

Report and Documentary History for
The Lad in the Lane, Erdington, West Midlands
Site Code: ERD-A

from

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

by

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. The Old Green Man, Erdington (the later *Lad in the Lane*) during reconstruction in 1916
(Photo: courtesy of Erdington Historical Society, presented by Mr Bird).

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Oxbow Books

ERD-A: THE LAD IN THE LANE, 22 BROMFORD LANE, ERDINGTON, WEST MIDLANDS

Grid reference: SP 1127 9078 Survey Date: 2005

By: Nat Alcock

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Peter Leather, then of the University of Birmingham, is thanked for facilitating the survey and dating of the Lad in the Lane.

References and abbreviations: Alcock, N. W. (2008), 'The Lad in the Lane, Erdington, West Midlands: Architectural analysis and History', unpublished report (copy at WCRO); Alcock, N. W. and Moran, M. (1984) 'Low open-truss beams (mantle-beams): Problems of function and distribution', *Vernacular Architecture*, **15**, 47-55.

BCA Birmingham City Archives

IGI International Genealogical Index (on-line)

WCRO Warwickshire County Record Office

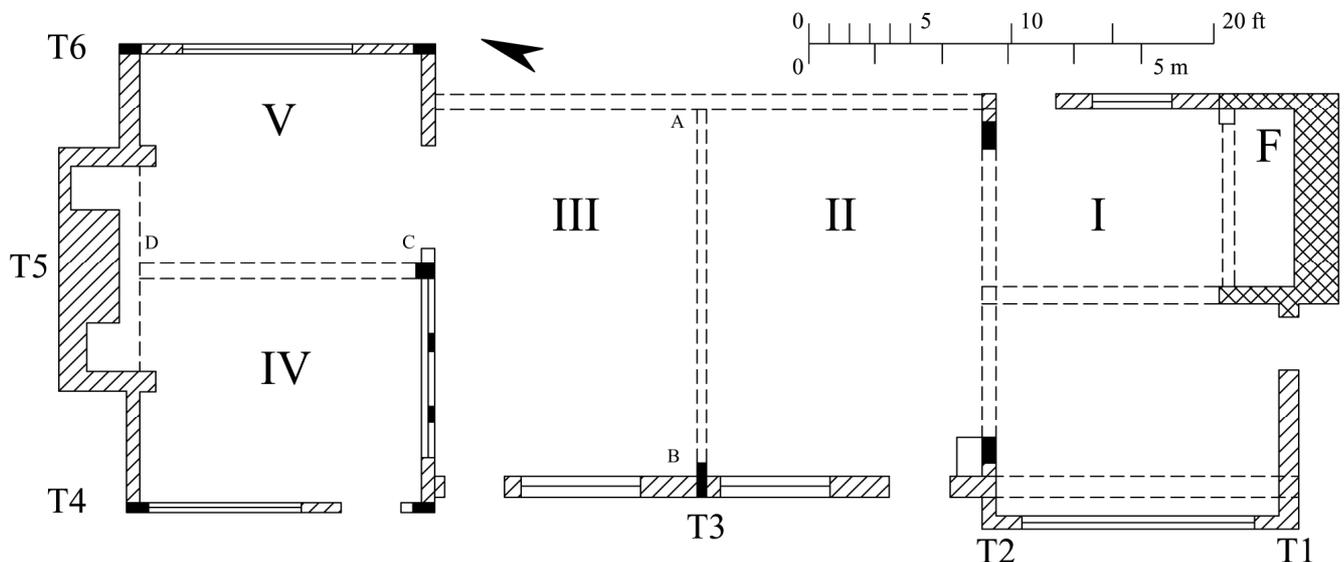


Fig. 2. Outline plan of the early parts of the Lad in the Lane, showing truss and bay numbering.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

PHASES 1 and 2. The building has two early components. The main range (oriented approximately north-south) is cruck-built, of three bays (I-III), comprising a two-bay hall and a service bay, dated by dendrochronology to 1400. At the north end, a fourth bay (presumably also cruck-built) was replaced by a two-bay two-storey crosswing, dated to 1456-61 (bays IV-V). Both these ranges are characterised by the use of remarkably massive timbers. Presumably the house was modernised in the normal way in the sixteenth century, flooring the hall and adding a fireplace, but any direct evidence of this has been lost. In or soon after 1600 (felling date range 1591-1621), the cruck hall had the lower (southern) end partitioned

off, when the tiebeam was inserted and the space above infilled, leaving just the two bays of the hall with its arch-braced central truss open to the roof. This phase probably included the insertion of the floor in bay I, and addition of the fireplace against truss T1.

Both the hall range and the crosswing of the Lad in the Lane are notable examples of early regional timber-framed buildings, and the timberwork is of outstanding quality. The cruck trusses have very substantial spans of just under 20ft internally (slightly uncertain because of the removal of the original walls), and the open truss has exceptionally massive timbers; other cruck halls typically have spans of 15-18ft, with one of the few comparable examples being Manor Farm, Stretton-on-Fosse, Warwickshire (SOF-A) with a 19ft span, though its cruck blades are more slender; it was clearly a building of relatively high status, probably the former manor house.

It is inferred that at both stages of construction, the Lad in the Lane was the home of a person of significant status – a substantial freeholder, or possibly even a minor manorial lord. In confirmation of this, the original builder is identified as one Thomas Holden. His family were very prominent freeholders in Erdington from the fourteenth century onwards, and indeed in 1569 acquired the manor house of Pype Hall there. This Thomas was the Earl of Warwick's ranger for Sutton Chase, as his descendants were on later occasions. They also held the post of escheator for Warwickshire (an important regional administrative post) in the 1460-70s.

Nothing is known of alterations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the building was partly converted into cottages. In 1916, it underwent a very extensive reconstruction, leaving only the skeleton of the timber frame intact from the earliest phases (Fig. 1). Although this has entailed the loss of almost the whole of the original walling, it has had the positive result that the impressive interior can be seen, almost as it was when first built. Surprisingly, despite the ruthlessness of the 1916 restoration, the overall footprint and the placing of windows and dormers was largely retained in the reconstruction.



Fig. 3. Interior of the open hall, showing truss T3 with T2 beyond.

STRUCTURAL FEATURES

It should be noted that the original timbers are very heavily coated in black paint, so some details (e.g. of peg-holes) are obscured.

The hall range

Bays I-III, the main range, contains a single bay to the south and a very substantial two-bay cruck-built open hall, with a central open truss (T3, Figs. 3-4). The southern bay (I) is separated from the hall by a closed truss (T2). By inference, it had an end truss at T1, and wind braces from this truss survive in bay I, though no visible evidence of the truss can now be seen; there appears to be a brick wall at this point in the 1916 photograph (Fig. 1). At the other end of this range, adjoining the crosswing, there is now no truss. However, the purlins in bay III have mortices for wind braces from this truss position, while it appears also that they have the ends of splayed scarfs at this point, similar to those that can be seen at T3. Thus, it is inferred that the range formerly extended for (probably) one more bay. The 'fair face' of the open truss T3 faces to the north, so this was the 'high end', probably containing a chamber perhaps with solar over. Bay I was presumably used for service.

