

Notes on the
De Aldithley (Audley) & Sneyd families
From the 10th to the 17th Century
Compiled by Richard Sneyd, March 2012

This information comes from a number of sources including the internet, John Sleight's History of the Ancient Parish of Leek, the Domesday Book, and. Sampson Erdswick's Survey of Staffordshire with notes by Rev Thomas Harwood

THE SAXON ORIGINS of the AUDLEY, STANLEY & SNEYD Families

Introduction.

There was an aural tradition of the Sneyd family that they were "special" because they were descended in the male line from a Saxon Princess. For many years The Society of Genealogists in London displayed a pedigree in the male line which stretched back to Ordgar, Ealderman of Defnsaetes (Devon & Cornwall)

J.H. Round wrote in 1910 in a chapter from 'Peerage & Pedigree' entitled "Some 'Saxon Houses'"

"I pass on to the family of Sneyd. Theirs is a very different claim from that of the family of Temple. Their descent from the Earls of Mercia is no mere clumsy concoction obviously false on the face of it but a perfectly plausible pedigree, of which every step is given. It is only its tremendous character that takes away one's breath the sole authority on which the pedigree rests is that of the 'Hulton Abbey MSS' Now these consist, it is no secret, of certain pieces of parchment which were purchased by a member of the Sneyd family as genuine within the last half century at most. Their provenance is quite uncertain and their genuineness is gravely impugned".

Mr Round writes that in 1893 General Wrottesley, who had recognised the importance of the documents if they were genuine, had gone into the matter thoroughly and pronounced them to be forgeries. Officers from the Public Record Office stated that in their opinion "They were very clumsy forgeries"

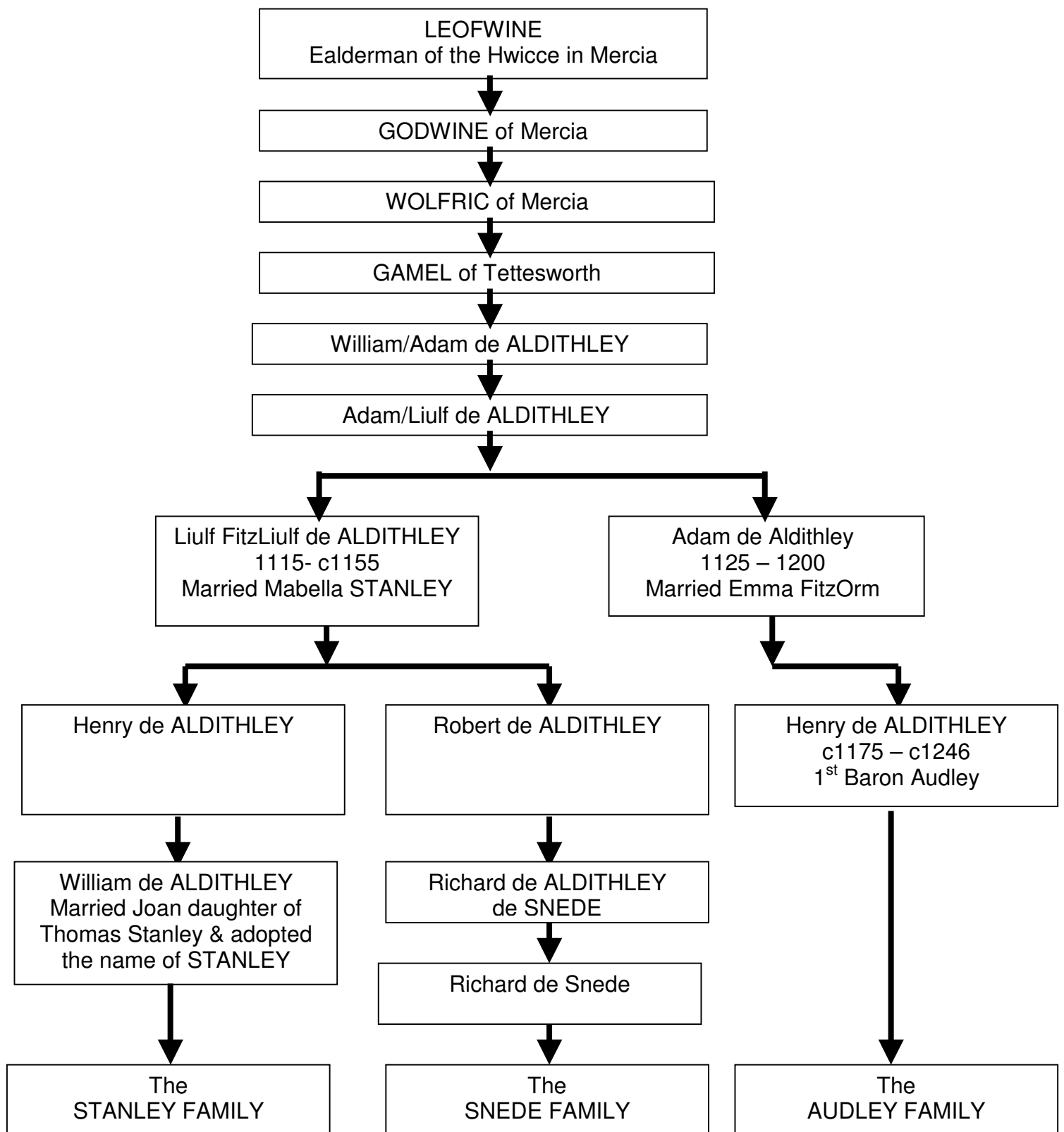
The purchaser of the Hulton Abbey MSS was Gustavus Alfred Sneyd 1844-1926 of Basford Hall near Leek. (now in 2011 the home of a kinsman Humphrey Scott-Moncrieff). It is rumoured that Gustavus and a cousin from the Keele branch of the family were the authors of the documents which were buried and then "found" at Hulton Abbey.

Richard Sneyd's version of the Saxon descent starts with Leofwine Ealderman of the Hwicce in Mercia, the forged version includes Leofwine, Earl of Mercia, descended from Ordgar who married Alwara daughter of Athelstan , Duke of the East Angles. Then astonishingly goes on as Richard Sneyd has to Godwine, Wulfric and Gamel. After this there is an Adam de Aldithley, apparently associated with the Verdun family. Adam's brother was apparently Robert de Stanley, vel Stonlegh and so confusingly on.

Mr Round devotes twenty pages debunking the origins of the Audley, Stanley & Sneyd families as shown in the Hulton MSS. There are not many families that can genuinely trace their male line to Saxon times even if it is only as far back as Leofwine Ealderman of the Hwicce in Mercia.

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SAXON ORIGINS of the AUDLEY. STANLEY & SNEYD Families.



Once the Hulton MSS had been discredited, publications like Burke's Peerage (Stanleys) & Burke's Landed Gentry (Sneyds) retreated to much later dates. The myth grew up that the de Aldithleys were descended from Adam &/or Lieulf de Aldithley who came over from de Aldithley in Normandy in the time of the Conqueror. The Wikipedia entry Audley-Stanley family acknowledges this fabrication but does not offer an alternative version.

Richard Sneyd is in his 81st year and is relying on others, to get his credible version on to the internet and accessible records.

The Sneyd family rightly lost their claim to have a pedigree which went back to Saxon times in the male line and this is a credible version which takes the pedigree back into Saxon times, albeit not so far.

The AUDLEY, STANLEY, & SNEYD Families come from a common source LEOFWINE.

The names in BLACK CAPITALS show the main line of descent in the male line

LEOFWINE. c950-c1028. Ealdorman of the Hwicce in Mercia, in the reign of King Athelred II Ad 979- 1016 and recorded in 997 as being an Ealdorman of the Hwicce in Mercia. Leofwine was one of the few English "earls" to remain powerful during the reign of the Scandinavian/Viking King Cnut. AD 1017-1035. King Aethelred II granted "Leofwine Dux" land in Warwickshire under a charter dated 998.

Leofwine's eldest son Leofric was appointed by King Cnut to be Earl of Mercia. Leofric married Lady Godiva. Leofric was succeeded as Earl of Mercia by his son Algar.

GODWINE c 979-before1057 was Leofwine's 4th son. He was known as Godwine of Mercia and was born in Balterley,. Godwine owned the townships of Audley, Balterley & Talke.

Godwine was succeeded by his son WOLFRIC

WOLFRIC , born at Leek c 1009. Lord of Leek, Aldithley & Balterley in Staffordshire, and Croxton, Etchells , and many other places in Cheshire. He owned these places before they were taken over by William the Conqueror as overlord in 1066. Wolfric's third son was

GAMEL of Tettesworth.c 1043-after 1086. He married Miss de Mottram St Andrew, born about 1045. the heiress to Mottram St Andrew, Macclesfield, Cheshiire. In 1086 Gamel was described as Lord of Aldithley, Talke on the Hill and Balterley in Staffordshire and Cedde and Mottram St Andrew in Cheshire. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 there were sixteen Thegns holding land in Staffordshire. Gamel who held his land by military service for his life was appointed as the "Tainus Rex" (King's Thegn) senior to the other Thegns. Gamel's lands in Staffordshire were held by the King as overlord. Gamel had a son.

Sir ADAM (WILLIAM) de ALDITHLEY. Born c 1067. He was the first person to be given the identification of de Aldithley. He inherited the Audley property, His cousin Ranulph inherited land at Tettesworth and following grants of land at Rudyard founded the Rudyerd family. 'Family Links' produces no other information except that Sir Adam/William had a son: Adam de Aldithley born 1086.

ADAM de ALDITHLEY, Born c 1088, (son of Sir ADAM/WILLIAM de ALDITHLEY). Another name for Adam was Adam de Audley. He had two sons

1 LIULF de ALDITHLEY born c1115 & 2. ADAM de ALDITHLEY born c1125.

- 1 LIULF de ALDITHLEY. Born c 1115 died after 1154. Liulf married MABELLA daughter and heiress of Sir HENRY STANLEY. They had two sons (a) HENRY de ALDITHLEY & (b) ROBERT de ALDITHLEY.

- (a) HENRY de ALDITHLEY had a son

WILLIAM de ALDITHLEY, born about 1170. married JOAN daughter of THOMAS STANLEY. In about 1192 William exchanged his manors of Talke & Balterley with his great uncle, Adam de Aldithley's. manor of Stoneleigh near Leek.. William gave up the name of Aldithley and took on the name of Stanley which was the start of the Stanley family who eventually became Earls of Derby.

- (b) ROBERT de ALDITHLEY married JOAN, had a son:

RICHARD de ALDITHLEY de SNEDE. Married ROSIA de PRAERS. Richard was given a grant of 550 acres of land in Snede, (Burslem), Staffordshire by his uncle, Henry de Aldithley or his kinsman Henry de Aldithley, 1st Baron Audley. (there is evidence that Snede was inherited by Henry de Aldithley, mother Emma FitzOrm). Richard de Aldithley consequently changed his name to de Aldithley de Snede.. Richard and Rosia had a son RICHARD.

RICHARD de SNEDE married his kinswoman JOANNE de STANLEY. Richard adopted in 1232 a differenced version of his mother's (Praers) coat of arms to a black (sable) scythe (snead) with two handles (sneads). Richard was alive in 1270 according to the Pipe Rolls. The Audley family still went on using its own coat of arms but Richard like the Stanleys before him was establishing from the de Aldithley roots a distinct family with its own surname and coat of arms.

