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UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG DERBYSHIRE'S TUDOR MERCHANTS:

PART 1: THOMAS THACKER AND HIS FAMILY'S ORIGINS

(by Anthony Thacker,

Introduction

This article centres on the personal story of one Derbyshire family, the Thackers of Heage, who rose from modest origins as millers, bakers, brewers, foresters, via advancing into trade as merchants and mercers, and associated legal work, and taking the opportunities presented there, to rise into the ranks of the gentry. The benefits gained through the Dissolution of the Monasteries only represent the high point of this advance, not its whole, and an exploration of the story of the property gains involved - the 'cash for honours' of its day - will be the subject of a later article. Here we tell (and correct) the story of the people involved. In this first part we tell the story of Thomas's ancestors, siblings and cousins. The second part centres on Thomas's own place in history, and the consequences for succeeding generations of the family.

The reign of Henry VIII was a period of upheaval, which facilitated the rise of a number of people into the ranks of the gentry. The meteoric rise of both Cardinal Wolsey, the son of a butcher, and Thomas Cromwell, the son of a brewer/blacksmith, provide only the most spectacular examples. This article shows this development in Derbyshire with the account of Thomas Thacker of Repton and his brothers and sisters.

Thomas Thacker's claim to a place in the history books - his most noted period of influence from 1535-40 - was as Cromwell's steward. He was employed to assist him in matters from ensuring co-operation of abbots and priors in the dissolution of monasteries through much of central England, to managing payments for the building of Cromwell's house. During this period, in 1536, he acquired holdings for his brothers from the minor dissolution; in 1538, he was granted a coat of arms, and gained Repton Priory (1539-43), becoming Thomas Thacker of Repton, esquire, whose descendants were the leading gentry of Repton until the line died out. We take up their story in part two, in a future issue of Derbyshire Miscellany. But the account of his origins, how he rose to such position, has received several conflicting accounts, all of which are in error in almost all matters. In relation to Thomas himself, we will show his earlier life in Calais, as a Merchant of the Staple from at least 1505, and his connections in London, Lincoln, Heage, Derbyshire and elsewhere. As we will show, Christopher, Oliver and Robert Thacker of Derby were his brothers and Alice Haughton of Little Chester and Margery Hopkins of Southwood were his sisters. They were the children of Richard Thacker of Heage, and the family's origins go back two centuries to Ralph le Thacker of Lea by Dethick. These connections have generally either been overlooked, unappreciated or misconceived. In fact, the connections between Thomas's family and the Thackers of Derby turn out to be two sides of the same coin, in terms of the rise from merchant to gentry status.

The sources I have used to write this account are many. Published material includes many earlier Derbyshire local history articles;¹ Jeayes' Charters and books by J.C. Cox and others; volumes of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Wakebridge Cartulary of the Chantry at Crich, State Papers of various reigns and The Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII (hereafter Letters and Papers or L&P), which has many letters to, by or about Thacker. Many of these show Thacker as Cromwell's household manager and general factotum, several show his personal role in the dissolution of the monasteries. A letter to him by his brother Robert, then sub-dean of the Collegiate Church of All Saints in 1537 is particularly illuminating.² The Heraldic Visitations, both published and unpublished have also provided much information. Other unpublished material includes Thomas Thacker's Inquisition Post Mortem (IPM) of 13 May 1548, which quotes his will; and other IPMs and probate provide further information. Over 100 documents of this family survive in what I shall term the 'Repton Archives' - held because of an eighteenth century Chancery Case, casting light on the Calais and London parts of the story. Records of the treasurer and of the comptroller of Calais provide further evidence. Parish Registers and Bishop's Transcripts provide some evidence for later family members, and tax records especially for the 1520s-40s are also instructive. A particularly rich source of evidence comes from Court Rolls. Those of Duffield and Wirksworth Manors (in the Duchy of Lancaster), though not continuous, go back to the time of Edward I. This has been the major source for detail relating to Thomas's father, Richard. The similarly ancient Nottingham Borough Court Rolls, particularly forinsec pleas (regulating disputes between Nottingham people and outsiders), have provided some useful clues relating to the early fifteenth century. Manor estate surveys (particularly those conducted by Gilbert Thacker of Southwood and Westminster) have added further

information. Other productive sources have included the many legal cases of the litigious Tudor and early Stuart eras, the depositions of which often state the age of the deponent (with variable accuracy). The internet is also an increasingly useful resource (Google Books for example), providing the sources indicated are checked properly.

In the sixteenth century, the Thackers rose to considerable prominence in Derbyshire. Among Thomas's brothers and sisters, Christopher Thacker became bailiff of the borough twice (1514 and 1534), Oliver three times (1525, 1538 and 1553), and Christopher's son James not only became bailiff in 1557 but then became one of Derby Borough's two MPs. Similarly Ralph Haughton, son of Thomas's sister Alice also became bailiff in 1571 and 1583. These were all in the merchant class, with Christopher, James, and James's son Christopher all described as 'mercens', as was Ralph in 1566 (when acquitted of manslaughter of his cousin James), though he and Oliver were later styled 'gent', but having made their initial social ascent through trading. Meanwhile, Robert held the significant post of sub-dean of All Saints, Derby, from 1530 until its dissolution in 1549: the collegiate church of All Saints with St Alkmund's was granted to the Dean of Lincoln in the time of Henry I but was run by the local sub-dean who was in charge of six collegiate priests.³ As for Thomas himself, we shall see that his prominence preceded his work for Cromwell: not only had he been trading in wool in Calais and in wines in London but he was a servant of Henry VIII to whom he appealed directly in a dispute.

Reputations

After the fall from power, and death of Wolsey, at the end of the 1520s, Cromwell emerged in the 1530s as the most powerful man in government, after the king, until his own demise and execution in 1540. Moreover, his impact on national life was if anything far greater than that of Wolsey, and while G. R. Elton's hyperboles about Cromwell ('the most remarkable revolutionary in English history', who virtually ended the Middle Ages and ushered in the modern era single-handedly) have been challenged, none would dispute the proposition that Cromwell's actions had a dramatically transforming effect on both church and state.⁴ As for state governance, one example, familiar to family and local historians, is of Cromwell's instruction that from 1538 every parish should make its own register of christenings, marriages and burials: even though but a tenth of registers survive all the way back to 1538, these provide the backbone of evidence for much research into local and family history.

Cromwell's impact on the church was hardly less radical: he learned from his work for Wolsey in the dissolution of a number of smaller religious houses how to endow his foundation of Cardinal College (now Christchurch College), Oxford, and a similarly named school, intended to match Eton, at Ipswich in 1525.⁵ However, by applying the lesson more systematically, Cromwell ensured the dissolution first of the minor monasteries in 1536, and then, after the failure of the resistance to this in the 'Pilgrimage of Grace', the dissolution of the rest of the monasteries in 1538-9. This precipitated major social change with upheaval for the monks, losses for the poor, and substantial opportunities for new lands both for existing gentry and nobility and for those aspiring to such status, including merchants like Thomas Thacker. It also earned much money for King Henry (quickly spent), but also enemies for Cromwell, certainly among many historians who have assessed his impact.

Until the 1950s, historians regularly portrayed Thomas Cromwell as 'a shadowy and unpleasant figure ... unscrupulous hatchet-man ... ambitious go-getter' who promised Henry untold wealth and secured it by robbing the church in the dissolution of the monasteries and erecting 'a ruthless system of repression that rested on spies and informers' through which the innocent were executed.⁶ This earlier consensus was echoed locally in discussions of Cromwell's chief aide in Derbyshire, Thomas Thacker. The Victoria County History described him as 'Cromwell's chief tool among Derbyshire residents'.⁷ A nineteenth century work, Joseph Tilley's *The Old Halls, Manors and Families of Derbyshire*, in a rather folksy manner, put it this way:

When Tom Cromwell, the Chancellor, was gathering around him that army of spies and witnesses, who were to circumvent the Monasteries, and testify whatever was necessary for fleecing the Church and the people, Thomas Thacker, of Heage, wended his way to London, and became Steward to the Chancellor.⁸

Tilley relates how Thacker acquired Repton Priory as a result of his service to Cromwell, and also bought various fixtures and fittings: 'He bought the plunder, too, at his own price ... for fifty shillings'. MacDonald cites J. C. Cox on Thacker to the same effect: 'there was no more subservient tool of Cromwell and Henry VIII in the Midlands'.⁹ And all these histories love to quote seventeenth century historian Thomas Fuller's comments about Thomas's son Gilbert Thacker (whose likeness, together with those of his wife and legitimate sons can be seen in

Repton church), who acted drastically to prevent the possibility of Repton becoming a priory again, like Westminster Abbey, and losing his Repton estate:

'...one Thacker, being possessed of Repingdon Abbey in Derbyshire, alarumed with this news that Queen Mary had set up these Abbeys again (and fearing how large a reach such a precedent might have) upon a Sunday (belike the better day, the better deed) called together the carpenters and masons of that county, and plucked down in one day (church work is a cripple in going up, but rides post in coming down) a most beautiful church belonging thereunto, adding, he "would destroy the nest, for fear the birds should build there again".¹⁰

So MacDonald described Gilbert as 'this notorious vandal', and the other commentators concur.

Since the 1950s, however, interpretations of this period of history, and especially of Cromwell have been transformed by the controversies raised by G. R. Elton, who reassessed not only Cromwell's governance, but also his reputation as brutal tyrant - an issue relevant to the assessment of Thomas Thacker as an assiduous 'spy'. As Randall summarises: 'The myth that Cromwell had established and maintained a network of paid spies and informers was exploded'. Cromwell 'had almost totally relied upon the normal' procedures concerning alleged treason, and the allegation that he distorted process to secure execution of opponents 'was shown to be almost totally untrue'. The rare exceptions concerned cases where Henry himself is believed to have made it clear to Cromwell 'that nothing less than a conviction would be acceptable'.¹¹ Elton, however, did not underplay the ruthlessness of Cromwell and Henry in seeing through the revolutions of church and state. We cannot airbrush away Cromwell's abuse of power for personal gain either. John Stow's personal account shows that Cromwell simply ordered neighbouring properties to relocate their boundary pales 22 feet further back in order to extend his own garden. As a result Stow's father's house was physically moved without warning. No one dared argue with all-powerful Cromwell. Stow noted: 'Thus much of mine own knowledge have I thought good to note, that the sudden rising of some men causeth them* to forget themselves'.¹² Cromwell's house became the Draper's Hall in 1543.¹³

But what of Cromwell's Derbyshire 'spy'? Many writers assume that Thomas Thacker rose to power and wealth simply as a result of his affiliation to Cromwell. But how did he gain his position under Cromwell? And how was he able to acquire the rights or afford the purchase of Repton from King Henry after the Dissolution (through which he established the claim of succeeding generations of Repton Thackers among the leading gentry of Derbyshire)? Thacker's rewards for service to Cromwell form only a late part of the picture. Another part of the answer lies in his successes in trading and other duties in Calais for 30 years or more before he rose further under Cromwell.

Thomas Thacker's Origins — Corrected

The fifteenth century background of Thomas Thacker's ancestry is obscure and disputed, and all previously published accounts of it are in error. A typical eighteenth century account came in The Topographer, which in 1790 stated that Thomas Thacker, Esq, was the son of Edward Thacker of Repton, Esq, the son of Thomas Thacker, Esq, servant to the king, and explicitly depended on the researches of Adam Wolley.¹⁴ Pictured right, from another place in the Wolley Manuscripts, we see Wolley's amplification of this information in family tree form. The Topographer compounded matters further, by making all three Thackers esquires. But the regnal dates (1540 and 1548) relate to the same man. What happened was that Thomas's supposed grandfather was confused with his grandson, Thomas Thacker (1541?-1613), gent of Heage, who was the son and heir of Edward Thacker (1514?-1576), gent of Heage, the younger son of Thomas Thacker, Esq (c.1480-1548), as we shall see.

