

Section C: Site History

By Clare Pye

The Hagg Cottages, Nether Alderley, Cheshire, were part of the estate owned by the Stanleys of Alderley, who had been established in the northeast of the county since the fifteenth century. Sir John Stanley became Lord Stanley of Alderley in 1839. The sixth Lord Stanley sold the whole estate including the cottages in 1938, and the houses themselves were demolished in the early 1950s by Thomas Neild, who had bought both the cottages and the adjacent Sandhills.

Tracing the history of the occupation of the Hagg is bedevilled by the patchy archival record. There are always problems investigating the rural working class, as they left few records behind them, and generally appear in archives mediated by the local elite. If they get into trouble, need help from the authorities or occasionally appear in the comments of their social superiors, then glimpses of their lives may be seen. This is often at a time of crisis, or we see them as they relate to the wealthier and more educated members of the community, for example as an employee, so we lack an understanding of the normality of their lives as themselves. This is where the archaeological record is so valuable. However, everyone has to appear in the Parish Registers or the Census, and rent payers appear in estate records.

As far as the estate records are concerned, the Stanleys had the misfortune to suffer two fires, in 1779 and 1931, which severely depleted their archives. However, the earlier fire was remedied to some extent in the early nineteenth century by the first Lord Stanley's research, collected in a series of notebooksⁱ, most of which are now in the County Record Office in Chester, together with other surviving estate archives. There is only one estate document from before the 1779 fire, the 1775 Enclosure map for Alderley Edgeⁱⁱ. This shows the open land to be enclosed, but not pre-existing fields, so it does not show the Hagg Cottages. Consequently one has to rely on other sources for glimpses into the situation before 1779.

In his notebookⁱⁱⁱ, Lord Stanley is quite clear about the eastern house; he says it was built for Daniel Dean in either 1746 or 1747. This was confirmed by the date plaque on the house remembered by people who knew the place. There is, however, evidence that there was a pre-existing building at the Hagg; the Poor Law assessment of 1735^{iv} mentions a Widow Dean of the Hagg. She is assessed at 4s 1d, one of the smaller properties in the parish. Her neighbours had larger farms; White Barn was valued at 15s 11d, Brynlow at 17s 10d and Topps at 16s 4d. However, cottages are valued between 1s and 2s, suggesting that her social and economic position comes somewhere between the established tenant farmers and the labouring cottagers. The Alderley parish registers record the burial of a widow, Frances Dean of the Hagg, in 1745^v. The Deans were a multi-branched local family, and difficult to disentangle; there seem to have been at least two Daniels living in the Alderley parish in the middle of the eighteenth century. The Alderley parish records contain very few addresses or place-names, an indication of the closeness of the rural community where every individual was known.

As Figure C.1 shows, in the late eighteenth century the Hagg was a small agricultural holding below the newly enclosed common of Alderley Edge. The Edge was in the process of being landscaped and having tree plantations established on it. There was one family living on the farm. Stanley said that a Frank Timperley married Daniel Dean's daughter and took over the Hagg tenement when his father-in-law died^{vi}. An estate book from the early years of the nineteenth century records the farm at this time.^{vii}

Field number on estate map	Field name	Statute Measure	Cheshire Measure	Value per Acre	Rent payable
222	Higher Pickin	01/02/2025	0/3/5	£2/5/-	£1/15/1½
223	Lower Pickin	01/01/1931	0/2/29	£2/14/-	£1/16/9½
519	Higher Riddings	02/02/1937	01/01/2006	£2/6/-	£2/19/2½
518	Lower Riddings	02/02/2019	1/0/38	£2/-/-	£2/9/6
521	Lower Newfield	01/03/2021	0/3/22	£2/10/-	£2/4/4½
522	Higher Newfield	02/02/1930	01/01/2003	£2/2/-	£2/13/3
523	Turnip Piece	01/02/2020	0/3/3	£1/16/-	£1/7/8
524	Middle Piece	02/02/2016	1/0/37	£2/6/-	£2/16/7¼
526	Wheat Field	02/01/2007	1/0/13	£1/15/-	£1/17/10
527	Higher Croft	0/1/25	0/0/31	£2/10/-	9/8½
528	Well Croft and Building	1/0/14	0/2/2		£2/-/-
	TOTAL	21/0/5	09/03/2029		£22/10/0¼

Table C.1: Field rental rates for study area, circa 1800-1808 (CRO P 143/14/1).

