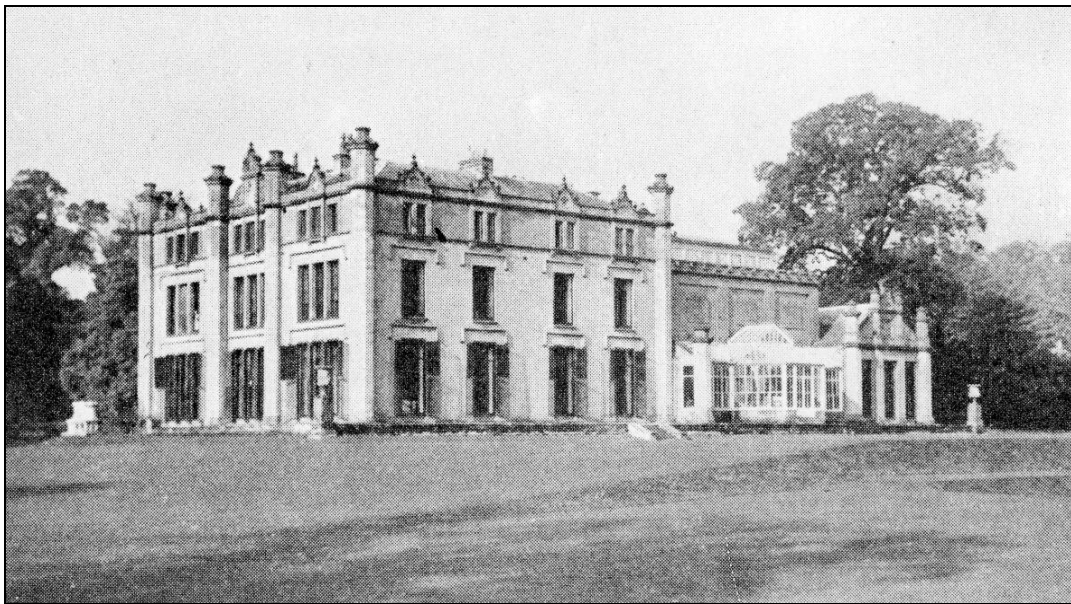


**THE LEASING OF COLEORTON HALL  
OVER THE PERIOD 1891 TO 1925  
BY THE DONISTHORPES' & ABEL-SMITHS'  
INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**



**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - NOVEMBER 2021 /  
UPDATED JANUARY 2021**

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The above are all included on the author's website as free to download and read publications under the PEOPLE section:-

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**- INTRODUCTION -**  
**THE BEAUMONT'S PARLOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION**  
**IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY**  
**LEADING UP TO THE LEASING OF**  
**COLEORTON HALL**

Although the legal jargon in the researched material is quite complex, it is worth recording some of the basic facts. In the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Beaumonts' were clearly starting to experience financial problems. Two cases were heard in the high court of justice (chancery division) brought by the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> baronets, Sir George Howland Willoughby Beaumont and Sir George Howland William Beaumont respectively.

When the first case was brought by the 8<sup>th</sup> baronet ( c.1840), under the settled land act, he sort to obtain sanction from the court to sell off various chattels from Coleorton Hall. The income from the estate was given as £8,000, but there was a charge of £10,000 on the estate. It was proposed that a sale of chattels including pictures and various other items should be made to set against the debt. At this time, the 8<sup>th</sup> Baronet's only surviving son was an infant. Based on the fact that the chattels proposed were left in trust by the 7<sup>th</sup> baronet, the guardian of the infant (ad litem) strongly opposed the sale of the pictures, which would become the property of the child if he attained 21. In the exercise of his discretion, Mr. Justice Chitty declined to sanction the sale proposed to be made. The application therefore failed, and the summons was dismissed.

As further evidence of the Beaumont's parlous financial situation at this time, the Sherwins', a wealthy Coleorton family, were lending significant sums of money to the 8th baronet before his death.

There appeared to be a period of stability during the 9th Baronets time, but having invested significant sums of money, with little income from the estate, on significant building projects and celebrations at the hall, it is clear from the following, that even more debt must have accrued.

A second case brought in the high court of justice by the 10th Baronet, c. 1885, was similar to that brought by the 8th baronet c.1840, in that an application was made for the court to sanction a proposed sale of chattels, consisting for the most part of pictures at the family mansion house, Coleorton Hall, which had been settled in a previous will as heirlooms.

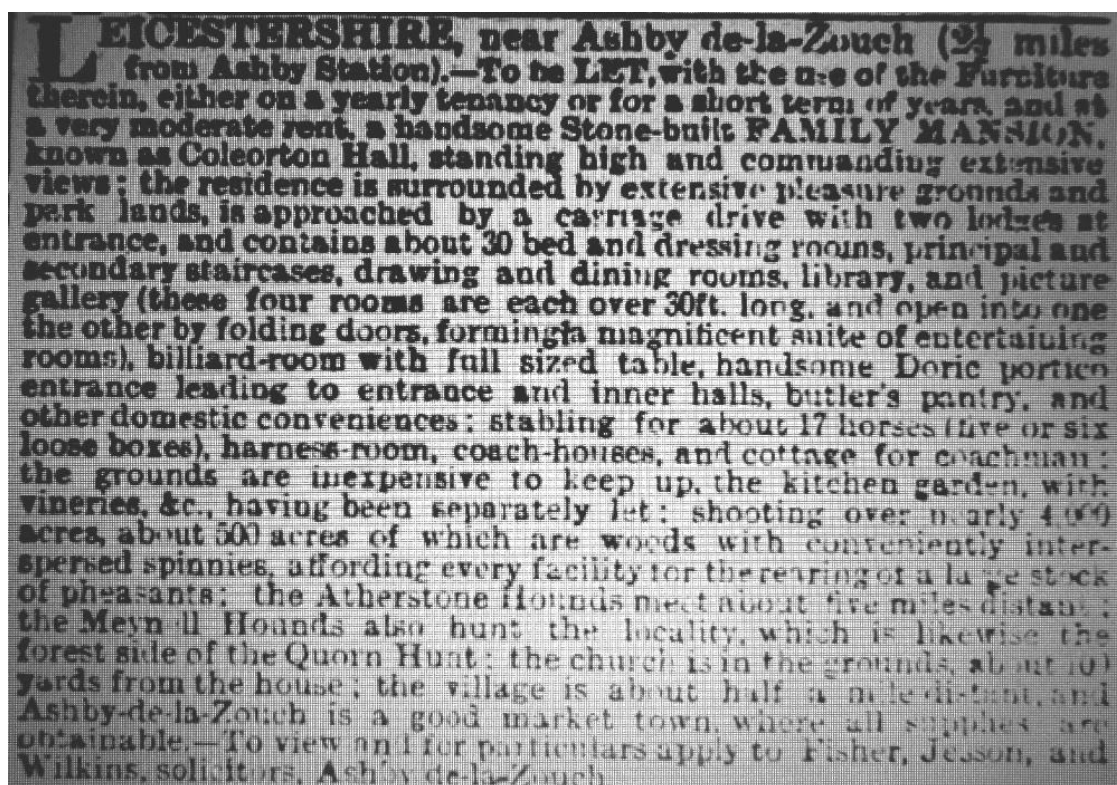
It was proposed that the sum to be derived from the sale, which was estimated to be about £7,300, should be applied in reduction of charges on settled land. The income of the estates was about £7,500 per annum, and the tenant for life received £2,000 per annum after payment of all charges and expenses for keeping in repair &c.

The trustees opposed the application, and Mr. Justice Chitty said that the 9<sup>th</sup> baronet had settled the proposed chattels as heirlooms. The 9<sup>th</sup> Baronet must be presumed to have been aware of the circumstances of the family when he was providing for it by making his will, and what were the charges upon the estates and what was the income to be enjoyed by the tenant for life. He had also given the present tenant (10<sup>th</sup> Baronet) for life a sum of £17,000.

Justice Chitty said that taking into consideration that fact, which was of some importance in an application which was, in truth, one to disturb testamentary dispositions, and also having regard to the small value of the pictures compared with the value of the whole estate, and also taking into consideration the facts that the pictures were a collection of some completeness, which had been formed by a member of the family, himself an artist (7<sup>th</sup> baronet), and had been in the family for nearly a century, and were a characteristic feature of the mansion house, and that the guardian (ad litem) of the tenant in tail in remainder and the trustees were opposed to the sale, and that since the testator's death there had been no very substantial depreciation of the property, he, in the exercise of his judicial discretion, declined his sanction, and dismissed the application with costs.

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It would have been somewhat of a surprise for many, particularly the estate farmers and villagers, to see or hear about the following advertisement in the April 12<sup>th</sup> 1890 edition of the London Morning Post which advertised Coleorton Hall to be let on a yearly or short term of year's basis. At that time, Sir George Howland William Beaumont, 10<sup>th</sup> Baronet, held the lordship of the manor. Why Sir George decided to let Coleorton Hall is not known, but it is not unreasonable to assume that it was for financial reasons.



**L** EICESTERSHIRE, near Ashby de-la-Zouch ( $\frac{2}{3}$  miles from Ashby Station).—To be LET, with the use of the Furniture therein, either on a yearly tenancy or for a short term of years, and at a very moderate rent, a handsome Stone-built FAMILY MANSION, known as Coleorton Hall, standing high and commanding extensive views; the residence is surrounded by extensive pleasure grounds and park lands, is approached by a carriage drive with two lodges at entrance, and contains about 30 bed and dressing rooms, principal and secondary staircases, drawing and dining rooms, library, and picture gallery (these four rooms are each over 30ft. long, and open into one the other by folding doors, forming a magnificent suite of entertaining rooms), billiard-room with full sized table, handsome Doric portico entrance leading to entrance and inner halls, butler's pantry, and other domestic conveniences; stabling for about 17 horses (five or six loose boxes), harness-room, coach-houses, and cottage for coachman; the grounds are inexpensive to keep up, the kitchen garden, with vineries, &c., having been separately let; shooting over nearly 400 acres, about 500 acres of which are woods with conveniently interspersed spinnies, affording every facility for the rearing of a large stock of pheasants; the Atherstone Hounds meet about five miles distant; the Meyn Il Hounds also hunt the locality, which is likewise the forest side of the Quorn Hunt; the church is in the grounds, about 100 yards from the house; the village is about half a mile distant, and Ashby-de-la-Zouch is a good market town, where all supplies are obtainable.—To view and for particulars apply to Fisher, Jesson, and Wilkins, solicitors, Ashby de-la-Zouch.

The following advertisement which is for the sale of the entire cellar of fine old wines from Coleorton Hall on the instruction of Sir George Howland William Beaumont, 10<sup>th</sup> Bart., appeared in the Leicester Chronicle dated February 19<sup>th</sup> 1887, and states that Sir George has already let the mansion at this time, although the preceding 1890 advertisement confirms it was for let again.



By Messrs. LUDLOW, ROBERTS, and WELLER.

ON THURSDAY NEXT,  
AT THE SALE ROOMS, No. 18, NEW-STREET,  
BIRMINGHAM.

Important Sale of the Entire Cellar of FINE OLD WINES, from Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire, by direction of Sir George H. Wm. Beaumont, Bart., who has let the mansion. Also, by permission, a FEW OTHER BINS of CHOICE OLD WINES and SPIRITS.

