

## MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

### ANNUAL BULLETIN NUMBER 2

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## A REVOLT AGAINST THE RATES IN MINCHINHAMPTON

The Minchinhampton Vestry at successive meetings on April 24th and May 1st in 1758 noted that there had been little response to their notices in Church of a meeting for a new and regular assessment for the Poor Rate; they adjourned again to May 10th. At that meeting it was ordered that a notice should "be fairly written and affixed to the Church door the following Sunday" and that the following notice "should be read by the Clerk after Evening Sermon."

"Whereas at a Vestry held the 10th of May last for altering the Poor's rate after several Vestries called for this purpose a General Rate was unanimously agreed upon for making the same upon an 'equitable and just equality as near as may be according to the annual Value of every Parishioner's Property in Lands, Houses, Mills and Woods liable to be rated in this Parish.

"Therefore all the said Parishioners for the more speedy and easie completing the said Rate are desired to give in the true annual Value of their respective Estates as near as may be to the Officers at a meeting to be held for receiving such Information on Friday 19th for accomplishing the same."

What was the reason for this? To find out it is necessary to go back several years into the history of Minchinhampton Poor Rate.

The method of assessment for rates in this Parish was a very unusual one. Each rate-payer - 87 for the Town, 97 for the Tithing of Box, Amberley and Rodborough, and 37 for Hyde and Chalford - was assessed at a monthly figure. Thus Samuel Sheppard, Lord of the Manor, was assessed at 9/7d a month; Thomas Pinfod, a clothier at 1/1d a month; William Cook, proprietor of the White Hart Inn, at 8d a month; John Hill, butcher, at 1d a month; and so on down to the small cottagers, such as John Key, at 1/2d a month. When therefore the Overseers had decided how much money they needed for the care of the poor during the coming year - Easter to Easter - and had obtained the approval of the Vestry, they set a rate of so many months. In 1735, when the newly obtained workhouse at the far end of what is now Chapel Lane, was coming into use, they set a rate of 82 months.

Thereafter for the next eighteen years the demand varied between 69 months and 90 months, with two high exceptions of 100 months in 1740 and 118

months in 1741; these higher rates being due partly to an increase in the workhouse account to over £270; but also to an increase in the number of those being given relief of rates because of poverty and of those poor whose rents were paid to their landlords by the overseers.

But in the 1750s the rate demands increased rapidly - 114 months in 1754, 114 months in 1755, 150 months in 1756 and 120 months in 1757 - with the workhouse account going up to £430 in 1756 because of the increase in the numbers of poor. In August 1756 the Vestry approved out-payments amounting to £8/15/0d a month to 46 poor, mainly elderly women and widows with children. In June of that year they ruled that in order to “defray the necessary Expenses” for the upkeep of the poor in the workhouse now “much more numerous than of late they were” the Overseer should pay monthly the Governor of the Workhouse “the several sums following” the Town Overseer £15, the Tithing Overseer £9, the Chalford Overseer £6. Even so, in October, they had to order an extraordinary one month’s payment to the Governor for the “immediate and necessary support of the poor.”

Discontent was beginning to show in 1754 when the Overseers recorded that they had not collected rates from seven people, among them John Hill, the butcher and Peter Perrett the Overseer in 1734. By 1757 the total of the defaulting rate-payers had reached 31, several of them quite substantial e.g. John Fowler a mercer, rated at 3d a month and therefore due to pay £1-10-0 that year; Daniel Keen, also assessed at 3d and an Overseer in 1741, Samuel Remington of the Tithing who should have paid £3. In 1758 with the rate again set at 120 months there was widespread nonpayment. Robert Harar, Overseer for the Town, whose demand came to £321, showed £139/1/1d. not collected, Joshua Thomas for the tithing failed to collect £72/1/6d out of a total of £203/12/6d, whilst John Teale for Chalford collected only £34/18/4d out of a demand for £98/10/-. By now, those not paying spread through the range of ratepayers. Samuel Sheppard paid £57/10/- in 1757, nothing in 1758. John Blackwell, a clothier in Chalford paid nothing - he was rated at 9d a month. Others paying nothing ranged from Thomas Feuster, a breeches maker rated at 4d, John Hill at 1d and William Smith a clothworker, at ½d.

