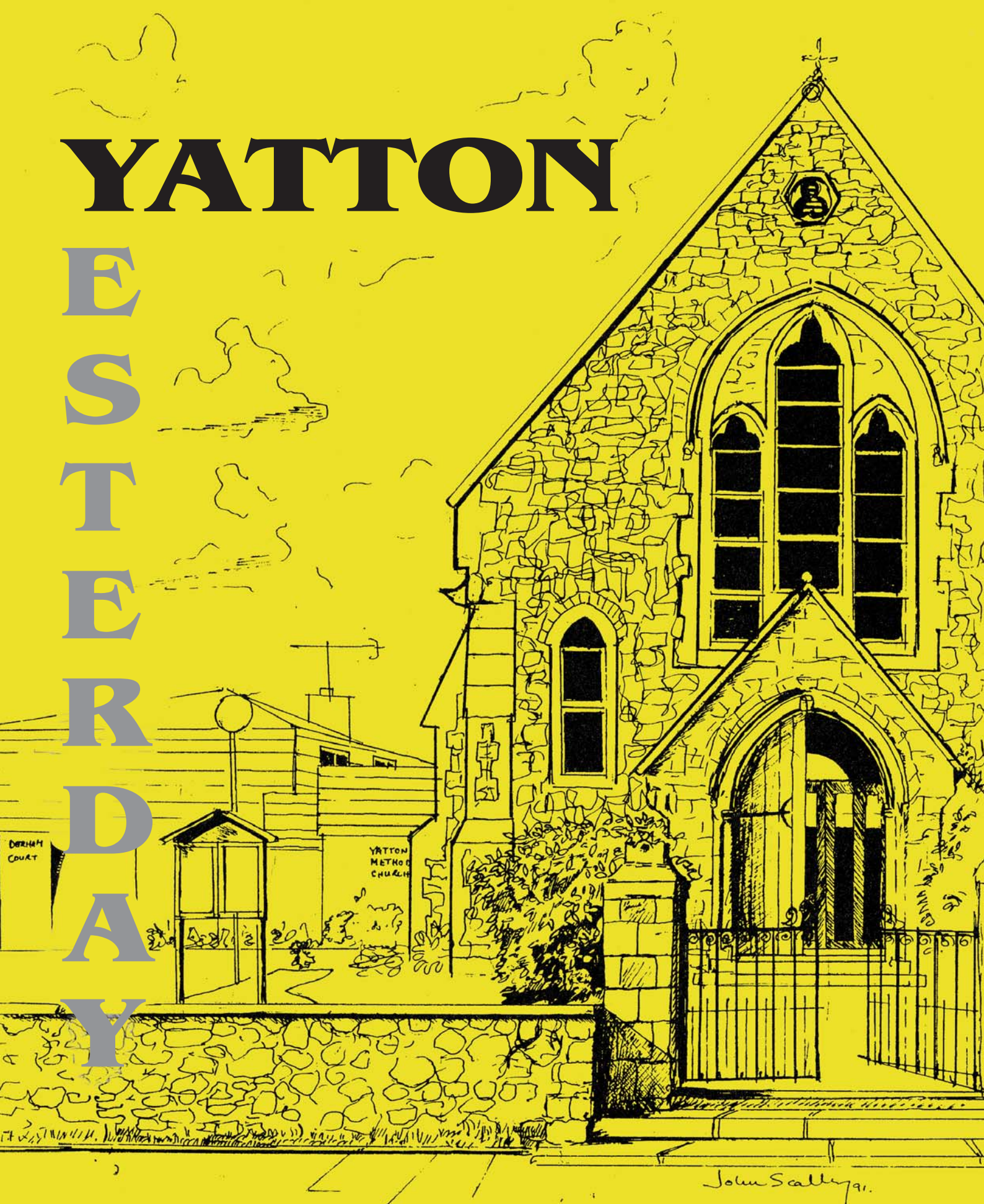


YATTON

ESTERDAY



No: 8 ~ 1991

Yatton Local History Society

Editorial

Our front cover for 1991 depicts the Methodist Church in Yatton. Since we now have our bi-monthly meetings in the church hall, and have been made very welcome, we thought we would make this small tribute. As always, we are indebted to John Scally for the art work.

Bob Young, though still a member, asked to be relieved of the position of President in which he has served us for four years. His help and advice to me as Chairman have been invaluable, as have his contributions to 'Yatton Yesterday'; our grateful thanks, Bob.

'A History of Yatton', compiled by Marian Barraclough from research by Society members, is another milestone in the Society's programme. Whilst not imposing on 'Yatton Yesterday', it provides a superb background to our individual researches.

Books 1, 2 and 7 of 'Yatton Yesterday' have completely sold out; copies are available of 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Our venture for 1992 will be to video the main events in the village during the year. Plans are at an early stage yet, but it is hoped to record Yatton's history for posterity. Anyone interested in helping with this project please contact the Society.

Our thanks are due once more to the local newsagents and Claverham Post Office for distributing 'Yatton Yesterday' free of charge. They have done this generously for seven years, and promise to help with this edition.

Contributors from outside the Society continue to help us – our thanks to them.

We hope you enjoy 'Yatton Yesterday' No. 8, and will honour us with your company at our winter evening meetings.

A. F. COE, President



Chairman's Note

After nine years as Chairman, Mr. A.F. Coe has resigned from this position, and we are extremely pleased to welcome him as our new President. Tony has done much to guide this Society through its formative years, always willing to help, encourage and suggest new ideas.

On behalf of the Society I would like to thank him for all his hard work and look forward to his continued support in the future.

B. Bradbury, Chairman



YATTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Gas In Yatton – Part I

In 1667 a gas was found to be bubbling through water near Wigan. This gas could be ignited and would burn steadily so was called 'inflammable air' and was leaking from a coal mine. In 1730 a gas called 'fire damp' from a mine near Whitehaven was used to light offices.

Commercial coal gas was introduced to this country by William Murdoch of Redruth in 1792, who later built small gas works in the Birmingham area, and a German, Frederick A. Winsor, who came over from France and eventually formed the first gaslight company in the world. This was the London and Westminster Chartered Gas Light and Coke Company and was formed in 1812.

In 1805 an exhibition of gas lighting was staged in Bristol's Broad Street and in 1815 the Bristol Gas Light Company was formed; the first Bristol shops to be illuminated had gas lighting in 1817 and against this background various small undertakings were formed.

So it was that the Yatton Gas Company was formed in 1867, some fifty years after the Bristol Gas Light Company was floated. Yatton Gas Company was officially designated as a non-statutory gas company, meaning it did not have automatic authority to dig up a road or highway to lay a gas main. However, prior to the formation of the Yatton Gas Company a meeting had been held at the Church Vestry on 24th June 1864 to discuss and consider 'allowing the Gas Company to disturb the highway in Yatton Street to enable the said company to lay pipes for the purpose of supplying gas to private consumers'; the Vestry Meeting raised no objections according to the minutes of that meeting. Two points arise from this record – one is how did a church meeting come to be discussing this sort of item? The answer to this is contained in the fact that the Parish Council was not formed until 1895, so the Vestry Meeting would have been the 'forum' to discuss local matters. The second point raised is that the date of this Vestry Meeting was 1864, three years before the foundation of the Gas Company. Could one presume that this was an exploratory meeting, prior to the persons planning to form and finance the company firmly committing themselves to the project? I assume the date of 1867 for the formation of the company is the incorporation date, rather than the effective operational date, which would have been somewhat before the formation date.

Eventually, having received the approval of the Vestry Meeting, the Yatton Gas Company was formed and gas mains were installed in the High Street, although no definite date for this activity has come to light. This would be to supply gas to private consumers, and rich ones at that, as the price of gas was very high initially. There was also an operational problem, in that gas was produced all the time but was only used by the consumer when lights were required, during the evening. Therefore it was important for all gas companies (and Yatton was no exception) to find other consumers and users. On 24th January 1871 a Vestry Meeting was held to discuss and consider gas lighting of the church and consequently pipes were to be laid. Presumably this was carried out and all was quiet for a few years.

Then on 6th February 1888 a meeting was to be held of 'the inhabitants of part of the parish of Yatton to determine whether the provisions of the Lighting and Watching Act dated the third and fourth year of William IV (i.e. 1833) shall be adopted'. A further meeting was held on 15th February 1889 and adjourned so that a committee could be formed to ascertain the opinion of the parishioners. It was found that two-thirds of those concerned were in favour of lighting and so the proposal was adopted. The area to be lit extended from the intersection of the two roads at the foot of the bridge over the Clevedon Branch Railway to the junction of Henley Lane with the Congresbury Road at the other end – *i.e.*, the north and south limits.

The other direction was limited to the corner of Poundfield (now called 'the Glebe') and presumably High Street was the other boundary. All the properties within 20 yards of the centre of the main roads were included in the 'Lighting District' and Mr. Dawes of the Yatton Gas Company agreed to provide, fix and maintain a sufficient number of lamps and to light them for eight months of the year. The cost was not to exceed a rate of 3d. in the £ (about 1p.) and 26 lamps were provided, although we have no record of where they were situated.

This work was obviously carried out quickly, because at a Vestry Meeting of 22nd April 1889 three Inspectors were to be elected and were empowered to collect up to £50 per annum for gas lighting from the area having street lighting (known as 'The Lighting District of the Parish of Yatton'). Things must have gone well and presumably the Inspectors did their job as we note that on 19th May 1892, at a meeting of lighting district ratepayers when the accounts were audited, a £53 precept was required for the current year and two lamps were to be added to the existing 26. One was to be by the church in the Causeway and the other outside Mr. Follett's. According to Kelly's Directory for 1889, William Follett, boot and shoe maker, lived in Biddle Street. This would probably be one of the houses in the present Church Road where it joins the present Chescombe Road. Footpaths passed through this area so the lamp may have been placed to improve the footpath lighting as well as to light the roadway.

A meeting of the Lighting District called on 3rd April 1893 was so poorly attended that there were not enough people present to form a quorum and the meeting was postponed until 25th May 1893, when the meeting approved the payment of any expenses for collecting the district lighting rate, presumably incurred by the Inspectors.

The Journal of Gas Lighting dated 23rd September 1903 printed an item referring to Yatton, saying 'Owing to a dispute between the ratepayers of the village of Yatton and the Directors of the Gas Company the public lighting was discontinued last winter. The inconvenience was so great that it was determined not to have a repetition this year and the relighting of the streets by gas took place a few evenings since, to general approval'. We have not found another reference to this 'dispute' but must assume its authenticity and wonder if it was caused, as many disputes were, by the high price of gas at that time.

Before we proceed further with this story perhaps we should consider the manufacturing side of the gas company. The production plant and offices were in Wemberham Lane, one building was used for offices, the other housed the plant. Both

these buildings are still there, although one is now a fencing contractor's office and stores and the other is a private dwelling. Behind the buildings the railway track runs and presumably coal was brought by rail for the plant, although coal was reported to have been delivered to Congresbury wharf by barge up to 1900, possibly to be transported by cart to Yatton. Many people will no doubt remember the gas holders; there was only one prior to 1937 when Yatton joined Clevedon and an additional holder was built, on the opposite side of Wemberham Lane where the concrete works is now.

We should mention at this juncture that the quality of the gas was controlled by Acts of Parliament, including one of 1871, which gave consumers within 25 yards of a gas main the right to request a gas supply. Gas could only be pumped for up to approximately one mile from the works due to pressure problems, leaks, etc. This limited the potential number of consumers per works and so there were many small works. This improved in later years, substantially towards the end of the 19th century, and gas became more widely used.

It seems that a small works like Yatton had a very small workforce which was supplemented as required; the following is a probable scenario of the operational side of a small gas works. The manager of the works together with an engineer would take care of the day to day operations including supervision of the works and of contractors who were responsible for outside work on mains, lamps, etc. and also reading the meters, passing the information back to the office for charges to be calculated and bills sent out. A stoker would be employed whose job was to feed the retorts and make the gas. This was a skilled job and he was the man who used his skill to produce the maximum amount of gas from the coal supplied, using the plant available. The plant may be old or worn or of a type not suited to the fuel available; all these things would affect the gas production and the stoker had to try to overcome these difficulties. Remember also that the retorts operated on a continuous basis and as long as gas was required they had to be fed with coal. The normal hours of demand were from 6am to 10pm, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, and although the retorts would be 'banked up' (i.e. a slow burning process introduced) for the night, stoking had to be resumed when gas was required. The manager and the engineer would assist if necessary to keep the gas production going. At some works such as Yatton a junior stoker would be employed when the company could afford to pay him. He would assist and learn the trade, and was an investment in the future.

