

It gives us great pleasure to be issuing the first copy of "Yatton Yesterday". We should like to thank all who have helped us with this production – our President, Jack Crease, for his editorial, our research members for their articles, and above all, the many residents of Yatton who have lent us so many documents, maps and anecdotes.

We hope our journal will encourage others to join us in our research, or pass on to us documents, photographs and stories of our past village life.

A. F. Coe Chairman Yatton Local History Society

### **EDITORIAL**

May I commend to you the first publication of the Yatton Local History Society. I hope you will find it interesting and it will be the precursor of many such.

Throughout my years of living in Yatton I felt a great desire that there should be a record of its past history, and I am very glad that the Society have undertaken this pleasing task.

If you know or have been told anything of interest about the village please inform the Society.

I feel it a great honour to have been asked to be their first President.

#### Jack Crease

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Cover design by John Scally

### YATTON CHURCH CLOCK - 1537 - 1877

The first records of a clock at Yatton church comes from the Churchwarden's Accounts for the period 1536/1540. William Sensam, who also made clocks for St. Nicholas and Christ Church in Bristol, was "payd in ernes for makyng a clock and chyme" the sum of 1d in 1536/7. Over the next two years a total of 62/3d appears to have been paid to the clockmaker and the total cost of the whole project over the four years was £4.0.3d. (£4.01).

It appears that the clock would not necessarily have been lodged in the tower in the first instance: early clocks did not have faces as we know them today. The word clock derives from the French 'cloche' and the first examples were bell striking mechanisms. Certainly a case or 'clock howse' was commissioned and this must have been of some ubstance. Records exist of "hewyng a tre for ye clocke howse" and 1/2d was spent on construsting this edifice.

By 1541/2 the mechanism was apparently working well for payments are recorded for "keepyng ye clocke" — presumably a winding fee. In 1546/7, 1/- (5p) was disbursed "for reparations of the clocke all the yere" — no doubt, an early form of maintenance contract, the manufacturer's warranty having expired. It is possible that Yatton, as Sendam's home village, may have been granted a preferential rate. The City of Bristol archives record a bond for £20 in 1566 to cover St. Nicholas church clock by the same maker and there was a condition that subsequent maintenance would be carried out at 20d (8p) per year for six years and thereafter at 10/- (50p) per annum. Sensam also earned 4/6d (22½p) in 1567 for repairs to Christ Church clock in Bristol. The Christ Church clock was apparently a complicated mechanism which gave problems during the period 1554/67. In 1566 an expenditure of 4d was sanctioned for expenses "to go to Comsbury for ye clockmaker to go hither ageyne".

It is not recorded whether or not the clockmaker was Sensam himself but as he had made the original this seems most likely; no doubt to the sophisticated inhabitants of Bristol, Congresbury and Yatton were equally remote. A hint of unwillingness is suggested on Sensam's part for after the sexton's long journey into Somerset the next entry records a payment of 1/2d (6p) "for 2 diners and breckfasts given to ye clockmaker to corrage hym to apply and follow his works". Warranty claims and mechanical repairs have an honourable tradition still continued in the motor trade over four centuries later!

Reverting from the man to his machine, the clock presumably continued more or less satisfactorily until the invention of pendulum movements during the 17th century indicated the desirability of improvement. Pendulum control was very considerably more accurate than the original verge and foliot method, the most noted example of which is still to be seen in Salisbury Cathedral. Galileo's discovery of the pendulum principle had taken place in the early 1600s and revolutionised timekeeping in a similar fashion to the effect of the microchip on accounting machines in our century.

The exact records of the conversion of the Yatton clock to pendulum movement have still to be located, but at some time between 1670 and 1700 the mechanism was taken apart and rebuilt. The wooden barrels carrying the drive weights, which would have been horizontally opposed in the original, were relaid in parallel in a new frame and a new shaft (the middle wheel of the clock side) laid in to transmit the drive up to a second new rod holding the escapement wheel and pendulum drive. The middle wheel of the going train as it stands today is certainly of late 17th century manufacture but the escapement shaft and wheel now in place are 19th century improvements on the 1700 version.

It is indeed unfortunate that the very records which would have been of most interest to us, covering as they would the period of conversion to pendulum operation, are nowhere to be found. At some time between 1939 and 1979 the Churchwarden's Accounts for 1595/1720 disappeared. They are recorded as present at an inventory of church documents taken just before the last war but were not lodged at the Somerset Records Office with the other sources for this paper in 1979. The search for them continues.

The conversion work would presumably have been done by a local blacksmith and his charges would make interesting reading.

Records start again in 1726. Throughout the 18th century the rate for winding the clock appears to have been 5/- (25p) per year. Various minor repairs are recorded and in 1732 it was necessary to remove the mechanism altogether for attention. Where it was taken and what was done is not mentioned, but £3.15.6d was a considerable sum 250 years ago. Twenty years later in 1753 John Martin and Richard Reed charged 8/6d for carriage to and from Chewstoke where the famous Mr. Edward Bilbie carried out further work to the value of £3.10.0d.

The years 1758/1761 were expensive ones but are of particular interest to us: it seems likely that the clock first had a face at this time. A total of £11.2.6d was expended on "a new Horologe, painting the same, carriage from Wrington and putting up". Mr. Bilbie, no doubt scenting further good business, was again involved to the tune of £4.14.6d. For this amount he would have had to carry out some fairly involved work to construct a drive relay to the hands. Unless the clock was mounted directly behind and on a level with the face, intricate gearing similar to the present arrangement in the belfry would have been necessary.

It seems strange that, having made this substantial expenditure, a further £2.10.0d had to be paid to Mr. Bilbie a year later in 1762 *"for sending and cleaning the clock and moving it to the East side of the tower"*. Possibly the Mark 1 version had given trouble and the solution was to reconstruct the hand drive with shorter rods.

Various routine expenses and repairs are recorded through the next hundred years or so until the faithful machine was removed and dumped without ceremony in a corner of the clock room to make way for the present Victorian brass and painted timepiece in 1877. We are fortunate that the churchwardens of the time did not exercise their right "to remove the old clock and devote proceeds of the same to necessary church expenses". The old clock remained at the scene of her former glory under a pile of old bell ropes for a further century before being lowered in 1982 for some overdue attention.

#### **Mechanical Notes**

The original pieces of the clock, dating from 1536/40 are the whole of the striking train (the left hand side viewed from the pendulum side) and the bottom wheel and barrel of the going train or clock side. It will be noticed that faint painted figures 0 - 60 survive on the inner face of this wheel, which is governed to make one complete revolution per hour.

The main frame, pendulum, conical drive weights, middle wheel of the going train and the pendulum suspension bracket and fixing screws are late 17th century and date from the major rebuild at that time. The screw threads on the mounting would appear to be hand cut.

The side members of the frame into which the shafts engage are fixed to the main frame only by wedges and the whole clock can be dismantled in less than fifteen minutes.

19th century parts are the vertical drive to the hands and the mounting brackets for this and the striker arm on the extreme left hand side; the cleaner edges produced by machine tooling techniques can be easily discerned. The anchor deadbeat escapement and its case hardened pallets are also 19th century replacements for the 17th century escapement which would have been contemporary with the items mentioned above. The brass escapement wheel was badly damaged and bent during the years of neglect and has been remachined to as new condition.