Messrs. LUDLOW, ROBERTS, and WELLER  
WILL SELL BY AUCTION,

At their Sale Rooms, No. 18, New-street, Birmingham, on Thursday next, February 24th, at Two o'clock precisely,

THE above Choice and Valuable WINES, comprising Large Bins of OLD-FASHIONED SHERRIES, bottled in the years 1847, 1849, 1851, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1858, 1860, 1865, 1868, and 1874, and supplied by Lambeth, Butler, Jubber, Iveson, Cosens,

&c. EAST INDIA MADEIRAS, Old Sercial and Tinto Madeiras, bottled 1830, 1860, 1870, 1876, and 1884. FINE OLD PORTS, consisting of 1847 (Lambeth's); 1851, bottled in 1856, 1852, 1853, 1855, and 1858; 1859, bottled by E. T. Hamp, of Ashby; rich port, bottled by Butler, 1860, and others. CLARETS, Chateau bottled and others, include Chateau Lafite, 1875; Mouton Rothschild, 1869; Margaux, 1869; Paveil Margaux, 1874; Palmer Margaux, 1875; Fourcade Malexot, 1875, and many others. FINE OLD BURGUNDIES, SAUTERNES, HOCKS, including PRINCE METTERNICH'S Johannisberg, CONSTANTIA, HERMITAGE, and a variety of other light wines in small quantities. The CHAMPAGNES include Geo. Goulet's, 1874; Wachter's, 1880; Louis Roederer's, 1880; Fred Meyer's, 1874, landed 1873; and others. Sparkling HOCKS include Johannisberg, 1874; old Moselles and Burgundy, 1868. VERY OLD BRANDIES, including Justerine and Brooke's Martello, 1865, &c. FINE OLD IRISH and SCOTCH WHISKIES. Rare old LIQUEURS, including Curacao, Noyaw, &c.

Note.—The Wines were principally laid down by Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart., and have remained undisturbed in the cellars from twenty to forty years. The Auctioneers themselves have drawn the samples, and will superintend the delivery of the Wines from the bins direct to the purchasers. See conditions of Sale.

The samples on view the day prior to and morning of the Sale, or may be had on the usual terms, and Catalogues may be obtained of

Messrs. FISHER, JESSON, and WILKINS,  
Solicitors, Ashby-de-la-Zouch;  
Or of the Auctioneers, No. 18, New-street, Birmingham.  
w345

The author has found no information regarding who leased Coleorton Hall between 1887 and 1891

## **THE DONISTHORPES' AT COLEORTON HALL c.1891 - c.1903**

From c.1891 to c.1903 the Donisthorpe family were leasing Coleorton Hall. The information available for the latter years is rather sketchy. However, we know that Mr. A. R. Donisthorpe died at Quenby Hall aged 74 in January 1904 leaving an estate of the gross value of £205, 954 0s. 6d.

Mr. A. R. Donisthorpe was the owner of a company of wool-spinners, and their factory in Bath Lane, Leicester is believed to date back to between 1794 and 1820. This building, was Leicester's oldest surviving factory building, but was badly damaged by fire in 2012.

From the 1820s, this area of Leicester was the centre of a thriving worsted spinning industry and the processes housed in the early mill buildings would have included wool preparation (carding and combing) and spinning, the final product being prepared for framework knitting.



**Donisthorpe & Co. Ltd - Donisthorpe Mills, Frog Island, Leicester**

Donisthorpe and Company was founded in 1739. But in 1220 there had been an monastery sited on that spot, belonging to the Black Friars of the Order of St Dominic, explaining why the building is often referred to as Friars Mills.

**What was left of this historically important building  
was burnt down in July 2012**

The Donisthorpe's employed a considerable number of staff at the hall and the photograph below was thought to have been taken of some of their staff outside the hall, possibly on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897 although we have no concrete evidence for this.



**See the Coleorton censuses for details of staff**

**From the Leicester Daily Post - Wednesday 21st October 1891**

A sale of work at the School Room in Newbold in aid of restoration work at St. Mathews Church, Worthington, was held under the patronage of the Right Hon. the Earl Ferrers and Countess Ferrers, Lady Beaumont (Dowager), the Rev. Canon W. B. and Mrs. Beaumont, Colonel Partridge and Mrs Partridge, and Mr. N. C. Curzon and Mrs. Curzon.....**Mrs and Misses Donington** were amongst the distinguished guests.

**Leicester Daily Post - Friday 30th October 1891**

### **ACCIDENT IN THE HUNTING FIELD**

The Quorn hounds met in the vicinity of Coleorton on Thursday, foxes being found, but none were killed. **Miss Donisthorpe of Coleorton Hall**, it is reported, was thrown from her horse, as also was young Hill, the son of a coachman, the latter being kicked by the horse. No serious injuries were sustained.

## **Leicester Journal - Friday 04 November 1892**

### **COLEORTON HALL**

A serious accident befel **Mr. Wright, butler to Mr. Donisthorpe, of Coleorton Hall**, yesterday (Wednesday) morning. It appears that he was violently thrown out of the trap through the restiveness of the horse he was driving, sustaining a deep cut on his forehead. Dr. Turner was at once called in, and his injuries were attended to.

## **Burton Chronicle - Thursday 30th November 1893**

### **A FASHIONABLE WEDDING AT COLEORTON HALL**

At the local church on Tuesday afternoon, Miss Beatrice Minnie Donisthorpe, second daughter of Mr. Donisthorpe at Coleorton Hall and Leicester, was married to Capt. W. Wanby Griffin of the Royal Artillery, at present stationed at Woolwich. The service was performed by the Rev. R. E. Griffin, brother of the bridegroom and Vicar of Halserown, St Ives, Cornwall assisted by the Rev. Canon Beaumont, Rector.

A large concourse viewed the wedding procession from the hall to the church. An awning 40 yards in length had been erected, under which the wedding party gained access to the church. The awning was of white calico, relieved with scarlet twill and adorned with evergreens, creating a pretty effect when viewed from the grounds of the hall. The church was filled before the wedding party arrived. The bride accompanied by her father, arrived at the church punctually at one o'clock, the hour fixed for the ceremony. The floral decorations were simple but effective, chrysanthemums decorating the altar table and the pillars near the chancel. The many guests invited to the wedding breakfast were present in the church and included Sir Edward and Lady Sieverking, Lady Beaumont, Mr. and Mrs. John Beard (Linton), Canon and Lady Beaumont, Miss Fane (Melbourne), Capt. Gordon (93rd Highlanders), Lieut. Logan (Chatham), Canon and Mrs. Denton, the Rev and Mrs. Vandeleur (Ravenstone), Rev. Terry (Ellistown), Lady Cave and Miss Cave, Dr. C. R. Williams (Ashby), Mrs. St. John (Ashby), Mr. and Mrs. Elliot Galer (Leicester). Mr. E. Clephan (Leicester) and many others.

The service was fully choral. The "Best Man" was Doctor F. T. Griffin, brother of the bridegroom. The bride who was given away by her father wore a rich white satin costume, trimmed with old Brussel's point lace., a wreath of orange blossoms, and a long veil, and carried an exquisite bouquet of white exotics and orange blossoms. The bridesmaids were the sisters of the bride, Miss F. E. Donisthorpe, Miss I. M. Donisthorpe, and Miss C.M. Donisthorpe. They were attired in pink silk, trimmed with deep flounces of white lace, and wore large "picture" hats trimmed with silk to match and carried bouquets of red chrysanthemums tied with pink satin ribbon. They also wore gold safety pins with monogram in pearls, presented by the bridegroom, and the bride wore a diamond pin, gold links, gold broach, and a diamond ring, also presented by the bridegroom.

The bride's dress was an admirable specimen of the costumer's art, and was made by Madame Oliver Holmes of London, while the bridesmaids dresses, neat and pretty, were made by a local hand.

No less picturesque was the attire of the niece of the bride, Miss Madeline Howard, who gracefully carried a shower bouquet of chrysanthemums and formed one of the wedding party - there were numerous wedding presents.



**Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 01 February 1896**

**THE QUORN HOUNDS.**

The meet yesterday was at Coleorton Hall, in beautiful hunting weather. There were present: The Countess of Loudoun, Lord Lonsdale, the **Misses Donisthorpe**, Captain Townshends (Netherseal), Captain Charrington, Messrs. J. Denton, W. E. Stevenson, H. Joyce, T Oakey Earp (Staunton), W. A. Musson, Barrs (Odstone), and W. German (Packington). The hounds found a fox in Coleorton Gorse, and after a good run killed near Lount Wood. Subsequently there were some pretty and exciting runs.

## **THE ABEL-SMITHS' - BACKGROUND INFORMATION PRECEDING THE MOVE TO COLEORTON HALL**

The wealthy Abel-Smith family could be said to be members of the upper class society and certainly lived up to that image particularly following the later Royal connection. There follows some information on their life prior to leasing Coleorton Hall. All the evidence seems to suggest that the Mr & Mrs. F. Abel-Smith never actually purchased a property but following their marriage below, leased well known historical properties in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire including Easthorpe House, Ruddington; Papplewick Hall, Notts; Coleorton Hall, Leics; The Manor House at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; and Beaumanor Hall at Woodhouse Eaves, Leics.

**Nottingham Guardian - Friday 14th August 1885**

### **MARRIAGE OF MR. F. ABEL-SMITH AND MISS MADELEINE SEYMOUR**

#### **REJOICING AT HOLME PIERREPOINT**

The marriage of Mr. F. Abel-Smith and Miss Madeline St. Maur Seymour was celebrated at Holme Pierrepont Church on Tuesday morning under the happiest auspices and general rejoicing. The bride is the fourth daughter of the Rev. H. Seymour M.A. rector of Holme Pierrepont, and the bridegroom is the son of Mr. A. H. Smith of the firm of Messrs Smith & Co., bankers of Nottingham and Wilford.. Both families are greatly esteemed in the neighbourhood and throughout the Nottingham district and the proceedings in consequence partook largely of a public character.

The road from the rectory to the church was made gay with buntings and floral decorations. At the entrance to the carriage drive had been erected a triumphal arch, made of evergreens and flowers set off at the top with a motto giving welcome to the visitors. From flagstaffs along the line hung the Union Jack and other flags. Another triumphal arch crowned with an appropriate motto and composed of flowers and evergreens was erected at the entrance to the churchyard and from here to the sacred edifice, and extending along the nave up to the communion rails, crimson cloth had been laid.

The church itself was a splendid picture, and much labour and great taste had been extended upon it in the way of decoration. The columns were set off with roses, Ivy and the dainty clematis and various other flowers and plants; the sides of the pews were relieved with a plenitude of floral devices; while from the upper portion of the building hung numerous shields formed of flags. The Chancel, too, had been extremely pleasing, the decorations, floral, and otherwise, being in excellent taste and in strict keeping with the nature of the celebration.

The ceremony was fixed for the hour of eleven o'clock, and not long before that time, large numbers of friends, and well wishers had assemble outside the church and in the beautiful park of Holme Pierrepont to witness the proceedings. The applications for admission to the church were very much more numerous than could be accommodated, so that not only was the Church full, but when the bride and bridegroom, together with the bridesmaids, relatives, friends, flower children and congregation had all assembled the scene was really brilliant and impressive. Whilst

the congregation were assembling, and previous to the arrival of the wedding party, Mr. W. Smith, the organist performed a number of voluntaries including a pleasing arrangement of one of Rubinstein's melodies. For the introductory voluntary he played a piece in F by Smart.

The bridegroom being a Lieutenant in the South Notts, Yeomanry Cavalry, an escort, in honour of the occasion was formed by a body of troopers of the corps, and the Radcliffe company of the 2nd. Nott's Rifles volunteers under the command of Lieut. Evelyn Stuart Seymour, acted as a guard to keep the approach clear to the church. The bride was escorted by her father, who gave her away, and Mr. Herbert Smith acted as best man to the bridegroom.

