

MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP COMMITTEE 2002/2003

Mr. John Cooper – Honorary President
Mrs. Diana Wall – Chairman
Dr. Hugh Kearsey – Vice chairman
Mrs. Sarah Cole – Secretary and Treasurer
Mrs. Andre Clapham – Assistant Secretary and Treasurer
Mrs. Sue Smith
Mr. Brian Keen
Mr. Bob Petersen

PROGRAMME OF PAST MEETINGS

2002	November	A.G.M. and Minchinhampton in old photographs” - Mr. Mike Mills
2003	January	“Kangaroos to K-Types - A history of Aston Down Airfield” - Mrs. Diana Wall
	March	“The Stone Trade around Minchinhampton” - Mr. Arthur Price
	May	“How to get the best out of Village Records” - Mrs. Rose Spence
	July	“Guided Walk around Frampton on Severn”
	September	“Minchinhampton Golf Course - Over a century of golf on the Common” - Mr. David Martin
	November	A.G.M.

THE YEARS IN PERSPECTIVE

by Diana Wall

In 1983 a small group of interested people met in the Vestry Room to discuss the formation of some form of local history society. The Minchinhampton Society had previously been entertained by lectures on local events, but it was through Bryan Gerard, of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council that our local History Group was formed, with Cyril Turk as the first Chairman, Sue Wood as Secretary and myself (by training a Geographer!) as Treasurer. Later in that year, various individuals were coerced to put pen to paper and the first Bulletin was published.

On this, our twentieth anniversary it is satisfying to look back over the intervening years and to report on a thriving group with a current membership of over seventy, who still publish an Annual Bulletin, along with Occasional Papers and there are now three volumes of "Minchinhampton Life and Times". Our Exhibitions in the Market House are held every two years (and there will be one in October 2004), and such is the popularity of the regular meetings that next year we will be moving to the larger venue of the School Hall, and are including an extra meeting in February, A far cry from the three talks held in 1983, in a rather cold Vestry Room before the new heating was installed!

With the current upsurge in interest in History, both local and national, Minchinhampton History Group should look forward to a very successful next twenty years.



Porch Room - where we have been holding our meetings

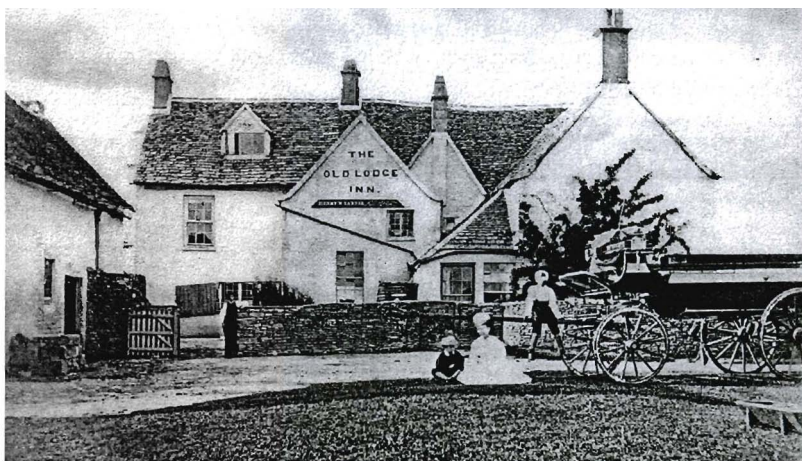
MINCHINHAMPTON COMMON IN THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES

by A. Cyril Turk

This is one of a series of unpublished articles written by the Group's president Cyril Turk before his death in 1998. Footnotes and illustrations have been added to aid the reader through the text.

In his celebrated book about Minchinhampton, A.T. Playne states, "this celebrated and beautiful expanse of downland was, until quite recent years, but little known and rarely visited by strangers".¹ Historically, the "custom wood" of the manor had covered this, but over the centuries encroachments had been made for farmland, timber clearance and enclosures for building, so that by the 18th century the Common was largely brush and thorn, with coarse grassland.

