

A HISTORY OF ELVERSTON'S YARD



c. 1890 ENGRAVING

BY SAMUEL T STEWART – APRIL 2020
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PART 1

INTRODUCTION

The author is greatly indebted to James Booth Elverston who wrote the “Annals of an old English Family” published in 1894. This has provided information on the early history of Elverston’s Yard and made a significant contribution to this publication. The book is out of print but the author managed to obtain a copy via a University posting in America. The engraving on the front cover is taken from the front cover of James Booth Elverston’s book.

The following two maps are included to first establish the geography of the area for the reader,

The publication continues with the study of an important and interesting old English family who established their roots in a small area of Coleorton which subsequently evolved into what could perhaps best be described as a tiny hamlet which had a most interesting social and industrial history which most people nowadays are not aware of. The Thringstone & Coleorton Elverston family’s heritage and influence spread over a much wider area than Elverston’s Yard, Stoney Lane, Coleorton, of course, and in this publication leads to an important gravestone in Griffydham Wesleyan Methodist Cemetery and an inscription indicating a branch of the families emigrated to America.

The name of the yard was originally established as Elvaston Yard which is used in the engraving on the front cover. The spelling of the family surname varies in records (Elvaston, Elverson and Elverston for example), but for the sake of consistency we will use “**Elverston**” throughout the publication. It thought to be a corruption of the original Saxon name Aelwoldestun which became softened to Aylwaston and then Elvaston / Elverson / Elverston,

Elverston’s Yard was within an area known as “Rotten Row” which features in **PART 2**.

Coal mining was also carried out adjacent to Elverston’s Yard and it had its own Inn, named “The Old Engine Inn” at one time, both of which feature later.

PART 2

THE AREA OF ROTTEN ROW AND THE LOCATION OF ELVERSTON'S YARD

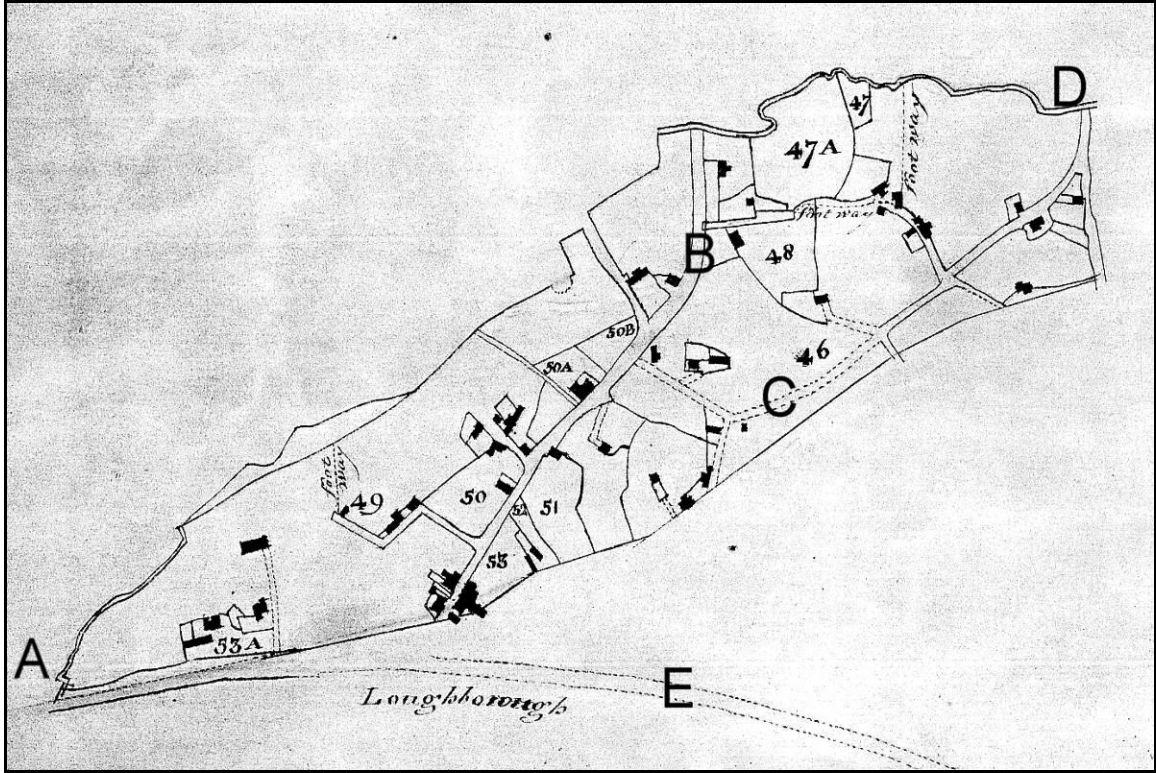
Elverston's Yard was within an area known as "Rotten Row" This was an Island within the Parish of Coleorton which was part of the Township of Thringstone till 1884, when it then became part of Coleorton Parish.

"Rotten Row" and the "Manor of Thringstone", was purchased by Joseph Boulton senior of Coleorton in 1764 for £1,600 from a Mr. Busby. Boulton gave Sir George Beaumont the opportunity to purchase it but he declined the offer only to find Boulton benefited financially from the purchase, but that is another story, covered elsewhere

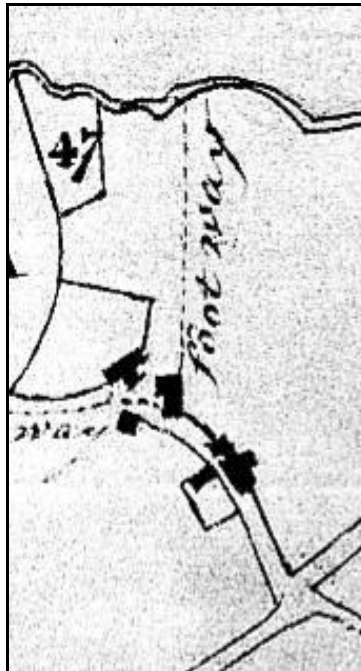
Elverston's Yard was located within this area known as "Rotten Row". It is difficult to imagine anywhere else in the parish of Coleorton which had such a varied mix of social and industrial activity as Rotten Row.

In addition to Boulton's coal mine, described later, the manufacture of many different light industry products were made in this area such as Whetstone / Oil Stones, Nails, Baubles, Hats and a range of knitted textiles, to name but a few. It would have been a really busy area and was supported socially by three Pubs over a period, Shops, a Post Office and Coleorton Methodist Chapel built in 1839. Even a first class Cricket team was established at the Beaumont Arms. All this in comparison with today, when none of the above survive.

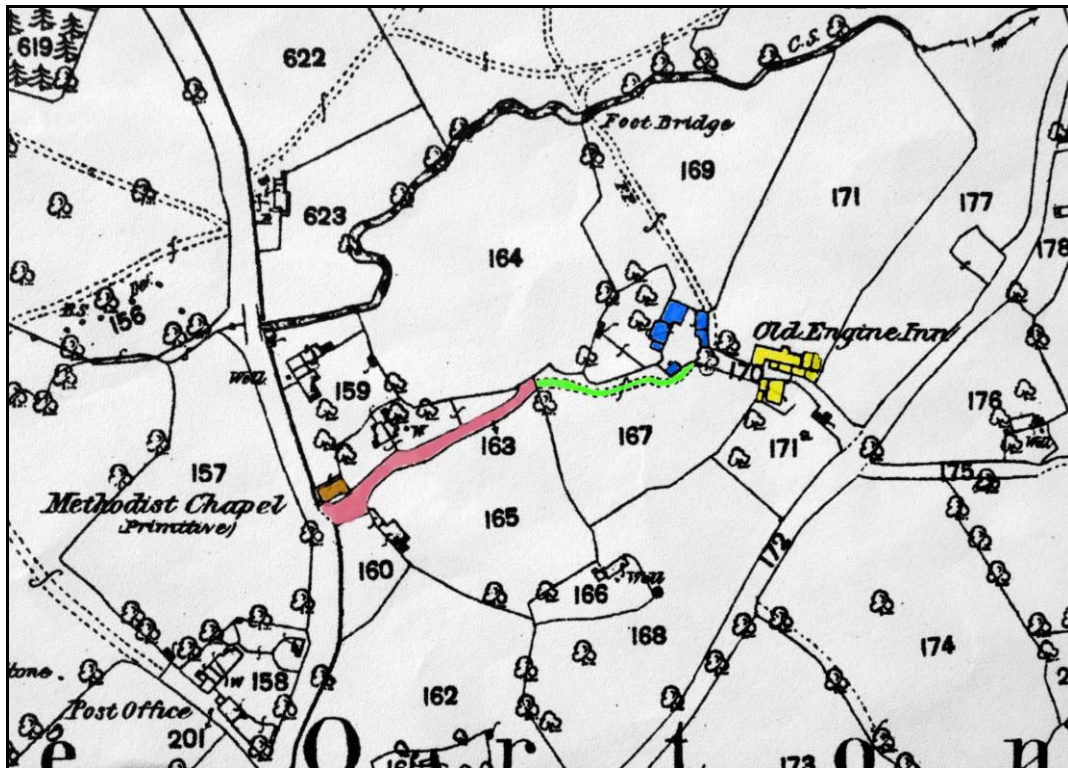
The area covered by Rotten Row, including **Elverston's Yard** is shown on the following map, which is an extract taken from the "**Thringstone and Peggs Green enclosure map dated 1807**". The key following the map will provide the reader with an idea of how it relates to the current geography of the area



