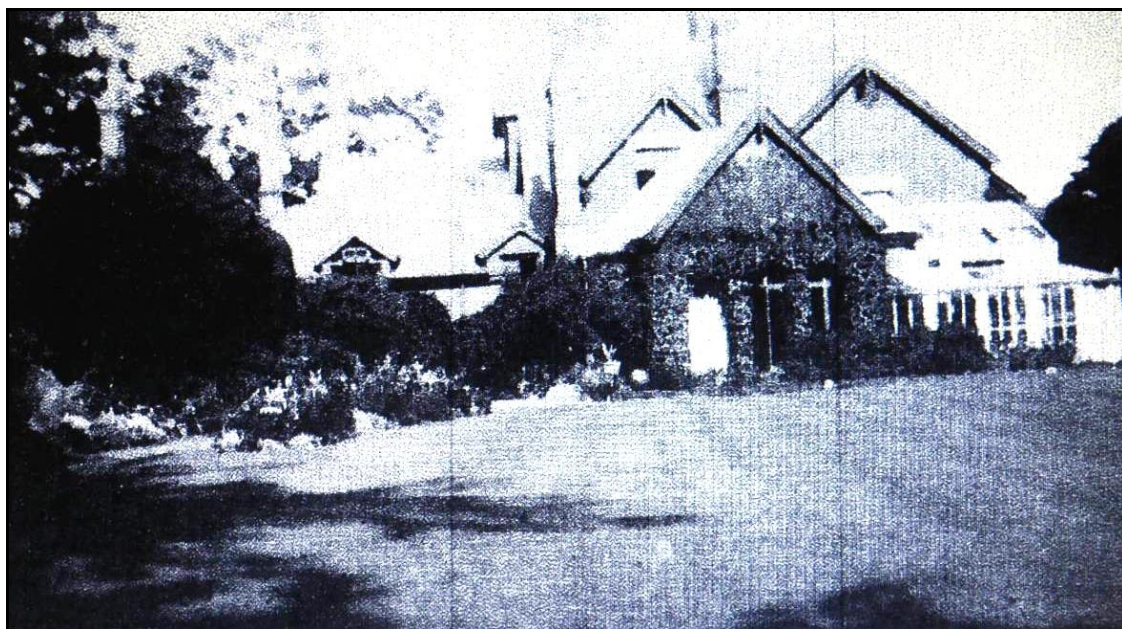


# **THE RECTORIES OF COLEORTON**



**COLEORTON RECTORY C.1910**

**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - JUNE 2022**

## PREFACE

Those with an interest in Coleorton will be aware of the location of the Coleorton Rectory built in 1814 which is described in some detail in the publication by the author on his website entitled "*An Overview of the Life of the Rev. Francis Merewether & Family Members*". This new Rectory building at Coleorton was commenced in 1814, and was largely financed by the Rev. Merewether.

If we consider that incumbents at Coleorton have been recorded back to 1209 when St. Mary's Church was referred to as the church of Overton Quatremaris, then it would be expected that they enjoyed a superior residence to those of the peasant class.

Part 1 is an attempt to throw some light on where the ancient incumbents / rectors residences may have been, although research material to hand is somewhat sketchy to say the least. Hopefully though, this will at least act as a catalyst for others with an interest in Coleorton history to carry out further research on this subject.

Part 2 again records the history of the new Rectory, but provides additional information to that recorded in earlier publications.

## COMPLIMENTARY READING:-

The following are free to download and read on the author's website - <https://samuelstewart940.wixsite.com/mysite> under Coleorton (sub-heading Religion)

- **An Overview of the Life of the Rev. Francis Merewether & Family Members**
- **The Pestells' - From Rectors to Slave Owners**
- **Rev. Harold Robinson - Rector of Coleorton Parish 1901 - 1921**

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## PART 1 - A POSSIBLE COLEORTON RECTOR'S HOUSE

In the publication by the author entitled "*The English Civil War in the Local Area Including Information on the Part Played by the Parliamentary Garrison at Coleorton*", the reader will find reference to William Pestell, the Rector of Coleorton at that time, being removed from "*his house*". This suggests that an actual rectory as such did not exist at that time.

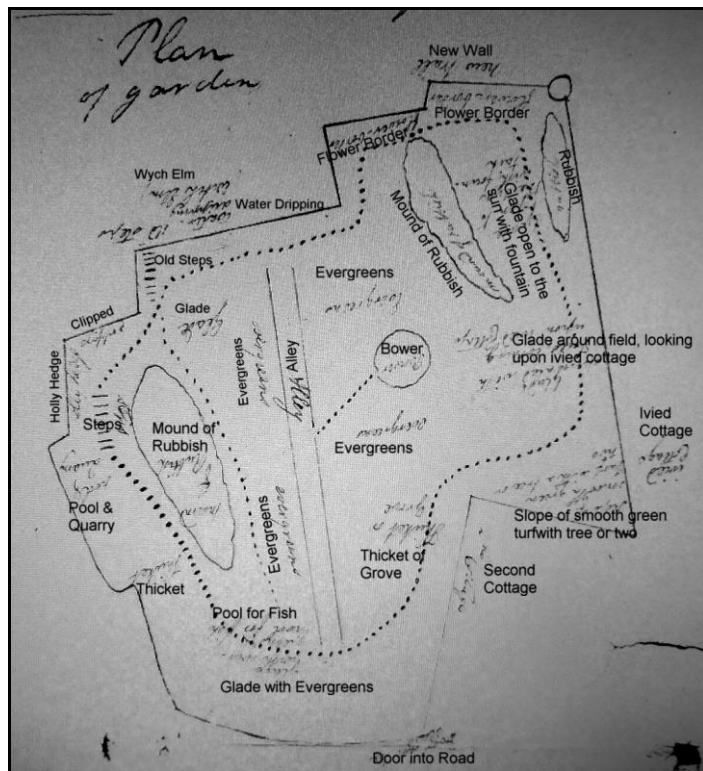
*Thomas the elder and his wife Katherine's second son William graduated with a B.A. in 1634 and an M.A. in 1638 from Queens' College, Cambridge. He was appointed rector of Cole-Orton, in 1640 by Sir Sapcote Beaumont (2nd Viscount of Swords).*

