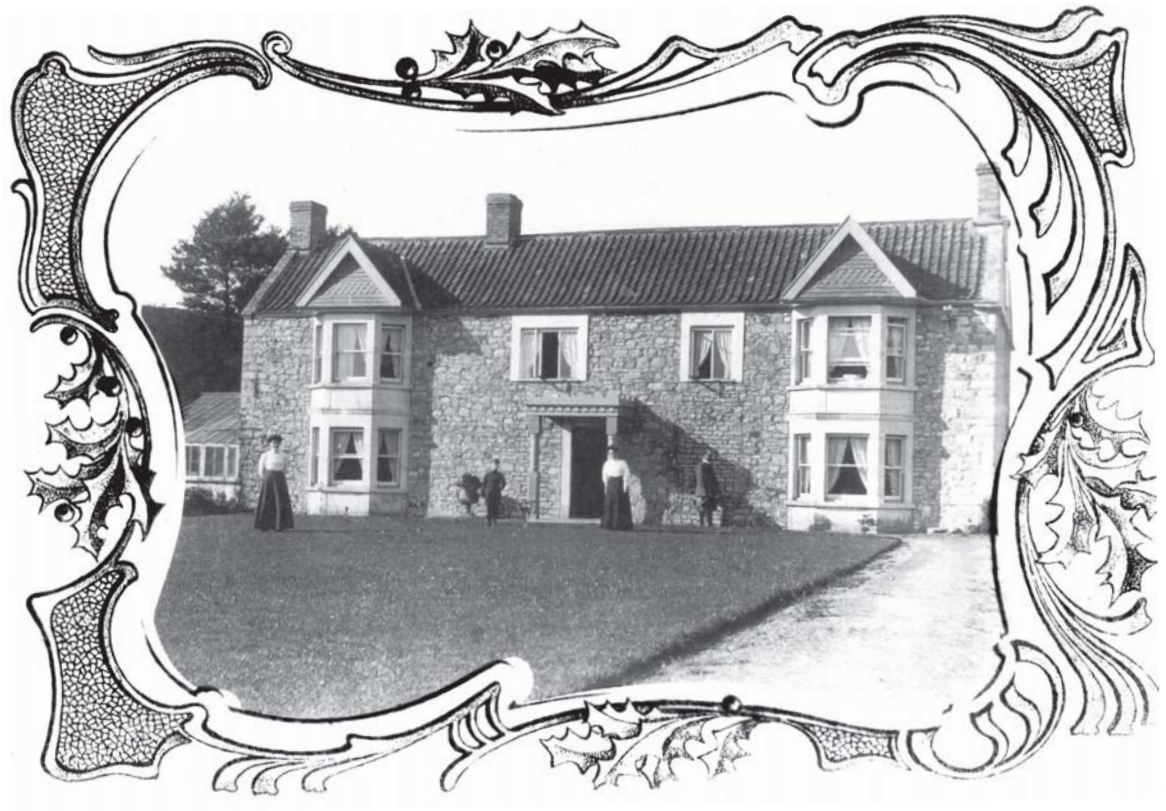
More Yatton Yesterdays

Number 8



Published By
Yatton Local History Society

MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

Cover picture is of the 'The Lawns' which was demolished in 1930 to enable Wake and Dean to extend their furniture factory in Horsecastle. This is a copy of a Christmas card dating from the 1920s sent out by the owners Dick and Fanny Burdge.

Registered Charity No 1019832

ISSN 1365 – 9766

Photoset & Printed by
Woodspring Resource Centre
Weston-super-Mare

Editorial

We are pleased to present the latest in our popular series of history booklets which has as usual, a mix of reminiscences and historical articles; maybe an item will encourage you, the reader, to put pen to paper and provide us with yet another aspect of the history of Yatton. We must thank all of our contributors for their work and for allowing us to publish their articles.

Next year 2007, is the Society's twenty-fifth birthday, we have discovered and recorded much of the village's history, but there is still more out there to find and record and we plan to continue our quest – watch this space!

On a personal note this will be my last issue as Editor of the *'More Yatton Yesterdays'* series and I would like to say thank you to everyone who has been involved in any way with these productions.

I would end by saying thank you to the traders who have sold our books for many years without any charge – they are Yatton News (Clive), Yatton Post Office (Nicola) and Jean of Jean's in the Precinct. Thank you.

Brian Bradbury
President and Editor

Contents

HORSECASTLE CLOSE / CASTLE TERRACE

Some time in 2004 a postcard was found by builders working on a house on the North End Road. It is a photograph taken around 1910 of the area which was renamed Horsecastle Close. The road was closed off at the junction with the North End Road when the houses of Wemberham Crescent were being built. The photograph has awakened the memories of some of the former residents who lived in the Horsecastle area during the 1930s and 1940s. At that time, the odd numbered houses 39 – 25 Horsecastle Close were known as 1 – 8 Castle Terrace (the row of houses shown on the left of the picture). On the opposite side of the road is the former Horsecastle chapel, now numbers 30 and 32 Horsecastle Close. The chapel was built in approximately 1840 for a Bible Christian group and it served as a place of worship until it was sold in 1987, to become a private Infant and Junior school. The new chapel in Horsecastle Farm Road opened for worship in 1988.

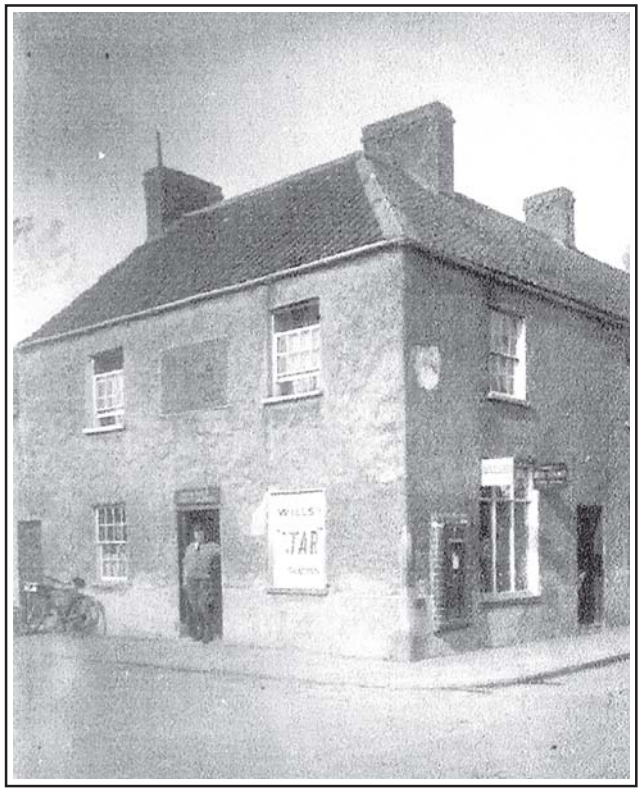
Castle Terrace/ Horsecastle photograph dated 1910

Some older residents of Horsecastle still remember a large house called "The Lawns" which was in the area of Horsecastle Close opposite Home Farm. It had a driveway, tennis court, a rose garden and a small paddock. The house was demolished in the 1930s and most of the land used for an extension to the Wake and Dean furniture factory (which was later renamed Avalon). When the factory closed, the Wemberham Lane road was extended to join up with the North End Road and some of the houses built on the site were given the road names of Woodmill, Avalon Close and The Lawns.

In the war years, the residents of Horsecastle and Wakedean Gardens were served by three shops (two were grocery, the other a grocer's and butchery). Claude Venning ran the grocer's and butchery, now 26A and 28 Horsecastle Close. The grocer's shop at the corner of Horsecastle and the North End Road is now known as Crossways House and 27 North End Road. This shop was run by Louis Pearce and it also dealt in haberdashery items, selling wool, cottons and silk, etc. Les Griffin ran the other grocery shop on the corner of the North End Road and Moor Road (now 20 North End Road). Les had taken over the shop when his father, Austin Griffin, retired and between them they served the people of the Horsecastle area for sixty-six years. The children of Horsecastle were able to buy a small three-cornered bag of sweets for a penny farthing (1 1/4d) or a bag of broken biscuits for one penny at Mr Griffin's shop during the early 1940s.

There was a fine spirit of co-operation between the owners of the two corner shops: if one ordered a large consignment of tins of salmon or bags of flour or any other scarce items, they shared the order between them to supply their customers. A delivery service was provided by both shops, Mr Pearce used a Durant van and Mr Griffin relied mostly on young lads riding Arkwright /Granville type bicycles (with a large basket on the front).

There was a cycle shop just around the corner on the North End Road and a Barclays bank (beside 77 Horsecastle Close). A former resident remembers that in the early 1960s, he travelled every Thursday by taxi, with another bank clerk, from Barclays in Weston to deliver wages to the Yatton branch for the Avalon furniture factory. As there was no barber's shop in Horsecastle, one young lad was sometimes sent to a house in Hillview for a haircut. He was given a short back and sides by the usual method of having a pudding basin placed on his head and the hair trimmed around the edges; the charge was sixpence.



Crossways House in the 1940s

A regular delivery of milk was carried out from two or three of the local farms. This was done by horse and cart with the milk served from a churn by pint and half-pint measures. In addition to the six working farms in Horsecastle, there was also the milk factory where cheese could be purchased. A delivery service was also provided by

the local coal merchants. In 1939/40 the price of coal was 1s 11d (10p) per hundredweight (50kg) and coke 9d (4p). By 1945, the price of coal had gone up to 3s 7d (18p), the current price is around £10.90.

The houses of Castle Terrace only had electricity downstairs in the early 1940s, with tallow candles in use upstairs. The water system had not been piped into the houses until the end of the 1930s. Before that time the eight houses had all drawn their water from a well in the garden of the first house in the terrace. At that time the rent was ten shillings per week. A few months ago, one of the two bedroom houses was refurbished and advertised for rent at £565 per month!

As there were no videos, computers or television, the lads from Horsecastle spent most of their out of school hours in outdoor activities. These varied from climbing trees, jumping ditches and birds' nesting, to an occasional project, building a den in a bush or in a dried up ditch. They regularly roamed over an area extending to Cadbury, Congresbury Station, Kingston Bridge and Mud Lane, Claverham. The three young evacuee brothers, Freddie, Stan and Johnny Nicholls, who were billeted in three different Horsecastle houses, discovered that there was a whole new world away from London, out in the Somerset countryside. For any of the youngsters who wanted to play near home, when football was played in the street, there was very little interruption by passing cars, and it was even considered safe to play a game of conkers. The only motorised vehicles in Yatton were those owned by the traders, the doctor, the farmers and the owner of Titan Ladders.

In those days, there were moorhens' nests in the ditches alongside the Cheddar Valley Line, thrushes and blackbirds' nests in the bushes in Wemberham and tree sparrows in the wooded area near Osmond Bridge. It was also possible to find the nests of skylarks in tufts of grass near Westmead, the nests of jackdaws in hollow trees in an orchard close to Ham Farm, and swallows' nests in the barns at Grange Farm.

Some of the children from Horsecastle spent many happy hours (during the 1940s) in the hay barn at Grange Farm, jumping around on the hay. This was of course in the days before trampolines and bouncy castles were invented. On one occasion, visiting the hay barn, an older boy was climbing in the rafters to investigate a swallow's nest. When he reached it, he realised that the bird had abandoned the nest and that the eggs were addled. He decided to bring this to the attention of the other lads below in the hay by dropping a couple of eggs down on them. This resulted in a direct hit on the top of the head of one of the boys with a rotten swallow's egg. (My mother was not happy when I came home to ask for the smell to be washed from my hair. The addled egg had spoiled my "sixpenny" haircut!)

At that time, the Grange Field (now the site of the houses of Grange Farm Road) was the home ground of a GWR cricket team. On a day when there was no match, some of us were taking turns sliding down off the roof of the cricket pavilion which was situated at the Clevedon end of the ground (next to the milk factory buildings). As this was an accident waiting to happen, when it came to my turn, I landed awkwardly and sprained my ankle. I was carried home by two older lads by the method known in first

aid as the "four-handed seat" (sitting on their crossed hands with an arm around each of their necks). This was known to the children of those days as a "Penny Armchair".

Although the local youngsters had been quite well educated by the staff at the two Yatton schools and were usually fairly well disciplined at home, there always seemed to be some doubt in their minds with regard to the meaning of words like 'private property' and 'trespassing'. This may have been one of the reasons why one former resident of Castle Terrace remembers sitting with another lad in the front room of PC Claxton's house, being asked serious questions about their activities. The local constable lived in Westminster House, one of the two large houses in The Park, with his wife and family of eleven children. PC Claxton was very well respected locally and knew the area well, as he cycled around the village most days during the years from 1939 to 1960.