A = Coleorton Fish Pond, **B** = Lower Moor Road, **C** = Stoney Lane, **D** = The Woolrooms, **E** = Loughborough Road. The brook flowing out of Coleorton fish pond is represented by the double line at the top which also defines the boundary of Worthington parish in this area.



Enlarged area of Elverston's Yard from the above map. The 3 buildings to the north can be related to the buildings coloured blue on the following 1885 O/S map



1885 PUBLISHED (1881 SURVEYED) O/S MAP

The Elverston's Yard cluster of buildings are coloured blue on the above map. When comparing the 1885 map, with the preceding 1807 map, it can be seen that a number of buildings already existed in 1807 along the short track leading to Elverston's Yard off Stoney Lane.

When the author as a boy / young man attended the old Primitive Methodist Chapel Sunday School (built 1839 & coloured brown) and later the new Primitive Methodist Chapel (built 1901), it was customary to walk via the track off Stoney Lane which bypassed several cottages (coloured yellow) before arriving at the remaining foundations of what used to be the original Elverston's Yard buildings (coloured blue). It is possible that the Elverstons' may have owned some of the buildings coloured yellow at some point.

At that time, c.1948 only the foundations of the buildings in Elverston's Yard remained, however, there were apple trees remaining in what was the orchard there, which were scumped on the way to Sunday School during the season.

The track across the field (coloured green) was referred to by the locals as "Chatter Lane" presumably because of the "Chatter gate" that existed there, prior to a stile being built for the council by the author's wife's grandfather Fred Barkby.

The trackway (coloured pink), now referred to as Chapel Lane, served two purposes, originally as an early access to Boulton's Coal mine, featured later, and subsequently providing access also to the two semi-detached properties that existed along there at that time, which were occupied by the Sheppard's in one and Minnie Stinson in the one nearest the Chapel. These are shown on the map. Minnie Stinson's garden contained a large pear tree adjacent to the Sunday School from which we tried to scump the pears causing Minnie to frequently burst into the Sunday School room to admonish the pupils. Exciting times eh?? The area including the yellow and blue buildings and the track leading to them eventually took the name of Elverston's Yard.



A CHATTER GATE

PART 3

A HISTORY OF THE ELVASTONS', ELVERSONS', ELVERSTONS' AND ELVERSTON'S YARD FROM 1650

There follows, some interesting extracts in italics, taken from the "Annals Of An Old English Family", written by James Booth Elverston, the grandson of James Elverston. Annotations have been added in blue by the author of this publication to try and help provide clarity:-

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

THE KING'S GRANT TO JOHN ELVASTON, ESQUIER.

James by Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Def., etc. To our right trustie and well-beloved Chancellor, Thomas Lord Ellsmere, our Chancellor of England greeting.

We will and command you that with our Great Seale being in your custodie you cause ore letters Patentes to be made for the in forme following.

James by the Grace of God, etc.

"To all persons to whom theis our present Letters Patentes shall come greeting. Whereas Raphe Sheldon, of Bocley, in the Countie of Worcester, Esquier, and Edward Sheldon, his son and heir apparent, by their recognisances, etc"

Then follows a highly technical description of fourteen different manors, parks, rectories, messuages and hereditaments, in the Counties of Worcester, Gloucester, Warwick and Leicester; and the process of proving, by Inquisition of the Sheriffs and a jury of the various counties, that the Sheldons are seized and possess of their properties become forfeit to the King, as heir and successor to his "deere sister Elizabeth, aforesaid," (Queen Elizabeth). It then proceeds as follows:-

[In the book on the Author's website entitled "The Development of Coal Mining in the Local Area", there is a detailed account of the Sheldon's Estates which it would be beneficial to read.](#)

Now knowe you that we in consideration for the performance of our said word and promise and at and upon the petition and humble and special appointmente and denomination of our said dear wife (Queen Anne of Denmark) of our special grace certain knowledge and mere motion have freely and absolutely given granted and assigned and by these our Letters Patentes for us our heires and successors do fully and absolutely give grant and assign to our trustie and well-beloved John Elvaston, Esquier, all and every the said manors Messuages Landes Tenements Hereditaments Leases Goodes and Chattels in the said several Inquisitions mentioned and conteigned and every part and parcel thereof and all advousons to the said Manors and premises of any of them.

"To have holde and enjoy the said manors and every part and parcel thereof to the said John Elvaston his heires executors and assigns for and during all such time and so longe as the same Manors, etc., shall or oughte to remaine in our hands without any accompt to be made for the same to us our heires or successors without any condition or revocacion....."

"Given under our Seale, and at our Palace of Westminster, the thirteenth day of Maye, in the fifth year of our raigne of England, France and Ireland, and of Scotland the Fortieth".

A diligent and careful study of this Record will show one or two things not apparent to the casual observer. First of all, that "our trustie and well-beloved John Elvaston, Esquier", is really John Lackland (a pun). He is of no manor, park or other demesne of any kind whatsoever, but simply John Elvaston, Esquier. And next, that on account of some excellence in camp or in court, or for

some single service rendered, he is rewarded on the petition of the Queen. Then thirdly, he is to be rewarded, not with the goods of the King or Queen whom he served, but with such chance of revenue as he may be able to lay hold of out of the confiscated estates of the Sheldons'. This is eminently characteristic of the Stuarts'.

Again I cannot understand why the original Grant should have lain in the Public Records Office, unless it was given up by John, as he would certainly need it as his authority on taking possession of the Sheldon Estates.....

From all these considerations, I think it more than likely that John turned away with disappointment and anger from the Royal Grant of such doubtful value. There is a great show of "yessues, revenues, and proffittes", but very little of this could have come into John's coffers. I am forced to the conclusion that he threw up the Grant, and retired, - probably, as the result of some sort of compromise with the Sheldons, - to, Overton, now Coleorton.

When one has had a disappointment, a loss, or a serious blow of any kind it is natural to turn one's steps towards home, especially the home of childhood, which is associated in the mind with great peace and security. I think this would be the case with John, and that he would turn his thoughts and his steps to Coleorton, as being near Elvaston, and a place on which he had some hold.....

It is now quite time to think about the next John Elvaston of the Moor. He was born in the year 1610 or thereabouts. He was settled in Overton Quatre - Marshe, and built a house there, about A.D. 1650. This John is described in the parish register (Whitwick), as "of ye Moor", meaning Thringstone Moor; and therefore, I had better explain that Thringstone Liberty extends right into Coleorton, in fact, to the brook at the bottom of the Elverston's land, and includes Overton Quatremarshe.

John Elvaston of ye Moor's father is the John Elvaston who received the King's grant in 1607.

The area being referred to as John Elvaston "of ye Moor" was "Rotten Row" which is featured in Part 2.

