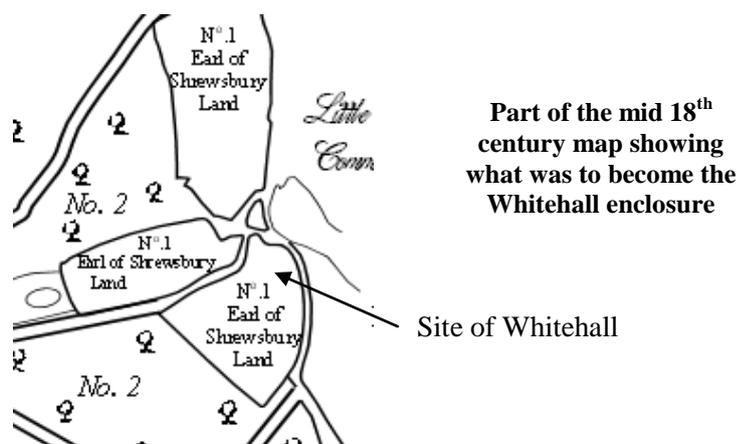


# TONY BOSTOCK'S LOCAL HISTORY NOTES: LITTLE BUDWORTH

## WHITEHALL

The lands on which Whitehall stands can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a parcel of lands enclosed from the wastes of Budworth Common and occupied by the Hixon family. A Randle Hixson paid hearth tax on a cottage here in 1664. A John Hixson occupied 'Hixson's tenement' in 1686 which contained just over twenty Cheshire acres and a Randle Hixson had two cottages hereabouts.<sup>i</sup> On 20 December 1714 Randle Hixson had a lease for the tenement at 'Brook Slack' which he renewed on 27 April 1716. For this he paid £10 3s as a down payment and an annual rent of 6s 5d with a heriot worth £2 6s 8d.<sup>ii</sup> The lease was to remain in force during his lifetime, that of his fifty-three years old wife and their eighteen years old son John.<sup>iii</sup>



On 2 January 1779 Francis Houlbrooke acquired a lease from the Earl of Shrewsbury for a parcel of land on Budworth Common in an area known as 'Brook Slack': this contained a little over eleven acres of land. The lease cost him £20 and the annual rent was set at £7 6s 1d with a heriot valued at £3 1s. The lease was to remain in force for the life times of himself, a Robert Wainwright Ashley and an Ellen Ashley who may have been relayed in some way. This parcel of land is shown as an enclosure of Budworth common on a plan drawn in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>iv</sup>

In 1783 Francis died and a new lease was taken out in favour of Robert Ashley of Park Place, Frodsham. This was to remain in force for ninety-nine years and for the lifetimes of himself, then aged forty-three, his seven years old daughter Ellen and his third son, twelve years old Thomas. At this time a new residence was built on land that had once been cottages occupied by Hixon, Kary and Birstall, and a parcel of lands known as 'Hixon's Tenement': this was to be called 'Whitehall'. Robert seems to have lived for only six years after he had the lease of the land on which he bought Whitehall as in 1789 Ann Ashley, his widow, was the occupant of Whitehall with a new lease. On the same date as the Whitehall lease, 5 January 1784, Robert's brother Francis acquired the lease of Shaw's Tenement that had previously been held by John Houlbrooke. This was for the lives of his son Daniel, aged fourteen, a John Houlbrooke, son of John Houlbrooke of Hepden, aged fifteen years, and his niece Ellen. The lease cost £14 and the rent was set at £3 13s 4 with a heriot of ten shillings. Thirty-one years old Francis also acquired a cottage and two acres of land for himself and his nephew Thomas. Interestingly in 1783 a Miss Houlbrooke 'a maiden lady' suffered a tedious illness 'with that calmness and resignation which are the certain characteristics of a well spent life'.<sup>v</sup>

On the south wall of St Peter's Church there is a memorial tablet to the Houlbrooke family of Whitehall which is inscribed with these words:

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Near this place lies the body of JOHN HOULBROOK of WHITEHALL Gentleman who departed this Life the 10th' day of August 1762, aged 67 years.

Also the Body of JOHN HOTJLBROOKE Son of the said JOHN HOULBROOKE by ELLEN his Wife who departed this Life the 7<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1762, aged 27 years.

