

# **MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP**

## **ANNUAL BULLETIN NUMBER 17**

**2000**

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## **MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP COMMITTEE 1999/2000**

Mr. John Cooper – Honorary President  
Mrs. Diana Wall – Chairman  
Dr. Hugh Kearsey – Vice Chairman  
Mrs. Ann Chew - Treasurer & Secretary  
Mr. Jim Doel  
Mr. Stan Dyer  
Mr. Brian Keen

### **PROGRAMME OF PAST EVENTS**

1998	November	A.G.M. & “Local Radio” - Mr. Ivor Ward-Davies
2000	January	“Settlement Records” - Mr. John Loosley
	March	“It started with Moses” - Mr. J. V. Smith
	May	“Hampton Windmill” - Dr. Hugh Kearsey
	July	Guided Walk Around Amberley - Mr. Roy Close
	September	“Minchinhampton Houses” - Local History Group Members
	October	Minchinhampton’s Millennium - Exhibition at the Market House
	November	A.G.M. followed by “Social Life c.1910” - Mr. Howard Beard

The Minchinhampton Local History Group has been compiling a record of life and places in the area in the year 2000. Many of the photographs were displayed at the Exhibition in October. The intention is to make them available on CD ROM.

Also two booklets entitled “*Minchinhampton Life and Times, Part 1: History and Part 2: Places, School, Organisations and people*” have been published containing some of the significant articles from previous Bulletins. These are available for sale at £2.50 each.

# The Sheppard Family History

*A history of the Sheppard Family of Minchinhampton was written by Mary Sheppard in 1892.*



## Preface

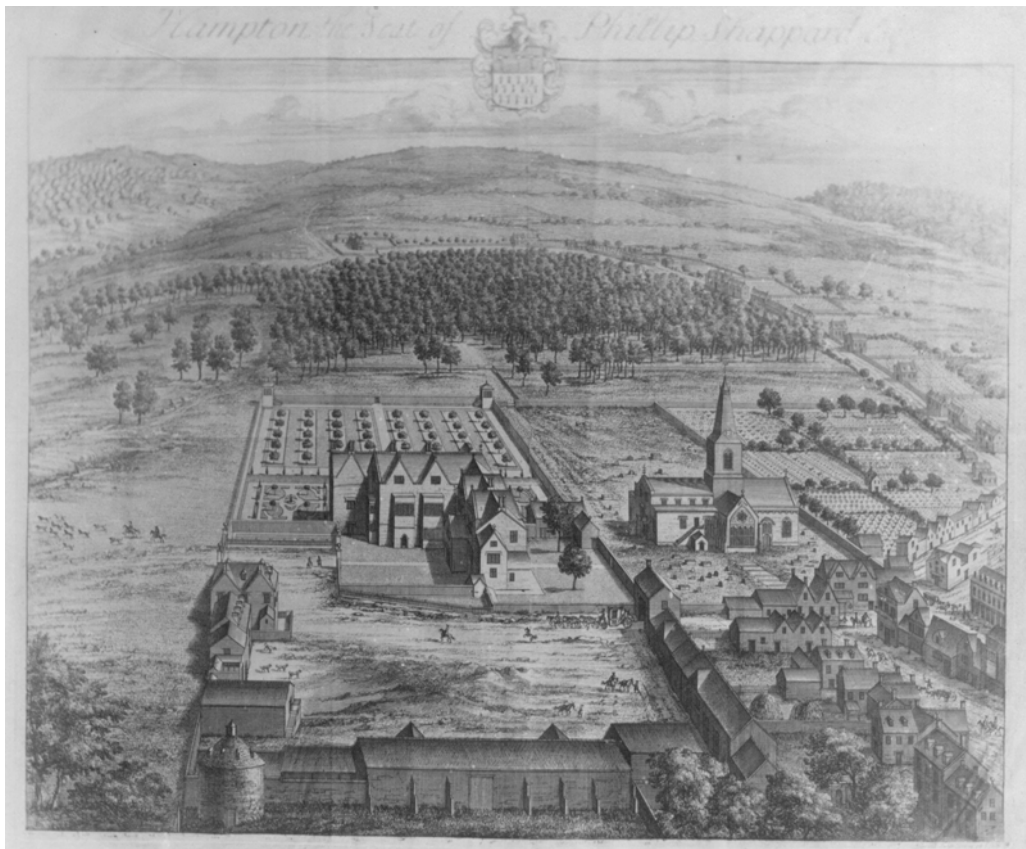
When our dear Mother was taken from us in 1885 the idea suggested itself to me that I would compile a short family history from the Diaries she had kept with much perseverance and faithfulness for upwards of half a century. When I began the work I found I had much interesting material in my possession referring to events anterior to the time when she began to write and I therefore thought it best to “begin from the beginning”.

For the early records of our family I had to turn chiefly to County Histories, while old letters & papers furnished me with much that was interesting in the early life of our Parents until such time as our dear Mother took up the pen.

I wish some abler hand than mine could have undertaken the work, but I have done my best, & as the work to me has been one of love & duty, I hope my Brothers & Sisters will accept it as it is, & that the rising generation will read with respectful interest the simple record of the lives of those who have gone before, & with whom they are connected by the tie of blood & affection.

*Elizabeth Sheppard*  
May 18<sup>th</sup> 1892.

