

the local glass working industry known to have been operating around Rugeley and Bagots Park in the middle ages. This local industry is known to have provided glass for such prestigious buildings as York Minster.



*Colton's Market Charter Would Have Looked Very Much Like this*



*Walter 1st Lord Aston*

The mid 17<sup>th</sup>. Century saw a local Colton heiress, *Constance Boughey*, marry Thomas Whitgreave of Moseley Old Hall. He was one of the Catholics who helped Charles 11 escape from the Battle of Worcester. By this marriage he became a significant landowner in Colton and the Whitgreave family

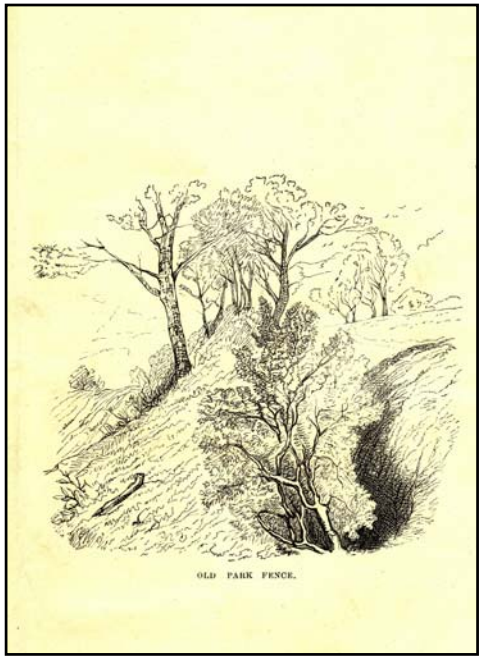


*Battle Of Worcester*



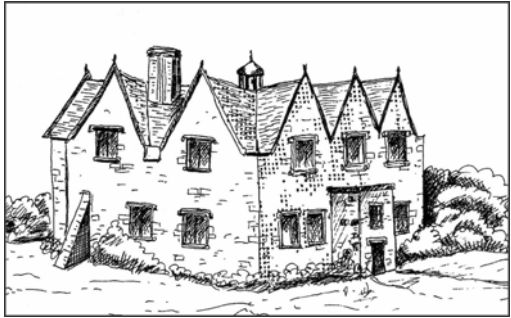
*Local Glass Works Produced Glass Used In The Windows At York Minster*

In the early 17<sup>th</sup>. Century the then Lord of the Manor, *Walter Aston*, acted as Ambassador to Spain for James 1 and was created Baron Forfar for his services to the country. He occupied a substantial timber manor house in Colton of which now unfortunately there is no surface evidence but the boundaries of the ancient deer park can still be seen.



*Boundary Of The Deer Park*

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Century *Herbert Aston* achieved notoriety by being implicated along with Lord Stafford in the Popish Plot. It was reputed to have been partly plotted at his Manor house in Colton at *Bellamour Hall*. The Plot although later to be proved fictitious, caused a huge outrage in England and both men along with other suspected plotters were imprisoned in the Tower. Lord Stafford was beheaded but the hoax was revealed before Herbert Aston lost his head and he was released.



*Bellamour Hall*

The 18<sup>th</sup> Century saw the development of schooling in Colton for the local children. The schools flourished and led to the opening of St. Mary's school in the 19<sup>th</sup>. Century that is still there today. The 18<sup>th</sup> century also saw the building of the canal through Colton. The canal as it went towards Rugeley was the scene of a brutal murder of a young woman in the 19<sup>th</sup>. Century and was the inspiration for a story in the popular crime series 'Morse' starring the well known



