

# TONY BOSTOCK'S LOCAL HISTORY NOTES: SWANLOW

## SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SWANLOW

A description of the township, written in 1621 by William Webb says, '... along the park side of Darnhall lies Swanlow, and therein a many good farms that have been of abbey lands....'<sup>1</sup> An apt description as many of the holdings had been possessed by the great abbey of Vale Royal until the Dissolution in the 1530s. These farm tenements, or messuages, would have contained a house with out-buildings, adjoining land and plots in the town fields. In addition there will have been smaller properties amounting to cottages with an adjoining croft and two or three acres in the town-fields.

In the seventeenth century Cheshire homes were described in the following way:

*"In building and furniture of their houses, till of late years, they used the old manner of the Saxons; For they had their fire in the midst of the house, against a hob of clay, and their oxen also under the same roof; but within these forty years it is altogether altered, so they have builded chimnies, and furnished other parts of their houses accordingly."*<sup>2</sup>

In most dwellings the main living room was called the 'house'. Here the family amused themselves, entertained their guests, prepared and ate their food and kept most of their furniture, along with their brass and pewter-ware. The 'parlour' and 'chamber' tend to imply bedrooms; the first often denoting the bedroom of the head of the household. Some houses had butteries, where barrels of beer and other drink were stored; kitchens, brew houses, stables, barns and other outbuildings also appear in some of the inventories.

At the time King James I came to the throne the population of Swanlow was probably much as it had been throughout the previous century – around 100. A figure which then remained fairly constant through the seventeenth century for by the 1660s there were about twenty-two dwellings – houses and cottages in Swanlow. The family names of Kettle and Holland seemingly survived from early times whilst other names had by this time moved away or had died out. Other names that persist throughout the century are Baker, Barker, Billington, Briscoe, Darlington, Davenport, Egerton, Hall, Hatton, Milton, Newall, Snelson, Stanley and Whittingham.

During the first two decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the lords of the manor of Over, and therefore the major land owners in Swanlow, were two successive members of the Pershall (or Peshall) family. The Lees of neighbouring Darnhall, the Cholmondeleys of Vale Royal, the Moretons of Middlewich, the Whittinghams, and later the Wilbrahams were all significant gentry families with property interests in the township. A survey of Cheshire in 1671 records that in addition to property held by Thomas Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, the freeholders in Swanlow were: Andrew Totty (Ways Green); Ralph Whittingham; Thomas Bosier; Abraham and Thomas Darlington, both of Brookhouses, Over; Thomas Darlington; Sir Thomas Stanley of Alderley; and Roger Wilbraham of Dorfold.<sup>3</sup> It is possible at various times during this century to identify individuals who resided here, though not their exact location (see the appendix to this section).

## THE PERSHALL FAMILY OF CHURCH HILL

During the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Edmund Pershall, a grocer and general merchant of London and descended from a Staffordshire family, bought the manor of Over from the Holcroft family who had held it since the Dissolution of Vale Royal in 1538.<sup>4</sup> He was born about 1570 at Horseley, Staffordshire. Moving to London he became a member of the Grocers' Company and formed his own business, residing at Bromley, Kent. Within the Grocers' Company he rose through the ranks being elected to the Livery in 1596 and ten years later a member of the Court, and elected Warden in 1608. As a grocer he was involved in the import of tobacco from Virginia. Edmund

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married Mary Bathurst the daughter of a London Alderman and had four children: Robert (born in 1599), Edmund (b.1601), Thomas (b. in London 1605) and Mary (b. in London 1612).

He was described as gaining a living 'by buying and selling of wools as a Merchant of the Staple',<sup>5</sup> but as a business man he seems to have been unsuccessful as he fell into serious debt. On 5 October 1620 Edmund Pershall sold some of his property, which included tenements occupied by Thomas Davenport, Raffe Holland, Thomas Newall John Whittingham, Alice Downward and Benet Hatton, all of which were either on Church Hill or along Swanlow Lane, to Henry Lee of Darnhall. Lee subsequently sold this estate to Richard Whittingham for the sum of £250 and an annual rent of 2s 6d.<sup>6</sup>

