



Ivy House Spaldwick

A Short History

and

Some Interesting Facts

by Stuart Dixon



This is a most interesting Grade II listed building. At the present time it is the oldest continually habited house in Spaldwick. In putting this booklet together my intention has been to inform myself about it as much as those who may not aware of its place in the village, and perhaps to remind those who have lived here much longer. As usual I have wandered off at times with stories and facts which, although not directly connected with the house, do I feel contribute to the house's place in the history of the period. There is much to add relating to more recent history but for the time being this will have to suffice! Reader, forgive errors and inaccuracies, and let me know! I am grateful to Rosemary Good for her input, and the helpful staff at the Norris Museum, St. Ives and Huntingdon Archives.

Stuart Dixon
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DESCRIBED BY SIDNEY INSKIP LADDS, architect, historian, author, church restorer and Diocesan surveyor for Ely, as a “*red brick house with pilasters having stone caps of a Renaissance design*”, Ivy House only took its name many years later when, unsurprisingly and appropriately, it was covered in ivy.



The inscription “PD 1688” over the doorway is something of a mystery. The house was built much earlier than this date so the significance of 1688 is unclear. The Dorrington family lived in the manor house in Stow Longa in the late 15th/early 16th century. William, and his son John, administered the considerable land owned by the Bishop of Lincoln until 1539 when the monasteries were dissolved by Henry VIII. Their manor house was subsequently sold and the Dorringtons built themselves another large house in Spaldwick, now “The George” public house. They are mentioned in the Herald’s Visitation of 1566. Research into the history of “The George”

shows that by 1584 it was in the possession of one William Bedell of Ellington and renovations to Ivy House a few years ago disclosed the date 1582 on a previously hidden fireplace and thus showing that this was most likely the date the house was built, and by supposition, by Richard Dorrington. It is probable that extensive internal and external alterations to the house took place in 1688 when Percy Dorrington inherited the house or was already in residence. (Ladds considered the “P” was for Peter but there is no evidence for that and the name Percy is thought by the present owner to be correct. However, Richard’s fifth son was called Peter but he died young). The Dorringtons are an interesting family and through them and their marriages can be gleaned some fascinating Spaldwick connections.

John Dorrington, son of William, lived in Stow in the late 15th century and he married Elizabeth daughter of Thomas Lenton. Their previous involvement with the Diocese of Ely appears not to have done them any harm and their second son, Richard, did very well for himself. By 1541 he was a footman to Henry VIII and shortly afterwards was “Keeper of Bandogs and Mastiffs” (bandogs are mastiff type dogs that are kept chained because of their ferocious nature). He was also Bailiff of various royal manors in Kent, Lincolnshire and Northants. He was granted a pension by Elizabeth I in about 1550 and became a Justice of the Peace in about 1554.

In 1563 the Cromwell family of Hinchbrook confirmed their acceptance by the electors of Huntingdonshire by having Henry Cromwell elected as MP with Richard Dorrington being elected as the junior member. Richard was subsequently returned to Parliament in 1571 and 1572 but died in 1573 and was buried in St. James’ churchyard. He bequeathed considerable sums to the poor of Barham, Spaldwick, Stow and Upton where he owned land.

Richard had married Mary, a widow, in about 1544, and they had five sons and four daughters (the youngest son Peter died when he was young). The eldest son John was born in 1547 and because of his father's wealth and position was able to be educated at Caius College, Cambridge. He married Magdalene Gyll daughter of John Gyll of Layston, Hertfordshire and they had at least one daughter. He followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a JP in Huntingdon in 1579 and "Keeper of Bandogs and Mastiffs" in 1598. Additionally, he was "Chief Master and Ruler and Overseer of All and Singularly Her Majesty's Games of Bears and Bulls and Mastive Dogs and Mastive Bitches" (1s 4d a day!), a position later confirmed by James VI.

