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# MORE YATTON YESTERDAYS

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NUMBER 10 (PART 1)



PUBLISHED BY  
YATTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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**Cover picture is of the West End Stores in 1924,  
supplied courtesy of J.Bell**

On the left side of the picture is Austin Griffin with schoolboy son, Leslie Griffin. When Austin retired the shop was taken over by Leslie. When the shop closed in 1977, father and son had served the people of the Horsecastle area of Yatton for sixty-six years. The building has now been converted into a private house.

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# Editorial

November 2010

The tenth edition of *More Yatton Yesterdays Part 1* brings new material from the locality through the ages. As we received too many contributions for one volume a second part will be published with a series index. If anybody has a further contributions please let us have them as soon as possible for consideration.

We are grateful to all our contributors particularly as some have had to wait for their work to appear. Although the Society has tried to verify where possible the information submitted, the responsibility for the accuracy of each contribution remains with the author.

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 exceptional editing skills and John Derrick for his technical expertise. 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 the Museum at Weston.

*Marianne Pitman, Chairman*

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## The Old Stone Crosses of Yatton

The 'Old Stone Crosses of Somerset' was written and published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (officially in 1877, although his research seems to have been carried out during the previous decade) by Dr Charles Pooley.

Pooley was a doctor at the Weston Sanatorium (now the 'Royal Sands' on Weston-super-Mare sea front) and lived in Raglan Crescent in Weston. He spent much of the 1860s and '70s travelling the lanes and byways of Somerset seeking out these fascinating monuments in churchyards, by waysides, over springs: he chatted with the local vicars and rectors, many of whom studied antiquities in their often remote parishes, where often they might be the only well-educated person in the place.

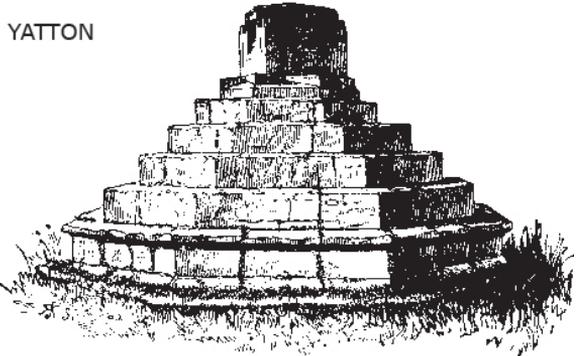
His documentary study seems, by today's standards, very slight, although to be fair his book was never intended as anything but 'notes', and he did achieve his plan, which was to make people far more aware of these structures, and to make certain they were better conserved, and in this, he largely succeeded.

Pooley retired to Cheltenham not long after the publication of his book, and a saddening letter now bound into the copy of the *Old Stone Crosses* in Nailsea library reveals that at the end of his life, he was completely blind.

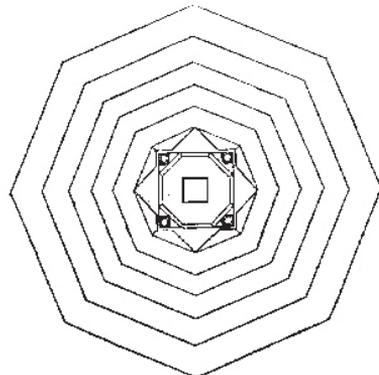
The name 'stone cross' covers a multitude of sins (if you'll pardon the phrase): it can mean anything from a crude cross cut into a natural boulder (there is one on the border of the parishes of Culbone and Porlock, in far Exmoor) to a huge complex building erected for a market shelter (such as that in the market place at Cheddar).

The medieval form of cross, which broadly speaking consists of a set of steps, a socket and a shaft (all broadly, but not strictly, radially symmetric), supporting and displaying a small carved head with

crucifixion and other scenes, is universal throughout the surviving Somerset crosses (with the exception of the special category of market crosses, which also incorporate a shelter over the steps - still radially symmetric, however).



YATTON



Most, if not all, crosses probably had carved heads in the medieval period, but these were ruthlessly destroyed in the iconoclastic times of the Reformation and 17<sup>th</sup> century civil war. This was carried out so thoroughly that only four survive on their shafts in Somerset – Stringston and Spaxton near Bridgwater, Wedmore and Chewton Mendip. Pooley identified several heads or fragments of heads surviving elsewhere, and my research has raised this total to about 20 (including potentially one at Yatton, but we'll come to that later).

Churchyards crosses are built for complex, inter-related reasons, but briefly, these seem to be:-

- 1 As a common memorial to all the dead of the churchyard
- 2 As a gathering point for the spreading of news and proclamations
- 3 As the last site of common celebration on the procession around the parish on Palm Sunday (which means that crosses standing on their original site are usually by the east side of the path to the south door of the church (as in Yatton).

Yatton churchyard cross is a fine example of its type, and Pooley's description recognises this:

*YATTON – There are few remains of Crosses in Somersetshire that present proportions so grand as these. By the construction, and style of ornamentation, of the socket, its massiveness, and the lofty Calvary of six steps, it may well be supposed that the structure, when entire, was one of no ordinary beauty.*

*In plan it is octagonal. It is erected in the churchyard, opposite the south porch of the church, and covers a large area of ground.*

*The socket is remarkable for the manner in which it is constructed. Its sides are set to correspond with the direction of the church, which is north. east and south-west. In its upper bed it is a true octagon, the alternate sides being worked, by slopes of double curves, into lesser octagons, which die away into square angle shafts by means of small broaches. On the north and west faces are oblong recesses, into which panels were evidently at one time fitted; on the south and east the panels remain in place. They measure 16 in. by 15 in., and are decorated with carved figures of angels robed, holding scrolls crosswise. A broken stump of the shaft is left in the mortise. The plinth, or top step, on which the socket rests, is effectively cut with sharp nosings, that form triangular tables similar to those of the Crosses of Wraxall and Dundry. Of the six steps forming the lower stage, the basement only has an overhanging drip, and a convex set-off on the ground-line. It is no less than sixty-eight feet and eight inches in circumference.*

**(Pooley 1877: 41)**

He also quotes the uncertain entry from the Churchwardens accounts, which as published by the Somerset Record Society are equivocal. If correct, these date the 'neue crosse' to 1499, but there are some reasons for uncertainty.

The cross, which is a Scheduled Monument, was restored and a new shaft and head added, in 1919 (North Somerset HER). This was intended for a war memorial, and is commemorated by a rectangular stone plaque, set into the ground below the cross on the side facing the church, bearing the incuse inscription:-

‘THIS CHVRCHYARD CROSS  
ERECTED AD 1499 WAS RESTORED  
AD 1919 TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND IN MEMORY OF YATTON MEN  
WHO DIED FOR THEIR COVNTRY  
IN THE WAR OF 1914 - 1918  
THEIR NAMES ARE ENGRAVED  
WITHIN THE CHVRCH’.

The missing two plaques in the socket, representing demi-angels holding scrolls, were replaced with new at the same time.

The socket holding the shaft has unusual broaches. They begin as traditional rounded fittings, but each becomes a cylindrical feature at the top, with a recognisable shallow dowel hole in the top face of all four. These may therefore once have held figures. There are no

dowels or other metal fittings in the cross. Two stones of the first step on the side closest the church have the scars of former iron cramps, although these have been removed, and their sites backfilled with cement.

There are records of potentially three other crosses in Yatton. Pooley states that one stood in the courtyard at Court de Wyck:

*COURT DE WYCK.*-The remains of the ancient Cross which formerly stood in the courtyard close to the old chapel, now tenanted by cider casks, have entirely disappeared (Pooley 1877: 172)

This cross is not depicted on the Yatton map of c1800 (in private hands, but copied by YCCART). Pooley’s description seems to acknowledge



*Yatton Church – c.1845*

Collinson (1791) (*In this court are the foundations of an old cross*). I made an extensive search of the site in 1991, during an archaeological watching brief, and certainly nothing of a cross survived then.

He added:

*..so also has every vestige of the more noble Cross, called 'Stallings Cross,' which stood a little to the west, [at ST44906615] close by a stream in the high road, where now stands a chapel of the Primitive Methodists. The name has been corrupted to 'Stream's Cross,' by which the site is now generally known. (Pooley 1877: 172)*

Collinson described it as *'westward of [Court de Wyck] stands an old massive cross, called Stalling's cross'*

(Collinson 1791: 618)

According to a letter of 13 November 1926, in the *Somerset County Herald*, a Mr B Crossman possessed 'an ancient map of the parish' showing Claverham Cross about opposite the post office, where the stream runs. This is similar to Pooley's location.

The map, which has been recorded by YCCCART, shows a cross-roads named 'Claverham Cross', which is probably the name of the cross-roads itself, and does not indicate the former existence of a cross in itself.

A local story had it that stones from this cross had been built into the gable wall of 6-8 High Street at Claverham, but I personally saw this building undergo very extensive rebuilding in 1997, and saw no evidence of such.

Finally, an intriguing note concerning Yatton church and a potential cross-head.

An undated hand-written note in the margin of the SANHS library's copy of Pooley, listing cross finds since his publication, includes the note *'Yatton-St Margaret from a cross head (now in church)'*. It is not known if this item survives, or even if it was correctly identified at the time. If so, it could be part of the missing head of the churchyard cross, but in the absence of better evidence is listed separately here. Is this stone still in the church? Perhaps we could search for it.

## References

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Collinson, J. 1791 | <i>The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset</i><br>Collinson, Bath                                    |
| Pooley, C. 1877    | <i>An historical and descriptive account of the Old Stone Crosses of Somerset</i> , Longmans, Green and Co, London |
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*Vince Russett*  
30 August 2010



## Handbell Ringing in Yatton



A set of 17 handbells, tuned to the 'International Concert Pitch' became available in October 1997 when the St. Peter's, Henleaze, Bristol, handbell ringers decided to buy a new set for their expanding team. I had been contemplating getting a set, and after 'receiving a tip-off' my wife, Eleanor, and I made contact and bought them. As there were extra half-notes which we decided would be required for tune ringing we then purchased a further 3 bells which had been restored and re-tuned to suit our set by Terry Jefferies of Mangotsfield, Bristol. One of these 'extras' had been found, minus its handle, behind the organ in a redundant church in Bolton, Lancs., – if only it could tell us how it got there!

The idea to form the 'Chalice Handbell Team' came some 12 months or so later when we decided we really needed to do something locally to use this set of bells, rather than wait for family and friends to visit us. We had been part of the "Polden Handbells Team" many years before and also had rung carols at Butcombe and Blagdon for several years, where we also taught tower bell ringing. At Yatton we now had the Yatton Moor 'Logo' of parish initial letters, viz:- K for Kenn, and another K for Kingston (Seymour), Y for Yatton, and two 'C's for Cleeve and Claverham, all forming a Chalice. (Y is the stem and cup, with forward and backward Ks at the top as handles, and the forward and backward Cs at the bottom providing a scrolled foot.) It was therefore hoped that we would be able to attract members into The "Chalice Handbell Team" from all these villages and we started off with Yatton and Kenn. Over the years these two have formed the mainstay of our band, though we have also had members from Kingston, Clevedon, Banwell and Congresbury.

Our 'zenith' was probably in 2002/2003 when we had a number of appointments to carry out, then came a depletion for a

couple of years, but now in 2009 the band seems to be consolidating once again. We have tried evening practices to attract the younger element but for the last year or so have homed in on afternoon practices, which of course means that the team is mainly composed of retired people. (This is in marked contrast from a previous Yatton handbell team). As the years have gone by we have performed at all the Yatton Moor Team churches, either for Christmas Crib or Carol Services, and at Yatton for Midnight Communion, St David's Day celebrations, and coffee mornings. At Kingston Seymour by July 2009 we will have played at two Cream Tea events. Old Folk's homes at Yatton and Winscombe have been visited, and a surprise visit to a very special 80th birthday celebration in Yatton in 2003 will long be remembered by all. Visits to Claverham and Cleeve village halls for Senior Citizen's Parties have been well received and we have more booked! In recent years at Kenn, where there is only one tower bell, we have also rung for three weddings; similarly for one at Brockley some years ago now. One of our handbells was also used at Kenn while the tower bell was being

refurbished at Whitechapel this year – it was rung with great gusto from the top of the churchyard cross and people claimed it sounded out as well as the tower bell (which is behind small slotted windows in the tower.)

In preparing these notes, I also came across a 1985 Handbell Concert programme for the visit of the Echo Handbell Ringers, from Tokyo, Japan. I believe I am correct in saying that they played at a concert in St. Mary's Church, Yatton during a tour of Britain. A photo on the programme shows at least 31

handbells and 19 young ringers, together with their director, Mr. Katsumi Kodama. Their repertoire included Bach's 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring', the English Folktune 'Greensleeves', Brahms' 'Hungarian Dance No. 5', and Rossini's 'William Tell Overture'. Needless to say, they were of a much higher standard than any of the Chalice Handbell Team's performances! Our music includes carols, hymn tunes, 'golden oldies', and a variety of tunes set to handbell notation by ourselves, and also from published sources.

Geoff Marchant, Yatton, June 2009.



## The Ups and Downs of St Mary's Spire

Why does St Mary's Church, Yatton have a funny looking spire? The reason for this "truncated" spire has been the cause of many questions over the years. Was it built like that? Was it ever a full spire and, if so, why was it reduced in height, and when? The answers to these questions and others have been found by delving into the archives: it is long story but an interesting one.

During Medieval times (1100-1500) the Parish of Yatton, which at that time consisted of the villages of Yatton, Hewish, Kenn, Claverham and Cleeve was considered to be a wealthy parish and as such was always very important to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Such was its income from church tithes that in 1135 the then Bishop granted a Prebendship of Yatton as the income for a member of the Clergy who had distinguished himself and who had been made a Canon of the Chapter of Wells (the ruling body of the Diocese). Three of these canons were the archdeacons who each managed one of the three archdeaconeries that the diocese had

been divided into. The Archdeacon of Bath covered North Somerset and would pay special attention to those villages owned by the Diocese such as Yatton and more so if it was wealthy, as Yatton was.

When the original Anglo-Saxon/Norman church at Yatton was replaced between 1220 and 1280, it would have been made larger than the previous one, but by today's standards it was quite a small building with the three-bay nave, the chancel and both transepts all of the same height. A short heavily built tower poked up through the middle of this cruciform (cross) shaped 13<sup>th</sup> century church, which even then would have dominated the village.

During the early years of the Medieval Period the Normans had influenced all forms of architecture and so most churches were heavily built structures of low height with small windows and in consequence were very dark inside. This meant that a large number of candles were required to keep the churches reasonably well lit both during the day and at night. The subsequent high cost of candles was of great concern to the local clergy and churchwardens, who nationally passed their concerns onto their Archdeacon at his visitation.

Although the increased ability to make flat glass and the Gothic style of architecture did help create larger windows during the Early English and Decorated periods of the 13th and 14th centuries, the archdeacons saw a need for larger, loftier and therefore lighter churches. This led to the Perpendicular period that resulted in the nation-wide surge in the building of not only new churches but the rebuilding of existing churches, all of which occurred from 1370 onwards.

