

# FRIENDS OF LYDIARD TREGOZ

## CONTENTS

- 3 The Conservation of Two Hatchments A Symposium
- 9 The Lydiard Tregoz Country Show, 1962-84
- 23 George Strange and the Strange family of Hook  
by Mark and Lorraine Child
- 26 An Account of the Painter Family and their links with Lydiard Park  
by R.W. Painter
- 32 Visits to Lydiard Tregoze  
by Kate Try on
- 41 The Rev. George Frederick St John (1795-1867), Rector of Mansion, Dorset
- 46 The Assessment of Lydiard Tregoze parish for Marriage Duty, 1696-1702
- 49 Swindon Borough Council Newsletter  
by Sarah Finch-Crisp
- 50 Shorter Notes:  
Rodney Family Tree  
The Mystery of the Beauchamp tomb in Worcester Cathedral  
Margaret Beauchamp - First Marriage  
*A History of Sir Walter St John School, Battersea, 1700-1986*  
Susanna and the Eiders  
Malcolm Titcombe  
Boiingbroke Close  
John Whittokesmede
- 54 The Friends of Lydiard Tregoz:  
Officers, Membership, and Accounts

**Report no. 32**

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

The objects of the society are to:

- foster interest in the Church, the House, and the Parish as a whole.
  - hold one meeting in the House annually, usually in mid-May, with a guest speaker. The meeting is followed by tea in the dining room and Evensong in the Parish Church. (The meeting in 1997 was held at Battersea.)
- » produce annually *Report*, a magazine of articles which are concerned in the broadest way with **the history of the parish, its buildings and people, the St. John family and its antecedents as well as more locally-based families, and the early years of the Sir Walter St. John School in Battersea.**  
**Copies of *Report* are deposited with libraries and institutions in England, Wales, and the United States of America.**  
The offer of articles for inclusion is always welcomed by the Editor.
- make occasional small contributions from unexpended income towards the cost of projects in either the House or the Church.

- - - - -

## THE CONSERVATION OF TWO HATCHMENTS

### A Symposium

[The conservation of the two hatchments in the St. John chapel in Lydiard Tregoze church was reported in a symposium at the 1998 meeting of the Friends of Lydiard Tregoze. Mr H.G.M. Leighton spoke on the purpose and development of hatchments, Canon Brian Came described the persons whose deaths were commemorated, and Ms Seonaid Wood of the Area Museum Council for the South West described the process of conservation. This article reports the findings of that symposium.

The estimate for the work is £4389. The Friends undertook the financing of the project. Grants have been received - £850 from the William & June Morris Fund of the Society of Antiquaries of London and £3000 from the St. Andrew's Conservation Trust. We are grateful for this most generous help. The balance will come from the Friends, from the proceeds of a concert and from unexpended income.]

### The Purpose and Development of Hatchments

The conservation of these two hatchments in Lydiard Tregoze church is an opportunity to look at the use of hatchments generally and to describe the Lydiard hatchments which follow the common form of diamond-shaped paintings depicting the coats of arms of deceased persons.

Hatchments are frequently found in British churches and also in Holland and Belgium. In their well-known form they were used from the 1620s until the 1840s. There are three examples of very early hatchments in Lydiard Tregoze church. In the south aisle there are square hatchments which commemorate the St. John wife of Sir George Ayliffe and Anne Leighton (d. 1628), first wife of Sir John St. John, 1st Baronet. On the north wall of the chancel is an even earlier rectangular hatchment, curiously painted with a brown background, which probably commemorates Walter St. John (d. 1597). A very late example is the hatchment which was hung on the outer gate of All Souls College, Oxford, on the death of Warden B.H. Sumner in 1951 showing the arms of the warden impaled with those of the college and which is now placed with others above the entrance to the ante-chapel. The main period of use - and the date of the majority of those that survive - is from 1780 till 1840. Many churches have one or two from a leading local family: some have a lengthy series such as Stanford-on-Avon in Warwickshire where there are twelve hatchments to members of the Cave family.

The word 'hatchment' is usually regarded as a corruption of 'achievement', for hatchments depict the heraldic achievement of the deceased person and are a continuation of the medieval custom of carrying helmets, swords, and heraldic devices in the funeral procession and placing them above the tomb of the deceased. At Lydiard Tregoze three funeral helms survive, two relating to the St. John monuments and the other to Sir George Ayliffe, but there used to be a number of other items. John Aubrey, describing the church in the 1660s records that

The Chancell, and the aisle of the St. Johns adjoining, are adorned with about 30 penons; over the altar doe hang two banners of St. George, two guidons [standards] of Ulster, and on each side a Mandilion [a sleeveless surcoat] beautified with all their quarterings, with shield, sword, helmet, and crest, made in manner of a trophie, with gauntlets, gilt spurs, and such like badges of Equestrian [knightly] dignitie.

There is a lack of accurate knowledge on the practice of the use of hatchments. It varied, but most commonly the hatchment was hung above the principal door of the deceased's house for the period of mourning and then removed to the church. In some instances there were two hatchments, one on the house and one on the burial place, particularly if it was within the church or a family vault. In

Anthony Trollope's novel *Dr Thorne* a hatchment is carried in a funeral procession and hung above the front door immediately afterwards. Some noble families had a hatchment hung on each principal residence.

Hatchments were normally supplied by the undertaker and thus tended to be painted locally and can be fine examples of naive art but some are highly decorative. They were painted on canvas or wooden panels. Occasionally an old hatchment was re-used and overpainted. The etiquette of their lay-out was precise. The full achievement of arms with crest and supporters, with a motto, was used. (A hatchment for an unmarried woman has the arms shown in a lozenge instead of a shield.) The colouring of the background - black or white - showed who it was who had died. Where it was painted black all over it represented an unmarried person or a widow or widower. If the wife's arms were on a black background it indicated that she had died before her husband - and vice versa. The code extended to cover most contingencies, for example, where there have been two wives and the background to just one of them is white while the rest of the hatchment is black it indicates that she was the second wife of her husband and a widow. Hatchments sometimes carry a family motto, but more frequently is found the conventional *Resurgam* [I will rise again] or *In coelo quies* [Rest in heaven]. Dates are infrequent, and the dating of hatchments is largely dependent upon the identification of the armorial bearings of the person concerned. Quite frequently there is additional decoration in the form of cherub heads, wreaths, skulls, or other emblems of mortality

Though many hatchments survive they are but a small portion of those that were used, and it is curious to observe how the custom grew and how suddenly it all but died out about 1840.

#### **The Hatchments and the identity of the persons who are commemorated**

The older hatchment has no impalement or quarterings and has a black background showing that he was a single man. It bears the arms of St. John of Lydiard Tregoze with the coronet of a viscount, the crest is the St. John falcon, and the motto is *Nil Admirari* [Nothing surprises]. For supporters there are two eagles with wings elevated, ducally crowned gules, each charged on the breast with the hames, the ancient badge of the Tregoz family. At the foot of the hatchment there is a winged skull.

This hatchment commemorates Frederick, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke and 3rd Viscount St. John (d.1787), who was buried in Lydiard Tregoze church and who had divorced his wife.

The hatchment is of considerable heraldic interest. The older viscounty was that of Bolingbroke, granted in 1712 to his uncle of the half-blood Henry St. John and by special remainder inherited by Frederick. Henry St. John was granted as supporters, dexter, a falcon ducally gorged and with wings displayed, and, sinister, an eagle with wings displayed and charged on its breast with the hames or. (The falcon is the crest of the St. John family, the eagle with the Tregoz badge is the Grandison crest.) These supporters have been used by successive viscounts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and rightly so as they belong to the earlier creation. (The only difference is that the hames have been coloured silver and red instead of gold.) Only the motto *Nil Admirari* recalls uncle Henry St. John with whom it is associated. In 1719 Frederick's grandfather was created Viscount St. John and was given as supporters, two eagles with wings elevated, crowned with ducal coronets, each of them charged on their breasts with the Hames party per pale argent and gules. These are the supporters that appear on Frederick's hatchment. (Collins's Peerage, ed. Brydges (1812) VI, p.61, gives as supporters for the arms of George Richard, 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke, the two eagles of the St. John viscounty.) The grant in 1719, unusually, contained a motto - *Nec quaerere nec spernere honorem* [Neither to seek nor to despise honour] rather than the older family motto of *Scmctus in terra, beatus in coelo*. One minor footnote concerns the small pearls - seven in number - that appear on the coronets on each of the hatchments. James I regularised the coronets that could be worn by the different degrees in the nobility. His grant to viscounts was that they could display sixteen small pearls on the rim of their

coronets, of which nine can be seen from the front. It is not only on these two hatchments that seven pearls are incorrectly shown: they are shown as such on the 1719 grant from the College of Heralds.

The second hatchment is slightly smaller than the other. It bears the arms of St. John of Lydiard Tregoze impaling, Gules, on a bend or three martlets sable within a bordure ermine, for Collins. Above is the coronet of a viscountess, with mantling gules and argent, and the conventional motto *In coelo quies*. The supporters are those granted with the earlier, Bolingbroke, viscounty in 1712. Below the shield are two sprigs of acacia. The whole composition is an attractive artistic ensemble.

The background is white behind the St. John arms and black behind those of Collins, for this hatchment was made to mark the death of Frederick's daughter-in-law Charlotte (c. 1760-1804), first wife of George Richard St. John, 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke.

### **FREDERICK ST. JOHN, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke**

Frederick was the eldest son of John, 2nd Viscount St. John, and his heiress-wife Anne (Fumese) who together remodelled Lydiard Park between 1738 and 1743. The family lived mainly in London's West End. John was MP for Wootton Bassett when Frederick was born, and succeeded to the sinecure of Controller of the Customs and Subsidies of the Port of London. Frederick went to Eton. He was aged fourteen when his mother died at the age of thirty-six. In the following year his father also died, aged forty-six, and Frederick succeeded as 3rd Viscount St. John, his guardians holding for him Lydiard, the manor of Bynol, and other farms in Wiltshire, the manor of Purley in Berks, the manors of Beckenham, Whitstable, and Ellenden, and other farms, fisheries, and woodlands in Kent.

Frederick's uncle Henry, his father's half-brother, the great and former Viscount Bolingbroke, took an interest in his education. Frederick was aged eighteen when his uncle died, and, by a special remainder in the creation of the title, succeeded him as 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke. He also inherited the manor of Battersea. At the age of twenty-four he married Lady Diana Spencer, eldest daughter of Charles, 3rd Duke of Marlborough. Lady Diana was a very talented artist. At Lydiard Park there is a representative assembly of her work: two portraits of her son George Richard, one in pastel, the other in water-colour, illustrations in pencil for books, and large decorated paper panels. She made designs for Josiah Wedgwood, and was greatly admired for her skill by Horace Walpole. The marriage lasted for only eleven years. Principally because of her husband's behaviour, Lady Diana developed an adulterous relationship with Topham Beauclerk, and a daughter Mary was born in 1766. The following year a son was born who died aged one month. Frederick resolved on divorce proceedings by the very long drawn-out, complex, and expensive procedure of a private act of parliament, which passed in 1768. Two days later she married Beauclerk. She cared for her new husband assiduously, but he has been described as an aimless dilettante, unfaithful to his wife, cruel and unfeeling to his children: by the age of thirty-five his dissipations had permanently undermined his health and he died aged forty.

*Report 21* (1988), 15-46, gives some account of Frederick's life and interests. His life has been summarised thus: 'He was the nephew of the late Lord Bolingbroke, the brilliant and notorious leader of the Tories. Unfortunately the uncle had passed rather more on to his nephew than just a title and a manor, for the 2nd Lord Bolingbroke was as unsavoury as his predecessor, indulging in most of the noble vices but taking little seriously outside his passion for gambling and racing horses. He was an irresponsible man rather than a wicked one, who seems to have made an effort all his life to appear as witty and dissolute as his uncle.' *Report 31*, 5-15, tells of his dalliance with Lady Coventry.

His gambling and his life-style, which far exceeded his income, was such that he had to reorganise his assets and sell property. He used a series of conveyances to break the entail on family property. Thus

Battersea was sold in 1762, and Purley went after his death to Robert Mackreth, proprietor of White's Club, moneylender and bookmaker. He owned a number of horses in the 1760s, including the immortal Gimcrack. He was also a great patron of George Stubbs: a series of paintings by him were formerly at Lydiard Park but have been sold.

He was seriously ill in 1779, and the papers actually reported his death. From about 1781, at the age of forty-eight, he is stated to have been out of his mind. He died in 1787, aged fifty-four, and was buried in the vault in the church next door. His son George Richard and his executor uncle renounced their interest under his will, claims by creditors apparently accounting for more than the whole of his personal estate.

### **CHARLOTTE, VISCONTRESS BOLINGBROKE**

Frederick had two surviving children: George Richard and Frederick, whose portrait the Friends had conserved a few years ago. George Richard was born in 1761. When he was two years old the manor of Battersea was sold, and when he was seven his parents divorced. Nothing has been discovered about his education, but he matriculated at Oxford when he was sixteen, but does not appear to have proceeded to a degree. At the age of nineteen he was courting Charlotte Collins, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Collins, rector of two parishes and second master at Winchester College. It is possible that Collins was tutor to George Richard. In 1782 George Richard became MP for Cricklade at a bye-election. He was a supporter of Fox, and as such was not returned at the 1784 election.

The courtship lasted three years. The marriage took place in 1783, when George Richard was twenty-two and Charlotte was twenty-three. Lydiard Park was apparently let, and they lived at a number of places. A son George was born the following year, three years later a daughter Mary was baptised at Lytchett Matravers, Dorset, and in 1786 Henry was born at Fyfield, Hampshire. Not very long after the birth of Henry but after the death of George Richard's father, Frederick, Mary Beauclerk, the illegitimate daughter of George Richard's mother and Topham Beauclerk came to stay with them. A criminal conversation, according to the language of the day, developed between George Richard and his half-sister, and to prevent scandal, Charlotte Collins took Mary Beauclerk abroad and nursed her in her lying-in. Then Mary Beauclerk had a second son. George Richard and she moved to live in Paris as Mr and Mrs Barton and two more sons were born to them there. One can only imagine the shame and distress that all this caused Charlotte. By 1794, when he was thirty-three, George Richard had tired of his half-sister, so he provided annuities, charged on Lydiard Park, for her and her four sons, and looked further afield. He met Isabella Antoinette, Baroness Hompesch, eleven years his junior, and went through a form of marriage with her in Germany. As Mr and Mrs Bellasis they lived in Wales, where a son was born in 1795, and then emigrated to America.

Charlotte lived with her father and her three children at Lydiard. George, the elder son, had indifferent health, much to his mother's grief. He died, 'the beloved object of her tender care', aged nineteen, in June 1803. She wrote, '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 beautiful face every day 'till it was necessary to have his coffin soldered down.' Charlotte herself was ill, suffering probably from consumption. After George's death she went to Clifton to take the waters of Hotwells. At the beginning of the following year, as her money had run out, she joined the patients on 'Death Row' as it was called, in one of the lodging houses at the bottom of the hill. She died on 11 January 1804. The obituary note in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* said, 'In the respective characters of friend, daughter, mother, and Christian, she exhibited to the world so perfect a pattern, as few of her sex will be able to imitate - none to surpass.' She died in the January and was buried in the family vault in Lydiard Tregoze church. Mary her daughter died in the May and her father in the



June of the same year. Only Henry survived, and became eventually 4th Viscount Bolingbroke. Eight months after Charlotte died, George Richard married Baroness Hompesch in New York, and returned to Lydiard two years later.

**REPORT** of Ms Seonaid Wood and Elizabeth Holford Associates Ltd.

**1. Hatchment of Frederick, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, 54" x 54/4".** Oil on canvas. Wooden frame painted black

### **Condition**

This painting was in a dreadful condition. The canvas was pinned directly to the reverse of the frame. The painting did once have a stretcher as the original tack holes are visible parallel to the outer frame of the present attachments. The canvas was in two sections and joined vertically. The type of joint was a butt joint, which was then over-sewn. The back of the canvas was dirty and had an enormous patch near the lower edge, in the same position as the lower section of the joint. The joint may have opened which would have contributed to the present damage. The patch was an attempt to support this huge damage. There was a large amount of paint and ground loss associated with this damage. In all there were four large damages, two of which were holes, with the original canvas missing. The canvas is slack and distorted and there is a general level of damage and flaking throughout the composition.

The paint film was 'cupping' and flaking over the entire surface with numerous paint losses. This may have been as a result of a lack of tension in the canvas as well as high humidity.

It was noticed that the inscription 'NIL ADMIRARI' had been repositioned. The painted letters do not correspond with the inscribed ones underneath, but it is the same inscription. . . The hatchment has not been X-rayed which might have revealed other possible information. Direct inspection with magnification did not indicate any repainting or alterations to the composition underneath.

The painting was unvarnished, it was covered with layers of surface dirt and there were splashes of decorator's paint.

### **Treatment [abbreviated]:**

The painting was surface cleaned. Some local fixing of the paint film was carried out close to the damage and main distortions in the canvas. The painting was faced up with the same tissue and wax/resin as the adhesive. It was then prepared for transit to the lining studio of Richard Watkiss in Wiltshire.

The painting was then carefully removed from its frame. The damages were relaxed prior to lining on to a new linen canvas with paste, an aqueous adhesive. As there was no stretcher, a new stretcher with wedges was made. The painting was then re-stretched using copper tacks and the wedges tied to the stretcher. Both the re-stretched painting and frame were returned to the Bristol studio where the frame was built up at the reverse, the joints mended (as it was discovered, for the second time). The painting received a final clean.

The fillings were sealed with 'shellac', textured using a scalpel and then retouched in watercolour. They were then textured again. A thin layer of resin varnish was brushed on and left to dry. The final retouchings were carried out with a varnish and pure dry pigment. The final varnish was a sprayed coat of the same synthetic resin.

The frame was cleaned and retouched. The rebate was lined with paper tape and velvet ribbon. A stretcher lining of polyester sail cloth was introduced to reduce possible vibration. The painting was reframed and backed.

2. **Hatchment of Charlotte Collins, Viscountess Bolingbroke**, 43<sup>3</sup>/<sub>5</sub>" x 43<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>". Oil on canvas. Flat wooden frame, painted black and with a gilded inner section.

**Condition**

There was no backboard and the reverse was dirty. The painting was supported by a strainer and there were signs of old worm infestation. The painting had been housed in a damp environment and the frame was waterstained. The canvas was slack and cockling in the comers, and there were several dents. The paint film was unstable in many areas where it was lifting and flaking with numerous losses. The surface of the painting was obscured by a thick layer of dirt and grime.

**Treatment**

Similar to the treatment of the other hatchment. The painting was lined on to an additional linen canvas by Richard Watkiss. When framed, the hatchment was backed with hardboard.

-----

**LYDIARD TREGOZ**

**GYMHA&RI**

**amn.» inn. as**

**HOLBORN, LYDIARD MILLIGENT**

Commencing 1-30 p.m.

**JUMPING - ALL CLASSES**

**CRICKLADE TOWN BAND**


**VINTAGE CARS - V.W.H. HOUNDS**

**FLOWER SHOW • OTHER EVENTS - RIANT PRIZES**

Refreshments - Cars 2/fi, Adults f/-, Children fid.

**Mo. & BIUH stops at the Field.**

Schedules from Mrs. G. Blake, Wmtsoni\* House, Common Platt, Purton, or Phone Swindon 3248 or Wcotton Bassett 445.



**ROYAL INSURANCE**  
**GROUP**

LOCAL BRANCH

**2 Queen Square, Bath**

POSTERS BY COURTESY OF ROYAL INSURANCE GROUP

20" x 15" posters on card supplied free by the insurance company



## THE LYDIARD TREGOZ COUNTRY SHOW 1962-84

[Information about the Country Show and its predecessor the Fete and Gymkhana survives in the *NEWS OF THE LYDIARDS*, 1961 - 67, in newspaper reports, in a certain amount of ephemera, and in the memories of those who helped run the events. This article brings much of the printed information together. Readers will be grateful for the added memories of Mrs Mollie Groom, Mr Tony Jepps, and Canon Jim Free.]