It was probably easier to maintain law and order in those days, when a 'joint' was a piece of meat you had on Sundays (if the family could afford it) and 'pot' was what it was cooked in. At that time 'coke' was a cheap fuel (collected from the gas-works) and cocaine was actually administered (in very small doses) by the local dentist, to relieve pain during filling treatment or extractions.

Viv Wathen (resident of Castle Terrace / Horsecastle 1934 – 1959)

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WARTIME MEMORIES FROM THE HORSECASTLE AREA

In October 1940 there was a daylight raid when low-flying aircraft dropped a string of eight bombs at the Horsecastle end of Yatton. One bomb landed on the main line and the others near the level crossing, the kennels and the Clevedon line. It was fortunate that none of the bombs hit the gas holder which was situated opposite the level crossing. The nearest crater was a few yards away in the field next to the gasometer. A direct hit would probably have destroyed most of the Horsecastle area.

A former resident of Horsecastle remembers being in the playground of the Undenominational School (the old Durban Trust /new library building) with the rest of her class. She recalls that a bomber flew over so low that she saw the faces of some of the crew and the bomb doors open, before the children were called away to a sheltered area by one of the teachers. One of her classmates also recalls seeing the low-flying enemy aircraft, the marking on the side, the bomb doors open and the bombs starting to fall. She says that she was not frightened because she remembered her father saying that bombs never fall in a straight line, so she knew they would not land in the playground!

One man who had a very lucky escape that day was Stan Gabriel: he was working in one of the fields where a bomb landed. He

was showered with earth and later had to rescue one of his sheep that had been blown into a ditch.

There is an account in a previous Yatton Local History Society publication of another man who had been working in one of the other fields near the Clevedon line on that day. He had left his scythe in the field when the farmer had asked him to do a different job, sorting out cattle for market. When he returned to look for the scythe, it had completely disappeared, as a bomb had dropped on the spot where he would have been working if he had not been called away.

A son of the former local blacksmith recalls the day he was working in a field near Wemberham Lane when he suddenly realised that enemy bombers were overhead (on their way to one of the first daylight raids on Bristol). Then he was surprised to hear a "ping-ping" sound close to the field where he was working. He was even more surprised when he realised that a Spitfire was diving down on the bombers, firing at them, and that the sound he was hearing was being caused by bullets bouncing off the stones on the Wemberham Lane road. In later years he realised that he had come nearer to being killed on that day down Wemberham Lane than he had on the days he spent on the Normandy beaches during the war.

Another local man used to tell the story of a day when planes were in the sky around Yatton for a daylight raid on Bristol. He was working in the local sawmill which was situated in the area of land between Elm Close and St. Mary's church. He had decided that it would be safer if he found somewhere to shelter until the raid was over, when he saw one of the older, more experienced workers running across the yard. He naturally thought that if he followed him, he would probably lead him to a safer place. It left him rather baffled when the other chap started to climb a tree. When he questioned what he was doing, he was told that he just wanted to get a better view of what was happening.

During a similar daylight raid on Bristol, a railway signalman from Horsecastle was on duty in Claverham signal box. While trains in each loop line were being held back in the Yatton area until the raid was over, the engine crews and guards from the stabled trains were in the signal box chatting together. One of the guards went back outside, saying that he did not feel safe in the signal box with glass all around him (at the Yatton West Junction signal box, the windows were all covered with fine blast-proof netting). When the guard reappeared after the raid was over, he said that he had been sheltering under the wagons of the train in the opposite loop. He was very surprised to be told by the signalman that it was actually a munitions train! It was signalled under a headcode designated as Government stores and it was the type of train that carried bombs, torpedoes and cases of ammunition.

In the early 1940s many evacuees from London and Bristol came to be billeted in Yatton. During a lunch time period in May 1941, the family in No. 1 Castle Terrace saw many of the Wake and Dean factory workers, on their way home to dinner, throwing down their bicycles and sheltering under the wall of the Horsecastle chapel opposite. Most of the family decided that it would be safer to look for shelter outside the house, as there was a low-flying enemy aircraft in the vicinity. However, the evacuee lady stated quite loudly that, "she was not leaving her dinner for b****y Hitler!". A few minutes

later, a land mine was dropped near a Kingston farm, leaving a crater 120ft in diameter and 9ft deep, and rattling most of the windows in Horsecastle. This was not enough to stop Mrs Williams finishing her dinner (she had no doubt been in much greater danger before she had decided to leave London to find a safer home for her two little girls).

It is recorded in the previous publication "Yatton at War", that in March 1943, two aircraft flew over Yatton and dropped two petrol tanks, that one fell in a field, the other damaged a house. The house damaged was No. 2 Castle Terrace and the large empty fuel tank made a hole in the roof and in the bedroom ceiling and landed at the top of the garden path. As this happened around lunch time, a perambulator with eighteen-month-old Michael Phillpotts in it had been brought into the house only half-an-hour before from the spot where the fuel tank had crashed to the ground.

During the war years, sad news came to Nos. 3 and 8 Castle Terrace, when the families were notified that William Van Klaveren and John Parsons had died on active service with the Royal Air Force.

An older member of Horsecastle chapel remembered the days when a flight of Tiger Moth bi-planes was sometimes seen in the sky over Yatton. These planes were being used for pilot training. One of the trainee pilots was his brother Tom Burdge who sometimes flew low over his home, Court House Farm (the beautiful thatched farmhouse which stood on the Somerfield precinct site at that time). Later in the war, he flew Mosquito fighter-bombers and attained the rank of Flying Officer. He has lived in Canada for many years but often returned to Yatton to visit his brother Len, and his sister Joan.

Some local residents still remember the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in February 1940. An arrangement had been made for the King and Queen to visit a war weapons factory in the West Country and for the Royal train to be stabled on the Cheddar Valley Branch siding overnight. The Queen had expressed a wish to meet the children of Yatton and on arrival of the train from Bristol, the platform was crowded with the children and their teachers from the two main schools in the village. They had a close-up view of the King in naval uniform and the Queen dressed in royal blue standing in the doorway of the train, as it pulled into the platform before proceeding towards the Cheddar Valley branch line. A former resident of Horsecastle recalls that as an eleven-year-old she went with several friends to a field beside the Cheddar Valley line later in the day in the hope of getting another look at the King and Queen. All she remembers is that they were very close to the Royal train as they stood on the fence beside the line, trying to peer into the windows of the carriage!

The people of Yatton and Claverham were set a high target when from June 5th to June 12th 1943 was declared "Wings for Victory" week. Many events were arranged in an attempt to raise £20,000 to pay for 4 Spitfires. The actual total raised was a staggering £43,229!

Elsewhere in Somerset, the story has been told of the farmer who was trying to get his wife to leave the house to find safety during an air-raid. She had shouted to him, "me teeth, me teeth, I can't find me teeth". His answer was, "never mind thee teeth, it's bombs they'm droppin', not ham sandwiches".

Viv Wathen

LITTLE RIDGE

The timber house in Grassmere Road has aroused considerable interest over the years, because it is unusual both in its construction and design. In history, the pioneers built houses of logs and subsequently sawn timber became common.

"Little Ridge" is an example of an early 20th century colonial style house built entirely from cedar wood, designed and manufactured in Canada to the requirements of the then owner of "The Lindens" [now Linden House]. The purchase was made from a catalogue seen at the forerunner of the Ideal Home Exhibition in London circa 1912.

The shipment was delayed by the First World War and it is believed that it arrived and was erected in 1920. The port markings on the timber are "O.N.O. London" and the onward journey to Yatton can only be surmised, possibly by sea on a coaster to Bristol and then by rail to Yatton. Much of the timber is 30ft long and so not easily handled.

The builder constructed a foundation in engineering bricks which are impervious and the task was to assemble a huge "flat pack" not having had any previous experience. The external appearance would have been quite different in colour from the current one. The timber throughout would have varied, red, pink or white depending on which part of the tree was used. The cladding was coated in a "Rawhide preservative" and part of the rear wall has retained the original coating, the weather has affected other parts.

The site was part of the orchard of Linden House and at the time would have had uninterrupted views of Congresbury and the Mendips. The oblique angle to the track from the High Street was an obvious choice. From 1920 to 1958 it was used as a "garden house" and then became a permanent residence when Grassmere Road was developed.

Cedar wood is very durable and apart from the external walls, was also used for the roof, which has a triple layer of shingle tiles. A question frequently asked is about woodworm; fortunately it is not susceptible according to a pest control company. There is little reason not to believe that the house will be standing for as long as those built in Canada and the USA during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The historic information was given to the present owners by a very elderly Yatton resident about 30 years ago. His recollection of being involved in the construction and the surrounding events had dimmed with age, so obviously if anyone can add to the knowledge, the owners would like to hear about it.

Brian and Judy Sachs.

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A History of Fields in Chapel Lane Claverham

When, in 2002 we were given all the original documents relating to our land either side of Chapel Lane, Claverham, we little realised that they would provide such an interesting insight into local history.

We purchased our first two fields in 1971 from Mr Sidney James (Jim) Lawrence who with his sister, Ivy owned Claverham Post Office. According to the Lawrence family history traced by Tony Dyer, Ivy was the postmistress and Jim was the postman. They retired to the bungalow behind the post office.

The smaller field, on the west side, was long and narrow and measured about an acre. The larger one, on the east side, was square and measured about one and a half acres. Neither field was large, but surprisingly, back in the late 1800s, each was divided into strips and each strip belonged to different owners! At that time the lane was called Oarfield Lane and was described as running from Streamcross to the Rhodyate.

In 1870 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were given permission to sell land belonging to them. There is no documentation regarding the purchase of land in Claverham from them by Samuel Filer - a hay dealer - but on March 9th 1886 it seems he took out a £100 mortgage on two fields. These were Tithe No. 470, described as forming the southern part of an orchard adjoining Oarfield Lane (the remaining portion of the orchard belonging partly to the Bristol Charities and to the Yatton Rectory Manor), and 1/3rd part of Tithe No. 392 measuring 1rod 10poles, described as being the middle portion of a 'close of land called Long Ground…and running between the strips of land belonging to the Rectory Manor of Yatton'.

The 1851 census shows a Samuel Filer aged 45, a hay dealer, lived at 78 Claverham Road.

On Thursday, 26th November 1896 these two fields were put up for auction at the Prince of Orange, the auctioneer being a Mr. W H Shiner of Yatton and they were bought by Thomas Sidney Lawrence of Stream Cross for £36.

Thomas Sidney Lawrence was born in Blagdon in 1857. He married Agnes and the 1881 census gives their address as Claverham Street. His occupation over the years was variously given as shopkeeper, wheelwright, carpenter and builder. Between 1889 and 1915 he was Claverham's sub postmaster.

In the autumn of 1898 Mr Lawrence added to his trench of land by purchasing a 1/3rd part of Tithe No. 473 from a Mrs J Pavey. However there were no deeds for this piece land only a letter confirming the title and indicating that it had previously belonged to Samuel Filer:-

"Cheddar August 16th 1898.

Sir,

I have recived of my son Albert the sum of £10 for a piece if land at Cleaverham, there is no Deed we never had any you just see Samuel Filer he will tell you about it. It is yours after the 29th day September 1898 after I have recived my half years rent.

Yours truly

Mrs. J Pavey."

In 1900 Mr Lawrence, now of Willow Cottage, Claverham (and described as a carpenter) bought for £91 Tithe Nos. 472, 2/3rds part of Tithe No. 392 and 2/3rds part of Tithe No. 473 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who retained the mineral rights. Tithe No. 472 was described as part of an orchard, now pasture, while the 2/3rds of No. 473 were described as part of Oarfield. He died in Claverham on 11th March 1915, leaving all his land to his wife, Agnes.

One of the largest landowners in the area, The Municipal Charities of Bristol, including Trinity Hospital, was given the authority by the Charity Commission to sell their land by public auction. On Thursday, 24th July 1919, 410 acres of farm holdings, pastures and well stocked orchards in Henbury, Almondsbury, Chew Magna, Chew Stoke, Bishop Sutton, Nempnett, Butcombe, Kenn and Yatton came under the hammer. This prestigious sale took place in the Grand Hotel, Broad Street, Bristol, and was conducted by the Yatton auctioneers W H Shiner and Young.