Missing parts are the cog wheel at the end of the clock barrel which would have engaged with the one on the hand drive to change the direction of the force. Also absent is the cog which would have engaged with the inner top of the strike governing mechanism.

Apart from the reworking of the escapement wheel mentioned above, the only other new parts made have been the paddles for the striking train over-run shaft: the originals had rusted completely away. The weight ropes now in use are discarded bell ropes. An examination of the historical records suggests that renewal of ropes was a frequent occurrence.

It should be borne in mind that when the clock was functioning the drive weights would have run over pulleys to give as long a drop as possible with a view to minimising winding visits. In this application the clock drive weight would have been the smaller of the two conical ones. In the absence of a pulley to reduce the loading on the mechanism the clock is currently running on a much lighter weight.

The whole machine has deliberately not been restored to 'concours condition', the aim having been to demonstrate as nearly as possible how it would have appeared during its working life.

# **Appreciation**

Grateful thanks are due to the following who have assisted at various stages of operations and indeed to many others who have encouraged the project by their expressions of interest.

Mr. Matthew Willis of Glastonbury for expert advice and historical guidance.

Mr. Robin Duys of Yatton for assistance in initial cleaning off and stabilising against rust.

Mr. Bernard North of Yatton for reworking escapement wheel and letting in new pendulum spring.

Unican Foods Ltd. Engineering Department for making replacement paddles and brazing up crack in pendulum fork.

Mr. Gerald Clements of Yatton for making wooden display frame.

Reverend and Mrs. Gordon Pollock for allowing the use of Vicarage Stables to conduct operations.

#### **Historical Notes**

The following pages contain extracts of data so far accumulated concerning the clock's years of operation. It is hoped that further research will elicit additional facts, in particular relating to the 17th century rebuild period.

R. H. Young

**April 1984** 

# **CLOCK DATES AND RECORDS**

		£	S	d
1536/7	Payd to Wm. Sensam in ernes for makyng a clock and chyme			1
1538/9	Payd to ye clocke howse makyng in ye Church Payd for hewyng a tre for ye clocke howse Payd to William Sensam for ye clocke -	1.	13. 2. 0.	3 0 0
1539/40	Payd for a locke to ye clocke howse Payd for takyng down of ye clocke howse Payd for stoppyng of the holes under ye clocke howse Payd in part for ye clocke Payd to and ye seid Clockmaker Payd for bryngyne home ye clocke Payd for bryngyne home ye frame of ye clocke	1. 1.	12. 2. 0. 2.	4 0 2 3 0 8 6
1541/2	To ye Clarke for keepynge ye clocke		3.	0
1545/6	To J. Lette for keepyng of ye clocke		3.	0
1546/7	For reparations of the clocke all the yere		1.	0
1582	Payd for keepyng the clocke			4
1583	Payd for keepyng the clocke			4
1592	Pd. to for mending of the clocke		1.	8
1594	Payd for mending the clocke			6
1595	Payd to George ? Coomer? for mending the clock			3
1596	Payd to George ? Creese? for mending the clock			7
1726	Brown for a Spring for the Clock and Lonthning the Hamer		4.	1½
1729	Jeremiah Wainwright for keeping the Cloak		3.	9
1730	Wm. Nobb for mending the Cloak		15.	0
1731	William Nobb for mending the Cloak Mr. Townly for mending the Clock		7. 7.	6 6
1732	Pd. for mending the Cloak Spent when took down the cloak Pd. for Carriing the Cloak and Cariing him back again John Nobb for helping putt up the Cloak	3.	10. 1. 4.	0 0 0 6
1733	Pd. for Gimmos for the Clock Case The Clockmaker for riting the Clock and Expence		3.	10 6
1734	The Clockmaker for righting the Clock		2.	0
1735	Clockmaker for cleaning Clock		5.	0
1737	Mr. Townley mending Clock		2.	6
1739	Mr. Townley for repairing the Clock Samuel Alford for mending Clock		2.	6 6

		£	S	d
1740	Repairing and cleaning Church Clock		10	6
1742	Mr. Townley for mending and repairing the clock		7.	6
1744	To John Wilmott for looking after the Clock a year due at Lady Day 1745 To John Wilmott for mending the clock		5. 2.	0
1745	To John Wilmott for looking after the clock a year		5.	0
1746	To John Wilmott for looking after the clock a year		5.	0
1747	To John Wilmott for looking after the clock a year and work done as receipt		6.	6
1748	To John Wilmott for looking after the clock a year due at Lady Day 1749		5.	0
1749	Pd. for a pint of Oyl for The Clock		1.	1
1753	Pd. John Martin & Richd. for carrying and fetching the Clock from Chewstokes Pd. Edward Bilbie for repairing Church Clock	3.	8. 10.	6
1755	Pd. for a clock rope		6.	0
1756	Pd. Mr. Bilbie for repairing clock and by bill	1.	0.	6
1757	Paid for a clock rope		8.	0
1758/61	For a new Horologe	2.	12.	6
	For painting the same	2.	12.	6
	For carriage from Wrington and putting up To Mr. Bilbie for the clock For carriage of same	4.	10. 14. 12.	6 6 6
1762	Paid Tho. Bilbie for cleaning clock Thos. Bilbie for mending and cleaning clock and removing it to the East side of the Tower	2.	7. 10.	6
1763	Edw. Bilbie about ye clock as per bill	1.	1.	0
1766/7	Ed. Bilbie for cleaning clock Ed. Bilbie for cleaning and mending clock		10. 11.	0
1768/70	Ed. Bilbie for cleaning clock		10.	0
1771	Edw. Bilbie for mending clock as by bill	1.	19.	0
1772	Oil for bells and clock Mr. Bilbie for cleaning clock		3. 7.	7½ 0
1773	Edw. Blbie for cleaning clock		7.	6
1774	Oil for bells and clock		2.	7
1775/7	To Mr. Bilbie for cleaning clock 2 new ropes for clock Oil for clock	1.	10. 4.	$     \begin{array}{c}       6 \\       0 \\       3\frac{1}{2}     \end{array} $
1779	To Mr. Bilbie for repairing the Clock	1.	1.	0

		${\bf f}$	S	d
1780/2	Paid for cleaning the clock		7.	0
1791	Paid Rich. Baber for repairing the Clocke	5.	5.	0
1869	Cash to John Salmon for attending to clock, oiling bells, repairing clock	1.	15.	0
1872	Terrell & Sons: new rope for clock		6.	9
1877	Minute of Vestry Meeting, 2nd April;			
	"It was proposed by Mr. W. Baber, seconded by Mr. C. Light and carried unanimously that the Churchwardens be ernpowered to accept the new clock of which it was proposed to make a present to the parish and that they be authorised to remove the old clock and devote the proceeds of same to necessary church expenses."			
	It is therefore presumed that subsequent entries relate to the present clock, which is by Dell & Co. of Bristol and bears the date 1877.			
1881	Repairing clock		10.	0
1882	Repairs to clock	1.	14.	0
1884	Dell for clock	1.	6.	0
1885	Dell & Co. for clock	6.	15.	0
1892	Mr. Bevan for repairing clock		8.	0
1893	Repairing clock	4.	10.	0
1894	Attending clock	1.	0.	6
1897	Clock repaired by Dell & Co.	12.	10.	0
	Note: - At this time the whole interior of the tower was altered with new floors being put in and all the bells being hung on one level instead of two as previously. This necessitated modifying the striking apparatus: the quarters had previously been chimed on bells 1 and 4 – they now struck on 3 and 5. The total cost for all this work including a commemorative plaque still in the porch, was:-	242.	17.	7
1930	Minute "The clock would greatly benefit from being cleaned"			

