ADDENDUM TO THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE DATED 2016
Mel Morris 15.2.2021

From September 1802 William and Jane Sneyd lived at Darlaston; here they rented the Hall from the Jervis family and amassed a large network of new social acquaintances, mixing with the local gentry, many of whom had recently commissioned new houses. They rented Darlaston until March 1807 when Miss Wedgwood "took possession of it" and the Sneyds moved to Leek whilst work was finished on Ashcombe. By the end of 1807 they had still not moved into Ashcombe even though William had, in preparation, filled the cellar with wine (52 dozen) and port (5 bottles).

The diaries of William Sneyd at Keele University Special Collections[1] describe how in February 1805 he met "Mr Webb" to discuss a plan for a house at Bottom Hall[2]. This is the first reference in his diaries to any proposals for Ashcombe. Mr Webb can only be John Webb (c.1754-1828) who was primarily a landscape-gardener and a proto-architect who lived in the village of Armitage near Lichfield, about 18 miles away from Darlaston. By 1805 his practice as a landscape gardener was reported to be "all over England" (Colvin[3], p. 1098) and in the course of that year he is known to have been consulted at Eaton Hall, Cheshire, Sandon Hall, Staffordshire, Ashridge Park, Herts. and Cassiobury Park, Herts[4]. Although this reference to "Mr Webb" does raise some doubt about the original designer of the House, we know that between 1st March and 17th March 1805 he had visited 9 stately homes or houses of the gentry in an area covering hundreds of miles, to 'advise' the owners[5], and he can have only given the broadest outlines of ideas at each of these sites. Popular opinion states that Ashcombe was Trubshaw's first commission, as architect, and Colvin states that "It is not certain that Trubshaw designed as well as built this house"[6]. However, the level of complexity involved in the planning and construction of the house and its interlaced geometrical floor plans and central staircase hall can only be attributed to an 'architect' with skill and careful and considered planning. That Trubshaw built the house is certain from the subsequent diary entries, but as he arrived at Bottom Hall on 3rd April 1806 (his first visit) and had started to pull down the Hall on 15th April, there was little time for thought, preparation, planning and design. To what extent, therefore, was the design conceptual by this time? In our modern thinking it would be unheard of to demolish a building and then consider the design of the replacement and it is interesting to speculate to what extent the design would have been complete before 3rd April 1806. That Webb had no further involvement with the site is also notable, as the construction phase would require a master-mason or architect to supervise aspects of the work. As William carefully documented all his meetings, social events and listed every contact by name, it is unlikely that he did not record any arranged meetings with Trubshaw before April 1806, or Webb subsequently.

Unfortunately, there is no other reference to "Mr Webb" so we do not know whether he prepared drawings and simply sent these on and they formed the basis of Trubshaw's commission, or whether Webb simply advised William Sneyd in a generic way, as he did with other owners. Instead, during February and March 1806, William mentions making regular visits

[1] Appendix 1 - Keele University Special Collections, Sneyd (Basford) Papers, extracts from the diaries of William Sneyd and John Sneyd are transcribed
[2] Sneyd Basford Collection B1. 1805-1807 diaries of William Sneyd
[3] Colvin, H. A Biographical Dictionary of Architects, 1600-1830
[4] Designs for Ombersley Court (1809), and Wanstead Grove, Essex (1821) are comparable. However, there are a number of elements of the design at Ashcombe which appear more state-of-the-art, e.g. main staircase and floor planning. He is known to have laid out the grounds at Cholmondley Hall, Bradwell Manor, Poole Hall, Oulton Park, Somerford Park and Tatton Park.
[5] SGPT newsletter, Ann Brookman, Issue 39, 2008
[6] Howard Colvin, A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600 -1830

to Bottom Hall, presumably in preparation for work starting on site, and on 3rd April he met Mr Trubshaw for the first time at Bottom Hall. Again on 14th April he met Trubshaw at Bottom Hall and on 15th April 1806 he records that they began to "pull down the Old House at Bottom Hall to ruins". On 22nd April he records that Trubshaw was at Bottom Hall but it seems that this was not a pre-arranged meeting and "Part of the timber arrived from Hull". This may have been imported Baltic pine, of which we find a high quantity in the buildings, although William also marked out "oak trees" to be felled for the Ashcomb buildings in March 1807.