In May 1960 the Rev. Brian Came became rector of Lydiard Millicent with Lydiard Tregoz. At that time, on the agenda of the Tregoz Church Council was the need to rehang the bells which had not been rung for many years. Mr Frank Coleby, one of the churchwardens, was most anxious that the work should be put in hand as soon as possible. Accordingly, a Bell Fund was opened. In November 1960 Canon W.H. Willetts, a former rector of Lydiard Tregoze, died. Donations in his memory went into the Bell Fund, and it was decided to add a sixth bell in his memory. The estimate for the complete work was £1,700 - a figure which needs to be multiplied by a factor of at least twenty to bring it to 1999 prices. Donations were requested and savings boxes were issued to the congregation and friends, but it was realised that some larger fund-raising event would have to be organised.

The rector called a 'buzz meeting' in 1961 to investigate the possibility of having a garden party with extra attractions. The discussion led on to the idea of a gymkhana being organised for the following year with supporting stalls, sideshows, and refreshments. Mr Peter Enderby of The Grange, formerly the Lydiard Tregoze rectory, and of The King's Arms in Swindon and of Hickman's the electrical contractors offered the use of his paddock and agreed to provide a beer tent and whatever was required in the way of electrical appliances. Mr Alfred Gay of Eastleaze Farm, Mr Brian Collett of Vastem Farmery, Mrs Sophie Crewdson, and Mrs Blake of Watsonia House, Common Platt, offered to make all the arrangements for the gymkhana. Mr John Bridal, a retired insurance official, and his wife Jean said they would organise the insurance of the show and all the necessary publicity. Mr Hamilton Strange offered to organise a flower and produce stall. Mrs Connie Large agreed to mobilise the members of the Mothers' Union, members of her own family, and anyone else she could enlist to provide goods for sale on the stalls, to staff sideshows, and to provide the necessary refreshments for sale. Mr Maurice Sharp, P.C.C. Treasurer, said he would look after the finances. Mr Sid Bowler and Mr Bob Hatch agreed to organise the car park. Each of these principals recruited others to help with the success of whatever aspect of the Fete and Gymkhana they had agreed to organise. Right from the start a way of working was agreed: that there would be a minimum of meetings - often only three in a year - of the 'committee', each 'principal', having agreed to look after a particular section, made all necessary arrangements without interference from any one else. As the aim of the helpers was to raise money for the Bell Fund there was no desire expressed for 'perks': everyone paid for admission and for any refreshments that were required.

One aspect of the Shows which is so often taken for granted is the enormous amount of work that goes into preparing and clearing up the site - year after year after year. Chairs, tables, jumps, and all sorts of things were borrowed. This involves humping and transporting before and after the event. The ground has to be prepared, tents erected, the right things put in the right place. The final task is a close examination of every part of the field to make sure that nothing injurious to cattle had been dropped by the crowd. Fortunately there was a band of loyal members who helped with these jobs. In the early years they included Bob Hatch, Sid and Ivy Bowler, Roland Gough, Gordon Parsons, and Jack Charlesworth. Their hard work meant that we could borrow things again the following year and the field was willingly made available to us. Without these unsung heroes the Shows could not have continued.

One decision that the committee had to face concerned the weather: some felt that extra insurance should be taken out against a financial loss due to a totally wet day. The 'insurance' that was agreed on was to print 2,000 numbered admission tickets, price one shilling for adults and sixpence for children, to be sold in advance. It is a sign of the times that the prizes offered for the lucky numbers were a bottle of sherry, cigarettes, and a box of chocolates. So successful was the prior sale of admission tickets that it continued to be our wet-weather insurance for a number of years.

The Fete and Gymkhana was held on 18 August 1962 in The Grange paddock. It was a modest affair. The flower show had just five classes for dahlias and two classes for flower arrangements. There were competitions for fruit cakes and sandwich cakes. The Wroughton Silver Band played during the afternoon. Mr Enderby had persuaded members of the Swindon Clay Pigeon Shooting Club to attend and hold their own competition. (Perhaps it was just as well that there were not too many ponies on the field.) A popular rider was nine-year-old Roger Collett with his two horses, Silver Mist and Sea Mist. In the Bending class he was first in the ten years-and-under class, and second and third in the under-14 class. He took equal first in the 12 years-and-under Jumping with Rosemary Collett, and first and third in the 16 years-and-under Jumping

In the interval the ring was used for a colourful parade by the staff and hounds of the Vale of the White Horse (Cricklade) Hunt. There was Bowling for a pig. (One year the 'pig' was obviously the runt of the litter. Alfie Gay won it. It ate and ate for months but did not get much larger.) There were coconut shies, pony and donkey rides, and, only in 1962, a gas-filled balloon journey competition. (It was not repeated because the cost of the gas cylinder was only just covered by the sale of the balloons.) A large number of labels were returned from Wiltshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Sussex, and Kent. Some were returned from France and Germany. The winner was Miss Myra Price of Crickhowel, Brecon. The label from the balloon she released was returned by Aloiz Molicnik of Luce Ob Savinji, Slovenia, Yugoslavia. The equivalent of 10s. was sent by Maurice Sharp to Mr Molicnik as his reward. Mrs Large's helpers excelled themselves with the stalls and refreshments. As a result of the day £3 26.1 Os. lid was paid into the Bell fund.

The Bell Fund was pushed into second place when the heating system in Lydiard Tregoze church froze solid on 11 January 1963. So deep was the snow that when Bob Hatch eventually was able to reach the building the system was useless. The boiler had split, radiators were cracked, and ice protruded from every joint in the heating pipes. Services were held at Lydiard Millicent church until Easter. The estimate for the complete renewal of the system and a new boiler was £1480. The Insurers offered £350, and the collections at Easter added a further £220. Sadly, Mr Ken Colborne, a prominent Swindon builder and freemason and a choirman at Lydiard Tregoze, died in April 1963. Donations in his memory amounted to £173, and these too went into the Heating Fund. (Messrs Smith & Hope of Wootton Bassett installed the new system, and it was switched on for the first time on 20 October 1963.) The deficit on the Heating Fund spurred everyone to work harder for the 2nd Fete and Gymkhana.

Such was the success of the 1962 event that it was obvious that a new site would have to be sought in future, and this was most generously offered by Mr Monty Stephens of Brook House. He made available for us the 10-acre field, The Ham, between Holborn and Watery Lane. The gates opened on 24 August at 1.30 p.m. for the 1963 Fete and Gymkhana. Problems had been experienced in the first year at the gate as a result of the prior sales of tickets. It was not easy to distinguish between 'adult' tickets and 'children's' tickets, so only 'adult' tickets were sold in advance, children paying at the gate. It is recorded that 1573 of these shilling tickets were sold in advance of the show. Messrs Smith & Hope kindly erected a large notice board advertising the show on the field site. Peter Enderby again organised the bar, as he did for a number of years. There were extra classes for ponies, both for the jumping and for the gymkhana events. The Flower Show had two additional classes.

A great addition for 1963 was the contribution of Mr Nigel Arnold-Forster of Bassett Down and Salthrop House, a great enthusiast for what he called 'interesting cars'. He was Secretary of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Great Britain and Captain of the Frazer Nash racing team. He gave advance information about the cars he was hoping would come to the Fete to the *Evening Advertiser* (21 August 1963):

The vehicles will include a 1922 five-litre Delage which Mr Forster has been racing with great success this year; a 4<sup>A</sup>-litre Lagonda, the actual outright winner of the 1935 Le Mans 24-hour race; a 114-litre supercharged ERA; and a Grand Prix Bugatti, 3.3-litre supercharged, which dates from about 1935 and is the fourth fastest car to have lapped Brooklands. "These vintage cars are much bigger and more dramatic than present-day racing cars, which all look alike to me," commented Mr Forster. In addition, Mr Forster is organising a rally and competition for more orthodox vintage cars. The oldest car taking part will be a 1913 Swift. Other cars entered include a 22-90 Alfa Romeo, a 30-98 Vauxhall, and several Frazer Nash vehicles.

More cars were on show than were listed in advance by the *Evening Advertiser*. On the day all eyes were on the spectacular 1908 12-litre Grand Prix Itala, and the crowd around it was hushed when the magnificent engine burst into life. (In the evening Mr Arnold-Forster entertained the drivers with their cars at Salthrop House.)

Roger Collett was again successful, riding Silver Mist, Sea Mist, and Forge Walnut. He took first and second places in the Jumping 12 years-and-under, first in the Musical Sack 12 years-and-under, and third in the Jumping 16 years-and-under. (Annette Enderby took second place in this class ahead of him.) Roger came first in the Open Jumping.

In 1963 an additional attraction for the children was Mr J. Sawyer's model railway. Cricklade Town Band provided music during the afternoon, and the VWH hounds again attended. The net proceeds of the day amounted to about £333, which went into the Heating Fund.

The 3rd Fete and Gymkhana took place on 26 August 1964, the gates being opened at 1.00 p.m. The proceeds of the day were for the Bell Fund. The bellfounders, Taylors of Loughborough, had hoped to complete the work by Easter 1964. However it was not until 6 April 1964 that the bells were taken away. The Service of Rededication took place on 14 November 1964, with the Mayor and Mayoress of Swindon and members of the St. John and Willetts families attending. The collection on that occasion, which included savings boxes, amounted to £110.

At the 3rd Fete and Gymkhana Mr Nigel Arnold-Forster once again collected together those friends of his that had 'interesting cars' - twenty in all: Bugattis, a Delage, a Lagonda, Frazer Nashes, and a 'James Bond' Bentley Sports car. The *Wiltshire Gazette and Herald* (3 September 1964) reported, "With growling and roaring exhausts they skidded round wooden tubs in the driving tests which thrilled the spectators."

In the horse events, a 4-year-old Gordon Hunt came first in the Leading Rein. Roger Collett, now aged eleven years, again distinguished himself, taking first in the Musical Sacks under-12, first and third in the Jumping 12 years-and-under, first in the Jumping 16 years-and-under, and first in the Open Jumping.

The site, as in previous years, was The Ham. There were more flower classes. There were competitive classes for cakes. (Mrs Large hoped that all entrants would allow their cakes to be sold.) The stalls were well patronised, the VWH hounds attended, and there were side-shows and competitions. The main competition - for a calf or £5 - was won by Mr Tom Selby of Shaw: it would not have taken him

long to decide to take the £5. The *Evening Advertiser* (21 August 1964) described the Lydiard Tregoze Fete and Gymkhana as “one of the principal shows in north Wiltshire.”

The net proceeds, for the Bell Fund, amounted to about £390. The prior sale of tickets produced £89 and a further £76 was taken in gate money. The stalls brought in £133. The largest item of expenditure was £45 for the hire of the tents, chairs, and tables.

With the replacement of the heating system and the rehangng of the bells being completed, the Church Council took note of the architect's advice that £4,000 was needed for the repair of the exterior stonework of the church. Application was made to grant-making bodies, and hopes were pinned on a successful 4th Fete and Gymkhana.

It had to happen sometime. The weather forecast for 28 August 1965 was not good. The day itself was dreadful. It was cold. The rain came down, only finishing just about the time the gates were due to open. The field was sodden, but the jumping and gymkhana events in twelve classes went on. The Gymkhana Secretary, Miss Mary Collins, received about the same number of entries as in previous years. The Open Jumping was won by thirteen-year-old Roger Collett on Noel, John Collett won the Collett Challenge Shield in the Jumping 12 years-and-under class. There was an exhibition of floral art by members of the Swindon Floral Art Society. A boxing tournament was staged by members of Swindon's Park Boys' Amateur Boxing club, and there was a display by members of the Swindon branch of the British Alsatian Association. An exhibition by the Pinehurst Judo Club had to be cancelled as the ground was unfit for the mats. Cricklade Town Band played, and the VWH Hounds paraded. There were donkey and pony rides, bowling for a pig, the usual stalls and sideshows, and a tractor and trailer reversing competition. Admission was unchanged at one shilling for adults and sixpence for children. The net proceeds of the day amounted to only £225 7. 2, due to the heavy rain in the morning.

There was a theft of lead from the roof of the north aisle in the Autumn of 1965, which entailed costly relaying.

The *Wiltshire Gazette and Herald* (8 September 1966) reported that over 4,000 attended the 5th Fete and Gymkhana, which was held on 3 September, and that ‘it was the most successful’ of the series. Entries in the major gymkhana events were higher than in previous years, and there were more special trophies - the Jean Bridal Challenge Cup, the Hogden Challenge Cup, the Three Mists Challenge Shield - signs of a maturing organisation. Mr Arnold-Forster once again invited his friends with their cars, and sixteen vehicles entered for the musical sacks race for cars, which was won by Keith Gay.

During the afternoon the band of ringers from Christ Church, Swindon, rang a peal of 5,040 changes in Grandsire Doubles in two hours and forty-two minutes. This was the first time that the rehung bells had been rung to a complete peal, and they sounded magnificent as they rang out across the fields.

The church council continued its efforts for the complete restoration of the church. At their meeting in November 1966 it was reported that £4822 had already been spent on the heating system, the bells, roof and wall repairs.

The 6th Fete and Gymkhana was held on 26 August 1967, again on The Ham, but with the gates opening earlier, at 12.30 p.m.. It was estimated that well over one hundred people, if the members of clubs and societies who also helped are included, worked hard on the ground during the day. In order to generate funds as an insurance against wet weather home-made cakes were on sale throughout the previous twelve months. The final figure for the day amounted to £335. 1. 8.

The 7th Fete & Gymkhana was held on 31 August 1968, and it featured once again the Vintage car section. There was a Children's Fancy Dress Competition as an additional attraction.

Nº IGH 7	N¥ 1637
<b>LYDIARD TREGOZ</b> <b>FETE &amp; GYMKHANA</b> (in aid of Church Restoration) at HOLBORN, LYDIARD MILLICENT on SATURDAY, 31st AUGUST 1968 commencing 12.30 p.m. Admission Ticket I/- Children 6d.      Cars 2/6d. (payable at the Gate)	

20 October 1968 was the last Sunday in the Lydiards for the rector, the Rev. Brian Came, who left to become vicar of St. Andrew's, Hartcliffe, Bristol. The Rev. Michael West was instituted as the new incumbent on the following 8 December. The Church Council pressed ahead with its programme of work on the nave roof and the south aisle roof.

The 8th Fete and Gymkhana was held on 6 September 1969. The competitive classes in the flower show were increased to twenty-one, with a special class for children under-14 of a miniature garden. There was a fancy dress competition for the children. At 4.00 p.m. there were childrens' sports in a special ring. Around 2000 people crowded the tents, stalls, and ringside. The net proceeds for the day amounted to £292, the total receipts being £450.

An estimate of £ 1813 was received for necessary repairs to the nave roof. A Gift Day was held in May 1970 and donations for the Roof Fund amounted to £249 by September. By then the roof repairs and the internal plastering of the nave ceiling were near to completion. The Church Council looked forward to a successful Fete and Gymkhana, which it was hoped would raise much of the expected £600 shortfall.

Towards the expenses of that Fete and Gymkhana a number of efforts had been organized during the preceding months - afternoon teas, a sale of teddy-bears, and raffles. A Cheese and Wine Party in Lydiard Mansion, organised by Mary Nutland, realised £60. The Gymkhana Committee organised a Discotheque Dance in Lydiard Millicent Village Hall on 11 July 1970, tickets being on sale from Mary Collins and Sandra Croucher, which realised £12. In all, these efforts raised £94.

For the 9th Fete and Gymkhana, on 5 September 1970, the dressage, jumping, and gymkhana events started at 11.30 a.m. The schedule for the flower show was extended by some vegetable classes: with schedules obtainable from Hamilton Strange or the rectory. An additional attraction for the Show was a visit from the Parachute Regiment who erected a parachute jumping tower and, after demonstrating it, offered anyone from the crowd the opportunity to feel just what it was like to jump from an aircraft. Another new feature was a dog-handling display and show in eight classes. (Class 5 was for the dog the Judge would most like to take home.) All the usual produce stalls, handicraft stalls, and sideshows were arranged. There was also a children's roundabout for the first time. The Fete and Gymkhana had a rival attraction on the day, 'Swindon in the Seventies'. Despite the competition, the net proceeds, including the £94 that had been raised during the year, amounted to £448 - £156 more than 1969. (The expenses of the Show amounted to £323.)

Efforts began early to cover the expenses of the 10th Fete and Gymkhana. A coffee morning at the rectory in February 1971 realised £12. The final account for the nave roof was received, which


amounted to £2334. Once again, it was hoped that the balance would be forthcoming from the next Fete and Gymkhana.

The 1 Oth Fete and Gymkhana was held on 4 September 1971. It was decided that there would be no cake competition, but a big effort should be made with the cake stall. Fruit cakes, jam sponges, fruit tarts, ginger cakes, etc. were requested in quantity, and these were to be delivered to Bertha Titcombe, Mrs Faulconbridge, or to the rectory the day before or to the tent on Fete day.

Fete day in 1971 brought glorious weather and a record gate contributed to making a most happy and successful event. Special thanks were accorded to Mr G.R. Elliott who had taken over Brook Farm from Mr G Stevens and had agreed to the continued use of The Ham field in the future. The net proceeds amounted to £457 - £9 up on last year, expenses being £380 - £57 up. It was reported at the Church Council that the roof repair bill was paid.

*THE TENTH*  
**LYDIARD TREGOZ**  
***F Fete and Gymkhana***

**September 4th, 1971 12.30 p.m.**  
at  
**Ham Field, Holborn**  
**Brook House Farm,**  
**Lydiard Millicent**  
By kind permission of Messrs. A.G.M. Stevens & Son



**PROGRAMME - PRICE 3p**



In order to help cover expenses for the 11th Fete and Gymkhana a National Hunt Jockeys' Donkey Derby was held at Lydiard Millicent Village Hall on a Friday evening in May 1972. The event was a great success, despite very poor weather, due to the National Hunt Jockeys who gave their services free, to the many helpers, and to Mr Martin Kidson-Trigg of Spittleborough Farm who organised the event. The profit on the evening was about £75. Also, a raffle was organised with a first prize of a 4/5 day holiday at Nabeul, Tunisia, in January 1973, which was donated by Hickie Borman. Martin Kidson-Trigg supplied volunteers with plenty of tickets to sell. Mrs Large again appealed for goods for sale: cakes, jams and pickles, toys, and goods for the white elephant stall. Mrs Love at Hook Schoolhouse asked for a good number of toys that were in need of repair.

The 11th Fete and Gymkhana was held on 2 September 1972. The Dog Show was expanded to include obedience classes as an extra attraction. New sideshows were introduced. There were three rings for elementary dressage, jumping - with B S JA jumps, and gymkhana events. The equestrian events started at 12.30 p.m., the dog show at 2.00 p.m., the children's sports at 3.00 p.m. The parade of the VWH hounds took place at 4.00 p.m. The schedules and entry forms for the Gymkhana and the dog show were obtainable from Mary Collins, Lower Salthrop Farm, for flower and vegetable show from Miss Paddy Strange or the rectory. The proceeds of the day amounted to £477.85, which was set aside for the repair of the south aisle of the church next year.

The 12th event took place on 1 September 1973, but the old name of 'Fete and Gymkhana' was replaced by the more appropriate, 'Lydiard Tregoz Country Show.' New attractions at the show included a Mountain and Moorland Pony Show and a cage-bird show. The Bampton Morris Dancers and Wootton Bassett School Gymnastics Team gave displays. The net proceeds of the day amounted to £540.28, which included £124.68 made at a coffee morning and at a cheese-and-wine party given by Martin and Anne Kidson-Trigg at Spittleborough Farm.

