

YATTON PAST & PRESENT



YATTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Preface

Yatton is situated in the north-east of Somerset between the Mendip Hills and the estuary of the Severn. Above it stands Cadbury Hill, an Iron Age hill fort, while in the heart of Yatton stands the church of St Mary the Virgin – a grand church for what was just a small village. It was built as a quarter cathedral and is known as the cathedral on the moor.

Prior to 1960 Yatton was a typical rural English village with an estimated population in 1951 of 2689. At the bottom of the village it boasted a furniture factory and main line railway through Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare, along with two branch lines to Clevedon and Cheddar. These put it on the map, but the village consisted predominantly of dairy farms: approximately seventeen served the village's own Milk Factory with milk for distribution and cheese making. There was just one long High Street which ran the length of the village, with several farms and just a handful of cul de sacs leading off from it.

In the 1960s and 70s an explosion of expansion occurred with several estates of houses being built and two roads constructed parallel to and on either side of the existing High Street. The population increased to 5,960 in 1971 and Yatton became a small town.

It was during this time of expansion that the face of Yatton began to change and we lost several buildings and sites that had been part of the village for many decades. Whilst it is good to progress and move forward, it is also good to look back sometimes at the past and remember what helped to create what we have today.

Through this book Yatton Local History Society has endeavoured to do just this. We hope that browsing through the photographs and narratives of Yatton's past will give you as much enjoyment as it gave us in researching it.

Pat Denny

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the many people who have contributed to this book in various ways: members of the Society's Committee, who have compiled material from past Society publications in the text sections to accompany the photographs; local residents and those who have responded to newspaper appeals with information and or photographs (any unused material may be included in future publications); and the local papers which have publicised the Society's work. Comments on the factual information contained in this book are very welcome.

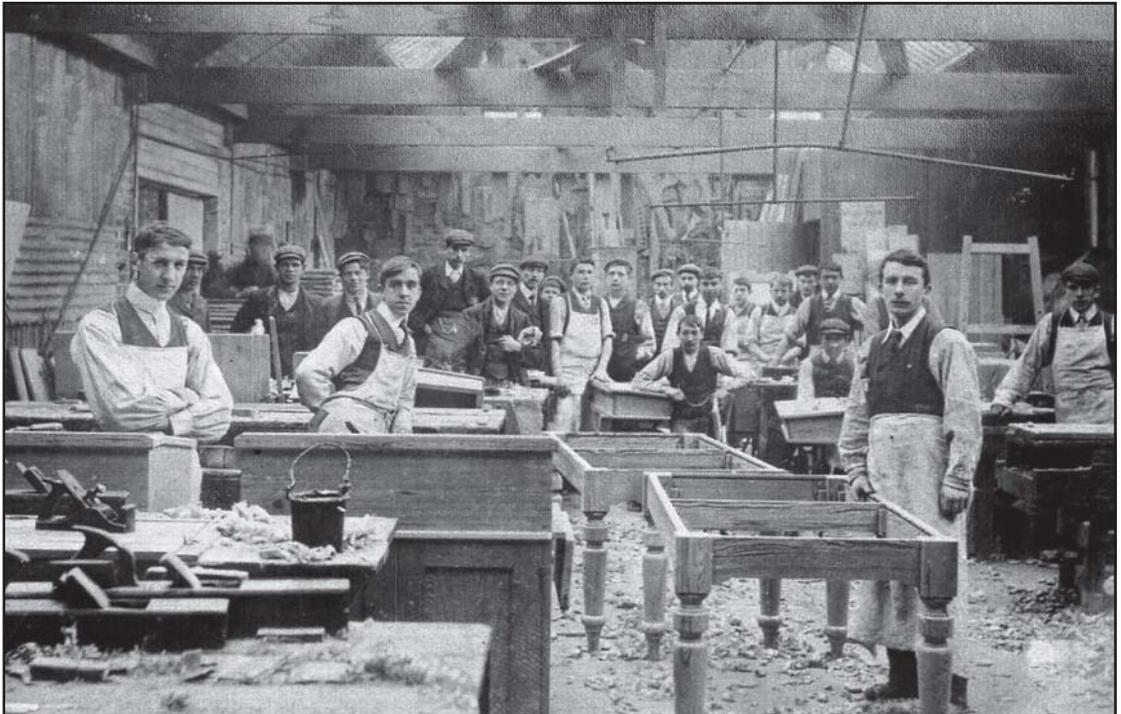
We gratefully acknowledge permission granted to reproduce material in this book, and we apologise for any errors or omissions. We would be grateful for notification of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions.

In addition we record our thanks to the local shops which stock our publications on a regular basis: Yatton Post Office, Yatton News, Cork and Fork, Good News, Wine and Food, as well as Yatton Books and Prints.

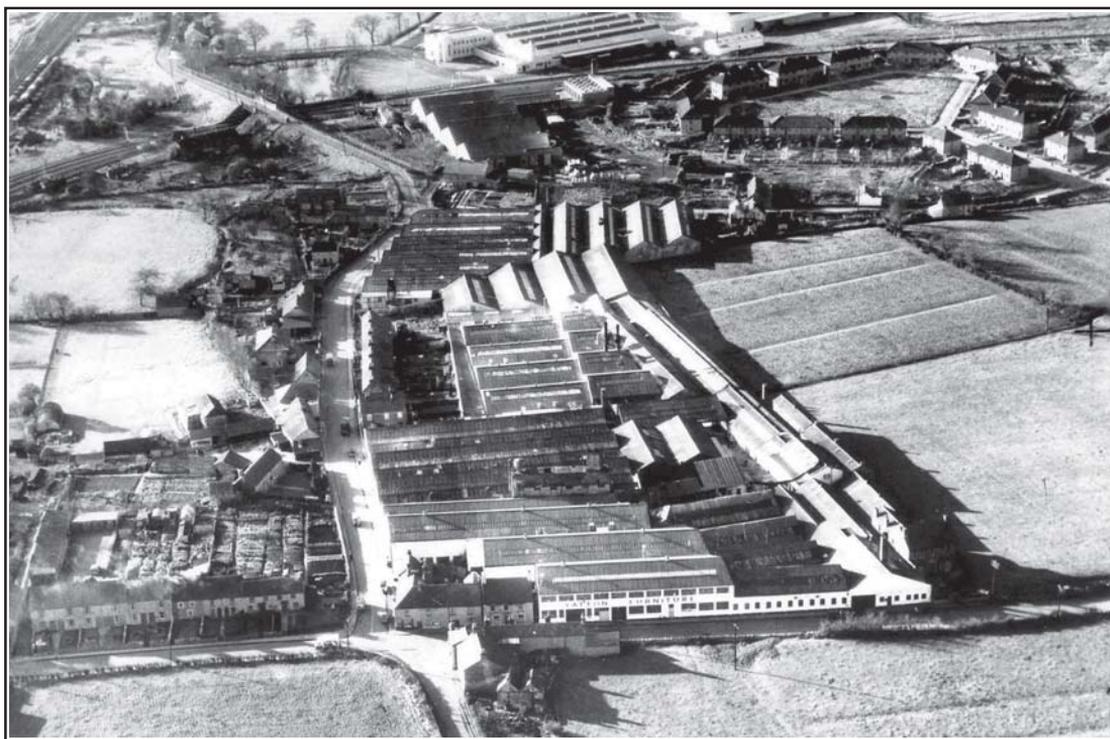
Wake and Dean Ltd

In the closing years of the 19th century the firm of Wake and Dean from London acquired some land in Yatton to build a furniture factory. Part of this land belonged to 'The Lawns' (opposite Home Farm in Horsecastle), a house reputedly built in the 18th century on the site of an older farmhouse, one acre fronting the Clevedon road. Arrangements were made to transfer the furniture manufacture to Yatton gradually and the London premises were retained for some time. At the end of 1900 all the closing mill machinery went to Yatton and the remaining timber stock was transferred. By 1917 all links with London were finally severed.

The company manufactured church furniture and examples can be seen in many churches and chapels throughout England and Wales. In addition, the firm through its contracts with the Ministry of Works supplied many education authorities with desks, cupboards and blackboards; it equipped school and college laboratories and also hospitals with lockers, tables and desks. By 1917 the factory also produced aeroplane parts. Timber was stored at the bottom of the factory and was delivered by rail to the company siding, being offloaded by hand.