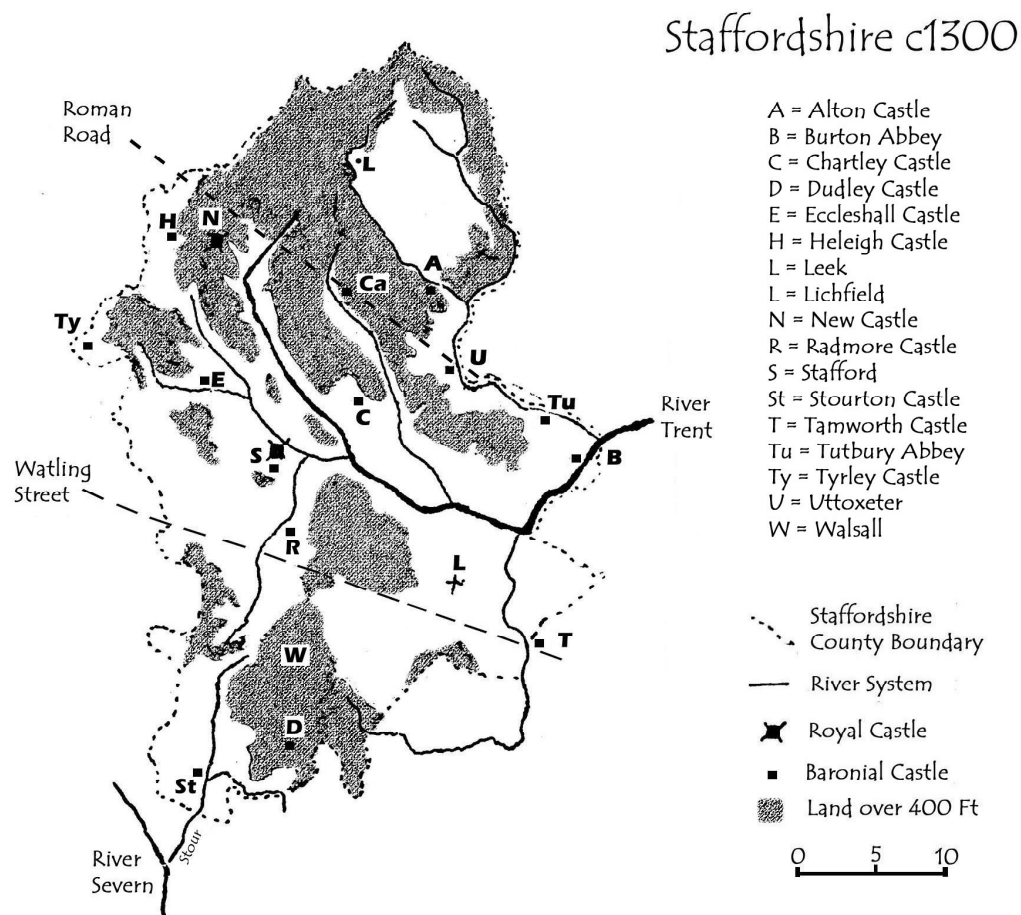
2 ADAM de ALDITHLEY II Born 1125 died c 1200, (2nd son of Adam de Aldithley born c1088) having lived for 75 years. Adam Married the heiress EMMA FITZORM daughter of RALPH FITZORM of Darlaston & Okeover & LETTICE de MONTGOMERY heiress of Snelston. Their 2nd son was:-

HENRY de ALDITHLEY Born about 1175 died before 1246. He married in 1217 in Edgmond, Cheshire BERTRED MAINWARING the daughter

of Sir RALPH MAINWARING & AMICE of CHESTER descended from the EARLS of CHESTER and consequently from ROBERT 1st EARL of GLOUCESTER, the illegitimate son of King HENRY I.

HENRY de ALDITHLEY became very rich and powerful and was created 1st Baron Audley. He founded the Audley Family.

By the year 1124 the lands that had been held by Gamel , the Saxon Thane, from King William I had passed to the Norman family of Verdon as overlords.



The Sneyd Family Tree 1270 – 1450

Richard de Aldithley (or Audithley) took the name Snede (Sneyde) c1232 when he was given land in the hamlet of Snede (part of Tunstall) by his cousin Henry de Aldithley

Richard assumes his mothers arms (a scythe), which are adopted by subsequent generations. The author takes Richard to be the start of the Sneyd family tree

Note;
In 1333 Edward III commanded every man in the realm to take a separate surname to do either with his, a quality of body or mind or a place where he dwelt

Richard fought under 4th Lord Audley at Poitiers and was granted addition of Fleur-de-lys to his arms and possibly a pension

He was granted land in Bradwell in 1400

He was granted the manor of Bradwell by Lord Audley (Touchet family)

At this point the family interest is transferred to Chester for two generations. Bradwell & Tunstall are retained

Richard de Snede = Rosia de Praers
c 1230 Daughter and heir of
Henry de Praers

Richard de Snede = Joanne de Stanley
c 1270

William de Snede = Martilda

Henry de Snede = Margaret (dau &
(of Tunstall & Snede) heiress of Nicholas
m 1310 de Tunstall

Nicholas de Snede = Idonia de Audley
(alias de Tunstall) d 1313 (dau of
d 1333 Giles Audley)

Richard de Snede = Wife's name unknown
(alias de Tunstall)

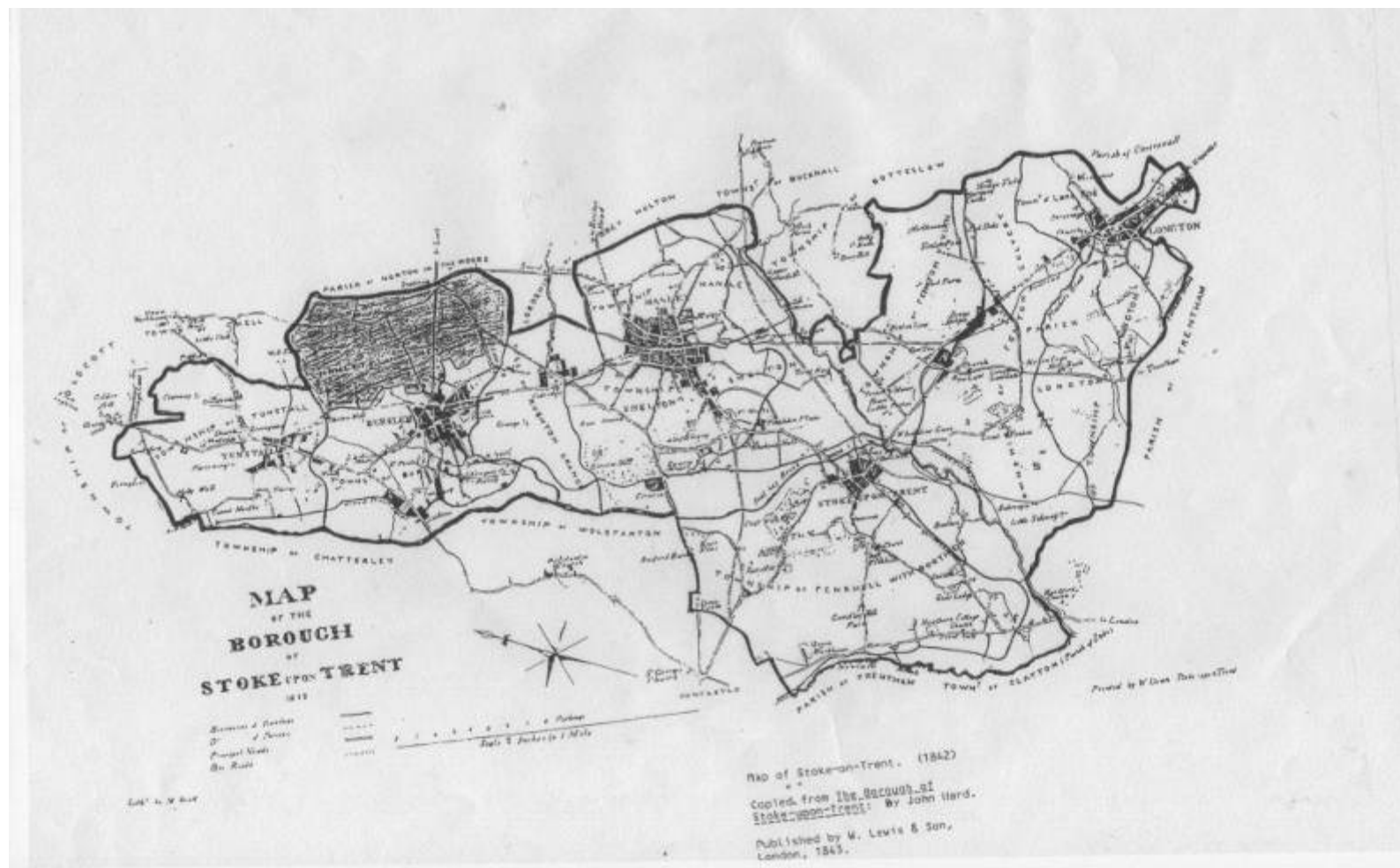
William Sneyde = Wife's name unknown
(of Tunstall & Bradwell)

Richard Sneyde = Agnes Sutton
(Bradwell) m 1423

Nicholas Sneyde = Margaret Downes
(Bradwell) (Shrigley Cheshire)

William Sneyd = Johanna Ledsham
m 1479 of Ledsham
Moved to Chester

The shaded area shows the 550 acres at Snede granted to Richard de Aldithley by his cousin Henry 1st Baron Audley



THE SNEDE/SNEYD FAMILY
From RICHARD de ALDITHLEY de SNEDE to
WILLIAM SNEYD 1612/1614 – 1694

Acknowledgements: The information has been compiled by Richard Sneyd from many sources which include Burks's Landed Gentry 1937 & 1969. A four volume thesis on "A Study of an ancient Staffordshire Gentry Family" by Sandra Burgess, 1990: Everyman Encyclopedia published by J.M. Dent & Sons in 1958: History of the Ancient History of Leek by John Sleigh, 1883: Survey of Staffordshire containing the Antiquities of that County 1684 collated by Rev Thomas Harwood in 1820. John Kolbert, Roger Wykes-Sneyd, The Internet, especially Wikipedia.

Background: The Sneyd family bore their own arms from the 13th century, previously they had borne the Audley coat of arms. The Sneyd family started with a high social standing and with many links with their powerful kinsman in the Audley & Stanley families. They could confidently trace their ancestry as de Aldithleys to a high born Saxon family. Records were lost when family documents were destroyed when the Parliamentarians plundered Keel Hall during the Civil War. The names of Leofwine, Godwine, Wulfric & Algar were remembered but applied to the wrong people. However the tradition that the Sneyd family was of ancient origin undoubtedly attracted heiresses from families whose origins were more recent and less prestigious.

A lot has been written about the Sneyd family but much of the material concerns later periods. Published family trees do not venture further back than Henry de Snede de Tunstall, living in 1310, (in the third year of the reign of King Edward II (1284 – 1327)), who married Margaret, daughter and heiress of Nicholas de Tunstall.

This account indicates how the Sneyd family survived the Wars of the Roses and the Civil War. Their fortunes rose significantly under the stewardship of WILLIAM SNEYD, (the Draper) of Chester & Bradwell. He was born in 1446, his son RICHARD SNEYD (the lawyer) was born in 1480 and died 1537. His son was Sir WILLIAM SNEYD (the Knight) 1512/14 – 1571 of Bradwell

The First SNEYD

The first SNEDE was RICHARD de ALDITHLEY de SNEDE the son of ROBERT & JOAN de ALDITHLEY. RICHARD married ROSIA de PRAERS, the daughter and heiress of Henry de PRAERS of Barthomley in Staffordshire (very close to the Cheshire border). The Praers coat of arms had a gules (red) background with a scythe argent (silver) with two sneds (handles). The name Sned or Snede has a certain usage across Northern Europe. As the handle of the scythe. Snedding is a forestry term currently in use for the operation of lopping off the lower branches of conifers.

