
MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

NUMBER 6



PUBLISHED BY
YATTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

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Cover picture of Hangstones Pavilion, Yatton,
meeting place of Yatton Parish Council.

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Editorial

I am pleased to present our latest offering *More Yatton Yesterdays No. 6*, which is the Society's twentieth publication.

We wish to thank our supporters who sell our books so willingly – Clive at Yatton News, Nicola at Yatton Post Office, Helen and Lin at the Corner Shop, Richard at Claverham Post Office and Jean in the Precinct. Their support enabled us to achieve a sell-out with *More Yatton Yesterdays No 5*.

This latest book has a mix of historical articles and memories from many residents covering all the community of Cleeve, Claverham and Yatton. We thank all the contributors for their articles and we hope their efforts will encourage others to put pen to paper.

Finally my thanks go to all the Committee for their efforts in the past twelve months and especially to Tony Coe who stood down as President this year. Tony has been Chairman and subsequently President for almost twenty years – thank you Tony for all your efforts and hard work.

Brian Bradbury

President and Editor of *More Yatton Yesterdays*

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YATTON PARISH COUNCIL

A Short History

The first chairman of the Parish Council, Rev. W. Arnold, took office in January 1895. A hundred years later his name was given to the road leading to the major new development at the north end of the village. The farming community was always strongly represented among the many councillors who have served the parish of Yatton and Claverham. In particular, the Crossman family have served a total of over a hundred years since 1897, and still have a member of the family on the Council at the present time. The longest serving member was Mr. Tom Burdge of Grange Farm who was a councillor from 1904 to 1947.

From the Council minute books :-

In 1895 it was proposed that a precept of £40 should be levied to cover general expenses and lighting. In 1901 a gas company tender for street lighting described the lamps as "15 candle power" gas. The cost would be 40 shillings per lamp per annum. This was later amended, after negotiation, to an offer of seven months at thirty shillings (£1.50) or eight months at thirty five shillings (£1.75).

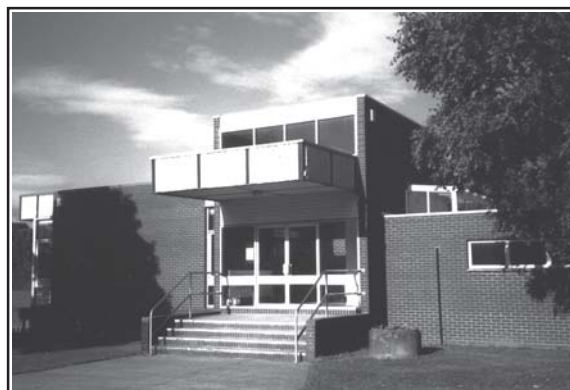
In 1913 it was reported that the Lighting Ratepayers Committee was unanimously desirous of lighting the streets by incandescent light, but felt that the additional cost for this [2s.6d. {12½p} per lamp, 41 lamps at £5.2s.6d. (£5.12½p) per annum] was ridiculously high. It was proposed

that a precept of £80 should be levied to cover the full cost of street lighting that year.

In 1922 lighting arrangements were made for the winter period only (October to March). The lamplighter was instructed not to light any of the lamps on the three moonlight nights of the month!

In 1903 it was considered that a scheme proposed by Bristol Waterworks Co. to supply water to Yatton was too expensive. It was decided that the District Council be advised that the Parish of Yatton possessed an ample supply of good spring water which was easily accessible by well sinking over the whole parish.

It was decided in 1912 that the clerk should write to the Lord of the Manor (who was he?) informing him that complaints had been received about the state of the Pound. This apparently



referred to an area of land at Top Scaur. Part of this land was purchased in 1922 (from voluntary subscriptions) and the parish war memorial was erected on the site.

In 1912 it was decided that a volunteer fire brigade should be formed. The vicar, the Rev. Hayes Robinson, was asked to act as captain (pro.tem.) and kindly consented. At a later date the fire brigade was insured at a cost of £3. It was recorded in 1915 that the brigade had donated a sum of £1.16s.0d. (£1.80p) to a fund to provide helmets, which were considered necessary!

In 1916 the Council considered the best means of giving warning of the approach of enemy aircraft, and it was decided that arrangements be made for the printing and distribution of leaflets advising inhabitants of steps to be taken during air raids. It was also recorded that the Claverham Band, despite having four members away on active service, had raised the sum of £15.2s.9d. (£15.13p) for the Bristol branch of the Red Cross by playing Christmas carols around the parish.

At a meeting on 20th November 1918 the announcement was made that the Armistice had been signed, and the National Anthem was sung by all present.

In 1919, in negotiation with the District Council, the question was raised of

dust nuisance to pedestrians and householders caused by the large amount of vehicular traffic. It was stated that the nuisance should be abated without delay by tar spraying the High Street. It was reported in 1921 that the cost of an extra man on the cesspit cart would be 3s. (15p.) an hour, for an eight hour day.

It is recorded that in 1937 it was resolved that the G.W.R. should be asked to issue return tickets from Yatton to Weston at nine pence (4p) instead of one shilling (5p) on two days each week, including Saturdays.

The council records also show details of payments made from the funds of charitable organisations set up by various local benefactors. A typical entry in March 1940 records that the trustees of Stanfast's charity decided to distribute 77 loaves of bread among 48 people living in Yatton, Claverham and Cleeve at a cost of £1.5s.8d. [4d. (2p) per loaf]. In the same year another charity made donations of £3 to the B.R.I., Weston Hospital and Yatton Nursing Association.

NOTE:

A more comprehensive history of the Parish Council was compiled in 1994 by a former vice-chairman, the late H.J.Vincent.

Vivian Wathen



PARISH EVENTS DURING THE 1939-45 WAR

War Weapons Week took place in June 1941, Warship Week in February 1942. During the war, weeks were set aside each year for fund raising events, during which enormous efforts were made by villages and towns to raise money for armaments and equipment for each of the armed forces. There was a great deal of rivalry between adjacent villages to raise the most money. Certificates were received in April 1944 relating to the parish's achievements in Warship Week and Wings for Victory week. In December 1944 a Salute the Soldier Week was held.

The most notable events were the visit of H. M. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on February 7th and 8th 1940, and the Wings for Victory Week in June 1943.

In the course of their royal visits the King and Queen made Yatton their centre for touring this part of England. The royal train was stationed on the Cheddar Branch siding on the evening of the 7th and the morning of the 8th June. The Queen had expressed a wish to meet the children of Yatton and they

were all present on the platform when the royal train returned from Bristol. Members of the Parish Council present were Messrs. Burdge, Head, M H Crossman and B Crossman.

Wings for Victory Week was arranged for June 5th – 12th 1943, with a target of £20,000. The residents of Yatton and the surrounding area actually raised the amazing total of £43,229 to cover the cost of four Spitfires.

Vivian Wathen



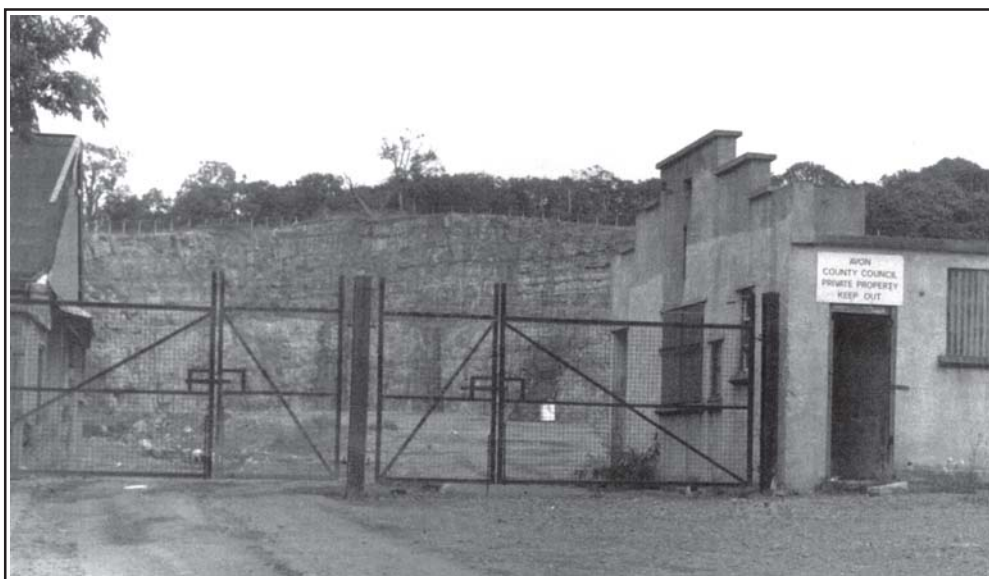
HENLEY QUARRY

Newcomers to Yatton may not realise that the area to the east of the car park at the end of Henley Lane used to be the local landfill site; before that it was a quarry, and before that it was a pretty wooded area.

My family occupied the cottage known as Quarry Gate, Henley Lane – aptly named as we were opposite the quarry gates – for sixty five years. My father, George, worked at the quarry for many years, maintaining the lorries. It was

very handy and I remember he would come in for a mug of cocoa every morning at eleven o'clock. His father also worked there and my sister tells me that he planted the poplar trees opposite the cottages as a screen. The girl who worked in the office came to our house at lunch time to escape the dust and to eat her sandwiches.

Mr Rossiter from Bristol owned the quarry where the workmen quarried the stone and a huge machine crushed



The quarry gates viewed from Quarry Gate cottage, about 1978

it into different sized gravel. Breeze blocks and concrete coal bunkers were also made there. Henley Lane was well used by the yellow and red lorries to ferry the stone out to build local houses, roads, motorways and the sea defences at Kingston Seymour.

The gunpowder used for blasting the rock was stored in a concrete bunker well away from the quarry face, on the right of the car park area. The police kept a close watch on this! Blasting times were 9-30 to 10am, 12 noon to 1-0pm, and 4-0 to 6-0pm; a horn was sounded to warn neighbours and passers-by that an explosion was about to take place and stones may come tumbling out of the sky. They sometimes fell into our garden. It was not exactly a peaceful place to live with all the blasting and the earth shaking. The stone crusher was noisy and everything

was covered with dust. The whole area was quite unsightly.

