

South Ella Part 4

The Eggintons

The move from the hustle and bustle of Charlotte Street at the centre of the commercial and social scene in Hull to the large country house at South Ella in 1869 must have been quite a change for Fanny Egginton and her family. Number 10 Charlotte Street had been home to John Egginton for more than thirty years and, after their marriage in 1842, he and Fanny had brought up their family there. By the time they moved to South Ella, John was 65 years of age and, perhaps, thinking about retirement and a quieter life in the country. Fanny, on the other hand, might have had plans to make sweeping changes at South Ella following the occupation of the house by her bachelor-uncle for the previous thirty-five years.

Fanny and John would have both known the house well from frequent journeys to Anlaby to visit Fanny's uncle and they would have been familiar with the area. Close neighbours in Kirk Ella, were cousins of John Egginton. John Smyth Egginton and his wife, Mary Anne, of The Elms on Church Lane with their ten children were well established in the village and pillars of the community. Their eldest daughter, Beatrice Constance, was to become the wife of John and Fanny's son, Arthur, who inherited South Ella following the death of his father in 1888. The house was to be home to this branch of the Egginton family until the early years of the 20th century.

The Egginton Family

The history of the Egginton family can be traced back to the time of the English Civil War. It is believed their original seat was at Egginton in Derbyshire but an influential branch of the family eventually settled in Nottingham, where one of their number, a Robert Egginton, became High Sheriff of the town and county of Nottingham in 1715 and 1721. However, one of his sons, Gardiner Egginton (b. 1732) chose to seek his fortune in Hull and was apprenticed to William Thornton, merchant, in 1746. At this time, whaling was proving to be a lucrative business and Gardiner eventually set himself up as a shipowner, and established himself in the whaling trade. Gardiner finally cut his ties with the Midlands in 1753 when he sold land that he had either inherited or acquired in Tamworth, Staffordshire, and he made Hull his permanent home. It was in Hull in 1756 that he married Elizabeth, daughter of Joseph Trower of Hull. They had twin sons, Gardiner and

Joseph, born in 1761 and, later, a further son, Metcalfe Arnold, born in 1769. The latter trained in the medical profession and became a military doctor. He died at Bastia in Corsica in 1794. It was through Gardiner and Joseph that the Egginton dynasty became established in Hull and, later, in Kirk Ella and Anlaby.

Gardiner Egginton, senior, died in 1789, and the business was subsequently run by his widow, Elizabeth, in partnership with her twin sons, Gardiner and Joseph. By this time, the business owned a number of ships including the *Elizabeth*, *Fanny*, *Mary*, *Oak Hall*¹ and *Egginton*. By 1823, the company, by then known as G. & J. Egginton, was trading from offices at 8 North Walls where they were listed in Baines' Trade Directory of that year as "oil and general merchants, ship owners and seed crushers".



1791 The New Dock, Hull with Charlotte Street nearby

The completion of a new dock² in Hull in 1778 had facilitated a significant increase in shipping and this had been to the great advantage of Gardiner Egginton Snr. and his fellow merchants. With the opening of the dock, a new business and residential area developed around it, with merchants' houses in the northern part of

High Street, such as Blaydes House, the home of the shipbuilder Benjamin Blaydes. New streets were also built: Parliament Street to link the old town centre to the new dock, and Charlotte Street parallel to the dock. It was in Charlotte Street that Gardiner Egginton purchased a residential property, which was to remain in the family for three-quarters of a century.

It is through the line of Gardiner (Jnr.) that our story continues. On 14th September 1797, at All Saints Church, North Ferriby, he married Mary Hall, daughter of Samuel Hall, Hull merchant, who had lived in Kirk Ella from 1768

¹ *Oakhall* was lost in ice in 1809

² At the time it was opened the dock was simply known as The Dock or New Dock. In 1854, it was renamed Queens' Dock in honour of Queen Victoria. It is now the site of Queen's Gardens.

before purchasing Aston Hall in North Ferriby from the Wilberforce family in 1792.³

After losing their first child, Gardiner Hall, in infancy in 1799, a daughter, Elizabeth, was born to Gardiner and Mary Egginton in 1800. Twin sons followed on 25 January 1802, although one of the twins, Gardiner, died at the age of eight months. The second, Samuel Hall, survived and as the eldest son went on to inherit much of the family wealth. A

further son, John, was born on the 2nd June 1803 and it is he who is one of the central characters of this story. Eventually, through his wife, John Egginton would become the owner of South Ella. In December 1812, a final son, Robert, was born to Gardiner and Mary. In 1842, Robert was said to be “of Liverpool” but later went on to marry Matilda Smyth, daughter of St. John Smyth



Aston Hall, North Ferriby
Childhood home of John Egginton

of Greenhills, County Louth, Ireland in 1849. Robert and Matilda went on to have at least seven children, all born in Ireland, before eventually settling in Leamington.

Following the death of his mother, Elizabeth, Gardiner Egginton inherited the family home at Aston Hall in North Ferriby in 1812. Prior to this, he and his family had lived at 10 Charlotte Street in Hull, this still being recorded as their town house in 1823. This was a house that was to remain in the family for some time to come. However, it was at Aston Hall that John Egginton and his siblings spent most of their formative years.

