



Clifton Burials

25 Aug 1725 John Powers, labourer

Langford Marriages

24 May 1747 John Powers and Elizabeth Dobson

Langford Baptisms

7 Mar 1747/8 Frances daughter of John and Elizabeth Powers

Langford Burials

25 Oct 1767 Elizabeth wife of John Powers

Langford Marriages

22 Aug 1768 John Powers, widower and Mary Storton, spinster,  
both of Langford

Langford Baptisms

13 Jul 1769 John son of John and Mary Powers

Langford Burials

13 Mar 1782 Ann wife of Edmund Powers

9 May 1782 Edmund Powers

13 Oct 1809 John Powers from Biggleswade

20 Sep 1812 Mary Powers from Biggleswade

Biggleswade Marriages

28 May 1799 John Powers and Mary Warboys

5 Dec 1805 John Warboys of Enfield and Elizabeth Powers

Sandy Baptisms: following children of John and Mary Powers

21 Jul 1800 John

5 Aug 1801 Samuel

15 May 1803 Mary [buried 25 Jun 1807]

17 Aug 1804 Sophia

16 Apr 1806 Thomas

4 Nov 1807 Joseph

21 Sep 1809 Edmund

7 Apr 1813 William

12 Feb 1815 Charles

[ his father, John Powers, is given as a baker]

Sandy Burials

2 Jun 1815 William Powers of Sandy aged 2

15 Apr 1819 Sophia Powers of Sandy aged 19

1 Nov 1829 Mary Powers of Sandy aged 55

28 Jul 1842 John Powers of Sandy aged 73

Biggleswade Baptisms all on Aug 10 1860

1) Ellen, 2) George, 3) John Edwin

all children of Edmund Powers of Biggleswade, miller and Harriet his wife

Biggleswade Marriages

28 Jun 1862 George Griffith Phillips, surgeon (son of John of Minster, Isle of Thanet, Kent) of full years to Ellen Powers (daughter of Edmund, miller)

31 Jul 1862 George Powers aged 20 (son of Edmund) both millers and Elizabeth Weston aged 20 (daughter of James of Biggleswade, gentleman)

Biggleswade Baptisms: following children of George Powers and Elizabeth Weston

25 Jul 1866 Robert Weston son of George Powers, miller and Elizabeth Weston his wife, of Holme Mills, Southill

7 Aug 1867 Mary Ellen Elizabeth daughter of George Powers, miller and Elizabeth (neè Weston) his wife, of Holme Mills, Southill

21 Oct 1868 Richard Henry son of George Powers and Elizabeth (neè Weston) his wife, of Holme Mills, Biggleswade

16 Feb 1870 Mabel Sarah daughter of George Powers, miller and Elizabeth (neè Weston) of Holme Mills, Biggleswade

2 Aug 1871 Alexander Charles son of George Powers, miller and Elizabeth (neè Weston) of Holme Mills, Biggleswade

9 Mar 1873 Philip Edmund, son of George and Elizabeth Powers of Broom Hall, Southill, merchant

19 Sep 1874 Harold Octavius son of George and Elizabeth Weston Powers of Broom, Southill, merchant

29 Jul 1876 Julian James son of George and Elizabeth Weston Powers of Broom, (Southill), cornbroker.  
(Godparents) Julia Ellen Murfin (later wife of Edmund Frederick, George's brother) and James J Weston (Elizabeth's father)