Table 1: Wolley's pedigree

Thomas Thacker of Highedge, co Derby =
serv^t to King Hen 8 (s^d to be his jester)
32 H 8

Edward Thacker of Repton co. Darb =

Thos Thacker of Repton esq =
ob 27 March 2 Ed 6

In nineteenth century accounts, the Lysons in 1817 mistakenly distinguished Thomas Thacker of Heage from Thomas Thacker of Repton as a 'probable cousin',¹⁵ but Thacker's *Inquisitiones Post Mortem* (IPM), already known to Wolley, and many other documents show them to be one and the same. Later accounts recognised this, but then the idea that Thomas was son of Thomas emerged. Meanwhile, Tilley claimed 'Thomas Thacker, of Heage, wended his way to London'. But the evidence shows him in Calais and London already by the 1510s, well before his work for Cromwell.

Most colourful of all is Alec MacDonald, whose 1929 *Short History of Repton* stated baldly of Thomas Thacker: 'He came of an ancient family. His father, Sir Gilbert Thacker, a great friend of Richard III, was slain at Bosworth, and his grandfather, also Sir Gilbert, was present at Agincourt'.¹⁶ MacDonald names no sources, and independent confirmation of any of this is absent. The heraldic Visitations don't help. The 1662 Dugdale Visitation starts with Thomas as does the St George Visitation of 1611 (as amplified in 1614), while the Flower Visitation of 1569 omits reference to any Thacker at all.¹⁷ Also, no Thacker is listed in Anne Curry's list of 6,000 known to be at Agincourt out of the 9,000 or so English soldiers she estimates present.¹⁸ MacDonald quotes Thacker's surviving letters, from the Letters and Papers, which are modernised contractions of the letters with quotations rather than transcriptions,¹⁹ but the original letters do not include any substantial reference to earlier Thackers than can be seen in Gairdner's edited versions. Because of these and other omissions (lack of any record of 'Sir' Gilbert having borne arms), Maxwell Craven rightly concluded, '... there is no hint of 'Sir Gilbert Thacker' slain at Bosworth, who, I am sure, is a fiction'. The only fifteenth century Gilbert Thacker I have found (together with Margaret his wife), in 1410, was in the Nottingham forinsec pleas, presumably as an outsider to Nottingham.²⁰

As for Craven himself, first of all, he revived the idea of a father named Thomas. While Craven rejected Lysons, rightly identifying Thomas Thacker of Heage with Thomas Thacker of Repton, in his 1982 article 'Is your name THACKER?', he presented a different duplication of Thomas:

The Thackers had, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, split into two branches, Thomas, son of Thomas Thacker of the Staple - based, therefore in Calais - in 1509, when he was, significantly, named in a Repton charter.

This man's son, also Thomas, was steward to Thomas, Lord Cromwell, who inevitably acquired Repton Priory a year or two after the Dissolution. He was also described in another document, as of Heage, and received a grant of arms in 1538.²¹

Of this, two things must be said. The 'two branches' (of Derby and Heage) were not split until the seventeenth century. And second, Thomas of Heage and Repton (fl.1538) is not son of Thomas of Calais (fl.1509), but the same man - as Craven later accepted. Thomas's son and heir, Gilbert, was stated to be 34 years of age in Thomas's 1548 IPM. This makes Thomas married by early 1513 at the latest, and probably several years earlier. He would have been born before 1490. Furthermore, among the 'Repton Archives' is a deed between 'Thomas Thacker as a merchant of the Staple of Calais, of Repindon, esquire' and Edward Dalton (another Calais merchant, of Hull) in 1542, and states that the same Thacker was bound in a deed of July 1515 to Dalton's late mother's subsequent husband, Robert Harrison.²² And this Thomas Thacker will be the Calais man given the freedom of the city of Lincoln in 1511, the man granted a bond for £200 in 1509, and named in a Pardon Roll of 1505. Meanwhile, as the bond of 1509 shows Thomas was at least 21 years of age,²³ he must have been born by 1488; and as Craven rightly notes: 'if [Thomas was] rich enough to be involved in fairly hefty financial transactions, we need to assume he was about thirty, thus born c1480'.²⁴

Craven then tried to reinstate Wolley's descent through Edward, son of Thomas. He recognised the problem of the close dates of the supposed grandfather and grandson (1540 and 1548), but suggested Wolley may have recorded a correct sequence, with faulty chronology: 'I suspect that here we have a genuine succession of Thackers, but with part of the *cursus honorum* of Thomas the grantee transferred by temporal telescoping to his grandfather. Edward being 'of Repton' may reflect some kind of reality - he could have been living in the village, which might explain why his son was financially involved with the Priory in 1509'.²⁵ In practice, Wolley cannot be rescued even in this mangled form, for Thomas was the son (probably the second son) of Richard Thacker of Heage (c.1455-1526?), and began working with two relatives - probably uncles - Martin Thacker and John Thacker, who we find recorded as working in their historic family trade as 'thackers' ie, roofers, in the repair works to Calais in 1492 and 1496, respectively.

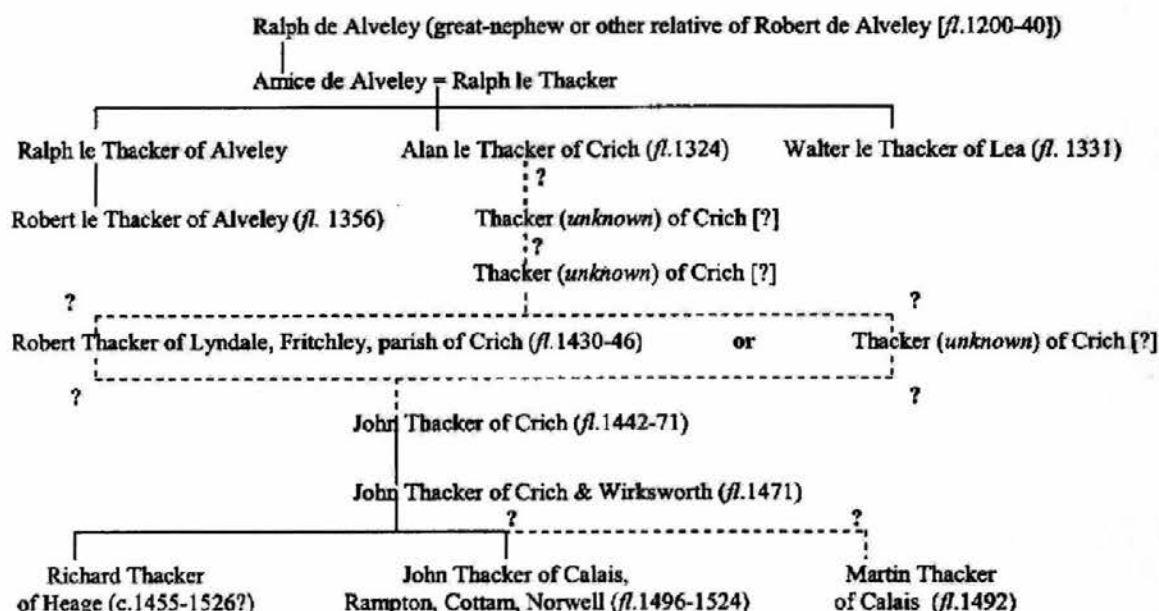
The case that Thomas was a son of Richard Thacker is made by combining pieces of evidence. Robert Thacker of Derby's 1537 letter to Thomas proves he was his brother, and he and his brother Oliver both name Margery Hopkins and Alice Haughton as their sisters. Finally, Alice Haughton, in a deposition of 1572, and then stated to be over 80 years old, declared that Richard Thacker of Heage was her father, and indeed had been a church reeve at the chapelry at Heage. Of the generations immediately prior to Richard we cannot be absolutely certain, as there is no documentary proof of relationships, though circumstantial evidence enables us to outline the most likely sequence, at least through the fifteenth century. Strangely, however, we do have the documentary corroboration to enable us to go back securely to the start of the fourteenth century, and it will probably be simplest if we now tell the story in sequence, adding detail to indicate the evidence for this as we proceed.

Ralph le Thacker of Lea and the Thackers of Crich

The name Thacker and its variants (Thaker, Thakkar etc.) are a regional variant of Thatcher, and by Tudor times the dominant form of the name in the Eastern counties from Lincolnshire down to Kent, as well as English-occupied Calais and the eastern and northern Midlands. In parts of Nottinghamshire and further north it tended to mutate to Theker (Theaker etc.). South and west, the name Thatcher predominates. In the medieval and early Tudor eras, these versions often interchange, especially Theaker and Thacker in Nottinghamshire, Thatcher and Thacker in the south-east. Some documents referring to Thomas Thacker of Repton or James Thacker as MP for Derby spell their names as Thatcher. As for 'Thacker', there seem to be two early concentrations. Those in Lincolnshire and East Anglia go back to communities near the Wash, where I am told the best thatch ('thack') is found. The other early centre is in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. While the earliest instances of the name will identify a man as a roofer, Ralph le Thacker, who was a free yeoman in the late 13th/early 14th century, will be the ancestor not only of Thomas Thacker and his family but also many others of that name in Derbyshire and neighbouring counties.

The earliest family tree (see Table 2, below) unsurprisingly is fragmentary, and shows suggested descent based on probabilities, as indicated.

Table 2: Genealogy of the Thackers of Lea and Crich



The origins of this branch of the Thackers go back to the turn of the fourteenth century, when Ralph le Thacker married Amice de Alveley, heiress of Ralph de Alveley, and gained holdings, including a tenancy of a messuage and four acres in Alveley within the territory of Lea, still current in 1356 for his grandson and heir Robert son of Ralph le Thacker, and a tenement in Lea by Dethick, which Walter le Thacker, whom we take to be another son, held in 1331. That Thomas Thacker was somehow descended from the de Alveleys receives corroboration of a kind from the Wolley Manuscripts, which quote the original title deeds still held by the Thackers of Heage in

1685, a deed of Ferrers transferring freehold land from William de Ferrers to Robert de Elveleia = Alveley, witnessed by Peter de Wakebridge and others. These names place this deed between 1200-25.²⁶ Alan le Thacker, no doubt a third brother, is named in the Derbyshire Feet of Fines, as exempt from homage in Crich Manor in 1324, and is perhaps the most likely ancestor of this branch, which next emerges in Crich in c.1430-46, with Robert Thacker of Lyndale, Fritchley within that parish, and John Thacker in 1442-3 and 1471.²⁷ No Thacker is found in the several surviving Wirksworth Wapentake court rolls with entries for 'Dethek Tanneseley et le Lee'. Furthermore, there are no entries after 1344 naming any de Aleveley, when a Ralph de Alveley was named, and neither name occurs in Lea or Alveley in the Wakebridge Cartulary after 1356 until 1430. While an omission is far from proof of absence, the evidence is suggestive of the Alveleys dying out (perhaps through the major plagues), and the Thackers also not continuing in Lee and Alveley after Robert le Thacker.

Thomas Thacker's descent from Ralph le Thacker is surmised, not proved, as there is insufficient evidence to determine the connecting generations between Alan le Thacker of Crich in 1324 (or Robert in 1356), and Robert Thacker of Fritchley, c.1430-46, or John Thacker, who for the year ended 29 Sept. 1443, was deputy collector for Crich Manor for the estate accounts of Ralph de Cromwell of Tattershall. During those years, Wolley Charters dated (by the handwriting) to Edward III (1327-77), concern land with a mill further north at Stanton Woodhouses (Stanton in Peak) which previously was of a Robert Thacker, and as later Thackers lease mills, this man might be related. Derbyshire's scarce Poll Tax records include a Robert Thacker (of Bowden) in 1381.

Robert Thacker of Crich is named in several places in the Wakebridge Cartulary, all dated by the editor to c.1430, where he is stated to be of Lyndale, Fritchley, within the parish of Crich, and among other things paid for two cows. One of these documents is a payment following the death of local chaplain Henry Coke (records show he was alive in 1409). As Robert Thacker of Crich he is also named in two cases, in 1436 and 1446, in forinsec pleas in Nottingham. By the Wakebridge Cartulary rental for 1460-1, Robert's name in Lyndale was replaced by a certain Richard Hobson. John Thacker is recorded as the deputy collector for Crich Manor in 1442-3, and may have been the son of Robert, or possibly his brother.