The plant itself would consist of retorts, exhausters, purifiers, holder and meter. Normally little maintenance would be required except when breakdowns occurred, except for the purifying plant, which prior to the 1860s was filled with lime, wet or dry, requiring frequent emptying and filling with new. After the 1860s oxide of iron was used, which is similar to soil in consistency and much more convenient, and had to be changed every two or three months. Disposal of by-products such as ammoniacal liquor and tar was a difficult item, dealt with in various ways by the gas company as we shall see in part two.

The manager and engineer would usually have a basic knowledge of engineering but in case of emergency they had two possible help lines. One was the assistance of a consultant who was paid a retainer and available when required. In

Yatton a qualified gas engineer was retained early this century. The other source of help was a neighbouring gas works – in the case of Yatton, Clevedon was the ‘helping hand’ in emergency. Although the two companies were close to each other they were not competitors, as each gas company had its own area and ‘poaching’ of another company’s consumers was illegal, and physically the gas pressure being maintained by the works through longer mains with poor joints was difficult in the early days.

The directors were all shareholders, non-technical, relying on the engineer and/or consultant for advice, with the secretary carrying out their wishes. It was not too unusual for personnel to be associated with more than one gas company. At one time Yatton Company’s secretary was also the secretary of Clevedon Gas Company, although this would not be accepted now. Similarly, in times of coal shortage it was not unusual for coal to be sold on from a larger works, which would hold a larger stock, to a small works to enable them to keep going; would this happen now, I ask.

At this point we will leave the Yatton Gas Company story until the 1992 ‘Yatton Yesterday’. To be continued.

References:

Parish Records – Somerset Record Office D/P/Yat 9/1/4
British Gas Records
Yatton Gas Company Records
Mr. D. Gledhill of Taunton

Brian Bradbury



Yatton Women’s Institute 1941 – 1991

The Women’s Institute was started in Canada at Stoney Creek, Ontario, in 1897. Its aims were to educate women in farming and household management and to give them a realization of a woman’s place in the community, thus superseding the more militant attitude of the suffragettes. Home and Country were the foundation of the movement.

On 11th September 1915 a group of women at Llanfairpwllgwyngyll in Anglesey, North Wales, formed the first W.I. in the United Kingdom. The movement spread quickly. Cleeve and Congresbury had formed institutes some years before Yatton held the first gathering of prospective W.I. members.

The first meeting was held on 27th March 1941 at 2.30 p.m, in the Gas Demonstration Showroom. This building is now Barclay’s Bank at the corner of Derham Park. Sixty-six women attended and the rules and aims of the Federation were explained by Mrs. Day from Congresbury and Mrs. Weaver, a County Organizer from Dulverton. Accordingly, a committee was formed. Mrs. I.M.B. Skinner was the first president with two vice-presidents, a secretary and a treasurer. With others on the committee were Miss J. Head and Miss S. Ralph. Monthly meetings were to be held on second Thursdays at 2.30pm in the Methodist schoolroom. The subscription was 2s. a year, but in 1943 it was raised to 3s. and a further 9d. a head was asked from

each member to help the County Federation at Taunton write off a headquarters deficit. At the end of the first year the Yatton W.I. membership was 88.

<p>I, <u>Sybil J. Raeph</u> wishing to become a member of the <u>Yatton</u> Women's Institute, in the County of <u>Somerset</u> promise to pay to the Treasurer of the Institute the sum of Two Shillings yearly while I continue a member. I also promise to keep the Rules and Bye-Laws of the Institute, and all Rules and Regulations made for Women's Institutes by the National Federation of Women's Institutes.</p> <p>Member's Name <u>Miss Raeph</u> Date of joining <u>10. 11. 41</u> Secretary of W.I. <u>Miss Faxon</u> Address of County Secretary <u>St. Mary's</u> <u>Hamilton Rd Taunton</u></p> <p>ADDRESS OF NATIONAL FEDERATION: 39, ECCLESTON STREET, LONDON, S.W.1. W. M. & Co., H</p>	<p>National Federation of Women's Institutes.</p> <p>MEMBERSHIP CARD</p> <p>"For Home and Country."</p> <p><u>Yatton</u></p> <p>WOMEN'S INSTITUTE, <u>Somerset</u></p> <p>County Federation of Women's Institutes.</p> <p><i>The main purpose of the Institute is to improve and develop conditions of rural life.</i></p>
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These first years of Yatton W.I. were during the second world war and many of the activities were connected with fund-raising and caring for those at the war front and at home. A National Savings group was formed and support was given to the Royal Navy Comforts, the Royal Artillery and in 1944 a big effort was made to help with the Red Cross fete. Many garments were knitted for the use of those on active service. During the war years the W.I. was instrumental in collecting herbs, rosehips and blackberries. These were sold to dealers for use in food production and industry where other ingredients were not available. A full part was taken to aid Wings for Victory Week, Warships Week, etc. and collections of articles to help people bombed out in Lambeth were made, together with eggs for Bristol hospitals and further aid to the 'Help Holland Fund'. Joyfully there was also the Welcome Home Fund at the end of hostilities.

In spite of these outside programmes there were informative talks at each meeting on subjects from 'Africa and the War' to 'Pruning', and from 'Women in Medicine' to 'Somerset Dialect'. Craft classes were held and monthly competitions were well supported; members were awarded gold, silver and green stars for these. So full of activity were these meetings that often the social half-hour had to be abandoned.

Each year Christmas and summer garden parties were held, in spite of severe food rationing. The cake at the first birthday party was made by Miss Head 'with ingredients provided by various members'. In 1943 it was not possible to make a cake

so there was a charge of 3d. a head for party food with 'sandwiches and any small buns obtainable'.

Quite soon a drama group and a W.I. choir were proposed and these became most successful in giving entertainment and at winning honours at county level. Mrs. Collings produced a nativity play in 1942 and in 1943 she wrote a play on the history of the Red Cross which was awarded a county merit. In 1944 Miss C. Harborne and Mrs. Hippisley gave a duologue at the Drama Festival and received a certificate of merit. A further award was won by Miss Harborne and Mrs. Maslen. It was in 1944 that the enthusiasm of Miss Freer led to the formation of a choir. Miss James, who is now Mrs. McLaren, trained and conducted the singers. Miss Freer was the valued accompanist and the choir went forward to gain county honours.

Since the end of the war and those early years, all the interests both local and in a wider field have been maintained. Successes continued in the craft section. In 1948 the page submitted by Miss Sybil Ralph was selected as the Somerset contribution for the gift book presented by the W.I. to the Princess Elizabeth on her wedding day. It was Miss Ralph's design, worked by three members, that was chosen for the tablecloth which is still used each month on the president's table. Another member, Mrs. Bragg, was one of six asked to work on the Somerset tapestry.

1965 was the Golden Jubilee of the W.I.'s foundation in Great Britain. Yatton W.I. made a scrapbook of village life and events of that year. Again in 1983 another scrap book was compiled, together with a list of 'Flora and Fauna' in the churchyard. Craft work has always been a great interest for W.I. members. Awards were won for lampshades, collages and flower arranging. During the 1960s a variety of classes were held and merits gained for toymaking, rugmaking, embroidery, gloves, basketry, silverwork and dressmaking. For the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, 1976, many articles were sent to be sold at Debenham's in Oxford Street.

The Drama Group continued to flourish, led by Miss Catherine Harborne, one year winning a gold star for a comedy 'Can the Leopard', and a silver star for a scene from Shakespeare's 'Winter's Tale'. In 1952 a silver cup was won at the Mid-Somerset Festival in Bath in the Shakespearean Group Acting Class and presented to Miss Harborne for her production. Later Mrs. G. Evans produced several entertaining and award-winning plays.

The Choir led by Mrs. McLaren had a great honour at Taunton in May 1952, winning two gold stars which put them in the advanced level class, and in 1953 they again merited three gold and one silver star at a choir festival at Weston. This meant they represented Somerset at the Albert Hall when a cantata written by Vaughan Williams for W.I. choirs, entitled 'The Four Seasons', was sung. The winning choir from each county formed a massed choir conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

When travelling became easier, the spring and autumn group meetings, those of the Somerset Federation and the yearly A.G.M. at the Albert Hall were all well attended. Group meetings took place at the Colston Hall in the jubilee year of 1965, and as a picnic on Blackdown. The yearly carol services at Wells and later at Bristol were fully supported and enjoyed.

Denman College, named for Lady Denman, the first national president, has always been a most sought-after venue. With the help of a bursary several members have enjoyed a week's course of study there. Yatton W.I. took part in the furnishing and decorating of a room at the college.

The 1947 yearly report contained these words: 'It would be out of place in a report of this nature to single out any services rendered by members for special comment or thanks, but we recall with gratitude many who have given the benefits of their talents and personalities month by month'. It is also impossible in this account to name the many who have served as committee members, officers and in other ways throughout the years.

One member who seems to embody the aims of the movement and the continuity of Yatton W. I. should be especially mentioned; she is Miss Mabel Gillard who was a long-serving committee member and held the posts of secretary and president many times. In 1953-4 as there was no-one willing to be secretary, she resigned the presidency to take up the vacant post 'in order that the W.I. in Yatton may continue to function'. It was fitting that in the Jubilee Year, 1965, she was given the honour of attending the Royal Garden Party. To mark the occasion, Miss Gillard was presented with an umbrella by the Yatton Institute. One hopes it was useful as a sunshade. Her interest in Yatton W.I. continued until her death in 1980.

The W.I. has always been active in Yatton itself. The first garden fete after the war was held by the Institute at Henley Lodge in 1947 in aid of their own funds and of the church bells. It was later suggested that a flower show run by a village committee could take its place. This came to be, and has developed into the summer show run by the Horticultural Society – see 'Yatton Yesterday' No. 7. For many years a Christmas party was arranged for the residents of Yatton Hall, and a summer treat of an afternoon at Clevedon for the girls there. Each year the W.I. ran a cake stall at the Hall's summer fete. In 1953 on Coronation Day members were at the village hall by 5.45am preparing the children's tea, so that they would be free to follow the Coronation procession on the television later in the morning. Yatton Festival weeks have been supported by craft shows and refreshments served at Hangstones.

Not only in local interests have Yatton W.I. been active. Each year the resolutions for discussion at the A.G.M. in the Albert Hall are seriously considered and the representative for Yatton given the information which indicates the way she is to cast her vote on behalf of the Institute. A wide range of resolutions has been put forward, such as colouring matter in food, under-age drinking and the sale of alcoholic drinks in supermarkets, planning permission for agricultural buildings, solvent abuse, legislation for the status of artificially produced embryos, acid rain control, world food help in self-sufficiency and many other subjects.

After the meeting in the Gas Showrooms, the Methodist schoolroom was used for a long period for the monthly assembly. In 1962 a new meeting place was the reading room in the village hall; during 1974-76 'the Infant School in Church Road' and later 'the Infant School in the High Street'. One meeting in 1977 was at the Chapter House but in 1978 a change was made to Hangstones Pavilion. This was used until

January 1990, when the Jack Crease room in the village hall became the W.I. 'home'. In 1959 the afternoon meetings changed to monthly evening meetings on Tuesdays. Another big change was that at the moving of the county boundary the Avon Federation was formed, and so the long association with Somerset F.W.I. was broken. An Avon honour came to Yatton in 1981 when a former president, Miss Janet Smith, was made a V.C.O. – a Voluntary County Organiser.

This year, 1991, the Yatton W.I. had its 50th birthday party, which took the form of a dinner at the village hall, as it had in 1981 for the 40th year celebrations. Both were attended by county representatives and by guests from nearby institutes who had been hosts to Yatton many times. With such a background of personalities, talents and activities, Yatton Institute is well rooted for a flourishing future.

Acknowledgements:

I am indebted to former and present members of the W.I. for much information. I also wish to thank the committee for making the minute books from 1941 to 1988 available to me.