In 1232 Richard de Aldithley receives a grant of 550 acres of land in Snede (part of Burslem). The donor was either his uncle, Henry de Aldithley or his kinsman Henry de Aldithley 1st Baron Audley (there is evidence that Snede was part of Emma FitzOrm's inheritance; Emma was Henry 1st Baron Audley's mother). Richard de Aldithley added de Snede to his name becoming Richard de Aldithley de Snede. Richard and Rosia had a son RICHARD de SNEDE

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THE SNEYDS OF KEELE HALL



"Nec Opprimere Nec Opprimi"

Neither to Oppress Nor to be Oppressed

RICHARD de SNEDE the son of Richard end Rosia married his kinswoman JOANNA STANLEY: Richard adopted a differenced version of his mother, 'Rosia de Praers' coat of arms to an argent (silver) background with a black (sable) scythe (snead) with two handles (sneds). Richard was alive in 1270 according to the Pipe Rolls. The Audley family still went on using its own coat of arms but Richard like the Stanleys before him was establishing, from the de Aldithley roots, a distinct family with its own name and coat of arms. They had a son WILLIAM DE SNEDE

WILLIAM DE SNEDE was the son of Richard & Joanna de Snede. William married MATILDA. There is a charter at Keele dated 1270 for a *feofment of land called Delriddings by Richard del Hay to William son of Richard de*

Snede. This is possibly the earliest mention of the Snede name in a recorded document. William died in 1293 and was succeeded by his son HENRY de SNEDE.

HENRY de SNEDE, the son of William Snede, married in 1310 his kinswoman MARGARET daughter & heiress of NICHOLAS de TUNSTALL, formerly de Aldithley. Henry assumed the additional name of de TUNSTALL. A deed held at Keele from the reign of Edward I (c1298) concerned the purchase of the manor of Bradwell, woodland and waste by Nicholas de Aldithley. It seems likely that the family home of the Sneyd family at the end of the 1200's was the Chief House at Tunstall inherited by Margaret from her father Nicholas de Aldithley, de Tunstall. Henry & Margaret had a son NICHOLAS *de* SNEDE alias Tunstall.

NICHOLAS de SNEDE, , alias TUNSTALL, the son of Henry de Snede married his kinswoman IDONEA de AUDLEY. A marriage settlement dated 13/8/1312 by Nicholas Baron Audley jointly to Nicholas de Snede and Idonea gave them land in Tunstall and Chatterley (Bradwell was in Chatterley). Five messuages, two bovates of land, 69 acres of meadow at a chief rent of 36 shillings per annum. There was enough land for five households, and the Sneyds held the land as freemen. The witnesses included Lords Peter de Lymmesey, James de Perers, and Knights John de Burgh, Giles de Audley, Richard de Weston, Richard de Delves and others. The settlement does not seem to have excluded mineral rights which would have provided additional income. Idonea and Nicholas' marriage and Idonea's marriage settlement was for some time considered to be the launch of the Sneyd family's fortunes. In fact

the family was already well established in North Staffordshire & was financially secure.

Nicholas died in 1333 and was succeeded by his son, Richard de Snede de Tunstall.

RICHARD de SNEDE de TUNSTALL, son of Nicholas & Idonea died in 1386 and is believed to have served under his kinsman, Sir James Audley K.G. of Stratton Audley, at the battle of Poitiers AD 1356. In recognition of Richard's services in the French Wars and particularly as one of the six Staffordshire esquires serving Sir James Audley, Richard was awarded, probably by the black prince (Edward Prince of Wales) the addition of the Fleur de Lys to his paternal coat of arms and the crest of the black lion of England. A lion passant gardant sa. It is probable that the motto "*nec opprimi, nec opprimere*", "neither oppress nor be oppressed", was adopted at the same time. Richard had a son William.

WILLIAM SNEYDE of TUNSTALL & BRADWELL was the son and heir of Richard de Snede. William married Matilda, He died prior to 1421/1422; William discontinued the use of the name de Tunstall and it seems likely that he inserted the 'y' in Sneyde. He was succeeded by his son RICHARD de SNEYDE.

Bradwell Hall and the Sneyd family:



Bradwell Hall 1841

'Bradwell Hall in the Parish of Wolstanton, Staffordshire.'
Showing a three storey late Georgian house of brick, in a garden,
with a sunken wall in front.

J. C. Buckler.

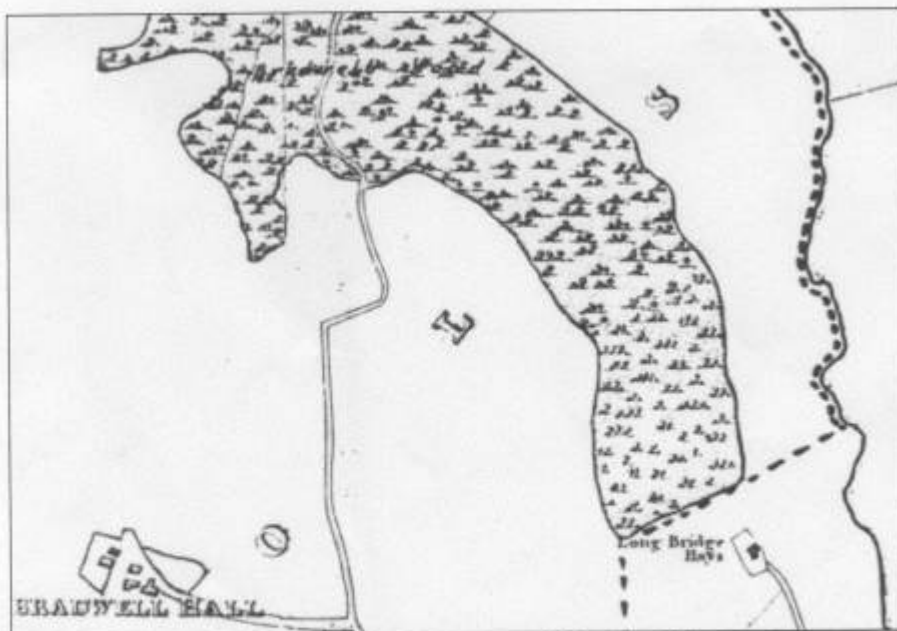
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Bradwell Hall and deer park - Plot's 1686 map

The extract above from a 1686 map of Staffordshire shows the location of Bradwell Hall north west of Chesterton. It also shows that the family had acquired another symbol of social status - a deer park - located north of the house.

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1832 Hargeaves map of Bradwell

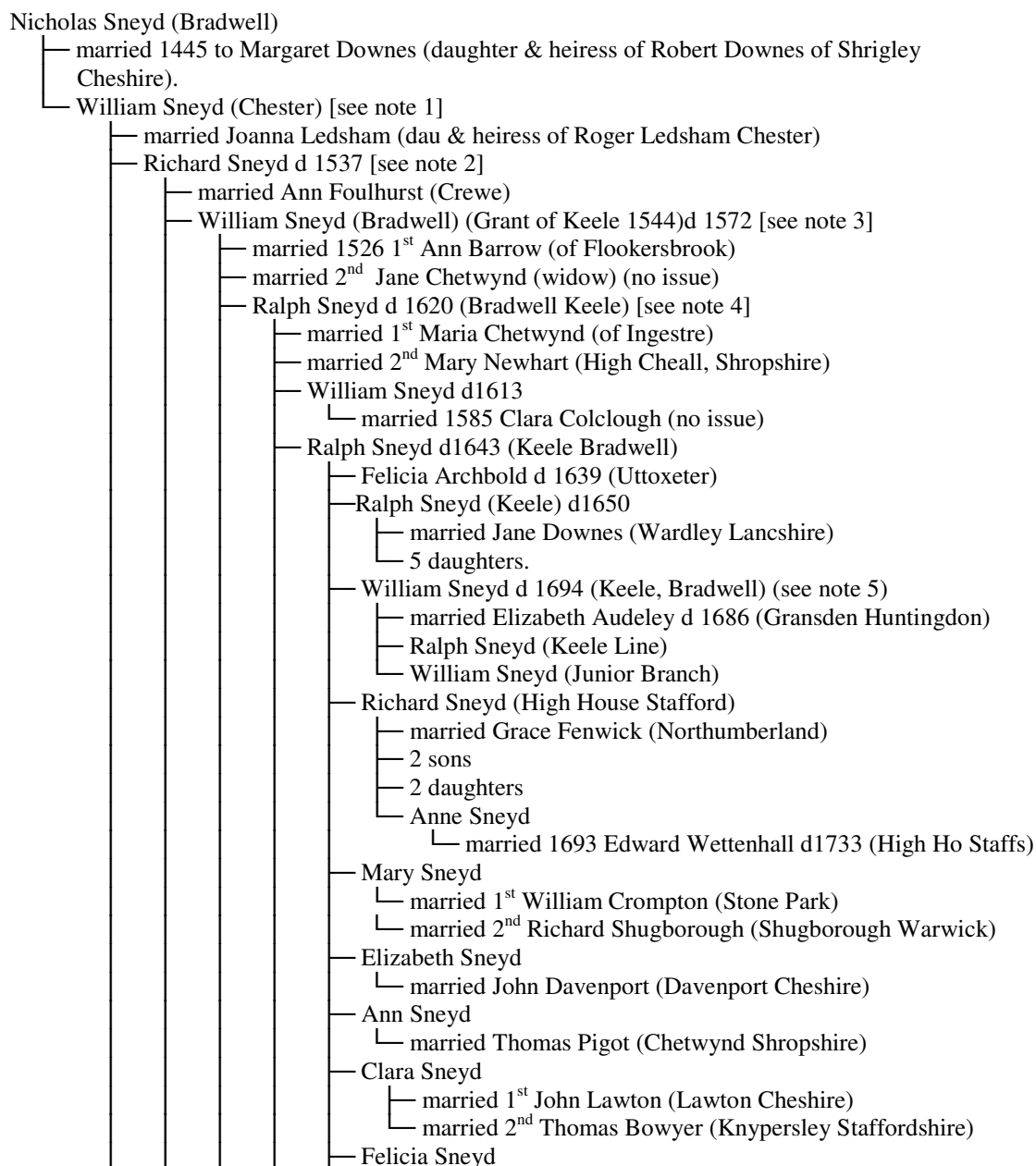
[-click for larger map-](#)

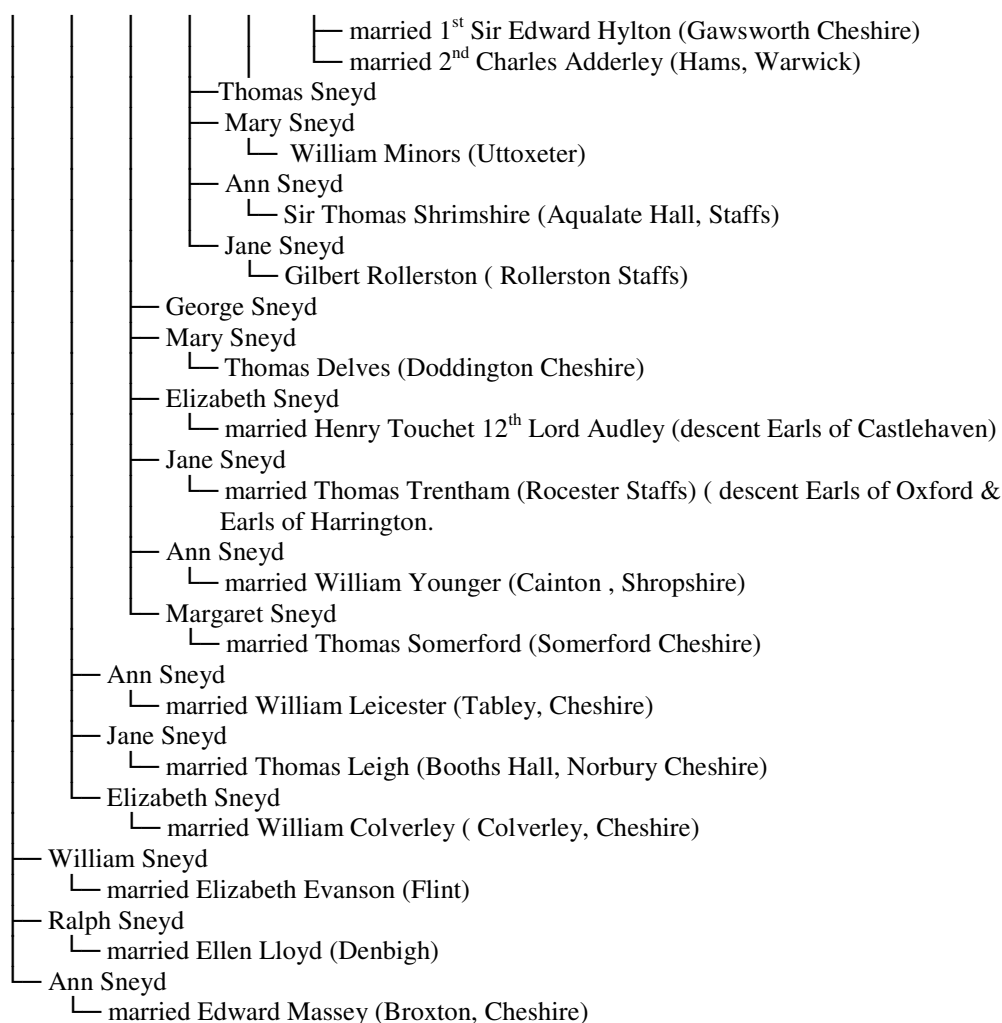
Bradwell Hall was built on the top of a small hill at a height of just over 600 feet above sea level which gave the occupiers extensive views over the surrounding landscape.

