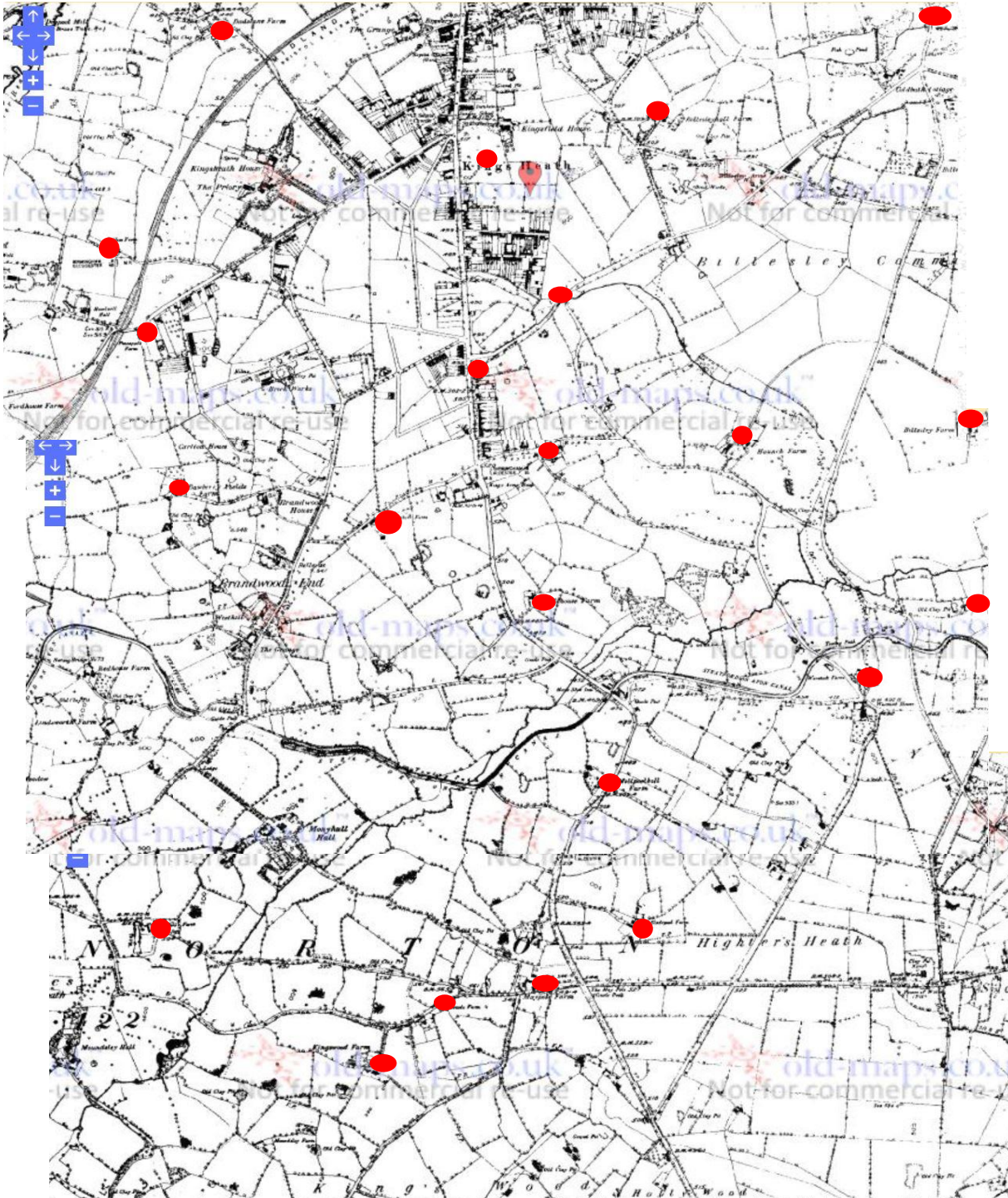


Old Farms of Kings Heath (part 1) - from a talk given by
Andy Bishop in 2019



Malthouse Farm, Alcester Lane's End 1980s

I have looked through old maps of Kings Heath and have discovered 22 old farms in the local area (the map stretches from Queensbridge Road to the Maypole):



There may well be more as some were only small, were not named, and may not have been listed in trade directories.

Some of the named farms in and around Kings Heath are listed below:

In 1884 there were:

Church Farm

Dads Lane Farm

Hollybank Farm

Billesley Farm

Billesley Hall Farm

Warstock Farm

Southern Farm

Woodthorpe Farm

Broad Lane Farm

Malthouse Farm

Dawberry Fields Farm

Haunch Lane Farm

Pineapple Farm

Mayhouse Farm

Bell's Farm

Quagmire Farm

Titterford Farm (later known as Trittterford Farm)

