence by George Blyke about Grauntham Mill.

**PRO. E134/29&30Eliz/Mich12 – 6 parchments – long**

*Depositions of witnesses taken at Bridgnorth 28<sup>th</sup> August 26 Eliz on behalf of Humfrey Elcock, complainant.*

1. *George Blyke of Astley, gent, 33? years or thereabouts – knows parties, mill, cottage, 4 parcels of pasture & meadow now in the occupation of the complainant or his assigns. That John Blyke, his father, was in his lifetime, lawfully seized of the said mill etc. in capite.. of the Queen – John Blyke did lease the premises to John Elcock – and that this deponent did deliver to Mr John Whitebroke the counter piece part of the indenture of lease. John left the premises to George, his son, and he conveyed it to Katherine Lownd – John Whitebroke, her son in law, conveyed it to her servant & authorised? The complainant hath been troubled by distress taken of his goods by the bailiff of the hundred, John Heyward.*

*The people below also testified*

**Humfrey Nicolls of Alveley, the elder, yeoman, aged 3 score & 3 years.**

17 Dec	1588	Isabell	d. Alice Nycoles	Bap
9 Feb	1589	Henry	s. James Nycoles	Bap
6 Jun	1589	Sara	d. William Nycoles	Bap
16 Jun	1589	Margaret Nycoles		Bur
12 Oct	1589	Francis	s. John Nycoles	Bap

**20 Oct 1589 Indenture** (Shropshire RO – BO 1/2/68)

Between **Humfrey Nycolles of Alveley, yeoman & Humfrey Nycolles his only son** – quotes an indenture of 1 Nov 1572 about agreement of property. Signed **Henry Nycolls & John Nycolls**

**Shropshire Records and Research Centre: The More Collection [1037/8 - 1037/21]**

Agreement. - **ref. 1037/12/45** - **date:** 1 March, 24 Eliz. 1581/2

1. *John Nycolles of Alveley, Salop, yeo. & Mary, his wife.*

*Land:- one messuage, one garden, one orchard, 60a of land, 30a of meadow, 100a of pasture and 10a of wood in Alveley, Kinges Nordley and Snede.*

12 Jan	1590	Francis	s. David Nycoles	Bap
10 Mar	1590	Francis Nycoles		Bur
8 May	1591	The wife of	Thomas Nycoles	Bur
25 Jul	1591	Cassandra	d. David Nycoles	Bap
30 Jan	1592	Thomas	s. John Nycoles	Bap
1 Mar	1592	William Nycoles		Bur
18 Jun	1592	Margery	d. William Nycoles	Bap
5 Jun	1593	Anne & Elizabeth	d. Humfrey Nycoles	Bap
17 Sep	1593	Elizabeth	w. James Nycoles	Bur
13 Jan	1594	Elizabeth	d. James Nycoles	Bap
21 Apr	1594	Elizabeth	d. David Nycoles	Bap
21 Jul	1594	Elizabeth	d. David Nycoles	Bap
13 Oct	1594	John	s. John Nycoles	Bap
20 Jul	1595	Margery	d. David Nycoles	Bap

**SP46/20 fo.44. James Nicholls of Romsley 1596.**

To the right hon. Masters of Her Majesty's Court of Requests at Westminster.

Of late one James Nicholls of Romsley hath ?? in your majesty's court of requests and upon his oath that I, being (as he sayeth) the chiefest enemy that he, the said Nicholls, hath in the country where he dwelleth, and being indebted unto him (as he allegeth) should tell him that if he would acquite me of the same I would do him good in the cause wherein I was, with others, a commissioner for the examining of witnesses in a cause depending between one William Langley, complainant, and him, the said Nicholls, def. And that I should offer him in secret, that if he would give me part of the said debt I would kill the matter of his syde? as the said Nicholls hath in his said other ? alleged.

All which matter will be manifoldly proved to be contrary for as touching my being enemy unto him, it is well known in the country that there hath been always great amitie between us and that a little before the executing of the said commission he sent me reapers into my harvest, and I always used him well, and he me likewise, without any difference or cause thereof.

And for being indebted unto him it will be proved that I was not indebted unto him at that time, nor any time since above the sum of ten shillings which was left behind unpaid upon a bill of £17.10s. in regard that he not having the bill with him at the time that he received the said £17. should send the bill and receive the other 10s. Afterwards my steward had from him the value of £5.8s. which hath been tendered at his house for cattle bought of him.

And for his allegation that the examining of the said cause was chiefly dealt in by me he hath therein also wronged me greatly for the other commissioners did proceed therein according to the equitie of the cause. Wherein I refer myself to the rest of the commissioners upon their oaths, and where he also affirmeth upon his oath that I should ? from him discontented in regard he would not give or allow the said pte., I owing him but 10s. that I should tell him that Langley would give me and my man £40, I refer it to your own judgment how unlikely or ? it is that he who hath so long remained in prison without living or maintenance should make any such offer or be able to perform it.

And for the rectifying of the commission it was according to the truth of the depositions which could not have been ? done (as is alleged by the said Nicholls), without corruption in the other commissioners, if there had been any such intention in me as there was none, I am further to inform that honourable court that dealing with him, the said Nicholls, for motions of agreement in the said cause, he thanked me for my good will, and laying his hand upon his purse said that he would warrant me that he would spend well enough, for he deal well with the judges of the curt or their men, and had passed through greater matters than that was, and what could not money do. And further said that he would bestow largely in money, but he would suppress the commission by one means or another, and the depositions then directly taken di touch him with ? in causing the poor man Langley to seale a release instead of a bill of £5, and further with breaking into the house of the said Langley and taking away his goods and also with suspicion or show of murder, as by the deposition appeareth. Further he would have dealt with my man, the bearer hereof, to have had from him the copies of the depositions before they were certified. I have sent the bearer hereof to present against the said Nicholls in such sort, as he shall be advised by my learned counsell, either by bill in the Star Chamber, or action at the common law, knowing myself to be altogether clear and wronged above measure by the untrue allegations of the said Nicholls.

And this I am ready to averre all that I have written herein to be true, upon my oath, referring my credit to that honourable court before the unjust oath of such a loud person as the said Nicholls have showed himself of late to be. I humbly take my leave. Compton 28<sup>th</sup> October 1596.

Your most humble Whorwood.

**STAC5/W73/30**

James Nicolls of Alveley – his testimony – tenement in Romsley of Jane Elcock, one Plymley ....

Questions about the land of Thomas Whorwood in Romsley – was House Close in the tenure of John Jordan and Lancelot Baskerfield. – Difficult writing.

21 Sep	1597	James Nycoles	of Nordley	Bur
30 Apr	1598	Peter Nycoles		Bur
3 Sep	1598	Thomas	s. David Nycoles	Bap
8 Oct	1598	Henry Nycole's wife		Bur

**20 Apr 1598. – Will of Peter Nicholls**

To be buried in the churchyard at Alveley.

To Jane Keye £13. To Peter Sanfort £5. To Alyce Sanfort 3s.4d. To Anne Littleford £3.5s.8d. To Lancelot Littleford & John Littleford and their young sister £3.

To Henry Elcock – his three sons £3

**To my father & mother £5.**

To my **brother James** 12d. & **his two children** 5d. apiece.

**To Dorothy Holloway, my sisters daughter** £20. **To Theodora Holloway, my sister's daughter** £13.5s. **To James Holloway, my sister's son** 40s.

To Jane Keye a featherbead with the furniture thereto belonging.

My **wife's sister Anne** 40s.

To **Cassander Holloway, my sister** and to the child to which Cassander shall be next delivered all my goods whatever unbequeathed.

I give unto **John Nicholls & Edward Holloway** each 10s.

I make **Henry Nicholls my father** executor.

17 Apr	1599	Humfrey Nycoles	of the Pir'	Bur
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**20 May 1599. Will of Humfrey Nicolls of Alveley, yeoman.**

(PRO will. BO 1/4/1)

To be buried within parish church of Alveley where **his late father & mother** lie buried.

**Daughters Priscilla, Elizabeth & Anne U/21**

**Jonas Nicolls U/21 his only son** to have his moiety **of the Lowe** after 7 years.

Wife **Cassander Smithe** – Robert Smithe her brother.

**C142/677/18 IPM of Humfrey Nicolls**

James Elcock of Alveley

1 messuage, 1 cottage, gardens, pastures in Alveley, Nordley Regis & Romsley from George Blyke 'de quondam Jacobi Nicolls qui tempore mortis (de Astley'

Jonas Nicolls, his son & heir.

**c. 1601.** (Bird) "Astley was held shortly after 1601 by **James Nicolls**, but how he acquired it, I have not been able to discover. From a series of Fines, it appears that he had been buying up one piece after another of the Blyke estate from those to who it had been sold, and I gather from other sources that he seriously impoverished himself in doing so; but I cannot find among these purchases any distinct mention of the Manor, or of the capital messuage, of Astley. The evidence of some of the witnesses in the suit to which I have previously referred in the court of Exchequer, seems to single out a purchase in 1597 from Sir Francis Newport, who had himself bought of George Blyke in 1585". (See Ped Fin 27 Eliz, Pas.; 39 & 40 Eliz, Michs. Rot. Pat, 27 Eliz, pt 8, 39 Eliz pt 19.; Exch. Deps. 29 & 30 Eliz. Mich, No12. Elcock v Lound.)

