

CHARLTON KINGS  
LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY



BULLETIN 10

CHARLTON KINGS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Meetings are held monthly from September to May in the Stanton Rooms at Charlton Kings Library.

Charlton

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1. A MEET OF THE COTSWOLD HOUNDS AT LILLEYBROOK



Photograph lent by John Lewis

Fete at Lilleybrook  
photograph lent by  
A. Hopkins





## 2. LILLEYBROOK - RECOLLECTIONS

Until recently I never thought that Lilleybrook could be considered an important part of the village economy. It was hardly a part of the village at all, built almost on the boundary and away in the south-west corner. Neither the house or the inhabitants appeared of really vital importance to the village community. Lately, however, this has changed. The house has become a luxury hotel, attractive to conferences from all over the country and the grounds are in process of developing into quite a presentable 18 hole golf course.

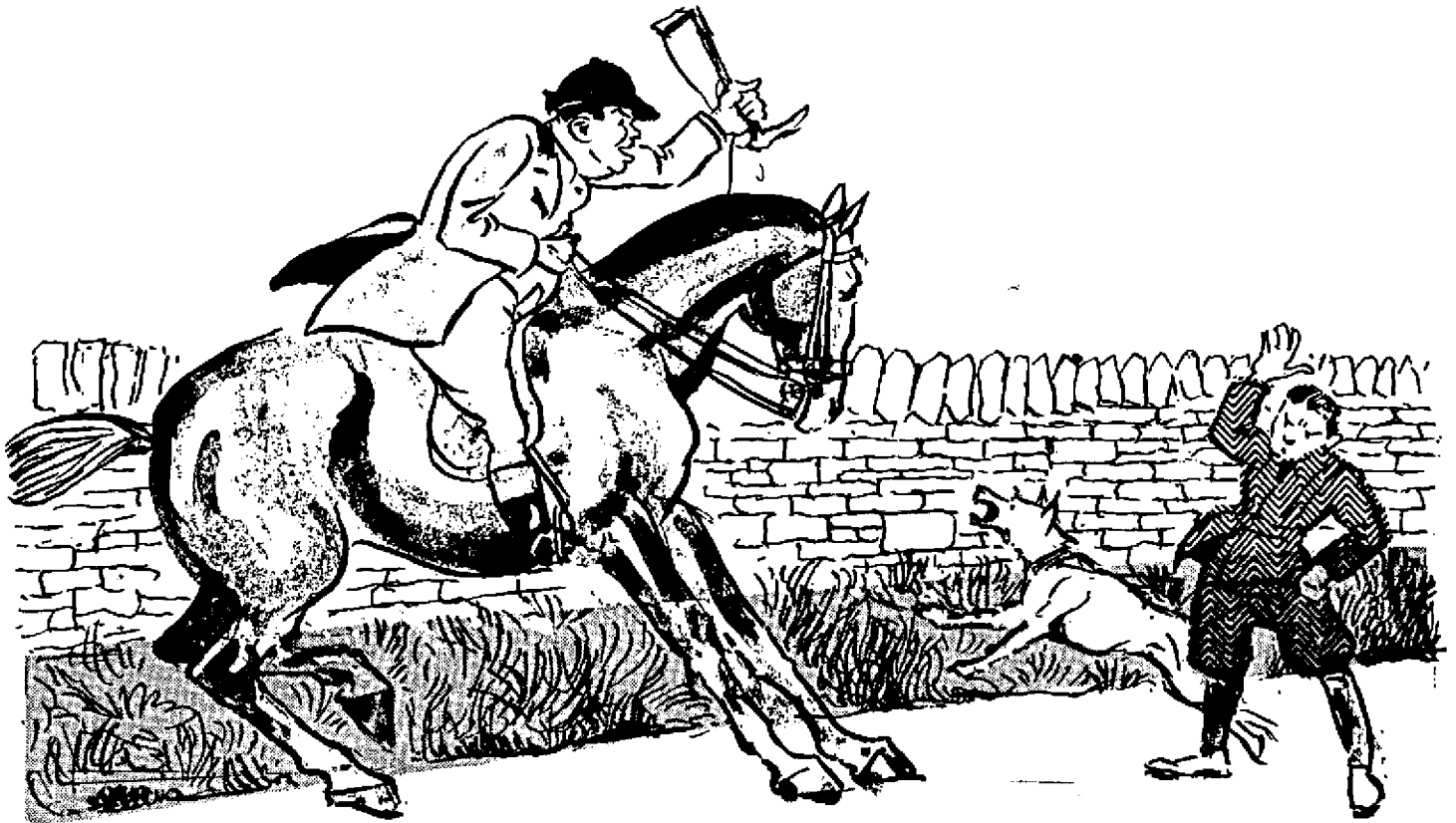
When I first knew it, at the beginning of the century, the house was a residence, pure and simple, the home of H.O.LORD Esq, M.F.H., and his wife. Yes, the house was certainly large and was of that post-Regency Victorian architecture of which we have so much about here. And it was beautifully situated, facing south onto the face of the Cotswold escarpment, where it overlooked a small lake caused by a spreading of the Lilleybrook, starting on its meandering way to the Severn.

Marching with the western boundary of Lilleybrook, on the other side of Sandy Lane, was Southfield Farm, now known I believe as Southfield Manor. This was the home of Mr CECIL LORD, H.O.'s brother. The LORDS of Lilleybrook were "horsey", that is, they were interested in horses and little else. H.O. was mostly wrapped up in his hounds and kept several good hunters, but I never knew him keep any racehorses. His wife, however, I really do think was interested in agriculture. Cecil Lord seemed to have little interest in horses. He farmed Southfield and kept the two houses "supplied" and his idea of sport was expressed in the carefully laid-out "square" half-way between the two houses with a good cricket pitch and water laid-on.

The LORDS I did not know, I wasn't the kind of person they would know. Our social standings could not have been wider apart.

But I did meet H.O. once. I was about 10, I suppose, a small boy with his dog wandering up the Cirencester Road. It was the day of the traditional annual Home Meet, when the Master of the Hunt entertained members at a Meet at his house before moving off. I was assured they always drew Lilley Grove first and thus there was an excellent opportunity for a small boy to get a ring-side seat and see the hunt draw, probably find, and start their first run of the day.

Of course they "found" in Lilley Grove. They'd got a fox waiting in a drain all night, and away they went up the gentle part of the escarpment towards the plateau. But my being where I was "turned" the fox and I never saw him again; and bang went a lot of careful and expensive planning! But I did see H.O.! He came up the road in his mounted and scarlet splendour and smelling like a leather shop. He told me what he thought of me, and I think some of my ancestors, in a language not entirely comprehensible to me who came from a Nonconformist family where even "dash" could be considered a swear word. I did not, of course, realise the enormity of my wrong-doing. He was cross. Through my carelessness bang went a possible 15 mile point, replaced by a shabby kill on the escarpment and no run at all! And all this before what was perhaps the best turn-out of the hunt that season.



I have said that I thought Mrs Lord was interested in agriculture. For one thing, I never saw anyone else make any decisions about the upkeep of the grounds. She was interested in raising prize cattle - Freesians were becoming popular - and high class poultry. She had a general manager, a Mr PRICE. I knew him well. He was anything but an educated man, yet at the end of World War I, when food production had to be got back to normal, the County did not hesitate to make him the County Poultry expert, so much was their respect for his knowledge of the subject. I did a good deal of drawing of prize poultry for him for blocks for the poultry magazines. Half-tones were not a great success on that paper. In return, I suspect, my father had the finest collection of Light Sussex for miles around. If we had a broody hen, all I had to do was to let Mr PRICE know and down would come a clutch of LIGHT SUSSEX eggs. Within a week or so of hatching, down would come Mr PRICE again and carry off one that he fancied, and that was payment for the clutch.

Perhaps, with the variety of entertainment claiming our interest at the present day, it is difficult to assess the importance of the Annual Flower Show to the village in those days. It was the village "day out". Free, to a great extent, of social differences and religious divisions, the community entered into friendly but serious horticultural competition and then really let its hair down for an afternoon and evening's fun. A "fair" with roundabouts, coconut shies and the exhilarating if somewhat penetrating calliope - and of course athletics, generally of a high standard. The high spot, as a rule, was the engagement of the band of some popular regiment and if it were a horse regiment they frequently brought with them a squad who did musical rides, tent pegging, and trick riding. Such displays need quite a bit of space, flat space, well closed in and not far from the village centre. Not many houses could provide this. Charlton Park, Lilleybrook, yes, but not many more.

But Mrs Lord was interested in the Horticultural Society, and what is now known as the 1st and 2nd holes, that good flat space in front of the lake, was frequently loaned by Mrs Lord for the annual village jamboree.

However, before I had anything intimately to do with Lilleybrook, I was always impressed with its individuality. I know of no house in the village with such an attractive facade. Its pedimented front and balustraded wide steps sweeping down to the lake are all set among tastefully selected and arranged trees, the chief of which in attracting me were the beautiful silver firs. And then, I believe, it was the only house in the village where there was a Home Meet. Maybe there was one at Charlton House when Mr PODMORE was M.F.H., but I don't remember it.

Then again, it must have been one of the few houses that had its own water supply. The house stood on about the 300 ft contour. At the 600 ft contour on the escarpment, the oolite met the lias and the result was a whole series of springs at that level. These were collected to one big reservoir, opposite the house, at about 500 ft. This was then fed by gravity to a large tank on the roof of the house from where it was distributed for all domestic purposes.

The last unique addition rather confused us all for a while. What appeared to be a small bungalow or a simple temple was built on the other side of the road and we wondered what it was supposed to house. We soon found out, it was a dynamo! and the deus ex machina was a Mr CATHERINE. He too might have been another of Lilleybrook's bits of uniqueness for he had a romantic black patch over one eye! But no! he was too late. Remember? Tom, Tom Smith had got there a long while before Mr Catherine!

Of course, the estate is broken up now.

I frequently walked across the Lilleybrook grounds because there were public footpaths. It was my best way out to Leckhampton Hill when I was living in the Old Bath Road area. Round about 1922 there was quite considerable activity going on in the grounds which would only immediately be intelligible to the initiated. They were laying out a golf course. I followed this with great interest and whenever I could spare time I would walk across to see how things went. Then one morning on one of our frequent inspections, the dog and I found only one worker rather furiously laying the turf on what is now known as No 4. Asking "Why?", I was informed that the Club had run out of money and so the architect and the contractor had left. "So", said the sole remaining workman, "they have left me to finish it." "But why you?" I asked, and he said "Because when there is a course, I am to be the Professional and Groundsman". "And what's your name?" I asked; and he said "Frank, Frank Bannister". And strange as these things happen, there, at that moment, was formed a friendship that was to last the rest of Frank's lifetime - aye and who shall say it is broken yet? Much later, after many a beautiful trip and wonderful game, when Tom and I went to see Frank off at the grey little crematorium under the Cotswolds, I wondered if - when it is my turn to join him again - we'll find him finishing another course on the Elysian Fields for our continued entertainment. Oh and I do hope we have the dog!

G. Ryland

#### A NOTE ON LILLEYBROOK

This house stands on the site of a copyhold messuage belonging to Ashley Manor. In the 18th century it was held by Ashmead family - on 20 October 1755 Thomas Ashmead claimed it as son and heir of Thomas Ashmead deceased by Amy his wife,

and two years later Thomas and his wife Mary were mortgaging this house at Up End, with its gardens and orchards.

A later Thomas Ashmead sold the place in 1816 to Robert Mansell, post captain RN, (later Admiral), for a total £1558. For this Mansell acquired a substantial house of c.1700-20, 3 cottages, stable, coachhouse, outbuildings, garden, and 2 acres of orchard, bounded by the Lilleybrook, the common road, and land belonging to William Hunt Prinn (a plot to the east of the house which Mansell bought separately). Mansell probably added the verandah on the lake side of the house which appears in the print in Griffith's Guide to Cheltenham of 1826.

However, this house was destined to be destroyed by fire. On 28 July 1831, fire broke out in the laundry, and in spite of the activity of Captain Stevenson of Bafford House in encouraging villagers to fight the blaze, Mansell House was completely burnt out (according to the account in the Cheltenham Journal of 1 August 1831). The only part to survive was the detached stable (recently reconstructed as the Clock Tower restaurant).

The main house was rebuilt and in 1848 was acquired by John Thorneley from Yorkshire. He lived till 1858 and his wife till 1864. By his will dated 27 June 1855, Thorneley devised the messuage known as LILLEYBROOK HOUSE to his wife for life and after (subject to annuities) to the children of Mary Thorneley Ollivant (a daughter of his cousin Mary Ollivant). Mary Thorneley Ollivant married William Dugdale and they had 3 daughters. The eldest, MARY OLLIVANT DUGDALE (born in 1865) bought out her sisters' shares. She married HERBERT OWEN LORD, and the house was held by trustees for her. This explains why she and not her husband had the say about the house and its grounds. Alterations, including an extension on the road side and the north wing, were designed by the firm of architects started by John Middleton, and were carried out by the builders Collins and Godfrey. They were done in stages from 1895 to 1908, ending with the Lodge near the entrance to the golf course.

### 3. TURNPIKE ROADS THROUGH CHARLTON KINGS

The House of Lords Record Office has supplied us with a copy of the public act of 1784 for turnpike roads through Cheltenham, and incidentally through Charlton Kings (25 Geo III c.125)

There had been two earlier acts which are recited in this statute, 29 Geo II (1755-6) and 14 Geo III (1773-4), under which two roads and two only were put into the hands of turnpike trustees for limited periods.

- (1) the road from Piffs Elm on the Tewkesbury road, through Boddington, to Elkstone church (of which road Sandy Lane formed part)
- (2) from Cheltenham market house up Aggs Hill,<sup>1</sup> through Brockhampton, to the Burford-Gloucester turnpike road near Pewsdon Ash (this side of Puesdown Inn).

The new act of 1784 substituted two existing roads which were then "in a ruinous Condition, narrow, and steep in many Places"; these were to be improved. The act empowered the trustees to "lay out and make, divert, or turn" and widen the newly turnpiked roads, by taking in private grounds, the land added to become "a common highway". "The Lands constituting the former Road, unless leading over some Moor or Waste Ground, or to some Town, Village, or Place to which such new Road doth not lead, shall be vested in the Trustees -- and



may be sold -- or exchanged". The improved roads were to be ditched and fenced, and mile stones were to be erected.

So the two main roads in future were to be:-

- (1) to London from Cheltenham, through the parish of Dowdeswell to the Gloucester-London turnpike road at Kilkenny. In 1784, this still meant the route down to Spring Bottom and along East End road (which in some deeds is called the old London turnpike). But three years later, in 1787, applications was made to Quarter Sessions for a new line of road through Castlefields; and the present London Road from Six Ways to Dowdeswell Mill on the parish boundary became the turnpike.
- (2) "the Road from the Direction Post in Bembridge Field near Cheltenham through Birdlip to join the Turnpike Road from Gloucester to Bath at or near the Town of Painswick--", that is to say, the Old Bath Road from the junction with Sandford Road, through Pilley, and up Leckhampton Hill.

This allowed the closure of parts of two old roads where they crossed Dodington Hunt's park - first the Forden Bank Road in 1784 and shortly afterwards Sandy Lane from the Withyholt corner. Hunt gave land for a new road from Withyholt to New Court (Moorend Road) and received in exchange the soil of the former highways.

The new Cirencester road (1826-7) was turnpiked from the start but under another set of trustees.

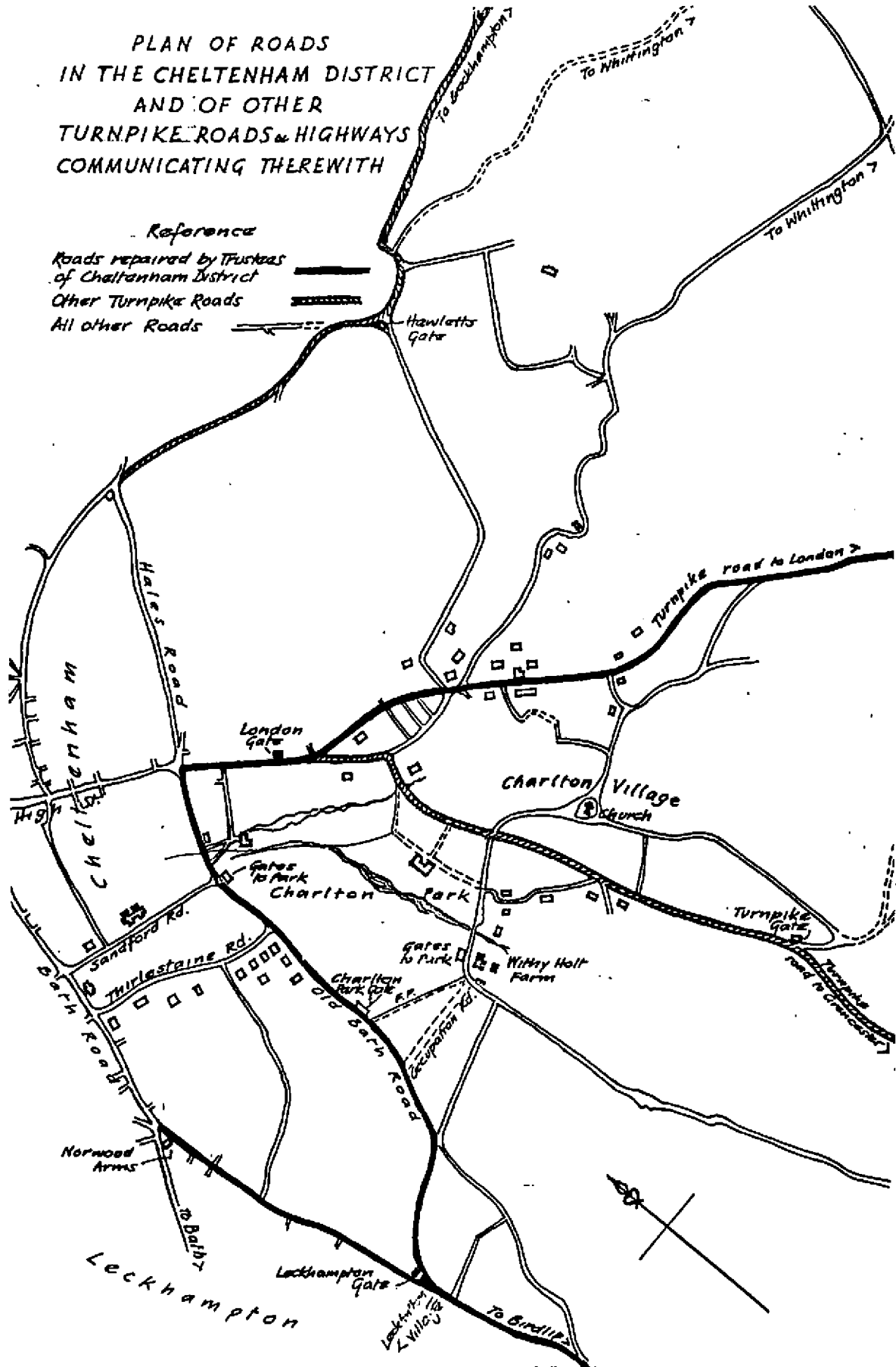
Turnpike trustees were empowered to charge tolls from road users for the upkeep of their roads, and to build toll houses for collecting money. Shakel's Pike or Hewletts Gate at the junction of Harp Hill and Greenway lane was the first gate out of Cheltenham on that route and a gate there may pre-date the 1784 act, though the octagonal pike house which survives (tacked on to new building) must have been built after the reservoirs were constructed and the road diverted round them. The gate is still shown as operating (but not under the Cheltenham District trustees) in a map of turnpike roads c.1870<sup>2</sup>. On the new London road, the first gate out of the town was at Gallows Oak (Hales Road) - Billing's map of the road in 1798 starts there. Later this gate and toll house were moved to the triangular patch of ground outside the Beaufort Arms - this was called London Gate in 1870. On Old Bath Road, the first gate was Charlton Park Gate, opposite Claypit path. Both these gates belonged to the Cheltenham District trustees. Trustees of the new Cirencester road had their first gate out of Cheltenham opposite Lilleybrook. It was normal for turnpike trustees to auction their tolls annually, so that they could be sure of their income in advance.