Elizabeth Sheppard                      May 18<sup>th</sup> 1892  
26 Marlborough Buildings, Bath



The Sheppards of Gloucestershire descended from a family of that name seated at Possmarch or Peasemarch near Rye in Sussex, which Manor they had purchases from Lord Montague. Other branches of the family were settled at Tenterden in Kent, and Battersea near London. About the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, William Sheppard, who married Margaret, only Daughter and Heiress of Francis Codrington of Frampton on Severn, migrated to Horsley in Gloucestershire and founded the Gloucestershire branch of the family. The Codringtons had married into the old family of Clifford, of Frampton, of which the celebrated Fair Rosamund was a daughter, and we read that a mill and lands in the parish of Frampton were given to the Nuns of Godstow, by Walter Clifford to pray for the souls of Margaret the Wife and Rosamund his Daughter, the latter of whom lay buried in the Choir of the Nunnery of Godstow in Oxfordshire. William Sheppard was succeeded in the family Estates by his son Philip [d. 1623] who left three sons, William of Hempstead, John of Tetbury, and Samuel of Minchinhampton, and one Daughter, Rebecca, Wife of Charles Hellier of Horsley. William was married four times, and John twice, but nothing is known of their descendants. The third son, Samuel, purchased the Manor of Minchinhampton and Avening from the Trustees of Lord Windsor in the year 1651. He married Isabel, Daughter of George Worth of Buckingham, Wilts, a sister of one of his Brother William's Wives, and died March 11<sup>th</sup> 1672 aged 70. The issue of this marriage was two sons and two daughters. Samuel the Elder, died young, and Philip the younger, a Justice of the Peace for the County of Gloucester, and Barrister-at-law, inherited his Father's estates. He married first Elizabeth Daughter of Sir Gamahel Capel of Rockwood Hall, Essex, and secondly Frances, Daughter of Francis Lord Seymour of Trowbridge, and a Relict of William Ducie the first, and only Viscount Downes. She

died without issue and was buried at Minchinhampton. The Capels were descended from Sir Richard de Capel, Lord Justice of Ireland A.D. 1261. Some time in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Sir John Capel was Chaplain to Lionel Duke of Clarence, which Duke gave him a girdle of gold to make a Chalice in the memory of him to pray for his soul. The family had large possessions in Suffolk at Stoke Neyland and Capel Stanton. William Capel, who was Lord Mayor of London, A.D. 1503, was knighted at the coronation of Henry VII A.D. 1485. His son, "Sir Giles" was knighted for his valour at the siege of Tournay and the Battle of the Spurs. Sir Edward, son of Sir Giles, married Anne Pelham and had issue Sir Henry, who married Catherine daughter of John Manners Earl of Rutland and it was the Daughter of their Grandson, Sir Gamahel, who married Philip Sheppard.



From the Elder Son of Sir Henry Capel the Earl of Essex are descended, Philip died in 1713 aged 82, and was buried at Minchinhampton. Atkyns in his history of Gloucestershire [Ed. 1768 p.236] says of him "*Philip Sheppard is the present Lord of the Manor of Minchinhampton and keeps a Court Leet. He has a large house near the Church, and a spacious grove of high trees in a park adjoining to it which is seen at a great distance. He hath a very large Estate in this and other parishes within this County*" The Rectory of Avening was also in his Gift and was presented by him in the year 1685 to the Revd George Bull afterwards Archdeacon of Llandaff and Bishop of St. Davids. The following extract is from the life of Bishop Bull by Robert Nelson page 348 - 477. "*It was in the year 1685 when Mr. Bull was presented to the Rectory of Avening in Gloucestershire, a large parish about eight miles in compass, the income whereof is £200 a year*" [His predecessor was The Revd Robert Frampton D.D. Bishop of the Diocese] The Patron of it is Philip Sheppard of Minchinhampton Esqr. A very worthy gentleman, eminent for his probity, sobriety and charity, and for his great usefulness in his country for he not only administers justice with great impartiality, but endeavoureth

*to reconcile all quarrels and dissensions among his neighbours before they break into a flame and before his neighbours lose their money and their temper in legal prosecutions, in which commonly they both suffer. It happened that when this living became vacant, Mr. Sheppard, Mr. Bull, with some other friends, were at Astrop Wells in Northamptonshire drinking these mineral waters for the advantage of their health, and they were even together with some other Gentlemen when Mr. Sheppard received the news of it upon which he acquainted the company that he had a very good living to dispose of, and reckoned up all those qualifications he expected in the person upon whom he should bestow it which so exactly agreed to Mr. Bull's character that everyone present plainly perceived that Mr. Sheppard designed to determine that preferment in Mr. Bull's favour, but he had too much humility to make the application to himself, and therefore took not the least notice of it. Some time after Mr. Bull withdrew with some of the company to walk in the garden in which opportunity Mr. Sheppard took to declare that he had on purpose given those hints that Mr. Bull might be encouraged to apply to him for it, but finding his modesty was too great to make that step, he was resolved to offer it to him who had more merit to deserve it, than assurance to ask for it, which accordingly he did as soon as Mr. Bull returned into the room, which he received with all those acknowledgements which were due for so good a living, to so generous a patron."*

Mr. Bull had not been long at Avening before he was preferred to the Archdeaconry of Landaff by Archbishop Sancroft, and was installed Archdeacon June 20 1686. He was consecrated Bishop of St. David's in Lambeth Chapel April 29<sup>th</sup> 1705, when in his 71<sup>st</sup> year, and died Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> 1709. Philip Sheppard had by his first Wife three daughters, two of whom died young, the remaining one married Robert Pleydell of Amney Crucis Gloucestershire, and two sons, Samuel of Frampton, & Philip of Colesbourne. The latter, who was born in 1663, and was buried at Colesbourne, married a Daughter of White Esq. of Didmarton, and had, with other issue, John who was living at Colesbourne in 1770. He sold the Manor of Colesbourne in that year to Francis Eyre Esq., who in his turn sold it to John Elwes Esq., in whose family it remains. John married first, Rachel, Daughter of Powell Esq. of Mandage Park near Malmesbury, which no doubt the place known now is Mandith's Farm, about two miles from Malmesbury.