As we saw in Part 3, Gardiner Egginton was a close business associate of John Beadle, long-time occupant of South Ella, and John Egginton, who joined the family business, must have spent much time working alongside the man whose niece he was to eventually marry. Little seems to be documented about John’s early business life but he certainly became a well-respected member of Hull society, and was elected Sheriff of Hull in 1834. By this time, John had taken on

³ Another daughter of Samuel Hall, Anne, had married Joseph Godmond, Hull grocer, and they lived in Samuel Hall’s house in Kirk Ella. The street on which the house was located is still called Godmans Lane to this day.

full responsibility for the family company. His uncle, Joseph, having died on 15th December 1830 and his father, Gardiner, on 22nd March 1832.

John Egginton, Oil Merchant and Seed Crusher

By now, the business was at a crossroads. Whaling, up until now, had been a lucrative business but it had reached its peak by 1818 when 63 ships returned to Hull with cargoes valued at £272,000. It was a hazardous industry, often with heavy losses of ships. In 1821, nine ships were lost and in 1830, the worst year in British whaling history, nineteen ships never returned to port. The hazards facing the crews of whaling vessels were many. The following extract from a pleading letter written to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty is dated 4th December 1835. It was signed by John Egginton and others (including his brother, Samuel Hall Egginton, his cousin, Joseph S. Egginton, and John Beadle), graphically illustrates one of the many dangers of hunting in the whaling hot-spot of the Davis Straits and Baffin Bay:

To the Right Hon the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty

We the undersigned managing and other owners of ships employed in the Davis Straits whale fishery from the port of Hull, sheweth that the following six ships *Abram, Dordon, Duncombe, Harmony, Jane, William Torr* all of the port of Hull; together with the ships *Lady Jane* and *Grenville Bay* of Newcastle; *Norfolk* of Berwick; *Viewforth* of Kirkcaldy and *Middleton* of Aberdeen; making in all eleven sail, were left on the 11th day of October 1835 by the ship *Alfred* of Hull, since arrived, closely beset in the ice in latitude 69° to 70° and longitude 60° to 65° with little prospect of their being speedily liberated and, as the frost had then set in severely and, as nothing has since been heard of these ships, we are very apprehensive that they may be compelled to remain in that perilous situation, until the return of spring shall have broken up the ice, so as to allow of their escape.

That although these ships (and we have no doubt all the others were) when they left the port of Hull, abundantly supplied with provisions, and everything necessary for the comfortable subsistence of the crews considerably beyond the expected duration of the voyage, yet they are not sufficiently provided with the means of supporting life through the severities of an Arctic winter, particularly as the crews of two wrecked vessels are added to their original number; and we greatly fear that the crews amounting altogether to upwards of 600 souls, will be exposed to dreadful sufferings in that inclement region, unless it should be found practicable to supply them with food, clothing and fuel; and this, it is presumed, might be effected if a ship furnished with such necessaries could open a communication with them over the ice.

We are informed that your Lordships have on various occasions supplied the wants of vessels falling short of provisions, &c., in consequence of being prevented reaching their port by adverse winds; and as the present unhappy situation of their ships has not been occasioned by any deficiency in their original equipment, nor by imprudently venturing into places whither they had not been used to resort, but solely by the unprecedented accumulations of ice, owing to the extreme severity of the season, we cannot but view this as a case worthy of your Lordships' interference.

We therefore pray that your Lordships will be pleased to take into your immediate and most serious consideration the case of these unfortunate men, and adopt such measures as to your wisdom may seem fit and proper for granting them effectual relief, to enable them to stay by their ships, and either prosecute the fishery in the ensuing season, or return home in safety, whichever may appear most expedient, so that the anxiety unavoidably felt by the families of these poor sufferers may be abated, and that the losses already sustained by ourselves through the total failure of the fishery, may not be aggravated by the destruction of such a number of their fellow-creatures, and the valuable property entrusted to their charge. And we will ever pray &c. ⁴

Hull, 4th December 1835

In his recent book, *Erebus*, Michael Palin writes, “word came of twelve whaling ships and 600 men trapped in the ice in the Davis Strait, between Greenland and Baffin Island. The Admiralty agreed to a rescue mission [and they] turned to James Clark Ross to lead it. He chose a ship called *Cove*, built in Whitby [and set sail in January 1836].……By the time the rescue-



Whalers in the Arctic by John Ward (1798-1849)
Hull Maritime Museum

mission reached Greenland, they learned that all but one of the whalers had been freed from the ice.”⁵ Ross was unable to find any trace of this last vessel, *William Torr*, which had probably been crushed in the ice in December 1835, although the crew were reported as having been saved. Another report states that “the *Dordon* had been wrecked but some of the crew had been saved.”⁶

Whales were becoming scarce and further distances had to be travelled in search of them. By the early 1830s, the number of ships returning to Hull had halved and during the following decade numbers declined rapidly. Another influencing factor in the decline of whaling was the change in the method of gas manufacture away from the use of whale oil to coal. By 1830, the local gas manufacturer, Kingston upon Hull Gas Company, had completely stopped using whale oil.

