

A HISTORY OF STORDON GRANGE



*BY SAMUEL T STEWART - DECEMBER 2020
SECOND EDITION*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Thanks to the Boulton family for providing written permission to use information from their genealogy website in this publication on Stordon Grange, with the agreement that their copyright is honoured.
- Thanks to Ashby museum for allowing access to their archives, including the Stevenson & Barratt ledgers.

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

A certain line of the Boulton family's became lessees of Stordon Grange. The Boultons were very influential in the locality at one time, and they were wealthy coal mine and land owners. A particular branch of the family had business associations with the Beaumonts' of Coleorton. Joseph Boulton (1700 - 1789) became land agent in 1757 to the Beaumont family estate. In 1760, he was granted a 21 year lease on a Beaumont Colliery, farm and woods, however, this relationship ended in rather unfortunate circumstances, but that is another story, which is recorded in "**The Development of Coal Mining in the Local Area**" by **Samuel T Stewart**, which is free to download and read on the website.

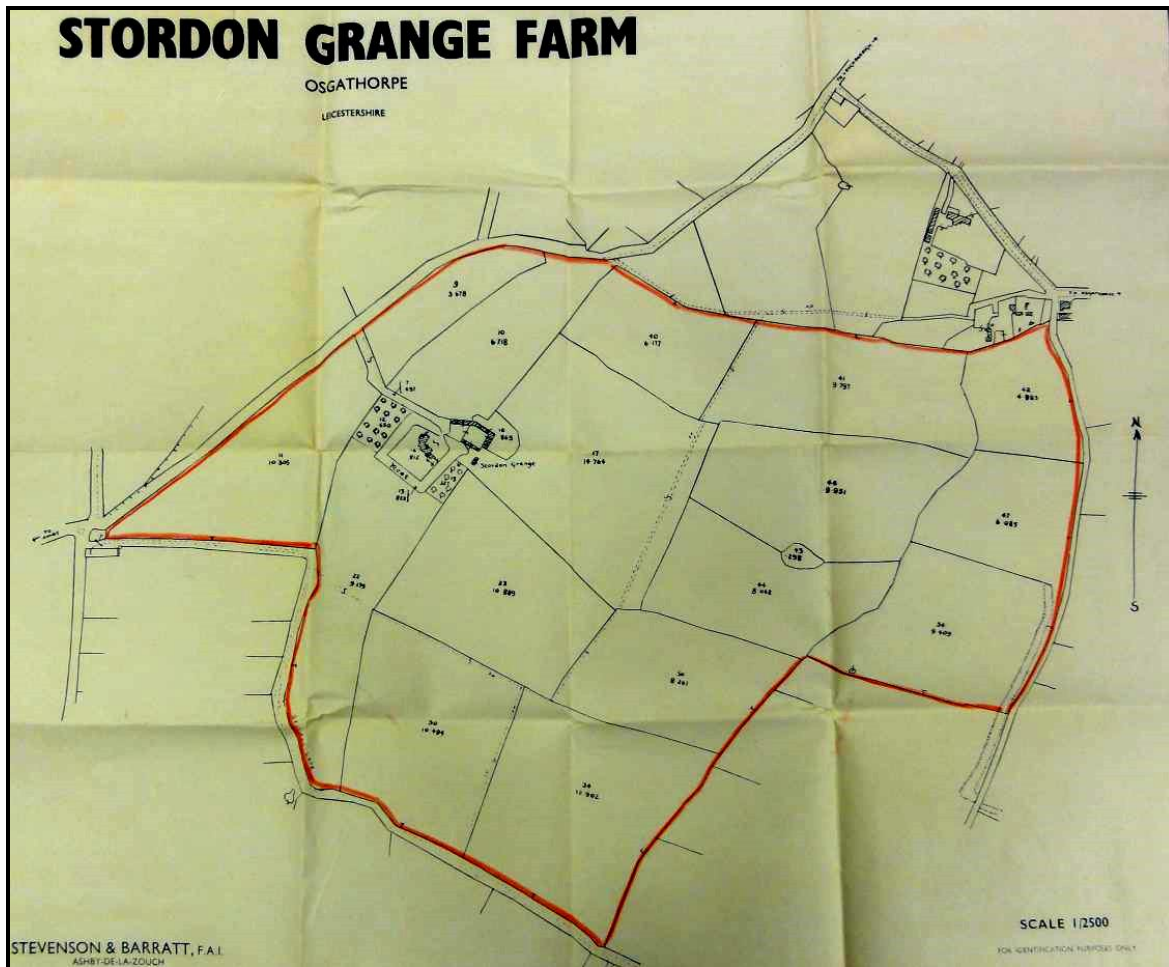
**COMPLEX HISTORICAL GENEALOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
ARE SO DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW THAT CLEARNESS OF
ARRANGEMENT IS THE FIRST PRIORITY. TO TAKE A
LEAP INTO THE MIDDLE OF A MORASS LEADS TO
NOTHING BUT HOPELESS FLOUNDERING. TO STEP
CAUTIOUSLY FROM THE SOLID GROUND TO SOME SPOT
WHICH OFFERS THE BEST PROSPECT OF SOUND
FOOTING IS THE MOST HOPEFUL COURSE OF
PROCEEDING**

