

THE COULSON FAMILY OF GRIFFYDAM By Samuel T Stewart - February 2024

The first evidence of Coulsons' living in Griffydam is recorded in the 1851 census. Thomas Coulson, a coal miner aged 25 and born in Sheepshead (later to become Shepshed) is living with his wife Selina, also aged 25, who was born in Newbold. As their entry in the census follows on from Cart Brook, the author suggests that they were living in the first property as you enter Elder Lane, possibly Rose Cottage which was later demolished to make way for road improvements.

In 1857, Thomas Coulson was appointed one of the trustees for the building of the new Wesleyan Methodist Reform chapel.

"The Wesleyan Methodist Reformers at Griffydam being summarily turned out of the old house in which they had conducted their services for several years, by the interference of the newly appointed Steward of the Nobleman whose property it is, had no place in which to conduct their Sabbath School and hold their Religious Services. At this period, namely Nov 10th 1857, an application was made to Miss Mary Farmer of Worthington for a piece of ground on which to build a Chapel, she consented to give a piece (sic), but dying three days afterwards it fell through, she leaving the Field to her brothers, they at once consented to give a piece (sic) of land on which to erect a Chapel.

Richard Page was engaged to superintend the erection of the Chapel. John Ison was appointed Treasurer. The following were all appointed Trustees:- John Ison, Francis Pope, Joseph Smart, Thomas Coulson, Charles Walker, Richard Cooper, William Usherwood, William Stinson, John Biddle, William Harrison, James Langham and Richard Page.

The new Griffydam Wesleyan Reform Chapel was opened on 27th April 1858 by Rev Jabez Burns DD of London, and services were conducted on 2nd May 1858 by Mr J W Acrill of Mansfield. Sabbath School was resumed on 16th May, when forty children attended.



In the 1861 census, Thomas (still a coal miner) and Selina are still living in Elder Lane. They now have three children - John (2m), Thomas William (2) and daughter Ada (4). However, they also had a servant Selina Lakin aged

13, who was born in Coleorton living with them. [Thomas William became landlord of the 'Traveller's Rest Beer House' for one year only in 1913.](#)

In 1864 a tragedy appears to have befallen the family when Thomas Coulson was involved in a serious underground accident at the Coleorton No.2. Colliery in Swannington (1855-1873), known as the Califat Pit. The following suggests that Thomas would not have recovered from his injuries, however, that does not seem to have been the case :-

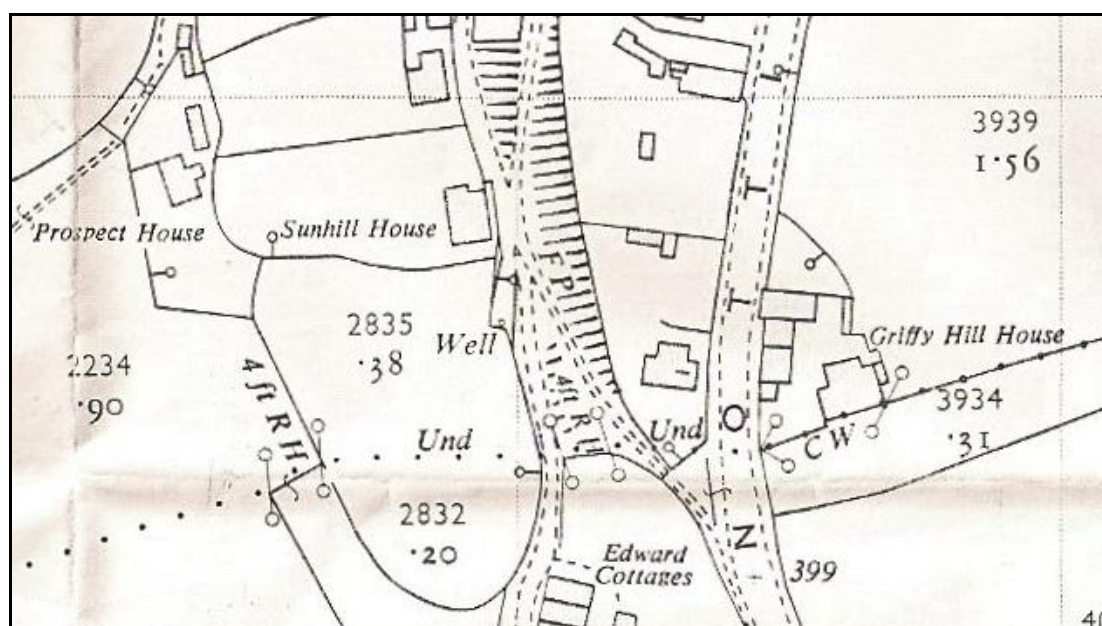
Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 05 November 1864

SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT No.2. COLEORTON PIT

On the 26th ult., a man named Thomas Coulson, a miner, of Griffydam, met with a serious accident whilst at work in the above pit, under similar circumstances to the cases already described,— a large stone falling from the roof upon his back, and crushing him in a shocking manner. The poor fellow was extricated as soon as possible, and conveyed home, where he still lies without the slightest hope of recovery.