The Hagg tenement was small for the farms at this time; the average on the Stanley estate was about twice the size. However, most of the larger holdings were down on the plain, and tenements on the hill tended to have fewer acres.

In 1808, when Stanley's father died, this estate book was revised and it is clear that by then the Alderley Mining Company was working on this side of the Edge, as they were renting the Hagg for £40 a year, double the amount for the original farm^{viii}. Fields 521-24 were the centre of their opencast mining, so the farm was no longer a viable agricultural unit. It was at this time that the buildings at the farmstead were divided to accommodate four families^{ix}: The original farmhouse on the east was divided into two, and the building to the south converted into two units. This is the occupation pattern for the rest of the buildings' life. The parish registers show that the Timperleys moved away, first to Manchester and then to Gatley; they still retained links with their old home as their dead children and then they were brought back home to be buried at St Mary's, the Alderley parish church^x.

Although the Stanleys had high hopes of the mines' profitability, especially after cobalt was discovered in 1806,^{xi} at the height of the Napoleonic Wars. It appears the mining community was separate from the main estate as indicated in 1810 when, at the time of George III's Golden Jubilee, the Stanleys entertained their tenants and estate workers to a great dinner at Alderley Park House, and then went up the Edge to eat with the miners and drink the king's health. They did not integrate the two events, but treated the two groups separately^{xii}. This phase of mining on Alderley Edge ended in 1817; the resumption of

peace and the restoration of better quality imports of cobalt from the Continent meant the Alderley operations ceased to be profitable. However, the buildings at the Hagg did not revert to an independent agricultural holding, but remained cottages tenanted by agricultural labourers and other estate workers

During the nineteenth century, the main documents that deal specifically with the Hagg Cottages are a series of surviving estate rent books from 1825-48^{xiii} and the Census returns, 1841-1901. Trade Directories, so useful in an urban context or when dealing with independent tradesmen and the middle-classes, are not meant to include the rural wage earner. The Stanley rent book has details of the tenants, their rent, and to a certain extent, information about the properties and their occupants.

Table 2 is taken from these rent books and indicates there was a steady turnover in tenancies. It is interesting to note that the southern pair of cottages had extensive repairs in 1839. Beechtree Lodge was the gamekeeper's lodge east of Alderley Park; the other keeper's house, the present Beacon Lodge on the Macclesfield Road, was built at the same time. Before this, the Stanleys did not have specially designed keepers' cottages, and the Hagg, conveniently situated between the Park and the newly landscaped Alderley Edge, may have been used by the gamekeepers before they got their own accommodation. The vacancy in 1848 in the cottage where the Ellams lived may be explained by a reference in one of Lady Stanley's letters to her daughter-in-law, Henrietta, describing how she dealt with a smallpox outbreak on the Brynlow Hill area of the estate. She was clearly annoyed.

"I gathered up six children yesterday for vaccination - Nightingale was so stupid about it all. I had no trouble in persuading the woman at The Hags to bring her 2 children or any other person. One of The Hagg inmates is in great disgrace & I shall probably send him about his business - John Ellam has thought proper to get a donkey to carry Nanny's washing home, which lives in the lanes, moreover he is accused of getting fern & heath at night from the Edge". Lady Stanley to Henrietta Stanley, 14 March 1848.^{xiv}

	East Cottage, Northern end	East Cottage, Southern end	South Cottage, Western end	South Cottage, Eastern end
	1 £4	2 £4 (1834: £5)	3 £4	4 £3/15/0
1825	John Acton	Thomas Norbury New Tenant (late Jerome Cartright)	<i>Vacant (late James Fisher)</i>	Sarah Lowe
1826	John Acton	Thomas Norbury	James Warren	Sarah Lowe
1827	John Acton	Widow Broadhurst	James Warren	Sarah Lowe
1828	<i>Vacant</i>	Widow Broadhurst	James Warren went to Whirley Farm for a short time, but came back at the Hagg the next year	Sarah Lowe
1829	<i>Vacant</i>	Charles Broadhurst	James Warren	Sarah Lowe
1830	Keay Owen	Charles Broadhurst	James Warren	Sarah Lowe

