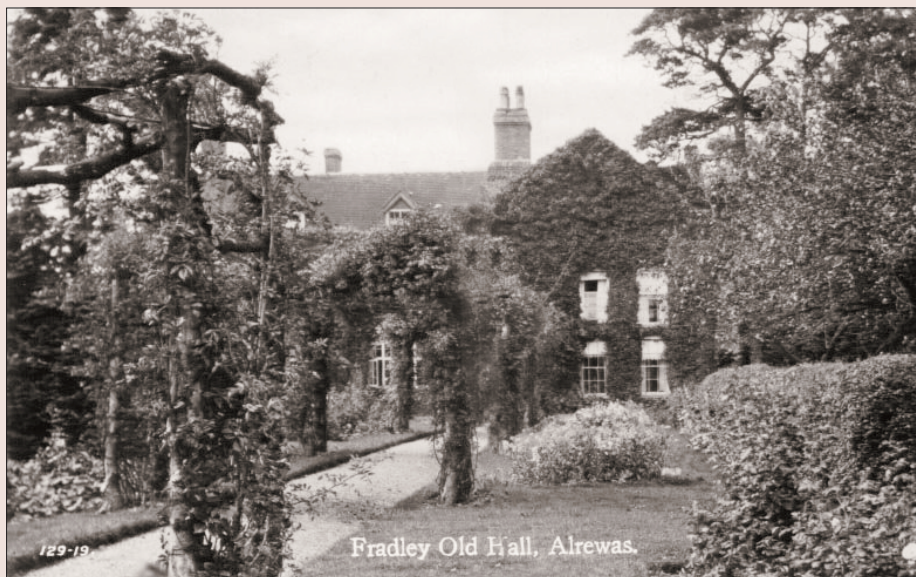




THE SHAW FAMILY AT FRADLEY OLD HALL

by ANNE LOADER



MR. SHAW of the OLD HALL, FRADLEY, near Lichfield, Staffordshire, offers to SHEW a young Brawn PIG, of the up-eared breed, for the sum of £5., against any Pig of any breed, bred in the county of Stafford, in either of the two following ways, or both together, viz., by taking the extreme length, breadth, and girt, or weight, for age. Proper allowance to be made for any difference of age if it does not exceed 14 days. He is 20 weeks old this day. This offer may be accepted on or before the 31st instant, by placing the above sum in the hands of Mr. GILLARD, Lichfield, and by sending a true and properly attested statement, addressed as above, which will be duly and satisfactorily attended to.

The above Pig is to be sold. His colour sandy.

Cutting from the Staffordshire Advertiser, March 1838

THE SHAW FAMILY AT FRADLEY OLD HALL

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hear from anyone with additional
relevant information

THE SHAW FAMILY AT FRADLEY OLD HALL

The Shaw family lived at Fradley Old Hall for several generations, as tenants of the Anson Estate. They all played a significant role in village life, but here we are going to look in particular detail at the lives and times of the four heads of the household – all confusingly named “William” – between the 1820s and the 1960s.

WILLIAM SHAW SENIOR (1778-1850)

William Shaw Snr was born at Hints on 12 April 1778, the son of farmer Samuel Shaw and his wife Mary, and christened at Armitage. On 9 February 1832, at the advanced age of 54, he married spinster Elizabeth Smith (1793-1874), who had inherited the tenancies of Old Hall Farm and the smaller, neighbouring Sale Farm, which her extended family treated as one unit. She was 39 and the only surviving child of her parents’ marriage, all six of her siblings having died. The Smiths had been at the farm since April 1825 when they took it over from George Knight. The annual rent was £277.

Elizabeth had been running the farm with an unnamed bailiff - very likely to have been William Shaw Snr. A few weeks after their marriage, on 25 March 1832 (Lady Day), the Anson Estate accounts show that he took on the tenancy himself. As well as being busy supervising their farm, William played his part in the Fradley hierarchy, living in the most notable property, performing his social duties and being a major employer.

Offlow North poll books and electoral registers for the 1830s and 1840s show that he owned a freehold house and land at Nailor’s Moor (sometimes referred to as Fradley Moor), which was rented out. This possession of property enabled him to have a vote.

Times were hard and justice was harsh in those days. The *Staffordshire Advertiser* recorded on 9

January 1833 that John Leadbetter and John Beard had been found guilty of stealing the housing of a horse’s collar, the property of William Shaw at Fradley. They were sentenced to be transported for seven years, with Beard to be kept to hard labour for three months, with one further week in solitary confinement.

In December 1836, it was reported that William Snr had been chosen to represent Fradley on the newly-formed Lichfield Union Board of Guardians. They were responsible for setting up and running a workhouse for up to 200 inmates, under the terms of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, that would cater for the 29 participating parishes and their population of around 22,000 inhabitants. There were 40 Guardians on the committee, which met every Friday morning in the grandest part of the building.

