

Cotgrave Place

Introduction

Cotgrave Place (now a Golf and Country Club) near the junction with the Nottingham and Stragglethorpe Roads, has a long history. According to William Lewin in his “A Short History of Cotgrave” (1944), Harold Scrimshire bought Cotgrave Place (together with Rempstone Hall, just off Scrimshire Lane) round about the middle of the sixteenth century, though there is no evidence that his family ever lived there - they preferred the Hall. We have no way of knowing what the property consisted of at that time – its first appearance on a map seems to be about 1793, when it is shown as an ill-defined arrangement of buildings at the end of a straight drive, linking it to the main Nottingham Road. At this time it was in the ownership of Mrs Lionella Clay. Roughly two years later it is again shown, though as a single building in the ownership of William Ianson, Esquire. Lionella and he were apparently close friends and she had immediately sold it to him, having inherited it from her uncle Thomas Lambe, round about 1790. This is consistent with another piece of evidence to the effect that Ianson built the present Georgian-style house, which was completed in 1796 at a cost of £5,000. It would appear that he cleared the original site in order to build his dream-house.



Then, on the first OS map of 1870, Cotgrave Place is again shown as being connected to the main road by a driveway, which divides just before reaching a rather small building or collection of buildings (it being difficult to distinguish buildings from trees!). Indeed, this arrangement of split driveway remains very much the same today. Of greater interest is the sudden change observed on a slightly later OS map of 1882. The same driveway is associated with a much more elaborate grouping of buildings, on both sides of the drive and it may be that these were either farmworkers’ cottages or perhaps servant accommodation. Yet again, in an OS map of 1899, the layout of the buildings is totally different and it would appear that there were frequent changes, though we have no way of knowing their significance. One date which is probably reliable is that when Gingerbread Cottage (where Chris Soar currently lives) was built, because it is engraved on the chimney - 1874.

