

THE ALFORDS OF SUSSEX - Continued

The eldest son of Edward Alford and Judith Downing his wife was:

4. John Alford (senior), of Hamsey and Offington in the county of Sussex, esquire, was born in 1590, and the Alumni Oxonienses records his matriculation at St. John's College, Oxford, in 1606, at the age of 16, describing him as "John Alford of London, armiger." John Alford obtained a seat in the House of Commons, sitting in 1625 and 1640 for New Shoreham, co. Sussex. The manors of Hamsey and Offington both came into his possession. "John Alford, owner of the manor of Hamsey, settled it on his wife Frances for life, with remainder to his brother Sir Edward Alford for life, and his sons in entail." The County History of Kent records that the manor of Wittersham, Kent, was sold to Sir Thomas Bishopp, whose daughter carried it in marriage to Mr. Alford. John Alford died two days after making the settlement, and was buried at Broadwater, where a monument in the South Transept Chapel was erected to his memory.

"Here lyeth the body of the truly honourable and religious John Alford of Offington, Esquire, who having finished his career, exchanged mortality for glory, Jan. 5, 1648. AEt. 59.

"He left issue ye noble Lady Jane Eversfield, and the virtuous gentle woman Mrs. Elizabeth Alford."

"Here lyeth the body of Frances, the wife of John Alford of Offington, Esquire, who finding no comfort in life after the decease of her husband, died Oct. 23, 1659. AEtatis suae 63."

His widow outlived him for eleven years. The Wills of both are appended:

John Alford of Offington, co. Sussex. 1649. To be buried at Broadwater. "All my goods and chattels and real estate to my dear and very much deserving wife Frances Alford. . . . My house of Hamsey in the said county . . . My daughter Jane Eversfield . . . My daughter Elizabeth Alford . . . My brother Sir Edward Alford . . . My brothers Launcelot and William . . . To John Alford son of William, my godson . . . Unto John Fettiplace . . . My brother in law Henry Bishopp . . . Lands, tenements, to Elizabeth Alford her heires, and for want of issue to Sir Edward Alford. My wife Frances sole executrix." P.C.C. 7 Fairfax.

Frances Alford, widow, of Surrey, 1659. "To be buried neare my deare husband in the Parishe Church of Broadwater . . . To my daughter Elizabeth all my household goods and plate . . . To my loving sister Lady Gresham my greate diamond ring and greate Bible . . . My brother Mr. Henry Bishopp. My grandsonne Mr. John Eversfield . . . To my god-daughter Mrs. Francis Alford my greate silver tankard . . . To the poore of Hamsey . . . My daughter Elizabeth Alford sole executrix." P.C.C. 520 Pell.

Testator was widow of John Alford of Offington, whose Will appears above. Her sister Lady Gresham, widow of Sir John Gresham of Titsey Place, Surrey, by her Will, dated 1664 (Surrey Wills), gave "Unto my nece Mrs. Bickerstafe a ringe with a diamonde which my sister Allford, her mother, gave me. Unto her husband Mr. Charles Bickerstafe the grete Bibell my sister Allford gave me. Unto their daughter Elizabeth, my god-daughter, four hundred ount (orient) pearles out of my best chayne. Unto Mr. John Eversfield, my godson, my wach in a playne silver case."

About 1618, John Alford had married Frances, daughter of Sir Thomas Bishopp, knight and baronet, of Parham, in the county of Sussex, by whom he had two daughters:

- i. Elizabeth, born 1620, who married Mr. Bickerstaff, and was subsequently her mother's executrix.
- ii. Jane, who married Sir Thomas Eversfield, and died, leaving a son, Mr. John Eversfield, who became a legatee under his mother's will.

The second son of Edward Alford (senior) and Judith Downing his wife was:

5. Sir Edward Alford, of Cassiobury Park, near Watford, Herts, and of Offington House, Sussex, knight. He was born in 1592, and his matriculation at Christ Church, Oxford, at the age of 20, is recorded in 1612.

While his father was occupied with his Parliamentary and public duties in London and Essex, Edward Alford (junior) appears to have lived at Offington, and to have made himself useful in his native county of Sussex, being High Sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in 1624.

The State Papers of this time contain these three allusions to him:

1627. "The King commissioned Edward Alford, with others, to use martial law to soldiers billeted in co. Sussex."

"Edward Alford complains against Freeman of Billingham, co. Sussex, for not duly maintaining a watch at a beacon."

1628. "Edward Alford of Offington renders some accounts of prize-ships." (War with France.)

The Historical MSS. Commission gives, June 24, 1628, "Letter from Edward Alford, West Dean, near Chichester, to Sir John Coke, Secretary of State."—"Upon two letters from the Lords of the Council for billeting 2,000 soldiers near Portsmouth, when he gave the Sessors their charge lately, they alleged that the soldiers were not taken off nor the money paid for the billeting of them, nor for impress coats and conduct-money disbursed long since. We have no hope the country will receive any more. There are 200 soldiers already billeted in the city of Chichester, between which city and Havant is but seven miles distance; and between, but one poor town and two or three hamlets already full freight with soldiers."

"Sir John Cokes's reply to Mr. Edward Alford" (afterwards Sir Edward), speaks of 3,425 soldiers in that district" and 3s. 6d. per week each man billet money." "I doubt not but you will give your best assistance to remove needless jealousies, and expedite the business, according to your accustomed diligence and zeal for the public good."

