

# YATTON

# ESTERDAY



**No: 10 ~ 1993**

**Yatton Local History Society**

*John Scully 93.*



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## EDITORIAL

We are delighted to present Book 10 of 'Yatton Yesterday'. Over the decade we are indebted to our enthusiastic researchers and many independent contributors.

Ten years' service given freely by our newsagent friends is typical of their devotion to the community and merits naming again — Andrew Melhuish, Clive Mortimer, Dave Batson, George Scott, with Peter Bell and Richard Whittaker at Claverham Post Office.

John Scally has produced his tenth piece of artwork for the front cover and deserves our gratitude. Our thanks are due to Margaret Burgess and Audrey Westmoreland for compiling books of newspaper cuttings.

During the year the Society has been making a photographic record of the new building developments at Park Farm, Yatton Hall and now at the Moor Road site.

Once again our Programme Secretary has arranged a series of winter lectures to be held in the Methodist Hall, High Street, and during the summer visits to local places of historical interest. The winter programme is available for anyone interested.

*A. F. Coe President*

*B. Bradbury Chairman*



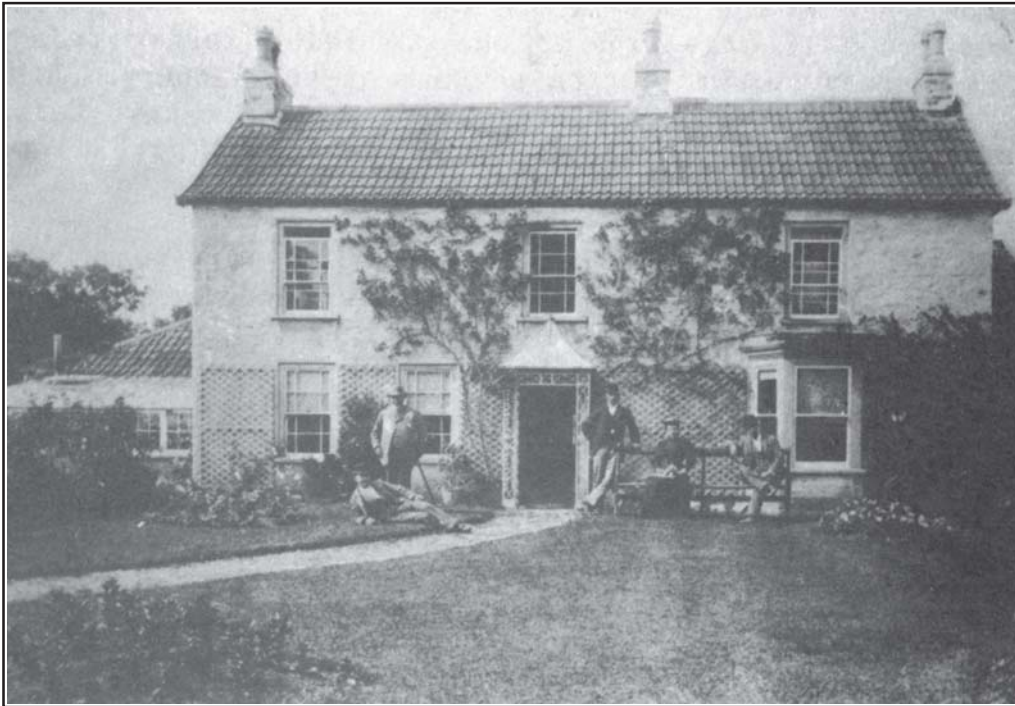
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The index was compiled by Margaret Burgess

## STOWEY LODGE, 11 CLAVERHAM ROAD

In 1821 Samuel Salmon owned a paddock with a barn in the angle between Claverham Road and Stowey Lane, the footpath behind the house, known as 'Sam Salmon's Lane'. By 1841 he had built a house there: 'Stowey Cottage, outhouse, garden and pasture orchard'. This house can be seen in the photograph, where an extension is shown at the east end. The front door was moved. From other evidence, this was done at or before the beginning of this century. At the 1851 census Samuel was 73 and a 'gardiner', born at East Harptree, with a son Edward (35) living at home.

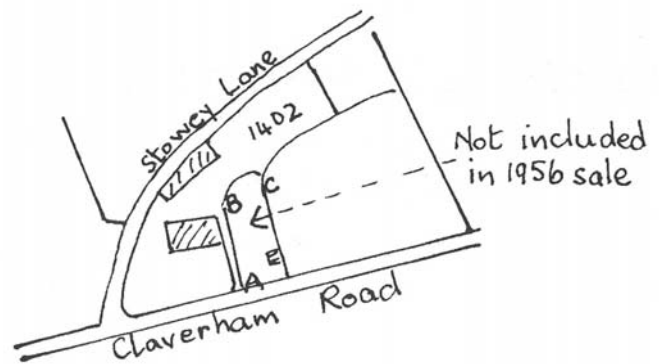


We assume that it remained in the family until another Samuel died on 12th January 1927. He had been living there in one room, having let the rest of his house to Oliver Wackett and family. The property was bought by Walter William Summers of Claverham, decorator, for £1,100 in 1927. It consisted of a 'messuage, carpenter's shop, stable, outbuildings, garden, orchard and land known as Stowell Paddock'. This was just over 1 acre and in addition there were 2¼ acres of pasture land adjoining the lane.

When Mr. Summers died intestate on 14th February 1954 his widow (his second wife) conveyed the property to Mr. Heales of Downend for £3,250. The plot to the east was not included in the sale. It is interesting to note that the vendor had to make up as much of the new road known as Stowey Park as was co-extensive with the property. A chain-link fence was to be erected between A & B and B & C (see plan). A bungalow, No.13, was later built on the plot to the east. Nos. 15 to 21 Claverham Road were built by Mr. Summers on the orchard before the war. They do not appear on the 1931 Ordnance Survey plan.

The next two owners did not stay long: 1961-63, Mr. & Mrs. Thuell and 1963-71, B. P. Tarr of Felton, after which it was bought by the present owners, Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm Watson.

Mrs. Wackett, mentioned above, was a nurse and probably looked after Sam Salmon when he was old. The Wackett family had two girls, Ann who died aged about 15 and Margaret who married a farmer from Berkeley, Glos. Mr. Wackett came to Yatton to work at the Tannery. A Miss Budd, also a nurse, lived with them. Mrs. Wackett kept a cow, Daisy, in the field at the back and she taught Dr. Damrel to milk it. They went to live in the Avenue when they left Stowey Lodge.



#### References:

Deeds kindly lent by Mr. & Mrs. Watson, who supplied the photograph.

Mrs. I. French, Mr. Summers' daughter (verbal).

Mrs. Molly Clements (verbal).

'A History of Yatton' p.53, published by the Society.

Plan taken from deeds.

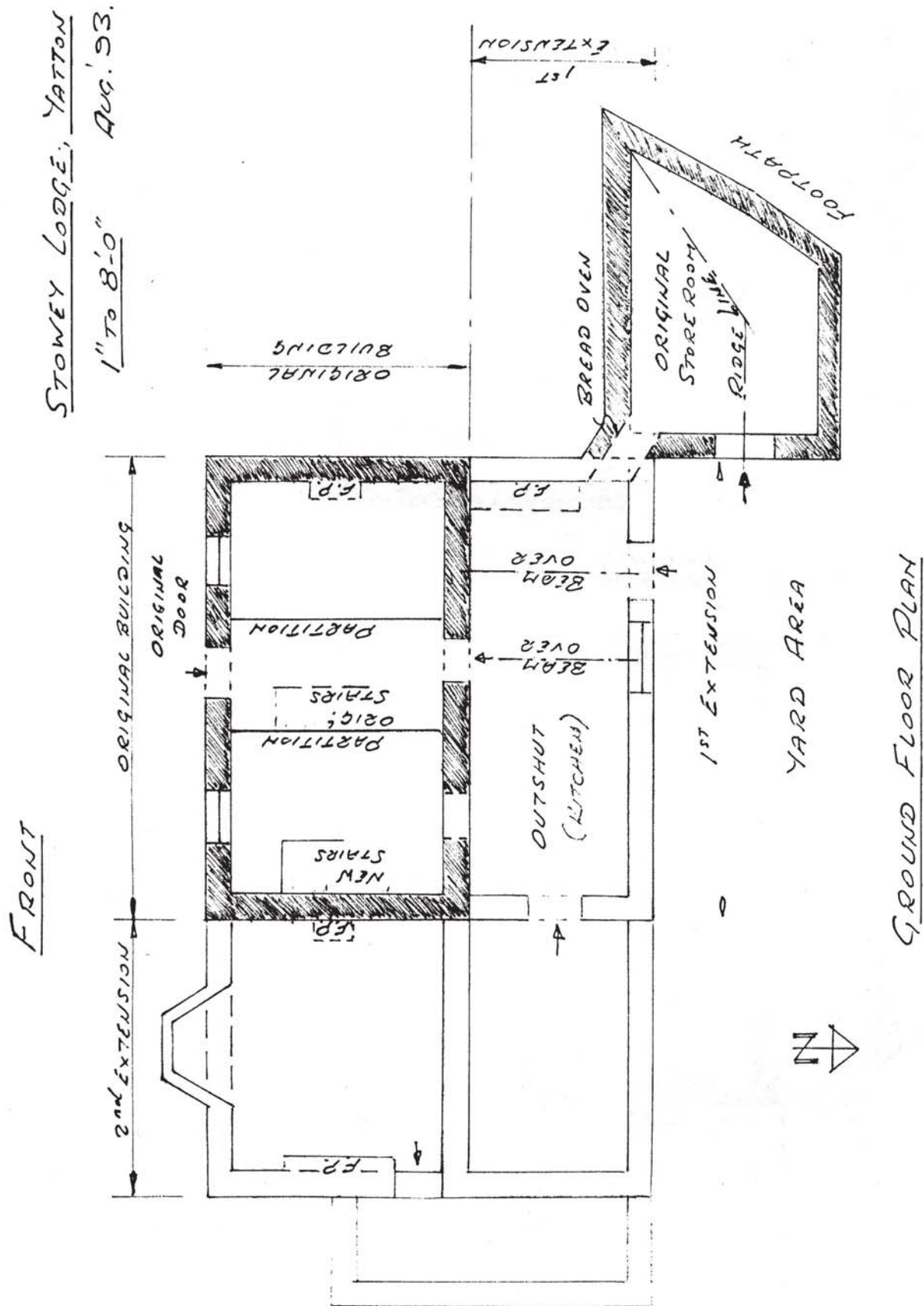
#### A Survey of Stowey Lodge carried out by B. Bradbury