For centuries the outstanding building on the Common was the Old Lodge. Playne



The Old Lodge

describes it as "an ancient enclosure ... consisting of an inn, stables and garden and a large and ancient bowling green." Its first buildings were erected in the 17th century when much of the land surrounding was rabbit warren, although its origins could have been as a hunting lodge. A conveyance from Lord Thomas Windesor to Samuel Sheppard in 1656 contains "*all those several Wood Coppices and Wood Grounds, commonly called Gattecombe [sic], Amberley Green, Amberley Coppice,*

¹ Minchinhampton and Avening - A.T. Playne 1915

and the Lodge thereon built ..." By the next century the Lodge had developed. In a contract made in 1718 by Samuel Sheppard on the occasion of his marriage to Ann Darrell, there are listed the various properties in the Manor whose rental, amounting to £250 per annum, he settled on her in return for her dowry of £7000. Of this settlement, £5 came from a dwelling house called the Lodge, with a bowling green, the outline of which is still visible.

During the 18th century two turnpike roads crossed the Common. In 1782, the track to the north, running from Cirencester to Stroud was repaired, surfaced and turnpiked. Six years later it was the turn of the Stroud to Tetbury road, cutting across the Common to enter Minchinhampton at Nailsworth Gate by the windmill. The Nailsworth Turnpike Trust made further roads affecting the Common; their committee meeting at the Lodge in the 1780s planned and made not only the main road from Tiltups to Dudbridge, but also branch roads from Nailsworth to the Fives Court (Halfway House Inn), from Woodchester to the Bear and from Little Britain to Amberley Bank, thus modernising the road system around the south of the Common.'

The Common was, of course, the natural place to turn for staging events, and in the 18th century horse races were regularly run there. An advertisement in the Gloucester Journal for 9th October 1750 reads:

*"That on Wednesday the 24th Inst. will be run for on
Hampton Common*

*A BRACE OF DOES Value six pounds and a note of
hand on "John Catch if you Can" by any Horse,
Mare or Gelding, which never started.*

*The best of three heats, four miles to the heat, to
carry ten stones*

No less than three to start.

*To be entered at the Market House at
Minchinhampton, on Monday the 22nd Inst. Paying
seven shillings six pence entrance or double at the
post, and to be subject to Articles.*

*The entrance money will go to the second-best
horse."*

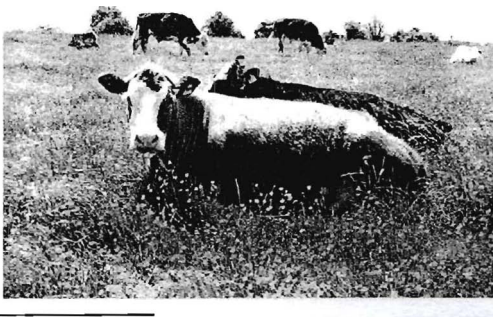
Horses and cattle were pastured on the Common then as now, and could be lost, stolen or stray. In August 1732 the Widow Wasty of Amberley Lodge advertised the loss of her two "dry heifers" describing them as "*one of flight brown colour, and burnt in the Horn with two SS and the other a black one with white on the Loins and a Notch on the Ear*" A month earlier, John Davis of Minchinhampton advertised his lost "*Sorrel Mare, 14 Hands high, 4 years old, with a white Stripe all down her face, pretty long Ears and has lately a Hurt with a Saddle on her near side*".

Paul Hawkins Fisher, in writing down his memories of the **district**³ describes the military gatherings that were held on the Common. The Loyal Stroud Volunteers were formed *"when the threat of invasion by Napoleon the First had so roused the patriotism of the nation, that volunteers were speedily raised, armed and trained for its defence. ... The countess of Berkeley presented the Colour to the Corps, at a grand review on Hampton Common, September the 19th 1799, on which occasion Mr. Hollings [Captain Commandant] made an address ... At the return of peace with France in 1802 the services of the Corps were dispensed with.*

On the formation of the second battalion of the Gloucestershire Rifle Volunteers in 1860 its two Stroud companies, the fifth and sixth, assembled on Hampton Common, July the 31st, in that year, when the old flag was brought forward and once more floated in the breezes of the high region."

