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# MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

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NUMBER 10 (PART II)

PUBLISHED BY  
YATTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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# MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

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**The Cover picture** is a view of Yatton High Street circa 1930. It shows the Old Rectory wall, which has since been demolished to build Well Lane.

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## Contributors

Mary Campbell	Brian Claxton	Pat Denny
John Penney	Marianne Pitman	Ruth Summerell



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## Editorial

Yatton Local History Society started publishing *Yatton Yesterday* in 1984 and followed this with *More Yatton Yesterdays* in 1998. Many earlier editions have sold out but if you are missing one it is always worth asking if any remain (telephone 01934 838902). Yatton Library has a complete set for reference but we have also included an index of previous copies in this edition.

This tenth edition Part II brings together much new material and a little from previous editions about World War II. Included here are historical illustrations and articles relevant to the old parish of Yatton that is mainly Yatton, Claverham and Cleeve. Although the Society has tried to verify where possible the information submitted, the responsibility for the accuracy of each contribution remains with the author.

We often get enquiries about personal family history. While we are happy to answer specific questions if we have the information, we cannot make further enquiries or develop family trees and so refer enquirers to Somerset Heritage Centre (01823 278805) and the Family History Society at Bristol Record Office (01179 224224).

The Publications Subcommittee (Mary Campbell, Allan Denny, Pat Denny, Marianne Pitman, Jill Riddle and Ruth Summerell) are very grateful to Mary Campbell for her time and expertise in typing the manuscripts, Jill Riddle for her editing skills, Geoff Marchant for expertly managing our accounts and John Derrick for his technical expertise. We are grateful to all our contributors particularly, as some have had to wait for their work to appear.

Woodspring Resources Centre at Locking has put the finishing touches to and printed many of our publications in the last decade. The final polish is down to Noel Hetherington, the proprietor, without whose efforts we would struggle considerably.

We are also grateful to those who sell our books without charge including Nicola at Yatton Post Office, Clive at Yatton News, Jenny and Eddie at Good News, Wine and Food at Cleeve and Claverham Gift and Coffee Lounge.

Finally we would like to thank all our customers and hope that some of you will contribute to future publications. Possibly the next one would be on the early 1900s and we are actively looking for new material now. We are interested in your views as to what we should include in future so let us know. Thank you for your support in buying this edition.

*Marianne Pitman*

## Denis Clement – WWII veteran

Denis Clement was one of the family of coal merchants based in Yatton and Wrington. Denis was involved in the business from 1931 and mainly worked in the area. Following his death in 2002 the family passed on to Eddie Reynolds some papers about the “Dieppe Raid” in 1942.

Ron Clement said that Denis was a member of No 4 Commando, which included other North Somerset men based at Portishead. The photograph shows Denis (front left) with some of his comrades from this time. The Dieppe raid was a challenge to Hitler’s Fortress Europe. Most of the troops involved were Canadian, but British commandos covered the east and west flanks.



*Denis Clement (circled) with members of No. 4 Commandos*

The western landings by No 4 Commando were intended to disable a coastal battery near Varengeville. Denis must have been “mentioned in despatches” as he was awarded the Croix de Guerre. [This medal was established in 1915 by France and Belgium and awarded to military personnel often from allied countries who distinguished themselves in combat against enemy forces.] Around Dieppe the cliffs were high and there were a lot of casualties. In total there was a 20 per cent fatality rate, along with a 50 per cent casualty rate including those taken prisoner.

Anecdotally, as the commandos returned to the landing craft, a French farmer who had accosted them in his nightshirt on their way to the battery, was dressed in his Sunday best to present them with new laid eggs because the troops were English!

Denis attended the 40<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary visits which were arranged to view the war graves and the towns involved in the offensive. The French entertained the veterans in their own homes and granted the freedom of towns such as Berneval to their visitors.

**Patricia Giesler:**

*The raid on Dieppe 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration August 19 1942. Government of Canada Veterans Affairs.*

**Ron Clement:**

*‘W E Clement and Sons, Coal and Smokeless Fuel Merchants’, More Yatton Yesterdays No 7, 2003 3-6 pp*

*Marianne Pitman*



## Creating a Map of The Medieval Sites in the Ancient Parish of Yatton

The Parish of Yatton, which originally included Cleeve and East and West Hewish, is extremely fortunate in having Earl Poulett's 1799 Estate Map together with J. Sturge's 1821 Schedule giving details of the names of the owners and the tenants of the houses and plus the field names. The Pouletts owned Court de Wyck from 1614 to 1815 when they sold the whole estate <sup>1</sup>.

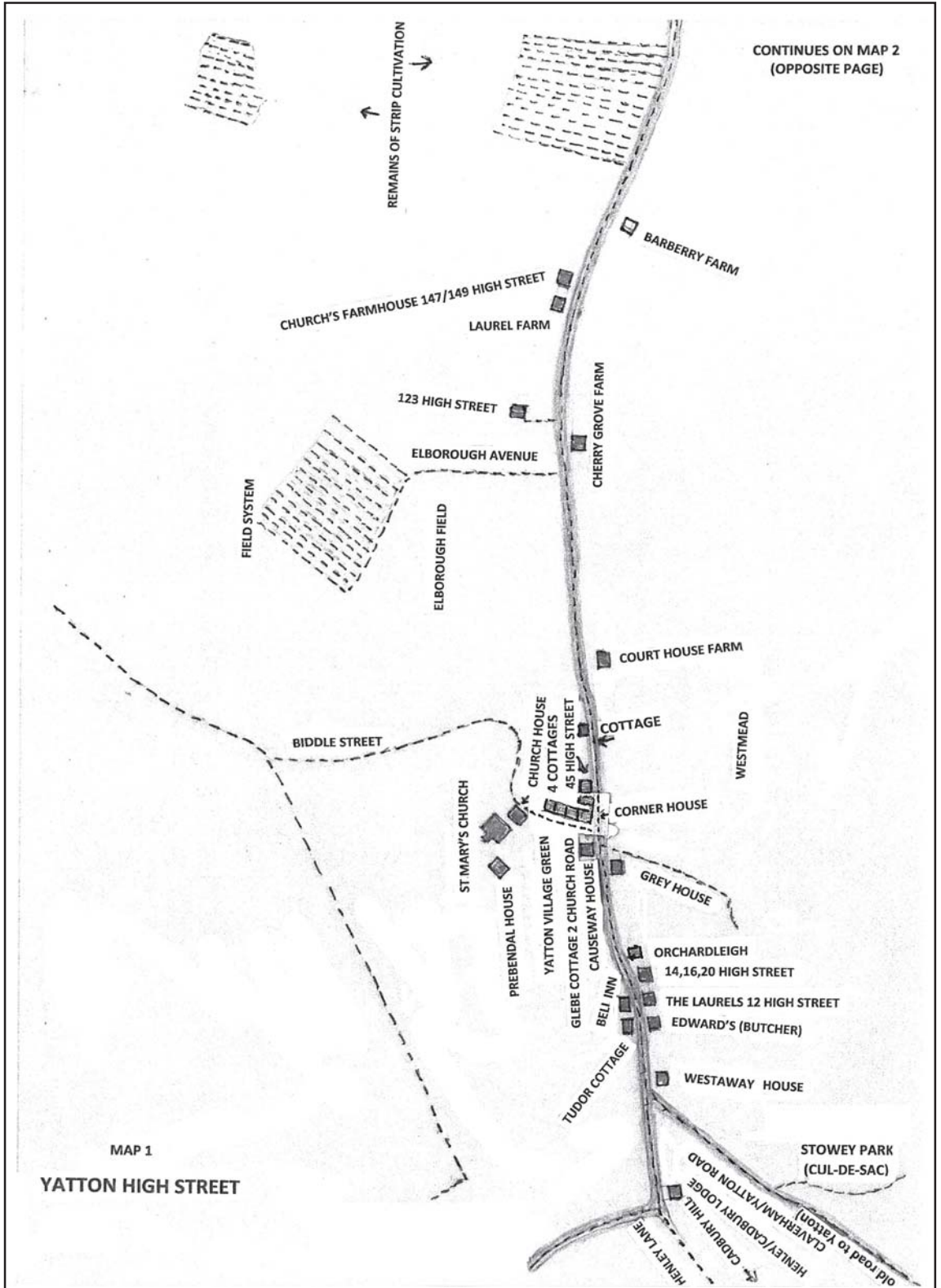
In 2010 Allan Denny asked me if the Yatton Local History Society (YLHS) possessed a medieval (1066-1530) map of Yatton. The request had come originally from the Rev. Christopher Steed, who was writing a book about Yatton<sup>2</sup>. The answer was "no" because the 1799 map is the earliest that we have of the area. Some parishes are lucky in possessing some very old medieval documents. However it suddenly came to me that I could make a rough map of medieval Yatton if I looked at the Parish Survey and plotted the medieval sites onto the 1799 map of Yatton. The Parish Survey was a book that I had put together in the 1980s from all the hard work of the members of the YLHS on all the Yatton sites. This included Marian Barraclough's wonderful work on transcribing the map schedule and all Earl Poulett papers, which were in the Somerset Record Office. She had recorded all the sites with **Common Rights** and these I had included in the Parish Survey. These Rights, which go back well into early medieval times, allowed the tenants of those houses to put animals on the commons for free grazing. The numbers and type of animal were specified in each case. There were commons at Claverham and at Horsecastle and all Cleeve Hill was a Common. Cadbury Hill, which belonged to Congresbury as well as Yatton, was also common land. Yatton Village Green is in

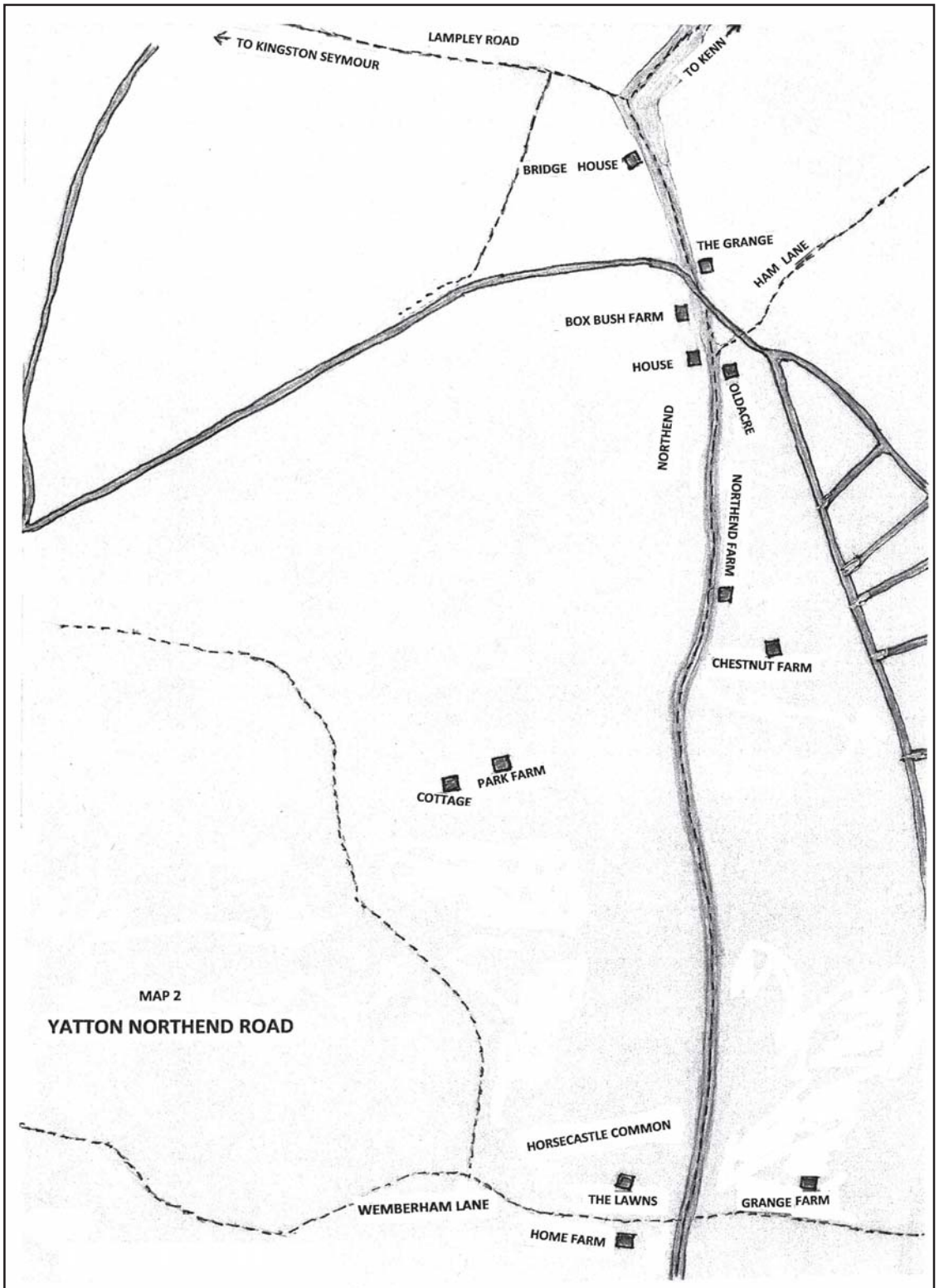
front of the church and would have been larger in medieval times.

