

MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP COMMITTEE 2001/2002

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PROGRAMME OF PAST EVENTS

2001	November	A.G.M.followed by “Gloucestershire’s Industrial Heritage” - Dr. R. Wilson
2002	January	“Minchinhampton Voices” Compiling an oral history - Mrs. Katie Jarvis
	March	“The Bisley Boy” Investigating a local legend - Prof. Brian Locke
	May	“The Dudbridge Donkey” The Nailsworth to Stonehouse Railway - Mr. Roy Close
	July	“Unravelling the Landscape History of Minchinhampton Common” A walk round the Common led by Ms. Nicky Smith
	September	“The Lost Horestone of Rodborough” - Mrs. Claire Forbes and Mr. Stephen Davis
	October	“Let’s Celebrate” Our exhibition in the Market House.
	November	A.G.M. followed by “Minchinhampton in Old Photographs” - Mr. Mike Mills

The Minchinhampton Local History Group has produced another volume of
“*Minchinhampton Life and Times*” entitled “*Landmarks*”

A Grave Undertaking

by Hilary Kemmett

The weather was appalling, the head-cold was worse: confined to the house, what better time could there be to undertake the promised recording of Minchinhampton's graveyard memorials? These needed to be transcribed from records made by Minchinhampton Local History Group some fifteen years ago and from a book lent by Dr Hugh Kearsey. This was compiled by one Mr. Ralph Bigland in the late 18th century, when he recorded the memorials then existing in the churchyards of Gloucestershire. If it were not for Mr Bigland, the majority of the older memorials would have disappeared without trace for very few of them still exist in a legible form today.

It was surprising to find that before the extensive rebuilding, there were at least 65 memorials within Holy Trinity Church itself, the oldest being that of one Anne Baynham, *"Daughter to Josephe Baynham, who was second Sonne to Joseph Baynham, of Westbury, Esquire. Her Mother was Alice, fourth Daughter to Robert Freame of Lypeat, Esquire. She died the 16 Day of August Anno Domini 1632"*. The oldest found by Mr Bigland in the churchyard commemorated Richard Fowler of Brimscomb, Clothier, who died on July 7 1627. The oldest memorial still legible when the Local History Group did their survey dates from 1740 and records the death of the 14 day old son of Benjamin Hayward in that year.



Some of the older tombs in the Churchyard

Some of the oldest inscriptions are still visible inside the church, such as the well-known brass plates now on the church walls, but in the 18th century there would have been a glorious array of flat stones, brass plaques and stone or marble monuments, adorned with coats of arms and flowery eulogies of the departed. It was not easy to decipher the ancient printed book, especially without a knowledge of heraldic terms, but there follow three examples of the attempts at deciphering these:

Ermine, on a Chief Sable, three Battle Axes Argent, for SHEPPARD: - impaling, per Fess Gules, a Lion rampant between three Cross Croslets fitchee Or, for CAPEL; 2. Gules, two Wings conjoined in Lure, for SEYMOUR

Per Fess nebule Or and Sable three Bucks Attires fixed to the Scalp, all counterchanged, for BUCKE; - impaling Argent, on a Bend entised sable, three Annulets Or, for SELWYN

*Arms: on a Bend, three Horseshoes, for FERRARS
Near this place lieth the Body of the reverend Mr John Ferrars, 52 Years Rector of this Parish, who departed this Life the 22d Day of May, in the Year of our Lord 1717, and in the 81st Year of his Age, an eminent Example of Piety and Charity*

Many of the memorials bore lengthy Latin epitaphs or inscriptions detailing the superior character of the deceased or exhortations to live a blameless life. One such memorial reads:

“In the vault behind this Chancel lie the mortal remains of Mary, the Wife of Phillip Sheppard, Rector of this Parish, who ended this transitory Life the 11th of May 1753, aged 49. Honourable age is not that which standeth in Length of Time, nor that is measured by Number of Years; but Wisdom is the grey Hair unto Men, and an unspoiled Life is old Age. The World passeth away, and the Lust thereof but he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever.”

And on another, bearing arms described as *A Fess engrailed, and in Chief three Fleurs, for ILES*, John Iles, of Chalford, Esq. is remembered as being: *“many Years a Justice of Peace for this County; religious, loyal, and beneficent; a Husband most affectionate, Father most tender; to all benevolent; in every Station, publick and private, exercising suitable Virtues; and in the whole tenour of Life a truly good Man. He died March 27, 1727, aged 70. Mary his Wife, whose Life, from Youth, was a continued Example of true Pietydied July 8, 1737 aged 78. Thomas Iles, second son of John Iles, Esq. was a Person of singular Probity, Humanity, the kindest Relation, and sincerest Friend. He died March 1, 1731, aged 29. Mary his Wife, eminent for her conjugal Virtues, kind and amiable in her Deportment to all”*
... . died Dec. 26, 1728, aged 27.

