

DERBYSHIRE MISCELLANY



Matlock Bath from the Old Bath Terrace.

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LANDOWNERS OF ASTON UPON TRENT 1500-1924

PART 2: 1727-1924

(by Miriam Wood,

Robert Holden II and his additions to the Aston Hall estate

Robert Holden, son of Samuel and grandson of the Robert who had bought Aston Hall in 1648, was born in 1676, but although his father died in 1692 Robert was not to succeed to his estate on reaching the age of 21 in 1697. Part of his inheritance he was to have when he was 25 and in Aston this consisted of some 140-150 acres which his grandfather had bought from the Weston manor estate. He was not, however, to have Aston Hall and the lands which belonged with it, what his father had called '*Hunts Lands*', until his mother's death, which occurred only in 1724 (see Part 1 in *Derbyshire Miscellany*, Vol 20, Pt 2, Autumn 2013).

Despite his success as a lawyer, Robert's first purchase in Aston was not until 1727 when he was already 50. Then he bought a messuage and 2 yardlands from Robert Lown(e), a descendant of the Robert Lowne who had had the farm from Nicholas Wilmot in 1648.¹ This was followed in 1728 by the purchase of a messuage, Homestead Close, 2½ yardlands and a toftstead from Thomas Bryan of Stainfield, Lincolnshire, yeoman.² Bryan was a nephew of another Thomas Bryan who had bought one of the Wilmot farms sold in 1705 and part of the farm sold by Robert Holden in 1648 to Thomas Clementson (see Part 1). He had left his property to his nephew, who seems to have added the other part of the former Clementson farm to his lands, only to first mortgage everything, then sell it to Holden.³ Robert bought little other Aston land during his lifetime, though he bought elsewhere, but it was his money which further enlarged the Holden estate there in the years following his death.

Robert was succeeded by his only child, a daughter Mary who married James Shuttleworth of Gawthorpe and Forcett esq. In 1747, the year after Robert died, his trustees purchased a messuage and 3 yardlands from John '*Bancroft*' of Aston yeoman,⁴ a descendant of the Christopher '*Brancrofte*' (also called Bancroft) who had the same property from Henry Sacheverell in 1595. Some 20 years later, in 1767, the other farm sold by Sacheverell in 1595, was acquired by Robert's son in law James Shuttleworth, and was described as 23 acres of land and a pingle called Green Leys⁵ - the enclosure of Aston's open fields had abolished the yardlands and their strips and replaced them with fields as we know them. Until this sale, the farm had remained from 1595 in the ownership of the Rolleston family.

Together, these purchases added about 210 acres to the Holdens' estate, making 500 acres or so in all.

Other landowners in the mid-18th century

Mary Cowlshaw in 1721 on her brother in law William's death succeeded to his 1½ yardlands, presumably holding this land in addition to the one yardland she had bought in 1704 (see Part 1). When she died in 1728,⁶ William's property passed to her daughter, Sarah, married to Richard Meysham (generally later spelled Measham) of Repton, together with Mary's own land. Under Sarah's will⁷ made in 1750, her property was to have descended to her 3 daughters and her son George, but it was George who appears to have owned it all later, perhaps buying his sisters out (although there is no evidence as to exactly what happened). George appears as an owner in the enclosure award in 1763 (see below) and the Meashams continued to be numbered amongst Aston's landowners until the early 19th century.

Another newcomer was Jonathan Bostock of Weston, yeoman, who, in 1733, bought the smallest of the old Harpur farms from Elizabeth Burton of Bagthorpe, Nottinghamshire, widow and her son John.⁸ It contained only 31 acres (including 4 acres of pasture) smaller than when surveyed long ago by William Senior at 41 acres. Two years later in 1735⁹ 27 acres of land were bought by Joseph Bostock from Joseph Burton of Derby whittawer who had acquired it in 1712 from John Pryor, again land which had once belonged to the Harpurs (see Part 1). Later, it was said that Jonathan and Joseph Bostock had purchased an estate from Elizabeth, John and Joseph Burton, presumably with reference to these 2 purchases¹⁰ and they were certainly held together by Joseph when Aston was enclosed (see below).

More significant, perhaps, than these changes were those which brought Joseph Sykes and Joseph Greaves into Aston. Both were designated esquire, both appeared for the first time as Aston landowners in the 1740s and the history of both their properties before that time is obscure.

Joseph Sykes (sometimes spelt Sikes) esq. was a maltster in Derby, at a time when malting was the most important of Derby's industries.¹¹ He is the most likely person to have acquired the property of the Reverend Edmund Meymott, some 2½ yardlands (formerly belonging to the Wards - see Part 1) - but no direct evidence survives. There is no other landowner, so far as one can see, who could have bought the Meymott lands, nor any other source for most of what Sykes held. Judging by the evidence of the enclosures (see below), Sykes probably owned about 100 acres, so he or his son must have also bought additional property, perhaps another 1½ yardlands, but nothing whatsoever is known about this. His descendants continued as landowners in Aston for more than a century.

Joseph Greaves esq. never held so much land as Sykes, nor did his family remain landowners there so long, but he left a greater mark on Aston and his family was of greater prominence. He was probably from the Greaves family of Mayfield and ultimately of Beeley, and had been living at Foremark in 1728 and 1732 (where Robert Holden II also lived) and at Ingleby in 1745,¹² possibly working as a land agent. He bought his Aston property from Thomas Gisborne of Derby, esq., a member of a wealthy Derby family and perhaps the Thomas who was a fellmonger and 5 times mayor of Derby.¹³ For his presence as a landowner in Aston there is some, but very little, other evidence.¹⁴ The property was described in a deed of 1743¹⁵ as 2 messuages, farms, lands or tenements, lately purchased by Greaves of Gisborne for £1200. It probably amounted to about 70 acres (to judge from later evidence) and may have consisted of the former properties of the Cowper, later Whitehead, and Bull families (see Part 1). Documents in the papers of the family into which a Greaves heiress later married suggest this, but it is not absolutely certain.¹⁶

It was Joseph Greaves who built Aston Lodge, apparently a smaller copy of the new Aston Hall of Robert Holden II, possibly on or near the site of the former Cowper house. The Lodge was, together with Aston Hall and the Rectory, one of the largest and most notable houses in Aston, a house which was always occupied by the better-off. Like the old Rectory it no longer exists. Although it is not known when it became known as The Lodge or Aston Lodge, for convenience this property will normally be referred to by these names.

Aston before the Enclosures

The enclosures of 1757 and 1763, particularly the latter, show how much the landownership pattern had changed since 1660. There were no longer so many independently owned small farms, even though 2 had been added to the number of such properties in 1705. Then Robert Wilmot had finally sold the last of the farms bought by his father Nicholas as part of his Weston Manor purchase, but on the other hand more had disappeared (see Part 1). The Hill and Buckley farms had broken up, the one to form 2 landholdings too small to be called farms, the other to be absorbed into other properties. Although little is known about the lands of Edward Ward and his successor the Reverend Edmund Meymott or Patrick Cock (see Part 1) or Joseph Sykes it is fairly certain that each of their properties was composed of 2 former landholdings. Thomas Bryan, too, had acquired 2 separate farms in the early 18th century, as above. The expansion of the Holden estate was, however, the most important single reason for the loss of the smaller independent farms. Robert Holden II's two purchases in his lifetime saw his estate absorb 2 properties (one of them Thomas Bryan's itself formed out of two farms) and soon after his death another farm was added to the family's estate. (The last and fourth was bought in 1767 when the 1763 enclosure had taken place).

All the families known from the 16th century have disappeared with the exception of Rolleston/Roulston, one of the two who had bought from Henry Sacheverell in 1595, but William Roulston's land was to be purchased by James Shuttleworth in 1767. The Burton charity and a few of the mid-17th century names still survived (in addition to Holden/Shuttleworth) - John Prior a descendant of a purchaser from Sir John Harpur, and Christopher Wright and Mary Williamson, whose lands derived from the break-up of Weston Manor (see Part 1).

The Enclosures of 1757 and 1763

A disappointing feature of Aston's two enclosures is that there is no map to accompany either. This is usually the case for Derbyshire's Parliamentary enclosures at this period, but neither is there a 19th century tithe map as the opportunity was taken to extinguish tithe payments at the same time as enclosure took place. It is, therefore, impossible to show the location of the new farms, although a map dated 1795 of Charles Holden's lands notes some neighbouring owners.¹⁷

Aston Moor, 240-250 acres, was enclosed in 1757¹⁸ and of this 88 acres were allotted to James Shuttleworth alone. He had allotments of 16 acres as lord of the manor and the remaining 72 acres in lieu of his normal pasture rights. The second largest allotment was of 49 acres to the Rector in lieu of tithes for Aston Moor and Little Moor recently enclosed by Shuttleworth (this may refer to a small area of 5 acres enclosed in 1747¹⁹). 24 other persons received allotments ranging from 13 acres for Joseph Sykes to John Toule's 1 rood 13 perches and the 4 acres divided between 7 cottagers.

