

MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

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Editorial

Once again we are delighted to publish another in the series ‘*More Yatton Yesterdays*’, this being Book 3.

Our researchers have continued to delve into old documents which seem to appear relentlessly from varied sources; moreover, we have received many articles from villagers who have been inspired by our previous books to make their own contributions to the history of Yatton.

Our sales of past issues have been outstanding, and for this we are grateful not only to our members and friends, but particularly for the wonderful support given to us by Clive of Yatton News, Christine and Nicola of Yatton Post Office, Richard of Claverham Post Office, as well as Lyn and George at The Corner Shop. The sales of the first print run of the *Yatton Parish Survey* were incredible: we are now into our first reprint to meet the demand!

Finally, the Winter lectures and Summer outings have been a great success and well supported by our members and visitors. New members are always very welcome to join us.

A. F. Coe, *President*
September 1998

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A Small School

The small school called Clytha was opened in the Methodist Chapel, Claverham (opposite the Post Office) by Miss Beatrice Watkins and her friend, Miss Earl, in the early 1940s. My husband, Robert O’Niell, was one of its first pupils (starting school in 1942/43). He lived at The Shrubbery, Rhodyate Lane, Cleeve, and knew Miss Watkins and Miss Earl well, as they lodged with his mother in The Shrubbery for some years. He would sometimes walk across Fanner Young’s fields to school, and one of his memories was seeing a bomb crater in the fields caused by a German bomber jettisoning its load on the way home to Germany after a bombing raid on Bristol. Some cows had been killed, but there were no human fatalities. He also remembers that at that time Cadbury House was a boarding school; coincidentally, he now works in the same Cadbury House, now Cadbury Country Club.

Miss Watkins, I am told, named the school Clytha after the place near Newport, then Monmouthshire, where she was born - a place whose correct pronunciation, in the Welsh, is **CLUTHA**. Daughter of a Welsh Minister, Miss Watkins taught her little school with a bias towards “music and morality” as well as the “Three Rs”.

Clytha survived the War and the dreadful winter of 1947, until in 1951 (according to the memories of one of its ex-pupils) it moved to a large white house near the river in Congresbury where it was known locally as “The Red Cap School” because of the distinctive red caps worn by the boys.

About 1960 Clytha moved again, first to part of a large house (owned by Mrs Needs) in The Avenue and then to Barberry Croft, formerly used as a school by Miss Burdge (the story of Miss Burdge’s school in Barberry Croft appeared in *Yatton Yesterday* No. 4) Barberry Croft was owned by the late Mr. Albert Sweet.

In 1969 Miss Watkins retired, after a period of ill health. I had by then become involved in the school, as our son Richard, had entered as a pupil in 1967. At Miss Watkins’ behest, and with the approval of the remaining parents and Education Authority, responsibility for the school was passed to myself, Mrs Gwen Evans (Headmistress) and Mrs Margaret Davies (Nursery).

Following the upheaval of Miss Watkins retirement, the school had shrunk, leaving an empty classroom. At the same time, Yatton was changing from a village to something resembling a small town. Young parents with new ideas were moving in, most of whom were looking not for full-time nursery education but some form of pre-school social activity for their children. The need was there – Clytha had the space – and this combination brought about what was, I believe, Yatton’s earliest form of playgroup. The idea took off – soon Clytha was bursting at the seams.

In September 1971 the older, school-age children moved into Linden House, a large house opposite Barberry Croft which had come on the market just as Clytha was looking for larger accommodation. At first, the playgroup/nursery section stayed in Barberry Croft, being known as 'Old Clytha', but a year later Linden House was extended to accommodate the younger group. Clytha now had a home of its own, but its name was changed to Linden House School. There it remained until 1986 – happy years – during which time (thanks to the late, much loved and extremely talented Mrs Gwen Evans) it gained a reputation for excellence in the verse speaking competition at the Mid Somerset Festival of Arts, Bath, being referred to as 'that Little School in Red which Swept the Boards'.

By 1986 the school was looking again for larger premises to extend its

facilities, and moved into the old Horsecastle Chapel in September 1986, taking the name of Copperfields School – the name of the new housing development built on the old Avalon site opposite the Chapel. Sadly, it did not thrive there and closed in 1990.

The story of this little school, which existed for nearly 50 years, began and ended in a Chapel - perhaps this was meant to be. However, perhaps not all links are gone. The annexe to the old Chapel, once the nursery section, is now the home of Sarah and Adrian Jones. Since moving to Horsecastle, Sarah has opened her own Day Nursery (Kiddicare Day Nursery, Hereward House, Northend) nearby. I like to think that the parents/ grandparents of some of the children who attend were once connected with, and have happy memories of, this our little school.

Frances O'Niell



Memories of St. David's Boarding School

by a former pupil 1948-1953

I became a boarder at St. David's School (Cadbury House) in about 1948. I was ten and half years of age and can remember being driven up the long tree lined drive by my Father and Mother on the first day. It was early evening and dusk was failing and as it was windy, the trees all about were bending their branches. As we reached the top of the drive I saw St. David's for the first time, framed by a backdrop of the woods that stood behind. To complete the scenario, the moon was shining through the scudding clouds to light up the school.

I immediately thought of Dracula's Castle, but I was not frightened as the School had a strange beauty as I looked at it, with its towers and strange little windows high up that promised the opportunity for me to explore the undoubtedly mysterious rooms that would be behind those windows.

I was led up the stone steps to the big wooden door at the top and I was met by the headmaster, Major Carr, a shortish and stocky gentleman who would have been in his late fifties to early sixties. After a few words with my parents, I bade farewell, endeavouring to hold back my tears, and I was introduced to some of the other boys and shown the dormitory in which I would sleep.

The dormitories consisted of steel beds and warm blankets, as there was no heating, a chest of drawers and a tall-boy, plus some chairs. There were six dormitories, the largest with approximately twelve beds and the smallest with two. The largest was for the very young boys and the others were occupied according to age.

The School was owned by Mrs Griffiths, who was also the headmistress and she was a very nice lady. I remember her as being elderly but she could have been middle aged in reality. I remember that she was very intelligent and taught mathematics and Latin as well as French and other diverse subjects, of which she had great knowledge. Mrs Griffiths had two daughters who resided at the School and helped with the running and care of everyday events, such as

cooking and laundering and keeping the boys clean and healthy. The daughters we addressed as Miss Adrian and Miss Beryl and they were very pleasant. The School also had two dogs that I remember with affection, a Red Setter called "Paddy" and a small black and white terrier called "Peter" who wore a leather muzzle as at times he was prone to bite.

Discipline was quite strict, the favoured method being the cane (of which the headmaster had a good and varied selection) administered to the backside. The number of strokes that the hapless pupil could receive would vary. I have to admit that I did receive punishment by the cane. Pupils were encouraged to show little or no emotion should they injure themselves, crying or shouting could be a caning offence. Use of sticking plaster or soothing ointment could also be punished with the cane - I suffered this fate. Getting up and carrying on without a murmur was the safest way to survive - should a boy remain prone, he was presumed dead, much to our misplaced hilarity.

Religion played an important part in our upbringing and every Sunday morning we would walk from the School in two's to St Mary's Church in Yatton to attend the morning service. I remember that when we passed the War Memorial in the High Street we stopped and lifted our School caps in memory of those whose names are upon the Memorial. I also remember with happiness the Harvest Festival celebrations at St. Mary's Church:

every year the windowsills and nooks and crannies were full of garden produce - lettuces and tomatoes, swedes and turnips, apples and cucumbers etc, plus long loaves of bread, decorated with ornamental swirls and designs.

Sport was very important and we played football every Saturday morning and Wednesday afternoon against local teams; we also played for an hour every day after lessons between four and five o'clock. The School colours were a red shirt with white collar, navy blue shorts and red and white stockings. Cross country running was also encouraged and one of our favourite runs was from the School to the "Roddy", down the other side and on to Goblin Combe where we used to go to Horseshoe Mount and clamber up the scree and rocks to the fields on top. This we greatly enjoyed as we were free and the open country was all about us; we ran for miles and never seemed to tire.

Meals were taken with the headmaster sitting at one end of a long room, together with other teachers each side of him, all on a raised dais. The pupils sat on long wooden forms at two long wooden tables; the tea would consist of eight half slices of bread with a spoonful of jam for each pupil. On Sundays we each had a fancy cake as a treat.

The School uniform consisted of a black blazer with red and white piping at the sleeves and

down the edges near the buttons, and the same red and white piping on top of the breast pocket. The School badge was a red griffin's head atop a red and white bar, all this upon a white background with a red surround. A black cap with the School badge on it and a red, white and black tie completed our attire.

The School also had around four or five girl pupils, these being either the sisters of a boy pupil or the daughter of a female teacher. The girls sat separately at a small table with a female teacher.

I can remember crawling along a central heating or air duct that ran under the rooms of the School. (Another pupil also mentions this in an article that I read in *More Yatton Yesterdays No.2*). As he says, there were lots of bats there.



One of the day boys would take orders for crystal sets, made by a relative. These were made in tobacco tins and were much prized.

I believe that the headmaster, Major Carr, endeavoured to run the School upon the lines of Winchester College and the School's motto was "Manners Maketh Man". We were taught "Fearless Honesty", which meant that we admitted any misdemeanours that we might have committed, if questioned. I still have trouble

understanding the "Fearless" part, as the cane was the outcome if we admitted the misdemeanour.

To summarise, I would say that the years I spent at St. David's were mostly happy days, with plenty of sport and fresh air, plus a good education, though I was not academically inclined. I learnt how to behave quietly and live having respect and regard for all men and every creature. "Manners Maketh Man" has stood me in good stead.

Michael Claridge



Swimming Pool

This history of Yatton Schools' Swimming Pool has been compiled from entries in the Junior School Log Book and my memory, and by such members of the original pool sub-committee who could be traced. None of the minutes of the countless meetings could be traced at either the Junior School or the Infant School.

By 1968 the Junior School PTA was up and running and a successful and profitable fete was held in July. Ideas abounded on how we should use the money raised, but the most popular suggestion was that we should consider building a swimming pool.

On May 5th 1969 Mr. Webb and Mrs Murray, Somerset County P.E. organisers, came to the school to discuss the possibility of building a pool and on October 2nd, after the Junior School PTA AGM, Mr. Penney, a director of a swimming pool firm, and Mr Burr from County Hall, spoke about and showed slides of school swimming pools. We must

have decided earlier that it would make sense to include the Infant School in our plans because after the meeting a sub-committee was formed which included Miss Gumbleton, the Infant School Headmistress, and some of her PTA committee. The sub-committee met on October 20th and the decision was taken that we should build a swimming pool.