Among memorials recorded by Bigland in the churchyard, there seem to have been fewer large enough to bear such long and flowery inscriptions, but one Samuel Sheppard was remembered as being:

A Gentleman of unblemished integrity, unaffected Piety, and truly primitive Simplicity of Manners; affable and courteous in his Behaviour, easy and instructive in his Conversation, just and upright in all his Dealings without Partiality, without Hypocrisy [sic]. His Charity was as free from Ostentation as his Nature from Disguise. In all Social Offices he remarkably excelled; an eminent Example of Conjugal Affection; a tender Parent, a kind Master, a sincere Friend. Thus adorned with an uncommon Sanctity of Morals, he sustained the Miseries of human Life with Christian Fortitude; his Conscience not reproaching him, with the Omission of any Duty to God or Man, He was patient and resigned in his death and his Hope was full of Immortality. He died December the 20th 1749, in the 63rd Year of his Age.

Another effusive epitaph was for Daniel Davis, late Schoolmaster at Burley, in this Parish died May 8 1756 aged 49 years, of whom to make no mention would be the greatest Ingratitude to Merit, and injustice to Posterity; for, without the least false Panegyrick too common to Inscriptions of this Nature, his Country has lost in him a truly useful and valuable Member of Society; his Intimates a sincere, constant, and unchangeable Friend; his Pupils a kind, instructive, and excellent Master; the distressed Poor a continual Assister and Benefactor; Mankind in general a living Example of the strictest Virtue; and Religion one of her firmest Supporters and faithful Votaries.

Reading through the records, particularly Bigland's, it has been possible to discover clues about certain aspects of life long ago in Minchinhampton. One sad fact is the large number of infants, under one year old, that died, many families losing several children. Some examples are the six children of William Wallington *of this Town, Mason, and of Rebeckah, his Wife* ; six children of Robert Pool, Ironmonger, and Ann his wife - John, Samuel, Elizabeth, Penelope, William and Ann - all died in their Infancy. Ann, another of their Daughters died Aug. 6 1736, aged 6 years. Another sad epitaph records *four children of John and Esther Simpkins died in their infancy; Esther, their daughter, died 18 Jan 1770 aged 6; John, their son, died 11 June 1770 aged 1*. The total recorded under one year of age is just under 100.

On the other hand there were a surprising number surviving into their eighties (80) and even nineties (16), the oldest recorded being John Cambridge who died in 1775 at the ripe old age of 99.

The profession most often given was that of Clothier - there were over thirty recorded by Bigland. There were also Maltsters, Bakers, Servants, Surgeons, Parish Clerks, a Physician, Mason, Mercer, Merchant, Schoolmaster, Butcher, Waggoner, Shoemaker, Shearmaker, Staymaker, Cooper and Collarmaker, not to mention an Excise Officer from Norfolk, an Officer in the Dragoons and the famous Astronomer Royal.

The memorials listed recently by the Local History Group mainly date from the 19th century and not many professions were recorded on the graves, but mention is made of a few Clothiers, two Surgeons, a Schoolmaster, Tax Collector, Ironmonger, Servant, a Rector and a Vicar.

Perhaps surprisingly, the surname appearing most often was Webb (46) whereas Smith, the second most frequent appeared 39 times. Other frequently occurring surnames were Cambridge (21), Sheppard (23), Child (19), Fowles (18), Pinfold (17), Cook (14), Iles (13), Playne (13), Close (12), Butt (11), Peach (11). Some names are still known in the area — a member of the Cambridge, Sheppard and Butt families being commemorated in local road names. Perhaps one of the Peach family gave his name to Peaches farm, and the Playnes are well remembered particularly for the history written by A T Playne. There were also 8 Hiatts (Hiatt Road) but only one Ricardo, an infant - Harriett Louisa - the date of whose death was not recorded.

The information gathered has now been put into a database so that those wishing to trace their family history can easily look up the surname in an alphabetical list which is then cross-referenced with the memorial number against which the full inscription - or the legible part of it - can be viewed. Only a few memorials listed by Bigland could still be read when the History Group made their records. The recording of existing churchyard memorials is not complete and it is hoped to continue this work in the near future, after which all new information will be added to the database.



Some of the newer monuments, so far unrecorded

Minchinhampton Parish Council - the first fifteen years **by the late Cyril Turk [taken from his original notes]**

1. The Vestry Room

The members of the new, elected, parish council met for the first time on January 1st 1895. Many parishioners had come to take note of their deliberations, and compare the novelty of this council of mainly working men with their Vestry predecessors, and doubtless many disappointed liberal supporters were ready to criticise.

The proceedings opened, necessarily, with the election of a Chairman. W.E. Niblett seconded by E. Young proposed the Rev. Frank Albert Mather. This was accepted so the Rector took the chair, though he was not an elected member. A. E. Philpott became Vice-Chairman, and W. A. Jones the Clerk. So with the necessary documents signed by all - except by W. Smith who was unable to attend - the new council could begin its task by establishing its authority.