As far as we know, Charlton people had to go into Cheltenham to board a coach at the Plough, the George, the York etc. There were no pick-up places in Charlton Kings for coaches, though there were for wagons and carrier's carts. It must be remembered that until the road improvements of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, fast road travel was impossible; the "mail coach era" had barely begun when the 1784 act was passed, and fifty years later, its end was in sight. One generation had seen it all. Turnpike trusts continued to function after a fashion until, in the period 1875-1885, the roads were gradually disturnpiked and responsibility for their maintenance taken over by other statutory bodies.

- (1) This ancient road had been a parish road before it was turnpiked in 1755. In 1733 Charlton parish was indicted at Quarter Sessions for not repairing Roadway Lane (as it was then called), and Mr Prinn disbursed 12s 6d "to

take of the indigntment". Presumably he laid out the money in stone and gravel on behalf of the parish, though he was not reimbursed till 1736. (P 76a CH1/1)

- (2) Plan of Roads in the Cheltenham District and of other turnpike roads and highways communicating therewith ND (c.1870), the property of Mr F.Baldwin.



#### 4. CHARLTON HOUSE

The present house, which belongs to Spirax-Sarco, is a rebuilding of a much older one, copyhold of Ashley manor. If Mitchell's 1806 map is to be trusted, the original building went round three sides of a courtyard open towards the Chelt, rather like Forden House in plan and like Forden House, no doubt originally timber framed. This may have been the messuage held at the beginning of the 17th century by William Combe and afterwards by Samuel Deighton who married Combe's widow Jane - on 13 April 1610 the inhabitants of Cudnall were to hang sufficient gates across the way against William Combe's barn; and on 28 March 1627 the court made a further order "that two gates shalbee hanged in Cuddenhill, the one att Ryworth, the other att Mr Sam: Deightons in the usuall place wheare the poaste standeth".<sup>1</sup> Such gates were set up every spring to keep cattle off the growing corn, one at the Ryworth end to protect that field, and one to protect Mill Furlong (the open field stretching from Old Bath Road up to the Hale hedge<sup>2</sup> where the boundary line runs from a point near the modern Holy Apostles church down to the river). It seems from this that the highway into Cheltenham dividing Mill Furlong from Mill Slad and Coltham Field was not fenced. The wording of the order, "Mr"Deighton, indicates a person of standing, and his house would therefore be a "quality" house. On the Hearth Tax Toll for 1671, the entry which seems to apply to Charlton House is "Mr Duncester, 5 hearths", putting it on an equal footing with Mr Greville's Forden House and rather better than Anthony Webb's 4 hearth house by the church. Unfortunately, no Ashley manor records survive until the very end of the 17th century.

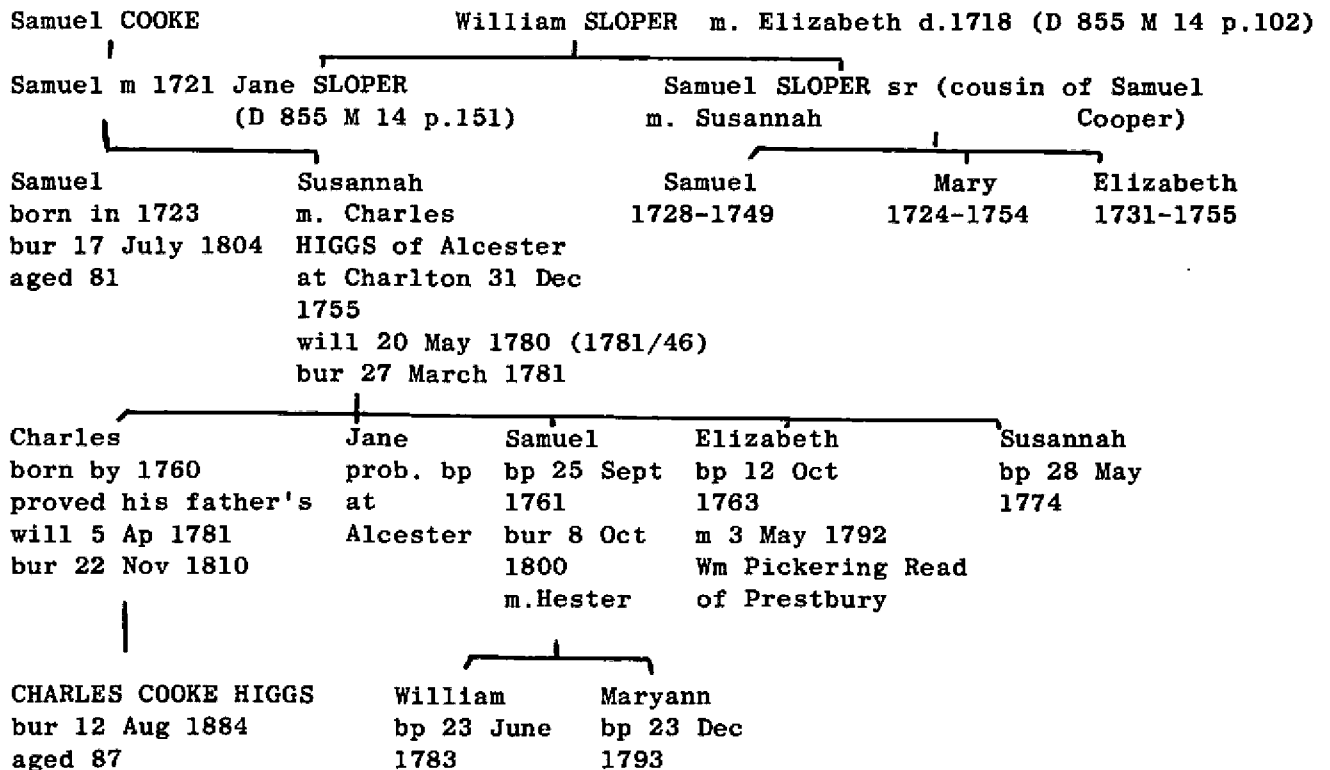
Charlton House was in the tenure of Samuel Cooper, a lawyer, by c.1696. In that year he was rated for a parish lewn at 12s 3½d for a house in Cudnell. He, and Mr John Grevil at 11s 5½d, were by far the most highly rated persons in the whole parish.<sup>3</sup> In 1702 John Prinn bought Forden House, and Sir Robert Atkyns in 1712<sup>4</sup> after speaking of him, remarks "Mr Cooper has also a good House and Estate in this Place". Cooper was steward of the manor of Ashley from 1716 and held two copyhold tenements of that manor, besides land belonging to Ashley and Cheltenham. His East End messuage (Wager Court) was occupied by a sub-tenant Nathaniel Greenwood. Charlton House was his home. No doubt he improved it, and may even have given a brick skin, just as his neighbour John Prinn had done at Forden House.

Cooper and his wife Jane (Wager) had no children. So in 1729 he surrendered his Ashley properties to use of himself for life and after to use of his cousin Samuel Sloper and Susannah his wife and their heirs.<sup>5</sup> Charlton House is described as the messuage in which Cooper then dwelt, and with it went a close called the Plat or Plock, another called The Hale, and a close called Windmill Peice (presumably at the top of Cudnall Bank). In 1734, Cooper and Sloper acting together acquired the meadow and grove adjoining Charlton House.<sup>6</sup> It lay partly in Ashley and partly in Cheltenham. The Ashley portion (1 acre) was bought from William Corbet and Anne his wife, previously the wife of John Harding; the Cheltenham part had been lately the inheritance of Henry Atkins deceased; the whole was divided into two parcels called Poolhay and Middle Moor. Another piece of land near the house was Bull Heys,<sup>7</sup> which had been settled in 1686 by John Mansell on his wife Sarah - from 1714 Cooper held a mortgage on it and sometime after 1728 (when it was claimed by Sarah Mansell's daughter Sarah wife of Thomas Lane) he must have foreclosed. This property was described at the time as Little and Great Bull Hays with buildings erected on the former. So before his death, Cooper had probably extended the grounds round Charlton House to 14 acres, including a stretch of the Chelt and a strip along the far bank of the river.

Samuel Cooper gentleman was buried on 15 May 1743. His will was proved in that year.<sup>8</sup> He left some land to found his charity; the rest was to go, with the surrendered copyhold, to Samuel Sloper and his wife Susannah. They claimed at a court held 10 June 1743 for the manor of Cheltenham and at another court on the same day for the manor of Ashley - (though it would appear from the register that Susannah had died in November 1741). But Samuel did not long enjoy his inheritance. He was buried on 21 June 1747. Under his will proved in 1747, his estates were divided between his son Samuel (baptised 21 September 1728) and his daughters Mary (baptised 16 October 1724) and Elizabeth (baptised 17 March 1731). However, the early death of the son made Mary sole copyhold heir. On 27 May 1749 she was admitted as her brother's heir and immediately surrendered to use of her sister the house in which they both lived and in which their father had lived, with the barn, stable, dovehouse, edifices, gardens, orchards, and fishponds; and an undivided moiety of other hereditaments. This was conditional on Elizabeth paying an annuity of £60 to Mary for life.

Mrs Mary Sloper spinster was buried on 27 June 1754; and Elizabeth survived her by less than a year. On 25 January 1754 she had surrendered all her Ashley manor tenements to uses of her will, paying £7.19.4 heriot (an indication of their value) and on the same day made a will devising the whole of her estate to her cousin Samuel Cooke for life, with remainder to Cooke's sister Susannah Higgs.<sup>9</sup>

The Sloper/Cooke/Higgs relationships are best explained in a table -



Samuel Cooke proved Elizabeth Sloper's will, and was admitted to Charlton House on 5 September 1755. He lived there for the rest of his life, not dying till 1804, when he was 81. But from c.1761, the next heir Charles Higgs was living in Cundall (presumably with his brother-in-law), and after his death in 1781, his son Charles may have done the same.

Charles Higgs (son of Charles and Susannah) was born before his parents settled in Charlton Kings; he did not succeed to the Charlton House estate till his uncle's death in 1804, and he himself died 6 years later - he was buried on 22 November 1810, leaving an only son and heir who was still a minor.

Verey dates the rebuilding of Charlton House to c.1790, which would mean that Samuel Cooke when around 70 suddenly decided to modernize his home. This seems unlikely. Architecturally, the present house is very plain; and Rowe's sketch of it c.1840 explains why it looks so bare - it was intended to have iron verandahs on ground and first floor. Such verandahs are characteristic of Cheltenham houses built after 1800. The earliest dateable ironwork Miss Chatwin has found is at Vittoria House erected in 1804.<sup>10</sup> So in default of other evidence, I am inclined to think that Charles Higgs is the man. He rebuilt another Cudnall property, Cowell House, between 1806 and 1808 and then mortgaged it for £2000. That would give him the capital to demolish old Charlton House and rebuild, but there would be no margin. So when Higgs died in 1810, leaving a son who was still a minor, the new house was let as soon as it was completed.

Charles Cooke Higgs came of age in 1818, and as his large new house was occupied by tenants, he bought another house in Cudnall, Charlton Lodge,<sup>11</sup> and seems to have lived there for some years. In 1820<sup>12</sup> he raised £3000 by a mortgage on Charlton House, its outbuildings, yard, garden, lawn, plantation, and appurtenances, "all that parcel of pasture land formerly planted as a cherry orchard adjoining the lawn belonging to the said messuage or mansion house, also that other parcel of land called The Hale, also two several pieces of pasture land adjoining the last called the Great and Little Pool Hays, otherwise Bull Hays, all which four last mentioned pieces of land are now thrown together, and also all that piece of wood or coppice situate at the bottom of the parcel called The Hale and formerly called the Grove", a total of 14 acres; in addition, there was Mill Furlong (10 acres); the whole being bounded on the north by the turnpike road.

The first tenant of new Charlton House was John Cooper, who died there aged 65. His tombstone can be seen in St Mary's churchyard near the Church Street railings, with an inscription calling him John Cooper of Charlton House. He was buried on 2 August 1817. A Mrs Charlotte Cooper (presumably his widow) ran an exclusive girls' school at the house from c.1817-1825. Griffiths' Cheltenham Guide in 1818 describes it in glowing terms.

"This admirably conducted Ladies' Seminary is deservedly ranked among the first Establishments of the kind of the Kingdom. The Conductress is eminent for her professional abilities, and the moral tendencies of her internal regulations. She is assisted by several teachers of approved qualifications, and the skill of the first masters, in different ornamental accomplishments. The mansion, elegant and gracious, is surrounded by an extensive pleasure ground, shrubberies, and garden. The interest of this charming spot is considerably enhanced by the beauty of the surrounding scenery."<sup>13</sup> After Mrs Cooper, a Birmingham business man Frind Cregoe took it while he looked out for land on which to build his own house - we know this from a further mortgage of 16 February 1825, and from the surrender of 20 December 1833 (by which he acquired land from the Lovesys) where he describes himself as Frind Cregoe of Charlton House Esq.<sup>14</sup> In that year he subscribed to Isaac Bell's book of poems.

Mrs. Turberville a collector of Roman antiquities, may have followed Cregoe.

The 1858 rate book shows Charles Cooke Higgs as owner and A.F.Cawston as

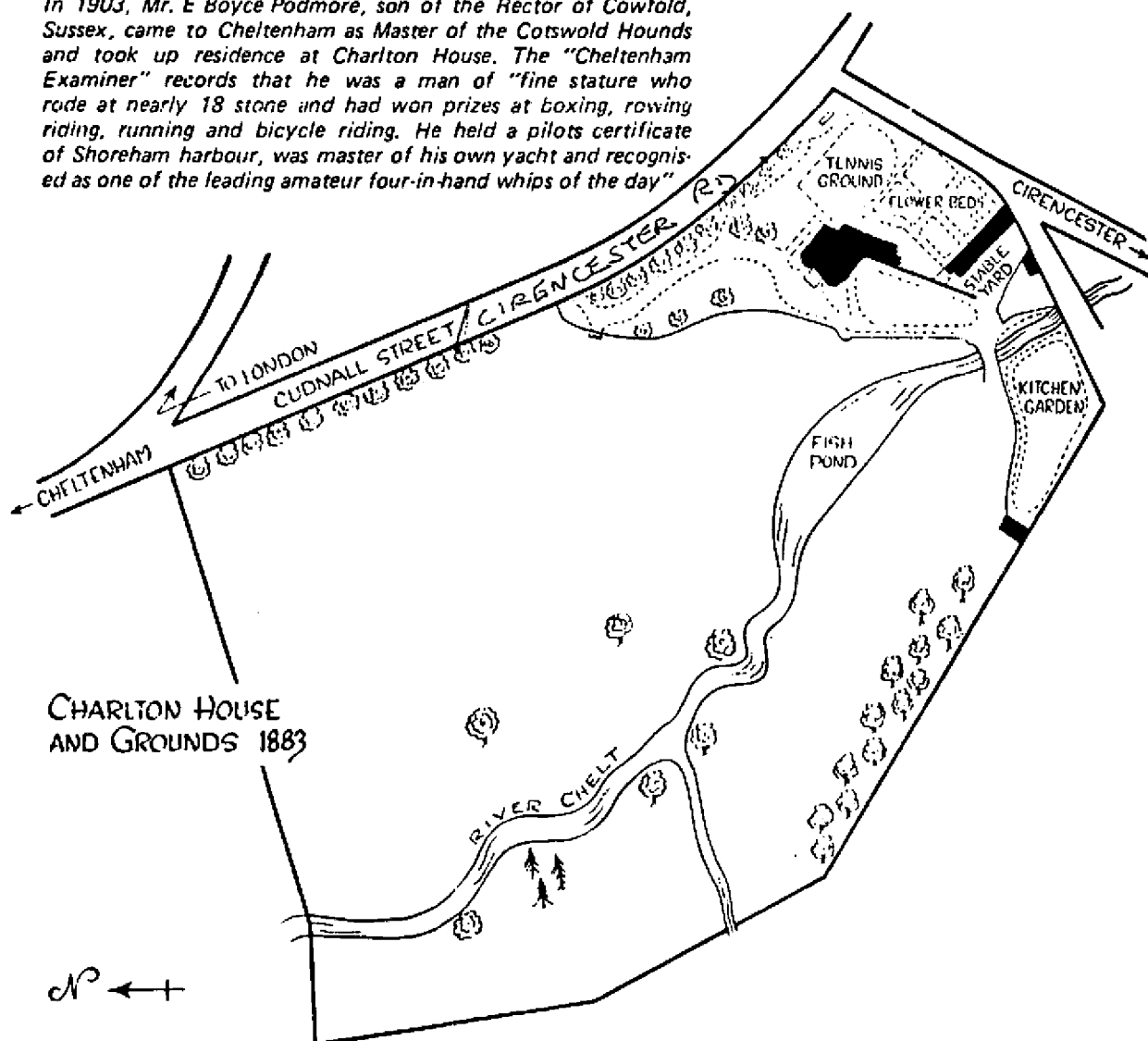
occupier of Charlton House, with 3 1/4 acres of extra pasture land (gross estimated rental £140 for the house and £11 for the pasture). There was a change of tenants in 1867, when the house was advertised in The Times as to let; the abstract of title<sup>15</sup> indicates that the next occupier was George Seward Prentice, followed by Thomas Rome.