Wake & Dean in its very early days making Church & School furniture



Wake & Dean as Yatton Furniture. An aerial view

The Lawns with two acres of land was purchased in 1917 for £800 and let to a foreman. In 1922 lorries were bought to replace railway transport and a section of the buildings at the Lawns was adapted as a garage. In 1925 Wake and Dean became a public company and its domestic furniture manufacture was growing. The Lawns was demolished in 1930 and a modern factory erected on the site. In 1939 work began nearby on building 69 houses for letting to the expanding workforce (Wakedean Gardens).

During the Second World War part of the factory was taken over to store foodstuffs such as wheat, sugar and flour, whilst the remainder worked on Government contracts for items such as ammunition boxes and hospital lockers. After the war work continued on the production of 'Utility furniture' and although the firm was taken over in 1952 after running into difficulties, 'Yatton Furniture' prospered in the 1960s and the factory site expanded under the title 'Avalon Furniture of Yatton'. A new office block opened in 1967 with new workshops on the Clevedon road - which still remain (now Oxford Instruments). In 1975 Yatton Furniture was acquired by Stag Furniture Holdings of Nottingham but after further reorganisations the factory finally closed down at the end of 1984. The site was quickly cleared and new roads of houses erected from 1985/6 (such as The Lawns, Avalon Close, Woodmill, The Wood Kilns etc). At this time Wemberham Lane was extended to join up with the North End Road.

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Avalon when it produced household furniture



Avalon's fleet of Furniture Vans

Yatton Market

The market (opposite the Market Inn) had been in existence since the 19th century – initially as a free market where farmers were able to take their animals and sell them themselves to the dealers who attended from Bristol and the surrounding area. Later Mr William Shiner (who lived at the Eagles in Yatton High Street) took over the market and began to sell the animals by auction. He was noted for his tremendously loud voice which could be heard right down into North End. Later there were two markets running side by side, until they joined forces under the title Yatton Market Auctioneers.

During the First World War the auctioneer, Mr Teddy Dawes, was called into the army, so his wife applied for an auctioneer's licence and became the first woman auctioneer in the country (and possibly the world) until her husband returned at the end of the war.

In the days before motor transport, all the animals were driven to market on foot from the surrounding area. Besides cattle, sheep and pigs, there was a large produce market with eggs, butter, cheese, live and dressed poultry, and green grocery, farming tools, surplus furniture and large numbers of rabbits. Some of the animals would be herded down to the station after having been sold. The Christmas



Produce for sale at Yatton Market

fatstock show was the highlight of the year with the prize winners realising high prices. This was followed a few days later by the Christmas poultry show, where holly, mistletoe, Christmas trees and other seasonal fare would be for sale alongside the poultry.



A busy day at Yatton Market

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*Yatton Market
shortly before
its closure*

The market closed in the late 1970s, partly due to a lack of support from local farmers but also because the land had become very valuable for development. The Market Industrial Estate now occupies part of the area where the market was held.



*Former site of
Yatton Market now
Yatton Industrial
Estate, 2013*

*Yatton Market site
as it looks in 2013*

Atlay's Garage



Atlay's Garage on the corner of Grassmere Road

Further up the High Street and over the railway bridge we reach Atlay's Court which is a cul de sac of residential houses and bungalows but we wonder how many of Yatton's newer residents know that on this site once stood Atlay's Garage (hence the name Atlay's Court), which served the people of Yatton with petrol and car repairs for many years.

It was owned by a Mr. T. R. Atlay who joined the garage trade after serving in the first world war, in which he fought at the Somme. It was while staying with his sister in Yatton on holiday that he was made aware of a piece of land with a shed which was for rent. He made the decision to start his own garage and engineering business, staying with his sister in Yatton and renting the aforesaid land and shed,



Atlay's Court in 2013, former site of Atlay's Garage



*The field on the left is the one purchased to build the second Atlay's Garage
(photo courtesy of the M. J. Tozer Collection)*

which was positioned on the corner of what is now Grassmere road. The top picture on the previous page is of this first site, which existed for eight years from 1921 until 1929 during which time the garage sold BP petrol and repaired all sorts of mechanical items among them milk churns for the Milk factory where Dairy Close now stands.

However when a field on the opposite side of the road came up for sale Mr Atlay bought it and built a garage and work shop. Unfortunately this burnt down in 1942 but was rebuilt in 1943/4 by the garage staff. The business flourished until Mr Atlay sold out to a petrol company in 1958 and the subsequent Yatton Motors existed until 1994 when it was closed and the site cleared for the Atlay's Court housing development.

The Old Post Office

The premises at 120 Yatton High Street now occupied by the hair salon "Through the looking glass" was formerly Yatton's Post Office for over one 100 years. This was the second of three premises to hold that title.

No 120 was one half of a brick semi-detached house built in 1859 and it replaced the Post Receiving position at Gregory's Grocery and Draper's shop at 20 High Street (opposite the Prince Of Orange) that had become a "Receiving house" in 1832. This was the collecting point for both the incoming mail brought by the Post Rider from Bristol and for the outgoing mail. At that time the Post Receiver was a Mrs W. Gregory:

an 1859 directory states “Post Office- Messrs Gregory, receivers, money orders are granted and paid at this office”.

The exact date of the Post Office moving from Gregory’s down to the “New Post Office “at 120 High Street is not known, but may have

been in the early 1860s after the creation of the Post Office Savings Bank in 1861. The register for 1866 certainly states that Yatton’s Post Office had its banking facility by then. No 120 was also much closer to the railway.

Over the 100 years that the Post Office was at 120 High Street there had been a succession

of post masters and mistresses but one man served Yatton Post Office for 48 years, mostly as the actual Post Master.



*Postmaster Charles James Inglis
and wife Lucy*



The Post Office in the early 1900s

Charles James Inglis, born in 1858, married Lucy Horler in 1880 and in the 1881 census he was stated to be a boot maker and letter carrier (postman). However, sometime between 1883 and 1889 he was appointed Post Master. At this time the post went out three times a day between 11am and 9pm. Charles retained his position until his retirement in 1927. During his 48 years at Yatton Post Office he would have seen a variety of new additions to the services offered: these included parcels in 1883 and then in 1897 express delivery and later Annuity and Insurance. In 1908 pensions were paid out and a telephone exchange was installed in a wooden shed to the right of the main building.

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Standing outside the Post Office from 1932 was a rare Derby castings oval pillar box. It carried the initials GR for George V, a posting aperture on one side and a stamp machine placement on the other. It was one of only 75 made and was considered so rare that it was



The former site of The Old Post Office now the Hair Dresser

moved in 1968 to its present site in Yatton, at the time of the Post Office relocation, when over 100 years of service as a Post Office at no 120 came to an end.



The Old Post Office Pre 1930

The Eagles / Rectory Cottage

'The Eagles' is a select group of modern houses, but it has an interesting past. The original house on the site was built some time before 1799 and was called 'Rectory Cottage'. It was owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and in the 1920's was occupied by Mr. William Henry Shiner, an auctioneer and local dignitary. Mr. Shiner was employed by George Nicholls and Co (who later became George Nicholls Hunt and Co), the company which operated Yatton Market.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners decided to auction a number of properties and land including Rectory Cottage on 6 October 1920. The Cottage was Lot 1 and the sale particulars describe the property as a gentleman's residence and including:

- | | | |
|--|----------------|------------------------|
| ♣ 2 sitting rooms | ♣ Kitchen | ♣ Back kitchen |
| ♣ Pantry | ♣ Water closet | ♣ 4 Bedrooms |
| ♣ 2 attics | ♣ Coal house | ♣ Cellar or wagon shed |
| ♣ Wagon shed | ♣ Orchard | |
| ♣ Stable – stone and tiled with 3 stalls and a loft over | | |

Prior to the sale Mr Shiner was paying an annual rent of £40-5-0 (£40.25). At the sale he was the auctioneer and successful bidder, paying £1,300 for the property on a freehold basis. Sadly, not too long after purchasing the property Mr. Shiner died, although his daughter, Elsie Shiner, continued to occupy the property for a while. However, in the 1930's she met and married a Mr. Hodinott and left the property. The house was occupied during the Second World War, when it was lived in by the Harraway family.



The Eagles is the house on the left side of the lamp post

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*The Eagles picturing Mr W. H. Shiner
(photo courtesy of Mr T. Smith)*

The Eagles was demolished in the 1970's, making way for the development that we see today.



