

John Clifford

(1782-1845) and his family in
north-west Leicestershire

By [John Clifford](#)

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The former Augustinian priory church of St Mary & St Hardulph, built within 2000-year-old earthen ramparts on a hilltop 400 ft (122m) above sea level, looking down on the village of Breedon. It is seen here from the south around 1900. Clifford marriages and baptisms at Breedon go back to 1606. Twelve Cliffords were buried in the churchyard between 1626 and 1804. John Clifford was probably related to them. (Original postcard, author's collection.)

Origins

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In each of our family trees, sixty-four positions are occupied by our 4x great grandparents, six generations before us. We receive our surname from just one of the sixty-four, along with a mere 1.5625% of our genetic inheritance. Tracing the transmission of a single surname, therefore, creates the illusion of a more significant connection than really exists.

Nonetheless, it is a peg on which to hang interesting lines of enquiry about the lives of the people to whom we are related, ordinary or otherwise, just like those in everyone's families. For those who are middle-aged in the early twenty-first century, six generations take us back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Leicestershire-Derbyshire border

John Clifford, my namesake, was my 4x great grandfather. His immediate origins are unclear, but he was born around 1782. He was probably from one of several Clifford families in north-west Leicestershire parishes near the Derbyshire border, including Whitwick and Bredon on the Hill, and just over the border in Aston-on-Trent.



Ordnance Survey map of north-west Leicestershire, First Series of 1835, showing: Castle Donington (top), Kegworth (top-right), Diseworth (centre-right), Long Whatton (right), Bredon on the Hill (centre-left), Belton (bottom), Worthington and Staunton Harold (bottom-left), and Shepshed (bottom-right). Melbourne (upper-left) is in Derbyshire. (VisionOfBritain.org.uk)

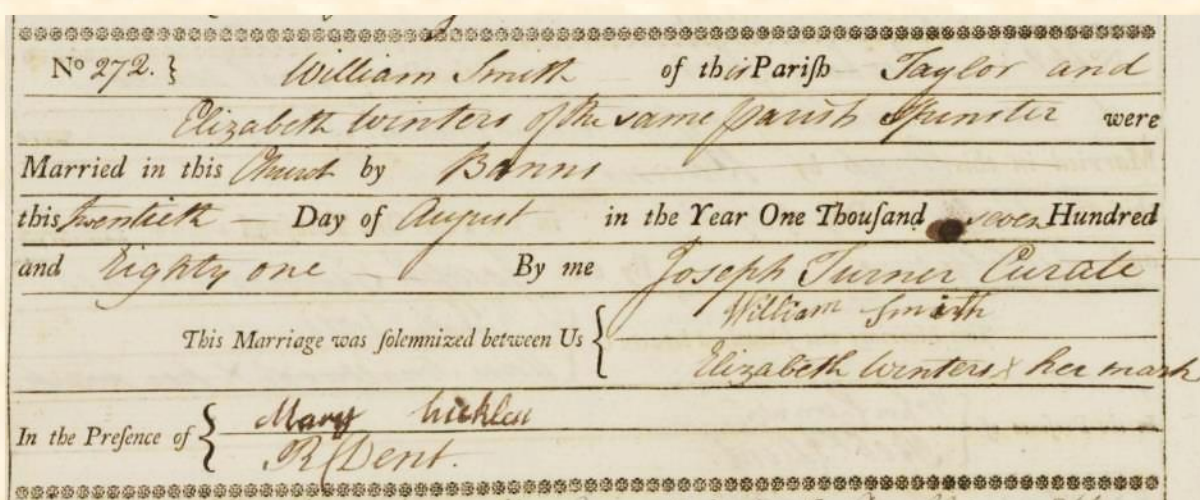
John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

I have attempted here to create a picture of the lives of John, his family and their descendants in north-west Leicestershire in the nineteenth century. In this relatively rural area, one of the most striking themes is the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

I am aware of a number of wills made by Cliffords in north-west Leicestershire, where East Midlands Airport and Castle Donnington motor racing circuit are today. Some of the oldest were made at Diseworth by a Margaret Clifford in 1523 and at Kegworth by a Nicholas Clifford in 1568. Others were made at Barrow upon Soar in the seventeenth century.

The earliest Clifford marriage at Breedon St Mary & St Hardulph was that of William "Clifforde" in 1606. The baptisms of his children were the first of the surname recorded there. Twelve Cliffords were buried in the churchyard between 1626 and 1804. John Clifford was probably related to them. A will was made at Castle Donnington by a William Clifford in 1803.

In London in 1804, John Nichols published Volume 3, Part 2 of his *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*. The grave inscriptions he noted at Kegworth St Andrew included "John Clifford, died April 26, 1789, aged 79" and "Dorothy Clifford, died June 9, 1783, aged 73." Nichols also refers to letters, "in the possession of Thomas Clifford, esq." at the time, which detail the imprisonment of Mary Queen of Scots at Ashby Castle before her execution in 1587.



Marriage of my 5x great grandparents, William Smith, a tailor who could write his own name, and Elizabeth Winters, who could not – register entry for 20 August 1781 at Breedon St Mary & St Hardulph. John Clifford married their daughter, Martha, in 1803.

Staunton Harold

Some of the Cliffords buried at Breedon in the seventeenth century were from neighbouring Staunton Harold, which fell within Breedon parish. Wills were made at Staunton Harold by William Clifford in 1728 and Richard Clifford in 1770.

The Staunton Harold estate was the seat of the Earls Ferrers of the Shirley family. Laurence Shirley was 4th Earl Ferrers from 1745. His uncle, the 3rd Earl, had been declared insane. Laurence was volatile and a notorious rogue who spent time

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enjoying the excesses of Paris. From around 1743, he took a mistress at Staunton Harold named Margaret Clifford. They had four illegitimate daughters between 1744 and 1749. Margaret's father, Richard, lived at Breedon and was the Earl's agent.

In 1752, the Earl married sixteen-year-old Mary, daughter of Sir William, 2nd Baronet Meredith of Marston. They had no children, and he continued his relationship with Margaret. He had Mary locked inside Staunton Harold Hall and, in 1758, she obtained a rare separation by Act of Parliament on the grounds of cruelty. Mary moved out of the Hall and the Earl then moved Margaret and their daughters in.

John Johnson, the former land steward to the Earl's father, was appointed to collect rents for Mary as part of her settlement. On 18 January 1760, the Earl sent Margaret and the girls away from the house before Johnson arrived for an appointed meeting. The Earl provoked a dispute and shot Johnson, who died the next day. The Earl was hanged for murder and was the last peer to be executed in England. His body was dissected by anatomists and briefly put on public display.

In his will, the Earl left generous sums to Margaret Clifford and each of their daughters, and an additional sum to Johnson's daughter. Margaret's daughters were given the Shirley surname and the title of 'Lady of Ferrers'. One of them, Lady Anna Maria Ferrers, married John Louis Pasteur. The famous French scientist, Louis Pasteur, was their grandson.



The Ferrers Chapel of the Holy Trinity, completed in 1653, and Staunton Harold Hall in its remodelled form of 1763, commissioned by Vice Admiral Washington Shirley, 5th Earl Ferrers. They are seen here around 1880. Cliffords living on the Staunton Harold estate in the seventeenth century are buried in Breedon churchyard. John Clifford and his sons may have worked on the estate in the early nineteenth century. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))

The 4th Earl was succeeded by his two brothers, Washington and Robert Shirley, the 5th and 6th Earls. They could not have been more different. The 5th Earl joined the

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Royal Navy, rose to the rank of Vice Admiral, and studied astronomy. The 6th Earl was created Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire in 1781. From 1787 to 1842 – most of John Clifford's lifetime – the estate was the seat of brothers Robert and Washington Shirley, the 7th and 8th Earls Ferrers. The 7th Earl was a historian. The 8th Earl was cupbearer to the royal household as a young man and was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire in 1832. The family never spoke of the execution of their uncle, the 4th Earl, but perhaps John Clifford had to endure stories about the Earl's mistress, Margaret Clifford. In 1804, John Nichols stated in his *History and Antiquities* that the Staunton Harold estate covered 1,700 acres (688 hectares) and included fifty-two tenant houses.

In the late eighteenth century, Sir Thomas Hugh Clifford, 1st Baronet Constable, lived 33 miles (53 km) west of Breedon at Tixall Hall, Staffordshire. He was a grandson of Hugh, 3rd Baron Clifford of Chudleigh, Devon. Sir Thomas' brother, Arthur Clifford, published his history of the Barons de Clifford, *Collectanea Cliffordiana*, in Paris in 1817. The Barons were descended from the Dukes of Normandy. In the twelfth century, they had taken their surname from Clifford Castle, Herefordshire, while policing the Welsh Marches. They later held vast estates in Yorkshire and Westmoreland and maintained order for the Crown on the Scottish border.

Closer to Breedon lived a relative of Thomas and Arthur – Laura, granddaughter of Hugh, 4th Baron Clifford of Chudleigh. Her husband was Ambrose Lisle March Phillipps De Lisle. In the 1830s, he had Grace Dieu Manor and Mount St Bernard Abbey built near Thringstone, a few miles south-east of Breedon. The family also owned Garendon Hall, a few more miles further east between Shepshed and Loughborough.

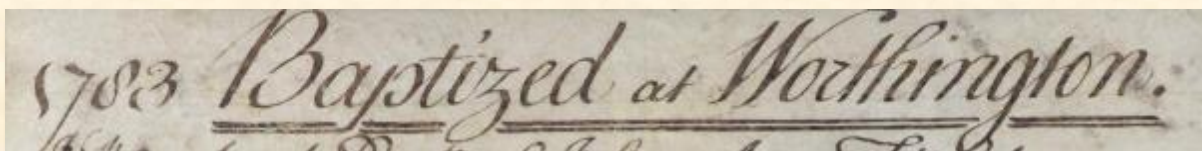
If John was aware of the Tixall and Chudleigh Cliffords, he would not have known how he might be related to them (and neither do I). Any connection had long since ceased to be relevant. Neither would he have been able to read a book like Arthur Clifford's, nor John Nichols' *History and Antiquities*. When signing the registration of his marriage, John could only scrawl an 'X'.

Worthington

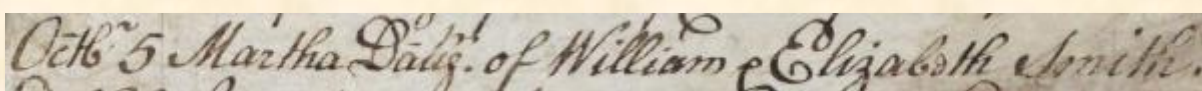
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John and Martha

John married Martha Smith on 7 August 1803 at Worthington, 2.5 miles (4 km) south of Breedon. Martha was the daughter of William and Elizabeth Smith, my 5x great grandparents, who had got married at Breedon in 1781. John and Martha's wedding was conducted at Worthington St Matthew by the curate, Francis Harris, who had baptised Martha there on 5 October 1783.

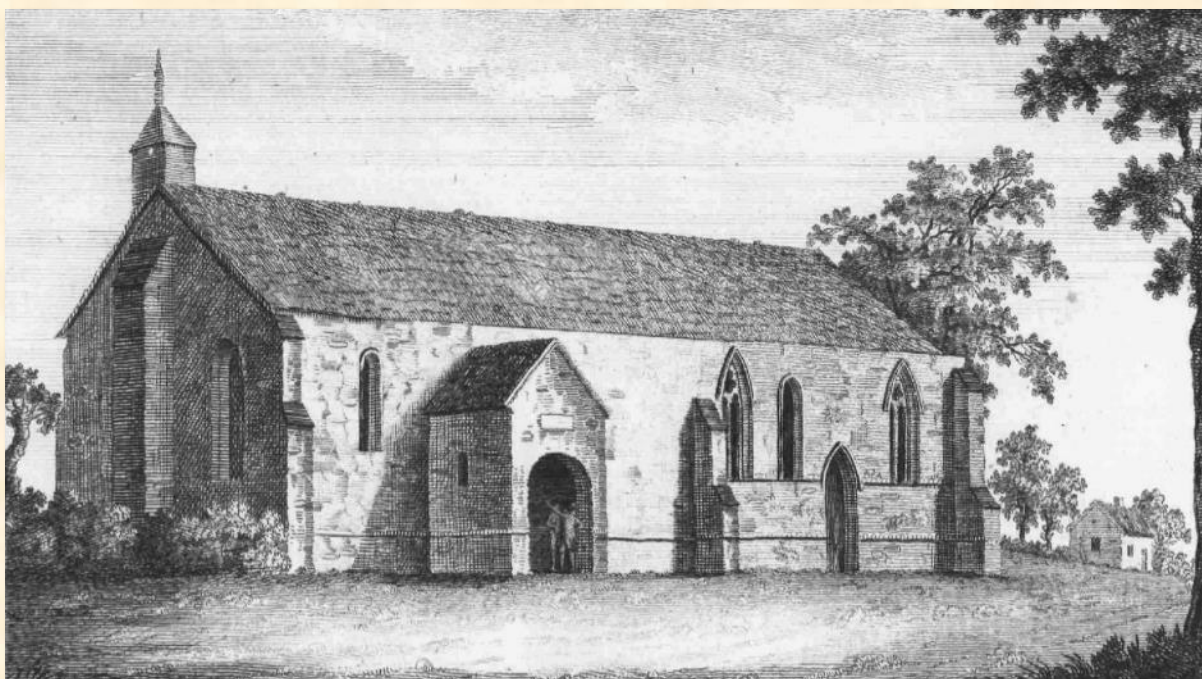


1783 Baptized at Worthington.



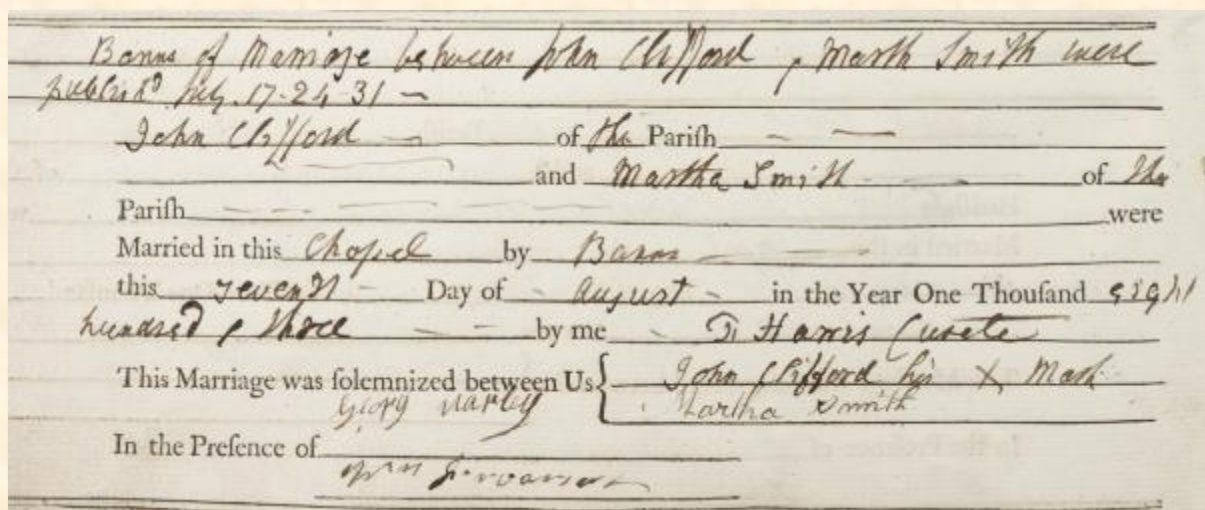
Oct 5 Martha Daugh. of William & Elizabeth Smith.

Baptism of my 4x great grandmother, Martha Smith – register entry for 5 October 1783 at Worthington St Matthew.



Worthington St Matthew, largely built in the twelfth century and seen here in around 1800. Several of my ancestors and their extended family were baptised and married here between 1783 and 1865 (History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester by John Nichols, Vol.3, Part 2, London, 1804 – [University of Leicester, Special Collections](#))

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Marriage of John Clifford and Martha Smith – register entry for 7 August 1803 at Worthington St Matthew.

The village of Worthington was a 'chapelry' within the Church of England parish of Breedon on the Hill. Since the twelfth century, the appointment of clergymen to the 'living' of Worthington was under the patronage of the de Ferrers family of Staunton Harold. The Chapel had no graveyard, so burials took place at Breedon.