This house would have been one of the properties coloured blue on the following 1885 map. Further farm houses and outbuildings were constructed over a period by descendants of the family. These were eventually demolished at some point but the author can confirm that foundations were still evident in the 1960s.

There is a description in James Booth Elverston's book of a house built c.1790 in Elverston's Yard by his grandfather James Elverson b.1769. It is described as being of Timber and Plaster with a new end of brick.

THE PARLIAMENTARY / CIVIL WAR

This "second" John Elvaston I look upon with some interest from the fact of him having served as an **Ironsides** in the Parliamentary Wars.....

(The **Ironsides** were troopers in the Parliamentarian cavalry formed by English political leader Oliver Cromwell in the 17th century, during the English Civil War. The name came from "Old **Ironsides**", one of Cromwell's nicknames).

.....All men from sixteen to sixty years of age were compelled to join one side or the other, and John lost no time in declaring for the order of the government. It could not be expected of him to be loyal to the Stuarts, and it was far better to be loyal to the nation. He was thirty two years of age when the news came that Charles had raised his standard at Nottingham, to which no less than ten thousand men had rallied.....

It is highly probable that when John took up his sword, in 1642, he little thought it would

be so long before he could again lay it down; but the Parliamentary armies were not finally disbanded until 1654. The Ironsides were first raised in 1643. They were mostly taken from the smaller class of freeholders, and yeomen generally. They were all without exception, men of family, of substantial position, and God-fearing, Bible reading men, - "the flower of the people; men who were, and knew themselves to be, the natural leaders of their countrymen....."

The Ironsides gave their time, their property, and their persons to "the Cause". No doubt they had to pay; but what was to pay to such a man as John Elvaston. He neither fought for pay, nor land, nor titles – but for dear liberty.....

At a later period during the wars, John had a son born, probably his first, but this cannot be known for certain. He might have had other children. This son, however, whose name was William, was not baptized until 1663, when he must have been a well grown lad. The explanation of this circumstance is to be found in the general disturbance of home, and all domestic arrangements. We little think of these things now, but when at the wars John must have been anxious about home and family. The operation of his farming and other business would be going on, and when, at brief intervals, he went home, he would look around the house and the farm, and he would see where a father's helping hand was needed, and where a master's eye. He would find his estate decaying, little grist to the mill, little corn on his own land, and his best horse at the wars. He would often ask himself the question whether he ought not to remain at home and let others fight the battles of the country. One hopes he always decided for the path of duty, and that light was given him to know it. Then we think of the time when he must depart for his quarters, where hardship and danger awaited him. Try to realize the circumstances: his horse ready saddled is waiting at the gate; time is up, and he must leave his loved ones with many tears and doubting's of heart, - for these stern men were tender and true. Away he goes with wife and children watching. What to him are the quiet aspects of nature as he rides along; the rose on the bush; the lark at heaven's gate? He must away to the dust and din of war, the fire and smoke of battle. And to Anne his wife, when he is gone – has been gone for weeks, and is far away, - how would she think of him night after night, whether alive and well, or lying wounded in the field, or probably dead in the trenches? One can well understand that many things were left undone, and that son William was left unbaptised.....



Cromwell in the Battle of Naseby in 1645. Charles Landseer ©

THE DEATH OF JOHN ELVASTON (OF YE MOOR)

.....John's long and eventful life ended in 1681; and we find in the Whitwick Parish Register that he was buried on the 21st day of August, and laid beside Anne, his wife, who had died only a few months before him. A curious and interesting circumstance took place in the church yard at the time of the funeral. No doubt there would be a large concourse of people present, as John was well-known. After the service was read, and the body was laid in its final resting place, the Vicar, John Brentnall – speaking to the persons present – called out with a loud voice: "Who maketh affidavit?" Whereupon John's two sons, William and Nycholas, came forward, and replied: 'We do.....'

EXPLANATION OF THE AFFIDAVIT

In 1666, "An Act was passed for the encouragement of the woolen manufacturers', in which it was provided that after March 25th, 1667, no person would be 'buried in any shirt, shift or sheete, other than should be made of wool only'. The custom of burying in linen was, however, as old as Christianity itself, and the statute was generally ignored.....

THE ANNALS

We will now go with the Annals, we find in the Parish Registers. First taking a look at the old church - Whitwick Church is a handsome pile of 13th century Gothic, and, although very old, is in a good state of preservation. It has a fine tower, peculiar from having no battlements. There is a peel of eight bells. The church yard is full of gravestones, and there are some of special interest to the Elvastons'. On the higher ground and near the west end, are seven graves of the family; they are all side by side. All have gravestones except one which seems to have been broken and carried away. The grave that has lost its stone is that of John Elvaston (of ye Moor) and his wife Anne Elvaston who were buried here in 1681. The stones all stand at the head of the grave, and are without exception, beautifully cut, and, considering the length of time that some of them have stood, are in wonderful preservation. The position of the graves is the most favoured one in the church yard. This with the fact that for more than a century they buried in exactly the same place, would indicate, it is fair to infer, that the Elvastons' were of some consideration in the neighbourhood.

LIST OF GRAVES

John Elvaston and Anne Elvaston (d.1681) – [This is John Elvaston "of ye Moor" who built the house in Elverston's yard c.1650.](#)

Thomas Elvaston (son of John Elvaston of ye Moor d.1723),

Mary Elvaston (daughter of John Elvaston of ye Moor d. 1724).

John Elvaston (d. 1759),

Sarah Elvaston (wife of John d.1745).

Hannah (daughter of John Elverson by Anne his wife d.1758).

William Elverson (d.1803), Elizabeth Elverson (wife of William d.1799).

Sarah Elverson (died in her minority).....

THE DESCENDANTS OF THE 2ND SON NYCHOLAS OF JOHN ELVASTON (OF YE MOOR) d.1681 AND HIS WIFE ANNE d.1681

NYCHOLAS THE SECOND SON, BORN 1652

NYCHOLAS HAD A SON JAMES, BORN 1683

JOHN HAD A SON WILLIAM, BORN 1719

WILLIAM HAD A SON JAMES, BORN 1769

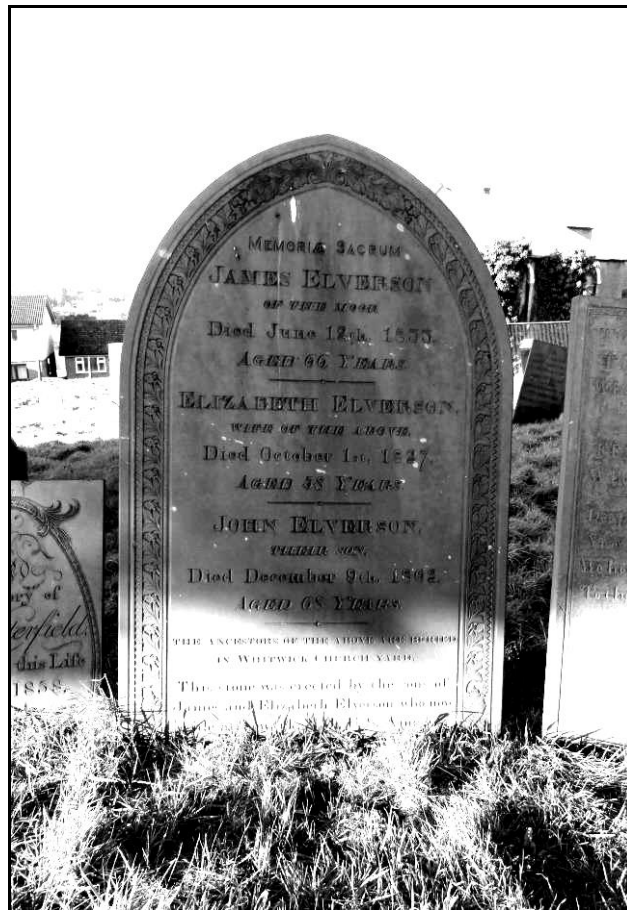
WILLIAM HAD A SON JAMES, BORN 1830

(THIS JAMES WAS THE FATHER OF JAMES BOOTH ELVERSTON, THE WRITER OF "THE ANNALS OF AN OLD ENGLISH FAMILY")

PART 4

**AN ELVERSON GRAVE IN
GRIFFYDAM WESLEYAN METHODIST CEMETERY**

**BELIEVED TO BE A DESCENDANT OF WILLIAM (b. 1649). HE WAS THE 1ST SON
OF JOHN ELVASTON (of ye MOOR) d.1681.**



**JAMES ELVERSON
OF THE MOOR
DIED JUNE 12TH 1833 AGED 66
ELIZABETH ELVERSON WIFE OF THE ABOVE
DIED OCT 1ST 1827 AGED 58
JOHN ELVERSON SON DIED DEC 9TH 1862 AGED 68**

**THE ANCESTORS OF THE ABOVE ARE BURIED
IN WHITWICK CHURCH**

**THE STONE WAS ERECTED BY THE SONS OF JAMES AND ELIZABETH
ELVERSON WHO NOW RESIDE AT NEWARK N.J. IN THE U.S.A.**

PART 5

WILLIAM ELVERSTON & JAMES ELVERSTON (FREEHOLDERS) AND THEIR CONFLICT WITH SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE SPELLING ELVERSTON HAS BEEN USED.

