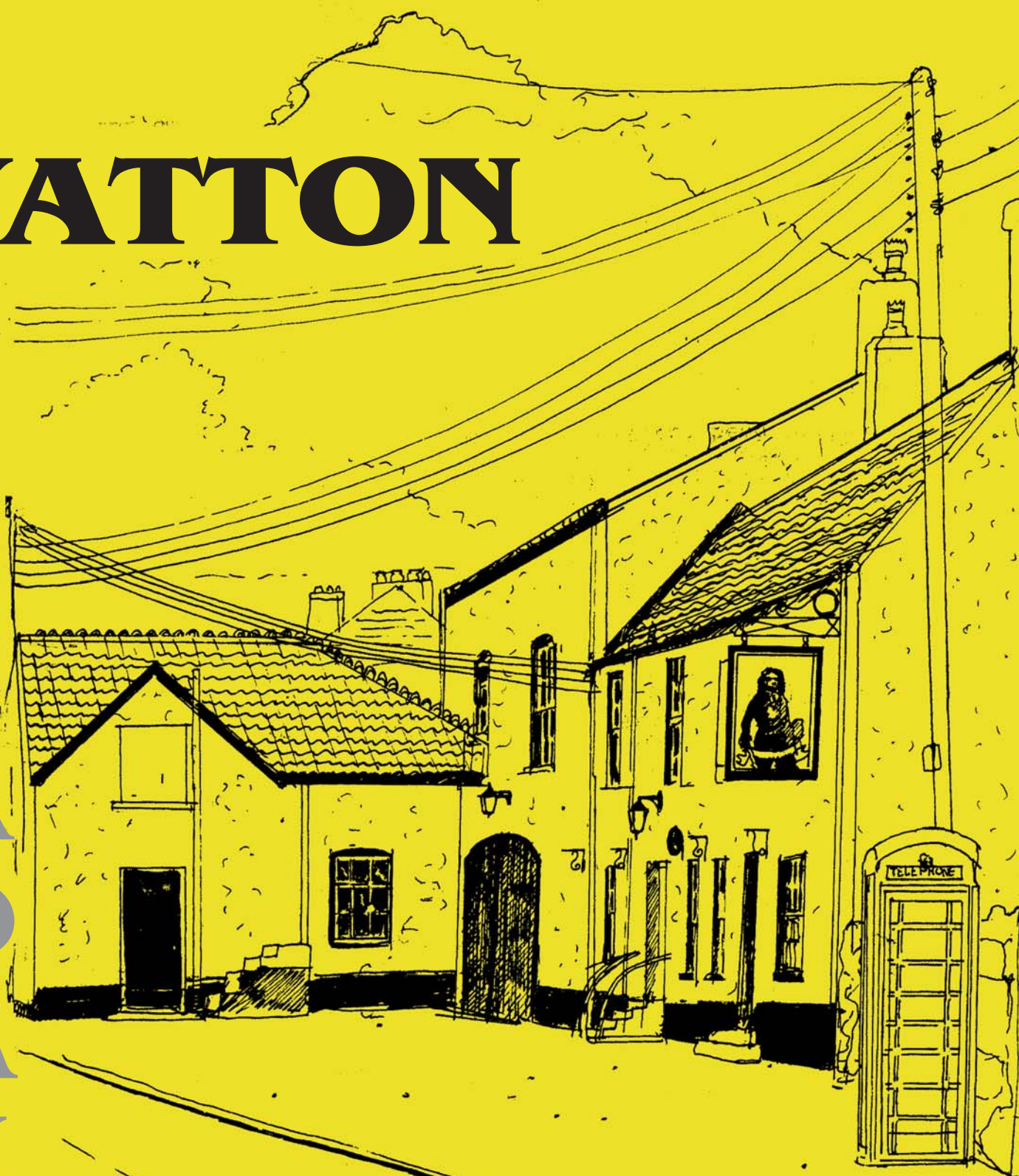


# YATTON

# ESTERDAY



*The house of Orange  
John Scally*

No.7- 1990

Yatton Local History Society..

## EDITORIAL

When our first annual publication appeared in 1984, we felt some apprehension over our ability to mine sufficient material for future editions. Six years later we are pleased to report that ample data is still being unearthed by our dedicated researchers, to the extent that several excellent pieces have had to be held over until the 1991 issue.

Our thanks are due as usual to the village newsagents for distributing our material without charge to the Society and also to our contributors, both from among our membership and the area at large. The meetings secretary has again excelled in the selection of speakers for our winter meetings and interesting venues for the summer visits: it is pleasing to record that the latter have enjoyed better support this year.

Membership remains constant at about 70. Newcomers to the village are especially welcome to attend our meetings, which this winter will be held at the Methodist Hall, Derham Court. Previous issues of this publication are still available and No.1 is being reprinted to special order (for the third time).

We hope that you will enjoy Issue No.7 — you may also care to obtain a copy of Yatton Village Trail, also published by the Society. This gives a thumbnail sketch of the older properties in the village and lends interest to a stroll around the older parts of Yatton.

Thank you for your support in buying Issue No.7: we hope to see you at some of our meetings over the winter.

*R. H. YOUNG, President.*

**NOTE:** Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of Issue No.1 should place an order with one of the local newsagents or with a member of the Society. When reprinted, a few complete sets (Nos. 1 — 7 inclusive) will then become available.

*Editor*

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# **Yatton Local History Society**

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## THE HISTORY OF YATTON'S INNS

In the 'Ale House Recognisances' for the early years of the last century only two inns are mentioned in Yatton: the **Prince of Orange** and the **Nelson Inn**, Cleeve — until 1949 in the civil parish of Yatton. In September 1822 Elizabeth Parsons was 'of the sign of the Prince of Orange Inn' with Samuel Parsons of Kingston Seymour yeoman — she was to pay £30 and he £20 'by way of recognisance to His Majesty's use'. She was allowed to sell bread and other victuals, beer, ale and other liquors in her house 'but was not fraudulently to dilute or adulterate the same'. The document continues:

*'She shall not use ... any pots or ... measures that are not of full size and shall not wilfully or knowingly permit Drunkenness or Tipling, nor get Drunk in her house or other premises, nor knowingly suffer any Gaming with Cards Draughts Dice Bagatelle or other sedentory (sic) game in her house or any of the outhouses ... by Journeymen Labourers Servants or Apprentices nor ... suffer any Bull Bear or Badger baiting Cock fighting ... nor harbour or entertain ... Men or Women of notoriously bad fame or suffer dissolute Boys and Girls to assemble in her house ... nor shall keep open her house nor permit any Drinking or Tipling ... during the usual hours of Divine Service on Sundays nor shall keep open ... during late hours of the Night or early in the Morning for any other purpose than the reception of Travellers ...*

These recognisances ceased after the 1820s.

An article on the Prince of Orange appeared in 'Yatton Yesterday' No.4, but to summarise: it was a 2-room plan house dating from mid-17th century. The name may refer to William of Orange who married Mary, daughter of Charles I, in 1641. If it refers to King William (1688) then it was named about 50 years after being built. It was the only meeting place in the village and was used by the Inclosure Commissioners, for market dinners, meetings of the Friendly Society and the Jury of Sewers (inspectors of the rhynes) who used it from 1849 until they ceased to operate in 1937.

The inn was owned by Earl Poulett until he sold it about 1813 to John Norman, who leased it out; the lessee in turn sublet. In the 1780s the licensee was James Parsons and Poulett's 1799 Rental shows that it was also a small farm because land behind the inn and down Claverham Road was part of the holding.

By 1827 the licensees were Charles Hale and James Parsons yeoman; in 1840 'inn, stables, outbuildings, barton and yard' were owned and occupied by Edward Thomas, with about 6 acres of land behind. In 1851 the licensee was Augustine Atherton, aged 35, born Yatton but had lived until recently at Pill. His wife came from Pill; they had four young children and a nursemaid aged 12. Between 1866 and the end of the century licensees were Richard Walters, Henry Manning, Charles Light, Frank Tinney and James Young. Frank Tinney states:

*'accommodation for cyclists, dinners etc. provided, large room seating about 200 to let for meetings etc., good stabling'.*

Joel Knight was licensee in the early 1900s and is remembered by Mr. Charles Edwards ('Yatton Yesterday' No.6). The entry in Kelly's Directory for 1902 reads 'wine and spirit merchant; horses & carriages for hire; good accommodation for cyclists; lock-up coach houses; private grounds attached suitable for sport etc; headquarters C.T.C.' During Joel Knight's tenure the inn and 6.3 acres of land were sold for £3,300. In 1948 Rock Road playing field (part of this land) was bought by the parish from George's Brewery. The corner of the inn projecting into the road, as seen on old photographs, was removed to improve visibility for road users (information from Mr. Charles Edwards).

Turning to the Nelson Inn — now the Lord Nelson rebuilt in the 1930s further back from the road than the original — the recognisances state that William Hill and James Hill yeoman were there in the 1820s. The 1821 Survey says 'Nelson Inn, gardens, orchards etc.' In 1799 John Hill, renting from Poulett, had a house, garden and carthouse. William bought it from Poulett and was still there at the 1851 Census, aged 77. He had two servants and two daughters at home, plus a farmer son. Rutter's description (1829) 'small inn and posting house' probably accounts for the 'visitor' in the census returns.

From 1824 to 1849, when they began to meet at the Prince of Orange, the Jury of Sewers used to gather at the Nelson Inn for dinner at 12 o'clock on the first Monday after 3rd May, 24th June and 29th September. Members were fined for being late or absent, half the money going to the landlord.



There was another inn, but not until the 1840s when the **Railway Hotel** was built (the 'Firebox') opposite the newly-opened station called 'Clevedon Road'. It was built on Twitching Orchard, part of the estate of the Manor of Yatton Rectory. In 1844 the Railway Inn, stable, cart-house, yard and garden were granted to Thomas Baynton, brewer, of Bedminster. In 1879 it was sold to Hardwick & Co. Ltd., Ashton Gate Brewery, Bedminster.

James Wookey was the licensee in 1851 and in 1866. The Census (1851) shows that he was 40, his wife 32, both born Yatton. They had two small children and four servants. Also living there were three unmarried older sisters-in-law and a

nephew. A visitor is described as 'gent from London', no doubt a traveller. By 1872 Edmund Parsons is advertising 'hotel and posting house, wine, spirit, ale and porter merchant'.

From the 1880s to the present century the licensee was James Mountstevens. His entry in Kelly's Directory for 1883 states 'First-class family and commercial hotel and posting house, wine and spirit merchant, ale and porter merchant and sole agent of Devenish's ales for Clevedon, Yatton, Cheddar Valley and Wells Districts'. By 1894 had been added a 'large assembly room seating about 300 and billiard room' The Foot Beagles are pictured outside the Assembly Rooms in 1894 in 'Yatton Yesterday' No.4. It was a popular place for dances, and many auction sales were held there.

The remainder of what today are called 'licensed premises' were not inns but 'beer houses'. At the top of the High Street was the **Bell Inn**, now the dry cleaning shop. The 1851 Census does not mention a beer retailer here but probably John Lukins, a stonemason, was selling beer because ten years later he is called 'beer retailer and mason'. He was 31 in 1851 and so too was his wife Eliza, a dressmaker. Charles, his eldest child, was 8. Joseph Lukins, also a stonemason, aged 27, lived just above, possibly in the cottage occupied by Florence Lukins in 1821. There is no mention of a 'beer house' in 1799 or in 1821, although a 'dwelling house, stable and garden' are shown next to the Prince of Orange. We have as yet no date for the old Bell Inn building. The Lukins were an old Yatton family; records show that one Joseph Lukins received a lease from Florence Stalling before 1620 of a cottage, garden and orchard in 'Middle Row' (the present Church Road area).





After John, his wife Eliza took over as 'beer retailer' and from about 1880 until the 1900s, their son Charles. By 1914 it has passed to Thomas James Lukins, who was also an undertaker and died in 1973. The Bell ceased to be an inn in 1963 when Mr. Bert Palmer was licensee. The building in the yard at the back was the skittle alley. (Information from Mr. Palmer, now of Nailsea).

Moving down the High Street we come to the **Butchers Arms**. This has been surveyed for the Society by two experts separately, Mr. David Dawson, director of the Somerset Museum Service, and Commander E.H.D. Williams. Both agree that the part end-on to the road is the original building and that it was a 3-room cross-passage house of the 17th century, with the part parallel to the road being a later addition.

In 1840 the original (end-on) house was occupied by Ann Cottle, the addition (parallel to street) was a house occupied by Samuel Chidsey; tithe no. 22, the next house where until recently Mr. Taylor lived, was occupied by Ann Curtis. This last house was not there in 1821, the site then being part of the garden of Causeway House. Ann Curtis, widow of William, had a son James, a blacksmith, who by 1837 had set up in Claverham, but now owned the three houses. On his death in 1869 his two sons inherited (they had moved away). Previously, in 1821, the two houses now forming the pub were owned by Ann herself, a copyholder of the Manor of Yatton Rectory. They were described as two tenements and gardens occupied by Thomas Sprod and Sarah Curry.

In 1851 Silvester Atherton aged 28 and his wife, both Yatton-born, were here and he was described as 'beerhouse keeper'. The entries in Kelly's Directories between 1861 and 1883 show Edward Parsley as farmer (or cattle dealer) and beer retailer, followed by Charles Parsley until the end of the century ('beer retailer' only). It does not state that it is the Butchers Arms but the conclusion is arrived at by the process of elimination. In 1914 Samuel Hollyman is 'beer retailer High Street'. There is a late 19th century photograph of the pub showing the name 'Butchers Arms' and it looked very much as it does today.

Another beer house was the present **Market Inn** (formerly the Railway Inn as distinct from the **Railway Hotel**). The 1851 Census has an entry appearing next to that for the Railway Hotel for Nicholas Hillier, beerhouse keeper, aged 55, born in Devon, and Ann his wife, born in Yatton, with a son and daughter helping. At the time of the Tithe Award, 1840, a man of the same name was tenant of several fields at North End and Wemberham but does not appear to have been living in Yatton. Nicholas was at the 'Railway Inn' in 1859 (Post Office Directory) and in 1866 (Kelly's Directory) when he would have been about 70 years of age.

By 1872 Thomas Burgess is at 'Railway Inn, Horsecastle' but from about 1880 to the present century Job Wilson Gregory was the beer retailer. The Society has not yet had the inn or the attached house, No. 3, dated. Buildings are shown here in 1799 (we have no details) & in 1821 there is No.189 A, B, C, occupied by William Gregory, John Tripp and William Nethway. In 1840 the north end (probably No. 3) was occupied by William Gregory, the next by the Tripps, who also had a

'house and court' occupied by M. Neades. These last two could be the Market Inn. They may be the original buildings altered — No. 3 has an early 19th century front — but we cannot say for certain.

Finally, moving to North End, it is difficult to imagine the modern **Bridge Inn** being a humble beerhouse. The old house was demolished about 1936. The 1821 and 1840 plans show a 'house, garden & orchard' on the site. Probably it was the house occupied by Abraham Young, aged 40, beerhouse keeper and farmer of 3 acres, in the 1851 Census. The 1859 and 1861 directories give A. Atherton and G. Atherton as 'beer retailers', possibly at this inn, but it is certain that John Fry, 'beer retailer, North End' was here in 1872; by 1889 he had been replaced by Mrs. John Fry and from 1894 by Henry Smith. The Society is indebted to the Revd. John Gregory of Sutton Coldfield for the information about this pub.