The 1763 enclosure related to 1452 acres of common fields, meadows, pastures and waste grounds - in fact, chiefly arable²⁰. The largest allotment as one would expect was to James Shuttleworth, 387 acres, but the second largest is less expected - it was 240 acres in lieu of tithe to the Rector and 71 acres for his glebe land, in all 311 acres. The Enclosure Award had allotted to the Rector one seventh of all the land enclosed by quality and quantity in lieu of all tithes and other dues, and from the residue an allotment for glebe. In fact, 240 acres was more than a seventh of the land enclosed by area, but the glebe allotment was additional to the one seventh and it appears that the allotment to the Rector included a large quantity of poor land. In effect, all the other landowners contributed one seventh of their land by value to the Rector. In total, with the 49 acres he had from the enclosure of Aston Moor, the Rector now held 360 acres, more than a sixth of the area of the township.

In addition to James Shuttleworth and the Rector, there were 13 landowners allotted 23 acres or more, 5 were allotted between 8 and 15 acres and 18 received 4 acres or under, of whom 9 had less than one acre apiece. The total is 38, probably including everyone who had property in Aston except any cottagers who may have held no land in the open fields. It is the 15 owners (including Shuttleworth later Holden and the Rector), allotted 23 acres or more who are those who had held 1 or more yardlands, all who are left after the various changes detailed before, and are those whose history is being followed here. They are also those who were assessed for 20s or so in the Land Tax Assessments mentioned later. It should be added that the number of these properties dropped to 14 soon after the 1763 enclosure (see 'Following the Enclosures' below).

Next after Shuttleworth and the Rector, the biggest landowner was Joseph Sykes (the second of his name in Aston) with 87 acres, followed by Christopher Wright with 72 acres. Then came Sarah Cowlshaw with an allotment of 62 acres, Joseph Greaves with 60 acres and Leonard Fosbrooke with 59 acres. The next group with about 50 acres comprised John Cock (53 acres), John Prior (50) and George Measham (49). The smallest allotments in this group were made to Joseph Bostock with 42 acres, Thomas Hickinbotham 38, Mary Williamson 36, the Burton charity 28 and William Roulston 23. For some reason, John Prior's land is more than expected and Joseph Bostock's less. All of them would have had more land but for the allotment to the Rector, but this loss was balanced by their small amounts of land from the enclosure of Aston Moor. Some may have also had some old enclosures (James Shuttleworth certainly had) as well as their farm houses and yards.

Following the Enclosures

The number of smaller properties, 13 in 1763, was reduced further by the purchase of William Roulston's farm in 1767 by James Shuttleworth, but otherwise there were relatively few changes until the last decade of the 18th century. Mary Williamson alias Meakin bought 13 acres of land from George Measham²¹ and there were other small transactions between owners of land, but nothing of note until 1791. In that year, however, the Reverend Charles Shuttleworth (later Holden) succeeded to the Aston Hall estate and two of the larger properties (always excepting Aston Hall and the Rectory lands) changed hands.

Sarah Cowlshaw and her 5 sons sold their Aston farm, consisting of a messuage and croft and 9 closes containing about 75 acres of land, to John Harrison of Derby, gentleman.²² This was the property which Robert Cowper had left to his kinswoman Grace Cowlshaw almost 70 years before (see Part 1). Nothing is known about Harrison except that he seems to have had Lancashire connections. His will also suggests that he was a professional man.²³

The second property referred to is that of the Greaves family. Mrs Ann Greaves widow and her only children, her daughters Ann and Maria, who was married to Edward Sneyd, all of them living in Lichfield, conveyed their property to Charles Best of Aston esq. for the use of such persons as he should appoint. This reads as though it was a conveyance in trust to sell - certainly, Best did sell later in the same year to the Reverend Charles Holden, the new owner of the Aston Hall estate.²⁴ The sale consisted of a capital messuage with dovehouse, coach house, stables, barns, etc, before occupied by Greaves, closes occupied with the house (22½ acres) and 3 messuages with 13-15 acres each, altogether nearly 68 acres. There is no doubt that this is the house later known as The Lodge or Aston Lodge and its grounds, together with what appear to be 3 smallholdings.

The Reverend Charles Shuttleworth later Holden

The Reverend Charles Shuttleworth's succession to the Aston Hall estate could not have been expected in the early years of his parents' marriage. Their first surviving son had succeeded to the Shuttleworth estate, whilst they had several other sons who could succeed to Aston Hall, two of whom were older than Charles. Mary (Holden) and her husband James Shuttleworth held Aston jointly until James' death in 1773, when Mary together with her son, also James, held the estate until his death, married but childless. Mary then continued, now with her son William, until he, too, died childless in 1791, a few months before Mary's own death in the same year. Charles the next son in succession therefore succeeded to the whole property - and changed his name to Holden in accordance with his grandfather Robert II's will (as had his brothers James and William before him). He had no children at this point and only with his third marriage in 1796 did he achieve a family (the first of which were girls). It was in this year that he resigned as Rector of Aston, a position he had held since 1774.²⁵

The Reverend Charles Shuttleworth Holden sold The Lodge property in about 1797 to a Mr Pack²⁶ and at about the same time, but it seems after the sale, had a survey of his estates made.²⁷ The total of land he held in Aston was said to be 564 acres. To this he had added a few acres by 1800, perhaps, although there is no surviving evidence, from the halving of the Measham property at the end of the century.²⁸ This was the estate which he left to his son Edward Anthony Holden at his death in 1821. The young Edward was still under age and it was not until 1833 that he began to buy land and resume the expansion of the Aston Hall estate.

The Land Tax Assessments 1780-1832²⁹

In this period, the Land Tax Assessments, part of the Quarter Sessions records at the Derbyshire Record Office, are an alternative source of information concerning land ownership when title deeds are not available. They were drawn up annually and give the names of landowners (the proprietors) and tenants and the tax assessed on the properties concerned, but no information on those properties. As the tax on a property did not change they enable properties to be tracked between owners and unusually the Aston assessments also included notes of previous owners at some periods. It is not always the case, however, that a property's history can be tracked, particularly when it breaks up on sale. The assessments for 1780, then every fifth one from 1785-1825, a very few others as necessary and finally the assessment for 1832 were those examined. It appears that a tax of a little over 20s (there were 20 shillings, written as 's', in the pre-enclosure pound sterling) related to land equivalent to the pre-enclosure yardland.

The Sutton estate

Mr Pack to whom the Lodge property had been sold retained only the house and less than half of its lands, the rest being sold to Thomas Sutton.³⁰ Nothing is known of Pack, who stayed at The Lodge until 1810,³¹ but the entry of the Suttons on to the scene was an important development in the history of Aston. Thomas was registered as a licensed victualler (innkeeper) in Shardlow from 1779 until 1793 and his son James from 1794. James was also a fly boat operator running the Shardlow Boat Company on the Trent and Mersey Canal, with interests in the Cheshire salt industry - hence his building of a salt warehouse at Shardlow.³²

Those lands which had once been held by Mrs Greaves and had passed to Thomas Sutton were in James's hands by 1805³³ and in the next 25 years or so James Sutton had built up an estate of about 300 acres in Aston. He never lived there, but remained in Shardlow. Sutton expanded his property in Aston in numerous mostly small purchases, but his own archives are scrappy and include few deeds recording his purchases in Aston, but chiefly deeds referring to the earlier history of some of the properties he bought. In consequence, it is the annual Land Tax Assessments which have to be used to track the creation of the Sutton estate in Aston. The 19th century lists cover the period of James Sutton's purchases and stop in 1832 just after he ceased buying in Aston and as Edward Anthony Holden began his own long series of purchases.

On the way to his 300 acres in Aston, James Sutton absorbed the whole of the Wright lands, acquiring them piecemeal over a number of years, and the whole of the former Greaves lands, as in the mid-1820s he bought that part which Thomas Sutton had not been able to buy (see below). Together, these amounted to at least 150 acres. He also bought parts of the lands formerly held by the families of Meakin alias Williamson,³⁴ Bostock and Thomas Hickinbotham and of the lands of two smallholders Thomas Earpe and John Banton. The Wright and Meakin/Williamson properties were the last of the Weston Manor farms sold by Nicholas Wilmot in 1648 (see Part 1) still held by representatives of their 17th century ancestors at the beginning of the 19th century.

