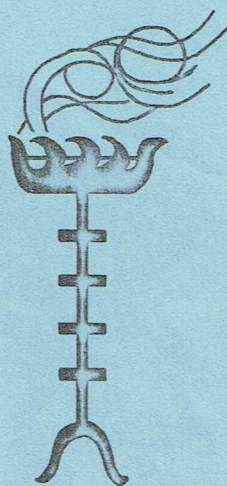


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THE JOLLIFFE FAMILY
And
THE LAST GREAT DAYS OF COFTON HALL

1633 - 1812

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CONTENTS

THE JOLLIFFE FAMILY AND THE LAST GREAT DAYS OF COFTON HALL

- APPENDIX 1. Genealogical Table
- 2. Monumental inscriptions in St. Michael's Church,
Cofton Hackett
 - 3. Rectors of Northfield, 1587 - 1779
 - 4. Sources

THE JOLLIFFE FAMILY AND THE LAST GREAT DAYS OF COFTON HALL

1633 - 1812

In 1594 the ancient manor of Cofton Hackett was bought by a rich Ledbury clothier, Edward Skinner (1541-1631). The medieval manorial system had by this date ceased to function, so effectively he became the owner of Cofton Hall and of nearly all the land in the manor - most of the villagers were his tenants, paying him rents in cash. The total population of the village was probably about one hundred.

The church of St. Micheel in Cofton Hackett was at this time a chapel of Northfield parish church, with the special privilege of keeping its own registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths. The rector of Northfield had to provide a curate to take the services at St. Michael's. (The respective duties of the rector of Northfield and the people of Cofton Hackett had been defined in a judgement of the Vicar General of the Bishop of Worcester in 1501, printed in Nash, Worcestershire II 193-4).

There was a further charge on the income of the rector of Northfield which was to cause a quarrel and law suit between Thomas Jolliffe of Cofton Hall and the rector of Northfield about 1690. When Gervase Pagnell founded Dudley Priory about 1160, he included in its endowments the rectory of Northfield with its chapel at Cofton Hackett. This was confirmed by a Papal Bull of 1182, which specifically mentions the chapel at Cofton Hackett (valuable evidence for the existence of the chapel in 1182). For reasons unknown, the priory never actually took possession of the rectory (in which case the prior would have appointed a vicar with a fixed stipend, and taken the rectorial tithes). Instead the priory had the advowson (the right to appoint the rector) and an annual payment of £4 from the rectorial tithes.

When Dudley Priory was dissolved in 1536 the advowson of the parish church of Northfield and the annual payment of £4 passed to the Crown. In 1554 Queen Mary granted them to Lord Dudley. After many sales and grants they were bought at some date before 1621 by Edward Skinner of Cofton Hall. He would be actively interested in the rectory of Northfield because the rector of Northfield was responsible for providing the services in the chapel at Cofton Hackett.

Edward Skinner left Cofton to his son Richard when he died in 1631. Richard survived his father by only two years, and left Cofton to his daughter Margaret (1619-47). She was married to Thomas Jolliffe, son of a Staffordshire landowning family whose name Jolley had been gentrified into Jolliffe. So this is how Cofton Hackett passed into the possession of the Jolliffe family, in which it was to remain for three generations.

By 1639 the advowson of Northfield parish church had passed to the Lord of the Manor of Northfield (which was held by the Jervoise family from 1531 to 1809). But Thomas Jolliffe claimed, successfully as will be seen, that the annual payment of £4 had descended to the heirs of Edward Skinner.

Thomas Jolliffe (1617-93) was an ardent supporter of Charles I in the great struggle between Crown and Parliament which occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century, and is even reported by Nash (I 252) to have been a close personal friend of the king. In the summer of 1645 Cofton experienced the Civil War at first hand. By this time the king's situation was becoming desperate. Early in May he led an army from his base at Oxford northwards to relieve Chester, which was besieged by a Parliamentary force and seemed

bound to fall unless relieved. On 14 May he joined Lord Astley a few miles south-west of Birmingham in the siege of Hawkesley House, which was held for Parliament by a garrison of about 120 men under Captain Gouge. The appearance of this overwhelmingly superior force secured the immediate surrender of Hawkesley House, which was burned down to deprive the enemy of any further use of it. The king spent that night with his friend Thomas Jolliffe at Cofton Hall, two miles south-west of Hawkesley. The next morning he was joined there by three prominent Midland Royalists with their troops: Colonel Scudamore, Governor of Hereford; Colonel Leveson, Governor of Dudley Castle; and Colonel Woodhouse, Governor of Ludlow. Before the king's reinforced army left Cofton, the Hall was set on fire to prevent it being of use to the enemy (only the medieval Great Hall survived the fire).