Paradise Farm

Wheeler's Lane Farm

Coldbath Farm

Millpool Hill Farm

Maypole Farm

Sladepool Farm

Warstock Farm

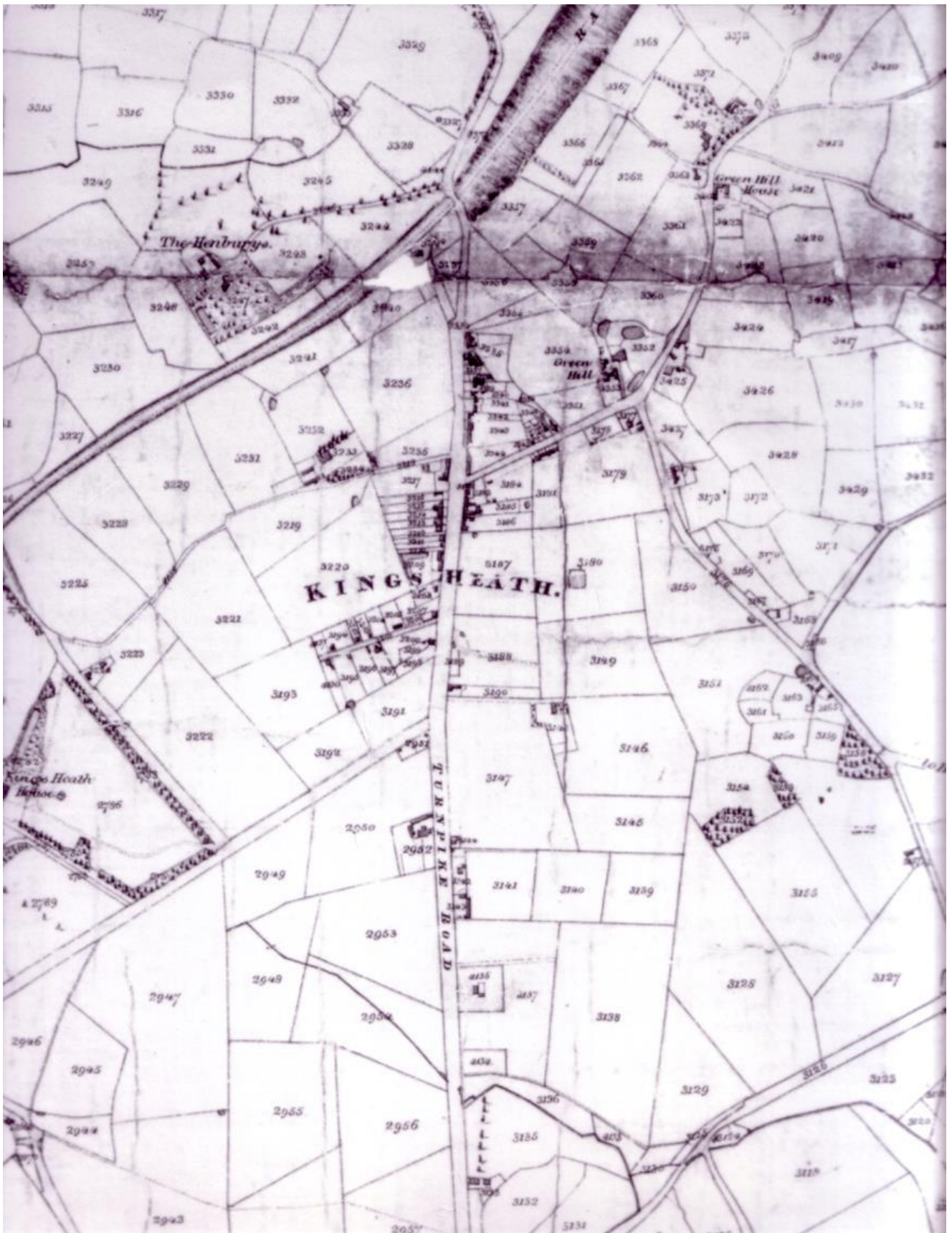
Ivy House Farm

Druids Farm

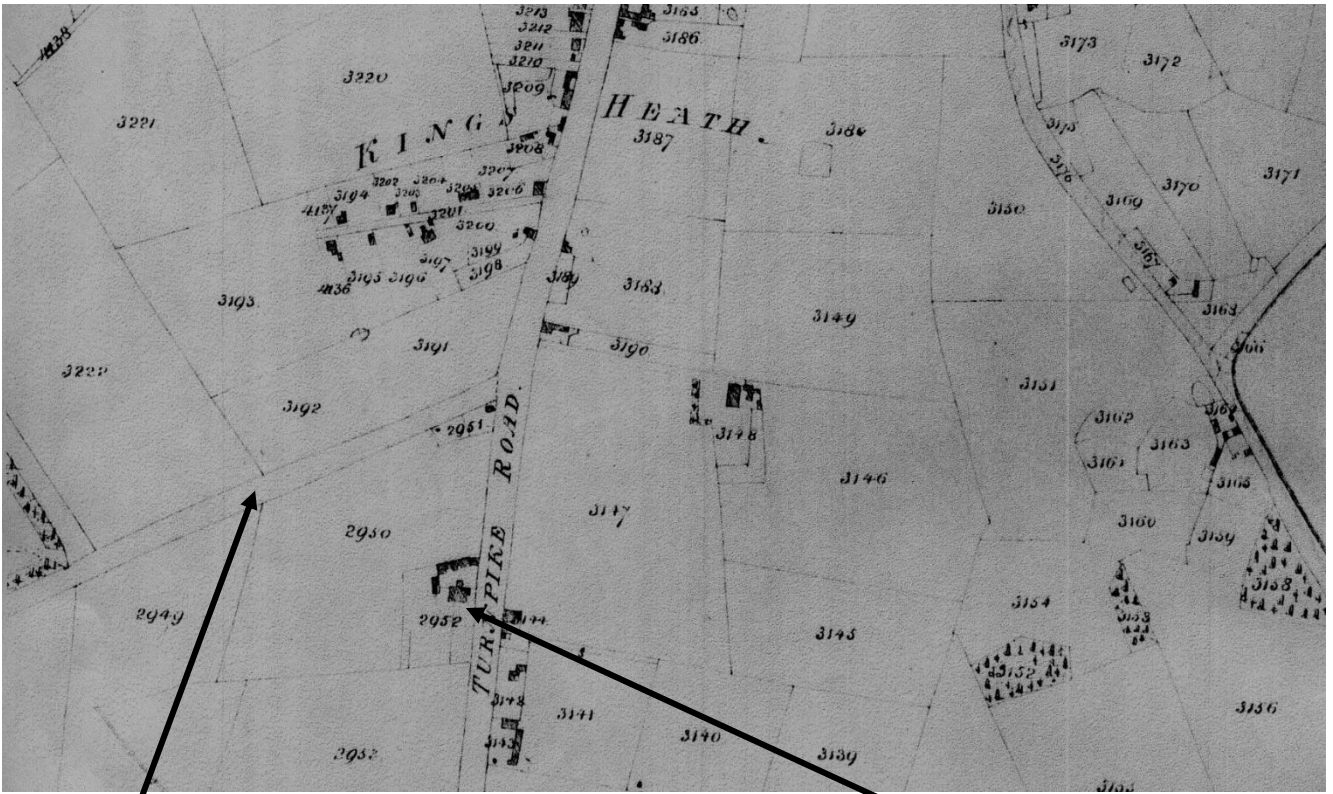
Alcester Lanes End Farm

Church Farm

The map below shows Kings Heath as it was in 1838:



If we look in closer detail we can see Church Farm:



Vicarage Road (then known as Bleak Lane)

Church Farm

In 1838 the plot of land associated with Church Farm was:

Plot 2952

Owner – William Congreve Russell

Buildings: Farmhouse, outbuildings, yard, orchard, and garden

Surrounding fields:

Garden close – arable

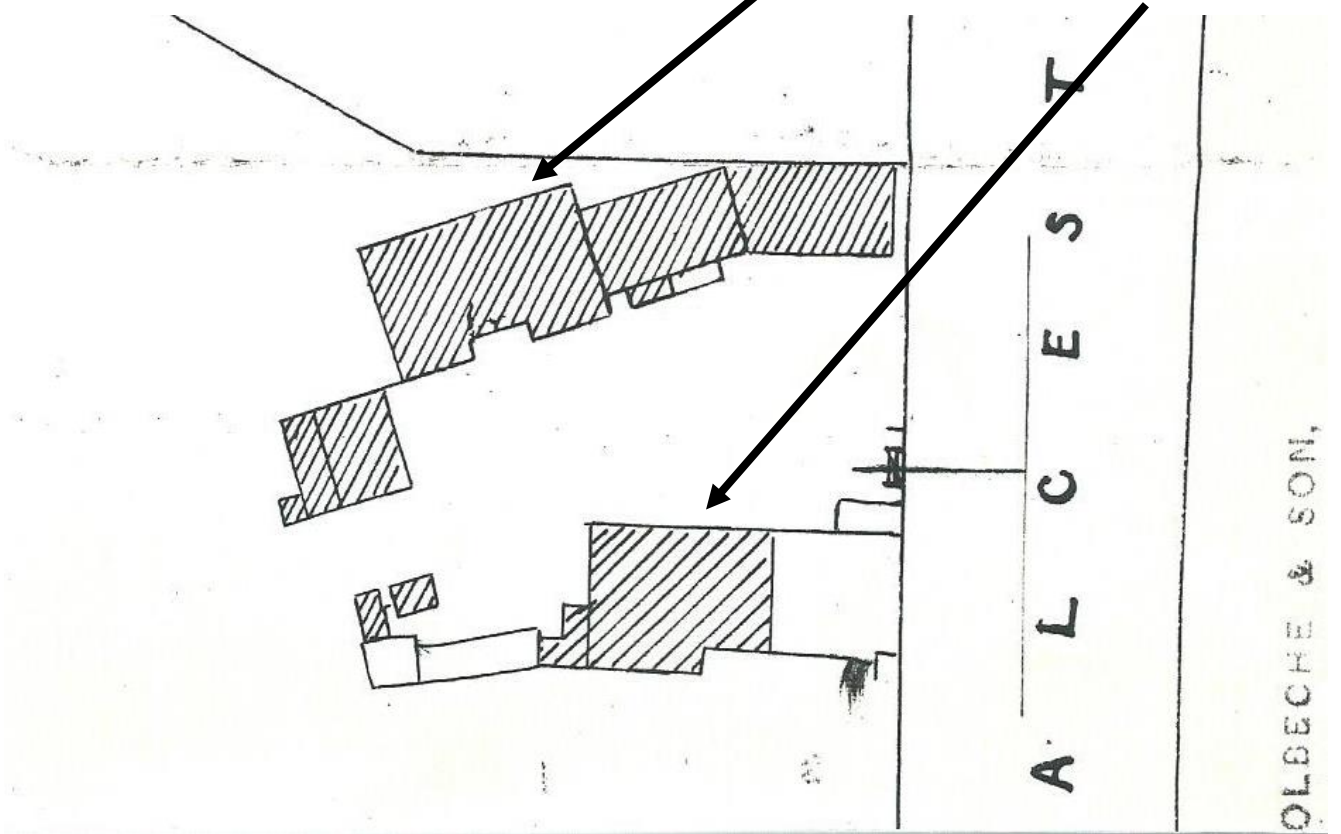
Big meadow – meadow

Little marl pit field – arable

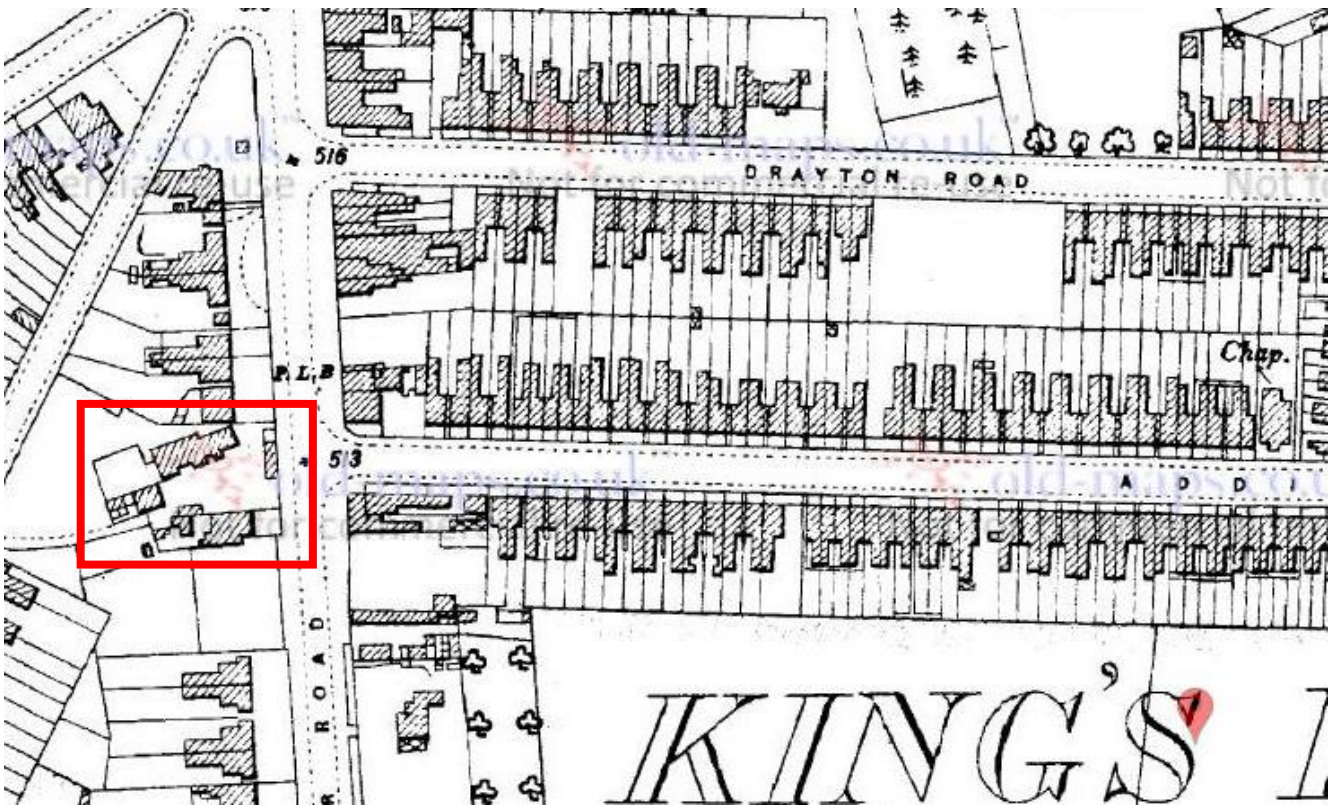
Close – pasture

Big marl pit field – arable

A plan from 1901 shows the buildings in more detail: Outbuildings Farmhouse



An old OS from 1904 Map shows that Church Farm stood at the end of Addison Road, roughly where Sainsburys now stands.