A second and most important decision taken at that meeting was that we would build the pool at the earliest possible moment. We argued that if we waited until we had the money to pay for the pool, it might be years before it could be built and in use. Many, perhaps most of the current parents would be raising money for a pool which their own children would not use. The best incentive for fund raising would be for parents to know that present pupils, *i.e.* their children, would benefit from the project. There were already a few hundred pounds in PTA funds and we were confident that, once Yatton parents saw the work beginning, the money would start rolling in.

I think it is important at this point to say how much the pool would cost. At the time of those first meetings Stowey Road/Well Lane houses were changing hands at about £6000 and early estimates for the pool came in at about that figure. When you consider such houses today are fetching upwards of £80,000, we were faced with raising a lot of money. How did we raise the money? Over the next few months Somerset County Council made a grant of £1250, Long Ashton Rural District Council gave us a loan of £500 free of interest and another £2000 at 9% interest, which Yatton Parish Council agreed to pay. The two PTAs already had about £500 available, and the money would be coming in from the usual school fund raising schemes - fetes, bring and buy sales and so on. More, much more would be needed, and so we borrowed an

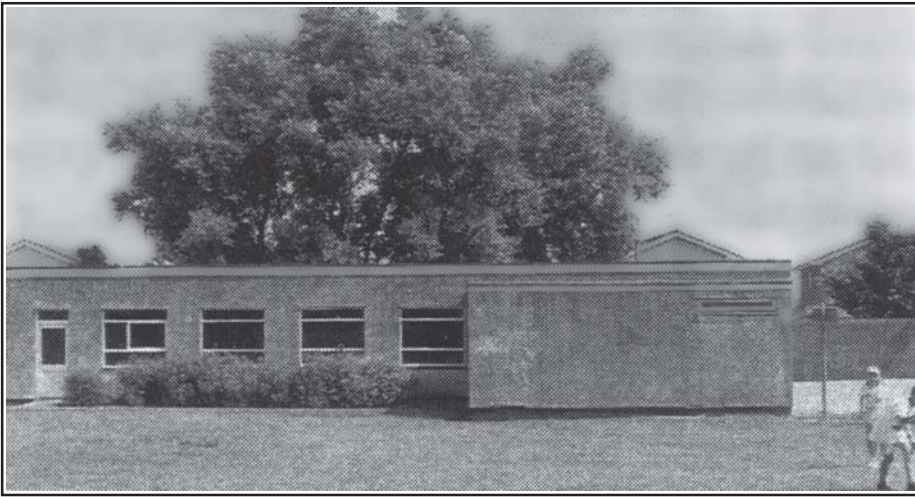
idea from the church and asked the parents if they would support a planned giving scheme. This would involve parents contributing a weekly amount of at least 6d (2½p) or, if they preferred, they could pay an equivalent amount annually. On November 6th we held a meeting to brief volunteer canvassers who would visit every family in Yatton, Claverham and Kingston Seymour asking them to sign a pledge to contribute to the pool fund until the target was reached, or until their children left the schools. The response was almost 100% and at the start of the 1970 school year every family received a bundle of little brown envelopes for the term, dated weekly, and with an individual number for identification purposes. The envelopes would be returned every Monday and checked against the master list. 'Defaulters' were reminded and asked for the back amounts owing. If you think this was a lot of work you would be right, but it did bring in £800 a year.

Next we had to decide on what sort of pool. At first it was generally assumed that it would be a hole in the ground type with a PVC/fibre glass cover. Nailsea Comprehensive and Pill Junior schools already had such pools, and Mr Penney's firm was well experienced in building them. On February 4th 1970 he came to a meeting and talked specifically about 'our' pool. After he had left the meeting two or three committee members who were in the construction business argued very strongly that we should consider a

bricks and mortar pool and that we should invite a firm of consultants from Clevedon to present the case for it. So on February 17th Mr Greenlees, of Houghton and Greenlees in Clevedon, came to a meeting and described the kind of pool he would build.

over the 'hole in the ground' one. So we commissioned a feasibility study which was presented to the committee on March 9th. The estimated cost was £5,200.

I remember extremely heated discussions over the merits of the



Substantially this was the building which was eventually pulled down in 1997 – a rectangular building 66 feet 6 inches by 31 feet, an upstanding pool 46 feet by 18 feet, with a depth of from 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet 6 inches. This would be a genuine learners' pool, enabling the teachers to stand outside the pool but level with the swimmers. The pool would be heated to 80 degrees F. and the pool building would also be heated to just about that level to reduce condensation. Extractor fans at the rear would also help with this. Mr Greenlees was a good talker and, providing the price was right, his pool did seem to have many advantages

two types of swimming pool, but it was eventually accepted that we would adopt the bricks and mortar pool, and the plans were sent to the Chief Education Officer for Somerset for his approval. He must have given the go ahead because on May 14th the PTA committees of both schools instructed Houghton and Greenlees to prepare specifications and to submit a tender.

Unfortunately the site we had planned for the pool – on the Yatton Hall side of the Junior School, between the classrooms and the playing field, was not approved by the County Architect

and we had to accept a site alongside Stowey Road. This was immediately criticised by residents in Stowey Road who, having bought houses overlooking school playing fields, were now faced, literally, with the prospect of a blank wall 66 feet long and 15 feet high on the other side of the road. Most of the residents affected had children at the school and those that had were most supportive of the pool scheme. They lobbied me and I lobbied the County Architect very hard, but he would not be moved. It was to be there or nowhere. So it was there, but the residents were not happy and who could blame them?

On August 27th 1970 the Swimming Pool committee accepted a tender for £5,400 from Hawkins of Clevedon and on September 3rd a full PTA meeting of both schools confirmed their acceptance of the tender and work began. On October 1st, following the Junior School PTA AGM, and joined by Infant School parents, Mr Greenlees spoke and answered questions. To maintain interest in the pool fund raising, a large white 'barometer' was erected in the Infant School yard alongside the High Street. It was headed 'Yatton Schools Swimming Pool Fund' and marked off from £0 at the base to £5,400 at the top, and as the fund grew so the £s were coloured in. By mid October 1970 the fund had reached £3,000!

By the end of January 1971 the pool was virtually completed. Parent

workers laid concrete paths and did the interior painting at weekends. Because I was Chairman of the Committee and on the spot, the organisation of the voluntary work, and the problems, seemed to land in my lap, and I noted in the school log on February 1st "I seem to be spending more time on the swimming pool work than I do on running the school!"

The changing rooms came later. At first heavy PVC yellow curtains were hung along the window side of the building to make temporary changing rooms, and with these in place, the pool was ready for use. The big day was March 5th 1971. At 9.30 am the first batch of children from Mrs Standing's class, carrying their costumes and towels, walked through snow into the building, changed and had their first swimming lesson. The room temperature was 84°F, the water 80°F. There was a press photographer present to record the event, and Yatton Schools' Swimming Pool was in business. It had taken 18 months from that first PTA AGM in October 1969.

The main use of the pool would be for swimming lessons in school time, and a timetable was arranged so that every child in both schools would have a lesson every week. Two days were allocated to the Infant School and three for the Junior School. Safety was of paramount importance. At the Junior School each class had the pool for an hour. Only half the class would be in the water at any time – a

maximum of say 15 or 16 children. The teacher taught from outside the pool and at least one parent would be in the water with the children. Other parents helped with changing, drying and general supervision. The hour allowed for two 20 minute sessions plus time for travelling and changing. I believe the Infant School, with younger and smaller children took even more precautions.

So the pool was in daily use from 9am. to 3.30 pm. for five days a week. But it was being heated for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. What a waste of resources if it were only used in school time! Why not use it in the evenings and at weekends? And if we did, and we charged for such use, we could raise funds for improvements. So we did. Various systems were tried and abandoned, but eventually the following system proved to be the most successful. Evenings and weekends were divided into hourly sessions. One or two families would book a session – 50p per family – and the pool would be theirs for the hour. Keys were passed from one group to the next and the last users would lock up and post the keys through the Junior School letterbox. Other schools (Wrington, Court de Wyck and Congresbury) booked late afternoon sessions. Yatton Hall patients used the pool regularly until they built their own, and the Evening Institute ran classes for adults. Birthday pool parties were very popular, although we charged £1 for those! We also tried swimming

sessions in school holidays but supervision proved difficult and they were discontinued.

Of course we had to have an official opening – our efforts deserved no less. This was arranged for St George's Day, April 23rd 1971. Councillor S. E. Williams – 'Bill' to his many friends, and a very good friend and supporter of the Junior School – was invited to perform the ceremony, supported by George Ranken, Deputy Director of Education for Somerset, Mrs Ralph, Chair of the District Education Committee, the Vicar, Dick Ackworth and 200 parents and staff. After the meeting in the Junior School we all trooped down to the pool for the opening ceremony. We had a few short speeches and then Mr Strickland, our PE specialist, in a rubber dinghy, rowed Bill Williams to the centre of the pool to cut the white ribbon which had been draped from one side to the other.

Meanwhile, the senior recorder group, under the direction of Mr Rylands, our deputy headteacher, played airs from Handel's Water Music. We then returned to the school hall for a cheese and wine party. It was a very happy and successful evening and a fitting conclusion to the efforts of everyone connected with the pool project.

Not quite the conclusion. We were still raising money and paying the bills. We made the final payment of £6160 to Houghton & Greenlees on November 25th 1971. My wife and I sent out the last batch of envelopes at

the beginning of 1972 autumn term and we paid off the Long Ashton R.D.C. loan on November 13th 1972.

Every year the pool was closed and drained a week or so before the end of the Christmas term and left closed until after the Easter half-term. This saved fuel during the coldest part of the year and gave ample time for necessary maintenance work. This included re-painting windows and walls – at first by volunteers but later by a professional – and servicing of the plant equipment. With the pool paid for, we were getting a steady income from the evening and weekend lettings, and it was this money which allowed us to carry out improvements to the pool without any need for further fund raising activities. Early in 1973 we began the construction of proper changing rooms, with a mixture of paid and voluntary workers, and this was followed by installing showers, a toilet, and tiling the floor in the area used by the swimmers.

Swimming was now part of the PE curriculum. Our aim was to have every child a swimmer by the age of 11. To this end a series of swimming certificates, graded 1 to 10, was devised to provide incentives for pupils. The qualifications for each stage were printed on the back of the certificate so that everyone was aware of what had been achieved. Grade One listed the most elementary confidence skills, while Grade Ten, a gold one, demanded mastery of a range of

accepted swimming strokes. Once a week, at morning assembly, children were called on to the stage to receive their certificates and the applause of those present. There must be thousands of those certificates in bottom drawers around the village! Whether we achieved our aim of making every leaver a swimmer I don't know, but I guess that very, very few children left Yatton Junior School without at least being able to swim the width of the pool unaided.

