

Crewenhale by Joseph McKenna

Crewenhale, the place of crows, is a deserted Medieval settlement. Robert Morden's map of Warwickshire for 1695, places it one mile south of Bettlesworth, the present day Bedsworth. He incorrectly placed Monkspath one mile south of Crewenhale, rather than up on the Stratford Road. If one reverses the three locations, with Bettlesworth in the south where it belongs, and Monkspath in the north, then midway between them lies Crewenhale, at the confluence of the three streams that join together to form the river Blythe.

Crewenhale was situated at the junction of the southern end of Cheswick Way and Creynolds Lane. The builders of the "Village of the Seventies," as Cheswick Green was known, referred to it as "the site of the Local duck pond." (1) The Ordnance Survey's one inch to one mile map, published in 1831, clearly show it as a moated site though. The Tithe Apportionment of Tanworth-in-Arden for 1840 indicates that the field site was known as "Home Close", a name usually associated with the site of the main farm or manor house.

The earliest reference, "Craueshala", dates from 1190. William Dugdale in his "Antiquities of Warwickshire. The coat of arms of that family at one time was displayed in a window of the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene at Tanworth-in-Arden.

Though the family were established here by the reign of Henry III (1216-1272), it is not until c.1320 that detailed documentary evidence appears concerning them. Robert de Crowinhal appears as a witness to the sale of land by a neighbour. (2) This same Robert appears as "Robto de Crowenhal" in the Lay Subsidy roll of 1327, where he is charged 18d, and apparently he is listed in the damaged 1332 roll as "Crowenhale." Robert's son Henry de Crouinhale witnessed a deed of 1349 relating to the purchase of land in Tanworth-in-Arden by John Ellis. This same John Ellis bought further land from Henry's son, Robert, in 1358. (3)

There is a curious reference to a member of the family for the year 1383, in the Warwickshire Assize Roll 975. One William Colyns, chaplain of Solihull, broke into the house of Katherine de Crowenhal and took away gold, a chalice, silver vases, linen, furs and beds, these being the goods of the late parson of Solihull, William Chirchehull, which were then in Katherine's safe keeping.

The last known member of the Crewenhale family was John de Crewenhale, who dying without a male heir, the estate passed to his daughter who married William Parker of Chartley in Staffordshire. Crewenhale remained in this family's ownership until the death of John Parker, on 31 December 1516. His surviving daughter and heiress Alice, married Thomas **Greswold** of Solihull, and bore him two sons. The estate descended through this family for several generations and was leased to a number of farming families, until in the late 1960's.

It was purchased by the Greaves Organisation who developed the site as part of Cheswick Green village. The overgrown moat, then sadly reduced to the local duck pond, was filled in and, the site used as the Greaves sales centre, before eventually being built on itself as No.1, Cheswick Way.

1. Cheswick Green News, Summer 1997, The development of the "Village of the Seventies."
2. Warwickshire Record Office, R333.34 Warw.(Local Collection) 109S/7
3. Ibid. 1095/ 14

Thanks to Joseph McKenna a Local Historian living in Cheswick Green for permission to use this article.