The Eagles cul de sac 2013, former site of The Eagles House

Larchmount Hall

Larchmount Hall was built between 1885 and 1903 and stands opposite Yatton Hall. It became a private school for day girls and boarders. Miss Avery assisted by Miss Mansbridge ran the school on strict lines. Mrs Long who worked at Cleeve Court remembered that her father used to drive the young ladies of the Manor Farm Claverham to school at Larchmount. The school had a good reputation and put on concerts. Its girls were also successful in the Associated Board piano exams. Miss Avery died in 1925 and the *Clevedon Mercury* reported that she ran a school at Larchmount for 35 years, suggesting that she started it in 1890. The building was converted by Larchmount Laboratories Ltd in 1925 into a factory where soap and perfume were manufactured. This was gutted by fire in March of 1935. A Masonic Lodge had been established in Yatton in 1868 but due to dissatisfaction with the meeting place at the Assembly Rooms, the decision was taken to move to Larchmount. When acquired by the Lodge, only the four outside walls and the chimney stacks of the building remained after the fire. In the reconstruction the latter were removed and the upper windows were left blank, as they are today. There was a ceremony of dedication



Larchmount Hall when it was a School, December 1904

on the 16th March 1936 conducted by the Provincial Grand Master. In 1940 the Local Defence Volunteers were formed in Yatton and plans were made in case of a German invasion. Medical arrangements were set up for a temporary Hospital



Larchmount Hall School Drawing Room



*Larchmount Hall School,
viewed from the rear,
December 1904*

*Larchmount School
Tennis courts*



*Larchmount Hall,
after the fire, 10th March
1935*



Centre at Larchmount. The Army also requisitioned the ground floor of the Lodge, but Masonic meetings continued sporadically. In 1968 the Lodge celebrated its centenary and it is still in residence there today.



*Larchmount Hall, now the Masonic Lodge,
2013*

The Gas Showroom

After the Second World War most people in Yatton weren't 'cooking on gas', so the Gas Showrooms were opened with the aim of improving this situation.

Although the Yatton Gas Company was formed in 1867, it took a number of years for the infrastructure to be put in place, including the buildings, gasometer and the gas mains. The gas operation and production was sited in Wemberham Lane close to the Railway line.



The Gas Showrooms (courtesy of the M. J. Tozer Collection)

The intention of the company directors was to provide the Parish Council, businesses and individuals with gas. However, there was no cohesive marketing strategy and it was available very much on a 'take it or leave it' basis. The gas was expensive and only those who could afford it were able to avail themselves of the facility. Consequently many Yatton residents continued to rely on Calor gas or coal for cooking and paraffin lamps and candles for light.

By 1907 the Yatton Gas Company negotiated with the Parish Council to supply street lighting and 41 lamps were installed. The Wake and Dean factory had become the biggest commercial user by 1917. By the 1920's the original gas mains were showing signs of age and it was decided to install a 6 inch (15 cm) main to reduce leakage and increase pressure to cope with additional demand.



The Gas Showrooms former site, now BetFreds, 2013

Gas cookers cost £11-10-03 (£11.51) in 1924 but this had increased to £16-15-00 (£16.75) by 1929.

The Yatton Gas Company continued to operate without any retail marketing strategy but this couldn't continue as the Government was now supporting the development of an electrical national grid providing a cheaper energy supply. The intervention of the Second World War halted any marketing retail development.

After the war ended the expansion of Yatton and extension of the gas mains network increased demand for gas appliances. It was only now that the gas suppliers decided to implement a targeted marketing strategy for Yatton residents and opened the gas showroom on the corner of the High Street and Derham Park. This red brick building with its interesting angled front provided a local focus for Yatton residents to discuss their gas requirements including gas cookers, water heaters and even 'fridges. The dedicated staff there could highlight the benefits of the different appliances and models, arranging hire purchase (credit agreements) where necessary.

The Gas showroom was very successful but this was the cause of its demise. After a successful operating period the number of customers requiring new appliances fell drastically and it was no longer financially viable to continue with the facility, resulting in its subsequent closure. The site was later taken over by Barclays Bank but when Barclays ceased to operate in Yatton it was occupied by solicitors for a while. The location is currently used by BetFred.

Court House Farm

Court House Farm had a seven-bedroomed farmhouse which stood in Yatton High Street for nearly 600 years. The house was demolished in 1966 to make way for a Gateway supermarket (later Somerfield and now the Co-op).

The house had uneven floors and two-foot thick walls, testifying to its great age. The house plan shows a circular staircase, of a type which was often enclosed in a wooden case and which was later condemned as a fire hazard. Behind the house to the northeast were orchards and the adjoining land across the rhynes in Summerleaze and West Mead was used mostly for grazing or for haymaking.



Court House Farm with a Thatched Roof



Court House Farm in 1966 with a tiled roof

From the records it appears that a family called Churchus farmed there for a long period from the 1600s and interestingly a bedroom window pane had “James Churchus 1665” scratched upon it. In 1726 the house appears in the records as ‘High House with 13.5 acres’, that is a smallholding tenanted from Lord Poulett of South Somerset by John Davis (Churchus), a Quaker. Churchus is probably a variant of the name Churchouse - that is a family who lived in a house by, or belonging to, a church. Later the house



Court House Farm Dairy delivery 1898-1912



Court House Farm 1966 viewed from Chescombe Road



Court House Farm a side view



Court House Farm viewed from The Mount



*Former site of Court House Farm
Now The Precinct in 2012*

was sold to Edward Churchus in 1821 as 'Higher House'. In 1826 it was sold for £2,800 to another Quaker, possibly a relative, from the Willmott family at Claverham Court. It subsequently became Court House Farm because a magistrate lived there in the 1830s.

During the 1840s and 1850s Samuel Baker worked the farm comprising 80 acres with two labourers and then in the early 1900s the farming family of Kertons sold milk from Court House Farm.

From about 1910 many farms were bought on mortgages or loans by farmers. Although rents had decreased from the 1870s because of the repeal of the Corn Laws (leading to cheap imports), businessmen started to regard land as an investment and hence farmers had no security of tenure. Land was scarce and farmers often emigrated to Canada, as did the next tenants, the Burdges, who came back in 1923 and eventually bought other farms in the village.

In 1927 Len Burdge, who was 12 years old at the time, sold milk from the farm in bottles with cardboard tops and initially delivered them on a bicycle, but later he made use of a motorcycle and sidecar once he had left school. Len who died recently in his nineties probably planted the walnut tree in Pages Court which had to be removed recently.

During World War II evacuee children from London stayed at the farm and they remembered the good food and seasonal routine of a mixed farm, including collecting eggs and bottling milk. They could recall the apple smell of the house, so presumably the family stored apples in the roof space, as was the custom in many farmhouses in order to preserve the apples over winter in a cold dry place. During the latter part of the war the Harris family employed Italian Prisoners of War from the Henley Lane camp, who were often former agricultural workers.

The house roof was tiled in the 1950s having been thatched until then. In the 1960s Pages Court was named after James Baker Page of Westaway House who was the Burdges' landlord.

Stuckey's Butcher's Shop and Chescombe House

These two Victorian stone buildings were constructed between 1840 and 1885 and were located on Yatton High Street on the left hand side of Chescombe Villas (the latter being occupied today by Bell and Stenton Opticians and John Hodge Solicitors).

The 1904 Kelly's Directory listed three butchers in Yatton, one of whom was Gilbert Stuckey. The Stuckey family lived in a house built for them in mid-Victorian times behind the shop. There was also a yard and other outbuildings. Gilbert had grazing for his animals on a large part of the moors between Yatton and Clevedon, where the stock was fattened before being slaughtered in the slaughterhouse behind the shop.

Gilbert Stuckey had four sons of whom only Stanley remained in the business. Ledgers from 1891 to 1898 show delivery rounds from this shop going to Langford, Clevedon, Nailsea,



Stuckey's Butcher's shop

Congresbury, Claverham, Cleeve and other places.

The shop was busy. There was cured bacon that could be kept for a year, salt beef cured with nitrate and prepared tripe. There was an icebox in the shop filled with one hundredweight of ice bought on a daily basis from the cold store in Avonmouth, but a refrigerator replaced this later.

Stuckey's butcher's shop closed in the early 1970's and both it and Chescombe House were demolished when Gateway's store (now the Co-op), which had opened in 1967, was extended and a larger car park created.

A rising pop musician, Andy Davis of the Korgis lived in Chescombe House in the 1970's until it was demolished. The gatepost can still be seen in the wall of the car park.

Chescombe House gave its name to the cutting from the High Street through to Church Road that became Chescombe Road. This was constructed through land that was originally part of The Mount.



Chescombe House



Former site of Stuckey's Butcher's shop & Chescombe House

The Mount

The Mount was situated in the centre of Yatton at 57 High Street, opposite what is now Page's Court, Yatton's shopping precinct.