The original building was a small cottage, two rooms up and two down. It seems likely that a steep staircase was positioned in the central passage which was formed by partitions of lath and plaster both upstairs and down. The original door opening to the front of the house was central to the original cottage, which measured about 27ft. long by 15ft. wide. Probably the present door opening into the outshut was the original position opposite the 'front' door. There was a chimney at each end of the cottage; at one end (east) the stack was outside the end wall and the opposite one was inside. The steep roof was almost certainly thatched; it now has clay tiles on a timber-framed roof which still has rough-hewn purlins with 'peg' fixings.

The original cottage was extended by the addition of an outshut (or lean-to) to the rear. This probably had a long through room at first floor level for storage of cheeses, apples etc. The ground floor was probably divided off with partitions to form a kitchen and dairy area with flagstone floors. The adjoining building was probably original. This is known as an apple store although a low door opening from the yard area does not seem a suitable access into such a building. A bread oven was built at the junction of the outshut and the store building (if that is what it was), with a kitchen fire alongside. This is now only indicated at the infill to the ceiling over.

Another extension was added to the end of the cottage and outshut, fire-places and chimney flues removed and most likely this was when the old stairs were removed and the present rather fine staircase added. Some of the stair details are reminiscent of the 'Grange', formerly Grange Farm. The old front door was also modified to become a window opening and the present front door position with porch was established. As a result of these changes and subsequent works only one of the three chimneys actually has a stack and flues beneath it.

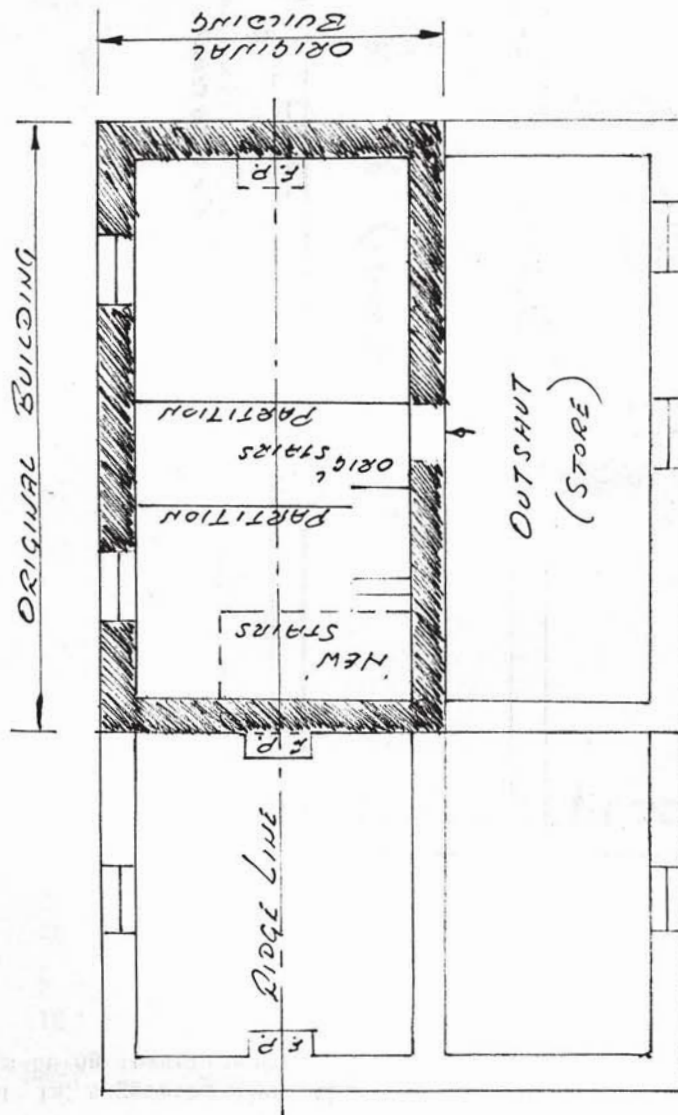
It is suggested that there are three wells on this property and this is being investigated.



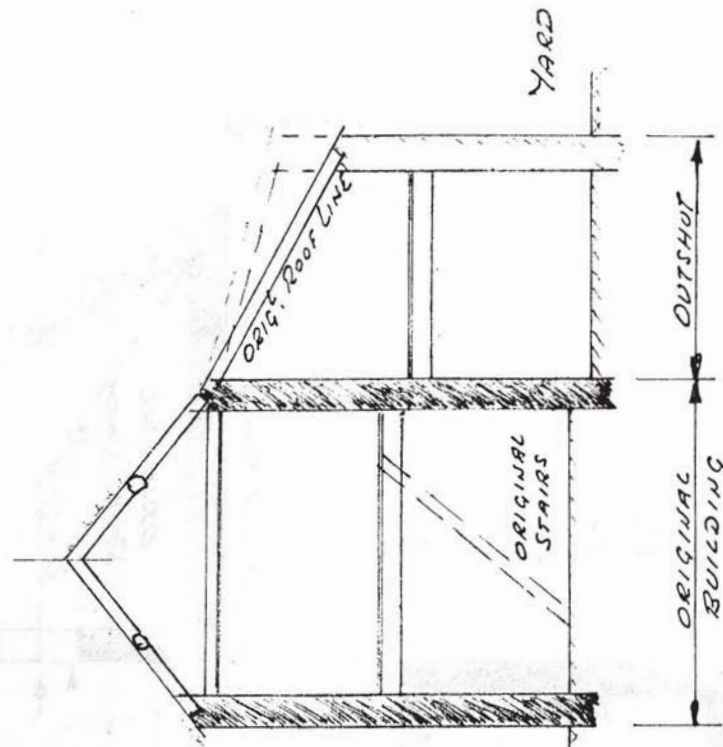


STOWEY LODGE, YATTON  
1" TO 8'-0"      AUG. '93

FRONT



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



TYPICAL SECTION

The roof line to the outshut has been raised as can be seen on the section drawing, again probably at the time of the second extension.



## THE YEO VALLEY LIONS

As the Yeo Valley Lions Club has contributed much to village life in Yatton since 1968, it seems appropriate that its activities should be recorded in 'Yatton Yesterday'. This article is meant to be a tribute to its efforts.

**Foundation.** Lions Club International is a world-wide organisation of people who enjoy helping others less fortunate than themselves. The first Lions club was founded near Chicago in 1917 and the first convention of 23 clubs took place in Dallas, Texas, in October of that year. World membership stands at 1.4 million in 177 countries, with recent additions being in Poland, Estonia, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Russia — all in the eastern world.

The first Lions club in England was formed in 1949 as the London Host Club. There are now no less than 870 clubs in this country with over 21,000 members.

**Internationally** there is a world-wide project to eliminate preventable and reversible blindness. The aim is to raise 130 million pounds by 1994. Other projects are Indian and African water wells and Indian eye camps. To help create understanding among peoples of the world the Yeo Valley Lions Club is twinned with that of L'Aigle in France with whom they exchange visits.

**Nationally** they sponsor 'Medic-alert'. An emblem, bracelet or necklace is carried by the patient engraved with the wearer's medical condition and a 24-hour telephone number for emergencies. If the wearer is unconscious the 'medic-alert' speaks with medical information within seconds. Help is also given with blood diseases, diabetes, drug awareness and deafness.

**The Yeo Valley Lions Club** was formed in 1968 with 20 members, now increased to 32, drawn from all walks of life. All work is done in members' spare time with support from families and friends. Money raised over the years is in excess of £300,000 and falls into three categories, international, national and local, with the last having priority. When researching the club's records it is impossible to list every undertaking over 25 years. Projects have been numerous and varied; however a selection of the highlights will give some idea of the range of the club's activities.

Soon after it was formed in 1968 the first challenge was the flood at Congresbury. Members helped with repairs and redecoration, made funds available to purchase materials and received donations for the cause. When help was volunteered by Lions overseas a plaque was put up at Lulsgate Airport giving telephone numbers and addresses of two members as a contact for incoming Lions wishing to assist.

In October they organised a balloon race for the Scouts of Cleeve, Claverham and Yatton and raised £40 towards their target of £850, the overall target being £3,500 for the building. One thousand five hundred balloons were sent with a prize of a transistor radio for the longest distance. One card was received from Ordogh Decro in Hungary. In thanks he was sent a china plate with the Scouts' crest on it.

That same month the Lions received their charter at Ashton Court. Telegrams of congratulation came from numerous other clubs both at home and abroad.