During the 19th century the local non-conformist Sunday Schools held annual meetings at Whitsuntide, and that of 1833 was reported in the Stroud Journal. Nine schools met having first assembled as follows - Bedford Street schools at the Fort, Brimscombe Wesleyan School and Littleworth Methodist near Mugmore and Brimscombe, Amberley and Minchinhampton at the Windmill. There were nearly 900 children present. accompanied by two bands of musicians and around 1000 spectators with carriages varying *"from the stately barouche and pair to the smaller one-horse trap"*. After sports and games there was *"an abundant supply of cakes and other food"*.

By Victorian times much, but not all, of the old common arable land had disappeared and the duties of the Court Leet had reduced to administering the common pasture, with the occasional. but increasing. help of a Committee of Commoners. Their minutes were well kept throughout the 19th century and show the concerns of taking land into the Common, dealing with straying cattle and with the quarries.



) Notes and Recollections of Stroud - Paul Hawkins Fisher 1871

There were two large areas of arable land left, one to the north of Box bounded by the village and the road from the Halfway House Inn to Minchinhampton, and the other stretching in a broad arc northwards from the windmill. Whenever possible land like this was gradually taken into the Common, either by purchase or transfer. When an occupier of land wished to straighten his boundary or enlarge his garden permission was granted provided he threw into the Common as large, or larger piece of ground. The Report of the Commoners for July 1878 gives several examples; Mrs. Frith made the road from the Halfway House to Tom Longs Post, in return for taking in 3 ½ acres of common land into the grounds of "Highlands", now Beadesert. Sometimes the old boundaries or the arable fields can be seen on the ground, as when a strip was taken from the field by Charity Barn, and the wall moved some ten feet back. The footings of the original wall are still visible on the Common.

The Committee of Commoners were concerned for their cattle, and damage of any sort to the turf brought an immediate response. In 1843 James Turner was fined 2s. 6d for cutting turf and in the same year James Leech took manure and was sent to the treadmill for seven days. In 1847 James Harrison of Littleworth was threatened with prosecution for *"injuring a stone trough"*. This underlines a previous Minute which reported that the weather had been so unusual that all the pools on the Common had dried, and water for the beasts was only obtained with great difficulty. Pools were cleaned out periodically and a Minute of September 1847 lists those dealt with: *"Wall's Quarry Hill, Black Ditch, Gravel Hill, Beare Pitch, Lower Littleworth, Duck's Pool, Sprig's Well, Nailsworth Hill and Box Post."*

The Committee faced an attack of distemper in 1845 with animals reduced to near a *"skellington"*. The remedies they offered were *"wash the mouth out with alum and vinegar, wash feet with soapy water and then anoint with butter of antimony and myrrh."* Unfortunately they don't record the result of the treatment.

Animals were still stolen from the Common. In September 1847 Alfred Peglar's horse was stolen and later found at the George Inn, Frocester, where Thomas Horwood of Horsley had sold it for £3 12s. 6d. He was also accused of having stolen Isaac Milliner's mare and selling that for £5. As a result, he was sentenced to transportation for seven years.

Another recurring concern for the Court Leet was injury to cattle through falling into one of the numerous quarries. In 1884 Isaac Paine's heifer fell into a quarry at Quarry Hill, receiving injuries that required veterinary attention, and in this case the owner of the quarry, Nathaniel Walkley was made to pay the bill. Reports on injury to animals occur frequently in the Minutes but a much more serious accident occurred on 23rd August 1844 as Captain Robert Felix R.N. was riding out with Mr. Whitehouse when his horse fell into a place *"formerly used for digging."* The

Captain sustained serious head and back injuries and died soon after.

