VICTORIAN HISTORY OF MOSTON



Title	Needhams Bank
Туре	Semi Detached Cottages xs 2
Date Produced	19 th Jan 2024
Internal Reference	E31P
1840 Owner	Lord Crewe
1840 Occupier	John Lowe
Tithe Map Apportionments	Various
1840 Area	5.5 acres











In 1840, the principal occupant of Needhams Bank was a John Lowe a boatman who moved there in the mid 1830's after the death of the previous occupant. The area had developed due to its location at the side of the Trent and Mersey canal which first came into use in 1777.

Canal V Sarah Jones of Married in this Church by	William Leedham a boatman originally from Tamworth who died in 1834. In the 1851 & 1861 census, the area was called "Leedhams" Bank
Source : Sandbach Parish Register 1810	nd Census for John Lone
Leedhams Bank John Longe	· Head A the Boatman
Hannah De	
Martha 90	Dang U.
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Leedhams Bank John Jugaller	od Helad M 35 & Bootman
Anne go	172 1
Harried 90	Daug. 22 1
toline 90.	- 2 aug . 20 a
Source : National Archives 1851 census	

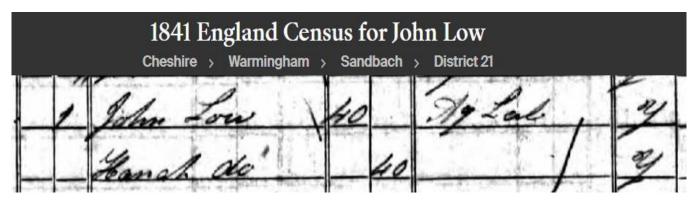
In 1840 Needham's Bank was part of the huge estate of Lord Crewe and at the time there were two houses there, one next to the canal and the row of cottages on the other side of the lane. John Lowe occupied about 5 acres of land as undertenant to William Leedham's heirs.

As can be seen, the land he occupied was not aesthetically placed though I suppose in those days it was not really a problem to hitch a lift across to plot 158 on the many barges that went up and down the canal. Likewise John Mulliner who farmed on the other side would have had a similar issue getting to his land at plot 174. Plot 246 was located on Crabmill Lane. It does beg the question why didn't they arrange some sort of swap......?



Township *	Parish 🛊	Plot \$	Landowner(s) 💠	Occupier(s) \(\psi	Plot Name	Land Use	Acres \$	Roods 🌲	Perches
Elton	Warmingham	158	Lord Crewe	John Lowe	Moss Piece		1	1	14
Elton	Warmingham	173	Lord Crewe	John Lowe	Moss Piece		0	2	26
Elton	Warmingham	173a	Lord Crewe	John Lowe	House and Garden		0	0	25
Elton	Warmingham	175	Lord Crewe	John Lowe	House and Moss Piece		2	0	33
Elton	Warmingham	176	Lord Crewe	John Lowe	Garden		0	0	30
Elton	Warmingham	246	Lord Crewe	John Lowe	Hall Croft		0	2	22

The 1841 census for Elton shows John Lowe (1798-1982) with his wife Hannah and 5 children. Neighbour's names were Smallwood possibly a permanent resident and the others casually living in the area. There were though many other residents at Needhams Bank at the time and it is unclear whether they were subtenants to John Lowe or they were paying rent direct to the Leaseholders. At any one time there were perhaps 25 to 30 people residing on the lane.



Source: National Archives 1841 census

The Crewe Estate records and the will of William Leedham tell us that the lease stayed in William Leedhams name for many years after his death as his executors managed the properties. The other names on the lease were William Needham's stepchildren by his wife Susannah Jones (nee Mulliner) Susannah was the daughter of Joseph Mulliner who had been responsible for building one of the properties, probably the one to the North of Needhams Bank.

	43 William Seedham's Reps for a Close of Land divided by the Canal late Ravenvorofts	1846 0.10.0	
THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PARTY	Garden. 0.5.0 16 Garden. 0.5.0 16 De for an Inclosure adjoining the Hall Croft not in leave. 30.0.2	1846 — " — 0.5 1847 — " — 0.5 1848 — " — 0.5 1849 — " — 0.5 1850 — 0.5	2 2 2 20 00

Crewe Estate Rentals DCR-50-2-24 (1847-1856)

By 1851 we get a much clearer picture as to the purpose of the properties. As one would expect with the location adjacent to the canal, John Lowe was a boatman. The other cottages were let on an ad hoc basis, some perhaps nightly – an 1850's Airbnb so to speak creating a localised hub for the boating community.