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# Note from Mr R . Clement, 38 Derham Park 20th February 1984

My Grandfather – Frederick James Clement – purchased a property in the High Street, now Loader's shop, to develop the premises as a Saddler and Harness Maker from two Kingcott brothers whose father had died. This was on 28th November 1894 and the purchase price was £500. A piece of land at the rear and side was purchased from Miss Cooksley of Linden House to provide a lawn and garden. At that time F.J.C. lodged with the Gregorys at Barberry Farm, almost opposite, until the premises were ready for occupation, when the family moved from their home at Warminster. Part of the land purchased was later developed.

The saddlery workshop was above the shop premises. As a young child I remember a Mr. Gliddon working there who lived at the top of Yatton (i.e. Rock Road area), also another man whose name I do not remember who lived at Rose Lynn in the High Street. In addition to saddlery and harness making the business supplied traps and wagonettes to collect people from the railway station to transport them to their home, etc. They also had a contract with the GPO to collect the mail from Yatton station and deliver it by fast pony and trap to Wrington, Langford, Burrington and Blagdon. This contract of course ceased when the Wrington Vale Light Railway was opened in 1901.

In addition they collected commercial travellers from the station and took them around the various villages calling upon their customers. As far as I can remember the last two were Gardiner, Sons & Co. of Bristol (now Gardiner Haskins) and H. H. & S. Budgett, wholesale grocers. In each instance they would be taken through the various villages to West Harptree where they would be dropped, presumably to return to Bristol on some regular service from that area, whilst the wagonettes returned empty to Yatton. On 21st April,1905 the premises were badly damaged by fire and needed rebuilding.

With the coming of the motor car, plus the railway to Blagdon, most of the wagonette trade was lost so this side of the business faded away. In its place, with the roads being surfaced with tarmacadam, a bicycle shop was opened which ran for a few years, but probably finished when a number of sons were called up for military service in the first world war.

After the end of the war the building at the north end was let to a Mr. T. R. Atlay to start a garage business, before moving further down the road to the present garage site. The small building in between was later let to a Mr. Arthur England as a fruit and vegetable shop and carried on by his widow for many years. It was eventually demolished when Frank Travis built his house on the site.

My Grandfather died on 14th January 1932, aged 80 years, and the house, shop and business were acquired by the Travis family on 17th May 1932.

Mr. Clement is a member of Yatton Local History Society.

# Does Anybody Grow These Apples Now?

It is interesting to note that auction details of 1920 for property at North End state that the orchards included in the sale were planted in 1901 and were now in full production. They were stocked with Blenheim Orange, Bramleys, Warners King, Hardwicks, Rich's Favourite, Court Royals, Hereford Beefing, Fearns Pippins and Tanners.

# Fieldwalking

During late August fieldwalking was carried out in the parish in conjunction with members of Bristol and Avon Archaeological Research Group, by kind permission of the landowner.

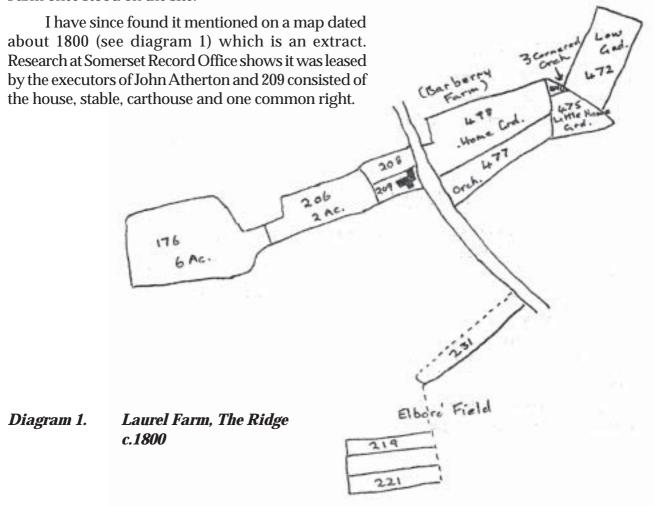
Finds included 3 flint flakes, Roman grey, black burnished and Samian ware sherds, the rim of a medieval cooking pot and various pieces of post-medieval earthenware; sherds of 18th century combed slipware, fragments of a 19th century clay pipe and sherds of 19th and 20th century china.

Earlier in the month one of our members took part in an excavation in a neighbouring parish.

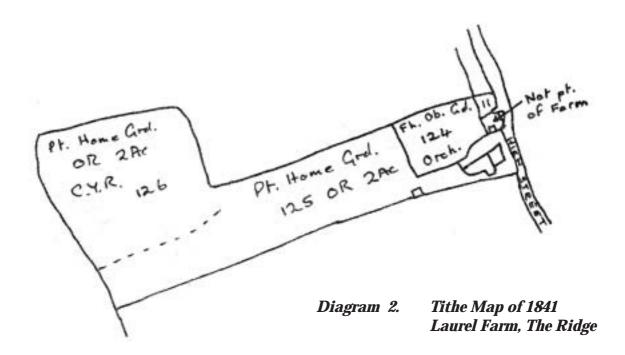
# The Beeches, 135 High Street Yatton, Avon

My active interest in local history began when we moved to the above address in June 1982.

It was whilst digging foundations for a greenhouse and conservatory that the remains of a wall were found. This lead me to join the Local History Society, where I was told that a Laurel Farm once stood on the site.



By the time of the Tithe Map of 1840/42 John Atherton owned and occupied lands shown in diagram 2, 124 being farmhouse, outbuildings, garden and orchard.



In 1889 George Atherton died and his executors, Thomas Price and Thomas Hardwick sold Laurel Farm to George Wm Rolls and Walter Counsell, for £938, to include timber. Laurel Farm at this time consisted of farm house with cottage, garden, hauling way, outbuildings and closes of pasture, orchard and arable land, adjoining and abutting on the main road in the Parish of Yatton (see Diagram 3).