He also became the junior Knight of the Shire, or MP, in 1584 in controversial circumstances. When his father died in 1573 he was replaced by Sir Henry Darcy for the remaining two sessions of the Parliament. In 1584, however, Darcy was unable to stand, having being appointed Sheriff. He supported instead the candidature of John Dorrington for the junior seat, but this was contested by Francis Cromwell (the younger brother of Henry). The senior seat, which was taken by Robert Bevill of Chesterton, does not appear to have been contested. With the Sheriff leader of the opposing side, Cromwell had little chance of being elected. In fact, according to a Star Chamber case brought by Cromwell after the election, Darcy postponed the election beyond the legal date and accepted votes from men without the 40s. freehold qualification in order to secure Dorrington's return:

"Election took place at a full county at Huntingdon Castle on 21 Nov. and there was some doubt as to the result ... [12 men] giving and yielding their voices for John Dorrington esquire ... some suspicion

[was] conceived of their freehold; the sheriff was requested to examine them on the evangelist. They falsely swore that they severally could dispend 40 s. annually freehold land. It was manifestly suspect that they did so by the instigation, comfort, procurement and abetment of some wicked person."

Despite an appeal to the House of Commons by Cromwell, the election result stood; John did not contest the next election in 1586.

On a cold and snowy February 19th 1588 the men of the Hundred of Leightonstone were mustered in Spaldwick and addressed by Sir Henry Cromwell, who took a prominent part in organising the forces of the county, and told of the need to prepare to resist the Spanish Armada. Dorrington was present and supplied horses for the troops. St. James' bells were rung in victory celebration later.

Somewhere along the way he had befriended Roger Manners, the 5th Earl of Rutland, a friendship that would see Dorrington end up in the Tower of London.

Manners was married to the step-daughter of the Earl of Essex and when Essex started his rebellion in 1601 against Elizabeth I (and subsequently ended up being beheaded), Manners was carried along on the tide. He was imprisoned in the Tower, with Dorrington in attendance, but was subsequently released with a £30,000 fine. Whilst he was there



Roger Manners

Dorrington wrote to Sir Robert Cecil, (who controlled the Treasury and Privy Council of Elizabeth) to ask for a place vacated by any of the beheaded rebels as his own estates he



said had been depleted in royal service. He appears to have had some success as he assumed the title “Sir” in 1603 (possibly from Elizabeth or perhaps from James VI). He died in 1604 leaving £5 to the poor of Spaldwick and Upthorpe and £200 to his daughter Cordelia; he was buried next to his father in St. James’ churchyard.

Cordelia married a Spaldwick man, Adam Hill, who was connected with the Court of James VI –

Page of the Bedchamber in 1624 for example – and who was granted a Warrant to have charge of all the game within five miles of Spaldwick in 1623. He was still a member of the Court of Charles I when he became king in 1625 and subsequently, despite Huntingdon being very much a Cromwellian county, he fought with Charles during the Civil War and indeed was rewarded with the gift of a scarf for saving the king’s life at the Battle of Edgehill in 1642. This scarf, or sash, was made of silk and embroidered with silk,

silver and silver-gilt threads, and trimmed with silver and silver gilt lace; it is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Adam and Cordelia had two daughters, Anne and Cordelia and it is through their marriages that further royal connections can be made.

Anne married Peter Denny the great-grandson of Sir Anthony Denny who was a close confidant



Lady Margaret Denny

of Henry VIII. The Denny family were a very well to do and important Tudor family whose influence extended for over a hundred years. One of Anthony's five sons, Edward, married Elizabeth I's "own favourite Maid of Honour and kinswoman" Margaret Edgecumbe in about 1582 - (Margaret was very well connected, her mother was second cousin to both Catherine Howard and Anne Boleyn) - and was given the Rectory Manor House in Bishop's Stortford as a wedding present. Edward served with distinction against the Spanish during the Armada (with his first cousin Sir Walter Raleigh) and had commanded troops in Ireland. He died in 1599, aged 55, and was buried, with a "sumptuous" monument, in Waltham Abbey; his wife survived for a further 48 years.