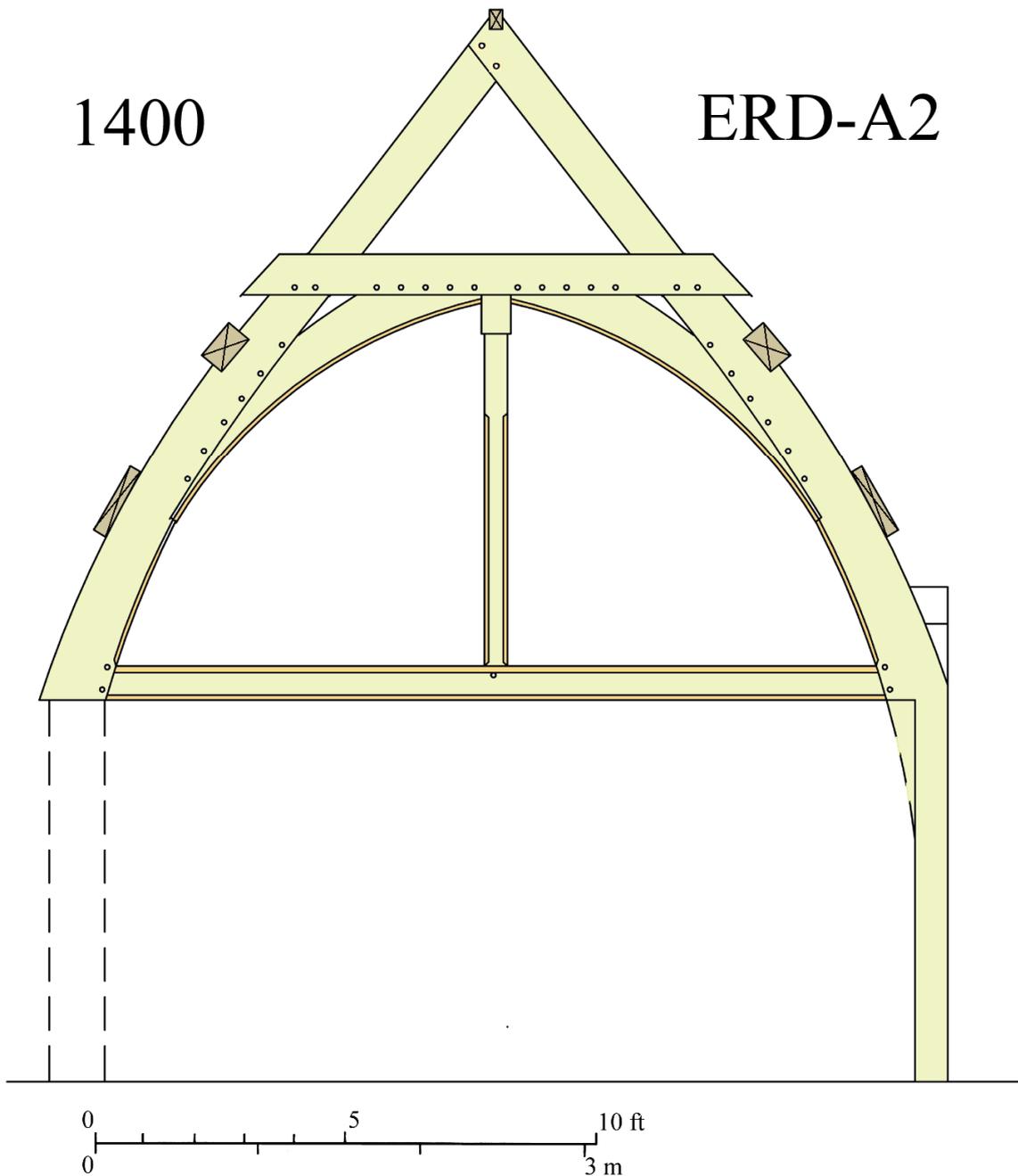


Fig. 4. Section of Truss T2

Truss T3 is a magnificent arch-braced open cruck truss.¹ It is particularly notable, firstly for the massive size of the blades, reaching 18in across at the elbow, and secondly for the central post and tiebeam, very unusual in an open truss. Although these might be thought to be later insertions as part of a conversion to a closed partition, they can be recognised as primary, since the chamfers on the blades are carefully stopped just above the junction with the low beam. The central post is chamfered to give it an approximately octagonal form. This structural feature has been identified in a small number of houses, mainly cruck-built, in the Midlands. The purpose of these beams is enigmatic, but they have been the subject of a detailed study (Alcock & Moran (1984); cf. STW-A); the most plausible suggestion seems to be that these beams held hangings providing temporary divisions between the two bays of an open hall.

Truss T2 is a more standard closed cruck truss, with the blades less elbowed and with packing pieces to carry the purlins. The apexes of both crucks are hidden by the ceiling, though they are visible in Fig. 5, and can be accessed from the end of the building; in T3, the blades extend to the ridge, with a square cut-out for the (missing) ridge-beam); the saddle of truss T2 carried a king-post (apex 'F1').

The crosswing

The crosswing that replaced the earlier upper end bay of the cruck house itself contains very substantial carpentry. Both gable trusses are preserved in part, with close-studding above the arch-braced tiebeams (Fig. 1); although the framing below this now has square panels, the 1916 photographs suggests that this and the north wall were formerly also close-studded.



Fig. 5 The crosswing trussT5: (a) view;

(b) detail of the post chamfering at first floor level

The central truss (T5; Figs. 5, 6 has a strongly cambered collar with knee braces to the wall-posts, and the latter are carved with chamfered ribs on the inner faces (with pyramid stops, Fig. 13). Two raking struts span between the tiebeam and collar. This truss was partitioned at ground-floor level, demonstrated by a series of stave holes in the soffit of the mid-rail; this partition and the joists of the upper floor have been removed. This upper floor was undivided and must originally have been a fine solar or first floor

¹ The large block supporting the south purlin (seen in Fig. 3) is an insertion, probably because of failure in the scarf joint; it had already been inserted by 1916 was taken.

chamber, open to the roof and spanned by the impressive arch-braced truss. Curiously, the chamfered ribs are offset on the posts (Fig. 5b); this possibly results from the ribs being intentionally much narrower than the posts, and being set towards the west side, so that from this side the post appears to have multiple chamfers. The roof structure has clasped purlins, with the principals reduced above the collar, though expanded at the apex (inaccessible for recording); each bay has large chamfered wind braces.

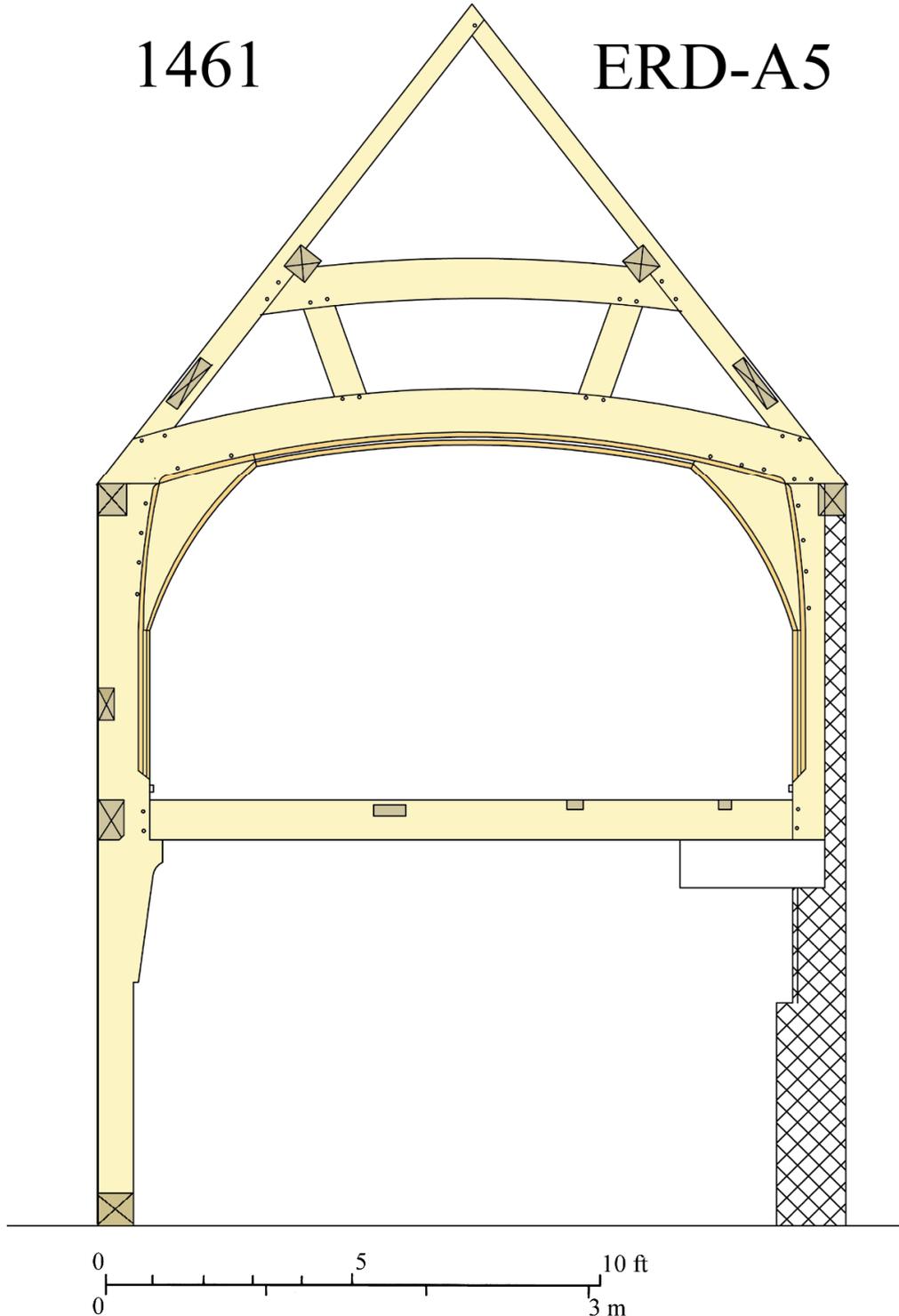


Fig. 6. Section of Truss T5

Later alterations

Relatively little evidence of later alterations has survived the extensive reconstruction undertaken in 1915-16 (dated on the crosswing fireplace); these would certainly have included the flooring of the hall and the provision of a fireplace for it, perhaps in the later sixteenth century. What appears to be the

chimney for the hall can be seen in the earliest photograph of the building (c. 1895), apparently placed on the hall side of truss 2, one of the typical positions for the insertion of fireplaces.²