At the top of the lane, just before Henley Farm and opposite the large tin shed, there used to be a short track leading to a lime kiln. It was used to heat up the limestone. The Bristol Waterworks pumping station right at the top of the hill in the wood, prevented the quarrying from going back too far.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's motorbike scrambling took place on the side of Cadbury Hill and the quarry was used as a car park for the spectators. It was all very exciting and attracted crowds of people!

In the mid 1970's the local Council bought the quarry and used it for a domestic rubbish landfill site, putting in a new road from the quarry to the

near-by main road (B3133) so that Henley Lane was not used. Local people at the time were very dubious about this development but it went like clockwork. I believe there was quite a thriving unofficial re-cycling business going on for a while! After ten years or so the gaping hole in the side of the hill had been filled with all kinds of household rubbish and then landscaped to look very much the way it does today.

There was the odd unexpected blip however like the time we saw smoke rising from the newly filled site, I rang a fireman friend for advice.

He said "I'm in the bath, give me five minutes then ring 999". They then spent all night putting out the fire!

If you go through the cricket field car park you can still see signs of the new road which was only partially removed, the middle section being left.

So what used to be a blot on the landscape is now a very pleasant place to be and if you climb the hill to the top you will be rewarded with extensive views over the village to the moors, the Bristol Channel and Wales beyond.

Mary Baber



BRITISH RAILWAYS STAFF ASSOCIATION

YATTON WOMEN'S SECTION

Yatton Women's Section was formed on the 7th of February 1952. It started with four members, meeting monthly initially at Chessum House, High Street, Yatton, the home of Doris and George Stockham. George was an engine driver on the Yatton – Clevedon line and also the Cheddar Valley line. He was Secretary of the Men's Branch of the Staff Association at Yatton for 20 years until his death.

The Women's Section Officers elected were

Doris Stockham (Secretary),
Betty Tucker (Chairman), and
Hilda Bray (Treasurer).

After a few years the meetings were held in the Assembly Rooms at the Railway

Hotel, which is where the Men's Branch also held their meetings. The Christmas meetings were held at various venues, including Prince of Orange, Railway Hotel, Cadbury Country Club, the Star on the 'Roddy' and several times at Doris and George's home.

There were guest speakers, skittle matches, outings for the children and joint outings with the Men's Branch, making it a family outing, sometimes travelling by train. Refreshments were supplied with Doris and George cutting sandwiches and asking individuals what filling they wanted in them. Lots of cakes were made - rainbow cakes for the children with fruitcakes for the adults – and of course drinks were served.

*Original
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C & M Organ of
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and
Holloway & Son of
Weston super Mare*

Yatton and Claverham
Playing Field Committee
(assisted by Local Organisations)
present

GRAND FETE & SPORTS

on
SATURDAY JULY 12 at 2.30 p.m.

♥ YATTON & CLAVERHAM
PLAYING FIELD
A GRAND

WALIST DRIVE

♣ Rock Road
(entries will be taken on Field)
competitions, etc.
moderate prices.

Match
BY LIONS)
and enemies of last year)
cing
(M.I.S.T.D., M.I.D.M.A., B.B.)
Fun
FREE.
Field.

will be held on
TUESDAY, APRIL 22ND.
in the
CHURCH HALL, YATTON
at 7.30 p.m.

PRIZES

LADIES	£2-10-0	£1-15-0	15/-
GENTS	£2-10-0	£1-15-0	15/-

(in Savings Stamps)

TICKETS 2/-

each may be obtained from Members
of the Playing Field Committee

C. & M. ORGAN, Theatrical Printers, Wrington, Bristol.

The membership went up, more outings were arranged to various places, typically a coach outing using a forty seven seat coach supplied by Mr. Gill from Congresbury went to the Marlborough Hotel at Sidmouth in 1957.

Mrs. Doris Stockham was elected as Area Secretary for the Bristol Area attending Conferences and travelling to London to attend Helping Hand Fund meetings, which raised money for a fund to help people in need. Doris also visited other Sections at Yeovil, Bath, Bristol and Highbridge in her position as Area Secretary and after twenty five years she was presented with a silver salver by Mrs. Forsyth, the wife of the British Railways Staff Association Regional Council Chairman Mr D.B.C. Forsyth. The presentation was made at the British Railways Staff Association Bristol Institute with many members and friends of the Bristol Women's Areas present: she was thanked for past efforts and her continuing involvement with the Section was hoped for many years to come.

The membership was for wives of the Staff Association Men's Branch and Associates and the aim was to help widows and families who had fallen on hard times. Elections were held each year for the positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, the subscription was 6d (2½p) a week and remained at this until the Section closed. Mrs. Dorothy Eeles was elected President, Chairman was Mrs. Dolly Hull, Doris was still Secretary and the Treasurer was Mrs Joy Turnbull but after thirty years the Women's Section had to close – the title of the organisation at closure was British Rail Western

Region Staff Association Women's Section – as the membership had dropped until only eight remained. Joy Turnbull received her silver salver for twenty five years service presented to her on the last meeting night and Doris received a commemorative plaque for her thirty years as Secretary.

Yatton and Claverham Playing Fields Committee assisted by various local organisations held a Grand Fete and Sports Day on Saturday 12th of July 1952 on the playing fields at Rock Road. The teas were organised by Mrs. Eileen Galloway assisted by Mrs. Doris Stockham. It was a very hot day and they were very busy making tea and washing up, but they met many people and enjoyed the day. This event which started at 3pm included sideshows, stalls, competitions, a variety of sports (entries taken on the field), teas, refreshments and ice creams 'all at moderate prices'.

In the evening a Cycle Speedway match was held between Yatton Eagles and Whitby Lions (who won?), open air dancing arranged by Miss Trixie Fido, and also a Grand Confetti Battle. Entry to the field was 6d (2½p), children free. The proceeds were for "your own playing field".

The "Railway women" (members of the British Railways Staff Association Women's Section) had been weighing and bagging 2 ounce bags of confetti for the Confetti Battle in the evening. The bags were sold for 3d a bag (1½p), it was great fun to watch the younger ones having their confetti 'fight' in the evening.

Another event which was organised by the same Committee was a Grand Whist Drive held in the Church Hall, Yatton, on Tuesday April 22nd 1950'ish starting at 7-30 pm. The entry fee was two shillings (10p) and the prizes were £2-10s-0d (£2.50), £1-15s-0d (£1.75) and 15s-0d (75p) for first, second and third, both ladies and gents. However, the prizes were given in National Savings Stamps.

In 1949 a Carnival was organised by the Royal British Legion and decorated floats took part in the parade; below is a photograph of one of the floats with some village personalities dressed as Wimbledon tennis tournament officials and players. We understand that from left to right the participants were Hubert Davey, John Puddy, Dennis Clements, Alan Viney,

Dennis Burton, Ralph Hawkins and Stewart Galloway.

The lorry was loaned by W E Clements, coal merchants, and this vehicle appears again in the other photograph which is another Carnival, date unknown, but probably in the early 1950's. The lady is Mrs Eileen Galloway and the girl second from the left is Ann Galloway (Eileen's daughter). Does anyone know the date and the names of the other girls?

Doris Stockham / Brian Bradbury



*Pictures provided
by
Eileen Galloway*

BEDMINSTER UNION WORKHOUSE

Flax Bourton

At the end of the article on the 1891 Census in 'More Yatton Yesterdays No 5' it was noted that further research was needed to find out if anyone from Yatton was in the workhouse on 5th April, the date on which the Census was compiled.

Unfortunately this information is not available because the Admissions and Discharge books for this workhouse at the Somerset Record Office start in 1904.

By looking at the 1891 Census return for Flax Bourton one could see how many born in Yatton were in the workhouse on 5th April (the return gives place of birth) but they might not necessarily have still been living there when admitted to the workhouse – and of course others living in Yatton could have been born elsewhere. So this line of enquiry is a “non-starter”.

However, the Record Office does hold the Register of Deaths at the

workhouse from 1866 to 1906, and this is interesting as one comes across several well-known Yatton names which have cropped up in previous research. Today, we do not realise how great was the fear of our forebears of “*dying in the workhouse*”. One of the saddest things in this register is the deaths of two small babies, one a day old and one six weeks, both buried at Yatton. One wonders what circumstances led to these mothers giving birth in the workhouse.

The following list gives the ages of those inmates who died there and came from Yatton, with date of death and where buried (in Yatton unless otherwise stated).

Date	Name	Age	Buried at
06.02.1867	Joseph Avery	54	
21.02.1868	? Williams	62	
23.08.1868	Samuel Morgan	80	
20.03.1869	Charles Coleman	66	
24.01.1870	George Yeeles	68	
23.06.1870	John Green	80	
21.08.1870	Charles Howell	51	
07.06.1871	James Hack (or Hook)	51	
06.02.1872	George Earl	78	
05.09.1873	William Parsons	34	
20.04.1874	Fredrick(sic)Radford	58	
16.09.1874	Joseph Collins	39	
05.02.1877	Elizabeth Avery	83	

Date	Name	Age	Buried at
14.12.1879	Robert Coombs	-	
09.05.1882	Samuel Drissell	-	Cleeve
17.09.1883	Charles Ball	37	
22.10.1884	Henry Gallop	58	
08.05.1885	James Harper	75	
17.09.1886	James Stokes	39	
06.05.1887	Alfred Norris	67	
25.12.1887	James Beacham	80	
16.04.1888	George Cabbie	82	
10.04.1889	Samuel Hodges	83	
05.05.1889	Samuel Gooding	-	
27.03.1890	Edwin Jelly	47	
04.01.1891	Edward Duckett	75	
10.03.1893	Esau Needs	50	Bedminster
06.03.1897	John Horsington	80	
21.01.1898	Lillian Matthews	18	Not stated
19.05.1898	William Merrick	72	Cleeve
04.08.1898	Hugh Parsley	52	
06.09.1898	William Hodge	90	
06.02.1900	Edward Savery	84	Cleeve
07.03.1900	Thomas Coles	88	Dundry
10.04.1901	Isaac Gregory	82	
08.05.1902	Jane Neads	83	?
27.05.1902	George Lang	62	R.C. Cemetery, Arno's Vale
19.06.1902	John (?Greer?)	70	
15.03.1903	John Savery	67	
04.10.1903	Robert Hollier	78	
04.03.1904	Thomas Cox	84	
28.02.1905	Alfred Godwin	78	
07.10.1906	James Payne	82	

In 1887 James Beacham died on Christmas Day: in *"A History of Yatton"*, (page 37) other members of the Beacham family are mentioned as living in the Poor House in Yatton and also being in prison.