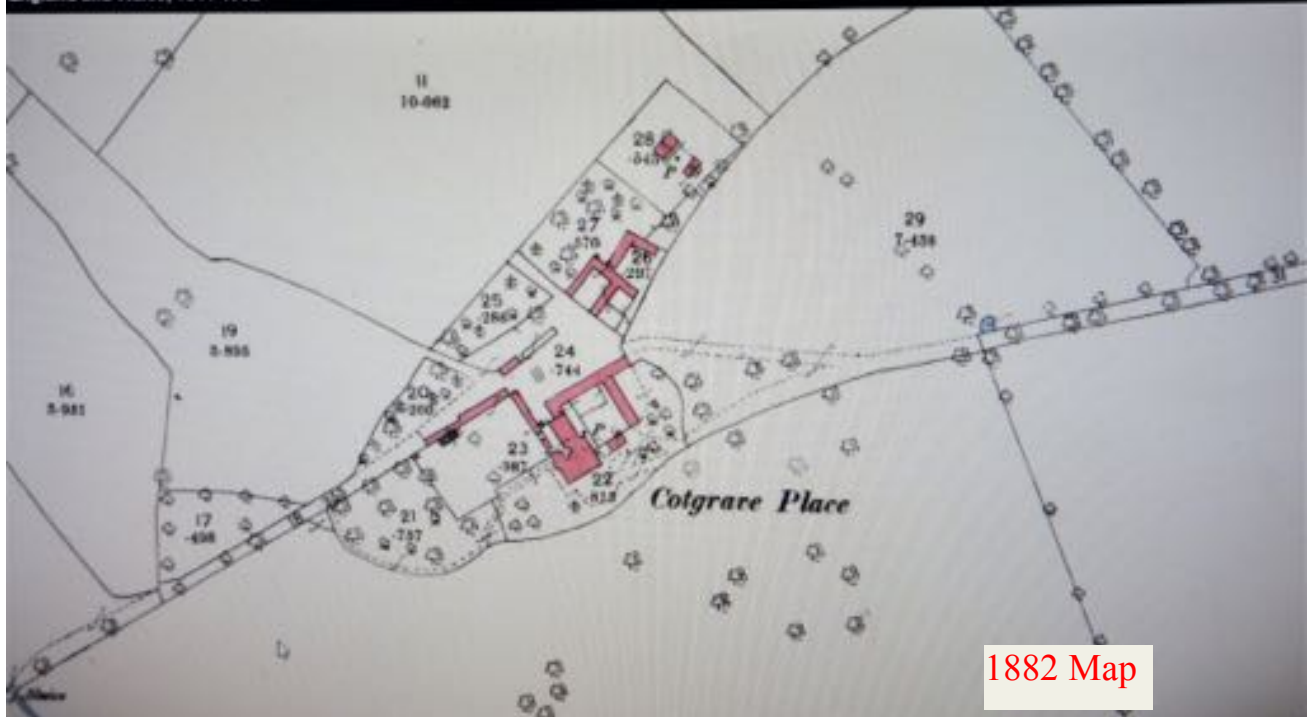




1870 Map

Surveyed: 1882
Published: 1884

England and Wales, 1841-1952



1882 Map



With regard to ownership of both house and associated farmland, we do know that it came into the possession of the Manvers family in 1807 when William Ianson's son Thomas sold it to Charles Meadows, 1st Earl Manvers (Ianson himself having died in 1800). It then remained in their ownership until the big Manvers Sale of 1941/2. One of us (CPS) is in possession of an Abstract of an important document, an Indenture of Settlement, dated June 1876 which, in turn, refers to an earlier Indenture of Settlement, called the 'First Settlement'. Such settlements were in general use by landed families to ensure their properties remained in the possession of their descendants. Being a moderately large and attractive house, the Manvers were able to let it out to a range of wealthy tenants, some of whom actually farmed the 300/400 acres of attached land. We have collected a record of these tenancies from entries in Census Returns and entries in various Trade Directories and appended it as a footnote to this introduction.

The modern history of Cotgrave Place begins in 1942 when it was sold by Earl Manvers to a certain Robert Oswald Smith of Langley Mill. (The date of Conveyance being 9 February 1942). He, in turn, transferred the property, by Deed of Gift to his wife Marion Smith in August 1946. He must have needed cash so, in November 1950 he borrowed, while Marion mortgaged the property as security, for £5,000. Then, in June 1953 she sold it to John Hubert James for the sum of £12,000 but subject to this mortgage, making the overall price £17,000. The James family had been in residence (presumably as tenants) for some time – they were certainly there at the time of the 1911 Census when John James is described as farming the land round about, John Hubert James being John's son. John Hubert continued to run the farm until his death in July 1986.

Cotgrave Place originally included 55 acres of land on the opposite side of Nottingham Road but John Hubert sold it to the National Coal Board on 21 June 1954. He had previously (1949) given them a two-year license to sink a trial borehole at the point where the road and canal cross, a trial which may have encouraged the Board to go ahead with establishing the Cotgrave mine in 1952. He also paid off the £5,000 mortgage in November 1958.



John Hubert had two sisters, Hester Mary James and Annis Frances Griffin James. Hester Mary suffered from consumption and spent much of her time, in warmer weather, in a green 'summer house' mounted on a circular rail so that it could be rotated to face the sun. She died in 1933 (aged 33). On John Hubert's death in 1986, Cotgrave Place came into the possession of Annis Frances but she too died on 3 March 1988 (leaving a legacy of £979,417) and, as none of the

James siblings ever married or had children, her Trustees put the property on the market for sale by tender (sealed bids), the sale being completed on 11th January 1989 to a company called 'Cotgrave Place Limited' (set up by Chris Soar and John Clark).



The golf course

Their original intention had been to develop a rural community with stabling for horses but there were delays with the Planning Department and a downturn in the residential market, leading to a change of plan. ‘Leisure’ was the new operative word – a country house hotel, with riding stables – but they were strongly advised that such an arrangement must be accompanied by a golf course and this they contrived to do, turning what is now Chris Soar’s home, Gingerbread Cottage into a temporary clubhouse, until a modern version could be completed. An initial course was mown through rough grass in 1990, while a more professional version made its appearance two years later – twenty-seven holes and a new clubhouse. It was more than good enough to attract the attention of the ‘serious’ golfing fraternity and, in 1996, ‘Cotgrave Place Golf and Country Club’ was sold to ‘American Golf’ through their subsidiary ‘European Golf’. A property developer bought the central area containing the main house and all the outbuildings, renovated the farmhouse and converted and rebuilt the barns and outbuildings. While that work was going on,



Chris Soar took up residence in Gingerbread Cottage, which had originally been a pair of semi-detached farm labourers’ cottages, converting it internally and adding a side extension and conservatory at the front. Meanwhile, ‘American Golf’ sold the course to ‘Crown Golf’ who finally sold it on to its present owner, who retitled it ‘The Nottinghamshire’ and that brings us up to date, as of 2021.