He appears to have had no children by his first wife but by his second, whose maiden name was White, he had a son John of whom nothing is known with certainty, tho there was some idea that he emigrated to America 1791. To return to Samuel Sheppard the eldest son of Philip of Hampton, by his Wife Anne, only daughter & Heiress of Thomas Webb of Wallbridge near Stroud, (who died 1734 aged 70 & was buried at Hampton) he had six sons and three daughters. "This lady probably brought a considerable fortune to her Husband as in the next generation the family occupied an important position in the county." Three of the sons and one Daughter died unmarried. William the sixth Son is described as of "Hackney Middx" "Blackwell Hall factor". Philip the fifth Son became Rector of the parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening, both valuable benefices, and there is a tablet to his memory in the Chancel of Hampton Church which states that he died December 18<sup>th</sup> 1768, having been Rector of the parish for 49 years. He built the Rectory house at Hampton, and planted an avenue of lime trees. Mr. Playne of

Longfords Gloucestershire has a fine portrait of him in cassock and bands with full grey wig. In a letter dated 1765 concerning the sale of the next presentation to the two livings it is said of him "T'is well known that the present Incumbent, who is an easy gentleman, doth not make the most of them . . . he had some time ago a stroke of the palsy, by which he has been lame ever since . . . being unable to do duty himself he keeps three curates to two of whom he gives £40 per annum each, and to the other £30 ! The parsonage house, where the present Incumbant lives, was new built by him, and is as pleasant, neat and convenient a dwelling as most in Gloucestershire." He married Mary daughter of Knight Esq. of Eastington, who died without issue in 1753, aged 49 years. Samuel, elder brother of Philip, inherited the family Estates, and was a Justice of the Peace and High Sheriff of the County in 1730. He married Anne, daughter of Edward Darrell Esq. of Rockhampton Surrey, who died December 29th 1749 aged 58. The family of Dayrel or Darrell was established in England by one of the Companions in arms of the Conqueror, and the name of its founder appears in the roll of Battle Abbey. Samuel died on the 20th December 1749; on his tombstone in Hampton Churchyard there is this epitaph, and if he possessed all the virtues it ascribes to him, he must indeed have been a remarkable man.



*"In memory of Samuel Sheppard Esq., 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 his dealings, without partiality without hypocrisy. 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 Dec. 20th 1749 in the 63rd year of his age."*

He left two Sons, and two Daughters, Samuel the elder son married Jane daughter of Thomas Whorwood Esq. of Holton Oxfordshire, who died in 1770 aged 51, and was buried at Hampton. The issue of this marriage was six Daughters, and two sons (twins) who died in infancy. In default of male issue, on the death of Samuel the estates devolved on his Brother Edward, who married Sarah daughter of Charles Coxe Esq. of Lower Lippiat.

The Cocks, or Coxes, were an old Herefordshire family, but removed to Kempley on the borders of Gloucestershire. Charles born 1658, Sarah Sheppard's Grandfather, was a Welsh Judge. He sat in many parliaments for the City of Gloucester, and the Borough of Cirencester. He married Catherine daughter of Thomas Chamberlain of Oddington Gloucestershire and Wanborough Wilts, by his Wife Catherine daughter & heiress of Robert Treme of Lippiatt Hall in the County of Gloucester. The Chamberlyns were a very ancient family, the name having been "de Tankerville". Count John de Tankerville held the post of Lord Chamberlain to Henry 1st, as did his descendants to King Stephen and Henry II, and hence the change of name. Catherine Coxes great great Grandmother, the 3rd Wife of Sir Thomas Chamberlayne, was a Sister of Antony Monk's of Potheridge, Grandfather of Monk Duke of Albermarle. The Tremes who had owned Lippiat "many"