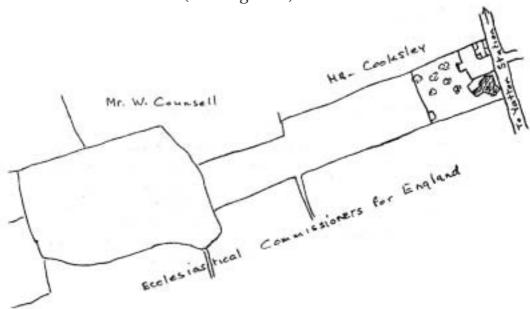
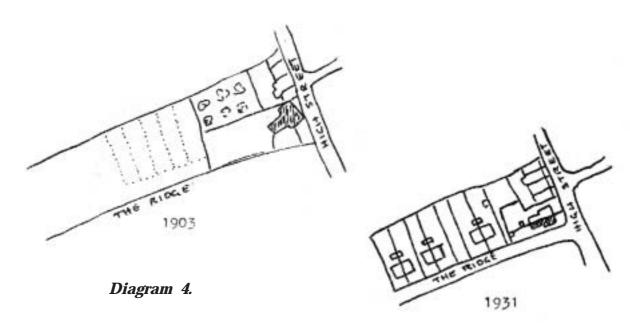


Diagram 3.

It is about this time that Walter Counsell had Laurel Farm demolished and the pair of semi-detached villa residences on the High Street and properties in The Ridge built. This was shown on the 1903 map with the plots pencilled in, but by 1931 the map was changed to show The Ridge and High Street more or less as it is today. (See diagram 4).

Having built the houses between 1900 and 1905 Walter Counsell let them yearly on Ladyday and Michaelmas Day tenancies. The Beeches was occupied by Frederick Henry George Rogers Wallbridge Udall.



In November 1918 the Estate of Walter Counsell was wound up and among the properties included in the sale were the pair of semi-detached houses in the High Street, known then as The Beeches (135) and Nithsdale (137) as well as the houses in The Ridge. All were let on Ladyday or Michaelmas Day tenancies with the exception of Oakwell which was on a 5 year lease from June, 1914.

In most cases the properties were purchased by the tenants, as was The Beeches by Mr. Udall and Nithsdale by Mr. S. Wake. Miss Udall lived with her mother after the death of her father on 14th October, 1926. A companion, named Miss Grove, also lived in the house and it was adapted by converting two of the bedrooms into a sitting room and kitchenette.

On 24th August, 1961, Miss Udall sold the property to William John Hicks, who, in turn, sold it to us on 4th June, 1982. We have extended, altered and modernized the property, yet trying to maintain its Edwardian charm, to accommodate my mother and grandmother as and when

"The Beeches" and "Nithsdale" (now named "Step-aside")

necessary.

At one time there was a dental surgery in an upstairs room in Nithsdale and during the depression a Labour Exchange was accommodated in the front room.

A stone drain with stone base and sides was found in the front garden of Nithsdale which could possibly be from Laurel Farm.

#### **Sources**

Map of about 1800 lent by Mr. Benjamin Crossman Somerset Record Office DD/PT, Box 47 Tithe Map 1841, Somerset Record Office P/Survey No. 373 Nos. 135/137 High Street Our Deeds

Leanna Ingle

# Land Sales in the Early 20th Century

"England is changing hands" it was said in 1920, and in fact from 1918 to the end of 1921 about a quarter of the land in England and Wales had passed from being tenanted land into the possession of the farmers. A transfer of land such as took place in the four years 1918 - 1921 had not been seen in such a short time since the Norman conquest. This change was not due to the effect of the war alone but had its roots in the agricultural depression of the 1870s and 1880s. Wheat growing areas were the worst affected by the depression, caused mainly by several wet summers and cheap imports of grain, and rents fell on average 26% between 1874/8 and 1894/8. For Somerset, which depended mainly on meat and dairy produce, the fall was only about 12%.

Land ownership had ceased to have political and socia1 advantages and was increasingly seen as an investment which it might be better to sell. From the 1870s prices fell steeply and there was no demand for land, as was found by many owners trying to sell parts of their estates to meet their debts. Six thousand acres of Wrington belonging to the Duke of Cleveland were put up for auction in 1895 – this included Havyat Lodge (a gentleman's residence), 26 farms, 2 pubs and parts of the villages of Wrington, Red Hill and Burrington. Sixteen lots remained unsold including six farms, for example Paradise Farm of 121 acres, despite its modern farm buildings, was withdrawn at £3,400. A few years later Nursebatch Farm at Nailsea was withdrawn at £2,700.

Early in this century, around 1906 - 1908, some farmers left Yatton to try their luck in Canada. Included in their number was :-

Mr. Ernest Oliver Burdge, the father of Mr. Leonard Burdge of Brick House Farm and Mr. William Burdge of Weeping Ash Farm. This family came back for the winter of 1919 and in 1924 finally returned to live, as tenants, at Court House Farm (where the Precinct is), later buying Chestnut Farm, North End. Other emigrants from Yatton returned, although some remained in Canada and U.S.A.

Demand for land revived about 1910 and between then and 1914 great estates were broken up and usually the tenants bought their farms, although they often paid more in mortgage interest than they had in rent. Some bought because they feared eviction by a new owner, and empty farms were now becoming hard to find.

After a break from 1914 - 1918 came a big revival in land transfers lasting until early 1922; selling had largely ceased by l925. The war had often meant double death duties when sons were killed in action (the duty was raised in 1920 to 40% on estates worth £2 million or more) added to which the shortage of labour, rising wages and inflation meant a huge increase in the costs of estate management.

Sometimes whole villages in Somerset belonged to one landowner and the effect on them of these sales must have been more dramatic than it was in Yatton where there were many smaller owners. At the time of the Tithe Award, 1841, John Hugh Smyth Pigott Esq. of Brockley was the only large landowner here owning much of the newly enclosed Kenn Moor apart from "Yatton Rectory", later known as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Two bodies owning land in Yatton to endow charities were the Trustees of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, later known as Bristol Municipal Charities, and the Society of Friends (Quakers). Other owners letting land to tenants included George Turner Seymour Esq., William Henry Goldwyer Esq. and a great many smaller landowners. Yatton is probably not typical, in that a proportion of farmers already owned some land. There was a transfer of land ownership here between 1800 and 1840, during which years Earl Poulett sold his Yatton estate. (Note: In 1841 Yatton included Cleeve and Hewish).

The Smyth Pigott estate of over 2,000 acres was sold by auction on 8th and 9th June 1914 in Weston-super-Mare and on 10th and 11th June at the Railway Hotel (now the "Firebox") Yatton.

### **Properties in Yatton were:**

**Horsecastle Farm** of 58 acres. The tenant was Mr. Edwin Brunt, under-tenant Mr. Stuckey. It was bought by Mr. Jack Burdge for £3,100.

**Ham Farm** of 98 acres "within a few minutes walk of Yatton Railway Station", bought by the tenant Mr. Henry Crossman for  $\pounds 5,525$ .

**The Grange**, North End — nearly 3 acres of land as well as the house, bought by the tenant Mr. Summers for £525.

Included in the sale too was Land Farm of 124 acres on the Congresbury boundary and land near Frost Hill then in Congresbury; about 165 acres mainly of pasture land in small lots of less than an acre to 2, 4 and 6 acres on average, bought by local farmers in most cases. There was however Lot 118 of 86 acres, pasture land by the River Yeo beyond the end of Wemberham Lane and this was bought by Mr. Lance of Weston for £4,750.