In bay I, probably in the early seventeenth century (suggested from the form of the chamfer stops on the axial beam), an upper floor was inserted, and (probably at the same time) a large inglenook fireplace added against the end wall. Tree-ring date (c) indicates that the tiebeam in truss T2 is a replacement, rather than primary to the truss, using timber felled between 1591 and 1621 (suggesting a most likely date of c. 1610 for the replacement). It is plausible though not demonstrable that this alteration took place at the same time as the insertion of the bay I floor, the replacement tiebeam perhaps being needed because the original one was at the wrong level for the new floor.

Early descriptions (1782; 1810, below) identify the building as including a house, barn, stable and shop (workshop). All these were certainly located in the long range to the south of the main house, which by 1735 had encroached onto the roadway (obviously at its west end). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, an additional cottage was created out of the wing of the original house, the latter becoming the 'Green Man Inn'. Shortly before 1810, the barn range was turned into three cottages, though the eastern end remained as part of the inn, as did a small section at the west end. This arrangement is clearly seen in early photographs; this southern range was also timber-framed, perhaps of sixteenth-century date.

The 1915-16 renovation

Building control plans survive for the 1915-16 alterations for Rushton's Brewery.³ The plan is very much as the building now exists; it is drawn partly in red and partly in black, the red perhaps being the new-build, the black existing; if so, the existing wall-line was unchanged. However, no plan is given of the cottages as they then were. The building includes a cellar at the south end with access beside the fireplace of the south room, but none of this lies under the historic footprint. The proposals also included a bowling green, and a garden at the rear of the public house. Probably as part of this renovation, but perhaps later in the twentieth century, the south wing (the cottages, formerly the barn and workshop) was replaced by a new range, which appears to have been intended as a club room or similar, since it has a arch-braced truss, possibly designed to resemble that in the main range.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

For dendrochronology abbreviations see page facing Introduction.

Sampling Comments: Seven samples were taken from the hall and northern crosswing of the building to try to obtain a precise dating sequence for the building. Four samples were from the hall range, and three from the crosswing. Very few timbers were suitable, as all of the wind-braces and purlins in the hall range were of elm, as were the crucks of the closed truss. The few remaining timbers were of very fast-grown oak, as were the majority of the timbers in the crosswing. The roof had evidently suffered from a fire in the past, and none of the original rafters of the hall range remained; some of the rafters to the crosswing had also been replaced. The floor to the crosswing had also been entirely removed except for the lower transverse beam. The building had a traditional construction date of 1306, although this was considered unlikely on typological grounds. The upper reaches of both ranges were accessed by a scaffold tower, and sampling achieved through the taking of 12mm cores.

The two crucks were found to match together, and were combined to form a 76-ring sequence (Ile12) with complete sapwood. However, this failed to date with either the reference chronologies or any of the other samples. The arch-brace to the rear cruck retained complete sapwood, and the two multiple cores taken to maximise the total length of sequence throughout the timber were combined to form the mean Ile3, which dated, spanning the years 1331-1399. This included 25¼ rings of sapwood complete to the bark edge, giving a precise felling date of spring 1400. The tiebeam from the closed truss was

² BCA, WK/E2/106. See also photographs of 1915 (*ibid*, 199, 485)

³ BCA, Building control 1915 26325, submitted Jan 4 1915; annotated: Work completed Nov. 1916. It was prepared by James & Lister Lea.

suspected to have been an insertion, due to the jointing of the studs which it supported into the crucks. This was confirmed from the dendrochronology.

The northern crosswing produced three dated samples, the two centre posts from which matched together to form the mean **lle56**. This was dated, spanning the years 1359-1423. Both timbers had what initially appeared to be either a heartwood/sapwood boundary or even complete sapwood, but this was difficult to determine under the thick layers of black paint. On analysis, neither retained any sapwood rings, but did seem to have a heartwood/sapwood boundary. These were at 1416 for sample **lle6** and 1423 for sample **lle5**. The third sample **lle7** was from the principal rafter, which had a last measured ring date of 1455, which included 23 rings of sapwood. The three samples were combined to using the OxCal analysis to derive a single combined felling date range. This produced a most likely felling date range of 1456-61, although the two earlier dates had very little overlap between this range and their predicted felling date ranges. However, it is clear that the three samples are contemporary, and that the crosswing could not have been built *before* 1455. This means that either the two earlier samples had an unusual number of sapwood rings (outside the normal 95% confidence range), or that they had been stockpiled for a number of years. As very few rings were probably lost from sample **lle7**, the 1456-61 range is probably the most appropriate for this group of samples. Apart from the match between **lle5** and **lle6**, there was no appreciable cross-matching between the contemporary samples, suggesting that they came from different growing environments, and thus were probably subject to different management regimes.

TREE-RING SAMPLE RECORD AND SUMMARY OF DATING

Sample Code	Sample Location	Total Rings	Sapwood Rings	FMR Date	LHR Date	LMR Date
Hall						
lle1	Rear cruck open truss (T3)	72	14C			
lle2	Front cruck open truss (T3)	74	13+1 NM			
lle12	<i>Mean of lle1 + lle2</i>	76	14C			
lle3a	Rear arch-brace open truss (T3)	43	H/S	1331	1373	1373
lle3b	ditto	43	25¼C	1357	1374	1399
lle3	<i>Mean of lle3a + lle3b</i>	69	25¼C	1331	1374	1399
lle4a	Tiebeam closed truss (T2)	26		1474		1499
lle4b	ditto	105	H/S	1474	1578	1578
lle4c	ditto	72	H/S	1510	1581	1581
lle4	<i>Mean of lle4a + lle4b + lle4c</i>	108	1	1474	1580	1581
Crosswing						
lle5	South centre post (T5)	65	H/S	1359	1423	1423
lle6	North centre post (T5)	46	H/S?	1371	1416	1416
lle56	<i>Mean of lle5 + lle6</i>	65	H/S?	1359		1423
lle7	North centre principal rafter (T5)	66	23	1390	1432	1455

Because of the different methodology used, no date category has been assigned.

Site master lle3: 69 rings long dated to 1331-1399 with *t*-values of 5.6(HIGHTOWN), 5.3(HENGOED).

Site sequence: lle4: 108 rings long dated to 1474-1581 with *t*-values of 5.3(ARDEN2), 5.1(SEECHM2).

Site master lle56: 65 rings long dated to 1359-1423 with *t*-values of 6.9(HIGHTOWN), 6.7(HERECB2).

Site sequence: lle7: 66 rings long dated to 1390-1455 with *t*-values of 5.4(PIXPORCH), 5.0(SENLAND).

Felling dates and ranges: Sample lle3 with complete sapwood: **Spring 1400**.

Sample lle4: 1592-1625, OxCal refined felling date range **1591-1621**.

Samples lle5: 1435-68; lle6: 1428-61; lle7: 1456-77. OxCal refined felling date range: **1456-61**.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

Situation

The Green Man (the later Lad in the Lane) is situated on what was originally an isolated site in Wood End, Erdington. It lies beside Bromford Road (Green Man Lane in 1804), and ‘the way from Woodend to Bromford’ in 1655; to the south was Beech Lane (now lost), and to the north of the adjoining croft, the road to Minworth (now Kingsbury Road), and (until 1804) Woodend or Birches Green.

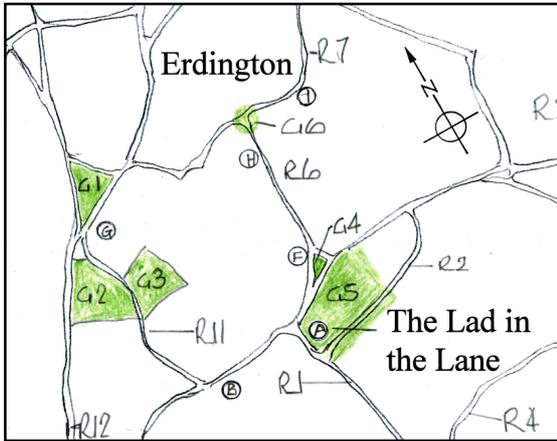


Fig. 7. Medieval landscape features in Erdington around the Lad in the Lane, based on Tomlinson's 1760 map (prepared by Mike Beard).

