

THE ALFORDS OF SUSSEX, LONDON, AND HERTFORDSHIRE CONTINUED

Edward Alford, the third son of Robert Alford and Ann Brydges, was afterwards of Aston-sub-Edge, in the county of Gloucester. This further connection with the West of England no doubt resulted from his mother being a member of the Brydges family already mentioned.

In 1580 Edward Alford was engaged in a law-suit, in which his brother Francis also had a part, concerning the manor of Aston-sub-Edge.

The *State Papers* for 1584 contain a deed of confirmation by Francis Alford to Edward Alford of the manor of Aston-under-Edge, in trust, for the sole use of the said Edward Alford. The manor was described as containing: "12 messuages, 10 cottages, a dove-house, 12 gardens, 12 orchards, 24 acres of meadow-land, 200 of pasture, 10 of wood." Edward Alford married, and had a son, Launcelot Alford, who apparently died young.

Launcelot Alford, the fourth son of Robert Alford (i) and Ann Brydges, was described later as of York House, Twickenham, Surrey. In 1548 he was appointed "Clerk of the Hanaper" in Dublin. There is mention of him in 1560 as still holding this office. In 1573 the superior post known as the "Tellership" became vacant, "a very lucrative sinecure office" in the gift of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Roger Alford (his brother) wrote to Lord Burghley, then Lord Treasurer, whose secretary he was, asking him to obtain the appointment for Launcelot. (See letter, *AAFA ACTION*, December 1989, page 23, column 3.) The application was successful, and he held the office for some years.

In 1582 Launcelot Alford obtained a twenty-one year lease of that well-known estate called "Yorke House" at Twickenham in the county of Surrey. "An historic mansion, one of the most beautiful old seats on the banks of the Thames, built of red brick, with high-pitched roof, in the 16th century. It stands in well-timbered grounds of about 10 acres. It was the residence of James II while Duke of York, and his daughters, afterwards Queen Mary and Queen Anne, were born in the house." Here he lived after his retirement from official life in Ireland.

Launcelot Alford married Anne Underwoods, and had two children:

- i. "Basyll Alford, sonne and heire" of whom no further record is found.
- ii. Francys, who married Richard Wright of Stoke, Nottinghamshire.

We now return to the family of Roger Alford (2) and Elizabeth Ramsay:

3. **Edward Alford** (senior), of London, and afterwards of Offington, county Sussex, Esquire, was the only surviving son of Roger Alford of London and Hitcham. He was born in 1565, and his matriculation at Trinity College, Oxford, is recorded in 1581, at the age of 16. In accordance with the instructions of his father's will (see letter, *AAFA ACTION*, December 1989, page 24, column 2), he studied for the law and entered at Lincoln's Inn.

The British Museum *Add. MSS* (12,503) contain a letter from Edward Alford dated 1593, to Sir Julius Caesar. His autograph is appended:

(Signature)

Edward Alford entered Parliament in 1603, and pursued a somewhat notable political career, as the following notices testify: "1 James I, 1603. New House of Commons. Member of Colchester: Edward Alford, Esq." A similar entry appears in the record for 18 James I, 1620.

The following notes are taken from *Parliamentary History*, March 16, 1620. "Proceedings relative to the Grievances." "Mr. Alford holdeth it a preposterous thing to be called as witnesses in a business where we have before been Judges"—Vol. i, 1207.

Nov. 27, 1621. "Mr Alford saith that since the Powder Treason the Papists say there hath been no practice against the King; and he wisheth that now, on our loose with Spain, those who are about the King should look well that he be not endangered."—Vol i, 1312.

In Gardiner's *History of England* we find some references to Edward Alford, thus:

General Index, p. 228: "Edward Alford applauds Coke's attack on the monopolies : asks (1621) for freedom of speech. Is made Sheriff (1625) to prevent his appearance in Parliament."

"Great was the joy in the House. 'This,' said Alford, an old Member who had represented Colchester ever since the death of Elizabeth—'this is the first Parliament that ever I saw Councillors of State have such care for the State.'"—Vol. iv, p. 41 1626.

"Charles, appealing to the people for a free gift, purified the Commission of the Peace by the dismissal of those persons who were likely to oppose the measure. Elliot and Phellps, Seymour and Alford, ceased to bear the honours of Justice of the Peace in their respective Counties."—Vol. vi, p. 125.