Unfortunately most readers will know that there is no happy ending to this story. School swimming came to an abrupt halt in June 1986. In another school pool, somewhere in Avon, a child drowned. The Director of Education ordered the closure of all school pools in the county pending an investigation and the issuing of guidelines for future school swimming. When these guidelines were published they required a trained life saver to be in the pool at all times, and that all swimming teachers should have a recognised ASA teaching certificate. No primary school could meet these requirements and the pool was closed. Eleven years later, having suffered the ravages of time and vandalism, the whole building was bulldozed to the ground and the area is once again part of the playing field. Only a line of masking trees remain as evidence of the existence of Yatton Schools' Swimming Pool.

John Burgess



Copy of the original notice to Parents

**YATTON JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOLS'
SWIMMING POOL COMMITTEE**

October 1970

Dear Parent

In October 1969 the Parent/Teacher Associations of the above schools decided to embark on a project to build a swimming pool. It was felt at that time, that if all parents of scholars agreed to financially support the scheme then it was feasible. It was suggested that four hundred families at say £2 per year would realise £800 per year, and with the expected Educational grant of £1,100 would leave £1,500 to be raised through other efforts, if the pledges were made for three years. The ultimate cost of the pool is now £5,600 and as hoped the results of the parents' support has amounted to approximately £800 per year being raised. To date, from these donations and other functions £3,000 has been collected, leaving £2,600 still to be found. The building of the pool has commenced and when completed in about eight weeks, will be forty-six feet by eighteen feet, covered, heated and space heated, which will enable the children in both schools to enjoy the use of the pool once a week practically throughout the year.

It is hoped that in the not too distant future, every child in Yatton will be able to swim before leaving the Primary School.

This letter is merely an introduction to the scheme. Shortly one of our committee will be calling on you to discuss this matter and elucidate any points which you find are not clear.

We hope that we will be able to count on your support in this very worthwhile project.

(signed) *Ron Eeles*

Fund Raising Secretary of the Swimming Pool Committee.

□ □ □ □ □

Copy of original Promissory Note

Yatton Schools' Swimming Fund

I would like to contribute the sum of _____ annually/weekly during term time, to the Yatton Schools' Swimming Pool Fund until the target figure has been reached, or until my child/children leave the schools, whichever is the earlier.

□ □ □ □ □

Lady Florence Stalling Almshouse

This building in Church Road, one of the oldest in Yatton, has been empty for many years. During 1998 extensive renovation works have been carried out and the interior has been converted into four homes. When the rendering was removed from the north wall facing Church Road a Tudor doorway was uncovered. This doorway is similar to the remains of the Tudor doorway visible in the rear wall of the building, facing the churchyard. Tenants moved into the building at the beginning of August 1998 prior to the official opening ceremony on 7 September.

The building originally began life as a Church House for the brewing of church ales. Church ales became increasingly popular in England during the fifteenth century and from the middle of that century there was a tendency for ales to become a regular means of parish funds. In some villages they replaced levies or gatherings as a more enjoyable way of raising money, often being held in a newly constructed church house or hall. ⁽¹⁾

In central Yatton the gatherings, originally collected for the support of lights in the church, were paid to the churchwardens who went from house to house. After the completion of the Church House, with its appliances for entertainment, gatherings were collected at the Ales. In Claverham and Cleeve separate church ales were held by "lightmen" or sub-wardens.

The churchwardens' accounts for 1445 record gifts from eight people for "the setting of the new houses tymbre" [*i.e. the Church House*]. From the accounts it appears that the Church House was rebuilt in 1471. In 1472 the hiring of the chamber in the Church House for

12d is recorded for the first time. The hiring fee was increased to 16d in 1476. In 1482 the contents included crocks, pans, brewing tubs, troughs, barrels, stands and a brand-iron for carrying burning logs on the hearth. ⁽²⁾

In time the facilities in Church Houses became a source of revenue by letting the brewing vessels on hire, they became places of entertainment and a convenient centre for social activities where anyone who wished to forward a church object found appliances ready. An "ale" would be proclaimed and parishioners flocked to it and gave contributions to the object. These ales became revelries which often gave rise to unseemly behaviour. They were eventually suppressed in the early seventeenth century because of the increasing influence of the Puritans.

Land at that time was generally owned by the Lord of the Manor and Church Houses were subject to a quit-rent to the local Lord. After the suppression of church ales, most Church Houses became Poorhouses and were administered by the churchwardens, overseers of the poor and vestries. This happened in Yatton:

Lady Florence Stalling had become the owner of the Manor of Yatton following the death of her second husband Sir Nicholas Stalling in 1605. In her will dated 6 August 1620, made shortly before her death on 20 August 1620, Lady Florence Stalling gave and devised and appointed the Church Houses of Yatton for the better relief and maintenance of the poor of the Parish of Yatton, subject to trustees paying an annual rent of 12d to her heirs.

It appears that the building quickly became used as the parish poorhouse. In 1796 it was fundamentally restored (one account says rebuilt) and, with the introduction of Union Workhouses in 1837, its sale was actively considered in 1839. An offer to rent it at £5 a year persuaded the Vestry that it was worth retaining and on 5 October 1840 they ordered its repair and gave notice to quit to all the pauper occupants. The hoped-for tenant did not materialise and on 2 November 1840 they agreed to "let to such aged and infirm people as might be considered fit and proper tenants". For this purpose a committee of seven was formed to administer the premises. ⁽³⁾

The 1851 Census recorded 29 persons

in the Poor House (Church House) with ages ranging from 7 months to 80 years, 14 being children.⁽⁴⁾ There are mentions in later Censuses. When the Yatton Parish Council was inaugurated in January 1895, it took over the administration of the Poor House or Church House. The Council's account books annually record income from "Poor House tenants", later amended to "Church House tenants". From time to time money was spent on the property but the building deteriorated. Income from the tenants was still being paid in 1955.

In 1986 the Lady Florence Stalling Almshouse Trust was set up to bring the building back into use for local people in housing need. The trust was unable to secure sufficient housing grant and in 1994 the trustees sold the building to the Knightstone Housing Association who obtained a grant from the Housing Corporation to buy and renovate the property. North Somerset Council granted planning permission in 1997 and also provided additional funding to ensure that all the architectural standards specified by English Heritage were met.

Nicholas A. Deas

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A Verger

To be a Verger in the Church of England is indeed a privilege and a pleasure, as I found out during my 15 years as Verger of our Parish Church here in Yatton.

The office of Verger (or Virger) is one of the ancient lay offices of the Church of England. The verger is, as the title implies, a man or woman who carries a verge or rod of office. Basically and characteristically, the verger is seen in cathedrals and in parish churches, robed and verge in hand – preceding and symbolically clearing the way for choir and clergy as they enter the church at the beginning of a service and when the service ends, leading the procession out of church. The work of a Verger varies considerably from parish to parish according to the needs of the particular church but usually wherever a Verger serves, whether it is in one of our great cathedrals or a small village church, the duties are concerned with ceremonials, keeping the inside of God's house in a good state of tidiness, looking after the clergy, caring for visitors and unlocking and locking the church, though sadly these days many churches have to remain locked much of the time for security reasons. Vergers are present at most services, including weddings, baptisms and funerals. Here in Yatton – as in most churches – they are responsible for seeing that the altars are dressed in the appropriate colour for the church season, for ordering the wine and wafers for the services of Holy

Communion and for ensuring that there is always an adequate supply of candles.

The Vergers at Yatton belong to 'The Church of England Guild of Virgers' which came into being in 1932 and operates today under a constitution which took effect in 1986. The Guild seeks to provide and promote Christian fellowship and spiritual guidance for its members, and to organise and promote courses of training in the work of a verger. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York are joint Presidents of the Guild.

During my years as a Verger I had the honour of being Chairman of the Somerset and Avon Branch of the Guild of Virgers and this gave me the opportunity to visit and meet with Vergers from many Churches in the Dioceses of Bath and Wells, and Bristol, learning of their duties and responsibilities in churches as diverse as the beautiful St. Mary Redcliffe and the equally beautiful tiny church at Selworthy. The loving care and pride taken in being a servant in the House of God was apparent in all the Vergers I met and in all the churches I was able to visit. I cannot resist the temptation to include a poem given to me sometime ago called "The Old Verger" and attributed to 'Lesley Taylor'. It reads like this:

I lights and stokes the boiler
 And clears away the cinders
 I polishes that big brass rail
 And cleans them stained glass windows.
 I know how things did ought to be
 For comfort and appearance,
 I wants no praise, I wants no thanks
 And I wants no interference!

As I said at the beginning it is a privilege to serve as a Verger; the duties are varied and many and so are the rewards. Not too many people have the pleasure of working in such beautiful buildings, enjoying the tranquillity (except of course, when there is restoration work going on!) and meeting and talking with people who all have their own special reasons for wanting to come into church.

During my 15 years as St. Mary's verger I served under three incumbents, which of course meant two interregnums, busy and interesting times. Most of those years were very happy but there was one occasion which made us all very sad and that was the day of the tower fire. The devastation caused will long be remembered but thanks to the skill of the firefighters the damage was contained in the tower and did not spread to the church. Other happier occasions which remain in my memory are the enthronement of two Bishops – Bishop George, now the Archbishop of Canterbury and our

present Bishop, James, and the splendid service when Her Majesty the Queen presented the Maundy money. It was not only a pleasure but an interesting and enlightening experience for a parish verger to watch the Cathedral Virgers at work on these special ceremonial occasions in Wells Cathedral.

In conclusion I would like to quote the Vergers' Prayer for all vergers everywhere -

Almighty Father, from whom every family in Heaven and earth is named, who has called us into fellowship of your Church; grant, we pray, that in all our parishes we may fulfil the duties and enjoy the privileges of our spiritual home. And on those who offer themselves for service as Vergers in the House of God bestow the fullness of your Grace; that, united in love to you and to one another, we may show forth your glory and hasten the coming of your Kingdom, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

William J Marsh
 St. Mary's Verger 1979-1994



Claverham Free Chapel — The 1492 Inquiry

When Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, died on 15 May 1491 the spiritual jurisdiction and revenues of the vacant see passed to John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

William Choke, the master or warden of the free chapel of Claverham had also died in 1491 and the Archbishop ordered Thomas Harrys, treasurer of Wells Cathedral, to arrange for an inquiry to be held into the advowson of the chapel. ⁽¹⁾

William Choke was one of the four sons of Sir Richard Choke of Long Ashton and his first wife Joan Pavy. William's father was a justice of the Court of Common Pleas from 1461 until his death in 1483. Hugh Pavy, William's uncle, rose in the church to become bishop of St David's from 1485 until 1495. ⁽²⁾

Because William Choke was still a minor when he was instituted to the free chapel of Claverham in September 1462, the bishop of Bath and Wells appointed Master Thomas Merssh as his curator. ⁽³⁾

The position of master or warden of the chapel was probably a sinecure as

William was subsequently appointed to the canonry in Wells Cathedral, the prebend of Wedmore, the vicarage of Bedminster, the rectory of Cromhall (Gloucs.) and the vicarage of Chewton Mendip. William resigned as vicar of Chewton by February 1491, not long before his death. ⁽⁴⁾

The inquiry into the advowson of the free chapel of Claverham was held in Backwell church on 5 April 1492 by two church officials, Mr Robert Pemberton and Mr Walter Morys. John Asshefeld, esq., and William Woode, gentleman, had recently presented John Woode, priest, to the chapel and claimed that the presentation pertained to them on this occasion.