Vestry Cottage 2000 - The Vestry Room is the upper storey

The Chairman opened by stating that the Vestry cottage, where the meeting was being held, had been the property of the Vestry who had purchased the site for £100 in 1818. The building had been erected for £300, the cost being defrayed by parishioners. Therefore he argued that the Vestry and the adjoining house were parish property and belonged to the parish council. It was agreed that John Cantor could continue to use the Vestry for meetings of the Church Vestry, provided this did not interfere with parish council use, at a payment of 5/- [25p] a year. It was further agreed to pay 6d. for fires to

be lit in the Vestry for their meetings.

The Council kept a careful watch on their property. On the 18th February 1895 they considered estimates of £4 from J. Simmonds and £2/10/6 from Harman for repairs, and accepted the lower. Three years later much more extensive repairs were necessary and on 5th January 1899 they again accepted W. A. Harman's estimate of £27/17/6 with a further 3/6 for opening up an old fireplace. This meeting also considered a complaint about bad odours from the privy to the cottage. The Chairman had spoken to Mr. Kimber, the owner of the two adjoining cottages, who agreed to pay £10 towards Mr. Simmonds' bill of £15 for connecting the three cottages to the parish draining scheme. The Council accepted this with the addition of not more than £3 for a connection, for flushing purposes, with the Water Company; and for a ventilation shaft. Meanwhile in July 1895 Mr. Cantor had died and the Council agreed to let the cottage to the Rector and the Church Wardens at £3p.a. on condition that the sexton should undertake the care of the Vestry on the same conditions as Mr. Cantors; with an addition of 5% on the rent to cover repairs. Three years later, 18th April 1901, Albert Harrison, the caretaker, asked for an increase in salary, which the Council then raised to £3.00. A little earlier that year it was agreed that the Clerk, now F. E. Jones, who was Overseer, could use the Vestry room that "being parish property" for collecting rates.

Throughout these years the council also considered their own comfort. At the first meeting they required the Clerk to make an inventory of the furniture belonging to the parish; and at the next meeting he reported that it consisted of: 1 desk, 1 oak table, the parish map and 3 benefit tables. On 2nd December 1895 they appointed a committee to consider lighting the Vestry, the adjoining room and steps, having at the same time decided that their meetings should start at 7.30pm (They had in October agreed to have gas laid on in the upper Vestry.) On 2nd October 1895 they asked the Clerk to provide ink and writing utensils; in July 1896 they asked for 18 armchairs "the same as those in the Board Room in Stroud", following this up at the next meeting with an order for a table for the Vestry room and linoleum for the floor. (In July 1901 this table needed repairs, so they ordered two drawers to be put in at cost not exceeding 12/-.) In March 1895 the Clerk reported that he had "two cartloads of parish paper" and needed something so that he could put his hand on any paper directly. The council therefore ordered a safe and a pitch pine cupboard. The cupboard was to be made by Mr. Harman for £3/10/- subject to him putting in a 3/8 deal back and brass fittings. The safe, they discovered, could be bought from Messrs Griffin & Sons for £8/15/0 but they eventually obtained one for £3/10/-. The last requirement for comfort was heat. This question came up in April 1901 when they decided upon a gas stove, but left it to Mr. Fowler to see if there was a second hand one in the school. He reported that two could be purchased for £3, and was instructed to obtain them and put one in the Vestry room and the other in the outer Vestry; and at the same time remove the outside lamp to the corner of the building.

Way back in January 1895 the Rev. Mather and Critchley had been instructed to draw up standing orders. Their suggestions were approved in February, 100 copies were printed and put on sale at 3d. Each. In March the Chairman suggested that Mr. Jones should offer a prize to who ever digested them first! No-one presented himself.

So, after six years, with their meetings controlled by orders, and the Vestry fully equipped the elected parish council was established.

2. Allotments

The meeting of January 1895 ended with the Council taking their first administrative action. This, a matter mandated on parish councils by the act which constituted them, was the provision of allotments. The Council set up a committee of seven - Chamberlain, Philpott, Harman, Blake, Baglin and Hunt - to ascertain who required allotments, requiring applicants to send to the Clerk in writing where they lived and how much they needed. By January 21st some forty one acres had been applied for, though there was only one applicant from Amberley. The Hampton Fields applicants said they would probably work in partnership. The Council therefore considered the land that had been laid out for allotments:-

Glebe 2 acres 3. 15. To be let to 30 applicants at 7d.

West End 5 acres 1. 14 to be let to 22 applicants at 6d

There was also 3 acres 2.19 at Amberley but this was not required. A new committee was appointed to find more:- Milford and Chamberlain for Box, Harman and Hill for Hampton Fields, and Baglin for Burleigh.

On 18th February it was reported that both Mr. A. T. Playne and Mr. H. G. Ricardo had agreed to let land. But the severe snowy weather prevented members examining the land and it was September before the committee recommended accepting Mr. Ricardo's offer of land at Park Corner, tenanted by Mr. Harman, of 3 acres at a rental of £6/10/- an acre to be let to Burleigh and Wall's Quarry ratepayers at 5d a perch. 200 agreement forms were printed; Philpott, Baglin and Moody were to arrange the letting and Moody was to collect the rent.