	Commissioners Value of Field Land		Commissioners Value of Moor Land		Old Inclosures Value		Value of the Houses	
	Shillings	Decimals	Shillings	Decimals	Shillings	Decimals	Shillings	Decimals
Adams James							5	
Aston Poor	46	680	6					
Banton John	168	754	15	100				
Bastock Joseph	654	550	60	400	47	220	20	
Brownbill Willm	216	079	21	100	1	920	10	
Burton Poor	393	551	36	200	14	440	20	
Briggs Henshaw	2	014						
Cowlishaw Sarah	907	101	81	500	32	520	20	
Cock John	632	898	52	800	48	580	20	
Clark John	23	705			29	400	15	
Clifford Joseph	11	328	6		2	080	10	
Earp Thomas	129	735	15	100				
Elvaston Poor	273	891	30	200				
Eggleson Elizabeth	133	682	6		2	660	15	
Fosbrooke Leonard Esqr	927	412	75	500	99	540	20	
Fisher Charles	2	786						
Fairbrother Hannah	11	328	6		1	620	10	
Greaves Joseph Esqr	1152	385	99	600	111	720	135	
Gree John	14	978	6				10	
Harpur Sir Henry	34	911						
Hickinbotham Thomas	611	877	48	300	5	360	20	
Locket Thomas	11	328	6				10	
Lane George	7	428					5	
Meashum George	781	404	75	500	2			
Moorley Joseph	15	006	6				10	
Prior John	501	301	45	300	78	400	20	
Rolleston Revd Mr	1467	102	258		122	280	65	
Roulson Wm	315	592	30	200	26	820	30	
Rose Thomas	9	760					10	
Redwood George								
Shuttleworth James Esqr	6398	152	478	400	965	980	270	
Sykes Joseph Esqr	961	227	75	500				
Smedley Robert	4	564						
Swindall Mrs Ann	42	968						

Part of 'A State of the Value of each Proprietors Estates in the Lordship of Aston
as fixed by the Commissioners' [of Land Tax], 1766.

DRO D779 B/E227. By courtesy of Derbyshire Record Office.

Other new owners in the early 19th century - 1832

Sutton was not the only new entry to the Aston scene at this time. In 1802, William Hickinbotham of Weston, farmer, made his first purchase buying 15 acres of land³⁵ which were probably the same as the lands involved in the marriage settlement of Joseph Brownhill and Anne Hill in 1703 (see Part 1). The biggest property he bought, however, was from John Harrison, son of the John who had purchased it from Sarah Cowlshaw and her sons in 1791. He bought most, but not all, of the former Cowlshaw estate in 1809, consisting of a messuage and about 63 acres.³⁶ Then in 1811 William bought 27 acres of the former Meakin/Williamson estate (the rest went to James Sutton as referred to above), so bringing his holdings to over 100 acres.³⁷

After these, the biggest buyer was George Redmond Hulbert, a rather surprising newcomer to Aston. Mr Pack had left The Lodge before 1810 and was succeeded by a Mrs Darwin. She had gone before 1820,³⁸ to be replaced by Hulbert, who is said to have been the secretary to Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, Commander in Chief on the American and West Indian Stations, and at one time Hulbert had held the very lucrative post of Navy Prize Agent in the West Indies. One can only presume that Hulbert settled in Aston because Warren, who was from Nottinghamshire, knew from his local contacts that there was a suitable property in Aston for a well-off man to retire to.³⁹ Hulbert also bought other lands, chiefly John Wright's,⁴⁰ and when after his death his property was sold in 1827 it amounted to 61 acres.⁴¹ It had all come to James Sutton by 1832.⁴²

Another rather surprising entry into Aston's land market was the Earl of Harrington, though for a very different reason. With their seat at Elvaston nearby, it might have been expected that the Earls would have shown interest in Aston's possibilities before, but there is no evidence that they had done so. Now, the Earl acquired a part (the larger part) of the former lands of John Prior by 1815⁴³ and by 1832 three quarters of the lands of Thomas Cocks.⁴² He may have had some 50-60 acres by the end of this period. His archives give no information about his purchases and evidence for them mainly comes from the Land Tax Assessments.

Other newcomers were more reminiscent of the mid-17th century buyers of land. Joseph Botham was an Aston man, describing himself as a farmer, and, having inherited a small property from his father in 1800 (mostly cottages with a little land), contrived to build up a modest landholding by purchases of a messuage and 4 acres of land from Mary Brownhill widow in 1813 and another messuage and about 13 acres from the former property of John Prior.⁴⁴ He paid less than the 20s in tax, normally the lower tax limit of the properties discussed here, but he was involved in the break-up of the Prior property, one of the old ones surviving from the 17th century, and must be mentioned for that reason. Joseph Botham was still in possession of these lands in 1832.⁴²

Richard Jowett was also an Aston man, a butcher, who bought 25 acres and a barn from Jonathan Bostock in 1806,⁴⁵ but by 1815 he was dead⁴⁶ and his property was in the hands of his executors. By 1820, most of these lands were owned by James Sutton.³⁸ Joseph Garner of Weston farmer falls just outside our terms of reference, always paying a little under 20s in Land Tax, but, like Jowett, his property came from the break-up of one of the small estates created in the 18th century, that of Jonathan Bostock. Garner also bought his small property, a messuage and closes, in all 20 acres, from Bostock in 1806⁴⁷ and a member of his family still held it in 1832.⁴²

The last of the 'new' names may actually not be new in the sense of having bought their property in Aston. The lands owned by the Fosbrooke family are shown as belonging to a Miss Fosbrooke from 1795 to 1815 and to her executors until 1825.⁴⁸ Then they passed to 'Mrs' Dawson, who could well be a descendant of the marriage of Susanna Fosbrook and the Reverend William Dawson of Weston in 1768.⁴⁹ Just as Miss Fosbrooke was on one occasion described as 'Mrs' the term may be a term of respect for a lady of status rather than signifying a married woman. By 1832, the property belonged to Thomas Bailey esq. who had either bought it or married 'Mrs' Dawson.⁴²

Aston in 1832

The turnover of property in the first 30 or so years of the 19th century was considerable. Probably approaching 500 acres changed hands, some more than once, and often the old farms were sold broken up between buyers. The Wrights' property, however, was sold piecemeal over some years.

Few of the familiar names from the 17th and 18th centuries remained - Greaves, Cowlshaw, Wright, Meakin alias Williamson, Prior and Bostock had gone altogether whilst Ellen Measham and Thomas Cocks no longer had sufficient land to fall within our terms of reference. The survivors were Edward Anthony Holden, the Rector, the Reverend Joseph Sykes, possibly Thomas Bailey representing the Fosbrookes, Thomas Hickingbotham and the Burton charity.

The Land Tax Assessment for Aston in 1832⁴² lists just 9 persons or institutions holding land liable to pay more than 20s annual land tax and though only 5 names fewer than in 1780 it was proportionately a large decrease. The 9 were Holden and the Rector, James Sutton, William Hickinbotham, Sykes, Bailey, the Earl of Harrington, the Burton charity and Thomas Hickinbotham.

Aston's Land Tax Assessment was £72 2s annually and it is possible to calculate roughly what proportion of the land was held by each individual from the amount paid by him or her. The last available Land Tax Assessment in 1832 (in pounds and shillings and ignoring pence) shows that Edward Anthony Holden paid £23 5s, that is almost one third of the total for the township, the Rector £14 16s and James Sutton £12, these 3 accounting for about two thirds of the tax and therefore presumably two thirds of the land. They were followed in order from the next highest payer William Hickinbotham assessed for £4 12s, to the Reverend Joseph Sykes, Thomas Bailey esq, the Earl of Harrington, the Burton Charity and finally Thomas Hickinbotham assessed at £1 4s. No-one else paid more than 20s. These 9 owners were liable for £65 18s of the £72 5s assessment. Joseph Botham and Robert Gamer fell just below liability for 20s tax, each paying 19s.

The Aston Hall estate 1832-1877

Edward Anthony Holden was the Reverend Charles Shuttleworth Holden's second son by his third marriage, his first son having died young. He came of age in 1826, five years after his father's death and married Susan Drummond Moore of Snarestone Lodge, Leicestershire in 1832. She brought with her a fortune of £40,000, of which £10,000 was immediately at his disposal.⁵⁰ The following year he made the first of at least 34 purchases, the last in 1875, by which his Aston property more than doubled in size.⁵¹

Edward Anthony's earlier purchases included some of his more substantial additions to the estate, but most of his purchases were of cottages and messuages, with relatively few involving a significant amount of land. He probably acquired over 60 houses, of which 5 or 6 may have been farmhouses. His greatest purchases came in 1865 and 1868 and after another property (see below) was added to the estate in 1868, little was added to it except for very small properties, bought by Edward Anthony before his death in 1877 and by his trustees and his grandson Edward Charles between 1880 and 1893, the last known purchase by the Holden family in Aston.⁵²

Holden's first purchase, in 1833, was of the main part of the now dead William Hickinbotham's property, consisting of a messuage and 86 acres of land - what happened to the remainder is uncertain.⁵³ In the following year he bought Robert Garner's farm, described as a messuage with its homestead and 3 closes, altogether 20 acres,⁵⁴ but nothing more until 1838. Then he bought 2 messuages, a cottage and closes, in all 19½ acres, from Joseph Botham.⁵⁵ Both described themselves as of Aston farmer and were the two landowners assessed for 19s land tax in 1832.