Mary Ann Fry, born 1846, married in 1869 Edwin Baker, who died, and in 1889 she married Henry Smith. John Baker 1871-1958 (buried at Kingston Seymour) inherited the inn from his grandfather, as his father, Edwin, had died. He, John, did not wish to live there and so his mother and step-father, Henry Smith, took it over. Henry died in 1932 and in 1936 John sold the inn. Henry's widow Mary went to live with her daughter in Staffordshire, this daughter being the Revd. John Gregory's mother.

Walter Smith the blacksmith was the son of Mary Ann and Henry; Walter was the father of Harry Smith of Chescombe Road and ten more children. The smith's shop which was at Kingston Bridge until about 20 years ago was not on the original site. The tithe map, 1840, shows a house and smith's shop on the bank of the Little River opposite Box Bush Farm, in the field between the river and the Bridge Inn.



One entry in the 1851 Census has not been fitted in — Samuel Chidsey 'beerhouse keeper' born Yatton. This entry is 'No. 107 Yatton Street'. Sarah Chidsey, presumably his wife, is listed living next door, entry No. 106, with the house servant only. Under No.107 come seven children aged 2 to 25, all born in Yatton. No.108 is the farm once standing on the north corner of the Ridge; the Census comes down High Street, so Nos. 106/7 must be just above and could be either side of the road. In 1840 one Samuel Chidsey was living in a house now part of the Butchers Arms (see above), but no records show if it was the same man and/or if he was selling beer there.

Beer houses came and went just as shops do today. Leases between 1700 and 1750 on a certain property originally belonging to Henry Sumner mention 'all that house formerly a brew-house'. The lessee in 1733 and 1750 was William Hooper 'maltster of Midsummer Norton'. The most likely site is in or off High Street, near Pullins the bakers.

Yatton was not on an important coaching route similar to the Bridgwater road with its many coaching inns, e.g. at Cross — indeed, it was not on any route, since Clevedon hardly existed. It may seem that there were a lot of beer houses in Yatton, but it was a very large parish. In 1851 the population was 2,061, making it the largest place in the area after Wedmore, Nailsea and Cheddar. At least one beer house, possibly more, existed at Cleeve. There were many acres of orchard and every farmer brewed cider for his workers. Perhaps this accounts for the strength of the late Victorian temperance movement.

## References:

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Ale House Recognisances Q/RLa  
Poulett Rental 1799 DD/PT Box 47  
DD/SS Yatton Deeds (536)  
DD/CC Wells Prebendary Estates  
Tithe Map 1840  
Sturge's Survey 1821 D/P/Yat 13/1/3  
Minutes of Jury of Sewers D/RA 1/2/120  
Drawings by Raymond Jones A.R.I.B.A.

Kelly's Directories from 1861- 1902  
Post Office Directory 1859  
R. G. Gilson in 'Y.Y., No.4  
(Prince of Orange)  
Parish Council minutes (Rock Rd)  
1851 Census Returns

*Marian Barraclough*

## Corrections to 'Yatton Yesterday' No.5 for 1988

Page 2: The vicar was the Rev. David Malcolm Clerk. ('Clerk' was omitted)  
Page 3: Thomas Moore (not 'Moon').

## THE WAR MEMORIAL

The Society thought it desirable to gather information about villagers who died in the 1939 - 45 war and whose names appear on the war memorial.

Our thanks are due to Mr. D.A. Day for the detailed research he has undertaken. If anyone has more information will they please contact Mr. Day or a member of the Society.

**BERRY, F. C.                      6th Airborne Division R. A., Gunner.**

Elder son in a family of two boys and one girl of Mr. & Mrs. W. Berry, who lived in 'The Old Farm', Main Road, Cleeve. Assisted on the farm before his call-up.

**DUCKETT, R. E.              R.N. Writer**

No details.

**FLOWERS, K. H.              R.N. Petty Officer**

Younger son of Mr. & Mrs. H. Flowers from a family of three boys and one girl, living at Broadcroft Avenue, Claverham. Lost his life with the sinking of the Ark Royal. Previously he worked for Wake & Dean in the school assembly section.

**HAZEL, S. L.                      7th Dragoon Guards, Trooper**

Only child of Mr. & Mrs. L. Hazel of Bishops Road, Cleeve. He worked in the butchery department of Yatton Co-op before joining the Army. He was killed on the Normandy beaches in the first day landings. His father was a signalman on the railway.

**LANGFORD, S. H.              R.N. Ordinary Seaman**

Served with the Royal Navy in the 1914-18 war and volunteered again at the outbreak of World War II. He lost his life serving on mine sweepers. He lived in the end stone cottage nearest to Cleeve Chapel in Plunder Street.

**MURDOCH, B. G.              R. N. Ordinary Seaman**

Was a retired Merchant Navy captain who volunteered at the outbreak of war. He served on H.M.S. Europa and lost his life on 6th March 1941, aged 56. Lived at Streamcross, Claverham.

**MONK, W.                      Merchant Navy Chief Engineer**

Lived opposite 'The Old Farm' in the house which was the old Post Office.

**PARSONS, J. E.              R.A.F.V.R.              Flight Sgt.**

One of two sons of Mr. & Mrs. E. Parsons of Castle Terrace, Horsecastle. Killed in action. His father worked on the railway as a porter and then as a shunter.

**STOCKER, A. E.              R.A.F.V.R.              Pilot Officer**

Flying Beaufort aircraft of Coastal Command, posted missing believed killed. Worked in his youth at Sainsbury's, London, later joining the Metropolitan Police. He was the only son of a family of two, one boy and one girl, of Mr. & Mrs. S. Stocker, North End, Mr. Stocker being employed at Wake & Dean.

**SAVAGE, W. F.            Somerset Light Infantry, Private**

Died 11th February 1944, aged 31. He had been on sick leave and did not move with his unit but rejoined it later, on 10th February. The next morning he was collecting sticks for a fire in an area supposedly cleared of mines, but unfortunately he was killed as one exploded. The Graves Registration Service were unable to trace his grave. He is commemorated by name on Face 7 of the Rangoon Memorial, Burma, erected in Taukkyan War Cemetery, Rangoon. Before his call-up he worked at Tom Avery's hardware store in Congresbury. He was one of six boys and three girls of Mr. & Mrs. A. G. Savage who lived in Elborough Street, Mr. Savage being a Post Office engineer.

**SHORT, E. I. M.            Guardsman, 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards**

A regular soldier stationed at Catterick. Returned from Dunkirk, then sent to Italy; fought in the battle of Cassino and was badly wounded. After partly recovering he was sent back to England where he spent a year in hospital in Bristol before dying on 5th October 1946, at the age of 27. Before joining the Guards he worked for Mr. V. Parsons, dairy farmer, Henley Lane, and Mr. L. Needham, builder, Claverham Road. He was the only son in a family of seven. His parents, Mr. & Mrs. E. Short, lived at 'The Cottage', High Street, Yatton. Mr. Short had started work at the age of 12 as a cleaner in the engine sheds of the G.W.R. at Plymouth, graduating to engine driver and retiring at the age of 62.

**SINCLAIR, D. B.            Lieutenant, 51st Highland Division**

Younger of two sons of Mr. & Mrs. R. Sinclair of Cleeve Court, Mr. Sinclair being a leading figure in the Lease-Lend Agreement. He later became chairman of Imperial Tobacco. He was knighted and created first Baron Sinclair of Cleeve, K.C.B., K.B.E. (29.7.1893 - 4.3.1979).

**STEVENS, A. W,            Sgt., R.A.F.**

No details.

**UPTON, J. L.                Driver, Royal Armoured Corps**

Died in June 1943 as a prisoner of the Japanese working on the Burma railway. Originated from a Clevedon family and was employed at Hales Bakery as a lorry driver.

**VINEY, M. H.                Private, Somerset Light Infantry**

Before his call-up he was employed at Tutt's grocery stores in Yatton. He was killed at Caen in France and buried in Bayeux military war cemetery. His parents, Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Viney of Rock Road, had a family of three boys and four girls. Mr. Viney was a stonemason and also ran the local Sunday paper business, papers being delivered by members of the family in the surrounding area.

**WALLER, A. D.            T. A. Major, 5th Battalion the Glos. Regiment**

Lived at Bishop's Well, Claverham Road.  
No further details.



**VAN KLAVEREN, W      R.A.F.V.R.      Sgt.**

A 20-year old airman who died in a prisoner of war camp. He was shot down on a raid and sheltered by the Dutch for some days before being taken prisoner and died from illness in January 1942. He was the son of Mr. & Mrs. C. Van Klaveren of Castle Terrace, Horsecastle. His father came to this country after the 1914-18 war and worked on the railway, first as a fireman and then as a driver.

**WAITE, C. J.                      R.N. Ordinary Seaman**

Lost at sea aboard H.M.S. Mahratta escorting a Russian convoy on 10th February 1944, aged 20. He was the youngest of a family of ten children, six boys and four girls, of Mr. & Mrs. A. Waite, No. 2 Council Houses, Main Road, Cleeve.

**DAVEY, WILFRED**

**Killed by enemy action** 4th January 1941, aged 19. He was a railway fireman based at Temple Meads station. After helping to fight fires there during a night raid he returned to his aunt's house at Totterdown where he lodged. He was killed in a later wave of bombing before he could join his aunt and family in the shelter. He was one of a family of six boys and two girls of Mr. & Mrs. Ted Davey, Cadbury View, No. 45 Claverham Road. Mr. Davey was a carpenter-decorator and undertaker.

**THE TUTTON FAMILY**

**Killed by enemy action** William, Elsie, Ellen, Betty and Dorothy. William aged 27 and Elsie aged 30 were husband and wife. Ellen was William's mother, Betty and Dorothy his two sisters. Before the war they lived at Horsecastle but owing to William's work as a railway fire man they moved to St. Anne's, Bristol, and were victims of the first severe night raid on the city, Sunday 24th November 1940. They were in their garden shelter with neighbours, eight in all, the sole survivor of whom was the baby Bryan, 14 months, who was found blown into the garden stripped of clothes. He had minor injuries including his foot. He was brought up by his aunt, Edith, his mother's sister, and now lives at 161 Mendip Road, Yatton, and works at Avonmouth docks.

**One** person whose name is not included on the war memorial, but is buried in the churchyard, is Walter Lewis **FIELD**, 'died through enemy action, 11th April 1941, aged 57'. Does anyone know where and how?

*D. A. Day*

## THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A VICTORIAN POSTMAN

On September 19th 1902 Mr. Dawes collected the mail from Portishead at 9.15p.m. with his horse and cart. Sixty five year old Mr. Dawes had been employed by the Post Office to carry the mail from Portishead to Yatton and back since 1862. At 10.00 p.m. he arrived at Clevedon where the postmaster gave him the Clevedon mail and saw him on his way at 10.50p.m. It seems strange that he spent fifty minutes in Clevedon we must presume he was sorting the mail or having a good gossip, or both. He was due to arrive at Yatton station at 11.28 that evening.

Mr. Dawes was sober but extremely tired and he must have been glad that retirement was not far away. He took the road to Yatton over the moors and at some point he fell asleep and fell from the mail cart, knocking himself unconscious. The horse wandered on grazing as it went, but in the dark it left the road and eventually over-balanced and fell into a rhyne.

Meanwhile there was consternation at Yatton station. The up mail train was due at 12.17a.m. and the down mail train at 12.42a.m. and where were the letters? The railway signalman at Yatton telephoned Bristol and message was sent from Bristol to Clevedon to find the missing post. The postmaster at Clevedon was puzzled as he had seen Mr. Dawes leave on time. He quickly jumped on to his bicycle and pedalled off along the road which he knew Mr. Dawes took each night. He arrived at Yatton even more puzzled as there was no sign of Mr. Dawes, whom he must have passed lying unconscious in the dark.

As dawn broke a Kingston Seymour labourer set out to milk his cows on the moor and he found the mail cart embedded in a rhyne and the horse up to its back in water and mud. The labourer having raised the alarm with his employer, set off for Clevedon on foot as fast as he could go. The employer, with the help of other moor men, managed to rescue the badly injured horse, the cart and the 'uninjured' mail bags.

The postmaster on his bicycle was returning empty handed to Clevedon when he met an individual who told him that he had seen an aged man with a whip wandering along the road and this proved to be Mr. Dawes who, having come to his senses, was looking for the mail cart and trying to obtain help from the sleeping inhabitants of Kenn and Yatton with no success. Finally the dazed Mr. Dawes, the muddy cart and the even muddier horse were united and the exhausted postmaster had the mailbags safely conveyed back to his office in Clevedon by 11.00 in the morning. The sad part of this story is that the horse had to be destroyed. Perhaps some of the present inhabitants of Yatton, Kingston Seymour or Kenn may remember being told by their parents about this incident in 1902.

### **Reference:**

R. C. Tombs, 'The King's Post', Bristol, 1905.

*Mary Campbell*

## BARBERRY FARM, YATTON

It is always pleasant to find that an old building which was defunct and almost derelict has been restored and put to a new use. This is what has happened to this, one of the oldest farmhouses in Yatton, which now provides accommodation for a family not connected with the agricultural industry.

The Grade II listed building, situated off the High Street near the station, was formerly a working farmhouse and was named after a large barberry bush in the garden.

The 'original' 17th century building dated 1680 - 1700 comprised a cross-passage house with two ground floor rooms and a fireplace in each gable wall.

Attached to the rear of the house (Barberry Farm Road side) is an outshut which is unusually of two storey eaves height containing the staircase giving access to first floor levels of both house and outshut. There is a step of about 3'6" (1.1m) from house ground floor down to the outshut floor level, and the stone work of the outshut which is about 18" thick (0.5m) appears to be older than the main building.

The ground floor rooms are about 9'6" high (2.9m) and the first floor rooms are of a similar height which is not common, and suggests that the roof may have been raised at some time.

The roof construction was of queen post trusses with butt purlins mortised with peg joints, and was thatched originally, but was re-roofed with pantiles. A fireplace is built into the stone wall junction of the outshut to the house at the first floor level.

An extension was added about 1750 to the west end of the house comprising a room in the main building and in the outshut. This has an unglazed timber framed window looking to what is an outhouse, added at a still later date; the window was probably looking into the farm yard prior to the outhouse being built.

The main house extension room has an 'inglenook' type stone fireplace with an iron 'pot crane'. There are many changes in ground floor level with steps in various combinations, with the outshut floor being at yard level. The outhouse has a small projection which may have been a bread oven and a well is supposedly under the stone flagged floor. Two bay windows and an entrance porch were added about 1900 to the front of the house.

We are pleased to hear that a large part of the land is still together as a holding and is still farmed by the Sweet family, because as a working farm we have been able to trace through various records the holdings back to 1775, and although it is not specifically named in the records it appears that the farm holding goes back at least to 1690.