During the seventies fashion shows were held at the Railway Hotel, now the Firebox, and at Backwell to raise funds. Anita Harris opened a Backwell fete and an economy car run for spina bifida was centred at Cadbury. Dances at Ashton Court provided funds for the Guide Dogs for the Blind. The swimming pool for the handicapped children project raised £300 and later a cheque was presented to the League of Friends of Yatton Hall for £960 for their swimming pool. A £300 E.C.G. machine was supplied to Yatton surgery, as a toy fair raised £120.

A grand charity ball in 1974 raised £1,400 for holidays for children at a local orphanage. Miss World, Anneline Kriel of South Africa, hosted a Country Club function raising £400 for the blind. A visit from Fred Hodder of California, vice-president of Medic-alert International, reminded members of their overseas commitments. In 1977 a village festival was organised with Morris Men, an art exhibition, sports and a decorated pram race from the Market Inn to the Prince of Orange. An auction raised £600. Ensuing activities ranged from cutting down trees and logging at the Rugby Club (£200), painting the Barberry Croft community centre and taking Yatton pensioners Christmas shopping. During the eighties a 42-seater coach was bought for Farleigh Hospital and a second-hand Ford coach was acquired to assist with local transport. In 1985 an auction realised £1,020 towards a new mini-coach and sponsored skittles added another £1,000.

1986 saw £1,000 sent to Children in Need and 1988 Weston Hospital was the beneficiary — a reclining chair for £240 and a laser printer for £3,000. The carol singing float, now repaired by the inmates of Horfield Prison, produced £812, and Yatton junior football club £650. Help was also given at Yatton Show. In the nineties Congresbury youth club received £2,000, Romania £480, handicapped sport £697, C.L.I.C. £570, a youth award £824 and a family holiday £720. The Beaujolais race produced £860.

In 1991 the blue mini-coach was burnt out by arsonists and £15,000 was needed for a replacement. £1,200 was raised in six hours in the Precinct, £430 at a garden party and £500 pledged by residents. This, together with the many donations from local businesses and other organisations, helped to purchase the new minibus, which is inscribed 'Given by the Community to serve the Community'. It is in constant demand by numerous clubs in the village. Claverham shoppers are taken to Yatton Precinct, church clubs, sports clubs (cricket and rugby), Scouts, all use it at different times. It also serves Kingston Seymour church, the handicapped at Portishead and takes groups from Somerset House on weekly tours. Apart from the Lions there are several good folk who volunteer to drive the minibus for various events. The latest venture is the building of a garage at Hangstones; £10,000 was raised for this, some at charity auctions at the Firebox and Congresbury hall.

Meantime charity work goes on. There are regular outings for the elderly and handicapped young people, an annual party for senior citizens and individual cases of hardship and distress are taken care of with privacy assured and respected in every case.

The village of Yatton continues to benefit from the dedication and generosity of the Yeo Valley Lions. If anyone would like more information about the Lions they should contact Ian Pullar at the Precinct or any other Lion member.



### Charter Night, 1968

Left to right: J. Newson, Monty Lane, Ken Edwards, Leslie Fox, David Pithie, George Griffiths, Leslie Mason, Michael Wheeldon, Ron Gardiner, Peter Orrin and David Pearce.

Charter members not in photograph:

R. E. Beasant, A.G.Curtis, J. R. Godfrey, M. Latton, K. Locke, I. Pullar, J. N. Quine, P. J. Smurthwaite, J. Watts Williams and W. O. Williams.

*A. F. Coe*



### Making your own coffin

Mr. Genge remembers that Bill Barnes, who worked at Wake & Dean, made his own coffin in mahogany. He put legs on it and used it as a side-board which he kept in his lounge — the legs of course were removable. Bill's hobby was knitting socks which he did even in his lunch break.

*Ruth Summerell*





## 7th SOMERSET BATTALION HOME GUARD

A month before Hitler's armies swept into the Low Countries and France, it became obvious that Britain's defences were inadequate. In April 1940 plans for a local defence force were urgently implemented. Colonel William Gibbs of Barrow Court appointed Sir Hugh Tweedie to the task of defending an area of three hundred square miles, including Long Ashton, Keynsham, Temple Cloud, Portishead and Clevedon.

Admiral Sir Hugh Justin Tweedie, K.C.B., D.L., Legion of Honour, of Wraxall House, had just returned from escorting convoys across the Atlantic. Not only did he throw himself into this work but he wrote a small book about the Local Defence Volunteers in North Somerset. The book, which was privately printed, ends with a warning – 'In the interest of National Security no part of the contents of this book may be disclosed .... until after the cessation of hostilities'. Now that nearly fifty years have passed it appears quite safe for some interesting facts to be shared with a wider audience.

Enrolment day was Saturday 25th May 1940. Long lines of men formed up; they had walked or bicycled to the appointed places. Forms were filled up to get an idea of the men's previous experience. So great were the numbers that the signing went all through Sunday as well. Further men came forward as the days went by. In August 1942 all men, if not already in the Forces or unfit to serve, were directed into the L.D.V., by that time called the Home Guard. There was an amazing mixture of men — clerks, factory and manual workers, schoolboys, professional men, agriculturalists and a sprinkling of poachers who, having practised field craft all their lives, proved especially valuable!

These motley groups were issued with denim overalls so that they looked alike but this did not give much protection against the wet and cold. The men were armed with cudgels and pitchforks. Some had no proper weapons for two years or more. Some people loaned their rifles and shot guns and some owned their own. In the autumn of 1940 a thousand American guns were issued to the Keynsham and Temple Cloud Companies but only ten rounds of ammunition were given with each gun. Had the Germans invaded this would have given each man two minutes' fighting time. No wonder Molotov Cocktails and other ingenious devices were invented. As a last resort men would have taken to the woods and continued fighting as the Maquis did in France.

The relationship between the L.D.V. or Home Guard and the Army was not an easy one. At first no money was given to the L.D.V. All expenses had to be borne by the Battalion Commander. Typewriters had to be borrowed and men had to use their own motor bicycles for transport even when used for vital communication work. Some clerical and other help was supplied free by the Women's Voluntary Service (W.V.S.). One has to remember that most members were working full time at their own occupations during the day.

Observation posts were established at especially vital points. Dundry was important as it overlooked a large area of Bristol. Along each road ambush points were set up, usually in a natural cutting or steep winding road to trap unwary German invaders. The men guarding the ambush were armed with Molotov Cocktails and later guns and grenades. Wires were to be stretched across the road immediately following a sharp bend. Minor roads were blocked with felled trees. The Bridgwater, Shepton Mallet and Weston-s-Mare roads were considered especially important.

No.5 (Clevedon) and No.6 (Yatton) Companies, who also guarded Lulsgate and Yatton Station, came in for coastal patrols on the stretch of coast and mud flats, mostly inhabited by wild ducks, between Weston and Portishead. Clevedon was considered to be of no military importance except to an enemy foraging for food and fuel. In the event of an attack, it might have had to be the subject of a scorched earth policy. We presume that the inhabitants of this unfortunate town were to be evacuated before the fires were lit. Would the same have applied to Yatton which was dangerously close to Clevedon?

During the heavy raids on Bristol the Long Ashton, Keynsham and Bishopsworth Companies had the most frequent calls; two men were killed by enemy action.

Many roads to be defended were deep set and could not be seen at a distance so communication between patrols was difficult. At first radio was forbidden to the Home Guard although later this ban was lifted. A few dispatch riders were used and a system of flashing lights was planned but this was looked on in horror by the Air Raid Wardens and the Police. Professor Ellis and Dr. Jackson of Bristol University designed a lamp with a narrow arc of visibility, however these were not easy to use. There was a shortage of telephone wire but somehow some was collected and attached to some disused telephones. A Pigeon Service was incorporated into the communication network. Mr. Read had the main loft at Long Ashton, a few yards from the Battle Headquarters.

On 7th September 1940 Admiral Tweedie answered the telephone to hear the order 'Action Stations'. Admiral Tweedie asked how long the exercise would take only to be told 'the real thing, they are coming'. This was the night that the church bells were rung and the present editor remembers her brother, then a boy at school, being called out to guard the Suspension Bridge that night. Out he went on his bicycle into the dark leaving us, like Admiral Tweedie, in a state of wonder.

When ammunition became more readily available training exercises could involve live firing of guns. There was always the worry that courting couples might be caught up in such exercises, however there were no fatalities, not even the man who returned at speed with tracers leaping around him. He had been up into the hills to get a 'better view of the show'.

One platoon spent a long hot Sunday digging trenches along the edge of a wood, only to find the following Sunday that the hedge had been cut, completely exposing the trenches. 'She ain't been done for five years and the surveyor'll be down along maybe, and make a tidy fuss if it bain't done', was the only reply when the Platoon Commander registered his complaint.

Admiral Tweedie wrote that as the enemy had stated that the Home Guard were to be treated as 'franc tireurs' no question of surrender need ever enter the men's minds. They would have to fight to the death. This was not a case of heroics since had they been captured they would most certainly have been shot. After reading this article the reader must remain thankful that the R.A.F. won the Battle of Britain and thereby prevented Hitler from invading these islands in 1940.

Ref: H. J. Tweedie '7th Somerset Battalion Home Guard', Bristol 1944

*M. V. Campbell*

## NAMES ON CLEEVE WAR MEMORIAL 1914-18

Mr. Day has been continuing his researches but in the case of Cleeve, then part of the civil parish of Yatton, he has not been as successful. If anyone has any information on the men listed under 'no details', Mr. Day would be glad to hear from them.

### Cpl. Mace, William Henry 65242

138 French Motary Battery R.G.A.

Death occurred 12th Nov.1917. Died of pneumonia. Age 33

Son of Henry and Jane Macey, Cleeve, Somerset, who gave his life in the Great War that we might live, and whose name is carved in stone.

At: Baghdad British Cemetery, Iraq.