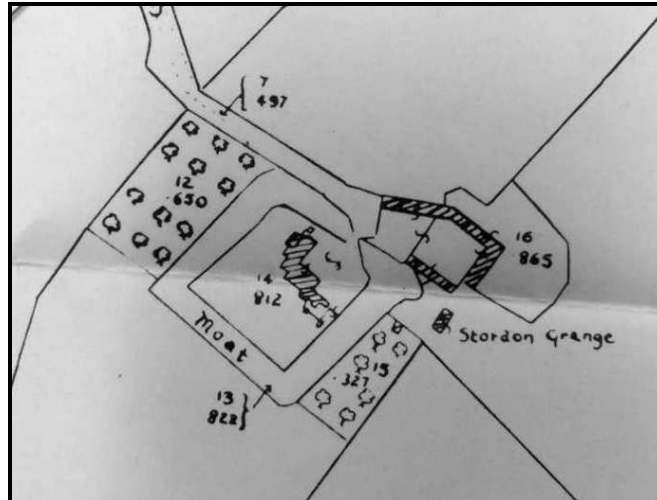
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STORDON GRANGE

"Stordon Grange", which was recorded as being given historical building status, prior to it being demolished c.1965, was in the Parish of Osgathorpe from 1936. It was in Thringstone Civil Parish, prior to boundary changes carried out in 1936, which resulted in 482 acres of land being transferred to Osgathorpe. This included "The Moated Farmhouse of Stordon Grange". Below, is an extract from a map showing the location of the property, which was on the Rempstone Road towards Osgathorpe, just after the staggered cross roads. There follows an actual plan of the Grange as it was prior to its sale in 1961.





Stordon Grange - Plan prior to sale in 1961

It is likely that Stordon Grange was of monastic origin, and built in the 15th / 16th century, although we have no actual proof of that. Monastic Granges were basically farms which worked the land owned by a monastery, Abbey or Priory. This is based on the premise that it lay between the Priors of Breedon and Grace Dieu. Garendon Abbey owned a great deal of land in the area in those times also. The writer has found no written evidence to confirm it was a Monastic Grange. A book entitled "Monastic Granges of Leicestershire" by Paul Courtney, which includes Garendon Abbey, Breedon and Grace Dieu Priors, does not mention it, although all other Granges are included. There is no mention found of Stordon Grange under any of the relevant sections of "The history of Antiques of the County of Leicester 1800", Volume 3 Part 2 by John Nichols. In a book entitled "Memorials of Old Leicestershire", which is edited by Alice Dryden, there is a section entitled "The Beaumonts of Grace-Dieu" by M. Jourdain, in which limited reference is made to it as follows :-

*"Thomas Beaumont died in 1458, leaving two sons, John and Thomas. Of these, John succeeded to the Coleorton Estate; Thomas, the second son, married Anne Moton of Peckleton, in the County of Leicester, and resided in Thringstone - probably at **the old moated house, still standing, known as Stordon Grange**; and it was his grandson, John Beaumont, who was one of the commissioners, and the first Beaumont owner of Grace-Dieu".....*