Marian Barraclough

RECORDING YATTON CHURCHYARD

Although it is thought that a church existed in Yatton in Saxon times, there are no earlier graves than the eighteenth century. Due to weathering and other factors, the inscriptions on the gravestones are slowly becoming unreadable. A member of Yatton Local History Society, Mrs Doris Nicholas, offered to record the inscriptions and, over a number of years, she carried out this work, including the more recent sections of the churchyard. This was an enormous task, for which we owe Doris a great debt of gratitude. Since her death other members of the Society have carried on her work, checking and recording those graves which have been recently uncovered. We have been able to appreciate all the work which Doris had done as we toiled, often in very inclement weather, to record the inscriptions.



Example of the Stonemasons Art (Ref. No. D19a)

Flour was sprinkled over many of the stones to enable us to read the inscriptions, which would otherwise have been indecipherable. The flour, which did not damage the stone, was carefully brushed away and many tiny insects will have been grateful for an unexpected feast. Most of the graves have now been photographed.

An unusual collection of gravestones can be seen in the east part of the churchyard: these are of the eleven

Joles/Joules graves. They are a gypsy family with a tradition of being buried in Yatton. The best known is Isaac Joules who wrote these words for his wife -

*Here lies Merrily Joules
A beauty bright
Who left Isaac Joules
Her hearts delight
1827*

We hope she was also his heart's delight!



Another Example of Memorial Work (Ref. No. D73)

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries rhymes were often included in the inscriptions. A few more rhymes can still be seen but fortunately some of those now lost to us were copied by the Reverend H. Barnard when he was Rector of Yatton and he published them in a book of Somerset Epitaphs. One of the most touching is on a father, Samuel Baber's grave –

*"Fair well my wife & children dear
I am not dead but sleeping here
Therefore mourn not, contented be
Prepare yourselves to follow me
In love we liv'd, in peace we died
Life was desir'd, but God denied*

It will never be known who gave the following awful warning, because only the initials W.D., S.D. & H.D. were given instead of the full names –

*Ye living men this Tomb survey
Where you must quickly dwell
Mark how the awful summons sounds
In every funeral knell*

We are sure that there were many saintly children in Yatton over the years but no one described them on their graves in the way that two parents did in Clifton. There an eight year old boy "spent his playtime in the service of the poor"! and when this unusual boy finally left this earth " he sparkl'd, was exaulted and went to Heaven".

Richard Brookes has recorded on his stone that six members of his family were church wardens of Yatton, from Thomas in 1694 to Richard in 1739; this must be a record. The Burdge family have eleven graves in the churchyard and Irene Burdge has a

beautiful headstone with a panel in relief and carved bands, leaves and flowers on either side.

Another beautifully carved and preserved headstone is near the church cross. The grave is that of John Parsons, who died before 1795; a carved angel is blowing a trumpet underneath knotted drapery, tassels falling on either side. A twenty four year-old wife, Beatrice Harris, is commemorated by an angel, and Florence Elsie Bennett has an angelic maiden strewing flowers above her grave. A coast guard, John Courtney has his profession commemorated by an enormous anchor and rope falling over a large headstone. Nine soldiers are remembered in this churchyard including a number of headstones erected by the Imperial War Graves Commission; one of these is near the path on the west of the church – Private Parsons of the Devon Regiment.

A grave which towers over all the others is one for Bessie Hindmarsh. It is made of either red marble or polished red granite, and is shaped like an enormous grandfather clock surmounted by a tall, draped urn. However, possibly the most illustrious person to be buried in Yatton is Hunt Jenkins who, in 1821, was buried in a low tomb under the church's south wall. He was a member of the Honourable House of Assembly in the Province of Georgia, North America; one wonders about his connection with Yatton.

It was sometimes rather sad for the recorders because of the stories which became apparent from the inscriptions. The Reverend H. Barnard, who collected the rhymes, buried five of his children in the churchyard; three were still children and two were under 30 years old. Not far from where they are buried, beyond the west end of the church, are a collection of children's graves, one of which has a carving which, according to Doris Nicholas, was taken from a school photograph.

In contrast to other churchyards, such as Clifton where there was a large connection with the American trade, only three people are recorded as having worked overseas. One was Hunt Jenkins mentioned above and the other two were the Reverend George Salmon from Demarara and William Wyllie from Kandy, Ceylon; perhaps he was a tea planter.

Thanks to the recording team, anyone wishing to read any of the inscriptions (instead of wandering around the churchyard in the rain!) can now see them in warmth and comfort by looking into the Yatton Local History Society files and in some cases see the photographs.

A wonderful thing has recently occurred for this churchyard – the formation of the Friends of Yatton Churchyard. Trees, plants and shrubs are being given the attention they need, old graves are being uncovered and new trees and wildflowers will be planted.

Mary Campbell



ST MARY'S CHURCH CHOIR, YATTON

There has been a choir at St Mary's church for many years, probably at least two centuries. Little is known about the early days although inspection of the archives held at Taunton would probably throw some light on the matter. Before the church was restored in the 1870s and the west gallery swept away it is probable the choir sang from there. Certainly the organ was at that end of the church and before that there was probably a church band or barrel organ up there with the singers.

The earliest record of the choir I have come across is an item in a book of extracts from an old Bristol newspaper written by "Churchgoer" and describing his visits to various local churches in the mid 19th century. In the record of his trip to Yatton he mentions a choir of school children entering the church led by the schoolmaster but does not say where they went in the church. In the same piece he also describes a notice in the church porch asking the congregation to "remove their pattens" before entering the building!

The earliest items of physical evidence I have seen are two manuscript music part books, one tenor and one bass, immaculately handwritten by a Mrs Barnard. A note in one of the books by her son H C Barnard, a churchwarden in 1922, says they were written by her for the choir between

1875 and 1880, and that she was church organist for many years, probably in the post during the period when the major restoration of the church and the organ took place. There must have been more of these exquisite books and it says a lot for the musical ability of the choirmen in those days that they could follow their own line of music without being able to refer to what everyone else was singing! That sort of expertise was usually only found in professional cathedral choirs.

In the choir library there are many complete sets of the music from the late 1890's onwards, sung at the annual diocesan choral festival in Wells Cathedral. Choirs from all over the diocese descended on the city on a summer Saturday and joined in lots of quite ambitious music making, all under the baton of the cathedral organist and with his choir deigning to attend and perform the more difficult bits in a solo spot. These festivals still happen today although the Yatton choir seems to have stopped going in the 1960s at about the time organist "Bert" Emery died. We have not resumed the practice if only for the reason that summer Saturdays usually means weddings at which the choir is required to sing. Area festivals and practices were and still are held before the great day in Wells and in former times the Yatton choir seems to have donned the cathedral choir's mantle at some of these local events, as indicated

in a 1930s note found in one of the service books. Many of the copies have pencilled notes and remarks in them written by the singers of those days and a copy of the 1899 festival book is a particular gem as someone has gone through it with a fine toothcomb making amendments and alterations in pen and ink. No ball pens in those days!! It also contains a prayer for choristers which is still said every Friday evening after the St Mary's choir practice.

An old choirman, the late Harry Whitting, once told me a nice story about Canon Davis, the cathedral organist in the 1920s, remonstrating with the North Somerset men who insisted on singing "Lord" with an "a" instead of an "o" in the anthem "Rejoice in the Lord always!".

For many years the Yatton church choir was a male-only group of men and boys, the latter sometimes graduating to the adult section when their voices broke or taking some other role such as serving at the altar or pumping the organ. However during the 1930s some ladies were recruited but were not allowed to sit in the choir stalls, perhaps because there was no room for them, although I suspect deeper motives were involved.

The all male tradition carried on until the 1980s, when 24 boys and 12 men were on the books but for a variety of reasons, not peculiar only to Yatton, the supply of boys gradually dried up

until ladies were welcomed into the ranks in order to maintain the Yatton tradition of a choir leading the worship Sunday by Sunday during an era when the idea of a robed choir was under attack – as is evidenced from what has happened to other church choirs not too far away from here. That threat has now gone and the choir has experienced something of a renaissance with boys and girls back in its ranks, ex-trebles singing in the adult male section, pressure on places in the choir stalls and not enough robes to meet maximum demand.

Much more research needs to be carried out into the history of church music-making in Yatton. For instance it would be nice to be able to compile a list of organists, choirmasters, choristers etc. We already know that there have been only three organists in the past 78 years and two choirmasters since the separate post was established in the late 1960s. And more recently one of the choirmen has compiled a list of choristers from 1981 up to the present day. This indicates that the current choir has 31 members, comprising 10 juniors, 11 lady sopranos and contraltos, and 10 men. Also he has found that 70 boys have sung in the choir since 1981 (not all at the same time!) including 18 pairs of brothers and some father and son pairings, a tradition that seems to have re-started recently as there are now three sibling combinations plus one mother and daughter and a mother and two children trio.

David Holmes



BICKLEY – A HOUSE IN CLEEVE

Bickley is situated between Rhodyate Hill and the edge of Kingswood. The name Bickley or Bickeley means Bick's Clearing so it is possible that a Saxon called Bick cleared an area of woodland either for cultivation or to build a house there. Excavations by the Bristol Archaeological Research Group in the 1980s discovered the remains of a small dwelling in the orchard with a cultivated area where possibly beans were grown; pottery found here dated the site to c.1100 AD.