When the new London Road to bypass Cudnall Street was cut in 1825, Charles Cooke Higgs built himself a new house on it, Langton House. There he lived for the greater part of his life, managing his sizeable estate and interesting himself in the education of children who had had little or no ordinary schooling - he built Higgs' Night School (now the Scout headquarters) for them on his own land at East End. He gave us Holy Apostles' church too, and the very remarkable carving in that church reflects his intention and the money he lavished on it. Towards the end of his life, Higgs realised that after his death his properties would be sold; and to ensure that nothing undesirable was ever done in any of them, he signed a document on 12 June 1882, which placed restrictive covenants on all of them, including Charlton House. It was to be used "as a private residence only, and not as a school for boys, a workhouse, or lunatic asylum, or for any purpose that might be in any wise detrimental to Charles Cooke Higgs a former and adjoining proprietor, his heirs or assigns, or his or their tenants". This clause was embodied in the conveyance when the house was sold. It was advertised in The Times of 2 May 1883 as having 15 bed and dressing rooms, a bathroom, 4 reception rooms, a billiard room, and a stable with 6 stalls. Very few Cheltenham houses of that date could boast a bathroom! The purchaser was Thomas Rome, the sitting tenant.

Rome continued to own Charlton House (subject to mortgages) till after 1909. When the property was enfranchised in 1906, the tenant was E.Boyce-Podmore (father of "Bob"); he was followed by Captain Macbean (remembered for his work with the Scouts). During the 1914-18 war, the house was requisitioned for German prisoners of war - there is a story that they stole unripe apples from a neighbouring orchard to use as ammunition in a battle among themselves!<sup>16</sup> and for many years the grafitti they left on the walls were preserved. When the house was released on 19 May 1919, it was immediately put on the market and was bought by the Revd Alfred Henry Rhodes, Vicar of Holy Apostles. He lived there till in 1934 he sold, first the land, and then the house and stables to A.C.Billings and Sons Ltd; and the 14 acre pleasure ground round the mansion, brought together by Samuel Cooper and Samuel Sloper, was divided into building plots.



In 1903, Mr. E Boyce Podmore, son of the Rector of Cowfold, Sussex, came to Cheltenham as Master of the Cotswold Hounds and took up residence at Charlton House. The "Cheltenham Examiner" records that he was a man of "fine stature who rode at nearly 18 stone and had won prizes at boxing, rowing riding, running and bicycle riding. He held a pilots certificate of Shoreham harbour, was master of his own yacht and recognised as one of the leading amateur four-in-hand whips of the day"



- (1) Gloucestershire Record Office D 855 M8 f 66v, 101; M9 pt 2 p.273
- (2) There are references in 1627 and 1633 to 2 strips in Millfurlong extending east and west under the hedge there called le Hale hedge, with lands of William King on the north (D855 M9 pt 2 p.275; M 10 ff 80-80v)
- (3) GRO P76a CH 1/1
- (4) Atkyns The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire (1712)
- (5) Not reported in court till 1743 and so included in the first surviving court book D109/1
- (6) D109, original surrenders 122, C135, C141
- (7) Ibid 121, C95, C97
- (8) Ashley manor will book I, D 109
- (9) GRO wills 1755/52
- (10) Verey Gloucestershire, The Vale and the Forest of Dean (1970) p.121; Amina Chatwin Cheltenham's Ornamental Ironwork (1974) p.18
- (11) Information from Mr Treasure
- (12) D 109/2
- (13) See Bulletin 5 p.30
- (14) D 109/3; see Bulletin 3 p.33
- (15) I am grateful to the firm for allowing me to see the title deeds and use this plan from Spirax Sarco News.
- (16) Mr Jennings.

M. Paget

5. ROBERT BUCKLEY PODMORE - AN EDWARDIAN SCHOOLBOY

A feature of our Parish Church to catch the interest of a visitor is the brass tablet on the west wall of the Nave to the right of the porch referring to a window in stained glass at the south west end of the Chancel. Both of these, as they state, are dedicated by officers of the Imperial Japanese Navy to the memory of Robert Buckley Podmore, who died on 14 August 1907, aged 14, who had been their friend and companion on the gun trials in April 1906 of the Japanese Navy ship Katori. Although all the essential facts are provided by the memorials alone, the history of those somewhat surprising gifts and of the principal personalities involved is not now well known.

Robert Buckley Podmore - called "Bob" by his family and friends and by others "the Little Master" - was born 6 June 1893, the younger son of Edward Boyce Podmore and Sophia, his wife. Mr Podmore appears to have been a very fine all-round sportsman ("riding nearly 18 Stone" as he once said) and in his lifetime was Master of the Vine Hunt in Berkshire, of our own Cotswold Hunt, and finally a Joint Master of the Bexhill Harriers.

For himself, Bob also became distinguished on the hunting field, and was remembered after his death as the youngest Master of Harriers that England had ever known. Whilst his father was Master of the Vine a wish was expressed for a pack of Harriers which Mr Podmore thereupon established at his own expense rather than have two Masters of Hounds in the same county. However due to severe falls Mr Podmore was unable to appear at the opening meet of the Harriers at Kingsclere and Bob, then only eight years old, is said to have taken charge, and with such conspicuous success that he was at once given complete control. In the first season every day's hunting produced a kill, even extending once to a buck that had escaped from the deer enclosure at Aldermaston.

The Podmores moved to Charlton Kings in about 1903, settling in Charlton House, when Bob became a day-boy at Cheltenham College, joining the Junior School in the third term of that year.

The rather unlikely connection between Charlton Kings and the Empire of Japan sprang from the business interests of Mr Podmore, who was a Director of the world-famous armaments firm of Vickers Son and Maxim Limited of Barrow-in-Furness.

On 12 February 1902, as an element in a clash of power amongst the principal European countries, Britain had signed a Treaty of Alliance with the Imperial Government of Japan. This led to that country placing orders following the start in February 1904 of the Russo-Japanese war for two new battleships to be built in England. The first, Kashima, was constructed at Armstrong-Whitworth & Co Limited's yard on the Tyne and launched on 22 March 1905. Her sister ship, which was Katori, was built by Mr Podmore's firm and launched at Barrow on 4 July 1905 by Princess Arisugawa of Japan who, with her husband, had come to England on a royal visit.

By the beginning of 1906 Katori was nearing completion and as an element in the courtesies exchanged on such occasions Mr Podmore invited a party of officers from the ship and from the Japanese Embassy to taste the delights of rural England in Gloucestershire during which time Bob entertained the visitors to an equestrian display. In return the Japanese offered Bob a trip on Katori during April of that year for her gun trials. The good impression Bob then made had significant consequences later on. The ship was completed on 20 May.

Death seems to have come suddenly to Bob in the afternoon of Wednesday 14 August 1907. He had had convulsions, probably, it was believed, as the result of brain trouble perhaps caused by riding accidents. His father was away from home.

It is clear that Bob was very widely mourned; the Parish Magazine describing his death as one of the most tragic events which had happened in the Parish for many a year. The Cheltonian, the Cheltenham College Magazine, later paid him a tribute saying: "He was a boy of singularly pleasant disposition and manners. Frank, manly, and straightforward, a thorough gentleman in every respect."

Bob's funeral service took place at St. Mary's in the afternoon of the Saturday that followed his death. There was a procession from Charlton House to the Church, the coffin being covered by his hunting jacket, cap, crop and horn. His pony followed with Bob's hunting boots reversed in the saddle. Interment was in the Churchyard at the south eastern corner of the East wall. The Vicar, the Reverend Edgar Neale, M.A., officiated.

When Bob's companions on Katori learnt of his death they thereupon expressed a wish to provide a suitable monument to him. In due course this was to take the form of the stained glass window, to a design suggested by Mr. Podmore, and the brass tablet, with inscription composed by Engineer Captain Fujii, of Katori.

In order that the window and tablet could by ecclesiastical law be legally installed it was first necessary to go through some formalities. The matter was put for approval to a meeting of the Parish Vestry on 5 December 1907 and the Vicar then petitioned the Chancellor of the Diocese of Gloucester through the Diocesan Registrar on 3 February 1908 for a faculty authorising the work to be carried out. At that time it was believed that the Japanese officers concerned, who were anxious to unveil the window when installed, were about to return to Japan. Accordingly Bob's father asked the Cheltenham County Court registrar (Mr Oliver J. Williams, KL.B) for help in getting the Faculty put through quickly. So Mr Williams wrote a tactful letter to the Diocesan Registrar (Mr Frederic Hannam-Clark) on 7 February 1908 ("as a very near and dear friend of Mr Podmore") asking Mr Hannam-Clark "of your kindness and goodness to so expedite matters anent the issue of a faculty that the unveiling can take place before the Japanese Officers leave. The [proposed] inscription has, I believe, already been supplied to you by Messrs Boulton". (The word in square brackets was Mr Williams' afterthought - perhaps he did not wish to give the impression that the grant of the faculty was regarded as a foregone conclusion.) However granted it was on 2 March 1908 and so the way was clear for the work to be executed or perhaps completed. The window was made by Messrs James Powell & Sons of London and the tablet by Messrs R.L. Boulton & Sons of Cheltenham, who were responsible for the installation.

Notwithstanding the urgency that had been expressed, all was not ready until April 1908 by which time Captain Fujii had returned to Japan. However the unveiling ceremonies finally took place on Saturday the 18th of that month and were of some magnitude.

Following a semi-private luncheon party at Charlton House a carriage procession left for St. Mary's, the family vehicle being accompanied by a posse of mounted Police consisting of an Inspector and two Constables. At the church the Mayor and Mayoress of Cheltenham (Mr and Mrs Dimmer) and Mr Oliver Williams were present and also 46 members of local Fire Brigades, by way of acknowledgement of Mr Podmore's interest in fire fighting. The various ceremonies were

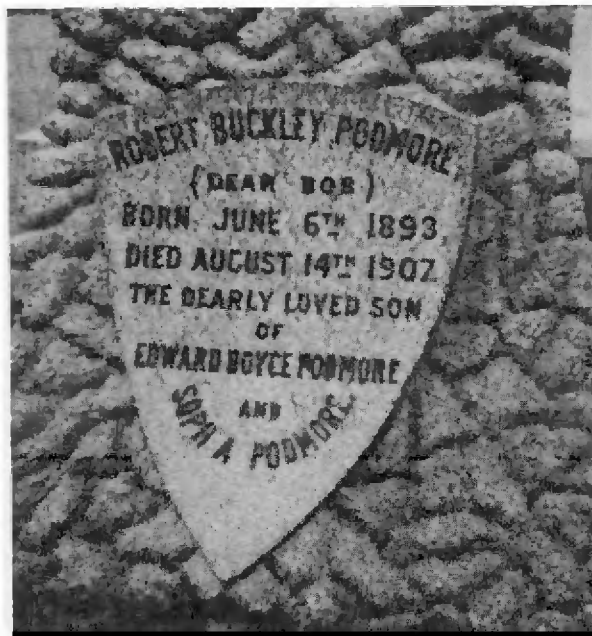
presided over by the Vicar assisted by two Curates.

Of the four Japanese Naval officers who had travelled down from London, Captain S.Tochinai, C.V.O.; of the Japanese Embassy, unveiled the window as deputy for Captain Fujii, and Commander Makihara of Katori unveiled the tablet. Everyone then moved into the churchyard where a Cornish marble cross to a design of Mr Podmore as completed by Mr. J.J.Smith, A.R.I.B.A., of Bideford was to be unveiled by Mrs James Dunn of London. This cross still stands at the south eastern corner of the eastern wall of the church. It has four memorial shields on it of which the first to be filled was in commemoration of Bob. Nothing further appears on this shield that cannot be gathered from the window and the tablet, except a line which reads: "A true gentleman - a man - yet a boy (W.R.W.Jun.)". This expression of regard had been taken from a letter by one of Bob's greatest friends to Mr Podmore. The remaining shields are now filled with the names of Bob's mother and father, and his three sisters

Although it might be thought that three separate memorials would have been sufficient in all the circumstances yet a careful examination of the ground on which the marble cross stands shows the single word "Bob" inscribed on the south eastern stone edging of the plot itself. So he achieved no less than four separate permanent mentions of his name at St. Mary's: a remarkable tribute to an Edwardian schoolboy. Katori did not however survive her youthful passenger for a great length of time, and, after being disarmed in 1922 and taken off the effective list in 1923, was broken up at the Maizuru Naval Yard in Japan between 1924 and 1925.

References: Gloucestershire Journal, 16.8.1907 and 25.4.1908, Who Was Who, 1916-1928, Gloucester Reference Library; The Times, 5.7.1905, Cheltenham Free Press, 25.4.1908, Cheltenham Examiner 21.8.1907 and 22.4.1908, Cheltenham Reference Library; Parish Magazines, 1907, Vestry, St. Mary's; Cheltenham College Register, 1928, p.571, and The Cheltonian, 1907 Volume, Library, Cheltenham College; Gloucester Diocesan Archives, Box F1/1, Gloucestershire Record Office; Local History Bulletin, No. 5, p.51; The Imperial Japanese Navy by Watts and Gordon, pub. Macdonald, London, per Naval Historical Branch, Ministry of Defence.

C.W.K. DONALDSON



## MR PODMORE REMEMBERED

Mr Podmore was a big stout man who had a good voice - soon after his son's funeral, he sang in church the anthem "Abide with Me", The Podmore vault is very large. Mr Podmore was Captain of Cheltenham Fire Brigade and gave them an engine called the Bob Podmore engine, after the boy.

W. Keen

## 6. THE CHARLTON KINGS MUMMERS PLAY

Firstly, a few words about Mummers plays in general. Broadly speaking, a Mummers play is a short dramatic piece performed by about six or seven persons, invariably male, as a seasonal custom, usually at Christmas time. Traditionally, the performers act the play on one day of the year only, say Christmas day or Boxing day, and will perform it several times in their own neighbourhood. The theme of the play varies slightly from place to place, but in the South of England and the Midlands, it usually takes the form of the "hero-combat" play. King George, or Saint George, steps forward with swaggering boasts, and is then challenged to fight. A mock sword-fight ensues and one of the combattants is slain. A doctor is called for, and after some humorous dialogue about his abilities and qualifications, he revives the dead man. The play normally ends with a request from the players for money, accompanied by wishes for a merry Christmas.

There are, however, many variations on this basic theme, and it is difficult to talk of a "typical" text. Similarly, the costume worn can vary, sometimes being conventional, i.e. with the characters dressed as their roles as a knight, Father Christmas, a soldier, etc., or else stylised, with the actors wearing spectacular costumes of paper streamers, often with blackened faces.

The origins of the Mummers play are difficult to determine, as written references to mummers plays date back no further than the eighteenth century. From one point of view, the play can be seen as a harmless piece of rustic humour, with a certain amount of almost nonsensical dialogue. However, it may have greater antiquity and deeper meanings, and some scholars see it as a piece of sympathetic magic symbolising death and resurrection, encouraging the winter days to lengthen and the crops to grow.

The play in various forms was performed all over England, except, curiously, in East Anglia, and was also widely performed in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Gloucestershire is one of the richest counties in examples of the play, as over fifty references have been noted to plays in different villages and some twenty-four complete texts have survived. One play, namely that of the "Marshfield Paper Boys" is still enacted annually as an almost unbroken tradition. Notable revival Mummers groups in Gloucestershire are the Waterley Bottom Mummers from Dursley, the City of Gloucester Mummers, who perform several different plays from the county, and the Old Spot Morris Men, who have revived the play from Longborough.

The first that I heard of a Mummers Play having been performed in Charlton Kings was in a conversation with a neighbour, namely Mrs. Sallis of Buckles Row, Charlton Kings, who was then over eighty years of age. She told me that her father, Charles Taylor, used to amuse her and the other children by dressing up as the "Turkish Knight" or, as he called it "Turkey Snipe" and reciting the play.

The text that Mrs Sallis remembers is given below, and is clearly incomplete. The words given in brackets are supplied by surmise, or by prompting Mrs.Sallis:-

FATHER CHRISTMAS : Here am I, old Father Christmas  
(Welcome or welcome not)  
.....

SIR GEORGE : (I fought the fiery dragon and brought it to slaughter,  
And by this means won the King of Egypt's daughter)  
.....

TURKEY SNIPE : Here am I, old Turkey Snipe,  
Just come from Turkey land to fight.  
Fight thee, Sir George, man of courage bold.  
If thy blood be hot, I'll quickly fetch it cold.  
So surrender!

SIR GEORGE : Surrender? I'll never surrender to thee,  
Though my body made of iron and my head is made of steel.  
.....

(They fight and Sir George is slain)

(FATHER CHRISTMAS) : Is there a doctor to be found  
To heal this man lie bleeding on the ground?  
.....  
What canst thee cure? (also "What pains canst thee heal?)

DOCTOR : I can cure the itch, the stich, the palsy and the gout,  
Pains within and pains without.  
Fetch me any man that's been dead this forty year  
.....

