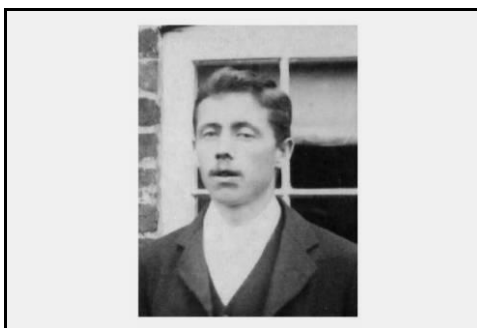


**JAMES STEWART 1878 - 1964**



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART -  
UPDATED OCTOBER 2022**

The story begins with James (Aka Jim) Stewart. James was the oldest son and first born child of Samuel and Annie Stewart, parents of the large Stewart family of Lount who were a staunch Methodist family. He was the great uncle of the author of this publication. As a young lad, living on the family small holding in Lount, opposite Coleorton Pottery, Jim was required to walk into Ashby de la Zouch before attending Staunton Harold school to pick up the daily newspapers. When he first left school at around twelve years of age, he was hired as a farm labourer whilst he was visiting the Ashby De La Zouch Statutes Fair. He worked away from home at the farm, which was reported to be along the "Top Brand" towards Tongue. Jim was allowed one day off a month and had to walk several miles to his home in Lount and back. The living and working conditions were apparently so bad, that his parents eventually brought him back home. Jim, being the oldest son, was the first to follow his father into Coleorton Pottery. The 1891 census confirms he was a potter at 13 years of age, and he continued to work there until c.1900. when he married Clara Hall (see below). Jim played cricket for "Staunton Harold Cricket Club", along with three of his younger brothers.



**James (aka Jim) Stewart aged 23  
b. 28th Feb 1878 - m. 1900 - d. 2nd June 1964**

George and Ann Hall (b. 1850 and 1851 respectively) were the parents of Jim's wife to be Clara, and are shown in the 1891 census as living in Rotten Row, an island of land within Coleorton which was in fact part of the Township of Thringstone which was in turn part of the ecclesiastical parish of Whitwick. Clara was aged 11 at that time. They lived in the far end cottage in the row in Elverston's Yard off Stoney Lane. George Hall was a coal miner at the Coleorton "Bug & Wink" colliery but later in life worked at Whitwick coal mine.

It is not known how Jim and Clara met, but they were married in 1900. The 1901 census for Rotten Row shows that George and Ann Hall, Jim and Clara Stewart with Gertrude are living together in Elverston's Yard. The living condition would have been quite basic at that time. By 1901, Jim, like his father-in-law, was also working as a coal miner, an occupation which obviously paid better than a pottery hand, which was clearly the attraction, although Coleorton Pottery at that time was in a parlous state anyway.

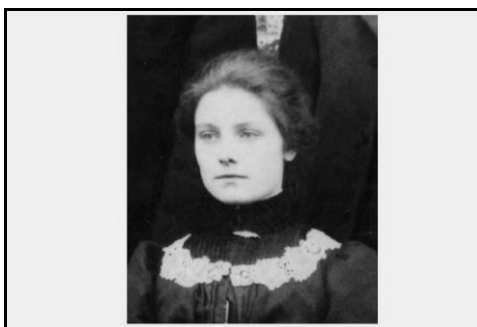
If the reader refers to the publication entitled a History of Elverston's Yard which is free to download and read on the author's website they will see that the first evidence of building in Elverston's Yard took place in 1650 when a cottage was built by John Elverston.

Jim and Clara subsequently had two further daughters Evelyn, and Hilda Noreen (the youngest). Hilda never married. Jim and Clara continued to live with her parents, **who eventually moved to the tiny adjoining Zion Cottages on Zion's Hill, Peggs Green, Coleorton, Leics on the site of the former "Sion Chapel"**.

The 1921 census shows that George Hall (b. Thringstone) and Ann Hall (b. Osgathorpe), both given as aged 71, with two granddaughters', Evelyn and Gertrude, aged 21 and 19 respectively are living at Zion Cottage. Gertrude's employment is listed as "Home Duties" and Evelyn's as "hosiery Mender - Own Account - At home. This poses the question as to where their mother and father Jim and Clara were. Bearing in mind that it was a tiny one up one down cottage at that time and there would not have been room, even in those days, for the two families. The adjoining cottage was apparently occupied by someone else (see the following details of the purchase of the cottages by Jim).

The 1921 census reveals that Jim, Clara and their youngest daughter Hilda Noreen, aged 11, were boarding at 46, Crescent Road, Hugglescote with Jim's sister Annie Elizabeth (aka Liz) and her husband William (aka Bill) Fowkes (both age 39). Bill was recorded as an out of work miner at Snibston Colliery, so presumably the rent from Jim and Clara would have been welcome. Jim was recorded as a coal hewer at Whitwick Colliery Company Ltd. Interestingly, the enumerator had crossed out Visitors and replaced it with Boarders.