D. M. Nicholas

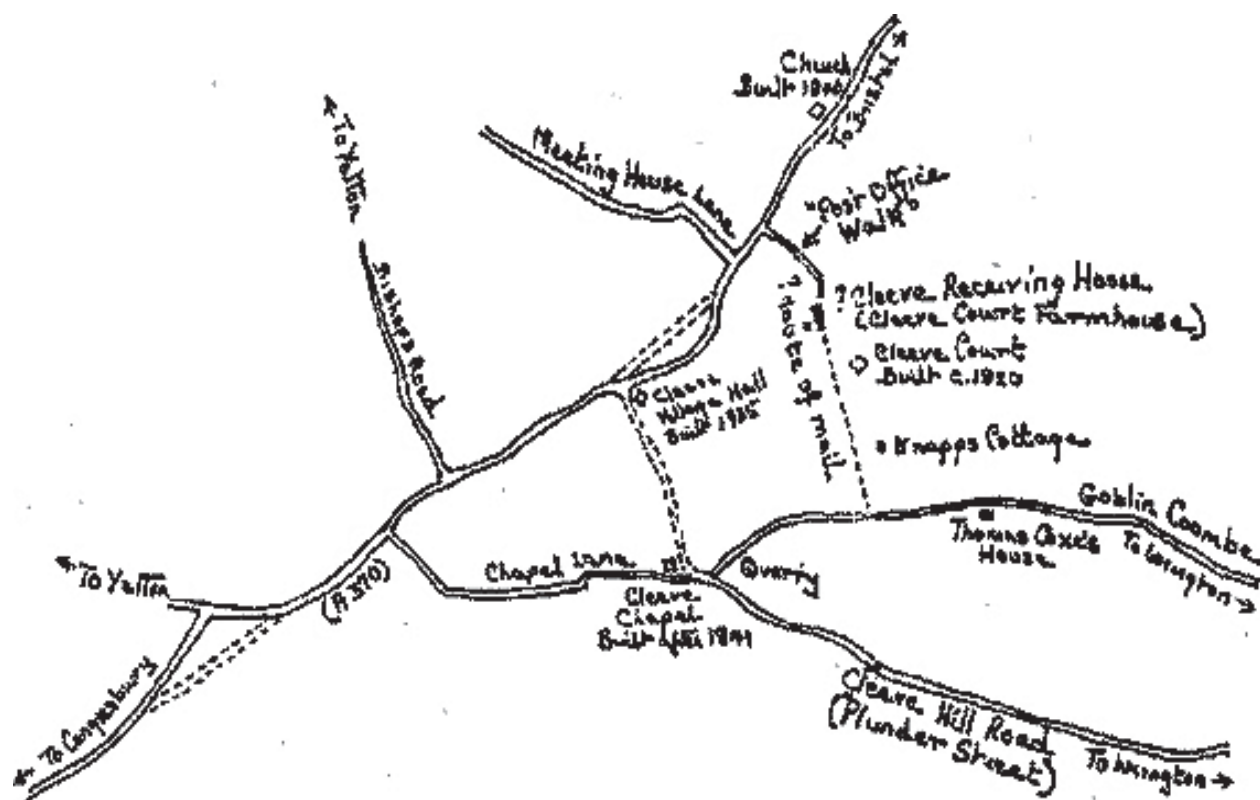


Cleeve's Early Postal Service

It is difficult for us nowadays, when we see the postmen on their bicycles or in their red vans, to imagine how different was the life of their predecessors in the early 19th century when the post was carried long distances by foot or on horseback to the villages around Bristol.

I became interested in the postal arrangements in the area when I carried out a Parish Survey of Cleeve. Two pieces of information were given to me by local inhabitants at the time but they did not seem to fit in with the known facts. One referred to the path which leaves the Bristol to Weston-super-Mare road through an arch in the wall. The actual arch may have been a mid to late 19th century addition and can be seen not far from Meeting House Lane but on the south side of the main road. 'This used to be called Post Office Walk' I was told. Why, I thought, should anyone want to take the post along there? Another informant said, when referring to the building then known as Cleeve Court Cottages, now Cleeve Court Farmhouse, which is 17th century in date or even earlier, 'that house was said to have been the post house in the 1800s and later post horses called there'. This was also a puzzle as it was not on the main road, although at the time it was probably in the heart of the hamlet of Cleeve.

Map showing the possible postal route through Cleeve to Wrington



One day Mr. Jack Vincent lent me a book about the Penny Post and suddenly everything began to fall into place and an explanation of these two traditions became a possibility. The route taking the post on horseback from **Bristol to Wrington** in 1816 was shown in the book to go through **Cleeve**. This would mean that these traditions were true but the position of the two sites still did not fit in if the present day route to Wrington were followed, that is, by Cleeve Hill Road, starting from the main road near Cleeve Village Hall. Then I remembered that in the early 19th century what is now Cleeve Hill Road left its present route near the quarry, ran along Chapel Lane and came out on the Bristol-Weston road near the bottom of Rhodyate Hill (see map). It therefore made sense for the post to leave the main road by 'Post Office Walk', to go along the Walk, to the Post Office or Receiving House in Cleeve Court Cottages, then over the land now belonging to Cleeve Court and into Goblin Combe to reach Cleeve Hill. This would be a shorter route. Two old cottages, now long since gone, are also known to have been near this route. One was called Knapp's Cottage and the other Thomas Coxe's House (see map). The latter was also pointed out to me as being the 'old post office' but I think this was a mistake. As the riders carrying the mail left the Post Office to continue their journey in 1816, they either went up Goblin Combe or by the road over Cleeve Hill. I wonder if this part of the journey held any dangers such as mail robbery; if so, no stories have come down to us in spite of the name Plunder Street by which name Cleeve Hill Road was known by all the local people over many years.

Some readers may be interested in a little more information concerning the routes used for the post at that time. In 1805 the Post Office Surveyor, Mr.B.Bartlett, outlined a plan to serve the villages between Axbridge and Bristol. The post was to be taken every morning by horse rider from Axbridge to Bristol via Sidcot, Churchill, Langford, Wrington, Redhill and Bedminster, with an extension by foot messenger from Wrington via Congresbury to Worle three days a week. This was to serve 'that extensive Marsh Country'. The rider was to return to Axbridge by 6pm. Receiving Houses were set up in all the places mentioned, except Redhill and Bedminster, for the dropping and collecting of bags of letters and for the distribution of mail in the villages.

After about a year it was found that the Bristol-Axbridge route was uneconomic so the diversion to Wrington was dropped to avoid the hilly and badly repaired road. Instead the post was taken on foot to Wrington from Langford. Congresbury and Worle lost their Receiving Houses.

The next major change was made in 1816. The country between Bedminster and Langford was sparsely populated and there were many well populated places including Clevedon asking for the postal service. On 11th November 1816 a new horse ride was established via Bedminster, Long Ashton, Bourton, Brockley, Cleeve and over Cleeve Hill to Wrington and Langford, terminating at Churchill. Receiving Houses were set up in all those villages. It has been seen that the Cleeve Receiving House was in all probability situated in what is now called Cleeve Court Farmhouse, especially as two early 19th century coach houses are attached to the house. All the letters for Yatton were distributed from Cleeve, which was part of the same parish at that time.

Two extensions for foot messengers were established to connect with this route. The first was from Churchill to Sidcot, Banwell, Uphill, Weston-super-Mare, Worle and back to Churchill, and the second was from Flax Bourton to Walton, Nailsea and Clevedon and back to Flax Bourton. Axbridge was by this time part of the post office at Wells.

In 1826 the Cleeve Receiver had his salary increased from £5 to £6 per year. He was to deliver in Cleeve, to take charge of the Yatton letters and to make up bags for Bristol. On 25th September 1827 Wrington was removed from the Flax Bourton ride and once again was serviced by foot from the A38, where the Barnstaple mail coach left the bags at Havyatt Green. By 1836 the need for speed by the mail coach caused this arrangement to end and thereafter the letters for Wrington and the surrounding area were taken to Cleeve by the Bourton carrier and collected from there, but the following year this was discontinued and Wrington was served by the Bristol-Cross ride.

The postal ride from Bourton now went to Clevedon but a foot service was provided from Bourton to Cleeve and was continued on to Congresbury. The Cleeve Receiver was still delivering on foot to Yatton. After a series of complaints and in order to provide the public with time each day for answers to be written, a horse post was recommended. In 1830, as a result of this recommendation, the Bourton-Congresbury route was given to horse riders and Yatton was included in the ride. To

send a letter and receive an answer in one day was a reality in 1830 but it is only a dream one hundred and sixty years later.

In 1832 Congresbury regained the Receiving House it had lost in 1806, and one was established in Yatton for the first time. From this it can be seen that Cleeve had a Receiving House sixteen years before Yatton had one of its own.

Reference:

Ian M.Warn, 'Bristol 5th Clause & Penny Posts 1793 to 1840', Perth, 1980. A copy of this book can be found in Bristol Central Library.

M. V. Campbell



The Forge, North End

In 'Yatton Yesterday' No. 7 is an article on the inns of Yatton. Reference was made to the Bridge Inn and the Smith family's connection through Henry Smith. Henry's son Walter eventually ran the forge assisted by two of his sons, Sidney and Stewart. It seems appropriate to pursue history with a few facts concerning this very valuable part of Yatton in those days.

Briefly, Walter was apprenticed to a Mr. W.C. Webber in 1904 for 7s.6d. per week (37½p.) Walter took over the forge in 1912 upon his mother's death. Later, Sidney and Stewart worked with their father until he died. Sidney claimed to have worked 'sixty years at the anvil'.

The forge itself had an unpretentious outward appearance belying the first class workmanship that went on inside. Originally, it is claimed, this used to be a farm building; where the horses used to be shod was a cow shippen and where the shoes were heated up and hammered on the anvil was a small barn. The office and stores was a stable. The auction particulars (28.6.1979) give the following details of the buildings:

Lean-to galvanised iron store with double doors 19ft. x 13ft.;

Stone built and tiled workshop 37ft. x 16ft.;

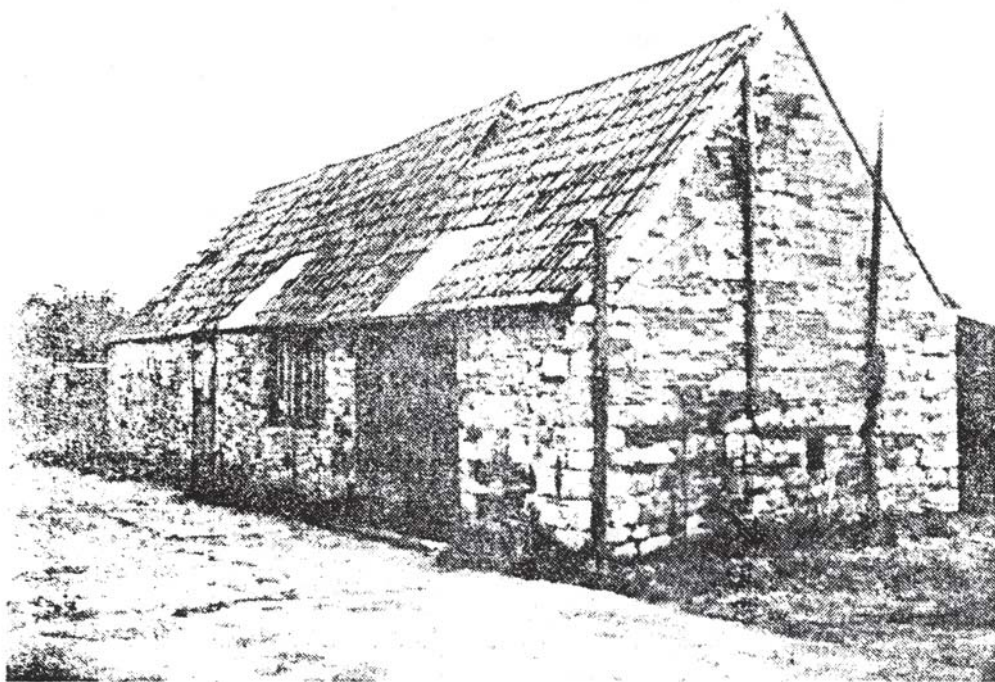
Secondary workshop 11ft.x 10ft.; office 8ft. x 11ft.;

Lean-to lathe 14ft. x 12ft.;

Lean-to galvanised iron store 20ft. x 11ft.;

Lean-to store 13ft. x 8ft.

The land was sold with planning permission for light industrial use.