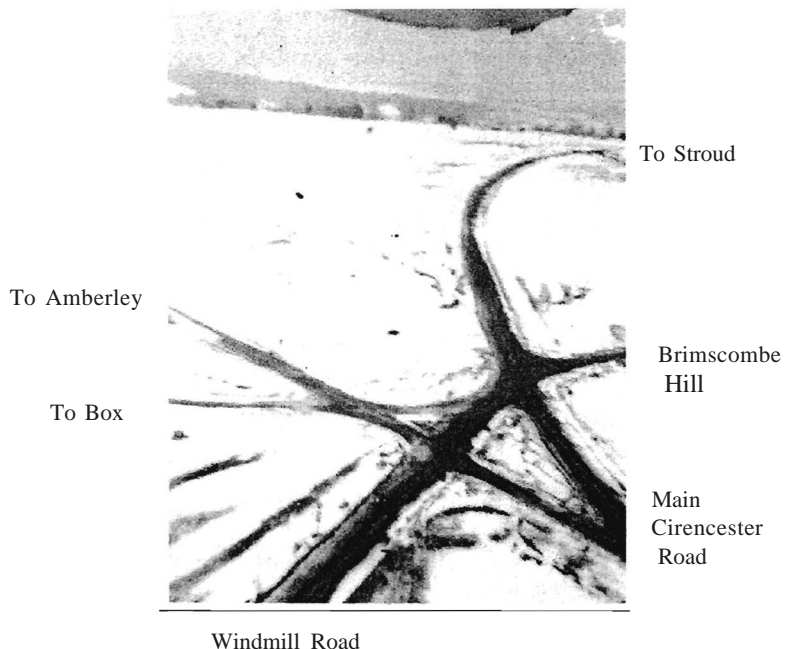
Such accidents led the Committee of Commoners to keep a close watch and in May 1865 they reported on the unsatisfactory state of the quarries and urged the Lord of the Manor to look to the fences around them before turning-out time, and in November 1869 they wrote to Mr. Niblett requesting him to fence or slope all quarries near the turnpike road across the Common. These fences were to be at least 4 1/2 feet high.

There is an interesting Minute on May 10th 1889, the year that Minchinhampton Golf Club was formed, when Mr. Shipway asked, *"On what authority holes were made on the Common?"* The Chairman, Mr. Playne (a golfer!) said that the Lord of the Manor had given permission and that he hoped there was not going to be any objection to a game that brought strangers into the area. It was not the game Mr. Shipway objected to but players who had threatened to prosecute people who complained; the holes were four inches wide and quite enough to lame a horse. Many men were members both of the Golf Club and Commoners Committees and the two have existed side by side ever since.

So Minchinhampton Common teetered into the Twentieth Century.



Tom Long's Post in the snow, late 1960's before the junction was altered. The view was taken from a model aircraft with an ordinary camera mounted inside, looking north west.



Radio controlled aircraft were often flown by the Cotswold Radio Control Society from the Common. Today they are based at Aston Down . These photographs come from founder member, John Bond.



The flight over!

EXTRACT FROM AN OLD LOCAL NEWSPAPER

A letter to the Stroud News & Journal when R. A. Butler was Home Secretary, sometime in the 1950's

I wish our Home Secretary had been at Hampton School in 1894 when the following episode took place and to my mind emphasises the value of control. The Schoolmaster had been called to Exeter for three days owing to the death of his father and left the conduct of the school during his absence to Miss Webb the headmistress of the Girls School next door. One of the boys aged twelve was a terror to the youngsters and the despair of the headmaster so when Miss Webb takes over he started walking about the classroom and pinching the other boys. His name was Evans.

Miss Webb; "Evans sit down in your seat at once".

Evans; "I shan't cos I be'ant afraid of thee".

Miss Webb; "What did you say Evans".

Evans; "I be'ant afraid of thee".

Miss Webb was out her desk like a shot and march towards Evans who by this time was kicking the skirting and shouting defiance. Miss Webb grabs him by both ears and bunts him up to her desk and in full view of all, tans his bare rump until it's as red as the flannel shirt he had on.

He doesn't cry but mutters, "Please Miss Webb, I be afraid of thee"

Miss Webb "That's better ,button your braces and return to your desk". but he still stands weakly.

Miss Webb "Sit down boy"

Evans "I can't cos it hurts".

Miss Webb "Good! Then stand and be a warning to the school".

Evans went to America in 1899 but a few years ago he visited Hampton and one of his old friends asked him if he remembered the tanning. "Gawd, But can I ever forget it. Yet it did more good than anything else before or since"

Such is the value of discipline. R.A.B. please take note.

A.N.C. *[possibly Arthur N. Clarke]*

TETBURY STREET IN THE 1880s – A SNAPSHOT IN TIME

by Diana Wall

A chance enquiry from a gentleman researching his family, who had traced his grandfather to Tetbury Street in the 1881 census, led me to speculate on whether it would be possible to build up a picture of what that part of the town was like in the Victorian period. Not only did the Local History Collection contain the census records for 1871, 1881 and 1891 but this was also the period of the first large-scale Ordnance Survey maps of Minchinhampton. Some past members have also researched their own properties in Tetbury Street, and by collating all this information it has been possible to build up a fairly comprehensive representation.