Evidence was given at the inquiry by the local clergy and a number of local residents, including two from Yatton. The names of those appearing were:-

Thomas Morys, rector of Wraxall,
John Squyer, rector of Clapton in Gordano,
William Corbett, rector of Backwell,
Matthew Hardyng, rector of Chelvey,
William Kyngman, rector of Brockley,
John Turner, rector of Weston in Gordano,
Robert Keyton, vicar of Clevedon,
John Hurlysfrensche, vicar of Tickenham,
Richard Thurbarn and John Passy of Yatton
Robert Feylond, Thomas Vowles and John Pasty of Backwell
John Wheler of Nailsea and
William Harrys of Chelvey. ⁽⁵⁾

Many of these names are still to be found 500 years later in the local telephone book. The names Harding, Harris, Morris, Turner, Vowles and Wheeler have many entries but there is only one for Thurbarn, perhaps a descendant of the Yattonian Richard Thurbarn.

The witnesses stated on oath at the inquiry that the chapel was vacant by the death of Mr William Choke, last master or warden; that John Charles and Mathilda his wife had last presented Mr Choke to the chapel; that John Rodney, esq., was the true patron on that occasion, or that it was his turn on this occasion. They stated also that John Asshefeld, esq., and William Woode, gentleman were now presenting to the chapel John Woode,

priest, by right and title of the advowson granted to them by John Rodney, esq., as appeared more fully in the charter of the advowson sealed with his armorial seal, and by virtue thereof were the true patrons.

On the following day, 6 April 1492, John Woode was instituted to the free chapel of Claverham by Mr Walter Morys, vicar of the prebendal church of Yatton and Mr Robert Pemberton, Bachelor of Canon Law, Wells. ⁽⁶⁾ John Woode was to retain this position until his death in 1503 when he was replaced by Thomas Cornish, titular bishop of Tenos and precentor of Wells Cathedral, on the presentation of Sir John Rodney, Knight. ⁽⁷⁾

Nicholas A. Deas

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‘Drink Wine, Mead, Ale and Beer with a Merry Heart” (Ecc. 9.7)

When the present generation of people in Yatton enjoy a pint or two of beer or a glass of wine in the Prince of Orange, the Butchers’ Arms or the Market Inn in Yatton I wonder if they realize that they are carrying on a tradition that started many thousands of years ago.

We know that the prehistoric people of the Old Stone Age who lived in the Cheddar caves would have made mead because there are cave paintings in France, dated earlier than Cheddar Man, which show the gathering of honey. The honey was used for all sweetening, because sugar was unknown at that time, and the wax from the comb would be used in many ways. Later, wax was used to waterproof fabrics and the ancient Egyptians used it to make cosmetics. Prehistoric man would soon have found that the water used to wash the honeycomb would ferment and make a delicious alcoholic drink of mead.

Ale and beer made from barley or wheat would have been made since the days of the first farmers in the New Stone Age. Later the Romans had many vineyards, some of which would have been in the surroundings of Yatton.

The great days of mead came after the spread of Christianity because the monks needed large quantities of wax for their candles. As a result of this the monasteries started a large bee industry. There were very many

monasteries around Bristol; the one nearest to Yatton was Woodspring Priory which could well have supplied mead to Yatton as well as honey. I am sure that the Romans living at Wemberham enjoyed their wine but after the great villas fell into disrepair, the vineyards too would have been unattended. As a result wine drinking in Yatton would probably have ceased, and I imagine that the Saxons and Celts would have probably preferred mead and ale. Wine was imported into Bristol from the 13th century onwards but was mostly drunk by the richer merchants of the city.

St Mary’s Church in Yatton would have often held “Church Ales”, which were enjoyable events given to raise money for the upkeep of the church; perhaps one can picture the noise and merriment taking place in the Church House, which has recently been restored, in Church Road.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII the whole of the monks’ beekeeping industry and mead production

completely collapsed. Honey was still required, although later sugar was imported to be used as a sweetener. Tallow (animal fat) was used for candles instead of beeswax and ale and beer took the place of mead because by this time people had learned to grow hops for beer instead of oats and wheat. Beer, ale and cider became the cheapest drinks for the majority of the population. In fact it was far safer to drink this than to drink the water which, although it was probably fairly clean in the wells of Yatton, would in Bristol have been badly contaminated due to the overcrowded conditions in which most of the inhabitants lived.

Perhaps the children in Yatton returned to school in the afternoon too sleepy to attend to their lessons because of the beer they had been given with their mid-day meal. This was the case with my grandmother in the second half of the 19th century. Once the authorities tackled the water supply to make it fit to drink, the need to give beer to the children gradually ceased.

M. V. Campbell

Ref: Frank Buckley,
Mead & Wine in Bristol, 1997



Quaker Burial Ground at Claverham Meeting House

In *Yatton Yesterday No 2*, 1985, there is an article about the beginnings of the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers in Yatton which mentions the burial ground at Claverham Meeting House. A record of burials between 1825 and 1869 shows ninety five names at Claverham Meeting House.

Of these there are twenty one mentions of Gregory, three of Eddington, ten of Palmer, five of Osmond, five of Wilmott, four of Sholl, and two Churchus, who were mentioned in the original article, so the association of these families with the Quakers in Yatton and Claverham can be demonstrated over many years. The other mentions are of Norris (4), Greenfield (4) and Copeland (3) as well as twenty eight other single or double mentions. Of all these Baker, Burdge, Naish, Sholl, Stuckey and Williams are mentioned in *Kelly's Directory* of 1904 and are therefore possibly relatives of the Quakers buried at Claverham.

There were thirty seven men and fifty eight women; the youngest was a fourteen week old male baby and the oldest a man and woman both aged 92. Nine died in childhood, eight as teenagers and eleven were over 80. The largest group consisted of twenty three who were between 70 and 79 years of age. Of forty one first names recorded, the commonest were Mary (9), Elizabeth (8) and William (7).

Marianne Pitman

Orchardleigh – the Story continues

Orchardleigh in Yatton High Street was first described in an article in *More Yatton Yesterdays No2* (page 3) and various questions remained unanswered – such as the position of the original staircase, the reason for the unglazed window and the ‘Tudor’ stone fireplace in the West bedroom. Now after further research on the site, the mysteries are unravelling, and there is a very real possibility that this house dating from around 1500 might have been a medieval ‘Hall house’, probably the only one in Yatton!

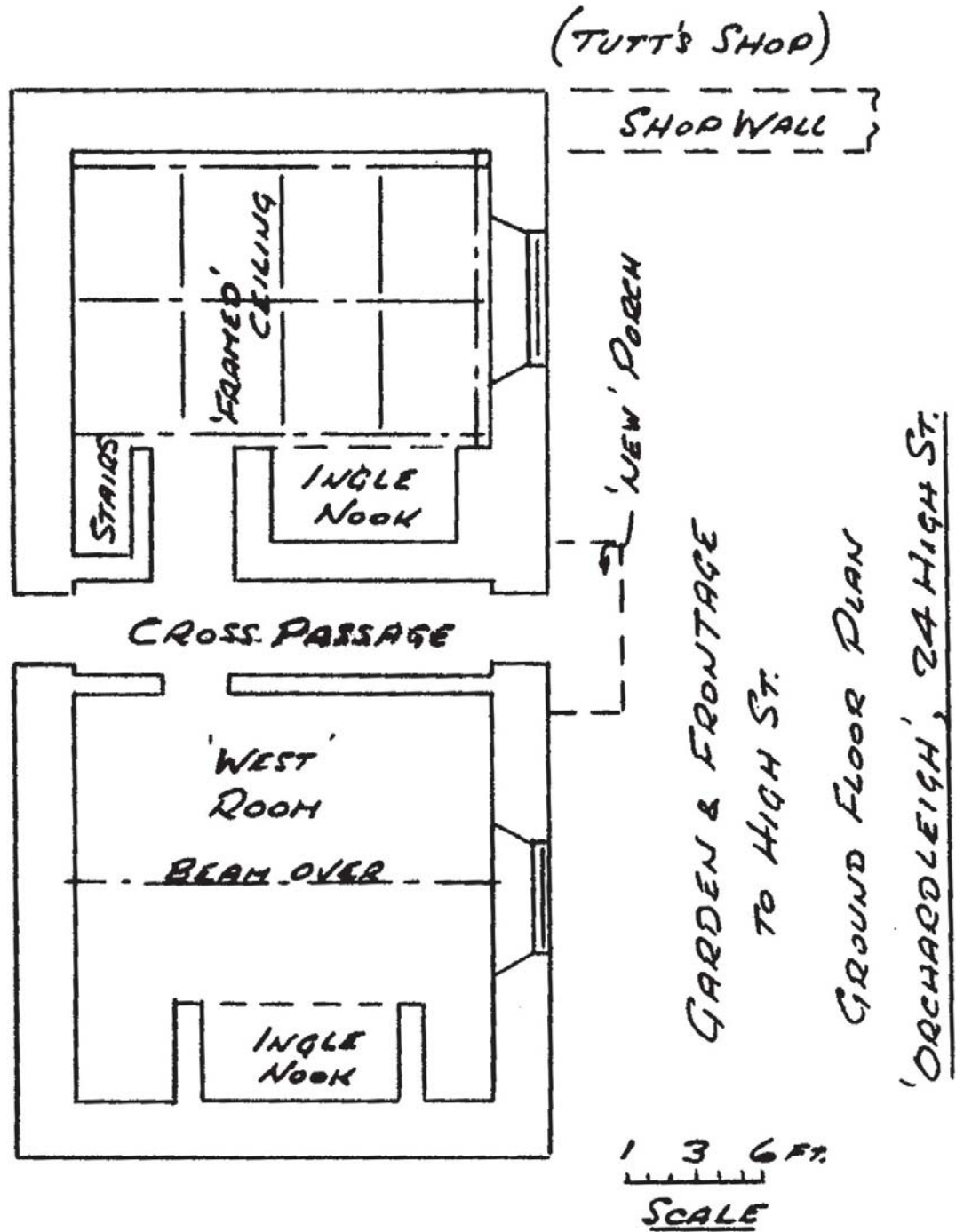
Firstly, what is a Hall house? We must go back to the beginnings of domestic accommodation, which differed from other buildings by its use and control of fire. Fire provided light and heat, under the control of the occupants, and because of its importance the fire (and open hearth) was situated in the prime position – at the centre of the room or the building. Everyone was then able to benefit from the heat and light wherever they were in the room. In the earliest constructions there was no flue or chimney to convey the smoke from the room: it found its own way out through the roof, but of course there would have been no first floor to impede its progress. Later we find that a roof vent was formed or gaps were left among the tiles or slates for the escaping smoke. Obviously the smoke blackened the roof timbers as it found its way to the outside, depositing soot from the wood fuel most generally used.