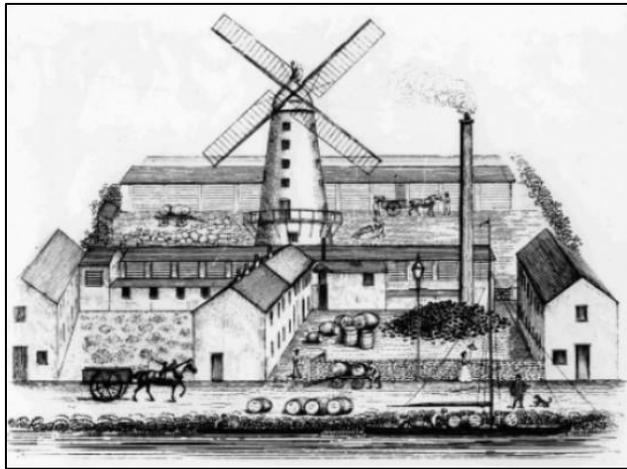
G. & J. Egginton had seen the writing on the wall and the company had diversified into seed crushing, a growth industry. The oil produced by this

⁴ *Nautical Magazine, A Magazine for Those Interested in Ships and the Sea*, 1836

⁵ *Erebus: The Story of a Ship*, Michael Palin, Hutchinson, 2018, p31.

⁶ *Arctic Whalers*, Basil Lubbock, Brown, Son & Ferguson, Glasgow, 1978

process was competitive with whale oil and in 1834 there were eight companies in Hull producing oil by this method. By 1838 this number had risen to thirteen. During the 1830s imports of linseed had trebled, the majority of imported seed coming from Russia.



19th century seed crushing mill

The seed crushing industry used a variety of methods of crushing and pressing, to extract the vegetable oil for use in a wide range of products. This gave rise to subsidiary industries all around Hull. One of the main uses of linseed oil was in the paint industry, which was growing rapidly in Hull, with companies such as Blundell Spence and

Sissons Paints expanding their businesses. Other end-uses were soap, linoleum, margarine and edible fats with the residue often used for animal feed, manure, and fertiliser.

John Egginton would have presided over this change in the emphasis of the family business from whaling to vegetable oil production. He would most likely have used the services of John Beadle's shipping company to import linseed and other raw materials. As we have seen, there was a close business relationship between G. & J. Egginton and John Beadle & Co., the respective companies having neighbouring offices in North Walls, and it is very likely that through this relationship John Egginton met with John Beadle's young niece, Fanny Spence.

A Notable Neighbour

The 1841 census reveals that John Egginton, merchant, was living in Charlotte Street in Hull. This was the old family house originally purchased by either his father or grandfather. He had a manservant, William Barnaby, and two female servants. It is interesting to note that amongst his close neighbours, at No. 7 Charlotte Street, was Charles Lutwidge. Prior to becoming Collector of Customs in Hull in 1813, a position he held for 35 years, Lutwidge was in the military. In 1793, he had accompanied his uncle, Admiral Lutwidge to the siege of Toulon in *HMS Terrible*. Afterwards, he became an officer in the 1st Royal Lancashire Militia, and served with that regiment in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798. He was subsequently commanding officer at the coastal defences at Dungeness in

1803-4, under Sir John Moore. He left the military in 1813 after his marriage and moved to Hull.

However, Lutwidge is remembered mainly as the grandfather of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, otherwise known as Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.



Painting of a dog by Michael Angelo Lowther presented to a young Lewis Carroll

It is recorded that the young Charles visited his grandfather in Hull in 1836 at the age of four. On this occasion, one of the female servants, Ruth Middlebrook, gave the young boy a small oil painting (15cm x 11.5cm) depicting a dog. The painting is signed by Michael Angelo Lowther 1821,⁷ and endorsed, "Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. Given to him August 1836 by Ruth Middlebrook who lived many

years as Housemaid in his Mama's family". The painting must have been much treasured by the author as it remained with his childhood belongings and he remembered in adulthood who had given it to him when aged just four years old.

John Egginton would have known Charles Lutwidge both as a neighbour and long-standing business associate, although there is no evidence that on the occasion described, John Egginton met the young boy who was to become a famous author.

Marriage and Family

It was around the time of the 1841 census or soon afterwards that John Egginton must have visited Tilworth Grange in Sutton to ask Edward Spence, the brother-in-law of John Beadle, for the hand of his daughter, Fanny. John was in his late-thirties by this time and, perhaps, feeling it was time to settle down to family life. Fanny was fifteen years his junior and it is likely that John had known her from her childhood. Had he had his eye on her for some time or was the decision to ask for her hand something more spontaneous? Notwithstanding the length of the courtship, John Egginton and Fanny Spence were married in the autumn

⁷ The artist Michael Angelo Lowther can be traced through census information to Hull where he was born c.1808, and was recorded in census returns as an artist and portrait painter. He is also listed in the 1834 Pigot's Directory as an artist (miniatures) of 13 Bond Street, Hull. His painting, gifted to the young Lewis Carroll is now held by the Surrey History Centre.

of 1842 at St. Andrew's Church, Kirk Ella. Neither lived in Kirk Ella at this time, and it was (and still is) usual for a church wedding to take place in the parish in which the bride resided. In Fanny's case, this was Sutton. It was maybe through the influence of Fanny's uncle, John Beadle, who was resident at South Ella or, perhaps, John's cousin, Joseph Smyth Egginton, who lived at The Elms in Kirk Ella, that the wedding took place at St. Andrew's Church. Perhaps the reception after the wedding took place at the home of one of these two gentlemen.