RICHARD de SNEYDE son of William & Matilda, married AGNES daughter of JOHN SUTTON Lord of Sutton. Richard had a grant of the Manor of Bradwell from Sir John Touchet, Lord of Audley in 1400. Sir John made a quit claim on 1/8/1402 to Richard of lands in Bradwell which had formerly belonged to Henry de Tunstall. A settlement in 1421/1422 granted lands, tenements, rents and services in the manor of Bradwell to Richard and his wife Agnes for the term of their lives and thereafter to descend to their legitimate heirs for ever

Agnes was the daughter of a John de Sutton, Lord of Sutton who inherited from his father John in 1411 who died 1428. The Sutton Hall estate was granted by the Norman Earls of Chester to be held by the performance of duties in the Forest of Macclesfield. Richard and Agnes had a son NICHOLAS.

Sneyd Family Tree 1450 - 1650





Note 1 William Sneyd was:

- 1473 Sheriff of Chester
- 1479 Mayor of Chester

Note 4 Ralph Sneyd was:

- Sheriff of Stafford 1575 & 1594
- Built Keele Hall c1580

Note 2 Richard Sneyd was:

- A Barrister
- Recorder of Chester 1518 – 33
- M.P. for Chester
- Kings Council for Wales
- Kings Attorney for Anglesey, Caernarvon & Merioneth

Note 5 William Sneyde was

- MP for Stafford 1660
- Sheriff of Stafford 1664

Note 3 William Sneyd was:

- A Knight 1547
- Sheriff of Stafford
- Recorder of Chester
- Present at the Battle of Pinkie
- Kett Rebellion 1549

NICHOLAS SNEYDE of BRADWELL, the son of Richard & Agnes, Nicholas married in 1445 MARGARET daughter of ROBERT DOWNES of Pot Shirley. Cheshire. Margaret was the co-heiress of her father. Margaret and Nicholas had a son William.

By the beginning of the 15th century the Sneyd family were well established with their own crest and coat of arms. Their seat was at Bradwell. The many family links between the Audley, Stanley & Sneyd families ensured mutual support and co-operation. The Audleys and the Stanleys entered into national politics. The Sneyds concentrated on local affairs in Staffordshire and Cheshire and with their reputation for being an 'ancient' family married a series of wealthy heiresses from less ancient backgrounds. The Audleys had a high & ultimately disastrous national profile and ran into financial difficulties, by the 17th century the Sneyd family had acquired 15,000 acres of Audley land.

Documentary evidence proves that by the early fifteenth century the Sneyds owned land in Snede, Tunstall, Chatterley and Bradwell

The three founders of the Sneyd family fortune. William (the draper), Richard (the lawyer) & Willam (the knight)

WILLIAM SNEYDE of SNEYDE & BRADWELL.

William Sneyde of Sneyde & Bradwell, (the Draper) in 1446 the 24th year of King Henry VI's reign, was brought up at Bradwell until he was thirteen. His father Nicholas Sneyde was with his paramount lord & kinsman Lord Audley serving the Lancastrian cause. Nicholas was at the Lancastrian defeat at Blore Heath, a day's ride from Bradwell. Lord Audley was killed in the battle and it is thought that Nicholas was wounded. William's maternal uncle John Downes & his son Robert Downes were from the Chester area and were serving with Thomas Lord Stanley's troops from Cheshire who were at Blore Heath nominally fighting for the Lancastrians, but actually standing on the sidelines. John Downes took the wounded Nicholas back to his wife Margaret (John's sister) at Bradwell. The immediate outlook for the Lancastrian cause was bleak after Blore Heath and it was arranged that William should go and stay with his Uncle John Downes at Shrigley near Chester. There were many opportunities for a young man in the prosperous city of Chester. The Stanley family, supporting the Lancastrian cause had many interests in Chester and they would have been able to offer a comparatively safe environment during the period called the Wars of the Roses. The Downes family were well established landowners in Cheshire and with their patronage William started to learn the drapery trade under Roger Ledsham, formerly a tailor of St Paul's Churchyard in London who became a Master Tailor in Chester and is described in a pedigree as a Gentleman. In 1462 Roger Ledsham sponsored William Sneyde as a Freeman of Chester paying the full incomer's fee of £ 1-6-8d for someone born outside Chester. William was elected Sheriff in 1473 aged 27 and between then and 1479 he married Roger Ledsham's daughter and heiress, Joanna Ledsham.

Diocese of Coventry & Lichfield. Then in the 1530s Ralph became a member of Thomas Cromwell's household and must have been involved in the puzzling situation caused by Thomas Cromwell supporting both sides in the liturgical arguments around the reformation and thereafter.

Ralph was from 1506 Rector of Tattenhall (Staffs), from 1525 Vicar of Rye, from 1530 Prebend of Lichfield Cathedral, and from 1535 Rector of Higham (Leicestershire) These Livings would have been held in plurality. In 1539 Ralph Sneyde was one of the churchmen who affirmed the draft of the six articles. In 1540 he was a member of the joint convocation which declared the nullity of the King Henry VIII's marriage to Anne of Cleves. This is after Thomas Cromwell was sent to the Tower but before Thomas was executed as the King still needed his support. By 1543 Ralph is back in Chester as Prebend of Chester. Ralph Sneyde was a survivor in a difficult time.

Ralph's great grandchild Richard was a sergeant 'ad clavem' in Chester, his wife and his four sons died in 1650. There is no record as to whether this was due to the Civil War or pestilence. This branch of the Sneyd family maintained the Sneyd presence in Chester, after the senior branch moved back to Staffordshire as their base.

RICHARD SNEYDE (the lawyer)

RICHARD SNEYDE (the lawyer) c1480-1547. Freeman of Chester 1496, Vice Justice for County of Cheshire 1509, Recorder of Chester in 1512. Recorder of City Records 1518-1537. Richard was trained in the law. He was co-executor to his cousin Sir Richard Sutton, died 1524, the founder of Brasenose College, Oxford and was co-trustee for the college and the large estates Sir Richard Sutton settled thereon in 1512.

Richard was probably educated at St Werburgh's Abbey Chester. He grew up at his parents' home in Northgate Street Chester. His father William was a Master Draper and became Mayor of Chester in 1479.

Richard was one of Lord Audley's councillors and was steward of his manor of Audley. In 1518 Thomas Stanley 2nd Earl of Derby appointed Richard as a lay executor for the minority of his son, this suggests that the patronage of the Stanley family continued after the execution of William Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby. This appointment brought Richard into contact with Cardinal Wolsey who was the senior executor for Thomas Stanley.

In 1528 Richard was appointed by Cardinal Wolsey, (Chancellor for Henry VIII) to the King's Council for Wales which was based on Ludlow. Richard was said to be the senior member of the Council under Princess Mary, who was then a minor. Richard acted as an attorney to the Princess. The Council for Wales was dissolved in 1533.

Thomas Cromwell (Chancellor for Henry VIII, after Wolsey) appointed Richard Sneyde in 1535 as assistant to the Commissioners for the local taxation list, the "valor ecclesiasticus", in the last year of his life, 1537, Richard was King's Attorney for Anglesey, Caernarvon and Merioneth. This career suggests that Richard Sneyde was highly competent and one of the leading lawyers of his time.

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A rental dated 1539, two years after Richard's death shows the extent of his holdings in Chester. A Chief House with garden in Northgate Street. Chief Rent to the Master of St John's Hospital . A Bull Yard (adjacent) with two tenements on part of it rented to the nuns of Chester. Two houses in Barn Lane, a tenement in Northgate Street. Two tenements rented to Lord Adlinton and Maister Stanley of Hooton. A tenement in Forgate Street called "the Lyon" Maistor Savage and the lease of a pasture and close for the "Lyon" leased from the Abbot of St Werburgh.

Richard's father William had left him a considerable fortune for the purchase of land. Richard spent approximately £2,000 on land, including the purchase of the Cheshire manors of Great Moldworth, Wiksterton and Willaston, some 3640 acres and 36 messuages. The Willaston estate remained with the senior branch of the Sneyd family until Ralph Sneyd of Keele sold the estate in 1860.

Lands were purchased In North Staffordshire in Clayton, Newcastle, Knutton, Fenton, Seabridge and Keele. These built on the land holdings owned by Richard's father William in north Staffordshire. There was also land in Flint,

Richard Sneyde married ANNE FOWLEHURST in 1512, Anne was the daughter of Sir ROBERT FOWLEHURST of Crewe. The Fowlehursts were a well established Cheshire family owning land in Crewe and also in Barthomley. The latter came to them through the marriage of Elisabeth Praers to Sir Robert Fowlehurst. Richard Sneyde was descended from Rosia Praers. In 1530 Richard was grantee of the wardship and marriage of Elisabeth daughter and heiress of Thomas Praers of Barthomley.

Richard died a very wealthy man, apparently his Will included numerous bequests of silver left to his children and other relatives.

There is no inventory of the amount of money and goods that Richard left but it is safe to assume that much of the money accrued by his father William (the Draper) was locked away in mortgages and loans (including to the Audley/Touchet family) to be used with great effect by Richard's eldest son WILLIAM (the Knight).

WILLIAM SNEYDE (The Knight)

Some of the information in this section, comes from Christopher Harrison' s chapter on the "Coming of the Sneyds" in the book he edited on "The History of Keele"

WILLIAM SNEYDE born c1505, the 20th year of King Henry VII's reign, died in 1571. He lived through the reigns of King Henry VIII 1509-1547, Edward VI 1547-1553, & Queen Mary 1553-1558., dying in the reign of Queen Elizabeth in 1571.

William was probably educated at St Werburgh's Abbey, Chester. His father Richard was a wealthy and prominent lawyer and William was brought up in a comfortable house in Northgate Street in Chester. He became a Freeman of Chester in 1533.

In 1526 William, in a marriage arranged by his father married ANNE BARROWE heiress of her grandfather THOMAS BARROWE, a glover of Chester. Anne's father was ROBERT BARROWE of Flookersbrooke. Anne brought substantial property to the marriage, held by William "in the right of Anne Sneyde, my wife, and to the heirs of her body by me begotten" . At the time of his marriage William moved back to Bradwell, enlarged the house, created the first of the Sneyd gardens and set up his own establishment. The move gave William the chance to look after his father Richard's interests in North Staffordshire. Richard died in 1537. William together with John Brereton took out a 21 year lease on the manor of Horton, west of Stafford. In 1539 William had a Valor or Rental made which listed the origin, location, and value of all his father Richard's lands and lands that William himself had bought.

(1) Lands, inherited by William's father Richard, included properties at Bradwell & Tunstall including the house at Bradwell, & a few minor holdings in Talke and Newcastle.