Though William Snr was subsequently returned unopposed for years afterwards, the early annual elections to choose the Guardians for three parishes in Lichfield itself were marred by unseemly battles



The workhouse at Lichfield

between the local Conservatives and C of E supporters, and the Radicals and Dissenters. In March 1837 the Guardians advertised for architects to submit plans for a workhouse in accordance with national guidelines and chose Sir George Gilbert Scott and William Bonython Moffat to undertake the task. Land was bought on the north side of Trent Valley Road and construction started in May 1838. The workhouse received its first inmates exactly two years later.

Lichfield Poor Law Union.—The following gentlemen have been elected guardians for the present year:—

Lichfield.—St. Mary, Mr. John Garratt, Mr. William Smith, Mr. William East Holmes; St. Chad, * Mr. John Delase Griffith, Mr. Anthony Pearson; St. Michael, Mr. John Lawrence, Mr. George Astley; Close, Mr. Thomas Hodson.

Alrewas.—Mr. Thomas Parr, Mr. Thomas Shakeshaft.

Ardington.—Thomas John Birch, Esq.

King's Bromley.—Mr. Richard Rice.

Burntwood.—Mr. Joseph Ashmall.

Colton.—* Mr. Joseph Dicken.

Fisherwick.—Mr. W. K. Bourne.

Farewell.—Mr. George Mann.

Fradley.—Mr. William Shaw.

Hammerwich.—Mr. John Pavier.

Longdon.—Mr. John Mann.

Pipe Hill.—Richard Hinekey, Esq.

Pipe Ridware.—Mr. William Lees.

Wetford.—* John Shawe Manley, Esq.

Hamstall Ridware.—Mr. William Jaggard.

Mavesyn Ridware.—Mr. William Slater.

Rugeley.—* Mr. John Smith, Mr. James Mellard, * Mr. James Bown, * Mr. John Simpson.

Swinfen.—Mr. R. Gibson.

Whittington.—* Mr. Charles Ashmall.

Shenstone.—Mr. Richard Brawn, * Mr. William Villiers.

Wall.—Mr. William Mott.

Yorall.—* Mr. John Brown, * Mr. Morton Bond.

Streethay.—Mr. John Hanbury.

Oygreave.—Mr. William Smith.
Those marked thus (*) are new guardians.

William Snr's re-election as it was reported in 1843

It was built of red brick made from the clay dug out from the foundations, embellished by blue bricks at the front and sides. Features included a gatehouse with battlements and an ornamental cupola.

Though he took his civic duties seriously, William Snr was at heart a canny farmer and he seems to have been particularly proud of his pigs. In March 1838 he placed a very strange announcement in the *Staffordshire Advertiser*, where he seemed to challenge other pig breeders in the county to better his 20-week-old sandy-coloured “young Brawn PIG, of the up-eared breed” by taking “the extreme length, breadth and girth, or weight, for age”. Those with an animal that they thought could beat it were asked “to place £5 in the hands of Mr Gillard of Lichfield” and send “a true and properly attested statement which would be duly and satisfactorily attended to” on or before March 31.

From its description, it would appear that the young pig in question was a Tamworth or Sandy Back, a breed now regarded as “vulnerable” in the UK by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. According to Wikipedia the breed originated at Sir Robert Peel’s Drayton Manor near Tamworth where they were first sold after the existing herd was interbred from 1812 with pigs from Ireland. Much of the improvement took place locally in Staffordshire. It may well be that William Snr was one of the Tamworth pioneers and he regarded his pig as an outstanding example.

Presumably the winner of the competition took all the money that had been staked by the losing owners, but £5 (about £650 in 2022) seems a great deal of money to gamble in this way. Perhaps it was just a publicity stunt on William Snr’s part to raise the value of the pig when he sold it. Annoyingly, none of the journalists on the *Advertiser* thought to follow up this intriguing story, so we will never know what happened.

In August 1838, William Snr was among the signatories of “landowners or duly authorised agents of landowners in Fradley and Orgreave”, who called a statutory meeting of landowners and tithe owners to make an agreement for the general Commutation of Tithes, to be held at the Crown Inn, Alrewas on September 6.

As well as being involved in improving the breed of Tamworth pigs, William Snr was also busy building up a herd of prize Longhorn cattle – an interest that he passed on to his descendents at the Old Hall. These were originally slow and heavy draught animals with long curving horns, used for ploughing. The cows gave little milk, though it was creamy and good for cheese. To this day the cattle are variable in colour but always have a heavy line of white along the spine, tail and underside of the belly. Selective breeding in the late 1700s improved the breed but it then declined.

William Snr was always keen to produce good livestock and one of the earliest recorded instances of his success is a report in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* of 22 September 1849 when he won a prize of £2 for his “pair of long-horned cows in milk” in the store cattle class at the Lichfield, Wolverhampton & Midland Counties Agricultural Society show at Lichfield.

William Snr died on 6 January 1850, aged 72, predeceasing his wife Elizabeth who lived another 24 years. They were both buried in Alrewas Churchyard.