The other characters include Beelzebub and possibly Jack Vinney. Mr. Taylor himself was born in Naunton Crescent, Leckhampton, Cheltenham in about 1879 and died in 1962. He later lived in King's House, Spring Bottom, Charlton Kings, which was known as the "Hovel". Mr Taylor married in about 1902 and his daughter, Mrs. Sallis, considers it unlikely that he took part in the Mummings play after that date. However, in view of the link with Leckhampton, it appears that the play is the same as that described by Reginald St. Johnston in his book "A History of Dancing", published in 1906. He wrote:

"The last time I saw the Mummings, and probably the last time that mumming was even done, at all events in that part of England, was in 1888 at Leckhampton, now a suburb of Cheltenham, at the foot of the Cotswold Hills. It was Christmas time, and a band of some seven or eight youths, evidently villagers from the Cotswolds, came to the house where I was living, and asked me if they might perform the old play of "St. George". They were all dressed up in fancy costumes representing St. George, the Dragon, the Faire Maiden, the Doctour of Physike, and other characters, and with some awkwardness they managed to get through the performance. At intervals there was a little dancing of rather a cumbersome kind, but the most interesting part of the whole performance was the use of words and phrases which could none of us understand, and which I doubt if they understood themselves. These were evidently bits of the pure Anglo-Saxon phraseology of the play, which had been handed down unaltered from father to son through all those centuries in this little out-of-the-way spot in the Severn Valley."

Fortunately, as we know, the Mummings play did not die out in 1888 as Mr. St. Johnston speculated, neither in Cheltenham nor in other parts of the country. It also seems from the account that the writer had some problems with the Gloucestershire accent! The mention of the Dragon may be significant, as Mrs.



Sallis mentioned a dragon as one of the characters. It is probable that Mr. Taylor learnt the play in Leckhampton and then took the play to Charlton Kings. He could even have been one of the youths that Mr. St. Johnston witnessed. Mrs. Sallis is certain that the play was performed in Charlton Kings at Christmas time, but thought that the other mummers were mostly from Leckhampton. Although there are many gaps in our knowledge of the play, it is a tribute to Mrs. Sallis' memory that so much information has been recovered.

Gwillim Davies

#### 7. A BAFFORD TENEMENT IN 1403

Mr Eric Green has kindly allowed us to photograph this deed which relates to one of the Bafford freeholds in the early part of the reign of Henry IV. His deed has had a chequered history - it was discovered in Australia by Mr Green's daughter and so returned to the place where it was written and sealed on 16 August 1403!

In translation, it reads "Know all men present and come that I Walter Aylrych of Cherlton Kynges have given and granted and by this my charter confirm to John atte Well', Richard Aylsaunder, and John Reynald of the same place, one messuage situated in Cherlton aforesaid between a messuage formerly of John Yoket on one side and a messuage of John Borouhulle on the other side; I have also given and granted to the said John, Richard, and John, 4 selions of arable land in the field of Cherlton aforesaid, of which 2 selions lie at Colvaforde between land of Thomas Klerc on one side and land of Lucas on the other side, another selion lies near Beerleystreem between land of John Reynald on one side and land of Thomas Brugge on the other side, the 4th selion lies in Schortte Grenehale between land of Braddestokes on one side and land of John Harpur on the other side; to have and to hold the aforesaid messuage and land with all their appurtenances to the aforesaid John, Richard, and John their heirs and assigns, freely, quietly, well and in peace, of the chief lords of that fee by the services due for them and of right accustomed to be paid, for ever; and I the aforesaid Walter and my heirs will warrant and defend the aforesaid messuage and lands with all their appurtenances to the aforesaid John, Richard, and John, their heirs and assigns against all men, with these witnesses - Roger Northeys, John Harpur, Thomas Balle, John Wyllyames, John Nymbeley and others. Given at Cherlton aforesaid on Thursday next after the feast of the Assumption of Blessed Mary in the 4th year of the reign of king Henry the fourth after the conquest."

Since Walter Aylrich is conveying his property by deed, it must have been freehold, not base tenure, and the three men named as donees or recipients may very well have been trustees who were to hold the messuage and land for some purpose unexplained - perhaps as a preliminary to one of those fictitious law-suits which enabled a man to clear all existing entails from his property. The words that follow "to have and to hold" are common form, because all land was held from some lord or from the king as chief lord, and the warranty clause would ensure that Walter or his heirs would support the donees' title in a court of law. It is possible that this deed was meant to pave the way for a real sale, after which this very small holding would be merged in a neighbouring one to make a more viable unit.

11. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 12. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 13. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 14. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 15. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 16. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 17. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 18. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 19. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...  
 20. in iudicio a p[ro]cur[ator]e p[ro]curat[ur]e de Ch[ar]terhouse...

That is in fact what had happened before the mid 15th century rental of Cheltenham manor (D 855 M68). One of the Bafford freeholds was called "Hopton and Borowehopis" - Boroweheope being the John Borouhulle mentioned in our deed as having a messuage on one side of Walter's. This had been lately John Hopton's and at the time of the rental was held by John Throckmarton with as much as 2 virgates of land - an exceptional quantity at a period when  $\frac{1}{2}$  virgate was the usual size of a holding. All the Bafford houses were on the west side of the road called Moorend Street (New Court Road plus the present Charlton Park back drive), and there is nothing to tell us whereabouts this messuage stood.

Of the three donees, we know from the rental that Richard Alysaunder or Alexander and John atte Well or John de Fonte held base tenements in Charlton in 1403.

No more than 4 selions (about 1 acre) of arable land went with Walter's messuage. This land was all in Charlton Lower field (the great open field stretching from the modern Reeve's Field and Charlton Park almost up to Southfield Farm). The Barley Stream mentioned is the old name for Southfield Brook. Colvaforde or Culverford, the pigeon ford, was on the stream we call Lilleybrook, perhaps at Bafford Farm. Short and Long Grenehale, furlongs in the open field, have given Greenhills Road its name. "Hale" is probably not hill but halh, a slight depression in the land (often hardly visible to the eye but a frost hollow). Lucas (who held land adjoining one of the ridges conveyed) gave his name to Lucas Hill (TM 213).

#### 8. EDGAR NEALE, VICAR OF ST MARY'S 1906-1937

There are still many Charlton people who remember Edgar Neale, and this is what they say about him. The reiterations stress some of the characteristics for which he is recollected with affection after 45 years.

##### (1) W. Keen

The Revd Edgar Neale had been curate at Tewkesbury - there he used to train the boys of the choir. He had a large bell which he'd pick up and ring when they got too noisy. The boys found out how to take the clapper off, and they took it off one day while he was out of the room looking for some music. He rang and rang the bell and there was no sound! - then he looked, and when he saw the clapper gone, he burst into a great shout of laughter.

He was a master-piece at singing comic songs - the Echo said of him "What the music hall lost as a comic, the Church gained as a priest". He used to sing at those Conversaziones.

My younger brother was in the choir - choir practice every night. One evening he was late and expected a row - then to his joy he heard the fire bell. So he stuck his head in at the Vestry door and bawled "Come on, boys, there's a fire up the London Road" - and all the boys kicked over the forms they were sitting on and rushed out - they left the Vicar using opprobrious language! The fire was at Springfield - the house happened to be empty, and a local man and his wife were acting as custodians. That was in the days of the Charlton Kings Fire Brigade, before the War, when I'd be about 15. (c.1912).

(2) Frank Neather

Twice the choir boys were summoned for throwing stones and breaking the china pots on the telegraph posts in London Road and Cirencester Road. Edgar Neale appeared for them in court, spoke up for them, and out of his small income, paid their fines.

(3) M. Wilkins

He was the beau-ideal of a rural parish priest, he could and often did take an entire service unaided, play the organ, lead the singing, preach the sermon, and read the service.

Before coming to St. Mary's he had been precentor of Tewkesbury Abbey, and when he first saw Charlton Kings church, he decided it was a little "cathedral", and he did his utmost to make it ever more beautiful.

We, the children of the parish, always called him "Vicar". He was his own choir master, and the choir boys wore navy caps with a red C.K.C. on the front. Each summer he took his boys to Tewkesbury to play a cricket match with the Abbey choir boys, ending up at Barsanti's for tea.

He said once - "Little girls are very nice, but they can't sing." On one occasion a notice appeared in the parish magazine "the Vicar is very short sighted, if he ever passes anyone without speaking, will they please shout at him."

The Vicar started the custom of holding a conversazione during the week of the Dedication Festival, it was held in St. Clairfords Hall, the only room of any size in the parish. He had an unending fund of comic songs, with which to entertain us, "When I was a boy at school," "The Old Black Hoss" and "We left the Baby on the shore".

I once heard him say "St Mary's was famous for two things, its missionary interest, and the musical maniac it had for a vicar."

Canon Neale was tireless in his ministry. The children of the parish were well instructed in the faith, we all attended Sunday School followed by Matins or Sung Eucharist (according to age), the Children's Service was at 3pm in the afternoon.

When we were about twelve years old, we were prepared for confirmation and thereafter, attended 8 o/c Communion on the first Sunday in the month. We were taught to go fasting, and no one would have dreamed of receiving communion at Sung Eucharist unless really ill or very old. He told me once that on his first Sunday in the parish his two top choir boys communicated at Sung Eucharist; he said "they did not do it again".

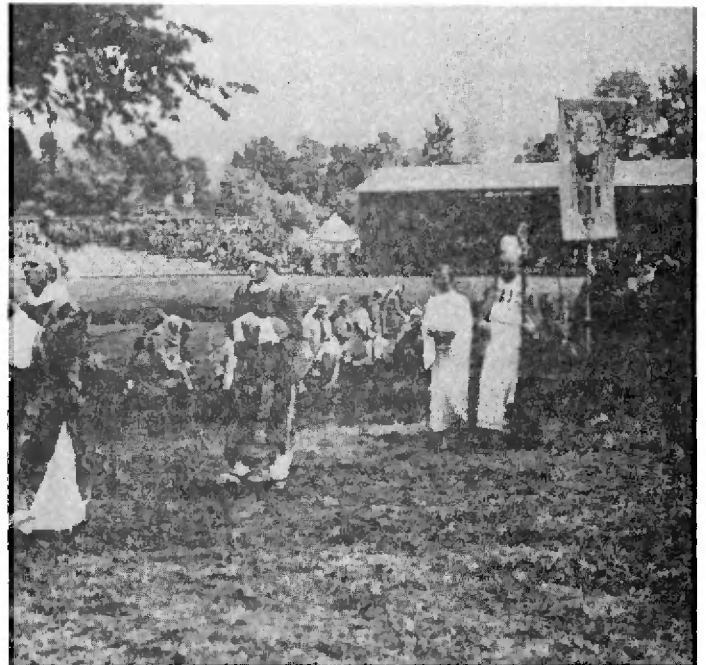
The daily Evensong at 6pm was always sung by the boys choir. Once one of the boys looking from the vestry saw no one in the congregation, and said to the Vicar, "Sir, Sir, the church is empty! shall we sing Evensong?" Canon Neale answered "my dear boy, the church is full of thousands of angels, if you could only see them".



With the Choir XI - (W.Keen's photograph)  
(c.1912)



Vicar and Curate -  
The Revd Edgar Neale and  
the Revd W.L. Smith c.1930.  
(M. Wilkin's photograph)



In the Tewkesbury  
Pageant (E.Stuart's  
photograph)

(4) A former choir boy, Percy Davis

These notes about the late Edgar Neale are not in chronological order but as they came to mind.

The Revd Edgar Neale made St Mary's famous throughout the county, with its choir and religious pagentry. He was an accomplished musician and bass singer. His repertoire contained most religious classics and many comic songs.

The choir comprised twenty-four boys and about eighteen men. For the boys, it was almost total dedication. Choral Evensong on six nights of each week and practice on five. On Sunday there was Matins, and a Communion service followed. The choir sang at churches in and outside Cheltenham, including Tewkesbury Abbey. From such a choir it was understandable solo boys would emerge. I was fortunate to be one of them.

Responsibility for the boys caused the Vicar many worries. For misconduct he imposed fines which were deducted from your monthly pay. This procedure was not always effective, and he resorted to stripes with a cane across the backside. When a boy was summoned to the Vicarage for this punishment, the boy's trousers were padded with choir caps!

The village Police Sergeant frequently called at the Vestry to investigate some of the boys' misdeeds - invariably it ended by the Vicar taking over the problem. I remember on a choir outing to Worcester, the boys inevitably found Woolworths - there were no shop assistants upstairs and nearly every boy helped himself! The store manager decided to prosecute. Eventually the Vicar paid the bill out of the Choir fund and fined every boy.

Harvest Festival was eagerly awaited - the temptation to taste those gifts could not be resisted. On one such occasion I remember when the chancel lights were switched off for the Vicar's sermon, one boy removed his surplice and crawled across the chancel to get apples. When he was returning laden a second time, the lights were switched on again, and he was caught in full view of the congregation!

Every Sunday afternoon, the Vicar took a Children's Service. He could never understand why they put objects other than money into the collection bags. The Sunday School treat was always held at Charlton Park. The event was preceded by a procession of the children, headed by the Salvation Army band, round the village. Every child carried a flag and the infants rode in a freshly painted farm wagon.

One of the tricks played by the choir boys was to ring the church bell before the proper time for Evensong. This caper invariably caused the Vicar to arrive almost breathless, and two elderly spinsters almost fell over in fear of arriving late for the service.

Probably the Vicar's most embarrassing experience was when, after chasing a boy to his home, he ended up in the back kitchen, to see the boy's mother having a bath in the tub.

Every Christmas afternoon, the Vicar and his choir walked to the Cheltenham General Hospital and sang carols to the patients.

A bicycle was the Vicar's means of transport. He always mounted the machine from a step on the rear wheel, because he could not do it in the normal way.



The machine received constant attention from the choir boys - hiding it, dismantling it, and painting it. His reaction to these misdeeds was really funny to us.

Some of the senior choir boys became servers. I performed this duty at the early morning communion service on Monday and Thursday. Opening the church and other jobs enabled the Vicar to stay in bed a while longer.

The Vicar took a keen interest in the church organisations and childrens' club, with the Parish Room as the functional centre. The caretaker was Mrs. Humphris - She dressed in Victorian style, and was nicknamed "Mrs Dump" by the boys. She was an officious person but completely unable to control them. Housed near the Parish Room were the village invalid chairs. They had three wheels and the chair was made of wicker. One evening when Mrs Humphris was taking a club, we took three of these chairs out to have a race down the Copt Elm pitch. Mine crashed into one of the kerb-side trees, out of control - although it was badly damaged, we got back unobserved. The Vicar was furious, he involved the village Police Sergeant, but we were never found out.

Many of the congregation at St Mary's were people of means and they gave considerable help to the Vicar materially and financially. Whatever he wanted for the church, someone was ready to give it.

At festival times, a lady, Miss Jordan, provided button hole flowers for the entire choir, while others gave choice flowers for the altars.

Prior to becoming Vicar of Charlton Kings, Neale was curate at Tewkesbury Abbey. In all probability, his experience there created his desire for religious splendour.

(5) Mary Davis (whose three brothers were all in the choir)

There was a grave round by the west door of the church, a vault, which had a flat top, slightly loose. While the boys were waiting for the Vicar to call them in for choir practice, they were playing fox and hounds in the dark, and it was the turn of my brother Leslie and another boy, Cyril Messer, to hide. So they pulled the stone up a little and hid in the vault - then the stone came down on them and that was it - it was much too heavy for them to lift. They heard the Vicar call them for choir practice - it was a Friday and a full choir practice with the men as well as the boys. When they all came out at 9, the two boys still hadn't been found and the Vicar sent for their fathers and they hunted and hunted in the churchyard - at last "Carlo" Fry the Verger heard a faint noise coming out of the vault and told the Vicar. "Oh nonsense, Carlo, they can't be there". But Fry persisted. It took three men to lift that stone off and get them out. Then the Vicar said to the fathers "What a dreadful night! we'd better have something to steady our nerves" and he took them round to the Vicarage for a drink of whisky. He didn't offer anything to the boys, who were half dead with cold and fright!

The children used to sing

"If you want some angels without any wings  
Go to the Vicar of Charlton Kings".

Everything the choir did had to be perfect. When it was the boys only, they practised in the Vestry with the piano. Then they had to sing it unaccompanied. And if it wasn't perfect, the Vicar would go on and on. One night, Leslie sang off key purposely and the Vicar made him come out to the piano and sing

it on his own, which he did. Then the Vicar said "Now we'll sing it unaccompanied and then you can go" and began to beat time - but he hadn't told Leslie to go back to his place. So while they were doing it, Leslie knocked all the music on top into the open piano! At the end, the Vicar said "Now we'll sing it once more with the piano and then you can go" - he raised his hands and struck the keys, and there was only a groan! He had to take the front off to get the music out and pinched his finger doing so - then he couldn't get it on again and pinched his other hand - and he got so red and angry, trying to control himself, Leslie thought he'd burst with fury.

Leslie used to end up every month owing the Vicar choir money, not receiving any. The Vicar used a fountain pen to write the fines in the book. But sometimes he'd tell the curate, "Bumps" Gardner, to write it down, and he'd always use a pencil, and then when the Vicar wasn't looking, he'd get out a rubber and rub it out.

My brother Frank looked like an angel with tight golden curls - he and Bob Smith were the first boys to carry the candles in procession - about 1922-3. (Bob was killed in the Navy during the war).

Once a month they had a service in the tin church at Ham, and the Vicar took all the choir boys up there with him - and they had to walk.

There was a Childrens' Service at 3 every Sunday afternoon and all the Sunday School children had to be there. One afternoon, while we were waiting, the fire bell started in opposition to the church bell and the Vicar hadn't yet arrived. So the 300 children dashed out - all the boys wanted to help the Fire Brigade push the truck and all the other children followed, down Copt Elm Road, up to the London Road - the fire was in the Lodge at Ashley Manor. When they came back an hour later, there was the Vicar waiting at the Lychgate very angry - he caught all he could and shepherded us back into church, and there he gave us a dreadful lecture and made us learn a new hymn - we were all an hour late for tea!

