

Origins of The Worlds End and the Hensman family. Compiled by John Smith of Southampton, 10x great grand nephew of John Morris circa 1535-1598 and 10x great grandson of Mychael Hensman circa 1544-1584'

The exact position of the original Worlds End Inn is not known for certain, but in 1825, John Cole, in his book 'The History and Antiquities of Ecton', claimed that the place had stood near the large Walnut tree in the orchard belonging to the present building, and that the new Worlds End had been built sixty years since. If John Cole's source of information was correct, this would date the move to circa 1765.

In 1730 and before, there was a lane that branched off of the turnpike from Northampton to Wellingborough and ran across the bottom of the now familiar triangular Worlds End plot of land, across, and fairly close to the Hall, and on to Earls Barton. Opposite the site of the Worlds End, on the other side of the Sywell / Ecton lane in 1730 was a large field named 'Town's End'. This lane disappeared at the time of enclosure, or before, when Ambrose Isted of Ecton Hall offered 350 acres of land in Little End near the World's End in exchange for property in Little Ecton, he had petitioned in the Court of Chancery for permission to close the road (Church Street) which ran in front of his house and the top end of Middle Street and East Street in Little Ecton. His petition was granted so long as he made alternative access, which resulted in a new road and footpath, a new bridle road to Barton was established South of Ecton Hall. By 1759 the long lead in of the old lane from the turnpike was lost under the new enclosed fields and a shorter road now turned off at a more acute angle from the turnpike into Ecton creating the current large triangular plot.

Looking at old maps does cast some doubt on John Cole's claim that the Worlds End was previously situated elsewhere. On a map created circa 1675, John Ogilby showed the route from Cambridge to Coventry, in it he has marked Ecken (Ecton), where he shows the Church of St Mary Magdalene, and also the Worlds End Inn, right by the side of the Great Turnpike Road. Later maps of 1730 and 1759 would seem to indicate the same current position of the Inn, which raises the question, is the Worlds End Inn still in the place that it ever was, albeit refurbished and reconstructed over time.

Mychael Hensman was an Ecton Yeoman, believed to have been born there circa 1544, he married Elizabeth Morris at St. Mary Magdalene in Ecton, in the November of 1565, raised four children, and by the time of his early death in 1584 he owned extensive land and property both within and without the Ecton area.

In his Last Will and Testament, among many other bequests, he left to his youngest son John, who was eleven years old at that time, 40 Pounds, to be paid upon reaching the age of twenty one years, or, upon default of the payment of this sum by Johns elder brother Thomas, he was to receive one yard land in Parsons Hide Ecton, along with all the commodities thereunto belonging. We do not know whether he got the money, or the land and all that went with it, but by the time of his own death, and his own Will written in 1620, John Hensman had also become a Yeoman himself and owned extensive land and property in Ecton.

It should be noted at this point that within the contents of the last Will and Testament of one John Morris of Ecton, dated 1597, he left jointly to his wife Margaret and eldest son John, a half yard land within Parsons Hide along with a Maulte Mill, two Garners and Hovellings for the duration of the term of their lease. John Morris, who died in 1598, was the brother of Elizabeth Morris, wife of Mychael Hensman.

John Hensman who had been born in Ecton in 1573 married Margaret Kent in Ecton, in the November of 1602, they were raising three children when Margaret died in 1619, so in his Will of 1620 John distributed all his land and goods among his three young children, daughter Elizabeth, who was fifteen years old, Aimy who was eight years old and John who was just eleven.

Among other property, money, and land held in trust by his executors for his children, he left to his only son John, a Maulte Mill [sic] and two Garners.

It would appear that it was this Malt Mill that was the origin of the Worlds End Inn, for when this John Hensman, the inheritor of a Malt Mill, died in 1667, he was shown in the parish burial register as John Hensman Snr. (of the Worlds End). It would seem to be that the Malt Mill and Garners bequeathed by John Hensman and those that had been previously bequeathed by John Morris were probably one and the same.

John Hensman, son of John, was born in Ecton, 1609, he married Cicily Harris in Earls Barton in the November of 1630, they lived in Ecton and raised five children, and upon his death in 1667 it was the second of his two sons, Joseph, born in 1645 who appears to have taken over the running of the Inn as later baptismal records would show.

Joseph Hensman born in 1645 married Helen Stamford in Ecton in the September of 1668 and they had seven children before Helen died giving birth to her son James in 1682, Joseph re-married to Elizabeth Hornsby in 1686 and one more child was born. It is the baptism entry in the Ecton Parish register for Joseph's last son James in 1682 that first records him as Inn Keeper at the Worlds End. Joseph Hensman is again shown in the occupation of Inn Keeper at the time of his own burial in Ecton, May 1704.

The running of the Inn then passed upon Joseph's death in 1704, to his eldest son, another John Hensman who was born in 1671 and who had married his wife Ann circa 1696, they had five children and at the baptisms of his first two children in 1698 and 1702 John is shown as a labourer, but at the baptism of his other children in 1705 and 1708 he is shown as an Inn Keeper, a clear indication of when he took over from his father. Johns wife, Ann died in 1720.

It is unknown who took over upon the death John Hensman in 1729, but the running of the Inn may have been covered by his brother Joseph.

Joseph had been born in 1672 and Married Catherine Morris (Great, great, grand daughter of John Morris c1535-1598) in Northampton on the 6th of February 1693, by the time Joseph took over the Inn he was already 57 years old and he died just six years later in 1735. It would appear that at that point the Inn was now taken over by Joseph's forty-one year old son Thomas.

Thomas Hensman had been born in Ecton in 1694 and married Elizabeth Smith in Ecton in the April of 1738, where in 1739 their only son Joseph was born. At his marriage Thomas is described as of Tyingham Bucks so it would appear that he had settlement there before returning to Ecton to take over the Worlds End, at the baptism of his son in 1739 Thomas is described as Inn Keeper.

Thomas can be found in licensee records for 1756 to 1758, the licensee records for the years 1759 and 1760 are missing but we know that Thomas Hensman was still the landlord in 1760 when the commissioners for land enclosure held their meetings at the Worlds End, where it is recorded that Thomas Hensman received £13-9s-6d for expenses.

In the 1761 record of licensees the name of Thomas Hensman name is crossed out and that of William Sutton of Wellingborough is substituted. Thomas Hensman must have been gravely ill in 1761 because he died and was buried in Ecton on March the 8th 1762, in his Will he left £30 in trust with Ambrose Isted Esquire for a term of six years, to his son Joseph who had at some time departed from Ecton to become a soldier and had not returned, failing an eventual return of Joseph or any sign that he was still alive, the sum was to pass to Thomas's youngest brother, Morris Hensman, who was by then married and living in Higham Ferrers, and to his brother in law, Samuel Smith. Elizabeth the wife of Thomas had previously died in 1749.