	1851 England Cer Cheshire > Elton				
Leed harry Ban	Me / de	Llegad	X	¥ .	Boatman.
	Marsha De	Dany	11.		
+	Jane Lowe	Dang.	20		
Leedhams Bank	Tohn Justwood	Lang.	10	35 30	Bostman
	Ann go	MA	X	1 33	× · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	telingo -	Laug.	, 20	9	1 1 11
Three Ho	James choose	Thomas	a Gree	u an	Joseph Smallwood
Ledham Bank		1 110	The !	24	Boatman
	Hanny Do	9	m	2/	

Source: National Archives 1851 census

As an aside, the 1851 census demonstrates quite clearly the changing position in the area with 11 properties being recorded on Red Lane (Though at the time it was confusingly known as Green Lane). None of these properties still exist primarily due to the effects of subsidence from salt mining.

Likewise, in 1851 all the residents of Needham's Bank were boatmen but by the 1920s and as a reflection of the domination of the Railways and steam power, residents were employed in either agriculture, Fodens Foundry or the Bone Mill on Rookery Bridge.

By the time of the 1861 census, John and his family had moved away to Rose Cottage on Moston Green where he died in 1862.

Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century there was one constant throughout and that was Elizabeth Thompson (1833-1915). Elizabeth, born in Middlewich was the daughter of John Lloyd Thompson, the illegitimate son of John Lloyd who for many years held the lease at the property known as Elton Farm (or historically Bromfield's Tenement)

in the County of Chester in the Year 183.3									
When Baptised.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name. Christian. Surname.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.			
Subruar	Sizabeth	John Rachel	Thompson	Newton	Bricklayer	Jours Wood			

Before she was out of her teens, Elizabeth had found employment with the eminent surgeon of Sandbach, Doctor Charles Latham as a wetnurse. Doctor Latham is today commemorated by a large memorial plinth outside Ashfields Medical Centre

	1851 England Census for Charles Latham Cheshire > Sandbach > ALL > 8c									
Thee lock Read.	Charles Latham.	Stead	1	34	-	Linge	76			
- 34	Hay et. Latham	->>	That	× -	34	School	ifr -			
	chath Latham	do		×						
	Theciam H. Lathan		-	2	1	·				
	Cathenine M. Lathan	Lecont	21	7	22	Cook.				
	Jarah Brownsond	do	11.			Stenun	naije			
	Catherine Delous	do	81.		2	chusen	THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE			
	George Wacker	do	11	17	7.0	Grown				

1851 Census - National Archives

Some women chose not to breastfeed for social reasons. For upper-class women, breastfeeding was considered unfashionable, in the sense that it not only prevented them from being able to wear the fashionable clothing of their time, but it was also thought to ruin their figures. Working women faced other pressures to abandon breastfeeding, including from their husbands. Hiring a wet nurse was less expensive than having to hire someone else to help run the family business and/or take care of the family household duties in their place. Some women chose to hire wet nurses purely to escape from the confining and time-consuming chore of breastfeeding. Wet nurses were used when a mother cannot produce sufficient milk. Wikipedia

The answer to how Elizabeth could produce milk is answered by referring back to her parent's census returns. In the autumn of 1850, Elizabeth had given birth to an illegitimate child, Alice who was living with her grandparents. It is thus highly possible that Elizabeth was working to earn money to raise her child. It is then most probable that Elizabeth was continually making the trip between Dr Latham's house on Crewe Road and back to Elton to ensure both children were fed.

		18	S51 England Cens Cheshire > Elf			npson	Į.	
	Parish or Township of		Ecolesiastical Distr	ict of	City	or Borong	A of	Tourn of
House- holder's Schedule	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	w	nd Surname of each Person he abode in the house, ight of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Hend of Family	Condition	Age of	ales	Rank, Profession, or Occupation
18	Red Lane	John	Loyd Hompson	Head	X	17	Bri	chlayer.
7		Heft	Jean Do	You	20	16	Cord	wainer
)		Ra	chel Do	Daughter	20.	4	91	90 .
-		toll	en 90	Daughter brandara	te 26	3	an du	fant.