Included in the sale were two unenclosed pieces of arable land called Oar field, Tithe No. 471 and measuring 27 poles. Both pieces were occupied by a Miss M A Hardwick, who was renting quite a lot of land in the Yatton area. Agnes's son Sidney James (Jim) Lawrence bid for them and for the princely sum of £10 he secured the final strip of the two fields.

On 4th May 1933 Agnes sold Jim the rest of her land, finally uniting the two fields which became known as Tithe Nos. 596 and 600 on the O.S. maps.

In 1973 the smaller field became part of the Whitehouse Road development, but the larger field still looks the same. However, things have a habit of turning full circle and in the spring of 2002 we fenced off a narrow strip to the south side of the field for an overweight pony and realised that we had probably followed the same line as the original boundary of Tithe No. 470 !

Ann Gawthorpe

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MACHINE MILKING

Until the early 1930s all dairy cattle were milked by hand. In the winter months they were tied up in the cow houses which were usually long low buildings with a 'lean-to' type of roof. Along the high wall was a 'forestall' which held the 'flaps' of hay for a row of mangers arranged in pairs with a partition between each pair. The cows were tied up with chains around their necks and the chains were fastened to a large ring which slid up or down a vertical post. This allowed them to stand up or lie down and if the chain was not too tight around their necks they could lick themselves all over.

Sometimes when we were milking they would lick us, thinking that we were their calf. Their tongues were like warm, wet sandpaper around your neck!

We had one cow house with sixteen stalls and two smaller houses. It was lovely and warm in winter, milking your way along a row of cows and quite a social event with four or five men all together. I learnt to milk on a dear old strawberry roan shorthorn cow called 'Lucy' who had nice big teats, was an easy milker and was very docile. These days cows are known by numbers which are freeze branded onto their backs.

In the summer milking was done out in the fields. I well remember a beautiful summer's morning and we were all busy milking in the corner of the Coalpit field, nearest to the back of the tannery which was then in Claverham (now Claverham Industries) when a steam whistle that had been fitted at the factory blew at 7.30 am to start work. There was panic on our side of the hedge, the horse in the crank axle cart bolted, the dog sat up and howled and all the cows ran off. We were all left sitting on our one legged stools with a milking pail between our knees! The dog forever afterwards howled when the factory whistle blew. Needless to say the next morning we went to the opposite corner of the field.

My father and I went to the Bath and West Show being held down at Yeovil and we met a Mr George Gascoigne (complete with his pipe) who had made a vacuum milking machine and sold one to a farmer at Wellington in south Somerset. He could see that we were interested and offered to take us down to see how he was getting on with it. The farmer was obviously very pleased with it and now he and his son were able to get as much milk as before and the other two men were able to get on with feeding and cleaning out the other cattle on the farm, with all done by breakfast time.

The outcome was that about three months later a Gascoigne four stall milking bail arrived at our farm. It was mounted on four high cast iron wheels, about 2½ feet tall and 1ft wide, one axle was set on a turntable fitted with shafts for a horse to move it. One horse could move it on the road but you needed two when it was out on the grass fields. We used to move it onto a clean patch of grass every week or ten days. The cows would gather round and come into the stalls quite naturally, in fact some would keep coming in until we erected a chestnut paling fence to make a holding pen for them. There was no electric fencing in those days.

A dear old farmer in the village was very upset when he heard that we were milking our cows with a machine. He came up to the farm, went to my father and said "It ain't right you know, it's going against nature and it's cruelty to animals" and that he would have to report it to the RSPCA. So a few days later an inspector watched me milk the cows, they still kicked a little but they were getting used to it and fortunately he did not condemn milking machines.

When I left school at nearly fourteen the farm had about eighty to a hundred acres; four men and three horses produced about forty to fifty gallons of milk a day with about ten fat cattle and a few fat lambs a year. When I retired the farm had grown to about two hundred and eighty five acres, three men with three tractors and a lot of hydraulic controlled machinery produced about one hundred and fifty to two hundred gallons of milk per day, forty five to fifty fat cattle each year and perhaps fifty fat lambs. Also about one hundred tons of wheat sold off the farm plus another one hundred and fifty tons of beans and barley

for home consumption and one hundred tons of baled hay each year.

We did quite a bit of contract harvesting and corn drying for our neighbours. Tractors with modern implements, weed sprays and modern fungicides made all the difference. I had much help from a Boots agricultural advisor who lived at Sandford; when we met a disease he did not recognise, off went a sample to Nottingham and we knew in a few days if there was an antidote for it. Today you almost need to be a chemist not a farmer. I think I must have spent about four to five thousand pounds a year on chemicals and new sprays just to keep the crops healthy. How things have changed in our lifetime.

Allan Young
(formerly of Cottage Farm, Claverham)

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Claverham Court Farm Barn

Claverham Court Farm, which is a Grade II listed building, was originally the Manor or Court house in Claverham and dates back to the 15th Century, although the Court is probably older than that, perhaps dating back to the 13th Century. The farm is a working unit with sheep rearing being the main occupation, making use of an extensive range of agricultural buildings. The barn is the principal structure and it is the subject of a report based on the survey work carried out by the *Yatton, Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team* during 2004 and 2005. The following is an article based on the report dated 2005 which may interest our readers.

The barn is a large stone built structure, part of the complex range of buildings forming the operation centre of the day-to-day agricultural activities of the farm. It measures 18270mm (60ft) long by 6850mm (22ft 6in) wide by 3600mm (11ft 9in) high from floor level to eaves.

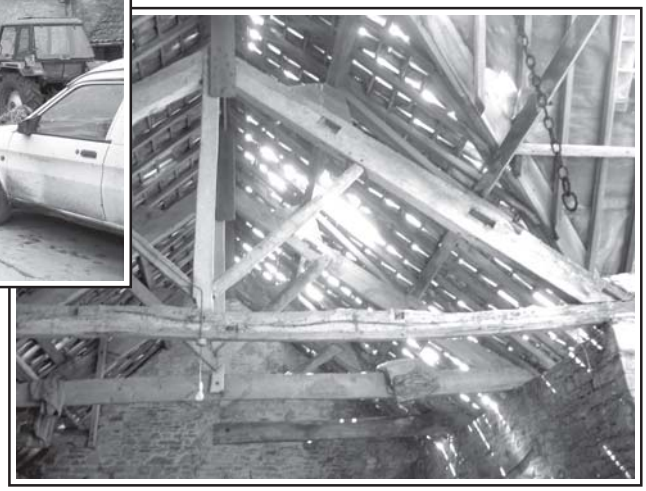
The 60ft length is divided into 6 roof bays varying from 2175mm (7ft) to 4000mm (13ft) in length and the walls are built of coursed rubble with dressed stone quoins. The South end wall predates the side walls of the barn – both East and West walls are constructed with butt joints against the South wall and there is no bonding of the wall junctions.

Both of the side walls have large openings, the East wall having large timber doors fitted to the opening whilst the West wall has side or wing walls constructed with a roof over, added at a later date than the original building to form a covered cart way into the barn. This covered way modified the original door opening opposite the corresponding opening in the East wall. It is probable that the arrangement of the door openings, with their alignment being in an East / West orientation which is the predominant wind direction, enabled the floor area between the doors to be used as a threshing floor. This entailed wheat or corn 'on the stalks' being spread on the floor between the two

open doors and beaten by hand using 'flails': the corn or wheat seeds remained on the floor to be gathered up whilst the 'chaff' (waste) and stalks were blown away by the cross wind. There are also stone 'cheeks' to the sides of the East door opening which acted as protection to the threshing floor. There were probably similar details to the side of the West door but they would have been modified when the wing walls were added. All of the walls show many phases of construction with variations in both stone sizes and mortar mixes.

The barn floor of 'beaten earth' was common in these buildings although the threshing floor between the large door openings was frequently laid with stone slabs; these may have been removed when hand threshing was no longer carried out. Sheep rearing would only require a beaten earth floor.

View of Claverham Court Farm Barn



View of Roof of Barn

Adjacent to the barn are various agricultural buildings including a large covered yard at the South end; part of this area had been used as a cider house before the yard was constructed. At the North end a lean-to building has been recently added with a large access opening formed in the original stone gable wall. This original gable wall has an interesting stone at the apex which appears to be of ecclesiastical origin: this may have come from the demolished chapel which is believed to have existed near the house. Adjoining the South end of the East wall is a range of sheep pens and stables, whilst the East side of the recently built lean-to has a range of storage and other buildings.

The barn roof is of timber construction and is clearly not the original with trusses

comprising large rafters, king posts and queen struts with varying main ties. The principal rafters have tenon slots to accommodate butt purlins, but these are not in line and the main tie to rafter connections vary throughout the roof. It seems that the primary members have been 'imported' from another similar site and modified to suit this building. The purlins in the roof are supported on stools or packings, which have increased the slope of the roof. This may have been carried out when the roof was converted from thatch to the present pantiles, whilst the covered-way roof mentioned above appears to have been added after the 'new' main roof was constructed.

The large doors to the East wall opening have unusual hinges, with pivots included in the bracket design: these hinges are set into sockets in the floor and the lintel beam. These hinges were probably hand made by a skilful local blacksmith.

Dating of the barn is very difficult since it lacks any original roof timbers that could have been used for dendrochronological dating, although there is a possibility that a personnel door lintel set in the South wall and also one in the East wall could provide suitable test pieces at some time in the future.

Accurate dating of the stone work is difficult, but from the experience of the writer there was an upsurge in stone usage for buildings in this area starting in the mid-17th Century and in view of the local importance of this site it is quite possible that the main South wall could have been constructed around that time with the barn being built during the following fifty years (ie 1650 to 1700 approx.).

Drawings of the barn and ancillary buildings have been completed as part of the report, also a photographic survey.

Brian Bradbury

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The Work of the Yatton, Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team (YCCART) 2004-2006

YCCART was formed in spring 2004. We are a community archaeology group, whose members (many from the Yatton Local History Society) regularly meet to 'do archaeology'. We do not (by and large) excavate, however. The work of the group is based around 'Landscape archaeology' in the broadest sense of the word, using the techniques of archaeology (field walking, earthwork survey, geophysical survey and so on), as well as air photographic, historic maps and documentation studies. The purpose is to have local communities investigate the way our parish or area developed: what the historical processes were, what physical remains there are (like old buildings, or the earthworks of prehistoric farms), what happened on our doorsteps and in our fields, and what we can find out about it.

YCCART began, like most community archaeology groups in a small way, initially, through making a measured, drawn and photographic survey of the magnificent stone barn at Claverham Court Farm. As we visited the site more, our curiosity grew about the rest of the farm, and a study of the remainder looking at hedges, earthworks and buildings has continued to date.

We have also worked in the (private) woodlands at the western end of Broadfield Down, above Cleeve, as well as the adjacent fields, finding a 'new' Roman farmstead, several possibly prehistoric stone enclosures (sites of farmsteads of that date) within the woods although we also have alternative ideas about what they might be, of which more later.

Some of the more interesting and important finds made by YCCART have been the following.

2004 Activities

Claverham, Claverham Court Farm ST44426718 *Stone barns and outbuildings*

YCCART carried out a drawn and photographic survey of the stone barn and other buildings on the farm at the invitation of Mr and Mrs Atwell. The buildings showed extensive re-use of roof timbers, which made exact dating of structures problematic, although the barn was provisionally dated as early post-medieval, with one earlier end-wall being part of a structure that ran through the core of the buildings. (Also see the article by Brian Bradbury). The rest of the buildings were photographically surveyed. A number of medieval carved stones, and a group of rescued post-medieval mere stones were also recorded there. Refs. (1)

Claverham, Claverham Court Farm ST44616705 *Site of Claverham village pound*

A lynchet running across the orchard to the south of Claverham Court Farm, along with a mound between it and the road, was photographically recorded, along with a scatter of rubble. From evidence on the 1799 map of Yatton, this represents the physical remains of the village pound. Refs. (1)(2)

Claverham, Claverham Court Farm ST44596679 – ST44036755 *Water-leat to Claverham Common*

This 1000m long artificial water-leat begins in the Claverham Brook, where the stones of a former dam have been cleared out during ditch-cleaning operations, runs through a neck of land to Claverham Court (with a stone sheep wash built into it at ST44596690), and across country to a former ox-house at the latter grid reference, although its original purpose may have been to fill the Claverham duck decoy (see below) (1). Intriguingly, not only does it supply a second sheep wash at this site, but it is depicted on a map of 1754 as running over a little weir (3).