The maps, which are reproduced here, are of six parts of the parish – Yatton High Street and Northend Road, the north and south parts of Claverham and the north and south parts of Cleeve. They show the sites with **Common Rights** and some known existing medieval houses. Many have no sign on the ground that a house existed on the site, some have had later houses built on them or an existing house may include some of the older remains. One of the most interesting houses is in Cleeve: Goblin Combe Farm, which was a medieval longhouse. The names on the map are all recent names so that the reader can see at what part of the parish he or she is looking.

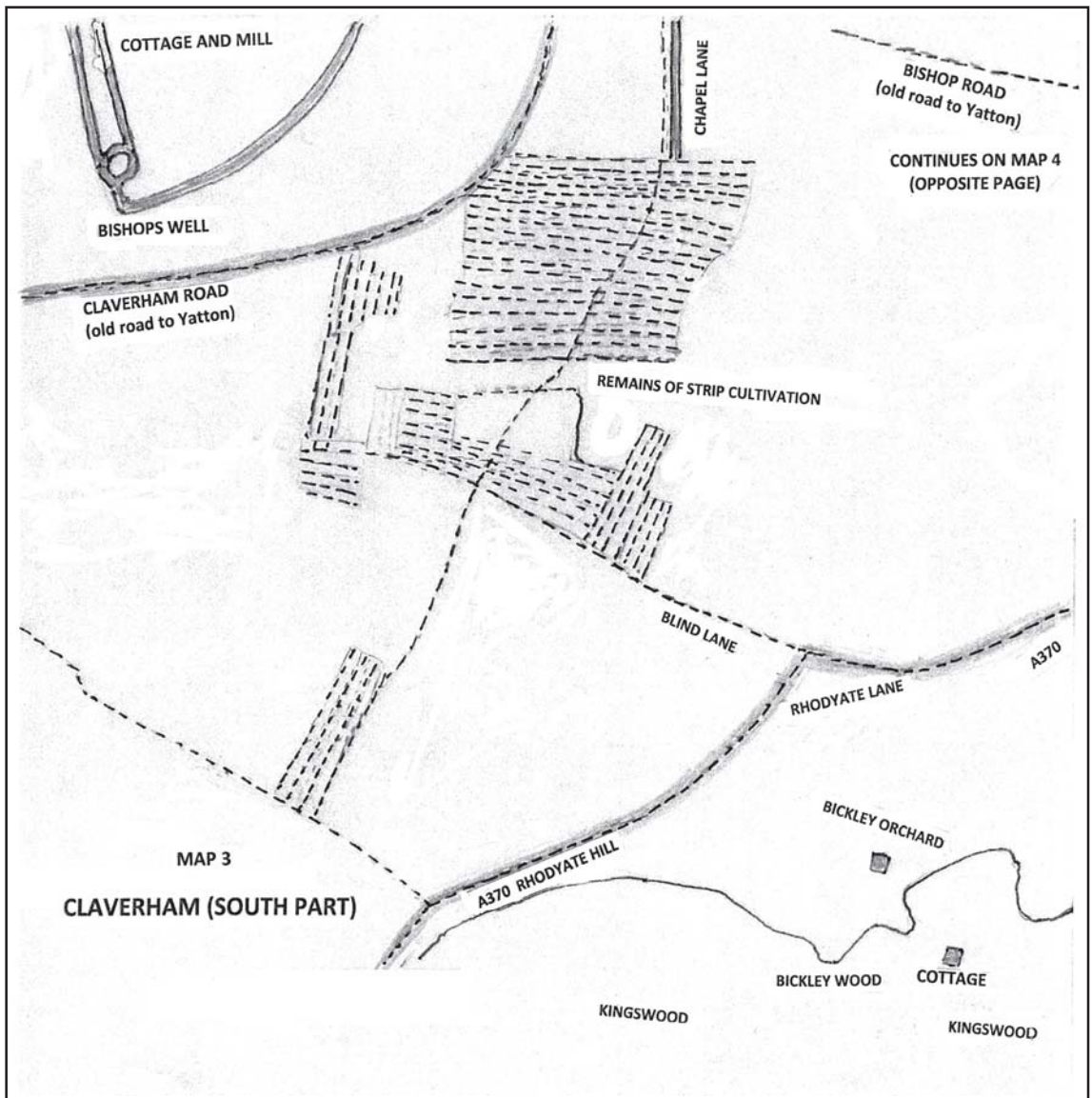
It can be seen by the houses, that the roads through Yatton and through Cleeve must be very old. The ancient road to Wrington can also be traced in the same way. It goes from the A370 up through Chapel Lane, past the old school into Goblin Combe and from there to Wrington (Map 6). The tracks on the map have been taken from the 1799 map and some may not have existed in medieval times. Bishop Road and Claverham Road together were called Yatton Road and this is considered to be the old road to Yatton. There are less medieval houses along this road compared