Tenants of Cotgrave Place

1808(?) – 1846	Robert Burgess	Sheep Famer	Agent to Earl Manvers	
1846(?) – 1863(?)	Charles John Hill	Ret. Lt. Col..	Magistrate	Farmer
1863 - 1869	Hon. Robert Henley Eden	Peer’s Son		
1869 – 1874	St John Leigh Clowes	Farmer		
1874 - 1876	George and Thomas Marshall	Farmers		
1876 – 1885	Edward Waite Browne	Farmer		
1885(?) – 1905	Albert Armitage	Farmer	Butcher	Maltster
1906 – 1943	John James	Farmer	Land Agent	
1943 – 1986	John Hubert James	Farmer		

So much for the ‘bare bones’. We now fill in a little more detail of these tenants and their families.

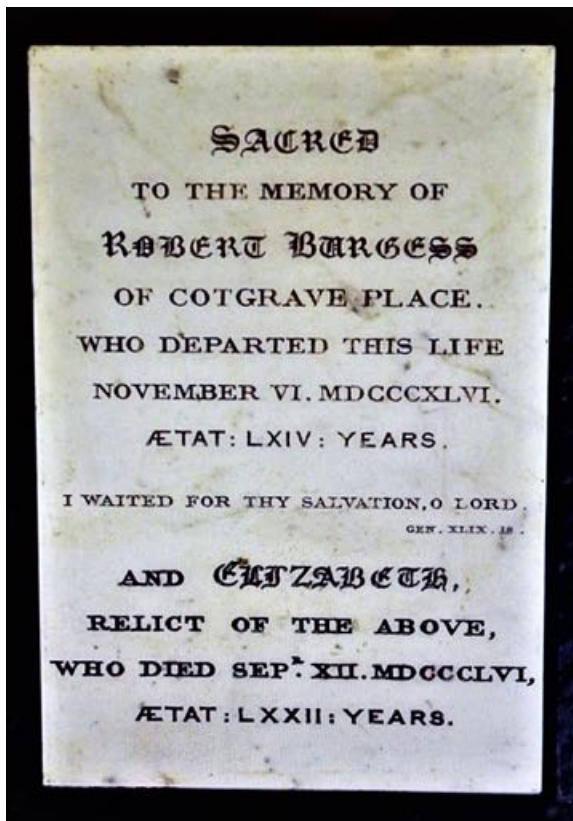
Robert Burgess (1781 – 1846)

Robert was born in 1781 in a village called Hugglescote, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch in Leicestershire. His father was also called Robert (as was the custom for first sons) and he had a brother, born in 1784, called Joseph Stubbins Burgess. The ‘Stubbins’ addition came from their mother, who was called Catherine Stubbins. She came from Holme Pierrepont, the one-time home of the Pierrepont family and she had a brother, Nathaniel Stubbins, who was to play a significant role in the following story.

Robert’s parents remained in Hugglescote for the rest of their lives but Robert, himself must have left home sometime in the early eighteen hundreds. No doubt because of Catherine’s contacts in Holme Pierrepont, Robert met a young lady called Elizabeth Donnithorne, the daughter of Thomas Donnithorne, then Rector of Holme Pierrepont. They were married in St Edmonds Church there in 1808. So far as we know, they did not have any children. The Rev. Donnithorne died in 1813 and there is a memorial plaque in the Church. Perhaps, surprisingly, there is a similar plaque to Robert, who died in 1846.

With regard to Cotgrave Place, there is an interesting letter in the Manvers papers (in the University of Nottingham Archives) in which Nathaniel Stubbins strongly advises Earl Manvers to buy it (together with close-on 200 acres of farmland) from Thomas Janson at the asking price of £21,000. He no doubt had hopes that he could also persuade him to rent it to his nephew, Robert, who was looking to run a large farm. This was in 1807. Whether Robert actually moved there at that time is not clear but he was certainly recorded as being a sheep farmer at Cotgrave Place in 1814. He was later appointed as Agent to Earl Manvers, as is made clear in the White’s Directory for 1832. Again in 1844 he is described as being Steward to Earl Manvers. In the 1841 Census returns for Cotgrave he is recorded as a farmer, living at Cotgrave Place with his wife Elizabeth and five servants. They were obviously well-off! We have no way of knowing exactly what their relationship with the Earl really was but it is worth mentioning that in 1798 Nathaniel Stubbins held the office of High Sherriff of Nottinghamshire, so it would seem that he must have advised the Earl as a friend, rather than as an employee. Another indicator is the fact that both Robert and his brother Joseph were referred to as ‘Esq.’ (This title seems to have had a variety of interpretations but certainly applied to those males who could be described as ‘Landed Gentry’.)