19 Aug 1879 Stephen Frederick, son of above. George described as merchant. (born 20 July 1879)

13 Jan 1881 Clara Edith, daughter of same  
(born 10 December 1880)

Tempsford Baptisms: following children of Charles Powers

25 Jul 1847 Elizabeth Kidman daughter of Charles and Elizabeth Powers

1 Aug 1852 Anne Amelia and Arthur Charles on same day, children of above

Biggleswade Baptisms: following children of Charles Powers

3 Dec 1862 on same day Hugh Edward and George Walter sons of Charles Powers of Biggleswade and Elizabeth his wife

Biggleswade Burials

21 Jun 1872 Mabel Powers of Biggleswade aged 2

5 May 1873 Charles Powers of Biggleswade aged 58

18 Oct 1879 John Edwin Powers of Biggleswade aged 33

17 May 1883 Harriet Powers of Biggleswade aged 75

18 Dec 1885 Edmund Powers of Biggleswade aged 75

16 Jun 1885 Henry Noel Walter Powers of Biggleswade aged 6 months

Biggleswade Baptisms

8 Apr 1842 Elizabeth daughter of James Weston of Biggleswade, gentleman and Elizabeth his wife  
(born 5 Mar 1842)

## The Powers Family of Biggleswade

On 28 May 1799 John Powers, baker married Mary Warboys at Biggleswade. By the time of the baptism of their first child on 21 July 1800 he is given as living at Sandy, probably at Girtford and carrying on the trade of a baker. Their 6th and 8th sons were Edmund (baptised 21 September 1809) and Charles (baptised 12 February 1815). Both of them became millers in the Biggleswade area. Edmund had 5 children, Charles Tower, Edmund Frederick, George, Ellen, all born at Biggleswade and John E at Blunham. By 1850 he was described as miller and farmer and ran Biggleswade, Holme and Stanford Mills. In 1868 he had taken into partnership his 3 eldest sons with George being based at Holme Mills, who had on 31 July 1862 married Elizabeth Weston, the daughter of James Weston, brewer and gentleman of Biggleswade. In 1869 he was made joint partner of James Weston, which only lasted till 1871. Soon afterwards Weston sold the Brewery in Shortmead Street to Wells and Company of the Biggleswade Brewery.

Charles Powers, Edmund's younger brother was established by 1847 as a miller and corn factor at Tempsford Mill. By 1853 he was also controlling South Mills, Blunham, where he had a manager. This latter was an oil mill producing oil cake. He also had a number of children, Arthur Charles, Hugh Edward, George Walter (born 22 January 1855), Elizabeth Kidman, Annie Amelia, Maria Louisa, all at Biggleswade. In 1868 Charles bought St Andrews, Biggleswade.

On 31 October 1873 Charles died suddenly, leaving a widow and 5 children under 21 to be maintained out of his estate. The eldest son Arthur Charles had left for New Zealand, somewhat under a cloud. There he lived a life of dissipation and died at Wellington on 22 April 1884, which was discovered many years later. Before his death Charles had made a will leaving the bulk of his assets in the hands of Trustees whom he named his elder brother Edmund, the family solicitor Thomas James Hooper and George Race, a cousin, who was a local farmer at Road Farm. The trustees had the power to carry on Charles Powers' business "Charles Powers and Company" if they so desired or to sell it if they did not. Out of this were to be paid legacies of £3,000 to each of the 3 sisters and Arthur Charles with the residue to be split equally between Hugh and Walter when they were both 25, i.e. in 1880. There were mutual reversions in the event of death with the issue of any of the parties.

Charles Powers also left legacies of £3,000 to Hugh and Walter Powers and £1,000 to each of the sisters.

The Trustees soon made two crucial decisions, firstly to allow Charles Powers and Company to continue and secondly to appoint Edmund Frederick Powers, Edmund's 2nd son as manager until the two younger sons of Charles Powers came of age. They could have sold

the mill and in that case the appalling financial trouble the whole family got into in the 1880s would have been avoided. At the time however it seemed a sensible decision because judging by Charles Powers' legacies he judged the business to be worth at very least £28,000 and probably very much more. 2 catastrophic fires, and an untrustworthy not to say dishonest manager, who was inadequately supervised, and unwise speculation in foodstuffs in a time of agricultural depression brought the firm of Charles Powers and Company to collapse and Charles' two sons, who were supposed to benefit from it, to being £2 a week remittance men.

The first of the fires occurred on the 9 August 1876 at Blunham Oil Mill (also known as South Mills) in which the building was totally destroyed. The Mill was insured with the Liverpool and Globe Insurance Company Limited for £23,000 [of which £12,200 was for stock]. A legal action was fought at Bedford Assizes for 1878 between the Trustees of Charles Powers and the Insurance Company [Powers and Others v. Nicholson] over who owned the Salvage. The Insurance Company claimed it and yet did nothing to prevent its further deterioration. Edmund Frederick Powers, largely on his own initiative, risked £1,300 on treating it and made a £1,200 profit. An Award made 9 January 1879 granted £1,333 in addition over and above the £12,200 plus costs to Charles Powers' Trustees.

In 1880 Hugh Edward Powers was admitted as a partner with Edmund Frederick Powers, while George Walter preferred to be out of the business but nevertheless lent £10,000 to carry on the business. The financial affairs of the company were still healthy but an ominous note for the future was that Edmund Frederick Powers already had an overdraft of £1,100 with Charles Powers and Company. Despite being a partner of Edmund Frederick Powers, Hugh Powers took no active part in the business and was content to receive his £12 a week without asking too many questions of what was going on.