It has been established that circa 1700, a Thomas Boulton, entered upon a 99 year lease of Stordon Grange, which was held under the ancient family of the "Beaumonts of Coleorton", and it is known that he was still living at Stordon Grange at the time he died in 1750 at the age of 88. He was buried in Breedon-on-the-Hill grave yard. We will refer to him as Thomas (A). It is now thought that he was the son of Joseph Boulton of **Griffydham**, the testator of the following Will, which is transcribed from the original in the Leicester District Registry. Thomas (A) had two brothers Joseph and William (B), the latter being buried at Osgathorpe in 1757 aged 92. The following extract taken from the Osgathorpe Poor Law and Parish Charity records refers to William Boulton of Stordon Grange, suggesting that he was lodging with his brother Thomas (A) at the time:-

After having given inadequate accounts in 1715 as churchwarden, Benjamin Waldrum further exhibited his shortcomings as overseer in 1722. The parish meeting refused to accept the details of his accounts again because they were so unreasonable and ordered that they be "*not entered here for others to copie after*". **Even the inadequacies of Ben Waldrum do not compare with the escapade of William Boulton (B) of Stordon Grange:-**

"William Boulton served the office of overseer of ye poor for ye year 1723, his accompts was given up and the spare money was drunk at Bradfords by ye persons there met (etc) but he took them home (I not being there) and afterwards lost ye same".

THE TRANSCRIBED WILL OF THOMAS BOULTBEE OF GRIFFYDAM

*In the name of God, Amen. I, **Joseph Boulton of Griffydham in ye liberty of Worthington, in ye Parish of Breedon in ye county of Leicester**, calling to mind ye uncertainty of life, and certainty of death and being of sound mind and memory, praised be God, do make this my last Will and testament in manner following. First, I commend my Soul into the hands of Almighty God who gave it me, and my Body to ye earth of which it was made, to be decently buried by ye discretion of my Executors in hopes of a joyful Resurrection into Eternal Life through the alone Merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer, and as for my Worldly Estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me, I dispose thereof as followeth, Imprimis I give unto my son **Thomas Boulton** ye sume of five pound at my decease. Item, I give unto my son **William Boulton** ye sume of five pound. Item, I give unto my son **Joseph Boulton** ye sume of five pound. Item, I give to my daughter **Mary Draper** ye sume of fivety shillings. Item, I give my daughter **Ann Shaxper** ye sume of five pound. Item, I give to my daughter **Hannah Shaxper** ye sume of five pound. Item I give to my daughter **Elizabeth Ellicock** ye sume of five pound. Item, I give to my Grandson **Richard Baly** ye sume of three pound to be put to him to Prentice, but if he does not go to a trade, then to be paid to him when he comes of ye age of eighteen years. And ye rest of my goods and cattle quick and dead, I give to my son **Thomas Boulton** and my son **Joseph Boulton** in trust for my dear and loving wife during her life and all ye remainder at her decease to be equally devided amongst all my grandchildren that are living, and this I make to be my last Will and testament*

Witness my hand and seale ye 7th day of October 1718.

The mark X of Joseph Boulton (seal plain)

Witness Will Boulton. Jo Boulton.

Proved on the 26th February 1718 by the oaths of Thomas Boulton and Joseph Boulton. (In modern style this would be written 26 February, 1719. The legal year at that time ended March 25th)

Another Thomas Boulton (**C**), the grandson of Thomas Boulton (**A**), subsequently became the official lessee under the terms of his “grandfathers” Will, when his father Thomas Boulton, (son of Thomas Boulton **A**), the Rector of Brailsford, died in 1780.

Thomas (**C**) was aged 26 at the time of his grandfather’s death and continued to live at Stordon. He married Jane Bage in 1749 and they had 11 children by this marriage, between 1753 and 1770. Thomas junior died in 1785, and his wife Jane died in 1789 at the ages of 61 and 57 respectively. It would appear that the lease still had some years to run, and his son Robert apparently became the lessee for the remaining years. Robert was apparently succeeded by his son Thomas, who left Stordon with his wife Sophia in 1818. Stordon Grange was thought to have been occupied by four consecutive generations of the Boulton family.