18,0		Migitimati			7 .0
Dee20	alier	Unjalet Thompson	Elwrth	h.	Royda.
No. 99					1

St Peter's Elworth – Baptisms 1850

Elizabeth moved to Needhams Bank in the early 1850s probably after marriage and spent the rest of her life there where she built up a large, networked family. In life she continued in a similar field to her time with Doctor Latham eventually becoming the local midwife. Elizabeth would have learnt her trade by experience and perhaps support from Doctor Latham. Her personal experience was to produce at least eight children of her own.

Despite having a valuable and reasonably well paid profession, Elizabeth was generally not recorded as such on the census returns, the best being offered was "Boatman's Wife". She was possibly a midwife for 60+ years. In 1902 the Midwives Act was given Royal Assent and aimed to improve the quality of the profession by requiring certification and training. Elizabeth must have carried on after this date because she was recorded as a midwife in the 1911 census.

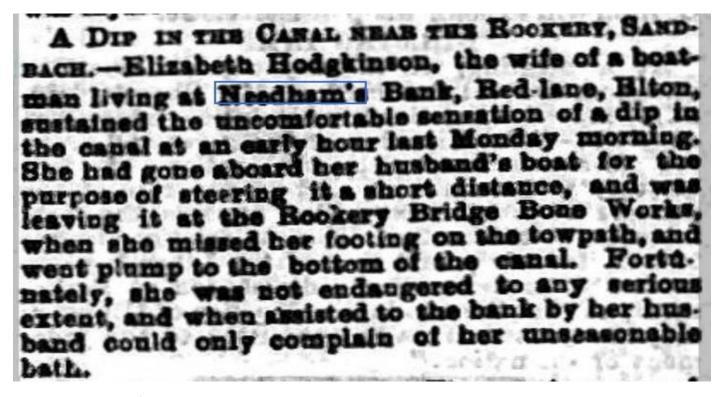
1911 England Census for John Collins Cheshire > Elton > ALL > 18									
Jurs Blysbeth Smallwood Head		44	Widow			midwife	434		
John Collins Son	46		Single			Brick bank La	boure 1		

National Archives 1911 census

As previously mentioned, there were many people living at Needhams Bank, but once a family tree is constructed for Elizabeth, it is clear the majority of the people recorded living there during the second half of the nineteenth century were related to her in some shape or form.

Name	Status	Lived	Occupation
Tom Collins	1st Husband	1829-1869	Agricultural Labourer
John Colllins	Son	1857-1921	Labourer
Charles Collins	Son	1853-1933	Boatman
Bernard Kelly	Son in Law	1843-1908	Married illegitimate daughter Alice
Joseph Hodgkinson	2 nd Husband	1828-1888	Boatman
James Hodgkinson	Son	1866-1927	Labourer at Bone Mill
Edwin Dutton	Son in Law	1865-1940	Boatman then Fodens, married Daughter Mary
James Smallwood	3 rd Husband	1832-1894	Boatman
George Hodgson	Son in Law	1865-1952	Mechanic
James Moore	Family	1821-1891	Boatman, Brother in Law of 2 nd Husband James
John Griffin	Family	1877-1924	Brother in Law of son James Hodgkinson
Ann Sherwin	Family	1810-1872	Aunt of Joseph Hodgkinson's Wife
Samuel Sutton	Family	1830-1910	Boatman, Son in Law of Ann Sherwin
William Shaw	Family	1887-1943	Boatman, married distant relation to Hodgkinsons

The certificates for Elizabeth's three marriages can be seen in the appendices followed by a more detailed schedule of the Head of Household for the Census returns 1841-1921



Northwich Chronicle 1st November 1870

After a very long and eventful life, Elizabeth passed away in 1915 at about the time major change was about to take place in the district when Lord Crewe decided to sell his estate. Her funeral was recorded in the local newspaper and attended by many of her family.

Funeral of Mrs. Smallwood.-At the Elward Parish Church on Friday the funeral took place of Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson Small wood widow, of Needham's Bank, Elton. away at the age of 82, on Monday of last week She was a well-known midwife in officiating clergyman were Messrs. The mourners Collins, William Collins, Hodgkinson and James Hodgkinson (son-Alice Kelly (daughter), Elizabeth Mr William Edward Dutton. Hodgson, Hodgson, Miss Ruth Hodgson, Mrs. James Hodgkinson, Hodgkinson and Mrs. Collins. Hands. George Jebson and John Griffin. Egerton carried out the funeral

Nantwich Guardian 27th Aug 1915

Until the latter end of the Victorian period, none of those recorded in the census returns appear on the Crewe Estate records because the occupants themselves never held direct leases. When William Leedham died, he left his estate to be divided amongst his three daughters and it wasn't until 1900 that the lease terminated and the land returned to Lord Crewe. At this stage, annual tenancy agreements were issued to Elizabeth Smallwood, James Hodgkinson, William Griffin and Philip James whose names appear on the 1901 census return.