In his later years Edmund Powers became senile and left the running of his business to his 3 sons. He had in his possession by 1883 an estate in Campton; Biggleswade Mill, Holme Mills, Langford Mills and freehold in Biggleswade and Clifton. The Campton estate he mortgaged to the Law Life Assurance Society for £15,000. On 15 August 1879 he issued a promissory note in £8,000 in favour of his 3 sons, who were not to be foreclosed on for 21 years, if the interest was paid regularly. On the same day he made his will leaving both the Campton estate and the £8,000 promissory note to his 2 nephews Hugh and Walter Powers as Trustees until the death of John Powers, his youngest son and his wife Fanny for 21 years. Out of these were to be retained £300 from the Campton estate to be held for the use of John Powers and his wife (reversion to brothers) and £280 for Ellen Phillips from the promissory note with reversion to 4 brothers. The Mills were to go to the 3 brothers Charles Tower, George and Edmund Frederick Powers, but a house was to be bought for Ellen Phillips at

Tickhill up to £1,000 value. Importantly this will was not proved till 15 February 1885 despite Edmund's dying in December 1883. The will was therefore not valid at a crucial stage in the proceedings.

Edmund Powers and Company were not solely concerned however with the Biggleswade area. Due to George Powers, Edmund's 3rd son, the company became involved in two businesses in London. The first, at Albion Mills, was leased by George Powers from the Great Northern Railway for 60 years. The Mills were situated near King's Cross Railway Station. The second was the Ham Farm Brickfield.

Edward George Tattersall and William Henry Gill, a gentleman from Wakefield, Yorkshire leased the brickyards at Ham. Gill put in £4,000 capital but got no profits for his money, so in June 1878 he sold his share to Tattersall for £6,000 to be paid within a year. Meanwhile George Powers had gone into partnership with Tattersall to purchase land and erect buildings in Westminster. By December 1878 Tattersall found himself over committed and could not discharge the Rent and Royalties due on the brickyard (£1,022) which allied to £600 (current debts) and debts of £6,000 to Gill and £3,350 and £5,000 to George Powers. An arrangement was made, which meant the payment of Tattersall's current debts in return for the lease to Powers as trustee for Gill as well as himself. Gill got £2,000 and Powers £5,000 of their £6,000 and £8,850. Gill in addition gave Powers £1,000 to carry on the "Ham Farm Brick Company" as a joint trust. On 26 March 1879 further partners were added: Walter Shoolbred (a wealthy draper of Tottenham Court Road), Frederick Safford (the illegitimate son of Frederick Hogg of Girtford, merchant), Hugh Edward Powers and Edmund Frederick Powers.

By October 1879 the two principal parties had gone to law with one another in an action entitled "Gill v. Powers". Agreement was reached on 2 January 1880 to wind up the business. Powers had to pay £1,750 to Gill, outstanding debts of Tattersall and Gill and £64.15s.6d on dishonoured Bill of Sale of £58. This left George Powers in sole control of the brickfield.

Between them the 2 Powers brothers had control of Powers and Sons, a London Mill, virtual control of Charles Powers and Company and the virtual ownership of the Ham Brick Field. To keep the conflicting interests of the 2 milling concerns apart would have been difficult but Edmund Frederick Powers does not seem to have made the attempt. He started using the name of Charles Powers and Company as security for a series of disastrous speculation in wheat and oil cake from abroad, principally America, which he started c.1881-2. In one year 1883 £50,000 was said to have passed between the two offices, yet the transactions were difficult to trace. The profitability for Charles Powers and Company was exceedingly questionable. Edmund Frederick Powers on their behalf accepted bills of £19,354 and yet only received £3,000 in return. T J Hooper the family solicitor, tried

to prevent this happening but without success. Charles Powers and Company also lent £3,000 to George Powers to help him with the Ham Farm speculation. By 1886 only £2,000 was recovered and no interest was paid for 2 years, presumably prior to 1884.

Edmund Frederick Powers' real motive seems to have been to get as much money as he could out of both firms without actually bankrupting them. On 19 July 1884 he had an overdraft of £5,000 with Charles Powers and Company as well as "losses on wheat of £3,000 and further losses of £1,000". Total £9,000. With Edmund Powers and Sons he had an overdraft of £5136..2s..5d and losses on wheat of £2,000. The money he used for defraying the expenses of a high standard of living. His wife, who had £300 per annum income of her own was clearly an elegant woman, who was accustomed to live well. His annual expenses were estimated at £1,000 per annum and included wages for 5 male and 3 female servants and 4 hunters.