In 1628 Edward Alford became M. P. for Steyning, co. Sussex, and in 1632 was knighted by King Charles the First. In that year his father, Edward Alford, senior, died, and the estates of Hamsey and Offington passed to John Alford, Sir Edward's eldest brother.

At the close of the same year Sir Edward Alford married. The Gloucestershire Visitation (Harleian Society) records the marriage of "Sir Edward Alford, second son of Edward Alford, co. Sussex, with Mary, widow of Sir Charles Morrison (whom she married at Lowleyton, Essex, 3 December 1606), of Cashibury, Herts, knight and baronet." She then, however, was the widow of Sir John Cooper, bart., her second husband.

In London Marriage Licences is recorded: "Alford, Sir Edward, of Offington, Sussex, knight, bachelor, about 40, and Mary Cooper of Cashibury, Herts, widow of Sir John Cooper [who died 23 March 1631, late of St. Giles, co. Dorset. Dec. 11, 1632." Lady Mary Alford was the youngest daughter of Baptist Hicks the 1st Viscount Camden. She had no children by this, her third, marriage, and died seven years later, in 1639, and was buried "in the Isle of Watford parish church".

In 1640 Sir Edward Alford was in Parliament, sitting for Arundel, Sussex. He took part in the struggle between the King and Commons, and "suffered greatly for his loyalty".

The Sussex Archaeological Collections, xiii, p. 81, etc., give the following notes:--

"Sir Edward Alford, knight, M.P. for Arundel 1640, joined the King. Thomas [?] Alford represented Lewes in 1585; Henry Alford represented Arundel in 1628, and his brother Edward in 1640. Sir Edward was on the King's side in the Civil War, and being in the Capitulation of Exeter in 1649, was severely fined by the Commonwealth. The amount of the fine for Offington alone was 1,503 pounds."

It is noticeable that Sir Edward had only just succeeded to the Offington estates, on the death of his brother, John Alford.

The Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Benefices, in 1650, found that the Vicar of Watford, Hertfordshire, had a donation of 50 pounds per annum, the gift of Lady Alford, and then paid by Sir Edward Alford, arising out of lands in the county of Gloucester.

"Sir Edward Alford of Offington, in the county of Sussex, knight. Petition to Commissioners, with signature, May 28, 1651. His delinquency that he was one of the members of the hon'ble house of Com'ons, that he deserted the Parliament and went to Oxford and sat in the Assembly there when the Parliament were voted Traytors. That he returned out of the King's Quarters the 25th November 1645. That he seized of lands and messuages in Tewkesbury in the county of Gloster, of yearly value of 430 pounds, for which his fine is 1,075 pounds. The Rectory of Cheltenham and Charlton in the county of Gloster, of the yearly value of 75 pounds, for which his fine is 189 pounds. Of the manor of Ilmington in the county of Warwick, yearly value 333 pounds; fine 852 pounds. Also lands at Whitbury in the county of Wilts, yearly value 194 pounds, fine 970 pounds. King's Langley Park, Hertford, fine 250 pounds. The Mannor of Pindast in the Parische of Waltham Crosse, yearly value 200 pounds, fine 500 pounds. Soe that his whole fine is 3,836 pounds." Royalist Composition Papers, 2nd series, iii pp 291-350.

This document also mentions Mrs. Elizabeth Alford, his niece; Lancelot Alford; Elizabeth Alford, his sister, deceased; his brother, John Alford, esquire, deceased; Mrs. Frances Alford, deceased; John Alford, son of William Alford; and Lady Alford of Cashiobury, deceased.

Sir Edward Alford also had an interest in Somersetshire, being lord of the manor of Stanton Drew in that county; and his name is recorded as appearing at the Taunton Sessions, 10 Charles I, in a case of poaching on his manor.

Just as these troublous times were commencing Sir Edward married a second time, his wife being Ann, daughter of Dr. Corbett, Chancellor of Norwich. By this marriage he had two children:--

- i. John Alford, of whom hereafter (6).
- ii. Frances Alford, who married Edward Thurland, of Reigate, Esq., and died in 1694.

Sir Edward Alford died intestate in 1653, aged 61, leaving a son John his heir, and letters of administration were granted to his widow, Dame Ann Alford; 24 Sept. 1653.

Lady Alford outlived Sir Edward nearly forty years, and, dying in 1692, was buried at Broadwater, where is a Brass in the Chancel floor:

"Here lyeth the bodye of
Anne, wife of Sir Edward Alford, Knight;
Who departed this life
Feb: ye 4th, Ano. 1692,
Aged 74 yeares."

6. William Alford, afterwards vicar of Purton, Wiltshire, was a younger son of Mr. Edward Alford, senior, of Offington, Sussex, and of Judith his wife. He was born in 1600, and matriculated at St. Mary Hall, Oxford, in 1617, when he is described as "armiger of Sussex"; he died in 1664. William Alford is mentioned in Sir Orlando Bridgman's Judgments in the Common Pleas, 1660-67, as a younger brother of John and Sir Edward Alford. He was instituted to the vicarage of Purton in 1629.

He married and had issue:

- i. Edward Alford, born in 1645. The Alumni Oxonienses records this son's matriculation at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1664, at the age of 19, "fil. Guliel. Alford, Purton, Wilts. cler.". He took his B. A. in 1668, and his M. A. in 1671.

- ii. John Alford, a legatee under the Will of his uncle, John Alford of Offington, who died in 1648, in which Will he is referred to as his "Godson". He is also mentioned in the above-recited Composition Papers of his uncle, Sir Edward Alford, in 1651.