Worthington Chapel fell into dereliction in the seventeenth century. It had been repaired by 1755, possibly encouraged by the Methodist revival, when John Dalby was appointed as the first curate for many years. His contemporary at Breedon, Walter Sellon, was an ally of the Methodists, and was the curate there from 1759 until 1770. From 1758, Revd Dalby was also vicar of Castle Donington 6 miles (10 km) to the north. In 1761, he moved to Lambley in Nottinghamshire, 24 miles (39 km) to the north-east, and became the rector there. In his *History and Antiquities*, John Nichols records an inscription at Kegworth to Dalby's son, Thomas, a surgeon, who died in 1787. Nichols notes the inscription to John and Dorothy Clifford a few lines below.

Dalby was succeeded as curate of Worthington by Francis Harris. Revd Harris was already the vicar of Whitwick since 1767, and had been curate at Coleorton five years before that. He was nominated for the Worthington curacy by Nathaniel Curzon, 1st Baron Scarsdale, who had inherited the patronage. The Scarsdale seat was 17 miles (27 km) away at Kedleston Hall, north-west of Derby.

A growing family

John and Martha probably lived in Worthington for around thirty years. All of their nine children were baptised there:

1803	William, baptised 22 July	1816	Elizabeth, baptised 26 May
1805	Thomas, baptised 13 July	1820	James, baptised 19 March
1809	John, baptised 19 April	1823	Charles, baptised 2 November
1811	Joseph, baptised 20 June	1828	Benjamin, baptised 20 July
1814	Edmond, baptised 7 January		

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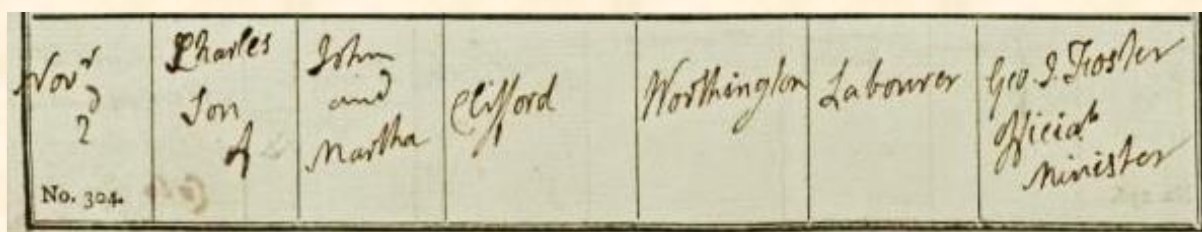
Main Street (above) and the Old Swan Inn (below), Worthington, around 1900. Dating from 1806 or earlier, the Cliffords and their relatives would have been familiar with the exterior and interior of the Old Swan, which closed in the mid-1990s. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))



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Revd Harris conducted the baptisms of their first six children. When he died in 1819, James Dean was nominated as his successor by Nathaniel Curzon, 2nd Baron Scarsdale. Revd Dean came from a curacy at Derby St Peter, which he had held from 1812. He baptised John and Martha's seventh and ninth children.

Charles, my three-times great grandfather, was baptised by a visiting officiating minister, Revd George Iliff Foster. Since 1784, he had been vicar of Breedon, and also of Ratby cum Groby, which was 15 miles (14 km) to the south-east. From 1797, he was also the curate of Nailstone, 11 miles (18 km) south of Breedon. Revd Foster would have spent many hours on horseback in all weathers, holding these posts until his death in 1827. The patron of the living of Breedon was George Grey, 5th Earl of Stamford. The seat of the Earls of Stamford was nearly 50 miles (80 km) to the south-west, at Enville Hall in south Staffordshire. Foster had been one of the signatories to an Act of Parliament in 1794 for the building of a canal connecting the Coventry Canal to Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The Ashby Canal opened in 1804.



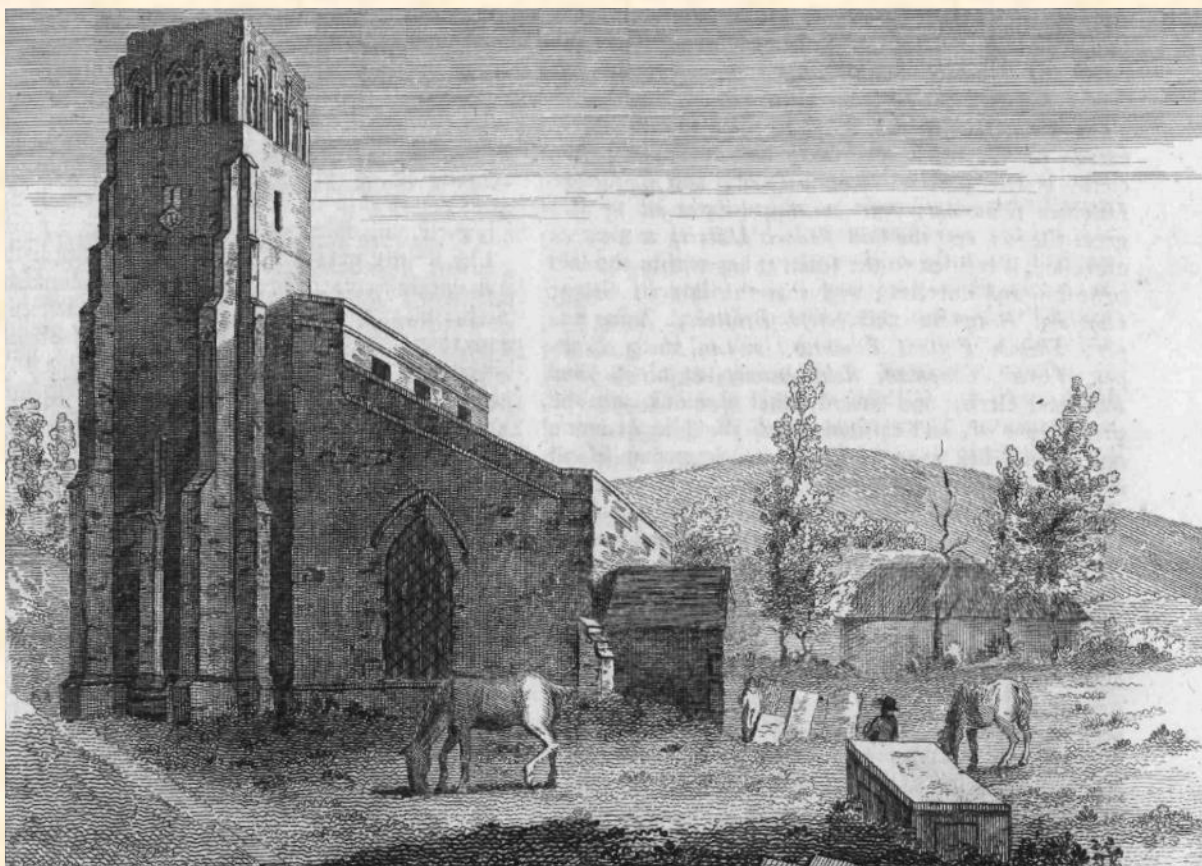
Baptism of my 3x great grandfather, Charles Clifford – register entry for 2 November 1823 at Worthington St Matthew.

National census records and those of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials throughout the nineteenth century show that many of John and Martha's descendants moved only a few miles from Worthington. Some of them lived in the villages and hamlets to the south, towards Ashby-de-la-Zouch – Griffydham, Osgathorpe, Thringstone, Peggs Green and Coleorton Moor.

Others lived in a ring of villages – Swannington, Whitwick, Snibston, Ravenstone and Hugglescote in the parish of Ibstock – within which the new town of Coalville would develop from the 1830s. Some family members moved a little eastward towards Loughborough and settled in Belton, Long Whatton and Shepshed.

John and Martha's eldest child, William, got married on 4 March 1827 at the fourteenth century parish church of Whitwick St John the Baptist, 4 miles (6 km) south-east of Worthington. His bride was sixteen-year-old Mary Webster from Newbold, a mile (1.6 km) south-west of Worthington. Mary had been born at Whitwick in 1810 or 1811.

Martha was pregnant with her last child, Benjamin, when William and Mary announced that they were expecting Martha's first grandchild. Little John was baptised at Worthington on 23 November 1828, four months after his uncle Benjamin. In 1841, William, Mary and John were living in the hamlet of Peggs Green, 2 miles (3 km) south of Worthington. Brick-making yards were common in the area and John, now aged twelve, was working at one of them. William died in 1845 and Mary in 1853, both in their early forties. John died sometime in between at around the age of twenty.



Whitwick St John the Baptist as it was around 1800. Revd Francis Harris was vicar of Whitwick from 1767. He baptised Martha Smith at Worthington in 1783 and conducted her marriage there to John Clifford in 1803. John and Martha's eldest child, William, got married at Whitwick in 1827. His wife, Mary Webster, had been baptised here. Also at Whitwick, William's brother, Joseph, married Mary Hall from Gelsmoor in 1839. (History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester by John Nichols, Vol.3, Part 2, London, 1804 – [University of Leicester, Special Collections](#))

Church records from both Breedon and Worthington include members of the Hall, Haywood and Toon families, into which John and Martha's children would marry. On 18 March 1833, their daughter Elizabeth, aged seventeen, married Samuel Haywood at Worthington. Samuel had been born in Breedon parish and was baptised at Worthington by Francis Harris on 29 July 1810.

John and Martha's third child, another John, also got married to a Worthington girl, seventeen-year-old Ellen Bancroft, at St Matthew's on 22 February 1835. Both Elizabeth's and John's weddings were conducted by curate Theophilus Henry Hastings Kelk. On 5 May 1839, John and Martha's fourth child, Joseph, married Mary Hall at Whitwick St John the Baptist. Mary was from Gelsmoor, between Newbold and Peggs Green.

Joseph and Mary's daughter, Martha, had an illegitimate daughter in late 1864. She named her Sarah Toon Clifford. The middle name identified the father, Thomas Toon. Little Sarah was baptised at Worthington on 15 February 1865 by William Barnes. Martha was finally married to Thomas Toon at Breedon by curate J G Mallinson on Christmas Day 1866.



Above and below: Worthington St Matthew seen here in 1870. John and Martha's great granddaughter, Sarah Toon Clifford, was baptised here on 15 February 1865 by William Barnes. She was the last member of the family to be recorded at Worthington. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))



John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire



Ordnance Survey map of north-west Leicestershire, First Series of 1835, showing the villages where John Clifford's descendants lived and worked from the 1830s onwards. Due south of Worthington (top) and Osgathorpe (top-right) are 'Griffy Dam', Peggs Green, Thringstone, Coleorton Moor, Swannington, Whitwick (right), Ravenstone (centre), Hugglescote and Ibstock (bottom). Note the Leicester & Swannington Railway of 1832-33 meandering up from Battle Flat in the south-east. The new town of Coalville was not yet shown. (VisionOfBritain.org.uk)

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

By 1870, Worthington had become a parish in its own right, independent of Breedon. Griffydam, Gelsmoor and Newbold now fell within Worthington parish.

William, Joseph, Elizabeth, Charles and Benjamin provided John and Martha with a total of twenty-four grandchildren. Eleven of those produced their fifty-seven great grandchildren. The first great grandchild arrived in 1856, the year when their nineteenth grandchild was also born. The generations would continue to overlap for the next sixteen years. The last grandchild, born in 1872, was Benjamin's son, who was the father of the last great grandchild, born in 1914.

The names 'John' and 'Martha' were used several times in the succeeding generations. William, Joseph, Elizabeth and Charles each named a son John. Joseph and Elizabeth both named a daughter Martha. Joseph, Elizabeth and Charles each had a grandson named John. Elizabeth also had a granddaughter named Martha. Joseph and Elizabeth each had a great granddaughter named Martha.

The Agricultural Revolution

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Land enclosure

John Clifford was an agricultural labourer. So were his sons, Joseph, Charles and Benjamin, and his son-in-law, Samuel Haywood. They would have worked, possibly together, on private farms or larger estates.

We would recognise the agricultural system and 'patchwork' landscape that surrounded them, created gradually over the previous three hundred years. Fluctuations in the value of grain and livestock in different periods had forced landowners and farmers to diversify and look for ways to increase productivity. As the country became wealthier, the population increased. Demand for better quality food was driven by the expectations of improving standards of living.

A major development was the enclosure of open fields. This was achieved by planting hedges interspersed with trees, erecting fences, digging ditches and building dry stone walls. Particularly in the Midland counties, fields were enclosed to create permanent pasture and to grow grain and fodder more intensively.

This was unpopular among many tenants. 'Common land' on which they had the right to graze their animals was unavailable after being enclosed. But enclosure was not always due to major landowners wanting to increase the size of sheep flocks and imposing their will on their neighbours, with whom they often reached agreement.



The Staunton Harold estate as it looked around 1800. In the following thirty years, John Clifford and his sons may have worked on the farms into which the estate had been divided. (History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester by John Nichols, Vol.3, Part 2, London, 1804 – [University of Leicester, Special Collections](#))

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Enclosed land had a higher value in the more active land market that followed the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s. Many large aristocratic estates were created on former monastic land. One such estate local to Worthington was that of Staunton Harold Hall, where John Clifford and his sons may have worked. The rate of enclosure in Leicestershire increased throughout the seventeenth century. Staunton Harold was 'disparked' in 1623 and divided into farms as an early form of enclosure.

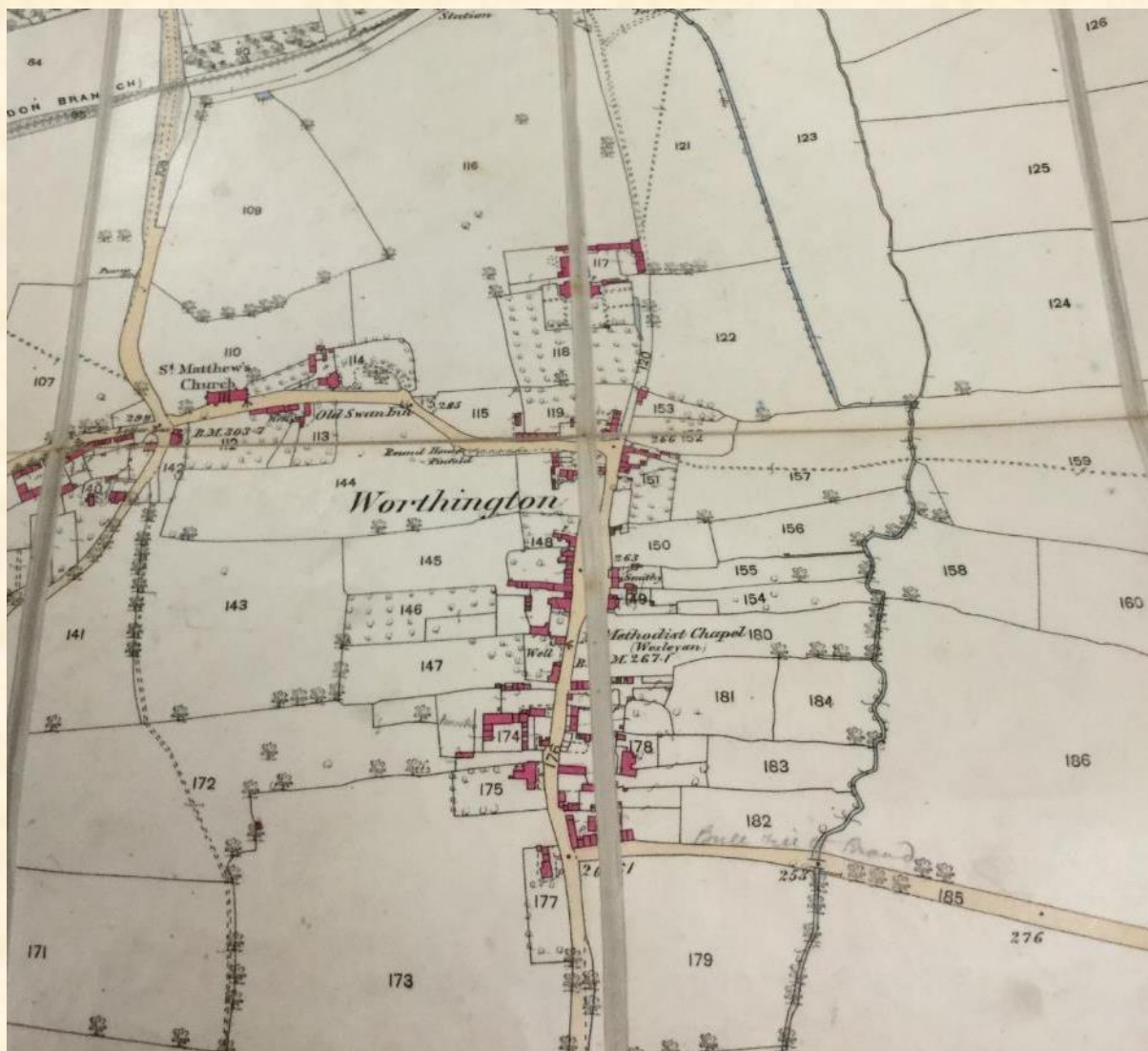
The amount of enclosed land across the country increased from 25 per cent to 47 per cent by 1710. Earlier enclosures had been made by landlords whereas, by 1800, most tenants had also done likewise, and the majority of farmland in England was now enclosed. Many field layouts were completely reorganised in a more regular grid. Where landowners had control of whole parishes, new straight and wider roads, with new farms and cottages built along them, were made across former common land. These contrasted with the narrow and winding lanes that followed the irregular field boundaries of previous centuries. To increase farmland, woodlands were felled, and heath and waste land were cultivated.



