

## CHADDESSEN & THE CHOLERTON FAMILY

Anyone who has undertaken detailed research into their own family history inevitably acquires a considerable amount of material over the course of time. Since my family has remained in Chaddesden and its immediate vicinity down the centuries, much of the information I have unearthed whilst piecing together the Cholerton family tree serves a dual purpose, both describing incidents in the lives of my ancestors as well as throwing some light on different aspects of village history as you will now read.

In June 1565, a Chaddesden yeoman by the name of Lawrence Angers (or Angel, as it was sometimes written) drew up his will. He was a prosperous man, for his goods amounted to more than £78, and his will occupies some 100 lines of text, but it is only the first few sentences that concern us here. After commending his soul 'into the hands of almighty god my Creator Redeemer and Saviour and to all the holle Company in heaven', and requesting burial in 'the Churchyard of Chaddesden' Lawrence began to make his bequests. The church was to receive the sum of 3s 4d for repairs, and then he left 4d each to fifteen of his poor neighbours, and as we read through his list we encounter the names of some of those inhabitants of early Elizabethan Chaddesden: Henry Stevens ... Agnes Rose ... Richard Cowlishaw and then Widow Chollerton. Unfortunately neither her Christian name nor the name of her late husband is given, but she is the first of my family on record as living in Chaddesden, and it seems probable that she was the mother (or even grandmother) of William Cholerton (c.1550–1617) whom we will meet again below.

Sixteenth century England witnessed a considerable expansion in the production of written records as, for example, parish registers began to be kept on a formal basis and ever increasing numbers of wills were prepared. Unfortunately, further research into any family at Chaddesden around this time is hampered by the fact that the earliest register of St. Mary's Church, which began in 1598, went missing sometime between 1824 and 1833. A book written in 1873 comments on the possible fate of this missing volume as follows: 'The old Registers of this parish [i.e. Chaddesden], commencing from an early date, have been lost, it is said by one of the parish clerks, some years ago. "They are supposed", observes the Vicar (Rev. Charles Rawlins), "to have been burnt, at least such is the tradition"' (A. E. Cockayne, *Cockayne Memoranda*, Congleton, 1873, pp.65–6). Although this reference is to missing registers (i.e. in the plural) only a single combined volume of births, marriages and burials seems to have vanished. There is some reason to doubt that the old register was actually destroyed in this manner, and I think it may possibly have been sold as a curio to someone willing to pay a guinea or two for such an ancient volume. Who knows, perhaps it might just reappear one day! The loss of this old Chaddesden register is only partially compensated for by the Bishops' Transcripts at Staffordshire Record Office, which begin in 1663.

With the oldest register at Chaddesden missing, it was good fortune that at much the same time – from 1578 onwards – my distant ancestors, William and Ellen Cholerton, were actually raising their family in the adjacent parish of Morley, where the parish registers date back to 1540. They lived at Morley Lime, only a few hundred yards to the north of the Chaddesden parish boundary and, as we have already noted, it was at Chaddesden that Widow Chollerton was the recipient of a small legacy in Lawrence Angers' will of 1565.

By a piece of legislation dating back to the time of the Spanish Armada and entitled An Act to Avoid Horse Stealing (31st Eliz. I, c.12), anyone buying a horse at a fair or market was obliged to have a description of it and the purchase price registered by the Clerk. If the horse subsequently proved to be stolen and claimed by the owner within six months the horse would be restored providing the purchase price was repaid; if the horse sale was not registered, its original owner might take it back at any time without providing recompense. Derby Local Studies Library has a set of Horse Fair books covering some of the fairs held at Derby in the seventeenth century, which provide details of the horses sold and also note any distinguishing marks, price paid, names of seller and purchaser, and the name(s) of the seller's vouchees ... all of which were designed to stop the trade in stolen horses. William Cholerton (1613–1684) makes an appearance in the following entry:

4 February 1647:  
*Thos. Eaton of Etwall in ye county of Derby yeoman sells  
 to John Baker of Etwall aforesaid yeoman a bay mare with  
 a star 2 white heeles behind trotting & four saddle spots Price £6 6s 8d  
 Tho. Brograve of Rolleston in ye County of Stafford gent  
 Willm Cholerton of Chaddesden in ye said county of Derby husbandman: vouch*