In October 1896 the Council looked again at the question of allotments in Amberley, but there is no further record. At the same time they offered a bonus of 1d a perch for each allotment holder who paid the rent to the collector on the first Saturday after Quarter Day between 5 & 7pm.

From now on the collectors paid in the allotment rents each January and June, but there were constant complaints of defaulters - in January 1897 Mr. Baglin paid in £1/16/8 instead of £2, there being two defaulters each owing 1/8. (This, in fact, was made up in June.) This complaint recurs often throughout the minutes. In September G. Jones took over the Burleigh and Park Allotments at a salary of £2, and the rental was increased to 6d. with a bonus of ½d for prompt payment. But the payments were constantly in arrears and he found the work more difficult than anticipated, and asked for an increase in salary which was raised to £4 in 1898 October.

For ten years now the allotments drop out of the minutes except for references to non-payment. Then in October 1908 the Council made an agreement with Mr. Orfe for the Park land at a rent of £18 per acre payable half yearly for a 35 year lease. They also considered land at Burleigh, but, with only two applicants, decided to do nothing.

The Council at this time was becoming concerned that some holdings were much larger than originally intended. W. H. Samson had applied for ½ acre, while C. C. Baglin and

E. C. Hillier had each applied for 2 acres. These last two applications they referred to the County Council for advice.

In October 1909 made a last appearance in the minutes. Mr. Ponting who had land allotment there was in arrears to the extent of 12/6. He claimed that this was because Mr. Gordon, the owner of the land and who was recovering it, had put stones across before the crop was off. The Council decided to ask Mr. Gordon to recompense Mr. Ponting.

A last reference comes in November 1909 when the Council decided that those holders who were behind with rent should lose the land if they had not paid up January. They found too that some holders had not signed the agreement form, and decided that this should be looked into.

The Boer War by Sue Smith

October 1899, action was taken to stop the dilution of British Power in Southern Africa and the weakening of her Naval supremacy round the Cape and the Indian Ocean. Great Britain was at war!

The first mention in Minchinhampton of this *little war* slotted between the Crimea with its Florence Nightingale, cholera and Charge of the Light Brigade and the Great War with its slaughter of an entire generation, was in December 1899 issue of the Parish magazine. There was a large congregation present in the parish church on Sunday morning October 29th it having been announced that the Rector would preach on behalf of the fund for the families of those engaged in the war. Taking for his text *Follow after the things which make for peace* (Romans xiv. 19) , he concluded thus:

No one likes war, the English people are not a warlike people. No Government bearing in mind the dreadful nature of modern warfare would lightly and wantonly plunge into war. And yet - for the first time since the Crimean war - we find ourselves engaged with whitemen, excepting only the brief hostilities with the same people who are now again our foes...

The sermon concluded with an appeal for the Soldiers and Sailors Assoc., which aids wives and families of the serving personnel. The collection came to the grand sum of £27.7.0 a very large amount in those days. Apart from this Mrs Bryans (Rector's wife) had received £7 towards the fund and would be glad of further contributions. Meetings of this Association were held at Longfords and a careful list of all soldiers and sailors serving in this division was kept. There are 35 soldiers whose homes are in the Minchinhampton parish and of these 14 are serving in South Africa. In several cases help had been given to families in the parish.

January 1900 bought the relief fund to £81.13.9d. on January 15th a Patriotic Concert was held for the War Fund in the Market House. A large enthusiastic audience attended helped by a fine night and the Town Band playing outside bringing people together. The Playnes, Lawrences, Bryans and the Littles organised, played and acted for the concert.

They raised, while playing *The absent minded beggar* this seemed to be the custom!! The sum of £11.9.11d.

In April 1900 a list of men serving in the war was recorded in the Parish Magazine; they were as follows William Henry Apperley, Edward Bingle, Lieut. Hinton Bryan, Frederick Bullock, George Brawn, Joseph Brown, Albert Cuss, James Cuss, Albert Creed, Sergeant Edge, Charles Evans, William Flocks, Edward Gilett, Henry Gosling, Edwin Harman, Frank Hatherall, William Holmes, James Masters, Richard Paddison (Imp. Yeomanry), Capt. William Playne(Lt. Imp.Yeo), Amos Stevens, Sergt.-Major Walkerley, Albert Edward Weaver and Edward William Willoboys. Four wives of men at the front were already receiving weekly allowances from the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association and two aged parents were also receiving help. Here is an extract from a letter from a soldier from Bristol serving in South Africa "There is not a married man or widower or son in this camp that hasn't a sunshine in his face when he gets his letters from home, and hears what the generous public or his late employers are doing for him. I am sure we cannot thank them enough. Of course we never dreamed of them doing as much as they have done". In November 1900 a special prayer for peace, and thankfulness for the signs of the end of the present conflict.

