

# FRIENDS OF LYDIARD TREGOZ

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The FRIENDS OF LYDIARD TREGOZ was formed in 1967 with the approval and full support of St.Mary's Church and the Borough of Swindon.

By the unanimous vote of its members at the annual meeting in 2005 it was incorporated into the newly-formed FRIENDS OF LYDIARD PARK.

The accumulated funds were transferred to the new body, with the request that they should cover the cost of producing a transcription, *St.John Papers from America*, published in November 2005 at £5 a copy and obtainable from Lydiard Park, and two further issues of *Report*, this year and in 2007.

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Sonia St.John

Visitors to St. Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze in Wiltshire, cannot miss the marvellous monument on the north wall of the chancel known as the St.John Triptych. With the Golden Cavalier on its west side and Sir John's marble tomb opposite it is arguably one of the largest St.John family memorials. When the doors are all closed the heraldry of the four visible panels show the genealogy of more than 20 paternal and maternal generations. On the relatively rare occasions that the doors are open, the visitor looks in wonder on the family painting portraying Sir John St.John and his wife Lady Lucy Hungerford with their six living daughters<sup>1</sup> to the east side. Their son, also Sir John, and his wife Lady Anne Leighton are to the west, with three coffins of dead siblings below. One's eye moves from one face to another and what Canon Brian Carne so aptly describes as the "wow factor" enters the mind. I am sure that all who have seen this image leave the church with a feeling of satisfaction at having been allowed to view what is rarely seen. The fact that two other panels are on view at these special occasions is usually lost to the majority of those who have benefited from seeing the doors open. If the visitor's gaze had taken in the genealogy of the panel to their left they would have found mysteries which are still unsolved today.

The top of the visible door panel to the left of the central painting shows four generations of the St.John family with the claim that the first St.John, John, came to England with the Conqueror, William I. John's son Oliver had a son named Roger who married Cecilia daughter of Robert de Haia (also spelt de Hays in other documents). In the representation of the fourth generation there are three children born to Roger and Cecilia: William, Robert and their sister Muriella St.John. The line then descends via Muriella who married Reginald Aurevalle. Reginald and Muriella Aurevalle's heir was a daughter named Maud. In addition to (or perhaps because of) Maud's status as a wealthy heiress, she was married to Adam de Port (d.1213) who inherited even greater wealth and position.

Adam was descended from Hugh de Port who fought at the Battle of Hastings and Hugh was richly rewarded by William for his contributions to ensuring William I's enthronement. Hugh held many manors across at least four counties of England and most of these were still held by Adam, his great grandchild. The Domesday Book records:<sup>2</sup>

*Chawton (Hampshire) was occupied in the time of Edward the Confessor by Odo, a Saxon-Hampshire thane. William the Conqueror made Odo surrender Chawton to Hugh de Port, the King's Norman follower. (De Port and his descendants held Chawton in direct male line for nearly three hundred years.)*

*Aghemundheld the manor of Chineham (just north of Basing) from Hugh De Port who owned Monk Sherbourne. (Adam De Port then granted the manor of Chineham to William.)<sup>3</sup>*

*The same Hugh de Port held Snoddington, Tidgrove, Knowl & Sandford, **Clere ...***

The Hants. county list continues and records almost 60 more entries for manors and 55 Lordships in Hampshire, making Hugh de Port by far the largest lay landowner in the county.

There are also entries for the counties of Dorset, Berkshire and Cambridgeshire, where Hugh held 20 acres of Ely.

Medieval historians can tell us much about Adam de Port, and his great grandfather Hugh de Port who originally came from Port-de-Bessin (an area of Normandy now better known as Omaha beach after the D-day landings), but what happened to the St.Johns and why is Adam on this pedigree?

The St. John male line died without male issue some time near the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The St. Johns lands and titles passed through the female line via Muriella St. John<sup>4</sup> and her daughter Maud Aurevalle<sup>4</sup> to William de Port, the son and heir of Adam and Maud de Port.

Adam de Port (b. c.1151 d. 1213) was Lord of Basing, now a small town known as Old Basing to the east of the modern town of Basing Stoke. The remains of his Norman ringwork and bailey castle at Old Basing can still be visited today. *Burke's Peerage* states:

*'This feudal baron [Adam de Port] was governor of the castle of Southampton in the 15th [1213-14] King John, and in the 22nd Henry II [1176] he was fined 300 marks for trespassing in the king's forests. In the 26th of the same reign [1180], he gave 1000 marks to the King for livery of his wife's inheritance in Normandy, and that he might be restored to the king's favour and do his homage. He m. Mabel, dau. of Reginald De Aurevalle, and grandchild and heir through her mother, Muriell, of Roger De St. John, and Cecily his wife, dau. and heir of Robert De Haye, Lord of Halnac, co. Sussex,... By this lady he had two sons, William and Robert'*<sup>5</sup>

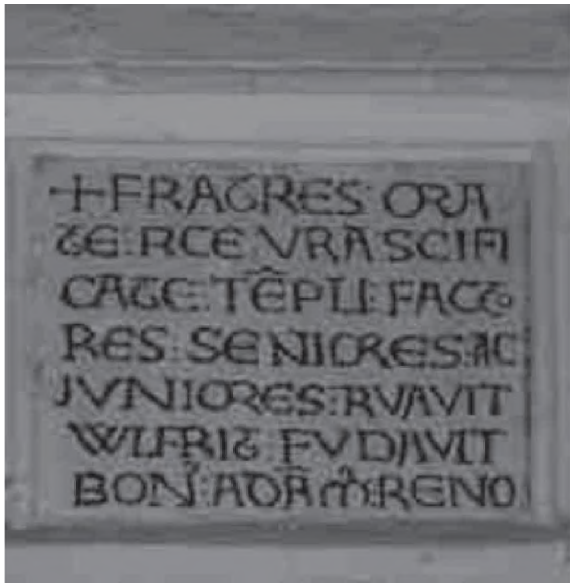
It is not clear from this text if Adam's homage to King Henry II was because of his trespass in the King's forest, or because he had married Mabel (also known as Maud) de Aurevalle without first asking the King's consent. In addition to performing his duties as Lord Basing, Adam had by 1173 rebuilt the Church of Our Lady in Warnford, Hampshire. In about 1210 he had also started to build a grand house on land that was given to Hugh de Port as part of his holding of the Meon Valley. Pevsner states:

*'... the special importance of the church lies in the two inscriptions, in the S porch and on the N side, which tell us that Wilfred founded the church, but that Adam de Port renovated it. Now Adam de Port held Warnford (as Lord of the Manor) from 1171 to his death in 1213, and it is quite possible that the tower represents c.1175 and the rest c.1210.'*<sup>6</sup>



Warnford Church in the Meon Valley Hampshire  
(photograph taken by Anthony St. John ©2005)





Inscription in the south porch of Warnford Church.

(photograph by Anthony St.John ©2005)

*‘Brethren bless in your prayers of this temple the founders old and young Wulfric founded it good Adam restored it’*

Wulfric could be either:

Bishop Wilfrid, the founder of 681, or the Abbot of New Minster (Hyde), Winchester, of 1067-72.



Inscription on the outer north wall of Warnford Church.

(photograph by Anthony St.John ©2005)

*‘Adam de Port may be blessed from the rising of the sun by the race signed with the cross for whom I have been thus restored.’*



The remains of the house at Warnford that Adam de Port started to build in 1210 built of flints set in grout-work, 80 feet by 54 feet, with walls four feet thick.  
(photograph by Anthony St.John ©2005)

Adam was not ungenerous with his great wealth. There is documented evidence that he gave to several establishments of which the following is one of many examples.

*In 1207 Adam de Port gave to the knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England, all his lands and manor of Godsfield in free alms.<sup>7</sup>*



The blazon of Adam's coat of arms is:  
'de *PORT of Basing, co. Hants*  
*Barry of six Argent and Azure, a saltire Gules*<sup>8</sup>

This, quite understandably, bears no resemblance to that of the St. Johns' which is:

'*ST.JOHN pronominal, of Basing...*  
*Argent, on a chief Gules two pierced mullets Or*<sup>8</sup>

And yet the coat of arms for Adam's son William on the inside panel of the Lydiard Tregoze triptych is that of St.John, as are all the following generations.

The de Port coat of arms

William also adopted his grandmother's maiden name, de St.John, as did all the de Port of Basing descendents from the time of Adam, who died on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1213. The change from de Port to de St.John seems to be total. The following table created from information about early rolls which have been researched by Brian Timms<sup>9</sup> shows that eleven de St.John fighting men can be identified, but there is no one named de Port or any sign of the de Port coat of arms.

| <b>Roll</b>              | <b>Date</b>    | <b>Individual's Name</b>  | <b>Spelling of name on the Roll</b>  |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Glover's                 | from<br>c.1252 | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>( 2) Robert de St John  |  |
| Walford's                | c.1275         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>( 3) Walter de St John  | John de Sein John<br>Walter de Sein John   |
| Camden                   | c.1280         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)  | Johan de Seynt Johan   |
| The Heralds'             | c.1280         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)  | John de Seint John   |
| The Dering               | c.1280         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)  | Jon de Seint Jon   |
| St George's              | c.1285         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>( 4) Richard de St John   | Joan de Seint Joan<br>Richard de Sein Joan   |
| Charles' Roll            | c.1285         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)  | Sir Seint John   |
| Lord Marshal's           | 1295           | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>( 5) John de Basing<br>( 6) Hugh de St John   | Johan de Sent Johan<br>Johan de Basinges<br>Hue de Seyn Johan  |
| Collins'                 | 1296           | ( 7) John de St John<br>( 6) Hugh de St John  | Jan de Seint Jan<br>Hue de Seynt Jan   |
| The Falkirk              | 22 July 1298   | ( 8) John de St John  | Johan de Sein Johan, le fiz  |
| The Caerlaverock<br>Poem | July 1300      | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>( 8) John de St John  | Johan de Saint Johan<br>Johan de Seint Johan   |
| Galloway                 | 1300           | ( 9) John de St John<br>( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>(10) Roger de St John<br>( 6) Hugh de St John<br>(11) John de St John | Sir Johan de Seint Johan de Lageham<br>Sir Johan de Seint Johan<br><br>Sir Hugh de Seint Johan<br>Sir Johan de Seint Johan |
| Stirling                 | c.1304         | ( 1) John de St John (d. c.1302)<br>( 7) John de St John  | Sir Johan de Seint Johan<br>Sir Johan de Seint Johan de Lagham   |

Prior to William de Port becoming William de St.John, Adam de Port was with the King in the army in Normandy in 1194 and according to the *Complete Peerage*:

*'He (Adam) accompanied King John to Normandy after his Coronation and was in frequent attendance on him from 1199 to Nov. 1212. In 1202 he and his s. William brought the prisoners captured at Mirebeau to England'.<sup>10</sup>*

Then in about 1204 William St.John (de Port) inherited through his mother and grandmother his great uncle William St.John's Honour of Halnaker with other titles and lands while his father was still alive.<sup>11</sup> William may have used the Lord St.John of Stanton title until his father's death when he succeeded to the position of Lord Basing. This does not explain why the name and coat of arms of de Port was completely abandoned.

While researching the family history a visit to Old Basing was arranged to see if any extra information could be found. Having walked around the site of the original castle and the ruins of the later manor house we visited a small exhibition about the past owners where I found a reference to Adam de Port. This generous feudal Lord who had supported King and country, with his proud Norman descent, was given a single entry which read '*Black Adam died 1213*'! This was quickly followed by a reference to William de St John, with no mention that these two people were father and son.

How had this man acquired such a title? An explanation may be found in the research of J. H. Round who wrote an article entitled 'The Families of St. John and of Port' in *The Genealogist*<sup>12</sup> (July 1899). No less than three Adam de Ports are identified by Round as owning land in Hampshire during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Round demonstrates how two Adam de Ports (the younger being the grand child of the elder) of Mapledurham, Hampshire and the Honour of Kington, Herefordshire were, and sometimes still are, confused with Adam de Port of Basing whose son William took the name St. John. Adam of Basing was most likely related to the other two, but no one has as yet been able to show how these three men link to a common ancestor. It is generally accepted that two de Ports came to England with William the Conqueror: Hugh and Hubert.

In 1172 Adam de Port fought at the uprising at Alnwick and was taken prisoner by the Kings' men. Consequently, Adam de Port forfeited all his lands for his treason. Good reason to be called '*Black Adam*', but this was not Adam of Basing who in 1172 was Lord Basing and Lord of the Manor of Warnford, overseeing the rebuilding of the church in Warnford. Could the fact that a relation with the same name being an enemy of the King have created such a dislike of that name that any excuse to change it would be quickly accepted? Was the apparent move from a large castle in Basing to a modest Manor at Warnford in about 1172 triggered by the events at Alnwick? Your guess is as good as mine. Whatever the reason in consequence of this mysterious change of name, I am Mrs. St. John and not Mrs. Port.

Many generations of St. John sons have been fondly told that their ancestor came to Britain from Normandy with William the Conqueror. No evidence has been found to confirm that a St John was part of William's retinue, but it's likely that a St.John ancestor did travel with William, and his name was de Port.

#### Notes & References

1. At the time that this part of the triptych was painted in about 1615, these six sisters were alive.
2. Information extracted from The Doomday Book on-line.
3. The identity of this William is not known. He is not a member of either the de Port or St.John lines.
4. There are several differing forms of the names Muriella St. John and Maud Aurevalle depending in the original source. (e.g. G. E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition vol. XI page 320 has the spelling for Adam's wife as "Mabel, heiress of Orval") Many genealogy researchers have also attributed false relationships to these two ladies, even to the extent of quoting Muriel St.John as the wife of Adam de Port's father, John de Port.

5. Sir Bernard Burke, *Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited, and Extinct Peerages, Burke's Peerage*, (London, 1883) page 466, St. John, Barons St. John, of Basing
6. Warnford Church website quote from Nikolaus Pevsner, *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*
7. House of Knights Hospitallers: Preceptory of Baddesley or Godsfield, *A History of the County of Hampshire: Volume 2* (1973), pp. 187-88.
8. Brian Carne, *Curiously Painted*, due to be published in 2006
9. [www.briantimms.com](http://www.briantimms.com)
10. G. E. C. *The Complete Peerage*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition vol. XI page 320
11. G. E. C. *The Complete Peerage*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition vol. XI page 321
12. J. H. Round, The Families of St. John and of Port - *The Genealogist*, New series, vol. 16 part I, (July 1899) pp. 1 - 13



## LADY LUXBOROUGH'S LETTERS TO WILLIAM SHENSTONE

by Audrey Duggan

Henrietta Knight, as she then was, first met William Shenstone in 1739. Their friendship blossomed and the ensuing correspondence which spanned a decade and a half provides a window into the eighteenth-century world of two people with much in common. Apart from an interest in literature and garden design, both were lonely: Mrs Knight, because she had been banished to Barrels, an old farmhouse at Ullenhall, near Henley-in-Arden, by a husband determined to believe in her adultery; Shenstone, because he had turned his back on London when he made his home at the Leasowes, a small country estate near Halesowen, inherited from his father.

At a time when roads were dirt tracks and frequently impassible in winter, the 'hermitess' of Barrels was dependant, as was Shenstone, upon the correspondence of friends. Cut off from her London intimates and the gaiety of Court life, Henrietta spent many hours penning her letters for 'selfish' reasons - so that she might obtain her reward, a 'packet' in response. She wrote from her chimney corner, at her writing table, and, even, quite frequently, in bed; and in spite of protestations to the contrary, the exquisitely crafted and beautifully illustrated letters that arrived at Shestone's door were the result of much hard work.

Much to Shenstone's delight, when her estranged husband was elevated to the peerage in 1747 Mrs Knight became Lady Luxborough. Her newly-emblazoned coach arriving at the Leasowes was an event that he records with evident satisfaction. '*A coach with a coronet is apretty kind ofphenomenon at my door. Few things prettier.*'<sup>1</sup> But such outward display did little to combat her Ladyship's isolation, and frequently she would see no-one, apart from members of her household, for days at a time. This is why she so looked forward to planning and paying visits.

Her letters are punctuated with invitations. '*I depend upon your promise of coming soon to Barrels*', she entreats.<sup>2</sup> But, to determine upon a date with a man who believed that '*fixing days is an encroachment upon liberty*',<sup>3</sup> must surely have been difficult! Even so he knew how to please, and would leave a poem or a note behind for her to find when he had left.

*How pleased we pass the Winter's day  
And charm the dull-eyed spleen away*<sup>4</sup>

But the pangs of leave-taking were acutely felt. '*Nothing is so terrible as parting from friends*', she opines, and, on another occasion, '*friends and neighbours combine to leave me at once to solitude and regret*'.<sup>5</sup>

One episode illustrates vividly her vulnerability. In 1751, an invitation to Shenstone to visit on her birthday had elicited no response. '*As I did not hear from you, I concluded every minute you was just coming*', she records in words pregnant with anticipation.<sup>6</sup> Several unanswered letters later, she paints a bitter-sweet picture of how the day came to be spent - alone, save for Captain Robinson's '*troop-horses which scamper about my avenue*' and a solitary Dragoons officer who came to her rescue. Gallantly he serenaded her upon his German flute - the eighteenth-century ancestor of our modern flute - and later on his bagpipes '*whilst we [members of her household] bowled and had our syllabub out of doors*'.<sup>7</sup>

Instead of the company of a friend she had been obliged to rely upon the services of a comparative stranger. In spite of her plea, '*Inever had so much occasion for your company andyour letters; which I find relish in*',<sup>8</sup> she would have to wait before Shenstone's eventual response buoyed her spirits. He

had been overseeing workmen at his farm, and his *'Masons and Carpenters! The Lord deliver me'*, was to provide a satisfactory reason for his non-appearance. Then, his genuine concern for her *'Depression of spirits of which you so seldom complain'*,<sup>9</sup> demonstrated an empathy which only an intimate might feel.

The friends supported each other on many occasions. In 1751, when the poet's brother died and Shenstone's heart *'is well nigh broke'*, her Ladyship's response, *'Your grief for your brother I feel in its full force'*,<sup>10</sup> was reinforced by action. She sent her servant Joe with a packet of *'toys'* - buckles and buttons of the sort he enjoyed collecting.

The friends had other problems in common. In the seventeen fifties Shenstone was embroiled in a legal battle over Harborough Hall - the home of the Penns, the family of Shenstone's mother - with his nephew, young Dolman: *'this little fellow who may well have malignity enough to cut my throat'*.<sup>11</sup> At the same time her Ladyship's problems also centred around property. Having restored her home, that *'damp ditch'* of a house to which she had been banished, and transformed it into an elegant dwelling, she confides that both her husband and her son-in-law now have designs upon it - that she must *'keep garrison at Barrels'*, and dare not meet with them unless a solicitor is present.