As the king moved north towards Chester news reached him that the Parliamentarians had raised the siege of Chester, but had taken advantage of his absence to besiege his base, Oxford. The king therefore swung his army eastwards and then south to relieve Oxford. This brought him to Naseby in Northamptonshire on 14 June, where his army was overwhelmed by a greatly superior Parliamentary force. Save for mopping up operations, this battle ended the war in favour of Parliament.

What happened to Thomas Jolliffe during the period of the Commonwealth (1649-60) and the first part of the reign of Charles II is not known. Presumably at the Restoration he was adequately compensated for the burning of his house by the king's forces in 1645, and he rebuilt the house. The next information we have about him is in 1670, and it comes from an account of a dispute between him and

the rector of Northfield, the Rev. John Hinckley, which the latter recorded at the end of the second volume of the Northfield Parish Registers.

From this account it appears that Jolliffe first raised the matter of the annual payment of £4 with Hinckley, who was rector of Northfield from 1662 to 1695, in 1670. Jolliffe evidently had no way of proving that he was entitled to this annual sum. Hinckley claims that Jolliffe promised not to demand payment so long as Hinckley was rector if Hinckley would provide Jolliffe with proof of his entitlement to the payment. This promise was made on 4 April 1670 in the presence of Jolliffe's married daughter, Mrs Anne Fitton. Hinckley claims to have fulfilled his side of the bargain by establishing that the annual payment of £4 from the rectory of Northfield was reserved to the Crown when Dudley Priory was dissolved in 1536. But this seems to fall very far short of proof that Thomas Jolliffe was entitled to receive this sum well over a century later.

By 1690 Mrs Fitton, the only witness to this agreement other than the two parties to the dispute, was dead, and Jolliffe brought a lawsuit against Hinckley for payment of £4 per year, with arrears right back to the time when Hinckley became rector, that is 1662. This, with costs, came to over £200. Jolliffe won his case by proving that the Rev. Timothy White, rector of Northfield from 1639 to 1661, had made this annual payment to him. But Hinckley claims that Jolliffe had threatened White with a lawsuit about his presentation to the living in 1639, and White had compounded by paying £4 per year rather than face the risk and expense of a lawsuit. Therefore this settlement was for White's lifetime only and afforded no legal proof that Jolliffe was entitled to the payment. Hinckley

blames his defeat on his lawyer's incompetence in failing to demand documents to prove that Jolliffe was entitled to the annual payments originally due to the Crown, and to argue that the payments made by Mr White were personal to him and did not extend to his successors in the living.

Hinckley was ordered by the court to make a first payment of £40 at Cofton. Jolliffe then cited him for contempt of court because of his failure to pay this sum - Hinckley claimed that he had offered the money but Jolliffe's son Benjamin had refused to accept it. The Court accepted Jolliffe's version of this event, and ordered Hinckley to pay £68.6.1.

Hinckley goes on to claim that Jolliffe was actuated by malice when he "prosecuted me with this violence". For this malice he alleges three reasons. First, "he tampered with me to quit my relation to Mr Jervoise and to take a presentation from him, which I utterly refused". This must refer to a dispute between Jolliffe and Jervoise over the right to present to the living of Northfield. Second, "his chief swearer (witness) John Jones being charged with a bastard and being put in the spiritual court (the court of the archdeacon, in which moral offences such as fornication and adultery were tried), he wrote a certificate that the said Jones was a virtuous and chaste man. He sent the same to me to subscribe, which I refusing he took most heinoulsy". Third, "at my first coming I found in my study a bond of £100 which was borrowed of Mr White by Mr Jolliffe. He was very angry that I delivered this bond to Mr White's children and not to him, saying absurdly that it was part of the money which their father owed upon the account of his quiet enjoyment of the parsonage" (that is, the annual payment of £4).