In their latter years of occupancy, it is possible that the Boultons’ rented Stordon Grange from the Beaumont’s on an annual basis only and there seemed to have been some conflict of ownership in the early 1800’s as described later.

It is worth mentioning that two of the sons of Thomas and Jane Boulton (nee. Bage) were recognized artists. Thomas was a portrait painter, and apparently the less talented of the two. John was a sporting artist and described as follows in the Leicester Mercury dated 24th May 1967:-

John Boulton, who studied under Sir Joshua Reynolds, was the son of the squire of Stordon Grange, and would have been a young man in the 18th century - "his finest hour came, when King George III appointed him as his animal painter, and gave him a house in Windsor Great Park.

As further confirmation that Stordon Grange was owned by the Beaumonts, the following was included in the John Crocker (local historian) archives :-

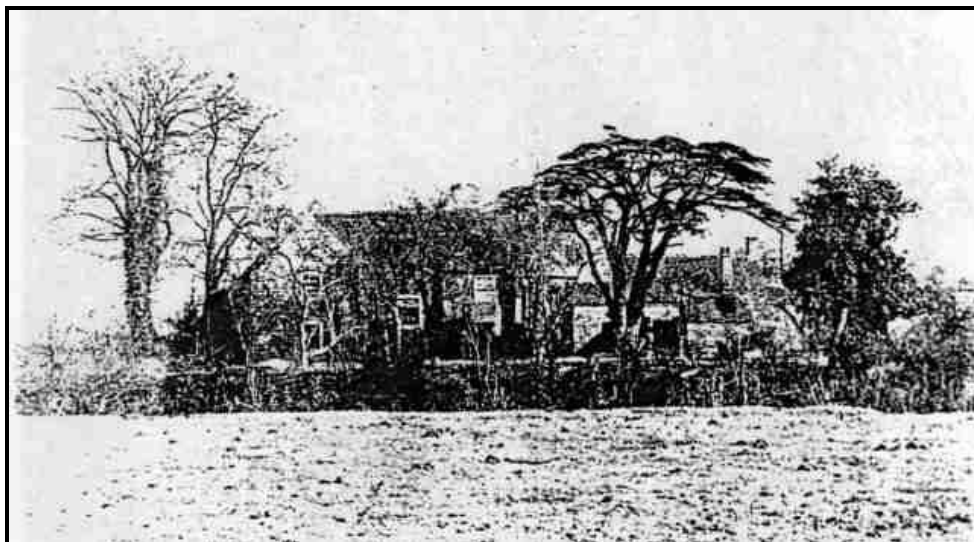
11 Feb 1799. A letter re consents to the intended enclosure of Thringstone (1807) includes reference to - Sir George Beaumont Imp. of great tithes, also owner of Stordon Grange Farm. 110A.

Long after the Boultons had left Stordon Grange c.1818, and the Knight family was in residence, a visit to the Grange was made in Feb 1891 by one of the Boulton descendants. The following description is given on the Boulton website, which it is assumed came from that visit:-

The moat encloses a house with a courtyard and a garden, and during the last century was accessible by a drawbridge, which is now supplanted by a small brick bridge or causeway. The dwelling belongs to that class of small country house, which a century or two ago, were inhabited by the less wealthy landed gentry, and has now passed into the occupation of tenant farmers

It lies in a small hollow, entirely secluded from all other habitations, at a little distance from a high road. It realizes the idea of a lonely moated grange, and might readily be passed within a short distance without suspicion of its proximity. The moat is supplied with water by the natural drainage of the slopes which surround it. Without the moat, there may be noted a large orchard of ancient apple trees which were probably planted by our forefathers, and a large farmyard with improvements of the modern order, which cannot date back many years. Within the moat, the courtyard, bounded on two sides by the house, occupies the north - east angle of the enclosure. On the west side some fine elm trees, which must have been saplings in the latter time of the Boulton occupation, overshadow the roof. On the south side, an old fashioned garden has in its centre, a gnarled and ancient cedar under which our forefathers must have often played in their childhood years. It may be older even than our family's connection with the place. It has been said, that Thomas Boulton built the house; this is certainly not true in the full sense, but it probably incorrectly represents a fact.