The War Fund was still collecting money and in Nailsworth (in which Minchinhampton is included) relieved 46 cases at a cost of £172. Nearly 400 persons, mostly ladies have distributed these funds nationwide making sure that families did not starve while their men were fighting in South Africa.

In his New Years letter to the Parish of 1901 the Rector was obviously in London on May 18th when Mafeking was relieved. Though peace had not been declared the war was practically over.

News that the War was over came at last and reached Minchinhampton on Monday, June 2nd and great was the rejoicing. "The bells rang, flags were flying and the band was playing".

A lecture was given in the Market House on February 27th 1902 on the subject *Our Soldiers in South Africa* by Miss Violet Brooke-Hunt, proceeds going to Miss Brooke-Hunt's Soldiers Institute Fund and the local division of the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association.

The returning men were met at Brimscombe station by the Town Band and were brought up into the town. The soldiers were wearing their red jackets and after were all given a meal in the Market House.

We have no record of any local men lost in the Boer War so we have to presume that all returned safe and sound.

Minchinhampton Church Magazines and *Story of Minchinhampton 1850 - 1957* by Minchinhampton W.I. is acknowledged.

A Living Faith

Unknown - a paper found in an old attic

I stepped down the hillside lying southwards from the great Minchin Hampton Common, dedicated to be an open space for ever, and managed by a local Committee appointed by the National Trust. And as I walked down the steep approach to Box village, I saw ahead of me to the East the golden spire of Box's new church gleaming in the sunlight. Crowned with its cross of gold it shone out beside an evergreen tree and lighted up the little valley in which the church is hidden. I walked more quickly, and passed through the village between Cotswold cottages and walls of grey and honey-coloured stone until, guided by the spire, I reached the church.

Twenty three years ago Canon Rex Hodson - whose father was Curate here in 1876 - was appointed Rector of Minchin Hampton and had charge of the hamlet of Box. Box's temporary church of wood and galvanised iron was wearing out and getting beyond repair. So the people of Box, greatly daring, began to dream of a church of stone.

A fête was organised in the village and the first fifty pounds was won and put into the bank to start a building fund: and ever since then fêtes, concerts, bazaars and jumble sales have followed one another in constant succession, so that the fund has gone on mounting steadily in spite of what often appeared insurmountable difficulties.

Year after year Box made its church-to-be the focus of their prayers, the object of their labours, the symbol of their faith. At last, about two years ago, it began to seem possible that the dream should materialise. The fund amounted to over £1,000 when a neighbouring (*sic.*) gave the site and paid all the legal fees for the transfer to the Diocese in perpetuity. After many vicissitudes an architect, famed for his local work with local materials, was found to take on the task: plans were submitted which gave great satisfaction to all concerned: and a local builder undertook the work for just over £3,000.

The Rector decided that building could start as soon as the fund reached £2,000, so strenuous efforts were made. For instance, one day in Summer everyone in the village was asked to support a special Gift Day during which the Rector sat for many hours within and without the church awaiting the gifts. A pony brought ten shillings. A little boy brought a bag of some hundred ship half-pennies that he had been collecting for years. And a dog brought his quota - and then tried to bite the hand of a friend who was putting a couple of sovereigns as his contribution into the box. An old woman who remembered the erection of the temporary church gave five pounds in memory of her husband who as a boy had rung its bell Sunday by Sunday. And so it went on. By the end of the day over £450 had been given by the village.

Meanwhile the Rector had appealed to the leading industrialists of the neighbourhood, asking them to follow the example of their forefathers who had helped to build the beautiful churches of the Cotswolds. The fund benefited substantially by their response.

Soon after this a memorial fund was opened in memory of one of Box's most faithful worshippers; and this produced over £400. Building could begin.

So on December 8th, 1951, the foundation stone was laid by the Bishop of Gloucester amid much rejoicing and thankfulness, and well within the year the building has been nearly finished.

A local firm gave the great iron stanchions to hold the roof; an old building was bought and the stone brought up to Box, along with the old golden-grey tiles that had withstood the rain and bluster of countless winters; two friends have each given a stained glass window; another the altar as a memorial; others, - also as memorials - the fine old doors. The Beaufort Hunt, when asked for a hunting gate, has offered two. Another local firm has given the fluted aluminium spire, which has been overlaid with pure gold given by a well-wisher in her husband's memory. Like a shaft of light it crowns the little church which on October 25th will be dedicated by the Bishop to the service of God, and which will not only enoble the village but will stand witness to generations yet unborn of the living faith without which it could not have been built.



Box Church

Cotswold Tiles

by Edward Berryman

The finest roofs in all the land are made from Cotswold stone,
And the mason gives each tile a name like children of his own.
By length and breadth the tally runs, by width and depth and size,
And the mason knows them all by name, for he is very wise.

Long Day, Short Day, Moreday amd Muffity,
Lye-byes and Bottomers, each a name receives:
Wivett, Beck, and Cussomes, Cutting, Third and Bachelor,
Smallest under roof-ridge, largest over eaves.