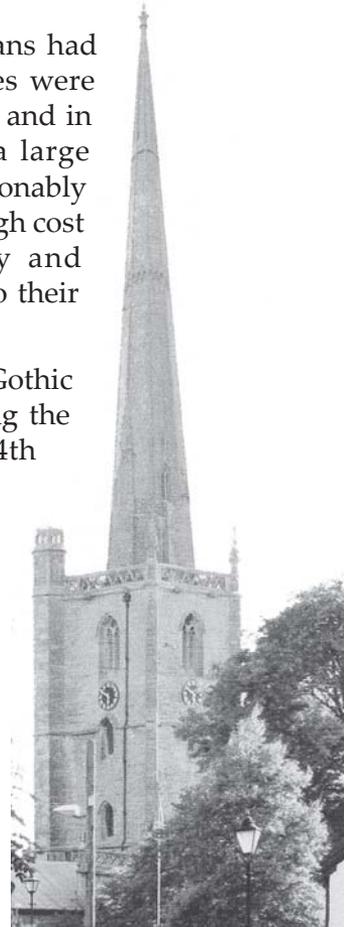
## Set to Impress

However, when Yatton church was rebuilt during the 15th century (1420-1460) it seems that the opportunity was then taken to make a statement about just how important the Parish of Yatton really was to the Diocese. It appears from the outset that Yatton church was deliberately going to be different from the norm, as it has been rebuilt as a quarter cathedral! One of the leading master masons of the time was commissioned to design and rebuild Yatton church. This was John Stonehouse of the Glastonbury Lodge, who was already involved with several churches in the Bristol area including the South Transept at St Mary Redcliffe, but he agreed to undertake the enlargement of Yatton church.

The work commenced around 1420 with the three-bay nave being completely demolished and replaced with one of five bays that was nearly twice as high as the old one, thanks to the addition of an extra level called a clerestory that was lined with windows. To the north and south of this new tall nave they built aisles that had large windows to bring in even more light. At the west end of the church a large and magnificent double-tiered west window was

constructed that would flood the nave with the rays of the evening sun. The central tower was not only retained, but then considerably raised in height.

Before the tower could be heightened it needed to be strengthened to take the additional weight. So during the 1450's huge foundation stones were laid inboard of those of the four existing 1.2m (4 feet) square columns. Then up the inside face of these columns rose carved



blocks of Doultong stone to form the ribbed arches of a ticeron vault of great strength, despite the hole in the centre for raising and lowering bells. With these additional feet in place the square tower rose to nearly 80 feet and a stair turret was added to its south east corner.

At this time a heavy peal of five bells including a tenor of 1,500 kg (1 ½ tons), was hoisted through the central bell hole up to the very top of the tower. One of these bells from 1451 is still in the tower today and has a Latin inscription on it, which translated has the immortal words 'I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever'. Now over 550 years old, this bell still calls people to worship on Sundays. Above the tower the construction work continued even higher as blocks of stone were laid to form a 27 metre (88 foot) high steeple on top.

When consecrated in 1460 St Mary's church would be seen towering above the moors for miles and the 50 metre (166 foot) high spire could have been seen from ships in the Bristol Channel. Those in power at Wells must have been well pleased with their 'New' church at Yatton. It is no wonder that St Mary's church has become known as the 'Cathedral on the Moor'.

So for 137 years the tower of St Mary's was adorned with a tall slender spire that could be seen for many miles around: it must have been the pride and joy of the parishioners. However, there was a problem, and a big one at that, which required a heart-breaking solution. The spire had become unstable and therefore dangerous, so in 1595 it was decided to take down over half of it. Three stone masons were invited to make a survey and give an estimate for the necessary

work. A Mr Jones was successful and he was paid 12 pence 'in earnest' as an agreement to the churchwardens to dismantle a large amount of the spire for £20. Then lugges, poles, ropes etc were bought and branches cut and laid on the ground beside the church and two men and a boy were paid to remove the required number of stone blocks, lowering them down onto the branches. It is not recorded what happened to these stones. A carpenter then built a timber roof on top of the truncated spire and a plumber covered it with lead.

Several reasons have been given for this truncation ranging from inadequate foundations, to subsidence, or lightning and storm damage. Storm damage was thought to be the most likely culprit, as there are several entries in the churchwarden's accounts for simultaneous storm damage repairs to the west window, pinnacles and the spire. However, old copies of the church periodicals have provided proof of the real culprit. It was the oscillation of the bells that was causing severe damage to both the spire and the tower.

It appears that the peal of five bells, with its heavy tenor bell, all being set up so very high in the tower, had caused the spire to sway so much that the mortar, dowels and pegs were all regularly shaken out of the stonework! A report dated 1900 states "that there is nothing holding up the spire but the sheer weight of the stone work!". So anybody standing at the top of then tower when the bells were ringing would have not only felt the tower swaying, but on looking up would have seen the top of the spire performing arcs across the sky!!

## Various repairs

So the 16th century reports of the mason simultaneously carrying out repairs to the west window, pinnacles and the tower were not due to a common occurrence such as a severe storm causing damage to all three areas, but just to the first two. Although the tower may have suffered from the same storms, the underlying cause was the ringing of the bells. However, it was sensible to have the mason carry out any necessary repair work around the church whilst he was on site. Having realised what the problem was, it is unbelievable that action was not taken at this time (1595) to cure the actual cause of the excessive swaying. In fact it would be 350 years before the obvious solution was carried out.

In 1760 the bell frame had to be replaced: it is not known if this was because the timber work had become rotten or that physical damage had occurred. Then a 6th bell was added to the peal in 1770! Talk about heaping coals on the fire! Well it was not too long before some really major repair work had to be carried out, not only to the top of the tower but to the parapets and spire as well. A major restoration of the tower and spire occurred between 1822 and 1826, in the middle of which (1824) the heavy 1500kg (1 ½ ton) tenor bell was taken down and recast into three front bells, thus making a peal of eight. It is not known if this was to improve the sound of the peal rather than alleviate the swaying problem. However, it is more likely that the weight of the peal had increased due to the additional frames!

The church itself underwent a major restoration between 1872-75, but this

mainly involved the nave, with no known work being done to the tower and spire. Then in 1897 the whole interior of the tower was altered with new floors being put in and all eight bells being hung on one level instead of two as previously and moreover, it appears to have been the upper level!

Well, you reap what you sow. In December 1899, with everyone waiting excitedly for the New Year to bring in the 20th century, Mr Buckle, the Diocesan Architect, presented his report to the Vestry Meeting and it was not good news. His report stated that the shaking of the tower by the ringing of the bells had caused some pointing to fall out of the stonework on the spire, the parapets, the top of the stair turret and the top of the tower!! Furthermore the report recommended that all these parts of the church be taken down and rebuilt at a probable cost of £1,100!! (There was only £44 in the Fabric Fund!).

To say that this would have spoilt their Christmas and New Year Celebrations would be an understatement. Amazingly, it would appear that the bells were rung during the festive period, since a ban on the ringing of the bells did not come into force until January 1900!

However, bells were heard during 1900, because a set of handbells in E that could be rung in two octaves, was purchased. The nine attendees at the next Vestry meeting agreed to become the Building Committee: there were eight men and one lady (Miss Avery of Larchmount Hall). Needless to say fund-raising was started in earnest and tenders sought. The tenders were returned from the three vendors in time for the Vestry Meeting

on 6th April and all three stated that “the work is being undertaken not a day too soon”!! At this meeting Mr Merrick’s tender of £985 was accepted and approved.

However, the contract had not been signed as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings had sent an architect to carry out an independent survey and prepare a report. When his report was read out at the Vestry Meeting it stated “that if the weight of the bells was taken down a stage lower then the masonry might be so repaired and strengthened to stand the oscillation of the bells without the need to take down the spire and rebuild it”.

There it was in black and white: the cause of the recurring severe damage was the fact that the heavy peal of bells was hung so high in the tower that they caused both the tower and the spire to sway and the pointing, dowels and stays to be shaken out. So at the Vestry Meeting did the Building Committee decide to follow this advice? Apparently not, but they did not know which way to go either, so they decided to bring in a third architect to act as a referee between the other two !!

A Mr Walter Paul of Messrs Paul and James of Bristol duly surveyed and presented a report that supported Mr Buckle, the Diocesan Architect! Now what to do? They were not sure, so they decided to go to the parishioners so that they could have their say! Copies of the reports from all three architects were displayed in the porches of the churches at Yatton and Claverham, the Post Office and the local shops and a Vestry meeting called for May 31st. At this meeting the villagers of Yatton and Claverham decided to opt for Mr Buckle’s scheme but with some additions as

recommended by Mr Paul. So at a Vestry meeting on August 17th 1900 approval was given for Mr Merrick to be given the contract which was now for £1,002. (The Fabric Fund now stood at £126!)

They totally ignored the recommendation from S.P.A.B. to put the bells lower down in the tower, despite the fact that they were fully aware of the truncation in 1595, the extensive repair works in 1822-26 and that the heavy tenor bell had been recast as three smaller bells. (*The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is now English Heritage.*)

The scaffolding started to go up at the beginning of January 1901 but high winds in the middle of the month distorted it, so it had to be rebuilt. Then Queen Victoria died and the nation appears to have stopped for a week! It had been hoped that only half the spire would need to be taken down but by March it had been found that hardly any mortar or dowels were left and the stones were held in purely by their own weight and a few iron clamps! The upright oak stays that supported the little timber roof were very badly rotted, so they had to be replaced as well. This means that during April 1901 St Mary’s church did not have a stone spire, but there may have been some timber supports sticking up with the little roof on top!

## Rebuilt at last

The spire was rebuilt during May and June 1901, then the parapets and the stair turret were dealt with and by November the work was finished and re-opening services took place on St Andrew’s Day – November 30th. At the end of the 8 am Holy Communion the choir sang the Te Deum to Sullivan’s setting in D, from the

top of the tower!!! Matins was said at 10 am and Holy Communion again at 10:30 am. The service of re-dedication took place at 7 pm that evening, led by the Bishop of Bath and Wells who had come at his great inconvenience!! Besides Yatton's incumbent, there were seven other vicars present.

To celebrate the re-opening of the tower the bell ringers rang Yatton's first recorded peal which was Grandshire Triples on 8th February 1902. However, sometime during that year a terrible noise from the tower informed them that the 6th bell was badly cracked! One of the churchwardens is reported to have said "There's never a rose without a thorn". The bell was sent to London in March 1903 to be re-cast. About the same time the church clock was "taken in hand" as both faces and the chimes were all out of sequence.

The peal of eight continued to ring out from the top of the tower for nearly another 50 years. Then in 1950 the timber bell frame was found to be in a severely rotted condition and the bells had to be taken down. So it was over half a Millennium since the bells had first been hung in the newly built tower, that the longstanding recommendation for the obvious solution was followed and the bells were rehung in a steel frame that was fixed 15 feet lower than previously.

So the spire had been built in 1455, reduced in height in 1595, then taken down completely and rebuilt in 1901. It is possible that this had also happened in the prolonged work of 1822 to 1826. Thankfully there has not been a recurrence of any major damage to the spire by the bells since then and long may that continue.

*Allan Denny – Revised May 7th 2010.*



## **Census 1831: A Lucky Find**

### **Population of The Ancient Parish of Yatton 1831**

In December 2009 *Mendip Times* carried an article about *More Yatton Yesterdays 9*, which had just been published. It was read by Ken Holloway, a builder from Hallatrow near Farrington Gurney.

Ken had worked on Rectory Farm next to St Mary's Church in about 1969. A number of picture frames from a small barn at the back of the farmyard were found when it was being cleared out. One of the frames had a copy of a document stuck to the glass.

Ken had kept this document safely for over 40 years and was pleased to find a home for it with Yatton Local History Society. We are delighted with it, as it covers the period immediately prior to our first census records (see over).

The first census was carried out in 1801 and then subsequently repeated every ten years. In England and Wales between 1821 and 1831 the population increased by 16%, mostly due to the effects of improved nutrition on survival and fertility. The Cholera Epidemic in Bristol may also have led to more people settling in the country. The increase in Yatton mirrors this trend at 23%.

**[Exact Reproduction of the document]**

**May 30<sup>th</sup> 1831**

By Act the 11 Geo. LV c. 30 an acct. of the population of the Parish of Yatton was taken this day of which the following is a copy.

	Yatton	Cleve	Claverham	Hewish	Total
1. Inhabited houses	189	84	66	14	353
2. Families	196	87	73	14	370
3. Houses building	1	2	4	none	7
4. Houses uninhabited	10	8	none	2	20
{Employed in agriculture	112	48	58	11	229
{Trade, manufacture and	49	23	10	3	85
{all other families	35	16	5	none	56
[above] families					
5. Males	488	215	189	47	939
Females	475	225	182	44	926
6. Males, upwards of twenty years	202	114	88	19	423
{Occupiers 1 <sup>st</sup> class	19	4	17	4	44
7. {Occupiers 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	9	10	9	1	29
{Labourers in agriculture	82	38	33	8	161
[above] agriculture					
8. Manufacturers	none	none	none	none	none
9. Retail trade & handicraft	56	28	11	4	99
wholesale & capitalists					
10. Clergy, office clerks professionals					
& other educated men	5	4	2	none	11
11. Labourers not agricultural	4	17	6	none	27
12. All other males of 20 years	8	6	2	none	16
13. {Upwards of 20 years	19	7	8	2	36
{Under 20 years	17	6	11	2	36
[above] male servants					
All female servants	45	23	22	6	96

<b>Parish of Yatton</b>	<b>Males in 1831</b>	<b>Females in 1831</b>	<b>Total in 1821</b>	<b>Total in 1831</b>	<b>Increase</b>
	939	926	1516	1865	349

The forgoing acct was taken by the undersigned

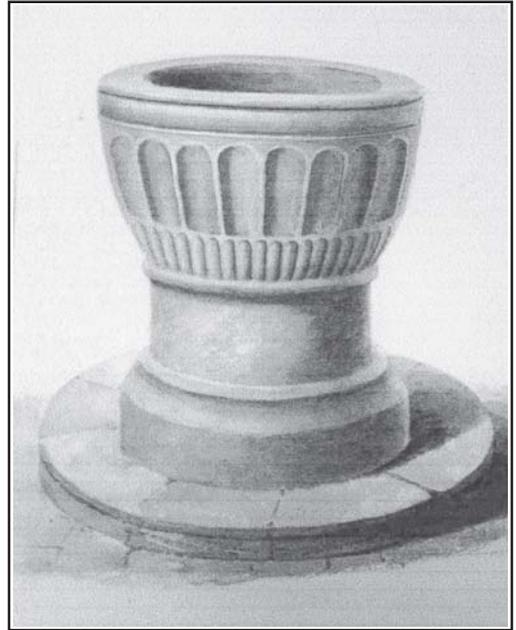
[ ] Derham  
 John Ford  
 [ ] Heale  
 [Stephen] Cox  
 George Puddy  
 Robert Williams

*Marianne Pitman and Mary Campbell*

Reference: The Cambridge Historical Encyclopaedia of Great Britian and Northern Ireland  
 (ed) Christopher Heigh CUP 1990

## The Fonts of Yatton Church

St Mary's Church has had a succession of three fonts, of which the latest is the one by the South door. The first known font at Yatton's church was of Norman origin (*Fig 1*), and was here until about 1840 when it was replaced: its present whereabouts are not known. We only know of its existence from a drawing by the artist Buckler that he made in 1827 for the Smythe Pigott Collection. *Fig 2* shows the second font. This was installed in 1854 and it has a plain Early English bowl with a stem of an earlier period. Where this font came from is not known, but we do know that during the 1872-5 restoration of Yatton church it was given by the Vicar of Yatton to the then newly built church of St Catherine on Felton Common, where it can still be seen. The reason this second font was replaced was because a new font was being produced as part of the restoration of St Mary's and it is the one that is still in the church today (*Fig 3*).