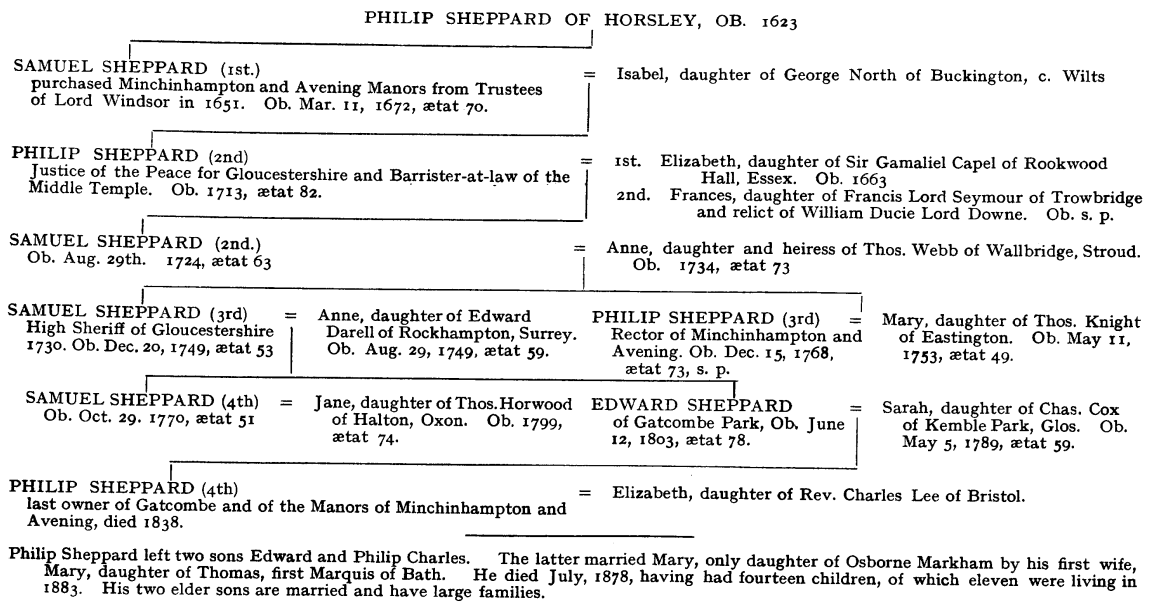
hundred years, were an ancient family, the last of the name, Thomas, buried at Bisley 1657 had three daughters, two of whom married into the Chamberlayne family, but none left issue except the eldest Catherine whose Daughter & Heiress Catherine married the Welsh Judge.

The estates of the Sheppard family at this time as is shown by rent rolls and accounts in

the possession of Mr. Playne of Longfords, were of considerable extent, and had very much increased in value. Edward, therefore, on coming into the property appears to have considered the old Manor House at Minchinhampton to be no longer suited to the requirements of his family, and accordingly built a new house at Gatcombe in a beautiful situation about a mile from Hampton. This house, described by Fosbrooke in his County history as “the elegant modern Seat of the Sheppard family” is a handsome looking building with grey stone front seen on the left hand side of the road leading from Nailsworth to Avening. It is not known how long a time was occupied in the erection of it, nor the cost, but judging from documents in Mr. Playne’s possession, it must have involved the owner in considerable difficulties. At any rate on the death of Edward Sheppard in 1805, at the age of 78, the property was deeply mortgaged. The next heir was his only son, Philip, our Grandfather, who was born in 1767, and married in the parish Church of St. Augustine’s Bristol 17.. Elizabeth daughter of the Rev. Charles Lee D.D. & his Wife Frances Newman Lee, daughter of Henry Dampier freeman of the City of Bristol. Our Grandfather was a good natured easy going man, very extravagant, and with great task for sport and expensive amusements. He raised a troop of Yeomanry in 1795, the equipment and maintenance of which cost him a large amount of money. He also kept a pack of fox hounds at Gatcombe, which were not looked on with favour by his Father if we may judge from an entry in a pocket book bearing date 1790. *“Phil talks of parting with ye hounds. I hope he may continue in ye resolution”*. On his accession to the property attempts were made to free it from encumbrances by the sale of the advowson of the Rectory of Avening and the next presentation to the Rectory of Hampton. The sums realized however fell far short of the amount required and his circumstances went from bad to worse. He endeavoured to stave off ruin by raising money on the mortgage and by selling portions of the property.

At this time the Manor House at Minchinhampton, the old home of our family, was sold and pulled down by the purchaser. At last the crash came, and in 1813 the Manor of Avening with all the property in that parish, was purchased by Mr. William Playne of Longfords, and the following year 1814 the Hampton Estate was sold to Mr. David Ricardo. With £10,000 of the purchase money our Grandfather purchased land at Almondsbury belonging to a Mr. Frampton and commenced building a house, but before two years had elapsed he had run through his money and mortgaged his land which soon after was bought from the mortgagee by Mr. Ludlow the then Recorder of Bristol. After this his ruin was complete, he left England and resided at Dunkerque.

## PEDIGREE OF SHEPPARD OF MINCHINHAMPTON AND AVENING



*The books consisted of two hand written folio volumes bound in original leather. They were loaned to us by the present owner Mrs. Carolyn Causton who allowed us to copy the pages relevant to Minchinhampton. Most of the pictures in this article were taken from the history.*

*The history continues to record the fortunes of the family, but no more has been transcribed.*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MINCHINHAMPTON BAPTIST CHURCH

by Stan Dyer

### ROOTS

During the mid 18th century, probably as a result of George Whitfield's preaching on the common, a group of nonconformist converts began to meet in cottages and some became members of Shortwood Baptist Church whose minister was the Rev Benjamin Francis. Mr Francis was almost wholly responsible for the erection of the Baptist Meeting House in Workhouse Lane (now Chapel Lane), Minchinhampton, including the raising of the necessary funds, and travelled to London by stagecoach several times seeking donations for the cause.



The building was erected in 1765 at a cost of £400 which included the purchase of the land from Gatcombe estate, presumably including the graveyard, and was opened on 17th September 1765 for services, but remained under the oversee of Shortwood for nearly 60 years during which time there were many ups and downs. Minchinhampton was a difficult place for those pioneers who experienced much verbal and physical abuse, and one commentator wrote that “the soil was so barren that it never yielded a harvest.” Nevertheless, Francis preached at the Meeting House once a fortnight for 35 years. Subsequent ministers at Shortwood could make no headway at Minchinhampton and the building was closed for a while.