Two farmhouses opposite each other on Main Street at Town End, Worthington, seen here in 1956. As agricultural labourers, John Clifford and his sons would have been very familiar with the farms within the village. They would certainly have known the farmhouse in the centre, which was built in the mid-eighteenth century and has been a Grade II listed building since 1983. Pear Tree Farm is at bottom-right. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

From 1604, and particularly between 1760 and 1815, many areas were enclosed by Act of Parliament, and this became the norm. These enclosures are identifiable today by the presence of mainly hawthorn hedging. Between 1750 and 1850, 200,000 miles (320,000 km) of new hedges were planted across England. In 1800, around 20 per cent of land was still left to nature. By 1873, this had reduced to well under 10 per cent. By 1914, over 5,200 bills had been enacted for the enclosure of 11,000 square miles (28,000 km²), over a fifth of the total area of England



Ordnance Survey map of 1882, showing Worthington with the twelfth century St Matthew's Church to the left. The Methodist Chapel of 1820 is in the centre. Note the rectangular fields of nine to twelve acres, dwarfing the older, narrow and irregular fields adjacent to the houses. (With thanks to Linda Farley)

In north-west Leicestershire, a private bill submitted to parliament was passed in 1802 as *An Act for Dividing, Allotting and Inclosing the several Open Fields, Meadows, Commons and Waste Grounds, within the Manors of Worthington and Breedon on the Hill, and Township of Newbold, all in the Parish of Breedon-on-the-Hill, in the County of Leicester*. The areas of open land that were enclosed included

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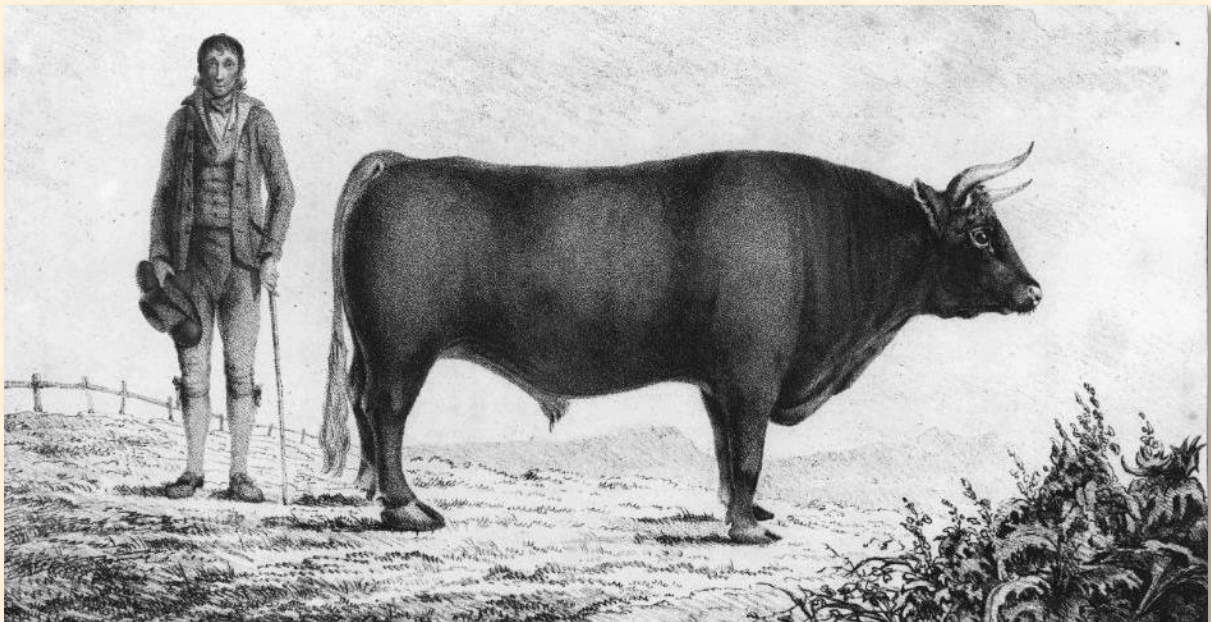
Breedon Brand Common, Gelsmoor Common and Thringstone Common. The work of enclosing land around Worthington, Newbold, Gelsmoor and Griffydam was completed by 1806.

What was John Clifford's opinion of enclosure? Did he feel powerless and at the mercy of local landowners and law makers? Was he resentful and apprehensive about what impact enclosure might have on his employment prospects? Or had he heard enough good evidence of increased productivity from other areas, with benefits for more than just the upper classes? It was the only landscape his sons would know.

Investment and productivity

Enclosure enabled greater control, and it became worthwhile to invest in land improvement. Innovations started to be introduced, including modifying soils and draining fields to enable a greater range of crops, such as turnips, to be grown in rotation. The Industrial Revolution was also starting to change some aspects of farming. Major landowners introduced machinery powered by wind, water or horses, such as threshing machines and chopping machines for straw or turnips.

When arable prices were low, livestock farming increased, for which some farmers had to learn new skills. The opposite was the case during the Napoleonic Wars, when grain prices peaked. This may have had an impact on the kind of labouring that John did before his sons were old enough to join him. When the amounts of land devoted to wheat, barley and oats were reduced, such as when prices fell after 1815, the increase in yields meant that the amount of production was maintained. Intensive arable farming needed more horses. The more livestock that were kept, the more manure was available to enrich the land.



Cattleman with a bull. John Clifford and his sons may well have worked with cattle, particularly when livestock farming was more profitable. (History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester by John Nichols, Vol.3, Part 2, London, 1804 – [University of Leicester, Special Collections](#))

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Farming was now managed far less from tightly packed cottages in villages like Worthington with a smallholding attached to each one. Where smaller farms could afford the expense, existing buildings were improved by adding bays to barns, rebuilding stables and adding roofs over open yards to provide shelter for animals. Estates built new farmhouses, barns, granaries, turnip houses, cattle sheds, fodder stores, forges, carpenters' shops, brick yards and wagon lodges. Some farms boiled animal feed in preparation rooms.

New farms were created, some being named after battles such as 'Waterloo Farm'. The buildings were arranged around new farmyards in the plan that we are familiar with, located in the middle of farms for maximum convenience. As profits increased, the quality and design of buildings improved. Some were quite ornate with Gothic and Neo-Classical features. Some were deliberately designed as model farms. All these buildings and boundaries needed to be kept in a good state of repair, so a large workforce of labourers like John and his sons was still needed.

In the early nineteenth century, competition from imported foreign food such as grain threatened to keep prices low and reduce home-grown profits for landowners. The Government passed the 'Corn Laws' in 1815, which were mainly import tariffs intended to maintain domestic grain prices. This was very unpopular with ordinary people as it raised the cost of living. It also restrained the wider economy for the next thirty years.

Despite the Corn Laws, there was a depression in the 1820s and 1830s, particularly in grain prices. Some former heath and common land would not be used for growing crops again until nearly a hundred years later, necessitated by the First World War. Many farms were sold by bankrupt farmers and rents paid by tenant farmers stagnated. This is the environment in which John laboured through his forties and fifties, and it was the only one that his sons knew as young men.

Profitability recovered from the late 1830s onwards. Farming became more mixed and further improvements came along. The new railways delivered agricultural produce, particularly meat and dairy, to growing urban markets. The care of livestock improved as a consequence, and more productive breeds of sheep and cattle found their way from large estates to private farms.

Griffydam

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The hamlet of Griffydam is 1.5 miles (2 km) south of Worthington. Its name is probably of Scandinavian origin. 'Gryfja Damnr' means a dammed creek, and a man-made bank is still visible today, built to hold water in a pond. Griffydam was one of several Danish settlements – Osgathorpe, Thringstone (Traengr's tun), Ravenstone (Hrafn's tun) and the 'by' in Ashby – among older villages in that part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia.

Local Methodist Societies

John and Martha's daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Samuel Haywood, made their first marital home in Griffydam. Their first child, David, was born on 9 January 1834. They were Methodists at the time and had David baptised at the Wesleyan Methodist chapel on Elder Lane on 23 February of that year. Most of their eight children were born in Griffydam. In 1841, they were living on Elder Lane.



Griffydam's Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, built in 1778, and the neighbouring houses on Elder Lane, seen here around 1900. Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood and their children lived on Elder Lane in the 1840s. (With thanks to [Samuel T Stewart](#) and [GriffydamHistory.com](#))

Nearby in 'Chapple Row' were Elizabeth's brother, Joseph Clifford, and his wife, Mary. They appear to have had a six-year-old son, Thomas, living with them, born four years before they got married. Thomas may have been a nephew, or Mary's illegitimate son. It is unclear what happened to him.

Methodist leader John Wesley passed through the area many times between 1740 and 1790. His brother, Charles, preached to the colliers of Coleorton in 1743. John made several visits to Castle Donington, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Loughborough and

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Markfield, 6 miles (10 km) east of Ibstock.

In the 1760s, a local Methodist society was established by John Hall in the hamlet of Tonge, a mile (1.6 km) east of Breedon. Hall experienced a religious conversion under the ministry of Walter Sellon, the curate at Breedon. Around that time, John Wesley preached on Coleorton Moor between Swannington and Coleorton. Squire Beaumont of Coleorton tried to disrupt the meeting using a band of ruffians led by the notorious collier, John Massey. Wesley ignored violent threats from Massey, who started to listen. He was greatly moved as he stood there, and then forbade the gang to harm Wesley. Massey became a leading local Methodist, assisting John Hall.

From Tonge, Methodist societies were established in various surrounding villages and hamlets, including Diseworth, Breedon, Worthington and Griffydam. Joseph Clifford's wife, Mary, and her father, Joseph Hall, were probably distant relations of John Hall.



John Wesley trying to speak at Wednesbury in 1743, defended from a threatening mob by one of its leaders who had a change of heart. A very similar incident happened at Coleorton Moor in the 1760s. John Massey, his defender on that occasion, had led the mob, but was moved when he heard Wesley speak and warned the others not to harm him. Massey became a leading local Methodist and is buried in Griffydam Methodist cemetery. (The Story of John Wesley, by Marianne Kirlow, published by Robert Culley, 1895 – Project gutenberg.org)

The Wesleys were supported, organisationally and financially, by Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. She lived at Donington Hall near Castle Donington, although she was often at 12 Downing Street, her London home. Horace Walpole called her "The Queen of the Methodists". Her father was Washington Shirley, 2nd Earl Ferrers of Staunton Harold Hall. His mother was a member of the Washington family from Wiltshire, from whom George Washington, the first President of the United States, was also descended. In 1728, Selina was married, aged seventeen,

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

to Theophilus Hastings, 9th Earl of Huntingdon. At Donington Hall, she was only 7 miles' (11 km) coach ride from her family, via Breedon. She moved to Ashby-de-la-Zouch after her husband died in 1748. The 4th Earl Ferrers, hanged for murder in 1760, was her first cousin. He was the greatest sinner of the family, whereas she was the greatest saint, and was known for being kind to her tenants.

John Hall was one of the trustees who purchased the land in Griffydam for the construction of a place of worship for local Methodists, and the chapel was built in 1778. It still stands and may be the oldest in Leicestershire. John Wesley visited the new building in July 1779. He preached at Castle Donington on Saturday 17th and in Nottingham on Sunday 18th. On Monday 19th, he rode from Nottingham to preach in Loughborough Market Place at 9am, at Griffydam around noon, and finally at Ashby in the evening. The next day, he preached in Markfield and Leicester.

There are burials in the chapel's cemetery of Methodists from Breedon, Worthington, Peggs Green, Coleorton and Swannington. When John Massey died in 1819, aged eighty-seven, he was buried in Griffydam cemetery. So were members of the same families recorded at Breedon parish church and Worthington St Matthews – Hall, Haywood and Toon – all connected to John Clifford's family by marriage.

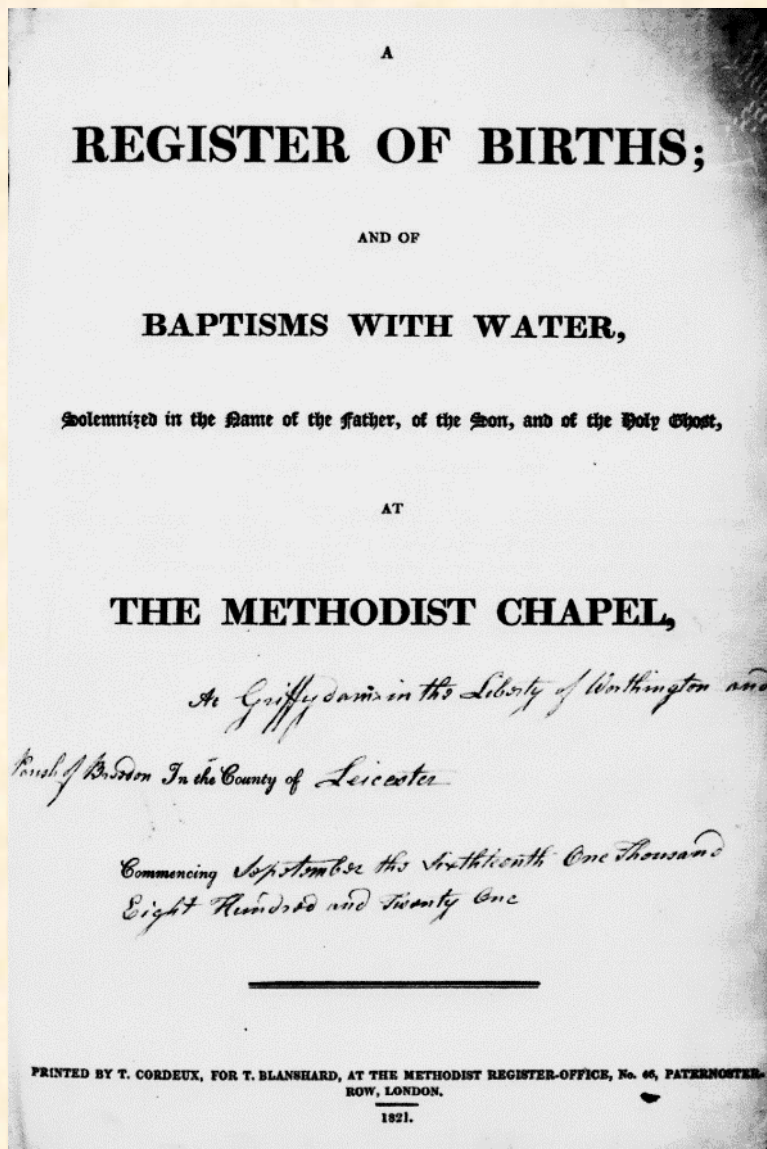


Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, a leading supporter of the early Methodist movement. Her family, the Shirley Earls Ferrers, lived at Staunton Harold Hall. She lived 7 miles (11 km) to the north-east at Donington Hall. She moved to Ashby-de-la-Zouch after her husband died in 1748. The countess died in 1791, the same year as John Wesley. (Engraving by R Page, published by T Kinnersley, London, 1819 – [National Library of Wales](#))

By the 1820s, the congregation at Griffydam had grown large, so the 'Providence' chapel was built in Gelsmoor, a mile (1.6 km) to the west. Two Methodist chapels local to Griffydam remain open today. One is Worthington's Primitive Methodist, built in 1820. This was absorbed into the local Wesleyan Methodist organisation in 1833, centred in Griffydam. The 'Chapel in the Valley' on Rempstone Road in Griffydam was built by the separate Wesleyan Reform grouping in 1858. Gelsmoor's Providence chapel closed in the 1930s, and the chapel in Griffydam closed in 2005.