The Smyth Pigotts had previously disposed of the rest of their property in the parish, much of it at the Claverham end, and so in the 1914 sale less than 500 acres of land in Yatton changed hands.

This can be compared with villages in neighbouring areas of Somerset, where sales included:

- 1. Parts of the Ashton Court Estate auctioned by the Hon. Mrs. Smyth in 1916, 1917 and 1921. The 1917 sale of dairy farms and smallholdings in Long Ashton, Nailsea, Wraxall and Tickenham, amongst other places, raised £46,980.
- 2. In June 1917, 1,920 acres of farms, land and cottages, the outlying part of the Hunstrete Estate (the Pensford-Chelwood area) went for £60,795.
- 3. In July 1919, parts of Clevedon Court Estate, including farms in Clevedon and Tickenham, were sold on two days for a total of £79,270.
- 4. Also in July 1919, 3,000 acres including the whole of Charterhouse-on-Mendip and parts of Blagdon and Cheddar went for £11,268.
- 5. In August 1920, the Earl of Warwick sold property in Clutton and Chelwood including 12 farms for £60,827.

In Yatton, there were some sales after war ended – for instance, in December 1919 the Misses Griffin auctioned grazing land, pasture, arable and a cottage, in Yatton, Kenn and Kingston Seymour, in 21 lots. In January 1919 Laurel Farm, Claverham, and some pasture land were sold by Richard Sherring of Hallatrow, gentleman, and Frank Beale of Weston-super-Mare, bank manager. Laurel Farm, a smallholding, was occupied by Mr. Levi Pike and pasture land was let to Mr. John Burdge of Claverham Court, Mr. W. Naish of North End, Mr. Ashman of Wrington and Mr. Benjamin Crossman of Claverham. The tenant, Mr. Pike, bought the farm (now the egg farm).

On 22nd October 1920 the 402 acre Badman Estate was put up for auction at the Assembly Rooms, Yatton, the auctioneer being Mr. W. H. Shiner. George Badman was a member of Yatton Market, lived at Park Farm and died on 17th April 1897. His executors were A. G. McGregor, a farmer of Portbury House, Kenn, and J.R. Bramble, a solicitor of Cleeve House (burnt down in late 1960s) and later of Weston-super-Mare. Included in this sale was Park Farm (40 acres) let to Mr. Thomas Jones and bought by Mr. J. H. "Jack" Burdge for £6,150.

Home Farm, Horsecastle, about 3 acres, let to William Wallace Burdge and bought by him for £1,000. Part of Wemberham Crescent was later built on the land.

North End Farm,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  acres, let to Alfred Naish and bought for £2,000 by Mr. Norman Stuckey.

Barberry Farm, 29 acres, let to W. J. Gordon Williams and unsold at auction.

The Ferns, now the Grey House, let to Henry Cuthbert Barnard, sold for £1,275.

The Gables, North End, let to Wilfred Wilson, sold for £1,000. This house had a tennis court, croquet lawn, hot house, engine house and battery house. Before the 1914 war they generated their own electricity (verbal, Mr. L. Burdge). Mr. Harold Stuckey lived there subsequently.

The sale included various orchards, pasture land and land on Kenn Moor let to farmers including Mr. Williams of Barberry, Mr. Jack Burdge, Mr. William Wallace Burdge, Mr. Naish and Mr. Jones.

As an example of prices in 1920, a stone cottage of 4 rooms and kitchen let to Mrs. Gallop was sold to Mr. H. F. Smith for £101. This was in the sale immediately following the Badman auction.

Also in October 1920, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were selling land and property by auction. Apart from grazing land the main items were Rectory Farm (the Prebendal house) with cottages and 110 acres, let to Mr. A. C. Price at a yearly rental of £310, Rectory Cottage (the Eagles) bought by the tenant, auctioneer W. H. Shiner, and "Penleigh", High Street, "an old-fashioned cottage residence occupied by Mr. W. G1iddon". Farms in Congresbury, e.g. Honey Hall, were included in this sale.

The last, large, local sale was that of the Somerset Estates of the Bristol Municipal Charities held at the Assembly Rooms, Yatton, on 18th and 21st January 1921. This included 19 farms and some smallholdings and cottages in Congresbury, Hewish and Wick St. Lawrence, with the Ship and Castle Inn (Lot 13) at Congresbury.

Also offered were 23 lots of "land suitable for building, market gardens or smallholdings", mostly in Congresbury (e.g. Wrington Lane, Rhodyate and main road). In Yatton property tenanted by Miss M.A. Hardwick was auctioneed. This included Weeping Ash Farm and some land (the subject of a separate article on page 19). The money raised from this sale was to be invested in trust for the Charity in Stocks, Funds or Securities; the days of buying land purely as an investment had finally ended.

The position in Yatton then remained fairly static, auction sales being mainly confined to the property of deceased persons, until the 1950s and 1960s, when the building boom commenced.

**References:** 

F.M.L. Thompson — "English Landed Society in the 19th Century"

Sale particulars from Mr. R. J. Hoddell of Hoddell, Pritchard and from Mr. M. Wheeldon, John Hodge, Yatton.

Verbal information from Messrs. L. and W. Burdge.

Marian Barraclough

# New Ordnance Survey 1: 25,000 (2½") Map

The 1984 Edition, ST 46/56, Yatton and Chew Magna, combines two sheets in one and replaces the previous Congresbury sheet. The map is clear and easy to read but unfortunately these new maps are being issued without covers. Footpath diversions in Yatton – for example, the path from Mendip Road by the allotments – have not been included.

The map is on sale at local shops and, despite these criticisms, it is worth buying.

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The following extracts are taken from an article in the Bristol Mercury and Daily Post for Saturday, 9th January, 1886

# "Extraordinary Scene at Yatton: Fat Ox Feast"

"If all the prodigal sons who in Bristol and the neighbouring counties had long ago wasted their substance and been living on husk and swine food had been summoned to Yatton to eat the fatted calf, and to "drink and be merry", there could not have been a larger or more mixed and strange gathering than that which yesterday thronged the village, crowded the inns and mobbed the dining tent in Mr. Wyndham's field to sit down to or rather to walk away with the fatted ox that had been roasting during the night for public distribution. A high wind had been blowing all night and the poor and the hungry, the loafing and the curious, the ne 'er do well and the sons of "Belial" who prowl by night, seem to have scented it afar. Soon after daylight some of them commenced a journey by road in order to be in time for the "feast of fat things"."

"They came literally in thousands. The committee with an ox weighing 8 cwt., two well grown sheep, three hundred quartrains of bread, and sundry hogsheads of 5X ale and cider, had provided for a thousand, but nothing short of a miracle would have fed and satisfied 5,000 hungry persons who thronged Yatton village yesterday."

"One old lady, 84 years of age, journeyed from Kingston Seymour on purpose to have a taste, as she remembered feasting of the last ox roasted whole in the neighbourhood 76 years ago, when the first sea wall of Kingston Seymour was completed.