(2) Lands, mostly purchased by Richard in North Staffordshire, in Clayton, Newcastle, Knutton, Fenton, Seabridge & Keele. In addition William had a mortgage in Great Chell and a half share in the Newcastle corn mills.

(3) Lands in Chester inherited by Richard, in addition there were lands in Cheshire, (including the Willaston estate) & Flint.

(4) Lands inherited by William's wife Anne plus some lands mortgaged to William.

It is possible that the 1539 rental was prepared in order to assess what to sell. This raised funds to buy land from the Audley family in North West Staffordshire .

In 1540 the manor of Keele was seized by the Crown and administered by the newly formed Court of Augmentation. Henry Delves' lease from the Hospitallers still had 36 years to run, so he paid his rent to the Crown rather than the Hospitallers. Financial pressures forced the Crown to sell much of the Church lands that the Crown had appropriated.

William's daughter Mary had married John Delves' son John.. The auditor Rygge described Keele as being an unremarkable manor with little or no exploitable woodland or other realisable asserts and recommended an outright sale. William must have regarded Keele as a long term investment, the Delves lease did not run out until 1576, but William already held, through purchase, nearly £11 of the copyhold, and the manor lay adjacent to William's principal holdings at Bradwell and Tunstall. In 1544 William paid £334 (about 19 times the annual value of Delves' lease), and became lord of the manor of Keele.

In 1543 William bought for £530 the manors of Glenfield & Syston in Leicestershire from his cousin Sir Thomas Foulehurst of Crewe.

William was present at the Battle of Leith in 1544 and was created Esquire, with insignia, collar and silver spurs. The "Battle of Leith" seems to have been a punitive expedition by the English against the Scots. Edward Seymour, Lord Hertford, led the

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expedition, which sailed from Newcastle and landed in Scotland on 6th May 1544. The English thrust aside a force led by Lord Arran and by Lord Beaton, and having been joined by the English cavalry, who had come overland, the combined force assaulted Edinburgh, blasted the main gate and burnt the city, de-spoiling the capital and the neighbouring countryside. Lord Hertford withdrew to Leith, sacked the town, took to his ships in Leith harbour and sailed for England. William Sneyd distinguished himself in this rather questionable raid which gave many opportunities for looting and enriching those involved.

At some stage William held the minor appointment of Sewer at the Court of King Henry VIII. The only Sneyd to hold a Court Appointment until Walter Sneyd of the Keele branch in the Court of King William IV.

In 1545 William became steward of the manors of Homersetton and Betley. By 1554 the lease had been passed on but the Sneyd family retained an interest in Horton. William's son Ralph purchased the manor of Horton for just over £300.

Just before Henry VIII died in 1547 he had ordered a great punitive expedition against Scotland. When the nine year old Edward VI became King, his uncle Edward Seymour, Lord Hertford, (promoted to Duke of Somerset when he became Lord Protector) went ahead with the invasion of Scotland and overwhelmed the Scots at the Battle of Pinkie. The battle took place at Pinkie Clough along the river Esk near Musselburgh, Scotland on 10/9/1547. It was the last pitched battle to be fought between the Scottish & English armies. The Scots suffered a catastrophic defeat. (William Sneyd was at the Battle of Pinkie serving under the Earl of Hertford).

William Sneyde was made a Knight of the Bath (military) on Shrove Tuesday, the 20th February 1547, the Coronation Day of the young King Edward VI. William was the last on the list of 39 new Knights of the Bath. The tradition was that on the eve of a Coronation, the monarch created a group of Knights of the Bath. According to the ritual, the Knights were stripped and bathed and given the admonition of Knighthood by the Sovereign, while still naked in the bath.

In 1547, the English party in Scotland had promised their little five year old Queen Mary to King Edward VI but when it became obvious that this was not going to take place as the young Queen Mary had been promised to the French Dauphin, Protector Somerset declared war on Scotland invaded and laid waste the Lowlands in the autumn of 1547, until he was met by the whole levy of Scotland on the hillside of Pinkie near Musselburgh on the river Esk. The Scots were bloodily defeated. For the first time the English used heavy artillery. Sir William Sneyde K.B. had been summoned to join Edward Seymour's army. Pinkie was the last pitched battle fought between the Scottish & English armies.

Sir William Sneyde KB went with John Dudley, the Earl of Warwick in 1549 to suppress the Ket rebellion in East Anglia. A tanner called Robert Kett, who called himself the "*King of Norfolk & Suffolk*" was the leader of a band of peasants who dreamed of a social revolution such as Wat Tyler had demanded years before. They complained of the greed of the new landowners who had superseded the old monastic foundations and who were evicting the old peasantry, turning farms into sheep runs as

wool paid better than corn. They also complained about the enclosure of common land, the debasement of the coinage, and the slowness and inefficiency of the law when used by the common man. The Protector Somerset felt that the men from East Anglia had right on their side and did not deal with them promptly or sternly. Kett's rising became very threatening and it seemed as if anarchy would set in all over the eastern Counties. The rebels defeated the Marquis of Northampton, and stormed Norwich. The rebels were only dispersed at last by the intervention of the Earl of Warwick, who marched against them with a mercenary force which had been collected for the Scottish war. The rebels were routed on Mousehold Heath. Kett was hung and the rebellion ended,

The Lord Protector's reluctance to intervene and the Earl of Warwick's success was one of the reasons why the Lord Protector was executed and his rival the Earl of Warwick took his place.

William Sneyde was involved in three military adventures, the sacking of Edinburgh, the defeat of the Scots at Pinkie and the suppression of the Kett rebellion. Nobles subscribed £100,000 to finance the putting down of Perkin Warbeck and Robert Kett's rebellions. The military officers would probably not have been paid but were recompensed by the proceeds of ransoms and looting. There is no doubt that William Sneyde would have financially benefited from his three military adventures especially the looting of Edinburgh and Leith. William was shrewd enough to shift his loyalties over from Protector Somerset to the even more unpleasant John Dudley, the new Protector and Duke of Northumberland.

When five Keele copyholders refused to accompany Sir William, their manorial lord, on the King's wars, in this case to put down Kett's revolt, Sir William sued them in the Court of Star Chamber. This is a late but by no means unique case of a lord demanding military service from his tenants & at Keele, as elsewhere, this *seigniorial right* was being challenged. The Muster Roll for Keele in 1538 lists two archers and eighteen soldiers in the village.

The Audley family suffered three deaths in six years with concomitant fees and dues which had a crippling effect on the Audley/Tuchet family fortunes. In 1497 James Tuchet, Lord Audley was persuaded by the Cornish to lead their rebellion. Apparently James thought that his talents had been ignored by the King. King Henry was taken by surprise as he had just sent off his army against the Scots. The King recalled the army and the Cornishmen were defeated at Blackheath. Lord Audley was captured and executed in June 1497. He had the added disgrace of having to walk bareheaded through the streets of London bearing his shield with its coat of arms in reverse. Lord Audley's son John was not restored in blood & honours until 1512. John died before January 1558, his son George Tuchet died two years later in June 1560 to be succeeded by his son Henry who had married William Sneyde's daughter Elizabeth and they had a son George. Henry died only three years after his father.

At Easter 1553 William Sneyde lent the Audley family £800 on the security of the manors of Audley, Heighley, Chesterton, & Norton-in-the Moors. Within two years the Audleys had recovered Heighley in February 1555 they leased Heighley to a London leather merchant. (the history of this lease is complex and led to the forcible

repossession of Heighley Castle by George Tuchet in July 1560 assisted by Sir William Sneyd).

In 1561 William had lent the Audleys £560 on the security of the manor of Tunstall In 1574 the new Lord Audley, George, sold Tunstall to Ralph Sneyd, (William's son), his 'welbeloved uncle' for the sum of just under £1200.

In another deal in 1561 Sir William built up his mining interest by buying, for 130 silver marks, ten ironstone mines in Tunstall from Lord Audley. Considerable wealth was being accrued from the expanding iron ore, lead, copper, tin and coal industries.. Many contemporaries considered English iron to be the best in the world. In 1601 an enthusiast told the House of Commons that "*Iron appeareth to be a particular blessing of God given only to England for the defence thereof, for albeit most countries have iron, yet none of them have iron of that toughness and validity to make such ordnance of*" Many of the newly acquired Sneyd lands were also rich in coal deposits. The growing manufactories of the period, brick making, glass, lime burning, salt making, brewing and the local pottery industry were all using coal for fuel.

In 1567 Queen Elizabeth I granted Sir William the advowson (living) of the Church of St Margaret in Wolstanton. The Queen was probably rewarding Sir William for his consistent low church and reformist attitude to religion. Wolstanton had been since Domesday a holding of the Crown or the Duchy of Lancaster. The advowson was granted with a rent charge of £5 per annum for the use of the poor of Wolstanton. In 1567 the sum of £5 was probably equivalent to the whole burden of the parish for maintaining the poor.

Sir William's wife Anne died in 1568, having had eleven children, six daughters and five sons as shown on William and Anne's handsome tomb in Wolstanton church. Five daughters and two sons survived to maturity.

After Anne's death Sir William married in 1569 Jane Chetwynd, widow of Thomas Chetwynd of Ingestre. Jane was the daughter and heiress of Sir John Salter, of Salter's Hall, Shropshire. There was no issue of her marriage to Sir William Sneyde.

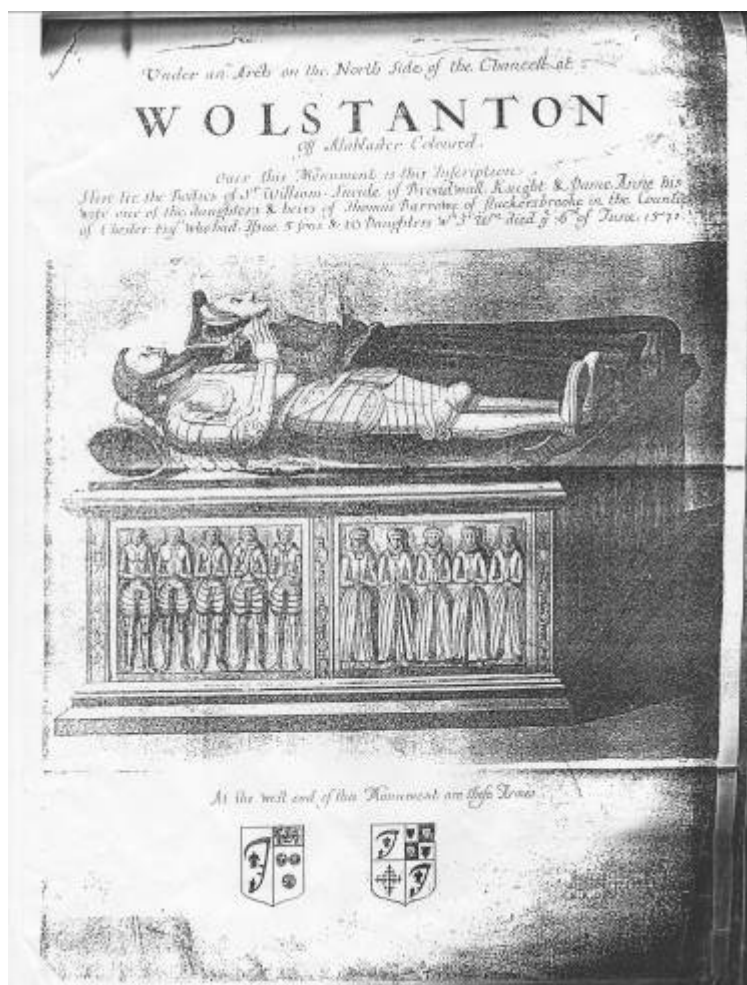
When Sir William Sneyde died in 1572 he held in Staffordshire, the Hall at Bradwell, the manors of Keele, Tunstall, Chesterton & Norton as well as lands in Whitmore, Bradwell, Chatterley, Chell, Talke, Ridgestrete, Newcastle, Clayton and Audley. In Cheshire Sir William held the manor of Wigsterton and other land as well as property in Chester itself and the two Leicestershire manors of Glenfield & Syston.