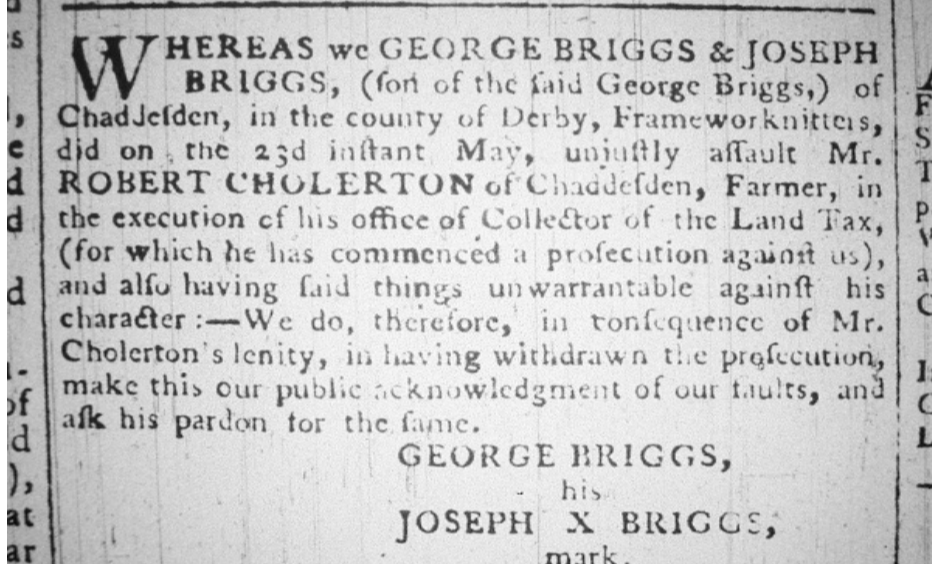
Nowadays we seem to be faced with ever-increasing tax demands of one sort or another and we probably like to think back to the 'good old days' when we imagine that people were able to keep all of their income. However, contrary to popular belief, taxation in one form or another has been around for a long while as these three examples demonstrate:

**Hearth Tax** – Introduced in 1662, this new tax was levied on the occupants of domestic properties throughout the country. Subject to a few basic exemptions for the very poor, every householder had to pay two shillings a year for each hearth in his or her home; and to ensure the government did not miss out on any revenue, parish constables were empowered to enter houses in their villages to check the premises for themselves. In 1662, like most of his neighbours, my own ancestor, William Cholerton (1613–1684), had a house in Chaddesden with just a single hearth and so he was assessed at the lowest rate of two shillings. Although this would only have represented something like an average day's wages for a man I can still imagine him grumbling as he paid his dues in two instalments at Lady Day (25th March) and Michaelmas (29th September)! At that time just 46 taxable premises were noted in Chaddesden, the biggest house by far was that belonging to 'Robert Willymott, Esqr', who was taxed on five hearths.

**Horse Tax** – Modern car-owners in the U.K. are only too familiar with Vehicle Excise Duty, but private transport was also taxed in the 18th century. Derby Local Studies Library holds details of the 1785/6 Horse Tax which quite a few Chaddesden residents had to pay. Indeed my gt-gt-gt grandfather Robert Cholerton and his brother John each owned a saddle-horse, on which they had to pay duty of ten shillings apiece.

**Land Tax** – This was a particularly long-lived example of direct taxation, paid by the owners of land or property according to the size of their landholdings. It was first levied in 1692 and only finally abolished in 1963, although by then most taxpayers had long since redeemed their liability. The Chaddesden returns for the period 1780–1832 have survived and include many references to the Cholerton family, here are a few taken from just one year:

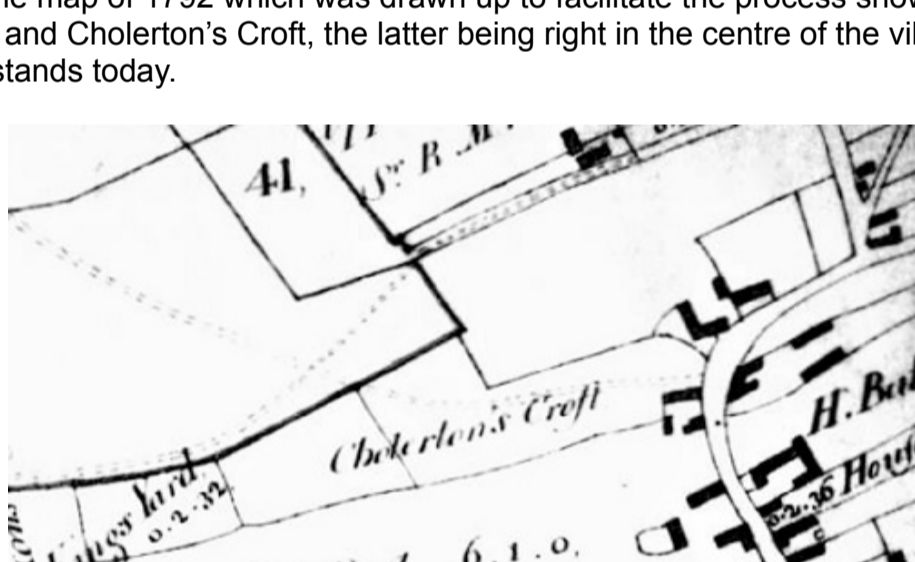
In 1781 the Land Tax documentation for Chaddesden extended to three pages, the preamble advising that the sums raised therein had been assessed at '4 shillings in the pound' and were made in pursuance of an Act of Parliament 'for granting an Aid to His Majesty'. Here we can read how Matthew Cholerton was the occupant of land owned by three different people – Robert Mead Wilmot, Widow Handley and Mr. Wright – and which was assessed in total at 6s 2d tax. Another one of Wilmot's tenants was my gt-gt-gt-gt grandfather Robert Cholerton, whose sizeable holding was taxed at £3 5s 0d. John Cholerton, on the other hand, was the owner-occupier of land assessed at 18s 6d as well as the occupier of some other land owned by Hugh Bateman charged at 5s 0d. To put these sums into perspective, the total amount raised through the Land Tax in Chaddesden that year (and successive years) amounted to £116 0s 8d.



The annual job of collecting the Land Tax fell on the shoulders of local men and this onerous and unpopular job was usually undertaken on a rota basis. From time to time violence ensued and in May 1796 my relative, Robert Cholerton, who was then acting in the capacity of a collector of the tax was assaulted. Generously he withdrew the prosecution on the condition that the two men responsible acknowledged their crime in the pages of the *Derby Mercury* newspaper, which they did on 2 June 1796 as can be seen here.

**Fig. 1: George and Joseph Briggs' public apology**

The last decade of the eighteenth century witnessed a dramatic agricultural upheaval in Chaddesden when its remaining open fields and common land were enclosed by a Private Act of Parliament (31 Geo. III, c.51). The map of 1792 which was drawn up to facilitate the process shows both Cholerton's Close and Cholerton's Croft, the latter being right in the centre of the village where Wilsthorpe Road stands today.