**1601.** C142/677/18 **Humphrey Nicolls** – Salop 43 Eliz, 1601 (Shropshire RO Bo 1/2/87) – Inquisition Post Mortem-

James Elcock of Alveley, yeoman says **Humphrey Nicolls** was seized of a messuage, land etc. in Nordley Regis, Alveley & Romsley in fee of George Blyke.

**James Nicolls of Astley, father of Humphrey. Humphrey died and Jonas Nicolls aged 19 years 11 months at his fathers death is his son & heir.**

14 Feb	1602	William Nycoles	Alice Longmor	Mar
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28 Aug	1603	Richard	s. Jonas Nycoles	Bap
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11 Dec	1603	Humfrey	s. David Nycols	Bap
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### 28 January, 5 Jas I 1607/8

Quitclaim from John Niccolles of Asteley Astley in the parish of Alveley co. Salop, son of James Niccolles of Ramesley Ramsley in the parish of Alveley, gent., and Marye, his wife, daughter of William Acocke of Yardeley to the said William Acocke of Yardeley Yardley gent., of a cottage with buildings, land and appurtenances in Sheldon. Parchment. - **ref. MS 3888/A 984** - Birmingham City Archives: Wingfield Digby family of Sherborne Castle, Dorset and Coleshill, Warwickshire: the Warwickshire estate papers

**1605** Shropshire RO Deed– witness. **Henry Nicholls** in part possession of message & tenement called **Platters– John Nicolls**

25 Jan	1605	Francis	s. Jonas Nycoles	Bap
10 Nov	1605	Mary Nycoles	of the Stonehouse	Bur
20 Feb	1606	Alice Nycoles		Bur
9 Mar	1606	Isabell	d. David Nycoles	Bap
1 May	1606	Henry Nycoles		Bur
14 Dec	1606	Basell	s. Jonas Nycolles	Bap
3 Feb	1608	John Glasiarde	Margaret Nycoles	Mar
28 Aug	1608	Richard Blackway	Priscilla Nicolles	Mar
4 Sep	1608	Ambrose	s. Jonas Nicolles	Bap
4 Sep	1608	Dorytye	d. John Nicolles of the Stonhouse	Bap
25 Nov	1608	James Nicolles		Bur
29 Nov	1608	William	s. John Nicolles of Asley	Bap

### 1608 Will of James Nicholls the elder of Romsley, yeoman (PRO will)

I give and bequeath unto **Humphrey Nicholls, my son** & to his heirs forever, All that message house or tenement called **Donibolds**, together with all edifices, buildings, dovehouses, orchards, gardens, closes & meadows, leasows, pastures, commons, woods, underwoods, waters, ponds, pools, commodities, rents and services whatsoever unto the said message or tenement belonging or in any way appertaining.

Item. I give and bequeath to **my said son Humphrey** and to his heirs forever all my **lands in Alveley, Romsley, called the Marishes?** now in the occupation of Richard Newell.

**To Humphrey** the house called **the Crown situate in the town of Bridgnorth** now in possession of John Newe **and my house in Low Town** now in occupation of ? Wynne.

To **my son William Nichols**, £20

Executrix – **Elizabeth my wife**.

**John Nicholls my brother**.

Witnesses: **John Nicholls**. Henry Plymley.

**James Nicholls the younger. Margaret Nicholls**.

**1609** Shropshire RO deed 1339/9 - mentions land of John Nicholls of Bowells.

25 Mar	1609	Richard	base s. Humfrey Nicolles & Mary	Bap
30 Oct	1609	Francis Nicoles	of Bowells	Bur
30 Dec	1609	Humfrey Nicolles	of Romsley	Bur
19 Feb	1610	Humfrey Lowe	Elizabeth Nicolles	Mar
23 Sep	1610	Margaret	d. Jonas Nicolles	Bap
28 Oct	1610	Francis	s. John Nicolles of the Stonhouse	Bap

### 1610 Will of Humphrey Nicholls (PRO will)

**Late father James Nicholls** bequeathed to me Dunibolds & Dimvalds & Marishes.

And now the said Humphrey Nicholls for the natural love and affection which I bear unto **John Nicholls of Astley** in the foresaid parish of Alveley, **my natural brother**, I do give unto him and his heirs forever all Dumbolds & Marishes.

My father left **my brother William** £20. John shall pay this plus £20.

I make and ordain my brother John my executor and I make and ordain my **overseer John Nicholls of Stonehouse** to see this my last will & testament

To my **mother Elizabeth** I give all my goods and chattels.

Witnesses: **John Nicholls of Bowells. John Nicholls of Stonehouse. James Nicholls**

**1610 Inquisition Post Mortem of James Nicholls**

Witnesses – Roger Rotsley of Rotsley, Lancelot Ridley of Astley Abbots, William Cheese of Astley Abbots, Richard Elcock of Chetton, John Habiton de Chetton, Thomas Solman of Burwarton;

Who say that James Nicholls of Bridgnorth had a capital messuage called Astley Hall

**PRO.WARD7/42/69 – James Nicholls – Salop – damaged.**

Bridgnorth 15<sup>th</sup> April 1610.

Inquisition – Capital messuage called Astley Hall and a cottage in tenancy of Thomas Elcock and also Catt Crofts in Alveley lately in tenure of George Pountney, clerk and also one cottage and one messuage in Romsley and also Dunbold in Alveley. A messuage in Bridgnorth called ? in occupation of John Nelde? Johem Nicholls son & heir.

Astley Hall, one pature of land called Culverhouse Field, pasture called Ffegge Leasow. Four parcels of land in tenure of James Jurden. Land called Le Hookes in Romsley.

John Nicolls de Stonehouse, Rico Acocks, Jacobi Nicholls and Elizabeth his wife

(Continues in English – some faded)

I give and bequeath unto Humphrey Nicholls sonne and his heirs forever all that my messuage, house or tenements with the appurtances situate in parish of Alveley called Dunbold together with all belonging. To my said son Humfrie Nicholls all my leasowes and pastures situated in the parish of Alveley commonly called ? in occupation of Richard Newett. Also houses in the town of Bridgnorth in occupation of John Newe.

19 Feb	1610	Humfrey Lowe	Elizabeth Nicolles	Mar
23 Sep	1610	Margaret	d. Jonas Nicolles	Bap
28 Oct	1610	Francis	s. John Nicolles of the Stonhouse	Bap
4 Aug	1611	Elizabeth	d. John Nicolles of Astley	Bap
22 Aug	1611	Mary	w. John Nicolles of Astley	Bur
5 Jan	1612	Jonas	s. John Nicolles of the Stonhouse	Bap
30 Jan	1612	James	s. John Nicolles	Bur
13 Mar	1612	Garrard	s. Jonas Nicolles	Bap
9 Jan	1613	John	s. John Nicolles of the Stonhouse	Bap
5 Jul	1613	Elizabeth	d. John Nicoles of Bowels	Bur
29 Jun	1614	Winyfred	d. John Nicolles of the Stonehouse	Bap
17 Jul	1614	Sara	d. Jonas Nicolles	Bap
2 Nov	1614	Alice Nicoles	widow	Bur
1 Jan	1615	James	s. John Nicolles of Asley	Bap
9 Jan	1616	Margaret	d. John Nicolles of the Stonehouse	Bap
10 Nov	1616	Anne	d. John Nicolls of Asley	Bap

**3 March 1616 Thomas Nicolls of Bow Hills married Eleanor Lee of Coton Hall. at Alveley**

**1616/17 Indenture – Jonas Nicolls - Shropshire RO Deed 14514 -**

This indenture made the sixth daye of January in the yeares of the raigne of our sovereign Lord James by the grace of God, king of England, Scotland, france & Ireland, defender of the faith. That is to say in the year of his majesties reign of England, France & Ireland the fowertenth and of Scotland the ffyfty. Between **Roger Hytchcoxe of Chesterton** in the county of Salop, gent, on the one part **and Jonas Nycolles of Piryhowse in the parish of Alveley** in the county aforesaid, gent, on the other part. Witnesseth that the said Roger Hytchcoxe aforesaid, for and in consideration of the some of thyrtye powndes of lawful and currant English money unto hym well & truly contented and payde whereof & wherewith the sayd Roger Hytchcoxe doth acknowledge himself to be fully contented, satisfied & payd and thereof and of any part and parcel thereof doth acquit & clearly discharge the sayd Jonas Nycolls, his heyres, executors & administrators and any of them by these presentments as also