This last paragraph of Hinckley's statement refers to the death of Thomas Jolliffe, which took place in October 1693. Therefore this statement was dictated by Hinckley between October 1693 and his own death in April 1695. The writing is not Hinckley's, and in fact is that of a man much less highly educated than Hinckley, who was a Doctor of Divinity of Oxford University, so the statement must have been dictated. Its highly emotional tone and the number of allegations it contains which conflict with other reliable evidence show how deeply moved the rector was in his old age by the injustice he had suffered at the hands of Thomas Jolliffe and the Court of Chancery. Further evidence of this is provided by Hinckley's memorial tablet in Northfield church (probably erected by his third son, Henry), which states that "he expended a great deal of money in defence of the rights of this church". It is impossible to say if Jolliffe was or was not entitled to the annual payment which he claimed, but it is quite certain that the Court accepted his claim without adequate proof of its legality.

The Rev. John Hinckley was succeeded as rector of Northfield by his eldest son Walter, from 1695 to 1699, and by his second son John, from 1699 to 1705. It is not known if they continued the annual payment of £4 to Benjamin Jolliffe, Thomas's son, but the Hinckleys must certainly have given satisfaction to the Jervoise family, the patrons of the Northfield rectory, to secure the presentation of three successive members of the same family to the living.

Thomas Jolliffe was succeeded at Cofton by his son Benjamin (1645 - 1719). He married Mary, daughter of another branch of the Jolliffe family who were rich London merchants. They had five

children, three sons and two daughters, before Mary died in 1699, aged only thirty-one. In due course the boys went to Westminster School and the girls married: Rebecca in 1706 to Humphrey Lowe of Bromsgrove, and Anne in 1715 to Robert Biddulph of Ledbury. Rebecca Lowe had seven children, including a daughter Rebecca; Anne Biddulph had three sons, of whom the eldest was Michael. Both the younger Rebecca Lowe (1711-91) and Michael Biddulph had important parts to play in the history of Cofton Hackett.

In 1712 Thomas and John Jolliffe, Benjamin's first and third sons, went up to University College, Oxford. After taking their degrees they entered the Temple in London to qualify as lawyers. John married Katherine Michell, an heiress of Petersfield in Hampshire, and settled there, later becoming Member of Parliament for Petersfield. Thomas never married, but inherited Cofton from his father in 1719 and settled down there for the rest of his life. He was hampered throughout his life by weak eyesight. His land agent for his estate in Staffordshire, a Mr Mills, has recorded that "I never knew him when he could write his name without having it pointed out to him where he was to begin writing, and sometimes putting the pen in his hand. I never knew him to help himself (at meals). Sometimes his meat was cut up for him on his plate, sometimes not". Even when walking in his own garden, "he would sometimes take me by the arm or put his hand on my shoulder".

Suffering from this handicap, Jolliffe, without a wife to help him, would need a housekeeper who was also fit to be a companion. Some time after he settled at Cofton he summoned his niece Rebecca, daughter of his sister Rebecca Lowe of Bromsgrove, to live with him, and she was his housekeeper and companion for the rest of his life.

Throughout this period the various branches of the Jolliffe family appear to have lived in complete harmony. Thomas's only surviving brother, John, divided his time between Petersfield and London. His portrait hung at Cofton Hall, and Thomas's at Petersfield House. When John was appointed Receiver-General of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1738, Thomas stood as the surety required by the Crown against malfeasance. Thomas was a trustee of the settlement on John's second marriage in 1744 (to Mary, heiress of Samuel Holden of London), and the second son of this marriage was named after his uncle. John used his influence as M.P. to procure for his nephew, the Rev. Thomas Lowe, the important rectory of Chelsea.

The understanding in the family was that the family estates would pass on the death of the unmarried Thomas to his younger brother John and so to his sons, with suitable provision for Rebecca Lowe in recognition of her years of devoted service to her uncle. In 1750 Sir William Jolliffe, a rich City merchant and uncle to Thomas and John, died. He left £10,000 to Thomas, and a much larger legacy to John. This unequal partition of the inheritance was later said by Rebecca to be the cause of Thomas disinheriting his brother in 1754 "in a pet". In any case, £10,000 was a comfortable fortune in those days, and it put Thomas in a position to make substantial provision for Rebecca without interfering with the expected descent of the family's landed property. Of this, the Staffordshire portion had descended from father to son for at least six generations, and Cofton for three. In 1750 he accordingly executed a will leaving Rebecca an annuity of £400 and all the estates to John.