*Fig. 1.*



*Fig. 2.*



*Fig. 3.*

*Allan Denny*

## So what did they do? .....

### Local jobs in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

For the past ten years I have been bitten by the family history bug and during this period I have become very interested in the 'world' of various members of my family. This has led to a natural desire to know more about the general population which existed around them.

As an extension to this and, being an 'immigrant' to Yatton, I decided to look into the world of an earlier population in the parish of Yatton which included Claverham and Cleeve. My only connection with these people is that I am now living in the same place, albeit 130 years later! The 1881 Census, being freely available, seemed a good starting point.

Initially I was surprised at the variety of occupations these people gave as their employment or profession. Some were to be expected, such as those related to agriculture, to the tannery in Claverham and the railway in Yatton. All three had labourers, who defined their labouring specifically. Of course there were general labourers, but also blacksmiths and mason labourers. One individual stated he was a brickyard labourer, but there wasn't anyone who stated they had employment or any other connection with a brickyard.

Apart from agricultural labourers, there was a selection of other jobs associated with the land: they obviously included farmers, but it is interesting to note that any sons could state 'farmer's son' as an acceptable occupation (almost like an apprentice farmer), but the same was not true of farmer's wives and farmer's daughters. The only time it was considered acceptable for a female to have a farming occupation was if she was unmarried and the head of the household or the widow of a farmer and had continued to run the farm.

Three farmers stated they had dual occupations, one saying he was a landowner and a farmer, the other two adding auctioneer and registrar of births and deaths to their farming employment.

Apart from agricultural labourers, there were farm servants, dairyman, woodman and farm bailiff. One individual was a 'worker of a threshing machine' and one woman was the 'owner of a threshing machine'. The only other stated employment relating to the land in a commercial way was the market gardener. On the other side was the 'group of merchants' who dealt in hay, corn, butter, leather and timber.

Railway jobs were a much smaller group with far fewer people employed. There was one station inspector, one engine driver and a maximum of seven porters. Also listed were engine cleaner, signalman, railway fireman, ticket collector and plate layer. One individual put 'cab prop rider' as his occupation and I assumed that this related to the railway, but I can be corrected if someone knows otherwise. It was very interesting to note that several of the employees came from outside the area: Devon and Wiltshire were among the birthplaces and the engine driver had been born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It was also noticeable that the tannery labourers lived in Cleeve and Claverham, whereas the railway employees lived in Yatton.

One of the largest occupational groups was that related to Trade. More than one grocer had dual occupations: these additions were blacksmith, tallow chandler and draper. One also called himself a 'Master grocer'.

In contrast to the 'farmer's daughter' situation, one grocer's daughter was allowed to state her occupation as grocer's assistant and one unmarried female was a shop assistant, but the draper's assistant was male.

Whilst remaining with the retail trade, there was a 'beer retailer' at the Bridge Inn, one publican and a licensed victualler. Lastly there was a coal merchant and coal haulier, a general haulier and a carter, plus a carrier's assistant.

I was surprised to find that one person was a gas fitter and there were house painters, with one specialising in paper hanging as well as painting.

Baker, butcher and craft occupations appear to have had various levels, for example in the 'crafts' there are apprentices and in all, there are journeymen and masters, besides 'plain' baker and butcher etc. I have come across an explanation saying that a journeyman did not have a permanent place to carry out their trade.

I have categorised some occupations as 'craft' as they were slightly different to the trades. Some did not have all the levels of apprentice, journeyman etc, whereas others did. These were:- carpenter, blacksmith, wheelwright, saddler and cooper. Builder was split into builder/contractor and builder surveyor and plasterer and plasterer/tiler. The next group of crafts were: bootmaker, as opposed to shoemaker,

tailor and silk weaver (but not silk weaver's wife). There were also a cordwainer and Master cordwainer, who were special leather-workers. Finally there was a carriage builder, a 'working' cutler and a limeburner.

The remaining male-dominated category was the 'Professions'. In the parish were located a physician in Yatton and a general practitioner with a medical assistant in Cleeve. A similar situation occurred in the church. There was a vicar in Yatton and one in Cleeve; however there was also a curate in Cleeve, possibly because the vicar was 85 and the household listed a full-time nurse!

There were three grades of teacher: a National schoolmaster, 'plain' schoolmaster and pupil teachers (one male and one female). Again this seemed to be an acceptable occupation for a woman. Both pupil teachers were in their late teens. One police constable is listed for the whole parish and he actually lived in Yatton. Finally there was an accountant and accountant's clerk, an insurance agent and insurance clerk, a commission agent, banker's clerk and a 'general' clerk.

Aside from 'Domestic' occupations, which I will come to later, the last group of jobs were what I have called the 'Odds'. These included cart owner, who was also a mail contractor, and a leather carrier who was also a book-maker. Even the business of 'selling' was subdivided into a general dealer, a market dealer, a pedlar and a hawker. Of course the 'pedlar's wife' was not allowed to list that as an occupation. Some teenagers were stated as being a letter carrier and newspaper and errand boys. Lastly there was a relieving officer, a hound

trainer (though there wasn't any other mention of hounds in the whole Census) and a blue manufacturer.

**Women's work**

This last occupation brings us on to 'female' roles and these included laundresses, who seemed to be largely based in Claverham (perhaps this is a coincidence). There were several 'levels' of dressmaker, including assistant and apprentice, and seamstress. One person was a dressmaker/milliner, whereas someone else was just a milliner, but there was a shirt-maker and a strawbonnet-maker. The bootmaker's daughter was allowed to put machinist as her occupation, and the Vicar's daughters were permitted to call themselves exactly that.

Housekeeping was split into lodging housekeeper, boarding housekeeper and housekeeper. However, if you were related to the person for whom you kept house then that was not acceptable as an occupation.

What appeared to be a private school was run by a schoolmistress and it was acceptable for her daughter to be a 'schoolmistress's daughter'. Also the baker's daughter was allowed, perhaps because it was the female equivalent of an apprentice baker.

One innkeeper was an unmarried female and she employed the only listed barmaid. Many women, young and old, were listed as charwomen. The few commercial occupations were shopkeeper, market keeper and market woman. The post mistress and the assistant post mistress (our own touch of 'Lark Rise to Candleford') were sisters who had been born in Ireland.

Most of the remaining women were

employed in domestic service, even though some were living at home. As expected this included parlourmaid, housemaid, cook and general domestic servant. There was also governess and various levels of nurse, the latter including under-nurse and nursemaid. The other type was monthly nurse and some lived at home.

Male domestic service included footman, gardener, groom, assistant groom, coachman and house steward. The 'general servants' were domestic, agricultural and indoor, however I was unsure as to what an 'indoor agricultural servant' would actually do.

**Beyond work**

Quite a number of people in the village were listed as retired, and their former occupations have already been mentioned. There was a retired ironmonger but no one appeared to be carrying on with the trade and the same was true of the retired drover. A sea captain, a Royal Navy officer and three Chelsea pensioners also lived in the parish.

Over thirty people were listed as annuitants – living on income from private means – and 40 women did not have any occupation. Some appeared to be the unmarried daughters of reasonably comfortable families and most others were related to farming, where the entry had been crossed out by the enumerator. Twelve people (including 2 boys aged 10 and 12) were stated as unemployed, the majority being general or domestic servants.

Only four people were listed as paupers, the one male saying he was a pauper/tailor. Three women over 80 lived with relations, the oldest being 97 and living with her grandson. The case of a couple in their seventies who were still looking after

boarders (one a child of just a year) really brought home the fact that people had to work for as long as they were able, there being no welfare state or state pension to support them (are we returning towards that now?).

Families were of course relatively large, with 6 to 10 children being quite normal.

Sadly many of the traditional skills mentioned in 1881 will no doubt have long since disappeared.

In even what appeared to be relatively modest income households, nearly all children between the ages of 4 and 16 were listed as scholars.

It would be very interesting to compare these Census results with a list of the current occupations of people in the Yatton area for the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

*Philippa Cormack*

Note: The Society's copy of the 1881 Census is available for members to view at its evening meetings.



## Names of Handbell Ringers

See More Yatton Yesterdays 9, Page 35

Tony Beck      Alistair Probert (perhaps)      Roger Hooper      Stephen Pitman



Sara Shakeshaft      Lisa Wojtowycz      Not Known

## Addendum to "Handbells in Yatton"

Article in MYY9.

Memories from Yatton's  
Ninety-year old Len Lawrence,  
August 2009:-

The handbells at St. Mary's (the ones used by the young people with Philip Waite in the 1970s as per MYY9 page 35), were used in the 1930s only at Christmas when the tower bell ringers would ring carols around the village. This was before Len himself joined the tower bell ringers. When he first went to work it was at Stuckey's the Butchers where the precinct car park is now (Somerfield's car park). In that first job he was working with Bert French who "showed him the ropes" of the job. Bert was 100 years old at the end of July, 2009.

*Geoff Marchant*

# The Library Returns Home

The whole village, I am sure is more than pleased with our now “state of the art” village library which has been housed in what was previously Yatton Infants’ School. The library was previously on the opposite side of the road in the building next to Loader’s Hardware shop, but with the expansion of the village it was obvious that larger premises were needed, hence the library’s move to its present site.

I was recently doing some Yatton history research and was surprised to learn from some 1900-1902 church parish magazines the following:

The Archdeacon inducted a new Vicar to the living of Yatton on Thursday April 17th 1901. This Vicar was the Rev. F.A. Mather. It appears he soon set to work making improvements where he thought fit and in the Church parish magazine of September 1902 was the following article:

## Yatton Parish Library

*The Vicar desires to inform the parishioners that there is a Parish library in existence, though it has not been opened for some years. A good library is a distinct need in a place of this size; so it is proposed to enlarge and improve the collection of books, so as to suit all tastes. There will be books of history, travel, biography, science, and wholesome fiction, and also those of a graver sort.*

*The subscription will be 3s. a year. Donations are also requested, so that the catalogue may be as full as possible. There will also be a good supply of children’s books, and of other interesting books for subscribers, at the rate of 1s.6d. a year. It is hoped there will be a large number of subscribers, so that the library may be kept up to date and thoroughly efficient.*

*Further notice will be given when the Library is ready to be opened.*

.....

Before continuing, I should perhaps inform those readers who may be unaware of the history of the building where the library is now housed.

It was originally the Friends’ Meeting House and was then sold to the British School, which was to become called the Undenominational School and later Yatton Infants’ School. As the population of Yatton grew, it became necessary to build a new and larger infants school: when this happened the former building became empty and in time the home of our now present library.

However, back in the October and November 1902 Church parish magazines, we have the following articles:

## Yatton Lending Library

*Through the kindness of Mr. Scholl a room at the Friend’s Meeting House has been placed at our service for the use of this Library, which will be opened for parishioners on Monday, October 6th. The hours of opening will be every Monday from 5 to 6 and 8 to 9pm, and the subscription will be:*

- Class A — 3s. a year, or 4d. monthly.*
  - Class B — 1s.6d. a year, or 2d. monthly.*
  - Class C — 1s. a year, or 1d. monthly.*
- (for Children)*

**Yatton Lending Library**

*The Parochial Library, which is open at Friends' Meeting House every Monday at 5pm and 8pm, has made a successful start. There is a collection of between five and six hundred volumes and if the library is well supported many books will be added.*

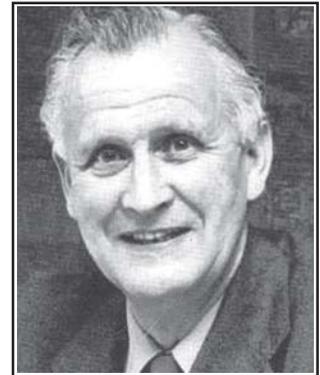
It would therefore appear that The Quakers kindly offered a room to be used to home Reverend Mather's Church Parish Library in the building where our present library is housed, so as my title says, the Library returns home.

*Pat Denny*



**Anthony (Tony) Frederick Coe**

**T**ony Coe, Founder member, Chairman, President and Life Member of Yatton Local History Society died on 23 May 2010.



*Tony Coe*

Tony was born in October 1913 in Derbyshire and his early education was split between London and Derbyshire, but he obtained a scholarship to the grammar school in Belper. He was a keen Scout and sportsman, involved in tennis, cricket and athletics as well as organising a local football team. He undertook some teaching before studying Latin, French and History at Chelsea and continued his sporting activities including hockey, receiving the equivalent of a 'blue'.

Having obtained his degree, Tony taught in Croydon until he joined the RAF Signals at the outbreak of war in 1939. He met his wife Dorothy in Blackpool and they were married shortly afterwards. He was then posted abroad for four years with the 'Desert Rats' in North Africa. Tony and his mate Harry, when monitoring enemy Morse Code signals, realised that Rommel was not where the allies thought he was, so they informed HQ and Montgomery changed his troop positions, later winning the Battle of El Alamein!

Tony returned to teaching after the war and, while a headmaster in Harrow, pioneered the teaching of French to primary school children. He retired in 1979 and moved with Dorothy to Yatton, where he quickly became involved in village life, helping to form the Local History Society in 1980. He became Chairman of the Society in 1983, contributing to the first *Yatton Yesterday* (published in 1984) and continued as Chairman until 1991 when he became President. He stood down in 2001 and was elected Life Member in appreciation of all his work for the Society.

He continued to assist with book sales and research, was always pleased to help and support anyone who needed it; his wide experience and knowledge were invaluable in his many activities. He will be sadly missed and sincere condolences go to Dorothy along with all their family.

*Brian Bradbury (former President, YLHS)*

# The Life of A Farming Family

## PART 1 – 1907-1911

Emily Hill was born in 1851. She was the daughter of William Hill and Emma nee Sperrin. We know that her mother came of a farming family at Court Farm, Backwell, and it is likely that her father was also a farmer. Her diary, and the diary of her daughter Winnie, together with the diaries of Winnie's three children, were given to the Yatton Local History Society in 2009 after the death of her youngest grandchild, Stella.



*Claverham Green Farm*

Emily married Charles Binning and in the 1880s they came to Claverham Green Farm. Charles died in the 1890s and Emily was left to run the farm herself. She kept 13 cows in 1907 and employed three men. When she needed support she had two brothers nearby. John lived at Walnut Tree Farm, Cleeve, and William lived in Backwell. Also her sister Lucy lived with her and Lucy made herself extremely useful. She would take a message to John when Emily wanted his help and she went to the Post Office, when it was necessary, to send a wire, and by 1909 she was able to telephone from there. She plucked the birds for sale and often interviewed people for Emily. She was one of the earliest in the family to buy a bicycle, which made it easier to attend the sewing classes at the vicarage and to get to Cleeve school for Missionary

and Temperance meetings. She also was a great help with the visits of the nieces and nephews, which were very frequent. She loved to visit Bristol from time to time. She sounds a delightful character and she lived until she was 99½ years old.

Emily also had the support of her brother-in-law William Plumley Taylor who had married her sister Elizabeth (Lizzie). They lived in St Nicholas Street, Bristol, where they had a poulterer's shop in St Nicholas Market. After William's son, Nathaniel, had taken over the shop it was sold to the MacFisheries and Nathaniel remained as their manager. They then lived in Cotham, Bristol. Most of the produce from the farm was sent to St Nicholas Street. Lizzie and William had seven children, Nathaniel, Stanley, Ethel, Olive, Norman, Edgar and Mervyn, who

often visited the farm, the elder boys collecting the chickens, ducks and turkeys for their father.