Mother told me that when he first came here, his first or second Christmas, he was preaching at Matins and he looked round the church at all the gentry and said how pleased he was to see them there - but where were their maids? why weren't they allowed to salute their Lord on Christmas morning? it caused great consternation.

He visited everyone and he knew everyone. On those Sunday School processions, every time they passed a house where there was some one ill or confined to the house, the Vicar would say "Three cheers for so-and-so" and all the children cheered.

When I was a girl, I was very ill with kidney trouble - for three weeks I was only allowed one pint of lemon water a day. Every week when the Vicar visited me, he brought me a box of Cadbury's Milk Tray chocolates (which of course I wasn't allowed to eat) and piled them up on my dressing table, saying he was building the Devil's Chimney! and at Christmas he rushed in after his first two services with a box of Rowntrees. he wanted me to give him a kiss, but he hadn't had time to shave and was all bristly, so I wouldn't!

When I began to get better, Miss Emma Smith used to bring me goats' milk (they kept goats) and grapes and peaches from their garden. The Miss Smiths were very kind. They used to make jigsaws to sell for the Mission and Miss Emma used to bring them for me to do before they were packed up and put away ready

for the next sale.

Once I was allowed to go on the Servers' outing in a bus - the Vicar said it wasn't fair that my three brothers should go - they were all servers - while I couldn't. But I had to sit on his knee all the way because there wasn't a spare seat.

At Festivals, he'd start with a service at 5.45, then another at 6.45, and yet another at 8, - he'd take them all himself, and at the end of each service, he'd whip off his surplice and rush to the organ and play the appropriate hymn - "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" at Easter - a carol at Christmas. He'd make it all seem so joyful.

'Banjo' Evans used to blow the organ for him. But if he were ill the Vicar'd go over to the Club or to the Royal and ask for a volunteer - and always got one. Never refused anything, that man.

It was at his instigation that the Chapel got an organ. He used to preach there occasionally and said the only thing that annoyed him was their harmonium! so he got a fund raised in the parish and they bought an organ.

He was a poor man, but if he had a penny, he'd give it to you.

On Armistice Day, he'd read out all the names of those from this parish who were killed, and when he came to the names of former choir boys or choir men or boys he'd known in the schools, the tears ran down his face.

When he had a chance of promotion, he refused it because he thought more of the parish than anything. So they made him an Honorary Canon.

(6) D.H.Davis, a former choir boy

When new boys joined the choir, the other choir boys shut them in the stoke-hole and put bicycles on top, so they couldn't get out for service - you'd hear them in the church! Another trick was to take new boys over to Alfie Dyer's Undertaker's Yard and put them in the coffins. Choir boys wore Eton collars and bow ties then, and black caps with the initials CKC. We were very proud of those because we could wear them at school. For weddings we were paid 6d and for funerals 3d, and had time off from school to sing. The Vicar was the head of the village and what he said went.

At Evensong choir boys used to refresh themselves with milk, brought in under their surplices; and choirmen would slip out and go across to the Club for a couple of quick pints. They could just get back in time for the last hymn, and then they could sing! Once the choirboys at evensong put a stink bomb (about the size of a marble) under the pulpit carpet - when the Vicar trod on it during the sermon there was a terrible smell of rotten eggs and he went red in the face with anger.

(7) J.A. Williams

Once when there was trouble in the parish, some ladies in the congregation (who were enjoying the scandal) wanted the Vicar to take a strong line. But he wouldn't. And he said to my mother "I find it comparatively easy to forgive the sins of the flesh, but much more difficult to forgive the sins of the spirit".

(8) E. Stuart (nee Freegard)

When we lived at Elm Wood in Cirencester Road, the Vicar often used to come over to the house for a musical evening, accompanying the singing on the piano. He had a terrific voice. He and his curate "Little" Smith would part at the passage from Gladstone Road and they'd keep up their conversation till both were on their own doorsteps - the Vicar at the Vicarage (only just above Moorend Road) and Smith at 'Stoneville'!



Coming out  
of a  
meeting in  
1934

(9) Mary Paget (nee Hill)

Edgar Neale was Vicar of St. Mary's for over 30 years. He loved to tell how, before his induction, as he and a friend first came in sight of St Mary's tower, the friend exclaimed "Why, my dear fellow, you've got a young Cathedral!" That was what St Marys remained to him - no other church like it, no choirboys like his even when they misbehaved, no better congregation - and because he believed it and proclaimed it, he made us believe it too. In our hearts we old ones still do!

He had been educated at Bromsgrove, and yearly when the text came up in the epistle he reminded us of the school motto "Honour all men, Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king". His sermons were organised in the old fashioned way - text, firstly, secondly, thirdly, and in conclusion, and always with some practical application. Once he preached on money and responsibility, urging parents to give their children money to spend responsibly. In particular, he suggested, they should pay their own tram fares. I thought this excellent advice and having for once a few pennies, I tried to pay my own tram fare next time my mother took me into town - she was furious and in the ensuing argument my precious halfpenny rolled under the sideguard of the open-topped tram and fell into the road --- Lost! I remember many of his sermons - sound rather than profound, but exactly suited to his congregation.

At that time our curate was "Bumps" Gardner who did a lot with the boys but was hardly ever allowed to preach. The next curate, Smith, preached regularly.

Neale had a tremendous voice - catching sight of a parishioner at the other end of Church Street, he'd bellow "Haow d'ye do-oo-oo?" with an inflection unlike anyone else's. This habit of never passing anyone however far off without a greeting helped to endear him to us, especially as he always had a broad smile on his round red face. He did enjoy everything so much - his church, his faith, simple pleasures - a visit to the pantomime was as much of an excitement to him as to the youngest choir boy. Everything he did was done with energy and gusto. He would take the Three Hours Service on Good Friday and 2 or 3 other services, and still conduct Stainer's Crucifixion in the

evening and sing in it with terrific vigour - no one who saw and heard him can ever forget his rendering of "Fling Wide the Gates!" He was his own choirmaster always, and how he worked his choir! Three sung services every Sunday, the only concession that at Matins the choir went out before the sermon. But they could sing. I've heard many famous choirs sing Stamford's Te Deum beautifully and yet found their rendering tame - there was an intensity when St Mary's sang it under Neale which went a long way beyond the music.

He couldn't bear slovenly phrasing. I remember him telling my mother that he'd heard a well-known London choir dragging the responses at Evensong in a way his choir would never have done - and he sang the phrase with a crispness and delicacy that surprised me.

Edgar Neale was an early 20th century Anglo-Catholic, loving processions and rituals which to him were indeed outward and visible signs of the truth of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Processions weren't a novelty at St Mary's, we already had a number of banners and the brass processional cross, besides the silver cross known as Winchcombe's Leavings (because it had been refused by Winchcombe before being offered to us!). But he enjoyed them so much that they took on a new dimension. When he preached, he always put on a preaching stole, first kissing the cross embroidered on it. He deliberately stopped short of incense (which he would have loved) because to some of his congregation that still symbolized Rome - then he could always tell critics that St Mary's wasn't High not like Prestbury! People sometimes threatened to leave and go to Holy Apostles, but, he'd say triumphantly, after a Sunday or two, they'd be back! St Mary's was so much more alive. As many people still remember, he was a stickler for communicating fasting - except for a very few decrepit persons, no one communicated at the 11.30 Sung Eucharist; and he liked us to genuflect in the Creed. But in doctrine, he was far from extreme - the authority of the Prayer Book to him was little short of the authority of Holy writ. This didn't mean that he never cut the prayer book text - at Matins he always leaped from "Dearly Beloved" to "I pray and beseech you as many as are here present"; and he prayed and preached in support of prayer book reform in 1928-9. On the other hand, we always had the Athanasian Creed on the proper Sundays (when we were one of the last churches in the diocese to do so) and once a year he even read the Communion Service, which he explained in a sermon as a simple declaration of God's dislike of bad behaviour. What the Church in its wisdom had ordained and taught, that he accepted - he was hurt and surprised when Cheltenham College refused to let him preach occasionally in College chapel because he had said in a sermon that Socrates was a pagan and therefore outside the scheme of salvation - he asked me, a 16 year old, whether I didn't think the College authorities very unreasonable! His simplicity and humility amazed me.

He was a past master in the art of gabbling - could read at tremendous speed such tricky passages as the burning fiery furnace, never skipping a single instrument of music, remaining completely audible throughout (like a clever Gilbert and Sullivan actor getting over a patter song) and completely reverent. His 8 o'clock daily communion started on the first stroke of the clock, he read the Commandments in full and cut nothing, and you could time yourself on the way to school by the sanctus bell on the dot of 8.20. His notices always went with a regular sing-song "Holy-Communion-daily-at-eight;-also-on-Wednesday-at-7-and-on-Thursday-at-11". A great impetus to daily communion had been given by a Mission we had in 1924 or 1925, when Fr. Bickersteth and Fr Simmons from Mirfield spent a week or ten days here and made a great impression. Many people then promised at least one weekday communion, and Miss Smith of Balcarras

never missed a single day, combining it with exercising her bulldog - she left him with Mrs Homer in Church Street while she went into church. My mother too went regularly on Wednesdays at 7. The Fathers returned at intervals to conduct Quiet Days -- but those Quiet Days were a bit too much for the Vicar - it was commonly reported that after one long speechless afternoon, he left the Fathers to say evensong for themselves and went off to the pictures with Horace Cleevly the Verger! Stillness and silence were not the Vicar's strong points.

In his dealings with other Churches he was extraordinarily ecumenical for that age (though he was accused by some members of the Baptist Church of "pinching" their boys for his choir if they had good voices!) In case of need, he would visit anyone, Anglican or not (which some clergy of his generation refused to do). And though he used to say it was up to people to send for him if they wanted him, however late the hour, he would go when asked and very often unasked.

He introduced a Free Will Offering Scheme; but we were always collecting for Special Causes as well - I remember him saying from the pulpit "Holy Apostles" has raised so much for such and such -- now we must beat that!" and of course we did. Our two great missionary causes were the SPG and the UMCA. Every parish in Cheltenham Deanery had a stall at a big SPG sale in the Town Hall every autumn, and there was great rivalry between parishes over the siting, arrangement, and product of the stalls. For two years running, Evelyn Freegard and I were entrusted with management of the bran tub at the SPG sale in the Town Hall - we felt ourselves highly honoured as licensed beggars! The UMCA was strongly supported by the Misses Smith, with a sale of work every summer in the garden at The Grange. No doubt it would have been simpler to have given the money direct -- but we shouldn't have enjoyed it half so much. Although there were one or two wealthy people in the parish who could be appealed to when it was a matter of the organ or the tower or the clock, the congregation in the 20s and 30s was made up of people of very moderate means, and considerable sacrifice was often involved in giving as they did.

My mother became a District Visitor and so was entrusted with distribution of occasional charity in the shape of coal tickets and grocery tickets. Thus she came to know how much real poverty there was in the village in those days of post-war unemployment and how much sickness - a great deal of TB in Charlton then. Often the Vicar's Disposal Fund got overstretched - and then he was not above a little juggling with the various moneys he held. Some accounts (like the Soup Kitchen Fund) went back years and were never touched. At the end of the financial year, it was widely believed, any discrepancy was made good out of his own pocket, though he lived on a very small stipend (£200) and the rent he got from letting The Grange. In other matters, such as correspondence, he was very business-like - on his desk was the motto "DO IT NOW".

He lived and worked in the small front room of a modest house in Cirencester Road - the room crowded with papers and books, parish Almanacks, reproductions of religious pictures - not a corner free from clutter. Although we had had electric light in the church since 1921, he still had gas lighting of an antiquated type and there was always a stuffy smell of burnt gas - I didn't much like having to go there for confirmation instruction. One fairly comfortable chair was his sole approach to luxury. Outside music, I doubt if he had any interests or read anything new - his sole literary quotation (so far as I remember) the angel's words from Gerontius.



"My Father gave  
In charge to me  
This child of earth  
E'en from its birth,  
to serve and save,  
Alleluia,  
And saved is he.

This child of clay  
To me was given,  
To rear and train  
By sorrow and pain  
In the narrow way,  
Alleluia,  
From earth to heaven"

That was what he believed and lived.

THIS BAPTISTERY WAS MADE AND THE  
ENDOWMENT OF THE LIVING INCREASED  
IN REMEMBRANCE OF A BELOVED PRIEST  
AND FRIEND OF HIS PEOPLE  
EDGAR NEALE M.A.  
VICAR OF THIS PARISH 1906 TO 1937  
AND HONORARY CANON OF GLOUCESTER

9. CHARLTON KINGS PARISH REGISTER 1635-1700<sup>1</sup>

There are about 1827 entries in this volume of the parish register - 904 baptisms or births, 101 marriages, and 822 burials. In saying "about 1827 entries" I confess that I am allowing for human inaccuracy in counting, but more especially I am allowing for a certain confusion over counting entries which are crossed out but still legible, entries made to record events in other parishes (only sometimes obviously relating to Charlton Kings people) and over the fact that the entries for 1700 are notated "Be it remembered that from the year 1700 tis entered in the new register". So let us settle for "about 1827 entries". An analysis of the number of entries by year forms Appendix A.

The accuracy and completeness of the entries must be open to some considerable question. There is one obvious period of a few years around the early 1650s where there is a considerable dearth of entries - no entries at all for 1652; a few for 1650, 1651 and 1653. It is hard to believe that even if marriages ceased to be a church affair (as from 29 September 1653),<sup>2</sup> births and deaths also dwindled to nothing. So one has to presume that there were political reasons for the lack of entries. Then from time to time there are mistakes of name corrected later (including one sex change for a baptised baby),<sup>3</sup> insertions of entries out of date order, and such like, which suggest that the register was not compiled at all times as conscientiously as it should have been. On many occasions, there is a distinct impression left that entries were made some time after the event, possibly from memory.

Using a crude rule of thumb for assessing the size of the whole population, from the births/baptisms and burials over a decade, one arrives at estimates which mostly range between 400 and 500 people in the area served by the register. But such a figure has to be treated with great reserve, in view of the crudity of the rule of thumb and the general unreliability of the register. It is not a reliable enough figure to enable any increase or decrease over the 65 years to be discerned.

Two families in particular impress one by the number of times the family name crops up in the register. By far the most common family name was BALLINGER, with 130 entries in 65 years; next most prolific were the CLEEVELYS with 67 entries; and it is interesting to note that there are still Ballingers and

Cleevelys living in Charlton Kings. Other family names with 25 or more references in this register are:- BUCKLE, CRUMP/CROMP, DICKERSON, DOWDESWELL, GALE, GOODRICH, HOULDER, MACHIN/MACHING, MANSELL, RANDLE, WELCH, AND WHITE; but of these only Crump, Houlder, Machin (without a G) Welch and White still appear in the telephone directory as living in Charlton Kings, and one can only speculate as to whether they are true descendants.

Some of the names have an amusing sound to them, like BRASGIRDLE or my favourite POTLUGGE; but I cannot find these two in the current phone book.

First names are on the whole rather conservative - endless streams of Thomas, Richard, and Henry, relieved by Robert, James, and John, on the one hand; lots of Mary, Elizabeth, Elinor, Edith, and Anne on the other. It is usually the gentry who use the slightly less common names like Theophilus, Lodowick, Silvanus, Pates, Linnett, and Lancelot; or Theophila and Winifred amongst gentlewomen. Some of these names are in fact surnames, producing some really odd combinations - Bakly Crows, Colle or Cole Hall, Bradly Harding. And there is the splendid ARCHELUS HUMPHRIS (presumably Archelaus, from philosopher or warrior).

Estates were obviously important to the community and therefore also in the register. The gentlefolk of the parish are always labelled as such, sometimes with both a "Mr" and "gent", fore and aft, so as to leave no doubt. The main gentle families were BRERETON, GREVILLE, PACKER, AND PATES; but about a dozen others get a reference or two each. At the other end of the scale, bastards seem always to be carefully recorded as lacking legitimacy, with only an occasional guess as to the identity of the father.

e.g. February 1635 "Bapt ye first day MARGERI the daughter of JANE MACHING and reputed daughter of JOHN JOANES".

John Jones seems to have been a bit of a lad, since he is later also reputed to be the father of base-born JANE MARSHALL (24 April 1636). Altogether 20 bastards are recorded, three of them being credited - if that's the right word - to MARY BALLINGER, who produced one every five years from 1689-1699.<sup>4</sup> Actually if John Jones was a bit of a lad, one suspects that there were quite a few "madams" amongst the girls too. How else to explain how ELINOR HALL and MARGARET HALL each bring a bastard for baptism on 8 March 1684<sup>5</sup> than that there must have been a fair old frolic in a hayfield some lovely warm June evening the year before? And the reputed fathers? RICHARD MACHING and GILES BALLINGER, surnames we have just heard before amongst the mothers. Some things must run in families ----

Only rarely is the occupation of a person mentioned in the register, in fact apart from ministers and clerks who jointly total 3 references<sup>6</sup>, there are only two occupations referred to:-

1679 "26th January buried JONATHAN the base son of ANNE BALLINGER singlewoman and the reputed son of JONATHAN GOODRICH woolcomber"  
and 1684 "July the 19 day batized WILLIAM the sonn of RICHARD BALLINGER smith"

I imagine there were so many Ballingers around that some further distinction was needed to specify this particular one.

You don't have to work long on this register to realise that the expectation of life was much lower in 17th century Charlton Kings than it is today. It was obviously worth special mention when HENRY USELL<sup>7</sup> was buried in November 1683 at the age of 100 years - he gets the only mention of age in the whole

register. Otherwise there is all too often apparent a sad conjunction of burials of mother and baby. Furthermore, over the whole period, one child in 13 of those registered born or baptised is buried within a year, and one child in 8 is buried within 5 years of birth or baptism. The situation does not seem to improve at all over the period, in fact the decade 1685-1694 seems worse for infant mortality than the decade 1635-1644, but of course one cannot be sure to what extent incomplete recording may have affected the statistics for the earlier period(8). From time to time one is left wondering what tragedies lay behind some of the burial entries. What befell JOHN MARSTON, Minister, and his wife MARY that they were both buried on the 12th January 1643? Or ELIZABETH and RICHARD, daughter and son of LINNET PATE gent, who were both buried on 29 October 1670? And whatever calamity overtook the family of CHARLES HARRIS that son ROBERT (19) was buried on 27 December 1690, son WILLIAM (28) on 10 January 1690<sup>9</sup>, daughter ALICE (24) on 23 January 1690/1, and daughter MARGERY (age unknown) on 4 February 1690/1?