*He was sequestered in 1654 when he and his wife were driven out by the parliamentary soldiers during the Civil War under Sir John Gell when they captured Coleorton. Contrary to the custom of the time, they were apparently cruelly used.*

*At the turn of the seventeenth century, a servant in the house of William Pestell at Coleorton by the name of Ann Harris, who had been in this employ during the 1640's claimed to remember the abuse and mistreatment her employer received during the civil war at the hands of the Parliamentary soldiers. She actually recalled and cited in a letter sent by William Hunt to another Clergyman named John Walker in Exeter. William Hunt was appointed Coleorton parish rector by Sir Thomas Beaumont (3rd Viscount of Swords) in 1700. He followed John Harrison who had succeeded William Pestell on his death in 1696. Hunt and Walker well knew, that during the war, all too many Anglican clergy had experienced mistreatment. Ann Harris recalled that the Parliamentary soldiers had forced William Pestell and his wife, who was heavily pregnant at the time, out of their home with the children to ride bareback on a horse to Tamworth some sixteen miles away. She and the children were recorded as being supported by charity. Walker recorded that William Pestell of Coleorton was taken to Tamworth and beaten 'black as a shoe'. This was recording in Walker's *Suffereings of the Clergy*. After the accession of Queene Anne, John Walker had made it his sole ambition in life, to collect memories of people such as Ann Harris which was to be part of a major work on Anglican clergymen whose homes, income and possessions had been sequestered. The correspondence which made up the greater part of Walker's correspondence are held at the Bodleian Library and is one of the major research sources available from ordinary people such as Ann Harris and older peoples memories of the civil war. A few poignant examples were apparently written by witnesses themselves. Walker relied heavily on reports from the parish clergy in his writings.*

The Rev. A. Eveleigh Eagar who was Rector of Coleorton from 1942, wrote in his publication entitled "*Cole Orton and the Beaumonts in Art, History & Literature*" that there was *no rectory in 1706*, but did not expand further on that for some reason. William Hunt, A.M., by Thomas, lord Beaumont on the death of John Harrison, was the incumbent at that time. Presumably, no new house for the rector had been built following the above, until the new rectory was started in 1816.

The question therefore arises as to where the earlier rector's house, demolished during the Civil War was located. William Wordsworth, when he was designing the "Winter Garden" at Coleorton makes reference to two derelict cottages and in fact includes them on his plan below.



A photograph taken in 1886 from what was once Wordsworth's Winter Garden in a southerly direction, showing the seat hewn out of the sandstone by Wordsworth, with the help of Mary and Dorothy. This is the seat where Sir Walter Scott reportedly wrote part of "Ivanhoe".

At the end of the outcrop of rocks in the preceding photographs is thought to be the chimney & remains of the “Second Cottage” referred to by Wordsworth, which is shown on the east side of Wordsworth’s Winter Garden plan. From the way Wordsworth describes the second cottage with its tall chimney, and pleads for its retention and repair, and to be subsequently covered in Ivy, the author feels that it is more likely to be the second cottage and not “Ivy Cottage”. Below is a close up 1986 photograph of the tall chimney which appears to have undergone repairs in order to preserve it.



Even without any substantive evidence to support it, the author is of the view that this was the remnants of the house occupied by the rector William Pestell, when he was sequestered in 1654 and driven out of his house by the parliamentary soldiers during the Civil War under Sir John Gell when they captured Coleorton. This would also support the Rev. Eveleigh's comments that there was no rectory in 1706 on the basis that it had been destroyed by the parliamentary forces 50 years previously.

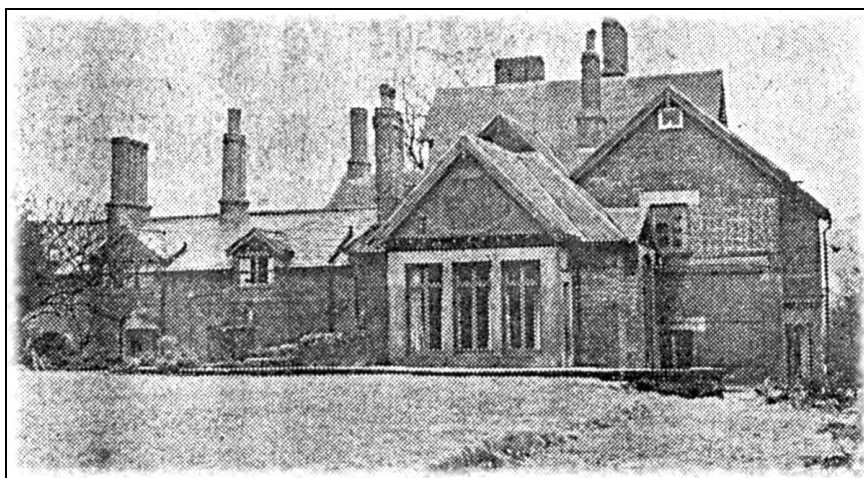


## THE FOLLY ?



The above 1986 photograph is thought to be the derelict remains of what Wordsworth referred to as "Ivy cottage". The author is of the view (and only a view) that this was a folly built at the entry to the old gardens prior to Wordsworth developing his "Winter Garden".