A modern Tamworth pig

WILLIAM SMITH SHAW (1835-1919) and William Shaw Junior (1862-1943)

In 1835, William Shaw Snr's wife Elizabeth Shaw gave birth at the Old Hall to the couple's only child, William Smith Shaw. The 1841 census shows him as a five-year-old living with his parents, two aunts, and six live-in farm and house servants. A charming oil painting of him in his infancy used to hang at The Hall and has been retained by his descendents (see photo below).



In 1851, he was listed as a 15-year-old living at the Old Hall with his widowed mother (59), now the head of the household and official tenant of the 300-acre farm, together with one of the aunts, farm bailiff Edward Knight, and six farm and house servants. Doubtless they also employed other male labourers who lived in the village in tied accommodation.

By the 1861 census, taken on April 7, William Smith was 25, working for his mother (69) on the farm and presumably taking much of the responsibility for its management. The bailiff had long gone. Living in the house were his aunt (now described as 'assistant housekeeper'), plus a shepherd (37), cowman (19), waggoner's boy (16), dairymaid (25) and housemaid (18).

In December that year he married Ann Matilda Nichols, daughter of James Charles Nichols of Fradley, land agent to various members of the

Levett-Prinsep family at Wychnor, Packington Hall and Croxall Hall. The couple went on to have eight children, two of whom – Robert Smith Shaw (1867-69) and Annie (1873-78) - died young of scarlet fever and are buried in Fradley churchyard.

The disease – currently in the news – was one of the main scourges of Victorian childhood, killing thousands every year and often weakening the surviving patients so that they died years later from complications. Nowadays it is treated with antibiotics but in those days there was no cure. For some reason, the remains of the medieval moat adjacent to the Hall were blamed for harbouring the infection, and it was filled in. Many years afterwards, the moat site was still regarded with suspicion. It is marked on old maps.

In 1871, at the age of 35, William Smith was listed on the census as head of the Old Hall household, living with his wife, four children, William Jnr (8), Charles (5), Herbert (2) and Elizabeth (1), and his widowed mother (79). They also had a middle-aged live-in nurse with a 12-year-old "nurse girl" to help her, a dairymaid, housemaid, and two young lads described as farm servants, aged 12 and 14.

With his sharp eye on an agricultural business opportunity, in 1875 William Smith took over his father-in-law James Charles Nichols' agency for Proctor and Ryland's bone manure and superphosphate of lime.

Proctor's had originally begun as rag and bone merchants, preparers of bones for manure, and glue manufacturers. Their fertiliser business flourished as more farmers became reliant on commercial 'manures' and they had agents all over the country.



The poignant little graves of Annie Shaw (left) and Robert (right) in Fradley churchyard

The bones component was produced by a vile-smelling process said to require a strong stomach on the part of factory inspectors, entailing the slaughter of old and unwanted horses and the boiling of their carcasses. The recovered bones were then ground to powder and dissolved in sulphuric acid to create superphosphate.

In 1858, Proctor's were advertising in a pamphlet on 'Manures, their properties and application' that "We have the chemist to suggest, the merchant to procure, the manufacturer to prepare, and the intelligent farmer to apply; and if each fulfils his allotted part we may look forward to results advantageous alike to individual and to the community."

Like his father, William Smith took great pride in his Old Hall herd of Longhorn cattle and achieved significant successes in many important agricultural shows. He was recognised as a major figure in the Longhorn world and passed this interest on to his son and grandson. A painting of a Longhorn cow by Thomas Walker Bretland, dated 1864 and now displayed at Shugborough Hall, was bought from a "Mr Shaw" in 1975 and may well depict one of William Smith's early prizewinners.



Above, Longhorn cow; below, "Earl of Upton"



His magnificent bull "Earl of Upton", was painted by Coventry artist Edwin Brown in 1876 (see photo). The animal had recently won third prize in the prestigious Royal Agricultural Society of England show at Birmingham. The picture is held in the Staffordshire County Museum Collection.

In 1879 he won second place in the class for Longhorn bulls under two years old at the Warwickshire Show; in July 1881, at the Derby Royal Show, his "Earl of Fradley" was the reserve champion in the class for Longhorn bulls over the age of two, and his cow was commended in the class for Longhorn cows above two years old, in milk or in calf. At the Leicestershire Agricultural Show a few weeks later, "Earl of Fradley" was joint first in his class, and the cow was highly commended.

In May 1886 William Smith is recorded in an unidentified press cutting as having paid the large sum of 44 guineas (about £7,000 in 2022) for "a splendid brindle and white ox" at the grand dispersal sale of the late Sir John Crewe's famous Longhorn herd at Calke Park. The event was described by the auctioneer as an opportunity that might come only once in a century. William Smith's price was the highest paid on the day.

According to an article relating to the Warwickshire Show in the Tamworth Herald in November 1902, Longhorn cattle were becoming more popular in the show ring. The anonymous writer stated: "These animals are again coming rapidly to the front, and are attracting great attention on account of their hardihood, marvellous constitution and the great success which has been achieved by several people in crossing other cattle with them.