for diverse & sundry good other good causes & reasonable considerations hym thereunto ? specyally moving hath gyven granted bargayned sold alienated enfeoffed delyvered & conformed and by these presentments from hym and his heyres doth fully clearly & absolutely give, grant bargayne, sell, alyen, enfeoffe delyver & confirm unto the sayd Jonas Nycolles hys heyres & assignes forever all that close, pasture and parcell of land with the appurtances conteyning by estymacon fower acres or thereabouts beyt more or lesse comonly called or knowen by the name or names of **Startes** lying and being in the parish of Alveley in the sayd county and nowe or late in the tenure or occupacon of Thomas Elcock or of his assignes or undertennants. And all and all manner of buyldinge, woods, underwoods & trees, water & water courses, comons, wayes, pathes, easements & fitte rents, commoditytes and all and singler other hereditaments whatsoever with all and singler theyre appurtenances whatsoever unto the sayd close, pasture or parcel of land and other the premises before by these presentments meconed, meant or intended to be bargayned & sold or to any part or parcel thereof belonging or in anywise appertaining or to or with the same close, pasture or parcel of land and other the premises or to or with any part or parcel thereof at any tyme heartofore demysed used let occupied or enjoyed. And the revercon & revercons, remaynder & remaynders of all and singler the premisses & of any part or parcel thereof with the appurtances. And all the estate, right title, interest, use, possession, clayme & demands whatsoever of the sayd Roger Hitchcoxe and of his heyres of in and to the premisses & of in and to any part or parcel thereof with the appurtances. Together with all manner of deeds, wrytings whatsoever concerning only the premises or any part or parcell thereof together with the towe copyes of all other deeds, evydenes, writings concerning the premises with any other messuages, lands, tenements or hereditaments to be wrytten & made at the coste & charge of the sayd Jonas Nycolles his heyres executors administrators or assignes. He the sayd Roger Hychcoxe for hym, his heyres executors & administrators & for any of them doth covenant promise & grant to and with the sayd Jonas Nycolles his heyres executors administrators & assigns & to & with any of them by these presentments to delyver or cause to be delyvered unto the sayd Jonas Nycolles his heyres or assignes before the feast of the Natyvytye of our Lord Sayvor Jesus Christ next ensuing the day of the date of these presentments without any further or longer delay. To have and to hold all the sayd close, pasture or parcel of lands and all other the premises before by these presentments menconed meant or intended to be bargayned and sold and any part and parcel thereof with the appurtances unto the sayd Jonas Nycolls, his heyres and assignes to the only proper use and behoof of the sayd Jonas Nycolls and of his heyres and assigns forever. And the sayd Roger Hychcoxe for hym, his heyres, executors and administrators and for any of them doeth covenant demise and grant to and with the sayd Jonas Nycolls, hys heyres, executors, administrators and assigns and to and with every of them by these presentments in manner and form following, that is to say that he the sayd Roger Hychcoxe, his heyres or assignes, before the feast of St Andrew the apostle next ensuing the day of the date of these presentments shall and will make or cause ?? to be had and made unto the sayd Jonas Nycolls and his heyres to the only and proper use and behoof of the same Jonas Nycolls and of his heyres and assignes forever as aforesaid a good, sure, sufficient, lawful, perfect, absolute and ?? estate in fee symple of and in all the sayd close, pasture or parcel of lande and of all other the premises before menconed to be bargayned and sold and of every part and parcel therof with the appurtenances ? by the sayd Jonas Nycolls, his heyres or assignes or by his or them or any of them ? learned in the lawe at his or theyre owne ? costs and charges in the lawe shall be reasonably devysed or advysed Ans that the sayd close, pasture or parcel of land and all other the premises before menconed to be bargayned and sold as aforesayd and every part and parcel thereof with the appurtances now is are and be and at the tyme of the making of the said estate so to be thereof made as aforesaid shall be and forever hereafter continue and be cleare and clearly appointed, acquitted and discharged and from tyme to tyme and at all and any tyme and tymes hereafter saved and kept harmless by the sayd Roger Hychcoxe, his heyres, executors and administrators or by some or one of them of and from all and all manner of former and other bargaynes, sales, gyfts, grantes, leases, rents, charge rents, ? annytyes, joyntures, dowers, ?? and of the staple judgements .....etc.

Signed Jonas Nicolls

3 Mar	1617	Thomas Nicolls	Elioner Lee	Mar
11 Jun	1617	John Nicolls	of Bowells	Bur
3 Jul	1617	Margaret Nicolls	of Bowells	Bur
5 Feb	1618	William	s. John Nicolls of Asley	Bur
14 Jun	1618	Fardinando	s. Thomas Nicolles	Bap
27 Jun	1618	Fardinando	s. Thomas Nicolles	Bur
30 Aug	1618	Margaret	d. John Nicolls of Asley	Bap
20 Jun	1619	Dorothie	d. James Nicolls of Bowelles	Bap
1 Aug	1619	Henry Nicoles	s. James Nicolls	Bur
29 Aug	1619	Margaret	d. Nicolles of Asley	Bap
6 Sep	1619	James Nicolls		Bur
25 Jun	1620	Jane	d. Jo. Nicolls of Asley	Bap
27 Dec	1622	Anne	d. Thomas Nicholls of Bowells	Bap

**1622 Mr Whorwoods rents**

A fee farm to **James Nicholls** of land in Romsley

A waste to **Mr Thomas Nycolles of land called Pewrke Ryddings in Romsley**

**Mr Thomas Nycolles chiffe rent for Bowells** – herriot the best beast & 2 capons.

**Thomas Nycolles of the Chawntrey****Jonas Nycolles & Mr William Pennell for the Lowe House****Thomas Nycolls for Bowells****David Nycolles for part of his house in Alveley – three lives.**

27 Mar	1624	John Nicoles	of the Stonehouse	Bur
22 Aug	1624	Edward	s. John Nicoles of Astley	Bap
6 Feb	1625	Launcelot	s. Thomas Nicoles of Bowells	Bap
2 Jun	1625	Ambrose	s. Jonas Nicoles	Bur
15 Jun	1625	Margret	w. Jonas Nicoles	Bur
30 Dec	1626	Elizabeth	d. John Nicoles	Bap

**1626 Fine** (Shropshire RO BO 1/2/98)

Between Edward Sebright gent & **Richard Nicholetts gent** plt. and Edward Pennell esq. def. concerning 2 messuages etc in Alveley.

**1627 Fine** (as above) (Shropshire RO BO 1/2/100)**Richard Nicholletts of Bishops Stanforde**, co. Hertford, gent**E134/3&4 Chas I/ Hil 15** -(1627/8) - Needs full transcription

Extracts from Interrogation on behalf of Lancelot Lee esq. Complainant against Francis Dovey, John Dovey his son, John White, Thomas Bache, John Martin the elder, Humfrey Jordan, Thomas Fletcher esq. And Elizabeth his wife, William Wolriche, Thomas Wolriche, Roger Perry, Richard Dovie & Francis his son & Stephen Jannes.

Do you know lands within the manor of Nordley called Parches, Youngs Place alias Inkes Place, Bickerstaffe, Heiresa Land, Milhouse, Oldfields, Fillilode, Ingrams alias Ingwardens, Tuncks, Greenhouse Waste, Brutons Lands, Backwardens, **Nicholls**, Whitehouse, Dolmans alias Ringehalse, Stonehouse, Shedhouse, Nedges, Hardwick, Scotts, Twentie Penny Lands, Birdslands.

Names tenants who may owe herriotts and rents etc.

Deposition of Henry Penn of Clent, Staffs.,

Deposition of Thomas Lye of Chelmarsh says **John Nicholls** was seized of one house and lands called **Stonehouse in Nordley** worth about £20 per annum. **William Nicholls conveyed his lands to John Nicholls.**

Thomas Potter, 26, deposes Thomas Lee, father of complainant.

John Lee, son of said Thomas mentioned.

Humfrey Arden, gent, aged 55, of Nordley Regis deposes. – John Lea complainant's grandfather.

George Cantrell of Kingsnordley aged 54 deposes – **John Nicholls died 4 or 5 years since seized of the Stonehouse and Shedhouse**

Francis Bromwich of Astley, gent, aged 22, deposes. **John Nicholls** gave to John Bromwich, this deponent's father a parcel of land in Kingsnordley called Tunks farling (Furlong?)

Roger Potter of Alveley, miller, aged 33, deposes

Josias Lee of Bridgnorth, gent aged 58 deposes. – His father, John Lee who by conveyance from his father and then to Thomas Lee owners of the manor. He says **William Nicholls about 36 years since, did convey the Stonehouse & Shedhouse to John Nicholls.**

4 Feb?	1627	Humfrey Hill	Isabell Nicoles	Mar
24 Feb	1628	Martha	d. Thomas Nicoles	Bap
8 Jun	1629	Thomas Jones	Margery Nicoles	Mar
4 Sep	1629	Humfrey Nicoles		Bur
1 Nov	1629	Margret	d. Rich. Nicoles of Perryhouse	Bap
10 May	1630	George	s. John Nicoles of the Low	Bap
30 May	1630	Thomas	s. Thomas Nicoles of Bowells	Bap

9 Dec	1631	Cassandra Nicoles	widow	Bur
15 Jan	1632	Humfrey	s. Richard Nicoles	Bap
6 Oct	1633	John	s. Francis Nicoles of the Stonehouse	Bap

**C5/1/17 Baskerville vs Ruston 1633** – mutilated – disjointed extracts only.

3 closes called Oldfields, Hares Close or Hasells Close, 2 crofts or batches in Romsley.

John & James Baskerville.

**Thomas Nicholls – well & truly paid did grant to John Nicholls** the two field closes called Over High Bridge field and Nether High Bridge field. William Ruston had the same in right of Elizabeth his wife.