Then the health of the corpulent and partly-sighted Thomas began to fail. In July 1753 he suffered an attack of palsy when visiting

his neighbour the Earl of Plymouth at his seat at Hewell Grange. A few months later he had a second and more severe stroke while "airing in his coach on the Lickey", and from this he never fully recovered. His doctor described him as suffering from a nervous disorder, relaxation of the nerves, and low spirits.

This collapse of Thomas Jolliffe's health at the age of sixty naturally threw complete management of his affairs into the hands of his niece Rebecca Lowe, his companion of some twenty years standing. "Miss Lowe managed everything within and Mr Plowman, his bailiff, everything without" states a contemporary report. This was the situation when, on 2 January 1754, Mr Rupert Dovey, an attorney from Stourbridge, arrived at Cofton Hall, summoned by Rebecca Lowe. In view of what followed, it should be noted that Mr Dovey was not Thomas Jolliffe's family lawyer (in fact, had never previously done any business for him), and that he married Frances Lowe, Rebecca's youngest sister, a marriage believed to have been already arranged at the time of his visit to Cofton Hall.

According to Mr Dovey's account of what happened, "after dinner, at which Mr Jolliffe was very well and as merry and jocose as ever I knew him", he, Jolliffe, and Rebecca drank tea. After tea Jolliffe said "I have some business with Mr Dovey", and Rebecca withdrew. Jolliffe then handed the attorney the will of 1750, and instructed him to draw up a new will leaving Cofton Hackett to Rebecca for life, with remainder to any son she might have; failing that, to his nephew Michael Biddulph; the Staffordshire estate to be sold to provide cash legacies for the Lowes and Biddulphs, with token legacies of £100 each to John Jolliffe and his three sons "for mourning".

The attorney spent the night at Cofton Hall. The next morning he rose at 5 o'clock and by 9.45 had drawn up the new will. He met Jolliffe and Rebecca at breakfast, after which they "adjourned upstairs, the will was read over to and approved by the testator". Three witnesses were then summoned: John Newey, a farmer in the village, and his son, and Galey, gardener at the Hall for forty years. The will was then executed, the testator, "being very dim-sighted", having to be directed where to put his name.

Three years later, on 17 April 1757, Rebecca wrote a letter to her uncle Robert Biddulph the wording and tone of which seems to disprove the later accusation that the Jolliffe will of 1754 was the product of a conspiracy by Rebecca Lowe and her Biddulph relations against John Jolliffe and his family.

Honoured Sir,

I beg you to believe that 'tis not from want of duty, or a most grateful sense of your great friendships and kindnesses to me that has so long delay'd my making my best acknowledgements, but indeed Sir, I am so wholly taken up with my poor Uncle Jolliffe that I have not time to show the respect I ought to any of my Friends, and which I'me sure is in a very particular manner due to yourselfe, who are the only relation I have had the comfort of seeing since my Uncle's late illness (but to fly the afflicted is the way of the world). I really don't know what account to give you of my Uncle, for he is better and worse many times in a Day; upon Tuesday last and yesterday he was tolerably well greatest part of the day. Except these two Days he may be said to be exceeding ill. I have gott a new Milch-ass for him, and as the milk has never disagreed, I trust in God it may be of service, he has now drank it 3 Weeks - but I did not doe

this without the approbation of Dr. Wall. I don't find he gets strength at all and I fear is more emaciated every day tho' his appetite is now very good, but I tell you the constant grief and anxiety I undergoe for him is utterly impossible.

My Aunt Biddulph and the reast of the family are, I hope, as well as usual. My Uncle Jolliffe desires to join me in duty and service as due and I am,

Honoured Sir,

Your most dutifull and obedient Niece,

R. LOWE

In November 1757 Thomas Jolliffe executed a codicil to his will of 1754 in which he added £1,000 in cash to Rebecca's legacy, and also gave her the power to grant leases of the property which had been left to her for life only. He died on 1 April 1758, aged sixty-five, and was buried four days later in a new vault under the chancel of St. Michael's, Cofton Hackett. Copies of his will and codicil were immediately sent to his brother John at Petersfield.