It was this John Thacker of Crich who was most probably Richard's grandfather, as Wirksworth Manor court rolls record that in 1471, John Thacker of Crich, junior, and Thomas Harvy of Wirksworth entered the court to be admitted for copyhold of a mill called Eyclyffes with land by the Mere Brook (a stream west of the Derwent, between Wirksworth Moor and Crich) for a six-year term. That he was Richard's father is suggested not only by proximity, but also continuity: Richard's land in Heage (presumably Thacker Hall), was adjacent by the river. Richard's son, Christopher and his wife, Joan, had a water mill on the Derwent, near Makeney and later bought the lease of water mills in Derby. So four generations, Richard, Christopher, Christopher's son James and his grandson, Christopher all worked as bakers. John Thacker's 1471 mill is part of a continuous pattern.²⁸

Richard Thacker of Heage

John Thacker's rented water mill suggests work as a miller, baker and brewer. In the Duffield Manor court rolls, the view of frankpledge accounts regularly report Richard Thacker paying the routine fines regarding assize for bread and ale, and he was described as a common baker (co[m]mun[is] pisto[rum] panis), and a common ale-housekeeper (co[m]mun[is] pandox[atores] et vendider[unt] cervis[iam]), in which regard, he was fined both for producing malt (brasium) and beer (cervisia), which indicates he was a producer for others.²⁹ Of course, to be next to a water supply was as ideal for brewing as for milling. When Richard Thacker first appears in records of the Duffield Manor court rolls, in 1492, he was already a jurymen for Heage (one of two on that occasion), and frequently thereafter. In April 1510 (and often afterwards) we see him appear in the list of 16 or so jurymen 'for the King' (who was the Lord of the Manor), for the Manor of Duffield and Makeney. The rolls for May 1513 also show him as one of the two affeerers (sworn for the assessment of the fines in the court of frankpledge).³⁰ Like others, when he served as a juror, Richard Thacker included himself among those paying the assize fines. We also regularly see Richard paying woodmotes of 2d or 4d 'according to custom' (for forestry activities in Belper Ward). This will be a kind of tax, rather than a punitive fine, as is shown by different entries in October 1515. At one time he pays the regular 4d but at another, the forester reports: 'that Richard Thacker (fined 6s 8d) felled and carried off six oak trees without licence and therefore remains in mercy'.³¹

These manor courts also dealt with small debts and, in December 1509, he pressed William Alcock for a debt of 2s 1d, but for which Richard paid 2d. Other disputes were also settled in these manor courts. The latest entries naming Richard see him in dispute with James Pole. The first occasion was in November 1514, where Pole acted as plaintiff against Thacker who did not appear in court and thus remained in the mercy of the court. In September 1521, a similar dispute saw Thacker as plaintiff and Pole as the defendant not appearing in court. In

the final entry, a month later, Pole was fined 3d for trespass against Thacker. In May 1519, Thacker and Thomas Sowter acted as attorneys for John Ellistones, a church warden colleague of Christopher, in a characteristic manor court transaction, where a cottage in Belper was to be set for 'the work and behoof of Christopher Thacker of Derby', Richard's son.³² Juryman, church reeve (for the chapelry at Heage), affeerer, and attorney all suggest a degree of education and secretarial and financial status, and his sons were all literate. So we should no doubt place Richard in those classes of freemen between the gentry and the villeins and serfs: the yeomen, artisans and merchants. However, he had clearly not reached the financial status of his children, paying 1s for £1 of goods, where, although Heage is not listed, we can locate it in the first Lay Subsidy of February 1523/4.³³ By contrast, his son Christopher's goods were valued at £5 and Oliver's at £20. It is also worth observing that Thomas Thacker did not pay this subsidy in Heage or London, and was almost certainly normally resident in Calais, where there are no Lay Subsidy records from the 1520s. By the 1540s, Thomas was taxed in Repton on his lands, which were valued at £40.

As for Richard's wife (whose name remains undiscovered), she was no doubt very old when Robert Thacker of Derby wrote his letter in 1537 to Thomas.³⁴ He adds a PS to the main letter, which I will quote for once verbatim with the original awkward spellings:

'my mother dothe recom'end hir unto yow & sends yow hir blessynge and says she
wold fayne se yow onys or she dye god comforthe hir I fere me lest we shall have hir
but a whyle in this world for she breyks marveosley sore I pray yow have com'ended
unto y my cossyns yowre chylderene and thus fare yow well R T

That she 'breaks marvellously sore' - following one of the meanings from Samuel Johnson's 1755 Dictionary - indicates that she was seriously declining in health and strength in a strange manner. Also, it is worth noting here the Tudor use of the word 'cousin' to refer to any lateral kin beyond siblings, here explicitly meaning Robert's nephews. We should also not be confused by Robert's use of the pronoun 'my' as if she was only his mother, as Robert also uses for 'my' his 'brethren' and cousins, who must also have been Thomas's brothers and cousins, especially in the elastic Tudor use of 'cousin'. Now this note indicates both that their elderly mother was still alive, but elderly enough for Robert to fear she might die before Thomas's next visit from London.

Thomas Thacker's Cousins

Before we turn to Thomas Thacker and his brothers and sisters, it will prove more instructive to consider the man Robert refers to in his 1537 letter to Thomas as 'my cousin Thacker of Newark' who can be identified as John Thacker. In his letter, Robert reports that James, their nephew, was with this cousin, unsuccessfully trying to set himself up. In fact a coroner's report shows he had already been in Newark for some time before January 1533/4. We should quote Robert's letter at some length here:

'James ... was with my cousin Thacker at Newark there as at leisure. He might have done well and his friends at convenient time, as God should have made them able glad to do for him. But his mother would none of that, but have him set up his occupation on the first day, and nothing of his own to begin withal. ... In case my cousin James cannot speed, my brother Oliver would desire you to write your letter unto Mr Foster in favour of him and then he would see the woman. My cousin Thacker of Newark thought always the woman peradventure might favour my brother Oliver but not my cousin James. For a woman of her substance will be well ware who she taketh'.³⁵

Oliver clearly went to Newark, and married Elizabeth, widow of John Kerchever; and because he was bailiff of Derby in 1538, we can be sure it all happened in 1537, very soon after Robert wrote his letter. In a lawsuit arising from this marriage, Oliver replied that John Kerchever paid the contested money to John Thacker of Newark. So it is reasonable to conclude that Oliver met and married Elizabeth as a result of his time with his cousin John.³⁶

There were two John Thackers in Newark in 1537 who could have been 'Cousin Thacker'. The elder John Thacker (sometimes spelt Theker, etc) of Newark is first located in the 1524 and 1524/5 lay subsidies in Newark, paying 2s 6d for £5 in goods. He received a routine fine in the court rolls for Newark in 1536 and appeared in legal cases around this time. In a feoffment with the 1532 will of Robert Browne of Newark, he is included as one of 13 yeomen (with five gentry) enfeoffed, and in a second deed, described as a mercer. Trinity

Guild membership in 1540 includes him with the honorary title Mr (Magister), and notes two servants, one of whom, Alice Thacker, was no doubt a relative, maybe even a younger sister of James, who had lived there.

This Guild membership list elsewhere mentions John Theker, husbandman, whom I assume to be his son, while I argue that the older John Thacker of the two should be identified as the one whose will was written in November 1540 and proved the following year at York. Following the medieval pattern of providing for prayers for himself and his deceased relatives - explicitly including his late wife and grandchildren - he made a number of bequests to four churches at Newark, Sutton on Trent, Norwell and Cromwell. John and Agnes Thacker, who can be identified as his parents, lived at Norwell and Cromwell. Richard Thacker was their eldest son so John of Newark must have been a younger son.³⁷

Robert's 'Mr Foster' will no doubt be Anthony Foster, alderman of Trinity Guild, Newark, and first Alderman of Newark after the dissolution of the Guild in 1546, listed (in Latin) with his wife Eleanor as Mr Anthony Forster, gentleman. In a legal dispute regarding the enclosure of lands in Pigs Lane (or Pigs Leys), Newark, Browne and Foster were accused of seizing common land (Browne in c.1528, Foster in 1535). John Thacker of Newark was among those who raised money to fight the case.³⁸

Robert's phrase 'his mother would none of that' is ambiguous, perhaps suggesting James' mother to us. But the section about her deciding who to take in Newark suggests we should see this as John Thacker's mother (Agnes), still apparently alive in 1537.

John Thacker of Norwell (fl. 1496-1524) was first recorded in Rampton, Nottinghamshire, in 1502 as a juror in a coroners' case and then again in 1508 in neighbouring Cottam, where his son and heir Richard (d.1545) later lived. In 1513, a merchant of the Staple of Calais named Stephen Hatfield (d.1522) and his wife Elizabeth gave land in the village of Cromwell, north of Newark, to 'John Theker' and his wife, Agnes who was the daughter and heir of Thomas Clement of Willoughby (in Norwell) where Hatfield was lord of the manor. This will be John of Norwell, as this land was later sold by Richard's son and heir Richard Theaker. Table 3, overleaf, should help disentangle the various Johns and Richards. It shows that I conclude that John Thacker of Norwell and Richard Thacker of Heage were brothers and that a third man, Christopher Thacker of Rampton is another of John's sons; thus disproving the assumption of Cornelius Brown that John Thacker of Newark was descended from another man of that name listed as an alien (a foreigner) in the alien subsidies of c.1440.³⁹

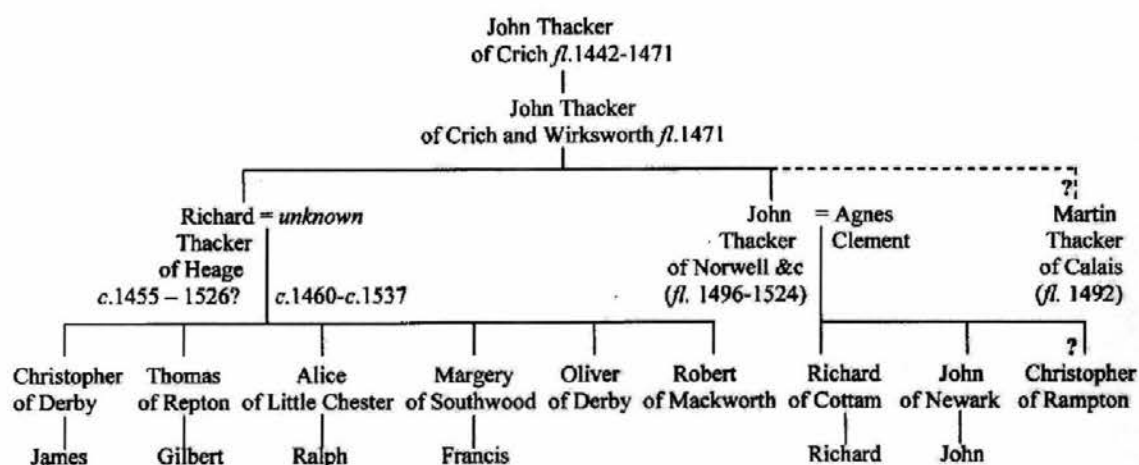
Now Stephen Hatfield (uncle of Thomas Cranmer, later Archbishop of Canterbury) was assiduously pursuing a policy of transforming his lands into sheep grazing, to ensure he had the wool to trade in Calais, including a practice of aggressive enclosure, bitterly contested by locals in Willoughby in Norwell and elsewhere in 1517-22. His actions were among those criticised in Wolsey's 1517-18 Royal Commission. Thomas More had given air to the disquiet about enclosures in his memorable description in 1516 in *Utopia* that 'sheep ... may now be said to devour men'. The Lay Subsidies for 1524-5 show the older 'John Theyker', significantly enough, in Norwell, 'Richard Theker' in Cottam, and 'John Thaker' the younger in Newark. As we have seen, Hatfield gave land to John Thacker's wife, Agnes, whose father, Thomas Clement, is shown in an earlier (1469) document receiving a lease from his father, John Clement, of a messuage in Willoughby.⁴⁰

As for Thomas Thacker, these connections with Hatfield may provide the answer as to how he came to acquire the prized status of a merchant of the Staple of Calais. When we turn to him in part two, we will see records of John and Martin Thacker in Calais in the 1490s, and if we are right to suspect that they are relatives of Thomas, we conclude that it is not unlikely that these two John Thackers (of Calais and Norwell etc) are one and the same. Hatfield would have spent much time in Calais and could have recruited Thacker for his business. In legal cases involving Hatfield, John Thacker is named as one of those acting on his behalf.⁴¹

As for other cousins and relatives, their connections are too unclear to determine with confidence. Thomas named a relative (kinsman) named Richard Wall in Calais, and a Calais list of payments made in 1539 to some boy labourers includes in succession William Wall and Leonard Thacker (the only Thacker discovered in the many Calais records I have checked apart from Martin, John and Thomas). It is possible Richard Wall (and William) may be identified with Richard and William Wall of Ashleyhay - but without further evidence, that is speculative, as is any possible connexion with Richard Thacker of Ashleyhay (d.1561).⁴² As James (after leaving Newark) married Ellen, daughter of John and Joan Rice of Meaford near Stone, Staffs., some relationship is likely with Henry Thacker (d.1533), who lived in Darlaston, the nearest hamlet, and his sons Roger Thacker of Swynnerton (d.1577/8) and Thurstan Thacker of Stone (d.1600).⁴³ John Thacker of Osmaston and John Thacker of Trentham, Staffs., both gained through the dissolution. But there is no evidence linking them to Thomas

Thacker. We are on slightly firmer ground when we consider the Thackers of Leigh, Staffs, starting with Edmund (d.1533), for, as we will see, Christopher Thacker of Clement's Inn described both Jane Thacker of Repton as his cousin and Robert Thacker of Leigh as his cousin and tenant.