Details taken from scroll Royal Garrison Artillery Record Office.

Notification: Army Form B104-82, 17.11.17.

### Pte. Brown, Albert H.

Gloucestershire Regt.

Son of Mr. & Mrs. W. Brown, Main Road, Cleeve.

Reported missing, aged 18. Army blacksmith (verbal).

### Pte. Stevens, George H. 21701

Welsh Regt.

Killed 30th January 1916, aged 17 (headstone).

### No details:

Donald Inglis, Harold E. Stokes, William C. Winch, Benjamin Shaw, William Shiner, Charles Brown, Arthur Henry Wright.



## MRS PARSONS' MEMORIES

Mrs. Jean Parsons (formerly Blackmore) says that when her mother, Agnes Wait, was a child she lived in Cleeve and went to Cleeve School. At the age of eleven she started cookery lessons. The children walked to Yatton in the mornings and had their cookery lessons at the skating rink in Rock Road. In the afternoons Mr. Thomas, who lived next door to the butcher in Cleeve and was the local carrier, used to take his horse and trap to Yatton to take the children home.

Dances were held at the skating rink too. Jack Pope, who lived in Cleeve, was a wonderful dancer and all the girls wanted to dance with him.

Mrs. Parsons' great-aunt, Emily Scribbins, was a forewoman at the shirt factory which was then at Rock House.

*Related to Ruth Summerell*



## THE SALVATION ARMY IN YATTON

There was a branch of the Salvation Army in Yatton for fifteen years, between 1893 and 1908. The 'War Cry' for 6th May 1893 reported the opening of the Yatton Circle: 'glorious times, sympathy good, five souls, prospects grand'. Will Whitley, the Captain, was assisted by Lieut. Fred Adams.

The following week a meeting was held at Wrington: 'good open-air, crowds of people, Congregational school-room crowded'. At Yatton there were 'good meetings all day, seven souls, making sixteen for eight days. Hallelujah!' Lieut. W. Smith assisted.

**Yatton Circle Corps** — report in the 'War Cry', 10th June 1893: 'The angels of heaven rejoice over one soul, and we met together on Monday to rejoice over twenty rescued from the power of the devil in four weeks. Praise the Lord.' Small wonder, when a tea was announced, that 127 sat down to a good spread. Claverham Brass Band gave their services and led the march through the village. Capt. Whitley and Lieut. Adams must have been delighted to see sixty men and women ready for the fray fall into line, sing, shout and do a wave-offering before marching to Rock House. Glory! Shop and room were speedily crowded to excess when a battle of song began in earnest. Congresbury Hallelujah Coach House was opened this week, thus completing the circle — Yatton, Congresbury and Wrington. Our prayer is, Lord, give us souls'.

In 1905, according to the Corps Index, Yatton had 13 soldiers and 3 recruits, Wrington 15 soldiers and 2 recruits. Yatton Circle appeared in the Year Book until 1908 but was not in the next issue of 1910. Wrington was listed in the 1910 book and appears on other lists until 1936, after which there is a gap in the records so it is not known when Wrington closed.

Compiled from information supplied to Ken Summerell by Gordon Taylor.



## PETER'S ISLAND

I read with interest the reference to 'Peter's Island' in the article written by Mr. Ray Naish in 'Yatton Yesterday' No.9. He was my grandfather, born to Joel and Ann Parsons in 1847 in Primrose Cottage, Cleeve. He married Emma Fisher from Mark, Somerset, in 1873. They lived in Well Cottage next to Cleeve Chapel in Plunder Street. They had four sons and one daughter Melinda, who was my mother. She taught at Cleeve School and later at Dundry School, to which she cycled every day. One son, Peter, was a schoolmaster in Bournemouth and another, Charles, emigrated to Canada where he farmed and had a haulage business. Donald joined the Monmouth Police Force. George worked for the Great Western Railway and is the legendary ghost supposed to have been seen crossing the road at Congresbury and sitting in a corner in the Railway Inn, now the 'Prince of Wales'.

Peter Parsons was a builder by trade. He took possession of a piece of land at the end of Wemberham Lane and built the house that is there, and presumably lived there for a time. Donald told us he had to help haul the stone, by horse and cart of course, as a young lad.

Later he built a wooden bungalow on a piece of land just beyond Cleeve Church. He put it on wheels so that it could be moved a short distance each year to avoid paying rates. Later, when the road was widened the Council built my grandmother another bungalow which was later moved to the top of Rhodyate Hill and has now been extensively extended.

Peter died in 1916 and they both now rest in Cleeve churchyard. The reason for which he lived on the moor on 'Peter's Island' one can only assume was again to avoid paying rates, or for health reasons. No-one left in the family can be sure, but he was certainly an eccentric man.

*Dennis A. Day*

*Mr. Day has a copy of a photograph of his grandfather on Peter's Island.*



## DARING HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Nathaniel Sholl 1818 - 1911

A local newspaper from the mid-1850s reported a 'Daring Highway Robbery'. Mr. Nathaniel Sholl was out with his horse and cart delivering bread near Nailsea Railway Station at 7.00 p.m. in the evening when he was attacked by three masked men. He was thrown to the ground and struck on the head but made no resistance. He 'reasoned with the men on the wickedness of their doings' and they left saying 'We don't want to hurt you' but had robbed him of 'between 5 and 6 pounds in silver'<sup>1</sup>.

Mr. Sholl, born at Spitalfields, London, in 1818, traded as a baker near the present Butchers Arms, Yatton, in 1851 <sup>2</sup> until 1889. Later he lived at 'Caerleon', 126 High Street (now called 'Stowe House'), which was built in the 1890s <sup>3</sup> so it may have been built for him. He was a Quaker and the last person to be buried at Claverham Meeting House burial ground in 1911 at the age of 92. The Claverham Meeting had been closed in 1866 but not the graveyard <sup>4</sup>.

Miss Elizabeth Sholl, Nathaniel's daughter, wrote a booklet called 'Happenings in the History of Claverham Meeting'. Until she died in the 1930s a room was kept for her use at the Meeting House in Yatton High Street which had replaced that at Claverham, and had subsequently been taken over by the Undenominational School (the present Infants' School).

- References:**
- <sup>1</sup> Nailsea Local History Society archives
  - <sup>2</sup> 1851 Census
  - <sup>3</sup> Y.Y. No.9 pp.22-24
  - <sup>4</sup> Y.Y. No.2 pp. 5-12

The newspaper article was kindly given to the Society by Phyllis Horman of Nailsea Local History Society.

*Christine Derrick*

## YATTON PARISH COUNCIL DURING THE 1914 - 18 WAR

The Parish Council elected in April 1913 was:

Thomas Burdge, Benjamin Crossman (Chairman), Charles Griffin, Joel Knight, Charles Lidbury, George Needham, John Ridley, Samuel Salmon (Vice -Chairman), William Henry Shiner and Charles Stuckey. In August 1914 Mr. Lidbury resigned and Benjamin Peckett was co-opted in his place. Elections due to be held in 1916 were postponed by Act of Parliament and the next election was in 1919, after the end of the war. The Clerk was R. H. Burdge who had held that position since the Council was formed in 1895. He resigned on 10th October 1917 and he was succeeded by A. S. Young. At the Council meeting on 20th March 1918 Mr. Burdge was presented with an inscribed piece of plate.

The Council minutes only record those activities with which the Council was concerned, and so cannot be a full record of Yatton during the war.

On 12th March 1915 a public meeting was held at the National School, addressed by Col. Long, to form a Volunteer Training Corps for the parish of Yatton. He impressed the importance of being able to do something to defend the country in case of invasion. It was agreed to form a corps and 24 men (whose names are listed) agreed to join. The only other mention of the corps is in March 1917 when the Council asked if they could assist with digging the gardens of those who were away in the Armed Forces.

On 21st March 1917 the Council appointed all its members to be a committee to assist the County National Service Committee in its work, but there is no further reference to this activity.

It was agreed that warning of the approach of enemy aircraft would be given by 3 blasts from the fire alarm hooter. At the next meeting this order was rescinded as the sound of the hooter might alert enemy aircraft to their position over a built-up area. Air raid warnings would be given by the police; it was not clear how the police received news of them, as shortly afterwards the Council was urging that the police stations at Yatton and Claverham should be put on the telephone. Leaflets about air raid warnings and the need for windows to be darkened by night were to be distributed by the Scouts of the village.

At the end of 1916 the District Council was asked to whiten curb-stones, which they declined to do. Also the Gas Company was asked to paint lamp posts white, but as the price quoted was thought to be excessive nothing was done.

Early in the war land at Land Farm was rented from the County Council for use as allotments. Most of this land, apart from an area sold for housing development, is still rented from the County Council for allotments. In 1918 further land was rented for allotments at Elboro Street and Yatton Nurseries.

At the beginning of 1918 arrangements were made for the Council to distribute 3 tons 8 cwt. of seed potatoes on behalf of the War Agricultural Committee; there were later complaints as to their poor quality. In 1917 the Council formed committees to see that all gardens in the parish were being properly cultivated, and at various times



complaints about uncultivated gardens were sent to the War Agricultural Committee. Also in 1917 the Council bought a sprayer for potatoes to be sprayed against disease. A government circular was received about the need to destroy rats and sparrows and a Rat & Sparrow Club was started, but no details are given as to its operations.

In November 1914 a letter received from the Lord Lieutenant (the Marquess of Bath) asking for funds to be raised for the relief of Belgian refugees was passed on to the churches. At Christmas 1915 the proceeds of carol concerts given by the Clevedon Band (£15.2.9) was sent to the Bristol Red Cross.

Among other matters to which the Council gave attention were:

Revision of Fire Brigade charges.