We find that the property nominated as lease No. 92, in Earl Poulett's rental of 1799, and showing on the Yatton map of that time, is definitely Barberry Farm. It comprised then:



No. 479 House, garden, part of this being in a garden on the south side belonging to Athertons. **A good farmhouse**, barn, stable, cart-house and oxstables.

480	Orchard	466	The Neck
481	4 acres	468	6 acres
482	Home Ground	463	3 acres
473	Orchard	460	2 acres
467	Paddock	405	4 acres (surrendered)
465	Long ground	683	Low ground
677	3 acres	177	in Heath
181	Marshcroft	165	3 acres
169	8 acres	222	4 acres
147	3 acres	71	6 acres
82	The Acre		

**One right of common**

- 469 Westmeadow formerly S. Willmott's
- 444 2 acres Westmead
- 461 Bearfield formerly Plenty's (sometimes called Bear Garden)
- 462 part of Bearfields, formerly Catherine Taylor's

This lease was to Thomas Gregory to run for the lives of his children who were Martha (aged 31), Thomas (28) and Isaac (21). The rent was 18 shillings (90p) per annum plus 4 shillings (20p) for extra items or additions which may be the item Nos. 469, 444, 461 and 462 listed above. A herriot of £3. 10. 0. (£3.50) and 14 shillings (70p) was also agreed.

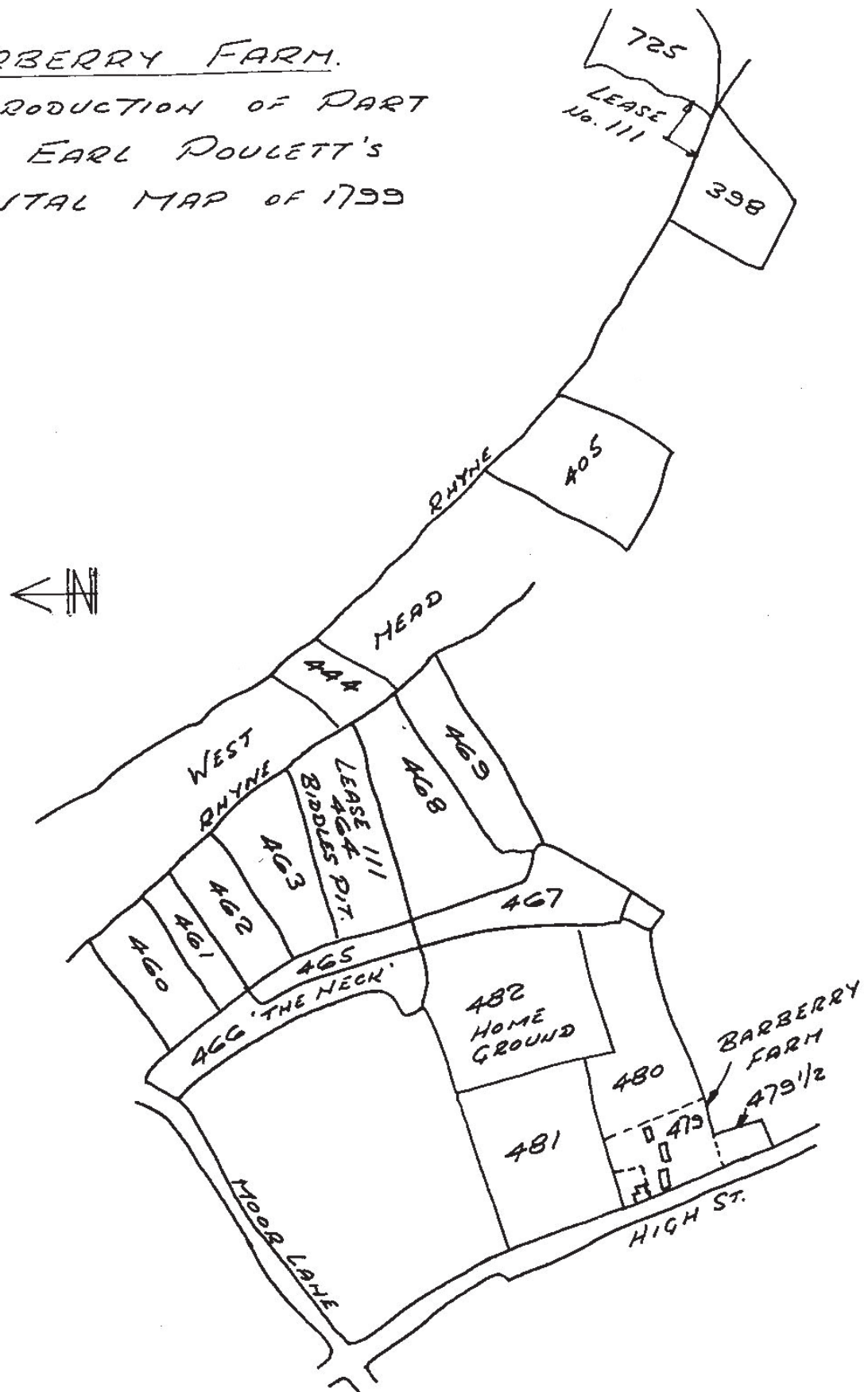
Thomas also held lease No. 111 comprising item 464, Biddles Pit, and 398/725, Horsecroft, for the lives of his children, Bishop (aged 16), Hannah (17) and Lydia (21), and lease No. 112 with item 103, 5 acres, 94, being 9 acres and 95, being 5 acres; this was held for the lives of William Gregory, who died in 1800, Edward Gregory aged 43 and Robert Gregory aged 41. These may have been his brothers. The rent for lease 111 was 3 shillings (15p) and a herriot of £1; the rent for lease 112 was £1. 5.4. (£1.27) plus 3 capons and herriot of £2.17.6. (£2.87). Thomas was obviously quite a prominent land tenant in the village at that time; he also had many children and was part of a large and prosperous Quaker family.

We found on lease No. 92 of Poulett's records in 1775, that Thomas Gregory had one tenement, one half-yard of land, sixty acres, and eight acres in Westmead, but a note on the back of the lease document states that he surrendered the premises to Earl Poulett on 10.2.1800. This was confirmed in the document list of 'Proposals and Fines' and listed as being the same property as that detailed on the lease 92 of 1799, i.e., Barberry Farm.

Having found that the lease was for one half-yard of land, sixty acres with eight acres in Westmead, we were able to trace the holding back through the records as follows.

BARBERRY FARM.

REPRODUCTION OF PART  
OF EARL ROULETT'S  
RENTAL MAP OF 1799



In 1767 lease No. 50 was held by Thomas Gregory for the lives of Ann his wife aged 22 and his brother Robert aged 11. Thomas was aged 24, described as a 'Gentleman'. This was for two acres in a piece of ground, formerly Mr. George Whitmore's, 'enclosed out of Westmead'.

Continuing with lease No. 92 we find that in 1758 Nathaniel Witts held a tenement of one half-yard of sixty acres and eight acres in Westmead for the life of Henry Witts, his son, and in 1737 a gentleman of the City of Bristol named Francis Witts held the same sixty acres plus eight in Westmead. Then in 1720 a Mr. George Whitmore, again a gentleman from Bristol, held a tenement with several closes called one half-yard of land, formerly leased by Thomas Taylor, gentleman, deceased. That was dated 8th December 1720 and earlier that year, 26th May, George Whitmore held the lease for eight acres of meadow situated in Westmead.

Going back even further we find in 1712 Thomas Taylor a gentleman of the City of Bristol held a lease for sixty acres, which was one half-yard tenement with several closes formerly belonging to Nicholas Nethway, whilst lease No. 92 in 1690 was transferred from Poulett's Trustees to Arthur Thomas of Barrow Gurney, a yeoman, on the death of Lord Poulett, and this lease covered a close of meadow, Biddle-spitts, two acres, and a close of meadow, Horsecroft, two acres; these are also named in lease No.111 of 1799 held by Thomas Gregory; also two acres in the common meade called West Meade. This too was held by Thomas in 1799 under lease No. 92. All these were part of the copyhold tenement held by Thomas Harris.

It is apparent that the land holding we know as Barberry Farm goes back to at least 1690, with a farm building for that time, and although a tenement is listed in 1712 it may not include the farmhouse. However it was usual for this to mean a dwelling house and, as we saw earlier in this article, the present building does date back to about 1690 with evidence of an even earlier construction in the outshut walls. So perhaps this holding goes back much earlier, maybe it is among other rentals going back to 1650 but unfortunately we cannot identify it from the information we have at present.

Coming back to more recent times prior to Mr. Peter Rex purchasing the farmhouse and doing the restoration, the farmhouse was owned by Mr. Albert Sweet and his wife from 1946 to 1982, then the Sweet family owned it until 1988. Before this a Mr. Withers was living there, but Mr. Gabriel had the lease of the land and agricultural buildings when Barberry Farm was sold in July 1944, with about twenty acres, and also including the part used as schoolrooms. As we know, Dorothy Burdge, Mr. William Burdge's aunt, ran a school at the farm in the part nearest to the High Street. There is more in 'Yatton Yesterday' No.4 for those interested.

However, back to the farm. We have records of it being up for sale by auction on 22nd October 1920 as part of the estate of George Badman under the instructions of a Mr. A. G. McGregor. It was not sold at the auction but was sold afterwards to



Mr. T. Burdge of Grange Farm. The sale particulars are as follows: 5 bedrooms, wash-house, cellar, dairy, stable, coach-house, calves-house, cider-house, implement shed, wagon-house, cow-house, rickyard and pigsties. The land was No.303 (Tithe numbers) farmhouse, outhouse, garden and barton; 304 orchard; 305 home ground; 306/307 orchard; 308 withy bed; 309 paddock; 310 Westmead three acres; 311 six acres; 313 Westmead; 1376 three acres; 1377 Bear garden and two acres; 1378 long ground; 1379 the hook. This totalled 29 acres and 11 perches. The tenant at the time of the sale was W. J. Gordon Williams, who held various parcels of land, some of which he bought at the auction. We note that the house sale details mention a cellar which was the lower part of the ground floor, in the outshut; and does not mention a well which is supposed to be under the scullery (wash-house).

Mr. Gordon Williams was, I believe, also well known in the village for cider and cheese making. Another character was Mr. Bird, who ran a small delivery service using a number of horse-drawn traps and wagons, and who rented the coach house and barn which are no longer in existence. A small outbuilding was used as the village lock-up at some time earlier this century I am told. Along with the other farms in the area the tenants had a duty to keep parts of the drainage rhynes clear and to this end there were 'keetching stones' set in the Kingston Seymour sea wall as markers.

#### **References:**

Somerset Record Office — Poulett Rentals DD/PT boxes 47 and 49 and DD/SS  
Yatton Deeds (536)

Hoddell Pritchard & Co.

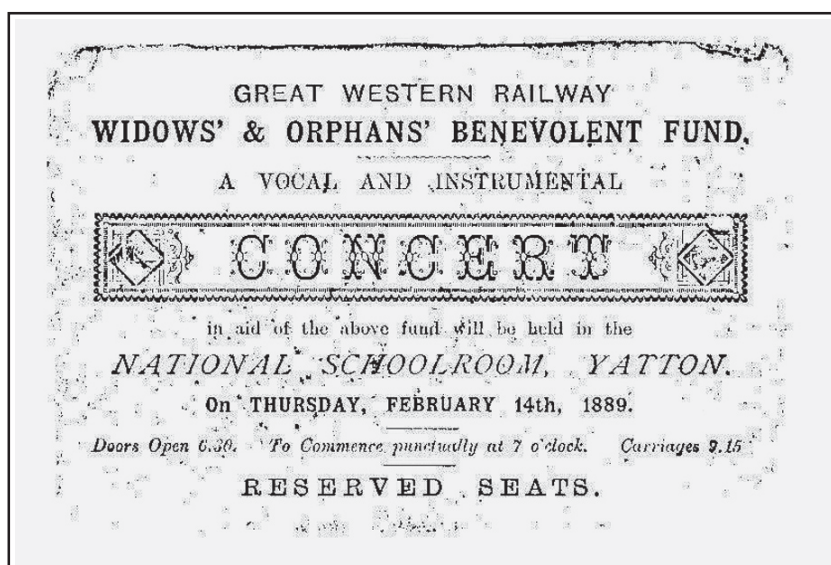
John Hodge & Co.

Mr. P. Rex

Mr. R. Gilson

The Sweet Family

*Brian Bradbury*



*The above was kindly supplied by Mr. Colin Forse*

## THE KINGSTON 'REVELS'

This is part of a story which I have been trying to piece together about events which were held annually in many parts of the West Country and probably over a much wider area. It seems that they were held in town and country and as near as possible to Midsummer Day. This has always been a date for activities connected with the summer solstice, or perhaps it was a good time to have a day out. Unfortunately, what started with good intentions ended up being banned by the authorities.

What created my interest was hearing my father say that they used to hold the Kingston Revels down on Beakes' Green. Beakes' Green was crossed by a much-used foot and bridle path which ran between Weston and Clevedon. It crossed the River Yeo at Phipps Bridge and was the only crossing of the river between Congresbury and the sea, and walking was the only means that many people had of making their journeys. So it would have been an ideal site for holding activities such as Revels.

With the villages of Kingston, Kenn and Yatton on one side of the river and Hewish, Puxton and Wick St. Lawrence on the other, there was bound to be keen competition. One form of pastime was shin-kicking in which two opponents would lay their hands on each other's shoulders. Kingston and Puxton, who were very keen rivals, had a more classy competition in which they tried to kick the buttons off their opponent's leggings or gaiters which were in fashion for the young men of the day.

Now, when did the Revels begin? I know that they were held in or before 1665 for there is an account of some sheep stealing which took place at that time and a report of the trial at the quarter sessions, when John Burke of Kingston was brought before Sir Thomas Gore charged with sheep stealing. (Ref: Somerset Record Office C Q/3).

James Howell, the herdsman in charge of sheep in a ground called Wemberham, said that on Saturday 24th June one sheep was missing and he found the body of another tied round with a rope. He found that the gates leading from the fields to Kingston were all open. Thomas Sesse gave evidence that John Burke had told him about a month before the Revel day (which was on 26th June), that he intended to kill a sheep 'against the Revel'. John Burke denied any knowledge of the rope, and stated that he bought a sheep from Widow Willet of Kingston for ten shillings and two bushels of grain. This sheep he had killed on Midsummer Day at about two hours by the sun, and he gave the names of those who had bought mutton. This account does not give the verdict and so we shall have to make our own judgment on John Burke, but the date of these happenings is very interesting.

In 1776 the Bath Chronicle gave notice that all Revels in the several parishes in the locality were to be suppressed on the grounds that:

*'The custom of Keeping Revels in the several parishes within the division aforesaid hath occasioned idleness, drunkenness, riots, gaming and all manner of vice etc. amongst the lowest class of people to the evil example of others, and the great disturbance, damage and*

*terror to the well-disposed, as well as tending greatly to the increase of the poor’.*  
(Ref: Avon Local History Handbook).

But to end on a brighter note, Philip Beisly, writing in the Weston- super-Mare History and Guide, says that the great local celebration when ordinary Westonians could let down their hair was the ‘Wesson Revel’ held on the first Thursday after 24th June. The date suggests that it may have developed from an old village fair associated with Midsummer. It was held for many years on the site of the Italian Gardens, and was the scene of all the fun of the fair, with gingerbread, Punch and Judy, donkey rides, etc. As the sands became popular people gradually drifted there, and 1850 saw the end of the Revels.