Examination of Orchardleigh suggests that it was either a Hall house or it had a smoke bay (this is a version of the Hall house in which only part of the building is open to the roof). This is because there is definite blackening of

the original roof timbers, and in addition the floor timbers which form the West bedroom floor appear to date from much later than other parts of the house.

The staircase – we know that it could not have been in the position suggested in the previous article, by the inglenook fireplace in the West room – as we now think that the original building had no first floor in this area, so it must have been where it is located now, by the cross passage at the rear of the house. The stairs were most probably modified when the ‘outshut’ or lean-to was added at the back of the house, as they now pass through the original external wall.

It is very likely that the East ground-floor room, with its moulded ceiling beams and bedroom above, was the original two-storey section of the house. This extended from the East gable wall to the cross passage and there was no heating as it had no fire hearth or chimney when it was constructed. The present inglenook fireplace adjacent to the cross passage was added at a later date, probably



coinciding with the transfer of the original central hearth in the West room to the West gable wall (where the fireplace is now). This is also an inglenook fireplace although it may have been just a 'smoke hood' projecting from the gable wall surmounted by a flue. This flue would have been added onto the wall and a chimney was presumably built at the same time.

The present bedroom floor in the West room could also have been added at this time, but we hope to clarify this later. We do know that the 'Tudor' stone fireplace was positioned in the bedroom more recently than the inglenook or smoke hood, because the flue to this fire was added on to the flue from the ground floor fire. The construction is clearly different. It seems therefore that another of our questions has been answered – this stone fireplace is almost certainly not original to this house.

So when did all this happen? We believe the house dates from about 1500 as evidenced from the 'moulded' ceiling beams, with the other part of the building being open to the roof and the fire situated in the centre of the 'Hall' room or 'smoke bay'. The fireplaces were probably attached to the original walls in the mid-17th Century, say 1650, but they may have been 'smoke hoods'. The 'Tudor' fireplace could therefore have been added about 1700 (after the first floor was constructed) or perhaps later, implying that it may not have been made for this house but instead 'imported' from a house of the Tudor period (1485-1603).

We hope to confirm – or otherwise – the various assumptions made in this article and solve the outstanding puzzle of the unglazed window at a future date, but in the meantime we must express our special thanks to John and Bobbie who have permitted access and even made holes in their walls to assist with our investigations!

Brian Bradbury



Titan Ladder & Case Co.

Whilst thoughts were being given to the production of *More Yatton Yesterdays* No.3, it was realised that the Society had nothing on record concerning one of our larger employers in Yatton and a company which had been in existence for many years. The following was the result of our investigations and makes interesting reading.

Mr F. Starke, who hailed from Mark, whose family were farmers, went to America in 1900 where he obtained a degree in engineering and was employed by the Pullman Car Co., Chicago. Whilst there he perfected his woodworking skills, which were to stand him in good stead in the years ahead.

He returned in about 1908, met his future wife in Yatton Chapel and they were married about 1910. Mr Starke commenced work with Wake and Dean, then went to Bristol to a furniture company owned by two sisters, given a Rover car and £5 a week, he ran the company for about ten years. This continued until the recession of 1929 struck and like so many people at this time he was out of a job and it is at this point that the Yatton story began.

Mr Starke commenced to make wireless sets; the reader should remember that he had a degree in engineering so this diversification would not be so far out of place. Many people were obtaining kits of parts and making sets so this was not at all unusual at this time. Mr Herbert Mattock and Mr F. Starke joined together and put £20 each into the venture. Mr Starke constructed the

wireless chassis, a three valve mains driven set and Mr Mattock made the cabinets. When completed the sets were marketed under the name of the "Rising Sun" and some fifty sets were made in all. One of the first customers was the Bishop of Exeter. It is interesting to note, although not pertinent to this investigation, that many well known names in the radio industry were commencing in a small way. About this time Pye of Cambridge were also marketing a set called the "Rising Sun" and one wonders who came first and if they were both produced without knowledge of each other. Who knows, that given a different set of circumstances, "Titan" might have been a huge radio manufacturing conglomerate now!

In the early 1930s Mr Starke met a Mr Scantlebury who had by then started an ironmongers business in Winterstoke Road, Bristol, called the "Metal Agencies Company" and suggested Mr Starke went home and manufactured some wooden steps for him to sell. "Titan Ladder & Woodworking Co." was formed about this time, some small machine tools were obtained and manufacture was commenced in Elborough Street. Some six a week were being made.

This continued until about 1932 when Mr Starke moved to Church Road (now Chescombe Road) and a small workshop was erected, the base of which can be seen to this day in the rear of 23 Elm Close.

Once more Mr Starke's engineering skills were called into play and a generator set comprising a Rover car engine and a DC generator, obtained from Penfold's on the Weston Road, was constructed, this enabled light and power to be made to run the machinery.

About 1935 the factory on the present site was constructed and both units were running together till 1936 and continued until 1939, the start of the Second World War. During this period, up to 1939, Frank Knowles transported the ladders to Bristol for 7/6d per load (37 ½p) and after the war Frank Pearce would take a lorry load to Bristol for 15/- (75p). As the production of the factory increased, the Bristol journeys increased to once a day, continuing until about 1960 when "Titan" purchased their first truck.

Returning to the war time, the factory produced battery separators, this being the insulation between the positive and negative plates in a wet battery cell. Depending on whether they were made for a lorry battery or a submarine battery the number would vary between a couple of dozen per battery to a couple of hundred, so one can see that seven or ten people would have their work cut out to keep up this production as well as making ladders

for the various War Ministries, the Post Office, and on certain occasions, Buckingham Palace.

This work continued until about 1970, making ladders at the rate of about 400-500 timber ladders a month, most going to the M.A.C. in Bristol. About 1978 a decision was made to start producing aluminium ladders, the first two aluminium-working machines were purchased and a small number of ladders and steps were produced. Over the years metal ladders took over and wooden ladder production was scaled down.

More sophisticated computer controlled aluminium-working machinery was purchased and the output rose to about 4000 ladders a week and currently some five million pounds worth of ladders are produced annually, most being exported all over the world.

This brings us to the present time as regards the history of the Company but there are a number of other facts which should be recorded which do not fit easily into the foregoing narrative.

Mr Bruce Candy joined the Company in 1975 as Sales Director and it is his efforts which makes the name of Titan Ladder & Case Co. known throughout the world. The Company is controlled by Mr Geoffry and Mr Russell Starke supported by an office staff of eight and about a total working staff of eighty. Mr Danny Smith joined the company as an engineer when Cam

Gears closed and has made his mark designing machinery for production and also new types of ladders and steps.

The factory produced its own power up to 1977 from a Ruston Hornsby generator set producing 60 KW of power. This unit was purchased from Binding and Paynes of Clevedon for the princely sum of about £200.

Mr F. Starke, who originated the Company, died at the age of 95 years in 1979 and for the last fifteen years of his working life produced all the catalogues, invoices, advertising literature, required to run a successful company, with the aid of a Rota-print machine, which shows what an engineer he was, early desk top publishing!

In 1966 the name of the Company was changed from Titan Ladder & Woodworking Co. to Titan Ladder & Case Company and with this name commenced producing wooden pallets for E. S. & S. A. Robinson of Bristol. This work only continued for about a year because, as always

happens, ladder work increased, and so pallet production was curtailed. However, upon the termination of this work the name of the Company remained as it is today.

In 1936 Mr Starke took on his first apprentice Mr Ron Parsons, who under Mr Starke's tuition, laid the groundwork for the quality of work which exists today.

Finally a little snippet which makes interesting reading:- in 1930, an employee of the factory had a surname of Cobley and he always claimed that his great grandfather was the famous "Uncle Tom Cobley". How true this was we can only guess at, so no responsibility is accepted for this little story.

This, more or less completes the history of one of Yatton's oldest businesses and it remains for me to thank Mr Geoffry Starke for taking time out from a busy day to record his thoughts to enable this story to be compiled.

Monty Lane



Yatton Parish Council Chairmen

Yatton Parish Council was set up as a civil as opposed to a parochial elected council in 1895. The first chairman was the vicar Reverend W Arnold who was Vicar of Yatton from 1889 until 1895.

The second chairman was a local doctor Dr Peter Pearson Johnson. He lived at Glenville from 1891 until 1911. Possibly he was a Scot as he obtained his medical degree in Edinburgh in 1877. Also he was Medical Officer of Health for the Bedminster Union Workhouse – which is interesting as there is a record of Butcher Stuckey of Yatton providing meat for it when there must have been nearer suppliers.

A list of chairmen follows, with the year they were elected to the chair.

1895 Rev W Arnold	1955 M Crossman
1895 Dr PP Johnson	1969 S E Williams
1897 B Crossman	1971 R Y Edwards
1899 Dr PP Johnson	1973 M Crossman
1903 C Knowles	1974 A Attwood
1907 B Crossman	1976 Mrs G Lewis
1919 R Salmon	1986 E G Farrant
1920 B Crossman	1987 P R Cox
1934 T Burdge	1991 R James
1947 C C Stuckey	1997 C Evans

Much of the information for this series of articles has come from the history of Yatton Parish Council prepared by the late Jack Vincent who was never chairman but was a member from 1979 and vice chairman from 1987 until 1991.

Articles about the life and times of Ben and Maurice Crossman, Allan Attwood, Bill Williams, and Ted Farrant are included in this edition. Articles on Bob Cox, Robert Edwards, Tom Burdge, Ralph James and possibly others will follow in later editions.

The Local History Society has very little or no information about many chairmen particularly those in office before World War Two and would be grateful for any assistance.