The 1841 Census does not record the size of any farm, so we cannot be sure of the acreage under Robert’s control but it would seem likely that it was several hundred acres, as recorded for some of the later tenants of the Place. What we do know is that Robert took his sheep farming seriously – together with his brother, Joseph Stubbins Burgess, he bred sheep which won prizes at various Nottinghamshire events. His brother is recorded in the 1851 Census for Holme Pierrepont as farming no less than 530 acres and employing some thirteen labourers and twelve boys. Their household also employed eight servants. Joseph made up for his brother in siring seven children, one of which, Robert Burgess, was Vicar of Radcliffe-on-Trent from 1845 to 1873.



In spite of living officially in Cotgrave, it would appear that Robert's connection with Holme Pierrepont was somewhat stronger. At first sight, one may wonder why his memorial plaque was located in Holme Pierrepont Church, rather than All Saints in Cotgrave but we should note that it was put in place *after* his wife died, which implies that it was arranged by her side of the family, based in Holme Pierrepont. Elizabeth herself probably moved out of Cotgrave Place following the death of her husband in 1846 – in the 1851 Census she was resident in Radford and died there in 1856. (Radford was, at the time, a rapidly expanding suburb of Nottingham in which the 'upper classes' were keeping well clear of the slums of Nottingham proper!)

Charles John Hill (1795 – 1867)

We meet up with Charles John Hill in the 1851 Census where he is recorded as living at Cotgrave Place, together with his wife Frances Charlotte Arabella, their daughter Georgina Mary (aged 8) and eight servants. Exactly when they moved in is not certain – all we can say is that it must have been between 1846 (when Robert Burgess died) and the 1851 Census date. Charles describes himself as working as a Magistrate and as having been born in Bristol. The couple, their daughter and one son were still there in 1861, when Charles describes himself as a farmer of 430 acres, employing fourteen labourers and five boys. Note the significant increase in acreage, compared with the 200 acres originally included in the 1807 sale – whether this occurred during the Burgess regime or later we don't know but the 430 acres represents a significant portion of the overall Manvers acreage in Cotgrave (at the time) of approximately 2500.

In the 1861 Census Charles claims to have been born in Westbury (rather than Bristol) but Westbury-on-Trym is a suburb of Bristol so there is no loss of consistency. Ancestry offers the detail that a son Charles John was born to Jeremiah and Maria Hill in Bristol in December 1795 and baptised there in 1796, these dates being reasonably consistent with (the sometimes slapdash!) Census records of Charles' age as 55 in 1851 and 62 in 1861. Unfortunately, we know very little about Charles' background, the only other snippet of information being that he had a military career at an earlier stage in his life, referring to himself in 1861 as a 'retired Lt. Colonel'. His Will confirms that he was 'Lt. Col. in Her Majesty's Regiment of 7th Hussars'. However, we know rather more about Frances Charlotte Arabella.

She was born at Tickhill Castle (near Doncaster, Yorks) in 1814 to Frederick Lumley-Savile and Charlotte Mary de la Poer Beresford. She and Charles were married there in 1836, when she was twenty-two and he was forty-one. They produced four children prior to their move to Cotgrave Place.

Her parents' names obviously suggest an aristocratic background and this, indeed, she had. The Lumley family were well established in the ranks of English Peers under the title 'Earls of Scarbrough' (Note that the Yorkshire seaside resort now refers to itself as 'Scarborough' but the Peerage retains the earlier spelling.) The title was created in 1690 for Richard Lumley in return for his contribution to bringing William-and-Mary to the English throne, in preference to the Catholic James II. It then passed to his sons, firstly Richard, then Thomas, the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Earls being known as 'Lumley-Saunderson', following their inheritance of the Saunderson estates. However, the seventh Earl broke the sequence by calling himself Lumley-Savile when, in 1797, he inherited the considerable Savile estates in Yorkshire and in Nottinghamshire (the Saviles owned a large house at Rufford Abbey, now demolished). The eighth Earl never married so in 1856 the Estate passed to a cousin, Richard George Lumley, who happened to be the younger brother of our Lady Frances Charlotte Arabella Lumley. By yet another twist of aristocratic contriving, their father had adopted the name Lumley-Savile in 1834, possibly because he foresaw the Earldom coming to his son, but his children were born just plain 'Lumley' and the family has retained this simple moniker to the present day. Two further points of interest are that the eighth Earl served as MP for Nottinghamshire and as Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, while his illegitimate son John Lumley-Savile became an important diplomat and, in 1888, was created Baron Savile of Rufford in the County of Nottinghamshire.