Each tile in its own special place is hung with loving care,
And they weather down the ages in the mellow Cotswold air;
Twenty-six in all there are — the family's not small,
I can but tell you one or two, I can't remember all.

Long Day, Short Day, Moreday amd Muffity,
Lye-byes and Bottomers, each a name receives:
Wivett, Beck, and Cussomes, Cutting, Third and Bachelor,
Smallest under roof-ridge, largest over eaves.



Thomas Tanner
&
An essay on the Gloucestershire Dialect -
Reminiscences of Childhood
by Mr. F. J. Tanner

THOMAS TANNER (1852 -1919)

I have gleaned some information on my maternal grandfather via letters of reference, - the originals of which I still have- and they help to give some chronological order to his early life.

They show that in 1875 he was Second Master at the Royal Grammar School, Hexham in Northumberland. A reference in the handwriting of the Headmaster, Thomas Dobson M.A. reads as follows;-

Mr Tanner has assisted me in the Grammar School Hexham during the present year. He has taught English Grammar, Geography (very good), Latin (Caesar), Reading and Arithmetic to my entire satisfaction. He is a persevering and painstaking teacher and in my opinion competent to conduct a school himself.

He has lived in my house and I have formed a very favourable opinion of his moral character. He is sober, diligent, and studious and he only leaves here because I am leaving.

He then went to St. Albans to teach and in 1876 he arrived at The Shard School in Minchinhampton for on August 14, 1877 the following testimonial was written by Mr J. Thompson who was either Headmaster or owner of the school property. It reads:-

. . . for the last 14 months he has been associated with me in this school: from the beginning of our acquaintance until now he has been a studious steady and persevering young man.

As a teacher Mr Tanner is deserving of liberal support: he is painstaking and thorough in his work: his attainments are varied: his skill in teaching very good.

Mr Tanner has taken classes in history, geography, Latin, Drawing, Chemistry, and French to my entire satisfaction and I am sure he is well qualified to give good instruction in mathematics and German.

In 1881 I found he was in the 1881 Census living in West End, Minch. so it would appear that he was at The Shard School from 1877-1884 when the endowment expired. From then he was employed as foreign correspondent by Mr Dangerfield at Bliss Mills, Chalford.

Here the chronology is difficult to be certain about: his funeral report in the Stroud Journal in 1919 refers to the endowment ending *some 35 years since*. This suggests that 1884 was the end of his schoolmastering life but there is also reference in the same report that he *in addition to the schools mentioned above, rendered service to the late Mr Sibree at Bussage House*.

It must have been at this time that Thomas Tanner became acquainted with “The Chalford Bus”. This, I believe was operated by the G.W.R. before the development of the railcar between Swindon and Gloucester. His connection with Avening shown in his poem about “Avenin’ turmut greens” no doubt came from the fact that his parents and certainly his grandparents came from Avening. There is also connection with Shortwood and Forest Green.

His ability as a linguist - he could read, write, and converse in sixteen languages and was learning to master Russian when he died - meant he was in ready demand in the Stroud valley where the export trade in cloth, wool, walking sticks and machinery saw him fully and continuously employed throughout his working life.

He was still working at his death in 1919, aged 69, as Company Secretary for Sir Alfred Apperley at Apperley, Curtis & Co. Ltd at Dudbridge Mill latterly occupied by Redlers and Cope-Chats.

One of his sons, Cuthbert Tanner followed him into the office at Apperley, Curtis and and on that company’s demise went to Marling & Evans where he finished as Company Secretary & Director.

The following is an extract from an essay on the Gloucestershire Dialect, written by my father, Thomas Tanner, about the 1880's. He lived in the vicinity of Minchinhampton in the Stroud District of Gloucestershire.

Reminiscences of Childhood

I’m a Glastershire son mysulf. I was barned at Noilsuth when I wuz vurry young. I was the youngest of a beg vamily an a sprak un I was too, I can tell ee and noo kid about it. I gid me mother a yep a caddle befoor I was beg enough ta goa to work. I didn’t turn into ot za yarley as some bwoys do, ver I was but a pickedi of a theng anyawst, as thin as skelinton: but was allus on the fistle, allus a. scantin about, playin the devel, runnin auver vyathers garn and spwiling the tyatters an the byins, vlinging stwons down the chimney, gwoin a bird dubbin or pichy powlin down the Rack Hill: zoilin the pagstrow on the watter vein a boout. Me mother did zoy as I did zend her ver neer croiky, and I da naw us a was zum times vein neer gallud ta deauth by the tricks as I did ploy. I have beyen a rum-un Mr. Chairman and I have had a rummy time ont, but I byunt what I have a-bin and I cannt do as I have a done.

I’ll tell ee a tail.