By the 1871 census, Thomas and Selina appear to have moved again. Thomas, (now a colliery labourer) and Selina have another son Albert (aged 8), but he seems to have disappeared from future censuses, however, he reappears as best man at his sister's wedding in October 1889. Living at home are Thomas and Selina, with daughter Ada (14) and son's Thomas William (12), John (9) and Albert (8).

The enumerator's walk for the 1881 census suggests that Thomas (55) and Selina (55) had moved to 'Sun Hill House' and only Ada (24) is now living at home with her Mum and Dad. Thomas Coulson's employment is recorded as a fireman. This would most likely have been a kiln fireman at the 'Griffydam, Brick, Patent interlocking House Tile and Earthenware Works' close to where he lived. The location of 'Sun Hill House' which was adjacent to Griffy Well as shown on the map below.



Eight years later Ada, at the age of 33, was married to Edward Roberts of Bacup, Lancashire on the 8th of October 1889, which is described in the following newspaper article. It is believed that the wedding and following tea took place at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (top chapel) and not the Wesleyan Methodist Reform Chapel (bottom chapel). This poses the question as to how Ada came to meet Edward Roberts from Bacup?? Also why were her mother and father not mentioned in the following newspaper report as attending the wedding and the subsequent tea *paid for by Ada's in laws*? The newspaper report does however confirm Thomas, Selina and Ada were living at 'Sun Hill House', when the marriage took place.



Bacup Times and Rossendale Advertiser - Saturday 19 October 1889

THE MARRIAGE OF MR EDWARD ROBERTS

On Monday week the marriage of Miss. Ada Coulson, the daughter of Mr. T. Coulson of Sun Hill House to Mr. Edward Roberts of Ashworth street, Tong, Bacup took place in the Wesleyan Chapel, Griffydam, Ashbv-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire. The chapel was filled with friends of the bridal pair. The Rev. F. S. Kirkliness performed the ceremony. The bride's dress was of cream satin trimmed with pearls and she wore a wreath and veil, and carried a splendid bouquet, a gift of the bridegroom. She was given away by her eldest brother Mr. T. W. Coulson. The bridegroom and Mr. Albert Coulson youngest brother of the bride arrived at half-past one. Then four bridesmaids — Miss Florence Elizabeth Coulson, Miss Minnie Gertrude Coulson, nieces of the bride ; Miss T. W. Coulson and A. Coulson sisters of the bride carrying baskets of flowers (Ada did not have any sisters, so there is clearly a mistake her). For many years, the bride has been a useful valuable member of the chapel and also of the choir and many of her fellow choristers were present at the service and sang appropriate music. Master Kendrick presided at the harmonium. A number of wedding presents were received. The happy pair left Worthington station by the 4.25. pm train. The bride is much respected and has been a teacher in the Sunday school for over seventeen years The streets were decorated from the bride's home to the chapel. Four archways of flowers had been erected and the chapel gates were similarly decorated and presented a

pretty sight. Carpets strewn with flowers were laid for the bride to walk upon, and everyone seemed to do their utmost to make her happy. The happy couple left the chapel amidst showers of rice. On Thursday evening week, a tea was given in the chapel by Mr and Mrs Roberts to all the members and Sunday School teachers, the scholars of Mrs Roberts's class and all the members of choir. After tea, a meeting was held in the chapel when Mrs Roberts was presented with a Bible and a hymn book, the gift of the Sunday school teachers and senior scholars for her long and unwearied services in connection with the Sunday school with their best wishes for her present and future happiness. Mrs. Roberts then spoke a few words on Sunday school work, and the delight she took in it. Afterwards, Mr. Roberts addressed the meeting for a short time, as did also other gentlemen. Mr. Kendrick proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. and Mrs Roberts which was seconded by Mr. Rowell, and supported by Mr. Sketchley for their kindness in giving the tea. Mr. Roberts responded on behalf of Mrs. Roberts and the meeting was brought to a close about nine o'clock, all having thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Marriages

Roberts — Coulson

On the 8th inst at the Wesleyan Chapel Griffydam by the Rev F S Kirkness of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Mr Edward Roberts of Ashworth Street, Bacup, to Ada Coulson daughter of Mr T Coulson, 'Sun Hill House' near Ashby-de-la-Zouch Leicestershire.

Thomas Coulson was a supporter of the Liberal party at that time as the Burton Chronicle dated 14th August 1890 describes a meeting of the Liberal Divisional Council held at the Liberal Club in Ashby de la Zouch, at which Mr. James Ellis, M.P., presided. **Mr. Coulson of Griffydam** is listed as one of the supporters attending.

In the 1901 census, Thomas (65) and Selina (65) are recorded as living alone, presumably still at Sun Hill House. Thomas is recorded as 'living on his own means', indicating that he wasn't working.

By the 1901 census there is no record of any Coulsons' living in Griffydam, and there is no record either of any of the Coulsons' being buried in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel graveyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Many people including the author will recall Miss Davey living at 'Sun Hill House' in the 1950s. She was a rather an eccentric lady who allowed fowls to roam freely through her house.

Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 28 September 1954

Found chair on fire

Miss Frances Davy of Sun Hill House, Griffydam, left her home for a few minutes yesterday and returned to find an armchair near the hearth on fire. With the help of neighbours, she put out the flames. Coalville County Fire Service were called, but the fire was out on their arrival.