Table 3: Relationships of Thackers of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire



Thomas Thacker's Sisters: Alice and Margery

Alice Haughton and Margery Hopkins can be certainly identified as sisters of Thomas, Robert and the rest, as they are named as such in the wills of both Oliver and Robert.

Alice Thacker was born before 1492, according to a deposition made in 1572. According to Richard Sawfurth (Salford) in his deposition of 1572, Alice was a servant for Henry Parkhall of Heage (who appears in local court rolls from 1462-1510). Alice's own testimony included answers about Henry's son, John, described in the language of the day as a 'natural fool'; and she (and others) testified to John's behaviour (which appears possibly akin to autistic behaviour to modern ears): 'when he should have eaten his meat [food], he would go out of the house with his meat into an ox stall or to a byre or pen or in the stable to eat it'. Her work for Henry Parkhall as a servant would be in the 1500s.⁴⁴ It is most likely she married shortly after her father died, which we conclude was 1526-7 - we will show in part two that her two known children were born around 1527 and 1531.

Margery, the other known sister, married John Hopkins, who did not reach the same social elevation as the Haughtons. However, he was well enough off to pay Lay Subsidy in 1543 of 20 pence for £5 in goods - a similar rate to Christopher Thacker. He was born about 1484, as he is said to be 66 at a deposition on 31 March 1551, and is there said to be 'of Southwood', a yeoman, and servant to Gilbert Thacker of Repton. In his witness statement, 'this deponent saith that for the space of xj years or thereabout he had used to drive the farm wood in mast time, and hath received pannage money for the swine then there going of them that did lie, but not of intercomeners for they pay nothing but a driving penny ...'. This, with other documents, shows he was involved in wood-cutting work and pig-farming. It also indicates Hopkins had moved into Southwood in 1539 or 1540, ie, just after Thomas, Margery's brother acquired Repton Priory. They are thereafter 'of Southwood'.⁴⁵

This means they will be the first occupants of Southwood House (south of Ticknall), of which Janet Spavold and Sue Brown have written, and who conclude 'that some of the materials used to build the original house came from the priory after its demolition'. This would lead us to conclude that Gilbert would have had Southwood House built for them after the major demolition of the Priory in 1553, and that John and Margery had lived in a simpler, earlier property there from 1539 - or else the house was first built for them in 1539. (Earlier, in 1521, we see him in Hulland.⁴⁶) Spavold and Brown's research shows that the rooms had ceilings ('a recent fashionable innovation') but was of sufficiently modest size 'that its inhabitants were only Gilbert's family and that the servants did not live in. This was unusual since they would be needed to help run the household'. However it is possible they would live nearby in their own homes. 'The house itself was a good-quality property, fashionable

for an aspiring gentleman'. Spavold and Brown rightly conclude that this property (improved over the years) was used by the family for younger brothers or as a dower house, Francis Thacker (d.1688) being the last member of the family to occupy it. Their other work, equally interesting, describes the more medieval style garden there, still preferred by many among the minor gentry, and enables us to picture the world of the Hopkins and their successors.⁴⁷

In 1555, the Repton Archives show that his nephew and master, Gilbert Thacker, made an indenture of agreement with John and Margery (witnessed by Robert Thacker, Margery's brother, and Edward Thacker, Gilbert's brother) permitting John and Margery to fell and dig up roots for 60 years. This indenture states they are of Southwood. The reference to John in Robert Thacker's 1558 will indicates he was still alive (in Robert's bequest to John's son Thomas Hopkins). But he probably died shortly before March 1561/2, as Gilbert then made an indenture to Margery as widow of John Hopkins of an annuity for life. Meanwhile a lease for 20 years by Francis, a yeoman son of John Hopkins in September 1565 (to Hugh Jackson), suggests Margery had also died by then.⁴⁸

Thomas Thacker's Brothers: Christopher, Oliver and Robert

We cannot be certain which of Richard's sons was his heir. Christopher Thacker is probably the most likely. By 1510, he was a mercer and a churchwarden at All Saints. In his latter role he co-supervised payments for the building of the steeple of All Saints, for which he and his fellow churchwardens, John Ellistones and John Newton received annuities of £1 6s 8d from the will of Richard Stringer, the younger son of Richard Stringer (who - or whose eldest son John - had been MP for Derby in 1495).⁴⁹ Four years later, Thacker served as a bailiff for Derby with this John Stringer - and was a witness for Stringer's 1518 will.

Duchy of Lancaster court rolls for Duffield Manor show Christopher Thacker of Derby active in several documents from 1517-1533. Careful examination of these rolls shows how many of the borough's leading members also held county land. Some court roll entries centre on transactions involving Christopher's wife Joan (in Latin, as Johanna). The earliest, in May 1517, shows John and Ellen Parker arranging for the water mill at Rowting Stones, on the Derwent near Makeney, which John had received two years earlier from William (no doubt his father) to go 'to the use and behoof of Christopher Thacker of the town of Derby, girdler and haberdasher, and Joan his wife, to the heirs and assigns of the said Christopher'. In principle, a business transaction; but the next entry is of Joan Parker, widow (presumably of William), releasing and quitclaiming this mill to Christopher and his wife, and probably indicates the younger Joan was a close relative, ie, her daughter.⁵⁰

We noted earlier how in June 1519, Christopher acquired the use of a cottage, close and orchard in Belper from John Ellistones, with his father as one of Ellistones' attorneys. Later, in 1533, he surrendered this 'to the work and behoof of John Fox of Wirksworth'. In Jan 1520/1, Christopher and Joan arranged for their own messuage in Belper to go to the use of John Steel as tenant. He must have transferred this holding to his brother Thomas, because when Thomas Thacker died in 1548, it was he who held the messuages and lands in Belper and Heage which had lately been the Steels. (Steel himself had died in 1543, and his wife Emmot earlier.⁵¹)

Christopher paid woodmotes of 6d in 1519, and there are other routine fines in 1526 and 1530. However the entries regarding him are different to Richard's, as might be expected from a man normally resident in Derby. Most of the short entries relate to unpaid debts owed to him, though in 1525, he was fined 5s for insult and affray against Roger Hellot, causing him to bleed.⁵²

As a mercer in Derby, he paid Lay Subsidies there. In 1523 and 1525, he was located at the Market Head, where he paid 2s 6d tax for £5 of goods. The Subsidies for around 1544 show him paying 20d (1s 8d) for £5 of goods one year and just 10d for the same £5 another year - this time for a property in the Breadleaps, while his son James is found at the Market Head, perhaps in the house where Christopher had been, where he paid just 6d (and 3d in the other year) for £3 of goods. Also, like his brother, Oliver, we find Christopher listed in the Derby Borough Rental, which states: 'The churche of All Hallowes for the bred shoppe at the Market Heed and a grese [staircase] perteyneing to the same nowe in the holdyng of Christofer Thakker. xijd'.⁵³

In 1526, Christopher proceeded to concentrate his business within Derby, so in May, he and Joan arranged for their mill at Rowting Stones in Makeney and lands in Duffield to go to the use and behoof of William Mirre of London, and in October, he entered a joint 41-year lease with John Johnson for the use of five water mills in Derby. This was a rental, as the mill in Makeney was later rented out by his son James and Ellen in March

1552/3. These mills, the bread shop and the rest show that Christopher was another miller, baker, brewer and forester, like his father, Richard, as well as a mercer, girdler and haberdasher.⁵⁴

Richard had been a church reeve, and Christopher was not only a churchwarden at All Saints in 1510 but also one of the auditors there in 1522, 1538 and 1543. In 1532, Christopher also made the Church-Ale, a kind of Beer-fest, at Wirksworth, to raise funds for All Saints. And in 1528, when the Dean of Lincoln died, and Henry Litherland was sent for a Visitation to check the state of the churches, Christopher Thacker was one of the nine parishioners for All Saints to bear witness to the state of the church, its services and parishioners.⁵⁵

Thomas's brothers benefited from the dissolution. In one letter he thanked Cromwell 'for your letters to the surveyors of the suppressed monasteries in the county of Derby, in favour of my brethren'.⁵⁶ This included Christopher. Patent Rolls of 1 September 1552 note 'the tithes of hay and other tithes in the parish of All Saints and St Alkmund, Derby, in tenure of Christopher Thacker, the elder, which belonged to the late college or free chapel of All Saints in Derby'. This suggests a benefit for him achieved by his brother Robert, sub-dean at the dissolution of 1549. The March 1552/3 Patent Rolls include Christopher among several tenants of properties formerly of All Saints, or of 'Derby Priory' (which the Patent Roll editors imply is a mistake for Darley Abbey). Patent Rolls also show that he was included in grants made in 1554, where 'a tenement and lands in the tenure of Christopher Thacker' is amongst the possessions of the former abbey of Darley. Simpson's History of Derby includes abstracts of Queen Mary's grants including one 'then in the tenure of Christopher Thacker'. This might suggest that Christopher died soon after May 1554. However, his son, James, was holding the Rowting Stones mill by March 1552/3 which suggests more strongly that Christopher had already died by then. If so, the Patent Roll wording in 1554 would have to mean 'then in the tenure of Christopher Thacker'. The reference to him being 'the elder' in 1552 theoretically could imply an otherwise unknown son named Christopher, as could the 1554 reference; however the younger man indicated will be his grandson, Christopher the son of James Thacker, then aged about 14.⁵⁷ Water mill lease-holders Thacker and Johnson had certainly died by 1555, for in 1553-5, their sons, James Thacker and Christopher Johnson were engaged in a dispute in Chancery over these mills (which is suggestive of problems arising shortly after the death of both fathers), record of which survives. The document states that James was 'one of the children' of Christopher Thacker, and held the original lease. Christopher was also one of seven witnesses to a transaction at Trusley on 26 June 1546, which concerned Derby people.⁵⁸

No document described Christopher directly as a gentleman, but in the 1547 will of Nicholas Bartilmew of All Saints (for which he was an overseer and witness) he was consistently given the corresponding honorary designation 'mayster'. This designation was also made in the inventory where he was a 'praiser' (appraiser).⁵⁹

Like his brother, Oliver Thacker was a churchwarden in All Saints, Derby (1532-33). He first appears in the records 14 years later than Christopher when his payment for the Lay Subsidy payments for April 1524 and 1525 were 20s for goods rated at £20 for a property in Sadler Gate, Derby (four times greater than his brother's). In 1525 he was a bailiff in Derby and amongst those named with varied responsibilities for ensuring the collection of the tax. He also acquired Cap Croft in Derby in 1527/8 (where his brother Christopher was one of those corroborating this transfer), which eventually passed to his godson, grand nephew and namesake, Oliver.⁶⁰ He appears rarely in the Duffield Manor Court Rolls (with people indebted to him). He was listed in 1537 paying for the same rate of goods. But by the 1540s he was 'of Little Chester' and paid 6s 8d in the 'Benevolence' of 1543. In the Lay Subsidies of 1544, 1549 and 1550, his goods were valued at £10.⁶¹

Oliver was also a bailiff in 1538. As Joan D'Arcy comments, 'As bailiff in 1538, Oliver Thacker had been ideally placed to take advantage of the monastic closures', and that his will and inventory reveals 'that he held St Mary Bridge's chapel and was using it to store wood and coal, with more timber'. In her history of Little Chester, she shows how Oliver had held the tenancy for 'le subdeane's prebende, alias Stone Prebende', and 'managed to retain the lease of the subdean's farm throughout the religious changes'.⁶² Indeed being bailiff, coupled with having well-placed brothers Thomas and Robert, enabled Oliver to secure several of the local pickings of the dissolution. Two bailiffs were appointed each year, and Oliver's fellow bailiff in 1538 was Robert Ragge (a relative and executor of Thomas Ragge, the last prior of Darley Priory), and the number of cases where they operate together reveals how fruitful financially their year of service was. The Letters & Papers (in Augmentations for 1544) show Oliver Thacker and Robert Ragge held tithes from Darley Abbey, from the parishes of St Peter's and St Michael's and from the dissolved Nunnery. Later legal cases reveal that Robert, as rector or sub-dean of the dissolved college of All Saints, demised the tithes of Little Chester and St Alkmunds to his brother Oliver (who later granted them to William More of Derby - bailiff in 1554, uncle of Ralph

Haughton's wife, Mary, and an overseer of Oliver's will).⁶³ Oliver Thacker was among those indebted to the King in 1539 which suggests that he had stretched himself as much as possible to acquire all these holdings.