The news that he had been disinherited came as a profound shock to John Jolliffe, who had had no inkling that he was on other than life-long terms of cordiality with his brother. After consulting his lawyers, he decided to challenge the will of 1754 and the codicil of 1757 on the ground that his brother was not sufficiently sound in body or mind at the time these documents were executed.

A commission sat at Bromsgrove in the summer of 1759 to collect evidence as to the state of Thomas Jolliffe's health in 1754 and 1757. While the Commission was sitting Rebecca wrote an agitated letter to one of her sisters which further contradicts the charge of a conspiracy between herself and the Biddulphs.

Dear Sister,

I was favour'd with your Obliging kind Letter upon Thursday evening and would have wrote on Saturday, could I have given my Mother any Satisfaction with regard to the Commission, but as the Commissioners are allways sworn to secrecy 'tis impossible to give any account (Mr. Dandridge to be sure can speak better to this thing than I can) and to say the real Truth I am not now capable of anything, for my Head is Distracted. I am sincerely glad that my Mother is better and I hope, tho' the Purging may weaken her for the Present, it will in the whole be of Service, and help to carry off her Disorder, and that she will soon recover some Strength.

I am sorry the Michael Biddulphs did not call upon my Mother, for they told me they should. They came to see me on Tuesday afternoon and left me about 12 o'clock the next day, for my Part I am truly sensible of the honours of their visitt, and wish all this Uneasyness had been prevented, by the fortune going to Mr. Jolliffe's family. Beside, I don't know but my poor uncle Jolliffe may have done a rash thing that may now make him miserable. The very thought distracts me, and added to all, the Gross abuse I have from Mr. Jolliffe and his family, and all the People in general round me, nothing ever Equall'd. I wish God would be so merciful to take me, and no Person who is my Friend, but what must wish it.

Is there no possibility of Compromising the thing between the Michael Biddulphs and Mr. Jolliffe, without the spending so much Money and Vexation? A man of my uncle Biddulph's Sense and Religion should consider, and ask himself how he should have like't to have a Brother give his fortune from him, nor can we tell whether the Peace and happiness of a dead Friend is not concerned, which is of

greater Consequence than all the Estates in the world can be. My poor uncle Jolliffe did it in a Pet, and I heard him (more than once) say that he would alter it. I wish I could see my Uncle Biddulph to talk to him about it; for my Part I had rather give up every Shilling my Uncle gave me than that my Poor Uncle, and all should not be made Easy. I wish they would let me Decide it, and the Michael Biddulphs don't yet know but it may go against us, for tho' we have People of Fashion to appear in behalf of us, so has Mr. Jolliffe too, and the 3 witnesses to the Will all swearing my Uncle's incapacity will be a Material Circumstance against us. All this is my own thoughts only and I wish it could be brought about, to the Comfort and happiness of all: What is done must be directly, for Mr. Jolliffe is bringing a Bill against us and I must put in my answer directly - and for me to swear my uncle's Understanding was so Exquisitely good, Either when he made the Will, or Codicil, I really can not, but this you must not mention except to my Uncle Biddulph.

Suppose you were to talk to Mr. Dandridge but I'm afraid he would not like it. Lord Foley and Mr. Bromley I'm sure might do this thing by talking to Michael Biddulph, Mr. Jolliffe, and myself, and I should be glad to go to London on purpose and I'm sure it would be happier for all. You see the sad Condition my poor head is in, and my heart quite broke.

My Duty waits upon my Mother and am

Dear Sister

Your most affectionate and obedient Hum; Ser:

R.L.

You must Pardone my writing, for I cannot see. What I should propose is, that the Staffordshire Estates should stand as it does (paying the legacy's) and that this Estate should after me, go to Mr. Jolliffe, and then Michael Biddulphs will get near £20,000 - which they may lose.