In 1624, financial pressures were such that Edmund feared the loss of his property and consequently conveyed some of his manors, lands and tenements to three business friends to hold in trust. A Bill of Complaint was filed by him about 1626 in the Court of Chancery in which he named Edmund Randolph, an attorney, Robert Philmer and Charles Bostock as the defendants. It seems that the three men had bought the manor of Over and other properties and interests in Over and Whitegate to hold equally and in trust for Edmund. Randolph apparently had other ideas and made the conveyance in favour of himself and then sold parcels of land in order to obtain others from Sir Thomas Holcroft. Holcroft who was already indebted to the trio for a loan of £1000, which he repaid by conveying to them a farm subject to a life estate of a widow named Eaton. Subsequently Randolph sold lands subject to this estate to Philmer and a John Warrington for which he received £5000 and refused to account for the sum. Randolph then sold to a man called Littler another part of the premises for £1200, and although £700 was paid, Littler defaulted and the lands became forfeit to Randolph. Pershall claimed that the money used initially to buy these lands were his personal funds and that the three men were indebted to him and that Randolph should account for any monies received and that conveyances should be made of the unsold lands according to the original intentions. In the case that transpired a number of 'Interrogatories' to be ministered to witnesses were compiled.<sup>7</sup> These asked if the witnesses knew of the parties involved; whether they knew of the Manor of Over and Whitegate; and whether they knew that Sir Tomas Holcroft, or his assignes, had sold the manor. In addition to this Pershall was also tied up in litigation with the heirs of a family called Calthorp for lands in Kent.<sup>8</sup>

Edmund had a number of creditors and they complained that he was either attempting to defraud them or at least defray repayment of his debts. Failing to come to terms with his creditors he was arrested for debt on 7 January 1626 and thrown into the Fleet prison. Although he had wealth in terms of land all of that was tied up in law suits so that he had no income from them. Edmund was so hard up that he appealed to the Grocers' Company to award him a pension – this they did in the sum of £20 a year from July 1626.<sup>9</sup> In July 1628 the Company learned that Edmund had an estate worth £500 a year and suspended the pension pending enquiry. Charles Bostock, a Cheshire man resident in London where he worked as a scrivener, spoke for his friend Edmund in March 1629 assuring them he had no other income and so the payment was continued – but not for long. Subsequently, the High Court of Chancery directed that Edmund be tried for bankruptcy and at the Court of Common Pleas held at Westminster he was formally judged a bankrupt. On 22 December 1627, commissioners were appointed to enquire into Edmund's possessions. They found that he held the manor of Over, the rectory of Whitegate, its tithes, profits and patronage of the vicarage, and that these had been conveyed by the original trustees to Sir John Pershall and Sir William Pershall, Edmund's relations. On 5 March 1628/9, the commissioners ordered new trustees to sell the manor to satisfy the creditors.



*The arms and crest of the Pershall (Peshall) family of Church Hill. Notice the trefoil which denotes this particular branch.*

During all this time Edmund languished in the Fleet prison and died there on 26 March 1629 and was subsequently buried at St Bride's Church, London. His will is dated the same date and in it he requests that his executors prosecute his suits in the courts and that whatever lands and monies were to be secured were to be divided equally among his children - Robert, Edmund, Thomas and Mary. The named executors were his son Thomas and his friend Christopher Ayres. Sons Edmund and Mary were witnesses to the will and presumably with him when he died. Efforts to resolve the litigation were not straightforward. Orders from the Court of Exchequer and the High Court of Chancery addressed to the commissioners required that issues between Robert Philmer, now Sir Robert, and other plaintiffs, and John Pepys and other defendants be settled. On 22 June 1637, £1500 was raised from Edmund's lands to satisfy the creditors and a further £800 to the satisfaction of Sir Robert Philmer to whom the manor of Over had been assigned by Edmund prior to his bankruptcy, and for monies due to Edmund Randolph.