Church Farm can just be seen in the distance at the end of this Edwardian postcard of Addison Road:



In the 1840s the farm was occupied by tenant farmer Henry Chinn. Historian Carl Chinn notes in his history of his family:

“Henry Sr’s inheritance gave him the funds to rent the 88 acre Church Farm in Kings Heath. The 1840 Tithe Map indicates that his farm house was on the Alcester Road, where Sainsbury’s now stands. His farm encompassed all the land behind the house as far back as about Hazelhurst Road and from Vicarage Road – then called Bleak Lane – along to Featherstone Road. He was a tenant of William Congreve Russell, one of the biggest landowners in Moseley and King’s Heath, and he also rented Row Heath Farm, in what is now Bournville. The two farms gave him 136 acres of farmland and a position of status. He became both a churchwarden and an overseer of the poor in King’s Norton.”

“Soon afterwards Henry Jr took on Church Farm from his father. Unhappily the fortunes of the family changed badly for the worse and in 1868 both he and his brother, William of Row Heath, were made bankrupt. It must have been a bitter pill for Henry the elder to swallow. As he came to the end of his life his life’s work in raising his family’s position to one of comfort and security had been shattered. He died in 1873 at the old age of 80 and was buried at St Mary’s, Moseley – as had been his mother, father and wife.”

Known occupiers of Church Farm:

1840 – 1868 Henry Chinn Sr and Junior

1896 – 1901 - Tom Bartlam Reynolds

The farm was still featured on a map of 1905 but had been demolished on the next map of 1916.

Hollybank Farm

This 1884 OS map shows Hollybank Farm with Wheeler's Lane running from left to right and Barn Lane running upwards.



Outbuildings

Farmhouse facing Wheeler's lane

Hollybank Farm summary:

1840 – Owner – James Taylor – Occupier William Eddens

1872 – Howard Lloyd (occupier) from Everson's Trade Directory

1881 – 1925 – Thomas Hadley – also recorded as Councillor Hadley of Billesley

Death – Thomas Hadley of Hollybank Farm on 28th November 1925

1925- 1954 – Sidney Fleetwood

1956 – listed as house and garden beside Hollybank Road

Hollybank Farm was a dairy farm that existed right up until the 1950s. When Thomas Hadley took over the farm in the 1880s the farm became known locally as Hadley's Farm.

The following census return shows the entry for Hollybank Farm in 1911 with 73 year old widower Thomas Hadley at the farm:

| CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------|---|----------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|------------|--|--|
| Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NAME AND SURNAME | RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family. | AGE Date Birth day and SEA. | PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE. | | | | | PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards. | | | | | BIRTHPLACE of every person. | NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country. | INFIRMITY. | | |
| | | | State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of— | Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.) | Children born alive to previous Marriage. (If no children born alive to previous Marriage write "None" in Column 8.) | Total Children Born Alive. | Children still Living. | Children who have Died. | Personal Occupation. | Industry or Service with which worker is connected. | Whether Employee, Worker, or Working on Own Account. | Whether Working as Householder. | | | | (1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish. | (2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, etc., and of the Province or State. |
| 1 | Thomas Hadley | Head | 73 | Widower | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Farmer | 100 | Employer | At Home | England | British | 218 |
| 2 | Margaret Hadley | Daughter | 44 | Single | - | - | - | - | - | - | Housekeeper | 100 | Worker | At Home | England | British | 252 |
| 3 | Heate Hadley | Daughter | 37 | Single | - | - | - | - | - | - | Housekeeper | 100 | Worker | At Home | England | British | 20 |
| 4 | Miss Corbett | Servant | 24 | Single | - | - | - | - | - | - | Servant | 010 | Worker | At Home | England | British | 20 |

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

| | | |
|---|--------|----------|
| I certify that— | | |
| (1) All the signs on this Schedule are signed in the proper set columns. | Total. | |
| (2) I have counted the signs and families in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sums with the total number of persons. | Males. | Females. |
| (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appear to be defective, and have approved such as appeared to be correct. | 1 | 3 |
| Signature of Enumerator | GNR | |

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Bathrooms, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor wardrobe, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Thomas Hadley

Postal Address: Hollybank Farm, George Heath

10



A view of the front of Hollybank farmhouse as seen from a snowy Wheeler's Lane in the 1940s.

Land was acquired for new housing in 1924 and the lower end of Hollybank was developed then. The upper part was not developed until after the 2nd World War. In the 1950s a new road was cut across the area and its path took it straight through the old outbuildings associated with the farm. The road was Hollybank Road. The cutting of the road can be seen below.



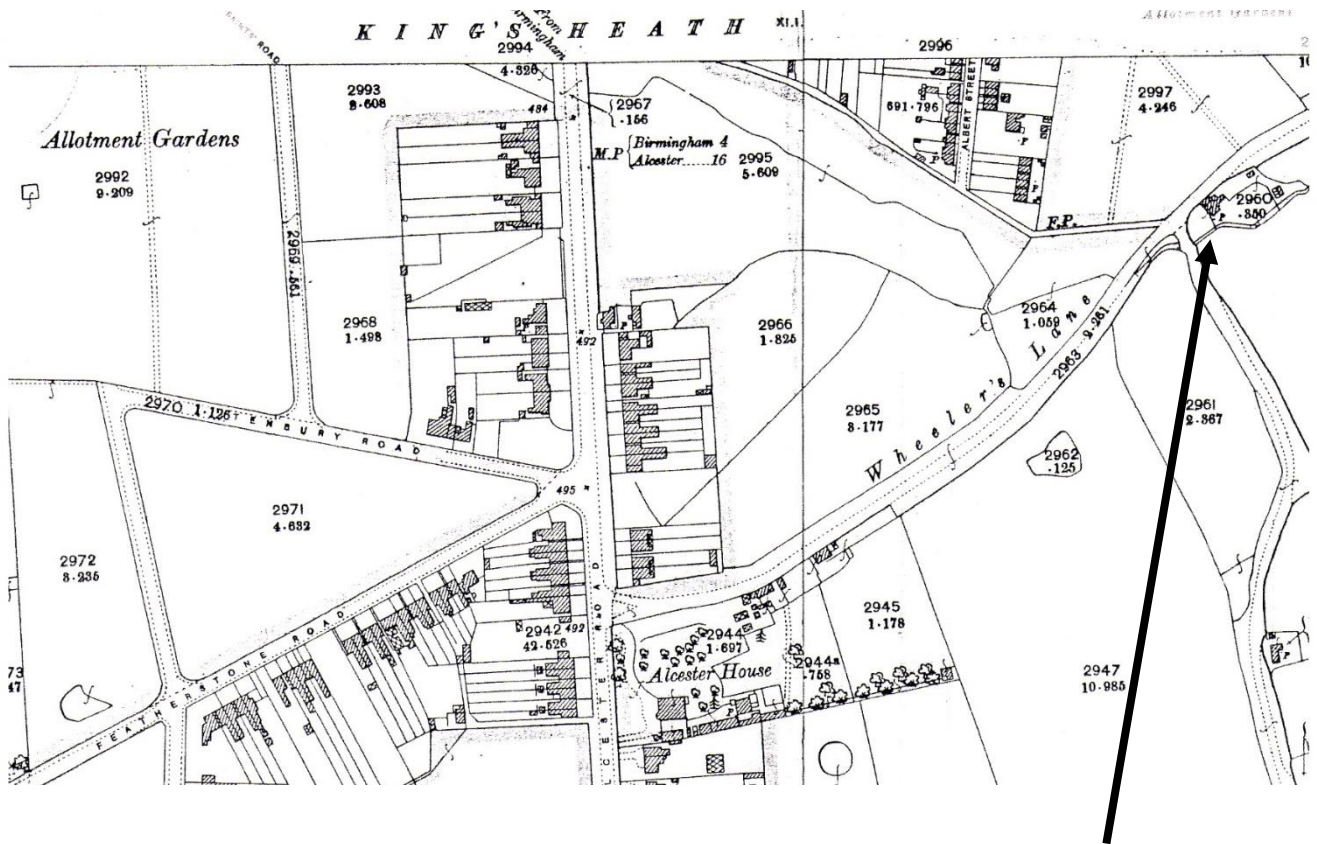
This left the farmhouse standing on its own on the corner of Wheeler's Lane and Hollybank Road. New houses were built on the new Hollybank Road and eventually the old farmhouse became derelict and cordoned off.



It was demolished soon after this photograph was taken.