The case did not come before Chief Justice Mansfield in Westminster Hall until 1 May 1762. For Rebecca Lowe and the Biddulphs, "certain of the nobility, gentry, and clergy" who had called on Thomas Jolliffe during the last three or four years of his life swore that despite "a great defect or dimness of sight" and being "somewhat weaker in body", the testator's mind was unimpaired. For John Jolliffe, Plowman, the bailiff, the three witnesses to the will, and four indoor servants at the Hall all swore that Thomas Jolliffe was mentally unfit to make a will in 1754 and 1757. The jury, composed of twelve gentlemen from Worcestershire, preferred the evidence of the nobility, gentry, and clergy who had only occasional and cursory contact with the testator to the evidence of members of the lower orders who were in daily and close contact with him, and found that the will and codicil were valid. On appeal the next year the Lord Chancellor upheld the jury's verdict, though he did order that the costs of both sides should be borne by the estate.

Rebecca celebrated her victory by erecting in Cofton church a monument to her benefactor - in which she also managed to place on record her own virtues - equal in length and grandiloquence to the monument of his grandfather, the first Jolliffe Lord of the Manor. But, perhaps characteristically, she omitted to include the information which local historians and genealogists most want from a monument or tombstone - the date of death of the deceased, and his age when he died.

Near this place
Are deposited the remains
Of Thomas Jolliffe, esquire, of Cofton in
this county.

Integrity and Benevolence
Were so conspicuously combined in his
character,

That it is difficult to determine
Whether the public spirit of the patriot,
Or the social virtues of the man,
Rendered him most valuable.

He loved his friends much, his country more;

In the love of both
He was equally disinterested and inflexible.
Humanity dictated and good sense directed
His unbounded charity.

He possessed an uncommon knowledge of the
World,

But was free from its corruptions;
His peculiar sagacity taught him the first,
His christian principles preserved him from
The latter.

His agreeable conversation,
His vivacity unallayed by malignity,
Contributed to soften the reverence
Which was raised by his nobler qualities
Into the gentleness of sincere affection.
The patience with which he expected,

And the resignation with which he sustained,
The Hour of Death,
Can only be paralleled
By the vigilance and assiduity of her,
Who closed his dying eyes.
The gratitude and filial duty,
With which she always regarded the paternal love
Of her deceased uncle,
Have erected this monument to those virtues
Which she must ever remember and
Lament.

But in spite of her wealth, and the power and influence in her own neighbourhood which her wealth gave her, Rebecca's life after her uncle's death and the publication of his will was not a happy one. Some indication of this has already appeared in her letter to her sister quoted above. A fuller and more moving description come from a letter to her from one of her Biddulph cousins.

My sentiments towards you are those of Pity; I should have a Heart of Stone if they were not, when you bemoan yourself as completely miserable, as a friendless, solitary, guilty Wretch. If such is your description of yourself within your own Walls, to how much greater miseries are you expos'd when you venture to look out of them, Even Sunday shines no Sabbath day to you. The Church itself affords you no shelter. There to have the Parson preach at you, the Clerk set his Psalm, and the whole Parish join the Cry against you! To be hiss'd and hooted at, and treated with every kind of Indignity! What a Picture! But however offensive your name

and character may be to the rest of Mankind, yet still you may claim my Compassion, as I am indebted to your steady frugality and wise economy that so large a Portion of my Uncle Jolliffe's Fortune came to me unincumbered. I cannot sufficiently praise your fortitude, in despising the Censures of the World unanimously taxing you with meanness and niggardliness. 'Twas a mistaken World; you were not saving for yourself but for me and my Brothers, for which Madam,

I have the honour to be,

Your most Obliged humble Serv^t.

Rebecca lived on at Cofton Hall for another thirty-three years, dying unmarried in 1791 aged almost eighty, subject to the contempt of her neighbours, estranged from the disinherited Jolliffe family, and on uneasy relations with her Biddulph cousins. She lived so frugally and managed the estate so effectively that she was able to amass a considerable sum of money. She distributed this as legacies to the sons and daughters of her brothers and sisters. It is perhaps evidence of Rebecca's relations with her neighbours and heirs that although her death is recorded in the parish register, there is no memorial slab or tablet to her in the church.