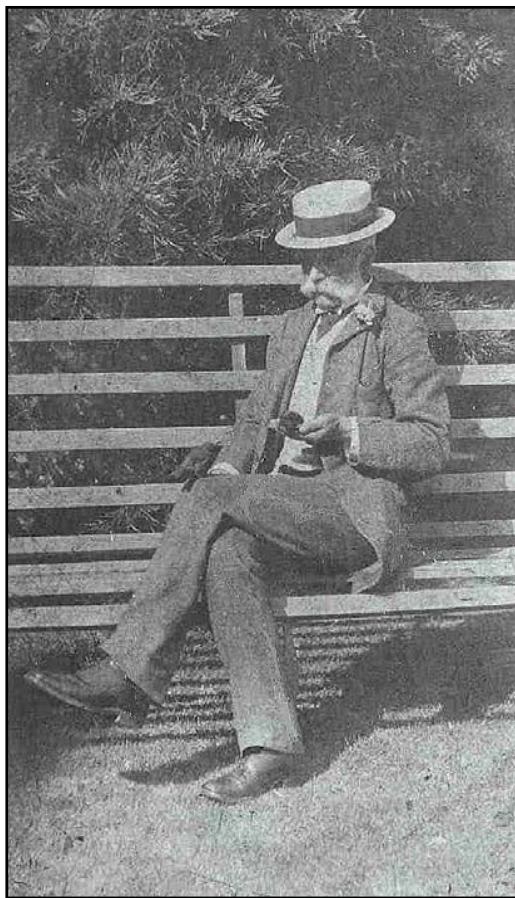
*Pupils At St Mary's School Colton circa 1890*

The 19<sup>th</sup>. Century saw the coming of the steam railway encouraged by the then Lord of Colton Manor *Mr. Horsefall* who was also M.P. for Liverpool. It was also the home for some years of Frederick Bonney, a Victorian explorer, botanist and distinguished photographer.



*Trent Valley Station*





Frederick Bonney

Bonney came to live at Colton House upon his return to England from Australia. He had spent many years working on sheep stations north of Adelaide. Whilst there he had travelled around taking photographs of aborigines and the life of the early settlers. His collection of photos is now an important collection held in the Museum of Australia in Sydney.



Frederick Bonney Pictured With Aborigines in Australia

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Colton slipped into the quiet obscurity of so many English villages but still remains to this date little changed.



St Mary's Church & Moreton Bridge In The 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Acknowledgement To Gill Sykes For Her Research And Time In Writing This Article



# Colton History Society

## A Short History of Colton



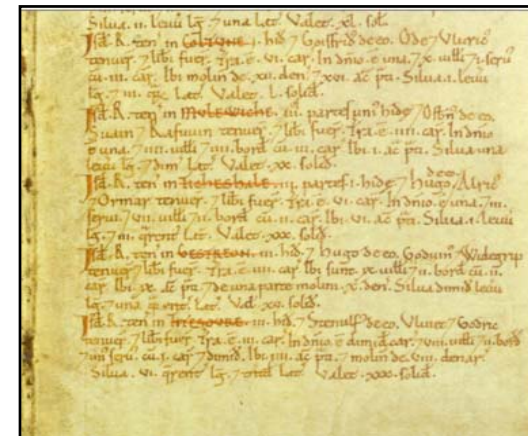
Colton As It May Have Appeared As A Saxon Age Settlement

Although Colton now appears to be a fairly insignificant small village in the Staffordshire landscape, it has a long and interesting history.

The earliest evidence of habitation in Colton dates from the Bronze Age. Bronze age Burnt mounds have recently been found within the Parish boundary and researched by Keele University. It is thought that they are evidence of occupation by one of the tribes known to be in this area of Staffordshire in the Bronze Age period and who built a huge fortification at Castle Ring on Cannock Chase some three miles away.

The earliest written recording of Colton is in the Domsday Book. Colton is recorded as having been held by four Saxon Thanes prior to the Conquest by William. It is also one of only a small number of Staffordshire villages recorded as having a Priest, which suggests that in Saxon times the village was of some significance.

Colton lands were divided between two of William's Norman supporters who had fought beside him at the Conquest. Part of the village was given to Lord Robert of Stafford and the other part to Earl Roger of Montgomery. Colton would have been a very small proportion of each of their land holdings. The Colton Manors were then sublet to Norman knights who in turn owed their allegiance to these two great Lords.



Colton's Entry In The Domsday Book

Colton in the pre and post Conquest period must have been one of the largest settlements in the area because it received a Market Charter in 1240, some three years before neighbouring Rugeley. Throughout the Middle ages it boasted a church, a market, burgage plots, mills and glassworks. Evidence of all but the market can still be seen. The remains of the glasswork kilns within the Parish have been found in recent years and have been linked with the

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