The bridesmaids were nine in number as follows:-

Miss. Seymour, Miss Julia M. Seymour, Miss Lillian Seymour (sister's of the bride); Miss Alice Smith, Miss Constance Smith (sister's of the bridegroom); Lady Mary Pierrepont, Miss Sullivan, Miss Marion Sullivan and the Hon. Bridget Vera Byng.

The service was choral and the singing was led by Mr. James Browne. The services were read by the very Rev, the Dean of Rippon, assisted by the Rev. Edward A. W. Seymour, brother of the bride. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Dean delivered a brief but appropriate address, pointing out what were the true elements of happiness in the married state and impressing upon all present that marriage was a religious, and not a mere social or civil rite.....A long list of witnesses followed.....

The bride wore an ivory satin dress, the front being covered with pearls and the bodice trimmed with lace and pearls. She had on her hand a wreath of orange blossoms, and her veil was of Tuile. For ornament, she had on a gold necklace set with pearls, the gift of the bridegroom. The bridesmaid's dresses were of cream coloured satin, the skirts being coloured with cream covered lace, and caught up at the side with long satin ribbon. The veils were of Tuile, and the wreaths were of marguerites. The veils were fastened to the waist at the back with a band of marguerites. Each bridesmaid wore a gold bangle fastened with a horseshoe of pearls, the gift of the bride.

After the signing of the registers, the party adjourned to the Rectory, where breakfast was served, both this and the luncheon served later in the day being supplied by Mr. Bingham of the Long-Row, Nottingham.....A long list of guests then sat down to breakfast.....

In a large marquee, in front of the rectory, a luncheon was served to visitors and friends and the band of the South Nott's, Yeomanry, conducted by Mr. W. G. Taylor performed.

In the afternoon, the Bride and Bridegroom left Holme Pierrepont for the Channel Islands and the Continent where they intend to spend their honeymoon.....

There was a tremendously long descriptively detailed list of presents given to the Bride and Bridegroom.

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## EASTHORPE HOUSE

There is a record that the Abel-Smiths' were living at Easthorpe House, Ruddington, Nottinghamshire in 1891.



Recent photograph of Easthorpe House

## PAPPLEWICK HALL

The Abel-Smiths were leasing Papplewick Hall, Nottinghamshire, c.1896



Papplewick Hall, c.1936 with St. James church in the distance

**Nottinghamshire Guardian - Saturday 04 March 1899**

### **PAPPLEWICK CHURCH.**

During the last twelve months some extensive improvements have been effected at this old church. The bells have been re-hung, the interior cleaned and decorated, the sanctuary paved with mosaics, and a handsome new altar cloth and altar rails provided by **Mr. and Mrs. F. Abel-Smith, of Papplewick Hall**, who have taken an active part in this excellent and much-needed work, and on Tuesday the last of a series of efforts to secure funds was arranged, **in the shape of a sale of work in the old Hall**. The spacious dining-room was occupied by a large stall, and filled to

repletion with a variety of articles, and in an adjoining room refreshments were provided for the visitors. The arrangements were superintended by Mrs. Abel-Smith, who was ably aided by Miss Ethel Hind, Mrs. Cundy, Mrs. and Miss Weddall, the Misses Machin, Miss J. Wright, Miss Hardstaff, and the Misses Ducker. £31 12s. 8d. was cleared, which leaves a small balance in hand, after meeting all expenses.



**St. James Church, Papplewick 1897**

**Nottinghamshire Guardian - Saturday 21 October 1899**

On Wednesday afternoon, about 100 ladies resident in the neighbourhood of Papplewick responded to the invitation of Mrs. F. Abel-Smith, and were entertained at Papplewick Hall, where a large display of ladies' work, suitable for distribution amongst the sick and poor of the county, was on view in the library. Tea and refreshments were furnished to the guests in the dining-room, and in the drawing-room a concert was given, the performers being Mrs. Walter Salmond and the Misses Salmond and Mrs. Richard Birkin. The music was thoroughly enjoyed by the party, especially the original compositions from the pen of Mrs. Salmond. Mrs. Abel-Smith was heartily thanked for her hospitality, and that lady expressed her appreciation of the contribution of needlework for the Guild, of which she is the local president



## THE ABEL-SMITH'S MOVE TO COLEORTON HALL

**The Abel-Smiths moved to Coleorton Hall on April the 14th 1904 and Mrs. Abel-Smith's leaving presentation was on March 23rd 1925 at Coleorton School.**

When the Abel Smiths arrived at Coleorton Hall from Papplewick Hall, Nottinghamshire, it is recorded that one of the first things they did was to install a new head gardener, Henry Wilson, junior., and tight constraints on the agent Fisher Jesson were applied, **because the landlord is "short of money" (Sir G. H. William Beaumont, 10th Baronet of Stoughton).**

An invoice dated 1904, shows "The Midland Horticultural Works" (owned by Messenger and Co,) had a contract at Coleorton Hall to carry out various work, particularly in relation to boilers, green houses, pipe work etc. Payment for invoices was being delayed because it was stated "the landlord was short of money". Presumably this was referring to Sir George Beaumont, 10th Baronet, and it is further proof of the parlous financial situation the Beaumont estate was in.

It is important to note, that during the period when Coleorton Hall was being leased by the Abel-Smiths', the Beaumonts' clearly had a good relationship with them as numerous Beaumont functions were still held at the hall. The Beaumonts' remained landlords of the Coleorton estate still of course.

At the time the Abel-Smith's move to the hall, the 10th Baronet was Lord of the Manor. He had lived abroad for many years with his mistress Mademoiselle Gabriel Louise Liegeard. The 10<sup>th</sup> Baronet died in 1914 in Aix le Bains, France at the age of 63. On his death, his son Sir George Arthur Hamilton Beaumont, 11<sup>th</sup> Baronet, inherited the Beaumont honours and estate. This approximately coincided with the time Sir George Arthur Hamilton Beaumont, 11<sup>th</sup> Baronet, had joined the army at the age of twenty.

When Sir George Arthur Hamilton Beaumont, 11<sup>th</sup> Baronet, married Renee Northey in 1923, they went to live in "The Gables" at Coleorton, then owned by the Beaumonts, as Mrs. Abel-Smith's lease still had three years to run. Sir George and Lady Renee moved into the Hall after Mrs Abel-Smith left in the spring of 1925 to become the lessee of the Manor House, adjacent to the castle at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the former home of the Countess of Loundon.

The author is of the view that after the death of her husband Francis, in 1908 who was an "extremely" wealthy banker, Mrs. Abel-Smith, saw herself as the "Lady of the Manor", during her time at Coleorton Hall. Mrs. Abel-Smith and the children certainly played an interesting part in Coleorton History, and their son Capt. Henry Abel-Smith married into Royal circles as can be seen later. There is ample evidence that the Able-Smiths' appeared to be extremely well liked by the people of Coleorton.

**We start the period of the Abel-Smith's lease of Coleorton Hall with "The William Wordsworth Centenary Commemoration", which was recorded in an obituary for Mr. Francis Abel-Smith as being organized by him. Ironically, there was no known ancestral relationship with Wordsworth.**

# WORDSWORTH CENTENARY COMMEMORATION AT COLEORTON HALL IN 1907

THERE FOLLOWS EXTRACTS FROM NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON  
WORDSWORTH'S CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS -  
THESE ARE THE ONLY KNOWN RECORDS

From the Loughborough Monitor - July 1907

## WORDSWORTH AT COLEORTON CENTENARY COMMEMORATION PROCEEDINGS AN INTERESTING GATHERING

**Note – Pictures plus information in italics added by Samuel T. Stewart.**

One hundred years ago, the great poet, William Wordsworth, paid his first visit to Coleorton, and on Sunday and Monday this fact was commemorated by divine service in the church on Sunday and a gathering in the hall grounds on Monday.

During his first visit to Coleorton, the poet lived at the "Hall Farm" from October, 1806, to August, 1807. *This was whilst he was designing the Winter Garden for Sir George and Lady Margaret Beaumont*



**Hall Farm in 1981**

Here his friend, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was with him from December 1806 to February, 1807; there also he was visited by Sir Walter Scott. In the Hall Farm which has been occupied by Mr. T. Radford for nearly half a century (*his grave is in St. Mary's Churchyard*), is a record of the famous people who have visited it. It runs from the early days of the nineteenth century. Coleorton Hall, the seat of Sir George *Howland* Beaumont, *7th Baronet of Stoughton*, with its shady groves, its smooth lawn, its classic alters, and its antique treasures, was the haunt of many a child of genius. Sir George Beaumont, who was endowed with true artistic perception, acquired some celebrity both as a landscape painter and a collector, and extended his hospitality without stint to votaries of the brush. There, Wilkie, Lanseer and Gibson in the morning of life found a warm and kindly patron. There, Wordsworth conversed and meditated with Coleridge, and wrote some of his best poetic pieces. There, Haydon went to talk and dream, and there, Sir Walter Scott met Davy, Rogers

and Byron. The Hall Farm has been visited by Sarah Siddons, the celebrated actress, in the time of Sir George Beaumont's residence at *Hall Farm* for four years whilst the hall was being re-built (*he spent much of his time at his Grosvenor Square London residence with Lady Beaumont*). It has also been visited by Charles Dickens (*the author has found no other evidence to confirm this*).

Sir Walter Scott, the wizard of the North, there wrote part of "Ivanhoe" whilst visiting Sir George, for of those who have read the romance know, the scene of the tournament took place just a short distance away "on the memorable field of Ashby de la Zouch, one of the most gallantly contested tournaments of the age". Coleorton, indeed abounds with many memories particularly relating to the poet Wordsworth. In the Parish Church there are two tablets by Chautrey, one in memory of Sir George Beaumont referred to by Wordsworth in his "Elegiac Musings", the stanzas of which were suggested by a picture of Peele Castle which was painted by Sir George. Another was in memory of Mrs. Fermont, the inscription upon which being composed by Wordsworth. *Mrs. Fermont was the sister of Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7<sup>th</sup> Bart's wife Margaret Willes of Astrop Manor, who he married in 1778.*



**B&W copy of "Peele Castle in a Storm" by Sir G. H. Beaumont, 7<sup>th</sup> Baronet.**

On the Sunday, the sermon in the morning was preached by the Rev. Christopher William Wordsworth, Chaplain of Clifton College, and a great-grandson of the Rev. John Wordsworth.

**From the Leicester Daily Post - Tuesday July 9<sup>th</sup> 1907**

**WORDSWORTH CENTENARY CELEBRATION AT COLEORTON  
INTERESTING MEMORIES OF THE POET**

**Note – Pictures plus information in italics added by Samuel T. Stewart.**

The celebration in connection with the Wordsworth centenary, organized by Mr. and Mrs. F. Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall, which, as already reported, began on Sunday, were continued yesterday, when a large party were entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Abel-Smith, and the villagers were provided with tea and sports, and other amusements were indulged in. The arrangements were, however, somewhat marred by rain, which fell towards evening. A very large number of guests had accepted invitations amongst whom were.....*there are too many to list but well over two hundred are estimated including some Wordsworth relatives.....*

**THE HALL FARM ASSOCIATIONS**

Hard by Coleorton Hall lies the Hall Farm (the residence of Mr. and Mrs. T. Radford), which is full of relics of Wordsworth and contemporary poets, chief amongst which are six line engravings of what is known as the "Coleorton Group", being portraits of William Wordsworth, Walter Scott, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in one frame, and George Gordon Byron, Thomas Moore, and Robert Southey in another. Wordsworth lived at the Hall Farm in 1806 and 1807 at the invitation of Sir George Howland Beaumont, himself one of the finest amateur artists of the day, which accounts for his intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds. Sarah Siddons was also a visitor at Hall Farm. Mrs. Radford also had an autograph of Wordsworth, which with one of the late Queen Victoria and Prince Consort were lent to the exhibition, which was arranged in the magnificent library in the hall. Sir Walter Scott wrote the greatest part of "Ivanhoe" here, according to a statement made by Sir George Beaumont, who died in 1881 (*should be 1882*). Dorothy Wordsworth (*who was with the poet*), writing to Lady Beaumont in November 1806, speaking of the Hall Farm, said:- "We like the place more and more every day, and every day we find more comfort in having a roomy house. The sitting-room, where, by the fireside, we have seen some glorious sunsets, we far more than like - we already love it". Again - "We have not been much further than your grounds except to Ashby, where we have gone several times on business - the roads, if you don't go very far from home, are by no means as bad as I expected. For instance, the Ashby road till you come to the turnpike, is very well. Afterwards, to be sure it is shocking, and no doubt the Ashby people think we are marvelous creatures to wade through it".