Earlier there was mention of Adam Hill's heroics at Edgehill – immediately after the battle Charles called at Bishop's

Stortford whilst staying at Reading and visited Margaret. She was an ardent loyalist and Charles gave her a letter of protection – “*Given under our hand and seal at Stortford on 19th December 1642*” and commanded that “*no officers or soldiers do or suffer to be done any act of force or violence, or offer any interruption or disturbance whatever to Lady Denny, her family, goods, or manor House*” on the pain of His Majesty’s “*heartiest displeasure*”. Because of her royalist leanings Cromwellian soldiers were subsequently quartered upon her; she died aged 89 in 1648. She had in her possession a pair of mittens given to her by Elizabeth I and also a pair of pearl embellished gloves given to her father-in-law (Sir Anthony Denny) by Henry VIII.

One of Sir Anthony’s grandsons, the son of his first son Henry, Lady Denny’s brother-in-law, was Edward, and he was created Earl of Norwich in 1626. As High Sheriff of Hertfordshire he was amongst the first to welcome James I to England. He became a favourite and, like his relations, received a pair of gloves from James. (The King had in fact spent the night of 27th April 1603 at Hinchinbrooke as a guest of Sir Oliver Cromwell whilst on his way to London to take possession of the throne).

Now, two of Lady Denny’s grandsons made interesting marriages and which bring us back to Adam Hill and Spaldwick. Peter, son of Henry, married Anne Hill, Adam’s elder daughter, and continued to live in Spaldwick; Edward, son of Anthony, married Cordelia his younger daughter.

Sir Godfrey Kneller was the leading portrait painter in England during the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and was court painter to English and British monarchs from Charles II to George I. He painted the great and the good and clearly the Dennys continued to be so

connected – both Peter and Anne were captured on canvas by him in 1688 and their son Hill Denny was painted, but not by Kneller, and which hangs in the V & A in London.

Hill was educated at Cambridge and became a Rector in Hertfordshire and Essex and inherited land and property in Spaldwick on the death of his father,

such inheritance was subsequently left to Sidney College, Cambridge, with his son William receiving his estates etc in Essex. William himself was a very successful man becoming Lieut. Governor of Pennsylvania in 1756.



Hill Denny

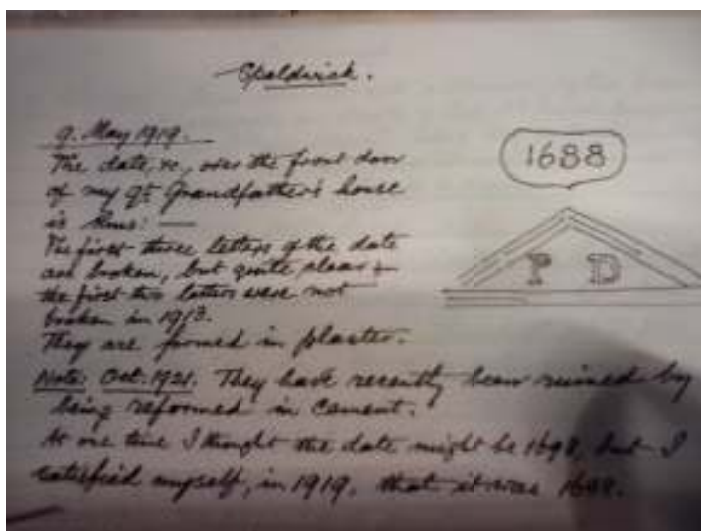
The house was occupied from about 1794 to 1831 by William Ladds who died in the latter year. His widow Mary (*née Mann, of the Manns of Beech House*) lived here until 1838 at which time she moved to Ellington. One of William's sons, Thomas, was vicar of Leighton Bromswold and was at one time the oldest clergyman in the county. During his time farming the 300+ acres at Ivy House William Ladds also found time to make the road from Easton to the "Hare and Hounds" public house between Spaldwick and Ellington (and now the headquarters of Williams Transport). William's great grandson was Sidney Inskip Ladds, the previously mentioned architect. He was articled to his father

and became diocesan Architect for Ely. He carried out a great deal of restoration work to local churches in Huntingdonshire which, for reasons of rural poverty and the poor work of previous architects, had fallen into disrepair.

On the first page of this history I made mention of Sidney's description of the house. He made further notes in 1919 and 1920 (*see photograph*) in which he comments on the date and initials as follows:

"9 May 1919—The date...over the front door of my gt grandfather's house is thus:- (see sketch in photograph) The first three letters of the date are broken, but quite clear; the first two letters were not broken in 1918. They are formed in plaster.