As a result of the Country Show repairs to the south aisle roof of the church were commissioned.

The 13th Lydiard Tregoz Country Show took place on 31 August 1974 and in Lydiard Park. The Show had been getting larger each year and the Ham Field, kindly made available by Mr G.R. Elliott and used for twelve years, was just not large enough. The Committee decided to seek a more spacious site and one within Tregoze parish. Mr David Rumming and Thamesdown Borough Council kindly gave permission for the use of the former deer park. A Donkey Show and a Veteran Car Exhibition were additional attractions on the day. There was an extra effort with the stalls, and appeals were made for jam and pickles, fancy goods, plants and produce, toys, white elephant, and cakes. Heavy showers broke in the middle of the afternoon which undoubtedly affected the attendance. However, the day was a great success, and Lydiard Park proved to be a spacious and splendid site. The surplus on the day amounted to £587. The bulk of the profit came from the working party stall (£264) and the refreshments in the marquee (£64).

The parish magazine reported that the total raised for the Tregoz Church Fabric Fund from the thirteen Shows was over £5000. Over that period £12,000 had been spent by the church council, and all the major work on the exterior fabric of the church had been completed. The Rev. Michael West moved from Lydiard at Easter 1975 to become vicar of Breage with Germoe, Cornwall. His successor, the Rev. James Free, was instituted on 22 May 1975 and made an honorary canon in June 1976. Mr Free gave great encouragement and his organisational skills to the Show.

The 14th Country Show was on 30 August 1975. There was a British Driving Society Marathon, a tent containing the now-famous collection of dolls belonging to Mr Green of Wootton Bassett, an army cadet band and display team, and a band of Morris Dancers to delight the large numbers of people who attended the Show. The gross takings for the day were even higher than before but so were

expenses, and the final surplus was lower than the previous year, and stood at £560.54. Mr Free expressed the thanks of all to the hard-working committee for this effort, which was helping to pay off a £2000 loan from the diocese, repayable at a rate of £400 annually over five years, to complete the last stage of the repairs to the roof of the church.

There was always work to be done on the church. In 1976 the organ had a major overhaul at a cost of £1058. The money came from church funds and donations from many individuals. On Easter Monday Mrs Gough raised the final £80 to cover the cost of the overhaul by a sponsored six-hour playing of favourite music.

Over the years the membership of the committee had been depleted by death. John Bridal died in 1971. For many years Hamilton Strange was one of the churchwardens at Lydiard Millicent and looked after the churchyard there. He was an enthusiastic grower of championship chrysanthemums and dahlias. He died in 1974 after only five years of retirement. The following year Peter Enderby died. In addition, the indefatigable but ageing Mrs Connie Large had to leave her home, Tregoz House, Wootton Bassett, in 1976 to live with a daughter and could no longer direct the stalls and refreshments. Fortunately for the Show there were others who took their place. Martin Kidson-Trigg, who had married Anne Gantlett, was the hard-working committee chairman. In 1976 the Show Secretary was Mrs Judith House of Axford, the Horse, Donkey, and Dog show Secretary was Miss Mary Collins. Mrs Mary Nutland was Flower Show Secretary, and Mrs Audrey Jepps was Press Secretary. Mr Free acted as Show Co-ordinator. (Another great loss was the death of Mary Collins in 1978.)

The 15th County Show, on 4 September 1976, started at 10.30 a.m. An interesting addition to the programme of events was the Tregoz Biathlon, organised by Martin Kidson-Trigg, which consisted of Clay Pigeon Shooting (5 single bird throws) and Fly Fishing (Casting in two rounds - Dry Fly and Wet Fly). The number of rings increased. Ring 1 was for Jumping, Ring 2 for Gymkhana events, and Ring 3 was for clear round and handy pony class and for the preliminary judging of the private driving classes. There was a ring for donkey classes and one for the Exemption dog show which had four classes for pedigree dogs and eight for non-pedigree. There were also Obedience Tests for dogs in a number of categories.

In 1976 the flower, vegetable, and handicraft sections were enlarged. The Hamilton Strange Memorial Challenge Cup was awarded to the competitor with most points in the Dahlia and Cut Flower sections. The Gantlett Challenge Cup was awarded to the competitor with most points in the vegetable section, which had twenty-three classes. There was also a Bronze Medal for the winner of the bowl of roses class. There were classes in Floral Art, for cakes and home-made preserves, chutneys, and wine, and five classes for handicrafts. As with all other Shows the hope was that as many exhibits as possible would be donated for the auction at the end of the day.

10.30 a.m. was again the opening time on 3 September 1977 for the 16th Country Show. A share in the proceeds this year went to the Swindon Committee of Action Research for the Crippled Child, whose chairman was Roderick Wightman, who had married Annette Enderby in June 1969. His committee helped to mount the day's events. Also, representatives of a number of local charities ran a group of stalls and sideshows, sharing the proceeds of their stall with the Show Committee.

In addition to the five rings for horses, donkeys, and dogs, there was a ring for heavy horses and one for Vintage and veteran cars. The heavy horses proved to be extraordinarily popular with the crowd. They were a great attraction for this and subsequent shows. The car display included a competition for musical cars. Over the years the horse and pony sections had become more and more popular with riders, and this was seen in the fact that thirty-two companies and individuals donated challenge cups, tankards, prizes, prize money, plaques, and rosettes. There was a Tug-of-war competition and a hot-

air-balloon launching. Prior events had been arranged in order to cover some of the ever-increasing expenses, and these included a Concert Party, organised by Mrs Gertie Gough, and 'A Night for Action', organised by Mr and Mrs Kidson-Trigg.

The 17th Country Show, 1978, was reported by the *North Wilts Standard* (8 September) as being attended by more than 2500 'who turned up on a chilly but sunny September day to see a show packed with thrills and spills, and reminders of a bygone age.' (Out of the proceeds of the Show £100 was given to the Cheshire Home at Kington Langley.):

The show was highlighted by a spectacular display of 'Wild West' riding by Miss Anne Hyland on the Arab stallion Nizzolan, as part of the New Forest Cabalgada Western Riding Team. The team, a group of four experts on Western American riding, also included Steven Bartlett, Edna Champion, and Michael Port. All the horses taking part in the display were American bred and specially trained in this country for the Western type riding methods. Both rider and horse were kitted out with genuine Western American clothing and tack, each was put through its paces in true cowboy fashion, showing speed, precision, and versatility. During the show Steven Bartlett gave a display of cowboy roping on his champion Western horse, Phantom. For the final item of the display, the group joined forces for a quadrille using the four horses in precision riding set to the music of the film 'Blazing Saddles.'

A cavalcade of over 20 vintage cars and motorcycles was a car enthusiast's dream come true. The display included cars in perfect condition dating back as far as 1927. They included a Vauxhall (1927), Austin Saloon, 1932 Rolls Royce, Humbers, Triumph Mayflower, Morris 8, a 1933 car, and a caravan made by Bampton Brothers of Wootton Bassett, a Morris Minor, jeeps, armoured cars and motorcycles used during the 1939-45 war. Motorcycles included a 1940 Indian 741 exhibited by Mr Cyril Smith of Collingbourne Ducis.

A further contribution from the 18th Country Show (1979) was given to the Cheshire Home at Kington Langley. A newspaper report stated that there was a record entry of competitors, with over 400 in the horse and pony classes and thirty-five entrants in the vintage and veteran car and motorcycle events. Entries in the Horticultural show were also up. The craft tent proved popular, and stalls and sideshows did brisk trade. A treat for the children was a model railway which ran throughout the day. Music during the afternoon was provided by Highworth Silver Band, and there was a display of traditional dancing by Bampton Morris Men. Once again there was a parade of the VWH hounds in the ring during an interval. It is an indication of the growing popularity of the Show that competitors came from further and further afield. In the early days almost all of the ponies were ridden along the lanes to the Show. It is significant that, in 1979, the winner of the Driving class was Ted Rowley from Hemel Hempstead and the best mare in the heavy horse classes was Amazing Grace owned by Mr. C.W. Vincent of Chertsey, Surrey.

The Report in the *Evening Advertiser* (1 September) for the 19th Country Show (1980) stated that the Show could be on the way to becoming one of the top horse events in the West:

For the first time in its 19-year history it was given the go-ahead to hold prestige British Show Jumping Association classes and attract top names. The schedule for Saturday's show read like a Who's Who in showjumping and racing. Derek Ricketts entered horses from his Buckinghamshire stables. He was unable to appear himself because of a show in Wales, so his wife Jill, sister of jockey Johnnie Francome, took over. It was Jill's first outing as a senior this season but she went on to win the foxhunter preliminary. Jockey Graham Thorner switched from race-horses to hunters and rode to victory in the open working hunter class, while Tony Biddlecombe, brother of ex-jockey Terry, took the

honours in the newcomers' preliminary. And two young ladies were showing the flair of their famous father. Clearly following in the footsteps of former champion jockey and one of the country's top trainers, Stan Mellor, were his daughters Dayna, 14, and Linda, 16, who travelled from Lambourn to compete.

Horse show secretary Mollie Groom was delighted with the record 400 entries. "It is one of the best courses in the west country and now we've got BS JA classes we can expect to see more and more top riders."

The news was just as good in the show's other sections with good horticultural and dog entries. The first ever goat show got off to a roaring start with an excellent 88 entries and seven classes - way above the expectations of secretary Carol Law.

The enjoyment of the Show by the paying public was obvious and the hard work of a great many people was tremendous, but from 1980 onwards there was always concern that the expenses, which increased with each show, should be covered.

The 20th Country Show was held on 5 September 1981, with jumping events beginning at 9.00 a.m. The Show Secretary was Mr Tony Jepps, and the Secretary for horse and pony events was again Mrs Mollie Groom. Arena parties were provided by members of the Wiltshire Army Cadet Force. A number of charities benefited from the proceeds of the day. The horse and pony events were advertised in *Horse and Hound*, *Country Life*, and in the local press. The Jumping competitions were conducted strictly under BSJA rules and certain classes were only open to horses or ponies registered with the BS JA. Among the many awards were the John Bridal Memorial Cup, the Sophie Crewdson Memorial Cup, the Mrs S. Hogden Challenge Cup, the Three Mists Challenge Shield plus a replica, the Jean Bridal Challenge Cup, and the Mary Collins Challenge Cup. In the Showjumping it was gratifying to see that the course builder in Ring 3 was Roger Collett and the Judges included Mr and Mrs Brian Collett. Roger and Russell Collett were competitors and among the winners in their class.

The Private driving class was open to singles, pairs, and tandems driven to a suitable vehicle, with rosettes from the British Driving Society.

*The Standard, Times & Echo* (11 September) reported that the 20th Show was the largest ever held with seven rings and two dressage areas covering a large proportion of the 50-acre field:

There were entrants from all parts of the county including some well-known names such as Ted Edgar who had entered horses from his Everest Stud.

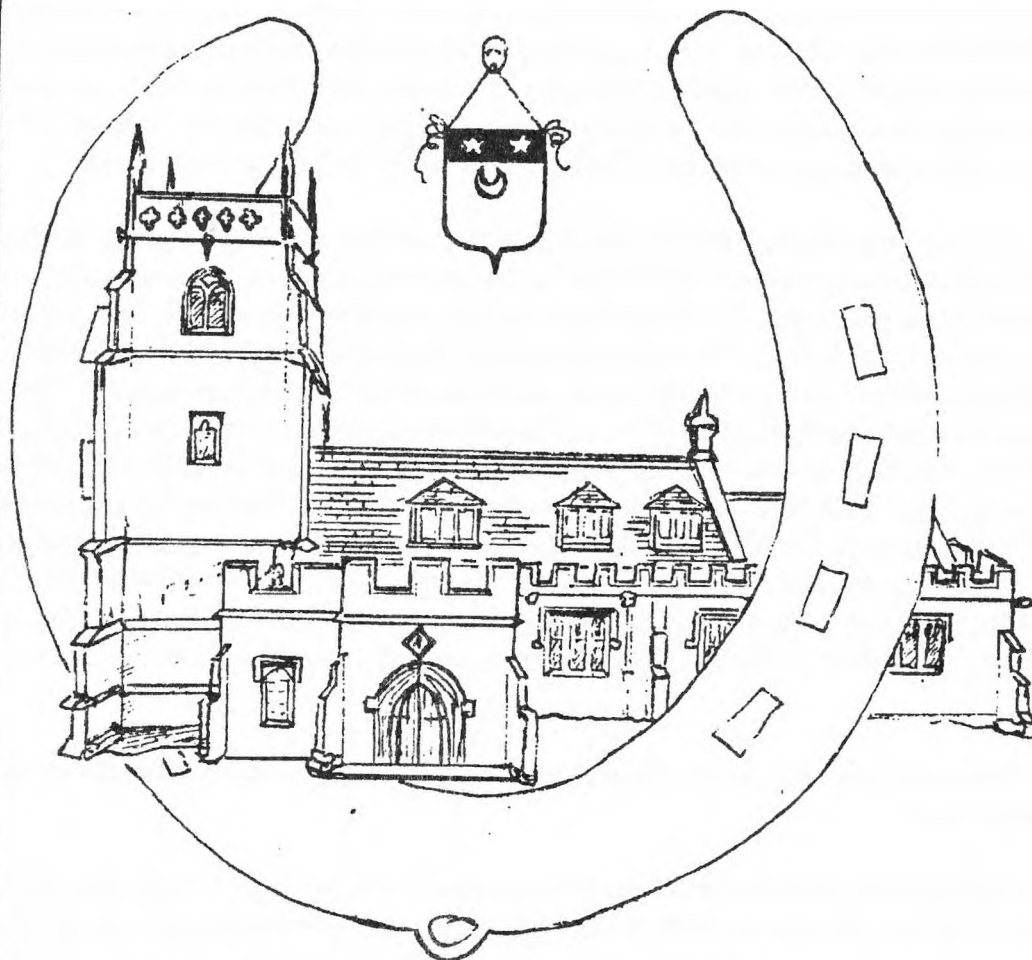
One of the main attractions for competitors was the regional final of the Rediffusion Pony Club Dressage Awards. Other events during the day included a parade by the Vale of the White Horse Hunt and displays of vintage cars and motorcycles. The Highworth Silver Band provided a musical note to the day.

With perfect weather for the show, the organisers were well pleased with the day. "The attendance was well up on what we anticipated and the show was very successful," said Mr. A Jepps.

A surprise win on the Darts went to the Curate of Toothill the Rev. David Attwood.

There were the usual stalls and sideshows, floral and horticultural sections, and in the domestic section - jams, pickles, eggs, etc. - the Gardiner Cup was presented to the competitor with the most points.

# LYDIARD TRECOZ COUNTRY SHOW



**SATURDAY, 5th SEPTEMBER, 1981**

In January 1982 Canon Free was appointed a residentiary canon of Bristol Cathedral, and he was succeeded as rector, later that year, by the Rev. John Flory.

The 21st Country Show, on 4 September 1982, had Alfred Gay as its President. It was a sign of the growing professionalism of the Show that all the refreshments were the responsibility of Tudor Cottage Catering. The restoration fund at the church was the main beneficiary from the profits on the day, but donations were given to the Children's Society, the British Red Cross, and the Wiltshire Army Cadets (who provided the arena parties). Thirty-eight companies and individuals were sponsors of the different horse and pony events.

The programme for the 23rd Lydiard Tregoz Country Show, held on 1 September 1984, contained the thanks of the committee to Thamesdown Borough Council and Francis Rumming for that part of the Showfield which is not the subject of upgrading and to Messrs John and Gordon Hicks for the use of the adjoining field.

**Mrs Mollie Groom writes:**

The morning of the first Lydiard Show of which I was Horse Show Secretary (1979) was memorable. We normally kept our elder daughter Sarah's pony at Hampsley Hollow Riding Centre, but, obviously, time didn't allow an early morning trek to Caine. So we brought the 13.2 pony and a few bales of straw home the night before and made an improvised stable in the garage. The following morning I got up at 6.00 a.m., looked out of the kitchen window and saw young Tiffany in dressing gown leading the pony (Simona) around the garden. I was told that Simona liked roses. At about 8.30 a.m. the telephone rang and I learned that Mrs Thompson who was due to judge in the Main Ring had just heard that her mother had suffered a heart attack and would therefore be unable to attend. Despite wondering what I had let myself in for, I soon learned what a wonderful, co-operative, and hardworking crowd were involved in horses and the Show. Later on that day as I was hurrying from one Ring to another an excited Sarah called. She had just left the Working Hunter Ring where she had won her class. Mr Dibble had set quite a jumping course, and Simona had been the only pony to go clear.

There was such an enthusiastic approach by the Committee, and that approach extended to the many people who helped in so many ways with the Show. The second year that I was involved with the Show, a hiccup proved a marathon day for George Scott and his niece Christine Affleck, who nobly acted as the Arena Party in the Main Ring! We learned from their feat that we needed a reliable Arena Party, and so the Wiltshire Army Cadets provided us with excellent service in the following years. The cadets would arrive at the field on a Friday afternoon, straight from school, and I would meet them, armed with biscuits and orange. They enjoyed being transported from one side of the sixty-acre field to the other in my Landrover. They worked so hard in setting up the seven rings and all the jumps. We arranged for Tudor Cottage Catering to provide them with a hot meal in the evening. Part of their training was to camp in the field overnight. The following morning - the day of the Show - Tudor Cottage Catering provided them with a hot breakfast and a packed lunch. At the end of the day we presented each platoon with a "Champion" rosette and a small cup which they displayed at their headquarters.

Each year we had a colourful and precise display from the Penhill majorettes who so obviously took a delight in their work.

In 1982 we protested that, under the terms of a Thamesdown Borough Council resolution, the annual parade of the VWH hounds was not allowed. In fairness, Thamesdown convened a special meeting at which they rescinded that part of the resolution, and so allowed hounds to parade on their land.

On the night before the 1983 Show we experienced tremendous gales in this area and arrived at the Showground to find every jump flattened and the marquees down and ripped. Everyone had to work very hard and quickly put up the jumps, and we were all pleased that the classes started at 9.00 a.m., as advertised. John Hicks and Alan Olding came to our rescue with long vehicle trailers, and Les Francis managed to hire a bus which served as a dining room for Judges and officials.

Although these Shows involved everyone in hard work they were great fun and the community spirit which evolved was something to be enjoyed and admired. We received generous sponsorship from a number of sources, and once we held the BSJA classes I had to start working to raise the necessary £1200 before the following year's Show.

As soon as we held the BSJA classes it became necessary to remove the telephone at dinner time and at midnight as the horsey fraternity is inclined to telephone at any time of the day. In the latter connection the local garage, which has a similar telephone number to ours, were not amused one year when the printers made a mistake on all the posters for the Show!



We were fortunate to have the professional services of Roy Munton and George Walker as accountants, and the ledger of the Show is now in the hands of Mary Nutland.

In 1984 we were denied access to the better part of the field (where we had previously held BSJA classes) because it was the subject of upgrading. This had a two-fold effect, as the standard of the ground we had to use was not up to that required for B S JA classes and Thamesdown advised us that, in future, the rent of the land would be doubled. I went along to Denys Hodson, stating that all moneys raised went to charity, but to no avail.

The 1984 Show had seven rings, dog classes, and a fun run, but, with the increased overheads, by the time we had paid prize monies and all expenses, we made only a slight profit. Sadly, along with a similar decision taken by a number of other horse shows at that time, we decided that we should not risk putting on another Show.

**Mr Tony Jepps writes:**

Following my appointment as the local National Farmers' Union Secretary and taking up the position in January 1974, I quickly became aware of the Show by being unable to refuse a kind invitation by Mary Nutland and the late Mary Collins to become part of the organisation of the expanding show. It was great to meet them as I had seen them win on television in the 1960s the £5,000 Daily Mail Get-ahead Competition which enabled them to set up as mobile farm secretaries in Wiltshire and adjoining counties.