"At one time it seemed as if they would have almost been lost to the country as a distinct breed. This was owing to a variety of causes – very many men had become very careless in the breeding of them, producing in consequence cattle which fed slowly, and handled hard; but by judicious management this is all of the past, and now you see magnificent specimens with mellow hides and abundant flesh... Many magnificent herds of these cattle were kept round Coventry and Warwick; in fact that the beginning of the last century nearly every animal in the Midlands was of this breed.

"The milk of the Longhorn is particularly rich, and gives a far larger proportion of cream and curd than

Date.	Names.	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.	S.	No. of days worked in a week.	At per day.		Total			Remarks.
									s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
1885.	Foster	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	6	15	0	M. Thrashing Barley. J. Thrashing	
	Perry	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	6	15	0	Barley. W. Thinning Barley. W. J.	
Jan 2	Cooper	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	6	15	0	drawing squitch out of New Field to yard at Sale. M. W. J. drawing	
5	Smith J.	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	6	15	0	brushings out of Slang. men winnowing Barley. J. W. J. drawing squitch	
6	Smith R.	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	6	15	0	off New Field & drawing turnips. men winnowing Barley. G. Teams	
10.	Edwards	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	6	15	0	delivered 50 Bags of Barley to Mr.	
	Elson	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	8	10	0	Evershed, Burton. men winnowing Barley.	
	Mrs J. Smith	1	"	"	"	"	"	1	1	0	1	0		
	Mrs R. Smith	1	"	"	"	"	"	1	1	0	1	0		

The first entry in the 1885 Wages Book for Old Hall Farm for the week 5-10 January. The skilled farm labourers, led by Foster the waggoner, were paid 2s 6d a day for a six-day week, the "boy" Elson received 1s 8d, and the two wives earned 1s 0d a day when they were called in as extra hands. The week's work was summarised thus: "Monday, Thrashing Barley. Tuesday, Thrashing Barley. Wednesday, Winnowing Barley, Waggoner drawing squitch out of New Field to yard at Sale. Thursday, Waggoner drawing brushings out of Slang, men winnowing Barley. Friday, Waggoner drawing squitch off New Field and drawing turnips, then winnowing Barley. Saturday, Teams [horse-drawn wagons] delivered 50 bags of Barley to Mr Evershed, Burton, men winnowing Barley." Note: Sydney Evershed (c1825-1903) was a brewer and Liberal Party politician who represented Burton as its MP from 1886-1900. He bought much of the farm's output of barley.

that of the Shorthorn, in fact analysis places it next to the Jersey.

"The resuscitation of the breed within recent years is doubtless due to the exertions of a few men, who really recognised the sterling qualities of the few remaining herds. Mr Sale of Atherstone started the ball rolling in buying animals from the beautiful herds of Mr Satchwell (of Knowle), **Mr Shaw (of Fradley)**, his close neighbour Mr Taverner (of Upton), and Mr Houghton of (Osbaston).

"From these have been bred numbers of prize-winners... The third herd book has just been published and there are now about 30 pure herds. Big prices are made by present day breeders."

In 1881 William Smith was 45 years old; he was listed in the census as a farmer of 300 acres, employing six men and a boy, living with his wife Annie (45) and children William Jnr (18), Charles (15), Herbert (12), Elizabeth (11), Sydney (10)

and Samuel (5). Also residing at the farm were a dairymaid, a young female general domestic servant, and a male farm servant.

In 1885, all farms were required by law to keep a Wages Book showing the daily earnings of the people who worked on the land. William Smith's first entry, for the week beginning 5 January 1885 records the names and wages of six men and a boy, and the wives of two of the men (who were on casual piecework). This weekly information was listed in two stout ledgers and completed in neat copper-plate handwriting. Notes of all the work done on the farm, and its changing team of labourers, were kept for many years and give a fascinating picture of agricultural life (see photo above).

They show that Old Hall was a traditional mixed farm, which involved a broad range of crops and livestock being grown and raised, with the advantage of spreading the risk of any one crop failing in a given year.

In 1888, when he was 53, William Smith took over from his father-in-law James Charles Nichols as land agent for the Levett family. The position entailed running their business affairs, supervising the farming of the property by their tenants and farm labourers, and collecting rents or other payments.

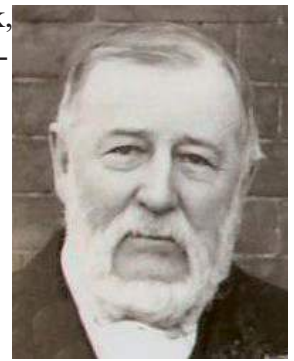
The following year, William Smith's eldest son, **William Jnr** (26), married Lydia Ada Summerfield of Lichfield at Christ Church, Lichfield, and the couple took up residence at Lodge Croft, the elegant Georgian house opposite the Old Hall. William Jnr had been born at Fradley on Christmas Day 1862 and was christened at All Saints, Alrewas on 1 Feb 1863.