1831	Keay Owen	Charles Broadhurst	Thomas Henshall	Sarah Lowe
1832	Thomas Owen	Charles Broadhurst	Thomas Henshall	Sarah Lowe
1833	Thomas Owen	Joseph Clarke. Moved to Beechtree Lodge, 1834. Cottage improved for next tenant.	Thomas Henshall	Sarah Lowe
1834	Thomas Owen	Mrs Leighton , paying £5 p.a after the improvements	William Thorley	Sarah Lowe
1835	Thomas Owen	Thomas Jackson	<i>Vacant</i>	Sarah Lowe
1836	Thomas Owen	Thomas Jackson	John Foden	Sarah Lowe
1837	Thomas Owen	Thomas Jackson	John Foden	Sarah Lowe
1838	Thomas Owen	Thomas Jackson	<i>Vacant.</i>	When Sarah Lowe left, her home was rebuilt.
1839	David Toft	Thomas Jackson	George Barton for last half of year as the front wall was rebuilt and the roof replaced with Kerridge stone	John Ellam. Did not occupy for the first part of the year as the front wall was rebuilt and the roof replaced with Kerridge stone.
1840	David Toft	Thomas Jackson	George Barton	John Ellam
1841	David Toft	Thomas Jackson	George Barton	John Ellam
1842	<i>Vacant</i>	Thomas Jackson	George Barton	John Ellam
1843	Mrs Clarke	Thomas Jackson	George Barton	John Ellam
1844	Mrs Clarke	John Clarke	George Barton	John Ellam
1845	Mrs Clarke	John Clarke	George Barton	John Ellam
1846	Mrs Clarke	John Clarke	George Barton	John Ellam
1847	Mrs Clarke (Pimlott)	John Clarke	George Barton	John Ellam
1848		John Clarke	George Barton	<i>Vacant</i>

Table C.2: Residents of the Hagg Cottages, 1825-1848 (bold indicates new tenant).

This rent book coincides with the 1841 Census^{xv}, the first census to detail people's occupations. Table C.3, taken from the 1841-1901 Censuses, names the occupants of the cottages. All permanent residents at the cottages in 1841 were agricultural labourers, but there was an anomaly: a separate entry for four single male stonecutters. They were part of the itinerant work force building the railway between Manchester and Crewe.

Census	Head of Household	Occupation of householder	No. in Family
1841	Henry Jackson	Agricultural Labourer	5
	David Toft	Agricultural Labourer	4
	John Ellam	Agricultural Labourer	2
	George Barton	Agricultural Labourer	4
	4 Stone-cutters		
1851	Benjamin Heywood	Stonemason	2
	William Ridgeway	Labourer	3
	Samuel Oaks	Labourer	5
	John Clark	Gardener	5
1861	David Walston	Copper Miner	5
	Samuel Oakes	Copper and Lead Miner	5
	Thomas Cooper	Engine Feeder, Copper and Lead Works	5
	William Taylor	Mine Labourer	2
1871	John Martin	Blacksmith	7
	William Davis	Copper Miner	5
	George Layman	Mines agent	3
	Joseph Pliscombe	Copper Miner	3
1881	David Ellam	Gardener	5
	Thomas Steele	Labourer, Woodman	5
	John Leigh	Farm Labourer	4
	George Leaman	Commercial Agent for Brewery	3
	Joseph Massey	Road man, High Road	5
1891	Joseph Massey	Labourer, Road man	1
	Unoccupied		
	George Leaman	Brewer's representative	2
	George Barber	General Labourer	5
	David Ellam	Gardener, Domestic	4
1901	David Ellam	Gardener, Domestic	3
	George Barber	Gardener, Domestic	4
	Ernest Barber	Stone Quarryman	3
	Joseph Massey	Township Roadman	2

Table C.3: Census details for Hagg Cottage residents, circa 1841-1901.