The Vestry tried, unavailingly to stop the revolt, and then on 10th May, with 12 members present, prepared the notice to be read in Church. At the same time they tried to ease the Individual burden by extending the rate areas and making liable to rates

- a) lands of a yearly value of 20/- to be rated at ½d a month.
- b) ½d a month on houses and mills of a yearly value of 40/-.
- c) ½d a month on every four acres of woodland. (This was to cause trouble later on.)

On May 19th the Vestry met again, with 19 members now, and recorded that “very few of the Landholders have complied with the said Public Request” to declare the value of their Estate. They therefore adjourned once more to May 25th in order then “to choose and nominate proper persons to view and judge the annual value of each man’s Estate”. So on that date 35 leading parishioners were appointed to determine “each persons annual profit in Land, Houses, Mills and Woods” and were urged to begin work on May 29th.

Of these 35 Gentlemen, headed by Samuel Sheppard and Rev. Philip Sheppard, 14 had previously been Overseers, one, Edward Clutterbuck, was an attorney; three were substantial landowners like Samuel. Heiron; six were clothiers such as Samuel Peach and Daniel Deverell; four were tradesmen such as the ironmonger Robert Pool and the mercer John Fowler; while one, John Clift, had been Sheriff’s Officer.

But, on May 30th Quarter Sessions quashed the 1758 rate, and ordered that payers were either to have their money returned or to have it allowed against future rates. By now the shortage of cash in the Overseer’s hands was beginning to show. Instead of receiving the ordered £35 a month, the Governor of the workhouse received in June £23/8/8d, in July £28/19/- and in August £19/10/8d; while from June no out-payments were made to the poor. There are no records of course, but one wonders the effect on widow Clark of the Tithing with five children who lost 10/- a month, on John Stratford, blind, and Ann Mellard, 90 years old, both of Chalford who lost 4/- a month and on Richard Casey, bedridden, of Minchinhampton with his 80 year-old wife who lost 7/- a month. Those are only a few of the 46 in receipt of out-payment whose lives, until the Poor Rate was settled, must have been one of miserable anxiety.

And they had a seemingly endless wait. The Vestry did not meet again until July 24th and promptly adjourned to the 26th and again to the 29th. This suggests that the ‘commissioners’ were finding it difficult to get the information they sought, On November 20th the Vestry held a public meeting in the Crown Inn and agreed for “avoiding further difficulties and delays” that

“the following seven be Chosen as a Committee for making and settling the said Rate upon the most equitable and just Proportion as they judge shall be most reasonable”. The seven were Thomas Deverell, Nathaniel Perks, Samuel Whitmore, Samuel Heaven, Joseph Mayor, James Chambers, junior, and John Clift.

Now a solution was in sight. On January 15th 1759 the charges for lands were agreed. On April 4th the Vestry accepted the Quarter Sessions order and at Easter 1759 the new Overseers, Thomas Saunders, Daniel Day and John Isles, levied a rate now no longer at a monthly value, but at 3/6d in the £. It is difficult to assess the impact of the charge on individual ratepayers. The number liable to rates increased - the Town list shows 25 new names. Some paid more - the Rev. Philip Sheppard, assessed at 7/3d a month paid £43/10/- in 1757, £43 in 1759 and a further £5/11/7d in 1759. John Blackwell, assessed at 9d paid £4/10/-- in 1757, nothing in 1758 and £6/7/4d in 1759; while John Fowler assessed at 3d paid £1/10/- in 1757, nothing in 1758 and only 9/7d in 1759.

