

The Bygrave family; 374 years rooted to land and community.

The surname is taken from the village of Bygrave which is situated one mile to the east of Baldock. To date the earliest confirmed record of the Bygrave surname appears in the Westminster Abbey's Ashwell Manorial rental accounts for the year 1420.

The Bygrave's first appear in the parish records for Rushden in 1617 with the birth and sadly the death of the twins, Alice and Joan Bygrave. The two girls were the daughters of Robert Bygrave and Anna Perman, married at Ardeley in 1613. When they first moved to Rushden we cannot be certain but they went on to have a further seven children recorded in the parish of Rushden between the years 1618 to 1632. The family wills of 1671, 1677 show that they lived at Southend Green and the will of 1698 shows they still held this property and land, though they were now established at Redhill.

The will of Robert Bygrave (proved in 1677) was actually written in 1642 when he and his family were gravely ill. This may have been the bubonic plague which had returned to England in 1640, lasting through until 1642. This period of plague was mixed with other illnesses, smallpox and a form of malaria. The resulting illness for this period was generically called 'The Sickness'. Whatever the cause of their crisis, Robert survived but his wife Anna, possibly one of his children and his father from Great Wymondley died.

The Will of 1671 is that of George Bygrave the son of Robert, who is now working and managing his father's farm and lands in and around Southend Green. He too had succumbed to illness and passed away in 1671.

The final Will of 1698 written in 1693 is of Robert Bygrave son of Robert. He had established himself at Redhill but still held his father's farm and land at Southend Green, now leased out to a John Piece.

From the description of their holdings at Southend Green in the Wills of 1671, 1677 & 1698 it would seem Youngloves Cottage would be the most likely candidate. As the property and holdings were in the latter years leased this would indicate that they held the title deeds and ownership. The property and land at Southend Green were inherited by Robert's son George. However unfortunately we have no Will for George. So we do not know if George sold up at Southend Green or if it was one of his sons. We do have the will of George's younger son Robert Bygrave, Blacksmith of Redhill, dated 1751 but there is no mention of property or land at Southend Green or Rushden.

Robert was trained as a Blacksmith, probably by his father's brother James who was working at a smithy in Cottered. Robert established his forge in Redhill on the site of the current property called 'The Old Forge' with the plaque in the gable end dedicated to 'James Field scythe maker'. Originally the property was just the two front rooms, ground and first floor with the side shelter for the forge (where today they have put the kitchen). The backrooms are later additions. Four generations of Bygrave's worked this forge. Across the road, fed by Cat Ditch, a small pond was created for the working of the forge.

The Will of Robert's elder son George Bygrave, Blacksmith of Redhill, dated 1797, records that he gave a portion of his land to establishment a Chapel and graveyard for the local Protestant Dissenters. The original access described in the will is now closed off and the graveyard in a sad derelict state. In 1998 Hilda Crook was the last to be buried in the graveyard. The Rev John Walker was the last Minister for the Chapel and community. The dilapidated Chapel was demolished in the 1960's.

From the mid 1600's my branch of the Bygrave family live primarily at Redhill with various sons and daughters over the following generations establishing themselves in Wallington, Sandon, Cottered and Walkern. The next Bygrave to live in Rushden is in 1834 with the marriage, in Rushden, of James Bygrave to Elizabeth Field. On the death of Elizabeth's father James Field in 1840, James Bygrave takes on her father's lease of Church Farm.



Elizabeth Bygrave (nee Field) in mourning dress for her husband James who passed away in 1862.

After James Bygrave's death in 1862 Elizabeth continued to live at Church Farm and their son James Bygrave with his wife Sarah Summer take over the running of farm.

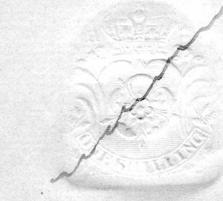


Elizabeth Bygrave (nee Field) at Church Farm taken circa 1880 aged about 74. At this time there was a craze for taking pictures of long lived people who were considered a novelty at this time. Elizabeth died in 1883 aged 78.

John Bygrave, James and Elizabeth's youngest son had taken on the lease for Shaw Green Farm in 1876. So when his elder brother James died in 1895, John had no interest in taking on Church Farm.

Inventory and Valuation
of Fixtures
and Brouse of Straw
at Shaw Green Farm
belonging to the Executors
of the late M^r. Ebenezer Gardner
& appraised to W^m. Frygrave
the incoming Tenant
Taken Oct 23. 1876

George Jackson
Auctioneer & Appraiser
at Ichin Baldwin
and Boston streets.