Hundreds of Bristolians journeyed by rail, and of course, amongst these were such gentry as the nigger minstrel and those brethren of the "gentlemen in cork", the stepdancer, the tambourine man, the Italian street harpist with his olive complexion, persuasive face and matted black hair, while a pair of peripatetic Scotsmen, with his bagpipes and rather ancient lassie in short plaid skirts joined the merry group who considered themselves among the numbers bidden to the feast. So crowded was the midday train that when the miscellaneous throng detrained at Yatton, the platform was crammed from end to end, and hundreds leapt the fences without giving up their tickets, and showed no more deference to discipline and ordinary rule than the mob at a prize fight."

"The committee had arranged to seat and dine 580 at a time but after the arrival of the 1.15 train, the crowd, finding the knife and fork business had already commenced, burst into the tent, carried away the side canvas, raided the tables and so upset all the arrangements of the committee that all was confusion and turmoil and the huge tent was packed with a dense mass of struggling people, each one of whom seized anything within his reach. Two or three had a dispute over the head of the beast, another, clutching two pounds of solid meat very underdone, was triumphantly hauling it aloft in his clenched fist, when a still more hungry visitor dexterously dashed it from his hold, and there was a scramble for it as it fell."

"The 8 cwt. of ox beef was cleared in no time, and in the struggle for possession, some of the tables were ripped up. Then came the contention for the beer and the cider, but the committee seemed to retain command of the taps, and drawing off the beer in gallon cans they stood on the tables and baled out the nut brown ale to the thirsty, struggling, clamourous multitude, who were now all on their feet, standing inches deep in mud ........"

"The whole affair, started with the best intentions and the most generous motives, proved such a saturnalia that, although it made Yatton more lively than it had been for a century, probably another century will pass before Yatton people consent to roast a second ox."

The article goes on to say that the ox was given by Mr. George Badman "who for years past has been accustomed to generously distribute a large quantity of beef and mutton amongst the poor of Yatton at Christmastide". We are also told that Mr. J. Counsell of Yatton gave two tons of coal with which to roast the ox, and that the field, belonging to Mr. Richard Wyndham, was an 8 acre field near the station. The spit was turned by a threshing machine engine.

"The ox was put down to the fire between eleven and twelve o'clock on Thursday night, and those attending it throughout the night had no pleasant task, as the gale which blew from the north-east till three o'clock was followed by driving sleet and rain for a couple of hours, during which the kitchen, which was built in the open field, was partially roofed in with an iron shield or bonnet".

"From the time the public entered the field, between twelve and one o'clock, the mud accumulated and in a couple of hours the greater part of the field was in a state of liquid mud....... Conspicuous amongst those in the field were the members of the Clevedon amateur fire brigade, who marched in with Sir Edmund Elton at their head, and they were all in uniform. The hotels throughout the afternoon were blocked with visitors, and many years have passed since Yatton was so crowded with people."

#### The **WESTERN DAILY PRESS** of the same date added:

"There was an ornamental arch erected at the entrance to the field, and over the engine was displayed the motto "Welcome to all" and on the reverse side "Long Life to our Donors". The band of the 1st Gloucestershire Engineer Volunteers gave their services".

Extracted by Tony Coe

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## The Cams of Claverham House

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Britten of Cadbury Farm have kindly lent the Society documents ranging from 1682 to 1865 including covenants, indentures, conveyances, and wills and letters.

For the purpose of this article I have selected the will of John Cam, and his connections with Cadbury Farm, alias Land Farm, alias Binneys. He lived at Claverham House but owned Cadbury Farm, then in the parish of Congresbury.

This will, dated 26th January 1795, is signed by John Cam, and witnessed by John Gregory, John Osmond and the "mark" of Mary Dyer. The copy is dated 11th February 1795 and vouched for by R. B. Simmons, and T. Foord, clerks to Mr. Baker of Blagdon. It reads:-

"The last will and testament of John Cam of Claverham in the parish of Yatton, in the county of Somerset: Whereas my daughter Elizabeth at present labours under an infirmity or disorder of mind,:

I therefore bequeath unto my wife and daughter Amelia Cam, their executors etc. to maintain and support my said daughter Elizabeth, the half yearly rent or sum of fifty pounds to be issuing and payable out of that estate at Rolston in the parish of Kewstoke, now in the occupation of Edward Blackford, and also that estate in the parish of Congresbury now in the occupation of Thomas Gregory (Land Farm) for and during the lifetime of my said daughter Elizabeth."

He then proceeds to exhort her guardians to take care of her, and *"if it pleased God to restore her reason"*, he wishes that she has the power to take over for herself the sum of £50, or any actions necessary to obtain it.

After debts and funeral expenses have been discharged he makes the following bequests:-

To daughter Harriet Baker £4,000 one year after his death,

Son-in-law Samuel Baker £50,

Grandson John Baker a silver tankard,

Daughter Louise Seymour £3,000,

Son-in-law George Penrose Seymour £50,

Daughter Amelia Cam £6,000,

Brother-in-law Richard Plaister £50.

Sisters-in-law Ann, Hester and Rachel Plaister five guineas each,

William Turner, John Plaister, and Mrs. Whitechurch of Backwell, five guineas each.

The rest of the estate he bequeaths to his wife Elizabeth for life, and after her death to his and Elizabeth's three younger daughters not to be touched until after her death,

#### He then adds:-

"All my household goods, chaise, horses and stock upon the land, I die possessed of, I give unto my wife Elizabeth Cam . . . I appoint her sole executor of this my will and testament in witness whereof I have herewith set my hand this 26th day of January 1795, Jon Cam.

Two burial certificates found with the deeds reveal:-

- 1. Elizabeth Cam, the wife, died and was buried at Yatton on September 16th, 1799, (Burial Certificate witnessed by D. M. Clerk, Vicar of Yatton, Feb. 7th, 1846).
- 2. Elizabeth the daughter died in the Parish of Brislington, at Dr. Fox's, May 14th, 1832, aged 82. Witnessed by G. C. Cartwright, Curate, 1846.

John Cam must have died soon after making his will, because in a valuation of Earl Poulett's estates (S.R.O. DD/PT, Box 47) of, or soon after, 1799, Amelia Cam, aged 33, is paying rent for Claverham House, said to be "a house fit for the accommodation of a gentleman". There were stables, a carthouse, barton, garden, two orchards and some land, including part of Broadcroft. By 1842 the house and land were owned by Mrs. Norman although she did not live there.

On 21st October 1835 Land Farm was leased and sold to John Jenkins Rogers and the lease refers to a "peppercorn rent".

On 22nd October 1835 a Conveyance was drawn up by Amelia Cam (now living at Huntspill Court in the Parish of Huntspill) selling the estate to John Jenkins Rogers for £1,999.

Various fields are listed by acreage, and others by names, e.g. The Wall, The Orchard, Batts, Backside-Batts, Cadbury Hill and the Batch.

Six acres also came from William Codrington and two acres from the Mayor, Burgesses and Commonality of the City of Bristol and the Governors of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital.

The witnesses were Gabriel and John Cripps, Yeomen of Huntspill.

As a follow-up to this sale there is a handwritten letter by Bishop Gregory (Christian name, not title) confirming that his father Thomas Gregory rented Land Farm from the late John Cam. He mentions changes in the land areas. The Wall becomes the Drove, the Batch – Binney ground, the Backside – Oxhouse and Barton, the Eleven acres – Lower Binneys, etc.