N^o. 163. David - the Son of Samuel Haywood of
in the Parish of Breddon in the County of Leicester
Labourer and of Elizabeth his wife, who was the daughter of John
and Martha Clifford was born on the Ninth - day of January
in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Thirty four
And was solemnly baptized with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the
Holy Ghost, on the Twenty third day of February in the year of our Lord one
thousand eight hundred and Thirty four by me *Thos Newton*

Baptism of David Haywood, son of Samuel Haywood and Elizabeth, née Clifford, and grandson of John and Martha Clifford – register entry for 23 February 1834 at Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist chapel.



Title page of the baptism register recording baptisms at Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist chapel from 1821 to 1837.

Moving on

By 1851, Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood had moved back towards Worthington, in an area then known as Brand Hill, adjacent to Breedon Brand Common. Their eldest, David, was now a seventeen-year-old brick maker. He probably worked at the Joseph Smart & Sons brick and tile works on Lower Brand, Griffydam. This was active from the mid-1840s until around 1880.

They then moved to Osgathorpe, 2 miles (3 km) east of Worthington. Their seventh child, John Clifford Haywood, was baptised at Osgathorpe St Mary, only to be buried there seven days later, all within the month of January 1854. This may indicate that the family had returned to the Church of England. However, John Wesley had always encouraged Methodists to maintain their connections with local Anglican churches as far as possible, rather than to simply become a separate, Nonconformist or 'Dissenting' denomination.

David married an Osgathorpe girl, Elizabeth Green, at St Mary's in 1855. This Elizabeth gave birth to eleven of John and Martha's great grandchildren! The first four were born in Osgathorpe.

By 1861, Samuel, Elizabeth, David and his family had all moved another 2 miles (3 km) east to Belton. They lived on the street known as Sadlers Wells. Sadly, Elizabeth died there at the end of April, aged forty-four. She was buried just three weeks after the census was taken. She and Samuel had been married for twenty-eight years.



Brand Farm and cottages, Lower Brand, Griffydam. Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood and their children lived at Brand Hill in 1851. Samuel was an agricultural labourer and may have worked on Brand Farm. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))

Methodist schools

Joseph and Mary Clifford remained in Griffydam. Their daughters, Martha and Sarah, aged seven and six, were attending a local school in 1851. It seems that the girls were the first of John and Martha's grandchildren to receive an education. They probably attended a school that opened in December 1847. Known as the Providence Day School, it was founded by the Methodist congregation in the village and that of the Providence Chapel in Gelsmoor. Classes were probably held in one or other of the chapels.

A century before, John Wesley had started the first Methodist schools with advice from his friend, the Congregationalist leader Dr Philip Doddridge of Northampton. By the 1830s, there was a growing impetus in Methodism to increase its impact on society by building on its network of Sunday schools. In 1843, it was proposed that 700 new Methodist day schools should be established by 1850. Good progress was made but there was a shortage of qualified teachers.

It may be that the Methodists of Griffydam, Gelsmoor and other neighbouring villages decided to start the Providence School until a centrally administered day school could be built. This arrived in 1853, and Martha and Sarah may have transferred to the new school, located in Peggs Green, half a mile (1 km) south of Griffydam. Alternatively, the girls may have attended the 'Penny School', also in Peggs Green, where pupils paid a penny a week for the use of school books.



The only surviving evidence of the Wesleyan Day School in Peggs Green is a plaque that reads "Opened 1853 | Erected by voluntary contribution | With aid from parliamentary grants". This probably replaced the Providence School of 1847. Joseph and Mary Clifford's daughters, Martha and Sarah, may have attended both schools. (With thanks to [Samuel T Stewart](#) and [GriffydamHistory.com](#))

Hard times

Life became hard for Joseph and Mary. They were registered as paupers in 1851. Mary was supplementing their income as a lace worker. Their daughter, Mary, was a nine-year-old seamstress in 1851, not attending school with her younger sisters. Their son, John, was three and a half years old. Mary died in 1853, aged twelve.

Their sixth and last child, Frances, born in 1858, would probably not remember her father. Joseph died towards the end of 1861, aged fifty, a few months after his sister, Elizabeth. He and Mary had been married for twenty-two years. Mary's sorrow would continue, the next tragedy arriving when Sarah died in 1865, aged twenty.



Joseph and Mary Clifford lost two of their six children before he died in 1861, aged fifty. The remaining four who may have surrounded his deathbed were aged between three and eighteen. One of them would die in 1865 and two in 1869. (Felix O C Darley, for Charles Dickens' Sketches by Boz, Household Edition, Vol.2, Sheldon & Co, New York, 1864; Philip V Allingham collection; [The Victorian Web](#))

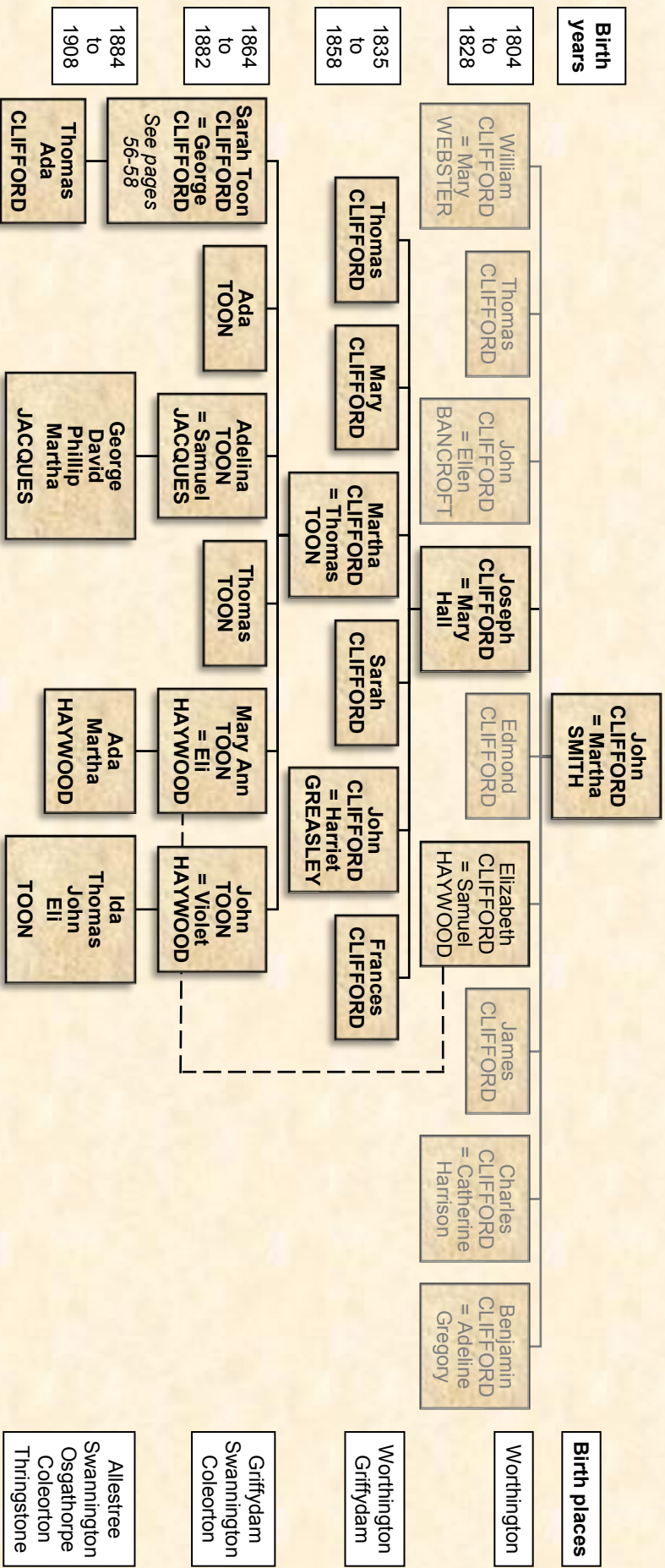
Only Martha would survive to create a family of her own, with Thomas Toon. The first of their six children, as mentioned earlier, was Sarah Toon Clifford. She was born in 1864 before Thomas and Martha were married, no doubt adding to Mary's concerns. Martha had been working as a domestic servant in Swannington for sisters Sarah and Anne Walker. Martha was around twenty-one and Thomas was twenty. He may have been working at one of the collieries at Whitwick or around Swannington. Martha's brother, John, turned eighteen in 1865, and had been a colliery labourer since at least the age of thirteen. Perhaps John put Thomas up against a wall and strongly suggested that he marry his big sister! Thomas complied in December 1866.

In 1867, John got married at Swannington St George to Harriet Greasley from Thringstone. Her father, John, was a coal miner, and she had been baptised at Christ Church in Coalville in 1847. Unfortunately, John Clifford died in early 1869, aged twenty-one. His little sister, Frances, died later that year, aged just eleven.

Poverty continued to dog Mary as a widow. In the 1871 census, she was still the head of her household in Griffydam, which included Thomas and Martha Toon and their daughters, Sarah and Ada. But Mary was once more noted as a pauper. Income was provided by Thomas as a colliery labourer and Martha as a seamstress.

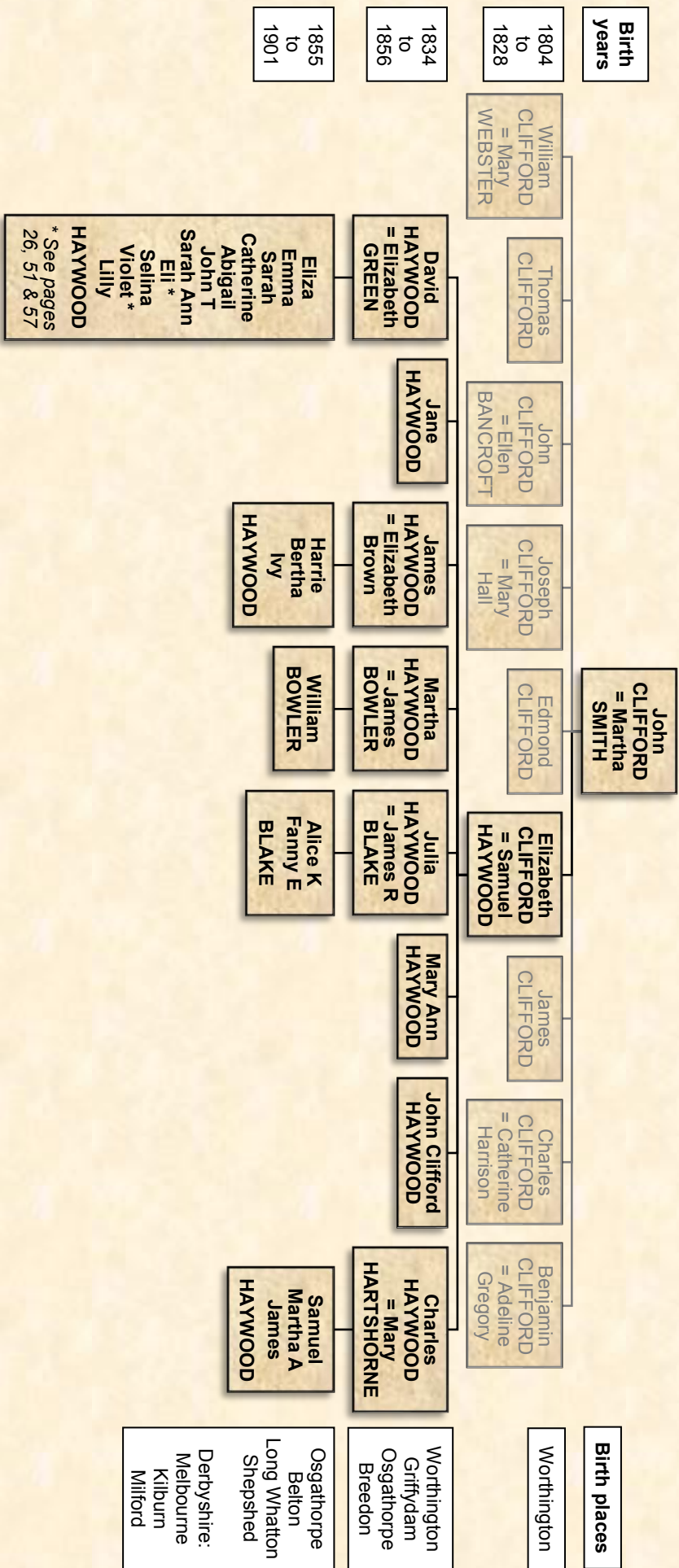
John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Clifford-Toon family tree



John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Clifford-Haywood family tree



Ravenstone

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John and Martha Clifford may have lived in Worthington for thirty years of their married life. Probably in the 1830s, they moved to Ravenstone, 5 miles (8 km) south of Worthington, taking their unmarried sons with them. Their fifth child, Edmond, died there in 1837, aged twenty-three. He was buried on 10 October in the churchyard of the fourteenth-century parish church of St Michael & All Angels. The curate, Joseph Webb, conducted the ceremony. Queen Victoria had come to the throne on 20 June.

John and Martha were certainly living there by the time of the national census of 1841, which was the first of its kind. The census recorded not just the number of people but household addresses and the name, gender, occupation and approximate age of each person living there. Even more detailed information would be collected in the censuses that have been taken every ten years since 1841.

A new organisation and process were created, soon incorporated into the civic registration responsibilities of local government. Enumerating officers were appointed in more than 30,000 districts. From the route that the officer appears to have taken through Ravenstone in 1841, John and Martha probably lived on Main Street.



Main Street, Ravenstone, seen here in the late nineteenth century. John and Martha Clifford and their two youngest sons, Charles and Benjamin, were probably living on the street at the time of the 1841 census. (With thanks to [Ravenstone Local History Group](#))

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

In the 1841 census, the ages of those over fifteen were typically rounded down to the nearest five years. We know that Charles, my 3x great grandfather, was eighteen rather than fifteen, his brother Benjamin was thirteen, and Martha was fifty-eight rather than fifty-five. The only evidence I have found for John's true age is the register entry for his burial. Being illiterate, John and Martha may not have been sure how old they were. If the enumerating officer called at the house while John was out at work, perhaps Martha said that they were about the same age.

The "Place" was indicated as "Derby" because Ravenstone was considered part of Derbyshire, due to historic land ownership from over the border. Many counties contained 'exclaves' of other counties. The neighbouring parishes of Ravenstone and Packington, which included Snibston, enclosed seventeen exclaves of Derbyshire between them, including much of Ravenstone village. These were transferred to Leicestershire under the Counties (Detached Parts) Act 1844. Four of the exclaves were absorbed into the new parish of 'Ravenstone with Snibston'.

John Clifford	55	Ag Lab.
Martha do	55	
Charles do	15	
Benjamin do	13	
George Turner	55	Farmer

Extract from the 1841 census for Ravenstone. John is shown as an agricultural labourer, living with Martha, Charles and Benjamin, next door to farmer George Turner, probably on Main Street. Other neighbours included a grocer, a bookkeeper, servants and other farmers and agricultural labourers.

Charles Clifford would be recorded as an agricultural labourer in 1851, and he was probably already working as such in 1841 with his father. Benjamin would follow suit. Their neighbour, farmer George Turner, may have employed them, and may have owned the cottage in which they lived. Alternatively, they may have worked for local estates such as those of Ravenstone Hall and Alton Grange. The Fosbrook family of Ravenstone Hall owned Hall farm, one of several in the village.

Through the 1830s, a leading figure of the Industrial Revolution, George Stephenson, lived at Alton House. This gave him a base while he was working with his son Robert on the Leicester & Swannington Railway (L&SR), one of the first public railways in England. The Stephensons also acquired the land of Snibston Grange and established two coal mines there. George Stephenson was often away, working on his many projects across the country during this extremely busy period of his career. If the Cliffords saw him, he was probably arriving or leaving in his carriage.

1845 was a sad year for the family. John and Martha's eldest, William, died early that year, aged forty-one. Sarah, the fourth child of William's brother Joseph and his wife Mary, was born around the same time. She was the ninth and last grandchild who John and Martha could have held in their arms. Martha died in March and was buried at Ravenstone St Michael's on the 16th of the month. John and Martha had been married for nearly forty-one years. He died at the end of September and was buried with Martha on 3 October. Their seventh child, James, died shortly afterwards, aged

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

twenty-five. He was buried in the same churchyard on 12 November. All three burials were conducted by Revd Giles Prickett, who had been the rector since 1809. John and Martha's second child, Thomas, may also have died around this time, aged about forty.