These notes are no more than a first quick comment on the register, which I hope will serve to whet curiosity and inspire further study by some one - there is a lot more of interest to be gleaned from this document.

- (1) GRO P 76 IN 1/3
- (2) Act 24 August 1653 made marriage a civil matter, performed by Registers elected by all ratepayers in the parish and approved by a magistrate.
- (3) Born 19th June 1657 MARIE Daughter of THEOPHILUS BREIRTON gent, bapt the first of July.  
The original entry, crossed out, read "THEOPHILUS son of THEOPHILUS" etc.
- (4) 6 Jan 1689 Baptised JOHN the son of MARY BALLINGER illigit.  
29 Sept 1694 Bapt'd WILLIAM base son of MARY BALLINGER  
4 June 1799 Baptz'd ROBERT base son of MARY BALLINGER
- (5) 1684, "March the 8 day baptiz. ELIZABETH the base daughter of MARGARET HALL: and reputed daughter of RICHARD MACHING  
March the 8 day baptiz. RACHELL the base daughter of ELINOR HALL: and reputed daughter of GILES BALLINGER"
- (6) July 1638 "Bapt ye 15 day HANAH the daughter of Mr JOHN STUBB CLER:"  
Jan 1643 "Buried the 12 day JOHN MARSTON minister and MARY his wife"  
Oct 1665 "Buried the 16 day ROBERT MANSELL minister"
- (7) 1683 "Nov the 1st Buried Hen: Usell aged on: hundred yrs"
- (8)

	<u>1653-44</u>	<u>1685-94</u>	<u>Remaining Years</u>
Total baptized/born	165	157	500
buried within 1 week	1	3	14
1 week to 1 month	2	3	9
1 month to 1 year	2	5	23
1 year to 2 years	3	3	9
2 years to 3 years	0	2	10
3 years to 4 years	0	2	4
4 years to 5 years	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
	13	19	72
- (9)

#### Appendix A

Dates as in register (25/3 to 24/3)

	<u>Born</u>	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Married</u>	<u>Buried</u>
1635		13	3	11
1636		17	2	10
1637		13	3	14
1638		21	5	15

1639		16		2		14	
1640		21		1		11	
1641		16		4		15	
1642		18		0		12	
1643		18		0		28	
1644		12	<u>165</u>	0	<u>20</u>	7	<u>137</u>
1645		12		0		7	
1646		10		1		8	
1647		10		0		18	
1648	1	6		0		9	
1649	0	1		0		9	
1650	4	1		0		7	
1651	3	0		0		2	
1652	-	-		-		-	
1653	2	2		0		1	
1654	18	0	<u>42</u>	6		15	<u>76</u>
1655	17	1		1		7	
1656	18	0		1		7	
1657	12	1		2		12	
1658	20	0		1		9	
1659	8	6		0		5	
1660	3	12		1		9	
1661	2	15		1		14	
1662	0	10		4		11	
1663	1	17		6		23	
1664	2	12	<u>74</u>	1	<u>65</u>	4	<u>101</u>
1665	1	13		1		13	
1666	0	19		2		12	
1667	0	15		0		21	
1668	0	11		1		15	
1669	1	14		1		11	
1670	0	15		4		21	
1671	1	17		0		12	
1672	0	20		0		10	
1673	0	14		0		17	
1674	0	11	<u>149</u>	0	<u>9</u>	15	<u>147</u>
1675		16		0		13	
1676		21		1		7	
1677		12		1		7	
1678		10		2		13	
1679		16		1		21	
1680		12		0		18	
1681		19		3		12	
1682		12		2		22	
1683		17		2		12	
1684		16	<u>151</u>	4	<u>16</u>	23	<u>148</u>
1685		11		2		22	
1686		19		1		12	
1687		17		6		10	
1688		9		3		13	
1689		11		4		15	
1690		18		1		14	
1691		11		3		15	
1692		12		1		15	
1693		12		2		24	
1694		17	<u>137</u>	1	<u>24</u>	17	<u>157</u>
1695		14		4		12	

1696	17	1	7
1697	15	0	14
1698	13	0	10
1699	13 <u>72</u>	2 <u>7</u>	13 <u>56</u>
	<u>904</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>822</u>

H.Middleton

10. SOME POPULATION FIGURES FOR CHARLTON KINGS AND CHELTENHAM 1548-1801, A NOTE

The size of the population in Charlton and its environs in past time is an important study for the historian. There are a number of sources of such information, some local and some in London. This interim note summarizes the information obtained from the sources held in the Gloucestershire Record Office, from local publications, and a little from London sources.

The problem is not the gathering of information but its interpretation. At different times between 1548<sup>1</sup> and the first civil census in 1801, a number of estimates or surveys of all or a part of the Charlton population were made for various administrative purposes, principally by the Church of England; eg to establish the number of church families or communicants in the area. These figures which record only part of the population need to be corrected to compensate for those local residents not allowed for specifically, and a "multiplier" is therefore used to do this. The result is only an approximation and is perhaps up to 15% too high or too low (Additional data from national sources may enable any error to be corrected in a later article). Even with such a caveat the actual figures given in the records sometimes themselves seem of doubtful reliability; eg the 40 families mentioned in 1650 seems much too low a figure.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) This is the earliest date for which a reasonable figure has been found. Various medieval lay subsidies, taxes, and surveys, have been examined but either data for this area is lacking (as in the Richard II poll tax returns) or their interpretation is too problematical; eg poorer people were omitted from the 1327 Lay Subsidy, when 44 tax payers were listed for Charlton (See Bulletin 7 pp 35-37) but we do not know how many were left out.
- (2) I hope to comment more fully on the 17th century population in a future note.

Sources

- 1548 T.B.G.A.S. Vol 8 p.282 "Gloucestershire Chantry Certificates" Sir J. Maclean
- 1551 See CKLHS Bulletin 5 p.11.
- 1563 Furney, Transcript 1721 of Bishop's return to Privy Council 1562 (recte 1563); photocopy 855 in GRO
- 1603 British Museum. Harley MS 594, pages 232-4.
- 1608 CKLHS Bulletin I pp 7-11  
39 men about 20; 22 about 40; 2 between 50 and 60, in Charlton
- 1650 TBGAS Vol 83 p.92 "Survey of Church Livings in Gloucestershire" C.R. Ebrington.
- 1676 G.R.O. photocopy 377.

1712 Atkyns The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire  
 1735 G.D.R. 285 B 1  
 1779 Rudder, Samuel A New History of Gloucestershire ---  
 1801-51 Victoria County History Vol II

ACTUAL FIGURES

Date	CHARLTON	CHELTHENHAM	PRESTBURY	DOWDESWELL	LECKHAMPTON	SWINDON	Type of figure in survey
1548	310/c 300	600	-	-	-	-	Communicants
1551	315	526	160	55	102	60	Communicants
1563	103	164	54	8	20	16	Households
1603	310 or 320	800/3/2	300/-/-	100	94/1/1	40/-/-	Communicants; recusants; Non-communicants
1608	75	164 Arle 23 Alstone 26 "Westal and Sandford" 15	-	-	27	22	Fit adult men
1650	c 40(11)	c.350	c.60	c.27	c.40	c.140 people	Families
1676	188/-/12	1068/4/97	177/-/10	80/-/5	90/1/-	53/-/-	Communicants; Papiats; Dissenters over 16
1712	550(111)	1500 (iv)	445	120	120	90	Atkyn's estimate
1735	700	about 2000	400	-	120	-	Inhabitants
1779	c.458 (11)	1433	4-500	199	142	105	Rudder
1801	730	3076	485	196	225	116	)Civil Census figures )for comparison ) ) ) )
1811	1005	8325					
1821	1607	13398					
1831	2478	22942					
1841	3232	31411					
1851	3174						

APPROXIMATE POPULATION (1)

Multiplier	CHARLTON	CHELTHENHAM	PRESTBURY	DOWDESWELL	LECKHAMPTON	SWINDON
x 1.67	517	1002	-	-	-	-
x 1.67	528	878	287	91	170	100
x 4.5	463 (v)	738	243	36	90	72
x 1.67	517	1338	501	167	155	86
x 3.5	262	798 (aggregate total)	-	-	94	77
x 4.5	180	1575	270	121	180	c 140 (actual)
x 1.67	313 + 20	1783 + 168	295 + 16	133 + 8	150 + 1	88 + 0

Notes

- (i) Decimals rounded down
- (ii) Probably too low
- (iii) 102 houses
- (iv) 321 houses
- (v) Charlton curate was Richard Linsey

11. ANTHONY WEBB - THE PERSISTENT WITNESS

In Gloucestershire Record Office are 62 wills relating to property in the parish of Charlton Kings which bear dates between 1660 and 1696. Anthony Webb witnessed 25 of these wills, before making his own in 1696. During the same period, he acted as one of the appraisers in 16 out of 42 surviving inventories.<sup>1</sup> It seems worthwhile to find out more about this man who played so active a part in the life of the parish. He witnessed about 40% of surviving wills and about 38% of surviving inventories, and probably witnessed more which have disappeared.

At first, Anthony Webb proved somewhat elusive. He appears to have received a respectable education. His signature is not that of a man who could just about write his name and little else.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Webb". The ink is dark and the handwriting is somewhat fluid and personal.

He must have been considered reliable or the people of the parish would not have called on his services so often, particularly since he was not native to Charlton Kings. There is no record of his baptism in our parish register, neither is there a record of his marriage to his first wife Jane Mansell. She was buried here on 6 April 1687, and in the same year on 4 October 1687 he married his second wife Elizabeth Ashmead. Perhaps he was still hoping for children; but he died childless. Both these women came from Charlton Kings families, and it is possible that he settled here after his first marriage. The first surviving will he witnessed is dated 1660, but that is not proof that it was the first he signed, for many documents do not survive. The parish register shows he was churchwarden in 1679; and he may have been the "Mr Webb, constable" who set his name to the 1671 Hearth Tax Roll.

He held land in East End on the south side of the parish meadows called Goldfinch and White Furlong<sup>2</sup>; and a surrender in Cheltenham Manor court made on 29 August and reported on 27 October 1697 shows that this land consisted of two closes, one called 1e Middlefeild Peece and the other 1e Pearmongers Plott, with the highway to Dowdeswell on the north side.<sup>3</sup>

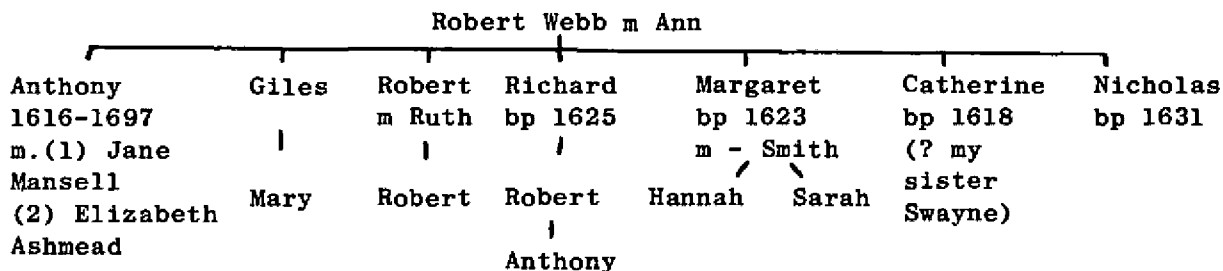
He may have held Ashley manor copyhold as well, but the court book is lost.

There are three other odd scraps of information concerning Anthony Webb. Among the wills is a document relating to the affairs of Thomas Cherrington<sup>4</sup> who died intestate. This states that Cherrington owed Anthony Webb £8 in rent for land. The other two statements come from tombstones noted by Bigland. The first refers to Jane his first wife and establishes her family. She was the daughter of Samuel Mansell and granddaughter of Jane Stubbs wife of John Stubbs<sup>5</sup>; her age at her death on 4 April 1687 was 61. The second tombstone is that of Anthony himself, who died 4 September 1697 aged 81. This means that he must have been born in 1615/16.

Very fortunately these are not the only sources of information about Anthony Webb. Both his will (1698/96) and the inventory of his goods (1698/56) survive. The will in particular is a mine of information. Both documents describe Anthony Webb as a yeoman.

In his will he leaves money to the poor of three parishes, £5 to the poor of Charlton Kings, and £3 each to the poor of the parishes of Cheltenham and

Oxenton. This suggested that Oxenton might have been his family home, and a search of the Bishop's transcripts for that parish shows that this was the case. There is no record of Anthony's own baptism, but the transcripts are far from complete; the baptisms of most of his brothers and sisters who are mentioned in the will are recorded, as well as the baptism of some who are not. It is in fact possible to draw up a tentative family tree:-



A kinsman, probably a cousin, Giles Webb collar-maker<sup>6</sup> of Cheltenham, figures very largely in the will. He is to inherit "all those my two ridges or sellions of arable land lying together in the parish of Charlton Kings in a place called Water furrows, having land of one Richard Whithorn on the north part thereof." This land, being left by will, was freehold.

Next come a series of family legacies. His sister-in-law Ruth, widow of his brother Robert Webb, and her children are to receive £5; his sister Swayne, his brother Richard Webb, his sister Margaret Smith, and his sister-in-law Margery are all to receive £5 apiece. I have been unable to decide whose wife Margery was. She might be the widow of brother Giles, brother Richard, or even brother Nicholas if he survived infancy. If she were the widow of Giles, Anthony might have been expected to name her as such. On the other hand, one Alice wife of Richard Webb was buried on 10 February 1699/1700. (There might, of course, be another Richard Webb in the parish).

A kinswoman Mrs Jane Cooper figures in the will. She is to receive 40 shillings to buy herself a ring, and also "my table board and Frame formerly in the parlour and the benches and Cupboards belonging thereto, the table boards in the Hall, my Furnace, my Crane, my safe, my waterstone at the pump".<sup>7</sup> None of these goods may be removed from the house. They are to remain to the use of Mrs Jane Cooper, so it looks as if she lived there, perhaps as housekeeper.

The section of the will which follows is an interesting example of how a man might seek to safeguard his wife and his heirs against loss of property rights. At that date, on marriage, a woman's property became the property of her husband. Very shortly after his marriage to Elizabeth Ashmead his second wife, Anthony Webb had by an indenture dated 25 October 1687 settled "a certain messuage house or tenement and diverse lands and tenements in Charlton Kings and Cheltenham -- upon John Sturney of Cheltenham mercer and John Gale of Charlton Kings yeoman and their heirs, --- to use of myself for life and after my decease to the use of the heirs of my body upon the body of my said wife lawfully begotten or to be begotten and for want of such issue to the use of my right heirs". There had been no children of the marriage, so now he directs that after his death and the death of his wife, all his messuages and lands unless otherwise disposed of in his will shall be used by the trustees to pay the legacies and portions which follow. His two nieces Hannah and Sarah Smith are each to receive £20, as does Mary Webb the daughter of his late brother Giles, and Jane and Elizabeth Webb the daughters of his kinsman Giles Webb of Cheltenham collarmaker. These sums were marriage portions for the girls.

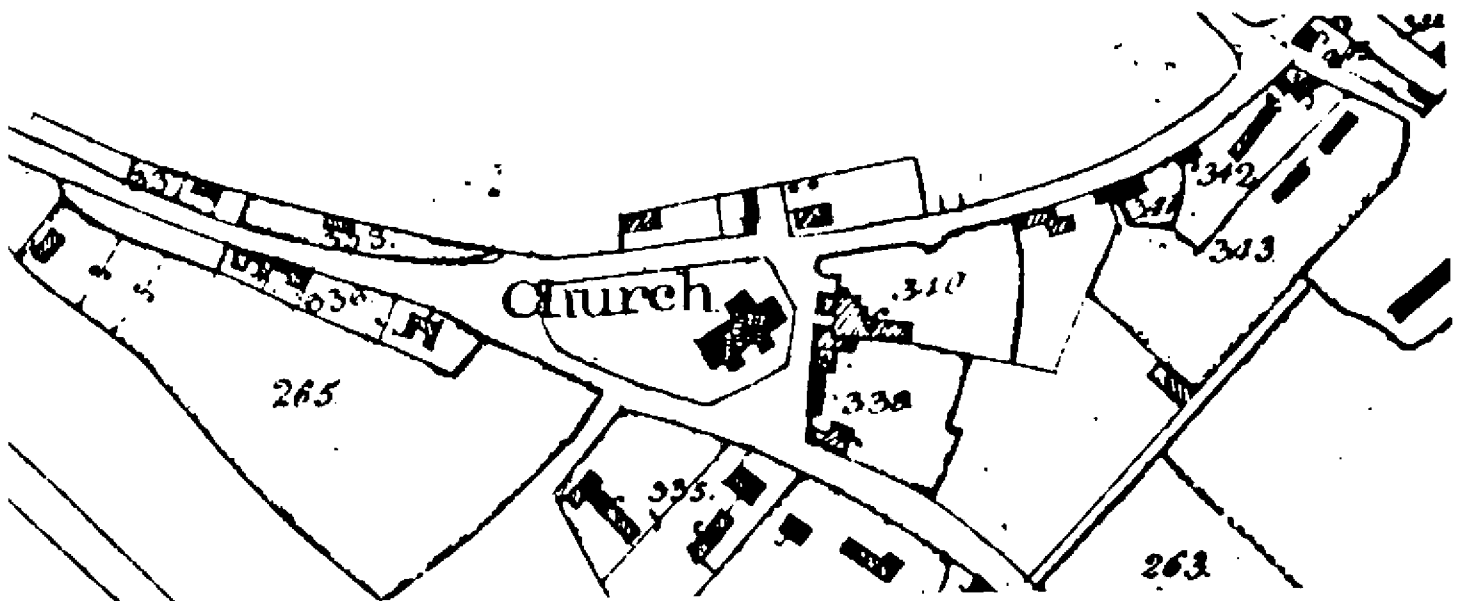


After all these legacies had been paid and the term of years become void, all the messuages and other property concerned were to pass to Giles Webb son of Giles Webb the collar maker, and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, or failing such issue to "my kinsman Anthony Webb the son of my nephew Robert Webb my brother Robert's son, for his life, and then to his heirs lawfully begotten".

