

Trentham Memories

The Hicks Family of Lilleshall and Trentham by Vera Hicks



Trentham Heritage Project

James Hicks was born in 1864 the 2nd child of 10 children living in a cottage in Moor Park (now a school) in Richards Castle near Ludlow in Shropshire. On 1871 census he was a scholar, 1881 was agriculture labourer, 1891 aged 26 he was a game keeper for the Broadward Hall estate in Shropshire, then Lord Combermere's estate and also for Sir Joseph Bibby at Hardwick Grange in Salop.

In 1899 he married Sarah Clutton aged 29 and James was 34 at that time at Leamington Priors now Spa. Sarah was from Malpas in Cheshire. They had their honeymoon at Stafford. James then went to work for Lord Stafford moving to live at Beech. This was followed by a move to White Gates Farm in Kynnesley near Lilleshall and stayed for 14 years (1914). The farm was owned by the Duke of Sutherland and in the 1911 census James was 46 years old and was a gamekeeper and a small farmer. By this time they had three children all born at Kynnesley

1. Albert born 1900, died in 1912 and was buried at Kynnesley.
2. Edith 1902 married Arthur Rose (both teachers) went to live in Symonsbury Dorset. They had two sons.
3. Thomas (my father) was born in 1907. He married Elizabeth from Wolstanton in 1939.

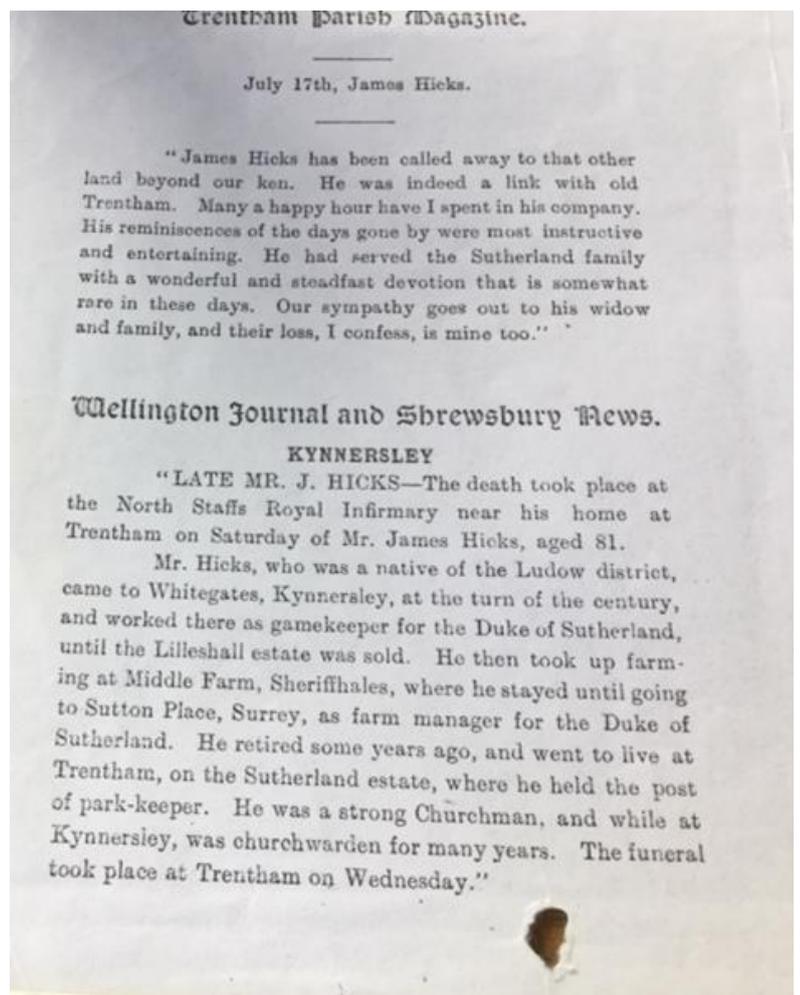
After Kynnesley the family moved to Middle Farm in Sherrifhales near Shifnal in 1915, renting it from the Duke of Sutherland, with 45 acres plus 20 acres belonging to the vicar. In the 1917 sale catalogue of Lilleshall Shropshire, when the Duke of Sutherland was putting property up for auction, James Hicks is listed as a tenant of a mixed farm with a 4 bed roomed home farm with buildings. They left the village in 1922 and I have a large silver tray from the villagers. In 1922 they moved to Sutton Green in Guildford (Surrey) to manage the farm of 400 acres for the Duke of Sutherland.





In 1927 he semi-retired to move to Trentham Golf house (now Trentham Park golf club) as park keeper to look after the fallow deer and general maintenance of the park fences etc.

In 1936 they moved to the Rosary in Park Drive next to the archway (the courtyard opposite the church) here he had the slaughter / butchery for the deer and hocks and cold section in our larder. He witnessed the railing being removed from the surrounds of the courtyard for war efforts, also the Polish, French refugees in the park killing his beloved deer including a pet white deer which he used to feed by hand with myself and brother. He stayed at the Rosary until his death in 1947.



Thomas Hicks my father, after getting married to Elizabeth in 1939 they went to live in the tiny cottage at the entrance to the hunt kennels. He was a catering clerk supervisor in the general offices in the clock courtyard, and I recall Red Cross war painted ambulances being stationed in the kennels and would come down our drive. I recall playing in a couple of starting kennels with my brother in the field opposite our house. We stayed there until my granddad died and we moved into the Rosary.

James and Sarah and Thomas and Elizabeth are buried in the Mausoleum cemetery.



Living in the Courtyard



When I lived at the Rosary, the two windows up and down to the left of the arch on the photograph. The house was named as my grandfather planted roses to replace the iron railings when

they were removed in World War II. He grew roses up the yellow walls for their perfume. Mr Grace use to prune them. Inside we had a very large cold store which was white tiled with hooks on the ceiling and a concrete slab, at table height, with a storage area underneath.



There were two cart horses kept in the courtyard, Sampson and Goliath. We used to ride Sampson bare back. The horse trough was in the centre of the courtyard and a haystack was kept in the upper section by the surveyor's house. Mr Wood lived there at that time.

Two buildings at the far end were for the farrier, where the vicarage is today and opposite on the top corner, there use to be a very large slaughterhouse, with white tiles. Next to it was a wagon shed with a wagon that was used to bring the deer down to the slaughterhouse.

At that time my father, who was unwell, was working in the offices in the clock courtyard across the road until he died in 1951. Then we had to move out of the Rosary to 55 Longton road then to May bank. My mother being a nurse, worked in the Red Cross hut in the playground at Trentham Gardens during the 1940s and early 50s until we moved to May Bank.

Trentham school

My brother started school in the bothy (black and white House) in the gardens then Trentham school on the A34. Myself I started school in the rooms under the clock in the courtyard, then went to the main school on the A34, opposite Café Monica. I recall getting sweets with coupons and sugar in blue bags and a section of bread. The loaf was about 18 inches long and we use to buy about 8 inches at a time. At school we had long concrete air raid shelters built in the school yard, which was on higher ground at the back of the school,



accessed in between Mr Goldstone's house and garden and the school. There were toilets at both ends of the shelter. I also recall the school's toilets which consisted of 2 or 3 wooden seats and one normal height compost toilet. The tallest person in the class stood on the desk to light the gas mantles, we did not have paper to write on, only slates one side stated HTU and the other plain. There were also slates all around the walls which we would write or draw on. Heating was by a coal open fire with a large guard around it. It was where the school's third of a pint milk bottles which we had at morning break time, used to be defrosted, if the cardboard tops had been forced up by the frozen milk.