A new site, the Park, enabled the various trade stands and rings to be set out to best advantage. My wife Audrey, in our caravan, became Press Secretary and results clerk, and I had the dubious privilege of locating the subterranean sewage system, long since defunct but installed in the early days of the War by the Military Hospital and Camp. By obtaining - no questions asked! - an extra large site plan, the exact location of the underground pipes was established. With a handy JCB to the ready, we were in business. Local Agricultural Merchants were persuaded to let us borrow several hundred yards of water pipes and pristine wagon ropes for the ring-sides. Local farmers were pressured into supplying straw bales for ring-side seating - not allowed nowadays due to Fire Regulations. Prizes were awarded to small boys for the greatest number of binbags that they could fill with rubbish so that the field could be swiftly returned to agricultural use.

In 1975 I managed to contact two redoubtable ladies Gladys Spooner and Gwendoline Barter from Broadstairs, whom Audrey and I knew from our honeymoon days in the Isle of Wight. They soon found competitors for the Carriage Driving Classes which were introduced that year and quickly became a popular feature of the Show in later years. Heavy horses, the 'Gentle Giants', also made their debut in 1974. Local breeders supported the classes and one could see the manicured horses in all their finery. Some local children had never see genuine horse-power in action. Vintage tractors, motor cars, motorcycles, and even locally-made caravans appeared on display over the years. The Army Cadets were a great help as the Ring Party, promptly setting up the poles so obligingly displaced by 'Bubbles' ridden by Samantha.

Following the move of Martin Kidson-Trigg out of the area, I became Chairman of the committee, assisted, as always, by the enthusiastic support of many new people as well as the 'old guard' who had instigated and nurtured the Show from the very beginning.

1984 saw the last of the annual Shows. It was decided not to advertise this fact. Indeed, I recall saying that with the increasingly successful Cricklade Show on the Bank Holiday immediately preceeding our Saturday show and the Uffington Show becoming a two-day show, it was more than likely that a show

in 1985 would not cover its costs. It was also a fact that the show site was due to be dug up to lay a high-pressure fuel line from Caine to Fairford, If anyone enquired about a show, that fact alone could be the reason for us not holding one.

It was also a fact that trade stands and suppliers were becoming reluctant to pay a reasonable site rent, and it was becoming obvious that the entertainment contractors would soon need to be paid to attend. Sadly, with the increasing popularity of major Horse Shows and larger Jumping competitions on television the smaller local shows did not have the kudos to bring in the paying public.

After twenty-five years it was time to bow out. It was better to finish on a high note, distribute the balance in the accounts, and consider a job 'Well done. ' Many people worked hard for the Show over the years. Holidays were taken for the week of hard work and fun. During the years that Audrey and I were part of the committee, the Show was a feature of our annual Calendar. No way could we not be at home to help put on another show. Come rain, wind, or (occasionally) sunshine, the show 'must go on.' I am not alone, I know, in missing the show. Working together gave everyone a sense of purpose. It was great.

**Canon Jim Free adds as a footnote:**

he initiative for the Lydiard Tregoz Show came from the church council and all but a small part of the proceeds went towards restoration work at the church. What impressed me was the generous amount of time that was given by so many who rarely used the church. It was an excellent partnership of members of the church and parishoners and others, many of whom lived in the sister parish of Lydiard Millicent, who showed immense goodwill.

I should like to add how much I valued the completion of the work to the fabric of the church before my arrival, and the consequent opportunity to begin work on the unique contents of the church. The splendid canopied St.John tomb had not been seen in its entirety for many years. In 1978 it was completely restored by John Green at a cost of £5,000, largely given by trusts. The Triptych was sent away in 1981 for complete conservation, and the work was incomplete when I left the parish.

Over the years thousands of people have enjoyed the annual shows, and posterity will be grateful for the attention that could be given to the church building and its contents as a result.

-----

## GEORGE STRANGE AND THE STRANGE FAMILY OF HOOK

by Mark and Lorraine Child

[Mr and Mrs Child have been researching the Strange family history for some years. George Strange was Lorraine's paternal great-grandfather. A shortened form of this article appeared in *LydiardsMagazine*, May 1998.]

The Strange family settled at Lydiard Tregoze during the 1790s with the arrival from Wootton Bassett of John Strange (b. 1765) and his wife Sarah (b.1664), and Edward Lansdown Strange (b. 1778) and his wife Elizabeth. John and Sarah had eight children. Their third son James was born in 1793, and of his marriage the second born was William (b. 1819) who married Elizabeth Embling (b.1820) in 1840. William was a hard man, most of whose children were to flee the family hovel as soon as possible; as much from desire as necessity. One of his children was George - the most fascinating in a family of several interesting characters.

George Strange was born in 1843 at Prioryfield, in one of a group of tiny stone cottages isolated at the end of a long track off Hook Street. He was the second in a family of seven children born to William and Elizabeth between 1841 and 1857. His parents were labourers and such education as he had took place at the Dame School in Hook; a single-cell, thatched cottage with bare limewashed walls and a flagstone floor. He was taught by George Swyer (1799-1890) who ran the school with his wife Jael (1797-1848). Late in George Strange's teens, the family moved into rented cottages at Cobb Gutter off the narrow Flaxlands Lane between Hook and Braydon. Here was a double row of ten thatched cottages, served by a central well and clustered within an arrangement of ditches (gutters) which can still be seen in the field, adjacent to Bolingbroke land. George took one cottage and the rest of the family moved in next door. Landlord Cornelius Gleed charged a weekly rent of Is. 6d from each of the properties.

George appears to have grown up emotionally in the likeness of his father, for William was described as a tyrannical bully. When he married Elizabeth Embling at St.Mary's in 1840 she was seven months pregnant with their first child, Mary Ann. Then came George, followed by Simeon (b.1845), Edwin (b.1848), William Richard (b.1852), John (b.1855), and Rhoda (b.1857) - all at Prioryfield.

Mary Ann left home before she was twenty, and had been living at Goatacre for some time before her marriage at Hilmarton church in 1864. William Richard was dead; the rest of the family were at Cobb Gutter and on the verge of breaking up.

Simeon, who in later life had the appearance of George's twin, was a mild-tempered man with deep religious beliefs and a strong moral sense of right and wrong. After a spell as a servant at Spittleborough Farm he married a sweet lady called Elizabeth Loveday. They were people of simple pleasures who often took in strangers who had fallen on hard times. In addition to their own children, they later brought up the illegitimate daughter of their daughter Ruth, the illegitimate son of their daughter Letitia, and the youngest son of Ruth's subsequent marriage! Once they had moved away to a smallholding at Wroughton, they seem to have given up contact with the family remaining at Hook. Simeon was to die at Stratton workhouse in 1929; ignored for so long by his family, bankrupted by the excesses of his own son, made homeless by a devastating fire, and senile.

Edwin Strange also fled his father's bad temper and never returned. One day he set out on foot for Somerset where he learned basket-making. Armed with the trade he was to pursue the rest of his life (and so too his sons, in their turn), he walked first to Exeter, and later to Mevagissey in Cornwall. There he married Amanda Jago, the harbourmaster's daughter. Thirty years later they were to live in London. John completely disappeared after the age of 16; so too Rhoda, although her name lived on as a family

favourite through several generations. Of the family, only George Strange remained at Hook, an angry man who was to look after an angry father until William died in 1899, the year after his wife.

The young George Strange was a pugilist, regularly fighting for beer and a purse in a field behind the Wheatsheaf (now Sally Pusseys) on the Wootton Bassett road. His reputation for picking a fight was legendary. It is said that when he walked into the pub, banged his fist on the bar and exclaimed "Here oi be!" the room emptied. Those who didn't want to be his next victim and those who wanted a good view of anything which might happen next, quickly moved out to the field at the back. Thickset, with a large moustache and a bullish appearance, George always shaved his head so that opponents could not grab him by the hair. Fights usually lasted until one man fell from exhaustion, although there were occasions when the proceedings were stopped for a beer break because neither protagonist could see through the blood in their eyes. George's bare-knuckle exploits would have taken place with the knowledge of the Wheatsheaf's famed and formidable Sarah Purse née Garlick (1815-1885) after whom the pub is now named.

In 1863 George married Jane Fowler of Wanborough. He was nineteen years old; she was twenty-four and more than seven months pregnant. Over the next seventeen years she was to give him thirteen of his twenty-seven children. When she eventually died following childbirth it was, in the words of the Coroner: "... of haemorrhage after confinement under a midwife, and from want of professional assistance at time of labour." In truth, George had resisted fetching the doctor throughout the confinement and its aftermath wholly against the midwife's advice. When he did so, he first asked the doctor what was his fee for attending a confinement. Wrangling ensued as George would only pay half a guinea (he admitted to earning 12s. a week as a wood dealer and there was money hidden in the house). Irritated by all this haggling, Dr Kirkman grabbed his bag saying that he wouldn't argue about the fee when a woman's life was in danger - but arrived too late. If George had listened to the midwife, said the Coroner, his wife's life could have been saved.

After Jane's death, George pressed their eldest daughter into service as housekeeper. His bare-knuckle fighting days over, he was now known as 'Turk Strange', and it is interesting to speculate why. 'Turk' was a term given to a type of scythe, and we know that George hired out his services with a scythe at harvest time. But 'Turk' is also an 18th- and 19th-century colloquialism for a male given to brutal sexual behaviour. The family at that time called him 'Great John George' although he did not have the name John, so this could have referred to the size of his girth or the size of his family. He was also described as a 'higgler' by occupation - someone who drives a hard bargain. With George, there were clearly no compromises.

Living close by at Cobb Gutter were Jacob Gough (b. Clyffe Pypard 1831) and his wife Eliza (nee Leighfield). At eighteen years of age he had been servant to the Horsells of Marsh Farm, then came to live at Hook and married in 1853. In 1869 the rent on their house and garden, owned by William Moulden, was 10d per week. They also had allotment no. 35 at Franklins, which was land at the back of the Bolingbroke Arms: George had allotment no. 37.

In 1881 George Strange married Sarah Ann, eldest of the Gough's five daughters. He was thirty-eight years old; she was just fifteen years, and four months pregnant. She was destined to give him fourteen children, either at Cobb Gutter or Purley Farm, Braydon, where George went in 1895 as a tenant farmer, taking his parents with him. Eventually worn out and undoubtedly thoroughly demoralised, she was to die at Wharf House, Kempsford, suffering from cirrhosis of the liver - quaintly termed 'gin drinker's liver' - and dropsy. The inquest heard that she had been an alcoholic for over twenty years and had virtually drunk herself to death. Losing her favourite son in the Great War had only hastened her demise.

Jacob Gough lived all of his life at Hook and Lydiard Tregoze, for much of the time next door to his

own parents - William Gough and Finetta (née Reeve) who were bringing up the illegitimate sons to whom his sister gave birth whilst in service at Lydiard Tregoze and Purton. Said to be 'a bit of a wag' and fond of his drink, the landlady of the Bolingbroke Arms used to call time on Jacob by hooting in his ear. Fie eventually died in 1922 in the Purton workhouse; a sad, lonely, old man of ninety-one.

Meanwhile George continued to prove himself as mean, unsympathetic, and bad tempered. He thrashed his children for childish behaviour. And he beat them thoroughly when they refused to clear stinging nettles with their bare hands. His offspring were sent to school with nails in their boots, which had to be presented for inspection every evening. The owner of any boot which did not have its full complement of nails was also soundly beaten. This favourite occupation nearly had tragic consequences when one of George's sons 'popped' a row of young cabbages. George responded with a horsewhip, punishing the son to 'within an inch of his life'.

George spent as little money as possible, making his family live on the most fatty, cheapest pieces of meat. On one occasion his wife took a huge piece of white fatty bacon and threw it into the canal. George saw it in the water when he came home, fished it out, and made the family eat it. The family's other staple food was cheese which, it is said, hung under the stairs and still had to be eaten even when it had gone green. He always insisted that the potatoes which were grown in the garden were left there as long as possible so that they would grow to their fullest. His daughter Sarah liked to cook small potatoes, so sometimes dug up the young haulms, stripped them of the vegetables, and replanted them. It was George's policy to allow no lighting in the house after 6 o'clock in the evening during the winter months, which he ensured by dispatching the family to bed at that time. Later in life, when his married daughter and her husband lived with him, he still insisted on the curfew. His son-in-law, when he wished to go to the pub for a drink, had to smuggle himself noiselessly in and out of a window.

George Strange was a familiar sight on the Lydiard road between Hook and Swindon, sprawled drunkenly across his cart, drawn by the great horses 'Captain' and 'Noble'. Their owner being disposed to call at several hostelrys on his return journeys meant that these creatures frequently found their own way home, their owner fast asleep in his seat. It was said that Captain and Noble stood patiently outside each pub for about half an hour, at the end of which they started off Local boys who held them back and helped the drunken George aboard were rewarded with a penny.

On one occasion, the horses had to turn around and go all the way back to Swindon. As an alternative to a farthing's change, McIlroy's store in the town sometimes gave a packet of pins. Discovering this had been the case when he arrived home, an enraged George Strange turned his horses round and drove them all the way back from Kempsford (where he went to live in 1901) to Swindon to claim his farthing.

It would be nice to think that these snapshots malign George. That here was a kind-hearted man who took pity on two pregnant women whom he married to save from shame and the parish. But alas, the stories handed down through the family about this son of Hook deny all attempts at amelioration. Two years after the death of his second wife George married Mary Lawrence, née Juggins, a widow of Kempsford: she was fifty-nine and he was seventy-four. It is said that this marriage was not a happy union and, although unsubstantiated by her death certificate, she apparently went to her coffin "black and blue" on account of her lack of interest in marital favours!

There is a final twist. George ended his days in 1925 in a house in Swindon. By the purest coincidence when I received this news, my husband was sitting in an office opposite a girl who turned out to be the then-owner of that very house. That evening, just as she was finishing telling her husband about George and of the coincidence of their ownership, a clock on the wall left its moorings and 'simply shot across the kitchen'. Taking this as a sign that seven decades on the other side still hadn't quelled George's tetchy spirit, they left the clock off the wall and sold the house!

## AN ACCOUNT OF THE PAINTER FAMILY AND THEIR LINKS WITH LYDIARD PARK

by R.W. Painter

From notes from the memory of his grandfather John Painter and from family history.

John Painter was born in 1849, and as his eldest son was born in 1870 he must have married in his late teens or at age twenty. He was a well-known gamekeeper for Lord Bolingbroke on Lydiard Park Estate, even until he was over eighty, when his son Harry and their family moved to Great Elm, near Frome, where my Uncle Harry had taken on lease a market garden. Old Granddad had been living in the house next door. Aunt Emma, Harry's wife, had been cooking for and looking after Grandpa since his wife had died in 1917.

Granddad came to live with my father and mother and us two boys in 1931 at 2 Southleaze Farm, which my dad, Ernest John, had been farming since 1921. The old chap must have found it hard, leaving his old home at Lydiard after all those years, because he died in March 1932 after a short spell of bronchitis. He had been out on our farm and shot a rabbit just a week before he died.

I was born in October 1919, so, when Granddad lived with us I would have been eleven years old. I can easily recall some of the tales that he told of his life and some facts about the Bolingbroke family in Victorian times and later. I once heard him say that at one time he had gone to Bristol and worked as a painter on the suspension bridge. Whether this was when it was new, he did not say. The house where most of the family were born was a cottage owned by the estate and opposite Hook Farm. It is still there. To carry out his job as keeper would have meant a lot of walking, because it is about 1½ miles from Hook to the woods surrounding the 'House', Lydiard Park mansion. He related tales of night fights with poachers, and even used to take some of his sons with him. One tale was told that my father, then about thirteen, was positioned to watch a bank where there were a lot of rabbit warrens, and I suppose the old man had heard that poachers were expected that night. Anyway, Ernest had been working on a farm all day, so he must have gone off to sleep. When he woke he said he had not seen anyone, then later, in daylight, the old father checked and it could easily be seen that the poachers had put down nets stealthily, then driven the rabbits to the nets and collected their haul and departed, all close by where Ernest was fast asleep. They had a laugh when he told us this tale.

Once at a shoot, Granddad was walking with a stick in his right hand when someone accidentally let off a shotgun and hit him in the hand, and I well remember him say that he had to go to the doctor for treatment. After several visits the doctor still found and got out some bits of wood from the stick which had been forced into the flesh of his hand.

Lord Bolingbroke, who died at the age of seventy-nine in 1897 - Granddad would then have been fifty years old - always regarded John as a friend, and they say that the old lord was a bit crippled with arthritis, and John would station the old lord out in the wood, then would do a bit of careful beating and drive a rabbit near enough for the lord to have a shot at it.

The lake, which still partly exists near the house, used to be much larger, the height of the ground forming the dam can still be seen with part of the wall still as it used to be quite close to Brook Cottage, where Uncle Harry and Granddad used to live until 1931. (Most of the estate was sold off in 1930.)

The height of the dam, and the size of the lake, can easily be worked out. I recall hearing old John say that he could remember when the original lake was intact, and the old lord had two guests there who went fishing and caught two great fish: the viscount had one and he gave the other to John. When I was about five, I can remember when we were visiting Gramps after driving over in the horse and tub



or governess cart from South Leaze. This was usually on a Sunday evening. He used to take us for a walk up into the woods, up towards the 'House', then round the wall and dam, and back on the inside, down to the lakeside. This was quite exciting for my brother Toby, him being three years younger, and me, and the old chap kept telling us to keep quiet. Lady Bolingbroke and her son were then living up at the 'House' which was just up by the church.

Two things I remember, we seemed to be taken up by the wall to pick lilies of the valley. There were quite a lot of clumps of them growing by the wall in the shade, so that must have been in the Spring. The other was seeing on the edge of the lake, lying partly out on the bank by the water, dozens of mussel shells, about 4-5 inches long, so it looks as if the lake had been well stocked with fish.

As I said, Grandad said he knew what the lake had been at one time, and he said the dam had broken or collapsed way back in the last century, and after a time the estate called in engineers to rebuild it. Unfortunately, after a few more years, it partly collapsed again. Thus I think it stayed until I first remember it about 1926: even then it was a fall of about 25 feet. I expect the size of the lake in the past could be checked on old maps.

By the way, my Grandfather could not read or write. One tale was that he went to a dinner or supper, when different people were asked to sing or make a speech. When he was asked, he stood up and said, "This is the song of the black sheep". He just held his hand on his forehead, brought it down in front of his face, and went, "Baa, baa", then sat down to laughs and cheers.

I think that was not too original because one of the boys in our class at school in Swindon was partly Scottish, and I have seen him do the same thing, saying before he did it that it was sheep coming down the mountains.

My old Grandad, apparently while living in the cottage at Hook where nearby all the family were born, must have known of an old very isolated cottage in the woods at Bincknoll, between Broadtown and Bassett Down, and it seems he had a yearning to go and live there. But I suppose when the old lord was alive he would not get the chance. I have read what I am relating now, quoting from memory, from a book written by Mrs Mary Arnold-Forster in the late 1940s, called 'Bassett Down House'. It is all about the old mansion where her husband's family had lived for a long time. The house had been pulled down, by the way, about 1957 after she had died in it. She describes the old cottage at Bincknoll, and could remember when it had been occupied by a gamekeeper called Roger, then later she mentions John Painter, and a page or two of the book actually describes her more than once walking or riding over to Bincknoll to the lonely gamekeeper's cottage and having a chat to old John. The wood was all owned by the Bolingbrokes in those days. Her tale was that the old chap had told her that he always wanted to go to that old cottage and be gamekeeper there, and his chance came when the old lord had died in 1899.