In the year 1808, Charnwood Forest was finally enclosed. It had been dissaforested for some time. It is thus described by Burton in 1622: "That vast and decayed forest, in forme somewhat square, of a hard and barren soyle; full of hills, woods, rocks and stone torres, and dells". Its area is about 16,000 acres, and its circuit is over thirty-six miles. I have in my possession a list of Freeholders claiming rights of common at the time of the enclosure.

The List of Claimants has many peers whom one would have thought had land enough already. It was said of the "Great Enclosure Act", that:-

*"Those who had much land had much more given them;
Those who had little land had little more given them;
Those who had no land had much taken from them,
Even that which was common".*

The Freeholders claiming lay all around the forest, at Ashby de la Zouch, Bardon, Grace Dieu, Mount Sorrell, Thringston, Whitwick, and about a dozen other townships. The list is divided into three columns: first the Proprietor, who is the Freeholder claiming; next, the Occupier, who is the tenant, but having no claim; and then a column which defines the nature of the claim.

In the list of local Freeholders or Proprietors appear the following names:-

Proprietors

William Elverston

James Elverston -----

Occupiers

W.L.King.

Richard Matchett

James Elverston

William Freer

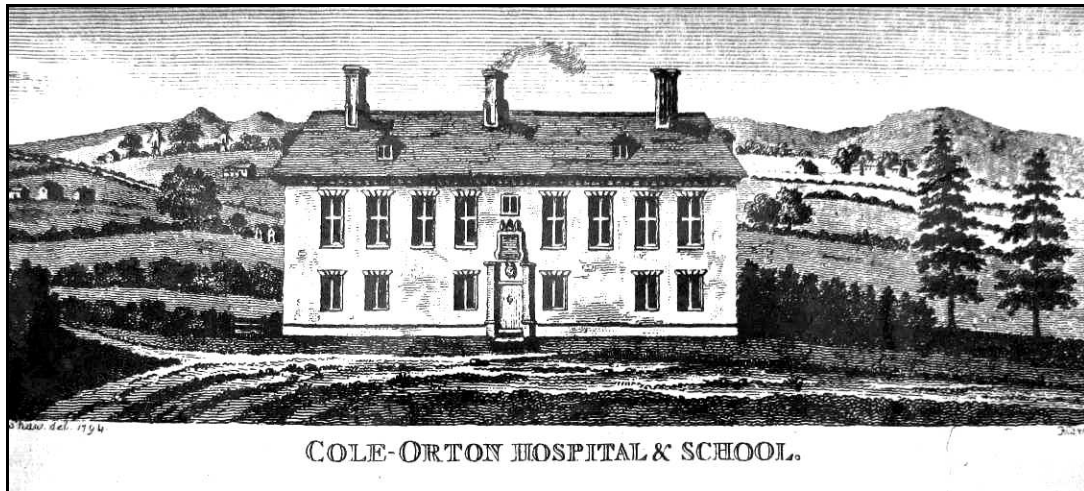
John Eames

Elizabeth Butcher

The above table shows that William Elverston claims as a freeholder or proprietor of land that he had two messuages, occupied by King and Matchett. It seems that this William Elverston was born in 1649 and was a retainer of the Stanhopes of Elvaston Castle, near Derby. The times were troublesome and the castle was besieged and held by Parliamentary forces, and we find, that while still a young man, William Elverston took up his abode on Coleorton Moor. He married and had two sons and one daughter, named respectively, William, John and Elizabeth. John settled at Thringstone, and from him descended the younger branch of the family known as the Thringstone Elverstons.

*It also shows that James Elverston claims as a Freeholder of land, and that he had four messuages, one of which he himself occupies. These were clearly the buildings coloured blue in Elverston's Yard as shown on the earlier 1885 map. **Sir George Beaumont** (7th Baronet of Stoughton) attempted to steal a march upon James Elverston, **my grandfather**. He not only claimed upon James Elverston's house and land, but also upon his other three messuages. This appears to have commenced a feud betwixt the two. James declared he was no tenant of Sir George and never had been, nor his fathers before him. Sir George made another attempt to get*

a small acknowledgement, but was soon sent to the right-about, much surprised - he was not wont to be treated that way. The sons of James were soon afterwards expelled from the Grammar School, at Coleorton. Presumably this was the "Hospital School" shown in the engraving below by S. Shaw . Feb 1794



James was the adviser, friend and letter writer for all Coleorton. He together with Sir George Beaumont and Lawyer Sketchley were the only three people in Coleorton who took newspapers at one time.

An incident occurred in the reign of one of the early George's, which however, I well remember from the graphic way in which he related it (that is James Elverston). At this period, there was a great demand for young men for the wars, and an attempt was made to capture William Elverston.

Now, he had just entered upon the paternal domain. He was a young man and newly married. When the King's officers came to take William, timing and friendly warning was somehow conveyed to him, and he went into hiding. The officers duly arrived at Elvaston Yard, and summoned its master in the Kings name.

Finding no response they entered the house, demanding of his wife to know where he was, and she truly answered she did not know. They then searched the house in every room - the out houses, shippens, barns, and what not, - but all in vain: no William Elverston could be found, and they had to go away without their man. It took the wife a long time to let William know he might venture back home for the present, and this also must be done under the cover of darkness, for he was well - known, and any person might be questioned on oath as to his whereabouts. One can imagine the young wife's suspense during the search. Had the officers found her husband in his hiding place? Had they come across one who knew where he was? As, a matter of fact would she ever see her husband again? For it must be born in mind these pressed men were often hurried right off, and sent as quickly as possible beyond the seas. How would she manage the farm and the business? And how would she bear that other charge that was coming upon her? In the dead of night she hears a cautious footstep, - a tap at the door, - can that be her husband? She joyfully lets him into the house; giving him food sorely needed, warmth and comfort. All was well at present, but how about tomorrow? She knew the officers would return again and again, as they were bound to produce their man. All this passed through her mind as her husband lay asleep. Morning came, with its early sunshine and music, but bringing neither to her, only renewed fear and doubt. What must she do? What could she do?

She thus mourned to William "My lass" said he, "I will never leave thee, depend on that." This he said when he was well awake, and a smile upon his face: and with that he went to where a

billhook hung on the wall; taking this down, he felt its edge, which was scarcely keen enough for him, so he took and sharpened it well. His wife, wondering what he meant by all this, saw him go to the garden gate, and, placing his finger on the top bar, he chopped it off with the billhook. Then his wife understood it all. He could not now pull a trigger, could not shoot a matchlock, and was of no use in the hateful foreign wars.