If you were to transport a resident from late Victorian times to the present day, it is possible that they would recognise the buildings in Tetbury Street, if not the traffic. The recession in the economy of the late 19th and early 20th century in Gloucestershire, coupled with the more recent status as part of the Minchinhampton Conservation Area, has meant that the streetscape has changed little. Some of the cottages may have replacement windows, or shop fronts have been inserted, but the buildings externally remain much as they did over a hundred years ago. The only major construction has been the Institute, now the Church Centre, which dates from 1907 and a century ago, where the council houses and allotments now stand, at the top of the hill was open farmland.

In the 1880s this part of the town was home to many craftsmen, without whom a settlement such as Minchinhampton could not survive. Apart from the building trades, including tilers and plasterers, carpenters and a gas fitter, there was a master cabinetmaker employing two apprentices living on the north side of the street. Associated with transport there were a wheelwright (with another who described himself as retired), a saddler and harness maker and a blacksmith, although it is not clear whether the latter had his forge in Tetbury Street, or merely lived there. The trade directories of the time suggest that the chimney sweep and the coal dealer carried on their work from their cottages.

Many of the residents mentioned in the 1881 Census rented their cottages, sometimes from important families like the Ricardo's or Playne's, or from Holy Trinity Church, but also from one of their neighbours, who might be described as "*proprietor of houses*". The owner-occupiers also often mortgaged their properties, so that any surviving deeds appear complicated in the extreme; Lease and Release appear frequently. Many of the mortgage holders were businessmen from Stroud

or Cirencester, who seem to have lent money at a fairly high rate of interest. Thankfully, to date no records of foreclosure have been found for Tetbury Street.



Looking up Tetbury Street with the Post Office on the right

Many families resided in the same street for several generations, whether owner-occupiers or tenants. John Sargeant, described as a saddler in the 1856 Post Office Directory, lived on the corner of Well Hill and in 1871 both he and his wife Susan were in their forties. The report of his death, at the same house, appears in the Parish Magazine for June 1905, when he was described as *"one of the oldest inhabitants of this place; one who in the days of his strength, used it with all his might, working with conscientious industry"*. On the north side of the street, adjoining Friday Street, lived the Price family, who had been owner occupiers recorded in 1830¹, with George and Mary Price and their two sons living there in 1881. At least two generations of the Clutterbuck family rented property on the south side of the street.

One of the most obvious features of Tetbury Street is the Baptist Chapel, with its prominent date stone of 1834. Completed during the ministry of Rev. Joseph Dunn, at a cost of over £1000, it replaced the smaller meeting-room in Workhouse Lane, which was converted for use by the Sunday School. David Ricardo, who as already mentioned owned cottages in the street, had given the land. The property where the chapel now stand was described as void in 1830. By the end of the Victorian period the church was strong both numerically and spiritually, with many members living

¹ Survey for the Equalising of the Poor Rate

close by in Tetbury Street, the non-conformist creeds having a great appeal to working men and women.'

Also on the south side of the street was the Salutation Inn. Although by the 1880s this had ceased to be a coaching inn, it was still one of the foremost hostelries in the town. To the east there was a large yard, with stables and other outbuildings, the result of the demolition of a cottage there some twenty years previously. The licensee was Caroline Browning, a widow, who is helped in the inn by her niece, Hannah. Messers Halliwell, Biddle and Stanton "*partners and common brewers of Stroud*" had purchased the Salutation in 1875; these same gentlemen were the directors of the Stroud Brewery Company.² The "Sally" was one of the longest surviving inns in Minchinhampton; the first reference to it by name is in a will drawn up in 1697, and it finally closed in 1963, when Stroud Brewery became part of the Whitbread group.