*Ken Stuckey*

## NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS

The late Dr. Damrel left to the Society her collection of newspaper cuttings dating back to the late 19th century. Among these were several of outstanding interest, two in particular which were written at the turn of the century. In 1898 a Mr. G. E. Weare wrote an article in the ‘Bristol Times and Mirror’ concerning a gypsy funeral at Yatton. In 1904 a Mr. T.G.S.’s article in the same publication was on ‘Yatton Church 60 years ago’ based on the works of ‘The Churchgoer’ in the 1840s. A précis of these two reports is included in this edition of ‘Yatton Yesterday’ with acknowledgements to the ‘Bristol Times and Mirror’ and the two contributors.

### **A Gypsy Funeral at Yatton, 1898.**

On 17th December 1898 Mr. G. E. Weare of Weston-super-Mare reported in the above paper on a gypsy funeral at Yatton church on the previous Friday. Jane Joules (Jouls or Joles) was buried in Yatton churchyard witnessed by a sizeable group of villagers. Jane was the widow of Richard, son of Merrily and Isaac Joules, and was aged 92. Her husband had died several years previously, This couple had had seven children altogether — two daughters, Caroline who d. 1862 aged 19 and Eldarah d. 1863 aged 24. William, a son, had died in 1874 aged 33. All were buried in the plot of ground just inside the churchyard, now surrounded by low railings. A villager claimed he had carried ‘poor William’ from Kenn Moor, assisted by three helpers. There was no news of the other children. Mr. Weare adds that ‘complaints from exposure during the winter months were the cause of early deaths among the gypsies’.

For many years Jane and her family had occupied ground near Bleadon and had earned their living basket-making. Merrily Joules her mother- in-law was more renowned and had been buried in 1827 with the epitaph:-

‘Here lies Merrily Joules  
A beauty bright  
That left Isaac Joules  
Her heart’s delight’



'Old Isaac' survived his wife for many years and was buried beside her. Merrily was 'a dark beauty of uncommon type' and her daughters 'remarkable for their beauty and fascinating manners'. All sorts and conditions of men paid homage to these 'gypsy maids'. Mr. Weare claims that one of the girls had several offers of marriage but 'she disdained to live between four walls in circumstances of respectability and comfort'. One lovesick swain addressed her thus:

'My gypsy maid, my gypsy maid,  
I bless and curse the day  
I lost the light of life, and caught  
The grief which maketh grey.  
My night-haired love, so sweet she was  
So fair and blythe was she.  
Her smile was brighter than the moon's  
Her eyes the stars might be.  
'Go and forget' she said, and slid  
Below her lonely tent.  
'I will not, cannot' — hear me girl  
She heard not, and I went'.

Isaac travelled the countryside earning a living as a knife-grinder. 'His appearance, in every village he frequented, being the signal for joke and merriment'. He was credited with the occult, and thought he was gifted with healing art. Pictures of him readily sold, and he allowed sketches of himself to be drawn on payment of a sovereign.

Weare adds 'Quite recently a member of the Joules family came over the Atlantic, and I believe is now living in Tiverton. The Romanies are now firmly established in America'.

There are numerous theories as to where these nomads originated. Many of their ancestors have come from northern India and their Romany language has similarities with a Hindu dialect. Others are connected with Wallachia (part of Romania). Switzerland's inhabitants speak no less than four languages — French, German, Italian and Romansh. The last is spoken in the east of Switzerland and is derived from Latin — it poses the question, did the Romany dialect have its foundations in Romansh?

### **'Take off your Pattens' — Yatton Church 150 Years Ago**

The reading of Mr. T. G. S.'s account in 1904 of 'Church Goer's' visit to Yatton prompted me to consult the original account in the 'Rural Rides of the Bristol Church Goer'.

Joseph Leech, born in County Clare in 1815, was responsible for this amazing account of his visits to the city churches of Bristol, and then to the churches around the area on his rural rides. These included Chew Magna, Fishponds, Pensford, Portishead, Winterbourne and Yatton. The accounts were published in the 'Bristol Times' on Saturdays, following his visits on the previous Sundays. Incidentally, he was the founder of the 'Bristol Times' in 1839.

His visit to Yatton was unusual in that he did not arrive on his horse 'John Bunyan', but took a second class ticket on the train. His companions were a family group and a railroad labourer. Their conversation mainly concerned the contents of their picnic basket (a goose), and then communications dried up. On his walk from Yatton station he was accompanied by a man wearing 'a coarse white flannel blouse and a cap of dried sheepskin'. This man earned 14 shillings a week in an unspecified job in the Swindon area, and was visiting his mother whom he had not seen for a year. He turned off along a by-way to reach her cottage.

Eventually Joseph Leech entered the churchyard over a wooden stile and met 'a number of rustics loitering about'. One old fellow sitting at the base of the cross, engaged in winding his watch, opened the conversation: 'Fine morning, maester, what be the time by thee?', seeing the stranger's fob watch. 'Doest thee keep rayel-rowad time?' he continued. Leech said 'No'. 'Ha' he said, with apparent satisfaction, 'I be delighted there's be one as don't go by these runaway ingines. All the village are a-going mad shoving on their watches ten minutes to be 'by the rayle', as they say.

Leech said to himself, 'I'll be bound he'd sooner take three hours and travel in his own market cart to Bristol than be indebted to Brunel or 'the rayle' as he calls it, for taking him there in a sixth of the time'. He then asked the name of the parson. 'Our parson, Mr. Clerk (1833 - 46), and as worthy a man as ever wore a gown. If he's an enemy, I'll eat un' said the rustic. 'If a man ben't a favourite who visits and helps the poor, edicates their children and knows and advises all his neighbours, why it would be hard to please us countryfolk'.

Leech continued 'How do you like him in the pulpit?' The man paused and then said 'If thee ask what kind of a preacher he be, I like a loud preacher — one to make the old church ring agin, a fine speaker that knocks the dust out of our hearts, and the old velvet cushion. Mr. Clerk is a good preacher for some, but I am old and getting hard o' hearing, and he goes so fast I can't always understand him, as it were, you see'. Questioned about the age of the church, he replied 'I am no scholard or learned in ancient things but I dare say he is a thousand or maybe five hundred years old'.

Leech then decides to enter the church and is faced by a board on which were painted the words 'TAKE OFF YOUR PATTENS'. 'Very necessary' he says, considering the dreadful clatter the iron-shod damsels sometimes make'.

Everyone looked at him as he entered and took a seat beside a plough-man and a boy in livery. His spectacles and broadcloth aroused further attention. The headmaster entered, music book in hand, leading a file of children 'who came pat, pat, clatter in their wooden shoes up the aisle. They looked over their snub noses at me as if I had two heads'. The clergyman approached the reading desk and proceeded to read so fast that Leech closed his own book in despair and comments to his readers that this produces indifference among the congregation. He notes that the organ is large for a country church (built for Bath Abbey and brought from the Bishop's Palace at Wells in 1842).

Then came the sermon: 'A good plain country sermon suited to the education

and condition of the audience' but once again, a rapid, irregular delivery. However, he forgives the preacher this because 'I am told that morning and evening and midday the incumbent of Yatton may be seen issuing from his Gothic Rectory\* on his errands of instruction and his rounds of visitation and charity'.

He states that 'Yatton church is one of the most beautiful in Somersetshire. The south porch is a good specimen, and the west end would reward an attentive examination, if it were not that the eye is offended with the quantity of sheep's soil with which the main entrance, though closed, is, one might say, hermetically sealed'. He refers to two of the monuments, one to the de Wick family and the second the tomb of Judge Newton and his lady. Finally, 'the congregation, which is a good one, is almost wholly composed of farmers and agricultural labourers'.

The full article is well worth reading, as are his impressions of all the other churches in the area. His book is called 'Rural Rides of a Bristol Church Goer' published by Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd. of Gloucester.

*Tony Coe*

\* Joseph Leech was mistaken: Revd. D. M. Clerk lived in the Vicarage on the other side of High Street. (Editor)

## YATTON MUSIC SOCIETY

The Yatton Music Society started as an idea in 1978 to bring classical music, performed by semi-professional and professional musicians, to St. Mary's Church. The original plan was to combine concerts and recitals with a competitive section as a festival. This, however, was not possible, so the competitive section was dropped.

The first 'Yatton Festival of Music' took place during the first week of May 1981. Only one copy of the programme of events remains, which shows that the first concert was performed by a group of professional artists known as 'Music and Sweet Poetry'. They gave an excellent recital to about 12 people! Other artists during the week were more fortunate as audiences became larger, and the final concert by the South Avon Schools' Orchestra played to a full house. They have given the final concert every year since then.

The organising committee decided to form a society with a constitution in 1985 and became affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies, since when the membership has grown to the present total of ninety.

In addition to the annual Festival of Music, a series of concerts and recitals takes place in the church or chapter house during the autumn and winter. There are recitals by solo artists and small chamber groups and concerts by choirs and orchestras. For our 'celebrity' events we have had performances by such well-known people as Antony Hopkins, John Amis and John Heddle Nash. In May 1990 the tenth anniversary concert was given by the Taunton Sinfonietta led and conducted by Robert Jacoby (violin).

The chairman, secretary and treasurer, with several members of the committee,

have been together since the beginning in 1978, as indeed have a number of the society's members. Audiences are now drawn from Winscombe, Clevedon, Wrington, Congresbury and Bristol, as well as from Yatton. It is of interest to note that several musicians who have played in schools' orchestras in the early years are now returning periodically to give recitals as young professionals.

*John Beach*

As this year is the Music Society's 10th anniversary we asked the chairman to put on record its story so far, so that this may be preserved as part of our village history. (*Editor*)

## YATTON STATION BOOKSTALL IN 1920

After working as a news delivery boy for Wymans at Burrington, I was offered the post of assistant at Yatton station bookstall in the year 1920. The manager, Mr. H.G. Sims, was marrying the previous assistant, Miss James. He had been serving in the army during the war. I travelled to Yatton each day on the Blagdon train and we collected very many churns of milk on this journey. The engine driver was usually O. Oliver and stoker H. Gilling, with the most well-known guard, Albert Jones. My season ticket for the daily return was £2.5.0. a year, and I also had a season ticket from Yatton to Clevedon costing £1. 5.0.

Yatton station was a very busy place for both passengers and freight. On the bookstall we sold all kinds of books and newspapers, also post-cards, cigarettes and chocolates. When excursion trains arrived I carried a tray with chocolates and books to sell to passengers at the coaches furthest away from the stall. From the stall we ran several newsrounds — Axbridge, Burrington, Yatton and district — and also supplied newsagents in Cleeve, Congresbury and Wedmore. In addition we were responsible for the Clevedon bookstall and once a week I used my ticket to take our cash to the Clevedon branch of Lloyds Bank.

There was quite a large staff on the station. Some of the railwaymen's names I remember are — ticket collector, Wilmot; signalman, L. Hazel; goods porter, Stockham; parcel office, Knight and Reid; ticket office, R. Hewitt and J. Gunning.

During my stay at Yatton we had the first 'Rock of Ages' pilgrimage which involved very large trains using the Blagdon line, and as it was impossible to turn the engines at Blagdon they all had to shunt backwards to Yatton. There was a little bit of excitement when a railway porter caught a carriage cleaner who had been pilfering the passengers' luggage on the Clevedon train.

An incident in which I was involved happened when I collected a parcel from the down train and rushed it to the stall, where it was opened so that I could take some of the papers over to catch the Blagdon train. To speed things up, I jumped down on the railway crossing and ran across the up line, to find an express approaching. I jumped onto the platform just in time. However, three of the porters were not so lucky. They were taking a platform truck loaded with goods across the tracks, only to be hit by the same express train. The porter in front was killed and the truck and contents scattered all up the line.

*O. A. Wilson*



## BUS SERVICES

In rural areas the coming of the motor-bus made a great change to village life. However, detailed information about early services is difficult to find and published books about nearby villages and Weston-super-Mare give little information.

Most services in North Somerset have always been operated by the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Co. Ltd. and its successors. This company, formed in 1887, soon started horse-bus services in Bristol as well as tramways and ran its first motor-bus service in the city in 1906. Other routes quickly followed and then out to the country. The first timetable published in 1914 showed route 24 to Brockley Combe and 25 to Nailsea. In 1910 a branch had been opened at Weston which ran local services and char-a-banc excursions. Expansion was held up by the war but soon afterwards the company operated in most parts of Gloucestershire, Somerset and North Wiltshire. For many years the company chairman was Sir George White who later founded the Bristol Aircraft Company.

In 1929 the Great Western Railway acquired a controlling interest which it transferred in 1932 to Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of Thomas Tilling Ltd. However, the Bristol company remained a separate operating unit, changing its name to Bristol Omnibus Co. Ltd. in 1958. The Tilling companies were sold in 1948 and after 1968 were supervised by the National Bus Company. In 1986 the country services of the Bristol company were separated as Badgerline Ltd. and later in that year sold to private shareholders, ending 38 years of public ownership. From time to time the Bristol company absorbed all other local operators in the area — G.W.R. services in Weston and Portishead in 1931, Burnells Motors of Weston in 1933 and the Dundry Pioneer in 1950. It also bought the Weston Tramways in 1937 and immediately closed them.

Until 1944 Bristol buses were always dark blue, after which they were green. No services were operated on Sunday mornings until after the last war. Services through Yatton are in four groups:

1. The Bristol to Weston service (No. 24) over Rhodyate Hill started during or just after the 1914 war. (A Parish Council minute of 1915 refers to the bus terminus at Cleeve). In Bristol the terminus was in Colston Avenue until the present bus station opened in 1958. In Weston the terminus was at the Grand Pier until the Beach Road bus station opened in 1928 (demolished in 1987). After the last war the service became half-hourly with extra buses from Bristol to Congresbury only. From 1959 some buses were diverted via Claverham and the Scaur at Yatton, but for several years these terminated at Congresbury. In 1966 the service via Rhodyate Hill became No.352 and that via Claverham No.353. In the 1980s some buses travelled along the Long Ashton by-pass instead of through that village.
2. The date when service No.87 started between Portishead, Clevedon, Yatton and Wrington has not been traced but it was operating by 1931 with four or five buses each way. From 1949 some were diverted through Kingston Seymour. At various times there were extra journeys from Clevedon to Yatton, one being shown in 1952 as terminating at Yatton Score Hutments. In 1952 and 1953 there were, on Fridays only, two journeys each way between Clevedon and Kenn Pier. In 1966 the service became No.361 and by 1972 journeys to Wrington were withdrawn. The remaining journeys from Clevedon to Yatton ended in 1974.

3. The Clevedon to Weston-super-Mare service via Yatton was No.150 and starting between the wars, was at first operated only in the summer months. It was withdrawn during the last war and afterwards became an hourly service but with reductions during the winter. It was reinforced in 1966 after the closure of the Clevedon branch railway by no less than 18 buses each way non-stop from Clevedon to Yatton Station. This extra service was gradually reduced, but after becoming No.123 in 1967, there continued for a time to be a few extra journeys from Clevedon to Yatton.
4. Service No.355 started in the 1960s between Bristol and Winscombe via Yatton Station, Congresbury and Churchill with extra buses from Bristol to Yatton. In 1974 the Winscombe service was withdrawn and some of the Yatton journeys extended to Kingston Seymour.