On 12 December 1637, the rectory of Whitegate, various farms, messuages, tenements and cottages in Over and Whitegate were sold for £2228 6s. 8d. to Thomas Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, by John Wallinger of Chelmsford, John Pepys of London, Edmund Pershall of Over and his brother Thomas, Sir John Pershall of Sugnell, Staffordshire, Sir William Pershall of Cannell, Staffordshire, and Sir Robert Philmer of Kent.<sup>10</sup>

On 6 April 1637, Edmund Pershall's inquisition post mortem was held at Northwich. The jurors declared that he had held the manor of Over from the King and that it contained eighty messuages, twenty cottages, four water-mills, a horse-mill, and 4650 acres of various land types, eight burgages, rents from various tenants and the profits of the courts of Over: in all 106 tenants are listed.<sup>11</sup> The son and heir was declared to be Edmund (presumably Robert had died earlier) who was aged 22 years when his father died. The other son, Thomas, was one of two executors of Edmund's will in which John Pepys and John Wallinger are named as creditors. Between old Edmund's death, 1629, and the date of the inquisition, 1637, the profits of the estate were drawn by Edmund junior, Thomas Cholmondeley, Henry Lee and Ralph Bostock.



*'Edmund Pershall of Church Hill'  
A portrait ascribed to Bartholomeus van der  
Helst (1613-1670)*

The son Edmund trained as a lawyer and was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1619. During the Civil War Edmund and his brother served the King and were declared delinquents for having 'deserted their homes and adhered to the forces raised against Parliament'. Edmund was certainly in active service and was taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester on 20 July 1646. As a result both men had their estates seized with all income being paid to Parliament. They were then required to take the Covenant and Oath and to compound for their estates and were accordingly fined on 27 May 1647, a half and a sixth of the worth of their estates respectively, a total of £300; this was later amended to one sixth each and a total of £239 10s. Tradition has it that during the Civil war a Royalist Officer, perhaps one of the Pershalls, hid in the chimney to escape capture by Parliamentary soldiers – quite likely given that the town of Over was garrisoned by Parliamentarians in the 1640s.



*The Communion Cup with the arms of the Pershall family, dated 1663*

Having eventually succeeded in recovering the lordship of Over, but still in debt, Edmund Pershall sold the manor of Over for £2,400 to Thomas Cholmondeley in February 1662.<sup>12</sup> He also sold Church Hill to Mathew Moreton for £500. He and his brother then occupied a house on Handley Hill and lands known as Rutter's Tenement.

This Edmund died unmarried in 1676 and was buried at St. Chad's on 2 June 1676. His will dated 27 May of that year contains the following information: he asked to be buried under his pew in St Chad's church; he had a conveyance of lands on Over and Whitegate which was to pass to his niece Mary Lee, wife of Mathew Moreton and their issue; should they not have children then the lands were to go to John Stych of Cannock, Staffordshire; Anne, wife of Henry Leadbeater and her children received cash sums; and his executors were Thomas Cholmondeley of Vale Royal, Henry Legh of High Legh and Ralph Lowndes of Middlewich. For some reason the executors withdrew from their responsibilities in favour of Mary Moreton to whom administration was granted. The inventory of Edmund's belongings was drawn up on 14 June and lists goods to the value of £145 12s 10d. These include, besides the usual items of household goods and husbandry ware, are his sword, belt and pistol, his gold rings and a watch, books and pictures - presumably one of which was his portrait.

A John Pershall, another brother who was born in Bromley Kent in 1614, was buried at St. Chad's on 17 February 1675.

## **THE WHITTINGHAM FAMILY**

The Whittingham family seem to have arrived in the area during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest will for this family is that of Alice Whittingham of Swanlow, widow, dated 1575 who mentions her son George who was to have a brass pot along with all the rest of her goods, and daughters Cicelie and Katherine. John son of Edward Whittingham had ten shillings.

James Whittingham, husbandman of Swanlow, will is dated 22 February 1608. In this he mentions sons Thomas and Robert, and daughters Ellen and Margery, wife of Peter Nightingale. He also mentions his grand-daughter Ann, daughter of Thomas, and his brother-in-law John Downward, who was one of his executors along with Thomas Davenport.

Richard Whittingham of Swanlow purchased a small estate here for £250 from Henry Lee of Darnhall, but nothing more is known of him, and a Robert Whittingham was listed as one of the tenants of Edmund Pershall, the Lord of the Manor of Over, in 1637. During the mid 1640s, during the time of the Civil War, Raffe and Charles Whittingham applied to the Constable of Over for compensation to recover losses incurred by Parliamentary troops billeted in the town.