Between 1847 and 1849, after Thomas Hickinbotham's death, Holden purchased the remainder of his property (some he had disposed of to James Sutton before 1832) consisting of a messuage or farmhouse and closes, a little over 26 acres.⁵⁶ Also in 1847, Edward Holden exchanged some Sawley property for the house and land belonging to the trustees of the Town's Lands of the Borough of Burton upon Trent, described as 3 cottages and a butcher shop and 5 closes, altogether 37 acres.⁵⁷ The last of the series of Holden's title deeds refer to the purchase in 1863 of Sikes Big Moor and Sikes Little Moor Closes, 13½ acres, probably the land allotted to Joseph Sykes in the enclosure of Aston Moor in 1757.⁵⁸

The greatest by far of Edward Holden's purchases is recorded only in a cash book.⁵⁹ Between 1865 and 1868 is an account of the purchase of Aston glebe, described as 362 acres of land, from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1865 for the sum of £26,700. The details of this purchase are worth recounting. Holden could only finance it by 2 mortgages, one of the former glebe back to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for £16,000 and the other of Holden's large Leicestershire property for £10,000. A mere £100 was paid in cash and 6 acres of land worth £600 was given to the Rectory for glebe. When Mrs Holden was left a legacy of £10,000 by her uncle the Leicestershire mortgage was repaid and it is probable that the property was then sold in order to pay off the mortgage on the glebe estate.

At about the same time an exchange with Miss Bailey of land in Ashby, Leicestershire, for her Aston property was planned. There are no title deeds in the Holden papers for this, but it appears that the exchange took place in 1868, and Holden's purchase was said to consist of 79 acres.⁶⁰ This completed the acquisition of all the larger properties still left in Aston, except for those three which were always to elude the Holdens, the main part of the

Sikes property, the Earl of Harrington's lands and most importantly the 300 acres of the Sutton estate. Edward Holden had, however, enlarged his Aston land by between 600 and 700 acres.

1877-1924

Edward Anthony Holden died in 1877. His eldest son had died aged only 18 in the Crimea and his second son Charles in 1872, so he was succeeded by Charles's son Edward Charles Shuttleworth Holden as a minor. He later followed a military career, fighting in South Africa and was present at the siege of Mafeking. Back in England, for whatever reason, he decided to sell his inheritance and in 1898 William Dickson Winterbottom a bookcloth manufacturer from Manchester bought the Aston Hall estate in its entirety for £96,232.⁶¹ It included land in Shardlow, Great Wilne and Weston upon Trent, in all 1,595 acres.

The valuation precis under the Finance Act 1909/1910 concerning proposed land duties, probably made before 1920, gives a total of 1803 acres for Aston (but it included certain parts of the Hall Park in Weston for the purposes of the valuation).⁶² Winterbottom had 1277 or possibly 1297 acres as well as many houses, followed by Edward Sutton with 280 acres, rather less than calculated in 1832. It appears, however, that he or a predecessor had sold the Lodge and 21 acres of land with it, for Reginald S Boden JP held Aston Lodge, with grounds of 5 acres and 16 acres of agricultural land. Boden, whose family was the last to occupy The Lodge, was it is said from the very successful lace manufacturers of that name in Derby.⁶³

After Sutton came the Earl of Harrington with 102 acres, more than he had had in 1832, but nothing is known of his activities in Aston between then and the Land Valuation. Perhaps he bought the remainder of the Measham and Cocks lands, which do not appear to have been bought by Edward Holden - there was little else available. Robert Wallis, of whom nothing is known, came next with 87 acres and probably had the property formerly belonging to the Sykes family who are not mentioned in the valuation. It can scarcely be a coincidence that Joseph Sykes had been allotted 87 acres in the 1763 enclosure award. The only other landowners with more than an acre were Elvaston Charities (19 acres), the Rector (6 acres) and Aston Charities (2 acres).

In 1924, following the death of Lieutenant-Colonel (as he then was) William Winterbottom, the Aston estate was offered for sale at auction, though in fact some property was sold by private treaty beforehand.⁶⁴ It was said to contain 1561 acres of land chiefly in Aston and included the Hall and its grounds and Home Farm, most of the village, farms, smallholdings, a large area of accommodation land, and the lordship of the manor or manors of Aston and Weston. The estate was split up and the Hall was sold to Nottingham Corporation to serve as a hospital, but there is little evidence as to who bought the farms and large quantity of accommodation land, and no attempt is to be made here to follow their later history.

As a postscript, it may be added that in Kelly's Trade Directories the chief landowners of Aston after this date until and including the last one of 1941 are named as the Earls of Harrington and the Suttons (or their trustees), the only difference from the pre-1924 Directories being the omission of Winterbottom. Reginald Boden was listed at Aston Lodge in the Trade Directories from 1916 to 1925, but not in 1928.

The land owners

It appears that in the late 16th and the 17th centuries tenant farmers were sometimes able to buy a farm, whether from savings or because their credit was good enough for them to borrow towards a purchase. None of these yeomen (and occasionally husbandmen), however, ever came to own a great deal of land, rarely adding to their original purchases. They were gradually squeezed out in the 18th and early 19th centuries, although they did not entirely disappear as they are those generally described as farmers from the late 18th century. After the mid 18th century enclosures the situation became ever more difficult for them because of the huge rise in the price of land which followed (see endnote). They could not compete with those whose profits in the professions, trade or industry far outdid theirs, or who married into money and had inherited lands from which they could raise the money to buy.

We do not know how John Hunt who bought the Aston Hall estate in 1513 made his money, but the purchaser of Weston Manor, Sir William Paget, became a rich man from his service to Henry VIII and succeeding monarchs and bought much other land in addition to Weston.⁶⁵ John Harpur,⁶⁶ Nicholas Wilmot⁶⁷ and Robert Holden II⁶⁸ were all very successful lawyers and again also bought land elsewhere, although Robert Holden less than the other two. Other professional men who purchased land in Aston were the Reverend Dr John Boilston the Weston Rector, Joseph Greaves, who built the house which became known as Aston Lodge and may have been a land

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Aston Estate Sale Catalogue November 1924

Title page to Aston Estate Sale Catalogue, November 1924

By courtesy of Aston on Trent Local History Group

agent, probably John Harrison, and George Redmond Hulbert, secretary to an admiral and a later owner of Aston Lodge.

Robert Holden I, the founder of the modern Aston Hall estate made his money, so far as the scant evidence goes, out of cattle trading,⁶⁹ whilst Leonard Fosbrooke (though he and his descendants never bought much in Aston) and James Sutton enriched themselves from trade on the River Trent (see Part 1) and the Trent and Mersey Canal (see above) respectively. Both the Fosbrookes⁷⁰ and the Suttons⁷¹ became large landowners elsewhere as well as in Aston. Henry Jackson in the 17th century and Joseph Sykes were Derby maltsters, whilst Joseph Burton, a whittawer, and Thomas Gisborne, a fellmonger, were involved in the leather trade. Their Aston estates were modest, but the Gisbornes had property in Derby and elsewhere¹³ and Sykes and his descendants had substantial property in addition to their lands in Aston⁷² Other industrialists on the whole came late into Aston, but made a considerable mark, as William Winterbottom, the Manchester manufacturer of bookcloth, bought the whole of the Aston Hall estate, and Reginald Boden, from the Derby lace manufacturers, Aston Lodge, after Aston Hall the largest house and the one with the greatest prestige.

Nothing is known of the Earl of Harrington's finances, but one can only presume that income from his estate or investments provided the money for his purchases in Aston. As far as the 19th century expansion of the Holdens' estate is concerned, the money for it may have come from a number of sources, but little is known of their financial affairs. Edward Anthony Holden's wife was a wealthy woman and in addition to her generous marriage settlement received a substantial legacy during their marriage, which was used in the purchase of the Rectory estate (see above). Other possible sources are income from rents and investments, and the mortgaging of land.

Most buyers of land in Aston were fairly local. They came from Aston itself (especially the smaller buyers), Shardlow, in any case part of Aston parish until the 19th century, Weston, Thulston and Elvaston, Swarkeston and Foremark and the nearest town, Derby, but they did not necessarily buy in order to make their homes in Aston. The Holdens, the buyers who described themselves as yeomen or husbandmen, and some of the owners of The Lodge, lived in Aston, but other purchasers of land in the township lived elsewhere. The yeomen probably bought principally from a desire to own their own farms and for the security landownership offered to their families (though no doubt with an appreciation of the enhanced status this brought them, too). For others, though their family's security and status were of prime importance, land was also an investment.

The ambitions of those buying in Aston were no different from those buying elsewhere, but the history of Aston was distinctive in one way, in that for about a century or so there were few tenant farmers and much of the land was in the hands of small owners working farms that were their own property. It was the particular circumstances of the 1640s (see Part 1) which largely, though not entirely, gave rise to this situation, but it also seems, as has already been said, that in the late 16th and 17th centuries it was possible for the tenant farmer to compete in the land market. In Aston, the break-up of estates - the Sacheverells', Aston Hall, the Harpurs' and Weston Manor - between 1595 and 1648 gave them their opportunity.