The land was owned by a Mr. Bishop and was originally a rubbish dump. G. H. Needham of "Henleigh" built the original house in 1915, assisted by Mr. Christopher Parsons, who, in 1896 had been apprenticed to Needhams.



The Mount

The property then comprised a kitchen, 2 living rooms and 3 bedrooms and it cost £290 to build.

It looked older than it was at first glance, having been built in a style pre-dating its construction. It had an interesting double-bayed front surmounted by three windows on the first floor. The house was set in approximately a quarter of an acre of picturesque gardens with an orchard. Mrs Parsons had a brooch made from a gold watch found on the dump.

When Christopher Parsons came out of the Army in 1919 a ladder led up to a larger workshop where Parsons and Watkins had established a painting and decoration business. This later became a building business owned and run by Megan Watkins' family members. Megan Watkins (nee Parsons) was born in The Mount in 1920 and also died there.

In the 1920's Arthur Barter built an extension at a cost of £190. This added at the rear a roof of "cat slide" formation. It also had an interesting feature downstairs of two round windows on the east side of the house. In 1931 gas and sewerage were installed, as until then a cesspit with a bucket and chain had been used.

Later on a Mr John Watkins (of no relation to the above) became owner of the house, from where he ran his veterinary practice. The old kitchen, which was used as the vet's surgery, ran off the central hall.

In the early 1980's the house was found to be unsound. It was considered to be of no particular architectural value and John Watkins drew up plans to demolish it and construct a new building himself. The building works were completed during 1987.



The Mount Viewed from the Rear

The new building comprised, on the left-hand side, a new veterinary surgery with waiting room, office, two consulting rooms and an operating theatre. Fruit and Spice Delicatessen run by Paul Bain who had re-located from the lower part of Yatton High Street (where Cork and Fork is today) occupied the middle shop. West Town Bakery took the third shop on the right-hand side. Office space for one larger or two smaller offices was created on the first floor.

The Mount was not actually demolished until after the new building was completed. The current houses on Chescombe Road including the Dental Surgery were built after the demolition in 1987.

After the delicatessen closed, C J Hole Estate Agents moved in and also expanded into the vet's front reception area. When the bakery closed, Cheung's Take Away opened in its place. Yatton Books and Prints took over the middle shop when the estate agents closed and the vets re-opened their reception and waiting room where it had been originally.



The former Mount site in 2013

The Old Vicarage and Gardens

The Yatton rector lived elsewhere, not in the prebendal house, and so a vicarage was built for his representative, the vicar. This was possibly on the old vicarage site, as it is recorded that in 1326 the vicar had the use of Hengstham Meadow adjoining the vicar's house. This meadow ran to and included Hangstones. There is no trace of the original vicarage but the "Old Vicarage" was built in the 1700s.

This very large three storey house was demolished in the early 1960s but stood where the road junction between the High Street and Well Lane is now. It had served as the residence for the vicar of Yatton for over 150 years, before being regarded as too big and out of date for modern requirements. It was replaced in about 1960 by a new vicarage sited on the other side of Well Lane.



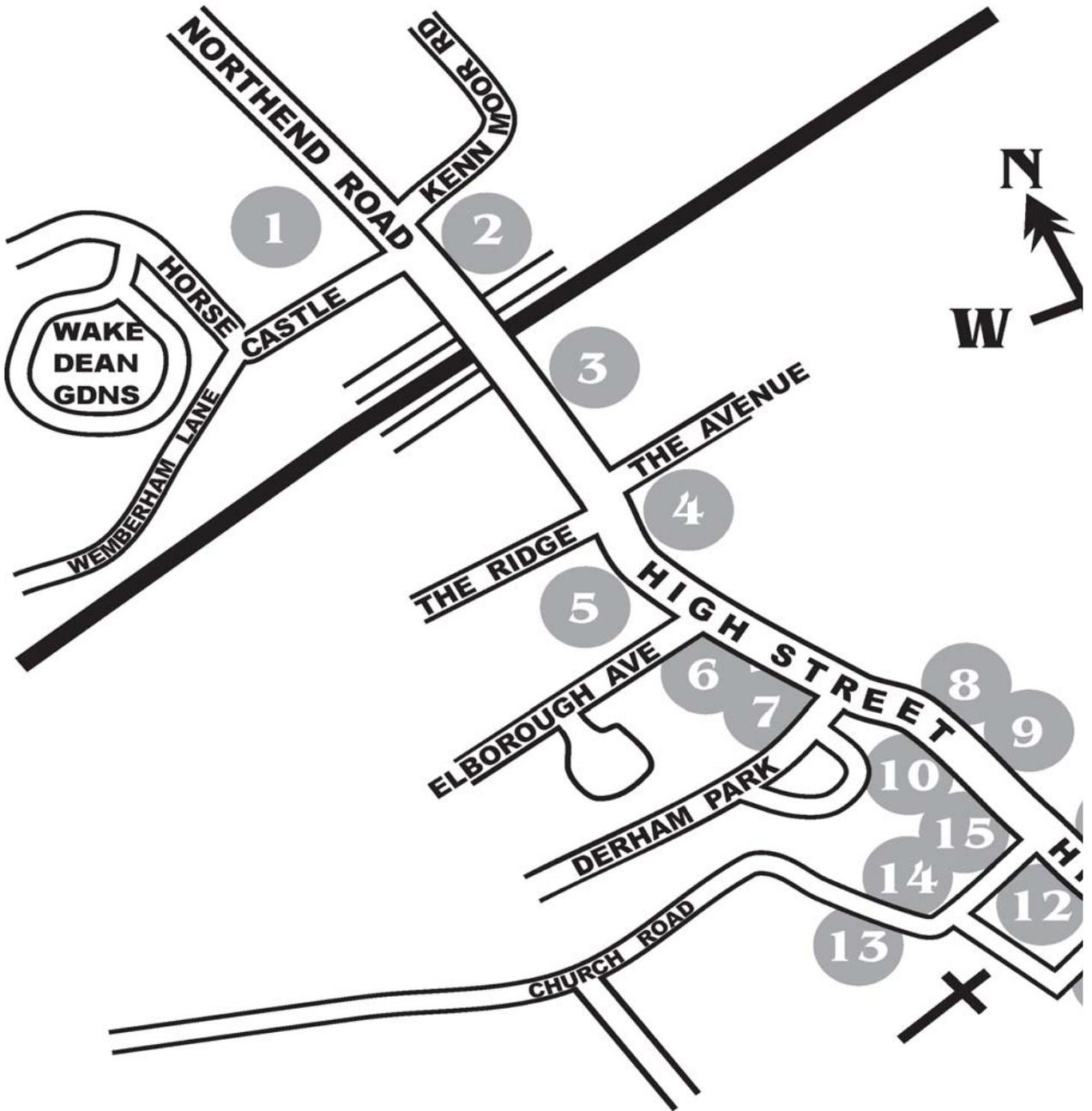
The Old Vicarage



Former site of the Old Vicarage in 2013

The old vicarage faced west towards St Mary's Church but at its rear looking east was a very large garden. This had several tall trees and a "T" shaped lake with a bridge over it at one end, plus a row of poplar trees down one side. Over the years all sorts of village activities such as fundraising and celebratory events took place on the big lawn, in the centre of which was a large oak tree providing shade on hot sunny days.

Someone who grew up in Yatton remembers, as a boy, going to several village gatherings that occurred there when Rev. Kemp was the vicar. Under the big oak scouts and guides would show their parents the things that they had learnt during the winter and spring months.