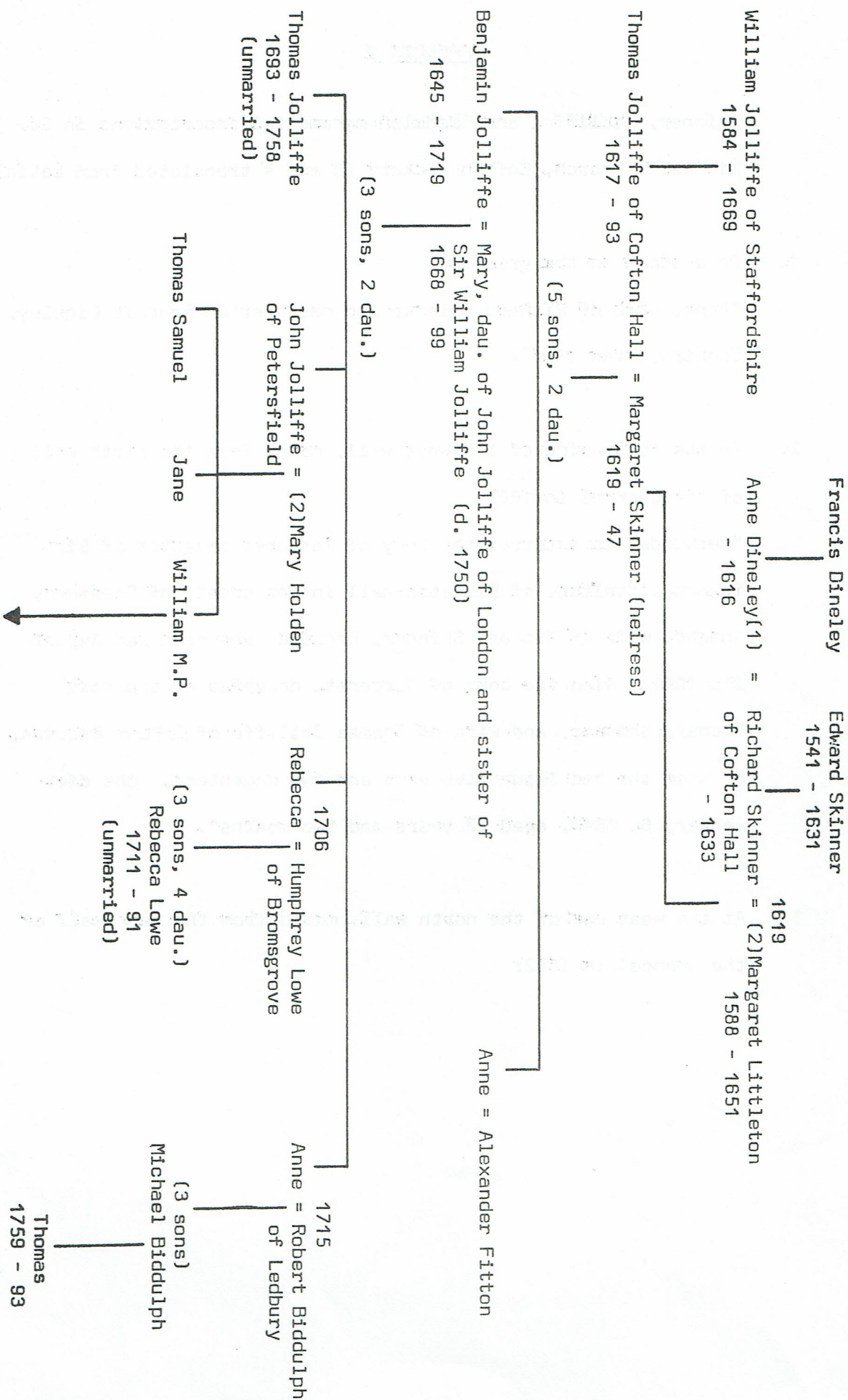
On her death Cofton Hackett passed, under the will of her uncle Thomas Jolliffe, to Michael Biddulph, her cousin. He was settled on the family estate at Ledbury, so his eldest son Thomas, named no doubt after the family's benefactor, came to live at Cofton Hall. But Thomas survived for only two years, dying in 1793 at the age of thirty-four. This premature death caused his father to write despairingly "I wish I had never heard of Cofton".