Note on land prices

In the early 18th century £200 seems to have been the standard price for a yardland in Aston. For instance, £400 was the price paid by William Shardlow to Robert Wilmot for 2 yardlands in 1705 (see Part 1 and reference 81) and by Robert Holden II to William Lown in 1727, whilst in the following year Holden paid £500 for Thomas Bryan's 2½ yardlands (see above and references 1 and 2). In the 1740s there appears to have been a substantial rise in the price of a yardland as, for example, in 1747 John Bancroft's 3 yardlands cost Robert Holden's trustees £900 (see above and reference 4). It is possible that this was in anticipation of the enclosure of the common fields, which would be expected to increase the value of farm land.

A few years after the enclosure of 1763, Thomas Brownhill was able to sell 2 closes, together only 10½ acres (that is, less than the equivalent of half a yardland) for £440.⁷³ By 1791 Sarah Cowlshaw was selling her lands comprising about 74 acres to John Harrison for £3,137²² and 7 years later, his son agreed to sell a close at £65 an acre and another at £70 an acre.⁷⁴

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DERBY SHROVETIDE FOOTBALL TO BE BANNED IN 1731

(by the Derby Research Group)

When writing *The History of Derby Shrovetide Football*, author Paul Hudson was able to show that the game was played from at least the early 18th century. He found evidence for its early date in the *Derby Mercury* of 1747, in a notice that the game was to be banned. In later newspaper accounts it was said that a ban had been attempted in 1731 but Paul could find no contemporary evidence for this.¹ It is hardly surprising that the game met with opposition. In much the same way as the game played today at Ashbourne, a leather ball was thrown up in the Market Place and the two competing sides, residents of St. Peter's and All Saints parishes, would attempt to run the ball to goals at opposite ends of the town. With no limit on numbers and boosted by 'foreigners' from out of town, it could become a physical and rowdy affair. Properties in the town centre were particularly vulnerable to damage and the 1747 notice refers to '*tumults and disorders*'. Over the last two years, members of the Derby Research Group have been transcribing Derby Borough Chamberlains' Account books and in one of these the following entries have been found:²

1731

Feb 18th	Pd Mr Mellors for printing the proclamation against foot Ball & Riots	2s 6d
Feb 23	Spent at ye Talbot examining ye foot Ball players, and upon Constables & Sargeants	6s 0d
Feb 24	Spent at ye Talbot at a Common Hall & ye Justices afterwards with the Constables & Sergeants quelling ye Riot at ye Town Gaol	11s 6d

In 1730-31 Derby's Guildhall, which was the seat of the town council, or Common Hall, was in the course of being rebuilt² so business was conducted at the Talbot, an inn on Iron Gate. It would seem that some 'players' had been arrested by the Constables, brought before the Magistrates and placed in the town gaol, thereby causing a riot. Refreshment for those involved in the proceedings was supplied at the town's expense. Quelling a football riot was clearly thirsty work! It was 1846 before Derby Shrovetide Football was eventually brought to an end.

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THE PORTS OF ETWALL

(by Roger Dalton,

The name Port has been associated with Etwall since the end of the fifteenth century.¹ Both Sir John Ports, father and son, lived in Etwall between 1495 and 1557² (see Figure 1). The first Sir John (c1472-1540) received an estate in Etwall including the land on which the former Etwall Hall was to be built. As increasingly wealthy lawyers the Ports then acquired further lands and properties in and around south Derbyshire. On his death in 1557 the second John Port (c1500-1557) is well known for willing the means which led to the foundation of the Almshouses in Etwall and a Grammar School at Repton, now Repton School, in addition to many other bequests.³ This Sir John had no male heir so he was succeeded in Etwall by his elder daughter Elizabeth and her husband Sir Thomas Gerard who became manorial lord. However the charities which, over the centuries, have variously supported the Almshouses and the School have continued to carry the name Port.⁴ In 1955 Etwall Hall and its grounds were acquired by Derbyshire County Council and it is now the site of the John Port School, one of the largest state secondary schools in England.

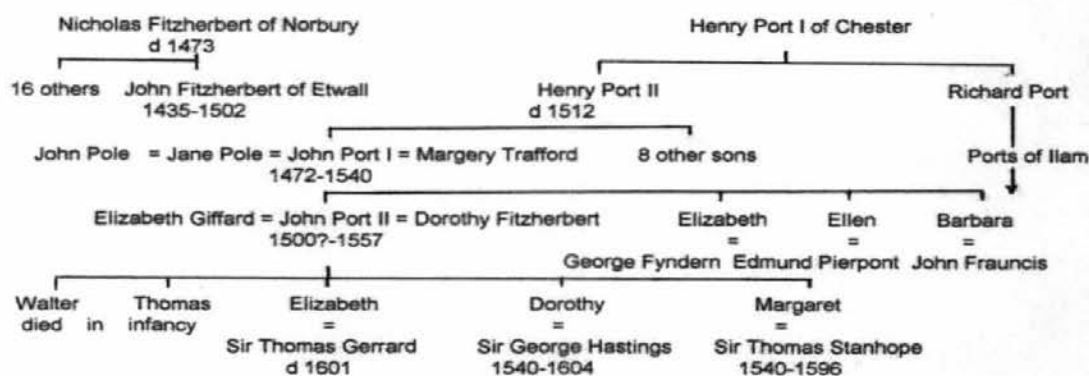


Fig 1: Family Tree of the Ports of Etwall simplified from Baker p xxii.

The first John Port was the son of Henry Port of Chester, a successful mercer and mayor of the city, well able to support John in legal studies at the Inner Temple in London.⁵ There, in 1494, John Port became associated with John Fitzherbert (1435-1502) originally of Norbury, who was King's Remembrancer,⁶ and in the following year he married Fitzherbert's widowed daughter Jane after the death of her first husband, John Pole of Radbourne. Baker⁷ suggests that Port's connection with Fitzherbert arose from legal work on behalf of Cockayne of Ashbourne but the consequences were profound as following his marriage John Port received at least some portion of the Fitzherbert estate in Etwall. Charters⁸ from the turn of the fifteenth century indicate two transfers of land and property to John Port. The first of these, dated 1495, involved 100 acres of land (arable), 60 acres of pasture, 20 acres of meadow, a windmill, a horse mill and 5 messuages at a cost of £200 while the second was for further lands which cost £160.⁹ Henry Port may have had a hand in the financing of these transactions.¹⁰ In about 1446 John Fitzherbert¹¹ had received lands and property in Etwall from the Nottinghamshire Priory of Beauvale¹² which had held the manor of Etwall from 1370. By 1468 Fitzherbert was described as 'of Etwall'¹³ indicative of close association and perhaps residence in the village. Included in the land made over to John Port was an area described as lying between a stream on its west side, the Etwall Brook, and the common well, the Etwall Town Well, on the east side, the latter being central to Etwall village and its church of St Helen. In this way the site and grounds of the former Etwall Hall, now the John Port School, plus other lands came into the possession of the first John Port in 1495.



Fig 2: Port Coat of Arms
(D & S Lysons, *Magna Britannia*, Vol 5, Derbyshire, 1817, p cxxxix)

The estate acquired on John Port's marriage enabled the family to enter the landed gentry in South Derbyshire and in 1506 it was his father Henry Port who obtained a coat of arms (Figure 2), '*Azur a fess engrailed between three eagles close, each holding in its beak a cross formy fitchy or*'¹⁴ which on his death in 1512 was incorporated into a monumental brass to his memory in the church in Etwall. John Port's first wife Jane Port died in 1528 having born him three daughters, Elizabeth, Ellen and Barbara, and a son John. Port's second childless marriage was in 1531 to Margery daughter of Sir Edmund Trafford. Travelling frequently from his domestic base in Etwall John Port developed a distinguished legal career¹⁵ which saw him knighted in 1525. In the North Midlands he was Commissioner for the Peace in Derbyshire, Judicial Commissioner and Recorder for Nottingham, Deputy Justice for Sherwood Forest, Surveyor of Duffield Frith and Surveyor of the Honour of Tutbury and Needwood Chase. He was appointed King Henry VIII's first Solicitor-General in 1509 and, based in chambers near the Inner Temple, became much involved in state affairs. In 1521 he was made Serjeant at Law and a member of the Serjeant's Inn, an Assize Commissioner and Assize Judge on the Northern Circuit, later moving to the Oxford Circuit with his son John as joint clerk. In 1538 he became chief justice of Lancaster. Early in the 1500s he was among those who endowed the new foundation of Brasenose College Oxford. Baker¹⁶ suggests his involvement with the College to be indicative of religious conservatism, indeed Catholic sympathies are evident in the later history of the family despite which John Port helped to enforce reformation legislation as a member of Star Chamber which in the 1530s dealt with opponents of the policies of King and Parliament.