An ancient stone chimney, perhaps of the 15th century is an evident relic of the older house. Lying close to Charnley Forest, the original Grange was probably a half timbered building with chimneys of freestone. It seems very likely from the appearance of the present house, that Thomas Boulton re-built this in brick, of which the exterior walls are now chiefly composed. The rooms are rather small and low according to our present ideas, but are larger and higher than in many small houses. The drawing room is lined with Wainscot paneling. The staircase is of good and bold design, and it leads to nests of bedrooms, one within another, which would not suit modern ideas. There is a tradition, that in one of the rooms of a long window, now uninhabited, the Beaumont (Francis) who is associated with Fletcher, wrote some of his dramas. The idea, true or not, witnesses to the antiquity of this place.



**The above photographs were taken in the late 1800's
when the Knights were in residence at Stordon Grange**



**This photograph was probably taken in the early 1900's
whilst the Knights were in residence**



**This photograph, although similar to the above, has the addition of a window on the left,
and was taken later with snow on the ground. The building had clearly undergone some
external refurbishment at this time, and there is evidence of the addition of a window.**

The writer has confirmed that the Boulbbees' were still at Stordon Grange in 1816, as the following marriage announcement was recorded in "The New Monthly Magazine Vol 5 & Universal Register Jan-June 1816 (Library of University of Michigan) - Married at Osgathorpe, Thos Boulbee Esq., of Stordon Grange to Ann, second daughter of James Lager Esq., of Coleorton Hall Farm.

In "The Gentleman's Magazine Vol 81 - Dec 31st 1797, the following marriage announcement appeared - At Sutton Bonnington Co. Nottingham, Mr J F Stamford to Miss Frances Boulbee, daughter of the late Mr. Boulbee of Stordon Grange.

In "The Monthly Magazine Vol 2 1796" (Michigan University), the following marriage announcement appeared - Sir T Perkins Bart of Bunny Park to Miss J Boulbee of Stordon Grange Leicester.

These marriage announcements confirm that the Boulbbees of Stordon Grange mixed in upper class circles.

At the time of the "Thringstone and Peggs Green Enclosures Award" in 1807, the plots that surrounded Stordon Grange (Nos 76,77 and 78) were owned by Sir George Beaumont. A Rev Francis Harris had been allocated plot numbers 61,11 and 18 as compensation, and allowed to gather tithes and Easter offerings from this land. There appeared to have been legal proceedings between Sir George Beaumont and the Rev. Harris as to who actually owned Stordon Grange around this time. Interestingly, Stordon Grange was indicated on the enclosure map (not named), and was not numbered. It did not form part of the enclosure award either. It should be remembered that the original Beaumont 99 year lease would have expired well before this time, and it was probably being rented from whoever the rightful owner was, at that time.

A reference from the John Crocker archives (local historian) states :-

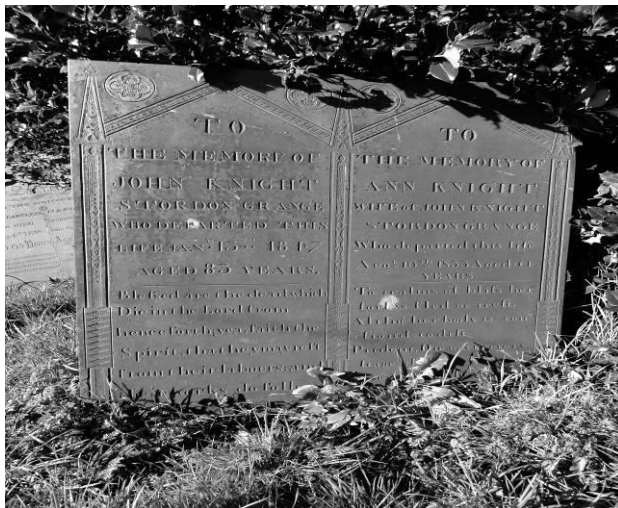
9th July 1804 - Bulls Head, Thringstone. Mr Hodgkinson for Sir George Beaumont to Rev Harris's claim to Stordon Grange Farm. Ordered Harris be informed, and to bring evidence in support.

The Boulbbees had left Stordon Grange by 1818.