£38 paid by Francis Baskerfield devised to him by Roger Reynolds – gave & bequeathed to William Willitt, his son in law, and Johane his wife the four said closes, also to Joyce his wife and Elizabeth his daughter now wife of William Ruston and Jane now wife of Henry Whitefoote.

Lots more but difficult to read as document needs straightening.

7 Jan	1634	Joane	d. Richard Nicoles	Bap
8 Mar	1635	Isabell	d. John Nicoles	Bap
20 Dec	1635	Isabell	d. Richard Nicoles	Bap
14 Feb	1636	Francis	s. Francis Nicoles	Bap
23 Feb	1636	Elizabeth	d. John Nicoles	Buur
23 Jun	1637	Richard Nicoles		Bur
30 Dec	1637	John (illegible)	Mary Nicoles	Mar
23 Dec	1638	Jane?	d. Francis Nicoles	Bap

**1639 Will of William Browne of Romsley, yeoman (PCC 39 Harvey) - extracts**

To Elizabeth Langley two sheep. **To Thomas Nicolls the son of Edward Nicolls** 20s. Executor my wife Anne – all the rest of goods.

16 Apr	1640	William Nicoles		Bur
17 Jan	1641	James	s. Francis Nicholes	Bap
31 Jan	1641	Thomas Penn	Joyce Nicolles	Mar
10 Feb	1643	John Nicoles	of the Catch	Bur
19 Mar	1643	Cateren	d. Francis Nicols	Bap
13 Oct	1643	Thomas Nicholes	of Bowels	Bur
2 Mar	1645	Thomas	s. Francis Nicoles	Bap
16 Jun	1645	Margery Nicoles	widow	Bur
30 Sep	1645	Jonas Nicoles, gent		Bur
26 Nov	1646	John	s. Francis Nicoles	Bur
25 Feb	1647	Humfrey Potter	Margret Nicholes	Mar
20 Jun	1647	Adam	s. Francis Nicoles	Bap
19 Sep	1648	Launcelott Nicoles	Margaret Shephard	Mar
5 Aug	1649	Thomas	s. Mr Launcelott Nicoles	Bap

**1649 Will of Thomas Nicholls of Bowells (PCC 148 Fairfax) - extracts**

Unto Thomas Nicoles my son all my freehold land and tenements in Quatt and in the lordship of Kings Nordley after the decease of Ellinor my wife.

To my three daughters Jane, Anne & Martha Nicoles £150 apiece.

To Thomas Nicoles my servant 20 marks - Out of my lands and rents in Alveley and Romsley

My will is that my wife Ellinor shall have out of my barn at Mose so much corn and grain to seed her land at Mose for the Rye crop and also for the lent crop and to find her house there until harvest. Also I give her my black mare and two feather beds and such pewter and brass as she shall think fit. I do desire my good brother in law Mr Lancelot Lee to be my overseer. Also my will is that my son and heir shall keep and maintain my brother John Nicoles with sufficient meat, drink and apparel during his life out of my lands at Bowells. Thomas Nicols. Witnesses. Lancelot Lee, Joyce Penn, her mark. Robert Gravenor.

**1655 Will of Thomas Nicholls of Moase, Quatt. (PRO fo.134)**

3 children John, Thomas & Elizabeth £40.

Wife Elizabeth

3 nephews Thomas, Richard, Robert – children of sister Joyce Pen

Cousin mistress Ellinor Nicholls exec.  
Brother in law master John Corfield & cousin Lancelot Nicolls overseers.  
Mark of Thomas Nicholls.

**PRO C10/466/55 Nicholls 12<sup>th</sup> June 1658**

Orator Katherine Cullwicke of Quatford, spinster, and John Cullwicke of Bridgnorth, an infant, by John Dade, gent, his guardian. That whereas one Francis Nicholls of the Stonehouse in parish of Alveley, yeoman, by indenture 27<sup>th</sup> August 1645 between Francis and Katherine and John, did for £20 paid by John Cullwicke, orators father, then living at Quatford, leased to Katherine one parcell of land in Kings Nordley called Kitte Meadow for 99 years and £1 for three years at end of August – No payment was made of this.

Francis Nicholls procured the lease by some sinister and indirect means from one Margaret Whirthead my aunt – he concealed it until John Cullwicke died – and now takes the profits of Kitte Meadow and leased the same to one John Goodman of Alveley, yeoman. And one other lease to Humphrey Grove of Alveley, gent and one other lease to Thomas Batch of Alveley, yeoman – they fell and cut down timber growing upon the premises to a great value and they share the profits.

**Will of Richard Davys of Harts Green, Alveley (PCC 1665 fo.14) - extract**

Item. I give unto my two grandchildren Elizabeth and Dorothy the two daughters of my daughter Joane Nicolls the sum of twenty pounds apeece to be payd unto each of them within sixe months next after my decease, and my will is that my executor shall take an acquittance from each of them for the payment thereof which shall be to him a sufficient discharge for the same.

-

**1666 Will of Elizabeth Nicholls of Mose, Quatt (Lichfield RO)**

Wife of late Thomas Nicholls of Mose (will 1665 above)  
Son Thomas, John – not 21.  
Daughter Elizabeth £40.

**PRO C7/247/4** Small document. Nicholls vs Bach. – Bill of complaint of **Francis Nicholls** 1667 was presented before Wiliam Bradeley of Salop for not paying his common rate or tax towards the repair of the church of Alveley and did not appear before the judge when summoned and was lawfully excommunicated.

**1667 Will of Cassandra Nicolls of Alveley (PCC fo.49)**

In the name of God Amen. I Cassandra Nicolls of Alveley in the county of Salop being in competent good health and of good and perfect remembrance doe make this my last will and testament in manner and forme following. That is to say ffirst I bequeath my soule into the hands of Almighty God and Jesus Christ my only saviour and redeemer and my body to bee buried in a decent and christian manner. And of my worldly goods wherewith God hath blessed me I dispose as followeth. Imprimis I give and bequeath to my brother Thomas Nicolls the lease of the house wherein I now live for and during the terme yet unexpired. Item. I give and bequeath to Elizabeth the daughter of Humfrey Bennett three pounds. Item. I give and bequeath to Ellenor the daughter of William Fforrest three pounds. Item. I give and bequeath to Humfrey Jones fforty shillings. Item. I give and bequeath to my neece Anne Jones fforty shillings. Item. I doe give and bequeath to Anne daughter of Humfrey Bennett fforty shillings. Item. I give and bequeath to John Hill twenty shillings. Item. I give and bequeath to Izabell Petoe? twenty shillings. Item. I give and bequeath Margery James fforty shillings. Item. I give and bequeath to my cosen James Jones three pounds if hee the said James comes personally to demand it within the space of three years next after my decease otherwise it is my will that the said three pounds bee paid to my cousin Anne Jones, sister to the said James. Item. I give and bequeath all my household goods of all sorts whatsoever to Humphrey Bennett. Item. I give and bequeath all the benches and shelves in the house and table board in the Hall house and the cupboard to my brother Thomas Nicolls. Item. I give and bequeath all the rest of my goods and chattells to my brother Thomas Nicolls and Humfrey Bennett to be equally divided between them, my debts and legacies paid and funerall expenses discharged. And lastly I make constitute and appoint my brother Thomas Nicolls whole and sole executor of this my last will and testament. Witness my hand and seale this nynth day of May in the yeare of our Lord one thousand six hundred sixty six. Cassandra Nicolls, her mark. Sealed and published in the presence of witnesses Izard Jurden, Ffrancis Bennett.

**C7/526/11 Francis Nicholls vs Bach 1670** – Your orator, Francis Nicholls, son of Francis Nicholls the elder, late of Alveley, yeoman, deceased. Father was seized of several messuages, land and tenements in Kingsnordley of yearly value £40 which descended to Francis Nicholls the younger. But the said Francis Nicholls the elder being much endebted and knowing your said orator to be an illiterate man and not acquainted with the said entail and title of the premises, shortly after your orator came to full age, did prevail with your orator to help with money to pay his debts, and did promise to settle the premises upon your orator. I paid £200 in ready money and did borrow £20 of Richard Barrett late of Wotton, yeoman, deceased. And for security did entreat Thomas Bache of Alveley to be bound in a bond of £40. The father sold the premises to your said orator, All that messuage called the Stonehouse together with all estate in the township of Kings Nordley except one litle tenement and a piece of building called the Kitchen with the garden, orchard & hemp butt. The £20 was paid on the day appointed. Thomas

Bache was left in possession of two closes called Canves ? Hedge and Crab Tree Innage but now says they are his.

### 1683 will of Lancelot Nicholls of Bow Hills

Thomas Lee of Coton & James Sheppard of Eton Moscott executors.

dau. Elizabeth married to John Tristram of Moor Hall, Belbroughton d. 1734. (Richard Tristram – Rector of Belbroughton d. 1691)

Rowland White of Romsley – bought land from.

John Griffiths – Smith Shop

John James – Smith Shop

Humphrey & Eliz Goodman – possession of land.

Isabel Frodgley – Longcroft & Undwells Meadow, Romsley.