Marianne Pitman

Benjamin Crossman Chairman of Yatton Parish Council 1897-99, 1907-1919, 1920-1934

Benjamin Crossman of Chestnut Farm, Claverham was a parish councillor from 1895 for 40 years and chairman for 27 of them. He only gave up being chairman because of the necessity to travel late at night to and from Claverham in the early thirties when the roads would have often been unlit, rough and flooded. When he left, his son (also Benjamin) and his nephew Maurice continued on the council. His brother in law Tom Burdge who was a county councillor was the next chairman for 13 years. Ben Crossman was known for his tact, businesslike manner, and ability to give a fair hearing.

In 1914 he provided evidence to the House of Lords because he alleged that Bristol Water Company was extracting so much water at Chelvey Pumping Station as to cause cracks up to 30 feet long and depressions 10 feet across and 4 feet deep on Kenn Moor. The banks of the river dropped and had to be rebuilt.

He alleged this affected some 300 acres on Kenn and Yatton Moors. As a consequence a dam was built by the Commissioners of Sewers at Wemberham and Bristol Water contributed £13 to the cost of this.

During his chairmanship the War Memorial and gardens were given to the council in 1922 and the lease of the Mendip Road allotments from Somerset County Council began in 1915.

Further afield he was a Justice of the Peace on Long Ashton Bench, a member of Long Ashton Rural District Council and a member of the Board of Guardians of Bedminster Union Workhouse which was based in Flax Bourton.

Besides his council duties he was a churchwarden at Yatton church, associated with the Yatton Cricket Club as senior captain (1912), the vice president of Claverham Lawn Tennis Club (1925) and chairman of Yatton Horticultural and Agricultural Show (1925).

Much of this information was obtained from Ben Crossman, his grandson who farms at Hewish.



Maurice Hardwick Crossman, Chairman of Yatton Parish Council 1955-1969, 1973-4

When Maurice Crossman of Ham Farm died on December 28th 1974 he had served two terms as chairman of Yatton Parish Council, the first of which lasted 14 years. He was a councillor for 40 years.

During his time as chairman there were many planning debates including some which eventually secured Glebelands as open space. There was also frustration when it appeared that Long Ashton Rural District Council were not as open as they might have been with parish councils and the term 'little Hitlers' was used to describe them by the parish council chairman. His rebuke by the RDC chairman was duly reported in the press. Other matters discussed were relief sewers and improved access for Cadbury Farm estate.



The Rock Road Youth Club featured because of complaints of noise after the fashionable rock 'n' roll dances. It is of interest to note that one councillor noted this was a problem after dances in 1947 elsewhere in Yatton so like the oft discussed bypass not a lot changes. In local council matters Maurice emphasised that the council's work should be apolitical, that the village should expand first in the built up area and then on not such good agricultural land.

His son David said that his father was one of four children, two sons and two daughters. His father died when he was

14 and his elder brother had already left home to farm at Portbury. Maurice ran the farm with his mother.

The farm was mixed comprising dairy cattle, sheep and corn. There was also cider from the farm apples. The farm still has the same 200 acres. He kept and 'broke' horses. When he went courting on the Mendips he rode two horses, the first to a farm where he kept the second horse but despite this he married a girl from the Land Army.

There was ample shooting as at that time not only were there duck but also

wild partridges and rabbits which have now disappeared. The moor was also used for ice skating when people used to come from Bristol by train and skate back to Backwell to catch the train home.

Besides the council Maurice had had a considerable history of public service including 26 years on North Somerset Drainage Board, of which he was chairman at the time of his death.

At an early age he had become a dyke reeve which later was called a viewer of the local waterways and ditches having taken part in inspections from the age of eight. The efficient working of the hundreds of miles of local waterways, drainage channels and dozens of hatches and sluices was part of his responsibility which contributed to the smooth running of farming, industrial and domestic life (eg flooding of houses at Horsecastle if water could not flow out to sea quickly enough).

He inspected commissioned rhines to see that farmers had fulfilled their commitments to avoid flooding upstream by 'ketching' or cleaning out the rhines (or dykes as they were formerly known) as required. Some such as that in Wemberham require this three times a year because of high light levels or other natural conditions which encourage prolific weed growth. His son David fulfils a similar function, which has changed little over the years. The water is penned back so that cattle have water to drink when they are out between April and November and fields are irrigated. Depending on the rainfall

the hatches are raised or lowered to regulate the flow. There are tidal flaps which allow rain water out but do not allow sea water in.

The area covered is from Congresbury to Flax Bourton to Clevedon . The Gordano Valley is separate. Rivers and farm ditches are excluded. New rhines are recognised and upgraded from existing ditches if required such as the recently recognised Jasmine Rhine which prevented ongoing flooding in Lower Claverham. The drainage system was dug out by hand in the 1850s.

There is a Drainage Board with an office in Kingston Seymour. At one time houses below a certain level paid drainage rates but now this is paid through the local authority.

For 20 years Maurice Crossman was a trustee of Yatton Charities and instrumental in the success of Yatton Fatstock Show, Yatton Farmers Union, the local Wildfowlers Association, as well as Clevedon Horse Show, North Somerset Agricultural Show, and North Somerset Ploughing Society. He was also a JP, a retained fireman in the thirties and a sergeant in the 'Specials' in the Second World War.

Maurice also had a keen interest in local history being instrumental in the discovery of a Roman site on the moors having noticed a man-made hump where a corn dryer and two skeletons were later found.

This information was obtained from his son, David Crossman, and cousin Ben Crossman.



Allan Attwood, Yatton Parish Council Chairman 1974-76

Allan Attwood became the youngest chairman of the parish council in May 1974, at the age of 37. The vice-chairman was Mary Ashbee. Soon after he came to the village he joined the Ratepayers Association and was then elected to the council in May 1970. When he became chairman Yatton had already taken on some aspects of a commuter village. There were still three farmer councillors, so the influence of agriculture was still apparent. Some councillors worked in the village. One a postman and retained fireman, while out on his postal rounds was close to a chimney fire and put on his fire fighting equipment as he was picked up by the engine as it passed by.

Sadly another councillor, Jim Hill (the father of the present owner of the furnishing shop in the High Street) died in a road accident on his way on holiday, and is remembered by a clock in Rock Road Youth Club. One councillor, Vivien Wathen, is still on the council. Another councillor had a notable election slogan using his surname 'Vote Munday on Thursday'.

Allan was on the finance committee initially, and saw many schemes developed there come to fruition in his time as chairman.

There were examples of practical as well as verbal collaboration. Because the council had very little precept it had to encourage volunteer labour and with the help of the local farmers mentioned above, the burial ground behind the churchyard was laid out. This proved to be very rocky close to the surface at the far end which made the gravedigger's life difficult. Also there was collaboration with local businesses such as Spillers who gave land for a play area at Horsecastle,



again laid out by the council, as the population there grew. During this time Claverham's play area was created.

There was also controversy. The council laid out the playing fields including a cricket square at Hangstones and built changing rooms, etc. The council meetings were transferred there from the then Church Hall in the Causeway.

About the same time the church was building its own meeting room (the Chapter House) and wanted to divest itself of the church hall. Some critics said the village would be paying for two village halls if it bought it. Indeed Avalon was interested in it as a social club as well but this was not followed through. Allan Attwood had been on the church council but had resigned when it appeared there might be a conflict of interest. However there were still accusations of dual interests. Interestingly the inspiration for this series of articles about council chairmen and women was derived from the board in Hangstones which lists them from the council's beginnings in 1896.

Other changes were also hotly debated and took some getting used to. When Church Road was made one way there was a timber yard at the corner of Church and Chescombe Roads. Large heavily laden timber lorries used to navigate Church Road past the surgery and the school in both directions. The playground was across the road in what is now the car park, so potentially halving the traffic was seen as an improvement. However it took

the vicar some time to remember to turn left not right to go home!

Around this time Glebelands was laid out and the Village Green registered as belonging to the parish and church jointly.

It is also interesting to note a sad story of a Polish refugee Cariole Fink who lived in Church House. When he died no relatives could be found so the parish council had to obtain permission from the Official Solicitor to make the burial arrangements.

At that time substantial improvements were made to Church House and nearly 25 years later this is being repeated. Another coincidence is that the hand rail by the church gate to which the council contributed £5 in 1974 was replaced again in 1997.

Finally Yatton's bypass was being discussed as far back as 1974. A small section from Stowells to North End roundabout has just come into existence, partly due to the availability of pumps suitable to drain the surrounding fields.



Stanley Ewart (Bill) Williams, Yatton Parish Council Chairman 1969-1970

Stanley, known as Bill, Williams was born in Bath in 1916. He was only called Stanley by his mother when he was in trouble. When the family moved to Bristol he was educated at Bristol Cathedral School and eventually became a governor, later the chair.

He started work for Bell & Nicholson haberdashery wholesalers as a salesman, before becoming a policeman in London. Prior to the Second World War he joined the North Somerset Yeomanry (TA) and on the outbreak of war was transferred to the Royal Army Service Corps rising to the rank of major. While in Egypt in 1941 at a hockey match he met Pat who was a Queen Alexandra Nursing sister but at that time holding a higher rank. When Bill equalled her rank they were allowed to be married in Moasca in Egypt and honeymooned at the Mena House Hotel. When Pat came to Bristol for her son Michael's birth she was transferred from her mother-in-law's house in the heavily blitzed city to Cleeve. Houses were being built for £950 in Court Avenue, Yatton.

So Bill, Pat and Michael and, later, their daughter Penny lived at Mena House in Court Avenue from 1946 when the houses were finished. Immediately post war they kept hens and rabbits in their large back garden. Surplus eggs were sold by a neighbour at the Monday Yatton Market. The unexpected compulsory purchase of much of their back garden without consultation and with 14 days notice of eviction, to



provide land for old people's bungalows, encouraged Bill to join the council so that the newcomers could have a voice.

Starting as a commercial traveller he became managing director and owner of Epstein and Co picture moulding manufacturers of Mivart Street, Bristol. He was secretary and then President of the regional Commercial Travellers Association. He travelled across the whole of both southern England and Wales!

Michael joined him as a salesman in the 60s. Sadly Michael who was a keen hockey player died in his very early twenties just before Christmas 1961. Bill Williams was a Yatton council member from 1954 until 1973 and again from 1976 until he died in 1983. He was chairman of the finance committee and then vice chairman from 1964 to 1969.

An early controversy he was involved in was when the Parochial Church Council were considering demolishing Church House. Bill and his daughter Penny read the deeds written in old English held at the Somerset Record Office. At one point they were considering grazing a sheep or goat on the village green as a result of their enquiries. They found that Church House could not be demolished and so it still stands today.

The Youth Club, the drainage at Horsecastle, and Yatton Infants' School were common topics of conversation in the Williams' household. The telephone sat on the table at meal times so that it could be answered without getting up. Calls cost 4d at that time.