John Port's legal career was profitable and enabled the extension of his initial property portfolio acquired from John Fitzherbert to include lands in Burnaston, Trusley and Hilton¹⁷ as well as Etwall and also manors in the northwest inherited from his father. Baker¹⁸ notes at least 22 further acquisitions of land and manors, mainly in Derbyshire but also in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. At the Dissolution, just two weeks before his death in 1540 and for £434 13s 4d, John Port was granted the manor of Etwall from Beauvale and the rectory and advowson of Etwall Church which had been in the possession of Welbeck Abbey since 1170.¹⁹ It is not known whether John Fitzherbert of Etwall had built a house or hall on the lands acquired from Beauvale in the mid fifteenth century, but it is certain that Sir John Port did so. However there is no record as to the appearance of the Port Hall which was rebuilt, initially in the latter seventeenth century by Sir Samuel Sleight,²⁰ manorial lord of Etwall 1646-1679, using sandstone brought from the slighted Tutbury Castle. Further modification took place between 1717 and 1726 at the instigation of Sleight's grandson Samuel Cheetham under the direction of the architect Francis Smith of Warwick. The internal arrangement of Etwall Hall appears not to have been surveyed when it was pulled down in 1955 to make way for the John Port School complex. However in 1899 the Hall was described as featuring '*an ingeniously contrived priest's hole with secret communication with the cellar and roof accessed from behind the fireplace in the master bedroom*'.²¹ This and a tunnel between the Hall cellars and the nearby St Helen's Church are referred to by Henderson, resident in Etwall in 1955.²² Such features would have dated from the time of the Tudor Hall and certainly would have reflected catholic leanings of the Ports and more especially the Gerards into whom the second John Port's daughter Elizabeth married.

On Sir John Port's death in 1540 his estate passed to his son John. He was twice married, firstly to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Gyfford (otherwise Gifford) of Chillington in Staffordshire, and secondly to Dorothy, widowed daughter of Sir Anthony Fitzherbert. He died in June 1557 without a male heir but was survived by three daughters from his first marriage, Elizabeth, Dorothy and Margaret. His career in the law was facilitated by

his father as in 1524 he went up to Brasenose College in Oxford with one of the scholarships founded by his father and in 1528 he was admitted to the Inner Temple. Thereafter he entered the service of Thomas Cromwell and was knighted as a member of the Order of the Bath in 1547. He was a Member of Parliament for Derbyshire on two occasions and also Sheriff of the County. He added to the Port possessions in South Derbyshire by the acquisition of Cubley through his first wife²³ and the purchase of interest in the manors of Milton and Repton in 1553.²⁴ However the full extent of the Port estate at the time of his death is unclear.

John Port II's will²⁵ was penned in 1556 some 15 months before his death in 1557. His wish, which was fulfilled, was to be buried in Etwall Church within six months of his death in '*a comely and handsome tomb of pure marble*' positioned to the right of his father's tomb.²⁶ John Port's Executors were named as his father in law, Sir Thomas Gyfford, his solicitor nephew Richard Harpur, William Brewster, vicar of Etwall, and his '*faithful and trusty servants*' John Harker and Simon Starkey. The Executors were placed under obligation of £3,000 within one month of Port's decease to Sir Thomas Fitzherbert, Francis Courson (Curzon of Kedleston) and William Fitzherbert '*to perform this will without delay*'. In addition they were to address the first John Port's will '*in every article, sentence, letter, title and clause by me not done and performed shall be observed and fulfilled*'. To assist the Executors Port willed that '*they shall have and occupy my house in Etwall for one year*'. Clearly Port was seeking to ensure that his wishes would be carried out quickly and to the letter and was perhaps aware that they might not find full favour with his surviving family.

The best known of Port's bequests led to the foundation of the Almshouses in Etwall and Repton School. To finance these institutions Port's executors and their successors were to receive three Lancashire properties, Mosley, now in Tameside Greater Manchester, and Abraham and Brockhurst, now both in Wigan, on condition of their '*finding a priest well learned and graduate and of honest and virtuous conversation freely to keep a Grammar School in Etwall or Repton to say Mass thrice a week*'. Additionally they were required to build a stone School House plus chambers and lodgings but in the event the Executors purchased for £37 10s 0d the site of the former Priory in Repton from Gilbert Thacker who had caused the priory buildings to be pulled down fearing revival of religious houses under catholic Queen Mary. However the Guest Chamber and Prior's Lodging were still serviceable and were adapted for school use. The Master of the school, to which position Port nominated his former chaplain Sir William Perryn, was to receive £20 annually and the Usher £10. The scholars were to be required to pray morning and afternoon for Port's soul, and for the souls of his wife and children.

John Port willed that an Almshouse '*be builded in or near to the churchyard in Etwall*' and the present site to the north of St Helen's Church was seemingly obtained without difficulty. Henderson and Robinson refer to church houses, '*St Eleyne houses*' in Etwall in 1527 so there may have been a tradition of '*charitable*' housing here. Port further willed that '*six of the poorest of Etwall Parish shall have twenty pence a piece weekly over and besides an Almshouse*'. The Executors were to take his properties and the farm at Musden Grange²⁷ near Ashbourne for seven years and to use the profits therefrom to find a priest to pray for the souls of Port and his parents in his Chapel in Etwall St Helen.

A number of Port's smaller bequests appear to have recognised that the dissolution of monastic institutions had removed the long established basis for the support of the needy. Every week for three years after Port's death 12 pence was to be given to poor prisoners in the Common Gaol for Nottingham and Derbyshire. Provision was also made for thirteen of the poorest drawn from Dalbury and Lees, Hilton and Repton to receive a penny every Friday for three years following the saying High Mass at Etwall. In the event of honest householders in these places being found to be in a state of '*decay and poverty*' they were to receive twenty six shillings and eight pence. Three score maidens resident on Port owned land in Derby and Chester were to have an angel or noble or 10 shillings on marriage. Port's servants and tenants in Etwall and Burnaston were to be given a black coat as was every person in his livery while house servants were to have 40 shillings and a black coat. Of five named tenants three were left 20 shillings and two 40 shillings while Port's godson John Collier was to have 5 marks. Henry Woodward was to have the farm at Cubley.

In addition to seeking prayers for himself and family John Port benefited local churches and their incumbents. Sir Thomas Otway, parson of Dalbury, received 5 marks to offer prayers on Port's behalf and also a vestment of silk. The churches at Repton, Hilton, and Sutton also received vestments. St Helen's at Etwall was to receive 23 shillings and 4 pence from lands and tenements in Burnaston for a '*perpetual lamp for oil and light ever burning before the most blessed and holy sacrament*'. Thomas Brewster the Vicar of Etwall was bequeathed £3 6s 8d, as well as £20 from the first John Port's will, while the church gained a vestment cloth of gold, two other cloths to cover the sepulchre and a brass plaque for his father's tomb.

Port's Executors were instructed to make and finish the churchyard wall in Etwall with gates to keep out cattle and swine. The bridges and highways about the town of Etwall were to be repaired '*special betwixt the Town and Radbourne and the bridges towards Hilton*'. A causey of stone pebbles and well gravelled the same for carts, wains or horses was to be constructed '*from Etwall town until Portal Hill leading towards Mickleover*' to be paid for by 20 shillings from lands at Burnaston. A further 20 shillings a year '*forth my lands in Repton*' was specified towards '*the maintaining, repairing and upholding of Swarkestone Bridge if I have male issue otherwise £10 and then 10s annually*', the latter presumably being the case. The roll of the Prior of Repton as Surveyor of the Tolls for Swarkestone Bridge had expired at the Dissolution so such support was evidently necessary.²⁸

Brasenose College at Oxford was to receive £200 while further amounts of money went to members of Sir John Port's family. His wife Dorothy was bequeathed £100 plus unspecified goods and chattels and each of the three daughters £100. Port's godson John Francis was named for 40 marks and forgiveness of debts, Sir Thomas Gifford his father in law £10, Richard and John Harpur lands in Cheshire and 200 marks, Jane Harpur 100 marks, Francis Courson of Kedleston £20, Richard Pole a cup of silver worth 5 marks, John Port of 'Ylam' £10 and his cousins Hugh and Sir Henry Brother a black gown and 20 shillings.

The Will therefore lists the beneficiaries who, for the most part, were to receive single sums of money or often lesser amounts over a period of years. The total willed for immediate payment exceeded £930 but taking account of amounts payable over a number of years plus gowns, coats, etc, the total committed would have been in the region of £1,000.²⁹ John Port's wife, Dorothy, and his three daughters were to receive the modest sum of £100 each and their expectation could well have been to have greater benefit from the landed estate. However the Will does not specify John Port's wishes with regard to the manor of Etwall, the Hall and the considerable estate of lands, manors, messuages, etc, except for those bequests to be realised through income from assets at specific locations.

The Will specified that the Executors had the use of Etwall Hall for one year but presumably Port's widow continued to live there. However, within six days of Port's death his youngest daughter Margaret married Sir Thomas Stanhope in Etwall Church. They were aged 14 and 17 respectively and lived in Etwall Hall before moving briefly to the Port manor of Cubley in the early 1560s.³⁰ In 1569 the Port daughters and their husbands entered a formal agreement with respect to the destination of Etwall manor to the advantage of Elizabeth and Sir Thomas Gerard: '*the like for George Hastings, knight, Dorothy his wife, Thomas Stanhope and Margaret his wife, to alienate the Manore of Etwall, the Manore of Dalbury Alias Dalburie Lees and lands there, to Thomas Gerard and Elizabeth his wife and the heirs and assigns of Elizabeth*'.³¹ Sir John Port's daughter Elizabeth and her recusant husband Sir Thomas Gerard subsequently used Etwall Hall as their Derbyshire seat.