Wheeler's Lane Farm

This old 1904 OS map shows where Wheeler's Lane Farm was situated:



Wheeler's Lane Farm

Little is known of the workings of the farm and it appears only to be a tiny farmhouse with no outbuildings. In its history it was known as Wheeler's Lane Farm and also as Rushton's Farm after another family who farmed there.

In 1840 the farm is listed as follows:

1840 Tithe Listing – Catherine Wheeler – Owner and occupier

On the 1841 Census it is listed occupied by Catherine Wheeler aged 60 (b. 1781) – farmer. It is possible that the thoroughfare Wheeler's Lane was named after the family. By 1841 Catherine was already a widow so who her husband was we are still unsure at the moment.

In 1911 35 year old William Seymore Rushton is listed as a "small farmer" on Wheeler's Lane near to Haunch Lane. This is Wheeler's Lane Farm. William had been born in 1876 the child of William Rushton who had married Elizabeth Greves. The house is described as having 4 rooms.

From reminiscences of people from Kings Heath we know that in the 1930s the farm was occupied by Ray Lowe and eventually demolished 1937. The farm building originally stood at the junction of old Haunch Lane and Wheeler's Lane. However, the end of Haunch Lane was eventually moved and set on a straighter course in the 1930s and so confusingly where the old farm stood would now be where Chesterwood Road joins Wheeler's Lane.

This old postcard shows how Wheeler's Lane used to look. The view is looking up towards where the Barn Lane roundabout now stands. The old farm boundary wall of Wheeler's Lane farm can just be seen in bottom right of the picture. This is sadly the only view of the farm we have.

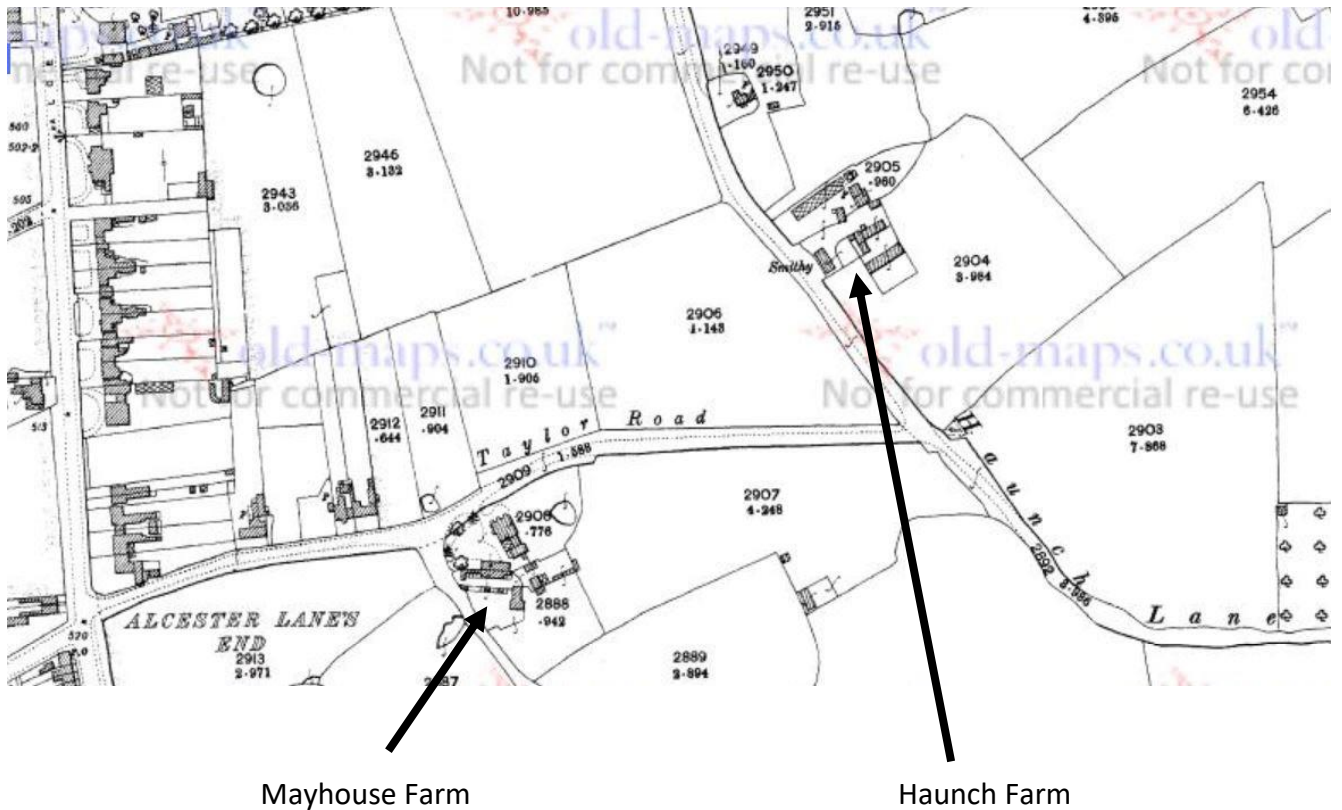


WHEELER'S LANE, KING'S HEATH.

276 A

Haunch Farm

The following map from 1904 shows the next 2 farms, Haunch Farm and Mayhouse Farm:



Mayhouse Farm

Haunch Farm

Haunch Farm is first mentioned when it was advertised for sale in Aris's Gazette of August 1783. It stood near the junction of Haunch Lane and Taylor Road. In the 1840s and 50s it was occupied by Thomas Avery and his sister Hannah. It is mentioned in the following newspaper article:

“Worcestershire Chronicle – Wednesday 5th May 1858

Extensive robbery and abandonment of a horse and cart

Between 2 and 3 o'clock yesterday (Tuesday) morning PC Tandy was on duty in the neighbourhood of King's Heath, when he fell in company with two men on the road, who were in possession of a horse and cart, heavily laden and covered over with a tarpaulin sheet. Tandy, who was walking in the same direction as the men, questioned them as to how far they had come, whither they were going to, and what their cart contained. Their answers not being satisfactory, Tandy examined the cart, and found it to contain a number of bags of grain and sides of bacon. Tandy left them, and called up Mr Adams to assist him in taking them into custody. The men, whose suspicions were aroused, meanwhile decamped, leaving the horse and cart behind them. Tandy followed, but unfortunately could not overtake them, and they got clear off. Tandy on returning got the assistance of his superintendent, Mr Humphries, who examined the cart, and found it to contain seven bags of malt and nine large sides of bacon. On inquiry, it was discovered that at some time during the same night Mr Avery's malt-house, at the Haunch Farm, in the neighbourhood of King's Heath, had been broken open, and the malt and bacon and tarpaulin stolen therefrom. The property was worth £50.”

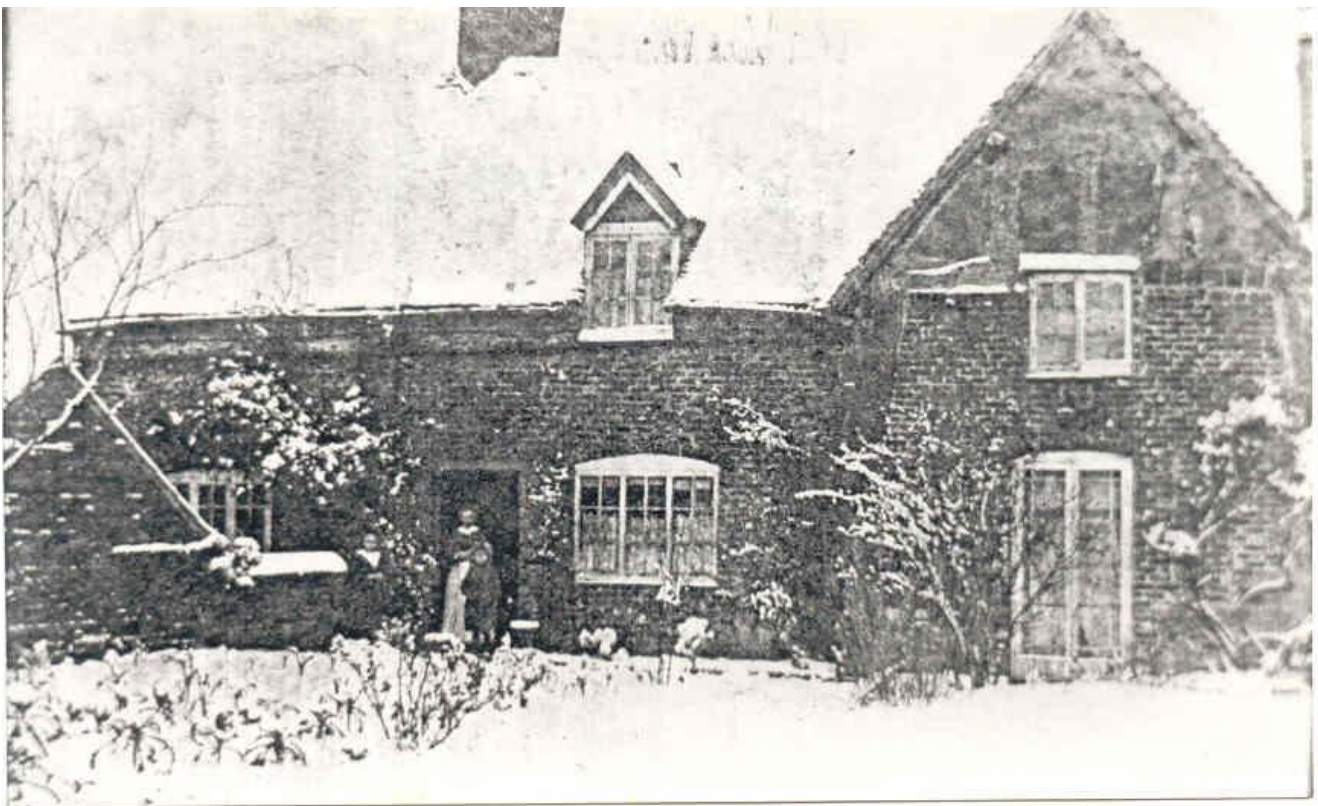
Sadly, Thomas Avery passed away soon afterwards and Hannah remained at the farm for a short time. The farm eventually passed to Henry Cooper and his wife Louisa from 1861-1884. In the 1891 census it was listed as occupied by a Herbert King, and from 1896-1901 it is occupied by Francis John Gibbs. The farmhouse remained into the 1940s and some of the outbuildings until the 1950s. All of the structures associated with Haunch Farm were eventually demolished by 1968.