Council business in 1966 also included protests about a 31% increase in electricity charges for 43 street lamps, totalling £224 including maintenance, imposed by SWEB. The general purposes rate was £150 – equivalent to a 3/4d (17p) parish rate.

Bill was well known for his ready smile and his debating talent both amongst the council members and further afield. He used the latter to good effect

when protecting the High Street from double yellow lines. He could see that parked cars acted as an early traffic calming device by slowing the traffic at no expense to the council.

As a district councillor for Long Ashton Rural District Council he was on the housing committee which dealt with the allocation of council houses. Sometimes when a young couple came to his house asking for a council house they were not aware of the grants available to make dilapidated property habitable. After occasionally heated discussions they, and their parents also, may have taken up the latter route of exploring the possibilities of private occupation. Not all tenants were as grateful for the time and effort he expended on their behalf.

While he made no secret of voting Conservative he tried to eliminate party politics from local council work. In 1970 he was chair of Long Ashton Rural District Council.

He was also a member of Somerset County Council at the time Avon was developed and set up. The aim was to improve the lot of those people in North Somerset who were remote from the county administration in Taunton and many of whom worked in Bristol.

When he died in 1983 he was Chairman of Frenchay Health Authority. Two days before his death he was distributing presents at his own expense to those patients who did not expect to have any, nor any visitors over Christmas.

For much of the sixties he was chairman of Yatton Horticultural Society and from 1964 secretary of Clevedon Horse Show.

Amongst other interests he supported the British Legion. In 1966 at a regional conference he voiced concern over the effect on the disabled of the closure of the Yatton to Clevedon branch railway line.

Mrs Pat Williams trained as a nurse and became nurse receptionist at the Church Road Surgery and night sister at Clevedon Cottage Hospital. She was also well known in the village for her work with the British Legion, Conservative Ladies, Yatton Horticultural and Red Cross Associations, and further afield

with the Samaritans and Commercial Travellers Association. She also offered considerable encouragement to her children including supporting her daughter in the Young Conservatives by making refreshments, etc.

Pat was born in India the daughter of an Army officer and had lived in Egypt, Germany and France. In the sixties she was involved in an incident when a careless bus conductor allowed a bus to move off when children were boarding and she was dragged some yards in Yatton High Street. The bus conductor was fined £5.

This information was obtained from Mrs Penny Wride nee Williams.



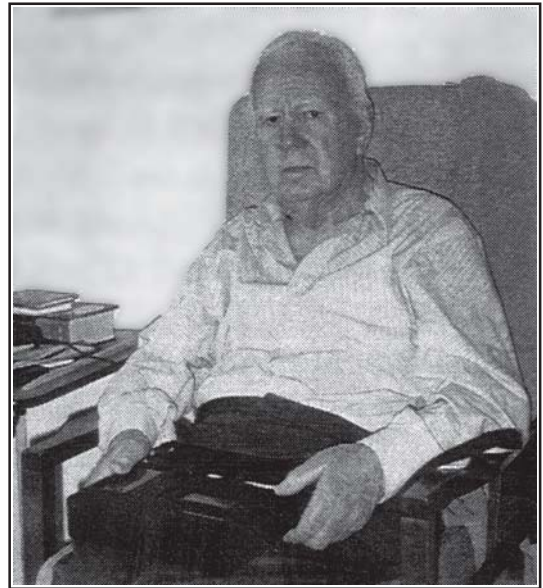
Ted Farrant, Yatton Parish Council Chairman 1986-7

Ted Farrant and his wife came to Yatton in 1972 from Lancashire. He had been an area sales manager for Cadbury Schweppes, retiring at the age of 60 and six months.

From an interest in local politics through the local Conservative Association he became a parish councillor in 1973 when Maurice Crossman was chairman. Ted also became a Woodspring councillor for four years in the mid-seventies.

His main interest was planning. Serving on Woodspring's Planning subcommittee he brought considerable local knowledge to the site visits and committee debates as he took the trouble to research proposals carefully. Innovative schemes to convert barns, including balcony features, were a particular interest of his. Mostly the parish council were unanimous on proposals the majority of which were for housing and Woodspring paid considerable attention to its views.

Party politics were coming into play when Ted became chair in 1986 and this changed the nature of debate from the previous non-aligned positions. At this time the council overall was probably still right of centre. Also the public were becoming more vocal particularly over controversial issues



and could be a handful at council meetings! At this time the meetings were opened by prayers said by Peter Cresswell, pastor of Horsecastle Chapel, in the way that meetings had traditionally been opened since the beginning of the council.

*Articles by
Marianne Pitman*



Adelard of Bath. A Yatton Landowner's Son.

Adelard (or Athelard) of Bath was born in Bath about 1080 and has been described as the first English scientist.⁽¹⁾ He is best known for his translations of scholarly works from Arabic into Latin and for his prominent role in introducing Arab science into Europe.⁽²⁾

The first documentary reference to Adelard is in 1106 when Athelard, the son of Fastrad [*Athelardus, filius Fastradi*] witnessed a document for Bishop John of Bath.⁽³⁾ Fastrad, the father of Adelard, is thought to have come from Lorraine and settled in Somerset during the era of reform and development at Wells under Bishop Giso (d.1088). The spelling of Fastrad suggests that it is more likely to have been an old German name rather than Old English.⁽⁴⁾ Bishop Giso had originally come from Lorraine about 1059 to be chaplain to King Edward the Confessor before being consecrated Bishop of Wells in 1060.

At the time of the Domesday Survey of Somerset (1086) Fastrad held directly of Giso, Bishop of Wells, 5 hides of land in Yatton, 8 hides in Wells and 1 hide in Banwell.⁽⁵⁾ So he was probably the predecessor of the de Wyke family who held two Knights' fees in Wyke and Milton, now Court de Wyke and Milton in Wells, from 1166 or earlier until 1356.⁽⁶⁾

A neighbour of Fastrad at Yatton was Benzelin, Archdeacon to Bishop Giso, who was shown in the Domesday Survey as holding from the bishop the church of the manor of Yatton with one hide of land.⁽⁷⁾ The foreign custom of

dividing up a diocese into three or four archdeaconries was introduced by the new Norman bishops following the Conquest. However in Bishop Giso's time Benzelin was the only archdeacon in the diocese and he continued in office for a while under the next bishop, Bishop John of Tours. After him there were three archdeacons, the usual number under Norman bishops.⁽⁸⁾

Fastrad's son, Adelard, travelled widely on the continent, studying at Tours and Salerno, and going on to the East to study Arab science. He translated many works of Arabic scholarship into Latin and by his translation of Euclid's Elements, most of which had been lost in the original Greek, he reintroduced to Europe the full corpus of Euclid's geometry as a logical deductive method. He also provided the West with additional information about sines and trigonometry which the Arabs had adapted from Hindu astronomy. One of the texts which Adelard is considered to have translated contains an explanation of Hindu arithmetic and explains the use of zero, as well as giving symbols for digits from one to nine. This is why he has been credited with helping to introduce Arabic numerals to Europe.⁽⁹⁾

Adelard was a man with numerous interests and as well as translating other people's work he was an author in his own right. After the outbreak of the civil war between Stephen and Matilda in 1139 Adelard returned to Bath and wrote a treatise on the astrolabe. This he dedicated to Henry Plantagenet (Matilda's son, later Henry II) who is known to have spent part of his

boyhood at that time in Bristol castle with his uncle Earl Robert of Gloucester.

Adelard also wrote a treatise on the care of falcons, the earliest known manuscript on the subject, in which he urged the handler not to associate with prostitutes lest he infect the bird with vermin.⁽¹⁰⁾

Nicholas A. Deas

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Memories of Yatton in the 1950s and 60s

Yatton Traders

Ruth and Dennis Butcher lived in Yatton High Street and owned the adjoining babywear shop opposite the Prince of Orange. For convenience there was a mirror in the lounge so that customers could be seen entering the shop. Despite the narrow pavement and the cars passing perilously close, the nearby jewellers shop window was always a draw.

‘Pop’ Butcher had a small holding in Stowey Park and he sold chickens and eggs including some from our hens at the Monday Yatton Market.

One winter’s afternoon Peter Butcher and I went skating on the vicar’s pond behind the vicarage which is now the green in Well Lane. The ice broke and we both fell in!

We were too frightened of Prebendary Beeching to shout for help even though the pond seemed very wide and deep. Seeing the houses built near the site of the pond in Well Lane reminds me of this incident.

The sawmill in Church Road owned by the Clarke family was dangerously fascinating. The large saws had no guards. I remember seeing huge trees stacked and moved on rails through the spinning discs of the saw blades. Eventually they were stacked as thin planks but in trunk shaped piles. The smell of sawdust is linked permanently in my mind with Yatton. Houses were later built on the sawmill site.

The two butchers shops in Yatton were fascinating. Stuckey’s, next to Court House Farm, where the precinct is now,

served as a bank. Mr Stuckey sat in his box office on a high chair with the ledgers on a sloping desk. On a wooden desk were wooden cups holding halfpennies, pennies, thruppences, sixpences, shillings, florins and half-crowns. The paper money disappeared into a drawer. If Mr Stuckey had to serve he had a leather bag under his apron where he put the money. Stuckey’s Bank in Corn Street, Bristol was taken over as part of National Westminster. Arthur Edwards, the other butcher, had stock in the yard and his sons Bill and Robert also farmed. Maureen Edwards, Bill’s wife, kept the books. She had a jar of sweets from which occasionally *very* good children were treated.

The Tutts had two shops opposite the Prince of Orange. One was a dress shop run by the Misses Tutt and the other a grocer’s run by their brother. Biscuits were kept in tins with glass tops and sugar was sold in blue bags. They, amongst others, ran a delivery service.

The best ham came from Pemberton’s dairy, where it was cooked every Saturday morning. It was sliced on a tall white stand with a paper frill round

the ham bone. Barnfields ran the radio and television business next door on the corner of High Street and Elborough Avenue and across the road was Banes' grocer's shop. The worst kept secret was that the barber Dave was the bookie.

PC Claxton who seemed a giant to small children, was succeeded by PC Dennis Carter when the new police house/station was completed in the heart of the village.

SHOWTIME

The Yatton and District Horticultural Society spring and summer shows always involved a great deal of work. In the Williams' household four days before the show a grey army blanket was put on the dining room table. The entry forms and fees were laid out.