In 1818 the Rev Joseph Baynes came to Shortwood as assistant to Rev Winterbotham and visited the chapel at Minchinhampton and made his acquaintance with those who once worshipped there but were now attending Shortwood Chapel. Under Baynes’ enthusiastic leadership, the Meeting House was reopened and, he, like Francis conducted services once a fortnight on Sunday evenings until he retired.

In 1819 there began talks referring to the desirability of Minchinhampton becoming a church in its own right which meant breaking away from the mother church. It seems that Shortwood were not averse to the idea and on October 7th 1824 the church became independent with Shortwood’s blessing.

### **REV JOSEPH DUNN 1826-1842**

The first pastor to be appointed was the Rev Joseph Dunn who began his ministry in August 1826, a ministry which was to be one of outstanding success, and was to last for 16 glorious years. he baptised 12 candidates in 1830 and is reported as having baptised 225 persons altogether. All previous baptisms had been carried out at Shortwood or Avening. So successful was Mr Dunn that the congregation outgrew the Meeting House in Workhouse (Chapel) Lane and a site for a larger chapel was sought. This was provided

in Tetbury Street by David Ricardo for a token payment of 5/- and he also provided the stone for building. Unfortunately, little was recorded concerning the actual building operation, but the cost was £1,000 and was completed in 1834. The old Meeting House built by Francis was then modified to accommodate an ever-growing Sunday School.

### **DECLINE**

After Mr Dunn, somewhat brief and unrewarding ministries were taken up by Rev W Evans, Rev R G LeMaire, Rev A Morris and Rev J Ingram Cobbin, following which, matters were at such a low ebb that the church almost closed and may have been sold had it not been for strenuous protestations from two members, Mr Daniels and Mr Mortimer. Once again Shortwood came to the rescue until the appointment of Rev C Deavin in 1858, and his preaching was “fresh and vigorous” but he retired after 6½ fruitful years.

### **REV H A JAMES 1865-1878**

Another highly successful ministry, during which time he baptised 116 people, and the church remained strong both spiritually and numerically. Significant improvements were made to the chapel, the vestry rooms were added and the manse in High Street was purchased.

### **REV HENRY KIDNER 1878-1884**

Mr Kidner continued the good work of H A James but much to the disappointment of the church resigned through ill health after 6 years, thus ending a very promising pastorate.

### **REV S J FORD 1897-1920**

Sammy Ford as he was affectionately known, will mainly be remembered for the erection of the Institute (now the Church Centre), and perhaps as a man of principal who went to prison for refusing to pay that part of the rates he objected to. During his ministry which took in the 1st World War years, the manse in High Street was sold and one in Windmill Road purchased.

### **CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS 1924**

Rev G H Kilby arrived in 1920 and lasted 7 years during which time the Centenary celebrations were held, and a Souvenir booklet was produced by him, and much of the foregoing account was taken from this publication which was priced at 6d.

Mr Kilby's ministry ended in 1927 and was followed by Rev Owen Denslow (5yrs), Rev E F Forsdike (12yrs), Rev C Markham Jones, “a gentle giant” who had served in the Metropolitan Police (6yrs), Rev Percy Bragg (5yrs), Rev Eric Giles (3yrs), and Rev Ernest W Labrum (4yrs). Ernest Labrum is worthy of mention for besides being a thoroughly good preacher we have him and Rev John Cornwall of the Parish Church to thank for bringing harmony between the two churches which still exists today where for many years there had been animosity. He was sadly missed when he retired due to ill health..Despite his early retirement he lived on into his nineties.

### **REV J ALAN L EDWARDS 1967-1986**

The ministry of Rev Edwards began in 1967 and 10 years later on July 23rd a completely reconstructed church was opened. The galleries had been removed and replaced by

upstairs rooms, the old wooden pews removed and replaced by more comfortable chairs, and the pipe organ rebuilt on the ground floor. Many other lesser improvements were also made. The considerable cost of this exercise was largely met by generous legacies left to the church by Miss Violet Powis and Mr Albert Doel. The old Meeting Place (or Sunday School as it was later known) was sold and was converted tastefully into private accommodation.

The Rev Edwards left in 1986 and for the next two years or so the church was run by an excellent diaconate until Rev John Smith arrived in 1988.

### **REV JOHN SMITH 1988-1993**

This was Rev John Smith's first church having been trained at London Bible College and he came with fresh ideas and fitted in well with what had now become a team ministry. He saw the Institute which has become almost defunct as a potential asset to the church and with the full backing of members set about the restoration thereof. With his energies split between pastoral duties and the restoration of the Institute, he unfortunately worked himself into a breakdown of health which lasted several months. However, in the Spring of 1992, former minister Rev Alan Edwards was invited back to perform the opening ceremony of the really splendid new Institute, now to be known as the Baptist Church Centre and which is now used extensively by the Family Church (Sunday School), various church meetings and the community. Rev Smith left us in 1993 to take up an appointment in Lowestoft.

### **REV ALISDAIR LONGWILL 1996-**

A Scotsman from East Kilbride, Alisdair took up the present ministry in 1996.