A gravestone in Griffydham Methodist Wesleyan Cemetery states the following, which suggests that John and Ann Knight were living at Stordon Grange by 1831 :- *Sarah Ann Knight Died May 5th 1831 - Daughter of John and Ann Knight of Stordon Grange.*



There are two gravestones in Griffydam Cemetery for separate John & Ann Knight couples, which state they were of Stordon Grange, as shown in the photographs below. However, due to the bottom of Sarah Ann's gravestone above being half buried in the ground, we do not know when she was born, without excavating the headstone. It is therefore not known which couple were her Mum and Dad. There is also another headstone in memory of Elizabeth Knight, daughter of John and Ann of Stordon Grange. She was born in 1838 and died Apr 12th 1849 and would have been the daughter of John and Ann in the RH photograph below.



John Knight b.1764 / d.1847
Ann Knight (nee Price) b.1769 / d.1833



John Knight b.1801 d.1870
Ann Knight b.1804 / d.1875

The first gravestone states that John and Ann Knight are of Stordon Grange in 1831.

It is not unreasonable to assume that the three John Knights in the three graves shown, were grandfather, son and grandson.

In the 1851 census John and Ann Knight aged 49 and 46 respectively are living at Stordon Grange with their 5 children. Also 3 servants are listed who have additional jobs as Dairy Maid, Waggoner and Cowman. John Knight is given as being a farmer of 133 acres and employing 4 labourers.

In the 1861 census, John and Ann Knight (aged 59 and 56 respectively) are still farming at Stordon Grange. 6 children are now living with them, 5 of whom are doing various jobs on the farm. They now have one servant. John is now given as being a farmer of 150 acres with 2 labourers and 2 boys.

The 1871 census is very strange in that it lists Louisa Knight (sister, aged 19) as a farmer of 155 acres employing 2 men and 2 boys. There are 2 female and 1 male servant indoors listed. On the day the census was taken we can only assume that other members of the family were away.

In the 1881 census Fred Knight is listed as a farmer at Storden Grange and living with his wife Harriet and 3 children, a domestic servant and 2 farm servants. A nurse was also visiting presumably because they had a daughter that was only 4 days old, and could afford this luxury.

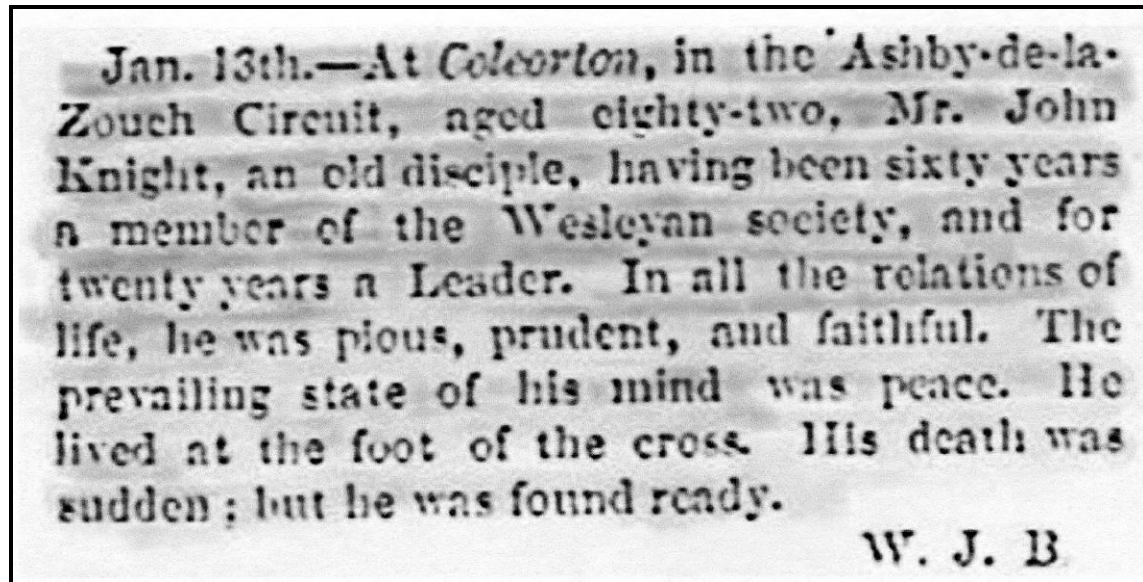
In the 1891 census John William Knight is listed as a farmer at Stordon Grange and living with his wife Sarah and 9 children.