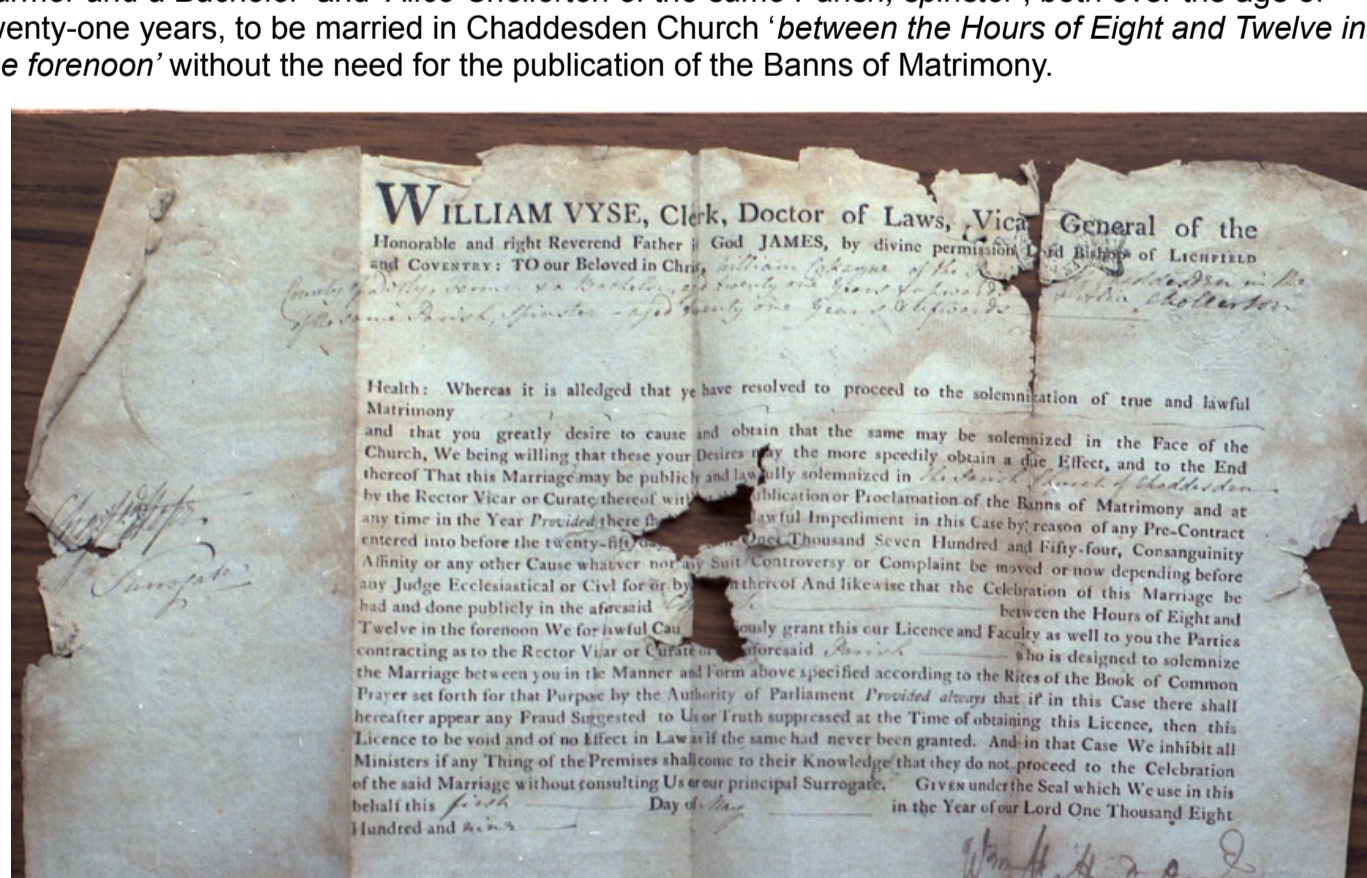
**Fig. 2: Cholerton's Croft as shown in the Enclosure Map of 1792**

Cholerton's Close, however, was located about three-quarters of a mile out of the village in fields to the east of Morley Road and is still in agricultural use today. This photograph of c.1970 shows its location, although these days the view has changed somewhat thanks to Acorn Way which now runs behind the small, tree-lined brook flowing from left to right across the centre of the picture.



**Fig. 3: Cholerton's Close situated off the Bridle Path on Morley Road**

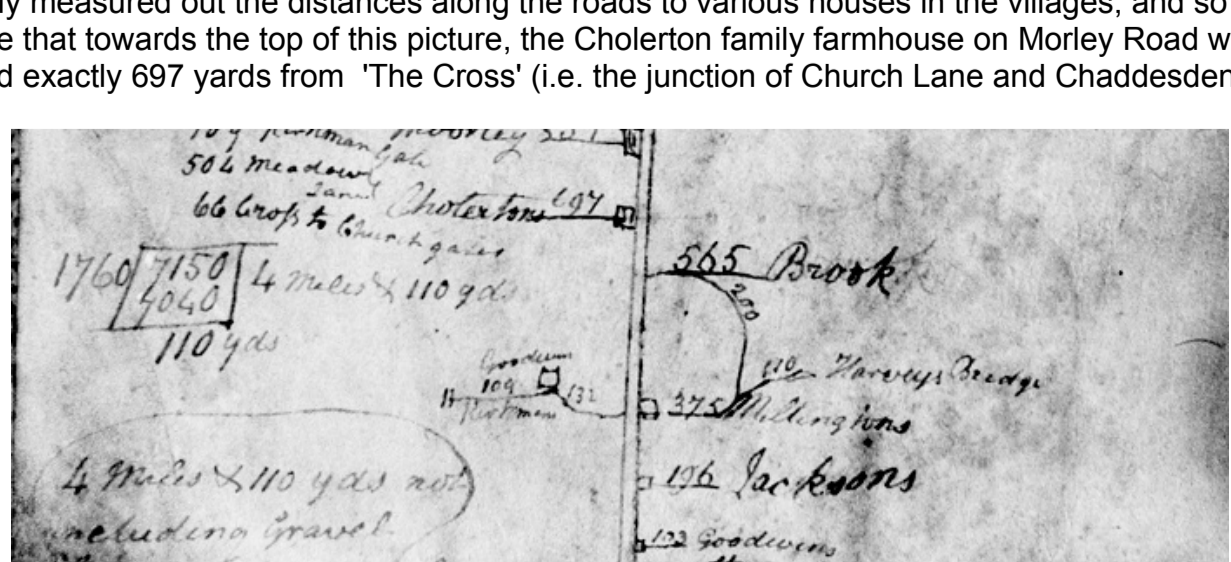
Another Chaddesden family of considerable antiquity is that of Cokayne (sometimes spelled Cockayne) and on several occasions they intermarried with the Cholertons. This illustration shows the marriage licence, dated 1 May 1809, permitting 'William Cokayne of the Parish of Chaddesden, Farmer and a Bachelor' and 'Alice Cholerton of the same Parish, spinster', both over the age of twenty-one years, to be married in Chaddesden Church 'between the Hours of Eight and Twelve in the forenoon' without the need for the publication of the Banns of Matrimony.