### **Ministers of the Church founded by the Rev Benjamin Francis A.M. in 1765**

Oversight by Shortwood	1765 - 1824	Rev G H Kilby	1920 - 1927
Rev Joseph Dunn	1826 - 1842	Rev Owen C Denslow	1927 - 1932
Rev W Evans	1842 - 1845	Rev E F Forsdike	1933 - 1945
Rev R G LeMaire	1846 - 1848	Rev C Markham Jones	1945 - 1951
Rev A Morris	1851 - 1854	Rev Percy S Bragg	1951 - 1956
Rev J Ingram Cobbin	1855 - 1856	Rev Eric L Giles	1957 - 1960
Rev C Deavin	1858 - 1864	Rev Ernest W Labrum	1961 - 1965
Rev H A James	1865 - 1878	Rev J Alan L Edwards	1967 - 1986
Rev Henry Kidner	1878 - 1884	Rev John Smith	1988 - 1993
Rev W H Smith	1885 - 1889	Rev Alisdair Longwill	1996 -
Rev Dr H J Wicks	1889 - 1897		
Rev Samuel J Ford	1897 - 1920		

# MINCHINHAMPTON AND THE CLOTH TRADE

by Ann Murray

## BACKGROUND

Minchinhampton has had a long association with the cloth trade. The town lies three miles south east of Stroud in Gloucestershire on a high plateau (600ft) and is bounded on the north by the River Frome, on the west by the Nailsworth stream and on the south by the Avening stream.<sup>(1)</sup> The abundance of running water made it a natural place for the construction of mills, and eight were recorded on Minchinhampton manor as early as 1086. By the late 12<sup>th</sup> century the cloth industry was established.<sup>(2)</sup>

The late 18th/early 19th century had been a successful time for the Gloucestershire cloth trade, but by 1840 there was a sharp decline, which lasted for nearly ten years. This was followed by forty years of what was described by A.T. Playne, the owner of the largest cloth mill in the area, as “...the palmy days of the Stroud valleys” (3), when there was international demand for West of England broadcloth.

Until 1879 trade was still increasing in Gloucestershire but in 1880 this started to reverse because of competition from Yorkshire and Scotland, punitive American tariffs on imports and the reluctance of the Gloucestershire producers to change from their dependency on broadcloth.(4)

## AIM OF RESEARCH

The aim of the research was to investigate the fortunes of the cloth trade in Gloucestershire and to look at the affect it had on the inhabitants of Minchinhampton, in the period between 1840 to 1880.

## SOURCES

The research was started by consulting secondary sources in order to increase my knowledge of the history and workings of the cloth trade in Gloucestershire. *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* was a useful starting point, and lead me to A. T. Playne’s, *Minchinhampton and Avening*, which had several interesting chapters on the author’s own mill, and details of the mechanisation of the various processes used in cloth making. The book by J de L Mann was suggested by one of the librarians at the Gloucestershire Collection.

The first primary documents I looked at were Trade Directories covering the period 1839 to 1885. These provided an overview of the fortunes of the village, as well as summaries of population. Secondly I looked at the Census Enumerators’ Books (CEBs) for 1841 and 1881. I selected these years as representing a time of deep depression (1841), and a time when the trade was at its height (1881). With a population in excess of 4,000 it was not possible to examine the CEBs for the whole parish, so I selected one street, West End. I did so on the basis that it was the longest street in Minchinhampton, with predominantly 18<sup>th</sup> century houses which had not been rebuilt or added to in the 19 century.<sup>(5)</sup> I felt that this stability should ensure that the

population would be fairly constant in size over the forty years under investigation. Additionally the houses, being mainly small and terraced, were likely to have housed the working classes of Minchinhampton.

## ANALYSIS

I have attempted to:

- Link the information obtained from the Trade Directories for the years 1839 to 1885, with the information available from secondary sources; first at the time of the depression in the 1840's, and then during the boom years from the 1850's to the late 1870's.
- Compare the Census information for 1841 and 1881, to see whether an analysis of the occupations of the inhabitants of West End at each date reflected the changing fortunes of the cloth trade in the period.

### Comparison of Trade Directories 1838/1852 to secondary sources

Mann reports in his book that Gloucestershire certainly had a thriving cloth trade in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, with trade doubling between 1793 to 1803.<sup>(6)</sup> The use of the gig-mill and the fly-shuttle in broad looms was widespread in Gloucestershire at this time, despite having been resisted in other areas, and this gave the trade an advantage. Gloucestershire also escaped the aftermath of over-speculation that followed the end of the French wars in 1814, because it supplied mainly the home market. However, by the end of 1839 despite these advantages, T. J Howell, Factory Inspector in charge of the Western Cloth Area, reported that there was greater depression than he had ever known.<sup>(7)</sup> There were only 77 mills at work in Gloucestershire in 1841, compared with 133 in 1831.<sup>(8)</sup> According to the Gloucester Journal of 15<sup>th</sup> January 1842, production in Gloucestershire in 1841 was only 53% of what it had been in 1832 and 50 manufacturers had failed in that ten year period.

The primary sources certainly support the depression of the trade described by Mann. The trade directories take a little time to pick up the decline; *Robson's 1839 Directory* says of Minchinhampton that “. . . the principal employment of the inhabitants consist(s) in the manufacture of woollen cloth, which has long been carried on in the vicinity.” However, by 1844 *Pigot's Directory of Gloucestershire* reports: “The manufacture of woollen cloths was at one time carried on here extensively; but the trade has almost entirely gone to decay.” *Slater's Directory of Gloucestershire 1852* also mentions the state of decay, and adds “... many houses being in consequence unoccupied, the place now presents but an uninviting aspect.”