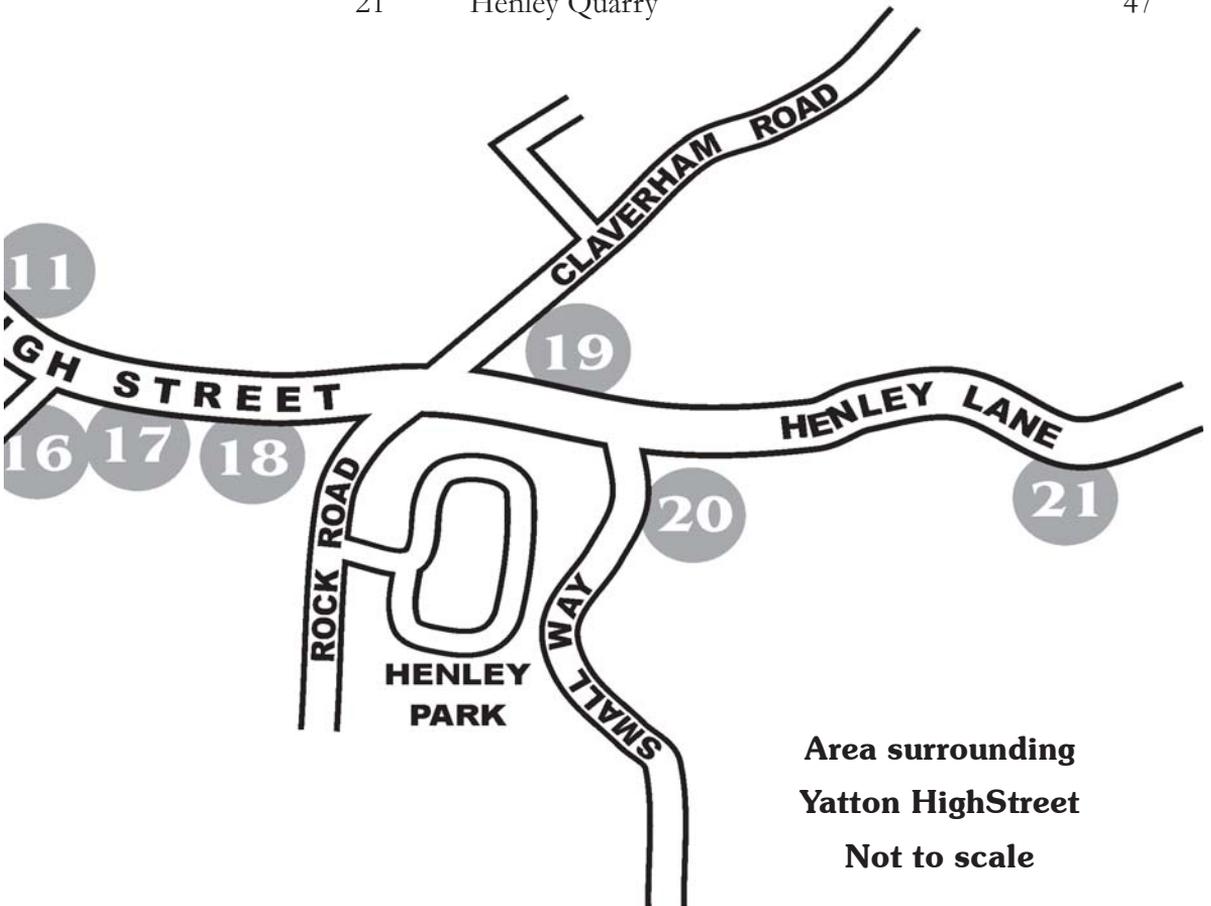


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*The Old Vicarage
Coach House, 1994*

The 150 year old building was demolished in about 1962 after the completion and occupation of the new vicarage (now known as the Rectory) which is situated, together with the Coach House and stables, near the entrance to the Infant and Junior schools and Well Lane.



*The Old Vicarage
Gardens and pond*



Old Vicarage Gardens

On church fete days the Rev. Kemp would give rides in his punt on the lake.

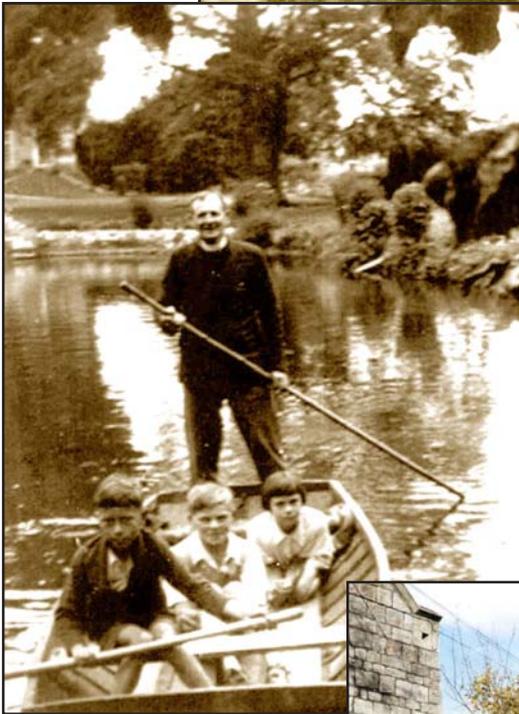
During the 1950's a later vicar – Rev Beechey - allowed one room at the rear of the vicarage to be used as a coffee bar by the village teenagers.

The houses in Well Lane occupy the old vicarage site; the grassed-over area half-way down the road marks where the lake used to be. The lake was fed by an underground spring – hence the name of this development.

YATTON PAST & PRESENT



*Swans on the pond in the old
Vicarage Gardens*



Punting on The Old Vicarage Pond

*The present
Rectory built on
part of The Old
Vicarage Gardens*



The Village Green / Glebelands

The Village Green and adjoining Glebelands lie between Church Road and the Causeway and are owned partly by the Church and Parish Council.

The 1851 census calls this area the “Poundfield” although by then it was covered by houses and gardens. This is most probably the oldest part of Yatton and would have been more or less at its centre. The Village Pump stands against the church wall opposite the green and is cast iron with ornamental detail handle and stone water trough, remaining from 1896 when it replaced a bucket and chain over a well.

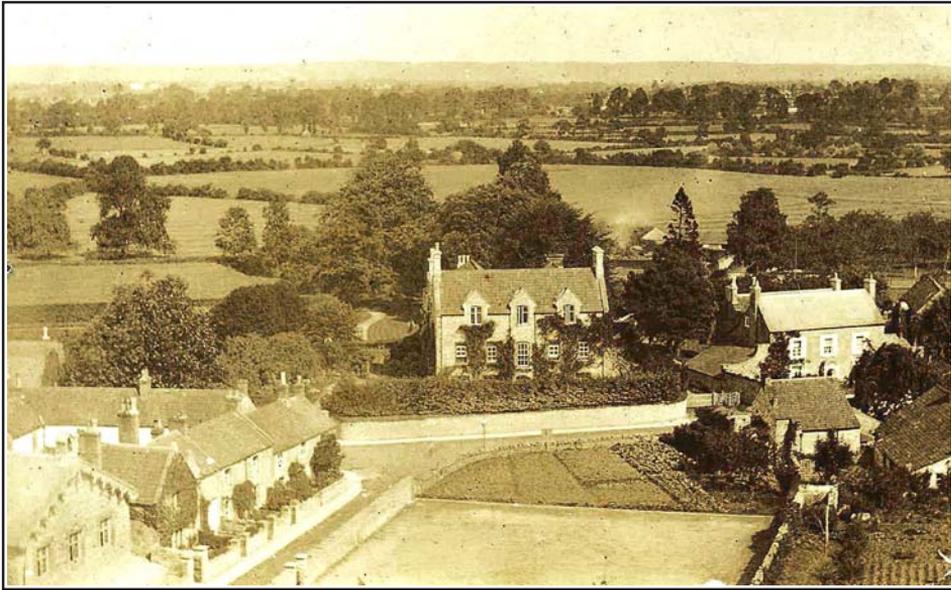
The area called Glebelands that adjoins the Village Green was so named when the area was landscaped following the closure and subsequent sale in 1987 of the School in Church Road and the conversion of its playground into what is now the village car park.



Glebelands, c1870 - 80



Glebelands cottages and Village Hall



The National School (bottom left)

But prior to this many cottages stood here, most having been built well before 1799 and others between 1799 and 1840. A row of ten small cottages (eight thatched) faced the High Street, with at least one of these ten still remaining in the early 1950s. Three cottages faced the Causeway House and four more were built in the middle. Fortunately we have photographs of some of these old cottages. The only one now remaining is Church View Cottage.

Prior to 1903 some of the land opposite the National school in Church Road had been turned into allotments, but at a Parish meeting attended by the Bishop (who spoke at length!) an agreement was made to enlarge the National School. It was also decided to tarmac over some of these allotments to create a school play ground and in 1905 the new school playground was opened. At this time several of the cottages still remained.

