

Cecil Family Fragments

From a tombstone in Ripon Cathedral Churchyard. "To the memory of Matthew Beckwith, Alderman and twice Mayor of Ripon who died on the fifth day of February 1780 aged 78 years. He married Alice the youngest daughter of Mr. Richard Austin of this town, Bookseller, by whom he had issue 6 sons and 6 daughters of which five died in infancy... Also Alice wife of the said Matthew Beckwith died 29th August 1783 aged 76 years..."

From the Ripon Millenary Record, 1892, Part 2, p101-105 we learn that Matthew Beckwith, Bookseller was Mayor of Ripon 1755-6 and 1767-8. The crest on his badge is an antelope passant. He was admitted a Freeman on 1.7.1751 and the same day chosen assistant: elected alderman 4.1.1755. He was one of the chief booksellers of the county. Their daughter Alice married Benjamin Oldroyd at Ripon on 11.2.1779.

We know nothing about the Oldroyds. Their daughter Alice Beckwith Oldroyd was educated in Scotland. Universal education came to Scotland in the early 1800s, much sooner than in England. Helen Sutherland in New Zealand, who has Oldroyd ancestors, writes, "When George Raymond visited my town some years ago and asked for names I said "Oldroyd". He looked at me, and said, "There is only one place in England with that name; Dewsbury in West Riding, Yorkshire." This needs researching.

Alice Oldroyd would later marry George Cecil, at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster on 28.1.1808. Of their eleven children, Elizabeth Frances was the eldest, and would marry Thomas Randall; their daughter Eliza would marry John Stainer on 27.12.1865.

Alice Oldroyd's sister Anne Oldroyd married James Shaddack. Among George Cecil's papers the following promissory note was found :- "London, 7.11.1826. Twelve months after date I promise to pay to Mr. James Shaddack or order the sum of two hundred pounds with five percent interest half yearly for value received." George Cecil. On the back of the note is :- "Memorandum 7.11.1826. I also undertake further to secure the payment of the said two hundred pounds and interest by a mortgage on the house and premises in my occupation and purchased by me at Oxford." Signed George Cecil. Dr. Edward Stainer writes, "The Two hundred pounds was not repaid and when George Cecil went bankrupt in 1832, James Shaddack's name appears in the list of George Cecil's creditors and all James got back was 5/- in the pound." (i.e. 25%)."

On a loose sheet of paper, a copied extract from a letter reads, "Since the sale of my effects I have been living with Mrs. C and two daughters and two sons in a small cottage on the Cowley Road taken for me by my son-in-law Mr. Randall who pays the rent & taxes and allows Mrs. C £1-10 per week for housekeeping, clothing etc and finds me the money to pay the fees of my holding requests, he receiving..."

Dr. Edward Stainer again. "I remember being told years ago that George Cecil died suddenly just outside "Tom" gate. Alice Lovejoy says that the Lodge Porter saw George Cecil's stick drop on the pavement and that he ran out to help the old man who was collapsing. A doctor happened to be passing at the time and was hailed. George Cecil was however found to be dead; he had a weak heart."

A tombstone inscription in St. Mary Magdalen Churchyard, Oxford reads, "Sacred to the memory of George Cecil, and Alice Beckwith Cecil... Near this spot lie the remains of John Hardy, son-in-law of the above who died of consumption Feb 9th 1842 aged 29 also of Mary Ann Caroline Hardy his widow, daughter of George and Alice Cecil who died of consumption May 26th 1843 aged 31; also of Frank Hardy

their son who died in infancy and of Mary Ann Caroline Hardy their daughter who died July 5th 1845 aged 5 years.” None of this family survived. We can preserve their memory here.