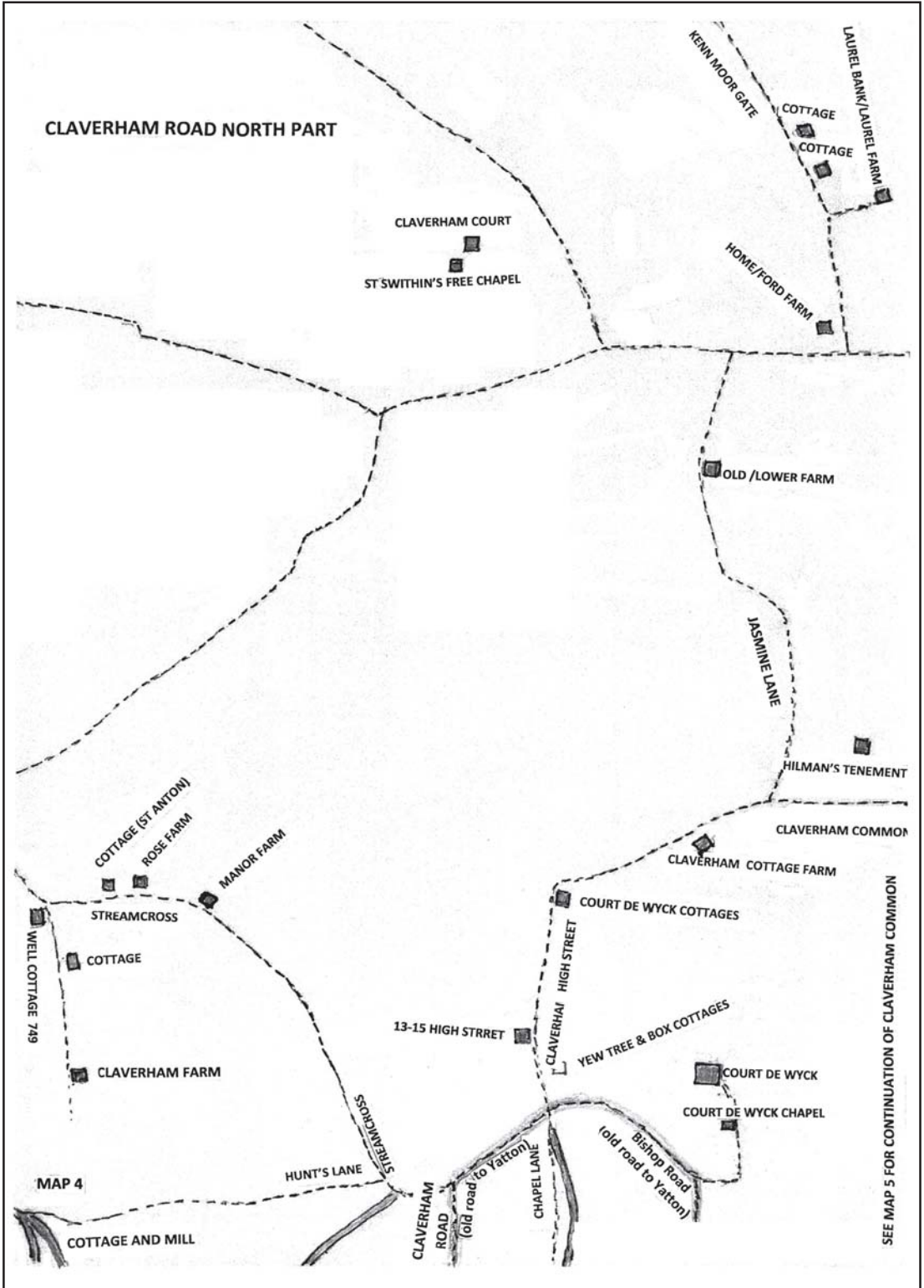


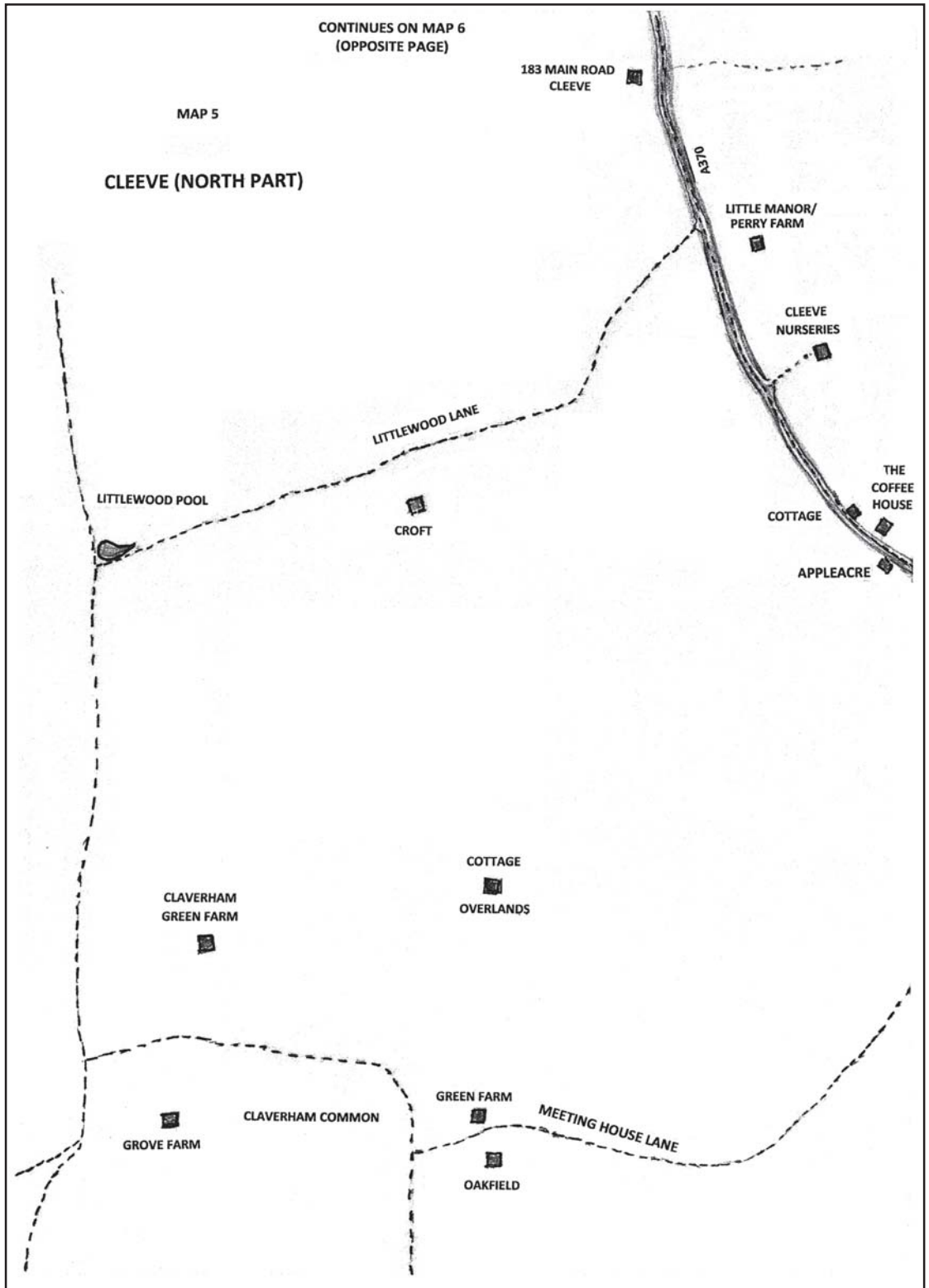
to the number through Cleeve and Yatton but it does pass two ancient wells.

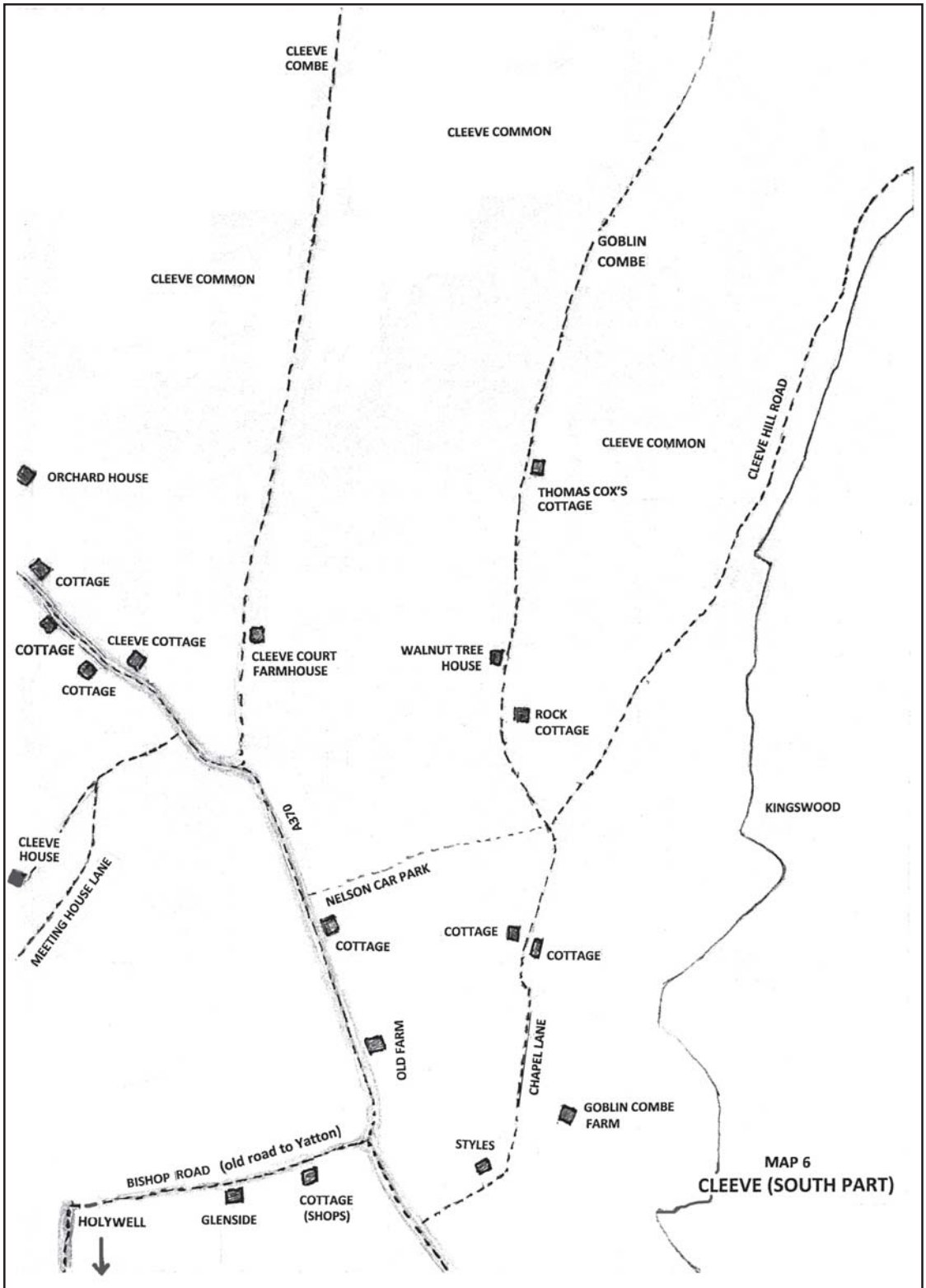
One odd feature concerning the roads and tracks in Yatton is the right of way near Stowey Park (Map 1). This is shown as a road very clearly on the 1799 map and one wonders if it is all that remains of an ancient road, which would have continued along the present right of way to join up with Hunt's Lane (Map 4) at the south end

of Streamcross or up past Claverham Farm to the north end of Streamcross where there is a group of six medieval cottages. This road would pass a very old cottage and mill (Map 3), which must have been built after 1086 as a mill is not mentioned in the Domesday Book.

In the 1799 map small areas of strip cultivation had remained. The tenants worked these, each having one or more







strips in different fields, some more productive than others. I have shown these on the maps but of course in medieval times their areas would have been far larger.

The population of Yatton given in the Domesday Book was a total of 31 villagers or villains, 49 smallholders or cottagers and 8 slaves. The book tells us that the Bishop of Wells owned Yatton (John the Dane having held it before 1066). Claverham is listed separately, Fulcran holding it from the Bishop. To understand the possible population of Yatton during the medieval period it should be remembered that apart from the rich and those with free grazing on the common there were many serfs. The numbers of

farm labourers required vary with each parish and the type of farming being carried out. The position of the poorer people's cottages or hovels is not known and therefore cannot be shown on the map. Not all the houses shown here would have existed at exactly the same time and plague and famine would vary the population. The Black Death in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century reduced the population by at least a third.

*Mary Campbell*

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- 1 Allan Denny; *Owners and Residents of Court de Wick*
  - 2 C Steed, "Let the stones talk" *Glimpses of English History through a North Somerset Parish 2011*



## Yatton's Road Names

In 1936 Yatton was mainly just one high street consisting of six public houses and many farms. There were just a handful of short roads leading off the high street, and there appear to have been no recognised names for these roads.

The Parish Council minutes of this period refer to places as being near Mr. X's house or Mr. Y's farm, but in March of the above year the Parish agreed a list of names and name plates sites be adopted. These were sent to Long Ashton Rural District Council for approval.

In December 1936 it was reported that the District Council was considering the proposed road names and sites for name plates.

Although there is no record in the Council

minutes that these names were ever agreed or that name plates were even erected, all but a few of the proposed names have been adopted, so it could be assumed that the list was approved and the District Council either varied the proposals or they have been altered in subsequent years.

In 1950 the Parish Council approved names of roads to avoid uncertainty, as follows: -



North End Road	Kingston Bridge to Station Bridge
Moor Road	Horsecastle Corner to Moor
Horsecastle	
Wakedean Gardens	
High Street	Station bridge to "Westaway"
South View Terrace	
Laurel Terrace	
Park Avenue	
The Park	
The Avenue	
The Ridge	
Elborough Avenue	Formerly Elborough Street
Derham Park	Formerly Elborough Estate.
Church Road	Miss Eyres shop to Dean Villas
Court Avenue	Formerly Court Farm Estate
Rock Road	
Henley Park	Formerly Henley Estate
Henley Lane	
Claverham Road	"Westaway" to Claverham Post Office
Stowey Park	
High Street, Claverham	Claverham Post Office to Mission Church

Some roads have been altered from the 1936 list, and the Claverham lanes have been omitted. Roads at Cleeve were omitted because Cleeve became a separate parish in 1949.

The road named Holy Well in the 1936 list is now Chapel Lane and Court Road is

now partly Streamcross and partly Lower Claverham.

In later years Parish Council minutes give the following information, (dates are of Council Minutes and not necessarily the dates when the roads were built):-

October 1951	Council houses to be built in Court Avenue.
October 1952	Path to be provided from Henley Park to main road.
November 1952	Land at Biddle Street acquired for council houses.
November 1953	Elborough Street to be renumbered.
February 1954	Biddle Street to be renamed Church Road. <i>(this was from 8 Dean Villas to the Pit)</i> New road at Biddle Street to be Mendip Gardens. New estate at Claverham to be Claverham Park. Elborough Estate to be renamed Derham Park.

March 1956	New road to be named Westaway Park.
March 1959	Campsite at Henley Corner vacated.
September 1960	Development of 53 houses on part of Cadbury Farm.
November 1960	New road to be named Binhay Road.
February 1962	Planning permission for a new vicarage.
May 1962	New road from Church Road to High Street completed.
June 1962	This new road to be Chescombe Road.
February 1964	New road to be Elm Close.
April 1964	Planning application for 11 houses at Rock Road.
May 1964	New road to be Whitehouse Road.
June 1964	Part of allotments at Orchard Lane sold to developers.
August 1964	Claverham allotments sold to developers. New road to be Westaway. New road at Ashleigh Park to be Mendip Road, and spur from it to be Ashleigh Crescent. New road on east of village to be Stowey Road.
September 1964	Westaway to be Westaway Close.
November 1964	Church Road to end at road junction. Remainder to be part of Chescombe Road.
December 1964	Well Lane to have exit into High Street.
March 1965	Development proposed behind Larchmount Hall.
April 1965	New road proposed as Hollowmead Crescent. Proposal for new footpath from Railway Hotel to Horsecastle through new estate.
June 1965	New road to be Rectory Way.
January 1966	Diversion order for Well Lane footpath.
July 1966	Proposed Hollowmead Crescent now to be Hollowmead Close.
August 1966	New shops to be Pages Court.
October 1966	New road to be Rectory Drive.
November 1966	Names proposed for new roads – Heathgate, Lodge Close, Grace Close, Chestnut Drive, Beech Road, Barnards Close, Orchard Way and Cadbury Farm Road.
June 1967	Proposal (but not adopted) that Church Road be made a cul-de-sac ending at the Almshouses
August 1967	Reference to completion of diversion of road to Congresbury, part of old road to be Tripps Corner. A new road to be Wemberham Crescent.
November 1967	New road – Alexander Road proposed. New roads proposed – Standfort Close, St Mary’s View and Lands Close.