Railway engineer George Stephenson. He lived at Alton House while working on various engineering projects across the country, including the Leicester & Swannington Railway and Snibston No.1 and No.2 collieries. (Portrait by John Lucas, engraved by W Hall; The Life of George Stephenson and of his Son Robert Stephenson, Samuel Smiles, 1868 – Project Gutenberg.org)

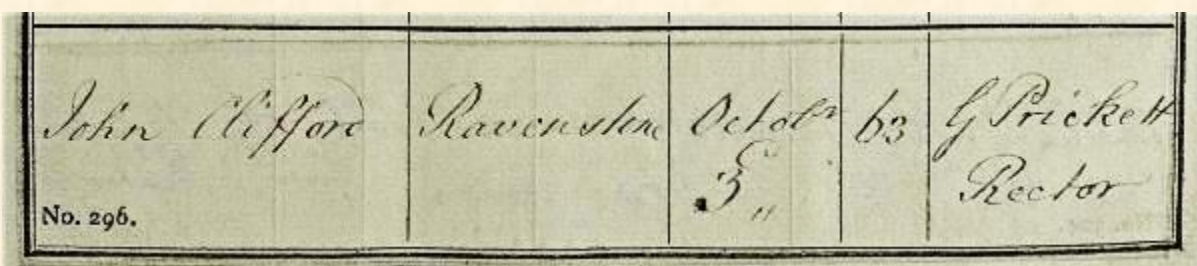
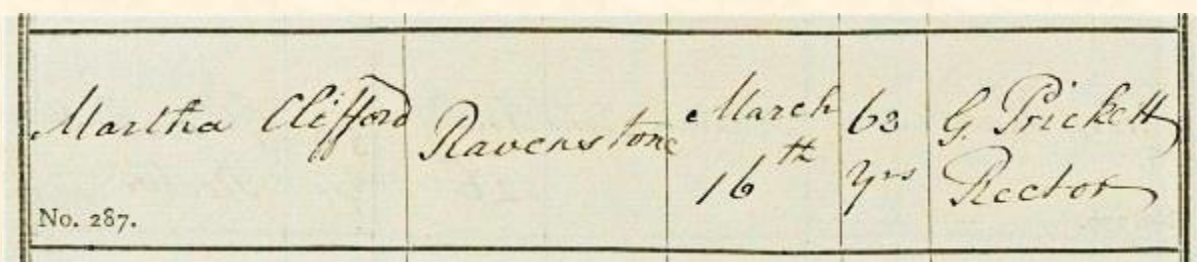
Alton House, where George Stephenson lived in the 1830s. He did not live at nearby Alton Grange as has often been stated. (The Life of George Stephenson and of his Son Robert Stephenson, Samuel Smiles, 1868 – Project Gutenberg.org)



John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire



Ravenstone St Michael & All Angels, seen here in the late nineteenth century. John and Martha's fifth child, Edmond, was buried in the churchyard in 1837. John and Martha were both buried there in 1845, dying six months apart. Their seventh child, James, joined them there that November. (With thanks to [Ravenstone Local History Group](#))



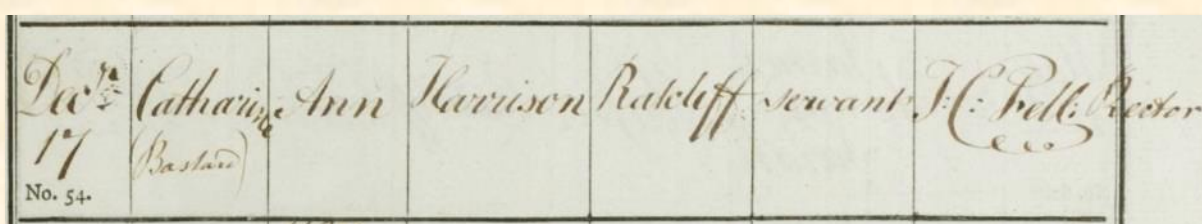
Burials in 1845 of Martha Clifford on 16 March and John Clifford on 3 October – register entries at Ravenstone St Michael & All Angels. The ages recorded for them suggest that they were both born in 1782.

Hugglescote and Ibstock

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Possibly around the time John and Martha died, Charles Clifford moved to Hugglescote, 2 miles (3.2 km) east of Ravenstone. There he met my 3x great grandmother, Catherine Harrison.

Catherine was born in 1820 in Ratcliffe Culey, 13 miles (21 km) to the south-west near Atherstone. She was baptised at Ratcliffe All Saints on 17 December 1820. Catherine was of illegitimate parentage. Her mother, my 4x great grandmother, was Ann Harrison, a twenty-three-year-old servant at the time. Catherine's father, my 4x great grandfather, was farmer John Henton, aged forty-nine when Catherine was born. In 1841, John was living in Witherley, just east of Atherstone.



Baptism of my 3x great grandmother, Catherine, the bastard daughter of Ann Harrison, my 4x great grandmother – register entry for 17 December 1820 at Ratcliffe Culey All Saints.

The 1841 census records Catherine as being a servant living in Normanton le Heath, 5 miles (8 km) west of Hugglescote. She was unmarried but became pregnant in November 1846 at the age of twenty-five. Was Charles the father, or was he kind enough to accept the child out of love for Catherine? Perhaps the situation was not obvious until well into 1847, too late to arrange a wedding. Catherine therefore had her own illegitimate baby girl in Hugglescote, according to a later school record in Derbyshire, on 15 August. She was named Helena, and would receive Charles's surname.



Marriage of Charles Clifford and Catherine Harrison – register entry for 28 February 1848 at Hugglescote St James.



St James's Chapel on Dennis Street, Hugglescote. It was built in 1776, partly in a Georgian style, and is seen here around 1880. My 3x great grandparents, Charles Clifford and Catherine Harrison, were married here on 21 February 1848. St James was demolished in 1881 after being replaced by the present-day St John the Baptist in 1879. (With thanks to the Parish of Hugglescote with Donington le Heath, Ellistown and Snibston – ThreeChurches.co.uk)



Main Street, Hugglescote, in the oldest known photograph of the village, taken in the 1870s. Charles and Catherine lived in the village from the late 1840s. My great-great grandfather, Thomas Clifford, was born here on 21 March 1850. (With thanks to Steve Duckworth of Coalville Heritage Society)

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Charles married Catherine on 21 February 1848. As with Worthington's relationship to Breedon, the village of Hugglescote was a chapelry within the parish of Ibstock. The wedding was conducted at St James Chapel on Dennis Street, Hugglescote, by John Bennett, the curate from Ibstock. Like Charles's father back in 1803, both parties and their witnesses could only make a mark on the register rather than sign their names.

Charles and Catherine made their first home together in Hugglescote. She gave birth there to Thomas, my great-great grandfather, in 1850. According to his Midland Railway staff record from the late 1880s, his date of birth was 21 March. He was John and Martha's thirteenth grandchild.

By 1851 when the next census was taken, Charles and Catherine Clifford had moved to Ibstock, 2 miles (3 km) to the south-west. Thomas was now a year old and Helena would soon turn four. Charles and Catherine's third child, John, was born in Ibstock and was baptised at Ibstock St Denys on 21 June 1852.

Charles Clifford	Head	Mar	36	Agricultural Labourer	de Worthington
Catherine de	Wife	Mar	34		de Kettleby
Helena de	Daughter		3		de Hugglescote
Thomas de	Son		1		de do

Census entry for Ibstock in 1851 for Charles and Catherine Clifford, their daughter Helena aged three and their son Thomas, my great-great grandfather, aged one year. Charles is shown as an agricultural labourer.

Other large estates on which agricultural labourers around Hugglescote and Ibstock would have worked, if not on private farms, included Bardon Hall, Donington le Heath Manor, Gopsall Hall, Heather Hall, Heather Manor and Odstone Hall.

The majority of Donington le Heath Manor was built in the 1620s, but the earliest parts date from the late thirteenth century. In 1670, the estate had been left to a charitable trust, which let out the Manor to tenant families. Bardon Hall was owned by Robert Jacomb-Hood, who was Chief Engineer to the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway from 1846 to 1860. Gopsall Hall was the seat of William Penn Curzon-Howe, 1st Earl Howe, who had been Lord Chamberlain to William IV's Queen Adelaide until Victoria came to the throne in 1837. Earl Howe also owned Odstone Hall. Heather Hall was owned by the Goode family. Heather Manor belonged to Revd George P Belcher, the local rector at Heather St John the Baptist.

1852	June 21	John	Charles & Catherine Clifford	Ibstock	Collier	J. G. Hall Curate	par.
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Baptism of John, third child of Charles and Catherine Clifford and brother to Helena and Thomas – register entry for 21 June 1852 at Ibstock St Denys. Charles was now a collier, rather than an agricultural labourer.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire



The junction of Chapel Street and High Street in Ibstock around 1910. Charles and Catherine and their children were living in the village in 1851. They would have been familiar at least with the thatched cottage. Ibstock Baptist Chapel was built in 1855, before which they would have known Chapel Street as Brick Kiln Lane. They would also have known High Street by its former name of Principle Street. (With thanks to [Ibstock Historical Society](#))



A late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century photo of Ibstock St Denys, where Charles and Catherine's third child, John, was baptised on 21 June 1852. (With thanks to [Ibstock Historical Society](#))

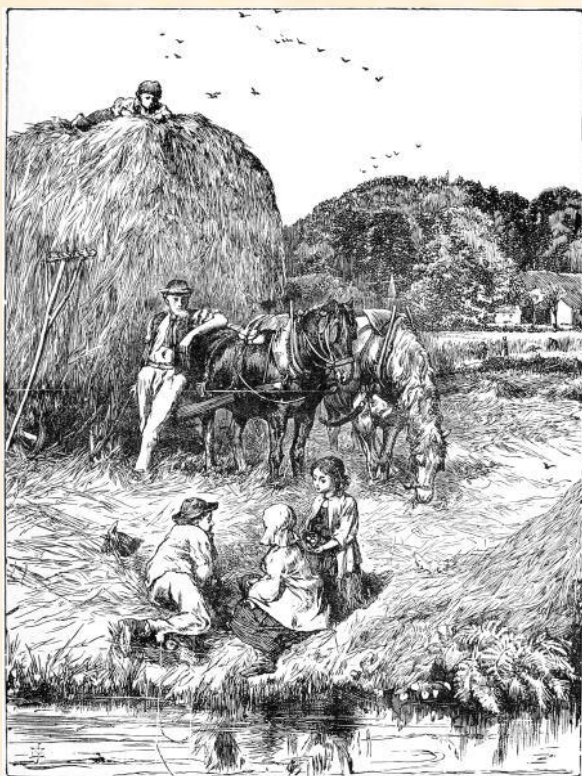
John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

John Clifford No. 286.	Hugglescote	Feb ^{ry} 9 th	8 months	Charles Holcombe Leacroft	J. S.
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Sadly, Charles and Catherine's third child, John, died at eight months. They had him buried where they had got married five years before – register entry for 9 February 1853 at Hugglescote St James.

Agriculture after 1840

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Summer, by J Mahoney. (The Sunday Magazine, 1866; included in English Illustration, 'The Sixties': 1855-70, by Gleeson White, published by Archibald Constable & Co Ltd, London, 1906; Project gutenberg.org)

Continuing improvements

Charles Clifford and his brothers, Joseph and Benjamin, and their brother-in-law, Samuel Haywood, may have witnessed developments in farming beyond those known to their fathers. These would have included new sources of nitrate fertilisers, such as bird dung or 'guano' from South America. Management of traditional manure improved with covered storage to prevent the loss of nutrients. The application of new science was overcoming old prejudices, and artificial phosphate fertilisers were available from the mid-1840s. These additives rendered it unnecessary to leave fields fallow for a year as part of crop rotations.

The improvement in farm buildings also continued. Apart from very old barns, most farm buildings standing today that date from before World War Two were actually built between 1840 and 1870. This was the high point in the erection of farm buildings, some of them grand and even borrowing styles from railway architecture.

Tramways were built to move stacks of wheat to static threshing machines. Moveable threshing machines that could be taken into the fields, powered by traction engines, took efficiency a stage further. This made the barn threshing floor obsolete, and the internal space in the barns could then be partitioned for a greater variety of uses. Farms were becoming organised like factory production lines with the locations of various processes arranged for maximum efficiency of movement. Expensive new machinery was properly housed to protect it from the weather, which would otherwise cause more deterioration than that resulting from usage.

Drainage

In 1861, Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood's son, David, was a 'bank labourer' around Belton. Traditionally, a 'banker' dug trenches and ditches to enable drainage of the land, creating banks with the spare earth. The term 'bank labourer' was similarly used for those working around the head of a coal pit. David could have been either.

The biggest banks in the area bounded the Charnwood Forest Canal of 1794 and its

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

supply reservoir at Blackbrook, 2 miles (3 km) south of Belton. The canal had been built to bring coal to Leicester from the north-west Leicestershire coal mines. The reservoir dam had collapsed in 1799 causing widespread flooding. It was repaired in 1801 but the canal was abandoned as not commercially viable, even before the Leicester & Swannington Railway was proposed.

A crucial development in farming was improved drainage for arable fields in wetter areas. This allowed greater crop varieties to be grown, such as root and green vegetables and fruit. This produce met the demand from urban markets and from the new jam, pickling and canning factories. Grain yields improved and animal fodder was easier to produce, improving the manure-arable cycle.

David Haywood may well have found employment digging channels for drainage pipes. Drainage was no longer enabled simply by open ditches along field boundaries. Laying tunnels of bricks in the eighteenth century gave way to the laying of hand-made clay pipes from the 1790s. Better drainpipe-making machines, available from the 1840s, made installation far more efficient. To appease owners of larger estates following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, the Government made several million pounds available through specialised investment companies. Landowners borrowed money to pay for drainage schemes at low rates of interest.



Donington le Heath Manor near Hugglescote. This was another estate on which Charles Clifford may have worked as an agricultural labourer in the 1840s and early 1850s. (Watercolour by Penelope Gresley, 1856 – with thanks to [Leicestershire County Council](#))

By 1900, 4.5 million acres (1.8m hectares) of additional land across Britain was being efficiently drained, particularly in the north, the west and the Midland counties. Tenant farmers contributed to the cost by paying increased rents. These drainage systems remained in operation until the introduction of plastic pipes in the 1970s.

Decline after 1870

Opportunities provided by the Industrial Revolution meant that only one other of John Clifford's grandsons, Charles Haywood, would work in agriculture, and only briefly. Charles was an 'agricultural servant' in Belton in 1871, when he was in his teens. He then moved to Shepshed and became a bricklayer and quarryman. He and his wife, Mary Hartshorne, lived on Sullington Road and then the street known as Ring Fence. Their son, James, became a brick and tile labourer like his father. James died in the Loughborough area in 1975, aged eighty.



Engraving entitled The Little Calf. (G J Pinwell, published in Wayside Poesies: Original Poems of the Country Life by George Routledge & Sons, 1867; included in English Illustration, 'The Sixties': 1855-70, by Gleeson White, published by Archibald Constable & Co Ltd, London, 1906; Project gutenberg.org)

Profitability passed its peak after 1870. High-investment, high-efficiency farming was no longer viable. Without the Corn Laws of earlier decades, competition was faced from the import of cheap North American grain. The price would drop by 50 per cent by the late 1890s, and the struggle was compounded by poor harvests. Farmers now concentrated on a more limited range of crops that was still profitable. These included barley and oats to feed the large population of urban horses. Wasteland that had been harvested for bracken, gorse, sedge and rushes was abandoned once more. Maintenance of buildings, walls, fences, hedges and ditches started to be neglected, as did the weeding of fields. Machinery also was left to rust.

Many farmers focused more on livestock. A number of improvements had been introduced since the 1850s. Better feed in the form of cotton and linseed cakes had arrived in the 1860s, and experimentation with silage also began. The introduction of feeding stalls or 'boxes' enabled each animal to obtain its share of food rather than having to compete at an open trough.

The railways enabled the transportation of cattle to market within a single day. They had previously lost weight during days of droving over long distances. Dairy farming increased more than any other sector, particularly to supply the growing towns. Milk consumption increased from 170 million gallons (773 million litres) in 1861 to 600

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

million gallons (2.73 billion litres) in 1900.

