

# **TONY BOSTOCK'S LOCAL HISTORY NOTES: SWANLOW**

## **NINETEENTH CENTURY SWANLOW**

In the 1861 census the 'hamlet' of Swanlow was defined as being '...from the Old Star, right and left to James Dooley's: the houses in Moors Lane, School Green, Ways Green, Back Lane, Mr Court's works, Owlter Hall, Grove Cottage and Cottage in Welsh Lane.'<sup>1</sup> The other census returns are not helpful in defining the area, however it is apparent from them that Minshull Lane, Stocks Stairs, Church Hill, School Lane and the Hollies were included. In essence Swanlow was the whole area south of a line drawn from School Green, along Darnhall School Lane, along the ridge behind the church and down to Winsford Bridge.

### **Swanlow in the 1840s**

At the gates to the church stands the white building [217], then a house and garden owned by Charles Cholmondeley and occupied, along with the land around the church, by Stephen Holland. By 1851, when this public house was known as 'The Blue Bell'; Joseph Viggor, a painter and glazier, lived here with his family. Up on the hill behind the white house stands Church House Farm [215] and its 132 acres owned by Lord Delamere and farmed by Mary Gresty. On the hill to the south-east of the church stood the old vicarage which was then divided into three cottages all owned by Charles Cholmondeley; one was occupied by Joseph Carter [188], one was unoccupied [189] and the third occupied by Stephen Holland of the White House. In 1851 these were the homes of Joseph Carter and Joseph Warburton.

On the left side of the road stands the 'Old Star' public house [223]. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century this 'beer house' was owned by John Baker, senior, and occupied by John Prince. Alongside, on what is now the car park there were a number of cottages [222] owned by Baker and occupied by William Foster and others according to the tithe return. These tenants also had the use of the gardens on the opposite side of the road now a grassed area. In 1851 William Foster, a salt boiler, lived here with his wife and their three children whilst next door lived labourer Joseph Sproston, his wife and their two children.

Opposite the cottages stood the Vicarage [92] occupied by the Reverend John Jackson, vicar of Over. Here he, his wife and daughter, assisted by three servants ran a school for thirteen children. This building still stands, though is now a series of flats. Next along this side of Swanlow Lane were outbuildings associated with the vicarage, then a garden, then a house with its garden, and then a series of cottages with gardens owned by Lord Delamere which still remain. The house [94] was occupied by William Cawley, a tailor, and his family and the cottages [95], the present series of black and white mock Tudor style cottages, by George Hulse and others. Another small garden separated the first set of cottages from that of Richard Bostock [97] and George Percival [99]. According to the 1851 census there were two cottages between the vicarage and Cawley's house occupied by the families of John Astles, a labourer, and Samuel Bostock, a salt boiler. The we have the cottages occupied by Joseph Dean, a shop-keeper and labourer, Richard Bostock, a pauper, John Thomas, a salt boiler, John Hanson, a labourer, John Brooks, a salt boiler, and their respective families.

Across the road lived Samuel Bebbington in a cottage [100] owned by William Vernon, a plot now occupied by two twentieth century houses. Next door is 'Smithy Cottage' which in 1851 was occupied by James Dodd, a twenty-eight years old blacksmith, his wife Henrietta, their two children, a seventy years old poor labourer and Jonathan Vernon a shoe maker. Incidentally Dodd's father was the blacksmith in Darnhall. Next-door, on the site now occupied by the Post Office, John Johnson occupied Thomas Buckley's cottage. In 1851 this was the home of Richard Bostock, a salt labourer, his wife, their four children and a married

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<sup>1</sup> PRO: 1861 census, RG9/2605, fo. 83

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couple who were lodging with them. Ten years later it was Joseph Williams wheelwright's shop. The following row of five present day cottages leading towards the junction with Welsh Lane all seem to be contemporary but are in fact somewhat later. In the 1840s on the corner, and set at an angle to Swanlow Lane, was a small row of cottages owned by John Vernon which in 1851 were occupied by Thomas Sefton, Thomas Vernon and John Vernon himself. The owner, aged fifty-three, had a carrying business and had three children living with him at home.