Everybody, but especially the Rev Stan and Mary Revell, the treasurers, were delighted once the table was full. There was help from many quarters including the GP, Dr Dyson who would check progress and encourage his patients to enter their prodigious produce or flowers. On the day, lady members Mrs Pitt, Brice and Skidmore masterminded the catering and Joe Brown and his wife from Claverham provided support from first thing in the morning until last thing at night. The weather was critical. Too high a wind and the tent would rip and the pegs would be torn out. Too hot and wet and the tent would steam up! Too wet and the lorry carrying the tables could not

get into the showground opposite Stowey Park! Too little rain and the ground would be too hard for the gymkhana and pony rides, a useful source of income.

Various members were detailed to keep an eye on the tent particularly at pub closing time. Dr Ursula (Damrel) used to go out into the show field, which was her field, next to her house, in her gardening trousers with a heavy torch and a pitchfork which frightened off a number of youths. The ultimate deterrent was the hosepipe which could be trained on any would-be vandals and also served as a way of identifying them, surprisingly wet on a hot summer's night.

The show was opened by a celebrity, usually known, however tenuously, to a member of the committee and sometimes the celebrity was appearing at the Knightstone Theatre in Weston-super-Mare. They arrived in style in a vintage car owned by the local garage owner, Clifford Holder.

There were a number of solid silver cups to be won and prized. One cup was given in memory of my mother's (Pat Williams) grandmother Ellen Davies and is still presented to this day for the most points in the homecraft classes in the summer show.

Yatton was a place where there was a considerable community spirit and it is important that this continues.

*Penny Wride nee Williams
Councillor 'Bill' Williams Daughter*



The Life and Times of William Hipsley.

William Hipsley, the son of George and Ann Hipsley (nee Dyer) was baptised at Wrington in the County of Somerset on the 13th January 1784. On the same day, a sister Mary was also baptised; the Register gave her age as two and half years.

An older brother, Richard, had been baptised at Yatton on the 17th February 1778, and another sister, Molly, was baptised at Kingston Seymour on the 30th March 1781.

William's parents, George Hipsley and Ann Dyer were married at Wrington on the 9th July 1777. George was described as 'bachelor', Parish of Cleve and Ann as 'spinster', Parish of Wrington.

Having given a brief background of William Hipsley's family, the saga of his life now unfolds.

No record of his marriage to a lady named 'Elizabeth' has ever been traced. It is assumed the union took place c1804. Issue began to arrive in 1805. The first born was 'Richard' baptised 10th February 1805. This child apparently died in infancy as a second 'Richard' was baptised 11th April 1807. The family was domiciled in the Parish of Yatton. From available evidence, it would appear that the residence was one of the cottages known as 'The Barton' next to the premises now occupied by Hill's carpet shop.

Further issue of William's marriage included: William and Mary, both baptised 17th July 1808; Elizabeth baptised 9th December 1810; and George in 1817.

William in common with his contemporaries was employed in agriculture. He was working for a Mr Hawkins as a ploughman.

All was well until the fateful day in June 1827 when his brother-in-law, Joseph Wilmot from Congresbury, appeared at William's home. He had with him a piece of cloth that had been stolen from Derham's shop just across the road from the present 'Butcher's Arms' public house. Joseph Wilmot asked William to conceal the cloth. Alas, the hue and cry had been raised, and before anything could be done, the Parish Constable, a man appointed by the Select Vestry, arrived on the scene. Both men were arrested and charged with felony.

The case was heard at the Lammas Assizes in Bridgwater in August 1827. The verdict was 'Guilty', sentence 'Death,' and William was taken to Shepton Mallet Gaol. The sentence was later commuted to 'Transportation for Life'. His prison record gave his age as 45 years. In November 1827 he was discharged from the Gaol to begin the journey to Devonport to be held aboard the prison hulk H.M.S. Captivity, an old man-of-war. This journey was done in stages with overnight stops en route. The first night the convoy arrived at Ilchester Gaol. During the night,

William and two other prisoners made good their escape. William walked all the way back to Yatton, around 47 miles - no mean feat, but in the event an unwise decision. He was soon 'picked up' and this time taken to Devonport in chains. He was held on the prison hulk until March 1828 when the convict ship 'Bengal Merchant' put in at Devonport to load convicts destined for Australia. William was on his way.

He was landed at Hobart in Tasmania (Van Diemens Land in those days) in August 1828. He was assigned to a Mr David Gibson, himself an ex-convict from Scotland who had been

released from penal servitude earlier and had made good. William was granted 'Ticket of Leave' in 1836; although still subject to penal law, he could now work on his own account. In 1840 he received a Conditional Pardon. He was free in Australia but could not return to the UK. No trace of him after 1840 has been found.

My Connection: William left a son George, George had a daughter Emma, Emma had a daughter Harriet, and Harriet had a son – the present Mark Martin – author of this article.

Mark Martin



Additions, Revisions and Feedback

Ruth Summerell

People's memories of time, places, events, etc, do not always coincide with those of other people, so we are devoting a section to the feedback we have received about previous articles. We are always grateful for the interest shown in our publications and welcome observations on any articles which appear.

More Yatton Yesterdays, No 2 1997

- Page 43 Amos Williams farmed at "Barberry Farm" not "The Lodge".
- Page 44 Victor Stuckey farmed at "Somerset House" not "Laurel Bank".
(Information from Dennis Clement)
- Page 46 Mr Calder, the dentist, used to hold a surgery in Yatton every Thursday afternoon, in a room at Mrs Reynolds' cottage, "Penleigh", High Street, Yatton - next door to the present Infants' School - Mrs Reynolds was the School Caretaker.
(Information from Pat Denny)



Farming and Yatton Market Notes

Farming

From' Yatton at War 1939 - 45'

Page 3: "Memories of Farming in Yatton" by Len C Burdge

As a schoolboy, I recall helping on Reg Court's farm in Claverham where I used to help harness the huge great horses, and was always surprised at how such massive creatures allowed themselves to be led by little me.

It seems so cruel now, but I remember we had a kitten that mum wanted "Neutered". In those days the friendly farmer would do it. I held the wriggling and frightened kitten in a sack, and Reg Court did the necessary with his penknife, the same one I think he used to eat his apples. My Uncle Jack Cleverdon found his farm cat had given birth to quite a few kittens. No one wanted them, so he put them in a sack and held it under water until the bubbles stopped!

Uncle Ray Payne of Laurel Farm, Lower Claverham took me in his pony and trap to Yatton market several times in the school holidays. It was a hive of activity.

Page 6: "Life on a Claverham Farm in Wartime" by Allan and Dorothy Young

Cottage Farm was just over the road from Holly Cottage where we lived. My father was in a reserved occupation – he worked for Fry's, the chocolate people, in Nigeria but when home on leave, he helped out as an ARP warden based in the official ARP post at Cottage Farm. One year, after a dangerous sea journey avoiding U-boats, he reached Claverham in the very early hours of the morning. To avoid waking us all up, he went to the ARP post with the duty wardens until it was time to get us up.

Mention is made of the Special Police. Jill Dyers' father, Basil Inglis was one. We have a photo of him in his Police uniform.

I remember the German and Italian POW's. My memory of them is that they were always kindly to children. The Italians would carve the middle of a threepenny bit out to make a small ring to wear.

Page 7: 'Harvest Time in Claverham in 1942' by Ben Crossman. This article reminds me of Harvest time in Gloucestershire.

I was at Stonehouse in a boarding school. To help the war effort we collected nettles (for medicine we were told) and assisted with haymaking. It was hard and hot work, and I discovered why in those

days most fields had a large tree somewhere in them – to rest in the shade and drink cider! It reminds me that a very large tree was thought to be dangerous because it was leaning over a main railway line. A team of young boys hung on to a long rope tied nearly at the top, and as the saws worked through the trunk, we heaved it away from the railway. As it came crashing down, we had to run for safety. That would not be allowed today!

From ‘ *More Yatton Yesterdays*’ No 2-1997 Page 22 “Our Village”-

The Market



Yatton Market

The other Auctioneers on the right hand side were George Nichols Hunt & Co of 59 Broad Street, Bristol (telephone 25630). My friend, Margaret Upcott and myself, Jill Dyer (nee Inglis) both worked at this market in the early 1950's. Our recollection of that time was that all the livestock was sent by train to abattoirs all over the country on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture. Drovers were used to lead the animals to the Station, where there were penning facilities, until the train arrived.

Between 1953-4 and 1957 when we both left, the Auctioneer sold the stock by auction. We seem to recall that it was only Geo. Nichols Hunt & Co who were involved with the livestock. Alonzo Dawes Son and Hoddell dealt primarily with produce, hens etc. Mr Jerrard Hunt was the principal auctioneer of Geo. Nichols

Hunt & Co but in the later years he was assisted by Mr John Brodie. Also on the staff was Eric Claxton whose father was the local policeman. The drovers, three in number, arrived weekly by train from Bristol. We feel that at this stage the Market was held only once a fortnight on a Monday. On the other Monday there was a market at Portbury, opposite the Priory Hotel. This Market closed down in the early sixties and then Yatton was held weekly.

Mr Hunt was Secretary of the annual Yatton Farmers' ball which was held in the Assembly Rooms, Yatton.

(PS. We have tried hard to trace the John Brodie mentioned above, but without success)

Jill Dyer and Margaret Upcott



The Ox Roast at Yatton c1885

An eye witness account was narrated to me by my late Uncle, Jack Scribbins, who used to live in South View Terrace. Jack's wife, Elizabeth and my mother were sisters. Jack was born at Kingston Seymour, c1868. At the time of the Ox Roast, Jack was a young fellow of 17 years.

This is the story he told me:-

The Ox Roast was to be a celebration for the Conservatives who, for the first time, won the Parliamentary seat from the Liberals. Squire Badman of Park Farm donated the ox carcass. The roast took place on that piece of land roughly enclosed by the site of the late Yatton Motors. In those days most of the land there up to the railway embankment was meadow. On the eve of the event, the roast was underway and it was found necessary to secure the carcass to the spit more securely. Trace chains were borrowed from nearby Barberry Farm. A photograph exists

which clearly establishes these chains around the ox.

On the day things were going well, tables, chairs, cutlery etc. were in position – and then all hell broke loose.

The miners in the Radstock area who were fiercely loyal to the Liberal cause decided on disruptive action. They descended 'en masse' on Yatton via GWR rail. When the train was pulling in to Yatton Station they poured out of the carriages before reaching the platform, and on scaling the embankment they came face to face with their adversaries. Fists began

to fly and everything was overturned and trodden into the ground, and this included the ox. Jack remarked “No one had a taste of that” This was not the end of the story. Fighting continued for some considerable time

afterwards in the length of the High Street up to the ‘Prince of Orange’. It really was an ugly day for Yatton.

Mark Martin

Footnote Jack died c1963 – believed then to be 95 years of age.

Editors Note This is another personal recollection of the events described in
Yatton Yesterday No 1, page 19



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