A dangerous ditch adjacent to the bus terminus at Cleeve in 1915 (the service was not extended to Weston until later).

A request to the churchwardens that the Bier House where the parish bier was kept should be locked.

Complaints from the Vicar and many inhabitants about Yatton Hall being used as an establishment for mentally defective children (see Y.Y. No.6).

A dispute with solicitors acting for the Vicar over custody of the Tithe Map. After legal argument and reference to relevant Acts of Parliament, the Council reluctantly handed it over.

Difficulties at Hewish railway level crossing (then in Yatton) caused by the G.W.R. altering the roadway. The farmers who regularly used the crossing were J. J. Edwards and T. V. Jones.

Arrangements for renting a new shed for the parish manure cart at £1 per annum.

At the meeting on 20th November 1918 the Chairman referred to the good news that an Armistice had been signed and the war practically terminated on 11th November, and on behalf of the members he expressed gratitude that the war had ended in a complete victory for the Allies, and sympathy to the parents of those of our lads who had made the great sacrifice and hoped that at a future date a public reception would be given to the lads on their return to the parish, and a suitable memorial erected to those who had fallen. The members then joined in singing the National Anthem.

The War Memorial was erected on ground part of which was previously the parish pound and part of which was purchased from the executors of Walter Counsell for £35. It was financed by public subscriptions raised by a committee comprising S. Salmon, T. Burdge, B. Crossman and A. Griffin.

It was unveiled by Col. William Long on 2nd July 1922 and subsequently the site was conveyed to the Council who have since then been responsible for its maintenance. There is no reference in Council minutes as to who was responsible for the design of the memorial and the gardens or for the work of construction.

*H. J. Vincent*



## YATTON FOOTBALL TEAM PRE - 1914

The original photograph is in the possession of Mr. Benjamin Crossman who has given the Society permission to reproduce it.



### Team members

Back row, L.to R: Len Fear, — Ball, Fred Baber, ? goal-keeper, Bill Monkton, Walter Smith, Charlie Viney.

Front row, L. to R: Bill Hockaday, Reg Hurley, Arthur Minchinton, Ben Crossman (Mr. Crossman' s father), Albert Iles.

### Others

Sitting on ground: Joel Knight, Landlord of the Prince of Orange.

Standing, L.to R: Harry Chambers, Unknown, Unknown, Benjamin Crossman (Mr. Crossman' s grandfather), Harry Hayman, Unknown.

Continuing on the other side of the team: Unknown, Sam Sedgebeer, Unknown, Rev.Hayes-Robinson (vicar), John Crease (Jack Crease's father).

Who is the boy? Can anyone tell us this, or fill in any of the blanks above?

# NEW HOUSING ESTATE, PARK FARM, NORTH END

As YY. No.2 is now out of print, we give below a summary of the information contained in it about Park Farm, which may be of interest to new residents.

Park Farm was the home of an important family of Quakers, the Gregorys, for about 150 years. In 1712 Thomas Hipsley came to the farm from Backwell; he rented it from the Poulett estate. In 1738 his daughter Elizabeth married Edward Gregory who moved to Yatton and eventually took over the farm. She had two sons before her early death:

1. William (d. 1800) was at Macquarie, followed by his son Maurice (d.1859). Maurice's son, Thomas (d.1907) moved away.
2. Thomas (d.1810), whose son Bishop (d.1857) farmed at Claverham Court from about 1818 to 1847.

After Elizabeth died Edward re-married and his youngest son, also Edward (d.1831), carried on at Park Farm which he bought from Earl Poulett. His son, also Edward (d.1872), was there but he left it to a nephew who sold it.



We suggest that in common with other similar farms in the district it could have been rebuilt shortly before Thomas Hipsley came in 1712, though we have been unable to survey the building — ‘rebuilt’, as it had a right of common and therefore there must have been a house here from early times.

In 1920 it formed part of the estate of George Badman, deceased and was let to Mr. Thomas Jones when sold at auction for £6,150. There were about 40 acres of land. (Tithe No.1583) Oxhouse and Barton shown on plan (Tithe No.1593) also had a right of common but the house had gone sometime before the 1790s.

Macquarie Farm (Tithe No.1596) actually belonged to the Quakers. The house has late 17th century details but the first time it is mentioned in documents is between 1707 and 1719 and it is thought that there was no house here before that date.

In 1260 John Odeline, Canon of Wells and Prebendary of the Church at Yatton, had caused to be ‘asserted’ (i.e. enclosed from waste land) a park and there is reference to ‘the park of the said Prebend’. (See ‘A History of Yatton’ page 10) The farm is in a similar situation to farms of the same name in Congresbury and North Petherton where they are known to stand in former deer parks. However, there is no definite evidence in Yatton for this being the site of John Odeline’s park.

The regular shape of the fields (see plan) indicates an ‘enclosure’ landscape; this may have been done in Elizabethan times but it is not documented as are the Parliamentary enclosures of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

*Marian Barraclough*



## YATTON DISCUSSION GROUP

The origins of Yatton Discussion Group can be traced to the early years of the war. In those gloomy days meetings took place in many towns and villages to exchange views and to look forward to a better future. The government actively encouraged the formation of formal groups in the larger towns, although no help was given in Yatton. Meetings were held in the Undenominational School, with Mrs. Vincent Wood presiding over a form of Brains Trust and Dr. Ursula Damrel giving musical evenings with records and discussion.

The first official season of the Group was from October 1944 to March 1945 under the presidency of Mr. E. W. Ebdon. The constitution was an extremely formal structure with senior and junior vice-presidents, secretary, treasurer, committee and auditors and an ambitious weekly programme led by university lecturers and experts in many fields from the area. During the fifties it was very well supported and had a benevolent committee, a representative on the Church Hall Committee and official attendance at the annual Civic Service. Bristol University Extramural Department provided many of the speakers but churches, colleges and schools, farmers, surgeons, journalists, librarians — all contributed through the years. Long Ashton Research Station, the British Transport Commission, Backwell Players, Yatton Choral Society, Langford Veterinary College and many more are featured in the programmes with



occasionally an unusual evening such as that given by a representative of the organ builders, Daniels of Clevedon or, so soon after the war, a former German fighter pilot.

Some outstanding speakers are still remembered by the Group as it exists today. Our farming mentor was Ted Owens, always glad to come and enlighten us on the trials and joys of working on the land, and ready at any time to shepherd twenty or so members around his farm near Langford. Dr. David Woodcock gave us an insight into the scientific side of horticulture and the work of the Long Ashton Research Institute. We were indebted to Mrs. D. Willis for talks on the Somerset Levels and the Mendip lead mines, and from Mr. A. H. Russell several absorbing evenings on Yatton history.

One of the favourite speakers was Mr. D. C. Whimster, headmaster of Weston Grammar School, who was always amusing and instructive on various facets of literature. All aspects of the Arts were covered, outside activities such as gliding and painting, politics, genetics, health and planning, even the Common Market in those early years. Reciprocal evenings were arranged with Clevedon and Shipham Discussion Groups, usually in the form of debates and always resulting in a very lively meeting. There were theatre visits and a party evening, usually in December.

The most fascinating and well-loved subject was travel. Miss M. Parsons took us to Malaya and China, we toured Australia with a group of farmers, Pompeii and Petra with Mr. Martin Davies and California with Dr. D. Woodcock. We visited South Africa, Korea, Egypt, New Zealand, Russia, Japan, Jamaica and many other exotic locations.

The Group first met in Atlay's Cafe, now Aladdin's Cave. There was seating for about 40 and space was often at a premium. It was there that Mr. H. A. Price told us about the church bells of England, an evening that had a sequel. It was decided to move to the centre of the village, so the year after his talk we were all sitting in the Reading Room of the Church Hall in October 1955. As our President, Mr. W. Manley, opened the meeting at 7.30 p.m. we were drowned by St. Mary's bells in full swing in a practice session. Many times afterwards speakers had to wait until peace was declared.

As the years passed it became more difficult to obtain lecturers from the University Extramural Department and outside pressures began to mount, particularly the spread of television. In the 1960/61 season it was decided to change to fortnightly meetings. Finally, in March 1968 members agreed to disband the Group. However, by the autumn it was revived, but no longer with a formal structure. A small nucleus of members met in each other's houses, with the host choosing the subject and preparing a talk. Subjects discussed included the Falklands war, C.N.D., the Brandt report, E.E.C. summits, unemployment, the problem of the ageing population, the oil crisis and the Gulf war. Recently the Poll Tax raised very strong feelings over several months. In the summer trips were arranged to interesting places such as Barrington Court and Fyne Court.

Gradually the subjects were less well defined and more local matters came to the fore. We are now a small group of very old friends and every year we lose one or more. Now in our fiftieth year we still meet on a regular basis, but no longer with a well-researched topic for discussion. A fitting topic for our final meeting would be to contrast the state of the world today with that of fifty years ago.

*H. A. Fowler*



## THE FORGE

As a result of the article on the blacksmith's forge in YY. No. 8, we received a letter from the Revd. John Gregory of Sutton Coldfield enclosing this photograph. He dates it as September 1950. The car in the bottom right hand corner is the 1929 Morris Oxford which he owned from 1938 to 1953.