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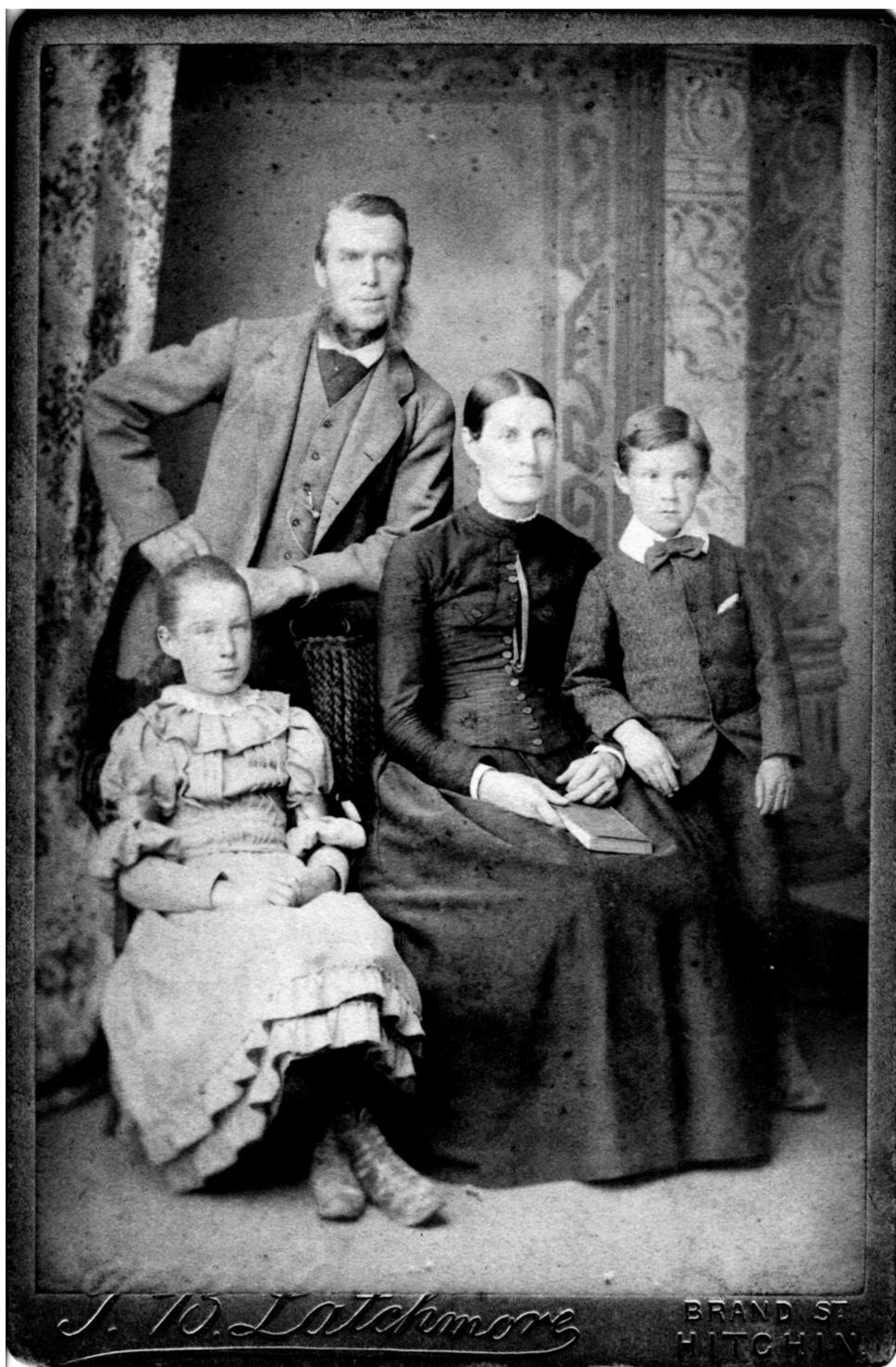
Inventory and Valuation of Fixtures
and Furniture of Shaw at Shaw Green Farm
belonging to the Executors of the late Mr.
Ebenzer Gardner and appraised to Mr.
Bygrave the incoming Tenant
Taken Oct. 25. 1876 -

Stove as fixed
Corner Breakfast with 2 pairs of Doors
Roller Blind in Bedroom
Stove as fixed in Bedroom
2 Roller Blinds
Bij Tub
Piece of Stone to Front Door
Pair of Dog Stones, Care and back
Gate Crane and Pot Hoop
Dresser with 3 Drawers, Cupboard under and
shelves on supports.
Blind Roller
Copper and lid as fixed.
Dresser Board
Dresser of Straw Chaff & Corn
3/4 Loads of Rye Straw

The Effects comprised in the foregoing
Inventory are appraised at the sum of Fourteen
Pounds and Seventeen Shillings, by me