January 1968	Alexander Road instead to be Alexander Way. Standfort Close, St Mary's View and Lands Close all to be Church Close. Mention of Franklins Way and Cherry Grove.
April 1968	Stowey Park not to be renamed as part of Stowey Road.
June 1968	New road to be Dunsters Road.
March 1969	Elm Close to be connected to new part of Mendip Road.
April 1969	Stowey Road now open from Cherry Grove to Stowey Park.
May 1970	High Street renumbered.
November 1970	New development at Henley Lodge.
November 1971	Planning application for Health Centre. Orchard Lane now referred to as part of Mendip Road. Planning application for houses on the sawmills site in Church Road.
December 1971	Rock Road to join Mendip Road.
January 1972	New roads to be Marsh Road, The Batch and West Road.
February 1972	Proposed new development at Frost Hill.
March 1972	"Westaway" to be divided into flats.
November 1972	New road to be The Eagles.
February 1973	One way orders for Church Road and Elborough Avenue to be in force from September 1973. Plans for extension of Whitehouse Road.
March 1973	British Legion flats to be Mitford Slade Court, (Orchard Court had been previously suggested).
September 1973	Connection from Mendip Road to new road to Congresbury to be opened.
October 1973	New roads to be Dysons Close, Shiners Elms, Derham Close.
January 1975	Link from High Street to Stowey Road to be called Barberry Farm Road.

Not noted are references to: -

Grassmere Road and Ashleigh Road	Probably early 1960's
Cherry Close	Probably mid 1960's
Cherry Grove	(Mentioned in 1968.)
Jones Close	Probably late 1970s
Mendip Close	Probably mid to late 1960s
Bramley Close	Probably late 1960s
Durban Way	Probably mid 1970s
Anvil Close	Probably late 1970s

A Parish Council map of 1974 shows the spur of Stowey Road near the railway as Battiscombe Road, but this name was not used.

When the estate was built on the site of the Avalon (previously Wake & Dean) factory, Horsecastle was split into Horsecastle Close and Horsecastle Farm Road. Wemberham Lane was extended back from the old railway bridge (Osmond Bridge) to North End Road and new roads were named Avalon Close, The Lawns, The Wood Kilns and Woodmill.

The road on the site of the garden of Yatton Hall was named Myrtle Gardens.

Roads on the Park Farm Estate are Briarstead, Gregory Mead, Hawthorn Crescent and Meadowland, and roads on

the Market Estate are Bramblewood, Moorside and Kenn Moor Road.

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There is a wealth of local knowledge and history that can be gleaned from the origins or reasons for a place's road names and Yatton is no exception.

During the sixties and seventies there was a massive expansion in the population of Yatton and the building of roads and properties and this has continued. A lot of the roads we have today were built during this period and their names, if we care to delve a little, can tell us a lot about Yatton's history. Below are just a very few of these names and a little of the history behind them.

### 1) **Barnards Close**

Barnards Close was built on land behind the Grey House, which was formerly the home for many years of Nurse Barnard. I am sure she will be remembered by many of the older residents of Yatton, for helping in the delivery of their children and their subsequent care.

Until recently there was an apple tree in a corner of the old churchyard where it was usual to bury the very young of this parish who had sadly died. Upon the felling of this tree a wooden plaque was discovered fixed to the tree commemorating her. Yatton also had two vicars named Barnard, Rev. H. W. Barnard (1830 – 1833) and his son Rev. H. J. Barnard (1846 – 1884).

### 2) **Chescombe Road**

Chescombe Road was originally a short cut from the High Street by the side of Lloyd's Bank to the junction with Church Road. Church Road then continued down to Rectory Farm but was later renamed Chescombe Road from this Junction.

Both Chescombe House (now demolished to provide a bigger car park for the supermarket) and Chescombe Villas (which houses the opticians Bell & Stenton and the solicitors John Hodge & Co) are on the opposite side of the High Street near the start of Chescombe Road.



*Chescombe House &  
Chescombe Villas*

*Court Farm  
from Church Path  
1982*



*Retirement Party for Dr.  
Dyson at Railway Hotel  
1965*

*Yatton's Milk/Cheese factory  
now Dairy Close*





### 3) Court Avenue

Court Avenue was formerly called Court Farm Estate as it was built on land adjoining Court Farm. Only the farmhouse now remains. It ceased being a working farm many years ago possibly in the 1940's and the land was sold for building. The road was constructed in two stages, the first in the early 1940's and the second stage as council houses during the early 1950's.

### 4) Dairy Close

Dairy Close marks the original site of Yatton's milk/cheese factory where at least nine of the dairy farmers of the village would take most of their milk. Prior to 1960 Yatton boasted at least 18 farms of which most were dairy farms. Can anyone tell us the date the factory closed?

### 5) Dysons Close

Dr. Alexander Dyson was a Yatton village doctor from 1945 and used his home, Orwell Cottage at 25 High Street, as a surgery until 1960, when premises at 14 Church Road were built and used for the purpose. In 1965, Dr. Dyson retired after 20 years service to the village. The present health centre in Mendip Road was built in 1972 and has recently been improved and enlarged to encompass a pharmacy.

### 6) Grace Close

Dr. W. G. Grace, the famous cricketer, visited Yatton regularly to hunt with the Clifton Foot Beagles, whose kennels were at that time at the Railway Hotel. It is said that he played cricket on the old Yatton cricket ground situated in a field owned by the Nurseries that stretched from Elm Close to Elborough Avenue. Only the Nurseries cottage now remains and is situated off Derham Park.

### 7) Page's Court

Page's Court is the name given to Yatton's Shopping Precinct, which is built on the former site of Court House Farm, a listed and probably medieval building. Scratched on to a bedroom window was *James Churchus 1665*. The farmhouse was demolished in the early 1960's and the Precinct was then built and named after James Baker Page, a previous owner.

### 8) Henley Lodge

Henley Lodge is named after the house 'Henley Lodge', which was situated on this site. It was described in 1799 as a neat house, detached, brew house, stable and barn, but is believed to have been much older than this. In the grounds there was also a very large Tulip tree which botanists from far away would come to see. This and a very large cedar tree were both felled when the house was demolished in the late 1960's.



*Court House Farm, Yatton c.1927*



*Wake and Dean site c.1970s (see p.20)*

**9) Wakedean Gardens**

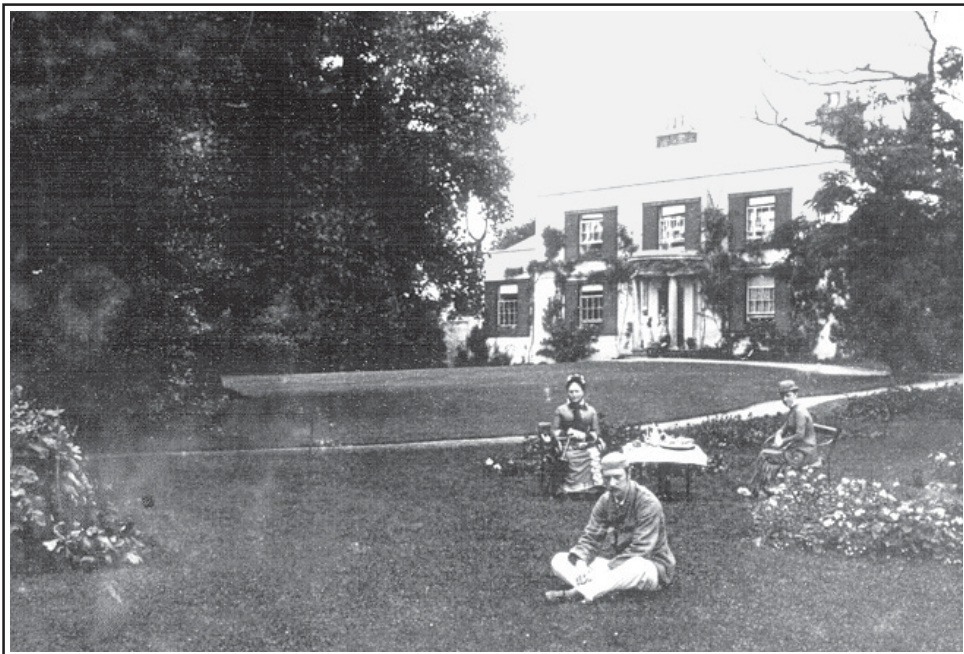
The houses called Wakedean Gardens were built in 1939-40 to house the workers at the Wake & Dean furniture factory. (*This does not include the houses in the centre, which were built at a much later date.*) Built in 1899 the factory made church and school furniture. The factory, later under different management was to be called Yatton Furniture when it employed over 600 people and in 1975 it became Avalon. Both factories produced household furniture. Sadly in 1984 the factory closed after being a large part of the village's life and employment for nearly ninety years.

The factory was demolished and the very large site sold for housing. The roads on this estate are called **Avalon Close, The Lawns, The Wood Kilns and Woodmill.**

It has not been possible to ascertain for complete certainty that this is the reason all of these roads have been so-called, but due to the history surrounding the names it is very probable.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the late Mr J.Vincent for his notable research into the Yatton Parish Council Minutes, which have been a valuable resource for this article.

*Pat Denny*



*Henley Lodge*



## Yatton in 1939 - the year World War II started

My family and I arrived in Yatton in June 1939 to a very different village from what we see today. From Horsecastle crossroads to the Scaur there were eight farms on or adjacent to the High Street. These were: Horsecastle Farm, The Grange, Somerset House (now a residential home), Barberry Farm, Chilton House, Cherry Grove (demolished), Court Farm (demolished) and Rectory Farm - none of which exist as farms today, except Rectory Farm which is in a different location now.

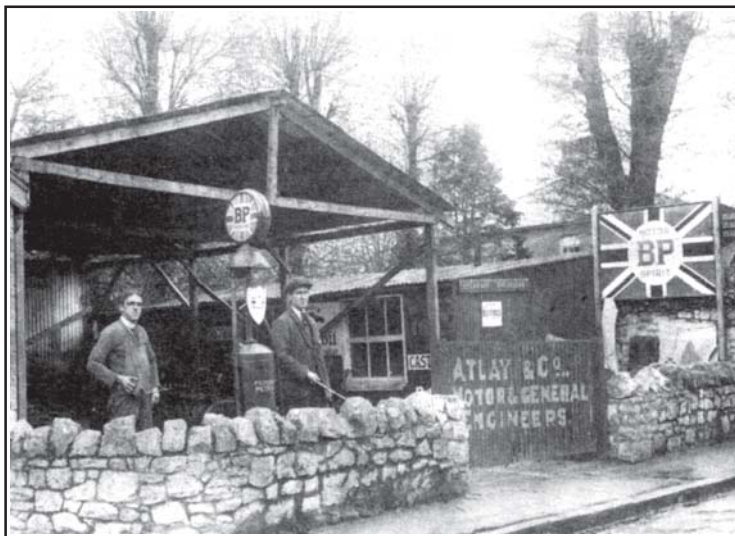
At North End there was what we called the Cheese Factory: local farmers took their milk there, but later it was collected and taken there by lorry. Wake and Dean produced mainly school furniture and employed a large number of local people. Wakedean Gardens was built as staff housing.

Atlay's Garage sold petrol and repaired vehicles, although very few people apart from business people had a car. There was a thriving market on Mondays with drovers bringing cattle from as far away as Bedminster (on foot). Lloyds and Westminster Banks had a sub-office at the market, but very few people apart from

businesses had a bank account. Ledgers and statements were all hand-written in those days.

There was a Gasometer and gas was produced in Wemberham Lane — we could always tell the gas pressure by how high the Gasometer stood. Coke could also be purchased there.

There were five grocer's shops (Pearce's, Griffin's, The Coop, Bane's and Tutt's), three butcher's (The Coop, Stuckey's and Edwards'), a greengrocer, a fishmonger, electrical shop, two baker's shops, two stationers (Manley's and Miss Eyres), a chemist's, ladies' hairdresser, a barber, two draper's (Collins and Tutt's), a jeweller, two



*Atlay's Garage*





*High Street prior to 1939*

builders (Lukins and Parsons), a solicitor, a cycle shop, a post office, a shoe shop, a hardware shop and coal merchant's, as well as five pubs (Railway Inn, Railway Hotel, Butcher's Arms, Prince of Orange, Bell Inn). We also had the sawmills where the timber for Wake and Dean was dried at the time when they were making church and school furniture.