Robert Biddulph, a grandson of Michael, seems to have lived at

Cofton Hall from 1793 to 1812. In the latter year the Cofton estate was sold by the Biddulphs to Other Archer, sixth Earl of Plymouth. The Windsors, the family name of the earls of Plymouth, had been established at Hewell Grange, between Cofton and Redditch, since 1543. Cofton was therefore an extension of their already substantial estate centred on Hewell.

But the Windsors had no use for another principal residence in Worcestershire, so Cofton Hall ceased for the first time since the early middle ages to be the home of the Lord of the Manor of Cofton Hackett. It declined into the home of the Plymouth steward for the Cofton estate, and then, after its outlook had been ruined by the great embankment of the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway in the eighteen-thirties, into the home of the farmer who rented the land which had formed the home farm of the Hall. As early as 1816 the portico was removed from the front of Cofton Hall to enhance the front of Hewell Grange, which had been built about 1712, improved in 1758, was improved again in 1816 at the expense of Cofton Hall, and was finally demolished in 1890 when the present house was finished (now the property of H.M. Government, and used as a Borstal institution).

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2

Skinner, Jolliffe, and Biddulph monumental inscriptions in St. Michael's Church, Cofton Hackett (3 and 4 translated from Latin).

1. On a stone on the ground:

"Anne, wife of Richard Skinner and daughter of Francis Dineley, Esquire, died 1616".

2. On the north side of the west wall, moved from the north wall of the chancel in 1852:

"Hereunder is interred the body of Margaret daughter of Sir Edward Littelton, of Pillaton-hall in the county of Stafford, Knight, wife of Richard Skinner, Esquire, who deceased August 25, 1651. Also the body of Margaret, daughter of the said Richard Skinner, and wife of Thomas Jolliffe of Cofton Esquire, by whom she had issue five sons and two daughters. She died January 6, 1647, aged 27 years and two months".

3. At the west end of the north wall, moved from the east wall of the chancel in 1852:

Here returns to the Earth which bore him

THOMAS JOLLIFFE ESQUIRE of LEEK

Descended from an ancient lineage in the County
of Stafford.

If to his Better qualities is not granted

A secure Home and Reward in Heaven,

Both an honourable Character and a Generous Disposition,

And Love for his Family and his Country,

And piety in the worship of God,

All these things Are in Vain and Useless as an Example.

These Endowments of an eternal Soul were not Pretended

But Genuine.

Attentive not to his own Reputation but to the public Good,

He fulfilled all the Duties of his life with distinction.

He preferred to be of Use to his Fellow Men to being on their Lips.

He considered that He gave more distinction to His Descendants

By the fruit of Example than of Reputation.

Oh Reader, do not turn against such a Man, Remarkable

Even in Death

(Nor make his Lot in Life of cause of Blame)

And do not suppose that Flatterers after his Death gave too much Praise

To a Man who did not deserve it.

For what this Marble states about Him with Inadequate certainty

The final and More Just Day will manifest

More adequately.

He died on the 23rd October AD 1693

Aged 76.

4. On the west end of the south wall, moved from the west wall of the chancel in 1852:

"Sacred to the Memory of

Benjamin Jolliffe Esquire of Cofton,

Who having tasted the pleasures and harmless pursuits of the country,

Preferred a secluded and active way of life

To smoke and luxury.

He excelled with admirable bodily activity

In hunting, indefatigable and elegant.

He died on the 28th of October AD 1719, aged 74.

His wife Mary is also buried here,

A kinswoman with the same surname, who died

On the 18th November 1699, aged 31."

5. On the south side of the west wall, moved from the east wall of the chancel in 1852:

Thomas Jolliffe, 1693 - 1758.

(Inscription reproduced the the text of the paper.)

6. Above the chancel door:

"Thomas Biddulph, eldest son of Michael Biddulph,

of Cofton Hall and Ledbury. He died 3 August 1793,

aged 34."

APPENDIX 3

Rectors of Northfield

James White	1587 - 1639
Timothy White	1639 - 1661
Thomas Glover	1661 - 1662
John Hinckley	1662 - 1695
Walter Hinckley	1695 - 1699
John Hinckley	1699 - 1705
Edward Chandler	1705 - 1706
John Jephcott	1706 - 1713
William Worth	1713 - 1742
Thomas Soley	1742 - 1779

APPENDIX 4

Sources

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