

## **BEALE BLACKWELL COLVIN (1809 – 1864)**

*A resident and for a short period, owner of Pishiobury House, Sawbridgeworth*

The name of Beale Colvin is another one of those which many people today in Sawbridgeworth would either not have heard of, or know very little about. He did not reside in Sawbridgeworth for very long, but his story and that of his family is interesting and is worthy of being retold.

Beale Colvin was born in the year 1809. The records are a little vague, but he was almost certainly born at the family home of Monkams Hall, Waltham Abbey. Unfortunately, the actual birth record appears lost. Furthermore, the surname in those days was spelt in a number of ways, such as Colville, adding to the confusion.

Beale was the son of Robert Sharp Colvin (1765-1825) and his wife Susannah (Dyson) (1772- 1839?). Through his marriage to Susannah, Beale's father Robert had inherited Monkams Hall, which was once described as 'the biggest house in Waltham Cross'.

Robert Sharp Colvin was a wealthy industrialist. In partnership with a Mr. Beale Blackwell (1752-1818) (after whom he named his son, 'our' Beale) he was the manufacturer of ink for the printing trade. The company was then known as Blackwell and Colvin. It was recorded in *The London Book Trades, 1775-1800* at King Street and Goswell Street (since 1864, z Goswell Road). These are (and were) desirable areas of London, and so it is likely that the addresses given were where Robert Colvin and Beale Blackwell resided at that time but not where they produced their ink. The type of ink in question is still used and is known as letterpress news ink. It is oil-based, using soot as black colouring. It was a dirty process to manufacture. In 1973, Blackwell and Co. Printing Inks, based in Stratford, East London finally ceased trading.

In 1825, Beale's father Robert died, leaving his estate to his son, who was just 17 years old at that time. (There is a memorial to Robert in the church at Waltham Abbey.) Accordingly, Beale was placed in the guardianship of his mother Susannah, his uncle James Dyson and James Farnell, who was a business associate of Robert Colvin. Indeed, from 1838 until 1860, the company was known as 'Blackwell and Farnell'. Beale clearly thought highly of James Farnell, because he later named his third son after him. When he reached the age of 21, Beale finally came into his full inheritance, which also included Upshire Hall, Waltham Cross.

In February 1848, Beale was appointed the High Sheriff of Essex. On 26 July 1853 at Marylebone in London, Beale married Emma Elizabeth Mary Britten, who was 25 years his junior, being born in 1835.

Our local interest in Beale and Emma Colvin comes from late in the year 1853. In 1853 (possibly 1854), Beale Colvin and his wife moved from their home at Monkams Hall to Pishiobury House. The reason for this relocation is unknown. It may have been simply due to the newlyweds wishing for somewhere different. However, from Monkams Hall (still extant, and now private apartments), which is situated on a hill, the City of London is easily visible. In Victorian times, this would have been a polluted industrial view. Possibly the Colvins simply wished to improve their vista. Whatever the case, the Colvin family retained their ownership of Monkams Hall, and to begin with, merely leased or rented Pishiobury House from the owner, Fanny Ede.



*Pishiobury House in about 1800*

Fanny Ede was the widow of Francis Ede, a wealthy Levant merchant (and the subject of another article by SLHS) who was at one time owner of Pishiobury House. Francis Ede had died in a freak accident involving the 'upturning' of a dog cart in 1849. His widow, Fanny, who had inherited Pishiobury House, was later to be found in census returns travelling and living at various locations, especially in the West country; which is why the property became available.

Beale and Emma Colvin were to have five children during their marriage, all born at Pishiobury House.



*Beale and Emma Colvin on the steps of Pishiobury House in about 1858*

The children of Beale and Emma were as follows:

Evelyn Emma Amelia, born on 12 July 1854, died in 1932

Richard Beale, born on 4 August 1856, died on 17 January 1936

Cecil Hodgson, born on 30 April 1858, died in 1938

Forrester Farnell, born in 1860, died in 1936

Beatrice Mary, born in 1862, died in 1956.

All three of the sons fought in the Second Boer War and their life stories are interesting enough for abridged versions to be recounted here.

**Brigadier-General Sir Richard Beale Colvin KCB TD BA MP JP**

Born at Pishiobury House on 4 August 1856. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. Gained a BA in 1879. Commissioned into the Army and rose to the rank of Brigadier-General. Fought in the Second Boer War, being mentioned in dispatches. He also served briefly in France during the Great War.



*Richard Beale Colvin, pictured in 1932*

On 26 June 1895, Richard married Lady Gwendoline Rous. The marriage was celebrated at Monkams Hall. Richard was a Justice of the Peace for Essex in 1889, Lord Lieutenant for Essex from 1928 until his death; High Sheriff of Essex 1890 and 1934; Conservative MP for Epping 1917-1923; Essex County Commissioner for Boy Scouts; Master of the East Essex foxhounds; a Freemason and Grandmaster.