The Old Forge

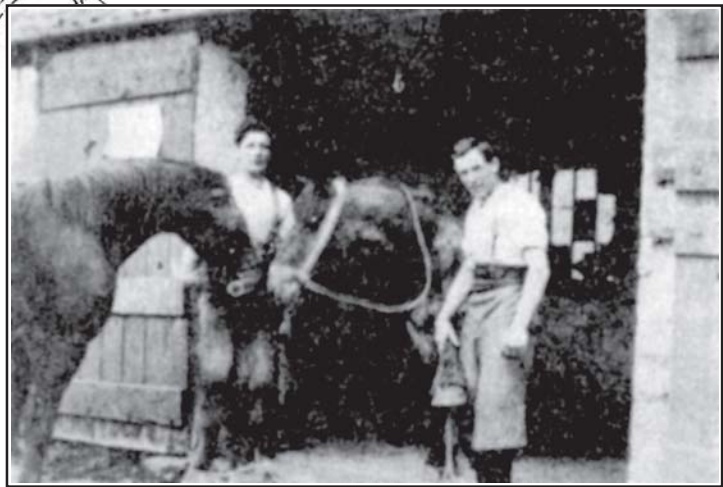
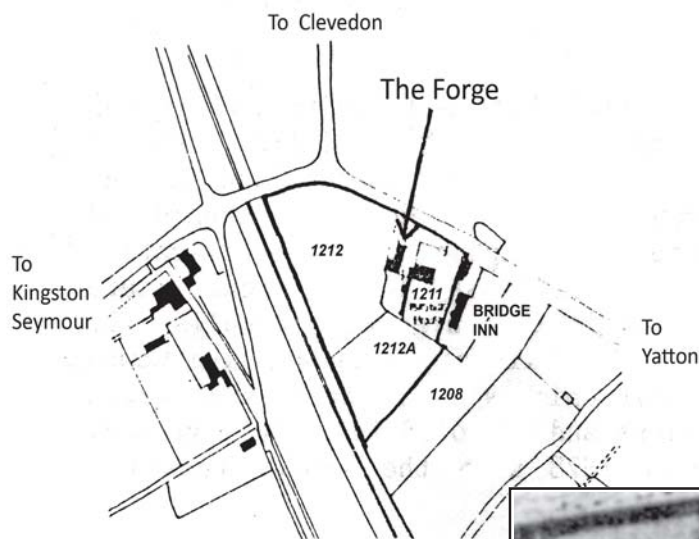
Basic tasks included shoeing, smithy work, welding agricultural machinery and wrought iron work on gates and railings. Farmers, butchers, bakers and coalmen were all dependent on this establishment. Some 25 to 30 horses were shod there every week; one farmer returned every fortnight to have his horses' rear shoes replaced. 'There would be as many as 20 mowing machines in at one time', said Sidney. These had to be repaired with a lot of overtime. Walter and Sidney used to ride to Nailsea once a week carrying all their tools on bicycles, in all weathers. If a horse was being shod for the first time it played up, and there would be a 'lot of demolishing' in the shed. On one occasion a horse kicked the tiles off the roof and they continued shoeing with the open sky above.

During the winter there were frequent requests for frost nails for the horses' shoes. Cart wheels were bonded with metal tyres. Large agricultural machinery was serviced – harrows, chain harrows, etc. As the years went by up-to-date machines were installed: hand drills, electric drills, electrical arc welding and oxy-acetylene welding; quarry tools were brought in for tempering; lawn mowers for repair and sharpening; hay carvers, knives, spades made or re-handled; mud scrapers for clearing the mud off the roads.

Iron frames for school desks were made for Avalon. Even the children came in for iron hoops with their ring guide attached to trundle along to school – one up on the standard wooden ones.

The Smiths claimed that they could make anything required one way or another, however unusual. These three men were real 'gentlemen' with the personal touch. Courtesy and consideration was the secret of their success.

Bridge House. Yatton. Bristol



The photograph, taken about 1922, shows Walter Smith (1891-1971) standing behind the horses' heads. It was supplied by Rev. John Gregory, who says:

'My mother used to tell this story about her brother (Walter Smith). He would go to any fair in the neighbourhood and find the showman who invited you to hit a knob with a wooden mallet which sent a marker flying up a pole. If it reached the top it rang a bell and you received a prize. Since Walter used a sledgehammer every day and compared favourably with Longfellow's blacksmith he could ring the bell every time. But this was not very profitable so he used to make an agreement with the showman to stay away for the rest of the day in return for 10s.'

References:

Conversation with Shirley Baker, daughter of Sidney Smith, with Harry Smith and Ron Smith.

A. F. Coe

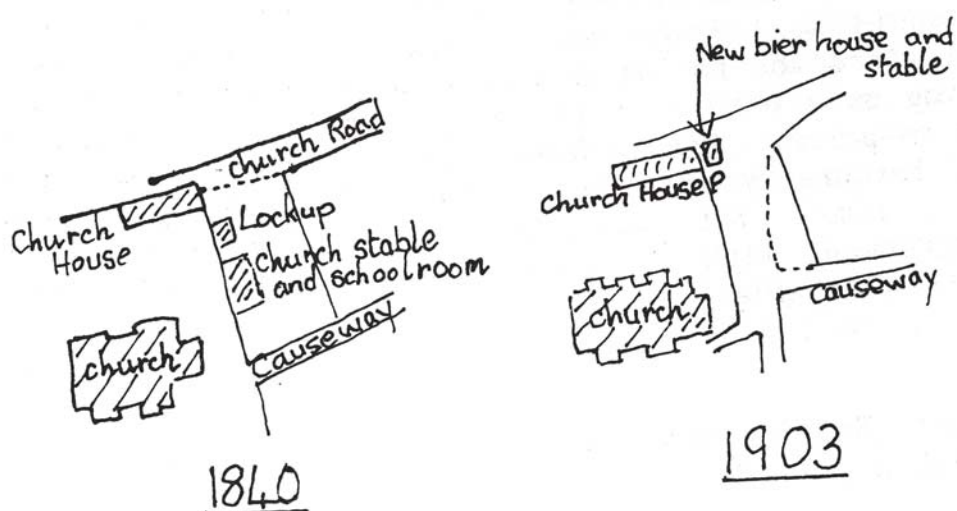
The Lock-up and The Bier House

As there seems to be some confusion about the name and purpose of the building adjoining the east end of the Church House, the following explanation may be useful.

The lock-up stood slightly to the south of this building and it was demolished before 1885. The Vestry meeting of 30th April 1827 resolved to obtain estimates for the erection of a lock-up house on land adjoining the Poor House (i.e. the Church House). In June they considered an estimate of £60 from John White of Wrigton. The specification was for a building measuring 16 ft. x 13 ft. and 11 ft. high. There were to be three rooms with a chimney in the largest, and walls 3ft. thick. The hemispherical dome was to be built of freestone from Combe Down, the summit to have an octagonal chimney pot. Bedminster brown lime was to be used for the foundations and up to 18 ins. above ground. The building was not erected until 1828 when the Vestry passed a resolution to proceed with the work.

An entry in the Vestry minutes for November 1828 speaks of a reward of £5 being offered for the detection of the offenders who wilfully pulled down part of the lock-up house. The Tithe Map shows the lock-up just north of 'church stable and schoolroom', both belonging to 'Parish Officers'. However, an entry in the Vestry minutes for 5th October 1840 states 'the materials of the Lock-up House to be sold by public auction'.

In July 1885 a Vestry meeting heard the report of the committee set up to enquire into the, by now, almost derelict schoolroom/parish room/stable and recommended pulling it down and building a stable only at the east end of the Poor House, as 'a Vestry room is so seldom required'. Also an extra room being added to the church school meant that this schoolroom would become redundant. The 1885 Ordnance Survey plan still shows the stable and schoolroom, but not the lock-up.



The drawings and specification for the new stable were prepared by Col. Bramble. By October 1886 the work of demolition and the building of the stable were complete; the church wall had been re-pointed. The total cost was £159.18. 0.

In August 1915 the Parish Council paid £5.10. 0. for repair of the bier and in that October they asked the churchwardens to lock the stable where the bier was kept, therefore the building had two functions. This is the building adjoining the east end of the Church House, where repairs were carried out in 1989.

References:

Vestry Minutes D/P/Yat 9/1/2 Somerset Record Office
Parish Magazines Feb. & Aug. 1885 and Oct. 1886
Parish Council Minutes

*J. Vincent
M. Barraclough*



Yatton Parish Council in the 1939-45 War

Part I

In 1939 Yatton Parish Council was:

T. Burdge (chairman)	J.J. Harding
J. T. Cleverdon	E.J. Head
B. Crossman	E. Millier
M. H. Crossman	F. Millward
C. G. Day	C. C. Stuckey
A. Edwards	Clerk - W.E. Ebdon

Parish Council elections were postponed during the war by Act of Parliament and the first post-war election was in 1946. When E.Millier resigned in 1943 (because of increased deafness), Mrs. P.V. Burn was co-opted in his place. Mr. Ebdon retired as clerk at the end of 1945 after 16 years in the position.

The Parish Council appears to have had no responsibilities relating to the war, and most of its minutes deal with its usual business – allotments, footpaths, street lighting, almshouses, the war memorial – and they as usual wrote to the District and County Councils about matters such as highways. Matters such as air raid precautions, reception of evacuees and billeting of troops were matters for other authorities, some of them for the government-appointed Regional Commissioner.

There was an extraordinary episode when a special meeting was called on 24th July 1940 after a letter was received from the vicar, Prebendary W.N. Kempe, and seven leading residents which referred to regret among residents at the apparent inactivity and lack of leadership shown by the Council towards village activities. About the same time an article in the 'Weston-super-Mare Gazette' said the Council had given no lead to the village and had almost obliterated itself from the public eye.

As a result of these charges the clerk offered to resign but was persuaded not to do so. Next month it was arranged that the chairman would see the vicar and it was reported that the chairman and Mr. Head had seen the editor of the Gazette, who would not discuss the matter.

After further meetings the clerk was again dissuaded from resigning, and eventually a further letter was received from the signatories claiming that the Council had been inactive about:

1. collection of waste paper
2. salvage of metals
3. shelters for school children
4. establishment of an information bureau
5. provision of public shelters
6. war savings campaigns
7. air raid precautions
8. Rifle Club
9. Spitfire fund

In October the Council considered that the signatories had not made out any case as these were not matters for the Parish Council. The chairman and the clerk were asked to meet the Chief Constable of Somerset, and they did so next month when he said he did not think there was any action for him to take.

In November the Council counter-attacked by writing to the signatories pointing out that two of the three Yatton seats on the District Council were vacant and suggesting that these public-spirited people might consider filling them.

Eventually the matter ended in January 1941 with a letter from one of the signatories, Mr. J.M. Jones, in a conciliatory tone hoping the matter could then drop. At the annual meeting of parishioners in April 1941 a motion of confidence in the Council and the clerk was passed.

Air Raid Precautions. The first reference in the minutes was on 7th February 1938 when the Council wrote to the Rural District Council about delay in organising A.R.P. Later, a public meeting was arranged for 16th June and in October Mr. B.C. Hall (A.R.P. organiser for the area) said that until the previous month, at the time of the Munich crisis, there had been only 18 volunteers in Yatton out of the 160 required, but the number had then gone up to 71. In November Mr. W.L. Williams, who had been appointed chief air raid warden for Yatton, said the area had been divided into sections with first aid posts. The number of volunteers had risen to:

Wardens	35 men	5 women
First Aid	11	30
Ambulance Transport	11	1
Rescue & Demolition	6	0
	<hr/> 63	<hr/> 36

People were being measured for gas masks and sites were being considered for trenches. On Sunday 21st May 1939 the Council was invited to a trial of Yatton's A.R.P. organisation.

At the first meeting after war was declared in September 1939, Mr. Williams said there was as yet no arrangement for a public air raid warning and the Council wrote asking for immediate action. In October the matter was still being discussed between the police and the county authorities, and in July 1940 a letter was sent to the M.P., Mr. Orr Ewing. In February 1941 a request was again made for a siren, but a reply was received that the Home Office would not allow one.

In October 1940 the District Council was asked to provide street shelters, and a list of seven sites was drawn up; however, these would not be considered by the Regional Commissioner.

The only other A.R.P. matter recorded is that in 1941 a supply of sand for dealing with incendiary bombs had been provided at 19 places. The Fire Brigade superintendent said that earth was equally effective.

With reference to air raids, the following may be of interest. From August 1940 to April 1941 there were serious air raids on Bristol, London and other cities. There were sporadic raids later, the last on Bristol being on 15th May 1944. Bath suffered heavily in April 1942 and Weston-super-Mare in June 1942. In Bristol, Bath, Weston and the rest of Somerset and Gloucestershire, 2,723 people were killed in air raids, 1,299 being in Bristol and 102 in Weston. People injured were 6,820, half being in Bristol, and houses damaged or destroyed amounted to 158,121. Of these, 93,000 were in Bristol and 8,574 in Weston.

These statistics are taken from 'West at War' by James Belsey and Helen Reid (Redcliffe Press 1990). The remainder of this article is based on Parish Council minutes. To be continued in the next issue of 'Yatton Yesterday'.

H. J. Vincent



From the Parish Records

On 11th April 1898 the Churchwardens proposed that the Sexton be vested with a cassock or gown, and that a pair of felt slippers should be provided for him. Unfortunately for the Sexton, this was not approved at the Vestry Meeting.