The only other service known to have served Yatton was in 1928 when a short-lived route was operated by the G.W.R. from Portishead to Claverham via Clevedon and Yatton.

In the early days of motor-buses services were licensed by the borough and district councils through whose areas they operated. From 1931 services were licensed by the Traffic Commissioners, a process intended to stop the cut-throat competition which had built up in some places. From 1968 County Councils were given power to subsidise loss-making rural services which they did by block grants to operators.

All this was changed by the Transport Act 1985, under which the National Bus Company was privatised. Licensing by the Traffic Commissioners was abolished and operators merely registered services they intended to operate. County Councils were given the duty of providing any further services they considered socially necessary, which they did by putting their operation out to tender. In this area only the 352/3 service from Bristol to Weston was registered by Badgerline. The County invited tenders for the continuation of all existing services, county-provided services having numbers over 400. The 123 became 823 and the 255 became 655. The tenders for both these services were won by Badgerline but subsequently for one year the 823 was operated by Bakers Coaches of Weston. Recently the County has started an infrequent service, No.822, from Yatton to Wrington via Congresbury operated by Coombs Coaches.

For some years District Councils have had power to arrange concessionary bus fare schemes for pensioners, disabled people and children. In Woodspring there was a short-lived scheme a few years ago, but since then it has been the only district in the County without a scheme.

This article has been compiled from a number of books on the omnibus industry and an almost complete collection of time-tables dating from 1940. Any information, handbills or time-tables from before that date would be gratefully received by the Society.

*H. J. Vincent*

## YATTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

The old Church of England school in Church Road, together with the school house, was sold in March 1987 for £80,000. Joseph Thomas was paid £300 to build the school in 1834 and £337 was spent in 1844 on the master's house, but this included £150 for purchasing an existing house and premises.

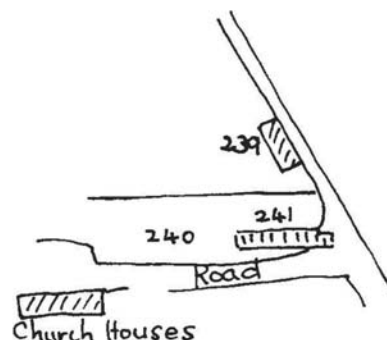
Schools set up before the School Boards were established in 1870 were either 'British' schools coming under the British and Foreign Schools' Society, or 'National' schools under the National Schools' Society of the Church of England. Attendance was voluntary until 1880, when the leaving age was set at 11. An earlier school for poor children in Yatton was established in 1729 under the terms of Richard Durban's will, and became in time the 'British' school, later moving to the premises of the present infants' school. It became known as the 'undenominational' school.

Hannah More encountered opposition from the Mendip farmers when she tried to set up schools for the poor. However, in Yatton the bells were rung when she came in the mid-1790s, the clergy and gentry agreeing to help her and to collect money to clothe the poor children. However the school, which was only open on Sundays, gradually declined and in 1800 it was closed.

In 1834 it was decided to build a Church of England, or 'National', school and a building fund was set up, subscriptions being requested. Most of the people of substance in the village contributed, whether because they genuinely believed in educating the poor or because it was expected of them. J. H. Smyth-Pigott gave £30 and Mr. Long of Cleeve Court £20, and later he advanced £100. Others gave between £2 and £10, e.g., James Tucker of Rectory Farm, Mr. Greville the surgeon, Mr. Fisher the solicitor, and the local farmers. Absentee landowners such as Mr. Galton of Birmingham and the Revd. J. P. Seymour of Wraxall gave, and subscriptions came from Frome, Wrington, Blagdon, Backwell, Bath and Bristol.

The church held a bazaar making £103 and a sermon in church raised £13. The government provided £72 and the total collected came to £612. An assignment of land made for the school building in May 1834 was replaced in February 1844 by another almost identical deed, which is quoted here. Charles Coleman, labourer, had in 1827 bought a 'messuage tenement or dwelling house' and garden from Edward Cook, bounded on the east by premises Cook was about to sell and on the north by premises of John Abraham, butcher. It is assumed that the premises on the east were sold to Thomas Osmond, plasterer, who had the well common to both premises. The plan from Sturge's 1821 Survey shows the position then.

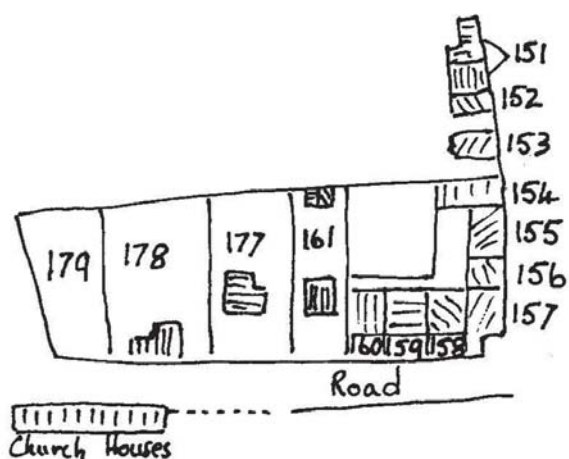
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| No. 239 | 2 tenements and gardens<br>owner John Abraham |
| No. 240 | 4 tenements and gardens                       |
| 241     | owner Edward Cook                             |



Now (February 1844) the deed states that the south-west boundary of Coleman's land (sold

to the church, as above) is a plot upon which has lately been erected a house for the master of Yatton National School. The east and north boundary is Thomas Osmond's property and the north and north-west that of Thomas Abraham.

The vicar, it says, has lately erected a National school on the piece of ground granted to Coleman by indenture of 1827 and sold to the vicar, and also cottages on the same land. The 1840 Tithe map shows the two cottages in question, Nos. 159 & 160, owned by Revd. D. M. Clerk as trustee. 159 is occupied by David Bratt and 160 is void. In 1844 the vicar mortgaged two cottages to raise £150 and they were said to have been lately erected and to be in the occupation of George Earl and George Young. Presumably they are the same cottages.



**1840 Tithe Map**

(enlarged)

owned John Abraham

- 151 House & butcher's shop
- 152 House & garden
- 153 House & garden

owned Frederick Lyons

- 154 Carthouse
- 155 House
- 156 House
- 157 House & shop

owned Thomas Osmond

- 158 House & garden
- 179 Garden

owned James Gregory

- 177 House & garden
- 178 House & garden

owned Revd. D. M. Clerk, vicar & trustee of the See

- 159 House
- 161 Parish School

- 160 House

According to the account book, Coleman sold the ground, cottages etc. for £140 (although the deed states a house) and it may have been the two most westerly of the four on the 1821 plan that he owned. The Act 'for affording further facilities for the conveyance and endowment for sites for schools' was not passed until the 5th year of the reign of Queen Victoria. This is why it was not mentioned in the 1834 Assignment and possibly why the latter was replaced by the 1844 deed, after the school had in fact been built.



The 1844 deed states 'The school so erected ... is always to be used as a School for poor persons of and in the Parish of Yatton ... and to be called the Yatton National School, and the said School is to be under the management and control of the Vicar.. .and the children educated in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and ... to be in union with the National Society incorporated for promoting the education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church ... and conducted towards the furtherance of its ends and designs ... to be open at all times to inspection of the Inspectors to be appointed in conformity with the Order in Council of 10th August 1840'. It also stated that it was lawful for the vicar to sell or convey by mortgage anything not actually part of the school. Charles Coleman signed with his mark, not as yet having received the benefits of education.

Joseph Thomas, mason and builder, was engaged on 26th May 1834 to build the school for £300, later reduced to £294.17. 6. It was to be finished by 25th December. He received £50 at the end of July when the walls were finished, £150 on 20th November when the roof was finished and the final payment was made in August of the next year. As Thomas signed his receipts with a cross, one wonders how he managed when it came to reading the complicated specification for the building of the school. Mr. T. Newton of Wraxall, surveyor, was to check the work.

The schedule states that the builder is to remove the ground 2 feet below the floor line to form a space and is to insert 8 air bricks. The precise number and size of all the beams is given and details for the floor, roof, windows, partitions, chimneys, painting etc. all stated in detail. The type of wood, tiles to be used, type of mortar, lead and paint are specified. Two privies 4ft. by 3ft.6ins. behind the building had to have proper drains, wooden floors and seats. The schoolroom floor had oak joists and other wood was to be 'sound, well-seasoned and free from sap'.

By another deed of February 1844 the church (Revd. D. M. Clerk) bought land from James Gregory of Claverham, carpenter, i.e. a messuage or tenement and garden adjoining, occupied by Thomas Moore, shoemaker. The deed states that the piece of ground on which the tenement is built, and the garden, are part of a piece of land demised for 10,000 years to James Gregory on 8th December 1831 by the Cook family. The wall dividing the garden from the property of James Avery, freestone mason, is mentioned — it is said that he, Avery, had lately purchased this next-door tenement from James Gregory. Avery had the well common to both houses, and the expenses of maintaining it were to be shared. At this time Stephen Jones was 'School Master of Yatton', a witness to the signing of the deed.

Again, money was raised by subscription. This time the government was more generous, giving £105. The Bishop gave £20 and the rest of the money came from the better-off — the total was £337. The heading of the accounts says 'the Purchasing, Building and Repairing of the School Master's House'. The house and premises were bought for £150 and it appears from the accounts that it was adapted rather than demolished and rebuilt. There is no house here on the 1821

Survey so it must have been fairly new; the shape of the house on the Tithe map is similar to that of the present house. Possibly James Gregory built the two houses when he acquired the land in 1831.

Carpenters were paid about £31, masons £24, plumbers and glaziers £11, tilers and plasterers £7 and blacksmiths £6; stonework and painting was £28. Timber, lead, lime, stones etc. came to about £50. There is no larger sum mentioned such as would have occurred if a house had been built anew. The accounts were signed and approved on 28th August 1844 by one of the Queen's Inspectors of Schools, J. E. W. Bellairs.

In 1853, when the vicar was Revd. H. Barnard, John Gregory fitted three tiers of desks and forms in the School Room for £9. 5.0. Various repairs and alterations to both school and master's house were carried out from time to time, as recorded in the Managers' minute books. The building once standing against the church wall was called 'parish stable and schoolroom above'. It was demolished late 1885 / early 1886. It was used as the infant schoolroom until a new classroom was built for them at the school. Following an adverse report from the Inspector, two new cloakrooms and two sets of 'offices' were built in 1894 at a cost of £123. In 1896 the master's house was in a dilapidated state, repairs costing £40.

In 1903 money was raised to enlarge the school; the total cost, including furniture, was £607 but the small room at the back used for infants and built for 30 children was overcrowded. The work of enlarging this was carried out by Needhams; the total cost was £225 and it was finished by September 1904. The money was raised by contributions from parishioners, as was that for a new playground. The enlargements to the school buildings meant that there was now hardly any playground and the children were having to use the road outside. Therefore the Managers took over 860 square yards opposite, land used as allotments, at a rental of £2 a year, and paid £183 for paving and walling. The playground was officially opened on Saturday, 30th September 1905, the ceremony being accompanied by the village band and followed by entertainments. It is now the car park.

This article deals with the buildings and land only, and not with the running of the school, which we hope will be covered in a future publication.

### **References**

Somerset Record Office — the relevant documents are filed under 'Parish Records' with numbers D/P/Yat 18/1/1, 18/3/1, 18/3/2, 18/3/3, 18/7/1 and 18/8/1.

Tithe Award 1840

Sturge's Survey of Yatton 1821

Copies of 2 deeds of 16.2.1844 and Abstract of Title of Charles Coleman in Parish Chest.

Parish magazines.

'Hannah More' by M. G. Jones, O.U.P. 1952.

*Research by: H. J. Vincent and M. Barraclough*

## YATTON AND DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

This year the Society is commemorating the 40th anniversary of its re-formation after the war. Between the wars the Yatton & District Flower Show & Gymkhana was one of the largest in the area. It was held in the field adjoining Henley Stores, now renamed Henley Cottage, on the corner of Henley Lane leading to the cricket field.

After the war Harry and Nancy Cole had organised shows, together with members of Yatton and Claverham Women's Institute and the local Playing Fields Association of which Harry was chairman. The shows had been highly successful and the Playing Field Fund had benefited considerably. Harry Cole writes:

'As a fund-raiser I prevailed upon a well known Bristol jeweller, Fears of Clifton, to present the fund with a rather splendid gent's wristwatch, valued at £7.19. 6., which forty years ago was an appreciable sum, and upon H.R.H. Prince Philip to wind and seal it in its container. This was then displayed in the window of the newsagents in Church Road, then owned by Miss Norah Eyres who was a great supporter of any Yatton activity. The public were then asked to purchase raffle tickets and state on the counterfoil the time they thought the watch would stop. This caused great interest, and when the moment arrived on the day of the Show it was discovered that the winner was one of our local war heroes, Captain Henry, who had led a convoy of vessels out of the Baltic Sea to escape from the Germans. He was the father of Mrs. Thelma Davis who was then living in Chescombe Cottage, subsequently knocked down to accommodate the Gateway car park'.

On Monday 19th March 1951 a public meeting was held in Yatton Church Hall. Mr. Harry Cole chaired the meeting in the presence of Mr. T. R. Maitland of the Somerset Farm Institute, Cannington. The purpose of the meeting was to test public feeling as to whether a horticultural society should be set up for Yatton. There were 36 people present and numerous apologies from those offering future support. It was unanimously agreed that a horticultural society should be re-formed in Yatton.

### **Officers and Committee**

The first president was Dr. E. V. Wood, the local general practitioner. Dr. Wood held this office until 1953 when he was succeeded by Dr. A. D. Dyson who was also a local GP. Dr. Dyson held the office until 1965. He was succeeded by Dr. Ursula Damrel who died in 1989 and the Society has not yet appointed another president. Dr. Damrel, who was also a local GP, was the daughter of Dr. Wood.

The first chairman, elected in 1951, was Mr. A. Rapp and the vice-chairman, Miss P. Barnard. Miss Barnard lived at the Grey House opposite the Causeway; she now lives in Honiton. Mr. Rapp remained chairman until 1953 when he was succeeded by Mr. Stan Revell. In 1957 Mr. Gifford-England took over for a year. From 1958 to 1964 Mr. S.E. (Bill) Williams was chairman, and was followed by Mr. Glyn Burgan for the three years from 1965 to 1967. Mr. Bill Williams returned as chairman from 1969 to 1972 and was followed by Malcolm Watson from 1973-5, who continues as a member of the committee. Laurie Beynon took over until 1982. In 1983 Glyn Burgan

returned, followed by Mrs. Jackie Petherbridge for three years from 1985. In 1988 Mr. Michael Pitman became chairman.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Harry Cole who set up the original meeting in 1951 was the first honorary secretary, assisted by Mrs. Cole. Mr. Cole now lives near Sydney, Australia. He was followed as secretary by Mr. Jim Nicholas. Unfortunately there is no full list of those who were present in 1951 and who formed the first committee. Many of the names mentioned in the Society's early minutes are still well known in Yatton such as Kath Harborne, Beryl Crossman, Jack and Nancy Crease, Jim Hill, Arthur Stockham, Doris Hiles, Eileen Galloway, Noel Pardy, Bert Davis, Joe Brown, Walter Nash, Bert Cadwgan, Douglas Barnfield and many others. Many of these names appear again and again in the minutes and it is clear that once someone became a member of the Horticultural Society they remained so for the rest of their lives or until they left the village.