Emily and Charles had one child, Winifred Lucy (Winnie). There was not much entertainment for a young girl in 1907. She attended sewing classes with her aunt, she enjoyed visits to friends and occasional trips in the pony and trap. There was the occasional concert at the Assembly Rooms in Yatton and lectures at Cleve School. She loved Harvest Festivals and went to all the churches for them and attended Church most weeks. She enjoyed whist drives all her life. When bicycles became popular she bought one and so had greater freedom. Of course there was a "young man", who features a great deal in the diary. His name was Gilbert Court and his parents lived at Cadbury Farm, Yatton. Finally in 1910 he and Winnie were able to get married and the farm was passed to Gilbert and Winnie. Their story will continue in part 2 of this article.

Emily made the farm the centre of her life. She enjoyed the visits of friends and relations and always welcomed her nieces and nephews. Unlike her daughter, she did very little outside her farm. She went occasionally to Cleve church and for an occasional drive and sometimes visited her sister in Bristol. She did not accompany her two sisters to a family wedding in Cardiff. Her main interest was the farm, which she ran with a very firm hand. She records the work of the farm workers every day, saying exactly what they were doing. They had to work a six-day week. They also worked on Sundays and on Bank Holidays, although the hours may have been shorter on those days. Very

occasionally they asked for a few days off and this was granted them. The names of these men during the four years of the diary are given, however two especially are of some interest.

Leo Harris was employed during the whole period 1907-1910. On June 9<sup>th</sup> 1907 he asked permission to visit his mother for a night. He sent a wire the next day and the day after to say he could not return yet. On the third day another wire said he was ill. However he returned about 8.0 pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> and was back hoeing and earthing potatoes. On Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> he finally plucked up courage to say he was married! On the 17<sup>th</sup> it was agreed that he should "live out" and be paid 18/- a week and his food plus 1/- for Sundays. On June 26 he fetched his wife and child from the station. We presume he had found accommodation in the village. The wife must have been rather unhappy because on September 7<sup>th</sup> Leo asked for a horse and trap to take his wife to the station, as she had been ill and wanted to go to her parents for a change. Leo returned to live in the farm once more. He was obviously much disturbed and stayed out all night on the 7<sup>th</sup> but returned the following morning for work. On the 21<sup>st</sup> he once again disappeared but returned the next day and agreed to milk morning and evening and then went to bed! Finally it was settled that he should live in his house and come to work daily and from then on he worked steadily on the farm. By January 1908 he was finding it hard to look after the house with the long hours he worked, so he went to Pilning to interview a housekeeper. How did he pay for her on 19/- a week as well as having to pay rent. Mrs Hall

arrived and was a great success. She made herself useful at the farm with shopping and milking whenever a man was away or ill. At harvest time she helped with the horses all day. She even came to keep Emily company if others were away. Emily was never left alone and always someone had to be found to be with her even just for an evening. This was a truly Victorian idea. Her daughter made the same demands when she too became widowed.

The other labourer due a mention was Sherborne. We do not know his Christian name. He arrived on February 17<sup>th</sup> 1908. Once he got sciatica and was told by the doctor to rest. It was arranged that he should milk twice a day in exchange for his food (no welfare in those days). This was hardly "resting" and he was driving the pony and trap the next day to Walnut Tree Farm. He did then take three days off to take Turkish baths but on the Sunday he took little Olive Taylor to Church and was soon back at work hoeing swedes. He also bought a bicycle which probably led to the following story. In October 1908 some young ladies went blackberrying and left their bicycles by the road. Two days later a gentleman arrived and accused Sherborne of taking one of their lamps. He denied the charge but two days later, confessed, returned the lamp and apologised. Emily Binning was extremely cross with him and he became very upset. He was forgiven for this but in August 1909 he returned one evening very drunk. No comment was made in the diary but when he left exactly a month later we must presume that he had gone a step too far and had been given notice.

The work the men were required to do was heavy but varied. This is a list of work that Emily recorded in her diary:-

**January & February** - throwing manure, hedging, hauling thorns, carting straw, brushing leaves, taking farm equipment to Mr Eacott the blacksmith for repair, clearing dirt from the road and putting it on the fields.

**March** - ploughing, clearing cess pits and putting contents on the fields, picking over the potatoes for bad ones, repairing railings and bushing the fields, [this was chain harrowing, taking the dead grass out of the pasture to allow new growth]. The harrow was made by pieces of wood bolted together to make a rectangle. Black thorn branches were held in place across the rectangle and horses pulled the affair over the pasture.

**April** - collecting wood, keeping birds [keeping birds off corn] hedging, rolling and dragging the fields and garden, planting potatoes, bouting, [putting soil up on either side of potato, swede and mangold roots], cutting the grass in the garden also picking up stones off the fields.

**May** - rolling fields, sowing clover and harrowing same, sowing and manuring mangolds, hauling thorns, cutting and stopping hedges, cleaning sticks and thorns, horse-hoeing potatoes and mangolds [removing weeds], sheep-washing and hedge cutting round the lawn.

**June** - drilling swedes, earthing up the potatoes, thinning mangolds and hay making.

**July** - hauling hay, horse-hoeing, shearing hedges, cleaning ox house and pond, planting mangolds where swedes had failed, cleaning the out houses, cutting and hauling oats and wheat, cutting thistles, hauling fern and shrouding a tree round the mow [hay stack] pen.

**August** - shearing hedges, hauling wheat, threshing wheat, weighing corn, picking apples and cider making.

**September** - digging potatoes, picking apples, hedging, cleaning and repairing the Barton.

**October** - catching moles, digging potatoes, cider making, picking thorns from hedges, manuring fields, weeding, cleaning calf house, cutting thorns, potato digging, cider making and mending fences, ploughing and hoeing mangolds and swedes.

**November and December** - Killing rabbits, repairing a ball tap and all the winter jobs.

One must not forget when looking at this list that every day there was the care of the animals, including staying up all night when a sow farrowed or a cow was in difficulty (and then men worked all the next day). Milking was twice a day, then churning, and separating for butter. The chickens, ducks and turkeys had to be killed and plucked for sale together with the other produce. Animals had to be taken to the market. The women will have dealt with plucking the birds, the salting of the bacon and hams and the making of the butter. They also did some decorating and painting in the house.

Emily often had bad luck with her animals. The cows warped [aborted] their calves and one sow lost all her piglets and another time several died. Cows and horses were bought and sold at the market and one horse was bought from Bickley. On November 27<sup>th</sup> 1907 five horses were moved to a field over the railway line. However they escaped and ran towards Nailsea. Five trains were brought to a halt until they were eventually captured. The cows had

names such as Strawberry, Cherry and Redhill.

Emily had many friends in the district. Two families especially should be mentioned. One was Farmer Wilfred Kerton and his wife Kate. Kate was due to have her first baby and shortly before he was born she became very ill. One imagines the illness was something which nowadays would be treated. The baby was born on November 7<sup>th</sup> 1907 and Kate continued very ill until her death on December 26<sup>th</sup>. An urgent message was sent to Claverham Green Farm on Christmas Day. Winnie was able to go over and say her last farewell to Kate. The baby was baptized John Wilfred and a house-keeper must have been hired to care for him as she is mentioned the next year. Emily and Winnie knitted and sewed for the baby and Winnie went over sometimes to help Wilfred with the butter making. The following year John Wilfred was brought over for tea at the farm.

The other family was Edwin and Rose Millier and their children, Edwin, Wilfred, Rose and Agnes. They were close friends but sadly they emigrated to Australia on the SS Norseman on August 1<sup>st</sup> 1912. They corresponded by letter, but Emily must have missed them. This must have been a sad time for Emily. She seems to have held a Sale at the farm in November 1909, when she appears to have sold her cows and horses leaving Gilbert to restock once he and Winnie were married on January 8 1910. She continued with the poultry until Gilbert and Winnie took these over from her. All this is recorded without emotion but from January onwards the diary completely changes. Farm work is no

longer mentioned. She actually went away twice, once to Lizzie and William in St Nicholas Street and the other time to very close friends, John and Agnes Cousins, in Downend. Lucy went to live with the Taylors in Bristol. It is not known if Gilbert took over the farm hands but

certainly Leo Harris left. One wonders if he ever joined his wife and child. One happy event was the birth of Winnie's first child, Reginald, on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1910. The story of Winnie and her family will continue in part 2.

The following extracts are transcribed from Emily's diary, which starts in May 1907:-

**May 19 1907 Whit Sunday** Very cold easterly wind. Gilbert & Winnie gone to St Nicholas Street. Last Wednesday the Memorial Stone to Father & Mother was fixed in Churchyard. Last evening Auntie [Lucy] took flowers to the graves & took sewing to Mrs Hartley.

**Monday May 20** Mr & Mrs Taylor [William & Lizzie] & 6 children here. Mr Cox called and told us Mr E. Manning wanted to leave his farm in a month. John throwing manure up in Cleeve ground.

**Tuesday May 21** John still throwing manure & borrowed horse & crank to drive to Yatton station.

**Wednesday May 22** John ploughing ground for swedes.

**Thursday May 23** W.P Taylor [William] and Nattie [Nathaniel] drove here & went with Aunty [Lucy] to Walnut Tree Farm. [Brother John Hill's house] Wet day. John cleaning up yard – Leo cleaning harness.

**Friday May 24** Wet morning. John washing out barrels, afternoon cleaning yard. White Heifer calved yesterday. Aunty had a wire from Willie and went along to Cottage to meet Mr Cox. Shiner heifer calved today.

**Saturday May 25** John & Leo hauling rubbish from pig styes. Mr & Mrs Cousins came here today.

**Sunday July 28 1907** W.P.Taylor, Nattie & Olive here to tea & supper. [Norman & Edgar staying for holidays].

**Monday July 29** Fine morning, came on to rain about 3pm. Stopped hay making.

**Tuesday July 30** Fine day. Nattie cycled down with ice this evening.

**Wednesday July 31** Nattie & Olive drove down. Ridley & Nattie went to Sam Yard & bought chicken.

**Thursday August 1** Fine day. Annie & Kitty came with Frank when he fetched the butter. Finished all but the rakings in 11 acres.

**Friday August 2** Began cutting overlands, broke machine.

**Saturday August 3** Put in some posts around clover mow in marl pits.

**Tuesday December 17 1907** Aunty & I plucked 15 geese. Fine day men picking apples

**Wednesday December 18** Plucked 14 turkeys and 2 chickens. Piano Tuner here. Martin fetched and returned him to Nailsea station.

**Thursday December 19** Aunty went to Nicholas Street for Christmas. G. Court [this is Gilbert, Winnie's future husband] who drove our horse & cart, taking their geese & ours, back about 7pm. Men finished picking apples.

**Friday December 20** Stormy. Men mending fence

**Saturday December 21** Stormy. Men took 2 sows away from young ones to wean them. Downs mending fence round clover mows. Miss Jose & Dolly Hawkins here to tea yesterday.

**Sunday December 22 1907** Fine morning, wet evening.

**Monday December 23** Fine. Churned twice. Unloaded wagon apples.

**Tuesday December 24** Martin hauled wagon load of coal, gift coal for Cleeve poor.

**Wednesday December 25 Xmas Day.** Fine. Very quiet – Wilfred Kerton's man came over about 6 pm. Kate much worse & would like to see Winnie. She went & found her very ill. Leo & his brother-in-law stayed with me while she was away.

**Thursday December 26** Poor Kate passed away about 12.30 today. Fine & cold

**Friday December 27** Hard frost. Martin went to plough but found so much grass [he] turned young beast there instead. Charles, Anna and Catherine [brother Charles, his wife and elder child] here to tea.

**Saturday December 28** Hard frost. Kate buried this afternoon. Men pulling swedes in garden.

**Sunday February 23 1908** Fine morning, stormy in afternoon & evening. Aunty Lizzie & Lucy went to church in morning, Winnie in the evening. W.P.Taylor, Adelaide [Hill relation who lived with the Taylors], Olive & Norman here, brought us another gobler, took the other back.

**Monday February 24** Sherborne took plough to Eacots [blacksmith]. Bushing summerleaze. Had calf die, the one I bought from Uncle John, gave 25/- for it.

**Tuesday February 25** Wet, very rough evening. Sherborne drove Aunty Lucy to Yatton to shop, so rough Aunty Lizzie did not go.

**Wednesday February 26** Fine day, stormy in evening. Winnie & Aunty Lizzie went to post office & wired to Willie not to fetch her today, and then went to John in afternoon. Sherborne hauling road dirt.

**Thursday February 27** Fine. Hauling road dirt. Winnie went to Yatton Church 3. o'clock Confirmation then to Cadbury Farm [Home of Gilbert Court & his parents] to tea. W.P. Taylor, Stan & Ethel came for Lizzie, she has gone home, stayed 10 days.[She came for a change as she had been ill].

**Friday February 28** Fine. Finished bushing Summerleaze. Winnie went to Miss Avery's concert at Assembly Rooms [Railway Hotel, Yatton]. Paid M.Griffin 31/- for making hedge after road in summerleaze 11 acres.

**Saturday February 29** Finished hauling road dirt, 26 loads (given me). Fine day. Ground white with snow when we got up this morning.

**Sunday May 10 1908** Fine & warm. Winnie and Gilbert went to church in morning. Aunty [Lucy] went in the evening. Canon Alford preached.

**Monday May 11** Fine. Sherborne hauling manure to swede ground, Leo churned & in garden. Dr White called to see me. I have a carbuncle on my face & not at all well. Mr Wyatt & Joe came in for an hour in the evening.

**Tuesday May 12** Fine. Sherborne hauling manure to swede ground, Leo in garden in morning. Afternoon washed crank [trap] & took up to Lawrence to be varnished & mended, brought back a trap I can use until my own is mended. Mrs W.Manning & Milly, Miss Neal & Wilfred Kerton's little boy, Jack, came over with Frank & stayed to tea.

**Wednesday May 13** Stormy. Leo stopping hedge & in garden. Sherborne finished hauling manure to swede ground & began ploughing same. Washing white clothes, finished papering passages, it took 7 pieces of paper.

**Thursday May 14** Stormy. Sherborne hauling away manure in a heap, Leo clearing out houses in morning. Both hauling thorns in afternoon. Doctor called again this morning, I am better, changed my medicine, another bottle No 2.

**Friday May 15** Heavy showers all day. Men stopping hedge most of the day. Sold spotted sow & 10 pigs to Mr Smith, Bedminster for £9, [he] fetched them this evening.

**Saturday May 16** Fine. Men cutting off hedge between overlands & plough paddock.

**Sunday November 22 1908** Wet Morning.

**Monday November 23** Fine. Hauling swedes.

**Tuesday November 24** Stormy. Sherborne went for load big coal. E. Milliers's boy fetched swedes 21 [cwt]. 12 he bought & 9 I gave him for loan of horse & helping with machine. Mr & Mrs Cousins here, came back from Langford about 6pm evening, going to stay the night, brought me 2 roses.

**Wednesday November 25** Fine. Men finished hauling swedes. Killed a bacon pig for the house. Mr Cousins bought apples & swedes & started home about 10.0 this morning.