St. Andrew's Church, Kirk Ella as it looked in 1842 at the time of the marriage of John Egginton and Fanny Spence. The church was extensively renovated in 1860.

Following their marriage, the couple made their home at 10 Charlotte Street, which appears to be where they remained until 1869, the year they inherited South Ella from Fanny's uncle. It was not long before their first child arrived, a son who they named John. He was born on 12th October 1843 but, sadly, died three days later. The following year, on 17th November, John Edward was born. On 28th August 1846, their first daughter, Mary Frances, arrived and she was followed on 23rd September 1850 by a second surviving son, Arthur. The family was complete with the birth of Elizabeth on 27th August 1853. By this time, the house was full, with parents, four children and six servants, the latter number having doubled from John's bachelor days ten years previously. Ten years later, the household had been augmented by the employment of a governess. She was Fanny Charles, aged 35, a native of Dublin, Ireland. She may have been taken on at the recommendation of John's brother, Robert, who was now established in Ireland with a growing family of his own.

In 1864, their eldest son, John Edward was admitted to Wadham College, Oxford. Here, he pursued his studies until 1866, when he died at the young age of twenty-one years on 8th June. This sad event meant that Arthur was now the eldest son and it was he who, now, became the primary heir to the family's wealth.

John Egginton, Banker

During the period between 1851 and 1861, John's professional occupation took a significant turn. At the time of the 1851 census he was described as "Magistrate, oil merchant (seed crusher)" but ten years later, this had changed to "Banker and Magistrate". In 1859, John Egginton became a partner in Samuel Smith, Brothers & Co., bankers, who had branches throughout Yorkshire but was headquartered in Hull.⁸ There was also a later agreement, dated 1862, that relates to the entry of John Egginton as a partner in the firm from 30th June 1861 for three years, on a gain or loss basis. He continued with the firm and is recorded as a partner during the 1870s and also in 1887. It was a position he was to hold until his death in 1888.

This private bank was formed in Hull in 1784 as Abel Smith & Sons by Abel Smith and his sons, Robert Smith and Samuel Smith. Abel Smith was an uncle to William Wilberforce, the campaigner for the abolition of slavery. The Hull bank traded as Abel Smith Sons & Co. from 1787, following the admission of Thomas Thompson, formerly a clerk, as partner. Abel Smith died in 1788 and the firm was subsequently known as Smiths & Thompson. Thompson remained the principal resident banker at Hull until his death in 1828, when the bank was renamed Samuel Smith, Brothers & Co.

Whether John Egginton became a partner of Samuel Smith, Brothers & Co. by invitation or by application we do not know. Neither is it known if he completely relinquished his involvement in the seed-crushing business, but in subsequent



A 19th century specimen bank note issued by Samuel Smith, Brothers & Co.

census returns (1871 and 1881) his occupation is stated as "Banker". Up until about 1860, seed crushing was a somewhat seasonal business with the winter being the busy period. Although, by this time, new sources of supply from the southern hemisphere and tropical climes were becoming available, enabling year-round production, the industry was also becoming

⁸ John Egginton's cousin, Joseph Smyth Egginton had also been a partner in this bank until his death in 1848.

increasingly competitive. By 1845, the number of seed-crushing firms in the town had risen to nineteen, and by 1858, this had increased to twenty-eight. Maybe John Egginton felt it was time to step back and leave this type of business to others. When he joined Samuel Smith, Brothers & Co. he was fifty-six years old and, perhaps, looking for a more sedentary occupation.

An Allegation of Perjury

An event in 1868 would have caused John Egginton a degree of consternation. An allegation of perjury⁹ was made against him in his role as managing partner at the Hull branch of Samuel Smith, Brothers & Co. A Hull solicitor, Thomas Spurr, alleged perjury to have been committed during an action by Smith & Brothers against his client, John Thornes. The charge that Spurr alleged was that John Egginton wilfully falsified the date on an affidavit relating to the dissolution of his client's business partnership.

John Thornes was involved in two distinctly separate businesses. In addition to being listed as a timber merchant and wood sawyer, he was also involved in the herring fishing industry, being the owner of a number of trawlers, and the herring curing industry. Which of these two businesses was involved in the above case is not known, although it is more likely to have been the timber business, as John Thornes appears to have had a long and stable association with John Fountain¹⁰, an Alderman of Hull, in herring fisheries and curing.

The accusation against John Egginton focused on the fact that he had dated an affidavit concerning the dissolution of the partnership the 5th June 1868. John Thornes and Thomas Spurr claimed that they had proof that the relevant documents had been filed on the 1st June 1868, the change to the later date seeming to have been to Thornes' financial disadvantage.

Thomas Spurr was persistent on his client's behalf and, after a long interview on 12th September 1868 with the Stipendiary Magistrate of Hull, Mr. T.H. Travis, during which Spurr petitioned Travis to issue a summons against John Egginton, Spurr left the meeting disappointed. A few days later, he published a letter in the *Eastern Morning News* containing defamatory remarks about both Mr. Travis and John Egginton. He hinted that Travis had been showing partiality towards John Egginton, and also issued a challenge to the latter to defend himself against the allegation of perjury and prove himself innocent, if he could.

⁹ At that time, the penalty for committing perjury was five years penal servitude.

¹⁰ Fountain Road, off Beverley Road, Hull, is named after John Fountain.