New competition from New Zealand lamb and Argentine beef put British livestock farming under pressure, as did diseases such as Liver Fluke and Foot & Mouth. But home-grown quality was still better, and the drop in cereal prices meant that cattle were cheaper to feed. Between 1875 and 1900, the amount of pasture in Britain increased by 25 per cent to accommodate the growing livestock population.

Four of John Clifford's great grandsons would work in agriculture for at least part of their working lives. All of them were Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood's grandsons. Two of them were David Haywood's sons. John Thomas worked with David as coal merchants in Belton in the 1880s. But by 1901, John Thomas had become a farmer at Charnwood Farm on Grace View Road, Thringstone. Also in 1901, his brother, Eli, was a farmer in Osgathorpe, where their four oldest siblings had been born between 1855 and 1860. The farm was on Village Street.

Eli Haywood	Head	M	30	Farmer
Mary A. 00	Wife	M	22	
Ada 00	Daughter		4 Mo	
Elizabeth 01	Mother	Wid	69	
Arthur Cooper	Serv	S	14	Cow boy agt

Extract from the 1901 census for Osgathorpe. Eli Haywood is shown as farmer. Living with him are his wife, Mary Ann, their first child, Ada, Eli's widowed mother, Elizabeth, and a fourteen-year-old cowhand named Arthur Cooper. Unfortunately, Eli and Mary Ann only had five and a half years left to live – see page 57.



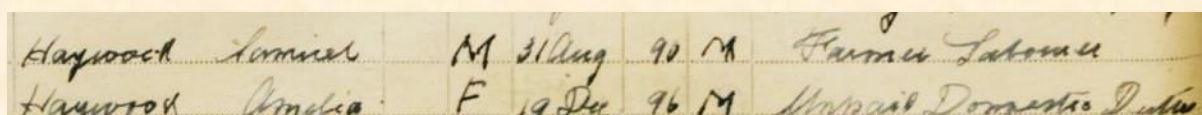
The Croft at Tonge near Breedon, seen here around 1900. According to the 1901 census for Long Whatton, 5 miles (8 km) east of Tonge, John Clifford's great grandson, William Bowler, was a cattleman on a farm. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood's daughter, Martha, married James Bowler of Long Whatton. Through the 1880s and 1890s, their son, William, was a framework knitter (FWK) of stockings, like his father. By 1901, he had become a cattleman on a farm.

But the earlier levels of investment were no longer available in farming. This may explain why, by 1911, William was an FWK once more. Many farm buildings were erected using cheaper materials such as weatherboard and corrugated iron, supplied to rural areas by rail. Innovations such as silage would not be sufficiently developed until the 1930s.

The final great grandson of John Clifford to make a living in agriculture was Samuel Haywood, Charles's son. Samuel was the only one to be part of an unbroken line of farm labourers since John, although they were not all working as such at the time their sons started. Samuel was working on a farm near Shepshed in 1939, and was still doing so at age sixty-five in 1955. He died in 1973, aged eighty-two.



Haywood Samuel	M	31 Aug	90	M	Farm Labourer
Haywood Amelia	F	12 Dec	96	M	Woolen Domestic Duties

Extract from the 1939 census for Shepshed. Samuel Haywood is shown as farm labourer, the last member of an unbroken line of agricultural labourers descended from John Clifford. Samuel's wife, Amelia, was a former hosiery factory worker.

Textiles

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Framework knitters

Charles and Catherine Clifford's immediate neighbours in Ibstock in 1851 included a family of framework knitters (FWKs). Typically, they made stockings and gloves on knitting frames in their own homes. The industry had grown since the early eighteenth century, employing many people in the Loughborough area and across the county. A survey in 1832 recorded that, of the 33,000 knitting frames in use across the Midlands, over 11,000 were in Leicestershire. However, the home-based industry was in decline in the 1840s. Charles and Catherine's neighbours were three of only thirteen left in Ibstock.



A framework knitter (FWK) making stockings. Both Martha Haywood and her sister, Julia, married FWKs, in Long Whatton and Shepshed respectively. ([Barrow upon Soar Heritage Group](#))

Using a frame required a lot of physical strength and many of the knitters were men, often former soldiers or agricultural labourers. Agents known as 'bag hosiers' rented the frames to the workers and supplied them with yarn, such as cotton, Worsted or Merino wool. Frame rent was due even during periods when yarn was not supplied and work could not continue. Demand fluctuated, as did fashions. The work was spread thinly across the available workforce and wages remained low. Ibstock's FWKs were among the lowest paid.

As we have seen, Samuel and Elizabeth Haywood's daughter, Martha, married James Bowler, an FWK from Long Whatton. The wedding took place at Belton St John the Baptist around New Year 1866. They made their home in the hamlet of Turvey, just south-east of Long Whatton, and 3 miles (5 km) north-east of Belton.

Martha was already pregnant with their son, who was born a few months later. They named him William. Martha's widowed father, Samuel, moved from Belton to live with them in Turvey, continuing to work as a farm labourer. Tragically, Martha died in 1867, aged twenty-two, and was buried at Long Whatton All Saints. Samuel was still living with James and William in 1871.

Almost everyone in Long Whatton made stockings or gloves. James Bowler was an FWK for all of his working life. William did likewise for most of his. William's aunt, Julia Haywood, married James Reuben Blake, an FWK in Shepshed. They lived on

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Queen Street, then at 5 Hall Croft, before James became the landlord of the Prince of Wales on Hathern Road.

James Bowler	Head	M	60	Framework Knitter
Hannah Bowler	wife	M	60	Seamer
William Do.	Son	S	24	Framework Knitter
Florence Humer	Step Daug	S	19	Seamer

Extract from the 1891 census for Long Whatton. James Bowler and his son, William, are shown as framework knitters. James' second wife, Hannah, and her daughter, Florence, were stocking seamers.



Main Street, Long Whatton, around 1911, looking towards All Saints church. Living a few minutes' walk from here in 1866 in the hamlet of Turvey were Martha Haywood, her husband, framework knitter James Bowler, and their baby son, William. Sadly, Martha died in 1867 and was buried in the churchyard. James and William lived around Long Whatton for the rest of their lives. William followed his father into framework knitting and was still doing so in 1911. He would have known the people in this photograph. (Original postcard, James Bentley archive)

Seamers

Stockings and other garments needed seaming, work that was done by several women and girls in the family. These included Joseph Clifford's wife, Mary, who was a stocking seamer in Griffydham in 1861. Their daughters, Martha and Sarah, followed their mother. So did Martha's illegitimate daughter with Thomas Toon, Sarah Toon Clifford, who was a "seamer, stockings" in 1881. By this time, the Toon family lived on the west side of Swannington, known as The Breach.

The same work was done by Julia Haywood, mentioned above. Elizabeth, wife of

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Julia's brother, David Haywood, did likewise in Belton. David and Elizabeth's daughters, Eliza, Emma, Abigail and Selina followed their mother.

As already mentioned, David Haywood was baptised in 1834 at Griffydam Methodist chapel. Selina was born in 1872. Like girls in previous generations of the Haywood family in the area, she was probably named after the Countess of Huntingdon. The Countess' support for Methodism in the previous century would still have been celebrated locally, and continues to be among Methodists worldwide today.

Joseph Clifford	Head	Mar	19	of Lab-
Mary Clifford	Wife	Mar	16	Stock Seamer
Sarah H ^c	Daughter	Mar	16	do
John H ^c	Son	Mar	13	Colliery Lab ^r
Frances H ^c	Daughter	Mar	2	do

Extract from the 1861 census for Griffydam. Joseph Clifford is shown as an agricultural labourer. His wife, Mary, and their sixteen-year-old daughter, Sarah, were stocking seamers. Their son, John, was a colliery labourer at the age of thirteen. The youngest of their six children, Frances, was nearly three years old.



Seamstresses by Frank Holl, 1875. Like the Clifford women in Griffydam, David Haywood's wife, Elizabeth, and their daughters Eliza, Emma, Abigail and Selina, all worked together as seamstresses in Belton in the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s. (Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, via [Art UK](#))

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

				General Serv	
David Haywood	Head	Mar	36		Labourer at Coal Mines
Elizabeth Do	Wife	Mar		36	Seamstress
Eliza Do	Daughter	Unm		16	Do
Emma Do	Daughter	Unm		14	Do
Abigail Do	Daughter			8	Scholar
John Do	Son			5	Do
Sarah Do	Daughter			3	
Eli Do	Son			1	

Extract from the 1871 census for Belton. David Haywood is shown as a coal mine labourer. His wife, Elizabeth, and two of their daughters, Eliza and Emma, were seamstresses. The next daughter, Abigail, would follow her sisters. Their brothers, John and Eli, would both be farmers in 1901, although John had helped his father in the coal business before then.

By 1881, Samuel Haywood had moved to Milford in Derbyshire to live with another of his sons, James Haywood. As for James Bowler and his son, William, they were now lodging at the Royal Oak on Town Street in Long Whatton. On 10 October of that year, James Bowler re-married. His bride was widow Hannah Huner, née Smallwood. She had been born in Griffydam in 1832 and baptised at the Methodist chapel. From her childhood there, she would have known the Haywoods as her neighbours, and also Joseph and Mary Clifford. Hannah had been a stocking seamer in Thringstone in 1851, and continued to work as such in Long Whatton.



Sewing machines arrived in the 1850s, supplied most notably by Singer of New York. An experienced seamstress could complete a shirt by hand in ten to fourteen hours. She could achieve a neater result in just an hour using a machine that could make 3,000 stitches a minute. For women who could afford a sewing machine, this was a great labour-saving device for making family clothes. But for those who had to use a machine to earn a living, it just meant that they were expected to produce more rather than making their lives easier. Their hours remained long and their pay remained low. (The Quiver magazine, 1890 – VictorianPictureLibrary.com, SO59)

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Joseph and Mary Clifford's granddaughters, Ada and Adelina Toon, made elastic webbing, typically used in the tops of stockings and the wrists of gloves. This was their occupation in 1891, when they were in their early twenties. They were living with their parents, Thomas and Martha Toon, who had moved to a lane between Swannington and Coleorton Moor known as The Rowlands.

Hosiery factories

Life was made harder for home workers due to competition from hosiery factories where knitting frames were set up in production lines. A factory had been established in Loughborough early in the century by John Heathcoat of Long Whatton. Vandalism by 'Luddites' from Nottingham in 1816 prompted him to move his business to Tiverton in Devon. But more factories would be established in Leicestershire. Shepshed was soon the largest and, through hosiery manufacture, the most industrialised village in Leicestershire.

A Coalville brickyard manager and Methodist, George Smith, campaigned throughout the second half of the century to improve the lives of workers and their families. He helped to establish Methodist Sunday schools, and became known as 'the Children's Friend'. His successes included releasing women from carrying heavy loads of clay in brickyards, enabling them to take opportunities in the textile and shoe-making industries.

Alice and Fanny, daughters of James Blake and Julia Haywood, were employed in Shepshed hosiery factories in 1891. Both girls got married in 1894. Fanny married Thomas Grimbley, a fellow hosiery factory worker. When James died in 1897, Julia moved in with Thomas and Fanny, on Moorfield Place. Alice married William Martin, a stone quarryman, and they lived on Forrest Street. They then moved to Factory Street and, by 1911, William was a plate layer for the London & North Western Railway Company. By 1939, he too was in the textile industry as a clothier's agent. By that time they were living at 16 Oakley Road.

Julia's nephew, Samuel Haywood, the last agricultural labourer in the family, married Amelia Coulson in 1925. She had been a hosiery factory worker in Shepshed in 1911 when she was fifteen. By 1939, they were living at 78 Forest Street.

James Reuben Blake	head	mar	X	James Reuben Blake	framework knitter (cotton)
Julia	Wife	mar	X	Fanny	seamer
Alice Keturah	Daughter			12	Scholar
Fanny Elizabeth	Daughter			6	Do
Charles Haywood	Boarder	Unmar	25		Bricklayers labourer

Extract from the 1881 census for Shepshed. Julia Blake, née Haywood, is shown as a seamer, and her husband, James Reuben Blake as a framework knitter using cotton. With them were their two daughters, Alice Keturah and Fanny Elizabeth, and Julia's brother, Charles, who was a bricklayer's labourer at the time. Ten years later, both Alice and Fanny would be working in a Shepshed hosiery factory. Charles's son, Samuel, married Amelia Coulson, a Shepshed hosiery factory worker.

Coal mining and railways

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Other neighbours of Charles and Catherine Clifford in Ibstock in 1851 were coal miners. By the time their third child, John, was born in 1852, Charles had left agriculture and was a collier himself, possibly due to rising wages for miners.

Early mining

North-west Leicestershire had long been a coal mining area in its shallow-depth form. The earliest evidence is a reference of 1204 to Swannington “where cole is gotten”. Mining had begun around 1275 at Gelsmoor. Around Lount on the Staunton Harold estate, coal and iron ore were extracted from the fourteenth century, followed later by lead, copper and lime. By the 1420s, coal was being extracted at Overton Saucy, which became known as Coal Overton, later modified to ‘Cole O’rton’. There were several ‘pits’ in Swannington in 1520.

‘Bell pits’ were typical, hollowed out underground until the cavity was bell-shaped. Supports were not generally used so excavation eventually became too dangerous and new pits had to be started. Water was not well drained at greater depths until pumps were introduced. These were driven initially by water wheels. John Wilkins of Ravenstone Hall introduced ‘atmospheric’ engines to pump water out of his mines. A fire-heated boiler produced steam which was condensed to create a vacuum. Wilkins had five in Swannington by the 1720s. The static steam engine was developed later in the century by James Watt and Matthew Boulton.

Clifford families in the Swannington area are known to have been among those involved in ‘higging’. This involved loading horses’ panniers or carts with coal to take to market in major towns many miles away. Unfortunately, higglers were not known for sparing their animals. People often had more than one job and could be involved in various industries. Labourers who worked in agriculture for the much of the year may still have been involved in higging. This was predominately a summer activity as the roads were bad and could be impassable in winter. Some labourers may also have worked shifts at local mines.

Deeper mines and the first public railways

Modern coal mining developed in the area as part of the Industrial Revolution. Engineer William Stenson from Coleorton ‘sank’ a mine in Whitwick in 1824. William Thurlby established Ibstock colliery in 1825. Another at Peggs Green operated from 1830. The Stephensons opened their Snibston No.1 mine in 1831 and No.2 in 1832.

Stenson and Stephenson had new housing built for their miners on land between Whitwick, Swannington, Ravenstone, Snibston and Hugglescote, where Long Lane crossed Hugglescote Lane. This development expanded and became known appropriately as Coalville. Eventually, the villages would be absorbed by the new town, of which Stenson became known as the founder.

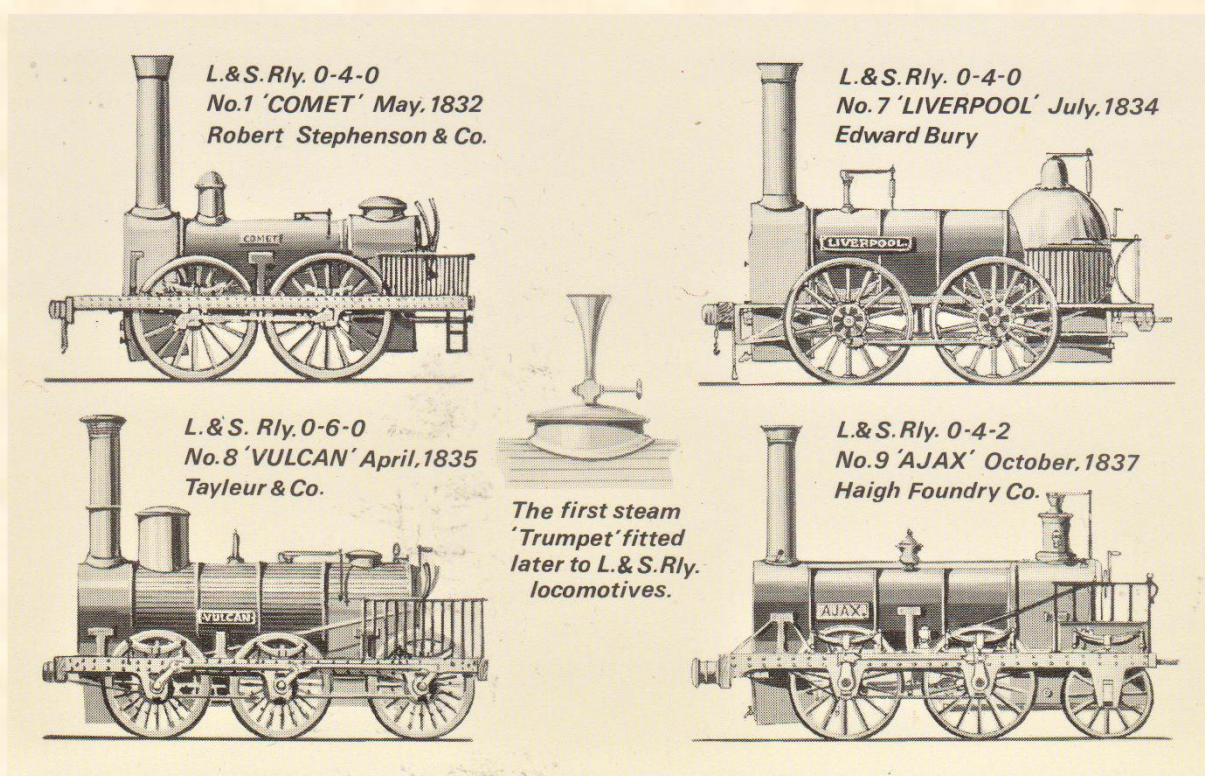
To help establish a railway line to serve the mines, Stenson approached the Stephensons. They were already busy with the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, the world’s first passenger service pulled by locomotives, which opened in 1830. A railway in north-west Leicestershire would solve the problem of reliable, cost-efficient

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

transportation of coal to towns like Leicester. Passenger services would also be provided using modified open trucks. The county's coalfield could then compete with those in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire which had use of a better canal network.