Bishop Gregory was one of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Yatton. Further details of this Society will be dealt with in our next edition.

One further item concerning John Cam's will is the reference to Elizabeth's death at Dr. Fox's of Brislington. Dr. Edward Long Fox, born 1769, was a relative of Caroline Fox, the famous diarist of the day. He came to specialise in the treatment of the insane. In fact he was a pioneer in the moral and medical treatment of the insane, as opposed to the horrors of Bedlam. He was influenced by the "Retreat" at York run by the Tuke family – Quakers.

He took a private house in Down End in 1794. In 1840 he moved to a house and additions at Brislington and made it a private asylum for games, occupational pursuits, and church services. His two sons later carried on the practice. (Source – City and County of Bristol 1954 –Bryan Little.)

No record to date of the death of Amelia Cam. Presumably buried at Huntspill.

#### **STOP PRESS:**

### Clevedon Mercury 23rd August 1984.

A grant of £879 approved by Woodspring Planning and Conservation Authority to replace sash windows of Claverham House. This eighteenth century country house is a listed building.

### Western Daily Press - Friday, 14th September 1984.

Brislington House for Sale for £1 million – built as an asylum by Dr. Edward Long Fox in 1815 – in its heyday, a home for the titled insane, who were looked after by their own valets and servants. House has 132 bedrooms, 13 reception rooms, a ballroom, several kitchens and bathrooms and a chapel.

What will it become? Hospital, Nursing Home, Training College, School or Hotel?

Tony Coe

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# How Things Have Changed!

In May 1949, 35 years ago, the White House, Claverham, was to be auctioned at the Lord Nelson, Cleeve, and the following glowing description was produced by the auctioneers:-

"... of particular interest to Huntsmen and other Sportsmen, having been the residence of the late Mr. Phil Turner, who was so popular and well-known in local sporting circles".

The house was approached by its own carriage drive from Claverham Road and it had two garages – one made into a stable – a harness room, yard, poultry house, store sheds and a chalet summer house. It was "situate in charming quiet rural surroundings. The premises are delightfully secluded and in no way overlooked at any point".

There were 2 acres of land, consisting of a paddock in front and a kitchen garden and orchard, with a second carriage entrance from the lane at the rear. There was room for a tennis court.

"The auctioneers wish to draw particular attention to this opportunity to obtain such a pleasant country home so well equipped and inexpensive of upkeep".

# Charity Land in Yatton

On 27th/28th February 1698/9 Edward Colston bought a farm and lands from William Dale of Yatton and conveyed them to the Governors of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, for the maintenance of six poor boys there, the revenue from the lands being to pay for their education. The Governors were the Corporation of Bristol. The document reads as follows – the numbering is mine.

All that messuage and tenement newly erected by John Dale, father of William Dale of Yatton, gentleman, with outhouses and barns.

- A. 13 acres of arable in Estovers.
- B. 1 close of meadow called Drawlands Meade, about 6 acres 1 close of pasture called Drawlands Upperground, about 12 acres.
- C. 1 parcel of land lyeing in Oldfield, 3 acres 1 parcel of pasture lyeing in Oldfield, 7½ acres.
- D. 1 parcel by Horsecastle called Farthings Pill, 1 acre.
- E. 1 meadow in Westmeade, 1 acre.
- F. 1 parcel of pasture in Horsecroft, 2 acres.
- G. 1 parcel of meadow in Dittland, 1½ acres.
- H. 1 parcel of arable in Twichings, ½ acre.
- I. 1 parcel of arable in Quarry Pitts, ½ acre.
- J. 1 parcel of arable in Worefield, 2 acres.
- K. 1 parcel of pasture by Biddlestreet, 2 acres.
- L. 1 parcel of pasture in Little Woolfield (or Woodfield), 2½ acres. 1 parcel of pasture in Great Woolfield (or Woodfield), 2 acres.

and several other parcels which I cannot identify with certainty, e.g. "1 acre in the holding of John Beales", or "pasture known by the name of Widow Dales".

**In February 1719/20** additional land was purchased by the Governors of Q.E.H. from Thomas Richardson the older of Redland in the parish of Westbury-on-Trym in the County of Gloucester, merchant, viz:

- 1. Meadowground in Oldfields Neck bounded by the house, orchard and ground of Thomas Hispley and by a green, and
- 2. One close of mead (6 acres) in the possession of Thomas Hipsley as tenant called Mannmead.
  - N.B. shown sometimes as Nunnmead, and I believe them to be the same.

In 1855 and 1856 more land was bought. This was:-

- 1. Battiscombe's 4 acres (to the north of Gangwall) so called because Ann Battiscombe, deceased, had once leased it from John Earl Poulett.
- 2. Lower Ground, about 1 acre of meadow land (adjoining the land of Weeping Ash farm).

In 1865 land was exchanged with the Society of Friends, giving them – the Friends
the land in Oldfield and receiving in its place Bullcroft (see map), possibly to make a more compact holding.

**Finally in 1872** the Governors bought a small piece of pasture from the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company, "Part of the 3 Acres". This is on the Cheddar Valley Line adjoining the Biddlestreet piece, and was the residue of a field bisected by the line.

**In 1906** Q.E.H. land in Yatton was transferred to Trinity Hospital Almshouses, Bristol, another charity administered by the Bristol Municipal Charities. The Municipal Corporation Act of 1835 provided that the financial management of the charities previously handled by the Corporation should be given to new trustees, and it was the next year that the Bristol Municipal Charities took over.

**In 1921** Bristol Municipal Charities sold all their land in Congresbury, Hewish, Wick St. Lawrence and Yatton at auction at the Assembly Rooms (Railway Hotel, now the Firebox), Yatton, on 18th and 21st January, and invested the proceeds in trust for the Charity in stocks, funds and securities.

It seems probable that the farm bought by Edward Colston from William Dale in 1698/9 is Weeping Ash. It was at this time "newly erected". The reasons for this assumption are that :-