George Jackson
Auctioneer & Appraiser
Mitchell & Daldoer
and Roston Streets -

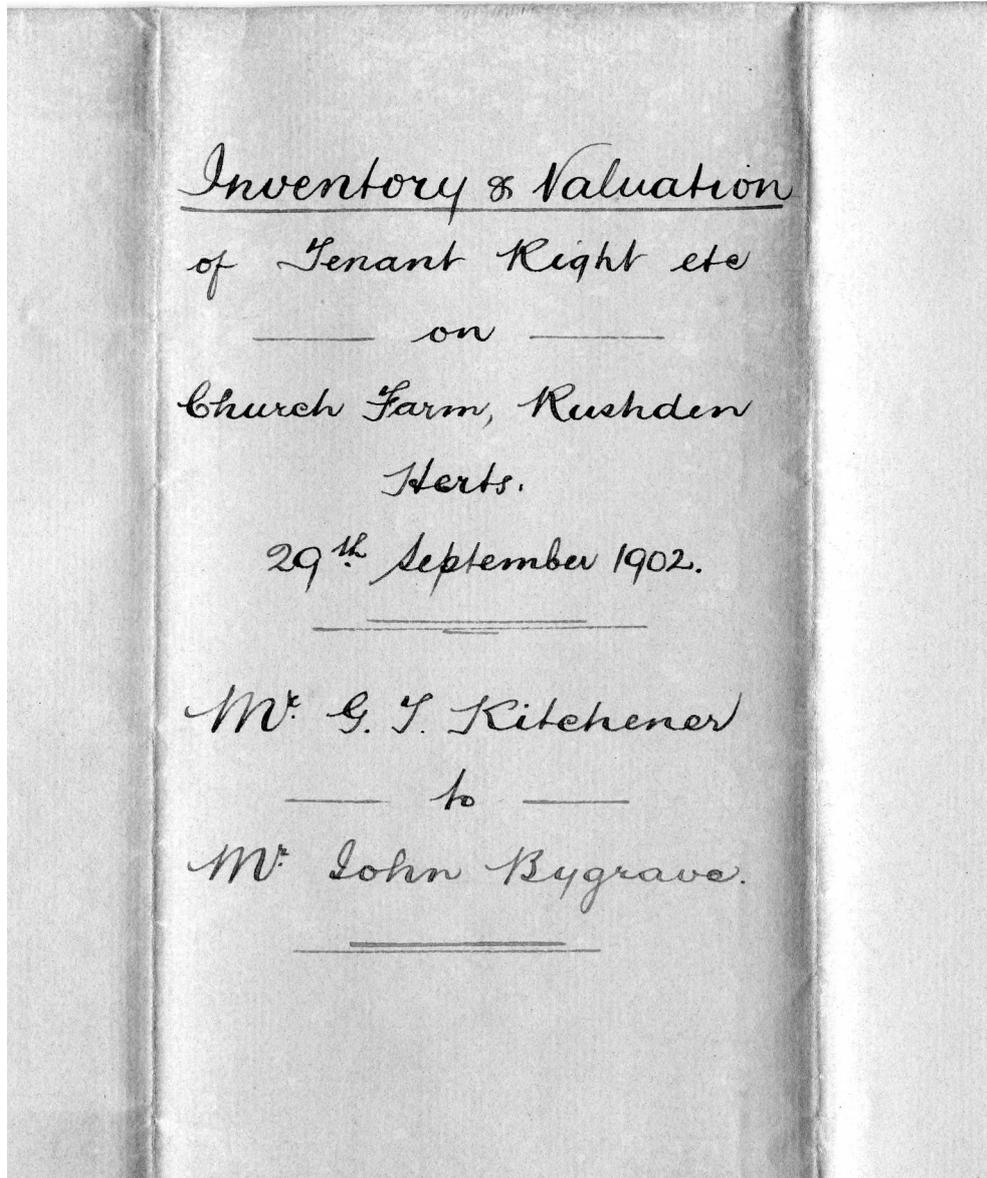
Amount of Valuation 14. 17. 0
1/2 Valuation and Stamp 10. 0



1893 John Bygrave with his wife Charlotte (nee Bray), daughter Amelia and son George. There other older son John is missing from the picture, why? By this date the son John would have been of working age, so may have been left at Shaw Green Farm.

John Bygrave married Charlotte Bray from Bradninch in Devon. Charlotte had left home for work as a Housekeeper, first to a house in Chesham, Bucks before then moving on to the Julians Estate, Rushden. It was whilst working there she met John Bygrave. They took on the lease for Shaw Green Farm as soon as they were married in 1876.

John , Charlotte and family moved out of Shaw Green Farm in 1902 when the lease on Church Farm became available.





Inventory and Valuation of
Straw and Chaff and other matters
of Tenant Right on the Church Farm
Rushden, Herts. from Mr. Gregory Thomas
Kitcheners the outgoing Tenant to Mr.
John Bygrave of Rushden, Herts. the
incoming Tenant.