## PART 2 - THE NEW RECTORY



**Coleorton Rectory, largely financed by the Rev. Francis Merewether and constructed by John Gadsby of Coleorton. Construction started in 1816 and continued over a number of years.**

The above photograph of the new rectory would have been taken after the Rev. Merewether had died and William Beresford Beaumont became the rector, and extended it further.

During George Halfpenny's tenure as "Brick Master" at the Coleorton Beaumont Brickyard (Coleorton Brick and Tile Company), the quantity of materials supplied to John Gadsby and the Rev. Merewether for the building of the original Coleorton Rectory was as follows. This is thought to be the largest order supplied by George Halfpenny. The project for building the rectory appears to have taken just over two years to complete. The Rev. Merewether was noted as being a late payer and Mr. Wade (presumed to be accountant at Fisher's solicitors) pencilled in a note commenting "Why not paid out of his Tithes?" Materials were supplied over a 4 year period. Although John Gadsby was listed as a "carpenter" in the Coleorton "1827 Cottage Book", he was clearly a building contractor, and for that reason was chosen to build the rectory. He also had a shop separate from his cottage which was included in his rent. At this time he had six children!

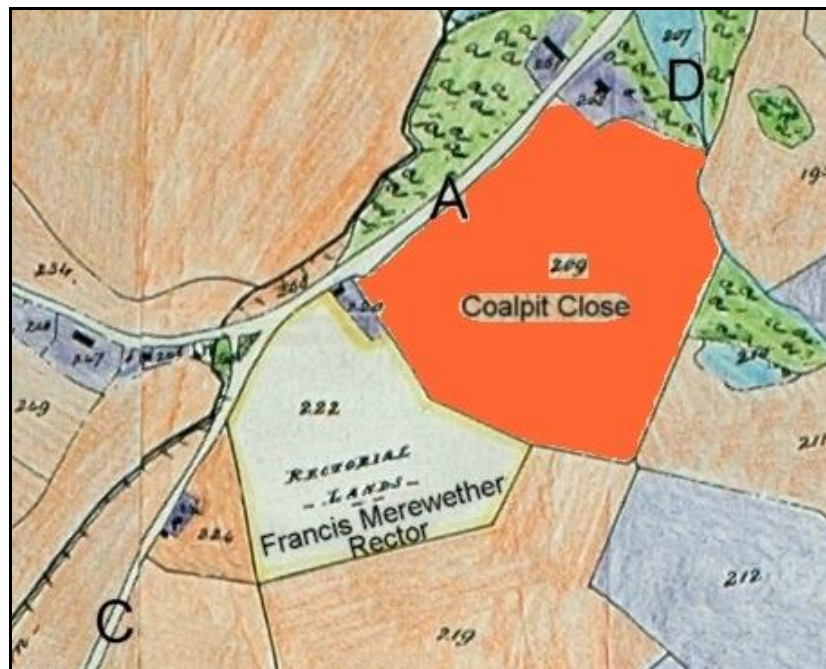
During the period from June 1816 to April 1820, John Gadsby purchased **134,050** common bricks at a total cost to the Rev. Merewether of £18,157. In addition the following were recorded as being purchased:-

- 2,900 plain tiles
- 40 plain ridge tiles
- 28 ridge tiles
- 1,552 flooring bricks
- 218 quarries
- 4 barn floor bricks
- 1030 leaded tiles
- 3 leaded ridge tiles
- 12 flue bricks
- 18 gutter tiles
- 21 soughing tiles

Clearly this was not all the building material, as for example, special round chimney bricks / chimney pots of which there were many, were not mentioned in the fragmented accounts, so there could have been another source besides Coleorton Beaumont Brickworks. There is a record that John Gadsby purchased 32,000 common bricks between Jan 1814 and May 1816 from Coleorton Beaumont Brickworks which could well have been for footings etc for the Rectory. Between Apr 1818 and Apr 1824, the Rev. Merewether also purchased 12,100 common bricks plus other materials.



**An extract from the 1835 O/S map showing the location of the rectory**



**Extract from 1842 Tithe Map showing the "Rectorial Land" on which the rectory was built - strangely it didn't show the rectory?**

**A = the old Ashby Rd, C = To Farm Town, D = Coleorton fishpond**



## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

### **Transcribed from the John Bull - Saturday 17 May 1862**

At an early hour on Thursday morning, the 8th inst., a most daring burglary was committed at Coleorton Rectory, Leicestershire, the residence of the Rev. F. Merewether, when upwards of £30 in money, some valuable gold seals, rings, and a pair of silver spectacles, were stolen. Entrance was effected by breaking open the dining-room window. In the recess of this window was a fine parrot in a cage, and in opening the cage either to kill it or let it out, it is supposed the bird severely clawed the venturous hand, as blood was found in the cage and near it. The bird made its escape, but was found quietly sitting in the porch doorway next morning. The police have been actively engaged in trying bring the perpetrators to justice. Although they have their suspicions, nothing satisfactory has yet been discovered.

