

FREDERICK SUTHERLAND SMITH OF WICKHAMFORD MANOR

At the time of the 1871 census, Wickhamford Manor was occupied by Fred S. Smith and his family. He was a 34-year-old 'Factor & Agent in Cloth Trade', who had been born in Aston Manor, Warwickshire. His wife was Edith J. R. (28) and there were four small children present – Frederick H. N. (5), Edith L. M. (4), Ethel (2) and Arthur H. B. (1). The eldest had been born in Aston Manor and the others in Birmingham.

Frederick Sutherland Smith was born on 13th February 1837, the son of James and Elizabeth Smith and he was not baptised until just after his second birthday. The ceremony was performed in St Phillip's Church, Birmingham on 16th March 1839. By 1861 the Smith family were living in Birmingham and Fred's father was a 'Button Factor', whilst Fred was a 'Clerk to Factor'. In the third quarter of 1864, in Aston, Frederick married Edith Jeanne Ridley Showell.

The family had moved to Wickhamford Manor by 1870, as a son, Arthur Harold Britton Smith was baptised next door, at St John the Baptist Church, on 6th March of that year. A daughter, Kate Joline E. Smith, was born about a year later and her birth was registered in the Evesham District in the third quarter of 1871. However, she was not baptised in Wickhamford Church, so the family may already have moved on. Frederick and Edith's next child was Grace Helen M., who was born in Harvington in 1873. Another son, Richard Cecil, was born there in 1876. The family then moved on again and Winifred F. J. was born in Sutton Coldfield in 1881.

Fred Smith's career progressed and in 1891 he was a 'Woollen Traveller' living in Bordesley and in 1901 a 'Commission Agent (Silk Goods)' working from home in Edgbaston. The census return of 1911 shows him still living in the same place and being a Commission Agent in Tailors Sundries, at the age of 74. The record shows that they had eight children in total, but that two had already died by 1911. An interesting twist to the story of the family is that in the census that year all of the family members, even his wife, Edith, have 'Sutherland' as a middle name. Pretensions of grandeur, perhaps.

Frederick Sutherland Smith died in 1915 in Birmingham and Edith died in 1923 in King's Norton.

Tom Locke – January 2014 (Revised November 2014)