Finally, we might briefly refer to Lady Frances' birthplace, Tickhill Castle. The Castle



dates back to Norman times but in 1362 it became part of the Duchy of Lancaster, under the ownership of the Crown and was let to a variety of tenants. During the Civil War, the then tenants fought on the side of the King but were defeated by Parliamentary forces who destroyed the Castle's defences (as frequently

happened). The house was remodelled in the eighteenth century and our particular branch of the Lumley family were tenants during the nineteenth century. Charles died at Tickhill in 1867 (when he would have been 71 years old). This is consistent with his family having left Cotgrave Place in 1863, when the Edens moved in. Lady Frances died in 1879 in Kensington but is recorded in the 1971 Census as being a 'Visitor' at The Priory, Warton, Yorks, the house of a family relative, Constance Pennington, Baroness Muncaster (also born at Tickhill).

Robert Henley Shawe Eden (1840 – 1916)

According to local Trade Directories, Hon. Robert Henley Eden lived at Cotgrave Place for something like six years during the 1860s (1863 – 1869) but, because his period of residence fits neatly between the 1861 and 1871 Census Returns, we know nothing further than this until we find him in the 1871 Census, living in Bramcote (near Beeston). He is recorded as living at 36 Town Street, together with his wife Jessie Ellen, their four children and four servants. Robert describes his ‘occupation’ as ‘Peer’s Son’ – more of his parentage in a moment. All four children were registered as having been born in Cotgrave, which is consistent with the family being at Cotgrave Place from 1863 onward. In 1881 they had moved again to a village called Minty, near Malmsbury in Wiltshire, where Robert described himself as a ‘Land Agent’. Their two sons had left home but their two daughters and four servants were still with them. Then again, in 1911 Robert and his wife were living in Merionethshire, where Robert refers to himself as an Estate Agent. He died in London in 1916 and is buried in Maidenhead. Jessie Ellen died in 1927 in Hove (Sussex).

Robert was born in Wandsworth to Robert John Eden, 3rd Baron Auckland and his wife Mary Ann Hurt. His father was then Vicar of the local Parish Church. Robert John, being the third son of William Eden, first Baron Auckland, had no expectation of inheriting the title, so chose his career in the ministry but, on the death of his elder brother George, who died without offspring, he found himself Third Baron. Nevertheless, he continued with his ecclesiastical career, becoming Bishop of Sodor and Mann (on the Isle of Mann). Our Robert therefore spent much of his childhood there, only moving to Somerset when his father became Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1854. His mother was brought up at Alderwasley Hall in Derbyshire, so must have met her husband when, for a brief interval, he was Rector of Eyam, just a few miles away. Jessie Ellen was born in Swannington, Norfolk to Frederick Hildyard, Rector of Swannington Church and was married there to Robert Henley Shawe Eden in 1862 by *his* father. Her own father obviously had to defer to the ecclesiastical seniority of her husband’s father.



William Eden, 1st Baron Auckland

A brief word about the Barons Auckland may be in order. The Baronacy was created in 1793 for William Eden, a prominent politician and it has continued to exist until the present day. The ‘Auckland’ in question is that of West Auckland near Durham and it is interesting to know that both the Capital City of New Zealand and a small island near South Island are named after these Aucklands. The island was discovered in 1806 by an English Captain and named after a friend of his father (William Auckland, first Baron). The City was founded in 1840 by William Hobson, Governor of New Zealand and named after George Eden, second Baron.