### **PRO C5/144/71 Cassandra Nicholls 1689**

Your orator, Humphrey Barrett of Alveley. That Cassandra Nicholls, late of Alveley, spinster did about 9 May 1666 make her last will and testament and did bequeath all her household goods unto the orator Humphrey Barrett. And also all the rest of her goods and chattells she gave and bequeathed to the orator and to her brother Thomas Nicholls to be equally divided between them and also made Thomas her executor. Thomas proved the will in PCC but died before distributing her goods eight years since, making his own will, making Eleanor Nicholls, his daughter, executrix who proved the will and possessed all his goods including the goods of the orator but never presented an inventory of the goods of Cassandra. Eleanor married John Baker of the city of Worcester, Brasier - etc. They to be a certain day to come to court to decide the outcome.

### **PRO C5/176/50 1697 Elcock.**

Henry Nevell of Hollow, Worcs. shoemaker, son & heir of Henry Nevell late of Hollow, gardiner, by Alice his wife, who was sole daughter and heir of Thomas Elcock, late of Hollow, yeoman, and also neice and heir of Humfrey Elcock, late brother of Thomas Elcock, who died in the lifetime of his brother Humfrey, who died without issue. That Humfrey being seized of some good estate and three closes of arable or pasture called Gorsleys in the parish of Alveley, near a certain place called Christians Green, of yearly value of £5 and died 17 years since leaving Alice, who shortly died leaving a son of eight years. One Francis Hadley, yeoman of Alveley, being some relation, did enter the premises and possessed himself of the goods, chattels etc. of grandfather, father and mother by letters of administration. But now Francis Hadley, by confederacy of one **Humfrey Niccolls** of Alveley say that Humfrey Elcock was indeted to one John Longmore of Romsley, yeoman in £30 and that one Edward Else, yeoman, deceased, stood bond for him in some penalty for payment of the debt. And that Humfrey Elcock made a lease for the premises for 99 years. John Longmore sued Edward Else for the money and forced him to pay whereupon Edward Else entered the premises and assigned it to Elizabeth Hadley late of Alveley, widow, since deceased. She made a will and named Francis Hadley sole executor. Henry Nevell cannot get lands.

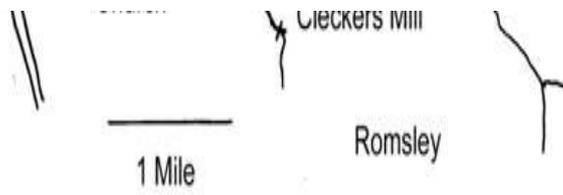
**6 Jun 1700 Will of John Nicholls of Mose, Quatt, - Lichfield RO. – Wife Anne**

### Industry on Paper Mill Brook; Hampton Loade Forge to Crow's Mill By David Poyner



Paper Mill or Bowhill's Brook is a short stream that runs through Romsley and Alveley into the River Severn at Hampton Loade. Despite its length, iand its tributaries have powered 5 mills and two iron works (Figure 1).

.In past Transactions there have been articles on Hampton Loade forge, Hampton Loade furnace (a 17<sup>th</sup> Century charcoal blast furnace) and Elliot's /Moor House Mill<sup>1</sup>. In this article, the history of the use of the lower reaches of the brook from Crow's Mill (SO 755860) to Hampton Loade forge (SO 784864) is described, combining documentary sources with evidence from the physical remains still to be found along its course. Hampton Loade forge is not described as this is too large a topic for the

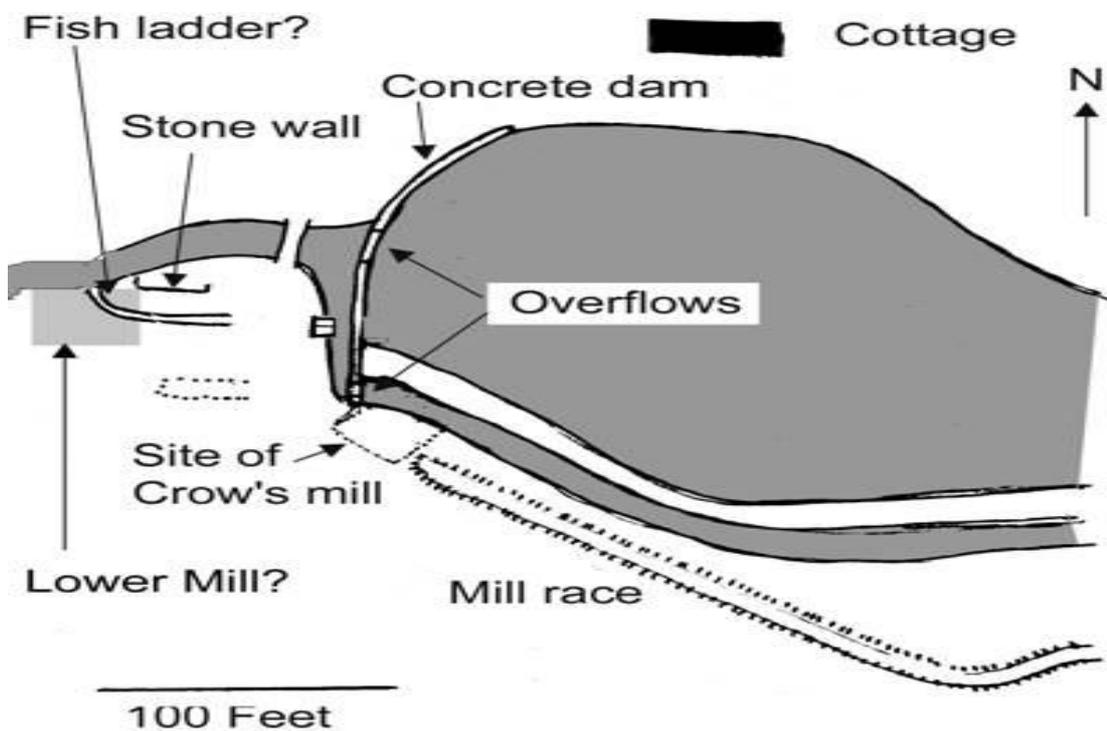


present account.

**The archaeology of watermills**

A typical mill is not usually worked directly by a stream or brook. The level of a natural brook is too variable; in drought there might not be enough water, in flood the resulting torrent would be likely to damage the mill. Usually, water for a mill is diverted by a dam (sometimes called a “stank”) or a weir into a separate mill race. Here the water is taken in a channel called a leat to the site of the mill. The leat usually runs parallel to the brook, but is engineered to run down only a very slight gradient. By the time the site of the mill has been reached, the water in the leat is often many feet above the level of the brook. It may then allowed to fall over the millwheel to turn it; such a wheel is said to be an overshot wheel (or breast fed, if the water hits the wheel half-way down). The greater the height difference (the head of water), the more power will be produced by the water wheel. The alternative is an undershot wheel, where it is the force of a current of water flowing beneath a wheel that strikes paddles attached to the wheel and causes it to turn. Whatever type of wheel is involved, once the water has flown by it, it is led back to the brook in a tail-race. It is essential that the water is efficiently removed; if it backs up, it will stop the wheel turning and may even flood the mill. Mill owners were often worried about shortages of water in summer; to safeguard this, they would build large mill ponds to store water. Sometimes several ponds would be built upstream of the mill; these storage ponds simply existed to impound water and had no leat leading from them. Floodgates were sometimes provided to release excess water. On the other hand, if the water flow was regular, there would be no need for mill ponds and a simple weir would suffice to turn the water into the mill race. When investigating streams, it is important to identify dam sites and the remains of watercourses; these often survive long after any mill buildings have been demolished.

The lower reaches of Paper Mill brook are not easy to survey. The stream has cut its way through solid rock forming a steep-sided gorge. Thus there are numerous piles of stones, which might represent traces of dams but which are more likely to have been deposited naturally. There have been landslips that would have obliterated any evidence of leats and floods have eaten into the banks and may have destroyed some potential dam sites. In spite of this, a survey over the last year has identified a number of interesting features.



**Brimford Mill**

The earliest reference to a mill on the lower reaches of Paper Mill brook comes from a document dated January 26<sup>th</sup> 1500. This is a lease for 40 years from John Strangeways, Lord of Quatt to Walter Heth, a bookseller, formerly of London. Strangeways allowed Heth “To turn the course of the brook between Quatt and Alveley .... and construct

flood gates or stanks on Docketts Batch to turn the course of water from Brymfforde Mylle to the Severn, and take profits of fishing therein” for the rent of 20d. The deed was witnessed by various local dignitaries; Humfrey Woolriche of Quatt, Sir Thomas Tonks, parson of Quatt and Roger Scribener<sup>2</sup>.

I am not aware of any other references to Brimford Mill. Dockett’s Batch can still be identified; it is the name of the land that is immediately to the north of the brook, on the Quatt bank. Heth was being allowed to take water from the lower reaches of Paper Mill brook. The “course of water” in Docketts Batch between Brimford Mill and the Severn is probably another way of referring to the brook itself, although it may mean a tail-race flowing from Brimfield Mill parallel to the brook down to the Severn. It seems that Heth was diverting the water into fish ponds; these were a common feature of the medieval landscape and were often very profitable enterprises, supplying the local populace with fresh fish. It cannot be excluded that these ponds then supplied water to some other mill, but there is no evidence for this. Given the subsequent history of this part of Paper Mill brook, the chances of identifying any of Heth’s works are remote. However his ponds, which by definition must have been downstream of Brimford mill, were probably in the very lowest reaches of the valley. The mill may have been immediately upstream of these; if not, the next practical site would be on the Crow’s Mill site. Who Walter Heth was and what attracted him from London to Shropshire are both unknown. Indeed, his profession of bookseller was unusual at so early a date, only a few years after the invention of printing.