The requirement that the Executors were to proceed quickly with their task of establishing the Almshouses and School using funds from the estate of lands, etc, evidently led to tension between them and the Port co-heiresses and their husbands. By 1558 the two parties were seeking judgement in Chancery Court regarding the manors of Mossley and Abram and Brockhurst and also Derbyshire properties in connection with the founding of the School and Hospital.³² This proceeding took a number of years but did not impinge on the implementation of the Will. Income from other assets was available to the Executors which are listed in the agreement of 1621 by which a Corporation was established as the body to administer the Almshouses and School.³³ In addition to the three Lancashire manors the following locations in Derbyshire are named: Radbourn, Parwich, Middleton, Wirksworth, Winster, Trusley, Caldwell, Marston, Tutbury, Bupton, Longford, Ashbourne, Clifton, Compton, Stenson, Rodsley, Aston on Trent and Normanton. The assets are described as messuages, lands, rent, tenements and hereditaments. It is conceivable that the Executors may have drawn just a proportion of the income realised and that the co-heiresses may have received benefit. Initially the income available to them was put at £71 annually but by 1621 it had risen to £214.

Cobbing and Priestland³⁴ suggest that the nomination of income from the farm at Musden Grange for seven years to finance the School and Almshouses delayed settling the jointure between Margaret Port and her husband Thomas Stanhope, a situation which would have also applied to her two sisters and their husbands. However the co-heiresses must have gained a share of the estate as Margaret Port wrote after her husband Stanhope's death in 1596 '*I brought to my husband a thousand marks by year of good land his estate then being so mean.... He was not able to make me above £60 a year for my jointure*'.³⁵ However disagreement was to continue well into the seventeenth century. Sir Thomas Gyfford died in 1560 and thereafter Richard Harpur took over the administration of the Almshouse and School, a roll assumed by his son Sir John Harpur on his death in 1573. In 1614 the descendants of the co-heiresses were initiating proceedings against Sir John Harpur for inadequate

administration of the John Port estate.³⁶ As a consequence Harpur surrendered his interest which facilitated the petition for the Charter by which the Corporation was established. Sir John Harpur and his heirs were enabled to retain premises in Milton and Repton and a farm at Marston and he was installed as the first governor of the Corporation. However he died in 1622 which allowed the management to be taken over jointly by the descendants of the marital families of John Port's three daughters: Gerard, Huntingdon and Stanhope.

Macdonald notes a lost Bill of Chancery of 1629³⁷ by which the then Sir Thomas Gerard, grandson of Dorothy Port, sought the renewal of a lease which was seemingly the final episode of the attempt by the Gerard, Huntingdon and Stanhope families to claim to themselves as much of the John Port estate as they could. Apparently the matter was settled out of court with lands being made over to Huntingdon and Stanhope and leases to Gerard. Presumably the families were satisfied but equally the incomes available to the Corporation were sufficient to enable the rebuilding of the Almshouses in 1681³⁸ and to progress the development of the School in Repton. Sir John Port's wishes were thus fulfilled and although he probably had no vision that the Almshouse and School would be jointly administered this remained the case until 1873-4 when an expanding Repton School was enabled to break from the Corporation and go its own way.

The School then became an even more significant feature of the fabric of Repton village. In Etwall the Almshouses offered a privileged refuge for the elderly, the residents receiving housing, pension, and coals and nursing care. They were modernised in 1983 and continue in their original function in a quiet corner of the village.

References

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2. The only known images of the two Sir John Ports, their wives and families are to be found on their tombs in St Helen's Church in Etwall.
3. The second John Port's will is transcribed in D.G. Edwards (ed), *Derbyshire Wills 1393-1574*, Derbyshire Record Society, 1998 and R. Bigsby, *Historical and Topographical History of Repton*, 1854, pp156-162.
4. Currently Sir John Port's Charity is based at Repton School and the Sir John Port and John Osbourne Charity supports the Etwall Almshouses.
5. John Port's career is summarised in the Introduction to J.H. Baker (ed), *The Notebook of John Port*, Seldon Society, 1986. See also J.H. Baker, 'Port, Sir John', *Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, p925. Notes made by John Port in connection with his legal work are amongst the earliest surviving relating to English Law and are important from the perspective of legal history.
6. Baker, *op cit*, xii-xiii.
7. *Ibid*, xii.
8. I.H. Jeayes, *Derbyshire Charters*, 1906, nos 1203, 1204, 1285 and 1286.
9. Cal. Inq., 18 Henry VII; H.J.H. Garrett, *Derbyshire Feet of Fines 1323-1546*, 1983 and I.H. Jeayes, *op cit*, 1906, summarise a number of agreements between John Port and John Fitzherbert.
10. Baker, *op cit*, xiv.
11. *Beauvale Charters* 7, Beauvale Society, Eastwood, Notts. Most likely these date from around 1446, the year to which K. Cameron, *Place Names of Derbyshire*, Vol iii, 1959, p560, attributes the earliest record of the fields named in the indenture.
12. Pat. Rolls, 1367-1370. 451.
13. K. Wilson-Lee, 'Representations of Piety and Dynasty: Late Medieval Stained Glass and Sepulchral Monuments at Norbury, Derbyshire', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 2011 p228.
14. This coat of arms features forms the basis of the crests of both the John Port School in Etwall and Repton School.
15. Baker, *op cit*, xiv.
16. *Ibid*, xv-xvi.
17. Jeayes, *op cit*, 1206.
18. Baker, *op cit*, xix et seq.
19. Welbeck Abbey see Victoria County History, *Nottinghamshire*, II, 1910, pp105-109.
20. M. Craven and M. Stanley, *The Derbyshire Country House*, 2004, pp95-97 provides a detailed account of the former Etwall Hall.
21. Anon, 'Etwall Hall', *Country Homes and Gardens Old and New*, 1899.

22. J.B. Henderson and E.R. Robinson, 1979, *op cit.*, p59.
23. S. Glover, *History and Gazetteer of Derbyshire*, Vol II, 1833, p153.
24. A. Macdonald, *A Short History of Repton* 1929 indicates that the manor of Repton was divided and that Port may have only acquired a partial interest.
25. D.G. Edwards (ed), 1998, *op cit.*, pp108-114 and R. Bigsby, 1854, *op cit.*, The summary of the provisions of the Will has been based on these texts.
26. As can be seen in St Helen's Church in Etwall today.
27. Musden Grange presumably received by John Port at the Dissolution is located to the west of the River Manifold on the bank opposite to the property of the Port's of Ilam.
28. Macdonald, 1929, *op cit.*, p48.
29. The purchasing power of £1 in 1560 is estimated to have been 300 times greater than today so the sum committed in John Port's will was approximately £300,000.
30. B. Cobbing and P. Priestland, *Sir Thomas Stanhope of Shalford*, 2003, pp196-7.
31. Pat. Rolls, 1566-69, 410.
32. National Archives, C3/71/65, Gyfford and others v Gerard and others.
33. Bigsby, *op cit.*, pp163-175 gives the complete text of the Charter of the Hospital of Etwall and School of Repton.
34. Cobbing and Priestland, *op cit.*, p53.
35. *Ibid*, p49.
36. Macdonald, *op cit.*, pp 93-4 indicates that proceedings by the descendants of the co-heiresses against Harpur in 1614 for maladministration made way for the Charter of 1621.
37. *Ibid*, p93 states that this document no longer exists.
38. In 1681 the original buildings were replaced at the instigation of Samuel Sleigh, Lord of Etwall Manor 1646-79. The rebuilt almshouses which stand today were 12 in number plus a wing of four to the south added in the early eighteenth century. Each house comprised two rooms, each 14 feet square being one up and one down with a stairway. There was also a house for the Master.

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A 17TH CENTURY FARMHOUSE DAIRY, STONE HOUSE PREBEND, DERBY

(by Joan D'Arcy,

Stone House Prebend, a former prebendal farmhouse attached to the College of All Saints church in Derby (now Derby Cathedral), stands within the confines of the Roman fort of *Derventio*, or Little Chester. After the dissolution of the College it was acquired by the Borough of Derby in 1554 and thereafter occupied by leasehold tenants who farmed about 100 acres, a mixture of arable and pasture.¹ In 1712 William Woolley described the area as '*good land, mostly meadow lying on the banks of the Derwent*'.²

In 1594 a family named Bate became the lessees and held the farm for three generations until the death of Nathaniel Bate in 1676. With no male heir or wife to succeed him, and with little money to leave, Nathaniel willed that his possessions be divided between his six underage daughters. As a consequence a detailed room by room inventory was undertaken. One room, adjacent to the kitchen, was fitted out as a dairy and arouses particular surprise and interest as it has survived to the present day.