St John Leigh Clowes (1833 – 1915)

The Clowes family first appear at Cotgrave Place in the 1871 Census, having replaced the Eden family sometime between 1869 and 1871. St John describes himself as a farmer of 437 acres, employing eight labourers and two boys. He had obviously taken over the land previously farmed by Charles Hill, whereas his immediate predecessor, Robert Eden, had made no pretence at all of being a farmer. St John was accompanied by his wife Elizabeth Caroline (nee Bingham), five children, a Governess and six other servants. He was born at Park Hill in Egginton, a small village in Derbyshire between Derby and Burton-on-Trent, while Elizabeth came from Brighton (born 1838). They were married in 1857 and settled in Torworth (near Retford, North Notts.), where, prior to their move to Cotgrave, St John farmed 200 acres, employing seven labourers. While living in Cotgrave, they had two more children, a son, Philip Cecil (with whom we shall be much interested in a moment) and a daughter, Evelyn May. In 1874 the family moved the few miles to Normanton (near Plumtree), then in the 1881 Census they are found to be living in Charlton Kings, Gloucestershire. They later moved to Oxfordshire, where, in 1891 (aged 58), St John describes himself as being a ‘Farm Steward’, so it would appear that he was associated with farming for most of his working life. Indeed, this had clearly been his intention - as a young man of nineteen, living in Hulme Walfield, Cheshire, he is recorded as being a pupil, studying to become a Land Agent. Finally, he and Elizabeth retired to Cheltenham (Gloucestershire), where he died in 1915, aged 82. She outlived him by five years.

St John’s origins are of some interest. Park Hill, it transpires, was a small country house built by the Every family in the early nineteenth century to function as a Dower House, their principal residence being Egginton Hall, a large mansion which was finally demolished in 1954. The Every family came originally from the West Country. However, Sir Simon Every married Anne, the daughter of Sir Henry Leigh of Egginton and, after his marriage, chose to settle in Egginton. He was a member of the Short Parliament of 1604 and was made First Baronet of Egginton in 1641. The Baronetcy has continued, from father to son, right up to the present day. The fact that St John was born in Park Hill and also having the second name Leigh suggests that he may have been related to the Everys but we have no direct evidence.

Finally, we shall briefly examine the career of St John’s son, Philip Cecil. The 1881 Census has him living at home with his parents but by 1891 he had left home. He re-appears next in East London, South Africa, where he married Daphne Scholtz (born in Cape Town in 1890). They had a son St John Legh Clowes (named after his grandfather) and he seems to have been something of a livewire. He was twice married, both marriages, apparently, being in England, so he obviously returned to his roots. What is quite clear is the fact that he enjoyed a productive career in the English theatre and cinema scene. His play ‘Dear Murderer’ was made into a film in 1948 which was very well received. However, his next effort ‘No Orchids for Miss Blandish’ was famously castigated for its concentration on sex and violence. It was described by the Monthly Film Bulletin as “the most sickening exhibition of brutality, perversion, sex and sadism ever to be shown on a cinema screen.”. It turned out, however, to be something of a commercial success! Admittedly, the connection with Cotgrave Place is a rather distant one but perhaps we should, nevertheless, be aware of it.



George and Thomas Marshall

Following the five-year tenancy of the Clowes family, there was a brief interlude during which Cotgrave Place was occupied by a pair of brothers who, though born in Stoke Bardolph, had lived and farmed for many years in Cotgrave. Their father, John Marshall came from Cropwell Bishop and, by 1841, had established himself as a farmer in Cotgrave. The 1851 Census gives us more detail – his farm covered 266 acres and employed four labourers - while in 1861 this had increased to 451 acres, employing eleven men and four boys. In an 1864 Trade Directory he is described as a ‘Landowner’ which has a certain significance. John and his wife, Mary had four children, all boys and it would appear that they were all involved in farming. The middle two, Thomas (born 1830) and George (1831) never married and remained close associates. Their father probably died sometime between the 1861 and 1871 Census’s, so, in 1871 we find Thomas and George sharing accommodation with two servants and running a farm of 230 acres. In 1881 this had been reduced to 110 acres and by 1891 they had apparently retired, though still living together with their two servants. There is no reference to either in the 1901 Census, so we may assume they had both died (they would by then have been in their seventies).

None of these Census Returns suggests that they were living at Cotgrave Place – we only learn of their joint tenancy from an 1874 Trade Directory. Then, in 1876, we learn that they had been replaced by Edward Waite Browne, so their stay was a relatively short one – less than two years and it is not at all clear what its significance was. It may have been part of their establishing themselves as members of the Cotgrave ‘Gentry’ - Thomas, in particular, is listed in several trade directories as ‘Mr’ and, in another reference, as ‘Private Resident’, though George, on the other hand, is usually referred to as ‘Farmer’. Possibly, they had made sufficient progress socially that they could converse with Earl Manvers on a personal level and that led to their tenancy of Cotgrave Place – but that is mere speculation. What is definitely recorded is Thomas’s membership of the Cotgrave Parish Council in 1896.