**Thursday November 26** Fine. Killed 9 geese, E. Millier cut up pig. J.Cousin's man came for apples & swedes & a piece of pork. Men began putting up arch for the roses to grow over. Phillis Court [Gilbert's sister] here, went with Winnie to see Miss Berthons Wedding [she lived at Cleeve Court]. Mr & Mrs Wyatt spent the evening here & stayed to supper. Nattie came for geese.

**Friday November 27** Fine. A.Edwards had loin of pork 10lbs. Leo finished planting roses, Sherborne hauling manure.

**Saturday November 28** Fine. Sherborne hauling manure, Leo in the garden, had sheep up and looked at their feet.

**Sunday April 4 1909** Fine.

**Monday April 5** Fine, very cold & dry. The last of Winnie's sheep lambbed in night, found her dead this morning, lamb alive. Tom finished rolling 11 acres of wheat in morning. Both went to Mr Pitt's for hay. Mr & Mrs Cousins drove in about 10am, quite unexpected, had spent the weekend at Mrs Holders, West Town. We went to low fields, Mr Cousins valued some hay, they started for home at 7pm.

**Tuesday April 6** Fine & dry, a little warmer. Tom rolling and dragging ground for mangolds. Aunty went to see J. Shiner about land, then on to Backwell [to Charles Hill]. Took 7 yearlings to low fields.

**Wednesday April 7** Fine day & warm. Tom ploughing mangold ground. Aunty went to see H.Alvis about land. One of the best of Winnie's lambs, in play, ran against gate post, obliged to kill it, sent it to A.Edwards.

**Thursday April 8** Fine, dry & warm. Men brought up all hay from Marl Pitts & worked in garden. Olive, Norman & Edgar Taylor come for their Easter holidays, Stanley brought them. A.Edwards sent to say lamb no good for him, too bruised.

**April 9 Good Friday** Dry & very warm. Tom drove Winnie to Yatton for lamb. Mrs Court bought one & Mrs Wyatt the other. Olive & Aunty went to church in the morning, no one [from here] in the evening.

**Saturday April 10** Dry & warm. Tom dragged & rolled ground for mangold and rolled garden. Aunty cycled to Yatton shopping afternoon and Olive and her went to churchyard with flowers evening. Mr Marsh called about land.

**Easter Sunday April 11** Fine but colder.

**Sunday September 12 1909** Fine. Nattie, Norman & Edgar fetched Olive home.

**Monday September 13** Little rain. Harry cut thistles until dinner then Leo & he threw of a load of hay [sic]. Tom Rogers left.

**Tuesday September 14** Fine. Haymaking.

**Wednesday September 15** Fine. Haymaking.

**Thursday September 16** Dry, very dull. Finished hay making all but the raking.

**Friday September 17** Fine. Making up mow [haystack] in low field. Uncle John here.

**Saturday September 18** Fine. Finished hay making. M.Griffin thatched 6 acres mow.

**Saturday November 6 1909** Fine. Men getting out implements. Uncle Charles & Cathy here for tea. E. Millier brought back ham he so kindly took to Bristol and had forced. He has asked if he may put a cow into the sale. Mr E. Young has also asked if he may put in five steres. Gilbert very kindly brought over beef which Baker had kindly roasted for sale.

**Sunday November 7** Fine. Winnie went to church twice.

Written along side of page:- Aunty, Winnie & 2 Wyatts went to a whist drive in Yatton.

**Monday November 8** Fine. All getting things ready for sale. Messers Shiner & Clapp here.

**Tuesday November 9** Fine Sale Day. Aunty Anna [Charles' wife] & Rose Millier helped us.

**Wednesday November 10** Fine. Clearing up, Leo not coming to work again, getting his own ready to go away.

**Thursday November 11** Fine. Jack picking up apples. Aunty cycled to Mrs Green to ask her to make a dress for herself.

**Friday November 12** Fine. Jack picking up apples. Gilbert has marked all his tools.

**Saturday November 23** A lovely day. Gilbert hauling his mangolds, Jack helping.

From 1910 Emily did not write in her diary every day. Winnie & Gilbert were married on 8.2.1910.

**Sunday April 17 1910** Fine. Nobody from here went to church. Gilbert gone to Yatton this evening.

**Monday April 25** W.P. Taylor, Ethel & Olive fetched me & drove me to their place Nicholas Street for a week's holiday. Had a sharp hail storm on our journey here. Olive gone to stay with Winnie while I here.

**Friday April 29** J. Cousins called for me and drove me to his place, Downend, to stay until Saturday.

**Sunday April 31** Mr & Mrs Cousins drove me back to Bristol this evening.

**Monday May 1** Connie & I went for a walk up Park Street this morning. After dinner Mr & Mrs Taylor & Norman drove me home, a lovely day.

**Saturday October 3 1910** Gilbert & Winnie drove me to Bristol, I stayed at St Nicholas Street until **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>** then went to Downend until **Saturday [October 8]**.

**Sunday October 9** W.P.Taylor & Dolly Hill bought me home.

**Monday October 10** Nattie & Willie Hill called.

**Wednesday November 2 1910** Winnie not well, sent for Nurse.

**Thursday November 3** Baby boy [Reginald] born 1.50am.

**Monday November 7** Stanley & Olive Taylor called, had tea.

**Tuesday November 8** Mrs Court & E.Edwards to tea.

**Saturday December 3 1910** Teddy Hill, John's little boy passed away.

**There were no entries for 1911 and only 9 entries for 1912.**

**Sunday July 21 1912** E & Rose Millier & their 4 children came to say goodbye.

**Saturday July 13** W.P, Lizzie & Norman Tailor on Saturday and returned on Sunday.

**Saturday July 27** Lizzie, W. & Edgar came and stayed the night.

**Sunday July 28** G.G. & Winnie went to Nailsea.

**Monday July 29** Alice & Milly Manning here to say farewell.

**Thursday August 1** Edwin & Rose & four children & Alice & Milly Manning sailed in SS Norseman

**Monday August 5** Taylors & Mr & Mrs Calder here. G.G. & Winnie & Edgar (who is staying here) went to Yatton Flower Show.

**Wednesday August 7** Mr & Mrs W. Court & Mr & Mrs Parsons spent evening here.

**Sunday August 11** I went to church this morning.

The Diary ends here

**Acknowledgements** to Mr Ray Naish for his help with farm expressions especially his detailed explanation of the word "Bushing". Also to Mrs Marion Atwell for her help with farm words and her help with details of the Binning and Court families.

**The Life of a Farming Family – Part II** will be published in a future edition of *More Yatton Yesterdays*.

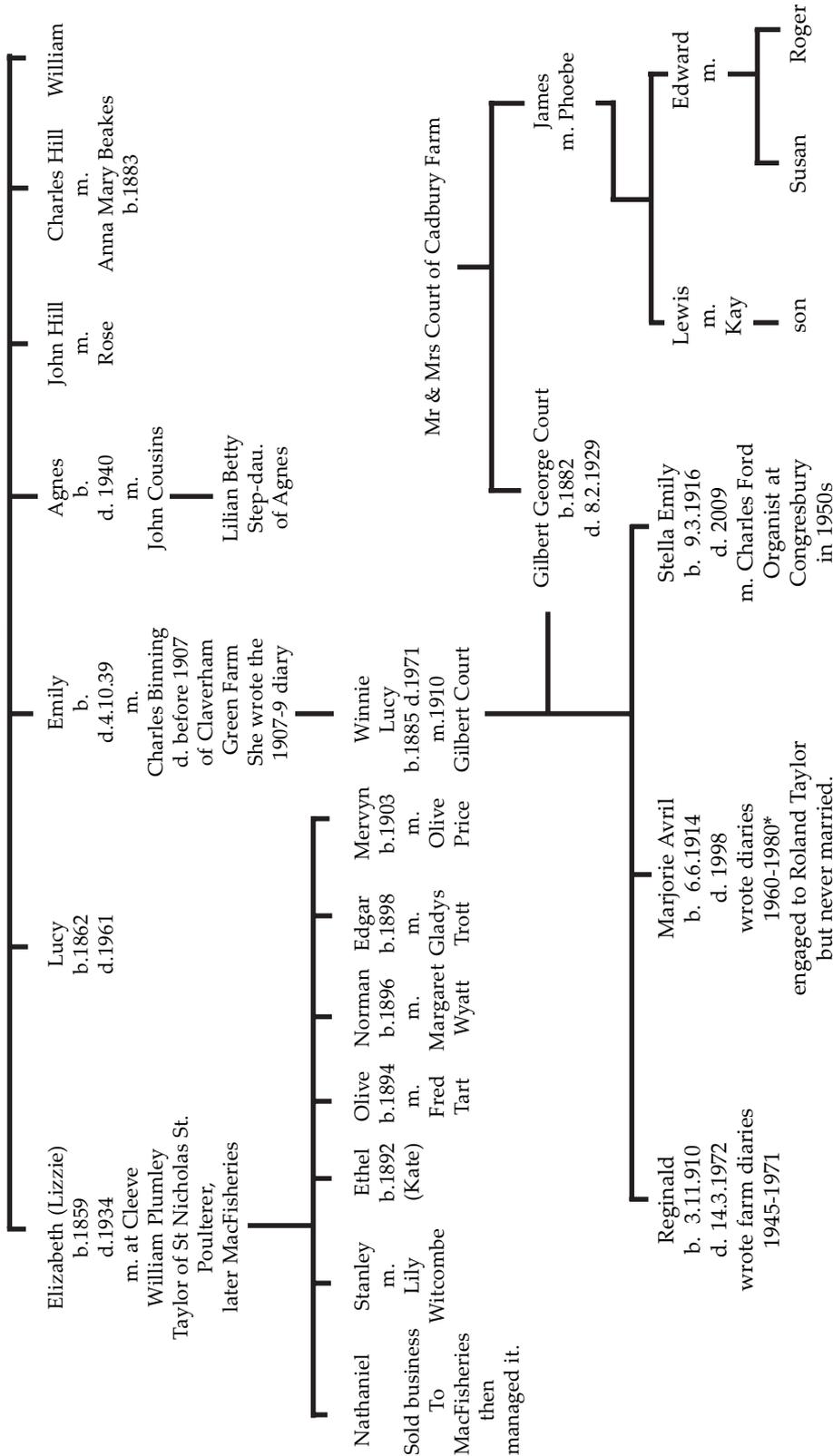
*Mary Campbell*



**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 1960,62,69,70,72-73,76,78,81,85,88 and 1990.

## Yatton's on-off-on Coronation Celebrations of 1902

This is an account of how Yatton prepared for the coronation of King Edward VII and how the village dealt with the subsequent cancellation of the first date due to the King's unforeseen illness and how the village eventually celebrated the memorable day. It is interesting to remember that the media coverage then would have only been in newspapers.

Extract from the Yatton Church Magazine for June 1902.

### THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII

*"Everyone is looking forward to this, the great event of the year, which has been fixed for Thursday, June 26th in Westminster Abbey. It is a solemn and impressive function in which the King will be consecrated to his high office, being anointed with oil, as Kings, Priests and Prophets of old were thus made and consecrated, after which he will be crowned in the ancient chair of King Edward, and as all his loyal subjects will wish to enter into this Service and to add their prayers for him in this, the most solemn moment of his life, it is proposed to hold a Service in Church at 11 o'clock in the morning, and to use the Special Form which has been issued for that purpose. The offertory on the occasion will be given towards the debt on the tower spire, and on so memorable a day all will surely make a worthy offering."*

Extract from the Yatton Church Magazine for July 1902.

### CORONATION CELEBRATIONS

*"This number of the Magazine will be in print before the Coronation day, so that we can only now record some of the preparations that are being made for its observance in Yatton. Large committees have been continually at work and the result of their deliberations is that, after the service in the church at eleven, the rest of the day will be spent in a festive manner. There are to be sports in the afternoon and at 3:45 a tea for all the children of the parish in three centres, when medals kindly given by Major Pethick will be distributed after which there will be games and prizes. At 5 o'clock, there will be tea for adults and at 6.30 another tea for adults. And to wind up the day there will be a bonfire on Cadbury Hill. The aged and infirm and those in receipt of parochial relief will not be forgotten, for they will have a ticket for goods to the value of half-a-crown given to them".*

*Everyone is longing now for a fine day and is hoping that the present unseasonable weather will soon change so that we may have nothing to damp our joy."*

*"GOD SAVE THE KING"*

Extract from the Yatton Church Magazine for August 1902.

**(Headed) 26<sup>th</sup> June 1902**

*"GOD save the KING!" "Little did we think that when closing the paragraph in the last issue of the Magazine with this aspiration, that ere the anticipated 26th June should dawn, we, with the Nation and Empire, would be offering the prayer with an added earnestness and pathos for our King stricken with a serious and unexpected illness. And that while the climatic conditions were perfect for a great national pageant, the chief actor in the Coronation solemnity would be unable to go to Westminster Abbey to be crowned.*

*Such, however, was the case, and the first very proper feeling of our local Committee was that the celebration here must be postponed entirely. The preparations were, of course, in a forward state – cake by the hundred weight had been baked to our order – and as the most cheering news of the King's condition came to us on the eve of what was to have been Coronation Day, it was wisely decided to give the tea to the children, and to hold an Intercessory Service in the Church in the evening.*

*Accordingly, on the day, the tea was held in three centres – the National School, the Friend's Meeting House, and the British School, and everything passed off most satisfactorily. The rooms were tastefully decorated and looked bright with flags and mottoes, and the heavily laden tables were made additionally attractive by a profusion of palms and ferns. Upwards of 400 children gathered from all parts of the parish, some of the younger ones being accompanied by their mothers. We were glad to think that in spite of the postponement of some of our*

*proposed festivities, the old folks and the children were cared for a fact which would give satisfaction to our gracious King and Queen. Each child was the recipient of a handsome medal, for which we have to thank Major and Mrs Pethick. After tea the youngsters had a good time in Mr. Edwards' field and then came more cake before going to their homes. The impressive service in Church at 7:30 fittingly closed a day which, but for the illness of the King, would have been a truly memorable one in our country's annals.*

*Will all those who so kindly helped with the tea arrangements accept our grateful thanks? It is impossible to mention all by name, but it is a matter of congratulation that such an army of willing and united helpers rallied round the indefatigable and ubiquitous secretary of the Tea Committee – Mr. E. J. Sparshatt, to whom our first and chiefest thanks are due. Associated with this sub-committee was a Ladies Committee of Helpers, with Mrs. Mather as president, Mrs. W. J. Thomas, Mrs. C. Knowles and Mrs. A. G. Collings vice-presidents, and Miss Cox and Miss Baber secretaries. We heartily thank all these ladies. We also thank the authorities for the use of the National and British Schoolrooms, and would specially thank the Society of Friends for so kindly placing their commodious Meeting House premises at the disposal of the committee, coupling with this the name of Mr. Nathanael Sholl, who was most helpful and obliging. Thanks are also given to the committees of the Yatton, Horsecastle, and Claverham Chapels, the Salvation Army, and Messrs. E. Burdge, J. Knight, S. Salmon, and R. Chambers for the loan of tables, trestles, seats, ware and urns; and to the following:*