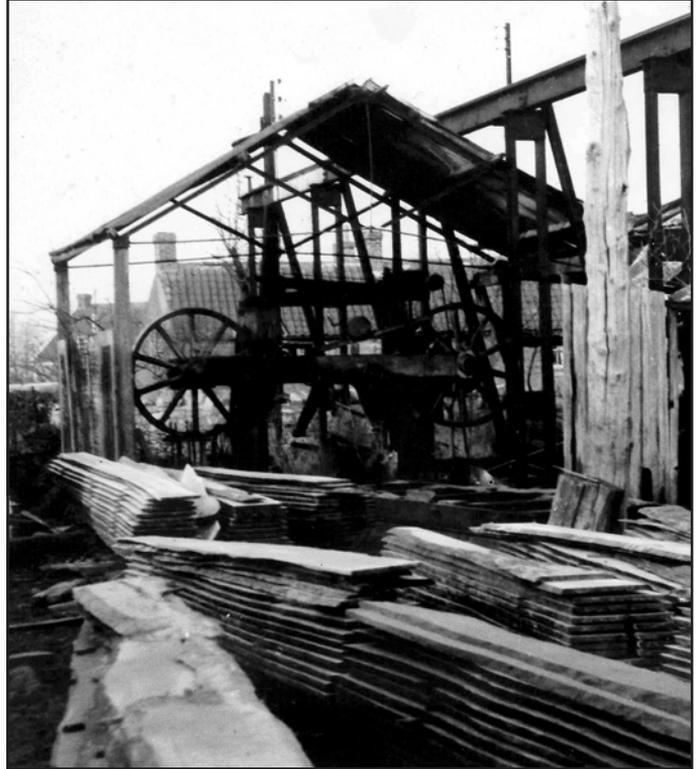


Glebelands from church tower

The Saw Mill and Wood Yard

The saw mill and wood yard appear to date from about 1900 and survived until 1974. This covered a large area and in its latter years was owned and run by the Clarke brothers. In the early part of the century it supplied cut timber to the Wake and Dean Furniture factory at the bottom of the village. During the Second World War one of the saw mill's main customers was the Bristol Aeroplane Company, to whom it supplied wood for making the timber framed Mosquito light bomber.

At the south east corner of the yard close to the Alms houses there were two small cottages that were end on to the wall of the churchyard. Their last known tenants were the Gallops and the Browns. These two properties became unoccupied just before World War II and soon became derelict, although they could still be seen up to 1974 when they were completely demolished along with the saw mill. The daughter of one of these families still lives in the village and can remember having to use the village pump situated against the wall of the churchyard; this pump is still there today.



Saw mill and Wood yard

The saw mill was dominated by a large steel-framed gantry with a rail on either side, along which ran a travelling crane that moved the tree trunks onto the saw bench and the sawn planks off afterwards. The sound of the saw and clunk and whirl of the overhead gantry was a familiar part of village life for those living within its vicinity, especially during the 1960s. The saw was under an open-sided canopy of corrugated iron and around the working area were several rickety sheds. In one of these was an automatic band saw sharpening machine that was continuously running when the saws were working. The saw mill was surrounded by large tree trunks or piles of cut timber that were stacked high around the huts in the shape of the original tree. Some of these stacks were known to have been in the yard for over 25 years.



*The field on the left later to become the Sawmill Site,
viewed from church tower*

There were two entrances that led straight to the heart of the yard: one was in Church Road just past the Alms houses; and the other was opposite the entrance to Elm Close. In the days before most of Church Road became Chescombe Road leading directly down to the High Street, some people (mostly children) would take a short cut through



Saw mill site in Church Road viewed from church tower in 2013

the wood yard to school or the shops but avoided being seen by the Clarke brothers, as it really wasn't the safest place for children but it was a great fascination.

In later years most of the yard became overgrown with trees around which nettles and brambles grew, interlaced with small pathways.



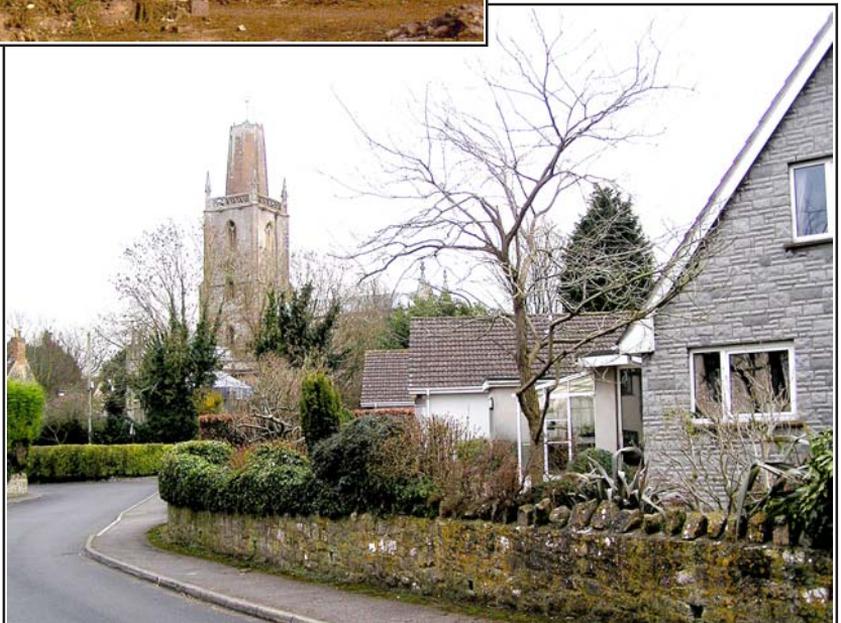
Saw mill with overhead gantry, shortly before its closure



Saw mill & cottages being demolished

Finally, but sadly, the site was sold and cleared in 1970 and the bungalows and houses, now standing, were built.

Saw mill, former site in Church Road, now Bungalows in 2009



The National / Junior Church School

This school was built in 1834 as a replacement for a “church” school that had been constructed against the churchyard wall sometime in the 1700s for the “National” School Society of the Church of England. The new National school in Church Road was built on the site of an old cottage and cost £300, some of which was raised by subscriptions, along with £100 from a bazaar, £30 from the Lord of the Manor - J. Smythe-Pigott - and £72 from the State.

Unfortunately the new school was not large enough for the infants, who had to stay in the old school in a room over the stables until an extra room could be built on the Church Road site. The old building, which at some time had a lean-to at one end that was used as the village lock up, was demolished in 1886.

Being a church school the “National” was under the control and management of



*National School & old stable
built against Churchyard wall*



National School viewed from the Causeway

the vicar and followed a syllabus set by the Bath & Wells Diocesan Board of Education. The school opened at 9 am with prayers and either a hymn or a psalm and religious instruction was given until 9.50 am. Besides teachers there would be a monitor to



National School Site 2013

1904 the enlarged school had a new headmaster chosen from 150 applicants, a Mr Mansey who would serve the school well until 1919. The number of teachers had been increased from two to four plus a monitoress and during 1904 the infants' room at the back had to be enlarged as well, in order to accommodate over 50 infants as it had been built for only 30.

Also in 1904 the allotments opposite the school were surfaced over to become the school playground, opening in 1905. With all of these improvements in place Mr Mansey was able to turn the school around so that it became one of the best in Somerset!

Besides being a day school there were also night classes on a large variety of subjects and the building was additionally the venue for club meetings and social events.

However, it was the Act of 1944 that had a big effect on this school, because

maintain good discipline. From 1870 the school leaving age was raised from 10 to 12 years and attendance was made compulsory.

By the early 1900's the school had become overcrowded and had to be closed for six weeks during 1903 to enable it to be made larger. From Monday 11 January



National School Trophy presentation to the Bird & Tree team



National School in Church Road

from September 1946 children over 10 years of age not destined for Grammar school were sent to Clevedon Secondary Modern School in Highdale Road. Then in January 1947 the infants went to the Undenominational (ex British) school in the High Street that became Yatton Infants' School.

Then the National School in Church Road then became Yatton Voluntary Controlled Church of England Junior School. Its head-master at this time was the respected Mr Malcolm Stone. However by 1967 the village had expanded so much that a new and much larger junior school was required and this was built between the High Street and Stowey Road, but it still retained the title of Yatton Voluntary Controlled Church of England Junior School.

The Church Road premises were then used as extra classrooms by the Infant school for a number of years but in 1987 the school and adjacent school house were sold with the school building being converted into three flats and the playground subsequently converted into the village car park.



National School, now converted to Flats, in 2013

The Corner Sweet Shop

(Every village should have one!)

Yatton had a sweet shop that served the village well during the 20th Century. It was ideally located, midway between the Infants' School in the High Street and the Junior School in Church Road. Officially known as 35/37 High Street, generations knew it as either Miss Eyres', Batson's or Scott's. It was a confectioner's, tobacconist and newsagent, where children bought their sweets, dads got their cigarettes and mums their *Women's Weekly*.

The High Street building dated from the 1820s and was the shop part, whereas the ground floor living area with its separate entrance was round the corner in Church Road in a building that had once been a thatched cottage dating back into the 1700s.



The Corner Sweet Shop (Miss Eyres')



Former site of Corner Shop 2013

Regrettably the business succumbed in the early part of the 21st Century to competition from other similar shops and the local supermarket. The building has since been converted into private residences.