On Thursday 1st May 1806 he met with Mr Brindley at Bottom Hall "to get him to set out the reservoir". This is not the famous canal engineer James Brindley, who died in 1772, but may be an obscure relation, or simply a labourer.

On 30th March 1807 William recorded that they opened the new road at Ashcomb and shut up the old one. The new road is pictured in the 1844 drawing by Buckler. The old road is evident on the late 18th century plan of Bottom Hall (D6920/6/3/31 - SRO). Map regression shows that whilst this access from the main road moved less than 100 metres south of the old road, it was contoured in a large swept curved path to the north, which approached the building from the north, rather than a direct line, as originally laid out, which approach the old Hall along its southern side. Perhaps Webb in his professional capacity as a landscape-gardener had advised on this. A sweeping carriage drive to a country house catching glimpses of the estate had become a fashionable convention of the Picturesque landscape by 1800. The 1839 Poor Law plan also reveals that the edge of the main road was planted with trees and shrubs in a long plantation belt on either side of the new entrance gateway, to provide privacy, a typical device of the early 1800s.

Work clearly continued throughout 1807 when there were weekly or twice weekly visits, but there are few details recorded in William's diaries.

Given the datestone of 1806 on the coach-house and the diary records, we can confidently date both Ashcombe Hall and the Coach-house range to 1806-1808. With Trubshaw on site during April and subsequent months in 1806, there is a strong probability that he was involved in the design of the Coach-house or at least was able to advise on this and the setting out of the House and its Outbuildings.

The next documented involvement of an architect at the site is in 1851 when John Sneyd appoints "Mr Johnson" to carry out works of extension and alteration. There is an entry in the diary expenses for 1851 to pay Robert Johnson £500.00. An architect named Robert Johnson was working in 1851 in the practice of the nationally renowned architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, in London, between 1849 and 1858. Scott designed a significant number of buildings in and around the Potteries.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - THE PARKLAND AND GARDEN SETTING

M Morris February 2017

A number of parks and gardens in Staffordshire are described in "The Historic Gardens of England" series but Ashcombe is not mentioned. William Sneyd's diaries record how he was visited by Mr Webb in February 1805 "about fernis (sic) a Plan for a House at Bottom Hall." It's a very short description but has such ambiguous potent. What was Webb's role if he did not eventually design the Hall and this fell to James Trubshaw, who was working on the site in April 1806, knocking down the old hall? There must have been a seismic shift in the ensuing twelve months, after Webb's February 1805 visit, but the diaries are silent. We know enough about John Webb's *modus operandi* to know that he was a major influencer and would have given general advice about landscape design and how to set-off a new house; this was not Trubshaw's forte.

There are records describing how John Webb worked on a number of the sites with which the Sneyd family were familiar as they fell within their social circle, such as Maer Hall (in 1805), owned by Josiah Wedgwood, and Shugborough Hall (1798-1805), where he altered water courses. Sandon Hall, which the Sneyds visited on a number of occasions, had been transformed by William Emes and John Webb, and this is how they may have been introduced. Webb designed Sandon's curving drive ca. 1800 and here there is an ice-house hidden by a decorative stone screen wall. Webb may have advised on the new location of the road at Ashcombe, which William Sneyd moved in March 1807, and shelterbelts which have a plump outline at the entrance gateway, and the changes to the landscape to improve the watercourses. John Webb, William Emes protégé, appears to have travelled the country during 1805 (the same year that he visited William Sneyd and stayed with his mother-in-law), advising on parks and gardens, very much in the spirit and footsteps of Repton before him, as one cultivated gentleman to another, but without stopping to oversee the work being implemented.