In the 1891 census, William Smith and Annie were living at the Old Hall. He was described as a "land agent and farmer", aged 55. With them were their three youngest children, Elizabeth (21), Sydney (20) bank clerk, and Samuel (15) scholar, together with a cook, housemaid and a young male farm servant (12).

Over at Lodge Croft, William Jnr (28) and Lydia (29) now had an 11-month-old baby, William Joseph Shaw (known as 'Joe'), and shared their home with boarder John Hawkins, who was a 20-year-old agricultural student, and a 17-year-old girl servant.

On Lady Day 1895 (4 April), William Smith handed over the tenancy of Old Hall Farm to his son. The

"Live and Dead Farming Stock, Implements of Husbandry, Produce &c, Furniture and Dairy Utensils", plus household items, were valued at £1,618 4s 10d. This amount was paid off in instalments as follows: 2 August 1895, £500; 11 October 1895, £100; 18 April 1896, £300; 30 October 1896, £100; and 27 January 1897, £200.



William Smith Shaw

The change of roles within the family necessitated a house-swop, so William Smith and Annie left the farmstead and moved into Lodge Croft, and young William and Lydia moved across the lane into the much larger Old Hall with their small children, William Joseph and Douglas.

In June 1899 William Smith's daughter Elizabeth (known as 'Sissie'), married Richard James Thomas, son of industrialist Richard Thomas of Field House, Bloxwich. Then on St Valentine's Day 1900 his son, bank cashier Herbert Nichols Shaw, married Florence Lilian Thomas, Richard Thomas's daughter. Both couples had lavish fashionable weddings, with group photographs taken outside the Old Hall - then covered with ivy (see below) - and Field House.

William Smith continued his work as land agent for the Levetts but although he had retired from farming he was still a great enthusiast for Longhorn cattle



Photograph taken in front of the Old Hall in 1899 when Sissie Shaw married Richard James Thomas. William Smith and his wife Annie (seated) are to the left of the two bridesmaids on the right.

and instead of breeding his own now concentrated on judging. For instance he is listed in the Tamworth Herald of 26 May 1900 as a Longhorn judge at the Warwickshire Agricultural Show at Coventry on 29 and 30 August.

In 1901 the census describes him as 65 years old, a land agent and employer, living with Annie (65) and sons Charles (34) bank cashier and Samuel (24) assistant land agent (presumably working for his father). With them were his sister-in-law, two female servants and a groom.

He was also a parish councillor representing the Fradley ward on Alrewas Parish Council, and co-trustee with Mr H W Brierley of the Kirkland Charity.

In 1907 William Smith showed his young dog Nancy in the fox terrier class for a maiden dog or bitch, in the first annual dog show to be organised by breeders belonging to the Staffordshire Agricultural Association, at the Swan Hotel, Lichfield. Nancy was commended by the judges and went on to be commended in the puppy section too.

William Smith's wife Annie died in 1907 and was buried in Fradley churchyard. Her widowed husband continued to live at Lodge Croft, where Herbert's daughter Joan Anne was born unexpectedly in August 1908 while Florence was visiting her relations. (See photo)

In the 1911 census, when he was 75, William Smith was still described as a land agent. Sissie and Rich-



Left to right, seated: Sissie, Florence, William Smith and Joan Anne Shaw (the author's mother); standing: Richard Thomas, unknown, Herbert Shaw. (Photo about 1910)

ard James, a "traveller in timber" were living with him at Lodge Croft with their 10-year-old son Cecil James, and two servants. The house was described as having 11 rooms.

William Smith died at Lodge Croft on 1 January 1919, in his 84th year. According to his obituary he had cast his vote in the post-WWI general election a fortnight earlier on 14 December 1918 "and that was the last time he was out". The article stated: "He was well-known and highly esteemed by a large circle, who will hear of his death with sincere regret."



Ann Matilda Shaw (nee Nichols)

The bearers at his funeral at St Stephen's, Fradley, were all tenants of the Wychnor Park estate during the time that William Smith was land agent for Mr Basil Levett. By this time Levett had sold the property and moved to Merley House, Wimborne, Dorset. William also served his son, Theophilus (pictured right).



Probate was granted on 19 September 1919 to Harry John Champion Winterton, auctioneer and land agent, and Richard James Thomas, now a "manufacturer". William Smith's effects were valued at £1,564 16s 8d.

WILLIAM SHAW JUNIOR (1862-1943) continued

William Jnr was also keen to follow in his father's footsteps and enter his high quality Longhorn cattle and Shire horses into prestigious agricultural shows as well as local ones. He won many prizes during his lifetime and was a judge of Longhorn cattle at the Royal Show, Lincoln in 1907.