Such perceptions colour her letters. Resentment at treatment by a husband unwilling to believe her innocent and society over-eager to pronounce her guilt, frequently flares and her overriding concern is that her thoughts and actions should be misinterpreted. She has *'suffered too much to risk again unjust censure'*, worries lest *'my ill fortune reaches my friends'*, and looks forward to trips to the Leasowes where *'ingratitude and malice'* do not penetrate.

But to dwell upon Henrietta's loneliness and periodic unhappiness is to present a one-sided picture. For she was born with a vivacity and love of life that enabled her to overcome her misfortune at least as frequently as she succumbed to it. When she is happy the letters sparkle with her zest for living as she writes of her garden, of her friends and neighbours, when she is gossiping or discussing literature.

The estate at Barrels owed much to Shenstone's judicious guidance. At the Leasowes he was already an enthusiastic and successful exponent of 'modern' garden design, and he aided her in the creation of new walks at Barrels and the opening of new vistas along fluid and more flexible lines.

Lady Luxborough was an active participant in the evolution of her garden. Over a period of three days she has enthusiastically *'stood from Eleven to Five each day in the lower part of my Long Walk, planting and displanting, opening views ... for the better'*.<sup>12</sup> Sometimes Shenstone's advice is not understood. *'I doubt whether I rightly understood in what manner you would have the Hermitage become part of the shrubbery,'* she poses<sup>13</sup>, and upon clarification is eager to keep him informed of her improvements.

Shenstone was also on hand to aid her with the design, inscription, and placing of an urn to the memory of William Somerville. (Somerville was a Midland poet, author of *'The Chase'*, and a friend of both Shenstone and Lady Luxborough.) With a design *'as plain as possible'* and an inscription in Latin - Henrietta would have preferred English- expressing sentiments which could not possibly be misinterpreted, this eventually found a suitable resting place in the fork of Barrels' historic double oak. Not before her Ladyship had coined a new word, *'urnary'*, to name the whole process!

Lady Luxborough had many caring neighbours, and the letters present charming vignettes of country life. We read of her chaplain, Parson Holyoak, and of Jackie Reynolds playing bowls by moonlight. There is Parson Adams, whose passion for whist and mince-pies made him, every Christmas, *'forget his friends and every... duty beyond... his parish'*<sup>14</sup> On one occasion Adams so enjoyed a visit to Barrels that he *'kept me up till three [a.m.] to hear his stories.'*<sup>1</sup> We read of the Henley Bellman who

*'has gone his Christmas round*, and of Shenstone's servant, Tom, arriving to find her Ladyship in the middle of consuming a large barrel of oysters with her friends, the Holyoaks. We are introduced to the Meredith family, who *'act plays sometimes at home'*, and especially to Miss Patty, whose Ophelia so entranced Shenstone and who, because *'she does some of the mad parts ... very finely'*,<sup>16</sup> was persuaded to *'do a scene or two'* when staying with her Ladyship.

Henrietta writes of the gilded world of her youth. She tells of her parents' friendship with George II, of the king's partiality for apricots stewed in brandy, which he first tasted at their Battersea home, and of subsequent annual presents of this delicacy to His Majesty by her 'mama'. She tells of *'the very great Handel*, who told her that inspiration for some of his *'best songs'* came from the sounds of street vendors marketing their wares. She reminisces of the day she *'stole'* a gilt picture frame belonging to Queen Caroline.

Both friends love to gossip about the present as well as the past. They write of their servants: Lady Luxborough's Joe, who could translate French into English, and the poet's *'trusty Tom'*, who has an excellent head for business. Much is inconsequential, as is the story of Hannah, Shenstone's scullery maid, and her valentine. Some is of more concern, as when her Ladyship's old retainer, Price, is taken mortally ill. Unable to climb the stairs he is transferred to the guest bedroom, where he is attended by Dr Wall, Lady Luxborough's own physician.

Both are keen to be kept in touch with the London social scene, and regale each other with stories told by friends. Her Ladyship tells of Vauxhall ladies who *'crowlike cocks'* to attract the attention of a likely-looking young man, and Shenstone of the Pantin, 'a sort of Scaramouch, which brings the ladies into company',<sup>17</sup> a life-sized cardboard puppet by means of which they communicated.

Henrietta loves to discuss literature. Shenstone frequently asks for advice about his poems, and together they discuss Pope, whose *'peevish little mind'* her Ladyship dislikes. But she admires Fielding, and her interest in Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* springs from the fact that in volume two is incorporated the memoirs of the notorious Lady Vane, an acquaintance of her youth.

At a time when death was a constant threat, the friends detail their health. Lady Luxborough writes of a trembling hand, of an irregular pulse, and of fevers that confine her to bed for weeks at a time. Her arthritis troubles her, and she complains of the cold and of *'paralytic fingers which will not obey the dictates of my heart'*! Shenstone, too, is subject to recurring fevers and is embarked upon a constant search for a purge to relieve his digestive problems. All of which helps to explain the anxiety caused when letters went astray, which frequently they did.

Many of the letters have numerous postscripts written at intervals so that they read like commentaries throughout the day or several days. They are witty. The Barrel's garden is a *'ferme negligée'*, and they illustrate how perceptive Henrietta is, when the tone deaf Mr Outing, her secretary, parrots the opinion of others in expressing his enthusiasm for *Judas Maccabaeus*. *'If his ear is not good enough to distinguish the harmony, it serves to hear what the multitude say of it'*, she points out.<sup>19</sup> The language used is apt. Henrietta's description of life's *'chequered chances'* evokes the hand of fate, and Autumn which *'if it does not afford all the gaieties of Spring and Summer ... is attended with fewer disappointments'*,<sup>20</sup> serves as a metaphor for life. Whether illustrating the discomfort of travelling - *'I don't love to jumble in a post chaise alone'*<sup>21</sup> - or contemplating her enjoyment of simple pleasures, she shows herself to be mistress of her craft.

Not everyone would agree. Horace Walpole branded her Ladyship's correspondence as *'insipid'* and without *'wit'*, an indictment which has coloured the perception of generations of readers. He was unwilling to credit the freshness and spontaneity of the letters and, it would seem, did not understand what she was aiming to do. *'I follow the rule I give and write what comes uppermost'*,<sup>22</sup> she explains, for she is conducting a conversation on paper.

These manuscripts provide excellent primary source material. From them we learn that it was not unusual for the host to thank the visitor for calling. Frequently guests would arrive in time for breakfast - and it was accepted practice for uninvited callers to ask if they might be shown round the garden.

The letters show how much Henrietta suffered, how adept she became in making the best of things. They tell of friendship to which she '*would raise an alter*', and chart how, in spite of a perceived grievance, she was to become a successful hostess and create a remarkable garden. These are letters which, in Shenstone's words, are '*written with abundant ease, politeness and vivacity... scarcely equalled by any woman of her time*'.<sup>23</sup>

References are taken from the following publications:

James Dodsley, ed., *Letters written by the Right Honourable Lady Luxborough to Williams Shenstone* (London, 1785)

Robert Dodsley, ed., *Shenstone's Works. Vol. 1. Elegies Written on Many Different Occasions* (London, 1764)

Marjorie Williams, ed., *The Letters of William Shenstone* (Oxford, 1930)

- 1 *Shenstone Letters*, p.109, 17 September 1747
- 2 *Luxborough Letters*, p.82, 4 January 1748
- 3 *ibid.*, p.64, 13 November 1748
- 4 *Works*, vol 1, p.135. 'Visit to the Same in Winter'
- 5 *Luxborough Letters*, p.162, undated
- 6 *ibid.*, p.282, 22 July 1751
- 7 *ibid.*, p.285, 22 July 1751
- 8 *ibid.*, p.283, 22 July 1751
- 9 *Shenstone Letters*, p. 316, 8 August 1751
- 10 *Luxborough Letters*, p.295, 20 January 1752
- 11 *Shenstone Letters*, p.448, 14 May 1755
- 12 *Luxborough Letters*, p.144, 29 November 1749
- 13 *ibid.*, p.90, 23 March 1748
- 14 *ibid.*, p.82, 4 January 1748/9
- 15 *ibid.*, p.160, undated
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 161, undated
- 17 *Shenstone Letters*, p.140, 5 May 1748
- 18 *Luxborough Letters*, p.293, undated
- 19 *ibid.*, p.20, 28 April 1748
- 20 *ibid.*, p.55, 16 October 1748
- 21 *ibid.*, p.36, undated
- 22 *ibid.*, p.12, Easter Sunday 1748
- 23 *ibid.*, p.iv, Advertisement, 1775

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Editor's footnote

Friends are grateful to Margaret Duggan for this article and for the gift to us of a copy of her book, *The World of William Shenstone* (Brewin Books, 2004). Copies of the book are available from the Publishers, Brewin Books Ltd., 56 Alcester Road, Studley, Warwickshire, B80 7LG, price £13.95.



## THE ODY FAMILY

by Frances Bevan

From April 1974 to March 1975 writer Elspeth Huxley kept a diary of life in Oaksey, a village situated on the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire borders. Huxley had lived in Oaksey for some thirty-five years, about as long as Harold Ody and his wife had been farming the 157 acres at Clattinger Farm. In her diary entry dated 27<sup>th</sup> September Huxley writes about Clattinger Farm, home of rare wild orchids and the famed snakeshead fritillaries. Describing the traditional methods the Ody's continued to employ in an age of machinery and chemicals, Huxley quotes Harold as saying; "*There've been Odys farming in North Wilts for five hundred years.*"

There is little doubt that Harold was accurate in his assertion. A trawl through Wiltshire parish registers reveal enclaves of Ody's in Chisledon, Highworth, Wroughton, Christian Malford, Brinkworth, Cricklade and across the borders into Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. Harold himself was the descendant of a family dynasty that had its roots in the parish of Lydiard Tregoze.

The earliest available listings of the inhabitants of Lydiard Tregoze are the Ship Money list of 1635 and Tax Census returns of 1697, 1700 and 1701 where no Ody's appear as paying taxes in the parish. The earliest reference to the Ody family in Lydiard Tregoze is recorded in the Churchwardens Accounts dated 1742. On April 19<sup>th</sup> John Ayers was nominated to serve as *Church Warden appointed by the Minister* and *James Marshall to serve as Churchwarden appointed by the Parrish* signed by Henry Smith, Thomas Neat, William Sheldon and Richard Ody. The burial of Richard Ody is recorded on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1749/50.

Twelve years on and another Ody is fulfilling his parish duties.

*December ye 29<sup>th</sup> 1754*

*William Mathews and Thos. Clifford Church Wardens gave up their Accounts for the year 1753  
Recd. of the Parish 3 taxes*

|                          |        |                   |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|
|                          | £14 16 | 10 <sup>l</sup> A |
| <i>Had in hand</i>       | 1 2    | 6                 |
|                          | £15 19 | 4 <sup>l</sup> A  |
| <i>Disbursted</i>        | £14 9  | 9                 |
| <i>Due to ye Parrish</i> | 0      | 9 7A              |

*December ye 29<sup>h</sup> sin,d By us*

*Thomas Ody  
John Draper*

*Witness George Pike*

Is there a family connection between Richard and Thomas? It is tempting to wonder if Richard could be the same one who married Elizabeth Garleck in Wroughton on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1712 where the couple are described as being *both of this parrish*. The Wroughton registers contain a baptism dated March 7<sup>th</sup> 1831 *Thomas son of Richard and Elizabeth Ody*, however other Ody family historians have cast doubt on this connection. If Thomas had been baptised around the age of six months, as was commonplace, he would then have been only 17 years old at the time of his marriage to Anne Phillimore at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1747 - not impossible, but highly unlikely.

The registers of St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze soon bear evidence of the burgeoning Ody family tree with the recorded baptisms of three children born to Thomas and Ann Ody; Ann on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1749, Mary on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1751 and a son George Pike Ody baptised on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1753.

George Pike Ody and Mary Price had their banns of marriage called at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September and the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1773 but according to the registers, the couple did not marry until the following autumn, on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1774. Their witnesses were Martha Simmons and William Price, probably the same William Price, a blacksmith, who had married George's sister Mary on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1771.

George and Mary's first child, a son Richard, arrived within ten months of their wedding and was baptised at St. Mary's on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1775. The next child, another son, named Thomas after his paternal grandfather, was baptised on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1777 but was not to survive to celebrate his first birthday, his burial is recorded on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1777 *Thomas, infant son of George and Mary Ody*. A daughter Jane was baptised on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1778 and a third son, also named Thomas on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1780 followed by Mary baptised on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1782, George on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1786 and a joint baptism of a son and daughter, Noah and Ann on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1790. And so the Ody dynasty in Lydiard Tregoze had its beginning.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the name Ody regularly appears in the rate books. In 1808 Mr Ody paid 2s in the pound tax for the relief of the poor on land described as *for Franklin's, for late Miss Pannels, for the Cowleaze and Spencer's and for Perkin's Ground*. By 1810 Mr Ody was paying tax *for part of Hook Farm* and by July 1814 the rate book includes two entries *Mr Ody for the Purleys* and *Mr Ody Sen. for Lord Bolingbroke*. The situation is clarified in the rate book entry of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1816 where Noah Oady paid 1s in the pound poor rate for the Purleys.

Land tax listings dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1812 list George Odey paying £5 18s on land owned by the *Right Honble Lord V. Bolinbroke in Liddiard Tregooze* and a further £3 4s paid by Odey and Kirby. In assessments made seven years later George is still included among Lord Bolingbroke's tenants.

The Ody family appears to have been both enterprising and hardworking, frequently operating more than one farm at any given time. However, not all George's children prospered. His eldest son Richard, employed for many years as a gamekeeper on the Bolingbroke estate, was made redundant in 1815. From then on his fortunes took a downward turn. Lord Bolingbroke offered his former gamekeeper the tenancy at Purley ground on the understanding that Richard's father, George, act as guarantor. Richard was to dismantle his house at Lower Wood and rebuild it at Purley - George would continue to live in the farmhouse and father and son would farm the 100 plus acres together. But something obviously went very wrong with this arrangement. Two years later both George and Richard were given notice to quit, moving north across the parish boundary to Lydiard Millicent where tax records dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1819 record that land tax is being paid by *Richd. Odee* on property owned by *Richd. Francome*.

Unfortunately the move to neighbouring Lydiard Millicent was not a propitious one and Richard's status rapidly sank to that of pauper. So began a lengthy and expensive legal case between the overseers of the two parishes as they attempted to establish Richard's place of settlement. Neither parish wished to claim the responsibility for a large pauper family who would be a charge upon the poor rate. The case rumbled on until 1830 and whilst Richard's son William moved to Hook, it is uncertain what became of Richard. One of Richard's sons did manage to claw back his reputation and in the 1871 census he is listed as living at the Nursery, Lydiard Millicent with his wife Maria. Aged 62, John's occupation is given as 'parish clerk,' a role he held for twenty-five years, an achievement he had commemorated on his gravestone when he died three years later.

Richard's fall from grace does not appear to have affected the future of his siblings as tenants of Lord Bolingbroke and younger brother Noah took over the tenancy of Purley Farm around the time that Richard fell foul of the overseers in Lydiard Millicent.

George and Mary's third surviving son, George, also began his working life as a gamekeeper employed by Lord Bolingbroke on the Lydiard estate. He married Hester Wolford at St. Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1810. Four of their children were baptised at the church, Anne on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1811; Elizabeth on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1812 and Hester and George on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1818. A further three children were baptised at the neighbouring parish church of All Saints, Lydiard Millicent, William on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1815, Esther on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1816 (who presumably died in childhood) and Robert on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1824 at which time George is described as a farmer and dealer living in Liddiard Millicent.

The sale details of the Braydon Estate and Manor in 1827 include in the list of tenants *George Ody living at Park Gate Farm, Purton*. This marked George's move out of the Lydiards/Purton district and by the time of the 1841 census he and Hester are living at Notts Farm, Cricklade St. Sampson. In 1851 George, 64 is farming at Dairy Farm, a property at Gosditch situated close to the village of Ashton Keynes. During the next fifty years the size of the farm fluctuates between 192 and 200 acres, as parcels of land were acquired and sold. When the farm was auctioned in 1913 it comprised 168 acres and was described as having a stone built farmhouse containing two sitting rooms and four bedrooms. George died in the winter of 1855 and was buried at Lydiard Tregoze on the 17<sup>th</sup> January. The entry in the burial register reads: *George Ody, aged 68, of Ashton Keynes*. His son William and daughter in law Fanny took over the farm at Ashton Keynes where they, in turn, raised a large family.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there are just two Ody marriages at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze. On 11<sup>th</sup> July 1799 Jane Ody and William Coward were married by licence -they were both minors. The witnesses were Charlotte Beasant and Mary Ody. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1802 Mary Ody and Robert Greenwood were married. It is most likely that these are two of George and Mary's daughters. Their youngest daughter Anne married John Peapell on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1811.

George Ody's wife Mary died aged 73 in the winter of 1825 and was buried at St. Mary's on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Today her lichen-covered gravestone survives and can be found on the south side of the churchyard. Her life as a farmer's wife, even a prosperous one, had been a hard one. She had given birth to nine children and no doubt suffered additional miscarriages during the early years of the couple's fifty one year long marriage. Seventy-three years was a more than respectable life span for a woman born in 1752.

George made his last will and testament on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1829. In these last years of his life he was living in Shaw, a small village, not much more than a hamlet, in Lydiard Millicent. The boundary between the two Lydiard parishes zigzags across fields, cutting through farms owned at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Lord Bolingbroke, the Earl of Shaftesbury and Thomas Packer Butt.

The first two bequests George makes are to his two granddaughters  
*Mary the Wife of Thomas Godwin and Mary Peaple Daughter of John Peaple.*  
To his son George he leaves

*All my Personal Estate and Effects whatsoever and wheresoever and of what nature or Kindsoever Upon the trust following that is to say Upon trust to sell and dispose of the same ..... And afterpayment there at of my just Debts and the above Legacies In trust to pay and divide the residue of the Monies to arise by such Sale and all other my Personal Estate and Effects unto and equally amongst my Children the said George Ody, Richard Ody, Noah Ody and Ann the Wife of the said John Peaple.*

From this will and George's failure to mention any further children it is fair to assume that his second Thomas, and daughters Mary and Jane, predeceased their father.