Mr. Edward Alford continued to represent Colchester in Parliament for two more years, and then sat for Steyning, Sussex in 1628, but was at this time, and doubtless to a great extent in consequence of the above events, that he retired to the mansion and estate of Offington, in the parish of Broadwater, Sussex, near the modern town of Worthing. The family had an ancient connection with that County, but this manor had been bought by the Alford's from the West family (now represented by Earl De la Warr), in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and remained in the Alford family until 1726.

"Offington House, formerly the seat of the Lords De la Warr, is on the north-west side of the parish of Broadwater, surrounded by a small park containing venerable trees. What was its extent formerly may be seen by the following enumeration of its apartments:

My Lord's bedchamber
The gallery chamber,
The inner gallery, with
The closet next the garden,
The gallery at my Lord's chamber-door,
The genteel women's chamber,
My Lady's chamber,
The great chamber,
The middle chamber,
The hall, the chapel,
The black parlor,
The tower chamber,
The noercerye,
The chamber over the butterye,
The parlor of the seller," etc., etc.

Gardiner's *History of England* proves the continuance of Edward Alford's political career.

1628. "The discussion in Committee was opened by an appeal from Alford to the lawyers present to inform him what benefits would accrue by the confirmation of the Statutes without explanation."—Vol. vi, p. 272.

From Guizot's *History of the English Revolution of 1640*, p. 26, we find some further information as to his career in parliament:

May 8th, 1628. "The House drew up the famous Bill 'The Petition of Rights,' adopted it, and transmitted it to the Upper House for its assent." The King objected, "addressing advice upon advice to the Peers, to the Commons message upon message." "The perplexity of the Peers was great," but "the Bill was adopted with this addition: 'We humbly present this petition to your Majesty, not only with care of preserving our own liberties, but with due regard to leave entire that Sovereign Power wherewith your Majesty is trusted for the protection, safety, and happiness of your people.'" May 17. "When the Bill thus amended came back to the Commons: 'Let us look into the Records' said Mr. Alford, 'and see what they are: what is Sovereign Power? Bodin saith that it is free from any conditions. By this we shall acknowledge a regal, as well as a legal, power. Let us give that to the King the Law gives him, and no more.'"

From the Report of the *Hist. MSS. Commission*, House of Commons, June 21, 1628:

"When his Bill was passed Sir Edmund did by the Speaker present his hearty thanks to the House for that favour in passing his Bill. Mr. Alford stood up and said this custom of giving thanks had been omitted ever since the passing of a Bill for the old Lord Burghley, and he held it due to the House, for what have these Lords so deserved of the Commonwealth that we should intermit the public affairs of the State to intend their private Bills."

Mr. Edward Alford died in 1632 at the age of 67. His will is appended:

Edward Alford of Offington, co. Sussex, Esquire, 1632. To be buried in the chancel of Hamsey Church. "To Elizabeth my daughter my manors of Offington and Hamsey in the co. of Sussex." Lands at Broadwater (the ancient parish of Worthing), Bramber, and Gowing. Tenement in All Hallows, Steining, London. To my son William the rectory of Titherington in the co of Glos', with lands, tenements, and the right of patronage to the vicarage. Lands in Bilston, Cornwall. Launcelott Alford, sonne of Edward. "My dear sister Lady Fettiplace . . . to my sonne John Alford my guilt bason and ewer, and two silver potts with my Armes upon them which wear my father's . . . to Jane Alford my grandchild a dozen guilt spoons . . . to Elizabeth Alford my grandchild my silver bason and ewer . . . My loving wife Judith, and my daughter Elisabeth, executors." P.C.C. 2 Audeley

He was buried in the Chancel of Hamsey Church, near Lewes, co. Sussex, the manor Hamsey being also in his possession, and apparently his residence in later days.

When about 25 years of age he married Judith, daughter of Edmund Downing of Suffolk, esquire, by whom he had six sons:

- i. John Alford, of whom next (4)
- ii. Sir Edward Alford, of whom hereafter (5)
- iii. William Alford, of whom hereafter (6)
- iv. Henry Alford, who became Member for Arundel in 1628.
- v. Robert Alford, who was admitted at Lincoln's Inn, Nov. 20th, 1620.
- vi. Launcelot Alford, of whom no further record is found.