PART 6

1851 CENSUS INFORMATION FOR ELVERSON'S YARD

NAME	AGE	STATUS	TRADE	WHERE BORN
James Springthorpe	28	Head	Coal miner	Thringstone
Elizabeth	28	Wife		Coleorton
James	2	Son		Staffs
Ann	4m	Daughter		Thringstone
James Platts	73	Head	Butcher	Thringstone
Sarah	55	Wife		Thringstone
Joseph	24	Son	Ag labourer	Thringstone
Charlotte	17	Daughter	Worker of lace (cotton)	Coleorton
Frederick	12	Son	Ag servant	Coleorton
Eleanor	3	Daughter		Thringstone
John Elverson	57	Head	Hat maker	Thringstone
Ann Elverson	50	Wife		Melbourne
Asia May	12	Daughter		Thringstone
Jane Elverson	10	Daughter	Sunday Scholar	Thringstone
Mary Ann Waterfield	31	Widow		Melbourne
George Waterfield	3			Thringstone
Elizabeth Handley	1	Visitor		Coleorton
William King	45	Head	Coal miner	Worthington
Eleanor	38?	Wife		Thringstone
Charlotte	16	Daughter		Thringstone
Eliza	14	Daughter		Thringstone
Frederick	12	Son		Thringstone
Harriet	6	Daughter		Thringstone
John Lakin	24	Head	Coal miner	Thringstone
Elizabeth	23	Wife		Thringstone
Mary	1	Daughter		Thringstone
William	4 months	???		Thringstone
John Webster	36	Head	Coal miner	Coleorton
Sarah	32	Wife		Oakthorpe
Joseph	8	Son	Scholar	Staunton Harold
Eliza	6	Daughter	Scholar	Staunton Harold
Abner ?	4	Son		Whitwick
Tom	1	Son		Whitwick
Henry Lakin	37	Head	Coal miner	Worthington
Rachel	32	Wife		Coleorton

James	10	Son	Scholar	Worthington
Hannah	8	Daughter	Scholar	Worthington
William	7	Son	Scholar	Worthington
Helen	5	Daughter		Worthington
Selina	3	Daughter		Thringstone
Jane Ann	7 months	Daughter		Thringstone
Mary Stacey	14	Servant	House servant	Bardon
James Platts	40	Head	Bricklayer	Coleorton
Sarah	38	Wife	Lace Worker (cotton)	Canterbury, Kent
George	14	Son	Coal miner	Birmingham
Ann	12	Daughter	Lace worker (cotton)	Coleorton
Mary	10	Daughter	Scholar	Birmingham
Elizabeth	7	Daughter	Scolar	Birmingham
Richard Room	44	Head	Coal miner	Coleorton
Ruth	42	Wife		Worthington
Edward	16	Son	Coal miner	Worthington
William	12	Son	Brickyard	Thringstone
Mary Ann	7	Daughter	Scholar	Thringstone
Richard	5	Son	Scholar	Thringstone
Maria Chamberlain	17	Servant	House Servant	Sweepstone

There were a total of 9 families and 55 persons living in this tiny hamlet with 1 property uninhabitable. It is really hard to imagine all these people living there in what would have been appalling conditions.

The only well for fresh water shown on the 1885 map in that locality was at the cottage down the trackway across Stoney Lane directly opposite Elverston's Yard.

The residents of Elverston's Yard would most likely have obtained their water from the brook.

The 1901 census for Rotten Row still lists a family of six Elversons. It is not possible to tell whether they were living in Elverston's Yard.

PART 7

THE “OLD ENGINE INN” – ELVERSTON’S YARD

Elverston's Yard had its own pub called the “Old Engine Inn”. The author is unaware of when it was built, although “NWL’s Mining Heritage Trail” publication, states that it dated back to the 1700’s which may be the case as Ale Houses, as it would have been originally, often appeared near to a coal mine so the miners could imbibe before going home. Some of course never made it home and would have gone straight to the next shift having slept off the intoxication! Until the 1825 Licensing Act came into force it was not necessary for an Ale House to be given a name, only a location.

The “North West Leicestershire’s Mining Heritage Trail” publication states also that the Inn was named after the atmospheric “fire engine” installed just beyond the existing cottages, to pump water out of “Boulton’s Mine” which is quite plausible.

Due to the fact that there was also the New Engine Inn at Peggs Green, and the licensing records refer to them both as the Engine, notwithstanding also that their records are both mixed up also, it is extremely difficult to differentiate between the two, even with some local knowledge.

The following table is a list of licensees taken from the licensing records which the author is confident can be relied upon:-

NAME OF LICENSEE	DATES LICENSE HELD	OWNER OR LEASEHOLDER
Isaac Waterfield	August 1842 to Aug 1846	Not given
Henry Lakin	August 1846 to Aug 1855	Not given
Rachel Lakin (wife of Henry)	August 1855 to Aug 1864	Not given
John Jinks	August 1864 to Aug 1868	Not given
John Toon Jinks	August 1868 to Aug 1872	Not given
Joseph Toon Jinks	August 1872 to Aug 1878	William Harrison, Ashby
William Ward	August 1878 to Aug 1886	Mathew William Harrison
James Grice (Coal miner and Inn Keeper 1891 census)	August 1887 to Aug 1892	Mathew William Harrison / Executors
Edward Robinson (32) Licensed victualler at home Own account	1901 Census	Not known if he followed James Grice and purchased the Inn from the executors
Thomas Turner	1904 (see following newspaper article)	

WILLIAM WARD - LICENSEE

Following his departure from the Old Engine Inn, William Ward appears to have moved to the Blacksmith’s Arms, Rotten Row (now Lower Moor Road) and situated just opposite Bradford’s Lane, where he is recorded as Beerhouse Keeper, Smith’s Arms in White’s Directory for 1887-8. This is the first written occurrence of a name for that establishment I am aware of, although it had likely operated from at least the 1840s. His move there was not by chance, but likely from family connection, since the property was actually owned at that time by Francis Smith, his brother in law, who had himself been its licensee before then. The Blacksmith’s was kept by several generations of his descendants until its demolition in ca. 1961 when the bungalow ‘Greenfields’ was built on the site. (Written by Terry Ward who currently resides in Coleorton and William Ward was his GGGrandfather)

The *Old Engine Inn* occupied what is now the right hand of a pair of cottages, currently named Willow Cottage which was formally part of a row as shown in the 1885 O/S map. The following undated photograph depicts an iron work pole for the hanging sign which hung at the end wall of the former Inn. Apparently there was some writing on this wall also.



Photograph copyright of the originator – date not known

The “Old Engine Inn” finally closed its doors to the public in 1908 as confirmed in the following newspaper report.

Leicester Chronicle and Leicester Mercury 27th June 1908, page 4.

*Under: Leicestershire Licensing Authority
Ten Licenses Refused Renewal.*

THE OLD ENGINE COLEORTON

Supt. Lockton said the house was fully-licensed and was owned as the last house. The population of Coleorton was 783 – one license to every 156 persons – and in witness opinion, not only was the license not required, but the house was structurally unsuitable.

No opposition was offered in this case and magistrates refused the license.

FURTHER NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:-

Nottingham Evening Post 26th November 1904

THE COLEORTON BURNING FATALITY

At the inquest held at the Old Engine Inn, Coleorton, yesterday afternoon, touching the death of Florence Annie Turner, the three year old daughter of Thomas Turner, Landlord of the Inn, Dr. Atkinson, of Osgathorpe, attributed death to shock,

The evidence of the mother was that on Tuesday she left the child playing in the taproom whilst she walked in the garden. On returning she met the child, who was in flames, running towards the door. The burns were confined to the face, chest and arms. Death ensued on Thursday. There was no fireguard in the taproom and the child was wearing a loose pinafore. A verdict in accordance with the medical evidence was returned.

This case once again illustrates how vulnerable young boys and girls were to burning accidents due to long flammable clothing.

Leicester Journal 29th August 1919, page 3.

COLEORTON

PROPERTY SALE. – *Messrs. Orchard and Joyce conducted a successful property sale at the George Inn on Monday.*

The last item on the list was three cottages situated in Elverson's yard, and the bidding reached £220, Mr. Hough being the purchaser.

INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO GENEALOGISTS REGARDING OTHER LICENSEES IN THE PRECEDING CHART

Henry Lakin died in 1855, his widow Rachel then married John Toon Jinks 4th quarter of 1861. John T. Jinks seems to have been a widower, since the 1861 census records him living at Peggs Green (age 40) as a coal miner with his children - Thomas (age 18), Clara (age 14) and Charles (age 7).

Rachel died 2nd quarter of 1867 (age 48). Assuming John Jinks and John Toon Jinks are the same person then this is all consistent with the licence records and explains how John Jinks came to be the licensee.