It is possible that the reference to empty houses in Minchinhampton in the 1852 Slater's Trade Directory is linked to incidents described by secondary sources. Playne reports a typhoid epidemic in 1846, which was blamed on contaminated soil from the Churchyard being spread around the village. 150 people died, all of them from the centre of the village.<sup>(9)</sup> In addition, The Victoria History reports that in the early 1840's, emigration to Australia, America and New Zealand for over 50 Minchinhampton inhabitants was

assisted out of the rates.<sup>(10)</sup>

### **Comparison of Trade Directories 1856/1885 to secondary sources**

Mann reports that the depression started to lift in the West in the late 1840's, and the arrival of the railway in Stroud in 1845 helped this.<sup>(11)</sup> The introduction of the power loom accelerated in the late 1850's, with 3 times as many in use in 1861 as 1850.<sup>(12)</sup> Although Gloucestershire's share of the market was small compared to Yorkshire, it was renowned for the excellence of its products, expensive "prestige" cloths. It produced "...blue, black and medley broadcloth, with scarlet for uniforms and hunting coats, some liveries and billiard cloth."<sup>(13)</sup> for which there was plenty of demand both at home and abroad. Larger manufacturers invested heavily in the 1860's, building additions to mills and buying the newest and best machinery.

Trade was still increasing until 1879, but the manufacturers were reluctant to change their products to keep up with innovations such as ready-made clothes, which required cheaper, lighter cloth. Ominously, at the 1878 International Exhibition in Paris, the jury, whilst awarding several gold medals to West of England manufacturers concluded that: "The productions of the West of England rank second to none in the world, though few but Englishmen can afford to wear them."<sup>(14)</sup> By 1880 trade was being lost to cheaper competitors and by the end of that year mills were coming up for sale.

The importance and scale of the trade is again supported by primary sources. In 1856, Kelly's Post Office Directory reported: "the manufacture of woollen cloth is the staple trade of the parish and neighbourhood, and furnishes employment for a great proportion of the inhabitants." Kelly's were still using exactly the same words to describe the successful trade nearly thirty years later, in 1885.

### **Comparison of Census information for 1841 and 1881**

The total population for the parish of Minchinhampton stood at 4888 at the time of the 1841 census, and at 4561 in 1881 (a 7% drop), having dipped to a low of 4147 in 1861. (See Appendix I) The sample population of West End stood at 283 in 1841, 235 in 1881 (a 17% drop), although the numbers of households stood fairly constant at 64 in 1841, and 63 in 1881. (Appendix II) The average size of a household had therefore dropped by 0.7 persons, which might suggest an improvement in living conditions.

49% of the inhabitants had an occupation in 1881, compared to only 43% in 1841. However, as no one described themselves as unemployed in either census, it seems possible that people gave their usual occupation to the census enumerator, whether employed at the time or not.

In 1841, 43 people in West End were involved in the cloth trade. This had dropped to 33 by 1881, which appears odd when the trade was in a deep depression in 1841, and still booming in 1880. However, there is a possible reason for this. Although the amount of trade increased, this was achieved partly by the introduction of new capital. This enabled

production to be centralised into fewer, larger, more efficient mills, and those mills were equipped with the most efficient machinery. In fact, the number of people employed in the trade dropped by 22% between 1850 and 1862.<sup>(15)</sup> This centralisation led to some of the smaller mills being turned over to alternative production, as can be seen by the appearance of the trades of umbrella stick-maker and sawmill worker in the 1881 census.

The beneficial effect of the booming wool trade, although not reflected by increased numbers employed by it directly, is demonstrated by the change in occupations of the residents of West End. The number of labourers had more than halved in the forty-year period, whilst the number of craftsmen had increased by more than 50%. The number of women working in domestic service outside of the house in which they lived more than doubled, which could indicate an increase in wealthy households elsewhere in the town. In addition, by 1881 there were four inns in West End alone, suggesting that the population had money to spend on other than essentials. This apparent prosperity is confirmed by the Victoria History, which records naphtha lighting arriving in 1857, the streets of the village being paved in 1858, drainage being installed in the 1860's, a fire brigade being formed in 1864 and gas laid on in 1872.<sup>(16)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The descriptions of the fluctuating fortunes of the cloth trade in Gloucestershire contained in secondary sources are supported by the information appearing in the trade directories of the time.

The impact on the inhabitants of Minchinhampton, however, was not straightforward. One might have expected to see a sharp increase in numbers employed by the trade in 1881 as compared to 1841, reflecting the success of the trade at the time: in fact the numbers fell. This can be explained by the increased capital invested in machinery, which reduced manpower requirements. At the same time it is possible to detect the improvement in living standards enjoyed by the working people of Minchinhampton: the change in occupation away from labouring to skilled work, the apparent increased average living space enjoyed by individuals, and the provision of public amenities. These improvements were probably due to the prosperity the cloth trade brought to the town.