All the parishes along the line of the railway showed this temporary increase in population in 1841, often, as here, living in makeshift accommodation next to other low status housing. This railway opened the following year and transformed life in the northeast Cheshire countryside, not least as it was the direct cause of developing the wealthy commuter suburb of Alderley Edge village, bringing a flood of people into the area, and where the new villas inhabited by the Manchester mill-owners and other middle-class businessmen and professionals became an important source of service employment for the lower classes.

The beginnings of this impact can be seen in the 1851 Census^{xvi}. One of the tenants was a young married man, Benjamin Heywood from Poynton, who was a stonemason. His father, Joseph, built the early villas, and the local trade directories^{xvii} show that Benjamin later took over his father's business. Another tenant was Samuel Oaks, again a young man with a family, including his sister, Sarah, who only a week before the census was taken had given birth to a daughter, Hannah. The Oakses came from the Hough on other side of the Edge; presumably her brother was ready to give Sarah shelter during this difficult time, and, acknowledging her debt, she named her daughter after her sister-in-law. In 1861 Hannah was still living with her uncle as a boarder; she had not been absorbed into Samuel's family but was supported separately^{xviii}.

In 1861 Samuel Oaks had become a worker in the mines, the occupation for all the other tenants at the Hagg in this year. Two households came from outside the local area, the Coopers from Derbyshire and the Taylors from Yorkshire. The Alderley Edge Mining Company needed the Hagg Cottages to house its workers, especially the skilled men they brought in to head the mining teams. The 1871 Census confirms this; all the tenants worked in the mines and all came from outside the area^{xix}. Three, William Davis, George Leaman and Joseph Pliscombe came from the West Country: their skills as hard rock ore miners were invaluable to the company.

As Figure C.2 shows, the Alderley Edge Mining Company's effect on the landscape was significant. There were two main mines on the southern side of Alderley Edge, Wood and West Mines, both connected by a tramway to a central dressing area. Lead, cobalt and copper were all mined, but it was the latter that had the most impact on the landscape. Over the twenty-one years of the lease, about 3,500 tons of copper were extracted from the sandstone by a leaching process using hydrochloric acid. This resulted in vast quantities of waste sand. Piled up, this became the Sandhills, a noted landmark on Alderley Edge until their final disappearance in the early 1960s. Everyone now over forty-five who grew up in the Alderley area can remember them, especially as an area to play when they were children.

However, the Mines ceased operation in 1878 when the lease ended. There was an attempt to revive them during the First World War, and even a scheme to make copper sulphate for Bordeaux Mixture, a fungicide used in the wine trade, but this came to nothing, and the mines were finally shut down and the equipment sold off in 1923^{xx}.

Wages in the mines were not high. During the 1860s, the Mines employed 40 - 50 men and boys underground and on the dressing floor. In 1866, a David Walton, who may be the same man as the David Walston of the Census, had a team of two men and two boys. They were working on a cross passage, were paid at 22/- a fathom dug, and managed to earn between £2 15s 0d and £3 4s 2d a week during February 1866.^{xxi} This would have been shared out between them, and shows that this team was getting little more than they could have earned as agricultural labourers.

By 1881, the Alderley Mines had closed, and, with the exception of George Leaman who stayed on as a brewer's representative, all the tenants were again local labouring families. The Mines Office had been converted to residential use, a role it was to fill for the rest of its time^{xxii}. George Leaman's niece, Elizabeth Johns, was still living with him; she reappeared in 1891 as his housekeeper^{xxiii}, and in 1901 as married to Ernest Barber and the mother of George Barber^{xxiv}. At this time, Ernest Barber and his family appear to have occupied both sides of the eastern house. With George Barber, we have reached the oral record, as he became the father of Roy and Molly Barber, whose contributions to the excavation have been noted elsewhere. Molly Pitcher (nee Barber) said that her grandmother died young and that Mr and Mrs Perrin then moved into the northern end of the house as Mrs Perrin was supposed to look after her brother Ernest and young George.^{xxv}

From the oral record we have a complete picture of the inhabitants of the cottages in the early twentieth century (see Figure B.2). The Misses Ellams and their father lived in the western half of the southern building. By the 1920s, they were no longer away in service, but earned their living as daily cleaners. Mary looked after the house and Gertie the garden where she grew their vegetables and fruit, some of which was converted into home-made wine. At the start of the Second World War, the Misses Ellams moved down into Nether Alderley village as their relatives thought the cottages were too isolated for them to live in as they got old^{xxvi}.