After Rachel's death, John Jinks seems to have married yet again and is recorded in the 1871 census at 'Engine Row', Thringstone (Elverston's Yard) as a coal miner aged 51 with his new wife Jane (age 30) his daughter Eliza Jinks (age 18, seamstress) and stepdaughter Hannah Lakin (age 12, seamstress). No mention is made in the 1871 census of the licenced trade. John Jinks died in 1892 aged 72.

PART 8

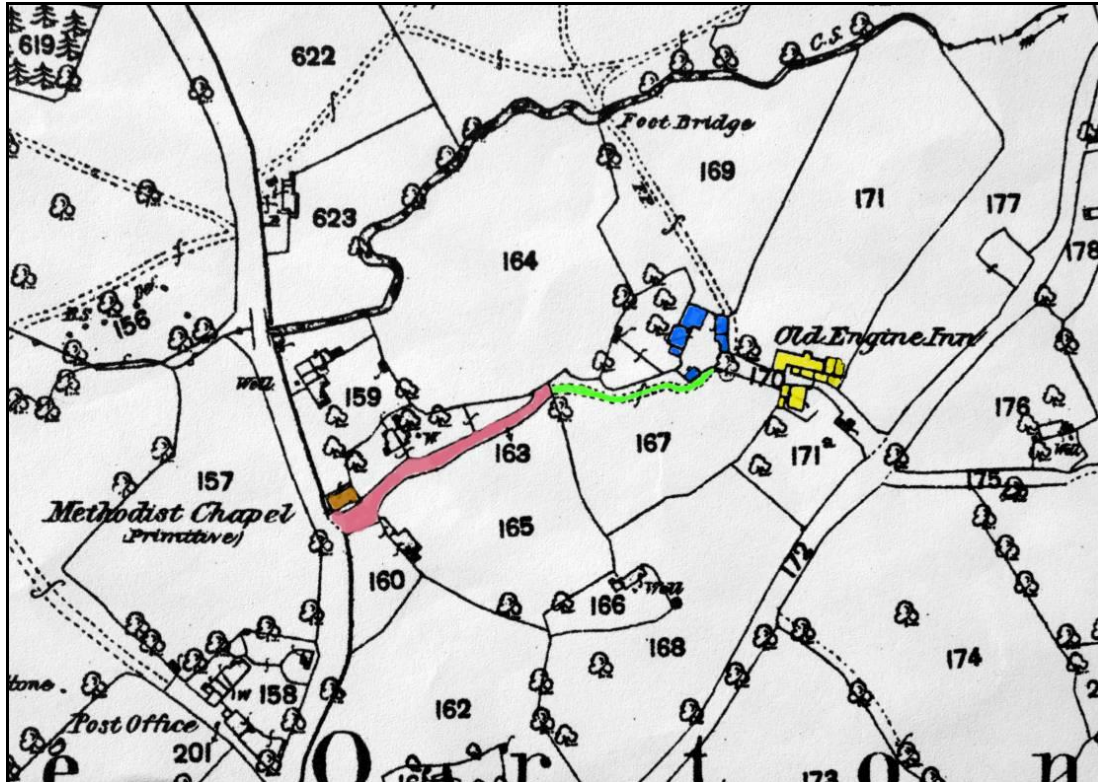
BOULTBEE'S COAL MINE

LOCATION

The following extract from the 1881 surveyed, 1885 published O/S map shows the entrance to Elverston's yard off what became Stoney Lane, and this can be related to the preceding 1807 map on page 5, where it is shown at the intersection of two foot ways at right angles to each other, just south of the brook flowing out of Coleorton fishpond.

Messr's Boulton's coal mine is thought by the author to have been sunk in the field marked 164 on the map below, which can be related to plot 47A on the preceding "Rotten Row" map on page 5 which in turn relates to the area shaded black on the map on page 23. It was sunk in the late 18th century, but it is not known how long it was worked, although evidence suggests that it would have been post 1839 as the original Primitive Methodist Chapel built in that year is included on the sketch map on page 24. The entrance track to the mine is coloured pink on the 1885 map below. The coal mine was most likely sunk by Joseph Boulton senior (1700-1789) and subsequently inherited by his son Joseph Boulton, junior following his father's death.

A Newcomen atmospheric fire engine is recorded as being installed as was common practice at this time to pump water out of the mine, and it is assumed that the "Old Engine Inn" in Elverston's yard took its name from that. Details of the Old Engine Inn are provided in Part 7. It is reasonable to assume that the Newcomen Atmospheric Fire Engine would have deposited the pumped out water into the brook north of the mine via a sough.



1885 PUBLISHED (1881 SURVEYED) O/S MAP

A branch of the ancient Elverston's families cluster of buildings in Elverston's Yard are coloured **blue** on the preceding map. When comparing this map, with the 1807 map on page 5, it can be seen that a number of buildings already existed in 1807 along the short track leading to Elverston's Yard.

When the author as a boy attended the old Primitive Methodist Chapel Sunday School (built 1839 & coloured **brown**), it was customary to walk via the track off Stoney Lane which bypassed several cottages (coloured **yellow**) before arriving at the remaining foundations of what used to be the original Elverston's Yard buildings (coloured **blue**).

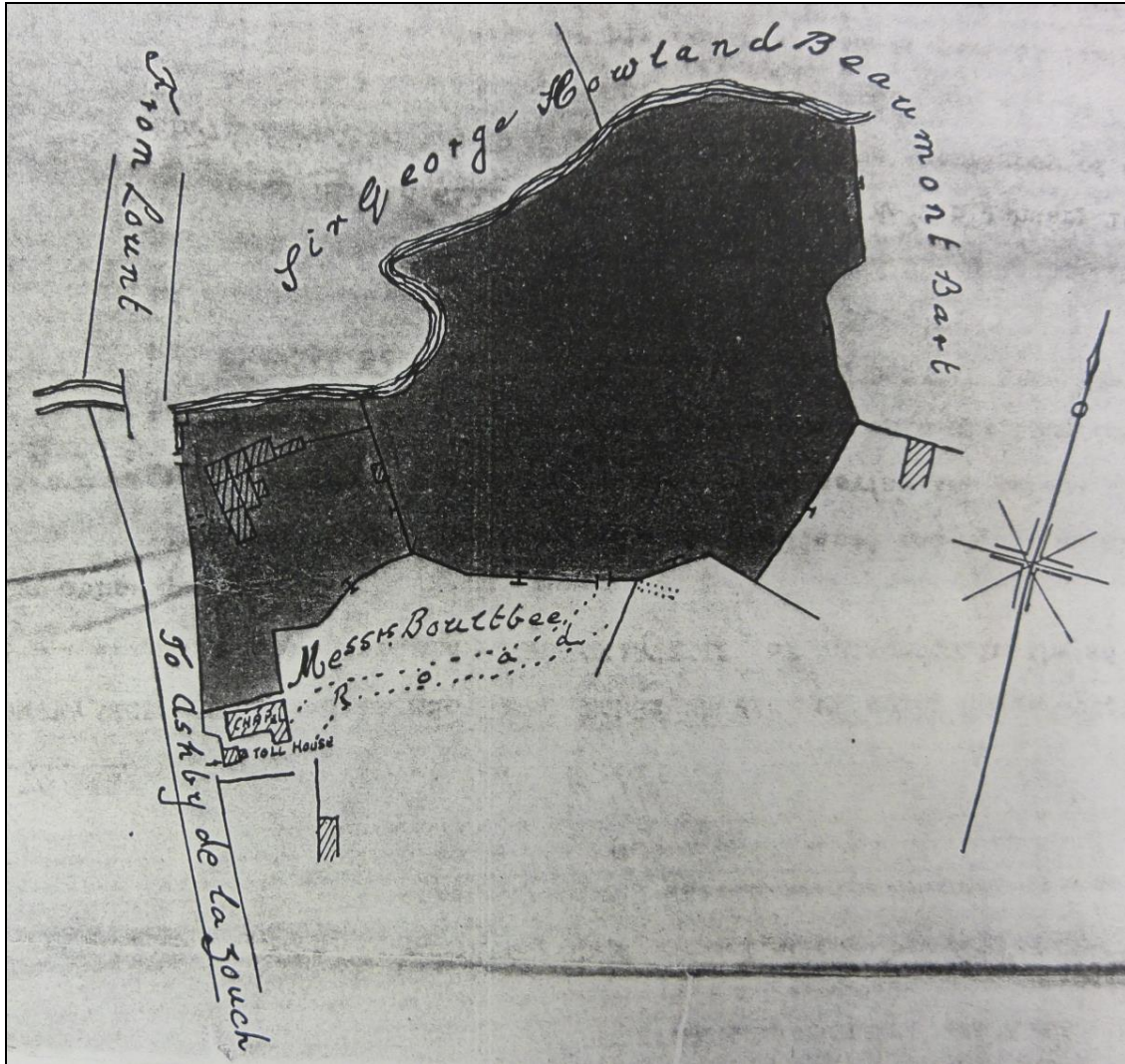
At that time, c.1948 only the foundations of the buildings in Elverston's Yard remained, however, there were apple trees remaining in what was the orchard there, which were scumped on the way to Sunday School during the season.