I remember I was gwoin whum one night in the spreng time just a voor the priminausin da come out and I had to gooa auver a tump and drow a thichut vull a muncher bushes. I never knawed a unkerer place and tha did zoy as a gaust had bin zid thur. I veeled al auver queer thuck night. Vust of all I vell mullucks down auver a oont have; that zart a putt ma in a fluster. The raud drow the thickut was a reglar steep pitch and ther was zum

warnut trees a vrow yards below in a vild - I used to pick mushrooms ther and cankers vein me rabbuts - Well just as I got opposite urn um how I vound a ticklin in me nause, I was boun to snisha and the zound zart a echoed queer like and I lucked roun and Egad I zid zummat white under the trees. All at once I cud veel me heart gwoin quop quop quopp an me heer begun to stand up on my yud. I was too afeered ta stop and too flummukst ta move and ther I stuck like a vool. Ater a bit I heered summut snopple and I thought as ater all the gaust might be a cow or zummut teeled up agyunst the tree zoo I got courage and snarled holt of a gurt beg stwon and whopped ihn dab right sploilet at the theng to make ihn move. No soonder had I dunt, then a gurt long strommucks of a vella jumped up an runned ater I, a swerin like mad. Twas a poocher name Crissol, and when I zin ihn vust a was quot down by a rabbut awl. I hut ihn a bit and zart a disturbed ihn like and he'd a warmed my souce purty kind, if a'd a-ketched ma, but I didn't let ihn. My eyes didn't I run vast. I come to a 5 roil geent an I tried ta jump ihn, but me vit got tangled in tha top roil, and I yell vlummuchs across a hoss tother zide and I dwont know which was mooust vrightened, the hoss or mizelf. I know I vell into a nice bunch a vrum stengen ettles, and twas rather teert, I can tell ee, I had ta have me yud tied up in a hangkitcher vein a wick an ver a long time I was very ernery and ee kun bet I didn't vleng at gausts agyun in a hurry.

Thur tha's a purty good specimen of Glos, an if tyunt as good as might be dwnnee be crass wi ma vein I've done me best.

In the process of recording the extract from my father's essay on the Gloucester Dialect, I formed some thoughts of my own about the extract. These I now offer, hoping they may be of interest.

I was the youngest of a family of five boys and one girl, and so far as I can recollect, nothing but common English was spoken in our home, or by our neighbours. But in reading the extract I was surprised how familiar it sounded to my *inner ear*. It seems that in my early days dialect was still considerably in use, and as a normal part of my environment I absorbed much of it without any conscious- commitment to memory.

My grandfather was born in 1813, my father in 1852 and I in 1897; all in the Stroud District of Gloucestershire. My father states that there is no word in the extract that he had not personally heard in conversation. Here I would point out that dialects, as all else, are subject to change. In the nineteenth century the introduction of universal schooling was taking place, extending to many the opportunity of learning to read. This increasing access to common English through reading would, I suggest, tend to its greater use in conversation, and thereby to a consequent disuse of the dialect. My father may have heard words spoken by my grandfather, which had fallen into disuse by the time the extract was written i.e. about 1880. So the extract is possibly a composition using dialect words in use over a period of a century rather than one using a diminished vocabulary of dialect existing in 1880. However that may be, I like to think that in 1880 my recording of the extract would have passed muster with my father and his dialectic friends.

Most of the dialect used is sufficiently similar to the common language equivalent from

which it derives, as to be generally understandable. There are however numerous words of which this cannot be said. I know the meaning of some of these and I list them here.

1	Noilsuth	Nailsworth	9	oont	mole [ant? Ed.]
2	fissle	fidgety		oont have	mole-hill [ant-hill? Ed.]
3	dubbin	throwing	10	cankers	dandelions
4	pichy powlin	rolling over	11	teeled	leant
		and over	12	vrum	firm. Mature
5	ont	of it	13	teert	sharp (in taste or feeling)
6	byunt	am not	14	tyunt	it isn't
7	drow	through	15	dwnnee	don't you
8	thuck	that	16	ihn	it. him

Then there is a group of words with which I am unacquainted but their meaning, I think, is fairly established by their context.

unkerer	unnerving, weird. eery
mullucks	wallop
snisha	sneeze
snopple (onomatopoeic)	e.g. breaking of a twig under foot
sarled	grasped
ornery	unwell, poorly

That leaves some eight words and phrases of doubtful meaning. Here they are given with some attempt to understand them.

Yep a caddle It sounds like a dance sequence. I have some recollection of hearing about an Elizabethan dance in which the male dancer lifted his partner off her feet.

Picked As my father owns to being backward in comparison with other boys and as thin as a skeleton, perhaps "undersized" would do here.

Scantin about "Up to mischief" fits the context.

Gallud The word "gall" has numerous meanings of which "vex" is one. This implies "vexed" as a valid translation for "gallud".

Muncher bushes I do not know of a bush named muncher. [hawthorn? Ed.]

Whopped ihn dab right spoilet Threw it straight at

long strommucks of a fella I have no memory of the word strommucks. Guessing I offer a possible translation as "a tall ungainly chap"

five roil geent. I have no recollection whatever of a "gate" being referred to as a "geent", but a five barred gate is clearly the subject here.