Another case in 1591 centred on a messuage and garden in Friar Gate, with one set of deponents being asked if they knew Robert Thacker, vicar of St Werburgh, and if they knew he held the premises, and had passed it on to his brother Oliver, and another set asking whether Oliver took out a lease of a house on the south side of Friar Gate from Joan Curzon the prioress of Kingsmead Nunnery. For the first depositions, Ralph Haughton confirmed Robert Thacker was his mother's brother and did occupy a tenement in that street. 90-year old Joan Whytherens confirmed Robert did appoint Oliver to the said rent. Meanwhile another Oliver Thacker (great-nephew of his namesake) was less certain, while John Tydie the current tenant claimed it had been occupied by James Thacker from about 1558 onwards, but was unaware of whether Robert had occupied it. Such is the ambiguity of witness statements relating to 50 years previously!⁶⁴

Not all went to plan. In 1541, Thacker and Ragge, together with other former and future bailiffs and other prominent people of Derby tried to enforce taking tolls from people coming to Derby from Melbourne, Chellaston and Castle Donington - who fought the practice in Duchy of Lancaster courts. Meanwhile, a case taken out c.1550 by Oliver's neighbours, Anthony and Mary Lister pressed a case against Thacker and Ragge. Anthony Lister relates how the late abbot of Derby monastery held various properties in Little Chester and in 1538 demised them to Richard Lister, his late father, who in turn demised and leased them in 2 Edward VI (c.1548) to Ragge and Thacker, who, Lister says, contrary to the terms agreed, effectively sub-let the premises of Thomas Swinton, 'who was negligent', and this property burnt down.⁶⁵

Some of the other lawsuits relate to Oliver's marriages. There is no evidence, in his will or elsewhere, that Oliver had any surviving children, or indeed any marriage before the late 1530s, but such a marriage is of course possible. We do know he married Elizabeth the widow of John Kerchever, onetime bailiff of Orston, Notts, most probably in 1537, and as often happened, acquired unresolved financial issues. John Kerchever had been an executor of John Rose, a former sheriff and mayor of Nottingham, whose grandson John Bredon claimed in 1540 or 1541 he was due 100 marks from that will, which he should receive from Oliver Thacker as the husband of Elizabeth, executor to her late husband. A year earlier, Oliver and Elizabeth pressed their own case against Edward Chamberlain for unreleased assets arising from this will. And even after Elizabeth's death, Oliver pursued Robert Pride, parson of Hawkesworth over moneys contested from the wills of Rose and Kerchever.⁶⁶

Fragments of another contested case survive, c.1547, where Oliver and his new wife, Anne, widow of Hugh Massey, together with Robert Ragge, and another onetime bailiff of Derby, Humphrey Sutton, were defendants against a plaintiff whose name is lost (but possibly another Massey). Sutton and Thacker would serve together as bailiffs in 1553, but this case explicitly relates to Sutton's earlier (1543) year as bailiff. This case relates to contests about money and charges of false imprisonment. It also states clearly that Ragge was father in law to Hugh Massey, and had gained 'a great part of the said Massey's goods' (after Massey's death), and unambiguously that Massey's wife was Ragge's daughter, and that 'Oliver Thacker who hath now married the wife of the said Massey', and that Robert Thacker was 'priest Official to the said Bishop' (of Coventry and Lichfield) and held some of Massey's assets.⁶⁷

Combining this information with the Act Books of Coventry & Lichfield, and Parish Registers of St Alkmunds, we see that Hugh Massey of All Saints, Derby died with probate granted on 2 November 1545 to Anne his widow; and that Elizabeth Thacker was buried on 12 March 1545/6. Thacker married Massey on 17 May 1546. The parish records wrongly name her as 'Agnes Massie': in common with many early Registers, these are a later copy which looks as if it was made in the 1590s, by the consistency of handwriting up to that point, and may represent a mistake in copying - 'Annes' being a common form for Agnes at the time.⁶⁸ This marriage is confirmed by the Religious Pension Roll, which in one place, after itemising Robert Ragge's receipts next names Anne Ragge, but in a later list, says 'Anne Ragge now wife of Oliver Thacker'.⁶⁹ This pension roll shows the many benefiting from the dissolution, including Thomas's two sons Edward and Gilbert (gaining from Darley and Dale respectively), and Robert a pension from the dissolution of All Saints as a Collegiate Church or Free chapel. Ragge, his daughter Anne, and therefore Oliver gained from the dissolution of Darley, presumably with abbot Thomas Ragge's help.

By the 1540s, charters and other documents naming Oliver describe him as a gentleman of Little Chester. He clearly held and occupied Stone House Prebend in Little Chester. Patent Rolls also reveal he held a meadow in Derby 'which belonged to the late chantry of Chaddesdon, Derby', a cottage in Roddington, Leics., a barn near St Leonard's Hospital leased by German Pole of Radbourne, and no doubt several other holdings. His will and

inventory reveal a combination of assets, including a smallholding (8 sheep), a lot of timber, and enough garments and yarn to suggest that like his brother Christopher, he had worked as a mercer. But his ability to style himself as 'gent' no doubt came from the lands and other acquisitions made in 1538.⁷⁰

His brother Robert went through the stages of acolyte (22 September 1520), sub-deacon, (22 December), deacon (23 February 1520/1) and priest (25 May 1521) according to the Lichfield & Coventry Bishop's Registers of Geoffrey Blyth. According to these (Latin) records, he was appointed to a title as a secular priest 'to the monastery at Darley'.⁷¹ He became vicar of St Werburgh, and was also appointed to the prestigious post of sub-dean of All Saints in 1530. As vicar he was named in the 1535 Valor Ecclesiasticus (he was also the unnamed sub-dean) where St Werburgh was only rated at 4s: the true value of the Collegiate Church of All Saints and its prebends was £38 14s, of which the sub-dean's prebend in Little Chester was valued at £3 6s 8d. The Valor Ecclesiasticus also revealed that the sub-dean received an annual payment from Darley Abbey. In the Clerical Subsidy of 1557-8, Robert's pension is listed as £6 13s 4d, on which he was to pay 13s 4d.⁷² As we have seen, Robert worked closely with his brothers, even to the extent of agreeing to demand a fee for Thomas from the abbot of Darley and Dale, no doubt in connection with the effects of dissolution. In 1543, Thomas vouched for him to enable Robert to become vicar of Mackworth, as shown in the Lichfield & Coventry Bishop's Registers. As vicar of Mackworth, Robert is also recorded in 1548/9 as witness to a livery of seisin for a grant of lands which originally belonged to the nunnery at Kingsmead, Derby.

Many of the clergy in this era are given the title 'Sir', and Robert was among them, called 'Sir Robert Thacker' by testator John Storer of Derby in 1544 (for whom he was an executor) in the Chancery case where he was described as priest official to the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and by his nephew Edward Thacker in a deposition of 1572.⁷³

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References

1. The Derbyshire Archaeological Journal is abbreviated as D.A.J.
2. Robert Thacker's letter, 18 June 1537. NA, microfilm SP1 §121 pp141-3. For (abbreviated) published version, see *The Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (L&P), Vol 12, part 2, June-Dec 1537, 1891, No.111, p39.
3. Joan D'Arcy, *A City Within a City*. Little Chester, Derby AD80-AD2000, 2005, pp21, 27.
4. G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 1991, p127. The most recent biography, Robert Hutchinson's *Thomas Cromwell The Rise and Fall of Henry VIII's Most Notorious Minister*, 2007 clearly departs from Elton's tone, but as clearly agrees that Cromwell's impact was radical.
5. P. J. P. Goldberg, *Medieval England. A Social History 1250-1550*, 2004, p244; Hutchinson, op. cit., pp19-21.
6. Keith Randall, *Henry VIII and the Government of England*, 1991, p95, summarising this earlier consensus.
7. *Victoria County History, A History of the County of Derby*, Vol 2, 1907, p52.
8. Joseph Tilley, *The Old Halls, Manors and Families of Derbyshire*, Vol 4, p47.