On 28th September 1868, the content of Spurr's letter was adjudged to be slanderous by William Digby Seymour, Queen's Counsel for England, and he recommended that John Egginton would be fully justified in taking legal action against Spurr and his partner, Mr. Chambers.

John Egginton, in consultation with another family member, decided that an apology from Thomas Spurr, "which must clearly indicate that no *prima facie* case was made", and that any further action by Spurr was abandoned, would bring the proceedings to a satisfactory conclusion, as far as he was concerned. It is assumed that this is what was finally agreed by Thomas Spurr.¹¹

Move to South Ella

The house at 10 Charlotte Street had been in the Egginton family for well over half a century and the decision to move away might have been a difficult one for John Egginton. However, Fanny's uncle, John Beadle, who died in 1869, had left the house and estate at South Ella to Fanny in his Will, and this was a good opportunity to move out into the country. Of course, life in the country was nothing new for John, having spent some of his younger days at Aston Hall in North Ferriby. Nevertheless, after living many years in town at the heart of business and social life in Hull, life in the country would have felt quite different. John Smyth Egginton, the son of his cousin Joseph Smyth, was well established nearby in Kirk Ella, so John and his family would have been very familiar with the area. Indeed, as we have seen, he and Fanny were married at St. Andrew's Church in the village.

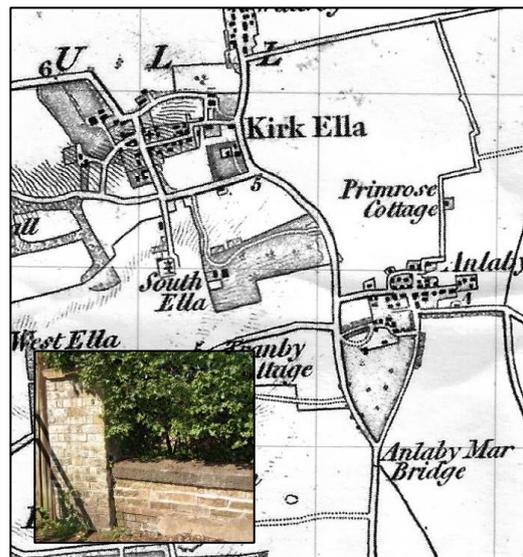
Fanny may have had different feelings about the move. South Ella had been her uncle's home for over thirty years and, perhaps, she had plans to make changes. After such a long time in the hands of a bachelor, she would surely have had many ideas about transforming the house into a family home.

Carriage Drive

By the time the Eggintons moved in to South Ella, an extension to the carriage drive had been built. This connected the house directly to West Ella Road. It was probably added by John Beadle and would have given more immediate access to Kirk Ella village, saving some time and distance over the more circuitous route via Beverley Road. Today, although much of the evidence for the existence of the South Ella estate has been all but obliterated, the route of this drive can still

¹¹ Much of the information in this section has been kindly provided by NatWest Group Archives, Ref SSB/1.

be traced, at least in part. At the side of a house on West Ella Road just to the east of St. Andrew's Primary School is a snicket, which at one time was the route of the carriage drive. The remnants of the gateposts are still visible at the entrance to the snicket, which leads to West Ella Way and onwards to South Ella Way, where it emerges next to No. 100. The path once continued across the road and up the drive of 97 South Ella Way and beyond to where South Ella once stood.



1862 OS Map showing location of South Ella and the route of the carriage drive. Inset shows an extant gatepost on West Ella Road.

Social Life

Despite moving to a house in the country, The Eggintons were still involved in social life in town, and the following press report in February 1870 provides an example of their continued participation:

The Infirmary Charity Ball took place at the Public Rooms, Jarratt Street¹² - amongst the guests were Mr John Egginton, Mr. Arthur Egginton and Miss Egginton of South Ella - Supper was served in one of the side rooms at one o'clock by Mr. Peacock in a style quite equal to the occasion. The company on returning to the ballroom kept up the dancing to an early hour in the morning. Mr Acey provided a numerous and efficient band, and the programme contained some of the best of recently published dance music.¹³

Which Miss Egginton was present is not recorded, although it was probably Mary Frances. Elizabeth would have been sixteen years old at the time and her parents may have thought she was still too young to be out so late at night. Why Fanny appears to be absent from this particular gathering can only be guessed at. One wonders at what time the party-goers rolled up the carriage drive of South Ella the following morning!

¹² Now, Hull New Theatre

¹³ The Hull Packet; and East Riding Times: Friday, 11 February 1870, page 6

Family matters

The exact date the Eggintons moved in to South Ella is not recorded but they were well-established by the time the census enumerator called on 2nd April 1871. He found John and Fanny at home with one of their daughters, Mary Frances, and nine servants, including a governess (Frances Charles), a butler (Frederick Dales) and a housekeeper (Hannah Hodgson). Meanwhile, on census day, Arthur was in lodgings at 16 Bury Street in the Mayfair area of London. The details given on the census fail to provide a clue for the reason he was there. He is recorded as being of “no profession”. Elizabeth was absent from South Ella on this particular day and her whereabouts remain unknown.