*G4 = Birches Green/Wood End Green
G5 = Langley Hurst
R1 = Bromford Lane. R2 = Beech Lane*

Summary

The house (or its location) was formerly known as Clayhole. It can be traced from before 1437 to the late sixteenth century in ownership of the Hopkyns family, passing then to Richard Norton (by 1605) and then back to Humphrey Hopkins (by 1629) and his son William. By 1710, it was owned by Henry Leake, and from before 1760 to 1804 belonged to the Dawson family. It was bought by Margaret Butler in 1810, and was bequeathed to her son Edward who left it in 1829 to his nephew Thomas Hailstone and his wife Mary. By 1872 it had come into the hands of Elizabeth Whitehouse, and in 1901 was sold by her grandchildren, Jane and Louisa Whitehouse, to Frederick Wiseman. In 1911, it was acquired by Rushton's Brewery.

The documentary evidence falls into four sections, the last three demarcated by the maps of the parish of Aston (including Erdington) for 1760 and 1833; detailed maps also survive for 1804 and 1848.⁴ It is most conveniently examined starting with the last of these periods, when the most detailed information is found in the title deeds. In the period from 1760 to 1833, the main sources are wills, with the framework of ownership provided by Land Tax assessments. Before 1760, the principal evidence comes from surveys, rentals and court rolls for the manor of Erdington, supplemented by some wills.

1830 onwards

The starting point for the history in this period is the will of Edward Butler, farmer, proved at Lichfield on 30 Mar 1830 (dated 6 Aug 1829). His real estate was partly the former property of his mother, Margaret Butler and had partly been purchased by him from Lord Howe. He left it all to Mary Hailstone, the wife of his nephew Thomas Hailstone,⁵ for life, and then to Thomas for his life. After that, the property was to be split between their children:

To Edward Butler Hailstone: the Green Man Public House and the garden belonging thereto, also the croft adjoining, now or late used as a garden with the appurtenances, exclusive of the three houses adjoining with their gardens

To his brothers and sisters (undivided): the rest of the real estate.

The 1848 Tithe map and apportionment labels the Butler property as plots 1129-1131 and shows it in the ownership of John Whitehouse. However, the deed evidence indicates that this is an over-

⁴ 1760: BCA, 292886; 1804: WCRO QS75/6 (Enclosure Map); 1833: BCA, 349833; 1848 (Tithe Map): BCA, copy of Library accession 14025.

⁵ IGI: 30 May 1822, St Martin, Birmingham, Thomas Hailstone = Mary Simkins

simplification. Although Whitehouse owned the former croft (1129-30 and part of 1131), he did not own the Green Man itself, nor the cottage that belonged to William Butler; however, his grand-daughters, Louisa Elizabeth and Jane Diana Whitehouse between them acquired the whole site by 1901. John Whitehouse died in 1868, and his will names his wife Elizabeth, daughter-in-law, Jane, two grandsons and two grand-daughters.

Ownership as given in 1848 in the Aston Tithe apportionment

<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Occupied</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Area (a-r-p)</i>
C.1129	various	Houses & gardens	0-3-5
C.1130		gardens	0-2-0
C.1131	Geo Ryman & others	Green Man Inn premises, houses & gardens	0-3-1

The pub

The development of ownership after 1830 was very complicated and is most clearly described from the deeds of the pub.⁶ In 1855, Edward Butler Hailstone sold it for £750 to Abraham Dunn of Birches Green, merchant. His mother, Mary, had died in 1836, but the sale was subject to his father's life interest; he had left England 10 years earlier and had not been heard of since, so this was probably not regarded as a serious obstacle.⁷ The deed also indicates that Thomas Hailstone had built six cottages on the rest of the property, and these are shown on the deed plan (Fig. 8); it appears that they had been sold to John Whitehouse of Erdington, who covenanted to produce a series of earlier deeds for the property (see below); according to the will, they would have passed to Edward Butler Hailstone's siblings. At this point, the deed plan shows that the pub occupied only the southern bay of the hall, together with the southern end of the original house and part of the range lying to its south. At some time before 1872, the pub passed from Abraham Dunn to Abraham Dixon, although the relevant deed has disappeared;⁸ in that year he sold it to Mrs Elizabeth Whitehouse of Erdington, widow. In 1883, she bequeathed it to her two grand-daughters, Louisa Elizabeth and Jane Diana Ann Whitehouse.

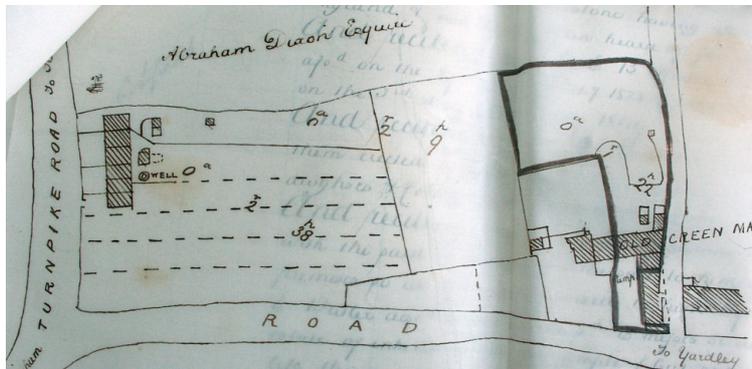


Fig. 8. Deed plan of the Old Green Man in 1855 (from conveyance: Hailstone to Dunn).

William Butler's cottage

The northern part of the house comprising the crosswing and the upper bay of the hall was the cottage formerly occupied by Thomas Archer and then by William Butler, that had been left by Margaret Butler

⁶ Kindly produced by Russell Tillison of Kimbell & Co, Milton Keynes, on behalf of Scottish & Newcastle.

⁷ The deeds contain a certificate from the Superintendent of Police at Hobart, Tasmania, showing that Thomas, of Green Ponds, Tasmania, had died on 28 Nov 1870 at Hobart. We can see hints of a family tragedy here. Edward was only born in about 1828 (from his age in the 1841-51 censuses), so was still very young when his mother died and his father emigrated. In both 1841 and 1851, we find him living in Curdworth in the home of his grandfather William Simkins (aged 88 in 1851), so presumably had been abandoned by his father.

⁸ It is possible that what really happened was a change of name, but no evidence of this has come to light.

to her son, William. In 1837, he sold it to William Reeves of Erdington, farmer, who left it in his 1844 will to his three daughters, Ann, Jane and Elizabeth.⁹ Anne's and Elizabeth's shares were acquired in 1856 by Abraham Dixon (Fig. 9a), and in 1872 this two-thirds was sold on to Jane Whitehouse of Erdington, widow. She must also have acquired the remaining third since, in her will of 1873, she left the whole of this cottage to her daughter Louisa Elizabeth Whitehouse.

The other cottages and the croft

For the ownership of the croft we have no direct deed evidence, but various sources confirm that it was acquired before 1848 by John Whitehouse, presumably from Edward Butler Hailstone (or his possible brothers and sisters); in 1855, John gave a covenant to Abraham Dunn to produce the earlier deeds for the site. When he died in 1868, he left the croft to his grand-daughter Jane Diana, who sold a part of it with the pub in 1901. It appears by 1887 (OS map) to have become part of the adjoining big house, Glenthorne, the home in 1891 of John Yates, edge-tool manufacturer; in 1902 it (probably with the croft) was bought by Birmingham City Council. The three cottages that formed part of the south range of the Lad in the Lane must have passed with the croft to John Whitehouse, and were specifically left to his grand-daughter Jane Diana.

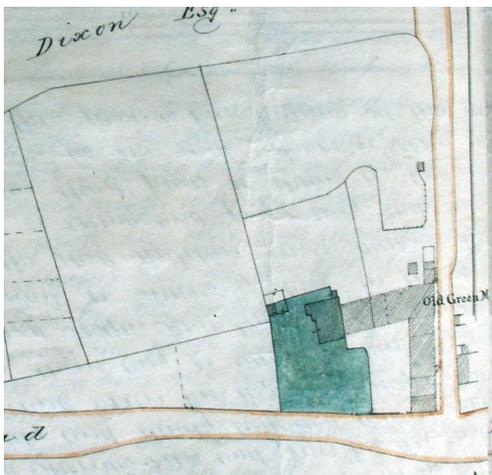


Fig. 9(a). Deed plan of the north cottage in 1856 (from conveyance: Reeve to Dixon).