### **Name of Society and Affiliations**

It is interesting to note that the title of the Society was the Yatton and District Horticultural Society from the beginning so that Claverham was always included, as was Cleeve. It is likely that this reflected the origins of the members of the original society, if the names of those involved are examined.

In 1952 the Society was affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society. It is noted in later minutes that considerable help was received from the Somerset Farm Institute, now the Agricultural and Horticultural College at Cannington, not only with the inaugural meeting but also with future meetings when speakers were provided. At that time Yatton was in Somerset.

### **Membership and Subscription**

In 1953 it is recorded there were 140 members and that each member paid a shilling a year. By 1957 this had gone up to two shillings and by 1964 to two shillings and sixpence. It is generally regarded that the £1 per household, which is at present charged, is good value for money. In 1989, 320 households were members of the Society.

### **Shows**

Initially the Society staged a spring show at the end of March, a summer show in what was Dr. Wood's field in Claverham Road at the beginning of August, and an autumn show in the first week of November. Lately for the spring show the Society has been affiliated to the Daffodil Society. It became popular with exhibitors from outside the village, which makes it a splendid occasion and has made it renowned for the high quality of exhibits. The summer show is normally held on a Saturday and includes a number of side shows making it a popular meeting place. For the fortieth anniversary show there was a two-day event, Saturday and Sunday 11th and 12th August. Since 1982 there has been some sort of evening entertainment which has varied over the years from hoe-downs to dances of various sorts, with appropriate types of supper provided. The autumn show where chrysanthemums are exhibited is well known for the quality of its blooms. The Society is affiliated to the Chrysanthemum Society which allows it to award specialised medals on its behalf, which attract outside exhibitors.



Each show not only has classes for flowers, vegetables, fruit and floral decoration, but also homecraft and handicraft and separate classes for children. There is always considerable support from Yatton Junior School in handwriting and painting classes which helps to make all the shows bright and interesting events. In the late 1960s there was a rose show in June as well, but this fell out of favour after a few years.

### **Entries**

An idea of the popularity of the shows can be gained from the information that in 1956 there was a record 1,008 entries and an eight pole marquee was needed. In 1962 there were 128 entries in the spring show, 567 in the summer show and 214 in the autumn show. It is estimated that the 1962 entries would be the equivalent of at least one entry per member in the spring and autumn and two or three entries per member in the summer show. Of course there would have been further entries in the open classes, but overall this implies a considerable degree of enthusiasm. Even allowing for the larger population of Yatton and district, the number of entries to the shows was not very much greater in 1989: 525 adults and 289 children. This is a comment on a different way of life which has evolved over the last 30 or so years, with a lesser emphasis on production from the garden.

### **Trophies**

Another interesting aspect of the Society's affairs is the way in which trophies were acquired and distributed to prizewinners. Most of the trophies bear the name of local people and businesses. The list below gives an idea of the number of trophies and the classes for which they were awarded.

#### **Summer Show**

<b>Trophies</b>	<b>Summer 1965</b>	<b>Summer 1990</b>
		<b>Additional Trophies &amp; Awards</b>
<b>A. Members</b>		
Flowers (Amateur)	Louisa Gane Memorial Lloyds Bank	Jim Tigwell Ann Stroud Treasurers Dr. Ursula Damrel
Vegetable Vegetables & Flowers	Dawes & Hoddell	Forbuoys
<b>B. Open</b>		
Most Points (Flowers Vegetables & Fruit)	Yatton	South Bank Nurseries
Vegetables		Jim Franklin
Vegetables, Fruit, Flowers	Arthur J. Wynn	
Decorative (flower arranging)	Claverham Cup	British Fuel
Homecraft and Handicraft	Ellen Davis Cup	Alisons (M. Zanker)
Children	Perpetual Trophy (Hiles & Cole)	Barbara Wood Yatton Players Yatton Crusaders WRS Electronic Devices

It is notable that in the last 25 years for the summer show, the number of trophies has more than doubled.

### **Spring Show**

J. C. Snook Haulage	Inter-show challenge shield for daffodils <i>This is a new development in which Yatton, Congresbury, Clevedon and Nailsea Horticultural Societies take part.</i>
Clevedon Mercury	Open classes most points
Harold Bryant Cup	Members' Classes most points
Westminster Bank	Decorative classes

### **Autumn Show**

Fred Pears Cup	Most points
Barnard Cup <i>(presented by Miss Barnard)</i>	Chrysanthemums
Orwell Cup <i>(presented by Dr. Dyson)</i>	Members' chrysanthemums
Joe Brown Cup	Fruit <i>In memory of a long-standing committee member who died in 1988.</i>
Albert Sparkes Memorial Cup	Vegetables
Jet Shoe Shop Shield	Decorative classes
Paradise Cup	Children's classes most points

### **Recollections**

In 1963 the Society had a moment, or rather half an hour, of glory when it featured in Gardeners' Question Time in the Assembly Rooms at Yatton. This broadcast was relayed on Sunday, March 10th 1963, on the Home Service of the B.B.C.

Recalling past shows Harry Cole writes that 'on the night of the Lynmouth disaster,\* when the storm struck the tables were being laid in the marquee. Nancy and Jack Crease were in the process of staging two individual displays around two centre poles when one side of the marquee fell in. How we saved the tent that night I will never know; people appeared from everywhere, guy-ropes were loosened and then tightened in turn, pegs were re-hammered in and frantic cries of 'Over here. Over here', abounded. Most of us got home just in time to wash and come back again, but the show opened on time.

Then there was the occasion when they borrowed our piano so that Nancy could stage a dancing display during the afternoon with her troupe of local children who were known as the 'Sunbeams'. We threw a tarpaulin over it for the night and after borrowing a flat-topped lorry from a local garage on the Sunday morning proceeded to the field to reclaim our treasured piano. The helpers included the late Noel Pardy and Arthur Stockham who both assured me that there was no need to lay it down as we only had a short distance to go and that

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\* This refers to a severe storm in the early 1950s (Editor)

they could easily hold it in an upright position. But as we drove out of the field onto Claverham Road one of the lorry's rear wheels rode over a large stone hidden in the long grass by the gate and over went the piano — keys, chords and pieces of frame closed the road to church-goers for some considerable time as we first argued as to whose fault it was and then lovingly collected the pieces. I can still remember Nancy's face as we deposited the remains in the hallway and fled. Though it was eventually reassembled it never did sound the same.

Then there was a time in the early days when a committee man took all the winning counterfoils at the end of the draw and put them back into the drum in an attempt to tidy up. Fortunately most of the prizewinners were in the crowd and were able to collect their just rewards. On the subject of draws, it is strange how a coincidence can occur. When we returned to Yatton to live in 1974, Nancy won the major draw prize of that year, a travelling case, and when my daughter, Jennifer came over from Australia, where she lives, for her mother's funeral in 1979, she also won the major prize for that year – a £20 voucher – two days before she was due to fly home'.

### **Opening of the Summer Shows**

Stars of the summer show at Knightstone Theatre, Weston-super-Mare, came many times to open the shows, and in 1971 the stars of 'Showboat', Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson, arrived in a vintage car from Holders Garage in Congresbury. In later years the show has been opened by Professor Jim Hirst, a previous director of Long Ashton Research Station, and television personalities such as Richard Wyatt. For the 40th anniversary show, Captain Courage M.B.E. from Radio Bristol opened the celebratory two-day event.

### **References:**

Minute books and papers of the Horticultural Society.

*Marianne Pitman*

<p align="center"><b>YATTON &amp; CLAVERHAM PLAYING FIELD FUND.</b></p> <p align="center"><b>FLOWER SHOW AND FETE. 353</b></p> <p align="center">HENLEY LODGE, YATTON. SATURDAY, AUGUST 13TH, 1949.</p> <p align="center">TICKET. Price 6d. Subscription to Fund.</p> <p align="center">HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH, (PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION)</p> <p align="center">having wound and sealed a</p> <p align="center"><b>GENTS WATERPROOF &amp; UNBREAKABLE WRIST WATCH.</b></p> <p align="center">17 Jewel. 10 years Guarantee. Valued £7-19-6.</p> <p align="center">Presented by MESSRS. FEARS, WATCHMAKERS, OF CLIFTON, BRISTOL.</p> <p align="center"><i>The person purchasing this ticket, may if they desire, estimate the time this watch shall stop. The person whose estimate is correct to the nearest second being the winner.</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Result at Fete at 7 p.m. Winner notified by post.</i></p> <p align="center">Estimate. Hours.....Mins.....Secs.....</p> <p align="center">Organised for the Playing Field Fund by H. D. COLE (Chairman).</p> <p align="center">Holloway &amp; Son, Printers, Weston-super-Mare.</p>
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## COLLECTED NOTES ON THE GROWTH OF YATTON'S RETAIL TRADE & SERVICES

County directories and local rural newspapers which began to appear in the mid nineteenth century hold a rich collection of material on retail trade and services of the English village. These and other sources are presented here in the form of illustrated notes to give an outline sketch of Yatton's own growth in trade and services, at the same time bringing together articles that have already appeared in previous issues of 'Yatton Yesterday'.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Yatton saw the arrival of the railway in 1841 and the population reach the century's peak of just over 2,000, followed by decline which did not recover until the early 1900s. The 1920s and 1930s saw a slight increase but it was after the second world war that the population numbers took off, when they rose from just under 3,000 to around 6,000 in the 1960s.

The lists of major traders (pages 36 & 38) derived from contemporary trade directories show no evidence that trade was affected by the declining population of the nineteenth century. In the case of J. Denmead, grocer/baker, he was able to open up a shop at Horsecastle in 1872 at a time when three well-established grocers were trading. The receipt signed by this grocer (page 36) is of special interest, being for the supply of 'Bread for the Poor', a charity issue which continued into the 1960s. After this time the Charity Commissioners agreed to the issue of bread being commuted to monetary grants.

Twenty shop keepers traded between 1859 and 1935, but for only short periods — with the exceptions of Miss Fanny Lukins (1872-1902) and Mrs. Martha Peters (1894-1914). Six bakers were also listed as short term traders during the same period.

Examples of two early newspaper advertisements are given on page 39: HOUSE TO LET taken from the Weston Mercury dated 14th February 1857 and NEW LIGHT DINNER ALES taken from the Clevedon Mercury dated 27th February 1869.

On the 26th February 1887 the Clevedon Mercury was reporting that Mr. Arthur G. Collings had been granted a licence to keep 80 gallons of petroleum. (see 'Y.Y.' No.6, p.28)


Easy access to the Cheddar Valley following the opening up of the branch line in 1868 no doubt brought about the start of Yatton's commercial development. The Yatton market appeared in the directories from 1890 (see 'Y.Y.' No.6, p.35) and two banks opened in 1894.

Wilts & Dorset Banking Co.	Mondays & Fridays	9.30 - 1.00
(Drawn on London & Westminster Bank, London E.C.)	Market days	9.30 - 2.00
Stuckey's Banking Co. Ltd.	Mondays	9.30 - 10.00
(Drawn on Roberts Lubbock & Co. London E.C.)		



BAKERS - TRADING LONG TERM IN THE VILLAGE OF YATTON		
TRADING NAME	DATES LISTED IN DIRECTORIES & LOCATION	
Sholl	1859* - 1889	Near Butcher's Arms but exact location not known.
Denmead	1872--1910	Horsecastle – also grocer.
Chambers	1883—1935	Now the Video Shop — including refreshment rooms from 1902.
Burge	1894—1906	On site of Hill's carpet shop see Yatton Yesterday No. 2. P.24.
Birch	1906—1919	No.114. High Street.
Coombs & Vowles	1910—1919	Evidence suggests Pullins Bakery.
Pullins	1927—	Still trading.

*Yatton, March 31 1894*  
*Bought by The Church Warden*  
*OF*  
*J. Denmead*  
**Baker, Tea Dealer,**  
**FAMILY GROCER,**  
*Flour & Provision Merchant.*  
*Huntley & Palmers' Biscuits. - Corn, Meal, &c.*



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*1894*  
*March 23*      *Bread for the poor*

*Perd*      *1 9 6*

*March 31 1894*  
*J Denmead*  
*with thanks*

(mod).

GROCERS — TRADING LONG TERM IN THE VILLAGE OF YATTON		
TRADING NAME	DATES LISTED IN DIRECTORIES & LOCATION	
Gregory	1859*- 1879	Shop & Offices - -20 & 22, High Street. Listed as Yatton's Post Office 1859-61.
Smart	1859*- 1902	Site of Hill's carpet shop see Y.Y. No.2. P.23.
Derham	1859*- 1875	Roots, 34 High Street. Listed as Yatton's Post Office 1872-75.
Denmead	1872—1910	Horsecastle - -also baker.
Collings	1879 - 1935	Roots, 34 High Street. see Y.Y. No.6. P.28.
Carter	1889 - 1902	No record.
Tutt	1897 - 1935	Traded at Horsecastle 1897-1902 continued trading at 20 & 22 High Street until the 1960s. see Y.Y. No.6. P.28.
Bailey	1909 - 1935	Site of Hill's carpet shop, see Y.Y. No.6. P.28.
Griffin	1910 - 1935	Corner of Moor Lane and Main Road traded for over 70 years closing in the 1980s.

BUTCHERS — TRADING LONG TERM IN THE VILLAGE OF YATTON		
TRADING NAME	DATES LISTED IN DIRECTORIES & LOCATION	
Gregory	1859*- 1861	Edward's present site.
Adams	1872 - 1889	No record.
Edwards	1889 -	Still trading on original site.
Stuckey	1872 - 1935	Traded at Horsecastle until 1910, then set up shop in High Street, (site of Gateway car park) trading until the 1960s.

\* First shown in trade directories but known to have existed prior to 1851.



[illegible]



The same year the first chemist shop arrived, and with gas already in the village, the following report appeared in the Clevedon Mercury on the 27th April:—

*‘The Gas Company proposed to place 26 lamps, to be lit for eight months during the year at a rate of 35 shillings (175p) per lamp per annum. To meet this it would be necessary to levy a rate of 3 pence (7.2p) in the £1 on house property and ½ pence (1.2p) in the £1 on land. Dr. Lyons then proposed the scheme be adopted and this was carried by a large majority’.*

Piped water arrived in 1907 (see ‘Y.Y.’ No.2 pp.15—20) and the telephone in 1908, the exchange being located in the former Post Office (now ‘Through the Looking Glass’).

The programme covering the opening of the Church Hall (now known as the Village Hall) in 1913 has produced one of the largest collections of advertisements — extracts shown on pages 37 and 39. (see A.E.Back, ‘Y.Y.’ No.5, p.45: ‘Y.Y.’ No.2, p.41: ‘Y.Y.’ No.6, pp.26/28).