The Crewe accounts show that for the second half of the nineteenth century, the lease was held by a James Sproston, being the son in law of William Leedham and husband of his youngest daughter Ann.

	of Mis Parish
	of He Parish
were married in this blunch by Sicense this sevente	_ with Consent of
Some in the Year One thousand eight hundred and H	
This Marriage was solemnized between us fames for	estan
In the Presence of { Joseph Walton	
No. 255.	. for the

Sandbach Parish Marriages 1836

Ellon cont	James Sproston Devise of William Leedham's Rep's for a Close of Land divided by the 1840 0.10.0 0.10.0 Canal late Ravenvorofts 1848 0.10.0 1849 0.10.0 1850 0.10.0 1851 0.10.0 1852 0.10.0
aproportion of Review 12 pour Mark to gat. 3/-	James Sproston Devisee of. 1851 52 William Leedham's Refor 1853 for a Stoure and small Garden behind 1855 the vame near the Canal and for a Close 1846 Garden. Garden. 90.52 The Nale Croft not in leave. 30.0.2 1856 1851 1851 1851 1851 1851

Crewe Estate Accounts 2nd Series DCR 59-2-24 1847-1856

There is a postscript to the legacy of the Leedham family at Needhams Bank. James Sproston wrote his will on 30th March 1855 as (on the face of it) a healthy forty four year but he was clearly disturbed of the mind.

Three weeks later, the significance of him "putting his house in order" became clear as he committed probably the most terrible calamity the little village had ever witnessed.

SHOCKING MURDER AND SUICIDE.

On Friday morning last, at Wheelock, a village near Sandbach, and about four miles north of Crewe, in Cheshire, an alarm was given of a murder and suicide of a most shocking description having been committed. A respectable joiner and builder (Mr. James Sproston), together with his wife, resided at a large detached house a little to the south-east of this village. people in easy circumstances, having inherited good property from relatives, besides what Mr. Sproston had amassed in trade, and had been married about 16 or 17 years, and lived together during that period in apparent happiness. They were both of them strictly professing Wesleyan Methodists, and the leading people of that religious sect in the neighbourhood. It is easy to conceive, therefore, with what surprise the intelligence burst upon the village on Friday morning that Mr. Sproston had murdered his wife and afterwards destroyed himself.

Mr. Charles Latham, of Sandbach, surgeon, said,-I saw deceased very shortly after they were found, but they were then both dead. James Sproston was sitting in a chair, with his head completely blown to pieces. The injuries had evidently been done with a pistol, which appeared to have been discharged into his mouth. With regard to Ann Spreston, I found a wound eight or nine inches long on the left fore-arm, which had completely cut through the muscles and bone. There were two other cuts on the same arm, four or five inches long, penetrating through the muscles and ligaments. There was another wound on the upper part of the right arm, seven or eight inches long, cutting through the muscles and bone. The skull on the left temple had been cut through, and the brain was left exposed. But the main injury is a cut at the back of the neck, going completely through the muscles, ligaments, and spinal marrow. This last injury has been the immediate cause of death, and all the injuries are such as would have been inflicted by a sword wielded with great violence.

On Saturday morning an inquest was held on the bodies, at the Golden Lion Inn, Wheeloek, by Mr. Roscoe, coroner for the Knutsford district of the county of Chester, when most of the above facts were stated in evidence, and the jury found "that James Sproston had destroyed himself by shooting himself with a pistol; and that Ann Sproston, his wife, had been killed by James Sproston, her husband, with a sword, he being at the time in a fit of temporary insanity." Mr. Latham, of the firm of Latham and Peagam, solicitors, Sandbach, was present at the inquest to watch the case on behalf of the executors under Mr. Sproston's will.