From the old maps it can be seen that there was also a Smithy sited at the farm whose building stood right on Haunch Lane to service any passing horses and to make farming implements.

Mayhouse Farm

Mayhouse farm stood at the top of May Lane where it joins Taylor Road.

This photograph from the 1920s shows the farmhouse.



From the censuses we know that following people are listed living at Mayhouse farm:

1841 – John and Elizabeth Crathorne

1851 – Richard and Sarah Taylor

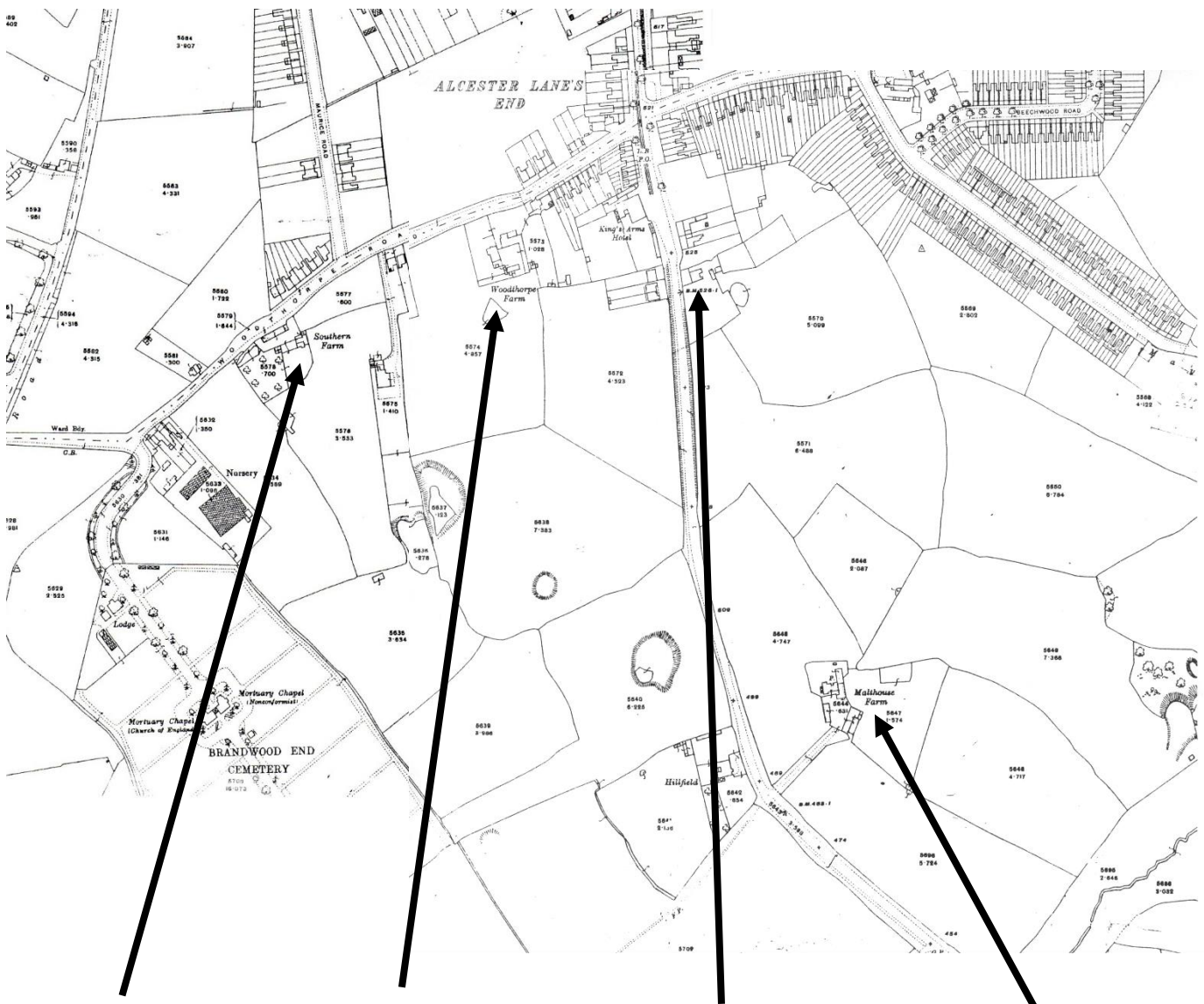
1871 – William Cooke – farm bailiff

1896-1901 – Mrs Annie Tansley

Taylor Road, May Lane and Beechwood Road were already quite well developed by 1916 and the farm was surrounded by new housing. It was eventually demolished in late 1920s or early 1930s.

Malthouse Farm, Southern Farm, Woodthorpe Farm and Paddocks Farm

The following map shows the above mentioned 4 farms which were all associated, in their histories, with one family. The Greves family.



Southern Farm

Woodthorpe Farm

Paddocks Farm

Malthouse Farm

(Also known as Alcester Lane's End Farm)

Malthouse Farm

Malthouse Farm is a rare survivor of an old Kings Heath farm building. It still stands today, but its survival was by no means certain. The last family that lived there were the Greves family and their association with Kings Heath goes back to the 1850s.

This photo from 1987 shows Malthouse Farm with a small section of timber framing still visible and this gives a hint at its age.



The farm was compulsorily purchased by Birmingham City Council in this year and its last occupant, Seymour Greves was forced to move out.

From censuses, trade directories and tax documents we can look at the inhabitants of the farm from the 1840s.

The tithe apportionment lists the owners and occupiers of each piece of land and lists Malthouse Farm as follows:

| Plot Number | Owner | Occupier | Description |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| 3038 | James Taylor | Thomas Wheeldon | Malthouse Farm, building, yard and garden. |

The owner of Malthouse Farm was James Taylor of Moseley Hall. He was a very wealthy man and owned large areas of land all over Kings Heath and Moseley.

Thomas Wheeldon was married at Saint Nicolas Church, Kings Norton on December 16th 1828. There he married Ann Greves and the marriage was witnessed by Richard Greves and Mary Ingram. By 1851 the census records him at Millpool Hill Farm as follows:

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|-----------------|------|-----|---------------------|--------------|
| Thomas Wheeldon | Head | 60 | Farmer of 146 acres | Kings Norton |
| Ann Wheeldon | Wife | 62 | Farmer's wife | Kings Norton |
| James Harwood | Serv | 42 | | Kings Norton |
| James Ward | Serv | 19 | | Kings Norton |
| Francis Bushell | Serv | 40 | | Kings Norton |

Thomas Wheeldon is only ever recorded at Malthouse Farm in the 1840 tithe apportionment. From then on he is recorded farming at Millpool Hill Farm. His will records him as a farmer at Mill Pool Hill who died on April 25th 1858. His will lists his effects as "under £3,000." Aris's Gazette of May 10th 1858 records the following:

"Important unreserved sale at Millpool Hill, about 4½ miles from Birmingham. To be sold by auction, by Mr. D. Holloway (by direction of the executors of the late Mr. Thomas Wheeldon) on Friday and Saturday 21st and 22nd May – each morning at 10 o'clock – the whole of the valuable live and dead farming stock, 50 acres of sound grass keeping, in lots, household furniture etc...."

By 1858 Malthouse Farm is recorded as owned by William Francis Taylor and its land is recorded as 32 acres 2 rods and 3 perches in size.

In 1859 Malthouse Farm was occupied by James and Isaac Bate. James and Isaac were fast becoming very wealthy men in Kings Heath. They owned and ran the Cross Guns public house and the Kings Heath Brewery which was situated behind the pub. The term "malt" links it all together. That is, the use of malt in the brewing process, the farm being called Malthouse Farm and also being occupied by brewers and maltsters.

Upon the death of James Bate (on June 26th 1869), Isaac remained linked to the farm until his own death in 1885. Isaac was listed as being a maltster but also a farmer too. Although James and Isaac are listed as occupying the farm it is doubtful that they would have lived at the farm. They would have employed a labourer to run it for them. They actually lived at the Grange, a large family house in Kings Heath that was knocked down in the 1890s and Grange Road built over it.