A group of regulars in the yard of "The Salutation"

Towards the top of the hill, and almost bordering the open fields was the Girls' School House. The headmistress, Miss Emma Webb, who was aged 41 at the census, lived here with an assistant mistress, two pupil teachers and a fifteen year-old scholar. These girls, all from working-class backgrounds, were at various stages in their qualification as teachers. After being monitors in their last year at school, like boarder Sarah Forbes, they began a five-year apprenticeship, and then took an examination after final training at college; the certification was only confirmed after a further period in school. Charlotte Hamlett had become an assistant mistress by

² A Brief History of Minchinhampton Baptist church in "Annual Bulletin Number 17"

³ The Salutation Inn in "Minchinhampton Life and Times Part 2"

this route, and in 1886 was appointed Mistress of the Infants' School when that was separated from the Girls' School. The pupil teachers took charge of groups of scholars during the day and then continued their own education in the evenings at the house. It appears that the girls were able scholars, as all their names are recorded as Bowstead Medal winners, and both pupil teachers, Henrietta Essex and Mary Lewis, had won prizes for drawing."



The ivy-covered house setback on the left is where Miss Webb lived in 1881

A statistical analysis of the census shows that almost a quarter of the 191 inhabitants of Tetbury Street were aged under ten. Several of the families had five or six children living at home. The Weaver household, in what is now No. 39, contained nine children ranging in age from 2 to 20. "St. Kilda House" on the corner of Workhouse Lane was described as a girls' home, and in addition to the matron and her assistant housed eleven girls all born in the London area. Robert Close, living on the north side of the street, also took in boarders, one of whom appears to be a brother of two girls in the home. Sarah Fewster was a widow living with her five children and four boarders (a pair of sisters and a brother and sister); all four were also from London. These children appear to be part of a larger group residing in the town; in 1878 Miss Webb records in the School Log Book that a party was held for the boarders and their "*mothers*", One wonders what the impact was upon a school of less than 400 pupils of a group of nearly fifty London children in their midst.

• An Education Miscellany in "Minchinhampton Life and Times Part 2"
 , Logbook of the Girls' School, Minchinhampton, 1868 onwards

Not all these young people attended school - Henry Boulton was a painters' apprentice aged 13, Daniel Dean was a stick dresser aged 12, and his sister Ellen aged 10 is described as "*half-time worker at stick dressing*". Of course, these wages were necessary to the family income, and even children described as "*scholars*" would often miss school at haymaking or harvest, when extra money could be earned.

At the other end of the demographic scale were the elderly, and, perhaps surprisingly, there were 11 residents over seventy listed in the 1881 census. Most of these gave an occupation; there were few people of independent means who could afford to retire. Edwin Bird described himself as "*formerly wheelwright*" and had his granddaughter living at the same address. Martha Humphries was a widow of 70 whose occupation was "*charwoman*", Abel Jarrett, living with his daughter in what is now No. 35, was aged 73 and a "*gardener*" and even Martha Rust, aged 82 was a "*home assistant*" presumably helping her daughter, Ellen, with her seven children. In fact the only "*pensioner*" was Mark Harnnan (43) who lived in the end cottage on the southwest of the street, and received his income from the army!

It is hoped that this overview gives an introduction into life in one of the four main streets of Minchinhampton in the late Victorian era. At the time of writing it has been possible to place over three-quarters of the households in the correct dwelling as shown on the Ordnance Survey map, largely due to the presence in the street of identifiable buildings like the Chapel and Hill House (No. 33). As research continues, artefacts such as personal photographs, posters and sale bills are coming to light, and it is hoped that a full picture of this street will be one of the displays at the next Local History Exhibition in October 2004.



Tetbury Street today

A Letter from Palestine

Notes on the letter :

Recently, this was passed to the Local History group via a gentleman in Hull, who had found it with his father's papers – his father being interested in Local History. It dates from before Rev. E. C. Oldfield's time in Minchinhampton, but gives an interesting insight into travel in the mid C19th.

Nazareth
May 17, 1857

My dear Wyatt,

I am sorry that I could not find time to write to you from Jerusalem. It was often in my thoughts, and, having promised to do so, I feel doubly vexed that I could not keep my word. But we were only ten days in the City, and hurrying about all the time. Besides which, I had extra work on my hands in consequence of the unexpected death of a Gentleman in our party. He was taken ill in the Desert - that great and terrible wilderness - and died just on the borders of Caanan. We buried him on Mt. Zion, in the English Cemetery. Until he was sick I had enjoyed the journey so much, living in a tent, riding on a camel, carrying a supply of water and surrounded by Arabs who looked wild enough for any mischief.