Robert Whittingham, yeoman of Wayhouse Green, left a will dated 29 December 1648. In this he left all his lands, messuages and tenements to his daughter Elizabeth Bosier. He also mentioned that Ann wife of Charles Whittingham of Swanlow had in her possession a cow called 'Scitternitt' and that Charles owed him £10, and that these were to be placed at the disposal of his grandson Thomas Bosier. Ann was also to have as much flax as to make her a smock. The residue of his goods was bequeathed to Elizabeth Holbrook, alias Edwards, with all the pewter ware given to her previously. He specifically mentioned one cow a two years old heffer, a young goose, a cow which Colonel Mainwaring's troopers had taken from her, her bed with flocks, bed stocks, feather bolster and two blankets, two pairs of sheets, one ribbing, one team of hemp twelve yards of flax and one big brass

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pot. The inventory was appraised by Robert Totty, then Mayor of Over, Thomas Totty and Charles Whittingham. It seems he also held two butts of land in the Town Field.

Raphe Whittingham of Swanlow, yeoman, left a detailed will dated 23 January 1659/60. To his 'Deare wyfe' Alice he gave all his goods and chattels, except for those items his father Richard had given to Raphe's son Raphe as 'heire loomes'. Alice also had half his lands and buildings with Ralph having the other part. Ralph had all the items of husbandry after Alice's death, a pistol, and twelve pence as his 'Childs part'. Daughter Mary Broadhurst had twenty shillings and all the goods she and her husband already had possession of – except a cow which was only lent to them. Younger daughter Jane was bequeathed two hundred pounds which had originally been settled on son Ralph and his wife to be. What had happened – had the marriage fallen through? To the poor of Over he gave forty shillings. Ralph also had a lease on a tenement in Wetenhall once occupied by his late sister Alice Lightfoot which he gave to Edward Lightfoot a bread baker of Chester. He appointed his wife and daughter Jane to be his executors and the witnesses were Raphe Maddock and Charles Whittingham. Attached to Raphe's will is a long inventory of his possessions. This was praised by Richard Weston and Robert Broadhurst on 17 June 1660: it totals £86 18s 4d.

Shortly after Raphe's death, on 20 July, his widow Alice wrote her will. She left three-quarters of all her possessions to her daughter Jane and the remainder to daughter Mary Broadhurst, wife of Robert. Son Ralph was given her gold signet ring and bible, which according to the inventory were worth £1 10s. Jane was appointed as executor and witnessed the will: because she could not write she made a mark. An inventory of Alice's goods was made following her death in early 1662 and records her goods as being worth £30 5s 10d.

Charles Whittingham of Swanlow, yeoman, left a will dated 29 July 1678 which was proved a week later. It refers to his wife Joan but no other members of an immediate family. However he does refer to two men who may be a nephew and niece: Charles and Alice children of Ralph Whittingham, Alderman who each received £5. There are a number of monetary bequests including one of £5 to Jane daughter of Samuel Whittingham. Samuel's son, Charles, was given one of his closes of land: he had two 'Pitt Crofts' and 'Milne Way'. His executors were Thomas Bosier of Little Over and Thomas Milton of Swanlow.

Ralph Whittingham left a will dated 1679. It seems he lived at Church Hill and had sons Ralph, Charles and James, daughters Alice and Elizabeth, and a brother Charles.

### **OTHER FAMILIES**

Among the probate documents which survive from the Over area, a few are of Swanlow residents: Roger Nickson (1616), Richard Colley (1646), John Hatton (1667), and Robert Briscoe, webster (1667).

Roger Nickson, husbandman of Swanlow, made his will on 2 May 1616 and was buried the following day. This mentions his wife Elizabeth and son Ralph and a Richard Broadhurst who was to have his 'best but one' jerkin, doublet and briches. His estate containing three 'lands' of three butts in Over Town Field he granted to Ralph Nickson, alias Buckley. His executors were Richard Darlington and Robert Whittingham of Swanlow. He also gave 13s 4d to the poor of the parish and 10s to church repairs.

Richard Colley, yeoman, left everything to his son-in-law Richard Dampote (Davenport) according to his will dated 2 March 1646. A bond of debt was exempt from this and was made in favour of Katherine Nightingale. Charles Whittingham and Thomas Robinson were the witnesses. He was buried at St Chad's on 20 May 1646.