He died on 17 January 1936 at Monkams Hall, Waltham Abbey and was buried on 24 January 1936 in Cheshunt, following a service at Chelmsford Cathedral. There is a memorial to Richard in Chelmsford Cathedral, which was unveiled in 1937.

**Colonel Cecil Hodgson Colvin CB DSO DL**

Born at Pishiobury House on 30 April 1859. Educated at Cheam School. Commissioned into the Army, where he was a skilled marksman and became (as a Captain) a musketry instructor. He served in the First Egyptian Campaign in the Sudan and in the Second Boer War. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his gallantry.



MAJOR CECIL COLVIN ROUGH RIDERS.

*Cecil Hodgson Colvin, during the Second Boer War*

On 26 January 1888, Cecil married Ida Craige-Halkett at St. Paul's church Knightsbridge. He was awarded the Commander of the Bath in the Birthday Honours of 1916. From 1891 until 1909 Cecil was on the voting register of Marylebone. He died on 22 November 1938 and was buried in Cheshunt; probate was held on 14 January 1939.

**Lt. Colonel Forrester Farnell Colvin CBE OBE MC DL LT**

Born at Pishiobury House on 22 January 1860. Forrester was commissioned into the Army and served with the 9th Lancers, where he rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. He served in the Boer War with 'Kitchener's Flying Scouts', an early Commando-type unit, where he was awarded a Military Cross. After the War, he was quartered at Dundalk in Ireland, where he married Isabella Bunbury, the eldest daughter of Lord Rathdonnell on 13 June 1903.



*Forrester Farnell Colvin in the uniform of the 9th Lancers*

Forrester later lived for six years at Shermanbury Grange, Horsham, Sussex. He was a competent polo player, a sport which he enjoyed. Forrester died on 16 February 1936 and was buried at St. Peter's church, Cowfold, Sussex.

In the year 1862, Beale and his wife finally purchased Pishiobury House outright from Fanny Ede. Whilst at Pishiobury, Beale lived the life of a country gentleman. In 1831 he had been commissioned into a reservist unit of the Cavalry (West Essex Yeomanry) and later attained the rank of Captain. He was the Master of the East Essex Foxhounds until succeeded by his son Richard. He was always attending country shows and was a member of Waltham Abbey Horticultural Society. Beale would donate prizes for achievements. On one occasion at the Essex Show, he gave 10 shillings (50p) as a prize for sheep shearing.

Beale was extremely proud of his herd of cattle at Pishiobury, many of which were rare breeds. So, it must have been galling for him, as reported in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* of 15 June 1860, to have achieved only the 2nd prize of £6 for his cow at the Essex Agricultural Society show. Even more so, as the winner of the 1st prize of £8 was his neighbour, Charles Barnard from Harlowbury. Beale was still reported as purchasing cattle up to the time of his death, which must have come about suddenly.

Beale was only to spend two years as the owner of Pishiobury House. On 19 September 1864, at the age of 55, Beale died at Pishiobury. The funeral took place on 26 September, with his death having previously been announced on the 22 September in the *Sun* newspaper (London). Probate was held on 4 November 1864. Although Beale was buried at Cheshunt in the vault of his uncle, R. Dyson, there is a stained-glass window dedicated to him in the west chancel of Great St. Mary's church Sawbridgeworth.

Of interest, according to records, despite living there much of the time, Pishiobury was probably not officially the family's main residence, but simply their country house. From the time of his marriage, up to 1865 (after his death!), Beale was always listed on the voting register for Enfield (Monkhams Hall). Furthermore, it is known that Beale also owned land near Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire.

Beale was outlived by his wife Emma. In the census records for 1871 and 1881, she was living at Hove in Sussex. In 1891 Emma was with her parents in Worcester. In 1909 and 1910 she was recorded on the voting register for local elections in Marylebone (yes, women could have voted in those elections if they had the money and property). Emma died on 2 June 1916 in Brighton with probate held on 18 July that year.



*Beale Blackwell Colvin 1809-1864*

## REFERENCES

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

British Newspaper Archive.

Coe. D. (2020) *Francis and Fanny Ede*. Sawbridgeworth Local History Society.

[www.essexregiment.co.uk](http://www.essexregiment.co.uk) [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

[www.forces-war-records.co.uk](http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk)

Great St. Mary's Church, Sawbridgeworth.

Hertford Archive and Library Service. *Pishiobury sale particulars D/P41/29/3*. Hertford.

Monumental Inscriptions. (1989). *Great Saint Mary's Sawbridgeworth*. Hertfordshire Family and Population History Society.

National Census Returns. 1841-1911.

[www.thepeerage.com](http://www.thepeerage.com)

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Flt Lt Douglas Coe BSc RAFVR(T) Ret'd.

Sawbridgeworth Local History Society, June 2020.