All of which leads to a common English translation as follows;

I am a Gloucestershire man myself. I was born at Nailsworth when I was very young. I was the youngest of a big family, and a *sprack* one I was too I can tell you, and no humbug about it. I lifted my mother off her feet before I was big enough to go to work. I did not start work so early as some boys do, for I was but an undersized lad, anyhow, as thin as a skeleton. But I was always unsettled, always searching around for something to do, and playing the devil. Running over father's garden and spoiling the potatoes and beans; flinging stones down the chimney, flinging at birds, or rolling over and over down

the Rack Hill; sailing the pig trough on the water for a boat. My mother said I sent her - very nearly crazy, and I know that she was sometimes nearly vexed to death by the tricks that I played. I have been a "rum-un"

Mr. Chairman, and I have had a rummy time of it, but I am not what I have been,- and I cannot do as I have done.

I'll tell you a tale.

I remember I was going home one night in the spring time, just before the primroses had come out, and I had to go over a tump and through a thicket full of muncher bushes I never knew so uncanny a place, and it was said that a ghost had been seen there. I felt quite nervous that night. First of all I fell down wallop over a mole-hill: that put me in a fluster. The road through the thicket was a steep incline and there were some walnut trees a few yards below in a field. I used to pick mushrooms there, and dandelions for my rabbits. Well, just as I got opposite them I felt a tickling in my nose. I was bound to sneeze and the sound echoed peculiar, and I looked round and Egad I saw something white under the trees. All at once I could feel my heart going thump thump thump and my hair began to stand up on my head. I was too afraid to stop, and too flummoxed to move, and there I stayed like a fool. After a bit I heard something snap and I thought that after all, the ghost might be a cow or something resting against the tree. So I got courage, and caught hold of a great big stone and threw it straight at the thing to make it move. No sooner had I done so than a great tall ungainly chap jumped up and ran after me, swearing like mad. He was a poacher, name Crissol, and when I first saw him he was squat down by a rabbit hole. I hurt him a bit, and upset him, and he would have beaten me soundly, if he had caught me. But I did not let him. My word, didn't I run fast.

I came to a five barred gate, and I tried to jump over it, but my feet got tangled in the top bar, and I fell wallop across a horse on the other side. I don't know which was the most frightened the horse or myself. I know I fell into a nice bunch of fully grown stinging nettles and it was rather painful I can tell you. I had to have my head tied up in a handkerchief for a week and for a long time I was very poorly. And you can bet I didn't fling at ghosts again in a hurry.

There that, is a pretty good specimen of Glos and if not as good as it might be, don't be cross with me for I have done my best.

Written by F. J. Tanner.
November 1983.

AVENING TURMUT GREENS

I'm just come auver fram Avenin'
Un I wish ee a appy new eer
Un I aup us drow the Christmus time
Ye've ad plenty of biff un a beer.

Un I aup us ee've ad enuff Xmas dump
To stretch yer bloomin' ides
Un vun enuff un laughin'
To make ee split yer zides.

We've got on well at Avenin'
Boath wi vistles and wi vun
We maynt be uz sprack uz you Chalford vauk
But we luk to No. 1.

We kip our own pegs in our sty
Un we makes un vattish too
Un wat wi cabbage un greens un dump
We kun make a rattlin stew.

Ther's zum be vond o' curly greens
Un zum o' Brussels Sprout
But them's a zart o' tasteless stuff
I dwont keer much about.

Ther's cauliflower and cabbages
Ull do us good betweenes
But uv ahl the greenstuff in the wurd
Gie I zum turmut greens.

I used to pick un cook um
Bevoer I zid me teens
I'm auver zixty now but still
I love me turmut greens.

One dwunt want much toots to um
One dwunt want biff nor veal
Zum pepper un zalt un vinegar
Un one hun make a meal.

Wy ther yunt a dish in aal the wurd
Noo, nat the very Queen's
Ta byett a good substantial dish
O' wum bred Avenin' greens.

An dwunt we like to zee um when
The sproutin' time is come
An watch un how tha da shout un grow
Za tender un za vrum.

Tis harvest in the Springtime
The best ov aal the lot
When we've got greens a plenty
Ta vill the vamily pot.

We biles a lump o' bak'n
Wi praps a dump or two
An we put the greens in last ov aal
Uz tha dwunt take long ta do.

Un when ther turned out smaukin hot
Then I, me wife un weans
We just zit down un buckle in
To a dish o' turmut greens.

An dwunt the young uns smack their lips
an dwun em ex var mooer
An dwunt my wife luk appy while
I kips a winkin to'er

Ver well 'er knows az them zame greens
Ull kip the young uns zound
We dwunt want doctor's physic much
When turmut greens abound.

Un the time's a-comm round me bwoys
Un me hearts gwoine pit-a-pat
Ta thank o'them zame turmut green
Uz I shall zoon be at.

Ther's every zine o' plenty un
we know uz ther'll bezeens
Un I'll ex ee up to Avenin'
Just ta taste our turmut greens.

Thomas Tanner