Extract from 'An Inventory of the goods & Chattells of Nathaniell Bate of Little Chester Gent deceased taken the 6th June 1676 ...'³

Dairy

: 5 Churnes 6s : 1 Cheese presse 18d : 1 table 18d	0	9	0
: 2 Thralls 1 Lead panne 2s 6d : 10 shelves 10s	0	12	6
: 3 bowles 3s : 2 trayes 8d	0	3	8
: 1 cheese Ladder : 6 fatts 1 sile dish	0	2	6
: 1 wooden Bottle 12d 1 prestales 6d 3 Seives 0 6d	0	2	0

The dairy, now used as a pantry, was created out of one bay of a three bay kitchen, a dividing wall being built in 2½ ins x 9 ins brick, a size which became common in the 17th century.⁴ It has a brick floor and the walls, which are plastered, were once painted with a blue distemper. (see Plan)

A large cheese press stands against the east wall. The substantial sandstone block which forms the '*press*' is 2 ft 8½ ins long x 1 ft 11¼ ins wide x 1 ft 9½ ins high (828 mm x 594 mm x 550 mm) and weighs an estimated three quarters of a ton. Beneath it is a grooved gritstone '*tray*' with a central hole to channel the liquid whey into a bowl placed beneath. The stones are set within a simple wooden frame fitted with a wrought iron screw which was turned by means of large wooden handles. The whole stands upon low brick walls with space between for the bowl. (see Photo 1)

Shallow arched brick thralls or benches, topped with ash mortar, line the walls, two on the south and three along the west. A wooden plank shelf runs above the thralls and there are hooks in the ceiling beams. The thralls, however, must have been rebuilt at a later date as the arches are formed of 3 in brick. The low walls upon which the cheese press stands are also rebuilt, as evidenced by a mixture of brick sizes, notably two elongated bricks measuring 2½ ins x 14 ins, usually ascribed to the period of the Brick Tax (1784-1850).

At some time, probably in the late 18th or early 19th century, the dairy was extended by about 2 ft on the north side. It was still in use at this time as a window opening in the north wall, now glazed, retains the vertical iron bars and remnants of zinc gauze that once allowed air to circulate. There is also a window opening with thin horizontal bars in the south wall which looks into a hall passage. Two barred rectangular openings were let into the north wall, each 9 ins wide and 2 ft high. These were subsequently blocked by wooden shutters and their purpose has yet to be explained. (see Plan and Photo 2)

Disappointingly, although the dairy is still there, the cheese press now in *situ* may not be the one in use by the Bate family in the 17th century. However, the inventory provides documentary evidence for what is generally supposed, that the '*Derby*' cheese was produced, and perhaps had its origin, in farmhouses around Derby. While it makes no mention of a cheese storage area or cheeses and there was no dairy herd at the time it was taken, the five churns itemised indicate a reasonable sized operation.

Glossary⁵

cheese ladder : support for a milk sieve over a pot.

sile dish : a strainer or sieve, especially for milk.

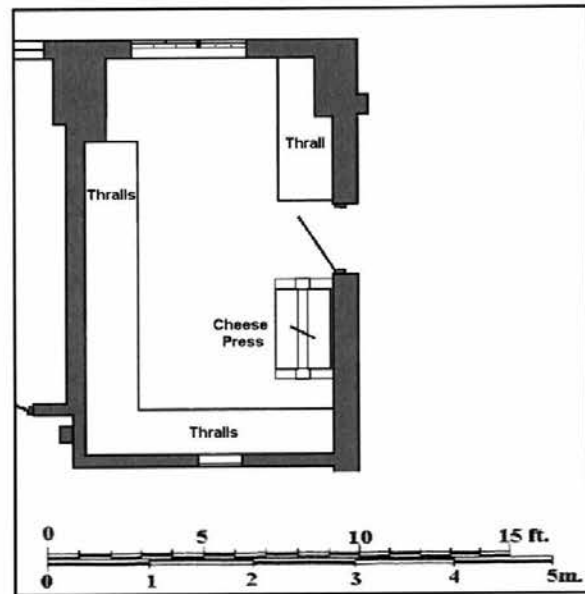
prestale : a stand on which an object can be placed.

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2. C. Glover & P. Riden, *William Woolley's History of Derbyshire*, Derbyshire Record Society, Vol VI 1981, p53.
3. Lichfield Record Office, B/C/11, Will of Nathaniel Bate gentleman Derby, probate 6 Oct 1676.
4. R. W. Brunskill, *Brick Building in Britain*, 1990, p140.
5. J. Bristow, *The Local Historian's Glossary & Vade Mecum*, 2nd edition, 1994.



Photo 1: Cheese Press (John D'Arcy)



Plan of dairy (John D'Arcy)



Photo 2: External view of house showing dairy window on the left (John D'Arcy)

DIARY OF A SHIPLEY FARMER 1867: Part 1: January 7-9 March

(by Malcolm Burrows)

Introduction

In the late 1960s and early 1970s I was tracing and interviewing former servants and gardeners who had been employed at Shipley Hall. On a number of occasions I was referred to people who had worked on the estate. One such occasion involved a visit to Sutton on Sea where I met John Fletcher who, together with several generations of his family, had been a tenant farmer on the Shipley estate. He it was who loaned me the original diary of his grandfather (another John Fletcher).

NB: The original spelling and punctuation has been retained.

THE DIARY

Monday 7th January 1867

Fetches a Brewing of Grains from Mark Beardsley's.
Winter with Frost and Snow but going fast.

Tuesday 8th

Whet day Cook gone Home.
Attending to Flock. Boil a copper of Turnips for pigs.

Wednesday 9th

A number of men for breakfast but no machine men came so could not work.
Reced Money for Barley from J. Bentley.

Monday 21st

Manuring half a day had Darling shod
taken J. Attenborough 2 qrst Peas 18 st. net at 1/1 per stone

Tuesday 22nd

Ben Taylor killed us a Pig 20 stone
Fetches 2 loads of Ash lops for Oven fuel from Mapperley a load of coals from Nutbrook for the House.

Friday 25th

Fetches a Brewing of Grains from Mark Beardsley's.

Monday 28th

Ploughing with 4 horses for Summers fallows in Broad Meadow.
Ann has been with us a week taken her back to Stanton.

Tuesday 29th

Ploughing

Wednesday 30th

Ploughing.
Set a man David Barton to Knock Manure on the Firey close seeds.
began this morning to have 2/6 a day finding himself.

Thursday 31st

Red Heifer cast calf through a hurt in jumping shed wall on tying up.
Tumbled down in Yard over a Pig trough when going to make the Big doors
Hurting me very much on the nose wrist and face.
Cook not here.

Friday 1st February

Brewing of Grains today.
Cook not here.
The ground very whet.
Sold Captain Horse 4 years old to go down Nutbrook Pit for £22 10s 0d.

Tuesday 19th

Fine day Ploughing for Peas.

Wednesday 20th

Finished ploughing Addlands in Broad Meadow very sticky and whet.

Thursday 21st

Began of sowing duty close Wheat after Turnips and Potatoes
going in well Hope it may Answer my expectation sown myself

Friday 22nd

Finished sowing Wheat ploughed the Addlands gone in well sown about 10 ½ thike
Fetching a Brewing of Grains

Saturday 23rd

Started Ploughing with 2 Teams want to get the land ploughed over for the Frost and weather to make it sown is
very whet and sticky.

Monday 25th

Ploughing with 2 teams
Had a cow calved Parker a Bull calf
Got an Order for the removal of Shipley wood cow sold to Isaac Attenborough.

Tuesday 26th

Ploughing today with 2 Teams in Broad Meadow for oats.

Thursday 28th

Fetchd a cart load of stakes from Shipley
Finished Ploughing in Broad Meadow all but the Addlands thought of letting them be till we have drilled Beans
and Peas.
Taken A Pig to the Boar but must send her a day or two sooner next time.

Friday 1st March

March comes in very mild a little catch of frost in the mornings
Finished Winnowing Oats taken 10 qrts in the cheese room 7 ½ qrs in the Barn
Fetchd Grains today

Saturday 2nd

Ploughing with one Team double on the Open hole for Oats.

Monday 4th

Cook gardening set 2 rows of Peas and some Beans
Bull calf of Parker

Tuesday 5th

Been to Stanley Common Tea and concert Mr Palmer the School master for Shipley and Cotmanhay went with
us spent a very agreeable evening.

Wednesday 6th

Snow with frost true March weather.

Thursday 7th

Have taken the Cheese to Nottingham Fair sold to Goodliffe before taking it out of the cart
79 Cheese 11 cwt 2 qr 14 lbs at 74s per cwt.
Cook left today been on the Anvil some time
Cockhorn and Dimplin calved today roan Bull calf Dumplin
White cow calf Cockhorn

Friday 8th

Snowey and Whet.
Fetchd Grains today.

Saturday 9th

Bessy drove to Mapperley to see Grand father and Ann Housekeeping.