So the revolt was over. But the vestry was not clear of trouble. In April 1759 Samuel Sheppard appealed to quarter Sessions that his rate was too high and that his woods should not be chargeable. In July 1760 the verdict came. The charge of £13/2/6d on his houses and tenements was too high and should be £9/7/6d and no more. As to the woods, Sessions found he had 250 acres of woods, with no coppice; much beech was cut for firewood at 23/- to 26/- a cord; and such wood was 30 to 80 years old and 10 to 20 ins, square. It was sold also for gun stocks, saddle trees, cardboard and building and pigs ran in the woods. They found therefore that the woods were not liable to Poor Rate by law and the Vestry lost £11/1/-.

CYRIL TURK

Sources:

Minchinhampton Overseers Accounts  
1734 - 1759 GRO 217a OV 2/1.  
Minchinhampton Vestry Minutes  
1756 - 1771 GRO 217a VE 2/5

## THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The Local History Collection, housed in Minchinhampton Library, is growing steadily through donations from local residents. As well as various documents, pamphlets, newspaper cuttings and photographs, there are now several original paintings of local scenes - should we be looking for a local museum?

One of the sources of very varied information is the set of Parish magazines. These are on permanent loan from the Parish Church, and cover the period 1878 to 1935. Then there's a gap till 1956, after which there is almost continuous run to the current issue.

It is impossible to illustrate all the facets of local history to be found in these magazines; the problem is that one can spend hours being side-tracked from one item to another, but as a couple of examples:

Education There are reports on teachers, examinations, standards of various subjects and behaviour of the pupils at the Parish School, in most issues.

In 1881 an evening class was proposed at Box for “men who may feel disposed to improve their scholarship. Instruction will be given in writing and Arithmetic.”

Health It is noticeable that nearly every month during the 1380's the Burial Register shows at least one infant.

In 1923, the Nursing Association bought a cottage on Well hill for the District Nurse. They were able to raise £100, but had to borrow the remaining £150 for its purchase. They therefore appealed for an increase in the Family Subscriptions, as those of the previous year had not reached a TOTAL of £50. During that year the nurse had made 3,388 visits!

For hours of serious research or instructive entertainment, I strongly recommend the Parish Magazines! The bad news is that they cannot be removed from my office; the good news is that my office is warm and comfortable and any member of the Local History Group (or other interested person) is very welcome to settle down in there - I very seldom use it!

If there is any person who is interested in indexing, and would like to spend a

couple of mornings a week doing this for the Local History Collection, I'd be delighted to hear from them.

JANET FRASER

## THE 1851 CENSUS

Amberley Parochial School now had the 1851 census on computer disk. The Headmaster, Mr. Saunders, will be only too pleased to lend this to anyone who has the wherewithal to use it. The Census will also be available at Stroud Library shortly on microfiche.

JANET FRASER

## EDUCATION IN MINCHINHAMPTON

Early Beginnings The first schoolmaster was recorded at Minchinhampton in 1572 and in 1594 the Curate was teaching a school in the Chancel of the Church. In 1699 two Charity Schools were founded for boys, and another for girls in 1759.

Educational Charities Sometime before 1697 Nathaniel Cambridge deposited £100 in the hands of Trustees to purchase lands for the establishment and support of a free school for boys born in Minchinhampton and Woodchester. In 1693 the estate known as the Manor of Seinckley (or Seyntcley, corrupted later to St.Ltoe or St. Cloe) was bought from Nathaniel Riddler of Edgeworth by these Trustees, for the purpose of a Charity School. The house was the master's residence and schoolroom. The boys, aged from 6 to 16 years, were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic or accounting. The Rev. Richard Bond became the first Master at St. Loe's in 1699, and was succeeded by his son Nathaniel. Joseph Hort was Master until 1813, and at the time of his death the Trustees insisted that the number of private pupils should be restricted and introduced the Bell System and courses to include Practical Mathematics. In 1826 attendance was about 30 boys.