### **Transcribed from the Leicester Guardian - Saturday 24 May 1862**

#### **THE DARING BURGLARIES AT COLEORTON AND HEATHER. CLEVER CAPTURE AND COMMITTAL OF THE OFFENDERS.**

It will be remembered that in our last issue we gave an account of a burglary having been perpetrated at Coleorton rectory, the residence of the Rev. F. Merewether, during the night of the 7th inst., and a quantity of valuable articles and money stolen there from another burglary, committed under precisely similar circumstances to the preceding one, which also took place at Heather manor house, the residence of the Rev. P. Belcher, during the night of Tuesday the 13th inst., but fortunately nothing was taken from there, the burglars appearing to have been disturbed in their work.

The two burglaries occurring so soon after one another, has naturally caused great alarm amongst the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods and they have done all in their power with the police in bringing the offenders to justice. We are happy to say that the rogues have not eluded the detection of the police, for they have all been apprehended by a very effective member of our County force, Sergeant Clarke, who, notwithstanding that every means to escape detection was practised by the offenders, succeeded in capturing them at their own homes in Birmingham towards the latter end of last week ; one of them, we may here state, is a native of Coleorton but had left that village about 10 or 12 years ago. We must not forget to mention the services of the detectives of Birmingham, especially Mr. John Stokes, who rendered every help in their power to effect the apprehension of the burglars. The prisoners were brought up at the police court, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on Wednesday, before W. W. Abney, Esq. Their names are Joseph Stockley, of Friston-street, Birmingham, late of Coleorton, Thomas Foxall, of Cope-street, and John Matthews, alias Johnson, of Leek-street, Birmingham. They are all well known by the police of their town as being notorious burglars.

The Court was very full with parties who evidently were very anxious to hear the case, and obtain a sight of the prisoners. There were also present several ladies from the surrounding villages, who alike displayed a similar interest in the proceedings. Before the prisoners were brought up out of their cells, the Chairman expressed a hope that the officers would search them, to see whether they had any stones in their pockets ; the, police however, had already taken the precaution to do so, but nothing was found upon them. The Chairman, throughout the hearing of the case, watched the prisoner's movements very closely, and he seemed much relieved when they were removed from his presence. It was not to be wondered at that he should

entertain such dread of them, for both of the prisoners were desperate looking fellows, and as will be seen below, one Foxall, endeavoured to obtain possession of an instrument, and he was heard to say after that had he got it, "he would have made some of their heads ache."

Mr. Smith, attorney of the firm of Messrs. Smith and Green, of Ashby, appeared for the prosecution, and the first witness called was Beadman, who said, I am servant to the Rev. Mr. Merewether, who lives at Coleorton rectory. I was in the house on the night of the seventh of May. I fastened up the house at nine o'clock and made secure the dining room shutters. I slept in the house the same night. I came down about half-past six on the next morning and went into the dining room ; I found it in a confused state, the drawers of two separate pieces of furniture had been wrenched open and marks of violence were upon them. The window was partly open, it was not quite halfway ; the shutter remaining on it was hanging by one hinge, the other having been broken off. There were marks on the window as though instruments had been used to wrench it up. I was in the garden the evening before but saw no footmarks, the border of the garden under the window had been dug over that evening. On the morning of the 8th, I saw footmarks under the window. A piece of dirty rag was found in the room, it had the appearance as if it had been used to wrap round the foot to hold a boot on, it was dirty with earth, the dirt being of the same colour as the soil in the garden under the window. Mr. Taylor said, I am out-door servant to Mr. Merewether. I went to Mr. Merewether's about a quarter past six o'clock on the morning of the 8th of May. I saw the dining room window open and the shutters thrown back ; the room was in a confused state. I saw footmarks on the border under the window and found the cockatoo on the door steps; it was usually kept in a cage in the dining room, feathers had been pulled off it and it had the appearance of having been roughly used. I went and gave information to the inmates. On looking round the field adjoining the lawn I found the instrument—"a cutter" and a "Wax Taper" —now produced, and I gave it to Sergeant Peberdy. Arthur Helmsley said, I live at Coleorton and am a wheelwright. I was at Rachel Lakin's public house, where I lodge, on the night of the 7th of May from seven to eight o'clock. I saw the two prisoners, - Stockley and Matthews, come in while I was there. I did not then speak to them. As soon as they got in Stockley pulled his top coat off and hung it upon the screen to dry. They called for a pint of ale, and in a short time they offered me some, I refused at first but subsequently I did have some. I then entered into conversation and asked them if they had come very far, they said " Yes." I said "It is very wet, have you far to go?" they answered "No." They asked Mrs. Lakin whether she had got any meat in the house, she had not any. They stayed about an hour and then left. Lakin's house from the rectory is about a mile distant. I am quite certain prisoners are the men. Matthews had not the bloodshot eye when I saw them before. Mahaler Lakin said, I live at Coleorton with my father, who keeps the public house there ; the last witness lodged with us. I was at home on the evening of the 7th of May from seven to eight o'clock. I saw the prisoners Stockley and Matthews there, they stayed about an hour and had a pint of ale. P.C. Thomas Peberdy said, on the morning of the 8th, a little before seven o'clock, I went to the prosecutor's. I examined the dining room window and saw marks of violence upon the bottom of the window sill of the window frame, as if it had been lifted up with a large crowbar or large chisel. I saw footmarks on the border under the window ; I covered them over with an old door. I traced the foot marks across the lawn and across the field to a little hand gate where there were also footmarks as if a person had been standing there for some time. Taylor, in my presence, picked up out of the ditch the instrument produced ; a small wrench was also found a little distance from it. On the 16th in company with Sergeant Clarke, I compared boots with the footmarks ; they corresponded with the marks under the window and near the gate too. There was a plate on the heel of the boots and there was the plate mark in the soil. I produce two drawers from Mr. Merewether's which