**Annie Elizabeth (Liz) Stewart** (b. 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 1883 - m.1903 - d. 9<sup>th</sup> Nov 1982)



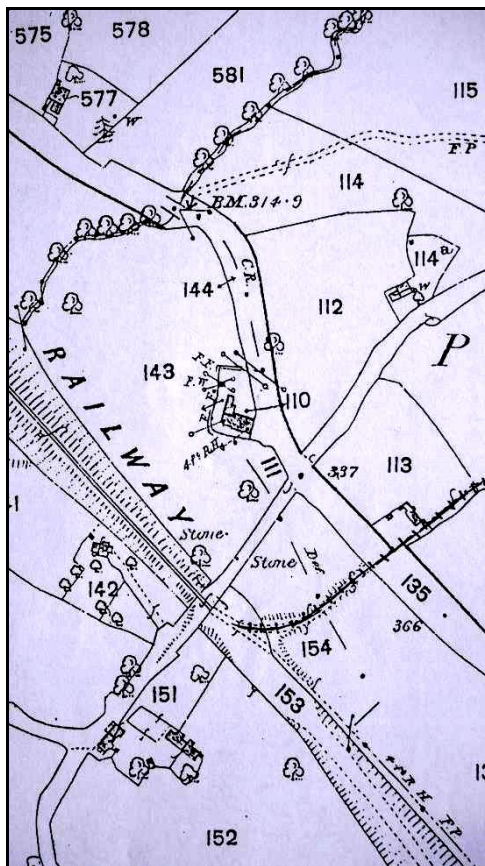
Liz, great auntie of the author, went into service after leaving Staunton Harold School. She was twenty years old when she married William (Bill) Fowkes in 1903. He was from Coleorton and worked at Snibston Colliery. They didn't have any children. Liz and Bill lived in Crescent Road, Coalville and Later Vaughan Street, Coalville. Liz passed away 3 months short of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Bill was very artistic and a brilliant musician, and it was generally recognised that his talents were wasted at the pit. He tragically died as a result of thrombosis after breaking a tibia at work.**

In the 1920 Coleorton Beaumont's estate sale, the two adjoining Zion cottages and gardens were purchased by James Stewart together with 2.766 acres of land for £175. The land encompassed the area between Engine Brook, Stoney Lane, the former Coleorton Railway embankment and Zion Hill. The previous occupier was recorded in the sales documents as being Mr. J. Richards who would have rented the property from Sir George Beaumont.



Enlarged extract from the Beaumont Estate 1920 sale map showing Lot 15 purchased by James Stewart for £175



Extract from 1885 O/S map showing plot 110 with the cottages and garden and the surrounding field 143 which were purchased by James Stewart

Jim, Clara and the family would have moved into Zion Cottage soon after Jim purchased them, and it is thought that Clara's parents would have occupied one of the two adjoining cottages. George Hall was given as a trustee of Coleorton Methodist Chapel in 1924, so at least one of the parents would have been alive.

Hilda, their youngest daughter, moved into the small adjoining cottage to her mother and father when it became vacant and remained there until she passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1975 aged 65. She was outlived by her sister's Evelyn and Gertrude. Their daughter Gertrude (Gertie) Stewart (died 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1998 aged 97) married Alf Bird (died 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 1953 aged 55) who lived in "Rotten Row" when they met. They lived opposite her dad Jim's cottage, but further up Zion's Hill in the row of cottages which Eileen Richard's (daughter of Jim Richards' the baker) had built. Following Alf's death, Gertie incorporated a small shop selling general groceries into their property, which would seem impossible nowadays in such a small place, considering they had a son Dennis, and two daughters, Gwenda and Margaret. Dennis married Joan and they had a son Jeremy who had a serious road accident in his early teens and was severely brain damaged. Gwenda married Maurice Leeson who was a teacher and they didn't have children. Margaret married her second cousin Henry Menzies who worked for 3Ms and they moved to America where they raised a family and still live there.

Evelyn married Ernie Williams who became a deputy at New Lount Colliery and they had a daughter Rita who became a teacher. Evelyn Williams was always known as Peb, it seems she received this nick name because that is how her younger sister Hilda pronounced her name when she was a baby. Ernie had a new house built in Lower Moor Road, Coleorton. Ernie and Evelyn (Peb) worshiped at Coleorton Primitive Methodist Chapel where Evelyn played the organ for a number of years.

Jim Stewart was known for being surly and abrupt by his family. Jim, Clara and the family worshiped at Coleorton Primitive Methodist Chapel, following the Stewarts' tradition. He was a teacher at Coleorton Sunday School. Trevor Stewart (his great nephew) remembers suggesting rather unwisely during one of his Sunday school lessons, that we were all descended from monkeys, to which Jim replied "yo may bay mi lad, bur I anner".

Jim was 'called to rest' on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1964 aged 86 and Clara followed him later that year on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct aged 84. Jim, Clara and family members are buried in the Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Graveyard.



**Clara Stewart's mother Ann Hall - b.1851  
photographed at the end of Zion Cottages on the site of the former  
"Sion Chapel"**

This photograph of Ann Hall is historically important in that it shows Zion Hill (part of the old Hinckley to Melbourne Common turnpike) prior to the row of terraced cottages that were built on the left by Eileen Richards, the daughter of James Richards, baker on School Lane. The turning to School Lane is immediately on the left and Weighbridge Cottage is further up the hill on the left.





**Clara's father George Hall - b.1850  
photographed at the rear of the Zion Cottage nearest the road**



**Photograph taken outside Coleorton Primitive Methodist chapel during the Golden Jubilee celebrations**

**Ladies Bottom Row Left to Right :-**

Mrs Freerson Mee, Mrs Wright, Polly Whyman, Clara Stewart (Nee. Hall) wife of Jim Stewart, Ada Stewart, Greta Stewart (Grandma and sister of the author respectively)

**Men Second Row Left to Right :-**

Freerson Mee (Conductor of choir), Laban Clifford, Samuel Stewart (grandfather of the author) Frankie Bailey, Jim Stewart (uncle of the author and husband of Clara on bottom row)

**Men Top Row Left to Right :-**

John Whyman, Charlie Wright, Jack Richards, Billie Benson, Herbert Rowell