

Alfred Marston (1834-1896)



Baptised: Hopesay 7 September 1834
Died: Ludlow 1896

Alfred Marston (1834-1896)

1. Introduction

Alfred Marston (1834-1896) was a member of the Marston Family of Hopesay, Aston on Clun and Ludlow. He was an avid fossil hunter donating many specimens to the Ludlow Natural History Society. His uncle, Richard Marston (1792-1866), was both a founder member and a life member of the Society – his eldest brother Richard was also a member. Neither of the Richard Marstons focused on the collection of fossils – at least to the extent of donating specimens to the museum.

2. The Marston Family

The Marston family have lived in the Cheney Longville, Afcot, Aston on Clun, Hopesay area of Shropshire since at least the 16th century. Of note was Francis Marston of '*Cheney Longville and Afcot*'. He was baptised at Hopesay on the 3rd October 1703 and married Mary Edwards of Clun in 1741. Francis and Mary had three sons; another Francis born 1744, Richard born 1752 and John born 1757.



John Marston of '*Longeville and Aston in Hopesay*' was christened at Holy Trinity, Wistanstow, on the 7th August 1757. He married Mary Carter the daughter of Nathaniel Carter of Sibdon Carnwood at the church of St Michael on the 29th May 1786. On their return from the wedding the villagers of Aston decorated with flags a black poplar tree known as the '*Arbor Tree*', a tradition still held today.

St Michael, Sibson Carnwood

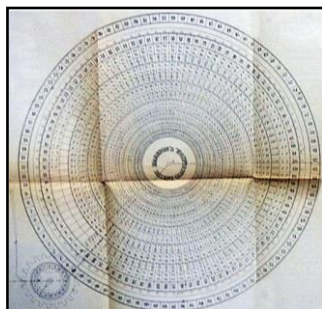
Photo: Bashereyre

On the death of his father, John Marston inherited all of his father's land in the parish of Hopesay. John and Mary Marston produced two sons, Francis (1789-1850) and Richard (1792-1866), and two daughters. Of the two sons, Francis reigned in Hopesay while Richard became a druggist and moved to Ludlow.

Francis Marston (1789-1850) took a wider interest in farming than most. As noted in *British History on Line*:

Francis Marston of Aston on Clun, a landowner and farmer with much experience of enclosure, considered that open commons were worth nothing, indeed – conventional wisdom by Plymleys time – that they had a deteriorating effect on neighbouring inclosed lands. That was partly because they discouraged farmers from thinking of their closes as anything but winter pasture, so that they were left uncultivated, and partly because sheep commoned on open land could not effectively be fenced out of neighbouring closes where they did much damage. Crime, particularly the theft of livestock, was alleged to be another characteristic of the open commons that was injurious to faming. Inclosure, Marston testified, more than doubled the value of the closes adjoining the former commons because they could then grow green crops, an important new element in improved livestock husbandry.

Francis Marston married Elizabeth Jones of the Hope, Edvin Loach at St James, Tedstone Delamere in 1824. The couple had five children, four sons and one daughter. The first born, Richard Marston (1825-1892) practised as a lawyer in Ludlow while the last born, Alfred Marston (1834-1896) became a chemist based in the Bull Ring also in Ludlow.



Francis was also an inventor. He was granted British patent No 9235 for an *Apparatus for making Calculations* – no details were known about the machine and it is suggested that it most probably remained only on paper. Francis died in 1850 and was buried at St Mary's, Hopesay on the 12th June of that year. His wife Elizabeth lived on to the age of 88 initially residing with her sons in Corve St, Ludlow and later in the Bull Ring prior to spending her final years back at 115 Corve Street with daughter Frances Elizabeth.

Richard Marston 1792-1866 was a founder member of the Natural History Society in 1833 but, as far as is known, he was not a collector of fossils. He was a life member and a committee member. He was primarily involved in the leasing of the museum building to the Society



Richard Marston married firstly his cousin Mary Marston, the daughter of John Marston of Afcot, and secondly Mary White of Ludlow. He was a druggist by profession living at 20 Broad Street, Ludlow. The couple had two sons; John (1836-1909) - John was the founder of Sunbeam cars - and Walter (1838-1919). Walter became a solicitor based in Mill Street Ludlow but left Ludlow for a life in Hampstead as an 'artist/painter' where he died in 1919.