**Fig. 4: The marriage licence for William Cokayne and Alice Cholerton, 1809**

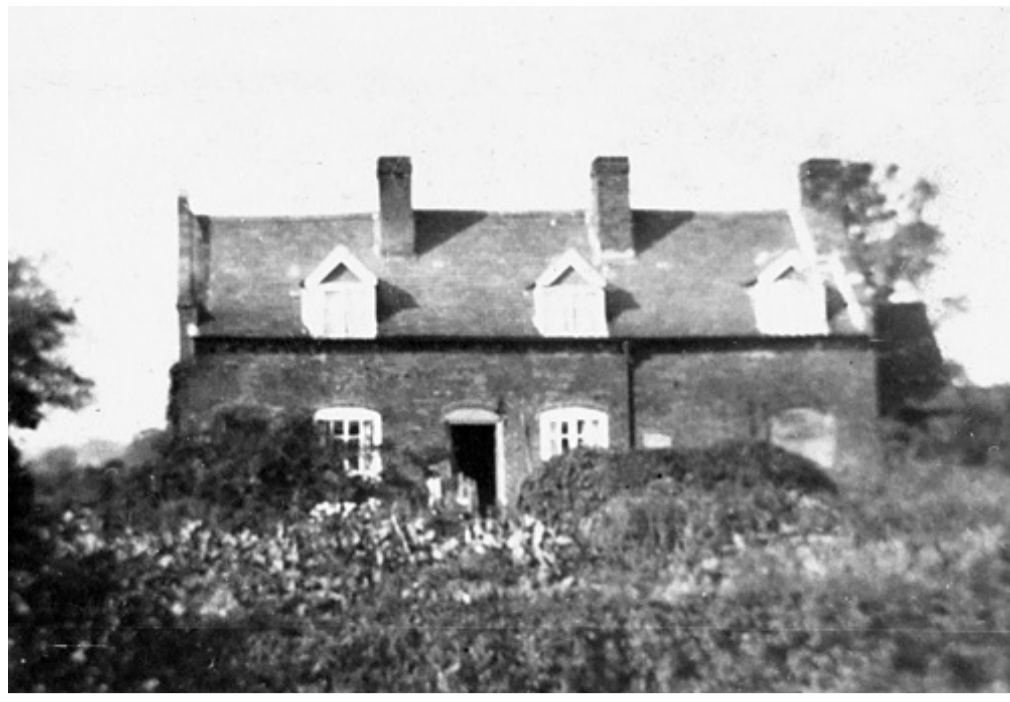
The couple were married two days later and eventually had nine children, and I think I am correct in stating that all the Cokaynes listed in the Chaddesden census returns from 1851 to 1911 were descended from them.

A couple of spare pages at the back of the oldest surviving register of St. Mary's Church were utilised by the parish clerk c.1825 when he drew a simple sketch plan of the roads in the village, presumably with a view to apportioning out the cost of their repair, since at this point in history each parish was responsible for maintaining its own roads. What makes the clerk's plan so interesting is that he carefully measured out the distances along the roads to various houses in the villages, and so we can see that towards the top of this picture, the Cholerton family farmhouse on Morley Road was situated exactly 697 yards from 'The Cross' (i.e. the junction of Church Lane and Chaddesden Lane).