## COURT DE WYCK CHAPEL

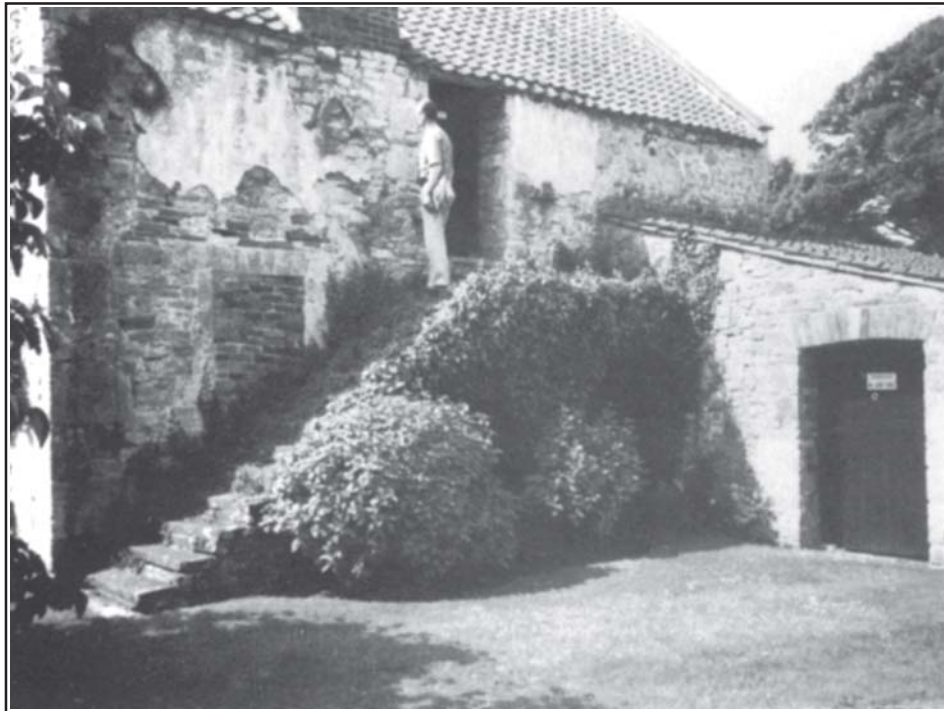
This ancient building was in a poor state until 1991, when Fairey Hydraulics Ltd. restored it and converted it into two meeting rooms and a reception area.

The Court had a chapel at least as early as 1338 (and possibly before) when John Wike had a licence to have divine service celebrated in his oratory (Bishop Ralph's Register 1329—63). Alterations were made by the Newtons in the late 1400s.

Collinson, writing in 1791, says 'The chapel occupies the NW angle of the Court. The entrance to it is under a beautiful Gothick arch and in the walls of the porch are receptacles for holy water ..... The chapel is small and has only one large and lofty window to light it from the Court. Over the entrance is a small apartment with a window looking into the chapel, for the purpose of hearing and seeing mass, and on the north side a gallery. Under this gallery in the wall is an elliptick arch ..... The pulpit and communion table are still remaining. Over this structure stands a small quadrangular open turret, which formerly contained a bell.' (History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset, Vol 3).

After the Reformation the chapel was used at times as a dwelling , and Stephen Cox used part for storing corn and cheese. He bought the Court from Poulett in 1815 to establish his tannery, and took out the 'large and lofty window' which was probably at the east end of the chapel. In the early 19th century alterations were carried out to the east and north walls and to the roof.

Woodspring Priory is another ecclesiastical building which was converted into a dwelling after the Reformation.



*North wall of chapel, showing large arch around bricked-in window. (June 1989)*

The external stairs on the north wall of Pennant stone, shown in the illustration, date from about 1830-40. The single-storey extension was also built about this time. The east room was open to the roof until the 17th century when it was floored over, and a smoke hood built. The west room was unheated. The floor beams which were put in to create upstairs rooms are of different dates.

Stone from the Dundry quarry was used for the arches and the quoins (corners), as can be seen in the photograph at the left-hand corner of the north wall and around the upstairs door. The rubble infill of the north wall contains local limestone with some Pennant (Prof. R. Savage, University of Bristol). The arch in the north wall is shown on the photograph and dates from 1460—70. It was blocked when a sash window was put in, but when the external stairs were built the sash window was filled in with bricks.

The Society is very happy to know that this building has been saved and so carefully restored by the Fairey Company, and we acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Mr. R. R. Buxton in supplying us with copies of plans and notes of the pre-restoration survey.

*Photograph: M. V. Campbell, 1989*

Compiled from notes supplied by *M. V. Campbell* and *Fairey Hydraulics Ltd.*

## THE UNDENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL

The following is taken from the Minute Book of the Managers of the British School, Yatton, 1903—67, now in the Somerset Record Office. This article records happenings at the school from 1903 to the early fifties.

The first meeting of the Foundation Managers of the British School took place on 16th July 1903, after the passing of the 1902 Education Act. Mr. William Burdge was chairman and correspondent; the County Council and Parish Council representatives were Mr. B. Crossman and Mr. C. Stuckey respectively; the Durban's Trustee was Mr. John Burdge and Mr. George Verrier represented Claverham Chapel. The secretary and representative of the Friends' Meeting was Mr. Arthur G. Collings.

The school was then held in the building called 'British School' (Cadet Hall) and had been managed by the Richard Durban Trustees. The tenancy of the building was to expire in 1912 and so the Trustees purchased the Friends' Meeting House lower down High Street. The move here took place during the Easter holidays 1913, and it then became known as the 'Udenominational' School. In 1915 the managers resolved to erect a notice board 'Yatton Udenominational School founded by Richard Durban A.D. 1729' but this was not done, as the matter was brought up again in 1920. One room in the new building was retained by the Friends for their meetings.

### **Staff:**

In 1903 Miss Brentnall, head teacher, asked for a rise but the managers were not empowered to alter salaries, only to make recommendations to the County. She was getting £70 p.a. and the managers asked for £5 more. She retired in the summer of 1921.

In 1904 Miss Whitman was appointed to teach infants at £35 p.a., and the next year Miss Gurnett was to be engaged as a supplementary teacher at £15 p.a., rising to £20. In 1906 Miss Maud Radburn commenced as a pupil teacher. After passing exams she was recognised as a supplementary teacher. By 1913 she was earning £35 p.a. and she remained at the school until 1920. Miss Whitman, having passed her exams in 1909, asked to be recognised as an uncertificated Assistant Teacher, and later on asked for a rise. As she resigned in 1912 one assumes she did not receive it.

In 1921 Miss Stradling replaced Miss Brentnall as head teacher and remained at the school until 1953, when she resigned owing to ill-health after 32 years at the school.

Mrs. Davies was appointed supplementary teacher in 1913 and spent 27 years there. When she left in January 1941 she was presented with a leather handbag and a notecase containing £11.13. 6d. Salaries were much higher after the 1914-18 war — in 1922 Miss Collins was to receive £146. She left the school in 1930. Uncertificated teachers were still being appointed as late as 1945.

### **Managers:**

In 1919 Mr. John Burdge became chairman and correspondent when Mr. William Burdge resigned. The latter was replaced by Mr. Franck of Hill Court and when he left Yatton



in 1922 Miss Mary Burdge of the Grange became the first woman manager, remaining on the Board until 1945. It is interesting to note that in 1954 the County appointed two women managers and when one left they insisted that another woman be appointed despite the wishes of the other managers.

In 1928 Mr. Warburton was the Parish Council representative (he died in 1945) and in July of that year it was reported that several managers were unable to attend the meeting as they were haymaking.

Mr. W. A. Collings joined the Board in 1932 and five years later Mr. B. Crossman resigned and was replaced by Mr. O. E. Burdge of Court Farm. Mr. Verrier became chairman on the death of Mr. John Burdge in 1939 and Mr. W. E. Clement was to be asked to represent the Durban Trustees on the Board. By 1947 Mr. T. Burdge, one of the Durban Trustees, had died and it was reported that Mr. W. A. Young was to be chairman.

Mr. Verrier, who had been a manager for 45 years, resigned in 1948 at the age of 95. The Board wrote to him in May saying 'No doubt the following are still in your memory although most of them have received the Home Call' — they list the original 1903 managers, and add 'Many tides have passed beneath the bridge since then and you are still with us' — but not for long, as he died later the same year.

### **The Buildings:**

No water was laid on at the British School. It is probable that they had a well, because in 1908 as a result of a medical inspection the managers were to have the water tested. The test result is not stated.

At the new building the caretaker had to provide firewood but coal and coke were to be bought in equal parts from Barber Bros. and Counsell and stored in the old stable. The stoves constantly needed repairing; although £13.19.1d. was paid to Mr. Light to do this in 1921, five years later they were again in bad repair and in 1930 the Trustees had to fit three new ones.

The school was lit by gas and gas mantles had to be bought. Not until 1936 was the school connected to the main sewer and even then the Education Committee refused to pay for the work.

Mrs. Palmer, the caretaker, left in 1930 and was replaced by Mrs. Waygood at £25 p.a. When she left in 1936, Mrs. Reynolds of Penleigh took the job, still at £25.

In 1940 the Friends gave up their tenancy of the meeting room because Miss Sholl had died. It was then used as an air raid shelter and for the children's meals. Mrs. Reynolds was given a rise of £2 p.a. for the extra cleaning. Mr. Parsons decorated the room but the Education Committee again would not pay. The room was let out for meetings at 3s. (15p.) to include gas (i.e. lighting) but 6d. extra if fires were required, with a gratuity to be paid to Mrs. Reynolds. In 1944 it was used by the Junior Discussion Group supervised by Mr. Crease.

No interior painting of the building was done after the move in 1913. Mr. Needham was unable to do the work in 1918 as he could not find any labour. Finally he did

the work in 1925 for £41 and it was re-painted in 1931 and 1935. The next year the Education Committee did pay half the cost of tarpaving the playground (£44).

The managers discussed topics such as the more economical use of disinfectant and whether to spend 15s. (75p.) having the windows cleaned outside.