The will was proved at Cricklade on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1832 before the Revd. John Edmeads Clerk M.A. and a declaration written on the cover of the will reads:

*The twenty fourth day of December 1832 George Ody the sole Executor in this Will named, was sworn in common form, and he further made oath that the personal Estate and Effects of the Testator within the Diocese of Sarum, were under the value of two hundred pounds.*

*Before me*

*John Edmeads*

*The Testator died the first day of December 1832*

*Prob. Issued*

*Decr. 26/32*

George was buried at St. Mary's on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1832. The entry in the burial register reads *George Ody, age 80, of Lydiard Millicent*. His gravestone can be found close to that of his wife's. Like Mary's, the gravestone is weathered and covered in lichen. George's date of death is particularly eroded and difficult to decipher, appearing to read Dec 1<sup>st</sup> 1833!

If George was the patriarchal figure of the Ody family, the title of founding father must surely go to his son Noah. Whilst George's family suffered fluctuating fortunes, Noah's multiplied and prospered.

Noah married Sarah Clarke at St. Michael's and All Angel's Church, Brinkworth on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1811 where Sarah's roots were firmly embedded in the Brinkworth soil. Her father Walter had married by licence Hannah Sherer, a minor, *with consent of her father* on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1775. The cause of this hasty marriage - Hannah was already pregnant, and a son John was baptised at St. Michael's just four months later. Sarah was the fifth of the couple's nine children who survived long enough to be baptised at the parish church, among them a daughter named Letitia who died in 1834. Sarah was to name one of her daughters Letitia Clarke Ody, in memory of this sister, a name that passed down the generations with several of Sarah's granddaughters called the same.

Noah and Sarah also married by licence, a bond of £100 was signed by Noah and his elder brother Richard. Richard Ody and Hannah Clark, presumably Noah's brother and Sarah's mother, witnessed the marriage.

And so another generation of Ody's quickly appeared on the scene. The couple's eldest son Thomas was baptised at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1812, the same day that Noah's brother George had a daughter Elizabeth baptised, possibly in a joint ceremony. A daughter Mary was baptised at St. Michael's Church, Brinkworth on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1815, but the rest of the children were named at the 13<sup>th</sup> century font in St. Mary's - Ann and George on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1818; Noah on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1819; Hannah on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1822; William on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1823; Sarah on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1825; Letitia Clark on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1827; John on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1831 and finally Walter and Charles on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1836.

The next documented reference to the family, aside from the parish register entries, is a

*Counterpart Lease of a messuage or tenement and farm situate in the Parish Lydiard Tregoze Count. Of Wilts between The Viscount Bolingbroke To Mr Noah Ody.*



This twelve year Michaelmas lease was signed on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1827 and appears to extend an existing tenancy of the one hundred and fifty six acre dairy farm called Braydon. Braydon Farm with ancient field names such as Great and Middle Purlieu, takes its name from the Royal Forest which extended from Purton into the two Lydiard parishes. (*The Oxford Companion to Local and Family history* by David Hey defines the word 'purlieu as meaning 'land on the edge of a forest which had once formed part of that forest and which still came partly within its jurisdiction'.) Braydon Farm, along with Purleys and Flaxlands remained within the occupancy of the Ody family throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1826 radical politician William Cobbett made an epic journey across Britain, to survey the lot of the common agrarian people. On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September, having travelled from 'Highworth to Cricklade and then to Malmesbury' he records his impressions of 'Lyddiard Tregoose.'

*'I went quite down to the house, close to which stands the large and fine church. It appears to have been a noble place; the land is some of the finest in the whole country; the trees show that the land is excellent; but all, except the church, is in a state of irreparable and apparent neglect, if not abandonment...'*

This description of an estate on its uppers might explain how Noah was able to negotiate such a competitive rent on Braydon Farm in 1827, just £52 10s per annum on 156 acres. Across the parish border in Lydiard Millicent John Tuckey is paying £335 for the 136 acres at Shaw Farm (Lower Shaw Farm) a property then owned by the Earl of Shaftesbury.

In 1832, with his father dead, one brother Richard a pauper and the other, George established in Cricklade, Noah is head of the family in Lydiard Tregoze and neighbouring Purton. By the time of the 1841 census Noah was farming 120 acres at Hayes Knoll Farm, Purton. On census night

Noah and Sarah had their children Thomas 25; Leiticia (sic) 12; John 10 and Charles 6 living with them (in the 1841 census adults over 25 had their age rounded down to the nearest multiple of 5 which accounts for some of the anomalies). Noah and Sarah's other children, George 25; Noah 22; William 19; Sarah 17 and Walter 8 were holding the fort at an unnamed farm in Lydiard Tregoze (probably Braydon) with James Smith, a farm servant aged 15.

The 1851 census shows Noah and Sarah still at Hayes Knoll. The family line up lists William 25; Leicea (sic) 22; Walter 18, Charles 15 and Matilda 7. Matilda is described as *daughter* but is infact a granddaughter, the illegitimate child of Sarah.

Noah made his last will and testament at Hays Knoll Farm in Purton. His first bequest is to his wife Sarah  
*I give and bequeath all and singular my Farming Stock Household Furniture monies and other my personal Estate and Effects for her use and benefit during her life.....*

After Sarah's death his estate is to be divided between his children - but not all of them! To his married daughter Hannah *the wife of William Slade* he bequeaths a legacy of £25 and to his then unmarried daughter Sarah fifty pounds. He goes on to mention his sons William, John, Walter and Charles and daughter Letitia '*...to be equally divided between them share and share alike...'*

Should those mentioned children desire their inheritance before the death of their mother, Noah instructs his executors that they

*'shall be at liberty so to do at such times and in such manner and either in money or stock as they in their discretion shall think fit...'*

In the case of Sarah, should she die before receiving her legacy, the money is to be divided between her two illegitimate children. He directs his sons Walter and Charles to take

*'the superintendence and management of my farming business and affairs in conjunction with my said Wife'*

He concludes by appointing Charles Snell of Cerney Wick along with his son George and wife Sarah as executors and executrix. J.W. Lovett, Solicitor and his clerk Arthur Lovett witness the will on the

*'thirteenth day of August in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty one.'*

Noah signs with a very shaky hand. He died just two days later. The question remains why did Noah omit his sons Thomas, George and Noah from his will.

By 1851 Thomas, George and Noah were all married so possibly they were given a legacy at that time. However, the plot thickens. Eight months after Noah's death, Charles Snell and George Ody signed a renunciation that

*'for divers good cause and considerations.... Each of us Doth renounce and refuse the burthen of the execution of the last Will and Testament of the said deceased...'*

In his early thirties and with a growing family, perhaps George was just too busy to undertake the duties of executor. But then again? In their place the two men nominate Matthias Thomas Hodding of New Sarum. The will was eventually proved almost two years later at Sarum on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1853.

The 1852 Amended particulars of Lord Bolingbroke's Lydiard Estate are particularly interesting as they contain annotations revealing both current and former tenants at various farms on the estate. The 116 acre Marsh Farm is described as *'Mr. Humphries farm'* which was later held by his widow Elizabeth Bathe Humphries and then her second husband Jonas Clarke junior and his niece Mrs Carey but here also are the names of Mrs. Ody, Geo. Ody and Nelson Ody. *Lands at Braydon, Lydiard Tregoze occupied by Mr. Noah Ody's Farm* have been altered to read *'George'* while Flaxlands Farm has *'Mr Henry Reynold's farm'* crossed through and written above it *'The Exts of late Mr Noah Ody'*. Noah's widow Sarah remained as tenant at Flaxlands until the 1860s when their son Walter took over the 200 acres of land in Lydiard Tregoze and Lydiard Millicent.

By the late 1840s the next generation of Ody's were marrying and Noah and Sarah's sons went on to produce equally large families. Their eldest son Thomas and his wife Mary began their married life at the 52 acre Dill Farm in Purton, close to Mary's parents Joseph and Anne Freeth, at Liverpool's Farm. By the time of the 1861 census they were at the much larger Pry Farm where Thomas remained until his death in 1892. Their children were Absalom, born about 1847; Tamar 1849; Sarah abt. 1851; Hephzibah 1853; Albert abt. 1855; Joseph abt. 1857; Mary abt. 1860; George in 1861 and Kate in 1867.

In 1887 Absalom married Charlotte Manners, daughter of Jesse Manners, farmer at Marsh Farm, at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze and by the time of the 1891 census the couple, with their three-year-old daughter Lilian, are living at Tadpole Farm in Blunsdon. Charlotte, aged 36, died later that year, either in childbirth or soon after the birth of their daughter Kate. Three years later Absalom married Maud Elizabeth Gough and by 1901 the couple were living at Chesshill, Brinkworth with Absalom's two elder daughters and their four younger children, Dorothy 6; Mary A. 4; Victor 2 and one year old Phedora. Absalom died on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1904 and is buried in Brinkworth cemetery.

Another of Thomas and Mary's sons, Joseph Freeth Ody married Esther Elizabeth Collingborn on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1889 at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze. At the time of the 1901 census Joseph was living at Braden Brook Farm, Crudwell, a village north of Malmesbury on the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire borders, with Esther and their five children, Ethel 10; Clara 6; William 5; John 3 and two year old Nora.

At the time of the 1871 census Thomas and Sarah's daughters were all described as 'assistant in dairy,' evidence that all members of the family had to pull their weight, even in a relatively prosperous establishment such as the one at Pry. Thomas' eldest daughter Tamar married Henry Leighfield and in 1881 the couple were living with Henry's father at Hart Farm, Wootton Bassett. Her sister Sarah married Charles Richens in 1880 and the census of 1881 shows the newly married couple farming 26 acres at nearby Bentham while Hephzibah married Walter Hayes and at the time of the 1881 census the couple were proprietors at the Wheatsheaf Inn in Crudwell.

The census taken on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1891 shows a much-reduced household at Pry Farm. Thomas is 79 years old and Mary 68. Their two unmarried children remain at home, George James, aged 30, and Ann Maria Kate, aged 24.

Thomas made his will later that same month on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1891. He instructed his executors, his son George and brother Walter, to sell *all my real and personal estate and effects*. Out of the monies realised the said George was to receive £470 and Thomas' daughter Kate £100. A debt of £100 owed to his brother in law *Thomas Freath* (Freeth) was to be settled and the residue was to be invested for the use of Thomas' wife, Mary. A codicil added a year later settles two sums of money totalling £250 *as surety for or on behalf of my son in law Charles Richens*.

Thomas died the following year. His worn and weathered gravestone at St. Mary's in Purton reads:

*Thomas Ody  
Of the Pry Farm Purton  
Who died August 6<sup>th</sup> 1892  
Aged 79 years*

In 1895 Thomas' youngest daughter Ann Maria K. known as Kate, married Job Simpkins. George James married Kate Eliza Hulbert in 1898 and when the census was taken in 1901 the two couples are still at Pry Farm.

Job and Kate at Pry Farm East have Kate's widowed mother living with them and George and Kate E. are at Pry Farm West.

Mary survived her husband Thomas by sixteen years. She is buried with him and her inscription reads:

*Also of Mary  
Widow of the above  
Who passed away August 4<sup>th</sup> 1908  
Aged 85 years*

None of Noah and Sarah's children moved far from their place of birth but two in particular retained close links with Lydiard Tregoze. Second son George, baptised with his sister Ann in 1818, remained close to home and like his father, had several irons in the fire at any one given time.

George, married Elizabeth Ingram in the spring of 1846 and the 1851 census finds them at a Bolingbroke farm previously leased to Noah, the 140 acre Braydon Farm in the Hook tything of Lydiard Tregoze. George employs three men and living in on census night was Samuel Simpkin, a nineteen-year-old agricultural labourer and Jane Cook, aged 14, a house servant. George's younger brother John was also in residence, described as a visitor, although it is more likely he was also working on the farm. George and Elizabeth have three young children, Ann 5; Arabella 3 and Nelson just one year old. The girls had been baptised at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1848 but Nelson had to await the arrival of his brother Noah later that year before they were baptised together on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1851.

During the mid 1850s the family moved to Bagbury, a 150-acre farm in Purton. The 1861 census returns record the family, swelled by a further five children, Noah as previously mentioned, now aged 9; Mary Jane, 7; Charles Albert, 5; George William, 3 (the first of the children to be born at Purton) and Elizabeth Emma just six months old. During their occupancy at Bagbury, George and Elizabeth's daughter Arabella died on November 15<sup>th</sup> 1864.

Another ten years on and in 1871 George and his family are at Lower Shaw Farm in Shaw, Lydiard Millicent, owned by Sir Robert John Buxton. The Ody's were the first tenants to follow the uninterrupted 157-year reign of the Tuckey family, which ended with the death of Richard Frampton Tuckey in 1863. The census returns include Francis John, their youngest child, born in 1862, thereby completing George and Elizabeth's family. However, their tenancy at Lower Shaw Farm was to be marked by the death of another daughter, Mary Jane, her burial is recorded in the parish registers *Mary Jane Ody Shaw Nov 16 22 years*.

George's wife Elizabeth died on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1877, about the time that the family moved to Wickfield Farm in Lydiard Tregoze. Wickfield Farm was situated in the manor of Midgehall and belonged first to the earls of Clarendon and then to the Meux family.

In 1880 George signs a three-year Michaelmas tenancy on both Marsh Farm and The Glebe Farm owned by Lord Bolingbroke where he establishes his son Nelson. When the leases are up for renewal three years later the entrepreneurial George attempted some wheeling and dealing on the two properties in Lydiard Tregoze. Lord Bolingbroke's steward writes in the margin that the lowest he would accept for Marsh Farm was £170 and for Glebe £160 and adds '*but I wasn't going to accept £150 for Glebe*'. George obviously struck a good bargain - in 1889 when his son Nelson paid his halfyearly Michaelmas rents he paid £85 for Marsh and just £57 10s for Glebe Farm.

The 1881 census shows George, now aged 62, with just three of his unmarried grown up children living at home, sons George William, 21 and Francis John 17. Lizzie aged 19 is the only daughter. By 1891 George aged 73 lives alone at Wickfield with two young servants looking after him, nineteen-year-old Annie Bond who acts as housekeeper and general servant and eighteen year old William Grubb, a farm labourer. Although George's son, George William and his growing family, live at the neighbouring Churchills Farm, it is a far cry from the days when George and Elizabeth's own brood filled the farmhouse at Lower Shaw Farm.

Noah and Sarah's third son Noah married Elizabeth Cox, the daughter of James Cox, a gamekeeper, on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1847 at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze. Three years later, at the time of the 1851 census, Noah is farming 56 acres at Latimers Farm, Brinkworth, employing two labourers. The couple do not appear to have had any children of their own, or at least none that survived childhood, as in his will dated 25<sup>th</sup> April 1876 Noah leaves '*all my household furniture books plate linen china pictures wines jewellery and all other household effects*' to his wife Elizabeth and all his personal and real estate to be held in trust by his executors, the rents also to be paid to Elizabeth. Upon her death everything was to be sold and the monies raised '*shall divide the same equally between and amongst all and every my nephews and nieces who shall be living at the time of the decease of my said wife*' - a generous bequest as there were an awful lot of them!

Fourteen years later Noah adds a codicil to his will in which he revokes the gift made to his nephew William '*son of my Brother George Ody*'. It is at this point that he includes the natural children of his sister Sarah and also *Robert Saunders 'otherwise Ody son of my brother John'*. He also removes his brother George as executor, instituting another brother, Walter in his place. In 1894 Noah adds a second codicil, probably upon the death of his brother John as he now instructs that *Robert Saunders, 'son of the late John Ody, should receive 4/- per week until his twentieth birthday'*.



Noah's brother George died in 1894 aged 78. Perhaps his decline into ill health, infirmity or old age was the reason Noah removed him as executor of his will in 1890. Or maybe, as with so many families, there was a dispute. Noah died at his long time home in Brinkworth on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1897, his brother Walter died just a few weeks later on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Probate was granted at Salisbury in the following February to his nephew Joseph Freeth Ody, his brother Thomas' son, the only surviving executor.

In 1871 Noah and Sarah's fourth son, William, farmed 72 acres at Haxmoor Farm in Purton Stoke, an ancient area of land mentioned in a land charter of 796AD as Hassuksmoor. He and his wife Sarah have eight children bearing popular Ody names Rosanna 17; Elizabeth Mary 19; Letitia Clarke 15; John 13; Noah 11; Sarah Ann 7; Fanny 5 and Ellen Matilda 2. William's eldest daughter Elizabeth Mary married Robert Slade in the summer of 1879. At the time of the 1881 census Robert and Elizabeth are living at Restrop, Purton where Robert is employed as an agricultural labourer. They have a month old baby son Henry with them, their one year old daughter Hannah is with her grandparents at Haxmoor Farm. William and Sarah have their married daughter Letitia Clarke Sullivan and her two sons living with them in 1881. Both the boys were born in Oxfordshire where Letitia had married their father William.

Sarah died on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1885 and by the time of the 1891 census the farmhouse at Haxmoor is a much quieter place, with just William and Sarah's youngest children still living at home with their widowed father, Fanny aged 22 and Walter 18. Margaret Bryne, William's ten-year-old granddaughter is also staying with them. William died 15<sup>th</sup> January 1894 aged 64 and is buried with his wife in the churchyard at Purton. With his father's death Walter appears to have given up farming. He married Helena Augusta M.M. Heaven in 1898 and when the first census of the new century was taken, Walter is living with Helena and their baby daughter Gwendoline in the village of Leigh where he is the local innkeeper.

Nelson and Sarah's fifth son John married Hannah Dafter at St. Mary's Lydiard Tregoze on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1858; John was 27 years old and Hannah 39. At the time of the 1871 census they were living at Longman Street Farm, Brinkworth, where they farmed 100 acres and employed three men. Like Noah and Elizabeth, John and Hannah did not have any children. Hannah died in 1880 aged 63. At the time of the 1881 census 49-year-old John was farming 100 acres at Malthouse Lane Brinkworth where his closest neighbour was his elder brother Noah. John employed Sophia Saunders, a 22-year-old general domestic servant, however, the relationship obviously became of a more intimate nature because in the spring of 1882 Sophia gave birth to a son, Robert John.

The 1891 census records John still living in Brinkworth but now at Fritters Well Farm, a much smaller establishment. Living with John is Anne Clark aged 36, employed as a housekeeper, and Robert Ody, his eight-year-old son.