Claverham, Claverham Court Farm ST44456714 *Resistivity survey SW of Claverham Court Farm*

A resistivity survey of these fields, begun in 2004, and currently continuing in the field to the west of the farm, has revealed what are likely to be stone walls and structures close to the farm. One particularly exciting pair of potential walls

at right angles, with N-S and E-W alignments may possibly be part of the lost chapel, and work is continuing to investigate this. A round structure close to the drive leading to the house is in the right place to be part of a former gatehouse (1).

2005 Activities

Cleeve, Bickley Wood ST44966494
Penannular enclosure south of Bickley

The group discovered a previously unrecorded stone walled enclosure 50m across, on the parish boundary in Bickley Wood. The enclosure was overgrown, and a major effort over five months in early 2005 uncovered and surveyed the monument, one of a number of similar but previously unknown structures in the woods at the western end of Broadfield Down. The monument is associated with a group of linear stone banks forming extensive field systems in the woods, of either late prehistoric (or possibly, post-Roman) date (1). Subsequent work found a single note that may have been a reference to this enclosure, in the fieldwork diary of T A Davies, from the mid-1930s (4).

Cleeve, Bickley Wood ST45276505
Penannular enclosure east of Bickley

A second enclosure, with clear bank and external ditch, at the top of a very steep natural slope, was found in winter 2005. The team surveyed this enclosure, also around 50m across. It is integrated into the system of field banks in the wood, had clear remains of two stone roundhouses within it, and a stone walled funnel-shaped structure attached to its western corner that may have functioned for sorting animals. As the above, its date may be late prehistoric, or possibly, post-Roman (1).

Congresbury / Yatton, ST various
Boundary stones in Bickley Wood and King's Wood

All the Congresbury boundary stones in the Cleeve area were photographed and surveyed during 2005. They are a heterogeneous group with similar inscriptions ('No. 15 / Manor of / Congresbury' etc), but very different sizes, presumably being sourced according to their site (1). The opportunity was taken to experiment with recording using PocketPC and digital camera in the field successfully. They date to the very end of the 18th century, since they are not referred to in the perambulation of 1785, but are in that for 1805 (5). A group of six smaller and more recent stones bearing the inscription 'TW' were also found in the area around Woolmers (c. ST457648), and more (ten) have recently been found and recorded along the edge of King's Wood to the south of Goblin Combe, and two more at Bickley (1). The identity of 'TW' is not presently known.

Cleeve, Bickley Wood ST various
Industrial features in Bickley Wood

A number of (largely 19th century) industrial features in Bickley Wood were photographically recorded during 2005 and 2006. A stone quarry by the A370 at ST44896504, with collapsed stone loading bays, lay at the foot of the earthwork of a tramway connecting the road to a second quarry at ST45036495. A third quarry just outside the wood at ST45006485 was probably served by a deep 200m long hollow-way connecting it with Bickley.

These quarries are most likely to have been for construction stone, since there are no lime-kilns in the area. A number of mine-shafts (possibly for iron) are also situated in the wood, many still uncapped. These are the remains of a large 19th century (and potentially earlier) iron mining industry in King's Wood to the north (1).

Yatton, Kenn Moor Gate ST44506761
Stonehurst Cottage

By the kind invitation of the owner, YCCART carried out a photographic survey of this cottage in 2005. It is a now extremely rare example of a simple type of early 19th century dwelling, built as a single open interior, with inserted wooden floor for an upstairs, single fireplace and chimney, and access to the bedroom by ladder. These were once common in the area, but have otherwise been extended out of recognition, or demolished (1) (6).

Cleeve, King's Wood ST45686517
Penannular enclosure S of Goblin Combe Farm

A stone bank and ditch enclosure was discovered and surveyed at this site, just inside the Vincent Trust Nature Reserve at King's Wood. The structure, some 90m across, has the earthworks of two roundhouses within it, and a large rectangular platform, possibly the site of a rectangular wooden hall, on the south-west side of the earthwork. Its date may be late prehistoric, or possibly post-Roman. The structure is bisected by the later footpath through the wood, which has been artificially enlarged, and decorated with large boulders in 'Gothick' style, probably as a phase of landscaping the woods in the 18th century (1) (7).

Cleeve, King's Wood ST45836514
Enclosure west of Cleeve Hall

A stone bank and ditched enclosure, more or less square in shape, and about 50m across, was discovered at this location after reference by David Ridley (Goblin Combe Farm, Cleeve). The site was surveyed by YCCART in spring 2005. It has a number of internal roundhouses, and next to the in turned corner entrance (reached via a hollow way) is a large rectangular platform similar to that in the other enclosure. Its date may be late prehistoric, or possibly post-Roman. The stone banks and ditch in the wood are attached to the enclosure at its south-west corner, where the enclosure is clearly the earlier feature. In its bank to the east, one of the 'TW' stones (see above) has been (re?) set (1).

Cleeve, Bickley Wood ST45286485
Site of 19th century beer-house

The earthwork of this single room cottage at a junction of tracks in Bickley Wood was surveyed during 2005. It stands next to the number 13 Congresbury boundary stone (1). Documentary study by Mary Campbell showed that the inhabitant was a beer seller in the 1851 census, probably serving the mining community of the flourishing iron mining industry of that period.

Claverham, Claverham Court Farm
The old ox-house

A group of buildings in a remote rural location were recorded at this site during 2005. The group consists of a pair of stone buildings (with the remains of an early 19th century roof on one), facing each other across a raised cobbled floor, with slab

floors within the building, of local stones up to 2m long. Much of the floor was excavated during autumn 2005, showing exquisitely fine cobbling. The site is at the end of a leat from Claverham Court Farm, the water from which is carried under the approach track by a fine stone-built gout. The earthworks around the site were also surveyed, revealing a possible small enclosure attached to the buildings. The earthworks of a known cottage site adjacent were recorded, and a geophysical survey confirmed the existence of its remains as stone rubble on the mapped site (1). The buildings are all recorded on the Yatton map of 1821 (8).

Cleeve, Goblin Combe Woods ST 464656 *Walkover survey*

The first stage survey of the archaeology of Goblin Combe woods for the Goblin Combe Environment Centre was carried out in 2005. Three known lime kilns were photographically recorded, and a number of new sites found, including cottage sites at ST46436578 in Cleeve Combe, at ST46276548 in Goblin Combe (both surviving as overgrown earthworks), at ST46126557 just outside the wood where a section of house wall survives in the wall beside the lane, and at ST46126549, where it is now within a private garden. Other features, such as mines and a probable saw-pit at ST46326579, were also found. Further work will be carried out to record many of these sites in detail (1).

References

1 Survey in YCCART archive

2 1799 map of Yatton, lent for copying by Ben Crossman

3 1754 enclosure map of Claverham Common (photocopy provided by Keith Gardner)

4 MS notes in North Somerset Museum (*per* Chris Richards)

5 Pers comm Chris Short

6 Pers comm Mary Campbell

7 David Ridley

8 Somerset Record Office D\P\yat/13/1/2 (1821)

These are only the tip of the iceberg: many other fascinating sites, structures and landscapes have been recorded by YCCART, as well as hedge and boundary surveys, and a number of walks to find new areas of interest. The archive is currently with YCCART members. To consult it, contact Vince Russett at 01275 888523 or

vince.russett@n-somerset.gov.uk

If you would like to join us on our Thursday mornings, contact Vince at the above to see where we are meeting that particular week. You don't need to be experienced in archaeology to take part: if you can walk across a field, and are interested in archaeology, come and have a go!

Vince Russett

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RAF DECOY AT KINGSTON SEYMOUR

I was ten years old when the decoy was constructed – therefore I cannot guarantee that my recollections are correct in every detail.

Initially about two dozen RAF men were billeted in the village with a sergeant in charge and there was also a corporal. The service personnel carried out some, if not all, of the work. A shelter was built of nine-inch brickwork covered by a large mound of earth. After the construction work had been completed many of the men were posted elsewhere; a nucleus with the corporal in charge remained to man the site.

We have no idea how effective the decoy was. It has been said that over a hundred bombs fell on Kingston. They may have been jettisoned when Nazi bombers had our fighters on their tails or perhaps in poor visibility the mouth of the Yeo was taken to be that of the Avon.

Most of the bombs were small incendiary devices; however, there were several big bombs or mines. One made a crater over a hundred feet in diameter very close to the village centre. Another did not explode and it took a bomb disposal unit several weeks to dig it out. One of the council houses stands very close to where that excavation took place.

The decoy was shut down towards the end of the War and the men posted somewhere else until their demobilisation. A few months later Corporal Hanham returned to the village. He was a skilled motor mechanic, having served an apprenticeship with Rolls Royce Bentley. He set up in business repairing bicycles and operating a taxi service for several years.

One remnant of the decoy remains on the Kingston site and there still is the one in Kenn Moor. Sixty years of erosion have removed most of the earth covering the air raid shelters, but most of the brickwork has survived.

Bob Ford

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CHARLES PARSONS TRAVES: Carpenter, Wheelwright and Undertaker

Charles Traves arrived in the Yatton area from his home village of Marston Magna near Yeovil around 1870, to set up his business of carpenter, wheelwright and undertaker.

Some time after his arrival, Charles married Caroline White who was the daughter of Mr and Mrs White of Horsecastle, Yatton. Mr White ran a carrier's business, travelling from Yatton to Bristol daily. He was the first man to run such a business from Yatton.

Charles and Caroline ran their business from a cottage at Kingston Bridge. When he first arrived, Charles had bought trees, had them felled and sawn into planks over a pit in the garden. This was a horrible job for the man who worked in the sawpit because when he pulled the saw down he got all the sawdust in his face!

When Charles built carts and wagons he did this in the lane outside his cottage: he only had a small shed in which to keep his tools and make coffins. When he had to make the latter Charles used wood that he had cut from the trees he had purchased locally. Caroline made all the coffin linings. She kept a cow in a field nearby for milk for her household. Later when she became elderly, she replaced the cow with a goat which she kept on the railway embankment near the cottage.

Charles and Caroline had one son, Willie, who after leaving Kingston Seymour school took an apprenticeship with Joel Knight who was also a carpenter and undertaker. Joel was in addition landlord of the Prince of Orange pub in Yatton. My great uncle, Frank Kingcott, was an apprentice there at the same time as Willie.

After Charles' death in his early sixties, Willie took over the business, at one time employing five men who were all skilled craftsmen.

Willie married his next-door neighbour, Virtue Quick, who was housekeeper to her uncle, farmer Prince, at Lampley Farm. Willie and Virtue had two daughters, Winnie and Mabel. Virtue was a very kind and considerate person, who did everything she could for the people who lived around Kingston Bridge. Many of them were very poor and Virtue kept a supply of sugar, tea and flour so that her neighbours never went without. She sold these groceries to them at one penny per teacupful when they were without. Sadly Virtue died whilst still quite young: Willie made her coffin, but he never got over her death and was never the same man again.

Their eldest daughter, Winnie, left Kingston Bridge and took a job at Clark's in Street, but Mabel stayed at home to look after her father. She took over from her grandmother Caroline in helping to prepare the coffins. Willie died about 50 years ago; in his prime he was a Master Craftsman.

Before about 1950 there was very little clean drinking water in Kingston Seymour, so most of the residents had to travel to Kingston Bridge to get water from Caroline's, and later Mabel's, lovely clean well. These two ladies kept Kingston people supplied with clean water free of charge for many years. I am told the well never ran dry, no matter how many farmers arrived with carts loaded with churns to be filled.

Mabel lived on her own for around forty years after her father's death. She died in January 2005 and was buried in the family grave at Yatton Churchyard, on her 95th birthday.

Postscript

Charles Traves' mother was a Miss Parsons from Charlton Horethorne in South Somerset and was a sister of my great grandmother Elizabeth Naish, the wife of William Naish who was churchwarden at Yatton in the late 1880s.

Ray Naish

MEMORIES of YATTON 1920 – 1945

I was born in Banwell in 1916 and when I was still very young we moved to Yatton because my father worked in Bristol and it was easier for him to travel to work on the train. He had served in the Boer War and he was also called to serve in the Royal Engineers in the Great War.

We moved into No. 9 Elbro Street (now 45 Elborough Avenue) and although my father only paid £50 for the house he later had to stand the cost of having the water and sewerage system laid on. The road name was changed later after more houses were built by the District Council at the top end of the road. At that time only the houses at the High Street end had been built and a large area of land belonged to the Nurseries: this included the area later developed as Elm Close and the top end of Derham Park. In the open area beyond the houses of Elbro Street was a huge wheel and we used to watch as children as a large carthorse attached to a pole walked round and round the wheel to pump water to the nurseries.