The area known as Bickley had probably been in the Court de Wick, Claverham estate since the 12th century, when the first mansion house was built, but the first mention of the word "Bickley" is in a deed of 1573 "a wood called Kyngswood otherwyse called Bickeley Wood". After that date there were frequent references to the "Bickley fields". The little wood behind the present day house was once joined to Kingswood via the present day orchard but quarrying at an unknown date had cut the little wood off. The early maps show a track running from the present A370 through Bickley stone quarry to another one in Kingswood. The iron mines in Kingswood had been mined since medieval times and possibly before then.

The house which is now called Bickey was built before 1841 when a deed stated that there is "a messuage or tenement with stable, coach house and other erections called Bickley Cottage then lately built by the said Stephen Cox on the said parcel piece or parcel of woodland called the coppice or on part thereof". In 1841 The Reverend John



Bickley c. 1927

Photo. Peter Clarke

Betts (36), his wife Ann (38), their daughter Annie (3) together with three farm servants, Hannah Jeffries (46), Mary Stanfield (22) and Sarah Badman (14) were all living at Bickley. Ann was the daughter of Stephen Cox, who had built the Georgian house on the site of the ruins of Court de Wick, so it is presumed that Stephen built Bickley for his son-in-law and daughter. The staircase seems to be carved by the same carpenter who made the one at Court de Wick but it is not as elaborate.

In 1851 Joseph Metford with his wife, Eliza and daughter, Mary Thomas, were living at Bickley with one farm servant, Sarah Martin. Joseph Metford born in 1771 had an interesting life. He was a Quaker and is buried in their burial ground at Cleeve. At the age of 16 he was apprenticed to a draper and grocer in Taunton and by 1802 he was in partnership with his nephew making hand woven stockings. This business closed by 1814 because by then stockings were being made by machine and Joseph then went into the wine business. As a

Quaker minister he travelled all over the British Isles; he held strong views and approved of the French Revolution. These views caused him to make speeches and write to newspapers as he felt that Quakers should speak out against injustice. Because of these activities he was expelled by the Somerset Quakers and he was not allowed to practice as a minister again. Five of his sons had emigrated to America so he visited that continent and found that "most are so very busy engaged in what appears to be most devout worshipping of mammon". He was shocked by slavery and wrote that he saw a well dressed eight year old white boy being drawn in a sleigh by three nearly naked black boys. After years of stress he came for a short time to Bickley and here, according to his daughter Mary, in this very picturesque spot her dear father and mother found some comparative peace after their previously tossed and troubled life.

The daughter Mary also had unhappiness. Her husband's family accused her of having an affair with one Burgess. Following a family row Mary admitted to being pregnant by him, Burgess fled to America, the child died, her husband deserted her and the Friends disowned her. Poor Mary spent the rest of her life with her parents.

In 1868 the Cox family sold Bickley to Thomas Proctor (who gave his house in Clifton to the City of Bristol as a home for the Lord Mayors of Bristol). Thomas never lived at Bickley but he rented it to various tenants. In 1892 it was sold to the Batt Trustees for £1,690 and at some time towards the end of the nineteenth century a wing was added to the cottage.

The Batt family were descended from Mary Batt, one of thirteen children of a blacksmith whose family had lived in Somerset since the 17th century. She had been housekeeper to Richard Teast, Richard and his brother Sydenham were rich Bristol merchants who may well have dealt in slaves. Richard Teast and Mary Batt had two illegitimate children, Richard and Eleanor and they inherited the Teast fortune. Unfortunately Richard's son, John Child Batt, was a spendthrift, he and his wife Martha had ten children. When Eleanor died in 1877, after what should have been a simple operation on her nose, she left her fortune to John's children in trust and John was only given a weekly allowance. One of the trustees, Ralph Chapman, was charged with embezzling the Trust's money and in 1893 he committed suicide. When the trustees bought Bickley in 1892 for John and Martha Batt and their five younger children there was £16,860 in the Trust. Bickley had cost £1,690 and repairs had to be made but the rest had been embezzled. By 1900 there was no money left, only the value of Bickley remained. John Child Batt took to drink and there are family stories about him. Sometimes he had to be taken home from a pub (Lord Nelson or the Star?) in a wheelbarrow by someone called Hoppy with a wooden leg and when John died they had difficulty in selling his pony as it would only go backwards and forwards between the pub and Bickley. Another story tells of his daughter Rosa, described in the 1897 Kelly's Directory as a dressmaker, who was once locked in her bedroom when an unsuitable suitor arrived. Strangely enough 60 years later a temporary tenant and his daughter had to hide in the wood when the daughter's

estranged husband came calling! Another of John Batt's daughters, Eugene, who was born in 1865 went to Australia to see one of her brothers where she got lost in the bush for five days. She returned to Bickley but she never recovered and died of shock a year later.

The trustees made many alterations to Bickley including making the kitchen into a dining room and the scullery into a kitchen. They also repaired the coach house and stables which later became Bickley Cottage. In 1903 the trustees sold Bickley for £1,880 to William Young who had married the eldest Batt daughter, his descendants and cousins still live in Somerset. Note that the value of the house only increased by £190 in eleven years. The farm was divided up in 1924 and the house, coach house and four fields were sold to Mr and Mrs Bradbury. Mr Bradbury committed suicide so his wife sold the property to Frederic Baring Leman. The latter had been born in India where his father was in the Indian Civil Service. He later served in the 2/3 Madras Regiment and was in the

North-west Frontier of India and in East Africa. He was serving at Trinchnopoly, India when he married his wife whom he had known since he was eighteen but she did not like the heat which made him decide to retire early. They bought Bickley as a small holding in 1926.

Among the objects sold to them with the house were a sow with nine piglets, six cows, three steers and a calf together with 33 Rhode Island red chickens, coops, milking stools, a churn, an iron bed, hip bath and 21 pots of marmalade! Frederic's wife Kathleen was my aunt. They had no children so Bickley was left to my sister and myself in 1961 when he died of grief only fourteen days after his wife's death. The changes they had made to the property were to sell a small triangle of field on the opposite side of Rhodyate Hill which had been cut off when the road was straightened in the 1920s and to buy 20 acres of the woodland when there was a threat that houses would be built there. They also added two rooms to the house and built a tennis court. Since that time small alterations have been made to the

house, the tennis court has been moved and the 20 acres of woodland have become a Site of Special Scientific Interest and administered by English Nature.

Mary Campbell



Bickley in 1991

References:

The Somerset Record Office and information compiled by Suzanne K.R. Clarke and John Clark who is descended from William Young.

TONY DYER'S MEMORIES of Claverham and Cleeve 1940s - 1950s

(with more than a little help from Jill)

The Blitz

Living at Holly Cottage, High Street, Claverham, one evening I stood in the front porch to watch the searchlights over Bristol during a raid. A German bomber was hit and flew, out of control and blazing, across the sky towards Weston and crashed.

The next morning Mum and I cycled down to Hewish to see the wreckage but soldiers stopped us. Whilst there, an RAF Beaufighter flew very low overhead – clearly the crew wanted to see the wreckage. I have read since that several of the Luftwaffe crew were killed, and I have visited their graves in Weston.

The Decoy

On the moors between Claverham and Clevedon a decoy was prepared to attract German raiders to drop their bombs there, not on Bristol. As you drive the Moor Road towards Clevedon, you can still see the bases upon which the anti-aircraft guns were mounted and what remains of an air-raid shelter.

Yatton ARP/ Civil Defence

Mr Williams, the chemist, was in charge. My mother was his secretary for much of the war. She used to type his letters and reports. His office was in the house alongside the shop, nearly opposite the Yatton War Memorial – now the undertakers.

Claverham ARP

The ARP wardens, later Civil Defence, had a headquarters in one of the barns in Young's farm in High Street, almost opposite Holly Cottage.

1st Yatton Scout Group

I was a school holiday member of the Scouts at Yatton. They met in the loft over the stables in a yard – opposite Miss Eyre's shop. We had to climb a wall ladder to get there. I well remember wide games and climbing on the top of Cadbury. We enjoyed a camp in the field, now alongside the motorway just outside Clevedon, Griffin's farm, which still has a circular building, a former windmill, which had been used as a lookout during the war by the Home Guard or ARP.

Cleeve Men's Hockey

We played home matches on the new playing fields, and wore maroon shirts. There were two hockey pitches, as well as the football pitch. The football pitch remains in the same place, the cricket square was bordered by the ladies' pitch on the Lord Nelson side, and the men's on the Church side. On Boxing day each year, the men's and ladies' teams joined to play a mixed game. It was very dangerous! The girls seemed to think our shins were tough!!

My dad, Robert Ernest Dyer, (Bob)

One time chairman of Cleeve Parish Council, chairman of Congresbury Bowls Club.

Cleeve Village Library

My mother, Mary Dyer of "Merrydene" Bishops Road, ran the library in the back room of the Village Hall, after the war, it was open one afternoon each week. In addition, from time to time, she needed to attend when the stock of books was changed; her customers often ordered specific books through her. It was an established village meeting place, where much gossip was exchanged. Eventually the local authority Mobile Library took over, and mum's little job ceased to exist.

I believe she was only a volunteer, I cannot remember the dates, probably from the late 1940's until the mid/late 1950's.

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

I had a busy time. Most of the day I spent helping to run the sports and fancy dress parade on the playing field, and in the evening I was MC at the Social in the Village Hall. My mum spent almost all day at home in the lounge, with the curtains drawn. She had invited some neighbours in to watch the Coronation on the brand new television set Mum and Dad had bought. It was very, very small.

Civil Defence

After leaving school, I joined the Local Civil Defence Corps. Jack Warner, "mine host" at the Lord Nelson was the leader. He held an important post in the local Civil defence during the war, and often recounted his horrific experiences during the blitz in Bristol.

Cleeve Cricket Club

I am very proud to be a founder member and the first club treasurer. My memories have been recorded in the club's history, published on its 50th birthday.