have been forced open. I also produced a wax taper which I picked out of the grass near to where the cutter was found. William Shorthouse, a blacksmith residing at Birmingham said, "I know the instruments produced—the "cutter" I remember making it. The prisoners, Foxall and Matthews, gave me the order to make it. on the 29th of April ; they received it on the 30th. Both of them fetched it away and Matthews paid me 4s. for it including the wrench. There were two more knives to complete it. I asked Foxall what it was for and he said it was for his business. In my opinion it is a "cutter" for shutters or doors. I gave the information to the Birmingham police before I made the instruments.-

**By Shorthouse :** I have not made instruments like those before, but I can tell them by the file marks, there are hunks straight across, I can also tell by the forging. You ordered it at half-past twelve o'clock on the 29th of April and I gave information to the police before the dinner hour was over. A policeman came in before you took it away and did you not see one about ?

**Mrs. Keturah Best** said, I live at Birmingham, the prisoner Stockley lodged at my house, and has lodged here nearly two years. I don't know his occupation, he has been away twelve months. On the fifth of May he was not at home, he left my house between nine and ten o'clock that morning ; no one was with him. he returned the following day and said he had been over to see his friend, his uncle and grandfather in the country. I did not hear him say he had been to Leicester. I noticed he had a small bundle when he came back ; he had a small striped carpet bag when he left. His wife paid me some money on his return for lodgings. They owed me six weeks' lodgings at 3s. 6d. per week ; she was to give me another shilling before the week was out. The detective officer Spokes and Sergeant Clarke came last week to search my house. They searched the boxes Stockley had in his room. After they came down I was shown a ring.

**By Stockley :** I said I do not know what trade you are in, only worked about one month. You went away one March and returned the following March on the 10th. I don't know where you were during the twelve months. I have lately heard, during the twelve months, that you were in prison.

**Sergeant John Spokes**, detective officer of Birmingham, said, I searched the room occupied by Stockley, at Mrs. Bests, about 12 o'clock on the night of Wednesday last ; I was accompanied by Sergeant Clarke of the Leicestershire Constabulary. I went into prisoner's room, the said prisoner and his wife were in bed. Sergeant Clarke took the prisoner into custody ; prisoner knew and I told him I wanted to search his boxes and himself. He made no reply. I commenced searching some boxes I found open. I found one box locked and I asked for the key ; his wife produced one, and I unlocked it, and found, amongst other articles, the little box and ring I now produce. After I had done searching, I showed prisoner the ring and told him it was the proceeds of a robbery near Ashby-de-la-Zouch last week. I asked him if he wished to say how he accounted for it. He said he bought it from a man and gave 3s. for it two or three days ago. I asked him if he knew who the man was, when he said he did not. We took him to the station, and then went to Foxall's house.— Foxall's father is a very honest workman.—At Foxall's house in Cope-street, I saw Sergeant Clarke find a carpet bag. We took him to the station, and afterwards before the Birmingham magistrates, and ultimately to Ashby. On arrival at Burton the prisoners were identified by some of the railway porters, as having been seen there on the previous day—Tuesday. Stockley denied having been there before or at the robbery. I told Stockley I was going to apprehend his brother on my return to Birmingham. Foxall said, " he was not there, nor was I, am as innocent as you are, and he knows it". "he (Foxall) was not there, nor more was my brother; I was there, and they were not".

**Afterwards, accompanied Sergeant Clarke to Coleorton** ; Sergeant Clarke fitted the instrument. On Friday morning, the 18th, I was at Birmingham and I went in company with Sergeant Clarke to the prisoner Matthews's house, Leek-street. Under the bed I found the purse produced, containing some sovereigns and some shillings. Sergeant Clarke charged the prisoner with the burglary when down at the lock up in Moor-street, Birmingham. Matthews wanted to change his boots. I said, Yes, I want those you have ; "he changed them and I took possession of those he was wearing and gave them to Sergeant Clarke. I went to your house between 2 and 3 o'clock. I never said I was directed by Stockley to apprehend you.

