

Alice Moverley, wife of Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley



Wedding Dress of Alice Moverley, modelled by her great granddaughter, Jenny Howard. Now in York Castle Museum.

Alice married Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley on 29th October 1903 at St Dominic's Priory, Hampstead. Her wedding dress remained in the family until 26th April 2018, when it was donated to York Castle Museum where it will be part of their fashion archive. It will be available for research and may be exhibited at some time.

Alice was born in Brandsby in January 1884, the eldest of a family of five, followed by Hilda, Thomas, Katherine and Charles. Her mother Jane Eliza (née Firth) was housekeeper for Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley and her father, Alfred, was gardener at Brandsby Hall. It is not known where, in Brandsby they lived. It could have been in the servants quarters at the Hall or in one of the estate cottages. Jane Eliza probably continued as housekeeper at Brandsby Hall until 1893 when Hugh moved from Brandsby Hall to his new house at Mill Hill.

At Mill Hill, Jane may have continued as Hugh's housekeeper for a while, but the Moverley family could not have lived at Mill Hill. Alice and her sisters were educated at a convent boarding school in Harrogate, organised and paid for by Hugh. Hugh took a lively interest in all three girls, writing and receiving letters from them.

At some time between 1893 and 1903, the Moverley family moved to London to live at 11 Chalcot Gardens, Englands Lane, Hampstead, NW3, the address from which Alice was married to Hugh. Besides settling the Moverley's into Chalcot Gardens, Hugh took a 'studio' at 6 Wychcombe Gardens, nearby at the top of Englands Lane. This was one of a group of buildings which were designed specifically for artists; they all had a large front window covering two floors.



Remaining listed front of one of the studios, no.6 on the right, as it is today.



Alice and Hugh with Frances and Elizabeth (Elsie) at Mill Hill.

Arthur Rackham lived at no. 6 immediately before Hugh took up residence. The studios are now an exclusive gated courtyard, some have been rebuilt, all have been renovated, but a listed wall for two of them still stands and shows how they would have appeared in the early 1900s.

No 11 Chalcott Gardens



Hugh and Alice with Francis and Elsie at Mill Hill

Hugh's work with the Agricultural Organisation Organisation and the Cooperative movement meant that he needed to spend a lot of time in London during those years. Alice and Hugh very much enjoyed their early married life at Wychcome Gardens, though they necessarily spent some time at Mill Hill in Brandsby. Their first child, Francis was born in 1904, followed by Elizabeth in 1905. In 1907 their third child, Richard was born and they gave up Wychcombe Gardens, as too small for a growing family and returned full time to Mill Hill in Brandsby.

In Brandsby, Alice was very much involved in village affairs, assisting with the organisation of Hugh's social activities, dances, cricket matches, and so on. She was involved in fêtes, bazaars and other fund raising events, in 1912 -13 organised a committee to raise money towards the building of the village hall. Alice embraced Hugh's reforming ideas and supported him, including abandoning Catholicism for the Church of England, though, in fact, after they left the Catholic Church they steered clear of organised religion for the most part. In 1912 their daughter Joan was born during a brief period of residence in Brandsby Hall, before it was sold.



Alice with Francis, Elsie and Richard at Brighton.