The Sneyd estate ownership (including the Botham Estate) historically included buildings and land to the west of Ashcombe Park, including Ashcombe Cottages, Heath House and Holly House as well as land and property to the east, including Felt House, Woodlands, Basford Bridge Farm, and, further east still, Basford Hall, Mosslee, Belmont Hall and Hay House. The extent of the setting of the Hall could be seen as limited to its parkland, but where there are close associations with other Sneyd property, such as the land and houses within the Churnet Valley, this may bring them within the setting of Ashcombe, and there may be dispersed places where there is a close association, such as land between Heath House and Cheadle Road, which appears to have been planted by the Sneyds to create a visual counterpoint on the approach to the entrance drive; this falls within the setting of the Hall and Park.

The 'park' at Ashcombe became a fully-fledged Deer Park in the 1850s, although it was not originally designed as such. We know from John Sneyd's account that he introduced deer into the park in the 1853, a herd from Bretby, the Earl of Chesterfield's estate in South Derbyshire. The title 'Deer Park' appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey plan published in 1879. Tall, stone boundary walls line the park along Basford Bridge Lane and the access track leading to Basford Bridge Farm, to the north of the park. Along Cheadle Road the walls are much lower, possibly lowered, and these may have been once supplemented by tall estate fencing as a deer proof fence, as suggested in the photograph of the entrance to the park in the 1926 Estate Sale Catalogue. A long shelterbelt of trees had been planted along Cheadle Road, providing privacy, by 1839, and was probably planted as early as 1807. The perimeter boundary plantation / shelterbelt was a common device undertaken by 'Capability' Brown and his contemporaries, such as William Emes and Adam Mickle, who used it to define the extent of a parkland estate and remove public views. There are only small fragments of this; the majority of the perimeter plantation has been lost, which means that although there are trees along this stretch of the

parkland, they are not thickly planted and there is no understorey, which results in long views from the public roads across the park, which were previously limited and carefully controlled. The 1926 sale particulars referred to the park having "absolute seclusion", which provides a very real sense of how this has changed.

Mature parkland trees fall within a large area of the northern park and provide a generous setting for the Hall. However, they are significantly depleted, compared with those depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. This area also once contained occasional clumps providing game cover, with an irregular outline, no longer evident.

The southern extent of the park is framed by Ashcombe Wood, which forms a backdrop in views, but all three early editions of the 6-inch OS map suggests that the area of the park at least included the fields to the south of the secondary access road, as far as Fox's Plantation, all of which can be experienced from this road and from the landscape near the walled garden. Incorporating productive agricultural land into a park was occasionally practiced by improvers such as William Emes at Keele Hall (Ralph Sneyd's estate). This area was used as fields, rather than planted with parkland trees, but is still experienced in association with the park and was probably 'emparked', in the 1850s.

Entrances and Gate Lodge

The main entrance into the park is now defined by a Gothic Revival gate lodge, which was added in 1852, and was probably designed by Robert James Johnson, who was employed to work on the house extensions in 1851 and 1852. The diaries record "Mr Johnson, the architect" working at the house and we might expect that this was Thomas Johnson, whose father-in-law was James Trubshaw, with whom he was in partnership for a short time, and who was working from Lichfield, but if it were not for the fact that the payments for services are made to 'Robert Johnson'. This threw a spanner in the works as attributions to Thomas Johnson (1794-1865) seemed initially more likely, given the familial association with the site, until it was realised that Robert James Johnson (1832-1892) was a practicing architect, assistant to Sir George Gilbert Scott from 1849 to 1858. GG Scott had extensive work in the Potteries at this time.