When I was a young girl there was a large wooden gate at the top end of the street and a smaller gate that led into a paddock. We spent many happy hours there playing; sometimes we had tea parties with bread and jam or honey, held concerts (with an audience of children) or played rounders with the adults.

As a young girl in the 1920s, I was given two pence a week pocket money, a penny from my mother and a penny from father. In the early part of each year I used to save a penny each week until I had enough money for an Easter egg for sixpence. There was a baker's shop in the High Street run by Mr. Chambers and as the local children paid for their eggs he put them in his window. In the week before Easter, his shop window was usually full of Easter eggs awaiting collection. Each one had the child's name on it written in icing. There was a super size egg for Peggy, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Chambers. I remember that we used to crowd around the window to see if an egg was there with our name on it.

When I was a child, I believed in Father Christmas as I was taken each year to see him at the draper's shop up in the High Street. All the children who came to see Father Christmas were given a present for sixpence, usually a toy or a book. The shop, run by Mrs Collings, was classed as an outfitters and it sold clothes for all ages (it is now the Heritage Estate Agents). Mr Collings was the Sunday School Superintendant and his wife was a Sunday School teacher at the Methodist Church. On the opposite side of the road to the Collings' shop was a Jeweller's run by Mr and Mrs Taylor who also made arrangements for watch repairs. They were also involved with the Methodist Sunday School.

I was taken to Sunday School at the Methodist Church at the age of three and I attended there regularly for over ten years. In addition to the Sunday School class another group of children and young people met in the Methodist Church

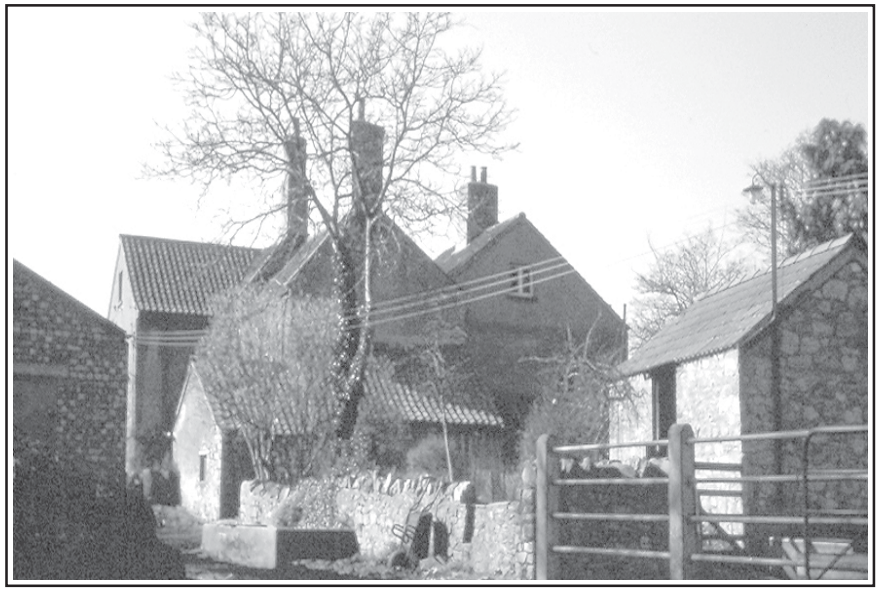
Picture Gallery

1. The Mount c1925 – (demolished in the 1980s)

2. The Mount in 1939

Picture Gallery

3 & 4. Court House Farm – (demolished in the 1960s)



Picture Gallery

5. Court House Farm in the snow

6. Stuckey's Butchers and Chescombe House – (demolished in the 1960s)

Picture Gallery

7 & 8. Carpenter's Shop in 1990s – (demolished in 2000)

Picture Gallery photographs supplied by John Watkins

schoolroom on a weekday evening. The group was run in the name of the Sons of Temperance and as a result of the meetings, when they became teenagers, my brothers each signed a pledge to abstain from alcohol. A picture taken outside the Methodist Church in the mid 1930s shows the group with a shield won in an area competition. The group in the picture includes one of my brothers and my two sisters.

Methodist Church Sunday School 1930s outing with 'Sons of Temperance' group.

During the 1920s I attended the Church Road School with my brothers (three older and three younger) and my two younger sisters. In 1926, during the General Strike, it was lucky that my father was able to support our large family. His job was considered to be important so he borrowed a bicycle from a neighbour and cycled every day to Bristol Bridge (Telephone Avenue). When I left school in 1930 our three-bedroom house was getting overcrowded, so it was decided that some of the boys could use two rooms in a large house at the High Street end of Elbro Street and walk up the hill to come home for meals. I was sent out 'in service' to work for a business family in Clevedon, but for a long spell I was back home to look after the younger children as our mother was ill. It was about that time I used to meet several other girls of my age on Sundays after they had attended church services in the village. We met at Tripp's Sweet Shop in Frost Hill for ice cream and chocolate and usually several lads cycled over from Cleeve to meet us. The old sweet shop is the house on the section of old road

at the Cadbury end of Mendip. It was there that I met Jack Smith, the young man who was later to become my husband.

In 1937 I was working as a nursery maid at Walnut Tree Farm, Cleeve, looking after two children and then I had a short spell as cook for the family. Jack and I were engaged that year and an engagement party was arranged for us in the Sunday School room at the Methodist Church. We married in 1939 and although my father came to the Church he was not very well and died that year, only a few months after his retirement. For some time he had seemed very worried that another war was going to start and that his sons would be called into the Army. When the war came, all six of my brothers joined up to serve in the Army (five of them serving abroad). One of my sisters served in the WRNS for a short time, but came out because of a health problem, and later became a Land Army girl. Unfortunately, one of my older brothers, WaIter Savage, died in Burma in February 1944. His name is recorded on a Rangoon Memorial as one of the soldiers of many races who died in Burma and Assam in the war against Japan.

When we were married we went to live with Jack's grandmother in 41 High Street. As Jack was working in Wake and Dean's factory when the new houses were being built, we were able to move into 28 Wakedean Gardens. In March 1940 my husband was called into the Army to serve in the Field Ambulance Service and was posted to Malta.

I was very nervous during the war when I was in my twenties and my husband was away in the Army. One day in 1940 I remember sitting in the back room at home with my sister, Evelyn, when bombs were dropped in the area around Wemberham.

We heard an aeroplane and several explosions and as we watched, we saw huge clods of earth thrown in the air, the cows running madly around the fields and rails and sleepers raised up in a tangle on the Clevedon railway line, about 100 yards away at the bottom of the garden.

In 1942 it was decided that I should move back to live with my mother in Elbro Street, while an evacuee family moved into our house in Wakedean Gardens. I worked in Wake and Dean's factory until 1945, by then working on the bench as a cabinetmaker.

My husband had served in Malta until 1943 (mainly working as a nursing assistant in Valetta hospital) helping to tend the many people injured in the regular air attacks on the island. After he had been transferred to the Middle East, I was informed that he was a prisoner of war, as he had been on a boat in the Aegean Sea when it was captured by the Germans. When the war ended in 1945 Jack came back home and we were able to return to 28 Wakedean Gardens as the evacuee family had moved back to their own home.

Jack died in 1970. We had two daughters and a grandson and, of the 31 years we were married, we had enjoyed 25 happy years together back home in Yatton after the war.

Doris Smith (nee Savage)

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A TALE of CHILDHOOD in YATTON 1940 – 1946

My arrival in Yatton was on a dull and wet day in December 1940. We came in a furniture van from Hotwells in Bristol, a couple days after our home was damaged in an air raid by incendiary bombs in the previous Sunday night air raid, which also happened to be the last night I slept in a deep air raid shelter. As we were taken to the Wake and Dean estate my mother was moaning she wanted to go back to Bristol, but that was out of the question and she never did go back.

When we entered this house it was brand new: no one had lived in it before. I was told to keep out of the way and go into the garden. I don't remember having a garden before and guess what happened next? A train went past that close to my house the driver waved out to me! I did not know at that time that it was going to Clevedon and also did not know that one day I was going to drive that very same train, but that's another story for later.

Outside in the front was a large green and on it at that time were army lorries, Bren gun carriers, big guns and lots of soldiers, who lived in some of the other houses. There were Yatton people there as well as people from London, Bristol and Liverpool, so this was going to be a great adventure. A couple of days later two of my cousins turned up to live in number 43 for a while, so this was to be a new adventure with new friends to be made and a new school to start at.

I think it would be sensible to describe the walk to the school from the estate, so here goes. When you came out of the estate into the lane to walk up the village you passed several cottages: Brookside was the first on the left and right behind it was a very deep rhyne which in time we all fell in at some stage. The cottage was empty at this time. Over the other side was Rose cottage, the home of Mr and Mrs Moore. It sometimes flooded in the winter. The next cottage was where the blacksmith lived and the little girl who became a lifelong friend. More of her later. Opposite on the other side was the first gas street light and three cottages, the Sweeting family in one and the Cox family in the other. Of the third I don't remember. Then came the factory right up to the bottom of Horsecastle. Just a little way further up the lane there was a railway line which connected the Great Western Railway right up inside the factory. There was some fun to be had and I will tell you more of that later. Then next came two cottages known as the Brow. If you turned right you would go up the railway bridge to Wimrum. So up to the main road that was known as Pearce's corner (Crossways). Here there were two grocer's shops opposite one another. Up the High street, then to the school, which is now the new Library.

Up on the front of the building was a large board with the name of the school, the "Undenominational School", very easy to spell and remember. The headmistress was Miss Stradling and Miss Kingcott and a teacher lived up Rock Road. I don't remember how long I was at that school but the next move was to Church Road

Undenominational School Class photograph dated 1927
Megan Parsons second from left in front row.

Church of England School. The headmaster was Mr M Stone assisted by his wife and other teachers whom I don't recall. Now that was a school where you learnt to make your way in the world and I really do believe that I had a first-class education in a village school. Of course in those days before school dinners we had to go home for dinner and then walk back up the village again for afternoon classes, then at 4pm walk back home again!

In school

The school day started with prayers for our soldiers, airmen and sailors and of course all the grown ups doing their bit, this being a particularly difficult time. Then it was "wacko" time if there were any miscreants for punishment! Generally three strikes on each hand. This was not very often because nobody liked the cane, but that's how it was in those far away days.

The one thing I remember was the lessons all came in a pattern. Monday would start with maths, then perhaps history, then writing and then a break in the playground (it's the car park now). Oh happy days for us, but not for the grown ups - after all there was a war going on! One of the highlights was the gardening in what is now the council burial ground. There we had a shed with the tools in it and I can still smell the oil used to clean the tools with. We also looked after the verge up the church path as far as the main door; nothing is planted there now.

Enough of school for a while - a little of home life now. When I got home in the first winter you must understand it was pitch black dark, no gas lights now - all shut off for the duration. So it was indoors we had to stay, the wireless was listened to like Children's Hour, then the six o'clock BBC news and after that it was read and entertain yourself until bedtime.

Now being the big age of 7 years it was time to get to know the area known as Horsecastle. We never did find a real castle, so a gang of us made our own and it was brilliant in a secret place near the

factory called Wake and Deans. [They were the landlords of our house.] In the timber yard there were supplies of wood to make swords, lances and wooden rifles to shoot the Germans and later we discovered a supply of raisins, currants and dried fruits in boxes. Now that was top secret! That railway line which I mentioned before went right up inside the factory and was uphill and up the top they kept some railway trolleys. Guess what? When we had half a chance we rode the line downhill right across the lane, got off and ran before you got caught. I personally got 'early to bed' punishment several times, with bread and water for supper, but it was fun with no damage done to anything or anyone.

The little girl I mentioned earlier wanted to join in with some of her friends – well why not? They were only girls; and when we played war games, guess who wanted to be the nurses? When the soldiers left the green it became a pirate ship by the stone drain box, and a cricket pitch although a bit bumpy! And when the grass grew a battle ground – oh what fun there was to be had! When the spring came, further afield we went, perfectly safe in those days out across the fields which Yatton was surrounded by and then in the next winter surrounded by water, so then we could get the punt going to the island and our den (admission by password only). How many of the kids know where the island is today?

One of my best memories is of the trolleys we made: some with four wheels, some with six. We would go up Jones' bridge, then go like mad down the other side – quite safe if Mr Burge was not coming towards you with his two big shire horses. Sharp turn left through the hedge down into the pond known as the titty bottle because of its shape. It was also home to many newts and frogs… so one did smell a bit, but then a bath put that right. The year 1941 passed and they were very dark days of the war. We kids could sense it: the food was getting less, although there were plenty of vegetables and in the August blackberries to be picked.