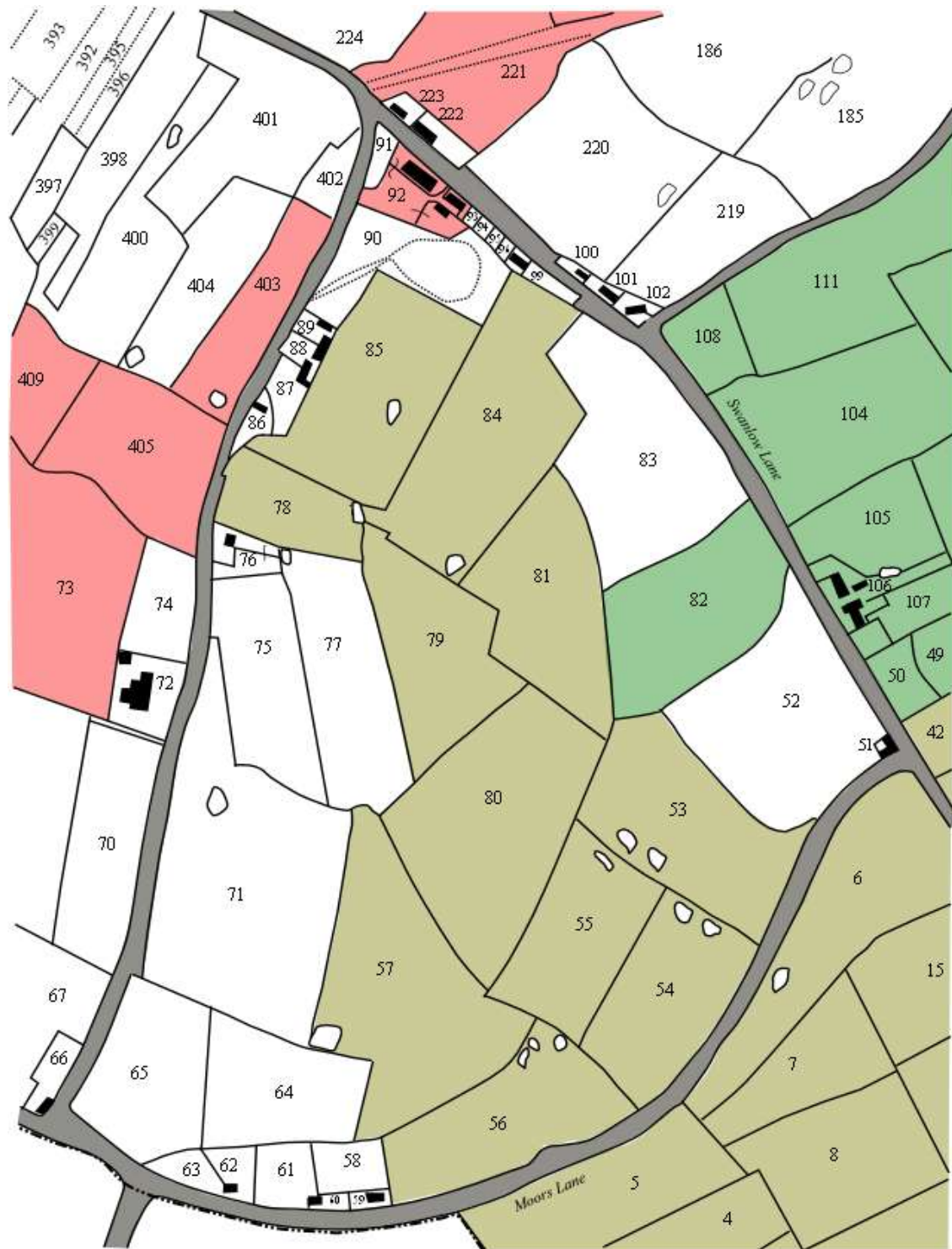
Another detour, this time down Welsh Lane, leads to cottages that still stand. The first house [184] had been leased from Lord Delamere by John Bebbington and sub-let to Thomas Finney; behind this house the field was called 'Vicarage Field'. Further along stands the house, buildings and croft then owned and occupied by James Murta, now known as 'Grove Cottage'. In 1851 John Lee who farmed School Bank Farm, Weaver, lived here with his wife and family. Returning, the lane passes on the left fields known as 'Moulton Field', 'Sandbach Field' and 'Sandbach Croft' the last two were no doubt named after a local family – a name which persists today. Opposite the junction with Welsh Lane there used to be a field called 'Swanlow Field' and it is from this point hereon that we are in the township of Swanlow. Interestingly the field immediately to the south is 'Over Lane Field' so it would seem that through the township of Swanlow the lane was called 'Over Lane'.

Continuing into Swanlow Lane, the first residential property was on the left side of the road on land owned by George Wilbraham. Here in 1856, at what is now called 'Old Field Farm' [106] Thomas Wood farmed sixty-two acres as a sub-tenant of James Leicester. The farm consisted of several fields lying behind the farm, 'Chapel Field' on the opposite side of Swanlow Lane, and Holloway Head Field further back down Swanlow Lane. Although mentioned in the tithe survey he is not listed in the 1851 census but is in the 1861 census. The 1851 census has a thirty-two years old labourer, John Ikin and his wife living with a female servant and a lodger with 'no business' - perhaps Ikin was temporarily here as a sort of caretaker. In 1856 Thomas wood paid £1 5s 6d land tax on the house and its land. He seems to be the son of Samuel and Ann Wood who had lived here in 1841 with their six other children, and another four years old child named Mary Higginson: they also had a male and female servant living with them.