These then are the main bequests made by the will. However, on his deathbed, when he was too weak even to write his name, Anthony Webb added a codicil which modified what had been done previously. The £5 left to Ruth, widow of Robert, and her children is now to go to her son Robert "within two years of my decease to bind him an apprentice" and so secure his future. Secondly, the messuages and lands which were to go to Giles Webb son of Giles Webb the collar maker on the expiration of the trust are to pass at once to Giles the elder and only after his death to go to his son.

The will does one other thing. It shows exactly where Anthony Webb's house was. He says it is in Church End, when he proceeds to name certain articles there as 'standards', ie things which might not be taken out of the house. These were no longer moveables and therefore were not priced in the inventory for the payment of the bishop's dues. A shrewd business move. In doing this he mentions "a little study over the entry" and "the chamber next the Butchery". A list of parish property c.1700 shows that the parish owned a house "on the East side neare the Church haveing -- the house of Mr Anthony Webb on the northside thereof". That parish house had been formerly inhabited "by one Richard Mason a Bucher deceast".<sup>8</sup> These properties were demolished when the churchyard was extended in 1854, but the tithe map of 1848 shows one house in this area and only one with a porch big enough to have a study over it.

The inventory, which has the distinction of being the only Charlton one to use Roman figures, shows that Anthony Webb was wealthy by Charlton Kings standards. His moveables are valued at £776.10.6. Of this, £380 is in bills, bonds, and mortgages (by far the most usual form of investment in those days, when banking was only in its infancy). The house is well equipped with all the normal furnishings. He also had a most unusual item "a little glass house" in the hall (perhaps a small conservatory leading out of the hall?)



Extract from the Tithe Map (GRO D 3647/1), enlarged. Anthony's property was TM 340

His farm animals, cattle, sheep, horses and pigs, are together valued at £118 - the cattle appear to have been the most valuable. He has wheat, barley, and pulse in his barns valued at £72; and hay and fodder for the cattle valued at £29. Hay is always highly valued. All in all, he was engaged in agriculture in quite a big way. It will be realised that inventories do not show houses or land (because they are only concerned with moveables); and to support the number of beasts involved, Anthony Webb must have been a considerable land holder.

- (1) Each will leaving goods above the value of £5 had to be accompanied by an inventory of all the moveables of the testator before probate was granted
  - (2) GRO P76a CH 1/1
  - (3) GRO D 855 M 12 p.286
  - (4) GRO 1685/97
  - (5) John Stubbs, steward of the manor of Cheltenham, had married a widow Jane Alexander alias Mansell, arranging that her copyhold should revert to her first husband's family after her death
  - (6) Probably a maker of horse collars
  - (7) Furnace, a large metal pot to hang over the fire; crane, the hook on which to hang the furnace; water stone, a grindstone lubricated by water
  - (8) GRO P 76a CH 1/1. This house had had 4 hearths at the time of the 1671-2 Hearth tax; and Webb was among the most highly rated persons in the parish in 1696, though his 6s 8d is entered under East End on account of his lands there
- The extract from the tithe map is reproduced by permission of Gloucestershire Record Office.

J. Paget

## 12. PILFORD BRICK WORKS

Although I have never lived in Charlton Kings, I am very interested in the area, as my great-grandfather, grandfather, and great-uncle moved there from Norfolk in 1879 to carry on their occupation of brickmaking. My father lived in the area until the 1914-18 war, during which time he served in France with the Royal Engineers, then at the end of hostilities settled in Bristol.

The family connection with Pilford Brickworks was brought to my notice a few years ago when Mrs M. Paget kindly showed me a document from Norfolk Record Office, giving details of an investigation in 1878/79 of the "Lower Pilford Lands at Charlton Kings", with a view to starting a brickworks there. At that time the land was held by Lady Walsingham. Subsequent examination of the Walsingham Collection at the Record Office in Norwich provided considerable information on the brickworks up to 1890.

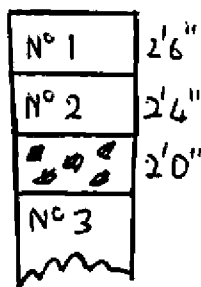
Thereafter I know of little until 1907, when the site was reported to have been taken over by Messrs Webb Bros Ltd, and the works dismantled, their Battledown works being able to supply all the needs of the Cheltenham area. Some workings were said to be still in evidence in 1910, but today no trace remains visible to the casual observer. If any reader has information on the working of the brickyard after 1890, I shall be very interested to hear from them.

### Location of Pilford Brickworks

Travelling south from Cheltenham on the Old Bath Road, if you turn left approximately half a mile beyond the bridge over the old railway track, you come to Pilford Road. This is short and unsurfaced and leads to a footpath over Leckhampton Hill. Turning left immediately over the stile and on to the hill, you can walk round the edge of a thickly wooded quarry which marks the boundary of the old Pilford brickfield. The site is identified as "Pilley Brickfield" on the 25" OS. map of 1884, while on the 6" Geological Survey map of 1903, it is marked as "Pilford Brick Works". Some idea of the development of the works over the years may be obtained from these maps, although no drawings or photographs have yet been found.

### 1878-1879. Surveying the Lower Pilford Land for Brickmaking

In the spring of 1878, samples of brick earth from the south end of the Lower Pilford land were sent by Mr G.W. Sadler (Architect and Borough Surveyor of Cheltenham) to Thomas, 6th Baron Walsingham, at Merton in Norfolk. Mr Sadler wrote:-



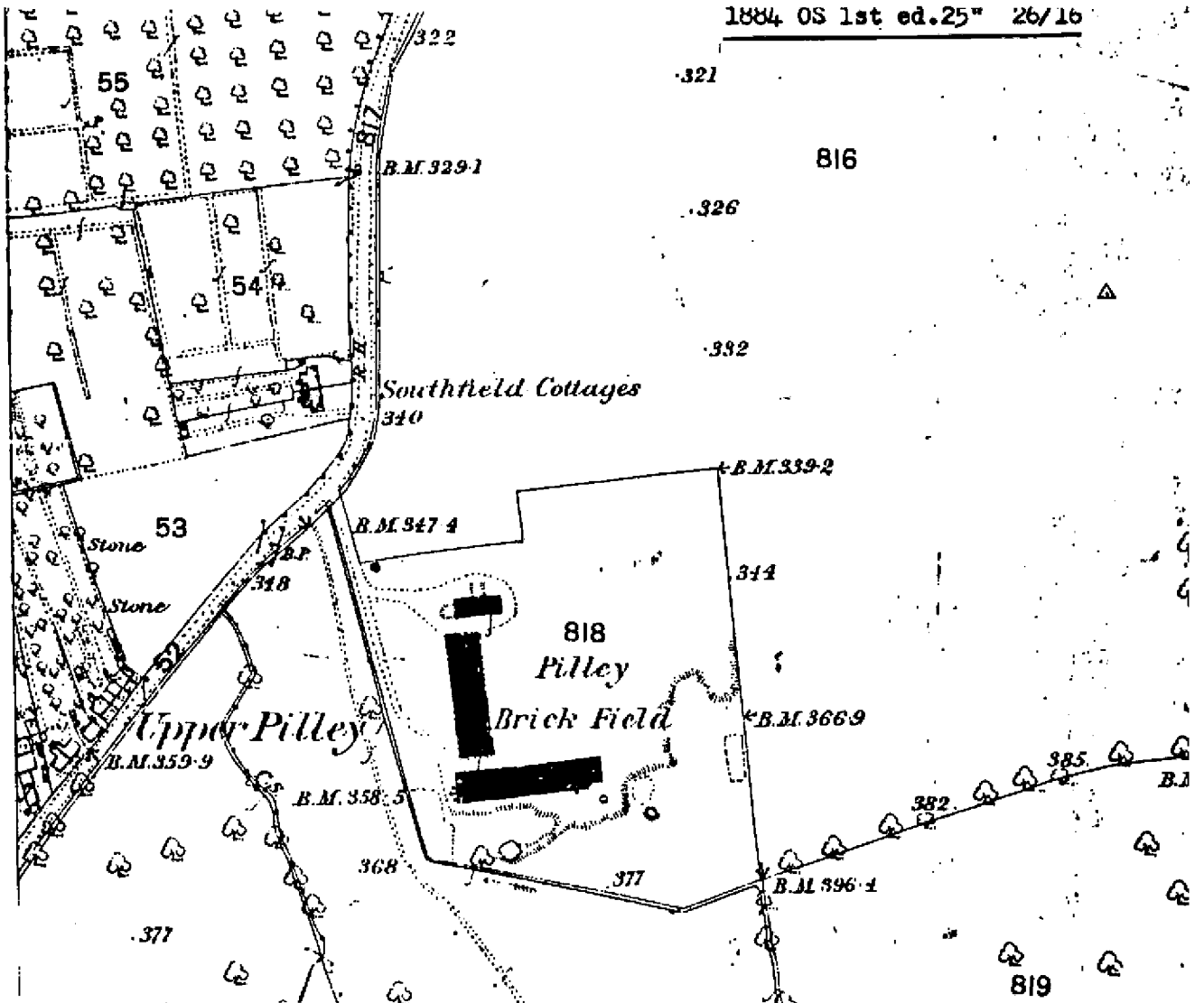
"Nos 1 and 2 will, I feel sure, make good bricks, but I am sorry to find that there is not a great depth of it before arriving at the marl, the first 2 feet of which is full of stones as shown. No 3 is a hard slaty marl which would make a strong brick if dug and weathered in the winter, and if it can be freed from lime wash. This in all probability extends to a considerable depth but would, of course, be more expensive to work than the mild clays on the top. ----- I have been making enquiries but have not been able to find any person willing to open a brick yard and pay a Royalty, and the season is, I fear, too far advanced to form a company."

Bricks made at Merton from the Pilford earth samples were thought by Mr Henry Woods (Agent for Lord Walsingham's estate) to be fairly good. Mr Sadler did not, however, think much of them and sent for comparison two bricks made in a Cheltenham brickyard, which he considered to be "of a fair average quality". Mr Woods' opinion was "only moderately good and not such as I would consider of first rate quality".

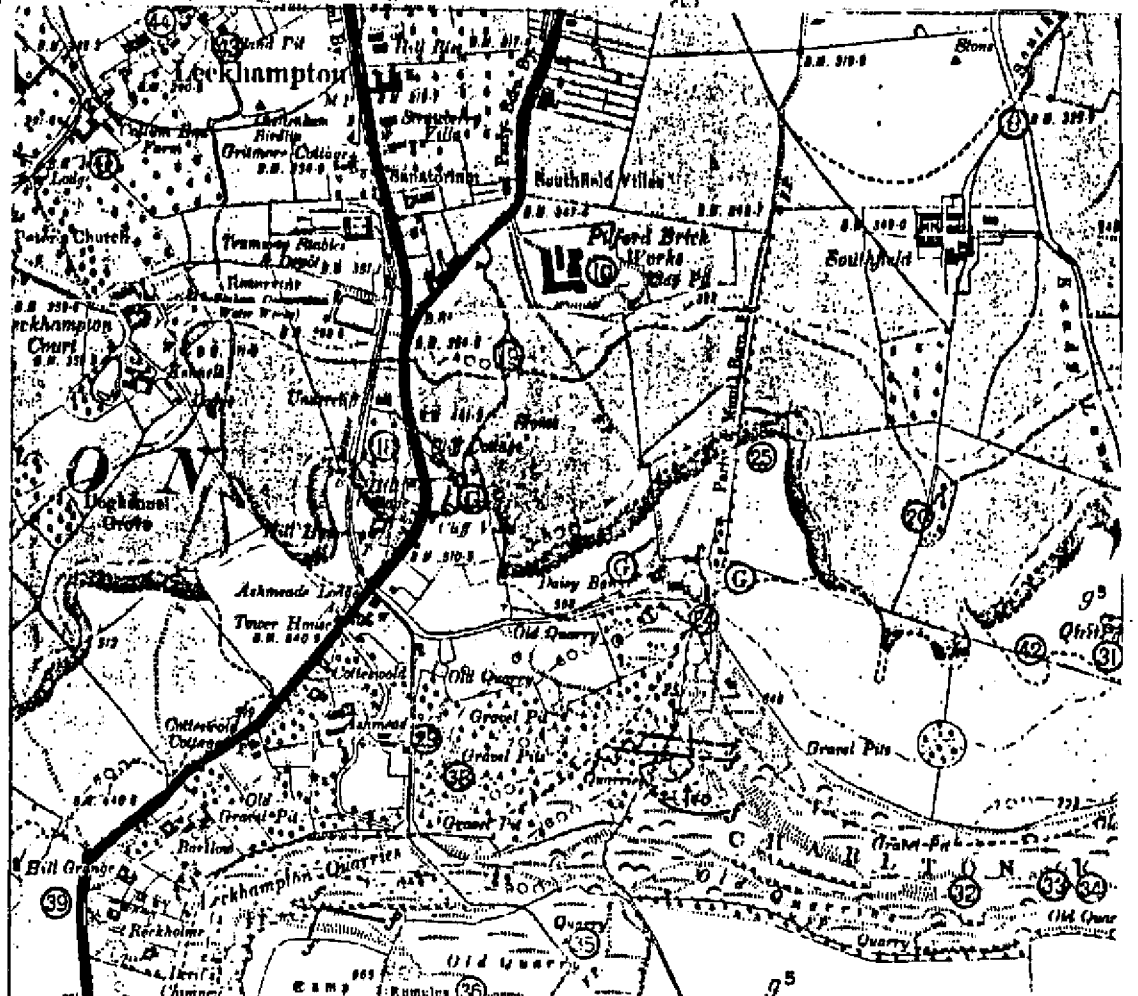
A further examination of the site was made early in the following year. Mr Woods, accompanied by George Hunt (my great-grandfather) a brickmaker on the Merton Estate, went to Cheltenham on the 5th of March 1879 and dug test holes further up the hill than the spot where the earlier samples had been taken (and where the best earth was thought to run out).

Mr Woods reported:- "---- on having the holes on the side of the hill dug to a depth of 8 and 9 feet, we found remarkably good earth, and, as Hunt declared on the second day, such as he liked better and better ----- and, so far as we could judge, very free from Lime and Iron Stones, and which earth Hunt believes capable of producing good bricks and drainpipes."

Three brickyards working then in the Cheltenham area were visited by Henry Woods and George Hunt.



1903 6" Geological Survey



(1) A small yard  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Charlton Kings. Mr Thackwell who started up this yard had, 34 years previously, been a working brickmaker earning 15s a week, and died in 1875 worth £20,000 saved from the working of the brickyard.

Only clamp bricks were made, selling at 30s per thousand from the clamp or 35s per thousand when selected. Sand for brickmaking had to be carted three miles, and bricks carted to Cheltenham had to pass through a toll-bar. Bricks from the yard were, however, in good demand, 42,000 being made and sold in 1878.

(2) A brickyard on the north side of Cheltenham. The only information is that bricks were sold at the same price as at the first yard.

(3) A yard with steam brick-making machinery, fire-heated drying shad, and a patent kiln. The proprietor's object was said to be to make a large quantity of bricks and undersell his neighbours.

Henry Woods' opinion was "that the proprietor will be beaten by his expenses and must be very careful that his new patent kiln and machinery do not ruin him." (If this was the Battledown Yard, then the prediction was not realised).

The annual consumption of bricks at this time in Cheltenham was about 6,000,000; and supply had not equalled demand, most of the best facing bricks being brought from distant yards. The greater part of the best buildings in Cheltenham were, for want of better material, built with rough kiln bricks and cemented over.

Henry Woods summed up the advantages of Lower Pilford as follows:-

- (a) Clean, good, and abundant earth.
- (b) Supply of water from lands above.
- (c) All down hill for barrowing of clay.
- (d) Good sand in the field and within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of the yard.
- (e) Yard would be near public highway and carting to Cheltenham would be down hill, or on the level, all the way.

His recommendations to Lord Walsingham were:- "That a few clamps of bricks be made and burnt. ----- I advise that arrangements be made to send George Hunt, his son, and 2 other Norfolk men to Cheltenham as early as possible, to commence the work, and to do the very best in their power to make good bricks, ----- that they shall have their railway fare paid to Cheltenham and back, lodgings paid for, and have such fair weekly wages as may be agreed upon, and that they may be allowed to make overtime.

----- If the clamp-made bricks prove as good as may be hoped for, then it may, hereafter, be desirable to build an inexpensive kiln such as the one we saw in No 2 yard we visited. George Hunt managed to see the man who built the kiln I referred to, therefore I shall have no difficulty in getting an estimate for the labour of building such a kiln, which we liked better than the patent kiln to which I had alluded. The difference in cost would be something fabulous.

The plant required for starting would be barrows, wheeling planks, spades,

light earth picks, brick moulds, tables, brick boards, pails, some canvas covering for the brick holes etc. The men must of course have a rough boarded shed with a fireplace in it, in which to get their meals and shelter during wet weather, and when burning the clamps.

----- If it is determined to make a start this year, then it is advisable that no time should be lost in getting the men to Cheltenham to be digging and preparing the earth for brickmaking".

It was estimated that about £300 would be required to start a brickyard in the manner suggested.

#### 1879-1885. Severe competition leads to losses

##### Reginald Astley reports on Brickworks in the Cheltenham area

Brickmaking started at Pilford in 1879, with Mr G.W.Sadler as manager. His salary was based on the quantity of bricks sold, a figure of a shilling per thousand being given, for example, for plain bricks sold, with the proviso that annual payments should not be less than £100.

By 1885 the yard was not paying its way. Competition from neighbouring brick-makers who had lowered their prices, caused a large fall in the quantity and value of ware sold in 1885. By the end of that year the amount owing by the yard was £795.

Acting for Lord Walsingham, his cousin and godson Reginald Astley visited Cheltenham in December 1885 to report on the state of the Pilford Yard, and compare it with other brickyards then working in the area.