**Sergeant Clarke**, of the Leicestershire Constabulary, said, front information received I went to the detective office, Birmingham, on Tuesday, the 13th. I saw Sergeant Spokes, and in company with him about midnight, I went to Stockley's lodgings at Mrs. Best's. Stockley and his wife were in bed , I told him to dress himself. I saw Spokes find the ring. Told prisoner I should apprehend him on a charge of feloniously entering the prosecutor's dwelling-house on the night of the 7th of May, and stealing money and other articles. He replied, "you have got the wrong man ; I am innocent" ; I have never been at Coleorton for a number of years. He was a native of Coleorton. We took him to the station, and about 3 o'clock in the morning ' we went to Foxell's house ; he was in bed, but was down stairs when we got in. I charged him in like manner; he replied. "I am innocent, I never was there, neither do I know where Coleorton is." I searched the house and found the carpet bag produced ; it was locked, and I asked for the key, when prisoner said he knew nothing at all about it, a woman in the house said it was lost. Sergeant Spokes and I forced it open, and in it we found a "centre bit" or "cutter," a screw driver, two nail-passers, a wrench, and two knives belonging to the "cutter," a wax taper, and a "jemmy" one end having a small piece broken off. Prisoner gave no account as to why he had them. We took him to the station, and the next day we brought him to Ashby and left him there. On Thursday the 13th we went to the prosecutor's, and I compared marks on the drawers with the screw driver, and they corresponded exactly to each drawer. I received a pair of boots from Mr. Spokes, at Birmingham, which I took to the prosecutor's house on Friday, and compared them with footmarks under the window and near the gate and they corresponded ; the plates on the hoot heels make a very clear impression.

**Mrs. Francis Elizabeth Merewether**, wife of the prosecutor, said, on the night of the 7th of May at Coleorton the rectory was broken open. A considerable sum of money was taken away ; it was charitable money in notes and sovereigns, wrapped up in parcels ready to be taken to the bank. There was also stolen a valuable antique ring set in gold, and a very old-fashioned nutmeg grater, and cork screw in silver, a pair of silver spectacles, two rings, and several other articles. The ring produced, which was formerly my mothers, I can identify as my property. Mr. Merewether had a rent day on the 7th inst., but that money was up stairs.

**All the prisoners being separately cautioned by the chairman**, - Stockley said, " I an innocent. I have nothing more to say." Foxhall said, "I am an innocent man, I was at Birmingham at the time they say the robbery was committed." Matthews said, "I have nothing to say concerning myself, but Foxall is an innocent man."

**The Magistrate** : You are committed to take your trial on the charge, Matthews : Trial where ; sessions. The Magistrate : At the assizes. Matthews : You cannot commit us for trial for burglary, for it is not found out until half-past 6 o'clock in the morning. The Magistrates : I know you are a pretty good lawyer, but you will not get over me, I am alive to your ingenious defence. Matthews was then removed.



Then Foxall and Stockley were placed at the bar on a charge of burglariously and forcibly breaking open the house of the Rev. Mr. Belcher, of Heather Manor, during the night of Tuesday, the 14th, with intent to commit felony. Sarah Cooper, servant, in the employ of the Rev. Paul Belcher, at Heather Manor house, said, - on the night of the 13th May, I fastened the shutters of the house ; the drawing-room shutters I closed about half past eight o'clock. On the following morning, I went into the drawing-room, and I found the window shut but the shutters a little way open. The furniture had been removed out of the drawing-room the night before, as we were expecting the sweeps. The door leading from the hall into the dining-room was locked, the key being in the hall ; there was a gimlet hole through the panel of the door. I examined the window in the ante room ; it was a little way open, but I shut it the night before, the fastener of the window was broken off, I went into the dining-room and opened the shutters ; I saw a pane of glass broken in the window ; it was not broken the night before. I found it unfastened and the broken pane was near the hasp. There are catchers at the side of the window, which prevents its being thrown up. I saw the window at 6 o'clock in the morning. Joseph Clay said, I live at Coalville, and am a miner in the employ of Mr. Stenson. On the 13th of May, I was at Mrs. Sheffield's public house, about 10 o'clock in the morning ; Coalville is about five miles from Heather. I and my brother were playing at dominoes, when the two prisoners came in. Foxhall had a black carpet bag in his hand, it was the bag produced ; prisoners had a jug of ale, and Stockley played a game at dominoes with my brother for a pint. While they were playing, I said to Stockley, "Don't I know you?", he said "No." I then asked. " Have not I worked with you," and he said, " No, I am sure you have not. I have not been in these parts for 16 years. They said they must be going, and they asked what time the train went to Burton ; I told them about 3 o'clock, and I asked them where they were going, they said to Ibstock and had to be back for the train. Stockley asked Fossil if he would have something to eat, he said ; and they went out to go to Ibstock about 1 o'clock. Istock would be about four or five miles from Heather. Mary Ann Salt said, I reside at Heather with my I father ; on the afternoon of the 13th of May, between 3 and 4 o'clock, I was at Elizabeth Quilters door place, and saw the two prisoners. Elizabeth Quilter said, I live at Heather, and recollect the afternoon of the 13th of May, and the last witness being at my father's house. In the afternoon, between 3 and 4 o'clock, I saw the two prisoners pass by ; they looked as if they were going to Ibstock. Inspector Ward, of the Leicestershire constabulary. stationed at Ashby said, on the morning of the 14th of May ; I went to Heather. I was shown two windows on the front, the pane of one window—the dining-room—was broken, and the other had the catch broken off. There were marks of violence on the window frame belonging to the window which had the hasp broken ; I saw marks of a chisel or "jemmy." I pushed the sash up of the ante room to examine the marks, and at the bottom of the sash, on carefully examining the window, I found a small bit of steel sticking at the bottom of it ; I produce it.- Foxhall reached over the bar and endeavoured to obtain possession of "the piecions bit." What he intended to have done with it had he got it, may le easily imagined.— Witness continued,- I have compared it with the "jemmy" produced by Sergeant Clarke on the 13th ; I find it exactly corresponds ; the "jemmy" is not complete without it. I also compared the "jemmy" with impressions at the bottom of the window sash, and it exactly corresponded with the marks on both windows. I examined the door leading into the ante-room, there was a hole bored through the panel ; the gimlet produced also fitted exactly. Foxhall, on the "jemmy" being produced, asked to be allowed to look at it— Inspector Ward did so, retaining it by a firm grasp, but the former as soon as he touched it, tried to destroy the matching of the "bit" with it, by endeavouring to knock off the edge with his thumb nail, he was, however, stopped from doing so. Sergeant Clarke, of the Leicestershire constabulary, said, I went to Birmingham on the 13th instant, and apprehended the prisoner Stockley on another charge. I went to the house of the prisoner Foxall, and apprehended him also on another charge ; I