The Barrows lived in the next house; Frederick Barrow worked as a joiner and upholsterer for Broadbents, the Alderley Edge village furniture shop. His wife, Delphine, who grew up in the Mines Offices bungalow, had worked as a nursemaid for the Handyside-Dick family in Ashfield, an Alderley villa. They had one child, a daughter Edna. When Mr Barrow set up in business for himself in 1932, much to his wife's regret, the Barrow family moved down to Alderley Edge village. Delphine's parents, Mr and Mrs John Massey, had already moved away from the bungalow to the North Wales coast, where Mr Massey was a gardener; their teenage son, Jim, had a weak chest and they thought the sea air would be healthier for him^{xxvii}.

The south side of the eastern house was occupied by the Barbers, Ernest Barber, his son George, daughter in law Violet and their two children, Roy and Molly. George was an assistant at Cumberbirch's, the chemist in Alderley Edge village. His training as a qualified pharmacist had been interrupted by army service during the First World War, and he does not seem to have completed it when he returned. However, his experience developing films at Cumberbirch's is a possible explanation for the high quality of the photographic record that we have of the cottages at this time. Mrs Barber, who came from Wilmslow and had worked as a confectioner before her marriage, never liked the isolation of living up at the Hagg. As her children said, she had to look after not only her immediate family, including an elderly father in law, but also keep an eye on the Perrins next door. The cottages' only mains service was a cold water supply and nothing was delivered apart from the coal. Molly also appreciated the change when the Barbers moved to Wilmslow in 1930; she then had many more friends of her own age^{xxviii}.

The next-door family, Mrs and Mrs Perrin, are remembered by a number of people, not just their immediate neighbours. Lena Perrin, George Barber's aunt, had moved there in 1912^{xxix} supposedly to look after him when his mother died, but she was a poor cook, and he tended to get fed at a nearby cousin's house, Brynlow Farm. Well known for her costume jewellery and her hobby of going to auctions and sales to pick up bargains, she

was a shrewd businesswoman, owning rental property in Alderley and Wilmslow. Presumably this provided the Perrins' income, as Jack Perrin does not appear to have had regular work. He was an itinerant pig-killer, and he sold half candles to people wanting to explore West Mine^{xxx}. Later, he was admitted to Parkside Asylum in Macclesfield, leaving Mrs Perrin alone at the Hagg. She stubbornly stayed on all through the 1940s, even when Thomas Neild cut through the water pipe, declaring she had always preferred the flavour of the well water^{xxxii}.

The Barbers were an extensive and well-known Alderley family. Only the Barber men rang the bells at St Mary's, Nether Alderley and only they were in the Alderley Mummers' Play that was such an important part of the Stanley estate tradition. George Barber played the Doctor. All three children attended Nether Alderley School and so went to Alderley Park for a Christmas tea, where they saw the Mummers perform and received presents from Lady Stanley^{xxxiii}. Adult tenants had their dinner too, a more alcoholic affair when the men were presented with a pipe and tobacco.^{xxxiii}

George Barber and his family left Ernest Barber at the Hagg when they moved to Wilmslow in 1930. The 1938 sale catalogue for the auction of Stanley estate is the best record of the cottages at the end of their occupancy and shows the last time the Hagg was fully occupied before old age and the Second World War started to remove the inhabitants. The Misses Ellams were still there and paid a rent of £6 10s p.a.; Mr Knight, who replaced the Barrows in 1930, paid £13 p.a.. Lot 499 shows the west-facing Stanley farmhouse; the developers put it up for sale as a single house although the sale details record the double tenancy.^{xxxiv} Ernest Barber paid £5.10s p.a. and Mrs Perrin £4 10s for their houses. This was only 10s a year more than the tenants of these two cottages had paid a century before. The Stanleys had a reputation for charging low rents on the estate, although this was not the only factor in the decision to sell up in 1938. Double death duties, due to the fourth and fifth Lord Stanleys dying within six years of each other, together with the sixth Lord Stanley's extravagance, were the main reasons why the Stanleys could no longer afford to live at Alderley Park.

