

For about two hundred years the Alford's held houses and land in Winsham, now a straggling and somewhat decayed village, lying between Chard and Crewkerne, in the County of Somerset, close to the borders of Devonshire. Winsham was formerly, however, a place of some importance, noted for the manufacture of cloth, and several of the Alford's of Winsham owed their competence to this business, at that time a prosperous one in the whole of the south-west of England.

It may be noted that for six successive generations, as will be seen in the pedigree, the senior member of the family in Winsham was a John Alford. The loyalty of the Alford's to the national church is also noticeable, at a time when there were strong leanings towards dissent in these western counties.

From the Winsham family sprang the Alford's of Lyme Regis, Ottery St. Mary, and Escott in Talaton.

Joseph Alford, author of *The Church Triumphant*, and *The Soul's Dispensatory*, published in London in 1649, was born at Winsham, but as the Wills and Registers mention three or four of that name it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other. A signature in the Registers in 1642 is probably this author's. He matriculated at Oriel College, Oxford, and proceeded to the degree of M.A. The books he wrote were in the Sydenham Library and Catalogue, and may now be seen in the British Museum Library. His name also appears as follows: "Alforde, Joseph, Witness against Totehill." 2 Cranmer, 387, 388. Parker Society. Joseph Alford is referred to in Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, where, speaking of the Alford's of Aldford and Holt (see pedigree Tables I and II), who afterwards branched off into Berkshire and the west of England, he says, "from these descended Joseph Alford, author of two religious treatises published in London in 1649". The dedication of these books to Sir John Brownlow has been already alluded to (*ante*, p. 3).

In 1649 another Joseph Alford, perhaps the nephew of the author, matriculated at Oxford. He married, at Winsham, in 1654; served as churchwarden of the parish in 1657, his signature being in the Register Book; and died in 1665, leaving no son. Letters of administration to his sister, Elizabeth Alford, of Winsham, were proved in October, 1673 (the year following her death), by their brother John. This John left two sons, twins John and William Alford, born in 1686.

Another author of the same period may here be mentioned, Michael Alford, or "Father Alford", author of *Britannia Illustrata*, published at Antwerp, in 1641, and *Annales Ecclesiae Britannicae*, 1663. In his case Alford was an assumed name, his real name being Griffiths, but it is not known what led him to adopt it. He was born in 1587. At the age of twenty he became a Jesuit, but afterwards left the Church of Rome, which he attacked in his writings. He died in Exeter in 1652.

The Winsham Alford's naturally spread into the neighbouring town of Chard which is only three miles distant. Here at a later date, i.e. from 1782 to 1805, when he died, Thomas Alford, of the Weston Zoyland line, was vicar. (See Table X.) His signature appears many times in the Registers, and there are numerous entries concerning the former mentioned family.

The following extracts from the Parish Books of Winsham, concerning the Alford family, are of interest:

- 1577 "Seates. On ye north syde nexte ye Chancell, John Alforde."
- 1621 Robert Alford signs as churchwarden.
- 1622 William Alford was churchwarden. The signatures of Robert Alford and John Alford.
- 1642 Robert Alford signs as churchwarden. Amongst the signatures to a "Protestation" are those of John Alford, Joseph Alford, Robert Alford and William Alford. Also, "The seat that belongeth to John Alford to remayne to that tenement of Amerham the which Robert Alford his father now enjoyeth."
- 1657 Joseph Alford signs as churchwarden.
- 1658 "Joseph Alford hath a room (i.e. a pew) near the Porch door." Also mention of "John Alford, whose father's house was in Amerham."
- 1666 March 22 John Alford and Robert Alford were witnesses at the induction of a new Vicar.
- 1689 "John Alford of Wells, Gentleman, 29, married Sarah Blackdon, of Winsham, County Somerset, at St. Cuthbert's, Wells."