The next notable event in the household at South Ella was the marriage of Elizabeth to Isaac Saunders Leadam on 17th November 1875. The wedding at St. Andrew’s Church in Kirk Ella was certain to have been a grand affair, with not only members of bride and groom’s immediate family present, but also her many Egginton cousins who were resident at The Elms, close to the church on Church Lane. The bridegroom was a graduate of University College Oxford, and at the time of his marriage, an Inspector of Schools, but in 1876 he resigned this position, following a call to the Bar at Lincoln’s Inn. He and Elizabeth went to live in London and in 1881 were at Harewood Square in Marylebone. By this time, they had two children, Harold Christopher Newton and Dorothy Egginton Georgiana. Harold was born in Kirk Ella in late 1876 and, so, may have been born at South Ella. Dorothy’s birth was registered in Marylebone in 1878. Later on, the family settled at 117 St. George’s Square, Marylebone, until, at least, 1903.

On 3rd April 1881, the date of the decadal census, Arthur and Beatrice were visiting family in rural Bedfordshire. John H. Peppercorn was Beatrice’s cousin and he and his family were resident at the Manor House, North Road¹⁴, Eaton Socon, a small village close to the Cambridgeshire border, near St. Neots. The family of John Peppercorn’s wife, Jane Elizabeth, née Ringrose-Voase, lived at Anlaby House, making them near neighbours to South Ella.

A Farming Venture

By the late 1870s, Arthur was beginning to take an active role in the running of the South Ella estate. He had developed an interest in livestock and, in 1878, had purchased a small herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle at sales in Montcoffer and

¹⁴ This was the Great North Road which ran through the Eaton Socon at the time. The modern A1 now bypasses the village.

Rothiemay in Banffshire. Not only was his intention to breed cattle for market (there was a slaughterhouse, at the time, in Anlaby) but also for show, an activity in which he achieved many notable successes. In the *History of Aberdeen-Angus Cattle* published in 1910, the authors note that, “during the twenty years it was in existence, [Arthur Egginton’s] herd occupied a prominent position”. The cattle were an impressive sight in the fields surrounding South Ella.

Arthur Egginton was successful at many livestock shows around the country. The following press report, dated 3rd December 1891, describes how he even beat Queen Victoria’s entry to first prize on one occasion:

The 43rd annual exhibition of fat stock opened at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday.....Her majesty the Queen again a large exhibitor, notwithstanding the statement in a London newspaper recently that she has decided not to fatten stock for show or sale any longer....the judges gave both the Elkington and the Thorley cups to Mr. Arthur Egginton of South Ella, Hull. It was a close fight between the Queen’s heifer, *Pansy*, aged three years and nine months, and Mr. Egginton’s Angus, *Black Empress*, aged two years and nine months. The competition was so keen that two judges were in favour of one and two in favour of the other and Mr. G German of Ashby-de-la-Zouch was called in as Umpire and decided against her majesty’s exhibit. The champion took besides the two pieces of challenge plate, the President’s plate of £25 and the prize of £15 in the class for pure bred polled cows and heifers, and the £30 extra for the best Scot in the yard.



Aberdeen Angus bull

Earlier successes at livestock shows included first prize in the class for pure-bred polled oxen (Scottish breeds) at Birmingham Show, 6th December 1884, and first prize for Aberdeen Angus steers at the Norwich Fat Stock Show, 20th November 1885, but there were many more. His most successful animal was *Epsom*, a bull that

weighed in at sixteen hundredweight (1800lbs/820kg).

News of Arthur Egginton’s success as a stock breeder even reached the newspapers in Christchurch, New Zealand:

“It is something strikingly new to hear of Scotch [sic] farmers from far beyond Aberdeenshire coming to England to buy Aberdeen-Angus cattle to found a herd

with. But such is the case. Mr Arthur Egginton, of South Ella, Hull, has sold four yearling Aberdeen-Angus heifers to Mr Donald Innes, Sandside, Thurso.”¹⁵

When the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, visited Tranby Croft in 1890, he expressed a desire to inspect Arthur Egginton’s herd. During the morning of Tuesday 9th September, after the Prince was up and breakfasted, he was able to view the valuable, prize-winning cattle. However, it was considered unseemly to expect the Prince to make the journey to South Ella, so the animals were led up to Tranby, a distance of about a mile, and paraded across the lawn in front of the house.

The introduction of Aberdeen Angus cattle to South Ella by Arthur Egginton inspired other farmers in the area and, in 1889, a herd was introduced by William Hey in Willerby, and Charles Percy Sykes of West Ella also introduced a herd in 1892. Both men purchased a number of animals from Arthur Egginton.

South Ella Model Farm

In order to accommodate a farm bailiff to tend the cattle, a farmhouse was built on the South Ella estate. Known as South Ella Model Farm, it was designed and built around 1885 by a Mr. Coleman of York. In 1891, James Dunbar was in residence as bailiff, a position he held for many years. Although the herd of Angus cattle was eventually sold, cattle continued to be important right up to the 1930s, when Robert I’Anson and Frederick Scott ran the South Ella Certified Dairy Farm at the farm. They opened up two milk bars in the centre of Hull, Prompt Corner Milk Bar in Paragon Square and Pioneer Milk Bar on Jameson Street, which were supplied from the cows bred here, and from other farms they ran in the area. Both concerns were still in operation in the early 1950s.