**Fig. 5: Part of a plan of the village roads c.1825 marking the principal homesteads**

Staff from the Inland Revenue's Valuation Office visited Chaddesden sometime around 1913 in order to value each individual property as laid down by the provisions of The Finance (1909–1910) Act, which introduced the collection of a duty on the incremental increase in the value of land. The relevant field book for Chaddesden is now in The National Archives at Kew (ref: IR 58/26032) and the Cholerton family farmhouse on Morley Road, which can be seen in the photograph below (Fig. 6), is listed as property number 16. There it is described as a freehold brick-and-tile house in moderately good condition, comprising four bedrooms, a living-room and kitchen; a further note adds 'Water good' ... a reference to the cast-iron pump a few yards away. Like most of the houses in Chaddesden at that time the old farmhouse was owned by the Wilmot estate and thus came under the watchful eye of Miss Constance Wilmot of Chaddesden Hall. The Valuation Office field book goes on to note that the occupier of the farmhouse was William Cholerton (my great-grandfather), who held the house together with some four and a half acres of land on an annual tenancy, for which he paid £18 7s 0d a year; in addition he was responsible for paying the rates and insurance, with Miss Wilmot liable for any necessary repairs.



**Fig. 6: The Cholerton family farmhouse on Morley Road**

My grandfather, John Robert Cholerton, told me the house had been occupied by the Cholertons for many, many years (a fact corroborated by the 1825 plan), but shortly after my father was born there in the early 1920s our family left the property, which was demolished some years later and today a bungalow (51, Morley Road) occupies its site. For a few years in the 1930s the house was let out to other people and went by the name of Springfield Farm, but as far as I know this name was never used by my family.

From time to time family members have featured in the pages of the local press, unfortunately not always for the right reason. For example, The *Derby Mercury* of 30 September 1868 relates that: 'Henry Cholerton, of Chaddesden, was summoned by police-constable Harper for negligent driving at that place, on Monday last. Admitting the offence, the defendant was fined 2s 6d and costs.' Exactly what, I wonder, was Henry driving that day?

Perhaps a rather more unusual case featured in the pages of the *Derby Daily Telegraph* of 4 October 1889 and involved John Cholerton and his wife Maria. As can be seen here, the couple were accused of causing damage by trespassing in Chaddesden Wood, the property of Sir Henry Wilmot. When I first came across the report, I thought that it would turn out to be an example of a young couple making for a particularly sheltered spot of the wood called Cozy Corner, much frequented by courting couples, but upon further investigation I realised that John was then aged 53 and his wife was just a year younger; so maybe they had some other purpose in mind ... liberating a pheasant or two for the cooking-pot possibly!

**DAMAGING UNDERWOOD.—John Cholerton and Maria Cholerton were summoned for damaging certain underwood on the estate of Sir Henry Wilmot, Bart., at Chaddesden, by trampling down the same on September 27th.—A gamekeeper named Ashton, employed by Sir Henry Wilmot, spoke to seeing the defendants in Chaddesden Wood on the day in question. He had previously cautioned the male defendant for being there. A great deal of damage had been done by trespassers in the wood.—There was practically no defence.—The male defendant had been in trouble on eight previous occasions, and the defendants were now each fined 2s. 6d., together with the damage and costs, or in default seven days' imprisonment.**

**Fig. 7: Trespass in Chaddesden Wood, 1889**

Another member of the family, Elizabeth Cholerton, had an unremarkable childhood but some of her descendants would undertake a truly amazing journey for the sake of their religion. Elizabeth was baptised at St. Mary's Church, Chaddesden, on 2 Nov 1773, and was one of the seven children of Francis Cholerton and Elizabeth Stafford. Together with her parents and brothers and sisters she spent her childhood at the family home on Chaddesden Lane, which many years later would variously be known by the names of Fernbank and Whitecroft and is pictured here in December 2013 after it had lain empty and on the market for some months.



**Fig. 8: Fernbank, Chaddesden Lane, 2013**

On 3 November 1794, just twenty-one years and a day after her baptism, Elizabeth Cholerton was back in Chaddesden Church for another important ceremony, this time to be married to William Parkes, who was of a similar age having been baptised in June 1773 at Darley Dale. Standing in St. Mary's Church for the ceremony, the couple could never have imagined that some of their descendants would travel to America as pioneers of the Mormon faith!

Their son, also called William Parkes (1797–1855), was born in Derby and married Jemima Mary Brentnall at St. Werburgh's Church in the town on 13 February 1827. The couple lived in Agard Street, Derby, at the time of the 1841 Census, where William followed his trade as a framework knitter. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) were active in Derbyshire, and it seems that William, Jemima Mary and their family joined the church in 1848 at Derby and, along with many other converts, began to think about emigrating to the United States. In the 1851 Census, William and Jemima Mary were still at Agard Street in Derby and working in the local silk industry, together with daughters Elizabeth, Jemima and Ann and William's mother-in-law Hannah Brentnall.