John Hatton was a tailor who lived in Swanlow and also acted as the parish clerk. His will was written on 20 July 1667. It mentions his brother Thomas' son Benet, to whom he gave forty shillings,

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along with a table, chest, and cupboard from his chamber. Thomas, Ellen and Jane, children of brother Owen had twenty shillings each. Likewise Ellen, Isabel and Jane, daughters of another brother James, had the same amount. Two other nieces, Mary and Ellen each had forty shillings. John's sister, Joanne Whittingham received a bible and all the rest of his money with which she had to pay any expenses. The executors were James Hatton and Robert Maddock, and Andrew Totty of Ways Green was the overseer. Ralph Hall and Samuel Whittingham were witnesses. John Hatton was buried at St Chad's on 23 July 1667.

Robert Briscoe was a webster and he left a will dated 28 September 1666: he was buried at St Chad's a few days later. He left his house and land equally to his wife, Martha, and children until such time as son Michael came of age. His wife was to have the parlour and the room above it, the house and garden with a half share of three closes of land together with forty shillings a year, or else the 'Midle Field'. Michael was to have the big .... And daughter Elizabeth the biggest pan otherwise household goods were to be divided equally. Item of husbandry were to go to Michael. When Michael came of age, or at least within six years of that time, he was required to pay his sister £10. His wife was granted free liberty to use the ovens and water and allowed three measures of apples a year. Robert couldn't write and placed a mark at the end of the will which was witnessed by Jonathan Hall, Thomas Milton, Katherine Brereton and Jonathan Robinson. The inventory of his 'Cattell, Chattells and Goods' was made on 20 October 1666. It records a total of £32 14s 4d. In addition to livestock, items of husbandry and household items he had, being a Webster, three looms and a quantity of yarn. Robert's brother Michael lived on Swanlow Lane and died a few year's later.

### COURT ROLLS

There are occasional references to Swanlow and its people in the manorial court rolls and also the rolls of the Consistory Court at Chester.<sup>13</sup>

During the 17th century the people of Over, Swanlow and the other hamlets that formed the manor of Over were subject to the manorial court. The court was technically known as a 'Court Leet with View of Frankpledge and a Court Baron'. The court sat twice a year in April or May and October and dealt with a variety of local matters: fighting, trespass, breaching local orders, keeping children in order, failing to maintain buildings, hedges and drainage ditches. To each session the manorial tenants were summoned on pain of a fine. From those who attended the jury would be elected and at the October session the officials for the following year would be appointed. Firstly, the mayor of Over, the most senior member of the community, whose election needed the approval of the lord of the manor. The mayor was held in much respect and following his term of office continued to be respected by being bestowed the title of 'Alderman'. Once appointed, he presided over the court in the presence of the lord's steward who was a full time official responsible for running the manor. Next, for the Borough of Over, two constables were appointed, then two ale tasters, two burleymen, the town sergeant, mayor's sergeant, sealer of leather, heyward and four assessors. Finally, the jury, known as the Grand Jury, numbering thirteen, were sworn in. For the country areas of Marton and Swanlow, a second inquest was held with a further jury of thirteen being appointed along with, for each area, two constables, two ale tasters and two burleymen (officers of the court) and a heyward, who looked after the hedges and usage of the Town Field.

A flavour of the usual court business can be gleaned from the following entries. In October 1664 Widow Twemlow and Thomas Milner were required to improve the ditch from Richard Davenport's 'Higher Holden' field along Moor Lane to Davenport's 'Green Field': failure to do so would incur a fine of 10s. It seems that this stretch of Moors Lane was a regular problem with getting water logged as over the next twenty years there are regular requests by the court for ditching along Moors Lane. At the October court in 1685. John Twemlow was required to cut his hedge and make a 'sufficient' ditch along the lane from the corner of Widow Davenport's field called 'Long Greaves' to the end of her other field called 'Holden Croft' (somewhere near Knobbs Corner) failure to do so before the next court would incur a fine of 13s 4d. Twemlow again occurs in the next few years: again ditching between Davenport's and his 'Holden Cross Field' to 'draw ye water into its Course'; alongside his

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garden, and from Cross Lane (Darnhall School Lane) to Davenport's gate. Interestingly there was a Twemlow Field just off Moors Lane during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and this lay within the Davenport estate at that time – evidence of continuity over at least two centuries. Another common problem involved the ditch along the lane from the Standley family's barn yard and hemp field along Vicar's. Katherine Stanley was required to clear the ditch 'so that the water may chase from the lane'. Twenty years later, John Standley had to cut his hedge and 'ditch his ditch' from his yard where his barn stood along to 'Vicar's Field' and as far as the corner of Little Meadow, on pain of a fine of 10s. At the same court Richard Wilcoxson was required to scour his ditch all along Swanlow Lane as far as his 'Little Meadow' on pain of a fine of 10s.