By a scheme under the Endowed Schools Act of 1888, the school was to be conducted as a Secondary School, with tuition fees of £6 to £28 a year, with the

exception of ten scholarship boys. In 1908 the school was closed.

By deed dated 21st January 1698 Ursula Tooke granted to Nathaniel Cambridge and John Yeats, 20 acres of Arable Land and £80, of which £8 a year was to be spent on keeping at school six poor boys from Minchinhampton, to be taught to read, write and cast accounts, and to be brought up in the Protestant religion.

Henry King, in his Will of 1698 left the residue of his Estate, with the profits to be spent on the salary of a schoolmaster who was to teach eight poor boys to read, write and cast accounts; to be taught with them were the six boys of the Tooke Charity.

In 1721 a school was established at Hyde for teaching poor children and the Tooke and King Charities were used to support this school, known as the Endowed School. In 1818 the school taught 14 boys and 8 girls. It received £28/12/- from the Tooke Charity and £32 from the King Charity and £23 from Charities founded by John Yeats and Benjamin Cambridge. By 1826 there were just the 8 boys of the King Charity and 6 paid for by the Tooke Charity.

Other Benefactors Elizabeth Coxe bequeathed £50 for a school to teach poor children the Principles of Religion. This was secured by Thomas Stephens of Gloucester and by Will dated 1721 he devised in Trust the tenement called Nibletts with an adjacent Close. 50/- of the rent was to pay a schoolmistress and the remainder was to maintain the school. In 1818 the Endowment formed the basis of a Dame School which all might attend and in 1825 it was a Sunday School. The teacher was paid £6/10/- from the Poor Rate and a further £2/2/- from School Close was added to the Parish Stock. By 1827 the school had lapsed and Coxe and Stephens Charity was not applied to any established school. The poor preferred to send their children to David Ricardo's School in Minchinhampton.

In 1759 Rebecca Vick of Clifton settled a rent charge of £5/4/- to pay a poor woman to teach the girls of Minchinhampton to read. The Charity continued to 1826, but it is not known how long the school actually survived.

From the late 18th Century to the early 20th Century Hyde Court was the home of the Beale family. While Dorothea Beale lived there, substantial alterations were made, including a private school.

David Ricardo Minchinhampton School In 1816 a school on the Lancastrian System was started in the Market House by David Ricardo, who supported it until his death in 1823. About 250 boys and girls were being taught in 1818, when the system in the girls section was changed to that advocated by the National Society. In 1833 the school had 270 pupils, when it was supported by school pence. Two years later the boys section was moved to Tetbury Street (the present No. 33) where Mr. Fenning Parke took over as master. When the girls section applied for a grant in 1848, the greater part of its income was provided by the younger David Ricardo and the Rector, Charles Whateley. Both the sections of the school were apparently replaced by the new National School built in 1868 on the site of the old Manor House. In 1885 the average attendance was 290 mixed and infant pupils, including 14 boys and 15 girls supported out of the proceeds of the Parish Educational Charities.

In 1911 as the Minchinhampton Parochial School it had an average attendance of 268, falling steadily to 180 by 1936. A new building was occupied in 1969, and by 1973 there was an attendance of 422.

David Ricardo - Amberley and Brimscombe In 1836 David Ricardo started a school at Amberley in schoolrooms in the basement of the new Church. In 1848 the attendance was 422 boys and girls, supported by Pence Subscriptions and collections, but in 1871 when it applied for a grant the school was teaching only 89. The school moved to a new building as a Jubilee Memorial in 1887. In 1911, as the Amberley Parochial School it had an average attendance of 113, falling to 65 in 1936, but 100 in 1973.

In 1840 a Church School was established in Brimscombe by David Ricardo and by 1885 there were 120 boys and girls attending. In 1911 it was called the Brimscombe Church of England School and had 107 mixed and infant pupils, 115 in 1936 but only 80 in 1973.

