

STONE HOUSE - SOME ASPECTS OF ITS LONG HISTORY

Sheila Smith

The problem with research is that one never knows where it will lead! Here, at Brook House, lived in by the Atkins and Smiths since 1903, we are surrounded by the memories of Ian (Reginald Ian Atkins Smith, who died on 15th April 2003) and his writings and records. It is a very living 'past', brought to the front of my mind by the need to compile information for the display boards for the land, which we have now put into the National Forest (see the last issue of this newsletter - re the Bradleys).

Bill Hale published in *Now and Then*, Autumn 2003, an excellent edited summary record of, in particular, four village families - the Smiths, the Atkins, the Richards and the Chesters. All these are intermingled as one investigates the properties in which they had interest. Ian dealt extensively with the development of the family property and business interests in the above record.

Stone House was built in the early Seventeenth Century. The date 1633 is engraved in the basement with the capital letters 'WMTIE.' The photograph right, is by courtesy of John Knight, whose father, Derrick, died on 24th January this year, was the gardener there for thirty five years



Thomas Atkins junior, the third child of the ten children born to Thomas Atkins and his wife, Jane Starkey, married twice, first to Annie Wadsworth, who died on 13th September 1891, aged 39, and secondly to Sarah Dent Rowse, the daughter of the then owner of Stone House, George Underwood Rowse. The property adjoining Stone House was The Firs was owned by the Atkins family. Both these marriages were childless.

Under a conveyance dated 31st January 1922, Sarah Dent Atkins bought Stone House from her father's executors - Grace Ellen Rowse and herself and Joseph Yates Rowse. That conveyance contains a recital that Sarah bought Stone House and The Bradleys at "public auction and at such an

Swannington Heritage Trust

Stone House garden 1997.



John and Derrick Knight 1988.

auction she was the highest bidder and was declared the purchaser thereof for the sum of £900”!

The property was described as “ALL THAT messuage or tenement situated at Swannington aforesaid called The Stone House, formerly divided into and forming five messuages, cottages or tenements and late in respective occupations of Sarah Dent Rowse, John Smith, Mr Griffin, Widow Peberdy and Mr Sibson and then forming three messuages, cottages or tenements and late in the respective occupations of the Testator (George Underwood Rowse) and Messrs Walker and Booth together with the orchard croft and gardens of the buildings and appurtenances thereto belonging to the whole containing 1 acre, 1 rood or thereabouts AND ALSO ALL THAT close of land adjoining before mentioned premises and called The Bradleys containing 3 acres or thereabouts formerly in the occupation of Richard Sibson and then of Charles Walker AND ALSO ALL THAT close of land containing 1 acre, 1 rood or thereabouts called by the name of Common Close situated at Swannington aforesaid and abutting on Limby Hall Lane and formerly in occupation of Testator and then of said Charles Walker EXCEPT THAT AND RESERVING unto owner or owners thereof all and all manner of mines, veins, lymphs and delphs of coal within and under said property with such liberties, powers and authorities for working, getting and carrying away same or otherwise as theretofore reserved. TO HOLD the same unto and to the use of the Purchaser, her heirs and assigns in fee simple”.

(Note the reference to the multiple occupation, including that of Sarah herself before her marriage. Clearly this had been the case for at least most of the last century until it was sold in 2005/6. Now it is restored to a single occupation residence albeit stripped of its orchard.)

Notes: The right to mine minerals is a valuable property right and reflects the history of Swannington as part of the Ashby Mining Field.

It is hoped that future editions of Now and Then will feature further articles concerning the long history of Stone House.

Family Tree - extracted from copies of trees prepared by Ian Smith

THOMAS ATKINS b.16 June 1824, d.23 September 1891 m. Jane Starkey b.15 February 1823 d.28 March 1905 - 10 children

3rd Thomas b. 5 July 1850 d.9 September 1926

(1) m Annie Wadsworth d.13 September 1891, aged 39

(2) m. Sarah Dent Rowse d. 26 August 1949

7th of 10 children - Charles b.28 February 1858 d. 4 April 1945 m. Emma Richards b.4 October 1870 d. 11 August 1956

1 child: Jane Adelaide Atkins b. 19 June 1893 d. 17 August 1982 m. The Reverend Reginald Walter Smith.

1 child: Reginald Ian Atkins Smith b. 11 May 1923 d.15 April 2003