9. Alec MacDonald, *A Short History of Repton*, 1929, p.50. This view is compatible with Rev J. C. Cox, *The Churches of Derbyshire*, Vol 3, c.1877, pp347, 429f, but MacDonald cites no reference, and I cannot locate these words.
10. Thomas Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, 1655, (ed. J. S. Brewer, 1845–8); quoted, eg. MacDonald, *op. cit.*, p53.
11. Randall, *op. cit.*, pp97f.
12. John Stow, *A Survey of London*, (new edition edited by William J Thorns, 1842), p68. The edition used is Stow's second edition of 1603; the asterisk (*) marks a footnote, indicating that in the first edition of 1598, on p141, Stow had added 'in some matters'.
13. The building, on Throgmorton Street, was destroyed in the Fire of London. Pictures of it survive, for example from the woodcut map *Civitatis Londinium*, 1560, which can be seen via Google Images.
14. 'The History of Repton Priory', *The Topographer*, no. XIV, Vol 2, 1790, pp273-274.
15. Rev Daniel Lysons and Samuel Lysons: *Magna Britannia*, Vol. 5, Derbyshire, 1817, p. cxlix.
16. Alec MacDonald, *ibid.*, p50.
17. The 1569 and 1611 Visitations are published in edited form in *The Genealogist*, New Series, Vol 7-8, 1894-5. One copy of a 1615 conflation of these two Visitations in DILSL (not DRO as incorrectly stated in the National Register of Archives) mentions Gilbert (c.1555-1613) and his son (Godfrey, wrongly named as Gilbert) in the Curzon tree. This error is not found in the St George Visitation of 1611 in the British Library. However, the latter does include some additional entries, clearly added in 1614 (the contemporary 1611 index has these 1614 entries in a different ink), where the Thackers of Repton appear, with the latest Gilbert then aged 2, but otherwise no information extra to the 1662-4 Dugdale Visitation, BL: Eg. 996, fo.79d. This copy also shows Christopher Thacker as husband of Dorothy Coke, fo.57r, and, in the Barwell entry, fo.80r, that William Barwell married Ann, daughter of John Blackwall. This man was John Blackwall of Alton, esq, who was the father of Katherine who married Gilbert Thacker, then Godfrey Poole, and brother of Richard Blackwall of Calke, whose 1567 PCC will shows William Barwell as his nephew, and Katherine as his niece. That John Blackwall was Katherine's father is also attested in the Ince Bateman Pedigree of the Poles of Heage (from Wolley), DRO: D5430/51/14, and stated in Gilbert Thacker's 1563 Inquisition Post Mortem (NA: C142/136/8, fo.2), which shows Gilbert married Katherine on 3 Nov. 1558.
18. Anne Curry, *Agin-court: A New History*, 2005, Appendix.
19. Contrast the letter of 15 August 1539 in the edition of Gairdner and Brodie (L&P, Vol 14, Part 2, 1539ii, 1895, p14) with the much fuller extract (an almost exact citation of the original) quoted in MacDonald, *op. cit.*, pp50f., which comes verbatim from Sir Henry Ellis, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, Third Series, Vol. 111, 1846, pp89-91.
20. Maxwell Craven, personal letter, 9 May 2005, p.3; Nottingham forinsec pleas, NottsA: CA 1306/II.
21. Maxwell Craven, 'Is your name THACKER?', *Derbyshire Life and Countryside*, 1982, p43.
22. NA, C109/87/1-133, the archives of the Thackers of Repton. The document cited is C109/87/18.
23. F. Williamson, Ed, 'Repton Charters', D.A.J., Vol. 53, 1932/33. Repton Charter 38, 14 May 1509, p77.
24. Craven, letter, p2.
25. Craven, letter, p2.
26. Avrom Saltman, Ed, *The Wakebridge Cartulary of the Chantry at Crich*, Derbyshire Record Society, Vol. 6, 1976. For the le Thackers and de Alveleys, see charters 18, 96, 144 and 146. The *Topographer*, *op. cit.* and Wolley MSS 6668 f.463d: deed of Ferrers.
27. NA, CP25/1/38/29/157 published in H.J.H. Garratt, Ed, *Derbyshire Feet of Fines 1323-1546*, Derbyshire Record Society, Vol. 11, 1985, No.690. The name clearly reads 'Alani le Thacker'. J.C. Cox, 'Lay Subsidy Rolls', D.A.J, Vol. 30, 1908, p.66. However, the Lay Subsidy Rolls for 1327-8 for Crich include a payment transcribed as by 'Alanus le Salkere', an unknown surname. Investigation of the original document, NA, E179/91/6, shows it is most probably correctly transcribed as le Salkere, though it could just possibly be read as le Sakkere. NA, DL30/48/581, rot.2d: the 1471 Wirksworth Court Roll reads: 'Johes Thakcar de Criche Jun' & Thomas Harvy de Wirks[worth] ven[erunt] in cur[ie] et ceper[erunt] de d[omi]ne j muner[andum?] molar[i]s vocat Eycliff[e]s & adest a Mere Broke usque Stonhou[s]. For John Thacker of Crich, 1442-3, see Historical Manuscripts Commission 77: de L'isle and Dudley, Vol. 1, p215.
28. For Robert Thacker of Crich, 1430, see Wakebridge Cartulary, deeds 144, 145, 146, 149. NottsA, CA 1328/II, fo.1d; CA 1336/II, fo.1r: forinsec pleas for Nottingham record two cases with Robert Thacker of Crich, 11 Oct 1436 and 1 Oct 1446. The latter has the name as Robert Thakkar of Crich (not Thokkar as in the online translation). For Wolley Charters, see BL, Charter ii.26.

29. NA, DL30/34/352 rot.5r. As for fines 'regarding the price and quality of bread and ale ... [i]t is generally agreed, however, that this was in practice merely a form of licencing'. Denis Stuart: *Manorial Records*, 1992, p4.
30. NA, DL30/34/354, rot 5r. The other affeerer was Robert Pearson.
31. NA, DL30/34/355, rot.5r.
32. NA, DL30/34/352, rot.5r; DL30/34/355, rot.9r; DL30/34/359 (freq.); DL30/34/360, rot.4d; DL30/34/358, rot.3r.
33. NA, E179/92/245, Appletree Hundred, Feb 1523/4. Although rot 2 has no place-name at the head and so is not listed in NA Catalogue, it clearly provides the full list of these tax-payers for Heage, as shown by the 19 names: starting with Philip Pole (of Heage Hall, taxed 4s for £4 in lands), which though faded show the other Heage families, including John Steel, Robert Pearson, Richard, Christopher and Hugh Chetam, Alexander Hellott and others.
34. For Robert Thacker's letter, see ref. 2. above. Remarriage was common in this era, so it can't be proved whether she was the mother of Robert's older siblings, but there is no evidence to suggest she was not their mother. She must not be identified with a supposed 'Elyner Thakker' whose name is a mis-transcription. See ref. 60 below.
35. See ref. 2 above.
36. NA, C1/950/59.
37. Lay Subsidies: NA: E179/159/121, 122, 129, 134; Court Rolls: NA: SC2/196/13; NottsA: DDMG (3) 6. For Trinity Guild see Cornelius Brown, *The History of Newark*, 1904; Registry of Wills at York: John Thekar of Newark 1541 and Richard Thekare of Cottam 1545.
38. Cornelius Brown, *The History of Newark*, 1904, pp250f., see also p346.
39. Rampton: see R. F. Hunnisett, *Calendar of Nottinghamshire Coroners' Inquests, 1485-1558*, Thoroton Society, Vol XXV, 1969, pp6f; Cottam: Inquisition of 1 Nov 1508; Richard as son and heir of John Thacker ('Theyker'): NA, C1/1075/19-20; Cromwell land: MSCUN, Ne D1231/1-2; in 1559 Richard Theaker mortgaged his holdings in Cromwell and in 1560/1 sold them to Sir William Holles: MSCUN, Ne D1232, Ne D1233/1-3, Ne D1234; Christopher Thacker in Patent Rolls for Edward VI (1547-1553), Vol. III, p18; NA, E179/159/73; Cornelius Brown, op. cit., pp158f, 180. John Thacker of Newark is equally unlikely to be descended from the fourteenth century Thekers and Thackers of Newark and Lenton to be found in Nottingham Borough Court Rolls at NottsA, CA 1251a-1341.
40. For Hatfield's enclosures: NA, STAC2/20/228; Lay Subsidies of Norwell and Cottam, see E179/159/134 and E179/159/122; Clement's lease in Willoughby: MSCUN, Ne D4080-1.
41. NA, STAC2/20/228.
42. L&P, Vol. 9, Aug-Dec 1535, 1886, No. 93, p27: 14 Aug. 1535 letter of Thomas Thacker to Lord Lisle (Arthur Plantagenet, Edward IV's illegitimate son, who was Deputy of Calais); E101/206/6, p326f; LJRO, B/C/11/, William Wall of Ashleyhey (1543), Richard Wall of Wirksworth (1566), Richard Thacker of Ashleyhey (1561). A Leonard Thacker is recorded in Parish Registers in Walsall in the 1570s, and could be a grandchild of some cousin of Thomas.
43. LJRO, Act Book of 12 May 1533 (for Henry Thaker, showing his widow Joan and John Hakyn as executors); and B/C/11/ Roger Thacker of Swynnerton 1578 (which names his brother as 'ffurstance'). SRO, Parish Registers for Stone show 'Thyrstan Thacker of Darlaston' was buried at Stone in Feb.1599/1600. LJRO, B/A/27ii, List of families in the archdeaconry of Stafford 1532-3: Darlaston by Stone has 'Henre Baker Jone uxor eius Thurstan Rog' in the home of Humfrey Hakyn, a relative, so the original clerk incorrectly wrote the name Thaker as Baker.
44. NA, DL4/14/42 (Sherratt v Stokes)
45. NA, STAC3/4/42.
46. NA, DL30/34/359 r13d. I have included the opening tiny fragments in counting the number of rolls.
47. Janet Spavold and Sue Brown, 'Southwood House and Garden: A Rare Sixteenth Century Survival', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, Vol 16, Part 1, Spring 2001, pp29-32. Idem, 'Southwood House & Garden, Derbyshire, A Rare 16th-Century Survival', *Garden History Society News*, Summer 2001, pp26f. Janet Spavold, personal letter 6 September 2006.
48. NA, C109/87/55; C109/87/59.
49. Only the surname Stringer survives from the original records. Col. the Rt Hon J. C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament. Biographies of the Members of the Commons House 1439-1509*, 1936, p824, identified him as Richard Stringer (d.1510); *The Committee of both Houses History of Parliament. Register of the Ministers and of the Members of Both Houses 1439-1509*, 1938, p.xxiii, in its addenda and corrigenda for the earlier volume corrected this to John Stringer (d.1518). John is certainly more likely than his younger brother Richard, but if (as stated) the member was thought to be born c.1455, then Richard, the father of both men is far more likely.

50. NA, DL30/34/357, rot Ir-ld.
51. NA, DL30/34/358, rot.3r; DL30/35/364, rot 2d; DL30/34/359; rot 8d (several rots only survive as tiny fragments); DL30/36/368, rot.Ir-3d passim; LJRO, B/C/11/ John Style of Heage, parish of Duffield (1543).
52. NA, DL30/34/358, rot 4d; DL30/35/362, rot 4r; DL30/35/363, rot 2r; NA, DL30/35/360 for many examples of outstanding debts to Christopher Thacker.
53. NA, E179/91/106, 160, 149; F. Williamson: 'Derby Borough Rental, 1540' D.A.J, Vol. 56, 1935, pp71-79.
54. NA, DL30/35/362, rot 6r; I. H. Jeayes, Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters in Public and Private Libraries and Muniment Rooms, 1906, No. 1006; NA, DL30/36/371, rot Ir.
55. DRO, All Saints Churchwardens' Accounts from 1466; Visitations of the Diocese of Lincoln, Vol. 1: 1517-31, Lincoln Records Society, 1940, pp97ff.
56. L & P, Vol 11, second half of 1536, pp136f.
57. Patent Rolls of Edward VI, Vol. IV, p450, Vol. V, p205 (see for 1 Apr 1549, 1 Sep 1552, 13 & 20 Mar 1552/3); Patent Rolls of 1 Mary: Patent Rolls for 21 May 1554 include a reference to Christopher Thacker as a (current) tenant of a former possession of Darley Abbey, whereas Queen Mary's grant to the burgesses in 1555 (unlike other tenancies) states 'then in the tenure of Christopher Thacker', for which see R. Simpson, History of Derby, 1826, pp68-72, esp. p.71.
58. NA, C1/1325/20, Johnson v Thacker; D1LSL and DRO, Cokes of Trusley MSS, No.15268..
59. LJRO, B/C/11/ Nicholas Bartilmew of Derby (1547).
60. For Oliver Thacker's purchase of Capp Croft, see William Salt Library, D1965/B/2/2, which (in Latin) states that Thomas Faringdon for £9 has 'sold, given and granted ...to the same Oliuer Thakker one tenement'. His occupancy is also found in the Borough Rentals for 1539/40 and 1540/41: D1LS: DBRID/120, 121. This corrects the earlier mistaken transcriptions of his name as 'Elyner Thakker' in F. Williamson: 'Derby Borough Rental, 1540', D.A.J., Vol. 56, 1935, p78.
61. DRO, All Saints Churchwardens' Accounts; NA, E179/91/97, 106, 116, 140, 147, 153, 160; E179/92/179, 184.
62. D'Arcy, op.cit., p28.
63. LJRO, B/C/5/ Little Chester 1574.
64. NA, E134/33&34Eliz/Mich40.
65. NA, C1/1243/71.
66. NA, C1/950/58-60; C1/1072/9-11; C1/1162/14-15.
67. NA, C4/53/68.
68. LJRO, Act Book for 2 November 1545; the actual will and inventory have not survived. DRO, Parish Registers of St Alkmund's Derby 1538-1660.
69. Rev. J. C. Cox: 'The Religious Pension Roll of Derbyshire', D.A.J, Vol. XVIII, 1906, pp18-43, esp. pp.21, 30.
70. Jeayes, Derbyshire Charters, No. 1014, dated 25 March 1548.
71. LJRO, B/A/1/14ii.
72. NA, E179/18/503, fo.6d. His entry appears twice, as does the following entry, and appears to be a scribal error.
73. LJRO, B/C/11/ John Storer of Derby (1545); NA, DL4/14/42: Sherratt v Stokes.