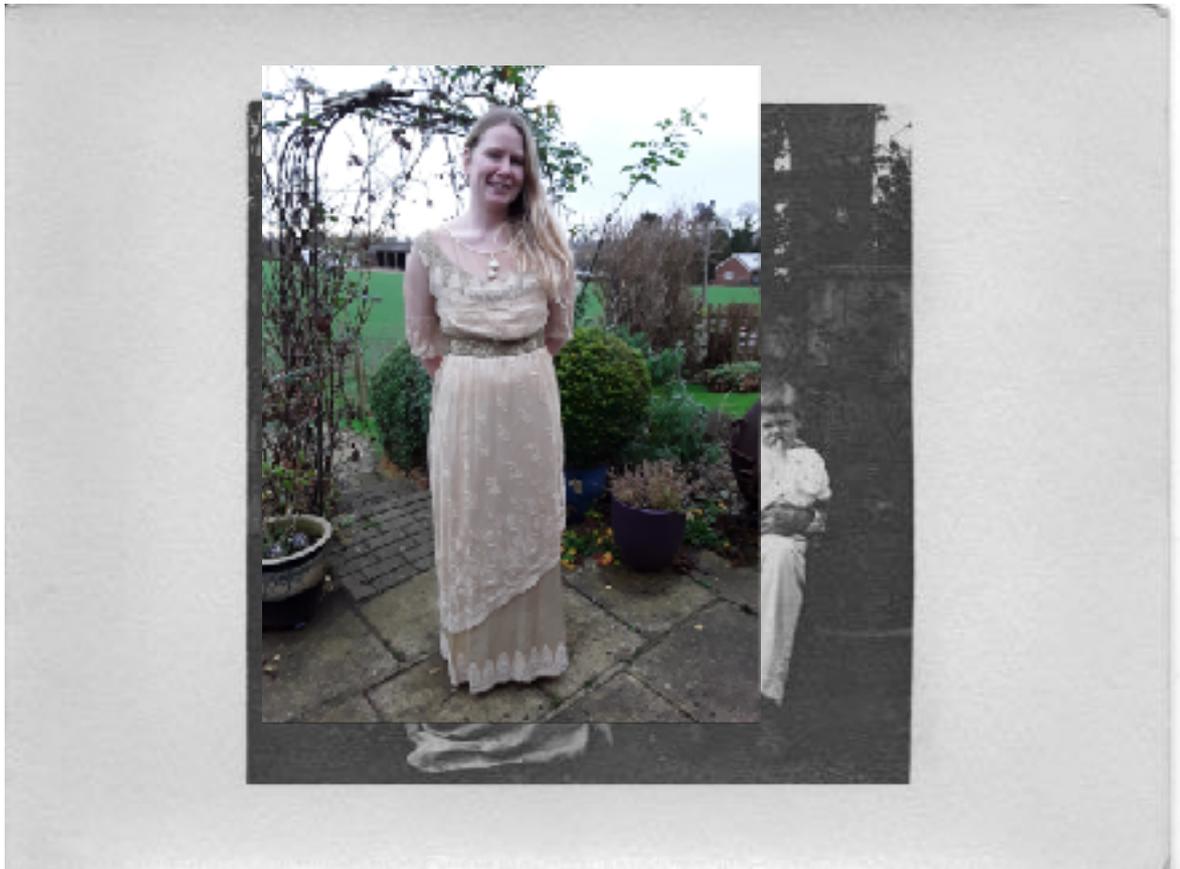
In 1913, after both Brandsby Hall and Mill Hill were sold, Hugh became somewhat disheartened and he, Alice and growing family went to live in Brighton for a few years. During that time Rosamond was born. However, they were back living in Brandsby at Spella Park Farm House in 1917, Hugh throwing himself into farming. Around 1924 they started planning a new project, a house and gardens at Swathgill. This was built, gardens laid out and they moved in in 1927.

Swathgill was very much loved by their children and all friends and relatives who went to stay with them there. This household lasted until Hugh died in 1940, but within 2 or 3 years after his death, Swathgill was sold and Alice moved down to Cotesbach, Nr. Lutterworth, Leicestershire to be near her friend Evelyn Marriott. After a period lodging in Cotesbach Hall, she settled in 'The Cottage' at Cotesbach. Alice died 8th November 1933 at St Cross Hospital, Rugby.



Alice, aged 18 years, painted by H.M. Paget as a wedding present.

Alice's sisters and brother Charles did not return to Brandsby to live, but Thomas did return to the area. Alfred and Jane Eliza continued to live at 11 Chalcot Gardens until they both died within two months of each other in 1920. They are buried in St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London.



Alice had her wedding dress altered to wear as an evening dress around 1910-1912.



The final resting place of Jane Eliza and Alfred Joseph Moverley at St. Mary's Cemetery, Kensal Green, London.