The census of 1861 lists George Quiney at Malthouse Farm:

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|---------------|------|-----|------------|--------------|
| George Quiney | Head | 55 | Labourer | Kings Norton |
| Ann Quiney | Wife | 57 | | Kings Norton |
| Emma Quiney | Dau | 26 | | Kings Norton |
| James Quiney | Son | 23 | | Kings Norton |

| | | | | |
|----------------|------|--------|--|--------------|
| Jane Quiney | Dau | 19 | | Kings Norton |
| Abraham Quiney | Son | 12 | | Kings Norton |
| W.E. Quiney | Gson | 5 mnth | | Kings Norton |
| R.G. Quiney | Gson | 1 week | | Kings Norton |

He was a labourer employed by the Bates to run their farm. George is described as 55 years of age and from Kings Norton parish. The 1881 census lists Ann Quiney (widow) aged 77 as a charwoman living in Broad Lane. She lived there with her son William who at 26 was described as an agricultural labourer.

After Isaac Bate's death, the farm is listed as being occupied by his widow Eleanor. However, the rate book of 1886 describes her as "Ellen" Bate rather than Eleanor, although it is clearly the same person. In fact her baptism records her as "Ellen" and not Eleanor. The size of the land around the farm had increased to 32a 2r 31p. Similarly, Eleanor would not have run the farm but a farmer would have been employed to do this.

By 1896, the rate book lists the occupier of Malthouse Farm as John Fleetwood with the size again increased to 37a 0r 22p. John was born in Hall Green in 1834 and married a lady called Elizabeth who was born in Moseley. Their two children, Mary Ann and Philip were also born in Moseley. In 1881 John is listed in the census as a farmer at Meriden in Warwickshire.

From 1901-1905 the farm is listed as occupied by Charles Payne, a 55 year old farmer, from Lichfield. In 1881 he is recorded in the census of Handsworth and recorded as a brickmaker. When he was at Malthouse Farm, Charles made bricks there and relatives, many years later, recall there being a brick works on the Alcester Road run by Charles.



An original brick made by Charles Payne at Kings Heath.

By now, the owner of the farm and its land, William Francis Taylor, had died and the land was now owned by George William Taylor.

The rate books of 1906-1912 record the occupier of Malthouse Farm as John Ingram Greves who also occupied a farm called Southern Farm on Woodthorpe Road. The 1901 census records John Greves at Southern Farm as follows:

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|------------------|------|-----|------------|--------------|
| John I Greves | Head | 49 | Farmer | Kings Norton |
| Mary Ann Greves | Wife | 44 | | Solihull |
| Seymour W Greves | Son | 14 | | Kings Norton |
| Horace G Greves | Son | 12 | | Kings Norton |
| Mary M D Greves | Dau | 8 | | Kings Norton |
| Edwin Greves | Son | 2 | | Kings Norton |

John Greves remained the occupier of Malthouse Farm until his death in 1918. However, from 1913-16 two other men are listed as occupying the farmhouse. They are George Horatio Mansell (1913-1915) and George Greves (1917). The ownership of the farm remained in the hands of George Taylor with the occupiers being tenant farmers. By 1920 the tenant was recorded as John Ingram's widow Mary Greves. She moved into a house on Woodthorpe Road in the 1920s, where she remained until her death in 1949.

After that date, the electoral register lists John Ingram Greves' son, Seymour, and his wife, Myra Greves, at Malthouse Farm.

It was during Seymour and Myra's tenancy of Malthouse Farm that it came under the threat of demolition for the first time. Previous to this time, Malthouse farm had remained a rather remote farmhouse on the outskirts of the small village of Kings Heath. However, the incorporation of small Worcestershire villages, like Kings Heath and Moseley, into the city of Birmingham caused their rural parts to be developed on a large scale in the early twentieth century. The first threat to Malthouse Farm came from the Alcester Road. This old quiet turnpike had been changed dramatically in the latter parts of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth. Horses and carts had given way to steam trams in the 1880s and electric trams by 1917. These modes of transport brought more people than ever to the quiet rural area of Kings Heath. Large family houses had begun to be built on either side of the Alcester Road and Malthouse farm disappeared from view behind them.

The City of Birmingham had begun to develop the southern fringes of Kings Heath from Alcester Lane's End and had a plan to build a large new housing development just to the north of Malthouse Farm. In fact, Seymour Greves actually remembered the ground being pegged out ready to start the development in 1939. However, the outbreak of the Second World War meant that as much land as possible was put back to agricultural production to feed the population. This meant that the proposed development was scrapped all except an edition of the A-Z of Birmingham which showed that the roads had actually been built, which of course they never were.

Another threat to Malthouse Farm's existence came from the newly created Cocks Moor Golf Club. This club was formed in 1926 and acquired land owned by the Taylor family just south of Malthouse Farm on which to create their holes and build their club house. The club was initially a nine-hole course, but it was envisaged by the club to obtain more land to create more holes. Certainly by 1936 there were 18 holes, however, 3 holes (numbers 4, 5 and 6) were on a separate piece of land across Warstock Lane. Many members did not like having to cross the road in order to play their game and so in 1951

the club attempted to acquire land, to the east and north of Malthouse Farm, to create new holes, and to acquire the farm itself. All plans to obtain the farmhouse came to nothing but land was taken for the golf course. The cowsheds were demolished and the cows sold off by the Council in 1966 to prevent the farm from working but the Greves family remained in the property.

Seymour remained at the farm until his death on January 18th 1970. His probate on March 26th 1970 lists his effects totalling £9,990. Seymour was survived by his wife Myra and their two children Seymour (actually born William Seymour, but always called Seymour) and Dorothy. Seymour junior remained at the farm until 1987 when it was acquired by Birmingham City Council. The building remained empty and soon began to deteriorate badly.

As with most old buildings the biggest enemy is the wet. The roof of the farm had been bad for many years before and only worsened once vacated. Water penetrated into the timbers beginning the slow and inevitable rotting of the main structure of the farmhouse. Once the farm was empty vandals broke in and began to set fires within the house. Luckily Malthouse Farm was fondly thought of by those locals who knew of its existence. One local in particular, Ken Unwin, began a tireless campaign to save Malthouse Farm. He began a correspondence with Birmingham City Council on the subject that would last some 20 years. It was his effort alone that achieved the erection of fencing around the farmhouse to protect it from vandals. Ken also persuaded the Council put a large tarpaulin over the roof in 1994 to prevent any further water penetration. Without his efforts, Malthouse Farm would probably have rotted and fallen down in the 1990s.

On July 8th 1982 Malthouse Farm was designated as a grade 2 listed building. English Heritage described the farm as follows:

“Late 16th century. Timber framed and largely refaced in 18th century brick; old tile roof. Two storeys; 3 bays, that on the left gabled and advanced. Ground floor with one tripartite window, a subsidiary door, a quadripartite window, the principal door and a single almost square window. All ground floor windows and doors with segmental relieving arches. First floor with a tripartite window with segmental relieving arch, a squared tripartite window breaking into the roof and single window. All window casements, mostly with glazing bars. Attached to the left, the dairy and, to the right, an outhouse at right angles to the house. Its gable end has an upper segment-headed doorway approached by a flight of brick steps which incorporates a dog’s kennel.”

In 1988 architect N.A.D Molyneux described the farm buildings in detail as follows:

“Malthouse Farm, 457 Alcester Road South:

The original building is an early 17th century timber-framed farmhouse of T-plan, the stem aligned east/west, with a cross-wing to the west end. The stem is of two bays, the cross-wing also of two bays with a further lost bay to the south. The entrance is (and apparently was) in the south east angle, and was a baffle entry (i.e. the front door opened into a lobby beside the chimney stack). The wall framing consisted of four square panels from sill to wall plaster with straight tension braces to the first floor. There is evidence for the position of a number of the first floor windows, and an original mullion survives in the rear wall on the ground floor. The roof construction has three vertical struts to the collar, and the single tier of purlins are trenched. There is a ridge beam.

The house was substantially rebuilt and slightly extended in brick in the 18th century, removing some of the frame and creating a number of three-light windows under segmental heads. In about 1800 a second cross-wing was built at the east end of the house. This formed a malthouse, which is an unusual survival of the rural malting process. This is almost complete, save that part of the north end has been demolished. This was the site of the kiln as indicated by traces of a brick vault. The rest of the floor is supported on substantial timber beams. The building preserves clear evidence for the whole of the malting process. At the south-west corner there is a small building which probably housed the steeping cistern, where the barley was steeped prior to it being "floored" in order to germinate. It was then roasted in the kiln to stop germination and provide the characteristic flavour of malt.

The interior of the house is extremely well preserved on the ground floor. In the cross-wing there is a parlour to the front which has a boxed ceiling beam and match-boarding to dado height. The corner fireplace has recently lost its grate and overmantel. The room behind is a dairy, sunk below floor level. This has an arched brick setlas around the walls and retains some fittings. There are a number of brackets for shelving, probably to hold cheese. Hanging from the ceiling there are two pairs of ladder racks which supported boards, probably for bacon. One of the two small windows retains a falling wooden shutter. The range of original fittings in this room is remarkably complete.

In the stem of the T, the west room is the main living room of the house divided off from the staircase by a late 19th century match-boarded partition. The ceiling beam is exposed and chamfered with lamb's tongue stops. The subsidiary beams are also exposed. The inglenook fireplace has a 19th century cast-iron range and an 18th century moulded mantel shelf above. There is an external entrance in the front wall, probably the site of the original main entrance. The hallway behind contains the 19th century staircase which has chamfered newel posts and stick balusters. The other main room in this range is the kitchen which has a 19th century cast-iron range and with pivots for a crane on the west wall. This is set within a 19th century timber surround. The quarry tile floor is not in good condition. Behind the kitchen (to the north) is a lean-to scullery which retains a copper in one corner, the stoke hole with a cast iron door, and a simple pine lid. Against the outside wall there is a shallow cream-glazed stone ware sink with a fluted front bearing the trade mark of three turrets on a shield (as yet unidentified).