The only estates then were Wake and Dean, Elborough Avenue, Elborough Estate (Derham Park now) and none were completed before war broke out. The Gas showrooms were completed, but never used as fully as intended.

Many modern developments bear names associated with places that have been demolished. The usual transport at that time was train or bicycle, although Atlay's Garage ran a taxi service. There was an automated telephone exchange, one of the earliest in the country, but few people

had a 'phone. Newspapers, the wireless and the Picture house were the only ways of getting news.

Again, life was very different: at fourteen normal schooling finished and work started — normally a six-day week, with seven for some. Each tradesman had a certain day(s) on which they would call: milkman (often twice per day), baker, butcher, grocer, fishmonger, coalman, greengrocer, hardware and household goods.

One amusing thing I do recall was that every Monday before Market, Bill Turner (licensee of the Railway Inn, now the Market Inn) put his parrot outside on an orange box, as there was a likelihood of farmer's wives going into the pub. It wouldn't have been good for him as the parrot swore, but outside it couldn't be distinguished from the men!

*Brian Claxton*





# The Life of A Farming Family

## PART 2 – 1936 – 1972

Winnie Court's diaries cover the years 1936 – 1942, her daughter Marjorie also kept diaries. Eleven years of these between 1960 and 1990 survive, although some are not complete.

In part 1 we covered Emily Binning nee Hill's life in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1936 she was living with her daughter Winnie Court and three grandchildren. She spent most of her time at home in Claverham Green farmhouse. However she had many visitors including her sisters, Lucy and Agnes and those of her sister Elizabeth's children and grandchildren who still lived in the area. Winnie's 1936 diary is not as detailed as those of the following years. Emily is mentioned only twice. In January Emily held a sewing meeting in her house. In April she and her sister Agnes, who was staying with her, were taken to Weston by their friend Mrs Wyatt. In March 1937, Emily was taken for

a drive by her nephew Mervyn and that was because the day was exceptionally fine. She had a bad fall in February 1938 and from then onwards her health deteriorated. She was given a water-bed and the district nurse called every day. On March 6<sup>th</sup> the Vicar called, "he had heard about Granny." "Aunt Lucy had a chat with him, quite fell in love with him." The nurse is mentioned less frequently in 1938. In the Spring of 1939, "Granny became quite unwell" and although Emily had a better summer, at one stage a "living in" nurse was obtained with a small child, Georgie. She stayed until Emily died on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1939. The following entry is the day of the funeral:-

**Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup> 1939** – *Lovely day. We buried Granny in lovely sunshine. Aunts Agnes and Lucy went with Reg, and Frank with Norman, Mervyn, Olive [see family tree] and Adelaide. The bearers were Mr Young, Mr Millier, Mr Wyatt & Mr Crossman. Everyone except Mr Millier came back to tea. Roland came over before 3.0pm, thinking the funeral was at 3.0 but it was at 2.0pm. Frank came after all, he was bound to, he said. Mervyn took Adelaide home [to Cotham, Bristol] and came back. [Adelaide was a Hill relation who lived with the Taylor family in Bristol.]*

Frank needs a little explanation here. He was one of the two farm workers. George was the other. Frank seems rather a feeble character, often unwell and unable to work. Reg had met him in Clevedon on the day before the funeral and told him about Emily's death. Frank was upset but said he was too poorly to come to the funeral!

**Winnie Court** was much more active outside the house than her mother at the

same age. The farm does not play as big a part as it had for her mother. She is in charge of the farm and pays the wages of the men. She does record the births, the deaths and illnesses of the animals, and the activities of Reg and the two farm labourers, especially when they were mowing or hay-making. Her interests were family and friend's visits. She loved whist drives which she often attended, making notes about her cards if they were

good or bad and when she won prizes. She went into Bristol for shopping and visited her family in Cotham. During 1936 Winnie performed two kind deeds. The first was when her nephew Lewis came to the farm and asked her urgently to come and nurse his mother, Phoebe, who was very ill. She immediately responded but after a week she managed to find a replacement as she needed to get back to her mother and the farm. The second was when her great friends Mr & Mrs Wyatt asked if she could take their three children for two weeks while their mother was in hospital. The family rallied round to entertain the children. During this year she mentions the death of George V and listening to his funeral on the wireless and also Edward VIII speaking to the Empire. She thought "he spoke very nicely." Very strangely she makes no mention about the Abdication at the end of that year, although she mentions George VI's coronation in 1937.

She records the health of her children and their activities. Reg ran the farm and we are told of his visits to market, to farm events and even when he had his hair cut! He played badminton very often and also hockey. Marjorie and Stella were keen on

badminton like their brother and also played tennis. Stella played hockey. All three seemed to be very good at games and were in the village teams. Just before Christmas Roland Taylor appears in the diary and becomes extremely attentive to Marjorie! This friendship continued until the end of Marjorie's life but they never married. It appears that both Marjorie & Roland felt they must stay at home to look after their mothers. Reg did not marry either but Stella married Charles Ford in the late 1960s.

The lives of all the family were made more interesting with visits from Mervyn Taylor, Elizabeth's son. He often came for the weekend. During these visits he would help Reg on the farm and went to badminton and football matches with him. He also took Winnie, Marjorie and Stella for excursions in his car. Many trips to local beauty spots were made, such as to Longleat, Minehead and Wookey Hole. Twice they went to the South Coast for the day visiting places like Seaton, Lyme Regis and Beer. Once Winnie went away for the night with Mervyn and Marjorie, leaving Stella to care for Emily. As the following entries show, they had a wonderful time:

**Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1938** *Nice day. Mervyn came and we started for the South coast at 9.30am. Marjorie with us, we stopped [at] "Holden Moor" & had lunch then we made for Dawlish, quite pretty but the railway spoilt it, then on to Teignmouth which I liked very much. Then Torquay, which I expected to see better. We went into Cockington and had tea, saw the Church, Court & Old Black Smithy and back again to Torquay, where we spent the night. Mervyn listened to the band. Marjorie and I went to the pictures & back to bed.*

**Sunday September 4<sup>th</sup> 1938** *Lovely day. Had breakfast at 9.0am then had another look round Torquay, then on to Paignton, very nice place. We went into Goodrington & on to Broadsands, little quiet spot down a narrow path through fields. Had lunch there by the sea, then went back to Goodrington & sat down for an hour, went round the lake there & then back again to Paignton for tea. Mervyn had a dip & we sat on the sands till we depart for home at 5.30pm, reached home about 9.0pm.*

World affairs are never mentioned except in 1938-39, when the following entries were made:-

**Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup> 1938** .... Stella went to Yatton in evening to ARP [Air-raid precautions] meeting.

**Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup> 1938** .... Mr Neville Chamberlain flew to Germany to try to end the troubles abroad. Hitler welcomed him

**Monday September 26<sup>th</sup> 1938** .... War clouds seem to be near, hope it will be averted. Stella played tennis .....

**Wednesday September 28<sup>th</sup> 1938** Stormy. George went to Bridgwater fair, went with Joe & Tom Shepherd by train. Seems another ray of hope for peace. Mr Chamberlain going over again to see Hitler, his 3<sup>rd</sup> visit. Roland came over in the evening .....

**Thursday September 29<sup>th</sup> 1938** Fine day. .... Reg started badminton for the first time at Nailsea, the girls started badminton at the Assembly Rooms. Everyone hoping Mr Chamberlain's visit will be a success.

**Friday September 30<sup>th</sup> 1938** Stormy. News came through of Peace. Mr Chamberlain had a wonderful reception. Joe Wyatt came in the morning to see Aunt Agnes [staying]. Both girls home .....

**Friday August 25<sup>th</sup> 1939** Fine. Stella & I met Joe at the gate to meet the Claverham Choir for their outing to Whipsnade Zoo. We left between 7.0 & 7.30am calling at Swindon & Oxford and reaching the Zoo about 1.0pm. We were thrilled with it, Stella took many photographs. We had lunch & tea together & started for home about 5.0pm reaching it after 11.0pm. We fetched our gas masks from Cleve.

**Sunday August 27<sup>th</sup> 1939** ..... Stella went for a ride round on her bike in evening. War clouds seem to be hanging over us.

**Tuesday August 29<sup>th</sup> 1939** Fine & warm. Busy hay-making .....

**Wednesday August 30<sup>th</sup> 1939** Fine. Busy in Overlands hay-making. Nurse went home in evening. Stella was at tennis, she was back before Dot went. We think war is passing over. Mr Wakefield called for tea order.

**Thursday August 31<sup>st</sup> 1939** Storms. War seems on us again. Sending all children out of London tomorrow. Nurse went home in the afternoon to do ironing. Roland came over but went before supper as his parents are on holiday & his sister is alone.

**Friday September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939** Fair. We are mowing rushes on Cleverden's ground in Moors. War is on us. Reg went to bank in morning.

**Saturday September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939** Storms. Paid George. Finished mowing rushes in Claverham Moors.

War, War, War, nothing but War. Stella went to Clevedon to dentist, had a job to get there, the trains were so full of London children coming to safer parts. Mervyn motored down to see us for an hour in the evening. Betty came to see Nurse & her husband came.

**Sunday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939** Storms. Dot came to tea, went soon after. She & Stella went for a walk & Dot did not come back. Roland came over about 6.0pm. for half an hour, had been driving children to different [foster] homes & was going back again to do so. Mr Chamberlain spoke to us at 11.15 this morning & the King at 6.0pm. Nurse went home to tea & back in evening.

**Monday September 4<sup>th</sup> 1939** *Fine. War dreadful War on us. Listening to wireless to hear results. The London children are coming around Claverham & Clevee.*

**Tuesday September 5<sup>th</sup> 1939.** *Fine. Went to Bristol, got brown velvet curtains for dining room for the blackout & more wool for my rug. Came back by 2.38 bus. The children are still coming to Claverham & Yatton. Made curtains & hung them. Men are finishing up Overlands hay-making. Stella went to Yatton to a first aid meeting.*

**Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup> 1939** *Fine. Finished Overlands mow. Nurse & Georgie [Nurse's child] in morning, back in evening. Stella busy on farm.*

The following year all was fairly peaceful until on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1940 when a raider came over at 2.0pm and dropped its bombs in Wales. From then onwards raiders came over most nights, especially during a full moon. On August 24<sup>th</sup> "Miss Anson [Land girl] cycled round to see a bomb crater in Claverham." One event occurred on August 25<sup>th</sup> when "a young Polish airman made a false landing in a field at Brockley". He was not hurt. On September 8<sup>th</sup> a big raid on London was recorded "dreadful,

hundreds killed, we have more peace in consequence." Foot & mouth disease attacked the cattle in Locking in November 1940, the previous out-break in the area had been in February 1938. The raids in the area became worse towards the end of September. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1940 "At 12.00pm a mass of German planes went over & our Spitfires after them". September 27<sup>th</sup>, "had another mass attack of German planes in the morning."

**Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup> 1940** *Nice day. Went to Betty to tea. Just after 6pm the raids started coming over dreadfully & we soon found out it was Bristol's night & saw great fires in the distance just after 8pm. Phyllis & her husband brought Stella home. We slept on the floor, the All Clear went about 12pm & Reg went to bed. Ruth stayed to dinner, then went with Joan to Sunday School. [presumably this refers to earlier in the day]*

**Monday November 25<sup>th</sup> 1940** *Fine day. The raiders started about 6.30pm, seemed for Avonmouth but over in about half an hour & nothing more all night. Miss Anson arrived home about 1am after a very disturbed journey, bringing another land girl, who was stranded on Bristol station. I put her up for the night. Rhoda came in to tell us all our Bristol relatives were safe. Norman [cousin] had been down.*

**Tuesday November 26<sup>th</sup> 1940** *Nice day. Gave the land girl breakfast & the Great Western Railway brought Miss Anson's goods so the stranger rode back to the station with the van to get to Yate. The raiders started again about 6.30pm it seems for Avonmouth but not for long & we heard no more all night.*

It is interesting that the Court family did not appear to have brought their beds downstairs as many other people did, except on the night of November 24<sup>th</sup>. They seemed to sit downstairs until the

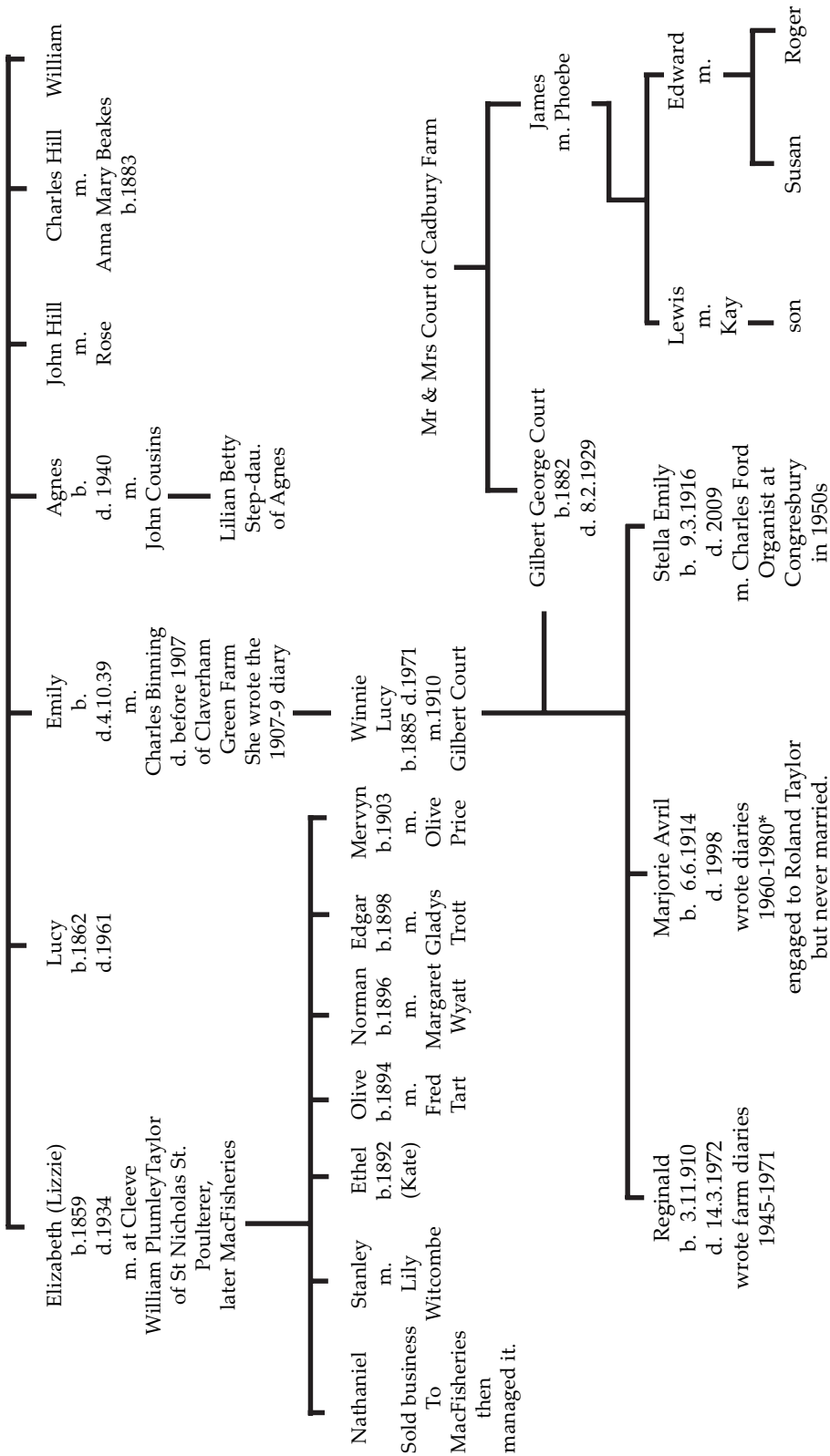
All Clear each night and this could be 4.0 in the morning. They must have been exhausted. Raids on Bristol were heavy in December and many people came out from Bristol to seek safety at night.

**Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup> 1940** *Nice day. We had quite an exciting day. Natt [cousin] rang Stella up asking her if I would put a friend of his & his wife [Mr & Mrs Robinson] up for bed & breakfast. They came to tea & just before them Mr & Mrs Smith, Emmie & Violet [Bristol friends] [came] asking to stay, they had been bombed out, so I had them all. Joan went to dinner & tea with Ruth. Norman came in.*

**Family Tree of Hills, Binnings & Courts**

Emma Sperrin b. 1818 at Court Farm, Backwell d. Yatton 1905

William Hill m. Emma Sperrin



*Mary Campbell*

\*The diaries that remain are 76, 78, 81, 85, 88 and 1990.



Mr & Mrs Robinson went away during the day-time and for the weekends until January 2 when they went to Reading. The Smiths were able to return to their home

by December 20<sup>th</sup>. Transcriptions from the diaries will give a flavour of what life was like for people during such a traumatic time.

**Sunday December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1940** *Frost. Mr & Mrs Robinson went off to Bristol to help. Natt came back to dinner & remained the rest of the day. We got Joan ready & Stella put her on the bus to go home for Xmas after dinner. E. Millier came for 2 ducks he had ordered. Miss Packer called in the afternoon asking for a duck for Mrs Hartley. Raiders over early.*

**Monday December 23<sup>rd</sup> 1940** *Frost hard & cold. Mr & Mrs Robinson went off this morning, going away for Xmas. We may not see them until the end of the week. Stella rode to Bristol with them & went to Cotham to see Aunt Lucy & came back by bus. Mrs Cleverden came down & said we were having a soldier for Xmas dinner. Marjorie took Mrs Taylor's chicken to her [Roland's mother]. Raiders over.*

**Tuesday December 24<sup>th</sup> 1940** *Dirty day. Busy preparing for Xmas. Mr Taylor called with present to Marjorie from Roland [who was in the army.] Stella went to the office for an hour. Miss Anson had her day at Weston. Miss Packer called for her duck. Stella gave me nice blue vases for the sitting room, Marjorie nice table mats. No raiders.*

**Wednesday December 25<sup>th</sup> 1940** *Nice day. We had promised to have a soldier for Xmas but Mr Carter called in the morning saying no soldiers were coming. Then when we had half finished dinner he brought us two. We entertained them with cards & darts till after 11.0pm, when they left us. Norman & Daphne came in. They were over to Joe's for dinner. So ends Xmas day. No raiders.*

The diaries are missing for the first part of 1941 so there is no description of the Good Friday raid on Bristol nor the night when bombs fell on the Rhoddy and Bickley fields, which were quite close to them. By

the time the diary continues in June, life was more peaceful.

The following dates have been selected to show their daily lives, including a family wedding:-

**Wednesday June 11<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Nice day. I met Miss Packer at the top & walked to Cleeve Whist Drive. Mrs Cleverden had a car & I rode with them, I had very good luck until the last 3 hands, then I had 3,5,2. I met Mary Hooper there & she is coming to her sister Mrs Dummit for duration. We had a quiet night, did not hear a plane & it was a lovely night.*

**Wednesday July 16<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Dull & rain at night. Kitty & Bert came down for the day together, they left to meet bus just after 6.0pm & Joan back to school. Mr & Mrs Smith came, had a cup of tea & stayed until nearly 9pm. Betty Puddy came over & spent the evening. Miss Packer came to see if [there] was any hay-making & stayed awhile. Miss Anson went to Loamers. Quiet night.*

**Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1941** *Nice day. Mervyn & Reg went off this morning to get to Norman's to dinner. Then pick up Edgar & on to Wales for his wedding tomorrow. ... Quiet night.*

**Monday August 4<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Rough storms. Mervyn's wedding day, he brought Reg as far as Bristol where he caught a bus home & arrived about 8.00pm. They called at Natt's for tea. Reg enjoyed the trip & had a nice time. Miss Packer helped milk for him. .... Quiet night.*

**Friday August 8<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Fair day. Mervyn & Olive came here on their way home from honeymoon, stayed a little while & started off again for London. Women in mangels, Stella helped them [she was on holiday]. Mr & Mrs Smith with Emmie called. Reg & John Puddy on old car cutting thistles. Quiet night.*

**Thursday August 14<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Fair day. .... Busy drying hay in Marl pits & in evening turning wheat. I went to Whist Drive & had 1<sup>st</sup> prize. Mr G. Burdge & Crossman came again about ploughing up more land. Quiet night.*

**Tuesday August 19<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Fair. Started hauling wheat, Miss Packer here. Stella was very poorly came home from work (very sick). Roland here starting his leave, he & his father had tea here .... Roland wanted to get home early for some sleep. Quiet night.*

**Thursday October 30<sup>th</sup> 1941** *Nice day, little rain at night. I went to my usual afternoon whist at Church Room. Cyril came & took Stella, Marjorie & Miss Anson to a dance at the Church Hall, Yatton. Got home just after 1.0am. .... Reg dragging wheat, Marshall Clark pulling mangels. One or two planes went over between 8.0 & 9.0pm & gunfire nothing after.*

Winnie seldom mentions how the war is progressing although she did write in 1941 on how glad she was that the Russians were killing so many Germans. She does not mention El Alamein, the turning point of the war, or Winston Churchill's speeches. She records General Smuts' broadcast on October 21<sup>st</sup> and on October 31<sup>st</sup>, the afternoon air-raid on Canterbury.

At the end of every day she writes the words "Quiet Night." This was after most of the danger of bombing had passed. Winnie was taken into hospital on September 14<sup>th</sup> 1942 for a thyroid operation by Mr Robert Cooke. It was two weeks before she was allowed to get up and she was discharged on September 29<sup>th</sup>. The following entry was made on -

**Friday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1941** *Lovely day. I sat out in front all the afternoon, Dr Ursula [Damrel nee Wood] came to see me, she told me I was cut about more than Mr Cooke's other patients as mine was so deeply rooted, clinging to my blood vessels & wind pipe & no wonder I was feeling ill. After Dr had gone, Margaret Hawkins came in & stayed for a cup of tea. She asked for Mervyn's address. In the evening the bull got loose, we had to let him stay out, couldn't do anything in the dark. In the morning Mr Shapland's man brought him back, he got with his cows, everything all right. Quiet night.*

Winnie made a full recovery. Her existing diary ends on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1943. We can get a little more news of her and the family from Marjorie's 1960 & 1962 diaries. Stella had met her future husband, Charles Ford, by 1960. Winnie was still leading an active life. She visited Stourhead in June 1960. In 1962 she continued to go to Whist Drives. She went out in the evenings to her sister-in law Phoebe and the family in Cotham, Bristol and

was counting her cattle on the moors and having her hair set in Weston. Marjorie's next existing diaries are 1969 & 1970. Stella had married Charles by 1969. For some reason either Stella, Roland or Charles spent the nights at the farm. The reason for this is not known, possibly it was for Winnie's sake but it could have been because Reg was unwell. He was described as "poorly" in April. Winnie's life was quieter, no whist drives are mentioned

but Stella and Mervyn were still taking her out for short drives to see the cattle on the Moors, to Clevedon and to Clapton-in-Gordano one evening. On Mothering Sunday in March Stella and Charles brought her flowers as did Stanley [cousin] and his children. On Christmas Day Marjorie was alone at Claverham Green farm with her mother and Reg but Stella and Charles called in the evening. Although Stella was married, she came over to help nearly every day. In 1970, which is the last year we can have a

glimpse of Winnie's life, the Bristol cousins, especially Norman, were still visiting and Mervyn & Olive came to stay from time to time. All the year Stella took Winnie for short drives in her car. Unfortunately Reg became very ill in December 1970 and was admitted to Frenchay Hospital. Roland or Stella or Charles continued to be with Winnie and Marjorie at night. Reg managed to get home in the New Year. Marjorie's diary for 1971 does not exist but Reg had kept farming diaries all his adult life.