William and Jemima Mary's daughter, Jemima Parkes, married Joseph Robinson on 26 November 1853 in Derby, and the newly-weds left sailed for America on 22 February 1854, bound for New Orleans. Once they had disembarked in America the remainder of the journey facing Jemima and Joseph and numerous others like them was definitely not for the faint-hearted, for in front of them lay a long steamboat trip down the Mississippi River from New Orleans to St. Louis, then another river trip down the Mississippi to Council Bluffs, and finally an overland expedition to Salt Lake City either by wagon, pushing a handcart, or simply on foot ... a distance well in excess of 2,000 miles. Back in Derby, William and Jemima Mary Parkes were making their own preparations to emigrate when Jemima Mary sadly died and was buried at St. Alkmund's Church on 25 July 1854. William then set out with his daughter, Ann, but died (possibly of cholera) on the American plains in June 1855 whilst on his way to Utah. Ann eventually arrived safely and was later joined by other family members.

A look at the oldest surviving public house in Chaddesden offers some interesting family connections. Seemingly the Wilmot Arms made its first appearance in written records between the years 1827 and 1829, when John Millington, its landlord, ran the pub while also working as a stonemason and farming a smallholding. That there is no reference to the Wilmot Arms prior to Millington's time is simply because the pub was then known as the Wheel Inn. This hostelry was certainly in existence by 1759 when it was used as the venue of the manor court. The name change from the Wheel to the Wilmot Arms apparently occurred early in the nineteenth century, for land-tax returns initially show John Millington assessed as an owner-occupier of an unnamed property, however, in 1819 he features as the tenant of the same premises, having evidently sold the freehold to the Wilmot family of Chaddesden Hall. On the assumption that this property was indeed the village pub, its name could have been changed to honour the new owners anytime after 1819, although the Wheel Inn continues to be mentioned until at least 1823.

John Millington remained as landlord of the Wilmot Arms until his death in 1839. By his will he left the interest on his assets to his wife for the duration of her life, and then to his sister, Mary, the wife of Robert Cholerton, with remainder to their children. The licence of the Wilmot Arms was duly transferred to Robert Cholerton's eldest son, Edward, who, like his predecessor, had to take on several jobs – farming and acting as the village schoolmaster – to make ends meet. Unfortunately Edward Cholerton died, aged only 45, in 1844; however, his widow, Mary, remained at the Wilmot Arms and the next year married George Briggs, who took over the licence.

Sometime after 1857 the Briggs family vacated the pub and the licence passed to German Cholerton (Edward's half-brother), who ran the Wilmot Arms with the assistance of his wife, Anne. Sadly, German was not destined for a long life either and died in 1868 at the age of 41. Shortly afterwards, Anne Cholerton married John Whitehurst Haynes, who continued as the pub's landlord until the early twentieth century. When I used to wind the church clock I was reminded of J. W. Haynes every time I looked out of the tower's tiny window, for he had carved his name into the stonework of the window opening!