The track across the field (coloured **green**) was referred to by the locals as "Chatter Lane" presumably because of the "Chatter gate" that existed there, prior to a stile being built for the council by the author's wife's grandfather Fred Barkby.

The trackway (coloured **pink**) is now referred to as Chapel Lane but this was initially just a roadway alongside the old Methodist Chapel providing access to Boulbee's coal mine, and subsequently, to the two semi-detached properties that existed along there at that time, which were occupied by the Sheppard's in one and Minnie Stinson in the one nearest the Chapel. These buildings are shown on the 1885 map.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

AN OLD UNDATED MAP



The date of the above sketch map must be post 1839 as this was the date when the old Primitive Methodist Chapel, shown on the map, was built.

The map is important in that it defines the road to / from Messrs Boulton's coal mine, which later became known as Chapel Lane. It also shows the Toll house adjacent to the chapel and the Coleorton branch of the Hinckley to Melbourne turnpike road running north to south. As this part of the turnpike branch was within the area of "Rotten Row", then strictly it would be incorrect to refer to it as Coleorton. One assumes that Boulton would have paid a toll at the Toll house on all the coal being transported from his mine onto the turnpike road.

The author suggests that this map, with the area shaded black was perhaps produced as a legal document to define the area of Boulton's coal mining activity and to differentiate this part of "Rotten Row" owned by Boulton, which was within the Township of Thringstone from the land to the north owned by Sir George Beaumont.

In an interview with one of the members carried out by Lavengro at the Coleorton "Darby & Joan" club in the old Primitive Methodist Chapel, which featured in the Coalville times newspaper dated October 9th 1953, he recorded the following:-

History, it appears, was all around us as we sat : the site of the old Toll-gate was just outside, and there were old pit shafts here, there and everywhere ; each with its own story. There was one colliery quite near the chapel. The shaft was simply boarded up when the workings were finished, and in due course, a garden was formed above it. then the boards rotted, and one day the whole contraption collapsed, and an apple tree and part of the garden disappeared into the bowels of the earth.

PART 9

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON ELVERSTON'S YARD

In the first half of the 1900's, the yard also had its own amateur barber who was known as "Shaver Bill", his real name being William (Bill) Richards. It is thought he got this name because he did a bit of part time shaving and hair cutting. We can tell from both the 1891 and 1901 census enumerator's walk that the Richard's family lived in the cottage next to the Old Engine Inn, which was still operating at that time. Apparently William Richards played the organ at the new Coleorton Methodist chapel for 50 years

1891 CENSUS FOR ROTTEN ROW

NAME	AGE	STATUS	TRADE	WHERE BORN
William Richards	32	Head	Coal miner	Newbold
Sarah Richards	30	Wife		Coleorton
Jane Richards	6	Daughter		Newbold
Levi Richards	2	Son		Coleorton

1901 CENSUS FOR ROTTEN ROW

NAME	AGE	STATUS	TRADE	WHERE BORN
William Richards	42	Head	Coal miner	Worthington
Sarah	40	Wife		Worthington
Jane	16	Daughter	Seamstress at home – Home account	Worthington
John	9	Son	Scholar	Thringstone
Sarah A	3	Daughter	Scholar	Thringstone

Note the change of place of birth between censuses

A Mr. Horn who had no legs and was a cobbler, also lived in Elverston's Yard. He used to travel around on a flat board with wheels, and wore shoes on his hands to propel himself. It was thought that he lived in the west end cottage coloured yellow on the north side of the entrance trackway to Elverston's Yard

PART 10

VANISHED LIGHT INDUSTRIES

In the present age of technological advancement, it seems even more important to place on record what we know about simple bygone industries, which in their time, were vital to the social structure and standards of the community. Three such industries in the Coleorton area were Hat making, Whetstone and Oil Stone making (also known as Stonecutting), Bauble Ornament making (Spar Manufacturing). Very little is recorded, and even less remembered, within the community, so a brief synopsis follows of what we do know to date. [A separate publication on Bauble manufacturing is featured on the author's website.](#)

HAT MAKING (More commonly known as Hatters)

BEAVER HATS

Originally, a high class hat would have been made out of beaver fur. Beavers were hunted nearly to extinction, first in Europe, then in North America. Other furs were tried, muskrat and coypu made acceptable hats, but rabbits are fast breeders and they were local.

A **beaver hat** was a hat made from felted beaver fur. They were fashionable across much of Europe during the period 1550–1850 because the soft yet resilient material could be easily combed to make a variety of hat shapes (including the familiar top hat). Smaller hats made of beaver were sometimes called **beaverkins**,

Therefore, in the 18th and 19th century, a lot of men's felt hats were made using hare and rabbit fur. In order to make this fur stick together to form felt, hatters brushed it with mercury nitrate which was extremely toxic. This, when inhaled, unfortunately found its way into the blood stream. This affected the brain causing shaking, slurring and forgetfulness, which led eventually to confusion, mental distress and death. It has been suggested that the saying "Mad as a Hatter" came from this industry.

'Bowling' and 'Blowing' are technical hatting terms for what is essentially the same thing: getting fur into the right condition for felting into a hat. Bowling is the old fashioned way of preparing fur. The fur has already been removed from the rabbit skins using a knife but it is still dirty, perhaps with small bits of skin in it, and it is in clumps. It needed to be clean and fluffy for felt work and therefore it needed bowling. A small out building would have been used to carry out the work. The fur would have been placed onto a willow hurdle (like a flat basket) on the table. Suspended a few inches above the table was the hatter's bow. It looked like a large violin bow, about 2 metres long, made of wood and strung with catgut. The hatter struck the catgut with a wooden peg, and it vibrated. All the fur underneath vibrated too – it flew into the air, gradually settling back down. By passing the vibrating bow back and forth over the fur many times, the fur would be fluffed up. All the dirty bits would fall down through the slats of the hurdle, and the fluffy fur would be clean and soft and ready to felt.

The matted fabric was pummeled and boiled repeatedly, resulting in a shrunken and thickened felt. Filled over a hat-form block, the felt was pressed and steamed into shape. The hat maker then brushed the outside surface to a sheen.



Beaver Hats

THE BLACK SILK TOP HAT

Although people already wore top hats in the 16th century, these were only covered in silk plush from about 1797. During the Empire Period (1800-1850), the hats - which were much taller and basically straight-sided - were called 'stovepipe hats'. The **black silk top hat** was made from cheesecloth, linen, flannel and shellac. Using various types of flat-irons, the shellac was 'baked' in the linen around a five-piece wooden hat block and covered with black silk plush, which came mostly from France. Only the master tradesman (foreman) was permitted to cut the expensive silk. The hat was finished with a 2½ to 3 cm wide cloth hatband, which was later replaced by one of ribbed silk. The brim of the hat also had a ribbed band. During this early Victorian time - i.e. approximately 1830 - top hats were extremely tall, some even reaching 20 cm.



The following is an extract from “Vanished Industries” by H. Butler Johnson, thought to have been written c.1910. :-

An industry that is now only known by tradition, once flourished in and around Cole Orton. This was the making of hats, the headquarters of the trade being at Ashby-De-La-Zouche.