He first visited the Battledown Yard. This yard, he said, had been started 2 years earlier, and was owned in part by Mr Armitage, Vicar of St John's, Cheltenham. At the time of his visit it was not working, as a new engine was being installed (by Thomas Fawcett of Leeds). The yard had a steaming shed to hold 30,000 bricks, a Hoffman kiln, and could make 60,000 bricks per week. About 20 men and boys were employed in making a wide range of products, including a few ornamental flower pots, and busts of people. Pressed bricks sold at 35s per thousand, common bricks at £1 per thousand, 9" square floor tiles at 7s 7d per hundred, and roofing tiles at 3s per hundred.

The next yard visited was that worked by John Yeend and his two sons, aided by "a lot of men and boys". Yeend did not welcome Astley at first, suspecting he was from Battledown. He complained that people from Battledown had been prying round his yard and taking a good deal of business from him. Yeend had an engine about half the size of that at Battledown, a brick-cutting machine by Whitehead, and could make up to 35,000 bricks per week. These were mostly common bricks, all sold in Cheltenham at £1 per thousand delivered. Yeend mentioned that 1,500 houses were unlet in Cheltenham at that time, and that before Battledown brickyard was started there were nine yards around Cheltenham; now he knew of only three.

Ryewell (ie Ryeworth) brickyard was next, but Astley found it closed. He was told by a little boy that the yard was only worked in summer, and was supposed to be under the charge of "an old woman".

After completing his survey of the opposition, Astley called on George Hunt at the Pilford yard, but did not reveal his connection with Lord Walsingham. He had some difficulty in locating the yard and wrote:-

"I found out where it was from the people at Battledown. It did not appear to be at all known in Cheltenham. I asked two or three people, but none of them had ever heard of it, though one of them was a policeman who has been in Cheltenham seventeen years."

George Hunt and three other men were working at the yard, busy making bricks, when Astley arrived. Hunt gave Astley the price of bricks as 35s per thousand for pressed bricks, 24s per thousand for common bricks for building and £1 per thousand for a less hard brick for walls etc. A four horse-power engine supplied power for the yard - Astley judged the one at Battledown to be at least four times as large. There were a large number of bricks piled up, some made two years previously, and Astley asked why they had not been sold. Hunt said he thought it was because there had been talk of building cottages there. The manager, Mr Sadler, appeared to spend very little time at the brickyard. Asked if he came on average about once a month, George Hunt's reply was "once a month; once a year would be more like it."

1886. A change in a management is considered; more money is advanced.

Shortly after his visit to Cheltenham, Reginald Astley was offered the management of Pilford brickyard by Lord Walsingham. At first he was attracted by the idea, and considered that the market might be enlarged by sending bricks from Leckhampton station to such places as Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, where common bricks were then selling at over 30s per thousand. However, by January 1886, his interest had shifted to farming.

Lord Walsingham possibly had second thoughts about making a change in management, for a memorandum (unsigned) dated February 1886 made the following points:-

- "(1) G. Hunt is quite sure that it would be most unwise to take the management of the yard out of Mr Sadler's hands.
- (2) He has so much influence in Cheltenham that it would be the ruin of the yard to take the management away from him.
- (3) If the management is taken from Mr Sadler, Hunt would prefer leaving Cheltenham, as he knows the yard would do no good, as then all the builders and architects would be prejudiced against it.
- (4) Hunt believes there is a chance of the yard holding its own against violent opposition, and if trade improves he believes the yard will eventually pay.
- (5) The Battledown Co. have built another kiln at a cost of £1,000 to make an increased number of bricks. It is generally felt that this yard will not be able to carry on."

Following a meeting in London in March 1886, Lord Walsingham advanced £700 to Mr Sadler. £361.15.7 of this was paid immediately to Mr Jordan of Cheltenham to settle an account for coal used for burning bricks, the balance being used to reduce other outstanding accounts. Revised instructions for management of the brickyard by Mr Sadler were issued. Mr Sadler, always adverse to advertising the brickworks, continued to resist, saying that there were local reasons why his name should not appear. As a compromise, it was suggested that any advertisements would read - "Apply to George Hunt, Manager on the Works."

Trade improved in the early part of 1886, including an order for 120,000 pressed bricks for Cheltenham Work House. George and James Hunt reported in a letter to Henry Woods dated 26th April 1886 that five or six of the Local Board Authorities, together with the architect, inspected the pressed bricks and agreed to take them; 10,000 to be supplied each week. Because of this order it had not been possible to promise a gentleman, who required 15,000 pressed bricks and 40,000 common bricks, that his order could be met. A postscript to the letter records that:- "The Battledown Co. are complaining to the men that they are losing money by every 1,000 bricks they sell."

Lord Walsingham was annoyed that it was not possible to supply bricks to a potential customer and notified Mr Sadler that he would rather send extra men and machinery from Norfolk, or even buy a new machine, than be obliged to refuse orders.

However, by September 1886, sales had dropped to such a low level that closure of the yard was under consideration. Henry Woods suggested that George Hunt should return to Merton for a day or two ("3rd class railway fare, one way, would not exceed 17s") and discuss the whole thing with Lord Walsingham. In October, George Hunt was instructed to reduce staff during the winter months so as to just keep the yard open.

#### 1886-1887 Trading Account

An idea of wages and prices at this time can be obtained from the trading account for Pilford brickyard for the two years from 1st January 1886 to 31st December 1887:

Sales of ware during 1886 were valued at £228.5.8, and for 1887 at £379.4.4.  
£100 was paid to G.W. Sadler for management during the two years.  
£345.5.3 was paid to George Hunt for making and burning ware over the two years (this may have included the wages of his sons James and William)  
£28.10.3 was paid to George Hunt for day work.  
£292.1.5 to coal bought.  
£45.18.0 to sundries.  
£2.6.8 to repairs.  
£5.10.0 to carriage.  
£3.3.0 to advertising (Cheltenham Examiner)  
Stock in hand was valued at £635.8.0 at the end of 1887.  
Eleven types of brick were listed, ranging from 200,424 machine bricks at 18s 6d per thousand to 80,000 pressed bricks at 24s 6d per thousand, and five sizes of pipe ranging from 25,000 of 2" diameter at 13s per thousand to 20 of 9" at 4d each.

#### 1888. Illness of George Hunt. Death of Lady Prinn.

George Hunt fell ill in June 1888. Although he was then aged 77, he still carried on supervising the brickyard, but much of the work appears to have been taken over by his sons William and James.

James, in a letter to Henry Woods dated 11th June 1888, reported sales to be a good deal better than for some time, with machine bricks selling as fast as they could be burnt, together with a great many of the old stock. Mr Jones of Gloucester was being supplied with 20,000 to 30,000 pressed bricks for building a Working Men's Institute at Charlton Kings.



The death of Lady Prinn in July 1888 cast more uncertainty over the future of the brickyard. The title of Lady Walsingham's trustees to the Pilford property had always been subject to the charges for lady Prinn. In the past, this had made it difficult to grant building leases or sell building plots on the land, resulting in stock-piling of very large quantities of bricks at the brickyard until these problems could be resolved.

Southfield Farm, part of Sir William Russell's property, had many years earlier been charged specifically to meet an annuity of £820 a year, to cease on the death of Lady Prinn, when a capital sum of £18,000 had to be raised. Due to the great depreciation in land values at that time, it was feared that Southfield Farm could no longer realise £18,000, and the contribution would have to be made rateably on the whole property, including the Lower Pilford land.

Because the brickfield had up to the time in question shown a loss, it was feared impossible to put more than an agricultural value upon it. Therefore it was decided to close the brickyard. On the 19th October 1888, Mr Sadler wrote to Lord Walsingham as follows:-

"My Lord. I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th inst. re Pilford Brickyard. I am bound to say I much regret the decision your lordship has felt it necessary to come to in this matter. Having established and kept open the yard for 8 years at a considerable loss, waiting for the death of Lady Prinn, now that the event has occurred and we are selling all the ware we can make at a profit, besides getting rid of a good proportion of old stock, it does seem to me a pity to break up the connection, but of course it must be as your Lordship please. I have therefore instructed the Hunts to make up the material partly prepared and to burn off the kiln they have now partly filled, after which they will be glad to know your Lordship's pleasure as to their future employment".

However, brickmaking was still in progress two months later, as revealed by James, William, and George Hunt in a letter written on the 13th December 1888 to Henry Woods:-

"In answer to yours, you wanted to know how we were getting on with the sales. We were just expecting an order for 15,000 pressed bricks and they have just started carting them, and that will take more than we have got by us till we can burn next week ---- We are afraid we shall not get bricks fast enough for the customers, for our Engine is out of repair and the man cannot attend to it till after Christmas."

1890. Death of George Hunt. William and James continue to work the brickyard.

The works are extended

Mr Sadler wrote to Lord Walsingham on the 31st December 1890:-

"My Lord. It is my painful duty to inform your lordship of the death of Geo. Hunt. ----- Hunt's sons William and James under my more immediate supervision are doing very well at the Brickworks and I am pleased to say we have and are doing a good trade there, in fact I have been obliged to have a new shaft erected and the flues in the Shed considerably extended to enable us to supply our customers."

### The Final Years

Information on Pilford brickworks in its last years was found in the 'Proceedings of Cheltenham Natural Science Society' Vol I, 1907-11, a copy of which was located for me at the Cheltenham Local Studies centre. I quote as follows:-

"This brickworks, which was dismantled in June 1907, was situated at the foot of Leckhampton Hill. The workings are still (1910), in evidence, but probably will be soon obliterated by buildings, for this estate is being rapidly developed.-----For pottery making some of the Pilford clay is too full of "irony" fragments which make the earthenware black, although until quite recently the Cotswold Potteries bought a good proportion of their clay from the Pilford pits. ----- Very good-coloured and regular-sized bricks were turned out, and also moulded bricks, tiles, and drainpipes. The common bricks were not very successful (although they were used for the first Ash-Destructor chimney), being commonly supposed to exude salt, and were always more or less damp, and were, for that reason, not very much used in house building work as the plaster and paper became discoloured.

Some dozen or so years ago the brickyard was purchased by Mr Councillor E. Lawrence and Mr. C. Williams. They pulled down the old kiln and installed other machinery, but without any improvement in the quality of the products. Indeed, with the new form of kiln, no better goods could be turned out than with the old one which had been pulled down. At Mr Lawrence's death the property was transferred to B.W.Pearce & Co Ltd, who worked it until it was taken over in June 1907 by Messrs Webb. Bros. Ltd, who dismantled the works. ----- The output of bricks at Pilford probably never averaged a million per annum."

My father always spoke of my grandfather, James, as having been a brickmaker, though when the latter died in 1905, 'Stationary Engine Driver' was given as occupation on his Death Certificate. I do not know if he was at that time still working at Pilford. His brother William died in 1922 at the age of 77, and was buried in the churchyard of St Peter, Leckhampton, as was his father George twenty one years earlier.

### Acknowledgements

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Norfolk Record Office for permission to use extracts from the Walsingham Collection.

WLS LX/60/3,4,9,10,17,19,21,23,28,29,30,41,44,46,48,50,53

WLS LXVIII/52/4,5,11,13,24

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Gloucestershire Record Office.

R.C. Hunt

13. NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

- (1) To Bulletin 9, p.36 (M.J. Greet)  
Item z) should have been lettered aa). The new item z, omitted earlier, should read

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Mother</u>	<u>-----</u>	<u>Alleged father</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
11.8.1817	Mary Elldrige		George Sly, baker, Cirencester. To pay £2.2.0 amd 1s 6d per wk (9d pr week from mother if child not cared for by her).	William s. of Mary Eldridge bp 6.6.1817

- (2) To Bulletin 8 - The Grevill family (M. Paget)

- a) p.10 Date of burial of Robert Grevill.  
Publication of Parish Register vol I shows that Robert Grevill gentleman was buried here on 8 February 1547/8. So the probate date ought to be early 1548.
- b) p.11. Francis Grevill was already called "Esq" in July 1548 at the time of the chantry enquiry (Hockaday). So he inherited before that date, apparently.
- c) p.12. Francis was probably not the eldest son. Giles was in possession of the estate by 1607, if not before. In 1607 he is listed as a free tenant, and resident in Bafford (D 855 M 8 f.1,2); he is so listed again in 1613 (M 8 f. 144v); and in 1616 was keeping sheep in Knavenhill field against the court's order (M 9 p.20). If Giles were in fact the eldest son, one difficulty vanishes.
- d) p.13. The register shows that several children of Giles and Sarah were baptised here:- Francis 31 December 1616, Richard 24 October 1619, Edward 17 Feb 1621/2.
- e) pp. 15 and 18.  
Younger children of Giles and Jane Grevill. The children provided for in 1691 (D 1224) are named as John, Charles, Edward, Francis, Silvanus and Hester. But it was a daughter Catherine who was baptised on 16 December 1683 (not Hester, as pedigree); and in fact Hester must have been an elder daughter. On 19 December 1681 (exactly 10 years before his lease and release of 19 and 20 December 1691 by which Giles provided for the 6 younger children) he had surrendered all his Cheltenham manor copyhold lands to Hester's use, and she was admitted on 24 April 1693, by which time she must have come of age (D855 M 12 pp 80-1)  
Presumably there was a condition attached. But if so, it was explained in a document which does not survive.

- (3) To Bulletin 9 p.50 item (2) The Rev Mr Chapone  
This was John Chapone, curate 1755-1760. He expected to leave 6 months later because his incumbency could only last 6 years, according to the agreement about the living made in 1629 between Lord Campden, the bishop, and Jesus College, Oxford.

- (4) Charlton Kings Parish Registers, Vol I 1538-1634 ed. E. Armitage.

Congratulations and thanks to Eric Armitage for an admirable piece of work. p.1 line 2, for Oliver read Thomas! (if not already corrected in your copy).

(5) PLAYS FORBIDDEN IN CHELTENHAM!

At a court held in Cheltenham on 5 April 1611,<sup>1</sup> the Steward was moved to record in full and in English (instead of his usual Latin) this presentment "that upon Thursday the xvijth dale of January last past, Guido Dobbins sounded his drumme up and downe the towne of Cheltenham in the tyme of markt, accompanied with Richard Clarke and divers other younge fellows being artificers and laborers, and the said Richard Clarke following the said Dobbins sounding his drumme, with a trunchion or short staffe in his hand in the maner of a lyvetenant or marshallman in very disorderly and rude maner, caused proclamacion to be made in divers places of the said Towne, publicquely proclayming, that whoseover would heare a play should come to the signe of the Crowne such an howre where they intended to play; whereupon the Bayliffe of the libertie and towne of Cheltenham, taking notice thereof, much disliked thereat, the rather for that the neighbor townes, namely Tredington<sup>2</sup> and Presbury, were then infected with the plague, and the towne of Cheltenham itself much suspected and greatly doubted that th'infection was there also And thereupon required the said Dobbins, Clerke, and the rest that they should desest and forbear to sounde the drumme and to make any further proclamacion And did also send unto Thomas Milton keeping the signe of the Crowne to will him not to suffer the said persons to play there, whereupon the said Clerke, Dobbins, and the rest, in murmuring maner departed, but not satisfied did endeavor to play notwithstanding at the house of one David Powell a victualler likewise in Cheltenham, and some of them caused the drum to be sounded againe about viij of the clocke in the night of the said dale, which the Bayliffe hearing sent John Holdy, underbayliffe there, to will them to forbear from playing and drawing company together so contemptuously, especially in so dangerous a tyme, otherwise he the said Bayliffe would come himself and suppress them, which messuage being delivered to the said Clerke and to the rest his concorts and companynions, he the said Clerke (20s) Dobbins (5s) Thomas Clerke (5s) Richard Fortey (5s), Edmund Trinder (5s) Walter Milton (5s) and Robert Cliveley (5s) with many others then assembled of their company much insulted and revyled against the said Holdy saying that they respected neither of them, both in contempt of all authority and good government, whereupon the said cheife Bayliffe understanding their insolent course went himself to suppress them and to punish them accordingly, which they understanding departed, and went away before the coming of the said Bayliffe"

So they were fined the sums set down after their names. Some were Charlton men, or had Charlton connections; Thomas Clerke who had married Judith widow of Edmund Cartwright (the couple had been granted a Charlton messuage for her life); Walter Milton a freeholder; probably Robert Cliveley. One can only speculate what play they wanted to see; and whether the Bailiff's concern for public health did not mask a puritanical dislike for plays? after all, the market had not been stopped.

(1) G.R.O. D855 M8 f.90v

(2) Not Tewkesbury, as in Hart

(6) ARSON AT THE KNAPP

This extract from the Gloucester Journal of 23 January 1769 has been contributed by Dr Rufford. The Knapp stood above Hearne brook where the old road climbed from Spring Bottom to enter East End Road by a farm on the site of The Hearne. (See Bulletin 3 p.54). But the house demolished in the 70s was a rebuilding of John Whitmore's.

"Whereas, on Saturday Night the 27th of August last, or early on Sunday Morning, the Barn and Stable at a Place called the Nep, in the Parish of Charlton Kings, Gloucestershire, belonging to Mr John Whithorne, of the same Place, Gent:, together with a large Quantity of Corn therein, were burnt down and destroyed; and whereas on Thursday Night the 19th of January last, or early on Friday Morning, a large Quantity of Wood the Property of Mr Shurmur, of Charlton Kings aforesaid, placed in a Pile close to a Dwelling-House belonging to the said Mr John Whithorne, was burnt down and destroyed; and as there are the greatest Reasons to believe the same were, by some evil-minded Person or Persons unknown, maliciously set on Fire, a Reward of FIFTY POUNDS is hereby offered to anyone who will discover the Person or Persons who did the same, to be paid on their Conviction. An Accomplice giving such Information will be entitled to the same Reward, and proper Means used to obtain his or her Pardon.

JOHN WHITHORNE"

(7) GEORGE RYLAND EXHIBITION 2

GEORGE RYLAND will be staging another picture show at the STANTON ROOM, CHARLTON KINGS.

ONLY on Friday November 26th, 7 pm to 9 pm; and Saturday November 27th 2pm to 5pm. Please come and bring a friend.