EXTRACTS FROM THE WINSHAM REGISTERS

1560, Apr. 11 Catherina Alforde, baptized.
 1561, Dec. 29 Joan'es Allforde, buried.
 1562, Jan. 8 Gulielm's filius Joan'is Allforde, baptized.
 1567, Mar. 8 Matilda Allforde, buried.
 1577, Mar. 24 Joan'es fil. Joannis Alforde junioris, buried.
 1579, Mar. 11 William, sonne of John Alforde, baptized.
 1581, Dec. 22 Maria filia Joannis Allforde junior, baptized.
 1584, June. 5 Roburtus filius Joannis Alforde, junior, baptized
 1584, July 26 Robert Batine and Joan Allford, married.
 1585, Dec. 27 Joannes Alforde, senior, buried.
 1587, Mar. 1 Agnes and Joanna filiāe geminæ Joannis Alforde, baptized.
 1590, Mar. 11 Richardus filius Joannis Alforde, baptized.
 1592, July 24 Elizabetha filia Joannis Alforde, baptized.
 1592, Oct. 24 Elizebatha filia Joannis Alforde, infans, buried
 1594, Aug. 22 Elizebatha filia Joannis Alforde, baptized.
 1596, Feb. 27 Agnes Alforde, vidua, buried.
 1604, Aug. 30 Gulielmus Alforde et Ana Hawker, nupti.
 1608, May 23 Gulielmus Lomberde et Maria Alforde, nupti.
 1611, Apr. 21 Agnes filia Joannis Alforde, junior, baptized.
 1612, Nov. 30 Thomas Membry cum Joanna Alford, nuptiis.
 1613, Aug. 1 Joannes filius Rich. Alforde, baptized.
 1616, Apr. 16 Richardus Allforde, baptized.
 1618, Nov. 1 Robertus Allforde, baptized.
 1618, Nov. 23 Richarde Allforde was buried.
 1621, Nov. 21 Richard, sonne of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1624, Jan. 5 William, sonne of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1625, Nov. 20 Joan Alford was buried.
 1628, Aug. 15 Thomas Deane and Mary Alford (Gould), married.
 1629, June 17 John Edwards and Anne Alford, married.
 1631, July 3 Samuell, sonne of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1634, July 7 Anna Alford, sepult.
 1635, Nov. 30 John, the sonne of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1637, Sept. 6 Elizabeth, daughter of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1638, Dec. 17 Giles Alford *als.* Gould, buried.
 1639, Feb. 7 John Alford, senior, buried.
 1639, June 7 John Hidgcock and Agnes Alford, married.
 1639, Sept. 29 Annie, daughter of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1641, Jan. 25 Marie, daughter of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1643, June 7 Joanne, daughter of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1644, Sept. 12 Anne Alford, buried.
 1645, July 22 Robert, sonne of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1647, Jan. 24 Joseph, sonne of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1647, July 30 Robert, sonne of William Alford, baptized.
 1648, Nov. 21 Emma, the daughter of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1650, Jan. 16 William Alford, buried.
 1651, July 1 William, son of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1653, May 21 Richard, son of John and Elizabeth Alford, baptized.
 1653, Nov. 13 William, the son of William Alford, baptized.
 1654, Oct. 17 Joseph Alford and Elizabeth Holwell, married.
 1655, Oct. 16 Robert, son of John Alford, buried.
 1655, Oct. 23 Robert, son of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1655, Dec. 30 John, son of William Alford, baptized.
 1656, June 3 Samuel, son of John Alford, baptized.
 1656, Aug. 26 Joseph, son of Joseph Alford, baptized.

1656, Sept. 29 Samuel Alford and Anne Dowdall, married.
 1657, June 3 Robert, son of Robert Alford, buried.
 1657, July 13 Joseph, son of Joseph Alford, buried.
 1657, Dec. 14 Mary, daughter of Samuel and Anne Alford, baptized.
 1658, Mar. 25 Richard and Elizabeth, son and daughter of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1658, Apr. 14 Richard, son of Robert Alford, buried.
 1659, Apr. 7 Robert, son of Samuel Alford, baptized.
 1660, July 20 Samuel, son of Samuel Alford, baptized.
 1661, May 16 Jane, daughter of Joseph Alford, baptized.
 1661, Sept. 16 Robin, son of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1662, Jan. 1 Elizabeth, daughter of William Alford, baptized.
 1663 or '68
 Feb. 21 Joseph, son of Joseph Alford, baptized.
 1663, Mar. 25 Anne, daughter of Samuel Alford, baptized.
 1663, May 5 Samuel, son of William Alford, baptized.
 1664, Jan. 5 Joseph, son of Robert Alford, baptized.
 1665, Jan. 7 Joseph, son of Robert Alford, buried.
 1665, Jan. 29 Sarah, daughter of Samuel Alford, baptized.
 1665, Sept. 6 John, son of John Alford, buried.
 1666, Mar. 7 Joseph, son of Joseph Alford, buried.
 1668, Jan. 8 Andrew, son of Samuel Alford, baptized.
 1668, Mar. 14 Elizabeth, wife of Joseph Alford, buried.
 1668, July 3 Joseph, son of Joseph Alford, buried.
 1670, July 27 Joseph, son of Samuel Alford, baptized.
 1670, Aug. 25 Elizabeth, daughter of John Alford, buried.
 1686, Sept. 12 Joseph and William, sonnes of Mr John Alford, baptized.
 1697, Aug. 20 Mary, daughter of John Alford, buried.
[Searched only as far as 1700]

REGISTERS OF CHARD, SOMERSET

[The result of a very incomplete search]

1673, Jan. 1 Bartholomew Alford, glover, buried.
 1676, Feb. 3 Philipp Alford, taylor, buried.
 1679, Jan. 18 Jane, wife of Andrew Alford, buried.
 1680, Dec. 5 Alexander, son of Andrew Alford, buried.
 1681, Jan. 5 Alexander Alford, buried.
 1691, Jan. 7 Elizabeth Alford, widow, buried.
 1705, Nov. 9 Francis Alford, gent., of Lime, buried.
 1784, June 20 William, son of John and Hannah Alford, baptized.
 1787, May 20 Anne Alford, wife of Jno., buried.
 1793, Mar. 31 Thomas Alford, buried.
 1794, Jan. — Jane, daughter of John and Margaret Alford, baptized.
 1800, Apr. 20 John, son of Mary Alford, baptized.