searched the house, and found the black carpet bag I now produce. I asked for the key, and prisoner said he knew nothing about it ; I forced it open, and found it to contain the " jemmy" produced, the centre bit, two nail-passers, screw driver, two extra " cutters," a wrench belonging to the "cutter," a wax taper, and a piece of rod iron. I gave the "jemmy" to the witness, and also one of the nail passers ; I accompanied him to Belchees, and saw him compare the "jemmy" with marks on the window, and the nail passer with a hole in the door; they both corresponded. We returned to Ashby, and charged the prisoners with the offence. Neither of them at the time made any reply ; in going back with the prisoner Foxhall to the cell, he said, "Clarke, so help my God, I am innocent of the first ; but I am right for this."

**Mrs. Ketura Best**, of Birmingham, said the prisoner Stockley lodged with me : he left home on the morning of the 13th of May, and said he was going to Chester races ; no one went with him from my house. He returned on the following day, the 14th. He said he had had no luck. I understood when he left he was going to speculate.

**William Shorthouse**, a blacksmith of Birmingham, said on the 9th of May, the two prisoners came to my workshop with a piece of steel about a foot long. They wanted to have it made into a "jemmy" turned at both ends, one end turned more so than the other. Foxall : Can I look at it in my own hands. Inspector Ward : No you shan't ; I showed it you down stairs, you have seen it often enough. Witness resumed,- I made it, and never saw prisoners again until the other day, when they were in custody, the "jemmy" produced is the one. By Foxhall : Stockley paid £1 for the " jemmy and both of you gave the order." Foxhall : I said to Detective officer Spokes, "Now don't get up to give evidence ; now don't he persuaded." Mr. Spokes said, his evidence was the same as he had previously given. That was the whole of the case, and the prisoners were then duly cautioned. In reply, Stockley said, " I have nothing to say and Foxhall, " I have nothing to say now." Both prisoners were committed to take their trial as the second charge, and they were removed. The prisoners were conveyed to Leicester by the 6.11 train, and safely lodged in the County Gaol, and in the care of Mr. Musson. Matthews, alias Johnson, has already entered hard labour for one month for attempted burglary in ?, and on the 20th March of the same year he was committed for two years hard labour fur burglary ; and on the 27th of November, 1857, he received six years penal servitude fur burglary ; he has only been back about six weeks. Foxall was in ? apprehended on a charge of stealing copper and discharged ; in ?, he was found on premises with intent to commit a burglary, and received three months imprisonment and in ? he had 4 years penal servitude for burglary : he has only been back about two months. Stockley has been imprisoned for a twelve month sentence up to the 10th of March, but for what offence the police do not as yet know.

### **Transcribed from the Coventry Herald, - August 8<sup>th</sup> 1862**

#### **The Coleorton Burglary.**

Joseph Stockley and James Mathews pleaded guilty to the charge of burglary at the house of the Rev. Francis Merewether of Coleorton, on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, and stealing a £10 note, a large quantity of gold and silver, a gold guard, a ring and other articles. Stockley also pleaded guilty, as did Thomas Foxhall, to a charge of the like offence at the house of the Rev. George Belcher at Heather manor house, on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. **Stockley was sentenced to seven years penal servitude, and Mathews and Foxhall, who had both been previously convicted, to ten years penal servitude each.**

## **Leicester Journal – August 5<sup>th</sup> 1864**

### **THE REV. FRANCIS MEREWETHER DECEASED**

Notice – All persons having claims or demands against the estate of the Rev. Francis Merewether, late of Coleorton Rectory, in the County of Leicester, who died on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of July, 1864, are requested to send particulars thereof to us, or to Mrs. Merewether, at the Rectory, Coleorton

Dated this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of August, 1864.

Dewes and Son  
Solicitors, Ashby de la Zouch

## **Leicester Journal – December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1864**

### **The Rectory, Coleorton MR. CHUBB**

Is favoured with instructions from the executors of the late Rev. F. Merewether

### **TO SELL BY AUCTION**

On Monday and Tuesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> days of December, 1864, on the premises, the Rectory, Coleorton

The dining, drawing, and bed-room furniture, Piano, Glass, China, Kitchen requisites, &c., &c. Capital Clarence Carriage, elegant Phaeton, Double and single harness, saddles and bridles, cow in milk, garden and other tools, and various other effects.