Other exhibits included the original edition of "The Excursion" with the poets corrections; Wordsworth's poems, his gift to his godson, W. B. Beaumont; the official catalogue of the contents of Dove Cottage, Grasmere (*Wordsworth's home*); one of the Coleorton parish registers, containing two signatures by Rev Jno Wordsworth, 1828; a portrait of the Rev. Francis Merewether, who is mentioned in several of Wordsworth's letters; and many other interesting relics lent by members of the Wordsworth family.

Professor Knight, LL.D., of St. Andrews sent a large number of portraits and pictures to the Rev. Harold Robinson, the rector of Coleorton, to be included in the exhibition, comprising five photographs of portraits of Wordsworth, a portrait by W. Byron, Grasmere Church, Wordsworth's grave at Cockermouth, Dove Cottage, and Heidelberg Castle, by Dorothy Wordsworth, when visiting the Rhine with her father and Coleridge in 1828; the walk in the gardens behind the house at Cockermouth,

where Wordsworth and Dorothy were born; seven engravings from water-colour drawings, by J. MacWhirter, of places associated with Wordsworth; other portraits of Wordsworth, his wife, sister, daughter etc., and a book of MSS, of Wordsworth Coleridge and Southey. Professor Knight also wrote a study and a eulogy of the poet, which was read by the Rev. Harold Robinson to the guests in the picture gallery, where also Miss Elizabeth Wordsworth, principle of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, gave an address, which, with the professor's paper, showed that Wordsworth was the poet of humanity as well as of nature.

#### **ADDRESS BY THE BISHOP OF LEICESTER**

The Bishop of Leicester gave an address to the company assembled at tea on the lawn. He said that he believed most of them were in church on the previous evening when he had an opportunity of saying something about the poet himself. This commemoration was a very unusual thing. There were not many places that had a connection with great men, and when there was a connection, it did not seem at all suitable that it should be forgotten, as they were apt to be. He could imagine that the young people of Coleorton would remember that day for the rest of their lives. It would set them thinking of Wordsworth, and his (the bishop's) belief was that there were very few of our great poets who were better worth thinking about than he was. Among the lessons he taught them was of value and interest in every human life. No one ever took more interest than Wordsworth did in everybody that he came across, no matter what his condition might be. Even a beggar on the road was of interest to him! He never saw a human being but what his heart went out to him, and he found something in him that was worth thinking about. "Peter Bell" was not a model character at all, but Wordsworth felt there was something in him. There was a tale about a Coleorton man and he (the bishop) would be glad to know whether it could be traced. Whilst walking between the Hall Farm and the hall, Wordsworth used to repeat his verses in rather a loud voice, and he discovered that a Coleorton man used to walk after him and listen to what he was saying, picked up a good many of his lines, and used to repeat them. When the poet heard of this some years later after, he sent the man a copy of his poems, and hoped he would recognize some of the lines. "I wonder" said the bishop, "if that copy is in Coleorton now?" It would be well worth while, he proceeded, to make enquiries about it. There was a reference by the poet also to a Coleorton man named Mitchell. (a voice; There is no Mitchell in the parish now). This man was a watchman in whom Wordsworth was interested. He told Wordsworth the tale about the seven whistlers and of "Gabriell's Hounds". "I wonder" said the bishop, "if anything is known about that?" The idea is that a man was hunted by his own hounds, but as to the seven whistlers, he believed that the story was well known, although he did not know if anyone had heard them. He did not know what a better lesson could be taught than to learn to find interest in all that there was about us, and to believe that there was something well knowing in every human being they met. His Lordship concluded an interesting address by an expression of exceeding sorrow that Mr. F. A. Abel-Smith was unable to be present due to illness (*he died in 1908*), a sorrow which was, he was sure, shared by all. (Hear, Hear). It deprived him of the pleasure of making Mr. Abel-Smith's acquaintance. (Applause). The Rev. H. Robinson, in a few remarks, thanked the bishop for his address, and especially for his references to Coleorton.



## CONTINUATION OF THE ABEL-SMITHS' PERIOD OF RESIDENCE AT COLEORTON HALL.

*Even though the Abel-Smiths were members of the upper class society, Mrs. F. Abel-Smith was very much a voice for good in the community. She was involved in numerous charitable functions, and was clearly well known for her good work in the locality and wider area. There are many newspaper reports that refer to her good work and generosity but they are too numerous to include here, however, a small selection has been included. She was also invited to open numerous events. They did excellent work in promoting the "Coleorton and District Horticultural Society" and before his death Mr. F. Abel-Smith was the president. Large events were organised at the hall and dinners were held at the Beaumont Arms. The number of entrants for vegetable competitions etc were numerous from all around the county.*

### **Leicester Daily Post - Thursday 21 December 1905**

The Quorn Hounds met at Coleorton on Saturday morning. It was a beautiful morning, and there was a large field. The usual hospitality was extended by Mr. F. Able-Smith. of Coleorton Hall, and hounds and huntsmen then moved off to Spring Wood. Among the company were the Master, Captain Forester. the Misses Abel-Smith (Coleorton Hall), Miss Bellasis, Mr. and Mrs. Paget, Mr. J. D. Craddock, Major Tennant, Captain Pennington, Mr. F. Whetstone, Mr. O. Worthington, the Rev. H. E. Worthington, Mr. J. Harriman, Dr. and Mrs. Burkitt, Mr. F. Jesson. Mr. Shields, Mr. R. O. Crewmen, Mr. J. Shepherd, and others.

A fox was soon found in Spring Wood. For a time "Bernard" kept his pursuers in the vicinity of the wood, and ultimately led off in the direction of Lount, where he was lost returning to Coleorton, a second fox was found, and he gave the hounds a good run in the direction of Ravenstone, where he also was lost.

### **Coalville Times - Friday 19 January 1906**

#### **ASHBY BOARD OF GUARDIAN - WORKHOUSE**

**MASTER'S REPORT.** The workhouse master (Mr. Blake) reported the receipt of cards for the inmates from Mrs Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall.—A vote of thanks was passed to Mrs. Abel-Smith. Mr. Blake also reported that three children named Curtis of Coalville were admitted to the home on Friday on an overseer's order, **the parents having been sent to prison for five months for neglect.**

### **Coalville Times - Friday 02 March 1906**

#### **TO RELIEVE THE MONOTONY**

Mrs. Pratt suggested that an invitation be given to Mrs. Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall. to visit the Workhouse when she thought fit, with the view of teaching the old inmates certain things in which they could pass their time and thus relieve the monotony. While in Nottinghamshire, Mrs. Abel-Smith did excellent work at the Basford Union and she said she would be glad to visit the Ashby Workhouse if invited. Mr. T. Radford said he would second it and thought it would be a very good thing. Mr. Adcock said it was a new thing and they did not know how it might come into collision

with the regulations of the house. He thought notice of motion should be given. Mrs. Pratt said she should be pleased to give notice.

**Leicester Daily Post - Friday 30 November 1906**

**COLEORTON.**

**For Waifs and Strays.—**

By the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. F. Abel-Smith, a drawing-room meeting in support of the Church of England Society for Waifs and Strays was held at Coleorton Hall, on Wednesday. Invitations were sent out to the neighbouring villages, and there was a large company present, including Mrs. and Miss Booth (Gracedieu Manor), Mrs. Jno. Martin and Miss Martin (Charley Hall), Mrs. W. A. Musson, hon secretary for Ashby district and for the Children's Union, Mrs. Barber (Ravenstone Hospital), Revs. H. Robinson (Coleorton), J. H. Bailey (Swannington), A. J. Meakin (Breedon), and C. H. D. Moore (Hugglescote). The chair was taken by the Rector of Coleorton.—The Rev. Archibald Nicol was present as a deputation from the society, and gave an interesting address on the useful work being done to reclaim and make good citizens, many who would probably otherwise gradually drift into a life of crime. If they had more funds at their disposal he thought they would make each diocese in the kingdom a separate district, so as to better carry out the society's work. There were two homes in his section, one at Stoneygate, Leicester, for boys, and the other, which had recently been opened at Kettering, for girls, out of the total of 101 homes kept going by the society. He asked those present to do what they could to help the society. A collection was taken at the close, and realised upwards of £20. Tea was afterwards served, and reception rooms thrown open to the visitors.

**Leicester Daily Post - Monday 03 December 1906**

**FROM ASHBY BOARD OF GUARDIAN MEETING - ASHBY WORKHOUSE**

.....Master's Report - The Master reported the receipt of tobacco, buns, shawls etc., for the inmates from Mrs. F. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall to whom the thanks of the board were given.....

**Melton Mowbray Mercury & Oakham & Uppingham News - Thursday 22nd August 1907**

**OUTING FOR WORKHOUSE INMATES**

In connection with the "Brabazon" scheme instituted at Ashby workhouse by Mrs. F. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall, a number of the inmates were taken on Tuesday on the light railway for a trip to Barton where they had tea. They were accompanied by the matron (Mrs. Blake), Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. German, Miss Ison and Miss Isable Hastings. There were 21 children, 11 men, and 14 women, and the trip was greatly enjoyed.

**THE DEATH OF MR. FRANCIS ABEL-SMITH**

**Leicester Chronicle – March 28<sup>th</sup> 1908**

**Death** - Mr. F. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall, Ashby de la Zouch, died on Friday afternoon at Bournemouth where he had resided with his family during the winter. He had been in failing health for some time. He was head of the firm of "Smith, Payne

and Smith's", bankers, and also honorary colonel of the Nott's Hussars. He had resided at Coleorton Hall for four years. The deceased gentleman leaves a widow, three sons and two daughters. While residing at Coleorton Hall, Mr. Able-Smith organized a "Wordsworth Celebration" in honour of the poet's association with Coleorton.

## **THE WILL OF MR. FRANCIS ABEL-SMITH**

**Leicester Chronicle & Leicestershire Mercury –  
Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup> 1908**

Will of Mr. F. Abel-Smith of Coleorton  
Estate of Half a Million Pounds

The gross value has been sworn as £541,846 11s 6d of the personal estate of Mr. F. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall, Ashby de la Zouch, director of "The Union of London and Smith's Bank Ltd".