1942 was a black year for the adults because they knew how the war was going, but us kids were being taken care of and we got the best of anything going. If I remember it was the year school dinners started and Mrs Hippsley was the cook. She managed to turn out the good dinners all the time. The blackout was an advantage to us in so much as for the games we could play, like the wallet on the pavement. The trick went like this: the wallet, having black cotton tied around it, was placed on the pavement outside the station on the Weston side. When the people got out of the train into pitch blackness they would grope a little way up the incline where we were waiting and one of them would put their foot on it and then go to pick it up. That's when we would tug it away! They then said they would get us but we were long gone, back later for another go. Happy days!

The year went on towards what was to be a very bleak Christmas. I did not know why that Christmas was to be like that until many years later and was told it was because the ships coming from America were bringing over the war materials for the invasion of France (more of that tale later). So the next year, 1943, came in with as far as I remember a terrible fog and I do remember staying down Sea Mills for a while during the Christmas holiday and watching the army lorries from America going up the Portway road very slowly in that fog.

The next dramatic thing to happen to me was I went very deaf and I had a spell in the General Hospital. Then to top it all I had to live with an auntie in Hotwells, so that meant I had to go back to my old school for a while. I really liked that! It was June before I came back to Yatton and I had to give Mr Stone my schoolwork from Hope Chapel School, which must have been OK because I went back into the class with my friends. By this time American soldiers were up at Brockley in camp: they were good for a bar of chocolate and chewing gum. I believe the ladies did alright for the latest hosiery – nylon stockings!

There was, if I am right, a fete to raise money for the war effort. These fetes were held in the Vicarage ground (Well Lane today). In August Mr Bird made it known he would buy all the blackberries we could pick, so weather permitting we were out every day during the school holidays picking all day. We were given hooked sticks to enable us to reach the difficult ones. About 20lbs we would take to Mr Bird; generally the share out was worth 5 shillings (25p today). On other days we could earn a few pence down on the farm.

Christmas was the best that Mums could do: we had a stocking with an apple, some nuts, some boiled sweets and a bar of chocolate, a spinning top and whip - great fun. This was the year we had a goose to eat…. Yuk, never ever again! Next was the year of changes coming over the horizon. The eleven plus - the exam to decide your place in society! For the ones who failed went to the new Clevedon Secondary school at Highdale Road. It meant going on the train to school. So that was going to be fun. So this year, 1944, was to be a very important one for me and the other kids in more ways than one. This was to be the real ending of the war. We had the exam and I went to Clevedon for eighteen months before winning a place at the Bridgwater Technical school to learn engineering, with the idea of the Merchant Navy as a career (which was not to be).

So 1944 started off pretty good in school and in general things seem to be on the up, the yanks coming into the village more often and down the station there were more trains than ever. There was one occasion in June when it seemed that every bit of track in the Yatton area had trains on it, locomotives on the Wake and Dean sidings, and other coaches in line. Then it happened: 6th June, for ever to be known as D-DAY. We thought something was up because the Vicar came to school twice in that week, Mr Stone and the other teachers stood in front of us and told the school that the Allies had invaded northern France. Then the Vicar asked us to pray for our troops. I can remember my mother waiting to hear the news, to know how the invasion was going. It was OK but the Americans were not so lucky. As for us who were eleven years old plus, this was the last time we went to school at Church Road, then the summer holidays came on. It was a 'do it yourself' holiday and did we have fun in our dens? All secret of course, no adults allowed anywhere near except the local policeman when he was on the prowl, but we had a special code to tell us when he was about. Then we were somewhere else.

In August the blackberries were in great demand: still 4 pence a pound, no inflation in those days. Then at the end of the holidays we had to go to the booking office to pick up our season tickets to go

to Clevedon Secondary Modern school. That was an eye-opener as we were streets ahead of the kids already there and we were all put in the top class - not bad for a village school!

New school

So a new school life started, and one of the things I remember was the so-called school bully. He did not last long and finished up a good friend. The teaching staff at school to the best of my memory included a Mr Robinson, Miss Robinson (no relation), Miss Morgan, Mr Windybank (woodwork), Mr Whittle (?) and others. The war in Europe was going well for the most part: the Germans were putting up stiff resistance, but retreating back towards their border known as the Siegfried line.

This was the time I got a couple of paying jobs at Mr Manley's for the paper rounds, evening and morning, starting across the road down to North End including the milk factory. I had to collect the money on Saturdays, on Fridays I worked for Mr Griffin senior with a Miss Leach, a dear lady. Made a few shillings for the saving stamps so I could buy a National Savings certificate - had quite a few at the end of the war. So 1944 was nearly at an end and that Christmas I was lucky to get a bike, a black one with a carrier on the back. Also got the post office game, I loved playing that.

1945 was the last year of the war but there was a terrible setback, with a battle known as The Battle of the Bulge - very worrying, the Germans advancing back into Belgium. Good job the allies overcame that setback! Then the advance went forward and with the Russians coming from the east, Germany was almost surrounded and the end was in sight. So we come to 1945 and the end of the war, but not the end of the shortage of food and other things. I suppose we had to share with all the people in Europe? Any how the end came in May and that was the off for the parties and bonfires. I think we must have had a very large bonfire because we had to move it from under the overhead electric cables. On the Wake and Dean estate we had a street party which lasted deep into the night. The grown ups were dancing, my Dad put his radiogram out in the front garden and played the records of Victor Sylvester. He was the man known for quoting "slow slow quick quick slow".

Mary and I had to go to Clevedon to get the ice cream (what is ice cream?). The first time I remember eating it! Someone said the sweet shop up Nailsea West End was selling sweets without sweet coupons: two ounces for everyone. So some of us went and got a bag of sweets each. Great!

The next big event in my life at that time was with Cyril Horsey from Clevedon to sit the exam to enter Bridgwater Technical School for the new engineering course. We had to go to Bridgwater for the exam, which was held in a room over a shop not far from the bridge over the river Parrett. Well we were both very lucky to pass the exam and after being interviewed by the headmaster we both had letters to say we were accepted. So it was to be a new school and a career to work for. Mine turned out to be very different from what was planned, but that is another story…..!

Colin C Forse

THE WORLD of a TEENAGER in YATTON 1957 to 1963

I became a teenager in August 1957 when I lived at home with my parents at The Brow, Horsecastle in Yatton. I was by then attending Weston Grammar School for Boys having passed the scholarship at the age of 11 from Yatton Junior School in Church Road under the tutelage of Mr. Stone.

I remember well the interview at the Grammar School. It was a day I had been dreading since the notification came through a couple of weeks previously. I was bought a new pair of short trousers, new shirt and a tie and I went to Weston on the train with my mother where we met an old friend of hers whose son was also going for an interview at the same time. I remember he looked a lot more relaxed and confident than I felt! Subsequently we became friends. I had only previously known the village schools, firstly the Infants and then the Juniors and most families knew each other in the village at that time. I recall being shown into the Headmaster's office by his secretary, she seemed daunting enough and he filled me with awe! However somehow some weeks later I heard that I had managed to pass both the exam and the interview and that the scholastic future for my teen years was to be at Weston Grammar School.

As the school holidays that year passed by, my apprehension grew daily. Some of my school chums would be joining me at Weston whilst others would be going to Clevedon Secondary Modern but I never really understood what that meant!

We were to be separated by what now seems to be an elitist system which somehow failed to recognize that everyone has different talents which develop at different speeds.

In the week before term commenced my parents took me to an outfitters in Weston to purchase the school uniform, including the new 'beach-ball' cap so called because it consisted of segments in orange and red. Then the dreaded day arrived and I had to catch the train to Weston and then a bus from outside the station to school. To someone who was used to a five minute cycle to school this was like going to another planet. I was lucky, as my brother was already attending Weston Grammar and at least he ensured that I and my mates got on the right train and bus although I think he was a little embarrassed playing nanny! When we got there the buildings seemed enormous: even the entrance doors seemed huge, there seemed to be thousands of kids, all of whom seemed to know what to do and where to go. Of course there were initiation ceremonies to be endured including soaking your brand new cap on your first day!

All the masters wore gowns and seemed to shout and there were so many rules to learn, for instance; do not walk on the quadrangle in the middle of the classrooms; do not speak in class; call all the teachers 'Sir' and on top of all this every boy in the school other than the new boys

like yourself were older and physically bigger than you. When I got home after the first day it seemed ages since I had left that morning and there was uncertainty as to what the succeeding days would bring. Little did I realize then how going to that school would open up so much new knowledge to me and give access to a whole new social world.

Being a teenager in 1957 was in some ways no different to now or any other period in time and yet in other ways completely different. For example consider how much communications have changed, I am sitting here typing this on my lap top. In 1957 people were just getting used to having black and white small screen televisions, steam trains still prevailed and foreign holidays took place on the Isle of Wight!

Clothes are always of importance to a teenager as it is essential to be trendy! I recall the huge pride I felt strutting about in an orange cord shirt with black cord trousers and safari boots. I also remember feeling a foot taller in my first pair of 'drainpipes', trousers so tight you dare not breathe heavily! Who could forget 'winkle pickers' or 'chisel toes'? Looking back the former somehow had circus overtones and were extremely painful to wear, but fashion dictated that a groovy young man must endure this to have street credibility. I also recall buying a sage green pile sweater and Chelsea boots, very 'cool' but so hot to wear in the summer. At this time teenage girls wore 'hooped' skirts and 'bouffant' hair styles and would spend literally hours back-combing their locks to get the look with the most body and height and then apply what seemed like a whole can of hairspray to hold it in place! Of course they always wore high heels to visit discos or coffee bars which seem so unsophisticated compared to the current places of entertainment.

Music changed forever in the late fifties and early sixties with the explosion of rock and roll. This had an everlasting social impact whereby the so called young generation had a music all of its own providing its own identity, language, clothes and morality. My own personal favourite was Chuck Berry who I think influenced the style of more artists then and since than any other of the originals. Elvis had become famous alongside Bill Haley, Little Richard, Fats Domino, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and other American artists. Gradually British performers copied them as did Marty Wilde, Billy Fury and Cliff Richard. Most teenagers could not get enough of these wonderful new sounds so original, so energetic and so loud! To hear them you had to tune in to 208 Radio Luxembourg or the odd broadcast on the Light Programme of the BBC. Juke boxes were installed in the thriving 'caffs' and coffee bars. I recall numerous visits to the 'Half Way Caff' in the garage at Congresbury; to Fortes on the sea front in Clevedon and to the Pavilion on the end of Clevedon Pier on a Friday night.

Other forms of entertainment were less 'exotic', during the week after school I would stroll up the village, meet a mate and visit Rock Road playing fields in the hope that some of the local 'talent' was hanging around or go to the youth club held at that time in the Drill Hall. After which a visit to the chip shop run by Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins was made, their 'scrumps' were the best in the business! Sometimes we would go to the pictures at the 'Maxime' or 'Curzon' in Clevedon. You

had to be careful though to ensure you caught the last train back to Yatton as it was a fair walk otherwise. On a more grand date a trip to one of the cinemas in Weston was called for, although this cost more. There were three, the 'Odeon', the 'Regent' and the 'Central', all of which did very good business. Other occasional pleasures included Yatton Youth Day (a good chance to show off) and the fun fair when it arrived on the Salthouse Fields in Clevedon. These seem such modest pastimes now but were looked forward to immensely.

I am not sure how relationships have changed but I am certain that back in the fifties and sixties at least people had the comfort of knowing where they fitted in. At school each pupil had his own desk for which they were responsible, you were not allowed to talk in lessons, called the teachers 'Sir' and handed homework in on time. None of that ever seemed a chore, it was the way the school society worked and it was in everybody's interest, after all you went there to learn for your future benefit and also your parents expected you to do your best.

As well as the academic side there was a great emphasis on sport and I loved rugby in the winter and cricket in the summer as well as athletics. I never did learn to swim though! In addition to these activities there were all sorts of societies from classical music to drama and caving. I find it sad that so many young people now play no sport or learn no extraneous skills outside their academic necessities. These pastimes also promoted social skills and team working.