When John made his will on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1893 it was very succinct and to the point:

*This is the last Will and Testament of me John Ody of Brinkworth in the County of Wilts Farmer whereby I give all my real and personal estate and effects to my brother William Ody upon trust for and to the use of Robert John Saunders the natural son of Sophia Saunders of the Leigh and I appoint my said Brother Executor of this my Will...'*

John died in the autumn of the same year, aged 61. Probate was granted to William on 11<sup>th</sup> November when John's effects were valued at £405 17s 6d.

Noah and Sarah's sixth son, Walter, named after his maternal grandfather, was effectively, the son who never left home. The brief details on the 1841 census show that eight-year-old Walter was living in a household headed by his elder brother George at an unspecified farm in Lydiard Tregoze. As Noah held the tenancy for Braydon and Purley Farms during this period, the siblings could have been based

at either of these establishments. The 1851 census shows Walter at Hays Knoll Farm in Purton, but presumably with his father's death later that year the farm passed out of the family's occupation.

Walter married Elizabeth Russell, the 22-year-old daughter of labourer James Russell, at St. Mary's Church, Purton on February 9<sup>th</sup> 1861. Elizabeth, a spinster, already had a young son, William James, born in 1858. When the 1861 census was taken just weeks after the couple's wedding, Walter, Elizabeth and her young son were living at Flaxlands Farm with Walter's widowed mother Sarah and his unmarried sister Letitia.

One of the larger Bolingbroke farms in the parish, Flaxlands measured 206 acres in 1841 and the Tithe Map Appointments record the following details:

|    |   |                  |                |
|----|---|------------------|----------------|
| 18 | <i>Flaxlands Common</i>                     | <i>pasture</i>   | 20 3 11        |
| 19 | <i>The Paddock</i>                          | <i>pasture</i>   | 1 1 8          |
| 24 | <i>The Home Ground</i>                      | <i>arable</i>    | 14 2 25        |
| 25 | <i>Cottage and Garden</i>                   |                  | 20             |
| 26 | <i>House barn yard garden</i>               | <i>homestead</i> | 1 2 37         |
| 28 | <i>Flaxlands Lane</i>                       |                  | 2 1 17         |
| 29 | <i>Braydons Close</i>                       | <i>pasture</i>   | 4 3 3          |
| 30 | <i>The Quarry Ground</i>                    | <i>pasture</i>   | 6 2 30         |
| 31 | <i>Ploughed Common</i>                      | <i>arable</i>    | 14 3 15        |
| 33 | <i>The Frith</i>                            | <i>pasture</i>   | 3 0 24         |
| 35 | <i>The Great Field</i>                      | <i>arable</i>    | 7 1 23         |
| 36 | <i>Hatch</i>                                | <i>pasture</i>   | 4 1 14         |
| 40 | <i>Hasell Hill Common</i>                   | <i>pasture</i>   | 46 0 32        |
| 41 | <i>Plantation in Hasell Hill<br/>Common</i> | <i>coppice</i>   | 2 2 34         |
| 42 | <i>Birchells</i>                            | <i>pasture</i>   | 2 0 21         |
| 43 | <i>Hasell Close</i>                         | <i>arable</i>    | 11 1 8         |
| 44 | <i>Purlieus Mead</i>                        | <i>pasture</i>   | 5 3 33         |
| 45 | <i>Cliffords Ground</i>                     | <i>pasture</i>   | 5 3 3          |
| 46 | <i>Further Rachels</i>                      | <i>pasture</i>   | 10 3 25        |
| 47 | <i>The Long Ground</i>                      | <i>pasture</i>   | 4 1 35         |
| 48 | <i>The Four Acres</i>                       | <i>pasture</i>   | 4 3 28         |
| 49 | <i>The Hilly Ground</i>                     | <i>pasture</i>   | 8 3 33         |
| 50 | <i>The Close Mead</i>                       | <i>pasture</i>   | 8 0 19         |
| 51 | <i>The Seven Acres</i>                      | <i>arable</i>    | 12 1 27        |
|    |   |                  | <u>206 - 5</u> |

The first of the couple's large family was born in 8<sup>th</sup> June, a swift four months after their nuptials, a daughter Ann Mary, baptised at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on August 25<sup>th</sup>. By the time of the 1871 census young William Russell had died aged 5 years and a further seven children had been born during the intervening ten years, Noah in 1862; Letitia Clarke 1864; Thomas 1866; Elizabeth 1867; John 1868; Francis 1870 and Richard who was just 2 days old at the time of the enumeration.

Thomas died at the age of four months and was buried at St. Mary's on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1866. Another son also named Thomas was baptised at St. Mary's on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1876 but as this child does not appear on the 1881 census at Flaxlands it is likely he also died in infancy. The death of further baby son is recorded in the burial registers - '*1876 Walter Ody Flaxlands April 20 6months*'.

By 1881 there were three new additions to the family, George born 1874; William 1875 and Mary Jane 1878. All the younger children, excepting two-year-old Mary Jane, are described as '*scholars*' and the Schools Admission Register for Hook School 1866-1890 bear details of some of their careers. Some

fares better than others. Letitia was admitted in June 1869, shortly before her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and passed Standard II in 1874 and Standard III in 1875 before leaving in March 1876 aged 12 years old.

Elizabeth enjoyed a longer school career, admitted in October 1870 aged just 3 years 8 months old, and leaving shortly after her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. She is recorded as having passed Standard II in 1875.

Noah would appear to be the star pupil. Presented at school three months after his 8<sup>th</sup> birthday, he passed Standard III in 1873; IV in 1874 and V in 1874 in just five years at Hook School.

Other siblings had a more chequered career -eldest daughter Ann received just two years formal education while Mary Jane seem to be admitted and withdrawn at regular intervals, starting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1883, then on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1885 and again on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1888, leaving on 21 December of that year.

By the time of the 1891 census the older members of the family were either married or running their own establishments. Walter and Elizabeth's eldest daughter Ann was married to Charles Ernest Clappen Snell and living in South Cerney. Charles Snell, who had renounced his duties as executor to Noah's will in 1852 was no doubt some relation to this younger Charles. Noah and Elizabeth had also fled the nest, leaving Letitia 25, who was working as a dairymaid on the farm, and her three younger brothers, John 23, Francis 21 and Richard 19 who are described as '*farmlabourers.*' Youngest daughter Mary Jane 12 is recorded as a '*scholar.*'

In 1883 Walter paid £242 yearly rent for the 214-acre farm at Flaxlands, plus a cottage. His account for that year has a note added by Lord Bolingbroke's steward:

*NB Ask him for Noah Ody's cot rent 6 do'.*

Noah held the lease for a cottage in Brinkworth dated from 16<sup>th</sup> March 1847.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Ody family, as influential, tax paying tenant farmers, attended Vestry meetings and fulfilled various parish offices. Walter served as churchwarden pretty much uninterruptedly during the ten years between 1876-1886 while his brother George and nephew Nelson undertook the arduous role of overseer. Walter also served as an extra Waywarden when, due to the large size of the parish, permission to appoint a second one was granted at the Court of Quarter Sessions in the winter of 1883. This was a parish office Walter was to repeatedly hold during the late 1880s and early 1890s.

As well as the duties of the more commonplace parish offices, Walter and his kinsman George were also trustees of the St. John Chancel Trust. Established by the 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet, Sir John St. John in 1645, the trust was created for the repair and maintenance of the various monuments in the church of St. Mary's. Walter is recorded as a trustee in 1882 and George, another of Noah's great grandsons and tenant at Wick Farm, in 1926.

Walter's wife Elizabeth died in 1896 and after a service at St. Mary's was interred at the newly opened burial ground in Hook.

Walter made his will in 1897, which reads as follows:

*'This is the last Will and Testament of me Walter Ody of Flaxlands Farm Lydiard Tregoze in the County of Wilts Farmer I hereby give devise and bequeath to my trustees and executors hereinafter named my enclosure of land situate at Stone Lane in the Parish of Lydiard Millicent Upon trust for my youngest daughter Mary Jane Ody all my personal estate and effects and the remainder of my real estate to be realised by my trustees and executors hereinafter named by public auction the proceeds to be distributed in equal shares within the*

*lapse of one year after my decease between my four sons namely Francis Richard George and William I hereby appoint Alfred Hitchcock and Normal Hitchcock both of Hook Lydiard Tregoze in the County of Wilts Trustees and Executors of this my Will to whom I hereby give the sum of five pounds sterling each in Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this twenty ninth day of March One thousand eight hundred and ninety seven...'*

He died four months later. The grieving family placed a death notice in the local newspaper, the North Wilts Herald, on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1897.

*'Ody July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Flaxlands Farm, Lydiard Tregoze, Walter Ody, aged 64 years'*

By the time of Walter's death the churchyard at St. Mary's had been closed to burials for some ten years, with local parishioners having to be buried in neighbouring churchyards and cemeteries. After protracted negotiations with Lord Bolingbroke, a plot of land in Hook was allocated and the new burial ground opened in 1891. Effective drainage of the heavy Kimmeridge clay was a constant problem but no one could have foreseen the spectacle that occurred at Walter's funeral. When the vault where his wife Elizabeth lay was opened to receive Walter's body, 225 gallons of water had to be removed before he could join her.

Tracing the movement of Noah and Sarah's seventh and youngest son Charles has proved more problematic. An incomplete entry in the registers at St. Mary's records a marriage between Charles Ody (father's name not given) to Hannah daughter of Joseph Angel on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1849. Whether this is Noah's son or not it is impossible to say without obtaining the civil registration certificate, and there is just the chance that this may not include the father's name either. A search of census returns for Wiltshire has, as yet, not revealed Charles and Hannah either.

As to Noah and Sarah's daughters, Mary died in 1837 aged 23 and Ann died in childhood, as did her sister Jane, aged just eleven months. All three daughters are buried with their parents. Hannah married William Slade in Purton in 1838 and is recorded in the 1851 census as living in Moredon, Rodbourne Cheney where William is a butcher. They have four children, Rosanna 11; Frances Ellen 8; Nelson 5 and Alice 10 months old. By 1871 Hannah had been widowed. She is recorded on the census of that year as living in Rodbourne Cheney where she was licensed victualler at the Red Lion. Her sons William 18, a butcher and John 15, a scholar and grandson Richard 16, an agricultural labourer, were living with her.

Like her brother Charles, the movements of Sarah Ody have also been difficult to trace. There is documentary evidence regarding her two illegitimate children Matilda and George Ody but as yet no marriage has been identified.

Noah and Sarah's youngest daughter, Letitia Clarke Ody, never married and in the 1871 census she is recorded as living at Common Hill, Cricklade where she is described as a shopkeeper. Living with her is her widowed mother Sarah aged 83 and two nephews Thomas, 11 and John 8. Matilda Gardener, Letitia's niece, the illegitimate daughter of her sister Sarah, is staying over on census night. In her will dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 1880 Letitia left everything to the same two nephews including two cottages at Chelworth, the rents for which were to be paid to her brother Charles until his death when the two nephews would become 'tenants in common'. Letitia died on 3<sup>rd</sup> November of the same year, aged 54. She was buried in the churchyard at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Ody's married into other local farming dynasties - George's (b.1818) daughter Annie married George Price and farmed at Hook while her sister Elizabeth married Edmund Hercules Slade and moved across the parish to Spittleborough Farm. In 1908 George William Ody, George's grandson, married Mabel Annie Lewis, daughter of Purton



farmer, John Lewis and moved into Wick Farm in 1910 where they lived for over ten years. Walter Ody's (b.1836) daughter, another Elizabeth, married Edward James Tuck from Highgate Farm while in 1898 Walter's elder daughter Letitia Clarke Ody married George William Walker, the son of a farm bailiff. The following year his son William James married Alice Minnie Walker, the same bailiff's daughter. Joseph Freeth Ody, son of Thomas (b. 1812) married one of the Collingbourne sisters, Esther Elizabeth from Ballard's Ash and his brother Absalom married Charlotte Manners of Marsh Farm.

As has already been noted, some members of the family failed to make it to the altar and there have been a few illegitimate Ody births. In most instances the children have been readily absorbed into the family, like Sarah's daughter Matilda and Elizabeth's son William Russell. John's son Robert John, who is variously named as Saunders and Ody, was left well provided for in his father's will, and like Sarah's two illegitimate children, received a bequest from their uncle Noah. However, one child did not receive such a warm welcome into the family fold.

Noah's (b. 1790) son, the elusive Charles was the father named in a bastardy case brought to court by the child's mother, Mary Ann Weston. In 1856 Charles was served with an order by a *P. C. in his own fields* at Flaxlands Farm, which must have been pretty embarrassing for Noah. In her evidence single woman Mary Ann stated that Charles had paid 1/6 a week for the child, '*sometimes*'. He had been paying for his infant daughter, then aged eleven months, since she was fifteen weeks old, often using a go-between named as Jane Hughes. Jane also gave evidence and told of how she had seen Mr. Ody give Mary a sovereign at the Fox and Hound, Coped Hall. She said:

*"They had been talking about the child and he said he'd pay 1/6 a week and he said he'd pay that money to the child. "*

An order to that effect was made.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were still plenty of Ody's farming in North Wiltshire. Trade directories list a George Ody at Herring Stream Farm, Purton in 1901 while George William Ody is at Wick Farm; Nelson Ody at Blagrove Farm and George Ody at Pry Farm in 1911. Another of Noah's great grandsons, Charles Victor, born at Church's Hills Farm in 1888 was the tenant at Lower Snodshill Farm. Owned by the Westminster Church Commissioners, Charles farmed there in 1912. The 75-acre dairy farm in the parish of Chisledon was one of the casualties of the 1970s eastern expansion of Swindon and now lies beneath the Post House Motel at Coate.

Harold Ody at Clattinger Farm was not the only Ody to make it into print. Swindon's famous poet Alfred Williams included in his recollections of Victorian South Marston *In a Wiltshire Village* a vivid, but less than favourable, description of Charles Albert, Noah's grandson, who farmed there.

*'Farmer Ody was alive then; to-day the farm is conducted by his widow. He was short, fat and corpulent. He would have been better and might have lived longer if he had worked harder.....There was a big family of children. When any of these had got into mischief they were tied up to the posts in the yard with a loose cord all afternoon. They feared their papa very much; if he only looked at them severely when they were young they burst into tears'.*

At the time of his marriage, the aforementioned Charles Albert Ody was living at Bagbury in Purton, the farm where he spent part of his childhood. His wife, Frances Annie Sutton, was the daughter of Purton farmer, Josiah Jesse Sutton. With Charles and Frances Ody's move to South Marston began the steady migration of this branch of the family into the Oxfordshire countryside. Charles and Frances' son, Jesse Sutton Ody with his wife Fanny Fisher farmed at Bampton, but in 1919 they were living at Blagrove Cottages, Wroughton where Jesse was employed as a cowman. They had a son Nelson baptised at St. Mary's, Lydiard Tregoze on 5<sup>th</sup> October of that year.

The churchyard at St. Mary's has disappointingly few surviving monuments to the Ody family. George and Mary's gravestone totter towards one another while Noah and Sarah's tablet shaped stone suggests they may have been anticipating further names to join theirs. The best-preserved memorials are those of the Wickfield based family, which are situated to the right of the path leading to what is now the main entrance to the church.

*George Ody*  
*Who died November 21<sup>st</sup> 1894*  
*Aged 76 years*  
*Also*  
*Elizabeth wife of*  
*George Ody, of Wickfield*  
*Who died October 1<sup>st</sup> 1877*  
*Aged 51 years*

*Blessed are the dead that died in the Lord*

*Also in loving memory of*  
*Dear Frank, their youngest son*  
*Who fell asleep in Jesus June 16<sup>th</sup> 1886*  
*On board The Torrens Homeward Bound*  
*Aged 22 years.*

The Torrens was a 19<sup>th</sup> century passenger ship that made regular trips between England and Australia. Frank's story is another begging to be researched.

George and Elizabeth's two daughters are buried together close by.

*Arabella*  
*Daughter of*  
*George and Elizabeth Ody*  
*Who died November 15<sup>th</sup> 1864*  
*Aged 16 years*  
  
*Also Mary Jane*  
*Daughter of the above-----*  
*Who died November 8<sup>th</sup> (?) 1875*  
*Aged 22 years*

In villages and parish churches across the region, War Memorials commemorate the names of those who gave their lives in two world wars. It has been possible to trace a few Ody descendants on these, with collaborative evidence obtained from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website.

The war memorial at St. James the Great, Dauntsey includes the briefest of details, among the names are those of E. and R. Ody. However, research has revealed more information about other members of the extended family.

Elton Ody's name appears not only on the Memorial at St. Michael's and All Angel's Church at Brinkworth but also on the Ploegsteert Memorial in Belgium. A Lance Corporal in the Wiltshire Regiment, Elton died on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1918 aged 19 years old. Elton was the second son of William Elton and Amelia Ody of Callow Hill, Brinkworth, a great grandson of Noah and Sarah.

Another great grandson of Noah and Sarah Ody's, William Joseph, was a private in the North Staffordshire Regiment when he died aged 23 years old in 1919. His name is recorded on the Delhi Memorial (India Gate) and also on the 1914-18 War Memorial at All Saint's Church, Crudwell. William Joseph was the eldest son of Joseph Freeth and Esther Ody who farmed at Braden Brook in Crudwell.

Vivian Ody, a steward on SS *Waimarama*, who died aged 24 on 13 August 1942 is commemorated on a number of memorials. His name is recorded on both the memorials at All Saint's Church, Leigh and the older, original church at Upper Waterhay Leigh, plus the Memorial Gates at the bottom of Lower High Street in Malmesbury as well as the Tower Hill Memorial at the Tower of London. Further research is necessary to establish from which branch of the Ody family Vivian descends.

With the death of Henry, 5<sup>th</sup> Viscount Bolingbroke in 1899 the heavily mortgaged estate was sold piecemeal in a series of sales dating from 1920. When Purley Farm, the long time home of the Ody family, was put up for auction in 1920 it was described as containing a brick built farmhouse with front sitting room, front and back kitchens, large dairy, brewhouse, coal house, 4 bedrooms and cheese room. The farm buildings comprised a brick stall with tie up accommodation for 20 cows and an open fronted stall and yard to accommodate 6 or 8 cattle, stabling for 3 horses with loft over. The farm measured just over 106 acres; mostly pasture with a coppice and an orchard.

Today the larger part of Lydiard Tregoze parish has been swallowed up by the 1980s western expansion of Swindon. 'Village centres' and local districts bear the names of former farms and fields -Toothill, Freshbrook, Middlelease and Ramlease among them. Lower Shaw Farm where George Ody farmed during the 1870s is now used as a learning holiday centre, clinging to a precious three acres of land amid the encroaching housing development. Marsh Farm, where his son Nelson farmed between c. 1887-1894 lies beneath the Windmill Hill Business Park, although the farmhouse remains, now used as office accommodation. Churches Hill Farm where Nelson's brother George William Ody was resident at the time of the 1881 census, is now a pub and restaurant, the name conveniently altered to read *Churchill*, the pub sign displaying a portrait of the war time Prime Minister. Wick Farm, high on the hill opposite the entrance to Lydiard Park, farmed from 1910 through to the early 1920s by George's grandson, another George W. Ody, is now a private house.