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THE PARISH BOUNDARY BETWEEN ETWALL AND EGGINTON: THE ARBITRATION OF 1791

(by Roger Dalton,

A frustration of the 1:50,000 Landranger Series of the Ordnance Survey is the absence of parish boundaries. These continue to delimit fundamental spatial units of the English countryside both for administration and data collection but historically were of greater importance being variously coincident with those of manors, townships or ecclesiastical parishes. Parish boundaries have been described as 'an invisible web which served to bind families into communities and to divide communities from one other'.¹ It is of interest therefore to come across an instance of uncertainty as to the precise location of a parish/township boundary in the latter eighteenth century.² The extent of the problem is unknown but in 1791 it was necessary for a formal arbitration to take place to fix the boundary between the parishes of Egginton and Etwall in the area where it crossed the extensive commons then known as Egginton Heath (Figure 1).

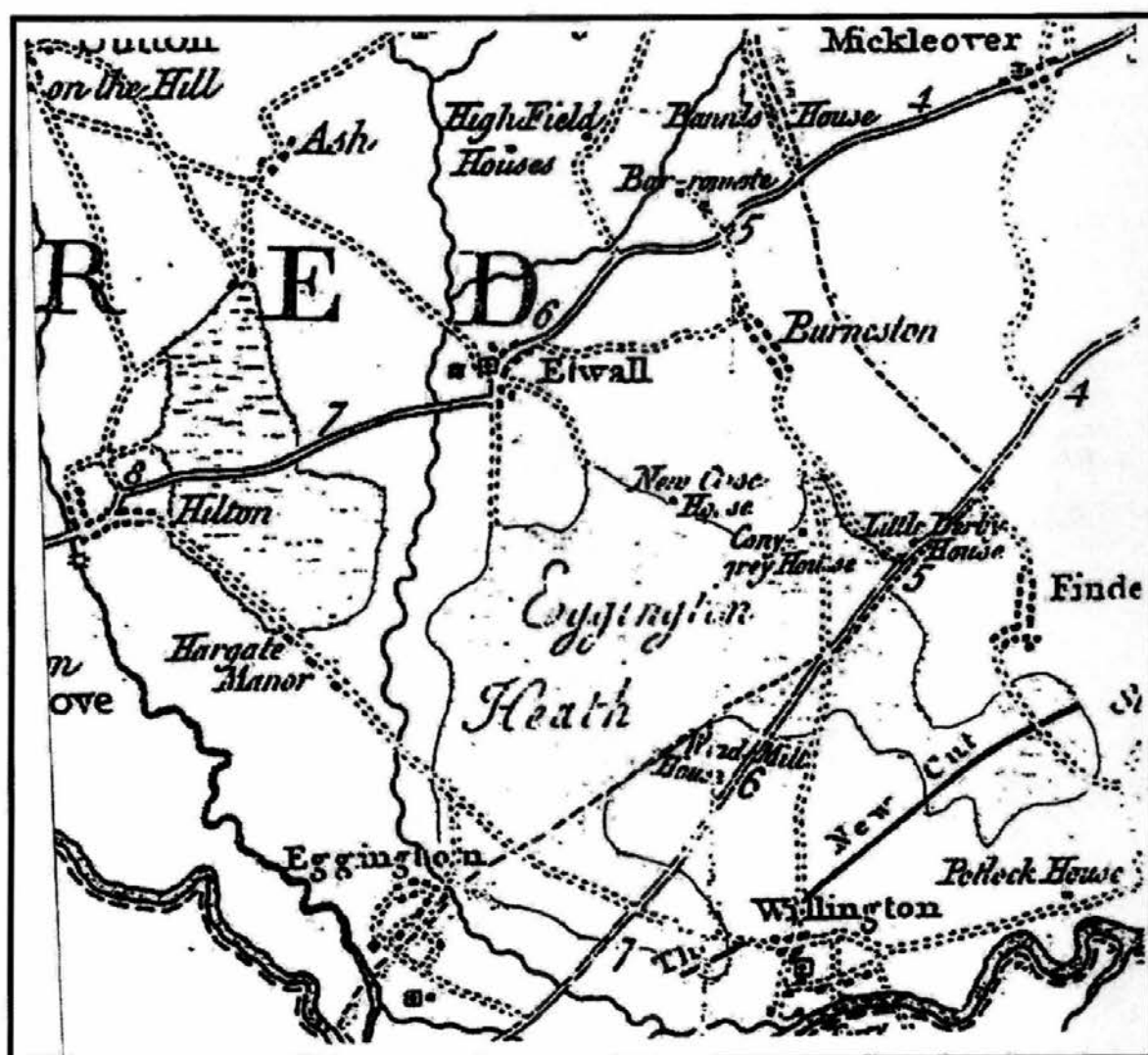


Figure 1. Egginton Heath as shown on the first edition of Burdett's map of Derbyshire 1767. The map was published at a scale of One Inch to One Mile. Distances can be gauged from the numbered points on the turnpikes indicating mileage from Derby.

Early in 1791 an Act of Parliament³ was obtained to enable the dividing and inclosing of lands in the manor and parish of Egginton located some ten miles south-west of Derby. Typically the Act anticipated the enclosing of many conditions of land including fields, common meadow, common pastures and stinted pastures but most importantly common and waste lands. It was estimated that in total over 1,000 acres would be involved. Three Commissioners were appointed, Samuel Wyatt of Burton upon Trent, John Beighton of Hazelwood and surveyor of the Every estate in Egginton in 1764,⁴ and William Eaton of Sutton on the Hill. In the Act it was acknowledged that 'doubts had arisen and may arise touching and concerning the boundaries between the parish of Egginton and the adjoining parish of Etwall of certain parts of the commons and waste lands ... intended to be divided and inclosed'. In order to prevent delays the Commissioners were instructed to perambulate the boundary and to fix the same by marks or stakes. In addition should the lord of the manor of Etwall or any three proprietors of lands make any claim which questioned the boundary as marked then the matter should be referred to Richard Geast of Blythe Hall, John Balguy of Duffield and Nathaniel Clark of Swanwick for arbitration and settlement.

Proceedings appear to have broadly followed the prescribed pattern. The Commissioners gave notice⁵ on 28th April that they were to meet at the dwelling house of Thomas Gardiner, otherwise the Coach and Horses Inn,⁶ on Monday 9th May at eleven o'clock in the forenoon to begin their task of implementing the Enclosure Act. On 12th May the Commissioners gave further notice⁷ that on 23rd May 'we shall openly, publicly and in the day time, ride, or perambulate, or cause to be ridden or perambulated, the Boundaries between the said Commons and Waste Lands' thus enacting the essential part of the arbitration process. They were to begin this perambulation near to a 'common meadow in the Upper Hargate, near to a house lately in the occupation of John Etherley'. This would have been at the western end of the disputed boundary so they must have proceeded eastwards towards a farm or possibly a windmill called the Roundhouse close to and seemingly accessed from Rykneild Street. The Roundhouse was owned by Sir Henry Every of Egginton and tenanted by a Robert Shorthouse.

In the preamble to the subsequent award⁸ Richard Geast, John Balguy and Nathaniel Clark refer to the terms of the Enclosure Act and in a brief arbitration schedule indicated that due notice of the perambulation had been given in the Derby newspaper and notices fixed to the church doors in Egginton and Etwall. The boundary had been ridden/perambulated on the 23rd May 1791, the proposed line had been marked by stakes and objections were to be presented within 6 months. Clarification of the schedule was effected by a detailed map (Figure 2 overleaf). The Commissioners had publicised⁹ their perambulation on 26th May and their readiness to receive claims in writing relating to the proposed boundary at the house of Thomas Gardiner on Monday 6th June. Implicitly nothing of immediate consequence occurred as on 30th June the Commissioners gave notice¹⁰ of a further meeting to be held on 15th July where representations about the intended inclosure could be made. However as the eventual Egginton enclosure award was dated 1798 serious delays must have occurred. It may have been significant that at this time Sir Henry Every (1777-1855), lord of the manor of Egginton, was a minor while William Cotton (1740-1819) of Etwall was a lunatic, although agents would have acted for them. In the event 1798 was close to the year of the Enclosure award for Etwall.¹¹

Of the documentation associated with the arbitration, the map is the item of interest and worthy of discussion (Figure 2). The boundary between Egginton and Etwall, as it has existed subsequently, is clearly indicated but importantly in relation to roads and named features on the Heath. The latter were not accurately located by symbols but implied by the position of the names, many of which do not appear on later maps and schedules. Such names are open to some level of interpretation thus giving insights as to the features of the pre-enclosure Heath landscape.

Burdett's 1760s map of Derbyshire¹² (see Figure 1) shows Egginton Heath as the largest of the commons which lay to the north of the valleys of the Dove/Trent and which correlated with a fragmented sequence of gravel deposits.¹³ It was an important feature extending for approximately two and a half miles east to west two miles north to south with an area of some four square miles. Burdett's survey appears reasonably accurate as his boundaries closely match those indicated by subsequent enclosure awards, most notably those for Egginton and Etwall but also to a minor extent those for Willington in 1767¹⁴ and Findern in 1780. The Acts described the Heath as common or waste where improvement could only be effected by enclosure. Traditional rights which had included grazing livestock, cutting furze and digging turves and gravel were to be extinguished indicating something of the character and value of the Heath.

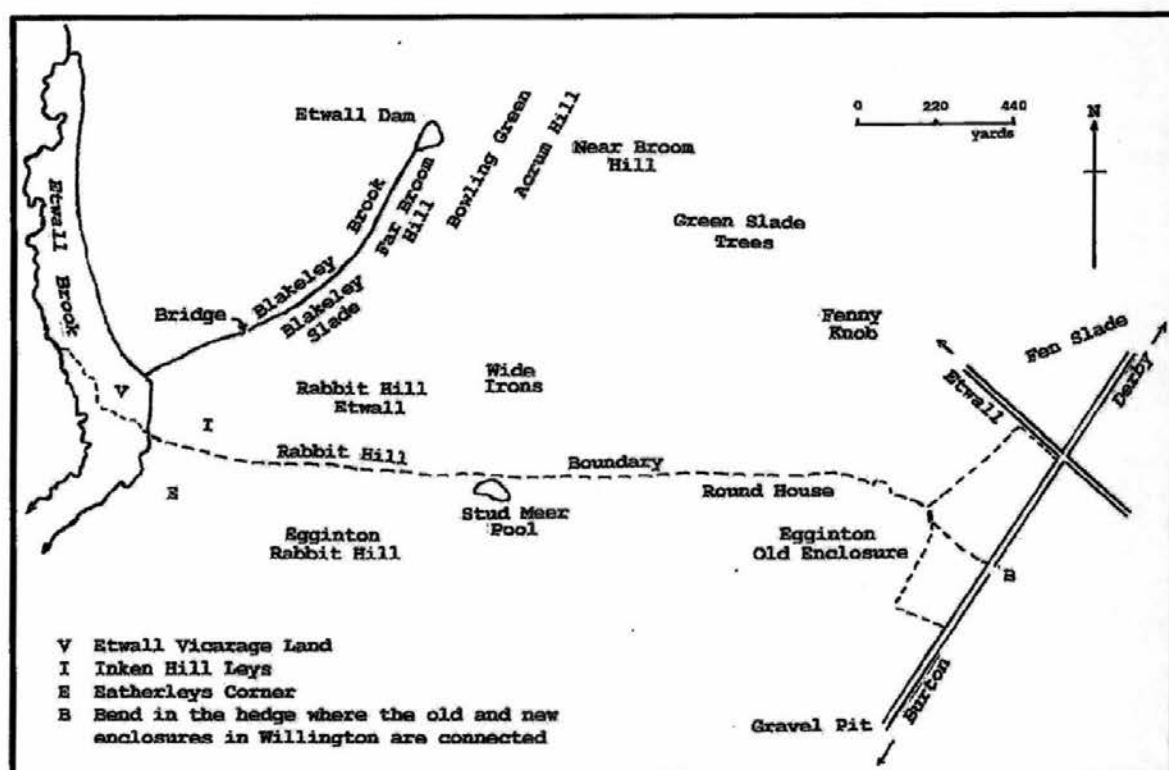


Figure 2. A redrawn version of the map accompanying the Eggington/Etwall Parish boundary arbitration award of 1791.

The arbitrators proposed that the boundary terminated against Willington at point B on the Burton to Derby Turnpike but Willington Parish incorporates land west of the turnpike to the dashed line as shown.