*Nazareth
May 17, 1857.*

*My dear Wyatt,
I am very sorry that I could
not find time to write to you from Jerusalem.
It was often in my thoughts, and, having
promised to do so, I feel doubly vexed that
I could not keep my word. But we were
only ten days in the city, - and hurrying
about all the time. Besides which I had*

I felt in such a new strange position that I could hardly enter into the "pains and troubles of the desert". It was not weary to me. We passed the Red Sea at Suez and having seen the springs and palm trees which are supposed to be Marah and Elim, we reached Sinai eleven days after we had left Cairo. Camels move very slowly - the distance is not 250 miles.

Since Sinai, - where we saw a splendid thunderstorm, reminding us of the thunderings and the lightnings which took place at the giving of the Law. Since

Sinai we have had anxiety and weariness enough to endure. Mr: Bolland needed remedies which we could not obtain and it became necessary to push on in hopes of reaching Jerusalem before his strength failed. By forced marches and with many interruptions we had just got out of the desert, when on Sunday April 26 our invalid sank and in a peaceful sleep left this earthly pilgrimage for the heavenly Jerusalem and exchanged his frail tabernacle here for a house not made with hands; eternal in the heavens. We brought his poor widow on to Jerusalem and she is now on her way back to England.

Jerusalem is a City which becomes more and more interesting every day. Inside, there are few certain remains or sites to be pointed out, a superb Mosque - or Mohammedan church - stands on the spot where the Temple once stood: Monks show the place where Jesus was crucified also where he was buried, but much doubt remains as to the truth of these assertions. I, for one can hardly believe them.

Outside, however, of Jerusalem no one can over-value the privilege of walking - on the east is the Mount of Olives and the garden near the brook Cedron. The view from Olivet of the City is very striking - far better than any other on the other sides - a deep valley like that between your house and the Vicarage - called valley of Jehoshaphat - serves to mark off very distinctly the limits of the City round which is a high wall. One hour from Mount Olivet is Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. But it would take too long to tell of all the sacred spots that one visits near Jerusalem: enough to say that for ten days we enjoyed the treat of being surrounded by names and places which point one heavenwards.

It is quite impossible to see these and not come away much better - or much worse. We left Jerusalem on May 11^h and travelled through the following places to Nazareth all which Sam and Emily will look out on the map - Ramah, Bethell, Shiloh, Shechem now called Nablous near which is Jacob's Well. Samaria, Jezreel, Nain, Shunern, past Mt: Gilbon on which Saul died, Little Hermon ant Mt: Tabor on the plains of Esdraelon to Nazareth among the mountains of Galilee.

Today, we much enjoyed a quiet Sunday in the place where our Blessed Lord spent so many years of his life. Close by our tent is an old fountain at which we see the women all day long filling their water pots. It is very likely the Virgin Mary did the same at the same place. The women here are very upright and good looking. They carry their water jugs on their heads and dress in very gay and picturesque colours. They wear loose trousers down to the feet and very often ankle rings. The inhabitants of Nazareth are chiefly Christians, not indeed Protestants but members of the Greek or Roman Church - much nearer the truth than Mohammedans, though I fear often very ignorant of the true way of Salvation.

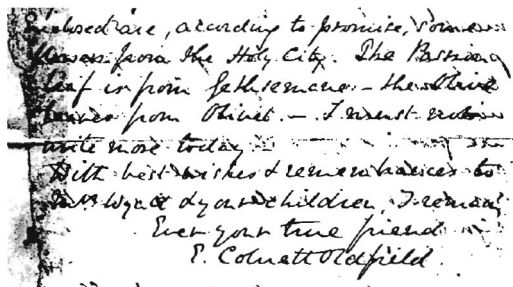
I cannot say how grateful an Englishman learns to be after a visit to these countries that he was born in a land of religious light. We shall have much to account for, let us strive and pray to live up to our privileges and to show our knowledge of Christ in our life and conduct.

Enclosed are, according to promise, some flowers from the Holy City. The Passion leaf is from Gethsemane, the olive leaves from Olivet.

I remain,

Ever your true Friend.