With the post war decline in farming succeeding generations turned to the more lucrative occupation of road haulage and plant hire and even gold mining! Chris Ody from Witney recounts the story of his grandfather, George Frederick Ody 1913-1976, a great-great grandson of Noah and Sarah's, who bought a gold mine in South Wales.

'Granddad took his wife and eight children in a converted bus and parked it on a Welsh beach for their holidays. The family lived in it while he went off mining for the whole summer'.

Despite the decline of local farming, there are still some Ody's around and over at Pinnells Farm in Grittenham near Brinkworth, Kenneth Ody, great grandson of Walter, kindly supplied a detailed family tree of his branch of the clan. There is also a musical talent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ody family. Andy Ody plays washboard in a skiffle group called *Ode & the Be Bops* while rock 'n roller Chris Ody tours clubs and pubs in the Wiltshire and Oxfordshire area using the stage name *Cody*.

Perhaps the last word should go to Harold Ody who farmed at Clattinger Farm, Oaksey in the 1970s, one of Noah and Sarah's many descendants, a great grandson of Walter and Elizabeth from Flaxlands Farm. Born in 1918 to Walter Noah and Sarah Melinda Bence Ody, Harold recalled a lifetime of hard graft. His parents farmed at Dauntsey and both Harold and his brother drew no wages for their work. 'If they needed pocket money their father gave it to them, but they needed very little, Harold said, ' records Huxley in her book *Gallipot Eyes - A Wiltshire Diary*. But life had been even harsher for the

young Walter Noah, born in 1885. An accident at the family farm in Dauntsey resulted in the death of his father Noah who was killed when thrown from a pony and trap. He is buried at St. James the Great, Dauntsey where his gravestone reads simply:

*In memory of  
My dear husband  
Noah Ody  
Who died Novr. 6<sup>th</sup> 1896  
Aged 34 years*

Harold Walter died twenty years after he made his contribution to Huxley's book. His memorial reads.

*In  
loving memory  
of my dear husband  
Harold Walter Ody  
died 1<sup>st</sup> June 1994  
aged 76 years*

He lies close to the grave of the two children he survived, Elizabeth Joanna 1956-1977 and Nicholas Walter 1958-1962 at All Saints Church, Oaksey, in the village where he had lived for so many years.

Inevitably, few of Noah and Sarah Ody's descendants are still employed in agriculture today - Harold was probably one of the last. But it had once been very different as Harold recalled in 1974. '*You'll always find Ody's living way out in the middle of a field*'.

#### Editorial footnote

Readers will be grateful to Frances Bevan for this account of the Ody family: information about her book *The Lydiards. A Tale of Two Parishes* maybe obtained by e-mail on [francesbevan@hotmail.com](mailto:francesbevan@hotmail.com)

# GEORGE RICHARD (1761-1824), 3rd VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

## AND HIS FAMILIES

by Brian Carne

[This account of Lord Bolingbroke and his family serves to draw together some of the information that has already appeared, over the years, in twenty issues of *Report*. It is, in effect, an extended index to previous articles with new material that has emerged more recently. References to particular issues appear in the text within square brackets, with the issue number in bold and the relevant pages in ordinary type.

Sir Roland Gibbs generously allowed the St.John family papers, which he inherited from his elder brother, to be transcribed before he deposited them in the Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office in Trowbridge. The first collection of these papers has already appeared in *Report* [27, 28, and 29]. All but a very little of the second collection was transcribed as 'St.John Papers from America' last year, and copies, price £5, are available at Lydiard Park. What was not included in that publication - mainly domestic items - are included in this account.

The principal sources I have used over the years, in addition to the St.John family papers [ *W&S C.R. O.*] and those in the possession of Peter Lesoing [*Lesoing MS*] are: for Charlotte Collins, the letters that were deposited in Winchester College Archives (M/PW/196 A-C) by Mrs Jervoise [*Jervoise MS*] and the letter in the Dorset C.R.O. (D.289) that was deposited by Sir Philip Williams [ *Williams' MS*]; for George Richard's liaison with Mary Beauclerk, *Betsy Sheridan's Journal*, ed. William LeFanu (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1960); for information about his time in the United States, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree. Travels through America in 1797-1799, 1805*, ed. Metchie J.E. Budka (New Jersey Historical Society, 1965); and for the settlements he made on his family, the Mortgage Deeds in the possession of Swindon Corporation [34 49-52] and his will [22 35-39.]

### SYNOPSIS

George Richard was the elder son of Frederick (1732-87), 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, and his wife Lady Diana Spencer (1734-1808), elder daughter of Charles, 3rd Duke of Marlborough, and sister of Lord Robert Spencer. Frederick was dissolute and a spendthrift [21 15-46]. He divorced his wife in 1768 on the charge of adultery with Topham Beauclerk, whom she promptly married. Lady Diana had, before the divorce, borne a daughter Mary (1766-1851) and a son (born and died 1767) by Topham Beauclerk.

Little is known about George Richard's childhood, but there is a reference to his being admitted to Wandsworth School.<sup>1</sup> He later had the Rev. Thomas Collins as tutor, presumably living *en famille*.

He was returned as Member of Parliament for Cricklade at a by-election on 12 June 1782, at the age of twenty-one. Parliament was prorogued in March 1784, and in the general election later that year he stood for Wells but was unsuccessful. In parliament George Richard followed Charles James Fox (d.1806), with whom he and at least one member of his family maintained a long friendship [29 68, 70, 74]. It is reported of George Richard's time as a Member that he was 'not very remarkable for sage deliberations or for deep researches into the speculative points of politics.'<sup>2</sup>

In 1783 George Richard married Charlotte Collins (d.1804), second daughter of his tutor the Rev. Thomas Collins (c.1728-1804) of Winchester School. They had three children: George, Mary, and Henry the future 4th Viscount.



George Richard's half-sister Mary, daughter of his mother by Topham Beauclerk, visited Lydiard Tregoze, the St. John's Wiltshire home. George Richard became enamoured of her, and Mary became pregnant. Charlotte 'went abroad with her and nursed her in her lying-in. Yet so harden'd were they in vice, that she was soon after with child again. Lady B- again acted the same part, and then the family return'd to England.'<sup>3</sup> George Richard and Mary set up home in Paris as Mr and Mrs Barton. Four boys in all were born of this liaison: Charles, George, Robert, and Edward Barton, who were born before 1793. George Richard tired of the liaison, and Mary Beauclerk, with an annuity from George Richard, married Count Jenison Walworth of Heidelberg, Germany. The Barton boys went to the United States.

To avoid the scandal of her husband's incestuous elopement, Charlotte, went to Italy with her three young children, her father, and a sister. Her presence in Vicenza appears in letters and journals from November 1793 until January 1795, and in Venice from 1 June 1796.<sup>4</sup> She returned to Lydiard, and was broken-hearted over the death of her elder son in 1803. She sought relief from a debilitating illness at Hot Wells at Bristol, and died there in 1804. Her only daughter and her father also died in 1804.

By 1793 George Richard had formed a new liaison, with Baroness Isabella Antonia Marianne Charlotte Sophia von Hompesch-Bolheim (d.1848), then aged about seventeen. His wife was still alive, so they went through at least one form of marriage before a Roman Catholic priest in Germany. In February 1794 their first child was born dead in London. The following year their second child George Frederick was born, also in London. To avoid, at best, social ostracism or, at worst, the charge of bigamy, George Richard and his latest family sailed for the United States. He and Isabella became Mr and Mrs Belasise.

#### ST. JOHN PAPERS FROM AMERICA

In the United States a life-long friendship was forged between George Richard and Thomas Barclay (1753-1830), the British Consul General in New York, who later acted as his agent in America. Barclay hoped that his friend would exert his influence to obtain preferment for his son Thomas in the Navy. After the death of Consul Barclay, his sons continued to give what help they could to the affairs of the Bolingbroke family in England. A son 'Captain Barclay' was in London in 1806, and sailed for India in June 1807. As Major Barclay he was in London in 1811. From other letters in the St. John archive, we learn that he was friend and banker to Henry Joseph when they were in France in 1814/15. Consul Barclay tried to interest George Richard in land speculation in Upper Canada.

On 29 March 1798 Liberty Hall with twenty-two acres in Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, was purchased by George Richard and Isabella from Brockhurst Livingston and his wife Catherine.

In 1804 George Richard's circumstances changed. His wife Charlotte died, as did their daughter Mary and Charlotte's father. On 1 August 1804 George Richard and Isabella were married in New York, by which time they had five children, with a sixth being born soon after the marriage. Nothing now prevented them from returning to Lydiard except for the sale of their American home. The opportunity was taken by George Richard and his wife to join Julian Niemcewicz on a journey to Niagara in 1805.

The sale of Liberty Hall and its land presented a problem. The purchase of real estate for cash was not popular. It was easier to sell on long credit or in exchange for other property. On 31 May 1806 Liberty Hall was 'sold' to Thomas Eddy at a valuation of \$12,500 (about £2,800). In exchange George Richard received 8,854 acres of land in some of the places he had visited on the journey to Niagara. This land was placed in trust for the benefit of the five children who had been born in America, or the survivors of them, when the youngest surviving child had reached the age of twenty-one. The Hon. Ferdinand (1804-65) was the youngest of the five, so the trust was to operate until 1825. From the very beginning there were problems. Great difficulty was experienced by Thomas Eddy in obtaining a good title to

these lands and a proper valuation. Thomas Barclay, while he was alive, ensured that taxes were paid on the land, but there does not appear to have been adequate supervision and letting of the land. George Richard died in 1824. The Hon. Ferdinand attained the age of twenty-one in October 1825, and the recommendation was that the tracts of land should be sold by auction, but it was realised that they could only be sold on long credit. It was suggested that an agent should be appointed by the beneficiaries or, better still, that one of the older boys should come to America and live frugally, cultivating the land perhaps for fifteen to twenty years. It was reported in 1833 that much timber had been cut, that taxes had been unpaid, and that squatters had moved on to some of these tracts of land. William James, the eldest of the beneficiaries, decided to go to America and was there by December 1834, when a conveyance was completed by which the survivors of the original five - Henry Joseph and the Hon. Ferdinand, then living in Florence - relinquished their interest in the lands for a nominal sum to enable William James to be able to sell on behalf of all three of them. It was reported in 1836 that William James had obtained \$20-25,000 from the sale of part of the lands and that he expected to receive as much or more when the remainder was sold. Henry Joseph and Ferdinand appear to have received only £250 each, William James died in 1850 at Boulogne, Henry Joseph died in 1856. Ferdinand instituted litigation in America for the remaining unsold land in 1856, and Antonia, one of the residual beneficiaries, received \$750 (about £170) in 1857.

The land attached to Liberty Hall was not sold in 1806. These lands were not sold until 1818. Thomas Eddy tried to sell Liberty Hall in 1807: it was eventually purchased by Niemcewicz and later renamed 'Ursino' in his honour.

Running through the Liberty Hall farm lands was a turnpike road. Before they left America George Richard purchased 300 Morris Turnpike Shares for \$6,000, to be paid in instalments, in the name of his wife Isabella. The attempt was made in 1807 to sell them in case war was declared between England and America. In 1817 the prospects of the turnpike road were considered to be good, but the coming of the railway and travel by steam boats devalued the shares as revenue was reduced. By 1820 the shares were worth no more than \$10 each, and Lady Bolingbroke was urged to sell them in 1829. By 1833 the shares were possibly worth \$7, by 1834 \$5; they were declared to be unsalable in 1839. No dividend was paid in 1844. The following year the valuation was not more than \$2.50 a share or \$750 for the full 300 shares if a buyer could be found. By 1846 Lady Bolingbroke was urged to sell the stock for whatever it may realise. The St. John papers do not record what happened to the stock.

George Richard and his family sailed from America on 6 June (*Niemcewicz*, p.283) or 11 June 1806, and arrived back in England on 7 July. (They left furniture to be sold, and, by a later ship, two pipes and two casks of wine, five boxes, and two trunks were sent on to them.) The services of Dr Prince were enlisted, especially as Lady Bolingbroke was again pregnant. He accompanied the family on the voyage, in all being paid for four months' service at \$100 a month. In July 1806 a stillborn boy was born in London. William Reid also travelled with them, and arrived back in America in July 1807. He was given \$500 stock by way of reward, purchased part of the Liberty Hall land, and eventually set up a grocery store in William Street, New York.

'The St. Papers from America' tell us something of the friends they had during their stay in the United States, among whom was James Ricketts (1754-1826), Captain of the 60th Regiment of Royal Americans of the British Army. He inherited family estates in Jamaica, in New Jersey, and in Hammersmith, not far from Holland Park. During their stay in England from 1805 the Ricketts family spent a number of Christmases at Lydiard Tregoze. James Ricketts was back at Elizabeth Town in 1816, and William James visited the family there in 1838. It was his daughter Sarah Eliza Julia Ann Kennedy Lawrence (1801-86) who wrote the letter which appeared in *The New York Times*. She corresponded with Isabella (d.1822) and Antonia (d.1826) until they died.

The Ricketts' farm at Elizabeth Town was looked after by Mr Palmer and his wife Maria with their five children. Maria Palmer corresponded volubly and effusively with Lady Bolingbroke. After the death of her husband she was in financially straightened circumstances and looked to Lady Bolingbroke as one of her benefactors, whom she visited in Torquay, probably in 1844. It was Maria Palmer whom Lady Bolingbroke consulted about the possibility of obtaining a living in the United States for her son the Rev. George Frederick.

Christopher Robert (c.1749-1827), was another friend. Born in America, he went to the island of Domingo and amassed there a considerable fortune as a lawyer (*Niemcewiczp.287*). He lived in a fine house just outside Elizabeth Town.

In the archives of the Catholic University of Notre Dame, New Orleans, there is a letter, dated 29 January 1806, in which the Rev. John Sebastian Tisserant wrote that he had that month travelled to New York in company with Mr Belasise and had returned with him to Elizabeth Town. He may have been in England in 1807. In the Catholic University archives there is a letter from John Cheverus, dated 3 February 1808, in which it is stated that Tisserant was in England but may be in difficulties there and would also be unable to visit his sisters in Germany if war were to break out between England and America. George Richard made provision for Tisserant in his will (1820) for a legacy of £500 to be paid *'in lieu and satisfaction of an Annuity I promised to give him.'*

#### THE FAMILY BACK IN ENGLAND

George Richard and his family returned to England in 1806, and took up residence at Lydiard. Early in 1808 he was in Bath, presumably for his health, and, later in that year, in Scotland. In a letter, dated 4 September 1808, Henrietta, Countess of Bessborough, to Lord Leveson Gower, addressed from Killin, at the west end of Loch Tay in the Grampians, she wrote<sup>5</sup>:

*'We went to the falls of Moness. While Ld.B. [Lord Bessborough] was drawing, W. [William] and I scrambled up the rock: I sat to rest on a stone while he went on to explore. After a little while I was startled by hearing my name. I look'd up and saw a Man I did not know standing by me (the noise of the water had hinder'd my hearing him come). He again repeated my name, and said: "Have time and misfortune completely altered me that you can find no trace to recollect me by? I never saw Ly. B. before, but I knew Ly. Duncannon, and still more Harriet Spencer too well not to recollect you immediately. " I stared at him, and growing quite frighten'd got up, thinking he was mad; but he took hold of my hand, and said: "Look at me again. " I did so, and his Spencer face and Moving (more than any thing else) made me recollect him: it was Ld. Bolingbroke, but so much alter'd from what he was formerly. I never saw any creature so agitated, but yet neither his long banishment, his crimes, and sufferings, seem to have subdued the violence of his Character.'*

George Richard and his wife visited France in 1817, and he died in Pisa in 1824: and undated newspaper report in the St. John Papers states that he went there for *'the re-establishment of his daughter's health'*. Lady Bolingbroke took up residence in Torquay, where she died on 12 July 1848. A lancet-shaped brass plate was erected on the south wall of the nave of Lydiard Tregoze church in their memory.

#### CHARLOTTE COLLINS

There was an understandable denigration of George Richard's first wife on the part of those who took the part of Isabella. *Lesoing MS* [31 38] states that Isabella *'satisfied her conscience'* in eloping with George Richard *'by considering his first marriage a morganatic one.'* A morganatic marriage is one

contracted with a woman of 'unequal blood' without conferring either title or status on her and without allowing any right of succession to their offspring. Such was not the status of the existing marriage to Charlotte Collins. Julia Lawrence's version of the marriage [6 112] is equally uncomplimentary:

*Lord Bolingbroke, when a youth, was placed with a private tutor, who aided his daughter, a woman much older than the young man, in her design to marry him. They succeeded in their plan ...*

Charlotte's coffin plate in the vault of Lydiard Tregoze church states that she was 44 when she died on 11 January 1804: she was probably born in 1759. At most she was two years older than George Richard. It must be left to the romantic novelist to decide whether the scholarly father [6 95], second master at Winchester College and holder of two rectories 'aided his daughter in her design to marry' George Richard. She appears to have been a loyal and loving wife and mother, but her sister described her as a 'mouse' [JervoiseMS]. Of the death of her elder son George, she wrote:

*' the separation from this belov'd object of my tender care for 19 years stings me to the heart... Providence supported me wonderfully in the last trial, I never felt my own debility, & had the resolution never to leave the dear angel 'till he had breathed his last - and I kiss'd his dear beautiful face every day 'till it was necessary to have his coffin soddered [sic.]' [Jervoise MS Letter III].*

Charlotte's elder sister Sarah married Philip Williams, rector of Compton. George Richard and Charlotte were married in Compton rectory on 26 February 1783. The witnesses were her father and Jeremiah Dyson, who married Charlotte's younger sister Elizabeth.

#### THE FIRST FAMILY

Lydiard Park was let to a tenant, so George Richard and Charlotte lived the first part of their married life in rented accommodation. The parishes where their three children were baptised may indicate where they were resident: George (d.1803) was baptised at More-Critchill on 4 January 1784 and Mary (d.1804) was baptised at Lytchett Matravers on 9 March 1786. The 1861 Census gives the birth place of Henry (1786-1851 as 'Fighfield', presumably Fyfield, Hampshire.