### **Education:**

As these are the Managers' minutes and not the school log book there is little mention of what was taught. Every year the managers approved the timetable and the work of the head teacher and signed certificates for these. In 1936 there was a poor report from His Majesty's Inspector but this is the only report ever to be mentioned in the minutes. Three years before this the managers reported that a girl had won a scholarship but her father would not let her take it up. It seems probable that the latter fact was the reason for the entry, and not that a scholarship was a unique event. There is no mention of any other child having gained one however.

In 1905 Dr. Johnson closed the school for a fortnight owing to a measles epidemic. The school was closed in December 1935 due to measles and chickenpox and in 1937 for influenza and one case of diphtheria (often fatal to children before the last war).

In 1911 there was a suggestion that boys (only) should learn to swim but nothing seems to have been done. The managers did not approve of the 'New Physical Exercises' introduced in 1921 and thought the children would do better to continue their lessons instead, and as it turned out that the 'Scandinavian Dances' or 'Swedish Drill' were not compulsory they decided to supply suitable games instead. We do not know what these were, but in 1937 Miss Stradling was asking for a further supply of shinty sticks.

Thirty shillings (£1.50) was spent on tools for boys' handwork in 1926, and in 1913 a piano had been supplied by the Education Committee on payment of £5, kindly given by Mr. Franck.

Claverham parents asked for a school to be built there unless transport could be provided, because of danger from motor traffic (in 1928). Four years later it was decided to finish school at 3.15 so that the Claverham children could catch the bus.

### **Reorganisation of Primary Education:**

In 1922 the County Inspector, Mr. Snelgrove, suggested that children up to 8 or 9 should go to one of the Yatton schools and then be transferred to the other, but Durban's Trustees rejected this. (A 1939 minute says that boys can now stay at the school until they are 11). In 1932 the managers decided they would be willing to consider plans to amalgamate the two schools.

A meeting at Congresbury in 1935 discussed the building of church senior schools for children over 11 but as this was suggested by the Church of England the Durban Trustees again rejected the idea. However, there was a joint meeting of the managers of both Yatton schools in 1946 when the arrangements obtaining today were discussed, i.e. infants at the Undenominational School and 7—11s at the C. of E. (the National School). Reorganisation was to start in September 1947. The Durban Trustees asked

about conditions for the take-over of their premises (on which they had a £500 mortgage) by the Education Committee.

In 1939 at the beginning of the war 30 evacuees joined the school. In the 1950s the population of Yatton began to grow and class sizes rose to 40, but the Education Committee would not agree to supply an extra teacher.

**Reference:** Somerset Record Office DD/X/LOC 1

*Marian Barraclough*

N.B. If you were at the Undenominational School before the war, we should be interested to hear your memories of those days. Do you remember the teachers, the stoves, the gas lighting, the shinty sticks?



## THE GREAT CANADIAN ADVENTURE PART II

Part I of the story of those who left Yatton in 1909 for life on the Canadian prairie can be read in YY. No. 9 (1992). We continue with the account written by May Burdge, who was nearly 16 when she left Yatton.

In 1910 Lou Peters opened a general store and post office; the mail was brought from Bassano by coach team. A little later Percy Holzworth began a small hardware business to serve Berry Creek residents. When the Peters family moved away Rose Hennessey opened her little store which included the Berry Creek post office.

In 1910 the first Berry Creek baby was born to the Peters family. Doctor Gordon was again in attendance and my mother was called to assist in caring for the new baby and mother.

Julius Warneboldt figured a method for getting lumber to the area in order to build more permanent homes. Arrangements were made with a firm in Red Deer to purchase lumber there and then float it down the river as rafts to Steveville. Every boy within miles wanted to be part of that venture, but a few selected men went to Red Deer to begin the project. They constructed river-worthy rafts from the purchased lumber and to these rafts they strapped and tied additional piles of lumber, and then pushed off into the river which flowed deviously towards Steveville. In all they covered nearly 200 miles. An entire book could be written about that river expedition. Sufficient to say that when they got to Steveville the rafts had to be dismantled and all the lumber loaded onto wagons and brought to Berry Creek.

When the need for schooling was apparent, Mr. McKellar began teaching classes in the Hambley home. Later, Miss Tarr and Miss Watts, both from England, taught the children in their little home, and within a few years one room school houses were dotting the prairie.

By the spring of 1914 the Berry Creek Gospel Hall was completed, but without a basement. Later it was moved to the present location, very near the original site, and on to a cement foundation. The basement of the hall was used in later years as a second school for high school students.

In our summers we often had picnics, or went berry picking or swimming in the creek for fun and relaxation. Horseback riding was also popular. In the winter we skated, sometimes for miles up and down the creek in the moonlight. There were family parties, Christmas concerts and sing-songs around the organ or piano.

Archie McKellar and I began courting. One evening he came with his horse and buggy to visit, and whilst he was in my parents' home my brothers switched front and back wheels on the buggy. He drove home in the dark quite oblivious of the prank, and the next morning his father drove off with the buggy. Not until he returned later in the day did Archie realise what made the buggy look so strange. We had lots of laughs, like the time Rose kept asking in the store for 'butta' and no one could understand her English accent; or Mrs. Auls from Germany who always called it 'budder'.

Ours was the first wedding in Berry Creek. We were married in the family house in June on my twenty first birthday. Isa Brotherston had supervised the sewing of my long white dress. Archie wore a navy blue suit and my sister, Olive, was bridesmaid. The ceremony was performed by my Uncle Sid. Just before the wedding I had searched in vain for prairie roses, so I was joyfully surprised when Mr. Bloise arrived from Calgary with a lovely arrangement of flowers he had selected for the occasion. About forty guests were present and refreshments were served in the garden. For a honeymoon we went to our own little home.

Marriages and new families soon enlarged the community and together as neighbours and friends we shared many joys and sorrows. Our first baby girl died at eighteen months. Sister Olive died a few years later following surgery for goitre. She had married Edgar Burkinshaw and they had two small children who were left motherless.

One night the dog barked and Archie got out of bed to investigate. Mr. Smith had come into the yard on horseback. He had at one time operated the Fieldholme ferry but had recently moved to Sheerness. This night he seemed bewildered; said he had lost his way but was sure he would be alright in the morning. He complained that he had had a pain in his side a day or two earlier. I made him warm bread and milk and he went to bed in the spare room. In the morning he did not answer our call and we found him dead in bed. No doubt he had had a heart attack. Just the day before Phyllis van Housen had died of a heart attack, leaving three small children. The sadness of these occasions necessitated the setting aside of a plot of land for a little graveyard, just north of the Berry Creek Gospel Hall. A number of years later my good friend, Ruth Gurnett, buried her husband, Arthur, there and she began alone to face the task of raising five growing boys.

Mr. & Mrs. Langley had moved to Berry Creek with their young daughter, Honor, and a few years later Sidney was born. One night during a severe thunderstorm a bolt of lightning struck the chimney and burned a hole in the bed where Honor was sleeping. It appeared to have gone right between her legs and she was completely unharmed. Every window in the house was broken or cracked.

As more and more land was broken we began to have drought and dust storms which sometimes blackened the skies. Further discouragement came when one year the beet



web worms destroyed our gardens. I remember hailstones as large as golf balls which smashed windows, crops and gardens. As we heard the first stones strike the roof of the house, we ran for pillows to hold against the window panes — it didn't help much. Gophers and grasshoppers became constant pests, but we learned to cope. We also began to understand how best to produce the most with the particular soil we had. Irrigating the garden produced a bountiful harvest of vegetables. We canned saskatoons, rhubarb and gooseberries in quart sealers and stored them in the cellar for winter use. We had home-grown beef, lamb, chicken and pork and learned to smoke delicious hams and bacon; we were never hungry.

As the warm sun melted winter snows the coulees ran with icy water and the creek swelled and flowed faster, sometimes with icebergs afloat. It was always a competition in springtime to see who had the keenest eye or ear for the first crocus or meadow lark. Even the first gopher was a harbinger of brighter days, and we revelled in the furry pussy willows. As the ground was turned for seeding we could smell the earth, fresh and beautiful. Who can forget spring? Wobbly baby lambs, new born calves.

The telephone system between our home and the Burkinshaws was unique. Archie had acquired two instruments at a sale; he was always improvising or creating, if necessary. His sister Nellie, married to Victor Burkinshaw, lived a mile or so to the east and each of us installed a battery set and hooked into the barbed wire fence that ran between the two farms. It worked very well unless it rained; that usually grounded the system, or if a cow rubbed against the wires and put the phone out of order. Sometimes it provided fun, and often saved many steps. Messages that didn't get through by phone were usually written on a scrap of paper and delivered post haste by one of the cousins who enjoyed a ride on a horse to complete the mission.

In early days several preachers travelled our area. There was Mr. Swan, Mr. Sam Benner, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Stevenson and others. Mr. McKellar and Uncle Sid were resident preachers, and the latter began taking younger men with him to help in Sunday afternoon services held in nearby school houses. Horace Swan, Hubert Collings and Archie often went with Uncle Sid and learned much from his good teaching. At the Berry Creek Gospel Hall crowds often packed the building, especially for the annual thanksgiving services. At that time there was always abundance of hearty singing, good messages, a social time for the younger set and a turkey or chicken dinner complete with pumpkin pie etc. Even when harvests were small there was a genuine spirit of thankfulness and we counted our blessings.

During the thirties a great exodus from Berry Creek took place. Many were discouraged by the hardships they encountered and felt they could do better elsewhere. We bade farewell to a lot of people we had grown to love, respect and appreciate through the years. By 1939 most of the old-timers had left the district. That was the year that Archie died, February 9<sup>th</sup>. It was four months short of our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and exactly thirty years to the day since I had left Yatton to come to Berry Creek, as a young girl. We had a very happy marriage and together had experienced the truth of the 23rd psalm again and again. The Lord had been our Great Shepherd.