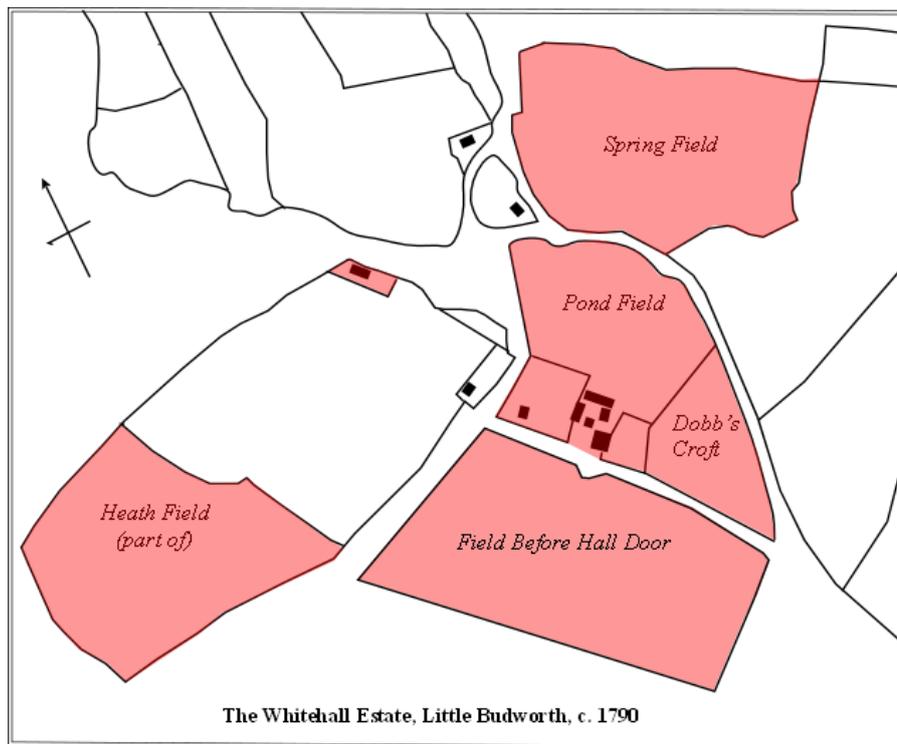
Also the Body of ELLEN HOULBROOKE Wife of the said JOHN HOULBROOKE the Elder who departed this life the 10th day of November, 1778. aged 77 years.

And also the Body of FRANCES HOULBROOKE Daughter of the said JOHN and ELLEN HOULBROOKE who departed this life the 29<sup>th</sup> day of July 1783, aged 47 years.

The Whitehall estate held by Ann Ashley contained 23a 1r 22p of land and included the following fields:

Spring Field	6a 3r 2p
Dobs Croft	1a 3r 14p
Pond Field	3a 2r 3p
Field before Hall door	9a 0r 24p
House, buildings, fold garden, etc.	1a 3r 19p

In addition Ann also had another house a little to the west of Whitehall with two acres in Heath Field and also possession of the Large Mill Pool (Budworth Mere) and the Lower Mill Pool (alongside Budworth Hall) and the fishing rights.



By 1851 Whitehall was the residence of William Jones and his wife Frances. He was a fifty years old race horse trainer and farmer of forty acres. Living with him were his nephew William Jones a twenty-one years old clerk, his thirty-eight years old sister-in-law, Margaret Billington, who worked as the house-maid, a male farm servant and a stable boy. In 1863 he

## **TONY BOSTOCK'S LOCAL HISTORY NOTES: LT. BUDWORTH**

is shown as tenant of 'White Hall' with the fields listed above and also two other fields known as 'Far Stoadleys' and 'Near Stoadleys' both situated in the far south-east corner of the township.<sup>vi</sup>

On the night of the 1871 census James Hugh Smith Barry was away from his apartments in Whitehall visiting Marbury Hall, the main family home, with his butler. His servants, a groom and three helpers, were in living in the 'Saddle Rooms'. Mrs Frances Jones operated the farm at Whitehall with her sister Margaret Billington, a niece named Mary Bloss who worked for them as a domestic servant, and a thirteen years old boy who was the farm servant.

On 3 May 1872 James Hugh Smith Barry, Esquire, of Marbury Hall, near Northwich, took a lease on Whitehall for thirty-five years at an annual rent of £75. The estate was then described as containing 23a 0r 27p of land. His lease permitted a sale of the lease for the remainder of the original term to John William McClintock of Bunbury for £1300 which was finalised on 6 February 1889. McClintock then sold the lease on to James Henry Stock for £1150 on 23 April 1892, at a rent of £103 a year until 1923. He was a gentleman from Middlesex who had recently resided at Knowle Park, Woolton, Liverpool.

During the 1880s the present house was built by James H Stock, M.P. for Liverpool Walton (1892-1906). His widow was still here in 1914 and three years later the family bought the freehold of the property when much of the Shrewsbury estates were auctioned off. According to the sale catalogue Whitehall contained two halls, a billiard room, five reception rooms, nineteen bedrooms, five bathrooms, domestic offices. Outside there was stabling for twenty-five horses, a garage, a coach house, a 'Men's room' and a cottage for the gardener.<sup>vii</sup> There were nearly twenty-four acres of land and the annual rent had been £500.

In 1927 Major B. W. Heaton of Yorkshire bought the property and lived here until his death in 1965.

During the war years the house was used by the army and the stables used for storage.

In 1979 Mrs Heaton sold the house to Mr and Mrs Howard Taylor since when (1993) the whole of the property has been restored.

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<sup>i</sup> Chester and Cheshire Record Office (CRO): DSH 60/8

<sup>ii</sup> A 'heriot' is the render of the best beast or item of chattel of a deceased tenant due to the lord of the manor, or a monetary equivalent.

<sup>iii</sup> CRO: DSH 60/8

<sup>iv</sup> CRO: DEO 1/15

<sup>v</sup> *Cheshire Sheaf*, third series, vol. 12, August 1915, p.53

<sup>vi</sup> CRO: DSH 299/25

<sup>vii</sup> CRO:DSH 299/27