In the corner of 'Chapel Field', at the junction with Moors Lane, stood a cottage and chapel [51] owned by a Samuel Stones and occupied by Ralph Threadgold. In the 1851 census Threadgold is recorded as 48 years old labourer living with his wife Elizabeth and their four children. Crossing back over to the east side of the lane we have 'Swanlow House'; this thirty-nine acre farm was occupied by James Balmer and, like all the remaining property from here to the southern boundary of the parish of Over, it was owned by Jane Davenport in the 1840s and then by Ann Davenport. In 1841 Balmer was aged about 45 years and lived with his mother Susannah, aged at least 75 years, and a son aged 15 named John. Ten years later this 32 acre farm is occupied by Thomas Balmer aged 27 years, wife Hannah and their infant son named John James: two farm labourers and a female servant lived in.

Present day Bank Hall Farm was once known as 'Park Farm' occupied by forty-six years old Charles Hitchen who had thirty-eight acres of land. He lived here with his wife and their three children. The house today, behind tall hedging, has re-built and was until recently a small hotel. Opposite lived Mathew Percival [16] and John Minshull [17] in two cottages which still stand today. Percival was a thirty-six years old labourer in 1851 and he and his wife had five children: twins aged six and another set of twins aged ten months. Next door, according to both the 1841 and 1851 census, lived George Dooley, a salt boiler, his wife and seven children.

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**KEY**

- Glebe lands (church property)
- Jane Davenport' land
- George Wilbraham 's land
- Township boundary

*Part of Swanlow in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century  
(Detail taken from the tithe map of Over)*

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Today's 'Manor Farm' [18] was the home of Thomas Davenport who had 33 acres. By 1851 this farm was in the occupation of George Percival and his wife. Opposite here was another 'Over Lane Field', now the site of Swanlow Park Cemetery, a privately owned resting place in the ownership of the present proprietor of Swanlow House Farm.

Remaining on the west side of the lane there are two cottages which were the homes of Samuel Bebbington [20], Hannah Parry [21]. During the 1840s Alice Warburton [22] had forty-six acres at her farm house, now Grange Farm. By 1851 this was in the hands of George Platt and his family: living with him was his ninety-three years old aunt Mary Vickers.

Crossing over the road there are a series of cottages with gardens occupied in the 1840s by David Golbourne [29], James Eaton [28], Samuel Woodcock [27] and Joseph Bebbington [26]. By 1851 the occupants were John Bebbington, labourer, Samuel Eaton, a salt boiler, Benjamin Williams, labourer, and Charles Hodkinson, a salt boiler. The last field on this side before entering Weaver is called 'Horse Field' and is now the site of Mr Evan's farm. Opposite the last row of cottages were occupied by Samuel Bebbington and others according to the tithe return.

Returning now to Moors Lane. At the far end William Wood, an agricultural labourer, was the owner and occupier of a cottage [59,] a garden and a croft, next door lived George Woodcock, another farm labourer. Next Edward Heard owned some cottages [60] occupied at the time of the tithe survey by William Wilkinson and others. This brings us to School Green. Here John Noden had a few cottages [62] occupied by David Hulse and others, but according to the census we have Hulse and a Joseph Eaton, both of whom were farm labourers. The next property down School Lane was a house owned by Thomas George Corbett of Darnhall Hall and occupied by Charles Johnson a tailor.

Half way along the lane, on the northern side, stood the house known as 'The Hollies'[72], the home of Reverend William Lockett. In 1851 he was the curate of Wettenhall. He lived here with his sons and a daughter, a visitor and two servants.

Further down on the other side of the road was a cottage[86] owned by Corbett and occupied by John Bettley, a 67 years old labourer who lived with his 12 years old granddaughter. Next door here was a garden [87] and a house [88] owned and occupied by Richard Woodward, who was teacher at the neighbouring school [89].

### **The Davenport Family of Swanlow**

At the time of the tithe survey in 1846 Jane Davenport owned just over 165 acres of land in Swanlow: a significant part. It seems that this family had lived here since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The first member of the family to be noticed is Richard Davenport who was born about 1680. It is believed that he was a son of George Davenport of Calveley and Bunbury (1658-1723). Richard is listed in the suit rolls of the manor of Over in 1700 and died in 1735 being buried at Over on 12 April. He was at sometime mayor of Over as he was styled 'Alderman' at the time of his death. Another of the same name, born about 1704 is found in both the suit rolls and in the churchwardens accounts between 1737 and 1760. Yet another Richard, a third generation was born in 1731. He had a younger brother name Aldersey who was christened at Over on 3 August 1740. He married a lady name Sarah Hough at Barthomley church on 8 February 1762. Their son was also named Aldersey and he married a Sarah Hibbert at Over on 22 January 1805.

Aldersey Davenport left a will dated 1 October 1816 the day before he died. It mentions his wife Sarah who was to have the use of the parlour of his house or else the house occupied by

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Joseph Banks. He was succeeded on the family's farm by his eldest surviving son John, whilst the younger son Thomas received £150. Probate was issued on 14 April 1817.