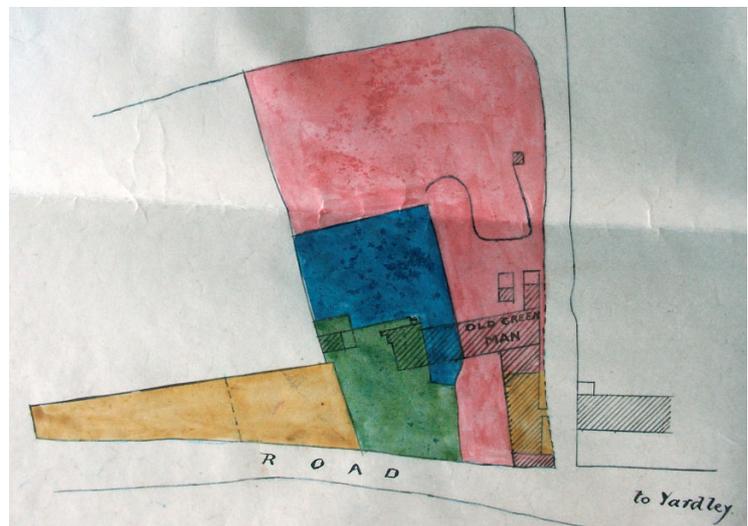


Fig. 9(b). Deed plan of the Old Green Man and adjoining property in 1901 (from conveyance: Whitehouse sisters to Wiseman).

The whole property

In 1901, the whole property was sold by the two Whitehouse sisters to Frederick Charles Wiseman, beer retailer, of the Gate Inn, Lichfield Road, Aston, for £3750; the complex colouring (Fig. 9b) of the deed plan identifies four separate components. Pink was the pub itself, owned by the sisters jointly (bequeathed by Elizabeth Whitehouse); blue and green belonged to Louisa (bequeathed by her mother, Jane); the blue had been leased with the pub. The yellow part, including frontage land north of the green part, and two cottages in the pub's south wing belonged to Jane Diana, and had been inherited directly from her grandfather John.

In 1910, Wiseman died and the property was sold to Rushton's Brewery for £5,000. They had already acquired an interest in the pub (probably through a lease in about 1901), since on 11 March 1901, they leased the Old Green Man to George Birkbeck for 7 years, though he only held it briefly, assigning it in 1902 to Walter and Albert Scattergood, sign-writers, who are recorded in the directories from 1902-5 (below). In 1938, Rushton's sold it to Ansell's Brewery and, following various mergers, the pub is now part of the Scottish and Newcastle group.

⁹ 1872 abstract of Abraham Dixon

1760 to 1829

The poorly preserved 1760 map of Erdington parish shows the house as an L-shaped building on plot C1, with the identification:

In Dawsons land Widow Coleman [*occupier*]
 C1 house & gdn, 0.20.5.
 C2 Croft 1.1.0; [1.0.20 net]

In 1833, Plot 959 had:

Owner: Devises of late Edward Butler.
 Occupiers: James Green, Green Man Inn
 3 [others]: Houses & Gardens

John Dawson, the 1760 owner, occurs in the Land Tax assessment for 1777.¹⁰ The sequence of sequence of owners and tenants can be identified, always paying 10s, from then until 1829, when Edward Butler is listed; after which, the listing is rearranged, and this specific property cannot be identified.

Land Tax owners and occupiers

<i>Years</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Tenant</i>
1781	Mr Dawson	Widow Phillips
1782-3	Mr Dawson	Wm Wallins
1785	Widow Dawson	Wm Wallins
1786-92	Tho Dawson	Jn Turner
1793-7	Tho Dawson	Own possession
1798	Tho Dawson	Jn Turner
1800	Tho Dawson	Wm Littlealse
1802-3	Tho Dawson	Wm Buttler
1804-9	Wm Nield	Wm Buttler
1811	Mr Butler [<i>apparently Mr, but almost certainly correctly Mrs</i>]	Wm Butler
1812-13	Mrs Butler	Thos Rowley
1814	Edw Butler	Thos Rowley
1815	Edw Butler	Sandford
1816-28	Edw Butler	In hand [also other entries]
1829	Edw Butler	Self & Newman [broken up] 8s 9d
1832	Late Butler now Hailstone	Self & Mansell 8s 9d

Deeds in this period

A listing of the deeds as they were covenanted to be produced is found among the title deeds for the pub (Table, p. 13).¹¹

¹⁰ WCRO QS77/17. The earliest assessments, for 1773-4, are damaged and the relevant name cannot be identified.

¹¹ Two copies exist. The deed of 1830 is recited in the 1872 abstract of title of Abraham Dixon; an original covenant of 1855 from John Whitehouse to Abraham Dunn lists the same deeds.

Deeds covenanted to be produced in 1830 and 1855.:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 Apr 1773	Deed to lead the uses of a fine. John Dawson of Sutton Coldfield, yeoman, and his wife, Mary, to trustees (presumably a family settlement)
27 Jan 1778	Will of John Dawson, proved 1782
10 Oct 1784	Mortgage by Thomas Dawson of Erdington and Hannah his wife, to William Cramley the elder of New Hall Mills, for £100
10 Oct 1787	Further mortgage, same to same, for £110
30-31 Jan 1805	Lease and release by Thomas Dawson & Mary Cramley to William Niels [<i>sic</i> for Nield] of Erdington, tailor, and trustee (conveying the property)
14-15 Dec 1810	Niels and trustee to Edward Butler and Margaret Butler (conveyance to Margaret)
15 Dec 1810	Assignment of mortgage to 'attend the inheritance'

Will of John Dawson of Sutton Coldfield, yeoman. Proved 2 July 1782

Although none of these deeds have been located, the original will of John Dawson exists at Lichfield Record Office. The disposition of his property was:

He is seized for life by settlement of premises in Birmingham and Erdington in Aston, with power to settle, of a messuage in Lichfield Street, Birmingham; a messuage in St Thomas's Street, Birmingham; a messuage at Erdington with shop, barn, stable buildings, orchard, premises and croft containing 2 acres near said messuage, now in occupation of William Phillips & John Bird.

These are left to his dear wife Mary Dawson for her life, then the Erdington property to his son Thomas; the St Thomas's Street property to his daughter Ann, wife of William Pratt of Birmingham, toy-maker; the Lichfield Street property to his daughter Mary, wife of Richard Kesterton of Sutton Coldfield, yeoman.

Sale by Nield¹²

Furthermore, the 1855 sale by Edward Butler Hailstone recites a considerable part of the 15 Dec 1810 conveyance by William Nield to Margaret Butler. The property as sold in 1810 is described as:

Five messuages, one a public house, the Green Man, all occupied by William Butler, Joseph Shaw, Robert Price, Thomas Archer and Joseph Smith, that were one dwelling house with a shop and barn, part then having been converted to another dwelling house by Thomas Dawson, and the other part since to three dwelling houses.

AND

an adjoining croft containing 2 acres, bounded by the land of Sir Henry Bridgeman, bart., called Freemans Croft, the road from Wood End to Birmingham, Stoney Lane and Beech Lane, together with a small plot allotted at enclosure.

The 1804 Enclosure Map (Fig. 10) identifies this additional property.¹³ It also labels 'Green Man' and Dawson on the map. The schedule of exchanges at enclosure includes:

Heneage Legge to Thomas Dawson.

A46. Allotment of Legge adjoining Green Man Public House next to Birches Green, area 0-0-1, bounded:

- (W) Road to Bromford Forge [*Green Man Lane on the map*]
- (S) Beech Lane
- (E) Inclosures of Thomas Dawson

¹² The spelling of his name is variable, Nield, Neeld, Niels, all being found, but it seems that Nield is probably correct.

¹³ WCRO QS75/6.

This was in exchange for an addition to allotment 258, from Dawson to Legge (not on Fig. 10).

Thomas Dawson received two allotments:

107 (area 0-0-27)

(N) Minworth Road

(W) Green Man Lane [*i.e. Bromford Lane*]

(SE) ancient inclosures of Thomas Dawson

(E) Allotment 25

108 (area 0-1-22), Near Tyburn Bridge, adjoining canal (not on Fig. 10).