William's property included over 400 messuages, as well as six mills and two dovecotes, although not all his property was totally secure, being held by mortgage, most of it was or was about to be made secure, this was done by William's son Ralph with the money that William had left. The bulk of Sir William's estate was divided in his Will into three parts.

1. To his son and heir Ralph
2. To his widow, Dame Jane with reversion to his son.
3. To pay his debts and finance his other bequests

Sandra Burgess wrote in her thesis " *J.E.Mousley in his research into Elizabethan Gentry families in Sussex found that among those holding county offices, the flourishing families owed much of their success to marriage, legal practice, trade and in particular the iron industry. The fortunes of the declining families were influenced by the failure of male heirs, involvement in excessive litigation, adherence to the Catholic faith, a few were also ruined by debts accumulated in consequence of holding crown offices*" The Sneyds of the time followed all the criteria for success and none of those for failure.

Professor Blake of Keele University said "William was probably the most powerful and perhaps the ablest of the Sneyd".



Sir William Sneyd K.B. retired early from the fringes of the national scene, this may have meant that his descendants were deprived of ennoblement, William kept his head and his honour in an age "where being loyal & straightforward were not common attributes amongst the great men of the time".

Sir William developed a respected landowning dynasty in North Staffordshire which lasted for over four hundred years after his death. He was succeeded by his son RALPH SNEYD of Bradwell, Keele & Sneyde.

RALPH SNEYD OF Bradwell, Keele & Willaston. (The Builder) Died in 1615.

RALPH was the eldest son and heir of Sir William Sneyd and his first wife Anne Barrowe. Ralph married MARIA CHETWYND of Ingestre, the daughter of THOMAS CHETWYND of Ingestre and his wife JANE. After Thomas Chetwynd died his widow Jane married Sir William Sneyd as his second wife and became Ralph's stepmother. Their eldest son William of Bradwell married Elizabeth daughter of Sir Anthony Colclough. William & Elizabeth had no issue and died before his father.

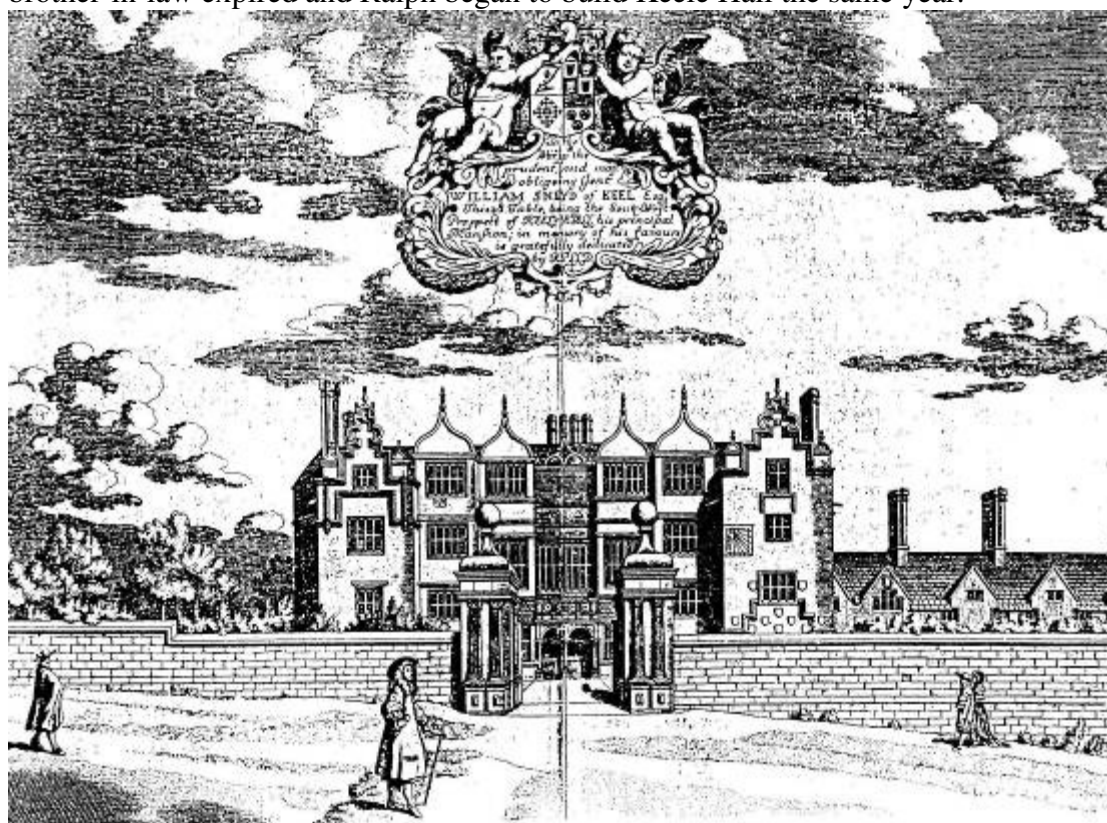
Maria & Ralph had three sons and four daughters. Ralph the second son was the only one to outlive his father and have issue.

Ralph married secondly MARY daughter of Sir RICHARD NEWPORT of High Creall in Shropshire, there is no record of any further children from the second marriage.

Ralph became Sheriff of Stafford in 1573, just after his father Sir William Sneyd died, and was Sheriff of Stafford again in 1594.

Ralph continued his father's policy of buying land. In 1575 he bought the manor of Haughton which was included in the marriage settlement of his great grand daughter Felicia to Robert Hyde of Norbury in Cheshire. The following year Ralph purchased two thirds of the Manor of Tunstall including its valuable mining rights.

In 1580 the lease of the manor of Keele to Henry Delves and subsequently Ralph's brother-in-law expired and Ralph began to build Keele Hall the same year.



Keele Hall Built by Richard Sneyd c1581
Dr Robert Plot 'The Natural History of Staffordshire'
Published in 1686

The building of Keele Hall gave the village its first great house and its first resident lord. This radically altered the whole character of the village. Many of the villagers were employed in the house and grounds. When the family was in residence the villagers had a new market for their goods.

In his "Survey of Staffordshire" of about 1593, Sampson Erdeswick wrote *"More than a mile from Newcastle southward stands Keele, where Ralph Snead hath built a very fine and proper house of stone, this Ralph by his virtue, lenity, and in all good sort increasing his patrimony, sheweth that the first advancer (William) obtained his wealth whereby the House has come to this Estate, by lawful good and laudable means, for otherwise, you know God could punish the sins of the parents upon the children into the third and fourth generations, and the third heir should scarce enjoy the patrimony"*

The third heir from Ralph the Builder was WILLIAM SNEYD 1612/14 to 17/1/1695. He scarcely enjoyed his patrimony as he succeeded his reckless and spendthrift elder brother Ralph who died in January 1651 having been accidentally wounded in the Isle of Man by a stray canon shot fired by his own side.

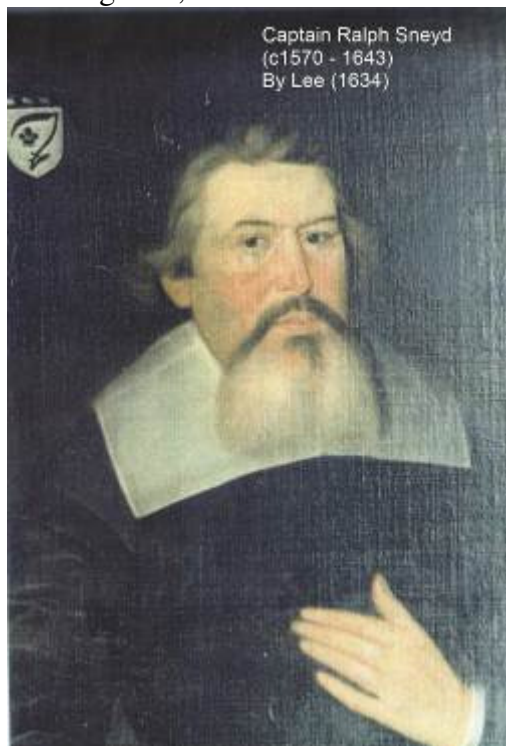
The Manor of Chell was bought in 1587 and in 1614 the 1100 acres of the Abbey Hulton land was bought from Sir Walter Ashton

Ralph Sneyd was undoubtedly one of the richest commoners in the country. He spent his energies on building a fine house on the estate which his father William had bought at Keele.

Ralph was succeeded by his second son RALPH SNEYD of Bradwell, Keele & Sneyd.

RALPH SNEYD of Bradwell, Keele & Sneyd. Born in 1564 died in 1643.

As the second son Ralph was not brought up as the heir. He started his career in Chester in the family draper's business.. Ralph married in 1605 FELICIA daughter of NICHOLAS ARCHBOLD. They had three sons Ralph, WILLIAM & Richard, and six daughters, Felicia died in 1659/1660.



Ralph & Felicia may have been staying or living in Lawton, Cheshire as their daughter Clara was married at Lawton in 1617, their youngest daughter Felicia was baptised in Lawton in April 1619 and in September of that year her sister Mary was married at Lawton. There is some doubt as to when Ralph's father died, but it is possible that the younger Ralph was fifty before he inherited his father's estates. Ralph was Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1621. He sold, with his oldest son Ralph, for £300, to Richard Adams, clerk, the advowson of Woodchurch in the Wirral. In another deal the two Ralphs sold land in Church Christleton to John Sparke of Chester.

Ralph was Member of Parliament for Staffordshire in 1640 in the "Short Parliament" Eleven years of tyranny by King Charles I had enraged the people and led by John Pym, the Member of Parliament for Tavistock, the Commons assembled in the Spring of 1640 and announced that "they were come together to discuss grievances before thinking of grants of supply". King Charles I immediately dismissed parliament which had sat for less than three weeks in April & May 1640.

In a deed of Entangle dated 18/3/1639 Ralph is styled as a Captain. He remained neutral during the early months of the Civil War. It is thought that he was a naturally cautious man but some of his neutrality, conservatism and prudence could be attributed to his being over seventy years old.

The fighting in the Civil War began in 1642 Ralph died on 7/4/1643 and was buried at Wolstanton. He was succeeded by his eldest son Ralph Sneyd.

The three Sneyd brothers, Ralph 1611-1661, WILLIAM SNEYD 1612/1614-1694, Richard Sneyd 1617-1684

Ralph Sneyd 1611-1651 The Reckless Cavalier.

The eldest son of Ralph Sneyd 1564-1643, born in 1611, and was only eighteen when he married on 20/1/1629, his kinswoman Jane Downes daughter of Roger Downes of Wardley in Lancashire. Ralph's direct ancestor Nicholas Sneyd had married Margaret Downes of Shrigley. Ralph did not complete his education although he was admitted to Gray's Inn as a lawyer on 11/2/1630. Jane's father was an ardent recusant (practising Catholic) and there is a possibility that Ralph's parents disapproved of the marriage. However Jane was given a handsome Marriage Settlement which provided jointures for both Jane and her mother-in-law Felicia Sneyd. Jane was to have the use of Bradwell Hall with all its appurtenances, as well as Bradwell Park. There were also lands and houses in the manors of Tunstall, Abbey Hulton. & similar properties in Milton, Bucknall, Bagnall & Sneyd Green. The estate was settled for life upon her husband Ralph, and after his death to the use of Jane for her life, this jointure being in lieu and satisfaction of her dower. After Jane's death, the estate was to pass to her eldest son, or in default of such issue, to the male heirs of her brothers-in-law William Sneyd (1612-1694) & Richard Sneyd 1617-1684 respectively.

A similar agreement was provided for Felicia Sneyd, the Manor of Cold Naughton & Naughton being allocated in lieu of her dower. These arrangements were to prove crucial in reducing the value of Ralph's estates when they were being assessed for the two sequestrations.