Edward Waite Browne (1826 – 1885)

As a resident at Cotgrave Place, Edward W Browne is unusual in that he was actually born in Cotgrave. He was the second son of John Henry Browne, Rector of All Saints Church and his wife Elizabeth Allethea Browne. J H was the longest serving of all Cotgrave Rectors and was responsible for the first major restoration of the Church during the Victorian era (there were several later ones). Edward, then aged fifteen, is recorded as living at the Rectory in the 1841 Census and again, aged 25, in the 1851 Census. At this juncture he describes himself as a farmer and there is evidence to suggest that he was looking after the Cotgrave Place farm for Charles Hill (then working as a Magistrate), this being quite a responsibility for a young man. That he was to take farming seriously is confirmed by the fact that in 1861 he was living in a Lincolnshire village, Langton-by-Wragby, while running a farm of 370 acres, employing six labourers and two boys. He also enjoyed the services of five servants which suggests that he was doing rather well! He also felt it necessary to inform the Census authorities that he was in possession of a BA degree from Cambridge University! (It would be interesting to know in which subject.)

At that time he was unmarried but, in 1862, he married Fanny Backden (aged 29) at Paddington. She joined him in Langton and they had two children (born 1865 and 1867) before she (sadly) died in 1870.

Her death was recorded at Horncastle, just a mile and a half from Langton. So, in the 1871 Census for Langton, Edward is recorded as being a widower, while running a farm of 890 acres, employing twelve men and eight boys, together with four house servants – he was clearly making a very successful career. In 1872 he married Edith Althea Franklyn at Clifton (Bristol) and he had four more children with her, the first, a son, Guy G. Browne being born (1874) in Clifton – presumably, Edith returned to her roots for the birth, but the family remained at Langton, where her second child, a daughter, Edith M. Browne was born in 1875.

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1872. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of St. Andrew's Clifton in the County of Gloucestershire

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
231	18 th April 1872	Edward Walter Browne	46	Widower	Esquire	Langton, Gloucestershire	John Henry Browne	Archdeacon
		Edith Althea Franklyn	29	Spinster	—	Clifton, Gloucestershire	George Woodroffe Franklyn	Esquire

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Licence — by me, James Clark, Curate

This Marriage was solemnized between us, E. W. Browne in the presence of George Althea Browne and Mary W. Franklyn

Immediately following this, the family moved to Cotgrave Place – they were certainly resident in 1876 - and Edward (aged 56) was still farming, though we have no record of the acreage involved. (It is worth bearing in mind that the Cotgrave Church advowson was held by the Manvers family so the Brownes would be well known to them and Edward would have been an obvious candidate for the Cotgrave Place tenancy.) In the 1881 Census Edward and Edith had five children living with them, together with eight servants. In fact, they were to have one further child, a son, H. Franklyn Browne who was born in 1883, just two years before Edward died in Easthorpe, Southwell (Edith was then a little over forty!).

It would appear that he chose to set up a retirement home for his wife, so the family left Cotgrave, probably in early 1885, and settled in Southwell, where Edith remained at least until 1901. She is on record as living there in both the 1891 and 1901 Census's, together with several of her children. There is an intriguing record in 1933 of the death of a widow, Edith Browne, aged 92 in Kingsclere, Hampshire which is consistent with the birth date of 'our' Edith A. Browne but we cannot be sure that it is, indeed, the same person.

Finally, we note another oddity which is hard to explain. The sixth child, H Franklyn Browne, is recorded in several Census Returns as being born in Langton, this being in 1883, when the family was still living in Cotgrave. They must have made several friends there but there would seem to be no obvious reason for Edith to return in order to give birth – possibly it was a mere accident that she just happened to be there when the child arrived. We can only guess.

