

Gentry and Villagers of Abbots Langley

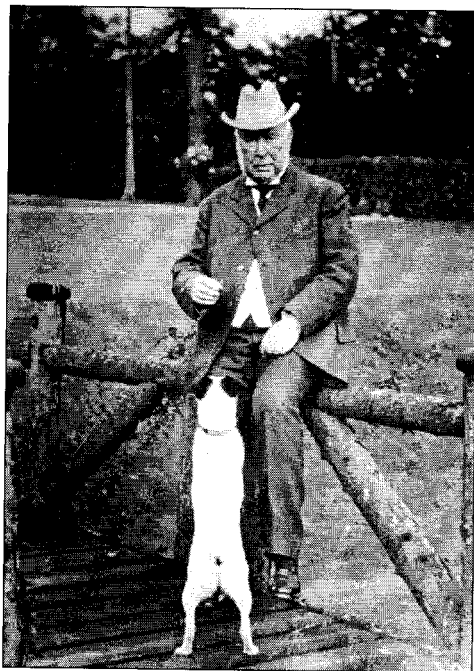
Part 1: The Inett Ward Family

History has many facets to it, but none more so than of people - those, who either through work, ideas or just by their very presence, leave a lasting legacy for future generations to discover and relate...

The Manor House, which was situated opposite Kitters Green, Abbots Langley, had been home to many notable families for some 250 years from its known 17th century beginnings in the 1640s. Internal Jacobean and Elizabethan traces had been found, taking it back another century, and the house is thought to have been built over the moated site of an earlier structure. The impressive house and extensive grounds of some 140 acres later became one of the major 'big houses' of those centuries, affording work for the many staff required to maintain its upkeep.

It was into the Manor House, towards the end of the 19th century in 1892, that John Inett Ward and his wife, Charlotte, moved with their children – Ethel May, Douglas, Nellie, Florence, Isabella and Gertrude.

John Inett Ward was born in Nottingham about 1833 to Jonathan, a Woollen draper, and Jane Ward (née Inett). Further research showed that his mother was born in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire where many of the Inett family lived. The name Inett was given to their son as a second name, which was often a custom for many families in the past. John Inett Ward had three known siblings – Elizabeth (1829), Harriet (1831) and William (1838). Although little is known about their



John Inett Ward, who lived at Abbots Langley Manor House from 1892 to 1921. Photo: The Dobson Collection

early life, it is possible they lived in that area for some time.

In 1861 John, who was 28, was a banker's clerk and had moved to Islington, London where in the census for that year he was living at home with his 61-year old widowed mother. In 1866 John married Charlotte Brown, and the 1871 census return shows them with their baby daughter, Ethel May, still living in Islington. In the same census for



Abbots Langley Manor House viewed from the south-west. c1897. Photo: David Spain Collection

Islington, his mother Jane is shown to be living with her married daughter, Harriet Hughes – quite near John and Charlotte Ward – but there is no further mention of his other siblings.

John and Charlotte's son Douglas Inett Ward, was born about 1872 followed by daughters Nellie, Florence, Isabella and Gertrude. By then John was a stockbroker and a member of the London Stock Exchange. Having moved up the social ladder, the family were then living in Belsize Park Gardens, Hampstead.

During the next period of their lives they not only had domestic servants to help with the house management but also engaged a governess, Henrietta Hobbs, for the children's education and who, it seems, stayed with the family for over twenty years.

As the family grew it was soon obvious that a larger house was needed for them all. At what point it was decided to consider moving away from their Hampstead home is not known but

by 1892, the Manor House at Abbots Langley being available, a move was made into what must have seemed like a grand country 'mansion' to them. At first the three elder children were still living at home, while the youngest two continued with their education, presumably with the governess, as life in the countryside took on a more settled style for all the family.

It is interesting to note that while the family were always strongly linked to the Abbots Langley village they were not at the Manor House on 31st March for the census return of 1901, but, with the exception of Douglas and Florence, the family were found at 'The Grand Hotel' in Eastbourne! (Perhaps it was an Easter Holiday.) However, there were staff at the Manor House in the 1901 census and Henrietta Hobbs, the Governess, although retired, was still living there along with other servants, who were maintaining the house while the family were away.