## **A HIGH SOCIETY WEDDING AT ST.MARY'S CHURCH WITH RECEPTION AT COLEORTON HALL**

**MR. EDGAR HUTTON AND MISS VERA CHEDWYND-  
STAPYLTON.**

**Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News - Thursday  
15 July 1909**

The wedding of Mr. Edgar William Hutton and Miss Vera Chedwynd-Stapylton was solemnised at Coleorton Church on Wednesday. The bridegroom is the only son of the late Colonel Edmund Bacon Hutton, 1st Royal Dragoons, and the late Lady Katherine Hutton, of Blidworth Dale, Notts, and grandson of the late Earl of Charleville, whilst the bride is the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Chedwynd Stapylton, of Weybridge, Notts. The picturesque environments of Coleorton Hall were enhanced by tasteful decorations, and by the kindness of Mrs. F. Abel Smith. A large number of tickets of admission to the grounds and church were issued. Fortunately the weather was fine before and during the ceremony, and hundreds of spectators lined the carpeted awning from the hall to the church to see the bridal procession. Under the direction of Mr. Wilson, the pretty church was lavishly adorned with lilies of the valley, mounted amongst the twining smilacae, which also encircled the pillars, whilst orchids were banked on the window sills, and the pulpit and font were exquisitely dressed with rare flowers. A band stationed on the lawns playing a wedding march announced the approach of the bride, whose girlish beauty was admired as she entered the church with her father, who afterwards gave her away. The bridegroom was accompanied by Mr. Miles Selby-Smyth, of the Rifle Brigade. The officiating clergy were the Rev. Canon Chedwyne Stapylton, grandfather of the bride, and the Rev. H. Robinson, rector of Coleorton. The service was choral, and included the hymns, "Lead us, Heavenly, Father," and "O perfect love." The bride wore a simple Princess robe, with long train of exquisitely soft satin brilliant. The bodice was draped fiche fashion, with soft crepe chiffon and pearl embroidery. The collarless transparent yoke was of fine lace, and the tight sleeves of chiffon and lace. A wreath of orange blossoms on her head was covered with a beautiful old veil of tulle, powdered with pearls and edged with exquisite Limerick

lace, lent by Lady Emily Howard Bury, the bridegroom's aunt. The bridesmaids were Miss Dorothy Chedwynd Staylton and Miss Grace Chedwynd Stapylton (sisters of the bride) , Miss Madeline Abel-Smith, Miss Ella Ohetwynd-Stapylton, Miss Helen Chetwynd Stapylton, Miss Violet Abel-Smith (cousins of the bride), and Miss Dorothy Gordon (niece of the bride), and Miss Margery Bacon (cousin of the bridegroom). The gowns of the grown-up bridesmaids were of pale shell pink & charmeuce mounted over taffeta under dresses, and made after a picture by Romney, having pretty fichus of pink chiffon de sole edged with lace, quaint belts on which were worked roses, and the old-fashioned puffed sleeves encircled twice with wreaths of roses. The children's dresses were of soft white muslin, with little quaint yokes of Valenciennes done into squares, old-fashioned fichus of insertion of lace and full gathered skirts, with little ruched flounces over silk underskirts, the shell pink colour repeating itself in waistbands, buckles, and sashes. The bridesmaids' presents were pendants of pink crystal net in diamonds, and they had bouquets of pink Madame Chesney ruse. The pages who bore the bride's train were Master Alexander Abel Smith. (her cousin) and Master Edward Hutton (the cousin of the bridegroom). The honeymoon in to be spent in Pans and the Austrian Tyrol. The bride went away in a dress of delicate blue chiffon voile, made as a draped Princess gown, with embroidery of the same, and yoke and half-sleeves of white lace. She wore a large black picture hat, trimmed with long blue feathers, and a biscuit coloured Shantung travelling cloak. A reception was held at Coleorton Hall. The guest list was far to long to be recorded here.....

**THE WEDDING IN LONDON OF  
MR HARRY TABOR & MISS MADELEINE ABEL-SMITH  
FOLLOWED BY A CELEBRATION RECEPTION AT  
COLEORTON HALL FOR THE VILLAGERS**

**Leicester Chronicle & Leicestershire Mercury –  
Saturday June 14<sup>th</sup> 1913**

The following is a synopsis only of the newspaper article, as the content was far too large to include all of it.

**MARRIAGE OF MISS MADELEINE ABEL-SMITH  
FASHIONABLE WEDDING IN LONDON (11th JUNE)**

Miss Madeleine Abel-Smith and Mr. Harry Tabor were married at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, London, before a large congregation which included many notable people.

Mrs. Francis Abel-Smith held a reception at 9, Chelsea Embankment, S.W. The house is picturesquely situated, overlooking the Thames, with a view of Battersea Park. It formerly belonged to "The Marquis of Ripon". The guests numbered several hundreds. The floral decorations were carried out by Mr. H. Wilson of Coleorton Hall Gardens (*Head Gardener*).

**A number of Ashby and Coleorton residents left Ashby by the 8.46 a.m. train to attend the wedding. They were provided with luncheon by the kindness of Mrs. Abel-Smith at the St. Pancras Hotel, and afterwards went on a motor tour through London before arriving at the church. Subsequently, they were entertained at Mrs. Abel-Smith's town residence (Princess Gate, Kensington) and went on a second motor tour, ending at St. Pancras, where tea was served before departing to Ashby**

## **Leicester Chronicle - September 20th 1913**

### **Wedding reception at Coleorton Hall – villagers entertained**

By invitation of Mrs Madeleine Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall, between 600 and 700 residents of the villages assembled in the beautiful grounds of her residence on Saturday, to celebrate the wedding of Mr and Mrs Harry Tabor. It will be remembered that the marriage of "Miss Madeline" (as Mrs Smith's daughter was known in the villager's homes) to Mr. Harry Tabor, of Ashted, Surrey, took place at St. Peters', Eaton Square, in June, and on Saturday, Mr and Mrs Tabor, made their first appearance together amongst the people, and received a very hearty welcome.

Three large marquees were erected on the lawns, in which tea was provided. The "Coalville Coronation Band" played selections meanwhile, and a troupe of "Peirrots" gave several performances, whilst hundreds of children made merry in the grounds. Mrs Abel Smith extended a greeting to everyone, and with her friends, visited the tables whilst the tea was in progress. The house party included – Mr and Mrs Harry Tabor, Miss Violet Smith, Mr. Henry Abel-Smith, Mr Alex Abel-Smith, Lady Maud Hastings, Viscount Tamworth, Lady Jean Shirley, Lady Phillida Shirley, Mrs Phillimore, the Rev. R and Mrs Fawkes, Mr. E. Seymour, Mrs Goodman of Park Hatch, Mrs Marjorie Goodman, Misses Irene and Marjorie Stewart, and Miss Cable.

During the evening, Mr Harold Robinson, Rector of Coleorton, said that this was a very special occasion, and he desired to say how grateful they all were to Mrs. Smith for her many kindnesses and at the same time to wish Mr and Mrs Tabor long life and happiness (applause).

Mr. George Beckworth, the oldest inhabitant, cordially endorsed what had been said, and he added that he hoped Mr and Mrs Tabor would live together for 50 years, "the same he had with Mrs Beckworth" (laughter) – Mr. H. Cuthbert also joined in the expression of good wishes.

Mr. Tabor said he was very glad of the opportunity of meeting them all and of thanking them for the magnificent present they gave his wife on their marriage. He hoped to see a great deal of them in the future, of those with whom his wife had been so closely associated, and he hoped that the kind feeling towards her which she prized so dearly would be extended to himself. He was sincerely grateful also to Mrs. Smith for the great kindness she had always shown him (applause).

Mr. E. Seymour responded for Mrs. Abel-Smith, saying how deeply grateful she was for the kindly expressions made towards her and her family. A beautiful garden was a great possession, but its beauty and enjoyment were enormously enhanced by the presence of hundreds of happy faces, and he was sure Mrs. Smith was never so happy as when her people were around her.

There was a display of fireworks at night.

## **Leicester Chronicle – October 4<sup>th</sup> 1913**

### **Worthington – Opening of the new parish rooms – On Saturday,**

Mrs. F. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall, opened the parish room, the Rev. H. B. Green presiding at the gathering. Mr. J. G. Shield of Isley Walton, he said, had generously given the land, and when the framework had been erected, they came to a standstill, because they had not the money to complete the work, but Mrs. Abel-Smith came to the assistance, defraying the expense, and at a later date, brought them 100 chairs! – A hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mrs. Abel-Smith.

Mrs. Abel-Smith then formally opened the doors, and entered the building. – Tea and a concert followed.



## **Leicester Chronicle – September 5<sup>th</sup> 1914**

Mrs. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall, has organized a women's working party, and they meet for work on the lawn of Coleorton Hall. On Tuesday, Mrs Abel-Smith had with her, Lady Maude Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Kathleen Hastings, Viscount Hastings, Mr & Mrs Harry Tabor, Rev. H. and Mrs Robinson, Rev. H. and Mrs Green, Miss Seymour and others. Five of the employees of Mrs. Abel-Smith have joined the new army.

## **Coalville Times - Friday August 6th 1915 (Issue 1222) Page 3**

### **WOUNDED SOLDIERS AT COLEORTON HALL**

#### **V.C.'S DRAMATIC MEETING WITH RESCUED MAN**

About 400 wounded soldiers in Leicester and county hospitals had an outing on Saturday, arranged by the Leicestershire Automobile Association. It was intended to visit Beaumanor, but the death of Mrs Perry Herrick necessitated a change in the arrangements and Mrs F. Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall, placed her grounds at the disposal of the promoters. Over a hundred cars, several of which were driven by ladies, were lent for the occasion and the route taken was via Loughborough and Gracedieu. The villagers of Coleorton gave the wounded soldiers a splendid reception, many displaying flags and cheering the men as they passed, while some ladies threw cigarettes to the Tommies. In the beautiful grounds of Coleorton Hall, associated with Wordsworth, the company spent a most enjoyable afternoon, the weather being beautifully fine.

Amongst those present at Coleorton were Mrs Abel-Smith, Countess Ferrers, Lady Joan Shirley, Lady Maude Hastings, Lady Hon. Mrs Skipworth, the Hon. Dorothy Maude, Miss Violet Abel-Smith, Miss Isabel Hastings, Mr and Mrs Evelyn Seymour, Mr and Mrs Radford, Mr and Mrs St. Quentin, the Rev. and Mrs H. Robinson, the L. H. Wellesley Wesley, Mr Michael Wesley, Mr Henry Abel-Smith, and Mr Alex Abel-Smith.

Whilst the men were recalling their exploits of the past few months a dramatic meeting occurred. Private Buckingham, V.C., the modest and fearless life saver of the 2nd Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, unexpectedly saw for the first time since he performed his deed of bravery at Neuve Chapelle on March 12th, one of the men he rescued under fire. It was his gallantry in regard to this particular man that was so much taken into consideration when it was decided to award the former Countesthorpe Cottage Homes boy the coveted V.C.

The rescued soldier, Corporal W. Tarry, "A" Company, 2nd Leicesters, had for a long time keenly desired to express his deep sense of obligation to the V.C. hero, and to whole heartedly congratulate him on the King's high recognition of the service rendered, but it had hitherto been impossible for him to do so. Corpl. Tarry was taken from the Base Hospital to Coleorton from the Charnwood Convalescent Home on Saturday, and he had not the slightest idea that Private Buckingham would be included in the company. It was whilst Tarry was making the best use of a pair of crutches – he was shot through the thigh – that the men met. Immediately they recognised each other, but for the moment neither spoke. Their vivid memories had temporarily got the better of them, but when they did speak it was one long stream of mutual congratulation.

Tea was served in a marquee on the grounds, and a concert, arranged by Mr G. W. Appleby, was gone through, the artists being Miss Edith Holloway, Mrs M. E. Wood, Mr J. Goddard, Mr H. Appleby, and Mr Ian McKensie. The Borough of Leicester Club and Institute Silver Prize Band, conducted by Mr S. Brown, also rendered a number of items.

At the close Councillor P. L. Baker expressed the thanks of all concerned to Mrs Abel-Smith for entertaining them. He mentioned that it was originally intended to go to Mrs Percy Herrick's at Beaumanor, but unfortunately owing to that lady's illness and subsequent death, the idea had to be abandoned. Whilst they deplored Mrs Perry Herrick's death, they admired the spirit of Mrs Abel-Smith, who, when told of the dilemma they were all in, said, "Bring them all here."