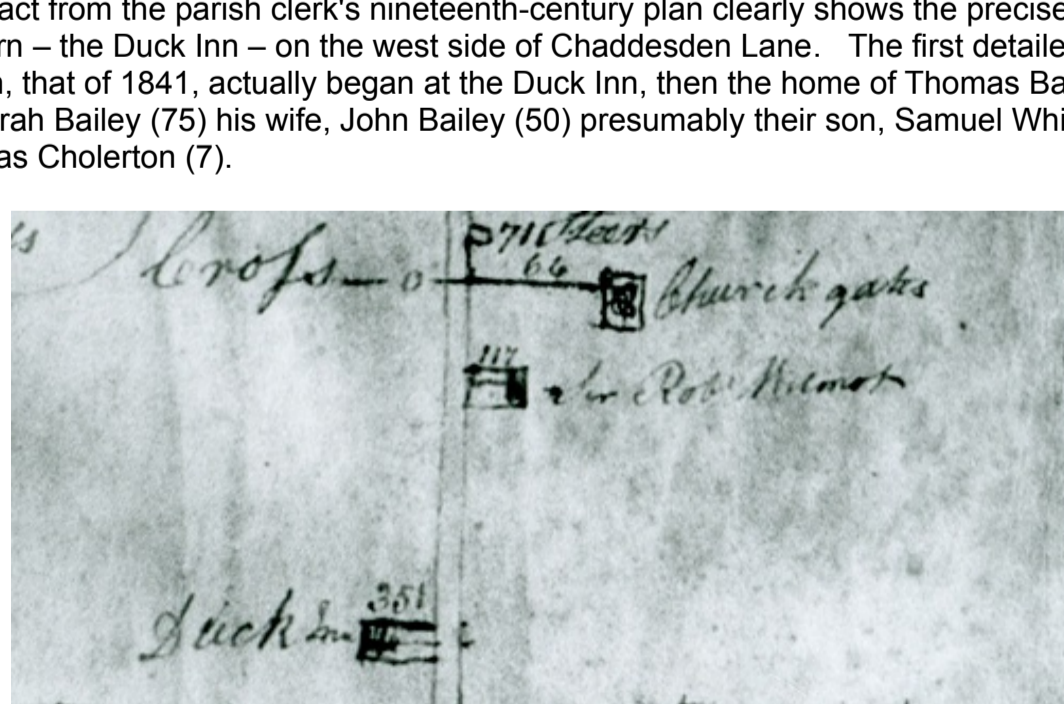
**Fig. 9: The Wilmot Arms, 2011**

The section of the parish clerk's plan of c.1825 shown earlier in the article (Fig. 5) somewhat obliquely refers to the Wilmot Arms as 'Millingtons'. Note also the nearby 'Harvey's Bridge' ... Elizabeth Harvey married John Cholerton in 1762, and the bridge (or rather its modern successor) still spans Chaddesden Brook at the bottom of Chapel Lane.

Today, many landlords later, the Wilmot Arms has all the appearance of a late eighteenth-century building, albeit one probably built around an earlier core. It is not formally listed as such, but is recorded in Derby City Council's schedule of local properties of architectural or historical importance. Interesting features to note in this 2011 photograph of the main (west) front include the vertically-sliding sash windows under brick segmental arches; the shutters (since removed) on the downstairs windows; and the two sets of semi-circular iron railings on either side of the front door.

The village pub features in a piece of Cholerton family folklore. My father once told me that one of the Cholerton landlords of the Wilmot Arms (he wasn't sure exactly which one) possessed a grandfather clock which kept time for the patrons of the pub back in the days when most people did not have their own timepieces. It became something of a tradition that whenever a new landlord took over the licence the old clock was left behind and thus continued to tick away the hours and minutes as one licensee followed another. A charming little story, but I imagine the old clock is now long gone!

Another extract from the parish clerk's nineteenth-century plan clearly shows the precise location of a second tavern – the Duck Inn – on the west side of Chaddesden Lane. The first detailed census of Chaddesden, that of 1841, actually began at the Duck Inn, then the home of Thomas Bailey (75) a publican, Sarah Bailey (75) his wife, John Bailey (50) presumably their son, Samuel White (55), and finally Thomas Cholerton (7).



**Fig. 10: Another part of the parish roads plan (c.1825) showing the location of the Duck Inn**

The Baileys' daughter, Mary, married young Thomas' father, also named Thomas Cholerton, at Chaddesden in June 1831 ... their first child, a girl, died shortly after birth in 1832, but they went on to have two more children, both boys, Thomas in 1833 and John in 1836.

**At Chaddesden, in this county, on Thursday last, by the Rev. S. Fox, Mr. Thos. Cholerton, jun. to Mary, youngest daughter of Mr. Thomas Bailey, of the Duck public house, both of the above place.**

**Fig. 11: *Derby Mercury*, 22 June 1831: The marriage of Thomas Cholerton junr to Mary Bailey of the Duck Inn, Chaddesden**

Unfortunately Mary Cholerton died in September 1837 and evidently her husband was unable to bring up the boys by himself, so Thomas initially went to live at the Duck Inn with his grandparents, while John stayed with an aunt and uncle. Local legend has it that the Duck Inn had its licence revoked a few years later because the noise of its patrons disturbed the Wilmot family at Chaddesden Hall only a few hundred yards away, however, in reality it seems the place simply closed down on the death of John Bailey in 1847, his father having died in 1842.

I hope you have enjoyed this rather eclectic ramble through the history of Chaddesden. All the details in the article were all discovered as I researched my family tree; maybe it might encourage you to trace your own family history, you never know what you might find!

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