He had moved with his family to live there, but what a lonely place right off the road, and no other house for at least a mile, the nearest being Bynol Farm and the cottages. Anyway by what I can recall hearing from different people, most of them long gone, they led quite a self-contained but contented life. My mother said that Emma used to use a boiler to cook most of the food, each different vegetable and, I suppose, the meat was put into separate nets and all cooked in the boiler, I suppose, in a shed at the back. Grandad was also a successful bee-keeper, keeping them in sheds and taking the honey in the Autumn. By killing the bees v/ith sulphur, younger stocks would be left for the next year. By all accounts he had honey in jars and combs, also beeswax, and, best of all, he made mead, which is the wine made from the honey that gets left in the combs which stays after all that can be squeezed out has been obtained. They also did fatten and breed a few pigs. There was a garden round the cottage, and some fruit trees, so, as I say, they must have lived quite a hard but self-contained existence. As

a gamekeeper he had to look after the pheasants, hares, and rabbits, but I have heard that he was sometimes known to supply the odd pheasant or hare or rabbit to order! (To people in Broad Town.)

The estate used to have shoots through the Winter, and my father Ernest, who emigrated to New Zealand in 1911, then when the Great War had been going on had volunteered and joined the NZ army and had been sent to France, and eventually had leave home to see his parents, well, he told us that he had took part in a shoot at Bincknoll, and what with his army training and the fact of being away from the trenches, he said how he enjoyed it and was the best shot there that day. I think it must have been written 1916-17.

I do not know when they had to move from Bincknoll to Brook Cottage, but it must have been before 1917, because one of my cousins, Dorothy, Uncle Harry's daughter, is sure that Granny had lived at Brook Cottage. They had a house fire there during the night, and the tale the old man always said is that they had to jump out of bed and Emma put both her feet in one knicker leg and got in a right fix for a few minutes. It was not a serious enough fire to badly damage the house, but I expect it was a worry while it was going. Grandad's eldest son, my Uncle Harry, had lived in Kent for many years and had been a gardener in private service, learning the trade as a professional, had married Emma Louise Wells, and they had one daughter Dorothy, and three sons Cecil, Lewis, and John. I do not know how it all came about but when the Great War was on, the two moves were made, Harry and family from Kent to Brook Cottage, and Grandad and his wife, being about 66 or so years old, had moved from Bincknoll to half of Brook Cottage, facing towards the brook and the wood and the dam.

I think my grandmother had died in 1917. She had written all the entries in the family Bible: there are no further entries until it came into my father's care after Grandad died in 1932.

I have done a bit of checking of the 1804 Ordnance Survey maps. It shows that the lake was quite wide and long, and confirmation, as to its dimensions, are actually shown in the 1970's official guide to Lydiard Park. It is a watercolour sketch by John Buckler, dated 1810, showing the lake was up to the contour which would be just below the level of the wall still in existence on the west end of the dam.

My father often told the tale that when his mother was living at Bincknoll - and it was during the daytime with everyone away to work — a gentleman called her out. He was in great distress. He had badly torn his hand or forearm with barbed wire, and he asked Emma if she would learn the words of a charm so that she could charm his wound for him so that it would heal quickly. He said the charm could only be passed to one of the opposite sex, i.e. a man to a woman. She dressed his wound, and also said the charm, and my Dad said his mother did use her power with the charm to help other people.

One other item of historic fact is that my father told us that when he was a boy living at Hook - this must have been between 1885 and 1890 - he saw, and also a lot of other folk came to see, Mr Walter Ody use the first horse-drawn mowing machine to be used in that area on any farm before. The dates tally with 'Far from the Madding Crowd' by Thomas Flardy.

After we were married, in 1950, my wife Betty and I lived in Japonica Cottage near the Vine and Elms at Shaw, and stayed there for about four years, and, of course, got to know some of the neighbours, as some of the old men had lived there all their lives and even two had worked on the Bolingbroke Estate.

I learned quite a few facts from the late Frank Bowler and old Mr Matthews. The rows of elms forming the avenue on the way up to the church were actually planted after the old lord, the 5th viscount, had died. Ted Hiscocks was the steward, and he planted the elms, shown in the guide, but all have gone now, savaged by Dutch Elm disease.

The tales are that Lady Bolingbroke, whom I never met, had been housekeeper at the house, and the old, 5th viscount, lord had slept with her, I suppose. When she became pregnant they sent her to live at Bath. Then I do not know when it was made public, before or after the old lord had died, but it was made known that the viscount and Bessie Howard, the butcher's daughter, had married in secret, thus making her Lady Bolingbroke, and her son, when he was born, was the heir to the title. My parents used to have a cutting from the local paper, telling of the secret wedding and all that it meant. (Mary Emily Elizabeth, as told me in 1936, sounded like Bessy, but it could have been Bethy or Betty.)

Ted Hiscocks must have been another of Bessie Howards' men friends. He was a local man and worked in the G.W.R. works in Swindon, and it is a well-known tale that, on being told that the old lord had died, he threw down his tools and declared that he would not have to work again. I do not know how soon it was, but he took over the estate steward's job and went to live at the House.

A few words about Ted Hiscocks. I saw him twice at the house. I was only a schoolboy and my father had reared some geese and had sold about four of them to Teddy. My cousin Jack Goringe, who was working for my father at our farm at the time, had to deliver them with a horse and milk float, and he took me along with him. Uncle Stan was there with Ted, and, after the geese had been housed and I suppose cash handed over as payment, Uncle Stan, who was the Seth- Armstrong-of-Emmerdale type, introduced us to Teddy, saying that Jack was Edith's boy and I was Ernie's boy in such a way that Teddy gave Jack a half-crown and me a shilling.

Another insight into the life of the times was after 1930, which was when my parents had bought their first motor car, a 7hp 2-cylinder Jowett: we all used to visit Uncle Stan, my father's brother and his wife and son Aubrey, I suppose every month or so. Well always, as we passed up through Amsey Lane, on the western edge of the park on our way to Uncle Stan's home in Hook, the same cottage where his father had lived and all the children were born, nearly always there was an Austin Seven parked half-way along the lane, with two people in it, and it was well known who the couple were. It was Ted Hiscock and lady friend: she was Mrs Lewis the landlord of the 'Wheatsheaf Inn' now 'Sally Pussies'. You see when Lady Bolingbroke got older, Teddy had other lady friends and the affair with Mrs Lewis went on for quite a few years.

A further twist to life is that Mrs Lewis also had another man friend who was none other than a farm worker who at the time lived with us at the farm, and was working for my father as milker and general farm hand. His name was Charley Archer. (This was before Jack Goringe was working for us.) An amusing twist came about when Mrs Lewis was ill and in a nursing home in Westlecot Road in Swindon, and, lo and behold, Charley's bike and Teddy's car were both seen outside when they were visiting her.

Old Frank Bowler, our close neighbour while we lived at Shaw, told me that old Teddy used to drink a lot, and he was in such a state once that they had a doctor to him, who tied Teddy up in a sack and tied it round his neck and ordered two men to stay there and look after him until he had sobered up.

Mentioning Frank Bowler brings me to another illustration of life in those days. Frank, after I had got to know him, said that the Painters could do no wrong as far as the Estate was concerned, and, indeed, facts bear this out.

Grandad was head keeper, Uncle Stan was keeper, then head gamekeeper. Uncle Hay was head gardener and had a white horse, which with a two-wheeled high cart, he used to go into Swindon on Saturdays and sell fruit and vegetables, which he had grown in the walled garden up by the House, and certainly Maud Painter worked there; another brother, Daniel, who always lived at Broadtown, well she was his daughter, and she was a servant girl at the House in 1920.

The tale is that my father, then working on a farm in Maisemore, Gloucestershire, where I was born, had applied for the tenancy of the Wiltshire County Council smallholding at South Leaze, and as a guarantor or sponsor he had named Mr Ted Hiscocks. Now imagine the scene at the House. Teddy consulted Uncle Harry about it, all in the presence of the servant girl Maud. Uncle Harry who was two years older than Ernest, my dad, said, "I don't recommend him for it, the young fool will only waste all his money."

My father did get the farm, No. 2 South Leaze, and I think moved there in September 1921. He had a struggle for ten years, and was successful through the Depression in the '30s. He died in 1945. My brother Toby carried on with the same holding until he died in 1988, having been born there in 1922: so after 67 years the Painter's name finally ended at South Leaze.

As a boy I had met Teddy and Lord Bolingbroke but never met her ladyship. My Dad, over several years from about 1929, used to rent different fields on the Lydiard Estate as grass keep, and the small field on the left, at the top of Amsey's Lane, about eight acres; this one he had for several years, until 1938. Fancy only horses to do the work, and taking the mowing machine and turner and wagons the four miles, spread over a week or so, making the hay, sometimes putting it into a rick in the field, then bringing it home in the Winter on a wagon pulled by Boxer the old cart horse. (We had the car, of course.)

For at least two seasons we rented the lawn out the front of the House. A small part was fenced off as lawns up by the House, I think with iron railings, and we cut and made hay on the lower part, below the railings and bounding the lake which was fenced off.

During one of the hot summers 1934-37 we were loading up hay, all by hand on August Bank Holiday Monday. It was scorching hot as with woods all round there was no wind and we must have drunk all the water or lemonade, so Dad asked me to go up to the House and ask for some water. Teddy came to the same side door, where we passed by to get to the front entrance. As soon as I asked he kindly said, "Wait a bit, I will go and make a jug of tea", which he did indeed, and we were all very pleased and thankful.

When the rent was due, Dad sometimes sent me over on my bike to pay them for the fields, and on at least one occasion Lord Bolingbroke came to the door and received the money.

Us boys sometimes had the job of, on bicycles, riding over there and counting and checking the cattle, which were taken over there after haymaking, after the lattermath had come on, the fresh growth after rains of Autumn.

Well, once Toby and I took Jack Ody, a neighbour's son of our age, with us and I suppose, being about ten or twelve years we got shouting or larking about, and, lo and behold, his lordship came over to tell us off, and would have done but for the fact that he recognised me from when I had paid the rent.

Mentioning the cattle reminds me of the days when we had to get organised and drive them the four miles from South Leaze. It needed about three people, two with bicycles. There was one behind to keep them going forward, while the others had to go and stand on any side road or turning till the herd had passed. Then when they had passed that entrance or turning, to ride on past them and be ready to block the next opening or side turning, it would not be allowed today, and would really be impossible. We used to go Costow, Hay Lane, then over the main road, once over that it was a bit safer, but it did happen on more than one occasion when the young cattle got bunched up, and one took it into its head to jump over a hedge or gap in a hedge into a field, thus causing a hold up, while it was got back on to the road to join the others. Sometimes Dad would have the car there, following behind.

Over the past few years, I have contacted a lot of my cousins and different members of the Painter family, all descendants of John and Emma, and here is a list of the numbers they had : 8 children, 29 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren, and in 50 marriages that we have knowledge of there has only been one divorce, a good record, which I am proud of.

R.W. Painter, 73 Sevenfields, Highworth, Swindon. SN6 7NG.

(01793-764263)

19 May 1992.

-----

## VISITS TO LYDIARD TREGOZE

by Kate Tryon

[Kate Tryon (1864-1952), the wife of a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology visited North Wiltshire in 1910, 1911, 1912, 1924, 1928, and 1938 because of her enthusiasm for skylarks, nightingales, and the writings of Richard Jefferies. On her visits she painted some 230 pictures and took over 100 photographs, a selection of which have been given to the Borough of Swindon. After one or more visits she wrote out her memories, *Adventures in the Vale of the White Horse*, in the third person, calling herself 'Eleanor Hale'. A typed copy of her manuscript is in Swindon Reference Library, from which extracts dealing with her visits to Lydiard Tregoze are here reproduced by kind permission. The extracts are not to be read as sources for facts but for the impressions that were recorded in her memory.]

### Chapter VTI The Home of the Bolingbrokes

Jefferies' father could not make a living out of Coate Farm, and no one has been able to since his day. The tenant was an auctioneer of things pertaining to the life agricultural, chiefly sheep and swine. He seemed to spend all his days driving a motor-car about Wiltshire from one market-town to another. It was always market-day somewhere. Old Aubrey, that fascinating archaeologist and topographer of Wiltshire, wrote between two and three centuries ago, "On Monday there is a gallant market at Swindon." Swindon market-day is held on Mondays yet!

Perhaps this particularly fine afternoon in early May was market-day at Wooton Bassett, for that is where the auctioneer was bound. He was not alone. It may be hard to understand how Eleanor Hale happened to be with him, but there she was. It was a mighty adventure — to find Lydiard Tregoze—"Lydiard Tregoze, sometime the seat of Lord Bolingbroke", Jefferies had written years and years ago. Bolingbroke — high-sounding name in English history! Bolingbroke, friend of Alexander Pope, Bolingbroke of Shakespeare, Bolingbroke of Queen Anne's ministry. She studied the map which the Lawrences now saw daily on their sitting-room table.

Lydiard Tregoze! There it was, two miles west of Swindon.

"Who lives there now?"

"Why, Lady Bolingbroke and her young son, Lord Bolingbroke."

"You look as though you meant to start for Lydiard right off," laughed Jack,

"I shall!"

And so she was in the motor of the auctioneer, who promised to leave her at the entrance of a lane off the Wooton Bassett road, whence a walk of twenty minutes would bring her in sight of the great house of Lydiard Park.

"You will have time to look about and see if there is anything you want to paint, and if so, one of my boys will take the pony and bring you out another day again. You'll see a church there. Wait by that and I'll pick you up."

The lane across the fields seemed very quiet after the long motor-ride. Now far aloft a lark could be heard, and a chaffinch in the hedge said several times, "Kiss me, jdear!" Dandelions all along. Clouds too high and light to cast a shadow on the ground. Sun-haze so bright one must half close the eyes. A noble beech-wood in mid-distance showing in two soft tones, greenish gold for the lighted planes, mauve for the shadow.

Against all this lightness, nothing dark until one came near to some oaks with giant trunks holding out scanty limbs broken and gnarled. Hawthorn-hedges and beechwoods a garment of sunny green, but these old wrecks still in winter's garb. The eager stroller stood by them long. Were they a thousand years old? Quite. She remembered the story about William the Conqueror giving lands — some claim it was Lydiard — to a certain retainer to hold until three crops should have been gathered from it,



whereon the wily gentleman planted oaks. The dusky old trees—which crop were they? They must represent the first — eleventh to twentieth centuries. It was quite possible.

The wild, sarcastic laugh of a green woodpecker startled the spring air. He had just flown away from one of the massive trunks, and was looping off towards the mauve and gold beech-grove. Was he laughing about noble family trees? Not so Eleanor. Hopelessly Yankee although she was, she revered long lineage, as in fact all true Yankees do, and to find her small self within this sacred demesne held for so many generations by the ancient family of St. John was a breath-taking experience.

There were several gates to go through and it took more courage to lift each one. The way became always more sylvan, the lane narrowing and hedged in with new-leaved hawthorns, between whose interstices presently the ground showed all purple with wild hyacinths. The sweet scent of them was intoxicating. Who has not seen an English bluebell copse has seen nothing.

However, the young nature-lover had to awake from her ecstasy and remember that she had not yet come in sight of the house she wished and feared to see, nor had she found the church by which she was to wait for the auctioneer's motor-car that would soon come whirring into the ancient park of the ancient Bolingbrokes. She was accountable to a twentieth-century businessman with head full of the price of pigs. Bluebells and pigs! What a world!

Leaving the bluebell-lane, the dense beechwood that had backed the field of ancient oaks was much nearer, with a grassy driveway across a big open space, seeming to end, however, only in the unbroken beechwood. But on reaching and keeping on past this towering wall of spring verdure, a square Georgian facade did peer out, huge and kingly, with looped garlands in stone on the cornice. "Lydiard Tregoze, sometime the seat of Lord Bolingbroke." There was the mansion centuries old in all its awesome beauty beyond a dark cedar of Lebanon. Inspiring but terrifying sight! Should she ever dare to present herself and presume upon Viscountess Bolingbroke's kindness to let her see and paint the place? No, she could not, dared not approach that stately portal. Another day possibly she might feel braver. She told herself there was not time today. Better look for the church. By Jefferies' description, it was back of the house. Then it must be reached by following the woods around to the left. She did so and after awhile discovered a solemn, square-towered church. It was surprisingly distant, but she did not feel a moment's doubt before starting towards it. The auctioneer had been careless in his directions. She had missed some turning he expected her to take and had gone quite wrong. Much time had passed and he must soon be at that church and if she were not there, what would happen? A five mile walk to Coate!

The thing to do was not to think but to run, making as quick time across those level fields as the exigencies of prickly hawthorn hedges and wet ditches would allow. A man mending a gate stared in amazement and called out something. With visions of being dragged before Her Ladyship as a trespasser, she ran the faster. At last, hot and flustered, she got near the church, to find it was on a highway with scattered cottages of a hamlet under trees and small children coming home from school.

The motorist had not arrived. That was well.

"Is this Lydiard Tregoze church?" she asked an urchin who was walking backwards to stare at her.

"Noo, un be-ant. Un be Lydyard Mil'cent. Lydyard Tregoze be thur — yoonder!"

Yes, she had run away from it. There was the venerable fane nestling at the edge of Lydiard's beech-grove and if, in her mad career across the fields, she had paused and looked backward she would have seen it.

Of course it was impossible now to return in time to the road the auctioneer would travel. Probably he had come and gone already. Not knowing what to do, she stayed where she was and within an anxious half hour quite a group of villagers came forth from their doorways to see what was up. Riders of bicycles and drivers of traps paused also. All knew the auctioneer and promised to send him that way should they chance to meet him. Cottage chimneys were smoking. It was tea-time and how tantalizing was the thought of the pleasant tea-table at Coate!

But if she must walk home she might as well start. They told her the nearest way, but she was loath to believe them. Had she not an Ordnance Map?

They pointed left where the road passed near Lydiard Park. She said she should prefer to go to the right.

“But that goes to the Wooten Bassett Road.”

“Yes, I know. I came that way.”

No one was clear-headed enough to state that their way to Swindon was only three miles and hers was seven, but they were pleased when at last she was ready to listen to reason.

“Now when you’ve gone about a mile and a half on this road, you’ll come to a footpath across the fields that leads right to the Works. You’ll see the men coming home and Swindon you can see plain right ahead.”

But it was not to be thus. Just outside the hamlet a milk-trap driven by a youth came rattling along. Very humbly she begged a lift.

“Sure! — as fur’s I go, that is, next turning beyond Shaw.”

He gave her the little seat at one side of the back of the trap and managed very adroitly to drive standing on the step, also behind.

“This will have to be a charity ride. I have no pennies with me.

“O, that’s all right, ‘miss.”

They drew up at each cottage and some one came out with a small pitcher — jug, the boy called it — to take a half-pint, rarely a pint of milk for tea. The ladle was returned to its nail on the side of the trap where it dripped white tears upon the passenger’s sleeve. The tall churn did not leave much room. A large pail beside it took the space in front of the seat. What harm to advance the foot and press it slowly but firmly nearer the churn? This she did, fixing her gaze the while upon the scenery of the Shaw road.

In a few moments her foot felt damp and looking down she saw with consternation that the pail was pushing open a faucet at the front of the churn and a stream of milk was issuing into the wagon.

“See what I’ve done! I’m so sorry!” she cried.

“O, that’s all right, miss.”

Just then a motor was approaching. Joy! It was Mr. Ferris! And never was any one more self-contained than this Englishman as he got down and opened the door of his motor.

“How did you happen to come this way?”

“Well, when you weren’t at the church I thought you had got tired of waiting for me and were walking along towards Swindon. Went by the Wooten Bassett road. Didn’t overtake you all the way. Knew you couldn’t have got there, so thought I’d try the Shaw road.

“Mr. Ferris, will you lend me half a crown for this good milk boy? He has been giving me a ride and I’ve paid him by trying to spill all his milk.”

“O, no miss. That’s all right.”