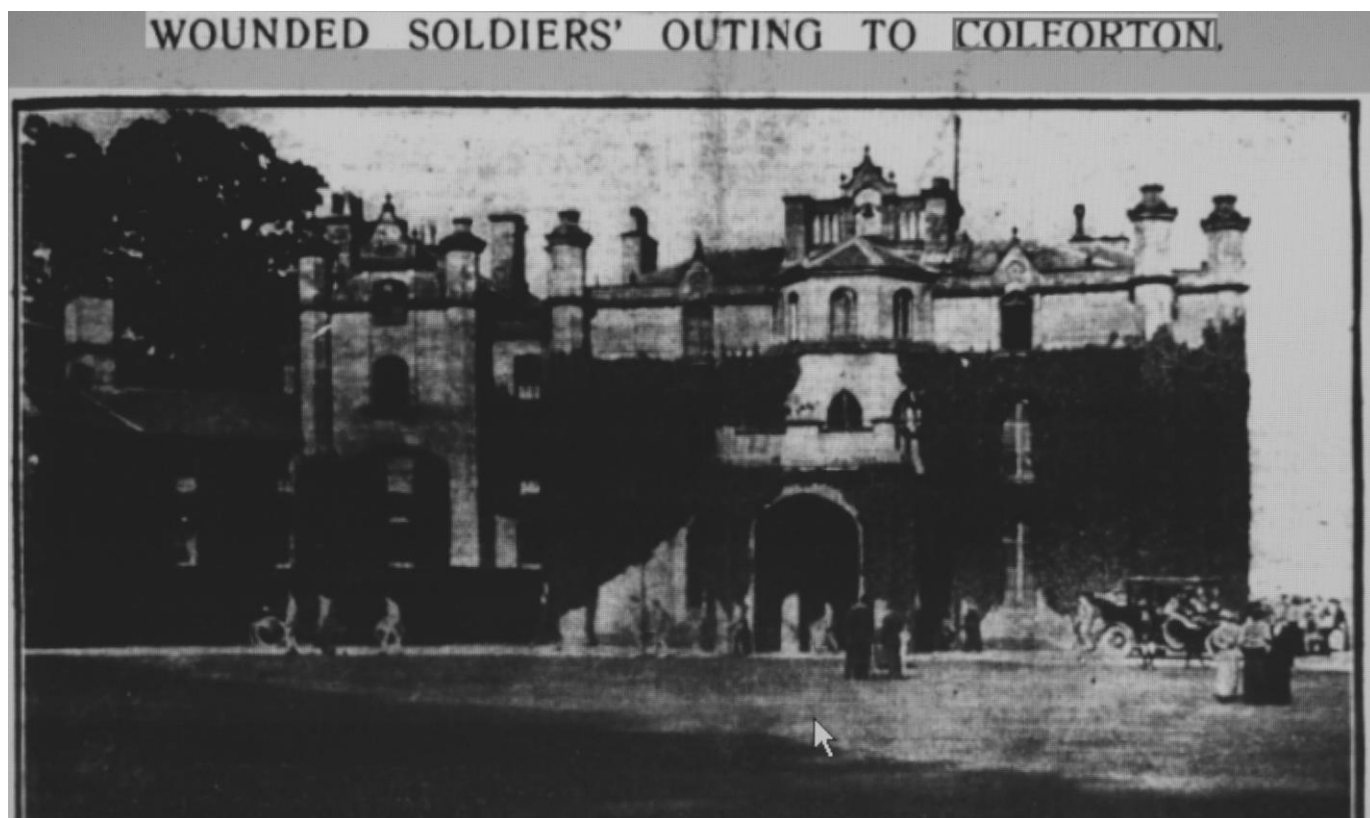
Cheers and musical honours were accorded Mrs Abel-Smith, who, in reply, said she needed no thanks. Mrs Perry Herrick was dreadfully distressed when she found that she could not entertain them, but she was so pleased when she knew they were going to Coleorton. Mrs Perry Herrick was a very charitable lady and she knew of no one who would be more missed.

The return journey was via Whitwick, Copt Oak and Bradgate.

### **The Illustrated Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 24th June 1916**

#### **WOUNDED SOLDIERS OUTING TO COLEORTON**

A striking photograph of Coleorton Hall, Nr. Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the stately home of Mrs. Abel-Smith who on Saturday last, entertained 200 wounded soldiers taken out from Leicester by the Automobile Club.



**Continued over page**



A striking photograph of Coleorton Hall, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the stately home of Mrs. Abel Smith, who on Saturday last generously entertained 200 wounded heroes, taken out from Leicester by the Automobile Club. Coleorton Hall is the seat of the Beaumont family, and was built by a former baronet, Sir George Beaumont, in 1805. Surrounded by beautifully kept grounds it commands a magnificent view of Charnwood Forest. The poet Wordsworth was a frequent visitor here, and memorials to him and to Sir Joshua Reynolds are objects of interest in the gardens. Beneath is a photograph of the members of the Leicester Club and Institute Band who played for the wounded soldiers at Coleorton Hall. In the centre is Councillor P. L. Baker, who organised the excursion.

**The Leicester Club & Institute Band who played for the wounded soldiers**

**The illustrated Leicester Chronicle - Saturday December 16th 1922**

**ENGAGEMENT OF MISS V. ABEL-SMITH OF COLEORTON HALL**

Miss Violet Abel-Smith, youngest daughter of the late Mr. F. Abel-Smith and of Mrs. Abel-Smith of Coleorton, whose engagement to Mr. Hugh Alastair Hamilton Fraser is announced. Miss Abel-Smith is captain of the Coleorton Girl guides, and has also started a troop at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Mr. Hugh A. H. Fraser is the son of Sir Hugh and Lady Fraser of Stromeferry, Ross-Shire, and 43, Linden Gardens, London, W. and is a member of the Fraser Clan.

Engagement of Miss V. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall.

Miss Violet Abel-Smith, youngest daughter of the late Mr. F. Abel-Smith, and of Mrs. Abel-Smith, of Coleorton Hall whose engagement to Mr. Hugh Alastair Hamilton Fraser is announced. Miss Abel-Smith is captain of the Coleorton Girl Guides, and has also started a troop at Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Mr. Hugh A. H. Fraser. He is the son of Sir Hugh and Lady Fraser of Stromeferry, Ross-shire, and 43, Linden Gardens, London, W. and is a member of the Fraser Clan.

Champion Bullo

### **Nottingham Evening Post – November 13<sup>th</sup> 1923**

A two day bazaar was opened at Loughborough yesterday by Mrs. Abel-Smith of Coleorton Hall, to wipe off the debt on the restoration of Holy Trinity Church, which was partly destroyed by fire in 1918.

### **Nottingham Evening Post – August 4<sup>th</sup> 1924**

The grounds of Coleorton Hall were lent by Mrs. F Abel-Smith, on Saturday, for the annual fete in aid of The Leicester County and Coleorton and Swannington Nursing Associations, which was opened by Lady Ferrers.

**Supplementary information** - *It is clear to the author, that although Mrs Abel-Smith was leasing and living at the Hall, the Beaumonts had maintained a close relationship with her. The hall and grounds were still used by the Beaumonts' for at least three major events before Mrs. Abel-Smith moved to the Manor House adjacent to Ashby Castle, previously occupied by the Countess Loudon.*

*Sir George Arthur Hamilton Beaumont, 11th Baronet of Staunton and Lady Beaumont moved back into the hall to take up his seat again as Lord of the Manor by the middle of 1925 in time for his son's first birthday anniversary as reported in the Nottingham Evening Post -Sept 26th 1925.*

*As early as 1919, Sir George held a large party for his tenantry in Coleorton. An extract from the photograph of that event is shown below, with Sir George and his mother on his left hand side in the centre. The Lady Dowager went to live at "Swannington House" before the Abel Smiths occupied the Hall, as a result of her husband the 10<sup>th</sup> Baronet deserting her. The Abel Smiths also hired out the hall & grounds for notable weddings.*



**Extract from the landscape picture entitled "Coleorton Tenants Entertained by Sir George Beaumont" – August 16<sup>th</sup> 1919. Sir George is in the centre with his mother to his left.**

## **MRS. ABEL-SMITH'S LEAVING PRESENTATION AT COLEORTON SCHOOL ON 23RD MARCH 1925**

**Leicester evening Mail - Tuesday 24th March 1925**

### **COLEORTON'S GIFT PARISHIONERS FAREWELL TO MRS. F. ABEL-SMITH**

\*

### **RECORD OF KINDNESS**

After occupying Coleorton Hall for nearly 21 years, Mrs. F. Able-Smith is leaving for Ashby-de-la-Zouch, having taken the Manor House there, and as a token of affection and esteem, the parishioners of Coleorton last evening presented Mrs. F. Abel-Smith with a beautiful silver rose bowl and sugar sifter, for which nearly all the villagers had subscribed.

The event took place in the school, and there was a large attendance. The Rector presided, and the presentation was made by Mr. H. M. Cuthbert, who said it was a painful duty, though at the same time a pleasant one. During all the time that Mrs. Abel-Smith had lived amongst them, she had devoted herself to making others happy and her good work had not been confined to Coleorton, but everywhere in the district one heard nothing but praise for Mrs. Abel-Smith and her many kindnesses. They had been blessed in Coleorton in having such a lady living amongst them for so long and she had endeared herself to them all, and it was with the deepest regret that they met to say goodbye. They hoped that she would be spared for many years to carry on the good work with which she had been associated.

The inscription on the rose bowl was - "Presented to Mrs. Abel-Smith, on her leaving Coleorton, as a token of respect and affection of her neighbours and friends in the parish., March 1925.

Little Miss Sheila Stacey, on behalf of the day school teachers presented to Mrs. Abel-Smith a beautiful album containing all the names of the subscribers.

### **HAPPY YEARS**

Mrs. Abel-Smith in reply, thanked them very much and said she would treasure those beautiful gifts, which would be handed down to members of her family. It would always be a reminder of the happy years spent at Coleorton. It was a sore trial to leave this beautiful place, the only home that three of her children ever rememberd. It was 21 years on April 14th since they came there. She felt that her lines had fallen in pleasant places, and she had everything in the world to make her happy. She had been wonderfully helped by the kindness of them all. She regarded Coleorton as the most wonderful place in the world, and was sorry to leave it.

Mr. Alex Abel-Smith also spoke acknowledging the kind references to himself and other members of the family.

Coleorton Hall is associated with Wordsworth, the poet having often stayed there, and a monument to his memory stands in the hall grounds. The hall has for centuries been the ancestral home of the Beaumont family. Sir George and Lady Beaumont are shortly to take up residence there.

**MRS F. ABEL-SMITH (MADELEINE ST. MAUR)  
LEAVES COLEORTON FOR THE MANOR HOUSE  
AT ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH MARCH 1925.**

**Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 28th March 1925  
"FAIRY GODMOTHER"**

Regret is freely expressed in the Coleorton district at the departure of Mrs. F. Abel - Smith from Coleorton Hall. Mrs. Abel-Smith is held in high esteem by all in the village and the neighbourhood, and has been termed "The Fairy Godmother of Coleorton", a title which she richly deserves.

The Coleorton folk have one consideration, and that is that Mrs. Abel-Smith is not leaving the district. She has taken the Manor House at Ashby-de-la-Zouch (*adjacent to the castle*) the former home of the Countess of Loundon.