29th September 1902.

Lent born Straw andavings (at consuming prices)

Barley Straw

a. r. p.
8 0 0 Part of Soap Boilers

Oat Straw.

3 0 0 Danes Hill
2 2 0 Gravel Field.

Pea Straw

2 0 0 Part of Soap Boilers.
4 0 0 Backside

Trefoil Stover.

2 0 0 Part of Soap Boilers.
4 0 0 Backside

Lare Stover

6 2 0 Part of Fourteen Acres

Wheatavings and Chaff

8 0 0 Danes Hill
9 0 0 Lare Garden

Manure.

90 Loads Manure in Yard.

Fisctures.

Wash House.

Washing copper as fixed with furnaces
and wood cover.

5 Foot Dresser with 3 drawers.

Sitting Room.

Register stove as fixed

Three fold screen

Roller blind.

Parlour.

Painted corner cupboard with 2 drawers
and shelves.

Roller blind

I Value the items enumerated in
the foregoing Inventory at the sum of
Thirty five pounds and six pence

£ 35. 0. 6

£ - " 2. - { Half stamp
+ Inventory

£ 35. 2. 6

John E. Thurnall

Royston

Herts.

Received of Mr. John Bygrave the
sum of Thirty five pounds two
shillings and six pence for the
above valuation -

John Bygrave dies in June 1914. The two sons took on the running of the farm with their mother. By this date their sister Amelia was married to Ernest Newland.



Charlotte Bygrave – Church Farm 1920.



John, Amelia, George & Charlotte – Church Farm 1920.



Amelia Newland (nee Bygrave) with her children Ernest, Grace & baby Cecil – Church Farm 1920.



Ernest Newland, Amelia, baby Cecil Newland, Charlotte, George Bygrave & Grace Newland – Church Farm 1920.

By September 1914 George Bygrave was running Church Farm. His brother John took on the lease for Drapers Farm when he married Elsie Denson in September 1914. John met Elsie when she was working at Rushden School.

Elsie Denson was born in London, her father was an itinerate builder who had moved out to North Hertfordshire.



Elsie Bygrave (nee Denson) aged about 3-4 years – London studio photograph.



Elsie Bygrave (nee Denson) aged about 21 years.



John Bygrave & Elsie Denson wedding September 1914 – taken at St Mary's, Aston, Herts



1920 Draper Farm, John Bygrave on the haymaker. Man with scythe unknown. The child behind the haymaker is John's daughter Eileen.

In 1921 the Cavendish Land Company put all the farms owned by the Julian Estate up for sale. My father believes the Meetkereke's created the Cavendish Land Company to manage their assets. When Mrs Metcalfe died this triggered the eventual winding up of their assets.

So in 1921 the Bygrave's moved out of Church Farm and Drapers Farm.

HITCHIN, HERTS.

MESSRS. J. & G. BYGRAVE

IN ACCOUNT WITH GEORGE JACKSON & SON,
AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS.

<p>1921 Sep.26</p> <p>To two-thirds share of the undermentioned expenses of Auction Sale :- Printing posting bills - posting same round country - Printing catalogues & postage of same - Advertising in "Herts Express", "Herts Mercury", "Herts & Cambs Reporter" & "Herts & Essex Observer" - Men lotting & portering at sale - Police attendance - Travelling expenses of selves & porters - Luncheons allowed to purchasers & cost of caterer's licence &c. - £32-11-0</p> <p>" commission for selling - Dead Stock - £199-6-6 @ 5% 9-19-0 Live Stock - £277-18-0 @ 2½% 9- 9-0</p> <p>Oct.15 " cash on account</p> <p>" balance due to yourself</p> <p style="text-align: right;">£</p>	<p>21 14</p> <p>19 8</p> <p>450</p> <p>86 2 6</p> <hr/> <p>£ 577 4 6</p>	<p>1921 Sep.26</p> <p>By amount realised by sale of Live & Dead Farming Stock at Church Farm, Rushden, as per priced catalogue amended</p> <p style="text-align: right;">582</p> <p><u>LESS</u> lot 173 bought in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">577</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;">£ 577</p>
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Sale of stock at Church Farm 1921.

Charlotte moved to Apple Tree Cottage in Redhill with her son George. The cottage was then owned by her son-law Ernest & Amelia Newland. The Cottage was originally cottage was semi-derelict, George and Charlotte lived in the better half, John and Elsie used the other half to store apples upstairs and make milk products downstairs. Charlotte died at Apple Tree Cottage in 1924.

John and Elsie bought an ex-WWI wooden military barrack hut and transported it to a large plot of land they had bought behind Apple Tree Cottage, this they converted into the family home. The old converted hut stood there until the early 1970's.