At the start of the 1920s the population had passed the 1851 figure by only 115, yet the following new shops and services became available during the decade:—

Accountant	Ladies & Gentlemen’s Hairdressers
China shop	Midwife
Cycle Agent	Motor Engineer
Dairyman	Oil Dealer
District Nurse	Newsagent
Fishmonger	Taxi

The 1930s saw the laying of the much needed foul drainage system (see ‘Y.Y.’ No.2, pp.18/19) and the arrival of the North Somerset Electricity Co. overhead supply.

There had been doctors in the village for more than 200 years, but it was not until the thirties that a visiting dentist had a surgery each Wednesday afternoon between 3.00—5.00 (see ‘Y.Y.’ No.1, p.13).

With all the public utilities now being available in the village, Yatton was now ready for expansion — but that is another story awaiting study.

#### **Sources:**

Harrison’s Post Office Directory & Gazetteer for Somerset 1859

Kelly’s Directories of Somerset

Clevedon Mercury

Weston Mercury

Mr. L. Fido, Yatton (verbal)

Art work by KAYDEE

*Kenneth Dougherty*

# THE HISTORY OF WAKE & DEAN LTD.

## (LATER 'AVALON')

### **PART II**

NOTE: Individual prices have not been converted, but as a guide: one shilling (1/-) contained 12 pennies (12d), now the 5p coin. There were 20 shillings in £1.

### **THE WAR, 1939-45**

The first part of the history of the company (see 'Y.Y.'No.6) ends with the outbreak of war in 1939. At this time an inventory of all the resources in the village was compiled; Wake & Dean had 24 lamps, 6 picks, 13 shovels, 6 crowbars and a well supplying 10,000 gallons of water an hour (See 'Y.Y. No. 5). Timber control was introduced immediately and two clerks were needed to complete all the necessary forms. Permits took at least two months to obtain and no timber was available for house, office or church furniture. Hardboard was used for government contracts.

Part of the factory was taken over by the Ministry of Food for storing wheat, sugar and flour. The rest was working on government contracts, making such things as ammunition boxes and lockers for hospitals and aircrew.

At the beginning of the war the 69 houses at Wakedean Gardens were complete and the total value was £35 - 40,000. The army requisitioned eight of the houses.

Sixty employees joined the Forces and women were trained to replace them. Mr. D. Munckton was appointed labour manager and welfare officer to deal with the Manpower Board. Another 32 employees were later called up. Instructions were received that the factory was to be destroyed in case of invasion.

Conditions became extremely difficult during 1941 with restricted transport and air raids. Two firemen were appointed for night duty at the factory. In November of that year Mr. C. F. Wake died. Miss E. M. Jenkins was appointed secretary of the company.

Late in 1942 Wake & Dean were invited by the Board of Trade to tender for 'Utility' furniture and were given a quota of £5,000 a month, increased in August 1944 to £10,000. By mid-1945 a few men were demobilised and by the summer of 1946 most of them had returned, apart from those killed in the war.

### **THE POST-WAR YEARS**

The end of the war in 1945 did not mean an immediate return to normality. Food, for example, continued to be rationed until the early 1950s; clothes, household linen and furniture were 'Utility' for some years. In April 1946 new wage rates and a 44-hour week were agreed nationally and by August a 5-day week had been introduced. Wages had risen since pre-war; a cabinet maker was now earning 2/4½ an hour. This is approximately £5. 4.6. for a 44-hour week and if he lived in a company house in Wakedean Gardens, 12/6 (62½p) was deducted for rent.

The Ministry of Food released the workshops used for storage; new works estimating, costing and designing departments were established. Travellers were reappointed and six lorries bought.

The late '40s were not easy — early in 1947 the weather was severe and fuel scarce, also there was a transport strike. The next year there was a shortage of raw materials and some employees were discharged. In 1949 furniture was still 'Utility'.

In 1947 Mr. A. V. Pleasant became production manager and by 1951 was works manager and a director. Late in 1949 Mr. Sidney Wake retired and Mr. C. G. Curtis took over as general manager. He reorganised the office and realised that new buildings and much new machinery were necessary for the manufacture of post-war furniture. A new timber drying kiln was built in 1951, when the authorised capital of the company was £600,000. Mr. Percy Wake was chairman and managing director until 1952.

### **THE END OF WAKE & DEAN**

The company ran into difficulties in the autumn of 1952, heavy losses being incurred, and it was taken over by J. H. and C. H. Hunt. Mr. Curtis remained and a Mr. W. H. Putnam came with the Hunts from High Wycombe. The Wake family connection ceased. The Hunts introduced upholstery but they too, got into difficulties in running the company. No dividends were paid, there were redundancies and the company had substantial liabilities. They had borrowed large sums from Barclays Bank in order to pay the wages and when they were unable to repay the money the bank appointed a Receiver, Mr. Russell Tillett. Under his management, by the end of 1956 the company was making a profit of over £50,000.

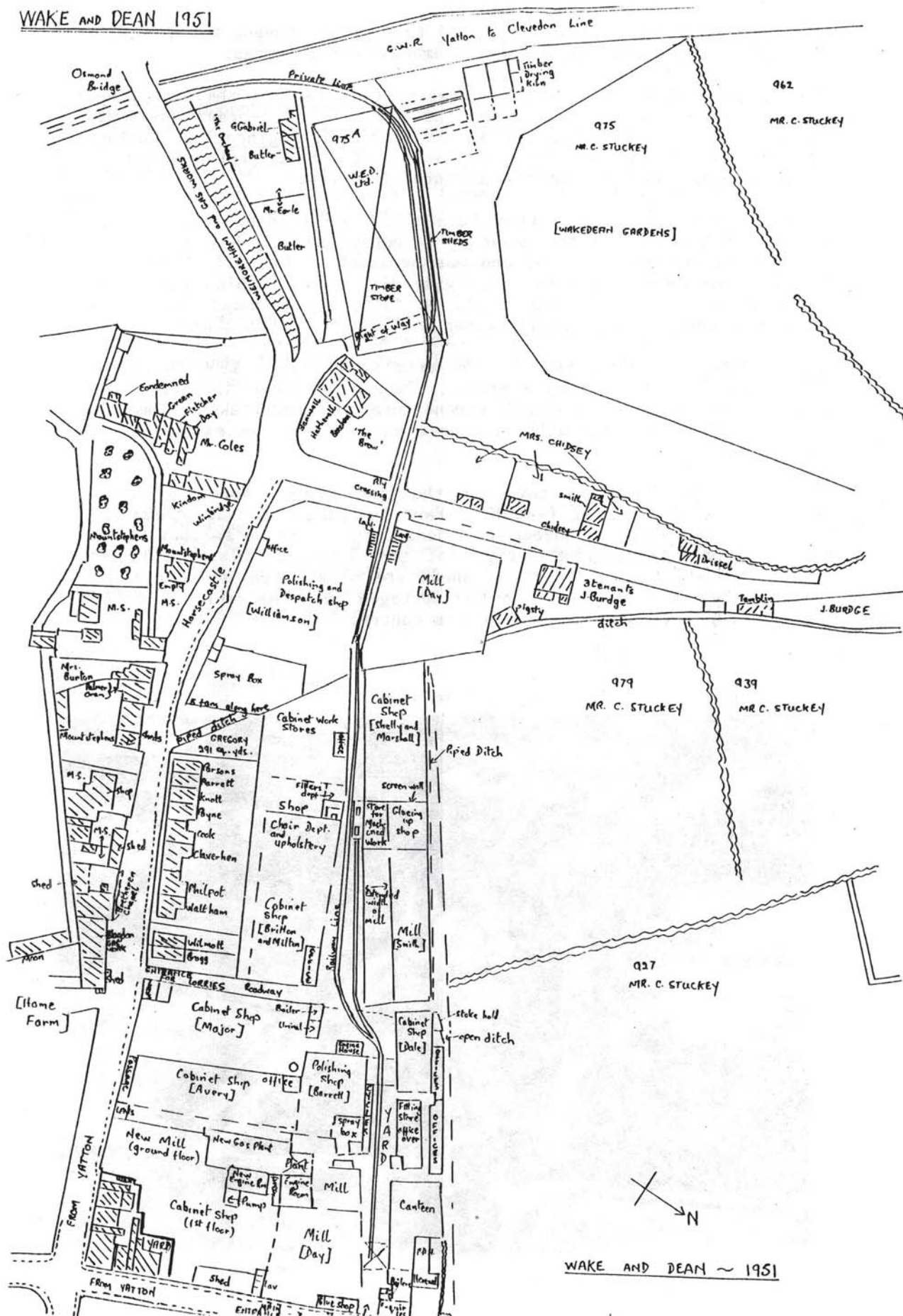
The Board of the company was reconstituted in order to devise a Scheme of Reconstruction. In 1956 the works were valued; it was thought that they would fetch less at auction than on the open market, so instead of auctioning the factory it was decided to continue to manufacture furniture. The share capital was to be reorganised and when the company had repaid money to the bank and to the Receiver, and agreed conditions about future organisation, the bank would withdraw the Receiver. The latter was still acting for the company in mid-1957.

### **THE 1960s — RECOVERY AND EXPANSION**

Mr. Putnam became the managing director of the new company 'Yatton Furniture', which prospered under his dynamic leadership. A programme of development and modernisation was embarked upon. Furniture for the home was now in demand and new processes, more automation and the expansion of the factory took place.

The firm of **Bath Cabinet Makers** of Lower Bristol Road, Bath, was acquired. This company, employing mass production methods, undertook contract work for universities and public buildings. Their 'Formation' range of desks and storage systems was supplied to halls of residence and offices. The 'Format' range was of plain functional design, for domestic use. The success of this range was said to be 'phenomenal'. In 1967 a new factory building in Bath was opened by Sir Hugh Casson. The name 'Wakedean' was transferred to Bath for the school furniture division, the manufacture of which soon ceased altogether.

WAKE AND DEAN 1951





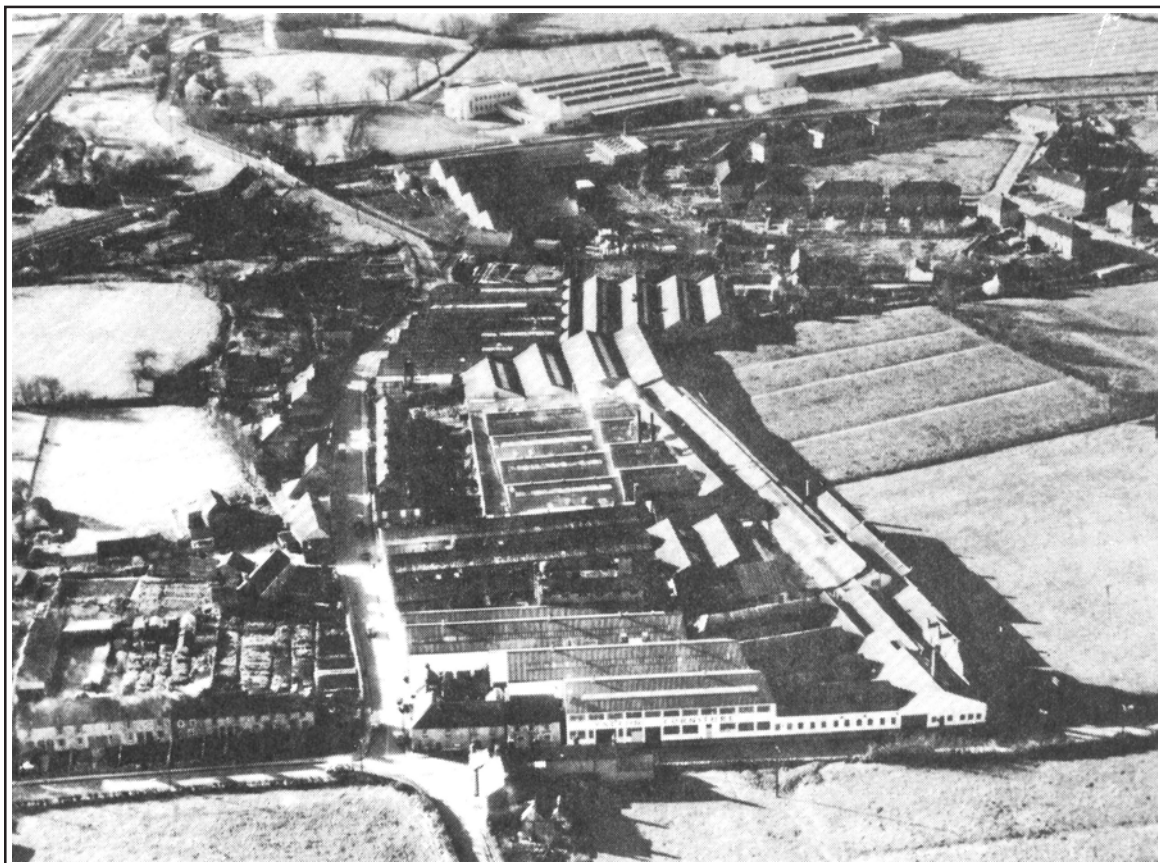
In January 1968 the firm of **Arkana** of Falkirk was bought for £200,000. They made moulded fibreglass chairs, amongst other things.

Another part of Yatton Furniture Company (the name of the group) was **R. Slocombe & Sons** of Bridgwater who did some mail-order business. They moved to Yatton later on, in 1975. **D.P.N. Engineering**, another part of the group, made metal fittings. The main profit-earner in the group was, however, Avalon Furniture of Yatton.

By now the chairman of Yatton Furniture, the holding company, was Mr. Donald Bussell and the managing director was Mr. John Womersley. Mr. Bussell resigned in 1969 and was replaced by Mr. I. T. Henderson. Mr. R. W. Bishop was appointed managing director of Avalon Furniture, which now employed over 600 people at Yatton. The exact figures in March 1968 were 530 men and 117 women.

**New Building:** a comparison of the area in the late 1950s with the 1970s shows how the factory expanded. During the 1960s in particular, a programme of major capital expenditure was undertaken. Between 1966 and 1969 over one million pounds was invested in expansion and re-equipment.

The photograph below was taken in the late 1950s. Note that there is no Wemberham Crescent (see Home Farm buildings) nor are there any houses in the centre of Wakedean Gardens. There are no factory buildings in the fields on the right of the picture. Clevedon branch railway is still operating; the sheds the other side of it are not part of the factory. See also the cottages in Horsecastle Farm Road and the name 'Yatton Furniture' bottom centre.



Land to the north of the existing factory, between it and Macquarie Farm, had been bought from executors of Mr. C. Stuckey. A new office block of 13,000 square feet and costing £65,000 was opened by Mr. Bussell in August 1967. On the upper floor were sales, marketing, stock control and the directors' offices, also a permanent display of Avalon furniture. On the ground floor was the accounts office and the computer. The latter, a GE 115 De La Rue Bull model, was installed in the November to help with automated production. At the rear was parking for 100 cars. In addition, new workshops were built on the Clevedon road (and are still standing, as is the office block).

The factory expanded over the other side of Horsecastle Farm Road as far as the Clevedon railway line. Wakedean Gardens had been built in a large field called 'Garrats Field' and on part of this, just behind the houses and adjoining the Clevedon line, was built in 1951 a timber drying kiln. This was extended in 1957. By 1951 there was already a timber store parallel with the road over Osmond Bridge (behind 'The Orchard').