Reference:

D/P/Yat 9/1/4, Somerset Record Office

A Yatton Railway Family

The Society has received the following article from Miss O. Smith, who was a teacher in Bristol and is now retired.

This 'history' was given to me by my mother all in random conversations occasionally supplemented by other Somerset-born members of the family. Her maiden name was Rachel Mary Rawlings. She was the youngest but one of the nine children of Samuel and Elizabeth Rawlings who lived at Horsecastle, next door to the chapel. Samuel called his house 'Greenland Cottage' because it never caught any sunshine. I believe he was born in Clevedon and as a boy worked as a servant in one of the big houses there, but later became a G.W.R. railwayman.

My grandmother died of dropsy at the age of 57 when my mother was thirteen. She was ailing for some time and unable to go to church, so friends used to carry her into the chapel. My mother was born in 1880 and went to Yatton Church of England school when Mr. Spiers was headmaster. She left school at nine, far better educated than you might expect. She could recite the collects from the Book of Common Prayer and quote snippets of Shakespeare which Mr. Spiers was in the habit of intoning. Before she left school my mother used to be sent to help teach the infants. If she had had the chance that fell to the next generation, her life would have been very different. Several years ago, a cousin sent us a copy of the 'Clevedon Mercury' announcing that my mother and one of her sisters had received prizes for regular attendance 50 years previously. The paper didn't state that the prize was 6d.

My mother's eldest brother was William. He joined the G.W.R. and was ticket collector on Yatton station, where in its halcyon days passengers heard him announce 'change here for Clevedon, Cheddar Valley and Wells'. He died in 1912, aged 48. The second brother, Sam, was ten years older than my mother. One day when they were 14 and 4 respectively their father was injured on the railway and brought home in a bad way. They decided that he was dying because the men were saying the Lord's Prayer over him. However, he recovered and died in 1918, well over 80, but his back was permanently affected. Sam became a signaller on the G.W.R. Paddington line and lived in Bristol.

The youngest brother, the youngest child of the family, was John(Jack). He was my mother's favourite and a lively boy. He worked at the kennels in Yatton and used to go through the village in the early morning imitating a cockerel and setting all the cockerels crowing. He eventually became a Bristol policeman before he, too, joined the greatest of all railways. It was through Jack that my mother met her husband, who was a fireman on the Clevedon branch line. One spring day he and Jack were picking primroses, which Jack said he was going to send to his sister in London.

Of my aunts, two I never knew. The eldest, Alice, married and settled elsewhere and the second, Sophie, died aged 32 in 1902 before my mother married. The eldest of those I knew was Mary Ann (Polly) who married Archibald Joseph Gale. They lived

at Horsecastle, across the road from Greenland Cottage. At one time Arch was a baker's roundsman. One day he was delivering bread at a cottage when a small girl ran in and had this conversation with her mother: 'Mawther, Trypheny's dead'. 'Where's she to?' 'In the ditch, on 'er 'ead'. And she was drowned in the rhyne, in spite of her biblical name.

Auntie Polly used to have a lodger, a young Irishman called Arthur Seymour James Twohig – known as 'Pat'. He was crippled and died young. He was a devout Catholic and used to walk to church each Sunday. My cousin Pat Gale was given the name 'Pat' by my mother, after the Irish boy, although he was christened Reginald. When young, Pat worked at Wake & Dean's and was reputed to sing at his work.

Polly's eldest son Arthur was a carpenter. At the beginning of the Great War he was one of the first to volunteer and was later killed. I still have a tray and a stool which he made for my mother. She had two other sisters, Elizabeth and Fanny. Fanny married William May and lived in Yatton, but Elizabeth settled in Bristol.

A large part of my mother's youth was spent in Dorset and London, but as was the custom when her sisters married she came home to look after her father, who was now retired with 10s. (50p.) a week pension. 'Auntie Rach', as she was called, was very useful to her sister Polly who had numerous children. My grandfather used to sell garden produce and he also went fishing for eels in the rhynes.

Among names my mother used to mention were Denmead, Burdige, Stuckey, Jake Wilmot, Olive White and family, Amy Nethway and Alice Neath. One of her acquaintances was always referred to as 'Babby Tutton'. I believe she came to live in Bristol and I wonder whether she was one of those killed in the blitz (see 'Yatton Yesterday' Vol.7,p.10). Alice Neath married a Welshman called Evan Jones and went to live in Grysbywl. She died a few years ago, aged about 102. I used to write to her every Christmas.

There was also a Mrs. Pinhorn, who came to a dreadful end when she visited the garden privy one night carrying a candle. She caught her nightdress on fire and was burnt to death. Another old woman my mother knew as a child was Daisy Chant, who must have been a neighbour at Horsecastle. There were bad winters when my mother was young. The moor used to flood and sometimes freeze; people took to skating, using a chair as support.

When my mother was little, grandmother used to threaten to pack her off to the Redmaids' boarding school in Bristol if she was naughty. This idea must have rubbed off on me. My mother used to tell me about a boarding school in Yatton owned by Miss Avery. One day when I was about 8, we had gone to Yatton and were walking back to the station. I was in disgrace and was walking ahead of my parents, when suddenly from a house on the left there appeared a crocodile of schoolgirls – a posse out to capture me! I took off and raced all the way back to the station!

O. Smith



School Absenteeism at the Turn of the Century

School log books are kept as a record of important happenings in the day to day life of a school. The events of today will be read with interest by people in a hundred years time. Just as interesting for us today are the records of what happened a hundred years ago. The earliest log book record we have of the Junior School in Yatton (then known as the National School) is dated 1869, although in fact the school in Church Road had been built thirty years earlier. Thomas King was the headmaster appointed on 1st January 1869. He came from Lambeth. Several entries for that year refer to the school being 'noisy' and 'very disorderly' and Rev. Barnard, the vicar at the time, visited the school in February and closed it! Other comments made were 'results unsatisfactory' and 'found several children unable to say their pence table'. By April order was 'much improved' and the school showed a 'better working spirit'.

Attendance fluctuated throughout the year and was often affected by what was going on in the local farms. On 22nd June for instance the entry read 'the numbers are very low on account of haymaking'. Similar entries occurred on 30th June, 5th July and 12th July. In mid-July 'nearly 50% of the first division have been absent this week'. However, by 26th July matters had improved and it was recorded that 'several boys who have been absent a considerable time on account of haymaking returned to school today'. It is interesting to note that at that time the summer holiday was only two weeks, although it was recommended in a report that 'not less than four weeks annual holiday should be given'. The summer holiday was extended to three weeks in 1885 and to four weeks in 1897.

Other reasons for absence were Congresbury Fair (September 1869) and a bazaar at Claverham (July 1870). A boy was absent because he was 'sent to fetch a pail of water' and another to 'fetch bread'. One mother was 'lonely and wanted her boy for company'. In September 1871 one mother sent word to school that if her daughter was kept in school in the morning for being late, she would keep her at home in the afternoon. In October 'the usual unsatisfactory reasons for absence have been sent this week and 10 children had no reason at all'. The Headmaster added 'the habit of irregular attendance is paralyzing all efforts at raising the status of the school' and in March he wrote 'it will be utterly impossible to carry out the requirements of the code at Yatton unless some means are taken to enforce a more regular attendance'. But in August 1872 another reason for low numbers became apparent when the Headmaster wrote 'the numbers are very low in consequence of the so called infant school (British School) taking children either free or at half the price of this school'. Mr. King's health suffered and in 1874 he became ill. By April 1875 he had lost heart and his final entry reads 'here ends my work in a school in which I have tried, lost heart then sympathy and failed'.

The new Headmaster appointed on 12th April 1875 was Reuben Spiers. His salary was £75 per annum. There were three other members of staff. Absence continued to be a problem – in September (heavy rain), October (picking apples, potatoes and mushrooms) and later, in February 1876 (wet weather). In March excuses given included 'minding the baby' and 'picking violets'. Attendance was

particularly low on Friday afternoons and so the last lesson was changed from singing to drawing. In 1879 there was the first mention of the school attendance officer visiting the school. He informed Mr. Spiers that 'steps would be taken to secure a more regular attendance for children in all the village schools who at present please themselves whether they attend school or not'.

Illness played its part in attendance. In March 1872 a boy died from blood poisoning and in March 1877 a girl died from scarlet fever which was rife in the village at that time. In February 1880 the school was closed for a fortnight because of measles, and in 1882 mumps, scarlet fever and whooping cough all affected attendance. Scarlet fever was mentioned again from March to June 1883 and three boys died. The school was closed for a month. In July 1890 and the last three months of 1900 the school was again closed for several weeks because of a measles epidemic and in the spring of 1893 because of mumps and scarlet fever. Scarlet fever recurred from time to time and another child died in 1897. In July 1895 the weather must have been hot as one boy was absent because of sunstroke, and in 1890 several children were found to have ringworm. In 1902 there is the first mention of chicken pox.

The weather was often to blame for keeping children away from school. In autumn 1869, May 1875 and February 1876 wet weather affected attendance, and on 3rd September only 18 children were present because of heavy rain. Severe weather occurred in December 1879 and the vicar's wife, Mrs. Barnard, sent up hot tea for the children each morning. The roads were blocked by snowdrifts in January 1881 and by February the melting snow had caused severe flooding, especially in Claverham. In October the following year the roads were impassable due to flooding and the school entrance was several feet deep in water. In December a heavy snowstorm prevented the children from coming to school, and in February 1888 and December 1890 the school was closed because of the snow. That year the severe weather lasted right through to March.

Sometimes the school was closed for other reasons such as the Yatton Benefit Society annual supper, clothing club sales and the bazaar. In October 1873 it was closed because there was a local ploughing match. The children were often given treats of tea at the vicarage, where school sports were also held. Dr. Hardman, who lived at Cadbury House (now the Country Club) treated the children to tea at his home in August 1875 and July 1877. This generous doctor was also responsible for a half day holiday in July 1878, when he treated the children to a visit to Ginnett's circus, and several years later, in January 1895, the children were given a day's holiday to celebrate his daughter's marriage. In December 1895 and April 1896 the school was in use as a polling station. In June 1897 a week's holiday was given to celebrate the Jubilee and in November 1899 a day's holiday occurred for the Queen's state visit to Bristol. Another day was given in May 1900 for her birthday.

In July 1903 the school was closed for six weeks for alteration to the premises. At the end of 1903 Mr. Spiers left after nearly 29 years at the school and he was presented with 'a handsome marble clock as a token of our love and esteem'. The new Headmaster appointed in 1904 was Hugh Mansey. There were four other members of staff and 195 children on the school roll.

Numbers on roll in previous years were: 1880 - 119; 1881 - 157; 1883 - 147; 1886 - 194; 1888 - 147 and 1889 - 159. By 1913 the number had dropped to 134.

School journeys were now taking place outside the village. In September 1906 the children went to Avonmouth and Bristol to visit a West Indian liner, the Natural History Museum and the Cabot Tower. In July 1908 the school journey was to Cheddar after a walk over Burrington Ham and Blackdown. In November 1910 the children went on to Frost Hill to observe rocks and fossils and in August of the following year the senior scholars visited the Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace in London. The school curriculum started to expand and in 1907 cookery classes commenced for the older girls. The boys did woodwork and gardening. In 1909 mention is made of a cookery course being held for the over 11's at the Friends Meeting House (the present infants school) and in April 1910 the school was used for an evening school exhibition. One amusing reason for absenteeism was given in April 1917 when one boy said he had been asked to mow the lawn of Miss Avery, who was a school manager on the attendance sub-committee.

A link with the present occurs in an entry for March 1919. A young girl called Hilda Standen was appointed as a pupil teacher. She later became Mrs. Stone, the wife of Malcolm Stone who was Headmaster from 1940 to 1965.

Margaret Burgess



The Owners of The Manor of Wyke, Yatton, c.1330 - 1356

Reference was made to Court de Wyck in 'Yatton Yesterday' No.4 in the article on the history of Claverham; the front cover of that issue shows the pillared doorway of the present Court. We have been very fortunate to receive from Mr.N. Deas a fully researched article on the Manor of Wyke in the 14th century, containing hitherto unpublished material. Of necessity, we have had to condense it and have been unable to include the detailed source list which he provided. However, both the original article and the source list are filed in the Society's archives and can be produced for anyone wishing to consult them.