Although passing through the teen years is a massive period of learning both about yourself, the world and your fellow beings I think teenagers in the fifties and sixties acquired their self confidence and self belief later by at least three years than the present day young people. Generally speaking all adults were respected whether parents or teachers or even strangers. Even if you did not agree with their rules, instructions or opinions you accepted them and respected them because they were older and more experienced. Despite this teenagers wanted change and discussed how to put the world to rights as this was the post war period of 'Iron Curtains' and 'Ban the Bomb' not to mention the Vietnam War. Other current topics were capital punishment and corporal punishment. The latter was still widely used in secondary schools and virtually never questioned, some of these principles of law and order may now seem primitive but sadly we do not seem to have found any other effective remedies. Because the population of Yatton was considerably smaller then, you knew most people either by name or as a nodding acquaintance. Crime was rare and even if somebody simply got drunk it became a talking point in the village! The local policeman had no police car, no mobile phone and no computer data base only a bicycle and when he did his rounds there was no backchat. If you overstepped the mark you got two dressings down, one from him and one from your parents, both to be remembered!

When you became fifteen, school holidays meant finding a holiday job and my first was at Hale's Cakes in Clevedon. This meant catching the firm's coach with fifty noisy ladies all looking to pull the leg of a rooky teenage boy and that was before the day's work started! I recall on my first day I was helping load the ovens with éclairs laid out on huge trays and inevitably I

dropped a complete tray full! My face was redder than any jam tart! Other tasks included loading hoppers with powdered egg and various flavours of catering jam, another tedious job was spending day after day watching thousands of 'drop' scones make a safe journey along the conveyor belts.

Another year I worked at the Tannery in Claverham and as the factory staff were on holiday the first two weeks, we spent the time cleaning all the machines and shop floors. After that I worked in the drying room watching hides pass along the conveyors and unloading them at the end of the process.

The best holiday job I had was at Capern's Bird Seed factory in Wemberham Lane which was just over the railway bridge from The Brow. My main job there was sitting at the back of a guillotine which chopped a sandpaper type material to size for use in the bottom of budgie cages and was called 'Tydisan'. This was in the very early sixties and I recall the Beatles 'Love Me Do' and 'She Loves You' always playing in the canteen.

When I left school in 1963 my first full time job was at Lloyds Bank in West Street, Old Market in Bristol. It was terrifying as the manager was of the 'old school', regularly shouting at the staff whoever they were and taking you into his office for a 'bawling out'. I remember he gave me a real dressing down as he did not like the style of my suit, shirt and tie! At that time everything was very regimented, the chains of command seemed infinite and there were hundreds of rules to be obeyed to the letter.

To get away from the work routine most people took a holiday during the annual shutdown, normally the last week in July and the first week in August. Everybody looked forward to this the whole year and tried to save a little for spending money. Many times I went with my parents to Ilfracombe to spend a fortnight in a caravan. Sometimes we went by train, sometimes by Campbell's steamers including the 'Cardiff' and 'Bristol Queens' and in my later teens by motorbike. My dad had an Ariel 'Leader' and I had an Ariel 'Arrow Super Sports'. My parents used to load up the luggage rack on the back almost as high as my mother who sat on the pillion. In those pre-motorway days Bridgwater was the major bottleneck on the A38 due to the volumes of summer traffic. One trick was to go out through Mark and cut back across the traffic in Bridgwater and I always remember feeling that once Bridgwater had been successfully manoeuvred the holiday had really begun!

Motorbikes were a young man's first love! My first one was a 98 cc Excelsior with the gear change on the handlebars. After that I shared my dad's 125cc BSA 'Bantam', then his Ariel 'Leader' and then my Ariel 'Arrow' which I bought new. I also dabbled with a couple of 'bubble' cars, one a Trojan and the other an Isetta. I never acquired a BSA 'Gold Star', a Norton 'Interceptor' or a Triumph 'Bonneville' although I once borrowed a Royal Enfield 250 which had a wonderful roar! In my early teens one of the highlights of the year was the motor cycle 'scramble' event held on Cadbury Hill. Most of the village attended and it was a social as well as a sporting event. The roar at the start of each race and the speed at which the competitors hurtled down the steep descent back to the flat part of the course by the stile in Henley Lane was most exhilarating to us lads!

Courting was basically the same process as always except that I am sure it reflected the more innocent nature of the times. As people travelled less because few had cars and virtually no teenagers had them, getting to know each other took place either in cinemas, during walks or on the way to school! Your boy or girl friend was likely to be a Yattonian, from a nearby village or perhaps from Clevedon. Once you were seen 'walking out ' with somebody or 'keeping company' with them you could be sure your parents and the whole village would know pretty soon and the teasing would start until a new topic of conversation came up. As ever a divine agony!

Looking back the teen years were a mixture of exploration, frustration and new found pleasures. Life in the 50s and 60s was clearly simpler without all the pressures put on young people today from technology, advertising and the demands of status in all aspects of life. However, correspondingly, expectations were more modest and I look back with real pleasure at the times my friends and I enjoyed.

And, oh boy, did we have some fun!

Robert Ashbee

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Who or What were the Yatton Eagles?

In the early 1950s cycle speedway was a popular sport with teams of teenage lads competing against each other, with several teams being in Bristol.

Arthur Richards lived in Elborough Avenue near a disused piece of land and he obtained permission to use it for cycle speedway. A group of Yatton lads got together to form a team and old bicycles were stripped down without brakes, mudguards, etc., then fitted with "cow" handlebars and circles of tin put on the outside of the wheels to protect them against pedals going into the wheels when racing. Most bikes were then sprayed, usually silver, by Arthur. Noel Pardy became involved, and when the small oval shaped speedway track had been set up, Noel arranged some successful friendly fixtures.

The following year the team progressed and moved to a fenced off corner of Rock Road Playing Field, where the present Youth Club building stands. This was a grass track which became very dusty when dry and remarkably muddy when wet weather prevailed – which all added to the excitement of the races. There were fixtures for home and away races. When the team travelled "away" they used a cattle lorry owned by Frank Pearce from Pearce's Garage at Claverham, which was driven by his son Ken. Bikes, riders and sometimes spectators all crammed into the truck as there were no health and safety regulations then! Some of the venues that come to mind are Highbridge, Uphill and in Bristol, Totterdown and Brislington. Probably the roughest track the team rode on was the car park at Weston Rugby Ground which was just marked out over a rough, stony surface. Needless to say there

were quite a few injuries received during the seasons, bad bruising, broken bones, dislocations etc. At one point there were so many that the local G.P., Dr Dyson, proclaimed that "These injuries are self-inflicted and if I get more I will not treat them!" but he did of course, though not without a grumble.

One of the highlights of the year was the Yatton Carnival, which was when the speedway team riders competed for the "Golden Helmet"; the individual winner then went forward to ride against other individuals, during the interval of a speedway race meeting at Knowle Speedway Stadium in Bristol, the home of "Bristol Bulldogs", on a grass track laid out in the centre of the speedway track. The outright winner would receive a brand new cycle speedway bike donated by Raleigh Cycles.

Terry Richards won the Golden Helmet at Yatton and the *Clevedon Mercury* reported that around 200 spectators, including the Carnival Queen and float, were in the playing field to watch the races at this time. Terry went on to ride at Knowle, but was unsuccessful in his quest for the Raleigh bicycle.

Some of the original team members were John Newton, Terry Richards, Keith Davey, John Sedgbeer, Alan Bish, Gordon Williams and Mike Trott.

A former Rider

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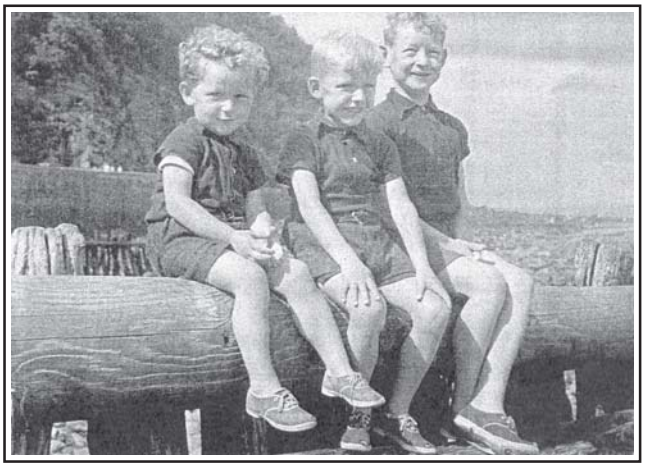
THE SMEDLEY BOYS OF NORTH END

Having lived in Yatton through the war years, I thoroughly enjoyed reading *More Yatton Yesterdays - Number 7*. It brought back so many memories of what I realize now were Golden Years. This issue reached me on the other side of the world in San Diego, California.

At the outbreak of the war, we left our home in Lynmouth (see photo opposite - Peter, Roger and Barry – I'm the youngest) for Bristol where my father worked for the Bristol Airplane Company at Filton. We lived in Henleaze but the Germans began daylight raids on the aircraft works and my parents decided to move into the country to avoid the bombing.



Smedley Boys – Barry, Roger, Peter
Lynmouth, North Devon 1939

Our "safe haven" during WWII was at Trelawney, North End, Yatton. Our next door neighbours were Bert and Enid Fowler and Leonard and Barbara Burdge of Brick House Farm on the other side. On a recent visit to Yatton with my wife Len Burdge graciously invited us for tea and then produced his photo album of wartime farm life. This included pictures of the tin canoes that he purchased as R.A.F. drop fuel tanks and made useable by us boys for paddling on the rhyne.

Roger and Barry canoeing in Len Burdge's modified drop fuel tanks

Len, in his eighties, is still very active and we had a wonderful time together recounting the war years at North End, Yatton. In reminiscing on all our friends I happened to mention John Hawkins who lived in Linden Cottage just across the road (who had written an article in *More Yatton Yesterdays* No. 7). I referred to the mischief we all got up to during the troubled war years and we had a few good laughs when I confessed to some of the many pranks we were involved in on his farm!

Extracts of a letter from Barry Smedley

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KEITH KERTON'S REMINISCENCES

My grandfather lived at Court House Farm, where my father was born, and then at Bridge House next to Walter Smith's forge and the Bridge Inn. I was brought up in North End before moving to Derham Park some time during the war. My sister and I have two delightful original water colours of Court House Farm circa 1930s. I recall playing there in the war with the Harris family. They had Italian prisoners of war working on the farm who were in the camp at the top of the village next to Wynn's store. I also remember the time when the thatched roof was replaced at Court House Farm. We could watch with dismay from our house in Derham Park.

Although I left the village in 1957 to move to the Midlands, I continued to keep in contact with local history, having received most editions of *Yatton Yesterdays*. I was fascinated to see in the 2003 edition of *More Yatton Yesterdays* an article by Elsie Ridley, our neighbour in Derham Park. We still exchange Christmas cards. Nigel, her son, was a promising cricketer in those early post-war days. I played a bit myself for

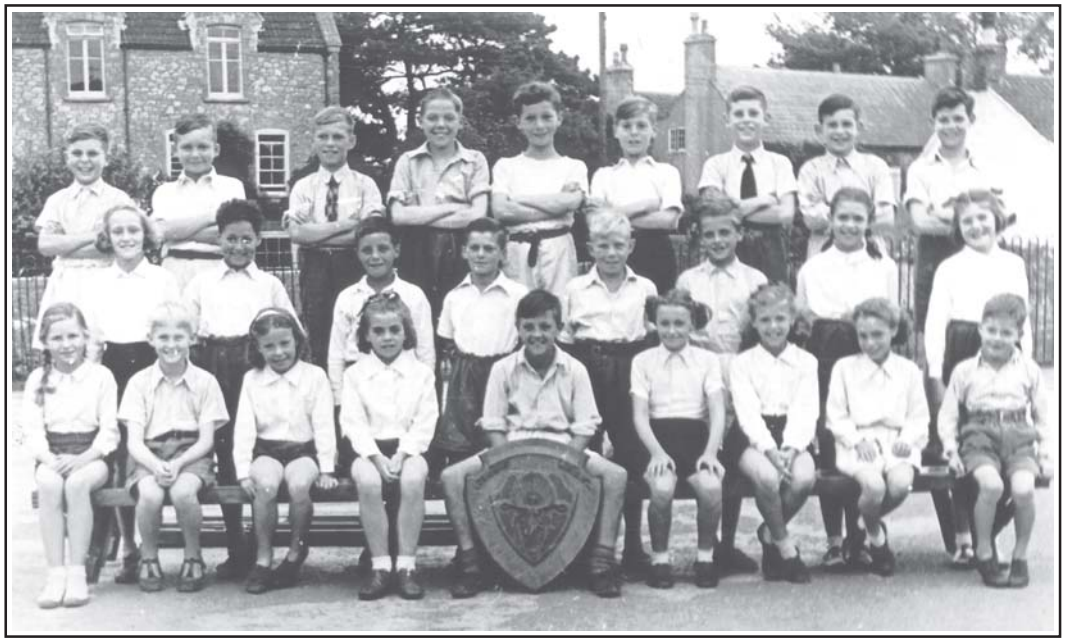
Claverham Cricket Club in school holidays and between 1954 and 1956 when I was doing National Service. I opened the bowling with Syd Hayman under the captaincy of Frank Young. [Watching TV recently I felt sure that it was his brother Ken who was on one of those 'sell your clutter' programmes from Bristol.]