However, the Stanley sale was the start of the disintegration of the tightly knit estate society, and isolated cottages like the Hagg became vulnerable as a result. The Sandhills area, including the cottages, was purchased by Thomas Neild, who ran a sand and gravel business from Whitebarn Farm. He was responsible for selling off the sand from the Sandhills and for demolishing the Hagg Cottages in the early 1950s, after they had fallen into disrepair and become a focus for vandals and for youths illicitly visiting the mines^{xxxv}. The last two residents in the cottages were Mrs Perrin and a Mrs Royle, an elderly widow who had come into the Barrow cottage some time during the war after Mr Knight left.^{xxxvi}

ⁱ CRO DSA 5/1-10 and CRO DSA 3752/1

ⁱⁱ CRO DSA 1919/33

ⁱⁱⁱ CRO DSA 3752/1

^{iv} CRO DSA 3752/1

^v CRO P/143/1/1 mf65/1

^{vi} Stanley Notebook. Alderley Edge Landscape Project Archive 10003.

^{vii} Stanley Estate Book, 1800-1808. Manchester Archives and Local Studies Centre: C7, mf2678

^{viii} Stanley Estate Book, 1800-1808. Manchester Archives and Local Studies Centre: C7, mf2678

^{ix} Stanley Notebook. Alderley Edge Landscape Project Archive 10003

^x CRO P143/1/1. mf 65/1

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- ^{xi} Lady Stanley to her aunt, Serena Holroyd, in *The Early Married Life of Maria Josepha Holroyd, Lady Stanley*, ed. Jane Adeane. Longmans, Green and Co. London 1899, p.297
- ^{xii} Lady Stanley to her sister, Louisa Clinton, in *The Early Married Life of Maria Josepha Holroyd, Lady Stanley*, ed. Jane Adeane. Longmans, Green and Co. London 1899, p.324
- ^{xiii} CRO DSA 3752/2-4
- ^{xiv} Letter 229 in *The Ladies of Alderley*, ed. Nancy Mitford. Batsford, London 1938
- ^{xv} CRO 18/11mf
- ^{xvi} CRO 2/16 mf
- ^{xvii} Morris and Co. *Directory of Cheshire*, 1874.
- ^{xviii} CRO 234/8 mf
- ^{xix} CRO 24/14 mf
- ^{xx} Chris J. Carlon. *The Alderley Edge Mines*. John Sherratt and Son. Altrincham, 1979.
- ^{xxi} Mines Setting Book. Alderley Edge Landscape Project Archive, 10006.
- ^{xxii} CRO 146/6 mf
- ^{xxiii} CRO 265/10 mf
- ^{xxiv} CRO 34/38 microfiche
- ^{xxv} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive 17105, Roy Barber and Edna Younger.
- ^{xxvi} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive 17103, Edna Younger.
- ^{xxvii} *ibid*
- ^{xxviii} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive. 17112, Roy Barber and Molly Pitcher.
- ^{xxix} Electoral Register. CRO CCRg1/330
- ^{xxx} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive. 17112, Roy Barber.
- ^{xxxi} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive. 17106, Molly Pitcher.
- ^{xxxii} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive. 17103, Edna Younger.
- ^{xxxiii} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive. 17112. Roy Barber.
- ^{xxxiv} Alderley Estate Sale catalogue. Alderley Edge Landscape Project Archive 10308
- ^{xxxv} Alan Garner and Harold Smith, pers.comm..
- ^{xxxvi} Alderley Edge Landscape Project Oral Archive. 17103, Edna Younger.