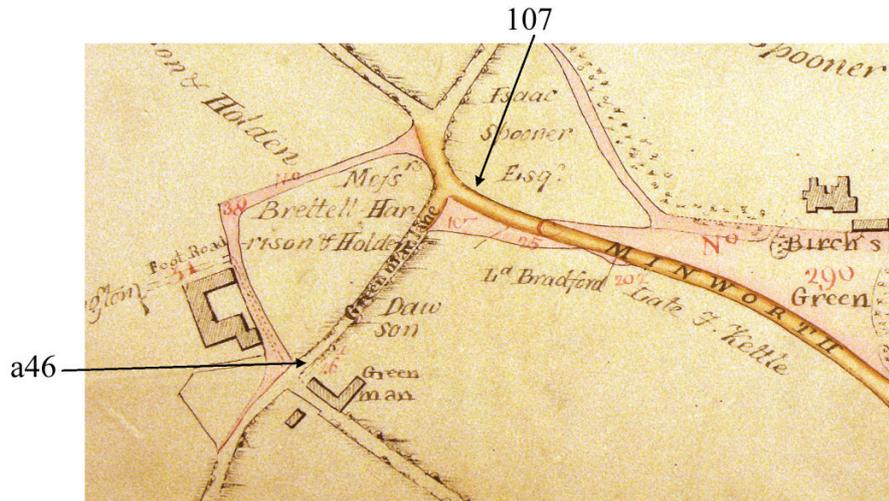


Figure 10. Section of 1804 enclosure map of Aston parish (WCRO QS75/6).

Will of Margaret Butler (Lichfield, proved 1 Mar 1814)

The next stage, following the purchase from Nield, is recorded in the will of Margaret Butler of Erdington, widow, dated 11 June 1813.

‘I give and devise to my son Edward Butler All those four Freehold messuages (one of which is now used as a Public House and called the Green Man) with all the outbuildings, etc. situate at Wood End in Erdington, now in the several tenures of Thomas Rowley, Joseph Shaw, Robert Price and ...Finch or their respective undertenants. Also a Croft or Close or parcel of land, containing by estimation 2 acres, lying at Wood End, adjoining the said messuages, gardens, belonging thereto. And also that small plot of land containing by estimation 20 perches lying at Wood End and now laid open to and occupied with the said Croft, Together with the buildings, ways, waters etc. etc. and appurtenances to the four messuages, outbuildings, etc.’

‘I give and devise to William Butler all that other Freehold messuage or Tenement situate at Wood End - late in the occupation of Thomas Archer but now of the said William Butler, adjoining to the said messuage in the occupation of the said Robert Price herein before devised by me to my said son Edward Butler, on the one side and the said Croft devised by me to my son Edward Butler on the other side thereof.’

‘The title deeds and writings in my possession relating to the whole of the said Freehold messuages, lands and Premises ... shall be from and after my deceased held by my son Edward Butler...He is to enter into a deed of covenant to William Butler, to produce them.

‘The lease lately granted to me by Heneage Legge Esquire of the messuage, Farm, and premises at Erdington ... which I now occupy’ is given to Edward, who is the executor.

The final steps during this phase were the bequests by Edward in his 1829 will, already examined. Also into this period fall the last of a long series of suitor rolls and chief rent lists for the manor of Erdington, which are of critical importance for the earlier history and are considered in the next section. In particular, the entry in the rent list for 1783-4 establishes its former name, the rent paid and that the house was a pub by this date. It reads:

Widow (Thomas) Dawson for house & land lately called Clayhole House, now the Green Man Publick House, paying 4d rent.

1570 to 1760

The bulk of the evidence from this period comes from documents relating to the manor of Erdington, the rolls of the manor court, suitor rolls (lists of those who had to attend the court), and lists of ‘chief rents’, small sums paid by freeholders for the property they owned. These last were often established far back in the medieval period, when a freeholder was granted some land, and continued to be collected until at least the end of the eighteenth century. As already noted, the last in the series confirm the ownership of the Green Man, indicate that it was formerly known as Clayhole House, and that it paid a chief rent of 4d a year. The actual texts are (amendments made to the lists are in brackets):¹⁴

1783-4: Chief rent list, p. 2.

Widow (Thomas) Dawson for house & land lately called Clayhole House, now the Green Man publick house, Wm Wallis (John Turner) tenant. 1783: 4d; 1784: 4d.

p. 16. [Old Incroachments] Widow (Thos) Dawson for part of his barn near his house in Clay Hole. William Wallins (John Turner) tenant. 1783: 2d; 1784: 2d.

1792. Similar to 1783-4, but only Thomas Dawson is listed

1798. Suitor List. Dawson is not listed, and possible tenant names cannot be identified.

Henry Leake

The preceding chief rent listing to that of 1783-4 is dated to Michaelmas 1735, and no references to the house have been found between then and the 1760 map.¹⁵ This listing includes:

f. 1v. Hen. Leak for 23 years Chief for Clay Hole House & land at 4d pr. Ann ending at Mich 1735.
For an encroachment at 2d per annum (presumably the extension of the barn over the edge of the road noted in 1783-4)

A suit roll of 1710 includes Henry Leake among the list of resident freeholders;¹⁶ a curious partial survey of the manor of about the same date raises a number of queries about the location of properties identified in earlier documents.¹⁷ Under *N*, it includes:

Which is Nickecross lane

Nortons Land is now H. Leaks House called Clay Hole

Nickcross stood at the Green Lane End next Cuckolds Corner leading to Maney

Thus, Henry Leake owned Clay Hole from before 1710 until 1735, when he died (see below) and, unlike John Dawson, he did live there. The Leake family acquired the house from the Hopkins family, sometime after 1655 (below), though a family of this name had been present in Aston since the early sixteenth century, with parish register entries (among others): burials of Margery Leake of Erdington in 1546, of Thomas Leake of Castle Bromwich in 1635, and of Edward the son of Henry Leake of Castle Bromwich in 1641.

Hearth Tax assessment

The 1666 Hearth Tax lists both William Hopkins, junior, and Henry Leake, each with two hearths and a forge,¹⁸ so does not help us decide when Leake acquired the property. Similarly, a Tithe Corn Book of 1677 lists Henry Leake, and also William, Thomas and Widow Hopkins.¹⁹

¹⁴ 1783-4: BCA, 277260; typescript (location of original unknown); 1792: BCA, 347955; 1798: BCA, 375169.

¹⁵ BCA, 349805.

¹⁶ BCA, 349831, f. 17a & b.

¹⁷ BCA, 349832, f. 14.

¹⁸ TNA, E179/259/9, f. 149. In 1670, Henry Leeke had two hearths, and William Hopkins three hearths; WCRO QS11/22.

¹⁹ BCA, 277261.

The 1655 survey

No relevant manorial documents survive before 1710 until 1655, the date of a detailed survey of Erdington.²⁰ This identifies the property by its abutments, by the name, Clayhole, and also as Nortons.

[*Fair copy*] ff. 16-17.²¹ [John Jordan] One close called Freemans Croft – bounded: Sir George Devereux, Beech Lane, land of Wm Hopkins jun, Woodend Green.

f. 17. [Wm Hopkins Jun] One messuage house and croft belonging to the same called the CLAYHOLE, and lieth to the way from Woodend to Bramford, the land of John Jordan aforesaid [*preceding entry*], Beech Lane of all partes.

This was Nortons land

[*apparently also William Hopkins*] One new-erected cottage in Woodend with a backside, called Hony Pitts, and lieth to the land of Thomas Bloxwiche, the land of Ambrose Eagles, the highway and the land of Sir Robert Holt on all partes

A rental of 1648 confirms the correlation with Henry Leake's 4d rent.²²

m. 2. Of Humfrey Hopkins for his messuage & land late Nortons, 0-0-2[d].[for half year]

It also includes three other Hopkins entries:

Of William Hopkins of Moore Ende for his messuage & other lands 0-0-3 2/4d [3½d]

Of Mr Kinnersley for a three penny day math bought of John Hopkins of Warde Ende 0-0-2/4[½d]

Of John Hopkins of Rowdon Ende for a cottage and backside in Rowdon & one close called Horestone and a 3 penny math in Ashold & some common lande. 0-0-2 2/4[½d]

These names can be recognised in a series of suitor lists dating from c. 1575 to 1655, although they are confusing in places; bold type indicates entries possibly relating to Clayhole, and italics added annotations.²³

Undated, c. 1575 [f. 1]	John Hopkyns [William] (Widow) Hopkyns de Wytton William Hopkyns de Parva Bromwiche
1598 [f.2]	William Hopkins <i>pro servic militar, alien[ated to] Ric Norton</i>
1629 [f. 3] (with many annotations, often not clear)	Rich Norton <i>discended to his sonne Richard & he alienated to Humfr Hopkyns</i>
1636	Humfrey Hopkins John Hopkyns Jo Kynnersleye } for Humfr Hopkyns land Jo: Page }
1651/2	The names of Freeholders John Hopkins sone of Ambrose Hopkins defunct, daughter Sarah heire John Hopkyns Wm Hopkyns sen Homfrey Hopkins Wm Hopkins, jun

²⁰ BCA, 349825, fair copy; 347948, draft copy

²¹ The names in brackets are only given in the draft copy. That of William Hopkins is annotated '17 Eliz; role 40 Eliz', which probably refer to court rolls of the 17th and 40th years of Queen Elizabeth's reign (1575 and 1598); for the first roll, see below; the second is lost.