*Mr. Hockey, for plants for table decoration; Miss Avery, and other friends, for flags; Mrs. T. Price, Mrs. Spiers, Mrs. Collings, Mrs. E. Burdge, Miss Lukins, and Mrs. Atherton for boiling water; Mr. C. Knowles, for horse, dray, and man for returning goods to owners; Messrs. Inglis and Waite, for very special services heartily rendered by them; Mrs Udall and Misses Counsell, for making badges for the various committees. And to Messrs. J. Knight and Edwards, for kindly lending fields for the sports and children's games. The Sports Committees had worked hard at their arrangements, but these had to be deferred.*

*The bonfire, which had been built on Cadbury Hill with wood kindly given by Col. Long, and other materials, was lighted without authority late on the night of June 30th.*

*Mr. A.G. Collings has most generously presented a fine Union Jack to the Parish Church, which we hope the kind donor will see flying on special occasions for many years to come.*

*The officers of the General Committee were: The Vicar chairman, Messrs. W. T. Cox and E. J. Sparshatt hon. secretaries, and Mr. G. R. Adams hon treasurer. All concerned worked in no half-hearted fashion to secure success.*

*We conclude this report with a feeling of intense satisfaction that, in the mercy of God, our King is making such rapid progress that the Coronation is announced for August 9th. We hope to have the special Coronation Service on the following day, viz., Sunday August 10th, followed by a Celebration of Holy Communion. The offerings that day will be for the Tower Fund."*

Extract from the Yatton Church Magazine for September 1902

**CORONATION DAY,  
August 9th, 1902.**

*"The Coronation commemoration festivities, deferred from June last, were happily carried out in our parish, under propitious skies, on the day upon which King Edward and Queen Alexandra were solemnly anointed and crowned in the venerable Abbey Church at Westminster.*

*The General Committee, with the sub-committees for tea and sports, planned in a praiseworthy manner the holding of a public tea for all adult parishioners at 4.15 p.m., followed by sports and dancing.*

*We are pleased to know that the arrangements gave satisfaction, as was evidenced by the numerous company which sat down to tea in a spacious marquee pitched in Mr. Thomas Price's field near the Vicarage, which was kindly lent for the occasion. The catering of Messrs. Burdge and Chambers was excellent, and the tent gaily decorated with pennons and bunting, presented an attractive appearance, the long tables looked pretty with Mr. Hockey's plants, and surrounded by the happy faces of a truly representative body of Yattonians.*

*We doubt not that the grand old Doxology, sung as the Grace, expressed the thanksgiving of many for the speedy recovery of the King, while the cheers for his Majesty, after the meal, were expressive of the loyalty of Yatton. We thank the many ladies and gentlemen who looked after the comfort of the big tea party and in various ways helped Mr. Sparshatt, the tea secretary.*

*The Sports Committee, of which Mr. W. T. Cox was the energetic secretary, had an*

interesting programme of events, for which there were numerous entries. Major Pethick made a genial starter, and Dr. Johnson discharged the duties of judge with a fairness, which must have consoled even the unsuccessful. The Ladies Race excited much interest, while the Donkey Race and Climbing the Greasy Pole for a leg of mutton caused much amusement. The only competitor for the latter prize was constantly at the bottom of the pole, but at length the prize was adjudged him for his futile, but well-intentioned attempts to gain the top. After the sports came dancing until 10 pm., to the strains of the Bristol Military Band.

The Union Jack, on our truncated spire, floated high over all, and during the day merry peals rang out from our Church

Tower. The decorations in the village were the work of private enterprise, and many pretty effects were to be seen by day; while some of the illuminations at night were on quite an elaborate scale, and gave much pleasure to the onlookers.

So ended the memorable day and as night folded her wings over our village it needed but a little stretch of the imagination to hear the far-off echo of the shouts, which had that day reverberated through the grey aisles of Westminster Abbey – “VIVAT REX EDVARDUS”.

On the Sunday following, the very solemn and impressive Coronation Office was used in our church, and the thanks offerings were asked on behalf of the debt remaining upon the rebuilt spire.”

Pat Denny



## Delivery cart from Tutt's shop 1917

A lady employee drove this delivery cart in 1917 for the grocery and draper's shop in Yatton belonging to William Tutt. At this time the orders were gathered by the shop traveller and sent out in the cart pulled by one of three horses. In the adjoining house, Orchardleigh, there lived Mr and Mrs Tutt and their twin daughters, at least two domestic staff and up to thirteen shop staff including apprentices.

The shop had a half-day on Thursdays and except for Sunday was open from 8 until 7 and even 9 on Fridays. Apprentices worked for four and a half years learning the trade.

The business had been set up in a new building in 1825. Mr Tutt took over the shop and house at 18-22 High Street in 1897 and the connection with the family finally ceased in 1994.



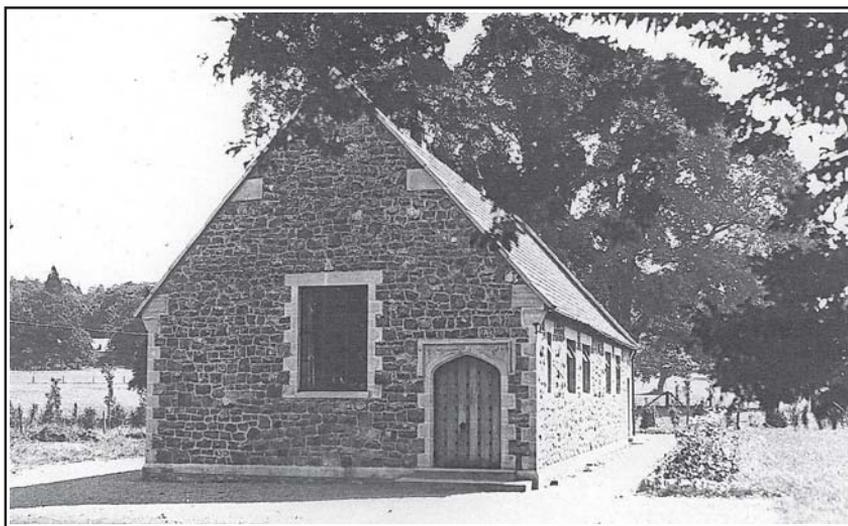
Marianne Pitman

## How Cleeve Village Hall Began

In May 1935 King George and Queen Mary celebrated 25 years on the throne. A village meeting was held at Cleeve School on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1935 to discuss arrangements to celebrate this Jubilee. When everyone was gathered at the school, Mr Sinclair, later Lord Sinclair, was voted into the chair by the village. He explained that they had two headings to discuss: the first was arrangements for the actual day and the second was what form of permanent memorial should be erected. The arrangements for the day were discussed.

The village then put forward several ideas for a memorial, of which three were entered in the minutes; a Playing Field for the young people of the village, a Clock to be fixed to the church tower and a Village Hall, which was felt to be definitely required. The last idea met with considerable approval. A sub-committee was then elected to investigate the best idea for a Memorial, and the following people were chosen. They were Mrs Vachell, Miss Baber, the Reverend J. Dixon, Mr G. Meade-King, Mr E.H. Millier, Mr Robert Sinclair and Mr H. Burn. The next village meeting was to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

When the sub-committee met on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> April at Cleeve Court, they discussed arrangements for Jubilee Day and what kind of permanent memorial should be erected. Mrs Vachell was asked to form a small group in order to raise at least £100.00 for this memorial. They also



*Cleeve Village Hall, 1936*

planned the arrangements for the Village Meeting to be held in the School that evening.

At this Village meeting the Vicar gave wholehearted support for a Village Hall. Sir John Macpherson had sent a message of support and many others agreed. As a result of this when the time came, there was a unanimous vote for a Village Hall. Mr Burn warned the village that volunteers would be required for both the preliminary building and the later care and upkeep of the Hall. The sub-committee was asked to carry on for the time being and Miss Jean Macpherson's name was added at the request of Mrs Vachell.

In actual fact Mr and Mrs Burn must have had the idea that the memorial should

take the form of a Village Hall all along, because on 25 March 1935 Mrs Phyllis Burn had written to the Somerset Rural Community Council. She enquired how to apply for grants and loans for a Village Hall. Mrs Burn also asked advice on starting such a project. Miss B. Spencer replied the next day enclosing a leaflet as to how to set about the work:- "The Hall must be kept in trust for the benefit of the village and the **Committee to manage it must represent adequately the different organisations and interests in the village.** Where both Grant and Loan were approved one-half of the total cost must be raised by the village. The Grant will be not more than one-sixth of the total cost, with a maximum of £350.0.0, and the Loan not more than one-third of the total cost, with a maximum of £500.0.0."

The main problem discussed by the subcommittee between April and August was where the Hall was to be sited. Mr Meade-King generously suggested that the small Scout Hut, which he had erected on his land [land on the opposite side of the road from the present Cleeve Nursery] should be enlarged and converted to a Village Hall. There were some problems attached to this site, one of which was that there might be a considerable delay. Several members pointed out that a central position was essential and Mrs Vachell, when collecting money in the west-end of Cleeve, had got the distinct feeling in favour of the Hall being built within a reasonable distance of these residents. Mr Sinclair then came up with the answer. He suggested that he might be able to solve the problem by giving a corner of his field, near Coward's garage

[the present car sales site]. This he would be glad to do, provided that the site proved suitable. The committee felt, unanimously, that this was the best option as it could go ahead straight away and Mr Sinclair was thanked for his most generous offer. On the 7<sup>th</sup> August Mrs Vachell reported that they had already raised £113.15.3.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August Mr Sinclair wrote to Miss Spencer, of the Somerset Rural Community Council, about various problems, but in it he mentioned that nearly everyone in the village had contributed and also the fact that no final decision had been made concerning the site to be chosen. Again Miss Spencer replied the following day!

The third village meeting was called on the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> November, when Mr Sinclair made it clear that in offering his site it "must be taken entirely on its merits" and he reported Mr Meade-King's kind offer in connection with the hut.

The meeting then passed unanimously the sub-committee's recommendation, that Mr Sinclair's generous offer should be accepted. Mr Burn then got up to show the plans for the Hall and to explain the amount of work which had to be done. At this meeting a Council was appointed to take charge of the Village Hall affairs, following the instructions on Miss Spencer's leaflet. The Council was:-

Mr Herbert Burn, Mrs Phyllis Burn, Mr Robert Sinclair, Mrs May Sinclair, Mr H.S. Dennis, Mr W.T. Davies, Mr A.G.P Evans, Mr Tom Garnett, Miss Clare Macpherson, Mr & Mrs E.H. Millier, Mr A.Pope, Mr S. Coward, Mr H. Andow, Mr F. Yeates, Mr A.H. Morse, Mr A.J. Hervey and Mr Bailey, Mrs Vachell **representing the Girls**

**Friendly Society**, Miss Jean Macpherson **the Girl Guides**, Miss Smith **the School**, the Vicar and the Churchwarden, Mr T.H. Fisher **the Church**, Mrs S. Young **the Chapel**, Mrs N. Ridley **the Ladies Club**, Mr H. Blackmore **the British Legion** and Mr W. Cooper **the Bowling Club**.

In early 1936 Mr Burn had estimated that by using voluntary labour to dig the foundations it would reduce the cost of the hall by about £70. He therefore drew up a plan. Up to twenty 'volunteers' should turn up on seven Saturday afternoons in February and March 1936 and possibly on some evenings when it got lighter. 'Volunteers' is in inverted commas because there was some feeling in the village about this!!

By 7<sup>th</sup> February 1936 matters had proceeded to a point where a financial statement could be issued. The cost of the Hall was £1040.0.0, which together with the cost of the lighting and heating of £45.0.0 and the architect's and solicitor's fees of £10.0.0 each came to a total of £1105.0.0. Unfortunately there is nowhere in the existing minutes to say how much money had been raised by this date. A contractor was employed but his name is not known, as it was not entered in the surviving minutes. He was to start on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1936. By which time the "Volunteers" had carried out a good deal of preparation work.

On Saturday 22 February 1936 Mr Burn arranged "A Spade and Wheelbarrow Party" at the start of which Mr Eacott was asked to cut the first sod, everyone was asked to bring a spade, and men too old to dig were invited to see "The Tossing of the First Sod".

The building was finally opened later the same year.

In 1947 there was a move to enlarge the hall, in order to create a Club Room and a Billiards Room adjacent to the original building. In June 1947 Mrs Burn wrote to the Flax Bourton Council Offices asking if a redundant plasterboard hut at Tyntesfield might be purchased for Cleeve Village Hall. Two of these huts, numbers 69 and 70, which were 60 feet by 18 feet were finally bought by the Hall committee for £60.0.0.

These huts had been erected by the army during the war and, when they were vacated in 1946, homeless people moved in as squatters. This caused a good deal of consternation. However they were allowed to stay until they could be rehoused, many in prefabricated buildings. The Council was eager to sell the vacant ones.

Work on erecting and lighting the huts was completed by September 1948.

Terry Organ wrote an excellent article in *All About Cleeve*, February 2003, giving the later history of the Hall. In it he said that money continued to be raised by the fund raising committee, after the Hall was opened, by holding whist drives and dances. He also stated that the old huts were replaced c.1971 when the new extension was built in 1972.

It might be of some interest to read what festivities were arranged for the actual Jubilee Day in 1935. Four committees were formed to take charge of:-

- 1) Sports,
- 2) Teas,
- 3) The Dance and
- 4) The Bonfire.

PROGRAMME

<p>8.00am Early morning Service in the Church</p> <p>10.00 Commemoration Service for all denominations</p> <p>11.15 Play by the schoolchildren on the Vicarage lawn (if wet in the school)</p> <p>2.30pm Sports in the field between the school and the main road</p> <p>3.45 Children’s tea</p> <p>4.30 Tea for adults</p> <p>5.00 Tea for adults</p>	<p>5.30 Tug-of-war and Prize-giving</p> <p>8.00 Dance in the school with an interval between 10.00 and 10.30pm.</p> <p>8.00 King George V’s speech to be broadcast in Goblin Coombe House and in the School</p> <p>10.00 A maroon will be fired and the village bonfire lit on the Batch by kind permission of Mr Collins</p> <p>10.00 Fireworks from Cleeve Toot</p>
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Mr and Mrs Robert Sinclair gave each child a Jubilee mug and some chocolates.

Does any resident of Cleeve remember the day? And can we share their memories of the occasion? Should the Village Hall really have been called the Jubilee Hall?



This article was previously printed in *All About Cleeve*.

Mary Campbell



Butchers’ Arms

I was very happy to lend an old photograph of the Butchers’ Arms for publication in *MYY No. 9*, but the informal narrative became rather confused. I thought perhaps it would be interesting to hear what it was really like to live in an authentic country pub between the wars.

We had been living at the Bell Inn Congresbury with my aunt and uncle. When Dad came out of the navy, to make a settled home for his family, in February 1933 we arrived at a neglected, dark old inn. It had belonged to the Church [*I do not think this is correct but perhaps I am wrong- MVC*] and to the long gone Ashton Gate Brewery and then George’s Brewery – famous for the grey shire horses that made deliveries.

I was three and my brother three weeks old. Most of the houses in Yatton had oil lamps, but there was no drainage system or piped water – that came just before the 1939-45 War and was regarded with some suspicion “you could see what you were

getting with your well! Frogs in ours." It was the time of the Great Depression, but Dad who was an electrical engineer and had served with the Royal Flying Corp all through the Great War, had a position installing industrial lifts eg. at Temple Meads Station etc. Mum ran the pub so they managed.

We children went to the Church of England school at 4 years of age. It was just opposite the present car park, which was our playground.