Arthur Davenport was required to scour his ditch along Cross Lane and to 'cast it into ye lane to raise the same before ye next great Court'. It seems that the level of the lane had worn down and was perhaps somewhat boggy, clearing the ditch and placing the dirt from it onto the road they hoped would raise its level somewhat. Cross Lane seems to have problems with drainage for at one court the 'Supervisors of Swanlow' were required to place 'plats' (boards) between the ditches.

Another lane to be mentioned is 'Common Lane' which ran south from the area of the church alongside 'Vicar's Field' and into and across Welch Lane. Katherine Stanley had to scour the ditch along this lane between her 'Barn Croft' and 'Vicar's Field', and along her orchard to draw water off the Common Lane.

In 1671 the following residents of Swanlow, who had lands in the Town Field were required to 'sett a gate into Town Field' to safeguard the corn: Mr Edward Pershall, Alderman Charles Whittingham, Alderman John Marsh, Richard Davenport, Andrew Tottie, widow Bossier, and Ralph Kettle.

During this period the church exercised control over both the clergy and the laity through its courts. The archdeacon, through the Consistory Court, strove to maintain ecclesiastical control over everyday life by disciplining the clergy, proving wills, awarding grants of administration, issuing licences and faculties along with other administrative matters, but, arguably, more importantly so far as the parishioners were concerned, by enquiring into complaints of immorality and matrimonial affairs. The court's jurisdiction was wide – adjudicating in tithe disputes, wills and marriage contracts; punishing those proved to have committed libel or slander; enquiring into cases of scandalous behaviour, seduction and bastardy. Even failure to attend church could land a person before the courts. The numerous extant case papers and files of evidence that testify to a community racked by niggling, back-stabbing, prying, gossiping and general meddling in other people's business. Whilst some might see the court as meddling, others might easily use the law to get one over on a troublesome neighbour or settling an old score. No doubt lies, perjury, prejudice and bribery played their part.

A particularly interesting case involved the local parson and people who lived in the Swanlow area. One night in 1676, Joseph Darlington and his friend went to widow Cooke's alehouse by the church at Over. There they saw Abraham Smith the curate who was "full of ale". About midnight they were in an upper room when they heard quarrelling below; on going downstairs they found James Kettle and Jonathon Robinson were fighting and Smith being held back from the fight. After they had been quietened Smith started on Robinson by giving Robinson a thump on the ears. It seems that the quarrel was over a drinking challenge. In evidence Robinson stated that Smith was a man of civil and sober life, diligent in visiting the sick and other pastoral duties. However, it appears that he and the vicar, Littler Sheene, were not getting on very well. Sheene had apparently criticised the bishop of Chester as being sympathetic to Presbyterians and Smith with others had disturbed and hindered him in performing his duty on account of this. On one occasion Smith had locked the church door against the incumbent and placed lock on the pulpit door. John Twemlow a witness for the vicar stated that Smith performed an act of marriage in Alice Barker's alehouse in Whitegate between Thomas Burroughs and Mary Dodd. Constable Darlington attempted to serve Smith with a writ, but he snatched it, tore it up and declared he "cared not a fart for it". For the other side, Robinson gave evidence that Sheene had fathered two bastards on sisters Marjory and Mary Maddock. Interesting times!

## THE CIVIL WAR

The people of the town of Over and the surrounding hamlets were considered as Royalist on the grounds that the local gentry were so regarded. The local gentry had their estates seized and their rents collected on behalf of Parliament. For example between 1645 and 1647, Richard Newall of Swanlow, Thomas Newall of Weyhouse Green and Katherine Kettle paid their rents to Ralph Bostock of Moulton and other Parliamentarian officials instead of paying Mr Pershall, the lord of the manor.<sup>14</sup>

The majority of cases of Over people suffering losses at the hands of Roundhead soldiers was during 1644/45, though the earliest occurrence of troops being quartered in the town and the surrounding area was in the first few months of 1643, 'a little before the first battle of Middlewich' (13 March).<sup>15</sup> In the spring of 1645, Parliamentarian Yorkshire cavalry arrived in Cheshire and took a part in the sieges of Beeston and Chester. When Prince Rupert relieved Beeston, the Yorkshiresmen, under the command of a German mercenary, Major Hans George, withdrew to Over.