Cleeve Table Tennis Club

We played in the village hall. The two tables were folded up and stored in the vestibule inside the front door. In those days, that was the door facing the gateway into the car park. There were "proper" table tennis lights, in permanent position, slung from the roof. There was a weekly club night, when everyone played everyone else. We had two teams in the Bristol and District League – one men's and one ladies'. Away matches were played in venues all over Bristol, both teams usually did well.

Jill and I played – as did Bob Day, Hilda and Kathleen King, Ron Yeates, Mr Harvey, George and David Shapland, Monica and Donald Stockham, Dorothy Williams and her dad Sid, Sheila Wall, Jock Henderson, and Mary Stevens.

Cleeve Billiards and Snooker Club

You can still see the base of the hut in the Village Hall car park. I believe there were three snooker tables there. My Dad, and other local men spent quite a lot of time there – it always seemed to be full of smoke. I expect everyone smoked in those days.

Cleeve Tennis Club

Jill and I belonged and played in the tournaments and friendly matches. I can remember helping to paint the white lines, and playing on the grass court at Kingston Seymour. Names we remember are: Maurice Inglis, Hilda and Kathleen King, Reg, Enid and Christine Allen, Ken Revell, Denis Marshall, Trevor Challenger, Sheila Pritchard, Mary and Dan Stevens, Don Light, Eileen and John Gittens, Jane Pope, Stanley and Sheila Wall, Jessie and Jim Hill, Monica Stockham, Betty Lewis.

Cleeve Boys Club

Mr Chilcott and dad ran it for a while. It was in the tin hut that used to stand opposite Cleeve Garden Centre. In fact, it was in the corner of the field used by Cleeve Football Club before the present playing field became available. There was a billiard table in one room at the end. Boxing and Darts took place.

I am not sure what the sequence of events was, but by the time I returned from my

National Service in the RAF, it had become a Youth Club.

Cleeve Youth Club

A Mr Macpherson was the leader. He lived in one of the Nissen Huts left at Brockley after the American Army (and German prisoners) had left. I remember meetings at his home. He and his family later moved to Bishops' Mead.

Tony Dyer



RHODYATE SERVICE STATION



Rhodyate Service Station (from an advertising photograph)

I must start this article with a few words of explanation.

Firstly, of all the readers of this piece who have come to live in this area recently, someone is going to say "where is Rhodyate Service station?". The quick answer to this is, that it no longer exists. It was demolished a number of years ago and Warner Close, situated on the A370 main road, occupies the site on the hill going down to Cleeve.

Secondly, the following article is not so much a history of the building but a description, where my memory allows, of what went on from 1940-1951 during my employment there.

The building seems to have been constructed during the early 1930s and was demolished during the early 1990s. I have made many enquiries as to the exact date of construction but no one seems to be alive now who can give this information, therefore I have to rely on my own memory. The building was certainly not in existence when I left Cleeve School in 1930, yet when I started employment there, it had been built and had signs of an extension having been added on to the rear. It was fitted with two exterior sliding doors in the middle of the building, doors which I never saw closed during the eleven years of my employment.

In 1940 the majority of the work carried out was to the fleet of furniture vans, owned by H.H. Reynolds, who had owned the garage and lived in a large house built on a site to the side of it. The Company by now was incorporated into the larger "Bristol Industries" although it remained autonomous until the end. About the time of my employment the company had been given the distributorship for the Guy Motors, a Wolverhampton based commercial vehicle manufacturer, whose products provided the greater part of work of the Company during my employment with them.

The first months of my employment took place during the so-called "phony" war, when little war like activity took place and life and work carried on much as before the war, such as repairing civilian vehicles and some local farmers' cars. The first war-like activity was the arrival of three vehicles, a Guy 15 cwt "Ant" truck, a Leyland half cab coach and a pre-war heavy "Guy" army truck which had to be overhauled for military use. The Guy Ant was fitted with a new engine, gear

box and rear axle. New brakes were also fitted. The Leyland coach had most of the glass removed and steel panels were substituted, complete with round holes for aiming rifles through (shades of "Dads' Army"). The pre-war military truck received a complete engine, clutch and brake overhaul. These overhauls took so long, mainly because of lack of spares, especially for the larger vehicles that this proved to be the only military contract Rhodyate Service Station received! To have awarded further work would have slowed the war down even further!

Whilst these repairs were being carried out we were still keeping the H.H. Reynolds fleet on the road, including roadside breakdowns. This brings to mind a certain occasion when I was instructed to drive to Warminster with a spare wheel and rescue one of the vans which had broken down with punctures. The fact this was late in the afternoon was of no particular worry, so off I went. Upon arrival at the scene of the breakdown I found not only one puncture but three! Having more than one hydraulic jack with me it wasn't too difficult to remove all the rear wheels and rearrange them so that there was at least one inflated wheel all round the vehicle. It was obvious that it was impossible to return to Cleeve like this so the van was driven slowly into Warminster and parked on an open site behind the post office, leaving the inflated wheels in place. The punctured items were loaded on to the breakdown vehicle for the return journey home. The van didn't look all that safe, but the work was the best that could be done with the available jacks and wheels. Just how unsafe it was would be revealed the following day!

For those who have forgotten or maybe never knew, pre-war commercial headlamps were, to coin a popular saying, "dim as a Toc H lamp", further reduced in power by the war time three slot head-lamp masks. As a result the amount of light showing on the road was very little. By now it was getting very dark and under these conditions we set off home. Just outside Warminster coming towards us was a bright green lamp, obviously in the middle of the road. Having no idea what it might be, I pulled over to the near side and took to the grass verge only to have a large tank rattle by a few inches away. The green light was mounted on the turret and the tank showed no other lights of any sort. Having recovered from the near miss, I proceeded to drive home.

Next morning, after fitting three new tyres and tubes, I returned to Warminster and refitted them to the van. Having finished the job, I took a look over the tail board, which was fairly high and I could see very little load inside. Puzzled at this, I asked the driver "what was in the load to have caused three tyres to burst?" "Only lead paint" was the reply, "7½ tons!". This was on a furniture van, the all up weight of which should have been 2½ tons!!! This type of overloading was repeated many times during the war years and speaks volumes for the reliability of the "Guy" chassis.

Alongside the normal garage activities were various types of war work, one of which was the storage and maintenance of a set of Queens Messengers, flying food squad vehicles. These consisted of three or four Bedford 30cwt mobile canteens, one Guy 15cwt water tanker and about 12 assorted ex-civilian motor cycles.

These vehicles were all the gift of various Empire countries, who donated the money to the people of Great Britain to help with emergency feeding following air raids. The convoy arrived in Cleve following use during the heavy air raids on Plymouth. My task, among many others, was to ensure that they were instantly available and able to start day or night. This consisted of keeping the batteries in state of charge and the tyres inflated correctly; in the case of the motor cycles to ensure these would also start. The bikes were pre-war civilian models, most still in their original colours and registrations – B.S.A.s, Nortons, Aerial, Triumph, Panther and Royal Enfield.

Although we didn't know it then, the raids on Plymouth were the last time they were to be used in action. During the years we had them, they were only taken out for practice, when a fleet of lady drivers for the canteens and men for the motor cycles were brought down from Bristol on a weekend to drive them around. Whilst the vans never gave trouble, being all new, the same cannot be said for the motor cycles and usually I had to go out on Monday mornings and collect all the broken down bikes after a weekend practice session. On nearly every occasion it was only a case of starting the engine and riding back to Cleve. The riders seemed to find it impossible to start the B.S.A.s and Nortons when they were hot. What would have happened if they had had to be used in action, I hate to think. All these vehicles were kept under cover and whilst the drivers could get them out of the garage, they found it impossible to put the canteens and water tanker back after use. They just left them outside for someone else to re-garage.

These vehicles were with us for some considerable time but the vans and water tanker were eventually shipped out to Germany, the need there being greater than ours at this time. The motor cycles were taken to what is now the Longton Storage site in Winterstoke Road, W-s-M, (but was then a Ministry of Supply site), dumped and rolled into the ground by a steam roller and covered with earth. I suspect they are there to this day!

Because there was so much space around the garage buildings, Charles Hill & Sons, Amusement Caterers, stored two steam fair ground engines, an Armstrong Sauer diesel power station and a set of Noah's Ark rides throughout the war years. These two engines caused a never to be forgotten chapter in my life at Rhodyate Service Station! The foreman at the time was known for being economical with words and my instructions on this day were "get out there and oil they engines". Upon enquiring as to which bits required oiling, I expected to be told which moving bits to oil and also what oil to use. I was very quickly informed that he wanted the whole engine, from the roof to the bottom of the road wheels to be covered with oil and to use old engine oil and cotton waste.

Those readers who have an interest in vintage transport will know how large a Fairground engine is and what a daunting task these two engines proved to be. The name on one of the engines was "Princess Mary". I have a feeling that it is in preservation somewhere in Kent to this day. The job took two weeks and my hands were white blobs – no protective gloves in those days. Very shortly afterwards the Heal's, father and

two sons, plus other employees made one of their yearly visits to raise steam in the boilers and drive them around the yard. Mr Heal senior enquired who had oiled the engines and then said would I like to have a ride - would I!! This all went well until the foreman came out to see what was going on and upon seeing yours truly driving this somewhat large steam engine, he was not economical with his words or the grammar, the gist of which was to get back to work pronto, if not before!

In case the reader should think that very little work went on, it should be pointed out that routine mechanical maintenance was carried out on H.H. Reynolds' fleet, also any body repairs and painting as was necessary.

By this stage of the war most of the vans were employed by the "Bristol Aeroplane Company" on various duties. One of the most prolific loads was the carrying of "Pegasus" engine manifolds, large 8ft diameter steel plate constructions, around to various R.A.F. maintenance units all over the country. To stop damage these units were held in place by heavy strips of wood, which were nailed to the van sides. After a few months of this treatment the framework would be breaking up and we would have to strip all the panels and replace this light framing with something heavier - supplied by, guess who - Wake and Deans Ltd of Yatton.