Jane and Ralph had a son Ralph, baptised at Wolstanton on 1/8/1633 and was buried at Keele on 23/10/1633 aged three months. Ralph and Jane had five daughters, Mary born in 1631, Anne born 1635, Jane born 1637, Felicia born 1640, Catherine born in 1642.

Ralph lived beyond his means and by 1638 was heavily in debt. He had debts of £2,000 including a debt of £200 with William Clifton, a Vintner. By the late 1640s the minimum total of Ralph's debts were, allowing for interest, approximately £25,328..

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These figures excluded arrears of composition duties and taxes. It is clear that Ralph was a spendthrift, heavily indebted before he even inherited the estates. His impetuosity and recklessness rendered him most unsuitable for the role of family patriarch and country squire.

In 1640 Ralph Sneyd became Member of Parliament for Staffordshire in 1640 in the "Long Parliament" which first met on 3/11/1640 until it was dissolved by the King in 1642. In June 1642 the King sent "Commissions of Array" to trustworthy recipients in every county. Ralph Sneyd was one of the recipients, who were asked to muster men in the King's name, presumably at their own expense.

The First Civil War started in August 1642 when King Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham. Leaving there on 16/9/1642 for Shrewsbury where some 6,000 infantrymen and 1500 dragoons were said to be assembling. Charles intended to use these forces to secure Chester, thereby safeguarding communications with Ireland.

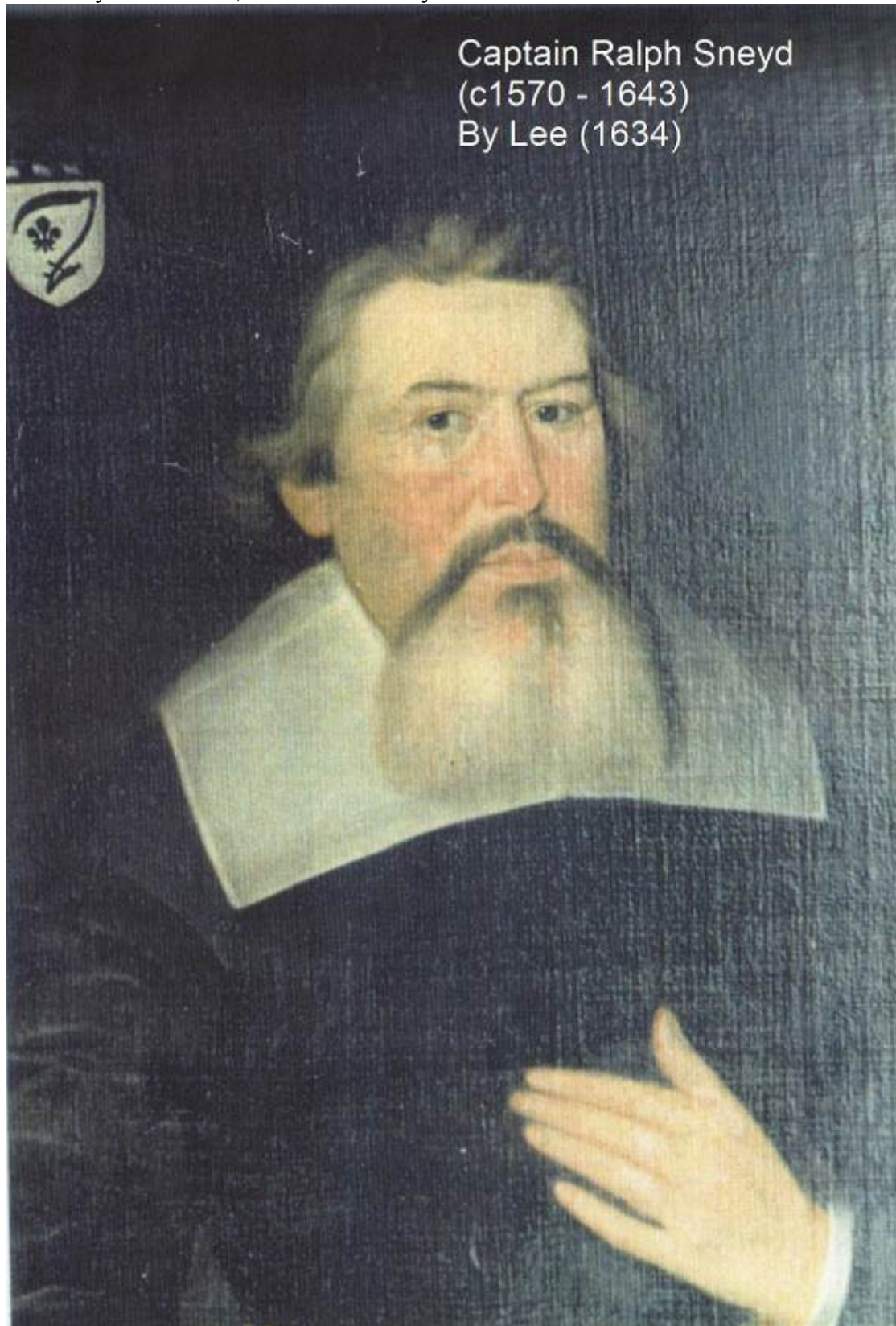
In early September 1642 the gentlemen of Staffordshire were summoned to meet the King at Dove Bridge near Uttoxeter, and provide for a stay of three nights under threat that those who failed to appear would be "*deemed disaffected & would be proceeded against*". Most of the Staffordshire gentlemen did appear and expressed their loyalty, but asked the King to reach agreement with Parliament and avoid war. The trained bands mustered and marched with the King to Stafford as they had a duty to protect the King while he was in the County, but no further.

On arrival in Stafford the King stayed from September 17th to September 19th 1642 at the High House, the home of Richard Sneyd, Ralph's youngest brother. During this stay Ralph was commissioned into the Royal army as a Colonel and Richard was commissioned as a Captain. The two brothers were now totally committed to the 'cause' and their warm reception of the King was to weigh heavily against them when their case was considered by the sequestration Committee in 1643.

According to Dr Robert Plot in "The Natural History of Staffordshire" Prince Rupert and the King were standing in the High House garden when the Prince made a shot at 65 yards distance at the weather cock on the steeple of the Collegiate Church of St Mary. The weapon was a screw'd Horsman's pistol a single bullet pierced the weathercock's tail, the hole plainly appearing to those below. The Prince proved to the King that this was no fluke by firing a second shot to the same effect"



Dr Plot writes that "the two holes through the weathercock's tail, as an ample testimony of the event, remain to this day"



After collecting all the available horses in the area the King moved on to Shrewsbury, and the trained bands of Staffordshire men returned to their homes. Most of the

gentlemen of Staffordshire were determined not to be embroiled in the War and very few joined the King. Ralph Sneyd, now 31, in debt, with a wife and five daughters, about to succeed his father who died a few months later, was one of the few to follow the King.

In October 1642 the King fought the indecisive Battle of Edgehill and set up his headquarters in Oxford. Colonel Ralph Sneyd was probably at the Battle of Edgehill and afterwards returned to Stafford to join the garrison there.

In 1643 Staffordshire became important to both sides because it was the link between the main Royalist areas of the country. Parliamentary forces set out to sever this link by driving a wedge from their base at Coventry towards Lancashire, to succeed in doing this they had to capture Stafford and Lichfield. In the spring of 1643 the Royalists frustrated this intention, however in June 1643 the whole of north Staffordshire, including Stafford came under Parliamentary control and a Parliamentary Committee was set up at Stafford..

Stafford fell to the Parliamentarians on 15th May 1643. The Parliamentarian troops under the command of Sir John Bowyer of Knypersley who entered Stafford at 3 o'clock in the morning, he took the town "everyone being in their beds" without the loss of a man. Colonel Ralph Sneyd was captured in Stafford by Sir William Brereton.

Colonel Ralph Sneyd was held prisoner in Stafford but in the late autumn of 1643 was exchanged for John Birch, an attorney of Cannock and a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Stafford, who had been apprehended in January 1642, accused of high treason and imprisoned at Shrewsbury for 12 months.

Following his release, Colonel Sneyd returned to active service in Staffordshire, Cheshire and Leicestershire. Sometime during 1643 Ralph joined forces with Lord Byron at Chester, after which Royalist forces spent several months rampaging through Cheshire. Ralph was one of the instigators of an attack on Newcastle-under-Lyme, a fervent parliamentarian town a few miles from Keele.

In December 1644 Ralph returned to his family at Keele for Christmas with his wife Jane and their five daughters. Considering Keele lay in the centre of an area controlled by the Parliamentarians, this was a singularly foolish action. Ralph became even more foolhardy, he attempted during January 1644 to install a royalist garrison at Keele, organising the raising of new troops and summoning local inhabitants to provide horses and arms. The Roundheads responded quickly, Keele Hall was besieged and captured and Colonel Sneyd was forced to flee into Cheshire where he joined Lord Byron in the siege of Nantwich.

The Parliamentary Committee for Stafford retaliated by ordering Captain Stone, on 10/1/1644, to make Keele Hall indefensible, and followed this up with orders to Captain Barbour on 29/2/1644 that Keele Hall was to be demolished. ***"That Mr Sneyd's house at Keele shall be made indefensible for a garrison, and Captain Stone shall see it performed"***. Despite these orders Keele Hall did in fact survive, but inevitably most of the goods and valuables were seized, furniture & fittings destroyed, and family papers destroyed. Apparently in September 1643 Oliver Cromwell gave

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signed orders to the Committee at Stafford to raise Keele Hall to the ground and destroy all letters and documents found there. Roger Wykes-Sneyd thought that the reason for this was because the family records and documents could contain information on the period a hundred years before when Ralph's ancestor Richard Sneyd was on the King's Council for Wales and would have dealt directly with Thomas Cromwell, Richard's brother Ralph was a member of Thomas Cromwell's household. In 1643 both sides in the Civil War indulged in character assassination for which original material was most useful. Oliver Cromwell's family had taken the name Cromwell in honour of Thomas Cromwell after Morgan Williams, a member of their Welsh family married Thomas Cromwell's sister. Keele Hall was later used as a Parliamentary garrison, its survival is probably due to the building being of more use to the Parliamentarians intact.

The lives of non-combatants were respected and the Parliamentary authorities took care to make provision for Colonel Ralph's wife Jane at an agreed price. Jane valued the property lost when the house was plundered as between £700 & £1,000.

Jane Sneyd and her children remained at Keele for the duration of the War. They did not join Ralph's mother at Norton Farms a Sneyd Dower House at Chebsey near Stone.

On 2/7/1644 the King's army was decisively defeated at Marston Moor. The King gathered another army together only to be defeated again at the battle of Naseby in the Spring of 1645. Nine thousand Cavaliers met thirteen thousand men of the Parliamentarians "New Model Army". After that the King realised that he could not win and told his garrisons to yield. The King put himself into the hands of the Scots army who handed him over to Parliament for £400,000.

Colonel Ralph Sneyd was captured again in 1645 and had his estates sequestered again. On 29/11/1645 Ralph was ordered to pay a fine of £2,026 for his delinquency or alternatively have his fine abated to £1,000 plus a payment of £50 annually in perpetuity to the chapels in Keele & Newchapel.