Douglas Inett Ward. Photo supplied by Julie Smith, his great granddaughter

Almost as soon as they moved into the Manor House both John and Charlotte Ward began taking a great interest in the local community. John Inett Ward donated money to finance the Reading Room for the village and they were particularly keen to give financial help to the schools.

The celebrations for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 saw the Manor House grounds decorated in splendid fashion for the occasion and where Mrs Ward provided the much needed new white ensign flag for the church tower. In that same year John Inett Ward gave generous donations to the schools' extensions and later gave money towards new surplices for the Church Choir.

Another of their earlier contributions was when the Manor House gardens were opened for a successful Bazaar, raising £300, which cleared the debts of the three schools and also provided half the money to repair the School

Master's House. Inett Ward also cleared the Cricket Club debt, promising the use of the Manor House Field for the next season, which allowed the members to start up the club again. John Inett Ward was Chairman of the Parish Council. He represented them on the board of trustees to the new Henderson Hall and gave a piano to the Hall. At the Church Vestry he paid the £5 debt owing for the gas lamps and suggested that his girls would hold a concert to raise funds of £12 for the winter lighting of the lamps. In fact, that December he provided an illustrated lecture in the Boys' School – 'An Evening with Punch' – which paid for the lamp costs. The villagers had much to be thankful for the Manor House family! They quickly became a valuable and well respected part of the village fraternity and were recognised as something of a 'saviour' – for it seemed their generosity knew no bounds where village causes were concerned!¹

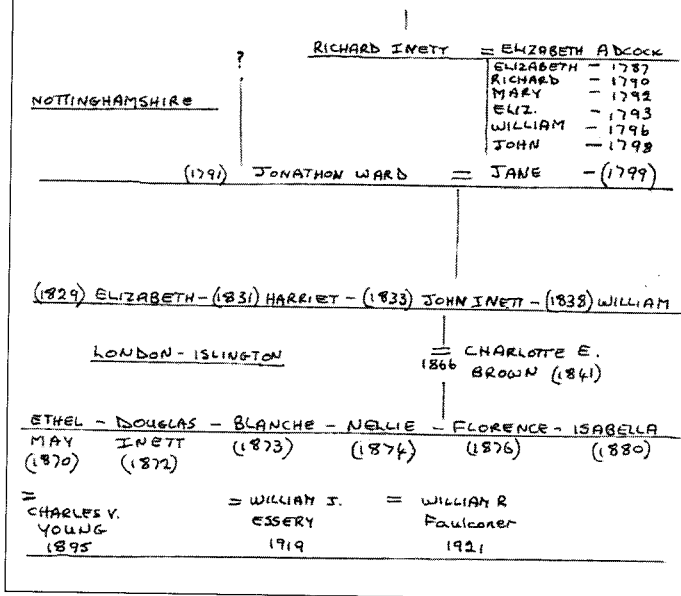
The Wards often lent their gardens and grounds for informal and formal events. Fetes, flower shows and annual balls were always very popular, being well supported by everyone in the village and surrounding area. Their children, when grown up, also played a part and there were many occasions when they held concerts in the open-air stage area of the garden along with other village groups. One event in 1917 was a 'Fete and Vegetable Exhibition' held by the Misses Ward and where some £180 was raised, part of which went to the 'West Herts Hospital'.

Nellie and Florence Ward were also competent wood sculptors who worked on items for the church and their work on the Lych-Gate inscriptions can still be seen today: 'O, Come let us worship' and 'A.D.M.G. in Memory of Victoria, Queen, 1837–1901'.

In 1902, when Miss Scrivenor of Causeway House in the High Street died, John Inett Ward bought the house for some £1,225 and later rented it out to one of the Misses Henty.