These extracts were transcribed from Reg's farm diary:-

**Sunday February 21<sup>st</sup> 1971** *Nurse (Roly poly) came to dress my wound. [This last was written before the news of Winnie's stroke] Mother taken ill after dinner. Doctor called 5.50pm, suspected slight stroke*

**Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1971** *Doctor to see Mother fairly early, about same. Nurse to dress my wound and help the girls with Mother. Nurse again to help with mother, (she is improving). Self walk about yard etc late afternoon.*

**Tuesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1971** *Nurse Croot to attend to Mother & to dress my wound. Mother still very ill. Nurse again afternoon to Mother. A. Pope brought Hereford bull calf to put on cow. Paid £23.10.0. Bert Wyatt called early with bed rest for Mother.*

**Wednesday February 24<sup>th</sup> 1971** *Nurse Weeks (Backwell) to Mother & to dress my wound. Doctor suspects new [ ] with Mother. Self stroll in yard & to see new calf brought by A. Pope yesterday.*

**Thursday February 25<sup>th</sup> 1971** *Nurse Croot to Mother (about the same) & dress my wound. Nurse Morgan in afternoon to Mother & discussed Ripple bed. Charles [Ford] & [Jack] Atwell called.*

**Friday February 26<sup>th</sup> 1971** *Nurse Morgan brought Ripple bed & dressed my wound. Doctor called, Mother less strong.*

**Saturday February 27<sup>th</sup> 1971** *Nurse Blagdon to attend to Mother & my wound. **Mother worse & sinking & passed away 11.30pm.** Nurse from Claverham here & Charles made contact with Bill Price [? Undertaker]*

**Thursday March 4<sup>th</sup> 1971** *Mother's funeral at Cleeve 2.30pm. (Self did not go, general advice.) Bearers – A. Young, E. Court, Ian Taylor, M. Binning. A big number of family back for cup of tea etc.*

Reg died on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 1972, almost exactly one year after the death of his mother.

*Mary Campbell*



## Decoy Site, Kenn (later Claverham) Moor

*Findings of site visit by Marianne and Michael Pitman and YCCCART \**

August/September 2008

The remains of a blast shelter, part of a Starfish site can be seen along the north side of Claverham Drove on the northeast side of Decoypool Drove. It was used for a short while as a dwelling immediately after the WWII. It was surveyed by Ian Donald in February 1987 and the purpose of YCCCART investigation was to see how much the site had deteriorated and to try to answer some of the outstanding questions. The possibility of conservation was discussed.

When bombing was expected in Bristol before London, the government organised decoy fires to attract the bombers away from Bristol at Wharf Farm Kingston Seymour, Priddy, Downside and Kenn Moor.

Starfish is short for Night Special Fires or QF. As the Germans dropped incendiaries on targets before bombing them these fires were to attract the bombs away from the real target of Bristol or Avonmouth. The enemy fires would be put out quickly and these alternative sites would be lit immediately. Kenn Moor site was operational in early 1941 and decommissioned on September 21st 1944. It was fired on March 27<sup>th</sup> 1944, but no bombs were collected.

Most starfish covered 10-15 acres and each firing used 25-30 tons of flammable material. There were three types of fire, usually 6 boiling diesel oil fires, 2 paraffin grid repeaters and 116 sawdust and scrap wood baskets. The first two burnt for four hours and the baskets for one hour, so a quarter



were lit every hour for four hours. Detonation was electrically initiated after a telephone call from RAF Lulsgate and if this failed, were lit manually. Sometimes creosote pools were lit. The sites were built and rebuilt as necessary by William Cowlin and Son Ltd, Colston Electrics did the electrics and Arthur Scull the plumbing.

They were only used on cloudy nights or they would have been recognised as a fake city burning.

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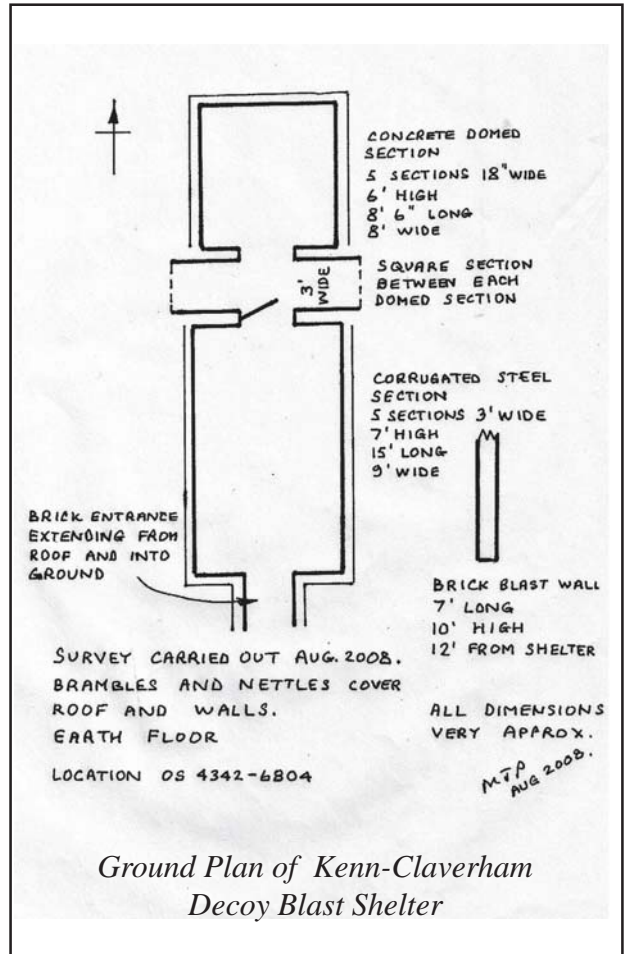
\* NB. The site is on private land and can only be visited with the permission of the landowner.



**Current state of blast shelter and generator house**

The corrugated roof and sides, and some brick blast walls of the shelter still stand. The main entrance door faces the corner of the intersecting drives and is protected by ascending stepped red brick walls. The door has gone but the doorway has a metal surround supported by a frame. The turf covering has also disappeared to expose the roof externally despite being replaced by Andrew Williams, the owner. The structure has some small holes but the interior mud covered floor is dry. The ribs, horizontal supporting bars and J fixings for the semicircular corrugated sheets can still be seen.

There are two main chambers separated by a passageway open at the north end and with a door held open to the west. The first and larger chamber has semicircular end sections with some regular round apertures on the south side. The second chamber is similar and



*Ground Plan of Kenn-Claverham Decoy Blast Shelter*



has a small hatch at ground level on the west side and the central panel at the far end has a semi-circular opening at the top. There are reported to be metal fixings on the floor for a diesel generator under the mud. It appears to be made of concrete and was constructed to a different specification for the generator.



Outside there is a freestanding blast brick wall obscured by brambles protecting the northern end of the passageway. After the war a blast wall protecting the front entrance was removed but the foundations remain.

The building was used subsequently as a cattle shelter and is undermined by badger setts.

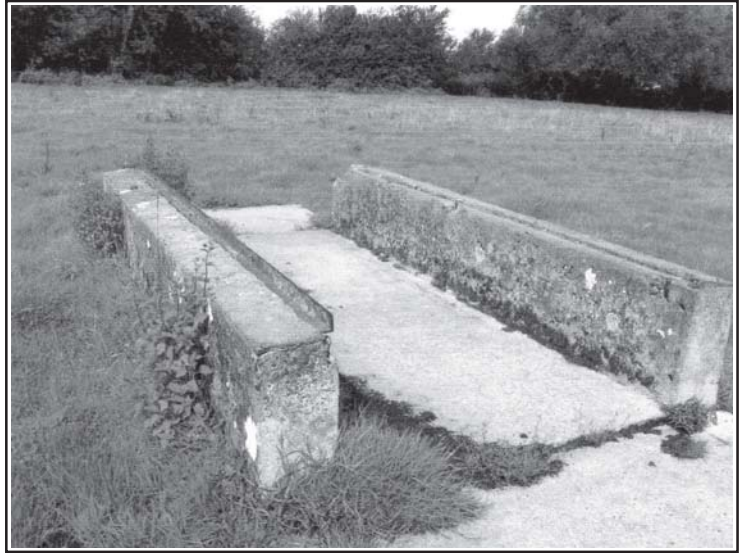
**Other shelter**

The bridge over the rhyne is reinforced concrete possibly from the small building on the west of Decoypool Drove which has since disappeared .

**Concrete holders**

In the field to the north are two concrete structures about 30 metres apart lying west east and made up of two small parallel walls and a longer base on each. The base concrete extends beyond the end of each set of walls. There are square holes in pairs in each slab and metal fixings in each of the walls on top which were probably to secure to baskets of wood shavings. There appear to have been grooves cut parallel in the end pieces which are likely to have been due to shuttering when they were built.

There are also four small mounds in pairs between the concrete structures linked by raised paths. AW understands that these were ash heaps and cinder tracks to aid movement on potentially boggy ground. There are also reported to be a further two concrete bases lying to the north buried in the ground.



Many pig troughs were brought from Yatton station by horse and cart but their use is not known.

**Possible site for searchlight**

From the air photos of 1946 there appears to be a round area which may have been a searchlight pad on the west side in the fourth field from the road. However a 95 year old farmer, Roly Hazell of Manor Farm, Kenn who farmed in the area during the Second World War said there was never a searchlight and this was corroborated by another 93 year old farmer, Len Burdge who farmed nearby. Len thought the area may have been the site of a circular feeder and surrounding hoof prints. Len identified where bombs dropped on the moor and these were corroborated against official records so his memories are likely to be correct.

**Possible rocket launchers**

There were batteries of rocket launchers so that rockets simulating an AA Anti-aircraft barrage could be launched to disorient

enemy pilots and searchlights. These were remembered by Peter Day and David Pearce but no evidence was found for them unless the concrete structures were for that purpose.

**Manning**

The site was manned first by the RAF from 1940-1944 by amongst others Lotty Forbes and Ginger Pooley and Sgts Andy Maine and Hussey; the latter two of whom lodged in Kenn Street with Mrs Staples.

They did odd jobs in Kenn. Five others lodged at Kenn Court with the Dyers and five at Mill Farm with Archie Griffin.

**Other parts of the site**

When the fields were ploughed about 2004 a bag of coal was found in the old plantation alongside the drove but further to the north, as well as concrete bases for the decoys.

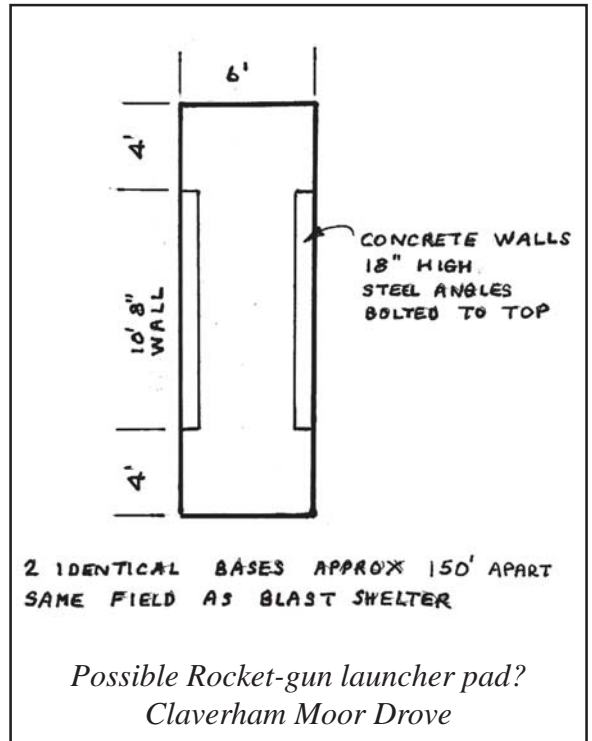
**Ownership**

The land belonged to Mountstevens from Yatton during WWII and land was rented to Ray Naish by Arthur Edwards. Then it was owned by Roly Gray from Bizley Farm, West End Nailsea until it was sold to Andrew Williams of Kingston in the 1990s and he still owns it.