In 1899 his highly-commended bay Shire mare, Fradley Flora, was sold for 100 guineas at the Lichfield Horse Sale and Show (approx £15,000 in 2022), where he also had the best two-year-old cart gelding. In 1904 his Longhorn heifer under three years old was reserve champion at the Warwickshire Show and the following year his Longhorn bull

Fradley Count, and cow Dolly Grey, were second in their respective classes at the same show.

In 1907, also at the Warwickshire event, he excelled himself by winning first, second and third prizes in the class for the best Longhorn heifer calved on or after 1 January 1905.

On his home ground at the Alrewas Show in 1914 he was awarded the championship cup for the best cow or heifer in the show. He continued to do very well at the show as the years passed, including in

1934 when his Shire colt foal was chosen as the reserve and his entry for the best Shire filly or gelding foaled in 1931 was third.

It is therefore amusing to note that in August 1935 there was a prominent correction by the Alrewas correspondent of the Lichfield Mercury that "the 2nd prizes for the best pair of farm work horses, and best-groomed and cleanest tackle, had been won by Wm Shaw's Fradley Bluebell & Fradley Lady Grey

and not by Mr Yates as stated in previous issue..."

The different types of work on the farm undertaken by William Jnr's employees and their tied accommodation at Sale Farm, are shown in these examples of advertisements which he placed in the local papers over the years:

"Wanted, a steady, trustworthy married man as waggoner; must thoroughly understand his work, foaling Shire mares, and be a good ploughman; good cottage and large garden, character required." - (1909)

"Wanted, steady reliable married man for general farm work; good milker; capital cottage and garden; character required." (1912)

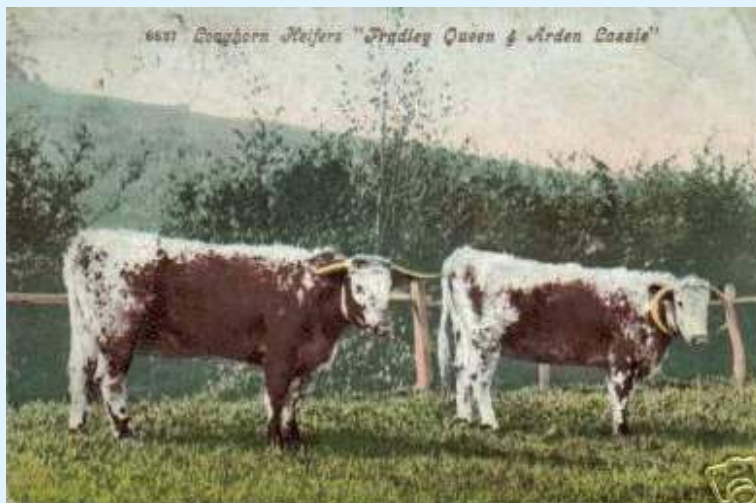
"Wanted, a capable man as farm labourer; must be an experienced ricker and thatcher, and a good milker. Cottage

and garden; character required." (1923)

"Respectable young man wanted (farmer's son preferred) to assist on 300-acre farm; must be good milker, and able to work a pair of horses; comfortable home, as family." (1924)

"Wanted, respectable willing youth : 17-19; farmer's son preferred; to assist with cattle and sheep; good milk-er; comfortable home; as family." (1927)

It is interesting that none of the three generations of "Williams" seems to have been interested enough in the farm's flock of sheep to exhibit them at any



This old and damaged postcard from about 1906 shows two Longhorn heifers, Fradley Queen and Arden Lassie, "famous" prizewinners then owned by W H Sales of Atherstone, though Fradley Queen must have originated from the Old Hall herd.

The card is in the University of Edinburgh online archives. A black and white version of the photo is reproduced in the vast 1200+ pages reference book "Farm Live Stock of Great Britain" by Robert Wallace, published in 1907, showing the best examples of many breeds of farm animals.

William Smith and William Jnr are individually named in there as among the most prominent members of the Longhorn Cattle Society. Also listed is T Basil P Levett of Wychnor Park.

of the shows. They are nevertheless mentioned from time to time in the Wages Book.

The Fradley Shire horses and their progeny were still in demand, even after they had left the farm. In the mid to late 1930s the Mid-Somerset and Pylle Shire Horse Society hired the well-bred stallion Fradley Harvester, a bay foaled in 1933 and bred by William Jnr, along with three others, from Mr J Harrison of Shepton Mallet. The society claimed these horses

would be “sure to get the right sort of Colt that sells well”, adding “We travel Stallions that are in their prime and sure Stock-getters.”

Adverts offering Fradley Harvester’s services and offspring appeared regularly in the Somerset press and the horse certainly seems to have been well-regarded. In September 1938, for instance, it was reported that two fillies by Fradley Harvester were sold for 22 guineas and 15½ guineas each at the Glastonbury Tor Fair.

It is interesting that in 1933, “Mr W J Shawe” of Old Hall Farm (presumably William Jnr’s son ‘Joe’) bought a Tamworth gilt for 10 guineas in the annual sale of Large White and Tamworth pigs at Lichfield. The Large Whites came from a renowned herd from Wall that was being sold off and those animals of the best quality for breeding or showing were individually named. Several were bought by the Prince of Wales’ agent to go to the Royal Farm at Lenton.