It would appear that the coarse soil texture and poor nutrient status of the gravel areas, developed on a pebbly material in a sandy matrix, were factors in their remaining as unimproved commons over many centuries. Gravels are often indicative of free draining conditions¹⁵ but the presence of clayey lenses within the gravels, the development of impervious pan in the subsoil and the action of streams in cutting through the gravel to expose the underlying Mercia Mudstone resulted in areas of distinctly poor drainage. That cultivation before enclosure was not impossible is evidenced by limited areas of open field arable which existed at the northern edge of the Heath in Etwall, the Heath Field, and to the south-east in Eggington, the Heath Flatt.¹⁶

The map accompanying the arbitration award can be readily matched against that of the Etwall Enclosure Award¹⁷ which was drawn to a similar scale, and also later Ordnance Survey maps. Key locations shown in detail were the intersection of the Derby to Burton Turnpike and the Etwall to Willington track including the bridge over the Blakeley Brook. The latter was formalised into a roadway of given dimensions under the Enclosure Awards. The boundary as proposed by the arbitrators at its eastern end against the turnpike appears not to have been acted upon. Figure 2 shows the line of the boundary running south-east across fields within Willington parish to meet at a point 'in the hedge where the old and the new enclosures in Willington are connected'. However the boundary was fixed to run round that of the Eggington Old Enclosure (Heath Flatt) and land in the vicinity of the Round House, the pre-enclosure farmhouse adjacent to Heath Flatt, before trending westwards across the commons in a straight line. At its western end the arbitration proposal ended against the lesser eastern course of the Etwall Brook so the boundary beyond and across the floodplain was not in dispute.

The existence of named locations within the commons demonstrates that to the people of Etwall and Eggington these were not featureless wastes. Conceivably many of these names had been in use for centuries and with due allowance for problems of interpretation¹⁸ they variously point to the use, visual character or drainage conditions of parts of the commons. The most frequent term associated with drainage is 'slade' derived from the old English 'slaed' indicative of a shallow valley or poorly drained land.¹⁹ Thus the Commissioners showed Blakeley Slade, alongside Blakeley Brook, occupying a shallow valley cut down to expose the mudstone. The upper course of the Blakeley Brook was controlled by Etwall Dam to create an unnamed pool most likely for watering stock. A further water feature, Stud Meer Pool, was located just within Eggington Parish. Here there is a

possible association with horse grazing and watering. Fen Slade was named at a location where the relatively impermeable Mercia Mudstone is again exposed while Green Slade Trees were located well within the gravels as was Fenny Knob, conceivably a mound surrounded by ill drained land.

In Etwall Far Broom Hill and Nether Broom Hill were positioned south and east of the present Broomhill cottages established after enclosure. Conceivably 'broom' was indicative of the presence of furze vegetation. They were divided by a strip named Bowling Green, perhaps a recreational association, and Acrum Hill with the Old English 'ac' as a prefix thus possibly giving Oak Hill.²⁰ At the western end of the Etwall/Egginton boundary were three adjacent areas named Rabbit Hills strongly indicative of an extensive area of warrens. To the east Wide Irons is a pointer to difficult ground perhaps to be compared with 'The Irons' derived from thorn bush as in Radbourne.²¹ To the west Inken Hill Leys are named. The word 'leys' is discussed by Gelling²² under the Old English 'leah' originally a clearing and later a pasture and may be taken to have been improved land at some time. Hinkenhill is located nearby in the extra parochial manor of Hargate. Fraser acknowledged this as a difficult name which possibly combined 'hline' for slope with 'hyrne' for corner.

Allowing for the difficulties of interpretation the named areas of the Etwall and Egginton Commons are in accord with the concept of heathland landscape. Poor drainage was evident in some locations while in others the vegetation was the key characteristic which had been identified. The existence of an extensive rabbit warren was usual for such locations. However the features on the arbitration map are likely to have been named long before the late eighteenth century and by that time the original vegetation form may well have changed considerably. What is clear is that arbitration defined the boundary between the two parishes thus facilitating enclosure and the transformation of the commons into a planned landscape of straight sided fields. Following the establishment of the Burton on Trent Sewage Farm²³ in the late nineteenth century, which straddled the boundary, an access road was laid out along its line from the Egginton to Etwall Road to the Round House. It now provides access to the composting plant currently operated by Biffa which deals with garden waste from South Derbyshire.

References

1. A. Winchester, *Discovering Parish Boundaries*, Shire Publications, 2000, p5.
2. Egginton Enclosure Act 1791, Derby Local Studies Library 4634.
3. *ibid.*
4. J. Beighton, *Survey of Sir John Every's Estate*, Egginton. Derby Local Studies Library FJ929.
5. Derby Mercury, 28th April 1791.
6. This was located on the Derby to Burton Turnpike, now the A38. The site now functions as an Indian restaurant.
7. Derby Mercury, 12th May 1791.
8. Arbitrators Award on the Boundary between the Parishes of Egginton and Etwall 1791. Staffs RO D877/123/1-2.
9. Derby Mercury, 26th May 1791.
10. Derby Mercury, 30th June 1791.
11. W.E. Tate, 'Enclosure Acts and Awards Relating to Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol LXV, 1944/5, p37. Tate gives 1797 for the Etwall Award but 1799 for enrolment.
12. J.B. Harley, D.V. Fowkes and J.C. Harvey, P.P. Burdett's Map of Derbyshire, 1791, DAS, 1975.
13. J.N. Carney et al, *Geology of the Country between Loughborough, Burton and Derby and also the accompanying map BGS Sheet 141 1:50,000*.
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15. H.M. Ragg et al, 'Soils and their Use in Midland and Western England', *Soil Survey Bulletin* 12, 1984 p84.
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17. Etwall Enclosure Award, Derbyshire Record Office, Q/R/I/43.
18. K. Cameron, *Place Names of Derbyshire*, Vol III, 1959, p559. See also M. Gelling, *Place Names in the Landscape*, 1993 and K. Cameron, *English Place Names*, 1961.
19. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol II, 1985, 2014 and Gelling, *op cit*, pp122-123.
20. *Ibid*, p218
21. W. Fraser, *Field Names in South Derbyshire*, 1947, p111.
22. Gelling, *op cit*, p198 et seq.
23. Clay Mills Victorian Pumping Station: Site Guide privately published 2007, pp3-6.

THE DIARY OF JOSEPH HUTSBY: PART 5

FEBRUARY - 12 APRIL 1845

(continued from Vol. 19, Part 1, Spring 2010)

Joseph was a miner and preacher. His diaries cover the period 1843 to 1846 when he was a colliery official at Loscoe, probably at Loscoe Colliery close to the village centre. (Extracted from introduction to Part 1.)

1845

Saturday February 1st

Turned day at each pit, self at Collry till 5. Paid the men £35 5s 10d.

Monday February 3rd

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self in hard till 9 at night. The Breow Pace broke and came out, put a new in.

Tuesday February 4th

Turned alday ½ at hard, ½ day soft. Self went to Eastwood, called and dined with Moses Fullwood.

Wednesday February 5th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry till 2. Went to Heanor, bought 2½doz of candles.

Thursday February 6th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self in both pits.

Friday February 7th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry till 3. Kild a pig, 16½ stone.

Saturday February 8th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self in hard, at Collry till 5. Paid the men as usual £46 16s 0d. Went in hard at 6, came back at 12 at night.

Monday February 10th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft, self at Collry till 2.

Tuesday February 11th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft.

Wednesday February 12th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft.

Thursday February 13th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. John Hutsby went to Watnall, bought 7 sacks of potatoes, gave 4s 9d per sack. Sold them at 7 a peck.

Friday February 14th

Turned alday at each pit, self at Collry till 2.

Saturday February 15th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry till 7. Paid the men as usual £51 5s 0½d.

Monday February 17th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry till 2.

Tuesday February 17th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry till 7 in the morning, very poorly, at home alday.

Wednesday February 19th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry till 9, at home alday.

Thursday February 20th

Turned ½ day at each pit, self in hard. Dialled from the parting of gates and through the works which was 160½ yards. John assisted me.

Friday February 21st
Laystill at both pits. Self went to Watnall, bought 13 sacks of potatoes at 4s 6d, to be delivered on Tuesday next.

Saturday February 22nd
Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry till 4. Paid men as usual £47 3s 2½d.

Monday February 24th
Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry till 2. Dialed the top of hard, found the Bassit end to be going through Top Dam, about 20 yards from the top of it.

Tuesday February 25th
Turned ½ day at each pit. Mr John Banner of Watnall brought us 8 sacks of potatoes, Oxnobles at 4s 6d.

Wednesday February 26th
Turned ½ day at each pit, self at Collry.

Thursday February 27th
Turned ½ day at each pit, self at Collry.

Friday February 28th
Turned alday at hard, ½ at soft.

Saturday March 1st
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry alday. Paid the men as usual £33 11s 3d.

Monday March 3rd
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry till 2.

Tuesday March 4th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft, self at Collry.

Wednesday March 5th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft, self at Collry.

Thursday March 6th
Turned hard alday, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry.

Friday March 7th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry.

Saturday March 8th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry till 7. Paid the men as usual, £53 17s 0½d.

Monday March 10th
Turned alday at hard, laystill at soft. Self in hard.

Tuesday March 11th
Turned alday at hard. ½ day at soft. Self at Collry.

Wednesday March 12th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry.

Thursday March 13th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry.

Friday March 14th
Turned alday at hard. ½ at soft. Self at Collry.

Saturday March 15th
Laystill at hard, turned at soft ½ day. George Ricking, Dan Farnsworth and Sam Garratt fetched 2 loads of alder and willow from Aldikar. Paid the men as usual £52 14s 1½d.

Monday March 17th
Laystill at hard ½ day, snow on railway. Went for one load of timber. Self at Collry.

Tuesday March 18th
Turned alday at each pit. Self at Collry. Joseph went to the Assizes at Derby.

Wednesday March 19th
Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft. Self at Collry.

Thursday March 20th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft.

Friday March 21st

Laystill. Good Friday.

Saturday March 22nd

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry till 4. Paid the men as usual £40 6s 10½d.

Monday March 24th

Turned ½ day at hard. Laystill at soft. Self at Collry.

Tuesday March 25th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry.

Wednesday March 26th

Turned at hard. Laystill at soft: firey. Selfe, Joseph Ricking and Mr Griffin went to Claycross, went down the Blackshall. Coming back the cart wheel came off, broke the harness. Brought the cart home with one trease. Self saw Henry Buckley, gave him 6d.

Thursday March 27th

Turned ½ day at hard. Laystill at soft, firey. Very rouff whether. Self went bought 2 asses. 3 drills, 8 dogbelts, 1 ringer, 2 loading forks, 4 shovels, 2 pair of ass harness, 1 horse harness, 1 nedle and scraper, pair of ass gears, 2 collars £2 0s 0d.

Friday March 28th

Laystill at both pits. Self at Collry.

Saturday March 29th

Laystill at both pits, firey. Self paid the men as usual, £27 18s 0½d.

Monday March 31st

Turned day at soft. Laystill at hard, firey through John Allen.

Tuesday April 1st

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry.

Wednesday April 2nd

Turned alday at each pit. Self went to Newsted to enquire about some larch poles. Mr Keyton gone to Nottingham. Self after him, saw him, could not give me an answer. Had to go again on Thursday, April 10th.

Thursday April 3rd

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry.

Friday April 4th

Laystill at hard, turned alday at soft. Self in hard, at Collry till 4. Lent Ed. Stanley £1 0s 0d. A fortnight.

Saturday April 5th

Turned alday at hard, ½ at soft. Self at Collry. Paid the men as usual, £26 12s 3d.

Monday April 7th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self at Collry till 6.

Tuesday April 8th

Turned alday at hard. Laystill at soft, firey.

Wednesday April 9th

Turned ½ day at hard. Laystill at soft, firey.

Thursday April 10th

Turned alday at hard. Laystill at soft, firey. Opened a head through the Gobin, out of the Old Basit Gate Road, which was 18 yards, which made an effectual cure of the pit. Had to make some fire boxes to hale by.

Friday April 11th

Turned alday at hard, ½ day at soft.

Saturday April 12th

Turned ½ day at each pit. Self paid the men as usual.