²² BCA, 347922a & b, 2 apparently identical copies. The previous rental, of 1615 (BCA, 349807) omits the chief rents.

²³ Series bound up in BCA, 349831. That for 1629 has a number of annotations, apparently in the same hand as that of the 1710 queries, perhaps made by the early 18th century estate steward.

1652 [f. 5]	John Hopkins	Homfrey Hopkins
		Wm Hopkins jun
		John Hopkins
1655 [f. 7b.] Includes	John Hopkins	John Hopkins
		Wm Hopkins, sen

.It is unclear why the final list does not include William, junior, who is recorded in the survey of the same year.

Several wills help to fill in the evidence for this period. In 1606, Richard Norton of Nechells Park in the parish of Aston near Birmingham, yeoman, left to his wife Elienor, ‘my messuage & croft in Erdinton I late had and purchased of William Hopkins.’ It then passed to his son Thomas or, for want of heirs, to his second son Richard Norton.²⁴ His probate inventory shows no apparent links to Clayhole, so he may have been living elsewhere.

In 1654, Humfry Hopkins, yeoman of Erdington, bequeathed ‘one messuage or cottage and one shoppe and a crofte & garden’, jointly to his younger son, Thomas, and his younger daughter, Elizabeth. This could be Clayhole but it is more likely the second property listed for William in the 1655 survey, which is described as a cottage. Humfry’s eldest son, William, received a bed and some other furnishings, so probably inherited Clayhole as of right; Humfry’s brother, William, of Moor End, is also mentioned.²⁵

After 1655, probate administrations exist for William Hopkins, 1668, and Thomas Hopkins, 1681, and wills for William Hopkins, 1684, and Thomas Hopkins, 1703.²⁶ The 1668 administration for the first William was granted to his next kinsman, William Hopkins of Erdington, locksmith; the deceased can probably be identified as Humphrey’s brother, William,²⁷ (senior in the suitor lists), with the younger William’s death occurring in 1684. His brother, Thomas was still alive then, so may not have died until 1703.²⁸ Whether William was still living at Clayhole in 1684 cannot be firmly established.

With this evidence, the ownership in the seventeenth century can be tabulated as:

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Owner</i>
by 1598 to before 1605	William Hopkins
to 1605	Richard Norton, father
Soon after 1605	Richard Norton, son
by 1629 to 1654	Humfrey Hopkins
1654 to 1684 (?)	William Hopkins, junior
By 1710	Henry Leake

Rentals, court rolls and account rolls before 1600

The court rolls for the manor of Erdington run in a long series from the fourteenth century to 1594 (with a few later fragments). They include in particular rolls for a number of ‘courts of recognition’, usually held on the inheritance of a new owner, at which freeholders on the manor had to appear and make fealty to the new owner. The rolls also record the deaths of freeholders and the inheritance of their heirs. Not only is the survival of such a good series remarkable, but so is their inclusion of information about

²⁴ Richard Norton, 1606, Lichfield.

²⁵ Humfry Hopkins, TNA, PROB11/244, proved by his widow, Joan on 2 July 1655.

²⁶ All at Lichfield Record Office in the year stated. Abstracts of relevant wills and inventories are given in Appendix II of Alcock (2008).

²⁷ This elder William may well have been baptised in 1616, son of Humphrey Hopkins.

²⁸ The Thomas dying in 1681 cannot be identified as a member of the same family.

freeholders. In addition, manorial rentals exist, dating between 1462 and 1573-4, as well as the later chief rent listings already discussed.²⁹

For the later sixteenth century, perhaps the most significant entry is in the court roll for 20 October 1575:

The aforesaid jury present that William Hopkyns of Wytton, who held freely by charter one messuage, one garden, one orchard and one croft, lying together in Erdyngton in a place called Cleyhoale, and certain arable land appurtenant to the said messuage in the common fields in Erdyngton, for an annual rent [blank], fealty, suit of court and heriot when it should arise,³⁰ died since the last court. And the said William Hopkyns during his life by his indented charter, dated 21 September 1560 ... enfeoffed Thomas Rosson and Thomas Wayte with the said property, to hold to the use of William Hopkyns and Elizabeth his wife for their lives, then to remain to the right heirs of William for ever. And the jurors further say that nothing comes to the Lord [of the manor] because of this decease, because Elizabeth holds the property in the name of a jointure [dower] until her death. And that after the death of Elizabeth, the premises should remain to Elizeus [Ellis] Hopkyns, brother and heir of William for ever. And the bailiff is ordered to distrain the said Elizabeth to do fealty to the lord at the next court. [*translated from Latin*]

The court roll for 14th January 1594 reported the death of Elizabeth Hopkins, but without further details, so we cannot be sure that this refers to William's widow, since at least one other Elizabeth Hopkins was living in Erdington at this period.³¹ Several Hopkins wills also survive for this period, notably that of Ellis Hopkins, dated 8 Feb 1574/5, who therefore probably did not survive to inherit his brother's house.³² Thus, the next certain identification of Clayhole comes in the 1598 suit roll already noted, and we do not know the precise relationship between this William Hopkins, and the William who died in 1575.³³

Earlier rentals and courts

From the numerous Hopkins references in the series of rentals and courts of recognition (surveys), we can identify those that relate to the 4d rent associated with Clayhole. These are listed below, in reverse date order.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Entry</i>	
30 Apr 1569	William Hopkyns of Wytton for his meace [messuage] there [Erdington?]	4d
1 Sep 1545	John Hopkins de Wytton	
24 Sep 1543	John Hopkins for his lands	2d and 2d (two payments)
[25 Mar 1543]	John Hobkyns	4d
9 May 1540	Recognition of John Hopkyns for a free tenement John [holds] in his demesne of fee 1 messuage, 1 orchard in Erdyngton <i>prope latus de le Stonelane</i> [beside the Stonelane?], and the <i>placea</i> [plot of land] or croft in which the messuage is situated, abutting on Woddengrene & Bychelane, & 2½ days in Whatcroft and 1 day's land in Hayrowefylde & 1 day in	

²⁹ A series of bailiff's accounts are considered relatively unlikely to be of use and most have not been examined. One stray at Stafford Record Office, D543/C/32/1 (1430-1) included no useful information; those at Westminster Abbey have also been checked.

³⁰ The requirement to forfeit the best beast or best possession on the holder's death – a sort of manorial death duty.

³¹ Named in the will of Edmund Hopkins, 1581; she cannot be William's widow, as if she was, Edmund, their son, would be William's heir.

³² Lichfield, proved 8 Feb 1575. He had a wife, Alice, daughter Johane and brother Thomas

³³ The later William was most probably the son of another brother of William and Ellis Hopkins, perhaps the Thomas mentioned in the latter's will. The missing court roll for the 40th year of Queen Elizabeth, referred to in the 1655 survey would have resolved the problem.

Lydiatetylde. Rent 4d & heriot. And the last heriot paid was Eustace Kytley.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Entry</i>	
11 Apr 1496	No Hopkins entry, but William Somerland holds Fremans Croft	4d
11 Apr 1471	John Hopkins holds freely 1 cottage & garden & 2 crofts adjoining also a croft called Kyttecrofte for 4d rent, and another croft called Tailors crofte for rent 2d and a parcel of meadow for rent ½d	4d
1462-3	John Hopkyns for a messuage and an orchard with appurtenances, late in the tenure of Thomas Perkyns, per annum 4d And for a meadow called Craddoks, per annum ½d And for various other parcels of land in right of his wife, lately [of] William Spenser, viz. For a croft called Katecroft per annum 4d, and for Tailerscroft per annum 2d [totals, half-yearly payments] 5d and 5½d	4d,
1461	John Hopkyns for lands that were William Spenser, in right of his [John's] wife, land called Kyttecrofte, rent 4d & certain lands in Tayllers Crofte rent 2d [and] a messuage, orchard adjoining and another croft called Fremans Crofte that William Somerlane holds, that were in tenure of Thomas Perkyns	4d

The 1540 entry is particularly helpful, since we can recognise the croft as being that of the Lad in the Lane, lying between Wood End Green and Beech Lane; Bromford Lane is here called Stonelane. It is also significant that in the margin of this entry, the seventeenth century steward has noted 'now Humfrey Hopkyns'. From the 1461-71 entries, it appears that at this period Hopkins owned two crofts, the croft or orchard belonging to the house itself and the one called Freeman's Croft (known to adjoin it – see below); John Hopkyns also held two other crofts through his wife, that had belonged to William Spenser (presumably her father).