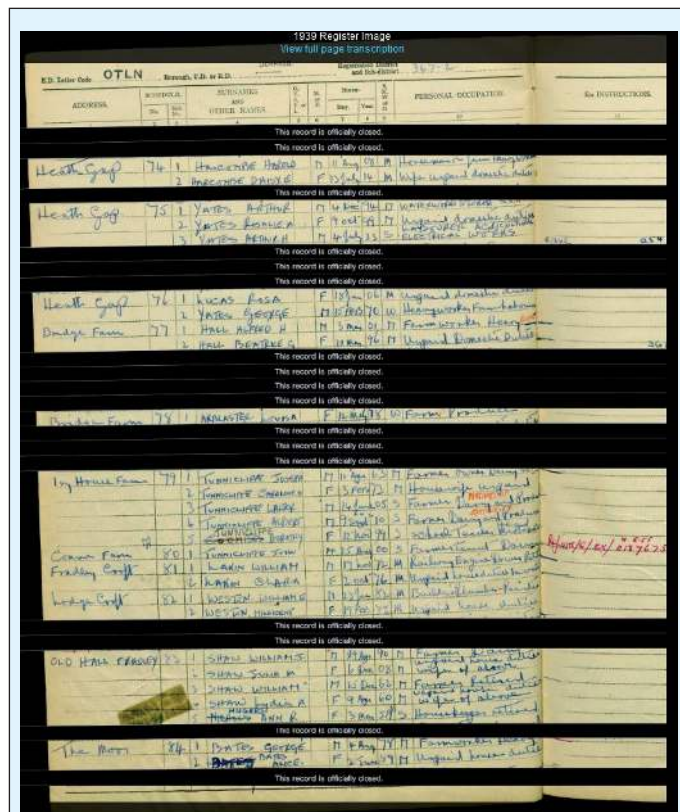
In addition to his farming commitments, William Jnr was for many years a manager of the Alrewas and Fradley Church Schools, and a churchwarden at Fradley Church. He and Mr W E Shuker were the originators of the agricultural classes at the Alrewas Show.



Fradley Church School - now demolished

He had been a member of the Lichfield Shire Horse Society since its inception and was the oldest subscribing member. He was also a member of the Staffordshire Agricultural Society and of the Shire Horse Society. This had been founded in 1878 as the English Cart Horse Society, which worked hard to improve the quality of horses through its pedigree and show system. The name was changed in 1884.

The Society also launched educational activities to transform the standard of management and treatment of working horses. However, as William Jnr



The 1939 Register was a type of census taken at the beginning of WW2, creating a constantly maintained national register of the civilian population of the United Kingdom, providing personal information to aid rationing and the issuing of identity cards. This extract from the Fradley register shows William Jnr and Lydia, born in 1862 and 1860 respectively, living with their son William Joseph and his wife Julia (Molly), relative Ann Nicols and someone who record is currently closed under the census privacy rules.

must have witnessed at first hand, the mechanisation of transport, agriculture and industry in the 1930s bought with it a decline in numbers of his beloved willing and gentle Shires.

William Jnr retired in 1938 and although he continued to live at the Old Hall, the farm tenancy was then transferred to his son ‘Joe’ Shaw, who had just married Julia Mary (‘Molly’) Bradley.

William Jnr died in 1943, at the age of 80 - a year after his wife Lydia. He had the distinction of having spent all his years on the same farm, and left effects worth £464 8s 7d.

WILLIAM 'JOE' SHAW (1890-1974) continued

Joe and Molly went on to have two daughters, Mary and Janet. Joe, referred to in most places officially as "W J Shaw", continued in the family tradition, playing his leading part in the community life of Fradley, and having considerable success showing his prize-winning Shire horses. Interestingly, he seemed to be fated to get a large number of third places.

In 1938 his Shire colt foal was third in its class at the Alrewas Show, where it was said that the exhibitors included many well-known breeders from Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire. His pair of farm work horses to be shown in any kind of tackle was also placed third. It was the last show before a six-year break during the Second World War, and when the event was revived in July 1945, Joe's brood mare won her class for heavy horses.

On August Bank Holiday Monday in 1946, the Meynell Hunt Agricultural Society's show at Burton-on-Trent was so popular that hundreds got in free by rushing the gates. There was a particularly good showing in the Shire horse classes and Joe's Fradley Land Girl was the best of the barren mares and the only Staffordshire entrant.

The same year some of the most highly skilled agricultural workers in the Midlands took part in the seventh annual hedge-cutting, ditching, tractor and horse ploughing competitions run by the Hartshorne Ploughing and Hedgecutting Society, and Joe was one of two judges for the horse classes.