The Leicester & Swannington Railway Company Act was passed in Parliament in 1830. For its crest, the L&SR adopted the Wyvern of the pre-1066 Earls of Mercia, later also used by the Barons de Clifford. Construction began at the Leicester end. The first part of the line opened in 1832 and the track reached Swannington in 1833.

From 1834, coal wagons were delivered by horses to the bottom of the Swannington Incline. The wagons were then attached to a cable and drawn up the slope on rails by a static steam engine at the top, where they were coupled to locomotives for their onward journey.



Some of the first locomotives that ran on the Leicester & Swannington Railway (L&SR). Others were named Atlas, Goliath, Phoenix and Samson. (Detail from a postcard of 1982 commemorating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the L&SR – author's collection)

In 1846, the L&SR became part of the new Midland Railway network, which inherited the Wyvern crest. In 1848, the line was extended, via Ashby-de-la-Zouch, to Burton upon Trent in Staffordshire.

By 1846, Coalville's population had grown from around a hundred living on Long Lane in the 1820s to about 1,200. Industrial enterprise diversified, such as local brickyards using coal to fire clay for bricks and tiles. Much of the clay for the bricks was extracted during mining. Ibstock colliery had its own brickyard.

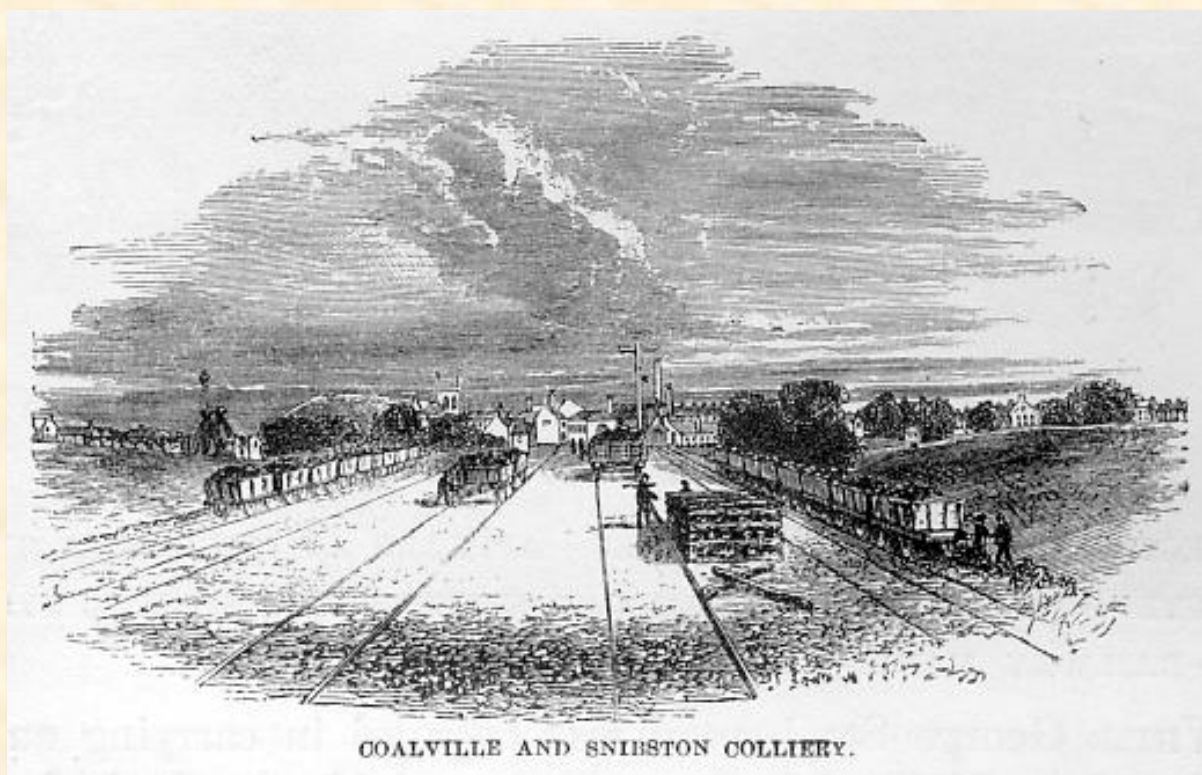
Stenson and Stephenson's employment and safety policies were ahead of their time

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

and much praised. Unlike mine owners elsewhere, neither was willing to hire women for the back-breaking work, nor boys under ten, although exceptions were reported.

The Coalville mines had relatively good accident records, and the health of the miners was considered to be good by the expectations of the time. An Ashby-de-la-Zouch surgeon reported that they were in better condition than agricultural labourers of a similar age. This may have been a factor in Charles Clifford deciding in 1852 to seek employment in coal mining, probably at Ibstock colliery. However, he may have returned temporarily to farming in the summer when the demand for agricultural labourers was higher and the demand for coal was lower.

But conditions were still very hard by any other standard. The men worked twelve hours days, five and a half days per week, with a half-hour meal break. The only holidays they had were public ones. The air quality below ground was poor, the Leicestershire coal seams were particularly hard, and very heavy pieces were extracted. Many miners could not work below ground beyond the age of forty-five, and fifty was a typical limit. Many older miners, who had survived accidents and disease, were still employed above ground on lower pay as banksmen, timekeepers and weighbridge operators. A banksman managed the coal containers as they arrived at the surface and recorded the quantities. Charles was a miner for no more than two years, aged around thirty, and may have had health problems.



Snibston colliery's coal wagon sidings, connected to the Leicester & Swannington Railway. (The Life of George Stephenson and of his Son Robert Stephenson, Samuel Smiles, 1868 – Project Gutenberg.org)

More mines open and close

Coleorton's No.1 'California' colliery opened in 1849, the year of the Gold Rush. Snibston's No.3 mine opened in 1850. Swannington's No.1 'Calcutta' colliery opened soon afterwards. Coleorton's No.2 was known as 'Califat', a modified spelling of Calafat, a town in Romania. The besieging of the town by the Russians was reported in the British press in 1854, the year the colliery opened. Snibston No.1 was on the main railway line. Branch lines connected the L&SR to Peggs Green, Calcutta, Califat, Whitwick, Snibston No.2 and Ibstock.

Peggs Green closed in 1859. Swannington No.2 'Sinope' and No.3 'Clink' mines opened in the early 1860s, but these and most of the other mines closed in the 1870s. Snibston No.1 ceased production in the 1880s. Snibston No.3 was reopened briefly until final closure in 1895.

As already mentioned, while living in Griffydam in 1861, Joseph and Mary Clifford's son, John, was a coal miner, probably at Whitwick or Swannington. When he died in 1869, aged twenty-one, John was the last male descendent of John and Martha with the Clifford surname living in Leicestershire. As we will see, from the 1850s onwards, his living male Clifford relatives had either moved to Derbyshire or were born there.

John's brother-in-law, Thomas Toon, still living in Griffydam in 1871, was working as a banksman, possibly at the same mine at which John had worked. After a hard and sad life, Mary Clifford had one last chance of happiness through her sixties. Thomas Toon's father, Thomas snr, was a widower. He was a farmer and was able to provide for Mary. She married him at Swannington St George in 1875. Father and son were now married to mother and daughter!

By 1881, the Toons had moved to The Breach near Swannington. Thomas now worked as a brickmaker's labourer, possibly because of the closure of the mine he had worked at. Thomas snr died in 1883, aged eighty.

David Haywood was also a coal miner in the 1860s and 1870s. His work as a 'bank labourer' in 1861 may have been at a pit head, rather than digging drainage ditches across farmland. When David's youngest brother, Charles, was an agricultural labourer in Belton in 1871, he had been working for coal dealer Thomas Powdrill. Charles may therefore have also worked as a coal higgler. As mentioned above, by 1881, David Haywood was himself a coal merchant in Belton, living on Long Street. His son, John, joined the business in the 1880s before becoming a farmer.

David Haywood	Head	Mar.	48	Coal Dealer
Eli do.	Wife	Mar	49	
Eliza do.	Daughter	Unm.	26	Hosiery Seamer
John do.	Son		16	Coal Dealer
Eli do.	do.		9	Scholar
Violet do.	Daughter		6	do. do.

Extract from the 1881 census for Belton. David Haywood and his son, John, are shown as coal dealers. John's sister, Eliza, was a hosiery seamer. Their younger siblings, Eli and Violet, were attending school.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

By 1891, Thomas and Martha Toon had moved their family to the lane known as The Rowlands, between Swannington and Coleorton Moor. Martha's mother, Mary, was still with them, but she died by the end of the decade. Thomas and Martha's sons, Thomas and John, were also colliers from the 1890s onwards. So was Samuel Jacques from Ravenstone, who their sister, Adelina, married at Swannington St George on Boxing Day 1895.

They all lived in two houses at The Rowlands. This was close to Coleorton's No.3 colliery, which had opened in 1875. The mine was nicknamed 'Bug and Wink', thought to be a reference to the colliery management's reputation for 'humbug and hoodwink' when negotiating pay with the miners.



Coleorton's No.3 'Bug and Wink' colliery, which operated from 1875 to 1933. Thomas and Martha Toon's sons, Thomas and John, and their son-in-law, Samuel Jacques, may have worked here. (With thanks to [Samuel T Stewart](http://SamuelTStewart.com) and GriffydhamHistory.com)

In 1894, David Haywood's daughter, Selina, married Jabez William Briscoe, a coal miner in Hugglescote. Jabez probably worked at the mine owned by the South Leicestershire Colliery Co Ltd, established in 1876 to the south-east of Hugglescote.

On 19 April 1898, thirty-five men died in an underground fire at Whitwick. It was the worst disaster in Leicestershire coal mining history. David Haywood died later that year, aged sixty-four. He and Elizabeth had been married for forty-three years.

John Toon and his sister, Mary Ann, married their second cousins, Violet and Eli Haywood, who were David and Elizabeth's children. Continuing the Toon tradition of getting married on a festive date, they had a double wedding at Swannington St George on Boxing Day 1899. Working class people often had to use public holidays for special occasions as many had no other holiday entitlement. By 1901, Elizabeth was living with Eli and Mary Ann. Queen Victoria died on 22 January, aged eighty-one. Elizabeth died later that year, aged sixty-nine.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Selina was widowed in 1907. In 1910, she married another miner, John Hill. They made their home a mile (1.6 km) from Hugglescote at Donington le Heath, where they lived at 5 Smiths Row.

By 1911, Samuel and Adelina Jacques had moved to Standard Hill in Coalville, between Snibston and Hugglescote. Their eldest son, fourteen-year-old George, was working with his father. They probably worked at Snibston No.2 colliery, or at the Hugglescote mine.

1	Samuel Jacques	head	37	married	15	14	11	0	coal miner, Hewer Below ground
2	Adelina Jacques	wife	37	39	married	15	14	11	
3	George Henry Jacques	son	14		single				Pit Bank General labourer above ground
4	David Jacques	son	12		single				school 390
5	Phillip Jacques	son	10						school
6	Martha Jacques	Daughter	8						

Extract from the 1911 census for Coalville. Samuel Jacques, husband of Adelina née Toon, was a miner, as was their fourteen-year-old son, George. They probably worked at Snibston No.2 or Hugglescote. Samuel was a 'hewer' working below ground. George was a 'bank general labourer' above ground at the pit head.



Postcard of Ibstock colliery around 1915 showing the upcast shaft, winding and boiler houses. Charles Clifford, my three-times great grandfather, worked here in 1852-53, before moving with his family to Allestree in Derbyshire. Note the Midland Railway (MR) coal wagon to the left. (Albion Real Photo Series No.2269 – with thanks to [Ibstock Historical Society](#))



The Coleorton No.3 colliery rescue team around 1913. On the left is James Clifford who lived with his family in Coleorton. James was probably a distant relative of John Clifford and his descendants. (With thanks to [Samuel T Stewart](#) and [GriffydhamHistory.com](#))

Although many of the mines that opened in the middle of the nineteenth century had closed, the earlier mines continued to be developed with further shafts being sunk. Ibstock colliery was worked until 1928, exceeding a century of operation. Its famous brickyard continued, and the old colliery site remains the headquarters of an international business today. Snibston No.2 closed in 1983 after a hundred and fifty-one years. Whitwick colliery soldiered on until 1986, a hundred and sixty-two years after it opened.

Migration to Derbyshire

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Charles Clifford and his family did not stay long in Ibstock. By the summer of 1854, they had moved 21 miles (33 km) to the north. They followed two of Charles's brothers, John and Benjamin, to Allestree, 2 miles (3 km) north of Derby.

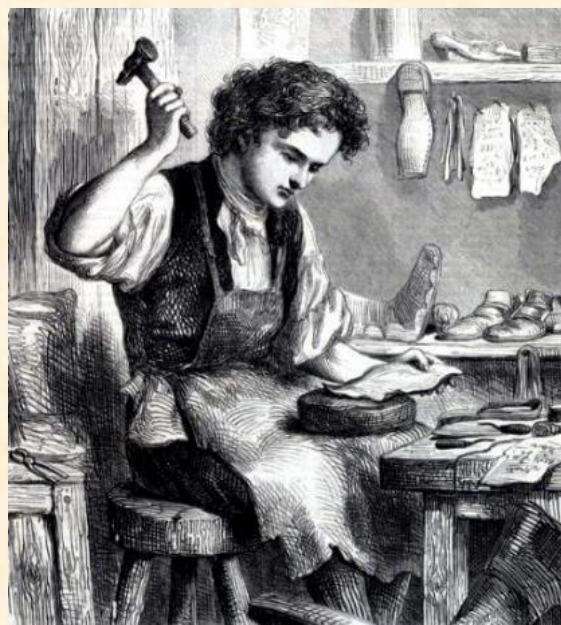
A direct route from Ibstock would have taken Charles, Catherine, six-year-old Helena and three-year-old Thomas, my great-great grandfather, through Ravenstone and Swannington. They may have taken a small detour via Hugglescote St James churchyard to say a final goodbye to baby John; and via Ravenstone churchyard to bid farewell to John and Martha, and to Charles's brothers, Edmond and James. From Peggs Green, they could have travelled through Griffydham, Worthington and Breedon, or via Newbold, Staunton Harold and Melbourne. This may have been the last time they saw any of these places.

Either way, they would have crossed the River Trent and then experienced the sights of Derby city, the like of which they may never have seen before. They were among 250,000 people who, between 1851 and 1871, migrated from the British countryside to urban areas, or emigrated to other countries.

A smaller agricultural workforce was an added incentive for mechanisation, perpetuating the exodus to the towns. Like their relatives back in Leicestershire, coal and textiles, and also railways, provided employment in the Derby area for several members of the Clifford family and their relatives through marriage.

In 1841, Charles's brother, John, and his wife, Ellen, had been living on Main Street North in Whitwick. John was a cordwainer. He made shoes from new leather, rather than simply repairing them, which was the task of a cobbler. By 1851, John and Ellen had moved to Allestree. Ellen was a lace worker like Mary Clifford, her sister-in-law back in Griffydham at the time.