There are many more stories which could be told concerning the garage involvement:- Vehicles were damaged during the first raid on Filton, when a large lump of concrete landed on a van roof, penetrating the floor before finishing alongside the driver, who had been unable to get to an air raid shelter and who had dived under his van. A

van tipped up on a mountainside near Aberdare, en route from Glasgow to Cardiff Docks with a load of N.A.F.F.I. cigarettes, following brake failure. Both of these required major body work after recovery.

At the end of the war many ex-government vehicles were purchased, reconditioned and re-bodied where necessary, to be put to peacetime use. Remember, very few civilian trucks had been made and there was a dire shortage of suitable transport.

After leaving Rhodyate Service Station in 1951 for pastures new, it was to be the late 1980's or early 1990's before I had any more contact with that place, when I had taken employment with Holder's of Congresbury, who had purchased the company. During this time the building had been extensively altered at the front and was nothing like the building I had worked in. In the middle 1990's it and all the surrounding buildings were demolished to be replaced by the houses and bungalows which now exist there.

Monty Lane



FIELDS AND THEIR SECRETS

"Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow and plough" – Gerard Manley Hopkins

There is nothing that defines the English landscape more than fields. The word itself comes from the verb "to fell", giving a clue to the origin of these parcels of land. Fields mainly came about as clearings in the wild woods that once covered Britain. Over many, many centuries the hard work of men and women has combined with nature to create the fields we have now.

What We Have Lost

It is only in the last 50 years or so that fields have lost so much of the wildlife and cultural associations that they formerly had. Fields were the place where much recreation took place, from archery practice to dancing. They were where people collected hedgerow fruit, herbs and other raw materials for daily life, couples did their courting and children played. Now fields just provide food for sale, not for free. They are largely unvisited by urban populations. Traditions like blackberrying and mushroom gathering have virtually disappeared in the past 25 years. Artificial fertilisers and weedkillers

have greatly reduced the wildflowers that used to adorn the fields and frequent mowing for silage rather than an annual haycut removes all cover for small mammals and ground-nesting birds like the skylark. It also removes the important winter food of grass and weed seeds which used to sustain a much larger bird population. The successful removal of flies around livestock has led to a decline in insectivorous birds like swallows and swifts. The rhynes, ditches, hedges and walls that enclose fields are often the only suitable wildlife habitat left, and form vital highways or corridors enabling wildlife to move about an increasingly sterile countryside.

Patterns from Pre-history

Just by looking at field patterns on a map, much local history can be deduced. Remains of small Iron Age fields are often found to be on land which was not cultivated in the Middle Ages, giving the lie to the notion that prehistoric peoples were small in number. Many prehistoric fields are probably still in use, according to landscape historian Oliver Rackham, but we cannot tell them apart from fields made by the Anglo-Saxons or medieval people. Straight lines came in after the Middle Ages.

It is tempting to think because there is little arable farming in Yatton now, that it was ever thus. However, this is far from the case. The Roman villa at Wemberham was the house of a wealthy man who probably oversaw many local farms at a time when the climate was warmer and the land drier (partly thanks to their efficient drainage works). A Roman corn-drying kiln has been found on Kenn Moor, on a wet site now considered marginal for corn, and the recent find of a Roman occupation site next to Gangwall suggests that the land here was not always so wet. Even as recently as the Second World War, local farmers were encouraged to dig for victory – or plough for victory - on fields which are now permanent pasture. Long ago each community needed to be much more self-sufficient and each had a mixture of arable, meadow (for hay), woodland and pasture. The pasture for the peasant farmers was often on common land, like the local open moors that existed on all sides of the village before the Enclosure Acts partitioned the moors and put them in the hands of the wealthier landowners to make them more productive.

Urban Clues

Everywhere you look fields are remembered in our urban areas. In Yatton, Elboro was a large field; Hangstones certainly became a field, although its boundaries suggest an earlier use than that. Many of our estates are built within old field boundaries which can be traced on the ground by their remnant hedges. Even modern house builders try to link the present with the agricultural past in names like Meadowlands, Bramley Close and Briar Mead, while other names recall the farms on whose land they were built, like Cadbury Farm Road, Court Avenue, Barberry Farm Road, etc.

These names, however culturally important they are, lack the romance of old field names. These often provide clues to the older history of the land. For a map giving a possible reconstruction of Yatton's fields and giving many field names, see *A History of Yatton* (ISBN 0 9515983 1 7) and the *Parish Surveys of Yatton, Cleeve, East and West Hewish* (ISBN 0 9515983 3 3).

One Field's Secrets

YACWAG (formerly known as Friends of Biddle Street SSSI) voluntarily manages the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk Local Nature Reserve where it forms part of Biddle Street Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – a very important wetland site which forms a triangle bounded by the River Yeo, the mainline railway and the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk. In 1999 North Somerset Council agreed to allow an unused small field which formed part of the landholding purchased from British Rail to be brought into management for nature

conservation. The field is known as Land at Milepost 31, showing its railway history. It is situated 31 miles from the end of the line at Witham, although the milepost is long gone. YACWAG obtained grants from Wessex Water and English Nature and engaged a contractor to open a ditch that was visible on the old maps, and to create a small pond. Because of its proximity to Gangwall the North Somerset archaeologist was informed, but the work coincided with one of those periods of excessively wet weather. The ground was liquid clay and there was little hope of looking for archaeology.

Several weeks later in the dry, Stephen Parker of English Nature came to look at the work that had been carried out. He stooped to pick up some grey fragments of pottery. "These look old" he said.

By a lucky coincidence Jane Allwood of the North Somerset Museum Service was speaking at Congresbury that evening about the Romans in this area. Samples of Congresbury ware from the Venus Street kilns were on display and exactly matched those found at Milepost 31.

As the clay dried out, more and more pottery fragments became visible, of all different colours, as they originated from various commercial Roman potteries all over Southern England and possibly some from the Continent. The vegetation was growing now, and English Nature said that once the plants had grown up it should not be disturbed. For a week or

two Tony and I collected up the bits that protruded from the clay when we noticed them on our evening walks. I rang Dick Broomhead, a local archaeologist who has an interest in the Roman period and said we had found Roman sherds. "How much pottery have you got then?" he said, rather disinterested. "About 50 pieces" I said. His tone changed, "Fifty pieces!!! That sounds like an occupation site. I'll come and have a look tomorrow!".

In partnership with Yatton Local History Society, YACWAG was able to raise a grant to pay for a full archaeological survey (the report of which is available from the Society) and Dick Broomhead's investigation found twelve Roman coins, a brooch pin, more pottery including Samian ware and the corner of a building. Nothing is visible on the ground now and nature has re-colonised the site, with the plants that have appeared also explaining something of the site's more recent history. Bristle club-rush was a new record for the SSSI which would not have come up in the uniform field of grass we disturbed.

Sue Clifford of Common Ground, the conservation charity, wrote "Every place is its own living museum". Fields aren't just nowhere and nothingness. The fields that surround us are holding their secrets, just waiting for us to discover them. Near Gangwall in the tightly grazed fields when the sun is low mysterious squares and lines appear. What secrets do they hold, I wonder?

Faith Moulin

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The History of the Countryside by Oliver Rackham

A History of Yatton – YLHS 1991

Parish Surveys of Yatton, Cleeve, East and West Hewish – YLHS 1997

Postscript

In August 2002, thanks to a Lottery Awards for All grant, YACWAG will be holding a celebration of fields at its nature reserve on Congresbury Moor, when local history, culture and wildlife will all be celebrated and it is hoped a traditional 1940s style haymaking will take place.



Mr TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE

A Tale of Two Villages

Several years ago I was surprised to read in "Yatton Yesterday No 3" that one Tankerville Chamberlayne had once lived in "The Lodge", High Street, Yatton, and had founded the village cricket club. I say surprised because it was not the first time in my life I had encountered the name. Could it be the same man?

During the first six years of our married life (1955-1961) my husband, Ray, and I lived in the parish of Otterbourne in Hampshire and our two older children were born there. Feeling I should get

involved in village activities, I joined the Otterbourne Women's Institute. Its president was a Miss Ethel Chamberlayne who lived in the nearby "big house", Cranbury Park. I learnt that her late father had been Mr Tankerville Chamberlayne – not the sort of name one forgets. I got the impression that he had been a man of some importance.

In last year's *More Yatton Yesterdays* - No.5, I again read about the gentleman in the article "Cricket's Strangest Matches".

It referred to Mr Tankerville Chamberlayne

of The Lodge, Yatton and Cranbury Park, Manchester. It should have read "Winchester" but it confirmed for me that it was indeed the same person. I decided to find out more about him. After all, I had lived and still live within a mile of his two residences for nearly forty six years!



*A Drawing of Cranbury Park
courtesy of Mrs Chamberlayne-Macdonald*

I was not sure if, after all this time, there would still be Chamberlaynes living at Cranbury Park so thought I would contact the Rector of Otterbourne whose predecessor had baptized our children over forty years earlier. I consulted the Crockford's Directory in St. Mary's Church Office for his exact address and was pleased to note that a Mrs Penelope

Chamberlayne-Macdonald was the patron of St. Matthew's, Otterbourne. The Rector's reply confirmed she was still living at Cranbury Park. He also enclosed a potted history of the estate which furnished me with some useful facts about the family's origins. Subsequently Mrs Chamberlayne-Macdonald sent me more personal information. She is Tankerville Chamberlayne's elder son's only child.

Tankerville Chamberlayne was of noble French descent. Count John de Tankerville and his elder brother, Count William had accompanied William the Conqueror when he invaded England in 1066. Their father, Count Raoul de Tankerville was tutor to the Conqueror. After the Conquest, Count William returned to the family estate (Castle de Tancarville, the ruins of which can still be seen near Le Havre) while John remained in England. He was granted extensive lands by William the Conqueror and later became Lord Chamberlain to Henry I. His son Sir Richard de Tankerville was Chamberlain to King Stephen, and it was he who assumed the name



The Lodge, Yatton – in 1983

Chamberlayne. In 1781 his direct descendant, William Chamberlayne was bequeathed Cranbury Park by his friend Thomas Dummer, MP. He was succeeded by his son, also William, in 1799 who lived there until he died in 1829 leaving the estate to his cousin, Thomas Chamberlayne. Thomas's second son, Tankerville was born there in 1840.