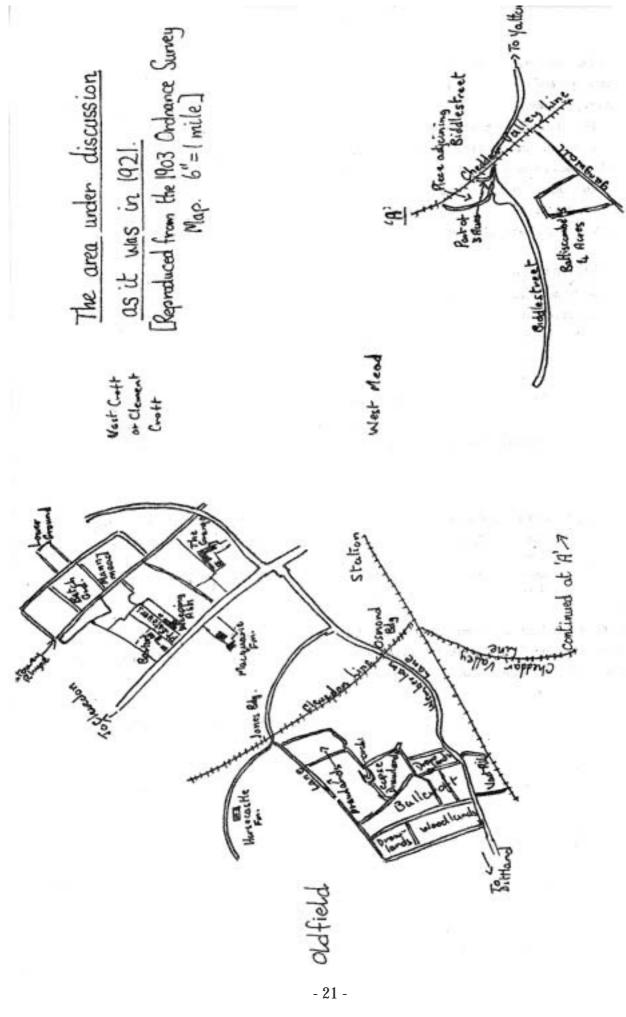
- (1) it was the only farm building owned by the B. M. Charities in 1921;
- (2) the other land sold in 1921 corresponds almost exactly with that bought by Colston plus subsequent additions and exchanges, and
- (3) that Weeping Ash is the farm shown on the 1734 plans "Survey of Several City Lands belonging to the Chamber of Bristol".

Possibly all the plans have not survived; I have seen four of them, which are – one parcel of land on Biddlestreet (Chescombe Road); ye Hams and Farthing Pill; Quarry Pitts and Whore Field (alia Wore or Oar), these two being on Blind Lane between Claverham Post Office and the "Star"; and Weeping Ash Farm.

Farthing Pill was part of the original purchase and there is a piece of land of this name (though not necessarily the same piece) on the 1841 tithe map, north of Wemberham Lane near the old gas company's premises. "Ye Hams" is possibly the "1 acre in the holding of John Beales" on the original list, as the 1734 plan marks "John Barnes" here. I have been unable to find the equivalent on either the tithe or modern maps because field boundaries have changed so much here through the building of the railway and enclosures. The only land sold in this area in 1921 was Vast Pill (3 acres) to the south of and adjoining Bullcroft.

In the 1921 sale there are three unenclosed pieces of arable in Oar Field, one unenclosed pasture here,  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre in Oarfield orchard and  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of unenclosed pasture in Quarry Pits – all let to Miss Mary Ann Hardwick of Weeping Ash Farm, and numbered I and J on the original list, also appearing on the 1734 survey.

Estovers (numbered A) next to the farm itself, and Mannmead (or Nunnmead) bought later from Thomas Richardson and situated behind the farm, were both sold in 1921. Colston bought 13 acres of arable in Estovers, and it was obviously divided as in 1734 one part belonged to Lord Pawlett. A note on a copy of the auction sale plan states "Miss Hardwick bought this part of Home Field (that is, Estovers) formerly belonging to two different owners".



Also sold were the pasture in Horsecroft (F), the pasture in West Mead (E), Drawlands (B), Dittland (G), Battiscombe's 4 Acres and Lower Ground, both purchased in 1855. The pasture at Biddlestreet can now be identified (K) and adjoining it is "Part of 3 Acres", bought in 1872. Most of this land was tenanted by Miss Hardwick.

Twichings (H) by 1921 was under the station. Other land in the sale, such as Vast Croft or Clement Croft probably correspond to items I have been unable to identify in the 1698 document.

With such a close correspondence in most items I think that it can be reasonably assumed that Weeping Ash was the farm newly erected by John Dale, and that therefore the present building dates from the late 17th century. In 1921 it was described as a "small dairy holding of  $16\frac{1}{2}$  acres". Purchase money was £1,866 and it was bought by Thomas Burdge of The Grange.

The house contained 2 sitting rooms, 6 bedrooms, kitchen and pantry, dairy and cellar. It had a barn, stable, traphouse and loft; a coalhouse, a calves house, 2 pigstyes and a fowl house, with a good well and pump. To the north was a barton with a garden, calving house, wagon house and cowshed to tie 15 cattle. Mr. W. Burdge, the present owner, has been kind enough to identify these buildings for me.

Edward Colston was born in Bristol and though he moved to London and made his money there, he established many charities in his native city. He died a batchelor, aged 84, in 1721, having represented Bristol in Parliament. Land at this time was a good investment. Other business men owned land in Yatton and this could form the subject of further research.

Queen Elizabeth's Hospital (the City School) was founded in 1590 by the will of a Bristol and London soapboiler, John Carr, who left revenues and lands, and laid down that the Corporation were to be the Governors.

**References**: Bristol Municipal Charities archives, Bundles 53, 54 & 55

City of Bristol Record Office No. 04480 "Survey of City Lands"

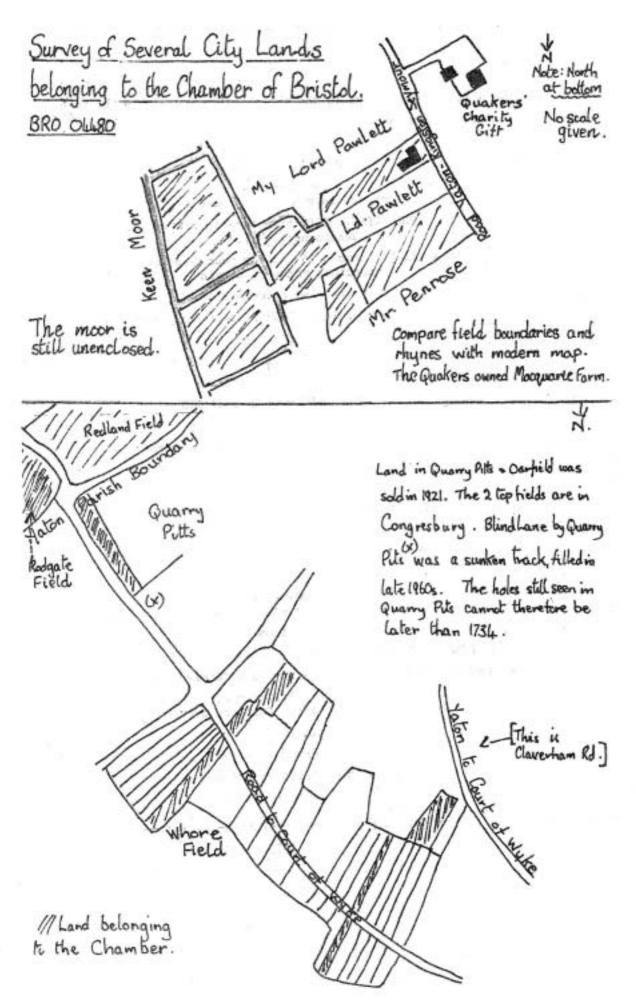
Copy of auction plan No. 5 of the Estates of B.M.

Charities Tithe map of Yatton, 1841.

The author wishes to acknowledge the help given to her by Mr. R. S. Hawkins Secretary General of Bristol Municipal Charities and by Mr. William Burdge who lent the auction plan.

Marian Barraclough

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