#### THE BARTON BOYS

Four sons, Charles, George, Robert, and Edward, were born to George Richard and his half-sister Mary Beauclerk in Paris. In 1794 George Richard made an allowance to Mary, from whom he had parted, and conveyed certain properties to Lord Robert Spencer, his uncle, Jeremiah Dyson, his first wife's brother-in-law, and John Wickens, his solicitor, as trustees to provide £100 for each of the boys.

The St.John Papers from America begin with accounts for the maintenance and expenses of three of these Barton boys who were being brought up in the United States. (Nowhere is the surname 'Barton' mentioned, but it would be extraordinary to discover that there were three more boys of the same Christian name who were the responsibility of George Richard.) It may be that the Barton boys preceded George Richard to America by perhaps two years.

Charles began a naval career. In the accounts which end in April 1803 he has been bought a quadrant and navigational instruments and a gift has been given to the Captain of the ?Montiallo, who presumably has taken Charles into his crew. *Lesoing MS* [31 38] records the family tradition that Charles was killed in one of Nelson's battles.

Edward followed a medical career, possibly trained in England, and returned to New York in October 1817. He settled in Philadelphia, receiving £50 a quarter allowance from his father and was assistant



to Dr Dorsey. He reported to his father in 1819 that the practice was not doing very well and in 1820 that he was having not much better success. He left for the south of France in July 1821 to spend, he hoped, the following winter there to cure his chest trouble. Thomas Barclay was of the opinion that there was no hope of his recovery. In 1824 George Richard received the balance of Edward's estate, amounting to \$241.05.

George is reported as having settled in Boston. In 1819 he was working for a Mr Eddy, and by 1820 had established himself as a Commission Merchant under the auspices of Welles & Williams of Boston. In the 1828 indenture at Lydiard Park George was stated to be alive at the time, but in another indenture of 1842 it is stated that he was by then dead.

This leaves Robert. There are two possible references to him. Thomas Eddy wrote to George Richard in 1807 and wished to be kindly remembered to George - that is, George Frederick, George Richard's eldest son by Isabella Hompesch - and 'Robert'. In 1817 Thomas Barclay wrote to George Richard commiserating over the death of 'your dear Robert to whom George Richard was 'devotedly attached. He was nearly equally beloved of her Ladyship, who on every occasion evinced her regard and love for him'. George Richard and Isabella did not have a son Robert. It would therefore appear that they took Robert Barton *en famille* with them to America. This may offer a solution to a problem that arises from the will (1802) of Charles James Fox (d.1806). In that will Fox bequeaths to 'Robert Stephen, a youth now living with Lord Viscount Bolingbroke in America' a half share of a legacy Fox had yet to receive. There is another problem that can be solved in the same way. By the time of their departure from America in 1806 George Richard and his wife had six children, but Niemcewicz, normally a most careful reporter of facts, wrote (p.283), 'Lord and Lady Bolingbroke... returned to England with their seven lovely children.' Robert Barton could very well be included in the seven.

The affection that Lady Bolingbroke has for one of her husband's sons by a former liaison is testimony to her magnanimity. It is interesting to note in this context that Edward Barton wrote in 1819 to Lady Bolingbroke as his 'friend'.

#### ISABELLA, LADY BOLINGBROKE

*Niemcewicz* p.lii, n.17, states that Isabella von Hompesch was niece of the last Grand Master of Malta, Ferdinand von Hompesch (1744-1805) [24 62-65]. The St.John papers has a select pedigree of the family which does not mention Ferdinand. It shows that Isabella Antonia Marianne Charlotte Sophia von Hompesch zü Bolheim was the daughter of Franz Carl Baron von Hompesch zü Bolheim, the son of Johann Wilhelm Baron von Hompesch zü Bolheim and his wife Isabella, daughter of Count Bylandt zü Rheist. Isabella's mother was Antonia von Hacke, daughter of Ludwig Anton Baron von Hacke zü Winterburg and his wife Anna Theodora, daughter of Hermann von Nachtendruck zü ?Germeniel. Isabella had three brothers, Baron Charles (d.1812), Baron Christian, and Baron Ferdinand, two at least of whom saw service in the German Legion of the British Army. In the St.John papers there is also the information that the Hompesch family hailed from Westphalia but migrated to Austria when Napoleon gave Westphalia to his brother Jerome, and lived in Galicia and Moravia.

Julia Lawrence,<sup>6</sup> in a letter to *The New-York Times*, 29 January 1877 [6 112], portrayed Isabella as the innocent convent-educated girl, 'with no knowledge of the world, innocent, accomplished, sweet-tempered, and confiding', who completely trusted George Richard, and implied that the truth of her husband's previous marriage was only made known to her in 1804. Julia Lawrence accused George Richard, therefore, of consistent duplicity and deception.

Augustus John Foster (1780-1819) described Isabella as 'anything but handsome; a little square German with broken teeth, but they say very amiable.'<sup>7</sup> *Niemcewicz* p.283 says of her:



*'although she was not beautiful, [she] possessed not only all the virtues but also all the graces. She was calm and sweet with a lustful husband, the best possible mother, a good friend, with a heart in which trust follows respect once given, a heart which was not hardened and everlastingly closed with a lock as the hearts of the inhabitants of this country usually are. '*

Isabella is portrayed as a saint. George Richard cannot have been an easy man to live with. She also had the almost impossible job of containing as far as she was able the disparate elements of his families - her step-son Henry who was the heir apparent to the titles and estates of his father, the four illegitimate Barton boys with whom she seems to have been on good terms, and her own children, of whom only the last three were legitimate. A discordant note about Isabella was struck by Henrietta Frances (Magrath), wife of her eldest son George Frederick. She published an anonymous thirty-eight page pamphlet in 1846, *Ten Days Abroad*.<sup>8</sup> The vilification of Isabella is about her dealings with money and the settlement on herself and her children of such assets as were under her control.

The pamphlet recounts the scene at the reading of George Richard's will twenty-two years earlier, as re-enacted by Henrietta's husband George Frederick for her benefit and the benefit of their nephew Henry the future 5th Viscount Bolingbroke [8 38]:

*That when his [George Frederick's] father's will was read, her [Isabella's] fury passed all bounds at finding him so well provided for, that she clenched her hands, stamped, and coming close up to him, grinned in his face, and swore he would never have the benefit of one of the bequests contained in it [the chance of becoming rector of Lydiard Tregoze]. Here he [George Frederick] came close up to Henry, and imitating his mother's infernal grin, contracted and convulsed his features into an expression so demoniac, that it can never again be absent, I fear, from my "mind's eye". In that hideous grin were concentrated the malignity of a fiend, the ferocity of a wild beast, and all the bad passions of human nature.*

Isabella's loyalty to and affection for her husband, however, cannot be doubted. In the St. John papers is the draft of an unfinished and undated letter in her hand, written before 1822. Two daughters are mentioned, they are Isabella (d.1822) and Antonia (d.1826). 'Dyson' is Jeremiah Dyson, who married Elizabeth Collins, younger sister of George Richard's first wife. He was one of the trustees in the settlements that were made by George Richard, on Charlotte and her children, on his half-sister and the four children she had produced for him, and on Isabella and her children.

*Monday*

*My dearest G. Tho' I did not write to you this morning my thoughts were with you for my principal Occupation has been reading over some of your very very old letters which I meant to burn but could not find Courage to part with - after 30 years still to be such a Fool!!*

*yet is it not the greatest Consolation we have left to think that our Affection has stood proof against all the storms & trials of the first years & the sorrows & disappointments of later Times. Our Confidence has gone on increasing & we are now indispensably necessary to each other's happiness - Time & Circumstances have cool'd most of your Friends & death has deprived me of all those who were formerly so devoted to me - we must make up to each other for all we have lost - indeed I thank God that your Life & Love have been preserved to me as my last & best Comfort when Youth & Health are fast declining & when at the last I still find myself a Stranger in your Family without having deserved to be treated more unkindly by them than several others belonging to it who to their & my certain knowledge were far more Culpable than I have been - but*

*perhaps I have not much to regret on that score if I am to judge by two or three of the Women I know belonging to the family who are such a Compound of Selfishness, Venom & Vanity that I think it best to let the Girls see as little as possible of them & therefore they can never be any protection to them if I died before they are settled in life - Dyson is the only Person to whose care I would trust my Children he alone comes up to my ideas of friendship & what I always loved in Wil & Joseph - Constancy thro' Life when once attached, & Truth, honour, firmness & goodness in all transactions with those Connected with him.*

*I wish much that you would find out if you see him whether in case of Accidents to you & me he would let the girls live in his family - perhaps you might do this without asking directly: as that is not & I hope will not be necessary: I am not perhaps sufficiently acquainted with his Wife you may think to predetermine upon such a Wish but the ground I go upon is that she is clever & devoted to her duties & that with my Opinion of Dyson's Sense etc I feel sure that he must have made a good Choice & at a time of life too when the passions are not so likely to blind our Judgements.*

*My Eyes ache & so good Night my dearest G. to morrow I may add a few lines after the Post has come in. take care of yourself & write often & bien detaille*

*by the bye I find that in our earliest Correspondence you scolded me for preaching tho' it was not about going to Church & parish duties etc*

#### GEORGE RICHARD'S THIRD FAMILY

The St. John papers contains a listing of George Richard's children by Isabella, written by her:

*Feby 1794 a Boy dead born in London*

*1795 George F born April 29th 1<sup>o</sup> cl. p.m. in London*

*God Father Baron Frederick Dalberg & John Wickens*

*God Mother Baroness Antoinette Dalberg*

*1797 William James born Jan 27th % before 10 a.m. in New York*

*God Father Govr. James Crawford*

*God Mother Miss E Farmer*

*1799 Henry Joseph born Jany 15th between 9 & 10 a.m. Elizabeth Town N. Jersey*

*God Father Mr James Ricketts*

*God Mother Miss Kitty Farmer*

*1800 Isabella Anne Elizabeth born Octr 23rd before 9 o cl. a.m.*

*God Mothers Baroness Marianne B & Mrs Stewart of New London Connecticut*

*God Father Honble Robert Kennedy*

*1802 Antonia Diana born Oct: 23rd 10 o cl. a.m.*

*God Mothers Baroness Antoinette D & Lady Di Beauclerk*

*God Father Count Julien Niemcewicz Elizabeth Town NJ.*

[1804 1 August the parents married]

*1804 Ferdinand born Octr 16th between 1 & 2 o cl. p.m. Elizabeth Town N.J.*

*God Father Baron Ferdinand Hompesch*

*God Mother Mrs Niemcewicz*

[The family arrived in England on 7 July 1806, with Dr Prince as medical attendant.]

*July 1806 a Boy dead born in London*

*1807 Charles Robert my seventh son born Novr 21st A past midnight Lydiard Wilts*

*God Fathers Lord Robert Spencer & Baron Charles Hompesch*

*God Mother Mrs Winder of Vaynor Park N. W.*

1810 John Jeremiah Dyson born Sepr 28th 4 o cl. p.m.

God Fathers J Dyson Esq & John Winder Esq of Vaynor Park

God Mother Mrs Ashe. John died at Lydiard June 15th 1812

1814 A Boy dead born early in London

Dearest Angelic Isabella died April 24th 1822 at Richmond in consequence of fright after

14 days illness & at last Brain fever A Seraph's eye a Seraph's Soul was hers

1824 Novr 18th Thursday at Pisa all my earthly happiness destroyed

1826 May 27th lost my heart's comfort Antonia Paris Champs elisees No. 12 bis

Nov 8th Ferdinand married

George Frederick [32 41-5, where there is a photograph of him], attended Eton for a time<sup>9</sup> and then matriculated from Balliol College on 12 February 1813. He took his bachelor's degree in 1816 and his M.A. in 1823. His father purchased the advowson for one turn of Manston rectory, Dorset, and George Frederick became rector on 2 August 1820,<sup>10</sup> remaining there until his death in 1867. His father's will provided that, should the benefice of Lydiard Tregoze become vacant before Ferdinand attained the age of twenty-four - by which time he would also have been ordained priest - then George Frederick should be given it, Ferdinand being given Manston. In the event, Ferdinand was not ordained and the advowson for one turn at Lydiard Tregoze was sold before it became vacant.

At Lydiard Park there is a version of the portrait of Lady Diana Spencer, George's grandmother, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which is signed G.F. St. John and dated 1830. This is the only evidence that appears to have survived of his artistic skill.

He married Henrietta Frances Magrath at St. Nicholas' church, Brighton, Sussex, on 28 January 1830. There were no children of the marriage. It was she who wrote the anonymous pamphlet, *Ten Days Abroad*, in an attempt to shame his mother into giving her son money. Henrietta describes what life was like at the Manston rectory as a result of his poverty:

*The consequences to G. have been, that he was arrested at least three times every fortnight during a period of not less than seven years, that we had not during that period, an article of furniture in the house (not even a bed) we slept on the floor till (from want of repair, I suppose) it became so full of huge rats from the churchyard and river adjoining we could no longer do so in safety, and Mr. Hibbert, of Chalfont, sent G. an old sofa to lie on, and a kind neighbour, Mrs. Baldwin, lent me a bedstead and bed. When Lord B. (the present) came with his daughter, intending to stay with G. for a day or two, - two chairs were brought from the poor-house of the parish for them to sit on, and a farmer gave them beds; of food, there was not sufficient, and it consisted of merely potatoes, bread and cheese and water; there was not so much as a poker in the house. An old gipsy-woman used to come and cook the little provision we had. Still this was not the worst; the house was constantly surrounded by bailiffs, G. was imprisoned during five months of a hot summer, I by allowing money to be raised to release him, on a property that was held in trust, involved myself in an interminable chancery suit with the celebrated Dr. Elliottson. [19 30] Had I not done so, he would have remained there and lost his residence. He did not dare, after this, to go out, even to bury the dead. He dreaded to have a fire in the coldest weather, lest the smoke should betray that he was in the house; was obliged to keep the window shutters closed, and barricaded day and night, winter and summer, and this state of circumstances lasted nearer ten than seven years altogether.*

There can be no doubt that Henrietta hated her mother-in-law. There are no limits to the vituperation that she heaps on her in the pamphlet. Much of what she writes must have been true. On 2 August 1850

Mary Shelley wrote to a friend, 'For you know that poor George St. John is in prison to take the benefit of the Act?'<sup>11</sup> In the St. John papers at Lydiard Park is a printed letter from 'J. Bolingbroke' - almost certainly Lady Bolingbroke, dated 26 October 1837. It is addressed to 'My Dear George':

*I need not say I was sorry for you and myself to receive your letter. The money could not well be spared: however, I have written to Messrs. Fryen and Andrews and sent them a check on Herries to pay for you £14 16s. It is very melancholy for you to be kept in constant hot water. Your only security would be to prevent the possibility of being made answerable for your wife's debts, and then return into the possession of some comfort at last.*

In contrast to the description of the wretched conditions that appear to have existed at Manston rectory, George Frederick had a high standing in the masonic world. He was Chaplain to the Provincial Grand Lodge for the County of Dorset [25 38-44], and moved in that exalted society.

The newspaper report of his funeral records that he was taken ill while conducting divine service in church and died three weeks later.<sup>12</sup> The funeral took place during a very heavy snow fall, with a large attendance of relatives, friends, and parishioners, 'some shielding themselves under umbrellas, others bravely defying the elements, and standing uncovered as the remains of their friend and pastor were lowered into the grave.' The newspaper report ends with a tribute to him:

*As a friend, a warmer hearted more genial gentleman never lived than Mr. St. John. Had he been rich as Croesus, he would have given away his last penny to make a heart glad, or to relieve distress. He was more like a father than a clergyman to his parishioners. His powers of conversation rendered him a bright and agreeable table-companion, and if he was not so strait-laced as some would have clergymen to be, none ever doubted the genuineness of his character, the warmth of his feelings, or the goodness of his heart.*

A brief inscription to his memory - 'for 46 years Rector of this Parish, died Janry 7th 1867 aged 71 years' - was added to an existing wall tablet in Manston church which George Frederick had erected in memory of his brother the Hon. Charles Robert St. John (1807-44).

William James, like two of his younger brothers, entered the Army. A great-uncle and an uncle were Generals in the Army. He married Anne Neville Pedley of Caddington Hall, Hertfordshire. A son of the marriage, John Henry Herbert St. John (d. 1876) served in the New Zealand forces, and has descendants in this country and in New Zealand.

As the eldest of the beneficiaries of the 8,854 acres in the United States held in trust, William James went there in 1838 to try to resolve the tangle which the title to the land had become. He died on 20 August 1850.