My mother continued to live in Yatton until the 1990s and was well known in the village and respected by members of the Mothers' Union and worshippers at St Mary's.

In the same edition of *More Yatton Yesterdays* there was an article by John Hawkins. We shared the same great uncle, Montague Kerton, who lived at The Hollies. John and I keep in touch. I am also in contact with Peter Smedley, the oldest of the three brothers mentioned in his article. We lived next to them and Mr Smedley, who sadly died when the boys were still young, was a gifted engineer with BAC in Bristol. I recall that he had the first TV in Yatton.

Most but not all of the team left at the end of the summer term in 1947, having taken 11+ in the cold winter of '47. In September of that year I went off to Sidcot School as a boarder for the next seven years.

Keith Kerton



Yatton Church of England School Sports Team in 1946/47

Back Row: *Peter Colley? Ralph Mitchell? Brian Baker, Keith Kerton, Barry Smedley,Eric Claxton, Roger Davis, Leslie Tutton, David Lyddon,*

Middle Row: *Shirley Brooks, Stan Hayman, Ken Sprod, unknown, Derek Wall? Brian Amos? unknown, Linda Wiliamson*

Front Row: *Unknown, unknown, unknown, Diana Turner, Don Stockham (Captain), Diana Vaughan? A Claxton? Joan Nicholson? unknown*

St. MARY'S INTERESTING GRAVESTONE

Back in June 2005, Ivor Astle was replacing rotten floorboards in the vestry at St Mary's Church, Yatton, when he came across a large gravestone. This stone is hidden now as it lies beneath both floorboards and floorbearers, but its exact location is close to the doorstep into the Chancel, slightly to the west, where one board is now screwed down to enable access to services (the electrical kind, not Holy Communion and Evensong!). This board and the one nailed down nearer to the doorstep need to be lifted to reveal the inscription, which even then is partially hidden by the bearer beam and the further floorboard.

My interpretation of the wording is as follows:

Here lieth the body of
Frances, the wife of William
Fowles of this parish, Yeoman
Grandaughter of the Rev. D^{r}
Cravohton, Prebend of Yatton
and Great Grandaughter of
the Bishop of Bath and Wells
who departed this life y^{e} 23
day of March 1743 Aged
36 years.

My wife Eleaner copied the church burial records for 1741-1743 and from those we found that the name was entered there as "Francese" but because this was immediately beneath the name Francese Sheppard (buried 11th March 1743) the spelling in the records may be erroneous. The surnames, though, were shown as Vowles and Creyghton, the latter appearing on more than one occasion (see below). "Francese" was buried on 26th March 1743.

Robert Creyghton was vicar of Yatton from 1729 to 1755. His daughter Elizabeth was buried on 9th April 1742 and his wife Mary on 31st August 1742. Was he the 'Prebend of Yatton' or was that his father, or even Grandfather?

So it seems that the daughter, wife and possibly granddaughter or another daughter all died within 12 months and are all buried at Yatton. I wonder what caused these deaths and whether the three are all buried beneath this floor?? {If so, then I wonder, too, whether the graves were recorded when the faculty was obtained and the original vestry floor was laid down?]

Geoff Marchant

Burials 1742

James Loves		3 January
	Wife of John Cox	12 January
Margaret	*Wife of John May*	19 February
Mary Brown		16 March
Francis Wilson		23 March
Ann	*Daughter of John Kingcutt*	30 March

Elizabeth	*Daughter of Robert Creyghton Vicar of Yatton and his wife Mary*	9 April
Susannah Marshman		8 April
Anne Dale		10 August
Samuel Hilman		14 August
Mary	*Wife of Robert Creyghton Vicar of Yatton*	31 August
Samuell Sheppard		10 September
Jacob Hilman		3 December
Elizabeth Burke		16 December
1743		
Charles Rickets		18 January
Francese Sheppard		11 March
Francese	*Wife of William Vowles*	*26 March*
John Hain		28 March
Hannah Avery		13 May
Robert	*Son of James Love*	17 May
Mary	*Daughter of William & Mary Sprud*	29 May
Peter Collins		6 June
Ann Mugelworth		28 June
Anne Avery	*Widow from Abbots Leigh*	5 September
Hester	*Wife of William Dunscombe of Congresbury*	29 September

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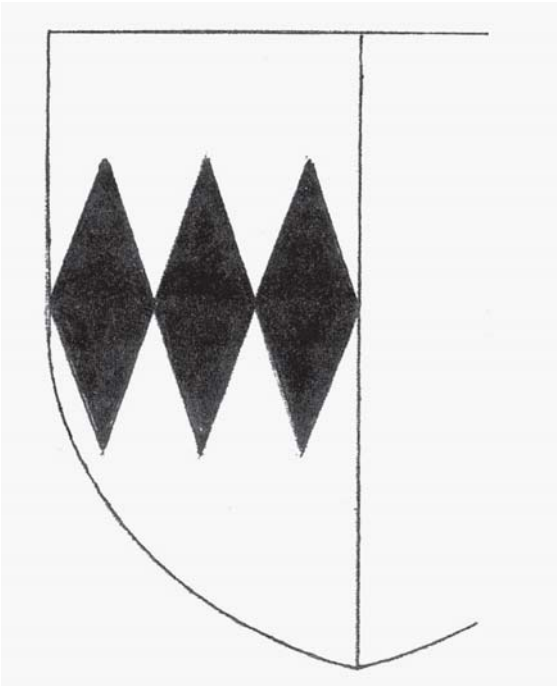
NEWTON'S LANDS in PEMBROKESHIRE

In one of the early issues of *Yatton Yesterday* (1) information was sought about any references to the Newton (previously Cradock) family in Pembrokeshire.

Sir Richard Newton (d.1448), whose monument is in Yatton church, came from Pembrokeshire and was the first of the family to assume the name of Newton. He was Recorder of Bristol from 1430 to 1439 and Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas from 1439 until his death in December 1448. In an early Welsh pedigree he was described as Sir Richard Newton alias Cradock, Lord of Newton and Nangle. (2) Nangle, now known as Angle, is situated at the southern entrance to Milford Haven. The name is derived from the Norse word 'ongull' meaning 'a bend of the river'.

Sir Richard Newton probably became Lord of Nangle as a consequence of the marriage of his great-grandfather Roger Cradock to Margery, daughter of Nicholas Sherborne of Nangle and the failure of Sherborne heirs. The Sherbornes were Lords of Nangle for two centuries and the ruined tower which once formed part of their manor house can still be seen north of Angle church but separated from it at high tide. (3)

The Newton family of Yatton clearly regarded their descent from the Sherborne family as important as the shield carved in stone above the entrance to the south porch of Yatton church shows the Sherborne arms (and not the Newton arms) impaled with the Chedder arms. The Sherborne arms are:- Ermine, three lozenges fesswise sable. On the porch the arms are shown as follows without the ermine field, which would have been too difficult to carve in the stone.



The south porch must have been almost completed in 1457 when payments were recorded for 260 lbs (118 kg) of lead to 'hely' (cover) the porch. (4) At this time Sir Richard's son and heir, Sir John Newton (d.1488), was living at Court de Wyke with his wife Isabel, daughter of Thomas Chedder.

The descendants of Sir John Newton continued to incorporate the Sherborne arms in their shields and these arms appear on monuments in Bristol Cathedral (Newton Chapel), East Harptree church, Braybrooke church (Northants), Cobham church (Kent) and Rayne church (Essex).

The earliest document referring to lands held by the Cradock family in Pembrokeshire is a record of an inquisition held at Pembroke on 6 April 1353 to establish what lands were held by the late Laurence de Hastings, Earl of Pembroke. This stated that John Cradock, at his death (16 August 1350), held 6 bovates of land at Neuton and 12 acres of land at Coitrath (near St Issells, now disappeared; about 8 miles north-east of Pembroke). Roger, his son and heir, was 17 years of age and had married the daughter of Nicholas Sherborne (who had died on 12 March 1349), having been betrothed the day after the death of the father. (5)

According to Roger Fenton (1810) the ancient mansion at Colby (2 miles north of Slebech Park) had belonged to "Sir Richard Newton, Chief Justice of England, who being alienated in his affections towards his native country by his education and high office, changed his name from Cradock to Newton, and with his Welsh name got rid of his Welsh possessions". (6)

Fenton appears to be wrong in suggesting that Sir Richard Newton disposed of his Welsh possessions as his grandson Richard Newton seems to have had considerable property in the shire of Pembroke and in the lordship of Haverford. A surviving document shows that Sir Richard Newton bought 3½ acres of land called 'le Parke' in Monkton juxta Pembroke on 20 November 1442. The transaction was confirmed in the court of Jasper, earl of Pembroke, on 28 April 1459 (7), presumably as a result of action taken on behalf of Sir John Newton.

Sir Richard's grandson Richard Newton, eldest son of Sir John Newton, probably lived most of his adult life in Monkton as he and his second wife Elizabeth (d.1524) both died there. In his will dated 24 September 1500 (8), two days before he died on 26 September 1500 (9), Richard Newton asked to be buried in the church of St Nicholas, Monkton. He left four tenements in Haverfordwest and Pembroke to the chapel of St George the Martyr at Nangle to augment the stipend of a priest "to sing for the souls of Edmonde Sherborne and his ancestors", "for the souls of me and Elynor my first wife" and "for the health of Elizabeth my wife". He mentioned Elizabeth Kenn, his mother's daughter (i.e. his sister Elizabeth who had married John Kenn of Kenn) and bequeathed lands and tenements in the town of Pembroke to John Newton, his brother's son. This John Newton was the second son of Richard's brother Thomas Newton and Joan Hampton, widow of Thomas Choke the elder; he later inherited his mother's extensive lands and became Sir John Newton of Barrs Court, Gloucestershire, and East Harptree, Somerset. Sir John died in 1568 and was buried in East Harptree church. Along the bottom of his monument, which is now in the church porch, are the kneeling figures of his twenty children.

As well as the properties mentioned in Richard Newton's will, one Welsh inquisition has survived which indicates that he owned lands at Jeffreyston (about 7 miles north-east of Pembroke). This was an inquisition of 11 May 1500 recording the establishment of a boundary between the lands of Richard Newton in Jeffreyston and of Isabel Wogan of Langenet. (10)

Richard Newton served as a royal servant to Richard III and Henry VII. During Richard III's reign he was given the custody of Pembroke Castle and carried out repairs to it. (11) Following the Battle of Bosworth (1485) Richard Newton was to have particularly close connections with Henry VII as he was appointed an esquire of the King's body on 9 March 1486. (12) This meant that he had to take his turn to attend the King at court. Shortly afterwards, on 12 March 1486, Sir Giles Daubeney, father of his wife Eleanor, was created Lord Daubeney and was to become one of the King's chief councillors. After the death of Eleanor, Richard married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John St. John of Bletsoe, Bedfordshire and second cousin of Henry VII. (13)

As a royal servant Richard Newton was appointed to various commissions in South Wales (14) and in addition he was granted, on 28 December 1493, the office of steward of all the lordships and lands of the bishopric of St Davids. (15) The bishop at that time, Hugh Pavy, was the son of William Pavy (d.1466), a Bristol merchant, and had connections with the Choke family of Long Ashton, near Bristol, as did the Newton family of Yatton. (16)

After the death of his mother, Dame Isabel Newton, in 1498, Richard Newton inherited numerous properties throughout south-west England, including the manor of Wyke at Yatton. He was not to enjoy his inheritance for long as he died at Monkton by Pembroke on 26 September 1500 (9), leaving two underage daughters, Isabel and Joan. Isabel married Sir Giles Capel, son of Sir William Capel, Lord Mayor of London, and Joan married Sir Thomas Griffin of Braybrooke, Northamptonshire. Although the bulk of the Newton lands passed to the families of these two daughters the Newton name continued in the descendants of Thomas Newton (d.1496), second son of Sir John Newton, and ancestor of the first Newton baronet.

Nicholas A Deas

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