**Leicester Daily Mercury - Wednesday 13 January 1926**

This afternoon Mrs. Abel-Smith, of the Manor house, Ashby, opened the new wing of the Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Kilwardby Street, Institute in the presence of a large and enthusiastic assembly. Nominally, the institute is the property of the Wesleyan body, but the club is quite non-sectarian, and payment of 1s. a year as acknowledgment money is the rent charged. Mr. J. H. Sutton, J.P. who was the prime mover in the erection of the institute, presided at the opening ceremony. A tea followed the speechmaking, and a whist drive is being held this evening.

**Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 04 February 1930**

I am sure all our readers will join with me in wishing Mrs. F. Abel-Smith, of the Manor House, Ashby, a speedy recovery. Mrs. Abel-Smith has been an active worker for the Conservative cause and also for the Church. During the latter part of last summer Mrs Abel-Smith had to withdraw all public duties and go into a private nursing home owing to a serious illness. I am now informed officially that Mrs. Abel-Smith has left the nursing home and set sail on Friday, January 31st, for South Africa to recuperate. I also understand that she has a son in South Africa who holds a very important position, and that she hopes to see him.



**Ashby Manor House**



## **LADY MADELEINE ABEL-SMITH MOVES TO BEAUMANOR, WOODHOUSE EAVES BY 1931**

By 1931, Mrs. Abel-Smith had returned from her recuperation in South Africa, left the Manor House at Ashby and taken out a lease on Beaumanor, Woodhouse Eaves, owned by Mr. Herrick of the well known and respected Herrick family.

**Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 01 September 1931**

### **DATE OF WEDDING NOT FIXED**

Lady May Cambridge, daughter of the Earl of Athlone and Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, left Beaumanor, Woodhouse Eaves, yesterday, where she has been staying with Mrs. Francis Abel-Smith, mother of Capt. Henry Abel-Smith, her fiancé, to rejoin her parents, who are holidaying in Brussels. During her ten days stay at Beaumanor, Lady May spent most of her time riding in the mornings, and playing tennis. Captain Abel-Smith is on Salisbury Plain for the manoeuvres, but, it is understood, he will be free from his duties there on September 19, the date on which his bride-to-be and her parents return to London. Both October 13 and October 15 have been mentioned as possible dates for the wedding, but the "Leicester Evening Mail" was informed to-day by Mrs. Abel-Smith that the exact date has not yet been axed.



**THE MARRIAGE OF  
LADY MAY HELEN EMMA CAMBRIDGE ABEL-SMITH  
(BORN PRINCESS OF TECK)**

**Photographs relating to Lady May Helen Emma Cambridge  
& Capt. Henry Abel-Smith**



**Photograph issued prior to their wedding at St. Mary's Church, Balcombe,**



**Miss May Helen Emma Cambridge  
Born Princess of Teck**



On the left Princess May as a toddler with her mother (Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone) and brother Rupert. She was the only daughter of the Earl & Countess of Athlone. On the right, Lady May's happy smile as she left St. Mary's Church, Balcombe on the arm of her husband Captain Henry Abel-Smith. She was radiant in her gown of shimmering satin and veil of Honiton lace lent by the Queen (Queen Mary), who wore it at her own wedding. The bride broke a precedent of centuries of Royal weddings by omitting the word "obey".

Lady May (formerly Miss May Helen Emma Cambridge) and cousin of the King, married Capt. Henry Abel-Smith (later to become Sir Henry) on 24 October 1931 in St. Mary's church, Balcombe, Sussex, close to the Athlone residence at Brantridge Park. **The bride was attended by four child bridesmaids; Princess Elizabeth (later to become our current Queen),** Rosemary Madeline Hamilton Fraser, Jennifer Bevan and Kathleen Alington: and eight adult bridesmaids; Hon. Imogen Rhys (daughter of Walter Rice, 7th Baron Dynevor), Lady Mary Whitley, Phyllis Seymour-Holm, Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, Princess Ingrid of Sweden, the later Princess Sibylla of Sweden, Verena Seymour (daughter of Sir Edward Seymour and granddaughter of the 4th Marquess Conyngham), and Wenefryde Tabor. The best man was Cecil Weld Forester, 7th Baron Forester of Willey Park.

In the front pew of the north side of the nave at St. Mary's church, Balcombe is a brass plate marking the spot where Queen Mary sat at the wedding of her niece, Lady May Cambridge to Captain Henry Abel-Smith of the Royal Horse Guards, on 24th October 1931. Other guests included the Prince of Wales, more members of the Royal family and many foreign royalties. Princess Elizabeth, now Her Majesty the

Queen, was a bridesmaid. The bride was the daughter of the Earl and Countess of Athlone who lived at Brantridge Park.



THE QUEEN'S GRAND-NIECE.—A new portrait of Lady May Abel Smith, formerly Lady May Cambridge, and her daughter Anne Mary Sibylla, who was born last year.



The photograph on the left shows the first daughter Anne Mary Sibylla (b. July 28<sup>th</sup> 1932). In the RH photograph at the front is the second child, son and heir, named Richard Francis (b. Oct 11<sup>th</sup> 1933) and held by the nurse with mother and father either side. At the rear are the Earl of Athlone and Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone with Mary Anne Sibylla. They had a third daughter Elizabeth Alice (b. Sept 5<sup>th</sup> 1936)

Lady May did not carry out any royal duties due to being only a distant member of the royal family. She did attend some major royal events such as the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and the wedding of Charles, Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer. At the latter event, Lady May was credited with popularising the counterweights at the back of women's necklaces to prevent the clasps from turning around, which she often wore herself on her usual pearl necklaces. Between 1958 and 1966, Sir Henry Abel Smith served as the Governor of Queensland. Lady May accompanied Henry to Brisbane, as vice-regal consort. They retired in 1975 to Barton Lodge at Winkfield in Berkshire, England. Lady May died one year after her husband. They are both buried at the Royal Burial Ground, Frogmore, not far from Windsor Castle. Her funeral was held at St George's Chapel, Windsor on 9 June 1994. It was attended by the Duke of Gloucester and Princess Alexandra, representing the Royal Family.

#### **Nottingham Evening Post – November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1931**

Lady May Abel-Smith, and her husband, Capt. Henry Abel-Smith, have promised to attend a dance in the Coleorton village school on Wednesday, promoted by the local lodge of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows. Lady May will present the prizes in dancing competitions. Coleorton is the Leicestershire village where Capt. Abel-Smith spent much of his early life.



## **A DAUGHTER BORN AT KENSINGTON PALACE**

**Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 29 July 1932**

Lady May Abel-Smith, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Athlone and wife of Captain Henry Abel-Smith. gave birth to a daughter at Kensington Palace, the residence of her parents, last night. Both mother and baby are stated to be going on well. This event is of considerable interest to Leicestershire, for Lady May spent much time at her husband's home at Beaumanor, Leicestershire. prior to her marriage last October. Lady May Abel-Smith was often to be seen hunting with the Quom Hounds and riding with her fiancé through the lanes of Leicestershire. Lady May Abel-Smith and her daughter were stated this day to be both going on well. The news of the birth of this baby has been relayed to the King and Queen on board the Royal yacht, Victoria and Albert, at Cowes. Lady May Abel-Smith, who before her marriage was Lady May Cambridge, is a niece of the Queen, and a daughter of Princess Countess of Athlone and the Earl of Athlone. Captain Abel-Smith is a son of Mrs. Francis Abel-Smith, of Princes Gate, Kensington, and Beaumanor, Woodhouse Eaves. Leicestershire, and the late Mr. Francis Abell Smith. He was aide-de-camp to the Earl of Athlone when he was Governor of South Africa and is in the Royal Horse Guards.

### **ROYAL FAMILY AT WEDDING**

The Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of York, with many other members of the Royal family, were present at the wedding, which took place in the little church at Balcombe, a village of Sussex. Lady May chose a country wedding herself, and particularly wished it to be at the Church of St. Mary's, Balcombe, where her parents have their country residence, Brantridge Park. For her marriage, the Queen lent her a very old Honiton lace veil, and the little Princess Elizabeth was numbered among her 12 bridesmaids. There were celebrations for the villagers in Leicestershire as well as in Balcombe, prior to the wedding, and a wedding eve dinner party was held at Brantridge Park. People from every part of the country journeyed to Balcombe, to witness the marriage, which claimed the interest of people all over the world.

## **ANN MARY SIBYLLA COMES TO BEAUMANOR**

**Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 30 August 1932**

### **CAPTAIN AND LADY MAY ABEL-SMITH AND A BLUE-EYED BABY**

As I rang the bell at Beaumanor, Woodhouse Eaves, to-day, the residence of Mrs. Frances Abel-Smith, I could see a large bassinette through a side window. It belonged to baby Anne Mary Sibylla, the infant daughter of Lady May and Captain Abel Smith, who arrived yesterday to spend three months at this delightful Leicestershire mansion. When the door swung open a nurse was just crossing the hall with the little mite wrapped up in a warm shawl in her arms, to be placed in the pram and taken out for her morning siesta. She was accompanied by her great aunt, Miss Seymour, Mrs. Abel-Smith's sister. I went in to look at this wonderful baby, for she is indeed wonderful, a little blue-eyed doll with just a wisp of dark hair peeping underneath a white lace bonnet with pink rosettes, and she has a beautiful skin. With gentle persuasion she smiled for the nurse and settled down snugly among lovely cosy pink and blue shawls.

Miss Seymour then took me down to the hard tennis courts where a number of the house party were. Some of them had gone to Derby races while Mr. Alexander Abel - Smith had made the journey to London. However, a very strenuous set of tennis was being played by Captain Abel-Smith and the Hon. Henry Tufton. Mrs. Abel-Smith returned with me to the house, and as we passed the front with its beautiful terraced lawns, Lady May came down the steps, it being her first appearance to-day as she had rested from her motor Journey from London yesterday. She looked extremely young and sweet in a soft blue silk frock with a cardigan coat to match. She wore no hat, and her pretty fair wavy hair was dressed in a swathing in her neck. Lady May's dog Whisky was by her side. She assured her mother-in-law that she had had an extremely good night, and her first question was: " Where is my baby?"

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**Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 13 December 1932**

**RENT ON MRS. ABEL-SMITH'S HOUSE**

The rent Mrs. Abel Smith was paying Mr. Herrick said was no rent at all. In fact, it might be said "he payed her to keep the place warm for him", he added. Mr. Herbert Bennett, of Richardson and Neville. Derby, said the agreement between Mrs. Abel - Smith and the owner was extraordinary. It was a caretaker's rent and did not reflect truly what an ordinary person would be prepared to pay. He suggested that a rental of £300 would easily be obtained. In reply to Mr. Loseby, who asked whether a house let for £500 a year before the war could not be let now for £100. Mr. Bennett said "No that is not my experience". "The market for country houses is limited" he said later. The tastes of people who rented country houses were mentioned by Mr. Bennett and he said tenants might object to the furniture and refuse to rent the house.

**REASONABLE RENT**

Mr. Brassey, addressing the Court, said Mr. Herrick was paying a substantial sum to keep his house going. In return, he was receiving a caretaker's rent in order that the house be kept up. Otherwise, would it not be better, if he sold his furniture and invested the money said counsel. "It would bring him in a greater return". Mr. Brassey stressed the fact that the rent which was being received should not be the basis upon which the assessment was made. He asked the court to decide what was a reasonable rent for Beaumanor and the assessment should rest on that figure. Mr. Joseph said the only alternative to accepting a rental of £200 a year was demotion. But £200 was £200 and it was no reason why an assessment should not be fair and proper. The appeal was allowed and the assessment reduced to £200. Costs to be taxed out of court by the Clerk of the Peace were allowed.