INETT WARD 'TREE'

MELTON MOWBRAY LEICESTERSHIRE



Causeway House, prior to demolition in 1957. Photo: David Spain Collection

In 1909 some interior works were carried out in the Corpus Christi Chapel at the church, where a new organ chamber was built at a cost of £500, which was met by Inett Ward.

For John and Charlotte during the latter part of their lives, it seems that of their children – Ethel May married Charles Vernon Young in

(Continued on page 15)

By order of Executors.

ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTS.

VALUABLE FREEHOLD PROPERTY, known as "The Causeway House," with old matured gardens and paddocks, in all about 2 acres, situate in one heart of this favourite village, adjoining the Manor House. The house contains 7 bed and 3 reception rooms, domestic offices, conservatory, coach-house and stabling.

The property has important frontages of 600 feet, and affords, as to a portion, a choice building site for small villa residences. Immediate possession.

Messrs. ROBINS & HINE

(Of 5, Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, S.W.), will offer the above to auction, at the Mart, Tokenhouse-yard, E.C., on March 10th, at 2 o'clock, in one lot, by order of the Executors of Miss Horivener, deceased, who has occupied the house for over 30 years.

Particulars and plan of Messrs. HAWKINS & CO., solicitors, Hitchin, or of the auctioneers, 5, Waterloo Place, London, S.W.

Watford Observer, February 1920

CLARENDON HALL, Watford.

Under Local Direction of G. W. Bowes.

Welcome Return Visit for Short Season, commencing MONDAY, Aug. 27, until further notice.

Nightly at 8; doors open at 7.30; early doors at 7 o'clock, 3d. extra. Matinees Saturdays at 3. Popular Prices - 2s., 1s. 6d., 1s., and 6d., limited threepence. Seats may be booked at Downer's, High-street.

SUNDAY CONCERT, September 2nd, "Life of Christ." Silver Collection.

A Coliseum Programme of Novelties.

Most important visit of the

W. F. JURY
IMPERIAL BIOSCOPE.

OVER 100,000
LIFE-MOTION PHOTOGRAPHS.

Watford Observer

In Watford at the Clarendon Hall these advertisements from the Watford Observer in the early 1900s show how the Bioscopes had already begun to evolve further. These were being shown along with another supporting programme and where by then the seat prices had risen to 2/-, 1/6d, 1/- and 6d with a limited number at only 3d – all to see what was billed as 'over 100,000 Life-Motion Photographs'.

However, by comparison with present day – when we turn on the TV or go to the cinema and take for granted 'pictures' of people and things moving on a screen as the norm – perhaps it will be interesting to see how things have evolved with the pioneers of yesterday – from those early days of light and film to what we see today... ■

Ed.

To be continued...

• **Weatherwise**

March winds and April showers
Bring forth May flowers

A sunshiny shower
Won't last half an hour

The Inett Ward Family

(Continued from page 13)

1895, Gertrude married William J Essery in 1919 and Nellie married William R Faulconer in 1921. Nothing further is known, as yet, about Florence and Isabella (but perhaps the 1911 census will reveal more). However, at some point Douglas Inett Ward chose to emigrate to New Zealand.²

Douglas Inett Ward's great-granddaughter mentions that he joined up in October 1915 and served with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during WW1. In October 1917 he was wounded and eventually discharged unfit for service. He was then hospitalised and later sent to the New Zealand convalescent hospital in Torquay, Devon before he embarked for New Zealand in March 1918, where it seems he spent the rest of his life and died in the early 1960s.²

Charlotte Ward died in 1919 and John Inett Ward died in 1921. They are both buried near the church tower in 'clergy corner'. In July 1923 a beautiful brass cross was presented to the church and placed in the Chapel of the Holy Name by their children and inscribed 'In memory of John Inett & Charlotte Elizabeth Ward'.

It is probably fair to say that during their lifetime at the Manor House the Inett Ward name was synonymous with the words 'generosity unsurpassed'... ■

Ed.

¹ courtesy of Clive Clark's book 'Abbots Langley Then: 1760-1960'.

² courtesy of Julie Smith, Douglas Inett Ward's Great-Granddaughter

Series continued in the next issue...