Older members of the family had already left the nest, but some of our eight children were still quite young when my husband died. Our oldest son Les lovingly took over the responsibility of caring for those of us who were still in the old family home and he ably managed the farm. Our oldest daughter, Mabel, was also still at home and was a wonderful help indoors and out. Frank was in Victoria attending school in order to become a teacher. He had to leave and go to war, and subsequently took up residence in eastern Canada.

In 1947 the family was quite grown and independent and I, too, moved from Berry Creek. In June of this year (1977) I will be 84 years of age and I can truthfully say that all those verses in the 23rd psalm are still very much part of my life; especially are the final verses increasingly precious to me: 'Surely goodness and mercy has followed — and will follow — me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever'.

For me prairie days are over, but memories linger. Memories I have of Berry Creek include, perhaps, the happiest years of my life.

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Mr. Ernest Burdge, whose first wife Nell was killed in the runaway accident in 1909 (see Y.Y.No.9), married Margaret Edwards in 1914 at Horsecastle Chapel, Yatton.

Brothers Len and Bill Burdge, who supplied this article, and Tom their younger brother, were born in Berry Creek and the family lived in the wooden house built by their father, Mr. Ernest Burdge. They pulled out in 1923 and came back to England where they farmed at Court House Farm, where the Gateway supermarket is now.

*L. and B. Burdge*



## CHILDREN' S COMPETITION

The two illustrations on pages 37 and back cover are by the 1st and 2nd prize-winners in a children's competition organised by the Society. The Society, having been left a small legacy by Charles Edwards, author of 'Pleasant Abode', decided to run a competition for children at the Junior School, which had been attended by Mr. Edwards many years ago. The brief was to paint or draw an old building in the parish and write about it in not more than 50 words. The pictures were judged by Dorothy Coe and the writing by Tony Coe. The winner, Martin Davies, had his picture framed as a prize.

A presentation was made to Martin at the Junior School on 17th June, attended by Society members Ruth Summerell, Tony Coe and Brian Bradbury. Tony talked to the children, telling them how the Society came into being, followed by Brian who spoke about the books published by the Society, which are useful for studying local history. Thanks are due to Andrew Bryden who monitored the competition in school.

*Ruth Summerell*



## THE ENCLOSURE OF THE COMMON LAND AND ITS EFFECT ON RURAL LIFE

The early 19th century upheaval in rural areas is often overlooked; writers tend to concentrate on that caused in industry by the factory system replacing hand craftsmen.

Much land was not being used effectively at a time when more food was needed for a growing population and enclosure of the common land enabled the new farming methods to be put into practice. Yatton & Kenn Moors were enclosed in 1815 and shared between the larger farmers, who had to be able to afford the cost of erecting hedges or, in the case of Yatton, maintaining the rhynes.

Men who had been farming in a very small way lost the right to pasture their cow on the common, to collect wood, etc. They became landless labourers, often ending their lives in the newly-established workhouses. Otherwise they migrated to towns to work in the new factories, or abroad to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and America to start a new life. Others, in their frustration, turned to crime and many rick-burners and sheep-stealers were transported to Australia. It is interesting to read the comments of John Rutter, writing in 1829, who says:

*'... the enclosure of nearly all the common lands was felt as a serious hardship by many of the cottagers who derived benefit from them, but when we regard the public advantage, especially if the land is of a valuable character, the improved salubrity of the district, and the increased facility of access to all parts of the levels, the advantages of the present system' (i.e. enclosed land) 'will be found to preponderate'.* He then adds a footnote:

*'It must be acknowledged that enclosures considerably abridge the comfort of the poorer cottagers, who ... have in many instances been deprived of essential advantages so long enjoyed ... and in some cases were reduced to the extreme of poverty from comparative comfort, or driven by despair to the commission of acts which rendered them amenable to the criminal laws. It would be well worth the consideration of those concerned in future enclosures, whether it might not be a judicious as well as a humane measure, to appropriate small portions of them to the poor families accustomed to derive benefit from the commons'.*

(John Rutter *'Delineations of the North Western Division of the County of Somerset'*, 1829)

An example of a holding with a right of common which ceased to be viable when this right was lost is the present Well Cottage, Claverham, originally a two storey two-roomed house with a fireplace at either end and dating from 1600 – 1650. It must have replaced a previous building on the site because common rights are ancient. It belonged to the Manor of Week (i.e. Court de Wyck).

In 1799 Ann Battiscombe was leasing it from Earl Poulett; she sub-let to the occupier, name unknown. As well as the field and garden behind the house he had the field across the road and two small fields up by the 'Star'. In addition, he had all the rights of a commoner. By 1821 Poulett had sold it to John Norman and it was occupied by John Osmond. The commons had been enclosed and all that remained to him was the home field and garden. By 1841 it had no land at all and had been divided into two labourer's cottages. Many other small farmers in the parish were similarly affected by the enclosure of the commons.

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## ROSE FARM

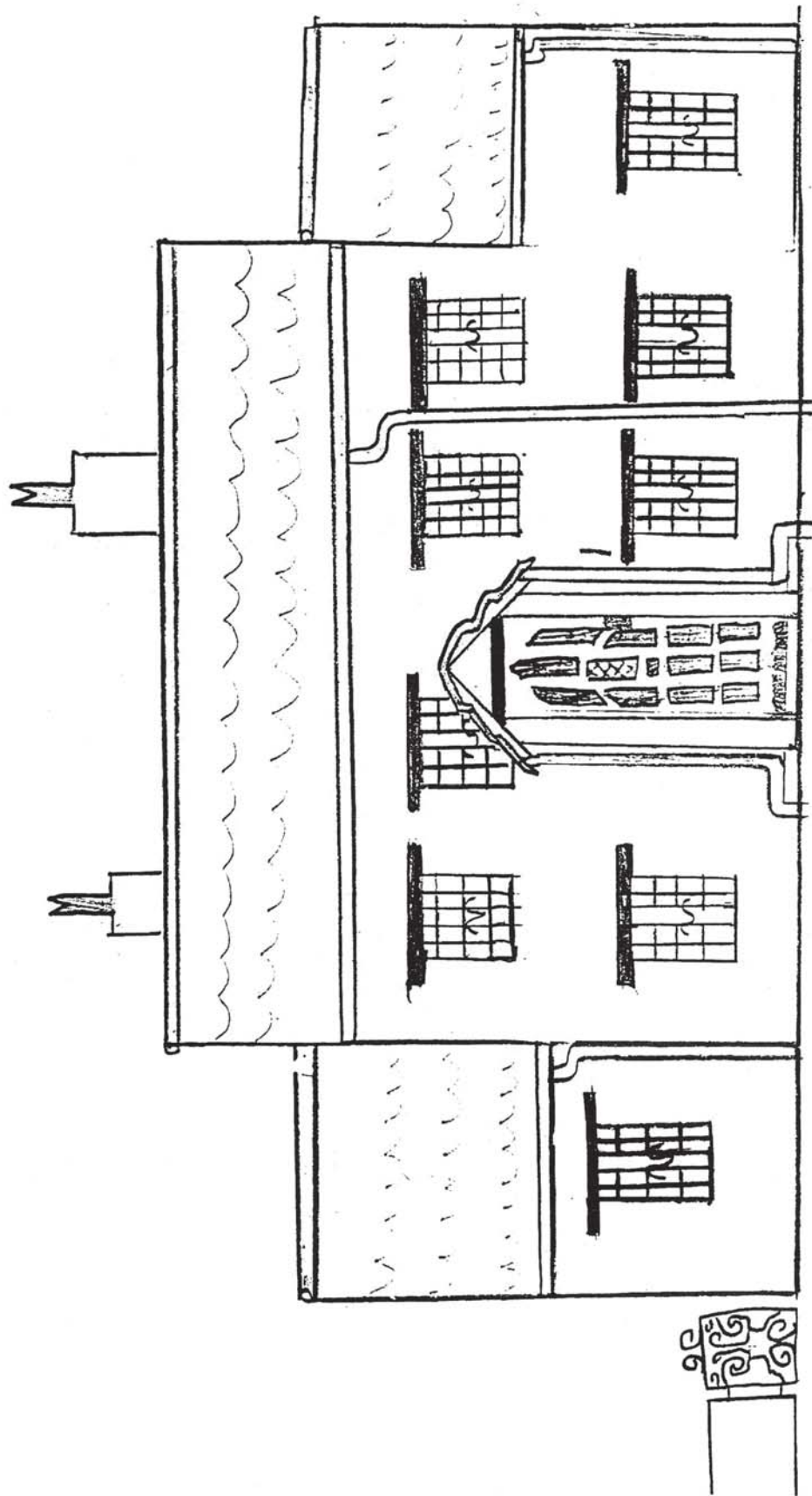
Rose farm dates back to about 1500 and is one of the oldest buildings in Claverham. The middle part is today the oldest part. About 4 years ago the building was renovated and many of the old features were (taking)<sup>+</sup> taken out. In the front room there is a huge fireplace with an old bread oven in the side. On the side parts a gallery was (d)<sup>+</sup> added at either end. Sometime during the last 100 years. Rose Farm belongs to our friend. Flor<sup>+</sup> Teresa and her childrens playroom used to be a dairy.

Martin Davies 5C Yatton  
Junior

See Page 29.

Martin Davies, 5C  
Yatton Junior School

ROSE FARM, CLAVERHAM





# Church of St. Mary.

By Jemma Smith, 6D  
Yatton Junior School