Many people will have memories of this iconic shop on the corner of Church Road and the High Street that has been illustrated in photographs and pictures,

YATTON PAST & PRESENT

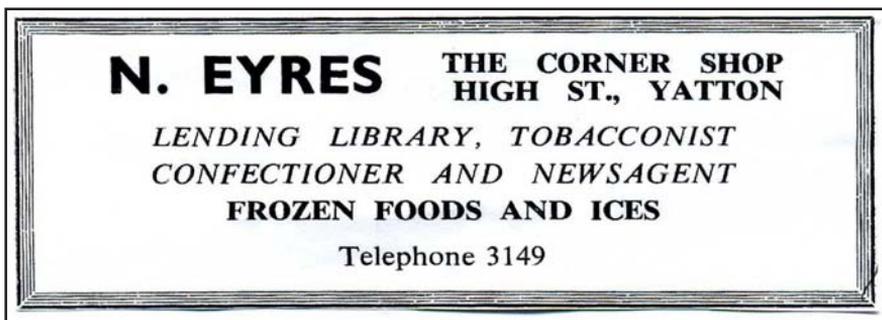
either looking down the High Street or along Church Road towards the church. Here are two stories that hark back to the austere late 1940s and early 1950s:

Rationing was still in force and people were watching their every penny. Local organisations trying to get back up to a pre-war standard found fundraising difficult and so some ingenuity was needed. Harry Cole was a good fundraiser and for the Playing Field Fund he came up with an idea that involved the most popular shop in the village.

He persuaded a Bristol jeweller, Fears of Clifton, to donate a splendid gent's wrist watch worth nearly £8 (a lot in those days), then had Prince Philip wind it up and seal it in its container. It was placed in the window of the newsagent's in Church Road, Yatton, then owned by Miss Norah Eyres, who was a great supporter of any Yatton activity. The public were then asked to purchase raffle tickets and state on the counterfoil the time at which they thought the watch would stop. This caused great interest. The winner was one of Yatton's war heroes, Captain Henry, who had led a convoy of vessels out of the Baltic Sea to escape from the Germans. He was the father of Mrs Thelma Davis who was then living in Chescombe House (demolished to become part of the supermarket car park)

The second story comes from Thelma's eldest daughter Josephine and is of her memory of Miss Eyres' corner shop.

"Food was scarce for many years. We had ration books and every Saturday I would go to the corner shop with my sisters to buy sweets, always two ounces each (50 grams). Behind the counter was Miss Eyres and she would cut the coupons from each of our books, then hand them back to us. My youngest sister always chose dolly mixtures because they were small and she would have more than the rest of us. She would always count them and tell us how many she had. Miss Eyres and Miss Cottle ran the shop. Miss Cottle was always quiet and busy sorting out humbugs and sherbet lemons into little bags and always looked miserable as though everything she did was a nuisance and Miss Eyres was the bossy one with eyes that saw everything so you did not dare touch anything or you would get a telling off. They never seemed entirely happy to be there but they were there day after day, year after year, forever it seemed —————."



Corner Sweet Shop Advert

The Causeway

The Causeway is a 'right of way' path running from Yatton High Street to St Mary's Church. Originally there was a gate and wooden turnstile at the High Street end, but this was replaced in the twentieth century by a locked metal gate.



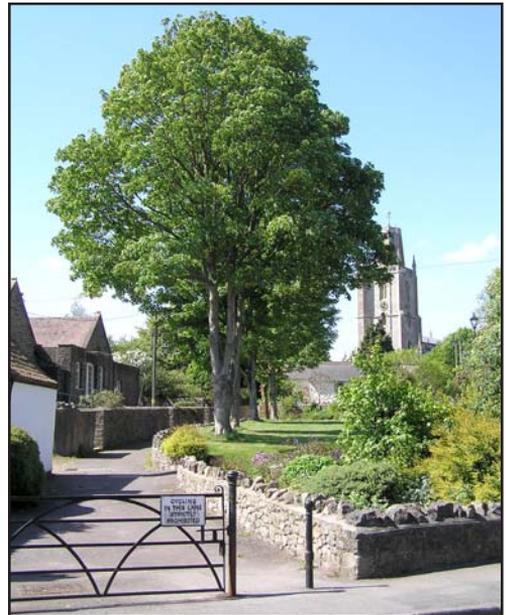
The Causeway circa 1905

On entering the Causeway from the High Street, the first house on the left is Causeway House, believed to be over 250 years old. The original house was probably a 17th century two-roomed passage house owned by the Church Commissioners and extended in the 1800's, with further alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries. It was thought to have been originally the Vicar's coachman's cottage and stables and then, later, accommodation for the curate. The house was subsequently sold by the Church Commissioners as a private dwelling in the 1950's.

Continuing along the Causeway stands the Village Hall, originally the Church Hall, beyond which a small white gate leads to a private house called St. Margaret's.

On the right we come to Church View Cottage, the only remaining cottage standing on the Glebelands. The rear of the cottage is part of the original structure, built around 1799 -1821. The front of the cottage was added around 1900, the red brick edging around the windows being indicative of the decoration of this period. The cottage was owned by the Church Commissioners and let to the Vicar and Church Warden, but it was later sold to the Parish Council and finally to private purchasers in 2007.

The Causeway continues up to the Churchyard, passing on the left the entrance to The Old Rectory and Rectory Cottage.



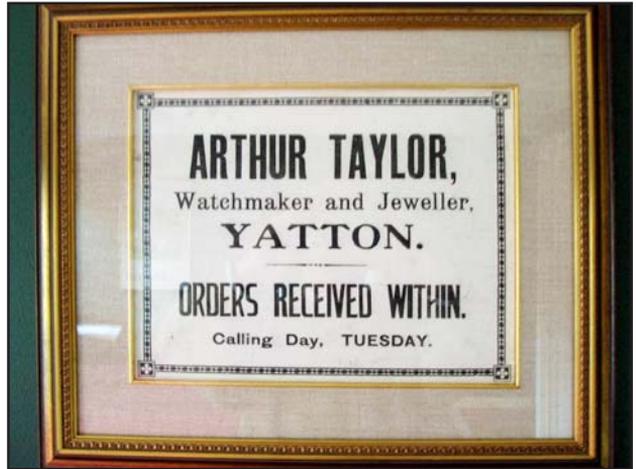
The Causeway in 2010 with Causeway House on the left

Watch Maker and Jeweller's Shop

Yatton may have been only a small village until its population explosion and subsequent building expansion in the 1970s, but it still had its own watch maker and jewellery shop. This was Box Cottage at 33 High Street, situated between Causeway House and the Butchers Arms. These three buildings belonged to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who sold all three in the 1800s.

The shop was built onto the righthand side of the front of Box Cottage and came to the edge of what was a very narrow pavement. Part of this pavement still remains. The shop door was on the righthand side of the path going up to the front door and the shop extended into the front living room.

It was owned by a Mr Arthur Taylor who was the craftsman who made and repaired watches, clocks and jewellery, as well as selling these items. We have been unable to establish exactly when the shop opened but it is known to have flourished well before the Second World War and until the early 1960s when Mr Taylor finally gave up the business. It remained empty and unused until 1976 when Mr



Jewellery Shop Sign

Taylor's son, a Mr Roland Taylor, applied for planning permission to remove the shop building and revert the house to residential use.

Unfortunately we have been unable to obtain a photograph of the jeweller's when it was still in use, but we are told that the window was well dressed with items of jewellery and time pieces for sale.



Jewellery Shop shortly before being demolished



Box Cottage with Jewellery shop demolished

The Bell Inn

In the early years of the nineteenth century only two inns were mentioned in Yatton, the remaining premises being called 'beer houses'.



The Bell Inn

YATTON PAST & PRESENT

In the 1799 and 1821 censuses a 'dwelling house, stable and garden' is recorded next to the Prince of Orange Inn. In 1851, the occupant was John Lukins, a stonemason and member of an old Yatton family, who was probably selling beer and by 1861 he was referred to as a beer retailer and mason.

After John, his wife Eliza (a dressmaker) took over as beer retailer and from about 1880 to the 1900's she was followed by his son Charles. By 1914 the role had passed to Thomas James Lukins, who was also an undertaker.

The building in the yard at the back of the inn became a skittle alley, with the Bell Inn skittle team successfully competing in and winning local competitions.

A well exists in the old cart house behind the building.

The Bell Inn ceased to be an inn in 1963 when Bert Palmer was licensee.

In 1986 the building was named Belin House and the front altered to accommodate the present day dry-cleaning business and computer shop. A launderette is situated at the rear of the building.