Little is known of Tankerville's early years, except he was educated at Eton and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he gained a BA. He joined the Royal Naval Reserve as an honorary lieutenant. His elder brother, who was in the army took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade and survived. Tankerville was very proud of him. However, by 1876 when Thomas Chamberlayne died his brother was also dead and Tankerville succeeded to Cranbury Park. Why, having inherited the estate he was living in Yatton in the 1880's is not known. By then he was newly married to Edith Rachel Ashley and his first two daughters, Edith Amelia and Daisy Agnes were born here.

He left Yatton in 1889 and took his family to Weston Grove near Southampton. His elder son, also named Tankerville, Mrs Chamberlayne-Macdonald's father, was born there in 1890. He was to add another son and two more daughters to his family after that, one of the girls being Ethel, the future W.I. president. He returned to Cranbury Park in 1900.

He was Conservative M.P. for Southampton from 1890 to 1904. I wrote to the Record Office which is in the House of Lords, asking if they could let me have the contents of his maiden speech. Unfortunately verbatim reporting did not commence until 1909, and all they could tell me was that in the 1893 to 1894 session he had raised a question in the House on "the theft of coconuts"! I expect it was an important issue at the time.

We know from his years in Yatton that cricket was one of Tankerville's great interests and it has occurred to me that the name of the public house on Otterbourne Hill "The Cricketers" might have been due to his influence. However, he was also a keen yachtsman. He had inherited his fathers yacht "The Arrow" which had beaten the U.S. entry "The America" in a race round the Isle of Wight for the Queen's Cup in 1852 (the race was later called the America's Cup). Tankerville was to win further cups with "The Arrow" which were presented to him by Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. King Edward and Prince Henry of Battenburg were both frequent visitors to Cranbury Park. Quoting from Mrs Chamberlayne-Macdonald's letter: "He was a keen supporter of local charities and was considered a great benefactor, giving land for schools, playing fields

and churches. He was a keen musician and composed piano music and played the organ regularly in his own home". Mrs Chamberlayne-Macdonald could not supply me with any photographs of Tankerville but informed me he was of medium height, slim and blond. He died in 1924 and is buried in St. Matthew's churchyard, Otterbourne near his wife, eldest daughter (both Edith) and elder son, Tankerville.

I must also mention Tankerville's wife and daughter Ethel. Edith was also philanthropic in her own way. Before the first World War at Christmas time a big shoot was held on the estate. Edith arranged for two rabbits and a pound tin of Mazawattee tea to be delivered to each household in the village.

I remember Miss Ethel Chamberlayne to have been a short, round-faced, kindly lady in her sixties, who was welcoming and tolerant of we younger members who had to bring babies and small children to the afternoon meetings. She was also a benefactor to the village and contributed to the establishment of the new village hall which she opened in November 1958 - our previous W.I. meetings had been held in the Scout Hut. On occasions she would invite members to tea at Cranbury. My friend and I attended one warm summer afternoon with our respective year-old sons. We plonked the babies on the floor, only to be confronted by the housekeeper, a rather fierce Mrs Danvers-type lady, who asked us to please remove the babies as they might wet on the valuable sixteenth century carpet! We scooped up our offending offspring and swept out. Poor woman, she was only doing her job.

In conclusion I would like to thank Mrs Penelope Chamberlayne-Macdonald, The Reverend E.J. Widdows and Mr Stephen Noble, Assistant Archives Officer in the Record Office, House of Lords for their valuable assistance. Without their help

I should have been unable to write this brief account of the life of Mr. Tankerville Chamberlayne, the man with an unusual name, who lived for some years in this village in the nineteenth century and introduced organised cricket to it.

Judy Lovejoy



CHRISTOPHER KENN OF KENN and FLORENCE STALLINGE

The following is a shortened version of an article by Nicholas A Deas; the original with a list of sources is held in the Society's archives and may be seen on application to the Chairman.

Christopher Kenn of Kenn (d.1593), the eldest son of John Kenn of Kenn, was the last of the Kenn family to hold the manor of Kenn. He had taken as his wife Elizabeth Stowell who gave birth to a daughter Martha. This marriage was dissolved in 1554 and he then married Elizabeth Beckwith, the widow of Leonard Beckwith, Knight. She was the daughter of Roger Cholmeley, Knight, who had been appointed J.P. in the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey in 1564. Christopher Kenn and Elizabeth his wife were granted a licence on 23 February 1566 to enter upon the lands of Roger Cholmeley following his death.

After Elizabeth's death Christopher married Florence Stallinge, daughter of Mr. John Stallinge. Their elder daughter Margaret married William Guise (1567-1642) at Kenn church on 2 January 1593. William was the eldest son of John

Guise of Elmore and Brockworth, Gloucestershire. Margaret gave birth to a son William on 10 April 1595 and died shortly afterwards. Her husband, who was knighted in 1619, remarried and had many children by his second wife.

When Christopher Kenn died on 23 January 1593 he knew that his wife Florence was expecting another child and was hoping that it would be a male heir. The child was born in July 1593 and was a second daughter, named Elizabeth, ancestress of the Earls Poulett of Hinton St George. At the time of his death Christopher Kenn owned, in addition to the Manor of Kenn, the manors of Wyke (in Yatton) and Walton-in-Gordano. He and his brother John had bought these two manors in 1574 from Thomas Markham of Nottinghamshire and John had then given up his interest to Christopher.

Thomas Markham's wife Mary Griffin was a great grand-daughter and the heiress of half the lands owned by Richard Newton (d.1500). Christopher

Kenn's great-grandmother Elizabeth Newton, wife of John Kenn (1450 – 1504) was Richard Newton's sister. He was therefore a third cousin of Mary Griffin.

As Christopher Kenn's daughter Margaret was living at the time of his death, and in 1595 gave birth to a male heir, one would have expected half of his lands to have been inherited by the Guise family. In fact all his lands eventually went to his posthumous daughter Elizabeth.

The key to the matter is Christopher Kenn's will of 26 March 1592 in which he left to his wife "the use, profits etc. of all leases estates and chattels of which I am possessed - then to Margaret Kenn, daughter of the said Florence. If they die, then to such persons, which shall happen to be my next heirs male, then living." These words clearly gave Florence complete control of his estates as she was to outlive her daughter Margaret by 25 years. It seems to have been Florence's original intention to let the Guise family have a half share as she came to an agreement with William Guise of Elmore on 20 September 1610 to lease him a moiety of the manor of Yatton and messuages, lands, tenements etc. in Yatton, Wyke, Kenn and elsewhere.

A few months after the death of her husband Christopher Kenn, Florence married Mr. Nicholas Stallinge (probably a cousin) at Kenn church on 14 September 1593. In the will of John Underhaye, a Taunton clothier who died in 1557, Nicholas was named as one of the nine sons of John Stallinge the elder.

Nicholas Stallinge had purchased the manor of Yatton on 9 October 1598 from a group of land speculators headed by

Richard Lewknor, serjeant-at-law, of West Dean, near Chichester. This group of men had purchased a large number of former episcopal manors which the Crown was selling off to finance the cost of the war with Spain.

Nicholas Stallinge appears to have made his career at court, as his mural tablet in Kenn church describes him as "Gentleman Usher, Dayly wayter of our late svrain of famous memory Queen Elizabeth and afterwards to our dread soveraigne Lord Kinge James".

Nicholas Stallinge may have been the "Stallenge" who, with "Gorges", arrived at Chartley Hall, Staffordshire, on 21 September 1586, with pistols at their belts, to take Mary Queen of Scots to Fotheringay Castle after the discovery of the Babington Plot. Sir Thomas Gorges, another Somerset man, born at Wraxall in 1536, was a Gentleman Usher to Queen Elizabeth. The deputation which waited on Mary at Fotheringay on 12 October 1586 included Stallenge (the Usher of Parliament) and Sir Amias Paulet, Mary's former custodian. Mary's trial took place a few days later and her execution was on 8 February 1587. It is interesting to note that Nicholas Stallinge's future stepdaughter Elizabeth Kenn was to marry in 1614 John Poulett (or Paulet), the grandson of Sir Amias.

The marriage of Elizabeth Kenn was the subject of a letter sent by King James I on 20 April 1604 to Nicholas Stallinge. In this letter the King commended Sir Robert Stewart, brother of the Earl of Orkney, as a suitor for the marriage of Nicholas Stallinge's ward Elizabeth Kenn, daughter of the late Christopher Kenn. Elizabeth was then nearly eleven years

old. Nicholas Stallinge was knighted shortly afterwards, perhaps in the hope that he would encourage the proposed match. After Sir Nicholas Stallinge's death on 10 January 1605 his widow

Florence received letters on the matter from Robert Cecil, Viscount Cranborne, Secretary of State to the King, as her reply of 22 April 1605 shows:-

MRS FLORENCE STALLINGE TO VISCOUNT CRANBORNE

"In January last you advised me to enter into due consideration concerning Sir Robert Steward's suit to my husband for a marriage between him and my daughter; and to take such course therein that Sir Robert might speedily know what to trust unto. Your letters together with some from Sir Robert came to my hands in the latter end of February, whereby I understood his purpose to be to come hither himself in person to receive answer in his suit; which accordingly he did about the middle of March. At which coming, respecting his birth and qualities, as also your letters, I endeavoured to give him the best content I could. Notwithstanding I always wished him to take all opportunities for his best fortune elsewhere and not to rely upon marriage to my daughter, considering how unfit it were for him to stay until she were of ripe years, being but a child, and that it was uncertain how she would be affected towards him hereafter. These and other considerations and conferences had, finding my daughter unfit for years and not inclined in affection towards him we departed finally and friendly as I took it. And I much marvel he would again importune you to write at this time, having from the beginning promised not to solicit my daughter until she were marriageable. His then resolution I thought to be a full satisfaction unto your first letters and therefore forbore to trouble you with any further answer in writing, wherein if I have forgotten myself or mistaken the scope of your letters I humbly crave pardon. I have since received other letters from your Lordship, requiring an answer to be made to his Majesty's letter in Sir Robert Steward's behalf about the same matter. His Majesty's letters were directed to my husband and not to myself, and came to his hands long before his death: after receipt of which he attended on his Majesty at Whitehall and there by word of mouth gave answer to him as he informed me. Other answer than that he then gave to those letters I trust his Majesty does not expect, neither can I well make, except you impart unto his Highness the inequality of years between Sir Robert and my daughter, who is but eleven years and odd months of age; with her childish resolution at his being here, that she could not affect him nor any other: although divers other respects both for jointure, present maintenance and future inheritance for posterity, in your discretion (I doubt not) may well beseem a mother to require for her daughter in such a case. All which I confess his Majesty's gracious favour more than countervails and I wish no longer to live than whiles I give content to his Highness, and in all duty satisfy you. So relying upon your relation hereof unto his Highness as occasion shall require I take my leave - From Kenn, 22 April 1605."