Henry Joseph is the correct name of the third son. No doubt due to the fact that he had an elder half-brother called Henry, he used the name 'Joseph' when he joined the Army. He signed letters 'J.H. St. John', which led to the error in earlier articles in Report which called him 'Joseph Henry'. He was the second brother to enter the Army. He was admitted to Sandhurst in 1812, at the age of 13, and his height was recorded then as 4 feet 10 inches. He did grow taller, and succeeded in becoming an officer in the Grenadier Guards. A number of his letters to his parents at Lydiard have survived [29 72-84 and 31 38-41]. The second batch of St. John papers that were received by Sir Roland Gibbs contained more of Henry Joseph's letters. The first one belongs to his early days at Sandhurst, the second is the letter, of which some parts appeared in 31 40-41, and the third is the original of the letter about his involvement in the Battle of Waterloo, where he may have been the youngest officer, which was only known in the version that was published in *The Sir Walter St. John School Magazine* [29 77-79]. All three are here transcribed:

1. An undated letter, addressed to The Viscountess Bolingbroke

R.M.C. Sandhurst

*My dear Mama,*

*I received your letter the other day & I am much obliged to you for it as a letter is quite a rarity to me for you have only sent me three letters this halfyear the 1<sup>st</sup> was something about some game that had 7 lines in it the second about going home & the last was that which you sent me You did not tell me how all went on at Lydiard but I suppose I shall see that au revoir I have passed my examination for upper 1<sup>st</sup> in arithmetic & am to be examined for under 3<sup>d</sup> in french next time*

*I received a letter the day I received yours from a fellow who is just going abroad & is now in Jersey.*

*I had almost forgot one of the principle things which I wrote for I want to ask you to let me have a pair of boots as I came in thin shoes as it was summer & I did not expect to come home again till next Summer you may think it odd that I should ask for boots but less fellows than me wear them here I am going to bring home my regimental coat but don't say a word about it as I want to surprise them all Pray write immediately or else there will not be time to have the boots made pray let me have them I know Papa will let me if you will My love to all & believe me*

*your affectionate son*

*H. J. St John*

*My plans forgoing home to go in a chaise to Reading & then take the coach to Marlbro'. there are four of us go to Reading Fred & two of my greatest cronies*

2. Addressed to Viscount Bolingbroke, Lydiard Park, Swindon, Wilts, the seal is embossed with an octagonal seal, with 'S<sup>T</sup>. J.' in large letters

*Atla Friday March 31st 1815.*

*My dear Mother,*

*You will be surprised at finding that we have left Brussels. I never was so sorry to leave a Town as I was that - it is such a nice Town & the English were so doted upon by the inhabitants - I hope that when we have thrashed this fellow [Napoleon] that we shall go there again - I was on guard the last day & when the order came for marching the next morning at 3 o'clock I could not leave my guard until 3 o'clock in the afternoon & I had to settle every thing between that & 5 o'clock I staid up until 12 o'clock at night with the Guard & then we were relieved*

*Before that I had the honour of ordering a Count Hompèche (a flemish man) at prison he was drinking in a public house with one of our privates & began praising Boney & abusing those present - so our fellow rowed him for it & the Count drew his sword & thrust at one fellow who immediately ran at him took his sword from him & knocked him down & brought him to the guard room - bell at 3 o'clock in the morn & I got my things on my horse & we marched huzzaing all the way through the Town & the people at the windows crying.*

*By the time that we got 3 miles out of the Town I began to feel ashamed of the Guards, half of the men were so tipsy that they kept tumbling into the ditches but really it was so ridiculous that I could not help laughing - here & there you saw a fellow rolling in the mud (it was raining very fast) & another on his back in a ditch so tipsy that he could not*



*speak - we (firstguards) were quartered upon a little village the near Enghien - the men were put in barns & 5 of us officers got into a little room in a cottage, our baggage not come up, wet through, & without anything to eat - This was about 12 o'clock in the day but we sent a man into Enghien to buy some meat & bread & we made the people of the cottage cook for us. there was only one bed in the room so we gave it up to a fellow who was not very well & 3 of us made our servants get half a dozen trusses of straw out of the barn & we slept on the straw (& glad enough to get that even) - Oh the pleasures of campaigning!!!*

*But really it is good fun, at least not too much of it - I have got into comfortable quarters here - I went yesterday to see a Grotto near here that took 7 years making. It is a most beautiful thing. Lord Wellington is to be at Brussels today - 50 thousand Prussians have passed Namur & the remainder of the allies are crossing the Rhine as fast as possible & what is best L<sup>d</sup> Wellington commands the whole. The French have been accustomed to live upon other nations lately during the wars but now we'll shew them what it is for other nations to live upon them - that poor silly fool the Duke of Berri was at Brussels the other day in the greatest fright imaginable, not content with being frightened himself but wanting to make these poor fellows frightened also. The old King is going to live for the present I believe at Prince of Orange's Palace at London. What do you think that your friends the Prussians did when they were at Brussels? Very likely my father remembers that there were a great many statues in the park, well these gents used to amuse themselves with knocking off the noses of these statues & the people have put on false noses to all the statues, they [the Prussians] are detested by the Belgians. Col Barclay told me a story of a Prussian that he says is a fact - a Prussian Officer was travelling & at a post house just as he was starting he asked his servant whether he had got every thing - the servant said yes but immediately said no sir I have forgotten one thing - what is that? why sir I have forgotten to flog the post master - why has he deserved it? - no Sir not this time but he may do something - so he flogged the poor fellow.*

*I suppose Col Barclay has written to my Father to say that I was obliged to draw 40 pounds upon him at Herries & Farquhar - I told Col B. that I did not know what to do for I had to get a horse & several other things & I had not near money enough (he always kept my money for me before he went to England) so he told me that he knew that my father would not be angry if I drew 50 pounds upon him - When he knew that there was an absolute necessity for it & that we would write & tell my father, he is at Brussels now*

-

*Saturday*

*I was forced to give over writing yesterday because I had no more paper & I had to attend a court martial. A private was tried for being 5 days away from the regiment he was sentenced to receive 100 lashes which he received the same day & if all the regiments flogged like ours the soldiers would not have much reason to complain - The other day, I was standing in the Place Royale in Brussels when a gentleman whom I had never seen before & who appeared to be a very good humoured sort of a fellow came up to me & said, You had a brother on board of my Brother's ship, & he asked me how Bob was, whether he had quite recovered his health &c - and he turned out to be Gen<sup>l</sup>. Adam's brother to Cap<sup>t</sup>. A - he commands a division here -*

*afterwards he began very good naturedly quizzing me about the difference in size between Bob & myself - I dined with Gen<sup>l</sup>. Maitland yesterday who commands the brigade of Guards in fact they know better now than to put anyone else but a Guardsman at the head of us. Even in Spain S<sup>r</sup> William Stewart who had the command of our division*

could not manage them so at last he gave up the command of us & L<sup>d</sup>. Wellington said to him, Why Stewart you could not manage these Gentlemen's sons? and he said that even when he had us himself a long time ago he could not do it - last night an order came out for us to be ready to march at a moment's notice. As soon as the people heard of it they were quite sorry for they say that they never saw any troops behave near so well in a garrison as the English it seems so odd to them not having all their things stolen - they are forced to hide their things from the french - to give you an idea of the discipline of the french soldiers, if an inhabitant has anything stolen and he complains to the officers the men tell them that if they say anything to them that in some battle they will kill them - in fact the subaltern officers in the french service have not the least command over the soldiers.

When we leave this place I suppose that there will be a difficulty in conveying letters to England so you must not expect to hear from me very often indeed but I will write by every person that goes home.

Pray remember me to all  
& believe me your affectionate Son,  
J H St. John

3. Addressed to Viscount Bolingbroke, Lydiard Park, Swindon, Wilts.

Bavay 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1815

My dear Father,

I wrote the other day (the evening of the battle) 9 lines to say I was safe - I will now give you an account of all that has happened - On the evening of Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> we heard that the French had attacked the Prussians under Blucher & the next morning we left Enguien at 3 o'clock & we marched from that time till 5 in the evening (making 3 halts) at 5 in the evening we (the Guards) came up to a wood on the side of a road where the french were, we entered the wood at the End of the wood near the road having open country to the left of the road, & drove the french clean through it but as we had no cavalry or artillery up we could not stay in the open country so the french cavalry drove us into the wood again

This sort of work went on till dark when we left the wood and bivouacked all night we lost about 4 officers & 500 men in our brigade (the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade was not engaged) everybody said that they had never been under such a hot fire for so long a time - a sergeant of the french came up with his bayonet fixed to one of our officers who is a very little fellow & told him that he must surrender himself prisoner, No says our officer you forget that you are a frenchman and I an Englishman so you are my prisoner, Eh bien, says the frenchman, chacun son lot, et je me rends votre prisonnier - that night the french attacked the Prussians & licked them taking away 18 or 20 pieces of cannon and the prussians losing a good many men killed & wounded so when L<sup>d</sup> Wellington sent over to the Prussian head Quarters they were all gone and we had to retreat towards Brussels immediately - Our army took up a position on the right of the road leading from Nivelles to Brussels some part of it crossing the road, - that evening the French came up & there was some cannonading & some slight affair between our cavalry & theirs - We bivouacked that night & the next morning about 9 o'clock there was a great deal of manoeuvring without any fighting - at last they say L<sup>d</sup> Wellington looking at one of their movements said "Can they be such fools" & immediately he gave orders for the army to be drawn up & the french attacked us & then began a battle in which battle I flatter myself that the 1<sup>st</sup> Division (composed only of the 3 regiments of Guards) distinguished themselves not a little. We were drawn up (I speak of our division as I saw none others

near) in squares and we were then under a most tremendous shelling for 2 hours then the thing that we expected happened the french Cavalry charged our squares it was pretty work they charged us & we beat them off the whole squares firing at them (the Brunswick infantry are some of the finest troops that ever were) they were next us from us they charged them they beat them off & so did all then they opened another most tremendous cannonade for some time we then heard musket balls whizzing over our heads & one Division alone took ground to the left just on the ridge of a hill - So [a tiny drawing of the hill, with a tiny 'o' at the foot of the hill, and an arrow pointing away from the top of the hill on the other side] the o is where the french Imperial guards were & the arrow is where we were - We were then ordered to lay down till the Imperial guards came up close - The Prisoners of them all say that Bunipate came up to them & said his last hope was in them & that if they broke our point the plunder of Brussels would be their reward

When we laid down the Imperial guard thought we were gone & they came up very fast the moment they came near we jumped up & poured in such a volley upon them that they could not stand it and from that time (?more of our troops coming up) there was a complete defeat of the french, it was a second Leipsic with slaughter - Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade behaved uncommonly well at a house in a wood, you will most likely see the accounts in the despatches - L<sup>d</sup> W. said to General Byng who commanded our division towards the latter end of the day "Well my dear Byng I have observed the Guards through the whole day & I am more pleased with them than you can conceive" Yesterday he said to him "I have not forgotten the guards in my dispatches, I do believe that they gained the battle" - a very pleasant thing to have said of us by a man who seldom praised us much. Well now my fingers are tired, so how are all in Wiltshire it is almost up with Boney - here at least. Give my love to all & tell them that I often think of them & hope soon to see them at Lydiard if things go on well we entered France yesterday Well good bye, as I am sleepy and hungry after a long march & can't get to supper because the man of the house is bothering [ ..missing.. ] how fond they are of the English.

I remain,  
 Your dutiful & affectionate Son,  
 J H St. John

Barclay is safe

Henry Joseph entered Lincoln's Inn in November 1828, and retired from the Army in 1832. On 6 May 1829 he married Lady Isabella Frances FitzRoy (1792-1875) at St. George's, Hanover Square. She was a daughter of George Henry (1760-1844), 4th Duke of Grafton, and Lady Charlotte Maria Waldegrave (1761-1808), second daughter of James, 2nd Earl Waldegrave. Lady Charlotte, one of the 'Ladies Waldegrave' in Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture, after the death of the husband became Duchess of Gloucester by her marriage to a brother of George III.

Henry had one daughter, Antonia Georgina Isabella St. John, and died in 1856. Antonia placed a plaque in his memory in the Guards' Chapel at Wellington Barracks.

Isabella Anne Elizabeth and Antonia Diana died unmarried, the former in 1822, the latter in Paris in 1826. A copy of Antonia's will is in the St. John family papers. Executed on 17 December 1824, with A.W. Tayler, Chaplain in the Hon. East India Company Service, J.H. Peebles, physician at Florence, and Horace Hall, banker at Florence, as witnesses, it simply says, 'I give and bequeath to my dear Mother Isabella Viscountess Bolingbroke all property of every description of which I am possessed.' Lady Bolingbroke is the sole executor. Probate was granted on 17 June 1828, and the estate sworn as under £2,000.

The Hon. Ferdinand [9 33-35] was born two months after his parents married. He it was who took charge of such of the St. John archive as has survived as the 'St. John family papers', and it was from him that the present Viscount Bolingbroke is descended.

In 1823 Ferdinand was appointed as an attaché to the British Mission at Florence, then the capital of Tuscany. On 8 November 1826 he married Selina Charlotte, daughter of Colonel Maurice St. Leger Keatinge, of Narraghmore, co. Kildare, but, at the time, of Paris, at the British Embassy in Paris. The first of their four sons, Maurice William Ferdinand - the future Canon St. John - was born on 14 November 1827 at Casa Bini, Via dei Cresci, Florence, and baptised on 16 December 1827 by Archdale Wilson Tayler, late chaplain to the Hon. East India Company and acting chaplain to the Mission at Florence and chaplain to the British Legation, with Lord Burghersh, H.M. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Tuscany, as witness.

In 1835 Ferdinand was in Rome. An incident took place which led to a duel between him and Count d'Aragon, in which the latter was shot dead [9 44-45, 20 1-10]. Ferdinand and his assistants tried to flee the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in which the duel had taken place, but without success. They were arrested in the Papal States, and held in custody in Terracina until intense diplomatic activity led to their release in mid-May. Nowadays we are accustomed to the media hyping up items of news: this tendency is not new. A newspaper report in 1835 stated, *'The parties were at Rome during Holy Week, and the quarrel is said to have occurred at an assembly at Torloni's, where the daughter of an English General (Sir H.C.) had 'turned both their heads'.* In the St. John papers is an undated cutting from a newspaper, possibly *The Times*, which reported the death at the age of 91 of Miss Margaret Alice Stanley, daughter of the Hon. Charles James Fox Stanley and his wife Frances, daughter of General Sir Henry Frederick Campbell. The report further states that, *'This lady' - the reference must be to Frances, Margaret's mother - 'had been the subject of a duel in 1835 - just a century ago - between the Hon. Frederick St. John and the Neapolitan Prince Cottrofiano, Count d'Aragon, the latter being shot dead'.*

The account which Ferdinand gave to the Secretary to Special Mission to Rome was communicated by the latter to the Minister Resident at Florence. It tells a different story:

*On the evening of the 20th. ult<sup>o</sup>., being Easter Monday, the Bankers Torloni had invited a very numerous company to see the fire-works of Castile St. Angelo from their house opposite. When the signal was given for commencing, a rush took place towards the balcony, and Mr. St. John desirous of obtaining good seats for some ladies of his acquaintance was endeavouring to make them pass on.*

*Finding Count d'Aragon stopping the way, Mr. St. John begged him to make room, instead of which that gentleman put forth his arm so as to create more obstruction; whereupon Mr. St. John put aside the arm with his hand, and Count d'Aragon made use of coarse and indecent expressions towards him. Mr. St. John gave no reply; but after having placed the Ladies, he returned to Count d'Aragon and pulled him by the nose. All this occurred with so little disturbance that scarcely anyone became aware of it. Indeed Count d'Aragon must have supposed that the scene had passed entirely unobserved, for he left it unnoticed for three days, when the fact became so notorious, and publicly spoken of that it was impossible for him to remain passive any longer. Instead, however, of applying to Mr. St. John in the usual manner for satisfaction, he wrote him a note full of coarseness, asserting that the indignity said to have been put upon him had never taken place, and if Mr. St. John said so, he was a "liar in his throat". Count d'Aragon being a noted duellist and a most expert fencer, it became evident that his object was to bring on the challenge from the adverse party, in order that he might have*



*the privilege of choosing weapons. Mr. St. John however so baffled him, and put him in the wrong, during the communication which ensued, that it became unavoidable for the Count to fight with any weapons whatever, and as he and Mr. St. John had been in the constant habit of practising together with pistols at a mark, and were precisely of equal strength and dexterity, there could be no reasonable objection on either side to fight with pistols,*

Almost certainly Frances Campbell was one of the ladies in the party, and probably Ferdinand's wife was another. The duel was occasioned by an affront to the ladies, and could have been avoided had an apology been offered.

Ferdinand, his wife, and their children travelled extensively in Europe. In 1853 he published *Rambles in Germany, France, Italy, and Russia in search of sport*, while he was staying at Baden. The book is, as the title states, about 'sport', that is, racing horses and shooting everything he could, from migratory birds to larger prey:

*I passed the week at Duke Maximilian's of Bavaria. We were six guns, and bagged one hundred and two roebuck, five hundred hares, and twenty-five foxes ... During the months of August and September, I shot, to my own rifle, three chamois, twenty-eight stags, and seventeen fallow buck; and, in the course of November and December of the same year, sixteen wild boar, (pp.77-78)*

He gives interesting accounts of stalking capercaillie, blackcock, and chamois. He describes fly fishing for trout and the use of hawks to catch herons. The book is episodic in character, but unfortunately lacking in the necessary dating that would be necessary to connect the biographical details that are sparsely and incidentally included. We read that he weighed fourteen stone, and was fluent in French, German, and Italian. He enjoyed almost unlimited permission to shoot in the King of Bavaria's preserves because of 'the King's former esteem for two of my maternal [Hompesch] uncles, one of whom until his death, had been minister of finance in Bavaria, and the other, a general in the English service, had passed the latter part of his life in Munich' [p.60].

In 1846 he took a lease of a chateau in Baden at the foot of the Kaiser-Stuhl mountain. These were days of great interest for his sons. They were invited to every shooting party that took place within twenty miles of their home, and, most interestingly, saw at first hand the local manifestations of the 1848 revolution.

His eldest son was Canon St. John (1827-1914). The second son was Major John Henry (1829-1912), and there were twin boys, Charles Louis (1831-1897) and Sir Frederick Robert (1831-1923). Both the twin boys were engaged in diplomatic service, the career of the latter took him to Turkey, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, Servia, and Switzerland.

The Hon. Ferdinand died at Pau in 1865.

The Hon. Charles Robert attended Harrow for a time, and was admitted a pensioner at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1824, receiving his M.A. in 1826. He entered the Army, and served with the 95th Regiment in Corfu, then under British colonial rule, until 1831. He had an illegitimate son, Charles Robert St. John [19 3-7 and 20 52-54], who had a long career in mercantile service under the name of 'Charles Roberts'. Charles Robert attended the funeral at Manston of his uncle and benefactor the Rev. George Frederick St. John.

The Hon. Charles Robert married Jane Gibson (1820-99) at St. James's Westminster on 20 April 1841. Jane was a daughter of Thomas Gibson, banker of Newcastle-on-Tyne [18 8-10] and 'his friend' Anne



Sheville. In 1844, after less than three years of marriage, lived apparently at Muddeford in Hampshire, he died at the age of thirty-six, intestate and without issue. His widow maintained good relations with her late husband's family for the rest of her life. After his death she moved to a cottage at Marnhull, Dorset, about five miles from Manston, where her brother-in-law, the Rev. George Frederick St. John, was rector. Seven years after her first marriage, Jane married Sir Percy Shelley, Bt. (1819-89), son of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and his wife Mary Wollstonecraft (née Godwin), author of *Frankenstein*, on 22 June 1848 at St. George's, Hanover Square, the service being conducted by her brother-in-law. The second marriage was happily spent in 'cultured opulence'.

The Hon. John Dyson, the youngest child of the third family, lived for only twenty months, and was buried on 19 June 1812.

## ASSESSMENT OF GEORGE RICHARD

Ancestors of George Richard had built up the family estates by marrying heiresses. George Richard was not swayed by such considerations, and thereby left the family's fortunes in a worse state than he received them. He learned to be a good husband, and Isabella wrote, when he died, '*all my earthly happiness is destroyed*'. He was a caring father to his many children, providing for them as best he could out of his disposable capital and income during his lifetime and by his will [22 35-39].