The gated entrance is also contemporary with the lodge and John Sneyd described how he added the stone lions in the same year (sadly stolen since the list description was written). In anticipation of his deer park, he appears to have added simple, tall wrought-iron estate railings to either side of the entrance gates in a swept curve. The railings which now frame the gated entrance in a curved alignment are ornate 20th century replacements, erected with replacement gates after 1926 in hand-forged steel. The four rusticated stone gateposts, the outer ones of which retain their ball finials, were probably part of the 1852 works and were tall and imposing but they have been rebuilt and lowered with one course of ashlar removed. These and the railings are listed Grade II, as is the gate lodge. We do not have a record of the appearance of the pre-1852 entrance into the park, but it may have had a set of gates similar to those in the estate courtyard.

It is interesting to note that there is a milestone to the north of the entrance railings which is marked "From London 151 miles, To Sandon 15 miles, To Leek 3 miles". The reference to Sandon (located on the A51), rather than the County town of Stafford, may reflect its prime influence on the Sneyds, who were socially connected to Lord Harrowby of Sandon Hall.

The location of the main entrance was determined (and altered) in 1807 in order to best present the house in its setting. Following the convention of the time, this meant that the house was not experienced in one view, but as part of a sweeping approach through the park and shrubbery planting, so that it could be seen from several angles, partially cloaked by shrubberies, finishing at its eastern entrance. This deliberate alignment is best illustrated in the 1844 drawing by Buckler. This approach is well-preserved and has been supplemented by

generous shrub and rhododendron planting in the later 19th century, probably when the kitchen and servants' wing was added, so that a large part of the house is no longer visible in the main view from the entrance gates. From the entrance drive there is a clear view of the kitchen garden.

A secondary tradesmens' entrance was created further south circa 1806 and this was mainly used as a farm track until it was formalised around 1852. It still exists but is now approached off the A520 lay-by, created when the sharp 'bend' was removed in the road.

Gardens and Pleasure Ground

To the north of the house, the sweeping carriage drive passes through a set of stone gatepiers, similar to those at the entrance and then passes between grassy mounds, which may have been planted at one time with shrubs. Map evidence suggests that there was a perimeter path around this part of the garden, but this is no longer evident and instead the perimeter is reinforced by wrought iron estate fencing and shrubberies. The drive cuts through the garden in a generous sweeping curve which terminates at the Stable Courtyard. There are secondary access drives leading to the walled kitchen garden and an old access to a field gate close to the walled garden.

The main focus of attention within the landscape was to the east and south of the Hall; to the east the carriage drive sweeps around to the front Tuscan porch and the ground falls away to enable long views across the Churnet Valley towards the other Sneyd property and land; to the south the landscape was treated by the 1850s as part of an extended Pleasure Ground.

To the south of the Hall there is a long 'ha-ha' (a revetted dry-stone wall) the line of which is illustrated on both the 1839 and 1879 maps. This was a retaining wall, which provided a large lawn sweeping around the eastern and southern sides of the Hall, behind the farm yard and as far west as the threshing barn. A gateway, which still survives, connected this raised garden with a Pleasure Ground and pools, which was formed by a series of walks though mixed woodland along the route of a series of fishponds. The fishponds were already in place by 1800 (three separate large pools) but were formalised to form a large upper pond with an island and a lower series of connected pools, built as a series of four cascades with stone revetments, which still survive; these were established by 1873, probably by Rev. John Sneyd in the 1850s. The combination of conifers and deciduous trees and understorey of shrub planting located around the connected fishponds provide an ornamented structure to the landscape and views from the Hall and ensure that these are closely related.