We could walk there quite easily. With just an occasional horse and cart, bicycle or great shire horses coming to and from work, it was quite unusual to see a car. Mr Dyke and his wife were headmaster and headmistress at the time, then Mr & Mrs Stone – all amazingly dedicated and talented teachers. We had a thorough basic education and even encouragement to do well. Many of us will never forget their care of us.

There were two hotels in Yatton, the Railway Hotel, built sometime after the railway came through Yatton, and the Prince of Orange, an earlier building, which catered for residents and local events eg. Farmers Fat Stock dinner at Christmas, The R.O.B. (Royal Order of Buffaloes) etc.

I have a large photograph, very bleary now, of the Ox Roast held in the fields at the back of the Prince – **not** on the site of Atlay's garage as reported. The Prince had a pony chaise and carriage to meet travellers from the train, the coachman died some years ago, but within living memory. The Railway Hotel had splendid accommodation and Assembly



Rooms, the scene of Farmers and Police Balls etc. - quite special and marvellous social occasions, which were enjoyed there. The darts, cribbage and skittles for the district all had their dinner dances there. It melded so many people into a close happy unit. Then came the 'locals' at the Butchers' Arms and the Bell Inn, which is now A.P. Cleaners, kept for many years by Mr Lukins who had a building and undertaker's business. Most publicans in the smaller houses had this arrangement or perhaps a small farm. Something to make use of the land and orchards which normally came with the pub.

The Butchers' Arms had a large stable yard at the back with cart sheds, stables, cider house and press, pig styes, and a vegetable garden, the garden shed higher than the old house. There were wide steps going into the yard where the pump stood and the roof at the back sloped to the level of the garden. Price's Farm or Rectory Farm was our neighbour and their orchard was a mass of pink and white blossom in May – no estates then. That little spot is now Church Close and Rectory Way.

I've almost missed the Railway Inn directly opposite the Industrial complex, it was also known as the Market Inn, but went back, I think to its original name. Directly opposite, at that time, Yatton Cattle, Poultry and House Items Market was held every Monday. This was a most exciting day, all the animals were walked from the farms for miles around, straight through Yatton High Street – those times really deserve an article on its own. The Railway Inn and the Prince had extended licences on Market days and Fat stock and Christmas Markets to provide refreshments for the farmers and auctioneers. A big hay cart, eventually an open lorry, was parked in front of the Railway Inn, selling farm clothes and all kinds of agricultural tools. I believe it belonged to a Mr Bailey of Congresbury, whose shop stocked everything – a real treasure trove of 19<sup>th</sup> century [*does she mean 20<sup>th</sup> ?*] animal and farm needs.

The Butchers' Arms had eventually an excellent local trade, a cross section of all the village. I don't know how they squeezed in but we had five teams of enthusiastic Darts, Crib and Table skittles players. I had grown up with many of the families that became friends and customers over the years. It was subject as life was then to very strict rules and deep respect for everyone, there was a lot of high spirits but no vicious disturbances or flouting the law, your licence would have been forfeited, but then bad behaviour was not tolerated by anyone. I remember so vividly the day war was declared, very few people had a radio, so everyone was invited to the living room to hear Chamberlain's announcement. It was the most beautiful sunny Sunday morning – there was dead

silence, all the older men looking grave, my mother hiding a tear and Dad so serious, they had been through all this before.

When my father died in 1956 I took over the Butchers' Arms. I was used to the behind the scenes hard physical work, but as children and young people we were never allowed behind the counter, or in the public area. There was no problem, and regular customers took good care that I managed OK until I got the hang of being a landlady! No problems, no unpleasant incidents, the licensing strictly kept and respected and a wonderful and valued clientele. Colourful characters that one missed now and would never see now. I particularly remember an old gentleman, a gypsy, who always had his bread and cheese lunch sitting in the bow window, when he came through Yatton with his horse and cart picking scrap. My eldest daughter, about a year old then, loved him. He made her straw men and she sat with him if I got busy and shared his lunch.

My mother died in 1956, she had never wanted to be anywhere else and we did what was wished, both parents buried in Yatton Churchyard. Circumstances for the small family pub were changing dramatically, the profits we made were not large but neither were the expenses. My three children were brought up there, and the business was good. We decided to leave in 1979, it was with very mixed feelings for the old house. I am so glad that it is still not altered too much, and full of happy memories.

*Joy Sweet*

# Enclosure at Chelvey Batch

## Broadfield Down – Earthwork Survey August 2009

*Shirley Everden and Yatton Congresbury Claverham  
and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team*

In the winter of 2007, Yatton, Congresbury, Cleeve and Claverham Archaeological Research Team (YCCART) commenced a survey of an enclosure on the north-west slope of Broadfield Down, at Chelvey Batch, Brockley. This enclosure was included in the appendix to Vince Russett’s article (2006) describing a group of earthwork enclosures on the Down, all of which share some similar features.

YCCART is a community archaeology team, part of the Community Archaeology in North Somerset project, initiated and guided by Vince Russett, County Archaeologist for North Somerset.

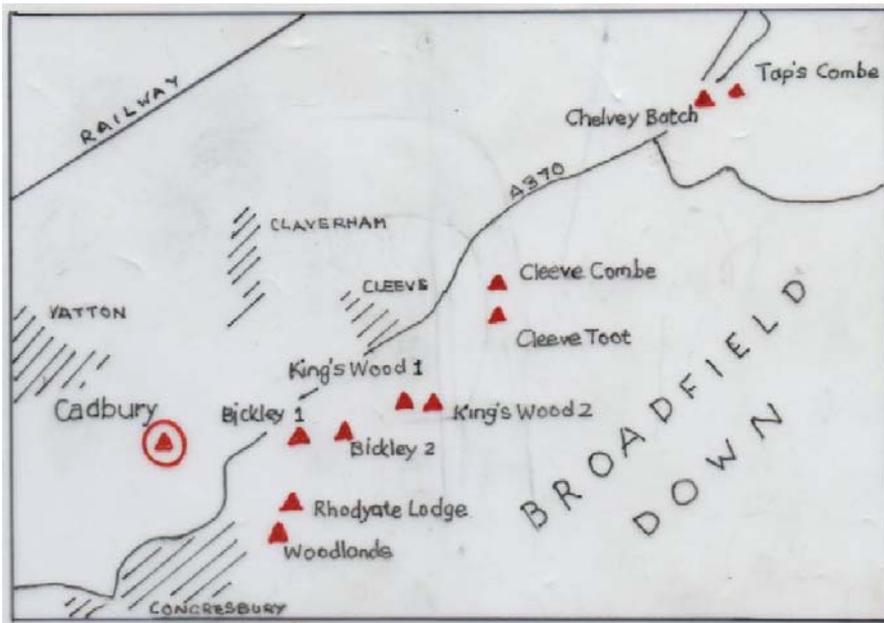


Fig.1. Distribution of earthworks on north-west flanks of Broadfield Down

### Introduction

Broadfield Down is bounded roughly by the A370 between Congresbury and Barrow Gurney, on the north by Barrow Gurney village and the open valley in which Winford lies, on the east by Winford parish, and to the south by the Wrington Vale and

the Wrington-Congresbury Road. To the west of Congresbury is an outlying hill which is the site of the internationally important hill fort of Cadbury (Rahtz et al. 1992) and the former site of the Roman Temple at Henley Wood (Watts and Leach 1998).

The relationship between this group of enclosures and the adjacent hill fort is much debated (Russett 2006). None of the enclosures has produced any datable evidence, in spite of close examination during surveys.

## The earthwork survey

The enclosure is situated in woodland immediately adjacent to the small lane called Chelvey Batch. (Fig 2.) It is approximately 50m x 50m (0.2 hectares) in size, and it lies between 55-70 m. above Ordnance Datum at NGR ST47636709. Like several of its comparative enclosures, it is roughly D-shaped, with the straight arm of the 'D' formed by a steep, probably natural slope on the west side, and a curved bank and ditch forming the north, east and south sides. Dividing the steep western slope from the interior is a slight secondary slope, which appears to form an extension of the outer face of the enclosure bank, and might indicate that the bank was originally continuous around the whole enclosure rather than penannular in form. There is no obvious entrance, and no features were observed inside the ditch and bank.

## Discussion

This earthwork has several factors which suggest that it forms a part of the group shown in figure 1 and discussed by Vince Russett (2006). It is sub-circular in form, and might be penannular; it falls into the smaller size group of the other enclosures; it is situated in woodland and on a hill-slope

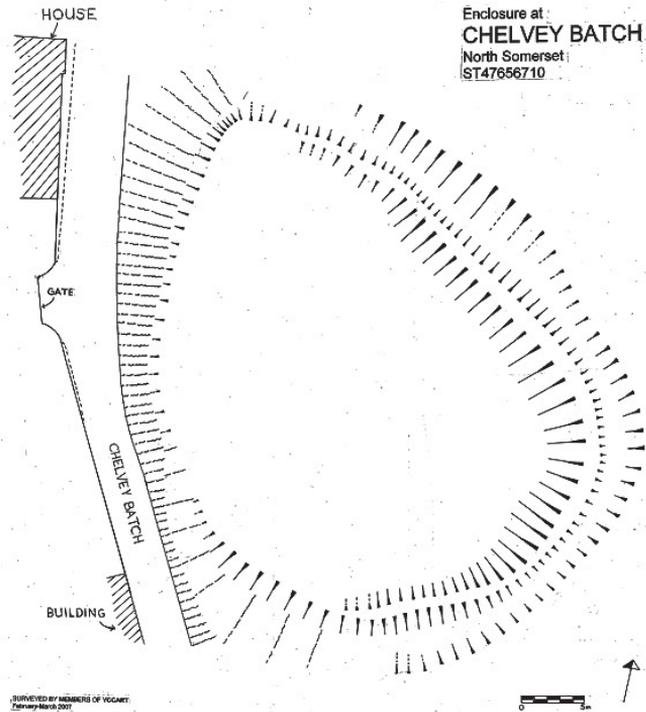


Fig. 2. Enclosure at Chelvey Batch

above a minor cliff; and finally, like several of the other sites, it has received no attention from archaeologists in the past. Like all the others, no dating evidence has been found within the earthwork. However, evidence for an early date might be seen at Bickley 1, where the earthwork lies exactly against the parish boundary. This suggests that the very visible bank of the enclosure was used as a marker for the boundary, and thus must pre-date the formalisation of parish boundaries in the early medieval period.

Other relationships with landscape features do not assist with dating these structures, although several of these sites appear to relate to ancient field boundaries within the woodland, where banks seem to approach the enclosure and fill the ditches, implying that the enclosures are earlier. At present, the banks cannot be closely dated either, so

probably only excavation could give more information.

So, several possible dates might be suggested for these structures. It is possible that they belong to the pre-Roman iron age, with associated field systems dividing up the unwooded uplands for farming.

A second possibility that must be considered is the relationship to the landscape of 5th-6th century Cadbury. It is strange that there are so many of these enclosures close to Cadbury but as yet, none have been found on the rest of Broadfield Down. This might suggest that they were a part of the vibrant economy of the hill fort in that period.

Finally, there is of course the possibility that the sites may have been founded in the late prehistoric or Roman periods and simply went on being used into the 6th or 7th centuries AD, as in Trethurgy in Cornwall (see Quinnell, 2004). But whatever the age of these structures, they must certainly be



Fig 3. Bank of enclosure, Chelvey Batch

taken into account in the future management strategies for the whole area. They need protection as an important, if not fully understood part of our heritage.

NOTE: This earthwork is in private woodland, and there is no public access to the site. We extend our very grateful thanks to Mr Paul Swift for his permission to survey and photograph this site.

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## Mrs Anne Harvey (nee Postlewaite)'s Memories

I came to Yatton in 1929 at the age of eight with my parents and an elder brother Jack, from Canada. This was after a spell in Kensington with our grandparents who were much amused to see my disappointment on discovering the underground trains were not for children's entertainment!

We moved into no. 5 Elbro Street, with a maiden aunt of Dad's. She was a brave lady to endure the presence of three wild Canadian kids for two or three years, after my kid brother Ron arrived. We had been accustomed to a telephone, electric light, fridge and freezer. That gas light and "candles to take you to bed" were absolutely fascinating. The soft English language was so gentle to the ears.

Yatton School brings back so many memories. Mr Eldon was headmaster and then Mr Dyte took his place. He was very forward-thinking, and introduced the childrens' lending library in what used to be the Village Hall, behind the playground. One day he announced that the boys could sit next to the girls of their choice: that caused a few ruffled feathers and did not last.

Mr and Mrs Stone lived in Congresbury at that time, Mr Stone was kind to me. He and his wife introduced in school a morning drink of milk in the summer ( $\frac{1}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup> of a pint) and Horlicks in the winter made with boiling water, as they were aware of so many poor children in the school.

I greatly admired a Miss Riccards who taught the girls cookery and needlework. We had to make these white aprons and to highlight the tedium, would read chapters from a book called "Froggies Little Brother". I only remember it was so harrowing. I know my apron ended up pale grey. Mr Peart was the vicar and

we regularly went to the church for worship from the school.

### Village events

The Flower Show each summer was quite an occasion: various Mums made cakes and jam, and Dads brought their finest vegetables and flowers. It was all held in a marquee in the vicarage grounds, with everyone hoping to win a prize. The Girls Friendly Society met in a building to the left of the vicarage entrance.

In one edition of *Yatton Yesterdays*, I recognised myself in the 1930's outing photograph as fourth from the left in the back row. Doris Savage who wrote her memories I remember very well, Evelyn and I were friends, as were Betty Lyddon, Rene Gallop, Beryl Skinner, Dorothy Van Klaveren, Peggy Roberts, Janet Palmer and many whose names I have forgotten but who made a lasting impression on me.

Mrs Council, wife of the local builder introduced the "Brownies". They had a brown dress with a collar and a brown leather belt which fastened with a buckle. We all learned how to tie a proper tie and mine was secured with a Gnome brooch, the group I was in. Making a rice pudding and receiving a badge for it was a proud moment. I remember we were taken to tea in a very large house. I think the owner had some connection with Cadbury's chocolate. We were served by a maid in cap and apron. I wonder if someone has a

better recall than I do. Brown Owl was so worried that one of us would drop a cup! Another time we went to a farm to “assist” in hay-making and enjoyed the thrill of riding on the horse-drawn hay cart.

Mr & Mrs Gabriel, the farmers along the High Street were very indulgent with we local children. Sadly they did not have a family. They took in summer boarders from private schools, and my parents were asked if I could keep some of them company. I remember being invited to tea and was given a boiled egg! Tea at home was bread, butter and jam.

For a while we lived in two rooms in a Villa owned by Mr Ashton, the fishmonger. Then when the Council houses were built we moved into no. 11, now no. 22. This at the time was the end house. The field next to this was owned by Mr Chambers, a nice man and stone deaf (our local baker) who kept his horse and cart there when he bought a van. Ron, my young brother told me when he was around four or five years old, along with three other boys, that they would contribute a halfpenny each, and for two pence in the slot machine buy a packet of Woodbines. World War 2 would have started earlier if the parents had known!