His great enthusiasm was sport. In 1788 he wrote from Orleans to the royal gunsmith in Paris [29 67] about fitting new firing mechanisms and barrels to four guns - the latest in a series of commissions to him over the previous fourteen months. Niemcewicz [p.249] wrote of George Richard as M. Belasise, [An Indian of the Cayuga tribe] *killed a white man in cold blood. Taken and questioned, he answered that he had no rancor against the dead man but that he had felt a thirst, a pressing need to shed blood that he could not overcome... My travelling companion, M.B, also feels from time to time this thirst and need to shed blood but, as he is kindhearted, that ofpartridge and quail satisfies him, though atpresent he longs to kill a bear.*

His mother wrote in a letter (1801), '*His is the noblest mind spoilt by an entire giving away to Passions, but the fond remains.*'<sup>13</sup> Niemcewicz [p.267] wrote of him, '*Lord Bolingbroke was a man of strong passion, he was, however, both polite and learned.*' These comments echo what was written in a letter to him by 'R.J.' in about 1796:

*The misfortune of your life has been that you have always given way not only to every passion but to every fancy you ever had & that you have never been used to resist the natural violence of your temper. I now see that this disposition remains in full force & that you retain the same obstinacy & willfulness.*

## PORTRAITS

Four portraits of George Richard are known. All but the second one are at Lydiard Park. Two are in pastel, the work of his mother, Lady Diana Beauclerk [11 34] - a portrait of him, aged about four, sitting at a small table, and another, which is in private hands, of him somewhat older, stroking George Selwyn's pug dog, Raton.<sup>14</sup> A watercolour of him, as a young man, was executed by Waller, and, also at Lydiard Park, there is a portrait in oils by or after Hoppner, of him as a middle-aged man.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Carola Hicks, *Improper Pursuits. The Scandalous Life of Lady Di Beauclerk* (Macmillan, 2001), p.165
- 2 Namier & Brook, *History of Parliament: The Commons 1754-1790*(1985), pp. 398-9, 409-11.7 40-41
- 3 *Betsy Sheridan's Journal*, p.176
- 4 John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800* (Yale U.P., 1997), p.102
- 5 *Letters of Lord Granville Leveson Gower* (E.P. Dutton, New York, 1916) p.325. Henrietta Frances, Countess of Bessborough (1761-1821), was a sister of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and a second cousin of George Richard.
- 6 Julia Lawrence was a daughter of James Ricketts (1754-1826) [26 26-34], of Hammersmith, New Jersey, and Jamaica, Captain of the 60th Regiment of Royal Americans of the British Army.
- 7 *The Two Duchesses*, ed. Vere Foster (Blackie & Son), pp.239-40
- 8 *Ten days Abroad* (Strutt, London, 1846). A copy survives in the Bodleian Library.
- 9 *The Eton School Lists from 1791 to 1877*(Eton & London, 1884), p.68b has George Frederick in the list of July 1811 but without any biographical details. The lists are triennial only.
- 10 Bishop of Bristol's Subscription Book
- 11 *Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. Betty T. Bennett (John Hopkins Press, 1988) III p.382. The note there adds, "The Act" refers to the Act of Grace, passed by the Parliament, which applied in cases of imprisonment by a creditor for a civil debt. A prisoner claiming benefit of the Act of Grace was bound, when requested, to execute a disposition of all goods for the behalf of creditors. By means of this act, the law of imprisonment for debt was substantially mitigated. (*Oxford Companion to Law* (OUP, 1980), p.15.)
- 12 The newspaper cuttings appear to have come from the *Sherborne, Dorchester, and Taunton Journal*
- 13 Mrs Stuart Erskine, *Lady Diana Beauclerk: Her Life and Work* (Fisher Unwin, 1903), pp.280-81
- 14 Illustrated in Erskine, *ibid.*, p.58

## SHORTER NOTES

### **MARGARET ST.JOHN (d.1492), abbess of Shaftesbury**

Margaret St.John was a daughter of Sir Oliver St.John (d.1437/8) and his wife Margaret Beauchamp. Some information about her appeared in *Report* 15 (1982) pp.12-15. Elinor C. Murphy, the Shaftesbury Abbey Librarian, has written to say that Hilary Huw-Jones of the British Library is indexing MS.Egerton 3098, which is a register of abbey lands, etc., made by Alexander Katour at the request of Abbess Margery Twyniho in 1500. There appears to be some reference to a dispensation (p.93) concerning Margaret's age on election as abbess and to a rental (p.11) associated with the chantry which she established in 1492.

This information came by courtesy of Jackie Vining, now living at Sturminster Newton, whose late husband Christopher was a great-great-grandson of the naturalist Charles William George St.John (d.1856), see, *Report* 19 (1986) select pedigree facing p.2. Mrs Vining has also presented the Friends with a copy of John Chandler's *A Higher Reality. The History of Shaftesbury's Royal Nunnery* (The Hobnob Press, 2003). The book refers (p.67) to the chantry that Margaret endowed very richly. When finally authorized in 1498, it 'included an impressive portfolio of land, comprising seven houses, three dovecotes, and over 500 acres of land in the Shaftesbury area of north Dorset, together with four houses and nearly 300 acres of land in neighbouring parts of Wiltshire.'

### **BOLINGBROKE'S GARDENS AT LA SOURCE AND DAWLEY**

During his exile in France and on his return to England, Henry St.John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751) put a great deal of effort and expense into the creation of *ferme ornée* gardens. In *Married to Mercury*, M.R. Hopkinson says, 'Unfortunately he used too much marble, too many inscriptions...', and her disparaging remarks have led me to ignore this aspect of his life.

However, at the Friends' annual meeting in 2005, Gilly Drummond drew my attention to Peter Martin, *Pursuing Innocent Pleasures - The Gardening World of Alexander Pope* (Archon, USA, 1984. ISBN 0-208-02011-X), which includes a 25-page chapter on Bolingbroke's gardens, containing many revelations. I had not realised how much the creation of the gardens at Barrells by Henrietta, Lady Luxborough, must have been influenced by her half-brother, with whom she was always very close.

Doubtless the influence of Bolingbroke will be covered thoroughly in Jane Brown's forthcoming book, *My Darling Heriott: Henrietta Luxborough, Poetic Gardener and Irrepressible Exile*, which is to be published by Harper Collins in July 2006. In the meanwhile I recommend those interested in Bolingbroke to study Peter Martin's book.

Arthur Carden

### **OLIVER ST.JOHN IN IRELAND**

The New Oxford *Dictionary of National Biography* has a fascinating account of the life of Oliver St.John (1559-1630), Viscount Grandison and lord deputy of Ireland, by Ute Lotz-Heumann, a German history professor who is an expert on Irish affairs. It mentions that three years before he was controversially appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland he was elected to the Irish Parliament of 1613-1615

as one of the knights of the shire for co. Roscommon, and that in this parliament he played a leading role in the conflict about the speakership between 'recusant' (Catholic) and 'protestant' parties.

This conflict over the speakership is described at some length in John McCavitt, *The Flight of Earls* (Gill & Macmillan, 2002), which is concerned with the Earl of Tyrone and his influence on Irish affairs, especially in Ulster, in the years 1594-1615. Readers of *Report* may be amused by the following extract from John McCavitt's book (pp.193-4):

*When the proceedings began in the Commons, it very quickly became apparent that the recusant M.P.s had drawn a battle-line on the issue of the election to the Speakership.*

*The eerie hush at the start of the proceedings as everyone sat quietly for some time waiting on someone to 'first break silence' belied the tempestuous events that were on the point of erupting. Sir Thomas Ridgeway, a senior member of the royal administration in Dublin, then rose and broke the strained silence, proposing the Attorney General, Sir John Davies, as Speaker of the House. In response, Sir James Gough 'stepped out of his place disorderly into the middle of the house' and launched into his speech. Quiescence had soon given way to an increasingly bear-pit atmosphere. Immediately the Protestant M.P.s barracked Gough to return to his seat. Gough then raised Catholic objections to those Protestant M.P.s who had been unduly elected, arguing that these matters should be resolved before the matter of choosing a Speaker could be proceeded with. At this point Gough was berated by Protestant M.P.s for not having spoken on the matter to hand, i.e. the election of a Speaker. Gough then nominated Sir John Everard, a former senior judge who had been removed from the judiciary because of his recusancy. Undeterred by the rebuke offered previously to Gough, several other prominent Catholic M.P.s returned to the thrust of the recusant contention that the matter of electoral malpractice should be dealt with first. The fact that a parliament had not been held in Ireland since 1586 may well have contributed to the procedural wrangling, as a grasp of parliamentary conventions had become uncertain. Certainly Sir Oliver St. John, another senior member of the crown administration in Dublin, believed so. He declared on the basis of his more recent experience in English parliaments that precedent dictated that a Speaker should be elected in the first instance and that the issue of election returns should be dealt with subsequently in committee. St. John was, of course, conveniently overlooking the fact that the 'packing' of the parliament with Protestants would have a decisive bearing on the result of the election to the Speakership (Protestants held only a thirty-two-seat majority). Seeking to bring the issue to a head, St. John appealed to the assembled members to observe parliamentary etiquette:*

*Gentlemen, the use of parliaments is to decide controversies by questions, and questions by numbering of voices, and for the trial thereof I know by experience that they that are of the affirmative part are to go out of the house to be numbered and to leave those that are of the negative part to be numbered within the house.*

*What followed was not only far from gentlemanly conduct, but departed markedly from parliamentary decorum.*

*Following St. John's appeal for a division, the Protestant M.P.s filed out of the chamber in conventional fashion in order to be counted. Two senior Catholic M.P.s, Sir Christopher Plunkett and Sir Christopher Nugent, were requested to validate the counting of those who had left the chamber in support of St. John's motion. This they resolutely refused to do, nor would they take part in enumerating the recusants who remained in the chamber. When Sir Thomas Ridgeway and Sir Richard Wingfield, two*

senior members of the crown administration, returned to the chamber and offered to count those opposing the motion, the Catholic M.P.s immediately rose from their seats and 'gathered themselves into a clump to the end they might not be numbered'. Unconventional behaviour soon gave way to the truly bizarre, and finally to pandemonium. This sequence rapidly unfolded after Ridgeway and Wingfield had left the chamber for the second time. The door to the Commons chamber was immediately closed behind them. At almost the same instant cries went up from within the Commons: 'An Everard! An Everard!' To the amazement of Ridgeway and Wingfield, who promptly returned to the chamber, Sir John Everard was sitting in the Speaker's chair, while his colleagues were hailing his assumption of the position. Astounded by this turn of events, the Protestants reacted by enumerating their M.P.s in a 'loud voice' as they re-entered the chamber. Responding to the recusant tactic of foiling a count of the Catholic M.P.s, the Protestants declared on the basis of simple mathematical computation that Sir John Davies was the rightfully elected Speaker, i.e. that the entire complement of M.P.s was 232, that there were six absentees (four Protestant and two Catholic), and that 127 had declared for Davies.

Despite the best endeavours of the Protestant M.P.s to persuade Everard to vacate the Speaker's chair, he 'sat still and refused to come out. Everard was then told that the Protestants would 'beenforcedtopluckhim out unless he voluntarily removed himself. Everard still refused to move. Then, in one of the finer points of parliamentary order, the Protestants decided to deposit Sir John Davies on Everard's lap, in an attempt to supersede Everard's supposed authority. However, this was easier said than done.

Davies being a distinctly corpulent individual, it took Ridgeway, Wingfield and 'divers knights and gentlemen of the best quality' to hoist him on top of Everard. Ironically, while English parliamentary tradition normally witnessed the Speaker being ceremonially dragged to the Speaker's chair on his election, the converse happened in this situation, with Everard being unceremoniously dragged from the chair. Versions of the events that subsequently unfolded as Everard was removed widely diverge, depending on the source, Protestant or Catholic. What is not in doubt is that some Protestant M.P.s decided to put an end to the absurdity of Davies perching on Everard's knee by physically removing the latter from the Speaker's chair, while Catholic M.P.s just as vigorously attempted to prevent his ejection. In the rucking and mauling that resulted, the amount of force employed by the Protestant M.P.s is the point at issue. According to a Protestant version, not even Everard's hat had been disturbed in the process. Catholics, by contrast, alleged that Everard had been ejected in a 'great rage' by Protestant M.P.s, including Privy Counsellors, who 'cast him to the ground and bruised him, tore his gown and used many a threat towards him'.

... and there were further burlesque scenes ...

Arthur Carden



***My Darling Heriott: Henrietta Luxborough, Poetic Gardener and Irrepressible Exile,***  
by Jane Brown, to be published by HarperCollins in July 2006.

Preliminary Review by Arthur Carden

Jane Brown kindly arranged for me to be sent an uncorrected proof of the above book prior to publication. The review which follows has been written in haste for inclusion in the current *Report*, and I hope that its shortcomings will be forgiven.

Henrietta St John, born in 1699, was infamous for her indiscretion with Parson Dalton “*the worst poet in Christendom*,” tutor to the son of Lord and Lady Hertford, for which she was viciously banished by her husband Robert Knight to his Barrells estate in Warwickshire, denied contact with their children and forbidden from travelling to London and elsewhere. Robert’s father was the cashier of the South Sea Company: they fled together to France when the ‘bubble’ collapsed, the cashier astutely managing to retain most of his ill-gotten fortune. Robert himself, possibly using some of his father’s money and secret information, later became Baron Luxborough and finally, after Henrietta’s death, Lord Catherlough. Henrietta, as Lady Luxborough, spent the rest of her life at Barrells, apart from a very few visits elsewhere. Nothing more might have been known of her if she had not carried on a lengthy correspondence with her neighbour, the dilettante and indolent gardener and poet William Shenstone. Their letters and other evidence show that far from becoming a sad and embittered recluse, she established, with Shenstone, Graves, Jago, Somerville, Thomson, Whistler and other local poets what became known as the Warwickshire Coterie, and enjoyed herself immensely creating a *ferme ornée* and calling herself a “*farmeress*.”

As a descendant, not of Henrietta but of one of her husband’s mistresses, Jane Davies, I am intensely interested in the whole subject, and many of the Friends kindly subscribed for copies of my limited edition compilation *The Knights of Barrells*, issued in 1993, from which some of the illustrations to Jane Brown’s book are to be taken.

Doubtless it was Henrietta’s *ferme ornée* which first interested Jane Brown, who is one of the foremost current writers on gardening subjects. Her book *The Pursuit of Paradise: A Social History of Gardens and Gardening* is an established and much-praised classic. By contrast *My Darling Heriott* is intended to be a biography rather than a gardening book, though of course it is the latter as well.

*My Darling Heriott* is a delight. Jane Brown’s enchanting and lucid text takes one at a gallop from a lyrical description of rural Lydiard, where Henrietta spent her youthful summers, before the days of the railway and the rebuilding of the house by her brother in the 1740s, right through to the destruction of Barrells as Henrietta knew it - though curiously there is no mention of the recent rebuilding of Robert Knight’s Bonomi mansion by its current owner Mr Daniel Lynch. Disconcertingly there are frequent digressions into matters which have only a very tenuous relationship to the subject of Henrietta, but they are always enjoyable. Jane Brown’s own interests and personality frequently and pleasantly intrude, and there is much use of the first person singular, perhaps unusual in a formal biography. There are also many intriguing speculations, the most outrageous of which is that Viscount Bolingbroke, her much loved mercurial 20 years older half-brother, famous treasurer to Queen Anne and Jacobite outcast, was actually her father! Jane Brown is particularly to be congratulated on distilling so well the contents of the often tedious correspondence between Henrietta and Shenstone, of which more than 200 letters survive, so badly presented in Shenstone’s compilation.

The book contains a very large amount of information new to me, such as the fact that the St John name was not affectedly pronounced ‘Sinjun’ in her day, and that the St John blood line came to an end with

Henrietta's grandson Josiah Child (can that really be so?), and many other more significant matters. There are many interesting notes and references, and it is worth reading them for their own sake in addition to reading the book itself.

This is an excellent book, which I strongly recommend to everyone interested in Lydiard and the St John family, and much more widely to everyone interested in the period, its politics, personalities and gardens. It is a very welcome addition to the previous rather limited biographies in books or journals by Walter Sichel, Wilhelmina Stirling, Lady Hopkinson, Nell Marshall and others and the sadly uncompleted biography by the late Dr Joan Lane.

This review would not however be complete without the expression of a few critical comments, some of which perhaps I will revise when I have had an opportunity to read the final published version, complete with illustrations, index and corrected text. One such comment, which I now withdraw, was to have been my sadness at Jane Brown's omission of my favourite poem by Henrietta, *The Bull-Finch in Town*, which I would have reprinted in this review had I not discovered at the last moment that it appears immediately before the Foreword! Perhaps some of the other comments below will in due course also need to be withdrawn.

- Henrietta was almost certainly not born at Lydiard, (see *Report36*, 2003, p.28) and unfortunately Jane Brown perpetuates this common error, to be found in the new Oxford DNB and elsewhere.
- Sadly, to me at least, Jane Brown's text appears to falter and become somewhat uncertain in the chapter 'My fat Fanfan' about the separation between Robert Knight and Henrietta, its causes and Robert Knight's apparently excessive reaction. This is very disappointing, as a proper understanding of this episode, yet to be dealt with adequately by anyone, is fundamental to the biography. It follows a particularly delightful chapter about the idyllic friendship between Frances (Lady Hertford) and Henrietta which led to her affair with Dalton.
- Jane Brown never mentions the words *The Warwickshire Coterie*, which have become a standard description, and does not appear to have studied the excellent 1905 book by Rev William Hutton or the 1991 book by Colin Hey both of which use this phrase and add a great deal about Henrietta and her circle.
- There is no comment on the possibility that Henrietta may have had a love child by either Dalton or her physician Peters, born soon after her banishment to Warwickshire, leading to her description as 'poor fat Fanfan' by her brother's wife.
- It would have been helpful to have a reference for the statement on page 66 that Henrietta was tall and well-built with glossy chestnut curls. This description does not seem to be in accord with her portraits at Lydiard, not with Horace Walpole's description of her.
- Jane Brown seems to make no reference to the delightfully illustrated letter in French from Henrietta to Shenstone in 1752 deposited at the Stratford on Avon record office by Mrs Hawkesworth, a possible Knight descendant, reproduced in colour in my book mentioned above and in black and white in Marjorie Williams' biography of Shenstone. It is a quite remarkable souvenir and a great contrast to her other letters to Shenstone.
- It is a little surprising that Henrietta's extravagance is scarcely mentioned, nor is Robert's cutting remark that if she failed to pay her servants or suppliers, it was they, not she, who gave the dinner parties which so pleased her guests!

Friends of Lydiard Tregoz  
13 May 2006