Note: Oct. 1921. They have recently been ruined by being re-formed in cement. At one time I thought the date might be 1698, but I satisfied myself, in 1919, that it was 1688"





In the late 19th/early 20th century Fred Mash and his wife, plus six children, farmed the land here (it was one of those children, Bessie, who married Walter Horsford who was subsequently hanged in 1898 for the murder of his cousin).



On Saturday November 1st 1913 the farm, then known as "Cotton Farm" was put up for auction and the existing tenant, Fred Mash, was the successful bidder.

LOT 2.
Imposed Value as 1910

IN SPALDWICK AND ELLINGTON.

ALL THAT

VALUABLE FARM
KNOWN AS
"COTTON FARM"

Comprising: Residence with Office, Ornamental and Kitchen gardens,
Farm Buildings and Yards, Arable and Pasture Land, containing in
the whole (Acres 308.880)

308a. 3r. 20p.

THE RESIDENCE
(Known as "YINE HOUSE")

Brick and tiled, veranda: 2 Dining Rooms, 2 Bedrooms, 2 Afters, Kitchen, Dressing,
Bath, W.C. and iron closet and Cycle House over back door, 2 Cellars, Brick house.

ORNAMENTAL AND KITCHEN GARDENS.

THE BUILDINGS
(At SPALDWICK)

Comprises: brick and tiled 2 small Wag Stalls, Cows House and 2 Calf Pens, brick and
tiled Loose Box, brick, timber and tiled Calf Barn and Calf House and Yard, 2 Piggeries and 2
Loose Boxes, brick, timber and tiled Cows House for 2 Cows, stable and two Trap House,
Poultry House, 2 brick and tiled Loose Boxes.

THE BUILDINGS
(At "COTTON FARM")

4-bay timber and stabled (one horse), brick, timber and stabled Barn, 4-bay iron,
timber and stabled (one horse) with Loose Boxes attached, and Rickyard Yard, timber and
tiled Barn with Cement Floor, brick and tiled Cart House Stable for 8 Horses, and 2 Loose
Boxes and 2-bay Piggery, brick, timber and tiled 4-bay (single horse) stable, wood, brick and
tiled horse room.

See P. 10 of Mash's

The Good family took over the house and farm and because the ivy was damaging the structure it had to be removed. Later the land was sold for the development of Ivy Way and the barns on the High Street re-developed as housing.

I am grateful to Mrs Rosemary Good for her assistance with this booklet and permission to print.

Schedule of Lot 2.
Coloured Yellow on Plan.

"COTTON FARM"

No. on Schedule Map.	Name of Field	Acres	Value	A. R. P.
22	House and Garden		445	
23	Buildings and Yards	partially	127	
24	Stone Close		5459	
25	Top Field		12516	
26	Old Ground, Pt.		2581	
27	The Meadow		22348	
28	The Meadow		8235	
29	The Pasture		2201	
30	The Pasture		7194	
31	Cotton Barn, Buildings and Yards		1285	
32	Low Green	17 600		
33	Low Green		26820	
34	Waterside Drive		12128	
35	Waterside Drive		12128	
36	Waterside Acre		22215	
37	Eastward Close	15 079		
38	Eastern Low Meadow		7148	
39	Waterside Acre	33 415		
40	Waterside Close		10001	
41	Waterside Drive		7730	
42	Upper Orchard Farm	22 421		
43	Waterside Farm	2 062		
44	Waterside	27 219		
45	Waterside	2 628		
46	Cotton Lake Course		5274	
		118 261	287 147	
			118 261	
47	Meadow		208 447	8 8 21
			62	1 25
			208 509	8 8 22

TENANCY.

In the occupation of M. Frederick Nash, as a Farm Tenancy (11th October at the first)

Annual Rent of £160 os. od.

Tenant paying all Charges except Land Tax Landlord's Property Tax and Quit Rent.





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Sources

British Museum MS Harley 890

Norris Museum

Huntingdon Archives

Victorian Crime and Punishment

Project Gutenberg

Mark Heath Photography