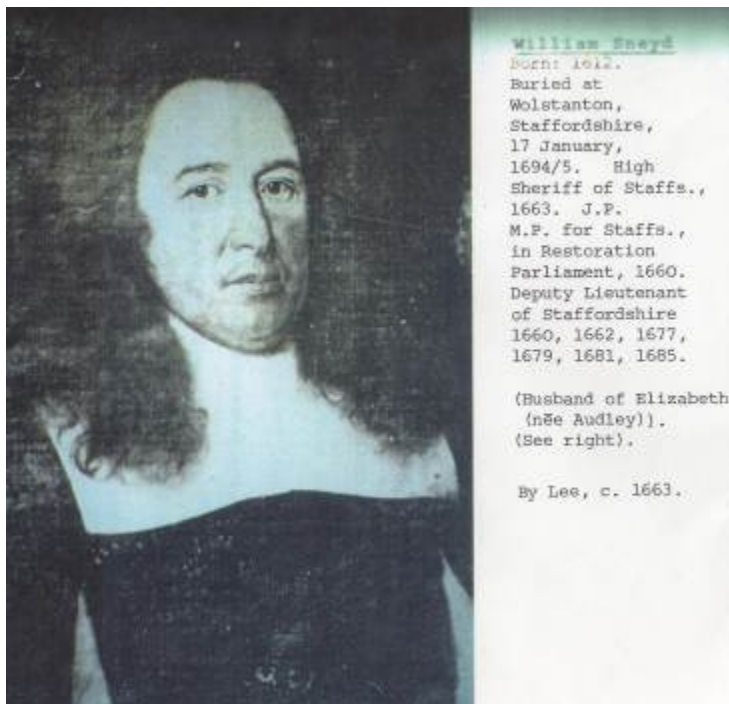
By 28/2/1646 Colonel Ralph Sneyd was reported by John Swinton, a County Commissioner at Stafford was once again shown to be against Parliament. In his petition to compound Ralph cunningly declared that he had been "misled" into taking arms, a common falsity used by the Royalists. It was not until the fall of Lichfield in 1646 that Colonel Ralph Sneyd laid down his arms.

Ralph took the National Covenant Oath on 1/10/1646 at Trentham before the Reverend Michael Pollarde, Minister of Trentham. In April of the next year Ralph swore to Covenant and took the Negative Oath before two members of the Stafford Parliamentary Committee. These oaths were meaningless to Ralph Sneyd and in 1647 he arranged for a bell to be cast for erection in Keele church, defiantly engraving it with the words "God Save the King, 1647, R.S.

In December 1649 Ralph was once again holding Royalist meetings at Keele Hall, Darlaston Bridge & elsewhere, He wrote to Charles Stuart in Holland. Planning the restoration of the monarchy and organising local rebellion. Orders were issued for

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Ralph's arrest the estate was re-sequestrated and a £3,000 fine was imposed. Ralph failed in his attempts to set up trust funds for Jane and his daughters as only two of the trustees signed and the deeds were never sealed.



In August 1650 Ralph fled to the Isle of Man to join the Earl of Derby. He was accidentally wounded by a stray cannon shot fired by his own side. Richard Weston who was by his side in the rowing boat died immediately. Colonel Ralph Sneyd died a slow painful death lingering on until January 1651

Sandra Burgess rightly suggested that if Ralph Sneyd had not died on the Isle of Man, the Sneyds could have become one of those slowly declining families, probably vanishing into social & financial

oblivion in the seventeenth century. Colonel Sneyd's war time career shows him to have been the archetypal Cavalier, impetuous, reckless and foolhardy. The family archives confirm Ralph's capacity as a spendthrift and the low priority he placed upon the preservation of his estates and his heritage.

WILLIAM SNEYD of Keele, Bradwell, etc was born in 1612 or 1614 and died 17/1/1695. He was the second son of RALPH Sneyd 1564-1643 and his wife FELICIA nee ARCHBOLD.

William was educated at Chell Grammar School (Mr Stevenson) & Caius College, Cambridge. He matriculated on 7/7/1632 aged 18 and went on to be trained as a lawyer at Grays Inn.

William married in the 1630s ELIZABETH AUDLEY daughter & co-heir of ROBERT AUDLEY of



Grandsden Magna in Hertfordshire.

Elizabeth and William had two sons and two daughters.

- 1 Ralph Sneyd of Keele, Sneyd, Tunstall, Bradwell was born on 22/4/1641. He married Frances the elder daughter of Sir John Dryden, 2nd baronet of Canons Ashby, Northants. Their issue continued the senior branch of the Sneyd until Ralph Sneyd of Keele died in 1949.
- 2 WILLIAM SNEYD 1642-1708 of Onecote. Married in 1668 SARAH WEITENHALL daughter and heiress of EDWARD WETTENHALL.

William was the founder of the Junior "Moorland" branch of the Sneyd family. This branch lost most of their land in Staffordshire in Victorian times through legal wrangling in the family and a disastrous copper mining venture in Snowdonia. In 2011, male members of the Junior branch and direct descendants in the male line from Leofwine, live amongst other places in Ireland, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Norfolk, Somerset and Wiltshire.

- 1 Felicia born 1637 married 1660 Roland Cotton of Crakemarsh.
- 2 Elizabeth married Richard Walters of Lapley.

William was one of the longest lived of the Sneyds living right through the reigns of four monarchs and the Commonwealth. He was a very competent lawyer and remained neutral during the Civil War unlike his brothers Ralph and Richard who enthusiastically followed the Royal cause.

William's life changed on his elder brother Ralph's death in January 1651. He was faced with the estates he inherited being sequestered for the non-payment of Ralph's fine for delinquency.

Unfortunately William and his sister-in-law Jane Sneyd were not on good terms. Two thirds of the estate were committed to his mother Felicia and his sister-in-law. William had to work hard to salvage what he could of the family fortune. He spent from 1651 to 1653 & £150 in living expenses trying to prove his right to inherit and fighting against the inclusion of the estate in a Parliamentary Bill of Sales in 1651. His petition against the sale succeeded, but sequestration over failure to pay finds in full remained until May 1652 when the last £1400 was paid. William lists the charges on his estate at £10,200s. It is likely that William purposely overstated the amount of his brother Ralph's debts & the burden of composition duties. The value of the sequestered lands was greatly underestimated. Undervaluation & concealment of property were common practice and Ralph had been guilty on both these counts.

Throughout the years after Ralph Sneyd was killed in 1650 William's influence in the county during the Commonwealth was slowly gathering momentum. He was appointed an Assessment Commissioner for Staffordshire by the Commonwealth

Government. In 1657 William Sneyd was elected Member of Parliament for Staffordshire in the "Healing Parliament" of the Restoration.

Described as a "good, sober, outstanding person", William was a supporter of the Court, although he was not an active member of the Convention. He was warned by the Committee for the Bill to supply defects in the Poll Act on 3/12/1660.

As a hard working & efficient lawyer William was Oyer & Terminer of the Oxford Circuit in 1660, 1680, & 1690. For thirty four years between 1660 & 1694 William served as a Justice of the Peace and also held the office of Deputy Lieutenant of Staffordshire for the same period.

In 1661 William Sneyd petitioned the King for discharge from the office of Sheriff because he was unable to bear the expense. He was, notwithstanding the expense, made High Sheriff for Staffordshire in 1663-1664 and was described about that time as being worth about £1200 a year but in debt. William was appointed Commissioner for the Corporation of Stafford 1662 - 1668. And was on the Commission for Recusants (Catholics) in 1673.

The Hearth Tax Records of 1666 show that William Sneyd was charged on 24 hearths. This made him the richest man in Staffordshire. Even Sir Edward Bagot of Blithfield had only twenty one hearths and a staggering 75% of the population of Keele village were either taxed on only one hearth or no hearths at all.

By 1669, only nine years after the Restoration in 1660, it seems that many of William's financial problems had been overcome. On 1/1/1669 William signed an indenture whereby he agreed to pay his sister-in-law Jane £20,000 in lieu of her dower, this effectively released to William and his heir Captain Ralph Sneyd all the considerable property which had been Jane's Marriage Settlement. This included the Manor House of Bradwell & Bradwell Park.

William required Bradwell Hall, a substantial house with fourteen hearths for his eldest son Ralph and his growing family. By 1669 Ralph and his wife Frances, nee Dryden, had three sons and one daughter, they had married on 20/4/1664. William spent over £800 in making Bradwell habitable after Jane Sneyd left the house in 1669. William provided £1,000 for the marriage portion of his daughter Felicia, and mortgages of £650 for his orphaned grand daughter Felicia Walters.

On 26/9/1670 William Sneyd bought the Onecote estate from John Whitehall of Pipe Ridware. This estate was left to William Junior in his father's Will.

William's second son WILLIAM junior had married Sarah Wettenhall on 2/6/1668, Sarah's father Edward Wettenhall paid £700 towards land in the manor of Bradnop and Sarah inherited the Waterhouse estate from her father William Sneyd senior invested £2,000 in 1669 in land for William junior, plus mortgages to the value of £1400. Part of the purchased land included £500 for land in the manor of Bradnop presumably adjoining Edward Wettenhall's purchase. On 26/9/1670 William Senior bought the Onecote estate from John Whitehall of Pipe Ridware. This estate was left by William senior to William junior

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The accumulation of the land at Onecote, Waterhouses and Bradnop meant that William Sneyd Junior & Sarah eventually had a substantial holding of land in this moorland area. This land was separate to the Keele and Bradwell estates and enabled William Junior to have a land base for the junior "Moorland " branch of the Sneyd family which he founded. William junior made his family home at the Birches a farm house that he leased with 100 acres of land from his father's Abbey Hulton estate.

William Sneyd senior's eldest son Ralph of Bradwell 1671-1690 married in Lichfield Cathedral Frances Noel 1673 -1750 only daughter of Sir William Noel, Bart, of Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire. The couple undoubtedly shared delusions of grandeur and were acquisitive in their approach to property. Consequently when William was being criticised by his son Ralph and others for being covetous he wrote "*A particular of what I have done for my eldest son who pretends that I do all I can for my younger son. I have paid charges on my estate since it descended to me which I have cleared and which came to £9.000. I have of my son Ralph's debts paid in ready money, paid £1370, I paid for the re-building of Bradwell for him to live there, some £760. I have disbursed for my eldest son £5,098 who hath shared more of my favours than my youngest son William who has seven children, the total I have disbursed so far to my younger son is to this day £3,300.* On 20/12/1694 William senior wrote " *Given to my son Ralphe Sneyd £10 which was not worth thanks*" Old William died three weeks later.,

William had many faults but achieved his aim of providing for posterity by providing both his sons with a decent inheritances despite his huge liabilities to his brother Ralph's family and to the Commonwealth Authorities. He managed to repair the considerable damage done to Keele Hall by the Parliamentarians. The two branches of the Sneyd family that succeeded WILLIAM SNEYD 1612- 1694 owe their survival for over four hundred years to William's sagacity & perseverance in rescuing the Sneyd estates from the Parliamentarians and the follies of his elder brother Ralph during the Civil War.

Richard Sneyd, 1617-1684, the third son of Ralph Sneyd 1564-1644. & the younger brother of Ralph Sneyd 1611-1651 & WILLIAM SNEYD 1612-1694/95.

Richard married Grace Venables and had two daughters Anne and Felicia. They lived at the High House in Stafford which Richard Sneyd bought the on 23/8/1639

He was commissioned as a Captain in the Royalist forces at his home, the High House, Stafford, by King Charles I in September 1642. Richard was at the defeat by Colonel Lilburne of the Earl of Derby's troops at Wigan, After the battle of Wigan Richard Sneyd conducted the Earl of Derby to Boscobel, a house which had been built by John Giffard with a hiding place for a priest. William Penderel & his wife were the only occupiers of Boscobel & kept the Earl in safety in the hiding place for two days & nights. Nine years late the Earl of Derby recommended to King Charles II that he used the same safe hideout after the defeat of the Battle of Worcester on 3/9/1651.

Family legend has it that Captain Richard Sneyd was one of the small group with the Earl of Derby who escorted King Charles II to Boscobel and was one of the guards standing round the famous oak tree. King Charles remained at Boscobel for a few days before starting his escape to France dressed as Mrs Lane's groom.

Records are meagre about Captain Richard Sneyd's military career (probably serving with the Earl of Derby). Richard was actively involved throughout the conflict and managed to escape capture. In March 1650, the Council of State was still issuing orders for Richard Sneyd's arrest, proclaiming him to be a "dangerous & disaffected person".

Felicia Sneyd bequeathed her house & land in Uttoxeter to her youngest son Richard together with a half share of all her livestock at Norton Farms, six tubs of butter & other items.

Little is known about Richard Sneyd's character except that he was less accident prone than his brother Ralph and more dashing than his brother WILLIAM.

