

Hindmarsh Gravestones at St Michael's Alwinton

A year ago we came to Alwinton to research part of my family tree, and soon found 2 very old, lichen covered, gravestones at St Michaels which seemed to fit. When we returned this year we made sure we were in time for the Alwinton Show and met up with Michael the Rector who happily agreed that we could clean the gravestones.



So armed with sponges, toothbrushes and a lot of water we went last week to the churchyard and did just that. Being October it wasn't perhaps the best time to be dripping in water whilst we painstakingly washed the lichen away but it was well worth it.



Before cleaning, the stones had been difficult to read; so difficult that in 1964, when a register of the stones was made, they had only managed to record the first name on each of the 2 stones ie Percival Hindmarsh of Roukland.



These are the stones as they were and below after they were cleaned. As you can see the stones are much more readable now.

The oldest of the gravestones is on the left, closest to the church door, and it reads;

"Here lieth Bodies of Percival Hindmarsh of Roukland and his two sons William died April 30th 1748 aged 3 months. James dy'd June ye 1st 1751 aged 5 years. The said Percival dy'd July ye 2nd 1760 aged 66 years Also Hendry his son dy'd Dec ye 5th 1782 aged 23 years Also Eleanor his wife who died Feb 5th 1799 aged 81"

The second gravestone ie the one on the left of the picture says;

"Joy in memory of Percival Hindmarsh son of Percival Hindmarsh of Rookland who died January 17th 1820 aged 77 years. Also Eleanor his daughter who died march 20th 1820 aged 37 years. Ann Hindmarsh wife of the above died 9th Feb 1837 aged 89 years. William Hindmarsh son



of the above Percival and Ann Hindmarsh died at Alnwick January 8th 1838 aged 58 years."

Knowing what the 2 gravestones say, however, is not enough in itself to prove a link and so I ordered copies of their Wills.

The Will of Percival Hindmarsh of Ruckland who died 2nd July 1760;

Percival wrote his will on 19th May 1760 and died only a few weeks later aged 66. In the Will he describes 5 sons and 4 daughters, however from his gravestone, as you can see above, 2 sons had already predeceased him

"two sons William died April 30th 1748 aged 3 months. James dy'd June ye 1st 1751 aged 5 years."

His surviving sons are George, Percival, James, Thomas and Henry (or Hendry) and his daughters are named as Susannah, Dorothy, Eleanor and Mary. My research does lead me to believe however that Susannah was in fact his brother's child whom he had taken in as his own.

Percival had married Eleanor Kirkup late in life at the age of 41 in June 1735. She was much younger than he was being only 17 when they married. Percival obviously loved her dearly as he refers in the Will to his "dear wife" and makes her the sole executrix of his estate.

					Percival Hindmarsh 1694-1760						Eleanor Kirkup 1718-1799
Susannah 1736-	George 1738-	Dorothy 1741-1829	Percival 1742-1820	Eleanor 1745-	James 1747-1752	William 1749-1749	Mary 1750- 1830	James 1752	Thomas 1755	Henry 1759- 1782	
				Marries Ann Dunn 1776							
William 1780-1838	Percival 1781-1821	Eleanor 1782-1820	James 1785	Jane 1787-1865	Ann 1791-1838						

Their son Percival who died in 1821 also, fortunately, made a Will

Percival the son, wrote his Will in 1819 and said "... anticipating, as I am far advanced in years, the day of my death..". Percival was, at this time, living in Peels Wellhouse, however you will see on his gravestone he refers to being the son of Percival Hindmarsh of Rookland. His Will was written on 28th September 1819 and he died in January 1820, just a few months later.

In his Will he makes reference to his only sons being William and Percival and he makes them executors along with the **Rev James Patterson of Harbottle**, his friend. He also makes reference to his wife Ann and says that £250 of his estate should be put into good securities and the interest paid quarterly to Ann until she dies. He then goes on to leave various sums to be paid at various times to his sons William and Percival and to his daughters Jane, Ann and Eleanor.

By the time Percival's Will was proved sadly great misfortune had hit the family as his daughter Eleanor who also lived at Peels had died just a few months after her father (March 1820) and his son Percival's wife, Margaret, had also died within weeks (February 1820). His son Percival then died in June 1821. This left only William, Jane and Ann plus his son Percival's surviving children William and Percival, who were now orphans.

The Will was not proven until 1823, 2 years after Percival's death, and probate is obtained by his son William who by this time is a grocer in Clayport Street in Alnwick. William takes in his orphaned nephews and this is where the family start to move away from farming. His nephew Percival goes on to become a Custom's officer travelling to Canada and then to Australia where he dies ultimately aged only 46. William follows in his uncle's footsteps and becomes a grocer and tea dealer in Clayport Street in Alnwick when his uncle dies in 1838. Ultimately William too joins the civil service and becomes a prison steward working at Pentonville prison, Dartmoor and Broadmoor before retiring from the civil service to run a family drapers business in Liverpool. It is from William I am descended.

© Gill Keeble 2013