Albert Armitage (1843 – 1911)

Following the departure of the Browne family in 1885, we run across a puzzling lack of information. The 1891 Census makes no mention of Cotgrave Place whatsoever! Then, in 1901, Cotgrave Place does get a mention but the only individuals referred to are clearly farm workers or domestic servants – there is no sign of an ‘important person’ who might be running the farm. The mystery is cleared up, however, by studying a number of Trade Directories. In 1891, 1900, 1901 and 1904 there are references to Albert Armitage as a farmer living at Cotgrave Place and, when we look more carefully at the 1891 Census, we find him, living *somewhere* in Cotgrave with his wife Penelope (Penelope Elliot Goodacre came from Lenton and they married in 1866), his half-brother John and his sister Elizabeth and sister-in-law Priscilla Richardson. They also have three servants. Albert describes his occupation as Farmer and Butcher. That the ‘somewhere’ is actually Cotgrave Place is confirmed by the fact that one of the people living there in the 1901 Census is



Priscilla Richardson (acting as housekeeper), while the mystery is further de-mystified when we discover that Albert was a farmer in Cotgrave and a butcher in Nottingham, having a shop in Angel Row and a private house at 23 Magdala Road, Nottingham (just off the Mansfield Road, north of the city). The fact that he was not recorded in the 1901 Cotgrave Census is easily explained by his being at his Nottingham address on the night of the Census.

It is interesting to look more closely at his Nottingham activities. Looking back to the 1871 Census in Nottingham, we learn that he was both a butcher and a maltster (that is, he fermented barley to produce the malt used in brewing beer). This is rarely done on a small scale and it would appear that his butchering business was also rather more than a small corner shop. The 1881 Census reveals a rather large menage in Angel Row, with several apprentice butchers. Assuming that he was also farming the 400-or-so acres round Cotgrave Place from about 1885, suggests that Albert was a businessman on a grand scale but exactly how he managed three residences is something of a mystery. So far as our records show, he had no children to help him out, only a brother and sister! What is more, he must have shown a real interest in Cotgrave – an 1896/7 Trade Directory lists him as being Vice Chairman of Cotgrave Parish Council (the one of which Thomas Marshall was also a member).

The last reference to Albert’s being at Cotgrave Place is in the 1905 Kelly’s Directory but he had obviously left by 1911 because the James family were definitely living in Cotgrave Place in that year, while the 1911 Census shows Albert and ‘Nellie’ living in Bulwell, he being a ‘Retired Butcher, Maltster and Farmer’. Penelope’s sister, Priscilla Richardson (age 74) was still living with them. Albert died later that year.

John James (1863 – 1943)

John Hubert James (1906 – 1986)

As explained in the introduction, the James family were associated with Cotgrave Place for a period of some seventy-seven years - essentially from 1911 until 1988. In particular, they were tenants of the Earls Manvers from 1911 until the 1941/2 sale, when the property was sold to Robert Smith. What is more, it eventually came into their ownership, when John Hubert James bought it from Marion Smith in 1953.

John James was born in Barnston, near Langar in 1864. According to the 1871 Census, his father (also called John!) was a serious farmer, running a farm of 300 acres and employing seven labourers and three boys, so young John was clearly brought up in a farming environment. The family also enjoyed the services of three servants, so they were obviously comfortably-off. By 1881 they had moved to Holme Pierrepont where they had extended their acreage to 555 and their workforce to twelve. John, at the age of seventeen, was just beginning to take a major interest. In the 1891 Census, he describes himself as a 'Farmer', while his father, aged sixty-two, was presumably beginning to relax! At this time, the family was based at Holme House (now alongside the traffic lights on the A52 dual carriageway) and they were still there in 1901, when John is described as a farmer and an employer. By this time, he had married (in 1900) Frances Mary Marriott from Cropwell Butler, her father having been a major farmer there (415 acres, eleven men and three boys!). They had three children, Hester Mary, Annis Frances Griffin and John Hubert.

Three servants were employed at Holme House, Rosa Caunt, Emma G(?) and Edwin Smith – of particular interest because two of them were still employed at Cotgrave Place, when 'young' John and family, moved there sometime between 1905 and 1911 - we cannot be sure exactly when they moved. It is interesting that, in Trade Directories for 1900, 1904 and 1905 John is said to be living at Holme House but farming in both Holme Pierrepont and Stragglethorpe, so, in a sense, the move may have been gradual. However, they were certainly living at Cotgrave Place in 1911. What is more, in the Cotgrave Census for that year their son John Hubert (born June 1906) is said to have been born in Cotgrave which suggests that they were already there in 1906 (though not necessarily at Cotgrave Place!).



In 1922 John was at Cotgrave Place, a JP and running a farm of more than 150 acres. The family were still there in 1939, when John (aged 76) had retired and his wife Frances Mary was an invalid. In 1941 John is again described as a JP, a farmer and a land agent, though, by this time, John Hubert James was certainly running the farm. John James died in 1943, while John Hubert James continued running the farm until his own death in 1986.

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