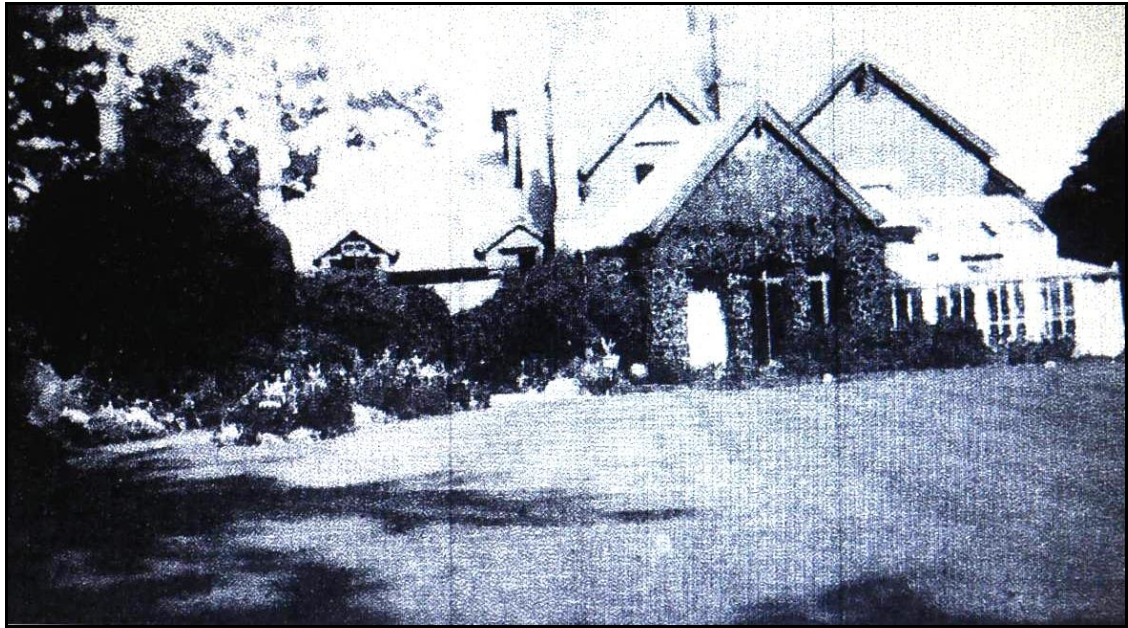
### **Sale to commence each day at 11 o'clock prompt**

It is not known at the time of writing where Frances Elizabeth Merewether went to live following the death of her husband, but it is likely that she went back to her roots in Great Yeldham, Essex.

William Beresford Beaumont, M.A. Clerk, by Sir George Beaumont, 9th Baronet of Stoughton of Coleorton hall, became the rector on the death of the Rev. Francis Beaumont.

Following the Rev. Francis Merewether's death, the rectory was occupied by a number of rectors as listed below:-

- 1864 - 1901 William Beresford Beaumont M.A.
- 1901 - 1921 Harold Robinson M.A.
- 1921 - 1932 John Nigel Philpott M.A.
- 1932 - 1942 Herbert Edward Stevens M.A.
- 1942 - 1954 Rev. Alexander Eveliegh Agathos Eager
- 1954 - 1957 Re. Frederick Lindesay Godfrey
- 1957 - 1961 Rev. Eric Stanley Pyecroft
- 1961 - 1966 Rev. Alfred Graham Burford
- 1966 - 1975 The Rev. Stanley Gordon Sheppard. He married the author and his wife, the former Sheila Bannister on September 28th 1970 at St. Mary's Church, Coleorton.
- !975 - ??? Rev. Philip Edgar Hunt



Photograph of the extended Coleorton Rectory, with its well manicured lawn and garden, probably taken c.1910 when the Rev. Harold Robinson was the incumbent and Rectory Lodge was occupied by his gardener William Coomber and family who resided at Rectory Lodge.



**WILLIAM COOMBER & HIS WIFE ANNIE CLARA**

## **COLEORTON RECTORY BECOMES A RETREAT HOUSE**

In 1954, Coleorton Rectory became a "Diocesan Retreat House":-

**The following is transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 11th June 1954:-**

### **DIOCESAN RETREAT HOUSE IN USE**

The eight candidates for ordination in Leicester Cathedral on Sunday are the first to make use of the new Diocesan Retreat House at Coleorton.

The house was formerly Coleorton Rectory, and it was dedicated as the Retreat House by the Bishop of Leicester Dr. R. R. Williams, last week.

**Those currently in retreat are:-**

Mr. J. Collie, of Holy Apostles, Leicester  
Mr. J. W. Foster, of All Saints, Loughborough  
Mr. J. H. G. Rushton, St. Andrew's, Leicester  
The Rev. D. B. Ashburner, of Christ Church, Coalville  
The Rev. D. H. Bridge - Collins, of St. Peter's, Leicester  
The Rev. G. B. Hunt, of St. Steven's, Leicester  
The Rev. T. H. Pearse, of St. Peter's, Leicester  
The Rev. J. B. Martin, of Holy Apostles, Leicester

*A Retreat House offered a range of options for periods of silence and levels of input. It accommodated individuals on private retreat who wished to get away on their own or may even wish to have someone alongside them. The Christian retreat can be defined most simply as a definite time (from a few hours in length to a month) spent away from one's normal life for the purpose of reconnecting, usually in prayer, with God.*

At some point, in the 1960's, the rectory became the home for the "Coleorton Youth Club", but this was a somewhat short lived project.