### **Hampton Loade Furnace.**

Hampton Loade furnace is first mentioned in a document of 1641 (see below) and there are passing references to it in 1647, 1653 and 1662. Peter King (who first drew my attention to the furnace) has argued that the furnace operated from 1641 to 1662 on a 21 year lease to Thomas Foley, a common period for such leases<sup>3</sup>. I have recently become aware of another reference, in a family settlement dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 1660, concerning arrangements for lands to be used for the benefit of Sir Thomas Wolryche of Dudmaston and his children<sup>4</sup>. It mentions “Lee Hall in Quatt, in the occupation of Margaret Nash, widow, the site and stream for iron making near Lee Hall farm and the ferry or passage over the Severn at Hampton Loade”. These were to be excluded from the property transactions mentioned elsewhere in the settlement, almost certainly because they were the subject of existing leases. The document confirms that the furnace site was owned by Thomas Wolryche and that the furnace must have been very close to the site of the later forge. It is also useful in supporting the evidence from the 1662 reference (a receipt issued to one John Legas for pots cast at Hampton and elsewhere) that the furnace was still in existence at the start of the 1660s.

There are no obvious references to the furnace or its site in the remainder of the Dudmaston Hall archive, deposited at the Shropshire Records and Research Office. This in itself may be significant, as the documents extend for many years either side of the period 1641-1662, suggesting it had no previous or subsequent history. However, it is possible that Heth’s works were still visible, if long-abandoned in 1640. The presence of existing leats and pool earthworks may have been instrumental in the decision to build a furnace at this site, not at the mouth of any of the other numerous streams and brooks that empty into the Severn.

There is one reference which suggests that the memory of the furnace was not forgotten after 1662. Amongst the Boulton and Watt papers in the Birmingham Reference Library is a list dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 1788, of “Charcoal Blast Furnaces which have declined blowing since the year 1750 owing either to the want of wood or the introduction of the making coak [sic] iron”. This list includes Hampton Loade, although a marginal note marks this as “Forge”<sup>5</sup>. There is no other suggestion that iron smelting was ever revived at Hampton after 1662, nor is there any other evidence for a forge at Hampton before the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Whilst it is difficult to rule out either of these possibilities completely, it seems most likely that the compiler of the list was mistaken. There was probably still a dim memory of the furnace in operation when the list was drawn up but the supposed date of its closure was out by almost 100 years.

### **Elliot’s Mill.**

There is only one explicit documentary reference to Elliot’s Mill. This is an agreement of the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1641 between Thomas Foley, the occupier of Hampton Furnace and John Heath of Alveley, miller. Foley had set up a dam “over the brook below and near Elliot’s Mill or Moor House Mill in Alveley” in the occupation of Heath, “where the water (for the purpose of the turning of it to a furnace of the said Thomas Foley) is pounded and kept above its normal height to the damage of the said John Heath and his mill”. Foley was to pay £1-6-8 a year to Heath for 7 years to indemnify him against claims by Lancelot Lee, the mill owner<sup>6</sup>.

Whilst short, this does provide some useful information about the location of the mill. The name “Moor House” shows that it must have been close to the farm of that name. It is difficult to imagine that the name could have been attached to a mill any further upstream of Paper Mill brook than the former Crow’s Mill. Thus the mill must have been between this and the furnace. As with Brimford Mill, the most likely sites for the mill are either just upstream of the furnace or on the Crow’s Mill site. Elliot’s Mill was owned by Lancelot Lee in 1641. By 1770, the only land owned by the Lee family along the lower reaches of

Paper Mill brook was at Crow's Mill<sup>7</sup>.

The land downstream belonged to the Hill House estate and I am not aware of evidence that this ever previously belonged to the Lee family. Thus, Crow's Mill would seem to be the best candidate site for Elliot's Mill.

"Elliot's Mill" reflects the name of an early occupier of the mill. The parish registers show the burial of a Thomas Elliot in 1584, followed by Ann in 1591. Francis Elliot, perhaps a son, baptised a daughter in 1600 and buried "Widow Griffiths", his mother-in-law in 1601 before apparently dying himself in 1614. The last mentions of the family in the registers are both in 1620, with the burials first of Elizabeth "daughter of Francis Elliot" and then Frances Elliot, widow. It is not clear if the Elliots were the first owners of the mill or whether they took over and gave their name to a pre-existing mill (ie Brimford mill?). By 1641 the mill was leased by John Heath from Lancelot Lee. The Lee family had acquired much property in Alveley and Astley in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century; perhaps this included the mill. We do not know where Heath was born, but it was not Alveley. Heath could have learnt his trade at any mill in the West Midlands. He lived in Alveley until he died in 1659, baptising children Thomas and Elizabeth in 1639 and 1642 before burying his wife, also Elizabeth in 1649. The children all left Alveley. Following Heath's death, Elliot's/Moor House Mill passes from sight. It may have metamorphosed into Crow's Mill or it may have been abandoned and demolished.

### **Crow's Mill.**

The first reference to a mill on this site (leaving aside conjectures about Brimford and Elliot's Mills) is on a 1770 map of the lands owned by Lancelot Lee (Fig 3b). This has some obvious surveying errors (see footnote 7), but shows two mills, a paper and a leather mill, one on the brook and the other on the mill race. Compared to its present position, the mill starts further downstream, east of the lane that led past the cottages at The Stank and follows a different course. It is difficult to accept the map exactly as drawn, but there is an intriguing reference in the Alveley Court rolls for 1805, for repair of the footbridge at the "new stank" at the paper mill which suggests the original watercourse was altered. Both mills were leased at £15pa. The entire estate covered 26 acres in Astley and Alveley and was occupied by William Crow. Crow lived in the cottage on the high ground to the north of the mill; further north another building marked on the map may have been a barn.

William Crow gave his name to the mill. The first mention of the Crow family in Alveley is in 1747, when William and Mary Crow baptised

Betty, their daughter. They subsequently baptised another 8 children,

concluding with George in 1767. In the Alveley manor court rolls, William Crow of the Lowe is mentioned in 1757, but perhaps the William of Crow's Mill and husband of Mary is more likely to be William Lowe junior, mentioned in the rolls in 1763.

It has not been possible to identify the origins of the family although people of that name were established around Ludlow, Cleobury and

Milson<sup>8</sup>. The 1770 map shows that William was operating leather and paper mills. Paper making was established in Alveley in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century; in 1686 the paper mill of William Atwell of Alveley was burnt down. Richard Fosbrook worked as a papermaker from at least 1705 to his death in 1729. Whilst the location of Atwell and Fosbrook's mills are unknown, they were almost certainly on Paper Mill brook, a name which is first recorded in the court rolls of 1760. Previous authors have assumed that the most likely site for these mills was Coton Mill, which worked as a paper mill until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and which subsequently remained as a ruin for many years. However, the evidence for this is slender. The mill is located in Nordley, not Alveley. The earliest reference to Coton mill is in the Nordley manor court rolls for October 1788, when Richard Windle erected a "stable, paper mill and [enclosed] a garden adjoining to the said paper mill on the Lord's waste". This would seem to date Coton Mill to that year, 18 years after Crow's Mill appeared as a paper mill on the Lee estate map. This does not prove that Crow's Mill was the site of the earlier paper mills, but it appears to have a better claim than any other mill in Alveley. It may even be that Elliot's Mill was converted to a paper mill by Atwell, burnt down, rebuilt by Fosbrook and then taken over by Crow<sup>9</sup>.