ABSTRACTS OF WILLS

John Alforde of Winsham, Somerset, 1561, Feb. 6. "Holle and sound of mynde ... bodie to be buried in Holie Grave ... John my sonne ... Richard my sonne ... Maude my wyfe ... to childer of my sonne John ... to every of my childers childer one live sheepe." Remainder to my wyfe Maude, sole Executrix.

P.C.C. 4 Streat.

Agnes Alford of Chard, co. Somerset, widow, 1661. "My daughter Elizabeth Alford, to whom I leave all I possess, and whom I make sole Executrix." Proved at Wells, August 17, 1661.

Wells, Bishop's Court, No. xxi.

Robert Alford of Winsham, co. Somerset, 1666. To be buried there. "To the poor of Winsham ... My son Robert Alford shall hold and enjoy that tenement wherein his brother John Alford now dwells ... To my son William Alford a house in Winsham ... My son Samuel ... My daughter Anne Edwards ... Anne Alford the daughter of my son John ... Residue to my sonne John sole Executor."

P.C.C. 115 Mico.

Elizabeth Alford of Winsham, co. Somerset, October, 1673. Administration granted to her brothers John Alford and Joseph Alford, John Alford the father being dead, and Elizabeth Alford the mother renouncing.

Thomas Alford of Chard, co. Somerset, 1678. "My daughter Joane Alford ... My wife Joane Alford residuary legatee and Executrix." Will dated May 2nd, 1677. Proved March 8th, 1678.

Wells, Bishop's Court, No. xiii.

Robert Alford of Winsham, in the co. of Somerset, gent., 1725. "My daughter Martha Milverton, my late wife Sarah deceased ... My daughter Catherine Alford ... my kinsman Edward Blagdon esq ... My estates to my son Robert Alford ... my kinswoman Mary Hingson ... My close called Harkwood in Winsham to my daughter Anne Horsey, widow, whom I appoint Executrix." (Testator married Sarah Blagdon in 1689.)

P.C.C. 105 Romney.

Joseph Alford of East Chinnocke, gent., 1742. House and lands at Yeovil to wife, Ann Alford. House and lands at Winsham. Remainder after wife's death to Samuel Hood, son of his brother-in-law John Hood, subject to a payment to his mother of £12 yearly. Will dated March 2, 1733. Proved at Wells, May 4, 1742.

Wells Archdeaconry Court, No. xxxviii.

Philip Alford of Chard, Somerset, 1752. "To my wife Mary Alford the house in which I now dwell, and after her decease to my nephew Philip Alford Collins ... William Alford the younger ... Residue to my wife, whom I appoint sole Executrix."

P.C.C. 56 Bettsworth.

Robert Alford of Axbridge, Somerset, 1766. Stocking maker. Son Robert Alford; daughters Elizabeth, Mary, Ann; sons Francis, John, James, Thomas; each £50 at age of twenty-one, or on marriage. Residue to wife Elizabeth Alford. James Tuthill of Axbridge, Clerk, and Richard Tuthill of Huntspill, Clerk, Executors. Will dated June 24, 1765. Proved Jan. 13, 1766. (Seal with Arms of Symes.)

Wells Archdeaconry Court, No. iv.

William Alford of Chard, in the co. of Somerset, Clothier, 1777. "To Thomas Collins and George Warry, gentlemen, of the same place, in trust, my dwelling-house with garden and outhouses, for Rebecca, wife of Philip Alford Collins. Amos Ashford, brother of the said Rebecca ... My nephew Samuel Alford Harbour, of Bridport ... my silver cup ... my silver tankard ... my silver beaker ... All the rest of my goods, furniture, plate, etc., to the said Samuel Alford Harbour and Rebecca Collins, equally."

P.C.C. 296 Collier.

Elizabeth Alford of Axbridge, Somerset, 1784. "To my son Francis the upper house adjoining the one in which I now live. To my daughter Elizabeth the corner house in which I now live, with a garden, and two houses adjoining. To my said daughter ... furniture ... silver cream jug ... etc. To my daughter Mary Smith a pint cup of silver. To my daughter Ann Walker a silver pepper-box. My son James, my son Thomas, £50 each. To my son John a pair of silver salts. My son Thomas Alford ... Jonah Shortman and my relative Mr. James Tuthill, surgeon of Axbridge, Executors." Will dated Aug. 27, 1781. Proved July 6, 1784. [Testatrix was widow of Robert Alford.]

Wells Archdeaconry Court, No. iv.