Of the farm buildings only one block remains, immediately to the south-west of the house. They consist of a small cart shed to the south end and a stable to the north. The cart shed is roofless, and the stable in need of repair. They probably date to the early 19th century."

N.A.D Molyneux

October 1988

In 2003 the farm was sold by the council to a private developer. The house was restored and converted for accommodation in 2005.

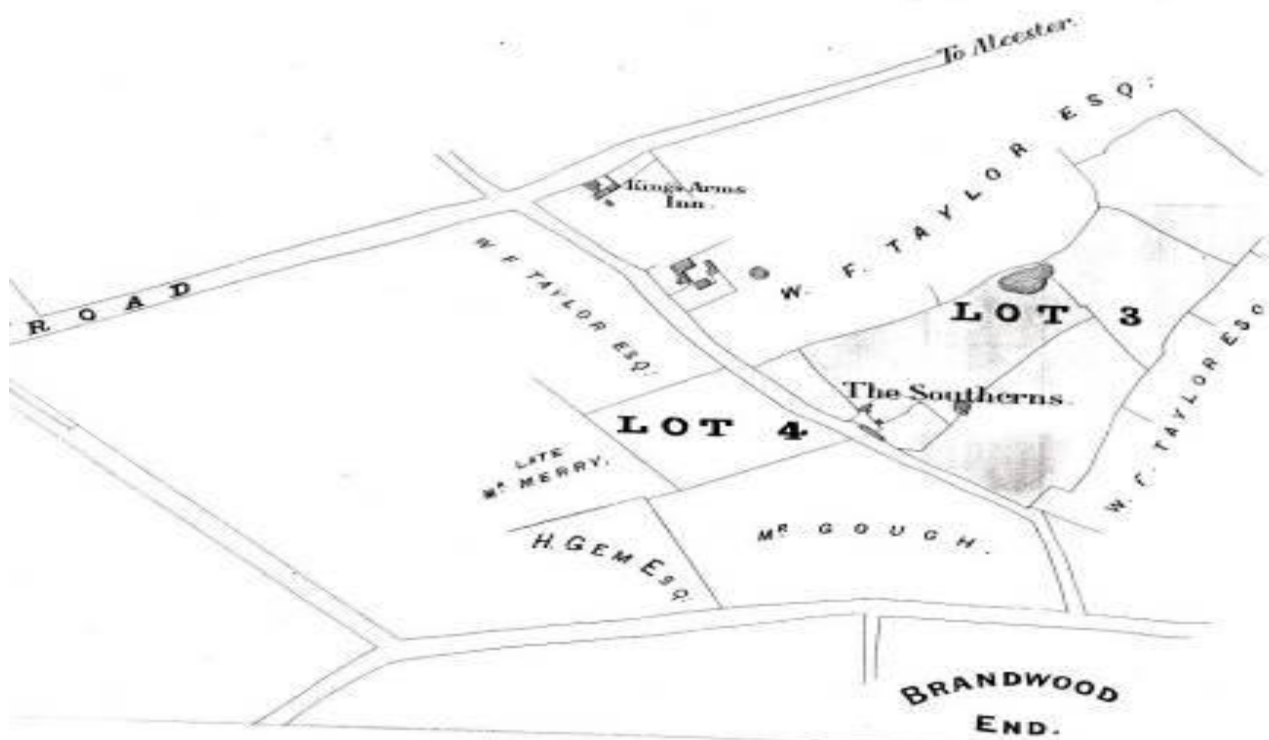


This photograph dates from 1958 and shows from left to right – Seymour Greves snr, Myra Greves, Councillor Collett, Seymour Greves jnr.



The completed redevelopment in 2005.

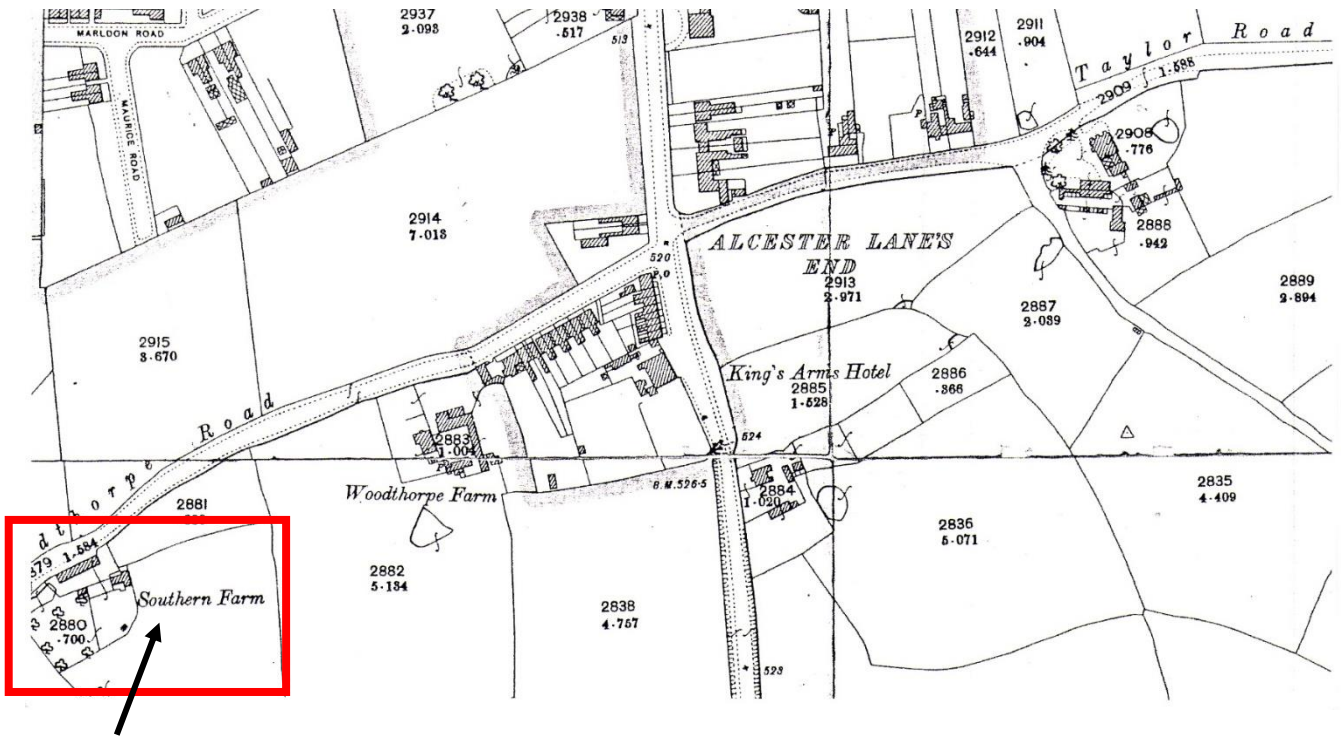
Southern Farm



The Greves family were associated with Malthouse Farm from the 1900s to 1987 but were listed in Kings Heath as early as the 1850s and Kings Norton in the 1600s. They appear to have relatives throughout Worcestershire, however, it is the Kings Heath branch of the family that features in this document. They are very important to the history of Kings Heath and to Malthouse Farm as the Greves' were the last family to actually farm there.

Seymour Greves and his family were listed as occupying Blackgreves Farm near to Headley Heath in the 1841 census of Worcestershire. His parents were Benjamin and Susannah (née Brittle) who had married at Saint Nicolas church, Kings Norton on June 13th 1811. Sadly, Benjamin died on April 26th 1821. However, the remaining family members went on to occupy many farms around the Headley Heath area. Blackgreves Farm was a fine moated farmhouse owned by Robert Mynors. The farm next door was called Malthouse Farm, Headley Heath and was occupied by Seymour's older brother Richard Greves and owned by Thomas Colmore.

Seymour was baptised at Saint Nicolas, Kings Norton on February 10th 1820. He married a lady called Elizabeth Watton on 25th October 1843 at the same church. It is possible that Seymour and Elizabeth moved to Kings Heath straight after they married in 1843, however, there are no more records until 1855 when they are listed as occupying a farm in Kings Heath called Southern Farm. "The Southernns" (see plan above), or Southern Farm, was located on Woodthorpe Road. The farm stood directly opposite the entrance to Hannon Road.



Southern Farm

Seymour Greves was listed as a farmer and publican there in the 1861 census:

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|------------------|------|-----|---------------------|--------------|
| Seymour Greves | Head | 40 | Farmer and publican | Kings Norton |
| Elizabeth Greves | Wife | 40 | | Alvechurch |
| Edwin Greves | Son | 13 | | Kings Norton |
| John Greves | Son | 9 | | Kings Norton |
| Elizabeth Greves | Dau | 11 | | Kings Norton |
| Seymour Greves | Son | 5 | | Kings Norton |
| Matilda Greves | Dau | 6 | | Kings Norton |
| Annie Greves | Dau | 3 | | Kings Norton |

The farm is visible on a map of Worcestershire as early as 1831, but was finally demolished in 1937. Seymour Greves and his family remained linked to this farm until the early 1900s.