On leaving school I was apprenticed to learn dressmaking at Collins drapery store where I received, in old money, one shilling and sixpence a week. One shilling went towards my “upkeep”. From the sixpence I was able to buy a Raleigh bicycle on the “never never”, a much needed form of transport. It was around this time in 1935 that I fell foul of

the law and now have a criminal record! The policeman was young and ambitious and his surname was Friend. One summer Sunday, Betty Lyddon and I were coming towards Horsecastle, on our way home after a bike ride along the Moors, unaware of a Halt sign that had been put up the day before. P.C. Friend was lying in wait and we were summoned to appear in court: I think it was Long Ashton.

We promised never to do it again and we were let off with a caution. P.C. Friend lodged with two ladies in Rock Road who were friends of my great aunt.

My Dad remarried after my Mum died: a very pretty girl called Frances for whom I had a great affection, she was always so kind to me. Eventually I had three beautiful half-sisters; the two youngest remaining came on a visit in February 2010 after thirteen years, although we corresponded regularly. They were unaware of the *Yatton Yesterday* books, which I discovered on a nostalgic visit in 1997 back home, when I bought *Yatton Yesterday 8*. In 1999 I received *Yatton Yesterday 9* from Mrs Heather King whom I met at that time. My sisters read them from cover to cover and I deeply regret missing out on the earlier copies.

I moved to Weston-super-Mare at the outbreak of the war (and worked in the Aircraft Factory) where I spent the happiest time of my life. I met and married my husband there and then went to live in Essex. We had one daughter who lives nearby and my husband died in 2005.

*Anne Harvey  
(nee Postlewaite)*



## More Memories of a Yatton Junior Headmaster

In *More Yatton Yesterdays* number 9, I wrote of my appointment to the headship of Yatton Junior School to succeed the long-serving Malcolm Stone. I described the conditions under which the staff worked, and ended with the move to the present building on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1967.

It was a little like winning the pools or the lottery. We were leaving a Victorian building and Victorian working conditions for a building with indoor toilets, an assembly hall, a dining room, an office for the secretary, a head teacher's room, a deputy head/sick room, a staff room and a staff kitchen, none of which we had in the old building. There were two playgrounds, which could be reached without crossing a road, a playing field - but more of that later - and an on-site school meals kitchen with all mod cons. The eight classrooms were arranged in two groups of 3 and one of 2, each group having a shared 'practical area' with sinks, work tops and toilets.

It all seemed wonderful, but it wasn't, not completely. There was a downside to all these lovely practical areas. The powers that be had decided that, as a third of each class would be using these areas - all day? - only two thirds of each class would need desks in the classrooms. With classes of 35 or more, that meant that a large number of children from different classes would be working in the practical areas at art and craft activities at the same time. You don't have to be a teacher to see the flaws in that arrangement. Would there be no times when all the children would be required to sit at a desk and respond to the teacher? I could go on! It took a little time, but eventually I did manage to get a full complement of furniture in each classroom, and a rota system was brought in for use in the practical areas.

Then there was the playing field - an expanse of weeds, rubbish and mud. The contract had been given to a firm in south Somerset, and

quite understandably, if they couldn't be assured of fine weather, they didn't want to make the journey to Yatton. It was May 1968 before the playing field was ready for use, and only then because the contract was transferred to a local firm. However these snags did not prevent County Education Officers from proudly bringing educationists from Denmark, Australia, Canada and West Lothian to see their new baby.

As I said in my previous article, changes under a new head teacher had to wait until the move, and the staff needed time to make themselves familiar with the new building. But changes had to come. It was the 1960s. Comprehensive schools were being established, the 11+ was going, activity methods were the 'in' thing, 'drawing out' rather than 'pouring in' was the new approach to education, and inevitably my style would differ from that of the previous head teacher. I had already formed a parent teacher association in the old school, and brought in new school uniform - short trousers for the boys! From September 1968 all classes became unstreamed and all children would be addressed by their first names, not just the girls.

In September 1967 the school had assumed a shape and style not too different from the present day. All 8 classrooms were occupied, the average class size was 34 and the number on the roll was 272. The teachers were Bob Rylands, deputy head, Marian Barraclough, Vic Edmunds and Maureen Grenfell (later Williams), with only Ruth Knott and Doris Nicholas remaining from Mr Stone's staff. There were two 'supply' teachers, but these

were replaced by Sheila Lambert and Andrew Bryden in January 1968. Mr Edmunds retired at the end of the Easter term, but returned after the holiday to take the violin classes. Mrs Champion, the secretary, luxuriated in a room of her own, and Mrs Skidmore had a purpose-built kitchen to work in.

Numbers on roll were increasing in leaps and bounds and in 1971 they peaked at 452, by which time we had 5 caravan classrooms plus a class in one of the dining rooms. Fortunately I had no problems in engaging additional staff. The increasing numbers meant we were entitled to 'posts of responsibility' with high rates of pay. 'Specialists' were appointed for the teaching of art and craft, music and physical education. To name just 3, John Henshaw left his post as head of music at a large prestigious comprehensive school to join the staff and subsequently his choirs, orchestras and potted versions of West End musicals involving scores of children drew capacity crowds to performances. Cliff Moon, a later deputy head teacher, achieved a national reputation for his work in the teaching of reading. And special mention must be made of Andrew Bryden, who still lives in the village. He was appointed in January 1968 and spent the rest of his teaching career at Yatton until he retired in August 1995, an awesome 27 years. He was our art and craft specialist and inspired everyone with his work. His Christmas decorations in the hall were a model of taste and inventiveness. No paper chains for Andrew! He subsequently became my third deputy head teacher, served as acting Head for a year when I retired, and a further 2 terms when Roy James died so tragically only a year after joining the school.

New traditions developed, some old ones had to go. The use of surnames, the cross country run over Cadbury Hill – on advice from the County Physical Education

organiser – the Ascension Day service in church and going up the tower – because of crossing the High Street and the numbers involved. The annual train outing for staff, parents and pupils was dropped in favour of curriculum based class excursions and PTA activities.

The PTA went from strength to strength. The first summer fete was held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1968 and became a highly successful annual event. One of the most popular stalls was the one selling Cheddar strawberries picked that morning by my wife and a group of friends. They always found a long queue waiting at their stall for their return.

The building of the school swimming pool was the PTAs biggest project, but that has been fully documented in *More Yatton Yesterdays* number 3. The most successful social events were the 'Scrumpy Hoe Downs', where tickets were always sold out on the first day of sale, and which were held twice a year until I retired. Other events were wine and cheese parties and frequent talks on educational topics by expert guest speakers. While not organised by the PTA, open evenings were held where parents could see their children's work and discuss their progress with the class teacher, and also exhibitions of children's work in the school hall. Parent volunteers came into school to help with art and craft and cooking in the practical areas, and also to hear children reading. I was amused to see an item on Points West recently, reporting on the latter happening in a Bristol school and hailing this as a 'splendid innovation'!

In June 1968 Mr Rylands, Mrs Grenfell and 2 students and 2 'dads' took 35 4<sup>th</sup> year pupils on a week's residential self-catering field studies camp at Somerset County Council's Greatwood hutted site on the Quantocks. In spite of torrential rain and water everywhere, it was most successful, and



*Yatton Junior School Staff 1985*

*Back l to r: Marie Szyłowska, Valerie Sinclair, Wendy Denbury, Beryl Heenay, Christine Perrett, Marian Tankard, Lyn Morrish, and Pamela Champion*

*Front Christine Evans, Jan Martin, Andrew Bryden, John Burgess, Ralph Dolling, Valerie Brook, Hilary Tincknell*

similar weeks were subsequently held annually at Youth Hostels in Swanage, Crowcombe, Salcombe and St Briavels in the Wye valley.

As I mentioned earlier, numbers were rising all the time, which meant we could hold our own sports days and inter-house soccer and netball tournaments. Our school teams benefited also from our increased size, and our soccer, netball and athletics teams were consistently successful in area competitions.

A feature of the school which developed over the years was the number of after-school clubs. These were undertaken by the staff, and the school was buzzing with these activities at lunch times and after school. There were clubs for P.E., Music, Art and Craft, Soccer, Netball, Athletics and Country, Morris and Sword dancing.

Few in the village will remember the magnificent line of elm trees, which graced one side of the playing field. I had visions of

creating a ropewalk from one end to the other, but unfortunately Dutch elm disease struck and they were all cut down and removed.

I could go on but I won't. The school is still changing and developing, but chronicling those changes I must leave to my successors.

My first article began with how I became the head teacher of Yatton Junior School, so I'll end this one by telling how I left. In the 1980s school numbers were falling and the County was trying hard to reduce – or should I say 'downsize' – their teaching force. Excellent redundancy terms were being offered and with only a year or so to go to qualify for my pension, I decided to apply. I had been head teacher for 19 years and 2 terms, and while I had enjoyed my work immensely I felt that now was a good time to retire. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 1985 I handed my keys to Andrew Bryden and on 1<sup>st</sup> September I became the former headmaster of Yatton Junior School.

*John Burgess*



## Incidents in Claverham

In a recent edition of "Yatton Yesterday" a resident referred to bombs dropped in the Horsecastle area during World War 2. Claverham also had its share, mostly incendiary bombs, which were dropped by German bombers returning from their raids on such cities as Bristol and Liverpool. These incendiary bombs mainly landed in gardens and fields and where dangerous, were extinguished by buckets of sand.

One Heinkel bomber, either hit by our ack-ack fire or machine-gunned by our fighter planes, flew very low and on fire over Claverham. We saw one of the crew eject and he parachuted to land on Cadbury Hill. Being ARP Messengers we followed the Wardens to Cadbury, where the young German airman was detained until the Police arrived. The airman was visibly shaken, but was provided with cigarettes by the Wardens.

In another raid when we could see in the distance that Bristol was ablaze, a stick of bombs, possibly each 100/200 lbs, was off-loaded on Claverham, starting with one exploding near the now Junior School site with others exploding along Claverham Road.

One of these bombs exploded in Mr. Stuckey's garden opposite Hollowmead, where his petrol pump was situated. We were given to understand that the petrol tank was dry due to the petrol shortage but the brickwork to his house was damaged and was, and may still be visible. The only other damage was to the electric

wires. That night the windows at the back of our house were all blown out onto our garden but strangely the windows of the Misses Haynes next door were blown into the rooms of their home.

Prior to this incident our Uncle Billy (Worrall) and ourselves dug a sizeable hole in our back garden and built an air raid shelter, where subsequently our family, and at times our immediate next door neighbours, sheltered during the air raids.

Sometime after the war, possibly during the 1960's, Mr. Leslie Vowles was digging a vegetable patch only a few yards from the old shelter site and discovered an object which turned out to be an unexploded bomb. Our mother and her neighbours were evacuated to safety while the Army Bomb Disposal Squad dealt with the bomb. No doubt this bomb was one of the stick of bombs dropped that night and should it have exploded on impact we could very well have been casualties.

*Peter Rainbow and Mary Griffiths*

(Late of "Westhaven" 156 Claverham Road)



## Diary of a School Summer Holiday in 1940

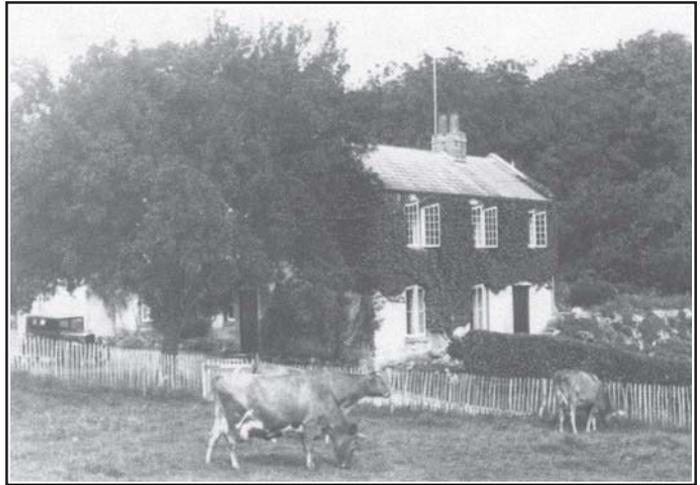
**July 26 1940** [Return from boarding school] Dick has come home for four days leave. He and Paul [still at school] have gone to London to see Dad [Doctor in an army hospital at Woolwich about to go to Middle East]. They did not get back until 2.00am because of an air raid. We go down to the basement, because we are sleeping on the top floor of 29 Victoria Square, Bristol.

**July 27** Go to [aunt and uncle at] Bickley, Cleeve by train with Mum and Anne. The boys [Dick and Paul] follow later, have lunch and tea there and go for a walk in the wood. We go back by train. Sleep in the dining room so do not get up for raids.

**August 2** Air raid early when we were getting up. In the afternoon go in the garden, Paul and I go down to the public library, Paul stays there until tea. I buy Aertex blouse. Have an air raid as we were getting to bed and another late at night. Paul goes to L.D.V. [Home Guard] all night.

**August 9** [Staying at Bickley for five days] Pick blackberries and then go into Bristol, have lunch with Mum take her sweet peas, blackberries, beans and plums. Shop and return to Bickley for tea, play tennis then help uncle sort out field dressings, bullets and paper for the troops [LDV's].

**August 11** Write to Dad, pick 9 lb 11 oz of blackberries, pick plums, play tennis and go to Kingston to take food to searchlight crew but find they have moved to Nailsea, so go on there. 15 of our bombers lost and 57 Germans. [actual figures nearer 30 British and 35 German]



*Bickley*

**August 12** Stone plums, pick 5 lb 2 oz blackberries, get very scratched, hear sirens so sit on the bank and see the balloons go up, clear day but see no aeroplanes. In the afternoon pick plums, mark tennis court, play tennis. After supper a man comes to fit new green hoses to uncle and aunt's gas masks. We must have ours done. Bombs fell near Flax Bourton and on Bristol. 31 Germans and 9 British lost. [actual figures nearer 27 German and 20 British]

**August 17** Woken at about 2.30am with a terrific crash, there had been two before but I was asleep, go downstairs then return to bed but again at 3.00am we have to come down until the All Clear sounds. In the morning go out to find bomb craters, find one in Mud Lane on the way back met Paul who has bicycled out from Bristol for the week-end, take dog for a walk and look for more bomb craters, read, play tennis, cow nearly eats tennis ball.

*M V Clarke*

## Enquiries and Information

Among the enquiries received since our last publication was a request from a gentleman in Warwickshire for information on the location of “Mendip Villas” and of his Aunt and Uncle, Mr & Mrs Alford. “Mendip Villas” was the name of the cottages on the left of the High Street, going towards Clevedon, just past “The Ridge”. Reg Alford, known as Bert, worked on the Railway as a Platelayer.

An Exeter gentleman had purchased a cigarette case inscribed “T. J. ANDOW Yatton The Great War 1914-18” and would like to have information on this person. There is no record of anyone named Andow in the burial records.

Information is also required on families named ALWAYS, QUINCE and ASHMEAD.

Cyril Dyer gave me some information on the article in *More Yatton Yesterdays* 9 by Eddie Reynolds. The local curate was the Rev AB Drew. He lived in the house next door to Mr Oxley the dentist, on the High Street. When he left Yatton he was the

curate at Christ Church in Clevedon. He later took a parish in Malvern, Worcestershire.

Does anyone know what happened to the cattle trough in Yatton Market?

Thank you for all your information and enquiries – keep them up.

*Ruth Summerell*

NB A correction has been received from the Atlay family. In our publication *Look out in the Blackout: Yatton at War 1939-1945* page 17, the man in charge of the L.D.V. unit was Mr Atlay, who lived at the Eagles, and not Mr Alsop.



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