There was a timber yard in front of the kilns but at the end of 1968 planning permission was sought to extend this to Horsecastle Farm Road and to build a store. This was to be on an orchard and garden belonging to Mrs. Chidsey. The two cottages on this land were subsequently demolished — therefore all that remained on this side of the road was Rose Cottage (see 'Y.Y.' No.2), demolished in 1985/6 for the building of the new chapel, and the three cottages at 'The Brow'.

On the factory side of the road, the cottages on the corner had been demolished pre-war. Four remained, opposite Rose Cottage, but these also were pulled down. The space in the centre of Wakedean Gardens was filled up with housing early in 1962.



## **THE END OF THE 1960s**

**Staff:** by 1969 average weekly earnings were £22.2.7. The canteens were improved and the factory shut down each year for two weeks. There was an additional holiday of 5 days and hours had been reduced to 40. A three-point productivity/welfare scheme was introduced in 1968 with profit-sharing for the 1,200 employees of the whole group, plus a sickness benefit scheme.

**Transport:** in 1967 Avalon had 30 vehicles, 18 of which were Dodge. Seven used semi-trailers. They were supplied by Coventry & Jeffs of Bristol. The transport manager was Mr. Tom Vickery. Vans went to Ireland via Glasgow and Larne and carried two 30 gallon fuel tanks. In 1968 there were 35 drivers. 'Safe Driving Awards' had been instituted and in 1967 ten drivers received £12 each for being accident-free all the year. Messrs. K. Davey and G. Skuse were presented with silver cups for 3 accident-free years during which they drove over 100,000 miles. The year before Messrs. J. Handy and H. Price received silver cups.

**Sale of Assets:** in 1969 there was a steep fall in demand for furniture, partly owing to the government's new hire purchase regulations. The Group's pretax profit fell by 64% in 1969. Bath Cabinet Makers' contract business had fallen off and so both they and Arkana were sold. Mr. Womersley, who had by then left the company, acquired a controlling interest in these two firms. The Group retained Slocombe and D.P.N. Engineering.

## **THE EARLY 1970s**

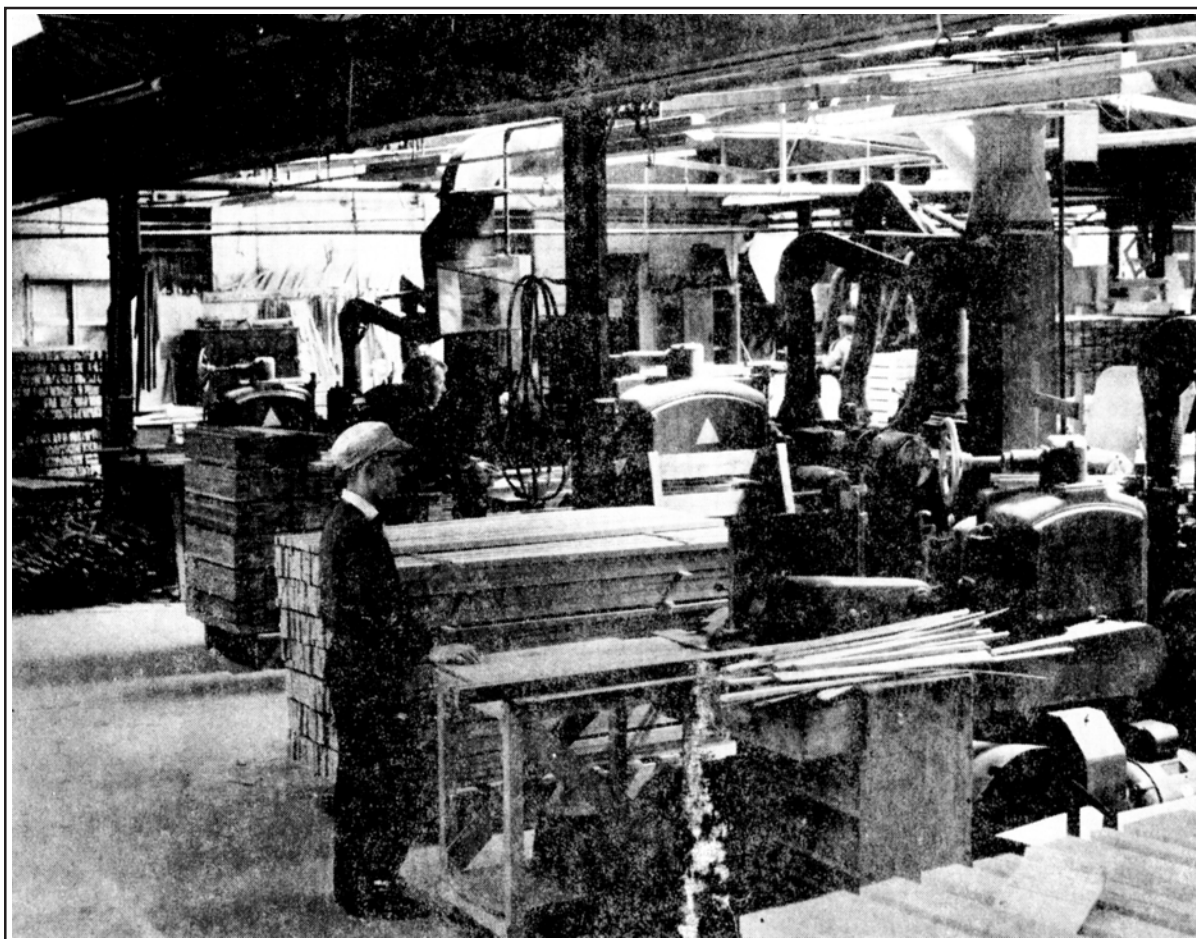
By 1970 trading conditions had improved. Machinery and processes were continuously being updated, with flowline manufacturing techniques. Particle board faced on both sides with natural wood veneers was now used.

The photograph on p.47 shows a multi-production unit, where 6 cutting operations are made on one pass of the wood – planing sides and faces, cutting a groove, a radius and a bevel.

At this time there were many complaints about fumes, smuts and dirt from the factory, especially from residents of the newly-built houses in Wemberham Crescent (built after the Clevedon line closed). To improve the position the company proposed to build a new boiler house measuring 80 ft. x 50 ft. with an 80 ft. chimney right behind 'The Brow'. This new plant was to cost £82,000 and, although its positioning was turned down by the Parish Council and Long Ashton District Committee, it was approved by the North Somerset Planning Board. Despite a protest meeting about the siting of the boiler, it was built and the cottages called 'The Brow' (owned by the company) became uninhabitable. Nos. 2 & 3 were used for storage until eventually becoming derelict. They were just behind the present Nos. 38 & 40 Wemberham Lane at the (then) road junction.

**New Ranges of Furniture:** Already in the late 1960s the Modula range of free-standing wall units had been introduced; also the Maryland 3-seater suite with high density foam and the Oregon suite in beech for £45.12. 0.





In 1970 the layout of the brochure 'Accent on Avalon' was re-designed; it was printed in colour and included all the ranges of furniture. There were additions to the dining range, a 4'5" sideboard from £51.15. 0., a centre leaf table £28.17. 0., a teak/glass coffee table and a rectangular one from £10.15. 0., all to match the Modula range in teak veneer.

There was also the new Comet recliner chair and four new designs of suite, as follows: The Sherborne from £130.17. 0., the Melody from £122. 5. 0., the Napier £63.18. 0. and the Clipper £58.15. 0., with three new fabrics. These are retail prices.

**Publicity:** At the end of 1970 Mr. V.J. Rosati became marketing director, having previously served as sales manager. The new marketing manager was Mr. W. L. Henderson. Public relations firms were employed and much time and thought given to sales promotion. At the 1970 Furniture Show at Earls Court a presentation was made to Mr. H. J. Roberts of High Wycombe, who 21 years previously was one of the two only representatives selling the company's products. By 1970 there were 25 travellers.

As well as exhibiting at Earls Court every year, Avalon attended furniture shows in Manchester, Glasgow and Brighton. In 1968 the company had 4,500 sixteen-sheet poster sites all over the country.

The poster featured a man in dark glasses with the wording 'Find the secret of Avalon Furniture — we have special agents everywhere'.



One of the most successful publicity promotions was 'Plan a Room with Katie Boyle' in 1970 (she was a TV personality). Avalon boosted their sales by 20% through this dealer promotion in which half of the 4,000 stockists took part. They had each to buy a £300 package of furniture and have a display in the shop or window for at least three weeks. In return they each received a Polaroid camera with which to photograph their display. The competition consisted of saying what furniture, in order of priority, they thought Katie Boyle would advise a newly-married couple to choose. First prize was £1,000 or a holiday, with 75 other prizes. The money was won by a 19-year old sales assistant at the Midland Co-op, Stoke-on-Trent. He was flown from London to Yatton with Katie Boyle in a helicopter to receive his prize.

In 1971 a 'Miss Avalon' contest was held and was won by 21-year old Linda Woodland, a punch-card operator who had been with the company for six years.

Avalon furniture was used in show houses around the country. The electronic chair used by Jimmy Savile on his TV programme 'Clunk, Click' (about car seat belts) was upholstered by Avalon. On 24th August 1976 a reception and floating exhibition for Avalon retailers was held on the River Thames in London. The boat embarked at 12.30 and guests enjoyed drinks and a buffet lunch — the boat was, of course, furnished with a range of Avalon products.

### **THE TAKE-OVER BY STAG FURNITURE**

Stag Furniture Holdings Ltd. of Nottingham was formed with Patrick Radford as chairman and John Radford as managing director of Stag Cabinet Company. In 1975 they acquired Yatton Furniture Ltd. (the holding company) which then became Avalon Furniture Ltd., there being no need for two holding companies. Avalon then had about 500 employees and the factory covered 15 acres.

In 1978 Stag bought Meredew Furniture from the receivers; they had 400 employees in two factories at Letchworth. At the beginning of 1978 Mr. Stan Thatcher, a director of the Stag holding company, became managing director of Avalon and the company was reorganised. In 1979 the upholstery department was separated from the cabinet section. In 1980 Avalon had 52 apprentices and a fleet of delivery vans consisting of 22 rigid motors, 36 boxes, 10 articulated trucks and 20 trailers.

Four years later, at the end of 1984, the factory was closed down. The contents were sold by auction on 1st and 2nd May 1985, the auctioneers being Henry Butcher & Co. There were 2,250 lots and the sale catalogue ran to 91 pages. It lists all the modern machinery in use in the factory in the 1980s — too many items to mention here.

The factory was quickly demolished, except for the buildings and offices of the 1960s on the Clevedon road and also Hereward House. By the winter of 1985/6 the two firms of Beezer and Lovell were laying out new roads and building houses on the site. It was as if the factory had never been — was this the biggest change in the village since the coming of the railway?

This picture shows the diesel tank being removed from behind 'The Brow'.

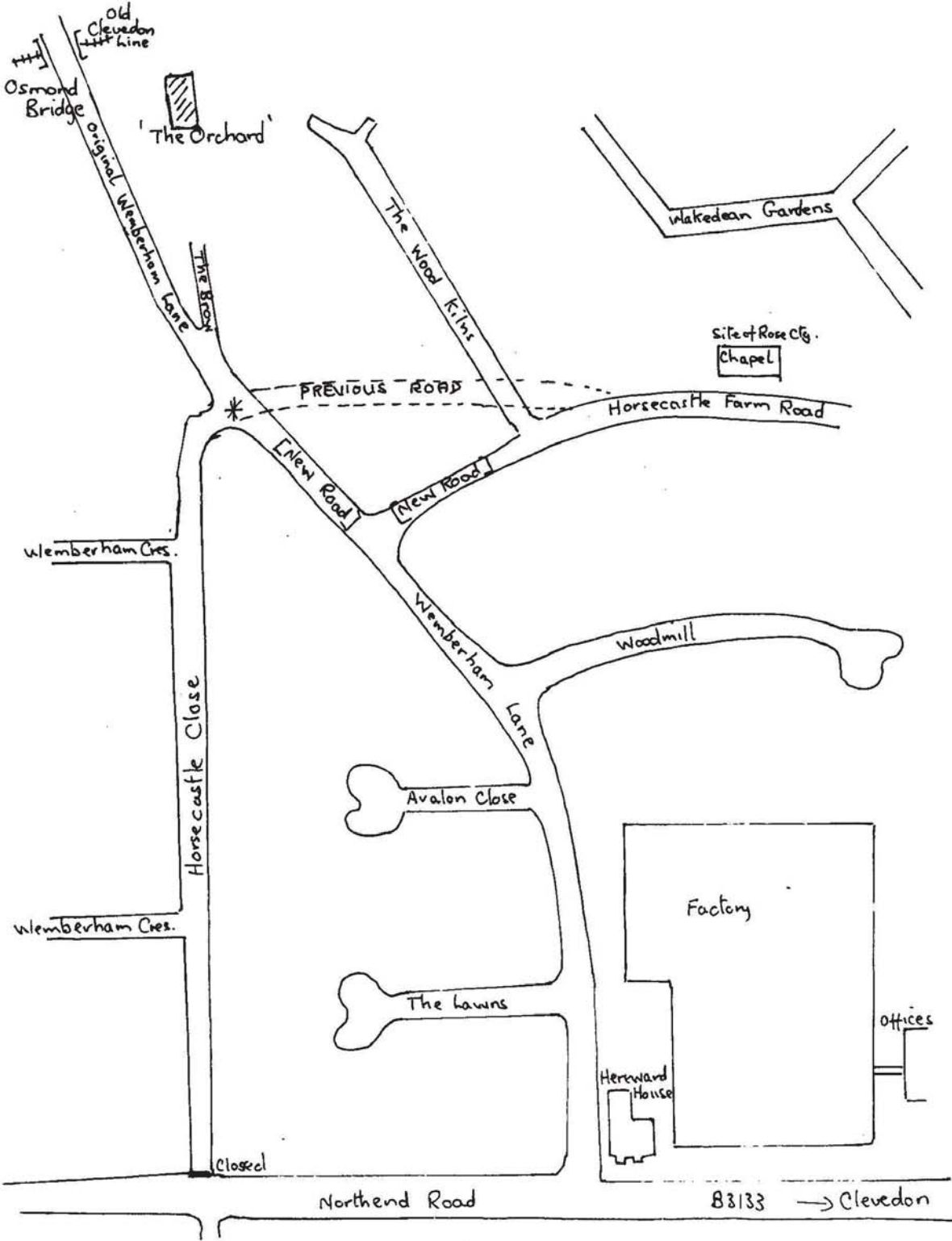


**References:**

Yatton Furniture — planning applications, letters, minutes, etc.  
Press cuttings — trade journals and local & national newspapers  
Plans and photographs  
Personal memories

This article was the idea of Mr. G.T, ('Clem') Clements, and is the result of co-operation between him and the Society.

The Society would welcome reminiscences from local residents who were employed at Avalon, or from their relatives, so that they may be recorded for future generations. (*Editor*)



The Society is grateful to the Yatton & Claverham Newsagents and the Prince of Orange who have generously agreed to sell this publication free of charge.

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