E. Colnett Oldfield



Enclosed are, according to promise, some flowers from the Holy City. The Passion leaf is from Gethsemane, the olive leaves from Olivet. - I cannot write more today. With best wishes & remembrance to Mr. Wye & family & children, I remain Ever your true friend
E. Colnett Oldfield

Notes on Edward Colnett Oldfield

The Rev. Oldfield was one of the long-serving Victorian ministers of Holy Trinity church. The parishes of Brimscombe and Amberley had already been created when he arrived in the Parish in 1865. Just three years later he was instrumental in the building of the Minchinhampton Schools, for boys, girls and infants. In the local History Collection, there are copies of letters he personally sent, inviting donations to this valuable work. During his ministry, he was married, and to accommodate a growing family he oversaw the remodelling of the old rectory (now Stuart House)', adding the porch and creating very much the building we see today.

Holy Trinity church had been restored in the 1840s, when the roof was in a parlous state, but it was Rev. Oldfield who improved the interior by applying for permission to remove the old galleries, reset the organ and insert a larger window in the east end of the chancel. Much of the painted glass was inserted during this time, all provided by the same firm, so preserving a unity of appearance.

After twenty years, and a bout of severe illness, Rev. Oldfield took up the incumbency of Harthill near Sheffield, in his own words "I am taking the right step, but this conviction will not remove the pain of parting from so many kind and true friends."²

¹ Minchinhampton Life and Times, Part 3
² Parish Magazine August 1884

THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

New Acquisitions

During 2003 many donations have been made to the Local History Collection. In return for a complementary copy of Playne's "Minchinhampton and Avening", the Nailsworth archive presented us with a group of books about their neighbourhood. Purchases were made of books on the arts and crafts movement, social life in the Cotswolds and Frampton on Severn, following the Group's visit.

Some small artefacts have been acquired this year. Firstly, there was a commemorative medal found in a wall in Minchinhampton and displayed at "Let's Celebrate", and a "moustache mug" showing the name of Minchinhampton followed this. A German souvenir plate, with a view of Holy Trinity Church has been loaned to the Group, although we will soon have difficulty in storing items such as this.

Malcolm Jones has made great use of the Local History computer, and has provided the Collection with a series of photographs taken in the district. He has also deposited much of his research into the history of houses in Box, supplementing the work of the late Cyril Turk. A further important acquisition has been his set of scrapbooks of cuttings from local newspapers in the 1960s and 1970s.

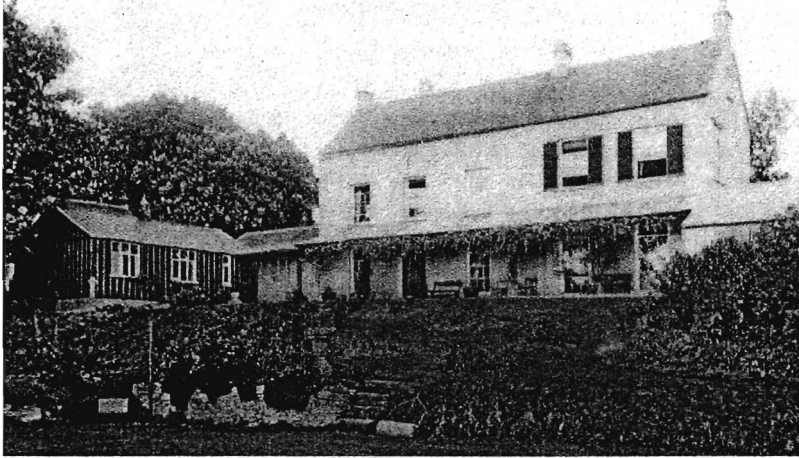
Lastly mention must be made of the papers discovered in a cupboard at 6 High Street, relating to the business of Mr. G. Smith, fishmonger. These have been passed to his son, Robert, of Tetbury History Society, who is writing about his father's life as a shopkeeper here in Minchinhampton.

An Appeal

Does anybody have a photograph of Minchinhampton Motors Garage that was in Windmill Road? Any year. If so the group would like to borrow it to make a copy.

A Mystery

This is a photograph believed to be of a house in the Minchinhampton area. Does anyone recognise it?



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