One of Edmund Frederick Powers smart friends was Walter Shoolbred head of a draper's firm, of Tottenham Court Road, London, who had an income of £25,000 per annum. He joined Edmund Frederick Powers in a joint speculation with George Race over oil cake. Instead of crediting Charles Powers and Company with Shoolbred's £1,800 it was credited to his Estate accounts with Walter Shoolbred. The money was in fact completely lost and Charles Powers and Company had to foot the bill. The loss of his money did not worry Shoolbred, who because of his "extraordinarily strong regard for Mrs Edmund Frederick Powers, who is a fashionable and striking lady", continued to be friendly with Edmund Frederick Powers and his wife. Indeed the trio went up to Scotland together, from whence Edmund Frederick Powers soon returned. Mrs Powers was described as "the supreme authority" in Shoolbred's house. What brought the question of the £1,800 into the open was the refusal of Edmund Frederick Powers' two brothers to honour the agreement bearing the name of Powers and Sons. As a result Charles Powers and Company went bankrupt.

The speculation of Edmund Frederick Powers was not the only problem on 3 December 1883, Tempsford Mills was burnt down, 4,500 Quarters of wheat were destroyed, 500 surplus to amount needed to fulfil the orders i.e. being used for the speculation of Edmund Frederick Powers. Despite charging £9 for their oil cake they still could not make a profit and the £1,800 loss was the last straw on the camel's back. Hugh Powers at last awake to the danger he stood in, forced Edmund Frederick Powers to resign as partner on 2 July 1884.

At the same time the Bank of Wells, Hogge and Lindsell decided to call in the overdraft of Powers and Sons which had been allowed to rise to £24,219 by 19 July 1884. This figure was more than catered for by 3 overdrawn accounts of the 3 brothers. On 2 July Edmund Frederick Powers was in debt to the Company to the tune of £6,871

[by the 19th including wheat stock losses he was up to £7,316 in debt], George Powers £16,513..8s..9d and Charles Tower Powers a more modest £1,332..7s..11d. The Bank successfully sued the Company in an action for £24,250..10s..4d, entitled Wells, Hogge and Lindsell v. E Powers and Sons. Order was given 3 October 1884.

As a result of this Albion Mills had to be sold to the Bankers for £29,000. On 22 January 1885 Charles Tower Powers conveyed all the Company's freehold property including Biggleswade, Holme and Langford Mills to the Bank. On 18 February 1885 Holme Mill was leased to William Jordan of Hatfield Hertfordshire for £250 per annum rent. On 16 March 1885 they leased Biggleswade Mill etc. to Henry Franklin of Biggleswade, corn and coal merchant for £300 per annum. On 28 March 1885 they leased Langford Mill to George Cobb, miller's clerk and Ernest Woodcraft, miller's traveller for £163 per annum. This saved the two brothers from bankruptcy but the legality of the Powers selling and the Bank buying was questioned later. A prior mortgage entered into by the father Edmund with Law Life Assurance Company should have been paid off before any of the bequests had been made including that of the 3 Bedfordshire Mills to the 3 brothers Edmund Frederick, George and Charles Tower Powers.

Meanwhile Edmund Powers was bankrupted on 3 July 1884, having previously conveyed "St Andrews", Biggleswade to the two brothers and resigned his partnership (2 July 1884). The case was heard during March and April 1885 and his estates were administered by Frederic Conder, local auctioneer, as Trustee in Bankruptcy. His affairs were finally wound up on the 27 February 1886 when Conder, as his Trustee, conveyed his interest in the properties to the Bank for £500. Throughout the trial Edmund Frederick Powers was extremely evasive and the criticism of his conduct by Lindsell, creditors' barrister appears justified. He accused him of reckless speculation, fraud against Hugh Edward Powers over £1,800; accepting bills without authority and swelling the profits of his own company by £8,000, taking wine from cellar after Bankruptcy Order; taking away brasswork salvage from Tempsford Mill after the fire. Fortunately for him, he had a well to do wife and departed to Cambridge to live in a comfortable house there. His wife's friend Walter Shoolbred continued to befriend him, largely one imagines on his wife's account. Various attempts were made to get Powers discharged but the case was not finally wound up until the death of the last of his cousins in 1922. Wells and Company got control of most of the long term interests of Edmund Frederick Powers' relations on his estate and it was they who finally concluded it in 1928.