The last of the de Wyke, or de Wick, family who owned the manor of Wyke was John de Wyke who died in 1346. He married Egelina (Aileen) who was probably the daughter of Geoffrey de Hautville. In 1332 Geoffrey was granted the manor of Norton Hautevyle north of Chew Magna and other lands, the advowson of the chapel of that manor and also lands at Box, near Bath, to hold for life, and after his death to John de Wyke, Egelina his wife and their heirs. On 15th October 1343 a licence was granted in order that banns might be called in the oratory or chapel within the court of John de Wyke in the parish of Yatton between Theobald Gorges of Wraxall and Agnes, John's daughter, to enable a marriage to be solemnized between them before Christmas.

One of the descendants of this marriage was Sir Edmund Gorges, d.1512, whose second wife was Joan (Hampton), the widow of Thomas Newton. Sir Edmund Gorges' altar tomb is in the chapel of Wraxall church.

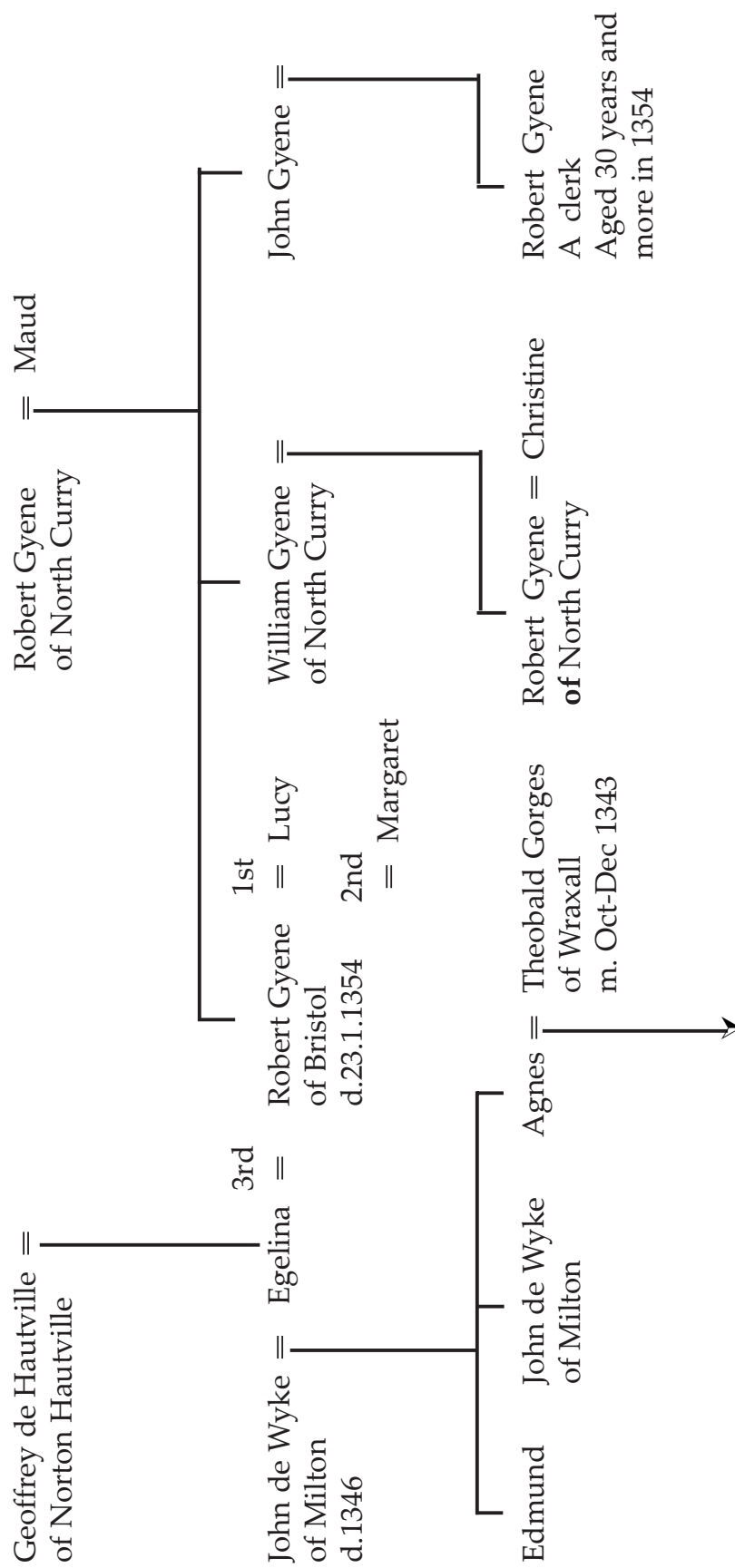
After the death of John de Wyke, Egelina married Robert Gyene as his third wife. He was a wealthy Bristol merchant who was, between 1327 and 1350, twice Bailiff of Bristol, three times Mayor and four times Member of Parliament. Robert came of a family of small landowners in North Curry, near Taunton; he was a friend of Roger Turtle, many times Mayor of Bristol up to 1341, and acted as his executor. They imported wines and other merchandise from Gascony in ships jointly owned. Robert's house in Bristol was situated in Small Street, adjoining the Guildhall, and is mentioned in two deeds of 1340 and 1348. It seems likely that the hall house of c.1200 which still survives inside the Small Street frontage of the present Guildhall was Robert Gyene's house.

The marriage between Robert and Egelina must have taken place after 20th April 1348, when Robert obtained letters patent to endow a chantry in the collegiate church of St. Mark, Bristol (the Lord Mayor's Chapel) to support three chaplains to celebrate divine service daily for himself, his wife Margaret and others, and for their souls after death. However, a document of November 1351 refers to his wife Egelina and his former wives, Lucy and Margaret. In May and November 1349, when priests were instituted to the vicarage of the chapel of Norton Hautevyle at the presentation of Egelina, she was referred to as Egelina de le Wyke and Egelina Wyke. In a document of 28th November 1350 she was 'Eglina de Wik, wife of Robert Gien, of the diocese of Wells'.

Egelina brought to Robert Gyene the manor of Wyke, which she held in dower as widow of John de Wyke, and also the manor of Norton Hautevyle which she had held jointly with John. Both manors were held of the Bishop of Bath by knight's service. She brought him too a certain position in the county, and he was knighted.

In or about 1352 Robert was alleged to be withholding money belonging to the King. He was tried and found guilty and 'condemned in £20,000 to the King'. The money withheld had belonged to Hugh le Despencer and Robert de Baldock 'lately the King's enemies'. Hugh le Despencer had been tried and hanged at Hereford in November 1326. Baldock, chancellor to Edward II, being a cleric, could not be executed. He was sent to the Bishop of Hereford's house in London in February 1327 but the mob broke in and dragged him to Newgate gaol, where he died shortly afterwards. Baldock had associations with Yatton, as he was appointed prebendary of Yatton on 15th May 1325.

Following his trial Robert was kept in prison, his lands were taken into the King's hands and all his goods were arrested. His gold, silver and jewels were carried to London to be delivered to the treasurer and chamberlains and his other goods were ordered to be sold. On 1st October 1352 Egelina was granted the manors of Wyke and Norton Hautevyle during the life of her husband; she was however required to pay £50 to the Exchequer for the goods in those manors in three equal instalments of £16.13.4.



Robert Gyene died at Fulham on 23rd January 1354. The son of his brother John, also Robert, a clerk, convicted and in the prison of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, aged 30 years and more, was found to be kinsman and heir of Robert. Robert the elder did not own any lands at North Curry at the time of his death as he had given them away in 1338 to another nephew, also Robert, son and heir of his brother William Gyene of North Curry.

In March 1354 the escheator in Somerset was ordered to deliver the manors of Norton Hautevyle and Wyke to Egelina. She continued to hold them until March 1356 when she, John de Edyndon (the elder) and John de Wyke of Milton, her son by her former husband John de Wyke, signed a series of deeds granting to John de Edyndon the manor of Wyke in the parish of Yatton, together with lands etc. in Cleware (Clewer in Wedmore), and the manor and advowson of Norton Hautevyle, with other lands nearby. Egelina accepted the tenancies of these properties under John de Edyndon, who agreed to John, her son, retaining the reversion of the manor of Wyke and the lands in Cleware upon certain conditions. Shortly afterwards John agreed that the manor of Norton Hautevyle should remain to John de Edyndon and his heirs after Egelina's death. In return John de Edyndon gave John de Wyke one hundred marcs of silver. The deeds linking the manor of Wyke with lands at Clewer are interesting, as these properties were to continue in the same ownership for a further 200 years. Clewer, on the River Axe, was important for its fisheries in the Middle Ages.

In Chew Magna church there is a wooden effigy of a knight in 14th century armour which was brought from Norton Hautevyle chapel when it was demolished at the Reformation. It has been suggested that the person represented is either John de Wyke d.1346 or Robert Gyene d.1354, the figure having been ordered by Robert for his chantry and taken by Egelina to Norton when she recovered the manor after his death. However, Pevsner is of the opinion that the effigy is of late 16th century date. In the north transept of Yatton church are two stone effigies which are said to represent Sir Robert de Gyene (c.1325) and his wife Egelina de Wyke (1330-40). Although the dates on the notices are incorrect, the figures wear clothing of the fashion period 1300-1370 and could indeed be representations of Robert and Egelina.

The accompanying pedigree (family tree) has been prepared in the light of documentary sources consulted.

References:

See introduction to this article.

Nicholas Deas



The Player Family of Cleeve

The marriage of Hannah Thomas brought James Player (1694-1771) from Stoke Gifford in Gloucestershire to Portishead in 1724. Hannah's grandparents were Arthur and Lydia Thomas (nee Grundy) of Cleeve (see 'Yatton Yesterday' No.2). James' family, and also his wife's, were members of the Society of Friends (Quakers). Meetings were held in their old home, Portishead Grange, and George Fox attended one of their meetings in 1668 when he was visiting relatives at Failand.

James and Hannah Player had one son, James, born in 1730. James married Mary Rizdon at Mark meeting house in 1751; their daughter Hannah inherited the Portishead estate. She married John Tanner of Banwell at Claverham meeting house in 1774 and the estate remained in their family until the latter part of the 19th century. Hannah's brother James (1752-18??) was disinherited by his father and grandfather because he married a non-Quaker in 1773, Mary Battman of Weston-in-Gordano. James Player of Cleeve was the son of Abraham Rizdon and Mary Player (nee Mitchell) of Weston-in-Gordano, and grandson of James Player and Mary Battman. He came to Cleeve about 1839 from Almondsbury and at the time of the 1851 census was living in an early 17th century house there, now known as Yew Tree Farm.

1851 Census Return

James Player	39	Carrier	born	Portishead
Mary	37			Weston-in-Gordano
Henry	15	At home	" "	" "
John	13	"		Almondsbury
James	9	Scholar		Cleeve
Abraham	6	"		"
Edith	4	"		"
William	2			"
Elizabeth	4 m.			"
Eliza Merrick	25	House servant		"

By 1861 the family had moved to 1 Bishop Road, Cleeve, possibly because it was more convenient for their business as carriers. In 1862 the son John died of typhoid fever, and two days later his father James also died of the disease. James junior continued with the carrier's business until his death in 1903. The widow Mary remained at Bishop Road, living with her unmarried son James and daughter Edith, until her tragic death in 1895 from injuries received when she was thrown down by a runaway horse. She was born Mary Davis, daughter of John and Mary Davis (Hinton) and grand-daughter of Stephen and Mary Davis (Yeeles) of Clapton Court, Clapton-in-Gordano.

The business was carried on by Henry's son and grandson * until the beginning of the first war in 1914. James Player's route was from Cleeve to Redcliffe in Bristol. Commencing in 1877, Henry had a two-horse omnibus service between Yatton and Wrington. Running three times a day, it connected at Yatton station with up and down trains from Bristol and Exeter.

A. J. P. Newton

* *please see next page*

- * Mr. Newton, a member of the Local History Society, is the grandson of Henry's grandson. He still has some of the old harness, but would be very pleased if anyone could let him have a photograph of the omnibus.



Correction to 'A History of Yatton', page 65, 6th paragraph.

The modern names of two adjacent farms in Cleeve Hill Road have been accidentally reversed. J.H. Smyth-Pigott owned both but, as Mr. Newton says, James Player lived in the lower one, now known as 'Yew Tree', and not in the one above now called 'Cleeve Hall'.