**Leicester Evening Mail - Monday 06 November 1933**

**CHRISTENING OF LADY MAY'S SON**

The christening of Lady May Abel-Smith's son will take place at St. Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington, at three p.m. on Saturday next, Armistice Day. Lady May, who is the daughter of the Earl of Athlone, is the Queen's favourite niece. Her husband is Captain Henry Abel-Smith, son of Mrs. Abel-Smith, of Beaumanor, Woodhouse Eaves. The boy, who was born on October 11, is to be named Richard Francis Abel-Smith. The godparents will be Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, Mrs. Francis Abel-Smith, the Earl of Athlone. and Mr. Edward Seymour. Princess Juliana will not make the Journey from Holland, but will be represented at the christening.



**Nottingham Journal - Saturday 11 November 1933**

**LADY MAY ABEL-SMITH'S SECOND CHILD**

**LADY MAY ABEL-SMITH** is showing that she has that loyalty to the past which has distinguished her parents, Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, and the Earl of Athlone. They are famous for their never-failing interest in South African affairs and their memory of people they met while they were out there. I went up to find what artist had given his work for the charity.

In a smaller and domestic way, Lady May has a similar trait. When her second child is christened next Saturday she has decided not to have the ceremony at one of the fashionable West End churches.

St Mary Abbots, Kensington, where the christening of the first child took place, is once again to be the scene. Also for sentiment's sake, she has asked Dr. Carter, the former Archbishop of Cape Town, who officiated at her wedding, to baptise the boy. He will be called Richard Francis, and Princess Juliana of the Netherlands is to be one of the godparents.

**Leicester Evening Mail - Thursday 21 December 1933**

**LADY MAY ABEL-SMITH**, accompanied by her husband, Captain Henry Abel-Smith, who are spending Christmas with Mrs. Francis Abel-Smith at Beaumanor, Woodhouse Eaves, was presented with a difficult task when she arrived at about half past ten last night at the Church Hall to judge fancy costumes. She received a splendid reception and looked charming in a gown of black with steel bead trimming at the waist line and a magnificent three-quarter evening coat of black ring velvet with an enormous white fox collar and bands on the cuffs to the elbow. It was lined with white ermine. Around her neck hung a beautiful pendant of turquoise and diamond, and her massive diamond engagement ring glittered on her finger.....

**Leicester Evening Mail - Monday 19 March 1934**

**GUIDES' BAZAAR - LADY MAY ABEL SMITH'S VISIT TO LOUGHBOROUGH**

Lady May Abel-Smith opened a bazaar at Loughborough Town Hall on Saturday, organised by Loughborough Division Girl Guides in aid of the Children's Convalescent Home, Woodhouse Eaves. A crowd of several hundred waited at the door, unaware that the lady who arrived with Mr. and Mrs. William Martin and the Rev. Arthur King, Woodhouse Eaves, was the distinguished visitor, and that she was already speaking on the platform. It was stated that Lady May Abel-Smith had made a special Journey from Windsor to perform the ceremony. - Mrs. C. H. Martin, County Commissioner, presided and was supported by the Mayor, Councillor J. S. Mart, who proposed a vote of thanks to the visitor. The Hon. Mrs. R. E. Martin, who seconded, Mr. C. B. Carryer, chairman of the Convalescent Homes Committee, and Mrs. Quilter, matron.

## **VISITS BY THE ABEL-SMITHS' TO COLEORTON**

**Leicester Evening Mail - Thursday 26th November 1931**

### **LADY MAY AT COLEORTON CHARITY DANCE**

### **CAPTAIN ABEL-SMITH RECALL BOYHOOD DAYS**

### **HEARTY WELCOME**

### **ODDFELLOWS - OFFICERS ATTEND**

The visit of Capt. Abel-Smith and Lady May Abel-Smith to Coleorton last night was an event of great interest to the villagers, to many of whom the Captain is personally known, he having spent a good portion of his boyhood days at Coleorton.

The occasion was a dance organised by the Loyal George lodge of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, the proceeds being for the juveniles summer outing fund.

Amongst those present were the Grand Master of the district, Mr. George F. Sheffield, of Coalville and Mr. Elijah Toon of Coleorton, the past provincial grand Master (see supplementary information at end).

The Bohemian Band provided a good programme, and Messrs. A. H. Choyce and Mr. J. D. Smith were M.C's.

Lady May looked charming in a dress of Princess Mary Blue Broderie Anglaise and black seal fur-lined coat with white fox collar and cuffs. She wore a single string of pearls, and had blue satin slippers to match her dress.

Mrs. F. Abel-Smith who accompanied by her son and daughter-in-law was attired in a black lace dress with brocaded coat and wore three strings of pearls. Capt. Henry Abel-Smith wore a pink hunting coat with evening dress.

### **BOUQUET PRESENTED**

The youngest Oddfellow, Alec Toon, aged four and a half years presented to Lady May a bouquet of flowers from Coleorton Hall, Capt. Henry Abel-Smith's former home.

The Grand master, Mr. G. F. Sheffield expressed a hearty welcome to the distinguished visitors. Mrs. Abel-Smith he said, was always welcome to Coleorton or anywhere in Leicestershire. She was known for her good works and the world would be better if there were more like her.

The past provincial Grand Master, Mr. E. Toon, said that the effort that night was to raise funds to take 150 boys and girls to the seaside in the summer. But for this effort these children might never see the sea.

Mrs. Abel Smith said they were very gratified to the Coleorton people, who had always been very dear to her, and it was a great grief to her when they had to leave Coleorton. It was always a pleasure to them to come and help in any small way and

she hoped the effort would be a wonderful success. She added: "I am so delighted to present my daughter-in-law to you tonight. I think you have only to look at her to see what a good wife she will be and how very fortunate my son is.

There was a common saying she went on to say, that a man was the head of a woman; but an old man once said, "I am not sure, I think the woman is the neck that twists the head, the way she wants it to go". "If Lady May is to be the neck, I think you will agree that she will twist the head in the right way", she added.

Dancing competitions then took place, Capt. Henry Abel-Smith and Lady May Abel-Smith acting as judges.. Four prizes, given by Mrs. F. Abel-Smith were awarded, the winners being:- Foxtrot, Mr. Haydn Chambers and Miss Gladys Smith; Waltz, Mr. L. Chester and Miss Irene Chester.

After Mr. Clifford had moved a vote of thanks succeeded by Mr. Bott. Capt. Abel-Smith said that on behalf of his mother, his wife and himself, he would like to thank them all for the warm welcome given to them. His wife said the judging was extreme difficult, as the standard of dancing was so high it took them a long time. The Captain said "it is a great pleasure to bring my wife here tonight to meet you all in Coleorton, where I spent most of my happiest years". In reminiscences of his boyhood days at Coleorton, he recalled that he was chosen to play "The Ugly Sister" in a performance of "Cinderella".

A pair of silver candlesticks, the wedding gift of the Coleorton people, were on view.

Mr. Victor Wileman, a Coleorton cripple, was introduced by Mrs. Abel-Smith to Lady May who chatted with him; and a young guardsman in uniform, Private Toon, had a conversation with Captain Henry Abel-Smith, who is in the Guards.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON ELIJAH TOON**



**Elijah Toon**

### **CORPOAL TOON AWARDED MILITARY MEDAL**

Corporal Elijah Toon from Coleorton was awarded the Military Medal (second only to the Victoria Cross) for his services to fellow prisoners in the Wittenberg camp during the first World War. He nursed many sick prisoners during a cholera outbreak when they received no help from their captors. Corporal Toon lived with his wife and family in Coleorton and worked at the Whitwick Colliery before the war. Corporal Toon was subsequently promoted to sergeant. Further information is available on the Coleorton heritage website under topics and families.

**Leicester Evening Mail - Wednesday 06 January 1932**

### **LADY MAY ABEL SMITH AT COLEORTON**

Captain Henry Abel-Smith and Lady May Abel-Smith were among those who attended yesterday's meet of the Quorn at Coleorton, the latter motoring with her Mother-in-Law. A capital day's sport ended on the borders of the Meynell country, about 22 miles from the kennels. Smoile Wood furnished the first pilot, and hounds ran well for Breedon Clouds Wood. It took them some 20 minutes to induce their quarry to quit the shelter of this spacious covert, but eventually he emerged at the end at which he entered, and made direct for Lady Augusta's Gorse, the scent failing between there and Staunton Harold Park after an hours gallop. Staunton Harold Spring Wood was tenantless, but a good fox was roused in South Wood. He was forced along at a fast pace all round the Staunton Harold Estate, and then set out as if for Coleorton. Short of this village, the hounds turned back by Staunton Harold Hall, and then made their way over the brook into Caulk Park. The closure was applied when the deer park was reached after a good run of 30 minutes.

**Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 28th November 1936**

### **SOCIETY AT COLEORTON**

Mrs. Alexander Abel-Smith the former Miss Peirpoint Morgan of the famous Banking House was one of the large party which her mother-in-law, Mrs. Francis Abel-Smith organised for the dance in aid of the Coleorton Friends Society at Coleorton the other evening. Of the many people present, she seemed to be the one to most thoroughly enjoy that very enjoyable event. She was absolutely thrilled, she confessed, at what was her first experience of an English village dance.

With her husband, her mother-in-law and others in the party, she was given a tremendous reception when she arrived at the tiny Coleorton school room where the dance was held. Her winning smile and delightful personality endeared her to everyone.

After being presented with a bouquet, Mrs. Abel-Smith and her husband went onto the platform to judge dancing contests. Following their adjudication, Mrs. Abel-Smith presented the prizes to the winners.

Mr. Abel-Smith expressed his appreciation of the villager's welcome in a little speech from the stage. He also said in his speech that it was a great pleasure to return to Coleorton, where his parents once lived, especially when that return was made to introduce a new member of the family to them (many cheers followed these words).

**Before they left, an invitation was extended to Mr and Mrs Abel-Smith to have coffee in the cottage of one of the women villagers. To this villagers everlasting pride, the invitation was accepted with charming enthusiasm.**

## DEATH OF MRS. MADELEINE ST. MAUR ABEL-SMITH

### COLONEL ABEL-SMITH'S MOTHER DIES

Leicester Evening Mail - Saturday 15 September 1951

The death has occurred in London of Mrs. Madeleine St. Maur Abel-Smith, widow of the late Mr. Francis Abel-Smith of Wilford House, Notts., and mother of Col. Henry Abel-Smith, formerly of Beaumanor, near Loughborough. She was 88. In 1931, when he was a captain in the Royal Horse Guards, Col. Henry Abel-Smith was married at Balcombe, Sussex, to Lady May Helen Emma Cambridge, daughter of the first Earl of Athlone and neice of Queen Mary.

It was regarded as the "wedding of the year," and was attended by the King and Queen, the then Duke and Duchess of York, Princess Elizabeth, the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales and others of the Royal house. Mrs. Madeleine St. Maur Abel-Smith was the fourth daughter of the late Rev, Henry Seymour, Rector of Holme Pierrepont, Notts. She married Mr. Francis Abel-Smith, who was High Sheriff for Nottinghamshire in 1885. He died in March 1908.

## MEMORIAL TO MRS. MADELEINE ST. MAUR ABEL SMITH (1862-1951)



**Memorial to Mrs. Madeleine St. Maur Abel-Smith (b. Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 1862 d. Sept 13<sup>th</sup> 1951).**

The photograph shows the Governor of Queensland, Sir Henry Abel-Smith, accompanied by his wife, Lady May Abel-Smith, and members of his family, unveiling a commemorative tablet to the memory of his mother, Madeleine St. Maur Abel-Smith, in Wilford Parish Church, Nottingham. The Abel-Smiths had strong connections with Wilford, and for many years lived in the Parish.