Longmynd Walter Marston 1877

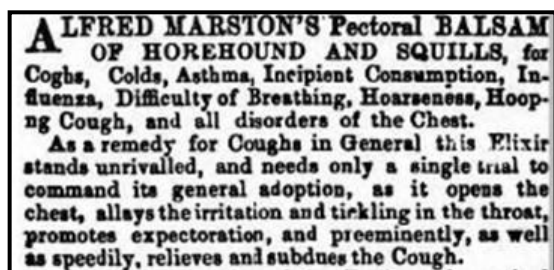


Oaker Peoples Collection Wales

Richard Marston, first son of Francis, practised as a lawyer in Ludlow. Richard married Frances Elizabeth Evans in Leamington Priors in 1851. The couple lived in Corve Street, Ludlow and had four sons, Arthur, Robert, Edwin and Edmond and two daughters. Arthur and Edmond were solicitors presumably members of the family firm *Richard Marston and Sons*. Richard purchased Aston Hall Farm in 1869 – and renamed the farm house Oaker, a name common to property already in his ownership.

Richard inherited the estate at Aston and Hopesay - this included most of the village of Aston – and the Kangaroo public house. The estate was sold in 1949. This Richard was also a member of the Ludlow Natural History Society from 1864 becoming a committee member from that date. Again there is no evidence that he collected fossils or that he donated specimens to the Museum.

Alfred Marston, the fourth son of Francis, was baptised at Hopesay on the 7th September 1834. He practised as a chemist living at 47 The Bullring in Ludlow – perhaps he was an apprentice of his uncle Richard? The pharmacy was established at 49 The Bull Ring almost opposite George Cocking’s pharmacy at 45 The Bull Ring - it remains a Pharmacy today (2017) as Brown and Francis part of the Murray group.



Marston sold *Alfred Marston's Purifying Dandelion and Camomile Pills* and *Alfred Marston's Pectoral Balsam of Horehound and Squills'* etc. The Advertisement shown left comes from the Ludlow Advertiser of 1869 and is placed directly above an advert for one of George Cocking's remedies.

Alfred Marston married Caroline Eliza Taylor in Edmonton, Middlesex in 1876. The couple had five children all born in Ludlow; Ellen (1877-1928), Henry and Alfred Leonard who both died in infancy, Sidney (1880-1903) and Herbert born in 1882. The family lived initially at the Bull Ring address but later moved to Julian Road in Ludlow.

Alfred Marston and the Ludlow Natural History Society

Alfred Marston joined the Ludlow Natural History Society in 1864. He was an Honorary Curator from 1865. An avid collector of fossils he donated over 120 fossil specimens to the Museum. There is not space to identify all the specimens here but they are listed in the La Touche Catalogue of 1928. All were transferred to the Natural History Museum in the 1940s.

Some idea of the spread of Alfred's collection can be seen from the locations listed in the 1928 catalogue which include the following:

<i>Formation</i>	<i>Locations</i>
Longmyndian	Mill, Church Stretton
Ordovician <i>Caradoc</i>	Cheney Longville, Horderley, Marsh Brook, Acton Scot
Silurian <i>Valentian</i> <i>Lower Ludlow</i>	Onny Section Bow Bridge, Downton, Evenhay Lane, Elton Lane, Church Hill (Leintwardine) Mocktree, Maryknoll Dingle, High Vinnals, Trippleton
<i>Aymestry Limestone</i> <i>Upper Ludlow</i> <i>Downton Sandstone</i> <i>Temeside Shales</i>	Whitcliffe Whitcliffe, Conduit Quarry, Ludlow Downton Bridge, Ludford Lane, Norton Tin Mill, Downton
Old Red Sandstone <i>Lower Old Red Sandstone</i>	Hayton Bent
Carboniferous <i>Carboniferous Limestone</i>	Orleton

A few specimens remain at Ludlow:

G.00148-150	Kirkidium knightii (with Henry Pardoe)	Shelderton
-------------	--	------------

G.03824
G.05401

Pristoglyphus colonus
Kionoceras filosum

Evanhay Lane
Leintwardine



G.00148 Brachiopod Kirkidium knightii



G.03824 Graptolite Pristoglyphus colonus

Alfred Marston is accredited with the finding of the fossil beds at Church Hill near Leintwardine :