On Tuesday 5th June 1866 an auction was held at the Hen and Chickens Hotel in New Street, Birmingham and described the farm as follows:

“A delightfully situated estate, known as “The Southern”, situate in the parish of Kings Norton, and fronting the road leading from Kings Heath at Alcester Lane’s End, towards Brandwood and Kings Norton, having a very good aspect, and comprising a house and homestead, with garden and orchard, and 5 closes of excellent land, principally in old turf, and all lying together. The estate contains 18 acres and 3 rods or thereabouts, and is now in the occupation of Mr. Seymour Greaves, as an annual tenant.”

If the farm was sold, it clearly did not affect Seymour as he remained the tenant as he is mentioned in Aris's Gazette of 1869 which described the following:

"July 16th 1869. At Kings Heath Police Court this day, Mr. Seymour Greves, beerhouse keeper was summoned for keeping open his house for the sale of beer during improper hours on Sunday."

The farm building was also used as a beerhouse from which Seymour sold his beer.



Beer token for Seymour Greves beerhouse.

The reminiscences of Mr J Moore of Poplar Road were recorded in the Birmingham News of July 26th 1919. Mr. Moore recalled:

"Featherstone Road was known as Featherbed Lane, at the corner of which was Seymour Greaves' public house."

Although the farm is described as a public house, it was actually a beerhouse, these being allowed to sell beer, but having no wine or spirit licence.

However, Aris's Gazette also, sadly, described the following:

"July 8th 1870. Mr. Seymour Greves, beerhouse keeper died at Kings Heath aged 50 years."

His will was proved at the Worcestershire Registry by his widow Elizabeth and his brother Alfred Greves, who is described as a farmer at Bell's Farm. Seymour's effects were recorded as under £600.

By 1871 the census listed the following:

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|------------------|-------|-----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Elizabeth Greves | Widow | 51 | Farmer employing 1 man and boy | Frankley |
| Edwin Greves | Son | 23 | | Redditch |
| John Greves | Son | 19 | | Kings Norton |
| Matilda Greves | Dau | 16 | | Kings Norton |
| Seymour Greves | Son | 14 | | Kings Norton |
| Anne Greves | Dau | 12 | | Kings Norton |
| Frederick Greves | Son | 8 | Scholar | Kings Norton |
| Susan Greves | Dau | 6 | | Kings Norton |

The census described Southern Farm as a **“public house with no sign”**. The family appeared to have given up the beer trade in favour of farming again. The next censuses of 1881 and 1891 list the family at Southern Farm as follows:

Southern Farm 1881

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|--------------|
| Elizabeth Greves | Widow | 61 | Farmer | Frankley |
| John I Greves | Son | 29 | Farmer's son | Kings Norton |
| Matilda Greves | Dau | 26 | Farmer's daughter | Kings Norton |
| Seymour Greves | Son | 24 | Farmer's son | Kings Norton |
| Susan S Greves | Dau | 16 | Farmer's daughter | Kings Norton |
| Frederick Greves | Son | 18 | Farmer's son | Kings Norton |
| William Rushton | G son | 5 | | Kings Norton |

Southern Farm 1891

| Name | | Age | Occupation | Where born |
|----------------------|------|-----|--------------|--------------|
| John Ingram Greves | Head | 39 | Farm Bailiff | Kings Norton |
| Mary Ann Greves | Wife | 32 | | Solihull |
| Seymour W Greves | Son | 4 | | Kings Norton |
| Horace George Greves | Son | 2 | | Kings Norton |

John Ingram Greves was born at Southern Farm in 1852. He married Mary Ann Hancox at Wythall on November 19th 1884. His father was recorded as Seymour Greves and hers as George Hancox. Once married, the family remained at Southern Farm, but lived in a separate building to his mother and his brothers and sisters. John and Mary soon had their first child. The baptism of Seymour William Greves was recorded at Saint Nicolas, Kings Norton on October 16th 1886. It is this Seymour that farmed at Malthouse farm.

Southern Farm (Dairy Farm) summary of occupiers:

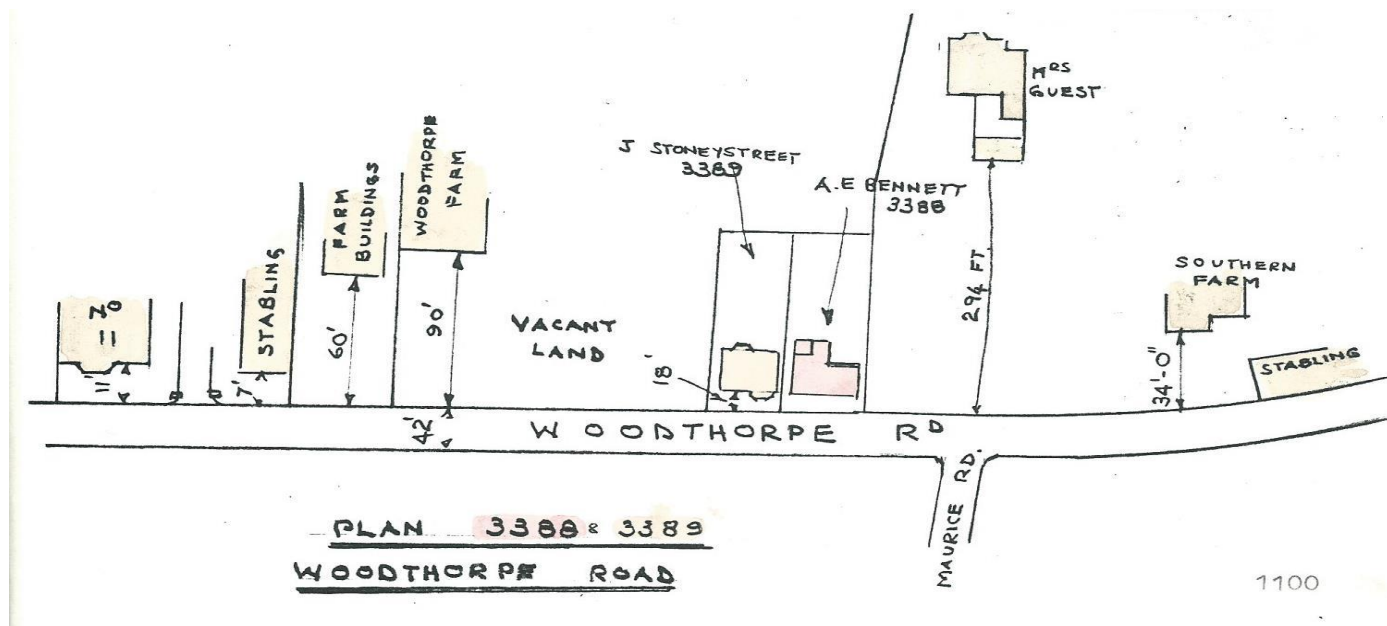
1840 – Owner – John Cotterill, Occupier – William Kendall

1855 – 1870 Seymour and Elizabeth Greves

1870-1899 – Elizabeth Greves and son John Ingram Greves (born 1852)

1911 – William Maiden

1937 – Farm demolished



Plan showing both Southern Farm and Woodthorpe Farm.

Woodthorpe Farm

By 1901, John Ingram Greves is also recorded in rate books as occupying another farm on Woodthorpe Road. This farm was known as Woodthorpe Farm. It was situated nearer to the corner of Alcester Road and would have stood across where the entrance to Sunderton Road is now situated.



Edwin and Daisy Greves at Woodthorpe Farm.

John must have acquired the farm for his expanding family in order to finally leave his mother at Southern Farm.

It was also John Ingram Greves who finally acquired the tenancy of Malthouse farm around 1906. Sadly, he died on 25th April 1918. He was buried at Saint Nicolas, Kings Norton and his will recorded the following:

“John Ingram Greves of Woodthorpe Farm, Kings Heath, Birmingham, farmer died 25th April 1918 at the Worcestershire Asylum Barnsley Hall near Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. Probate at Birmingham 14th June to Mary Ann Greves, widow, and Seymour W Greves, farmer. Effects - £2,506 19s.”

John had apparently suffered from some form of mental illness as he died at Barnsley Hall Asylum which was a large institution for sufferers of mental health problems. His remaining family readily acknowledge to this day that he had suffered from mental health problems which required him being hospitalised.

Upon his death, his wife Mary remained at Woodthorpe Farm until 1932. She then moved to number 141 Woodthorpe Road, where she remained until her death on 5th February 1949. Her will listed her effects as £2,849.1.10. Her youngest son Edwin took over Woodthorpe Farm in 1933 and he remained there until 1949. The farm was demolished in 1950.



Photograph of Woodthorpe Farm

Woodthorpe Farm summary of occupiers:

1840 - Owner – George Crocker Fox

Occupier – Thomas Mason

1901 - 1918 John Ingram Greves and wife Mary

1918-1932 Mary Greves (Moved in 1932 to 141 Woodthorpe Road until her death in 1949)

1932 - 1949 – Edwin and Daisy Greves

1950/1 Farm demolished

together with a quantity of blacksmith's tools, and other effects. Particulars of which appear in catalogues to be had at the King's Arms Inn, Alcester Lanes End. The sale to commence at 10.30."

1896 – William Print

John Greves – 1900 – 1950s



Postcard showing Alcester Lane's End Farm farmhouse.

In 1927 the land behind the farm was acquired and used as Kings Heath Dog Track and until 1970/1. The farmhouse remained as a private house at the entrance to the car park of the dog track. It is visible in the following aerial photograph of the dog track.



Kings Heath Dog track

Alcester Lane's End Farm

The farmhouse was demolished in 1971 when Wynfield gardens was laid out and new houses built where the dog track stood.