The 'ha-ha' enabled long uninterrupted views from the principal rooms, across the immediate garden and parkland, to the Churnet Valley landscape to the east. In the 19th century the garden to the south and east of the Hall was relatively informal and there are no signs of a formal terrace, rather a gentle grassy lawn sloping away from the Hall. This early 19th century style of garden, with shrubberies, lawn running right up to the house and possibly some flower beds close to the house may have been indirectly influenced by the ideas of Humphry Repton, and perhaps directly by John Webb, the landscape designer who visited the site in 1805. It is now formalised into a series of structured terraces, with formal gardens laid out to the south of the house, a raised paved terrace supported by a retaining wall, a low terrace with grass parterres and central pond and fountain. The "ornamental pool" is listed separately grade II and the list description states that it dates from 1806, but this is unlikely, as it was placed here ca.1930 and may be a re-working of an earlier pool. The formal raised terrace and parterre were established after the 1926 sale and first appear on the 1937 OS map. Photographs in the 1926 sale catalogue show how the lawns were originally treated.

The Bank Rock-Garden and Mound

Located between the garden and the stable courtyard, and visually and physically separating them, is a large raised mound, which rises to meet the top of the northern courtyard building and hides the presence of the underground service tunnel and the ice-house, both of which are semi-subterranean. The house and the stableyard are physically quite close, so we can appreciate a need for screening between them.

The raised mound is for the most part covered in a rockery, as well as some slow-growing trees, yew and juniper (?). The large rockery is an interesting and very important element of the garden. In order to accommodate the ice-house, which is semi-subterranean, the ground had to have been raised and mounded in this location when it was first conceived. The rockery was built on top of the ice-house and the tunnel connecting the house to the stable yard; the height of the dome within the ice-house required a very large mound to be constructed to conceal it. Stones in the rockery are laid so that they frame a series of small paths and steps winding between the rough lumps of rock. Rockeries were always designed to display alpines and appreciated at close quarters. A large part of this rock garden faces north, where it would have been best suited for ferns and mosses, rather than alpines, but the mound sweeps round to the east and finishes on a south-facing mound beyond the southern stableblock.

The northern part of the stable courtyard, with its coach-house, was built first (we have clearly dressed and pointed ashlar visible in the ice-house tunnel), and then the ice-house was built adjoining this and buried. The great depth of the ice-house, which is probably up to 6 metres below ordinary ground level, suggests that it was built in conjunction with the coach-house. It would appear that the long underground tunnel connecting the stable yard with the basement level servants' quarters was built at the same time. The phasing and evidence would be better understood with a measured survey and section because the earliest plan of the site (1839) is inconclusive. It is assumed that the ice-house, the tunnel and the retaining wall with the built-in privy were built as one phase circa 1806.

The 'rocks' may have been supplemented at a later date but there is nothing to suggest that this creation was much later. If this was purely an embanked area, rather than a rock garden, it must have been intended to be covered in plants to screen the stables and if it were later adapted as a rockery then it would have involved removing a large amount of topsoil and potentially exposing the top of the ice-house dome. If it were indeed constructed in 1806 it would be an early, very large and rare surviving example of a rock garden. We should also bear in mind that the Sneyd family were particularly obsessed with their garden and plant collections at Belmont; John Sneyd (Jnr) and his brother William (William and Jane's sons) were frequently tending to their grandfather's garden, erecting fences and building walls. Sir Joseph Banks, who constructed one of the first known rockeries at Chelsea Physic Garden in 1772 (and was president of the Royal Society of Arts from 1778), was a personal friend of their grandfather, John Sneyd. As a result of his garden at Belmont, John Sneyd was presented by the Society of Arts with three gold medals[7]. There is a further interesting potential source for the rock garden, because William and Jane's toured Wales in 1802, and in his diary William writes that they visit Devil's Bridge and Havod (sic Hafod[8]); Hafod is where Mariamne Johnes had recently built a rock garden as a setting for plants, designed and planted by Dr James Anderson from 1795-96.

By 1806 the use of Rockwork had become accepted although it was not widely established until the 1820s and 1830s, when it was popularised by J.C. Loudon. The earliest known example of a 'bank rock garden' of which this is an example, dates from 1782 (Utrecht). In 1800 a mound-

[7] First wife of John Sneyd. 1. Bishton 1768 May 21, writing on behalf of her husband who has not yet heard whether B. (sic Banks) will grant his request for the loan of his Herbarium while he is abroad. The gold medal received in 1797 was for planting eleven thousand larch trees in 1794 and 1795.