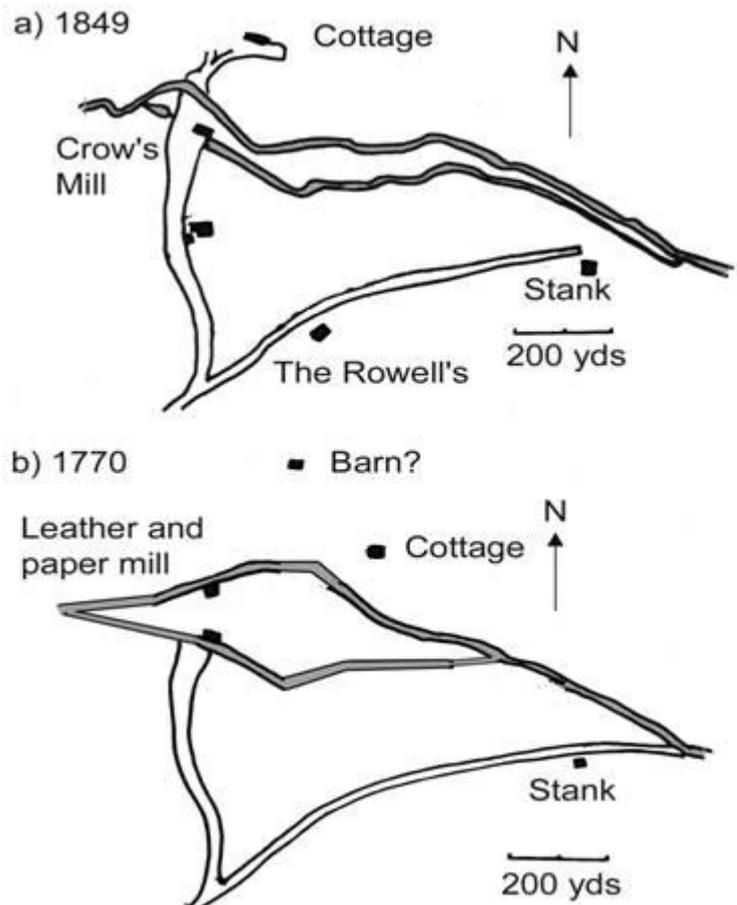
Crow's Mill remained in the Crow family for many years. William seems to have been succeeded by Richard (1761-1823), one of his sons. In 1806

Richard leased a 21 acre estate including a dwelling house, corn and paper mills in Alveley for the annual rent of £12, fixed for his life. At that date, the estate was offered for sale. Whatever the outcome of this, Richard was still recorded working the paper mill in 1816. A list of paper mills in 1826 does not mention Crow's Mill but records a new mill, "Crow's Nest", owned by Henry Harris. This is probably a case of a new owner changing the name of an existing mill. Harris owned paper mills at Langley in Milson and Sturt's in Neen Sollars in 1816, so he was clearly no stranger to the trade. In 1831 he was in partnership at Sturt's with Joseph Harris but it closed very shortly afterwards. As Crow's Nest was also closed by 1832, it seems that it suffered the same fate as Sturt's. It is not clear if the Harris's gave up their paper mills freely or if their business failed<sup>10</sup>.

The history of the site for the next twenty or so years is obscure. It is marked as a mill on the tithe map of 1849 (Figure 3a); it is not clear if there was still a building on the brook but the main mill is in the same place as on the 1881/2 OS map (Figure 4).

It is likely that the brook-side mill became disused in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The 1881/2 map shows an apparently new building between the mill and the brook and suggests that the tail-race had been partially culverted. It is not possible to find a miller on the 1841 or 1851 census who was definitely associated with the Crow's Mill. In 1851 a miller was living at the nearby Gorton's Mill but at Crow's Mill only an agricultural labourer, John Fox was recorded, along with two empty houses. Thus it may have been seen only intermittent use during this period, perhaps being worked with Gorton's Mill. However, in the 1861 census Edwin Spillsbury is recorded as a miller employing one man. Using censuses and trade (Kelly's) directories it can be seen that Spillsbury was succeeded by Samuel Davies by 1871,

John Giles from c1879-c1885, Emma and William Giles in 1891 (the mother and younger brother of John) and finally "Hy Grubb" in 1895. Grubb was the last recorded miller and the mill probably ceased to work around 1900. The mill was eventually demolished and a large concrete dam built close to its site (Figure 2); apparently part of a scheme for fish pools<sup>11</sup>. The mill weir is well preserved (SO 75648593) although surrounded by concrete fish pools and from it, the mill race can be traced to the site of the mill. This is lined with stone blocks at its terminus. The mill stood adjacent to a cart road leading from Alveley and the Butter Cross to Hampton Loade and beyond. This is clearly a very old track and would have provided ready access to the mill. There is no map evidence for any mill pond, so it seems the owners were happy to rely on the natural flow of the brook, even in the summer. The mill itself has largely been obliterated by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century pool (Figure 2). However, fronting the current course of brook are traces of a sandstone wall that is in the right place to be part of the mill. A sandstone millstone survives on site; 4' diameter with a 9" eye in the centre. It has the typical domed shape of millstones; 2" thick at the perimeter and 5" in the centre.



Beyond Crow's mill, a tail-race led to the main course



of the brook. To the west of the cart road is a platform, about 10' wide and about 20' above the present course of the brook (Figure 5). This may have carried the tail-race but it has two problems. It stops short some way from the brook and it is difficult to see why any mill builder would waste a 20' head of water. Immediately next to the brook, the bank is supported by a substantial stone retaining wall up to 10' high (SO 75288604; Figure 5). At its west end, there is a 6' wide buttress that extends 4' towards the brook. The east end of the wall is very indistinct. It may turn through 90° but tree roots make it difficult to be certain. There is no evidence from the surviving masonry that the wall ever extended across the whole width of

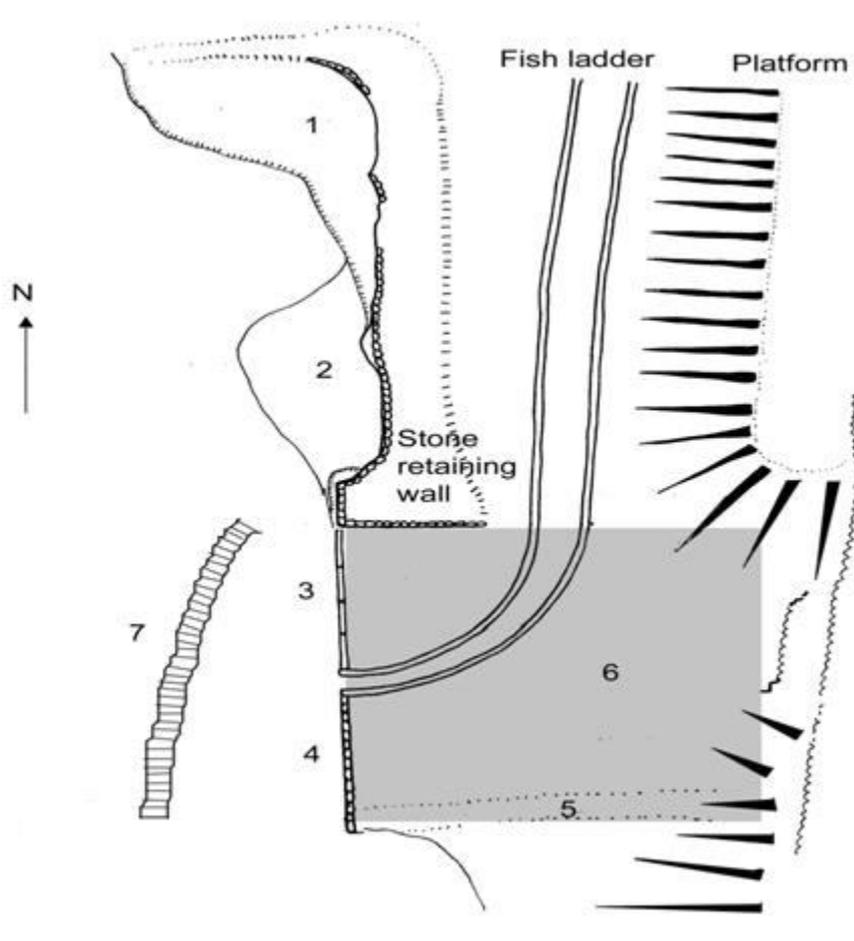
the brook, as would have been expected for a dam. Furthermore, at this site it seems impossible that any watercourse could have lead to a mill further downstream, at least on the Alveley bank. However, a tail-race between the wall and the platform would make much better use of the water available at Crow's Mill, allowing for perhaps a 15' to 20' diameter overshot wheel. A fish ladder now occupies the likely course of the water channel. The tithe map of 1849 shows that the tail race included a small pool before finally emptying into the brook; there is space between the retaining wall and the platform for such a pool. Immediately below the retaining wall, the brook bank is lined by stone blocks, continuing the alignment of the wall and

buttress. These are now no more than a foot high, but at the east end are made of large blocks of dressed sandstone. At their west end they join with a low bank which once appears to have been a stone wall. The steep valley has been cut away at its east end to create a straight, stone face. Together these features define a square with sides of about 35'. It seems very likely that this was once a mill. Its wheel may have been fed directly from the brook, from the tail race of Crows Mill or via a mill race that reached it over the high-level platform. The latter is the most economical explanation of the features on the site. In the brook, by the foundations is a brick arc. The bricks seem fairly recent and may be connected with the intake to the fish ladder that now crosses the site.

The 1770 map shows a mill on the brook in addition to the mill on the mill race. The map suggests that the mill on the brook is not in the same place as the surviving foundations. However it is so badly surveyed in the region of the brook that it is possible that the two are the same. The mill would have been very prone to flooding and it may have abandoned because of this problem. The fear of flooding at Elliot's Mill was the reason for the 1641 agreement between John Heath and Thomas Foley and it is tempting to associate the foundations with that mill and perhaps even Brimford Mill before it.

### Other features of Paper Mill brook

The Sites and Monuments Records for Shropshire record a forge (7028) by Crow's Mill. This is almost certainly incorrect. Whilst there is clinker and slag in the bed of the brook at this point, it has probably been washed off the track from Alveley to Quatt. The basis of the record seems to be a misreading of Robert Baugh's 1808 map of Shropshire; the forge marked by Baugh is the well-known one at Hampton Loade



**Figure 5 Retaining wall at Crow's Mill.**

- 1) Rock shelf. 2) Loose gravel and rubble. 3) Low retaining wall made of large stone blocks 4) Low retaining wall made of small stone blocks. 5) Indistinct wall. 6) Outline of possible building. 7) Brick arc in the brook.