Follow-up from 'Yatton Yesterday' No.7 - The War Memorial

After his researches into those commemorated on the 1939-45 war memorial, published in Vol.7, Mr. Day has received the following information:

1. From Mr.A.Viney of Court Avenue about STEVENS, A.W.,Sgt.R.A.F. (see p.9). He was stationed at R.A.F. Locking; he came from Chideock, Dorset, and married Miss N. Viney of 'The Laurels', Claverham Road. He was posted to Blackpool in 1940 and contracted multiple sclerosis. He was invalided out and lived at 'The Laurels' until his death in 1941. He was buried at Chideock.
2. From Mr. Raymond Tutton of Bedminster, a brother of William Tutton who was killed with his family (see p.10), about LEWIS FIELD (last para, of p. 10). He and his family lived at Bishopsworth but his daughters moved to Church Road, Yatton, after the outbreak of war. He was killed on Good Friday, 11th April 1941, during an air raid. His wife came to Yatton to live with her daughters and was granted permission for his burial in Yatton. He had been an employee of W.D. & H.O. Wills.

The Society received a letter from Mrs. B. Shelley, now living in Wales, but formerly of Yatton (Artie Palmer). She says she has much pleasure in reading our journals, being at heart still a Yattonian. She sent several interesting photographs, including one of Brian Tutton, the baby blown out of the air raid shelter (p.10).

Mr. Day is now researching those killed in the 1914-18 war, whose names appear on the war memorial. This is obviously a more difficult task, and he would appreciate any information about these men (832831).

From the Clevedon Mercury, 30th September 1871

About £1,500 is still required for the restoration of the fine parish church of Yatton.



The Dyke Reeves – Yatton Jury of Sewers

Background

The problem of keeping the sea and rivers from inundating the low-lying land near the Somerset coast has been considered in 'A History of Yatton' (Chapter 16). There is also a full historical account in Michael Williams' book 'The Draining of the Somerset Levels'. This present article gives some of the details of the work in Yatton, taken from the minute books of the 'Dyke Reeves of the Yatton View of Sewers' now housed in the Somerset Record Office.

The coastal clay belt, drained by a network of rhynes of great antiquity, was protected from the sea by walls stretching from Middle Hope to Clevedon. Inland from the clay were the lower peat moors, flooded sometimes for four or five months, because the fall of the rivers was insufficient to drain them. Apart from rainfall, sea water could also flow up the rivers. The level of the water in the River Yeo at high tide was above the surrounding land. Matters did not improve until the early 19th century because drainage works were not co-ordinated over a whole catchment area, but dealt with piecemeal. From 1819 to 1827 Rennie provided new cuts and sluices for the River Yeo; high tide would close the sluice gate (ear) to keep out the sea water, but at low tide it would open to allow river water to flow out.

Yatton Jury

The Yatton Jury came under the Wrington Division of the Commission of Sewers, and members were local farmers. They had to see that those responsible carried out their works on the rhynes and sea defences, and could impose fines in default; they could authorise repairs and collect rates on behalf of the Commissioners but they had no power to initiate new works. In 1792 the Jury consisted of Nathaniel Ainsworth, foreman, and 32 members; in 1855 Samuel Baker was foreman with 24 other farmers.

Yatton Jury looked after the Kenn or Great River from its source in Backwell (east of the present lake by the station there); it flowed via Chelvey Ford, Sluice Stile, Kenn Pier and to the outlet at Hook's Ear, Kingston Seymour. They also saw to the Little River, alias Yatton River or Oldbridge Yeo or Hay-lake Yeo, flowing from the River Kenn at Sluice Stile into the Congresbury Yeo at Phipps Bridge until the early 1840s, when it was diverted via the New Cut to an outlet further down the Yeo. In addition, they inspected rhynes in Kingston Seymour, Kenn, the whole of Yatton parish and parts of Chelvey and Brockley. They were not, however, responsible for the Congresbury Yeo itself, only the river banks ('sea walls') on the Yatton side.

It is obvious that both the 'Great' and 'Little' rivers had been straightened in part at some previous date.

The 'views' were undertaken during the first week in May, at Midsummer and at Michaelmas, with additional views sometimes in March, August or October. Special views could be ordered if necessary. For instance, a special view of the Great River from Sluice Stile to the outlet was to be undertaken in 1867 and a report made on the state of the river. The 'view' was done on horseback and the reeves sometimes required

bridges to be put in place for them. In 1909 Mr. Weaver was fined 2s.6d. for having 'his gate fastened in such a manner that the dyke reeves could not ride through'. As late as 1932 one man was ordered to remove barbed wire from the top of his gate or face a fine of 10s.

Maintenance of Rhynes

Those holding rights of common in the parish had obligations with regard to maintenance of rivers, rhynes and the sea wall. A list of 1708 gives the names of those in Yatton, Cleeve, Claverham, Huish, Wrington and Broadfield Down who claimed common on the Great Moor, commonly called Kenn Moor. Other commons mentioned included Westmead, Moor Street, Coldharbour and Vastcroft.

Farmers had to ensure that rhynes, including their banks, were free of obstruction; the ditches had to be 'keetched' annually. In 1800 Earl Poulett was fined £10 for not doing his keetching in the Great River by midsummer. Thorn bushes, willows, weeds and thistles must be removed and mud slides thrown out. The rhyne or river must be kept at the stipulated width. Gouts and bridges had to be kept in repair and sometimes raised. In 1849 Moor Street Bow over the Little River was ordered to be raised and widened, but the work had not been carried out by 1851. Samuel Willmott in 1775 was to raise his bridge over the Great River so as not to obstruct the flow of water in time of flood.

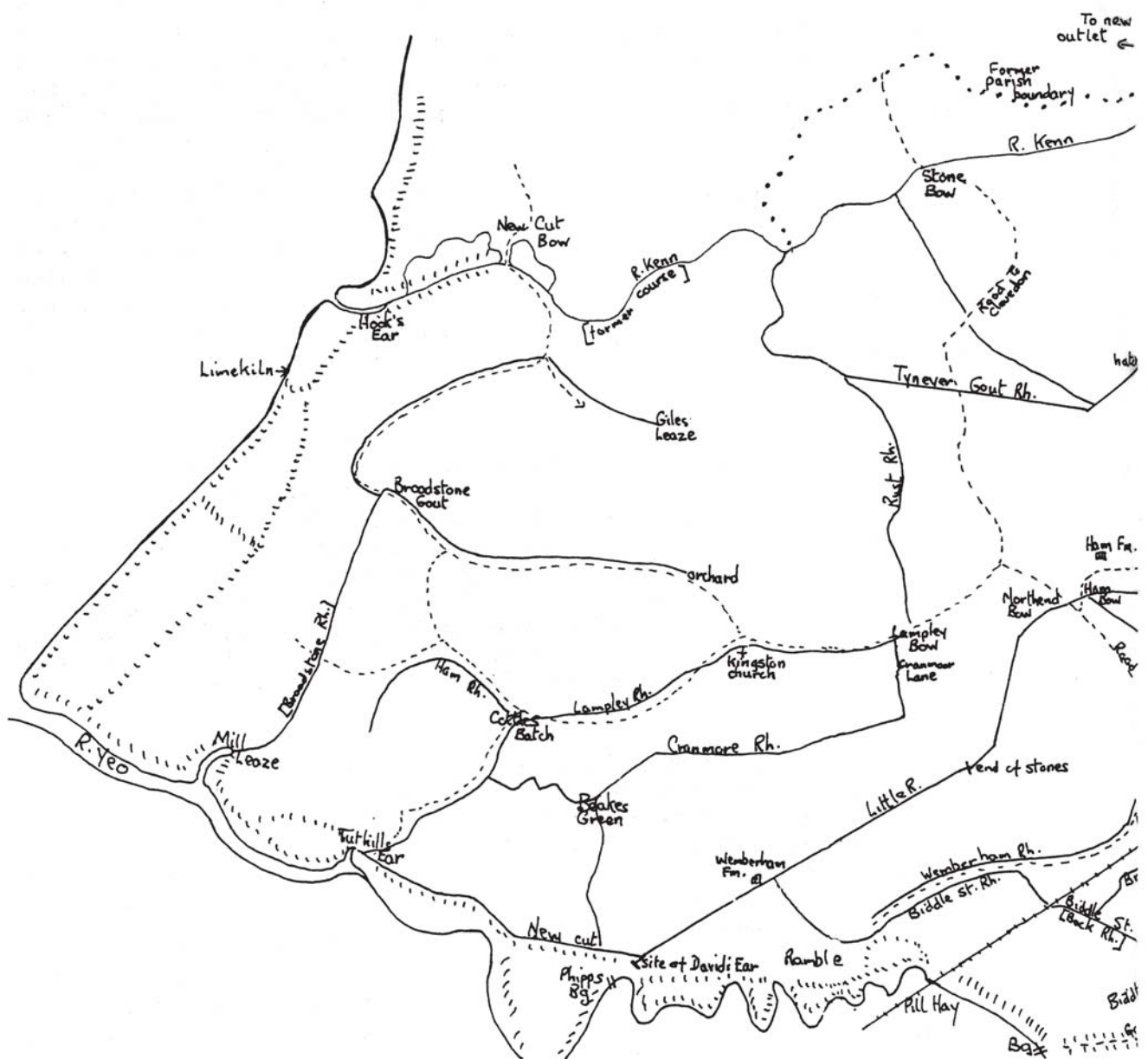
In every set of minutes is a record of those who had failed to do their maintenance; they were to do it by a certain date or face a fine. But for deliberate damage the fines were much heavier - cutting the river bank was frequent and Jno. Ford was fined 21s. in 1805 for cutting through the bank of the Little River and 'not stopping of it up again'. Abraham Davis had to pay £10 in 1844 for raising and doing serious injury to the freshwater hatch in the Little River 'considerable damage being sustained in the country above'. In order to prevent the cutting of the river bank 'so often complained of' the Jury recommended that there should be a hatch from the Great River to Black Ditch, to let fresh water into the moor if dry and take away water if the moor were flooded.

Widths of Rivers and Rhynes

In 1777 the Kenn or Great River was to be 20 feet wide from Sluice Stile to Kenn Pier, but about fifty years later the minutes state that from Kenn Pier to Chelvey Ford it should be only 14 feet. The Little River from Sluice Stile to David's Ear was to be 16 feet, but widths later are given as 12 and 10 feet. Stowell (Stowey) Rhyne was ordered to be made 8 feet wide by midsummer of 1814, similarly New Rhyne.

Meer Stones

These stones were placed along the river banks and sea wall to indicate who was to maintain a particular length; for instance, in 1846 'the Meer Stones from Sluice Stile to David's Ear to be newly and properly fixed and initials put on same'. Lengths on the rivers were measured in ropes of 20 feet. The fine for not putting up a stone when instructed was usually 10s.



A Survey of 1848 gives lists of meer stone works on:

1. the Kenn or Great River from Stone Bow to Hook's Ear. The occupiers, proprietors and number of ropes are given together with the number on the stone. There were 18 stones and the number of ropes of each person varied from 8 to 68. The Ear belonged to J.H. Smith-Pigott Esq. but the fresh water hatch was kept by the parish of Kingston Seymour.
2. the Yatton or Little River - 'a list of the Commons from Sluice Stile to North End Bow shewing the Commission work in the said River as set out on the north bank by Mere Stones, together with the occupier, proprietor and distance of each work in ropes. The work is now apportioned to various lands originally claiming rights of common'. This was because Kenn Moor had been enclosed in 1815 and the right of common of a person was exchanged for land on the moor.

There were 83 stones, nearly all being 9 ropes, but some 6 or 3. Up to stone No. 57 is Cleeve and Claverham (e.g. Stone 33 is Cox Bros., the Tannery), then follows Yatton Street and this is where the 6 and 3 ropes occur (e.g. No. 65, Joseph Derham's shop, 3 ropes).

3. the Little River from Ham Bow to the end of the stones; there are 44 stones. One has 12 ropes, half have 6 going down to two having 1 rope only. James Mulford of Pill Hay had stone No.30, 6 ropes. The stones stretched for 1,072 yards from North End Bow to the east corner of Tithe No. 1722 (the beginning of Oldfield where the river changes direction).

From Wemberham Farm to the New Cut the work was to be done by Yatton Parish Officers, who had been responsible for maintaining David's Ear before the New Cut was made. The sea wall stones are dealt with below under 'The Sea Wall'.

1848 Survey - a Summary of the 'Views'

Viewed May, June and September generally.

1. Rhyne from Lampley Bow to Gilling's (or Tuthill's) Ear passing Kingston Seymour church, crossing and re-crossing the road. N.B. Today known as 'Tutshill' but named after Mr. James Tuthill.

Rhyne from Cranmore Lane to Phipps Bridge with two branches from Beakes Green, one to the New Cut and the other to the rhyne leading to Gilling's Ear.