As regards the Cole Orton branch of it, the business of hat making seems to have centred on Elverson’s Yard, members of the family of that, being engaged in it over a long series of years.

*One of the family, James Elverson, who died in 1823, was a maker of both silk and beaver hats which were taken on horseback around the countryside and sold to residents. James Elverson would seem to have seen the best days of the hat making industry. **This is the James Elverson referred to in PART 5.***

The Rev J. Curtis, the Leicestershire historian, writing in the year 1831, records that the trade was then dying out at Ashby and Coleorton.

*Hat making in a simpler form, lived on at Cole Orton until the 1870’s. This involved the fashioning of the poke bonnets, then affected by the Victorian generation of the fair sex. One of the last, if not the last, to carry on the trade was an old lady of the name of Betty Cooper, whom some still alive will remember travelling the countryside carrying the cardboard boxes containing her wares slung over her shoulder. She lived, we are informed, in a cottage nearly opposite to the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Coleorton village (**Chapel built 1839 in Chapel Lane on the Lower Moor**).*



A poke bonnet was a women’s bonnet, featuring a small crown and wide and rounded front brim. Typically this extended beyond the face. It has been suggested that the name came about because the bonnet was designed in such a way that the wearer’s hair could be contained within the bonnet. Poke may also refer to the brim itself, which jutted out beyond the wearer’s face

The 1841 census for Coleorton Moor lists the following people as Hat Makers:-

John Waterfield
William Toon
Thomas Gilbert
Thomas Whirledge

The 1881 census lists:-

Ada M M Armson as a straw bonnet maker on the Moor.

The 1841 census for Peggs Green lists (these are thought to have been in Rotten Row):-

Thomas Middleton (40) Hatter.

Isaac Waterfield (40) Hat Maker and Licensee of the *Old Engine Inn* from 1842 to 1846.

Fanny ? (15) Hatter,

John Elverson (47) Hatter.

James Platts (61) Hatter,

Henry Mathews? (15) Hatter.

The 1870s:-

Betty Cooper – Maker of “Poke Bonnets”

WHETSTONE / OIL STONE MANUFACTURING

Whetstones and Oil Stones, were, and still are used as honing / sharpening stones for knives, carpenters tools - such as chisels, and many other engineering cutting tools. The word *Whetstone* is derived from the word *Whet* which means to sharpen.



A typical 19th century whetstone set in a wooden block



A typical piece of whetstone from the quarry prior to dressing

There follows an article, by H. Butler Johnson, first published in the early 1900s concerning the industry surrounding the Charnley Forest Hone:-

In the first place, the making of Charnley Forest Whetstones seems always to have been in Cole Orton as a one man, or at most, a family trade; the work being carried on either in the interior of a dwelling-house or in a small outbuilding attached thereto. Although other parts of the Charnwood Forest were occasionally resorted to (notably at Thringstone village) there is no doubt that Whittle Hill was the primary quarry for the stone. The whetstone makers seem usually to have visited the

quarry in person in order to select for themselves suitable pieces of stone; bringing it away in a pony and cart, or, if only a small quantity was required, as much as a man could conveniently carry home on his back across the Charnwood Hills. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the stone was to be had free of charge at the quarries, though in the case of Whittle Hill an acknowledgement of 5/- per year was paid by the Whetstone maker to the owner, Mr. Perry Herrick.

As indicated above, the Whittle Hill Quarry did not enjoy a monopoly of providing suitable stone for the whetstone makers. A small quarry near to the village of Thringstone yielded stone whose quality was held by the Cole Orton workers to be superior to all other. It was however hard to come by which probably accounts for its lack of general appreciation. The whetstone makers usually carried out their work in the winter months, the summer being given over to the hawking of their wares round the workshops of Coventry, Birmingham and other industrial towns. Each hawker seems to have had his own round of contacts and repeated it year after year, his visits being looked forward to by those who needed his wares. There was one, working principally in Thringstone stone, who did a good trade for many years among the file cutters and other skilled artisans in Sheffield.

The workshop equipment of a whetstone maker consisted, in a general way, of a breast-high wooden bench, a long-handled, heavy-bladed knife, a rubbing stone and some sand. The knife played an important, one might say essential, part in the making of a whetstone. Long and heavy, its lower-end was fastened down to the back of the bench by a hook attachment: the leverage thus obtained enabling great pressure to be exerted on the cutting edge of the blade. Equipped with this device the knife was used to cut, scrape, or pare down, as the case might be, the rough-hewn blocks from the quarry until they acquired the shape of a whetstone. The final surfacing was completed on the rubbing-stone with the aid of sand and water. Simple as it may seem this scraping or paring down was a long, arduous and unpleasantly noisy process, a sound once heard never to be forgotten.

Sometimes it would take two to three hours to reduce a particularly hard piece of stone to the size and shape required. We cannot hear any fixed rules for the size and shape of the whetstones, each fragment of forest stone was dealt with according to its shape. All that the maker could do was bring the skill and judgment of long experience to each individual case. In a few cases, mainly towards the end of the industry, a circular saw worked by a foot treadle, was used to some part of the work but this was by no means the general custom, most workers preferring the old-time knife. These knives were always made at one or the other of the local blacksmith's shops. Great care had to be exercised in the process of "steeling" the edge of the blade otherwise it would soon have worn out on the hard forest stone. One particular blacksmith who flourished in the 1860's, enjoyed a reputation for the enduring nature of his blades and was accordingly much patronised by the local whetstone makers.

In 1800, Nichols, a writer on the early industrial history of Charnwood Forest, stated that "at Gatehouse Hill, now called Whittle's Warren, in the royalty of Beaumanor in this forest, are found about two feet deep large quantities of most excellent stones for sharpening razors and pen knives. They are sold in vast quantities at Birmingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton at 2d an ounce. It is possible that this large scale production and sales of whetstones as instanced by Nichols dates from the building at Whitwick in 1678 of a large Ironworks by Humphrey Jennens, the Birmingham Ironmaster. Later in the century the prices paid were more determined by the state of the market and the species of stone required, a large-sized stone of good quality fetching as much as eight or ten shillings among certain classes of skilled workers in Sheffield or Birmingham.

The following is an extract from “Vanished Industries” by H. Butler Johnson, thought to have been written c.1910. :-

An interesting local industry, which was carried on until the closing years of the 19th century, was the fashioning of “Whetstones”. These were, the once famous “Charley Forest Whetstones”, made from a green-coloured, hard hornstone of volcanic origin obtained from a quarry at Whittle Hill (between Longcliffe and Woodhouse) on the Charnwood Forest. This Whittle Hill stone was extremely hard to shape and work, and in the latter days of the industry, a softer Turkish raw material was used by the home makers.

*This occupation, as far as the Coleorton district is concerned, does not seem to have been of any great antiquity. Our enquiries go to show that it was brought into the locality about the middle of the last century (19th), and would seem to have been confined to members of the families of Croson, Hall and Else. John Hall of **Rotten Row** Cole Orton, was the last, we think, to carry on the trade. These hones, which were held in high esteem in the workshops of Sheffield, Birmingham and Coventry, used to be carried to their above-mentioned towns by the makers, and sold direct to the workmen. A considerable trade was done in them at one time amongst the file cutters of Sheffield. A small quarry at Thringstone afforded an excellent material for Hone Stones also.*

The 1851,1871 and 1891 census records for Griffydham, Peggs Green, Coleorton, Worthington and Whitwick, reveal that the following people were actively involved with the manufacture of Whetstones and Oil Stones:-

In 1851, Richard Stacey, John Hall, Thomas Hall and Jess Croson were listed as Stonecutters in Rotten Row. A William Hurst of Griffydham is also described as a stone miner. Joseph Else (b.1826) and Thomas Else (b.1823), later to become a coal miner in Hucknall Torkard, were listed as Oil Stone makers on the Moor (Coleorton).

In 1871, James, John and Thomas Hall were listed as Stonecutters in Rotten Row, with Joseph Else, a Stonecutter, having now moved to **Elverson’s Yard**. Joseph Hall was doing the same in Ashby Rd, Peggs Green.

A more in depth research would no doubt unearth many more whetstone makers in the locality.