The marriage of Elizabeth Kenn was raised again in an undated letter (1608?) to Robert Cecil (now the Earl of Salisbury) from Lettice Countess of Leicester, widow of Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex. She assured Salisbury

of her faithful remembrance and requested his opinion as to a proposed match for Walter Devereux with Lady Stallinge's daughter. This Walter Devereux was her grandson (b.1592), the second son of Queen Elizabeth's

favourite Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, who rebelled against Elizabeth and was executed in 1601.

Elizabeth Kenn eventually married in 1614 a Somerset man John Paulet (or Poulett), son and heir of Sir Anthony Paulet of Hinton St George. John Poulett was created 1st Baron Poulet in 1627 and died in 1649. Elizabeth appears to have taken her father's estates in the manors of Kenn, Wyke and Walton-in-Gordano to her husband at the time of her marriage. This is suggested by the fact that on 16 May 1614, when a new vicar was instituted to Walton-in-Gordano, the patron was Florence Lady Stallinge of Ken, whereas on 13 January 1617 the patron was John Poulet. After her daughter's marriage to John Paulet, Florence Stallinge went to live in Bristol with her servant and friend Anne Dodington, but the manor of Yatton remained in her ownership until her death on 20 August 1620.

Previously, in 1606, Thomas Robertson and Elizabeth his wife had taken proceedings in the Court of Wards against Florence Lady Stallinge, submitting "that Martha was the daughter and heir of Christopher Kenn and Elizabeth Stowell his rightful wife". However the judges decreed "that the suit on the part of the plaintiffs was not maintainable". Elizabeth was Martha's daughter.

The inquisition post mortem following the death of Sir Nicholas Stallinge stated that he had, on 2 April 1603, vested the manor of Yatton in four trustees for the use of Nicholas Stallinge and after his death for the use of his wife Florence. One of the trustees was George Upton who was subsequently made one of the four overseers of the will of Sir Nicholas

Stallinge. George Upton's wife was Frances, daughter and sole heir of John Newton, second son of Sir John Newton (c.1495-1568) of East Harptree. She was therefore a great-granddaughter of Richard Newton's brother Thomas and third cousin of Christopher Kenn.

There is a monument to George Upton in St Mark's Church, Bristol, with an inscription (in Latin) stating that he died on 25 January 1609, on his own birthday, aged 55 years. In his will dated 23 January 1609 he left "to Lady Stallinge my coach, with the furniture – to Mrs Dorington [? Dodington], her gentlewoman, one gold ring with a table diamond set in it".

In the will of Dame Florence Stallinge dated 6 August 1620 she left legacies to the poor of the parishes of Kenn and Yatton, to "the Singinge Men and Queristers of the Colledge of Bristoll" [ie. St Mark's] and to the poor of Frog Lane. Frog Lane is at the bottom of Park Street which suggests that she was living in this area. The will states that there were orchards, gardens, stable and coach-house attached to her dwelling house and early maps of Bristol show that there were houses with large gardens and orchards on the hillside above Frog Lane.

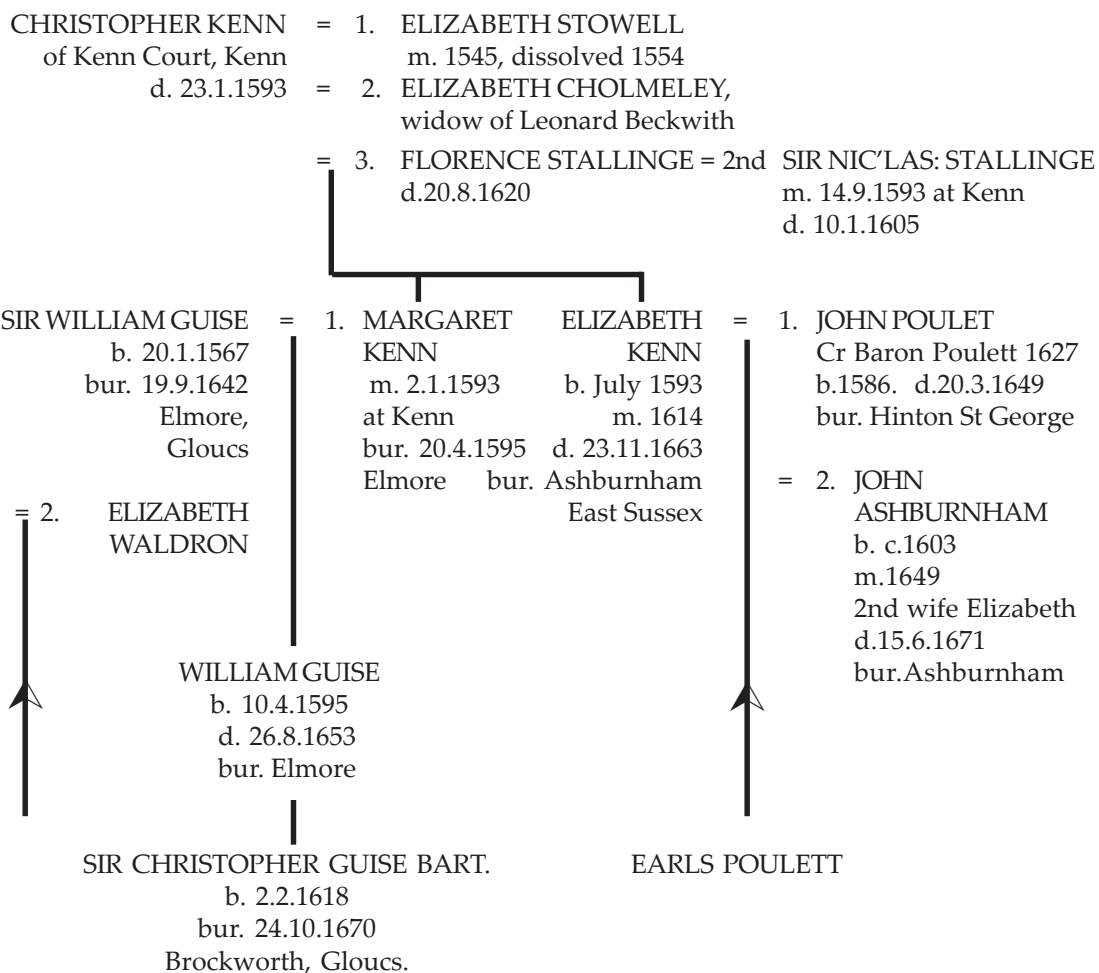
In Florence Stallinge's original will of 6 August 1620 she confirmed a lease made to her grandson William Guise of her manor of Yatton for the term of forty years, with a proviso for the payment to him of £3000. However in a codicil annexed to the will on 10 August it was stated that she had revoked this lease and was confirming another lease to him for the payment of £3000. The terms of the second lease are not stated but it would

appear that they were not as favourable as those of the revoked lease. It is possible that John Paulet made a payment of £4000 to William Guise in return for giving up his right to the lease of the manor of Yatton.

In her will of 6 August 1620 Florence asked to be buried in the church of Kenn near the body of her first husband Christopher. She gave to her servant

Anne Dodington her house in Bristol with most of its contents for her lifetime and after her death they were to go to her grand-daughter Margaret Pawlett. A stone in Kenn church recorded by Collinson in 1791 stated that Mrs. Anne Dodington was buried there on 5 April 1645. In her will made on 20 July 1639 she had asked 'to be buried at Kenn near the body of my dear Ladie and Mistress, the Ladie Stallinge'.

CHRISTOPHER KENN'S FAMILY



Nicholas Deas

FEEDBACK

We always welcome any additions or revisions to articles which have appeared in previous publications :-

More Yatton Yesterdays No. 5

Page 39

The Tannery fire at Court de Wyck.

In the final paragraph the date of the fire at Clevedon Court was 1882 (not 1832)

From Ruth Summerell

Page 28

Yatton Community Service – Finance.

The farmer who leased the premises to Y. C. S. was Mr. Albert Sweet, not Smart. He served on the Parish Council and the former Woodspring District Council, with great effort for many years – his wife was a loyal supporter of the Service, with Jack Crease, and ran the Red Cross Loan Service from the farm.

From Joy Sweet nee Rostron

CLAVERHAM MEETING HOUSE

This meeting house is now once again used by the Society of Friends following its purchase by a new Claverham Trust set up by the Clark family and the completion of major building work in the Spring of 2000. Meetings are now held there by the Society of Friends at 2.30 pm. on the last Sunday of each month.

The brief history prepared by the Friends states that by a deed of gift dated 24th May 1673 Richard Dawson conveyed the half an acre plot to nine local Friends. The name quoted in *Yatton Yesterday No. 2*, page 5, paragraph 2 is Robert Davis. The name in the document of 1673 has obviously been mis-read by someone and one of these names is wrong (which one ?).

There seems to be a mistake in *Yatton Yesterday No. 2*, page 7, paragraph 3, where it says that “He [Jonah Thompson] left in 1735, going in 1762” to establish a school in Dorset.

“1762” seems a long time afterwards and this date is possibly incorrect.

From Nicholas Deas



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