Small Schools In 1826 an Infant School was established by voluntary contributions, in the Parish, possibly in Well Hill. By 1833 it was teaching 57 children. In 1870 an Infant School was established in Littleworth and eight years later another was founded at Box. It had 28 pupils in 1885, but soon closed.

Beaudesart Preparatory School was formed in 1918. It was housed in a large house called "Highlands", west of Box, which had been the principal residence

of the area in the 19th Century. By 1973 there were 120 pupils.

Sunday Schools In 1786 the Church Sunday School started and 210 children attended in 1833.

A dissenting Sunday School with over 100 children had been started in 1818 and by 1838 there were three dissenting Sunday Schools. Two with 185 and 160 children were the Wesleyans of Brimscombe and Littleworth respectively, and the third was the Baptists, with 170 children. However, it was decided that the members were too poor to establish a Dissenting Day School or British School.

PAT AND MIKE HOPKINS

Footnote Pat and Mike have now moved to Leicestershire with their family, and managed to put together this account in the last few weeks of their stay here. They have passed on a wealth of information from the School Log Books and other sources, so if anyone would like to carry their research further perhaps they would like to contact one of the Local History Committee.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1984 - 5**

Mr. Cyril Turk - Chairman  
Mrs. Sue Wood - Secretary  
Mrs. Diana Wall - Treasurer  
Mrs. Pat Hopkins  
Mr. Chris Brown

## PROGRAMME OF PAST EVENTS

- 1984 Nov. Commencement of SPAB Barn Survey  
Nov. Informal members' Get-Together  
1985 March Visit to Corinium museum  
April P. Griffin - 'Gleanings from Newspapers'  
July Consolidation of Churchyard Survey material.  
Sept. Display at Local History Conference in Gloucester.  
Oct. A.G.M. L. Wa1rond - 'Mills of the Stroud Valleys'

## THE CHURCHYARD SURVEY

The object of this piece of work is to record the monuments in the Parish Churchyard. Other parishes in the locality have been recorded by the local Women's institutes, but this was not the case for Minchinhampton. Enquiries showed that the whereabouts of the Church Map of the graveyard were unknown, so it was felt that the undertaking of a memorial survey would be a useful exercise for the Local History Group.

Some of the benefits of a completed survey, of which it is hoped to produce two copies, one for the Record Office and one to lodge in Minchinhampton, will be apparent to the amateur historian. Family history could more easily be traced through an alphabetical index, the various types of memorial lend themselves to more detailed analysis, several mason's work could be researched, and the survey sheds light on.

Work on the survey commenced in the summer of 1984, after a successful Local History Meeting at the Church. Willing individuals or groups were allocated a section of the older part of the Churchyard i.e. to the south of the avenue. They recorded inscription, type of tomb, size etc. in a rough form, and also produced simple sketch maps and listings for their area. By July of 1985 much of the groundwork had been achieved, despite a vary wet season! It was decided that thought should be given to the finished presentation.

The Local History Group visited the exhibition of the W.I. Surveys, held in the Corinium museum in March 1985. Many approaches had been taken, but it was felt that the most effective was the use of recording cards from the Institute of British Archaeology. This method has now been adopted for Minchinhampton..

Current (Oct. 1985) work is the completion of these cards.

A Local History Conference is held in Gloucester in September of every year, and in 1985 the Minchinhampton Local History Group were able to mount an exhibit of the Survey in its on-going form. This was greeted with much interest, and enabled some 'spin-off' work in the form of research into the Mayer and Peach families, and the use of techniques such as rubbings and photography. In order to reach a wider audience, the exhibit is also to be shown at Minchinhampton Library during the week of the A.G.M.

Once the Survey is complete, with map and index, perhaps our members could turn their attention to the Baptist Burial Ground, in this area of strong non-conformist traditions.

DIANA WALL