## Chapter VIII Painting at Lydiard Tregoze

The American girl with her campstool and paint-box were objects of interest, and her acquaintance among the town visitors to Coate was getting so extensive that it must soon be necessary to seek a more retired place. People said she worked every hour of daylight. One had seen her by the road-side painting John Brown’s cottage; another, the plummy elms of the field-path to Swindon; another, the swans on the Reservoir; another, the bluebells in Burderop Wood. All had stopped to have a look and some had stayed. The boathouse on the bank had become an art-center, for already the walls were well covered with the fruit of her industry, and many an interesting personage was encountered at this impromptu gallery — a gentlemanly old ex-postmaster who had gone to school with Jefferies lent her an autographed copy of Jefferies’ first little book, “A History of the Goddard Family of North Wilts” and told her of two women cousins of Mrs. Jefferies whom she must see. Best of all, a young poet named Alfred Williams, who seemed the spiritual descendant of Jefferies himself, gave her a book of his verses and asked her to take tea at his cottage in a neighboring village. In fact all conversation ended in invitations to tea. The nightingale was always demanding a call, and if she yielded to the lure of birds

and people, there would have been no time for painting. But she had waited long for these English days and they must count.

Lydiard Tregoze must be visited again and that before the bluebell-copse had faded. Alfred Williams was coming for tea on Saturday afternoon and that was the day the Ferris boy and his trap could be counted on. Still, if they got off early, they could be back by four.

But beggars cannot be choosers. That is what the impatient young woman felt as she waited on the garden bench at Coate Farm.

Young Hollis had caught his Dartmoor pony in the Brook Field and harnessed him into the trap. This looked propitious certainly, but after half an hour had passed and the pony was still dozing against the same background of pump and courtyard bars, she began to think it was all an illusion about going to Lydiard Tregoze.

At nine o'clock she could sit still no longer and, passing through the old dairy into the kitchen, she found her young Jehu had got as far as blacking his boots. Ten minutes more and a cap and necktie were brought triumphantly forth.

Most encouraging. But now it appeared that brother John had decided to go too, and his toilet must be arranged. It was nearly ten o'clock when the two boys and their passenger, with camera, paint-box, campstool and lunch were stored away in the trap.

The sun was hot and Hollis said he "expected" the pony would "not be up to much" today. His expectation was justified. The trap was of that obsolete variety called a "tub", springless, side-seated, with scanty room for feet and luggage. It rattled and jolted horribly over the flinty road.

But Eleanor was tenderly tolerant of Hollis and John because to her mind they stood for Bevis and Mark. She tried hard to forgive them for their tardy setting-out and this was easier when she found they intended to leave her at Lydiard and go on to Wootton Bassett to dinner at their uncle's and so would not be around to bother when she was painting the bluebells.

Bevis and Mark were sociable. They talked softly, incessantly, rapidly, unintelligibly, mile after mile. It was a bit trying, considering that the sun was burning, the tub rattling and jolting. Worse still, they could not understand the American lady's speech any better than she could theirs, so they begged pardon and "what-did-you-sayed" all the way to Lydiard, which they reached at last past a meeting of roads called "Nine Elms" on the Map, which turned out to have diminished to eight, and the village of Shaw.

There once more was the wonderful old church, dwarfed by the towering beechwood, a white trackway leading to it across the field. Getting nearer, they could see the rear wall and massive chimneys of the house rising in solemn dignity, very close behind the church, as Jefferies says.

There was a high wooden gate which somebody must unlatch and of course our brave young lady could not let these English lads think she was afraid of anything.

Next moment after the awful sensation of walking inside that gate they found themselves in the presence of two surprised hostlers and a bareheaded gentleman with a flower in his buttonhole who came forward with unsmiling pomp and asked what he could do for them.

Might an artist be allowed to make some paintings of the place?

He would have to see what Lady Bolingbroke had to say about that and he went off towards the house. The hostlers retired also and a magnificent peacock that was sunning itself on a wall flew away up to the church-tower and alighted with his long tail drooping over the open-work quatre-foil of the balustrade.

"Oo! Snap 'im!" cried Hollis.

"S'sh! Here comes Lady Bolingbroke!"

A quiet-faced woman in a dark blue dress of old style, with grey eyes and a fresh color that belied her silvery hair, was advancing. She had an every day, matter-of-fact air and did not prove to be particularly unapproachable, although she was an English Viscountess.

Bevis and Mark evidently had forgotten their Wootton Bassett uncle in the passing show. It was interesting that Lady Bolingbroke objected to turning a photographer loose about the place and that she must know exactly what the artist wished to make paintings of and why, before giving her consent.

Fancy any one's not wanting photographs taken when everybody at Coate Farm loved it so!

Lady Bolingbroke was willing the church should be photographed and was accommodating enough to have the cook come out with a biscuit to induce the peacock to return to the wall which, strange to say, he did for an instant but, disliking the situation more than ever, he withdrew quite definitely to the roof of the manor-house. The picture was taken and both Her Ladyship and the cook were in it. Miss Hale's expressive look at the boys said so and they were overjoyed.

"I think you would like to see the church", said Lady Bolingbroke, "and you have an opportunity. The sexton is within."

Eleanor did not want to see the church. It would keep and the bluebells would not. It must be nearly noon and there would not be much over an hour to paint, if she was to be back at Coate by tea-time. But the suggestion seemed a command which she dared not disobey.

"I will take your camera to the house with me," said Her Ladyship, "and you may come for it when you go home."

The interior of Lydiard Tregoze church was flooded with light this May morning, for the square-headed glass of the nave was mostly clear or pale amber, the plastered walls pinkish. Beyond the screen, surmounted by the rampant lion and unicorn in gay enamel, touches of emerald, scarlet and cobalt in beautiful windows bejewelled the soft gloom of the chancel. But it was the family memorials with their alabaster effigies that held them spellbound. Bevis and Mark, English boys though they were, had never seen the like.

The boys were enchanted with the great Baron Tregoze, his lady and all their kneeling children, but they left with greatest reluctance the unknown treasure hidden in a wall-cabinet with folding doors. The sexton himself did not know what was in it. Iron-barred and padlocked, Her ladyship kept the key. It was decorated with time-yellowed lacquer and queer verses embodying the history of the St. Johns - Lady Bolingbroke pronounced the family name "Sin-gin" - ran right across the doors. At the top was Queen Elizabeth's portrait, showing that the memorial was placed there in her reign.

Returning to the courtyard, there was Lady Bolingbroke who, having donned a big shade-hat, said she was ready to show them the nearest way to the hyacinth-path. So, the boys leading the pony-cart, they traversed a road through the beech-grove and came to a gate leading into the open field.

"There, now I think you can find your way", said Lady Bolingbroke. "Go wherever you like and if the gamekeeper should come to you, say you have Lady Bolingbroke's permission."

It was not the place Eleanor had seen the other day and there was no time to search for it. They found a pretty bed of bluebells under an oak tree with a hazy vista across the field to the solid wall of beeches. This was difficult enough, especially as she would not be alone. The boys must stay. One luncheon must serve for three and the pony must eat off Lady Bolingbroke's grass which, already unharnessed from the tub, he was proceeding to do. It was uncomfortably like being the head of a gypsy-caravan and she hoped that the gamekeeper, who must be the gate-mender who had hollered at her when she was getting through his hedges, would not appear; worse still, the young Lord himself.

However, the artist stole a final half-hour of peace by having the boys put the pony into the tub and drive to the house for the camera.

"Tell Lady Bolingbroke I am sorry not to thank her in person but I have to spend what time there is on my sketch. Tell her I should like to come again, if I may."

It was a brief half-hour. They were back in no time, saying they had seen Mrs. Lady Bolingbroke.

"And she says you are to drop her a line when you are coming again. She will show you pictures and no one is allowed in the house if she is away."

The sun burned hot on the white road and the rattling of the tub was doubly irritating after the dry little repast, although being faint and thirsty would not have mattered if the bluebell-picture had been a success.

Arrived home, the girls were at the gate looking for her, for tea was waiting and their father had just gone up to the boathouse to summon her guest and Jack. She dashed to her room to freshen up and saw them descending the bank before she was half ready. But those good hostesses, the Lawrence

girls, had prepared everything so attractively, including their bright selves, that her lateness was forgiven.

[Chapter XXIII describes her stay at Puiton at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Grabum, during which stay she visited College Farm with its memories of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon.]

#### Chapter XXIV More Painting at Lydiard Tregoze

The trip to Lydiard Tregoze was planned for the next day, but the weather promised to be too oppressive to walk there and back across the fields. So a trap was ordered for eight o'clock and Mrs. Grabum watched the departure, worried about the weather and because Miss Hale would take no sandwiches. But the driver said he had an umbrella and a rubber and Eleanor felt sure of an invitation to lunch.

The bluebell sketch made in May was taken along, and Lady Bolingbroke, who happened to be in the hall when the trap drove up, thought it very pretty, but was at a loss to understand where it was painted from.

"And now you intend to do the church, don't you?"

Eleanor really would have preferred to do the stately front of the house with the Cedar of Lebanon, but probably that had better wait for closer acquaintance and, since Her Ladyship seemed engrossed in household affairs, it was best to express thanks for the privilege accorded her and withdraw forthwith, which she did, taking with her the assurance of doubtful comfort that no one else had ever been allowed to make any pictures of the place.

The church, from the flat field, against the great beechwood would be the picture then. But it was impressive this morning as the woods loomed dark against the silvery gleam of thunder-clouds and the ground was strewn with buttercups.

The clouds piled higher and higher in the hazy, heated atmosphere. Thunder growled more and more frequently, once with sudden violence; and now, although most of the heaven was bright, one dark cloud showered rain with promise of reinforcement from even darker clouds.

There was an open shed over by the stable-gate. Preparations for painting were complete. It was maddening to have to re-pack the box, fold campstool and run for this sole shelter, but there was no choice. However, the shower was neither alarming nor of long duration. The early start from Purton had given plenty of time to finish the church picture and between twelve and one o'clock the hungry painter glanced several times towards the gate. But there was no black-clad butler coming with an invitation to lunch - only a labourer finishing his bread and cheese in the shelter of the shed. The minutes passed, with increasing wonder how she could have been so simple to expect hospitality at Lydiard Park.

The trap had been ordered for seven o'clock and two-thirds of the day was still at her disposal. Some food must be found at once. The thought that there was none made her actually weak with starvation. It was oppressively warm, not a breath stirring since the shower, and the walk to Lydiard Millicent would waste too much time and energy. Nor was there any assurance of relief in that quarter. Better chance a timely call at the house and see what would happen. Yes, that, although unpleasant in prospect, seemed the only thing to do.

The butler came into the hall at her ring and asked if she wished to see Her Ladyship.

"Please, if I may."

And when he had retired, the church picture and the bluebell picture were placed against the back of the settle. They were certainly admirable and Lady Bolingbroke was pleased, though plainly not more impressed by the artist's skill than by her own kindness in allowing the paintings to be made. After a while, when Her Ladyship was assured that this kindness was properly appreciated, she led the way across the great hall to the polished-floored apartments hung with portraits, among which was one of Alexander Pope, the one with a turban on the head, familiar to this American visitor since Maine

school-days when she little dreamed she should one day see the original in a stately English home where the poet himself had often been. "Indeed," said Lady Bolingbroke, "he was quite at home at Bathurst Park just over at Cirencester."

"And of course you know his address to Lord Bolingbroke, beginning the 'Essay on Man' - 'Awake, my St. John!'"

It was a pity to be so ignorant - and so hungry - in presence of all these noble portraits which held such interesting volumes of life-history.

Leaving the portrait-gallery, Lady Bolingbroke took her caller through a wide-open door onto a formal lawn facing the Cedar of Lebanon which a Lord Bolingbroke, ever so long ago, had brought as a seed from the Holy Land. Beyond the end of the house was a pond which on this still summer day mirrored the dark mass of trees behind it.

A Greek border drawn on a huge scale and worked out in scarlet geraniums followed the lawn across the whole front of the house. This classical parterre was old and Lady Bolingbroke said was designed by a Duke, perhaps the Duke of Marlborough, who was a close friend to one Lord Bolingbroke.

All the while two parrots, placed on either side of the doorway, curtsied and bobbed about their cages distractedly and said things no one would suppose parrots could say. One of them spoke in a low man's voice and his mistress declared there was no limit to his vocabulary. One day the bird heard the steward offer a glass of wine to a man who had come to pay a debt. Two or three sorts were mentioned and declined, whereat Polly gently suggested, "Give him whiskey-and-soda!"

Perhaps this story reminded Her Ladyship that the present visitor might like something and the butler soon appeared with a decanter of sherry and a loaf of rich plum-cake - which would not have been so bad after the sandwiches which were supposed to have gone before. As it was, the thought of cake and wine was dizzying.

"Perhaps you would like something different with your wine?"

"Yes, thank you. I prefer bread and butter."

Her Ladyship went out and presently returned with a few dainty slices, while Eleanor could scarcely restrain her laughter, for she was thinking how delighted Mr. Job Lawrence would be if she should tell him of this hungry adventure. He was amused at her fear of Polly's home-made wine and would think it a grand joke that she had been forced to lunch on sherry. She took very little, but even that made the ground a bit unsteady as she went out to the church.

She had decided to paint the church interior, thinking that by sitting where it was cool and remembering how soldiers had to do long marches on nothing a day, yet lived, that she might manage to endure for five or six hours.

It happened that a rural couple had just been united in the church and the sexton had stayed to get things in readiness for the Sunday service. Now this sexton was a very approachable man and she felt so well acquainted with him from the former visit with Bevis and Mark that she was soon laughingly confiding to him her dilemma, making it clear that there had been no lack of hospitality, only she had been very stupid.

"If you wouldn't mind coming down to my house, my sister would be glad to give you tea, - or I will bring it here when I go for mine."

The tea was not very hot when it arrived in a bottle and bread and butter and plum-cake are a poor substitute for 'the good roast beef of old England'. Still it served to help a determined young woman through the intricate drawing of columns, arches and family tombs - to the perspective of pews, where courage died past all reviving. She had her doubts if the effort had proved worth while but as there had been more than one shower in the course of the afternoon, perhaps the time could not have been better employed.

When she went to the house toward six o'clock Her Ladyship showed more appreciation of the church interior than of either of the other pictures, probably because it was a subject very dear to her heart.

She led the way to the kitchen-garden, whose high brick walls enclosed untold treasures in the form

of old-fashioned perennials, the most extraordinary being an ancient moss-rose whose main stem was a veritable trunk. It clambered the whole height of the wall and was itself mossy, branching freely and covered with its elegant buds.

Here and there Lady Bolingbroke cut a lovely strange rose, a spike of lupine, a tall larkspur - anything that excited admiration - until the visitor had a rare bouquet to take home. Then they strolled out the driveway under the beeches and were overtaken by a shower from which a yew-tree gave shelter. Robins and chaffinches were singing in the falling rain and they spoke of birds, Lady Bolingbroke saying that her son was a great lover of birds and had many books about them. He had gone to Bath for the day.

It was still raining when the trap drove up and Eleanor was glad to see the big umbrella and the rubber. Her hostess thought that "something more" should be taken before setting out.

"I should like a glass of milk," was Eleanor's reply, whereat Her Ladyship smiled a little at her visitor's simple American tastes, but said that milk was not so bad with a little whiskey in it and when the butler brought the decanter a few drops were added. The combination was queer - like creosote.

Driving away from the door there was a glimpse through a window of softly-shaded candles shining down on silver and snowy napery. It was suggestive of hot joint, boiled potatoes and cabbage greens, the thought of which haunted the journey to Purton. On reaching the village it was half-past eight and Eleanor Hale noted with a sigh that the butcher's shop was closed.

"Have you had a good day?" was the inquiry as the traveller and her traps were being helped into the house.

"I have indeed. But - I say! Have you any meat in the house?"

"Yes, two chops."

"Please cook them at once!"

-----





The Rev. George Frederick St. John

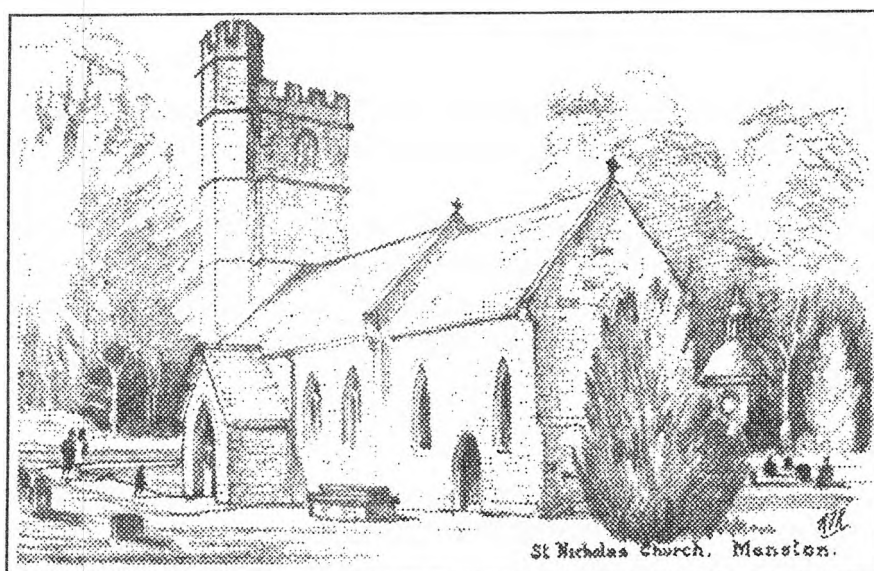
(Photograph taken 17 January 1864)

Rector of Mansion, Dorset

[This article brings together information about George Frederick St. John and his wife, most of which has already appeared in different editions of our *Report*, to accompany the photograph which Peter Lesoing discovered in his St. John family album. (Sadly, almost every other photograph is unidentified.) Gratitude is here expressed for permission to reproduce the photograph which has been enlarged and made usable by Christopher Pocock.]

His Family

George Richard (1761 -1824), 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Bolingbroke, was the father of children by three women. By his first wife Charlotte Collins (d. 1804), whom he married in 1783, he had two sons and a daughter, the younger son Henry (1786-1851) eventually succeeding him as 4<sup>th</sup> Viscount Bolingbroke. He then had four sons by his half-sister Mary Beauclerk with whom he lived in France. By 1794 George Richard had formed an attachment to Baroness Isabella Charlotte Antoinette Sophia Hompesch (d. 1848) with whom he went through a form of marriage in Germany whilst his first wife was still alive. To avoid discovery George Richard and the Baroness went to live in Wales, where their first son, George Frederick, was born on 29 May 1795. (Neither the date nor the place accord with the 1851 and 1861 Census Returns for Manston, where London is the place of birth and his age is given as 54 (1851) and 64 (1861).) They then left for America, where four or five more children were born. When the news reached New York that his first wife had died, George Richard married the Baroness. One more son, the Hon. Ferdinand (1804-65), was born in America before they returned in 1806 to live at Lydiard, where the Hon. Charles Robert (1807-44) and the Hon. John Dyson (1810-12) were born.



Brief Synopsis of His Life

George Frederick attended Eton College for some time between Autumn 1808 and his matriculation from Balliol College on 12 February 1813.<sup>2</sup> He was admitted pensioner at Jesus College, Cambridge, on 25 December 1815, but it is doubtful whether he resided in Cambridge. From Balliol he took his bachelor's degree in 1816 and his M. A. in 1823. His father had purchased the advowson of the rectory of Manston, Dorset, for him. (The rector of Manston died, and a caretaker rector, the Rev. John Wickens, was inducted on 27 January' 1818 to hold the place 'for a Minor', the parish being served by a curate.<sup>3</sup>) In 1819 he was made deacon.<sup>4</sup> On 2 August 1820 the Rev. George Frederick St. John became rector of Manston on the presentation of his father<sup>5</sup> and continued in that living until his death on 7 January 1867.