2. Ham Rhyne west from Cottles Batch with two branches both via Broadstone Gout, one commencing at 'Giles Leaze' and the other at an orchard (one being the present Broadstone Rhyne).
3. Part of the R. Kenn from Stone Bow and New Cut Bow to Hook's Ear.

These three were in Kingston Seymour.

4. Mawkins Rhyne and branch, and Sandover Rhyne.
5. Tinneford (Tynever) Gout Rhyne (continuation of Mawkins and joins rhyne leading to Lampley Gout), and Rust (or Russ) Rhyne. (Was the latter an old river? It formed the Kenn/Kingston boundary and is not straight).

6. Black Ditch Rhyne with branches (a) to Ham Farm (b) to the Yatton to Kenn Pier road (c) north to R. Kenn and (d) to Mawkins Rhyne.

These three were in Kenn.

7. Meadmore Rhyne, which went north from near Ham Farm via a hatch in Mawkins Rhyne.
8. Part of R. Kenn west to Kenn Pier Bow and Stone Bow.

9. Part of R.Kenn north-west from Sluice Stile, also Springwell Rhyne which joined the Little River near Kenn Moor Gate.
10. Rhyne from entrance gate of Claverham Court going north-west to Little River. Viewed in September only.
11. Eastern Drainage Rhyne, west on north side of Claverham Drove, finally south into Little River.
12. Part of Little River from Sluice Stile to Ham Bow with a branch southwards from Moor Street Bow. Additional views in March and August.
13. Westmead Rhyne, from Mead Mills in Claverham to Little River at Moor Street Bow, additional view in March.
14. New Rhyne; Stowey Rhyne to the Little River at North End.
15. Back Rhyne (Biddle St. Rhyne), crossing Biddle Street Drove and under railway, along south side of Wemberham Lane and north to near Wemberham Farm.
16. Wemberham Rhyne on the north of that lane, with a branch under the railway flowing into Back Rhyne.
17. Spencers Sluice and part Eastern Drainage Rhyne (now Decoy Pool Rhyne) south to bend in Claverham Drove.
18. Gangwall from near the church, north to Pill Hay Bridge and on to Phipp's Bridge, having crossed the railway ('the work on this wall is attached to the Rectory of Yatton'). A special Jury viewed this on the first Monday after 29th September . N. B. Between Pillhay Bridge and the railway the bank has been removed.
19. The rhyne dividing Brockley and Chelvey and ending on the Chelvey Road.
20. The part of R. Kenn in Chelvey, from Sluice Stile to Chelvey Ford.
21. From Chelvey Ford east to Washing Pond next to the Nailsea to Backwell road.
22. Two rhyne in Backwell south from R.Kenn.
23. The remainder of the R.Kenn east of Washing Pond.
24. The sea wall at Kingston Seymour. In 1792 it was arranged that the Jury was to meet at New Cut Bow yearly at 9 a.m. on the first Monday after Michaelmas Day to view the sea wall.

The Sea Wall

The 1848 Survey lists the 'View of the Sea Wall from Hook's Ear to Phipp's Bridge in the Parish of Kingston Seymour'. One entry is 'The whole tithing of Kingston Seymour to make and repair the sea wall from the Overthrow to Mr. Love's gate and rails, now done by J. H. Smith-Pigott Esq.' and the Survey continues down the wall. It goes on to list the meer stones; there were 114 and the wall was measured in lugs of 15 feet each.

The stones extended past Phipp's Bridge to the end of the Ramble, then Pill Hay and one entry beyond - probably Gangwall as it was William Tucker's (he was at Rectory Farm). The lengths vary from under one lug ('a spade's length') up to 27 and one of 40; most are under ten. Those responsible are often told to 'raise the Sea Wall in their warth' and to fill in cracks. Mr. Ken Stuckey's stone was No.93 and bore the initials 'JJR' from John Rogers, a mid-19th century tenant of the farm. The work had to be completed by 31st March.

The total length of the sea wall, rhynes and rivers which the reeves had to inspect and report on was nearly 49 miles. The length of the Great River was just over 9 miles and that of the Little River $4\frac{3}{4}$. The minutes show that they carried out their work well over the years.

Rates

Certain lands 'within the Yatton Level' were subject to a rate made by the Commissioners of Sewers at the Court held at Wrington. Lists are alphabetical according to the tenants' names but also give the landowners. John Atherton paid 3s. 8d. on $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres of Kenn Moor, although Miss Bayley only paid 2s. 8d. for 7 acres. Two acres in Westmead is variously rated at 7s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 3s. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Mr. Blew had 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of Kenn Moor altogether, rated at £6.16.0 $\frac{3}{4}$., but John Manning paid £9 for 69 acres. John Lyons had 66 acres, of which half was on the moor, and he was rated at £10.9.10 $\frac{1}{2}$.

The rate may have depended on the value of the land, and seems to have been quite high, bearing in mind that these figures are for 1837. John Manning was appointed collector of the rate for that year.

The Twentieth Century

The concern of the reeves was the outfall of the Kenn or Great River and also the Sea Wall. Back in 1834 it was said that the outlet of the river was insufficient to convey water to the sea in flood time and that it should be enlarged. So the cause of flooding was diagnosed but the solution had to wait for over 100 years, when the Blind Yeo made Hook's Ear outlet redundant.

An attempt was made in the 1860s to improve matters. A survey was carried out at a cost of £1,600 (to be raised by a levy) and it recommended a plan to deepen and widen the outfall at Hook's Ear with a new flap to exclude tidal water. In 1862 a contract was made between the Commissioners and the firm of J. & C. Rigby for this work.

In 1912 a meeting held at the school at Kingston Seymour considered a plan for repairing the Sea Bank near the old lime kiln; it was said that the constant encroachment

of the sea was a danger to life and property. The reeves protested at the manner in which this report was received by the Commissioners, and were to approach their M.P. They recommended to the Commissioners alterations to the dam at Hook's Ear and proceeded to levy a fine on the Commission's engineers for taking away work from those who should have done it, and then not doing it themselves.

In September 1918 the Jury wrote and told the Commissioners that the work being done on the foreshore at Kingston Seymour was a waste of money, as it had been washed out several times; would they please appoint an engineer with experience of sea defence work?

At Mr. Crossman's suggestion the ratepayers of the Levels were in 1920 represented on the Board of Commissioners, and he himself became the representative. The following year the Commissioners were asked what arrangements they had made for giving constant and vigilant attention to the new sea defence works (?implying that they had made none). The reeves wrote in 1926 to say that they had lost all confidence in the engineer, Mr. Powell, and later serious erosion was reported on the new sea defence wall. Mill Leaze outlet tidal flap and fresh water hatch were constantly leaking.

In 1925-7 there was a state-aided drainage improvement scheme but farmers were also to be rated, as £10,148 had been spent on the River Kenn alone to accelerate the flow of water. J.H. Burdge of Park Farm expressed the view of most of those to be rated in a letter he wrote to Fosters of Wells, the solicitor to the Commissioners. He had, he said, 36 acres which cost him £1,850 in 1920, the best on the moor and not bog which floods. He objected to being put on full rate as he already paid £53 a year and the new works would not benefit him. Many similar letters of objection were written to Fosters saying that floodland could have been bought cheaply and why should those who paid more subsidise the owners of the cheap land.

In 1934 the North Somerset Drainage Board took over the Yatton and Nailsea Levels, and the next year the reeves protested to them about their neglect of the River Kenn.

The last minutes of the Yatton View of Sewers are those of a meeting held on 10th May 1937, foreman T. Burdge.

References:

Somerset Record Office: Minutes of the Meetings of the Dyke Reeves

D/RA 1/2/120, 121, 123 and 124. 1/2/180.

Rate books in Society archives 91/89

Verbal, Mr. K. Stuckey

'The Draining of the Somerset Levels'¹ Michael Williams C.U.P.1970

Marian Barraclough



Bus Services (continued)

In our last issue there was an article on Bus Services. Mr.M.J. Tozer of Pill has kindly given us much information and copies of early timetables and tickets which are now in the Society's files.

The precursor of Service 24 was a horse bus service from Temple Meads station via Coronation Road to Long Ashton which started in December 1900. The horse buses were replaced by motor buses in December 1906 and from June 1907 the Bristol terminus was moved to Holy Trinity Church, Hotwells, and the route then ran via the recently opened Ashton Swing Bridge and Ashton Avenue. In October 1913 the service was replaced by two new services from the Tramways Centre via Hotwells and Long Ashton to Cambridge Batch, where they diverged, one continuing to West Town and the other to Nailsea. In April 1914 the West Town service was extended to Brockley Combe and then by September to Cleeve, and numbered 24. There were six journeys on Mondays to Fridays, ten on Saturdays and seven on Sundays. The fare was 9d.

In 1917 the service was reduced between February and early June to only middle of the day and late evening, as the bus was otherwise required to carry construction workers to and from a munitions factory being built at Hallen (abandoned after over £3½ million had been spent on it). On 19th May 1920 the Cleeve service was extended to Weston-super-Mare, and the Nailsea service (No.25) to Clevedon. By November 1921 there were fourteen journeys, plus an extra one to Cleeve, on weekdays and eight on Sundays. Fares from Cleeve were 1s.3d. to either Bristol or Weston. Full fare was charged for children over 3 and parcels over 14 lbs. had to be paid for.

Service 87 was running by August 1923 and a timetable for November of that year shows four journeys on weekdays and two on Sundays from Cleeve to Clevedon, most continuing to Portishead. Fares from Yatton station were 4d. to Cleeve and 6d. to Clevedon. By now children aged 3 to 12 paid half fare with a minimum of 2d.

Service 150 started in 1927 with four journeys on weekdays and three on Sundays.

The G.W.R. service from Claverham to Portishead operated from 31st December 1928 to 1st July 1929 on Mondays only, Yatton market day.

Mr. Tozer has pointed out that several of the references to the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Co.Ltd. were not completely accurate, although taken from reputable books.

The Company ran one horse bus service to Clifton from 1887 and started several others in 1900.

Sir George White actually formed four aircraft companies from which the Bristol Aeroplane Company (now part of British Aerospace) evolved.

The date the Company's name was changed to Bristol Omnibus Co.Ltd. was 31st May 1957.

The Company did not buy the Weston Tramways but agreed to pay the owning company a sum of money after the tramway had been closed.

The Company's buses were previously blue and white, although there were variants of the colour scheme.

The 1948 purchase of the Tilling companies was by the British Transport Commission and marked the start of the years of public ownership.

It is interesting that the 1923 timetable for Service 87 carried advertisements for:

S.T. Collinson, Boot & Shoe Maker, Station Road, Yatton.

Arthur Edwards, Family Butcher, Yatton.

Chas.J. Vowles, The Bakery, Yatton.

Prince of Orange Hotel, Yatton (proprietor J.Knight).

Oaklands Tea Rooms, Cleeve (Misses Sargent).

The Cleeve Restaurant.

The last two were said to be near the bus terminus.

H. J. Vincent



From the Clevedon Mercury, 11th December 1926

For some years past the County Court in Yatton has been held in the Assembly Rooms, immediately opposite the railway station, and from time to time complaints have been made as to its unsuitability in the winter owing to the difficulty of keeping the room adequately heated. These protests were renewed last Friday, when his Honour Judge Parsons re-appeared after the luncheon adjournment carrying a couple of coats, which he wrapped round his legs as he took his seat.

Kenneth Dougherty



Correction to 'Yatton Trail', page 17, Tutchter's Farm.

The single chimney was for the wash house and not for the bakery, as stated.



'A History Of Yatton'

This book is available at the three village newsagents, Claverham Post Office and at the Heritage Centre, Titles Bookshop and the Museum in Weston-super-Mare. Price £4.50.

It is completely separate from the annual journals 'Yatton Yesterday', being a chronological history of Yatton from its beginnings to the present day; it is well illustrated with pictures and plans.



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



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PLEASANT ABODE

A. C. Edwards



This book was written in 1969, but it had to wait 22 years for publication. It gives the background and memories of a small boy in the North Somerset village of Yatton, during the early years of this century. It begins with the massive bed on which he was born, and then moves through the house and into the yard, garden and fields beyond. It describes the main village activities, especially the ingenious efforts to raise money for a Church Hall and the scene on the Village Green at the proclamation of King George Vth, as well as the way the First World War appeared to a boy of 9 - 13. There are vignettes of friends and relations, including an affectionate portrait of the village schoolmaster, and the delights afforded by visits to an uncle whose watermill ground corn and whose brick oven baked bread of a quality not seen today. The book is permeated with the lively humour which is evident in the author's other writings in the field of local history. Particularly hilarious are the accounts of cider-drunk pigs, and the exploits of Bob, the sheepdog, as an expert ratter.

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