[8] Hafod was the earliest renowned example of a picturesque garden designed, planted and built between 1782 and 1810 by Thomas Johnes.

like rock garden was recorded at Glasnevin, Dublin and a bank rock garden was illustrated on a plan of the Liverpool Botanic Garden, published in 1808. The early rock gardens attempted to mimic the landscape and the example at Chelsea contained imported lava, whilst later 19th century examples in Staffordshire were said to be built from a mixture of flint and fused bricks to form 'stoneries'[9]. They did not achieve the natural quality and geological stratification of the imported gritstone and mid 19th century rock gardens that we associate with Chatsworth (1844) or Biddulph (1850s), or the early 20th century 'scree' rock garden, but there is a strong possibility that the example at Ashcombe is an early example, as it contains blocks of stone often laid on-end rather than on-bed.

Twentieth Century Alterations

By 1937, following the sale of the Hall in 1926, the southern garden had been altered to create a wide, stone-paved terrace in front of the house, with a large drystone retaining wall separating the house from a lower compartmented lawn. The area of lawn adjoining the rock garden had been adapted to create a long flight of steps leading down from the upper terrace to the new lower lawn. The lower lawn was divided into four compartments with a central pond. The list description for the pond suggests that it was built in 1806, but if it indeed was built at this date it must have been relocated by 1937 at this new level. The original lawn was laid out as a relatively uniform area with a gentle slope at the end closest to the house; the ha-ha wall was partially raised to compensate for the new levels.

To the east of the Hall the original garden was extended beyond the 'ha-ha' to create a lower terrace, which was probably laid out as a tennis court. This was later adapted to build a swimming pool, established sometime after 1985. This has only relatively recently been removed and left in its wake a concrete-block pump house, pipework and a series of partially erected concrete-blockwork and reinforced retaining walls dating from the 1930s. This area is unsafe and will need sympathetic re-landscaping. The outlook from the house over this part of the garden is important, in so far as it contains the main views to the Churnet Valley. It had been softened by shrub planting by 1924 but most of this had been removed at the time that the lower terrace was constructed.

The park and garden setting of the house are largely complete, as designed and set out and established by the 1850s. There have been some important additions, in the form of terraced gardens, but these have been laid upon the earlier structure of the garden, with little loss of the 'picturesque' qualities that the Sneyd family were aspiring to.

[9] PhD thesis, 'Sojourns In Nature - The Origins Of The British Rock Garden' Susan Elizabeth Schnare, 1994, p. 102

Appendix 1 - Sneyd Ashcombe – Keele University Library (Special Collections)

1802 Diary for William Sneyd

Wednesday 31st April
I went with Col Dobson to meet Mr G Jervis respecting taking Darlaston

Saturday 3rd April
Brother Ralph din'd with us. Mrs Dobson call'd in the afternoon. I took my wife an airing in the gig. We return'd about 2 O'clock and soon after she was safely deliver'd of a boy which Mr Atkinson baptized Clemt …..

8th April
I went to Darlaston to meet Mr Rowley to put a valuation on the land there.

Saturday 8th May
We went to look at Darlaston when Mrs W. Sneyd agreed with Mrs Jervis that we should rent it.

1st June to 10th July – a long tour / holiday / journey with his wife to London and then all around Wales visiting sights including Hafod, Devil's Bridge, etc.

27th September – they arrived at Darlaston. The children and their nurses and the housekeeper arrived on 7th October.

Social events start to include members of the aristocracy[10] – Lord and Lady Northern (Nov), Sir Thomas Fletcher.

Sunday 26th December
II walk'd in the morning to Bottom Hall to meet James Hollingshead there.