Chester Courant 2nd May 1855

The contents of the will confirm that James Sproston and Ann were quite a wealthy couple owning many properties. I do wonder whether it is of significance that none of the wealth (including that at Needhams Bank) was left to anyone on the Leedham side of the family.

It is probable that some time before his death, James Sproston signed a new lifehold lease with Lord Crewe as the land didn't revert back to the estate until 1900.

The 1901 census shows Five households on Needhams Bank, one of the properties had the note "All Away" and this was typical for the area where many of the boatmen would be away on the day of the census and lost to the system.

The Crewe records confirm that the missing family were those of Phillip James, the son of Phillip James who seem to have offloaded their eldest child with the grandparents. Where they were with their two youngest children has been lost to history.

	1901 England Census fo	or Phillip Ja	mes	
	Cheshire > Elton > Sandba	ach > District 1	В	
Zuilly forms 1.	4 Unily James	Nead M.	60	Canal Boat Jan.
	Helin "	Prize M. S-child	57.	<u> </u>
Heed horris Bont /	Singh - do-	Wead M.	35- 27.	Boiler Fireman
	Ruth - do.	Naughter 5.	26	1
Weedhame Dank 1	John - do.	Mucle. M.	74 39	Labourer (reports)
· .	months do.	Saughta	13.	V
ludhamin Bank /	3. Hinghoth Swood		65	V XL
	Sorne: Detton		6	General Laborary
New Whamo 8k: * 1	(all away)			

29 Grass, Juble Garder, and I small broper	Chizabeth Smallwood, We.	. 10 .
Han hicko stepil denochold	Sames Hedghinson	6.
49 Hours, Sable Guden, remarder of late States Sittle Marcheld	William Griffin	6
ale Tomes Garden Hable, part of	Phelip Sames, Sens	55.
lag France, Garden Mable, pass of late	Philip James Sum late Sam Ritchard	54.

Crewe Estate Annual Accounts 1901-02 DCR-59-5-138

It can hence be seen that at the time, the going annual rate for one of these cottages was between five and six shillings with further rentals for holding additional land. Elizabeth Smallwood paid the most as she held the field of nearly two acres to the north of her property and adjacent to the canal.

Appendix 1 - Elizabeth Thompson Marriage Records

1853 -Thomas Collins

When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.		Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession Father.
Lennery	Tomas Collins	23	backelor	labourer	Kinderton.	John Gollins	labourer
						John Thompson	
	John Wh	1th Elizabeth Thompson	17th Elizabeth Thompson 22	The Elizabeth Trompson 22 spinster	The Elizabeth Trompson 22 spinster	1th Elizabeth Timpson 22 spinster - Kinderton	anary !

1860 - Joseph Hodgkinson

No. When Marr	ed. Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession Father.
	Josef & Horphias	h.	Vilar	Bostine	Ellen	Thomas Holyke	In Both
men	Engloth Horphias	Mel			Eller	The Though	
26	Theyatell I hus	7	bilow		11111	Ma & rolly in	TO ACCOUNT
farried in the	6 /						hum
arried in the	ecc.	ording to the	Rites and Ceremon	nies of the Establishe	ed Church,	Bulion	Jour
is Marriage	rech Horthuin	his x	ment	. Idua	ed Well his	mark	T. Carrie
was	1 -1 4 0 11.		in t	he	0		

1892 - James Smallwood

186	2 Marriage	solemnized at Soft	1	in the	Parial of	Elworth	in the County of	Ther him			
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.		Rank or Profession of Father.			
	11.10	James Imallows	full	Widower	Boatman	Elworth	James Imallwood	Boatman			
337	Top 12	Elizabeth Hory Kinson	full	Widow	_		John Thompson	Bircksetter			
Mar						d Church, after be	uno y	by me,			
	Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, after bearing Liberty by me, This Marriage forms Amellwood this mark in the Scharles Lea in the Presence between us, Solemnized between us,										