South Ella Farm: 1990s

The farmhouse on the South Ella estate was still in existence in the early 21st century. It was located on the north side of Woodlands Drive, slightly set back from the road. During the 1980s, it was no longer run as a farm, but there

¹⁵ *The Lyttleton Times, Christchurch, Monday July 8th 1889*

remained a small market garden, growing vegetables and keeping chickens. By the early 2000s, the house was unoccupied and it was demolished in 2005. A small cul-de-sac of new houses, South Ella Farm Court, now stands on the site.

Bell Ringing

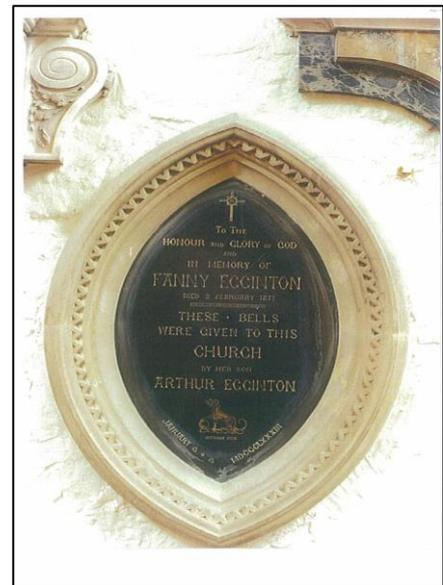
What it was that inspired Arthur Egginton to start raising prize cattle we only guess at, but this interest arose a short time after the death of his mother. Fanny Egginton, wife of John Egginton and niece of John Beadle, died on 2nd February 1877 at the age of 59. Her funeral service was held in St. Andrew's Church and she is commemorated by a memorial in the churchyard.

Another interest of Arthur Egginton was bell-ringing and he became an enthusiastic member of the ringing team at St. Andrew's. In 1883, Arthur presented six new bells to the church in memory of his mother. A plaque in the belfry reads:

To the Honour and Glory of God and in memory of Fanny Egginton, died 2 February 1877. These bells were given to this Church by her son Arthur Egginton, January MDCCCLXXXIII.

These same bells, given in memory of Fanny Egginton (nee Spence), still ring out today over the village of Kirk Ella on Sundays and other special occasions.

On 20th July 1888, five years after the dedication of the bells to his wife, John Egginton died and was laid to rest with Fanny in St. Andrew's churchyard. He was 85 years old and had lived a long and fulfilling life. His choice of wife had enabled him to live at South Ella for almost twenty years. A memorial in the churchyard reads:



Memorial to Fanny Egginton in the bell tower of St. Andrew's Church

In memory of John Egginton of South Ella near Hull who died 20th July 1888 aged 85 years. Also, of John Edward elder son of John Egginton of South Ella near Hull who died 8th June 1866 aged 21 years. Also, of John Beadle Esq. of South Ella who died 12th June 1869 aged 82 years. Also, Fanny of South Ella who died 2nd February 1877 aged 59 years the beloved wife of John Egginton.

Arthur, as the eldest surviving son of John and Fanny, was now head of the house at South Ella.

Arthur Egginton, Church Warden

Arthur Egginton was church warden of St. Andrew's Church for over twenty years. He was elected in 1881 and remained in office until 1902. Colonel Arthur Dibb of The Old Hall on Church Lane was his fellow warden during much of this period. As church warden, Arthur and his wife Beatrice, would have been ever-present members of the congregation at Sunday services. However, it was said that "Beatrice's theological views were less well defined than her opinions on current millinery styles". According to Arthur Wilson-Barkworth of The Elms, another stalwart of St. Andrew's Church during this period, Beatrice was "extremely pretty and a notorious flirt and utterly insincere!" Whether this is a fair portrayal of her character we shall never know.

The Eggintons were very much involved in the social life of the parish and hospitality was often shown at South Ella. At Christmas, Beatrice laid on teas with 'feasting and games' for the children of St. Andrew's School. The children would troop up the carriage drive from West Ella Road after lessons had finished, and one imagines, at that time of the year, it would be quite dark by the time the festivities were over. In September, Beatrice would send baskets of apples and pears from the orchard at South Ella to the school for the children to take home.

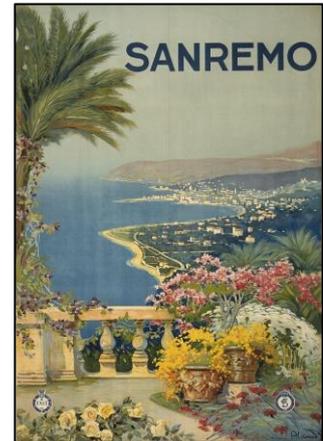
Arthur Egginton, Banker

Despite Arthur Egginton's many interests and honorary duties (as well as being a churchwarden, he was also a Justice of the Peace), he followed his father into the banking business and became a partner himself at Samuel Smith, Brothers and Co. Apart from inheriting considerable wealth from his father, he also derived a regular income from his employment by the bank and this was supplemented by land holdings and stock breeding. In 1902, Samuel Smith, Brothers and Co. merged with Union Bank of London and a number of other banks. The new bank became known as Union of London & Smiths Bank Ltd. and after the merger it had 51 branches across the country, although these were mostly in London. This merger seems to have a significant impact on the direction of Arthur's life. It is possible he became a casualty of the merger and lost his position at the bank. By the end of 1901 he had sold his livestock and his herd of Aberdeen Angus were dispersed across the country. In 1902, he resigned

his position as churchwarden at St. Andrew's Church and he disappeared from the local record. No occupancy of South Ella is listed between 1903 and 1909 and no record of the whereabouts of Arthur and Beatrice can be found for this period, so they may have left South Ella. If this was the case, perhaps a skeleton staff of servants were kept on to look after the place.