The losses that the local people endured fall into three broad categories: livestock of all kinds; food and drink, that included barley, oats, peas, bacon, bread and in particular – cheese; and miscellaneous items, such as bedding, cloth, beds, clothes pewter ware, yarn, horse gear weaponry and even a ladies petticoat! Claims for repayment of debts incurred by Parliament in Preposition money, free quarter and plunder seized by its forces and the sufferings of each of the freeholders and tenants of Over were separately recorded by the constables and their accounts still survive.

Of the Whittingham family, Robert Whittingham suffered particularly in losing thirteen cows, three heiffers, a calf, all his cattle, a nag, a three-years old filly, a colt and an old mare, all valued in excess of £40. In addition to his livestock, the following was seized: nine hundredweight of cheese, half hundredweight of 'new' cheese, malt, bacon, pewter, bedding, a new pair of boots, a new winnowing sheet, two pairs of horse gear and rope, all worth a further £10. He then suffered the indignity of having to accommodate soldiers in his house and their horses on thirty-four occasions. His claim is endorsed as follows:

*'The Whole Some that Robart Whittingham aforesaid hath Paid Lent or advanced upon the p'positions of Parliamen' and hath had taken from him and Quartered of the Parliam' p'ty with more that he cannot Remember him of is £125 13s 2d.'*

His kinsman Ralph paid £13 to Parliament and lost £15 worth of goods by plundering – these included his sword taken by a man named Whitney and John Wilkinson of Woodside, Wettenhall. Other items were three cows, clothing taken out of a chest, a bed, and four measures of oats. He also had to provide quarter for soldiers and horses on twenty-nine occasions at a cost of just over £8. Charles Whittingham also lost two cows, thirty-one measures of oats, and paid out £9 8s to Parliamentarians by reason of his being a 'delinquent', and also lost a horse a mare, a nag and other goods by way of plunder. When accommodation for soldiers was added, his total claim was £35 14s 8d. Lastly, John Whittingham lost £8 of goods seized by a Captain Carter and Captain Gimball's soldiers.

John Bosier's musket, several daggers, a boarding piece, a mare, a horse, two colts, six measures of oats, 28 shillings in cash were taken along with his son Thomas' sword, scabbard and belt and son Ralph's sword, scabbard, belt and fowling piece, all worth in excess of £14. John Bowden who lived at Over Church Style lost money, oats, cloth and harness all to a total of just over £4. Robert Tottie at Ways Green suffered soldiers staying with him. Some stayed for one night, most for two nights and some for a whole week. His total claim for thirty-three instances of providing accommodation and food for the men and their horses came to £33 17s 6d. He also made a claim for 16s 2d rent that should have been paid to him by his tenant Blackburn but was taken by Parliament.

Even the vicar, John Ford, suffered loses in the form of oats to feed the soldiers' horses and in providing quarter – a total of £11 7s was claimed.



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The following Swanlow residents can be identified as making claims against the Government: Ralph Kettle - £18 10s; Margaret and her son George Holland - £7 1s 2d; Richard Davenport - £4 19s 10d; Robert Briscoe - £1 17s 8d.



***St Chad's Church and Church Hill.***

*(The house on the hill, fifty yards south-east of the church would have been the home of the Pershall's. It became the vicarage in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, divided into two houses in 1775 and was pulled down in the 1895.)*

## APPENDIX

### SWANLOW RESIDENTS FROM THE MANOR COURT ROLLS

Sample years have been taken to indicate the family names that continued in Swanlow during the century. The figures in brackets refer to those identified as being listed in the Hearth Tax, 1664, and the number of hearths (domestic fireplaces) on which they were taxed. The asterisk refers to those too poor to pay the tax.