In its report on the Lichfield Show in August 1946, the Lichfield Mercury headline listed the attractions of "cattle classes, horse leaping, steer riding, sheep-dog trials, dog show, poultry show and horticultural exhibition" and understandably spoke of "a splendid feat of organisation". Joe's mare, not suckling a foal, or gelding won second place in the heavy horses' section.

At the Derbyshire Show in May 1947 there was praise for the quality of the Shire horse section, and the *Burton Observer* stated that "the Shire horse classes introduced some magnificent animals, in the face of increasing mechanisation". Joe's Modern Miss was third in the open class for fillies foaled in 1946 and second in the equivalent class for local fillies.

In June 1947, Joe's entries did well across the board in the Shire classes at the Staffordshire County Show at Walsall, when his filly foaled in 1946 was third, his mare with foal was third, and his colt foal was



The wedding of 'Joe' Shaw and Julia Mary ('Molly') Bradley was held at Fradley church in June 1938. The Lichfield Mercury of 3 June 1938 reported that "the church was filled and the porch and churchyard were lined with friends and villagers to catch the first glimpse of the bride... The Vicar said they were there to wish God speed to two people who were well known and highly respected by everyone in Fradley." The reception, held at the bride's parents' home in Wellington, was attended by between 70-80 guests. Among the wedding presents were gifts from the Alrewas Agricultural and Horticultural Society, Lichfield Shire Horse Society, the Farmers' Union and Fradley Church Entertainment Society.



Joe Shaw and Jim Hughes with two of the Shire horses and a foal. At least one appears to be wearing some sort of label. Were they off to a show?

It was a sign of the times that in the 1956 ploughing and hedgecutting competition organised by the Lichfield, Tamworth and Walsall District of the Staffs Agricultural Society, there were only three horse ploughmen, and tractor ploughing was predominant. Joe's employee R Hall was listed fourth in the deep tractor ploughing class. In 1958, R Hallam, of Old Hall Farm won the class for the best-kept tractor maintained since 31 December 1953. And at the same event in 1961 the same Mr Hallam won a challenge silver tankard for the best deep tractor ploughing. (Was "Hall" a misprint for "Hallam" in the report of the 1956 competition?)

In October 1960 Joe was among the tenant farmers who made up a large congregation for the memorial

second. At the Rugeley Show in September he took third place again in the open class for a Shire yearling filly or gelding.

In July 1951, Joe was president of the Alrewas and District Agricultural and Horticultural Society and was described as having rendered yeoman service to it. (He had been vice president the year before, and won third place with his filly or gelding foaled in 1949.) In 1951 he still found time to enter a brood mare in the three years and upwards class in the annual show, which was placed third.

A record crowd of 7,000 attended the Lichfield Show in June 1950, when Joe's Fradley Lady Luck was chosen as reserve in the heavy horse class for one or two year-old fillies or geldings.

In September 1952 his three-year-old filly or gelding won third place in its Shire horse class at Alrewas. At the same show in 1954 he took second and third places in the competition for the best mare or gelding, four years old and upwards, and in 1957 he was in third place with his colt or filly foal.

It was not only the horses at Old Hall Farm that did well. At the December 1955 Fat Stock Sale in Lichfield, Joe's entry won the best fat cow class.



Mr Hallam pictured with the magnificent Birdie



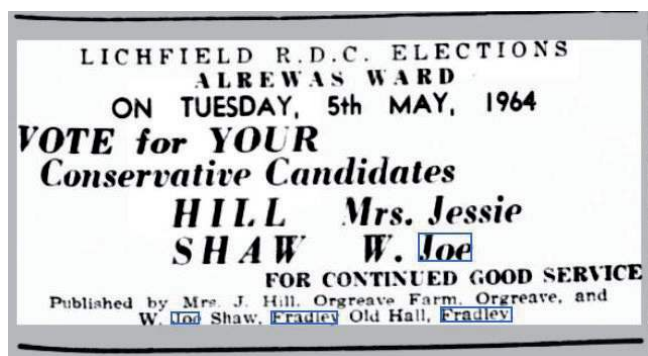
Joe (centre) chatting with his friends at the market



These impressive Longhorn horns had pride of place over the fireplace at Old Hall Farm

service at Lichfield Cathedral held in memory of their former landlord, the late Earl of Lichfield. In his address, the Bishop of Shrewsbury said that the Earl had loathed ostentation. "Those who were privileged to know him well would always remember his downright straightforward integrity which was a characteristic for the whole of his life."

Joe was an active member of the Lichfield branch of the National Farmer's Union, chairman of the Village Hall Committee and President of the Alrewas Show. He represented the Fradley ward on Alrewas Parish Council, and was a Conservative member of Lichfield Rural District Council from 1951.



He and Molly moved out of the Old Hall in 1964 and lived at Statfold House in their retirement. He died in 1974, at the age of 84. Many mourners contributed to the Church Yard Fund in his memory. Molly passed away in 1999, aged 90. They are buried in Fradley churchyard with their daughter Mary, who died in 2001.

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(Great-grand-daughter of William Smith Shaw)