The fields border onto the original wetland plantation or forest on Jeff Naish's land at Decoy Pool Farm at West End Nailsea.

William Naish, Ray's great great grandfather built the road on willow faggotts.

Charles and Cuthbert Stuckey ran Blue Angus on these fields earlier in the twentieth century and Price's colts were



also there. There were always a lot of reeds that used to be burnt off.

**Conclusion**

Ian Donald identified in February 1987 the structures identified in roughly the same state of repair.

YCCART identified the efforts AW had made to preserve the site and concluded that the group could not do anything to support preservation further because of the badger setts but hoped AW would continue to use it as a calf shelter and replace the turf roof.

Additional information from Vince Russett/SMR/CBA, Ian McDonald, John Penney, Ian James and Donald Brown has been included.

*Marianne Pitman*



## Wartime Incidents in Yatton

The details were extracted mainly from the Daily Summaries issued by the Civil Defence, No. 7 (South Western) Regional Office, Bristol. No single complete set survives, but that at the Somerset Record Office in Taunton is the most comprehensive. However there are other sets, albeit less complete, one in the Gloucestershire Record Office at Gloucester and another two in different files in the National Archives at Kew. So by extracting all I could at Taunton, I was able to add the missing reports from Gloucester and Kew in order to obtain a complete picture of the bombing in the Avon area.

As the details from all over the West Country were telephoned to Bristol and then quickly typed up they are riddled with spelling mistakes etc regarding locality names and the like and I have already discovered hundreds of these so any corrections are most welcome!

### 2/3.8.40

Between 22.00 and 23.40 hrs Junkers 6 Junkers Ju 88's of 11/KG 51 flying from Orly airfield near Paris attempted to bomb the Bristol Aeroplane Company's plant at Filton. A searchlight near Bristol was also attacked.

### Yatton

01.47 hrs (approx.) 2 H.E.'s in a field near Moorstreet Bow, 1 mile NE of Yatton railway station, on the Clevedon - Yatton Moor Road. The bombs fell in Yates Field, some 50 yards north of Bow Bridge, on the left hand side of the road near the river. No damage.

### 16/17.8.40

During the night 19 Heinkel He 111's of II/KG 27 flying from Bourges and Dinard were briefed to attack a number of objectives including Avonmouth and Filton airfield. These were claimed attacked between 23.25 and 03.30 hrs.

### Yatton

02.25 hrs (approx.), 5 H.E.'s between Yatton and Kenn. Craters about 10 feet in diameter

x 4 feet deep, (1 crater 200 Yards west of Middle Mud Lane). Telephone lines on main G.W.R. damaged. No casualties.

### 23/24.8.40

During the night 11 Heinkel 111's of I/KG 27 at Tours were briefed to attack Avonmouth while II/KG 27 at Bourges and Dinard sent 8 Heinkels to Bristol Docks and III/KG 27 at Rennes sent a further 12 Heinkels to Bristol Docks.

### Yatton and Claverham

A total of 12 H.E.'s including 1 Oil Bomb reported.

02.30 hrs, 1 H.E. outside "Folley Meade", Claverham Road. 8 H.E.'s between Weston Road and Yatton Waterworks.

4 H.E.'s off Clay Road, including 1 H.E. behind Pearce's Garage. 1 H.E. damaged Stuckey's Garage and Knowles Farm buildings on the opposite side of the road. About 18 houses in Clay Road suffered damage to roofs, windows and ceilings.

4 H.E.'s at S.Young's Farm, 1 cow killed, 1 calf injured.

Total animal casualties 5 sheep, 2 cows and 2 calves.

**25.9.40**

At 11.45 hrs 58 Heinkel He 111's of Stab, I, II and III/KG 55 attacked the Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton.

**Yatton**

3 H.E.'s, including 1 on the railway siding and 2 in a field. Clevedon Branch line temporarily blocked.

**24.10.40**

During the day a single Heinkel He 111 of III/KG 55 flying from Villacoublay airfield was briefed to attack the Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton. Oberleutnant Speck von Sternberg and his crew reported attacking a railway junction east of Filton at 13.37 hrs as an alternative target due to poor visibility.

**Yatton**

13.30 hrs, 8 H.E.'s and 1 UXB. 1 H.E. fell in the centre of the main GWR track ½ mile west of Yatton Station, between Yatton West Signal Box and Hewish Signal Box, making a crater 35 x 20 ft. The others were of smaller calibre and straddled the line from the gas holder in a SW direction about ½ mile west of Yatton Junction. 2 of the H.E.'s fell in fields nearby. 1 UXB fell close to the main GWR line. The up and down relief lines were re-opened to traffic up to 5 mph at 19.30 hrs and both up and down main lines had been repaired by 11.00 hrs, 26/10/40 when normal traffic was in operation subject to speed restrictions.

**04/05.1.41**

Large Scale raid on Avonmouth by 127 aircraft. Not very successful as raid drifted down the North Somerset coast.

**Yatton**

**H.E.'s reported**

**16/17.3.41**

Large Scale raid on Bristol and Avonmouth by 164 aircraft.

**Yatton**

H.E.'s caused some damage and Electricity cables were brought down.

**30/31.5.41**

During the night 6 aircraft (units unrecorded) claimed to have attacked Bristol as an alternative to Liverpool.

**Yatton**

1 H.E. in a field on the Clevedon side of the main railway line about 200 yards from Yatton East Signal Box.

**Cleeve**

From the Yatton Local History Society's records and verified with John Penney's record there is the following.

Bombs fell at Bickley on the night of March 16<sup>th</sup> 1941.

Two large high explosives fell in the field below the cottage by the cow shed, rocks hit the Cottage and the House, broke a window and pierced the ceilings and filled up a small pond in an old quarry by the little wood.

Four more explosives fell on the other side of Rhodyate Hill and about 60 more in Kingswood .

The drive alongside Bickley Five Acre field was almost impassable possibly because of further high explosives in this field.

*John Penney*



## The Yatton Invasion Committee

In 1803 some of the inhabitants of Yatton may have joined the 16,000 men of Gloucestershire and Somerset who volunteered to defend their country against invasion by Napoleon and his French forces. The story of how the Bristol Volunteers were drilled on Clifton Downs was passed through the generations. As a child I was told about this as if it was but a short time before.

In the same way one hundred and thirty seven years later the danger of invasion by Hitler and his German forces has now become part of our history. The Local defence Volunteers were formed in 1940, this was later to become the Home Guard. My uncle was put in charge of the Cleeve Section on the strength of his having been a major in the Indian Army. It was among his papers that I found the information on the plans made in Yatton in case of Invasion. Other copies of these papers exist in Yatton, but for those who have not had a chance to read them the following extracts may be of some interest.

The Plan covered every possible contingency. The Parishes of Yatton and Cleeve were divided into eight areas with a leader and deputy leader. Details of these areas have been included as it indicates the small size of these parishes in 1940 and how much new building has taken place since that time:

- 1) Mr Stuckey's garage in Claverham Road to Yatton Vicarage – this included Rock Road, Church Road and Henley Lane.
- 2) Yatton Vicarage to the railway bridge, including all side streets.
- 3) The railway bridge to the Kingston boundary.
- 4) Wake and Dean's estate and Horsecastle.

- 5) Mr Stuckey's garage to Mr Millward's bungalow on Bishops Road.
- 6) The Gospel Hall to Lower Claverham.
- 7) The Rhodyate to the Lord Nelson, including Plunder Street and the remainder of Bishops Road.
- 8) All of Cleeve not mentioned above.

The Headquarters and main warden's post was the Pharmacy in Yatton with the Vicarage as the alternative headquarters. The other warden's posts were at Wake & Dean, the School House at Kingston Seymour, Cottage Farm in Claverham and the Village Hall in Cleeve. A committee was formed with each member allocated a special responsibility

<b>Billets:</b>	Mr M. E. Stone
<b>W V Service:</b>	Mrs P. V. Burn
<b>Food:</b>	Mr E. J. Head.
<b>A R P:</b>	Mr W. L. Williams
<b>Fire:</b>	Mr T. Jones
<b>Medical:</b>	Dr W. V. Wood
<b>Police:</b>	Mr M. H. Crossman
<b>Home Guard:</b>	Mr P. G. Cardew & Mr W. H. Neild
<b>Parish Council:</b>	Mr T. Burdge
<b>Factory:</b>	Mr D. Munckton.

The deputies were Mr Millward, The Vicar, Dr Ursula Wood and Mr Atlay.



The W.V.S. Housewives Section was put in charge of the aged, the children, the homeless and the refugees, the making and mending of clothes and assisting with the billets.

A sign of the times was that instructions were given for all bicycles to be rendered immobile, should an invasion occur, by removing and secreting the chain and pedals, but no cars were mentioned. Not only did fewer people own cars but petrol was given only for essential services. Wake and Dean were instructed to immobilize their machinery.

The W.V.S. visited every home discussing the "Stay Put" Policy in event of invasion. The Reverend A.B. Drew was to tour round in a "loud speaker car" impressing on everyone to "Keep Calm". Should this

calming voice remain unheeded, a warden was to be dispatched to "deal with the situation". He was told to prevent anyone from leaving their homes even to the extent of handing the offenders over to the military authorities! There was good reason for this. When the Germans invaded Europe the roads became blocked with refugees, thus hindering the invading armies.

The medical arrangements were made for a temporary hospital centre at Larchmount Hall. Minor cases were to be treated at the local warden's post. Feeding and rest centres were arranged at the village and church halls, the schools and at Horsecastle Chapel and plans were made for field kitchens.

*Mary Campbell*



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## Enquiries and Information

Since our last publication we have received several enquiries from people seeking information about old Yatton families. We would be grateful for any help from readers regarding the following.

Joe Edwards and his family of four children who went to Australia and came back again, presumably to Yatton.

We have also been asked for information about people with the following surnames:

Kerton, Denmead, Fear, Feaver, Spearing and Girdlestone.

Thank you for all your help in the past and the future which is much appreciated by the enquirers.

*Ruth Summerell*



### Corrections

#### **Cleeve's Early Postal Service**

*Yatton Yesterday 8,9-12*

From a more detailed study of the original copy of the 1799 map of Yatton and Cleeve, it seems possible that the post for Wrington was taken to the Posting House, now Cleeve Court Cottages, and then up Cleeve Combe to Wrington, rather than Cleeve Hill Road or Goblin Combe as stated in the article.

#### **Tutts Delivery Cart**

*More Yatton Yesterdays 10(I)*

#### **Cyril Dyer of 85 Kenn Road Clevedon**

Mr Dyer said his mother Lily Banwell from Christon is the driver. She would collect supplies from the wholesaler in Bristol where she met her husband a Dyer from Felton. After living in Bristol for a while they moved to a council house opposite the PO in Claverham.

There were three outbuildings in Tutts yard.

### Abbreviations

*More Yatton Yesterdays 10(I)*

**Page 4**      **HER** – Historic Environment Record – a list of historic sites in North Somerset Council Area

**Page 5 & 6**    **YCCART** – Yatton, Congresbury, Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team – community team open to all

**Page 6**      **SANHS** – Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society

*Marianne Pitman*



*National Lotto Outlet*  
**YATTON NEWS**  
(Clive's)



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