#### 1661 & 1664

Ralph Whittingham (3)  
 Thomas Newall (1\*)  
 Thomas Millton (2)  
 Richard Davenport (2)  
 Thomas Milner (1)  
 Robart Briscoe (2)  
 Ann Whittingham(1\*)  
 Kathleen Standley, wid (2)  
 Richard Newall (1\*)  
 Thomas Hatton (1\*)  
 Elizabeth Bancroft (1\*)  
 William Darlington (2)  
 George Holland (1)  
 Thomas Hatton (1\*)  
 Ralph Kettle (2)  
 John Snellson  
 Elizabeth Bassford (1\*)  
 Robert Hall (1\*)  
 Hugh Hakshall (1)

#### 1665

Ralph Whittingham (3)  
 Thomas Newall (1\*)  
 Thomas Millton (2)  
 Richard Davenport (2)  
 Thomas Milner (1)  
 Thomas Whittingham  
 Ann Whittingham (1\*)  
 Kathleen Standley, wid. (2)  
 Richard Newall (1\*)  
 James Hatton (1)  
 Elizabeth Bancroft (1\*)  
 William Darlington (2)  
 George Holland (1)  
 Thomas Hatton (1\*)  
 Ralph Kettle (2)  
 John Snellson  
 Elizabeth Bassford (1\*)  
 Robert Hall (1\*)  
 Hugh Hackshall (1)  
 John Mainering  
 John Tomey (1\*)  
 Thomas Johnson (1\*)  
 Thomas Maddocke (1\*)

#### 1673

Ralph Kettle  
 Thomas Newall  
 Thomas Edgetton  
 Thomas Milltton  
 John Twamloe  
 Mighel Brisscoe  
 Ketheren Standley  
 Richard Newall  
 Thomas Hatton  
 Richard Baker  
 James Hatton  
 Thomas Whittingham  
 Thomas Barker  
 John Snellson  
 Robart Hall  
 Henry Bore  
 Richard Harrisson  
 Richard Billington  
 Samuell Ffareclove  
 John Nixsson

#### 1682

Ralph Kettle  
 Jacob Hatton  
 Richard Baker  
 Thomas Hatton  
 Ann Pershall, wid  
 Margaret Whittingham, wid.  
 Katherine Stanley  
 Samuel Whittingham  
 John Twemlowe  
 Maria Davenport, wid.  
 Thomas Milton  
 Thomas Whittingham  
 Michael Berrisford  
 Thomas Egerton  
 Robert Holland  
 Margaret Newall, wid.  
 Margaret Bosier, wid.  
 Robert Hall  
 Thomas Barker, shoemaker  
 Richard Billington

#### 1700 (using Latinised names)

Carol' Whittingham, gen.  
 Edw'us Moreton, gen.  
 Maria Moreton, Vid. (she is crossed through suggesting recent death in May 1700)  
 Isabell Hatton, Vid.  
 Jo'hes Stanley  
 Jo'hes Bebbington  
 Ric'us Davenport  
 Joh'es Berrington  
 Thom' Whittingham  
 Michael Briscoe  
 Thom' Egerton  
 Thom' Robinson  
 Rad'us Bower del Heth  
 Robt'us Hall  
 Thom' Newall  
 Joh'es Snelson  
 Thom' Holbrooke shoemaker  
 Edward Walker  
 Carol' Skelton

## TONY BOSTOCK'S HISTORY NOTES: SWANLOW

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, W., and Webb, W., *The Vale Royall of England*, published by D. King. (1656), as quoted in Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Cheshire Sheaf*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. xlix (1954), p.46

<sup>4</sup> Cheshire Records and Archives Office: DBC 1621/26/3

<sup>5</sup> *Cheshire Sheaf*

<sup>6</sup> CRO: DBC 1621/16

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, Bundle 20, No. 16 (Peschall v Randolph)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Budle 85, No. 32 (Pershall v Halke)

<sup>9</sup> The information concerning the Grocers' Company is taken from [History and Genealogy of the Pearsall Family in England and America \(1928\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> CRO: DBC 1621/26/20

<sup>11</sup> Record Society, *Cheshire Inquisitions Post Mortem*

<sup>12</sup> CRO: DBC 1621/26/20

<sup>13</sup> The manorial court rolls are filed in CRO DBC 621/22 and the Church court rolls are in EDC5

<sup>14</sup> *Calenders of State Papers (Domestic) 1645-47* and *Calenders of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents*.

<sup>15</sup> British Museum, Harleian MSS. 2126, ff 3-39