Ellen died in 1852, aged thirty-four. It seems they had no children. On 1 May 1854, John was admitted to what was then known as the Derby County Lunatic Asylum. This had been opened in 1851 at Mickleover on the west side of Derby. John may have tried to take his own life, and he died the next day. Perhaps the death of Ellen and having no children to live for were contributory factors. He was forty-five years old.



An apprentice shoemaker or 'cordwainer', which was the profession of John and Martha Clifford's third child, John. (November 1861 edition of The Band of Hope Review, a Temperance magazine for the young, established in 1847 by Methodist Thomas Bywater Smithies, published by S W Partridge & Co, London; Parker Collection – DivergentPathsStafford.wordpress.com)

James Haywood

In 1867, one of Charles Clifford's nephews, James Haywood, married Elizabeth Brown, an Allestree girl. The first of their three children, Harriet, was born in Melbourne in 1868. This is just over the border from Leicestershire and only 3 miles (5 km) from Breedon on the Hill.

The 1871 census says that James was working as a railway labourer at Melbourne. A branch line from Derby to Melbourne opened in 1868. By late 1869, a single-track extension had been completed with stations at Tonge and Worthington. The line reached Ashby in 1874. James may have worked on the building of this extension.



Railway labourers or 'navvies' digging a cutting in 1872 on the Worthington section of the new branch line from Derby. They also used a mechanical excavator known as a 'steam navvy'. This single-track extension from Melbourne reached Ashby-de-la-Zouch in 1874. James Haywood probably knew the labourers in this photograph, and may be among them. (Hand-Me-Down Hearsays, Simon Jones and Jamie Wigmore, 2003 – [Breedon on the Hill Parish Council](#))

James and Elizabeth's second child, Bertha was born in 1874. But by that time, they had moved to Kilburn, 15 miles (24 km) north of Melbourne and on the other side of Derby.

By 1881, they were living in Milford, 6 miles (10 km) north of Derby. James was now working at the William Hawley & Sons colour works in neighbouring Duffield. His widowed father, Samuel, had left James and William Bowler, his son-in-law and grandson in Long Whatton, and was now living with James in Milford. Samuel died later that year, aged seventy-one.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Bertha worked at Milford cotton mill as a spinner, waste picker and, later, a yarn examiner. Bertha's sister, Ivy, was born at Milford in 1901.

Benjamin's family

Charles Clifford's younger brother, Benjamin, married Adeline Gregory in Allestree in 1850. He continued as an agricultural labourer for several years. Adeline worked at the cotton mill in neighbouring Darley Abbey. They had four sons. The first two, Edward and James, both died young.

By 1871, Benjamin was a coal higgler – the local coal merchant rather than a transporter of coal from a mine. He was joined in the business by his two younger sons, George and William, born in 1858 and 1872 respectively.



Blacksmith on Duffield Road, Allestree, around 1900. Benjamin Clifford and his sons, George and William, were the local coal merchants from the 1870s onwards. They may have had their horses shod here. (Thanks to [Allestree Local History Group](#))

In 1883, George married eighteen-year-old Sarah Toon Clifford, his first cousin once removed. Sarah had never given up her mother Martha's maiden name, despite being the eldest of the Toon children, and now she had a double claim on it.

George and Sarah's son, Thomas, died at a few months old in 1884. They would lose their daughter, Ada, in 1899 at the age of twelve. Sarah's parents, Thomas and Martha Toon, came to live with her and George in Allestree around this time.

Adeline died in 1898 after nearly forty-eight years of marriage to Benjamin. He died in 1903 and was buried with her at Allestree St Edmund. George and William continued supplying coal well into the early twentieth century.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Thomas Toon	Head	M	76	General Labourer
Martha do	Wife	M	77	
Mary do	Daughter	Wid.	76	
Sarah Clifford	Daughter	M	76	
Ada Toon	Daughter	S	23	Elastic Net Weaver
Adelina do	Daughter	S	19	Elastic Net Picker up
Thomas do	Son	S	16	Colliers Labourer
Mary A do	Daughter		12	
John do	Son		9	
George Clifford	Visitor	M	52	General Labourer
Ada do	Visitor		24	

Extract from the 1891 census for The Rowlands near Swannington. The Derbyshire and Leicestershire families clearly stayed in touch with each other. On the day the census was taken, Sarah Toon Clifford, her husband, George, and their daughter, Ada, were visiting from Allestree. Sarah's father, Thomas, who had worked in mining and brick making as a younger man, was now a general labourer. Sarah's twice-widowed grandmother, Mary, was living with the family. Two of Sarah's sisters worked in elastic webbing manufacture – Ada as a weaver and Adelina as a 'picker up'. Their brother, Thomas jnr, was a collier's labourer, probably at Coleorton No.3 mine.

Martha Toon had been married to Thomas for thirty-eight years by the time she died in 1904, aged sixty. This meant that she did not have to endure the tragedy that befell one of her other daughters, Mary Ann, and son-in-law Eli Haywood. Eli and Mary Ann had three children: Ada, born in Osgathorpe around New Year 1901; Martha, born in Swannington in 1903; Eli, born in August 1906 in Hugglescote. Eli and Martha were baptised together at Hugglescote St John the Baptist on 12 August. Three months later, Mary Ann died, aged twenty-seven, and was buried on 15 November. Eli died days later and was buried on 29 November. The three children were now orphans, and more heartbreak was to come. Little Eli died about seven weeks later, and was buried with his parents in Hugglescote churchyard on 23 January 1907.

It seems that Ada and Martha Haywood were taken in by their aunt and uncle, George and Sarah Clifford. The two Haywood girls were certainly living with them in Allestree in 1911. So was their grandfather, Thomas Toon. He lived until 1922, dying at the good age of seventy-seven. George died aged sixty-five in 1923 after forty years of marriage to Sarah. She lived another eighteen years, dying in 1941 at the age of seventy-six.

Benjamin's son, William, had ten children, the last of which was Doris, born in Allestree in 1914. She was the fifty-seventh and last great grandchild of John and Martha Clifford. Two of William's sons, George and James, died in Allestree in 1977, aged seventy-five and seventy respectively. Their sister, Adelina, died in Duffield in 1994, aged eighty-six. Allestree residents today remember the Cliffords there.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

1	George Clifford	Head	52	married	28				Coal Dealer	59
2	Sarah Clifford	wife	46	married	28	2	0	2		
3	Thomas Toon	Father in law	66	Widower					Private Means	37
4	Thomas Toon	Brother in law	36	married	8				Fruitener & Seedsman	9
5	Ada Haywood	niece	10						School	370
6	Martha E. Toon	niece	6							

Extract from the 1911 census for Allestree. Benjamin's son, George Clifford, is continuing the coal dealing business in Allestree, started by his father at least forty years before. With George and his wife, Sarah, is her widowed father, Thomas Toon, with his own means in retirement. He and his wife, Martha, had moved from The Rowlands near Swannington in the late 1890s. Martha had died in Allestree in 1904. Also with them is Sarah's brother, Thomas Toon jnr, now a horticulturalist dealing in fruit and seeds. Two more members of the extended family were also living with them. Ada and Martha were the daughters of Sarah and Thomas' sister, Mary Ann, and her husband Eli Haywood. The two girls had been orphaned in November 1906 when Mary Ann and Eli both died.

Charles's family

In Allestree in July 1854, Charles and Catherine Clifford provided a new little brother for Helena and Thomas. They named him James John. His middle name was probably a memorial to the brother he would never meet, baptised in Ibstock in 1852 and buried in Hugglescote fifteen months before James was born.

One more brother, William, was born in Allestree in January 1857. Unfortunately, Charles died on 16 September that year, aged thirty-four. If his short time as a coal miner in Ibstock suggests that he was in poor health, this may also explain why he died young. He was buried at Allestree St Edmund. By 1861, Catherine and Helena were working at Darley Abbey cotton mill with Benjamin's wife, Adeline.

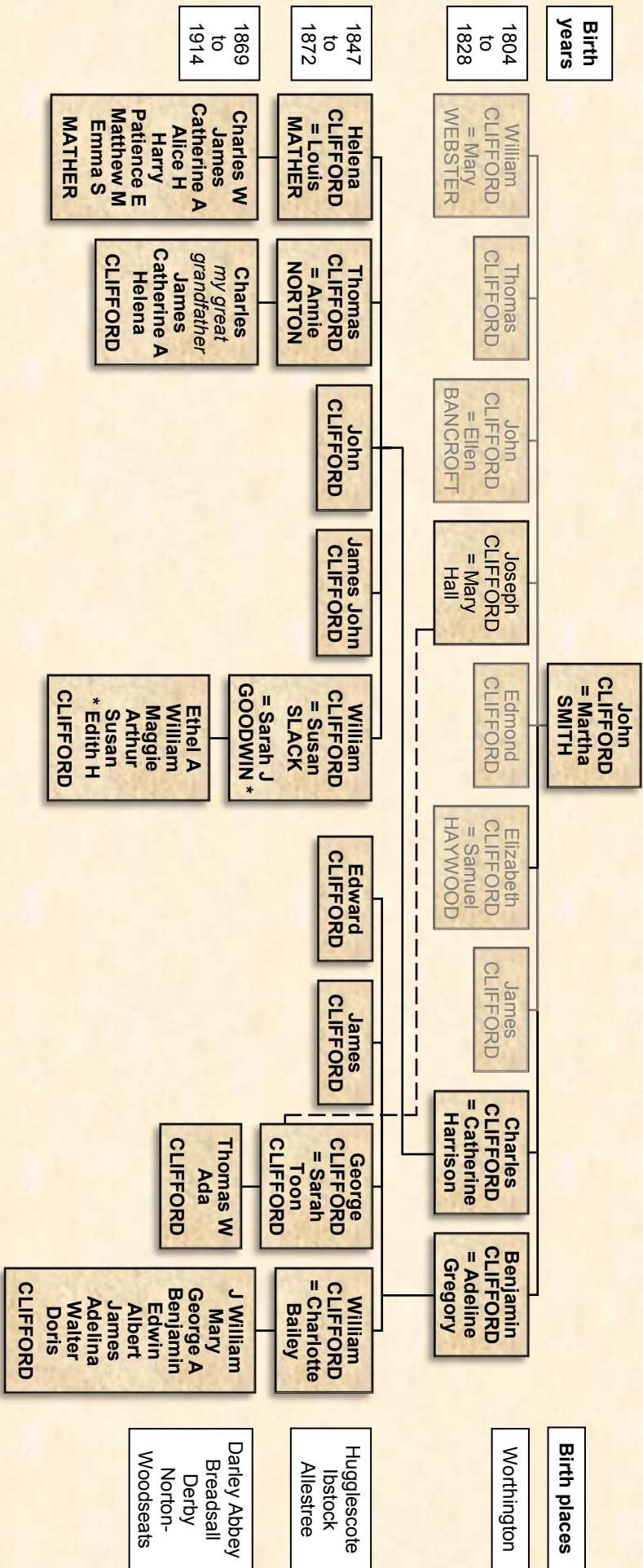
Catherine remarried in 1863 and moved with her four children to the Darley Abbey home of her second husband, James Monk. He was a gardener and had been a widower since 1860. James and his family had also migrated from Leicestershire. He had been born in Hoton, east of Loughborough, and his wife was from Cadeby, west of Leicester. They had got married in Woodhouse between Leicester and Loughborough. Their five children were born in Woodhouse where James was an agricultural labourer. They had moved to Darley Abbey in the 1850s and four of the children were cotton mill workers there in the 1860s. James and Catherine would have needed to be a great comfort to each other. It seems that, by 1871, all of James's children had died.

In 1868, Helena Clifford also married a gardener, Louis Mather. They had eight children. Her brother, Thomas, my great-great grandfather, was also a garden labourer until his early twenties, and probably worked with James Monk and Louis Mather.

Thomas then joined the Midland Railway, as did his brother, William. Thomas married my great-great grandmother, Annie Norton, at Darley Abbey St Matthew in 1875. She worked at the cotton mill, as did several members of her family. Thomas was now a locomotive fireman.

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Charles and Benjamin Clifford's family trees





Boar's Head cotton mills at Darley Abbey, owned by Walter Evans & Co. From the 1850s to the 1880s, several members of the Clifford family and their local relatives by marriage worked here. (Mid-nineteenth century engraving – with thanks to Tony Lintott, [Darley Abbey Historical Group](#))

Thomas also had a brief career with Derbyshire Constabulary from 1880 to 1885. A piece I have written about his police career is available on the [Derbyshire Family History Society](#) website.

He re-joined the Midland as a fireman in 1887 and was promoted to become a driver in 1889. One of Benjamin's grandsons, Edwin, was recorded as a locomotive fireman in the 1939 census.

What thoughts came to Thomas' mind on the footplate of a locomotive as he passed the junctions, stations and sidings at Snibston, Swannington, Ashby and Worthington? Perhaps he hauled coal trucks from the mines. Had Charles and Catherine told him much about the area that he left at the age of three, when the family had moved from Ibstock to Allestree? Was he still in touch with his cousins in north-west Leicestershire? Most of his uncles and aunts had died by 1861. The few who were left to share their memories lived near him in Derbyshire.

Thomas and Annie had four children. Their eldest, Charles, was my great grandfather. He was born in Derby in 1876, and was John and Martha Clifford's twenty-fourth great grandchild. Thomas' mother, Catherine, died in 1880, aged fifty-nine, and was buried at Darley Abbey St Matthew. It seems his brother, James, died around the same time. Their stepfather, James Monk, lived another eleven years, dying at the age of seventy-seven in 1891.



A driver and fireman in the cab of a Kirtley Class 700, built between 1869 and 1874. It is seen here before 1907 when the Midland's numbering system was changed. As a fireman in the 1870s, and as a driver from 1889, Thomas would have been familiar with these locomotives. (Mick Hymans Collection, with thanks to [Charlie Verrall](#))

Helena's sons, James and Harry, joined the Midland Railway works in Derby, probably in the mid-1890s. By 1911, William's son, Arthur, was a tram car conductor for Derby Corporation Borough Council. He also later joined the Midland. Some of the girls in the family married railway workers.

Helena's eldest son, Charles, was working at Darley Abbey cotton mill in 1881 at the age of twelve, but then became a bricklayer. His sisters, Alice and Patience, also worked at the cotton mill from the 1890s. Helena died in 1920, aged seventy-three.

In 1901, Thomas and Annie Clifford's daughter, Catherine Anne, and her cousin Maggie, William's daughter, were silk workers in Derby. Another of William's daughters, Edith Harriet, was a 'linker' at a hosiery factory in Derby in 1911. She died in Derby in 1982, aged eighty-nine.

End of the line

Thomas Clifford was widowed twice. Annie, my great-great grandmother, died in January 1891, aged just thirty-five. She was buried at Nottingham Road Cemetery in Chaddesden, north-east of Derby.

In June of that year, Thomas married his second wife, Eliza. She was the widow of William White, who had been born in Ibstock in 1839. William had worked at one of the coal mines as a twelve-year-old living in Whitwick. By 1861, he had moved to the Derby area, and married Eliza in 1863. By 1871, he was a railway labourer. He and Eliza lived in Breadsall, 2 miles (3 km) from Darley Abbey. She was working at the cotton mill in 1881. William died in 1887 after twenty-four years of marriage to Eliza.

Young Charles Clifford, my great grandfather, may have been unhappy about his father marrying his stepmother just five months after his mother had died. A few weeks later, in August 1891, he left Derby to join the Royal Navy at Devonport near

John Clifford (1782-1845) and his family in north-west Leicestershire

Plymouth. That is the reason my immediate family is not from Derbyshire. He was based in Portsmouth for most of his career. My grandfather, Harold, was born there in 1913. Charles's brother, James, followed him into the Navy.

Eliza died in May 1896, aged fifty, and was buried with Annie at Nottingham Road Cemetery.

In the November, Thomas married his third wife, Matilda. She was the widow of George Sheldrick. He was from Cambridge and she was from Norfolk, where I have lived for most of my life. They had moved to Derby by 1881. George was a tin worker and was employed at the Midland Carriage Works.

Thomas and Matilda were married for eighteen years. He was still an engine driver when he died in 1915, aged sixty-five. He was buried with Annie and Eliza. Matilda died in 1922, aged sixty-four.

*My great-great grandfather,
Thomas Clifford, born in
Hugglescote on 21 March 1850.
He is seen here aged fifty (my
own age at the time of writing)
at Portsea, Portsmouth, on
11 June 1900. The occasion
was the wedding of his son,
Charles, my great grandfather.
(Original photograph,
family collection)*



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