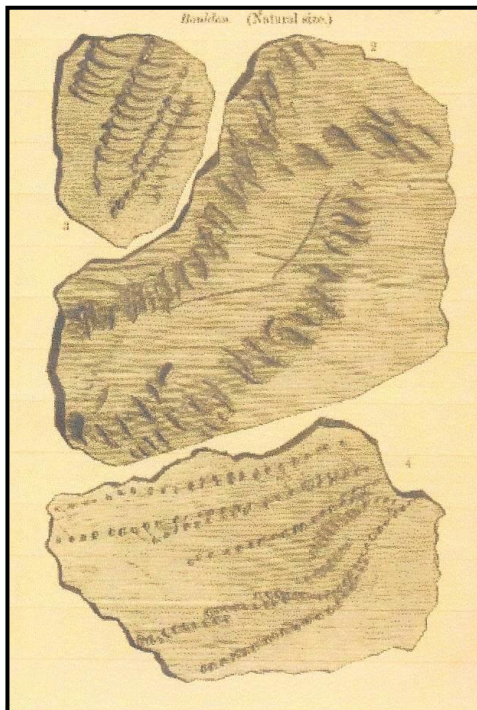
Alfred Marston, who discovered the 'Starfish beds' described the site as consisting of several Lower Ludlow quarries close together near the summit of Church Hill, facing Leintwardine, the most prolific one being 'the uppermost, and nearest to the hedge from which the starfish were first produced and also where they occur in the greatest abundance the starfish and other fossils lying in bands, very seldom with any admixture of species'.

Geological Conservation Review Vol 16 Church Hill Quarry (GCR ID: 1616)

One such find, *Paleodiscus ferox* is illustrated by Salter with the tab - *Locality Leintwardine, in Lower Ludlow Rock; the only specimen is in the cabinet of Mr Marston, of Ludlow* (Wright 2015).

One particular fossil collected by Alfred Marston was examined by George Roberts and written up in the Quarterly Journal *On some Crustacean Tracks from the Old Red Sandstone near Ludlow* (QJGS 1863) as follows:

I lately received some sandstone-slabs from the Lower Old Red Sandstone, obtained by Mr. Alfred Marston, of Ludlow, which exhibit more clearly than is usual tracks and trails of Crustacea. They were obtained from a somewhat noted quarry at Bouldon, a village seven miles north of Ludlow. Mr. Marston has furnished me with the following details of the Bouldon section.....



A zone of fine-grained and thin-bedded deposits, indicating quiescent conditions and shallow water, is thus seen dividing two conglomeratic beds, the lower of which I am inclined to regard as the rock wanting above the plant-bearing bed at Linley, but which is seen to accompany that deposit at Trimpey, in Worcestershire, and elsewhere

The Crustacean tracks occur as casts abundantly upon the under surface of the thin sandstone-layer of the above section (not shown here). Of the three or more varieties, the most important in size and distinctions (fig 2) is a slightly curved

trail about 1½ inch in width, formed by two series of oval or, rather, flask shaped points ¼ of an inch long, each bearing a number of transverse wrinkles parallel to the direction of the trail. The prints taper inwardly, and have a slight upward curve at the same end. Their distance from each other varies, as also does the height of the cast, but these inequalities may be regarded as results of peculiarities of the

QJGS 19 p. 234 Fig. 2-4 *condition of the surface which received them.*

The indentations made by another crustacean upon the slabs (see fig. 3) are longer and more sharply ended, and show a nearer resemblance to those described and figured by Mr. Salter, from the Lingula-flags, as the trail of Hymenocaris vermicauda.

The track of an apparently smaller Crustacean (?) (fig. 4) consists of ovate prints, stamped in a more regular serial order. In none of these is there any evidence of tail-markings, in the existence of any central rib or ridge, like that which appears in the trail of the Climactichnites of the Potsdam Sandstone, or in that of recent Lixanti? Long slender impressions also appear upon the sandstone surfaces having coriaceous interiors, and being probably the casts of Sertularian zoophytes.

The Bouldon quarry is certainly the richest exposure of these track-bearing sandstones, and should therefore be carefully worked; for in the absence or, at least, paucity of organic evidence as to the Crustacean fauna of the Old Red Sandstone, we are forced to content ourselves with the examination of secondary and indirect witnesses.