The regular court rolls also have several relevant entries. The succession on John Hopkyns' death was reported in the court for 29 March 1559.

And they [the jury] also present that John Hopkyns of Wytton who held of the lord of this manor freely by charter one messuage with garden, orchard and croft of land adjoining, lying beside Stonylane, and various arable lands in the common fields in Erdington, by rent per year of 4d, suit of court, fealty and heriot when it arises, died since the last court, so there comes to the lord one black cow price 10s [*heriot*]. And William Hopkyns is his son and next heir and is of full age. And the bailiff is to distrain him for a relief of 2d and for fealty.

Particularly significant are the two earliest court entries relating to John Hopkyns. In 1437, the jury presented that Thomas Holden had alienated a messuage to John Hopkyns, and they were to inquire into it. The answer was apparently not recorded until 1446, when the court roll listed his property comprising a messuage and certain land lately belonging to Thomas Holden, paying 4d, and he made fealty. Before this, the court roll series has a gap between 1380 and 1436, so we have no evidence relating to the period when the Holden family might have acquired the property.

Ownership of the house

The Holden family

The house is first directly referred to in the 1437 court roll (confirmed in 1446), recording that it belonged to John Hopkyns and had formerly been the property of Thomas Holden. We can infer that the Holden family were the original builders, and from this understand why the house is of such exceptional quality. The Holdens were very prominent freeholders in Erdington from the 14th century onwards, and indeed in 1569 acquired the manor house of Pype Hall (the later Wood End House, that stood opposite the Lad in the Lane across Bromford Lane). This same Thomas was the Earl of Warwick's ranger for Sutton Chase, as his descendants were on later occasions; they also held the post of escheator for Warwickshire in the 1460-70s. Thus, it is easy to see Thomas building a new house of a quality befitting

the family's status in 1400, but finding some 30 years later that it was no longer sufficient for the family's needs and disposing of it.

The Hopkyns family

From 1437 until 1559, the house was in the ownership of members of the Hopkyns family, generally a John Hopkyns, but clearly these were not one individual, and we do not have the evidence to distinguish them. By 1461 John Hopkyns (perhaps the second in line) had made a marriage that brought further land to the family, inherited from William Spenser. Before this, perhaps in the 1440s, the house had been let out to Thomas Perkyns, but the wording of the 1461 court suggests that it was again occupied by John Hopkyns, although the croft was held by William Somerlane. Certainly, at just about this date, the house was improved by the replacement of the end bay by the smart chamber block, something that is unlikely to have been undertaken for a tenanted house. The court of survey in 1496 lacks a Hopkins entry, but it appears that William Somerland, (presumably the son of the 1461 man) held the property, presumably as tenant to Hopkins. In the early sixteenth century, the court rolls include William (rather than John) Hopkyns regularly among the jurors,³⁴ and he was probably the owner at this period. His will survives, dated 1534, in which he is described as William Hopkyns of Erdington, smith, and we also have the will of his daughter (?), Isabella Hoppkys of Aston in 1539.³⁵

William's will refers to his six children (un-named), accounting for the proliferation of the family in Erdington in the later sixteenth century. They probably included the next owner of Clayhole, John Hopkyns, living in Witton rather than Erdington. Isabella's will mentions her eldest brother, John, and her two sisters, Jes[...] and Marget.

By 1540, the house must have been owned by the fourth or fifth generation of John Hopkyns, though we have another indication of someone else involved, in the name of Eustace Kyteley (otherwise unrecorded, but perhaps the second husband of a Hopkins widow). In 1545, John Hopkyns was 'of Witton';³⁶ he died in 1559 and was succeeded by his son William, also of Witton, the latter dying in 1575. As described above, some time after the next William succeeded, he sold the house to Simon Norton, though it was re-acquired by Humphrey Hopkins by 1629, and only finally left the family some time around 1700.

We can use the evidence for the Hopkyns family to suggest the answer to one of the most significant questions about the Lad in the Lane. How did it come to be preserved with remarkably little alteration from the fifteenth century until its conversion to a pub and a range of cottages at the end of the eighteenth? This would indicate that it continued to satisfy the needs of the family, and would be entirely consistent with its being the home of a succession of well-off craftsmen – blacksmiths, supplementing their craft with some farming. Studies elsewhere have indicated a strong correlation between moderate-sized well-built houses not associated with much land and ownership by craftsmen; For farming to provide a reasonable income, required more land, a larger house (to accommodate the farm servants), and a more substantial group of farm buildings.³⁷ This interpretation is also consistent with the evidence (above) of the 1666 Hearth Tax and of the buildings as they were described at the end of the eighteenth century, as a dwelling house with shop (i.e. workshop), barn and (sometimes) stables. Furthermore, it explains why, in the early nineteenth century, the workshop and barn were converted to cottages. As well as the demand for additional housing, the result of the increasing population at this period, craftwork was being superseded by factory-based industry, and traditional workshops abandoned.

³⁴ Including in 1524, 1527, 1529 (BCA, 347876-8).

³⁵ This suggested identification rests in part on the mention in her will of the meadow she had bought of her father, coupled with the bequest in his, of Little Overwast meadow to feoffees to sell in order to carry out the instructions of his will. Surprisingly, this deed itself survives (BCA, 348901), though it gives no further information.

³⁶ He is also recorded as of Witton, as a juror in the 1542 court (BCA, 347879).

³⁷ See Alcock (1984), *People at Home*, esp. p. 54.

We can take the 1534 probate inventory of William Hopkyns as typical of the lifestyle of a craftsman family at this period (whether or not he lived at Clayhole). He had a simply furnished hall, with hangings and a trestle table (and presumably forms, though these are not listed); the chamber included a well-appointed bed and three coffers. The house also included a buttery and kitchen (the latter probably detached) and his workshop. If there was a second bedchamber, as might be expected, this was empty. Much of his quite substantial wealth comprised the farm animals (21 cattle and 7 horses) and 14 acres of corn in the field; clearly, he had access to much more land than the 2 acre croft of the Lad.

Later members of the Hopkins family

From the mid sixteenth century onwards, the Hopkins and then the Norton family were definitely not living in the house, and we do not know the names of their tenants. However, for Humphrey Hopkins, the next owner, the will of 1654 plausibly relates to the house. Although no inventory survives, his will lists a number of his goods, particularly the brass and pewter. William Hopkins, dying in 1684, may also have lived in the house. Like the earlier William, though, he too was farming on a much larger scale than would have been possible on the Lad's croft. His inventory lists nine rooms: Hall, Buttery, Dairy House, Parlour, Entry, Malting Houses and Chamber over, Cheese Chamber, Chamber over Hall, as well as the Barn. The will also names the High Chamber (with a bed in it), which may be the same as either the Cheese Chamber or that over the Hall. This can reasonably fit with the Lad, with the Parlour and Cheese Chamber in the crosswing, and the buttery, dairy and entry in the south end (perhaps partly outside the original house). The contents demonstrate a comfortable and prosperous life style, for someone well on in life, with grown-up children.

It is noticeable that, despite its name, the Malting Houses contained a blacksmith's working tools, suggesting that William was moving away from smithing towards farming, and that the Malting Houses had been his forge or workshop. The use of this name also suggests the possibility that beer-brewing for public consumption had already begun by the end of the seventeenth century, as an alternative livelihood to blacksmith's work.

Henry Leake, 1735

The evidence of the chief rent lists indicates clearly that Henry Leake was a resident freeholder, so must have been living in the house when he died in 1735. His inventory lists five rooms, Dwelling House, Parler, Chamber over the House, Chamber over the Parlour, Little Chamber, as well as the Shop (his workshop), although the expected buttery and dairy are not mentioned. Unfortunately it gives no details of their contents, so we cannot be entirely certain that he was a blacksmith, though this is a reasonable inference; the administration documents name a John Leake of Sutton Coldfield, blacksmith, who was perhaps Henry's brother.