30th December
I breakfasted at Lord Southwells and went with a Cock Shooting at Swinnerton Park.

31st December
Mrs Sutton left us. She had been with us as Housekeeper nearly 3 months. We sent her home in the gig. Mrs Hughes of Bottom Hall came to us (*replacement housekeeper?)*

1803
5th Jan.
I call'd in the morning upon Lord Grenville (sic Granville)
8th Jan
I call'd upon Lord Harrowby
10th Jan
Sir John Heathcote
3rd March
Col. Dobson went with Mrs S and myself to call upon Sir J Heathcote and Mr(?) Ryder at Trentham
10th March

[10] The houses associated with these members of the aristocracy and gentry are: Lord Harrowby (Nathaniel Ryder) – Sandon Hall, designed by Samuel Wyatt; Sir George Chetwyn, Brocton Hall; Sir John Heathcote, Longton Hall; Lord Grenville (sic Lord Granville) of Stone Park; Lord Southwell(?), Swynnerton Hall (Lord Stafford's)

I went in the morning to Swinnerton and play'd all morning at Billiards with Ld Southwell.
23rd May
We met there Sir George Chetwyn
26th May
I went to Bottom Hall to meet Mr Hyde & James Hollinshead respecting repairs
Late 1803 – Mr and Mrs John Wedgwood
December – Met Mr Sparrow at Sandon

1805 Diary for William Sneyd at Darlaston

Tuesday 5th February 1805
Mr Webb came to Leek about fernis (sic) a Plan for a House at Bottom Hall. He drank tea and supp'd at Mrs Debanks.
Mr Webb breakfasted at Mrs Debanks. I went with him after to Bottom Hall on his way home….

Tuesday 7th February
I purchased a pr (pair) of black of Carriage horses. Sold my Rhoan horse and my brown leader.
Cash Account: Bought a pr of black of Carriage Horses on 4th other 5 year old £89 5s, Sold the Roan Horse £68 5s, ditto the Brown Coach Horse £26 5s
I gave J. Vale for bringing me a horse 2s 6d

During November there were occasional visits to Bottom Hall but nothing in the diary before November. His father attended the Navigation meetings in April 1805. His brother Ralph died in March and was interred in the family vault at Colwich (they called on their sister Mills at Haywood). The proximity of Colwich and Haywood may have provided a connection with the Trubshaw family.

Friday 1st March 1805
I attended at the Navigation meeting at the Stone Wharf respecting Jos. Birch's affairs

1806 Diary for William Sneyd at Darlaston

William Sneyd
During February and March he mentions going to / riding to Bottom Hall

March 27th
I made a Bargain with Mr Brandstorm for Timber for Bottom Hall

Thursday 3rd April
I met Trubshaw at Bottom Hall, he came with me to Leek

Friday 4th April
Trubshaw left us after he had had his dinner

14th April
I met Mr Trubshaw at Bottom Hall – And signed in his presence a Deed for Mr and Mrs Macdonald as one of Their Trustees to empower Sir A Macdonald to receive from Lord Craven £10,000 Money.

Tuesday 15th April
We began to pull the Old House at Bottom Hall to ruins – I borrowed from Mrs Debank £300.00

Thursday 17 April
Borrowed from Mrs Debank £100.00

Monday 21st April
The Revd Kinsley baptized out little girl, Eliz. Penelope…

Tuesday 22ndApril
Eliz. Penelope died between two & three o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs Kiddlesden went with me in the morning to Bottom Hall - Trubshaw was there. Part of the timber arrived from Hull.

Thursday 1st May
I went to Bottom Hall to meet Mr Brindley to get him to set out the reservoir.

24th June
John Edgwood breakfasted with us. Jane and I went after to Bottom Hall & returned to Darlaston to supper.

In June and July he continues to visit Bottom Hall regularly and continue to borrow or receive money from Mrs Debanks for £100

19th August
Jane and I called upon the Marquis and Lady Stafford at Wolstanton…..