The Census Return for 1841 recorded the population of Manston as 127 persons, living in 20 houses.<sup>6</sup>

On 11 December 1824 George Richard, 3rd Viscount Bolingbroke, died at Pisa. His will apparently proved to be a further cause of friction in his family.

On 28 January 1830, at St. Nicholas' church, Brighton, George Frederick married Henrietta Frances Magrath. There were no children of the marriage. In the 1861 Census Return for Manston, she is described as aged 64 and stated to have been born at 'Easton, Devon.' In a pamphlet she published in 1846 - see below - there is a reference to 'an interminable chancery suit with the celebrated Dr. Tillotson.' The suit in Chancery was about land in her tenure in the parishes of Kenwyn and St. Issey, Cornwall.<sup>7</sup> Henrietta St. John outlived her husband.

George Frederick St. John had considerable artistic ability. In 1830 he made a copy in charcoal of the portrait of his grandmother, Lady Diana Spencer, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The portrait in charcoal hangs in Lydiard Park.

On 30 April 1841 the Hon. Charles Robert St. John (1808-44) married Jane Gibson. They made their home at Mudeford, Dorset, where he died three years later. A tablet in Manston church has an inscription to his memory and also to that of his brother the rector of the parish.

In August 1846 George Frederick, his wife, and their twenty-six-year-old nephew the Hon. Henry St. John, the future 5th Viscount, set off from London for 'ten days abroad'.

On 22 June 1848 George Frederick St. John officiated at St. George's church, Hanover Square, at the marriage of Sir Percy Florence Shelley, bart, and the widowed Jane St. John, who gave as her address Marnhull, Dorset, which is not far from Manston.

On 12 July 1848 Isabella, Viscountess Bolingbroke, died at Torquay, aged 76, and was buried at Lydiard on the 22nd, the Rev. Giles Daubeny officiating at the ceremony.

Over the years George Frederick acquired a position of honour in the Masonic Order in Dorset. *The Dorset County Chronicle & Somersetshire Gazette* (16 August 1860) reported on the meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge for the County of Dorset at Shaftesbury, the splendid repast, the colourful procession under decorated arches, and the impressive sermon by the Provincial Grand Chaplain, the Rev. George Frederick St. John. (See, *Report* 25 (1992), 38-44.)

### **Death and Burial**

On 7 January 1867 the Rev. G.F. St. John died, aged seventy-one, having served as rector of Manston for forty-six years. A local newspaper reported the circumstances of his death and burial:

The unexpected death of Bro. the Rev. G.F. St. John will carry a pang of regret to the heart of every Mason in the province of Dorset. Whilst engaged in the performance of Divine Service in his pretty little church at Manston some three Sundays ago, he was suddenly seized with illness - so severe that service was abruptly concluded. He was assisted home, where he got no better, and his neighbour and brother Mason, Captain Hanham, with true fraternal feeling, insisted that he should be brought to his house, where he could be better attended to than at home; for his wife was lying ill also at the time. It was little thought then that the illness would have a fatal termination, but in spite of all that friendship and attention could do, and of the professional services of Mr Leech, he gradually sunk, and on Saturday last was buried, as we believed he desired to be, with full Masonic honours.

Those who saw the ceremony (and the number coming from a distance was remarkably numerous) will never forget the scene they witnessed. Saturday, it will be remembered,

was distinguished by one of the heaviest and quickest falls of snow that we have had for some years, and it fell fastest and most heavily whilst the corpse was being consigned to its final resting place.

The funeral party assembled at Captain Hanham's, Manston House, which is within a stone's throw of the church. The body was preceded by the Masons of the Shaftesbury Lodge .... Following were Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, Rev. Ferdinand St. John, vicar of Frampton-on-Sevem, and heir presumptive to the Bolingbroke title, Major J.H. St. John, 92nd Highlanders, Chas. St. John, Esq., Sir W.C. Medlycott, J.R. Lyon, Esq. (the executor), the Rev. R.B. Kennard, E. Ellis, Esq., of Wyddial Hall, Herts, Mrs. Dewar, Doles Hall, Mrs. Remmett, Mr. Hutchinson, &c.

The service was impressively read by the Rev. Prebendary Dayman, of Shillingstone, and when the corpse was brought into the churchyard, notwithstanding that the snow was falling heavily, there were in a village of 130 inhabitants, fully 100 persons at the grave, of whom one half were the deceased's parishioners, men and women, and little children, 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 place of sepulture was marked by an iron railing; into this a creeping shrub had curiously entwined, and the fresh snow fell and settled upon the limbs, presenting an outline that was no unfit type of the character of the dead man - bold, and graceful, and free, and light.

The late Mr. St. John was the son of Lord Bolingbroke, and his wife, Baroness Hompesch. He took his degree in 1816, at Oxon. and his Deacon's orders in 1819. The rectory of Manston, value £315, with 95 acres of glebe, was in his own gift, but it now reverts to J. Y. Leather, Esq., the contractor for the Plymouth Breakwater. 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 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 straight-laced as some would have their clergyman to be, none ever doubted the genuineness of his character, the warmth of his feelings, or the goodness of his heart.

The funeral was attended by three of his St. John nephews, two of whom, the Rev. Maurice William Ferdinand St. John (1827-1914) and Major John Henry St. John (1829-1912), were sons of the Hon. Ferdinand St. John. The third nephew, 'Mr Charles St. John', was Charles Robert St. John, the only son of the Hon. Charles Robert St. John (d. 1844). He was the sole residuary legatee - after the death of his widow - of George Frederick's estate. Perhaps George Frederick felt a special kinship with his nephew Charles Robert, for both of them were required to bear the burden of illegitimacy.

It is likely that George Frederick's estate was small. The newspaper obituary referred to his generosity to a fault: his contemporaries knew that he had been imprisoned for debt. On 2 August [1850] Mary Shelley wrote from Field Place to John Hastings Touchet,<sup>8</sup> and included in her letter the news that 'poor George St. John is in prison to take the benefit of the Act.' ('The Act' referred to is the Act of Grace, which applied in cases of imprisonment by a creditor for a civil debt. A prisoner claiming benefit of the Act was bound, when requested, to execute a disposition of all goods for the benefit of creditors. By means of this act, the law of imprisonment for debt was substantially mitigated.)

### **Relationships in the St. John Family**

It is abundantly clear - and not altogether surprising - that deep-seated animosities existed between certain members of the St. John family. George Richard forsook his first wife shortly after the birth of his future heir Henry. Henry's mother, brother, and sister died before he was eighteen, and two years later his father, his step-mother, and their children - all but one illegitimate - arrived to take up

residence at Lydiard. It was another eighteen years before George Richard died and Henry entered into possession of the Lydiard estate. By then Henry had married a daughter of Sir Henry Paulet St. John-Mildmay, and their elder son Henry Mildmay, born in 1820, became the 5th Viscount.

Henry received nothing at all under the provisions of his father's will<sup>9</sup> except for the opportunity, for a limited period, to purchase from his step-mother for £35,000 the woodlands which George Richard had inherited from his father. The provision for his first wife and her children, which was made in 1795, was withdrawn from Henry and allocated to younger children of the second marriage, and Henry was expressly excluded from being a residual legatee of his father's personal estate. These provisions undoubtedly reflect the poor relationship that Henry had with his father and step-mother.

George Frederick had been presented to the living of Manston by his father. His father's will provided him with £1,000 which was the smallest sum that any of the children - even the two surviving children of his liaison with Mary Beauclerk - received. He was also made, with his brothers and sisters, a residual legatee of his father's personal estate in the same proportion as the original bequests were made. In addition, he was given the right to become the next rector of Lydiard Tregoze unless his brother the Hon. Ferdinand had attained the age of twenty-four by the time the next vacancy occurred. The next vacancy occurred with the death of rector Miles in 1839, when the Hon. Ferdinand was thirty-four, by which time the right of presentation had already been sold. (The income of Lydiard rectory was twice that of Manston.)

George Richard seems to have been on good terms with all the family. His mother was staying with him at Manston when the conveyance was made whereby Henry purchased a small part of the Lydiard woodlands.

Among the papers that belonged to the 6th Viscount is a printed letter to George Frederick from his mother, dated 26 October 1837, in reply to a request for money. The letter indicates that she had a poor regard for her step-son Henry and for George Frederick's wife.

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 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. Having the opportunity of a frank, I send you £5 for your journey on the 30th. I am glad you are not on bad terms with H; [Henry] but to expect any good whatever from so coldhearted and selfish a man, would be quite in vain. He will make use of you to your cost, and be the first to turn his back on and deride you. Not one farthing would I ever again lay out for his sake. I will tell you more when you arrive. - Ever dearest G., yours affectionately,

J. BOLINGBROKE

At the bottom of this printed letter Henry wrote, "Step Mothers & Mothers in law make very flattering representations ecce signum not however worth much notice".

In August 1846 George Frederick and his wife Henrietta went with his nephew the Hon. Henry Mildmay St. John, then aged twenty-six, to France and Belgium. Two months later she had printed *Ten Days Abroad*, a thirty-eight-page account of their travels and of their conversations.<sup>10</sup> The flyleaf to the copy in the Bodleian Library has an inscription in ink, 'The Publication of this shamed Lady Bolingbroke into relieving her son', which was undoubtedly the reason for its publication.

*Ten Days Abroad* begins with a description of their journeys and of the small talk among themselves and their fellow-travellers. Then erupts pent-up hatred towards George Frederick's mother, the dowager Lady Bolingbroke, in which nephew Henry is not backward in adding fuel to the fire. In the pamphlet Henrietta St. John presented her case against her mother-in-law, 'the monster mother', for all the world to read and before the court of Heaven. The case is argued in language that is highly charged with emotion, no opportunity being lost to expose the one who, in the opinion of the writer, is the incarnation of malignity. The writer gives example after example of the abominable behaviour of her mother-in-law. In particular, she accuses Lady Bolingbroke of having taken unfair advantage of her husband's generosity and financial problems. The argument is very one-sided and, in places, based on untruths. Even if only part of the case is correct Lady Bolingbroke is to be seen as a vicious, unnaturally greedy person. George Frederick is shown to be too good-natured to stand up to her.

Henrietta St. John describes the life that she and George Frederick were forced to live because of his mother's selfishness:

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.

...

Henrietta gives the names of those who could vouch for the truth of what she writes, and these witnesses include Sir Edward Baker of Rainston and the Rev. Mr. Blennerhasset of Iweme. She does not refer to Lady Bolingbroke's charge that George Frederick's plight was due to her own debts. A great deal more research is needed before the balance of truth is established.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Report* **6** (1973), 91-114; **7** (1974), 82-85; **9** (1976), 31-42; **18** (1985), 9-10; **19** (1986), 3-9, 30; 22 (1989), 35-39; 25 (1992), 38-44
- <sup>2</sup> H.E. Chetwynd Stapylton, *The Eton School Lists from 1791 to 1877* (Eton & London, 1884), 68b. These lists are triennial. George Frederick's name appears on a list dated July 1811.
- <sup>3</sup> Dorset Record Office. 'Remarkable Events and Occurrences from Midsummer 1780, being the Diary of Henry Kaines of Manston from 1780 till 1840'
- <sup>4</sup> Obituary report probably from *Sherborne, Dorchester, and Taunton Journal, and Yeovil, Wells, and Bridgwater Gazette*
- <sup>5</sup> Bishop of Bristol's Subscription Book
- <sup>6</sup> H.O. 107/293 1841 Census Return for Manston
- <sup>7</sup> *Chancery Proceedings 1800-1842*, Winter, Johnson & Turton, 1841 brr, bundle no. 1289, piece no. 14, Elliotson - St. John
- <sup>8</sup> *Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* ed. Betty T. Bennett (The John Hopkins Press, 1988) m p.382
- <sup>9</sup> PRO. PROB 11/1695 C/5589
- <sup>10</sup> Bodleian Library 204 e. 337

## THE ASSESSMENT OF LYDIARD TREGOZE PARISH FOR MARRIAGE DUTY, 1696-1702

The heart of the local historian is always cheered when lists of persons have survived from earlier days. An example of such lists is the series of assessments that were made throughout the country - but of which very few have survived - as a result of the act which granted 'to his majesty certain rates and duties upon Marriages, Births and Burials and upon Bachelors and Widdowers for the term of five years.' It was approved by parliament in April 1695. Two years later it was renewed for an additional six years so that it ran eventually from 1 May 1695 till 1 August 1706. During these eleven years the act's principal terms remained unchanged, its amendments tackling only various administrative weaknesses.

This taxation had two distinct parts: charges on vital events - birth, marriage, and death - as and when they occurred, which was essentially a tax on families, and annual payments by both bachelors aged over twenty-five and childless widowers, which was essentially a Poll tax on single independent males. Two assessors/collectors were appointed for each parish who were responsible for the implementation of the tax.

### Records

For the tax to operate two types of record had to be kept with accuracy. At the beginning of each year the assessors were required to draw up a complete listing of the households in their parish. These lists were required to give the full names of every inhabitant as well as their 'estates, degrees, titles and qualifications', together with the sums for which they were or would be liable under each of the four headings relevant to the act: burials, births, marriages, and unmarried. All of this information needed to be recorded because the rate of tax attracted surcharges dependent on social status. Until 1698 the parsons were also required to read out these lists in church after morning service to give people an opportunity to appeal.

The other type of record that needed to be kept in greater detail were the parish registers. Anglican clergy were instructed to extend the scope and increase the reliability of their registers and to make them freely available, twice a year, to the tax collectors and other interested parties. The register of baptisms was extended to include all births, including stillbirths. Should parents not wish to have their new baby baptised at the parish church they had a duty to give information about the birth and pay the tax to the incumbent for onward transmission to the parish collectors. Stephen Charman - rector from 1692 till 1714 - entered in the baptism register after an entry for 11 February 1697, 'About that time a child of Robert Jones born but not baptized.' In the burial register an entry for 15 February 1697 reads, 'Elizabeth the wife of Robert Jones. Then his child buried but not baptized.' Rector Charman entered the name of the mother - as well as that of the father - and very often the date of birth of those baptized from 21 June 1696. Between June 1696 and November 1697 twelve of the nineteen baptism entries have a date of birth recorded. Of these twelve baptisms, six were performed on the day of birth, four on the next day, and in one case each the baptism was delayed for three or five days.

The marriage registers were also to be extended to include the 'pretended marriages' of Quakers, Roman Catholics, and Jews, as well as all persons who 'shall cohabit and live together as man and wife'. All such persons were to be charged as though they had contracted valid marriages even though the payment of such tax conferred no such legality of status. It was soon realised by parliament that the main source of tax evasion with marriages was migration to another parish. Any parson or clerk, therefore, who conducted marriages without banns or licence was liable to heavy fines. Rector Charman entered in the marriage register the parish of residence and the 'condition' of the parties from July 1696.



Rector Charman also entered into the burial register from June 1698 details of the social status of the dead. The basic tax for being buried was 4s. The fee for the burial of a gentleman such as Giles Pleydell, 25 June 1698, or Thomas Hardyman, 6 June 1702, was £1. On 27 April 1700 Lady Barbara Topp was buried: as her husband was a baronet the appropriate tax was £15.

### Assessment Schedules

The vast majority of parish assessment schedules have not survived. In the Wiltshire Record Office, WRO 212B/7202A, are preserved a few such schedules from the Hundred of Kingsbridge and part of the Hundred of Elstub & Everleigh. (In 1994 the Wiltshire Family History Society published transcriptions of these schedules.) Whereas the requirements laid down for extra information to be recorded in parish registers greatly improved the registers at Lydiard Tregoze, the surviving schedules are generally deeply disappointing. The best of the local listings for 1696/7 is that of Swindon. It provides information on occupations, relationships, and households, and such information was essential where the tax on servants and lodgers was collected at their places of residence. The worst listing is that of Lydiard Tregoze, which is little more than an undifferentiated mass of names. The 1696/7 listing of the inhabitants of Lydiard Tregoze includes the names of thirty-three persons with the surname Woolford, but there is no division into families and absolutely no information given about them. Elsewhere in that listing there is a division into families but no recording of households, which would give the names of living-in servants.

There are three listings for Lydiard Tregoze (WRO 212B/7202A/7a-c):

- 1 *Collected by us* - Adam Tuck and Alexander Spackman - *Collectors for the Parish of Liddyard Tregoze for the year 1696 & untill the lthof May 1697 the sume of £4.9s. 6d. We do Nominate as Collectors for the year Ensuing Jeffery Holliday and John Nitt.* The listing was countersigned by Thomas Benet and J. Chamberlayne, Justices.

It is hard to work out how they arrived at the amount of tax. In the period 25 March 1696 to 11 May 1697 19 births [baptisms], each chargeable at 2s., 14 marriages, each chargeable at 2s. 6d., and 8 burials, each chargeable at 4s., were recorded in the registers, and there were 5 bachelors over the age of twenty-five living in the parish, each chargeable at 1s. There were no childless widowers. The total should have come to £5 10s. 0d., but those families who were in receipt of alms paid no tax, the parish paying the tax in respect of burials. Also, the collectors were entitled to deduct three pence in the pound - raised to five pence in 1698 - to compensate them for their trouble.

The listing indicates the six families in the parish who, through their 'quality', would attract the higher rates of tax: as Esquires, Preston Hippisley, William York, and Edmund Pleydell; as Gentlemen, Thomas Hardyman and Charles Vilett; with Stephen Charman being described as rector in one listing and as gentleman in the other two.

- 2 After a gap of two years, the second surviving list is dated 22 July 1700. *Robert Allen and Thomas Pick gave an acct for £5. 3s. Od reed in the year 1699. Wee nominate Thomas Scull & John Jacob Collectors.* The listing was countersigned by Thomas Benet, Edmund Pleydell, and J. Chamberlayne, Justices.

In the period 25 March 1699 to 24 March 1699/1700 11 births [baptisms], 7 marriages, and 6 burials, which included that of Giles Pleydell, gent., for whom £1 would be paid, were recorded in the registers. There were 15 bachelors over twenty-five and no childless widowers. The total tax would, therefore, be £4. 18s. 6d.

- 3 After a gap of one year, an account for the year beginning 1 May 1701, *the Assessment of*

*Thomas Skull & Alexander Spackman, assessors for the parish.* There is no statement about the amount of tax that was collected.

Although the listings lack the sort of information that would enable a sociological survey to be made of the parish, there are two sets of figures that are of some interest:

- 1 Size of total population of the parish:

11 May 1697	341 persons
24 March 1699/1700	357 persons
1 May 1701	348 persons.

- 2 Some indication of mobility in the population.

Sixty-five (19%) of the names on the first listing (1697) do not appear on the last listing (1701). None of these belong to the 'settled' families, members of which appear in the parish registers. Only one of the sixty-five was baptised in the parish, but even here she was a member of a transient family. One-fifth of the total population unaccounted for after a period of five years seems to call for explanation.

The total of sixty-five can be divided up. It includes six single men, eighteen single women, and thirty who were members of ten families. These may all have been indoor or outdoor servants or agricultural workers who, having worked their contract, moved on to work elsewhere. (The migration of some of these fifty-four persons may be due to marriage or illness and burial in another parish.) The disappearance of the remaining eleven names can be accounted for by recourse to the Lydiard Tregoze Burial Register.

-----

## SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Over 20,000 people visited the House in 1998 and tried our new '**Story Box audio guides**', an alternative to the traditional-style guide-book interpretation usually associated with historic houses. The 'Story Boxes', which are stationed in each of the State Rooms, describe the history of Lydiard Park, relate stories about the people associated with it, as well as drawing attention to points of interest in the rooms. There is also a 'children's button'.

Interest in the House in Victorian days remains high, partly due to the Victorian period being included in the **National Curriculum for Schools** and, perhaps amongst other things, the advent of photography which made the age seem more tangible. School children visiting the House now have a chance to dress up as Lord and Lady Bolingbroke and their servants while handling artefacts and learning about life on a country estate. Many schools combine this visit to Lydiard with one to the Railwayman's Cottage in Swindon.