The Bell Inn former site in 2013

Henley Lodge

Henley Lodge comprises a small estate of detached private houses at the top end of the High Street. The name was taken from the large house that stood there in its own sprawling grounds that spread up to the lower slopes of Henley Hill.

The exact date of the original building on this site is not known but is believed to have originated before 1700 and it was known as Cadbury Lodge up to the 1870's when it was changed to Henley Lodge, probably to avoid confusion with nearby Cadbury House that was massively rebuilt in 1872. It was certainly known as Henley Lodge in 1880 when it was leased to Dr Alfred de Courcy and became the residence and surgery for several doctors over the following 60 years.

The original 16th century building appears to have been rebuilt as a "Gentleman's House" between 1750 and 1790, because the front part of the main house was more recent than the rear, which had an integral bread oven. The twin-gabled building had extensions to both ends and the front had an outstanding feature in a stone-pillared portico. The stone walls were two feet thick and the rooms were high with large paned casement windows.

A central stone staircase led down to the stables and corn store and it was said that the horses could be heard whilst one sat in the drawing room above. Later a separate and detached stable block was built at what is now known as Combe Lodge, where the entrance to the stables can still be seen at the rear of the present garage. In 1799 Cadbury Lodge was described as a "neat house with a detached brew house, stables and garden".



Henley Lodge



Henley Lodge site in 2012

In the 1851 Census the residents were Reverend Richard Symes (aged 55), the vicar of Trinity church at Cleve and his wife Elizabeth (aged 59) plus three servants: a cook, a housemaid and a groom. The Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society's publication (also of 1851) stated that a Roman internment had been found in the garden of Rev. Richard Symes of Cadbury Lodge and that the bodies were all deposited 18 inches below the surface. Adjacent to them was found an urn of black ware which was nearly full of brass coins of the later period of the Roman Empire. A Mr Straddling said that he had spent one morning collecting coins from the village shops that had been passed off as farthings for several weeks! One of these coins had the head of Orbiance Augusta, the wife of Emperor Severus Alexander (222-235).

Following its name change, Henley Lodge became the residence of a succession of doctors from 1880 until 1965 when the house and immediate grounds were sold for residential development and became the small estate of private houses that exists today.

In the grounds of Henley Lodge there had been a very large Tulip tree that had attracted botanists from far and wide. This, together with a very large cedar tree was cut down when the house was demolished in the late 1960's.

The Prisoners of War Camp

During the Second World War a prisoner of war camp was built in Yatton. It consisted of nine or ten Nissen huts and was situated partly on the realigned B3133 road to Congresbury between Henley Lane and Cadbury House, and the field that runs alongside it containing the large chestnut tree [see photo]. The old road prior to realignment is still visible in the form of the *cul de sac* that runs between the B3133 and the back of Henley Park.

The prisoners numbered about one hundred and they wore brown trousers and tops with distinctive orange patches on the back. The first to arrive were Italians, who worked on the local farms, replacing farm labourers who had been drafted into the forces. The farmers had to supply bicycles to enable them to get to and from their farms. Later when Italy entered the war on our side the men were allowed more freedom, even going to Weston-super-Mare by train unescorted.



POW site before realignment of road



POW Camp site in 2013

After the Italians moved out they were replaced by German prisoners in 1945, who also worked on the land, with some in the tannery at Claverham. One particularly hard-working man called Helmut was promised to return to the Young's farm each summer but was unexpectedly sent to Clevedon to recondition gas cookers -which he liked doing. However the other workers took his tools away at lunchtime because he worked too hard! He then returned to the Young's farm and even lived in!

The Free Church at Claverham was attended by many of these Germans who took their own part of the service in German. Sometimes Dr Rendle Short came on the train to Yatton and cycled to Claverham and a student would translate the service into German for them. They sang as well as the Welsh, and the German carols at Christmas were very much enjoyed.

When the POWs left the site it housed 'Displaced persons' including Lithuanians, Estonians and others. Some of them stayed here and married local girls. Finally the camp provided temporary homes for local people until more permanent accommodation could be found. The camp was demolished in the 1950s.

Henley Quarry

and the site of a Roman Temple

Before it was filled in, there was a limestone quarry that dated from the 19th century on the right-hand side of Henley Lane. When the Reverend Dr. Hardman bought the original Cadbury House on the slopes of Cadbury Hill on his retirement in 1873, he purchased Henley Wood together with Henley Quarry. His purpose apparently was to prevent public access to Cadbury Hill, presumably so that Cadbury House, which he then enlarged, would not be overlooked. Cadbury House and Henley Quarry remained part of the Hardman Estate until 1923. The quarry had been rented by a Sylvester Parsons. On 8th August 1946, Hoddell Pritchard published sale details of "Pasture land and quarry & limekiln which make up Henley Wood". The eventual buyer was not named, but the land was leased to R. J. Wear until 29th September 1949.

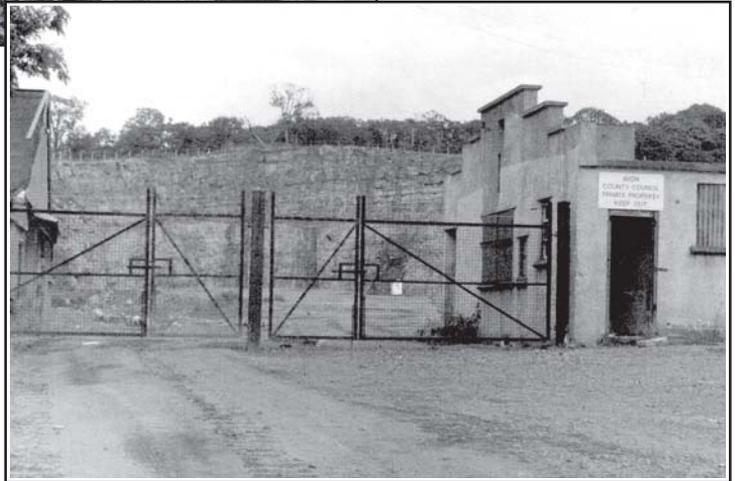
From the 1950's the quarry was owned by a Mr Rossiter of Bristol, who operated it under the name of Henley Quarries (Yatton) Ltd. The red and yellow Lorries driven by Ralph and George Hawkins delivered crushed stone, stone dust, concrete blocks and coal bunkers to customers throughout the area. It was a relatively small operation until the mid-1960's when a large demand for stone arose from the construction of the M5 motorway through North Somerset, and the quarry had to expand to meet this demand.

At about this time the Chairman of Clevedon Archaeological Society was visiting the Henley Quarry as a customer when he noticed a bulldozer clearing away the bushes and



*Henley Quarry,
aerial view*

undergrowth above the quarry face. Knowing that an Iron Age fort had been found on the adjacent Cadbury Hill, he went up to look at the scraped area and found shards of black pottery and fragments of bones. Experts were called in and in 1965, with the approval of Mr Rossiter, an exploratory excavation was carried out. The walls of a building were revealed including roof tiles and several graves. A full excavation was needed but the quarry owner wanted to expand his quarry. However, the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works took an interest and so excavations resumed in July 1966.



Henley Quarry Gates



*Henley
Quarry*

After a month's work the ground plan of a temple was found, plus twenty graves laid east to west, but no grave goods. They had discovered what appeared to be a Roman temple and an early Christian burial ground, probably Romano-British. More excavations followed from May through to September 1968.



Henley Quarry lorry at a fun day

These showed that the cemetery followed the line of a wide ditch or quarry which was probably Roman. It may have been a boundary for the hallowed ground of the temple precincts. The temple overlooked the Bristol Channel and there were no remarkable finds other than a large number of small coins and masses of pottery shards. Another excavation was planned, but it appears that the quarry extension went ahead and the site was lost forever. The quarry expanded greatly whilst the M5 was under construction and some stone also went to strengthen the sea defences at Kingston Seymour.

Henley Quarry was a busy and noisy site with a siren warning of imminent blasting that could be carried out at any of the set times during the day. These were 9:30 to 10 am; 12 noon to 1 pm; and 4 to 6 pm. The sound of the sirens and subsequent explosions became a normal part of Yatton village life. Some stones from the explosions occasionally fell into the gardens of the houses in Henley Lane. A huge stone crushing machine added to the noise and dust.



Henley Quarry 1986 – when a land fill

The demand for stone dropped off in the 1970's and eventually the quarry closed. It was bought by Avon County Council who used it as a landfill site from 1980 to 1985. When full the site was covered over with top soil and seeded with grass, as it remains today.



Henley Quarry 1989 – former temple site

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