George Edward Roberts (1831-1865) was an amateur geologist from Kidderminster who took up the post of Clerk to the Geological Society in 1860.

Alfred Marston died in 1896 and was buried in St Leonard's Cemetery on Corve Street on the 24th March 1896 - by then the family had moved to Julian Road in Ludlow. Caroline Eliza returned to Edmonton together with daughter Ellen and son Herbert, she died in 1929. Ellen died, unmarried, in 1927. As to Herbert, a Herbert Marston married a Stella Fenton in Edmonton in 1938 but his further whereabouts in unknown. Sidney joined the Royal Garrison Artillery; he was in barracks at Portsmouth in 1901 but died in Roorkie, India of enteric fever and was buried there on the 17th May 1903.

Dr J. A. Gosling
July 2018

Publications

Alfred Marston privately published his one single work *A Guide to the Geology of Ludlow* in 1882.

Sources

Box J (2013) *Dressing the Arbor Tree* Folklore Vol. 114 April 2003 pp 13-28.

Geological Conservation Review Volume 16 *Fossil Fishes of Great Britain..*

Harding N (2010) *Aston Mill Farm and the Oaker Estate at Aston on Clun* South West Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Journal, Supplement 1 to Journal No. 21.

La Touche T H D (1928) *Catalogue of the Palaeozoic Fossils in the Museum of the Ludlow Natural History Society* Typescript, Ludlow Museum Resource Centre.

Roberts G E (1863) *On some Crustacean Tracks from the Old Red Sandstone near Ludlow* Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society 19 233-235.

Salter Ann Mag. Nat Hist; 2nd Series. Vol xx, p. 333, Pl, IX, fig. 3.

Wright T. (2015) *A Monograph on the British Fossil Echinodermata of the Oolitic Formations*, Cambridge University Press.

history-computer.com The Apparatus for making Calculations of Francis Marston

Findypast findmypast.co.uk

Appendix 1: The Marston Family

Richard Marston m. Martha Bright
 1666-1728 1673-1756
 |
 Francis Marston m. Mary Edwards of Clun 23.02.1741
 1703-1781 1693-1780
 b. *Wistanstow* 03.10.1703
 d. 19.07.1781
 |
 John Marston of *Cheney Longville and Aston in Hopesay*
 1757-1831
 c. 07.08.1757 *Wistanstow*
 bd 28.10.1831 *Hopesay*
 |
 m. (1) Mary Carter 29.05.1786 *Sibdon Carwood*, bd *Hopesay* 13.12.1806
 | m. (2) Sarah Lloyd bd *Hopesay* 28.10.1831

 | |
 Francis Marston Richard Marston
 1789-1850 1792-1866
 c. *Hopesay* 18.10.1789 c. *Hopesay* 03.11.1792
 bd *Hopesay* 12.06.1850 bd *Hopesay* 16.11.1866
 | |
 m. Elizabeth Jones m. 1. Mary Marston 19.06.1827 *Wistanstow*
 05.06.1824 *Tedtone Delamere* m. 2. Mary White 03.06.1824 *Ludlow*
 1797-1883 d. 02.02.1883 *Ludlow*

 | | | | |
 Richard Frances Eliz. Mary Jane Percival Alfred
 1825-1892 1827-1904 1829- 1832-1875 1834-1896
 c. 18.10.1825 c. 19.09.1827 c. 30.08.1829 c. 01.01.1832 c. 07.09.1834
Hopesay Hopesay Hopesay Hopesay Hopesay
 bd 30.06.1892 d. *Ludlow* bd 24.04.1875 bd 24.03.1896
Hopesay Ch. Stretton Ludlow
 | |
 m. Frances Elizabeth Evans m. Caroline Eliza Taylor
Leamington Priors 1851 *Edmonton* 1876
 d. *Edmonton* 1929

 | | | | |
 Ellen Henry Alfred Leonard Sidney Herbert
 1877-1928 1878-1878 1880-1881 1880-1903 1882-?
 11.10.1877 c. 15.03.1880 c. 25.02.1881 c. 25.10.1882 c. 25.10.1882
Ludlow Ludlow Ludlow Ludlow Ludlow
 d. *Edmonton* bd 14.12.1878 bd 22.01.1881 bd 17.05.1903 |
 . *Ludlow Ludlow Ludlow Ludlow* |
 . m. Stella Fenton
 . *Edmonton* 1938