Appendix 2 – Head of Household -Census 1841-1921

				No in	
Census	Head of Household	Age	Occupation	House	Comments
1841	John Lowe	40	Agricultural Labourer	8	
1841	Mary Cookson	80	Independent	3	
1841	Ann Smallwood	21	Independent	3	Husband away
1841	John Bailey	25	Agricultural Labourer	7	
1841	Ellen Robinson	22	Independent	3	
1841	Robert Estrap	31	Agricultural Labourer	5	
1851	John Lowe	54	Boatman	6	
1851	John Smallwood	35	Boatman	4	
1851	Edwin Estcourt	27	Boatman	4	Son in Law of John Lowe
1851	James Moore	?	Boatman	?	
1851	Thomas Green	?	Boatman	?	
1851	Joseph Smallwood	?	Boatman	?	
1861	Samuel Sutton	28	Boatman	2	
1861	Ann Sherwin	50	Pauper	5	
1861	Samuel Cooke	38	Labourer	4	
1871	Thomas Ruscoe	23	Boatman	3	
1871	Samuel Cooke	48	Railway Platelayer	4	
1871	Elizabeth Hodgkinson	36	Boatman's Wife	4	Husband Away
1871	Ann Sherwin	61	Annuitant	5	
1871	Samuel Sutton	39	Boatman	5	
1881	Charles Collins	28	Boatman	5	
1881	Mary Hodgkinson	27	Boatman	4	
1881	Joseph Hodgkinson	55	Boatman's Wife	4	Husband Away
1881	Moore	52	Boatman	2	
1881	Ann Griffin	19	Boatman's Wife	4	Husband away
1881	Bernard Kelly	38	Bone Mill Fireman	7	
1891	Mary Hodgkinson	47	Widow	3	
1891	Elizabeth Hodgkinson	53	Housekeeper	4	
1891	James Moore	67	Boatman	4	
1891	Ann Griffin	28	Boatman's Wife	5	Husband Away
1891	George Hodgson	26	Boatman	5	
1901	Philip James	60	Boatman	3	
1901	James Hodgkinson	35	Boiler Fireman	5	
1901	Ann Griffin	39	Boatman	3	
1901	Elizabeth Smallwood	65	?	3	
1901	?	?	?	?	" All Away"
1911	Elizabeth Smallwood	77	Widow	2	·
1911	Edwin Dutton	44	Fodens Riveter	5	
1911	John Griffin	34	Fodens Labourer	8	
1911	Alice James	17	Housekeeper	6	For absent parents
1911	Philip James	77	Pensioner	4	
1921	John Collins	66	Agricultural Labourer	1	single
1921	John Griffin	43	Bone Mill Fireman	9	Ü
1921	James Hodgkinson	56	Bone Mill Labourer	4	
1921	Philip James	42	Labourer	10	
<u> </u>	I	•		-	

Appendix 3 – List of Owners and Leaseholders

Year	Source	Location	First Name	Surname	Lived	Age	Occupation	Status	Other
1767	Wyatt Survey	All	John	Crewe	1742-1829	25	Gentleman	Owner	
1767	Wyatt Survey	South	Thomas	Ravenscroft			Farmer	Leaseholder	
1767	Wyatt Survey	North	Caleb	Potts	1702-1785	65	Farmer	Leaseholder	Fell out of Lease on Death
1785	Crewe Estate	North	John	Mulliner	1745-			Leaseholder	
1813	Crewe Estate	All	William	Leedham	1787-1834	26	Boatman	Leaseholder	Son in Law of John Mulliner
1840	Assent		Hungerford	Crewe	1812-1894	28	Gentleman	Owner	Grandson of John Crewe
1834	Crewe Estate		James	Sproston	1811-1855	23	Builder/Joiner	Leaseholder	Son-in-Law of William Leedham
1840	Tithe		Hungerford	Crewe	1812-1894	28	Gentleman	Owner	
1840	Tithe		John	Lowe	1798-1862	42	Boatman	Undertenant	
1895	Assent		Robert Offley	Crewe-Milnes	1858-1945	47	Gentleman	Owner	Nephew of Hungerford Crewe
1901	Crewe Estate	Gone	Philip	James	1834-1913	67	Boatman	Tenant	senr
1901	Crewe Estate	No 2	James	Hodgkinson	1866-1927	35	Boiler Fireman	Tenant	Son of Elizabeth Smallwood. Left and returned
1901	Crewe Estate	No 3	William	Griffin	1848-1924	53	Boatman	Tenant	Father in Law of James Hodgkinson
1901	Crewe Estate	No 4	Elizabeth	Smallwood	1833-1915	68	Midwife	Tenant	
1901	Crewe Estate	No 1	Philip	James	1870-1928	31	Boatman	Tenant	son of Philip
1918	Estate Sale	All	Francis John	Poole	1867-1940	51	Lawyer	Owner	Son-in-Law to Edwin Foden