The Loss of Two Sisters

For now, we return to the story of Elizabeth, Arthur's sister, who was living in Marylebone, London, with her husband, Isaac Leadam. In early 1903, Elizabeth was travelling in Italy and visited San Remo on the Riviera coast. She was either taken seriously ill in the resort or had an accident of some kind as, on 10th February 1903, she died. The circumstances of her death and whether her remains were interred in Italy are not recorded. However, a plaque on the wall in the south aisle of St. Andrew's Church, Kirk Ella, reads:



San Remo - contemporary travel poster.

To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Elizabeth younger daughter of John Egginton of South Ella and wife of J S Leadam who died at San Remo February 10 1903, aged 49. S Matthew, Chap XI, verse 28. This tablet is erected by her sorrowing sister.

The biblical text from Matthew's Gospel quoted in the above inscription is, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." If this was aptly chosen, then it suggests that Elizabeth might have been suffering from a medical condition and, perhaps, visiting the Riviera coast for the sake of her health.

The "sorrowing sister" described on the above inscription was Mary Frances who was living, around this time, at 6 Addison Court Gardens in the Shepherd's Bush area of London. After leaving South Ella during the 1880s, she had been living in west London¹⁶ and when she died in 1911, she was buried locally in the city she had made her home for a quarter of a century. Mary Frances is also commemorated in the south aisle of the church in Kirk Ella:

To the Glory of God and in loving memory of Mary Frances Egginton, elder daughter of John Egginton of South Ella who died in London May 29th 1911 aged 64 and is buried in North Sheen (Fulham) Cemetery. "Yea though I walk through

¹⁶ In 1887 she is reported to have been living in Brechin Place, Gloucester Road.

the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me Thy rod and staff they comfort me," Psalm 23 verse 4. This tablet is erected by her niece Dorothy Cooper.

Bedford

The death of Mary Frances in 1911, meant that, if Arthur and Beatrice Egginton were still alive, they were the only surviving former residents of South Ella. Arthur and Beatrice were, indeed, very much alive and, in 1910, were found to be living at 11 St. Michael's Road, Bedford. It was at this address he and Beatrice appear to have spent the remainder of their married life together. However, Arthur seemed keen to maintain his links with Hull as, in 1913, he remained listed in Kelly's Directory for the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, even though his Bedford address was given.

Quite why Arthur and Beatrice moved from South Ella to Bedford is something of a mystery. He was not appointed a partner in the newly formed Union of London & Smiths Bank Ltd. and, by 1911, he was described as a "retired banker" in the census return of that year. After the banking merger, did Arthur take up a position in another bank in Bedford? We know that Beatrice had relatives in Bedfordshire (the Peppercorns at Eaton Socon) – could that have been a reason for the move to this part of the country, where it seems they had no other connections? The date the couple moved to Bedford is also uncertain. The first mention in the records of Arthur Egginton at a Bedford address is in 1910. Whether they had moved to Bedford before this or, if not, where they had been since 1902, is not known.

Arthur Egginton lived out the remainder of his life in Bedford and died at the age of 71 in 1922. Like his sisters, he is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of Kirk Ella church:

To the Glory of God and in remembrance of Arthur Egginton, younger son of John Egginton, of South Ella. Churchwarden of this Church from 1881 to 1902. Died at Bedford, April 2nd 1922, aged 71.

No donor or sponsor of his memorial is stated but the fact that his church wardenship is mentioned suggests that, even twenty years after he left office, and many years after leaving South Ella, his long service to the church had not been forgotten.

How long Beatrice continued to live in Bedford after her husband died is not known, but around the time of her 84th birthday she died in Bridlington. An announcement on the front page of *The Times* on 15th April 1941 read:

Egginton On April 10 1941, at Bridlington, Beatrice Constance, widow of Arthur Egginton, of South Ella, and eldest daughter of the late John Smythe Egginton, of Kirk Ella. No flowers by request.

The End of an Era

There is no memorial to Beatrice in the church at Kirk Ella and this signifies that the Egginton era in the village was over. Today, there are no Eggintons in Kirk Ella or the surrounding villages, but the large number of memorials to the family in the south aisle of St. Andrew's Church remind us that, during the 19th century, the family had a large and influential presence in the village. The marriage of Arthur Egginton to Beatrice Constance Egginton had brought two branches of this family together. As we have seen, the Eggintons, over several generations, were a family of substance and influence in Hull and the villages of Anlaby, Kirk Ella and North Ferriby. This story is only a partial account of the considerable legacy they left behind.

The departure of Arthur and Beatrice Egginton from South Ella during the first decade of the 20th century ended a further chapter in the house's history. There were no children to inherit and, after they left, the empty house awaited its next occupants.

Thanks go to many people, both members of AWAKE U3A and others, in helping to gather information for this episode in the life of South Ella. The help of Lyn Crawford, Kimberley Harsley and Sophie Volker of the NatWest Group Archive in Edinburgh for enabling the "perjury" story to be told is particularly appreciated. Special thanks are reserved for Christine Gibbs who researched and provided much of the genealogical information.

Francis Davies
September 2020