Saturday 23rd August
The Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford called at Darlaston

1807 Diary

20th February
I sent to Ashcomb 52 dozen and 5 bottles of Port to be put in the cellar there.

20th March
We sent a wagon and cart load of goods to Ashcomb

25th March
Miss Wedgwood came to Darlaston in the morning to take possession of it. Col. Dobson accompanied my wife and self from there to Mrs Debanks.

30th March
I went in the morning to the Heath grange?, where I marked 36 Oak trees.. where I marked 7 more for the buildings at Ashcomb. We opened the new road at Ashcomb & shut up the old one.

B.2/1 – John Sneyd Belmont 1815

Diary written by John Sneyd whilst living at Belmont in 1815. No mention of his mother. Was she living at Ashcomb on her own?

8th February
My father & Col Dobson walked with William and I to Belmont

9th February
Mr Trubshaw came to measure the work at Belmont. My father & Coll Dobson came with him.

16th February

We rode to Ashcomb

April 6th
My father and mother, William and I left Loxley. We dined in the Dairy at Ashcomb

In June
John and his brother William go to Ashcomb to the 'dancing master' 'drawing master' and 'French master' regularly

Diary from 1820
(John Sneyd is mainly at Oxford, studying)

1851 Diary – the year John Sneyd's father William dies at the age of 83.

24th April
Mr Johnson the Architect came here. I agreed with him about a plan for altering the House. …

19th May
Three workmen arrived from Lichfield & commenced the alteration of the House

24th May
Mr Johnson came for the second time…

14th June
Let the Bricklayer have £12 and the Stonemason £25

28th June
Mr Johnson the Architect came to over look the Building

26th July
discharged my stonemasons & labourers and took them in again

28th July
Mr Johnson came here to superintend the works

14th August
Mr Johnson came here and stai'd the night

4th September
Mr Johnson the Architect came here.

1st October, 20th October, 12th November
ditto

27th November
The Servants Hall was made habitable

Notes of expenses
Sent Mr Robert Johnson a check on S&S for £500.00
List of domestic servants includes: coachman and a groom. All of the others are associated with the house

1852 Diary

24th July 1852

The Painters finished their work here
26th August
Had a sale of Scotch oxen and cows at Ashcombe with some of Ralph's Fat cows. I sold 21 Bullocks & 5 cows
9th September
The Stone Lions were placed on the Gate Posts
5th October
Went on my gig to Mixon Hay where I bought a cow for £8 Twenty Sheep for &18 & let the winter ley of the corn field for £4
13th December
I called at Bretby to ascertain when the Deer would come from there to Ashcombe & found they had not been caught.

Note: Expenses include William Shaw for a set of double harnesses, and £154 to Mr Johnson as Architect

Memorandum
25.3.1858
Revd. John Sneyd to Daglish
"with stabling for twelve horses, Coach House, Laundry, Brew House, Pigsties, Icehouse, Outbuildings, Gardens….the said Garden, together with the Conservatory, Hotbed frames, Sheds and Plants therein Shrubbery, Fences & Pleasure Grounds… keep in health the wall and other fruit trees…."

Further Note
Dryden Henry Sneyd had mortgaged his Belmont / Basford / Hay House / Mosslee estates to John Brocklehurst (later William C. Brocklehurst in 1887 and then later Alfred) to raise a sum of £20,000 on which he was paying regular interest in the 19th century (from 1875 documented), until the sale of the estate in 1913, when the loan was called in. 1875 first copy letters of his cheques / payments. Also letters with lists of interest paid to Mrs Somerset, presumably a similar basis loan. In 1901 DH Sneyd writes to William Mair requesting another of the Brocklehurst family to take up the mortgage, to avoid having to pay it off. Signs of financial difficulties and he identifies his interests in silica rock and potter's marl being a new source of income.