## END NOTES

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| 1 The Victoria History of the Counties of England, P184                          | 9 A T Playne, Minchinhampton and Avening, P59            |
| 2 Ibid.,P195   | 10 The Victoria History of the Counties of England, P201 |
| 3 J de L Mann, The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640 to 1880, P204 | 11 J de L Mann, <i>ibid.</i> , P195                      |
| 4 Ibid.,P212   | 12 Ibid., P199   |
| 5 The Victoria History of the Counties of England, P186                          | 13 Ibid., P203   |
| 6 J de L Mann, <i>ibid.</i> , P138   | 14 Ibid., P216   |
| 7 Ibid., P178  | 15 Ibid.,P199  |
| 8 Ibid., P180  | 16 Ibid., P188   |
|  | 17 A T Playne, <i>ibid.</i> , P138                       |

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- A.T. Playne, Minchinhampton and Avening, Redwood Bum Ltd., 1978, (First published 1915).
- The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Vol. XI, 1973.
- Census Enumerators' Books for the Parish of Minchinhampton, 1841 and 1881.
- Various Trade Directories:
- Robson's 1839 Directory – Gloucestershire
  - Pigot's Directory of Gloucestershire 1844
  - Slater's Directory of Gloucestershire 1852
  - Kelly's Post Office Directory of 1856
  - Slater's Directory of Gloucestershire 1867
  - Morris Directory of Gloucestershire 1876
  - Kelly's Directory of Gloucestershire 1885
  - Kelly's Directory of Gloucestershire 1894

## APPENDIX I

### MINCHINHAMPTON AND THE CLOTH TRADE Population of Minchinhampton Parish (Source: Census records)

YEAR	Population
1841	4888
1851	4469
1861	4147
1871	4361
1881	4561

## APPENDIX II

### MINCHINHAMPTON AND THE CLOTH TRADE INFORMATION FROM THE CENSUS ENUMERATORS' BOOKS FOR WEST END, MINCHINHAMPTON

	1841	1881
Number of inhabitants	283	235
Number of Households	64	63
Occupations:		
Involved in cloth trade	43	33
Labourer	23	10
Domestic servant	5	13
Dress maker, tailor, hat maker, shoe maker	15	9
Grocer, butcher, baker, coal merchant	10	11
Professional	5	4
Craftsman	9	14
Umbrella stick-maker	-	4
Sawmill worker	-	2
Inn keeper	-	4
Independent means	5	4
Other	8	7
TOTAL	123	115

## **RAILWAYS at Brimscombe**

**by Stan Dyer**

In the early part of the nineteenth century local manufacturers mainly in the woollen trade realised that travel wise Stroud was rather a backwater and much trade was being lost to the Yorkshire mills, due to the canal being expensive and slow, and in 1834 a meeting of railway enthusiasts met to discuss the situation. Among those attending were the mill owners, the Marlings, the Stantons, the Playnes, Joseph Watts of Stroud Brewery and one of Stroud's two M.P's W H Hyett. The meeting was addressed by Isombard Kingdom Brunel who proposed to take the line from Swindon to Cheltenham via Kemble, Chalford, Brimscombe, Stroud, Standish and Gloucester. It was therefore decided in March 1835 to petition parliament in favour of the G.W.R. (Brunel's) plan. The Bill authorising the plan was passed in 1836. Unfortunately, the years that followed were years of terrible depression but the line was eventually completed and opened on 12th May 1845, though for some reason Brimscombe station was not opened until 1st June. Folk could now travel to London 2nd class for 21 shillings (£1.05) or 1st class for 31 shillings (£1.55). The seating for the humbler class of traveller was in open trucks with no protection from wind and rain and on a wet day travellers would arrive in London or back home in very bad shape. There was no mention of 3rd class - just as well. It was not possible to return the same day, and the timetable was "travel up to London on Monday or Tuesday and return Thursday or Saturday."



Chalford station was opened in 1897 to improve the services and in 1903 a railcar service was introduced between Chalford and Stonehouse with halts at St. Mary's, Brimscombe Bridge, Ham Mill (Thrupp). Bowbridge, Downfield, Cashes Green and Ebley. This service was later extended to Gloucester. This rail car with a push/pull engine left Chalford every hour on the hour from early morning 'til late at night. In between times the Cheltenham Flyer would speed through as did the fish train, mail train and paper train, and many a goods train would rattle through displaying such names as Ricketts and Corry, Cannop, C.W.S. and Bolsover Colliery.

Now while Brimscombe station served the travelling public and manufacturers well, the station was very necessary for the home of the Brimscombe bankers, workhorse engines which were required to push or pull main line trains up the Chalford bank which at its steepest was 1 in 60 at Frampton Mansell, and on through Sapperton Tunnel. With the demise of steam powered engines and the introduction of diesel engines the bankers were no longer required and Brimscombe station closed in late 1964.

### *The Great Western Rail Road or the Pleasures of Travelling by Steam*

Now of all the great wonders that ever was known,  
(and some wonderful things have occurred in this town)  
this Great Western railroad will beat them all hollow  
and whoever first thought on't was a wonderful fellow.

You'll ride up to London in two hours and a quarter  
with nothing to drive but a kettle of hot water,  
you can breakfast at home on tea, toast and butter  
and need not to put yourself in a splutter  
you may travel to London and there dine at noon  
and be home to your tea again the same afternoon

And look what a lot of employment 'twill make,  
why, your Country Bricklayers may then undertake  
to send ready built houses up to London by steam!  
and no doubt it could turn out a very good scheme.

And any old woman that has just got enough sense,  
by raking and scraping to raise eighteen pence,  
if at a service in London she has got a daughter  
she may ride and see her by the boiler of hot water.

Thomas Willey, Cheltenham