The dam that served Hampton Loade forge is well preserved, although breached. On the Alveley bank is a concrete, 20<sup>th</sup> Century fish ladder. On the Hampton Loade side the remains of the sluice and leat are to be found. In 1786, William Whitmore, who owned the land on the Quatt bank of the brook, was given permission by the Alveley landowners, Edward Oakley (Hillhouse Farm) and Henry Lee (Crow's Mill) to construct a dam across the brook within 200 yards of the mill and divert the water on payment of £21<sup>12</sup>. This must refer to the construction of the dam and it also suggests that Hampton Loade

forge dates from 1786.

Between Crow's Mill and the forge dam, the Quatt bank of the brook is supported for a short length by a stone wall (SO 75238607). This is 4' high and currently about 15' long; it may have once been twice this length. A collection of stones a few yards upstream may be the faint traces of a dam, but could also be a natural feature. Beyond the wall on the north bank of the brook, the ground is level with a long narrow depression running parallel to the brook. This may be a leat but it is now difficult to be certain. There is no convincing sign of the leat running further downstream, but it would have been possible to construct one as far as the forge dam, where it could have followed the line of the forge leat. The function of the wall is uncertain. It is difficult to see why the bank should be supported by a wall unless it was to protect a feature such as a leat. It may have been an abortive attempt by Whitmore to build a dam upstream of the site that he eventually chose. It may have been the leat for Hampton Loade furnace or Heth's ponds. (Previously I speculated that the dam and leat for the furnace were on the same sites as those for the forge; there is no documentary or current field evidence for or against this idea).

There are slight suggestions of a dam and leat at SO 75008615. Unfortunately these are so insubstantial that positive identification is impossible.

### Conclusion

The lower reaches of Paper Mill brook has been utilised since medieval times. By 1500 Brimford Mill was at work either close to the confluence with the Severn or on the site of Crow's Mill. At this date, Walter Heth constructed fish pools somewhere near the forge site. From 1641-1662, the forge site was occupied by Hampton furnace. In Alveley, Elliot's Mill was in operation at this time, possibly the successor to Brimford Mill and probably located at Crow's Mill. From the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, papermakers started to use the brook. It is possible that Elliot's Mill may have been the site of one of the early paper mills, perhaps even that owned by William Atwell and burnt

down in 1695. Certainly by 1770 William Crow had two mills at Crow's Mill for paper and leather production. The layout of site evolved for the next hundred years as it changed use first to paper and corn milling and then corn milling alone. Milling ceased about 1900. Along the brook there are substantial remains of the forge, which probably cover Heth's pools and the furnace, the forge dam of 1786, a retaining wall of unknown function and the water courses of Crow's Mill. Whilst the site of Crow's Mill itself has been obscured by a 20<sup>th</sup> Century dam, there are remains of another mill just below it, perhaps Elliot's Mill.

Paper Mill brook clearly has had a very complicated history. The present article has shed some light on this, whilst posing new questions. It is to be hoped that more fieldwork and documentary study will answer some of these.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr Pitt for allowing me access to his land alongside Paper Mill brook, Tim Booth for commenting on an earlier draft of this article and interpreting the remains at Crow's Mill, Margaret Sheridan for providing me with details from Alveley parish registers and census returns, Peter King for discussions about Hampton Loade furnace and forge and Tim White for administrative help.

### References.

- 1) A tunnel system at Hampton Loade Forge, D. Poyner, *Trans. Alveley His. Soc.*, 1999, 53-7; Hampton Loade Furnace, D. Poyner, *Trans Alveley His. Soc.*, 2000, 53-68.
- 2) Hampshire Record Office, Jervois Papers, 44M69/C/496.
- 3) Poyner, 2000, op. cit.
- 4) Shropshire Records and Research Office (SRRO), Dudmaston Hall Collection, 2922/3/34-5.
- 5) Quoted in "A gazetteer of charcoal fired-blast furnaces in Great Britain in use since 1660", P. Riden, Merton Priory Press (Cardiff), 1993, pg 61. Peter King is of the opinion that this list is of dubious accuracy. The earliest reference he has to a forge at Hampton Loade is 1790.
- 6) Herefordshire Record Office, Foley Collection, E12/VI/KAc/64.
- 7) The Lee family holdings and the 1770 map are illustrated in "The History of Alveley", A.J. Nicholls, 1994, plate opposite page 117 and maps 1 and 6. The map of Crow's Mill has north marked pointing to what is actually south and the fields on the north of the brook are too far east. The problem seems to have been a surveying error on the brook
- 8) The Alveley manor court rolls have been published in the Transactions of the Alveley Historical Society by Alan Nicholls; 1996, 50-81, (1623-1762) and 1997, 85-159 (1763-1867).
- 9) For papermaking in Alveley, see: "Paper making in Shropshire", L.C.Lloyd, *Trans. Shrops. Arch. Soc.*, 49 (1937-8), 121-187; The excise numbers of paper mills in Shropshire, A.H. Shortes, *Trans. Shrop. Arch. Soc.*, 53, (1949/50) 145-162 (and following article by Lloyd) and "The Industrial Archaeology of Shropshire", B. Trinder, Phillimore Press (Chichester), 1996, pp18-19, 237.
- 10) Berrow's Worcester Journal, September 1<sup>st</sup> 1806; Lloyd, op.cit., Shortes, op. cit.
- 11) I understand that the 20<sup>th</sup> century works on the brook were carried out by Mr Pitt's father
- 12) SRRO, Abstract of title to Edward Oakley's estate in Alveley, 2756/2.

### Court Leet of the Liberty of Romsley 1642-1655. By Alan Nicholls

(Shropshire Record Office Ref. BB/F/1/3/1 )

The Court Leet for the Liberty of Romsley was held with those of Bridgnorth and its records are contained within the Bridgnorth reports. They are very fragile and usually consist of one page listing the names of the jurors and fines that are to be served etc. I have abstracted the more interesting points from the reports.

Each report from the record of the Court Leet contains the following detail about fines that will be incurred for non-compliance.

*We lay a pain that all the inhabitants of Romsley do keep the gates and bound hedges and in the town fields in good reparacons.3s.4d.*

*We lay a pain that all men keep their swine yoked and ringed.3s.4d.*

*We lay a pain that any person that has a house shall not receive any foreigner or stranger into their house without giving sufficient security for saving harmless the said Lordship.£1.0.0*

*We lay a pain of any who hold land upon the port way between the Mil?? Gate and Stone Gate do ditch, cleanse and lop their hedges before St James Day next. 3s4d.*

#### **25 Apr 1642**

Jurors:- Thomas Nicholls, gent.; John Longmore, Henry Browne; Humphrey Goodman; Hugh White; William Willmott; William Stinton; John Baskerfield; Francis Frodgeley and Francis Longmore.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> October 1643**

We present Arthur Ffarmer for breaking the article? in selling ale.

We find the pain left by Wiliam Shenton for default of his bond hedge belonging to the corne fields 3s 4d.

We present for being absent – Humfrey Longmer

We present Hugh White to serve the office of Constable for the farm in Romsley called the Townsend.

Jurors:- John Longmer; Humfrey Goodman; William Shenton; John Baskerville; Henry Plymley; Henry Elcocke; Francis Langmer and Anthony Brettell

#### **1643**

Jurors:- Lancelot Nicholls, gent; Humphrey Longmore, gent; Garrard Davis; Ffrancis Baskerfield; Henry Plymley; Henry Elcocke; Thomas Hand; Thomas Hardinge; Lancelot Baskervild; Thomas Wilmott; John Watkis; Thomas Dovey; Anthony Brettell; Thomas Browne.

#### **22 Oct 1644**

Jurors:- James Baskerville; John Baskerville; Henry Plymley; Humfrey Goodwin; Francis Elcock; Anthony Brettell; Arthur Ffarmer.

We present Robert Patchet and Magdalen his wife for making affray upon William Ince and striking him with their hands.

We present Thomas Arden and Humfrey Elcock, his tenant, to serve the office of Constable for this year ensuing. Signed G. Elcocke.

#### **No Date**

Hugh White, Constable of Romsley. Jurors:- Lancelot Nicholls, gent; John Longmore; James Baskerfield; John Baskerfield; Humfrey Goodman; Henry Plimley; Henry Brown; Francis Langmore; Gerrard Davis; Henry Elcocke; William Willmott; Robert Lawley; Humfrey Elcock; Arter Farmer; Anthony Brettell.

#### **October 1647**

We present James Baskerville for straightening the Kings Highway by inclosing the common

We present Gerrard Davis to be Constable.

#### **October 1648**

We lay a pain that the ditches and trees be cropped and kept where needs requireth in the lane leading betwixt Romsley Cross and Hearrens Gate.

We present absent Tho:Longmore, Hugh White, Robert Patchet, Humfrey Goodman and John Watkis.

We present Jexsom? Lowe to the Constable or else to find a substitute. Signed Lancelot Niccolls and John Hadley.