Since the Summer a new display, **M'Lady's Linen**, continues the popular theme of service life in the House with a reconstruction of the Laundry Room at Lydiard. In the Dining Room the character figure of Lady Bolingbroke has been given an exact **replica of the costume** worn by Lady Mary in the late-19th century.

**Conservation issues** have been highlighted with the assistance of the Woodmansterne Conservation Trust, who have helped us to promote a new approach to supporting conservation work in the House. Our scheme '**Treasure Forever**' invites local businesses and other interested societies to make a permanent contribution to the house by funding the conservation of a vulnerable object. Although the majority of our collections are on public display some pieces are in need of treatment and other items are too fragile to be shown in their current condition. Several pieces of **furniture** were repaired during the year. A neglected Chinese Chippendale-style table was restored and put on public display for the first time in the Hall. The whole of the portrait collection has also been rehung on uniform fixings.

**Country House Christmas** in December drew over 1,200 visitors to see traditional Victorian Christmas decorations. Cascades of ivy from the chandelier onto the Dining Room table, authentic shell and dried fruit arrangements as well as greenery from the Park transformed the State Rooms for the whole of the month. This display is now an annual fixture.

Another regular feature in the Lydiard calendar is provided by **Shakespeare in the Park**. Crowds of Shakespeare fans, armed with picnics, enjoyed two evening performances of *Macbeth* in front of the House in the Summer. In 1999 Heartbreak Productions will be returning for a fourth year on the 24th and 25th of July with a boisterous *Twelfth Night*. Proceeds from the event are used to support projects directly benefiting Lydiard Park.

As ever I hope that you will come and enjoy some of our 1999 activities and displays. Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome. Entrance to the House remains free of charge to members of the Friends and we look forward to seeing you.

Best wishes,

Sarah Finch-Crisp  
The Keeper, Lydiard Park

*P.S. Those of you who have collected the Reports of The Friends of Lydiard Tregoz will be aware of their importance in contributing to the knowledge of Lydiard Park and the people connected with*

*it. For this reason we have had one set of the Reports professionally bound to ensure they remain a ready source of reference. All unwanted back copies are always welcome here as there is a steady public demand for them.*

## SHORTER NOTES

In the *Swindon Borough Council Newsletter* above Sarah refers to a new initiative **Treasure Forever**. Woodmansteme Publications Ltd made one of their Conservation Awards to Lydiard so that the portrait by Cornelius Jansen of Oliver, Viscount Grandison, could receive conservation treatment. At a reception at Lydiard park on 21 October 1998 Mr Paul Woodmansteme spoke about the awards, his wife unveiled the portrait in all its glory, and Ms Seonaid Wood spoke about the process of conservation.

Mr Woodmansteme then spoke particularly to the business people who were present about 'Treasure Forever', an award scheme which invited the business community and interested societies to be a part of Lydiard Park in one or more of a variety of ways:

- by covering the cost of displaying important items such as the two St. George volumes of St John genealogy and heraldry or the dress uniform of the 5th Viscount in his capacity as a Deputy-Lieutenant of the County.
- by covering the cost of transport from the University of Texas of the portrait of Alexander Pope which was at Lydiard Park until 1943.
- by sponsoring the 1999 Shakespeare in the Park event.
- by helping to provide ramps at the entrance and chairs inside the house for visitors to sit on.

The Friends hope that this initiative will have the success it deserves.

-----

### **Rodney Family Tree**

In 1992 Lt-Col. John G. Moncreiff, great-great-grandson of Charles William George St. John - see *Report* 24, 66 - presented the Friends with a table of The descendants of Admiral Henry Craven St. John. This table has been invaluable in providing information to members of the Friends. Admiral Craven (1837-1909), a great-grandson of Frederick, 2nd Viscount Bolingbroke, married Catherine Dora Rodney (1837-1914), a great-granddaughter of George, 1st Baron Rodney (1718-92). John Moncreiff has for a number of years been working on the Rodney descent, and has very kindly presented the Friends with a real feat of genealogy, The Ancestors and Descendants of Admiral Sir George Rodney KB 1st Baron Rodney of Rodney Stoke. The first six generations on the table, beginning with Walter de Rodney living 1095, were compiled by Sir Edward Rodney (d. 1657). The study of pedigrees such as this reveals an understandable relatedness between families of a similar social position. It is interesting, therefore, to see that a thirteenth-century Jane Rodney married Sir Thomas Pattishall. In the following century Sir Walter Rodney married Dorothea, daughter of Sir Roger St. John, and that a grandson of this Sir Walter Rodney by a second marriage, also named Sir Walter Rodney (d. 1466), married Margaret, daughter of Walter, 1st Baron Hungerford.

John Moncreiff is heartily to be congratulated for putting in order the fruits of his researches and for generously making them available to us.

-----

Two notes by Brigadier Charles Barker, whose wife has St. John forebears.

### **1 The Mystery of the Beauchamp tomb in Worcester Cathedral**

Margaret Beauchamp was a most important forebear of the St. John family. In searching her Beauchamp connections I came across the magnificent Beauchamp tomb in the north aisle of Worcester Cathedral. My observations from interpreting the shields on it may be of interest to the Friends of Lydiard Tregoze.

The tomb is a splendid example of a medieval knight's burial with the effigy of a knight in full regalia alongside that of his wife in the lady's dress of the period. Their hands are together as in prayer. Their heads rest on swans' heads, his on a helm; their feet rest on dogs. The tomb has sculptured crests around the monument.

There is a notice at the tomb stating that the knight buried there was thought to be SIR JOHN BEAUCHAMP of HOLT, who when Baron of KIDDERMINSTER was treacherously executed by the 'wonderful' parliament in 1388 during the reign of Richard II and buried in Worcester Cathedral by the monks.

The tomb is over 600 years old, and over the years the colouring which had largely disappeared has been repainted. On studying the heraldry on the tomb, bearing in mind the heraldry of Margaret Beauchamp of Bletsoe, I was immediately struck by their resemblance; the knight is attired in a surcoat bearing, Gules (red), a fess between six martlets or (gold). The Beauchamp of Elmley arms are prominent on all four sides together with the Beauchamp arms as on the knight's surcoat. Further shields show the Beauchamp arms impaled with arms - a fess with three crescents - which are exactly the same as those of Patishull of Bletsoe except for colouring. So I made further enquiries.

The Cathedral librarian was most helpful. It transpires that the identity of the occupant of the tomb has been a matter of speculation over the centuries, by Leland, Dugdale, and Habington among others. In 1942 Canon F.E. Hutchinson, having studied all the evidence by these scholars, concluded that, 'We may safely follow Leland in placing Beauchamp of Holt in the nave and assigning the monument tomb in the north aisle to Beauchamp of Powyck and his wife Elizabeth Patishull.' However, no action seems to have been taken, and the notice remained which stated that it was thought to be the tomb of Sir John Beauchamp of Holt and his wife.

My research of Margaret Beauchamp reveals an interesting addition. Her great-grandmother was Sibyl Patishull who was descended from the Beauchamps of Bedford, whose last knight was killed at the battle of Evesham. Sibyl married Sir Roger Beauchamp of Powyck (d. 1379/80) - hence the heraldic shields on the Lydiard Tregoze triptych. The Canon's study did not mention any link with Bletsoe, but the link is significant. Sir John Beauchamp of Powyck (1342-89) had married as his second wife Elizabeth Patishull (d. 1411), his younger brother Sir Roger Beauchamp had also married a Patishull, no doubt some relation.

None of the Beauchamps of Holt had Patishull wives or had wives whose arms were remotely connected with crescents. To my mind there can be little doubt that the tomb in the north aisle contains, as Leland concluded, Sir John Beauchamp of Powyck and his second wife, Elizabeth Patishull, a relation of the Sibyl Patishull of Bletsoe, who was married to his brother Sir Roger Beauchamp of Powyck.

The confusion has, in my judgement, arisen in the past because of repainting errors on a very ancient tomb where colours had faded beyond recognition. If my assumption is correct, this tomb contains the remains of Margaret Beauchamp's great-great-uncle and his wife Elizabeth Patishull.

The notice by the tomb should be amended and, maybe, the Patishull arms should be correctly painted although this solution is less sensational than that the tomb contains the shamefully executed Sir John Beauchamp of Holt, Baron of Kidderminster, who was buried by the monks.

## 2 Margaret Beauchamp - First Marriage

*Report 29*, p.20, states, 'It would be interesting to discover how it was that she [Margaret Beauchamp] married as her first husband Sir Oliver St. John (d. 1437/8) of Fonmon.' Fonmon Castle is in the Vale of Glamorgan. A possible solution might be as follows:

Margaret Beauchamp was descended from the rich and very influential Beauchamp family of Elmley through the Powyck branch. At the time of her wardship the Nevill family were another large baronial family with branches at both Salisbury and Abergavenny. Sir Edward Nevill had married Lady Elizabeth Beauchamp, the only daughter and heiress of Richard Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny and Earl of Worcester. The Beauchamp and Nevill families were well acquainted indeed: Richard Nevill (1450-71), son of the Earl of Salisbury, married a Beauchamp heiress to become the 15th Earl of Warwick.

Charles Ross, in his book, *The War of the Roses*, writes of Richard Nevill:

As Earl of Warwick he blatantly defied the laws of inheritance and sought to hold the entire LORDSHIP OF GLAMORGAN by force against the Duke of Somerset to whom the King had granted its keeping.

Glamorgan was a very desirable piece of real estate. About the time of Margaret Beauchamp's wardship the two Barons Nevill and Beauchamp would have known the families of Glamorgan including the St. Johns of Fonmon. Maybe the link between Sir Oliver St. John and Margaret Beauchamp was via the Nevill and Beauchamp web site!!

-----

*A History of Sir Walter St John's School, Battersea, 1700-1986*, 324pp, was published in 1998. Frank T. Smallwood (1890-1982) taught at the School for forty-four years until his retirement in 1954. In 1957 he was asked by the staff to undertake the writing of the history of the School, a task he accepted with pleasure and enthusiasm. He worked diligently at the task for three years, after which, for a variety of reasons, he laid the project aside. The work was still unfinished when he died. Mr Smallwood's son John arranged for his manuscripts to be typed, and these, edited and with additional material by Roy D. McNamara, form the printed *History*.

Mr McNamara is to be congratulated on undertaking this formidable task. He added chapters to cover the period 1907-39 and to take the story of the School from 1961 through to its closure in 1986. Other sections had to be completed. He chose to reproduce Mr Smallwood's text as he had received it as far as possible. The fact that Mr Smallwood did little or nothing to amend his manuscript after 1961 means that he did not incorporate in the text the results of his researches into the Conquest of Glamorgan and the entry of members of the St. John family into England in the time of Henry H. (*CReport 6* (1973) 73-90.)

-----

**Susanna and the Elders** is the subject of a stone relief that stands in the fireplace at Lydiard Park. In *Report 27,34*, it was described as probably of the 16th century. It has now been definitively dated by Anthony Wells-Cole as of 1620-30 by his discovery of the Dutch print that gave it its inspiration. His *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. The influence of Continental Prints*,

1558-1625 (Yale U.P., 1997) traces how craftsmen in this country, at that period, working in stone, glass, wood, metal, plaster, and embroidery often drew their inspiration from Continental prints:

Reproductive engraving reached a peak of virtuosity in the hands of the Netherlander in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries .... Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Utrecht were... important centres where the humanist emphasis of Maarten van Heemskerck was continued by artists such as Karel van Mander (1548-1606), Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), and Comelis Comelisz. van Haarlem (1562-1638), who formed the so-called Haarlem Academy between about 1586 and 1591. The engravers who helped to disseminate their style included Domenicus Custos and Lucas Kilian in Augsburg, members of the Sadeler family, Jan Muller, Jan Saenredam, and Hendrick Goltzius himself. Despite political links with the northern Netherlands and cultural links between individuals at the courts of Elizabeth I (and later Henry, Prince of Wales) and Rudolph II at Prague, the apparent influence in England of these artists and engravers was slight. I know of no derivations from van Mander and only two from Comelisz. van Haarlem, both at Lydiard Park in Wiltshire: a painted glass window there incorporates a quarry decorated with a sailing boat which appears in the background of his design *of Arion and the Dolphin* engraved by Jan Muller, and a marble panel depicting Susanna and the Elders comes from the engraving by Jan Saenredam (1602). The glass was probably made between 1628 and 1631 and the panel, which incidentally retains traces of its original polychromy, is likely to be contemporary. Both must have been part of the decoration of the earlier house which was part remodelled in the Palladian-revival style in the 1740s.

This revision in dating gives an insight into the modernisation and embellishment of Lydiard Park that was carried out by Sir John St. John, 1st Baronet. 'Susanna and the Elders' may well have been part of the overmantle to a richly ornate fireplace.

-----

In *Report 30* (1996) there was an account of the Church Organ and of the organists who have played since about 1842. **Malcolm Titcombe** has been organist since 1981, but during the year he announced his resignation. Malcolm is one of our founder members and we always enjoyed his accompaniment at Evensong at our annual meetings. We shall miss his playing but will continue to enjoy his company at our meetings.

-----

The residents of **Bolingbroke Close**, Hook, are to be congratulated once again for the unbelievable display of Christmas lights that transforms the close. Reports of the display appear on television and in the national press. The close is closed to cars on some evenings so that coffee and mince pies can be served. Visitors are asked to make a donation to a number of charities which, this year were the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, Lydiard Millicent School, Swindon Chalet School, Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, Crowdys Hill School, the Princess Margaret Hospital Special Care Baby Unit, British Heart Foundation, Longleaze School, Jubilee Gardens, Prospect Foundation, the Imperial Society for Cancer Research, and a fund to send a terminally-ill local person to Disneyland. Well done, Bolingbroke Close.

-----

**John Whittokesmede** *InReport 29* (1996), 30-31, there was a reference to Whittokesmede and John Coventry who were appointed feoffees of the manor of Lydiard Tregoze by Peter Beauchamp in 1444. In 1458 they conveyed the manor to fifteen trustees. It was very difficult to break the entail on land



and to prevent it being conveyed by course of law. To enable it to pass according to the wishes of the owner a legal device was used, known as an Enfeoffment for Uses. To be successful in this device the services of a trained lawyer were needed, and this is where John Whittokesmede came in.

*The Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* vol. **92** (1999), 92-99, has an article, 'John Whittokesmede, a Fifteenth-Century Lawyer and Parliamentary Carpet-Bagger', in which everything that is likely to be discovered about Whittokesmede is assembled. His legal career spanned some fifty years until his death about 1482, and occupied him not only in Wiltshire but in the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas in London. He enjoyed wide personal connections, the most important of which were with the Hungerford family and the bishops of Salisbury, whose bailiff he was for many years. He was elected MP twelve times between 1427 and 1472. He was a survivor who was able to accommodate himself from Lancastrian to Yorkist rule.

-----

### THE FRIENDS OF LYDIARD TREGOZ

Officers for 1998-99:

- President: Mr.H.G.M. Leighton, M.A., F.S.A.
- Vice-Presidents: Field-Marshal Sir Roland Gibbs, G.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.  
Dr. Arnold Taylor, C.B.E., M.A., D.Litt., Docteur h.c. (Caen),  
F.B.A., Hon.V.-P.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.
- Secretary: Mrs. Sarah Finch-Crisp, B.A.,  
[REDACTED]
- Treasurer: Mr. Richard Clarke,  
[REDACTED]
- Committee: Mr. Tom Hassall, M.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
The Rev. Ann Mackenzie  
Mr. Russell Weymouth.
- Editor of *Report*: Canon Brian Came, B.Com., F.S.A.,  
[REDACTED]

### Obituary

It is with the greatest sadness that the deaths of two good Friends have to be reported. Capt. Reuben Elmore (Smokey) Stivers died at his home in Virginia on 13 June 1998 at the age of 80. (He earned his nickname as a young voluntary fire-fighter who bravely effected a rescue from a burning house, and the nickname remained with him throughout his life.) He had a varied and interesting career - in the Navy, in advertising and public relations, and as a professional writer and editorial consultant. Among his many interests was the research into the history of his family which led to the formation of the Society of Shropshires, among his ancestors being the emigrant Rev. St.John Shropshire (d. 1718) of Marlborough whose family hailed from Lydiard Tregoze. Smokey was a member of the Friends from 1981/2, acting for a number of years as assistant treasurer for us in America and made a special trip to England in 1994 to attend our meeting at Lydiard. It was he who arranged for a complete set of our *Reports* to be held in the Earl Gregg Swem Library in the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg.

Brigadier Charles Barker died on 17 November 1998. Our sympathy is with his wife Joan and his family. Charles had many interests. Among them was research into Joan's St.John ancestry. He was a great ferreter out of information, often at the request of the Editor, who greatly appreciated his help. This *Report* carries two of his contributions. He was well-known as a seascape watercolourist, and one of his pictures appears on a slim volume of his poetry. He would have agreed, somewhat diffidently, to one of his poems being reproduced for us to read in remembering him:

### **LIFE ON EARTH**

How could I perceive hid within the womb  
The intricate design of earth, the love, the hate, the tomb.  
How could I imagine - the wind, the sun, the rain,  
Summer, winter, sea - and all of this domain.

How can I deny, there's something else beyond?  
Finite mind is far too small to even comprehend.  
The vastness of creation out of sight of man  
Can only be embraced by God's infinite span.

What its all about - that I cannot tell.  
All I know for certain is I'm here to live and dwell,  
To do the very best with the gifts I possess  
Is my return for life on earth - this and nothing less.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **RESIGNATIONS**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Copies of *Report* are deposited with:

The British Library  
The Bodleian Library  
Cambridge University Library  
Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, USA  
The College of Arms  
The Society of Antiquaries of London  
The Society of Genealogists  
The Public Record Office at Kew  
The Council for the Care of Churches  
Battersea Library  
Sir Walter St.John's Association

Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society  
 Glamorgan Record Office  
 Wiltshire Record Office  
 Wootton Bassett Historical Society  
 The Borough of Thamesdown  
 Swindon Public Library  
 Swindon Museum

**INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT.  
 FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 1998**

To Postage	40.64	By Subscriptions	530.58
Telephone	2.76	Donations	132.00
Stationery	4.50	Sales	38.00
Photocopying	6.67	Bank Interest	5.18
AGM Expenses:			
Speaker	14.60	AGM: plate at tea	63.28
Teas	19.77		
Report 31	360.00		
Wiltshire Local History Forum	7.00		
Hatchments:			
Transport	50.00	St.Andrew's Conservation Trust	2027.50
Progress payment	<u>2027.50</u>		
	<b>2533.44</b>		
<b>Add:</b>			
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>263.10</u>		
	<b><u>£2796.54</u></b>		<b><u>£2796.54</u></b>

**BALANCE SHEET as at 31st DECEMBER 1998**

Accumulated Fund	
31st December 1997	814.57
<b>Add:</b>	
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>263.10</u>
	<b>£1077.67</b>

Current-Liabilities:

Current Assets

Fees in advance	31.00	Cash at Bank	
Society of Antiquaries	750.00	Current	29.45
Treasurer's Expenses	<u>3.61</u>	Deposit	<u>1832.83</u>
	<b><u>£1862.28</u></b>		<b><u>£1862.28</u></b>

Accounts subject to audit

Richard T. Clarke  
 Hon. Treasurer.

## THE HATCHMENTS

### GRANTS

### ESTIMATES

Society of Antiquaries	750.00	Area Museum Council	4389.18
St. Andrew's Conservation Trust			
2027.50			
<u>972.50</u>	3000.00	Return Transport (est.)	50.00
Balance from Friends of Lydiard			
Tregoz (est.)	<u>889.18</u>	Rehanging in Church (est.)	<u>200.00</u>
	<u><b>£4639.18</b></u>		<u><b>£4639.18</b></u>

-----

Friends of Lydiard Tregoze  
8 May 1999