In the 1901 census Fred Knight is listed as a farmer living with his wife Harriet and 3 children, a visitor (nurse), a domestic servant and 2 farm servants.



In Loving Memory of John William Knight of *Stordon Grange* who died October 8th, 1920 aged 78 years. Also his wife Sarah Hannah who died Sept 17th 1924 aged 78 years. Also of Clara Louisa daughter of the above at rest Sept 23rd 1906. Aged 28 Years

The first two John Knights appeared to be non-conformists as they were buried in Griffydham Methodist Wesleyan Cemetery, however, John William Knight was buried in St. Mary's Anglican Parish Church, Osgathorpe. The following obituary appeared in the Wesleyan Magazine on page 724, which, by the date of death, and age given, must refer to the first John Knight, and describes his dedication to the Wesleyan movement.



The author was informed by one of the Knights descendants, that they finally left Stordon Grange in 1924, which presumably coincided with the death of Sarah Hannah Knight whose grave is shown in the preceding photograph in St. Mary's Church graveyard at Osgathorpe, and includes her husband and daughter.

After the Knights vacated Stordon Grange, it was purchased by the Co-op, but reportedly, they sold it soon afterwards, having lost a lot of money because they employed a farm manager who couldn't farm. The Co-op sold it to a Mr. Joseph Nicklinson. He passed away in 1961 and Stordon Grange was put up for auction by Stevenson & Barratt on the 25th of September 1961. See the following sales documents.

By 1965, Stordon Grange had been demolished, and the rubble from the buildings used to fill the moat. A new house was built in between the original site of Stordon Grange and the road in 1962. Sadly no trace of the old Stordon Grange is now thought to exist.

By direction of the Administrators of J. O. Nicklinson, deceased.

WITH VACANT POSSESSION ON COMPLETION

**THE VALUABLE FREEHOLD
AGRICULTURAL HOLDING**

**STORDON GRANGE
FARM**

OSGATHORPE
Nr. Loughborough, Leicestershire

FOR SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION
(Unless Sold Previously by Private Treaty) on

MONDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER, 1961

Auctioneers :
STEVENSON & BARRATT, F.A.I.,
Chartered Auctioneers & Estate Agents
Ashby-de-la-Zouch. (Tel. 66)
and at Newark-on-Trent, Notts.

Solicitors :
Messrs. H. PIPES & CO.,
Meibourne,
Derbyshire,
(Tel. 113.)

Particulars

**STORDON GRANGE FARM
OSGATHORPE LEICESTERSHIRE**

The FARMHOUSE AND BUILDINGS stand well back from the main road and are approached by a hard farm drive from the main road.

The FARMHOUSE, part of which dates back about 300 years, is built of stone and brick having a tiled roof and contains the following accommodation:—

DINING ROOM with fireplace fitted cupboards and corner cupboard; TWO SITTING ROOMS (one with modern tiled fireplace); KITCHEN with range and fitted cupboards; SCULLERY with sink (cold taps over) and electric water heater; Pantry; FOUR BEDROOMS; back Staircase leading to two bedrooms and attic. Outside: Two Storeplaces; Coalplace; Earth Closet.

The FARMBUILDINGS are conveniently arranged around an open yard and comprise:—

Range of brick and tile Buildings forming two Pigstyes; GARAGE with loft over; THREE LOOSE BOXES; STABLE; TWO HAY BARNs; GRAIN PIT; MIXING PLACE with loft over; HAY PLACE; COWSHED for 20 with feeding passage, concrete divisions and floor, tap.

Range of brick and tile Buildings forming LOOSE BOX; COWSHED for 12 with concrete divisions and floor, tap. Open Cart Shed; DAIRY with concrete floor, tap, electric power point. Brick and tile FOUR BAY IMPLEMENT SHED.

The LAND which lies very compactly around the homestead in a ring fence, is well known for its feeding qualities. The majority of the pasture fields are watered by troughs from the main supply and many of the fields are serviced by good hard roads.