The case of Hugh and Walter Powers, who had been swindled by their cousin, was very different. The collapse of Charles Powers and Company left them virtually penniless. The Bank in 1885 insisted that Hugh mortgage his share in Charles Powers' will, 6 cottages in Chalton [Blunham] and in Charles Powers and Company to cover his

overdraft debt of £1,191..3s..5d. Walter similarly mortgaged his moiety or half share to his father's trustee and secondly to Arthur Hills, 7 July 1886

Further blows were in store for the unfortunate Powers brothers, as Walter Shoolbred, at long last, began a legal action [Shoolbred v. C Powers and Company] for the recovery of the £1,800 lost by Edmund Frederick Powers, see above. At the same time their sisters sued the Trustees of their father's will to ensure the raising of £6,000 each to which they were entitled in two separate actions, Powers v. Race and Race v. Powers. The Chancery Order insisted that these sums be raised by mortgage of the various properties rather than by sale [7 July 1886]. A mortgagor was found on 5 August 1886 in person of James Marson.

Deprived of his £12 a week and having to live on his overdraft Hugh Powers position deteriorated rapidly. By 1888 his overdraft had reached £10, 808..4s..7d plus arrears of interest. The Bank therefore bought the equity of redemption on the estates of Charles Powers deceased for £30 each to Hugh and Walter whose affairs must have been equally bad. They were in addition to be paid £2 per week. The two brothers lived in a state of total degradation, moving constantly from one cheap lodging house to another; perpetually in debt and often evicted; living off the charity of T J Hooper, who took pity on their plight and sent them money on receipt of truly heart-rending letters, which vividly describe the appalling life of the penniless genteel in the harsh London of 1890s. Totally untrained to do professional work and incapable of doing manual work, such as navvying, they found it difficult to get jobs even as clerks, so they were out of work more often than not. Hugh died on 19 November 1899 but Walter survived till 30 November 1921. His last surviving sister died 4 May 1922

To return to Edmund Powers' children. Even after the virtual collapse of the 3 Powers brothers' finances they still remained the centre of legal disputes. Ellen Phillips tried at various times to get the £8,000 Promissory Note out of Powers and Sons but the grand finale came when Manisty for the Law Life Assurance Company sued the Bank and the Powers family and Trustees. The Company claimed that as its mortgage debt was a prior claim on the estate of Edmund Powers and that they should have been satisfied before the bequests were given to beneficiaries.

After Edmund Powers' death the interest had been paid regularly till February 1888 but the Company had not found out that Edmund was dead. They also found that the Campton estate, good security for their £15,000 in 1871, at the height of the agricultural boom was very poor security in the slump of the late 1880s, when its value was estimated at £8,000. They then turned to the other beneficiaries of the will; the chief of which were the 3 brothers, who had conveyed the bulk of the

estate of their father to Wells and Company to clear their overdraft. It was agreed on 28 July 1890 that the Campton estate should be sold to Wells and Company in part payment of the £15,912..5s..7d owed according to certificate of 10 May 1889. It was claimed that the defendants were liable for the rest of the £9,000. They would have liked to claim more, as the defendants were accused of letting Biggleswade and Holme Mills fall into disrepair. As a result of the case the mortgagees sold the property with the approval of the Court.

The Campton estate was purchased by F Archdale on 28 July 1890. Between 6 August and 30 September George Powers, the tenant, Herbert George Powers' father, removed a cattle shed, two wood barns belonging to a cottage, a wagon lodge, a sheep shed, a double span cattle shed, a cart lodge, and stable with onion loft and chaff loft over, a fence, and gate with posts and wooden boundary fence, in all valued at £300, on the grounds that he had put them there. He removed them to Stanford Mill, Southill where another son Robert was also tenant. Herbert, however, went to America in 1887 and his father was acting as his attorney.

On November 6 1890 George Powers was accused before the Biggleswade Petty Sessions of malicious damage to the value of £300. The case was sent to the Autumn Assizes. At the trial came out the facts that he had tried to buy the property for £7,500 and the vendors the Law Life Assurance Company had been prepared to support him. T J Hooper, the solicitor of F Archdale, had protested that Powers was not worth £20 and had offered £8,000, which was accepted. An interesting side plot to the story was that as a Poor Law Guardian George Powers had tried to get T J Hooper's salary as a clerk reduced and exposed the practice of the Biggleswade Union leaving several thousand pounds at the Biggleswade Bank, of which F Archdale was a partner, without charging interest.

The Jury found Powers guilty but gave a recommendation of mercy. The Judge sent him to prison for 3 calendar months on 17 November 1880. Immediately a petition was drafted and signatures canvassed in all the local newspapers. The petition was forwarded to the Home Secretary, who sent an order remitting the sentence, which arrived in Bedford on 2 December 1890. He returned home in triumph to Caldecote Lodge, Northill, a house he was still living in, in 1898.